



How to Paint With Coffee Granules

By [Bob Davies](#) on 25th April, 2020

Introduction

For the Art Tutor Isolation Challenge (Day 9 - Random) I added a quick lesson which allows anyone to make a simple, but satisfying painting using some 'Random' materials

I've deliberately used an old, fairly battered child's paintbrush and there's only one colour - brown.

If you've got watercolours, or just cheap kid's paints then that's fine, but if you haven't, not to worry!

Anyone can try it!

It's in staged photos and my paint is ... ***Instant coffee granules!!***

The lesson is about what we call good tonal values (where we have lights and darks next to each other so they stand out better).

The lightest lights and darkest darks give a nice 'punch' to the picture, turn on the sunlight and avoid that dead, dull atmosphere that often exists in paintings where tonal contrast hasn't been effectively observed.

There are only four shades, which I've dabbed at the bottom of the picture as we progress, so you can judge the strength of your coffee/paint easier.

I've also used thickish drawing paper (not printer paper as it'll buckle when wet) but you could also use any thin card you may have lying around.

It will work with the inside of cereal packets or even the back of any junk mail that may be printed on thicker paper.

Materials

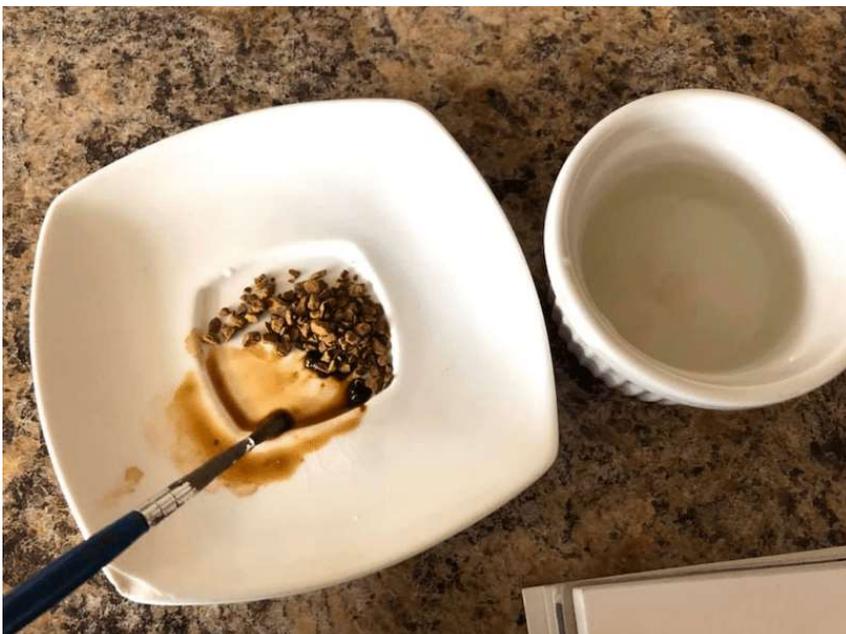
All you need is shown in this first photo - your 'paint', a little pot of water, a brush and pencil, plus your painting surface.

2-min.png



Add just a brushful of water at a time to better control the strength of colour...

3-min.png



Getting Started

Here's the basic sketch. Not a lot of drawing skill required, with a couple of oblongs for the building, an angled oblong (parallelogram) for the roof and a couple more small oblongs for the chimney.

The trees can be virtually any shape you want as long as they rise above the cottage.

4-min.png



The first and lightest stage is added for the roof and front of the cottage which will be catching the sunlight.

5-min.png



Here it is when dry, with a splash of the colour at the bottom of the picture as a reference.

6-min.png



Making It Three- Dimensional

Now a stronger, darker colour to catch the shadowed side of the building. Note the contrasting patches at the bottom of the photo.

7-min.png



Now pull in some more coffee granules so you can get a mix that is darker again for the trees.

8-min.png



Achieving Good Tonal Contrast

Add this stronger colour behind the cottage. See how it makes the building stand out against the foliage - even the darker wall shadow appears light.

9-min.png



With a slightly dampened brush extend the trees either side so they're a bit lighter.

10-min.png

This helps to keep the lightest lights and darkest darks around the building itself and also adds depth to the picture as the lighter trees look further away.

Use some of the tree mix to loosely paint the chimney pots, door and the windows. A couple of vertical strokes is all that's needed.



Don't forget to put a single stroke underneath the eaves to represent the shadow caused by the overhang of the roof.

Now a really dark mix for the small bush in front of the cottage...

11-min.png



Adding Further Interest

Nearly there! This time dampen your brush with water - that's damp, not flooded!

12-min.png



Now slightly agitate the side wall to create a variation in tone to add further interest. Keeping the brush just damp will assist here.

You can add a darker colour on the right and gently lift it out with the damp brush towards the left edge of the wall - and then stop!

Note how the colour is dark on the right hand end of the side wall, but lightens off towards the back of the cottage.

Varying the tones in the wall like this is a simple but effective dodge when you realise two similar toned areas (in this case, the trees and the side wall) are adjacent and would otherwise get 'lost' against each other.

Now, with some very pale tones, sweep your brush sideways across the ground in front of the cottage, leaving the pathway unpainted as well as some other patches.

Keeping these strokes to the minimum will make them look fresher and sunnier rather than if you fiddle and try to be too precise.

13-min.png



Completion

By dabbing the damp brush, you can lift out a few random patches in the bush for added texture and light and now you have your finished picture!

14-min.png



So do have a go - get the kids involved because it's a picture that's simple enough, but will really help them - and maybe you - with those tonal values!

Enjoy!

Art Isolation Challenge Facebook Group

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