

Empire

Last month **Helen Campbell** took you through the processes needed to paint a flower with botanical accuracy. This month build your skills and confidence in watercolour by painting a simple object – an apple – using the wet-on-dry layering technique

The technique I will use for this painting is wet on dry as this method gives me complete control, allowing the paint to be placed exactly where I need it. I always begin my paintings by seeking out the strongest highlights and reflected light. I see that there are a few strong highlights on both the right and left-hand side where the light is reflected, and the two highlights toward the centre. It is important to retain these highlights, as it will give the completed painting a sense of realism.

As you follow me through this demonstration, it's vital that you leave each layer of watercolour to dry before applying the next.

► The reference photograph: an Empire apple



You will need

■ Surface

- Arches hot-pressed 300gsm 6¾x6¼in. (17x17cm)

■ Brushes

- Rosemary & Co. spotter No. 3
- Winsor & Newton Series 7 miniature No. 1

■ Winsor & Newton Professional Water Colour

- Scarlet lake
- Permanent rose
- Payne's grey
- Quinacridone gold
- Burnt umber
- Raw umber
- Burnt sienna
- Cadmium scarlet
- Quinacridone red
- Perylene violet
- Cobalt violet

■ Holbein watercolour

- Permanent magenta
- Bright violet

■ Daniel Smith watercolour

- Pyrrole crimson

Step 1 ►

1 Using a mechanical pencil, make a simple outline. The drawing should be clean, crisp and definitely not sketchy.

2 Using a pale mix of Payne's grey and cobalt violet with the No. 3 spotter, begin painting around the strong, central highlight and the right and left-hand edges. Quickly clean the brush in water and blend this into the paper.

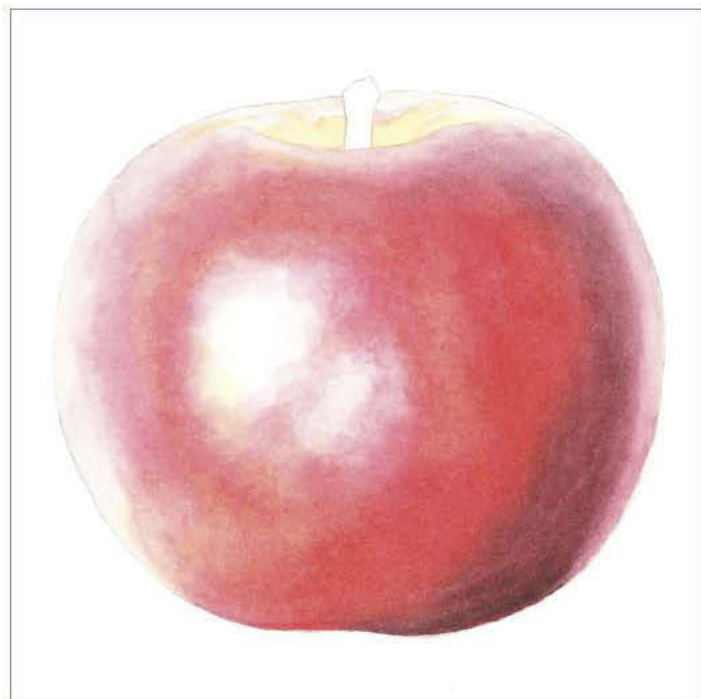
3 The apple has an overall orange/red colour. Mix a pale wash of scarlet lake and permanent rose, and place it everywhere apart from the highlight wash you've just done. At this stage it doesn't matter if the wash is patchy.





▲ Step 2

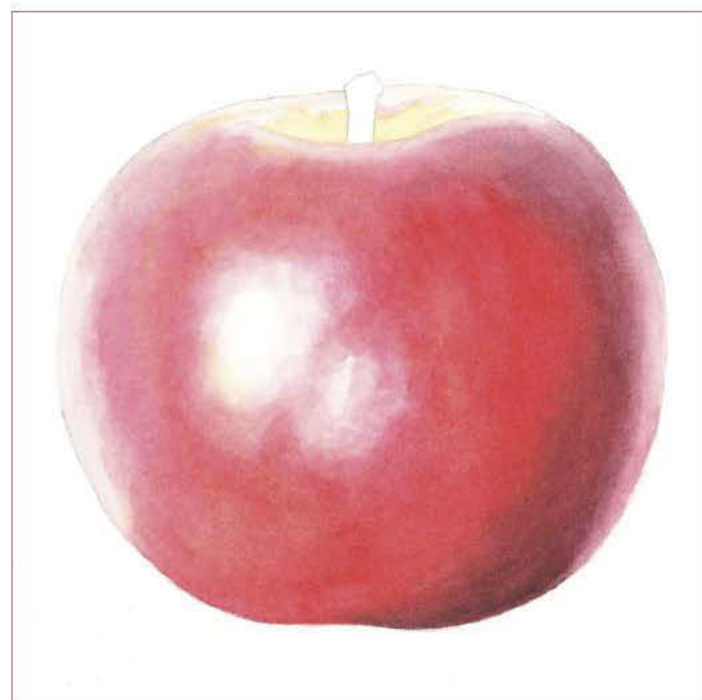
With the initial washes in place as a guide, you can now safely begin to build up the colour slowly. At this point, mix a slightly stronger wash of scarlet lake and permanent rose and apply over the 'red' wash only. Be careful not to take any of the wash into the highlights you've just painted.



