

THE ART SHERPA™

HOW TO PAINT

IN ACRYLIC



SOLSTICE SONG

BY: THE ART SHERPA

NAME CREDIT TO PATRON: SHARON O'BRIEN

STEPS: 11 | DIFFICULTY: INTERMEDIATE | 2 HOOTS



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SHERPA FORWARD:

As I head into the last two tutorials of 2021, I hope that my goal has been achieved to teach art rather than demonstrate how to paint art.

In November 2021, my community undertook a month-long painting journey entitled "Beginners Acrylic Paint Course" which consisted of almost daily premiers on YouTube and Facebook, followed by a live Q&A session. It was a true beginners art course and taught all a beginner needs to know to be able to paint my beginner, 1 Hoot, paintings. If you are a beginner painter and did not take advantage of that course, which culminates with a Certificate of Completion, I highly encourage you to do so.

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. 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.

<https://theartsherpa.com/BeginnerAcrylicPaintingCourse>

Traceables and grid resources for this tutorial can be found at theartsherpa.com.

This tutorial is not extremely difficult and will enforce skills in determining the order of the application of paint, following the steps closely, creating and reusing color mixes, and being careful of frequent brush changes. Your end result will probably be by using this document as well as following the tutorial step by step. If you are a beginning painter and want to attempt this, I recommend that you take advantage of all the available free resources I provide.

I have done numerous holiday themed tutorials in years past that can be found on my website if you would like to see them. If there is something you don't like in the reference, you won't like it in the painting. Remove it or change it. I have also added the color Yellow Ochre to the 2021 palette for this one to aid in the skin tones.

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 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:

- 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
- Fluid White Paint = FWP

BRUSHES:

- #4 TAS Round
- #1 Monogram Liner
- #12 Round Blender
- 1" Oval Mop
- TAS Splatter Tool
- ½" Angle Brush
- Grass Comb/Grainer

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 dry before you proceed.)
- Optional: StayWet Palette

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
- Setting a Horizon line
- 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	3:30	BACKGROUND
STEP 2	11:39	BRANCH AND PINECONES
STEP 3	19:13	PINE NEEDLES
STEP 4	22:16	BRANCH TEXTURE
STEP 5	30:37	MORE NEEDLEWORK
STEP 6	38:59	SNOW
STEP 7	48:55	PINECONE DETAIL
STEP 8	1:00:04	BIRD BEGINNINGS
STEP 9	1:07:31	FILLING IN THE BIRD
STEP 10	1:16:19	BIRD DETAILS
STEP 11	1:20:45	FINAL DETAILS 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.





24

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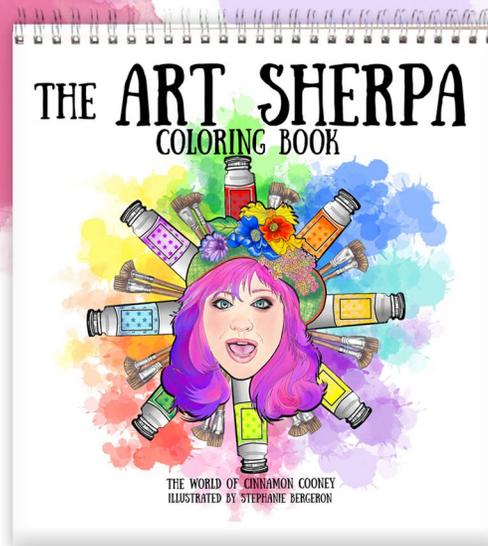


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STEP 1 - BACKGROUND

“THE BLOOM EFFECT OF WATERCOLOR”

PAINT:

Cad Red Medium = CRM

Cad Yellow Medium = CYM

Phthalo Blue = PB

Ultramarine Blue = UB

Burnt Sienna = BS

Mars Black = MB

Titanium White = TW

Phthalo Green = PG

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

1" Oval Mop Brush

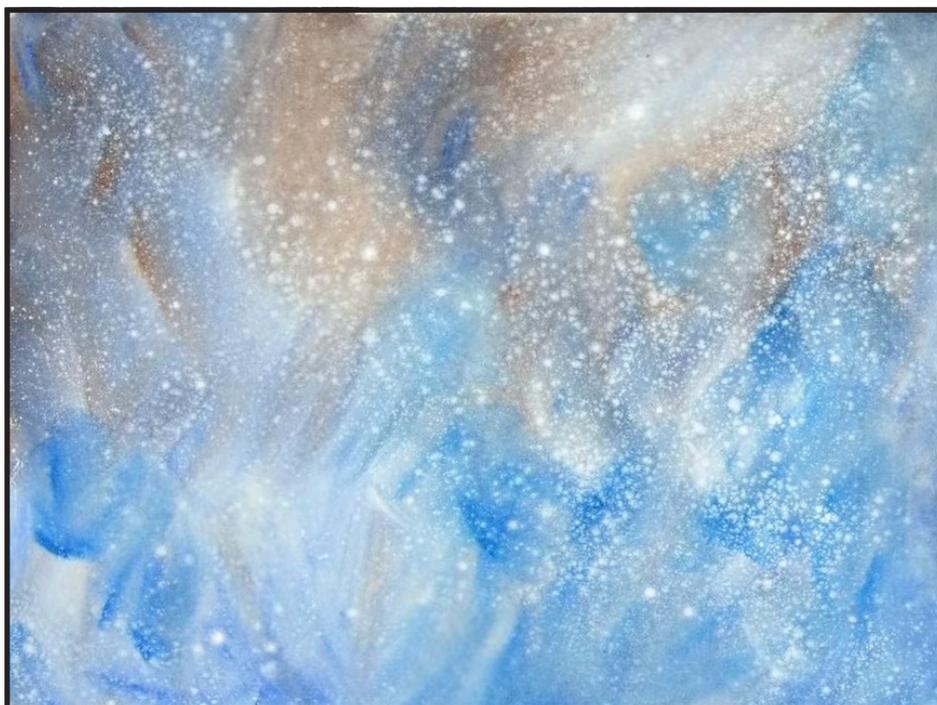
TAS Splatter Tool

STEP DISCUSSION

- As we start this tutorial, you should know that I will be leading you, as some of you learn to paint acrylic paint in the watercolor technique.
- Put out CRM, CYM, PG, BS, UB, PB, TW & MB on your palette.
- With a spray bottle, mist the paper. Then with a mop brush, wet the paper all over with the water. Add some UB on the mop and perhaps a touch of TW here and there, and just sweep the color into the damp paper. Light brush strokes in a criss-cross random style about halfway up the canvas.
- Make gray with UB + BS, put that into the sky area above the layer you just put in.
- Mix PB + UB for some pops of blue in and around the paper.

- Come back with TW in places.
- Rinse the brush and get a Splatter Tool loaded with TW and splatter some snowflakes on the canvas. The flakes are unique because the paper is still wet and the paint “bleeds out” for a beautiful, distant snow effect.
- It has to dry completely and would be best to allow it to dry naturally.

***Sherpa Tip:** I am not switching to watercolor brushes because it is acrylic and acrylic is hard on brushes and destroys them.*



STEP 2 - BRANCH AND PINECONES

“LIKE YA DO”

PAINT:

Burnt Sienna = BS

Mars Black = MB

Ultramarine Blue = UB

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

TAS #4 Round Brush

STEP DISCUSSION

- With a damp round brush, get BS and loosely sketch, or “washerly”, like ya do, paint in a few branches for our little bird to perch on. You can refer to the photo reference at the

end of this step and to the traceable to assist you. You can also just use the traceable.

- Rinse the brush and get BS + MB on the wet brush, and paint the bottom of the branches where they would be in shadow.
- Bring this color down below the branch, and with push pull strokes, start adding a silhouette of a pinecone, hanging down from the tree about mid-branch.
- Build up another pine cone at the end of the lowest branch. It would be ok to add some UB into the brown-black mix. Add a second neighbor pine cone at the end of the lowest branch.
- Add a pinecone at the “Y” branch in the limb and add a little friend next to him on that branch.

