Working In Acrylic Ink: A Daily Sketchbook Practice with Missy Dunaway

Chapter 1 - Working In Ink: A Daily Sketchbook Practice - Create a New Chapter

Overview

(lively music) - Hi, I'm Missy Dunaway, I'm an artist and illustrator. In this daily practice we're going to be establishing a daily routine of keeping a sketchbook and visual diary. We'll grow accustomed to painting with acrylic ink in a bound book and explore new ways to use our materials. Lessons will progress from easy to advanced as we learn to break down compositions into simple masses of color, apply acrylic ink in layers, and gradually add detail and complexity. (lively music)

Day 1 - Studio set up

- I know it's a stereotype that artists keep messy and kooky spaces, but for me personally I've always been much more productive and relaxed in a tidy, clean studio space. I don't know about you, but I have a job outside of being an artist, and when I get home after a long day at work and a commute, sometimes the last thing I wanna do is sit down in my studio and challenge myself in a new and creative way. When I come home I like to have my space as clean and inviting as possible. So I always have my acrylic inks organized in rainbow order, ready to go, my brushes handy, two glasses of clean water, my brush cleaner and preserver, a clean cotton rag, and then of course my sketchbook. I find it's a good idea to keep my inks in the same order every time, just like a piano player can play with more grace and ease when they know where all the keys are, in the same way I like having my paints in the same place every time, and that way I don't have to constantly be checking to make sure I'm dipping in the right color and risk cross contamination. Since we have our inks ready to go, let's remove the caps. I toss the ink caps all together in a single bowl. They will touch each other and the colors will rub off on each other a little bit, but it's pretty minimal so it doesn't bother me. And if you wanna be a little bit more careful and make sure all of your caps are lined up individually so that they don't touch, that's up to you. It just is determined by your comfort level. The acrylic resin in acrylic ink tends to settle at the bottom of the jar, so it's always a good idea to give them a little bit of a shake as you open them up. As we start painting, the acrylic resin will probably settle at the bottom of the jar throughout the process, but that's okay too because we'll be dipping into the jars with brushes, mixing it up as we go along, and you always know that you can dip down to the very bottom to get the acrylic resin to make sure that the ink is a little bit more thick and opaque. For brushes, I use Kolinsky Sable watercolor brushes. They're one of the finest watercolor brushes you can buy. They last a really long time. The oldest ones here you can see are very distressed and they're about 10 years old. I add a few new Kolinsky Sables to my collection each year, but for the most part I use the same set that I've always had. I have a range of sizes from zero all the way to 16. This one here on the end is actually a squirrel hair brush. Fun fact, when it's wet it does smell like a wet squirrel. I also always have a selection of dip pens on hand. So these pens, I have old ones that I still reuse and also new ones. As you can see I favor the globe-pointed nib and a plastic holder. These are very inexpensive, and so I always have quite a few on hand. And I use those for either fine details or also writing text on the paintings. I have some books with me that I've already completed. And so you can see that the classic moleskin sketchbook paper is heavy enough to accommodate quite a bit of paint. These are really heavily layered scenes. My earliest sketchbooks were much more simple and it was just sketches and doodles of me getting used to working with the acrylic ink using dip pens and brushes. And then

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over time it became more of a complete visual diary. Later in the month we'll be creating more complex and layered scenes like these. I think it's a good idea to spend even just five minutes making sure your workspace is tidy at the end of the day. So make sure that you put all of the caps back on the jars so nothing dries out, wash your Kolinsky Sable brushes with the brush clean and preserver, or at least thoroughly wash them with distilled or filtered water. If you live in a city you might have hard water, in which case it's even more important to use filtered water 'cause Kolinsky Sable brushes are an investment.

Day 2 - Practice translucent washes
- For the first 10 days we're just going to be getting used to the acrylic ink, painting with it in a way where we just learn different ways we can use it, testing its boundaries, just getting comfortable with the materials overall. Today we're just going to be practicing washes, so I'm going to do a painting of the sea at night. So I am grabbing one of my larger brushes because we're gonna be doing broad strokes, big brush work, so I loaded it up with a lot of water and I'm gonna dip into my indigo. And I'm just gonna cover the page with color. So I find that when use quick gestural brushwork you get some really beautiful, energetic marks. I try not to be too type or tedious, especially in the beginning. I just wanna be nice and loose. So I'm gonna divide this in half just to create a horizon. And for the sky I'm gonna keep it a little bit lighter. And then the water's going to be darker. So I'll dip back in, load it up with even more water. Maybe wipe off some of the excess. Go back into the indigo. And with the darker pigmentation fill up the rest of the page. As you can see I go straight over the centerfold of the book. I pretty much pretend that it's not even there. I don't pay attention to it. I'm really liberal with my paint application. You know, we work inside of a book and you're choosing to work inside of a book rather than a flat two-dimensional surface. And so it's gonna get a little messy and there are gonna be places where it falls onto underlying pages. It comes off on your fingers. But I think all these marks are what help create some unique qualities to working inside of a book, because you don't get those kinds of marks when you're working on just a simple single flat page. I want this to dry. I can leave it to sit for five to 10 minutes. Acrylic ink dries pretty quickly, especially when you dilute it with a bit of water as we did. To help it dry a little bit faster, I do have a heat gun here. If you don't have a heat gun at home, you can also use a hairdryer. That works just as well. Now I'm going to grab one of my sharper brushes, one of my newer ones. This is a size four. Just gonna add a few details to make it obvious that we're looking at the sea at night. So I'm just going to layer on a moon, and then create a reflection in the water. And again, we're working really small, very simple. Today is just about getting comfortable with the acrylic ink. Working with just one color, very simple shapes, very simple painting. And at the very end we also have to clean our brushes. I use The Masters Brush Cleaner and Preserver. The idea of using this cleaner is not necessarily to make a bubbly lather but rather a paste. The reason why we wanna use it with our brushes is because the acrylic ink has an acrylic resin in it that can really hide inside of the bristles. So the way to use the soap, you get your brush wet just a little bit, not soaking wet, swirl it around in the disk until it starts to make a paste. It even looks like maybe I used a little bit too much water, you can use less than that. Then once you start to make a paste, use your fingers to work the paint out from the bristles. If you have old oil painting brushes that you've kept a hand on, you can really save old brushes using this cleaner. It's really incredible. If you set aside an hour, you can take your oldest brushes that are hard as rocks and create this paste and work it out. It's pretty amazing. Okay. So this is good for now. We didn't do a lot of painting today, so it's not, we don't have a big job to do with cleaning our brushes, but it's just a matter of getting in that habit of

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making sure that we always keep our materials clean to make sure they last a long time and that the art materials are clean for the next day which means our colors will be clean when we paint the next day.

