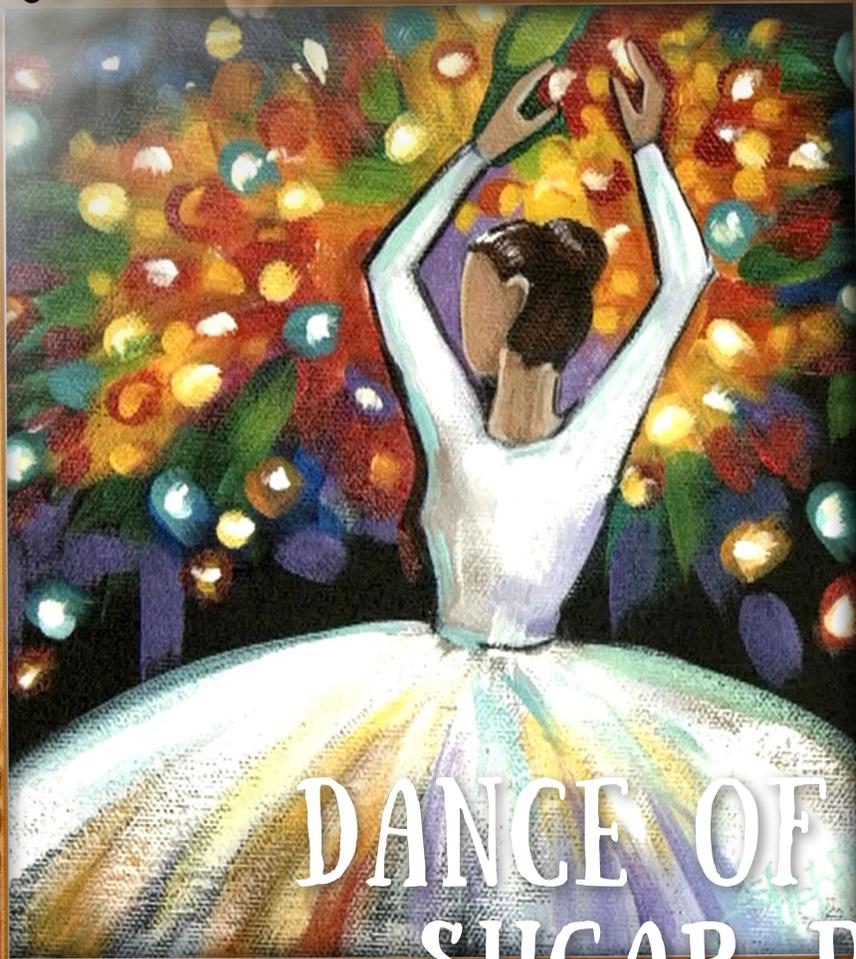# The ART SHERPA

presents

Winter

WONDER

DANCE OF THE SUGAR PLUM

BY: THE ART SHERPA

NAME CREDIT TO PATRON: GEORGIA WALLACE

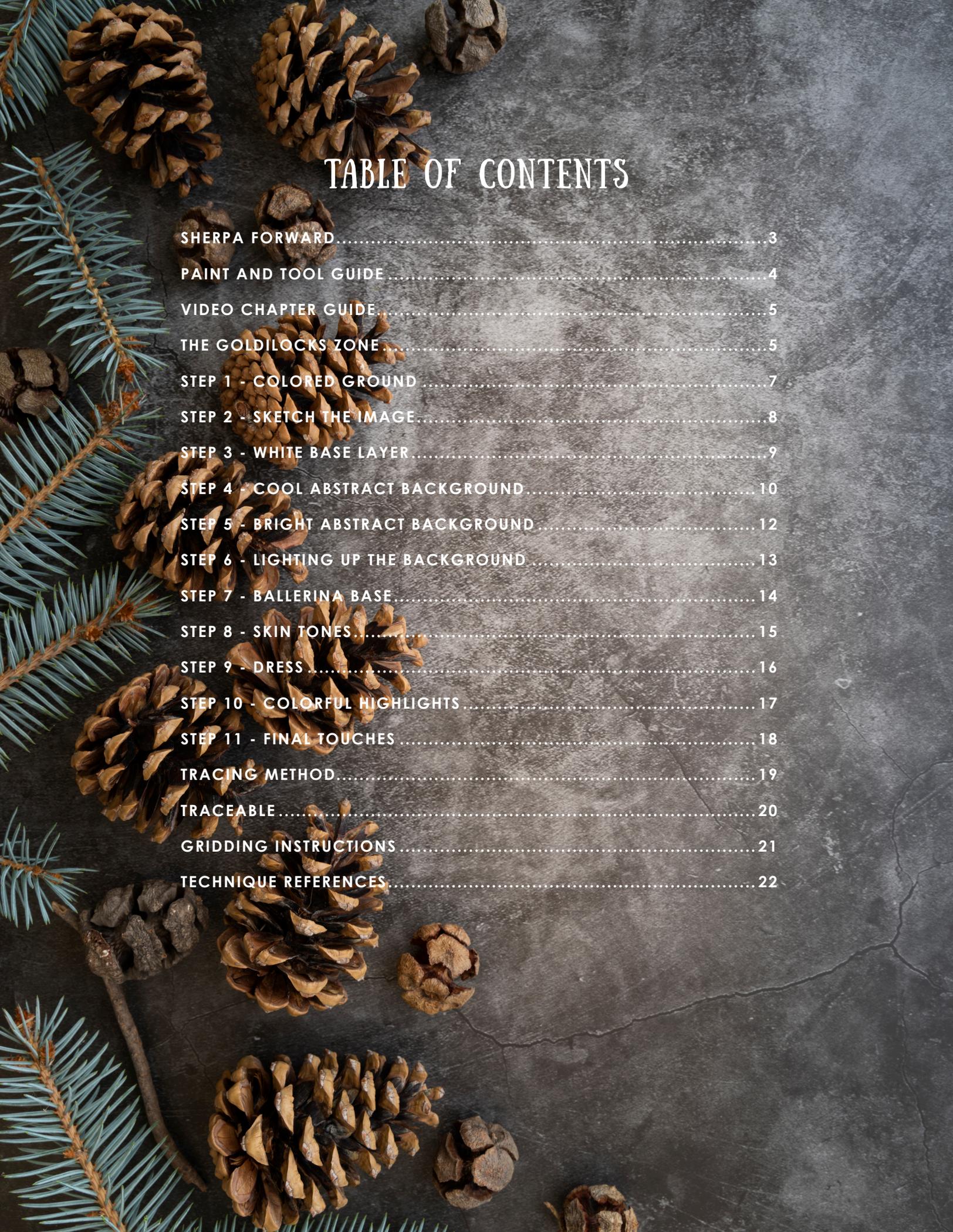STEPS: 11 | DIFFICULTY: INTERMEDIATE | 2 HOOTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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: 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 abstract art which means that the image representation will be a slight, partial, or complete departure from reality.

