

# Green Heron

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This little Green Heron can be found in many aquatic habitats; however he prefers small water bodies. Green Herons are generally solitary, nesting as isolated pairs or in small groups, never in the large breeding colonies of other herons and egrets. They eat small fish and also crustaceans, frogs, tadpoles, insects, and small rodents. I took a photo of this little fellow while visiting the Bahamas one winter. This little Green Heron is painted in a more realistic style.



## Palette – JansenArt Traditions Acrylics

JA02 - Naphthol Red (PR170)  
JA14 - Hansa Yellow (PY74)  
JA22 - Phthalo Green-Yellow (PG)  
JA24 - Phthalo Blue (PB15:3)  
JA26 - Ultramarine Blue (PB 29)  
JA35 - Titanium White (PW6)  
JA42 - Carbon Black (PBk7)  
JA43 - Raw Sienna (PBr7)  
JA45 - Raw Umber (PBr7)

## Mediums and Sealers

JAM 01 - Glazing Medium  
JAM02 - Extender and Blending  
Medium  
JAM04 - Satin Varnish  
JAM06 - Texture Medium (for making  
Gesso)

**Surface** – 8 x 10 stretched canvas  
(available at any art supply store)

## Standard Supplies

*Traditions Artist's Technical Guide*

Large wet palette (a large surface is needed for  
blending and mixing)  
Water jar or bucket  
Water mister for misting palette  
Paper towel  
Tracing paper  
Stylus  
Graphite paper  
Palette knife and fine grade sandpaper  
Chalk

## Brushes

*JansenArt Brushes:*

JAB24 - #6 Filbert  
JAB17 - #1 Short Liner  
JAB21 - 3/8" Angular Shader  
JAB20 - 1" Antiquing  
JAB07 - 3/4" Flat

## ***Preface***

Before you begin painting the design, read through the directions, matching the steps to the photographs. I refer to the photos often, making the painting process easier to see and then to execute with my suggested technique. I do all my color mixing on the wet palette; this is the reason I recommend the larger wet palette. I use mostly brush mixing. The instructions are written in the same manner and order that the design is developed. The (0:0:0) paint ratios are approximates only. These mixes will vary slightly, as every artist will interpret 'brush mixing' differently. Use your photos as a color guide.

## ***General techniques and tips used for this pattern:***

- **Limited Palette** – We will be painting this design using 9 of the 10 color starter set in the JansenArt Traditions line, using an earth color, Raw Umber (PBr7) for toning. We 'tone' colors to make them relate to each other and to lower the intensity.
- **Palette Set Up** – The colors are arranged on the palette in the way they go around the color wheel, starting with reds in the top left corner and working across the top of the wet palette to the violets. It is easier to mix and adjust colors when they sit in this particular order. Refer to page 30 in the *Traditions Artist's Technical Guide*.
- **Light Source** – The light source is right frontal lateral. (Right side, towards the front)
- **Brush Mixing** – Pick up two or more colors on the brush, gently blending them together on the palette to create the desired (color) mix or adjustment.
- **Wash** – This is a thin or watery transparent application of color.
- **Slip-Slap** – To move the brush in a criss-cross manner. This is used for casual application of color.
- **Pat-Blending** – This is a gentle tapping brush method used to disperse one or more colors on top of a wet or dry layer. In this painting, we will use 'wet in wet' blending.
- **Mopping** – 'Softly' brushing the wet surface to remove brush strokes with a large dry mop brush.
- **Floating** – The side-loading of a color into a wet or moist brush. When the color is stroked on the painting surface, the pigment floats out.
- **Tip** – Thinning the paint – It is important to note this point: when you thin paint for detail liner work or washes, it is crucial to add a little glazing medium to put the 'glue' back into the mix. Without this step, the addition of water changes the paint to binder ratio and the paint's ability to stick to the surface.

## ***Painting techniques and brushes used for this pattern:***

- **Base coating** - the bird - using the #6 filbert
- **'Slip-Slap' Blending** – 3/4" flat brush
- **Pat-Blending** – filbert brush
- **Floating Color** – 3/8" angular shader
- **Liner Work** - #1 short liner

**Canvas Surface Preparation** – Mixing mediums together to make a 'gesso-like' medium.

**Surface Preparation** – Apply 2-3 coats of the following mix:

- Mix a gesso-like material using the JansenArt Texture Medium diluted with a little glazing medium and water, approximately (4:1:1). The glazing medium will give our mix more strength,

and the water will help thin the mix slightly to facilitate spreading.

