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THE ART SHERPA™



*Acrylic
April*

MONDRIAN MEETS FLOWERS
CREATING GEOMETRIC ABSTRACT ART
RETRO FLOWER POWER

BY THE ART SHERPA

Name credit to Patron: Pauline Sagnol
Steps: 9 | Difficulty: Intermediate | 2 Hoots

2023

Table of Contents

SHERPA FORWARD	3
PAINT AND TOOL GUIDE	4
VIDEO CHAPTER GUIDE	4
STEP 1 - COVERING THE CANVAS	5
STEP 2 - SKETCHING	5
STEP 3 - BASE COLORING	8
STEP 4 - FILLING IN WITH YELLOW	9
STEP 5 - RED FLOWERS AND SHAPES.....	9
STEP 6 - FINISHING WITH BLUE	10
STEP 7 - BASE COLORING REVISITED.....	10
STEP 8 - FURTHER YELLOW	11
STEP 9 - POSCA PEN	11
THE TRACING METHOD	13
GRIDDING INSTRUCTIONS	14
TECHNIQUE REFERENCES	15

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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:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/TheArtSherpa>



Grab your paint, get your brushes and let's go!

Day 10: 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
- Cadmium Yellow Medium = CYM
- Phthalo Blue = PB
- Mars Black = MB
- Titanium White = TW

BRUSHES:

- X-Large Synthetic Bright
- Large Synthetic Oval Bright
- Small Synthetic Bright
- Small Synthetic Round
- Medium Synthetic Angle

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
- 3M Posca Pen White
- Diamond Palette Knife

SYMBOL GUIDE:

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

TECHNIQUES YOU WILL USE IN THIS PAINTING:

- Color Theory
- Finding Value
- Directionality
- 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 9	44:10	Posca Pen
Step 1	03:13	Covering The Canvas		1:00:15	Sign
Step 2	05:52	SKetching			
Step 3	16:22	Base Coloring			
Step 4	22:20	Filling In With Yellow			
Step 5	29:43	Red Flowers And Shapes			
Step 6	35:42	Finishing With Blue			
Step 7	39:26	Base Coloring Revisited			
Step 8	42:48	Further Yellow			

Step 1 - Covering The Canvas

Timestamp 3:13

PAINT IT BLACK



BRUSHES:

- *X-Large Synthetic Bright*
- *Large Synthetic Oval Mop*

STEP DISCUSSION:

Load the Bright 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 by applying long strokes, vertically and horizontally. Rinse the brush.

Then, you can use the Oval Mop to lightly smooth the surface, removing any obvious brush lines. Rinse the brush.

Dry the surface before continuing to the next step.

PAINT:

- *Mars Black = MB*

Step 2 - Sketching

Timestamp 5:52

PERFECTLY IMPERFECT, WHIMSICAL FLOWER BOUQUET

PAINT:

- *Mars Black = MB*

BRUSHES:

- *Small Synthetic Bright*
- *3M Posca Pen White*
- *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. I drew in only the major objects. For a more visible image on video, I use paint to sketch this image onto the canvas. You should use a Chalk Pencil or Watercolor Pencil.

The image is going to be built from the right to the left, creating a natural tendency for Westerners, who

read left to right, to bring their eye back into the painting from the left into the right.

Down in the lower right third of the canvas draw a slightly curved horizontal line. Then, draw a line straight down to complete a structure that represents a vase.

Loosely sketch the first stem line, starting from inside the vase, curving up to the top left corner. Draw another implied stem line from just below the halfway point on the left, curves up and then down into the vase in an almost half circle shape. Next, sketch a stem starting in the lower right corner, up and over the top of the vase, then almost straight out to the left. Place yet another stem line that comes from the right top corner, bows out to the left, and then comes to rest in the bottom left corner of the vase. The final stem bows to the right, starting at the bottom right of the vase and finishing about 1.5 inches from the top of the canvas and a third of the way from the right.

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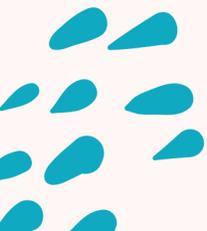
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STEP 2 - CONTINUED



Continue the stem lines downward off the bottom of the canvas in the vase shape. Then, draw a horizontal line across the vase to imply a waterline. Also, indicate the top of the ellipse of the opening of the vase rim on either side of the stems.

