

THE ART SHERPA PRESENTS:

# Acrylic April 2021



## A STORY OF WATER: PAPRIKA

NAME CREDITED TO PATRON SYLVIA BOIRE

STEPS: 11 | DIFFICULTY: INTERMEDIATE | 2 HOOTS



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# THE ACRYLIC APRIL PAINT CHALLENGE EXPLAINED

The Acrylic April Painting Challenge begins April 1st 2021 and ends April 30. 30 powerful little painting tutorials that challenge global artists to participate by completing one small acrylic painting every day for an entire month.

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**PARTICIPATE BY  
COMPLETING ONE  
SMALL ACRYLIC  
PAINTING EVERY  
DAY FOR AN  
ENTIRE MONTH**

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This year's Acrylic April Challenge is designed around the "Story of Water" and every painting will embrace that theme and every tutorial will teach skills that will be built upon in subsequent lessons. If you engage in this unbelievable art journey for 30 days, you will gain a greater understanding of water, how it engages with nature, how it behaves, how to successfully illustrate it.

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 Acrylic Art Journey. The document is best viewed in outline format to allow for ease in navigation between sections. Once all of the tutorials have been recorded and have an accompanying mini book, The Art Sherpa will prepare a printed version of all of Acrylic April 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](http://theartsherpa.com).

We sincerely hope that you enjoy your experience with Acrylic April and look forward to seeing your completed paintings. Please do not hesitate to contact us at [support@theartsherpa.com](mailto:support@theartsherpa.com) if you require assistance.

You can join the The Art Sherpa Facebook Acrylic April group at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/AcrylicApril>



# DAY 25: APRIL 25, 2021

A Story of Water Acrylic April 2021 began with a dawn and the principles and techniques we will touch upon today are true for any painting that contains both sky and water. Our subject for today is a glittery little seahorse in amazing colors that John and I can't wait to share fun facts about. Surprisingly enough, I don't think you will get a chance to throw a shark emoji at John; I could be wrong, but I don't think so.

Grab your paint, get your brushes and let's go!



## PAINT AND TOOL GUIDE

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

### PAINT:

- Cadmium Red Medium = CRM
- Quinacridone Magenta = QM
- Cadmium Yellow Medium = CYM
- Phthalo Blue = PB
- Phthalo Green = PG
- Mars Black = MB
- Titanium White = TW
- Fluid White Paint = FWP
- Golden's Acrylic Gloss Glazing Liquid = AGL

### BRUSHES:

- #4 TAS Round
- #1 Monogram Liner
- #26 Bright
- #8 TAS Cats Tongue

### TOOLS:

- T-Square Ruler
- Chalk Pencil or Watercolor Pencil
- 8 x 8 Canvas (If you notice that your canvas started to warp, as sometimes happens, just turn the canvas over and put it back side forward on your easel, then mist the back of the canvas. It usually resolves itself. Let dry before you proceed.)
- Optional: StayWet Palette

### TECHNIQUES YOU WILL USE IN THIS PAINTING:

- Expressive Painting Strokes
- Being Painterly and Loose
- Atmospheric Perspective
- Finding Value
- Dry Brushing
- Color Theory
- Perspective of Waves
- Directionality
- Blending Wet into Wet
- Color Mixing
- Dynamic Light on Water



## 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.

STEPS:	TIME:	DESCRIPTION:
INTRO	00:00	INTRO
STEP 1	2:45	COLORED GROUND
STEP 2	5:40	TRANSFER IMAGE
STEP 3	11:05	REFINING LAYER OF WATER
STEP 4	14:41	UNDERWATER LACING OF LIGHT
STEP 5	22:15	DETAIL UNDERWATER LACING
STEP 6	28:25	GLAZING, REFINING WATER
STEP 7	30:50	BLOCK IN SEAHORSE
STEP 8	36:10	VALUE, HUE AND FIDDLY BITS
STEP 9	45:10	MORE SHADOWS AND HIGHLIGHTS
STEP 10	57:30	REFINE SEAHORSE DETAILS
STEP 11	1:04:05	FINAL WHITE DETAILS AND DOTS SIGN



# SHERPA FORWARD:

Water as a mirror; one of the concepts to succeed at painting water is that water is a mirror, it is reflective but it is also transparent. On a calm day, you can see what is above the water reflected like a reverse image.

