

THE ART SHERPA™

HOW TO PAINT

IN ACRYLIC



SWINGING INTO FALL

BY: THE ART SHERPA

NAME CREDIT TO PATRON: JESSICA HENNING

STEPS: 13 | DIFFICULTY: INTERMEDIATE | 2 HOOTS

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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 Green = PG
- Burnt Sienna = BS
- Mars Black = MB
- Titanium White = TW
- Yellow Ochre = YO
- Ultramarine Blue = UB

BRUSHES:

- Large Synthetic Angle
- Medium Synthetic Angle
- Saral Paper
- Ballpoint Pen
- Low Tack Tape
- Small Synthetic Round
- X-Small Synthetic Liner

TOOLS:

- 11x14 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: Sta-Wet Palette

SYMBOL GUIDE:

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

TECHNIQUES YOU WILL USE IN THIS PAINTING:

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

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	3:58	LIGHT BACKGROUND
STEP 2	15:30	TRANSFER THE IMAGE
STEP 3	21:26	GARDEN BACKGROUND
STEP 4	30:40	SWITCHING BRUSH SIZES
STEP 5	31:50	DEEPEN THE VIGNETTE
STEP 6	35:45	RED FLOWERS
STEP 7	44:14	ORANGE & YELLOW FLOWERS

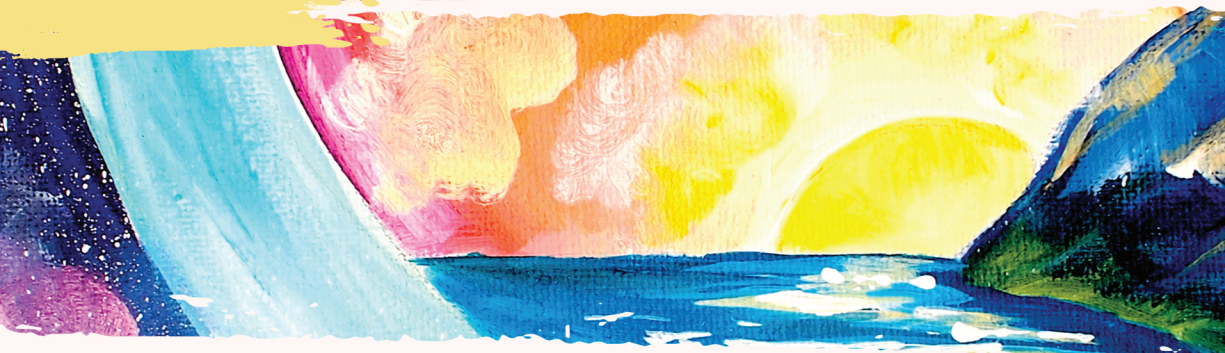
STEP 8	1:02:40	FIGURE UNDERPAINTING
STEP 9	1:18:27	SKIN VALUES
STEP 10	1:24:31	SHOES
STEP 11	1:29:31	DRESS
STEP 12	1:33:33	DRESS VALUES
STEP 13	1:36:41	ROPES & HAIR
	1:48:38	SIGN

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Step 1 - Light Background

"Energetic Impressionist Weave"

Timestamp 3:58

PAINT:

Cad Yellow Medium = CYM

Burnt Sienna = BS

Ultramarine Blue = UB

Titanium White = TW

Yellow Ochre = YO

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

Large Synthetic Angle

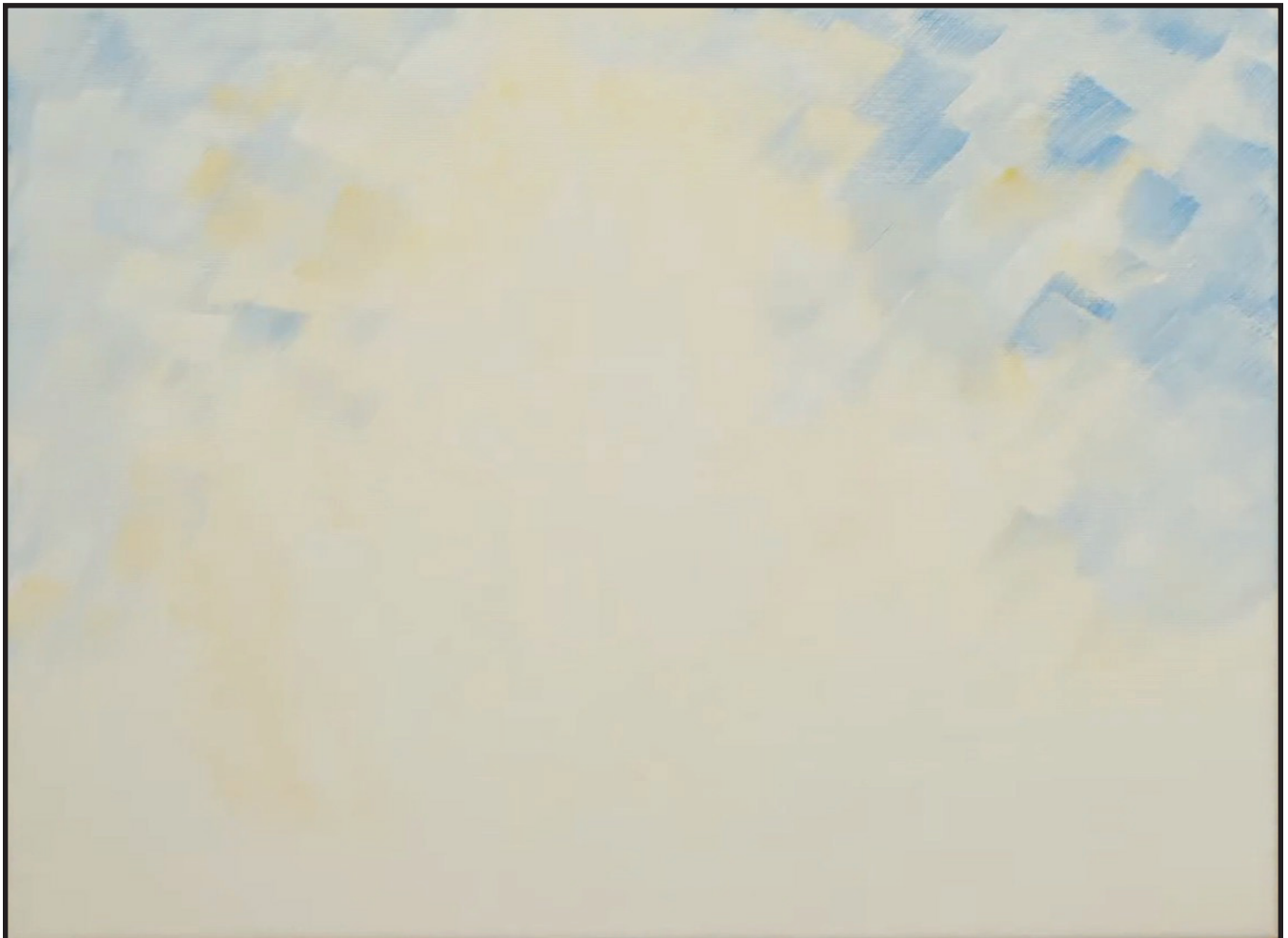
COLOR MIXES:

Off White = TW > YO

Sky Blue = TW + UB > BS

STEP DISCUSSION:

- Load the brush with **Off White mix**, and paint an off-center V shape. This is where our light values will be placed later on. Add a bit more Yellow Ochre and create a large circle of light centered slightly to the left on the canvas. Then, add Cadmium Yellow Medium to the brush and create hints of sunlight around where you have already painted. Wipe the brush off on a towel.
- Next, load the brush with **Sky Blue mix** and begin weaving in the sky at the top right and top left corners of the canvas. Add more Ultramarine Blue or Titanium White in some parts, a little bit at a time. Wipe the brush off on a towel.
- After that, continue with the **Off White mix** in the center and dance between Yellow Ochre and Cadmium Yellow Medium with Titanium White, just as we did with the blues. This background does not have to be particular, it is very impressionistic in nature. Rinse the brush.
- Dry the surface before continuing to the next step.



Step 2 - Transfer The Image

“One Method Of Many”

Timestamp 15:30

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

Saral Paper

Ballpoint Pen

Low Tack Tape

STEP DISCUSSION:

- In this step, I am utilizing Saral paper in order to transfer my traceable to the canvas as a sketch. First, print out the traceable which is located at the end of this minibook, as well as on our website. Lay the paper a little left of center on the canvas, and apply low tack tape on each side to secure it in place. Place the traceable over this paper, also securing it with tape. Then, using a pen, draw over the image to translate the sketch, following the lines as they appear.

Sherpa Tip: If there are any graphite remnants, take a damp brush and sweep it off. This is very common with paper transfers, so if there are any spots you cannot seem to get off, do not worry. We can simply paint over it.



