

THE ART SHERPA™

# HOW TO PAINT

IN ACRYLIC

## REACH FOR THE SKIES

BY: THE ART SHERPA

NAME CREDIT TO PATRON: SHANNON MURPHY


STEPS: 6 | DIFFICULTY: BEGINNER | 1 HOOT





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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](https://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.

Imagine laying on your back, on a bed of fragrant leaves, in an autumn forest, looking up into the trees above you. That is our painting today. 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. It is a very easy painting, very beginner friendly, and I also have done several smaller still life tutorials which can be found on my website. 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](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:

- Cad Red Medium = CRM
- Cadmium Yellow Medium = CYM
- Phthalo Blue = PB
- Ultramarine Blue = UB
- Phthalo Green = PG
- Burnt Sienna = BS
- Dioxazine Purple = DP
- Mars Black = MB
- Titanium White = TW
- Golden's Acrylic Gloss Glazing Liquid = AGL

### BRUSHES:

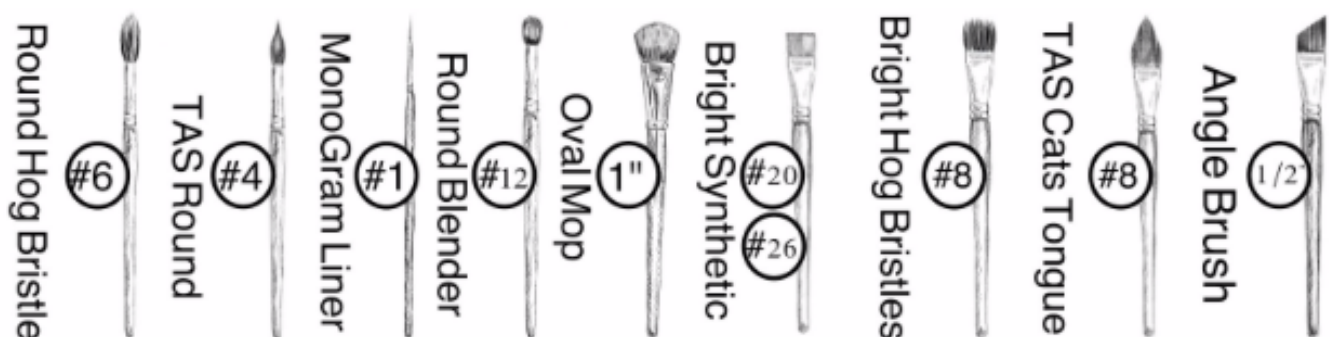
- 2" Hog Cutter Brush
- #4 TAS Round
- Large Synthetic Round Brush
- Large Hog Round Brush
- #1 Monogram Liner
- 1" Oval Mop

## TOOLS:

- 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.)
- Palette Knife

## TECHNIQUES YOU WILL USE IN THIS PAINTING:

- Painting a Silhouette Landscape
- Implying Foliage
- Expressive Painting Strokes
- Being Painterly and Loose
- Atmospheric Perspective
- Finding Value
- Dry Brushing
- Color Theory
- Directionality
- Blending Wet into Wet
- 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	9:42	BACKGROUND SKY
STEP 2	16:27	TALL TREE TRUNKS
STEP 3	31:01	DARKEST LEAVES
STEP 4	45:25	LIGHTER LEAVES
STEP 5	54:18	LIGHTEST LEAVES
STEP 6	59:07	BRANCHES 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.





