

THE ART SHERPA™

HOW TO PAINT

IN ACRYLIC



LOVE YOU FOREVER

BY: THE ART SHERPA
NAME CREDIT TO PATRON: MARY DANOS

STEPS: 10 | DIFFICULTY: INTERMEDIATE | 2 HOOTS

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SHERPA FORWARD:

Welcome back, I'm so glad to be here and to see you again. It's been a minute since we could really be together and I missed you.

I'VE MISSED YOU SO MUCH AND I WANT TO PAINT WITH YOU!

This first tutorial back at the easel is of beautiful forget-me-nots. The Patron name chosen was a real community favorite, because as Mary tells us, forget-me-nots are the flower of dementia remembrance. Dementia truly is the "Long Goodbye" and I hope this touches all the hearts of my community who have had dementia claim their loved ones.

In keeping with my desire to do more to help teach art than demonstrate how to paint art, 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: 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.

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 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!



ART SHERPA

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
- Phthalo Blue = PB
- Ultramarine Blue = UB
- Phthalo Green = PG
- Burnt Sienna = BS
- Mars Black = MB
- Titanium White = TW

BRUSHES:

- X-Large Synthetic Flat
- Large Hog Bright
- Large Synthetic Oval Mop
- Small Synthetic Filbert
- Medium Synthetic Round
- X-Small Synthetic Round

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
- 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
- Expressive Painting Strokes
- Being Painterly and Loose
- Atmospheric Perspective
- Finding Value
- Color Theory
- Directionality
- Blending Wet into Wet
- 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	1:06	COLORED BACKGROUND
STEP 2	4:55	DIFFUSED BACKGROUND
STEP 3	13:37	DIFFUSED FARAWAY FLOWERS
STEP 4	19:39	BLOCK IN FLOWERS
STEP 5	34:48	FLOWER CENTERS
STEP 6	37:48	DEFINE PETALS
STEP 7	48:09	MORE PETAL LAYERS
STEP 8	1:00:29	LAST PETAL LAYER
STEP 9	1:07:43	STEMS AND CENTERS
STEP 10	1:16:16	FINAL DETAILS AND HIGHLIGHTS
		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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TOGETHER**

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STEP 1 - COLORED BACKGROUND

“LET’S GET LOOSEY AND GOOSEY”

PAINT:

Phthalo Green = PG
Burnt Sienna = BS

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

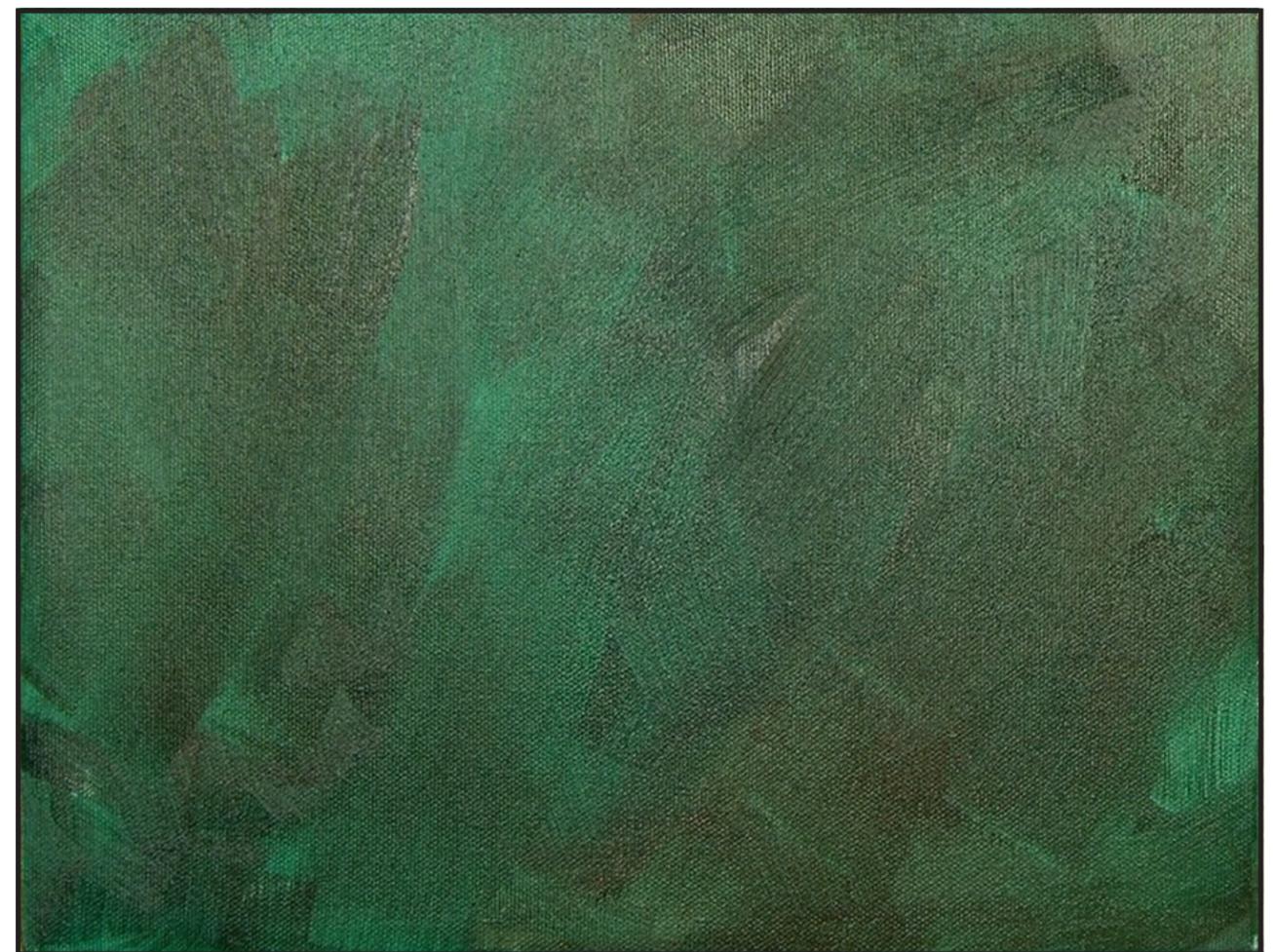
Large Synthetic Flat

COLOR MIXES:

Dark Green = PG + BS

STEP DISCUSSION:

- Load the brush on both sides and then roughly paint the entire canvas with the **Dark Green mix**. Vary the mix as you go, ensuring all the white of the canvas is loosely covered. Rinse.
- Dry the surface before continuing to the next step.



STEP 2 - DIFFUSED BACKGROUND

“I NEVER FEEL LIKE AN ALMOND JOY”

PAINT:

Phthalo Green = PG
Burnt Sienna = BS
Cad Yellow Medium = CYM
Titanium White = TW
Ultramarine Blue = UB
Quinacridone Magenta = QM

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

Large Synthetic Mop
Large Hog Bright

COLOR MIXES:

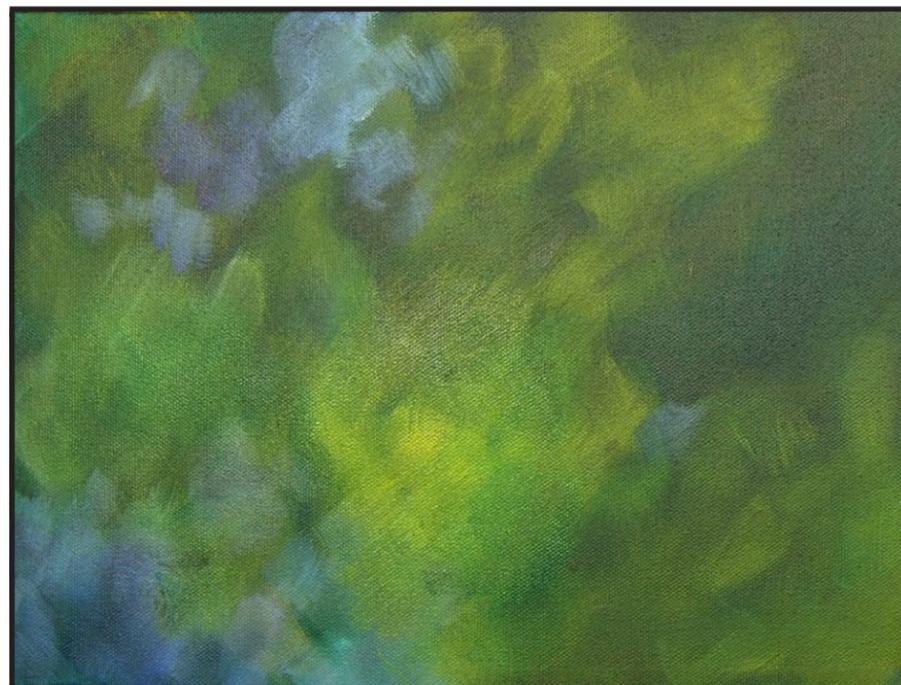
Med Green = CYM + PG + BS
Dark Green = PG + BS
Stone Blue = UB + TW
Purple = UB + TW + QM

STEP DISCUSSION:

- Begin about 2 inches from the right side and very lightly brush the **Medium Green mix** onto the canvas, using irregular brush strokes. Apply these lighter values in an out-of-focus manner. Use the **Dark Green mix** in places to add depth. For another variation, mix in some pure Phthalo Green, without rinsing the brush. Continue varying the mixes, by adding any of the colors within the mixes, to create a diffused background throughout the canvas. Add some Titanium White to the **Medium Green mix** for a softer green in places and more Cadmium Yellow Medium in other places. Rinse.

- Paint the bottom left and the top center of the canvas, using the **Stone Blue mix**. Vary the mix slightly by adding Titanium White. Add a few touches of interest with the **Purple mix**. Switch to the Mop brush and soften the blend.
- Continue switching between the two brushes and adding any of the previous paint mixes to achieve the desired effect. Rinse both brushes very well.
- Dry the surface before continuing to the next step.

Sherpa Tip: *Wipe the brush on a paper towel when a stronger value of a mix is needed.*



STEP 3 - DIFFUSED FARAWAY FLOWERS

“DON'T FORGET, YOU CAN DO THIS”

PAINT:

Cad Yellow Medium = CYM
Titanium White = TW
Ultramarine Blue = UB
Phthalo Blue = PB
Quinacridone Magenta = QM

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

Small Synthetic Filbert

COLOR MIXES:

Mid Blue = PB + UB + TW
Pale Yellow = TW > CYM
Purple = UB + TW + QM

STEP DISCUSSION:

- Paint the first diffused flower in the upper left center of the canvas using the **Mid Blue mix**. Curve the brush stroke, while applying soft pressure, using an almost dry brush effect, to keep the petals out of focus. Add another flower on the right and a few more at the bottom left, in the same manner. Rinse.
- Create the centers of the flowers using the **Pale Yellow mix**. Use very light pressure and allow the canvas below to show through.
- Desaturate the **Pale Yellow mix** by adding it to the **Purple mix** and add some of this diffused color at the top center. Vary the color slightly by mixing the **Mid Blue mix** on the dirty brush.
- Continue playing with the mixes and adding them to a couple of places near the blue areas of the canvas. Rinse.



STEP 4 - BLOCK IN FLOWERS

“EVERY FACE STARTS WITH A STRUCTURE”

PAINT:

Titanium White = TW
Ultramarine Blue = UB
Quinacridone Magenta = QM
Phthalo Blue = PB

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

Small Synthetic Filbert

COLOR MIXES:

Mid Blue = PB + UB + TW
Purple = UB + TW + QM
Deep Purple = UB > QM > TW
Sky Blue = TW > UB > PB

STEP DISCUSSION:

• I chose to freehand the focal 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.

• At the upper canvas, just left of center, use the **Mid Blue mix** to paint a crisper, more focused flower. Begin by painting

the overall shape of the flower, keeping in mind that they are star shaped and contain five petals. Use opposing curved strokes to give the appearance of the petals. Paint a few flowers using the **Sky Blue mix**.

