

THE ART SHERPA™

HOW TO PAINT

IN ACRYLIC



CRESCENDO


BY: THE ART SHERPA
NAME CREDIT TO PATRON CHRISTINE RICHERS

STEPS: 13 | 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 and 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. It is best viewed in outline format to allow for ease in navigation between sections. We hope to prepare a printed version of all of those documents that you will be able to purchase which 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.

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 composition of rocks being pounded by ocean surf. This tutorial is a lengthy one using basic color mixes to create different values throughout the steps. This picture was previously taught in watercolor, but I thought that perhaps the acrylic community might like to paint it as well as it will bring into practice a lot of the concepts and skills we touched upon in Acrylic April 2021. It is a fairly neutral still life which is the most commercially successful subject for painting. A still life is a work of art depicting mostly inanimate subject matter. You would commonly see natural subjects, including food, flowers, plants, rocks, shells, or man-made subjects, like drinking glasses, books, vases, jewelry, coins, and pipes.

If you are a beginning painter and want to attempt this, I recommend that you choose one or two of the objects in the setting and concentrate on those and build up to the entire setting. I have done several smaller still life tutorials which can be found on my website if you would like to start with a less difficult painting. If there is something you don't like in the reference, you won't like it in the painting. Remove it or change it.

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.

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!



PAIN'T 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
- Ultramarine Blue = UB
- Phthalo Green = PG
- Burnt Sienna = BS
- Mars Black = MB
- Titanium White = TW
- Fluid White Paint = FWP

BRUSHES:

- #12 Round Hog Bristle
- Small Round Hog Brush
- #1 Monogram Liner
- #26 Bright Brush
- 3/4" Angle Brush
- Splatter Tool

TOOLS:

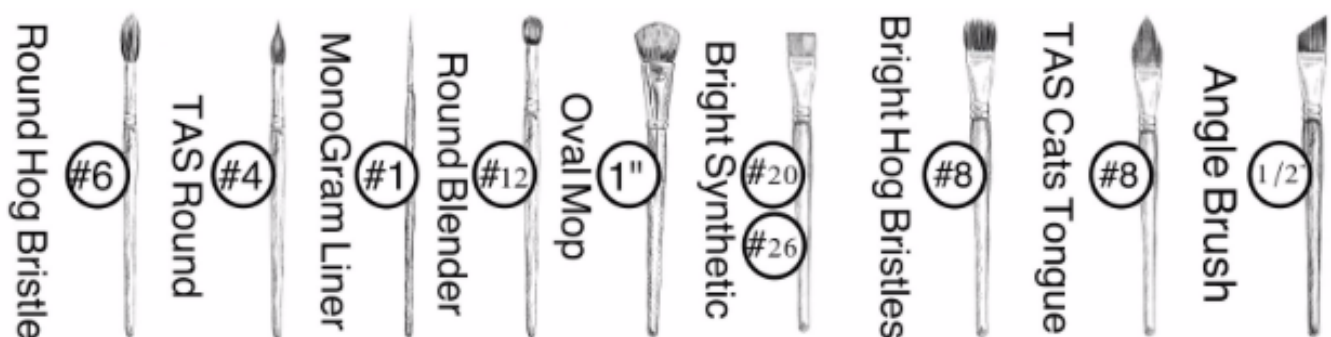
- T-Square Ruler
- Chalk Pencil or Watercolor Pencil

- 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.)

- Optional: StayWet Palette

TECHNIQUES YOU WILL USE IN THIS PAINTING:

- Painting a Silhouette Landscape
- Expressive Painting Strokes
- Being Painterly and Loose
- Atmospheric Perspective
- Finding Value
- Dry Brushing
- Sea Foam
- Color Theory
- Perspective of Waves
- Directionality
- Blending Wet into Wet
- Setting a Horizon Line
- Color Mixing



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	5:08	TRANSFER/SKETCH IMAGE
STEP 2	10:25	BLOCKING IN SKY AND OCEANS
STEP 3	24:56	BLOCKING IN ROCKS
STEP 4	33:40	FARAWAY WAVES
STEP 5	51:32	ROCK TEXTURE
STEP 6	1:10:30	FINAL ROCK TEXTURE
STEP 7	1:37:39	FOREGROUND WATER
STEP 8	1:45:45	SEA FOAM
STEP 9	1:54:42	SPLASH SHADOWS
STEP 10	2:07:08	MID-TONE SPLASH
STEP 11	2:13:16	SPLASH HIGHLIGHTS
STEP 12	2:20:51	DETAILS, LACEY BITS
STEP 13	2:34:33	SPLATTER SIGN



THE GOLDBLOCKS 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.



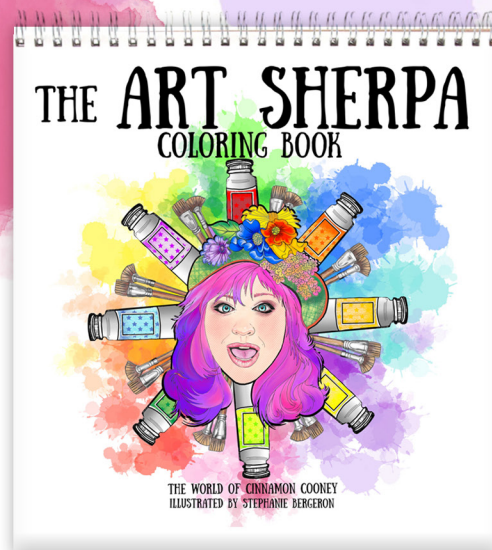


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STEP 1 - TRANSFER/SKETCH IMAGE

