

How to Paint in Acrylic by The Art Sherpa

“How I Paint Clouds” Clinic

Thursday, March 11, 2021



Clouds seem to be one of the first things that a new artist decides is her Achilles Heel and if you feel that way, I hope that this video will be one of the steps that helps you overcome that feeling. There is no magic cloud brush, I even named one of my brush sets the Cloud Brushes, and I would take it back if I could, but I'll get to that in a minute. It is a huge misconception - a myth - an urban art myth, that a single cloud brush even exists. No two clouds are the same; the clouds live in you, not in the brush. There are a lot of brushes and tools that we can use to paint clouds.

Video Chapter Guide

Below are the timestamps we inserted in the tutorial video so that you can easily coordinate using the book and the tutorial video simultaneously.

Intro		
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	2:05	The Cloud Is In You, Not The Brush
	5:30	Synthetic, Hog or Goat?
	7:05	Synthetic Pros and Cons
	8:10	Hog Bristles Pros and Cons
	9:21	Goat Bristles Pros and Cons
	10:32	Quality vs. Qualities
	12:30	What are My Favorites?
	13:14	Soft Blenders
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	16:52	Brights and a Round
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	18:30	The Red Art Sherpa "Cloud Brush"
	21:35	Fingers and Sponges
	23:08	Where to Buy Brushes
	30:02	Clouds are Almost Never White
	32:27	Finding the Light Source
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	46:56	Circle, Circle vs. Comma, Comma
	50:00	Techniques
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	58:30	Wispy Clouds Demo with "Domed Scrumbler"
	1:00:24	Silver Lining
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The Brushes

You know it's going to be a good show if I make notes.

Keep in mind, if you learn nothing else from me, that the quality of a tool is the consideration, not the brand name or the price. Every brush has qualities and the key is to research and learn them. It's out there. I do like quality materials and tools so I tend to work with established manufacturers who I can depend on.

As for brushes, sometimes you want to use a goat, sometimes you want to use synthetic, sometimes you want to use hog. They are very different and do different things; have different pro's and different con's. If someone tells you that you always need to use a certain brush, just say "Hogwash".

I have a picture of brushes below and I'm going to tell you about the brushes that I use that correspond to these pictures. That does not mean that you can buy these specific brushes to get the job done that you need. It means that these brushes work for me and I will always have them in my studio. Some of them are discontinued, so you would not be able to purchase them, but there is a lovely substitution out there if you will just find it.

Hog, Goat or Synthetic?

Hog Pros and Cons

Animals are not killed for art materials; they are usually sourced from another industry that is already processing animals. Hog bristles come from the meat industry. When you have a good brush maker, they interface the bristles, they are flagged (split ends), and they work with a lot of media very well. They can become brittle and break and wear down over time. The weirder a brush gets, the better it works so I have a lot of old hog brushes available to me.

Goat Pros and Cons

It is soft and can blend but holds too much water and may be difficult for beginners. Difficult curve to learn and sheds a lot. Can smell bad because it is wet hair. Please prewash the goat or hair before you paint a cloud.

Synthetic Pros and Cons

Economical, no animal is harmed, holds up well, and controls water. Environment concerns about making process; hard to really learn and understand which brands work best because of manufacturer labeling. Sometimes not as "artful" as the naturals. Synthetic holds less, the goat or hair holds the most. Please prewash the goat or hair before you paint a cloud. I often recommend it because PH in acrylic is super high, and it makes hair and hog become brittle. Sometimes I will lean in to the poly tip. How much water it holds is another consideration.