Step 3 - Garden Background

"Tones That Imply Leaves"

Timestamp 21:26

PAINT:

Cad Yellow Medium = CYM

Phthalo Green = PG

Burnt Sienna = BS

Titanium White = TW

Yellow Ochre = YO

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

Large Synthetic Angle

COLOR MIXES:

Off White = TW > YO

Green Gold = BS + PG > CYM

Fall Green = BS + PG

Honeydew = TW + CYM > PG

STEP DISCUSSION:

- To start with, if there are any graphite markings you would like to remove, simply take the **Off White mix** and blot them out. Rinse the brush. Next, load the brush with **Fall Green mix** and create a floral bush at the bottom right and bottom left of the canvas, curving off at the sides and bottom. The greenery on the left is a little less full, as our focal point is slightly left of center. Without rinsing the brush, load it with **Green Gold mix** and bring the foliage out a little further. Blend and mish-mash with the previous marks, implying leaves.
- Using the **Honeydew mix**, continue to layer over the foliage, turning the brush during some strokes to give a natural variation. For added tone, add Yellow Ochre. Continue to dance between these mixes until you achieve a balance you like. Rinse the brush.
- Dry the surface before continuing to the next step.



Step 4 - Switching Brush Sizes

"Quickstep"

Timestamp 30:40

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

Medium Synthetic Angle

STEP DISCUSSION:

- This step is simply sizing down the brush, as we will be moving to slightly smaller details.

Step 5 - Deepen The Vignette

"Darken The Corners"

Timestamp 31:50

PAINT:

Cad Yellow Medium = CYM

Phthalo Green = PG

Burnt Sienna = BS

Mars Black = MB

Titanium White = TW

Ultramarine Blue = UB

- Return to the foliage at the bottom, and deepen the lowest parts of the greenery with **Dark Green mix**. If you wish to make any adjustments to this layer of brush, do so now by mixing in Cadmium Yellow Medium, and any of the mixes from the previous step. Rinse the brush.
- Dry the canvas before continuing to the next step.

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

Medium Synthetic Angle

COLOR MIXES:

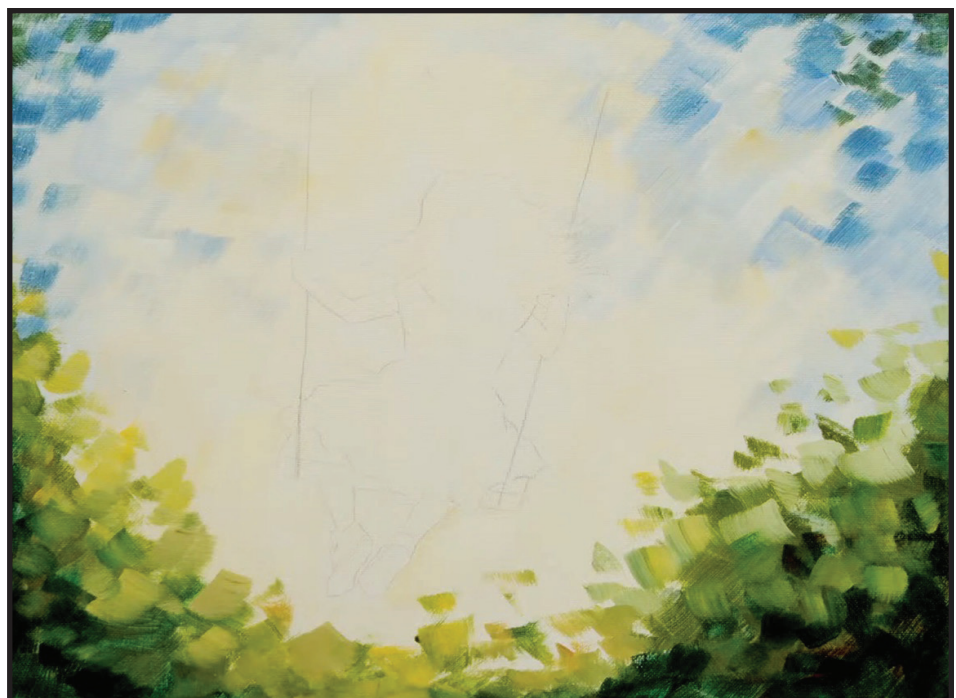
Pine Green = PG + BS > MB > UB

Dark Green = PG > BS

Azure Blue = UB > TW

STEP DISCUSSION:

- Load the brush with **Pine Green mix** and imply hints of foliage at the top corners of the canvas, using only a handful of strokes. We are looking to create a natural vignette, paying close attention to brush directionality. Without rinsing, load **Azure Blue mix** onto the brush and continue the subtle vignette. These brush strokes should extend slightly towards the sky, but not directly into it. Rinse the brush.



Step 6 - Red Flowers

“Colorful Blooms”

Timestamp 35:45

PAINT:

Cadmium Red Medium = CRM

Titanium White = TW

Ultramarine Blue = UB

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

Medium Synthetic Angle

COLOR MIXES:

Lipstick Red = CRM > UB

STEP DISCUSSION:

- Load the brush with **Lipstick Red mix** and create flower petals using a four stroke pattern, using the tip of the brush. These flowers dot around the greenery we have created, some smaller or bigger than others. A few of them might be one or two strokes, some petals fly away in the wind. Keep them simple and impressionistic. Rinse the brush.