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!

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
- Dioxazine Purple = DP
- Mars Black = MB
- Titanium White = TW
- Yellow Ochre = YO

BRUSHES:

- X- Large Synthetic Bright
- Medium Synthetic Filbert
- Small Synthetic Round
- X-Small Synthetic Round

TOOLS:

- Chalk Pencil or Watercolor Pencil
- T-Square Ruler
- 8 x 8 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

SYMBOL GUIDE:

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

TECHNIQUES YOU WILL USE IN THIS PAINTING:

- Expressive Painting Strokes
- Being Painterly and Loose
- Atmospheric Perspective
- Finding Value
- Dry Brushing
- Color Theory
- Directionality
- Setting a Horizon line
- Color Mixing
- Implying Motion
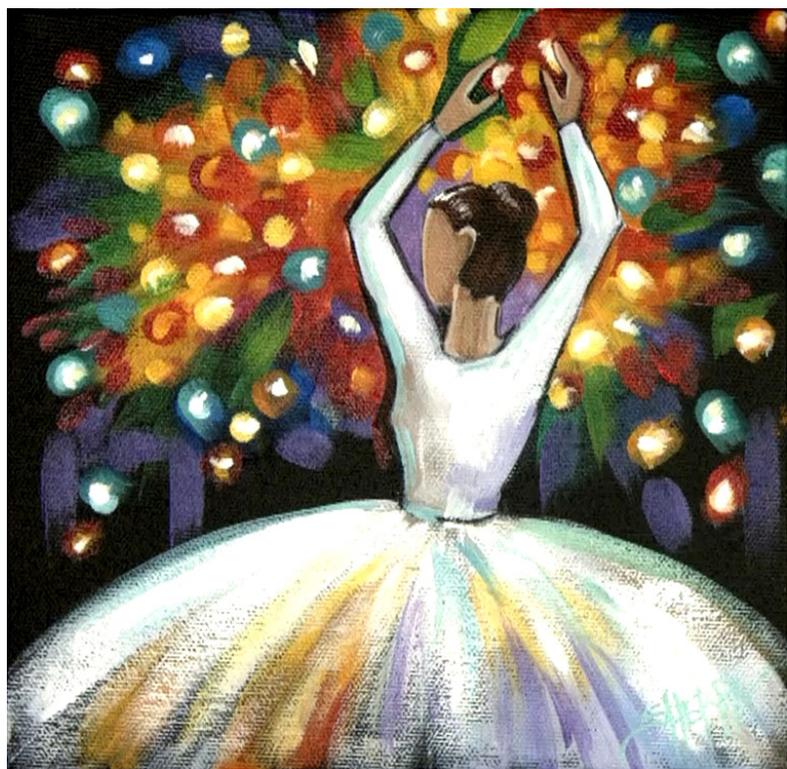
VIDEO CHAPTER GUIDE:

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	00:00	INTRO
STEP 1	04:06	COLORED GROUND
STEP 2	08:09	SKETCH THE IMAGE
STEP 3	14:55	WHITE BASE LAYER
STEP 4	23:34	COOL ABSTRACT BACKGROUND
STEP 5	29:33	BRIGHT ABSTRACT BACKGROUND
STEP 6	35:09	LIGHTENING THE BACKGROUND
STEP 7	45:08	BALLERINA BASE
STEP 8	52:08	SKIN TONES
STEP 9	1:00:10	DRESS
STEP 10	1:06:10	COLORFUL HIGHLIGHTS
STEP 11	1:11:54	FINAL TOUCHES
	1:16:11	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.
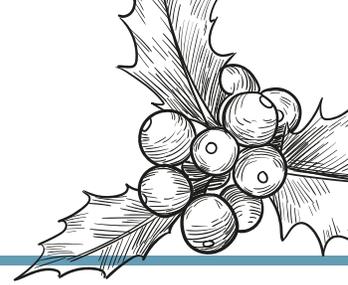
THE ART SHERPA PATRONAGE

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An exclusive place where The Art Sherpa brings you awesome art content and fabulous perks!

The ART Sherpa™

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www.TheArtSherpa.com/patron

"WAITING FOR THE CURTAIN TO OPEN"

PAINT:
Mars Black = MB

BRUSHES & TOOLS:
X- Large Synthetic Bright

STEP DISCUSSION:

• Load the brush with Mars Black, then roughly paint the entire canvas. We are just ensuring that all the white of the canvas is loosely covered. Smooth the paint somewhat by applying long strokes, vertically and horizontally. Rinse.

• Dry the surface before continuing to the next step.

