

# THE ART SHERPA™

PRESENTS

## *Dance of the Dragonflies*

10 STEPS | DIFFICULTY: BEGINNER | 1 HOOT



NAME CREDIT TO PATRON: TAMMY LITCHFIELD



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# SHERPA'S FORWARD

**THIS PAINTING IS THE FOURTH PAINTING TUTORIAL, AND THE 12<sup>TH</sup> 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](http://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.



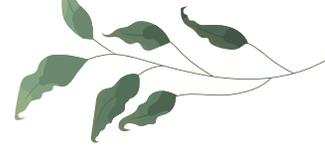
## THE GOLDILOCKS ZONE

**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.





# 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
- 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:

- Painting a Silhouette Landscape
- Implying Foliage
- 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
- Mirroring Sky in Water
- Setting a Horizon line
- Color Mixing
- Dynamic Light on Water
- Implying Motion

## 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	2:14	SKY BACKGROUND
STEP 2	7:26	GLOW OF THE MOON
STEP 3	12:37	MOON
STEP 4	15:40	WATER
STEP 5	18:27	CORRIDOR OF LIGHT
STEP 6	24:56	REEDS
STEP 7	33:11	CATTAILS
STEP 8	37:43	HIGHLIGHTING THE REEDS
STEP 9	40:25	DRAGONFLY
STEP 10	44:52	DRAGONFLY DETAILS SIGN





# STEP ONE - SKY BACKGROUND

## GET CREATIVE WITH TOOLS

### PAINT:

- Primary Blue
- Primary Blue
- Titanium White

### BRUSHES:

- Large Bright Brush
- Chalk Pencil or Watercolor Pencil

### STEP DISCUSSION:

I chose to freehand this image but there is also 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.

In the first step, we lay out some structural information. With the canvas in portrait orientation, get a t-square ruler and a watercolor pencil, draw a straight line across the canvas as the water line. I used a big roll of tape to help me draw a 3" circle. You want about 2-3 fingers above the moon at the top of the canvas.

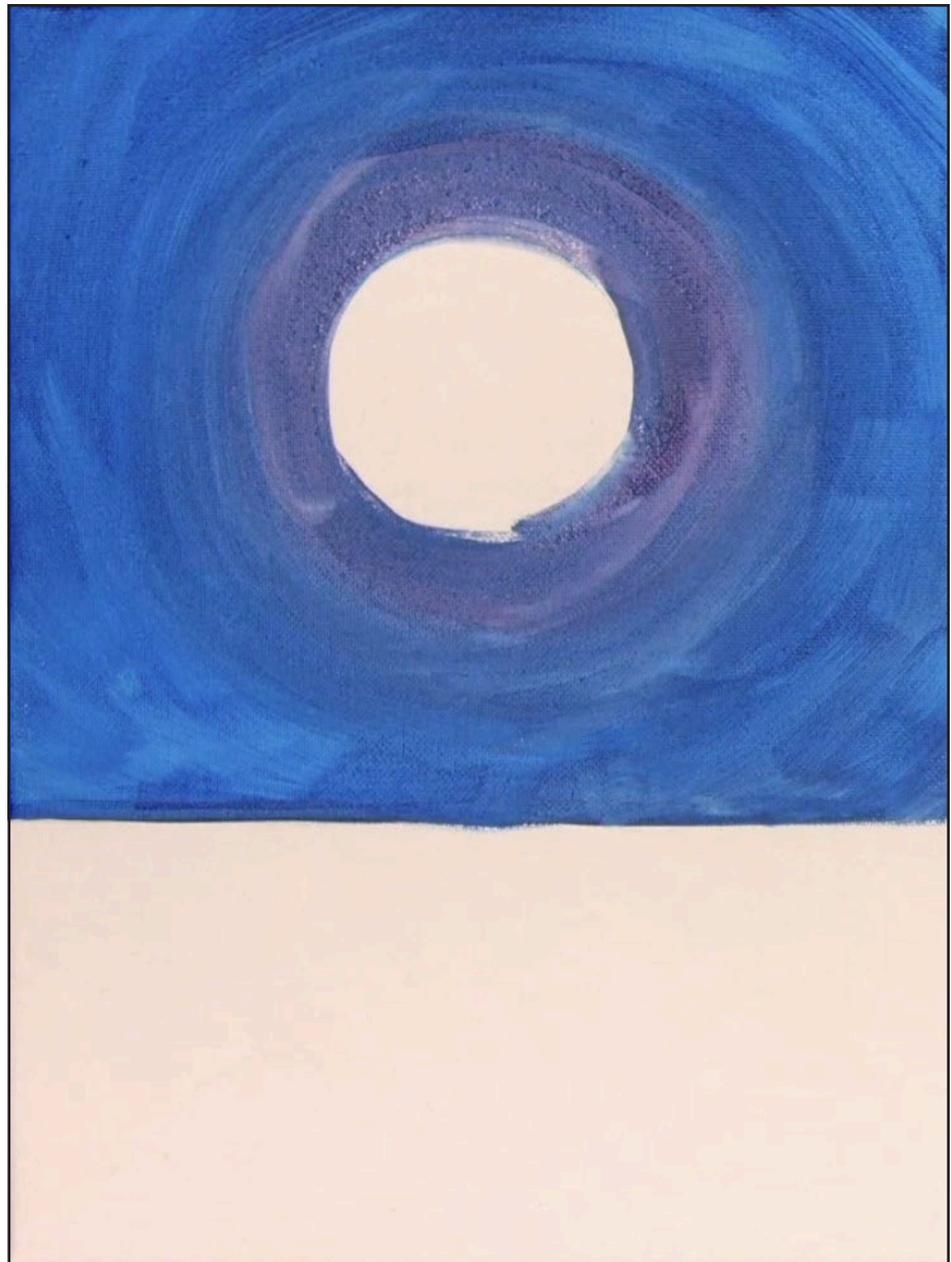
Get a bright brush to create circular strokes around the