Sherpa Tip: In the case that you are painting with economic paints, I recommend painting the flowers in white first, letting them dry, and carefully adding the color overtop of them. This is because economic yellows tend to struggle showing on top of darker colors.



Step 7 - Orange & Yellow Flowers

"More Radiance"

Timestamp 44:14

PAINT:

Cadmium Red Medium = CRM

Cad Yellow Medium = CYM

Burnt Sienna = BS

Mars Black = MB

Titanium White = TW

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

Medium Synthetic Angle

COLOR MIXES:

Orange = CRM + CYM

Lush Yellow = CYM > CRM

Dark Brown = BS + MB

STEP DISCUSSION:

- Load the brush with the
- Add a touch of Titanium White to the toe of the brush, and plan out where the yellow flowers will be. Even with professional paints, yellows can have a hard time truly popping; anywhere the yellow flowers will go that is dark, you want to have Titanium White first. It is less important as you near the very light center. After that, use **Lush Yellow mix** to create even more flowers, going over the Titanium White marks. Add a hint of **Orange mix** every so often, staying playful with the composition. Occasionally add Titanium White to the mix as another value. These flowers will have petals flying in the wind as well. Rinse the brush.
- Dry the canvas before continuing.
- Load the brush with the **Dark Brown mix**, and just touch this color to the center of some of the flowers. Rinse the brush.



Step 8 - Figure Underpainting

"Blocking In"

Timestamp 1:02:40

PAINT:

Cadmium Red Medium = CRM

Burnt Sienna = BS

Yellow Ochre = YO

Mars Black = MB

Titanium White = TW

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

Small Synthetic Round

COLOR MIXES:

Chai = BS > YO

Rust = CRM > MB

Beige = MB > BS > TW

STEP DISCUSSION:

- Begin laying out the figure from the sketch using the **Chai mix**, mapping out the legs and the arms. The legs will go behind the swing, so be sure not to paint them too far up. Likewise, the right arm will be partially covered by hair. Then, paint the skin under the neck, which will also be partially blocked by hair.
- Next, paint the shoes with the **Beige mix**. Add more Mars Black to this mix and fill in the back of the swing. We are just aiming for value at this stage. Add Burnt Sienna to the mix, and paint the top of the seat. Rinse the brush.
- Next, paint the dress with the **Rust mix**. The current goal is to map out our figure, making things easier as we go. Rinse the brush.
- Using pure Mars Black, create the hair, flowing in the wind. Use a pull and flick motion to really make the strands of hair fly. The hair also flows down the back slightly. Rinse the brush.
- Dry the canvas before continuing to the next step.



Step 9 - Skin Values

"Shading and Highlighting"

Timestamp 1:18:27

PAINT:

Burnt Sienna = BS

Yellow Ochre = YO

Mars Black = MB

Titanium White = TW

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

Small Synthetic Round

COLOR MIXES:

Chai = BS > YO

Sun Kiss = TW > YO + BS

Mocha = BS + YO > TW

STEP DISCUSSION:

- Load the brush with **Chai mix** and smooth out the application of the skin tone. Then, with the **Mocha mix**, highlight the tops of the arms, a bit of the shoulder, as well as the front of the legs. Rinse the brush.
- Combine the previous two mixes together, finding a tone that meets in the middle. Then, blend below the highlights and above the base layer, creating shadows and depth. Then, adding a touch of Mars Black to the mix, begin to define shadows. They are below the arms, at the inside corner of the hand, along the dress line, as well as the back end of the legs. Rinse the brush.
- Load the brush with **Sun Kiss mix**, and finalize the highlights, altogether bringing the skin tone to a new level of vibrance. Rinse the brush.



Step 10 - Shoes

“Contrast And Dimensionality”

Timestamp 1:24:31

PAINT:

Burnt Sienna = BS

Mars Black = MB

Titanium White = TW

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

Small Synthetic Round

COLOR MIXES:

Beige = MB > BS > TW

Latte = TW + MB > BS

STEP DISCUSSION:

- Using the previous **Beige mix** with slightly more Mars Black added, shade the back of the left shoe, as well as the bottom-most part of the sole. Then on the right shoe, add shading to the back as well, and also surrounding the bottom. Rinse the brush.
- Next, using the **Latte mix**, create highlights around the edges of the top, and front, of the shoes. Add this highlight to the middle-front part of the soles as well.
- Then, combining the two mixes, create midtones between the lights and darks, aiming for dimensionality. Add Mars Black to this mix to finalize the shadows, and then Titanium White to round out the highlights. Adjust as needed. Rinse the brush.