Day 3 - Opaque gradation
- Yesterday, we practiced making translucent washes by diluting acrylic ink in water. Today, we're gonna be practicing opaque washes of color by leaving out the water, and just painting with the acrylic ink. I'm gonna start with the same size brush I used yesterday. We're gonna be doing big washes of color with big brush strokes, so I'm gonna grab the bigger brush so I can cover more surface area faster. I'm gonna dip into my Rowney Blue, and I'm really loading it up, dipping all the way to the bottom, 'cause that's where the acrylic resin often settles, so it's thicker at the bottom of the jar, and I'm going to start covering from the top. I'm going to paint a blue sky today. And I'm thinking about how a blue sky is more saturated up towards the center of the sky when you look straight up, and then once you get down further to the horizon line, it sort of fades into more of a hazy blue, so now I'm gonna dip into my Process Cyan, and from the bottom up, work with that. So here I'm blending wet into wet. Both passages of color are wet, and I'm using that to integrate the two colors together. The ink is already starting to dry, but before it dries completely, I just wanna pass through one more time and make sure these are starting to integrate together. Okay, and so now down below, I think I'm gonna dunk right into the white. In order to make sure that the white stays clean, I'm gonna dip in with a clean brush. And as you can see, the blue is still wet. I have a little bit of time to work with it. If you're working with acrylic paint, you probably know it dries really fast, and you have to work really fast. Acrylic ink, it's sort of nice in between, where it dries quickly enough to be convenient, but not so fast that your layers start working against you by drying before you're ready. Sometimes when it's like this, instead of using my brush to blend them together, I'll just use my fingers, and that can create a nice, even blending. So this is the effect that I wanted. It feels like a blue sky, where it's most concentrated up top, it starts to get a little bit lighter. I think it could be lighter down here. When I see how the color changes from up here, I have a little bit more interest and more variation, and down here, it's just one block of color. So I'm gonna go in for the white again. Maybe I'll use a different brush to make sure that I'm using it clean. Dip into the white, I'm gonna go to the very bottom where it's the thickest, and swipe down below. And here, maybe I'll just use my fingers and do one of those again, okay. So it takes a little experimentation, sort of messin' around with it, that's better, so now here we have a clear gradation of color from the darkest, to the middle, to the lightest. That's what I was going for, so I'd say this is enough for today. Now we'll let this dry overnight, or if you'd like to speed up the process, use a heat gun or a travel hair dryer, and don't forget to wash your brushes.

Day 4 - Inkblots
- Let's loosen up and experiment with our materials. I'm gonna forego using any brushes or dip pens today, and instead, practice making marks in different and experimental ways. This is one example of a day where I loosened up and tried to make marks in new and experimental ways. I thought it went pretty well, so today, we're going to replicate this technique. I do wanna point out that as you can see, I do paint on the back of each page. Over time, as we do this, the pages will get really thick with paint application, and they just become more and more sculptural, and thick, and sturdy, so feel free to continue painting on the backs of each of your pages. To create my Rorschach image, I'm going to drop droplets of ink onto the page using the actual ink caps. I think I'm going to make

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my image turquoise, so I'm gonna grab the turquoise ink cap, I think I have the right one, and then we'll put it in. I'm gonna give it a shake, just again, to make sure that the medium hasn't separated. 'Kay, this is lookin' good. The first thing I'm gonna do is squeeze the cap empty, then submerge it fully into the jar, and fill up the cap fully. Then I'm gonna come over and just, you know, let it go, and I wanna make sure that I have some spaces that have a lot more ink, and others that are a little bit lighter to make sure that when I do the blotting technique, there's a little bit more interest, and different size blotches. So you probably know what's coming next, let's just close the top. Give it a little bit of pressure. Open it back up, make sure I'm on the right page, there we are. I like this composition, but I do feel like it's lacking a little bit up here. It's a little bit too quiet, so we don't have to be completely set with what Rorschach gave us, so I'm just going to dip my finger in some of the pooled ink, and create some marks up there, and I'm gonna leave it like that. I remember in elementary school, our art teacher had us make ink blot images just like this, and then from our own individual images, we would find a picture in these abstract forms, and draw off of them to complete a picture.

Day 5 - Straw effects
- Let's create another abstract image and get messy using ink splatter. I'm gonna use several different colors today. I'm gonna use the primary colors, red, yellow, and blue. The foundation of all colors. I love using ink splatters, I used to use them a lot when I was painting in college, 'cause they had so much energy in them. And they had sort of an explosive quality that added, just some nice energy into a painting. So, I've pooled the ink on the surface of the page, and now I'm just going to blow it, I'm actually gonna turn my page around, to make sure I'm blowing into the surface, and not off onto the table. I have my metal eco-friendly straw here, I hope you have one too. And, (blows) okay. You might see other artists who use ink splatter, ink splotches all the time. Ralph Steadman is one artist who incorporates them into his compositions, and they give his work so much energy, and a really unique look. Okay, so now I'm gonna grab the red. Whoops, whoops, oh well. Okay, and then again. (blows) Actually, I like how these are joining, so maybe they marble a little bit. I might play that up a little bit. (blows) The ink is going off the page, things are getting a little bit messy, but it doesn't bother me too much. So, let's just move forward. Now I'm gonna go for blue. (blows) And I kinda don't like this to be too quiet of a space, so maybe I'll blow it in the other direction, as well. Maybe I'll add some of a different kind of blue. (blows) And I think I'm gonna move this yellow over here a little bit more. (blows) So again, we're not going for a real work of art here, but just something fun to loosen up. And creating spin art on the table, apparently, while I'm at it. Okay, and for the last, I'm just gonna add some green here. I'm gonna go for a darker green, now that I think about it. And for this one I'm gonna put the air straight down. (blows) Yeah. So, something different. I hope you had fun.

Day 6 - Opaque and translucent layers
- We're gonna practice layering our acrylic ink by adding some more layers to a page we've already done. I really like to rework a page over and over until it's my very favorite one in the book. And then by the end I have a complete sketchbook where every page is my favorite and it's a really treasured possession. If we look at the first page we started off with on day one with the translucent washes, we have a really nice foundation here. I really like how the color extends to the edge of the pages. And I also think that this would be a great start to a more layered and beautiful seascape scene. As you can see the pages do get a little bit damaged as we continue working through the

