

BRUSH DRAWING

AS APPLIED TO

*Natural Forms and
Common Objects*

by

May Mallam

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Yesterday's Classics, LLC
PO Box 339
Ithaca, NY 14851

BRUSHWORK

To learn Brushwork is to learn to draw with a brush instead of a pencil—in mass instead of in outline. It has been found that children like this method, and find it easy: proportions are more readily grasped, faults are more easily seen in the filled surface, while even the work of a beginner often shows the grace and the spirit of the model. In its first stages Brushwork aims (1) at mastery of the brush; (2) at the use of the brush to draw with. In its later stages it teaches the expression of solid form by means of light and shade, and simple colouring—the beginnings of water-colour painting. Its chief object is to teach bold, simple work; it deals with general effect rather than detail; it is suggestive rather than exact. Much must be left out in using this method, but a wise “leaving out” is one of the secrets of an artist. The pupil is taught to look for the broad effects that mark the modelling, disregarding, for the time, small changes of surface and colour. When the power of doing this has been obtained, a great step has been made, and the pupil will be ready to attack more serious work.

GENERAL DIRECTIONS

Requisites—Paper fairly thick and not too smooth. A good cartridge paper for the purpose can be obtained at 1s. 1d. per quire, extra thick.

One or more hollowed palettes to hold colour: they must be able to hold quite a teaspoonful of mixed paint.

A sloping surface for the paper, to ensure the smooth run of the colour; the slope of the school desk will do, but a steeper slope is better.

Brushes not too fine: Numbers 6 or 7 are good.

Blotting paper or duster to wipe and clean the brushes.

A white screen in front of the pupil, *i.e.*, a piece of white cardboard, with a hinged stand, which can be easily made, and a couple of skewers piercing the screen, so that their rings support the specimen to be studied.

For monochrome, a tube or pan of indigo, sepia, or other suitable colour.

PLATE I

Mix your colour not too thick, but thick enough to give decided effect; fill your brush, but not so full that the paint drops from it. The drawings shew the method of holding the brush:— (1) for vertical, (2) for horizontal strokes. In every case the brush must be held parallel to the stroke to be formed. The hand should not rest on the paper, but be raised from beyond the wrist; the little finger may touch the paper to steady the hand if necessary, but the further back the weight is thrown, and the higher the hand is raised, the greater the flexibility attainable. The whole hand should be able to move to continue a long line, or to change smoothly and easily the position of the brush in a curve.

Practice all the varieties of vertical and horizontal lines till they can be done with ease. The length can be done without moving the wrist. Start by placing the brush firmly on the paper, as far forward as the fingers can reach it (the stick of the brush pointing straight downwards for the vertical, straight along for the horizontal), and pull the brush in the direction needed, letting it press out wide on the paper for the broad parts, rise to a point for the thin ones. Pay great attention to evenness of line, avoiding jags, but let the paint thicken where it happens to do so. The strokes widening on one side only are the most difficult: the hairs must be pressed to one side, while the brush is still drawn in a straight line. Then practice all the same strokes in longer lines, letting the wrist move, and also in slanting lines in any direction, starting sometimes from the top, sometimes from the bottom. It is useful to group the strokes into radiating patterns, and to insist on all the strokes being worked *to* the centre or *from* the centre. Working simple patterns is excellent training for the eye: distances must be guessed, and working out the patterns will shew how far the guess was correct. Pupils should be encouraged to make their own grouping, it makes the work more interesting, and soon leads to efforts at design. A few patterns are suggested of straight lines only—they should be much enlarged and varied. Such patterns can be invented by the dozen, or can be found on printed pamphlets, wall papers, table linen, &c. Printed letters of the alphabet make some good straight line practice. A line too long to be done in one movement should be neatly joined when the hand has taken a fresh position.

