



BRUSH DRAWING
INSTRUCTION & PROCESS

SECOND EDITION

BY

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Brush Drawing: A Basic Course
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Adapted and expanded on from *The A.L. Complete Course of Brush Drawing* by Emeline Steinthal and A. Leach

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ABOUT THE BRUSH DRAWING COURSE

In an age where images on a screen pass by quicker than thought, brush drawing encourages us to slow down and thoughtfully observe.

In a society of clicking, tapping, and swiping, these carefully graduated lessons help establish a freedom of touch with a brush and accuracy of eye that will, in turn, help reproduce what the eye sees or the imagination envisions. Whether decorating the pages of a bullet journal with botanical designs, illustrating a poem, or making an entry in a nature notebook, brush drawing becomes a means to appreciate, gather, and express beauty and form. We draw from nature and are, in turn, drawn to nature.

This course in brush drawing with watercolor features carefully prepared lessons that lead one step-by-step from the most basic brush exercises to beginning painting from nature. Visual and written instructions for each lesson are laid out on 32 cards along with helpful video demonstrations, important how-tos, a list of materials needed, and suggested natural objects for early to more advanced brush drawing work.

As a self-paced program of study it may take only a number of weeks for one to complete while a teacher with no formal art training may lead students through the 30-minute lessons over the course of a few months or a school year.

materials to begin

- 2 round watercolor brushes
- 1 tube of watercolor paint
- 1 small saucer
- 1 container for clean water
- 1 pad of 1" grid paper
- Internet-connected device for playing video demonstrations



materials for lessons from nature

- 1 basic watercolor set in either pan or tubes
- Extra saucers or palette for color mixing
- Notebook or unlined paper that accepts watercolor
- Models from nature
- Paper tape, also known as washi-tape, or masking tape
- White paper for mounting models

watercolor brushes come in a variety of shapes, sizes, costs, and hair types. A #4 and #6 short-handled round watercolor brush with a good point are suggested to begin. If those sizes are unavailable, just be sure to use both a small and a larger brush. The ability of the brush to hold its point and shape while also laying down color evenly is of more importance than the price. The lessons as well as the original plates were made using a variety of synthetic and synthetic-nat-

ural hair blend (synthetic/sable or synthetic/squirrel hair) brushes ranging from inexpensive to moderately priced.

watercolor paint comes in either pan or tube. A student grade tube in any color is suggested before lessons from nature is begun. Lesson Cards 1-28 were done in Prussian Blue and Lessons 29-30 in Sap Green.

Tube watercolor is favored in the beginning lessons for its efficiency in diluting just once for use during the entire lesson. Mix a small saucer of paint with water until the consistency is somewhat like that of ballpoint pen ink. Add more water or color until reaching the desired consistency. Any leftover paint can usually be reconstituted with a few drops of water. Working with pan watercolor is possible, just be aware that it

will take a bit more time throughout the lesson. With economy, a .25 fl. oz. tube should take one through the course while a .5 fl. oz. tube is advised for lessons with more students. At Lesson 29, when more colors are introduced, you may choose to use tube, pan, or both at your discretion.

paper

Grids are utilized in both the lesson cards and exercise paper to keep work neat and orderly and train the eye in fixing angles and distance. The Brush Drawing course does not use the “grid method” of drawing for reproducing images. Once lessons from models or natural objects are begun, plain paper that will accept watercolor should be used. Mixed media paper is fine to use and expensive watercolor paper is not a necessity. A quality 1” gridded paper pad is available through Simply Charlotte Mason.

holding and handling the brush

The brush should be held in a basic pencil grip between the thumb and first two fingers with the brush being kept as vertical as possible. While a pencil is normally held at an angle of 45° to the page for writing, in brush drawing the brush remains perpendicular to the paper at 90° in the beginning strokes featured in this course.

