

THE ART SHERPA™

# HOW TO PAINT

IN ACRYLIC



## BJ AND THE BATH

BY: THE ART SHERPA

NAME CREDIT TO PATRON: KAREN SCOTT

STEPS: 7 | DIFFICULTY: BEGINNER | 1.5 HOOTS

SHERPA



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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. Although this is a beginner lesson, this bird is the more complicated of the three birds. I recommend that you take advantage of all the free resources I provide and especially that photo references follow each chapter step.

The Blue Jay represents creativity, mental clarity, and intelligence....As such, seeing a blue jay is also with loyalty, fierceness, and passion.

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
- 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:

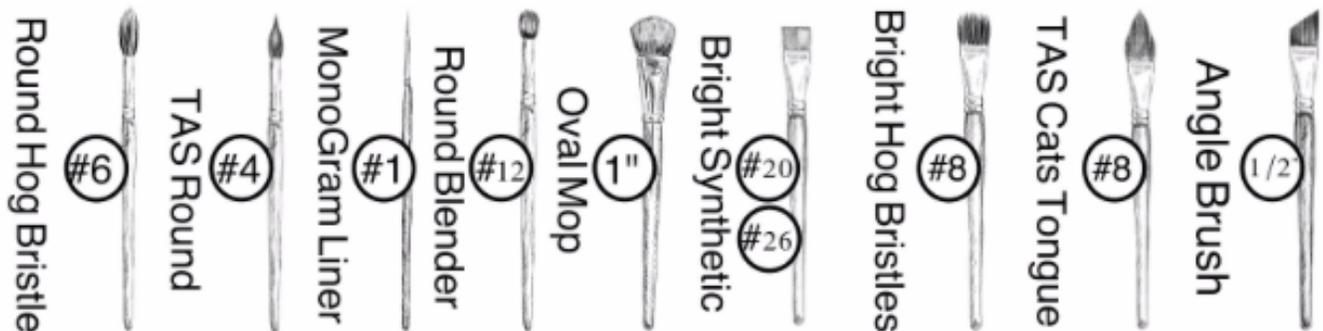
- ¾" Angle Brush
- ½" Angle Brush
- #4 TAS Round
- #1 Monogram Liner

### TOOLS:

- 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
- Implying Motion



## 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.

<b>STEPS:</b>	<b>TIME:</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION:</b>
<b>INTRO</b>	<b>00:00</b>	<b>INTRO</b>
<b>STEP 1</b>	<b>2:18</b>	<b>SKETCH IMAGE</b>
<b>STEP 2</b>	<b>5:31</b>	<b>MUTED BACKGROUND</b>
<b>STEP 3</b>	<b>11:33</b>	<b>BLOCKING IN BIRD AND BATH</b>
<b>STEP 4</b>	<b>20:55</b>	<b>BIRD BATH DETAILS</b>
<b>STEP 5</b>	<b>24:17</b>	<b>FEATHER VALUES</b>
<b>STEP 6</b>	<b>34:19</b>	<b>FEATHER DETAILS</b>
<b>STEP 7</b>	<b>44:16</b>	<b>FINISHING TOUCHES SIGN</b>



## 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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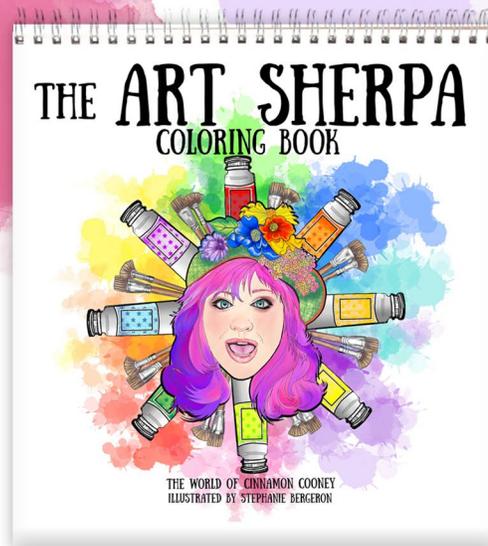


