

How to Paint in Acrylic by The Art Sherpa
Funny Cow in Sunflowers



Steps # 10

Difficulty: Challenging; Three Hoots 🦉 🦉 🦉

Paint Color & Mixing Legend:

Use this paint legend below to understand the symbols that I use to give you important painting information.

- Cad Red Medium = **CRM**
- Cadmium Yellow Medium = **CYM**
- Ultramarine Blue = **UB**
- Phthalo Green = **PG**
- Burnt Sienna = **BS**
- Mars Black = **MB**
- Titanium White = **TW**
- Fluid White Paint (for splatter) = **FWP**

Materials

The Art Sherpa =TAS

- 1" Cutter Brush (hog)
- #8 TAS Cats Tongue
- #4 TAS Round
- #1 TAS Detail Brush
- Saral Paper (optional)
- Artist Tape (optional)
- Turntable (optional)
- StaWet Palette (optional)
- Tuesday: 8 x 8 Canvas
- Traceable

Techniques you will use in this painting are:

- How to block in.
- Being painterly and loose.
- Achieving good value.
- Implying flowers.
- Expressive painting strokes.

Sherpa's Notes:

You are an artist, not a copy machine. Yes, YOU are and 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. You can also always go back and review the recorded tutorial in the video library on my website.

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.



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		
Step 1	4:23	Colored Ground
Step 2	9:01	Transfer Image
Step 3	16:30	Diffused Background
Step 4	27:25	Faraway Background Flowers
Step 5	38:04	Blocking In Cow
Step 6	49:00	Horns and White Hair
Step 7	1:00:27	Defining With Dark Shadows
Step 8	1:18:13	Eyes, Nose, Flower in Mouth
Step 9	1:35:00	Sunflowers in Front of Cow
Step 10	1:43:00	Little Sunflowers Everywhere
	1:56:35	Sign

Sherpa's Forward:

I am resolved in 2021 to do more to help teach art than demonstrate how to paint art. To that end, you will see changes being made through the year. This document may be the first change that you see, and I hope you will know that everything I do is to help teach you how to paint.

This document is a step by step written description of brushes, colors and mixes, techniques and explanations taken directly from the tutorial. It is provided to you as a resource to assist you in your art journey. The document is best viewed in outline format to allow for ease in navigation between sections. Once all of the tutorials of any given month have been recorded and have an accompanying mini book, The Art Sherpa will prepare a printed version of all of those documents that you will be able to purchase. That expanded book will include technical resources not available to you at this time about color mixes, techniques, brushes, materials, and all things art.

Traceables and grid resources for this tutorial can be found at theartsherpa.com.

Another change I'm making is to not promote specific "brands" as opposed to teaching you how to select the best art materials for your journey. The first thing you will probably see is me

referring to the shape and size of a brush rather than the brand name. It will be difficult for you in the beginning, but you will be much more successful this way. I always say there are many brushes that will do the job. I do not want to limit you to exploring with the brushes that do the best job for me especially since some of them are being discontinued. I want you to explore your options. I will refer to my line of brushes, as such, and I do recommend the Princeton #12 Round Blender as a staple to your tool box.

This tutorial is a lengthy one, but not an extremely difficult one. I would recommend this 3 hoot to anyone who has been wanting to expand into a more difficult subject matter from simple paintings. We will be using all of our paint mixes through the tutorial, so when you make a mix, make a good amount of it for future use.

Our painting today is a Holstein Friesian Heifer who seems to be surprised to be caught eating a sunflower blossom in a field of sunflowers.

We sincerely hope that you enjoy your experience with The Art Sherpa and look forward to seeing your completed paintings. Please do not hesitate to contact us at support@theartsherpa.com if you require assistance.

"Actual remarks taken from the video are provided for your enjoyment only, and are in italics and in blue."

Step 1 Paint Till The Cows Come Home

Materials & Colors for Step

PG

BS

1" Cutter Brush (hog brush)

Step Discussion

Paint your canvas with **PG + BS** using a large damp hog brush. Just scumble in the color, creating an underpainting. You can paint the edge of the canvas if you'd like. Make yourself happy in your own private sip and paint studio. It's very brushy, an acrylic "ground", so to speak. Dry.

