

THE ART SHERPA™

HOW TO PAINT

IN ACRYLIC



A MOTHER'S LOVE

BY: THE ART SHERPA
FOR PATRON NIKI MARTIN

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 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.

This tutorial is not an extremely difficult one and the giraffe subject was a request that I received from a community member. I have done several smaller wildlife 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!



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
- Dioxazine Purple = DP
- Burnt Sienna = BS
- Mars Black = MB
- Titanium White = TW
- Fluid White Paint = FWP
- Golden's Acrylic Gloss Glazing Liquid = AGL

BRUSHES:

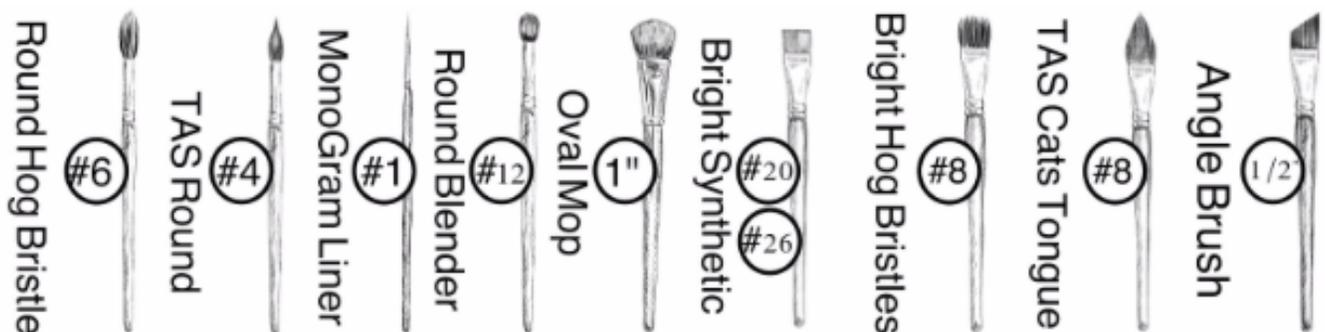
- 1.5" Cutter Brush
- TAS #1 Detail Brush
- #4 TAS Round
- #1 Monogram Liner
- #12 Round Blender
- #8 TAS Cats Tongue
- Grass Comb or Filbert Grainer
- Splatter Tool

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:

- Expressive Painting Strokes
- Being Painterly and Loose
- Finding Value
- Dry Brushing
- Color Theory
- Directionality
- Blending Wet into Wet
- Color Mixing
- Hair



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	3:50	BLUE COLORED GROUND
STEP 2	7:35	TRANSFER IMAGE
STEP 3	14:36	GALAXY NIGHT SKY
STEP 4	29:30	SPLATTER
STEP 5	33:54	BLOCK IN GIRAFFES
STEP 6	47:03	DEFINE 1ST GIRAFFE FUR
STEP 7	1:07:02	DEFINE 2ND GIRAFFE FUR
STEP 8	1:20:11	EYES AND EARS AND BLENDING
STEP 9	1:28:50	SPOTS ON 1ST GIRAFFE
STEP 10	1:38:38	SPOTS ON 2ND GIRAFFE
STEP 11	1:42:17	DEFINING SPOTS
STEP 12	1:49:51	GLAZING SHADOWS 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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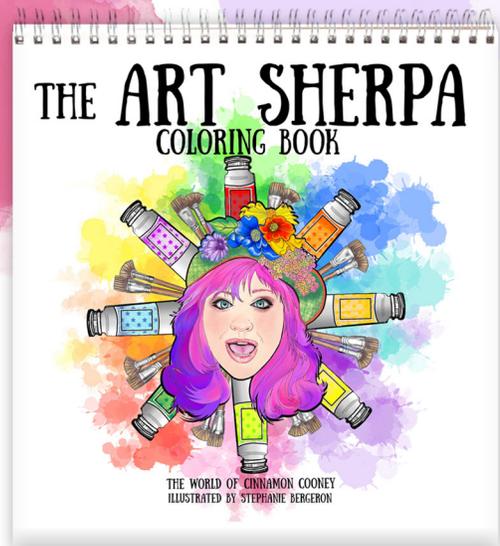


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STEP 1 - BLUE COLORED BACKGROUND

“THE AWESOME, EASY STEP”

PAINT:

Quinacridone Magenta = QM

Phthalo Blue = PB

Dioxazine Purple = DP

Titanium White = TW

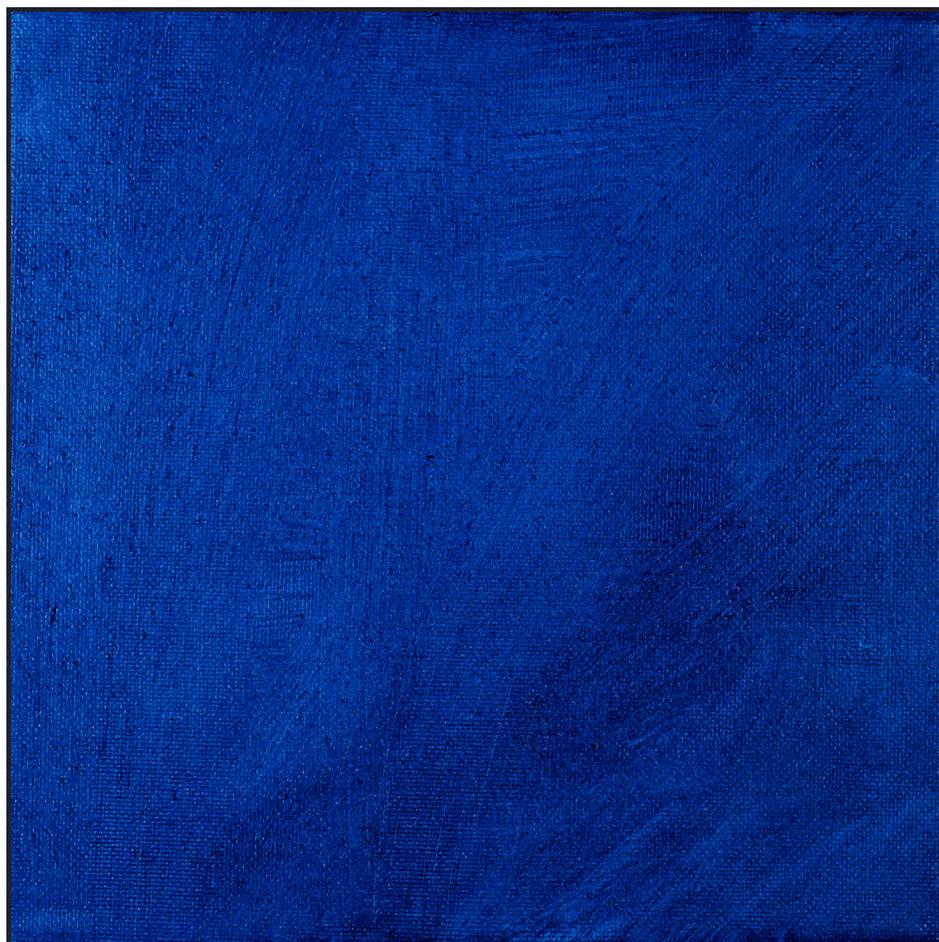
BRUSHES & TOOLS:

1.5" Cutter Brush

STEP DISCUSSION

- The Wet Palette is back.
- Put PB on your palette for this awesome and simple step.
- I'm using a 1.5" cutter brush to paint the entire canvas.
- Add DP, QM + TW to your canvas.
- Dry and cool the canvas.

You guys know what to tell yourself here to avoid shifty paint.



STEP 2 - TRANSFER IMAGE

“LET GO OF ALL THE NEGATIVITY AND TENSION”

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

Saral Paper

Traceable

Chalk Pencil or

Watercolor Pencil

Artist Tape

in creativity and self-confidence, let go of self-doubt and negativity. Relax and try not to hold tension in your body.

STEP DISCUSSION

- I chose to transfer this image and have provided a transfer in this document 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 the major objects by tracing over the dark lines on the traceable using a piece of yellow saral paper. The traceable does show the spot placement a bit but I did not transfer them. I don't need them, but if you prefer to have them on your canvas to assist you, then please trace them.
- Redefined any lines that I was having trouble seeing with a chalk pencil.
- Take a deep breath, bring



STEP 3 - GALAXY NIGHT SKY

“A GALAXY OMBRE SKY”

PAINT:

Quinacridone Magenta = QM

Phthalo Blue = PB

Dioxazine Purple = DP

Titanium White = TW

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

#12 Round Blender

#8 TAS Cat's Tongue

STEP DISCUSSION

- On the edge of my Cat's Tongue, I tapped in areas and blended them in with the darker colors. But you use what brush you have.
 - Dry and cool.
- While I waited for John to take the picture I had a personal recommendation of my sippy sippy from Korea. They are slickery. I drink slickery sippy sippy.*
- With a damp round blender, mix PB + TW to a light blue and start applying the galaxy background.
 - Then add some QM to the mix and put in some of this.
 - Lastly add some DP bits here and there. The galaxy background colors are very blendy, blendy into each other, but you do see color shifts.
 - PB is very transparent and works very well in an ombre design to help make our galaxy background feel very “spacey”.
 - You can add TW, to the DP or to the QM to lighten the value in places. You are working in small areas at a time to blend your galaxy sky.





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STEP 4 - SPLATTER

“LET IT GO IF IT’S NOT IMPORTANT”

PAINT:

Cad Red Medium = CRM

Cad Yellow Medium = CYM

Burnt Sienna = BS

Fluid White Paint = FWP

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

TAS #1 Detail Brush

TAS Splatter Tool

STEP DISCUSSION

- I added BS, CRM & CYM to my palette.
- With a splatter tool and FWP, I added stars for the galaxy sky
- Using a Detail Brush and FWP add some bigger stars in the sky. One of my stars got a bit wonky, but not so wonky that I could not live with it's lack of roundness.
- Dry on low heat.

John - And, if you have too much wind, you get comets.



STEP 5 - BLOCK IN GIRAFFES

“SERIOUS ABOUT IT TODAY”

PAINT:

Cad Yellow Medium = CYM

Burnt Sienna = BS

Mars Black = MB

Titanium White = TW

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

#4 TAS Round

#8 TAS Cat's Tongue

STEP DISCUSSION

- Let's start the giraffe's with a TAS #4 Round loaded with a mix of BS + MB and came under the jaw and neck of both giraffes. Outline the mouth, nostrils and eyes of both, color in the inside of the ears and add a little shadow under the neck of the bottom giraffe and the outside neck of the upper giraffe. You should be using medium to light pressure and being scrubby scrubby. You want a little shadow on the ossicones and behind the ears, as well as under the jaw and cheek of the further back giraffe.
- The main giraffe color is BS + CYM + TW and you will start blocking in the faces. It's ok to be scruffy, this is the first of many layers.
- Get the TAS #8 Cats Tongue to define the color more after you have

put in the first layer with the #4 in the detailed face area. I used the Cats Tongue to put in the first layer of the necks because I did not need to work around little details, like eyes and noses.

- This color will look very scruffy and you will still see blue peeking through. Blue can be difficult to cover and if you are not using pro acrylic, or very good student acrylic, it may require more layers before you go on.

You have got this, you can do it.



STEP 6 - DEFINE 1ST GIRAFFE FUR

“IT’S VERY STREAKY”

PAINT:

Cad Red Medium = CRM
Cad Yellow Medium = CYM
Phthalo Blue = PB
Burnt Sienna = BS
Mars Black = MB
Titanium White = TW
Golden’s Acrylic Gloss
Glazing Liquid = AGL

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

#4 TAS Round

STEP DISCUSSION

- Get the TAS #4 Round Brush and MB and start relining the black lines under the jaws.
- I’m working on the left giraffe first and don’t hesitate to use all of the references I provide to help you. Get CRM + CYM + BS to a kind of light yellow orange, and bring this around the mouth; add more TW to the mix to go around the nostril, because it is lighter on top. You could also add this bright color around the curve of the upper lip. Vary your color mixes, and start painting in the face. His color would be lighter on the forehead and under the eye, darker on the eye lid and upper lips; a dab of darker just under the jaw and lower lip.

Sherpa Tip: When painting a patterned animal, paint the value of the animal before you add the pattern into the mix. That’s what we are doing today.

- While this is still wet, put out some AGL and use that to help with paint flow and blending. I added BS + AGL to add a darker shadow along the jawline and above the nostril.
- Darken your color with more BS and vary with CYM and lighten with CYM & TW as you desire. Look at my reference below and just paint the mix that is on your brush. Some places have a lot more red; some are subtle browns, some are almost a buttercup yellow. This is a good exercise for blending and you do want to paint in the direction that the hair would grow.
- OK, it’s kind of a hot mess, then the magic bit happens and it’s breathtaking.



