



## What is Transparent Watercolor

What is the difference between transparent and opaque watercolors you ask? When working with watercolor, there are three types of watercolor paint; transparent, semi-opaque and opaque. Each type handles differently and can all be used in the same painting.

Transparent watercolors permit the white of the paper to shine through, giving the paint a vibrancy as the light bounces through the paint. Transparent colors also give you the ability to change the color each time you add another color over the original color. New colors are created but still keep that vibrancy of the light reflecting off the white paper and through the other hues before it's captured by your eyes.

A good way to test for transparency is draw a line on a piece of watercolor paper with a waterproof black marker. Paint a few brushstrokes of each of the colors you are testing across the line and allow them to dry. If the ink line is clearly visible through the paint, it is a transparent paint. If the line is somewhat obscured then the paint is semi-opaque and if the line is clearly diminished then the color is obviously opaque.

Semi-opaque watercolors are similar to the transparent colors except they do not allow quite as much of the underpainting or white paper to show through the paint. It is possible to layer several colors but you will find they are not as luminous as the transparent colors, depending on the ratio of water to paint used. They are also less likely to create new colors when they are layered.

Opaque watercolors are more condensed and often are mixed with white paint when created. This blocks the light from passing through the paint and simply reflects it off the surface of the paint, preventing the luminosity you find in transparent paintings.

While our show is a "Transparent Watercolor Show", your painting will not be turned away if you used semi-opaque or opaque watercolors. They all have their merits and produce beautiful work. This is our members show and we hope everyone takes the opportunity to participate.