***Sherpa Tip:** As our water on the canvas dries, you will see the paint act and seem more like acrylic.*



STEP 3 - PINE NEEDLES

“SCENTS OF CHRISTMAS PAST”

PAINT:

Phthalo Green = PG

Burnt Sienna = BS

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

#4 TAS Round Brush

STEP DISCUSSION

- Rinse the round brush and mix PG + BS. Then on the upper part of the branch add some pine needles along the sides; just very soft, irregularly placed needle shapes. Keep it random. Add needles

to all the offshoot branches on your pine bough.

- Rinse the brush.





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STEP 4 - BRANCH TEXTURE

“THE BRANCH IS ALIVE”

PAINT:

Cad Red Medium = CRM

Cad Yellow Medium = CYM

Ultramarine Blue = UB

Burnt Sienna = BS

Mars Black = MB

Titanium White = TW

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

TAS #4 Round Brush

½" Angle Brush

Grass Comb/Grainer

STEP DISCUSSION

- To define the branches, mix CRM + CYM to a very

yellow-orange, then add BS or you could even use yellow ochre, and tap out the detailing on the top part of the branches.

- Add TW, to the tree brown mix, with just a touch of MB, and tap it in, to create more of a wood effect on the branches. Branches have many many colors.
- Mix MB + UB, add deep shadows on the branches, especially the main branch.
- Play with all your browns and oranges and brown-blacks to make this branch just exactly what you want it to be.
- Come back with CYM + TW for a highlight color.

***Sherpa Tip:** In acrylic, we paint dark to light, typically. In watercolor, we paint light to dark. When using acrylic as watercolor, we use a mixture of both techniques. In mixed media, we sometimes have acrylic and watercolor in one project, but usually, watercolor gets applied first, then acrylic. Watercolor is too transparent to cover over acrylic.*



STEP 5 - MORE NEEDLEWORK

“BUT NOTHING LIKE CROSSSTITCH”

PAINT:

Cad Yellow Medium = CYM

Phthalo Green = PG

Burnt Sienna = BS

Titanium White = TW

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

#4 TAS Round

STEP DISCUSSION

- Continue using the Round brush and mix PG + BS + TW + CYM to a mid tone green. Use this to highlight or add pine needles on the bough. Our needles

have value, shape, and form.

- If you overpaint, add some dark needles back in with PG.
- Add more TW and CYM to the green mix and add some of these needles.
- Our bird has needles in front of him and needles behind him; these are all needles behind him.



STEP 6 - SNOW

“DOES IT MAKE WAFFLES?”

PAINT:

Ultramarine Blue = UB
Burnt Sienna = BS
Titanium White = TW
Fluid White Paint = FWP

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

#12 Round Dome Blender

STEP DISCUSSION

- Get the Princeton round dome blender and load TW to UB + BS for the first bits of snow. Just tap this in closest to the spine of the pine needles, on

the branches. Maybe snow gets caught in the bend of a branch. Just find the snow that lives in your pine cone branch, waiting on a little bird world.

- Rinse the brush and add TW to the mix for a brighter white, to highlight the snowy bits.
- Put out FWP and load this on the dome blender to add some highlights in the snow piles.

This little brush just does everything.

John - Does it make waffles?

Don't make food with your art supplies.



STEP 7 - PINECONE DETAILS

“LOOK AT US GO”

PAINT:

Cad Red Medium = CRM

Cad Yellow Medium = CYM

Burnt Sienna = BS

Mars Black = MB

Titanium White = TW

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

#4 TAS Round Brush

STEP DISCUSSION

- We need to add some pine needles that go up over the snow using our greens. You don't need a ton, just a few for perspective and depth.
- Rinse the brush and make a couple of mixes to dress our pinecones. For our first mix make a bright orange by mixing CRM + CYM then add a skosh of BS. Our next mix will be made with some BS to MB. We will be using these mixes and BS to dress the pinecones.
- Refresh any colors that you may need on your palette.
- With the brown-black, define the pine cones scales with this dark mix. Add more BS in the mix and a touch of the orange and drop some of that color on the scales. You are never trying to cover up the first layer, you are enhancing the first layer.
- Lastly, get the lightest color and add some TW to it and use this as a highlight.