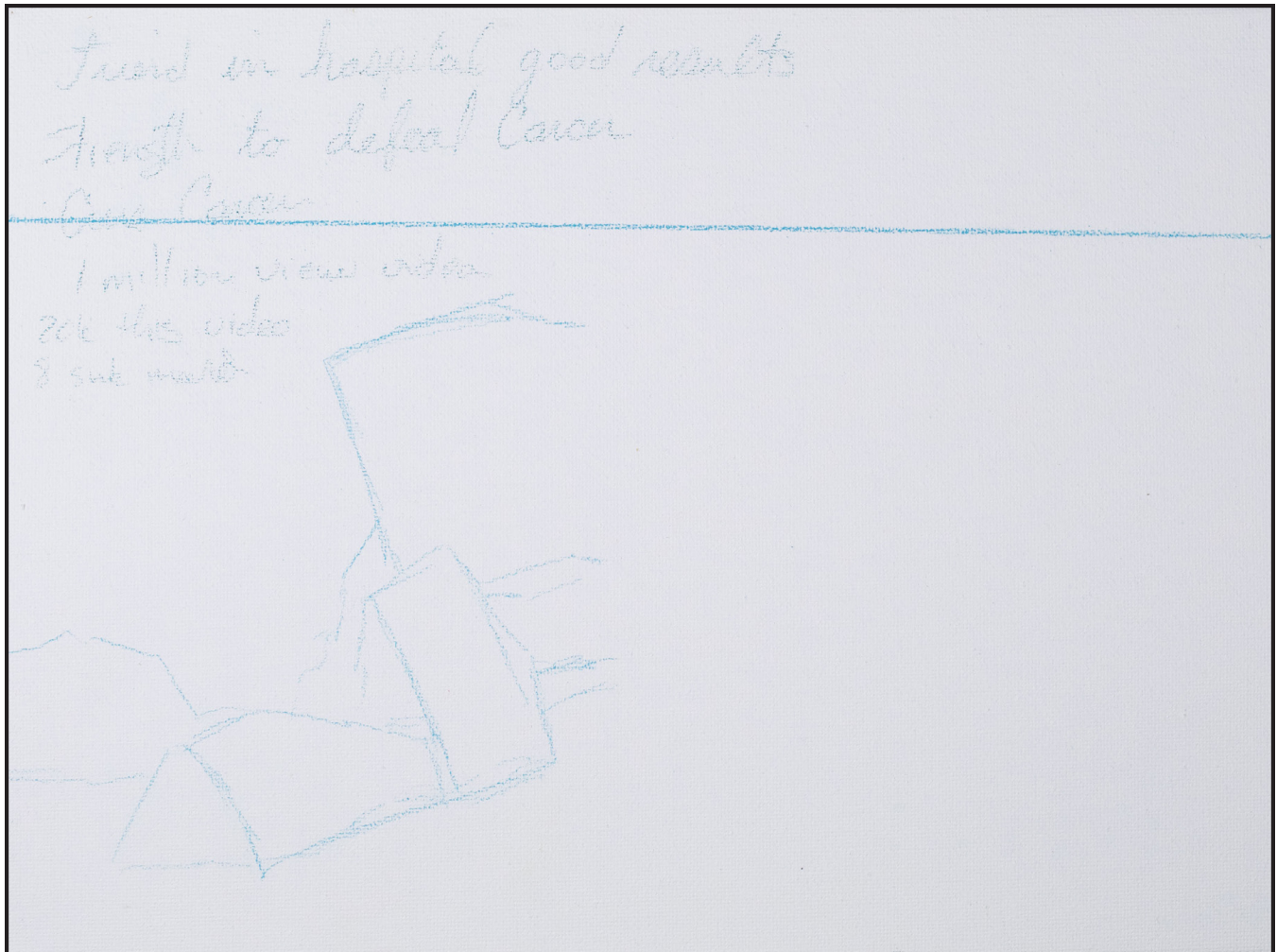
"DEFINE THE SHAPE"

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

T-Square Ruler
Chalk Pencil or Watercolor
Pencil

STEP DISCUSSION

- Put your canvas in landscape orientation.
- Using a T-square, and a watercolor pencil, come down from the top about 2.25" and draw a horizon line.
- Then loosely sketch in the rocks. You are not defining yet, just putting in the jagged shapes so you don't have to paint the ocean where they exist. You want to basically look for the shape of things, is it a triangle or a square, where are the angles and opposing angles. Just look for the outside structural lines of the big rock structures. It might have interesting details, but the structure is a triangle, so I draw in a triangle.
- The little stones will be dropped in a little later.
- 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 are free handing, you have numerous references to assist you. There is the picture that follows this step, the traceable, and the grid reference. I drew in only the major objects.



