

THE ART SHERPA™

# HOW TO PAINT

IN ACRYLIC



## CHITRAKAR

(SANSCRIT FOR SPOTTED ONE)

BY: THE ART SHERPA  
NAME CREDIT TO PATRON JOY SAWYER


STEPS: 12 | DIFFICULTY: CHALLENGING | 3 HOOTS





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# SHERPA 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](http://theartsherpa.com).

I provide you with the specific brush I use, but bear in mind that brush sizes are not standard across the art brush industry. The most important thing to look for is not the brand of brush I use, but the shape of the brush head, it is a bright, or a filbert, or a hog. Brushes get bigger as the numbers get bigger, and it is not uncommon for beginners to fear using too big of a brush. Use what you have, what is most comfortable for you, explore your options, don't fix what isn't broken, and learn what works for you.

Our painting today is a soulful little cheetah. It is a long tutorial but is very doable if you just follow along step by step, use all of the references available to you, and be patient. I have done numerous tutorials on wildlife and they are all available to you on my website

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](mailto:support@theartsherpa.com) if you require assistance.

You can join the The Art Sherpa Official group at and please post your paintings there:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/TheArtSherpa>

***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
- Cadmium Yellow Medium = CYM
- Phthalo Blue = PB
- Burnt Sienna = BS
- Mars Black = MB
- Titanium White = TW
- Fluid White Paint = FWP
- Golden's Acrylic Gloss Glazing Liquid = AGL

### BRUSHES:

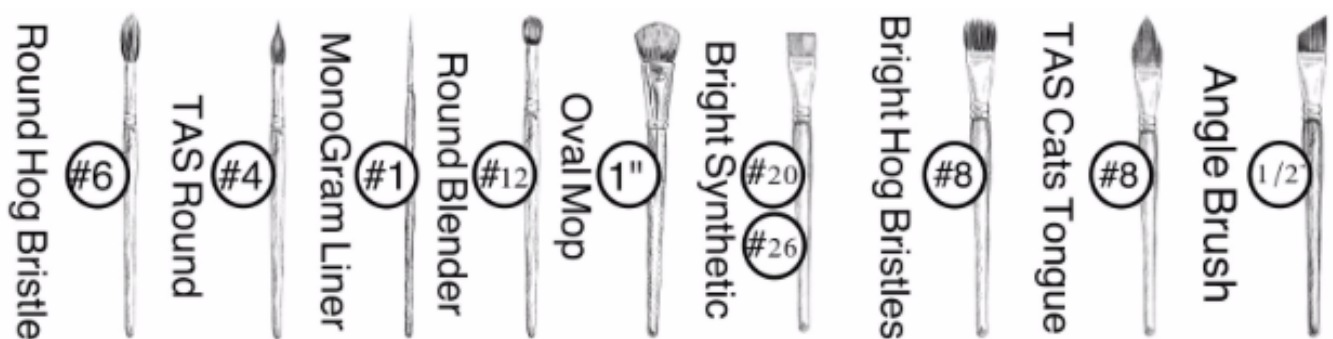
- ½" Bright
- #4 TAS Round
- #1 Monogram Liner
- #24 Bright
- #12 Bright Hog Bristle
- Fan Brush
- Grass Comb

### TOOLS:

- Chalk Pencil or Watercolor Pencil
- 16 x 20 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.)

### TECHNIQUES YOU WILL USE IN THIS PAINTING:

- Expressive Painting Strokes
- Being Painterly and Loose
- Finding Value
- Dry Brushing
- Color Theory
- Directionality
- Blending Wet Into Wet
- Color Mixing
- Fur
- Glazing





## VIDEO CHAPTER GUIDE:

Below are the timestamps chapters we inserted in the tutorial video so that you can easily coordinate using the book and the tutorial video simultaneously. The actual timestamps will be provided after the tutorial goes live on YouTube. A revised version will be made available after it is revised.

