
Playing with Acrylic Mediums with Lisa Solomon

Chapter 1 - Acrylic Mediums

Overview

- I'm Lisa Solomon. I'm a mixed media artist and I spend half of my week actually as a professor at a local college, and I don't know if you guys remember, but I did the first Creativebug acrylics class. And today we're gonna dive into part two. This class is about experimenting with all different kinds of acrylic mediums. There are literally hundreds of them. I'll be showing you the difference between transparency and opacity in paint. We'll compare different kinds of whites. We'll make a glazing chart so you can see how things layer. We'll be using a photograph as an underpainting so you can see how glazing works on top of that. And we'll be working with pouring medium, which is one of my favorite things to work with. And finally, we'll be working with modeling paste, and you'll get to see how it looks to build up a really thick surface. And then we can either paint on top of it or we can add color to it. It's gonna be really great. I think all of us are pretty familiar with acrylic paint, but really, if you add some of these mediums, there's just all these things that you could do when you start using other materials. (exciting music)

Materials

- There are a ton of materials for this class. You don't need to have them all to start. You can definitely just pick something that you wanna start with and work your way through getting them all, but I'm gonna go over everything that we're gonna be using in class. The first thing are these eight by eight birch panels. I just wanna take a minute to tell you how important it is to work on a hard surface for most of these mediums. If you work on something flexible like canvas or paper, there's a chance that it's gonna bend, and then some of these things are gonna flake off. So you really need a hard surface. They don't have to be this size. They could be bigger, they could be smaller, but you want some kind of panel. You can also get some pre-geessoed panels if you want a white background to make it easier on yourself, and then you don't have to do the gessoing. You want some kind of acrylic paints. I have this beautiful set right here. You don't need all of these colors, but it's really fun to have them. Any brand, any kind, all good. Over here, I've got some transparent white, because the set comes with titanium white, but there's definitely a difference in between these whites, something that we're gonna go over today, so I've got both of them here. I also threw down some fluorescent pink paint, because fluorescent. We've got some little squeegee or pop-top bottles that we're gonna add some medium into and shake it up and use, so I've got this kind and this kind. Again, it doesn't matter, big or small, any kind is great. We've got some silicone kind of brushes, and we've got a little plastic card here. We're gonna use it like a palette knife. We've got some butter knives to use like a palette knife, as well. And I've got a razor blade, 'cause we're gonna do some scraping off of glass. Here we've got a couple of stencils. If you have some already, great. If you don't, they're really fun. You could do a lot of cool, really interesting geometric shapes. They're all over the place. I'm using an artist variety set of brushes. If you don't have a bunch of brushes, this is a great way to start your collection. It's got a whole range of things in there, but if you already have brushes, definitely feel free to use what you have. We've also got a random stenciling brush, because these work best with the stencils that I just mentioned. Got a couple pairs of scissors. We've got some artist tape, blue tape, artist tape, any kind of tape will work. Adhesive spray, we're gonna actually end up spray-mounting a photograph to one of these

wooden panels, and this is the best thing to use, because you'll get a really nice, flat surface. Got a big sheet of glass right here. You don't need something this big. This is actually from a frame that I had that fell apart. I've taped off the edges so that I won't cut myself, so you should do that, as well. I've got a little funny baggie of clouds that I cut out with a paper punch. I'm just gonna use these kind of to collage and to show you what you can do with a couple of the mediums. So any kind of extra paper or ephemera that you have around will totally work. We've got this huge tray of mediums, it's a little crazy. And you'll notice that they're all different brands, because it doesn't matter what brand you use, it really doesn't. Each brand kind of has its own version and its own formula of these mediums. I've never had an issue hopping from brand to brand. You can mix them all, they're all acrylics. All acrylics like other acrylics, one big happy family. We're gonna start up in this corner. I've got matte medium, I've got gloss medium, and it also serves as a varnish. We've got satin glazing liquid if you're gonna do glazing. You can glaze with other mediums, but I really recommend getting the glazing medium. It acts a little bit different than the regular matte medium does. We've got different kinds of thicker gels, so we've got a gel medium. We've got a regular gel, which is a semigloss, and we've also got gloss gel, and I'll show you how different they really are when they're painted on a surface. We've got modeling paste, the stuff to make really thick cake-like surfaces. And then I've got pouring medium. These are actually both pouring medium. It's just Liquitex's version and Golden's version, and they do the really cool stuff we're gonna see later on. Got some wax paper, because when you're using pouring medium, you probably wanna put that down on your surface so that stuff doesn't stick. And then we've got a couple of photographs here that we're gonna use as an underpainting for when we're glazing. These are included in your PDF. You could definitely use the photo we provide or you can use any photo that you have. Just make sure that you print it the right size to mount onto your panels, whatever size they are. So there you have it. I know we have a lot of materials here, but it's gonna be really fun. Remember you can start with just one or you can go out and get them all and spend a fortune and then have a really good time.

