

Hello my dearest watercolourists,

It was so, so wonderful to see your beautiful artworks this week and I so enjoy seeing your Facebook posts! Thank you for sharing the images! I had so much fun working with the wet on wet and wet on dry watercolour technique this Tuesday! I hope you did too. Also, I do love lavender so much! And hearing about the one you have in your garden made my heart happy!

As we will continue our artistic journey with a vase of flowers next week, I thought it was only right to share with you a wonderful botanical artist. She was called Marianne North and she was an English Victorian artist. She travelled and documented the flowers she encountered in wonderful images. I find it so inspiring and wonderful to be able to look back in the history of art and see a female artist travelling all around the world and dedicating her life to her passion. Marianne North travelled through Europe, America, Australia, New Zealand painting the flora. Did you know her work? You might have heard her name when visiting Kew Gardens maybe?

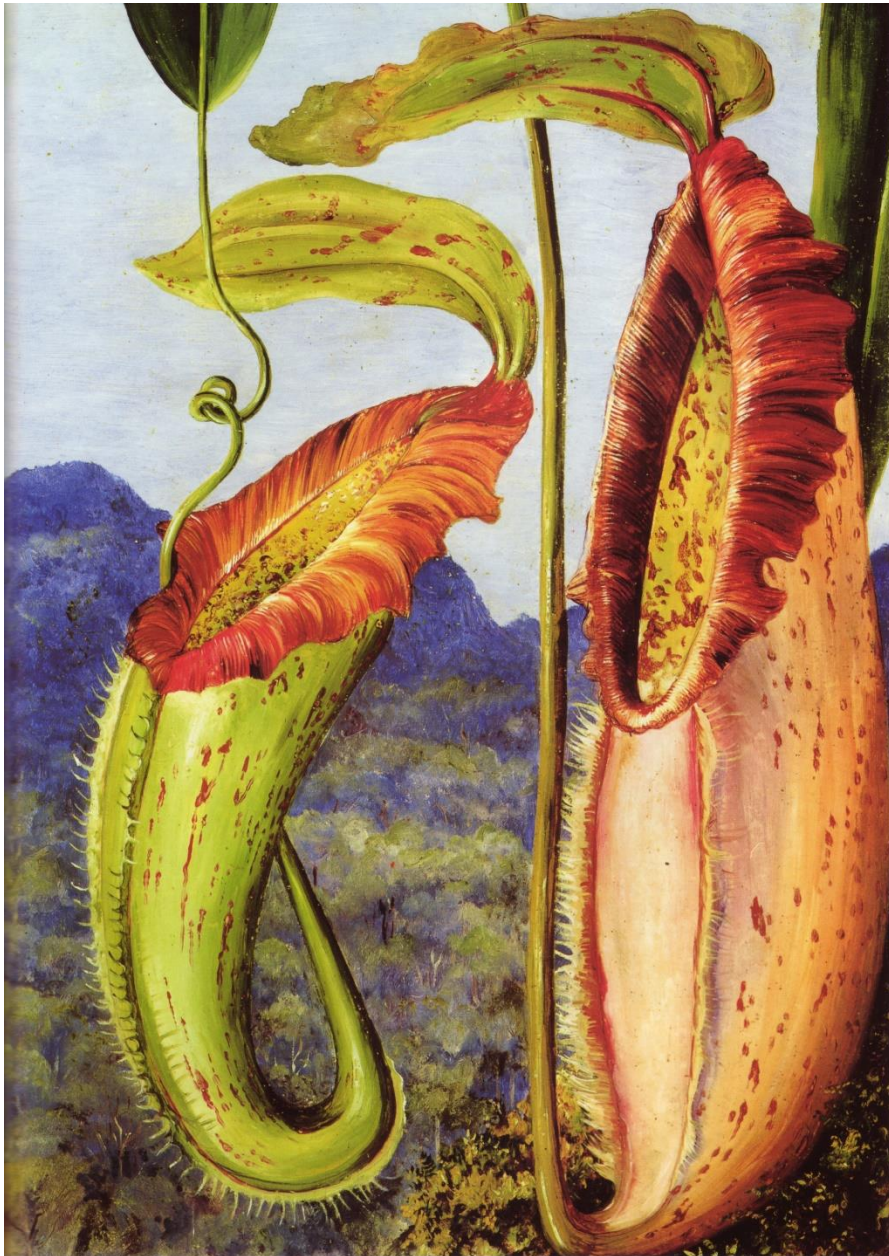
She works in oils and the thing I find inspiring about the wonderful images is the composition. Unlike traditional botanical illustration, which singularises the subject, her work is more creative and imaginative, presenting the plant in a coherent landscape and contextualising it in its exotic background. Marianne North intertwines Still Life paintings with biology in a colourful spectacle.

