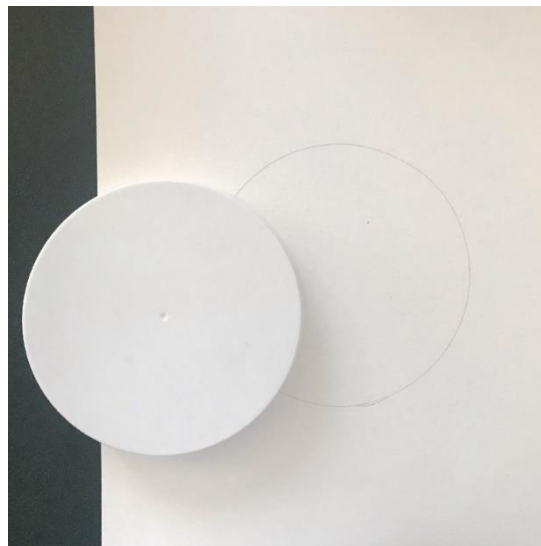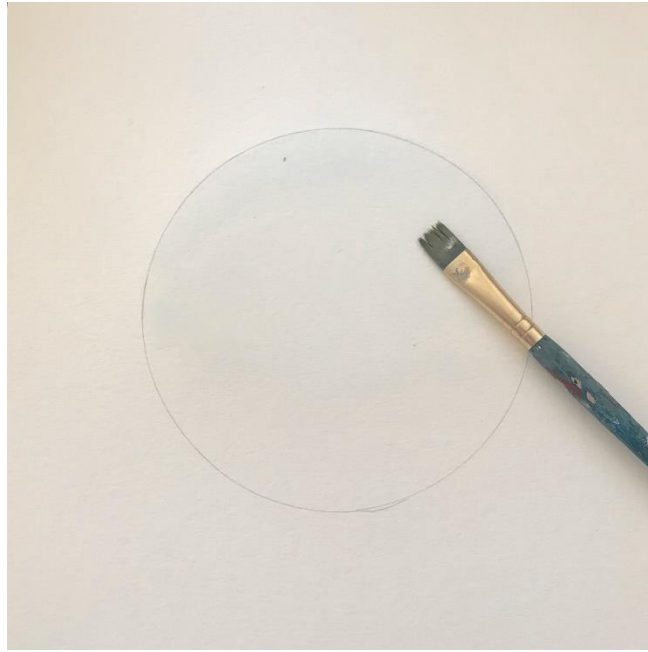# DIY Watercolor Forest
By: Abby Slater

