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THE ART SHERPA



*Acrylic  
April*

ABSTRACTED NATURE  
USING REPETITION AND PATTERN  
*CELEBRATE*

BY THE ART SHERPA

Name credit to Patron: Vicki Anderson  
Steps: 9 | Difficulty: Intermediate | 2 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](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:  
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*Grab your paint, get your brushes and let's go!*

# Day 7: 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 Green = PG
- Mars Black = MB
- Titanium White = TW
- Hansa Yellow Light = HYL

## BRUSHES:

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

## TOOLS:

- T-Square Ruler
- Chalk Pencil or Watercolor Pencil
- Optional: StayWet Palette
- 3MM Posca Pen White

- 1MM Posca Pen Black

- 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.)

## SYMBOL GUIDE:

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

## TECHNIQUES YOU WILL USE IN THIS PAINTING:

- Color Theory
- Implying Foliage
- Finding Value
- Directionality
- Blending Wet into Wet
- 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.

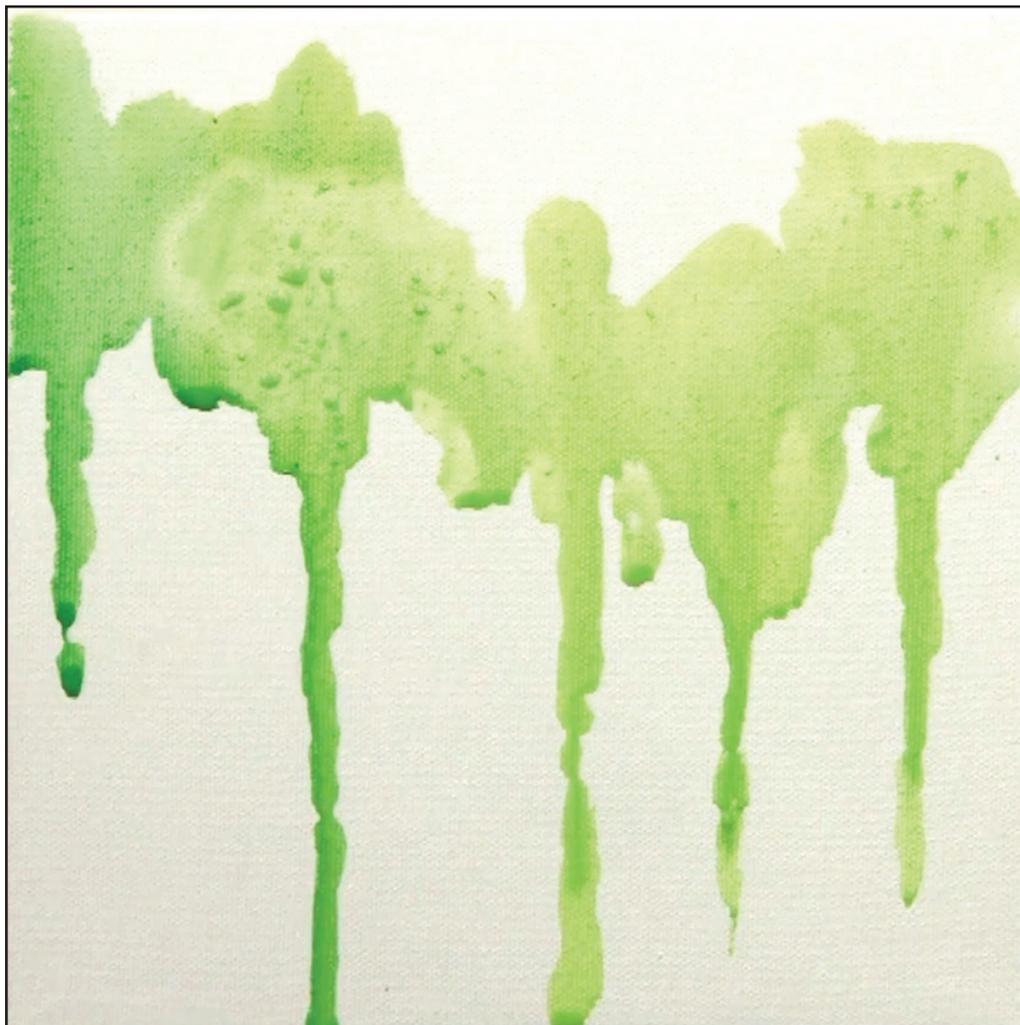
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STEPS:	TIME:	DESCRIPTION:
Intro	00:00	Intro
Step 1	02:46	Green Drips
Step 2	06:06	Splatter
Step 3	07:44	Upper Left Pink Corner
Step 4	14:04	More Pink Objects
Step 5	16:46	White Underpainting
Step 6	19:20	Yellow Shapes
Step 7	24:00	The Orange Layer
Step 8	29:10	Black Shapes
Step 9	34:40	Detailing
	48:00	Outro

