

Porcelain painting lessons

by Barbara Carrupt – IPAT Master Artist and Teacher

Lesson 1: First brush strokes and Nyon Cornflowers

The art of overglaze painting on porcelain or china painting, as it is commonly known, had its beginnings in ancient China. It continued to gain popularity in the 1800s in Europe, especially in Germany and France where many factories employed skilled artists to hand-paint their wares. (www.wikipedia.org > English > search China Painting)

It is an overglaze process, which means that, unlike its sister arts of pottery and ceramics, all of our work is done on an already glazed piece, using the glaze as an oil painter would a canvas.

The lessons are not meant to be a substitute for a good teacher. There are some things that are difficult to describe that are much easier taught by watching a knowledgeable teacher, like the correct texture of the paint... and there is nothing like being able to create under the watchful eye of a teacher... but they can be difficult if not impossible to find in some areas, so I hope I can help with the information I present here. Also, be aware that there are many ways to paint on porcelain and there are many different ways to accomplish the same thing. What I present is the method of painting I learnt and teach. But it is not the only way!

Basic supplies

PAINT: China paints are formed from ground mineral compounds and flux. The minerals vary according to the color of the paint, but most of the ruby and purple contain gold, which makes them a bit pricy.

The second component of the paint is flux which is essentially a very finely ground glass which is similar to the composition of porcelain glaze. When the paints are fired in a kiln, the flux melts and fuses the paint permanently to the glaze. This makes china pigment the only true permanent pigment in existence. One fired and fused to the glaze, it won't fade or discolor.

BRUSHES: Good china painting brushes, as with any high-quality brush, are expensive, but it is an exercise in frustration to try to paint on porcelain with cheap brushes. Good brushes properly cared for will last a very long time. For European style, we need round pointed sable brushes.

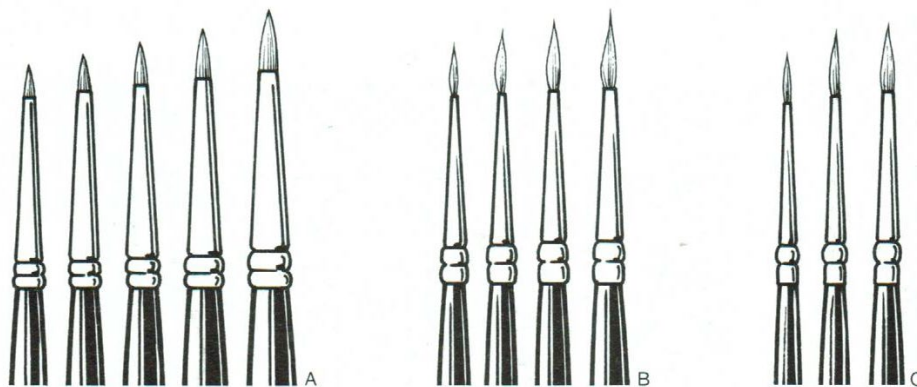


Photo 1

MEDIUMS: You need a fast dry medium, e.g. fat oil or copaiba and oil of clove. I use turpentine to clear my brushes. To a pile of paint the size of a large pea, add one or two drops of fat oil, mix this to a heavy cream consistency like toothpaste. Add a drop of clove oil, and mix again. **Color should not be too thick or too liquid.**

The brush stroke is the most important thing. It doesn't only permit to apply color, but to shape it. The first lesson will be the hardest, but once assimilated, progress will be as fast as your application has been great!



The first exercise is to shape exclamation points. The longitudinal axis will present a groove formed by the brush. These are the petals of a cornflower. This exercise seems easy, but you will quickly find many problems. First, apply to these petals all the same length (ideally 5mm = 0.2 inches), ensuring that the modeling appears in a harmonious way. This painting style requires a discipline to achieve regularity and perfection of strokes as each small flower involves one loading of color on the brush and 3 brush strokes.

