

THE ART SHERPA™

# HOW TO PAINT

IN ACRYLIC



## OWL BE YOUR FRIEND

BY: THE ART SHERPA


NAME CREDIT TO PATRON: BILL PITILLO

STEPS: 8 | DIFFICULTY: BEGINNER | 1.5 HOOTS



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# SHERPA FORWARD:

The collaboration between myself and Ginger Cook dates back to my birth; she's my Mom. As a second generation professional artist, she is the one who made sure that I had all the tools I needed and wanted to be able to create art and I am truly grateful. We have done art collaborations before, but not quite like this one and we sincerely hope that you enjoy this experience and we both look forward to seeing your completed paintings.

This is the second in a series of collaborations that we are doing together. We each teach three beginner bird paintings, chosen by our individual community, during one long marathon of an afternoon.

Owls are fondly thought to be wise but in reality are mostly solitary and nocturnal birds of prey typified by an upright stance, a large, broad head, binocular vision, binaural hearing, sharp talons, and feathers adapted for silent flight. Add grump to those sharp talons and I'm not sure I'd want to make one angry. Move over Grumpy Cat, I think Grumpy Owl may trump you.

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:  
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***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
- 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:

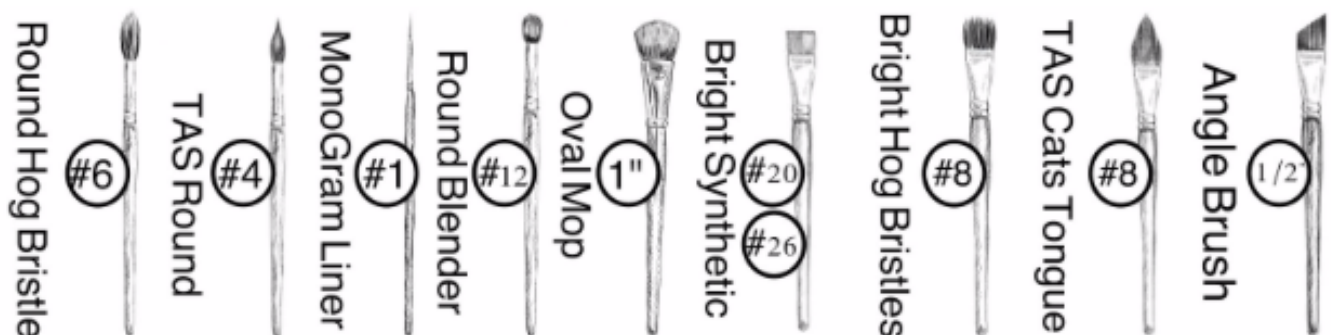
- ¾" Angle Brush
- ½" Angle Brush
- #4 TAS Round
- #1 Monogram Liner

## TOOLS:

- T-Square Ruler
- 6 x 6 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
- Feathers



# 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.

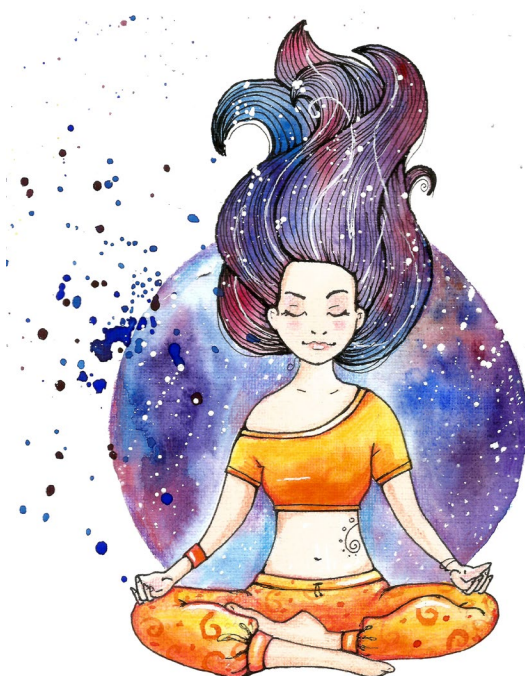
STEPS:	TIME:	DESCRIPTION:
INTRO	00:00	INTRO
STEP 1	2:09	SKETCH IMAGE
STEP 2	5:35	BACKGROUND
STEP 3	10:15	BLOCKING IN OWL
STEP 4	15:50	EYES AND BEAK
STEP 5	20:07	FEATHER VALUES
STEP 6	29:12	FACE AND BEAK DETAILS
STEP 7	38:52	BODY FEATHERS
STEP 8	42:03	HIGHLIGHTS
		SIGN