STEP 2 - BLOCKING IN SKY AND OCEAN

"TEARS OF JOY"

PAINT:

Cad Yellow Medium = CYM

Phthalo Blue = PB

Ultramarine Blue = UB

Titanium White = TW

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

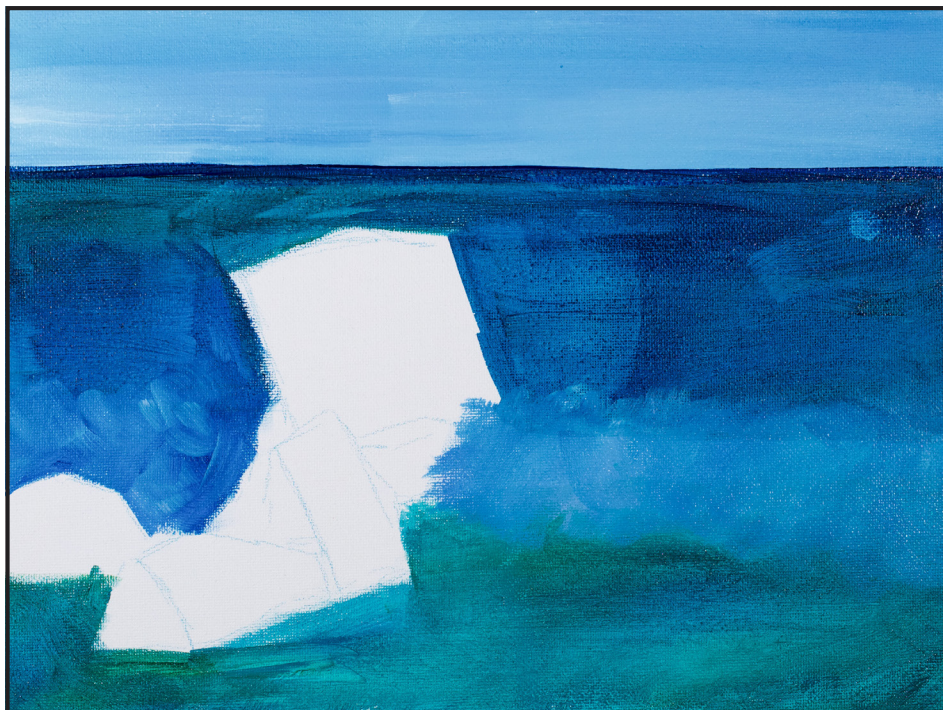
#26 Bright Brush

¾" Angle Brush

STEP DISCUSSION

- Mix PB + UB+ TW on a large bright brush and paint the sky a light version of that middle blue color. Try to keep your line level at the horizon but we can always come back and redefine it later if we need to.
- Add a little TW to this mix and bring the lighter color closest to the horizon line.
- Mix PG + PB for a phthalo turquoise on a ¾" angle brush and reinforce the horizon line and bring this color down into the body of the ocean.
- Draw in a line to where you want to stop with this color, on both sides of the rock and paint down to that point. You can smooth out the brush strokes for they all go side to side.
- Get UB on the left where you know you have sea foam, just right above the smaller rock. You can even add a little TW in that, and you can paint it roughly in, because it would be splashy there.
- Mix UB + CYM and bring it to the right under the wave that will be in front.
- Add some phthalo turquoise color over this green and toward the shore.
- Then paint UB + TW in the splashy area between the deep blue sea and the greenish sea at the shore.
- Reinforce the horizon if you need to.

My cancer free wish tree, from several years ago, came true for one of our patrons, 2 years cancer free now. The kleenex came out and we are so very happy, but the community reported that there were many years and some ugly crying. Happy tears, tears moved by joy. Where do we go from there?



STEP 3 – BLOCKING IN ROCKS

“THE SECRET OF ROCKS”

PAINT:

Cad Red Medium = CRM

Cad Yellow Medium = CYM

Burnt Sienna = BS

Mars Black = MB

Titanium White = TW

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

#12 Hog Bristle

STEP DISCUSSION

- To block in the rocks, with just the basic values and no details yet.
- Get a hog bright and mix CYM + CRM to an orange color, then add BS to achieve our base rock light color.
- Add this color to the small rock, on the center right of the large structure, and also at the top of the large rock.
- Right now, find the places where the rock has light and the angles of the rocks jutting out or in the sun's direct path.
- Add more BS + MB to this mix for the darker brown rock color. This is a blocking stage so it is ok if it looks rough.
- You can vary your colors in these dark ranges by adding more of the brown or black. There is a bit of staining at the bottom of the rocks where they are met by the water.
- In the foreground water, start adding a few little rocks. Three is always a good number compositionally.
- Don't hesitate to use the reference that follows to help you “anchor” your colors.





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STEP 4 - FARAWAY WAVES

"GUNNA GET INTO THE WAVE"

PAINT:

Cad Yellow Medium = CYM

Phthalo Green = PG

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

#12 Round Hog Bristle

STEP DISCUSSION

- Get a round hog bristle brush loaded with phthalo turquoise and TW and start adding some broken lines back near the horizon. Waves have shadows and highlights and we need to portray them realistically using value and implied texture.
- As you come forward, there is more chop, and the strokes become longer and perhaps not as level, because the water is being affected by the wind. It's a roll.
- Where the water flattens back out, the color might be lighter and wider.
- Use curved upward strokes when you want to indicate that water might be building up into a wave.
- You can add PG + CYM in areas where the water might be more green.
- Use my reference below to help you get to the point I am before going on to the next step.

John - Do you know what I find the ocean is often full of?

Cinnamon - SHARKS?

John - Sharks. They were here first.

Cinnamon - We are the intruders.

John - They have left their teeth all over the ocean floor saying, "It's mine, it's all mine".

Sherpa Tip: In landscape painting, one way to break it down is that you first paint the areas furthest back and then layer the forward objects over it. This helps you not get overwhelmed.

Being an artist is not about being a perfect person, it's about expression.