"POSITIONING THE DANCER"
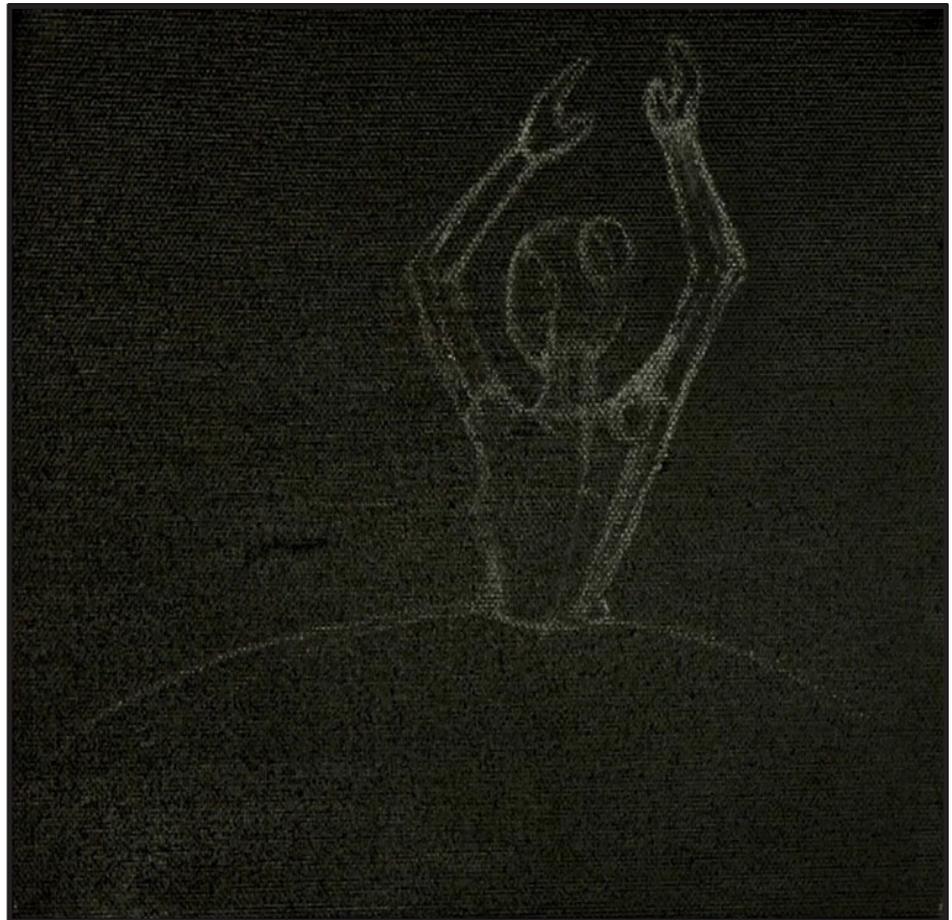
BRUSHES & TOOLS:
Chalk Pencil or Watercolor Pencil

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 to get your image on the canvas. 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. You should use a Chalk Pencil or Watercolor Pencil.

- Draw an oval for her head, just to the right of center, about 2 inches from the top. Make a mark for her neck. Add a little bun at the top, right of the head. Once the bun is in, it is easier to position the jawline, and thicken the neck.

- Draw a curved horizontal line that attaches to the neck for the shoulders. Add two little balls at either end of this line for the shoulder joints. Add dots about a ½ an inch

from either side of the upper area of the head, to place the elbows. Then, join the elbow to the shoulders, and bend the forearms towards each other. The right arm is positioned differently, so it is slightly higher even though the actual arm lengths are the same.

- Slightly curve the spine downward and to the left. Using the head as a unit of measure, make the spine two head lengths long, including the neck. Draw a line from the right shoulder down to the waist. Make a line from the left shoulder that bumps out slightly for the breast, then narrows in towards the waist. Draw the dress coming out from the waist on both sides, and curving down towards the sides of the canvas.

- Thicken the arms while tapering to the elbows and again to the wrists. Then, draw in a simple hand shape with just the thumb and forefinger. Leave a little bit of length out from the wrist for the paddle of the hand, then make the fingers and thumb with a "C" shape and join them to the paddle. No need to be perfect, because we will refine this with paint. Pop an ear in line with where the eyes would be, that will allow you to add a hairline.
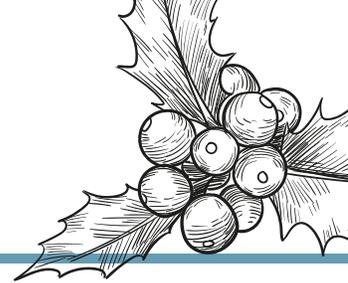
"STAGING THE LIGHTING"

PAINT:
Titanium White

BRUSHES & TOOLS:
Medium Synthetic Filbert

STEP DISCUSSION:

• Use Titanium White to dry brush, little short strokes around the Ballerina. Doing this will ensure that when we paint our bright colors, they will be vibrant, especially if you are using student paints. You do not need to go down much past the armpit because the brightest areas are above that. There are a lot of bright areas around the head and hands, so be sure to paint in there. Continue adding Titanium White where you feel you need it for future bright lights, dipping the brush in water as needed. Paint a few circles around the outer edges of the background where the colors need to be the brightest. Rinse.

• Dry the surface before continuing to the next step.

"TIME TO GET PLAYFUL"

PAINT:
Quinacridone Magenta = QM
Cad Yellow Medium = CYM
Phthalo Blue = PB
Ultramarine Blue = UB
Phthalo Green = PG
Dioxazine Purple = DP
Titanium White = TW

BRUSHES & TOOLS:
Medium Synthetic Filbert

COLOR MIXES:
Mid Green = PG + CYM
Lavender = DP > QM + TW
Rich Blue = UB + PB > TW
Turquoise =
PG + PB > CYM > TW

STEP DISCUSSION:
• Brush little strokes of the **Mid Green mix** throughout the Background. Not everywhere, but definitely around the outer edges of the white area. Rinse.

• Use the **Lavender mix** to add some abstract strokes both vertically and horizontally on the lower part of the black background. Then, add a few strokes through the outer edges of white area, sometimes layering over the green. Rinse.

• Randomly disperse the **Rich Blue mix** through the outer edges of the white area. Rinse.

• Add some of the **Turquoise mix** around

the outer edges of the white area, and to a few spots on the dark background. Rinse.

• The area closest to the ballerina should still be mostly white. Use the reference photo at the end of this step to help with color placement.

