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THE ART SHERPA



Acrylic  
April

GEOMETRIC ABSTRACTION WITH  
MID-CENTURY MODERN INFLUENCE  
*SPACE ODYSSEY*

BY THE ART SHERPA

Name credit to Patron: Colleen Marie  
Steps: 10 | Difficulty: Beginner | 1 Hoot

2023



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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 can be found at [theartsherpa.com](https://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 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](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!*

---

# Day 21: 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
- Burnt Sienna = BS
- Titanium White = TW
- Fluid White Paint = FWP

## BRUSHES:

- Medium Synthetic Angle
- Small Synthetic Round
- Small Synthetic Angle
- 1MM Posca Pen Black

## TOOLS:

- T-Square Ruler
  - Chalk Pencil or Watercolor Pencil
  - 8x8 Canvas
- (If you notice that your canvas started to warp, as sometimes happens, just turn the canvas over and put it back side forward on your easel, then mist the back of the canvas. It usually resolves itself. Let it dry before you proceed.)

- Optional: StayWet Palette
- 4 ½ " Circle

## SYMBOL GUIDE:

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

## TECHNIQUES YOU WILL USE IN THIS PAINTING:

- Color Theory
- Expressive Painting Strokes
- Being Painterly and Loose
- Finding Value
- Dry Brushing
- Directionality
- Color Mixing
- Implying Motion

# 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.

---

STEPS:	TIME:	DESCRIPTION:	STEPS:	TIME:	DESCRIPTION:
Intro	00:00	Intro	Step 8	25:19	Donuts
Step 1	00:54	First Fun Shapes	Step 9	28:21	Touch Ups
Step 2	03:12	Circle, Splatter & Drips	Step 10	30:04	Finishing Details
Step 3	07:45	Half Circles		31:24	Outro
Step 4	09:36	A Bright Orange Coat			
Step 5	11:03	Lines, Dots And Circles			
Step 6	15:00	Black Lining			
Step 7	22:03	Layers Of Interest			



# Step 1 - First Fun Shapes

## MID-CENTURY MINIMALISM

Timestamp 00:54



### PAINT:

- Cadmium Red Medium = CRM
- Burnt Sienna = BS
- Titanium White = TW

### BRUSHES:

- Medium Synthetic Angle

### COLOR MIXES:

- Dusty Rose = CRM > BS + TW

### STEP DISCUSSION:

Paint a large curved line using the edge of the brush with the **Dusty Rose mix**, press down at the beginning of the stroke to widen the line, then release the pressure as you come to the end of the line so it thins and lifts off with a nice point. Start this line about 1 ½ inches above the center bottom

of the canvas, bring it up and around the left side, and end it in the left corner about 1 ½ inches from the top.

Paint a parallel curved line just a bit to the right of the first, and it begins and ends a little longer than the first. Then, add a third parallel curved line just a bit to the left.

In the bottom right corner, place the edge of the brush on an angle just above the curved lines, then use the shape of the brush to create a stylized, squished shape like the number 3, and flow into another

curve that runs off the bottom of the canvas. This lyrical, calligraphy-like stroke is made from left to right, pressing down and releasing pressure, pushing down, wiggling back with light pressure, and curving off the canvas. As you change the brush pressure, the paint is laid down heavily or skips across the surface. Rinse the brush.

Dry the surface before continuing to the next step.

*Art Sherpa Tip: It may be a good idea to get a piece of scrap paper or cardboard to practice these marks before you commit to the canvas.*

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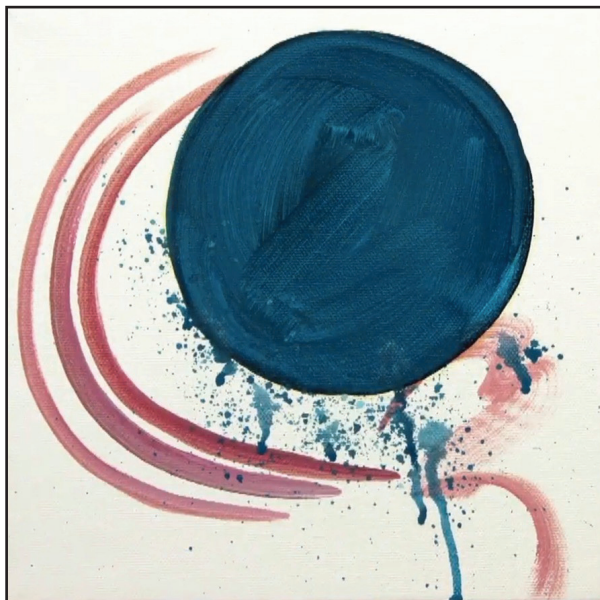




## Step 2 - Circle, Splatter And Drips

Timestamp 3:12

### LESS IS MORE



#### PAINT:

- Phthalo Blue = PB
- Burnt Sienna = BS
- Titanium White = TW

#### BRUSHES:

- Chalk Pencil or Watercolor Pencil
- Medium Synthetic Angle

#### COLOR MIXES:

- Dark Blue = PB + BS

#### STEP DISCUSSION:

Use a Chalk pencil to trace a circle about 4 ½ inches in diameter, centrally in the upper canvas, about ½ inch from the top. Fill in the whole circle with the **Dark Blue mix**. Add some Titanium White, and a little more Burnt Sienna, to the mix to improve coverage without lightening the value too much. Rinse the brush.