Heat Talk - John's been doing this for 7 years now, he has it. John ignores heat talk and tells everyone to subscribe by texting "TheArtSherpa" to: 33222 on your phone.



Step 2 Clarabelle, the Grass Puppy

Materials & Colors for Step

Saral Paper (optional)

Traceable (www.theartsherpa.com)

Artist Tape

Sketch In The Image

Because of the size, I chose to use the transfer method on this piece. I do provide a transfer if you prefer to use that method. There is no right or wrong way, you can grid, transfer, or freehand, whatever makes you the most comfortable.

Even the Renaissance masters used a transfer method.

I have a new YouTube Channel that I'm very excited about; it's called "How To Color Live With The Art Sherpa" Step-by-Step Watercolor Lessons. All of my watercolors tutorials will be posted over there and we will start dual broadcasting of the watercolor lives next week.

Our first studio assistant, Honey, calls cows "grass puppies", so I just thought I'd share that bit of cuteness.

Sherpa Tip - I tape down the traceable and the saral paper with artist tape before I transfer the image.



Step 3 Keeping It Chill

Materials & Colors for Step

CRM

CYM

PG

BS

MB

TW

TAS #8 Cat's Tongue

Step Discussion

With a #8 Cat's Tongue, and your green background mixture + **CYM**, start adding in the green background behind the heifer's head. Add more **CYM** to lighten; add more **PG** to darken. We are putting in the faraway green patchwork of a background, and being careful around the image. Carry the pattern on the front side of the face and ear, and in front of the cow below the sunflower blossoms for a more finished painting.

Dry.



Step 4 Blobby Shapes

Materials & Colors for Step

CRM

CYM

PG

TAS #4 Round Brush

Step Discussion

Mix **CYM + CRM** to get orange and on the #4 Round add a titch of **PG**, to get a mustard color. We are creating our petals, little comma marks, different sizes and directions, just random in the background. You can use my reference below to help you with placement, but you are an artist and you are ready to make these decisions about where to place your petals. Rinse out and add more **PG** to this color, and blend this color around your mustard color softening it back into the background. You could even add a bit of the orange to the brush to vary the color. Add more **CYM + CRM** into the mix and roll the brush in it to load on a good amount of paint, then add little pops of color. **CYM + CRM** to the yellow tint and add those petals in.

When you make a mistake, what you do? You dry it and you paint over it. Acrylic is very forgiving, but the paint has to be dry.

I am making blobby shapes, and if you are new to painting, please reserve judgment on your blobby shapes, give yourself wiggle room to know your blobs, and you may discover that you have a better blob than you think.

Add **CYM** into the background green color of **PG + BS** to get a bright green and then start layering in the greens.

Your background is fuzzy, it should all be fuzzy at this point. Use the touch pull stroke.

Very painterly.

This might be the story of a very happy cow in a field or an upset farmer with a very bad cow.



Step 5 Swirl the Cowlick

Materials & Colors for Step

CRM

CYM

BS

MB

TW

TAS #4 Round

Step Discussion

Mix **TW + CRM + CYM** to get a flesh tone, but it also makes a pretty good color for a cow's nose.

The term "Block In" actually means to paint zones of color.

Paint in the nose and don't forget the lower lip. Add **BS** to this mix and this will be our white hair base. It is a dusty beige color. Starting along the backside of the cow, flick the brush up for a hair hide type of feeling. Not ovey, but cowey. Paint all the white areas with this neutral color. Use the reference below, you can see it is quite streaky. It should be. On the forehead, I swirl the hair from the "COWLICK" at the center of the forehead. Bringing this color around the nose and under the lower lip. Now it's a green and white cow. Use **MB + BS** to paint in the black areas of the cow. Flick your brush again on the ears to suggest hair. Making the markings happen. I painted in the nostrils and mouth with this color as well as the black spots on the body.

