HOW TO PAINT IN ACRYLIC BY THE ART SHERPA

CHRISTMAS STALLION



STEPS 12 | DIFFICULTY: BEGINNERS

MATERIALS - ACRYLIC PAINT

- Cad Red Medium (CRM)
- Cadmium Yellow Medium (CYM)
- Titanium White (TW)
- Mars Black (MB)
- Phthalo Blue (PB)
- Phthalo Green (PG)
- Burnt Sienna (BS)
- Zinc White (ZW) to help blending
- EXTRA - Fluid White Paint (FWP) for sparkle lines

MATERIALS - BRUSHES

The Art Sherpa = TAS

- Large Brush (background)
- #8 TAS Cats Tongue
- #4 TAS Round
- Assorted Acrylic Bright Brushes
- Detail Brushes
- Dritz Tailor Chalk Tool and/or Chalk Pencil
- 16 x 20 Canvas
- T Square Ruler

TECHNIQUES YOU WILL USE IN THIS PAINTING ARE:

- How to mix color with a limited palette
- How to Use the Gridding Method
- How to use transparency to blend
- How to create Reflected glow
- How to work in dramatic and dark lighting
- How to imply tree branches
- How to create Twinkle Effect
- It is important to note when a color mix is heavy or predominant in one color. Use this paint legend below to understand the symbols that I use to give you important painting information.

PAINT COLOR & MIXING LEGEND:

- Cad Red Medium = CRM
- phthalo Blue = PB
- Cadmium Yellow Medium = CYM
- Titanium White = TW
- Zinc White = ZW
- Mars Black = MB
- Phthalo Green = PG
- Burnt Sienna = BS
- EXTRA - Fluid White Paint (for splatter) = FWP
- Even 1 to 1 Mix: =
- More of this color: >
- Less of this color: <
- Add tiny smidge of this color: LC-
- Colors bias is in the order they are written, left to right.
- First color is the primary and strongest color. Colors that follow are descending in amount.

THE GOLDILOCKS ZONE

In painting, every technique or process has what I call a "Goldilocks Zone. As an artist, you will be constantly seeking this space to achieve maximum results from any project you're doing. Much like Goldilocks, you will go into each technique and try to find a space that is just right for you. When you're loading your brush, sometimes you will have too much water, sometimes you will have too little water, and sometimes you will find the amount of water is just right. When applying strokes to the canvas, you may find that you have too much brush pressure, too little brush pressure, or that your brush pressure is just right. The Goldilocks zone changes for every technique and every process. You will know you have found it when something that seemed difficult suddenly becomes much easier. A little goal I'd like to set for you is to notice when you have found yourself in the Goldilocks Zone so that you can locate it again easier the next time you come across particular technique.



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SHERPA'S NOTES:

Dramatic and dark lighting with a black on black subject can at seem overwhelming but as a painting subject, actually presents wonderful and accessible art opportunities for the new artist. A painting like this will show you how a little bit of value can imply a whole object, even a horse. I do recommend zinc paint, but this product does come in a variety of names and price points. Tinting White, Mixing White, and Transparent White are other names you might see in the market. I have verified that this color is available in professional grade, student grade and even craft paint. If it's financially possible, I recommend you getting a bottle of it; if you cannot do so for any reason, you can use Titanium White, but it will be harder to get transparency because of the opacity of that pigment. If you have a bottle of glazing liquid already around, or a gel, you can do a makeshift version. But again if you're a first-time painter, that's a complicated process, and can have unexpected results. Experimentation in art is always wonderful for the artist but it can be a difficult emotional journey if an experiment fails. Experimentation, by nature, will always have a failure rate so it's an excellent opportunity as an artist. Define an emotional space to embrace those unexpected if less than desirable results. I personally believe we learn as much from the things that work as the things that don't. You should also know that a technique that doesn't work in one project may be perfect for another, so there is no true failure in art there is just not this painting, not right now.

It is important to note when a color mix is heavy or predominant in one color. Use this paint legend below to understand the symbols that I use to give you important painting information.

ZINC WHITE

- What acrylic paint companies have this color? Amsterdam, Golden Artist Colors, Soho Urban, Liquitex, M. Graham, Artist's Acrylics, Holbein, Windsor and Newton, Vallejo
- What are the price ranges? $2- $11
- What is the pigment number for this color: PW4
- Is this color Cool or Warm compared to titanium white: neutral warm
- Blurb about the history of this color: Zinc white is zinc oxide with the formula ZnO. Used by Vincent Van Gogh
- Mixing White or Tinting White is an exchange for this color