STEPS:	TIME:	DESCRIPTION:
INTRO	00:00	INTRO
STEP 1	4:56	COLORED GROUND, TRANSFER IMAGE
STEP 2	16:00	DIFFUSED BACKGROUND
STEP 3	23:20	BLOCK IN FACE
STEP 4	38:20	BASE LAYER OF EYES
STEP 5	43:52	EYES, NEXT LAYER
STEP 6	48:34	FINAL LAYER OF EYES
STEP 7	53:01	EARS AND TOP OF HEAD
STEP 8	1:08:01	START TO DEFINE FUR
STEP 9	1:24:11	FURTHEST BACK FUR
STEP 10	1:33:25	MORE FUR LAYERS, SPOTS
STEP 11	1:45:41	MORE BODY FUR AND SPOTS
STEP 12	1:55:31	FINAL FUR DETAILS AND LIGHTENING GLAZES SIGN



## 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.





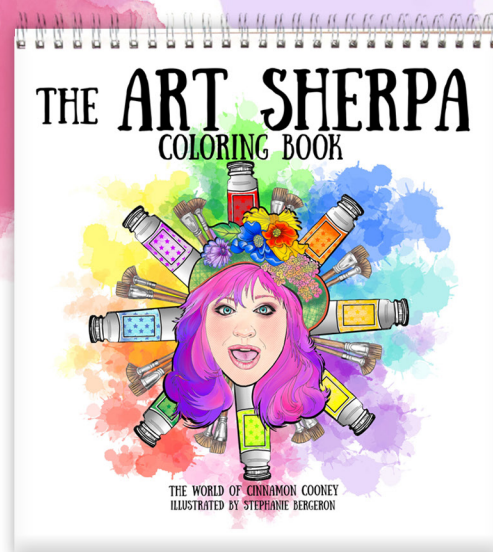


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# STEP 1 - COLORED GROUND, TRANSFER IMAGE

## "ART R&R"

### PAINT:

Burnt Sienna = BS

### BRUSHES & TOOLS:

#26 Bright

Watercolor Pencil

Artist Tape

### STEP DISCUSSION

- Paint the surface from side to side with BS using a big bright brush. It is ok to be streaky here. Let it dry and cool before you proceed.
- I chose to trace this image using seral paper. I have provided a traceable, if you prefer to use this method too. There is no right or wrong way, you can grid, transfer, or freehand, whatever makes you the most comfortable.
- If you are free handing, you have numerous references to assist you. There is the picture that follows this step, the traceable, and the grid reference.

*Cinnamon - I have an opinion on Carol Baskins. I have decided that if Carol Baskins gets these animals protected and in healthy shelters, it's all good.*

*John - I'm more into ThunderCats.*

*The easiest of the steps.*

*Are you ready for some art R&R.*





## STEP 2 - DIFFUSED BACKGROUND

### “BLENDY BLENDY BOKEH”

#### PAINT:

Cad Yellow Medium = CYM

Burnt Sienna = BS

Mars Black = MB

Titanium White = TW

#### BRUSHES & TOOLS:

½" Hog Bristle Bright

#### STEP DISCUSSION

- Put CYM, MB and TW onto your palette.
- With a ½" hog bristle bright, mix CYM + BS + TW and create a bokeh effect in the background using a scruffy stroke. Vary the color mixes, adding a touch of MB, in places to imply a loose little bush. You want light pressure to create an abstracted loose background.
- Add more CYM and TW to get a lighter color to put along the bottom area of the canvas to his left. We are dry brushing and also using wet into wet here.
- When you're happy with the background, add a little TW and pop in some even lighter areas in places, still diffused and abstract, still bokeh.

*This Cheetah face made me very happy in my heart.*

*Sherpa Tip: Hog brushes need to be rinsed out and wiped dry frequently.*





# STEP 3 – BLOCK IN FACE

## “BEWARE THE CHIRP, SHERPA”

### PAINT:

Cad Red Medium = CRM  
Cad Yellow Medium = CYM  
Burnt Sienna = BS  
Mars Black = MB  
Titanium White = TW

### BRUSHES & TOOLS:

#12 Bright

### STEP DISCUSSION

- Add CRM to the palette, our missing color, and mist your paint if you need to.
- With a Bright brush, mix CRM + CYM + BS into an orangey-brown. Beginning at the right ear, start blocking in this color. Leave a little of the darker brown unpainted in the center of his ear, because it would be darker there and continue to work into the face.
- Add TW to make your mix lighter then start following the direction of the fur as you move down onto his jaw,
- Use the yellow-white mix from the previous step around his right eye and under his nose.
- Continue to block in the fur. Varying the mix by adding more of any of the colors to it. These colors are close so it can be confusing when you get near the background.
- Add more MB to the yellow-white mix for the fur that is immediately around his neck. You also want to use this color around the nose, it almost looks like an off white-blue.
- Mix BS + TW on the corner of the brush and paint around the left eye and nose area.
- CRM + CYM + BS mixed to a darker brown-orange color for the left ear and the forehead between the eyes.
- Use your yellow-white mix on the hair under the eye and down the cheek area on both sides of the face.
- Use this same color on the left side coming down the shoulder of the body to set the cheetah a little in front of the background.
- Put some MB into those interesting little spaces on the ears.