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book. I get a lot of questions about damaged pages because so often paint will slip off from new pages on to older ones. Sometimes completely effecting old finished pages. Sometimes I repair them sometimes I don't. The damage that's here on this page is sort of convenient. Because we're just gonna paint right over it again and it'll slowly disappear. But sometimes I like these touches because it shows the history of the book and also gives it just a little bit more character. And differentiates it from a more traditional 2D painting. I took this picture while I was going by a walk by Casco Bay in Maine. I take a lot of photos as I go for walks. I love going for walks not only to just clear my mind. And get me in a good head space for when I'm about to paint. But also to scout out new subject matter. So I always take a photo with my iPhone. I don't really have great photo equipment. I don't consider myself a talented photographer. My heart's just not in photography. But I do think that it's great visual note taking. I have a great memory when it comes to color. Because I studied color for so long. But when it comes to remembering perspective and facts, what was taller than what, and what was closer to me than something else. All of those details tend to get lost in my memory. So that's where taking a quick photo comes in handy. What really struck me about this image when I was walking around was that usually when you have really placid, calm water, it's like a mirror and it will just reflect the sky. And so the sky and the water will blend into one color. But on a really choppy day the water takes on a darker tone and it's so different from the color of the sky and it helps to create a really dramatic image. There was even more drama added in the fact that there were these bright red kayaks out in the distance. And people wearing yellow life vests. So it was a simple image but just in the play of the color and the high contrast I found it to be a dramatic scene. So I snapped a photo so that I could paint it later. And that's what we will paint now. First thing I'm gonna do is tone up the colors. Because they're pretty close when we started off with this night scene to the real image. Or the reference here. But I think I can get a little bit closer. So I'll start off with the sky. I'm just gonna probably take out the moon altogether. I'm gonna start off with white. And add a little bit of the cyan. So even though I'm using pretty opaque and thick application that indigo that we had from the first layer is still visible and shining through and it helps to just create a little bit more of a nuanced color. That has more going on to it than just something straight out of the jar. If you've watched me paint before you know that I am pretty messy when it comes to my brush work. I'm just focused on filling the space with color. I'm not very delicate. But again I just my brushes as tools. And I use them just in the way that I'm comfortable. So I tend to be a little bit more rough. Okay. And actually I'm also gonna add in, here we see this haze before it drifts up to that cyan so I'm gonna put that in too. We did a bit of this in that day two lesson. And so we can bring that new skill to play here. And I'm gonna add a touch of yellow. And now I'm gonna use my hands and do one of these again. And let me get some darker blue for the top to bring down and then I think we'll be ready to move onto the water. There we go. So I'm not going for perfection here. I'm just looking to capture the spirit of the moment in as few layers as possible because we're still trying to be really simple. And just slowly increase our expertise and our skill set. So now I'm going to touch up the color of the water. I'm gonna go for, I think I'm gonna go for the romwe blue. And some turquoise. Feel free to just give colors a try. Your first instinct might not be correct. Or maybe it will be correct but the important thing is to just get it down on the page. It's really hard to correct a blank page. It's much easier to correct a mistake that you're looking at so think less just move with your instincts. Give it a try and then adjust as necessary. And here we are just covering up that damage that had happened earlier. The texture change will still be there but I kinda like that. I think it adds interest. Okay. So that looks pretty good. Because I'm a heavy handed painter and I use so much ink, the pages do tend to curl as they dry. So you might have noticed that I've taped

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down the edges right here with just a little bit of scotch tape and when the painting is dry I'll take off the tape and then just fill in those holes. But the pages even though they start to curl and warp I think we've all experienced that when working on paper. Luckily we're working in a book. And so at the end of the day once we close it and maybe rest it under a weight over night they will flatten back out again. And then over time they'll become really thick and flat. Now I'm going to add in this large land mass here. And these two small islands. If we're looking at the contrast and the level of value the trees are just a little bit darker than the ocean. But just a bit. They're actually pretty similar. I'm gonna start by dipping into some green. And then I'm gonna dip into some burnt umber. And it needs to be a bit darker so I'm just gonna grab my darkest color which is the indigo and add that in. And that smaller one. Okay. So we have really minimal information here. But you also have to trust your viewer that they're gonna be able to fill in the blanks and see what they're looking at. A horizon line is always a dead giveaway that this is a painting of a landscape. And then I think even though we're using really minimal marks it's pretty obvious we're looking at you know masses of land in the distance. I do think that my color of the water is a little bit too dark because it's competing with the land a bit too much. It should be a little bit lighter from looking at the reference. So I'm going to brighten that up now. I'm going to dip into the white. Put it on the page. And I'm gonna dip back into the blue. That's better. And if this is getting too light maybe it's too light I'll just grab my rag and let's just pull some of it off. So I only use cotton rags. Because I wanna reduce the amount of waste that I create with my art materials. So I always try to avoid disposable paper towels. Paper towels, also the fibers in them will come off in to your brushes. And we want to be as delicate with our brushes as possible where we can. In cotton rags, the fibers will not come off on to our brushes. I'm gonna go for a sharper, smaller brush. Now I'm gonna add in the boats and the kayaks. I'm gonna start off by making all of the boats and the kayaks white. And then I will use that white as an underlayer to create a really bright neon colored red. I'm not being too careful about my marks or my drawing. I'm just practicing this technique and I encourage you to also be a little free. Don't be hard on yourself if you're still getting used to these materials. And you're finding it difficult. We're just getting used to how everything behaves. I'm gonna let this dry completely before going over with the glaze of bright red. I'm gonna use a dry brush so I'm gonna go for my brightest red which is flame red. I'm not gonna go to the bottom where it's really thick with that acrylic resin. I'm just gonna stay at the top where it's sort of viscus. And then as you can see, that white shines through and then creates this really beautiful pop of color. I'm gonna let this dry again. This won't take as long just because it's a really thin application of paint. Now let's go back to the blue and start refining these shapes. It looks like kayaks are a little bit thinner in the back. And I wanna square off the bow and the stern. Once we add people sitting in the kayaks it'll become much more clear what it is that we're looking at. And then the colors that I've used in the water I'm just going to blend in to make sure I don't have that sort of halo look around them. Okay go through with red one more time. Because I think I overdid it with the negative space and it started to encroach a little bit on their form too much. So now I'm gonna go down to the very bottom of the red ink jar where it's really thick and make sure that it'll be pretty opaque when I put it on. So this is all a part of the process. The back and forth. You know you correct yourself you over correct yourself. You have to go back and bring it back to the middle that's pretty normal. I'm gonna add the masts of these sailboats in the back. And also just a few marks that represent the bright life vests and the people sitting in the kayaks. Objects in the distant, I add much less detail. And I don't draw them as carefully. Just because if you think about it if you're looking at something in the distance you don't see all those close details. Sometimes you really just see vague shapes. Especially if you wear glasses for distance

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like I do. Or you're supposed to and you just don't, like I do. Lastly let's add in these little spots of color that show that there are people sitting in the kayaks. Even though I know that they are people and I'm sure that their faces have plenty of beautiful detail I am going to avoid the siren's call of detail and instead just go for these really simple spots of color. I mean from a distance all we really need is to just add little spots of yellow and white. And it becomes pretty obvious that we're looking at people sitting in boats. So I'll go for my white first. I think I'm gonna use the same technique as I used for glazing over the boats where I start off with white. And then I just use that as an underlayer to add color over later, after it's dried. So I remember when I was here looking at this scene in real life. It was a kayaking club. And so there was pairs of people in each boat. So I'm gonna add two kayakers in each boat. Right, I'll let that dry. Let's glaze over some colors. I'm gonna go for that really bright yellow first. Maybe I'll go for lime green now. Maybe I'll mix a little bit of orange. And that last person I'll give a blue life vest. Finally, I am going to add just a little bit of dark details that further describe a form. Because this is starting to look just a little bit too abstract. So I'll go for some umber and indigo. And now let's just give these people some heads and bodies a little bit more obviously. Maybe I will put in an oar here and there. All right for the learning purposes of this exercise I'd say we're done. If you want a second look at this reference image it will be available in your class PDF.

