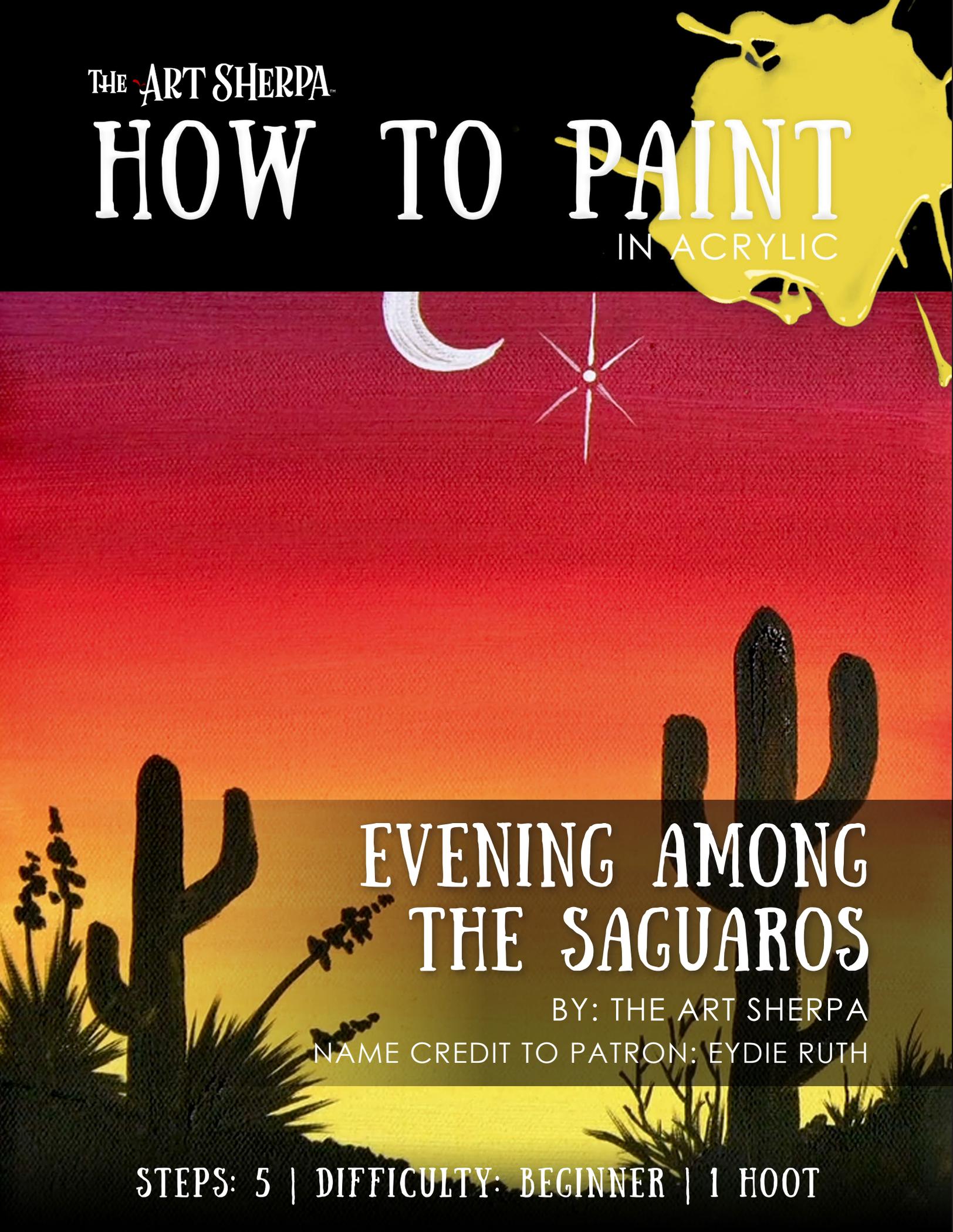


THE ART SHERPA™

# HOW TO PAINT

IN ACRYLIC



## EVENING AMONG THE SAGUAROS

BY: THE ART SHERPA  
NAME CREDIT TO PATRON: EYDIE RUTH

STEPS: 5 | DIFFICULTY: BEGINNER | 1 HOOT



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# SHERPA FORWARD:

I am resolved to do more to help teach art than demonstrate how to paint art and 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.

Traceables and grid resources for this tutorial are included and more can be found at: [www.theartsherpa.com](http://www.theartsherpa.com)

Keep 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.

It is a landscape painting, which is a depiction of natural scenery such as mountains, valleys, trees, rivers and forests, usually in a wide view of elements arranged in a coherent composition. Sky is usually included in the view and weather is often an element of the composition.

If you are a beginning painter and want to attempt this, I recommend that you choose one or two of the objects in the setting and concentrate on those and build up to the entire setting. I have done several smaller still life tutorials which can be found on my website if you would like to start with a less difficult painting. If there is something you don't like in the reference, you won't like it in the painting. Remove it or change it.