You want to rinse out your brush between the two sections and wipe with cloth to control the amount of water you retain in the brush.

If you want to paint the edges of the canvas, you just be you.

Relax with yourself, if you are having trouble with techniques, I offer videos on

most of them and you can always practice on paper before you come to the canvas.

You can always go back to rewatch the tutorial if you want to. It is on YouTube as well as at [www.theartsherpa.com](http://www.theartsherpa.com).

It is perfectly acceptable to use a watercolor pencil or chalk to draw in elements, like clouds or landscape, before you paint them in. This is a wonderful tool for new artists and cleans up with a damp brush if you make a mistake.

The techniques you work with today will hold true in all landscapes that involve water in creating an illusion of reflection.



# STEP 1 - COLORED GROUND

## "THE DADS TOTE THE YOUNG"

### COLORS FOR STEP:

**PB**  
**PG**  
**TW**

### MATERIALS FOR STEP:

#### **#26 BRIGHT**

- Mix PB + PG + TW to an aqua color and paint the entire canvas with a #26 bright brush. You want to vary the mix a bit and keep in mind it's a bit more green than blue. The camera does not like this color.

*Fun Fact: This is the seahorse arena and in their world, the Dads carry the young.*

*Fun Fact: There are over 40 species of seahorses.*

*Fun Fact: Seahorses swim in pairs and they hook their little tails together.*

- Dry.



# STEP 2 - TRANSFER IMAGE

## “THE HUMMING BIRD OF THE SEA”

### MATERIALS FOR STEP:

#### T-SQUARE RULER CHALK PENCIL OR - WATERCOLOR PENCIL

- Get a chalk pencil to sketch the image. I chose to freehand this image but I have also provided 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. If you choose to freehand, use all the references available to assist you, like the grid reference and the traceable and the image below.
- Start with the face and leave room to the right for the fins and all the weirdness over there. The head has a bit of a bony brow and a tiny snout, and it kind of looks like a horse. They have cute little bellies and I exaggerated the tail a bit. It's my seahorse world and I can just do that. The body is actually a little “S” shaped and very fun to draw.

- If you have been thinking about venturing into drawing, this would be a good one to start with.

- Draw in the fins on these creatures and fun, little swimmey bits.

*Fun Facts: The little fin in the back beats like 35 times per minute. They are the humming bird of the sea. They are really ineffective swimmers and don't wander out in the ocean too far because they get too tired.*

- Be very happy with your drawing before you move on. I tend to make horse adjustments because I'm very familiar with horses.

- Dry.



# STEP 3 – REFINING LAYER OF WATER

## “NO SEAFOAM IN THE OCEAN”

### MATERIALS FOR STEP:

**#8 TAS CAT'S TONGUE  
T-SQUARE RULER  
CHALK PENCIL OR -  
WATERCOLOR PENCIL**

- Let's work the background and seascape, so with the T-square draw a line about 1 1/2" down then using the TAS #8 Cat's Tongue and a darker aqua color, paint above the line much darker. As you come down, you want to be lighter and greener, and transition that still wet darker color down into the dry paint of the underpainting. Be careful around the seahorse that you don't lose all your hard drawing. You are creating an ombre effect. Make sure all your brush strokes are horizontal. You can get lighter as you go down the canvas.
- There is no seafoam in the ocean, only on top of the ocean. You might see seafoam if he was near the surface.
- **DO NOT** take a break between this and the next step. We want the paint to still be fairly wet for Step 4.



