

# Seashells - The Basic lesson

**Paint:** Cobalt and/or Ultramarine Blue, Burnt Sienna or Brown, any Red, Opaque White. (Optional – any other colors you like)

**Liquid Masking** – any brand will do (optional: masking pick up)

**Other:** Mr. Clean's Magic Eraser, newspaper, paper towels, paint brushes, old toothbrush, salt, hair dryer, graphite paper (or make your own with a pencil), misting bottle

## Before You Start

1. **Mask shell before or lift after** – decide whether you want to mask out your shell before spattering or plan to lift it out later with a stencil and Mr. Clean
  - a. Advantages to masking – works on most papers, gives you a white shell to paint.
  - b. Disadvantages: can't change the placement and may affect the way the washes flow. With lifting you can make better decisions on shell placement so it fits the composition formed by the washes.
  - c.
2. **Practice your spattering.** You want **round spots** (not streaks) and if you can produce large and/or small spots at will, you're an expert!
  - a. I use the tip of a very firm toothbrush to spatter. (Most cheap toothbrushes work great and are inexpensive at the dollar store.) Load the end of the toothbrush. Aim the brush towards the paper. Pull the bristles toward your palm with your thumb and let go. Repeat
  - b. P.S. Having a very large drop of masking fall on your paper is scary, but don't panic. Those random spots are easily turned into beautiful shell bits, sea glass, rocks, etc. and adds to the realism of the painting.

**Step 1** – Spatter masking over lightly over your paper. **Dry well.**

**Step 2** –

Wet the surface.

Add thin washes of burnt sienna and cobalt blue - large brush.

Turn your paper to mix. Turning your paper in a diagonal makes a more dynamic composition.

You can add more color with a smaller brush or with spattering on color or water, but keep in mind – the next layer will cover this, so it's just for fun.

**Dry completely.** (If you put masking on wet paper, it won't come off.)

**Repeat a few more times**, making your washes of color a little thicker (more paint) with each successive repetition. In the last layer of color you can sprinkle salt on the drying paint, if you want even more texture. Dry.

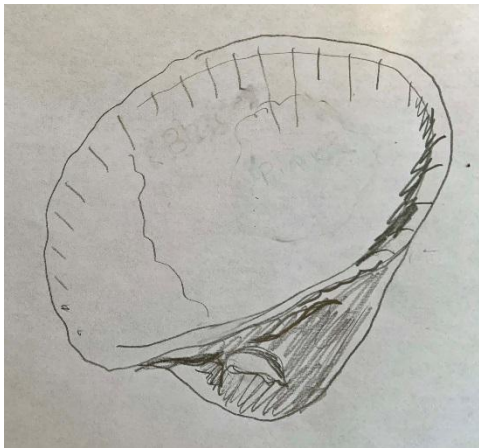
**Step 3** – Spatter with black. Dry.

**Step 4** - Remove the masking. (Frisket remover)

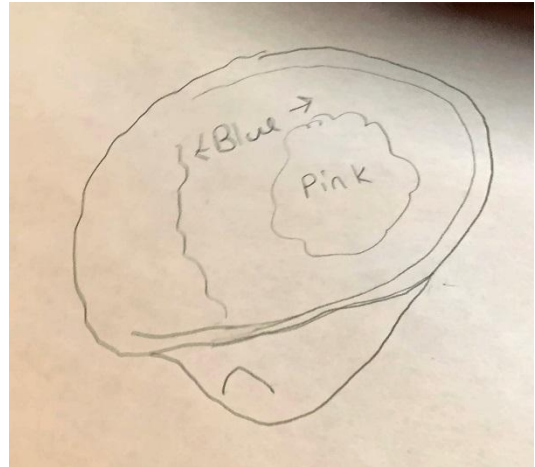
**Step 5** -Lift your shell out with Mr. Clean and a stencil if you didn't mask.

**Step 6** – Draw or trace your shell shadow detail onto your shell. You can carefully position your seashell reference over the lifted area and trace the detail with graphite paper, or draw it on.

**Step 8** - Paint your shell



I like to wet the shadow side of the and put a drop of in. It makes an excellent center of interest and looks the sun shining through the shell. (You can use orange if you like.) The rest of the shadow is blue, darkest where the shadow edge meets the light edge.



shell  
pink  
like

**Step 9** – Put sand in your shell.

Start with a blob of medium gray for the main mass of sand. Dry. Dot on some black sand and some white sand.

**Step 10** –Add shadows. (This is the magic.)

Start near the shell with black and add water to the black as you move away, so the shadow gets a bit lighter. Lay the shadow on with as **few brush strokes** as you can manage.

Add similar shadows to a few more spots - they all need to go the same direction.

**Step 11** – Turning your drips into stuff.

Note the photo beside the shell – see all the different stuff that's there? Shells, bits of shell, miscellaneous sea left overs that no one know what they are – just copy a couple of those and it will be soooo amazing.