We sincerely hope 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](mailto: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
- Quinacridone Magenta = QM
- Cadmium Yellow Medium = CYM
- Dioxazine Purple = DP
- Phthalo Blue = PB
- Mars Black = MB
- Titanium White = TW

## BRUSHES:

- Large Hog Bright
- Large Synthetic Oval Mop
- Medium Synthetic Angle
- Small Synthetic Round
- X-Small Synthetic Round
- Dotting Tool

## TOOLS:

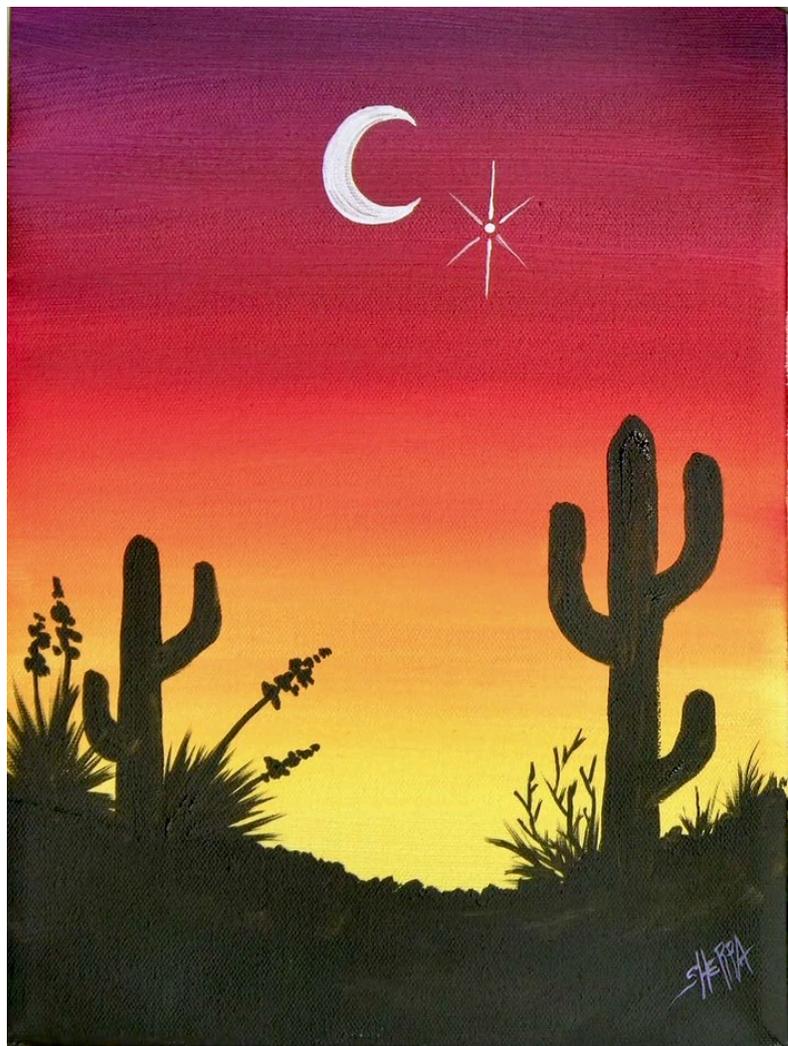
- 9 x 12 Canvas (If you notice that your canvas started to warp, as sometimes happens, just turn the canvas over and put it back side forward on your easel, then mist the back of the canvas. It usually resolves itself. Let dry before you proceed.)
- Optional: StayWet Palette
- T-Square Ruler
- Watercolor Pencil Or Chalk

## SYMBOL GUIDE:

- > Less than previous amount
- < More than previous amount
- + Equal amount

## TECHNIQUES YOU WILL USE IN THIS PAINTING:

- Painting a Silhouette Landscape
- Implying Foliage
- Atmospheric Perspective
- Finding Value
- Color Theory
- Directionality
- Blending Wet into Wet
- Setting a Horizon line
- Color Mixing



## 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	01:17	OMBRE BACKGROUND
STEP 2	08:15	SILHOUETTE ROCKS
STEP 3	11:37	CACTUS
STEP 4	15:15	GRASS AND PLANTS
STEP 5	19:17	MOON AND STARS
	22:40	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 - OMBRE BACKGROUND

## “THOSE NASTY BRUSH HAIRS”

### PAINT:

Cadmium Red Medium = CRM  
Quinacridone Magenta = QM  
Cadmium Yellow Medium = CYM  
Titanium White = TW  
Dioxazine Purple = DP

### BRUSHES & TOOLS:

Large Hog Bright  
Large Synthetic Oval Mop

### COLOR MIXES:

Orange = CRM + CYM  
Bright Orange = CRM > CYM  
Purple Pink = QM + DP > TW

### STEP DISCUSSION:

- Using the Hog brush and starting about 1 inch up from the bottom of the canvas, use Titanium White and a side to side stroke to paint almost up to the halfway mark. Wipe the brush and without rinsing, load on the Cadmium Yellow Medium. Paint that on top and into the white while the white is still wet. Rinse and wipe the brush.
- Add about an inch of the **Orange mix** above the yellow, then using light pressure paint it into the yellow area slightly, wet into wet. Use a dry Oval mop to softly blend these colors to create a smooth transition. Wipe the Oval brush on a towel.
- Switch back to the Bright brush and without rinsing out, paint the **Bright Orange mix** next. Use the Oval mop

again, to softly blend these colors. Wipe the Oval brush on a towel.

- Switch back to the Bright brush and add Quinacridone Magenta to the Bright Orange mix. Use the Oval mop in the same manner to blend.
- Switch back to the Bright brush and use the **Purple Pink mix** next, then more Dioxazine Purple at the very top of the canvas. Blend these colors as you did above using the Oval Mop.
- Adjust the transitions as desired using the Oval mop. Rinse the brushes.
- Dry the surface before continuing to the next step.