Understanding Acrylic Paint

Comparing paints

- Maybe you've been painting for a long time, maybe you're a beginner, I don't know if you've noticed though that acrylics come in all different kinds of opacities and it's something that you can really use to your advantage and you should understand what the symbols are on the paint so you can tell whether or not your paint is opaque or transparent or translucent. So there are basically three different levels of opacity. This one is phthalo blue and if we flip it over, each paint brand has these symbols in different places. You'll notice here there's this tiny little white square, it's all the way filled in so what that means is when you put it down on your surface it's fully opaque so you can't see through it, that said, you can spread it out with some mediums so you can make it more transparent but out of the tube it's opaque. The second tube of paint we have here is ultramarine blue and you'll notice that this one is half filled in so it's half a white triangle and half a see-through triangle, this means that it's translucent so it's not opaque you can see through it, but it's not completely transparent. Right here we've got a pigment formula so this one is PB 29 that's actually a cross brand, it's the formula for ultramarine so any time you look for ultramarine you're going to have that pigment formula and then underneath that is some information about lightfastness. I don't

really pay attention to lightfastness when I'm playing around but it is something that you should know about so usually brands have three settings, setting number one means that you can potentially leave it in the sun although you really shouldn't leave anything in full sun forever and ever. Lightfastness two means that it's going to fade a little faster and then three means that it'll really fade quickly. A lot of the fluorescents and a lot of the really cool colors are unfortunately not lightfast, so if you do use those just keep in mind that you don't want to keep your completed pieces in direct sunlight for any length of time. So the third bottle I have here is transparent mixing weight and it has a completely open square which means that it's completely transparent so you should be able to see through this without any problem straight out of the tube. I've used these two pallets to lay out all the different mediums that we're going to play with. Here we've got modeling paste and satin glaze and matte medium, gloss medium, semigloss gel, matte gel, gloss gel, pouring medium, I've got a little tub of water here, I've got a water that I'm going to add flowy to and I'll explain what that is later. And then we've got the phthalo blue and a little square that's filled in all the way so that we know that this is the opaque one and we've got ultramarine blue with our little translucent square right next to it so we know which is which and here I've got a chart where I've laid out with a pyrrole red which is an opaque color and a naphthol crimson, which is a completely transparent color using all the different mediums to see how they work with each of the colors. I've tried to be pretty scientific in my mixing so I've got a little percent indication here about how much medium versus how much pigment I have in each of them so I can really see what they do across the board with all the different mediums. We're going to start making another chart, I really recommend if you have the time and the energy and the interest to do this it really teaches you a lot about these mediums really quickly and then you have this thing that you can keep and you can say oh I want a shiny surface which one of these mediums is going to be shiny oh this one, no that's too shiny I want to use that, that's less shiny and that ones perfect. So then you have this in your studio and you can use it whenever you want. I have gridded out my panel with two inch squares, I'm going to start with the phthalo blue, I'm actually going to use a pallet do my mixing, so I'm going to take a scoop of it and put it into my pallet. I'm going to keep in mind that I'm playing with percentages of the mediums and I'm going to start with modeling paste. Add one big scoop of modeling paste and one sort of smaller scoop of modeling paste, going to use a half inch brush, you can use any brush that you have. I'm going to take about the same amount of pigment so that I know that the percentages are going to work out and I'm going to smoosh it into the modeling paste. You can definitely use a pallet knife or those butter knives as well. You'll see how sort of gooey and cake frosting like this stuff is. Then I'm going to take it and I'm just going to put a nice big clump right here. Rinse off my brush, dry it off, I don't have to be super clean 'cause it's the same pigment and the same medium. Going to take this pigment and mix it into this clump and you'll notice already that it's a lot darker, still cake like frosting. And if you feel like there's not enough contrast, go ahead and add a little more pigment. Add this clump right next to it so I can really see the difference. Then I'm going to make sure and label it, so we'll say that this is modeling paste and I also want to make sure I know which blue it is, so this is my phthalo blue. I'm going to guess that the light one was about 80% modeling paste and we're going to say that the darker one ended up being about 50% modeling paste to pigment. Could be off a little bit but that's okay, it's going to work. We're going to move onto the satin glaze, I'm going to pour a little bit of it into my pallet. I'm going to make some puddles, so we're going to say that that's the 80%, say that that's about 60 and I'm going to say that that is about 40. I'm going to use my half inch brush and I'm going to make sure it's super clean this time, so that it doesn't have any modeling paste left over.

I'm going to bring some phthalo blue, again I'm going to try and make the amount of pigment that I add to these about the same, so I'm going to do these little dabs. I'm going to mix the satin with the phthalo. Definitely want to clean off my brush 'cause I don't want to add any pigment into my next puddle, adding it into this 60% puddle. Painting it onto my board. Then 40%. Make sure and label, you continue I'm going to skip ahead and show you what it looks like to mix the semi translucent color with a few of the mediums so you get a sense of that too, we're going to go to our glass gel and make a couple of lovely puddles of that on our pallet. So we'll go 80 20 some ultramarine blue (mumbles). Better, again with the half inch brush try and make sure it's really clean this time so it doesn't have any of the phthalo stuck on it. Mix, you can even see in the pallet the difference is. The fun thing about the glass gel is it holds its shape but you can also see through it so I'm going to try do a little bit of it both, paint it out a little bit and leave some of it a little gloppy. Mix our little pile. Plop some of that down and scoop the extra off so I can paint that little edge out so we can see it. 80, this is 20 and I'm going to write sideways and we're working with ultramarine. I put the glass gel in this square so I moved over because the glass gel for the other color is supposed to be in here and I want to be able to compare them. And next we're going to do pouring medium so I'm going to put a scoop of my ultramarine blue in my pouring medium. I'm going to use a spoon to get it out of here and onto the panel it's like cooking. Put this, already can see what a different consistency this is than anything else we've used. You really want to keep this level until it dries so don't jiggle it or move it around, I'll write pouring medium so I remember. I just put a tiny bit of pigment in that big thing of pouring medium so I'm just going to label this 80% too might even be like 90. Continue working on your chart until you have it all filled out this is going to be a great studio reference. Make sure you let it dry for 24 hours without touching it and then it'll be good to go forever and ever. There's one more medium I want to show you that we're not putting on the chart because it doesn't really work in the same way as these other guys but it's super important and it's something that will help especially if you feel like when you've used acrylics that they're kind of plasticity and you can't get them to move the way you want them to. It's called flowy you add it to the water that you use when you're painting, it slows the drying time down a little bit of the paint but it also makes it move a little bit nicer, so we're going to add a couple of the drops into our water. I'm going to try and demonstrate for you what the difference is, so I still have a half inch brush here just going to go ahead and use the phthalo blue. When you're painting sometimes I feel like acrylic paint dries a little bit especially as it starts to dry or if you're trying to get a really nice smooth finish without brush strokes. It's kind of hard to do, of course you can add a little bit of water, but the water actually changes the feel of the paint and if you use too much water, not a good thing and you can still definitely see the brush strokes as I'm pushing the paint around. If I dip my brush into the water with the flowy which I'm going to stir around just to make sure that the flowy is really in there. Going to pick up some pigment. I know you can't feel the difference but I can, the brush moves a little bit smoother through the paint, it'll be a little bit easier for me to get the brush strokes to disappear. It basically just makes the paint feel a little bit creamier as you're working with it and I actually really prefer that to acrylic out of the tube.