STEP 5 - ROCK TEXTURE

"A LITTLE ROCK PLAY"

PAINT:

Cad Red Medium = CRM
Cad Yellow Medium = CYM
Ultramarine Blue = UB
Burnt Sienna = BS
Mars Black = MB

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

¾" Angle Brush

STEP DISCUSSION

- Mist your paint if you need to and don't hesitate to change out your water when it needs it.
- Get CRM + CYM + BS on an angle brush and paint in the first layer of highlights. Not bright highlights, just lighter and more yellow.
- Vary this by adding more of any of the colors.
- Mix UB + BS to get a rock gray color and add it to some of the shadows.
- BS + MB is another great dark shadow color.
- Paint your rocks as if they have personality, find the shadows and create the drama that sets the stage for the highlights to add the zhuzh zhuzh. Keep the brush strokes rough and considered.
- Mix TW + CYM + BS to a mid beige color for more highlights.
- Mix CRM + CYM + BS and add this wet into wet in places on the face of the biggest stone.
- Continue to build up the rocks and come back with dark values if you overpaint something.
- Please play with your rocks and all your rock colors until you get to your stopping point.



STEP 6 - FINAL ROCK TEXTURE

"MORE ROCKS, SAME DEAL"

PAINT:

Cad Yellow Medium = CYM

Ultramarine Blue = UB

Burnt Sienna = BS

Mars Black = MB

Titanium White = TW

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

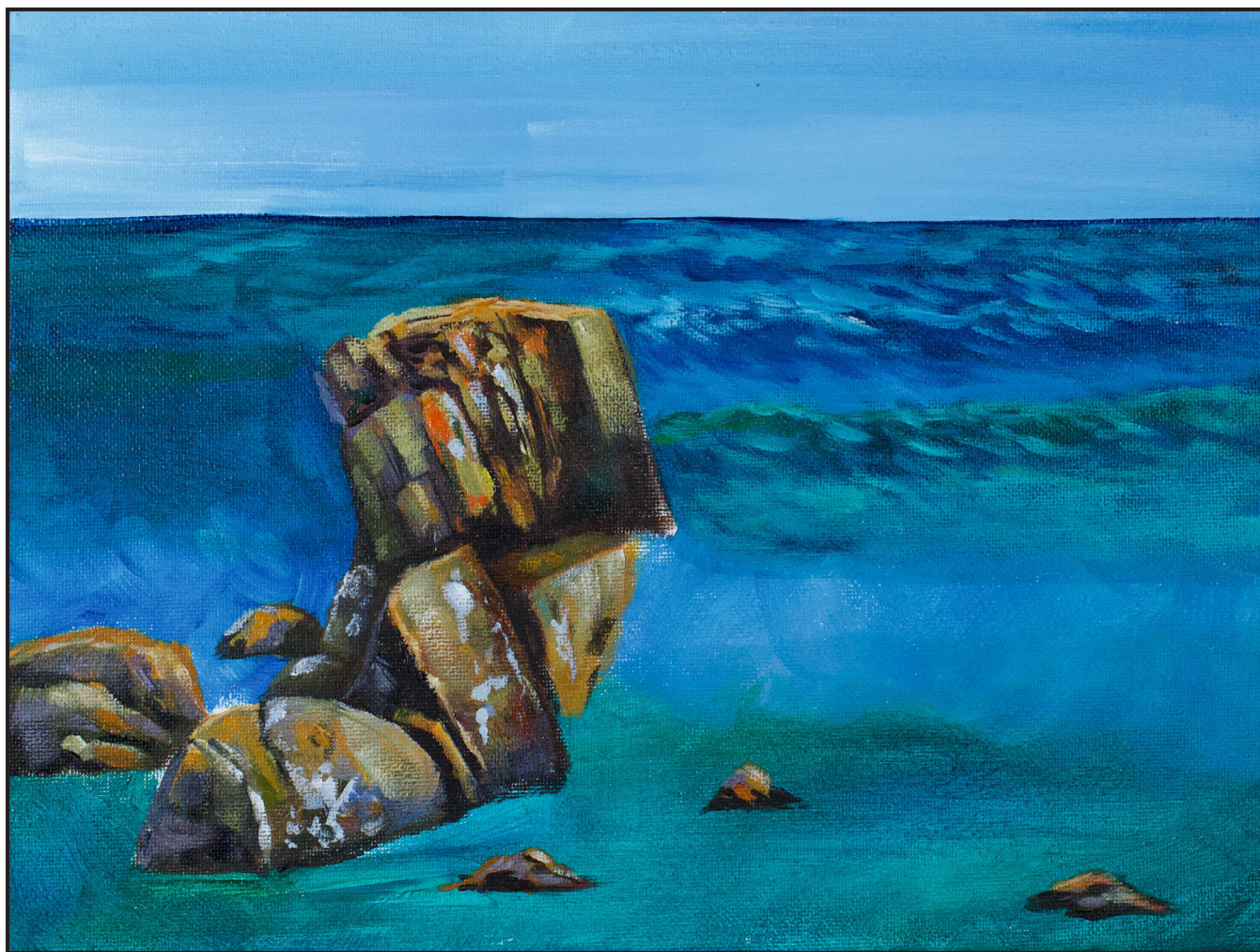
¾" Angle Brush

TAS #4 Bright

STEP DISCUSSION

- Continue working that main rock structure, adding highlights and shadows. You will find highlights at the rocky edges.
- Use the UB + BS for a dark color, as you did before, reserving the black for very dramatic moments.
- Add TW into your highlight colors to lighten the value.
- I use both wet into wet and dry brushing techniques on the rocks.
- Deepen the dramatic shadow areas with the MB and for rock shadows under the water.
- On the far side, get your orange brown mixture into play.