▲ Step 3

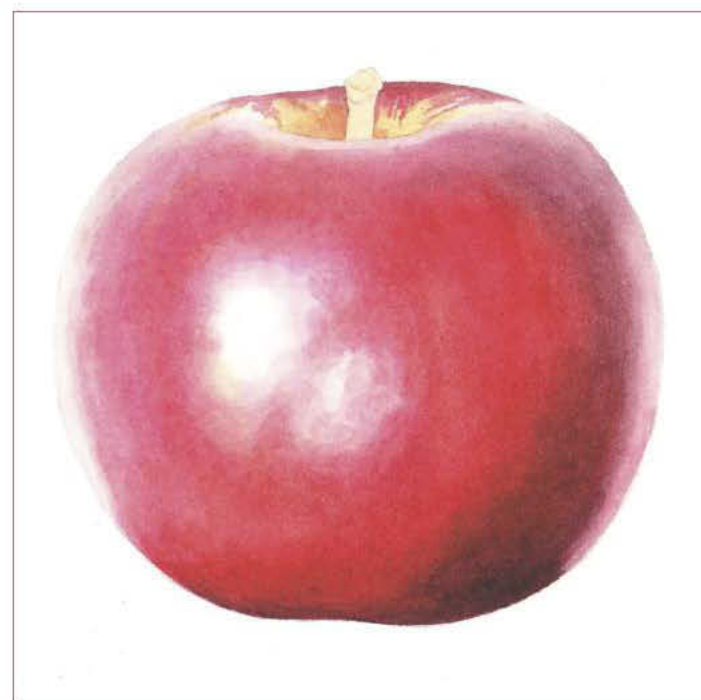
1 Paying attention to the darker areas on the right-hand side and towards the bottom, mix pyrrole crimson and Payne's grey to a fairly thick consistency. Begin to apply this to the bottom right-hand side, carefully blending into the existing highlight and slowly merging the colours together using a clean, damp brush.

2 Add a little water to the mix and apply this over the top right-hand highlight. Then add a small amount of quinacridone gold to the area at the top and around the stalk.



▲ Step 4

Continue to strengthen the colour using a slightly thicker mix of scarlet lake and permanent rose.



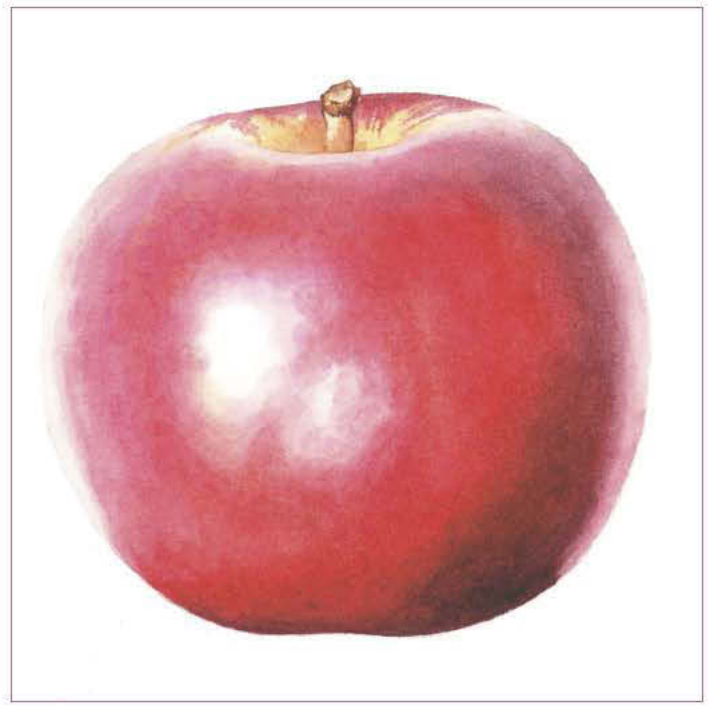
▲ Step 5

1 Looking now at the top detail, apply a weak wash of raw umber all over the stalk.

2 Mix pyrrole crimson to a thick consistency and apply to the area behind the stalk, paying attention to the pattern you can see there.

