

HOW TO PAINT IN ACRYLIC BY THE ART SHERPA  
THE NEW DAWN



THE ART SHERPA™



## GREETINGS

I want to welcome you to my Life Book 2021 lesson entitled "New Dawn". This lesson is a visual manifestation of the things I hope will be true for this year. I tried to use symbolism that spoke to me about rebirth, healing and renewal. I find that dawn is a great symbol to paint when you're speaking to new beginnings because it supports the rebirth concept that we are leaving the cycle of winter slumber into a new cycle of growth and birth. The tree goddess represents our spiritual place with an image while the flowers and blooming in her leaves and the grass around her speaks to the health and vitality of this transformation. The river in the valley represents the flow of life and it's calm nature is demonstrated by

how it reflects the sky beautifully. Finally the butterflies add another symbol of transformation and hope.

To me, every mark and brush stroke that an artist makes symbolizes either what's currently happening in their life or the hope of a future manifestation. I highly encourage you to add your own symbols to the painting; perhaps birds in the sky to represent freedom or maybe a particular flower that reminds you of someone you love. Everyone has their own unique, personal symbolism. A codex to their life. Including these images into your artwork will make it more meaningful to you and any viewers.

## ART MATERIALS

I have been painting my entire life. In addition to my mother being a working artist and being raised in her art studio, I have been a working artist my entire life. One of the benefits of that in-depth experience is that I am very familiar with art materials. I go to industry trade shows and talk to paint manufacturers. I even have my own line of fine art products; I know things from behind the scenes. If I talk about a brush or paint or a specific paper/canvas, it is because it has been tested in my studio by me. I ask a lot of my art materials and so you will see me use things that work. I won't ever put pressure on you to buy anything. If you don't have a specific paint color, match the swatches with your closest approximation. If you don't have a particular brand of brush, use the brush you have. If you pay close attention to the things that I use it is a really wonderful "insider" look at what works for me. I also only use products from companies that

produce quality materials consistently and have excellent customer service. That doesn't mean all the products I use are expensive. It does mean that what I use I consider to be of good quality.

### ACRYLIC PAINT

I will be using heavy body professional grade acrylic paint in this lesson. I use this grade of paint because it does make my painting experience more enjoyable for me. Please be assured that you can always use other acrylic paints. In this exercise, we will be thinning the paint down in some areas to use like watercolor so pick a good product with a lot of pigment. You will want decent coverage wet or dry. If you use craft paint, "Deco" is my personal recommendation. In acrylic paint, I recommend Golden, Sennelier, Holbein, Artist Loft Level 3, M. Graham and Pebeo brands.

## HERE'S MY ACRYLIC COLORS LIST:

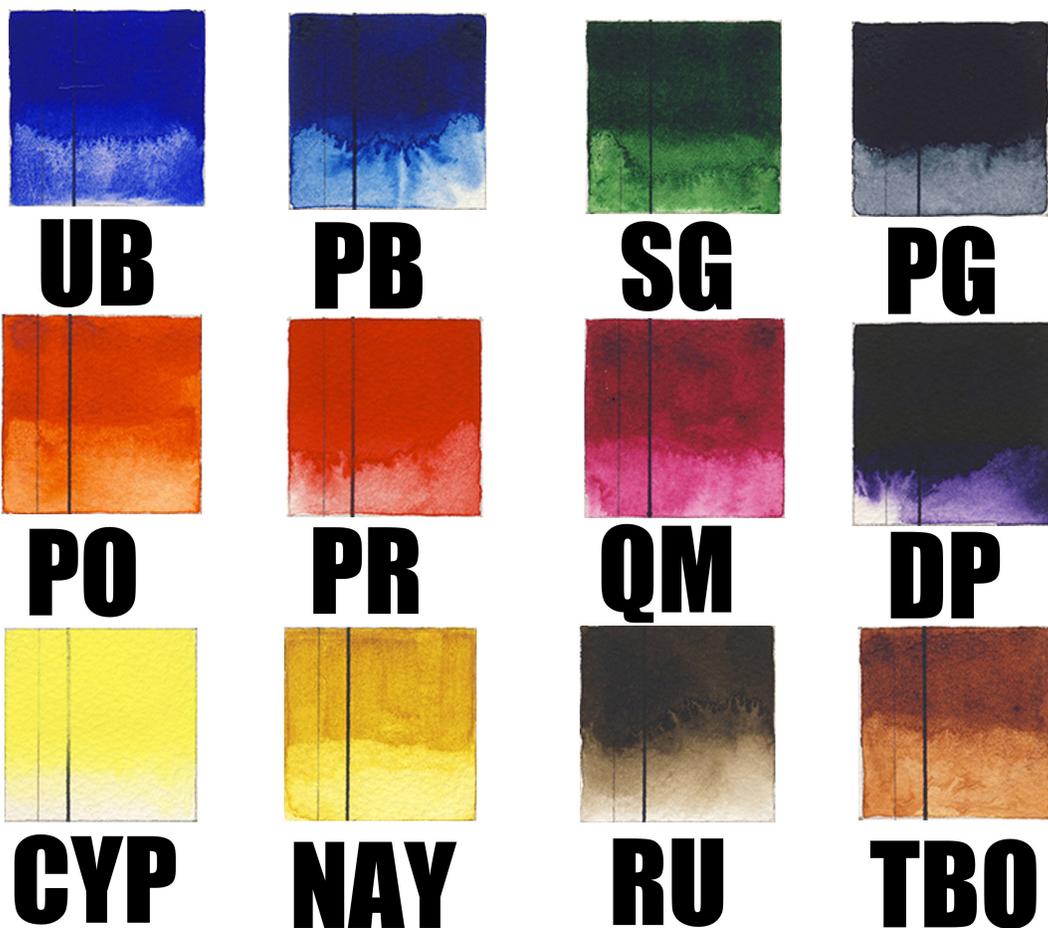
- Burnt Sienna: PBr 7
- Cadmium Yellow Medium: PY 35
- Cadmium Red Medium: PR 108
- Phthalo Green Blue Shade: PG 7
- Phthalo Blue Green Shade: PB 15:3
- Dioxazine Purple: PV 23
- Quinacridone Magenta (fuschia): PR 122
- Titanium White: PW 6
- Mars Black: PBk 11

