

A flight of fancy

Line and wash masterclass with Liz Chaderton – 23 April 2024

In this two hour online masterclass we will paint a wonderful macaw using line and wash and in the process explore capturing movement and flight using hard and soft edges, expressive linework and glowing colours.



We will explore mark making and capturing the essence of our subject. The lessons we learn can be applied to many subjects, not just birds in flight.

Line and wash is where drawing and painting meet, each bringing something to the painting. The line often adds definition and contour, while the washes add character and emotion. We will start with the line work and then add washes of watercolour to bring life to our piece.

First we will think about the composition and how cropping or changing our reference can help us tell a story. We will explore pen drawing styles, such as continuous line or broken line. We will also explore colour mixing and how the underlying bias of the primary impacts whether the secondary colour is vibrant or muted. We will work out when to stop and when to add more, along with what role both the line and the wash play.

I'm sure we will explore lots more in our two hours together!

The reference

When looking for reference images, it is highly unlikely you will find the perfect one. Be ready to use elements of multiple images. I loved the colours and wings of the first (note this is AI generated) and the tail of the second. Both come from www.pixabay.com and are royalty free. Please print /download them in high resolution before the class. Don't sketch it out beforehand unless you want to, as I will share some drawing and composition tips in the class.



<https://pixabay.com/illustrations/ai-generated-scarlet-macaw-wings-8013048/>

<https://pixabay.com/photos/bird-animal-macaw-cutout-7086611/>

Ask yourself:

- What do you like about the image (s)?
- What do you dislike?
- What emotion do you want your painting to communicate?
- What is the crucial thing you want to capture?

Materials

Half sheet watercolour paper (15x22 ins). If you do not have a piece this size, use the largest you have. It is far easier to be expressive on a larger piece of paper than a small one. I am using Hahnemuhle Sugar Cane paper as an experiment. It seems rather appropriate for our exotic subject (<https://artsupplies.hooluh.co.uk/hahnemuhle-sugar-cane-watercolour>) Your paper should be 140lb / 300gsm NOT (cold press) of your favourite brand.

Colours (tubes if possible because of the size we are working, but pans are fine): Cadmium red, alizarin, azo yellow, cadmium yellow, French Ultramarine, Prussian blue. You are going to use a warm and a cool version of the primaries, so you might choose Lemon Yellow as your cool yellow and quinacridone gold as your warm yellow, rather than azo and cadmium. You might choose quinacridone red instead of alizarin or phthalo instead of Prussian. Please use what you have.

Brushes: round 8-10, large round 14-16, large filbert or dagger if you have one – lovely for the ends of feathers

Pen: It must be waterproof! Always check the compatibility of your pen and paper, as some apparently waterproof pens will run slightly on certain papers. Fineliner with pigment ink, 0.5 width. If you are going to use a small piece of paper, a smaller pen might be better. If you are using a larger piece, then go for a broader pen. If you have a fountain pen with waterproof ink, that would be great too.

Other: salt, misting bottle, kitchen towel, eraser, HB pencil, two water pots, mixing palette



The painting

We will start with the line work and then move on to the watercolour. If we have time we might go back to more line at the end. In this example I started with the watercolour, but given the drying constraints we will work the other way around in the class. Perhaps you could do some homework afterwards to try the other way around?