Step 11 - Dress

“Adding Texture”

Timestamp 1:29:31

PAINT:

Cadmium Red Medium = CRM

Cad Yellow Medium = CYM

Burnt Sienna = BS

Mars Black = MB

Titanium White = TW

Ultramarine Blue = UB

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

Small Synthetic Round

COLOR MIXES:

Luscious Red =

CRM > CYM > MB > UB

Bark = MB > BS

Sunbleached = MB + BS > TW

STEP DISCUSSION:

- Load the brush with **Luscious Red mix** and smooth out the values of the dress. Add more Ultramarine Blue to the mix at the back of the dress because it is more in the shadows. Then, with pure Cadmium Red Medium, create irregular, uneven marks on the back of the dress. This serves as both highlighting as well as implying a pattern on the dress. Rinse the brush.
- Load the brush with the **Sunbleached mix**, and dry brush a light wood texture on the seat of the swing. Then, with the **Bark mix**, paint the back of the swing. You can use this mix to slightly exaggerate the wood on the seat as well. Rinse the brush.



Step 12 - Dress Values

"Highlights and Patterns"

Timestamp 1:33:33

PAINT:

Cadmium Red Medium = CRM

Cad Yellow Medium = CYM

Mars Black = MB

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

Small Synthetic Round

COLOR MIXES:

Pumpkin = CRM > CYM

Orange = CRM + CYM

STEP DISCUSSION:

- Load the brush with the **Pumpkin mix**, and begin highlighting the front right side of the dress, much of the outer edges and a bit in the center. The shadows should remain relatively unchanged. Vary this highlighting with the **Orange mix**, using loose, painterly strokes. Add some Mars Black and Cadmium Red Medium to this mix to create a few dark shadows on the dress. They tend to fold and flow, meaning the shading will be uneven to a degree. Then, add some pure Cadmium Red Medium in spots. Rinse the brush.
- Adjust as needed. Rinse the brush.



Step 13 - Ropes & Hair

"Fly Away"

Timestamp 1:36:41

PAINT:

Cadmium Red Medium = CRM

Cad Yellow Medium = CYM

Burnt Sienna = BS

Mars Black = MB

Titanium White = TW

BRUSHES & TOOLS:

Small Synthetic Round

Low Tack Tape

COLOR MIXES:

Coffee Bean = BS > MB

Copper = CYM + CRM + BS

Bark = MB > BS

Chain = MB + TW

STEP DISCUSSION:

- Dry the surface to make sure it is not tacky at all, before continuing. Place low tack tape along the sketch lines of the rope for the swing. Then, use the **Bark mix** to paint the rope. These straight lines will extend all the way off the top of the canvas. Ensure that they fall behind the arms of the figure.
- Load the brush with the **Coffee Bean mix** and give the hair depth and value, paying attention to what parts of the hair would catch the most light. It should be wild and in motion, highlights and all. Next, use the **Copper mix** to create further highlighting, with some of these strands flowing off into the wind as well. Use pure Burnt Sienna in conjunction with these

mixes, remaining playful with stroke motion and color choice. Rinse the brush.

- Apply some shadows and flyaway strands to the hair using Mars Black on the tip of the brush. Rinse the brush.
- Define the lines of the rope using the **Bark mix** on the toe of the brush. Use the **Chain mix** and twisting motions to create a chain-link around the rope. Rinse the brush.
- With pure Titanium White, create small splotches of paint on the dress, representing petals, or even glistening sunlight.
- Sign.



