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THE ART SHERPA™



*Acrylic
April*

ABSTRACT ACRYLIC FACE:
FIGURATIVE ABSTRACTION
ANGUISH

BY THE ART SHERPA

Name credit to Patron: Kathleen Carroll-Walsh

Steps: 8 | Difficulty: Challenging | 3 Hoots

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.

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 if you require assistance.

You can join the The Art Sherpa Official group at and please post your paintings there:
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Grab your paint, get your brushes and let's go!

Day 14: 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
- Mars Black = MB
- Titanium White = TW

BRUSHES:

- Large Hog Bright
- Medium Synthetic Bright
- Small Synthetic Round

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
- Diamond Palette Knife

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
- Atmospheric Perspective
- Finding Value
- Dry Brushing
- Directionality
- Blending Wet into Wet

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:
Intro	00:00	Intro
Step 1	02:57	Sketch The Image
Step 2	07:17	Messy Background
Step 3	08:34	Face Values
Step 4	12:23	Emotional Features
Step 5	16:10	Drippy Tears
Step 6	18:43	White Scribbles
Step 7	21:09	Palette Knife
Step 8	24:03	Red Scribbles
	28:53	Sign

Step 1 - Sketch The Image

Timestamp 2:57

THIS FACE IS NOT PRETTY



that is slightly left of middle. Sketch a ball and nostril like flares at the bottom of where you imagine the cheek line is. From here, draw an upward line on either side of the centerline.

Under the nose, sketch an elongated "M" shape, with a second "m" shaped line directly below it, as the top lip, essentially. Then, leave an open-mouth space, and sketch the two curved that imply a bottom lip.

For the teeth, place a horizontal dividing line between the lip shapes. Add a

PAINT:

- Mars Black = MB

BRUSHES:

- Small Synthetic Round

STEP DISCUSSION:

Use Mars Black to begin very loosely sketching the image. Start at the top left of the canvas, about 2 inches in and down from the corner, and bring a line down. Then angle the jaw to the right slightly and down. Curve a small line at the bottom for the chin, and angle another line up and slightly right for the right jaw. Then, sketch yet another line part way up the right side of the face. This should give you a rough outline of a very loose face shape that can be adjusted as we go along.

Draw a vertical center guideline through the image

center vertical line, followed by a few separation lines on either side.

Now, roughly sketch a vertical guideline above the nose-like structure that is about the same distance from the nose, as the mouth is. Create strong arched brow lines above this guideline on either side of the nose bridge.

Add the almond shaped eyes below the brows with round upward facing pupils that do not touch the bottom lids. Adjust if desired. Roughly mark in the dark areas around the eyes and fill in the upper lip lightly.

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Step 2 - Messy Background

Timestamp 7:17

DO NOT BE NEAT



PAINT:

- Mars Black = MB
- Titanium White = TW

BRUSHES:

- Large Hog Bright

STEP DISCUSSION:

Begin by messily painting Mars Black around the image starting at the top left corner. Continue using rough brush strokes as you come around the image and up the right side to the midway point. Loosely paint a bit of the top, as well.

Load Titanium White on the dirty brush, and add it to the bottom left corner of the canvas. Loosely mix it into the black area, while continuing to use very rough brush strokes. Blend it up the right side as well. Rinse the brush.

Dry the surface before continuing to the next step.

Step 3 - Face Values

Timestamp 8:34

GIVING SHAPE TO THE FACE



PAINT: · Mars Black = MB · Titanium White = TW

BRUSHES: · Medium Synthetic Bright

COLOR MIXES: · Grey = TW > MB

STEP DISCUSSION:

Load Titanium White on the brush. It is ok to have just a titch of gray mixed into it. Paint the planes of the face, such as forehead, chin, cheeks, and eyelids. Exaggerate the whites of the eyes so they seem even more upward facing.

Begin adding from the **Grey mix** on the left side of the image to imply that side is more in shadow. Keep it simple as you create the planes of the face. Use just a few strokes of the brush and do not blend the strokes in. Use the light color to indicate the more outcropping or higher planes. Use the **Grey mix** on the shaded and more receded planes. The downward, angular planes would be more of a midtone value consisting of the **Grey Mix** and more Titanium White.

