

Ballerina

“Learn to Watercolor” Project

Instructions

This watercoloring lesson introduces the art of French Impressionist artist Edgar Degas (1834-1917). Following a step-by-step approach, you'll learn basic watercolor painting techniques as you paint an excerpt from his “Ballerina.”

Step 1

Start by sketching the ballerina. Once you have everything looking just right, you can start to paint.



Step 2

Paint the dress a pale yellow. Use a dry brush technique (a little bit of water and lots of paint) in applying this color to the bottom of the dress, painting with outward strokes. Test your brush on a scrap piece of watercolor paper before you start painting. Paint the top of the dress with the same pale yellow. Let the color dry completely. (You might want to use your mom's hair dryer to move things along.)

Step 3

Paint the face, chest and arms of the ballerina. You will need to mix yellow and a bit of red. You should be able to paint the arms in two or three long brush strokes. Don't worry if you don't cover every speck of white space. The imperfections are what make watercolor paintings so interesting.

Step 4

Paint the hair and the tops of the slippers with brown. Her bangs should be painted with a few short strokes using the tip of the brush. Finish the elevated slipper by adding a little red to your brown paint.

Step 5

Your painting is almost finished. Paint her lips with a red-orange mixture using the tip of your brush. That's it!

Congratulations!

If your watercolor painting didn't turn out as well as you hoped, try painting it again. Every talent takes time to master. If you apply yourself, you will be great!

Your model →

