

THE ART SHERPA™

PRESENTS

Moonlight Songbirds

11 STEPS | DIFFICULTY: BEGINNER | 1 HOOT




NAME CREDIT TO PATRON: JENNIFER MEEHAN SECOR



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SHERPA'S FORWARD

THIS PAINTING IS THE SECOND PAINTING TUTORIAL, AND THE 10TH VIDEO, IN MY ACRYLIC BEGINNER PAINTING COURSE.

This painting is the second painting tutorial, and the 10th Video, in my Acrylic Beginner Painting Course. This course is taking place during November 2021 and we have already met 8 times to learn about products, supplies, skills and techniques that all beginner artists need to know as they begin an art journey.

All of this program is available on my website and can be watched on YouTube or Facebook. After each of the first 8 sessions, we conducted live Q&A sessions to answer questions from the community. All of the resources in the program are completely free although you do have to register on my website, www.theartsherpa.org, to be able to download the accompanying mini books, which are also free. Please be sure to post your finished paintings in the Facebook The Art Sherpa Official group.

We do pick up about 20 minutes after the end of the tutorial on Facebook to answer any questions you might have about the course so far.



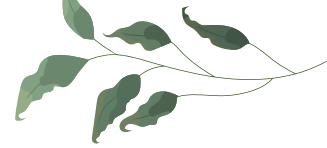
THE GOLDBLOCKS ZONE

IN PAINTING, EVERY TECHNIQUE OR PROCESS HAS WHAT I CALL A “GOLDBLOCKS 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.





PAINT AND TOOL GUIDE

USE THIS PAINT LEGEND BELOW TO UNDERSTAND THE SYMBOLS THAT I USE TO GIVE YOU IMPORTANT PAINTING INFORMATION.

PAINT:

- Primary Red
- Primary Yellow
- Primary Blue
- Mars Black
- Titanium White

BRUSHES:

- Synthetic Bright Brush
- #4 TAS Round
- Hog Fan Brush
- Angle Brush

TOOLS:

- Chalk Pencil or Watercolor Pencil
- 9 x 12 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 it dry before you proceed.)
- Optional: StayWet Palette

TECHNIQUES:

- Implying Foliage
- Expressive Painting Strokes
- Being Painterly and Loose
- Atmospheric Perspective
- Finding Value
- Dry Brushing
- Color Theory
- Directionality
- Blending Wet into Wet
- Clouds
- Color Mixing
- Dynamic Light
- Feathers

VIDEO CHAPTER GUIDE:

BELOW ARE THE TIMESTAMPS WE INSERTED IN THE TUTORIAL VIDEO SO THAT YOU CAN EASILY COORDINATE USING THE BOOK AND THE TUTORIAL VIDEO SIMULTANEOUSLY.

STEPS:	TIME:	DESCRIPTION:
INTRO	0:00	INTRO
STEP 1	1:34	RADIAL BACKGROUND
STEP 2	8:03	THE NIGHT SKY
STEP 3	10:46	MOON
STEP 4	14:34	BIRDS 1ST LAYER
STEP 5	20:29	BRANCHES 1ST LAYER
STEP 6	28:12	BRANCHES, HIGHLIGHTING THE TWISTS
STEP 7	35:10	BERRIES, 1ST LAYER
STEP 8	41:04	BERRIES, RED LAYER
STEP 9	46:26	BIRDS 2ND LAYER
STEP 10	52:18	BIRDS DETAILS
STEP 11	59:46	FINAL DETAILS
		SIGN





STEP ONE - *RADIAL BACKGROUND*

A RATHER MAJESTIC NIGHT SKY

PAINT:

- Primary Blue
- Titanium White

BRUSHES:

- Large Bright Brush

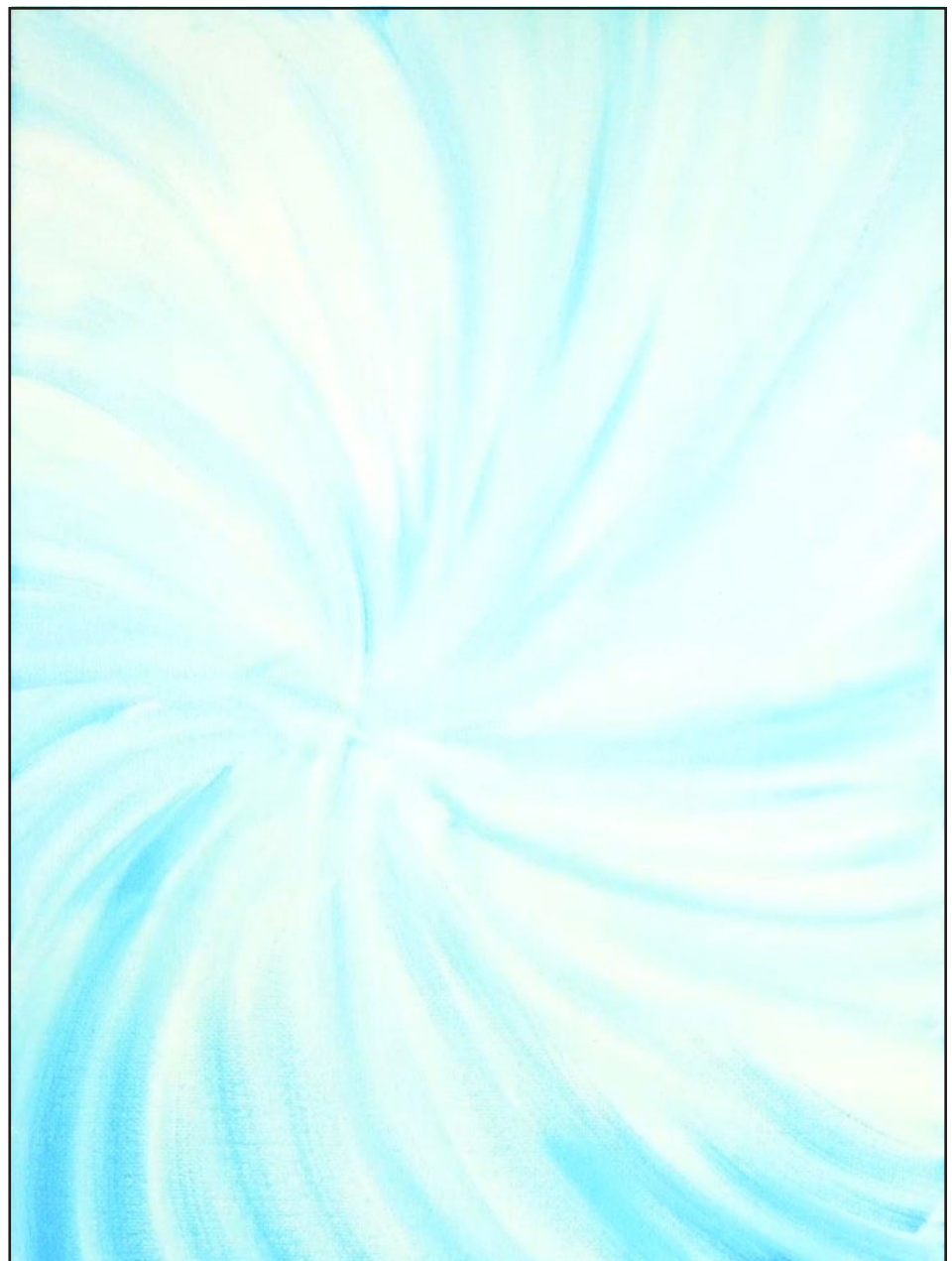
STEP DISCUSSION:

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, and the traceable. I drew in only the major objects.

We are going to paint a radial background today, but I want to measure first, so with the canvas in portrait orientation, measure 3.25" across from the left side and make a mark and about 6.5" down from the top. The center of the radial is where these two points intersect.

Start with a big wide, bright brush dampened with water and loaded with white. Bring a little bit of blue to the mix and begin to create radiating curves coming out from that mark.

Dry.