Thin the paint mix with water, and tap the brush lightly on a second brush to create a splatter directed mostly under the circle. It is ok if the splatter lands in a few big drops, just let it drip. Rinse the brush.

Point the hair dryer in a downward position to encourage the drips while drying the surface.

## Step 3 - Half Circles

Timestamp 7:45

### THE BALANCING ACT



#### PAINT:

- Cadmium Red Medium = CRM
- Cadmium Yellow Medium = CYM
- Burnt Sienna = BS

#### BRUSHES:

- Medium Synthetic Angle

#### COLOR MIXES:

- Orange = CYM + CRM
- Coral = CYM + CRM + BS

#### STEP DISCUSSION:

Use the **Orange mix**, and the edge of the brush to create a large half circle diagonally across the middle of the canvas. The flat side begins just above the lower left corner, and ends in the center of the blue circle with the round edge facing down to the right. Fill it in with the **Coral mix**.

Paint a second small half circle above, to the left of the first. The flat side begins about an inch above the point of the first half circle, goes up at the same angle as the first, and ends at the top of the canvas about 2 1/2 inches from the right edge with the round edge facing down to the right. Fill it in with the **Coral mix**. This placement creates a balance. Rinse the brush.

Dry the surface before continuing to the next step.

## Step 4 - A Bright Orange Coat

Timestamp 9:36

### VIBRANT AND HEATED ORANGE



#### PAINT:

- Cadmium Red Medium = CRM
- Cadmium Yellow Medium = CYM

#### BRUSHES:

- Medium Synthetic Angle

#### COLOR MIXES:

- Orange = CYM + CRM

#### STEP DISCUSSION:

Paint another layer onto the half circles with the **Orange mix** to brighten them, and get a more solid coverage. Rinse the brush.

Dry the surface before continuing to the next step.

## Step 5 - Lines, Dots And Circles

Timestamp 11:03

### BALANCE AND CONTINUITY



#### PAINT:

- Cadmium Yellow Medium = CYM • Phthalo Blue = PB
- Burnt Sienna = BS • Titanium White = TW

#### BRUSHES:

- Medium Synthetic Angle

#### COLOR MIXES:

- Beige = TW + BS + CYM
- Dark Blue = PB + BS

#### STEP DISCUSSION:

Use the edge of the brush with the **Beige mix** to outline the right edge of the blue circle. Fill in the

top right corner of the canvas. Create a border for this space by curving a line from the bottom of the circle, following the curve of the circle to the 4 o'clock position where it curves up, and off the right side of the canvas at about two inches from the top. Fill in this area with the **Beige mix**.

Paint a semicircle over the bottom left corner that overlaps the bottom tip of the large orange half circle. Fill it in with the Beige mix. Rinse the brush.

Use the **Dark Blue mix**, and in the upper left corner, position the brush almost parallel to the edge of the canvas, just to the left of the rose curved lines. Use the shape of the brush to create a calligraphy-like scribble that ends at the blue circle. Press up, curve over to the right, wiggle and down, then curve up to the right. Rinse and dry the brush.

Use Titanium White, and the shape of the brush to create another stylized scribble through the blue circle. It continues where the blue scribble left off, and joins where the rose scribble begins. Press right with the flat of the brush, then curve down in a U shape, zig to the right, zag down, and bounce to the right to join the rose line. The blue, white and rose join, creating a continuous line that is divided by different colors.

Use the toe of the brush, and Titanium White to paint small dots inside the blue circle as shown. Rinse the brush. Dry the surface before continuing.



## Step 6 - Black Lining

Timestamp 15:00

### GAINING WEIGHT



#### BRUSHES:

• 1MM Posca Pen Black

#### STEP DISCUSSION:

Use the Black Posca pen to draw an arch, or half of an ellipse, that begins and ends where the semicircle in the bottom left touches the edges of the canvas, from one side to the other. Echo this line in ever expanding half ellipses originating from the same two points.

Add a couple expressive lines that follow the energy of the rose calligraphy-like line in the bottom right.

Inside of the beige area in the upper right, add curved lines that start by following the curve of the small orange half circle, then echo this curve fanning out from the edge of the blue circle to the edges of the canvas. Then, between every second curved space, add small curved lines spanning from side

to side. Some of these lines curve upward and others curve down.

Draw oval shapes on the left side of the canvas, near the middle. Then, draw in smaller ovals inside of some of the larger ovals.

Create more of the expressive lines that loosely follow the shapes of the white and the blue scribble lines.

Add small curved lines under the last curve of the rose calligraphy-like line.

At the bottom center of the canvas, echo the ellipse curves off the end of just on

the middle rose curved line.