# STEP 4 – UNDERWATER LACING OF LIGHT

## “ART IS OBSERVATION”

### COLORS FOR STEP:

**CYM**  
**TW**  
**AGL**

### MATERIALS FOR STEP:

#### #4 TAS ROUND

- Your paint is still fairly wet, so with the TAS #4 Round, your aqua and CYM + TW, start making light lines around him. Kind of a light lacing effect, just stuff in the water that reflects the light, rather like veins. It does take thoughtfulness, so be patient and allow yourself to take your time. We have not done this particular technique before. To help with ease of flow, you might want to add some of the AGL. Some lines are very fine, some are more solid. It's ok to go over the tail at this point, we won't lose it and we will have no trouble redrawing if you want to.
- It is unnerving to do this, don't let it throw you off.

***Fun Facts - I didn't think seahorses lived in Galveston but the dwarf seahorse is the third***

*smallest seahorse and it is found in the grass beds of the Bahamas and the Gulf of Mexico. Surprising. The pygmy seahorse is even smaller.*

- Just keep in mind, your goal is to paint what you see. Use my reference below. Art is observation and you are creating a webbing component of water created by light from above. Right now, it's very monochromatic.
- There is less lacing in the distance. Our glazing will create the sense of depth in another step, the atmospheric perspective underwater.
- Dry.



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# WEEKEND GETAWAY

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# STEP 5 - DETAIL UNDERWATER LACING

## “SILVER LINING THE LACY WEB”

### COLORS FOR STEP:

**FWP**

### MATERIALS FOR STEP:

#### **#4 TAS ROUND**

- We will start with FWP and the TAS #4 Round. Using just a touch of aqua in the FWP, start adding highlighted bits to some of the webbing. Find the silver linings of the web by trusting your instinct and realizing that the highlights are caused by the light above. I tried to capture the refraction of light in a couple of places by having more solid highlights.
- Dry.



# STEP 6 - GLAZING, REFINING WATER

## “GLAZE EVERYTHING AQUA”

### COLORS FOR STEP:

**PB**  
**FWP**  
**AGL**

### MATERIALS FOR STEP:

#### #8 TAS CAT'S TONGUE

- Let's glaze with the TAS #8 Cat's Tongue loaded with AGL + PB and just brush horizontally back and forth over everything on the canvas. None of your lines will disappear from the webbing and your seahorse will still be discernible enough to be able to paint him.
- Come back with the FWP and add back the brightest bits of lacy webbing here and there.
- Dry.



# STEP 7 - BLOCK IN SEAHORSE

“BEGINNING TO  
LOOK A LOT LIKE  
SEAHORSE”

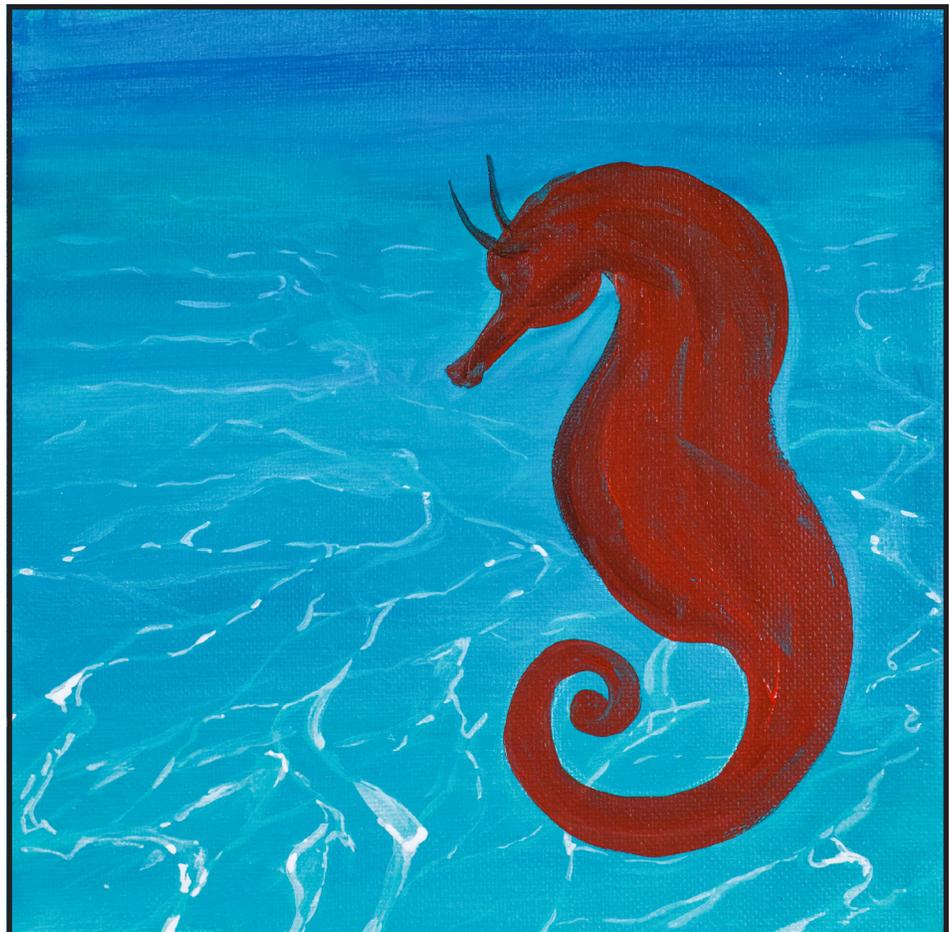
## COLORS FOR STEP:

QM  
CRM  
MB

## MATERIALS FOR STEP:

### #4 TAS ROUND

- Use the TAS #4 Round and QM + CRM + MB mixed to a brick color. Then paint in the entire seahorse. Get him as smooth as you can with this initial color. Vary the color values and bring up those little ear antennae at the top.
- Dry.



# STEP 8 - VALUE, HUE AND FIDDLY BITS

"I'M A PLANT, YOU DON'T SEE ME"

## COLORS FOR STEP:

CRM  
CYM  
MB  
TW  
AGL

## MATERIALS FOR STEP:

### #4 TAS ROUND

- Values and hues are going to be added now. Some of which is created by his patterning, so it will be great practice for your brush work. Get fresh water.
- With the TAS #4 Round, get CRM + CYM to a red-orange and start adding the fiddly spikey bits along his spine. These little fiddly bits will give him his unique little personality.

**Fun Facts:** *Their strategy of this is that he wants to look like a plant and not a fish, and he is almost entirely made of bone.*

- Bring this orange along his backside in a band, then add more CRM in a layer, following the curve of the first layer and into the belly. Make sure your

brush strokes follow the curves of his body. Add TW to the orange and highlight the little fiddly fin, brushing it back into his backside; it should be almost a glaze. Add a line of this color along the curve of his spine and take it up into the fiddly bits. If your paint drags, add some AGL.

### Who's got fiddly bits?

*John - This little dude has fiddly bits.*

- Add more fiddly bits along the entire outward curve of his spine into the tail, add highlights where you want them. Get your red-black color and add a bit more MB to it and come to the head and darken it. Then add a line around the neck and belly. Next add some bumps on his belly, he is very boney so nobody wants to eat them. Seahorse are afraid of current, ergo they hide. Don't stop at the belly, take this darkness around the whole inside of the tail. Come back and add some stripey ridge shadows along the inside curve of his body and along the inside of the tail. These are actually ribs.
- Dry.



# STEP 9 – MORE SHADOWS AND HIGHLIGHTS

## “SO BONEY, MR. SEAHORSE”

### COLORS FOR STEP:

CRM  
QM  
CYM  
TW  
FWP

### MATERIALS FOR STEP:

#### #4 TAS ROUND #1 MONOGRAM LINER

- As we go forward, we will define shape, so using the TAS #4 Round, and a mix of CRM + QM + CYM paint this color adding little scoop effects just inside that orange line on his spine. Not sure what they are but we'll call them scoopers. He is incredibly textured and you can add a lot of this color to the tail section using various little strokes. Add QM + CYM + TW to the red mixture to achieve a coral color and add pops of that color along the fiddly bits on his spine. He's worked very hard on his camouflage, so help him out. Get more yellow or reds in it to vary the color values for these highlights.
- Play with your reds and oranges to get him to your

happy place using my reference below. Try to keep your brush strokes following the curve of him and rinse out your brush from time to time.

