THE BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO ROCK PAINTING:

PAINTING FUNDAMENTALS & TECHNIQUES

HERE'S WHAT'S INSIDE!
- Learn Basic Painting Fundamentals
- Painting Techniques Every Artist Should Know
- Easy Blending Techniques
PAINTING FUNDAMENTALS

Have you ever heard of blocking in or double-loading?

Don’t worry, this beginner’s guide of painting fundamentals and techniques is for you. If you’ve never painted before and you decide it’s time to give it a try but you don’t know where to start. Well, that’s going to change today. We are going to go over some very important information that every beginner should know when learning about painting techniques.

Let’s get started!
EASY TRACING TECHNIQUE

Freehand painting can be intimidating for beginners.

One way to transfer your design to a rock is by tracing. You can do this by using a pencil and graphite transfer paper. Simply find a design that you desire to paint on a rock and trace the image on the tracing paper or print out a design. Place the transfer paper, graphite side down onto the rock. Then place the image on top of the graphite transfer paper. Use a pencil to trace the outline of the design. Make sure to apply enough pressure when tracing out the design to get the tracing line visible on the rock.

EASY TRACING METHOD ON ROCKS FOR BEGINNERS

To create this look, I used a tracing method that can be used for tracing image and words as well. Use tracing graphite paper and pencil to trace this anchor on your painted rock.

1. Simply find a design that you desire to paint on a rock.
2. Place the transfer paper, graphite side down onto the rock.
3. Then place the image on top of the transfer paper and trace the outline using a pencil. Make sure to apply enough pressure to make lines visible.
4. Remove paper and paint in your traced image.

www.RockPaintingGuide.com
WHAT IS BLOCKING IN?

Blocking in is a common technique that usually comes after the sketch. You probably already do this, but now you know there’s a name for it! It is where the painting is started by colors being placed in flat shapes. This is done while the paints are still wet and, in most cases, you can’t mess anything up as nothing has any details yet.

It also gives you the chance to change things as you see fit. With the shapes laid out, you can look at it as a paint by shape, each one is the color that you want to lay down for the end picture. Once you are content with the blocking all you have to do is let it dry before moving on to the next layer. Which happens to be our next technique.
LAYERING TECHNIQUE:

Our journey of rock painting fundamentals continues with layering. Previously we touched on blocking in. If you started with that technique then you would continue on with the layering by adding more colors and in more defined details. At this point, your design is starting to take shape. Acrylics are good for this because they dry fast which is why some oil painters use acrylics to do their blocking before moving forward. If you choose not to do the block method and just want to paint the design directly, just remember that you can make your colors have more depth by painting in layers.
BRUSH STROKES 101:

1. Round Brush - It is rounded with a pointed tip, good for detailing, outlining your work, great for painting in small areas on your rock, and create thick to thin lines depending on the pressure you use.

2. Flat Brush - This brush has a square end which allows the paint to be spread quickly and evenly, painting in large areas, can use the edge for thick lines, and straight edges.

3. Bright Brush - This one is more curved on the side becoming flat toward the top, it is shorter than its cousin the flat brush and also tends to be a stiff bristled brush. It is good for both thin and thick paints, and for more short controlled strokes.

4. Fan Brush – This brush is hair that fans out which are good for blending and feathering making trees and clouds.

5. Filbert - These are flat brushes with a more domed shape on the end, they are good for up close detail work and blending edges.

6. Angled Brush - These are versatile brushes have a flat angular tip that can be used for coverage as well as detailed work, they’re good for doing corners and have better angles than other brushes as well as being able to get to small places with the tip.

7. Detail Brush – This can also be called a fine liner brush. It’s a smaller version of the round brush. Good for detail work when painting on rocks, creates fine lines, and it also used in Mandala dot art as well.
Brush Styles and Strokes

1. Shader
2. Bristle Round
3. Stencil
4. Natural Round
5. Natural Flat
6. Detail
7. Natural Mop
8. Angular
9. Filbert
10. Liner
11. Comb
12. Takion Fan
13. Takion Round
14. Wash

Infographic by Favecrafts.com
PAINTING TECHNIQUES

For instance, if you want to do stippling you need would a flat brush. Dip it in the paint and quickly press the tips against the rock, pulling back and repeating as many times as needed. This creates a beautiful effect using solo colors or several colors. I use this technique when I am wanting to make the leaves for trees. I usually will not rinse out the brush when I do this as I want the colors to blend into each other and I also like the texture.

DRY BRUSHING
When using the dry brush technique, it means to paint with a brush that has not be dipped in water. The strokes are applied to rocks or other substrates and the results are a more-scratchy less smooth or blended-look like wet brush-stroke, without water to dilute the painting and soften the edges of the brush strokes. When changing to a different color that you don’t want the old color blended into you need to rinse the brush and squeeze all remaining water from it. This technique brings texture and dimension to your painted rock.

