



Flowers II Course

Exercise III: Orquídea Cymbidium

5
Stages

Materiales utilizados

Paper:

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

Dimensions:

in my case, 19x28 cm.

Colors:

Gamboge
yellow
(Mijello)

Quinacridone
yellow
(Mijello)

Orange
yellow
(Mijello)

Permanent
red
(Mijello)

Perylene
violet
(W&N)

Burnt
sienna W564
(Mijello)

Sepia
(Rembrandt)

Sap
green
(Mijello)

Green
(White Nights)

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 3: Cymbidium orchid

For our third exercise of the new flowers course, we'll paint this orchid, from a photograph I took when I was visiting the amazingly beautiful Estepona orchidarium. As you can see, it's not the typical phalaenopsis that we see everywhere. This species is called cymbidium.

Cymbidium was the first orchid to be sold as an indoor plant. It's original from the equatorial and tropical areas of southeast Asia and Australis, and its name comes from the greek kumbos, which means hole, and refers to the shape at the base of the lip. There are more than 100 varieties and thousands of hybrids grouped under this denomination.

Let's begin!



Fitting the drawing

When I paint flowers, I usually do it without a previous drawing: I don't like the pencil lines marking my way. I don't look for exactitude or hyperrealism, I only mean to suggest and evoke, without caring too much about the exact size of the flower or other details. But this doesn't mean we shouldn't respect the rhythm and composition of a painting.

Now this is my way of working, and by no means it's the only one nor the best one; but it is the fruit of many years of work that allow me to plunge into painting without a previous drawing, because the composition is already clear in my mind.

But you can work with a previous drawing. Before, for a long time, I've had to make previous sketches in which I studied the focal point, the composition, tone, etc. So, if you're still a beginner, or if you don't yet feel confident enough to proceed like this, I recommend you make a drawing placing the main floral masses, and also a tonal sketch can be very helpful.

In summary, 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.

First wash

Once the drawing is done (if you decided to do it), and when you've already wetted the paper on both sides (and waited for it to dry a little bit), we can start painting the orchid. This is quite an easy stage. I place the main flower's petals with gamboge yellow for the warmer areas, and with lemon or quinacridone yellow (or whichever other similar yellow you have) for the cooler ones. With those same colors, we also give a wash to the background, to suggest some secondary of more distant flowers.

Here we are working on the lightest tones of the flower.



Intermediate tones

The main flower will be the most detailed one, so we have to work on it more. 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. For the red areas I've used perylene violet and permanent red. To add volume and darken some petals I've mixed my "palette dirty" that had red, yellow and sepia leftovers.

It's key to respect the lightest areas, leaving the yellow of the previous stage as a base.



The background

Before beginning with the background, we wet the paper with uneven brushstrokes. It's not necessary to soak the whole thing.

For the greens, I've used sap green with royal blue when I wanted not-so-brilliant colors, and green from White Nights for the darkest areas. We paint some dark stems and leave other in a lighter tone, by working in negative around them.



Final details

In this last stage, we observe if there's any areas which need to be darker to highlight some petal; also we add some spot of color, some shadow or other details that may be missing from the main flower.

We also give some volume to the lighter stem.