At the end of the lowest stem on the left, draw some shapes that imply petals of a cup shaped flower. Then, add a downward leaf shape between the petals and the vase on this same line. Draw curved vein lines branching off either side of the center vein. Further down the stem paint a second leaf shape with veins, pointing upwards.

Moving up to the next stem, you may want to adjust the length of the line by painting over some of it with the black background color. If you do adjust the stem, dry first before drawing in the flower shape. Draw a circle about half an inch away from the end of the line. Then, draw longer daisy-like petals on the upper side of the flower, and foreshortened petals on the lower side. This places the flower in an interesting direction.

In the top left corner, add a whimsical, curly shape

that comes from the end of the line, curves down in an “S” shape, and then curls back up and spirals around the stem. On the upper side of this same stem, draw a long bow shape that is twice the length of the curl. Finish the calla lilly shape by bringing a line up under the stem from the bottom of the bow, to join the outer edge of the curl. Finally, draw two short lines joining the inner curl to the outer curl, on a left to right angle. Remove any unwanted lines with Mars Black paint. Rinse the brush.

Add whimsical, feathery petal shapes staggering down either side of the next stem to the right, creating a spike-like flower. Then thicken the stem of the lilly shape, which will

bring it forward in the bouquet.

On the stem that bows right, add a diamond shaped leaf at the very top. Then, add these leaves with center veins coming down either side of that stem. Some in front of the other objects, and some behind.

Attach a long curly leaf shape to the underside of the lily stem, and a smaller one on the top side.

Counter balance the piece by adding a few circles to some of the negative space, in various sizes.

Assess your piece, and add any more details you feel necessary. You can finish the ellipse on the top of the vase, add a narrow leaf along the right side, add in more circles and draw a long line joining the bottom of the curl in the lily to the spot it joins the stem.

Sherpa Tip: If you need to move a line just use some Mars Black paint and paint over it. Rinse the brush, dry the surface and move on.

Step 3 - Base Coloring

Timestamp 16:22

PREPARING THE PAINT AND THE CANVAS FOR BRIGHT VALUES



coverage.

Start on the right side, and paint the petals on the spike flower stem. Then, paint the lily leaves, and the center button of the daisy-like flower.

Also, paint some of the shapes in the vase that are created by the division lines the stems make. Leave some of these shapes black, building sort of a checkered effect. Also, paint in a few of the circles in the background.

Rinse the brush.

Dry the surface before continuing to the next step.

PAINT:

- Phthalo Blue = PB
- Titanium White = TW

BRUSHES:

- Diamond Palette Knife
- Medium Synthetic Angle

COLOR MIXES:

- Primary Blue = PB > TW

STEP DISCUSSION:

Use the Palette knife to thoroughly mix the **Primary Blue mix**, lightening its value so that it shows well against the black. Wipe the knife clean.

Use the Angle brush with Titanium White to under paint anywhere there will be yellow. This is to ensure the yellow will be nice and bright with good

Step 4 - Filling In With Yellow

Timestamp 22:20

MELLOW YELLOW



PAINT:

- Cadmium Yellow Medium = CYM

BRUSHES:

- Medium Synthetic Angle

STEP DISCUSSION:

Load Cadmium Yellow Medium onto the brush, and cover the white areas that you painted in the previous step. Allow a white line to show around the edges of each shape. There is no need for concern if the white edges are not neat. You can tidy them up with the Posca pen once the paint dries. Use the corner of the brush in the tighter areas.

Apply a second coat to these areas, to brighten the color even further. Rinse the brush.

Dry the surface before continuing to the next step.

Step 5 - Red Flowers And Shapes

Timestamp 29:43

VIBRANT RED



PAINT:

- Cadmium Red Medium = CRM

BRUSHES:

- Small Synthetic Round

STEP DISCUSSION:

Paint the flower in the middle left of the canvas with Cadmium Red Medium, leaving a rim of white around each petal. Again, there is no need for concern if the white edges are not neat. You can tidy them up with the Posca pen once the paint dries. If you find your red does not have good coverage, you can use the same method as you did with the yellow: underpaint with white first.

