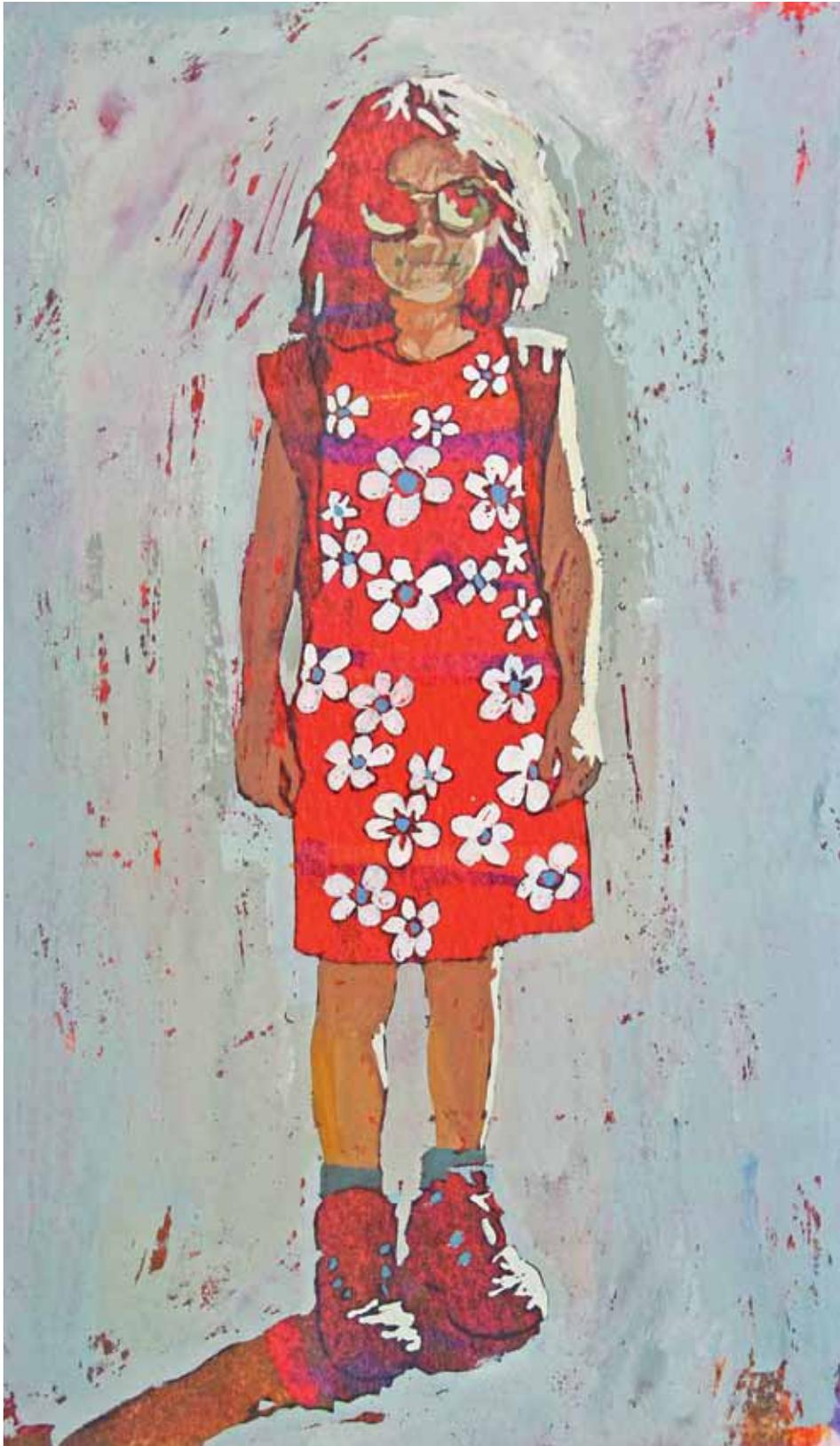


Illustrating in layers

Award-winning painter Chris Rigby introduces three illustration techniques to try that involve building up colour and tone in unusual and experimental ways



→ INK AND GOUACHE

WHAT IT IS...

A bold mix of mediums that add controlled highlights to darker, decorative areas. Working over darker ink will encourage you to employ bolder painting methods.