I will also be using a **Qor Watercolor** pallet, by Golden, with this pallet order:

- Cadmium Yellow Primrose (CYP)
- Nickel Azo Yellow (NAY)
- Transparent Pyrrole Orange (PO)
- Pyrrole Red Medium (PR)
- Quinacridone Magenta (QM)
- Dioxazine Purple (DP)

- Ultramarine Blue (UB)
- Phthalo Blue (Green Shade) (PB)
- Sap Green (SP)
- Payne's Gray (PG)
- Transparent Brown Oxide (TBO)
- Raw Umber (Natural)

Like I mentioned earlier, you can thin down acrylic paint to use like watercolors. To assist you, I've created a swatch card to help you to match the colors I'm using. If you want to go out and purchase watercolors, I highly recommend this pallet, it's been one of my favorites for many years. I do recognize that the material list for Life Book can be expensive and that after 2020, we may all be on a budget. To that end my suggestion is to use these swatches to find the closest color that you have and use it in the lesson.



## ACRYLIC BRUSHES

Should be firm and have a good spring. I will announce the name brands of the brushes I am using during the video. I do not want to convey the feeling that you have to have those exact tools. I do use some of my own line of brushes and while I'm not trying to unfairly influence you, I only use products that perform well for me. You may already have what you need.

- A good round brush with a fine point
- A filbert
- A bright
- A round blender
- A fine lining brush

## WATERCOLOR BRUSHES

I recommend Escoda, Raphael and Silver Brush (Black Velvet only from this company). I will use a Jazper Stardust brush, which is really a hand crafted handle with an Escoda brush.

- A good #8 round
- A wash or quill for wetting out paper
- Chalk or a chalk pencil
- Brown watercolor pencil
  - I use Caran D'ache Brown
- A Cretacolor aqua pencil
- 9 x 12 140lb watercolor paper
  - I use Fabriano White Cold Press Watercolor Pad

A note on Jazper Stardust. I know many of you will see this brush and rush out to his Instagram account, so I have included his name. He hand makes these products and we have many in my family; all of which perform beautifully. Jazper also hand makes paint which I have found to be high quality, as well. If, like us, you just HAVE to go purchase one of his brushes, please let him know I sent you. He doesn't pay me. I just advocate for him because I think what he does is wonderful and I wish to support talented artists who produce quality products. I think it's important to delightfully enjoy products and tools that are useful in your art studio.

# YOU!

**The most important tool, the most valuable art material, in your art studio is you.**

**All the wonderful art supplies are terrific but the magic of a painting comes from you and your spirit.**

**Do not let not having a particular color or tool be an obstacle to you.**



# TECHNIQUES

I have included a technique video so that you can become familiar with the idea of using watercolor and acrylic media together. These two water-based art medias are amazing together and on good paper, it's possible to use acrylics in a way that we couldn't on canvas.

## WET INTO WET (WATERCOLOR)

The pigment goes where the water is. In wet into wet work, it's important to pre-dampen the paper and apply your color before the surface is completely dry. Make sure not to soak the paper as that can increase buckling and waves. Another reason I use a watercolor block.

## CLOUD LINING (ACRYLIC)

Using a detail brush and fluid acrylic paint, outline the contour lines of clouds with white to give the effect of a silver lining.

## GLAZING

Applying transparent and thin layers of color over dry colors underneath.

## CLOUDS WITH SPONGES

Removing pigment from the paper with a barely damp sponge to create a cloud shape.

## GRASS

Applying fine thin brush strokes that release pressure at the end of the stroke in a flicking manner. Remember to make your brush strokes uneven in length and curvature.

## DRY BRUSHING

This can be done in watercolor and acrylic. The brush is damp to nearly dry and the paint application is thick and rough over the surface.

## FLOWERS AND LEAVES

Using the tip of the brush and a pulling stroke layering small dabs to imply leaves.