THE TRACING METHOD

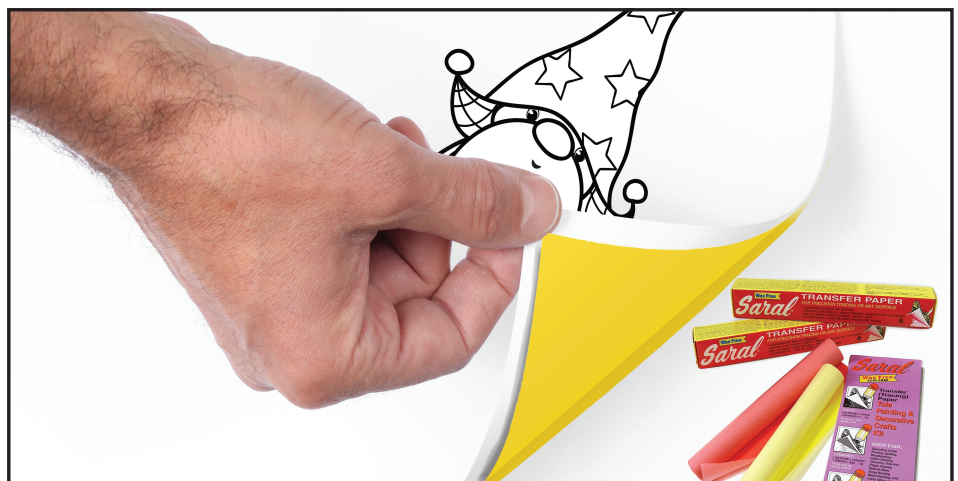
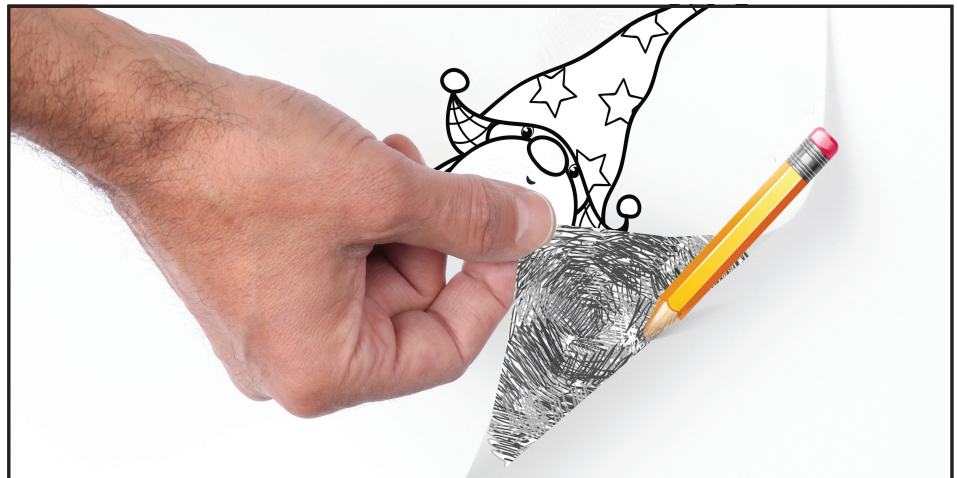
- Adjust the size to fit your surface and be sure to check your printer settings to see if the final size reflects the size you need.



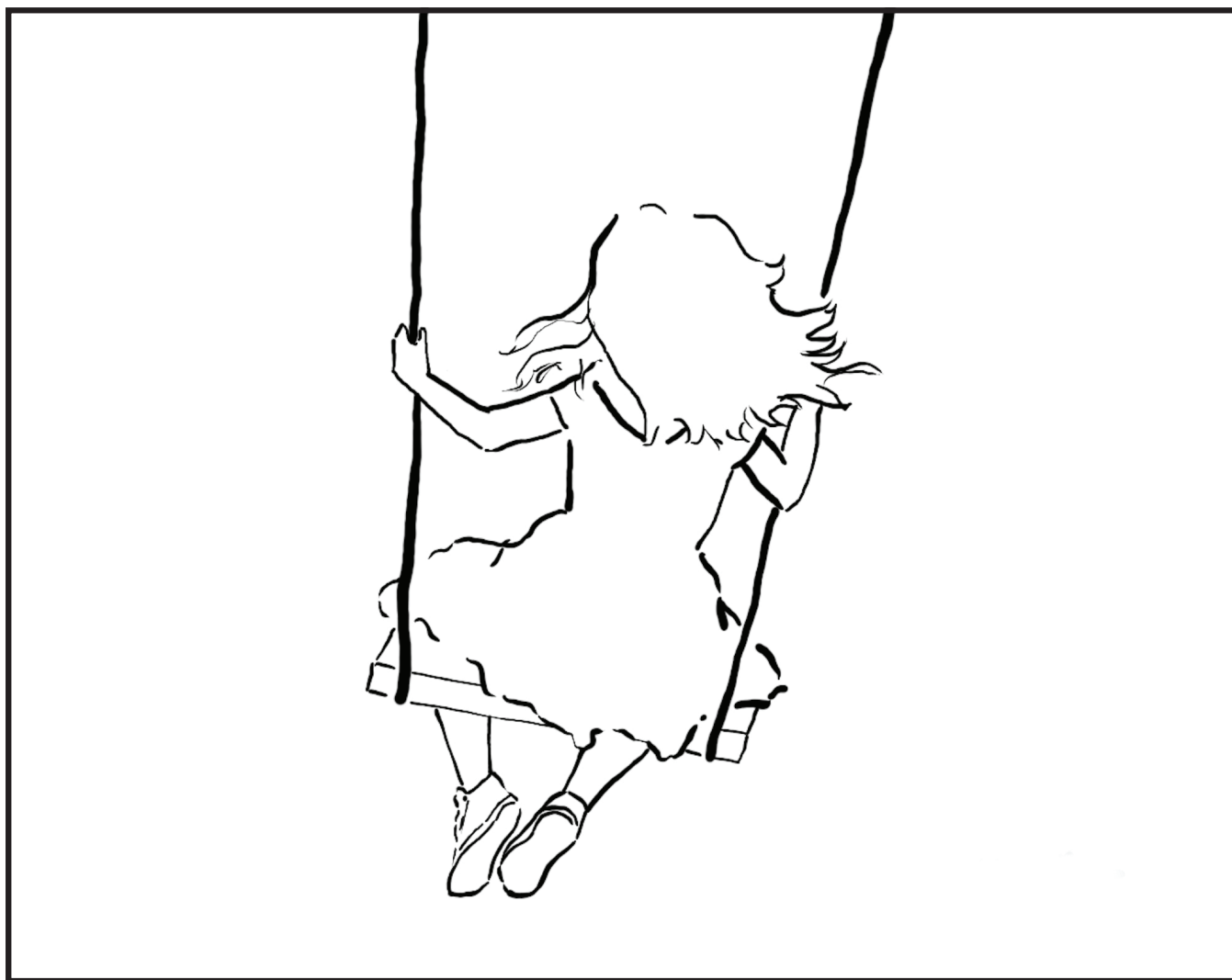
your rubbing is too thin or that your pressure is not too light. After you are done tracing the lines, remove your traceable and you should have a copy of the line art on your canvas.



