

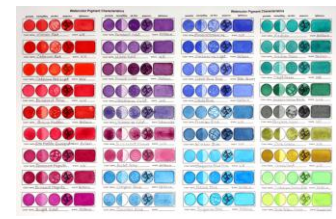
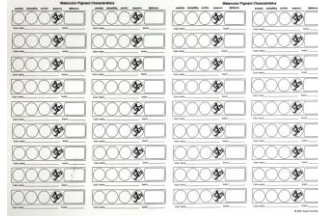
Baltimore Watercolor Society one-day workshop:

**"Characteristics of Your Watercolor Paints" presented by Susan Avis Murphy, AWS**

**January 19, 2013** at the Howard County Center for the Arts

(8510 High Ridge Road Ellicott City, MD 21043 (410) 313-2787)

**SUPPLY LIST**



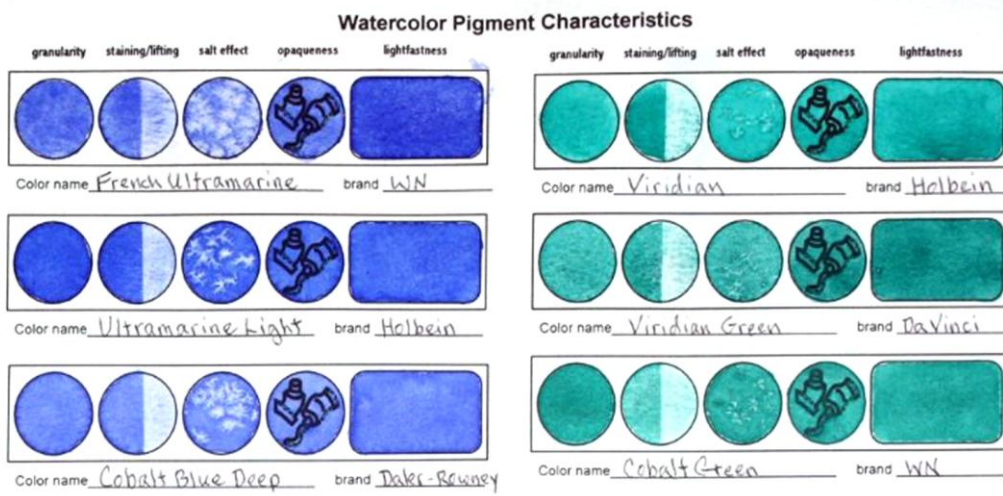
Welcome to my workshop on the *Characteristics of Your Watercolor Paints*. We are going to start with an approximately one hour discussion/lecture on the general characteristics of different watercolor pigments, their classifications, textural qualities, lightfastness, etc. Then each workshopper will start to fill in, using their own paints, a copy of my "Watercolor Test Sheet", which you will receive as part of your tuition, along with a set of directions.

What you need to bring is the following:

- As many tubes of your own watercolor paints as possible; they don't have to be fresh or new, but need to be openable; bring a pair of pliers or a book of matches to loosen the caps if in doubt
- A palette or several paper plates; we want to put out tiny dabs of each color, unadulterated by other colors, so that we know we are testing only that color and not a mixture
- One or two small round brushes, such as a #4 sable or synthetic brush
- A stencil brush, about 1/4 inch diameter; I will have some to sell for about \$2 each if you don't have one
- A water container and some paper towels
- Some table salt
- About a yard of drafting tape (3M is best); I can supply this if you don't have it

As you can see, this is a very simply supply list. You do not need to go out and buy anything! I will have extra Watercolor Test Sheets to sell at the workshop if you would like to do more than one. I expect that during the workshop, artists will be able to share pigments with their neighbors so that they can try more different pigments than the ones they personally own. For example, I have never really explored Daniel Smith paints, and I intend to do a sheet with these alone. But generally it is best to group your paints according to color and have a logical arrangement on the test here. The second page here tells exactly how to use the test sheet.