## BARK AND BRANCHES

Layering acrylic in three value minimums to create the expression of bark. Using fine line brushes and wandering outlines to create the effect of branches. Try to avoid creating pitchforks but instead create wandering streams.

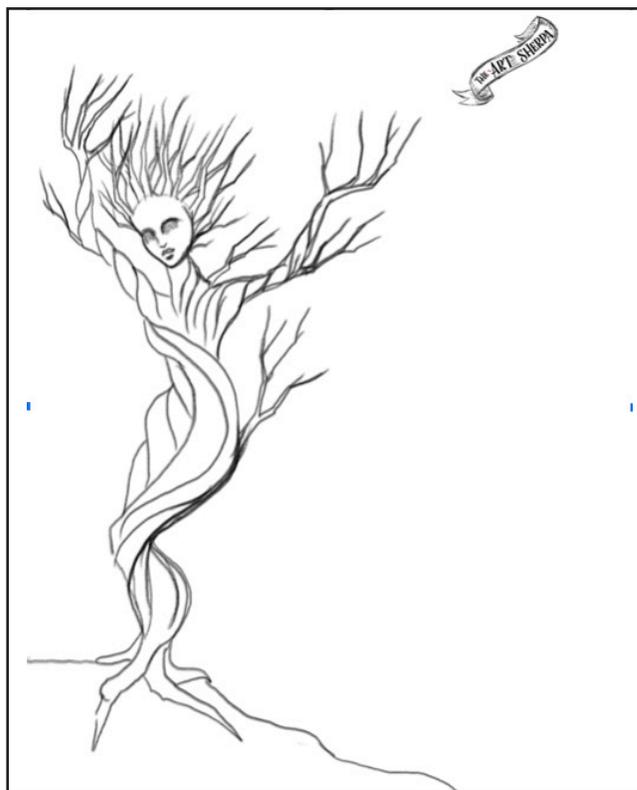
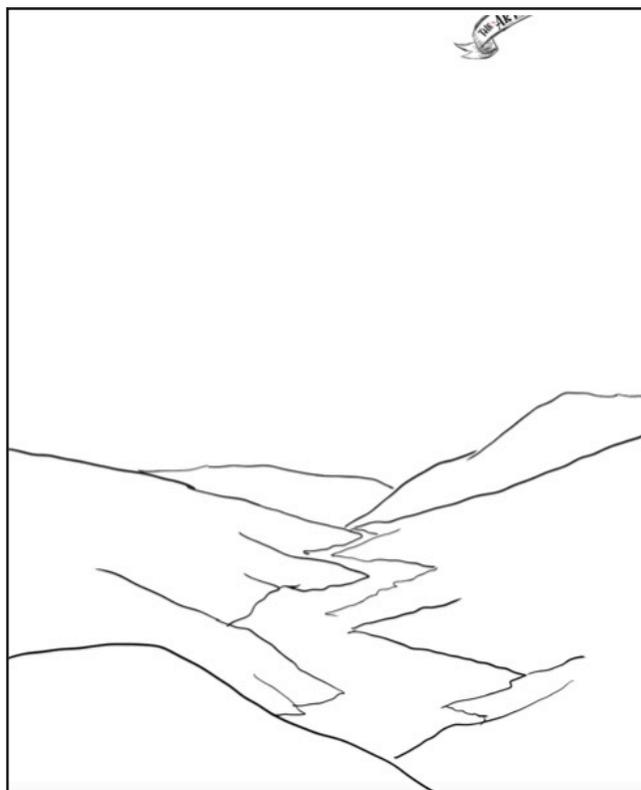
## WET INTO DRY LAYERS

This is a unique technique that we can do on paper where the initial layer is very wet into wet, but we build dryer and dryer layers on top with the acrylic.



# DRAWINGS

This is different from a traceable. These two references are to help you if you're free handing at the two different stages of the project where we do penciled-in information. Drawing one are the light lines to help us know where the major landscape structures are. Drawing two helps you see the structure of the Goddess tree.



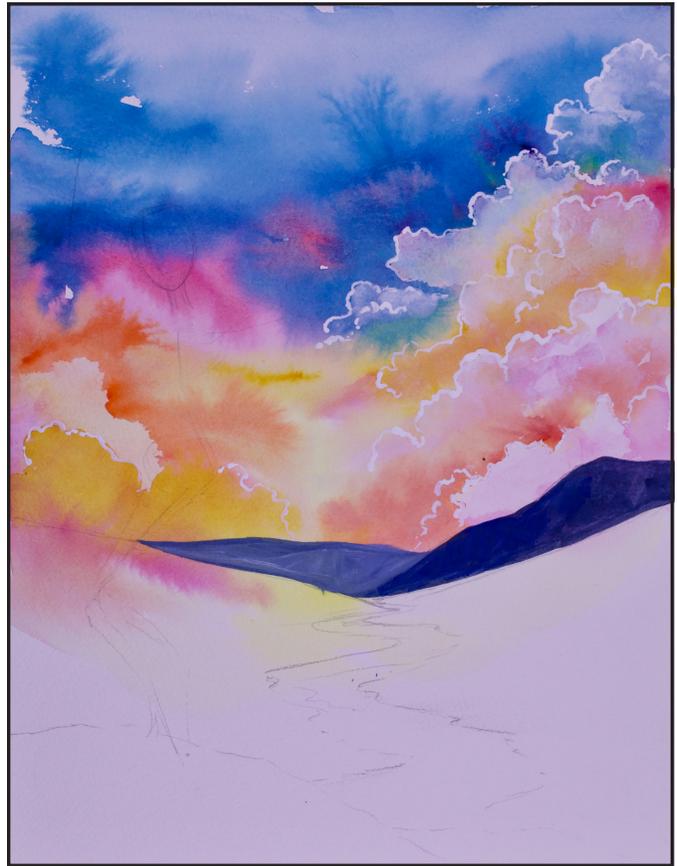
## STEP 1:

### WASH WATERCOLOR WET INTO WET PRE DAMPENED PAPER ROUND WATERCOLOR BRUSH

- Loosely work yellow in the center, adding pinks to outside edges and finally blues to the top. It's important to weave irregular shapes into each other. I can come back with warm reds and oranges to create focal spots to the lower center sides. Observe in the video the balance of allowing the paper to rest and develop fully and the intentional actions taken to create shape and form.

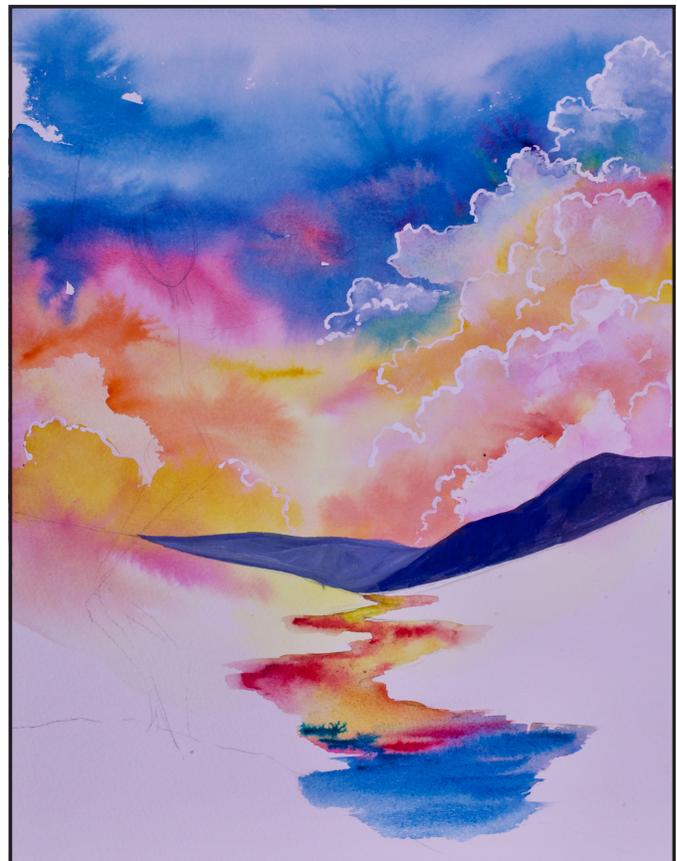


- While the paper is still damp I'll be using a sponge to remove some of my pigment to create a subtractive cloud. This is a lot of fun but try to avoid going crazy with it. A little goes a long way. I allow the painting to rest and recover so that the pigment may develop into the paper. I do not accelerate this process because I wanted to have its full resolution, that's where the magic of the art comes in. When dry, I will take fluid acrylic and a fine lining brush to outline the contour lines of my clouds. Mostly focused on the right hand side.
- I have loosely and lightly sketched in, with a water graphite pencil, the major structure of the painting so that I can be aware of where my horizon, hills, valley and river reside. This is done very lightly and as the painting is built-up it will disappear



## STEP 2:

- Using the same colors in your sky, prewet the river and paint a matching reflection of the sky. A reflection is a reverse of the image, so the farthest point of the river is in your yellows, pinks and reds and then moves to blues as it gets closer to you.



# MOUNTAINS

## ROUND ACRYLIC BRUSH DIOXAZINE PURPLE, MARS BLACK, AND TITANIUM WHITE

- The distant mountains are desaturated, greyed and cool. Using a mix of your black, purple and white to create a light grey color that's closer to the value of the most distant mountain shown below. When painting the closer mountain, darken the value of your color to show its closeness to the viewer. I find it best to mix my base grey, lighten with white, and then darken with the purple for my two tones.

- Create an off-white color using your basic mountain mix and a lot of white. Once again the lightest value goes to the most distant mountain and darkens as it comes to the forward mountain. It can be nice to go over the top with a little bit of pure or brighter white to imply snow in bright light reflecting. Notice the uneven shapes and randomness of the snow on each mountain.