- Continue adding these singular flowers into an oval cluster of flowers. Use the **Purple mix** to add slightly darker flowers closer to the bottom of the oval shape. Add the **Deep Purple mix** for the flowers that will be in even more shadow.
- Use all the mixes and variations of them to fill in the cluster. Leave spaces in between some and use slightly lighter values on others to be able to see where some are layered.
- If the canvas feels a little wet be sure to dry the surface before continuing to the next step.



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STEP 5 - FLOWER CENTERS

“THE CENTER DEFINES THE BLOSSOM”

PAINT:

Cad Yellow Medium = CYM
Titanium White = TW
Phthalo Green = PG

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

Medium Synthetic Round

COLOR MIXES:

Light Yellow = TW + CYM > PG

STEP DISCUSSION:

- Use the **Light Yellow mix** to tap in small ellipses for the centers of the flower. The centers of the flowers will dictate which direction they are facing, so vary their placement on the flower faces somewhat.



STEP 6 - DEFINE PETALS

“I’VE MISSED YOU SO MUCH”

PAINT:

Titanium White = TW
Ultramarine Blue = UB
Phthalo Blue = PB
Quinacridone Magenta = QM

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

Medium Synthetic Round

COLOR MIXES:

Sky Blue = TW > UB > PB
Mid Blue = PB + UB + TW
Purple = UB + TW + QM
Purple Pink = QM + TW > UB

STEP DISCUSSION:

- Begin defining the petal shapes with curved strokes that come in from the petal edges using the **Sky Blue mix**. Add some depth to the middle of the petal with the **Mid Blue mix**. Continue highlighting and adding depth to these petals by working between these two mixes. You can also vary the mixes by adding more of any of the colors within them. Using the lighter mixes to layer the petals helps show which petals are on top and which petals are below. Each of the bluer flowers within the cluster are defined in the same manner.
- Use the **Purple mix** and the **Purple Pink mix** to define the darker flowers, using the same method as above.
- Loosely add a few pops of these purple colors amongst the out-of-focus flowers in the background.
- Finally add Quinacridone Magenta on the dirty brush and apply a few pops of this color onto the darker purple flowers in the cluster. Rinse.



STEP 7 - MORE PETAL LAYERS

“EACH FLOWER BECOMES UNIQUE”

PAINT:

Titanium White = TW
Phthalo Blue = PB
Ultramarine Blue = UB

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

Small Synthetic Filbert

COLOR MIXES:

Light Blue = TW > PB
Sky Blue = TW > UB > PB

STEP DISCUSSION:

- Apply pure Phthalo Blue to shade the middle of the petals. Also use it to create cast shadows along the petal edges to help define the layering. Continue shading each flower in the same way.
- Highlight the edge of the petals using the **Light Blue mix** and the side of the brush, while applying light pressure and a curved stroke.
- Lightly apply the **Sky Blue mix** for highlights on some of the purple flowers and a few of the out of focused flowers.
- Continue highlighting until you are happy. Rinse.



STEP 8 - LAST PETAL LAYER

“WHERE DOES THE BLUE COME FROM?”

PAINT:

Cad Yellow Medium = CYM
Titanium White = TW
Quinacridone Magenta = QM
Phthalo Blue = PB
Ultramarine Blue = UB

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

Small Synthetic Filbert

COLOR MIXES:

Pink = QM + TW
Light Pink = TW > QM
Pale Blue = TW > UB
Light Blue = TW > PB
Pale Turquoise = TW > PB > CYM

STEP DISCUSSION:

- Add light touches of the **Pink mix** to the edges of some of the petals. Use the **Light Pink mix**, occasionally in a few spots. Rinse.
- Apply another layer of highlights to the tips of the petals with the **Pale Blue mix**. Adjusting the shadows as needed by adding Phthalo Blue onto the dirty brush. Adjust any mid value areas using the **Light Blue mix**.
- Use the Pale Turquoise on a few petals to pull them forward even further. Rinse.



