

Goldfinch and Coneflower in Watercolor

Suggested Colors

- Lemon Yellow or any good yellow
- Black
- Pink/Purple – any Quinacridone red, pink or magenta
- Brown – Burnt Sienna, Transparent Orange or any brown
- Spring Green – mix green with yellow or cobalt turquoise + yellow
- Background can also be any pretty blue
- Opaque white for touch up.

Step 1 – Draw or trace, keeping the lines light.

Step 2 – Background – wet the background and paint with [yellow, then green] or blue. Use a big wash brush and smaller brush to go around the objects. Tilt to mix for no brushstrokes.

Step 3 – Coneflower Centers – Leave white at the top, then paint some yellow. Beside it add brown or orange, and last add a little black around the bottom. Texture – you can add salt to the damp wash for texture or add dots of white, brown, or black after it dries.

Step 4 – Coneflower petals need to be lighter or darker than the background or they won't show up. Wet each petal and add concentrated pink/purple color near the center and just let it blend out. The end of the petals can be pure white. Dry well and you can add line on the petals with pink or white. The stem is green with pink at the top.

Step 5 – Paint the goldfinch.

- Start by painting the bird yellow.
- Add shading (any of your coneflower center colors) to the bottom of the body above the flower. Dry.
- Paint a hint of black wings on either side and the tail black.
- Paint the head and eye black and leave a thin line between if you can. If you can't use a white gel pen to add a tiny line.
- Paint the beak orange, lighter on top. There is a tiny bit of black on the end of the beak – but keep it small.

Step 6 – Evaluate your values and correct as needed.

The take away skill with this lesson is that the objects you paint need to be a different value than your background if you want them to stand out. With a medium value background, your objects need to be shades of dark and light, which many beginners avoid. Embrace the change and your paintings will POP!