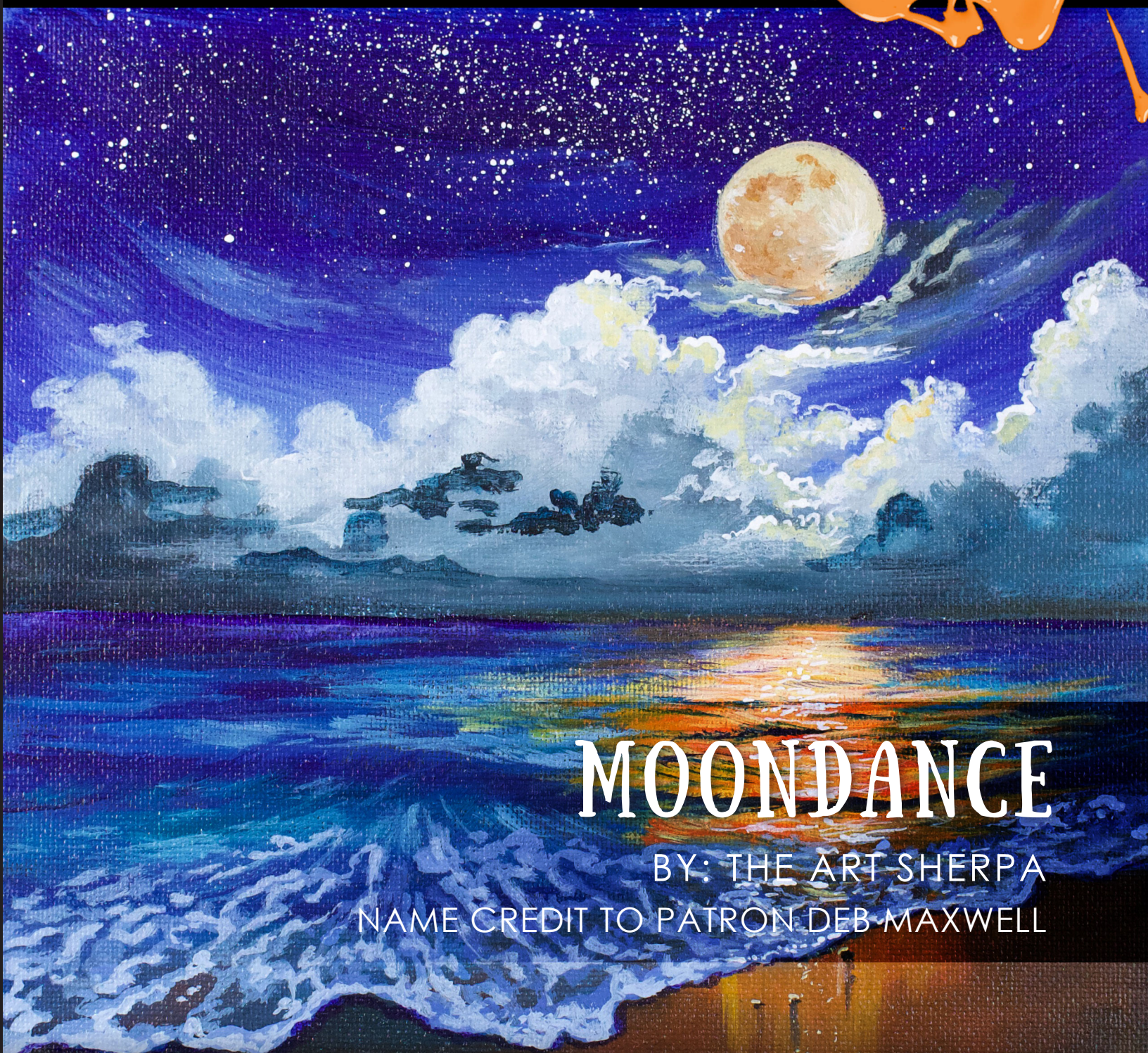# The Art Sherpa™
# HOW TO PAINT
## IN ACRYLIC



# MOONDANCE
## BY: THE ART SHERPA
## NAME CREDIT TO PATRON DEB MAXWELL

# STEPS: 14 | DIFFICULTY: CHALLENGING | 3 HOOTS

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# 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.

Bare 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 subject today is a night sky, inky and ominous, with a tremendous cloud formation lit by a golden "made for wishes" moon. Sea foam creeps up the beach from gently breaking waves and I am almost positive that I can just make out Peter Pan in that cloud formation as he leads the lost boys to Neverland.

