



Main Painting Techniques Artists Use and Why

KS2 ART & DESIGN

Ages 9-12 ⌚ 3 min read

What are Painting Techniques?

A **painting technique** is the way an artist uses paint and brushes to create their artwork. Just like there are different ways to cook an egg—frying, boiling, or scrambling—there are lots of different ways to paint. Each technique creates a different look and feel, and artists choose them to match what they want their painting to show.

Think of it like cooking: you can make pasta creamy, oily, or with a thin sauce. Each way tastes and looks different, but it's still pasta!

Brushwork and Strokes

One of the most basic techniques is how artists use their **brush**. Some artists make long, flowing strokes that you can clearly see. Others use short, small dabs of paint called **stippling**. **Thick strokes** (called **impasto**) make paint look almost 3D, while **thin, smooth strokes** create a flat, polished finish. The way an artist moves their brush completely changes how the painting looks and feels.

Layering and Glazing

Layering means painting one colour on top of another once the first layer is dry. This builds up depth and creates interesting mixed colours where layers overlap. **Glazing** is a special type of layering where artists paint a thin, see-through layer of paint over a dried layer underneath. This makes colours appear softer and more blended together, like looking through coloured glass.

Think of it like wearing coloured cellophane sheets on top of each other—each sheet changes how you see the colours underneath.

Wet-on-Wet and Dry-on-Wet

Wet-on-wet painting means applying wet paint onto already-wet paint. The colours blend and blur together, creating soft edges and dreamy effects. **Dry-on-wet** is when you add dry paint (or slightly wet paint) to a wet background, which creates interesting patterns and textures as the paints push against each other.

Splattering and Texture

Some artists create texture and energy by **splattering** or **flicking** paint across the canvas. Others use special tools like **palette knives**, sponges, or even their fingers instead of brushes. These techniques are perfect for showing movement, rain, or rough surfaces like tree bark or stone.

Think of it like making art with your food—you can drizzle chocolate sauce, sprinkle sprinkles, or dab cream on a cake to make it interesting!

Why Technique Matters

Choosing the right **painting technique** helps artists tell their story. A fast, energetic painting might use bold splashes, while a detailed, peaceful landscape might use careful, thin layers. Learning different techniques gives artists superpowers to create exactly what they imagine.