Comparing mixing whites

- Paints have transparency and opacity to think about. We can think about that with whites, too. I've got two different whites here; I've got transparent mixing white and I've got titanium white. And then I've got, over here, a little bit of alizarin crimson. Transparent white is something that you can use in glazing, which we're gonna go over in a little bit, and it'll show what's underneath it when you

paint over something, while titanium white will just cover up what you have painted underneath it. But where I think people really need to think about the difference in these two whites is when you're mixing. So I'm gonna try and make a pink, and hopefully you'll really see a distinctive difference between the two whites and how they work. I'm gonna use two brushes so that I can keep each white separate. They're still both half inch flat brushes. And take a little bit of my alizarin and put it over here, and mix some of my transparent white into it. (light scratching) I'm gonna try to make a pretty pale pink. I'm gonna put that brush down, take a little bit of my alizarin, and put it over here. And take some titanium white and mix it. As I've mixed these out, you'll notice that this one is a little bit warmer and the top one, which is our transparent mixing white, is a little bit cooler. If I was gonna paint these out, you might also notice the difference, so let's try it. I'm gonna use a little bit of a satin glazing liquid in order to help them move. And let's just use the back of my color chart as a little testing ground. So I'm gonna add a little bit of the glazing medium to my titanium white version, and I'm just gonna paint a little square on the back here, do 'em side by side so you can hopefully really see the difference. Now I'm gonna use the transparent white and put a little bit of a satin glazing medium in there, and paint it out. (light scratching) This one definitely is more transparent in comparison to the titanium one. And if I built up the layers, that would stay true. So the titanium white would give me more coverage, and the transparent white would just always stay a little bit more translucent. This pink is the one that we made with the titanium white, and you can see that it's covering up the wood grain fairly well. This is the pink that we made with the transparent mixing white, and you can definitely see a difference. You can see the wood grain in there. The funny thing is, is keep in mind that this was the exact same red. This is alizarin crimson. So it looks really different, and that's only because of the white that we were using. Remember when you're making your charts to label everything so that you can remember what you did. (scratching)

Glazes

Glazing charts

- One of the more advanced techniques in painting is glazing. It's where you use your transparent and translucent colors to layer them on top of one another. It creates a sense of depth or a sense of realism, or it just allows you to sort of build color up in a more interesting way. Think about how you used to mix colors, like yellow and blue make green. Sure, you can mix 'em together and have a separate green, or with glazing, you could put a yellow down and then put a blue down on top of it, and because you'll be able to see through the blue, you'll actually get this green that's kind of really luscious and has lot more depth and sparkle to it. I set up this grid on my panel. These are half-inch squares. I've worked them on both sides, and then it leaves me with enough space to write down the name of the paint. So you do the same paint color both on the left-hand side and up at the top. You just go quinacridone, quinacridone, alizarin, alizarin, or whatever it is, the paints that you're using, and then I just put a little teeny dot of the color next to the name itself so that I know what it is that I'm painting with, and I also put down whether or not it's opaque or semi-translucent or completely transparent. The only one I have that's completely transparent on this board is white. We've ended up with 13 colors, plus the transparent white, and I'm gonna show you how to mix 'em out with the glaze and paint them in these stripes. I'm gonna use a 3/8 angle brush, because this is gonna allow me to kind of do this really neatly. I can push down to fill out the stripes. But it's not

