CHRISTMAS LAKE COTTAGE

STEPS 14 | DIFFICULTY: INTERMEDIATE

MATERIALS - ACRYLIC PAINT

- Cad Red Medium (CRM)
- Cadmium Yellow Medium (CYM)
- Titanium White (TW)
- Mars Black (MB)
- Phthalo Blue (PB)
- Phthalo Green (PG)
- Dioxazine Purple (DP)
- Burnt Sienna (BS)

MATERIALS - BRUSHES

The Art Sherpa = TAS

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

The ART SHERPA™

TECHNIQUES YOU WILL USE IN THIS PAINTING ARE:

- How to mix color with a limited palette
- How to block in
- How to be painterly and loose
- How to paint trees with fan brush
- Reflections in water
- Light on water
- How to have good value
- Two brush Blending
- Expressive painting strokes
- Sketching in buildings
- Landscaping methods
- 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
- UltraMarine Blue = UB
- Cadmium Yellow Medium = CYM
- Titanium White = TW
- 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.

SHERPA'S NOTES:

You are an artist, not a copy machine. *YES, you are. A key to success is not to rush. Follow the steps, breath and be relaxed with yourself. I will demonstrate a concept in a step and you should duplicate that concept before moving to the step. At the end of all of the steps, we will both have beautiful paintings, though they will not be identical. I truly believe that everyone can learn to paint but that some art skills take time to master. Be kind to yourself and give yourself time to be a beginner. Your time of being "new" is shorter than you think, so enjoy the discovery process. Don't waste time beating yourself up over mistakes. Be present and mindful of your successes. Pay attention to the elements of painting that are fun and unexpected. Remember that the steps in this booklet match the steps in the video. These are set up to go together so you can quickly refer to the video demonstration and the book together. It Is my deep belief that the marriage of these two teaching methods will result in a higher enjoyment rate for you, my community student.*

Included with this step by step illustration are technique references at the end so that if you do not understand a technique I am referencing, you can refer to it.

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 a particular technique.

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.

TODAY'S GOLDILOCKS ZONES ARE:

-**TWO BRUSH BLENDING**

-**WET INTO WET**

-**LAYERING**

-**FAN BRUSH TREES**

-**WATER GLOWS**

STEP 2 - COLORED GROUND

COLORS:
TW< UB<BS

- With a large brush, paint the entire canvas with 1 coat of TW.
- While paint is still wet, use the same large brush to blend in a soft blue grey made from TW, UB, and BS.
- DRY

STEP 2 - BLOCK IN THE DESIGN

COLORS:
UB

- With a #8 Cat's Tongue brush, sketch in the loose lines that define the major subjects and zones of the painting.

STEP 3 - LAKE REFLECTION

COLORS:
DEEP BLUE : PB<UB<DP
MID BLUE: PB<UB<TW
VERY LIGHT BLUE GREY: TW<UB
WITH SMALL MIXES OF BS

- With a large brush, start the highlight from the right side. Rinse brush out and pat dry.
- While the light area is still wet, brush in your darkest blue moving to mid blues from edges and bottom. Go over with a soft brush; first horizontally and then with vertical strokes to blend. This is a two brush blending method and can take a couple of tries to get right, so be calm, breath and know that after you master this method, you will be amazing at lake reflections. So worth it.

STEP 4 - BLUSTERY SKY AND TREES

COLORS:
SKY LEFT: TW<UB<BS
SKY RIGHT: TW<UB<BS - VERY HEAVY IN TW
LAKE STONES AND SHADOWS: DP<MB

- With a large brush, loosely mix a mid-grey blue color. Brush this in from the top down and leaning left for an effect that should feel like a cold sky. Add more white and brush in very light clouds.
- Take a #8 Cat's Tongue and redefine the lake line with a dark purple made of DP and MB. You can add back some loose stones in the bottom of the lake.

STEP 4 (CONTINUED) - DARK PINES

COLORS:
MB<DP
DP<TW

- With a fan brush, using a stippling motion, dab out an uneven tree line. This should randomly wander up and down from left to right. The overall tree line should angle down and blend into the landmass a little before the edge of the canvas. With a large bright brush, fill in the tree line to the snowline.
- Come back and add dark purple faint trees added to imply a distant forest.

