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THE ART SHERPA™



*Acrylic  
April*

LYRICAL ABSTRACTION  
WITH ACRYLICS  
*NEVERLAND*

BY THE ART SHERPA

Name credit to Patron: Kathleen Carroll-Walsh / Jenna Bug

Steps: 5 | 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.

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

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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!*

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# Day 13: 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
- Ultramarine Blue = UB
- Dioxazine Purple = DP
- Mars Black = MB
- Titanium White = TW

## BRUSHES:

- Large Synthetic Oval Mop
- Medium Synthetic Oval Mop
- Trowel Palette Knife

## 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

## 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
- Directionality
- Blending Wet into Wet
- Color Mixing
- Implying Motion
- Painting a Silhouette

# 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.

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STEPS:	TIME:	DESCRIPTION:
Intro	00:00	Intro
Step 1	02:17	Colored Ground
Step 2	05:47	Background
Step 3	09:24	Palette Knife
Step 4	18:54	Dark Matter
Step 5	23:39	Final Touches

# Step 1 - Colored Ground

Timestamp 2:17

## SKY-LIKE GRADIENT



### STEP DISCUSSION:

Paint the lower half of the canvas using a damp brush and Titanium White. Use a curved brush stroke as you paint this white on white.

While the paint is still wet begin dusting on a little of the Cadmium Yellow Medium. Rinse the brush.

Dust in the **Yellow Orange mix** in the bottom right corner. Blending it upward along the right side and outward along the bottom, to about the midway points.

In the middle of the canvas,

starting on the right, begin blending in the **Orange mix** and swirling the stroke as you move upward to the top right corner.

Blend the **Red Orange mix** in the bottom left corner, up past the midway point on the left side, still painting wet into wet. Add a touch of water if you need it to assist with the blend. Wipe the brush and swirl it on the canvas, to help with the blend.

Cover the remaining white area of the canvas with the **Pink mix**, adding the **Blueberry mix** as you move up to the very top.

Switch to the dry brush and soften the blend on the entire canvas using curved strokes and a light touch. Rinse both brushes well.

Dry the surface before continuing to the next step.

### PAINT:

- Cadmium Red Medium = CRM
- Quinacridone Magenta = QM
- Cadmium Yellow Medium = CYM
- Phthalo Blue = PB
- Ultramarine Blue = UB
- Titanium White = TW

### BRUSHES:

- Large Synthetic Oval Mop (damp)
- Medium Synthetic Oval Mop (dry)

### COLOR MIXES:

- Orange = CYM + CRM
- Yellow Orange = CYM > CRM
- Red Orange = CRM > CYM
- Pink = QM > UB + TW
- Blueberry = UB > QM

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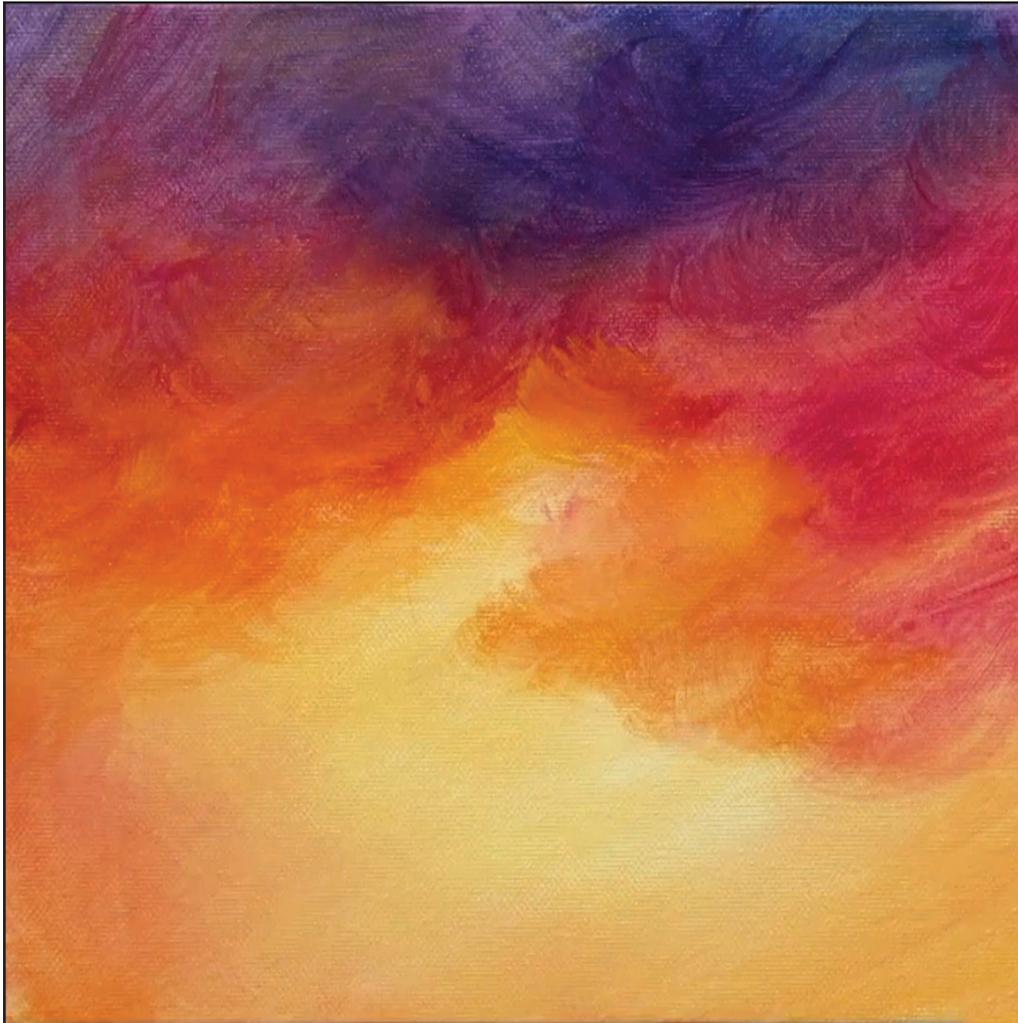
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## Step 2 - Background