- You can get a light gray with BS + UB + TW to add to the edge of a black shadow area pulling it out and away from a rock behind it then use CYM as a highlight color.
- On the big rock just to the left of the main craggy rock, start finding the highlights and shadows that exist there. It does seem to be more in light. If you get a little inadvertent green in the paint, that's ok too, because the rocks might have some moss on them.
- You can make a green color with MB + CYM to add on this rock and in places on the main rock structure.
- When you are happy with this rock, move to the little rock that is behind the structure, kind of set apart from the big structure.
- With an off white color, add some spots of brighter highlight on the big rock structure.
- Switch to a bright brush and add your green rock mixture on the little rocks in the front.
- On the rock to the extreme left start adding more rock colors to that little stone.
- You do want to add some of this green color at the base of the rocks that are toward the bottom of the canvas.
- Mix your orange with BS to get a deep rust-red and add some pops of that on the rocks.
- Use MB at the bottom of the forward rocks to show shadows under the water.
- When you're willing to let it go, let's step it.

STEP 6: CONTINUED



STEP 7 - FOREGROUND WATER

“PAINT THE STONES THAT RISE UP FROM THE SEA”

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

#12 Round Hog Bristle

STEP DISCUSSION

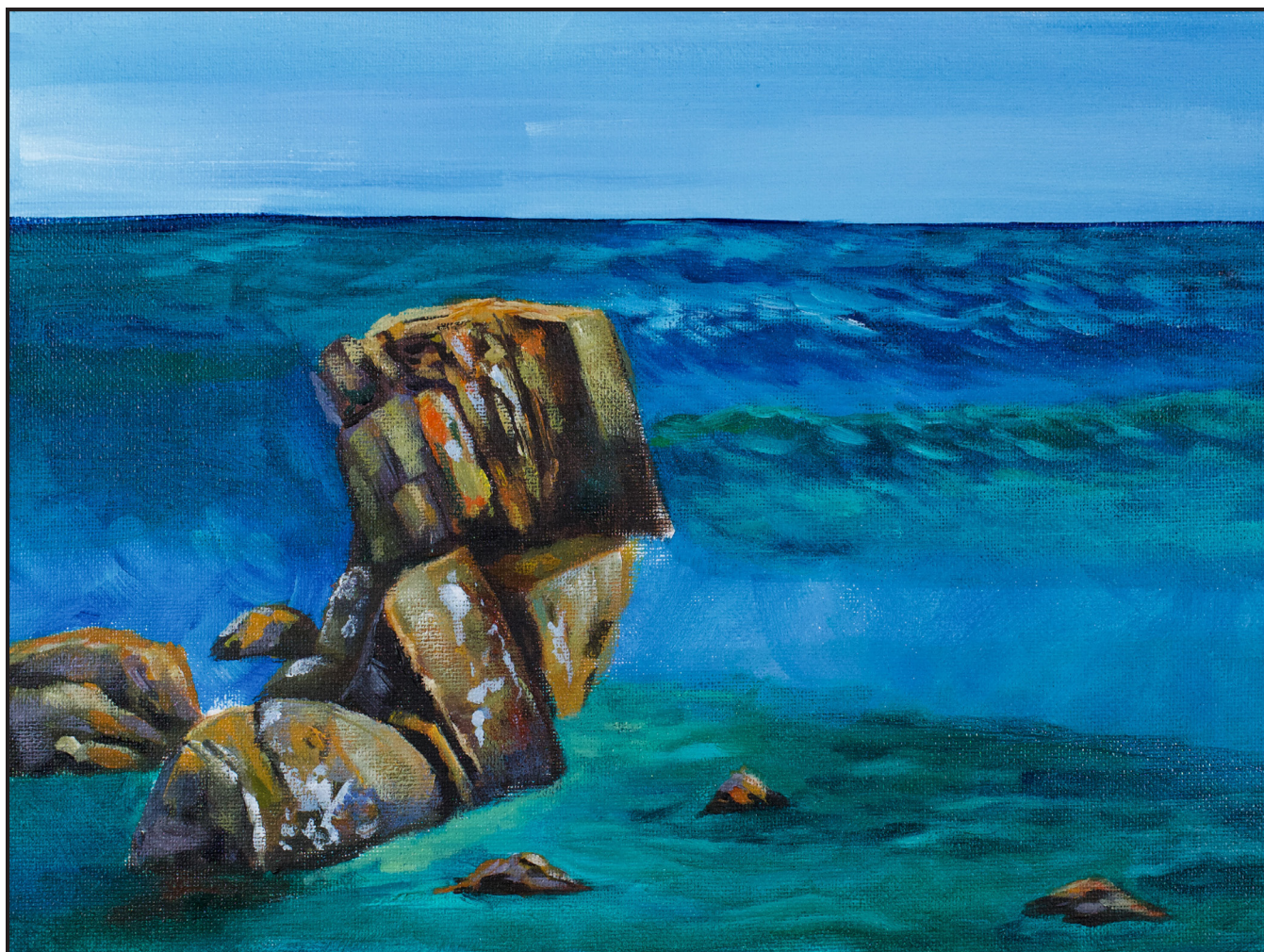
- Use the hog brush as you concentrate on details in the forward water area. You could use a dome blender for this or any brush that gives you a nice blend.
- Use all of your blue and green water mixes from

earlier steps. You want this area to be very blendy, blendy because it is shallow water.

- Find the darker shadows under the surface of the water, then find the highlights that ride the surface.

Cinnamon - I lost my brush. While I look, can someone tell me how John got named Stunt Hands?