I have painted several of these test sheets for my own reference purposes, and actually use them all the time. They are extremely handy for choosing colors that will work best for your particular application, especially in terms of their staining and lifting properties. Here is an enlargement to help you visualize the finished product:





Susan Avis Murphy  
 Artist and Director  
 17520 Doctor Bird Road  
 Sandy Spring, MD 20860

phone: 301-774-3418  
 website: [www.arthouseart.com](http://www.arthouseart.com)  
 email: [susan@susanavismurphy.com](mailto:susan@susanavismurphy.com)  
 hours: Wed – Sun, 10:00 – 6:00 pm

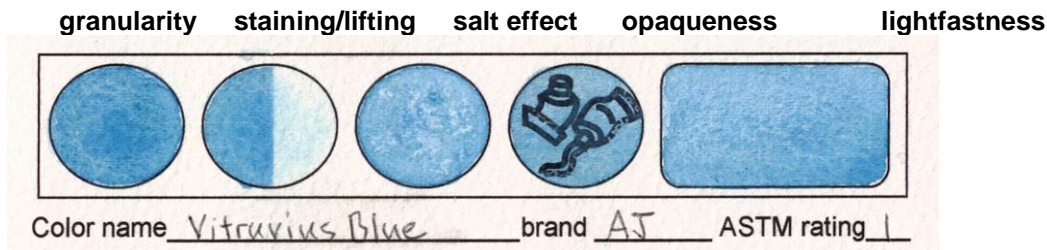
## How to Use the Watercolor Test Sheets

**The Purpose** of the Watercolor Test Sheet is to provide a place for you to array all your different watercolor paints on one or several sheets, so that the characteristics of each pigment are immediately visible. This enables you to become better acquainted with the pigments in your possession. It is also an excellent way for students new to watercolor to learn about the pigments and practice applying the paint. The sheet is printed on a bright white acid-free watercolor paper and should last for many years.

### Procedure

1. Get out all your watercolor paints and organize them by color. If you have several different brands of the same color, paint them one below the other so that you can compare and evaluate them. Note the ASTM lightfastness rating on each tube (if there is one) and write it on the chart, along with the color name and brand.
2. Keep your colors pure as you paint so you have a good color sample. We are going to observe the following qualities of each pigment:
  - Their granularity versus smoothness
  - Their staining properties, or ability to be lifted off the paper when dry by using a wet brush
  - Their ability to achieve a salt effect
  - Their degree of transparency versus opaqueness
  - Their resistance to fading, or lightfastness
3. The granulation circle: Fill this with a medium value of the color. Tilt it back and forth a little to allow the clumps to settle into the valleys of the paper.
4. The staining/lifting circle: Fill this with a medium value. After it dries and you have completed the whole vertical column, you will tape off a strip down the middle of these circles and gently lift the paint with a wet brush, scrubbing each one gently exactly the same amount to see how they compare in their ability to be lifted. Some will leave more of a stain behind.
5. The salt effect circle: Fill this with a lighter value of the color. When it has lost some of its wetness but is still wet, sprinkle a few grains of salt on it, being careful of your other circles. You might want to do the salt circle first, and then brush away the excess salt with a dry paint brush so it doesn't get on neighboring circles. After the paint dries, rub away the salt.
6. The opaqueness circle: Fill this with a darker value of the color. Don't worry, the black ink will not run. You want to see if your color has any opaqueness and can mute the dark lines.
7. The lightfastness circle: Fill this very evenly with a medium value of the color. When the chart is finished you are going to cover half of this oval with a piece of opaque tape. Then you are going to set the whole paper in a sunny window for several months. Write the starting date of your test on the sheet. A car dashboard is a good place too. Check it after several months, but perhaps put the tape back and wait even longer. Keep in mind that some very high-quality windows have a low-emissivity (low-e) coating that blocks out much of the UV light, so you may have to find an old window in your house...

### An example:



If you have any questions or comments about the Watercolor Test Sheet, please contact ARThouse at email: [susan@susanavismurphy.com](mailto:susan@susanavismurphy.com) or call 301-774-3418. ARThouse is located at 17520 Doctor Bird Road in Sandy Spring, Maryland, 20860.