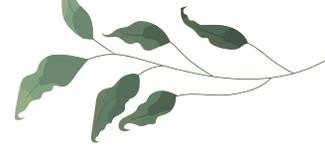
moon that radiate out. Begin by adding a touch of blue to the red, then add some white, to get a purple. Start painting the sky around the moon. We can always reset the circle if we need to, but try not to paint inside of it. Brush the paint out and around, adding more blue and less red to the color mix. Paint across the horizon in a straight line, then roll the atmosphere up into that circular motion that you have been working on around the moon. This is the first layer, it's not about tidiness, but about directionality.

Add water to your brush as you need to in order to improve flow.

This is a calm one to paint, but will also be a calm one to look at.

Dry.





# STEP TWO - GLOW OF THE MOON

## IT'S NOT RADIOACTIVE

### PAINT:

- Primary Yellow
- Primary Blue
- Titanium White

### BRUSHES:

- Large Bright Brush

### STEP DISCUSSION:

Once dry, we are going to add some depth. Get your purple color again and mix it to a burgundy-pink color. Then using short brush strokes and the bright brush, kind of dry brush around the moon. You do want the lighter colors closest to the moon and it should get darker as you radiate out.

Rinse and wipe the brush then take your white to some blue, to make a light blue. Weave that color over the purple with the same strokes, building up that glow of radiance. The paint is not wet and the canvas is dry.

Take yellow to blue and make green, then add more blue to get a turquoise color, then add a lot of white. Weave this color around the moon with the same strokes. It can be very streaky. It's like a beginning Van Gogh stroke.

Take a smidge of yellow to red, then add white to

make a pink. You don't want orange, you just want enough yellow to warm the red. Add this color to the radials. Try to avoid repetitive patterns in the strokes, keep it irregular, Agent Chaos. Play with it until you are happy. Mix a happy color that resides in your world's moon radials. Just be playful.

Rinse and wipe the brush.

Dry.