WHAT YOU NEED...

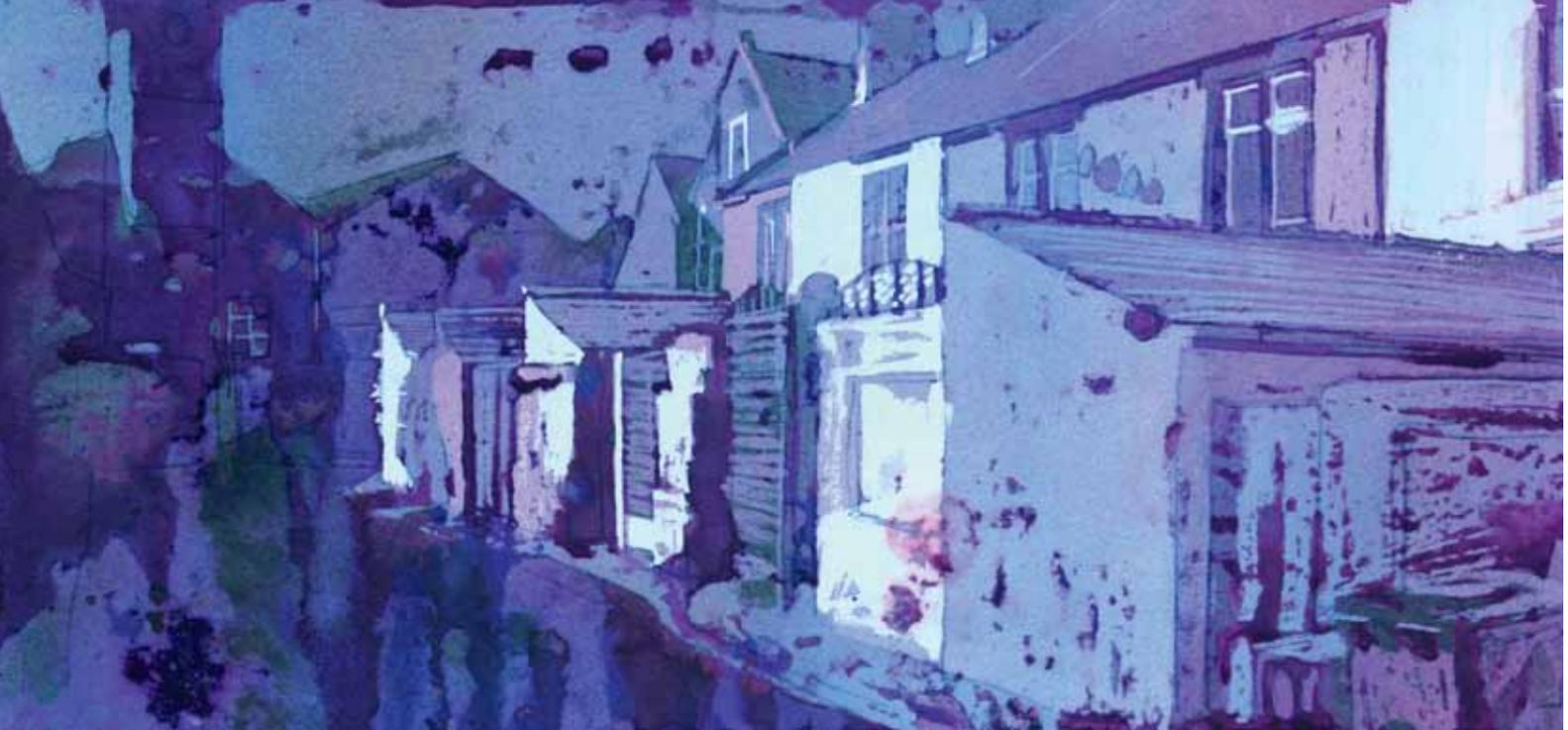
- A sheet of stretched, hot-pressed watercolour paper
- A selection of Winsor & Newton drawing inks
- A selection of Designers' gouache
- A wash brush
- A selection of watercolour brushes
- Distilled water

HOW TO DO IT...