# Step 1 - Green Drips

Timestamp 2:46

## VERY FUN DRIPPY DRIPS



drip downward.

Then, move to the upper right corner to create drips using the same method. Add some of the **Neon Green mix**, wiggling the brush in an irregular fashion. Carry this color over to the left, and allow it to blend in with the first green.

Without rinsing, add more Titanium White onto the wet brush and allow it to mix and blend right on the upper left of the canvas. Encourage this by rolling the brush on the canvas to release the paint.

Leave the canvas

### PAINT:

- Phthalo Green = PG
- Titanium White = TW
- Hansa Yellow Light = HYL

### BRUSHES:

- Large Hog Round

### COLOR MIXES:

- Bright Green = HYL + PG
- Neon Green = HYL + PG + TW

### STEP DISCUSSION:

Place a paper towel under the bottom of the canvas to catch any stray drips. Thin the **Bright Green mix** with water. Tilt the canvas slightly to allow gravity to work. Wiggle the brush up and down in the upper left corner to allow and even encourage the paint to

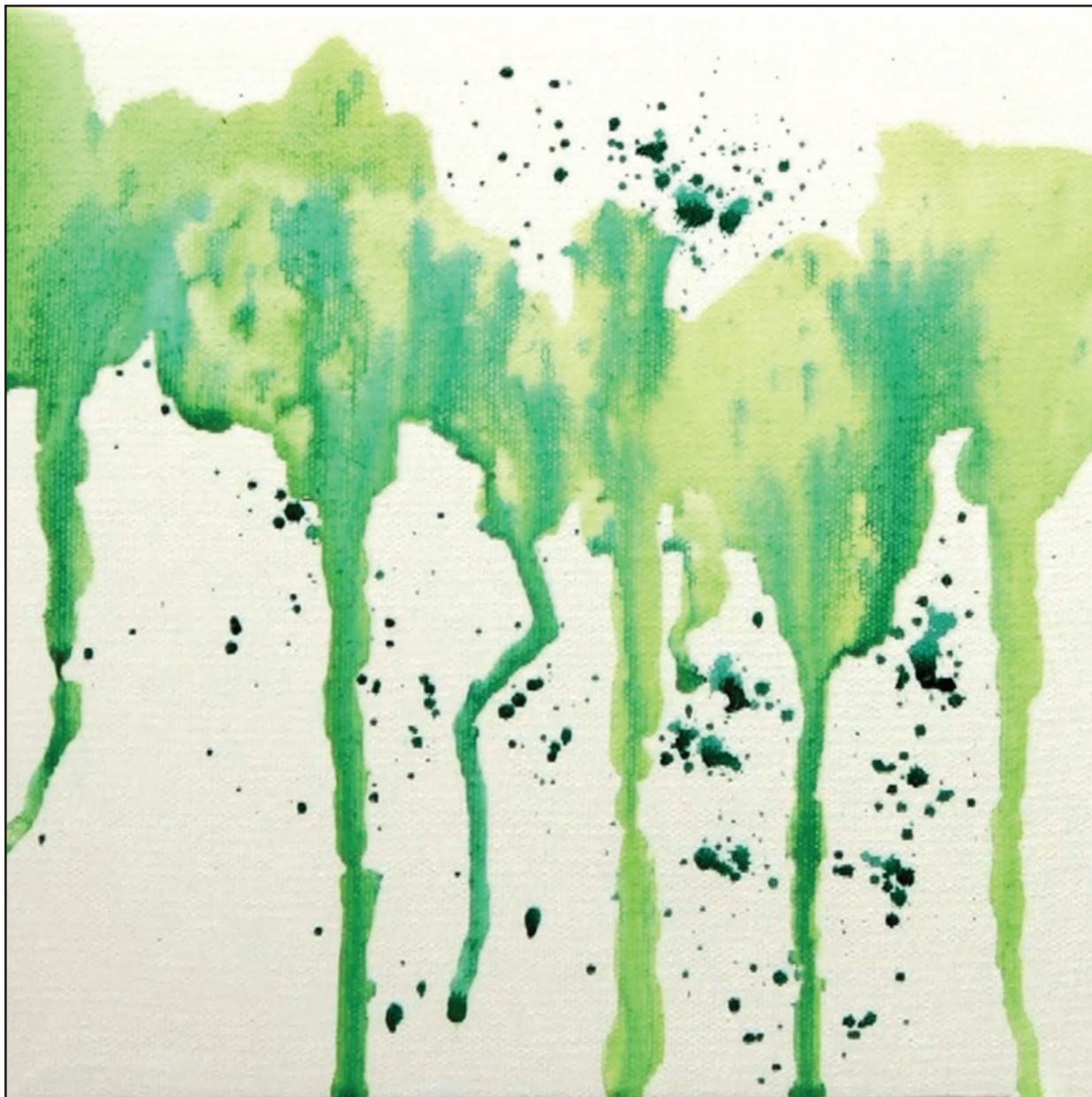
wet for the next step.