• Dry the surface before continuing to the next step.
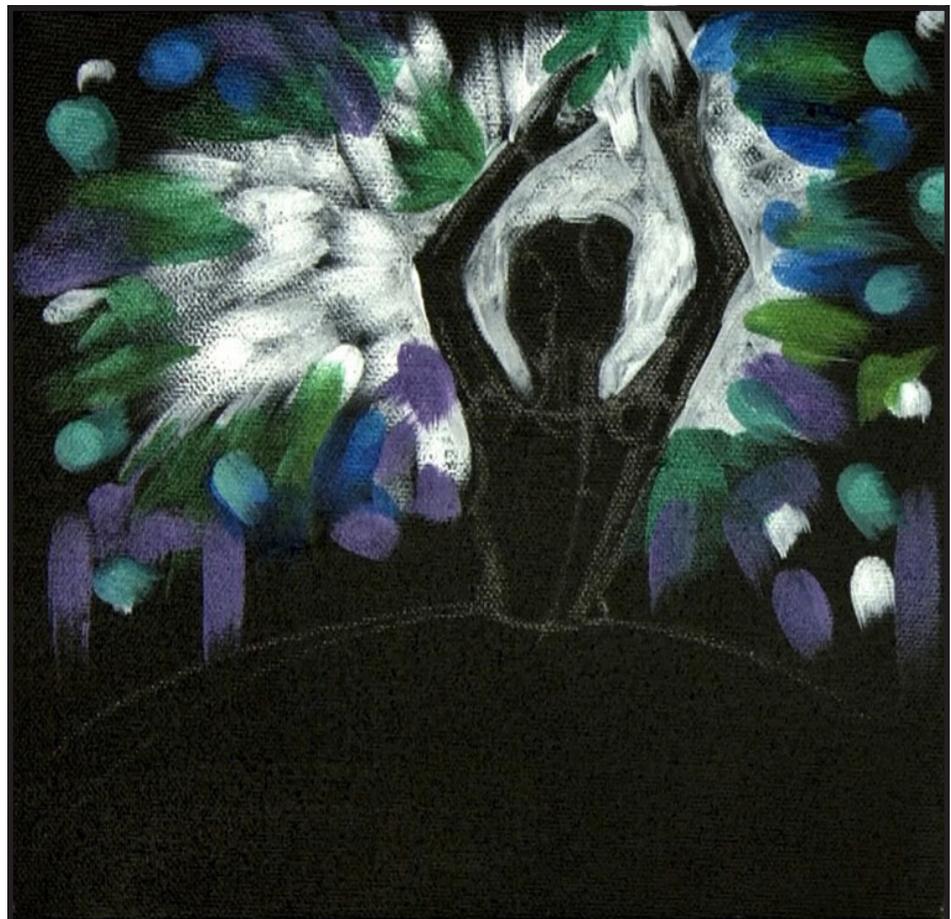
WATERCOLOR
WEDNESDAYS

FREE
weekly watercolor
live stream virtual art class!
7:00 PM EST

Watch directly from TAS Facebook
page each week.

ALL skill levels welcome.
Bring your watercolors and let's

RELAX &
CHILL OUT
TOGETHER

THE ART SHERPA

"FOCUS THE SPOTLIGHTS ON THE DANCER"

PAINT:
Cad Red Medium = CRM
Quinacridone Magenta = QM
Cad Yellow Medium = CYM

BRUSHES & TOOLS:
Medium Synthetic Filbert

COLOR MIXES:
Yellow Orange = CYM > CRM
Orange = CRM + CYM
Rich Red = CRM + QM

STEP DISCUSSION:

- Paint brush strokes of the **Yellow Orange mix** around the Ballerina. Vary the color by adding more Cadmium Red Medium and mixing it right on the canvas. You want it brightest in the center, so add more Cadmium Yellow Medium closer to the Ballerina. Splash in some of the **Orange mix**, and carry a bit of this color into the dark background as well. Loosely add little spots of Cadmium Red Medium and other spots of just Cadmium Yellow Medium.

- Focus some of the **Rich Red mix** around the hands. Then, add spots of this color randomly throughout the entire array of lights. Layer it over the other colors to light up the background. Rinse.

- The area just around the face and neck should still be mostly white. Use the reference photo at the end of this step to help with color placement.

- Dry the surface before continuing to the next step.
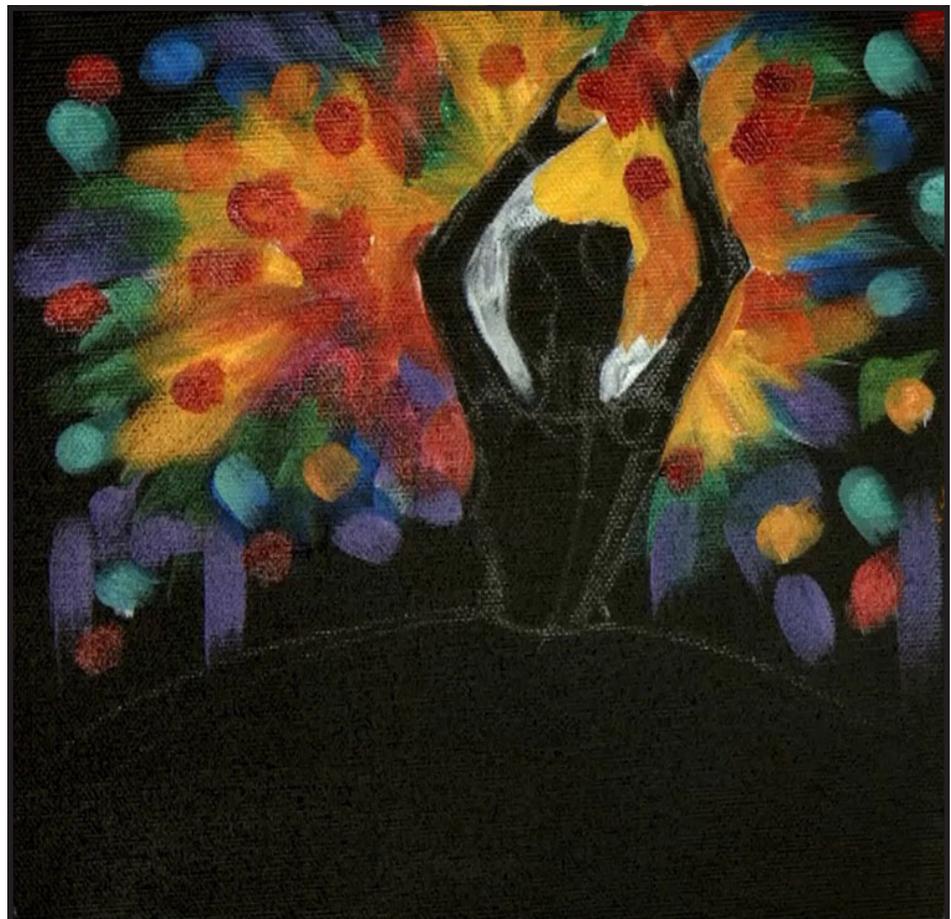
"BRIGHT FLASHES OF CAMERAS"