This tutorial is a lengthy one, but not an extremely difficult one. 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. No worries, especially if you went on the Acrylic April 2021 journey with me, because you have got it. I'm going to give you all the support for success that I can.

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!*

## PAINT AND TOOL GUIDE

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

## PAINT:

• Cad Red Medium = CRM

• Cadmium Yellow Medium = CYM

• Phthalo Blue = PB

• Phthalo Green = PG

• Burnt Sienna = BS

• Dioxazine Purple = DP

• Mars Black = MB

• Titanium White = TW

• Fluid White Paint = FWP

• Golden's Acrylic Gloss Glazing Liquid  = AGL

## BRUSHES:

• ½" Angle Brush

• #4 TAS Round

• #1 Monogram Liner

• #12 Round Blender

• 1" Oval Mop

• Grass Comb

• #26 Bright

• Splatter Tool

## 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.)

• 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

• Clouds

• Mirroring Sky in Water

• Setting a Horizon Line

• Color Mixing

• Dynamic Light on Water

Round Hog Bristle #6

TAS Round #4

MonoGram Liner #1

Round Blender #12

Oval Mop 1"

Bright Synthetic #20 #26

Bright Hog Bristles #8

TAS Cats Tongue #8

Angle Brush 1/2"

# 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 | | HORIZON LINE |
| STEP 2 | 9:44 | DARK SKY |
| STEP 3 | 16:04 | SKY DEPTH & SPLATTER |
| STEP 4 | 25:00 | MOON |
| STEP 5 | 33:31 | BLOCK IN CLOUDS |
| STEP 6 | 41:08 | MORE CLOUD LAYERS |
| STEP 7 | 49:08 | FINAL CLOUD LAYERS |
| STEP 8 | 57:47 | BLOCK IN WATER AND SAND |
| STEP 9 | 1:04:51 | BEACH |
| STEP 10 | 1:11:28 | OCEAN LAYERS |
| STEP 11 | 1:19:53 | LIGHTING UP THE WATER |
| STEP 12 | 1:30:15 | SEAFOAM |
| STEP 13 | 1:40:40 | SEAFOAM DETAILS |
| STEP 14 | 1:48:46 | WHITE LINING CLOUDS AND WATER 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.
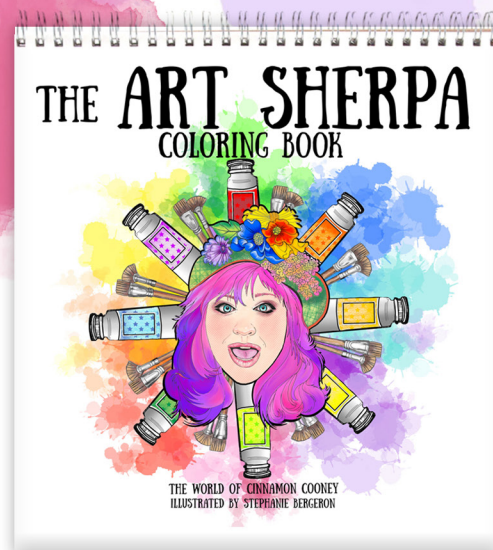
# STEP 1 - HORIZON LINE