gonna go over my stripe unless I push really, really hard. And that'll help me keep it really neat. And I've got some satin glaze in a little cup over here, and then I've got all my colors lined up on my palette and ready to go. Just be sure and clean your brush really well between each colors, 'cause you don't want them intermingling. Take some glaze, and we'll start with the quinacridone. And you wanna make sure that you end up with a really nice transparent looking glaze. So, if this feels like it's too opaque for you, you can add even more of the glazing medium to thin it out even more. Okay, now that I've got this, I'm... I don't really like painting the reverse way, but I'm gonna get the paint off the other side of the brush and then clean it up. Okay. You would think that it would make sense to go straight down this way with my quinacridone as well, but I actually want this first square to dry, because I wanna see what two layers of it looks on top of each other. So I'm gonna go ahead and rinse out and clean my brush. I'm gonna move onto the alizarin crimson, so again, scooping out some of the glaze material and putting some crimson in there. You would also do this on a gessoed panel. If there was white underneath these colors, they would really pop in a different way. And now, mixing up cad red light, which actually is kind of on the orange side. And now we're gonna do cad orange. Continue filling in the rest of your chart, going down through all the rows. I'm gonna skip ahead and start doing a few of the vertical rows so you can start to see how the colors would interact. I'll do the cad yellow medium, just this guy. And just to give you a real sense of sort of what the colors can do, I'm gonna do a green. So, let's do the hookers green, 'cause it's actually supposed to be opaque. So we'll see how you can turn an opaque color into a glaze. You'll notice I'm using the point of this angled brush to help me get into these corners, nice and neat. This one's our phthalo blue. And let's try burnt umber, old-school, traditional brown, which is also an opaque color, so it'll be interesting to see what it looks like when we try to make it transparent. As you continue to go through your chart, you'll see what's starting to happen. The yellow that's interacting with the red is actually turning orange, and you'll notice that the brown over here is making things sort of darker and more intense. Remember that we're working on wood, which has its own sort of color tone to it. If you were working on white, the colors would really start to pop. But you should also be thinking about what happens, say, when you have a hundred layers of a color. You could really work this technique so that you layer color on top of color on top of color until there's like a real depth into your painting. Let's take all look at the completed chart. You'll notice here what starts to happen when all the colors are interacting with one another. Like this green-gold, when it interacts with, say, the lemon yellow, you get this really cool olive color that I think is, you know, really beautiful and has a lot of depth to it, and you wouldn't get it if you just put olive green down. You can also see what happens when this green-gold interacts with this magenta. You get kind of a weird brown color. So if you're painting nature, you know, if you're looking at flowers, flowers have a lot of actual subtle transitions in their colors, and these kinds of glazing techniques can really help you get to those. I wanna be sure and point out this row. This is the transparent white row or the mixing white row. You'll notice that just one single coat of the white on top of these colors instantly makes them more pastel and really beautiful. I wanna show you one other chart that I made. This is a panel that I divided up into four different areas. So, I left one of them raw wood. I painted one of them out with white gesso. I painted one of them out with pink, and one out with kind of like a slate gray-blue. And then I took one type of yellow and one type of blue, and I painted a glaze down. I did two sets of stripes in a sort of satin glaze, and I thinned one of them really far out so you could really see through it, and then I made one a little less transparent, but also still with the satin glaze, and then I did one stripe with the same color yellow and blue, but in a gloss medium so that you can see the difference. You can also glaze with gloss mediums if you want, and you can see immediately sort of

the difference between the shiny surface and the matte surface and how they interact with one another. You can see also sort of how the yellow and blue are starting to make green, too, and you can see what happens when you change the background color. So this is what I was referring to earlier, when the color underneath really can change how you see the glazes that you're putting on top.

Glazing over a photo

- Now we're gonna put our glazing techniques to use. Historically, painters would start with an underpainting, usually monochromatic, black and white, or all different colors of browns, or any kind of tones where they could really create a range of value on their surface. And then they would use the glazes to help build up the color and the depth as they went along. We're gonna cheat. I'm gonna show you a really quick and easy way to do an underpainting without actually having to do an underpainting. We're gonna start with a photograph. There's a link to this photo in the PDF, it's a cactus photo. I just sort of randomly picked one on one of those sites that offers you free stock photos. You can use any kind of photo you want. You want to take it into your computer, and you want to change it into either a black and white photo or a sepia toned colored photo, or anything else. You could change it to all red if you wanted to. Just make sure that it's monochromatic, and that there's a pretty good high contrast in the photo that you're using. You want to make sure that you print it to the size of the panels that you're gonna use. You're gonna cut it down, and you're gonna use spray matte to get it onto your board. Be sure and follow the directions on the can. Each spray matte works a little bit differently. Usually they want you to spray six to eight inches away from the paper. They want you to let it sit for about a minute before you put it down. But spray matte is really great because it gives you a nice smooth adhesion to the panel, so it'll look really seamless, which is really nice. One other thing to keep in mind is that you need to have these printed on a laser printer. You can't use ink jet, because we're using a water based paint. If you put any water onto an ink jet print, it's just gonna smear around and look like a mess. But if you use a laser print, then you can for sure put the paint right on top. If you want to use an ink jet, you can, but you're gonna need to put like a clear gesso or a coat of matte medium in between what you paint and the piece of paper itself. That way, it'll be protected. I've got two panels here. And you'll notice that I've played with the contrast. So this one has sort of a lighter value in tone, and this one's a little bit darker. I'm gonna paint two simultaneously. We're gonna do one on the side of sort of realistic tones, so greens and browns, and what we think a cactus would really look like. And then we're gonna do one in like some crazy colors, like some pinks and some reds and some yellows, just to kinda see what you could do with this technique, and see how far you can take it. I'm also just gonna use a random assortment of brushes. I've got flat brushes, I've got angled brushes, I've got round brushes. They're in all different sizes. I'm just gonna try for speed and ease to use one brush per color. You don't need to do this at all, but since I have all these brushes, I might as well use them. So we're gonna start with our glazing material. I've still got some of the glaze in here from our glaze test, but I'm just gonna start in a clean area. And we'll mix some green in, this is hooker's green. And I think I want to make it a little but lighter, so I'm gonna add some permanent green in there. And I'm just gonna start and paint one of the cacti leaves. You literally just go over the photograph. It's so easy. And you can see already how fun and simple this is. Since the photo has all the contrast and the value in it, I don't even have to adjust my tone of green. The photo is doing it for me. So let's make a little bit lighter of a green, so we can see sort of how it looks if we've got a more lime green. And we'll do that on the front cacti part. And if you waited for these coats to dry,