*Sherpa Tip: You will see some foaming while using this technique. You can either tap your brush to break them or allow them to dissipate on their own.*

## Step 2 - Splatter

Timestamp 6:06

### BLOOMING SPLATTERS



#### PAINT:

- Phthalo Green = PG

#### BRUSHES:

- Large Hog Round

#### STEP DISCUSSION:

Load the brush with a very wet load of Phthalo Green. Using a second brush, gently tap the two together to splatter pigment onto the canvas.

Hold the second brush in your nondominant hand horizontally to the canvas. Then, take the first brush

with the wet paint load and tap it against the other, making the paint fly. Notice how the color blooms in the areas where the paint is still wet from the previous step. Rinse the brush.

You definitely want to have this dry before we move on. If you have a hair dryer, position it above and to the top of the canvas, blowing down, so the drops do not move or change direction. Alternatively, hold it far back so that it is not blowing the drops around. You can also just allow the paint to air dry naturally.

## Step 3 - Upper Left Pink Corner

Timestamp 7:44

### A FLOWER-LIKE BOTANICAL ELEMENT



the structures you just created. Then, fill in the negative space around the teardrop shapes with the **Warm Pink mix**. Vary the color inside this structure by deepening it with more Quinacridone Magenta, lighten it with more Titanium White, and brighten it with Hansa Yellow Light. You want the upper half of the structure to be darker, while the bottom will be lighter, creating separate zones within these two areas. The depth of color adds a weight that helps give dimension

#### PAINT:

- Quinacridone Magenta = QM
- Titanium White = TW
- Hansa Yellow Light = HYL

#### BRUSHES:

- Small Synthetic Round

#### COLOR MIXES:

- Warm Pink = QM + HYL + TW

#### STEP DISCUSSION:

Use the **Warm Pink mix**, and start in the upper left corner to make a diagonal line downward. Then, add a curvy line that wanders back up to the top near the middle. At the end of the diagonal, another curvy line wanders off the left side of the canvas. Use the brush to sketch in some teardrop shapes within

to this abstract. Blend some Hansa Yellow Light, wet into wet, onto the curved section of the bottom structure. Rinse the brush.

Dry the surface before continuing to the next step.



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## Step 4 - More Pink Objects

Timestamp 14:04

### ORGANIC SHAPES AND MARKS



Continue using the Light Pink mix to paint a tall, solid rectangular shape in the bottom right quadrant.

Piece this color around the top of the green in the upper right corner, so it seems to now be behind the green. Then, paint down the side of one of the drips on the left. Choose another drip and paint a bit at the top of the right side of it, then the bottom of the left side of the same drip. Rinse the brush.

Dry the surface before continuing to the next step.