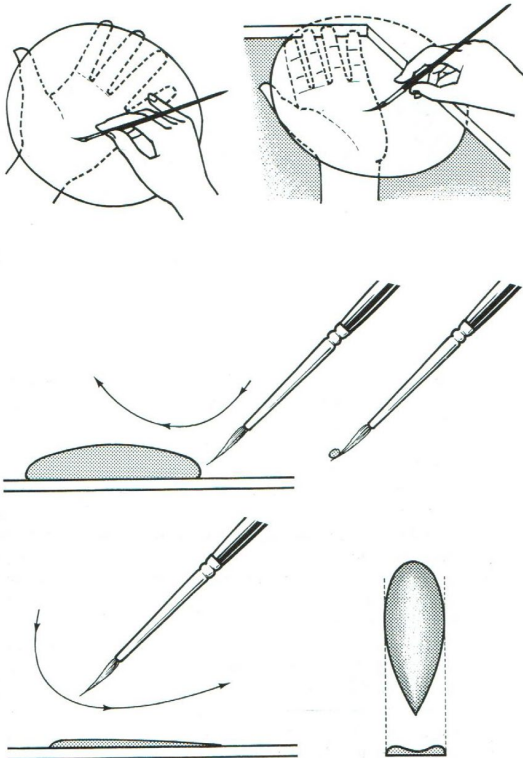


Photo 2

COLORS: Cornflower blue for blue cornflowers; Spring green (a bright yellow green) for stems and leaves; Dresden Ruby for the stamen and a mix with black green and Ruby for outlining the stems (color must be greyish)

1. Roll brush (P 401 or 202, you must try) in a small quantity of cornflower blue. Place tip of brush on porcelain, and pull, with flattening the brush towards you and lift the brush with CLEAR MOVEMENT. Hold brush at straight angle. Add two thin side strokes, a bit shorter and thinner than the first stroke to form the one-petal cornflower.
2. Turn the plate slightly and add the second, third, fourth and fifth petal to form the cornflower
3. Add a little spring green ball underneath petals 1,2,3
4. With spring green, paint a fine curved line for the stem, either to the right or to the left.
5. Apply the same movement in painting the petals to the leaves, but curve it slightly and add a short tail. For variety, add a smaller leaf underneath the first one but without the tail.
6. Outline the shadow side of the ball and cross-hatch center, stem and leaves with the mix black green- ruby
7. Add stamens between petals with Dresden Ruby. They can be a bit longer than the blue petals.
8. Add some gold florets (roman gold) and a border
9. Firing cone 017 (800°C)

- ✚ If you are not sure you can do a first firing after point 5, then continue with points 6 and 7
- ✚ It is best to do one flower, stem and leaves completely before going on to the next flower. This helps to place them better, as you want to place them at different angles and also leave room for the gold florets. Remember that this first pattern should give the impression of scattered flowers and should not be symmetrical, but in a scattered design.

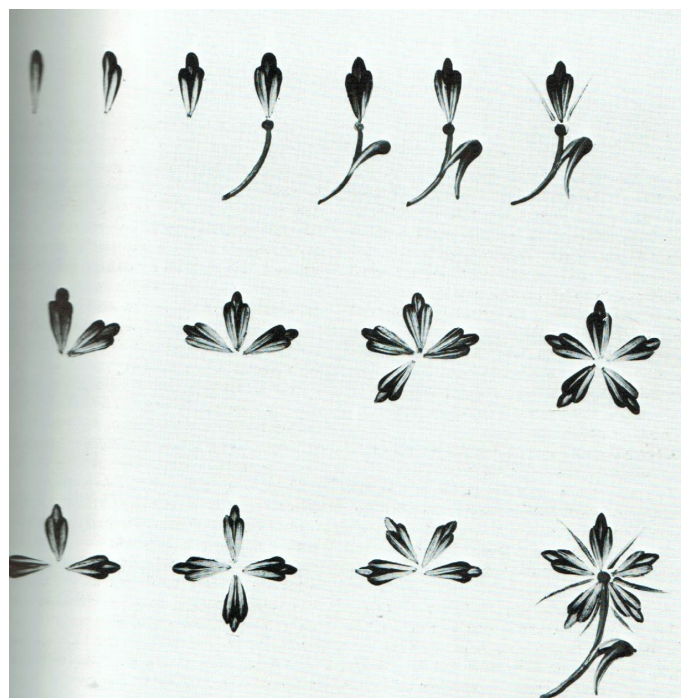


Photo 3

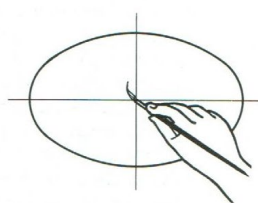
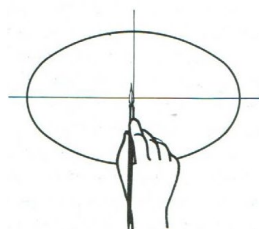
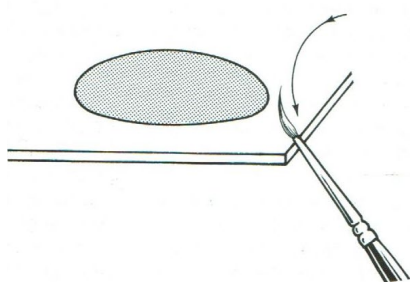