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# STEP 1 - SKETCH IMAGE

## "WE DON'T WANT STUBBY LEGS"

### PAINT:

Ultramarine Blue = UB

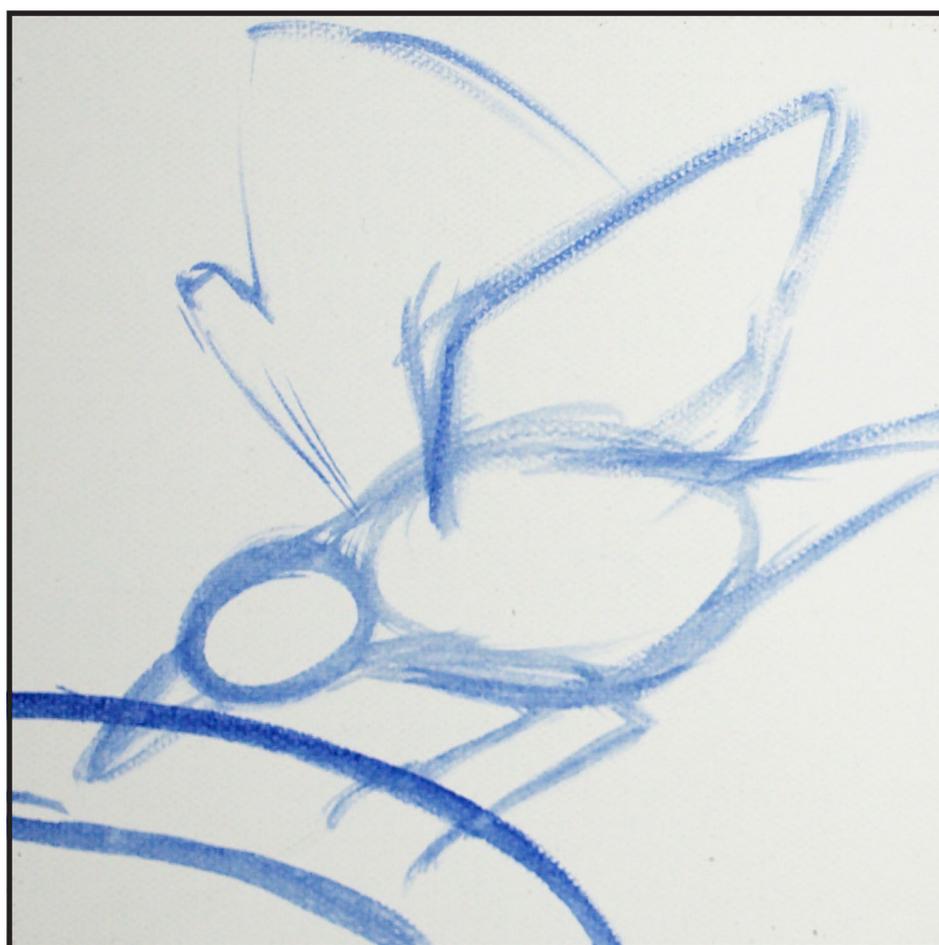
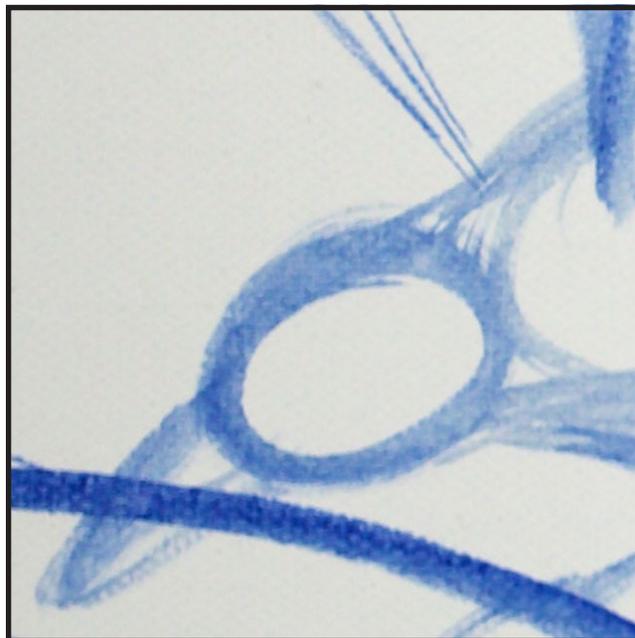
### BRUSHES & TOOLS:

#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.
- With a Round brush and UB, we want to sketch in the bird bath, draw an arc starting about 4 fingers up on the left side to about the middle of the bottom of the canvas. Add an inner arc line about 1/2" inside of that first line.
- The bird's head is about the size of a walnut and sits above the bird bath. Loosely, sketch in an oval for his body.
- Make sure his little legs have a bend to them;

we don't want stubby legs. He has a forward right wing and his left wing is not extended as much.