STEP 8 - BIRD BEGINNINGS

"IT'S JUST A PRETTY JOURNEY"

PAINT:

Ultramarine Blue = UB

Burnt Sienna = BS

Mars Black = MB

Titanium White = TW

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

#4 TAS Round Brush

Chalk/Watercolor Pencil

STEP DISCUSSION

- With a watercolor pencil, sketch in the bird. I started with the foot placement, but you can use the traceable if you'd like. His body is over his feet and his chest is puffed out. His head sits on his chest and to the side and his beak is turned up. His tail goes up and ends near some of the pine needles.
- With TW and UB on the round brush, paint in his chest near the neck, down to his feet. Paint the feathers that go from his cheek over his collar.
- Mix BS + TW to a gray and paint in the tail and the wing. Add more MB to the gray mix to add around the head and under the throat and to pull some feathers over the chest. Paint the beak with this dark color.
- Use the yellow-red-brown from the branches and work this on the bottom half of his belly towards the tail feathers. Paint in his legs and claws with the brown-black.

***Sherpa Tip:** Watercolor pencil blends with water, so allows for ease in fixing anything you need to.*



STEP 9 - FILLING IN THE BIRD

“LEMME SEE YOU SHAKE THOSE TAIL FEATHERS”

PAINT:

Burnt Sienna = BS

Cad Yellow Medium = CYM

Ultramarine Blue = UB

Mars Black = MB

Titanium White = TW

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

#4 TAS Round Brush

STEP DISCUSSION

- Use a Round Brush and TW to add some feathers along his cheek and under the black feathers on his chest. Bring the light gray mix to

just under the white to the golden brown on the back part of the belly. There is also a touch of TW up over the beak which is very important.

- Add lighter gray to the tail feathers and dry brush that in. Add a little UB to the mix for the far tail feather. All of this is mostly dry brushed in.
- Mix gray and some of your golden yellow and add it under the white feathers leading toward the back and tail feathers.
- Get a bright yellow with CYM + TW to highlight the gold and tan belly.
- Mix MB + BS for the edge of the gray wings. Just play with your bird and his colors until you are happy with the bird who lives in your pine cone world.
- Use black to help you make little lines along the wing to give the image of separation of feathers. Add some arched lines on the far side of his body to give the illusion of his second wing.



STEP 10 - BIRD DETAILS

“THE BIRD IS THE WORD”

PAINT:

Ultramarine Blue = UB

Mars Black = MB

Titanium White = TW

Fluid White Paint = FWP

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

#1 TAS Detail Brush

#4 TAS Round

Grass Comb/Grainer

STEP DISCUSSION

- Use a Detail brush and UB + TW underneath the forehead to dot in a circle for the eye and add

the two beak parts. Add MB on the upper and lower beak sections and under the throat a little.

- Get FWP and add a dot in the eye for a highlight using a Round brush.
- Switch to the Detail brush and FWP to accent the beak divide.
- Use the Round brush again, to add any pops of TW. that you think might be missing.
- Thin some MB with water and add in some cast shadows, from the pine needles, onto the Chickadee. Then add some yellow fluff on the Chickadee belly, above the legs.



STEP 11 - FINAL DETAILS

“ADIEU FOR NOW, BUT SEE YOU IN JANUARY 2022”

PAINT:

Phthalo Green = PG

Burnt Sienna = BS

Titanium White = TW

Fluid White Paint = FWP

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

#4 TAS Round

Grass Comb/Grainer

STEP DISCUSSION

- With PG + BS on a Round brush, add more pine needles that go in front of the bird.

- Get blue and gray on the brush and desaturate near the base of the pine cones, in places. Just a kind of a glaze that adds dimension to the painting. You can also shade near the spines in the pine needle groupings.
- Switch to the Round Blender and FWP to highlight any snow where you think you need to highlight snow.
- Add a few more feathery effects with FWP and the Grainer brush, on the Chickadee's chest and cheeks and tail sections.
- Sign.