Add **TW** to the dark mix and paint in the horns and eyes.

Dry.



Step 6 MOOOO Cow

Materials & Colors for Step

BS

MB

TW

TAS #4 Round

Step Discussion

With the mustard yellow mix and the black mix, add **TW**, and using the #4 Round, outline the outside edge of the upper horn, and put in little lines to help make it look more like bone. The highlight along the edge will accentuate the bend of the horn. You can probably see that in the reference below. Do both horns. Add more **MB** to darken it if you need to. Dance back and forth as you need to in order to get the result that you want. Ombre the tip with the dark color. This is a useful study - a study of horns. These horns seem to be ground, but they will keep growing.

John - I'd be annoyed if I had to navigate around with 3' of horn on my head.

Add some **TW** highlights where you need to.

Mix **MB + TW** to get a light gray and add that where you want it. Outline the left horn on the outside. We will use all of these colors as we continue around the fur.

That cowlick is a little brighter and maybe he has some pretty bangs that fall down over the black part of the face. Add more **BS** to the area round the face, as well as under the lip, which seems to be more in shadow. There is kind of a "V" on the left side of the mouth area. Use the browner color nearer the greenery in front as it would be picking up those shadows. The bridge of the nose is light again and your brush strokes should always be following the direction that the hair grows. It grows down the nose, not up the nose, and accentuates that cowlick. Not everyone can have a cowlick like Alfalfa.

Farmers harvest the sunflowers and let the cows in to eat the stalks. This cow decided she needed dessert. Cows have hair, not fur.

Come back in with **TW** and outline the eye. Work your colors until you are happy with your cow. This is a hairy lesson. Add highlights where the light hits the cow, near the top, and more **BS + MB** near the bottom, because it's more in shadow. If you paint out part of the ear, you can put it back in later.



Step 7 Flicking Hair

Materials & Colors for Step

UB

MB

TW

#4 TAS Round Brush

Step Discussion

With your black and black-brown mixture add **UB + MB + TW** to make my “Sherpa Paynes Gray” color. Flick out the hair on the ears over the white and use that Paynes gray as a highlight on the black ears and in the black areas. Add a gray highlight around the eyes.

I love internet drama, it's not a healthy choice, but I drank the kool aid and it's too late. I'm on John's account, which is difficult for him. We have very different tastes in what we watch; he's very serious about it, and I, like I said, I love internet drama. Bottom line, we have messed up his alegra rhythm and he can't find any of his stuff.

John: It's important to know who Tom Bombadill is.

I do teach art. Do you feel like you are learning anything?

Let's paint. Blue gray highlights are added for low lights in the black hair. Accentuate below the lip, especially on the right, before there will be a sunflower over it.



Step 8 Don't Confuse The Cows

Materials & Colors for Step

CRM

UB

PG

BS

MB

TW

FWP

#4 TAS Round Brush

#1 TAS Detail Brush

Step Discussion

With the #4 Round and a mix of **PG + CRM + BS**, paint the inner nostril, and shade around the nose and upper lip. Fix any part of the nose that needs fixing. Add some white on top of each nostril for a highlight. Use **MB** to add a black spot on the nose. If you were painting a cow portrait, this would be very important, because cows are not identical and it is these markings that set them apart. Don't confuse Clarabelle with Elsie. We will have a flower over the right nostril. Use **TW** to redefine any white hair on the face that you need to. I think he has a rather furry mouth.

Get the dry #1 TAS Detail brush loaded with **MB + UB** and put in the dark of the eye; she is looking kind of behind her. Do the same with the right eye. With **TW** on the brush add this to the white of the inner eye on the left and then on the right eye. Then add **MB + UB + TW** in the center of the eye. Add a little pink in the corner.

Add **FWP** to the top of the eye. There is his little cow face.

Bring some of this white along the horns, just so that they curve out in shape and form; dotting the line, breaking it up, making sure the horns show. Add some dots to the top of the nose with the white paint and down over the nose.