- Sketch your image with relatively heavy pencil lines – even under a light coat(s) of ink it may be difficult to find them. You will usually be able to disguise most lines with gouache later if they bother you.
- Apply the ink as you would a thin watercolour wash in order to maintain luminosity. Thin the ink with distilled water – tap water can separate the pigment from the medium.
- Drop in colours where you want them to create your desired effect. You could build up a surface over two or three layers if you wish. Leave to dry.
- Mix the gouache to the consistency of double cream and paint it over the ink. How and where you apply it depends on your design but to help you decide, remember the basic rule of thumb: shadow = ink, light = gouache. You can't really do a light gouache (or watercolour) wash over ink because it will resist – you have to use a relatively thick gouache mix to make it stick.

PERFECT FOR...

Architecture – ink and gouache is great for that mix of strong bold shapes and clearly defined areas of light and shade. >



→ GUM AND INK

WHAT IT IS...

A layering of gum Arabic and drawing ink. The unpredictable, accidental nature of the process leads to interesting surprises at the final reveal.

WHAT YOU NEED...

- A sheet of stretched, hot-pressed watercolour paper
- A sheet of tracing paper or carbon copy paper
- A selection of drawing inks
- Gum Arabic
- An airbrush
- A wide, wash brush
- A finer brush for detail
- A reference image

HOW TO DO IT...

- Start by tracing down your image onto the watercolour paper. Don't be afraid to use

heavy lines, as they will be hard to see by the end of the process.

- Apply a layer of ink using the wash brush – this acts as a ground to kill the whiteness of the paper.
- Once dry use a fine-detail brush to apply your first spots of gum Arabic to the very lightest of the highlights in the image. Wait for this to dry.
- Apply a layer of ink. It is necessary to use an airbrush for this, so as not to disturb the gum. Use the same colour or a variety of different colours depending on the effect you want, until the whole image has been covered. Allow to dry.
- Repeat the previous two stages several times, blocking in successively darker tones with each layer of gum.
- The next layer of ink will be applied as a wash. Have a good quantity of different coloured inks at the ready. Sit the picture up so that the ink can run down the surface. Starting at the top and working down, apply

the wash in single, confident, horizontal strokes, taking care never to go over the same area twice. Make sure the brush is well loaded and use a different colour with each stroke. Leave to dry.

- Apply more gum. You may have to go over areas previously blocked in as the wash can wash the ink away in places. Leave it to dry completely.
- This is the exciting part. Run a shower over the entire image to rinse away the gum. Use a soft wash brush to gently remove more stubborn areas. Ideally, you will have a successful final image. However, sometimes more ink washes off than intended. If this happens, touch up the painting with gouache in similar colours to the ink.

PERFECT FOR...

Conveying a strong sense of contrast, such as figures emerging from a dark surround or objects with strong, sharp highlights. Buildings and street scenes also work well.

→ RUB BACK

WHAT IT IS...

A painting technique that involves adding layers of gouache and wiping it back, similar to the reduction method used in relief printmaking.

WHAT YOU NEED...

- A stiff painting surface, such as mount card
- A sheet of tracing paper or carbon copy paper
- Gesso
- A selection of Designers' gouache
- Acrylic gloss medium
- A wash brush
- A pointed stick
- Cotton wool

HOW TO DO IT...

- Prepare the painting surface with gesso. Leave the brushwork visible for texture.
- Print your image to the required size and trace it down, paying attention to areas of light and shade, as well as any detailed patterns. Give yourself as much information as possible with which to work.
- Choose a nice bright colour of gouache (to keep it as bright as possible, avoid mixing pigments). Lay down the first wash of gouache across the entire surface.
- Wet small pieces of cotton wool with clean water and use them to wipe away the gouache from the areas on which it is not required. The longer you leave the gouache to dry, the more likely it is to leave some kind of staining when you wipe it off – therefore if there are areas you want to keep clean, start

wiping them while the paint is still wet. For finer details, try sharpening the end of an old brush and wrapping cotton wool around it.

- Once the gouache is dry, apply a coat of acrylic gloss medium to seal it – this can be applied with a brush, as gouache on gesso is fairly stable.
- Apply a second layer of gouache. This needs to be applied with some rigour, as the acrylic gloss medium will resist it at first. Persevere and eventually it will stick. In this instance, you can allow the paint to dry without fear of staining as it lifts very easily off the acrylic base. Repeat as required.

PERFECT FOR...

The soft edges you can create lend themselves well to depictions of the human form. 