- Paint an even coat on the canvas using a large brush.
- Sand lightly with fine sandpaper and apply another even coat of the mix.
- Repeat this step until you have a smooth surface. (Degree of smoothness is personal.)
- Do not sand after the last coat.
- Apply one coat of glazing medium before painting the design.

### *Suggested techniques for painting the design:*

#### **Background**

Before you begin, please read this technique: ‘Slip-Slap’ – to apply two or more colors, randomly or side-by-side, blending these colors together in a casual or slip-slap manner to create a mottled or variegated ground. This application is usually executed quickly, so colors blend together while they are still wet. Work in a random method so there is no uniform pattern created.

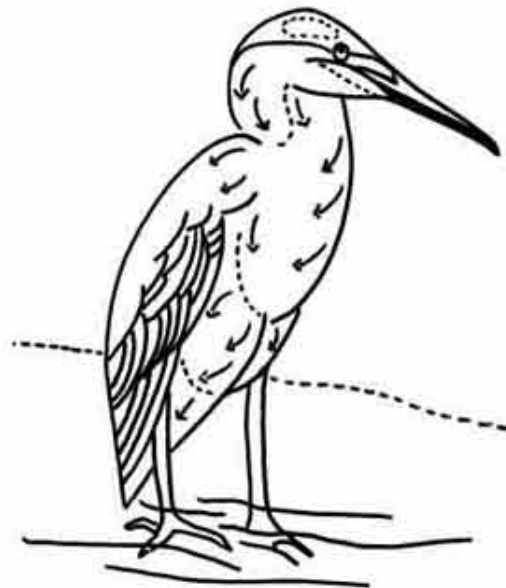


- **Photo #1** - Mix a puddle of blue-green using Phthalo Blue (PB15:3) and Phthalo Green-Yellow (PG7) (2:1). This blue-green mix will be used often throughout the design.
- Pick up a little Extender Medium in the large brush and spread a thin coat on your prepared canvas. The canvas should be shiny, not wet. This is a small canvas, so you should be able to ‘slip-slap’ the whole background in one application before the extender dries. ‘Slip-slap’ the entire background to create the mottled effect that is seen in the photo.
- **BEGIN** - Using the 3/4" flat brush, start the process by picking up Titanium White (PW6) and a very little amount of the blue-green mix. (This blue green is made from extremely powerful pigments; only a very small amount on the corner of the brush is required.) Tone down the intensity of the color with a bit of Raw Umber (PBr7). Blend the colors in the brush to make a soft aqua color. Immediately go to your canvas and begin to paint with a slip-slap technique. Apply the paint in a slip-slap or criss-crossed manner to create a casual application of color, blending very quickly. Pick up more Titanium White (PW6) and blue green; continue blending on the canvas creating some lighter and some darker areas as you go. Blend quickly to soften and refine the colors so there is a smooth transition from one color value to the next. Use the large mop brush to soften and remove harsh brush strokes while the paint is still wet. You can see from photo #1 that the first application of this mottled effect is quite rough. Most of this mottling will be softer and more refined after the second application, compare to photo #2.



- **Photo #2** - Dry well, apply a coat of Glazing Medium. Repeat the previous step once or twice if more coverage is needed. As you refine, keep the value change less dramatic and strive for a more gradual change. Note, in photo #2, the way the effect seems to go diagonally across the canvas.
- Draw a soft chalk line across the canvas to divide the sand from the water. Refer to the line drawing and photo #1 for the placement. Paint the sandy area across the base of the canvas in the same manner as above (slip-slap) using Raw Sienna (PBr7), Raw Umber (PBr7), and a bit of Titanium White (PW6) to lighten. This area can have more texture and be a little transparent allowing the soft aqua color of the water to show through. Refer to the photo to see how light the value is.
- Dry well; apply a coat of Glazing Medium.

### Painting the Heron



Trace and transfer the design.

No need to trace the wing detail at this time. Place the bird approximately 1.5" from the bottom

and toward the left side of the canvas.