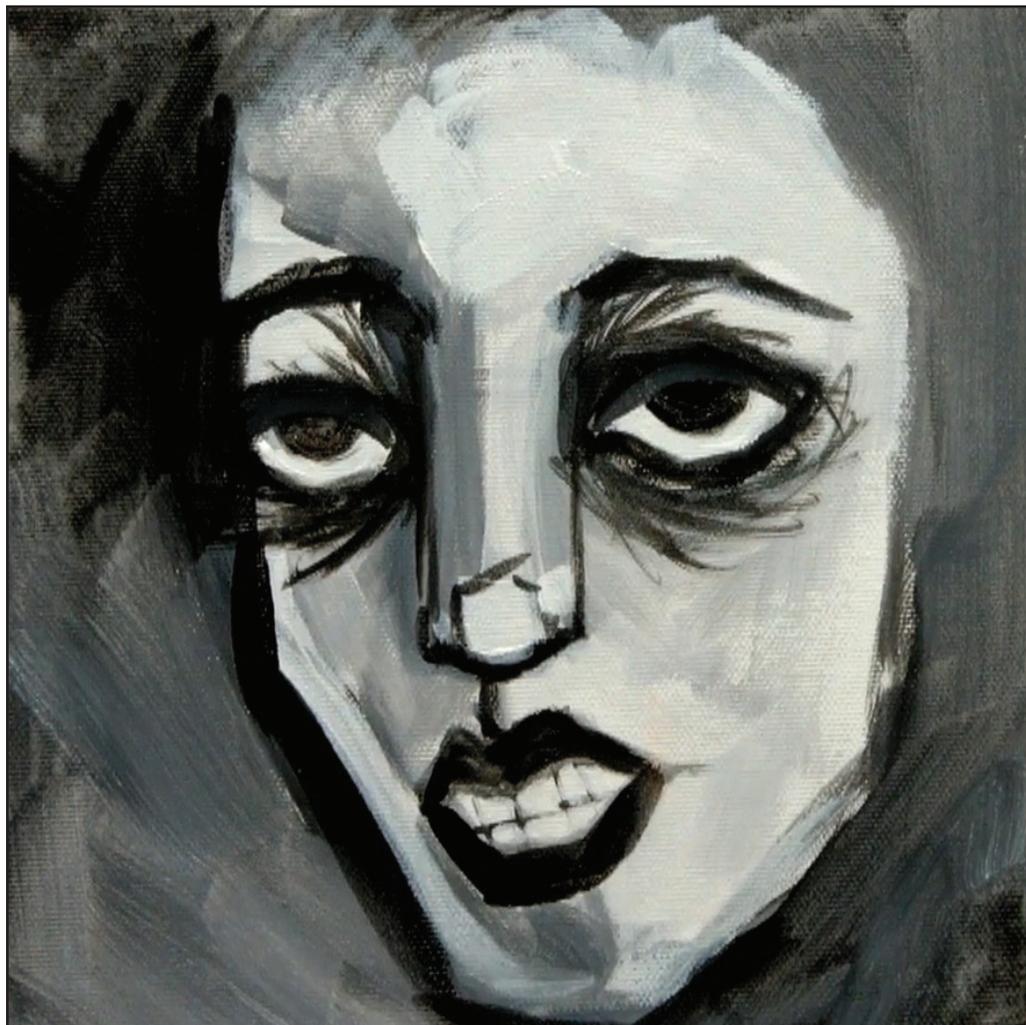
Lighten and exaggerate the whites of the eyes, the tip of the nose, right nostril, and middle of the forehead once again with Titanium White. Rinse the brush.

Dry the surface before continuing to the next step.

Step 4 - Emotional Features

Timestamp 12:23

CREATING ENERGY WITH HEAVY, SHARP, ANGULAR LINES



PAINT:

- Mars Black = MB
- Titanium White = TW

BRUSHES:

- Small Synthetic Round

COLOR MIXES:

- Grey = TW > MB
- Dark Grey = MB + TW

STEP DISCUSSION:

Load Titanium White on the brush. It is ok to have just a titch of **gray mixed** into it, and paint the outside left edge of the face. This will create a more angular cheek plane.

Add Titanium White to the whites of the eyes, the tip of the nose, and to brighten and exaggerate the

teeth. Rinse the brush.

Line the eyes, and paint the pupils with Mars Black. Strengthen the eye brows, and continue outlining the eye, giving it a dark inner corner. Use this color under the nose, and create thin lines for the outer nostrils, and be sketchy around the ball of the nose.

Paint the upper and lower lips using strong brush strokes.

Add a shadow under the upper eyelid by painting a line of the **Dark Grey mix**.