## "JUST SHOW UP AND YOU ARE THERE"

**PAINT:**
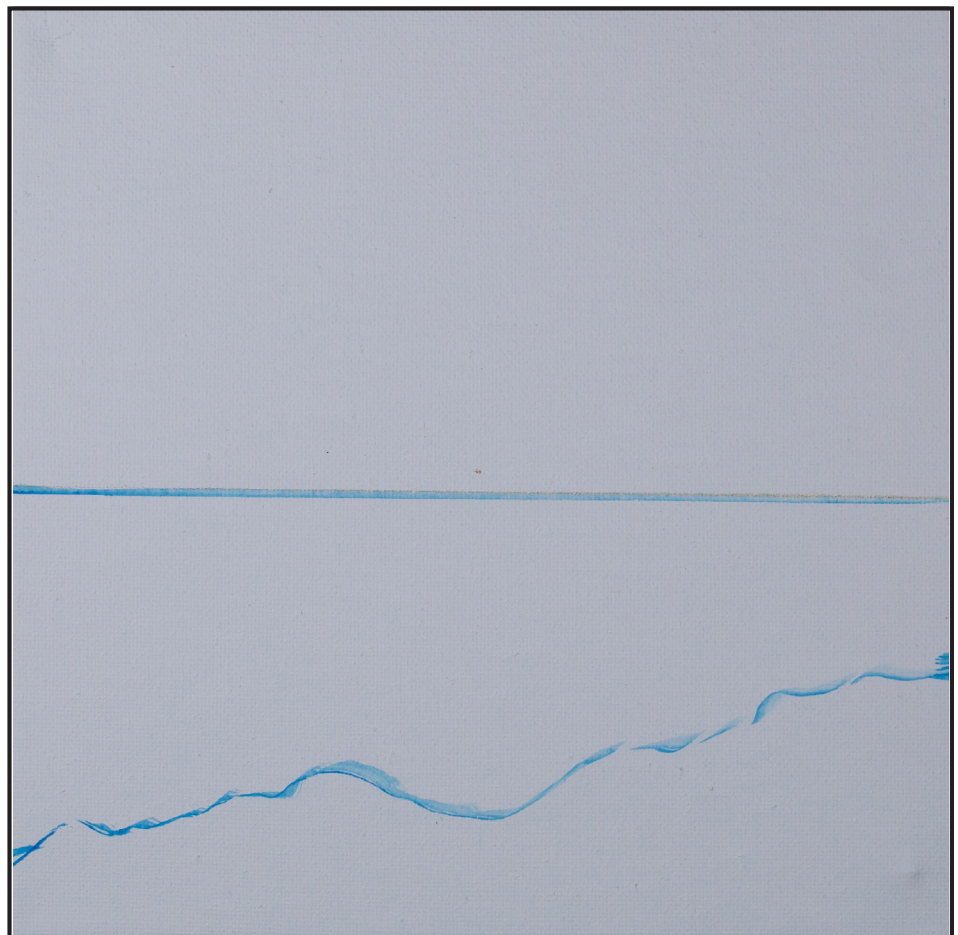Phthalo Blue = PB

**BRUSHES & TOOLS:**
½" Angle Brush
T-Square Ruler
Chalk Pencil or
 Watercolor Pencil

**STEP DISCUSSION**

• With a T-square ruler and a watercolor pencil, draw a horizon line just below the 4" mark.

• Next, we want to put in the water line. On the toe of a ½" angle brush, using PB, I started creating a wandering line to represent the outermost edge of the seafoam. Start about 1" from the bottom and go up to about 1 ½" below the horizon.

• 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 - DARK SKY

## "WE COME TOGETHER IN THESE MOMENTS"

**PAINT:**
Phthalo Blue = PB
Dioxazine Purple = DP
Golden's Acrylic Gloss
 Glazing Liquid = AGL

**BRUSHES & TOOLS:**
#26 Bright

**STEP DISCUSSION**

• The sky is slightly lighter at the horizon and gets darker as it goes up and be sure that the clouds are in front of the moon. This is a very critical point. The clouds cannot be seen that exist behind the moon.

• Load a big bright brush with AGL , PB + DP and add along the horizon line, brushing side to side as you move up. If you want to hang without framing your piece, you can paint the sides as you go.

• I add more PB to the brush and start the next upper layer, while blending these transitions. If your canvas is refusing to take the paint, you may have to do several coats.

• Does your sky look lighter at the horizon then get darker? Is it blended? Are you happy? If the answer to all these questions is "Yes", then...

• Dry the canvas. Repeat John's "Heat Talk" to yourself; you know it, you love it, you've got this.

# STEP 3 - SKY DEPTH & SPLATTER

## "THE DEPTH OF SPACE"

**PAINT:**
Phthalo Blue = PB
Dioxazine Purple = DP
Fluid White Paint = FWP
Golden's Acrylic Gloss
 Glazing Liquid = AGL

**BRUSHES & TOOLS:**
1" Oval Mop
Splatter Tool

**STEP DISCUSSION**

• Let's start with a 1" synthetic mop brush, AGL and the light blue that we put in at the horizon, to create some fantastic wispy little cloud effects. Use just the edge of the brush, it's not quite dry brushing because of the glazing liquid, but it might resemble it some.

• Add more PB + DP to the brush and bring that up over the darker color at the top of the canvas. Whisp it down and over some of the blue that you just put in.

• Get a splatter tool and some FWP and splatter in some far away stars, perhaps concentrating in the center. We have to let the splatter dry before we go on.