# MOUNTAIN SNOW

## ROUND ACRYLIC BRUSH BASE MOUNTAIN COLOR AND WHITE

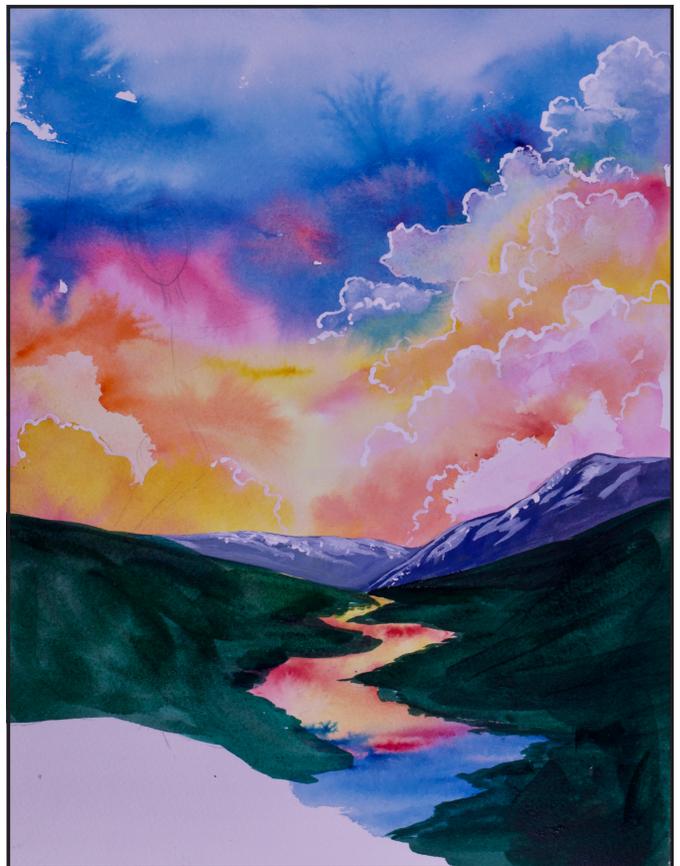


## STEP 3:

# GREEN HILLS

## #8 CATS TONGUE PHTHALO GREEN, BURNT SIENNA, CAD YELLOW AND TITANIUM WHITE

- The greens of the painting are a mix of Phthalo Green deepened with Burnt Sienna. You can lighten with both Cadmium Yellow and white. Play with how much green, brown, yellow and white are in the mix to get many values and hues of green. More Phthalo Green tends to be more mint. More yellow tends to be a warmer green and more brown tends to be a deeper green.



# FIRST LAYER DARK GREENS

- Using my #8 Cats Tongue, I create a deep green mix using my Phthalo Green and Burnt Sienna. I find that the paper can be thirsty at this stage so I add more water into the mix than I would on canvas to help the pigment and acrylic sink into the paper. I will be working wet into dry on the mountains, and this is possible because we are painting on paper and its nature is very different from canvas. To do this technique on canvas I would allow the layers to dry before proceeding.

# SECOND LAYER MIDTONE GREENS

## SCRUFFY BRISTLE BRUSH

- As I continue lightening my greens with yellow, I start to define the shape of the hills in the valley. The color values will be darker near the stream and shadows will be demonstrated where the hills are rolling to create a sense of depth and perspective. I also like to use rough and irregular brush strokes and marks to give the impression of different values of grass on the hills. It's a good idea to vary up the value of green during this painting process.

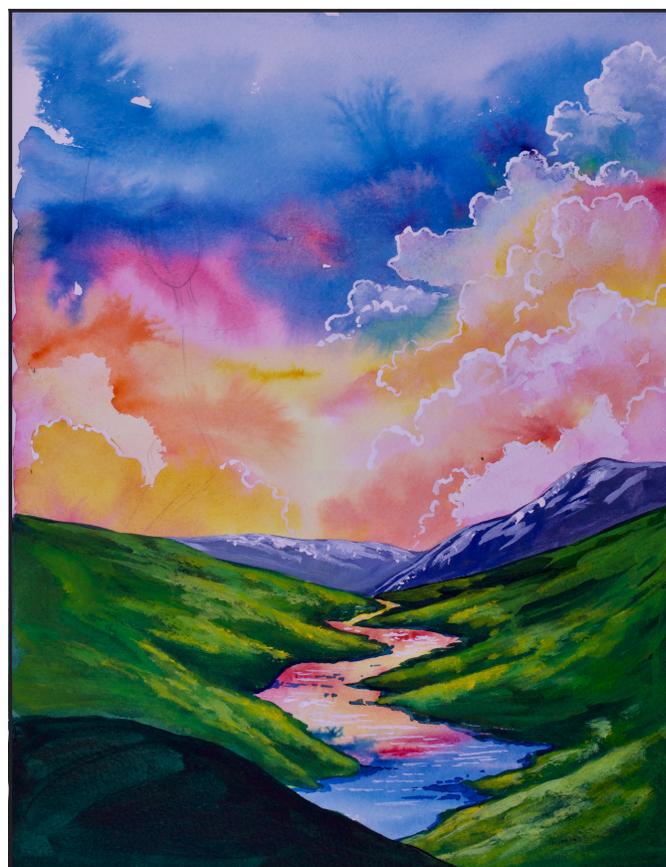
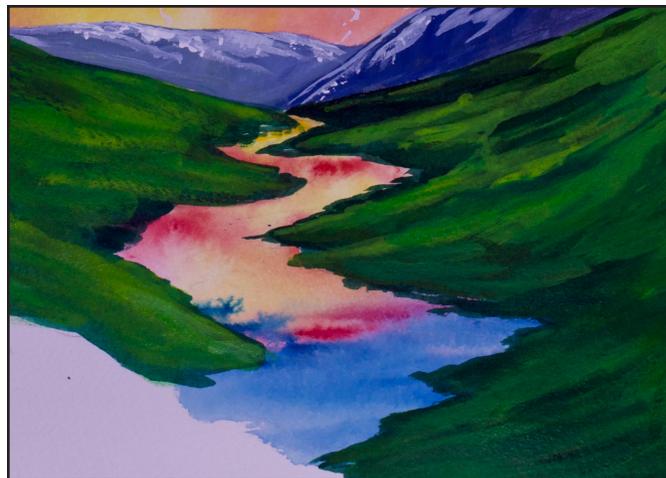
# FINAL LAYER GREEN HIGHLIGHTS