## 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.



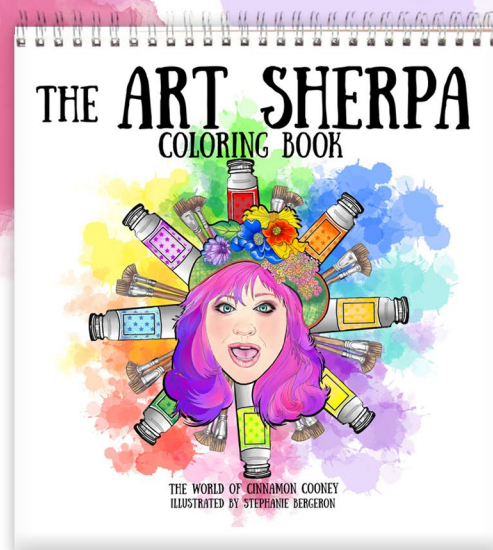


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# STEP 1 - SKETCH IMAGE

## "THERMOS OR MUPPET BIRD OWL"

### **PAINT:**

Burnt Sienna = BS

Mars Black = MB

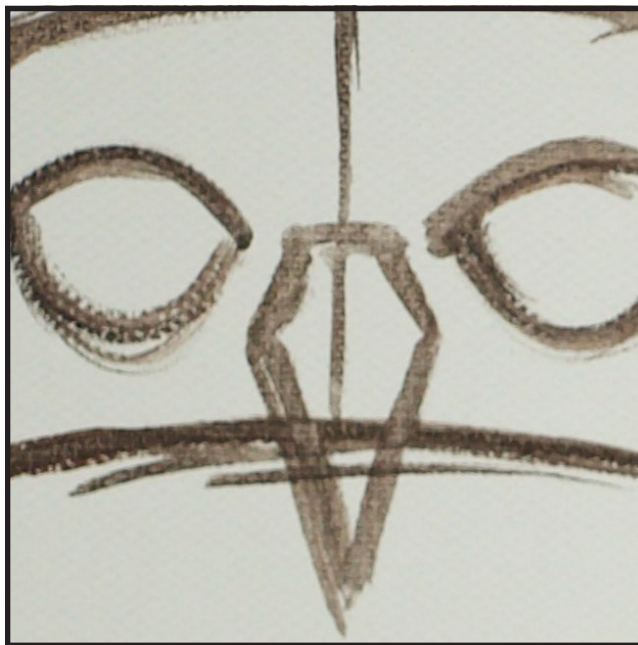
### **BRUSHES & TOOLS:**

#4 TAS Round

### **STEP DISCUSSION**

- 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.
- Load a Round Brush with BS + MB. Draw an angular line on the left side, starting 1" from the bottom of the canvas, to about the midpoint. Then do the same on the right side of the canvas, and connect those two lines to create his chest. His head sits on top of his shoulders, and is almost square. It kind of looks like a thermos at this point.
- Divide the head in half vertically. The beak is at about the mid-point on his

face, and it is like an elongated diamond, because he is a hunting bird. He has kind of grumpy eyes as well, so draw in some big, roundish, grumpy brows and eyes. Now, he kind of looks like a Muppet Bird.