*Cinnamon - You can use a face mister. I bought this on Amazon a couple of weeks ago, and it still has not broken.*

*John - that's a great testimonial for Amazon.*

*John - Cheetahs can't roar, they can only chirp, purrr and growl. Beware of the purr. Just saying, AND, the Cheetah is the only wild cat with a black nose.*

**Sherpa Tip:** Do not ever hesitate to use all of the references available to you for color placement. You have my step reference below, a grid reference, and all the step pictures in this document. You can also go back and rewatch the tutorial at any time.



### STEP 3 CONTINUED:







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# STEP 4 - BASE LAYER OF EYES

## “SOULFUL EYES”

### PAINT:

Burnt Sienna = BS

Mars Black = MB

### BRUSHES & TOOLS:

#4 TAS Round

### STEP DISCUSSION

- I find that if I get the eyes in early, my community is much happier, so we will be starting at the right eye using a Round Brush.
- Thin some MB with a touch of water and start painting in the black outline of the right eye. Paint the entire shape then come down the side of the snout just a bit. Continue the same process on the left eye.
- Then paint down the entire area of the snout, outlining it to the bottom of the face.
- Paint in the pupil of both eyes. Observe if you are happy with that placement and fix anything you need to.
- Mix MB + BS and paint the dark outer ring to create depth.
- Dry it.

*John - let's get those eyes upon you.*

**Sherpa Tip:** *On an eyeball, there is an area that is lit up and there are shadows areas.*

*Cats' eyes are so cool because they are apex predators and are probably trying to determine if you are tasty or not by looking into your soul. I really love painting cat eyes.*





## STEP 5 - EYES, NEXT LAYER

### “GLAZING THE CAT’S EYE”

#### PAINT:

Cad Red Medium = CRM

Cad Yellow Medium = CYM

Burnt Sienna = BS

Mars Black = MB

#### BRUSHES & TOOLS:

#4 TAS Round

#### STEP DISCUSSION

- On the #4 TAS round brush, mix CYM + CRM + BS, which is the mid tone fur color, and add it around the pupil. Allow some of the darker brown from the last step to show on the outside. You don't want to paint at the top of the pupil either because it is in shadow.
- Add more CRM in some places and more CYM in other places; tapping in spots of color.
- Create pops of color by tapping in CYM + BS in the iris area. He is starting to stare out.
- Mix a glaze of MB + BS to add over the pupil, just underneath the black line.
- Play with your eyes to your heart's content.



## STEP 6 - FINAL LAYER OF EYES

### “THE GLOW”

#### PAINT:

Phthalo Blue = PB

Titanium White = TW

Fluid White Paint = FWP

#### BRUSHES & TOOLS:

#4 TAS Round

#1 Monogram Liner

#### STEP DISCUSSION

- Put out some FWP on your palette.
- Then with PB + TW, on the toe of a Round brush, add a reflection to the eye. Just on top of the pupil and on the inside corner. Next use dashes and broken lines on the outside corner.
- With a Monogram Liner and FWP, add the bright highlights on the eyes.
- Come back and fix any of the black that you need to.





# STEP 7 - EARS AND TOP OF HEAD

## “WILD HAIRS”

### PAINT:

Cad Red Medium = CRM

Cad Yellow Medium = CYM

Burnt Sienna = BS

### BRUSHES & TOOLS:

Hog Fan Brush

Grass Comb Brush

### STEP DISCUSSION

- Let's start with the stiffer fan hog brush because a synthetic would be too soft. Get it damp and loaded with CRM + CYM + BS then using sweeping upward strokes, paint the hair on the forehead in the direction that the hair would be growing. The ear's have hair that sweeps over it, from the outside toward the center of it, from all sides including the bottom. The hair next to the eyes sweeps out. Use this directionality on both sides. If it does not look right to you, take time to figure out what is wrong and fix it. I used the fan on this step so you could see me demonstrate it, but I do prefer a comb. The hair on the nose comes down the center, and then along the side of the snout.
- Switch to the comb brush and add the light

yellow-white color to the inside of the left ear to show the lighter hairs that protect the inside of the ear. Also come around the top and the opening of the inner ear with this highlight color. You will want to use my reference below to help you with all of this various color placement and brush directionality.