Step 9 Focal (And Slightly Eaten) Sunflowers

Materials & Colors for Step

CRM

CYM

PG

BS

TW

#4 TAS Round Brush

Step Discussion

Mix **CYM + CRM** to get an orange color then add **PG** on the #4 Round, and add a big sunflower center petal near the mouth. You can add more **CYM** and **TW** if you need it lighter. Dry for a second. Put more centers in areas around the cow, separating the colors by spacing them out. Just a few of the center faces are showing, you can add more **CRM** to some of the centers. With **PG + CYM + TW**, adding water for flow, start painting sunflower stems into the foreground; add more **PG** to the mix for some green leaves.

[As of now, Watercolor Wednesday will be broadcast both on Facebook and on my new Watercolor YouTube Channel.](#)

If I make a mistake, I can remove it with clean water if the paint is dry under it. I did make a mistake on the leaf that hides under the ear. I fixed it.

Mix **PG + TW** to get a mint green and add this on the stems because sunflowers do have this minty color on the stems; it just makes them pop-a-licious. Add **CYM + TW** highlights to the fronts of a few centers; most of them are kind of downward facing. Mix **PG + CYM** for highlights on the leaves and use the touch pull stroke. Add more **TW** to the mix for another highlight color on the green stems. Use some of your orange color as petals come out from the sunflower center. A little of the center peeks through, and the petals are multidirectional. On the flower on her nose, the petal is actually in her mouth. Apply little "S" strokes to bring the petals down using the toe of the #4 brush. You want to kind of curve them in. A lot of the muzzle is getting covered up, but we were expecting that. With **CYM** on the brush add more pops of yellow to the petals that are on the side of the cow.

This is a three hoot; mixes are not complicated, techniques are not complicated, but it's a lot. Again, this is a great opportunity for 2 hoot painters to try a 3 hoot. You have this.

Mix **BS + PG + CYM** to make sure that we manage the expectations in the painting and add the crowns at the bottom of the sunflower centers that connect it to the stem. Use all of your green mixes to add highlights and lowlights. Add some brightness to the stem for that flower. These are the important focal flowers.



Step 10 We've Got COW!

Materials & Colors for Step

CRM

CYM

PG

BS

TW

#4 TAS Round Brush

Step Discussion

Use a #4 Round, but change the water.

Refresh any colors that you need to and it might be a good idea to get fresh water. We will be using brighter colors in this step.

Get your orange mix on the #4 Round and start adding sunflowers all over the place.

Sherpa Tip: Sometimes, I add dots of paint to help me determine the direction I want the flower to go in.

Add petals here and there in groupings of different sizes. Some flowers might be blocked off by other flowers or hiding in the grass. Add more **CRM** for a very light orange and then curve in more of the petals. Layer in some unexpected dimensionality using highlights on some of your flowers. In art, we are just painting the illusion of objects. You can use the reference below to help you with placement if you wish, but you are ready to be the Sunflower Master of your art. Bits of yellow should peek out from the green here and there. The fuzzy foreground and background will allow the viewer's eye to immediately focus on our subject cow and her 3 sunflowers, as we want to have happened. Some sunflowers are downward-facing. Apply **BS + PG** to add crowns on some of the flowers and to add leaves that are deeper and darker, maybe hidden in there. Come up over the cow with a few leaves. Add **TW** to the green for some light green stems. Mix a very bright yellow-green and start adding leaves and highlights to some of the crowns. Get more **CYM** and add in a grouping of leaves; more **PG** in another grouping of leaves. The field is very full of sunflowers, to our little heifer's delight.

Rinse and wipe.

Mix **CYM + TW** (just a smidge) and load it on the toe of the brush, add a couple of pops of color to some petals in that front field. Just some. Keep the focus on the heifer and her sunflowers.

Sign.



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 finished 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.