#### PAINT:

- Quinacridone Magenta = QM
- Titanium White = TW

#### BRUSHES:

- Small Synthetic Round

#### COLOR MIXES:

- Light Pink = TW + QM

#### STEP DISCUSSION:

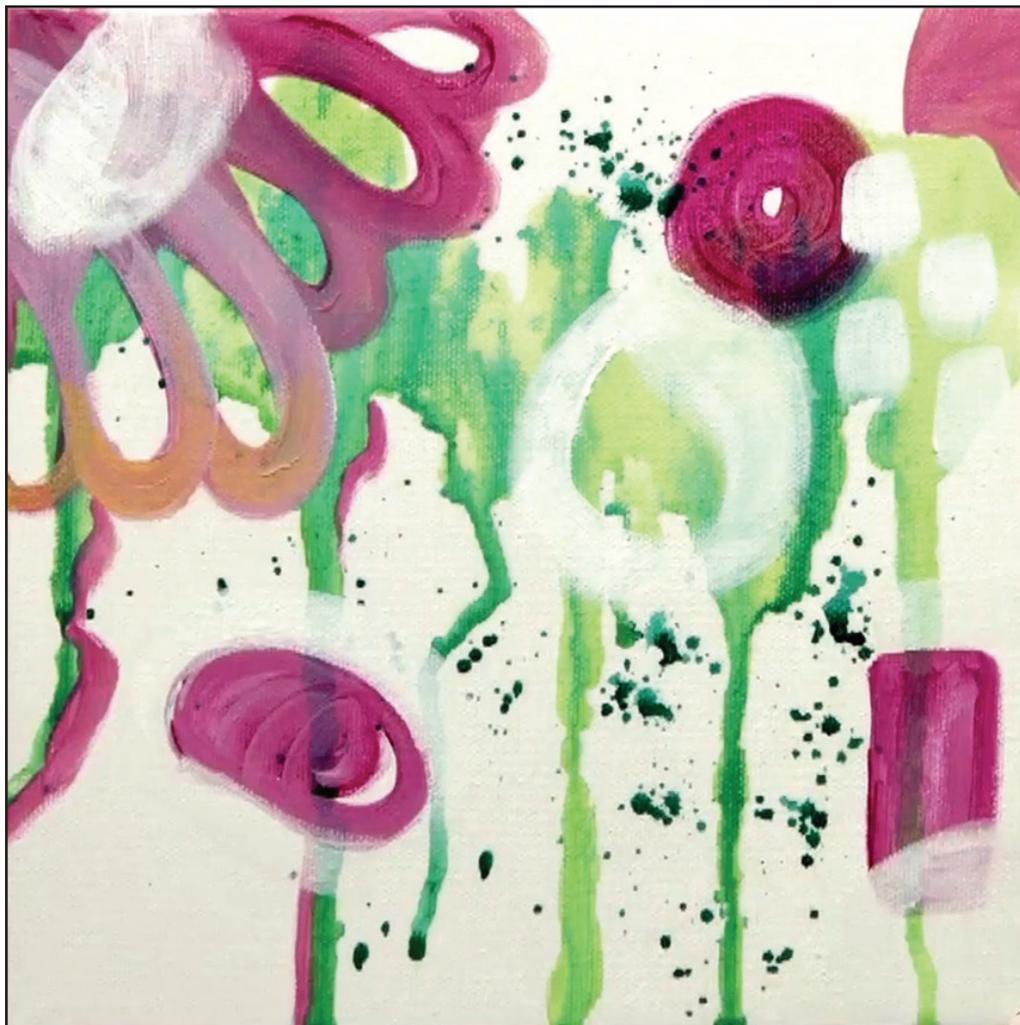
Create a bean shape with the Light Pink mix in the bottom left quadrant of the canvas, and fill it in. In the top right quadrant paint a circle, leaving a little pinhole in the center.

Lighten the mix with more Titanium White, and add some dimensionality to the bean. Use curved strokes, and leave a bit on the right side unpainted.

## Step 5 - White Underpainting

Timestamp 16:46

### PREPARING FOR BRIGHT YELLOW



this time.

Outline the pink bean with Titanium White. Layer a white oval over top of the pink object in the upper left corner. Then, add a series of white marks coming down the right side of the canvas in a checkerboard-like fashion. Use the shape of the brush, pulling down to make the marks. Rinse the brush.

Dry the surface before continuing to the next step.