John - I think I said “I think these hands do all their own stunts.”



STEP 8 - SEA FOAM

“CRASHING WAVES”

PAINT:

Cad Yellow Medium = CYM

Ultramarine Blue = UB

Burnt Sienna = BS

Titanium White = TW

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

#12 Round Hog Brush

Small Round Hog Brush

STEP DISCUSSION

- Continue with the #12 round hog brush and your

seafoam green color (PG + UM + CYM + BS + TW) and add some TW to get an off-white-seafoam color.

- On the toe of the brush using light pressure, start patterning seafoam in the front portion before the wave and coming into the rocks.
- I switched to a smaller hog brush to allow me to do more detailed strokes.

It's so fun to paint foam.

Sherpa Tip: Get to know all your tools.



STEP 9 – SPLASH SHADOWS

“EVEN SPLASH HAS A SHADOW”

PAINT:

Ultramarine Blue = UB

Phthalo Green = PG

Burnt Sienna = BS

Titanium White = TW

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

#12 Round Hog Brush

Small Round Hog Brush

STEP DISCUSSION

- Get fresh water when you need to.
- Work the shadows of the splash until you are happy.

Sherpa Tip: To get the right seafoam color, use your light ocean color and add TW to an off-white color. Works if your ocean is blue, or green, orange or purple.

Never throw a brush away. Areas of splash like this are the reason for that golden rule. They make excellent foliage and wave brushes. Sometimes a dollar tool is a tool that works very, very well. Know your tools.

Don't forget that when using a hog brush, less water on the brush is more. Wipe it out after rinsing and also when the paint becomes too loaded on the brush. Hog brushes hold water and will not work well with too much water.

- Get a round hog brush, damp, and mix UB + BS or you could use a sea sponge for this if you preferred.
- Start painting seafoam by tapping this color into that blue strip that is just above the green shallows, taking it up onto the rocks. We are using a darker color because some of the splash will be shadow.
- Add PG to the mix for a more green cast to the water.
- As we move left, the shadow becomes more pronounced, so add more BS.
- Switch to a smaller hog brush for control as you come around that little detached rock on the left. Bring some seafoam into the water between it and the forward rocks and all the way up the left side of that big rock structure.



STEP 10 - MID-TONE SPLASH

“LOVING THE RESULTS”

PAINT:

Titanium White = TW

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

Small Round Hog Brush

STEP DISCUSSION

- Continue with the small hog brush, and your shadow foam color, as you tap out the seafoam spray that heads up over the rock structure and

background sea area. It has hit the rocks and is in a freely zone before it falls back to it's watery home.

- Add some TW to the mix in places, for your mid-tone between shadow and highlight.
- You do want what is happening behind the rocks to show through the splash. Building up the structure of the splash around the rock. It's an involved project.



STEP 11 - SPLASH HIGHLIGHTS

“THE SHAPE AND FORM OF SPLASH”

PAINT:

Titanium White = TW

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

Small Round Hog Brush

STEP DISCUSSION

- Put out more TW if you need to.
- Then with the small hog brush as you start adding highlight spaces with the

pure white. They are random shapes and sizes and not at all regular or predictable. Creating shape and form to this splash. This is a painstaking and very involved step and one that allows you to play to your heart's content.

- And next...FLUID PAINT...There are so many levels of seriousness to an ocean scene.

***Sherpa Tip:** Varnish is the most challenging part of any painting. It's the part that can ruin a painting. You have to follow the instructions on the varnish that you are using. You cannot wing it. All varnish does not work the same way.*



STEP 12 - DETAILS, LACEY BITS

“GO US”

PAINT:

Fluid White Paint = FWP

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

#1 Monogram Liner

STEP DISCUSSION

- With a Liner brush and FWP, we are going to add the zhuzh zhuzh to this wonderful splashy seafoam.
- I do this by wiggling broken little lines and dots throughout the splash. Take your time, find where you want to direct the viewer to look, find the beauty in Mother Nature's motion. We are just setting the stage for the splatter and finding moments of splashy fun.
- You could choose not to splatter if you are totally happy with where you get to on this step. You are the creator of your art world. Once you start this, you need to take it across the entire canvas.
- Don't be cheap with the little rocks in front.
- Also add some white wiggles in the shallows, showing a little zhuzh in the water movement.
- Every layer you add and

all the time you spend pays off. This pulls it into the wonderful painting that it will be.

- Water can be a difficult concept to master, and if you are struggling, I highly recommend that you review the Acrylic April tutorials from this year. They are all about water and it's environment and how it reacts to many things.



STEP 13 – SPLATTER

“THE SHAPE AND FORM OF SPLASH”

PAINT:

Fluid White Paint = FWP

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

Splatter Tool

#1 Monogram Liner

STEP DISCUSSION

- Put out more FWP and get your splatter tool. We will work with directionality when we splatter.
- Load the brush and begin to slowly flick the bristles to move the paint from the bristles up into the sea splatter area.
- Work consciously and move the brush facing downward if you want splatter in the sea water.
- Sign.
- You can make an irregular shape, like a crumpled up paper towel, and lay it on the rocks to protect them a bit from the splatter.