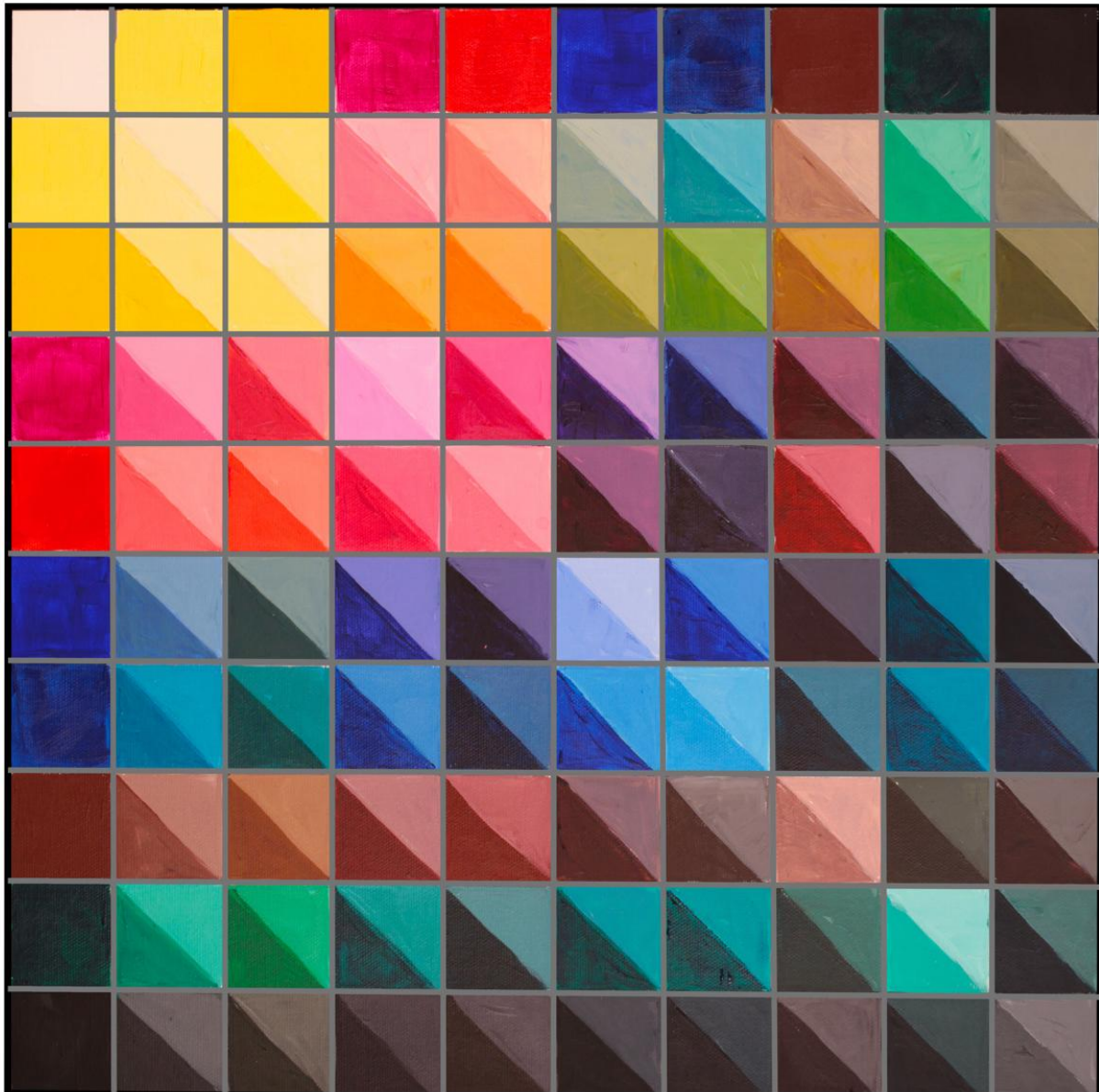
Allow your painting a few days to cure and harden. Acrylic paintings do dry quickly but they still continue to cure a few days after you're finished even with thin applications of paint. Taking the time to allow your paintings to cure will help them be more resilient through the framing and hanging process. 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.

Acrylic needs to breath so it's best to frame without glass. If you do wish to use glass, make sure you have a mat or two to allow for air between the painting and the glass.





COLOR CHART



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