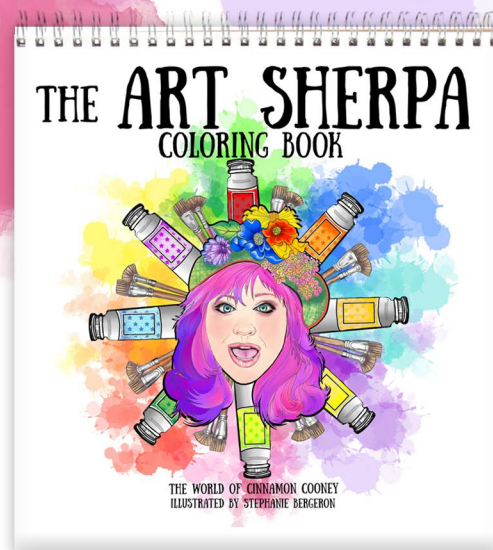


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# STEP 1 - BACKGROUND

## "THE EASY PEAZY STEP"

### PAINT:

Cad Red Medium = CRM

Cad Yellow Medium = CYM

Phthalo Blue = PB

Titanium White = TW

Golden's Acrylic

Gloss Glazing Liquid = AGL

### BRUSHES & TOOLS:

2" Hog Cutter Brush

1" Oval Mop

Palette Knife

### STEP DISCUSSION

- Because of the nature of this painting, there is no traceable or grid for this tutorial. It is a very great opportunity to practice your freehand skills. I provide numerous resources to assist you, so take advantage of all of them.
- With a palette knife, MIX CRM + CYM and make a yellow-orange.
- Add a touch of TW to PB and make just a little lighter blue value.
- Add a bit of the yellow-orange mix with a smidge of the blue mix to make green, then add a lot of TW to that. Once you have your light color add a tad of CYM. This will be the transition color, or the bridge, between the yellow and the blue.
- Get a Hog cutter brush

and dampen it with water and pre-wet the canvas, because my studio is dry right now. Get some TW on the brush and apply a small amount of that horizontally across the canvas, that is in landscape mode.

- Add the yellow mix on the brush and starting at the bottom, sweep this, side to side up the canvas, to the midway point.
- Rinse, and get a little TW and brush it in the top of this yellow area, then add some of the green mix and start transitioning this upward.
- Rinse out, wipe, and get the blue mix and paint this into the sky area above the green. Come slightly down into the green transition area. Rinse out your brush between colors, and hug them dry.
- Get a soft, dry, oval mop, and softly blend the transition area while it is still wet. Add water if you need to to help with flow or add AGL if you wanted to.
- Mist the canvas to assist if you want to. Continue blending until you are happy with the transition. You can make any adjustments that you need to very easily. The trick is having a couple of dry brushes, the bridge color, and a lot of white available, on the side and working quickly wet into wet. You can apply two coats if you need more coverage.

**SAVE THE COLLECTION; PULL THE SCREEN! I SPLATTERED ON AN AA PAINTING! I'm a bad person.**

***Sherpa Tip:** We will want to work wet into wet so we want to make these mixes before we start painting.*





# STEP 2 - TALL TREE TRUNKS

## "DON'T HECKLE THE ARTIST"

### PAINT:

Mars Black = MB

### BRUSHES & TOOLS:

Large Synthetic Round Brush

### STEP DISCUSSION

- Change out your water, rinse and hug your brush you used in Step 1 and dry your painting.
- Load MB into the belly of a dampened, large Round synthetic brush, grabbing water if you need it. Then just above the center, on the left, start painting upward, at a slight angle towards the top of the canvas. You don't want a straight line, so lighten the pressure on the brush as you go up. VOILA...A tree trunk.
- Make another one on the right side of the canvas, maybe slightly lower than the one on the left. I add my fuller trees first, because it is easier to add the smaller ones after and still keep your painting in balance.
- The trees coming up from the bottom won't be as thick as the two you just put in, but they are thicker at the base. They do not come up as far on the canvas. Fill in your trees

and don't hesitate to use my photo at the end of the step description to help you see where I placed my trees. You are the master of your art universe, you get to decide where your trees go. I am just your guide to get there.

*Surprisingly, trees do not like to have their branches intermingle with other trees' branches.*

*John - I always thought that was because they wanted to keep their squirrels all to themselves.*

*You have to be the change you want to see in the world.*





# STEP 3 - DARKEST LEAVES

## “BE THE CHANGE”

### PAINT:

Cad Red Medium = CRM

Dioxazine Purple = DP

Mars Black = MB

### BRUSHES & TOOLS:

Large Round Hog Brush

### STEP DISCUSSION

- Refresh any colors that you need to, on your palette.
- Add CRM to the DP and mix with an artist's knife, or a brush, or whatever is at hand.
- For leaves, we could use a fan brush, a round hog, or a sponge. I am choosing to use a big round hog brush, dampened a LITTLE. Load this deep cranberry color onto the brush, and start tapping in leaves close to the tree trunks. Pay attention to placement, or, what object is in front of another. The way you place the leaves will play into that. You do want to add some leaves coming onto the canvas from the side because this is a forest and we don't see all the trees.
- Make irregular patterns and vary your color mixes; especially adding more MB as you get lower on your canvas, Agent Chaos.