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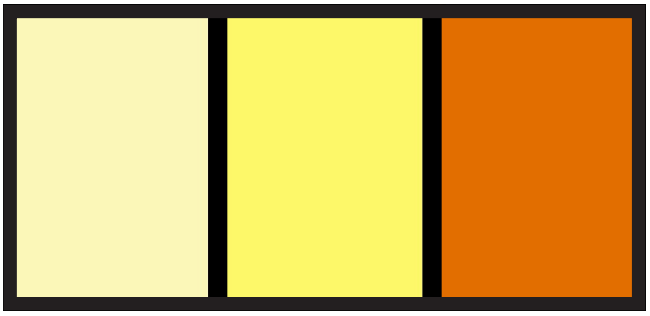
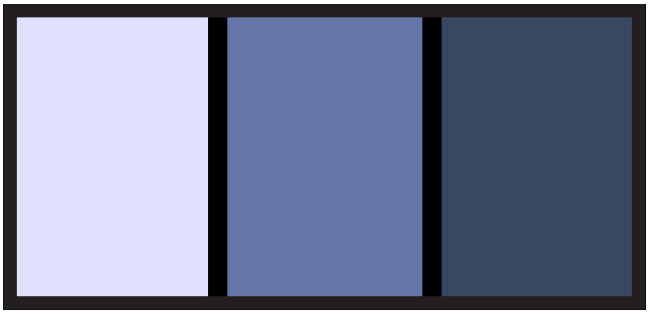
USE THE COLOR KEY TO HELP CHECK YOUR MIXES.



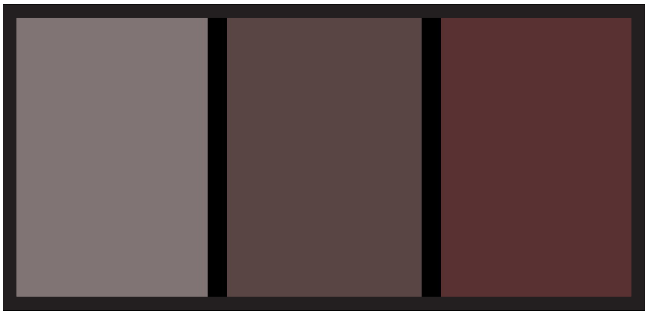
The greens of the painting are a mix of Phthalo Green deepened with Burnt Sienna. You can lighten with both Cadmium Yellow and white. Play with how much green, brown, yellow and white are in the mix to get many values and hues of green. More Phthalo Green tends to be more mint. More yellow tends to be a warmer green and more brown tends to be a deeper green.



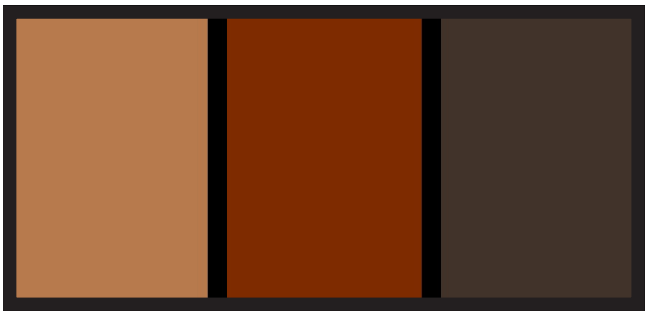
The yellows and oranges of the painting are started with a strong base of Cadmium Yellow. For the orange, you will want to slowly mix a small amount of the red into the yellow to keep the orange very bright. The yellow glows have Cadmium Yellow and white. Adding more white will lighten but still feel warm and glowy.



The cool grays of the stallion's body are mixed primarily with Mars Black, Phthalo Blue and Zinc White. These mixes will be transparent and blend well into both the canvas and each other. When opacity is needed, a small amount of Titanium White can be added to the mixture. When you want to darken the color and blend into a shaded area of the stallion, add more Mars Black. When you are creating a deep reflection, add more Phthalo Blue. Sometimes, transitionally, you will add some of the Burnt Sienna to create gradients into the areas of the stallion that have a warmer more brown cast reflection.



The warm grey reflections are created using a mix of Burnt Sienna, Mars Black and Zinc White. To create a deeper value and blend into the dark of shadows, add more Burnt Sienna and Mars black. To lighten it and transition into the highlights of the stallion, add more Zinc White. You can create middle mixes or halfway transitions by mixing a small amount of this color into your blue gray color. I find that Zinc White sometimes makes this transition easier.



The browns are created using a base of Burnt Sienna and Mars black. You create a deeper brown by adding more Mars Black. Mid browns are created by adding more Burnt Sienna; highlights are created using Cadmium Yellow and a small amount of Titanium White.