# STEP 2 - MUTED BACKGROUND

## “BECOME AN AGENT OF CHAOS”

### PAINT:

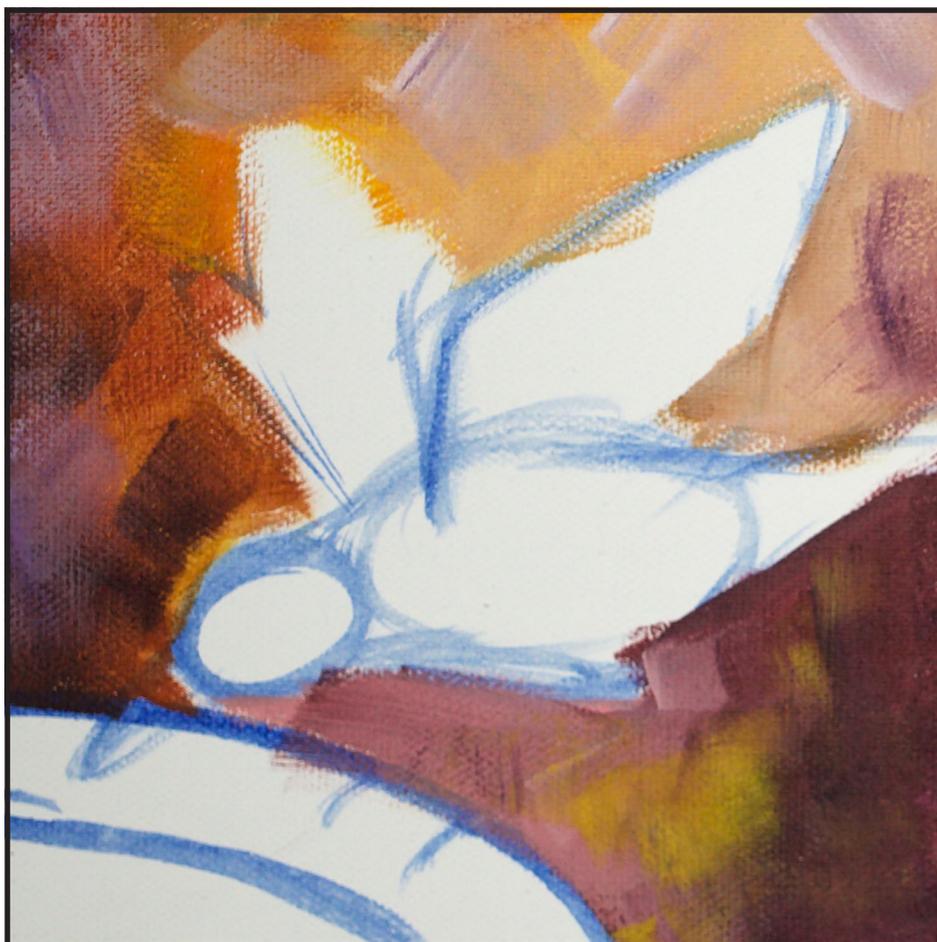
Cad Red Medium = CRM  
Cad Yellow Medium = CYM  
Burnt Sienna = BS  
Dioxazine Purple = DP  
Titanium White = TW  
Golden's Acrylic Gloss  
Glazing Liquid = AGL

### BRUSHES & TOOLS:

3/4" Angle Brush

### STEP DISCUSSION

- Get back to the orange colors and add CYM to the background, just above his wings. Add more BS to this mix for the area behind his uplifted wings. Don't forget to paint your canvas sides.
  - Come back with pops of TW and CYM and CRM and DP in places using a dry brush technique.
  - Use the reference photo to help you get to the point I did when I went on to the next step.
- Make an orange mix from CRM + CYM + BS, and use an angle brush to paint the background in a bokeh style. Vary your colors by adding more CRM in some places and more CYM in other places; it's very loose, you are an Agent of Chaos.
  - Add DP + CRM to a mix for some dark places, and TW to get another great little pop of color. Take the darker mix of this to the far lower right side. As you come forward, add more TW and a touch of CRM to DP to come between him and the birdbath. This will help his dark little legs pop. You might have to paint out his little blue jay legs, but we will fix that later.
  - Add water to your brush if you need help with flow, or if your studio is dry, or try using AGL.