- Then add the lighter orangey-brown color to the ear.
- Add in any black areas.
- Highlight the back, side and top of the ear to help him pop out from the canvas. Make sure some individual hairs come up over the background.
- Get your brown-orange mix and pop in some of that color here and there.
- Once you are happy with the left ear, repeat the process and paint the right ear.
- Make sure he has some hair sticking up on the top of the forehead.

**Sherpa Tip:** A good thing to remember about fur, is that there are brushes that will help you. Grass combs, fans, rakes, and grainers are great tools for hair.

*He is so downy and soft looking that you just want to touch him. But, always keep in mind, his purr does not mean he's happy to see you.*

STEP 7 CONTINUED:





# STEP 8 - START TO DEFINE FUR

## “NO CHEAT CHEETAH”

### PAINT:

Cad Red Medium = CRM

Cad Yellow Medium = CYM

Phthalo Blue = PB

Burnt Sienna = BS

Mars Black = MB

Titanium White = TW

### BRUSHES & TOOLS:

#4 TAS Round

### STEP DISCUSSION

- Mix PB + MB on a Round brush and start painting this light-mid gray on the top of the nose.
- Outline the nostril areas and the center division line with a blue-gray, and then paint in the nose with MB, allowing the blue areas to show through.
- Use a little grayish white along the sides of the nose, and highlight the bottom part of the “V” of his nose.
- Then accentuate the mouth line with a darker gray.
- Mix CYM + BS + TW and add some fine hairs under the lower line of the mouth, onto the chin and jawline, like a beard.
- Use a mid gray to add some shadows under the

nose, on the sides. The nose should have several values of the black on it. MB + TW will give you various shades of gray depending on how much white is added.

- Mix CRM + BS to get a light color, then on a comb brush start adding some fine hairs along the side of the nose and philtrum above the mouth.
- Use this color to come under and over the eyes in the eyebrow area.
- Add a few strokes of this color on the forehead.





# STEP 9 – FURTHEST BACK FUR

## “COMB CLUMPING HAIR”

### PAINT:

Cad Yellow Medium = CYM

Burnt Sienna = BS

Titanium White = TW

### BRUSHES & TOOLS:

Grass Comb Brush

### STEP DISCUSSION

- Using a comb brush, mix CYM + BS and a touch of TW.
- On the shoulder, begin painting the hair that is furthest back using a curved stroke. Making sure to go up over the background slightly.
- Use all of your fur colors to start adding in clumps of hair on his shoulders and body.





# STEP 10 – MORE FUR LAYERS, SPOTS

## “DON'T LET THE GLAZE DISARM YOU”

### PAINT:

Burnt Sienna = BS

Titanium White = TW

Golden's Acrylic Gloss

Glazing Liquid = AGL

### BRUSHES & TOOLS:

Grass Comb Brush

### STEP DISCUSSION

- Get some fresh water.
- Continue with the light yellow, brown and white, fur color, and the comb brush, and add some detailed hair above the eye and up into the forehead area. I did put out a little AGL to help make the paint flow a little better because it's very humid today.
- Use your TW in places to show off the yellow-whites and lighter colors that might need some attention.
- Next, mix the orange color that we have been using previously with a touch of brown and white. Add this in and around the bright hair clumps. Again, pay attention to the directionality of the hair.
- At the bridge of the nose, paint down the center of the snout to the sides.

- Then up from the bridge into the forehead.
- Using BS add some shadows on the snout and forehead, then into the area before the ears.
- Add this color in places between the clumps of hair you painted in previous steps, giving it depth.

*He's hidey, hidey, stealthy, stealthy, but he is wonderfully beautiful, tricking you into his space, getting ready to churp.*

**Sherpa Tips:** Nature painting is time intensive. Take the time, nobody is rushing you. They are worth taking the time to paint.

*You don't often work with just a pigment, but because Burnt Sienna is almost a glaze, it really works with our cat friend.*





# STEP 11 - MORE BODY FUR AND SPOTS

## “DON'T BE FOOLED BY THE PURR”

### PAINT:

Mars Black = MB

### BRUSHES & TOOLS:

Grass Comb

### STEP DISCUSSION

- Get MB on a dampened grass comb, and start blending in some black clumps in irregular shapes, here and there.
- Add this dark color on the face and either side of the snout keeping your pressure very light. Be sure to pay some attention to the forehead and the ears. Use the brush on the edge when you want control and flat when you want to see individual hairs.
- Fur is fatiguing, but worth it. You have it in you.