you could do multiple coats on top of one another. Then I'm gonna add a little bit of burnt umber to the green that I already made, just for fun and to see what happens if I change the tone of the green, even a little bit more. I'll do that in this third guy, that's hanging out in the back. Magenta. I have no idea what this is gonna look like, so we're just gonna go for it. It's party cactus. Since this is basically another fun test chart, I'm gonna go ahead and just alter that magenta color just like I did with the green, just to see what happens on the other two parts of the cactus. I'm gonna add some alizarin to the magenta I already mixed. Change the tone of it, okay... And then let's try burnt umber again. Get to this guy. Let's attack the pot now. This is that sisal stuff that kind of raffia looking brown stuff they make rugs out of. So I'm gonna do this one kinda realistically, I'm gonna try and make like a tan color. I'm gonna mix some burnt umber, and some white. Maybe add a little bit of yellow, so that... Ooh, that was too much yellow. Aah! There we go, okay. I like that. That's good. Add some glazing medium... Which had a little bit of magenta in it, but that's okay. Okay. We'll do our realistic friend over here. I feel like the top of the pot should probably be a little bit darker. It's darker in value in the photo, but I think it would be nicer if it was also glazed in a dark color. So you'll see that while I'm painting, I'm really trying to pay attention to the direction of my brush strokes. If I do something vertically, it sort of alters the way that I see the pot, so I'm trying to do swooping, horizontal... Actually kinda curved to match the shape of the pot. I'm gonna flip it around so I can get the side. And this is really where you can see how the photo does its magic, because it's dark on one side and it's totally light on this side. So it looks like we've spent all this time working really hard to make a highlight. And then for the crazy colored one... I don't know, should we do purple? Maybe a little lavendery. Same thing. You'll notice too, that this print has some funky laser lines, they're kinda glowing purple. But we don't care, 'cause we're gonna paint over it anyways. We're gonna do the top of the pots. On the realistic one, I'm gonna do a darker brown. I think I'll just do some burnt umber, pretty straight, maybe? Yeah. Just throw some glazing medium into that... Using a slightly smaller brush. I'm gonna even need a teenier brush to get to that back part. And while we're here, I might as well use that brown to make kind of a dark color. I'm gonna add a little black. Okay, and on our non-realistic one, maybe we'll just try the straight purple for the top. And I think I'll just make this purple darker for the dirt, too. I'm just using ivory black to do that, because the dirt in this is kinda speckly. I think I'll just make this a little speckly, too. Great, I'm gonna keep working on the backgrounds, slowly building up layers of glaze in order to fill them in. (upbeat music) (upbeat music) (upbeat music) (upbeat music) Here we have the two paintings that I completed. You'll see that they're both sort of photo realistic, that's 'cause there are photos underneath there. But we have the one over here that's kind of in more natural tones, and we have the one over here where I went a little crazy. You'll also notice that in some areas, I did a little bit more impasto with the painting. I started to build it up. I've got some like, white ridges going on in here, and I have some of the areas in here where I put a couple layer of glazes on. You can keep going, you can glaze these over and over and over and over again, until you have, like a really nice, thick surface. Or you can leave them as they are, it's really up to you. I also want to show you this one other one that I did. This one was based on a sepia photograph, so you'll notice that the contrast is a little less in comparison to the black and white one. And you'll notice that the tones are a little bit warmer, because the colors that are underneath all the glazing is a little bit warmer. So hopefully this gives you an idea of sort of where you can get started with this photo as an underpainting. You can take it wherever you want. You could do pet portraits, you could do humans, you could do landscapes. You could do anything you really wanted to do with this technique.

Other Mediums

Gel medium

- Gel medium may be something you're already familiar with. It's really similar to matte medium. It's a little bit thicker though, so you can build up a surface. You can like leave really thick brush marks and have an impasto while you're painting. It comes in different finishes. We've got glossy gel, we've got matte gel. There's also a semigloss kind of in between the two. We're gonna do a little decoupage 'cause gel medium is also really great for that. It's also perfect for gluing things together. So if you have two pieces of acrylic that you want to stick to one another, gel medium is perfect to use as a glue in between those two things. But to do decoupage, we're gonna take another board, one of our eight by eights, and have these little funny clouds that I punched out from some colored paper. I'm gonna put a piece of tape in the middle so that we can really see the difference between the gloss and the matte and then the unfinished surface so you really get an idea of how these gel mediums work. So if you want to try this out, you want to take a blank board and you want to use some artist's tape. I'm gonna use the thicker one, but any size will do. You can also use blue tape. You can use masking tape. You can use any kind of tape that you have around. If I was being really finicky, I would measure this out, but we're gonna be unfinicky. When you're taping, you want to make sure that the tape is really sticking to the surface, otherwise it won't do its job. I'm just gonna randomly place some clouds. So I'm gonna open up the gloss gel. We didn't mention palette knives in the materials list, but if you have one, this would be a good time to use it. I'm just gonna scoop it right out. You'll see, whoa, you'll see I just made a mess, it's really thick, and goopy, and it's white, and I swear to you it's gonna dry clear. It's not gonna look like it. It's gonna be really gross, but it's gonna dry clear. In fact, what I'm gonna do because I already made this big glob, I'm gonna use the glob on my finger to kind of glue these guys down so the they don't move while I cover them up. You don't probably want to start too thick. You can always build this up. You can do multiple coats. Because the tape is there, I'm not worried about going over that edge. So now I'm just trying to smooth it out so that I can even see where the clouds are 'cause you can tell the white one I can barely see. As you get close to the end, try and neaten it up, and you want to make sure that your coverage is pretty even or really not even on purpose. After about 24 hours, this should be pretty clear. You probably still don't want to bang it around or test it with your nail. It might get that impression if you do that. So I would say wait at least a week for it to, like, really harden and completely cure. After a day, you should be able to see that it won't be milky anymore and it'll look more like our original example instead of what you see here. So on the bottom half you'll go ahead and use just a regular matte thick gel medium the same way. It'll look like frosting, it'll be really milky, and then it's gonna dry really clear. So let's go back to our original example just so you can see how it's really gonna work. So again, you're gonna let it all dry at least 24 hours. You can pull the tape off then and you'll get this nice, clean surface in between so you could really see the difference between the three materials. I also wrote on the side of the panel here so I wrote gloss gel on this side and I wrote matte gel on this side so that I really can remember what it's like. So now this one is really solid, right, I can knock on it, I can even dig my nail into it, it's not gonna keep that impression. Make sure you wait though so that it's really cured so that nothing will happen to your surface. So remember that you can use these gels. You can use them to paint with. You can tint them with other colors of acrylic, and you can build up a really thick surface. You can also use it as a glue. You can use it as a topcoat if you want as well, so it's a really versatile medium.