WET ON WET TECHNIQUE
What does wet on wet term mean?
Well, for example, would be let’s say that you were to paint the background of your picture then while it is still wet you begin to paint the foreground, trees or something else in the picture while the paint is still wet. Using this technique makes it easy to blend paints together. overall. it’s a simple method to use.

WASHING
A wash can be achieved by diluting acrylic paint with water to create a translucent look, such as a watercolor look.
**STIPPLING**
Stippling is applied by using a flat brush to make small dots. For example, you would use this to make trees. This is often used to blend colors together.

**SPONGE/DABBING**
This technique can be used to blend colors together with a stiff bristle brush, sponge, or a foam pouncer brush. This can be achieved by using a quick dabbing motion with light pressure. Like stippling, this can create depth and achieve color gradients for backgrounds.

**FLICKING OR SPLATTERING**
Use a flat wet paintbrush to flick paint onto your rock. I like to use my other hand to tap the brush against to get a good spray of paint across my rock or other surfaces. This is a fun way to add that extra “pop” of color to your painting.

**DETAILING**
It’s all the about details or in this case, it’s usually the final step when doing the layering process. Using a fine detail brush to apply the final touches to your painting.

**ACRYLIC POURING**
This technique is by far the most fun way to create abstract art. There are so many different ways to do acrylic pouring. A popular method is called the dirty pour. Simply, pour prepared paint colors in layers inside a cup and then pour over the rocks.

**ALCOHOL INKS**
Using alcohol inks on rocks is a fun way to paint rocks and see how it reacts with other colors. Alcohol inks are permanent, dye-based vibrant pigments that are fast-drying and perfect medium for beginners.
MANDALA DOT ART
Mandala dot art is a complex geometric circular form made by lines or in this case dots. You can use a dotting tool or a detail brush to accomplish this technique.

HERE’S A STEP-BY-STEP YOUTUBE VIDEO ON HOW TO DO ACRYLIC POURING ON ROCKS.
https://youtu.be/UhKDc-X41Vo

HERE’S A VIDEO TUTORIAL BY JENNIFER FUNNELL DEMONSTRATING PAINTING TECHNIQUES
https://youtu.be/-7SGxMf6GOA
Ombrè Blending Techniques

Another technique to learn when working with acrylics is blending. This will take some practice when working with this painting technique, because of how fast it can dry and that is the trouble with thinner paint is the drying speed but if using thicker paints, it can be done a lot easier. You can lay one color down then pick up another and lay it with before moving the brush across or as I do it. I tend to pick up more than one color on a brush. I recommend using a flat brush for this process.

Double-loading or even Triple-loading a brush for effective blending to create a gradient look on your painting. What you want to do for double-loading is take a small amount of the two colors. Then you dip each corner of the brush into the paint then spread. Repeat this process with the other side and you will have a beautifully blended line.

How to Create an Ombrè Look on Rocks

To create this look, I used a method similar to triple-loading. This can easily be made by using three 1-inch foam brushes.

1. I started coating the rock with the dark blue in a swiping motion in one direction.
2. While the paint was still wet, using the same method in step 1 repeat this process with lighter blue paint. Start swiping just below the dark blue to blend colors.
3. Repeat step 2 with the pale blue paint.
SOFT GRADIENT LOOK TECHNIQUE
Try using a latex makeup sponge to create a soft gradient look. Add the paints on the sponge and then dab in a straight line across the midline or wherever you want to ombré effect to start. Let it dry for a few minutes and apply a second coat. Again, let it dry and using a clean sponge this time, with the top color paint at the line. Begin dabbing the top area to cover the rest of the rock and blending to the line. Adding more coats if needed for complete coverage.
HERE'S A VIDEO TUTORIAL BY KAYLA ESCOBAR DEMONSTRATING HOW TO PAINT AN OMBRÈ EFFECT ON ROCKS:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XF2cb8MTKk0

These are just a few acrylic painting techniques that you can use to apply to rocks. There is always time to hone your skills and if you work at it long and hard enough, you may even develop your own techniques. It's all about what works best for you. There is no wrong way to create your own masterpieces. Remember to relax and most of all, have fun.

WANT MORE?

IN THE NEXT GUIDE...
You'll learn all about Color Theory and How to Mix Colors with Confidence.

Hopefully, you enjoyed reading this guide and is excited to start your rock painting journey!

HERE'S WHAT TO DO NEXT
Send me a message to rockpaintingguide@gmail.com to let me know what you think of this guide.

Also, follow me on Instagram @rockpaintingguide and join our Facebook Group where I share helpful rock painting tips & more!