

**PAINTING STUDY MATERIAL FOR CLASS 12TH**  
**BASED ON NCERT**

**RADHAKISHOR MONDAL    Date : 23/07/20**

## **Watercolour painting**

### **History**

*Watercolor painting is extremely old, dating perhaps to the cave paintings of paleolithic Europe, and has been used for manuscript illustration since at least Egyptian times but especially in the European Middle Ages. However, its continuous history as an art medium begins with the Renaissance. The German Northern Renaissance artist Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528), who painted several fine botanical, wildlife, and landscape watercolors, is generally considered among the earliest exponents of watercolor. An important school of watercolor painting in Germany was led by Hans Bol (1534–1593) as part of the Dürer Renaissance.*



*Albrecht Dürer, Young Hare, 1502, watercolor and body colour, Albertina, Vienna*

*Despite this early start, watercolors were generally used by Baroque easel painters only for sketches, copies or cartoons (full-scale design drawings). Notable early practitioners of watercolor painting were Van Dyck (during his stay in England), Claude Lorrain, Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione, and many Dutch and Flemish artists. However, botanical illustration and wildlife illustration perhaps form the oldest and most important traditions in watercolor painting. Botanical illustrations became popular during the Renaissance, both as hand-tinted woodblock illustrations in books or broadsheets and as tinted ink drawings on vellum or paper. Botanical artists have traditionally been some of the most exacting and accomplished watercolor painters, and even today, watercolors—with their unique ability to summarize, clarify, and idealize in full color—are used to illustrate scientific and museum publications. Wildlife illustration reached its peak in the 19th century with artists such as John James Audubon, and today many naturalist field guides are still illustrated with watercolor paintings.*

### **English school.**

*Several factors contributed to the spread of watercolor painting during the 18th century, particularly in England. Among the elite and aristocratic classes, watercolor painting was one of the incidental adornments of a good education; mapmakers, military officers, and engineers used it for its usefulness in depicting properties, terrain, fortifications, field geology, and for illustrating public works or commissioned projects. Watercolor artists were commonly brought with the geological or archaeological expeditions, funded by the Society of Dilettanti (founded in 1733), to document discoveries in the Mediterranean, Asia, and the New World. These expeditions stimulated the demand for topographical painters, who churned out memento paintings of famous sites (and sights) along the Grand Tour to Italy that was undertaken by every fashionable young man of the time.*

*In the late 18th century, the English cleric William Gilpin wrote a series of hugely popular books describing his picturesque journeys throughout rural England, and illustrated them with self-made sentimentalized monochrome watercolors of river valleys, ancient castles, and abandoned churches. This example popularized watercolors as a form of personal tourist journal. The confluence of these cultural, engineering, scientific, tourist, and amateur interests culminated in the celebration and promotion of watercolor as a distinctly English "national art". William Blake published several books of hand-tinted engraved poetry, provided illustrations to Dante's Inferno, and he also experimented with large monotype works in watercolor. Among the many other significant watercolorists of this period were Thomas Gainsborough, John Robert Cozens, Francis Towne, Michael Angelo Rooker, William Pars, Thomas Hearne, and John Warwick Smith.*



*Thomas Girtin, Jedburgh Abbey from the River, 1798–99, watercolor on paper*

*From the late 18th century through the 19th century, the market for printed books and domestic art contributed substantially to the growth of the medium. Watercolors were used as the basic document from which collectible landscape or tourist engravings were developed, and hand-painted watercolor originals or copies of famous paintings contributed to many upper class art portfolios. Satirical broadsides by Thomas Rowlandson, many published by Rudolph Ackermann, were also extremely popular.*

*The three English artists credited with establishing watercolor as an independent, mature painting medium are Paul Sandby (1730–1809), often called the "father of the English watercolor"; Thomas Girtin (1775–1802), who pioneered its use for large format, romantic or picturesque landscape painting; and Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775–1851), who brought watercolor painting to the highest pitch of power and refinement, and created hundreds of superb historical, topographical, architectural, and mythological watercolor paintings. His method of developing the watercolor painting in stages, starting with large, vague color areas established on wet paper, then refining the image through a sequence of washes and glazes, permitted him to produce large numbers of paintings with "workshop efficiency" and made him a multimillionaire, partly by sales from his personal art gallery, the first of its kind. Among the important and highly talented contemporaries of Turner and Girtin were John Varley, John Sell Cotman, Anthony Copley Fielding, Samuel Palmer, William Havell, and Samuel Prout. The Swiss painter Abraham-Louis-Rodolphe Ducros was also widely known for his large format, romantic paintings in watercolor.*



*An unfinished watercolor by William Berryman, created between 1808 and 1816, using watercolor, ink, and pencil. The use of partial pigmentation draws attention to the central subject.*

*The confluence of amateur activity, publishing markets, middle class art collecting, and 19th-century technique led to the formation of English watercolor painting societies: the Society of Painters in Water Colours (1804, now known as the Royal*

*Watercolour Society) and the New Water Colour Society (1832, now known as the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours). (A Scottish Society of Painters in Water Colour was founded in 1878, now known as the Royal Scottish Society of Painters in Watercolour.) These societies provided annual exhibitions and buyer referrals for many artists. They also engaged in petty status rivalries and aesthetic debates, particularly between advocates of traditional ("transparent") watercolor and the early adopters of the denser color possible with body color or gouache ("opaque" watercolor). The late Georgian and Victorian periods produced the zenith of the British watercolor, among the most impressive 19th-century works on paper, due to artists Turner, Varley, Cotman, David Cox, Peter de Wint, William Henry Hunt, John Frederick Lewis, Myles Birket Foster, Frederick Walker, Thomas Collier, Arthur Melville and many others. In particular, the graceful, lapidary, and atmospheric watercolors ("genre paintings") by Richard Parkes Bonington created an international fad for watercolor painting, especially in England and France in the 1820s.*