## STEP 2 - BACKGROUND

“DON'T FORGET THE SIDES”

### PAINT:

Cad Yellow Medium = CYM

Phthalo Green = PG

### BRUSHES & TOOLS:

$\frac{3}{4}$ " Angle Brush

### STEP DISCUSSION

- With the angle brush loaded with PG + CYM, start to paint the background of the bird and please paint the sides of the canvas.
- Add CYM and “bokeh” the background, it's diffused, something is back there, we just can't define it but it's pretty and it's bright.
- Add PG to the brush to add pops of a darker color back there.



# STEP 3 - BLOCKING IN OWL

## "THOSE WEIRD LITTLE SIDEWAYS HEAD FEATHERS"

### PAINT:

Cad Red Medium = CRM

Cad Yellow Medium = CYM

Burnt Sienna = BS

Titanium White = TW

### BRUSHES & TOOLS:

½" Angle Brush

#4 TAS Round

### STEP DISCUSSION

- With the Round brush, mix CYM + CRM to an orange. Begin to paint in the first layer of his eyes. Vary the mix between the red and orange and paint in both eye sockets. Otherwise, he would not be "just grumpy".
- You can also add TW if you need to lighten a value. Make sure to paint the edges of the canvas.
- Let his body color get a little darker as you move toward the bottom of his chest. This is not perfect or neat, but he IS beige.
- Switch to an angle brush and we will begin to catch his values, with TW + orange + BS mixed to a buff color. This will be the base mix for the owl. Add a touch of water to the mix to help with flow. The nose is quite narrow at the bridge so go ahead and paint over the outline we drew in because we will define his nose with the darker colors a bit later. Make these mixes very loose by adding bits of orange and CYM and CRM and BS in places.
- The feathers on the side of the head also go outside of his body a bit, over the green background.





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# STEP 4 - EYES AND BEAK

## “JOHN IS WILEY”

### PAINT:

Cad Yellow Medium = CYM

Phthalo Blue = PB

Burnt Sienna = BS

Mars Black = MB

Titanium White = TW

### BRUSHES & TOOLS:

#4 TAS Round

### STEP DISCUSSION

- This is the basis of the eyes and nose. Mix CYM + TW on the Round brush and paint in a smile along the bottom edge of his eye sockets. Get orange on the dirty brush to add it under the yellow and then blend. The orange iris with the yellow pupil looks like a ring of fire.
- Get PB + MB to address the upper nose. Give him nostrils at the top and then curve the beak into a point.
- Add TW to a blue-gray and highlight above the nostrils and also add that highlight that runs down the center of his beak, which will actually help us portray the curve.
- Get back to the blue gray + MB and outline over and under the eyes. He needs big pupils, so outline those and then paint them in black. He is definitely eyeing some dinner.

- Add more TW to the blue-gray for a mid-gray color and add this along the sides, and upper area of the beak, but leaving a black outline very visible.

*I gave John “the look” about the mini boat he brought up just out of the blue. In front of the whole community after saying he really didn’t want one but they were cute. Then when the community chimed in on chat, he asked if I wanted one. He is wiley...that one.*



# STEP 5 – FEATHER VALUES

## “IN THE DIRECTION OF AN OWL”

### PAINT:

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

### BRUSHES & TOOLS:

¾" Angle Brush

### STEP DISCUSSION

- Get the angle brush loaded with TW and your buff color, then starting at the absent throat section, add a little bow-tie under his beak. Add some above the eyes and over the beak and above the brow on both eyes. Add more at the top of the head near his ears and along the sides of the face and upper beak.
- Add a touch of gray, MB + TW, to the dirty brush on either side of the nostril area and under both eyes. If you overpaint, come back with a damp brush to remove color but only if the paint underneath is still wet. Get MB on the brush to add the “smile” part of the beak.
- Mix CRM + CYM + BS, you will know when you get to the correct color. Then paint a line to show yourself where the wings come down over the body. Use brush stroke directionality to

imply the way that the feathers grow on that area of the body.