To see more, click here: <https://artuk.org/discover/stories/marianne-north-in-india-travels-of-a-pioneering-victorian-artist>

What do you think about her paintings? And what style of flower paintings do you prefer?

Do you like the painterly ones or the more scientific illustrations?

We can take inspiration from this and use it in our own art. If we want to highlight one flower in particular, we can bring that forwards, make it bigger compared to the rest of the elements in the picture and make sure it is central. We can also use stronger colours for this highlighted element, whilst the background can be muted (in watercolours we can do that by using watered down colours in the background).



Nepenthes northiana (c. 1876), Marianne North Gallery, Kew Gardens. The painting shows the pitcher plant's lower and an upper pitcher.



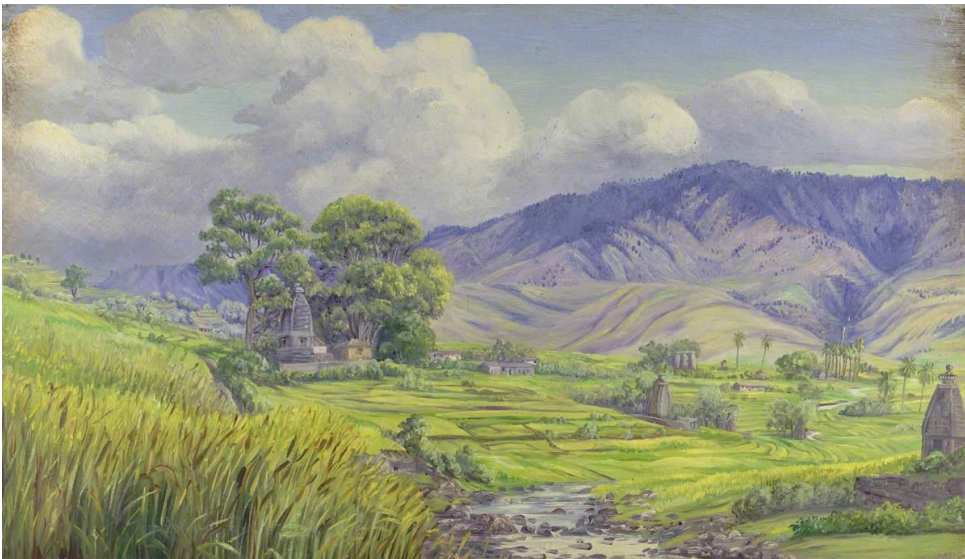
The Great Lily of Nainee Tal, in North India, Marianne North (1830–1890), Marianne North Gallery

If, on the other hand, we want the whole image to be explored in detail, rather than just one element, then we can think about how we can make a balanced image using coherent colours and creating visual relations between our elements. This visual relation can be created by using similar sizes, shapes, colours, and orientation. There is no right way of achieving balance, in fact it is largely dependent on your specific taste and aim. Take a look at Marianne North's landscapes below. In the first one she uses the trees to achieve balance, while in the second one the shape of the mountain is echoed in the shape of the

field. Also, the second image has the point of interest, the trees, slightly to the left rather than in the centre, in order to emphasise the landscape rather than just the trees. Which one do you like more?