STEP TWO - *THE NIGHT SKY*

LET'S ADD SOME DRAMATIC LIGHTING

PAINT:

- Primary Blue

BRUSHES:

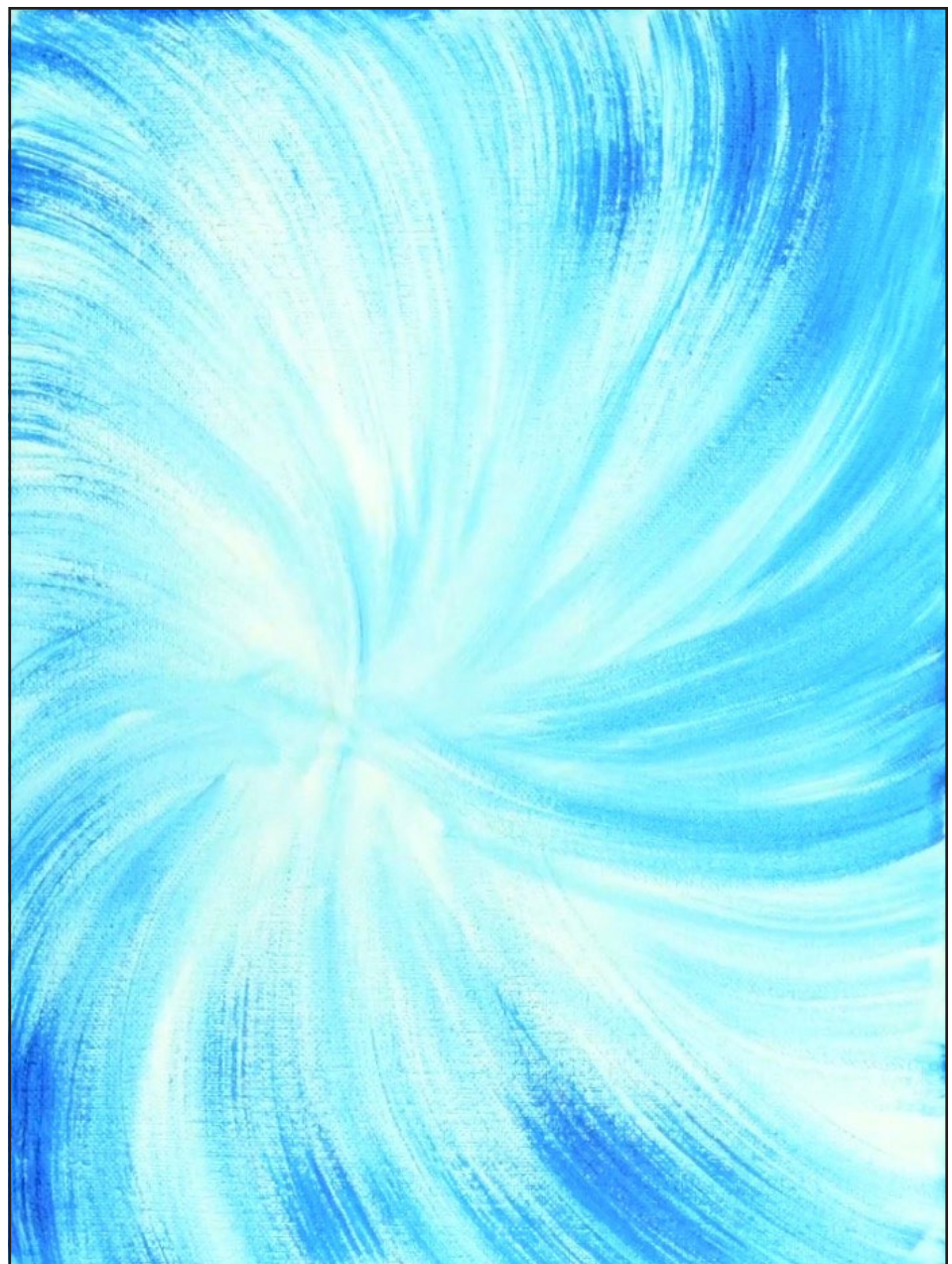
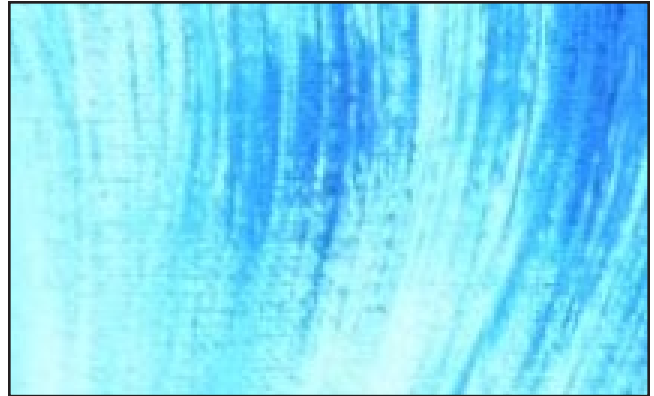
- Hog Fan Brush

STEP DISCUSSION:

Now we will be painting from the outer edges, inward, using a bit darker color. You could use the bright brush, but I chose to use a hog fan brush. Load it with blue, and very lightly, start darkening the outermost edges of the radials. You are not covering the entire background that you put in during Step 1.