• Dry.
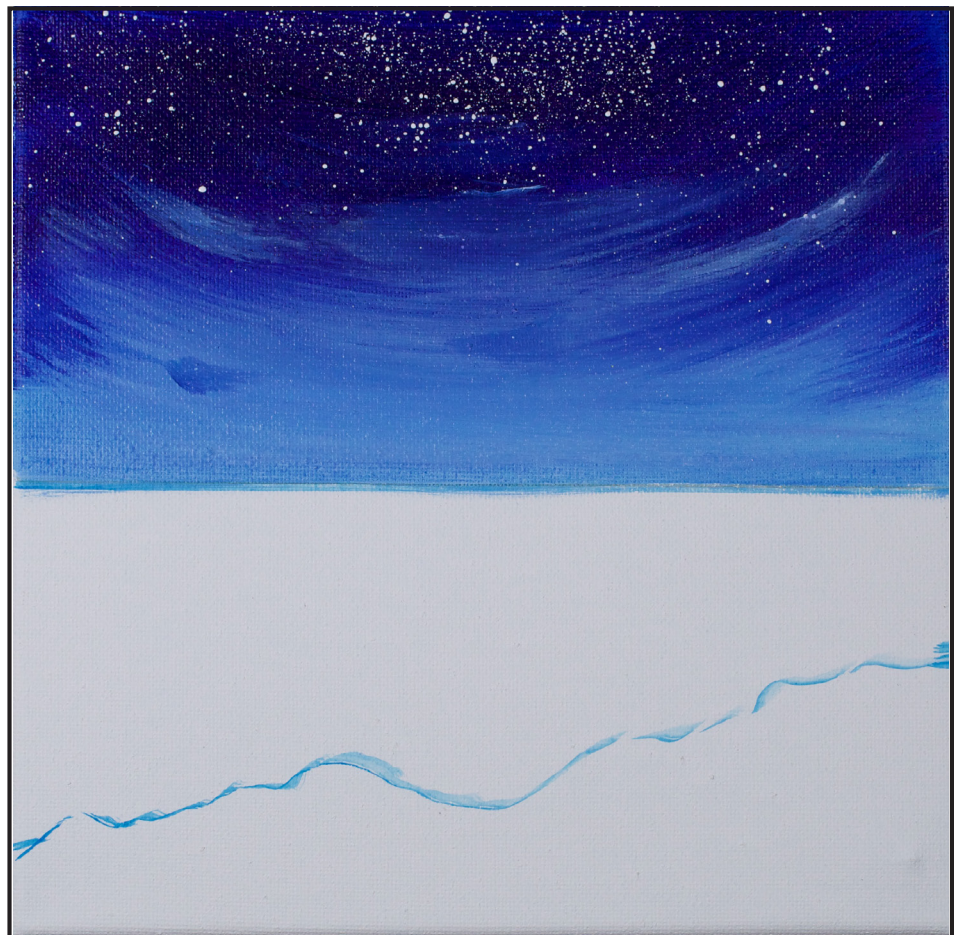
# THE ART SHERPA
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awesome art content and
fabulous perks!

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# STEP 4 - MOON

## "TO PAINT A MOON"

**PAINT:**
Cad Yellow Medium = CYM
Burnt Sienna = BS
Titanium White = TW

**BRUSHES & TOOLS:**
#4 TAS Round
#12 Round Blender
Chalk Pencil

**STEP DISCUSSION**
• I use a chalk pencil to draw in the moon and cloud shapes to help me with placement. This is a really great exercise that you can do to help you pre plan where you want to paint in your clouds.

• With a Round brush, mix BS + CYM + TW to a light yellow ochre and paint the moon.

• Dry.

• With a round dome blender, load TW into that mix and add a second coat to the moon; you are not trying to cover everything you just painted because you do want craters.

• Vary the mixes of these three colors so that some craters are more brown, some are more white, and the moon retains her goldenness.

• You can also use the Round Brush if you would like to add some radials with TW on the surface. It was a bad day when that crater hit.

# STEP 5 - BLOCK IN CLOUDS

## "CLOUDS ARE FUN"

**PAINT:**
Phthalo Blue = PB
Mars Black = MB
Titanium White = TW

**BRUSHES & TOOLS:**
#4 TAS Round

**STEP DISCUSSION**

• With a Round Brush, mix TW + MB. Clouds are rarely white so this is probably a mid shadow color. We will add to this color for shadows and for highlights.

• Use a curved stroke, vary the color of the mix and don't curve the same way every time. You are just adding the underpainting of the cloud.

• If you drew in your clouds, start with the big center cloud. After you have that main cloud in, start adding the other clouds in that system. It's very brushy.

• As you come down to the lower area of the cloud, your stroke will be more side to side and less brushy.

• There is a very dark area between the horizon and cloud line so you want to mix PB + MB for

that space. Do try to keep the horizon line level. You can always put painter's tape at the horizon line to keep it level or come back when the paint is dry with a t-square. Remember, this is just our first layer, so no pressure.