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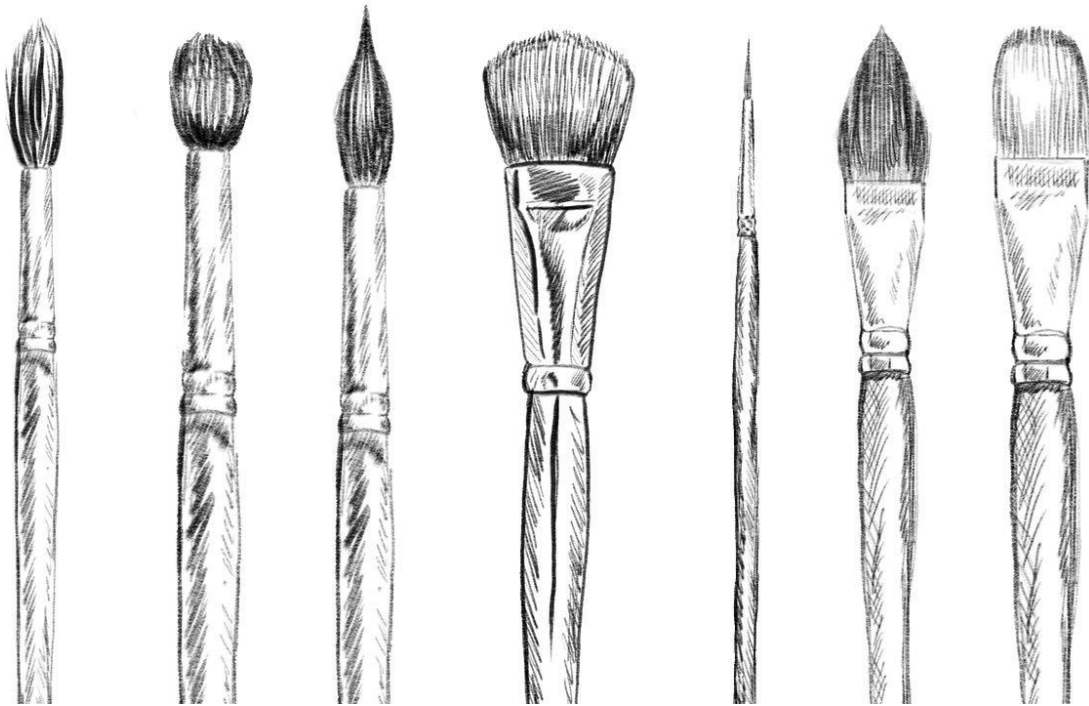
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My Favorite Cloud Brushes - My Go To's



Hog Round Brush

I will always have at least 2 sizes in my studio. My favorite big one is a # 12 Silverstone Round, but I pulled out three of the same size. This is a large brush. If a hog round becomes unshaped, wet it and roll it on a cloth. Simply Simmons has a great hog, Cambridge is great, but it is discontinued. The other hog round that I have is a # 6 round, so about half the size of the Silverstone.

Princeton #12 Round Blender



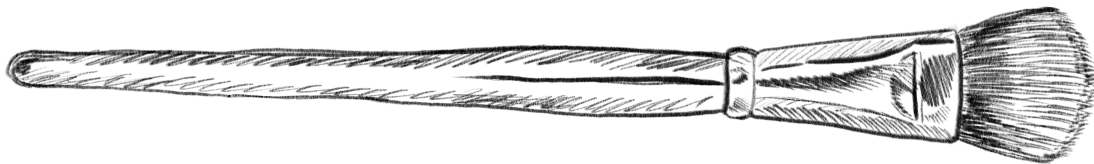
This is a hair brush and the only hair I use for clouds. I will always have this brush.

TAS 4 Round -



I need something for fine lines; precision fine lines.

The TAS Ultimate Brush



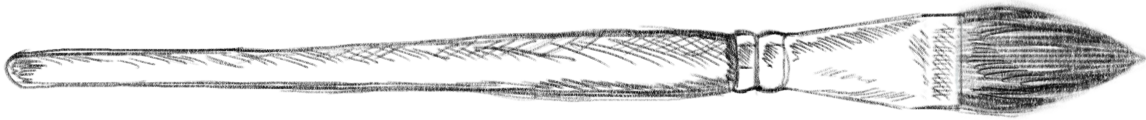
This is an oval brush, 1", and I love it because the gradation of the head is wonderful, the length out from ferrule is great, and it holds the right amount of water and flicks well. The farrells can come loose, it is a Silver Brush and their brushes do that.