## SCRUFFY BRISTLE BRUSH

- To paint the highlights of the green grass, I continue to lighten my base green mix with yellow and then, eventually, white. This is done mostly in a dry brush technique with my scruffy bristle brush. I come back with little pops of yellow where I imagine the brightest parts of sunlight dapple the hills down the center of the valley. This creates a corridor of light that is very delightful to the painter and the viewer.

## DEEP GREEN FORWARD HILL

- Go back to your original deep green and #8 Cats Tongue to block in your final hill



## STEP 4:

### GREEN HILLS

- Using a tracing and transfer method, projection or simply freehanding, sketch in the basic lines of your tree goddess. In this lesson, I free-handed her in using both white charcoal pencil and a dark brown watercolor pencil. I did this because the canvas has a variety of values from light to dark and using both tools allowed me to see all my lines.
- When done, use a fine tip round brush and a mix of Burnt Sienna and Mars Black to loosely paint in her contouring lines and structure lines.



## STEP 5:

### ROUGH IN THE GODDESS

#### #4 ROUND BRUSH BURNT SIENNA AND MARS BLACK

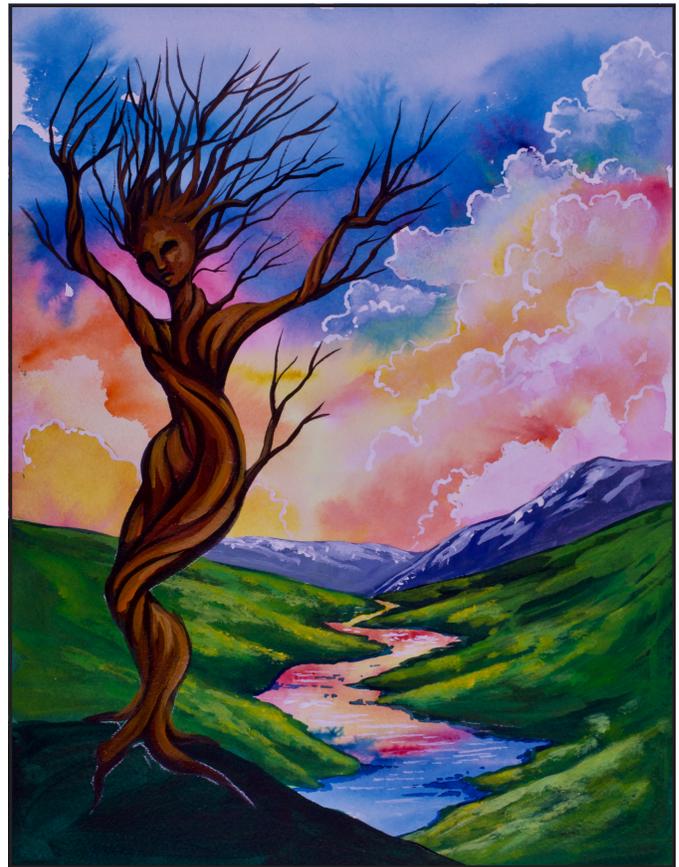
- Fill in and define the rest of your tree goddess. It is a good idea to add shadows where her facial features require them. You can always refer back to the video to rewatch how I detailed the face. I recommend using a good brush with a fine point so that you can paint in the branches and twigs with greater ease. When I paint branches, I tend to thin my paint a little more than when I'm painting large areas. I use my darkest value of brown to define the deep shadows and the twists and gnarls of the bark. I fill in the lighter areas with burnt sienna.



## STEP 6:

### #4 ROUND BRUSH WITH A GOOD POINT TINY DETAIL BRUSHES FOR FACE BURNT SIENNA, MARS BLACK, CAD RED AND CAD YELLOW

- Mix a bright orange with your red and yellow. Take your time when refining your tree goddess with her highlights. Little value changes can have a big impact. The bark tones of the painting are based in Burnt Sienna. You create value in the bark tone by adding either black to deepen the color or oranges to lighten it. For the final value highlights, you may add in a little bit of Titanium White to your lightest tree color. Like with the grass, it's best to lighten first with the orange yellow reserving white for the final pops. Her face will have darker values on the left side and lighter values on the right side. I tend to use the detail brush around her face for greater control and my large round brush for the areas that allow for a bigger brush.