*The popularity of watercolors stimulated many innovations, including heavier and more sized wove papers, and brushes (called "pencils") manufactured expressly for watercolor. Watercolor tutorials were first published in this period by Varley, Cox, and others, establishing the step-by-step painting instructions that still characterize the genre today; *The Elements of Drawing*, a watercolor tutorial by English art critic John Ruskin, has been out of print only once since it was first published in 1857. Commercial brands of watercolor were marketed and paints were packaged in metal tubes or as dry cakes that could be "rubbed out" (dissolved) in studio porcelain or used in portable metal paint boxes in the field. Breakthroughs in chemistry made many new pigments available, including synthetic ultramarine blue, cobalt blue, viridian, cobalt violet, cadmium yellow, aureolin (potassium cobaltinitrite), zinc white, and a wide range*



*of carmine and madder lakes. These pigments, in turn, stimulated a greater use of color with all painting media, but in English watercolors, particularly by the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.*



*Winslow Homer, The Blue Boat, 1892*

## **United States**



*John Singer Sargent, White Ships. Brooklyn Museum*

*Watercolor painting also became popular in the United States during the 19th century; outstanding early practitioners included John James Audubon, as well as early Hudson River School painters such as William H. Bartlett and George Harvey. By mid-century, the influence of John Ruskin led to increasing interest in watercolors, particularly the use of a detailed "Ruskinian" style by such artists as John W. Hill Henry, William Trost Richards, Roderick Newman, and Fidelity Bridges. The American Society of Painters in Watercolor (now the American Watercolor Society) was founded in 1866. Late-19th-century American exponents of the medium included Thomas Moran, Thomas Eakins, John LaFarge, John Singer Sargent, Childe Hassam, and, preeminently, Winslow Homer.*

## Europe



*Stanisław Masłowski, Pejzaż jesienny z Rybiniszek (Autumn landscape of Rybiniszki), watercolor, 1902*

*Watercolor was less popular in Continental Europe. In the 18th century, gouache was an important medium for the Italian artists Marco Ricci and Francesco Zuccarelli, whose landscape paintings were widely collected. Gouache was used by a number of artists in France as well. In the 19th century, the influence of the English school helped popularize "transparent" watercolor in France, and it became an important medium for Eugène Delacroix, François Marius Granet, Henri-Joseph Harpignies, and the satirist Honoré Daumier. Other European painters who worked frequently in watercolor were Adolph Menzel in Germany and Stanisław Masłowski in Poland.*



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*Paul Cézanne, self-portrait*

*Unfortunately, the careless and excessive adoption of brightly colored, petroleum-derived aniline dyes (and pigments compounded from them), which all fade rapidly on exposure to light, and the efforts to properly conserve the twenty thousand J. M. W. Turner paintings inherited by the British Museum in 1857, led to an examination and negative reevaluation of the permanence of pigments in watercolor.<sup>[citation needed]</sup> This caused a sharp decline in their status and market value.*

*Nevertheless, isolated practitioners continued to prefer and develop the medium into the 20th century. Gorgeous landscape and maritime watercolors were done by Paul Signac, and Paul Cézanne developed a watercolor painting style consisting entirely of overlapping small glazes of pure color.*

*20th and 21st centuries.*

*Among the many 20th-century artists who produced important works in watercolor, Wassily Kandinsky, Emil Nolde, Paul Klee, Egon Schiele, and Raoul Dufy must be mentioned. In America, the major exponents included Charles Burchfield, Edward Hopper, Georgia O'Keeffe, Charles Demuth, and John Marin (80% of his total work is watercolor). In this period, American watercolor painting often imitated European Impressionism and Post-Impressionism, but significant individualism flourished in "regional" styles of watercolor painting from the 1920s to 1940s. In particular, the "Cleveland School" or "Ohio School" of painters centered around the Cleveland Museum of Art, and the California Scene painters were often associated with Hollywood animation studios or the Chouinard Art Institute (now California Institute of the Arts). The California painters exploited their state's varied geography, Mediterranean climate, and "automobility" to reinvigorate the outdoor or "plein air" tradition. The most influential among them were Phil Dike, Millard Sheets, Rex*



*Brandt, Dong Kingman, and Milford Zornes. The California Water Color Society, founded in 1921 and later renamed the National Watercolor Society, sponsored important exhibitions of their work. The largest watercolor in the world at the moment is Building 6 Portrait: Interior. Produced by American artist Barbara Ernst Prey on commission for MASS MoCA. the work can be seen at MASS MoCA's Robert W. Wilson Building.*

*Although the rise of abstract expressionism, and the trivializing influence of amateur painters and advertising- or workshop-influenced painting styles, led to a temporary decline in the popularity of watercolor painting after c. 1950, watercolors continue to be utilized by artists like bMartha Burchfield, Joseph Raffael, Andrew Wyeth, Philip Pearlstein, Eric Fischl, Gerhard Richter, Anselm Kiefer, and Francesco Clemente. In Spain, Ceferí Olivé created an innovative style followed by his students, such as Rafael Alonso López-Montero and Francesc Torné Gavalda. In Mexico, the major exponents are Ignacio Barrios, Edgardo Coghlan, Ángel Mauro, Vicente Mendiola, and Pastor Velázquez. In the Canary Islands, where this pictorial technique has many followers, there are stand-out artists such as Francisco Bonnín Guerín, José Comas Quesada, and Alberto Manrique.*

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**P.G.T FINE ART**

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