If you are just beginning to get into painting, or if you are looking for some new décor, watercolor pine trees are the perfect place to start. They are simple, easy, and fairly therapeutic to paint.
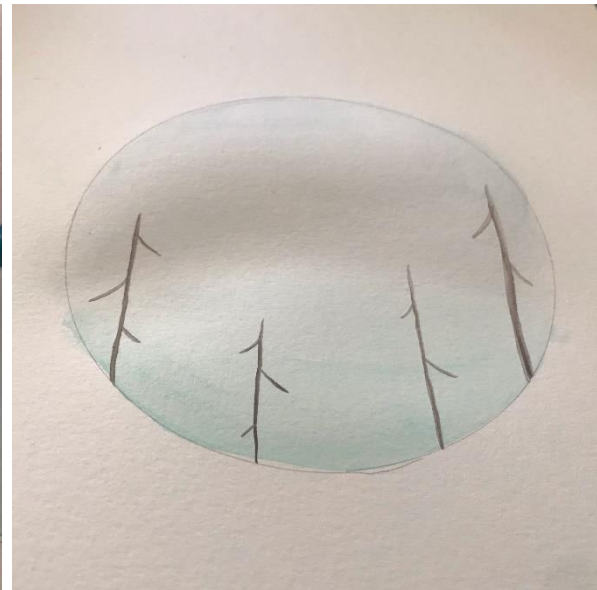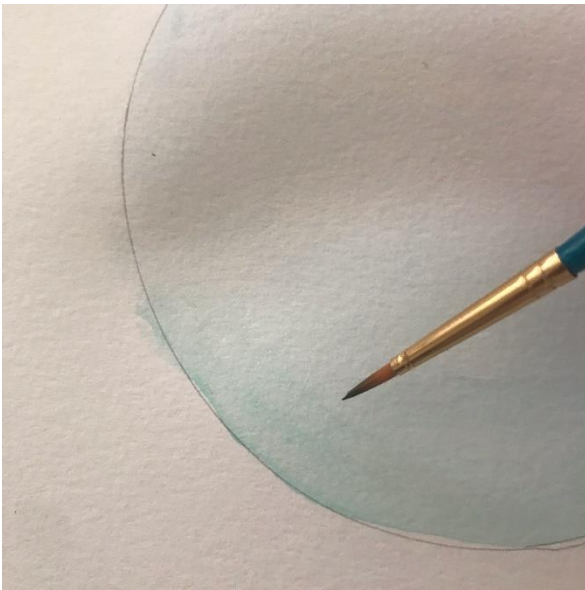
Before starting, make sure you are using the right materials. For this painting I am using watercolors on watercolor paper. If you do not have any watercolor paper handy, mixed media paper will work as well; avoid using copy paper as it does not hold the water or the color very well and may rip.
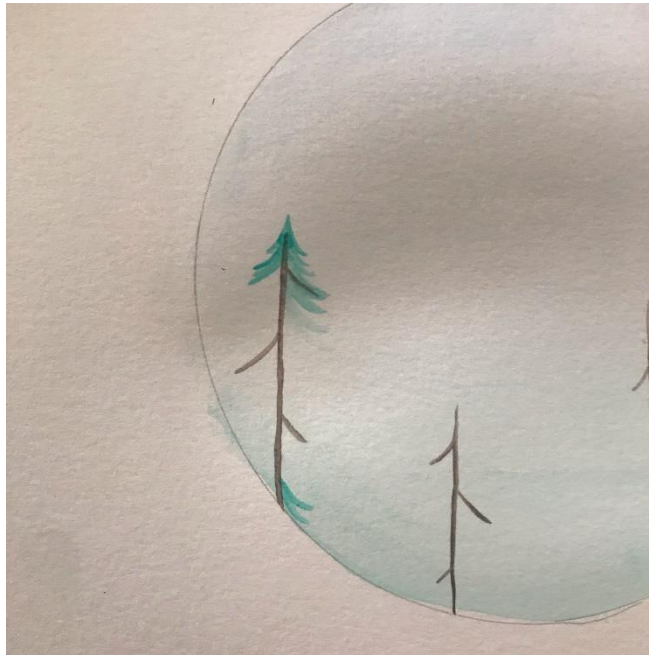

The first step is to plan out your drawing. Sometimes, especially when you are just starting out, filling up a whole page can seem overwhelming and little bit intimidating. Therefore, I decided to make the space I had to fill a smaller circle. I made the circle by tracing the lid of a pretzel bin on to the paper.

The next step is the background; make sure to use a larger brush to make the process go by faster. I chose to do a light wash from a light blue to a teal-green, where the trees will go later on. In order to have a lighter wash make sure to load more water than paint onto you brush. If at first that wash is darker than you would like, simply add more water to the paper and watch the color lighten. One of the best features of watercolor paints is that you can paint over or lighten what you already have on the paper.

Let the background dry as much as possible so that the colors do not bleed into each other for this next step. With a smaller brush, start to paint thin lines in either brown or green for the trunks of the trees. Feel free to add as many trees as you wish, but also make sure to leave room for the trees in the background.

With the same brush, start to paint the greenery of the trees. I suggest starting at the trunk of the tree and then moving out for a narrowing brush stroke. Make sure to start with smaller brush stroke at the top of the tree and then add in length as you move closer to the bottom of the tree. For a more realistic effect, use lighter color towards the top of the tree, and darken towards the bottom.

For a misty look, do the opposite for the trees in the background; start with a darker shade towards the top, and allow the paint to get lighter towards the bottom. Do not let the background trees touch the trees in the front to maintain the misty mountain appearance.

In order to make the trees more realistic than in the samples, feel free to add more color variation amongst the trees. Another way to add a more realistic feel to the trees would be to

shade the branches by adding darker colors mainly towards the bottom and consistently to one side.

Get a little creative with your piece as well… Add a word or quote in the sky, maybe some mountains, a moon, or some birds. Do something imaginative to make it your own. Most importantly, especially if you want to track your personal improvement as an artist, make sure to sign and date your masterpiece!

Contest: Create your own water color painting of trees to paint as instructed in our article or pick your own image to create.   In the empty space on your art creation put an inspirational saying or word(s) and we will add your t-shirt design to our T's 4 Hope t-shirt collection. If we pick your masterpiece, we will send you a FREE T's 4 Hope t-shirt with your design. Design space is not greater than 12"x12", not less than 10"x10". T's 4 Hope's website is: **https://www.ts4hope.com/shop**