# STEP 2 - SILHOUETTE ROCKS

“DON'T USE OVERLY SMALL BRUSHES”

## PAINT:

Mars Black = MB

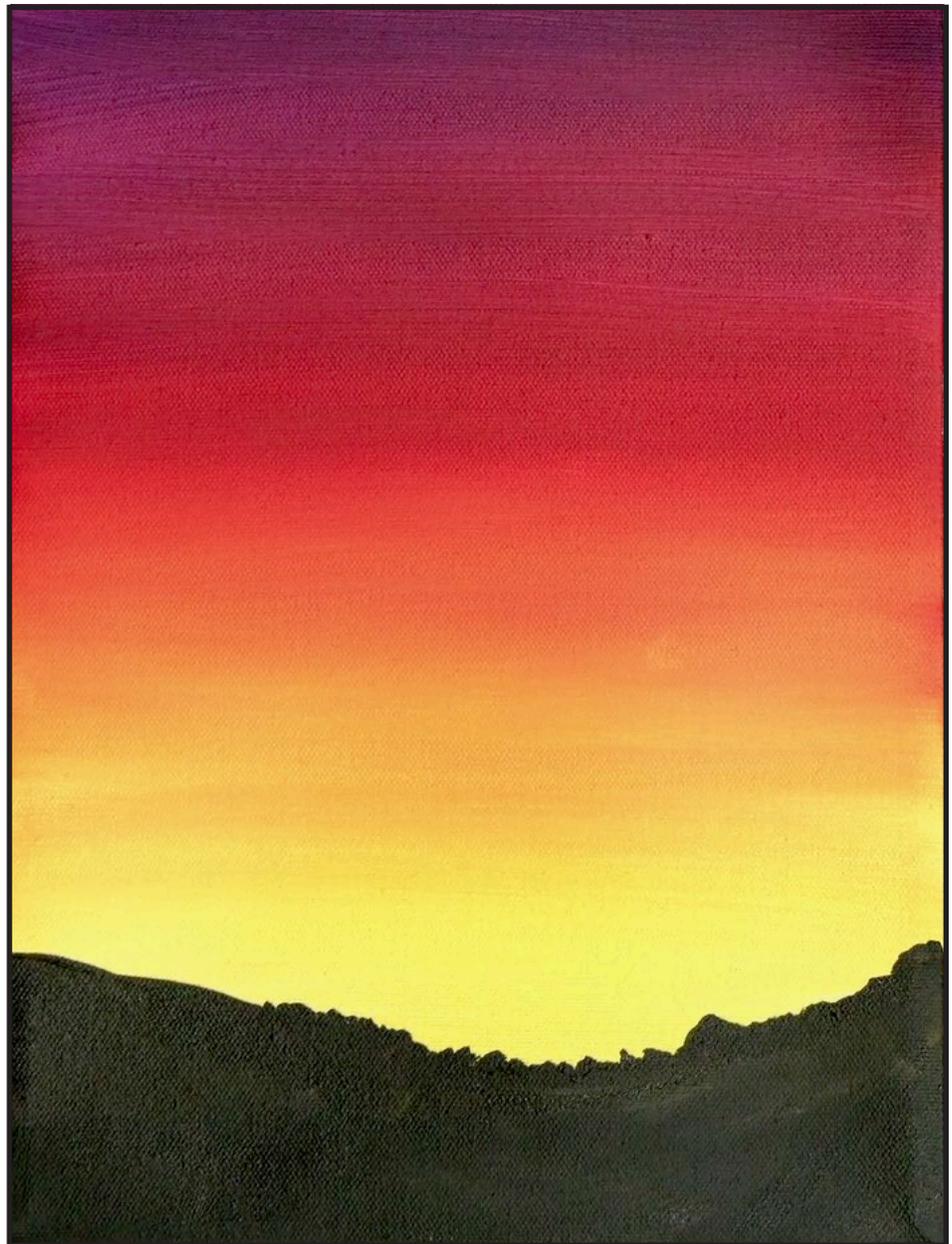
## BRUSHES & TOOLS:

Medium Synthetic Angle

## STEP DISCUSSION:

- Cover the unpainted canvas at the bottom using Mars Black. Then on the left side, use the edge of the brush and draw a hill a bit above the black area that slopes towards the center. From that point create a hill going up and off the right side of the canvas. Fill this area in with the Mars Black.
- Load the corner of the brush and paint irregular rock silhouettes along the top of the landmass that vary in size. Rinse.

*Sherpa Tip: It may require more than one coat of black to cover the sky, depending on the pigmentation of your acrylic paint.*