Dry completely.

Sherpa Tip: *I did a demo of the same technique but I used a bright brush. I wanted to show you that you have to be more careful with your strokes and more aware of how much water is on the brush.*





STEP THREE - *MOON*

A CREATIVE CIRCLE OF A SILVERY MOON

PAINT:

- Mars Black
- Titanium White

BRUSHES:

- ½" Angle Brush
- Chalk Pencil or Watercolor Pencil

STEP DISCUSSION:

I made a 3" circle by tracing the center of a large roll of artist tape with a chalk tool. You use the tools you have.

Using an angle brush, add a smidge of black to some of the white paint and mix a light gray color. Then paint in the circle you just drew. I start with the short filaments of the angle brush and brush out, controlling my turn. This is very loosely painted.

Wipe off the brush, reload white, and loosely paint over the gray.

Get a little black on the brush and imply that the moon has some craters around the right and top of it. Use the brush at an angle to very texturally, dry brush.

Dry.





STEP FOUR - BIRDS 1ST LAYER

JUST A CUTIE PATOOTIE

PAINT:

- Primary Red
- Mars Black

BRUSHES:

- Round Brush
- Chalk Pencil or Watercolor Pencil

STEP DISCUSSION:

Birds before branches, how crazy is that? Actually, it makes the painting much easier.

Get your chalk tool and let's draw birds using circles. Come down about 4 fingers from the top, toward the center, and make a silver dollar to a quarter size circle for the head. Add an egg shaped circle coming off the head to represent the body. Then a pointed "V" shape for the tail.

I painted it with a Round brush and red. Red can be transparent, so add just a touch of black to make it more opaque. Paint the circle and the bird body; add the wings on the sides and a ribbon tail. We want just the basic shape. If you're happy with the bird, paint another layer on him.

You want your second bird to be about three fingers up from the bottom, and more on the right hand side of the

canvas. I freehanded him in using paint, but you do you. There is no right or wrong, you can draw with chalk, use the traceable, freehand, whatever works best for you. Paint this second little bird in, then add the tail on him last.





STEP FIVE - BRANCHES 1ST LAYER

STAGGER AND WOBBLE

PAINT:

- Mars Black

BRUSHES:

- Round Brush

STEP DISCUSSION:

Now that we have birds, we need branches. Use the round brush and thin the black paint with a drop or two of water.

The top branch starts 2" from the left and wobbles it's way behind the middle of the upper bird's body. Continue to wander up at an angle and allow it to taper off before going off the canvas. Go back and thicken out the branch on the left side and taper it as it goes across the canvas. Again, bumps are in your favor here, wobbly is the goal. About 2 - 3" from the beginning of the branch, on the left, add a couple of offshoot branches. Maybe add more branches shooting off, on the other side of the bird. They were in my world, but you paint your world.

Even with the off shooting branches, you want them thicker at the base and to taper off at the end.

The bottom bird is sitting upright; so paint the branch across his tail. About four fingers from the bottom right of the canvas, start painting a

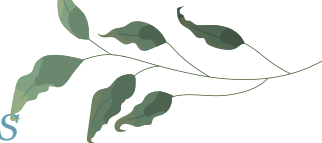
branch that is coming onto the canvas from an unseen tree, and taper it off to the left. Add some little wobbly off shoot branches and thicken them all at the base and allow them to taper off. Stagger your branches, you don't want pitchforks.

Rinse out the brush.

It would help you to dry your canvas.

***Sherpa Tip:** You may not need to thin your paint if you use craft or soft body paint.*





STEP SIX - BRANCHES, HIGHLIGHTING THE TWISTS

RIGHTSIDE UP AND UPSIDE DOWN

PAINT:

- Mars Black
- Titanium White

BRUSHES:

- Round Brush

STEP DISCUSSION:

Make a highlight for the branches by using the round brush and mix some black into the white. This is a dark gray, darker than the moon, but lighter than black. I painted the bottom branches first. You want to highlight the branches that would be catching the light from the light source, which is the gray moon. I am curving the highlight to imply that the branches are round and twisted, which leaves the side away from the moon, dark and in shadow.

