

## Penguins using Water Colour Washes

The Lunch Queue  
27cms x 35cms



### Introduction

I received my first proper wooden paint box when I was 16, it contained 16 Winsor and Newton half pan Paints and I loved using them. I have treasured that wooden box which has been all over the world with me, I continue to use the same box today and still use Winsor & Newton paints. I now choose to use the Artists Full Pans and although over the years I have experimented with tube paint I prefer the pans, and find the intensity of pigment and lack of binder and fillers suits my style of painting best.

I like the full pans as opposed to half pans as I tend to use the side of my brush when lifting the paint from the pan to mix it, rather than poking about with the point of my brush, which would wear it out much faster.

The full pans are much more economical to use than the half pans too.

I like to use a limited palette for most of my paintings, as I find this leads to a more luminous result and avoids muddy colour mixes.

I therefore recommend that artists buy fewer, better quality paints rather than lots of cheaper ones. In my book *How to paint Water Colour Washes* I explain which colours I choose to use and why I use them. I also explain which colours work well together and how I use the qualities of the pigments such as flocculating and granulating pigments to create special effects in my work.

The whole idea of this book is to encourage you to use washes of watercolour, letting the colours merge and run together in controlled areas. This involves letting the washes dry before adding more colours on top.

I particularly enjoy subjects, which have strong tonal contrasts as well as interesting shapes; these have always fascinated me and have led to me painting the subjects I choose to paint today.

Living in Bourton-on-the-Water means that I can pop down to Birdland to sketch the Birds any time I want to. Whenever there is a bright sunny day and I have some spare time I can just go along with my sketchpad or paints. It needn't take very long and the simplest of subjects can inspire me, so I am going to share with you this painting of these wonderful Penguins.

The penguins often stand on this narrow ledge above the water; the light bounces off the waters surface creating the most wonderful reflections on the penguins white fronts. In the sunshine the light then dances on the wall behind them warming their shadows.

It's quite a challenge, but watercolour is a fabulous medium for this type of subject.

## Step 1

Fig 1



Working on Saunders Waterford not surface 140 lb watercolour paper, I begin with a simple line drawing then put some masking tape around the edge of my intended picture.

I then choose my colours. I try these out on a test sheet first, mixing them to ensure I can mix a dark enough colour.

Once I have selected my colours I rarely add more during the painting process.

Fig 2



Cadmium Yellow Deep  
Burnt Sienna  
Winsor Blue (green shade)  
Cobalt Turquoise Light

## Step 2

I wet the paper thoroughly using The Golden Leaf brush, pushing the water into the paper and working side to side and up and down to ensure that the paper is thoroughly wet. (but not pooling)

Changing to my Classic Round (equivalent to a number 12 squirrel) I drop onto the surface, dilute Cadmium Yellow Deep and Winsor Blue (green shade) letting the colours merge together forming patches of colour. Whilst this is still wet I use the Half Rigger brush to drop in very strong patches of Cadmium Yellow Deep onto the Penguins.

Fig 3



I then let this dry. This is our first wash done.

Using these transparent colours means that I can overlay washes, one on top of the other, deepening the tones but retaining the underlying colours.

### Step 3

Using the Golden Leaf brush, I wet everywhere I wish to darken. All of the light areas remain dry, as I don't intend to work on top of these again. Using my Classic brush I then drop in more colour watching as they move into the different areas, adding more pigment where I want darker colours. I let some of the colours run into the background, especially where I want to add darks later on, this ensures that I paint the background as well as the subject and avoid leaving the background as an afterthought. This is our second wash completed.

Fig 5



Fig 6



Detail - Dropping in darks.

Once I feel I have added enough darks and the painting is beginning to dry, I leave it to dry totally.

#### Step 4

Using dilute Winsor Blue (green shade) and my Classic brush, I boldly add all of the shadows. This colour needs to be dark enough to create the shadow in one layer but light enough to show the underlying colours. Winsor Blue (green shade) is a lovely transparent colour and perfect for this situation. I keep the shapes simple and am not tempted to fiddle!

Fig 7



#### Step 5

This is the most dramatic part of the painting process, adding the darkest areas. Still using my Classic brush I add the heads and dark sections of the wings using a mix of Winsor Blue (green shade) and Burnt Sienna.

Fig 8



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If you would like to see more of my paintings go to [www.fionapeart.com](http://www.fionapeart.com) and look in the Gallery.

If you would like to learn how to paint washes in this way, my book How to Paint Water Colour washes is available. There is also a DVD to accompany the book showing you three step-by-step paintings using these techniques.

I hope I have inspired you to have a go at painting watercolour in this way.  
Good luck with your painting

Fiona