#### PAINT:

- Titanium White = TW

#### BRUSHES:

- Medium Synthetic Bright

#### STEP DISCUSSION:

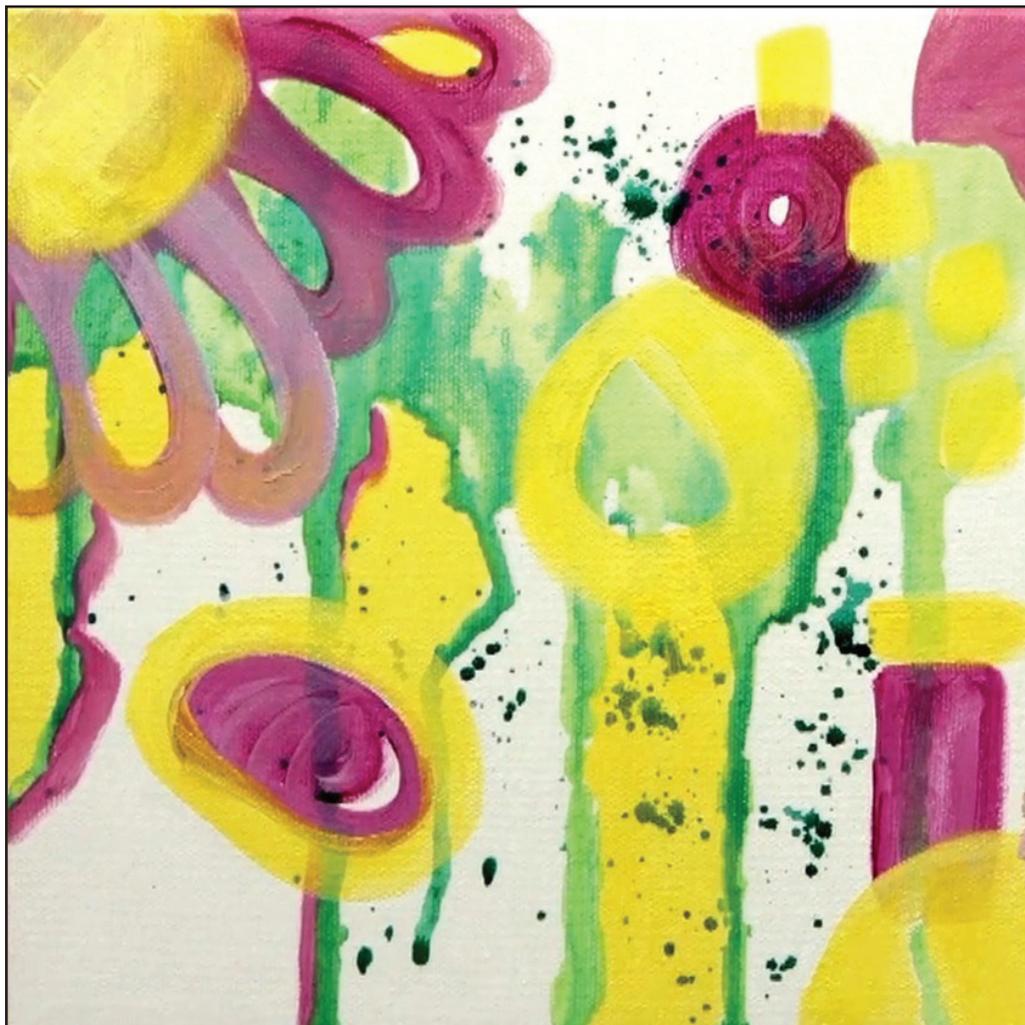
In order to get the bright yellow to show, an underpainting of Titanium White will need to be done first. Paint a petal shape coming off of the circle in the top right corner. It points downward and toward the center. Fill in only the top and right side of it.

Paint a curved line over the bottom of the pink rectangle. Then, fill in down to the bottom of the canvas, leaving the green drip exposed for some interesting layering. Also, paint a wide stripe of white above the pink rectangle, covering the green drip

## Step 6 - Yellow Shapes

Timestamp 19:20

### TURN UP THE NEON



#### PAINT:

- Titanium White = TW
- Hansa Yellow Light = HYL

#### BRUSHES:

- Medium Synthetic Bright

#### COLOR MIXES:

- Light Yellow = TW + HYL

#### STEP DISCUSSION:

Use the **Light Yellow mix** to paint over all the white areas from the previous step. Sometimes use more Hansa Yellow Light for variety. In a few places.

When painting over the semicircular shape that covers the bottom of the pink rectangle, leave the green drip showing. The stripe at the top of the rectangle covers over the drip, forcing it behind the

rectangle.