# STEP 6 – MORE CLOUD LAYERS

## "CLOUDS HAPPEN"

**PAINT:**
Titanium White = TW

**BRUSHES & TOOLS:**
#12 Round Blender

**STEP DISCUSSION**

- With the blender brush, use that dark sky color to add a few darker clouds.

- Add a titch of TW to the color and even bring a cloud around the front of the moon to set it back in our perspective.

- Add more TW to this as a mid-highlight color to add near the tops of the clouds. Not your brightest white yet, but lighter.

- Add nearer, lighter clouds in front of some of the bigger clouds by adding even more TW to the mix.

- Address the bottom of the cloud bank with your darkest color mix.

## "SING THE "PERSONALITY SONG"

**PAINT:**
Golden's Acrylic Gloss
Glazing Liquid = AGL

**BRUSHES & TOOLS:**
#4 TAS Round

**STEP DISCUSSION**

• Load a Round brush with the light gray and start highlighting the tips of some of the cloud formations.

• Use the black mix to make some of the shadows that are in the dark area even darker.

• Rinse out your brush, and using AGL add more bright highlights randomly, throughout the clouds.

• Change your water and replenish any palette colors you need to.

# STEP 8 - BLOCK IN WATER AND SAND

## "WATER, WATER, WATER"

**PAINT:**
Cad Red Medium = CRM
Cad Yellow Medium = CYM
Phthalo Blue = PB
Burnt Sienna = BS
Dioxazine Purple = DP
Mars Black = MB

**BRUSHES & TOOLS:**
#26 Bright
Grass Comb

**STEP DISCUSSION**

• We will put in the dark wet beach sand with MB + BS and a big Bright Brush. We need a place for the sea turtles to have sea turtle babies and for the seafoam to threaten to invade. Smooth it out a little after it is all painted in using a side to side stroke.

• Mix CYM + CRM to an orange. Paint this moon reflection in the body of water, under the horizon, and onto the beach. You want to use the brush at an angle and it should lighten as it comes down. On the beach area, you want to brush both horizontally and vertically.

• Add more CYM over the areas where you want it to have more light.

• Mix PB + DP and starting at the horizon line, bring it down and into the water's

corridor of light. This is one of those steps where I am very glad that I can turn my canvas on my lazy susan so I can paint easier.

• Using a Grass Comb or a Filbert blend the transition between the ocean color and the corridor of light. We are already seeing it, our brain is saying "water, water, water, water, water".

• Dry.

*John actually said the "shifty paint is bad" narrative. Don't choose heat.*

*Sherpa Tip: It's important to remember to breathe when arting. While I could say "LOL" here, we do tend to hold our breath sometimes when we paint. Try to remember that water is a mirror and in this painting, we will have a corridor of light from the moon.*

# STEP 9 - BEACH

## "A WET SANDY BEACH"

**PAINT:**
Cad Red Medium = CRM
Cad Yellow Medium = CYM
Phthalo Blue = PB
Burnt Sienna = BS
Golden's Acrylic Gloss
  Glazing Liquid = AGL

**BRUSHES & TOOLS:**
#12 Round Blender

**STEP DISCUSSION**
- Using a blender brush, add CRM + CYM, to the water's edge right in front of the corridor of light and onto the beach to highlight the sand. We want the sand to seem wet, so we will create soft color transitions by blending between the color changes.

- Use AGL where you need it to help improve flow.

- Add some PB on the left side of the beach and blend it in.

- Mix BS to your orange color for a variation of the highlighted sand area.

# STEP 10 - OCEAN LAYERS

## "THE SEAFOAM UNICORN HOME"

**PAINT:**
Phthalo Blue = PB
Dioxazine Purple = DP
Phthalo Green = PG
Titanium White = TW
Burnt Sienna = BS

**BRUSHES & TOOLS:**
#4 TAS Round
#12 Round Blender
Grass Comb

**STEP DISCUSSION**

• With the Round brush and PB, DP + TW mixed to a darkish purple color, outline a foamy inlet that lets you know where the edge of the seafoam will be.

• Add TW to this and brush in the seafoam area.

• With the Blender, tap up and down with the darkish purple in this area, adding more TW in places, and keeping it darker in others.

• You can add PB above this area in the ocean, just to create some softness; adding TW where you need to add a lighter color. Paint both sides of the corridor of light.

• Add a little BS into the seafoam to imply sand showing through.

• Switch to a Grass comb and sway in some wave movement using the tip of the brush. Create this movement by varying the lighter blue color and darker blue color and by adding a little PG in areas.