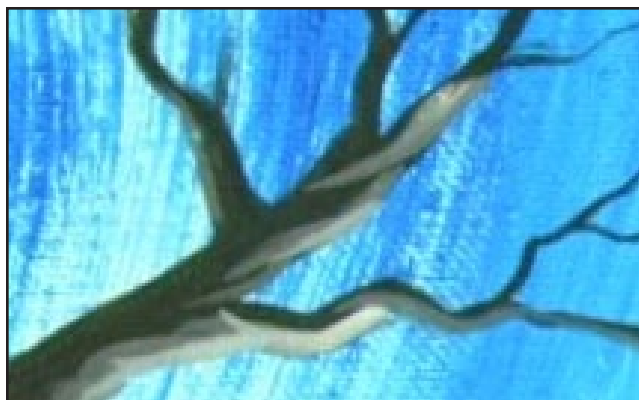
Turn your canvas so that the top bird is now upside down, but nearer to you, and add highlights to the branches in the same way. When we turn it rightside up, it will show that it is catching the light from the light source below it, leaving the top of the branches in shadow.

Rinse and wipe your brush, then take some of your gray to your white, and make a bright highlight.

Turn your canvas back to the correct position and highlight the lower bird's branches.

Then turn the canvas upside down again and highlight the upper bird's branches.

Dry.





STEP SEVEN - BERRIES 1ST LAYER

BERRIES CAN BE IRREGULAR, TOO

PAINT:

- Titanium White

BRUSHES:

- Round Brush

STEP DISCUSSION:

The first layer of the berries is applied with the round brush and thinned white paint, loaded on the tip of the brush. Start making a lot of different sized, white circles along the branches. I'm not using a qtip or dotting tool because I want them to be very irregular. You can also layer some of the dots over other dots.

You want berries on both branches, so turn your canvas and paint berries on all the branches.

Dots take a minute so this is the most time consuming part of this painting. This is just the first layer. We will come back with a red-orange and paint them all again.

Dry.





STEP EIGHT - *BERRIES, RED LAYER*

WHERE DOES YOUR INSPIRATION COME FROM?

PAINT:

- Primary Red
- Primary Yellow

BRUSHES:

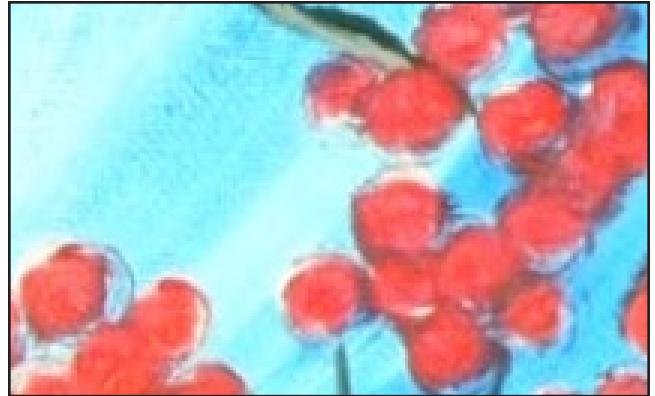
- Round Brush

STEP DISCUSSION:

With the round brush, mix a touch of yellow to the red, because we want a warm fire red. Everywhere you have a white dot, you want to paint it with this color.

It's ok if some of the white shows through, because my muse for this painting were the berries in my backyard, and they have bits of white on them.

Dry.





STEP NINE - BIRDS 2ND LAYER

DOWNY SOFT FEATHERS

PAINT:

- Titanium White
- Primary Red
- Primary Yellow
- Mars Black

BRUSHES:

- Round Brush

STEP DISCUSSION:

Birds need layers too, so come back with the red/black mix on the Round brush, and repaint both birds to make sure we have a good base to work with. We want them to be opaque, not transparent.

Dry.

Rinse and dry your brush.

Get black on the toe of the brush and paint in the beak of the top bird. Add a partial eye on the left side of his face and a full eye, slightly bigger, more to the right side of his face.

The bottom bird is facing us, so paint in one eye, then a little downward beak, then the other eye. I added 2 claws to represent his little feet that were cupped around the branch.