Timestamp 5:47

### BRUSHING OVER



more Titanium White to the mix as you move down the center of the canvas.

Blend in the **Orange mix** on the left side of the canvas at about the midway point. Use light curved strokes to blend it outward and downward. Use Quinacridone Magenta starting on the middle right side, and continue to apply curved strokes as you blend.

Deepen the top of the canvas with the **Indigo mix**. Then, blend the Quinacridone Magenta and transition the darker top area

into the brighter area below. Follow the transition of color with the **Orange mix**. Rinse the brush.

Use the damp brush to soften the blend.

Play with the mixes on the palette and see where it takes you. Keep in mind that you want the light to center through the bottom, up to mid canvas and the top to be darker. You also want the colors to transition neatly. Rinse the brush.

Dry the surface before continuing to the next step.

### PAINT:

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

### BRUSHES:

- Large Synthetic Oval Mop

### COLOR MIXES:

- Light Yellow = TW + CYM
- Orange = CYM + CRM
- Indigo = DP + UB

### STEP DISCUSSION:

Apply the **Light Yellow mix** to the middle of the canvas using short, curved, overlapping strokes. Add

## Step 3 - Palette Knife

Timestamp 9:24

### RAISED GLOBS



the canvas. Add a touch of Titanium White to the Dioxazine Purple, just enough to reveal the color. Load it on the tip of the knife and make three small circular shapes in the top left corner, using thick paint application. Load the right edge of the knife and continue on the top of the "S" shape, making three more circles, a bit larger and to the right. You will end with the soft background and then this raised image. Create a darker value by adding less Titanium White and start overlapping the globes of color slightly.

Add dabs of the **Mid Blue mix**, sometimes alternating it with pure Ultramarine Blue, thickly applied. Then, transition from that color into circles of the **Light**

**Blue mix**. Continue moving towards the right and slightly downward, and begin adding dabs of the **Blueberry mix**. This color has more open spaces, between the dabs.

Begin adding the **Light Pink mix** a little lower and to the right. Then, vary the color slightly with more Titanium White. Lightly layer some of this mix onto some of the previous colors. Wipe the pigment off of the knife.

Turning towards the left, start dabbing on some of the Cadmium Red Medium. This is then followed by the **Orange mix**.

Then, use pure Cadmium Yellow Medium, followed by the **Light Yellow mix**, as you get closer to the center of the canvas. Tap some of the Cadmium Yellow Medium onto the previous red colors. Wipe the pigment off of the knife, and start to carefully dab on some Titanium White.