# STEP THREE - MOON

## LA BELLA LUNA

### PAINT:

- Primary Yellow
- Titanium White
- Mars Black

### BRUSHES:

- Angle Brush
- Chalk Pencil or Watercolor Pencil

### STEP DISCUSSION:

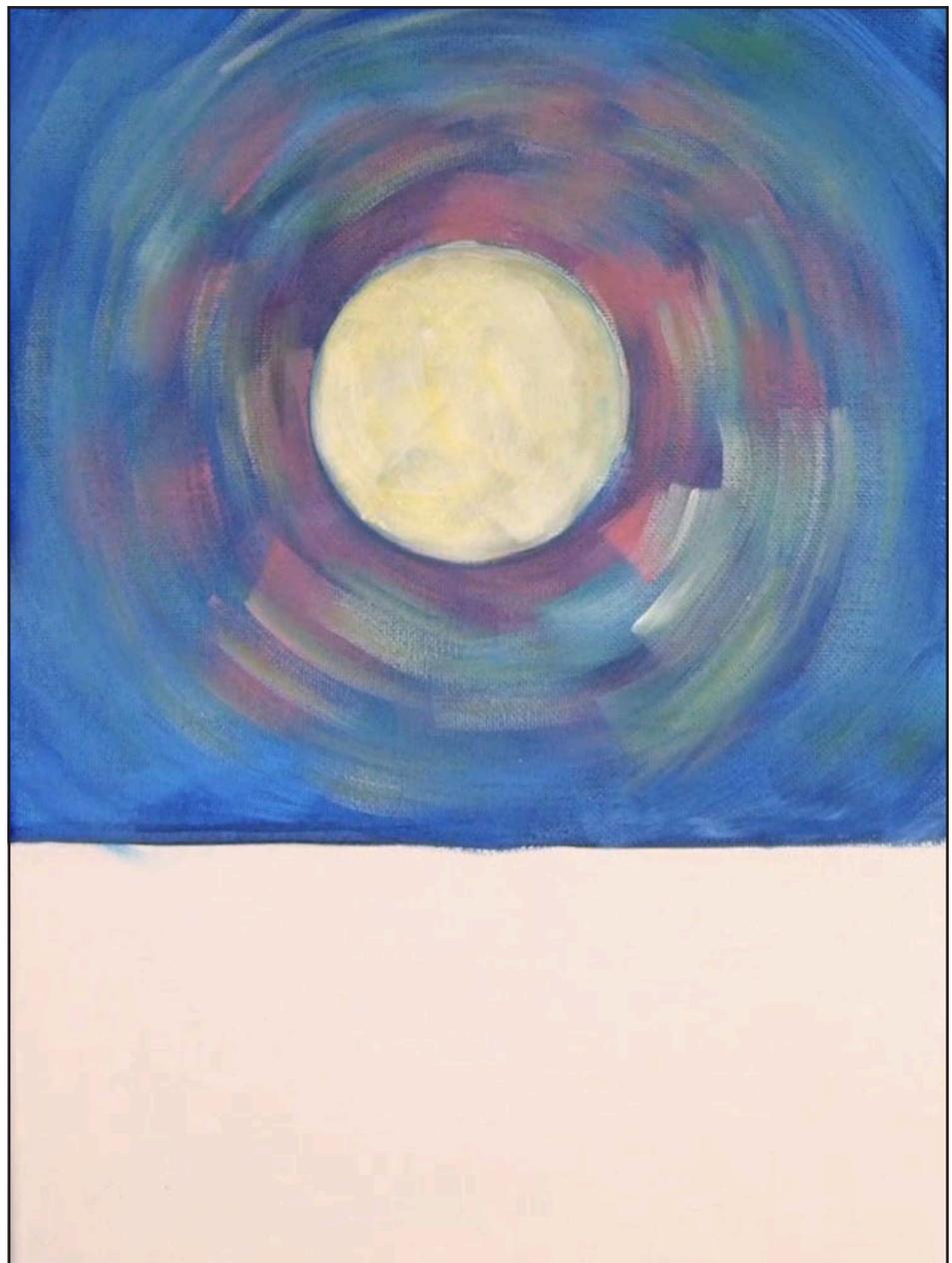
The first thing I did was reinforce the line of the moon with my roll of tape.

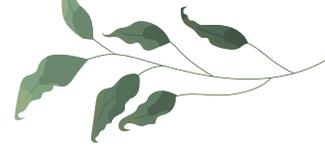
With the angle brush, mix black and white with just a touch of yellow, to make a yellowish-gray color, then paint in the moon. This color will cover what I need to do and still build in an excellent base for the lighter colors which will come next.

Dry.

Rinse and wipe your brush.

Then mix white with just a touch of yellow, and dry brush this color onto the moon, using light pressure. You want to allow that first color to peek through a bit because it adds depth.