Use the transparency of the pure Hansa Yellow Light to glaze over the area between two green drips. Glaze a stripe of yellow down the left edge of the canvas, through the teardrop shape, over the pink, and down to the green drip. Fill in white areas of the teardrops with this luminous yellow glaze. Cover the white area above the bean shape as well.

Add a second coat of yellow to the areas that were pre-painted with white for better coverage

and brightness. When repainting the oval, cover the left corner of the canvas to create balance. Blend in some Titanium White to help cover the pink below. Rinse the brush.

Dry the surface before continuing to the next step.

## Step 7 - The Orange Layer

Timestamp 24:00

### LAYERING COLOR BETWEEN, BEHIND AND OVER THE SHAPES



#### PAINT:

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

#### BRUSHES:

- Medium Synthetic Bright

#### COLOR MIXES:

- Orange = CYM + CRM
- Red Orange = CRM > CYM

#### STEP DISCUSSION:

Paint some of the areas between the shapes and objects with the **Orange mix**. You can see that because there is yellow involved in the mix, it is very transparent which allows glazing over some of the splatters.

Use the **Red Orange mix** in the top right corner to cover the pink circle with a thin line downward from the top top of the canvas to the bottom of the circle. Fill in the remaining white space in this area,

and some of the white spaces on the right edge of the canvas, with the **Red Orange mix**. Add a long, stripe down the lower right edge, layering on top of the yellow, and taking it off the bottom corner. Notice how that layering changes the placement of the objects.

Paint the outline of an inner teardrop with the **Orange mix** into the petal-like shape in the upper right quadrant. Rinse the brush, then glaze some Cadmium Yellow Medium over the lighter yellow here, making it feel much more orange.

Paint the bottom left corner again with the **Orange mix**, giving it weight with a more solid covering.

With the **Orange mix** outline the pink bean

between the pink and the yellow layer, and around the outside of the yellow layer. Notice there is a break in the outer line to allow the drip to flow out. Rinse the brush.

Still using the **Orange mix**, add square shapes around the inner edge of the yellow shape in the top left corner. Then, using this same color at the bottom center of the canvas, paint squares in diminishing size coming up this white space.

Switch to the **Red Orange mix** to add squares coming down the white area to the right, tucking the bottom-most square behind the semicircle. Rinse the brush.

Dry the surface before continuing to the next step.

## Step 8 - Black Shapes

Timestamp 29:10

### BLACK MAGIC



#### PAINT:

- Mars Black = MB

#### BRUSHES:

- Small Synthetic Round

#### STEP DISCUSSION:

Get a heavy load of Mars Black on the brush. Wander a wavy line through the middle of the painting, from the bottom right corner up to the top center of the canvas. Notice how the line went under some objects and over others.

Paint some leaf-like shapes along that line giving it an organic-esque feel. Some of these leaves are in front of other objects, and some are only partially seen because they are behind. Where we keep a line continuous, or choose to break the line around objects creates where the objects exist in space.

In the bottom left corner, create a smaller wavy stem with small leaves to balance out scale. Rinse the brush.

Clean up and refine anything that needs it to improve the graphic quality of the piece.

Thoroughly dry the surface before continuing to the next step.

## Step 9 - Cheerful Detailing

Timestamp 34:40

### THIS MAKES MY HEART HAPPY



#### BRUSHES:

• 3M Posca Pen

#### STEP DISCUSSION:

This style of abstract is inspired by abstracts seen in LifeBook by Tamara LaPorte where a bright color palette, and geometric shapes interacting with organics create a cheerful, happy mood.

Begin by outlining three black leaves in the center of the canvas. Then, very carefully add parallel stripes across their width.

Define the inner pinhole in the pink circle in the upper right corner with an outline, then radiate bands out in concentric circles.

Outline the pink bean, and stripe lines across the width of three quarters of the bean. In the bottom right quarter, switch direction of the lines by following the outer curve of the bean. White line the teardrops and wavy edge of the pink shape in the upper left corner. These lines create another form of weight in the piece.

Paint various sizes of polka dots on the orange area in the bottom left corner. Tuck some of the polka dots behind or over the other objects. Add these dots in the orange area at the top of the canvas as well. White line the red orange squares at the bottom of the canvas, and add a dot to the middle of the squares.

White line between the orange squares lining the edge of the yellow shape in the left corner, then add wavy lines down the yellow center. Put a dot in the center of the orange squares, and define this area with a curved, scallop border. White line the yellow and orange teardrop petal in the middle of the canvas on both the inside and outside. Notice that

when you add a line like this, you create separation of the objects around it.