Day 7 - Linear drawing with a dip pen
- Today I'm setting the brushes aside and we're going to draw using a dip pen and the acrylic ink. We'll practice describing form with line, and also using acrylic ink with a different drawing tool. For a reference I have this photo of a majestic seagull on a Maine beach, and I'm going to disregard his surrounding environment and just focus on the bird. He has some brown tones, so I'm going to choose burnt umber as my color. This is going to be a single-color drawing. I'm only gonna be using burnt umber. Sometimes when I'm drawing with a dip pen, especially if it's brand new, the nib is really slick and smooth, and the ink can slide right off of it, and here you can see that it's just about to pool and drip off. So as I'm drawing, I always give a little attention to the point of the pen to make sure a drop is not about to fall onto the drawing, and I just collect 'em up top. After working with mass so much, it feels a little bit different to switch to line. Line is harder than working with mass. So, don't be too hard on yourself if it doesn't look exactly as you want. Just like with anything else, we're just gonna be starting off really simple, just building the foundation of the drawing with sort of the general construct of the form, and then adding in more detail as we go along. I'm starting off with just a contour drawing. Contour is pretty much the outside lines of a form. - [Person Offscreen] Okay. (mumbles) - [Instructor] I'm not going for perfection here. My goal is that, if I were to show this picture to somebody on, you know, the street or a bus who has no idea who I am or what I'm doing, they can look at this drawing and tell that it's a seagull. That's how I know I've made a successful drawing. That is all I'm going for right now. His little knobby knees. What I love most about dip pens is that they give you a beautiful variety of line. If you work with just a ballpoint pen, or a fountain pen or something, you know the lines all look very uniform, and, you know, even just these subtle changes between really thin to thicker, and then sometimes it's raised because the acrylic ink is quite thick, even those small changes can help make what could be a boring drawing look just a little bit more interesting. The purpose of this exercise is to focus on line and little tick marks, so I'm gonna avoid doing anything other than linework today for this drawing. In places where he is darker, or she, I might just press down with my pen more, so that more ink comes out and I make a thicker stroke. And I'll rely on thicker strokes, or closer strokes, to create value, and

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local value, with the color of his feathers. And again, I'm not necessarily going through and getting every single feather as it is in the reference photo. I am not trying to capture any realistic interpretation of the seagull, I'm just trying to capture his spirit, and maybe a little bit of his attitude. Again, my marks are just going to sort of mimic the form and suggest it. But I'm not being too careful. If I'm trying to establish the daily routine of drawing in a sketchbook, I really want this to be enjoyable for me, and fun, because I might be doing this at the end of a really long day. I would much rather make anything, even if it's not perfect. I'm gonna change the direction of my stroke just a little bit to show that the form is different here. Um, oop, that's what I was talkin' with the, there we go. I'll cover these up later. Okay, and then I think I'll do some smaller ones around his face. Again, trying to make sure that my lines somewhat mimic the turn of the form, to make his head feel round. And let's add a little bit more to his beak. He's got a strange smile, lemme fix that. Okay. All right, so now lemme just fill in his legs. Hm, I do want his feet to have a tone, so maybe I'll fill these in a little bit more with line to make sure that they don't look white, because they are pretty dark. Okay, so I think I have enough to feel like he's done. He feels a little funny just out on his own on a blank page, so maybe I'll add in his cast shadow. That might be a nice touch to ground him a little bit, so he doesn't feel like a floating object. For this I am gonna grab a brush, and think I will use that royal blue color. And I'll just pull it right from his feet. Okay. I like the shadow, I like the bird. I think I would just want him to pop a little bit more on the page, so, I might add a little bit of a color blocking effect by just giving the background a single color. That might just create a neat image. And we're still falling within a pretty quick exercise here. Ah, those drops came in handy for something, 'cause that looks really nice. For such a simple exercise, I'm gonna preserve this page for something else. And let's just focus on this left side here. This is one of my oldest brushes. You can see how distressed it is, especially when it gets wet. This is really handy sometimes when I need to make sort of irregular marks, maybe if I'm doing grass or something like that. At the moment, though, I want a sharper edge, so I'm gonna switch that out, and go for a sharper one. And I'm going to just use what I already have on the page, rather than grabbing more. All right, we're just about done here. A lot of these early daily practice exercises are kind of going back to how I used to draw when I was in college, it's really nice. Relaxing.

Day 8 - Pointillist drawing with a dip pen
- Today we're gonna continue working with a dip pen, this time using pointillism instead of line to describe form and create value. Today's reference photo is of a little duckling that I almost bought at a Turkish bazaar when I was in Istanbul. I didn't have money with me at the time, so I ran home to grab some lira to buy a duckling, and then made the mistake of calling a friend along the way and she talked me out of it and said that I was better off not acquiring a duck. So I took a picture of him instead. And I thought today we could add him onto the same spread with the seagull and create a whole bird-inspired page. I want these two drawings to relate to one another. So I think I'm gonna draw the duckling with a light blue to pick up on the seagull's blue shadow. So I'll dip over here. I'm gonna use the light blue, since it's a little bit more delicate and this is a delicate little bird. The first thing I'm gonna do is just outline with some dots. Dots are nice, noncommittal. They'll also easily blend into the rest of the drawing, once we end up filling it in with dots. This might seem like a tedious way to draw, but it's actually pretty relaxing, kind of like when you're doodling on the phone. The feeling of drawing with pointillism is very similar. So you might enjoy it more than you expect. I'll be able to refine these general shapes a little bit more as I start filling in. The great thing about drawing with pointillism is that you can just slowly edge out forms and really delicately

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change their shape and refine. Another reason why I've decided to draw a duckling using pointillism is that the little dots have sort of a soft and fuzzy feel. So it just seems like appropriate when drawing a little soft, fuzzy duck. He's so cute. I was a fool not to buy one, I should've gotten one. I'm trying to convince my husband into getting ducks. So maybe he'll watch this and will be convinced. Okay. So I think that's good enough for now. Maybe I'll bring his wing out a little more, little wing. Okay, I have the shape pretty well rendered here. Enough that I'm happy with, just for the sake of an exercise. So now I'm gonna start filling in. I'm gonna use the density of dots to create value, meaning the shading. So where it's darkest on him, like these sort of compression folds, underneath where his neck is, and then also underneath of his wing, his breast here, I'm gonna fill in with the most dots. And then as the form turns and starts getting brighter, I'm gonna use the white of the page to create brightness. And so I will use fewer and fewer dots. The highlights on him I might actually just highlight now. And those areas, I'm gonna keep completely clean and I'm not gonna draw in them at all. The highlights here, I would say, are on the tip of his wing and also on his beak. The top of his head is also bright, but compared to the wing and the beak here, it's not the brightest thing, so I'm gonna let myself use a few dots in here. But these areas I wanna preserve to be the complete perfect white of the page. At second glance at the reference photo, I think I've made his body a little bit too small and his head is looking too big, so I'm just gonna just the line of the dots to extend his body a little bit more. I'll also have to bring down his feet. Let's see here. Maybe I can get away with keeping his feet. Ah, I'll just bring it out a little bit. Okay, so it looks a little bit messy at the moment, but as we continue to add in more dots to describe the form, the shape will become more and more clear. And then eventually, just like with the seagull, we'll surround the negative space with a color so that he really pops as a single shape. So now here comes the fun part. Just put on some music or maybe a TV show or a movie or something and just start dotting. It's kind of difficult to start off with a tone that's in the middle, so I'm actually gonna go for the darkest parts on him, just to set up my constraints, or the non-negotiables. We have the lightest parts, now let's get in the darkest parts. And then from there, meet in the middle. Here along the midsection of his body, It's really pretty evenly one tone. It does deviate to more shading here, some light strokes in here. But if I were to squint my eyes, I can see that this is really generalized into one value. So I am going to outline the overall shape of that one value here, which I have on his form right here, and I'm just going to fill it in with that generalized value and then from there add in a little bit more specificity. But it's nice to have this common denominator of all of the values together that you can work from. Makes things go a little faster. As you can see, those old lines I had, where I was trying to decide how tall and wide his body was, now those lines that ended up being incorrect are being absorbed into this tone. And so now it's, you know, disappearing, and his shape is becoming more clean and decisive. That's why it's so nice working with dots, because they're pretty forgiving, because any change you make is pretty subtle. You have to stick with a change for a long time for it to be noticeable and hard to come back from. I might bring in a little bit of lines soon, just to describe his feathers a little bit, because there's these downy feathers that extend off of his form that are just so cute and fuzzy and I wanna make sure I include them. And it would be really hard to create each line with dots, although it is possible. So I might include some line near the end. So again, I'm going to be careful not to go over the areas that should be the brightest. I'm gonna avoid those, but everything else should be filled in with some dots, just to give it a bit of a tone. I think I just went over a place that I was supposed to keep white, but that's okay. Oh well. This area where I am right now, I'm gonna fill in with denser dots because that will help define his wing popping off of his body, or extending off of his body, giving him a little bit more form. So he's coming along. Again,