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# STEP 4 - LIGHTER LEAVES

## “LIGHTER LEAF RED”

### PAINT:

Cad Red Medium = CRM

### BRUSHES & TOOLS:

Large Round Hog Brush

### STEP DISCUSSION

- We want to lighten the leaves, so with the large hog brush, add CRM to the dark red mix you used in the last step, and tap the tops of some of the clusters you just put in. Vary your mix.





# STEP 5 - LIGHTEST LEAVES

“STAY WITH THE HOG”

## **PAINT:**

Cad Yellow Medium = CYM

## **BRUSHES & TOOLS:**

Large Round Hog Brush

## **STEP DISCUSSION**

- Get the hog brush, again, rinse it out and hug it dry. Add CYM to the mix from the last step and make a lighter orange. Tap this little halo color at the top of some of the clusters, where the source of light is catching the leaves.





# STEP 6 - BRANCHES

## "THE SWARM OF BEES RULE"

### PAINT:

Mars Black = MB

### BRUSHES & TOOLS:

#4 TAS Round

### STEP DISCUSSION

- With a Round Brush we will start painting the mini branches. Change your water and put out more MB if you need to. We'll be using it for a minute.
- Load MB on the damp brush and start adding in branches; some of them go through leaves, some of them go behind leaf clusters, and others go in front of leaf clusters. It's the little branch tree game. You can add a drop of water to the black if you want to thin it, you could also use Fluid Black if you preferred.
- Work your branches until you are as happy with your happy little trees as I am with mine.
- Sign.
- We talked of many things from William Alexander and Bob Ross to even... gasp...pronouns and art. You can watch me paint this entire tutorial and listen to the complete dialogue at any time on my YouTube channel.

*Cinnamon: I feel sorry for the children of Generation X because they have probably been raised in sarcasm. I'm a member of Generation X, so I say that from experience. I've come to the realization that when dealing with my own children, I must apply The "Swarm of Bees Rule" when trying to understand my own teenagers. The "Swarm of Bees Rule" is that you always have to ask yourself how a swarm of bees would act in any given situation and then kind of have an expectation as to how your teenager is going to act.*

**Sherpa Tip:** Forkey branches happen when you have two side branches that join at the same point on the central branch. You want to remember to allow them to fork off irregularly and to wander and not be stick figure branches.