*Don't let him fool you. He's a predator. That purr does not mean he wants to be friends. I do believe we need to turn big cat hunting into big cat photography.*





# STEP 12 - FINAL FUR DETAILS AND LIGHTENING GLAZES

“SO WE’RE PAINTING, AND WE’RE PAINTING, AND WE SIGN”

## PAINT:

Cad Yellow Medium = CYM

Burnt Sienna = BS

Mars Black = MB

Titanium White = TW

## BRUSHES & TOOLS:

#1 Monogram Liner

Grass Comb Brush

## STEP DISCUSSION

- When you're happy with your finished result, sign it.
- Hide the kitty. Blend him in.

*Please post your beautiful big cat on the Art Sherpa Official page on Facebook so we can all admire him.*

- Mix CYM + BS + TW on the grass comb brush. If your load is too dark, wipe it off on a cloth so you don't want to overwhelm all the other colors.
- Start popping in clumps of this color here and there, even going over some of the black clumps from time to time.
- Just play with this little guy and his fur. Dry brushing will allow the colors underneath to show while lightening the value.
- Get MB back in to redefine any lines around the snout that need it.
- You want to use curved s strokes and curly q strokes for those light hairs on the ears.
- Add a bit of bright TW above the eye to draw the attention to those soulful eyes.





## THE TRACING METHOD

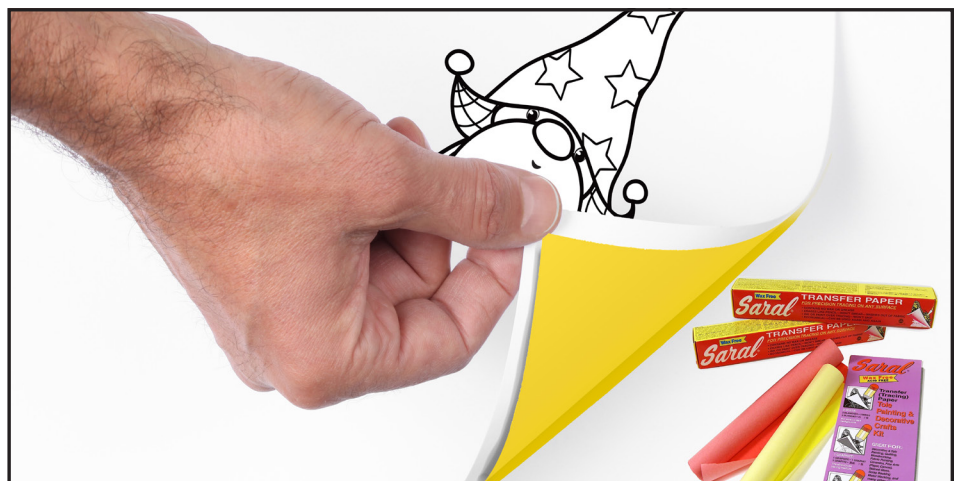
- Adjust the size to fit your surface and be sure to check your printer settings to see if the final size reflects the size you need.



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.