- Rinse your brush.
- Get the monogram liner with the red color and some CYM + FWP and add some brilliant highlights along the fiddly parts on his backside. Turn your canvas, do not turn your body to paint all these highlights. I highlighted some of the little scoopy bits that I added earlier. Come to the face and body and add highlights along the end of the ribs and where the color changes on his face.

*Fun Facts - His bumps are actually bumps created by bones - he just has so many bones.*

- Then just inside the belly's black area, put in some broken lights to illustrate highlighted bits. You also want to highlight some of the area of his backside with more solid areas.
- Dry.



# STEP 10 – REFINE SEAHORSE DETAILS

## “VERY UNEDITABLE”

### COLORS FOR STEP:

**CRM**  
**QM**  
**CYM**  
**MB**

### MATERIALS FOR STEP:

#### #4 TAS ROUND

- With the TAS #4 Round, loaded with CRM + QM, start inputting this color between the rib shadow areas, behind the broken white lines you put in in the last step. At the start of the tail, you can pull the colors across the outer white line along his spine area. The bones create a very ridgy structure on them and they are very uneditable.
- Get CRM on the brush for highlights on the belly side of the ribs, I actually painted over most of the white broken lines I put in earlier. Reinforce the dark red on the face. Come back and highlight the upward sweep of the little scoops on his backside.
- Rinse.
- Mix CRM + CYM to a bright orange and paint this on the back underside of the rib shadows.
- Then with MB add some shadows and define the fin and add details of dots and outline it. Outline the jowl and belly with MB and reinforce the curve. The eye is camouflaged in the head and is barely seen. Not any eye that we know. Outline it in bright red and then reinforce the black dot.
- Dry.



# STEP 11 – FINAL WHITE DETAILS AND DOTS

## “LOOK INTO MY EYE”

### COLORS FOR STEP:

**FWP**

### MATERIALS FOR STEP:

#### #1 MONOGRAM LINER

- Refresh any colors you need to and change water if it's dirty. Then with the monogram liner and red, add some dotting along some of the highlight bits along his backside. It's fussy, but you will be glad that you took the time to do this. Placing random dots of red throughout the spine area.
- Rinse.
- The many dots of a seahorse comes next, so just start putting in dots with the monogram liner and FWP. I think this dotting makes it very difficult for predators to see them. Pay attention to the eye and how it is camouflaged. Most of the dots are fairly small and they extend up into the fiddly bits. I know crabs are its predators, but I'm not sure what else is; hard to imagine it would have a single

predator. Some of the places could be a line of white, others are just dots.

- You can follow my reference below to help you see how I highlighted the fin and to help you get your painting to completion. He's like a floating little constellation. Their head has a few dots that seem outside of the head.
- I added my name as a light reflection.
- Dry.



## THE TRACING METHOD

- Adjust the size to fit your surface and be sure to check your printer settings to see if the final size reflects the size you need.



see that your transfer is happening. If not check if your rubbing is too thin or that your pressure is not too light. After you are done tracing the lines, remove your traceable and you should have a copy of the line art on your canvas.



- Rub the back with graphite or use Saral paper and skip this step.
- Be sure to rub the back of your paper on the side without the lines drawing using a HB pencil.
- Hold up to window light to make sure graphite covers all the lines of the subject drawing.
- Test your Seral paper to make sure the color you are using is going to show on the canvas.
- Tape your paper on your surface to transfer with tape to keep it from moving. If you are using saral paper make sure you have both sheets taped down and the transfer side of the Saral paper will be facing your surface. Carefully, with medium pressure, redraw over every line. You can lift one corner of paper to



## 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. In this example, we have an 8 x 8 canvas and the example is based on a one-inch square grid with everything of equal ratio. On your 8 x 8 canvas, you will make a mark using your chalk tool and a T-square ruler at every 1 inch point both horizontally and vertically. The T-square will help ensure that your lines are straight.