“Merriest of Holiday Seasons and a Blessed New Year to you and yours from Cinnamon, John, and the entire Art Sherpa Team as we bid adieu to 2021”



THE TRACING METHOD

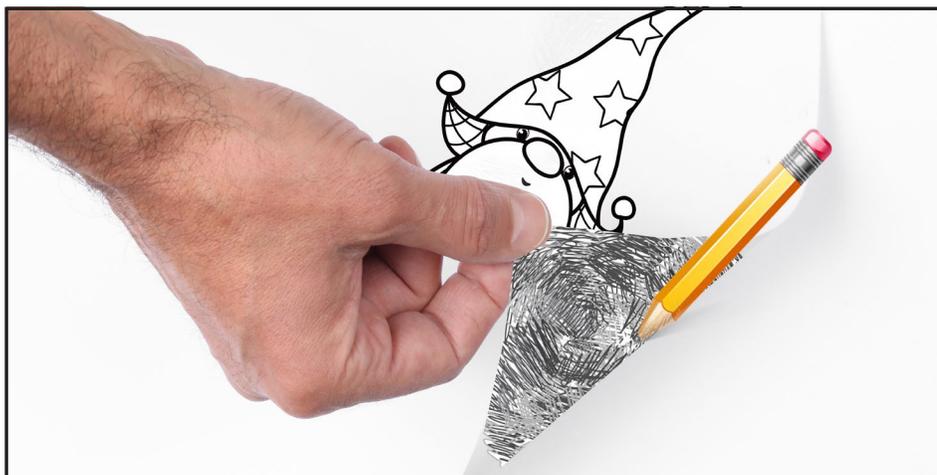
- Adjust the size to fit your surface and be sure to check your printer settings to see if the final size reflects the size you need.



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.

