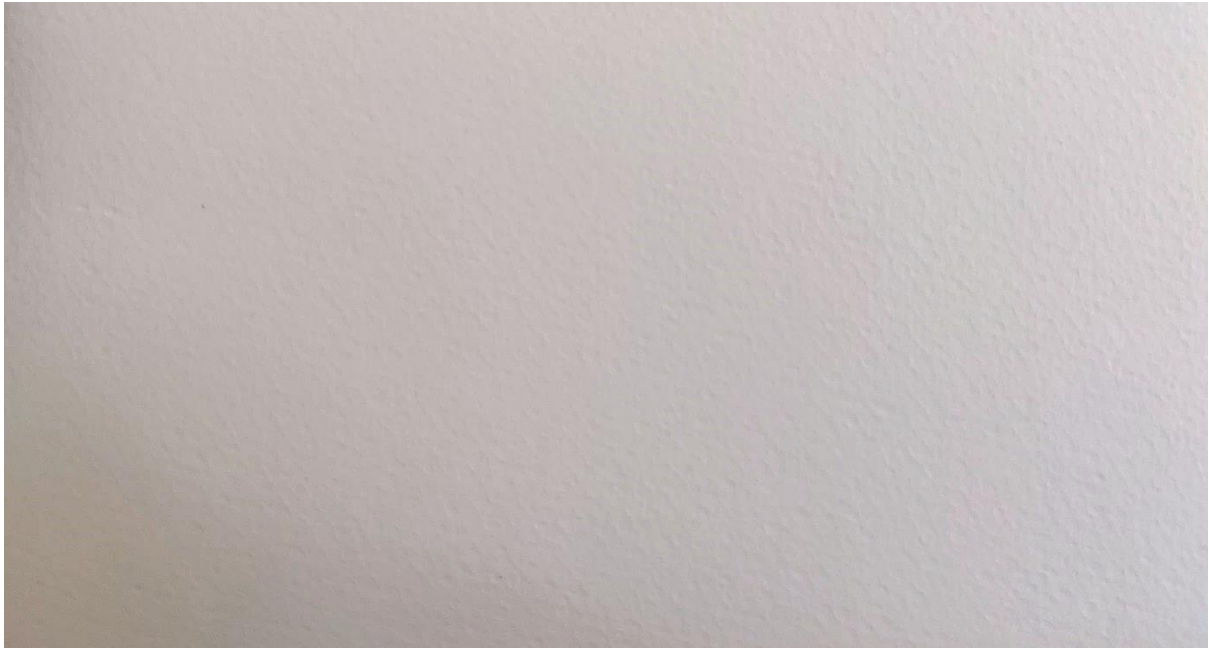


Dearest Watercolourists,

As promised, here is a step by step tutorial to painting roses. As inspired by Georgia O'Keeffe's negative contouring, we will use white gaps to separate our petals.

I am using watercolour paper and a brush with plenty of water.



I then use very very watered-down red to make the core of my rose. I create two semi-circles one inside the other. Or two mirrored C s, again one inside the other like this!

