



VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

Gallery Social: *In Bloom* by Viviane Sassen

Video two: Artist Tessa Asquith Lamb creates a colourful watercolour picture inspired by Viviane Sassen's *In Bloom*

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[08:21]

Tessa Asquith-Lamb:

Hello, my name is Tessa Asquith-Lamb and I'm one of the artists that works on the Gallery Social programme for the National Galleries of Scotland. For the second of my videos today I'm going to be looking at an art activity you could have go at based on Viviane Sassen's beautiful photograph *In Bloom*. In this photograph a figure stands in an amazing blue and yellow frothy dress in a field of pink tulips. The dress is floating up into the air and the figure resembles a flower. We are going to try and encapsulate some of those ideas in our activity today.

So, I'll just run through the materials first. I've got some watercolour paper, I've got a white candle, some watercolour paints and I've got my brush and my water-pot, and I've also got some kitchen salt.

So, to start today we are going to think about the shape and the colours that are in that Viviane Sassen photograph. In my mind I see the yellow and the blue and the froth of that flower and that's what I'm going to try and bring into my piece here today. This is the kind of watercolour pad that's already gummed around the edges which is good as it holds it flat as it dries. You might want to tape down your paper.

Take your candle and think about the shapes of a petal and draw onto your watercolour paper a kind of crinkly edge like this (draws with candle on paper). Now the thing about this is that you're working blind, you've no idea where you are drawing. Rub that over a few times like this. Can't see anything, sort of a secret message.

Then I'm going to get my wet brush and put it into this dark blue paint. (paints onto paper) I'm going to rub it quite a few times across the surface so I've got quite a lot of paint on my brush. Then I'm going to drag this across the surface of where I think I've put the candle wax. You can see what's happening. These lovely lines coming through where the wax is resisting the paint. It's a kind of magic and I like it.

Next step is to wet this area in between. This is a very experimental technique. It's just really about playing with the paint and playing with the colours and seeing where it takes you. So, I've wet that whole area inside that kind of swooshing shape and I'm thinking about the other colour that's in that photograph, a really beautiful kind of golden yellow. It's the kind of yellow that reminds me of primroses, the sulphur yellow that you get of primroses as they appear in the spring. So, I've used some yellow here, quite a lot of yellow on my brush, but instead of doing lines this time I'm going to let dabs of that yellow fall onto the already wet surface, and as they fall onto that surface the pigment and the colour expands out into shapes, into these flower-like shapes (drops paint onto wet surface).

I'm going to move on to using some other paints here, these are really beautiful iridescent, shiny almost metallic paints. There's a good gold in there that I thought I'd try. Dab some of that in there. This is a kind of lemony pale gold. I'm going to add the pale gold in amongst those colours. Where it hits the blue of course I'm getting a green. And then I've got this other kind of lemony yellow, I'm going to add that in. Lemony golden yellow. It's beautiful to watch them change. You can add more water on top as well, just flick the water on and add a bit more paint and see what happens when you get those shapes.

I'll try and show you without getting wet paint everywhere. There you go (lifts wet paper to camera). So, everything's pretty wet there on that paper just now, and that's what I want it to be for the next stage. I'm just going to make sure everything's wet for the next stage by putting a bit more water on my blue.

So, the next part of this experimental technique we are going to try today is salt. Now this is just the kind of cooking salt that you'd have in the kitchen and I'm going to sprinkle a little bit onto that surface. (sprinkles salt onto wet paint) Where it hits the wet paint you get this amazing kind of granular surface, little speckles, like kind of a sandy surface. I'll show you that. (lifts paper to camera). The speckly surface there. Now of course I'm having to hold this very flat at the moment as its very wet, but as that dries those speckles will stay there and once it's completely dry you can put it over the bin and rub it quite gently with your hand and the salt will fly off and you'll be left with this lovely granular surface.

So that in itself is really a kind of beautiful thing and you can see some other examples here that I've been ben playing around with. Here I've not really used the candle very much, just mostly watching the way the paint expands over the surface. I've got a peachy-golden experiment here and I've torn the edges of some of them, just to sort of get some nice shapes.

So, I'm going to let this one dry and I'm going to show you another thing you can do. So, this is a previous example and I've dusted off some of the salt. You can still feel the salty surface a little bit. I'm going to rip this, tear around the edge of it thinking about the skirts flying up in the air and the shape they might make. (tears around painted area of paper). Looks a bit like a seashell like this, and

I really like the edges that you get on torn paper, they have this kind of softness to them that you don't get with cut paper and it's nice to contrast that with a cut edge. Here are a couple of different ones that I've made like this.

Thinking about the dancer-like model in the photograph what I've done here is cut out some legs and arms and a head and I've stuck them down onto another one of my experimental watercolour pictures like this, and you can see she's kind of emerging from this cloud of blue ink. I'm going to take one of these torn pieces like this and I'm going to move it around like this until I like the way it looks. Until it reminds me of that skirt flying up in the air. Like that, there. The I'm going to stick that down onto the surface.

And there I've got my, inspired by *In Bloom* by Viviane Sassen watercolour picture, inspired by the flowers and the colours of spring.