# Poinsettia Painting in Acrylic

**By Pat Rodgers**
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**I have been a watercolorist, showing my work for 30 years and recently made the leap to acrylic painting. I love the vibrant colors and the ease of the medium. I feel that it is easier to begin in Acrylic and then make the move to watercolor if you so desire. This class is appropriate for those who have never painted and those who just would like the opportunity to expand on skills and information. You do not need to know how to draw.**

**This class should be for enjoyment as well as a wonderful learning experience about exploration of the painting process. I found that puttering around with paint and various supplies allows the learning process to be less frustrating.**

**I purchase most of my supplies from:**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Dick Blick** | **DickBlick.com** | **1-800-447-8192** |
| **Daniel Smith** | **DanielSmith.com** | **1-800-426-7923** |
| **Utrecht** | **utrecht.com** | **1-800-223-9132** |

**You may purchase as little as 5 tubes of paint, Alizarine Crimson, Hansa yellow, Thalo blue, white and black. You may use a Styrofoam meat or egg carton for a pallete or you may purchase one of your choice. This class does not need to clean out your bank account.**

**The following supplies are suggestions.**

**Supplies:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Brushes | ½ inch and 1 inch Aquarelle, #10 round, #6 round synthetic, You may purchase as many brushes as you wish, but you will need these basic sizes. |
| Optional | mop, filbert, small liner. |
| Surface | Stretched paper on surface at least 11 inches x 14 inches. |

I only use Arches 140# cold press. You may purchase one sheet and tear it in half or quarters or a watercolor block to eliminate the need to stretch the paper. I will demonstrate how to stretch your paper to a masonite board in class.

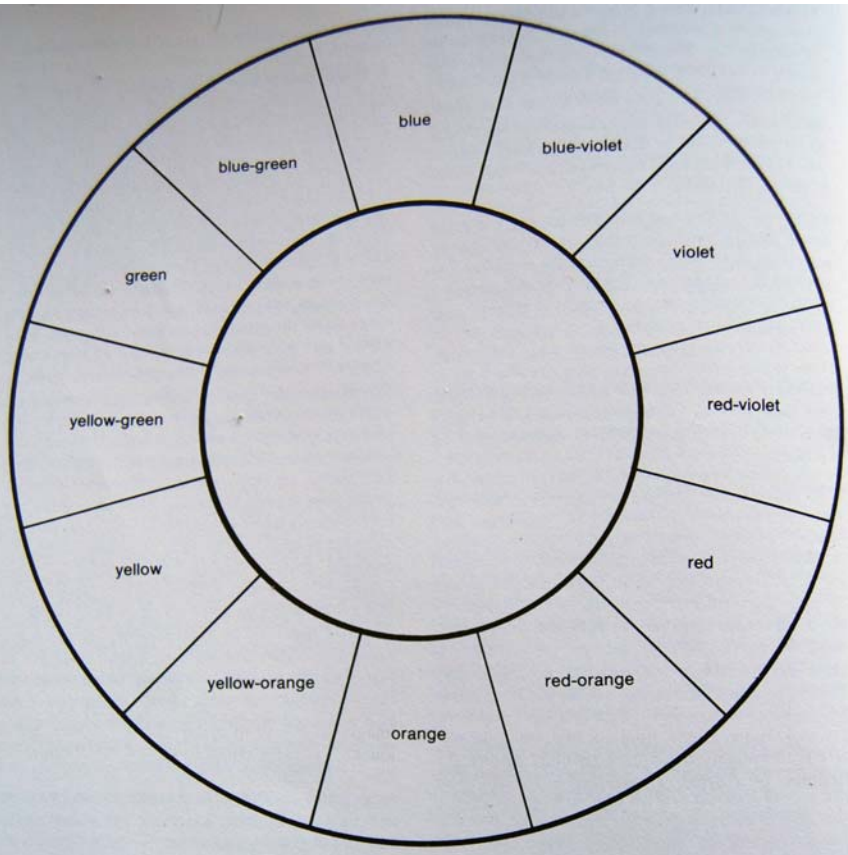
Other Palette of choice in plastic, metal or Styrofoam. Some artists use the flat covered palettes with a sponge and disposable paper. I use a sheet of glass that is taped on 4 sides.
Spray bottle, large water container, paper towels, masking tape, pencil, eraser, sponge, masonite board, tracing paper, carbon or transfer paper and hair dryer.