Add this color to some of the circles, and a few of the checkerboard shapes in the vase. Paint every other row on the leaves that are divided into sections. Finally, go over the outer edges of the calla lily petal. Rinse the brush.

Dry the surface before continuing to the next step.

Step 6 - Finishing With Blue

Timestamp 35:42

BRIGHT BLUE



PAINT:

- Phthalo Blue = PB
- Titanium White = TW

BRUSHES:

- Small Synthetic Round

COLOR MIXES:

- Primary Blue = PB > TW

STEP DISCUSSION:

Paint the entire shape of the lowest flower in the bottom left corner with the **Primary Blue mix** that you created previously. You can reconstruct the petal division lines with the Posca pen once the paint dries. Rinse the paint out of the brush as needed to reset it.

Add this color to some of the circles, the remaining shapes in the vase, and paint every other row on the leaves that are divided into sections. Paint another line of color on the lily under the red line, but keep a line of the black between the red and blue. Rinse the brush.

Dry the surface before continuing to the next step.

Step 7 - Base Coloring Revisited

Timestamp 39:26

STRENGTHENING THE COLORS



PAINT:

- Cadmium Red Medium = CRM
- Phthalo Blue = PB
- Titanium White = TW

BRUSHES:

- Small Synthetic Round

COLOR MIXES:

- Primary Blue = PB > TW

STEP DISCUSSION:

Paint the remaining black area of the lily with Titanium White. Rinse the brush.

While that is drying, add a second layer of Cadmium Red Medium on any of the red objects to make them more vibrant.

Also, add a second layer of the **Primary Blue mix** on any of the blue objects. Carefully painting around any of the red areas to prevent creating purple. Rinse the brush.

Dry the surface before continuing to the next step.

Sherpa Tip: The goal of an abstract is to spend a nice amount of time reflecting on the process, because it is an internal journey rooted in how we feel.

Step 8 - Further Yellow

Timestamp 42:48

BRILLIANT YELLOW



PAINT:

- Cadmium Yellow Medium = CYM

BRUSHES:

- Small Synthetic Round

STEP DISCUSSION:

Now that the white on the Lily is dry, paint over it with Cadmium Yellow Medium. Then touch up any of the other yellow areas that need it. Rinse the brush.

Dry the surface THOROUGHLY before continuing to the next step.

Step 9 - Posca Pen

Timestamp 44:10

LINE WORK CREATES SPACE, WEIGHT AND POLISH



BRUSHES:

- 3M Posca Pen White

STEP DISCUSSION:

Reinforce the outlines with the White Posca Pen. If you do not have a Posca pen you would use a small Round brush and a fluid Titanium White paint.

Every line is significantly more important now because they have huge weight on the piece. Everything gets a rethink as you strengthen these lines, adding energy and vibrancy. Stronger more considered lines will finish and polish the piece.

Add interest by not weighting the daisy stem in the areas that it layers through some leaves. This will push it behind. Even though there is still a line through the leaf, it gives it an X-ray effect.

It might have been overwhelming to figure out where the divisions of space in the vase would be, but the stems helped us make those important decisions.

At this point, you can add lines in unexpected ways in a few places. Such as stripes on the petals and leaves, ripple effects on a couple of petals, dots in some of the blooms, and even more circles in the background filled in white. Some of the white circles in the background can layer over the colored circles. This is just another method of visual communication. Continue playing until you are happy.

Sign.

Sherpa Tip: Because I am right-handed, I probably should have inked from left to right, to avoid running my hand through wet paint. You might want to think directionally for your dominant hand.

WATERCOLOR WEDNESDAYS

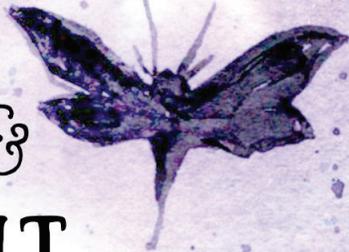
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THE TRACING METHOD