TAS Monogram Liner #1



When I need to add a silver lining to a cloud or sign my name, I tend to go for this very fine, small, extremely sharply pointed detail brush.

TAS Cats Tongue -



You could use a pointed filbert or a filbert. I like this brush because the filaments are softly rounded from the edge to the tip, making it possible to paint clouds and diffuse. I have two sizes, #8 and #4, in my studio.

Bright

I prefer a slightly distressed hog bright, or flat, but will also use a synthetic bright.

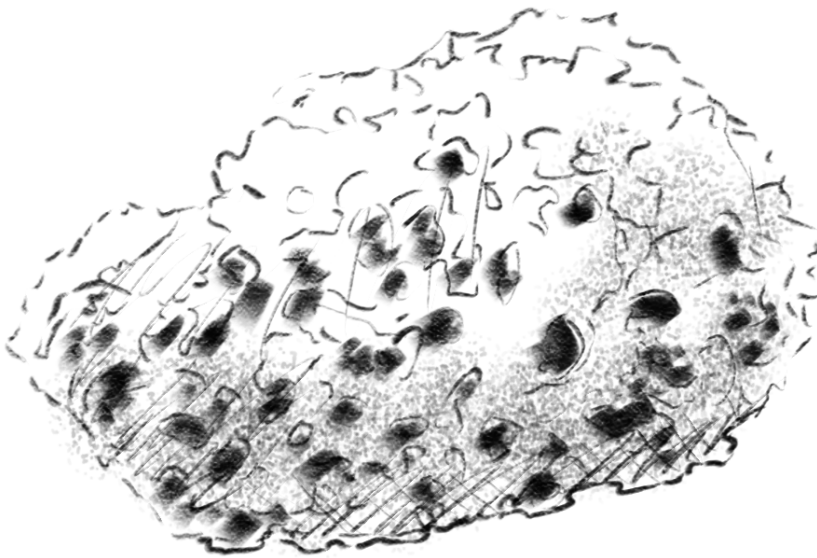


TAS Cloud Brushes



Similar to Princeton, but with a very stiff filament and I wish I could have called them a dome scumblr when I named them. They do an amazing dry brush for high wispy clouds, trees, thick foliage, splatter, and ocean waves. But, they do confuse beginners with the name. This is not a magic cloud brush, but a blender that just produces amazing effects. The name got in people's head and my ego is not so great that I won't admit to wishing I'd chosen some different name. This is a unique brush on the market; I truly feel most other brushes on the market are made wrong.

Sea Sponge



When damp, they can do so many cloud effects.

My Creative Colorfun Finger



This is one of my favorite tools. Be careful when using a cadmium, which can be toxic, and could cause an allergic reaction.

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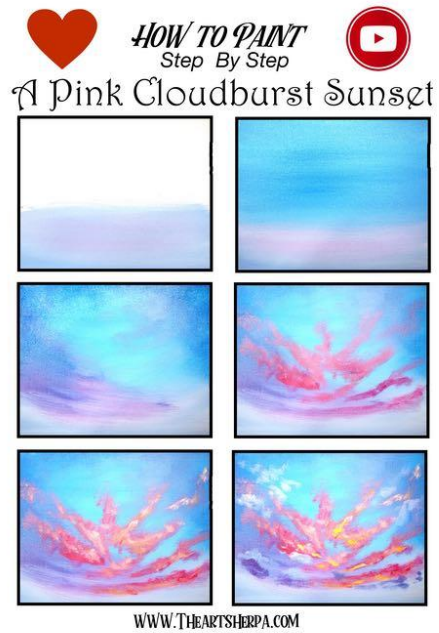




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The Techniques

It's really important to me that you all succeed at everything you do and that I give you the skills and knowledge to succeed.