## THE TRACING METHOD

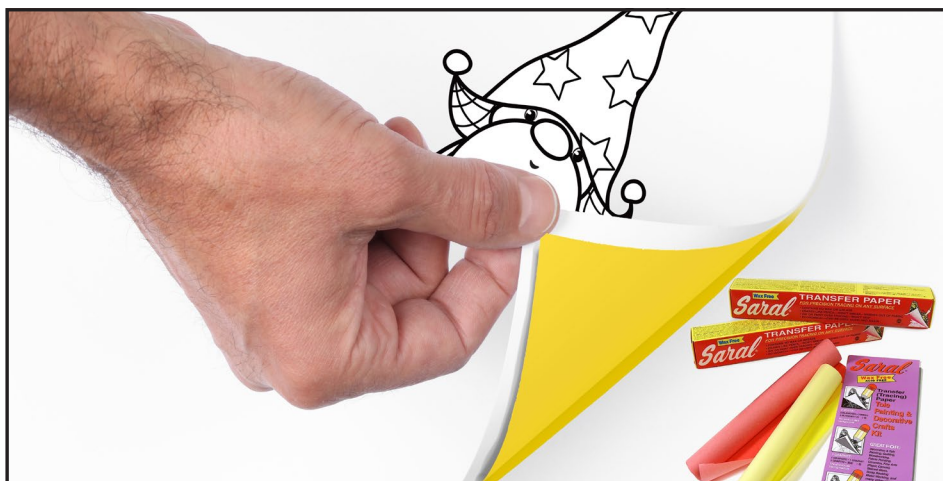
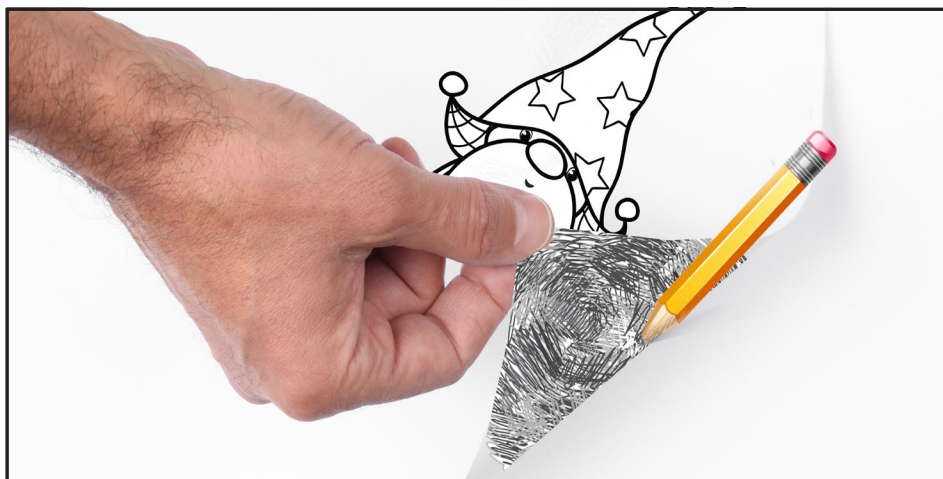
- Adjust the size to fit your surface and be sure to check your printer settings to see if the final size reflects the size you need.



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





## 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.

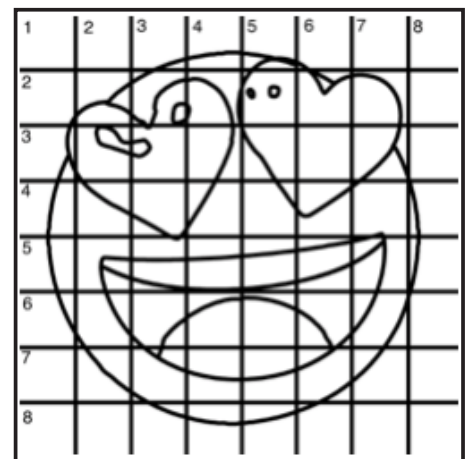
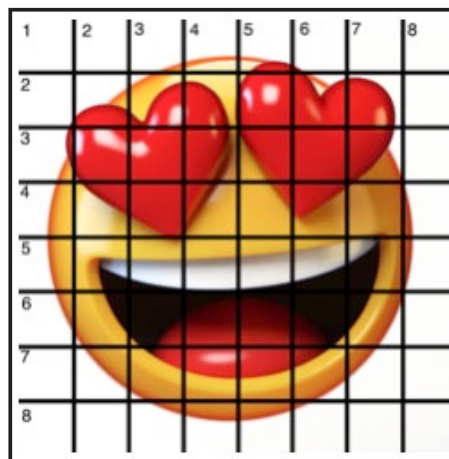
Number your columns 1 - 8, left to right, and your rows 1 - 8 from the top to the bottom.

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.

You can remove chalk easily by taking a soft brush and getting it damp with clean water. Gently brush over the lines you wish to remove and they will lift.

If you prefer a different size there are many great resources out there that involve math about how to scale. I do not teach math for many good reasons and I could count them all for you, but that would be doing math. The resources out there for that information and those mathematical formulas exist online in copious amounts. Explained beautifully and if you are choosing to paint different sizes than we are utilizing in this mini book, I highly recommend finding one of those formulas and mastering it. Short of that, buy a 8 x 8 canvas to match the free grid for this project.

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





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