Pouring medium

- One of my favorite mediums is pouring medium. It's so incredibly versatile and it's super, super fun, 'cause it does so many different things. The first thing we're gonna do today is work on using it like a resin. So I have two different kinds of pouring medium, so you'll notice, I think Liquitex actually trademarked the term pouring medium, so it's actually called Pouring Medium on their bottle. Golden also makes a version, but I don't think they get to use that name, so theirs is GAC-800. And it says it reduces creasing, but it does the same thing. I have two versions over here. This one has no tint in the pouring medium, but you'll see this probably has about seven coats on it and it gets a little yellow as you keep pouring the coats on. We're just gonna do one coat on this version. And then in this version I tinted the pouring medium with a little bit of a lavender pink just so you can see the difference of what happens when you do or don't add a tint. So in order to get ready to start with this I wanna tape off the sides of my board, that way you end up with a nice clean surface on the edge. If you want it to spill over the sides, which is definitely a look, you don't have to tape it off at all, but I want it to be neat, so I'm gonna tape. So I'm gonna make sure that the tape overlaps and that it goes right up to the edge. You'll notice that I've laid down some wax paper and I'm also working on an enamel palette. The reason why I'm doing that is this needs to sit immobile really flat for at least 24 hours. So if you wanna move it off of your desk or your surface then you wanna put it on something that you can carry away. So a board will work or this palette will work. If you can just leave it where it's gonna be then you could just leave it on your desk, but I definitely recommend putting some wax paper down, because this pouring medium, if it ends up on a surface it's not gonna go anywhere. The wax paper will protect whatever surface. And you'll also notice that for these I painted my boards completely white before I did the little color meditation on them. I tried to do three that were pretty similar just so you could see the difference. On the tinted version I actually also ended up painting on top of the surface a little bit afterwards, so you can definitely do that too. Okay, I think everything's taped. Make sure it's really solidly on there, 'cause this is gonna get a little messy. One other thing you wanna do is check your surface to make sure it's level. If it's not level the pouring medium, like even if it's a slight tilt, is gonna come off of your surface and you wanna try and prevent that. So I've got this nice handy dandy level. I believe you can get really cool apps on your phone for levels too. So it's not perfectly level. I'm gonna use a little bit of tape as a shim to try and make it as level as I can. Now we're ready to pour. The Golden pouring medium comes with this really great cap, so I'm not gonna pour this into another bottle, but if your bottle's really big or really heavy and you don't wanna use it you can put your pouring medium into a little bottle to make it easier for you to pour on the surface. All you really need to do now is lay it down. I usually go in kind of a circular motion and you'll see the magic of this stuff is it fills in itself. So it self-levels and all the gaps disappear. So you wanna pour a little bit and kind of let it do its thing and work your way out to the edge. We're gonna let this sit for 24 hours. After that you can pour another layer on it if you want it to seem more resin like or if you want your top coat to be really thick. You can add another layer that's tinted, you can paint on top of it, you can do whatever you want after it's all set and dry. Let's take one more look at these first samples, just a little closer look, so you can really see what's going on. So remember, this one is really dry, it's got maybe five to seven layers. I honestly can't remember how many I poured onto it. But you can see it changes tone a little bit and it's really got like a nice glossy, but not super glossy surface. Look back to the gloss gel medium to see the difference between these guys. And then this one has a little pink tone in it and you'll notice that I painted these guys on top after the pouring medium was totally dry. Remember, all three of these started the exact same way, they all looked like that one that we just