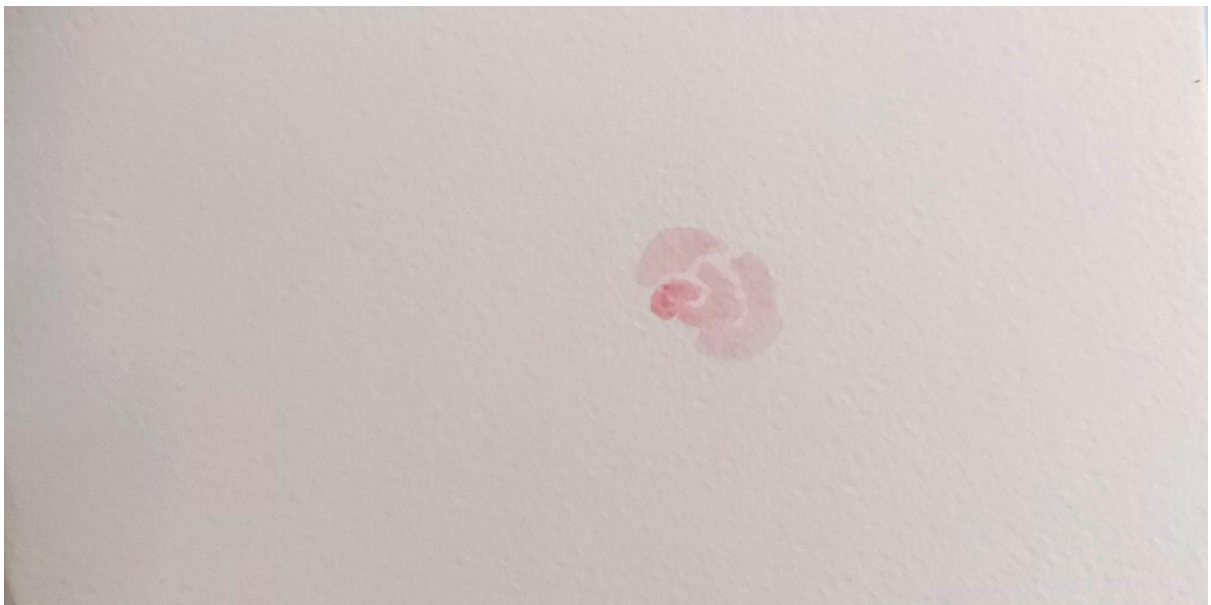
↓



Next, I add another larger C above my image. I then drag the colour down to create the impression of a petal, making sure I still leave a gap between my earlier Cs. ↓



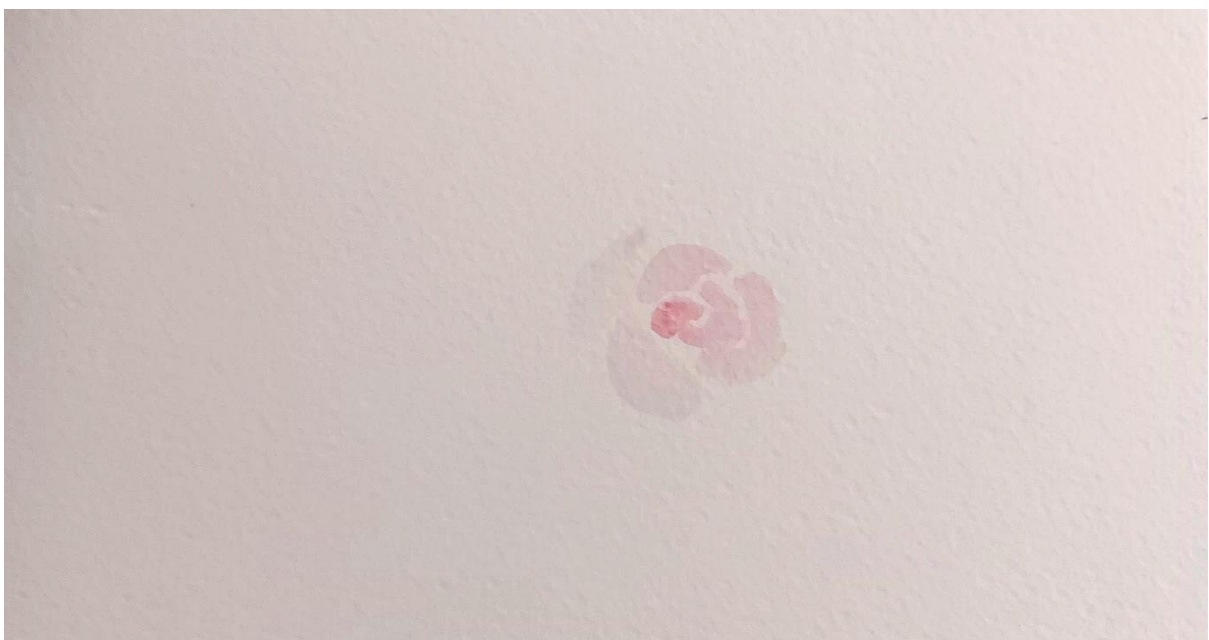
I continue adding petals in the same fashion, making sure there is a white plain paper gap in between each new petal. I make sure that my first layer is thin, but also that there is not too much water as that can make my pigment bleed.



