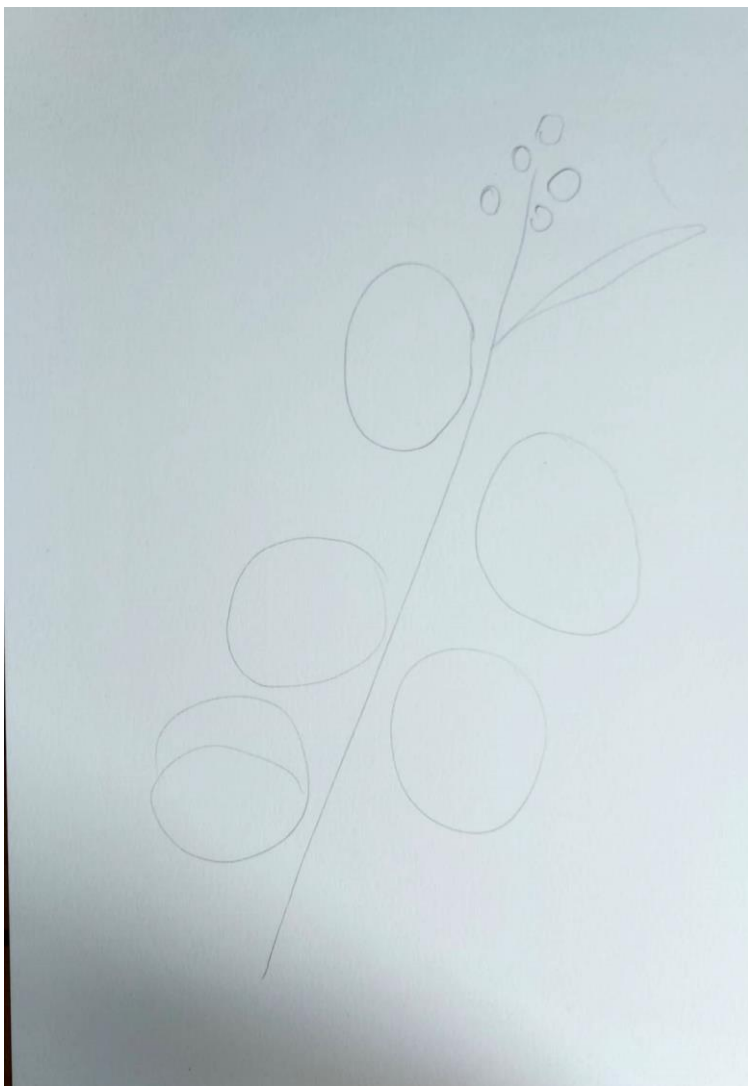


My dearest watercolourists

Today we are painting a hollyhock flower. This is one of those plants that I have always seen around but I never stopped to look at it closely. Until last week, when we were visiting a NT garden nearby. It is just beautiful, and it became the source of inspiration for this week's tutorial.

Here we go:



First things first, the composition:

We start with a portrait oriented paper and the main stem which we place at a slight diagonal orientation (bottom left of the page to top right).

Next, we sketch the flower heads: to make sure the composition is balanced we can use rough estimation of the sizes and the shapes of the flowers.

We need a balanced composition not a perfectly symmetrical one.

We will also add leaves to complement the flowers so some of the white gaps will be used for those.