PAINT:
Cad Red Medium = CRM
Quinacridone Magenta = QM
Cad Yellow Medium = CYM
Phthalo Blue = PB
Phthalo Green = PG
Dioxazine Purple = DP
Titanium White = TW

BRUSHES & TOOLS:
Medium Synthetic Filbert

COLOR MIXES:
Lavender = DP > QM + TW
Turquoise = PG + PB > CYM > TW
Light Yellow = CYM + TW
Mid Green = PG + CYM
Yellow Orange = CYM > CRM
Rich Red = CRM + QM

STEP DISCUSSION:
- Add the **Lavender mix** around the face and neck that is still white. Rinse.

- Layer circular spots of the **Light Yellow mix** through the background to light it up further. Rinse.

- Add spots of the **Mid Green mix** layered over the bright background.

- Tint some Titanium White with the **Turquoise mix**. Use this color to light up the centers of the turquoise lights. Then, add just the **Turquoise mix** to a few more spots in the background. Rinse.

- Add some centers in the red spots with the **Yellow Orange mix**. Rinse.

- Tint some Titanium White with just a titch of Cadmium Yellow Medium. Add hot centers on more of the bright, glowing lights. Rinse.

- Tap in little strokes of the **Rich Red mix**. Work these colors around the background until you are happy with it. Rinse.

- Dry the surface before continuing to the next step.

"TIME FOR HAIR AND COSTUME FITTING"

PAINT:
Burnt Sienna = BS
Quinacridone Magenta = QM
Ultramarine Blue = UB
Mars Black = MB
Titanium White = TW
Yellow Ochre = YO

BRUSHES & TOOLS:
Small Synthetic Round

COLOR MIXES:
Skin = TW > BS > YO > QM
Dark Brown = BS + MB
Pale Grey = TW > BS > UB

STEP DISCUSSION:
• Paint the face and hands with the **Skin mix.** Carefully reshape the hands using the toe of the brush. It will probably take two coats of this mix to really get the desired skin tone. Rinse.

• Use the **Dark Brown mix** to paint the hair, increasing the size of the bun and creating an arc at the hairline on the nape of the neck. Rinse.

• Apply the **Pale Grey mix** on the arms and torso of the Ballerina. Remember to maintain the taper at the wrists and elbows. Add a little bit of water to improve flow if needed.

• Paint the skirt with this color as well. Arc the stroke down and to the left while painting the left side of the skirt, then arc the stroke down and towards the right while painting the right side. At the middle of the skirt, the stroke will straighten out. Press a little harder at the beginning of the stroke and release as you I come down the canvas to create that tapered, dry brush effect. Rinse.

• Dry the surface before continuing to the next step.
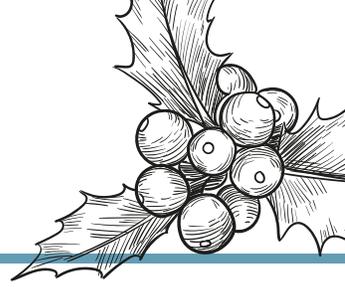
"LIGHTING CHECK"

PAINT:
Cad Red Medium = CRM
Quinacridone Magenta = QM
Phthalo Green = PG
Burnt Sienna = BS
Titanium White = TW
Yellow Ochre = YO

BRUSHES & TOOLS:
X-Small Synthetic Round

COLOR MIXES:
Shadow Skin =
TW + BS > YO > CRM
Skin = TW > BS > YO > QM
Dark Green = PG + BS
Rich Red = CRM + QM

STEP DISCUSSION:

• Paint the face again, but use the **Shadow Skin mix** this time. Carefully paint either side of the neck with the Skin mix. Add this lighter value at the front of the face, and the top of the ear. Rinse.

• Have the **Shadow Skin mix** and the **Skin mix** available so you can create halftones. Then, start with the darker tone in the center of the neck and blend it into either side with the lighter tone, keeping the front of the neckline a little bit above the chin.

• Use the **Shadow Skin mix** to carefully paint the hands again, reshaping as needed. Rinse.

• Create some contrast around the hand using the **Dark Green mix.** Piece in color around the left hand to make it stand out. Rinse.

• Exaggerate the bright Reds around the right hand using the **Rich Red mix.** Again, piece in color around the right hand to help it stand out. Rinse.

• Paint a highlight using the **Skin mix** on the inside of the hands. Rinse.

• Add a little more Yellow Ochre to the **Skin mix** and blend it into the face and the center of the neck. Rinse.

• Dry the surface before continuing to the next step.

"SEE HOW THE DRESS CATCHES REFLECTIONS FROM THE LIGHTS"

PAINT:

Cad Red Medium = CRM
Cad Yellow Medium = CYM
Ultramarine Blue = UB
Dioxazine Purple = DP
Burnt Sienna = BS
Titanium White = TW