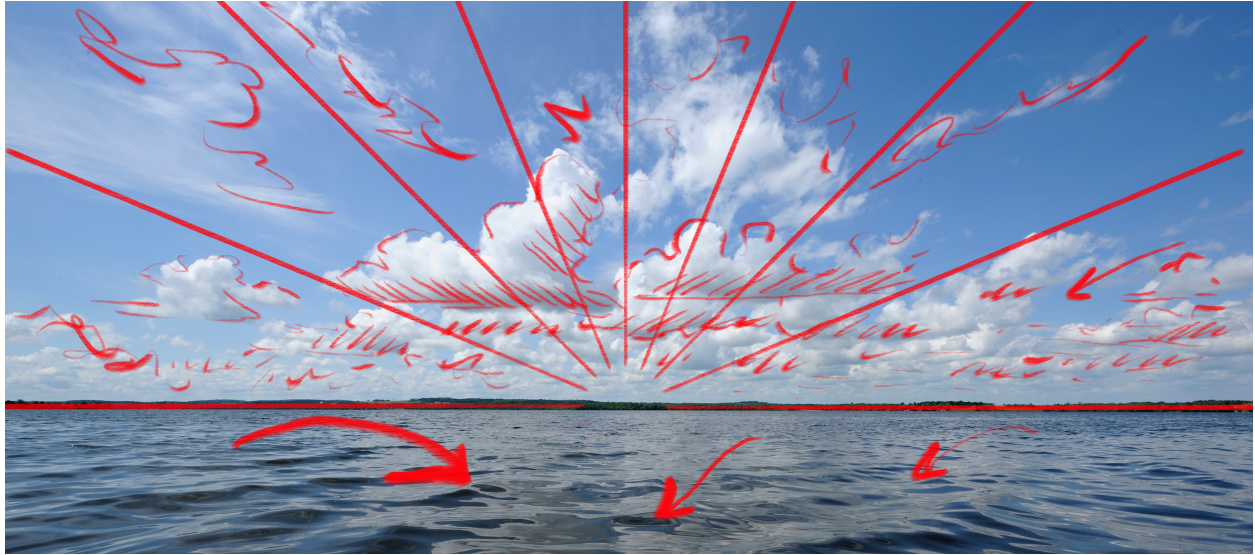
Myth - Clouds are almost never white.



First thing to ask yourself when painting clouds.....Where is the light? Sometimes it is visible by the impact of the objects, like in the second picture. Where is the light on the clouds in your reference. If lit on top, the sun is above. If lit on the bottom, the sun must be below. Clouds do not go behind the sun.



Keep it in perspective. We are familiar with this in cities, the way the streets converge in the distance, it is very direct. Distance mountains are purple, and something I see people forget is that clouds do not have perspective, we see them in perspective. The vanishing point is where the lines intersect, the clouds at the side are smaller, and the clouds nearest us are bigger and in the center. The lighting is on top, but as they become closer to the horizon, they are closer together and less defined. The domed brush is for those upper clouds. Don't forget that clouds cast a shadow and reflect.



Random Painting Method - big big thing. I used a pen to find the irregular pattern. You must master the randomness of your cloud. I have a video called "Do's and Don'ts". This video will change your life. You can find it at www.theartsherpa.com. If you are struggling with something in art, but it's not because you can't paint, it is because you have not mastered the skill. You don't have the concept of it yet. There is thinking that confuses your new artist brain.





There is a circle circle brush stroke that most beginners use when doing clouds. As you grow, your circle circle strokes will become more of a curved stroke.





Under Pressure - How Much Is Too Much?

Just a kiss is about the right pressure. The correct amount of pressure should allow just the toe of the brush to lightly connect with the surface.



Don't push hard unless you are just blocking in, because it does not produce a light process. It can be very easy for new artists to not notice how much weight and kinetic energy they're putting into the brush and the brush bristles. This will both make the brush stroke too thick and heavy and damage the brush.