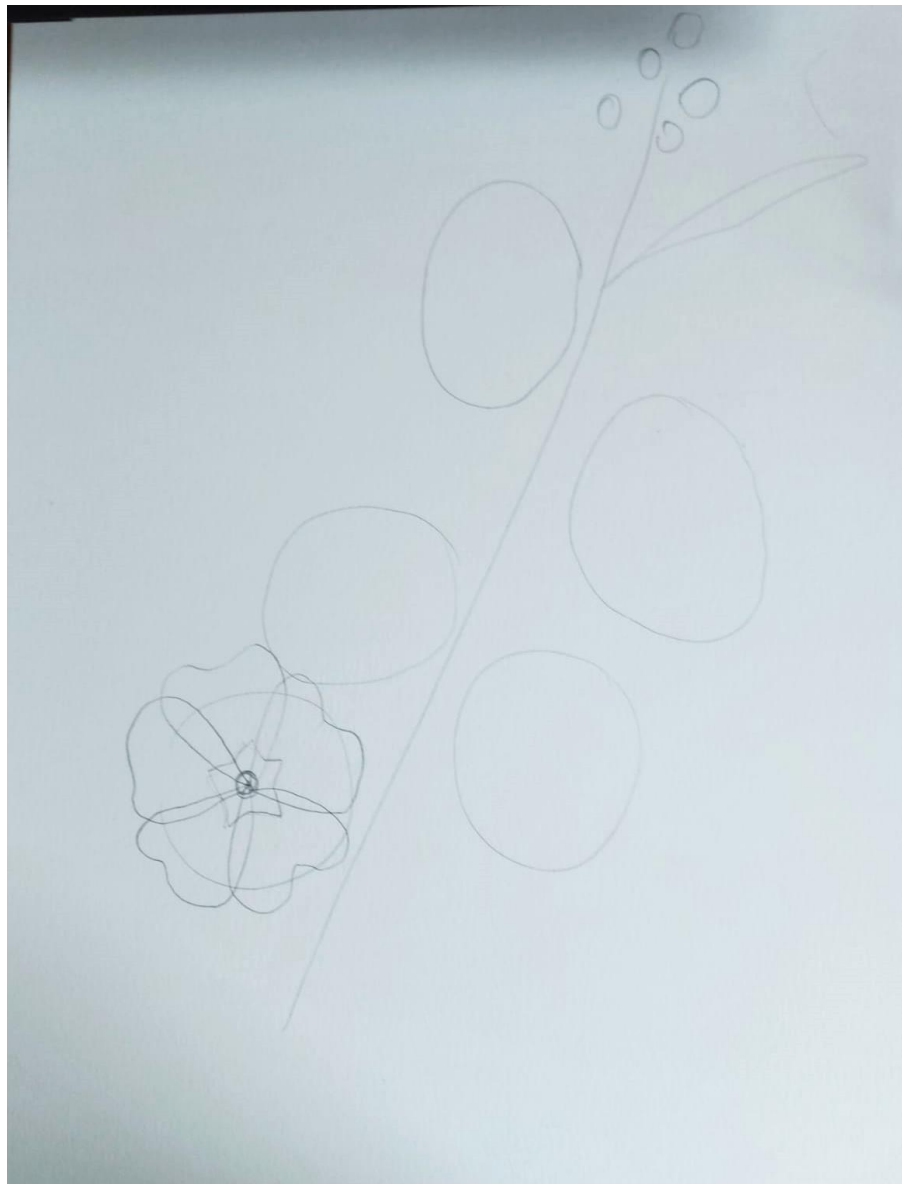
If you decide to add these aiding lines, make sure you do not press too hard on the pencil as we will erase them before starting to paint.

Now we start drawing and adding more details!

The hollyhock flowers have very 'paintable' and 'drawable' petals, hmmm like most flowers probably 😊

Those in particular have heart shaped petals with frilled outer edges.