did the demonstration of pouring onto, and they all end up looking really different. You can also use pouring medium to paint. It's really cool and really fun. You'll see here that I've got a series of little bottles that I've already mixed some pigment into the pouring medium. I'm gonna show you how I did one just so you have an idea. There's not really a science to this, it's kind of intuitive. Go ahead and pretty much fill this bottle close to full. You'll notice like now there's just a little bit left in here. I might actually just use this to put pigment into. I did that with this bottle. It was like the leftovers of this last bottle of pouring medium and I just put some yellow in there. So you can get to every last drop if you kind of utilize it that way. I need purple, here's purple. I think we're gonna do something kind of rainbowy and goofy. I'm already set on a moveable platform with wax paper, I've already shimmed the board, so that I know it's really level, I checked that before we started. If you feel like it's not dark enough you can add a little bit more pigment. You can also mix colors. So if I wanted to make this a lavender I could add white into this and it would get lighter. Rainbow goodness. This is kind of a pink, this was supposed to be red, but it's kind of pink, but that's okay. And I am really just winging it. And you'll notice that it sits kind of right where you leave it. I'm just trying to even it out a little bit. It's really hard to get it to be perfectly even unless I were taping. So you could tape, you could do this really slowly and carefully and methodically, or you could just be kind of silly. Let me go ahead and put this orange color. And I'm just gonna run it right next to, oh, it's got a little yellow in there too, right next to the red. And you'll see that they kind of like meet up, but don't run into one another. That's the magic of pouring medium. Then we'll go yellow. And I can change the width of these, like if I wanna make the yellow thick again, I made that orange a little thinner. As long as you keep pouring medium in an airtight bottle, so you'll see all these guys have lids, if you make sure your lid is on when you're done it'll stay this way forever. It's just the second that it gets into the air that it starts to dry and it'll start to harden, and then it gets really yucky. This is a good time too to remind you that all these acrylic materials are plastic. So if you don't do a good job cleaning your brushes or your palette knives or your surfaces they're gonna end up with like a coat of plastic goo, so just make sure you clean up really well when you're all done. Oh, I really like the way the green is interacting with the blue. I have no idea why this happens, but some pigments like to intermingle more than others. It's also 'cause I'm dripping closer to the color when I start. You could let this dry, you could leave it alone, this could be totally done. You could take a stick and like do a spiderweb pattern in here while it's wet and move them around. I could even go in and do polka dots of like another color if I wanted to. If I wanted to fill this space in like really neatly and cleanly I could wait for this to dry and then come back in with more pouring medium, or let's say I wanted to add some clouds I could just use some white and try and do some clouds up in the sky. Just kind of do like a funky outline. I did a whole bunch of examples, 'cause I couldn't stop playing with the pouring medium. It's so much fun. So in this one I just puddled some paint and then I took a toothpick and I started to spider it out. I tried to do little polka dots inside while I was working in this pink area. They came out a little funky. If I had waited a little bit longer for them to dry they would have stayed a little more solid. So that's what I tried to do in this one. So there's actually this really nice pink polka dot in this one that's really clean and then I went ahead and dripped the green into it and then I purposefully dripped this in. And I put a little polka dot in here and I dragged it with my brush. I waited for these guys to dry just a little bit, so that they'd be really solid and then I filled in the background with white. But I left the edge this time just trying to see what would happen if I did that. In this one I literally just followed the wood grain that was on the board. So there was this funny little knot in here and I filled in based on that. And then there were these stripes. This one I did tape, so you can see what happens when the pouring medium runs down the

side of the piece. It actually looks pretty cool and it's an effect that you can use to your advantage for sure. And then in this big one I just decided I would set up kind of a grid and then fill in between the spaces with other colors. So you can see that all of these have the same palette, it's because I set myself up with squeegee bottles full of stuff, like I showed you, and then I just went to town using them and playing around. This one too you'll notice, this is a really good example, because I didn't let this one full cure before I moved it around. So there are a couple areas in here where there's a little bit of a mess up. So this one I think was just because it was up against another board, so sort of like this, and because plastic likes to stick to itself it ended up making this funny little swirl. And this one was because there was a board sort of hanging out like this. It's kind of like nail polish. You know when you do your nails and if you don't let it dry all the way and you like smush a little bit, it's exactly the same thing. You end up with these funny little nobs. Which can be okay, I don't really think you see it until I pointed it out to you, but it's just something to be aware of, that you really need to let it sit and dry flat before you start moving it around. And it may look like it's dry, but really you have to leave them alone and not have them touching anything, I would say probably even for a month to make sure that nothing's gonna happen, 'cause the pouring medium is pretty thick. So don't put anything on top, don't put any books on top, don't shove them into a drawer with a bunch of other stuff, really leave them out for a while to dry before you do anything with them.

Pouring onto glass

- Pouring medium is so amazing that you can actually make skins of acrylic paint like this, and they'll be a little bit different. This side's kind of matte. This side is kind of shiny. And the way we do this is you pour the medium onto glass and you let it sit for at least 24 hours, probably maybe a little more like 48 hours, and then you peel it up with a razor blade and then you end up with this, this magical stuff. You can fold it, you can bend it, you can actually acrylic to itself. So if I wanted you know I could make a sculpture out of this stuff. And it's actually really fun to use whatever leftover pouring medium you have in this method. So if you have a sheet of glass, just make sure the edges are taped off so that you're not gonna hurt yourself, and then just have it to the side. And when you're done doing whatever else it is that you're doing with pouring medium, use whatever leftovers you have onto the glass and then you have all these things that you get to experiment with. Here's a little goofy painting that I made that's been dry for at least 24 hours. We're gonna use a straight razor and get it off the glass. You do wanna be careful. I try to get around all the edges. You can kinda feel where it's sticking. Just be sure and be really careful with your fingers. This stuff is sticky, it's hard, go slow. We don't want any injuries. After you start to get the edges up, you can pull a little bit too and usually you can get most of the middle by just gently lifting up. So satisfying. Ta-da. I have a bunch of these pieces that I've already peeled off. The really cool thing about these guys is you can cut them, you can sew them together if you wanted to. Literally fold them in half and run a needle and thread through them. You could end up putting two pieces together. Sometimes when you razor blade them off, the edges are not super neat or clean, so you can just take a scissors and cut them. They're really pliable. They also sometimes look different on either side. So if I wanted to like cut this into a square. Or sort of a square. (laughing) Got a square. You can also think about how thick you lay the paint down. They need to be a pretty good thickness, otherwise they're just gonna rip and tear. So you can sort of really see how plasticky they are. But they're super fun. And then you could take these and gel them onto another surface. You can gel them together. They're really really versatile little plastic pieces of goodness.