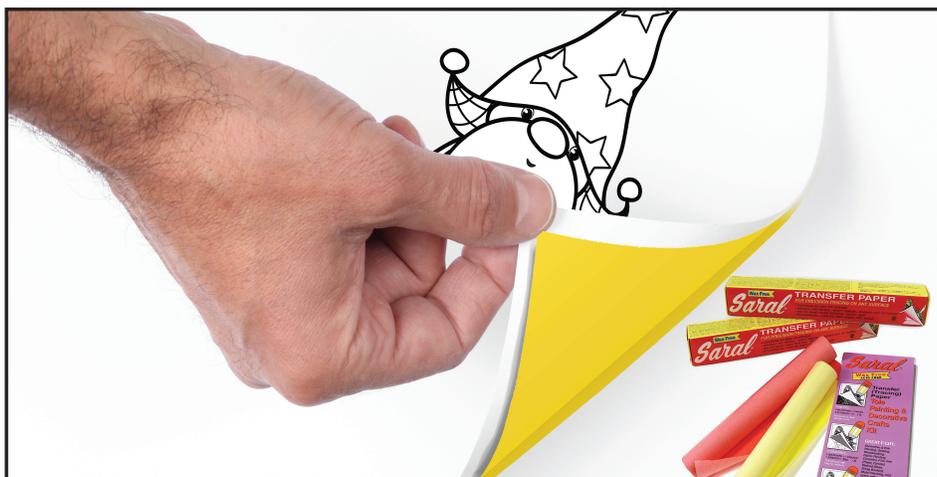
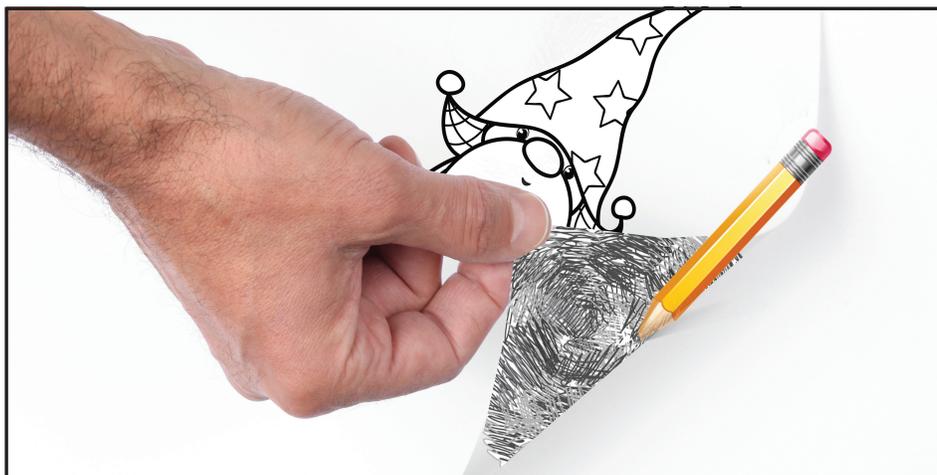
- Adjust the size to fit your surface and be sure to check your printer settings to see if the final size reflects the size you need.



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 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.

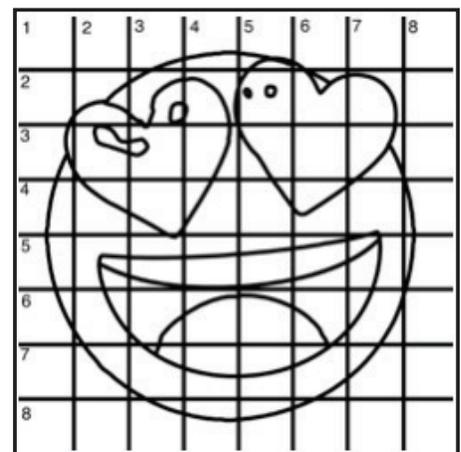
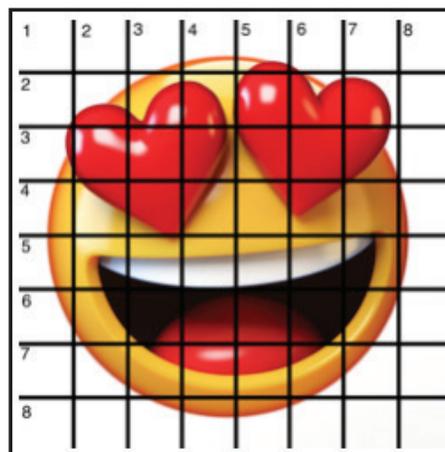
Number your columns 1 - 8, left to right, and your rows 1 - 8 from the top to the bottom.

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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