Line drawing, enlarge to desired size, approx 6"-7"

*Please note before you begin to paint this design: You will jump around on the design quite a bit as the painting develops. This is not the type of design where you can take any one area to completion at once. Each little element (beak, head, shoulder, etc.) is taken to a particular stage, as it must relate to the area next to it. Don't be afraid to experiment a little and play with the paint and the color as you work your way through the design.*

### **Head & Body:**

Basecoat the red and green base areas on the bird – Photo #2

- Red color mix – Mix a puddle of toned brownish red using the following colors: Naphthol Red (PR170), Raw Umber (PBr7), Titanium White (PW6) (3:1:1) When mixing colors, always add each color a little at a time and mix slowly to read the color. This way you can make small adjustments as needed.
- Photo #2 – Use your #6 filbert brush to basecoat the red areas of the bird: head, top of wing, the entire breast and belly, to the base of the tail.
- Blue-Green color mix – Mix a puddle of blue green using Phthalo Blue (PB) (15:3) and Phthalo Green-Yellow (PG) (2:1). This blue green mix will be used often throughout the design.
- Photo #2 – Base the wing and the top of the head with some of the blue green mix plus a little Raw Umber (PBr7) to tone. Add a tiny amount of Titanium White (PW6) to lighten the chest and belly areas. Strive for solid coverage. The base color should appear a dark blue green color at this stage.

### **Developing the form of the Bird – Shade and Highlight:**



Use the following technique: *Pat-Blending* ~ This is a gentle tapping brush method used to disperse one or more colors on top of a wet layer. In this painting, we will apply wet paint into a wet base layer, and then proceed with blending.

- First apply a thin coat of Extender Medium to the red areas with a clean brush. Apply a thin coat of the red base color mix and quickly begin to create the soft highlights by pat-blending a little more Titanium White (PW6) into the highlighted areas. Working wet in wet using the #6 filbert brush, blend the red with the white to create a lighter value as you see in the photo. Note the shoulder in photo #3, where the reddish area of the body meets the greenish area of the wing. This transition of color is subtle and soft. The two hues meet and merge! Blend these softly before

building the additional fluffy feathers that cover the top of the wing. Do not try to complete this step; you will come back to it after the wing detail is put in place.



After you have blended these areas, use the brush tip or the chisel brush to create the texture and the direction that creates the soft feathers on the breast, belly, and the shoulder.

- Build the highlights very slowly, always following the contour or curve of the body and getting lighter as you proceed. Create texture to make the feathers (refer to the arrows on the line drawing and photo #5 and #6) and the direction of these feathers on the shoulder, breast, and the lower belly.



- Let this stage dry before moving on. You may use a blow dryer; do not overheat. Allow the area to cool before moving forward.
- To shade the red areas of the body, mix a violet color from Naphthol Red (PR170) plus Ultramarine Blue (PB29) (1:1). Use small amounts of this violet mixed with the red mix to create the deeper shading colors.
- Dry and apply Glazing Medium. When dry, reapply a thin coat of extender, and continue working wet in wet with a pat-blending technique. Work in the same areas, continuing to build even lighter highlights using more Titanium White (PW6) plus a touch of Raw Sienna (PBr7) to warm slightly. Use the tip of the #6 filbert brush to leave some texture behind; making the highlights smaller each time they are applied.
- Dry and apply a coat of Glazing Medium.

## Head

- Photo #3 – Basecoat the beak with a brush mix of Carbon Black (PBk7) and a touch of Titanium White (PW6) to make a very dark gray.
- Basecoat the eye with a toned yellow (mix Raw Sienna (PBr7) with a touch of Raw Umber (PBr7)).
- Using the liner brush, outline the eye with a thin line and paint a tiny pupil solid with Carbon Black (PBk7).
- Dry the bird and apply a thin coat of Glazing Medium with a clean brush.

## Legs

- Photo #4 – Basecoat the legs of the bird with a toned yellow (brush mix of Raw Sienna (PBr7) plus a touch of Hansa Yellow (PY74) (3:1)).
- Photo #5 – Highlight the legs with a float of the same yellow mix plus Titanium White (PW6). Keep your light source in mind when painting the highlights.
- Photo #5 – Shade the legs with the 3/8" angular shader. Use narrow floats of the yellow mix above plus a touch of Raw Umber (PBr7) to tone and lower the value of the yellow.

## Head and Body

- The next shading step will help to create the 3-dimensional form of the head and the body. Begin shading the following darker areas of the bird with soft floats of color: under the wing, behind the head, under the chin, below the belly, and at the base of the breast. Shade these areas with the mix of toned reddish brown. Use Raw Umber (PBr7) and a touch of Naphthol Red (PR170) plus a touch of the violet mix color to deepen if needed. Keep these floats transparent and slowly build the depth of color as you apply subsequent floats.