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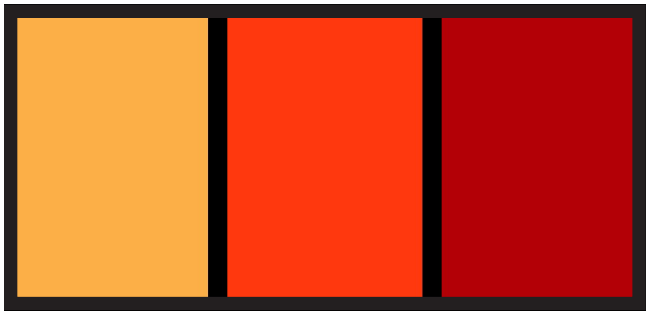

The red in this painting starts with an unusual deep base of Cadmium Red Medium and Quinacridone Magenta. The mid range is pure Cad Red Medium and a highlight is a light orange created by adding Cadmium Yellow.

GRIDDING

The gridding method allows you to dip your toe into drawing without being in the deep end of the drawing pool on day one. For our purposes, the gridding method has been worked out for you. We will work on a 2" grid. On your 16 x 20 canvas, you will make a mark using your chalk tool and a T-square ruler at every 2 inch point both horizontally and vertically. The T-square will help ensure that your lines are straight. Number your grid to match the reference. You can remove chalk easily by taking a soft brush and getting it damp with clean water. Gently brush over the lines you wish to remove and they will lift.

To draw the grid your canvas must be dry and it's advisable that it is also cool. You should use chalk that is wax or oil free. It must be pure chalk. I use a Dritz fabric-marking tool because it does fine lines easily and removes well from the canvas. There are also chalk pencils available or you could use chalkboard chalk. While I will always share with you the tools and equipment that I am using, you are welcome to deviate from that any time you feel something else is best for you.

Something that I have learned especially with complex images is that it can be easy to get lost in the grid. If you find yourself unsure, go back and check to make sure that the square you are marking on matches the square in your reference. After you master this method, you will be able to use gridding to transfer any image from a reference to your canvas.

If you prefer a different size there are many great resources out there that involve math about how to scale. I do not teach math for many good reasons and I could count them all for you, but that would be doing math. The resources out there for that information and those mathematical formulas exist online in copious amounts. If you are choosing to paint different sizes than we are utilizing in this mini book, I highly recommend finding one of those formulas and mastering it. Short of that, buy a 16 x 20 canvas to match the free grid.

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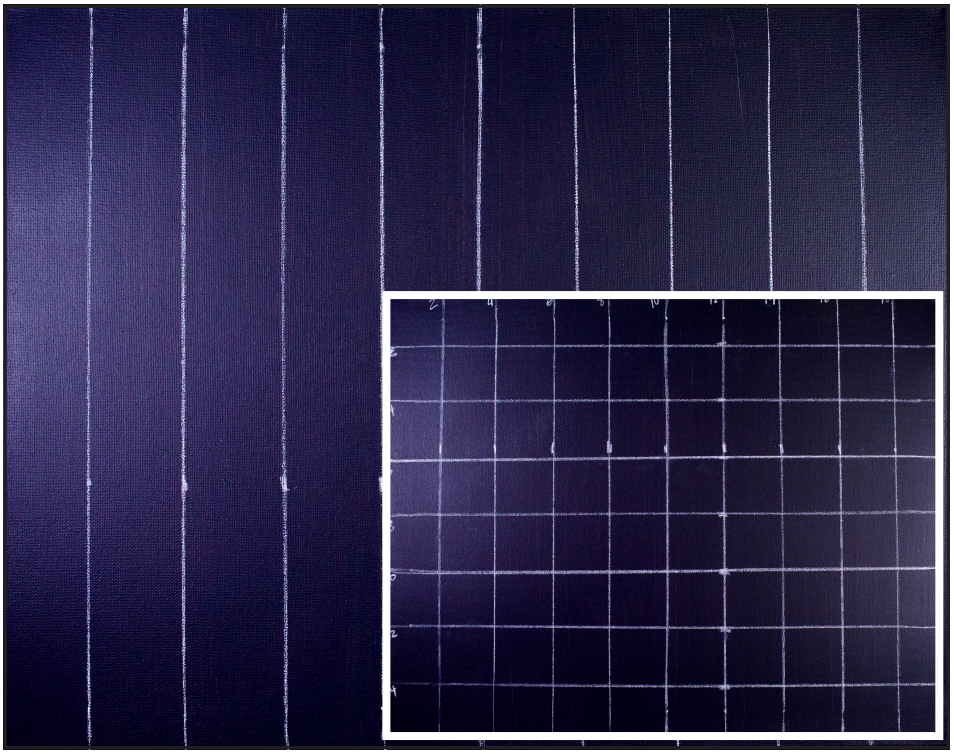
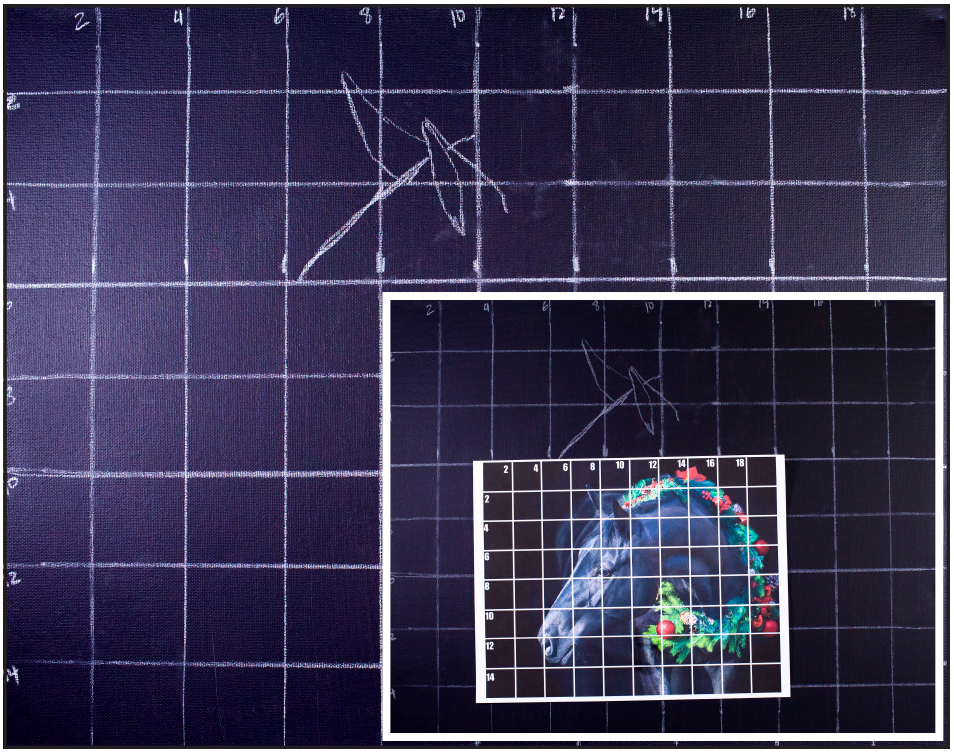
STEP 1 - BACKGROUND AND GRID LINE SKETCH