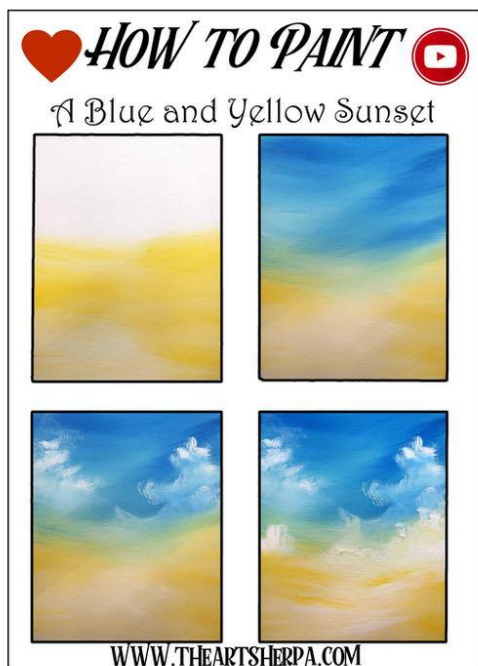
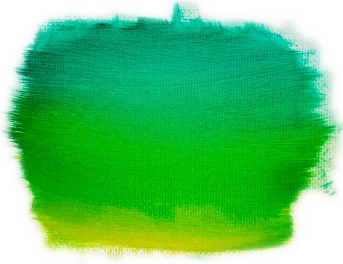


If you come in light with pressure on the edges with a curl stroke, it quickly becomes something. By building clouds with small energetic curved strokes, you create an implied line which strengthens the concept of the image.



Wet into Wet

A nice blend for a seamless line. 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.



Dry Brush

A dry brush allows a soft blending when your paint is dry. This is sometimes necessary with clouds. This technique utilizes less water in the brush and a lighter pressure through the stroke. The goal is to allow some of the surface to show through and the texture of the bristles to be evident. It is an excellent way to create texture or transition in artwork and is especially important in acrylic because of the way it dries. Unlike other artists' mediums that can be reactivated and moved, once acrylic is dry, it's pretty much stuck there. Dry brushing is a great way to continue transitions once paint is dry. It's actually one of my very favorite parts of acrylic painting. Dry brushing is an essential technique to master.



Curve the Stroke, Don't Make Circles

Do this on the corner of the brush to get the soft effect you want. It can be tempting to make circles to create clouds but resist the urge and build them with curved and layered strokes.



Up Flow

Swirl up and bring on the corner of the brush to emulate a clouds swirl. This is created by an updraft in the atmosphere. I love my mop for this method. Using an updraft creates lots of drama and fun in your clouds