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# STEP 3 - BLOCKING IN BIRD AND BATH

## "HE NEEDS A BIRD BATH TO TAKE A BATH"

### PAINT:

Phthalo Green = PG

Phthalo Blue = PB

Ultramarine Blue = UB

Burnt Sienna = BS

Titanium White = TW

Dioxazine Purple = DP

Mars Black = MB

### BRUSHES & TOOLS:

¾" Angle Brush

½" Angle Brush

### STEP DISCUSSION

- He is preparing for a bath, so we kind of need a bird bath. Use the angle brush to mix PB + PG and get Phthalo-Turquoise, then paint in the outer lip of the birdbath. Add a touch of BS to the mix for the water and be sure to catch both of the sides and bottom of the canvas.
- Get some of the light purple mix and paint along the outside, of the outer rim of the bird bath. Then bring some of the darker color, closer to the water.
- Switch to the smaller angle brush, and mix UB + PB. This mix of blues is the base mix for the bird. Paint in this blue on his little upper blue jay head, it has a bit of a roll to it, so use your strokes to express that. Add TW to this color,

it's ok if some of your other purple mixes get in there, and bring this lighter value to the upper body of the bird and lower part of the head.

- We will start on HIS left wing, on your right side. Add some BS to this blue color and start on the outside of HIS left wing. Add TW to this mix, if you need to gray it, add a skosh of BS, and paint in the back part of the body. Using the toe of the brush, paint in the upper part of the wing. Add water to thin it if you need to. Add more of the blues or BS to darken your mixes. You do want to paint from the back to the front, and add DP to the mix as you come forward. I did leave a bit of white at the back for some of the backlit feathers.
- At the front of the wing, get your blue mix, and add TW for on the top feathers. Use this same off white mix to capture those back feathers on his wing. We are creating shadows, capturing shapes and mixing values.
- Go to HIS right wing and put DP at the bottom, nearest the body. Use the blues mix at the front of that wing with lines to capture the illusion that his feathers are sticking up. This is a good capture of motion. Very energetic.
- Paint the top of the tail with the blue mix.
- Mix MB + UB to a nice gray color and paint in the beak. It is a bit bowed and a little bit open.
- Add an eye socket and paint in his bowed legs. This is just the basic first layer work.

*Sherpa Tip: I use a lazy susan so that I can easily paint my smaller canvases in the direction of my strongest stroke.*

- Whenever you want to gray UB, add BS to gray it out.



STEP 3: CONTINUED



# STEP 4 - BIRD BATH DETAILS

“CAUSE IT’S GOT PERSONALITY”

## PAINT:

Titanium White = TW

Phthalo Green = PG

## BRUSHES & TOOLS:

½" Angle Brush

## STEP DISCUSSION

- We will be using the angle brush to add some personality to the fountain. Mix the gray with PG and start speaking to some highlights around the upper rim of the bird bath. Add TW and paint along the water edge between the rim and the water, then dry brush some water reflections.
- Come back with green and brown on the rim and then TW but remember less is more.
- Dry.



# STEP 5 - FEATHER VALUES

## "BLUE JAYS STAND FOR COURAGE"

### PAINT:

Phthalo Blue = PB  
Phthalo Green = PG  
Dioxazine Purple = DP  
Mars Black = MB  
Titanium White = TW

### BRUSHES & TOOLS:

3/4" Angle Brush

### STEP DISCUSSION

- Use a Round brush and MB to define the legs, raise the height of the leg if you need to. Secure the claws so he doesn't lose his perch.
- Get your blues together and make sure that his forehead is very defined. Add TW for a reflection on his head and add some white around his eyes and in the throat area.
- Add DP + blue mix + gray mix to darken his right wing feathers. We will come back with gray to lighten more and even lighter off-whites to pop the highlights.
- Use your gray and add highlights to the upper part of the feathers on his right wing. Add TW to the tips of the two bottom feathers and to pop in a line of white along those feathers. Highlight the upper tips. Get PB + TW to add this blue, still working on his right wing feathers. Add some DP to

any of these mixes for shadow colors. Get turquoise + PG for a highlight color toward the middle of his wing.