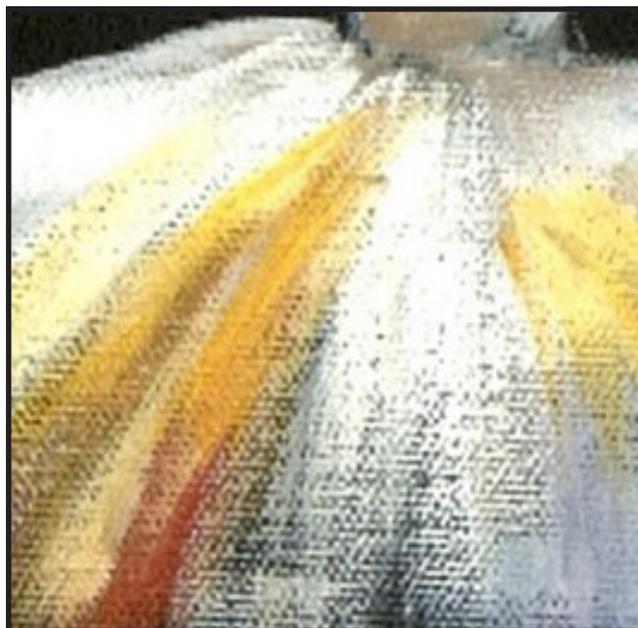### BRUSHES & TOOLS:

Medium Synthetic Filbert

COLOR MIXES:

Orange = CRM + CYM
Putty = TW > BS > UB
Tinted White = TW > DP > UB
Pale Purple = TW + DP + UB

STEP DISCUSSION:

• Use the **Orange mix** to brush up some reflected color from the bottom of the skirt going up. Add more Cadmium Red Medium on the dirty brush and playfully add some of that as well.

• Paint the front of the torso, under the right arm, and a little bit at the top of the skirt using the **Putty mix**. Rinse.

• Paint some brighter highlights on the upper and lower dress using the **Tinted White mix.** Paint the skirt with more of a dry brush effect, so the previous layers show through.

• Roughly add some **Pale Purple mix** onto the right side of the skirt. Vary the mix slightly by adding more Ultramarine Blue.

• Pick up even more Titanium White to dry brush a stronger highlight on the dress.

• Layer a bit of Cadmium Yellow Medium on the dress as well. Rinse.

• Dry the surface before continuing to the next step.
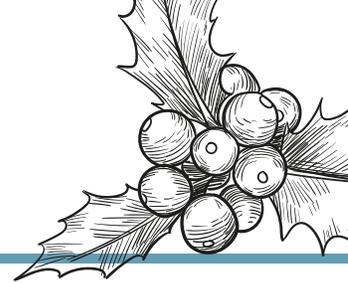
"READJUSTING THE LIGHTS"

PAINT:
Quinacridone Magenta = QM
Cad Yellow Medium = CYM
Phthalo Blue = PB
Phthalo Green = PG
Dioxazine Purple = DP
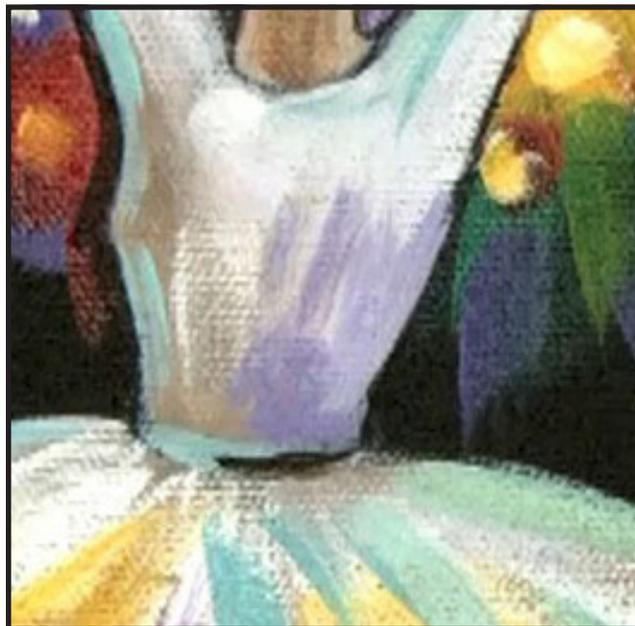Titanium White = TW
Mars Black = MB

BRUSHES & TOOLS:
X-Small Synthetic Round
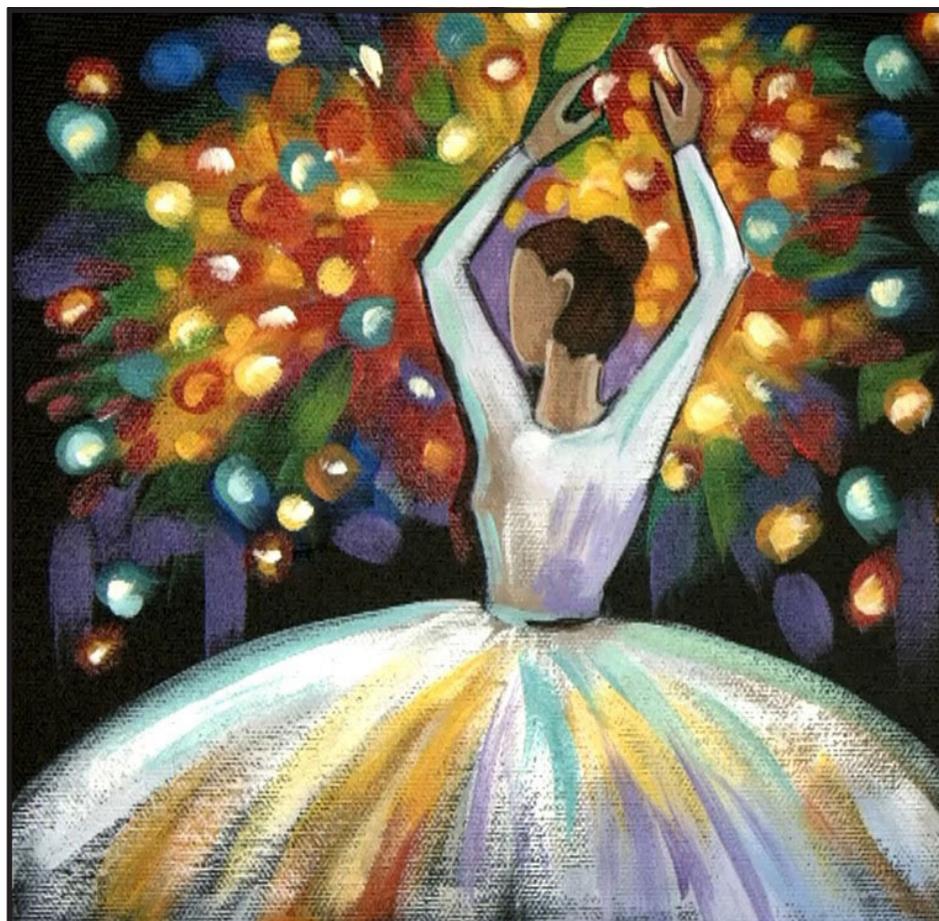Small Synthetic Round

COLOR MIXES:
Turquoise =
PG + PB > CYM > TW
Lavender = DP > QM + TW

STEP DISCUSSION:
- Use the Small Round brush and the Burnt Sienna to loosely add a highlight on the hair and bun. Rinse.