The wrist is curved so that the point of the brush is always held toward you and no part of the hand or arm rests on the paper with the exception of the tip of the little finger. Though this position may seem awkward at first it will allow

NOTE: Though Prussian Blue is considered non-toxic, do not use everyday kitchen items still utilized for food. Non-porous containers are recommended. Please take necessary precautions to keep children or pets from ingesting paint. Store or dispose of any unused paint properly and wash all containers thoroughly.



for freedom of movement of the wrist and arm needed to foster control of the brush and development of a light yet firm touch.

making a brush impression



With the hand in the proper position and the *tip* or *point* of the brush kept toward you, lay the point down first then let the full length of the brush lie down before lifting it up so that a brush impression is left on the paper.

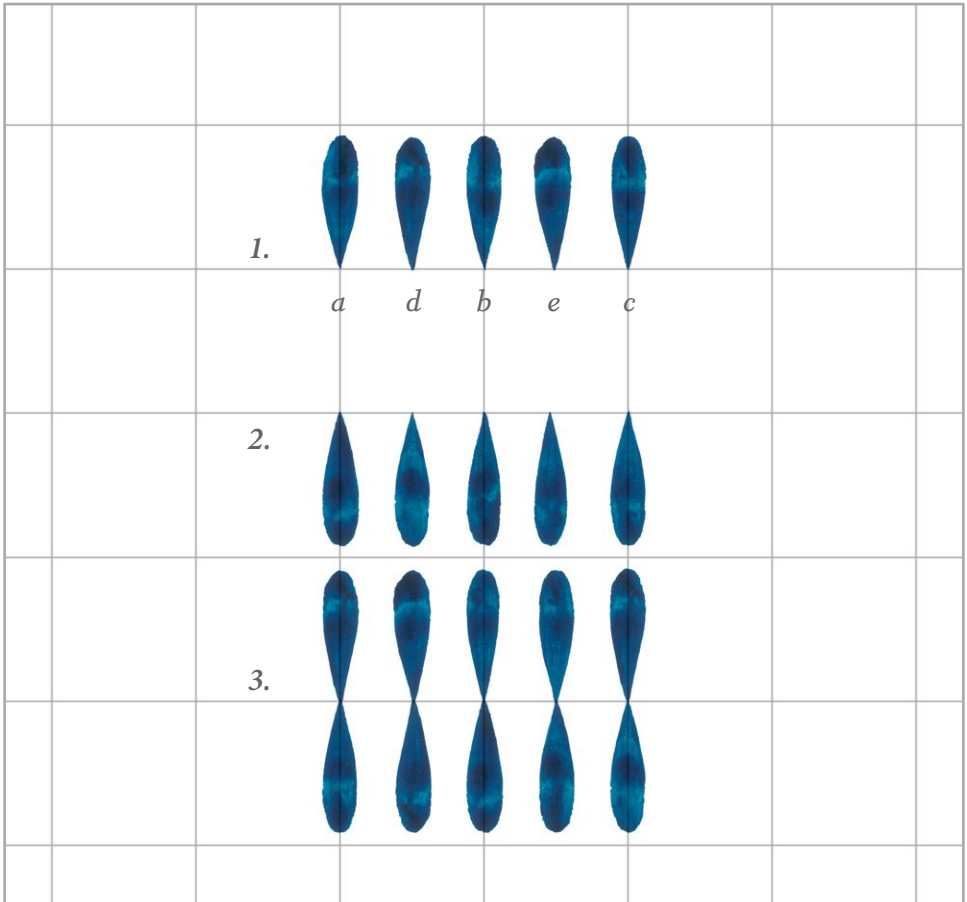
beginning brush drawing lessons

A majority of the lessons consist of a variety and multitude of brush exercises. Though tempting to skip them, these exercises are fundamental and should not be bypassed. Much like playing scales on a piano, the brush

exercises will help you develop control, evenness, a steady hand, and ease with the brush while you also gain accuracy and precision of the eye. Mastering technique and fundamentals first will make for a happy readiness in application when you do begin representing objects through brush drawing later.