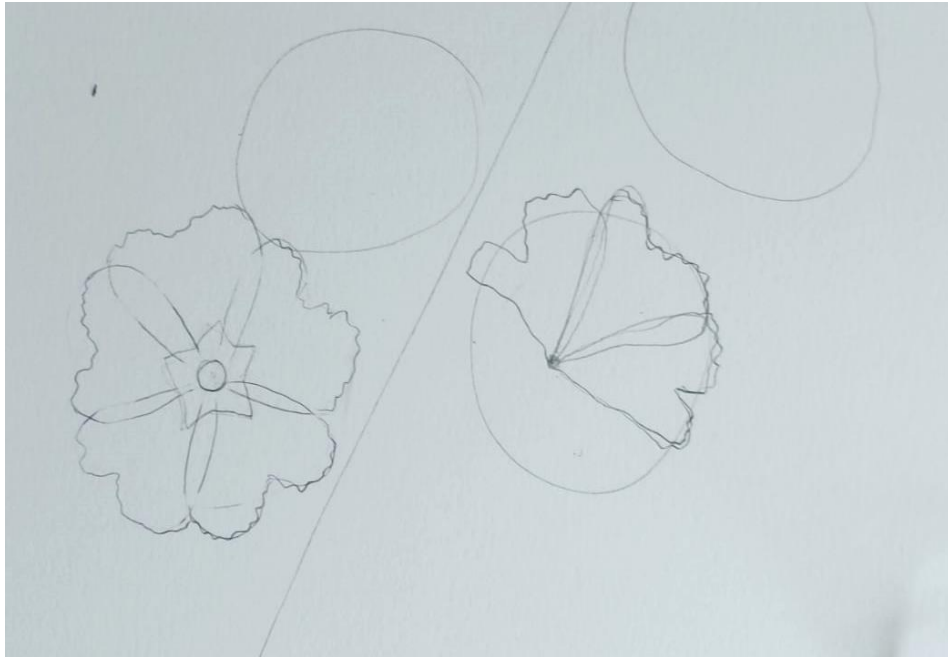
For the first flower we drew the petals as heart shapes, then we erased the outer edge, and drew over a wavy line, flowing the shape of a heart.



However, for the next flowers we drew the outer edge of the petal frilled from the start.

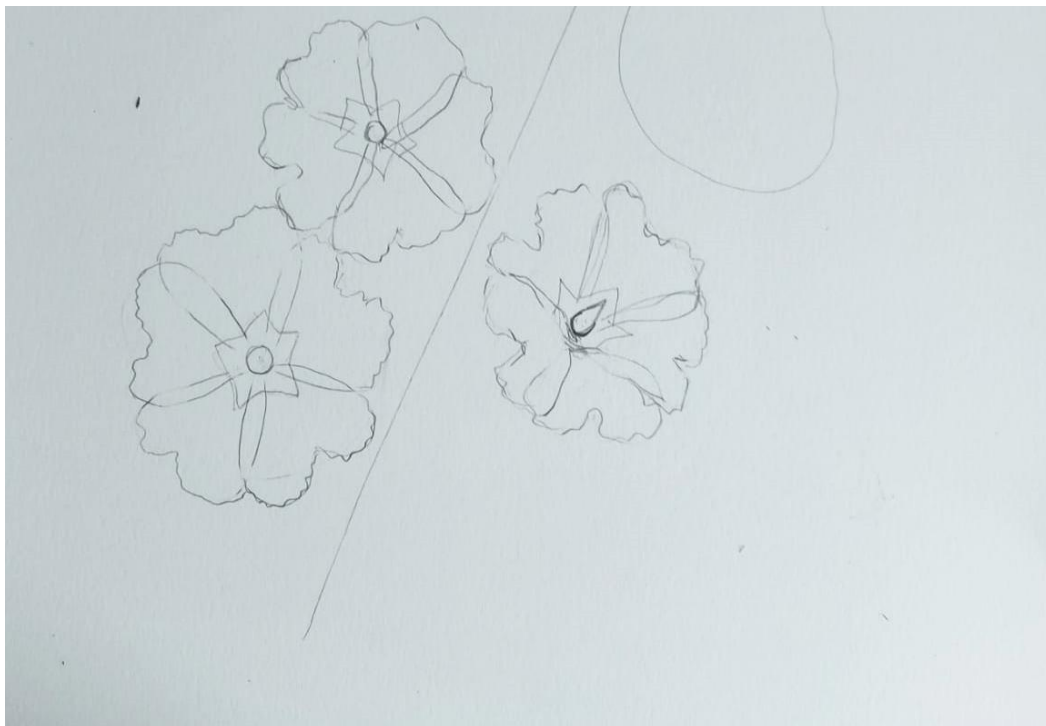
All petals slightly overlap.

