



BLANCA ÁLVAREZ  
watercolors

## Flowers II Course

### Exercise IV: Vase with flowers

**5**  
Stages

# Materials

## Paper:

Saunders Waterford, cold press, 300 g. Extra White.

## Dimensions:

in my case, 19x28 cm.

## Colors:

Gamboge  
yellow (Mijello)

Quinacridone  
yellow (Mijello)

Quinacridone  
magenta  
(Mijello)

Permanent red  
(Mijello)

Perylene violet  
(W&N)

Red violet  
(Mijello)

Bright  
violet  
(Mijello)

Burnt sienna  
W564 (Mijello)

Sepia  
(Rembrandt)

Sap  
green  
(Mijello)

Green  
(White Nights)

Cobalt  
Blue  
(Rembrandt)

Royal  
Blue  
(Sennelier)



These are the colors I use, but it's only a guiding list, and it's not necessary to have the same ones. You can use similar colors from your own palette.

## Exercise 4: Vase with flowers

We've come to the end of this second edition of the flowers course. As a last exercise, we'll paint this floral arrangement.

They're flowers from my small garden: there's buttercups, windflowers, sweet peas and freesias. I placed the bouquet in a simple vase and waited for the moment in which the light in my studio is prettiest, at sunset.

When you've finished with the course, I invite you to make your own compositions, with different light settings, adding or removing elements, moving the flowers and the bouquet until you find a harmonious composition. Take many pictures so you have plenty of material from which to pick.

Let's begin!





# Fitting the drawing

As we've already talked about, we can proceed in two ways: either we can make a pencil drawing before painting, more or less detailed; or we could try and paint directly, without a drawing, simply observing the shapes in the reference image. Because this is a more complex exercise, with more elements, I want to show you how I would make the drawing for this scene.

As to composition, I've moved the ensemble slightly to the left, so it wouldn't be centered and the composition would be dynamic.

To accentuate the flowers and not the background, I've zoomed the image, even to the point I've cut off the lower part of the vase.



## First wash

Once the drawing is done, and the paper is wetted on both sides (and you've waited for it to dry a little bit), we can start painting with the lightest tones. This is quite an easy stage.

In this stage, as I was saying, we work on the lightest tones of the flowers and the vase, not minding if the paint goes over the pencil lines. I've used magenta with a little orange for the buttercup, and violets for the rest.

In the vase, I've put some shadows with sienna and cobalt. And sap green with yellow for the stems.



## Intermediate tones

We start working on the intermediate tones, adding at this point more definition and detail to each flower.

In this stage we'll define every petal, separating one from the other through observing which one is lighter and which one is darker in tone, and thus working in negative. We paint with more pigment and less water than in the previous stage, using the same colors, and with permanent red and perylene violet for the darker areas.

It's very important to respect the lightest areas of the previous stage; if we covered it all it wouldn't make sense to have done them in the first place.



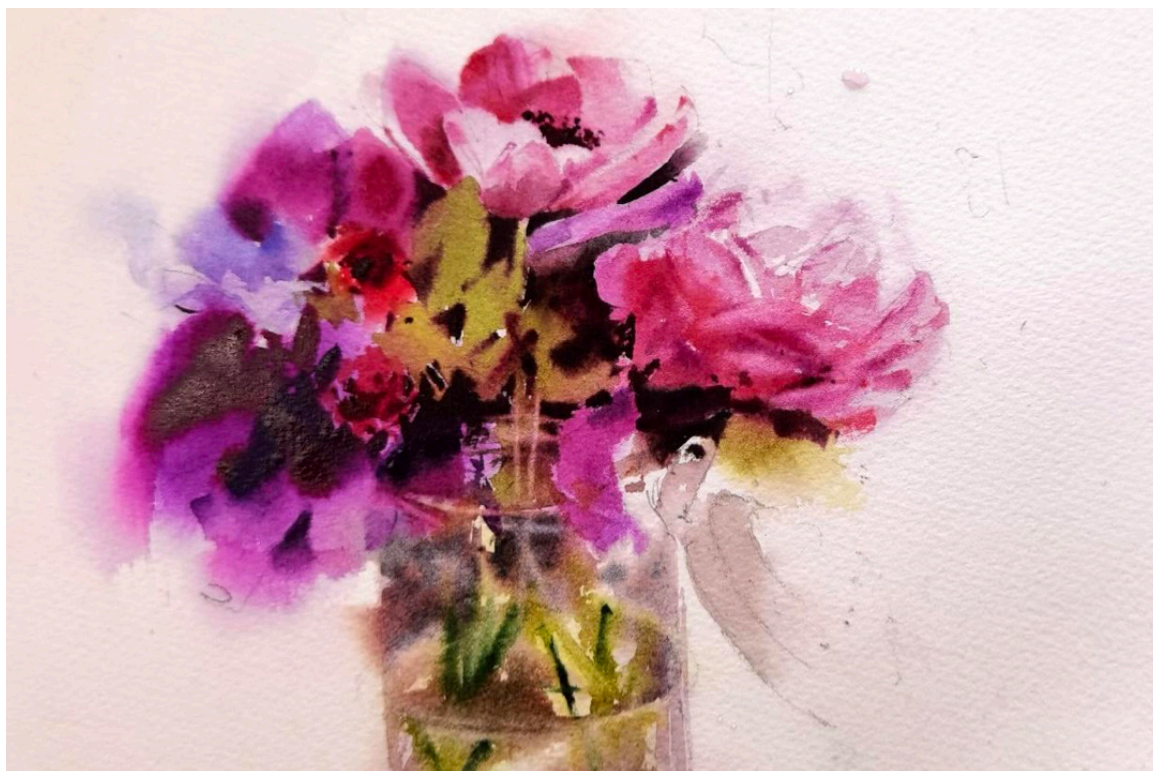


## Dark tones

Now we paint the darkest tones. With sepia and perylene violet we cut in negative the shapes of the flowers.

With sap green and burnt sienna we paint the leaves and stems.

We add more contrast and darkness to the vase, since what's behind it is dark as well, and we can see through it. But keeping the light where it shines and working in wet.



## The background

Now, we paint the background, adding more shadows on the right side, to counter-balance the weight of the vase.

I've used violets and royal blue with a little quinacridone magenta.