After the brush exercises in the day's lesson have been accomplished, at least five to ten minutes of time should always be taken to engage the imagination by combining the forms learned into original designs. You might also find a specimen from nature and incorporate the strokes learned into a brush drawing of the object.

Full written instructions are provided for each lesson. They are mainly intended for use as you get the ground under your feet, to help clear up any confusion, or as an aid in instructing others. Try to fix in your mind's eye the placement of the brush impressions on the card before laying down your own; working toward moving your eye between card and paper less and less. Your reliance on written instruction should be minimal and, in either brush exercises or drawing from nature, you should observe position carefully in order to lay your brush down with confidence.

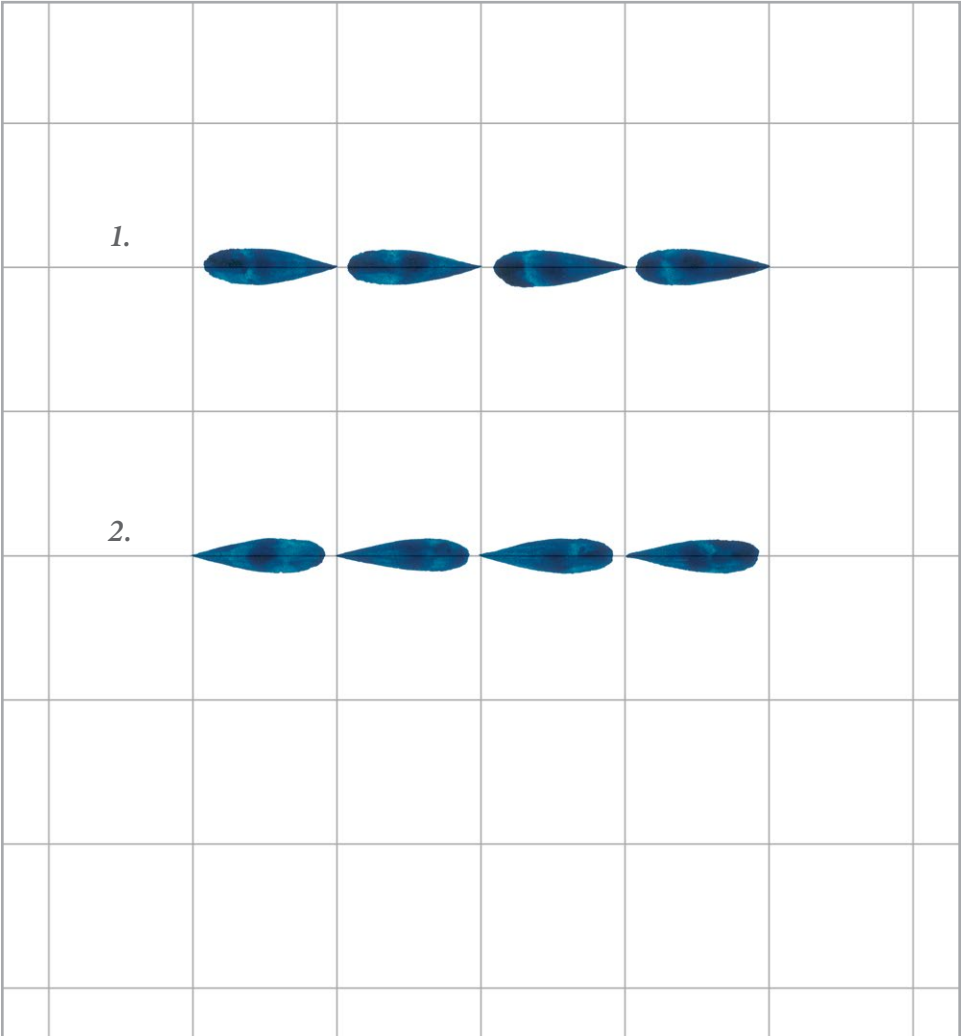


Do three full rows of each exercise across the paper using the larger brush.

