

Al Kline

Watercolor Basics to Advanced Workshop

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Al Kline discussed his painting process and how he achieves his effects. He expressed hope that we would take away at least one or two techniques to incorporate into our paintings from this workshop. Techniques aren't merely learned; they are developed over time. Al emphasized that watercolor created quickly and without fussing yields the best results.

Al enjoys drawing and painting, specifically En Plein Air to develop and improve his drawing and compositional skills. He stresses the importance of not using projection tools or grid techniques, but rather to develop the art of drawing naturally by practice. Drawing is a learned skill and requires a lot of practice. Many of his plein air paintings now resemble his studio works. There is more emphasis on painting rapidly with an economy of time and effort to yield the best results. When drawing, he focuses on tone and value, considering four different values. He utilizes the value study app on his iPhone to check the contrast in his values. He aims for two to four values instead of ten or more. Painting a good watercolor involves selecting an interesting subject and identifying your focal point, tone and overall compositional design. It's also crucial to make your values stand out and to vary your edges. Juxtaposition of light and darks around the focal point of the painting will add a dynamic effect.

Watercolor effects give a painting the appearance of a watercolor, so allow the medium to take charge and let gravity work its magic. The less you interfere, the better the outcome will be. Maintain your transparency even in the darker areas. There exists a balance between dark and light. He works from left to right and top to bottom. Everything must be interconnected.

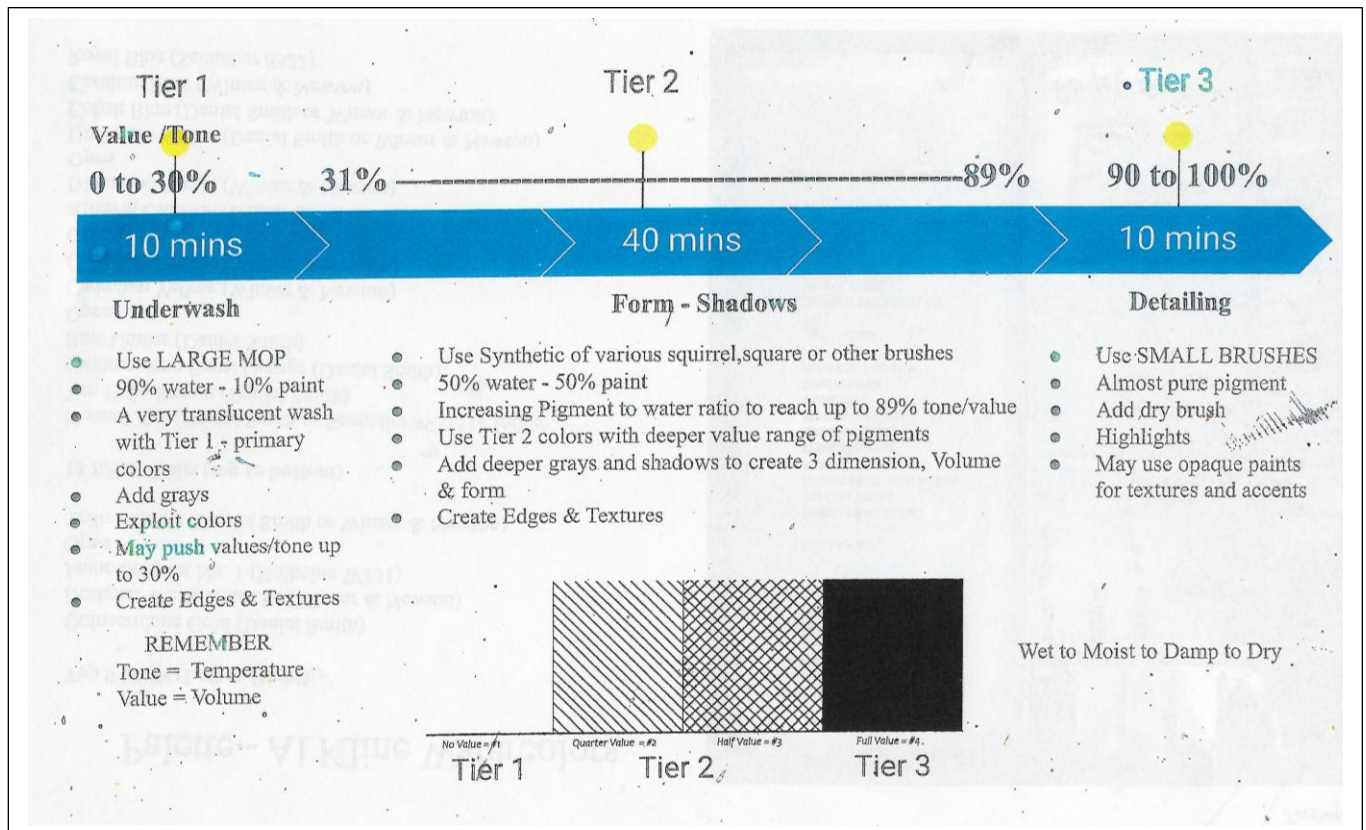
There are 4 stages of wetness. There is a wet stage while the paper has a sheen. There is a moist stage where the sheen is disappearing. There is a damp stage when the sheen is gone but nice ethereal effects are possible. The dry stage is bone dry.