# STEP FOUR - WATER

## THE PERFECT MOON MIRROR

### PAINT:

- Primary Yellow
- Primary Blue
- Titanium White

### BRUSHES:

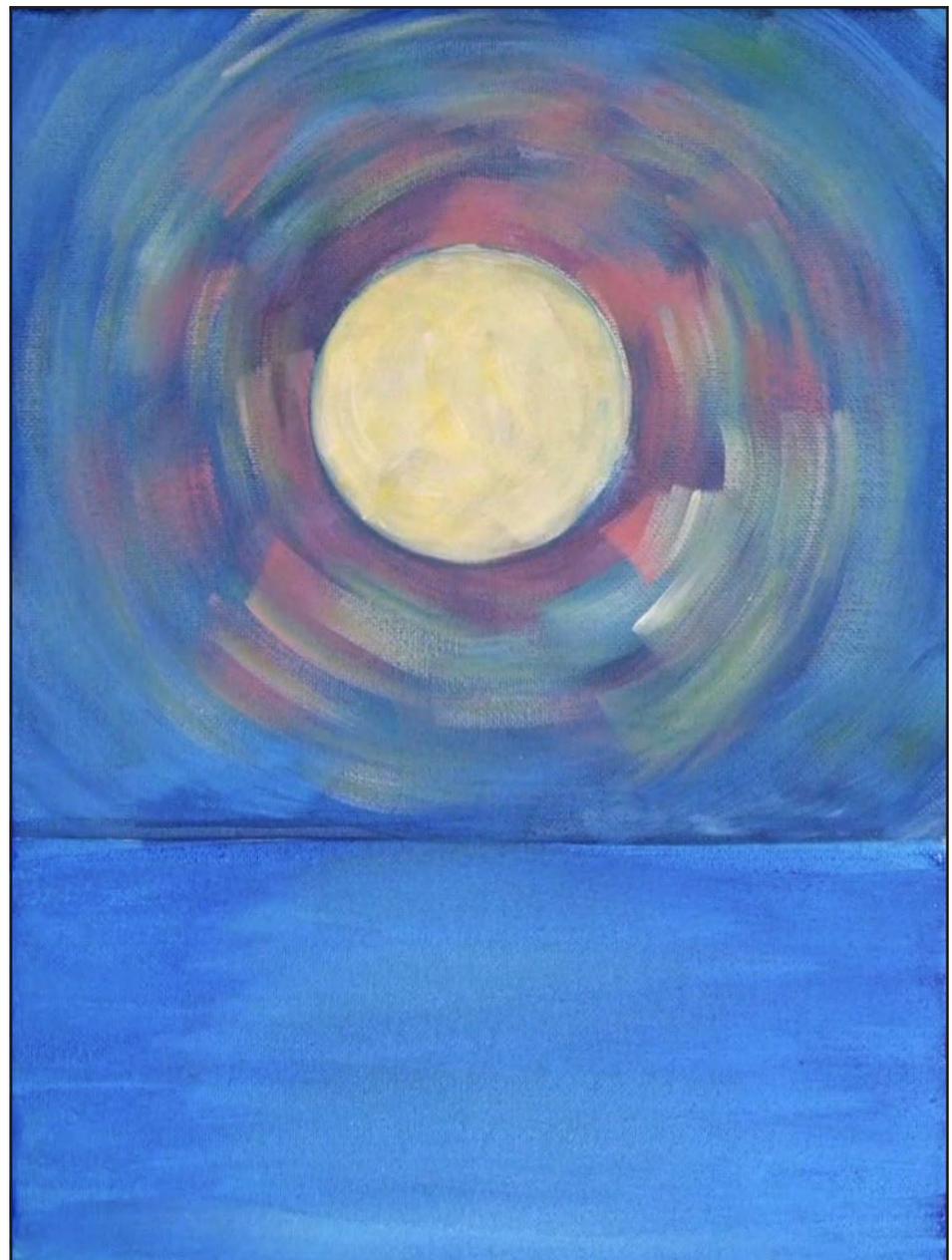
- Bright Brush

### STEP DISCUSSION:

Get the bright brush damp, and let's start adding some water. Use the blue to paint below the horizon line. You do want the brush strokes to go side to side, and not up and down. I'm not being precious, but I am trying to stay fairly level.

Mix a little yellow, a little blue, and a little white and lay in a corridor of light, in the water, in front of the moon.

Dry.





# STEP FIVE - CORRIDOR OF LIGHT

## NOT JUST ANY CORRIDOR OF LIGHT

### PAINT:

- Primary Blue
- Primary Yellow
- Titanium White

### BRUSHES:

- Bright Brush
- Angle Brush

### STEP DISCUSSION:

Blue is quite transparent, so let's add another layer of that light blue with the bright brush. Make dashing lines that are horizontal in that corridor of light. The moon definitely is a source of light at night.

Come back with blue and build in from both sides of the canvas into the corridor of light. Everything should be a little irregular as shimmers do not march in a row but shimmer to their own beat.

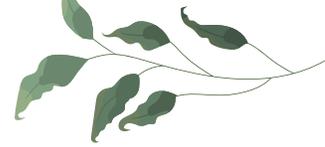
Keep working that mix of colors to build up the corridor of light.