To draw the grid your canvas must be dry and it's advisable that it is also

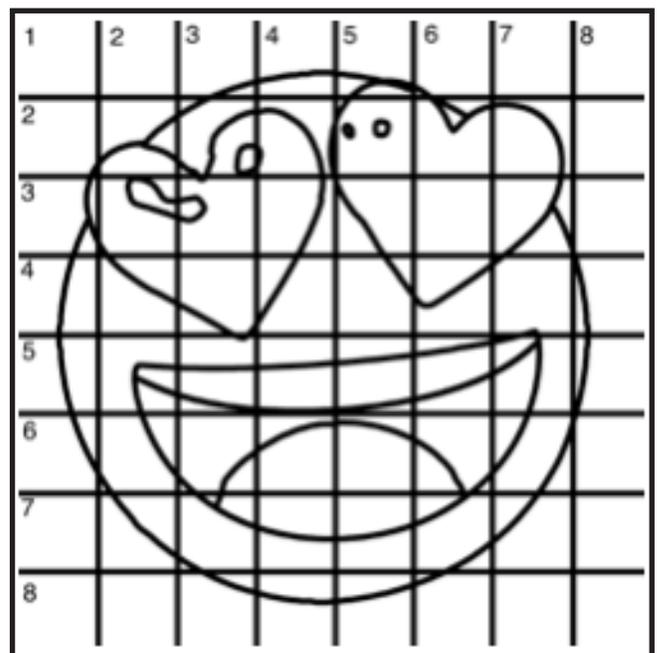
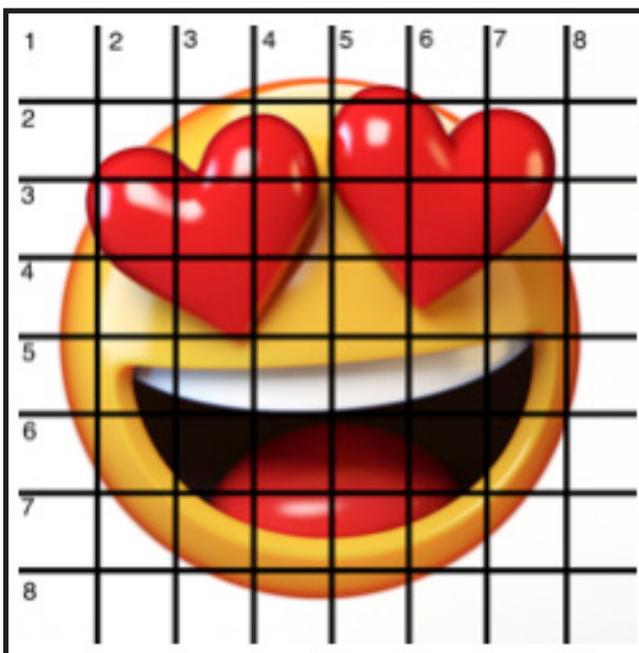
cool. You should use chalk that is wax or oil free. It must be pure chalk. I use a Dritz fabric-marking tool because it does fine lines easily and removes well from the canvas. There are also chalk pencils available or you could use chalkboard chalk. While I will always share with you the tools and equipment 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.

Number your columns 1 - 8, left to right, and your rows 1 - 8 from the top to the bottom.