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if I were to show this image to somebody on the street, would they be able to tell it's a duck? That is the level of accuracy I'm going for in this stage of our daily practice. Now I'm going to pick out a few of the shadows that help describe his form and give him his sweet little shape. So this shadow right under his breast kind of gives him that, you know, proud duck stance that he'll get as he gets older, so I want to bring that out. And then maybe some more of the descriptive shadows around his face. And then I think I'll be ready to add in a few lines and work into the background. Oop. Oh, well. Let's fill in his feet with a, again, pretty middle tone. All right, so now I'm ready to introduce just a few lines, pretty strategically placed, just to better describe his form. Again, this lesson was about pointillism, using dots to create value and describe form, but I just wanna help it along, just a little bit, in the interest of time, really. Okay, so let's let this dry and then add in some tones, just to complete the composition and fill out this page with the seagull. Now I'm going to use one of our translucent washes to just give him his sweet yellow color. Gonna get some water so it's a little diluted. I don't want it to be too strong. I'm gonna use a mix of two yellows, the middle yellow and then the lemon yellow. Oop, maybe that was too strong still. So I'll use a little bit more water. I'll continue just using the paint that I've already put down and lengthen it using water. That's definitely a duckling. To fill in these, whoa, to fill in the fuzz along his contours, outer contour, I'm gonna take my brush, fray the edges, and let's just get some of the fuzz on there. It's pretty easy to draw something when the materials actually mimic the form. So I find brushes and bristle brushes to be really handy in rendering fur and hair because they're made with fur and hair. All right. So now I'll pick a color to do along the outside of his body. And I think I'm going to do the light blue, just because yellow and blue is one of my favorite color combinations. Working from the outside in, I do want to be a little bit more careful once I get along to his contours. So I'm just kind of working up to it. He's starting to get that halo, so I'll get in a little bit closer. Maybe I'll do that frayed brush technique to bring the background in around him. That should be pretty handy. There, he's looking fuzzy. All right, so I'll just touch up here and we'll be done.

Day 9 - Distressing the surface

- Up until now, we have been creating our paintings by adding acrylic ink onto the page. Today we're gonna experiment with wiping it away, taking it off, putting it back on, and creating different textures through that play. This is a really beautiful retired barn that I found just on a nature trail in state park in Scarborough in Maine. This barn, unlike most that we're familiar with with wood paneling, this one had steel paneling that had rusted over. And it was just a really beautiful sight, especially at golden hour, so I took quite a few photos of this location. And that's what we will be painting today. But it seemed like a great example for this lesson in particular because, as you can see, there are so many different textures going on and colors. It's a very distressed surface, so it should be fun and one that we don't have to worry about overworking. I'm gonna grab a nice medium-sized brush and just put down the first initial statement that's just the simple shape of the barn as a whole. I'm gonna use my turquoise because that looks like what the barn used to be colored, or perhaps that's just the patina that has come with age. This might be a painting that we develop later in the month, so I'm going to be a little bit more careful as I paint this one and not be as haphazard as I have been in earlier lessons, just because this one might have a little bit more potential to be a beautiful painting down the road. I really like over-exaggerating color statements in the beginning. This is a really bright teal, obviously much brighter than what's in the reference and what was there in real life from what I remember. But it's much easier to start with something overdramatic and scale it back rather than start with something muted and try to bring it to life

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later. That's an uphill battle, so I recommend going overboard and then scaling back. All right, my lines are pretty rough. My brushwork is rough. Here, there's still white of the page coming through. There's some bleeding going on here, ghost lines in here. All of that's fine. This is the lesson we're really gonna embrace all of those irregularities, so don't feel like you have to make everything nice and seamless and perfect. Okay, there's very subtle perspective that's going on here where this side of the barn is a little bit further away from us, so the roof line is a little bit angled, and I haven't really captured that in my initial statement. So I'm going to use the straight edge of my brush, line it up with my eye line with that top of the roof, and then compare it to what I have. And I can see that I'm far too straight across, and I should be angled downward a little bit more. This image is actually a little bit tricky because sometimes subtle changes are harder to detect and harder to replicate. So I just wanna make sure I at least have that sense that the barn is angled a little bit and we're not looking at it straight on. The line along the bottom is sort of having an opposite effect where it's coming up a little bit higher, at least with the foundation of the barn, so I'm gonna make sure I have that as well. And that's good enough for now. Just enough to make sure I'm getting that sense of the tilt and angle. So here I'm going to add in that empty space. Looks like it might have been an entryway or a garage door or something like that, and the face of it has been ripped off. So I'm gonna make it really dark. These really beautiful moments of where the golden light is catching random spots in that negative space is really beautiful, but those are smaller details that I'm gonna add in later. If I add them in at this stage of the game, they're inevitably gonna be lost because I'm still figuring out where everything has to go. And if I start putting in small details, I risk really getting attached to those details and then having to move them. So it's just best to save them to the end when I have everything organized with where it's meant to be. Okay. And I'm also gonna add in the lines of those two doors that go to nowhere. Really beautiful. So as you can see, my brush is a little bit frayed, and it's making these sort of ghosty lines, and that's perfect. I don't wanna be using really decisive-looking lines. I want everything to look a little aged, a little lost. That is the effect we're going for, so having rough, loose, painterly lines is perfect. Okay. So we have the initial statement down. I think things are looking pretty good to move forward. So now let's start the process of putting paint down and scraping it away to create the effect of the rusted steel and distressed surface. I'm gonna go down to the very bottom of the ink jar where it's really thick and layer that on. Okay, while it is still wet, I'm gonna take it away. I'll grab my rag, and let's just pull it off. Maybe put it on a little bit other places. Sometimes the cotton rag makes some really beautiful marks because it's such a wide surface juxtaposed with these really sort of delicate, ghosty lines. You get a really nice, I don't know, just relationship. Okay, so now maybe I'll go in with some white and create this effect of the paneling, the stripes. The white I'll probably paint over later to add color to it, so we really don't have to worry about this being too bright. If your image is ever getting too bright, it's really easy to just lay a glaze on top of everything to get rid of the white and also bring everything into one form. And here I'm gonna grab one of my most distressed brushes. This is the perfect job for one of these brushes, one of the reasons why I keep them around. The material itself or the tool itself is already distressed so the marks it makes is going to be distressed, so really this is the perfect job. So I've filled it up with a lot of paint, and then let's just draw some beautifully irregular stripes. Okay. So now I'm gonna put in this rust. I think I'm gonna use the same approach that we did where we lay on thickly and then scrape it off. I think I'm gonna use a mixture of flame red and burnt umber. Now let's go through and wipe it away. Now I'll probably need to redefine those lines that I just lost, add some teal back in, but I really like this sort of distressed and grainy texture that I have now. It feels like a really rough surface. So I'm gonna use this as a foundation and continue