Then, using Mars Black, paint

sketchy, angular, thin brushstrokes, on the inside of the upper eyelids. Create the emotional energy with sketchy lines under the eyes as well.

Finally, reinforce the edges of the image using Mars black. Rinse the brush.

Dry the surface before continuing to the next step.

Step 5 - Drippy Tears

Timestamp 16:10

LET THE TEARS FLOW



PAINT:

- Mars Black = MB
- Titanium White = TW

BRUSHES:

- Medium Synthetic Bright
- Small Synthetic Round

STEP DISCUSSION:

Use the Round brush to thin some Mars Black with water to get the inconsistency of ink. From under the eyes load the wet paint along the lower lid, creating tears dripping down the face. Use the toe of the brush to guide and control this very wet application. The tears will travel on their own somewhat, but you will be able to control how they travel. Rinse the brush.

Using Titanium White, paint a "U" shaped iris inside the dark circle of the eye, leaving a black outline along the outside and a dark pupil on the inside. Rinse the brush.

Switch to the Bright brush to paint an upward vertical stroke along the front of the nose, using Titanium White to cover the dark line across the nose and make a stronger highlight. Adjust any other features if you wish. Rinse the brush.

Dry the surface before continuing to the next step. In order to not disturb or alter the drips you could allow this to dry naturally. If you use a hair dryer do so with care and from a distance.

Step 6 - White Scribbles

Timestamp 18:43

ANGRY, SWARMING BEES



PAINT:

- Titanium White = TW

BRUSHES:

- Small Synthetic Round

STEP DISCUSSION:

Using the toe of the brush and Titanium White to make a little bug-like body shape under the face on the left. This consists of a dot for a head and a fuzzy oval body. Then, scribble in some upward triangular wing-like marks on the top of the shape. Add more of these bug-like shapes through the bottom background area.

Paint some angry white scribble marks through the background as well. Rinse the brush.

Dry the surface before continuing to the next step.

Step 7 - Palette Knife

Timestamp 21:09

ADDING STRONG TEXTURE



PAINT:

- Mars Black = MB
- Titanium White = TW

BRUSHES:

- Diamond Palette Knife

COLOR MIXES:

- Grey = TW > MB

STEP DISCUSSION:

Load the right side of the knife with Mars Black. Start to scrape down with this color, starting in the upper left of the face moving down along the edge of this side of the canvas. Scrape the knife texture in patches across the top.

Without taking out everything that you previously did, add more of this interesting dark texture around

the background. Enforce the shadow behind the left side of the face by placing the knife on the jaw line and dragging it out, away from the face.

You can even push down on the knife, kind of scribbling it on with the knife to get some interesting effects.

Thoroughly blend the **Grey mix** together, and layer it over some of the black you just added. The grey and the black play against each other to add another dimension of interesting

energy. Rinse and clean the knife.

Dry the surface before continuing to the next step.

Step 8 - Red Scribbles

Timestamp 24:03

SEEING RED



Really resisting protecting everything, because this just needs to be layer on top of layer. Rinse the brush.

Reinforce the lips again with the Cadmium Red Medium, and go over the red marks in the eyes.

Strengthen the intensity of lines in and around the eyes using the Mars Black and the toe of the brush. Rinse the brush.

Brighten the left side of the irises with Titanium White. Rinse the brush.

Sign.

PAINT:

- Cadmium Red Medium = CRM
- Mars Black = MB
- Titanium White = TW

BRUSHES:

- Small Synthetic Round

STEP DISCUSSION:

Load Cadmium Red Medium on the tip of the brush without using a lot of water. Paint the inside of the lips. Line the upper eye lids eye, and add to the scribbled energy around the eyes with this red. Place this intense red along the left jaw, on top of the black eyebrows, into the right side of both irises, around the ball of the nose, nostrils, and along the side bridge lines of the nose.

Roughly scribble the red over the background.