Outline the drips.

## Step 7 - Layers Of Interest

Timestamp 22:03

### DECISION TIME



#### PAINT:

- Cadmium Yellow Medium = CYM
- Burnt Sienna = BS
- Titanium White = TW

#### BRUSHES:

- Medium Synthetic Angle
- 1MM Posca Pen Black

#### COLOR MIXES:

- Beige = TW + BS + CYM

#### STEP DISCUSSION:

Add a second layer of the **Beige mix** on the semicircle in the bottom left corner. Rinse the brush.

Outline the white dots inside the blue circle using the Black posca pen. Then, curve some short lines spanning the end of the inner pink curve in the upper left corner to counterbalance the ones at the opposite end of the middle curve.

## Step 8 - Donuts

Timestamp 25:19

### SCRATCHING AN ITCH



#### PAINT:

- Cadmium Red Medium = CRM
- Cadmium Yellow Medium = CYM
- Titanium White = TW
- Fluid White Paint = FWP

#### BRUSHES:

- Small Synthetic Round

#### COLOR MIXES:

- Yellow Orange = CYM > CRM + TW

#### STEP DISCUSSION:

Carefully paint the ovals that are in the center left side of the canvas with the **Yellow Orange mix**. Some are painted around the inner oval, and others have just the inner oval painted. Rinse the brush.

Use Titanium White to paint in one section between two of the half ellipse lines in the bottom left corner. Rinse the brush.

Dry the surface before continuing to the next step.



## Step 9 - Touch ups

Timestamp 28:21

### FUSS WITH THE DETAILS



#### PAINT:

- Fluid White Paint = FWP
- Cadmium Yellow Medium = CYM
- Burnt Sienna = BS
- Titanium White = TW

#### BRUSHES:

- Small Synthetic Angle

#### COLOR MIXES:

- Beige = TW + BS + CYM

#### STEP DISCUSSION:

Use Fluid White Paint to add a second layer to the white band you painted in the last step. Rinse the brush.

If needed, touch up the semicircle in the bottom left corner with the **Beige mix**. Rinse the brush.

Dry the surface before continuing to the next step.

## Step 10 - Finishing Details

Timestamp 30:04

### CRISP BLACK OUTLINES



#### BRUSHES:

- 1MM Posca Pen Black

#### STEP DISCUSSION:

Use the Posca pen to improve the lines around the white band in the bottom left corner. Also, refine the lines in and around the donuts on the left.



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## THE TRACING METHOD

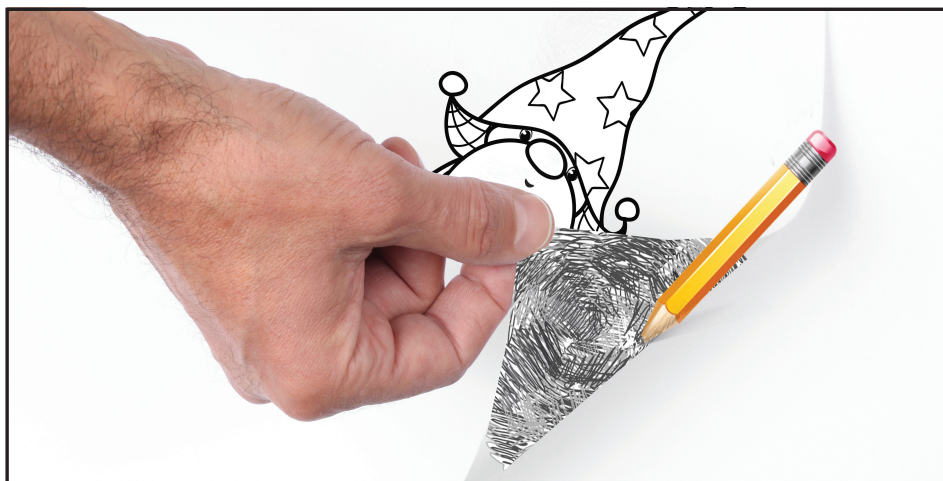
- Adjust the size to fit your surface and be sure to check your printer settings to see if the final size reflects the size you need.



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 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



## 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.

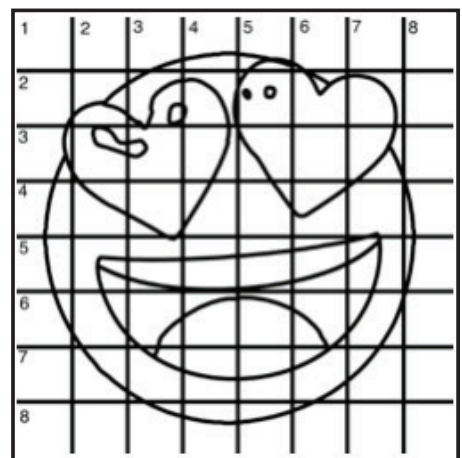
Number your columns 1 - 8, left to right, and your rows 1 - 8 from the top to the bottom.

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 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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