- Get MB on the brush to add some patterning on those back feathers and in the mid area of his right wing.

*Blue Jays stand for courage.*



# STEP 6 - FEATHER DETAILS

## "HIS RIGHT IS YOUR LEFT"

### PAINT:

Phthalo Blue = PB

Ultramarine Blue = UB

Burnt Sienna = BS

Dioxazine Purple = DP

Mars Black = MB

Titanium White = TW

### BRUSHES & TOOLS:

#4 TAS Round

½" Angle Brush

### STEP DISCUSSION

- Use the Round brush, to mix TW + UB + MB and highlight the lower part of the open beak, the pointy tip of the upper beak, and the nostril. Use MB to darken the rest of the beak. Come to the area of the head just before the beak and add some dark.
- Get the UB + TW mix and add highlights around his eyes, short strokes that imply feathers. Then add some of this gray to the legs and claws. Just enough to perceive that the legs are there.
- Switch to the angle brush, loaded with BS + UB and catch his left wing by the body. Add TW to this color and paint lighter feathers on top of this dark section in the direction that his feathers would grow. Add DP to the dirty brush to use on this wing.
- Use the gray for an upward feather on this wing that overlaps, in front of his right wing. Add a few more of these gray feathers. Continue defining the feathers on his left wing. Adding more MB to the gray for the deeper values that are found in the feathers, but not covering up the other layers entirely. Use the light gray to add those highlights closest to his body. It does have a purple cast, so don't hesitate to add DP in places.
- This is a difficult step to try to put into words, so use all of the free references that I provide to help assist you to get to the same place I was when I go on to the next step. Use all of your bird colors to help you and especially the photo that is included in this step description.
- Switch to the Round brush to reinforce the basic, blue mix areas. Add TW to highlight the tips of this wing. On the bottom feathers of this wing, the white on the tips of the feathers is much brighter where the light is catching them. Add some of those spotting features on the under part of the wing.
- Use MB to separate the feathers a bit.



# STEP 7 - FINISHING TOUCHES

## "BJAY TAKES A BATH"

### PAINT:

Dioxazine Purple = DP

Mars Black = MB

Titanium White = TW

### BRUSHES & TOOLS:

#4 TAS Round

½" Angle Brush

#1 Monogram Liner Brush

### STEP DISCUSSION

- Use the Round Brush and MB, to define the eye. Add some black feathering on the head and throat area. Add black markings on his left wing in the underlayer.
- Mix DP + TW and add just a little line, inside the black of the eye. Add a lot more TW to the brush for the white down feathers around his eye and throat.
- Add more DP to the dirty brush for the fluffy feathers on the underside of his left wing. Add fluffy where you want fluffy.
- Switch to the angle brush and the blue mixes, and reinforce that color on the top of the tail.
- Get TW on the dirty brush to add some downy feathers from his lower body up towards the tail. Add some little dashes along the upper ridge of his tail for highlights; then come back with MB along the tail.
- Get TW on the brush and highlight the eye, you'd be smart to do this with a detail brush.
- Continue getting your blue jay to the point where you are happy. Do you have enough dark shadows; do you have enough bright highlights? Can you discern the two wings from each other? Are his claws anchored; does his beak look highlighted?
- Whoo hoo, we did it. Sign with the Liner brush.

*I certainly hope that you enjoyed this wonderful little blue jay and that if you have not already watched all 6 bird episodes on YouTube, that you do so, and paint them all. They make a lovely collection.*