STEP 7 - DEFINE 2ND GIRAFFE FUR

“SPOTLESS GIRAFFES”

PAINT:

Cad Red Medium = CRM
Cad Yellow Medium = CYM
Mars Black = MB

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

#4 TAS Round
#8 TAS Cats Tongue

STEP DISCUSSION

- Come back with your giraffe colors on the neck of the slightly further back giraffe on the TAS #8 Cats Tongue. You will want a shadow under the head of the front giraffe, so you would want that a little darker. His neck color should probably go deeper and darker as it moves back toward the open sky behind him because it is in shadow from the other giraffe.
 - Once you have the neck to a happy place, switch to the TAS #4 Round and your colors to paint in the face, paying attention to color placement. In my world, the light source seems to be directly above.
 - When you have them both in, get MB on the brush and fill in the eyes and redefine any black lining that you want to keep.
- Mix CRM + CYM or orange and add this color above the eye on the forehead near the ossicones and along the cheeks. Get more orange, more to the red, and use this as a highlight on the ossicones.



STEP 8 - EYES AND EARS AND BLENDING

“SURREAL REALISM WITH A TOUCH OF WHIMSEY”

PAINT:

Cad Red Medium = CRM
Cad Yellow Medium = CYM
Burnt Sienna = BS
Mars Black = MB
Titanium White = TW
Fluid White Paint = FWP
Golden's Acrylic Gloss
Glazing Liquid = AGL

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

#4 TAS Round
TAS #1 Detail Brush

STEP DISCUSSION

- Add a shadow with BS + MB along the ossicones. Both female and males have them; they are formed from ossified cartilage and are covered in skin. Ossified meaning hardened into bone.
 - Get the TAS #1 Detail brush with FWP and add little broken lines along the lower eyelid of the eyes. Get MB + FWP and add some lashes to the upper lid, coming down over the eyes.
- Get the TAS #4 Round loaded with MB and make sure the eyes, nostrils, and mouthlines are very distinct. Get BS with a touch of MB and paint in the lower lid and the darkness along the upper lid and in the area just in front of the eye, in the curve of the nose area. Use CYM + TW as a highlight color on the faces if you want them. Get orange along the lips.
 - Come into the main color of CRM + CYM + BS, more to the red saddle color, and start adding the hair of the manes and the hair on the ossicones.
 - This painting is probably a surreal realism, the giraffes are realistic, but I've enhanced them whimsically as I wished to do.



STEP 9 - SPOTS ON 1ST GIRAFFE

“THE RIGHT GIRAFFE”

PAINT:

Cad Yellow Medium = CYM

Burnt Sienna = BS

Mars Black = MB

Titanium White = TW

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

#4 TAS Round

#8 TAS Cats Tongue

STEP DISCUSSION

- Get your light giraffe color on the TAS #8 Cats Tongue and make sure that you have good coverage of this brightest color on the necks. Blend with BS to darker, CYM to add a bit more color, as you continue to build up the layers on the neck. We're not done. We have more shading and layers to come, probably in a way you are not expecting.
- Get the TAS #4 Round with your giraffe color, to the reddish saddle brown color, and start adding spots to the forehead of the face on the right. Come down the center of the forehead onto the mid nose. You are adding spots but not trying to cover up the skin. You want irregular shapes, you want the color to vary. You can add MB and/or BS to this color to darken a lot of a little. You can come back with your brightest highlight color to add highlights back in. You are making dramatic changes to the skin with these spots and it may cause you to feel that you need to change some details to make them look right.
- You want to add in the mane in the red saddle color along the back of the neck and head, and in front of the ossicones.
- Take your time, it will pay off in the end when you do.
- The spots on the neck are more into the orange space and much bigger than the ones on the face.



STEP 10 - SPOTS ON 2ND GIRAFFE

“THE LEFT GIRAFFE GETS SPOTTY”

PAINT:

Cad Yellow Medium = CYM

Burnt Sienna = BS

Mars Black = MB

Titanium White = TW

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

#4 TAS Round

#8 TAS Cats Tongue

STEP DISCUSSION

- Take your time, it will pay off in the end when you do.
 - The spots on the neck are more into the orange space and much bigger than the ones on the face.
- Get the TAS #4 Round with your giraffe color, to the reddish saddle brown color, and start adding spots to the forehead of the face on the left. Come down the center of the forehead onto the mid nose. You are adding spots but not trying to cover up the skin. You want irregular shapes, you want the color to vary. You can add MB and/or BS to this color to darken a lot of a little. You can come back with your brightest highlight color to add highlights back in. You are making dramatic changes to the skin with these spots and it may cause you to feel that you need to change some details to make them look right.
 - You want to add in the mane in the red saddle color along the back of the neck and head, and in front of the ossicones.