STEP 9 - STEMS AND CENTERS

“SOMETHING SHOCKING”

PAINT:

Cad Red Medium = CRM
Cad Yellow Medium = CYM
Phthalo Green = PG
Burnt Sienna = BS
Mars Black = MB
Titanium White = TW

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

Medium Synthetic Round

COLOR MIXES:

Deep Green = PG + BS + MB
Orange = CRM + CYM
Brown Orange =
CRM + CYM + PG + BS + MB

Gray Green = PG + BS + CYM > UB < TW

STEP DISCUSSION:

- Paint the dark stems of the flowers using the **Deep Green mix** and then add this color to a few places here and there near the bottom of the cluster. Rinse.
- Use the **Orange mix** to dot on the little bumps around the edge of the flower centers. Rinse.
- Add shading to the very middle of the flower centers and a little bit under the centers using the **Brown Orange mix**. Add some of the **Deep Green mix** where the shadows might need to be darker. Rinse.
- Paint the veins on the petals using the toe of the brush and the **Gray Green mix**. Rinse.



STEP 10 - FINAL DETAILS AND HIGHLIGHTS

“MAKE TIME FOR YOU AND BE CREATIVE”

PAINT:

Cad Yellow Medium = CYM
Quinacridone Magenta = QM
Phthalo Green = PG
Burnt Sienna = BS
Titanium White = TW
Phthalo Blue = PB
Ultramarine Blue = UB

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

X-Small Synthetic Round

COLOR MIXES:

Bright Yellow = CYM + TW
Pale Yellow = TW > CYM
Pale Blue = TW > UB
Light Blue = TW > PB
Gray Green =
PG + BS + CYM > UB < TW
Purple = UB + TW + QM

STEP DISCUSSION:

- Choose a few spots to tap a pop of color into the centers of the flowers using the **Bright Yellow mix** and the toe of the brush. Vary the mix if desired. Highlight some of these spots with the **Pale Yellow mix**. Rinse.
- Highlight the veining in the petals with the **Pale Blue mix**. Use more of a dry brush to the flowers that are closer to the bottom of the cluster. Add a little of this color to some of the centers if desired. Adjust the values as needed, using Titanium White mixed with a titch of the **Gray Green mix** in some places and the **Light Blue mix** in others. The lower flowers are a bit

more shaded near the bottom of the cluster so, tint the Titanium White with a little of the **Purple mix** in this area. Rinse.

- Add some water to the Titanium White and use the toe of the brush, to lightly white line the outer edges of the petals. Tint the Titanium White in a few places with some of the **Purple mix** while continuing to white line. Rinse.
- Sign.



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.