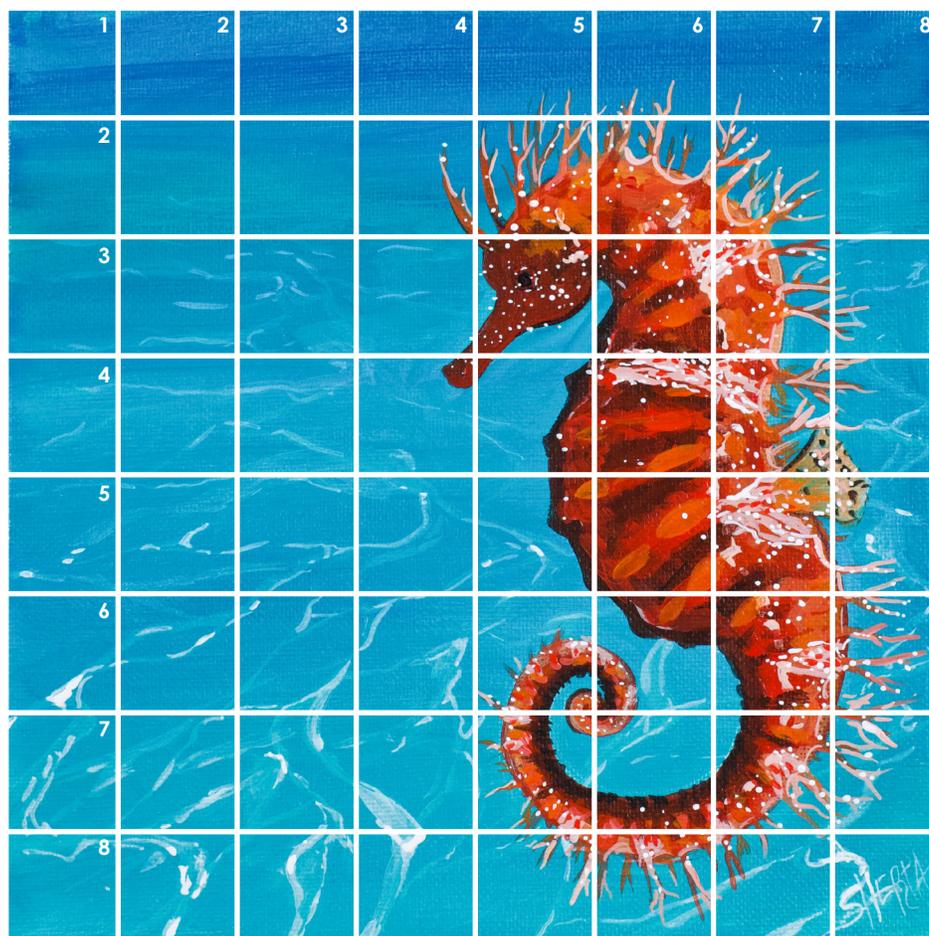
Find the first row that the contour line of your image enters and exits and duplicate only what you see in that one single square. Continue through the entire image square by square transferring, the contour lines of the subject with chalk on your canvas. When you have duplicated the subject from your reference to your canvas, you will be done.

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.



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. Explained beautifully and 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 8 x 8 canvas to match the free grid for this project.

**HERE IS AN EXAMPLE OF A 8 X 8 CANVAS; YOU CAN DO A 1" GRID ON ANY SIZE CANVAS.**



## PRACTICE PAGE:

The practice page matches the Facebook pre-show events for Acrylic April. During the pre-show we will do a page by Page walkthrough of this mini book and a small demo of how to use the practice page to get confident in your color and value mixes.

### STEPS OF THE PRACTICE PAGE

1. Looking at the reference select the color families you think are present in the painting.
2. Write down the paint colors you use
3. Mix the main colors you see in the painting.
4. Place the color near the closest value using the Grey scale bar on the side of sandbox
5. Be sure to test mix colors you think could be harder to correctly get
6. Use the steps of the mini book to help you guess what palette colors you need
7. Optional practice brush strokes in the sandbox
8. Use the note section to write down any thought you have about the painting