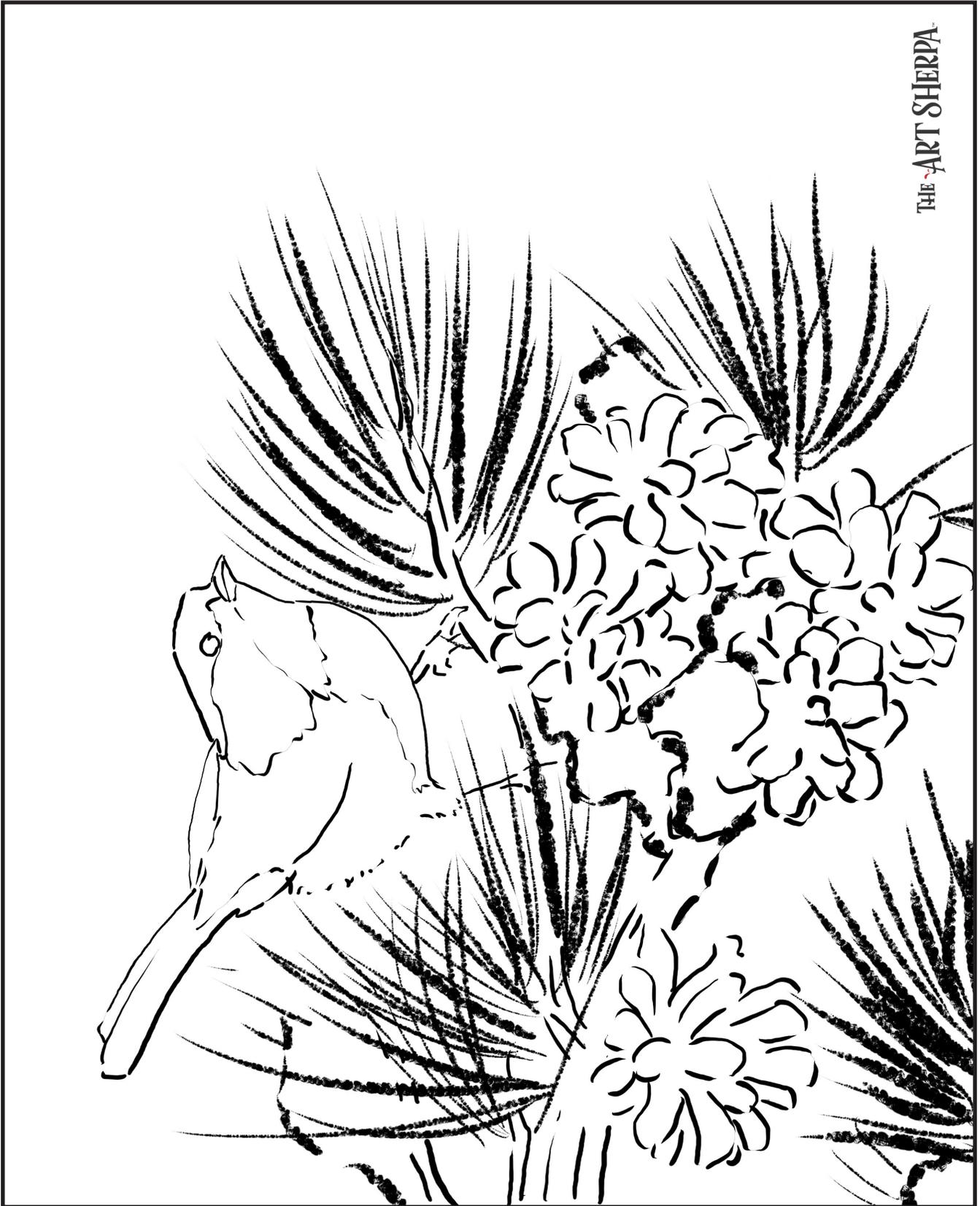


- Rub the back with graphite or use Saral paper and skip this step.
- Be sure to rub the back of your paper on the side without the lines drawing using a HB pencil.
- Hold up to window light to make sure graphite covers all the lines of the subject drawing.
- Test your Seral paper to make sure the color 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 9 x 12 canvas and the example is based on a one-inch square grid with everything of equal ratio. On your 9 x 12 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.

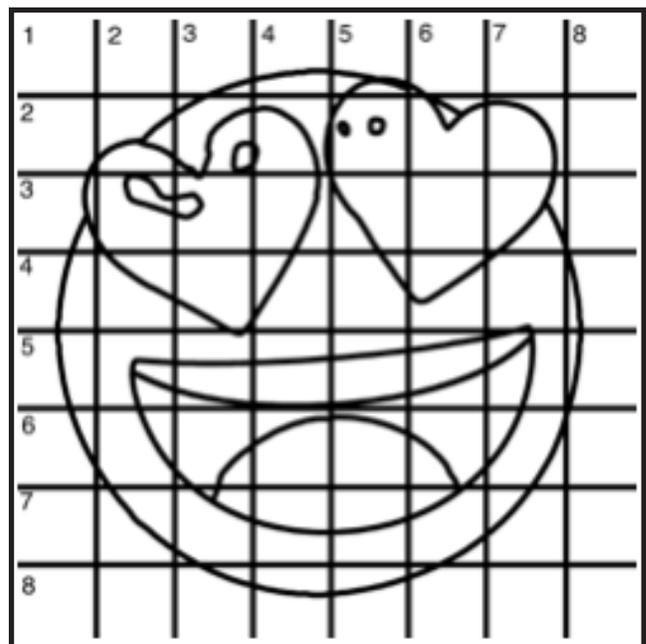
To draw the grid your canvas must be dry and it's advisable that it is also cool. You should use chalk that is wax or oil free. It must be pure chalk. I use a Dritz fabric-marking tool because it does fine lines easily and removes well from the canvas. There are also chalk pencils available or you could 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 - 12, left to right, and your rows 1 - 9 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.