COLORS:
MB

- With a large brush, freely paint your canvas with a layer of MB.
- Dry
- I recommend another coat of MB.
- Dry
- Put in your vertical chalk lines every 2 inches then add your horizontal lines every 2 inches. Number by 2's In each square draw what you see in the squares one square at a time. Use the contour lines to help you define the structure of your horse!! Remember - contour lines define the outline of form
- Even if drawing is a new skill for you, gridding is a way to make complex shapes on your surface accurately and easily. "Easily" being a loose term for "not as hard as freehand". Remember to be easy with yourself whenever you're learning a new skill. What will be easy tomorrow can only become so by facing your art challenges and practicing.





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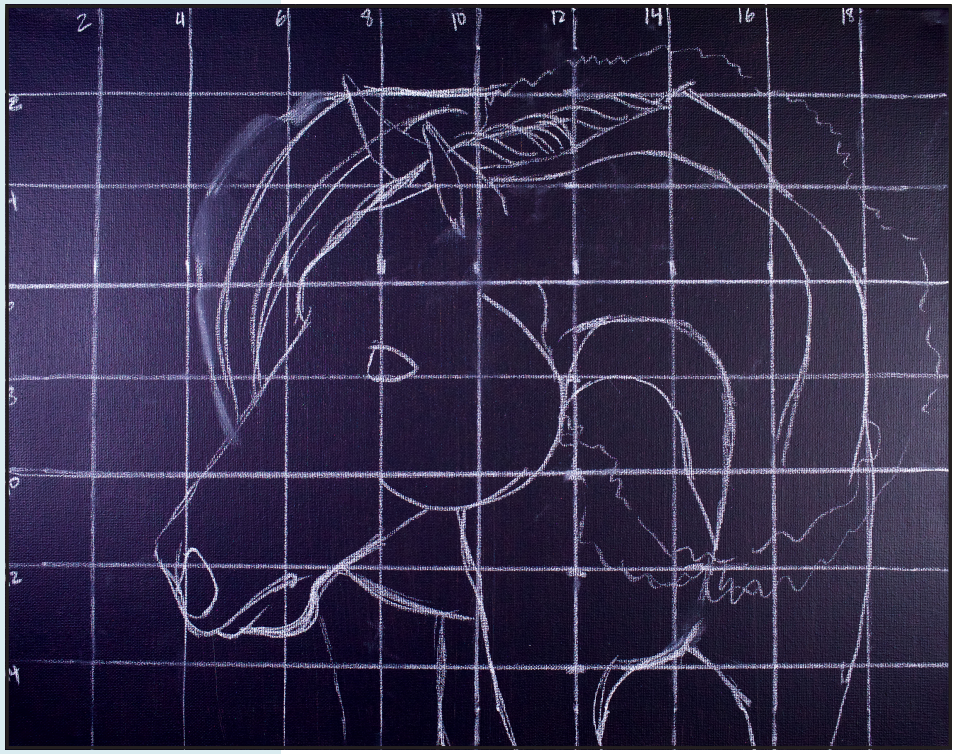
- With a clean damp brush, remove grid lines. Take your chalk and define your subject lines to help them be stronger and more defined. Clean up any residue that can't be removed on the outside negative space around the stallion with more Mars Black to give it a smooth finished look.





