

Tip #46

Watercolor Painting -- with a palette knife!

You may not think it's possible to use such a liquid medium with a palette knife, but it is! It can be very satisfying, giving you effects that aren't possible any other way.

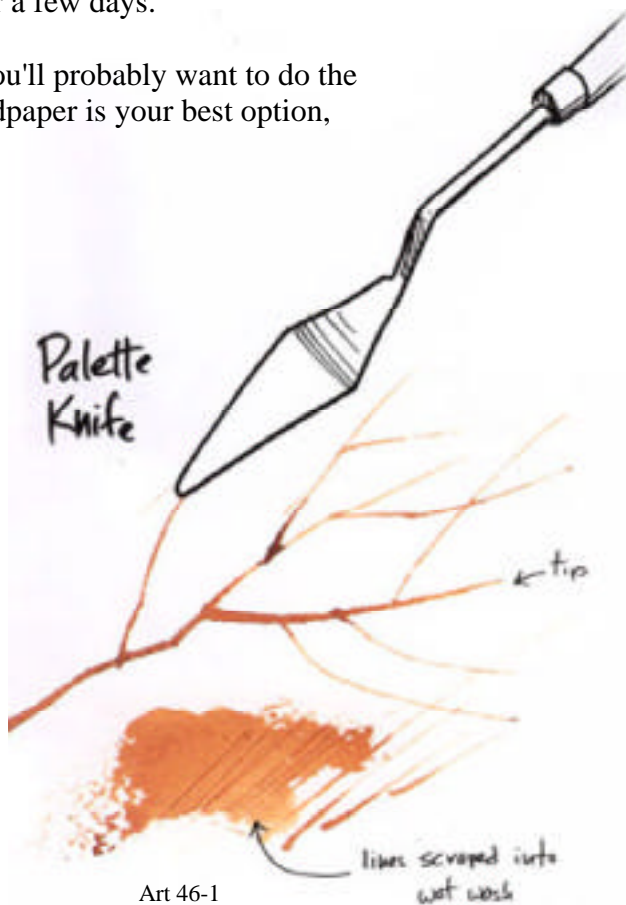
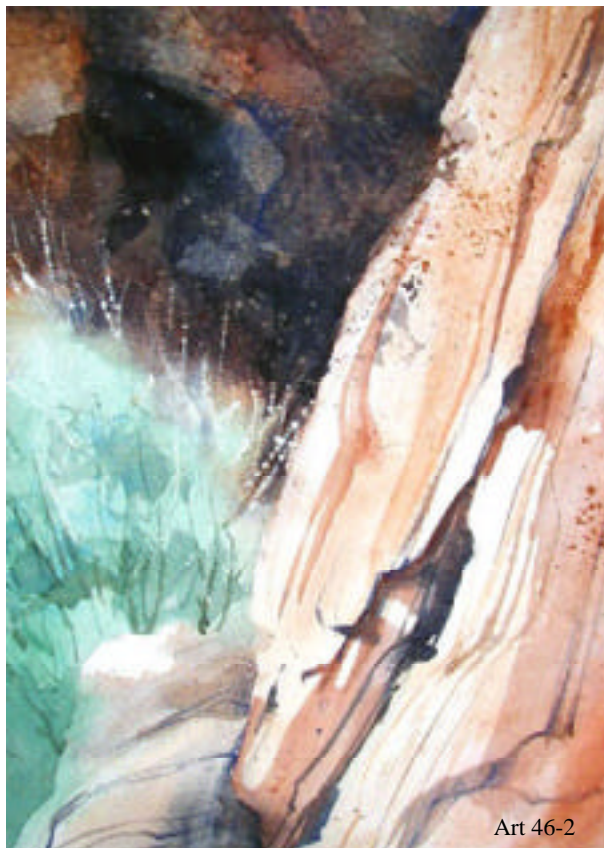
First, though, you need to prepare the knife-new ones come with a shellac or varnish that will have to be removed before the metal will hold the paint. Sand it off with a very fine sandpaper, or even burn it off over a candle or a gas flame (be careful not to burn yourself-and you may want to do this outdoors in case of fumes.) To make extra sure, sometimes I plunge the blade into a lemon and leave it for a few days.

If you're using an old palette knife that's been used with oils, you'll probably want to do the same drill. If you've found an inexpensive plastic one, fine sandpaper is your best option, but the metal ones really work best.

Art 46-1

I prefer ones that are almost-but-not-quite pointed-a slightly rounded end like the one shown seems to work fine.

Notice the strokes made here-mix a rich puddle of paint, and dip your palette knife into it. Drag it across the paper at a low angle and you'll get a nicely tapering line as shown! Scratch with the edge into a wet wash and you'll get fine, sharp lines.



Art 46-2

I used the palette knife to get some of the lines in the foliage beside the rock, and some of the linear effects in the rock itself.

Art 46-3

The palette knife worked great for the fine lines of the twigs, here!

Art 46-4

You can even apply liquid mask with your palette knife, allow it to dry, paint over it and then remove it, as I did here. (Some of the background limbs are also palette work.)



Don't feel as if you have to just use this tool for linear work, though - you can use the side of the blade or the body of it for scraping, scratching and even direct scumbling - it's a versatile tool to add to your kit, even if watercolor is your medium!



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