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building on slowly just small details to make it read more as a barn. Sometimes if I apply paint a little bit too thickly and I completely lose those marks I had underneath, then again just take your rag, wipe it off, and then they'll become visible again. Those were lost a little bit more than I intended, but as it dries they might reappear again. Okay, so the surface is now feeling pretty messy. The values are feeling a little bit more true to the real thing. So now let's just go back in and start cleaning things up and redefining the basic shapes, the doors of that negative space here, the ceiling, the foundation, things like that. This whole door's actually darker than what I've had it, so I'm gonna make it dark now. Looks like the bottom part is darker. I think it's always a good idea to migrate around your drawing. Be a bit of a nomad. Work a little bit here, work a little bit there. Bring the whole thing up together. The last thing you wanna do is spend all your time making one area perfect, move on to something else, and then realize your overall larger proportions were incorrect and now you have to change the thing you've been laboring over for an hour. Yeah, I think it's always a good idea to build a drawing or a painting up together as a whole. Okay, I actually really like that color that I made. This was made with indigo and burnt umber. So I'm gonna keep a little bit on my brush here, fan the bristles, and then go back in to make those beautiful lines. I can actually draw up from what I have below. As you can see, we're really extending over the edges here, but if we're gonna preserve this basic shape to create into a more finished painting later, we will eventually use the color of the sky to clean up these edges, so I'm really not concerned about those moments where things are getting a little messy and irregular. We can deal with that later. So the last thing I might do here for now is using a really distressed brush to sort of touch up and bring some more teal into these rusted areas 'cause I feel like the rust has sort of taken over, and I wanna show that turquoise coming up from below again. Every time you put your brush down on the surface, you're kind of taking a risk 'cause you're not quite sure what's gonna happen. In moments like that, I'm always really happy because that's exactly the effect that I wanted, and that's what I got. Okay. If we do continue with this in the future, I think we can add a little bit more details and complexity as we get a little bit more advanced. But for the purpose of today's lesson, I'd say that we've accomplished the goal of creating a distressed surface.

Day 10 - Using brushes of all sizes

- Today, we're gonna practice using brushes of all sizes. I've collected all of these leaves from around the Creativebug property, and I thought that they would be a great example of exercising using brushes of all sizes with leaves of all sizes. I'm gonna try to draw these mainly to scale. For this one, which is so huge, it could easily hog the entire page, so I'm just gonna have it sort of peeking off with the page like that. And I might just check out how my composition might look by placing my subjects on the page, not taking too much time. I might not use all of the leaves that I've collected. I just wanna make sure I have a pretty good variety. I'll set aside the leaves I'm not gonna use. I guess we'll get started from left to right, that way I'm not dragging my hand through wet paint. I'm gonna keep my reference nearby. When we're drawing to scale and you're drawing from life and you have your subject with you, it's a good idea to just keep it as close as possible, so long as you're still comfortable. I'm also going to just pull out brushes of all sizes. Sometimes I get in the habit of just going back to my favorite brushes. We can see the ones that I use the most, that have gotten the most love. But I wanna make sure I'm giving attention to all of the brushes today. So I'm gonna pull out from my largest to my smallest and then some variety in between. Some medium-sized brush. I'm gonna save this guy for when we're working with the big maple leaf. So I'll go for the second biggest here. Maybe I'll start with some burnt umber and just a touch of this, what

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is this, Indian yellow. I would just, like in previous lessons throughout this daily practice at least in the beginning, I'm not going for perfect accuracy, I'm just looking to capture the overall spirit and personality of the subject. Maybe I'll do this slender green one. For this I'll pick a slender brush. That seems to compliment the shape. And here I'll go for this light green and I wanna make it a little earthy, so let me add a bit of yellow as well. Woop, too yellow. There we go. For the vein that runs down the middle and the stem, we can add those details a little bit later when the first pass is dry and we wanna exercise the smallest brush. So this has the most variety of marks in its form. We may have to use a couple of sizes for this one, but I'm gonna start off with the small one. This is a size two. I grabbed a little bit of umber to take this brown a little earthier. And let's just sort of generally drawing in some of the variety of these leaves. Some of them we're only seeing their side plane, so it'll be really thin. This leaf has some real bubbly textures to it. And then there's that nice gap. I wanna leave that space, I kind of like it. And these berries, we'll add, and this curly leaf I'll put in. Now, I'm gonna put down the more slender brush and pick up one that has a little bit more mass. I wanna step away from the line and paint with a bit more mass now. So I really like bold shapes, bold strokes. Personally, I think a bold decisive looking stroke that's a little bit incorrect is better than sketchy lines that sort of suggest the correct angle. Okay, that's good enough for now. Let's move on to the next leaf. Got this yellow one. This is a really nice detail. I think I'll add that in with a sharper brush towards the end. But to get the overall mass first, I'm gonna go to one of the larger brushes again, maybe that one we started off with. And I'm gonna go right into that Indian yellow. Again, as you know, I never pay attention to that center fold of the book. Just go right over it. It might be seeping in between those pages onto another painting, but that's really never bothered me. So, if that does bother you, if you're afraid of contaminating another painting that's finished that's below, you can just do a little bit lighter application over the centerfold, but I tend not to pay attention. So I'm gonna get that sharp brush again and just add in this really beautiful contour of the eroded edge there. I'm gonna get that burnt umber and just let it bleed right into the wet yellow. I think that'll have a really convincing effect. Maybe it won't bleed in much at all. There we go. Okay. And bleed that in a little bit. There we go. Moving on. We have another just little elegant green leaf. I don't think I've used this size yet, that looks like a good size for that amount of mass. Here's a moment, I know we're not really talking about color in this lesson, but this is a good opportunity to bring it up. The chroma, meaning the vibrancy of this color, is way too bright. Comparing this to this right next door to each other, we can see this one is much more subdued and earthy, so if you wanna take a color away from a really high vividness and make it more of a natural muddy earth tone, you add just a touch of its complementary color. So, this is green, the opposite of green or its complement is red, so let's get just a little little bit of red and put it right in there. And see how perfectly that matches? That's exactly what it needed. That formula, you can use all the time. The opposite of yellow is violet, so I would use violet to tone down that yellow, orange, and blue. All right, so now the part I've been waiting for; let's put in the maple leaf. I often save my favorite thing for the very last, sometimes if you just do your favorite thing first and you get really attached to it, you might not wanna change it later when maybe it really needs to be changed and you just feel beholden to it and leaving it as is. Okay, so this one has a lot of bleeding going on in it. I grabbed a sharper brush just because this contour I wanna keep nice and clean and have those sharp points. I'm gonna load up a lot of water because I wanna make sure that the ink bleeds into each other. I'm gonna start off with burnt umber. This leaf is a little confusing because it has so many points and peaks and valleys. I wanna make sure that I get them generally correct, so I'm gonna place the leaf exactly as I want it on my page, and then I'm gonna go through with my brush and just do little