White line more of the large black leaves and parts of the wavy stem, to create more interplay between black and white. Dot the tips of these leaves and the small ones in the left corner

Switch to the Black Posca pen to carefully line the small dots on the orange squares in the left corner. Black line the small circles in the squares that are in the bottom right corner, and around the pinhole circle of circle in the upper right corner.

I will sign on the back so I do not interfere with the graphics of the piece.

*Sherpa Tip: If you do not have a Posca Pen you can use a detail brush and thinned Titanium White.*

*If I did this right, the main focus of the pattern should be through the center.*

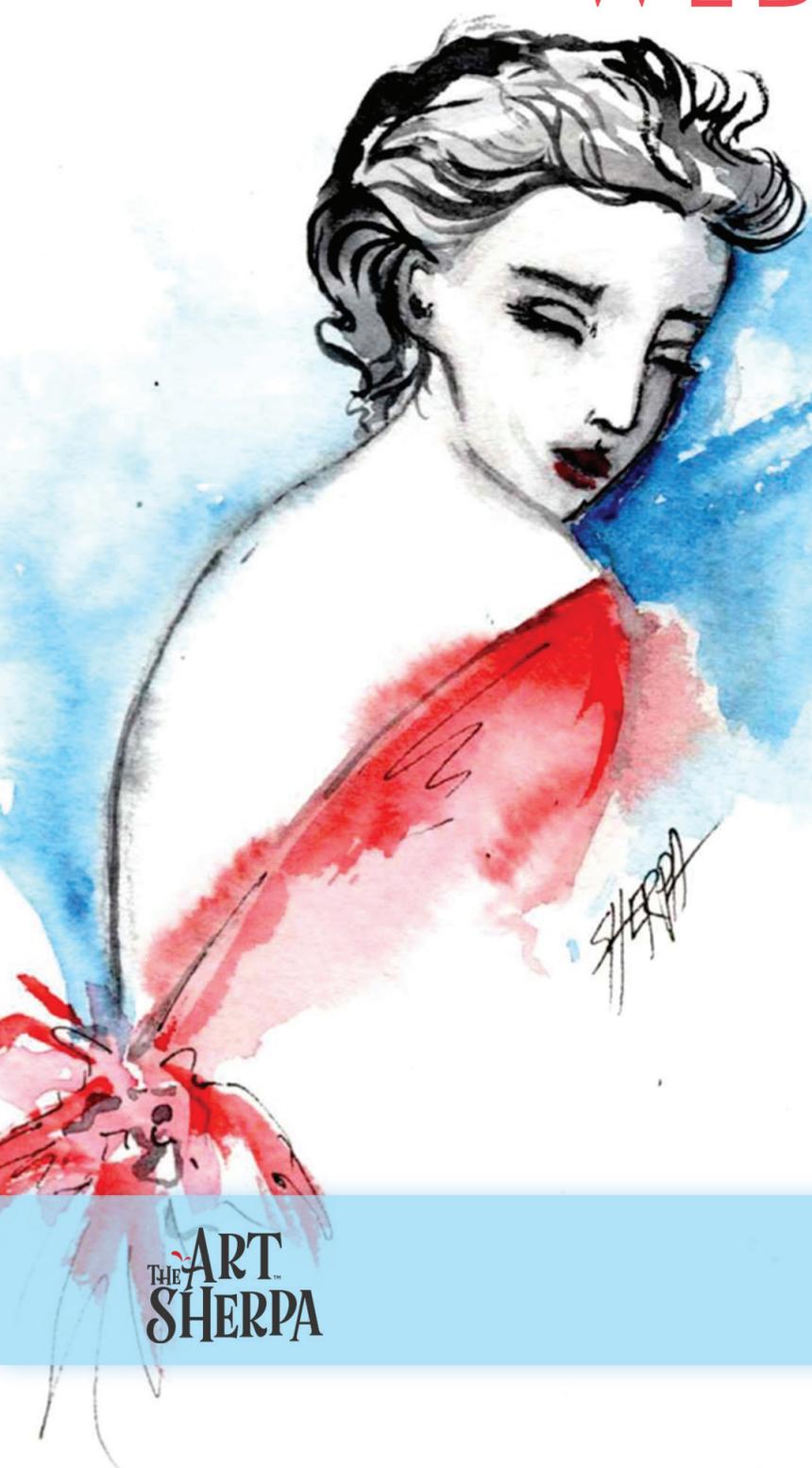
# WATERCOLOR WEDNESDAYS

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