*Collaborations are mayhem and I'm loving this.*

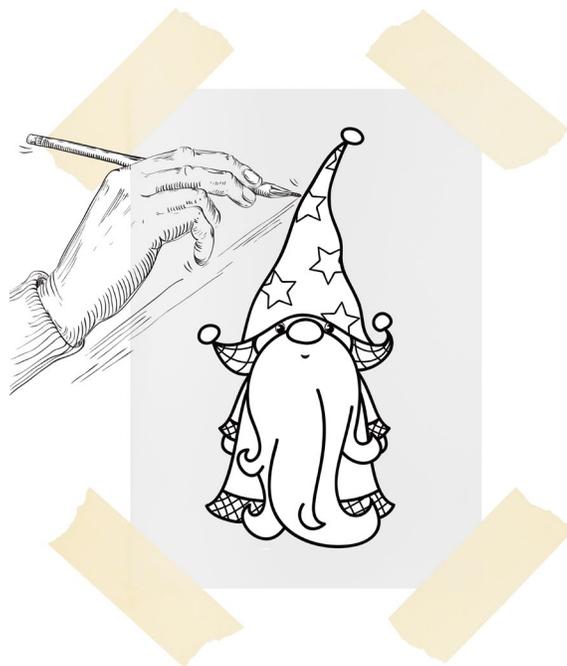


## THE TRACING METHOD

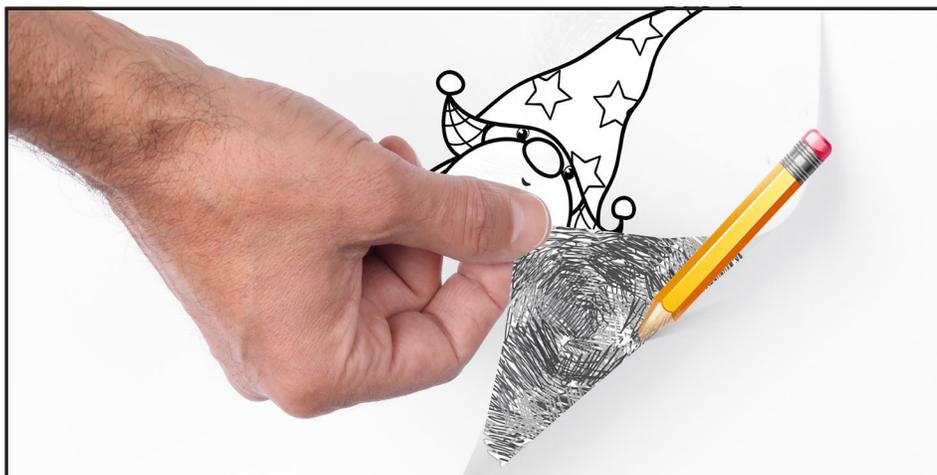
- Adjust the size to fit your surface and be sure to check your printer settings to see if the final size reflects the size you need.



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.

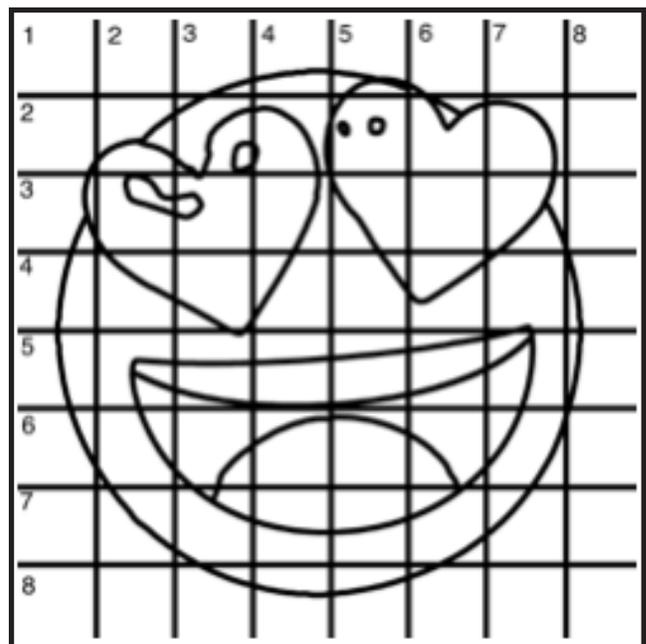
To draw the grid your canvas must be dry and it's advisable that it is also cool. You should use chalk that is wax or oil free. It must be pure chalk. I use a Dritz fabric-marking tool because it does fine lines easily and removes well from the canvas. There are also chalk pencils available or you could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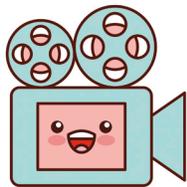
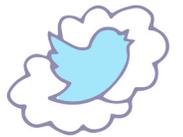
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