Photo 4

photo 5

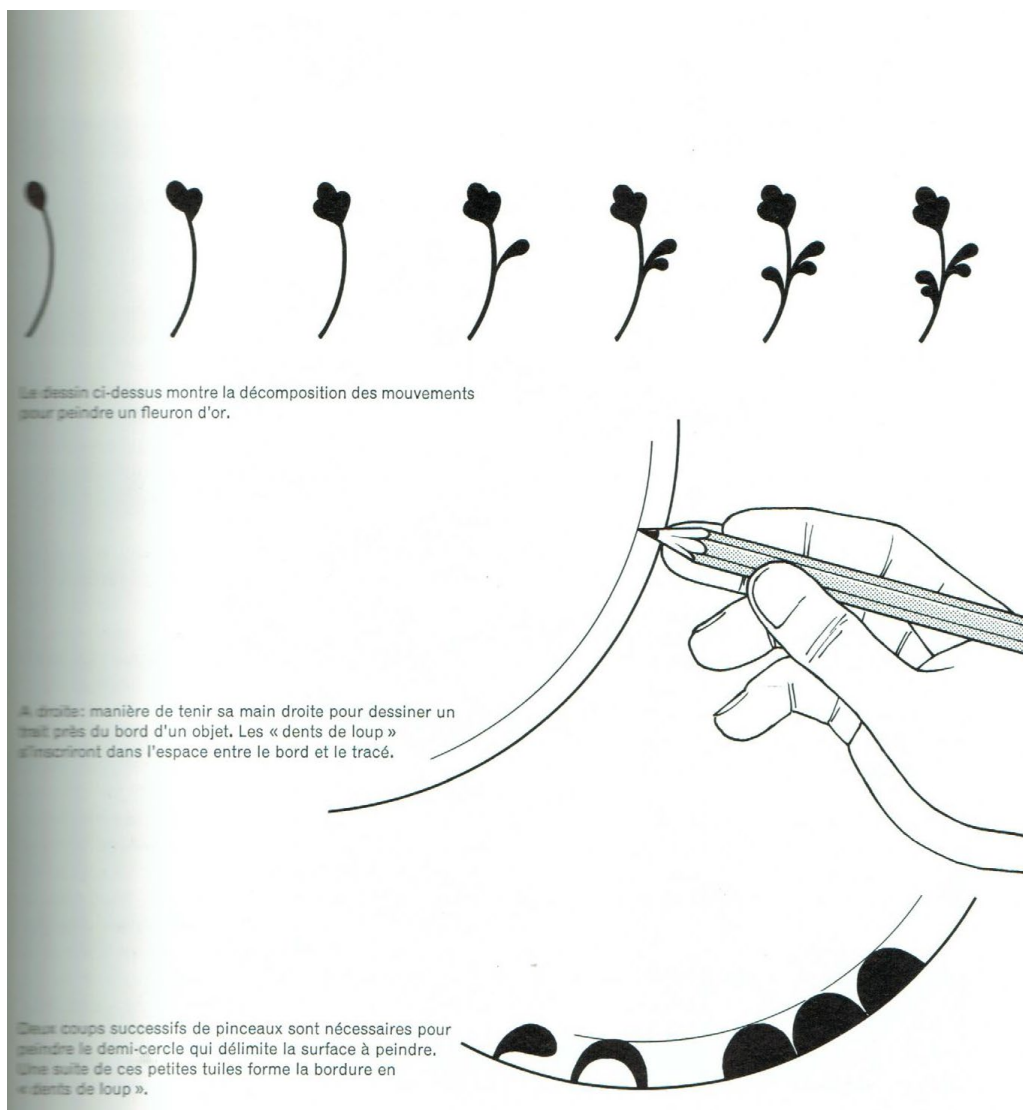
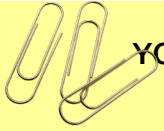


Photo 6



YOUR ASSIGNMENTS – LESSON 1 – CORNFLOWERS

1. On a porcelain tile (or a plate) paint lines of exclamation points (no firing), take a picture and send me it by email. (photo 2)
2. When you have about 50 perfect exclamation points, you can begin with the second phase of the exercise: paint one petal (remember 3 brush strokes), then flowers with two, three and five petals (always on a porcelain tile without firing, it's only an exercise) (photo 3) Send me a picture
3. If your petals are ok, add stem and leaves with spring green(photo 4) Send me a picture
4. If your cornflowers are ok on the exercise tile, you can begin to paint the first cornflower piece, e.g. on the small nut dishes in a scattered design. (photo 5) Before the first firing, send me a picture
5. After firing you can finish with stamens and outlining
6. If you wish add some gold florets and a small border in roman gold (photo 6)



Happy Painting !



Barbara Carrupt
chemin des Carrières 4
CH – 1870 Monthey / Switzerland

www.porceelaine-bc.com
email: barbaracarrupt@bluewin.ch