## Paint colors:

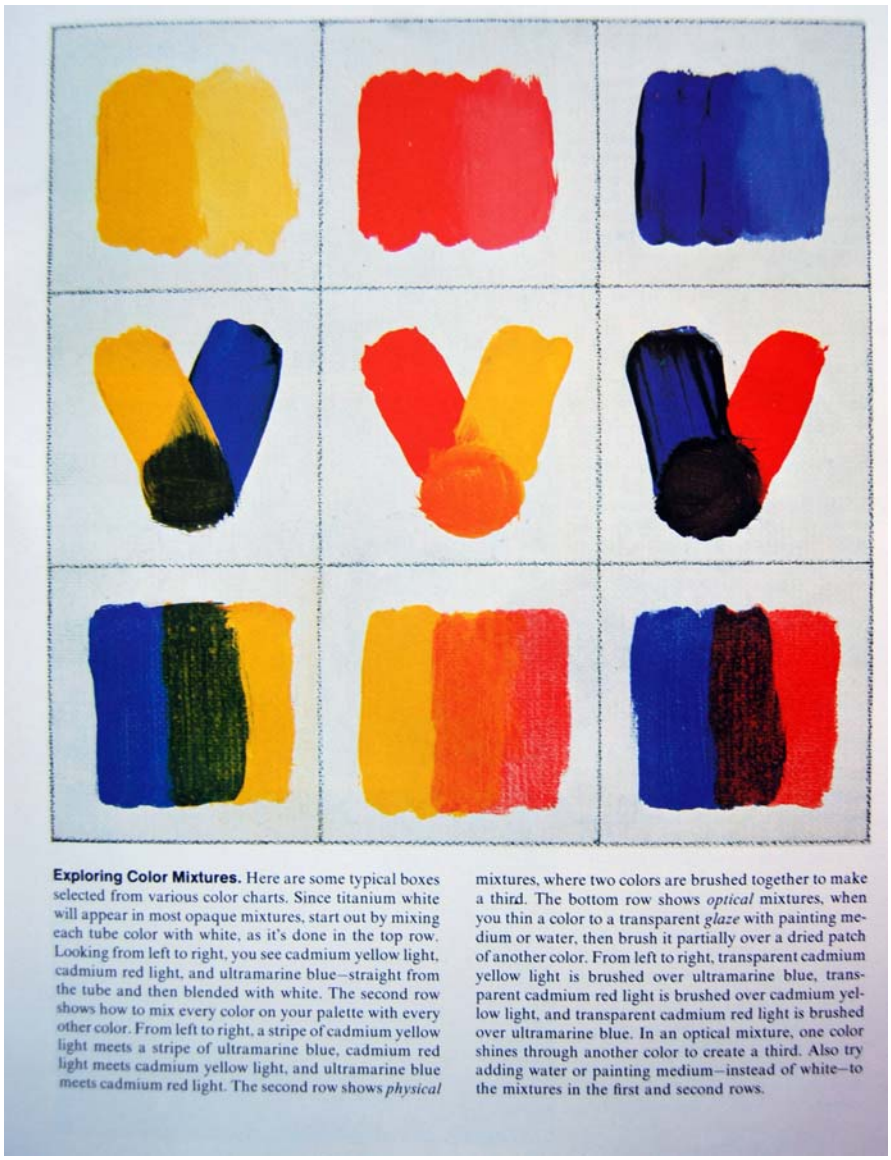
The primary colors of Alizarin Crimson, Cadmium Yellow Lt and Thalo Blue will allow mixing to almost any desired hue. You may use any product or size of your choice until you decide if you wish to make a larger investment. **Additional** colors as follows:

Blues: ultramarine blue, phtalocyanine(Thalo) blue and cerulean blue.
Reds: cadmium red, permanent rose and alizarin crimson
Yellow: hansa yellow, cadmium yellow light and yellow ochre
Green: phthalocyanine(Thalo) green Optional: hookers or sap green
Browns: burnt umber and burnt sienna
Black&White
mars or ivory black and titanium white

You may add these all of these additional colors or just a few.