Add a touch of white to the bright red paint and use this color to glaze the top bird's left wing and the bottom

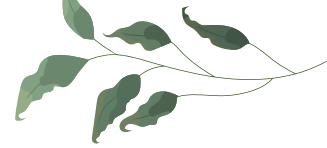
bird's left wing - these are the inside soft feathers.

Rinse out and get white to add to the tip of the tail and the right wing of the upper bird. Add a few white feathers on the forehead and on each cheek and a touch to the inside of his beak.

Use white on the bottom bird to add feathers on his belly and tail. The right wing has more white feathers. As does his crew cut doo, then outline the beak and paint it in. Add two little white cheek blushes.

Dry.





STEP TEN - *BIRDS DETAILS*

IT'S ALL IN THE DETAILS

PAINT:

- Mars Black
- Primary Red
- Primary Yellow
- Titanium White

BRUSHES:

- Round Brush

STEP DISCUSSION:

Pull out some yellow with the round brush, and add a touch of white, then paint the beak of both birds.

Rinse and wipe the brush.

Get pure red on the brush, and layer it up over everything, even the white, to brighten him up. Do the same with the bottom bird. Getting some brightness going.

Add a touch of yellow to the red and use this color to highlight some feather areas on the upper bird. You can use my photo reference to help you with placement if you need to.

Do the same with the bottom bird.

Mix a gray, and if you have trouble with fine lines, you don't have to do this part, but load gray on the brush and outline the eyes on both birds.

Get black on the toe of the brush and redefine the black part of all the little beady eyes.

Outline the birds with thinned black paint. This does not have to be a solid line, just enhancing him a bit here and there. Do the same with the bottom bird, and again, use my reference below to help you with placement.

Rinse your brush twice to get all the black out.





STEP ELEVEN - FINAL DETAILS

ZHUZH ZHUZH

PAINT:

- Titanium White
- Primary Red

BRUSHES:

- Round Brush

STEP DISCUSSION:

Thin the white and add reflections to the eyes. Make some loopy movements to indicate feathers on wings, tails, and foreheads on both birds.

Grab some of your pink and blush the cheeks of both birds

Use pure red to darken some of the berries if you want to.

Rinse out your brush and wipe it.

Get thinned white on the toe of the brush and add a dot of glow to some of the berries. You could use the dotting tool here if you wanted to.

Sign.

John - Don't bury the berries.



Q & A

CAN I PAINT THESE IN MY CANSON MIX MEDIA BOOK? I ONLY HAVE A FEW CANVASES.

Yes, you definitely could.

I'M HAVING ISSUES WITH THE FLOW OF MY PAINT COMING OFF MY BRUSH AS SMOOTHLY AS YOURS AND I'M USING GOLDEN, WHAT CAN I DO?

Go back and watch the video in this series about how to load a brush.

ARE WE SUPPOSED TO WET THE CANVAS BEFORE STARTING THE BACKGROUND?

That is probably a good idea if you live in a dry environment.

WHAT WERE THOSE MEASUREMENTS?

3.25 over and 6.5 down.

IS IT A HOG FAN OR SYNTHETIC ONE?

I used the hog fan.

MY BRUSH DRAGS WHEN I TRY TO DO THESE BACKGROUNDS, DO I NEED MORE WATER?

It could be that your brush is dry, that your paint is starting to dry and get tacky or that your canvas is thirsty.

WHAT BRUSH ARE YOU USING RIGHT NOW?

4 round brush.

CAN I USE MY CAT-TONGUE BRUSH? THE ROUND GIVES ME TROUBLE.

You 100% can.

ARE LIQUITEX HEAVY OR MEDIUM BODY?

They are both, but more of a medium because they shrink.

I'M WORRIED ABOUT DOING MY BIRDS, THEY COULD GET A LITTLE BIT MISSHAPEN LOL.

For sure, many, many birds will be artisanal and have all kinds of body types.

ARE THESE CANVASES BEIJING GESSOED?

No, the canvases are right out of the wrapper.

CINNAMON ADD ME TO THE REQUEST FOR FORESTS AND FOG\MIST. PLEASE PLEASE.

Look for a landscape that will have some of that coming up in the 12 days second half.

IF YOU HAD A SMALLER ROUND WOULD YOU CHANGE TO THAT FOR THIS IF YOU FELT IT WAS HARD TO HAVE THE CONTROL YOU WANT YOU CAN ALWAYS SIZE DOWN THE BRUSH?