THE TRACING METHOD

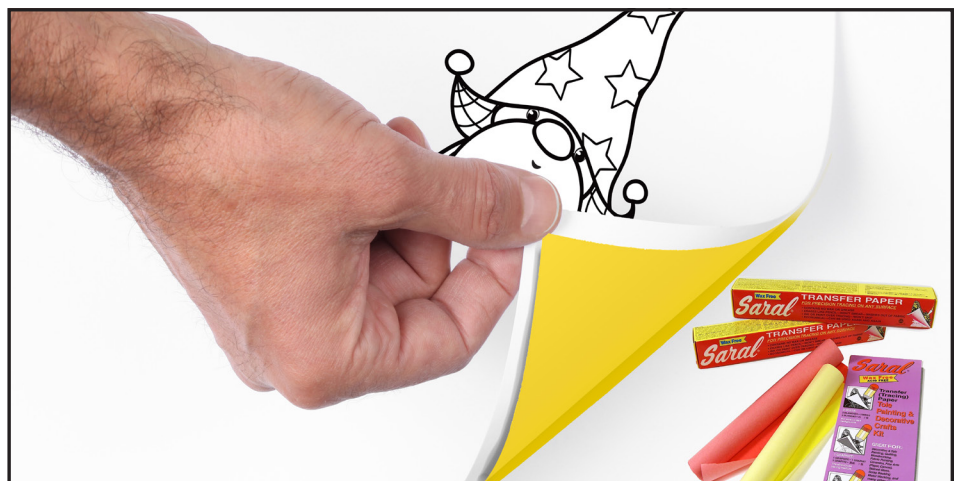
- Adjust the size to fit your surface and be sure to check your printer settings to see if the final size reflects the size you need.



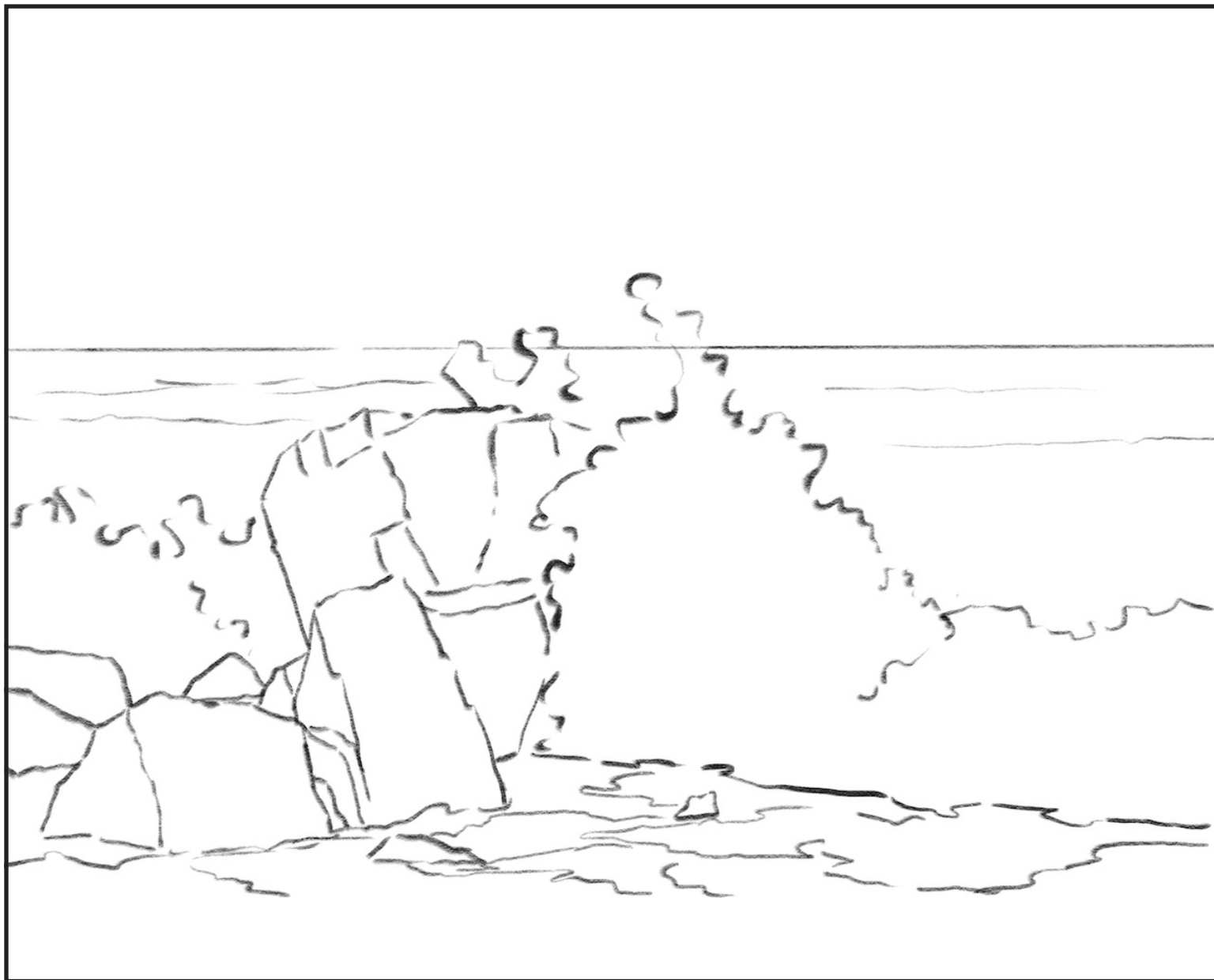
see that your transfer is happening. If not check if your rubbing is too thin or that your pressure is not too light. After you are done tracing the lines, remove your traceable and you should have a copy of the line art on your canvas.



- 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.

