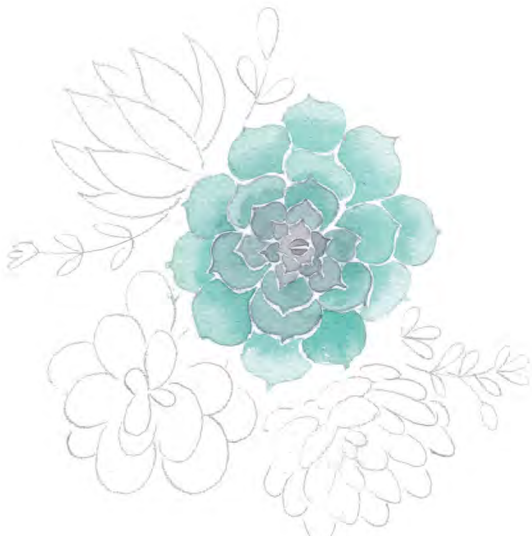
Succulents

Color pooling is the perfect technique for capturing each individual leaf of the succulents and the beautiful shades of green blue and purple they come in.

Materials Cold press watercolor paper • Pencil • Eraser • Medium round brush
Small round brush
Colors Used Viridian Green Alizarin Crimson Sap Green Ultramarine Sepia
Yellow Ochre Cadmium Yellow

Sketch the succulents lightly using a pencil.



Mix a purple color using the Viridian Green, Alizarin Crimson, and lots of water. Using a small brush, paint the two central leaves on the large succulent. Add a little more water, and paint the next three leaves, allowing white space to show between the leaves. Add a tiny bit more Viridian Green and some water, and paint the next ring of leaves. Repeat the process, adding a tiny bit more green and some more water to the mixture and painting the next ring of leaves. As the leaves start getting bigger, you can play around with varying the tone somewhat. Paint the whole leaf with a light wash of watery paint, then drop a more concentrated version of the same color into the center of the leaf to add depth. Continue in this way, making the paint mixture lighter and greener as the leaves get bigger and closer to the outside, being careful to keep a small white space between all the leaves.

Create a green mixture using Sap Green with a little bit of Ultramarine and a little bit of Sepia. Move half this mixture to another part of your palette and add more water so you have a lighter version of the same color. Use this light color to paint the succulent with pointed leaves. Paint the outside leaves first using your small brush and the lighter mixture. Add a drop of the darker mixture to the base of the leaves while they are still wet. Paint the next layer of leaves using the same light mixture, and add more of the darker mixture to the center while the leaves are still wet. Make sure there is a thin white space between the leaves so they do not run into each other.

Mix a green with Viridian Green and a bit of Alizarin Crimson. Paint the smallest leaves in the center of the succulent using this mixture and your small brush. Add more water as you paint the leaves getting bigger toward the outside. The leaves in the foreground that appear to be coming toward you should be the lightest. As before, make sure there is a thin white space between leaves, and add a drop more color to the center of some leaves to add depth.

Mix Viridian Green, a bit of Yellow Ochre, and lots of water. Transfer some of this color into another part of your palette, and add more water to make a lighter version of the same color. Paint the small central leaves of the remaining succulent using a small brush. Paint the rest of the leaves moving outward, painting them first with the lighter mixture, then adding a drop of the darker mixture to the center using your small brush.

Create another green mix using the Viridian Green, Cadmium Yellow, and lots of water. Using your small brush, paint the leafy tendrils. Add a drop more mixture to the center of each leaf. Create a pinkish purple using Alizarin Crimson with a bit of Viridian Green. Using a small brush, paint the flowers at the end of the tendrils. Add a drop more Viridian Green at the base of each flower.