Al provided a chart of the three **Tiers of his Painting Process** and his **Color Palette**.

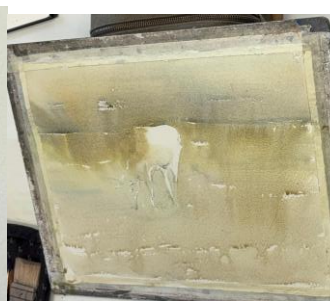
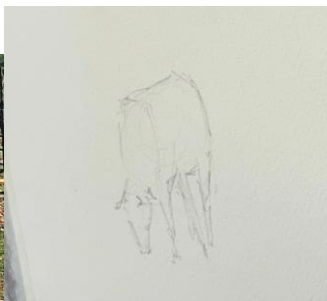
The **First Tier** is the under wash where you're "painting the light" by leaving transparency and highlights as whites of the paper. He does large washes using a large mop brush. The paint has a watery consistency. Use a large brush and maintain a bead of water flowing down the page. The value on the scale for the wash is between 1 and 3 or up to about 30% of the overall tone and value. Darker passages of paint can be introduced into the background and foreground to allow for economy of painting and soft, misty passages before it is completely dry and moving on to the second tier. The painting must be allowed to dry completely before moving on to the second tier of painting.

The **Second Tier** is when the majority of the painting is completed. Forms and shadows are established in this stage. The mid-values are painted wet on dry. You enhance the tone by adjusting your ratio of water to pigment. Inside the forms, he works wet on wet to allow for the various midtones and value shifts. He works from background to midground to foreground, usually in that order. Soft elements are executed while it is still wet. Harder edges are created wet on dry. A palette knife can be used to scrape out highlights or branches while the paper remains damp. He can also use a razor blade to pull out highlights when the paper is completely dry. He varies his hard and soft edges between the wet and dry stages.

The **Third Tier** is when the details are added. He applies dry brush details at the end. Al had us do an exercise using two circles. The two circles are merely shapes without any form to them. He began with an underwash, maintaining it tonal at 30% so that it would be transparent. The light shone through the paper as the form was being created.



We did several exercises to help try out these skills. We painted a sheep, a cow, swans, circle shapes into forms and trees. When mixing color, he used Yellow Ochre, Cobalt Blue and Alizarin Crimson to make both warm and cool grays. He likes this mixture of colors because they do not make greenish grays.

