



MAN IN THE MOON INFORMATION SHEET PAINTING WITH WATERCOLOUR MASKING TECHNIQUES

In order to create crisp and defined whites within a watercolour painting by allowing the white of the paper to show through masking techniques can be applied. Some artists make regular use of masking and others prefer reserving the white of the paper by hand. Masking is often used to create strong counterchange and graphic effects.

There are two basic methods of masking which are using masking tape or masking fluid. Masking tape is particularly useful for straight edges but can also be shaped by cutting. Masking fluid can be applied more accurately with a brush and can be used for complex areas of masking. Like many techniques in watercolour it is important to consider carefully how you want to use masking in a composition before you start a painting.

There are a few factors that you need to be aware off.

- Masking tape can damage your paper surface when removed, so remove carefully. (Low tack masking tape can be purchased to diminish this problem.)
- Masking tape and fluid should be removed as soon as your painting is dry as leaving these materials on the paper make them harder to remove.
- The edges and whites created by masking effects are very defined and can stand out from the rest of your painting work, so you need to get used to using the techniques and decide the effect you want to create from the outset.
- Masking fluid severely damages brushes and is very difficult to completely clean out of the hairs. I suggest using old or cheap brushes to apply it and never using your usual watercolour brushes.



This panoramic watercolour of Dinas Dinlle in North Wales made considerable use of masking fluid for the whites on the clouds, the highlights on the rocks and the roof of the outbuilding. The method was used to create strong whites and contrasts in the painting.

In looking at the edges of the white you notice edges that are more regular in effect than would have been achieved by simply reserving the whites with a brush. However using the masking fluid allowed me to plan quite a complex set of highlights in the painting during the early stages.