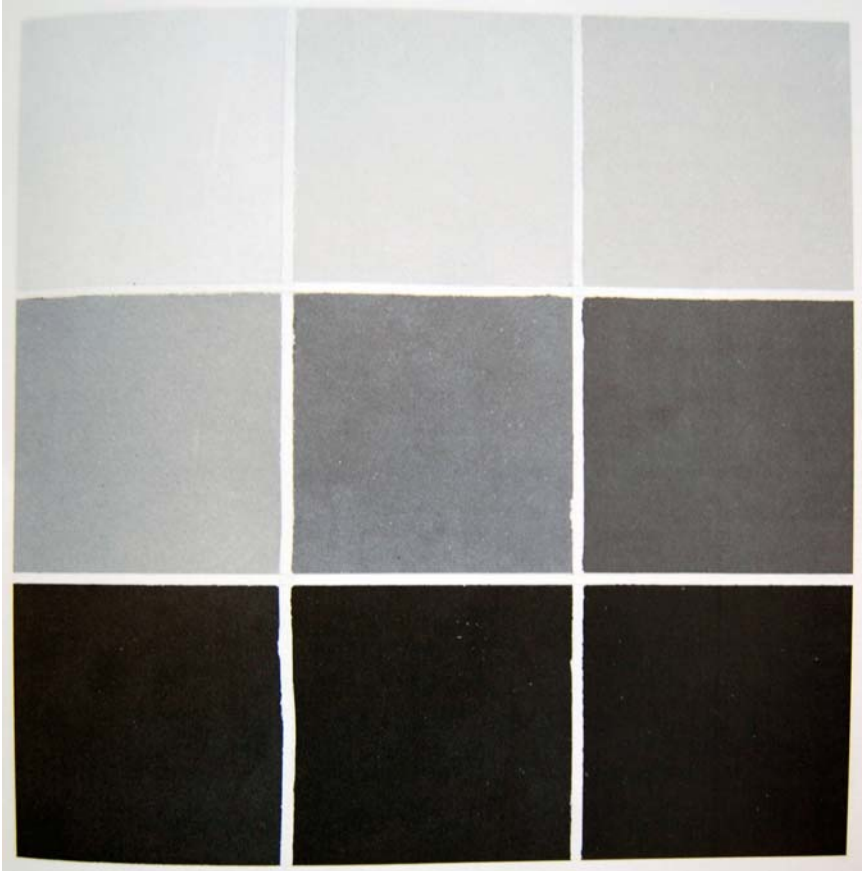



**Classifying Colors.** It's helpful to memorize the classic diagram that artists call a *color wheel.* This simple diagram contains the solutions to a surprising number of color problems you may run into when you're working on a painting. For example, if you want a color to look *brighter*, you'd place a bit of that color's complement nearby to strengthen it. You'll find the complement directly across the wheel from the other color. On the other hand, if you want to *subdue* that original color, you'd blend a touch of its complement into the original color. If color harmony is your problem, one of the simplest ways to design a harmonious color scheme is to choose three or four colors that appear side-by-side on the color wheel, and build your painting around these *analogous* colors. Then, to add a bold note of contrast, you can enliven your color scheme by introducing one or two of the complementary colors that appear on the opposite side of the wheel from the original colors that you've chosen for your painting.



**Exploring Color Mixtures.** Here are some typical boxes selected from various color charts. Since titanium white will appear in most opaque mixtures, start out by mixing each tube color with white, as it's done in the top row. Looking from left to right, you see cadmium yellow light, cadmium red light, and ultramarine blue—straight from the tube and then blended with white. The second row shows how to mix every color on your palette with every other color. From left to right, a stripe of cadmium yellow light meets a stripe of ultramarine blue, cadmium red light meets cadmium yellow light, and ultramarine blue meets cadmium red light. The second row shows *physical* mixtures, where two colors are brushed together to make a third. The bottom row shows *optical* mixtures, when you thin a color to a transparent *glaze* with painting medium or water, then brush it partially over a dried patch of another color. From left to right, transparent cadmium yellow light is brushed over ultramarine blue, transparent cadmium red light is brushed over cadmium yellow light, and transparent cadmium red light is brushed over ultramarine blue. In an optical mixture, one color shines through another color to create a third. Also try adding water or painting medium—instead of white—to the mixtures in the first and second rows.

**This is a way to see what colors do when mixed. This is why the color wheel is important.**



**Classifying Values.** Painters usually begin mixing a color by looking carefully at the subject and determining its precise value. Thus, it's enormously helpful to have a value scale on your studio wall. To paint such a chart, draw a checkerboard of nine squares on a sheet of illustration board, or on smooth, heavy drawing paper. Then mix the various tones with ivory black and titanium white. Paint the nine values as you see them here, starting with the palest tone at the upper left and gradually darkening each square until you get to pure black at the lower right. (Actually, this scale includes ten values if you include the white surface of the illustration board.) Compared with the diversity of nature, you may wonder if these ten values are enough—but you'll find that every color in nature comes *reasonably* close to one of the ten values on the scale. The job of painting those nine squares looks easy, but it isn't. You'll probably have to paint and repaint most of the squares several times, adding a bit more white or black to each mixture until you get the values exactly right. Don't worry if the chart isn't absolutely neat. (The edges of some of these boxes are a bit ragged.) The main thing is to get the values right—and commit them to memory.