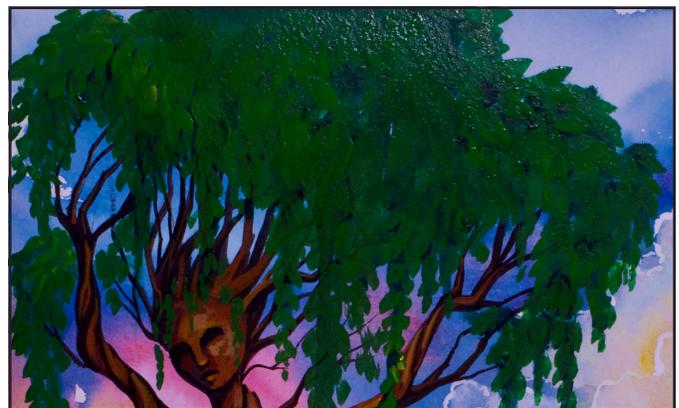
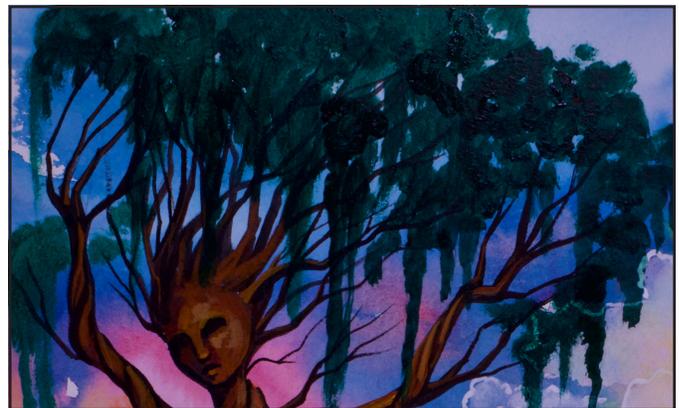


## STEP 7:

### DARK LEAVES

#### #4 ROUND BRUSH TINY DETAIL BRUSH FOR MINI LEAVES WHEN NEEDED PHTHALO GREEN, BURNT SIENNA, CAD YELLOW AND TITANIUM WHITE

- Make a dark green with Phthalo Green and Burnt Sienna, and with your round brush, paint in her branch leaves, loose and dripping-like, in the effect of a willow tree. At this stage you can use more water in your paint. Make sure you leave little areas where the sky peeks through. You can use the reference and video to help you refine your shapes of leaves on the branches. It's important this stage to get in a good overall tree shape that you can build up to.

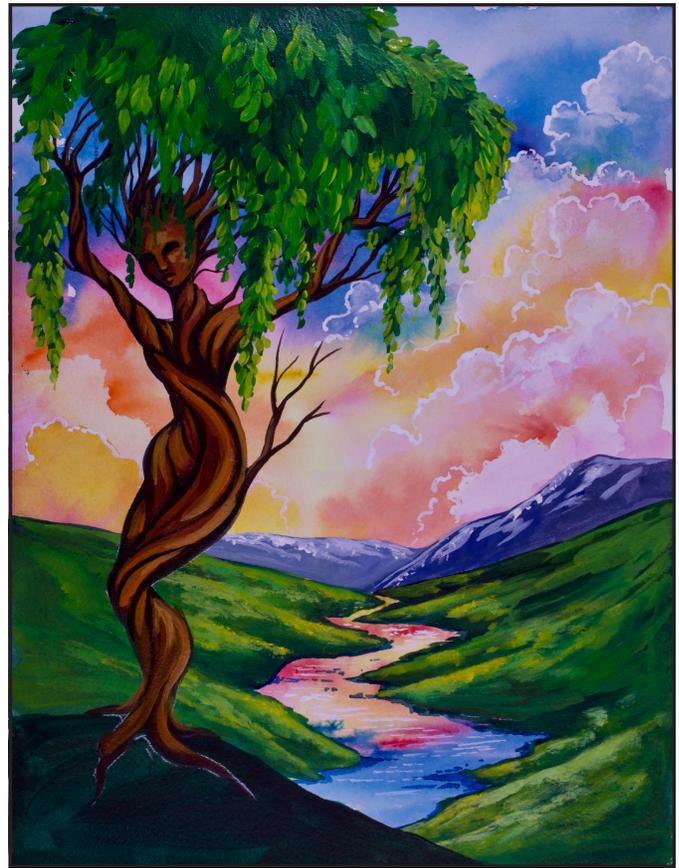


## MID TONE LEAVES

- For mid tone leaves, add yellow to your dark green mix to create lighter values. The brush strokes are more of a stipple and use the touch pull stroke demonstrated in the technique video. Remember more pressure and paint for a larger leaf and less pressure and less paint to create smaller more delicate leaves. As the willow style branches fall down, the leaves should become more delicate and tapered to the tip.