STEP 11 - DEFINING SPOTS

“THE RESOLUTION STEP”

PAINT:

Burnt Sienna = BS

Mars Black = MB

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

Filbert Grainer or

Grass Comb

STEP DISCUSSION

- With a Filbert Grainer or a Grass Comb, get your brownish red color and add some hair implications on some of the spots. Use this over some of the spots, then come back with the lighter giraffe colors and add hair growth in a lot of areas on the neck. It's great to add to the face, but be careful. Keep in mind that you can always come back and repaint something back in if you get carried away.
- Get MB + BS and add some hair growth to the necks and ossicones and ears of both.



STEP 12 - GLAZING SHADOWS

“SPOTS ON A GIRAFFE”

PAINT:

Burnt Sienna = BS

Mars Black = MB

Golden's Acrylic Gloss

Glazing Liquid = AGL

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

#1 Monogram Liner

#12 Round Blender

STEP DISCUSSION

- With the #12 Blender, get BS + MB + AGL loaded, and glaze the shadow beneath the neck of the right side giraffe and glaze the shadow beneath the jaw of the left side giraffe. Come back anywhere that you think you need shading.
- This is the fussy step. Critique your painting. Do you need to add more hair details around the body, or ears, or ossicones. Do you get an impression of hair when you look at the body. Do you see shadow where shadow should be and highlights where highlights would be? Does the eyes stand out?
- I discovered that I was very happy with where I was at, so I signed.



THE TRACING METHOD

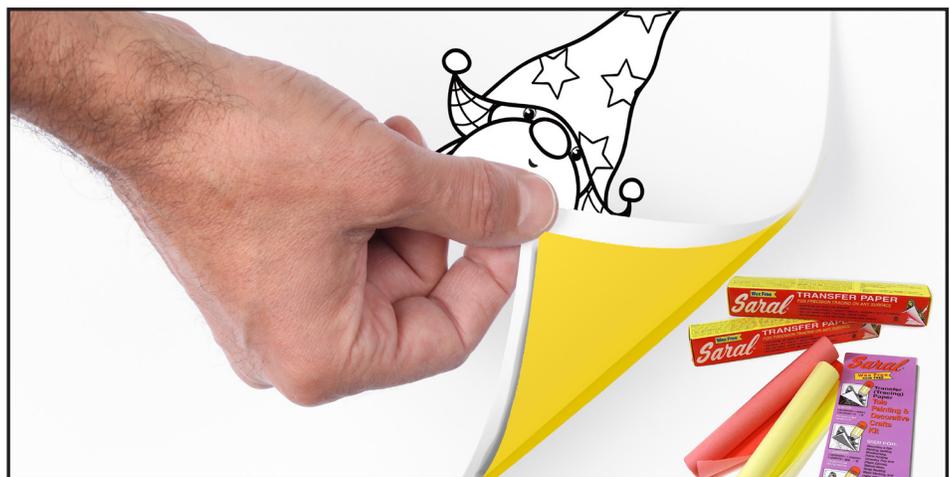
- Adjust the size to fit your surface and be sure to check your printer settings to see if the final size reflects the size you need.



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.

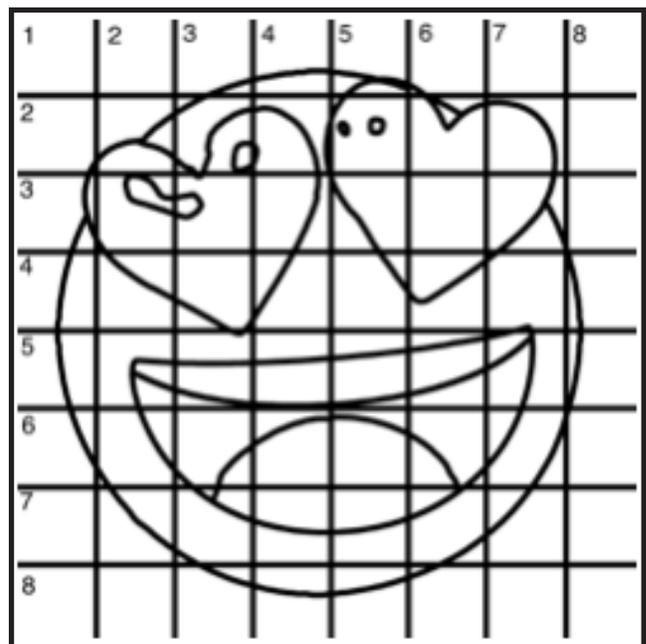
To draw the grid your canvas must be dry and it's advisable that it is also cool. You should use chalk that is wax or oil free. It must be pure chalk. I use a Dritz fabric-marking tool because it does fine lines easily and removes well from the canvas. There are also chalk pencils available or you could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



