

## Susie's Watercolor Tips

I love to paint with watercolor and I enjoy sharing what I've learned with others! I hope these short tutorials and watercolor tips will inspire you and tempt you to try them in your own paintings. It takes practice, sometimes a lot of practice but it's worth the effort. Have fun and enjoy the journey! Happy Painting!

One way to add special interest to any seascape painting that has a sandy beach is to add footprints in the sand.

For the method I'll show you here, you first need to dampen the entire area where you want the footprints to be placed with clear water. Wet your paper well beyond where you will be painting. (It's ok to put water over dried watercolor paint.) By painting into the damp area the edges will be soft (not hard) -that's important for the ground to look sandy.

Next, paint the foot shaped prints starting with the nearest point and getting smaller and lighter in color as the footprints move into the distance.



Allow the footprints to dry completely.

These footprints could have been found on an abandoned beach, but I decided that adding a little girl carrying a beach bucket would add more interest to my painting.

You can see in this second illustration where I have started to paint in the shape of the girl. The previously painted water was very pale so it was easy to paint over it. (The bathing suit will cover the water line.)

Again, allow this to dry completely.

Before I can add the shadows to my painting I need to decide which direction the light is coming from.



Using a clear piece of transparency film and a sharpie marker I try drawing in some shadow shapes over the contours of the dunes to see what works better. This is a useful tool to allow you to test your ideas before you add them to your painting. In the example on the left I notice the girls shadow minimizes the impact of the footprints



To create a better composition I selected this one with the light coming from the right and pointing toward my focal point instead of away from where I want the viewers eye to go. The shadows are painted with a cool grayed purple and slant slightly downward to depict the rolling contour of the sand dunes.