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points for the major peaks to make sure I have them in the right spot. All right. Maybe I'll get this one, too. All right. And again I'll keep it nearby. Just start filling it in. So I'm gonna get a little bit more water on my brush. Again, I want really liberal paint application 'cause I wanna make sure that the colors bleed into each other. And to avoid that hard edge, I am going to just keep it wet. Once it starts to dry, that's when you get those ghost lines that are, you know, continue to be visible. All right, so now let me go in with a little bit of green, starting mixing that into it. There we go. And the green is what I'll bring down. Again, keeping the surface wet, using a lot of water, using those translucent washes that we practiced on the very first day. And let me bring in a little bit more burnt umber. The water can really lighten the image and so sometimes, you know, if you need to keep it saturated just dip your brush back into the paint and put it back in to keep those proportions the same. Okay. And there's also a lot of orange in there that I like so I'm gonna just grab a little yellow, grab a little red, and make some oranges myself. Okay. Maybe some greens again, they're getting a little too diluted and I'm losing 'em. Okay. There we go. So, once it dries then we can go back in and add in the veins and that will definitely make it clear to the viewer that they're looking at a leaf, there's no mistaking a shape like that once you especially have those veins and lines in. But I still have some empty spaces here, so I think I can fit in some of those other leaves I didn't think I would have room for. So, let's see what we've got. Maybe I'll use that one coming off the page, and that's a nice one, too. All right, so let's add those in. Again, this is a low stakes exercise, so I hope you can really just relax and enjoy it. One of the nicest things about drawing something natural like a leaf is that leaves are imperfect and each one is different and so your drawing itself can be imperfect and different. You really don't have to worry about having it a perfect likeness. Okay. Let's mix it up and I'll grab one of my bigger brushes 'cause it's a pretty big, wide surface area. I don't think I have it wide enough. There we go. We'll fill it in with green. You know, I'm not entirely happy with the greens that are right out of the bottle, you can mix your own greens and sometimes you get just a little bit more of a beautiful and nuanced color, so I'm gonna go ahead and do that by mixing blue and yellow. All right, so this is looking good. I'm happy with it. Let's just let it dry and then go back in for just some final details to give each leaf a little bit more life. For the veins, let's grab our smallest brushes. This is one I haven't used yet, so I'll grab this one. As we can see in the leaves, the veins are usually a lighter color, like a light yellow. So I'm gonna go through, grab my lightest yellow, the lemon yellow, and yeah, just draw some veins. Nice and simple, woops. Gonna grab my other one that's a little bit sharper. You could even use a dip pen here if you wanted to, but I'm gonna continue with the brush. And let's just get a few coming off. Get some yellow again. And let me just add a few branching off of this one and. Done! If you go out in search of leaves, try to find ones of various different shapes and sizes, and then, of course, use as many different sizes of brushes as you have leaves.

Day 11 - Blending wet into wet

- We've already practiced blending wet into wet by painting a blue sky, but we were working in all shades of the same color. Now we're gonna try blending wet into wet with different shades of different colors by painting a sunset. I chose this sunset scene because it's a bit simpler. There aren't a lot of clouds and there's clear divisions of color. I'm gonna start off with the colors of the sky, and then later on add in the dark land mass. I'm gonna start with one of my larger brushes, just because we're working with pretty large shapes and divisions of color. I'm gonna start off really bright and then add in the darker colors later. I'm actually gonna bring this down a little bit now that I think about it. There's not much going on in the land, and so I don't want to give it too much real estate

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on the page, 'cause it won't be that interesting, so I'm gonna push the horizon line down a little bit. So now I'm gonna switch to a cooler yellow, the Lemon Yellow. And I actually get the feeling I'm using a little bit too much yellow, 'cause there's quite a lot of blue going on, so I'm gonna scrape some of this away. Now I'm gonna switch brushes, because I want to make sure the blue is on a clean brush and it doesn't turn green, so I'm gonna grab a similar size brush that's clean, dip into the clean water. Now I'll go for some blue. I'm gonna keep a little bit of a halo between these two for the moment, because I don't want them to bleed together while they're so wet and turn green. And instead, I'm gonna bring in some white to help blend them together. Okay. So now I'm gonna do that trick where I paint with my fingers a little bit. Okay. And now I'm gonna do the same thing below, blending it down into the yellow. I'm gonna grab, I think the brush I had before should be all right. No, actually, I think I want to use a dry brush just to minimize the bleeding. I'm gonna grab some really dramatic red to just pop out where the color's the most saturated down by the horizon, so I'm gonna go for some Flame Red. There we go. If you are working on a painting where you want to give it a little bit more time and make it really accurate and carefully rendered, you know, these stages, you could take a little bit more time to make sure everything is blended nicely and evenly and there's even more color changes, but for this exercise we just kinda want to get used to the idea of blending wet into wet, blending different colors that are really different from each other, because it's pretty difficult sometimes to blend colors that are so different without having them actually mix. I mean, I want the blue and the yellow to blend in together but not turn totally green, so those things take practice. This division here feels a little bit clunky, and I just want to blend it in a little bit better, so I'm gonna go for a bit of white and a bit of yellow and then let's just smooth that out a little bit. This might be a good time to use my fingers. Okay. All right, so I think the sky is good for now. Let's move onto the land mass, which is basically just one whole dark silhouette. I'm gonna use a brush I've already been using. Since I'm gonna make this color really dark, I don't mind if a bunch of colors mix together, so I'm gonna go for my darkest Indigo, put it on the page. I'm also gonna grab some of the Crimson here. I think violets make really convincing shadow colors. And I might just grab a bit of Umber to make it a little earthy. Okay. Oh, might have been a little too earthy, so I'll just clean off the brush, go back in and get that violet mixture I had before, Indigo and Crimson. Yep, there we go. I'll just finish filling this in, extending to the edges of the page. And the horizon line, I don't want to be perfectly straight, because there are some trees. I think I was actually at a marsh. I'll just make it a little bit uneven. All right, and these early layers, with your acrylic ink, you'll kinda notice that they do tear up the paper a little bit and the paper gets sort of a grain that comes off. The more and more layers that you add to the page, that will really get smoothed out and covered up and the pages get thicker and thicker with acrylic ink. You know, if you want to do just one shot paintings that are pretty quick, you will see these textures come through, which is totally fine, but if you do want those really opaque thick passages of paint that you might see in a lot of my other sketchbooks where everything's really heavily layered. That just comes with time and more effort. Okay. So the last thing I want to add to this is just to fill in, add these like really beautiful reflected light that's on the still waters of the marsh, so I'm gonna wait for this to dry. Just maybe five, 10 minutes, and then use some white and a color and then quickly draw those in. So I'm gonna get a bit of a sharper brush, because these are really thin lines. I'm going to dip all the way down to the bottom of the white where the acrylic ink is the heaviest and the most opaque, and then I'm just gonna quickly splash it into the Indian Yellow. And, as you can see, my brush is really loaded up with a lot of paint. I want this to be really thick, and you do that once more. All right, I'd say we're done. In these past 11 days, we've been practicing skills and also developing

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underpaintings. In the next 10 days, we're gonna start putting these new skills to use by creating more developed compositions.