- 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 see that your transfer is happening. If not check if



TRACEABLE:



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GRIDDING INSTRUCTIONS:

The gridding method allows you to dip your toe into drawing without being in the deep end of the drawing pool on day one. For our purposes, the gridding method has been worked out for you. In this example, we have an 8 x 8 canvas and the example is based on a one-inch square grid with everything of equal ratio. On your 8 x 8 canvas, you will make a mark using your chalk tool and a T-square ruler at every 1 inch point both horizontally and vertically. The T-square will help ensure that your lines are straight.

To draw the grid your canvas must be dry and it's advisable that it is also cool. You should use chalk that is wax or oil free. It must be pure chalk. I use a Dritz fabric-marking tool because it does fine lines easily and removes well from the canvas. There are also chalk pencils available or you could use chalkboard chalk. While I will always share with you the tools and equipment that I am using, you are welcome to deviate from that any time you feel something else is best for you.

Something that I have learned especially with complex images is that it can be easy to get lost in the grid. If you find yourself unsure, go back and check to make sure that the square you are marking on matches the square in

your reference. After you master this method, you will be able to use gridding to transfer any image from a reference to your canvas.

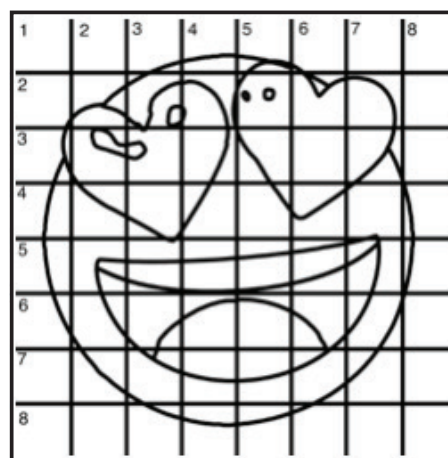
Number your columns 1 - 8, left to right, and your rows 1 - 8 from the top to the bottom.

Find the first row that the contour line of your image enters and exits and duplicate only what you see in that one single square. Continue through the entire image square by square transferring, the contour lines of the subject with chalk on your canvas. When you have duplicated the subject from your reference to your canvas, you will be done.

You can remove chalk easily by taking a soft brush and getting it damp with clean water. Gently brush over the lines you wish to remove and they will lift.

If you prefer a different size there are many great resources out there that involve math about how to scale. I do not teach math for many good reasons and I could count them all for you, but that would be doing math. The resources out there for that information and those mathematical formulas exist online in copious amounts. Explained beautifully and if you are choosing to paint different sizes than we are utilizing in this mini book, I highly recommend finding one of those formulas and mastering it. Short of that, buy a 8 x 8 canvas to match the free grid for this project.

HERE IS AN EXAMPLE OF A 8 X 8 CANVAS; YOU CAN DO A 1" GRID ON ANY SIZE CANVAS.



TECHNIQUE REFERENCES:

BLENDING WET INTO WET

Create transitions from one color to another, or one value to another, in acrylic painting, by blending colors together with the brush on the canvas while both are still wet. Mastering a blend like this is also essential for acrylic painting. In general, blending requires a soft pressure with a bit of urgency because it must be accomplished before the paint is dry. If you are in very dry studio conditions, such as air conditioning or dry heating in winter, your paint may dry out faster than you can blend it. No worries...there are mediums called retarders that you can add to the paint to slow the drying time.