- Add TW to the mix to paint the transition between that beige bow-tie and the orangey part of his body. This light peach is a great feather accent color.
- Add more CYM to the mix, for some feather colors around his eyes and next to the lower beak, using the corner of the brush. Don't hesitate to brush the strokes away from the eye and over the green background to imply that feathers stick out here and there. Come over the white of his eye mask and brush back, from the forehead to the crown. Make sure that you have feathers that go out from his ears.
- Add more BS to your feather mix to paint in the base of the wings because we want them to be darker.
- Another great shadow mix is PB + BS. You can paint a darker little feather area, between his chest and the wings and right next to the beak on both sides.

*Not distinctly owl yet, but in the owl direction.*



# STEP 6 - FACE AND BEAK

## "MY OWL'S A FIGHTER"

### PAINT:

Cad Red Medium = CRM  
CadYellow Medium = CYM  
Phthalo Blue = PB  
Mars Black = MB  
Titanium White = TW

### BRUSHES & TOOLS:

½" Angle Brush  
#4 TAS Round

### STEP DISCUSSION

- With a Round brush and MB, refine those pupils. Then wipe the brush and get CYM to highlight the eyes around the pupils.
- Define the nostrils on the sides of the upper beak with MB. Add a light gray down the center of the beak and a touch of MB to the sides. Come back with TW on the dirty brush and super highlight down the center of that beak. I think my owl has been in a fight and has had his beak broken. I need to fix this.
- Mix PB + TW to add some reflections inside the pupils. Add more TW to make some soft broken lines of moisture in the black area of the lower lid.
- Switch to an angle brush and add more TW to the base owl mix. With short little brush strokes, start adding little feathers along his body. At the top of the head, pull the

feathers in the direction that they go. The feathers grow from his eyes up and over his head. They also go from his eyes down to his throat, except along the sides of his face where they might stand out a little.

- Add CRM to the mix for the most light feathers. On his left side, the feathers kind of curve to the left; when they are on his right side, they curve to the right.
- Get the brown-black on the toe of the brush and start adding those dark brown, feather patterning marks. They do still curve accordingly, as before and they are how he hides himself from his predators. Much like people, owls have distinctive looks.
- If you overpaint, you can add the lighter back colors back in. You do want this dark color along those feathers that go out from his upper head.

**Sherpa Tip:** *It does help to hold the canvas up from time to time to observe your progress because you can get crooked working on a flat table and you don't want a crooked nose.*



# STEP 7 - BODY FEATHERS

## "FEATHER SPOTTING PATTERNS"

### PAINT:

Burnt Sienna = BS

Mars Black = MB

Titanium White = TW

### BRUSHES & TOOLS:

½" Angle Brush

#4 TAS Round

### STEP DISCUSSION

- Continue using the angle brush and a darker chocolate-brown color, and bring some feathers along the sides of Mr. Cutie Pant's face. Add more on the upper throat and down his chest and body. His little body has kind of mirrored feather patterns - kind of crazy. Not quite a dalmatian but they have some spotting in common.
- Add more BS or more MB where you want to, especially on the wings, they are much darker.
- Use the photo reference in this step to help you get your painting to the point mine was when I moved on to the next step.
- Switch to a Round brush and TW to add the highlights in his pupils and to accentuate his nostrils and beak and to add moisture along the lower rim of the eyes.



# STEP 8 - HIGHLIGHTS

## "HE'S GRUMPY AND CUTE"

### PAINT:

Cad Red Medium = CRM

Cad Yellow Medium = CYM

Mars Black = MB

Titanium White = TW

### BRUSHES & TOOLS:

½" Angle Brush

#4 TAS Round

#1 Monogram Liner

### STEP DISCUSSION

- For feathers around the feathers, use an angle brush, and more TW + CYM added to the light beige. Start adding little down feathers that go under his eyes and beside his beak, a few over the eyes and on the throat. We are dry brushing here.
- Come back with MB to add some dark feathering details.
- Get a Round brush and add an exaggerated long feather that goes entirely along the upper outline of the eye and flicks up toward the sides of his face.
- Add a little CRM to the inner and outer edges of his pupil.
- Create little hairs with MB along his throat; sensory feathers.
- Sign with the Liner brush.