STEP 5 - TREE REFLECTIONS

COLORS:
DEEP REFLECTIONS: DP<MB
LITTLE HIGHLIGHTS: DP<TW LC-

- With a fan brush, add a reflection of trees in the water. Add a little lighter color, occasionally, at the lake edge and randomly on the line. Only do small sections at a time. Spray with a micro-mister to aid in blending, if needed. Come back with a damp clean brush to soften and blend the trees. Repeat though all lake reflections to the far left edge. Where the trees go high, the reflections in the lake should be longer. I find it's helpful to turn the canvas to the side for this step.

STEP 6 - LIGHT BLUE WATER REFLECTIONS

COLORS:
TW<UB<BS

- With a very light blue grey and a fan brush, brush in a lighter lake edge and spots of reflections. It can help to do small sections and come back with a clean damp brush to blend. Refer to the reference if necessary for placement.

STEP 7 - SNOW IN TREES

COLORS:
GLAZE: DP,
BLUE FOR BACK TREES: UB<TW,
TREE HIGHLIGHTS: DP<TW,
VIOLET FOR FAR BRANCHES:
TW<UB
WHITE WITH BLUE SNOW
HIGHLIGHTS

- With a fan brush, dapple in Far snow with a light bluish white and allow to dry.
- Come back and glaze over with DP.
- Create edge bushes with values of DP and UB. Highlight with light spots of white tinted blue. Come back into far trees and add snowy highlights with a light blue. Make sure to keep your deep shadows and also a dark edge where the forest meets snowbanks.

STEP 8 - CABINS, PART A

COLORS:
SNOW: TW<MB<UB
CABIN: CR<MB

- With a bright brush, paint the back snow with a grey. Where the snow falls into the bank, use curve strokes. Define the cabin shapes with your brush and fix any negative space around them with the deep forest color. Paint the cabins in with the cabin colors; lighten this value with red and deepen the value with black. The roof is added in with the snow color. Block in a little chimney with the cabin color. The front faces of the cabins are a little more red than the sides because of lighting in and round the cabin and our fire, when we add it.

STEP 9 - CABIN, PART B, AND FRONT SNOW

COLORS:
CABIN WINDOWS:
CR<CY
CABIN COLORS:
CR<MB, CD<CY<MB
FRONT SNOW AND ROOF SNOW:
TW<UB

CABINS

- With a bright brush, refine the structure of the cabin with the CR and MB. The front of the cabins should be lighter with more red; the sides with more black. Refine shadow under the roofline and below the chimney.
- Add in the snow banks with very light blue.

CABIN WINDOWS

- Paint in windows with warm orange and yellows, using a small brush. Add the door; it glows because it is open.

STEP 9 - (CONTINUED)

- Don't forget to add glow on the snow under and around the windows and doors.

SNOW

- Add lighter whitish blue for highlights where the snow is highest and deeper blue where it is in shadow or is a deeper drift of snow.
- The banks should be deeper blue and a dark line shadow should run along the lake edge.

STEP 10 - FIRE, SMOKE AND FRONT TREES

COLORS:
DARK VALUE TREES: DP<PB
DARK SNOW: PB<TW
LIGHT SNOW: TW<PB
DARK FIRE: CR<MB
MIDDLE FIRE: CR<CY
HIGHLIGHT FIRE: CY<TW
SMOKE: BB<TW

TREES

- With a TAS #4 Round, start a dark layer of trees with your deepest color. It can be best to start at the furthest back tree and then do the left tree. Add your darker snow color to the tops of the side and middle branches. Finish with your light snow color focused to the right of the trees.

FIRE

- Add a shadow of DP under the fire. Start with a dark fire red near the ground and sides using an s stroke and

a #4 TAS Round. Add to the middle of the fire with oranges and yellows. Then create a hot core to the fire and some embers flying away with yellow and white. You may need to allow layers to dry to get a good effect. You can add smoke leaving the chimney with wandering and curling s strokes.

• A nice final touch is adding a yellow light being reflected on snow and trees.