I move around the core that I have just created, adding more petals, which are progressively larger, and the edges become less perfectly circular and wavier to imitate the way larger open rose petals look. This is still the first layer, so I do not use too much colour and I am aware I can always use a tissue to erase a detail that I do not like 😊



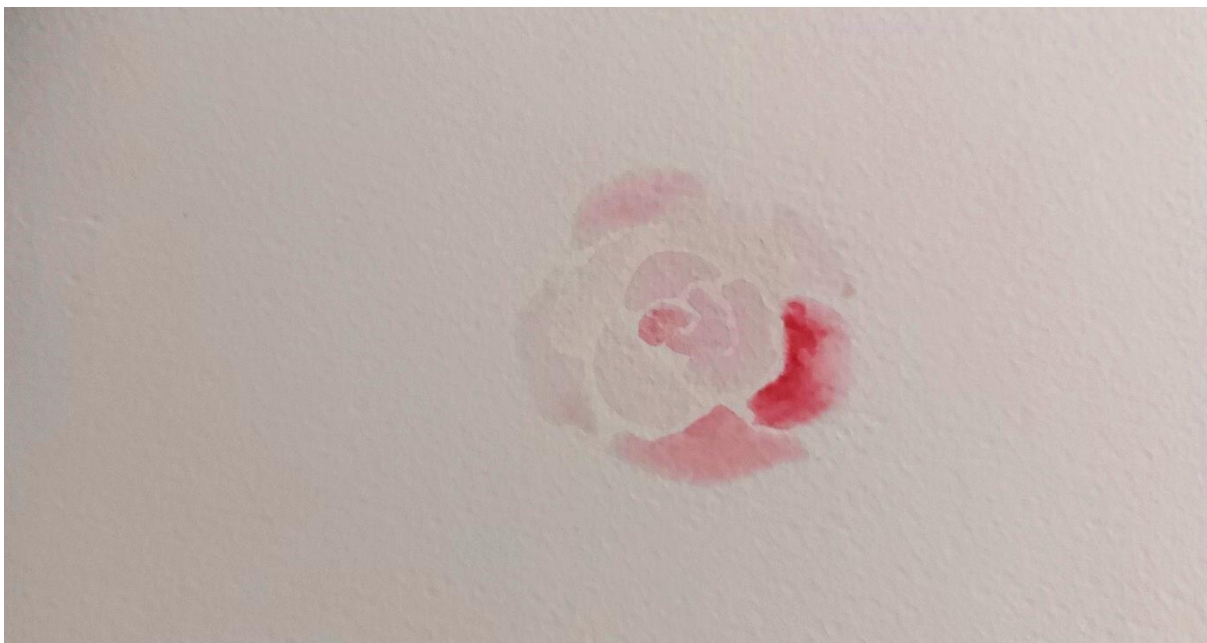
I also use up all the water and the pigment from my brush. This allows me to be flexible with the shape and not too attached to the image, as I know I can always change it as long as the layer is thin



After I use up all the colour I then add more and continue to work around my flower. Notice how different pigment looks when it is wet and fresh in comparison to the dried one? The more I move to the outside of the core, the larger and bolder the petals.



I continue to add petals maintaining a white gap in between each one until I am happy with the result



Next, I allow my first layer to dry completely. As you can notice, watercolour is a very interesting medium as the colours look very different when they are wet in comparison to when they dry



As my second layer, I add more red pigment to the inner edge of each petal to give my flower more depth and to further emphasise the white gaps that I use as an outline.

↓



For my third layer, I add and drag more pigment to the extremities, in order to get a radiant spread of red. I also begin to think about adding some leaves



As I let the rose to dry, I work on adding some leaves and one or two stems. As always, I start off with a very watery brush and watered down pigment. ↓



My rose looked a little bit lonely, so I decided to add another rose bud. I painted a red circle using watered down paint and a wet brush.



Next, I decided to add more shadows, using a wet on dry technique. I added some shadows to the lower half of the rose bud and more red to the inside of the big petals. This is how my rose looked as I applied the colour



Nonetheless, here is my dried watercolour painting! As I mentioned before, it is very interesting to observe how different the image looks at different stages and how the colours lose their intensity as they dry. The more we paint the better we understand the process and the more opportunities and techniques we can find and master.



So, what do you think about this technique and this rose? Would you like to give it a try? Share with us the pictures, I am very much looking forward to our next session and seeing your paintings!

Xxx

Ioana