# STEP 3 - CACTUS

## “GIVING THE FINGER TO THE CACTUS”

### PAINT:

Mars Black = MB

### BRUSHES & TOOLS:

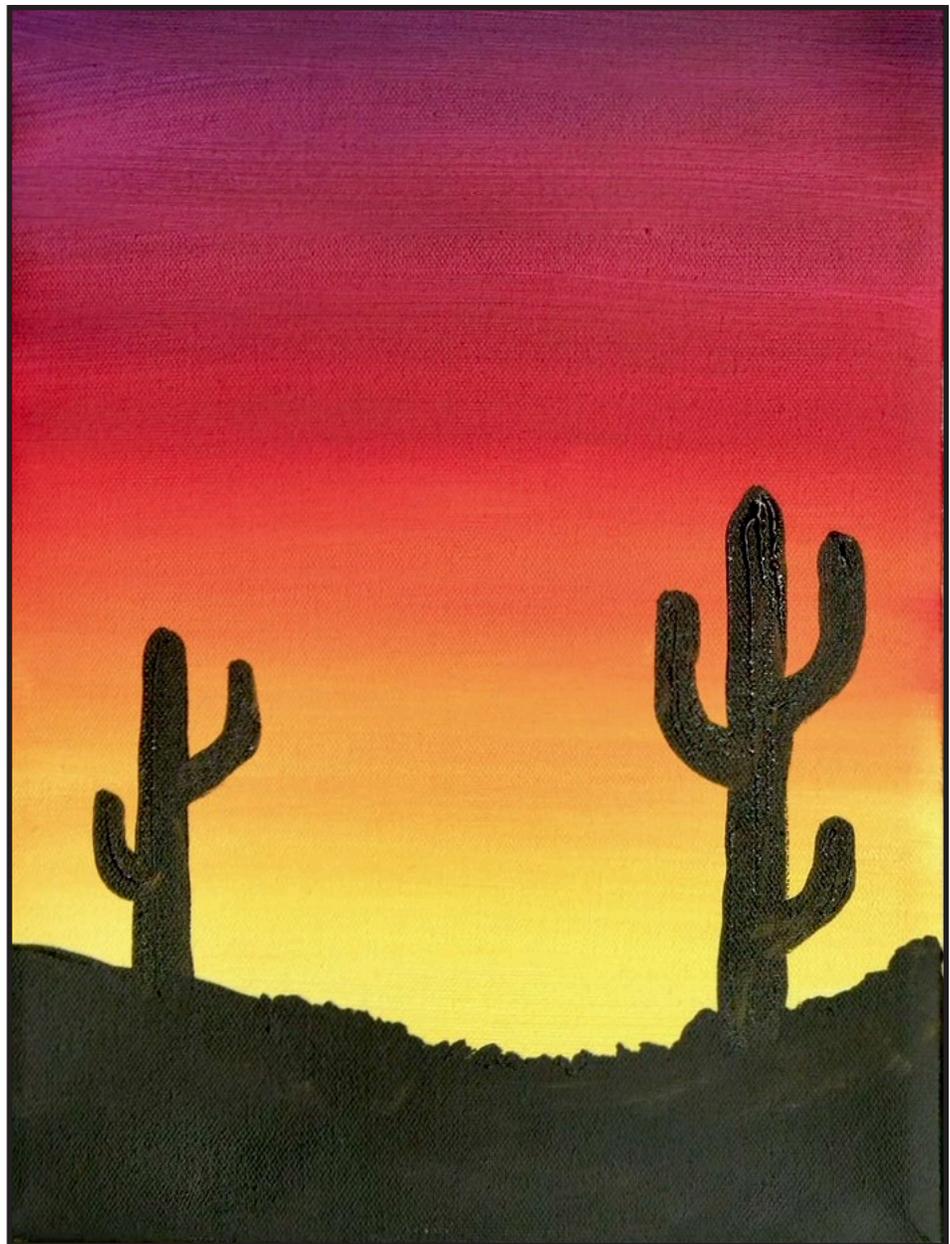
Small Synthetic Round  
Chalk Pencil or Watercolor  
Pencil

### STEP DISCUSSION:

- I chose to freehand this image but I have also provided a traceable 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. For a more visible image on video, I use paint to sketch this image onto the canvas. You should use a Chalk Pencil or Watercolor Pencil.
- Just above the halfway mark and about 3 fingers from the right side, paint a straight line down to the land. Add to this line so that the support trunk is between 1/2 - 1 inch thick. Paint an arm on the right side, starting a little below the top of the cactus. As it comes down, angle it into the main trunk. Paint a similar, opposing arm on the left side that is a

little lower. Then a third smaller arm on the right, closer to the bottom of the cactus. Thicken the arms but not quite as much as the main trunk.

- Paint a slightly shorter cactus on the left in the same manner except there are only two arms on this one. The right arm is higher on the trunk and the smaller left arm is lower.