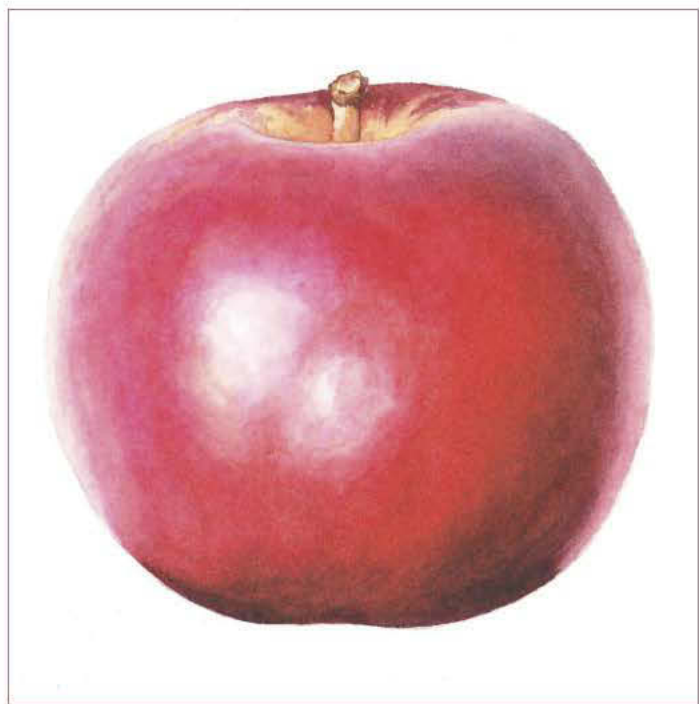


▲ The reference photograph: an Empire apple



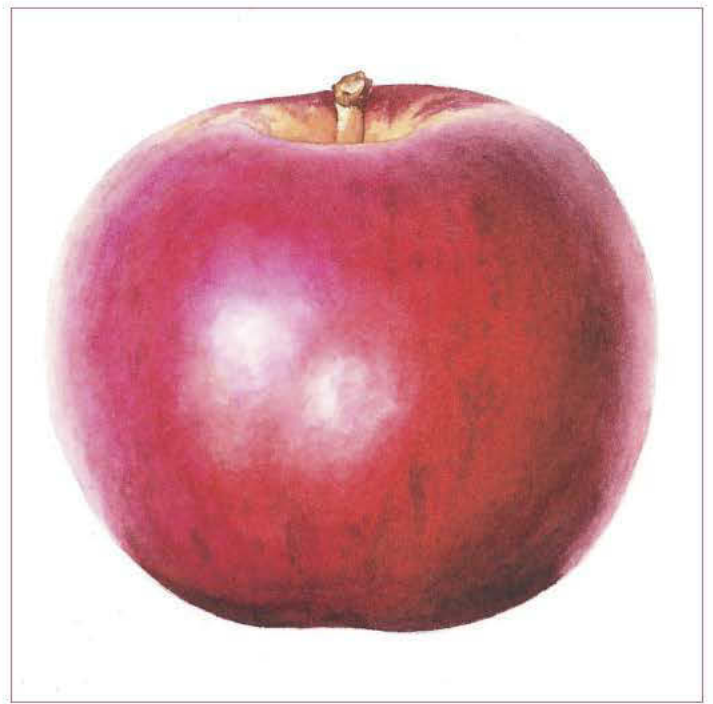
▲ Step 6

Returning to the stalk, apply cadmium scarlet and quinacridone gold around the area closest to the stalk then apply a thick wash of burnt sienna to both sides and around the top to create form.



▲ Step 8

1 Look now at the markings. Use a thick dryish mix of perylene violet and the No. 1 brush and apply using a 'wiggling' motion, which follows the contour of the apple.
2 Add water to the mix and apply this over the highlights.