*John - They also may be sarcasm feathers.*



## THE TRACING METHOD

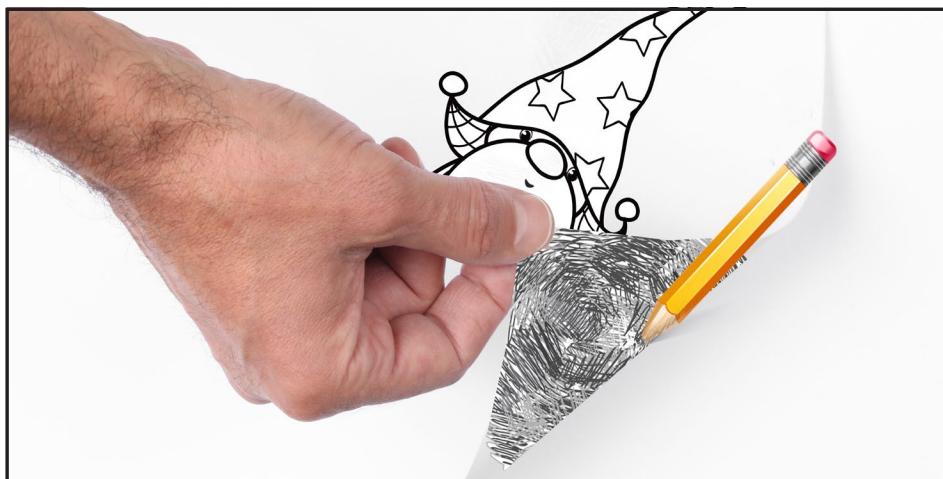
- Adjust the size to fit your surface and be sure to check your printer settings to see if the final size reflects the size you need.