- Apply the **Turquoise mix** to the left side of the upper body, across the waist, and the inside of the right arm. Also layer some of this color onto the skirt. Rinse.

- Add a little Ultramarine Blue to the **Lavender mix.** Paint some of this color onto the skirt, and to shade the lower back. Rinse.

- Switch to the X-Small round brush and Mars Black to exaggerate a little bit of the waistband. Then lightly line the upper part of the dancer. Rinse.

- Dry the surface before continuing to the next step.

"RAISE THE LIGHTS, AND START THE SHOW"

PAINT:
Cad Red Medium = CRM
Quinacridone Magenta = QM
Burnt Sienna = BS
Titanium White = TW
Yellow Ochre = YO

BRUSHES & TOOLS:
Medium Synthetic Filbert
X-Small Synthetic Round

COLOR MIXES:
Skin = TW > BS > YO > QM

STEP DISCUSSION:

- Use the X-Small Round brush to define the highlight on the hands with the **Skin mix**. Rinse. Add more Cadmium Red Medium to the mix to touch up elements of the skin on the face and hands. Rinse.

- Load just the Titanium White on the toe of the brush to paint fine line reflections in the hair. Directionality in the hair is important. Rinse.

- Switch to the Filbert brush and Titanium White. Dry brush pops of brightest highlight on the arms, back and skirt, allowing the layers below to show through. Rinse.

- Switch to the X-Small Round brush and use Titanium White to add little pops of light in the centers of some of the bulbs in the background. Rinse.
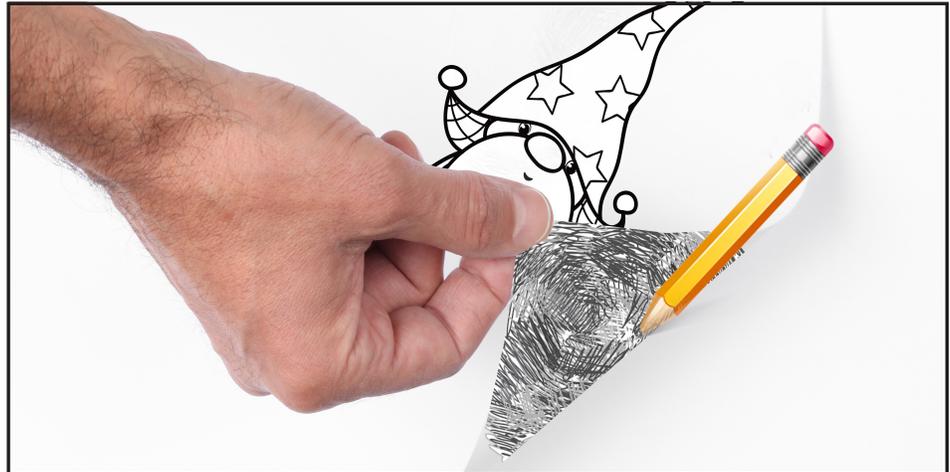
- Sign.
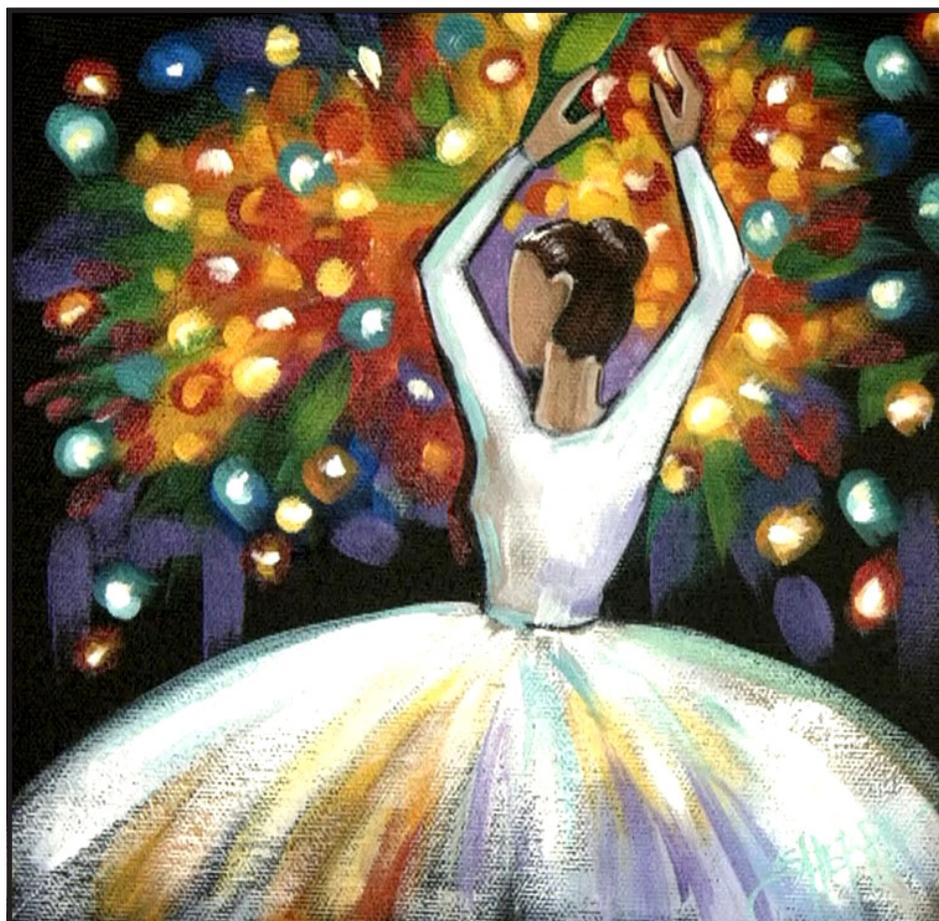
• Adjust the size to fit your surface and be sure to check your printer settings to see if the final size reflects the size you need.