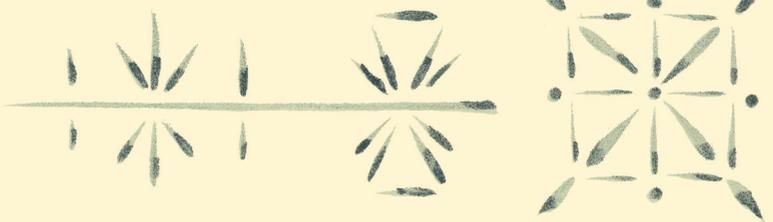
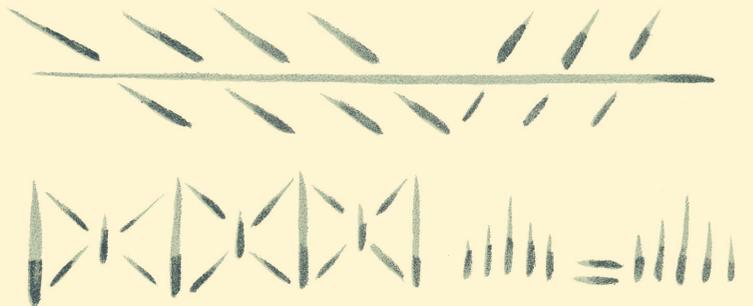
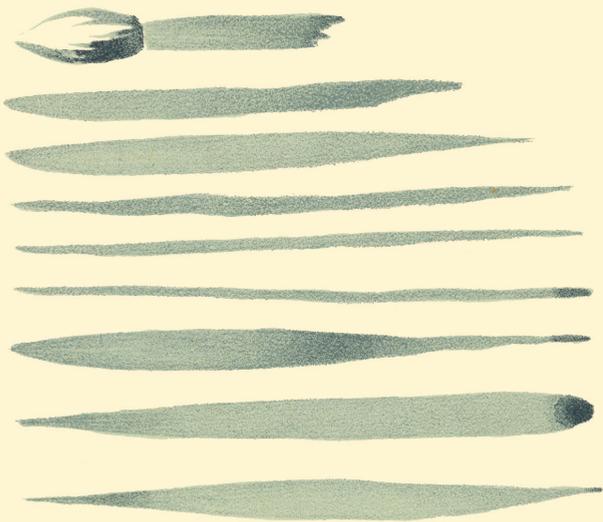
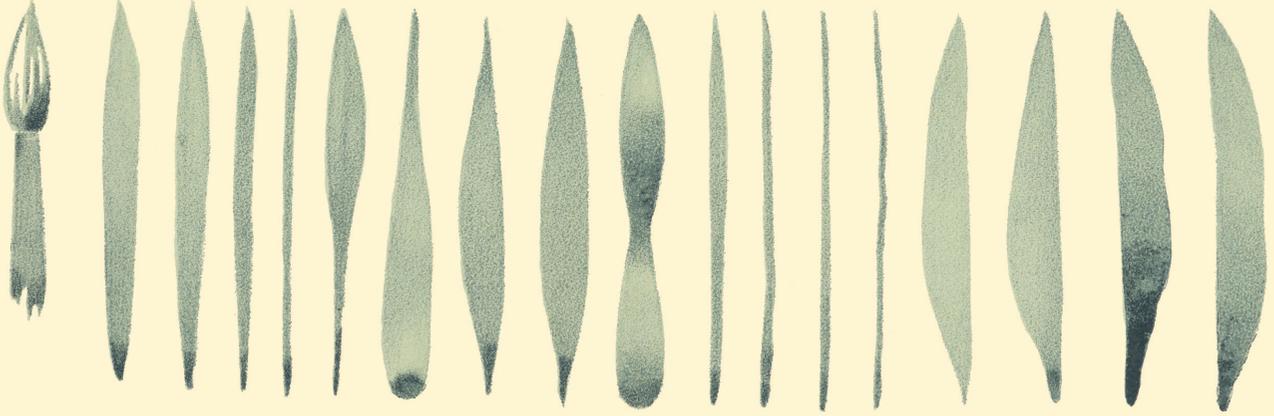
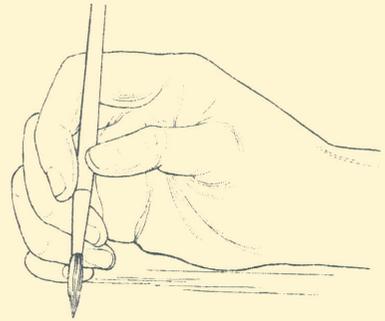
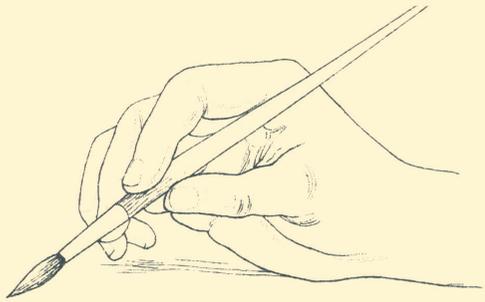


PLATE I

PLATE II

A curved line is almost more natural to the hand than a straight line, but a great deal of practice is required before the student can curve his line as he wishes every time. Hold the brush loosely and raise the hand well on the forearm so that great flexibility is possible. The direction of the brush handle will need to be constantly and smoothly changed, a twist of the brush *in* the fingers often helps to keep the hairs following the stick in a curve, and thus avoids jags. It is well to do the strokes in pairs, reversing each, and forming gradually more complicated groupings. Work from memory as much as possible, grasping the whole form of the stroke and not looking a second time at the copy. Work as a rule from top to bottom and from left to right, but vary the work for practice, only be sure always that the stick leads, the brush follows. Writing letters make good practice, and flourishes may be encouraged. The student should persevere with exercise work till he can lead his brush in fine line anywhere and make his stroke thick or thin at will. Here again pattern making is of great advantage, and becomes very fascinating. Any strokes repeated at regular intervals make a pattern or the basis of one. Dots are made with the tip of the brush, starting with a point and working round it; placed at even distances apart they will make a basis for a number of border patterns. Good work may be done too by drawing simple forms of chairs, tables, scissors, and other common objects, outlines of leaves, &c., but such work would be best done from memory, the shape being first learned. This is good training for the eye, and it enables the whole attention to be given to the management of the brush.



PLATE II