

# Fun & Joy

Newsletter from YongChen.com

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## Demonstration

### One of my methods of painting a still-life watercolor

#### Still-life setting and drawing

After I spent enough time arranging my still-life setting, I started from a drawing to define the space and shapes.



In the process of setting up, I have already spent time thinking through the concept, the mood, the space (include the negative space), and how the colors would work together. In the drawing step, I did a final evaluation of the setting till I was completely satisfied with the arrangement.



#### Start from the main subjects

There are a number of ways to begin a watercolor painting. In this demonstration, I started the painting from the main subjects.

I first put yellow into the area for the bananas, then I mixed yellows and reds to define the areas for the mandarin oranges and the two persimmons. As you may noticed, I left some blank areas within the

oranges and the persimmons which will be used for the highlights and leaves of the fruits.

#### Balance the dark and the light areas

Next I worked on the fabrics and worked to develop the color and value relationship between the major areas.

I washed the top and left dark fabric areas with a mixture of blue, red and burnt sienna. In the light-color fabric area I mixed burnt umber and yellow with good amount of water to paint the shadows.



I squinted my eyes when I looked at the still-life setting so that I would avoid noticing the small details, thus keeping my focus on the balance of the major areas. Each wash and stroke on the painting needed to work together to bring out the concept and impression of the painting that I had developed in my mind while creating the initial setting.

#### Bring the subjects to life

When I have accomplished the overall dark and light value and color balance, I started to work on the form of the main



subjects.

This was the time to enrich the colors of the subjects by defining the light and shadow. During this step, I paid close attention to the reflective colors from other subjects in the setting. As I developed a richer relationship among the subjects, I moved the color and value balance to the next level.


#### Proceed to details


I continued adding colors to the different areas of the composition one layer at a time. As I change one element, another would strike me as needing refinement. This became a continual process as I matched up the watercolor painting to my minds eye. This was how I could make the painting more detailed, interesting, and achieve a certain perfection.

This was the time to push the painting to fullness. I worked on defining the darkest area, the brightest area and other areas in between, to complete the balance.

This painting was completed in about one and a half hours.



 [View a video](#) on how this still-life in watercolor came to life

 [View a video](#) on how I prepared the setting for this watercolor still-life painting

■ This demonstration is provided by Yong Chen. For more painting technique demonstrations, please visit our [online learning center](#). We love see your work, please email your artwork picture to [friends@yongchen.com](mailto:friends@yongchen.com). You may see it posted on our site!

## Suggestions

### Color and value in a water-color painting

Original painting by Anne Davis,  
 Suggestions by Yong Chen



The craft and techniques used in this painting are great. The colors are vivid and the style is relaxed and loose.

The painting is beautiful as it is, but my suggestions for further experimentation are to add more depth and values to the painting which would improve the balance of colors.

#### Adjust the color balance and value

First, I'd deepen the colors of the two pillows on the left and right of the two people.

I'd apply a layer of red on the pillow on the right, then I would mix red and burnt sienna to wash on the pillow on the left. This would tone down the area next to the main subject, the people,

while at the same time adding stronger value and visual variety to the whole painting.

#### Enrich the neighboring colors

I would want to push the colors more in the direction of this unique style. Still working to the left and right of the figures, I'd make the horizontal red strokes brighter, which adds more contrast with the background as well as the figures.

#### Add variety of colors to the vertical area

I'd like to break the same color tone in the vertical area of the sofa by applying a glaze with burnt umber. The value change would create a sense of space.

#### Add darker value to the background

Next, I'd like to apply a wash with blue to the background. This would push back the space in the background, and move the focus of attention to the two main subjects.

#### Final Touch

As the final touch, I'd add a bit more definition and suggestion to the garment inside the arms of the boy and the girl.

To read the illustrated full version of this critique, please [click here](#) to visit our online learning center.

### Instructions to Submit Materials for Critique

Send an email to:  
[critique@yongchen.com](mailto:critique@yongchen.com)

In your email, please state clearly your name, your age, and the medium of your art work. You must attach a digital picture of your artwork in JPG format (no smaller than 300 pixels by 200 pixels). The image you submit must be of an original work of art created solely by yourself.

We thank you in advance for your interest in our critique service, but we must also apologize because we simply can't critique every entry submitted. We do reserve the right to display all submitted works on our site without compensation or notification; however, you as the artist will receive full credit for works used on our site.

### About the Artist: Yong Chen

Born in China, Yong Chen developed an interest in art at the early age of 4. A natural artist with a superb eye for beauty, Yong has been teaching painting techniques since the age of 13.

After graduating from college in China and teaching high school art for five years, Yong moved to Boston and studied illustration at the Massachusetts College of Art. Starting soon after his graduation until 1998, Yong taught Watercolor Painting, Watercolor Portraiture classes and workshops at the Massachusetts College of Art and Rivier College. Since then, Yong has been a successful graphic artist and corporate branding expert as well as a children's book illustrator. His published works include *Finding Joy*, *Miz Fannie Mae's Fine New Easter Hat*, *Starfish Summer*, *Swimming with Sharks*, and *Maria's Loose Tooth*.

Yong has also had several solo exhibits of his original artwork in Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

In addition to painting and teaching, Yong works with fellow artists to promote their works in the global marketplace through [www.worldgalleryonline.com](http://www.worldgalleryonline.com).

To learn more about Yong Chen, we invite you to visit [www.yongchen.com/chen](http://www.yongchen.com/chen)

## What's New



### Artists' Community Forum

We are pleased to introduce to you our new Artists' Community Forum. We are excited because we feel that this will bring a higher level of communication between the members of our community and ourselves.

So [come to the forum](#), sign up, and select a username and an avatar that you are comfortable with. Let the community know you, and if you can, please help others in the community.

[www.yongchen.com/aforum](http://www.yongchen.com/aforum)

We know that there are many experienced and beginning artists in our community. This forum can be used to exchange ideas, ask questions and get answers from the community and from us. We expect that a lot of good information will be shared.