You certainly could, you could also use a hand bridge or mahl stick to steady your hand.

WHAT HOOT IS THIS?

This is a 1 hoot.

WHY IS THAT THE SIMPLER PAINTINGS ARE MORE CHALLENGING THEN THE MORE DETAILED ONES FOR ME?

You are not alone, a lot of people say that too.

I WONDER IF THIS CAN BE DONE AS CHERRY BLOSSOMS?

Yes it could and it would be lovely.

WOULD THE HIGHLIGHTED COLORS CHANGE IF IT WAS A SUN INSTEAD OF A MOON?

If we were painting from life 100% would change and we can let that inform even simpler paintings. I would do browns and warm orange and yellow browns.

SHOULD WE PAINT THIS FLAT WITH OR ON OUR EASEL?

Put the position and health of your body first, do what is right for you. I am painting flat so the cameras can capture more.

WHERE ARE THE BEGINNING VIDEOS?

Check for 1 hoots at www.theartsherpa.com and this is only the second painting video in the Beginner Acrylic Paint Course, but you could also find all the videos in the series on my website. All videos are also available on both YouTube or Facebook. If you go to the website and register, you would have access to the mini book when it is available, as well.

WHAT'S THE BEST WHITE AFTER TITANIUM WHITE?

Zinc White.

THE TRACING METHOD

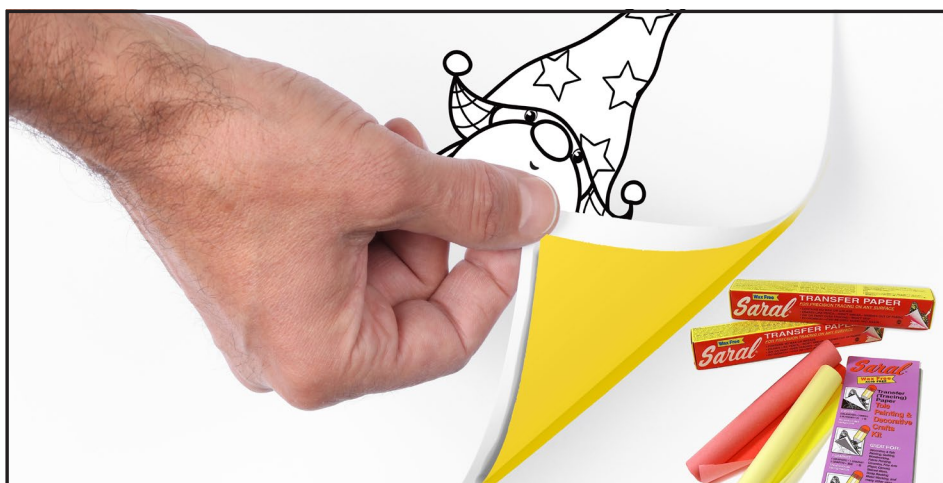
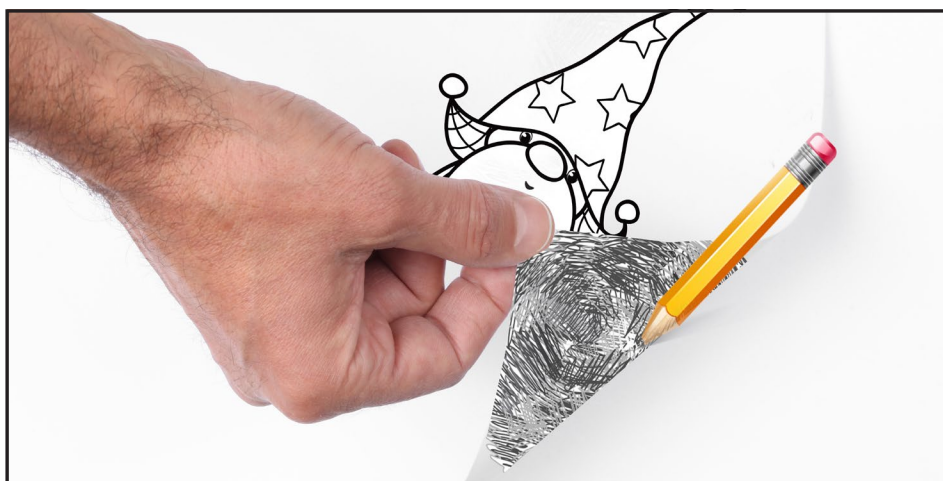
- Adjust the size to fit your surface and be sure to check your printer settings to see if the final size reflects the size you need.



