

BEYOND WATERCOLOUR

By mixing your pigment with another carrier medium, you can create various other kinds of paint. Different materials will produce different types of paint, from opaque gouache to rich tempera. Art continues to develop, so you can likewise grow and experiment – as I show here with my creation, veglair.

Gouache

Gouache (or poster paint) is watercolour with added chalk or filler to give it body and opacity. It is completely intermixable with watercolours.

In a pestle and mortar, place one part of your chosen ready prepared foraged pigment, with anything up to one part powdered chalk, whiting or ground washed eggshells, and one part of your homemade watercolour medium. Mix it well and test a little of the paint on a piece of paper to see how it brushes out. We are looking for an opaque, fluid paint that covers well and doesn't streak. Add more water or pigment to adjust the flow or to lessen the gloss. When the paint test is dry, rub it a little and add more medium to your recipe if you find it too powdery.

Each pigment you use might need a different amount of chalk or binder to get the feel and coverage just right. Gouache is stored moist and ready to use. When you have a gouache mixed just right, make your final notes, then add a drop or two of antifungal essential oil to the mix, stir it in, and decant into a spotless little jar and label it well. If you are storing it in a refrigerated or in a cool place, you won't need the essential oil.

You will need

- / Teaspoon
- / Sieve
- / Bowl
- / Smooth surface
- / Palette knife
- / Prepared pigment
- / Finely-ground foraged chalk
- / Whiting (refined calcium carbonate powder)
- / Small clean jars with lids in which to store the paint
- / Watercolour medium
- / Paintbrush and paper



1 Sieve some smashed chalk, using the back of a teaspoon to encourage it through the mesh.



2 On a smooth surface, use a palette knife to combine one part refined pigment with one part sieved chalk.



3 Add the same volume of watercolour medium as the powdered pigment and whiting mixture. To make your gouache paint opaque, you may find you need to add more filler. Add chalk or whiting gradually until it is the required consistency.



4 This is now ready to be used, usually slightly thicker than with watercolour paint.

How to use gouache

Gouache is an excellent all-round paint with good covering power, and can even take a little layering and overpainting, if used quite dry. As such it is a good replacement for acrylic, especially for children, where they are just painting on paper and won't be reworking it later.

Gouache prepared as described here should store indefinitely in a cool dark place. If it dries out, just add a little water and mix well to reinvigorate it. Gouache is ideal for use on heavier card and paper to make cards and craft items.



VIEW TOWARDS MULL SKETCH

Vivianite and chalk gouache with coal details on a malachite watercolour wash ground.