# STEP 11 - LIGHTING UP THE WATER

## "S'MORE OF THAT"

**PAINT:**
Cad Red Medium = CRM
Cad Yellow Medium = CYM
Phthalo Blue = PB
Titanium White = TW

**BRUSHES & TOOLS:**
Grass Comb

**STEP DISCUSSION**

• On the toe of the grass comb loaded with the lightest blue, add more of the water movement in the front area that is building up into a little wave.

• You can also add some off-white movement on the top of the water in the back.

• Use CRM + CYM + TW to refine that corridor of light and it's reflections on the water.

• Get CYM + TW on the brush and add some lighter highlights to the corridor of light.

• One of the easiest things to do is to lose the shadows in a corridor of light, so use PB in places where you need to add those back in.

*A grass comb is not just for fur anymore.*

# STEP 12 - SEAFOAM

## "SEAFOAM DIMENSIONALITY"

**PAINT:**
Phthalo Blue = PB
Dioxazine Purple = DP
Titanium White = TW

**BRUSHES & TOOLS:**
#4 TAS Round

**STEP DISCUSSION**

• Mix PB + DP + TW to the lightest color you have made yet, and start tapping in the sea foam using a Round Brush.

• Apply PB + DP under the edge of the seafoam to add the shadow.

• Dry.

# STEP 13 - SEAFOAM DETAILS

## "NIGHT PAINTINGS ARE DIFFERENT"

**PAINT:**
Titanium White = TW

**BRUSHES & TOOLS:**
#4 TAS Round

**STEP DISCUSSION**

• Use the Round Brush to add a bunch of TW to your dark purple, getting a brighter highlight color for the seafoam. We are moonlighting the seafoam.

• This is a night painting, so we aren't using pure TW.

# STEP 14 - WHITE LINING CLOUDS AND WATER

## "THE ZHUZH STEP"

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

**BRUSHES & TOOLS:**
#4 TAS Round
#1 Monogram Liner

**STEP DISCUSSION**

• You could stop at Step 13 if you wanted to, but I wanted to go on to make this painting a little something extra.

• With the Round brush, mix CYM + CRM + TW to a golden yellow and add some warm glows to the clouds and in the atmosphere around the moon.

• Get a small detail brush and FWP and line the outer rim of some of the clouds, popping out some focal moments. You don't want to outline everything, just enough to draw the eye to the moon and clouds.

• Then add more to the corridor of light. This white will immediately draw the eye and lead it to your chosen destination. The

oceans and the skies live to serve the magical moon. But, don't stop there.

• Add some highlights along that seafoam right in front of the corridor of light.

• Complete the viewer's journey to the moon by getting MB and adding some stones right in front of the corridor of light on the sand, then add AGL to pull down some shadows.

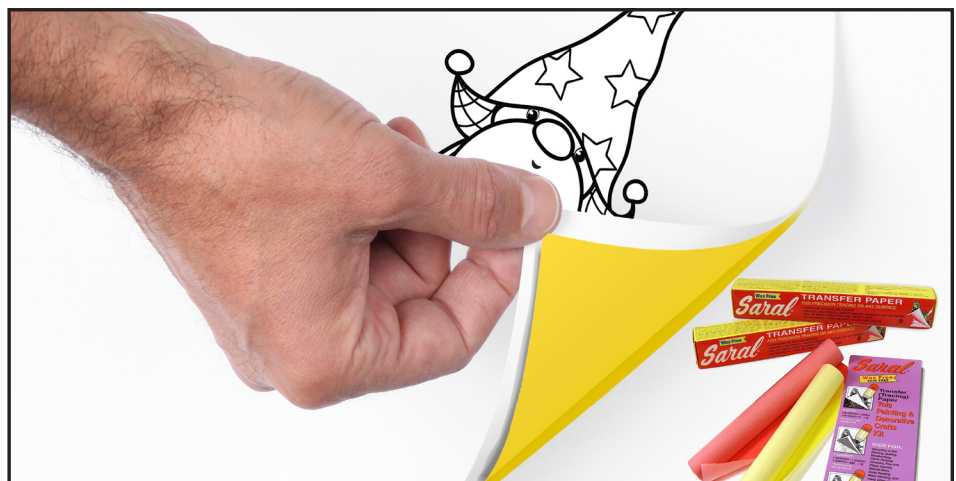• Use some of the lighter yellow to add highlights to the rocks.

• Sign.