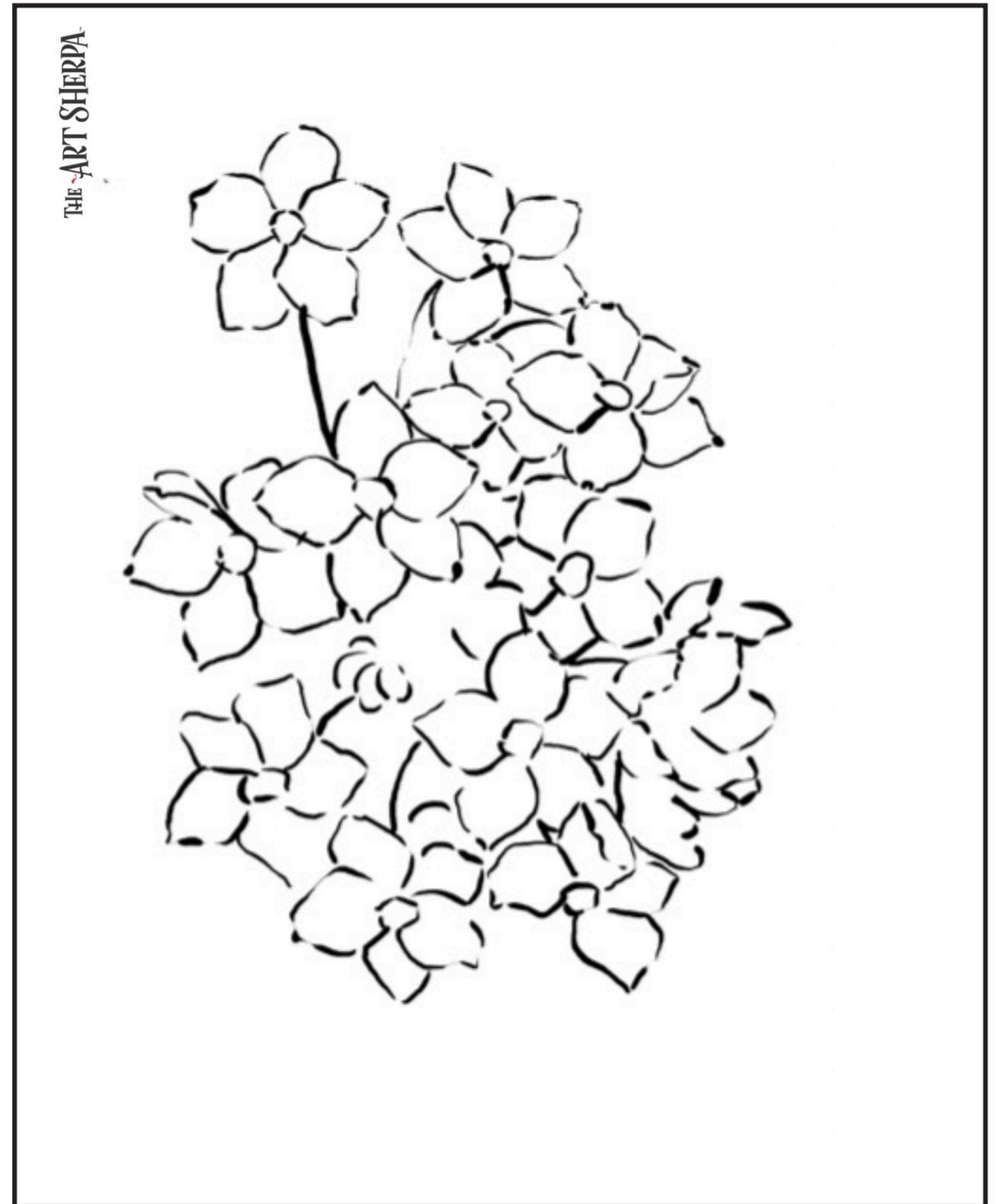
see that your transfer is happening. If not check if your rubbing is too thin or that your pressure is not too light. After you are done tracing the lines, remove your traceable and you should have a copy of the line art on your canvas.



- 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:



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.

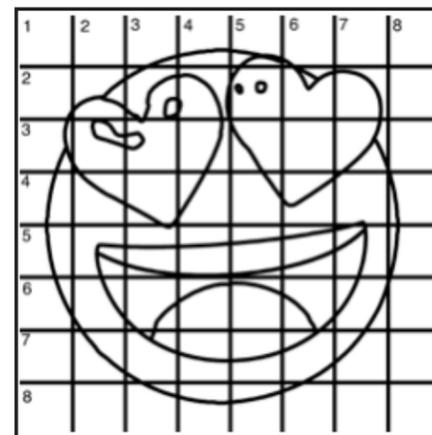
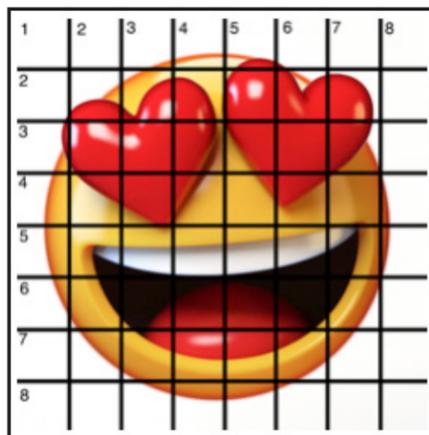
Number your columns 1 - 8, left to right, and your rows 1 - 8 from the top to the bottom.

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 pigmented 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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