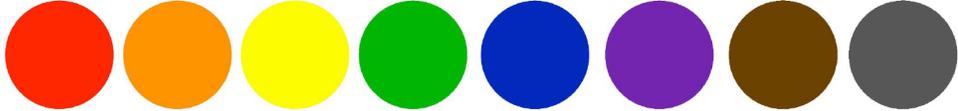


# ACRYLIC APRIL PREP

LET'S PLAY—Print and Practice



COLOR FAMILY



THE PAINT COLORS: \_\_\_\_\_

C  
O  
L  
O  
R  
  
M  
I  
X  
I  
N  
G

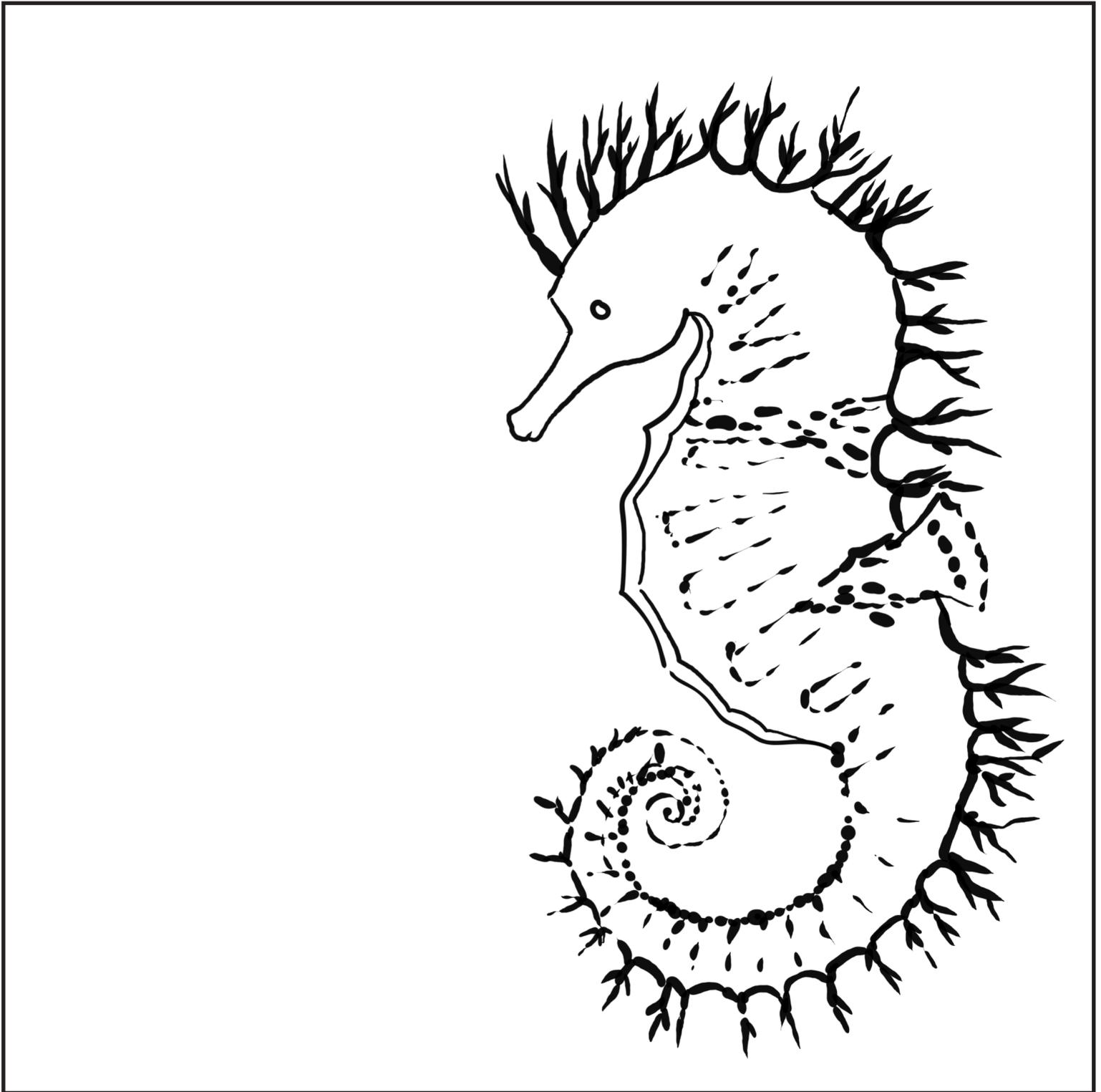
S  
A  
N  
D  
B  
O  
X



NOTES:



TRACEABLE:



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#TheArtSherpa #StepbyStepPainting #Acrylicpainting

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