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STEP 2 - ROUGH IN THE NECK

COOL GREYS:
PB<MB<ZW, PB<MB<TW

WARM GREYS:
MB<BS<ZW, MB<BS<TW

TRANSITIONAL MIXES:
WARM GREY MIX + COOL GREY MIX + ZINC WHITE TO BLEND



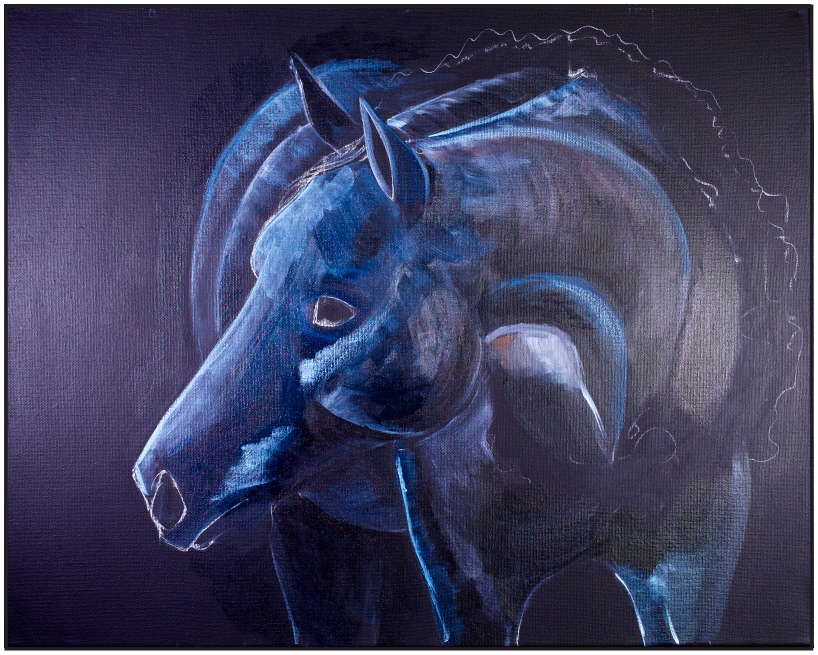
- Using a good bright hog bristle brush, or your favorite blending brush, dry brush and scumble at the top of the neck, painting the cool grey highlights; define at the main top edges and jugular to indicate roundness in shape. Transition into warm grey reflections in the larger curved areas of the neck using transparent middle mixes between the two colors to create soft blends. When painting, we define roundness by working the value from light to dark. Since we're working on a black canvas, we can easily blend into shadows by simply adding more Mars Black.

STEP 3 - DEFINE FACE AND BODY

COOLS GREYS: PB<MB<ZW SOMETIMES WITH TW ADDED

WARM GREYS: BS<MB<ZW SOMETIMES WITH TW ADDED

TRANSITIONAL MIXES:
WARM GREY MIX + COOL GREY MIX + ZINC WHITE TO BLEND



- Using a good bright bog bristle brush or your favorite brush to blend, dry brush and scumble.

- Continue using your cool grays and warm greys to create shape and value over the rest of the structure of

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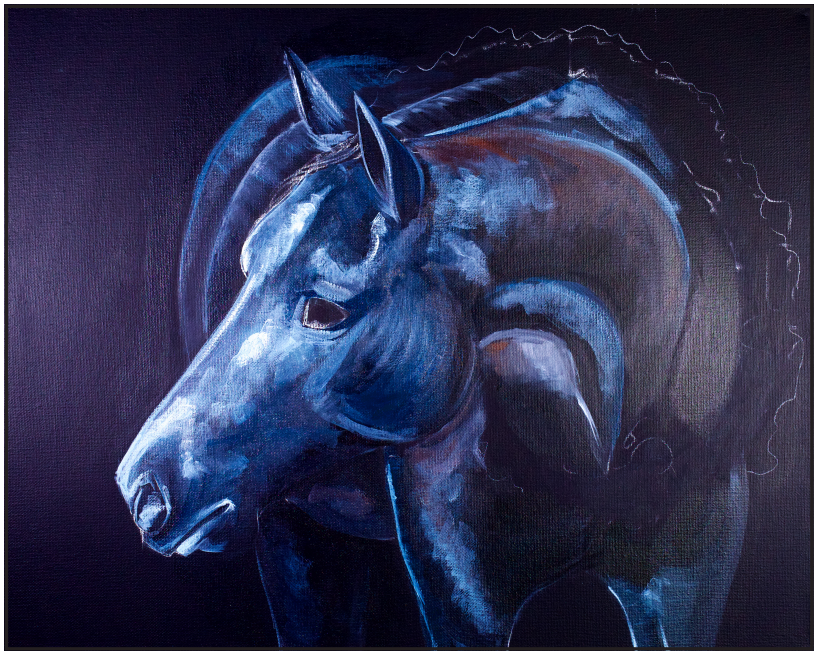
the horse. Where the horse is in similar value to the background, continue to add more black to allow that part of the form to naturally fade into the shadow. If chalk lines remain, they may help you discern where deep values are too similar. As you continue to paint, you will be able to erase these chalk lines because the values will create that space for you. These transitions can be done for a variety of techniques. Sometimes you will be working wet into wet; sometimes you will be scumbling. Sometimes you will be dry brush layering. This is a good time to just start finding what of those processes works best for you. Get into your Goldilocks Zone.