1. With your paper in portrait orientation and the point of the brush kept toward you, lay down brush impressions **a**, **b**, and **c** as shown. Continue until the entire row is complete with an impression on each line. Next, lay down brush impressions between the first, shown as **d** and **e** — using your eye to get these as centered as possible. Do two more rows of this exercise, laying down all the brush impressions on the lines before going back to add those in the centers.
2. Rotate the paper 180° upside down to create a mirror image and repeat just as in the first exercise.
3. Make a border pattern on the remaining rows of your paper by putting the first two exercises together, letting the points just meet.
4. Spend some time making combinations and patterns from these exercises of your own design.

lesson 2.

horizontal

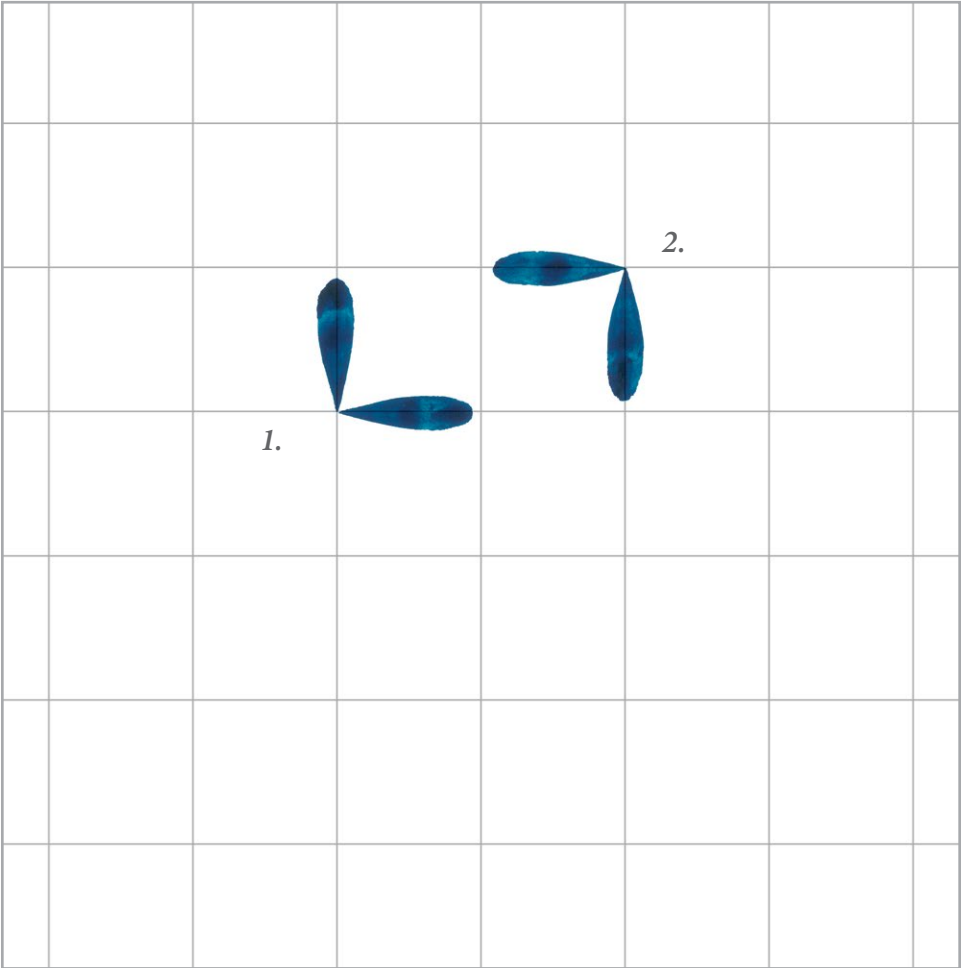


Do three full lines of each exercise using the larger brush.