# STEP 4 - GRASS AND PLANTS

## “LET’S FLICK IN SOME YUCCA”

### PAINT:

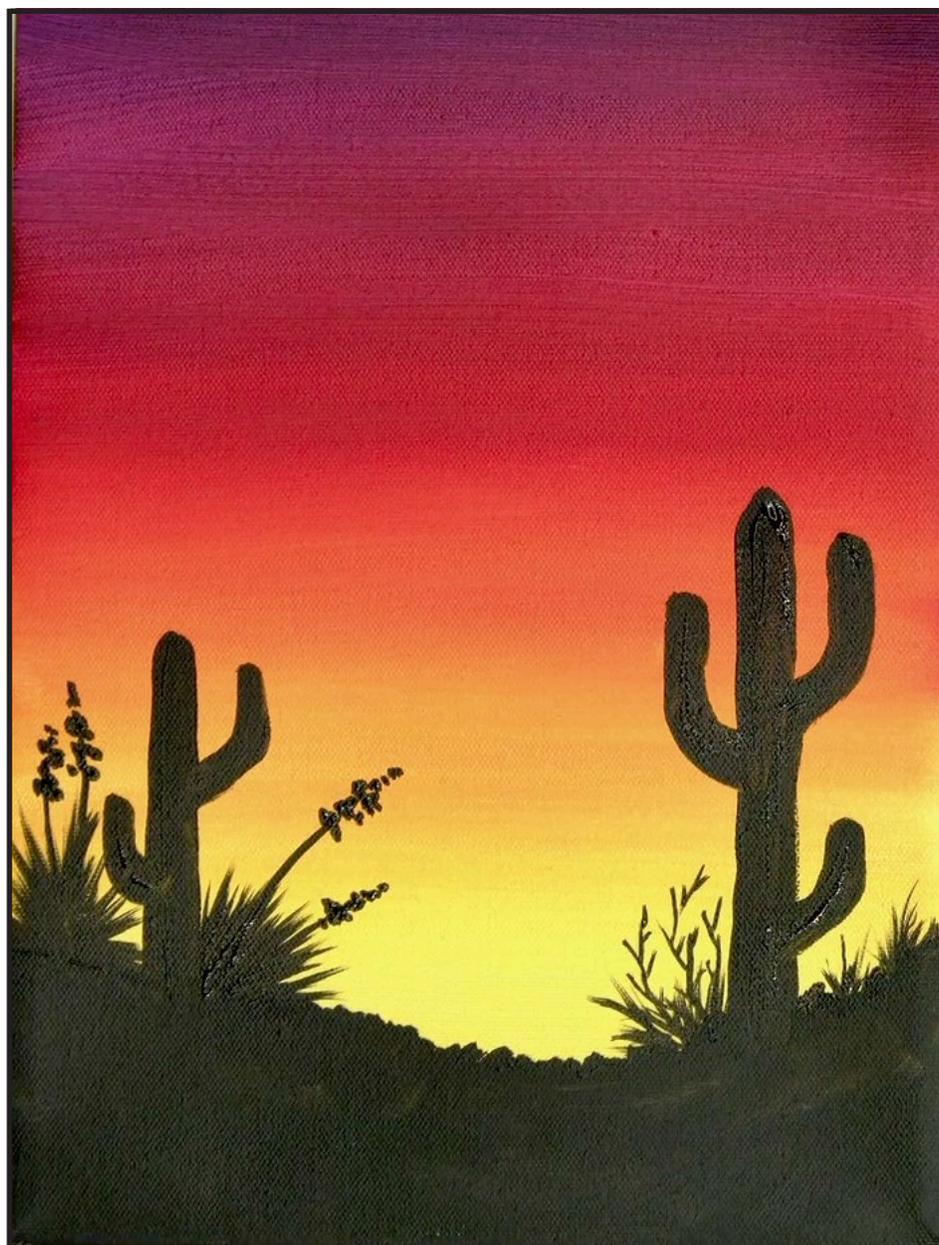
Mars Black = MB

### BRUSHES & TOOLS:

Small Synthetic Round

### STEP DISCUSSION:

- Slightly thin Mars Black with a drop or two of water and load it on the toe of the brush. Using light pressure, begin flicking upward strokes for the yucca plant on the left side of the smaller cactus. Radiate these strokes outward into a sort of semi circle shape. Paint two slightly crooked stalks coming from the center then, dot in the individual petal shapes that get smaller at the tops. Paint a second yucca plant in the same manner, on the right side of the small cactus.
- Paint some smaller grasses that grow in an unruly manner between the right side of the canvas and the cactus.
- Add a few twig-like plants to the left of this bigger cactus. Give them crooked spines that branch off in a few directions.
- Then flick in some grasses around the twigs and add more or adjust them as you like. Rinse.



# STEP 5 - MOON AND STARS

“THE STARS AT NIGHT, ARE BIG AND BRIGHT”