Wing details

## Wing Detail

- Photo #4 and #5 – It is important to note at this point: when you thin paint for liner work, it is crucial to add a little Glazing Medium to put the ‘glue’ back into the mix. Without this step, the addition of water changes the paint-to-binder ratio and the paint’s ability to stick to the surface. This is an important step. The detail on the wing is painted with the liner brush and a very pale aqua color mix made from Titanium White (PW6) and a touch of the blue-green mix. (Refer to the

line drawing for the placement of these feather markings.) You will have to re-trace these at this time. Note that these strong detail lines vary in thickness and should taper slightly before you end the stroke. Keep these details sharp, neat, and crisp.

### Head and Body Details

- Photo #3 & #5 – With the liner brush, create fine lines to establish the little feathers on the right and left of the eye and the little detail lines on the legs with the following mix: Titanium White (PW6) and a touch of Raw Sienna (PBr7) to make a warm white. If this is too bright, tone with a little Raw Umber (PBr7)
- Next, use the blue-green mix plus the warm white mix from above, thinned with water and Glazing Medium, to paint fine lines on the lighter crest of the head above the eye. Use a little of the violet mix to enhance the area directly above the eye and along the edge of the blue-green color.
- When dry, wash this area with a thin transparent layer of the blue-green mix to soften the detail and set it into the head.



- Create additional feather detail on the rest of the head and body. Paint the highlights on the cheek with the same warm-white mix from the previous step. (Refer to photo #6 these are on the belly and throat only.) These additional fine lines will give the feathers a downy or fluffy appearance.
- Next, using the #1 liner brush and a brush mix of Titanium White (PW6) plus any of the dirty, grayed colors from your palette, paint the fine-detailed hairs where the beak joins the head and above the wing at the base of the belly.
- Highlight the eye with the pale yellow mix and add a soft glint or sparkle to the lower right of the iris of the eye.
- Create a soft highlight on the top of the beak with a float of gray, made from Carbon Black (PBk7), Titanium White (PW6), and a touch of the violet mix (3:1:1). Adjust the value and the hue depending on how dark your bird's beak is. The highlight should be very subtle.
- Use the 3/8" angular shader – Shade the darkest areas at the back of the body, head, under the cheek, between the legs, and under the wing with a float of the violet mixed with the blue-green (1:1). Adjust the value and the hue depending on how dark your bird's body is. Always keep the shades as transparent and sheer as possible.

### **Background ~ Water Ripples**

- Photo #4 – You will notice several wiggly lines in the water and over the sand. Paint these in with lighter values of the base colors of both these areas, i.e., water - aqua and sand - brown. Refer to the base colors at the beginning of the instructions and add a little Titanium White to lighten the values. Use the tip of the #6 filbert brush to create the ripples in the water. Do not overload the brush with paint. It is important to keep this step as sheer or translucent as possible. This and the next two steps may have to be repeated two or three times to develop the ripples. See photo #5.
- Dry and glaze with Glazing Medium.
- Wash the areas across the sand with the following toned color: blue-green mix plus Raw Umber (PBr7). Keep the color very transparent and the value not too dark.
- Dry well and apply a coat of Glazing Medium to the entire canvas.

### **Cast Shadow ~ Under the Bird**

- Photo #5 – Wash a shadowed area under the bird with a deeper mix of the following toned color: blue-green mix plus a touch of Ultramarine Blue (PB29) to cool the mix, plus Raw Umber (PBr7) leaning into the Raw Umber. Shadowed areas are cooler and more toned than surrounding areas.



- Photo #5 – Begin to lighten and brighten some of the ripples around the base of the painting starting around the legs. Use the base colors from the background with a little more Titanium White (PW6) to lighten or a touch of Hansa Yellow (PY74). This color should be a light aqua with a slight greenish hue.
- Paint a ripple across the ankle area of the legs (refer to photo for placement). Shade under this ripple with a sheer float of the cast shadow color. This step helps to set the legs into the water. Dry well.

### **Finish**

- Dry and apply a coat of Glazing Medium to the entire surface. I always take a break from my painting to sit back and assess. I can always go back and make small adjustments before I varnish. You may want to tweak the shading and fine details on the body of the bird and create additional

depth to the water by darkening some areas with soft washes of more intense blues or toned greens. Remember: less is often more appealing!

### **Varnish**

- Photo #6 – Dry well. Varnish with two coats of JansenArt Traditions Satin Varnish.

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