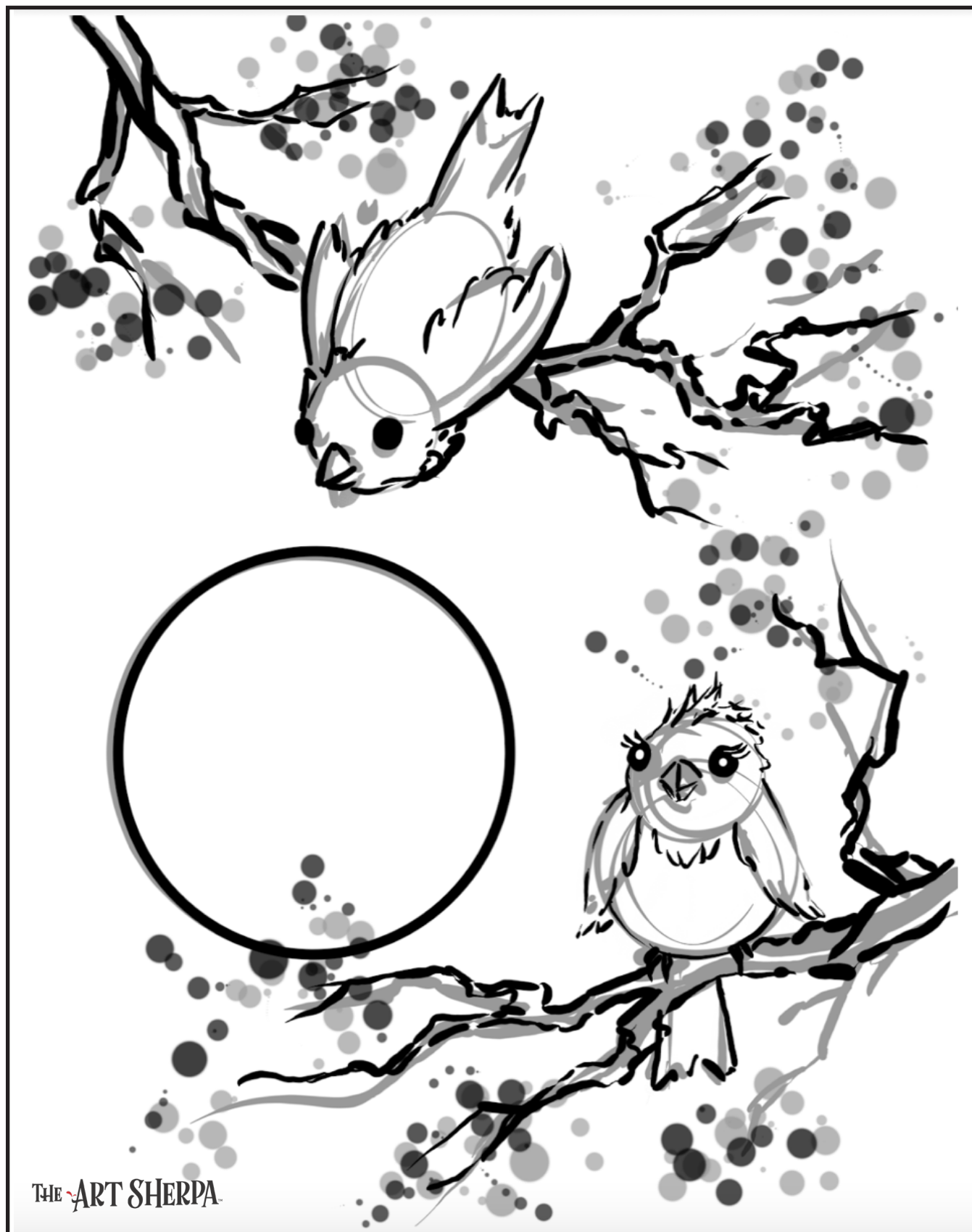
see that your transfer is happening. If not check if your rubbing is too thin or that your pressure is not too light. After you are done tracing the lines, remove your traceable and you should have a copy of the line art on your canvas.



- 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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