**Some students begin their painting with a gray scale under painting. I will make that an optional decision for you. It is good to understand values of color and placement before you get very involved with your painting.**

## Glossary

**Acrylic** A type of synthetic resin formed by the polymerization of acrylic acid esters.

**Alla Prima** Italian term for direct painting or the process of achieving final effects with one application of paint.

**Analogous** Colors close to each other on the color wheel. They have something in common such as blue, blue green, green and yellow green.

**Complementary** Colors opposite on the color wheel. Green is opposite of red. Orange is opposite of blue and purple is opposite of yellow.

**Ester** A compound formed from a reaction between an alcohol and an acid by the elimination of water

**Ferrule** The band or tube that holds the bristles or hairs of a brush together and attaches them to the handle.

**Fugitive** A paint that either changes color fades or bleeds (leaches) into neighboring or overlayed paints affecting their color.

**Gesso** Whiting or chalk mixed with a glue solution or an acrylic resin.

**Ground** The first layer of paint film which provides the proper surface for the application of subsequent layers of paint films.

**Hue** The name of the color such as red. blue or yellow.

**Impasto** Thick or heavy application of paint.

**Intensity** brightness or dull ness of a color

**Keys** Wood or plastic triangular shaped wedges that fit into the slotted inside corners of a stretcher frame for tension on the stretched canvas.

**Medium** The binder or vehicle in which the pigment is dispensed to make paint.

**Neutral** Colors that are brown and gray. Achieved by mixing 3 primary colors together or any pair of complements in varying proportions.

**Paint** Pigment ground in a vehicle or medium

**Painting knife**
A tempered steel blade in various trowel like shapes and sizes with a bent shank and wood handle used to apply paint to a surface.

**Palette** A nonabsorbent surface on which to mix paint.
Also, the range or selection of colors.

**Pigment** A finely ground powdered coloring substance or matter.

**Polymer** A compound of high molecular weight formed by uniting a number of identical molecules into larger molecules.

**Primary** Colorsred, blue, yellow

**Primed** A surface that has been prepared for painting by the application of a ground.

**Secondary** Colorsachieved by mixing two primary colors together. Blue and red to make violet; blue and yellow to make green and red and yellow to make orange.

**Scumble** A thin film of a light opaque color applied over a darker color.

**Shade** A darker degree of a color.

**Shank** The round steel shaft from which the painting knife blade is formed and to which the handle is joined also called the tang.

**Size** Aqueous (water soluble) glues or gelatins used in the preparation of a support for oil painting.

**Support** Any material to which the paint is applied ( wood, canvas)

**Temperature** warm and cool colors. Reds, oranges and yellows are warm and blues and greens are considered cool.

**Tertiary** Colorsachieved by mixing a primary and a secondary color together.
Blue-green, yellow-green, blue violet, red-violet, red-orange, yellow orange

**Tint** A lighted degree of a color

**Value** describes comparative lightness or darkness of a color

**Mediums:**

Gloss medium will thin paint to creamy consistency. If enough medium is added, the paint will turn transparent and allows underlying colors to shine through. Gloss medium dries to a shiny finish while the matte medium dries to a satin finish. Combining the two will result with a semi gloss look. Gel medium has a thick consistency and it comes from the tube in a cloudy appearance but dries clear. It is great for heavily textured brush and knife painting.

**Modeling paste**

has a consistency like clay. You can build a painting $\frac{1}{4}$ inch to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick if you blend your tube colors and build gradually in thin layers. Retarder allows paint to dry slower. Mediums work as an adhesive and work well with collage.

## Class content

During this class we will meet one another and establish **your** expectations. We will discuss painting terminology and techniques, supplies, color wheels, value, lighting, photography and subject matter. I will demonstrate how to stretch paper on masonite boards. We will be using water with our Acrylic paint to thin it. We will layer color to indicate depth, lights and shadow.

I will bring a live Poinsettia into class and will also have available a photograph for those who do not wish to draw from the live plant. You may trace the photograph to your paper.

I will then instruct you how to work with a commercial printer and help you turn your painting into your Christmas Greeting Card.

I hope to continue this course each quarter with different subject matter. Again, do not worry if you have no drawing or painting skills. If you have those skills, this class will be fun for you also. I believe each and every person will take home a successful painting.

Pat Rodgers