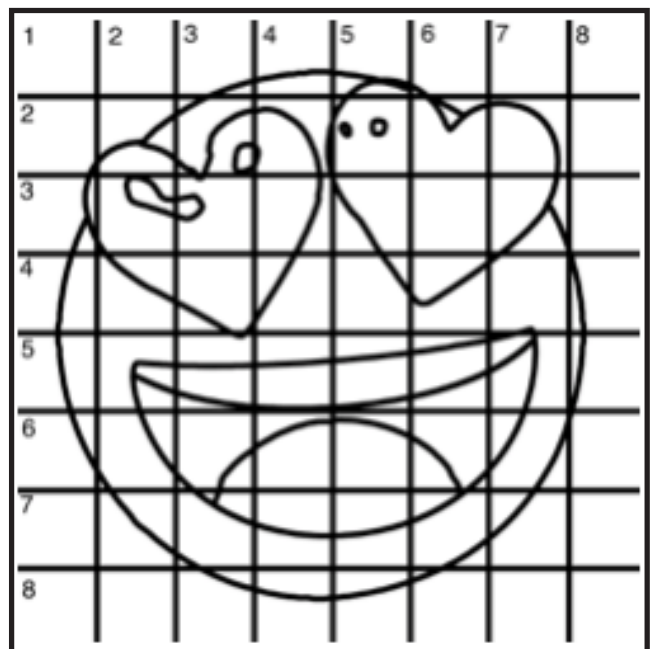
To draw the grid your canvas must be dry and it's advisable that it is also cool. You should use chalk that is wax or oil free. It must be pure chalk. I use a Dritz fabric-marking tool because it does fine lines easily and removes well from the canvas. There are also chalk pencils available or you could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



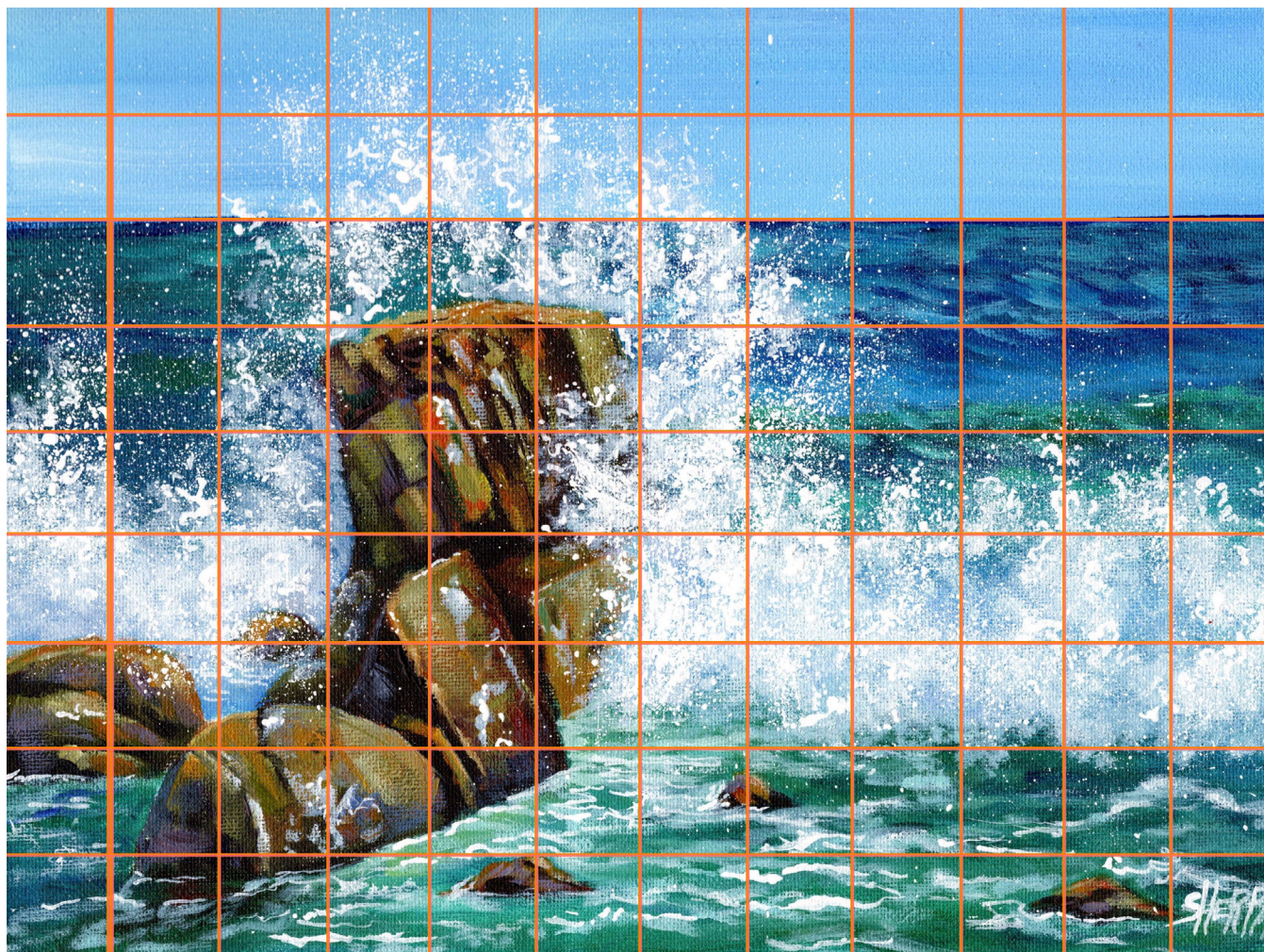
GRIDDING INSTRUCTIONS CONTINUED:

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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