## PAINT:

Titanium White = TW

## BRUSHES & TOOLS:

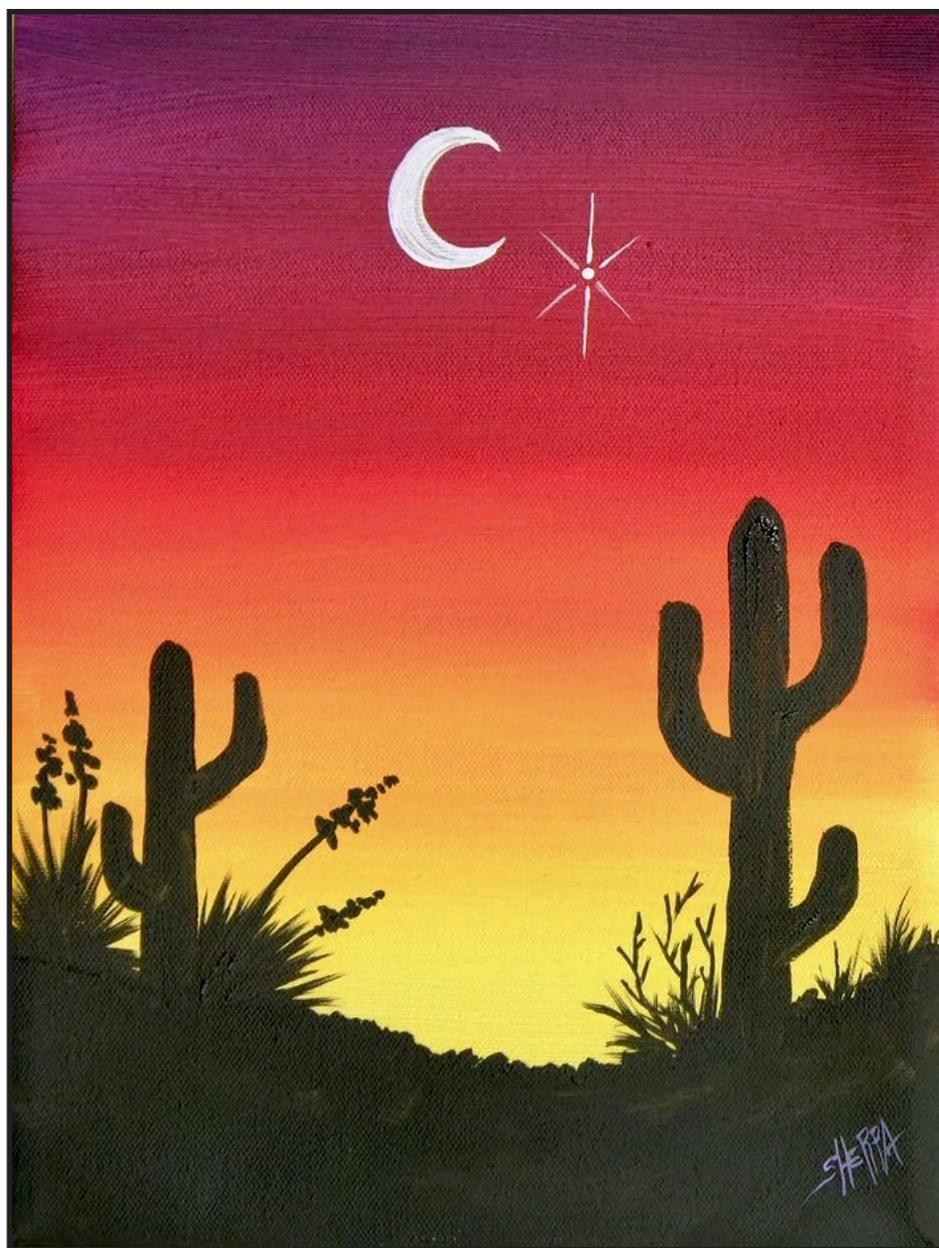
X-Small Synthetic Round

Small Synthetic Round

Dotting Tool

## STEP DISCUSSION:

- Load the toe of the Small Round brush and paint a “C” shape in the upper center of the canvas. Thicken it slightly. Rinse.
- Load the dotting tool with paint and to the right and below the bottom of the moon, tap a spot for the star center. Clean the tool.
- Switch to the X-Small Round brush and load the paint onto the toe. Carefully paint an upward twinkle that tapers out. Then add an opposing downward twinkle. Symmetrically, angle two more twinkles on either side of the center star. Rinse.
- Sign.





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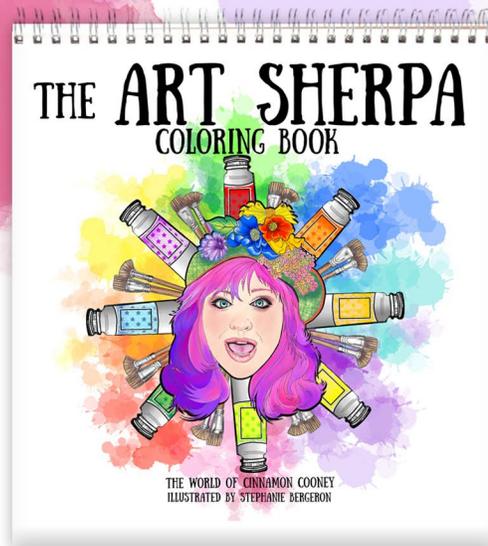


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## THE TRACING METHOD

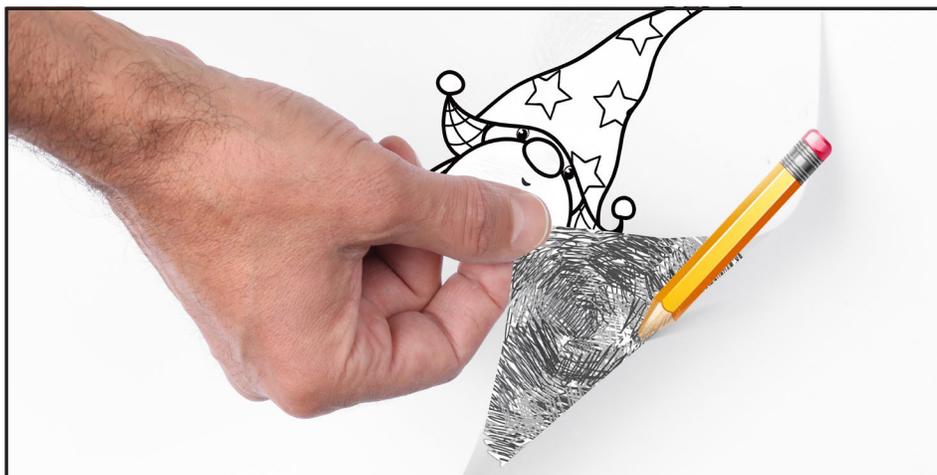
- Adjust the size to fit your surface and be sure to check your printer settings to see if the final size reflects the size you need.



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.