STEP 4 - REFINE THE HORSE WITH BLENDED VALUE AND HUE

COOLS GREYS: PB<MB<ZW SOMETIMES WITH TW ADDED

WARM GREYS: BS<MB<ZW SOMETIMES WITH TW ADDED

TRANSITIONAL MIXES: WARM GREY MIX + COOL GREY MIX + ZINC WHITE TO BLEND



- Using a good bright Hog bristle brush or your favorite brush to blend, dry brush and scumble.

- After you have established your basic value scheme, it's time to revisit, refine, and define the shape and form of the horse. These techniques are like the ones you have already done but we continue to layer and blend creating a smoother form and value. Be mindful of your reference and take your time during this process. It is in the little details of highlights and shadows that our subjects really take shape. Going forward, the previous techniques are more important to create smooth visual transitions. You can always go back and rewatch any section of the video that you need to for clarification.

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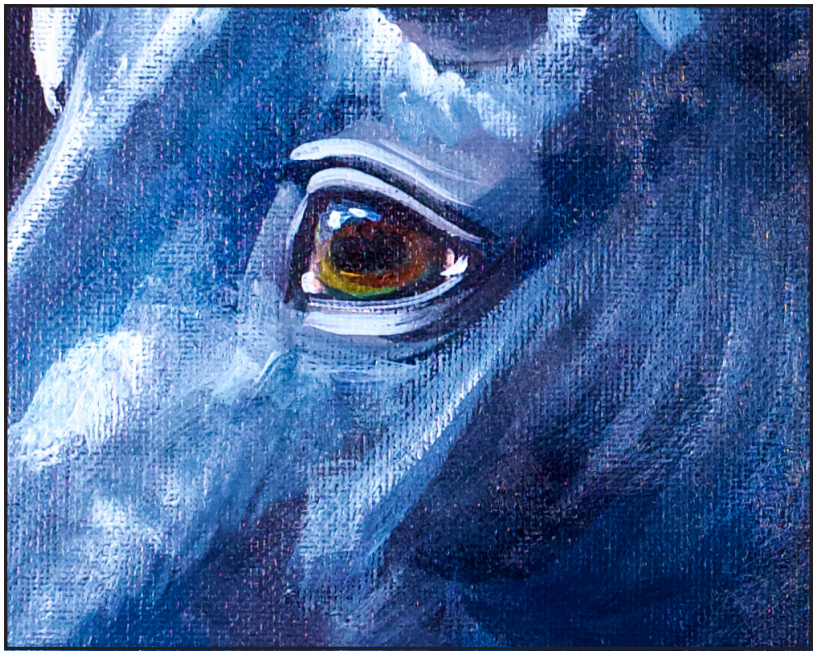
STEP 5 - EYE

COLORS:
ORANGE, CR<CY
BROWN, BS AND ORANGE MIX
DEEP BROWN, BS<MB
REFLECTION, PB <TW

USING A TAS #4 ROUND AND TAS #1 DETAIL ROUND



- Begin the eye by painting the iris of his eye with a mix of BS and MB. Follow with a highlight in the inner left corner of the iris using a brown and orange mix. Then create a shadow under the lid using MB and BS. In the center of the eye, create a pupil using MB. Finish with a highlight made of TW and PB. You can add a little pink to the two corners of the eye with CR and TW. Small spots of pure white are placed in the reflections.

STEP 6 - DARK PINE BRANCHES

COLORS:
PG>BS< CYM < LC-
LIGHTEN WITH YELLOW



- With a round brush or the TAS Cat's Tongue, rough in the wreath around the horse. Use a flicking stroke to imply the tree-like branches of the wreath.

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STEP 7 - DEFINE PINE BRANCHES

COLORS:
PG>BS< LC- CYM < LC-
LIGHTEN WITH WHITE

- Using the same brush go through adding different colors and hues of green to imply highlights and shape to the wreath. This is a multi-layer process, so give yourself time to be able to complete this.
- Add or decrease yellow to create colors in a range from pine yellow green to pine mint green. Using the #8 Cats Tongue, finish and fill the clumps in with colors of light pine green to cool minty pine green. When you want a warmer green, add more yellow; for cooler green, add more blue. You can even lighten both colors further by adding white.



