

GLAZING LADYBIRD



• permanent green light, green gold, scarlet lake, neutral tint, permanent rose,

In this project, we will explore one of the most fundamental watercolour techniques: glazing. Glazing is a method of building depth in your painting by layering watercolours once each previous layer has dried, and provides a level of control with this wild and unpredictable medium.

The ladybird is a very pretty beetle that comes in a variety of patterns, but is most commonly recognized by its red body with black spots. It is great for glazing as its dome-shaped body requires a clear depiction of light and shadows to show its volume. For this exercise, we will paint a ladybird from a 45-degree angle, so you can see the top and side facing you.

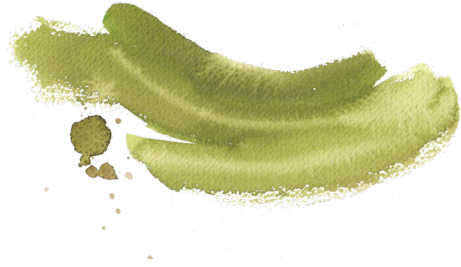




1. To depict a ladybird from a 45-degree angle, sketch a dome shape with a slightly curving line at the base. Place the central line of the body closer to the top; this will create the illusion that one body half is more visible than the other, generating a three-dimensional effect. Transfer this sketch onto watercolour paper.



2. On your palette, mix permanent green light paint with green gold in about equal proportion. Load your mop brush with the mixture and paint a few curvy, abstract strokes under your drawing. Add a few paint splashes (see page 24). Rinse your brush and load it with clean water. With the tip of your clean brush, draw a few curvy lines on top of the green shape – the water will push the pigment away and create a vein.



3. Mix a very watery scarlet lake paint and apply it to the wing cases. Leave the highest point of the body white, to indicate the highlight. Whilst the paint is still wet, draw a curvy line along the bottom of the wing cases. The line can touch the bottom of the wings slightly but shouldn't merge completely. Next, mix a very watery neutral tint for the chest and head. Cover each with a layer of paint but leave white space between each body part to define the structure. Leave this layer to dry completely.



4. Once dry, mix a slightly less watery scarlet lake paint than previously. Keep the colour fairly light as you will get a darker colour simply by layering on top of the dry paint. Add more strokes on the wings but leave out the area around the highlight. You are starting to build the volume of the body. Next, mix a slightly darker shade of the previous neutral tint. Apply another coat to the dark body parts whilst still leaving some lighter bits. With swift brushstrokes, add three legs. Leave this layer to dry completely.



5. Mix scarlet lake paint with permanent rose until you have a slightly darker shade of pink. Add another layer to the wings, concentrating the darker colour on the bottom part. Apply another coat of neutral tint to the chest, head, eyes, antennae and legs. When layering, it is important to avoid completely covering the previous layer. Instead, focus on building up darker areas where shadows would naturally fall to add depth and dimension to the painting. Leave this layer to dry completely.



6. Now add some details. Load your brush with a neutral tint and paint dots over your ladybird's back. With just the tip of your brush, paint a line

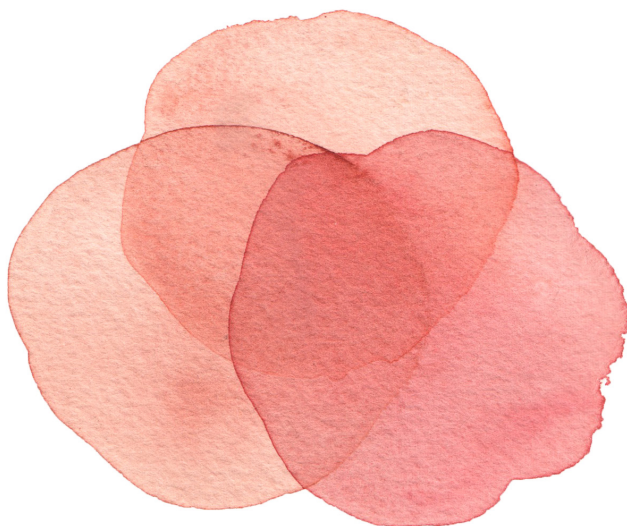
that separates the two wing cases and add other small details to the head. Add a few paint splashes – they can really improve the composition.





Paint wild

Glazing is a very useful technique that can be applied to any painting. Practise using it to create different animals – the key is to apply more coats where darker shades are needed, and leave gaps to create white highlights. Experiment with layering different colours on top of each other, creating new colours where they overlap.



Extract from *Wild Watercolour* by Inga Buividavice. Published by Leaping Hare Press, £14.99



Leaping Hare Press