Let Dry.

Switch to the angle brush. Mix some yellow into white and paint little, bright horizontal pops of color in that corridor. You want to zig zag in the water and to see some of the original blue, implying that there might be movement in the water.

Dry.





# STEP SIX - REEDS

## CATTAILS...NOT CAT'S TAILS

### PAINT:

- Mars Black

### BRUSHES:

- Angle Brush
- Chalk Pencil or Watercolor Pencil

### STEP DISCUSSION:

Reeds come next, and we are going to layer them on first to "push them back".

With a chalk pencil on the left bottom corner of the canvas, draw a focal cattail that arches up almost level with the moon. As you add 2 more to it's right, you don't want to go as high, so as not to cover the moon. Then put in the cattails that live on the right hand side of the canvas in your world. If you don't like what you draw, dampen a brush, remove the chalk, let it dry, and redraw it.

I'm going to start adding reeds. Use the brush to add a couple of drops of water to the black to thin it. I paint from the outside in, and from the bottom to top. I paint in this direction because I am right handed and it is the direction of my power stroke. Give the reeds some gestures and have them be irregular.

The tops of the cattails are

short strokes across the reed, up to ½" wide, with a tip of the reed showing above this pod area. They are super fluffy.

When working with black, take your time, watch your pressure, and don't stress. Acrylic is very fixable if you do something you don't like.

When you're happy with the cattails, paint in some random tall spikes of watery grasses with the thinned black. You do want to see water between the grasses but the bottom corner should kind of be a solid black. Do the same thing on both sides of the canvas. These grasses arch and curve and grow randomly.

Rinse your brush thoroughly and dry the canvas.





# STEP SEVEN - CATTAILS

## A BIT OF ZHUZH

### PAINT:

- Primary Red
- Primary Yellow
- Titanium White

### BRUSHES:

- Angle Brush

### STEP DISCUSSION:

It is already a pretty composition, but I need zhuzh.

Use the angle brush to pull out some yellow, then add a small amount of red to make an orange. Add white to get a lighter orange, and layer it over the tops of the cattails. The way you layer them will actually determine which one is behind and which one is closer to the viewer. You can use the photo reference I provide in this step to help you with placement, but I'm pretty sure that you have already discovered that you have GOT this.

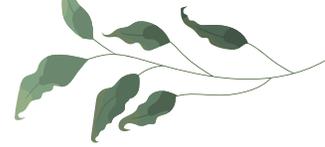
Add more yellow and white to your mix and flick bits of this bright highlight along the side of the cattail facing the moon's corridor of light .

Rinse your brush and wipe.

Get white for the very last random highlights, in places along the cattails. If you have trouble, dry the canvas first.

Dry.





# STEP EIGHT - HIGHLIGHTING THE REEDS

## THE DEPTH OF SPIKY LEAVES

### PAINT:

- Primary Yellow
- Primary Blue
- Titanium White

### BRUSHES:

- Angle Brush

### STEP DISCUSSION:

To give the leaves depth, use the angle brush and take yellow over to the blue and mix a green color, and then add some white to it. You want a simple green, a little on the yellow-green side. Then on the edge of the brush, swipe up some random spikes of grasses, thinning the paint with water as you need to in order to improve flow.

Add more yellow and white to the mix for a distinctively brighter color and keeping in mind that less is more, add some highlight spikes of grasses.

Rinse out and dry.





# STEP NINE - DRAGONFLY

## CHARMING DRAGONFLIES

### PAINT:

- Mars Black

### BRUSHES:

- Round Brush
- Chalk Pencil or Watercolor Pencil

### STEP DISCUSSION:

For charming dragonflies, get your chalk pencil and estimate the space where the first one will reside. Make a curved line below the moon. Across the moon from this, make another line that curves in the opposite direction. Add their little heads. Sketch in the wings keeping in mind that the bottom dragonfly's wings will probably layer over the cattails. The upper dragonfly's wings will bend back the other way.

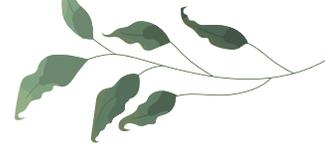
Thin your black paint using a round brush and paint in the heads, then make dots that get smaller going down the spine of the dragonfly. Outline the upper wings and the lower wings.

Rinse your brush and dry the canvas.

