

Crafters' Corner - Articles & Tips

How Do I...Paint Grapes?

by Bill Thompson



Have you ever wanted to decorate a piece of greenware, bisque, or china with bunches of plump, juicy grapes, but didn't quite know how to go about it or were put off by the painting of so many round shapes? It is actually quite easy to portray fruit of the vine with almost any type of color if you initially treat each bunch as a unit and add the individual grapes within it.

Try the method outlined here, then use your new-found knowledge and decorate a piece like the one pictured

here or one of your own choosing.

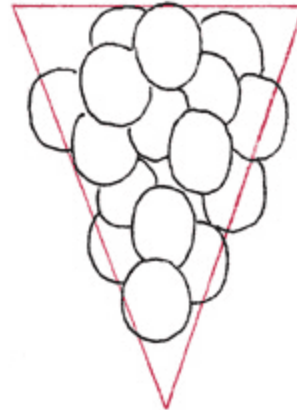
Step 1) Begin by drawing a pattern as shown in Figure 1:

Sketch a cone shape, large end up, to represent a bunch of grapes. This cone can be short and fat, long and slender, or somewhere in-between, depending on the size of the bunch of grapes you wish to paint.

Draw a small oval shape at the tip of the cone, one at the top, and another slightly off center at the midway point. Working outward from these shapes, add partial ovals of similar sizes within the cone shape. Finally, add a few grapes that go outside the cone shape to give the bunch a more natural look.

Transfer this pattern to the ware.

Figure 1



Step 2) Use a flat brush to paint the entire outlined shape with the "body color" of the grapes as in Figure 2. For green grapes use a mixture of yellow green and yellow brown colors. For red grapes mix a rusty tone from red and brown. Use a medium dark purple color for blue or purple grapes.

This colored shape is the base to which will be added the lighter and darker tones to shape the individual grapes.

Figure 2



Step 3) If you cannot see the outlines of the separate grapes through the applied color, reposition the pattern and trace them on again.

Figure 3



Add some white to the original color. Corner load a shader brush with this color and paint around the left side of each grape which will indicate that the light is coming from the upper left. Using less color, shade around the right sides of the grapes as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 4

Step 4) To complete the bunch of grapes, add the shadow color, the highlight, and the reflected light. (See Figure 4.)



Shadow color: Load the brush with a dark, grayed tone of the original color. For green grapes, use dark green, a touch of red, and a little black. For red grapes, mix dark red and a bit of dark green. For purple grapes, use dark purple, a little dark brown, and a touch of black.

Apply this shadow color in a crescent shape to the lower right side of each grape.

Highlight: Use a small brush to apply a "dab" of white at the upper left of only those grapes that would be in line with the light source. Leave the highlight as applied for green and red grapes as they have a smooth almost shiny surface. For purple or black grapes, which often have a "dusty" appearance, wipe off the brush, then use it to tap around and soften the edge of the white highlight.

Reflected light: Using a light tone of the body color, add a small crescent shape along the bottom right edge of each grape. Remember that no color can be brighter than the highlight, when mixing color for the reflected light.

Editor's Note: If you have painting questions that have been plaguing you or have some painting technique that has been giving you trouble, drop us a line. Questions will be answered through this column. Please direct them to:

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