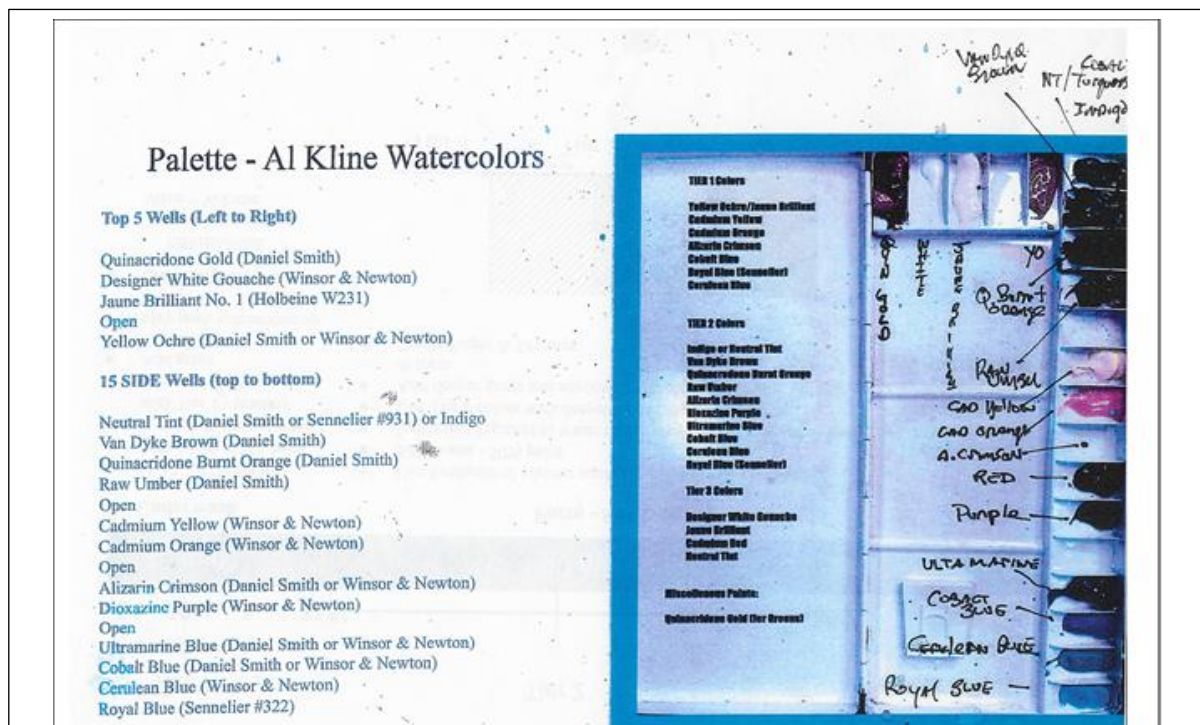




Some additional information that Al shared with us:

- When doing the background, he used three primaries: red, yellow, and blue.
 - He plans a roadmap of where to paint and how the paint needs to travel from point A to point B.
 - The pigment-to-water ratio is used to control the value.
 - Shadows were employed to define the form.
 - He emphasized that when applying washes, it is essential to connect them.
 - While texturing, he looked for magical occurrences.
 - He also incorporated color themes of blues and ochres in the foreground.
 - He often enjoys using cauliflower blooms that form when the paint is wet in the damp stage of drying.
 - Quinacridone Yellow and Cobalt Blue create a pleasing green.
 - Royal Blue by Sennelier, pre-mixed with White Gouache, was used for splattering to achieve an ethereal effect. A synthetic brush was utilized for the splattering.
 - Van Dyke Brown and Ultramarine Blue produced a dark hue or his darkest values.
 - He also mixed Alizarin Crimson with Van Dyke Brown and a Purple to create a dark shade.
 - He can generate texture by misting as he paints wet-on-wet.
- Al Kline has a **YouTube channel** with a step-by-step demo of painting a dog which illustrates his process of making washes with primary colors. www.youtube.com/channel/UCs5o6F1wdEo2RICf4ibqHaA
 - Al Klein has an **Amazon Page** where you can find some of his preferred supplies
[Al Kline Watercolors's Amazon Page](#) .
 - His **Plein Air Tripod** is a **SLIK** brand that can be found at

Amazon.com : Slik U9000 Tripod with 3-Way Fluid-Effect Head and Built-In Bubble Level,Silver : Best Tripod : Electronics



Al's favorites COLORS*

Winsor Newton White Gouache Neutral Tint Cadmium Red (light) or Alizarin Crimson Yellow Ochre
Cadmium Yellow Gold Ochre
Quinacridone Gold

MUST HAVE COLORS FOR WORKSHOP:

Cobalt Blue Ultramarine Blue Yellow Ochre
Quinacridone Gold Van Dyke Brown Quinacridone Burnt Orange
Indigo

Primarily uses Daniel Smith TUBED watercolor paint and a mix of Winsor Newton and other professional grade tubed watercolor paints.

Miscellaneous Items

Spray bottles (large droplet) and/or spray atomizer
Paper towel roll or Towel
A water container
Langnickel K-4 Palette Knife (or any palette knife will do)
Matte Board to mount your watercolor paper with tape.

Preferred Pencil/Pens

2B Pencil or Mechanical Pencil
.05 and .07 Fine Tip Mechanical lead Pencil
Any watercolor, acid free pen (Such as Pigma Graphic or Pentelics) No SHARPIES Small kneaded eraser

Preferred Watercolor Paper

SketchBook (Hand-Book Journal - 90 lb watercolor paper)*
Saunders Waterford or Arches 140lb (300gm) rough, block or free paper sheets (Quarter to half sheets). You can also use Hahnemuhle 140lb rough and/or Arches 140lb rough (block) 16x12 sizes
*Any sketchbook of choice will be acceptable

Preferred Brushes

Large Mop SQUIRREL HAIR brush
3-set DEGADO BRUSHES (See amazon store)
Synthetic Rosemary Brushes or round brushes sizes # 12 or 14
Small detailing brushes (I use #6 or #8 and smaller escoda detailing brushes)
Cheap square brush (1 inch)

Palettes

Small metal or ceramic palette. I prefer the Holbein.

Paints (Tubes only)

Daniel Smith
Cotman
Winsor Newton
Lukas