## HIGHLIGHT LEAVES

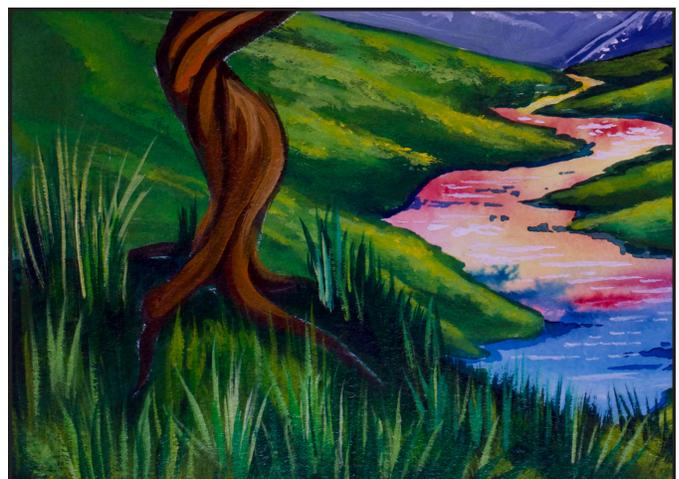
- Using the same color mixes as in with the rolling hills, continue to create lighter and lighter values of leaves to designate areas of sunlight on your goddess tree. Strive for lots of varied greens with lightest values around the branch and leaf edges to create a lot of drama. I allow some mixing of the colors to happen on the canvas to create variety within my greens.
- Dry surface before flowers to prevent the dulling of their colors.



## STEP 8:

## GRASS

- Using the same colors that you did in the distant Hills paint in wild grass on your foremost Hill. I highly recommend watching the technique video before painting the main lesson especially if you're not familiar with creating grass Strokes. The grass Strokes begin with your deepest green Building up into your Midtown and highlight greens to create shapes within the Clumps on the hill. I find it's best to reserve the lightest greens to create the illusion of highlights through the grass and on the outer edges. Remember to vary the length of your brush Strokes the value of your color and the directionality of the curve within the grass stroke.



## STEP 9:

### TREE FLOWERS

**ROUND BRUSH OPTIONAL  
DETAIL BRUSH VERY HELPFUL  
PHTHALO BLUE, DIOXAZINE PURPLE  
AND TITANIUM WHITE**

- In much the same way you did the leaves we will now add delicate little clumps of flowers within the tree branches. These should speak to wisteria or falling clumping vine flowers. The first layer of flour is best done with a darker purple. I like to vary between my round brush and my detail brush as needed to get control over the size of the pedals. I add more weight to my base purple mix and even blue and whites to create little highlight areas within each flower cluster. We go over this in detail in the technique video.



### GROUND FLOWERS

**DETAIL BRUSH  
QUINACRIDONE MAGENTA,  
CADMIUM RED AND TITANIUM WHITE**

- Starting with a deep pink mixed from your Quinacridone Magenta and Cadmium Red, dot in little clusters of flowers. This is delicate work, so take your time and enjoy the process. Remember to create clusters and clumps but also don't forget the little groups that exist deep in the grass or hidden out on the edges. Adding white to your quinacridone will create a pink highlight. Come back and paint little areas of highlight where the sunlight has caught the blooms creating depth and dimensionality.



## STEP 10:

# WHITE BUTTERFLIES

### DETAIL BRUSH FLUID WHITE ACRYLIC

- As a final touch to the work I like to paint in a flutter of white butterflies. Notice that we created butterflies that were closer and farther by changing the scale. We also create dimensionality with the butterflies by putting them in front of or behind objects.



Sign your painting and pat yourself on the back because this is a big project and you've learned a lot. If I may, I would like to suggest that you go ahead and do the final step of sharing your artwork in the Lifebook 2021 Facebook group. To my mind, this is a very important part of this year's progress. It can be scary to share art in any public space, even a safe one like the Willowing Facebook group, but I can assure you that the community is so extraordinary kind-hearted and helpful, and the moderators are so vigilant, that this is the perfect place to put yourself out there if you've not been able to do that before. Everyone in this group was a beginner at one time just like you. Don't let artwork that you perceive as better than your own prevent you from sharing your part of the journey. Be sure and add your image to both the feed and the album.

As a guest teacher, I would love to hear what your experiences were in the lesson, the things that you were thinking about, and what your final takeaways were when you were finished with the painting. I'm genuinely interested and I will make a point of being in the group daily for 2 weeks after the lesson drops to answer questions. I suggest though that you make sharing a part of this year's journey holistically with every guest teacher and with Tam, herself. I understand that may not be the right answer for everyone and of course I respect everyone's personal choice.



# WHAT TO DO WITH THE ART WHEN YOU ARE DONE?

I often get asked what remains to be done when artwork is finished.

If this artwork is part of a journal there are finishing waxes for art in art journals that I highly recommend and you can also ask about them in the group to get people's different experiences with different brands.

If you choose to frame this work, keep in mind that there is such a large amount of acrylic used, and that you will need air between the artwork and the glass. You do not need to varnish but you can if you prefer that result. Find a place in your home to hand where the artwork is not in direct sunlight or exposed to extreme temperatures or moisture. This will help your artwork last a very long time.