Modeling paste

- The last medium we're gonna talk about is modeling paste. It's really cool 'cause it'll help you build up a nice, thick surface fast so you don't have to use layers and layers and layers of paint. You can also use it to make some pretty interesting shapes on a board so that you have a nice higher-up surface then you can paint around it. The one thing to keep in mind is modeling paste does not dry clear. It'll stay white so it's gonna have a different effect than say a gel medium or some of the other mediums we were working with. It's super thick and gooey. It's also like cake frosting. I'm gonna show you how you can tape off an area and build up some impasto on this board right here. You'll notice I already placed some tape on the board. I'm just gonna spread some of this modeling paste out and think about how I want it to end up. You can see it's really, really thick. I can make some stiff peaks like if we were making a meringue. Look how high I can get that to sort of sit. It'll stay like that. There is a danger with modeling paste. If you put it on really thick, it might crack. Just be aware that that could happen. I'm just gonna lay out a bunch first and then we'll figure out what we want it to look like. I have my square fully filled in. I could if I wanted to use a credit card or a silicone thing and smooth it out so it's really nice and smooth. And then when I peel this tape off, we would have these really beautiful crisp edges. I can also cut into it this way, make a really interesting texture. I was noticing when I was spreading it around with the butter knife that the butter knife itself had kind of a cool texture. I could go back and forth and let the little ridges in the knife make some texture. You can also use these guys. This is a silicone scraper or a wedge. They also make brushes with brush handles that have things like this. You could take this and run it through the modeling paste. They come in different shapes and different thicknesses so these are really fun to play with as well. I'm gonna go back to semi-smooth-I kind of like that. I wanna leave that. This stuff is not cheap. I'm gonna take all of this and scrape it back into my jar so that I can use it again later. You definitely wanna let this dry fully, say minimum 24 hours. I think it depends on humidity and what the weather is like until it's fully dry. You wanna make sure it's completely dry before you do anything else to it. Here I have a board where I made a random texture with modeling paste. It's definitely dry. It's been sitting for a long time. I'm gonna go ahead and paint on it so you can see what happens when you paint on top. Because this is a really big sort of texture to begin with, I'm gonna use a big brush. This is a one inch flat. I've got just some random colors here and a little bit of glazing medium and a little bit of matte medium to add to the paint to thin it out. I'm just gonna wing it and go for it. You can see with the ridges if you wanna make sure that color gets in between them you're gonna have to dab in there. You can thin out the paint to kind of give it some different tonal values like here, I'm leaving it really thick in the crack of the impasto from the modeling paste and up at the top I'm thinning it out to kind of get a paler yellow. Gonna switch colors here. Just setting up some areas so that it'll interact with the yellow. I got another clean one inch flat. Let's try some of this beautiful fluorescent pink. I can never resist. If I tried to do this with paint itself, it would take a really long time. The stiff peaks that are here with the modeling paste might not hold up with the paint by itself. It might collapse. Gonna throw in a little bit of a ochre undertone just for fun and see if we like that. Gonna use a smaller brush. This is a six, size six. You'll notice here at the bottom I left some of the wood without any modeling paste so that gives you a different texture too. Let's do some green. Gonna flip the board around because we've got so much texture and depth I think there's some little areas of white that I've missed. I wanna make sure I cover them all. I sort of want the illusion that this wasn't modeling paste, that it was all paint. The fluorescent pink is a little more transparent than the other paints so I can see the white through. I'm painting another coat on. Love it when the paint is wet and I get to just mix it around on my surface. So surprising what colors you

end up with. (yelp) That looks totally fun. I never really paint like this so it's super fun to try this out and the modeling paste makes it go so fast. Super easy. Here's a panel where I tinted the modeling paste before I put it down. If you don't want to use or have that bright white to interact with, this is a really easy way to make sure that the modeling paste has a tone to it. Sometimes it might make more sense if it has a tone so that you're not dealing with that super bright white and having to make sure that you're covering everything up. I put a little bit of yellow into this modeling paste. Remember it is white so it's gonna make things kind of pastel. You're never gonna get a black modeling paste to work with. But you can lay it down and then I used the silicone scraper to make these really interesting designs and I used the back of a brush to kind of go in circles and then I let it dry. It's exactly like frosting. You can see in a couple places it's cracked. That's probably because it was a little thick and so it dried a little fast. But that's okay, we'll be able to paint over it or we can incorporate those cracks into the final piece. Our last example I set up a house out of the modeling paste. I used tape to tape it down. I did several coats and let them dry really well in between. I was trying to keep the surface pretty smooth. It's a little bit hard to make it perfectly smooth while you're laying down the modeling paste but, the good thing is you can actually sand it when it's totally dry. You can use a block or you can just use some random sandpaper and you can actually try and smooth out your surface. For this one, I'm gonna put a stencil on top here and just do a little painting just 'cause it'll be a fun thing to do. I have a little doily stencil. I'm gonna pretend like it's the sun for this house. I'm gonna tape it down so I don't have to hold it. When using stencils, it's recommended that you use a sort of stubby round brush that isn't pointed. This is a half inch but again, any size that you have will work. You don't have to have one of these stencil brushes but it does makes it go a little bit faster. I'm gonna paint it yellow 'cause it's the sun. If your paint feels a little thick, you could add a little bit of matte medium into it to help spread it out. And then I'm literally just gonna dab. Gonna work all the way to the edge. I'm gonna carefully peel this off and I am going to not run my hand or run the stencil through it. And don't forget to wash this off. Look at that! That's exciting. I could stop here but why? I would let this dry and then you can paint the house, you can use gel medium, we could even use pouring medium all around in the background here and make something really cool. We could make a blue sky, we could make a couple clouds. It's really endless. I'm really hoping that this short little introduction into these mediums will get you to experiment and try some of them out for yourselves and really see what you can do with them.