### PAINT:

- Cadmium Red Medium = CRM
- Quinacridone Magenta = QM
- Cadmium Yellow Medium = CYM
- Ultramarine Blue = UB
- Dioxazine Purple = DP
- Mars Black = MB
- Titanium White = TW

### BRUSHES:

- Trowel Palette Knife

### COLOR MIXES:

- Mid Blue = UB > TW
- Light Blue = UB + TW
- Blueberry = UB > QM
- Light Pink = TW + CRM + QM
- Orange = CYM + CRM
- Light Yellow = TW + CYM

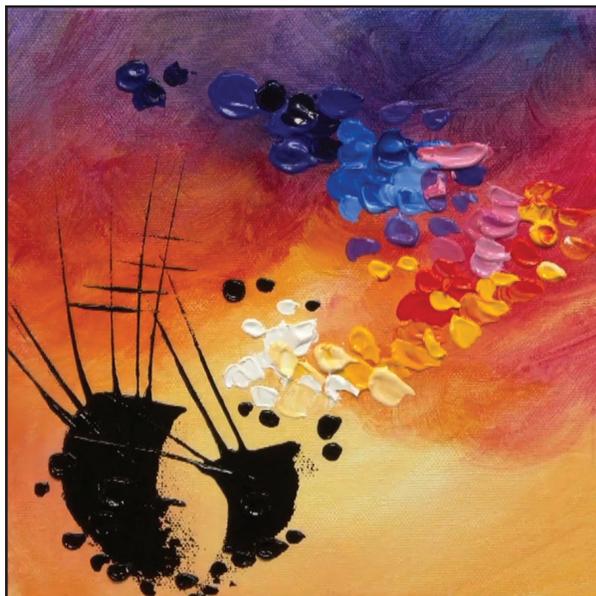
### STEP DISCUSSION:

We will work the objects in an "S" curve through

## Step 4 - Dark Matter

Timestamp 18:54

### CREATING BALANCE



#### PAINT:

- Mars Black = MB

#### BRUSHES:

- Trowel Palette Knife

#### STEP DISCUSSION:

Load Mars Black on the right side of the knife. In the

bottom left corner, carefully curve a stroke that starts about 2½ inches from the bottom, curves left and tapers off near the bottom of the canvas.

Load the edge of the knife on the right. Curve a long line from up and to the left using just the edge of the knife. Continue adding these lines for a total of 6, with a couple flowing off of the canvas on the left.

Once again, load the edge of the knife on the right and add an opposing curved stroke. This stroke is smaller and just to the right of the bigger stroke. Cut in lines that come from this curve, on an angle and over to the left.

Begin adding little dots around the curves. They vary in size, with some of them at the bottom of the curves imply that the dark objects may be coming apart. Dab spots of black on black within the curves to create some great texture.

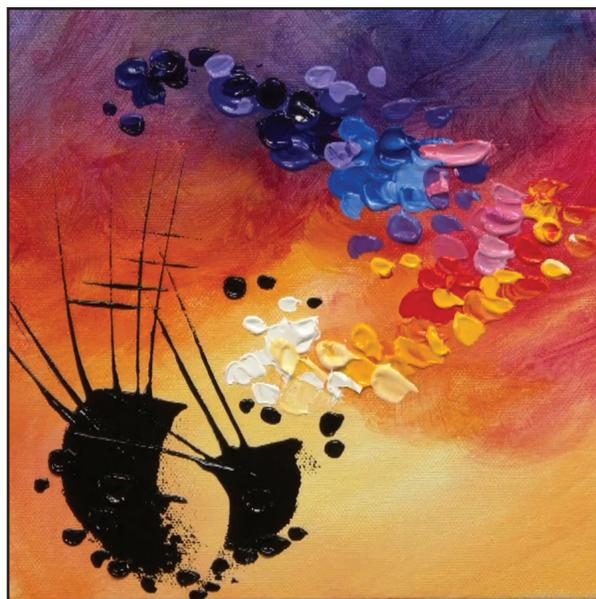
Use the edge of the knife to add horizontal lines crossing over the vertical lines.

*Sherpa Tip: I got a bit of unwanted Mars Black into the Titanium White, but I wanted a pure pigment load. So, I just scraped it off the canvas, wiped off the knife and dabbed a thick application of the pure pigment on top.*

## Step 5 - Final Touches

Timestamp 23:39

### BALANCING ACT



#### PAINT:

- Dioxazine Purple = DP
- Titanium White = TW

#### BRUSHES:

- Trowel Palette Knife

#### COLOR MIXES:

- Light Purple = TW + DP

#### STEP DISCUSSION:

Use Dioxazine Purple to build up some of the darker dabs of paint at the top of the canvas. Then, add some contrasting dabs here and there, at the top, using the **Light Purple mix**.

# WATERCOLOR WEDNESDAYS

**FREE** weekly watercolor  
live stream virtual art class!

**7:00PM** EST

Watch directly from  
TAS Facebook  
page each week.