*John: I am a professional at watching paint dry.*

*Sherpa Tip: A good ounce of dry is a good ounce of prevention.*





# STEP TEN - DRAGONFLY DETAILS

## AND ALL THAT PIZAZZ?

### PAINT:

- Primary Yellow
- Primary Red
- Titanium White

### BRUSHES:

- Round Brush

### STEP DISCUSSION:

WE DO, WE DO, but we want more, so with the Round brush and white, paint inside the wings allowing that black of the outline to still show. Add highlights to the upper head and to the dots on his body. This white is mostly to allow the bright colors we add next to show up brightly against this intense background.

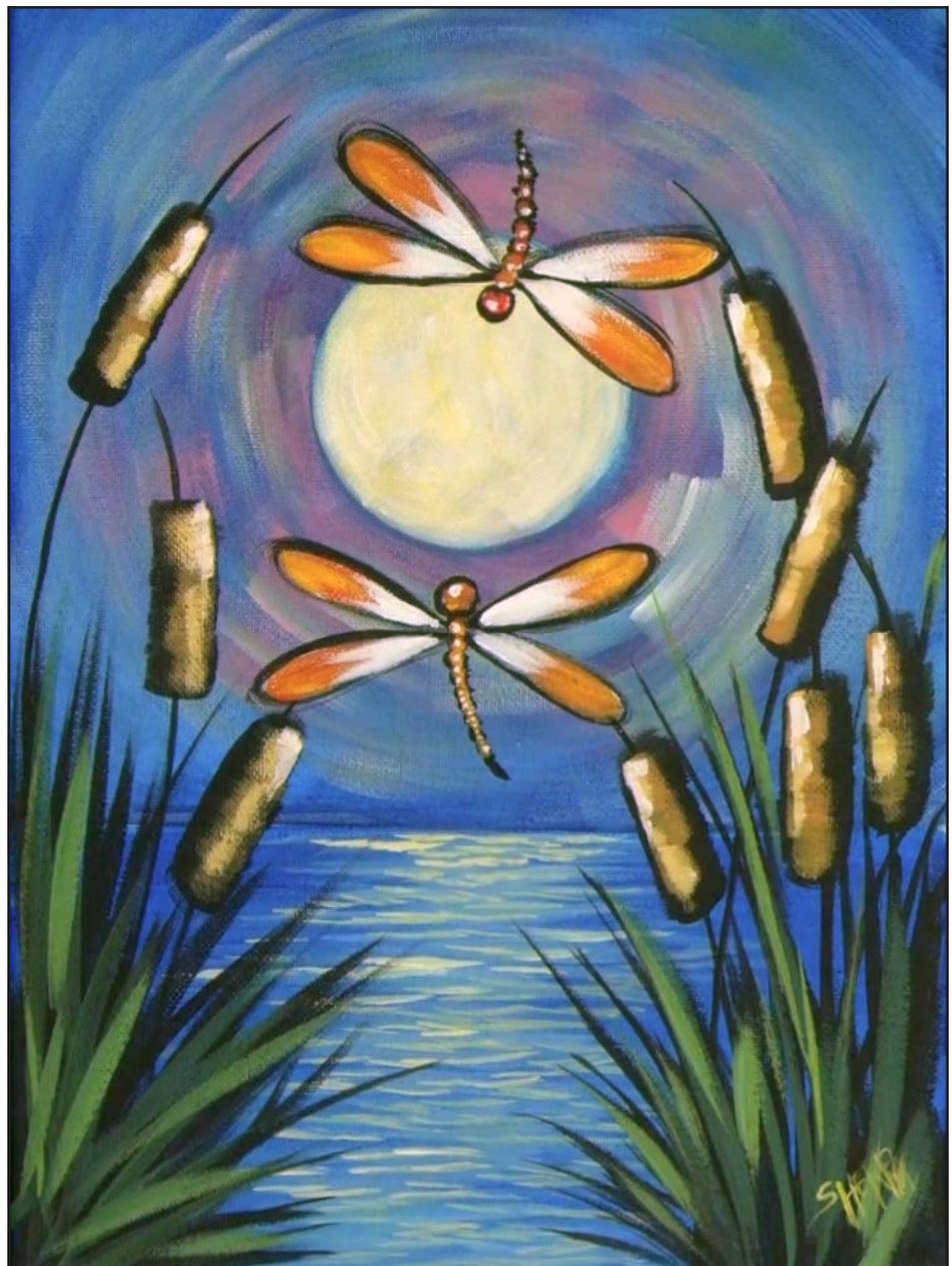
Dry the canvas.