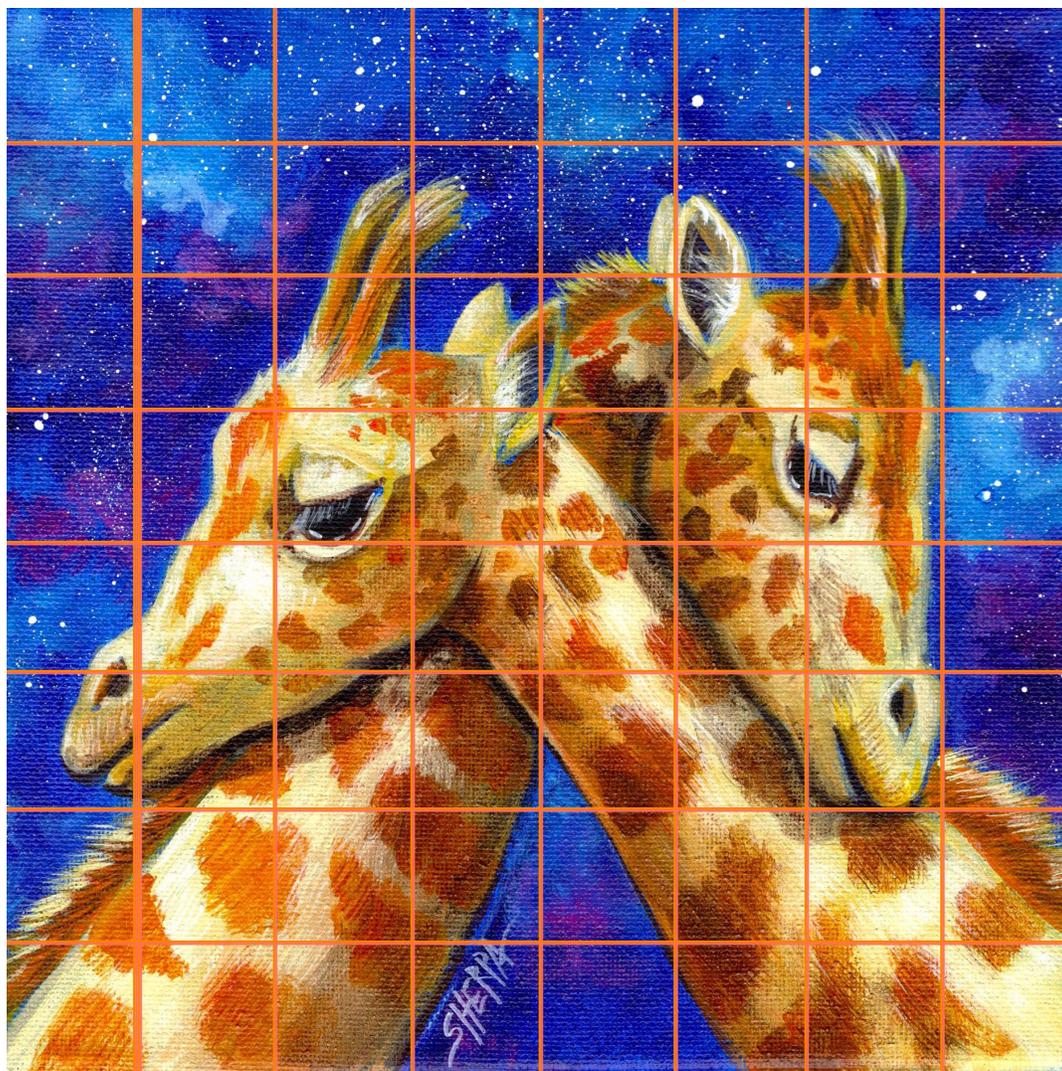
GRIDDING INSTRUCTIONS CONTINUED:

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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