Clouds with a Wispy Tail

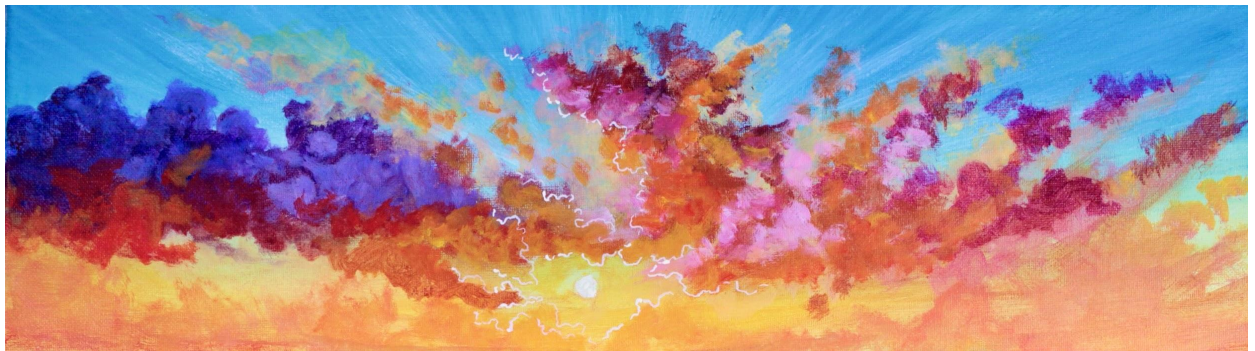
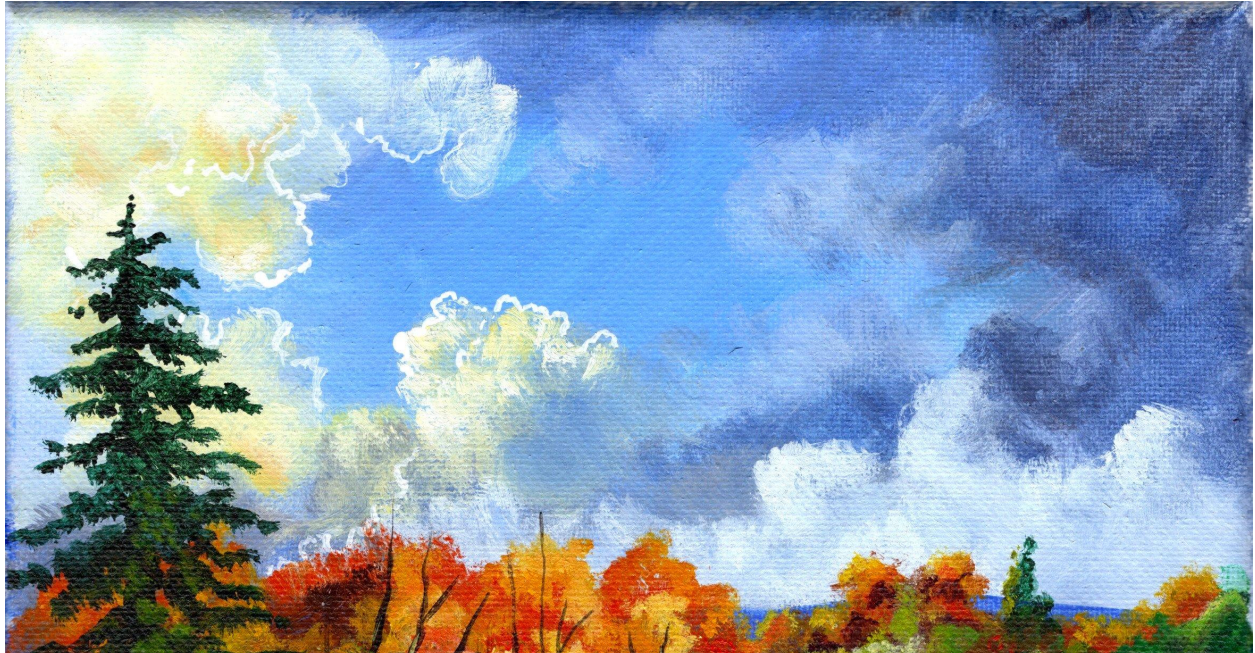
I use my cloud brush for those.





Silver Lining

This is a very Sherpa thing, I do this on most of my personal paintings, I think this just sets the clouds apart. I usually use Fluid White Paint for this technique. Find the contour of your Clouds and define some of the edges with a lighter line or edging.





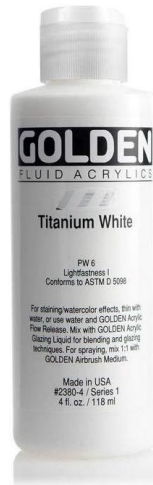
ORBITAL FAILURE - Clouds ***do not*** go behind the moon.
No matter the type of clouds the moon will never be in front of them



There are fundamental things about clouds that hold true, but there are no two clouds that are alike. All clouds are special and a rare chance for you to express yourself.



The Mediums - Crazy Things You Need



Water

You need water. It thins, blends, flows and makes coffee, my favorite sippy sippy.

Glazing Medium

You need this. Golden Gloss Glazing Liquid or Golden Fluid Acrylic - it is a flow extender for acrylic paint. A slow drying extender that increases the working time but is also a glaze.

Fluid White Paint

I use Golden's Fluid White Paint in Titanium White.

Thoughts, concepts, materials, and skills are what you need to know to help you with clouds.

Never apologize for your art or your tools. You just be you.

Community Member Heather C shared Michaelangelo's Motto - *I AM ALWAYS LEARNING*

Be a Michaelangelo, I am.



I sincerely hope this video has helped you understand clouds a bit more. As always, Be Kind to yourself, Be good to each other, and I want to see you at an easel really soon.



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