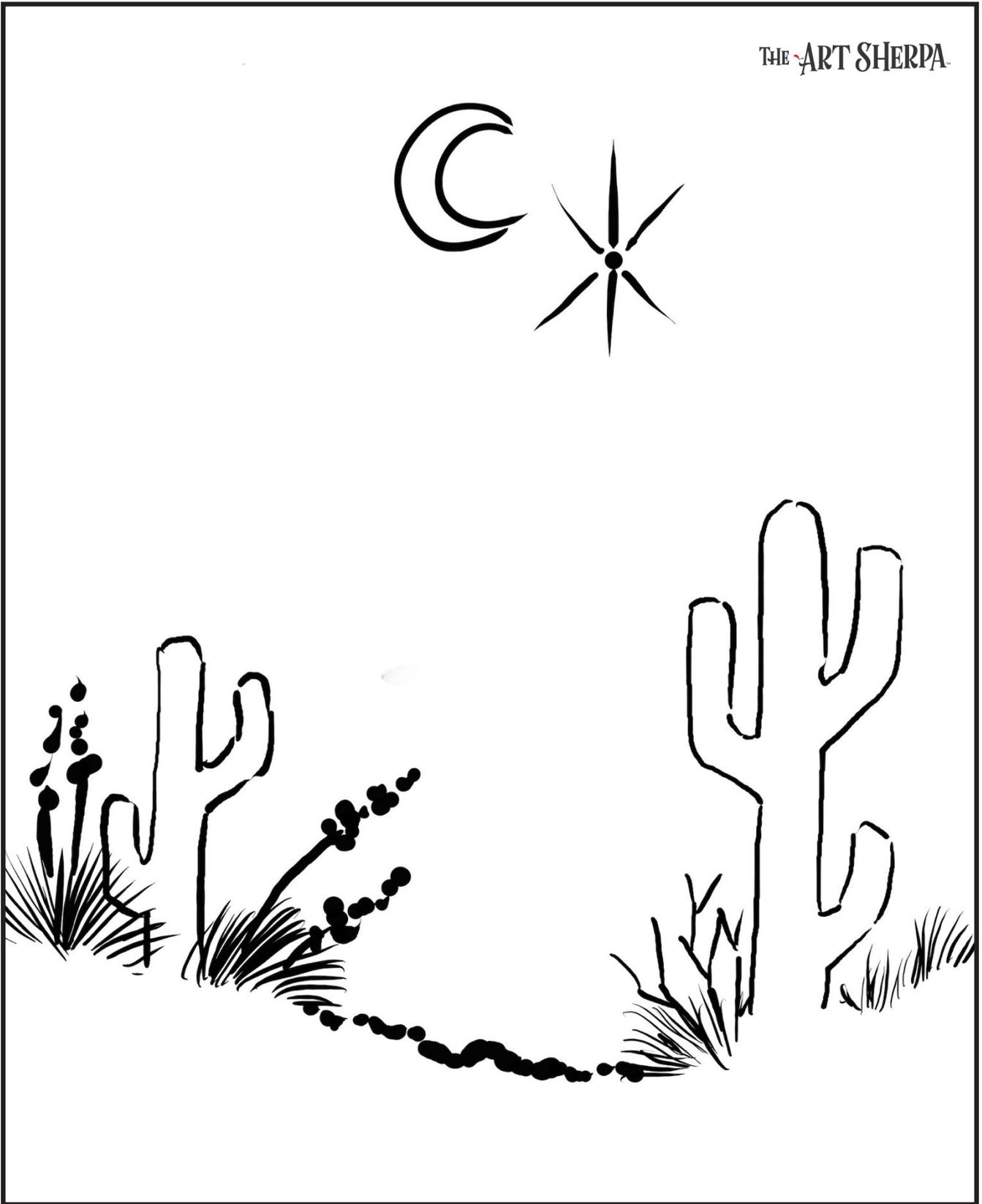


- Rub the back with graphite or use Saral paper and skip this step.
- Be sure to rub the back of your paper on the side without the lines drawing using a HB pencil.
- Hold up to window light to make sure graphite covers all the lines of the subject drawing.
- Test your Seral paper to make sure the color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

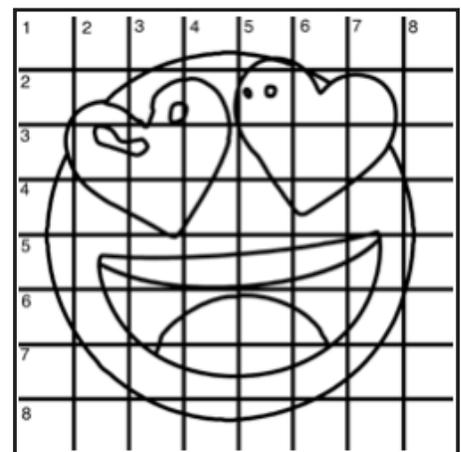
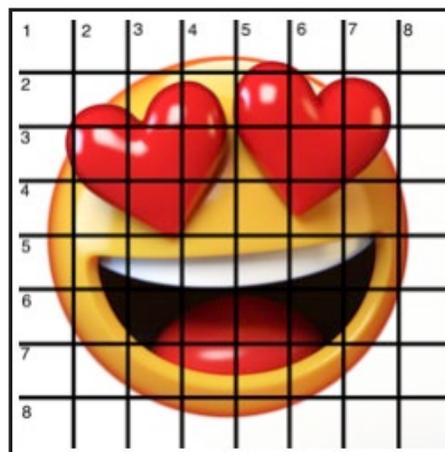
Number your columns 1 - 8, left to right, and your rows 1 - 8 from the top to the bottom.

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.

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.

**HERE IS AN EXAMPLE OF A 8 X 8 CANVAS; YOU CAN DO A 1" GRID ON ANY SIZE CANVAS.**



## TECHNIQUE REFERENCES:

### BLENDING WET INTO WET

Create transitions from one color to another, or one value to another, in acrylic painting, by blending colors together with the brush on the canvas while both are still wet. Mastering a blend like this is also essential for acrylic painting. In general, blending requires a soft pressure with a bit of urgency because it must be accomplished before the paint is dry. If you are in very dry studio conditions, such as air conditioning or dry heating in winter, your paint may dry out faster than you can blend it. No worries...there are mediums called retarders that you can add to the paint to slow the drying time.

