Water Color Application

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

You are now able to draw your own figures and to place your designs on them. In order, however, to give your design such an appearance as will attract the eye of the manufacturer, you must do more than make a mere pencil sketch. You are required to work up your design in color. The colors you use may not always be favored by the manufacturer—he may even discard them, and use colors that suit his own taste; but in any event, color work serves to make a design more attractive, and therefore wins the attention of the observer more readily.

You are familiar with the theory of color and color harmony. You know that all colors have definite meanings, and you know which colors can and which colors cannot be combined, so as to produce an harmonious effect.

This knowledge alone will not suffice. You must be able to put your knowledge to the practical test, and actually produce the desired effect when working with the brush.

A design is best colored when flat tones are used. In order to secure flat tones, you must be familiar with the proper method, and you must have practice. By continually working in the right way you will acquire skill and proficiency in handling your brush.

To begin with, work with the light tints. If you
have a palette before you, you can work out this little experiment: Put a little clean water in one of the hollows in your palette. Wet the brush, touch it to the color blue, and mix the color with the water in the hollow. This produces a light tone of blue. With a pencil, sketch a square about two inches on each side. Fill this with the flat tone of blue you have mixed.

There is no set rule as to the direction of your strokes; but there is one absolute rule which must be followed, and that is, all the strokes must go in the same direction. In other words, if you prefer to work from the top downward, rather than from side to side, you may do so; but you must be sure that all your strokes follow this direction; otherwise your color work will have a streaky, uneven appearance.

If you can conveniently provide yourself with a drawing board, it will be a good idea to do so. However, a bread board or any flat surface will serve the purpose. Have your board and paper tilted somewhat when working, so that the wet colors may run down a little, but not too much. The brush should be wet enough to permit the color to run down if the board is held at a steep angle, but not so that it will run when the board is slightly tilted.

Your brush should be dipped into the pool of color, and then pressed just a little against the edge of the palette in order to dry it a bit. Work in long, quick strokes, with the flat surface of the brush. Agility in making these strokes is indispensable, for the first brush stroke should not yet be dry when you have finished the last one.

If you desire to color an oblong, working with down-
ward strokes, you should begin at the upper left-hand corner and work from top to bottom. At the end of each stroke, lift your brush from the paper and start the next stroke from the top.

Before you put any color on your brush, stir up the color in the pool. Then dip your brush again, and dry it a little by pressing it against the side of the palette. After coloring the entire space, you will find that there will be a little pool of color at the bottom. This can be cleared up with your brush, after you have washed it in clean water and dried it off somewhat.

It is good practice to have on hand two brushes, one to be used for the purpose of clearing up these little pools of water that form at the bottom, due to the tilting of the board.

Follow the same method in working from side to side. Always lift your brush from the paper after making a stroke, and start your next stroke beside the preceding one and in the same direction.

There is another point on which you must be careful. Do not touch up wet water color. Unless a tone is absolutely dry, you should not attempt to cover it with another. If you do, you will produce a streaky, uneven appearance.

In coloring a design, you must first work up your sketch accurately in pencil. Then lay a flat tone of color over this drawing. If there should be a break in the costume, as for instance a sash, which would separate the waist from the skirt, you should first color the waist and then the skirt. To represent shadows you should use the darker tones of color.

With a knowledge of the fundamentals of color theory and color harmony, you should experience no
difficulty in representing a design on paper, well sketched and tastefully colored. Always bear in mind the principles given you. If you follow them closely, you will soon find that your work will assume that much-desired professional appearance that is the key to success.