Make a bright orange by adding red to yellow, but since we want a bright orange, and bright equals more red, so add more red. Then paint in the outer tip section of the wings allowing the white to remain on the wing closest to the body, on both dragonflies.

Remember to adjust your canvas so you can keep good body posture, not the other way around. Come back with orange and glaze the dots along the spines.

Get some thinned white and add highlights on the heads and spine dots and inner wings of both dragonflies.

Sign.



# Q & A

HAS TAS EVER USED GRAPHITE PAPER WITH TRACEABLES? PROS AND CONS?

I have - pros is it's easy to find and it makes dark marks. Cons doesn't work great over a fully painted surface of acrylic and is not easily removed from canvas before it's painted.

COULD YOU DO THE SKY WITH A FAN BRUSH?

Yes you totally could.

ARE YOU USING PRESSURE FOR THE GRASS?

It's the grass stroke from the technique video; firm at the start releasing at the end.

DO YOU USE CATS TONGUE FOR ALL THINGS LIKE THE GRASS OR NO?

I'm not using a Cat's Tongue in this series at all. I used an angle brush for the grass and stems on today's painting.

DO YOU TURN YOUR CANVAS WHEN YOU'RE WORKING ON AN EASEL?

I still turn it some and by rotating, I find it helps a lot, but the easel lets me back up and that helps a lot as well.

IF WE CHANGE COLORS OR ADD THINGS TO THE PAINTINGS IS THAT OK? WILL IT AFFECT THE CERTIFICATE?

For the most part it would not at all.



## THE ART SHERPA

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#THEARTSHERPA

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Read our full disclosure here that covers partnerships and affiliate links  
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**TO GET TEXT NOTIFICATIONS OF WHEN WE ARE LIVE**

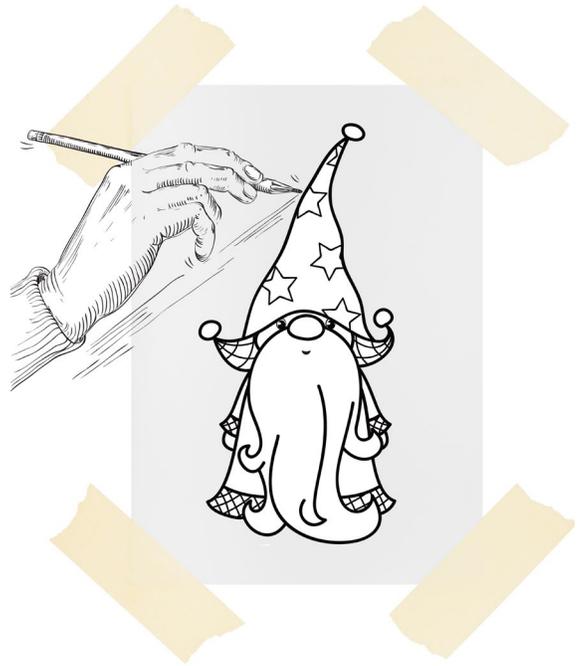
Text theartsherpa on your phone to the number 33222

## THE TRACING METHOD

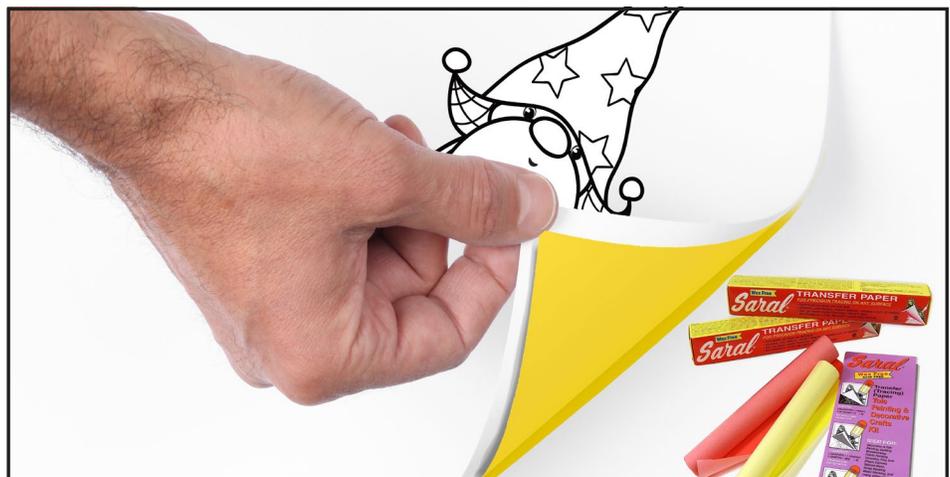
- Adjust the size to fit your surface and be sure to check your printer settings to see if the final size reflects the size you need.