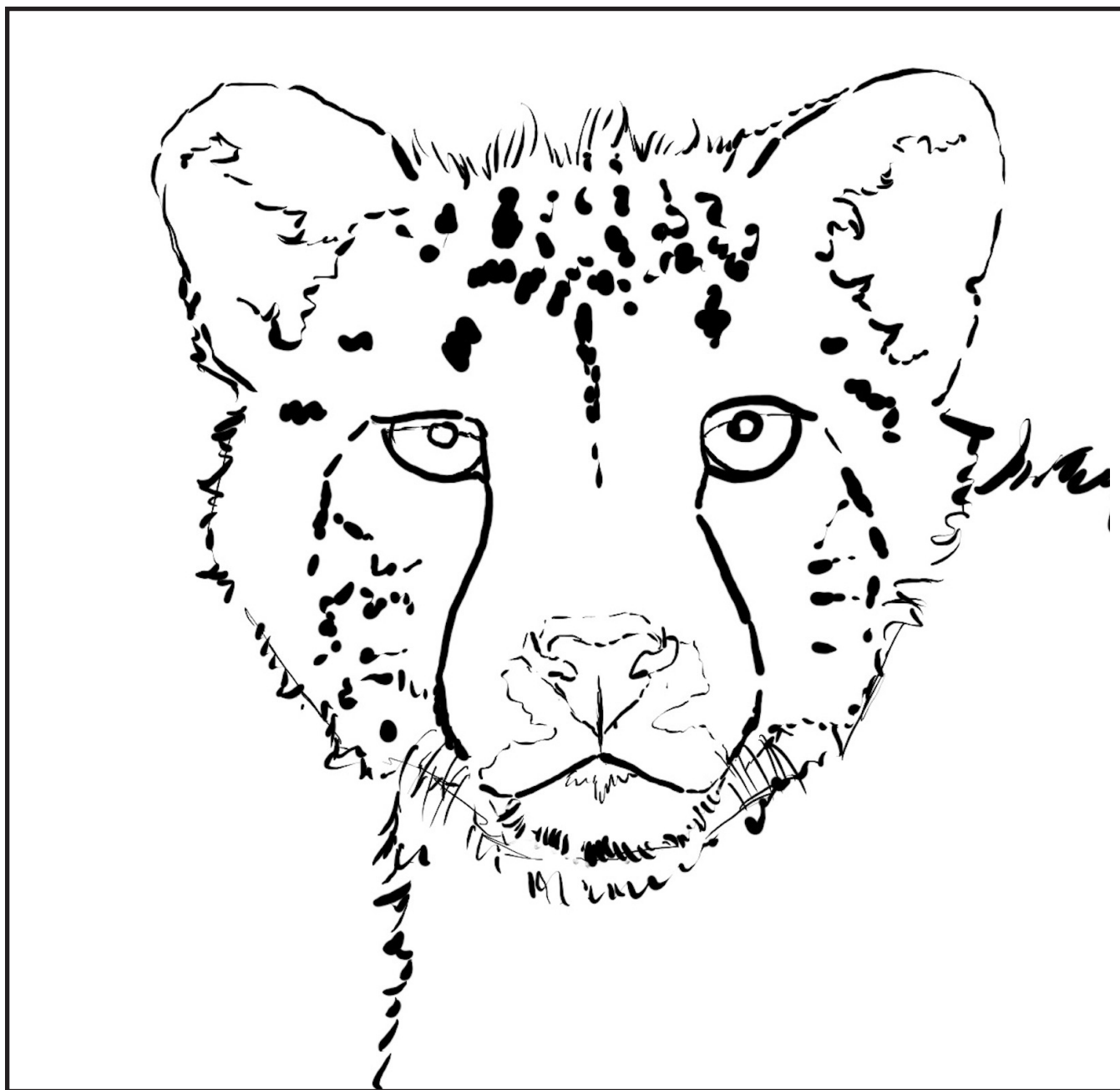


- Rub the back with graphite or use Saral paper and skip this step.
- Be sure to rub the back of your paper on the side without the lines drawing using a HB pencil.
- Hold up to window light to make sure graphite covers all the lines of the subject drawing.
- Test your Saral paper to make sure the color 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





TRACEABLE:



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## GRIDDING INSTRUCTIONS:

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.

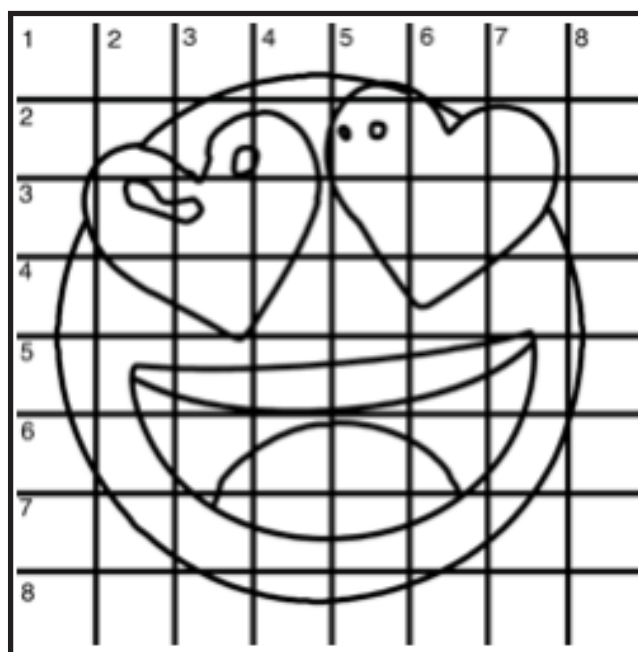
To draw the grid your canvas must be dry and it's advisable that it is also cool. You should use chalk that is wax or oil free. It must be pure chalk. I use a Dritz fabric-marking tool because it does fine lines easily and removes well from the canvas. There are also chalk pencils available or you could 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.