Mount Kanchenjunga from Darjeeling, West Bengal, India, Marianne North (1830–1890)



'Duarah Nath – Kumaon, India. 23d August 1878.', Marianne North (1830–1890)

This an exercise where you can play with your creativity and sense of balance. I would encourage you to look at the images attached here and see which compositions inspire you and which you find less balanced. It may be that you feel inspired by symmetry and balance or maybe by the exact opposite! It may be that the compositions that you gravitate towards are the more fluid ones. It is always fascinating to question what you like and what you do not, always bearing in mind that there is no right or wrong in art. This exercise is great for our next session, when we will be painting our vase of flowers.

You can have the vase positioned maybe in the centre, with a bouquet that has an even number of flowers, or maybe the vase can be on one side of the paper with a few flowers that have fallen down on the table next to it. Maybe it is the vase that you want to highlight, in which case it has more detail and stronger colours, or maybe it is the flowers or the leaves. I encourage you to take a look at some compositions and see what it is that you like.

Also, if you find a flower that you would like to paint, please let me know, maybe take a picture of it and sent it to me! We will make it happen!

Our bouquet can have any flower we want!



Group of Cultivated Flowers, 1870

Please let me know if you enjoyed this week's artist and I am looking forwards to our next session!

Remember that our sessions are now taking place on Mondays! I hope that you can still join us! The details for the Zoom meeting are below:

Topic: Watercolour Session with Ioana

Time: Sep 21, 2020 10:30 AM London

Meeting ID: 5426874953

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5426874953>

kindest wishes,

Ioana

P.S. If you missed the last session, let me share with you what we have been up to!

Last week we looked at different watercolour techniques. We first experimented by using a piece of scrap paper on which we used a brush saturated with only water and no colour. First we made a circle using a brush saturated with water and no colour. We made the paper wet in the shape we wanted to then fill in with colour. Then we used watered down green which dispersed and beautifully filled the area.



Next we did the same process but using a square. We applied colour to the edges and saw how the colours tend to stay within the designed area we chose when wetting the paper.

Afterwards, we made a square-ish area of only water marks, then on one edge we used a brush with watered-down red. We cleaned the brush and then used watered-down green at the other end. We then saw the gradient effect this technique has. This is wet on wet. It is when on wet paper we use watered down watercolour to get a fluid gradient colour.



Another thing we did was to make another square shape with only water and then drop on the watered-down

paint. This shows how little control over the edges one has in the wet on wet technique when applying colour within the wet area. Nonetheless, it is an interesting effect to know, especially when you might consider painting a background that is not uniform.

This way we familiarised ourselves with the wet on wet technique. And now nothing was now stopping us from painting our lavender!



1) We started with very watered-down green lines which became our stems. They were fairly fluid and curvy, not parallel.



2) We then dropped water along the upper half of the green stems both sides. The drops of clear water would determine where we would then apply the colour. We used watered down purple in the water droplets.

3) We also experimented with dropping 2 watered-down colours within the same wet area and allowed for the colours to mix on the paper. I chose blue and purple, but the possibilities are endless! There is no right way of doing this!



4) We continued like this until we had finished all the stems.



- 5) We added leaves in a wet on wet fashion as well. We wet the area we wanted to become the leaf in the shape of a leaf and then we dropped on watered down green.



- 6) This was our first layer which we let dry for a bit



- 7) We then added more details this time in a wet on dry technique, where the brush was wet and it had watered down paint but the paper was dry. This offered us more control.



- 8) We painted in layers, the watered-down thin layers were in the back, the more intense ones would come forwards, giving the impression of depth and dimension. We also added details to the leaves and the stems with stronger pigmented green.

- 9) And voilà! This is my final piece! What do you think? Would you like to give this a try? How do you like the wet on wet technique? Please let me know