WATERCOLOR WEDNESDAYS

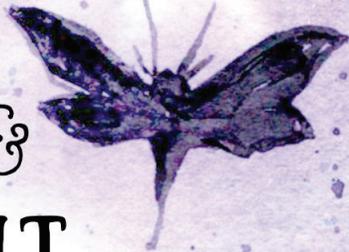
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THE TRACING METHOD

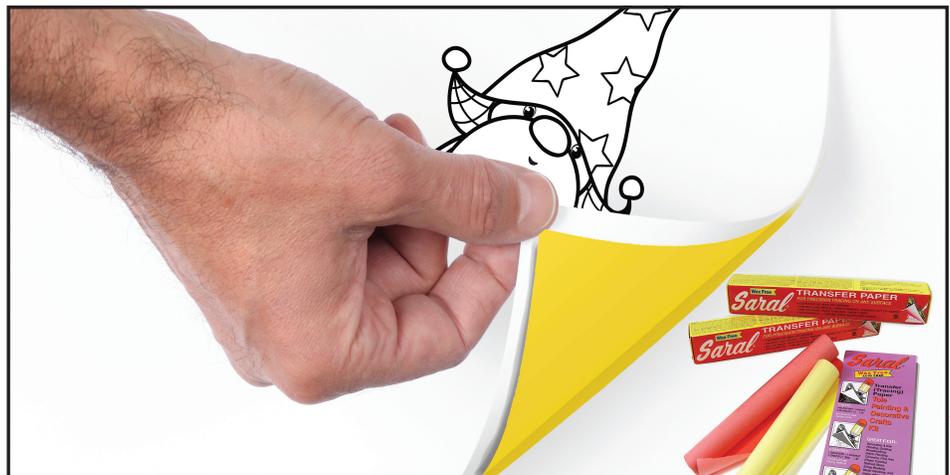
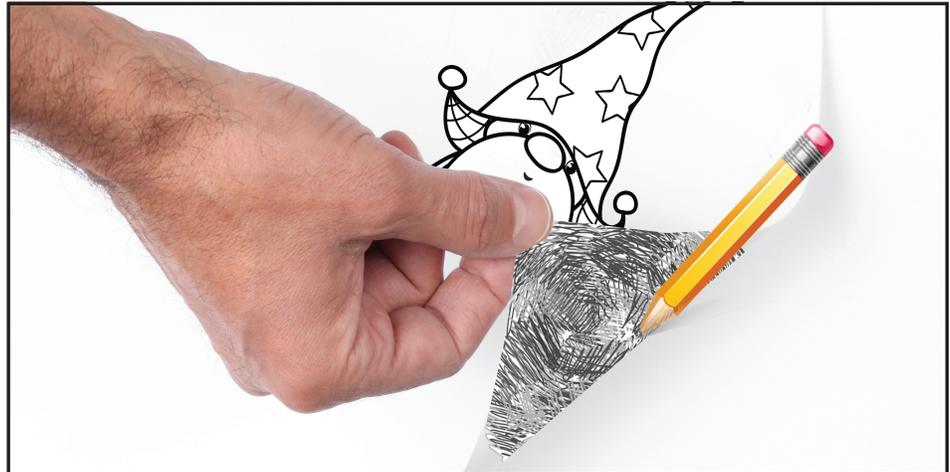
- Adjust the size to fit your surface and be sure to check your printer settings to see if the final size reflects the size you need.



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



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.

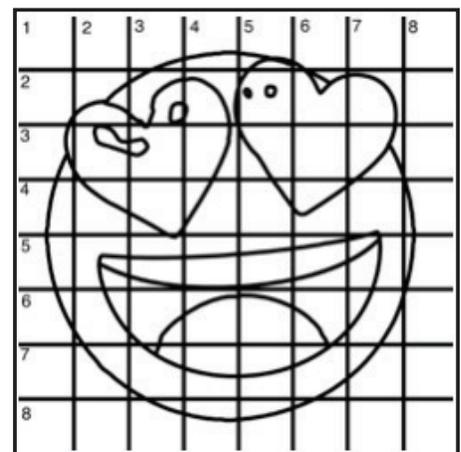
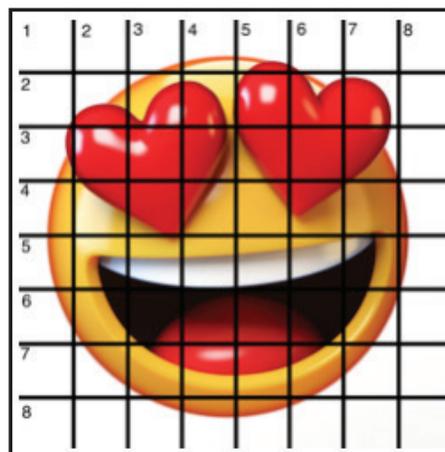
Number your columns 1 - 8, left to right, and your rows 1 - 8 from the top to the bottom.

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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