- 1.** With your paper in landscape position, begin at the bottom. Place the point of the brush where the lines intersect, then lay the brush down fully before raising it back up. Repeat, with each brush impression placed above the preceding impression.
- 2.** Rotate the paper 180° and proceed as in the previous exercise.
- 3.** Using combinations from this lesson and the first, make a variety of different patterns of your own design.

lesson 3.

combination of vertical and horizontal



Do three full rows of each exercise before proceeding to the next.

1. With the paper in the portrait position lay down a brush impression on each vertical line. Next, turn the paper to the left so that it is in landscape position. With the point of your brush just meeting the point of the first, lay down your next brush impressions.

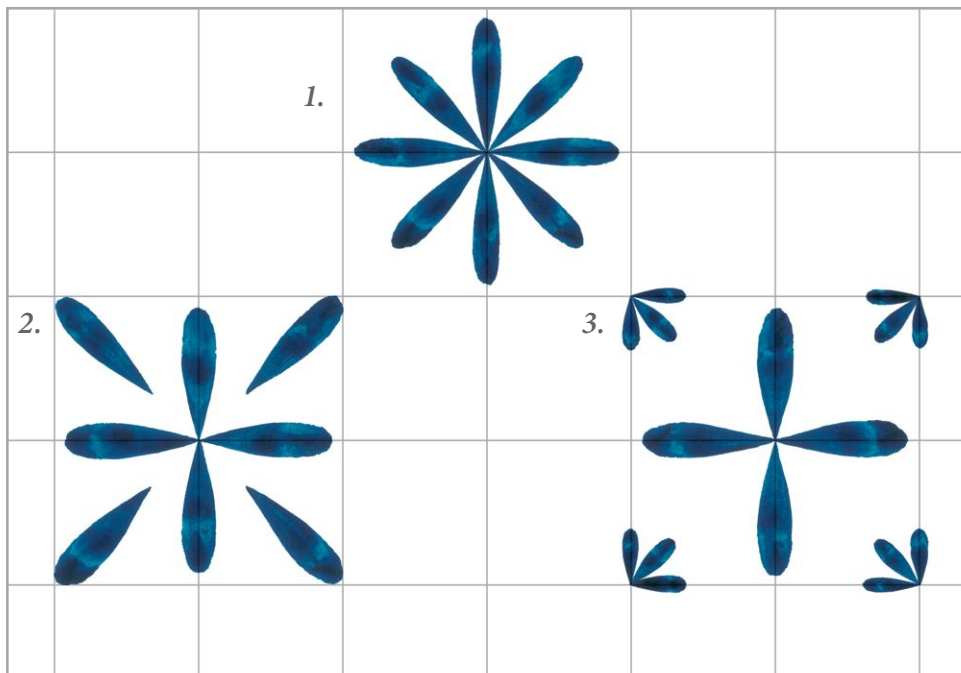
2. This will be worked as in the first exercise but this time begin with the paper

rotated clockwise to the landscape position before laying down a row of brush impressions. Now turn your paper clockwise again so that it is in the upside-down portrait position and place the next series of strokes with the points just touching.

3. Using combinations from all the lessons, make a variety of different patterns of your own design.

lesson 17.

slants, verticals and horizontals



Turn the paper only as much as necessary, curving the wrist to keep the brush point toward you.

Since so many points are just meeting, take care to get the point as fine as possible in these exercises. Paint each of the exercises in this lesson twice, using both the larger and smaller brush in the third exercise and observe carefully the starting and ending points in the fourth and fifth exercises. End by combining all the strokes into a design of your own imagination.

1. With your paper in the portrait position, lay a vertical impression on the vertical line. Place a slant to the left and the right of the initial impression. Rotate the paper and repeat until the design is complete.