STEP 8 - THE PINE CONES, DARK PINE CONES

COLORS:
BS<MB MIDTONE COLOR
BS WITH VERY LITTLE MB
HIGHLIGHT, BS<CY<TW
TAS #8 CATS TONGUE OR
A TAS #4 ROUND

- Using a touch and pull stroke, start painting the first layer pine cones with your darkest brown mix. Come back with your mid range brown on the toe of your brush and help define the layers of the pinecones. This is the layer that allows the tiling effect to become visible and to create the structures that are identified as the pinecone. Follow this layer with your highlight color to create more depth and structure.



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STEP 9 - DECORATE AND LIGHT THE WREATH

RED ORNAMENTS

DARK RED
CR<QM

MIDDLE RED
CR

HIGHLIGHT
CY<CR

BEGINNING GLOW
CY<CR

- Using a large round brush, paint your ornament circles with your darkest red mix. In the reference, you will notice that three of the ornaments are not complete circles, but half or partial circles. Later in the painting, we will bury these behind branches, but for right now, you need to have ample ornament to cover up later. While that color is drying, use a TAS #4 Round Brush to create radiating circles of light orange and yellow to imply twinkle lights. This is the first layer of twinkle lights we have yet to make them sparkle.

- When your first dark layer of red on the round ornaments is done drying, you can add a mid tone in the middle of the ornament with just pure Cad Red. As soon as that's done, mix a light yellow orange and apply highlights as shown in the reference.



- Dry

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STEP 10 - FINAL BRANCHES AND WREATH DECOR HIGHLIGHTS

COLORS:
THE PINE BRANCHES
PG>BS< LC- CYM < LC-

LIGHTEN WITH WHITE

TWINKLES
TW<CY< LC-

ORNAMENT HIGHLIGHT
TW

- When the canvas is completely dry, it's time to add a final layer of pine branches. Repeat the techniques from Step 6 and 7, making sure that pine cones and ornaments are well layered into the wreath by painting branches that go in front and around them. You will use the same brushes and same colors in the step as before.

- Dry.

- With a TAS #4 Round, add circling highlights with TW and a small amount of Cad Yellow. Finally, finish this step by adding a highlight to the ornaments as shown in the reference below using just Titanium White and whatever brush fits in your Goldilocks Zone.



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STEP 11 - SPARKLE THE TWINKLE LIGHTS

COLORS:
FWP

T SQUARE OR RULER
FINE LINE BRUSH



- Using fluid white paint and a straight edge ruler, carefully define the sparkle lines radiating out from the center of each twinkling light. The main lines are vertical and horizontal with shorter angled lines between. The trick here is to not drag your hand and ruler through wet paint. My strategy is to do a series of lines throughout and then return to my first spot to do the next series of lines. Generally, this task is time consuming enough to allow the paint to dry between twinkles. If you find it is not, it is acceptable to use a hairdryer to dry.

STEP 12 - HIGHLIGHTS AND REFLECTIONS

COLORS:
FWP

FINE LINE BRUSH



- Using a detail brush, carefully outline highlights and reflections around the contours of the horse to create contrast and drama. Use the reference as your guide for where you might put these highlights. Stand back and take a long solemn look at your painting. Give a little distance and a point of perspective from it. This is the time to listen to your artist's brain and see if there's anything else that you would like to tweak or adjust. As soon as you find that you're happy with your work, go ahead and give it a signature.

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TECHNIQUE REFERENCES:

BLENDING WET INTO WET
Another way to create transitions from one color to another, or one value to another, in acrylic painting, is by blending colors together with the brush on the canvas while both are still wet Mastering a blend like this is also essential for acrylic painting. In general, blending requires a soft pressure with a bit of urgency because it must be accomplished before the paint is dry. If you are in very dry studio conditions, such as air conditioning or dry heating in winter,your paint may dry out faster than you can blend it. No worries...there are mediums called retarders that you can add to the paint to slow the drying time.

BLOCKING IN
Paint in the shape with a color, but no detail is required.

CONTOUR
Following the outer lines of an object or subject with your brush or tool.

COOL COLOR
Colors on the cool side of a color wheel. Blues, greens and purples. These colors shouldn't visually feel cool to the eye. They often make up objects in our real world that are cool like ice or the green in nature . These colors tend to recede visually and give a sense of distance.

CONTOUR PAINTING
This is where you use the brushstroke to define the outline of the form. The brushstrokes are long and smooth and help us express the form and line of the object.

FEATHERED BLENDING
When you create a softened edge by gently brushing on the toe of the head of the brush allowing the bristles to feather out visually defusing the stroke.