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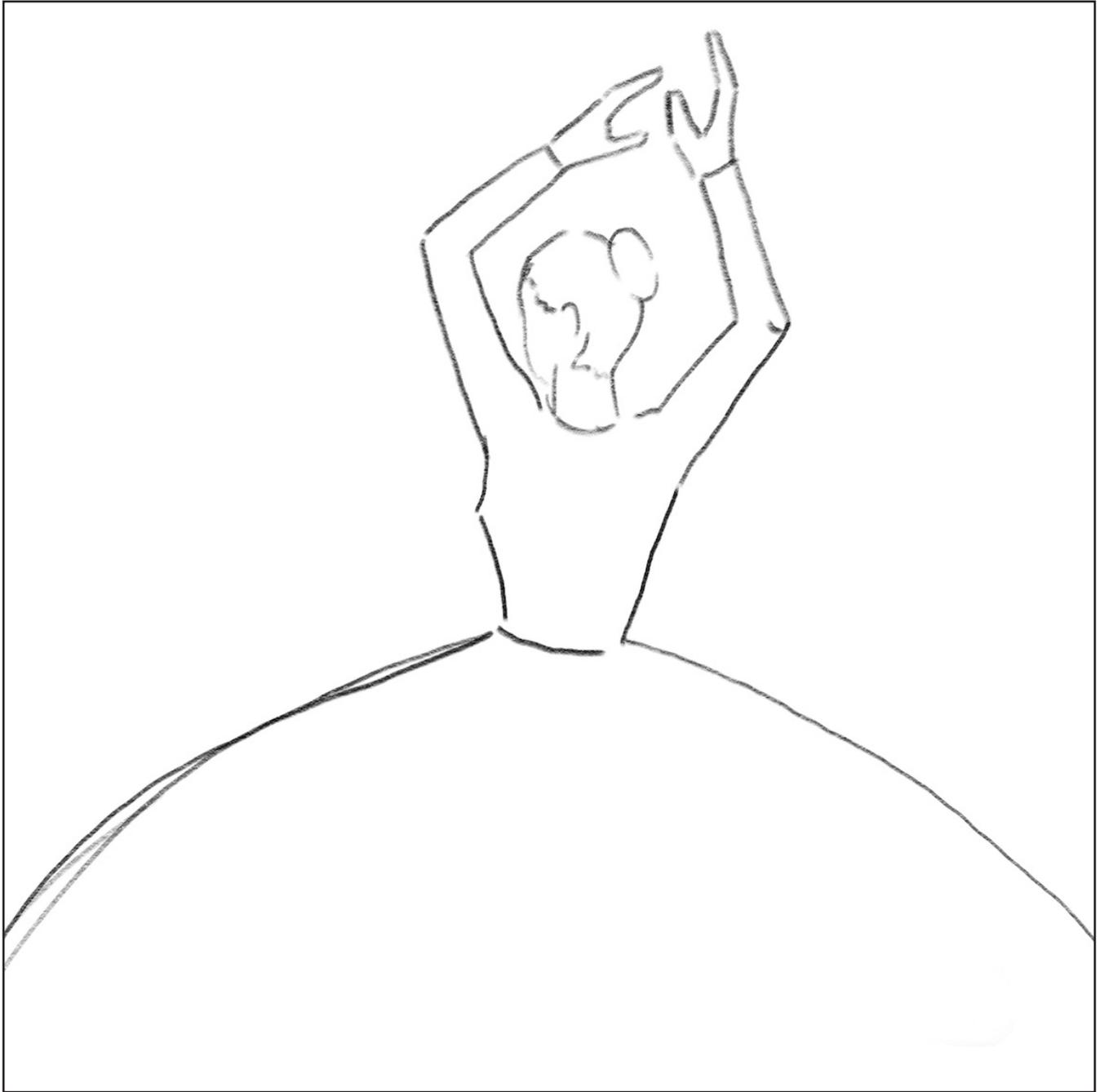
see that your transfer is happening. If not check if your rubbing is too thin or that your pressure is not too light. After you are done tracing the lines, remove your traceable and you should have a copy of the line art on your canvas.

THE ART SHERPA

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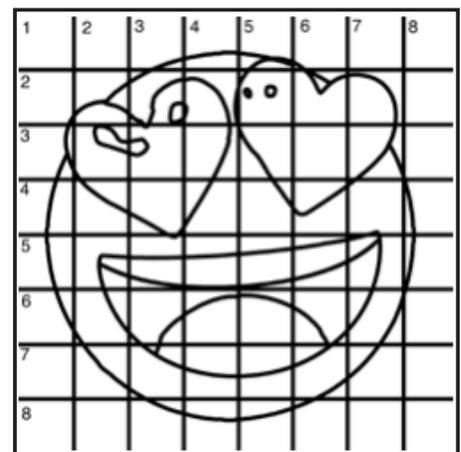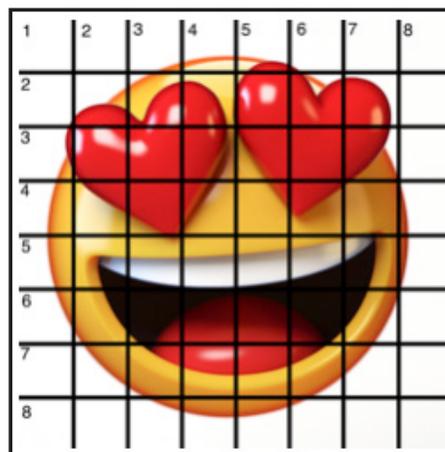
Number your columns 1 - 8, left to right, and your rows 1 - 8 from the top to the bottom.

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.

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 pigmentmented 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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