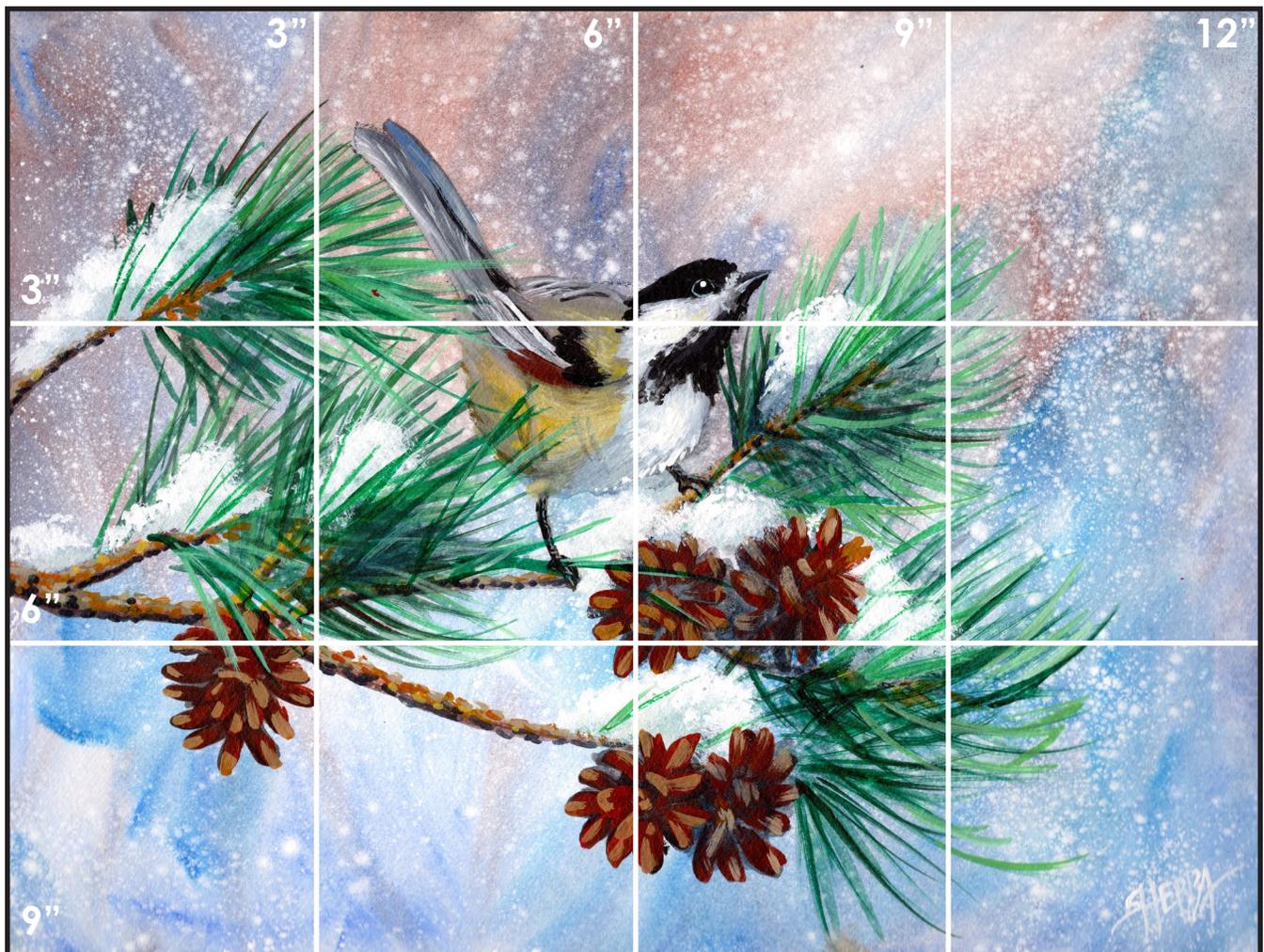
GRIDDING INSTRUCTIONS CONTINUED:

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 9 x 12 canvas to match the free grid for this project.

GRID REFERENCE:





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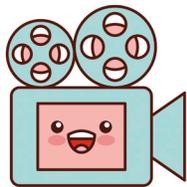
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