FINE LINE WORK
Taking paint that is made more fluid and a fine line brush to create brush Strokes that are delicate and elegant in nature. This is often used for hair, delicate grasses or natural elements, edged highlights.

GLAZING
Glazing is taking thin transparent coats of paint over another coat of dry paint.The transparency of the paint allows the color from the paint underneath to affect the paint on top. This is another way for artists to make transitions with acrylic paint. Some paint is naturally transparent because of how the pigmentmented it is. Colors like quinacridone magenta or phthalo blue are very transparent. Opaque pigments can be made transparent using a medium for glazing.

LAYERING
This is a very important part of acrylic painting. It can be hard for new artists to understand because it's used in so many different ways. you can layer wet paint over wet paint. You can layer dry paint over dry paint. You can glaze over dry paint to layer also. Layering can help you build texture and depth in a painting. Understanding that techniques are built up in layers will help you move away from the magical brush thinking. What I mean by that is you remember seeing cartoons paint a tunnel in one stroke with a single brush? As regular humans we can't do that to get these effects, We need to layer the paint. Once you embrace this thinking the depth of your painting will improve greatly.

LOOSE, EXPRESSIVE AND PAINTERLY
This is when you paint showing the brush stroke. The painting has a freshly captured feel. This technique gives the impression of capturing a moment in time. it has qualities where the color stroke in texture defines the artwork instead of line.

LOOSELY MIXED
Taking two colors and mixing them together we're both colors are still evident in the mix and brush stroke.

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PAINTERLY

Brush strokes that are free flowing and expressive. A painterly expression of art generally allows the medium and the brush strokes to show instead of hiding them through blending and careful placement.

S STROKES

Being able to create compound curves as strokes is a very important technique in painting. Most of the natural world will require your ability to execute it as stroke. It's a good idea to practice making bold S strokes and delicate S Strokes.

SCUMBLING

Scumbling certainly has some dry brushing to it but involves a more randomized circular brush stroke. Be careful when you scumble, you don't want to press so hard that you break the heel of the brush. In scumbling, just like in dry brushing, we won't be using a lot of water in the brush. We are going to want to move the brush around in a random and circular motion creating no sense of a particular line or direction.

SMOOTHLY BLENDED OR TIGHT PAINTING

This is when you smooth the paint and try to hide the brush Strokes and transitions. When you hear an artist talking about a particular painter being tight, what they're speaking of is the way that this artist is able to hide the medium method of the painting. Acrylic blending is one of the more frustrating techniques for new artists.

THOROUGHLY MIXED

Taking two colors and thoroughly incorporating them so they make a smooth even secondary color with no sign of the two colors used to create it.

TRANSITIONAL MIXING

There are many ways to blend acrylic paint creating tonal and value transitions through the hues. When you have two very different colors you can create hues that are half shades by mixing them together and biasing the mix to create a subtle transition. This is always useful.

UNDERPAINTING

Loose large fields of color that future layers of painting will build on.

WARM COLOR

These colors are on the warm side of the wheel such as red, yellow and orange. Warm colors remind us of things like fire and sunlight. They tend to come forward visually and pull the viewer in.

RESOURCES:

- The best resource for this book is to use it with the YouTube video. Additionally, I have many resources to help new painters achieve their dreams of being creative. I've made over a thousand videos and chances are I have a video that will help you with your specific challenges.
- Be sure to check out the "Where to Start Acrylic Painting with the Art Sherpa" playlist on Youtube.
- Search for videos on the website.
- Use the traceable - it is NOT cheating.
- Join the Art Sherpa Official Facebook group for support.
- Come to live streams and ask questions.

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WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR FINISH PIECE?

Hang it on a wall or give it as a gift just like SANTA!! Deciding to hang a piece of art in your home is an enjoyable and easy decision. Look for locations that are not in direct sunlight, exposed to large amounts of moisture, or in the direct path of extreme temperature shifts such as a heater or door to the outside. You can frame your art, put it directly on a wall, lean it in a special place or even display on an easel. Check decor and style magazines for other ideas and inspiration

ART GIFTS AND THE MAIL

Acrylic can be difficult to ship as the surface can soften in extremely warm temperatures and will stick to packaging. It is important to put your artwork in a box that has ample room so air can circulate around the artwork. The goal is to add bracers so that no side touches the box or wrapping materials.

Be sure to add insurance to your package if you ship it but be aware that the value of the artwork is in the materials unfortunately. To be able to collect a higher value beyond the materials of the artwork, you would require to have an appraisal by a legitimate source. What I'm saying is that you can't establish a maximum value on the art just because you feel it's worth it. In art, the value of work is established by previous sale prices, the current market, providence, and an evaluation buying established appraisal firm. This is true for your insurance company as well, so remember that artwork needs to have special policy and you should contact your agent for more info if you feel it necessary.