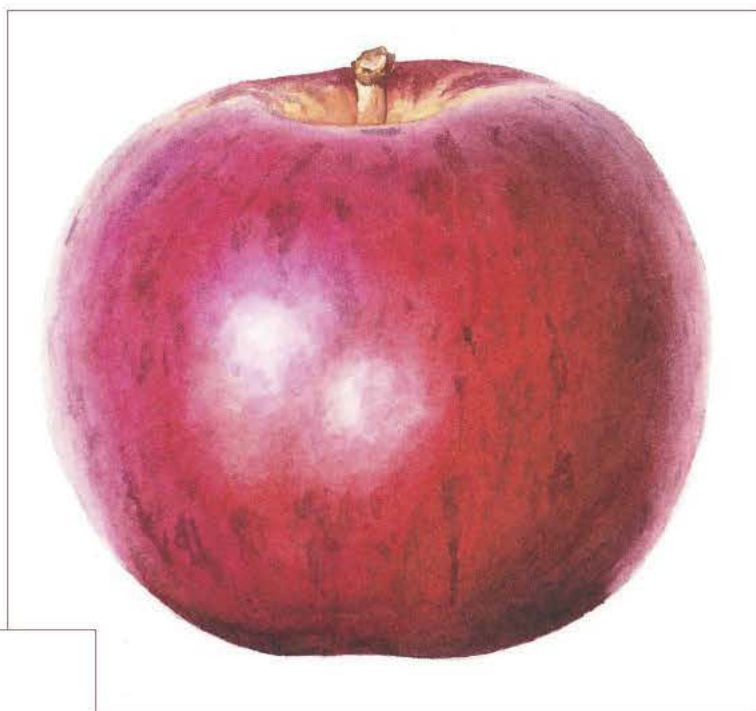
▲ Step 7

1 At this point you will need to strengthen the overall colour and make a few tonal adjustments. With a fairly strong mix of perylene violet, take this wash over the entire apple, carefully avoiding the highlights as before.
2 Add water to the mix and place this very weak wash over the highlights to merge the colours together.
3 Mix a thick wash of Payne's grey and pyrrole crimson and add this to the existing darker colours to strengthen.

Step 9 ▶

1 At this stage you can see the apple requires a unifying wash. For this, use a thick wash of permanent magenta and apply over the entire apple, again avoiding the highlights.

2 When this wash has settled, go over the markings to enhance and add more Payne's grey and pyrrole crimson on the darker areas.

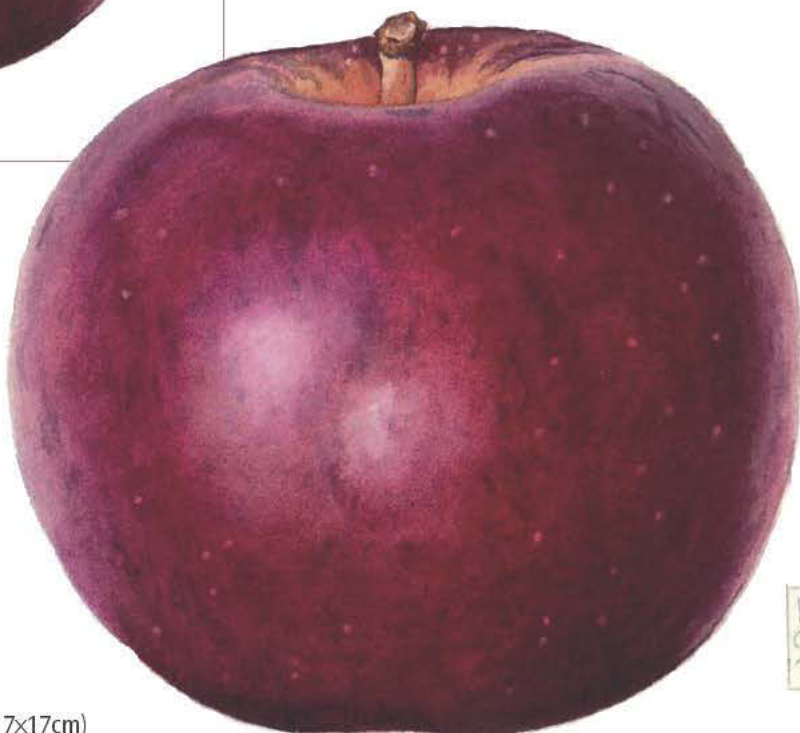
**◀ Step 10**

With all the elements now in place, add a further wash of permanent magenta to deepen the colour.

▼ Step 11

1 Using the same mix, enhance the area at the top of the apple and around the stalk.

2 Finally lift out the lenticels (the little dots) with a clean, damp No. 1 brush and 'wiggling' the paint until you can feel it move. Then lift off with kitchen paper. Do this over the entire apple.

**Helen Campbell**

Helen has been painting professionally since 2010. She was awarded a Silver Gilt medal by The Royal Horticultural Society for her work this year and now runs courses from her studio in the Cotswolds village of Winchcombe. For more information visit www.helencampbellart.co.uk or email info@helencampbellart.co.uk.

▶ The finished study *Empire*, watercolour, 6½×6¾in. (17×17cm)