### BLOCKING IN

Paint in the shape with a color, without detail.

### CONTOUR

Following the outer lines of an object or subject with your brush or tool.

### COOL COLOR

Colors on the cool side of a color wheel. Blues, greens and purples. These colors shouldn't visually feel cool to the eye. They often make up objects in our real world that are cool like ice or the green in nature. These colors tend to recede visually and give a sense of distance.

### CONTOUR PAINTING

Use the brushstroke to define the outline of the form. The brushstrokes are long and smooth and help us express the form and line of the object.

### FEATHERED BLENDING

Create a softened edge by gently brushing on the toe of the head of the brush allowing the bristles to feather out visually defusing the stroke.

### FINE LINE WORK

Taking paint that is made more fluid and a fine line brush to create brush Strokes that are delicate and elegant in nature. This is often used for hair, delicate grasses or natural elements, edged highlights.

### GLAZING

Taking thin transparent coats of paint over another coat of dry paint. The transparency of the paint allows the color from the paint underneath to affect the paint on top. This is another way for artists to make transitions with acrylic paint. Some paint is naturally transparent because of how pigmentated it is. Colors like quinacridone magenta or phthalo blue are very transparent. Opaque pigments can be made transparent using a medium for glazing.

### LAYERING

This is a very important part of acrylic painting. You can layer wet paint over wet paint. You can layer dry paint over dry paint. You can glaze over dry paint to layer also. Layering can help you build texture and depth in a painting. Understanding that techniques are built up in layers will help you move away from the magical brush thinking. You remember seeing cartoons paint a tunnel in one stroke with a single brush? As regular humans we can't do that to get these effects, we need to layer the paint. Once you embrace this thinking, the depth of your painting will improve greatly.

### LOOSE, EXPRESSIVE AND PAINTERLY

When you paint showing the brush stroke. The painting has a freshly captured feel. This technique gives the impression of capturing a moment in time. It has qualities where the color stroke in texture defines the artwork instead of line.

### LOOSELY MIXED

Taking two colors and mixing them together with both colors still evident in the mix and brush stroke.

### PAINTERLY

Free flowing and expressive brush strokes. Painterly expression of art generally allows the medium and the brush strokes to show instead of hiding them through blending and careful placement.

### S STROKES

Being able to create compound curves as strokes is

a very important technique in painting. Most of the natural world will require your ability to execute it as a stroke. It's a good idea to practice making bold S strokes and delicate S Strokes.

## SCUMBLING

Scumbling certainly has some dry brushing to it but involves a more randomized circular brush stroke. Be careful when you scumble, you don't want to press so hard that you break the heel of the brush. In scumbling, just like in dry brushing, we won't be using a lot of water in the brush. We are going to want to move the brush around in a random and circular motion creating no sense of a particular line or direction.

## SMOOTHLY BLENDED OR TIGHT PAINTING

This is when you smooth the paint and try to hide the brush Strokes and transitions. When you hear an artist talking about a particular painter being tight, what they're speaking of is the way that this artist is able to hide the medium method of the painting. Acrylic blending is one of the more frustrating techniques for new artists.

## THOROUGHLY MIXED

Take two colors and thoroughly incorporate them so they make a smooth, even secondary color with no sign of the two colors used to create it.

## TRANSITIONAL MIXING

There are many ways to blend acrylic paint creating tonal and value transitions through the hues. When you have two very different colors you can create hues that are half shades by mixing them together and biasing the mix to create a subtle transition.

## UNDERPAINTING

Loose large fields of color that future layers of painting will build on.

## WARM COLOR

These colors are on the warm side of the wheel such as red, yellow and orange. Warm colors remind us of things like fire and sunlight. They tend to come forward visually and pull the viewer in.

## RESOURCES

- The best resource for this book is to use it with the YouTube video. Additionally, I have many resources to help new painters achieve their dreams of being creative. I've made over a thousand videos and chances are I have a video that will help you with your specific challenges.
- Be sure to check out the "Where to Start Acrylic Painting with the Art Sherpa" playlist on Youtube.
- Search for videos on the website.
- Use the traceable - it is NOT cheating.
- Join the Art Sherpa Official Facebook group for support.
- Come to live streams and ask questions.

## WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR FINISH PIECE

*As an artist, there's still a lot to think about.*

*Do you varnish? Believe it or not, varnishing is optional with acrylic painting. In my opinion it's best only to do so in good weather in a dust free space following the instructions of the specific varnish for acrylic painting exactly. Varnish is good because it does protect and unify the finish of a painting, but it is not required.*

*Allow your painting a few days to cure and harden. Acrylic paintings do dry quickly but they still continue to cure a few days after you're finished even with thin applications of paint. Taking the time to allow your paintings to cure will help them be more resilient through the framing and hanging process. These days you don't need to be a professional to frame or hang your paintings. Frames and ready to hang options are available at your local craft and art store.*

*When acrylic paint is warm, it gets soft, so when a painting is near the warmth of a fireplace you wouldn't want to add decorations that would touch it because they could leave an impression. It's perfectly fine to hang your artwork over the fireplace and change it out seasonally like I do. It's just important to be aware of hazards and fire safety. Also knowing that acrylic paintings can become a little softer when they're warm will prevent you from accidentally having a boo boo. Perhaps your Elf on the Shelf doesn't need to sit on the edge of the frame or lean against the painting if your art is in a warm spot. Properly cared for, acrylic paint will never become wet again or lose its cure and it will always remain finished and dry. This is the nature of plastics.*



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