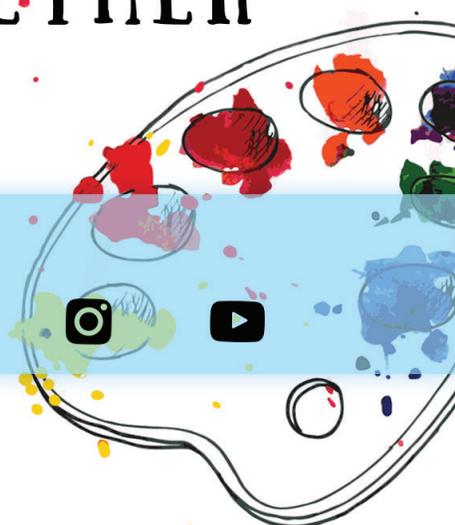
Watch directly from  
TAS Facebook  
page each week.

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

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CHILL OUT  
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## THE TRACING METHOD

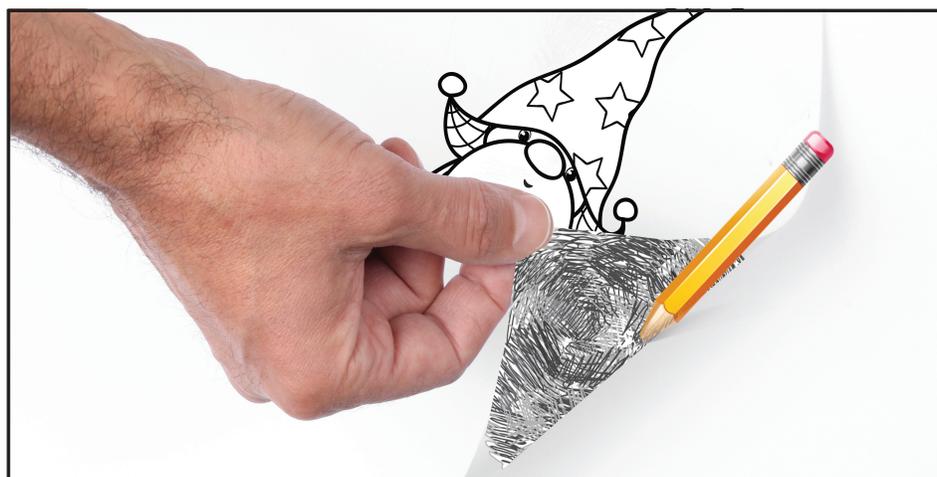
- Adjust the size to fit your surface and be sure to check your printer settings to see if the final size reflects the size you need.



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.

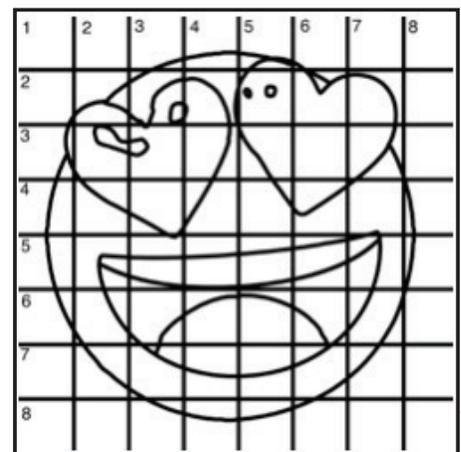
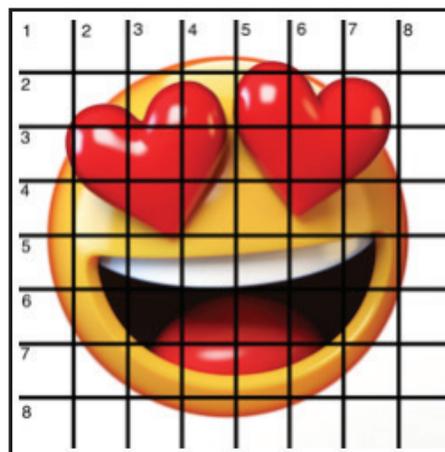
Number your columns 1 - 8, left to right, and your rows 1 - 8 from the top to the bottom.

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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