Both drawing techniques work just fine, the second (creating frilled edges from the start) is faster, but it allows more space for error. As always, I encourage you to experiment and chose what works best for you!



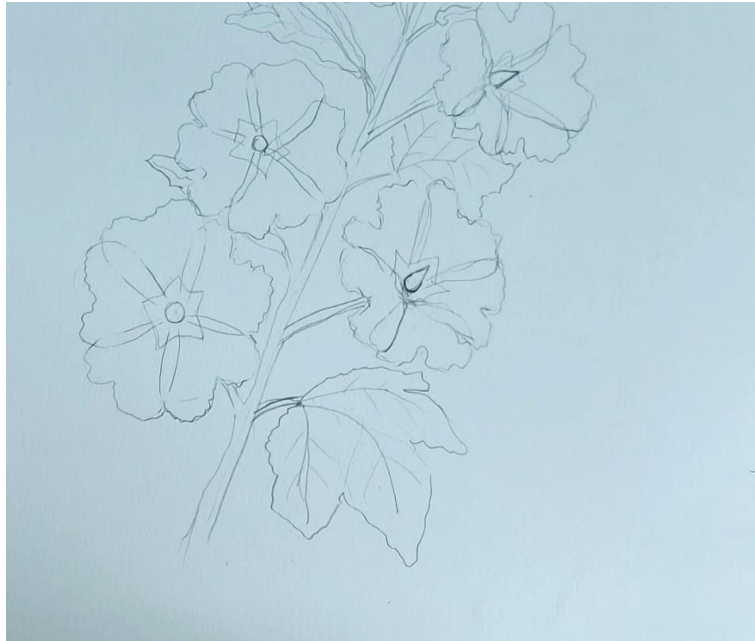
Our flowers have a star around the pistil. For each petal add an upward pointing corner, all the five of them will create a star shape.

When looking at a flower at a slight angle, the viewpoint changes and it creates distortions to the petal shapes. This is what happens to our second flower, the one to the right. The further away petal will appear longer and bigger, whilst we will only be able to see the outer top edges of the close up petals, as demonstrated below.



Next we draw the flower on the left, following the same steps we did for the first flower, but making this one slightly smaller. We add a fourth flower to the right similar to the second flower.

The fifth flower is above to the left; we are using the same technique we did for the distorted flowers; this time our flower is pointing down.



We also have a side view of a flower, which I attach below:



The tiny flower buds are very delicate. They look like spherical egg shapes protected by tiny leaves. They go to the top of the stem. We are also in control of our composition, so if we find any gaps in our image, we can decorate them with some of these buds.

Talking about gaps and decorations, it is time to add some leaves as well.

For the leaf shape, think about it having 3 main veins attached to the stem, and a frilled edge like demonstrated below:





Time to paint!

Firstly, we add a thin layer of the chosen colour to the petals. It can be anything: yellow, pink, red, crimson.



In order to obtain the beautiful effect of the translucent petals overlapping, we need to paint every other petal first. So we apply a thin layer of the chosen colour to alternating petals: one petal yes the other no. We do that to all flowers. By the time we finish the first layers sixth flower, the first one should be dry. We then go and paint the remaining petals. The area where the petals overlap will have a overlaying effect. The trick is the first petals should be dry and we should not add more than one brushstroke over the previous petal, otherwise the edges will bleed into each other resulting in a gradient not an overlaying effect.

Next, we add a milky consistency (meaning more pigmented) green to the leaves, stem and buds.



We can go back to our flowers and add a delicate frilled detail. I think that translucent lines emphasise the filled effect of the petals.

Once the petals are dry, we will add some yellow to the centre, like so!

And we are done!





I hope you enjoyed today's tutorial and had fun painting this,

Let me know your thoughts and as always do let me know if you have any suggestions or feedback.

Kindest

Ioana