STEP 11 – GLOWING LAKE REFLECTIONS

COLORS:
LIGHT BLUE REFLECTIONS:
PB<TW
GLOWING LIGHT REFLECTIONS:
CR<CY<TW

• Add light blue reflections in the lake with a bright brush, along the edge, and blend out. Come back with the edge of a fan brush and add reflections of yellow, orange and red vertically on the lake, below the windows and fire. Come back with the light blue reflection color and light purple to show trees. Finish with little touches of white.
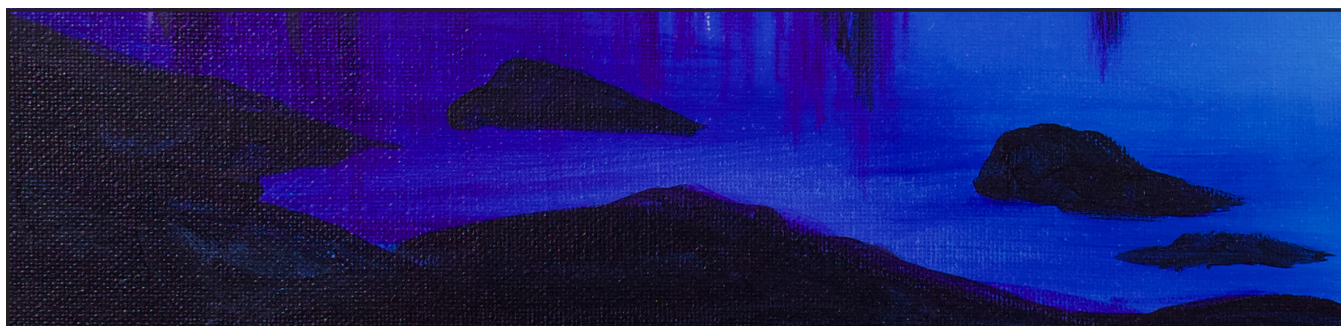
STEP 12 - DARK STONES

COLORS:
MB

- With the #4 TAS Round brush, paint in the shapes of the river bank and stones.

STEP 13 - SNOW ON STONES AND REFLECTIONS

COLORS:
DARK SNOW: UB<<TW
LIGHT SNOW: TW<UB
REFLECTIONS AROUND STONES:
PB<MB<TW
SHADOW AROUND STONES: PB

WATER AROUND ROCKS

- Glaze a shadow with your round brush using PB around the stone's water edge. Add shadows along far river bank lines. With your water reflection color for the stones, add reflections of highlights in the water below and around them. Use the reference for placement assistance.

SNOW ON ROCKS

- With a bristle brush, stipple and dry brush deep snow on top of the stones. Add the snow where the rocks are highest and create their shape and form with this highlight. Come back with the lightest snow color.

STEP 14 - LIGHT ON STONES AND FINAL DETAILS

COLORS:
ANY COLORS AND MIXES USED IN PREVIOUS STEPS.

- As we finish our painting, now is the time to find details and values that need refining. Stand back and view your painting from a distance. Are there shadows around the roof and lake edge? Do you need more reflections in the lake and trees? Let your artist's brain guide you. When you are happy, sign your artwork. Please be sure to upload a picture of your finished painting in our Facebook group.

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.

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.

(OPTIONAL) GRIDDING

This is optional for this project and is provided for students who wish to use it.

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.

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.

WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR FINISH PIECE?

As an artist, and, yes, you are an artist, because you have created a painting. But there's still a lot to think about.

Do you varnish? Believe it or not, varnishing is optional with acrylic painting. In my opinion it's best only to do so in good weather in a dust free space following the instructions of the specific varnish for acrylic painting exactly. Varnish is good because it does protect and unify the finish of a painting. But it is not required.

Allow your painting a few days to cure and harden. Acrylic paintings do dry quickly but they still continue to cure a few days after you're finished even with thin applications of paint. Taking the time to allow your paintings to cure will help them be more resilient through the framing and hanging process. These days you don't need to be a professional to frame or hang your paintings. Frames and ready to hang options are available at your local craft and art store.Something you might not know about acrylic painting is that when it's warm, it gets soft, so when painting is near the warmth of a fireplace you wouldn't want to add decorations that would touch it because they could leave an impression. It's perfectly fine to hang your artwork over the fireplace and change it out seasonally like I do. It's just important to be aware of hazards and fire safety. Also knowing that acrylic paintings can become a little softer when they're warm will prevent you from accidentally having a boo boo. Perhaps your Elf on the Shelf doesn't need to sit on the edge of the frame or lean against the painting if your art is in a warm spot. Properly cared for, acrylic paint will never become wet again or lose its cure and it will always remain finished and dry this is just a nature of plastics.