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.

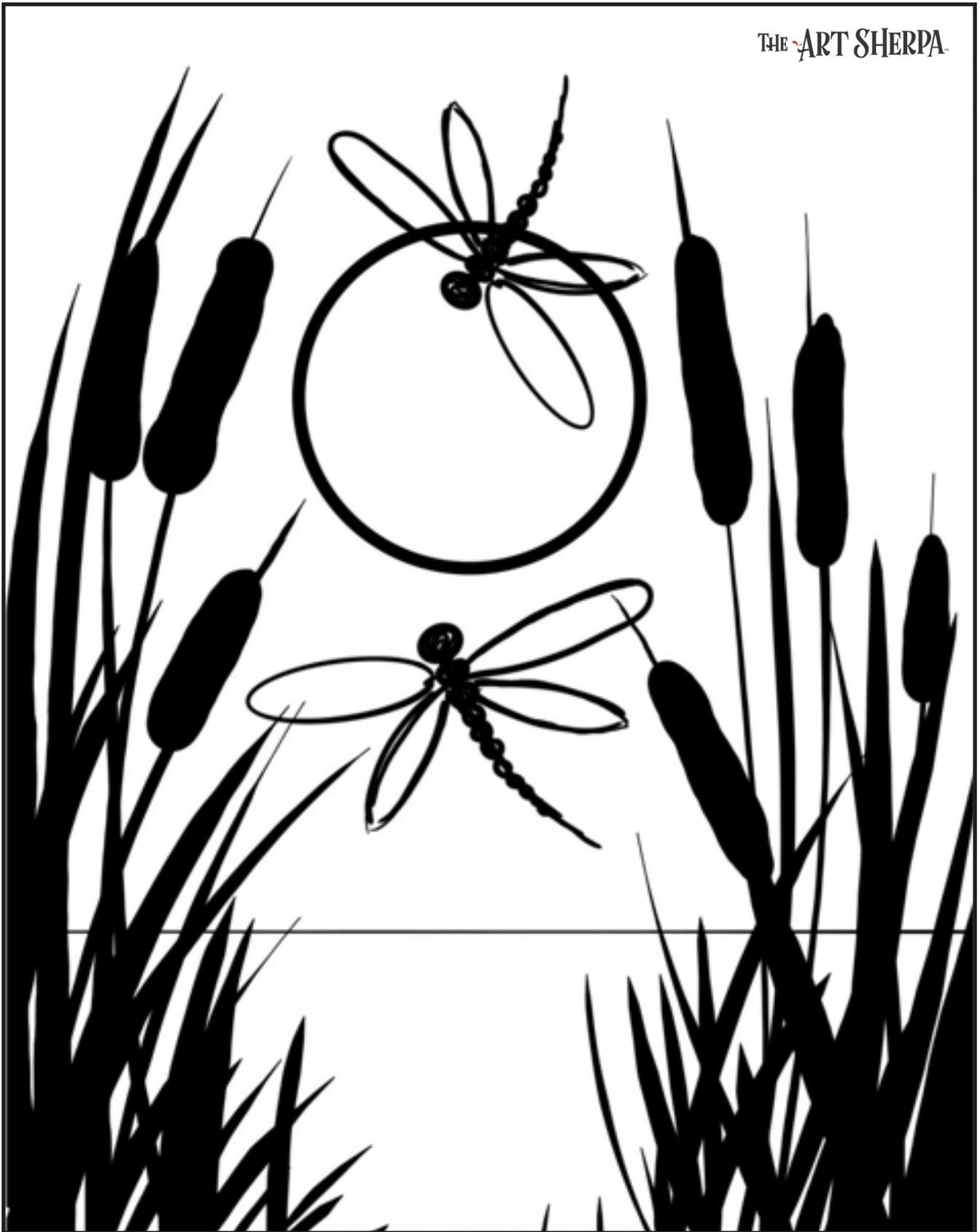


- Rub the back with graphite or use Saral paper and skip this step.
- Be sure to rub the back of your paper on the side without the lines drawing using a HB pencil.
- Hold up to window light to make sure graphite covers all the lines of the subject drawing.
- Test your Saral paper to make sure the color 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:

THE ART SHERPA





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