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





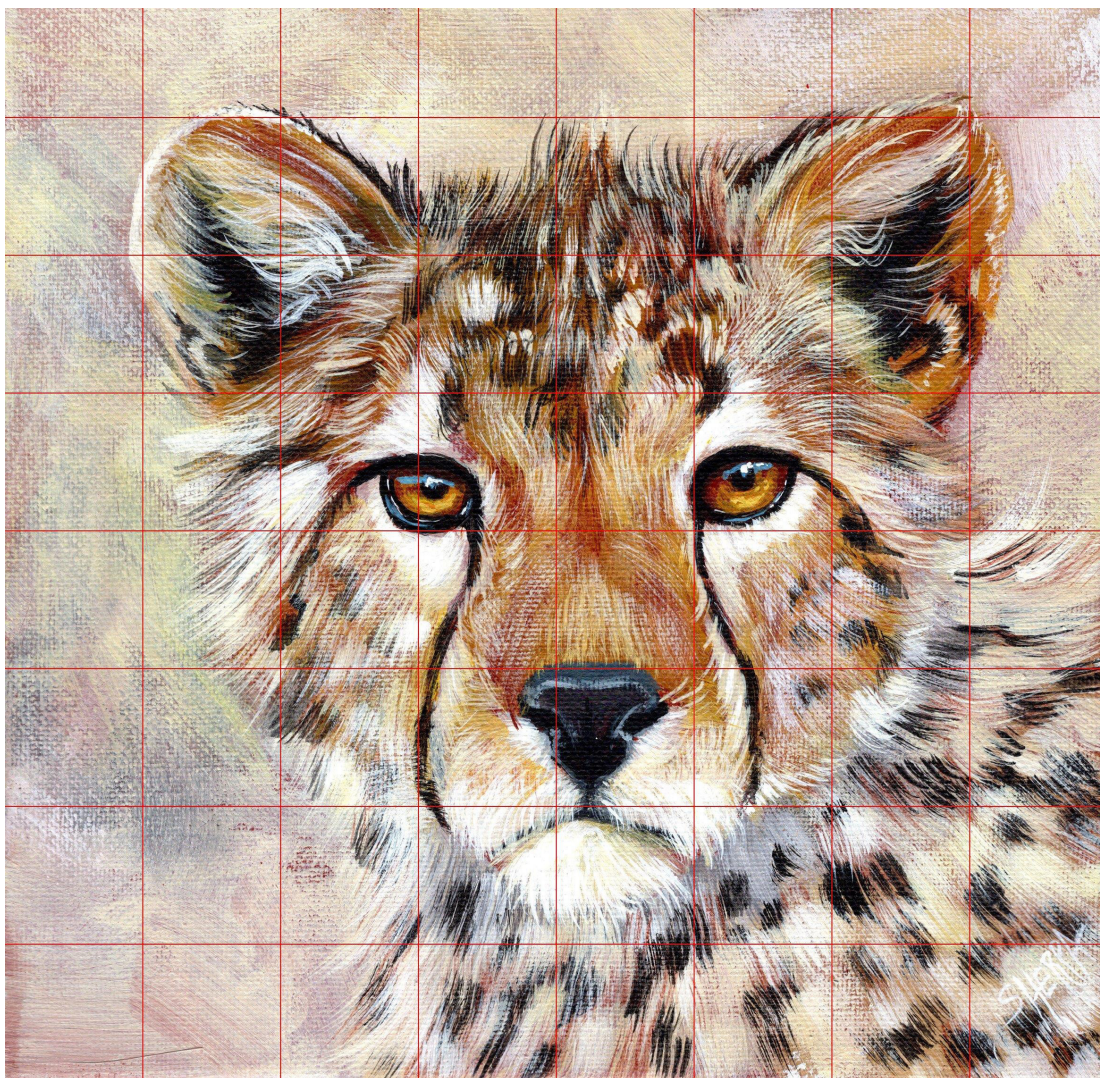
## GRIDDING INSTRUCTIONS CONTINUED:

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.

## GRID REFERENCE:







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