- 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.
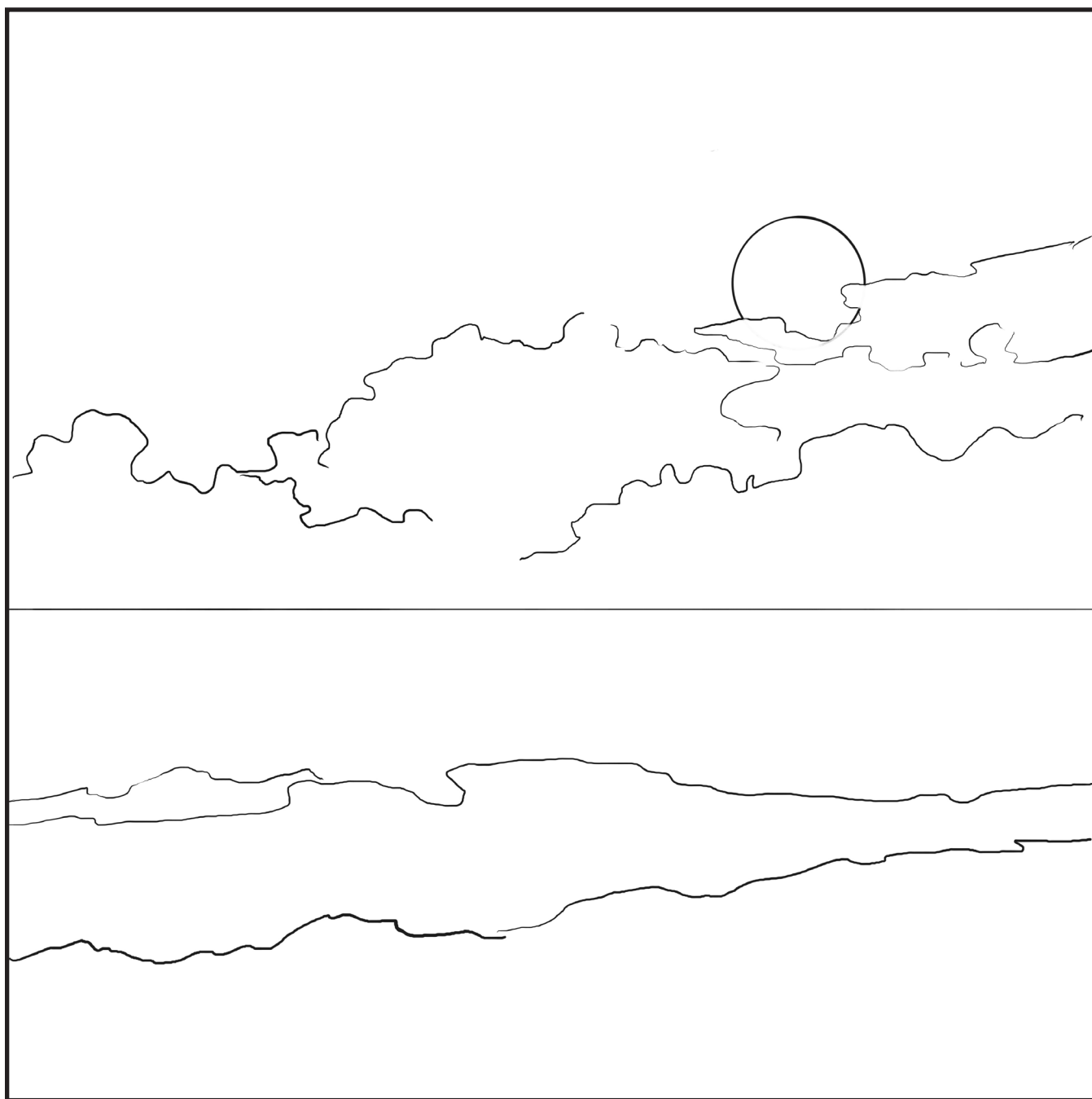


- Rub the back with graphite or use Saral paper and skip this step.

- 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

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.

## 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.
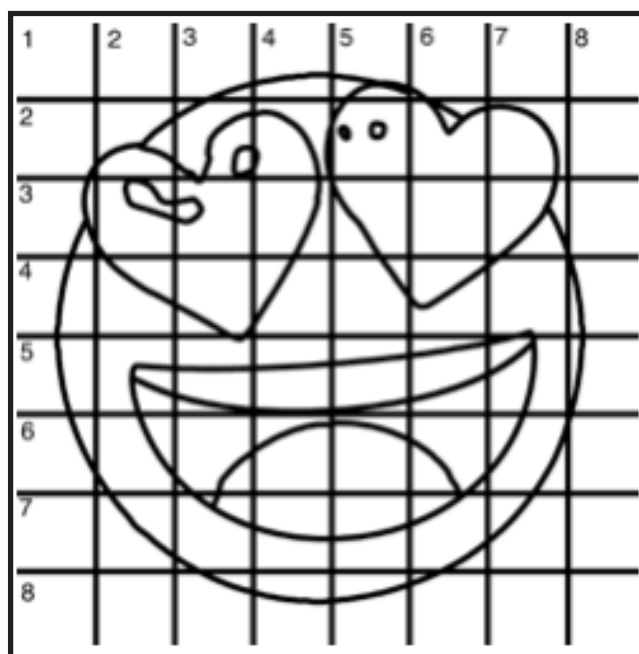
## GRIDDING INSTRUCTIONS CONTINUED:

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:
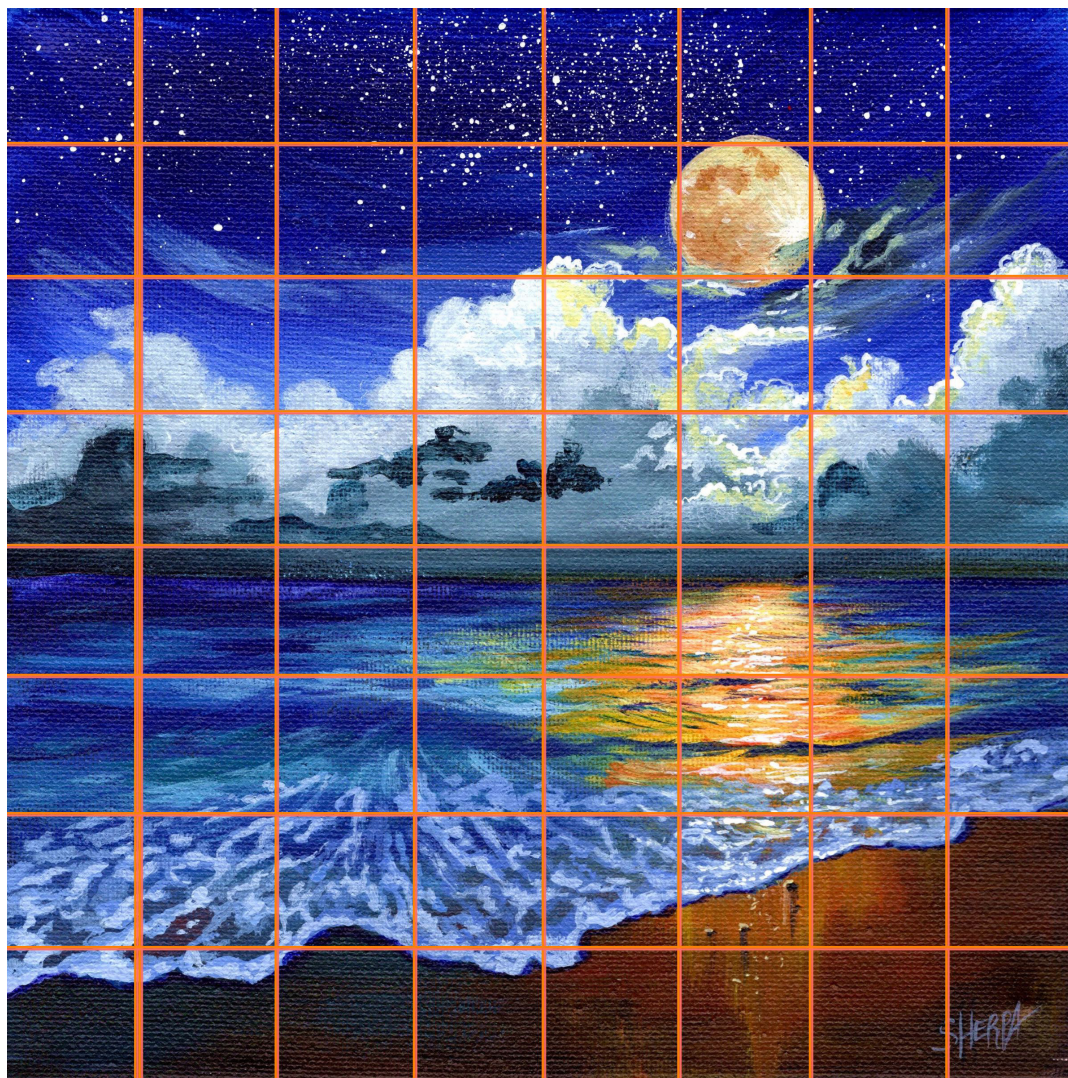
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