

**Intro:**

Painting sunflowers brings together cheerful colors and bright tones. To create this brilliant blossom we'll use a range of tones that mix together beautifully and can be used on their own for stunning results. Let's take a look at our palette of color.

Hansa Yellow Deep is a bold yellow with smooth, even color. This warm yellow has a slight orange bias that brings drama to your painting. Mixed with water for a light wash, Hansa Yellow Deep remains vibrant and simply glows.

Permanent Green is a bright, mid-range green. This watercolor is perfect for painters who desire consistent color with a smooth finish. It's transparency brings life to your work and creates beautiful, light-filled washes.

Van Dyck Brown is a rich neutral perfect for the deep tones and dramatic shadows in your watercolor painting. It is dark enough to replace the black on your palette, letting its rich brown tones add character to your work.

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Begin the sunflower painting by creating a very light, warm brown wash. Mix Van Dyck Brown with just a touch of Hansa Yellow Deep. As you create this mixture, adjust the color until you see more brown than yellow in the paint. Fill in the center portion of this sunflower by adding water to this mixture and loading your brush with color. You can trace around the edges of the circular shape, and fill in with color. We'll revisit this area later to add some more detail here. After the circle is filled in, use a slightly damp brush to sweep away some of the color from the center of the flower, adding a highlight to this area. Blend or remove any additional paint as necessary.

Next, let's mix a natural looking green for the stem of the sunflower. Start by moving some Permanent Green to an empty well on your palette. This color is bright and beautiful, we're going to use it as a base and add some Hansa Yellow Deep. This warms the green, making it a bright shade for a summer sunflower. Finally, add just a drop or two of the brown mixture we made earlier to take a bit of the edge of that brightness, making a green that will be harmonious with the brown area on the painting.

Use this color on the stem, working our way behind the petals of the sunflower. Pull this color down the stem, using your line drawing as a guide and focusing on blocking in the color. The first step for this stem is to lay down nice even color. Next, work the same color into the leaves that branch off from the stem. You can add more water to your mixture if necessary to create paint that flows evenly. This will make filling in these areas simple, the paint will just flow onto the page. We'll come back in later to add some detail and shading to these green areas.

Now that the leaves and center of the flower are colored in with their base layer of paint, let's do the same for all of the vibrant petals that make up the sunflower. Mix water into

the Hansa Yellow Deep to create a wash of color. Work your way around the painting, filling in the petals with this nice light color. This is the initial wash so make sure to fill in all of the areas that will be yellow, but you don't have to fill them in as individual petals, we'll add those details later. For now, keep your brush loaded with paint and fill in color from the center to the outer edges of the flower. Hansa Yellow Deep is a great watercolor for the sunflower because it is a very warm tone. It does not granulate in washes, so your color will be very even and smooth.

Once the petals of the sunflower have been painted in, let's take a break and allow of these initial layers of color to dry. You can allow the paint to air dry or carefully use a hair drier to speed up the process.

When your painting is dry, use the Van Dyke Brown with just a bit of water to gather a deep shade of brown onto your brush. Beginning in the center of the sunflower, dry small lines with the brush to add in the sunflower seeds. These small dashes radiate out from the center of the painting and, for variety, add some varying sizes of dots and lines. If you would like to soften some of these areas, use a slightly damp brush and gently blend together some areas of the center of the sunflower. By leaving some areas unblended, and softening others, you'll add texture and interest to your painting. At the bottom of the flower's center, I am adding a little more color into the wet area to create depth and shadow.

Next, add a touch a Hansa Yellow to the Van Dyke Brown. This diluted brown is the shadow color for the flower's petal. Add plenty of water to create a nice shade, and use this color to fill in some of the background petals of the sunflower. Anywhere where there is one petal behind another just fill in this light brown right over the top of your yellow shade. This application is a glaze and we're adding a deeper tone and more complexity to the painting. Also, add this darker shade where petals fold over. Finally, working your way around the flower, use the brown to trace the lines between the petals and even up the center of some of the petals. At this point, you can add as much or as little brown as you like. Keep in mind that the more details you add, the less of that brilliant yellow will be visible. If you need to, slow down this process and take time to choose where your bright yellow will stay and where shadow is necessary.

After you fill in the dark areas of your flower, reintroduce the Hansa Yellow Deep at full strength, tracing along the center of the petals and adding a third color to these areas. Now you have the bright yellow wash, the brown shadows and this brilliant deep yellow for a lot of vibrancy on this flower. This warm, fiery shade of yellow orange can be blended in with some of the darker brown areas as well. Add this color all the way around the flower to keep the painting balanced while you add more dimension to the blossom.

Now let's revisit the leaves and stems to add detail to these areas. Begin with your dark mixture, adding more Van Dyck Brown. Add some of the Permanent Green and adjust your mixture until you have created a rich, dark green shade. Use this color to trace around the stem. Add a shadow area right where the stem meets the petals, and pull the color along the bottom edge of the leaves to add an element of shadow.

Because this color is so rich and dark, let's use a slightly damp brush to gently blend the color up into the individual leaves. This will give another tone that is midway between the light and dark shades already on the page.

To add just a hint of sunshine to the leaves, drop in a touch of Hansa Yellow Deep to some of the top areas of the leaves. Then use a damp brush to lightly blend the areas where you have added color. Bringing in these touches of yellow will add character to the leaves and help balance out the foliage with the petals.

Finally, revisit any wet areas that seem uneven or too dark and soften the paint by blending with your brush.

The last detail on the stem is to add a dark shadow on the side of the main stem and under the leaves with the Van Dyck Brown. I'm also adding some lines in the stem for texture.

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Closing:

This sunflower captures the sunny days of summer with glowing watercolors and brilliant blends.