

Impressionistic Flowers



Rose Rhapsody

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Photography has come a long way since its inception. We've progressed from tintype to film to digital exposures. And with the advent of the home computer, we now have a wide variety of post-processing software choices to help refine and enhance the images we take. Filters, Plug-ins,

and Actions give us even more options to express our creativity. Producing fine works of digital art has become almost easy. But sometimes, using some of the older techniques can be a lot of fun, too. One such method can be easily utilized as a tabletop procedure in one's own home and works well with floral photography. The materials needed are inexpensive and readily available. And the results can be awesome! For lack of a better name, let's call it the Impressionistic Technique. And with a tip of the hat to Monet, your photos can have a similar appearance to those of the Grand Master.

The basic materials needed for this procedure are a flower, a small vase or holder for the flower, a piece of textured glass, a sturdy stand to hold the glass, and a piece of colored cardboard for the background. Artificial silk flowers work best because they can easily be bent into position. Roses and Mums work very well because even after being distorted, they are still readily identifiable. The textured glass is available at shops that carry stained glass art supplies. They are available in a variety of sizes, textures and tints. Some textures are swirled, others have a geometric appearance, and others look like they've been sprinkled with raindrops—the variety is seemingly endless. Best of all, they are relatively inexpensive and easy to store for future use. Colorless glass seems to work best. Try to avoid those that are deeply colored since it will make it difficult, if not impossible, to see through it. You can use a homemade or store-bought stand, or simply—and



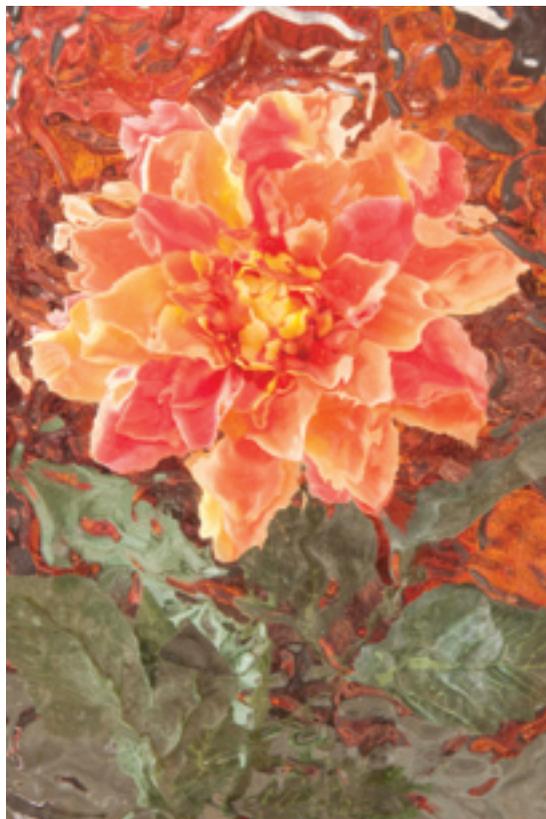
Iced Mum



Basic Blue

very carefully—prop up the glass so it stands upright. Colored cardboard is readily available in most stationary or office supply stores.

Once your materials are assembled, begin by placing the flower directly behind the textured glass, as close as possible without touching the glass. Give the flower a diagonal bend. Place the colored cardboard behind the flower. The



Coral Glow



Floral Sunshine

cardboard can be propped up against the wall or any sturdy object. It does not need to be perpendicular to the table. Frame the flower in your camera's viewfinder, focusing on the flower rather than the glass. Try to avoid getting any ambient light reflected on the glass because this will detract from your photo. Natural light seems to work best but feel free to use studio lights or even a flashlight to provide side lighting on the flower. Just be sure to keep any light from falling on the glass itself. You can vary the look of your photo by draping fabric over the background. Since the background will be distorted by the texture of the glass, only the colors and shadings of the fabric will be visible. You may want to use a small aperture but experiment for the best results. Be sure to use a tripod in order to avoid any camera shake, especially if you use a long exposure. Then take your best shot! Monet would be proud—and possibly a bit jealous—of your results! ■

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