2. Make a cross on the vertical and horizontal lines, rotating the paper as necessary. Using the eye to measure, place the point of the brush $\frac{1}{3}$ of the way from the center and lay it down in a slant that

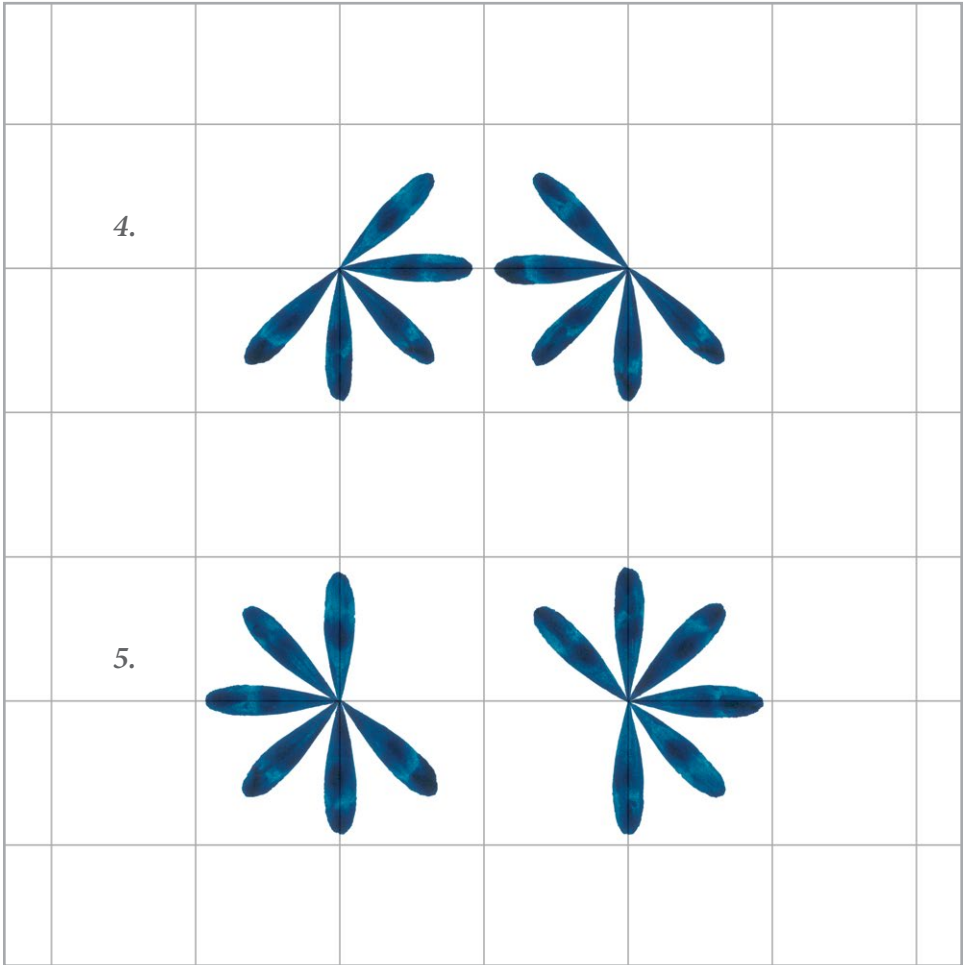
extends to the opposite corner. Continue in this way, rotating the paper as necessary to complete the design.

3. Begin by painting a cross on the vertical and horizontal lines as in the previous exercise. Switch to the smaller brush and — rotating the paper as necessary — lay down horizontal, vertical, and slant impressions in the corners opposite the cross.

CONTINUED ▶

lesson 17. (continued)

slants, verticals and horizontals



4. With the paper in the portrait position, place the point of the brush in the bottom left-hand corner of the square and lay it down toward the opposite corner. Rotating the paper counterclockwise as needed, place the next four impressions. Next, make the mirror image of the first design by repeating the previous steps but turning the paper clockwise each time, carefully observing the start and end points.

5. With the paper in the portrait position, lay a vertical impression and a slant to the left of it. Rotate the paper clockwise only as much as necessary to make the next four impressions. Make an upside-down mirror image of the first design by repeating the previous steps but rotating the paper counterclockwise each time, carefully observing the start and end points.