BLOCKING IN

Paint in the shape with a color, without detail.

CONTOUR

Following the outer lines of an object or subject with your brush or tool.

COOL COLOR

Colors on the cool side of a color wheel. Blues, greens and purples. These colors shouldn't visually feel cool to the eye. They often make up objects in our real world that are cool like ice or the green in nature. These colors tend to recede visually and give a sense of distance.

CONTOUR PAINTING

Use the brushstroke to define the outline of the form. The brushstrokes are long and smooth and help us express the form and line of the object.

FEATHERED BLENDING

Create a softened edge by gently brushing on the toe of the head of the brush allowing the bristles to feather out visually defusing the stroke.

FINE LINE WORK

Taking paint that is made more fluid and a fine line brush to create brush Strokes that are delicate and elegant in nature. This is often used for hair, delicate grasses or natural elements, edged highlights.

GLAZING

Taking thin transparent coats of paint over another coat of dry paint. The transparency of the paint allows the color from the paint underneath to affect the paint on top. This is another way for artists to make transitions with acrylic paint. Some paint is naturally transparent because of how pigmentmented it is. Colors like quinacridone magenta or phthalo blue are very transparent. Opaque pigments can be made transparent using a medium for glazing.

LAYERING

This is a very important part of acrylic painting. You can layer wet paint over wet paint. You can layer dry paint over dry paint. You can glaze over dry paint to layer also. Layering can help you build texture and depth in a painting. Understanding that techniques are built up in layers will help you move away from the magical brush thinking. You remember seeing cartoons paint a tunnel in one stroke with a single brush? As regular humans we can't do that to get these effects, we need to layer the paint. Once you embrace this thinking, the depth of your painting will improve greatly.

LOOSE, EXPRESSIVE AND PAINTERLY

When you paint showing the brush stroke. The painting has a freshly captured feel. This technique gives the impression of capturing a moment in time. It has qualities where the color stroke in texture defines the artwork instead of line.

LOOSELY MIXED

Taking two colors and mixing them together with both colors still evident in the mix and brush stroke.

PAINTERLY

Free flowing and expressive brush strokes. Painterly expression of art generally allows the medium and the brush strokes to show instead of hiding them through blending and careful placement.

S STROKES

Being able to create compound curves as strokes is a very important technique in painting. Most of the natural world will require your ability to execute it as a stroke. It's a good idea to practice making bold S strokes and delicate S Strokes.

SCUMBLING

Scumbling certainly has some dry brushing to it but involves a more randomized circular brush stroke. Be careful when you scumble, you don't want to press so hard that you break the heel of the brush. In scumbling, just like in dry brushing, we won't be using a lot of water in the brush. We are going to want to move the brush around in a random and circular motion creating no sense of a particular line or direction.

SMOOTHLY BLENDED OR TIGHT PAINTING

This is when you smooth the paint and try to hide the brush Strokes and transitions. When you hear an artist talking about a particular painter being tight, what they're speaking of is the way that this artist is able to hide the medium method of the painting. Acrylic blending is one of the more frustrating techniques for new artists.

THOROUGHLY MIXED

Take two colors and thoroughly incorporate them so they make a smooth, even secondary color with no sign of the two colors used to create it.

TRANSITIONAL MIXING

There are many ways to blend acrylic paint creating tonal and value transitions through the hues. When you have two very different colors you can create hues that are half shades by mixing them together and biasing the mix to create a subtle transition.

UNDERPAINTING

Loose large fields of color that future layers of painting will build on.

WARM COLOR

These colors are on the warm side of the wheel such as red, yellow and orange. Warm colors remind us of things like fire and sunlight. They tend to come forward visually and pull the viewer in.

RESOURCES

- The best resource for this book is to use it with the YouTube video. Additionally, I have many resources to help new painters achieve their dreams of being creative. I've made over a thousand videos and chances are I have a video that will help you with your specific challenges.
- Be sure to check out the "Where to Start Acrylic Painting with the Art Sherpa" playlist on Youtube.
- Search for videos on the website.
- Use the traceable - it is NOT cheating.
- Join the Art Sherpa Official Facebook group for support.
- Come to live streams and ask questions.

WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR FINISH PIECE

As an artist, there's still a lot to think about.

Do you varnish? Believe it or not, varnishing is optional with acrylic painting. In my opinion it's best only to do so in good weather in a dust free space following the instructions of the specific varnish for acrylic painting exactly. Varnish is good because it does protect and unify the finish of a painting, but it is not required.

Allow your painting a few days to cure and harden. Acrylic paintings do dry quickly but still continue to cure a few days after you're finished even with thin applications of paint. Taking the time to allow 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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