

# Painting an Expressive Oil Study

**Overview** Open a new file and sketch using a Bristle Oils variant; paint using Oils brushes that can both apply color and smear it; complete the study using Oils and Blenders variants.



We painted a loose sketch in color using the Bristle Oils variant of the Oils, sized to about 10 pixels.



Painting color over the sketch



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PAINTER'S OILS BRUSHES ENCOURAGE SPONTANEITY and quick gestural painting because they make expressive, smooth strokes and thus make possible a more tactile painting experience. For this color study, *Calla Lily and Ti*, we sketched using the Bristle Oils variant. Then we laid in color using the Smeary Bristle Spray and a Medium Bristle Oils variant. To blend and pull color we used a modified Medium Bristle Oils brush, that can both apply color and smear it like traditional wet oil paints. To build up more color activity in some areas, we painted glazes using a low-opacity version of the modified Medium Bristle Oils brush. We added final details using small Round Camelhair (Oils) and Round Blender Brush (Blenders) variants.

**1 Setting up and making a sketch.** Open a new file (our file measured 1300 x 1500 pixels). Before you begin your sketch, open the Papers palette by choosing Window, Show Papers. Click the Paper Selector (near the upper right corner) and choose Coarse Cotton Canvas from the pop-up menu. For a finer canvas effect, scale the paper to 50% using the Scale slider on the Papers palette. In the Brush Selector Bar, choose the Bristle Oils 20 variant of the Oils, and reduce its Size to about 10 pixels (using the Size slider popped out of the Property Bar). We chose the Bristle Oils because of

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*Roughing in colors to show the afternoon sunlight on the leaves*



*The Medium Bristle Oils 25 chosen in the Brush Selector Bar (top) and the new settings in the Property Bar*

4



*Using the modified Medium Bristle Oils to add more brushstrokes and smear areas on the leaves and flower*

5



*Using a tiny Round Camelhair brush to define edges of the leaves and to add striated highlights and shadows on the calla lily and under the leaves*

the sensitivity of this tool when used with a stylus—with it you can make expressive, thick and thin strokes that reveal bristle marks. Now select a mid-toned color in the Color picker to begin your sketch. As you sketch, develop the contours of the shapes in your image.

**2 Developing the underpainting.** The brushes we used for the underpainting, the Smeary Bristle Spray and Medium Bristle Oils, have unique qualities. By varying pressure on the stylus, you can add new color, or subtly mix color as you paint. This gives the feeling of painting with conventional wet oil paints.

We established a general color theme by laying in color—greens, purples, blues and yellows—directly over the sketch. Using the Medium Bristle Oils, and Smeary Bristle Spray (also Oils), we loosely blocked in color. We purposely left some of the white from the canvas showing to help retain the loose quality of the study.

**3 Modifying a brush.** In preparation for the blending and glazing work in Step 4, we modified the Medium Bristle Oils to accentuate its smeary capabilities as follows: Choose the Medium Bristle 25 variant of the Oils and in the Property Bar, reduce the Resaturation to 25% and increase the Bleed to 40%. Now choose a color. Using your stylus, paint a few brushstrokes on your image using firm pressure, then select a new color and apply more brushstrokes over the original strokes using very light pressure. As you drag this brush through a pool of color while using light pressure, you'll notice the brush picks up a small amount of the existing color from the canvas. Resize the brushes as you work using the Size slider in the Property Bar.

**4 Blending and glazing.** After painting the foreground, we wanted to create an atmosphere of afternoon light shining on and through the leaves by painting a subtle separation between the foreground calla lily and ti leaf, the mid-ground leaves and the background wall. We used the new smeary version of the Medium Bristle Oils brush to modulate deeper blues, purples and grays into the mid-ground and background areas. To make the background recede more, we softened the focus in some areas using a Round Blender Brush (Blenders). Next, we used a low Opacity version of the smeary Medium Bristle Oils brush and lighter yellow and orange colors to brighten the backlit areas in the foreground and mid-ground leaves. To lower the opacity of the brush, move the Opacity slider on the Property Bar to the left.

**5 Adding details.** To finish, we modulated the highlight areas on the foreground ti leaf and calla lily using the new Medium Bristle Oils and a Round Blender Brush; we used a tiny Round Camelhair brush to define the edges of the calla lily and to brighten areas where sun was shining on the leaves; we built up more detailed, striated shadows under the ti leaves. 