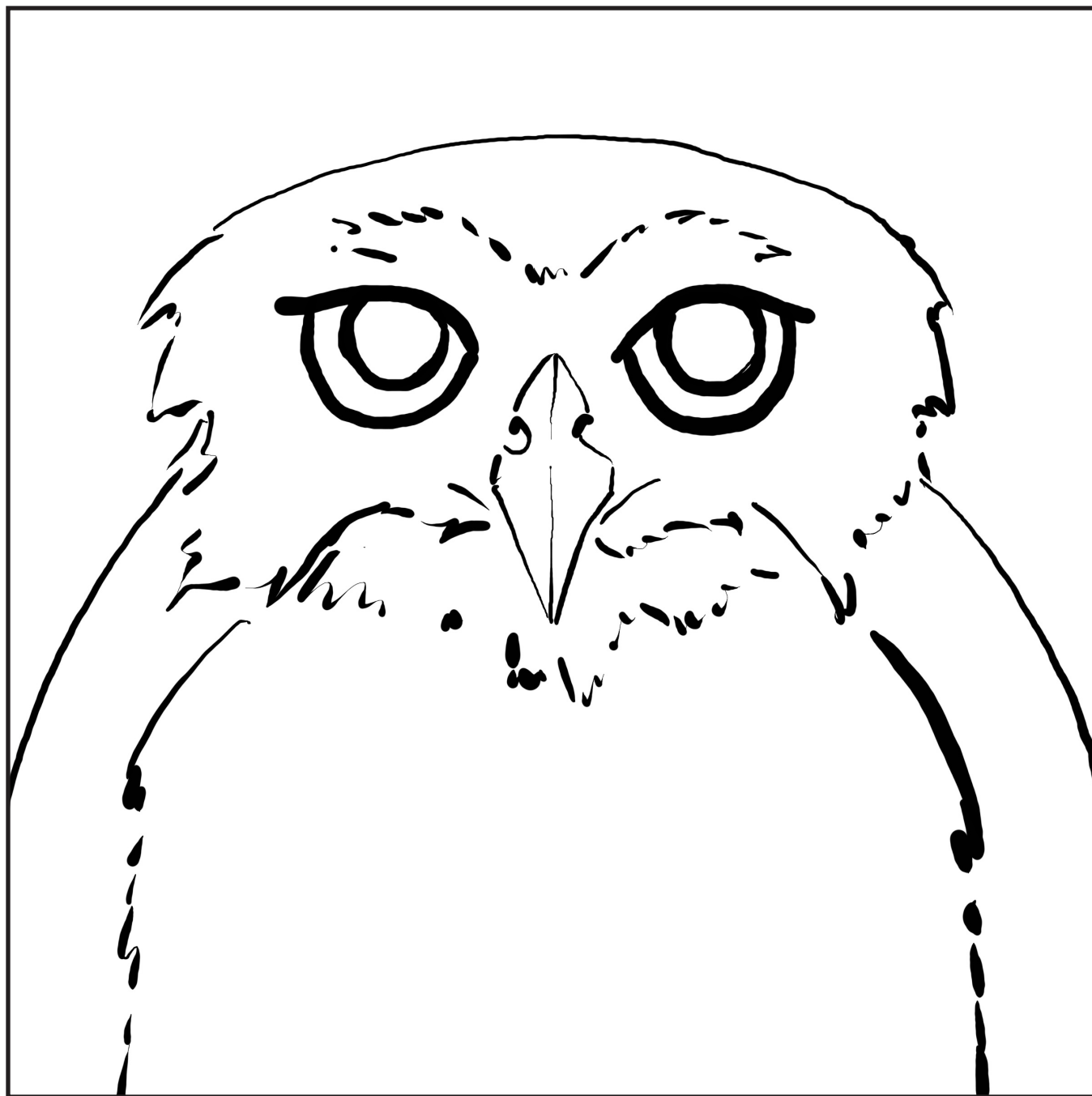
see that your transfer is happening. If not check if your rubbing is too thin or that your pressure is not too light. After you are done tracing the lines, remove your traceable and you should have a copy of the line art on your canvas.



- 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.

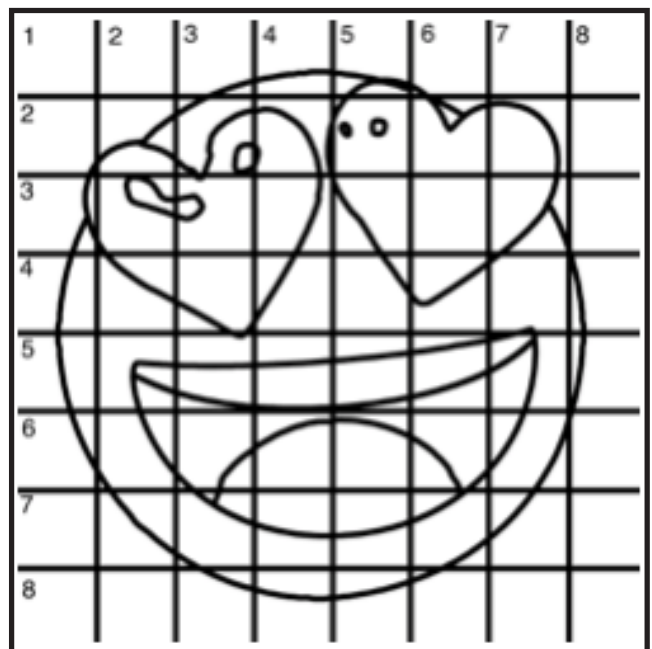
To draw the grid your canvas must be dry and it's advisable that it is also cool. You should use chalk that is wax or oil free. It must be pure chalk. I use a Dritz fabric-marking tool because it does fine lines easily and removes well from the canvas. There are also chalk pencils available or you could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



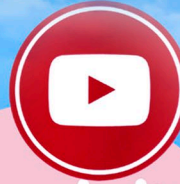
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