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

**RELAX &  
CHILL OUT  
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## THE TRACING METHOD

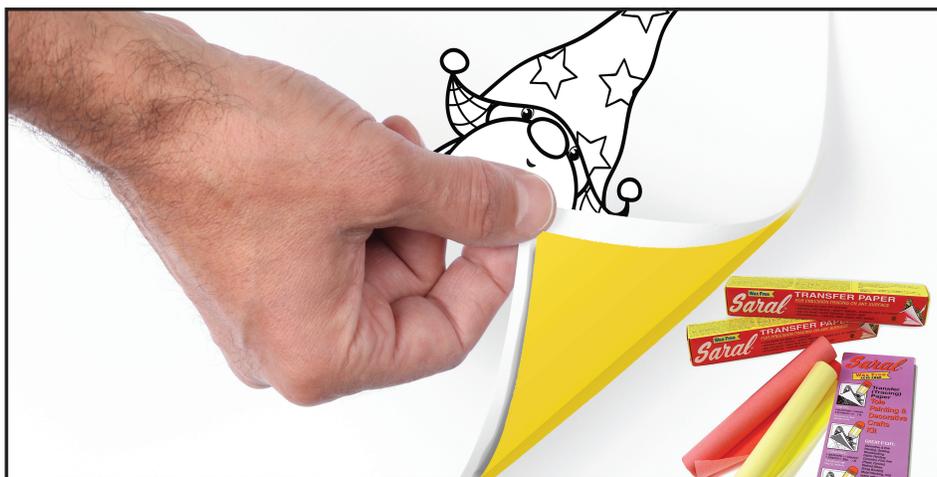
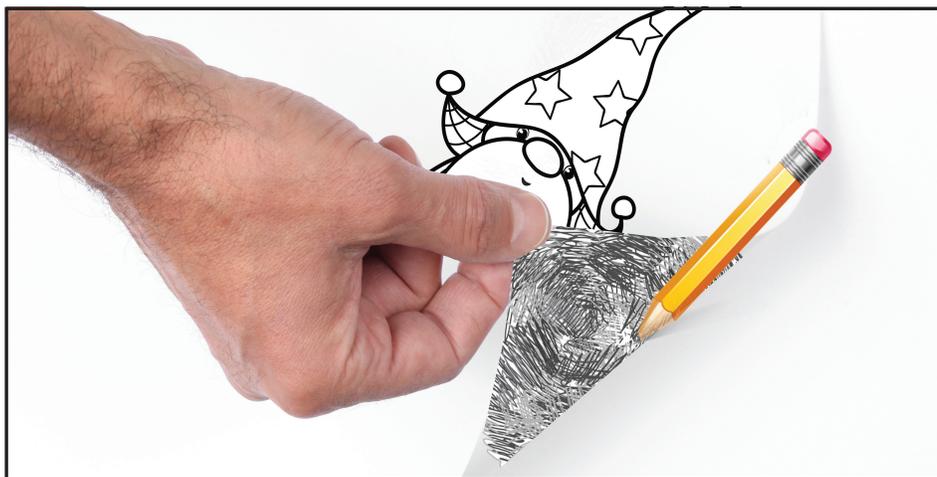
- Adjust the size to fit your surface and be sure to check your printer settings to see if the final size reflects the size you need.



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.

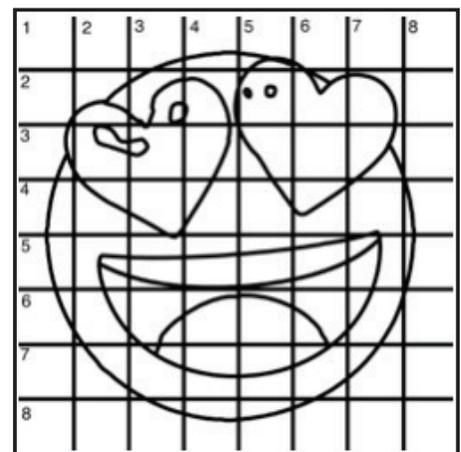
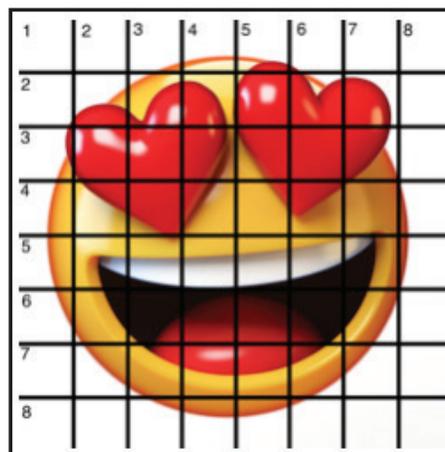
Number your columns 1 - 8, left to right, and your rows 1 - 8 from the top to the bottom.

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 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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