Day 12 - Nocturnal seascape
- In the next 10 days, we're gonna be building upon the skills we've been practicing. Today, we're literally painting on top of one of those exercises, the blue sky from day three. We're gonna use this as an underpainting for a new nocturnal seascape, and with this underneath the layers, it's gonna a really thick and well-developed image. So I'm gonna start with my largest brush as usual, because we're just going to be filling in large masses of color. This is a view of Istanbul at night, and the reason why I chose it is because I loved all of these beautiful street lights and lights at night that are different colors reflecting onto the water. My camera, again, I just take photos with my phone, and they're not really great quality, so even though these look like really just dark, flat, black tones, I'm going to enhance the color that I remember being there, and maybe intentionally pull these two tones apart, making the sky a little bit more violet, and the water a little bit more blue or green, maybe. I'm not sure how much of the blue is really gonna show through. The idea of reusing a page like this is that it's very simple, it's not really rewarding or a beautiful image. It just makes like a nice foundation, and when we continue building on top of pages like this, they get really thick, and the paint becomes increasingly glossy and opaque, and so those tones that we have with that sunset that we did yesterday where it gets sort of grainy, all of those textures will eventually disappear, and then they'll become really smooth. I'm gonna go to the indigo to start. It's my darkest blue, and I'm just going to, maybe I'll just cover the whole page now that I think about it. And that light blue from before still shines through, so it makes this indigo a little bit more interesting. You know, you can see that light blue shining through in here, and it just creates a little bit of mystery. Moments like that, people have to study the painting, and really try to think about how it was that you achieved that, I like moments like that, because it draws people in, and then it also disguises your technique a little bit and makes it seem more just magical. This is already starting to look more like a nighttime scene rather than daytime. Okay, so now I'm gonna go for a crimson, and I think I'm going to make the sky a violet. This is one of my favorite things about working for a nighttime scenes, or bringing up shadows. You have all this freedom to put in as many colors as you want because they all still sort of recede into the background. Nothing really pops forward, like you can put in hot pink like I'm basically doing, or green, and everything still continues to look, you know, like a shadow. Or like the nighttime sky. Okay, so now for the water. Let's just see how it looks if I add a little bit of green. It's pretty, okay. All right, so I'm happy with this. I'll leave this as-is, and let it dry, and then we'll just go in and add those city lights. Gonna go for one of my sharper, smaller, more exact brushes, and then I am gonna dip into the white, all the way down to the bottom. To start, I am going to make all of these lights just white, and then I will eventually use that just sort of as a backlight to glaze over with the color later. I don't wanna replicate this image exactly, I just wanna paint a nocturnal seascape scene with lights reflected on the water, so I'm just using it as a general reference, but I'm not trying to make it look exactly the same. For a horizon that's far away, a lot of these lights are stacked, just because you're seeing buildings that are taller than each other, or further away and closer up, so I'm just gonna make sure, I don't want the dots to look uniform. Just like a city, I wanna make everything sort of just a mishmash of different heights and distances, and just suggest that we're looking at like a really densely-populated area. All right. So, now before I let these dry, or as I let these dry, now I'm going to put down the reflections in the water. And as you can see, when we look at the reference, not all of the lights are reflected in the water. It's the largest ones that are

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closest to the seashore. So I'm just gonna pick out some ones that I think would be the closest. And I'm just kinda dancing my brush along the surface to make sure it feels like there's sort of the lights bouncing on top of waves. I want it to feel sort of graceful, and irregular. I want it to have a lot of movement suggested. And also, when the reflection is closer to the light source, it's more dense, and then as it gets further away and closer to me, where I was standing, the light spots have more space in between them. Okay. So now we're going to let this dry, and then once the white is dry, glaze over with colors, and that will be it. I'm gonna go for a dry brush that's a little bit more blunt. If we look at the reference photo, you'll see a lot of these lights have just really different colors, even if they sort of all just looked similarly bright. There are ones that lean more towards orange, and maybe pink, green here, yellow, obviously, and then these fluorescent lights that always have that blue-green, so I'm gonna bring that variety into my painting, and then exaggerate it for effect to add interest. Let's just start off with the easy one, which is just a bright yellow, an orange-y yellow, and I don't want too much on my brush because I'm just gonna glaze over. You get a sort of back-lit effect that mimics the actual mechanics of neon light, where we have light coming through, hitting the white underneath, and then shining through the color that's glazed on top, and then don't forget, when you do color some lights, make sure that you give their reflective light the exact same color. And maybe it gets a little bit softer as it gets closer to us, not quite as pigmented, okay. Gonna play that up here a little bit, lighten this up, okay. Nocturnal seascapes, it's so easy to make them beautiful just because, you know, we have these really bright neon colors on top of a dark background. It's just a really pleasing image on their own, and so sometimes, when I've had a stressful day, and I wanna paint something that is easy and I know it's gonna turn out well and look beautiful, I'll paint a nighttime seascape like this one. Maybe I'll do turquoise, where it's a blue-green to get that halogen light. I'm still gonna leave some white, so I'd say we're just about done. So painting like this I love a lot because it straddles the line of something that's abstract and also representational. I think it's pretty obvious that this is a nighttime seascape, but even if it's not immediately obvious, it's also a pleasing abstract painting, and just to add a little bit more fun, let's just put in a couple stars, and I might add the moon as well. And then I'll give the moon a reflection. Okay, I say we're done.

Day 13 - Daytime seascape

- Yesterday we painted a nocturnal seascape and today we're going to paint a daytime seascape. We'll blend wet into wet, and then once dry, we will include drawn details on top. As usual, I'm going to start with a larger brush, a clean one that I haven't used so far. And I'm gonna start with a really pure blue procession. And as I lay this down, I can already, whoops, got a drop on the reference photo. I can already tell that the procession is maybe just a little bit too green. So I'm gonna add just a touch of crimson to it to push it a little bit more towards the violet side of blue. (brush stroking paper) So I'm approaching that part of the sky where it's starting to get sort of hazy, right above the horizon line and it gets very yellow. So I'm gonna go for a new brush that's clean, gonna dab this up while I'm here. And now I'll go for a new, clean brush and I'll dip it right into the white and I'm gonna grab just a bit of that lemon yellow and draw it across. This is an airier image, so I'm gonna keep things pretty light, simple, airy brush work. I think this looks pretty good for now, I might blend it just a little bit. I can use my fingers again. When we're working with dark colors, you have the freedom to throw in any color that you suspect might be hiding, you can really experiment and toss anything in, but when we're working with light colors, you really wanna keep each tone to maybe being a mixture of two to three colors and white, but definitely no more than

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that. Once you start adding in more colors from there, your tones will get too complex and muddy. So, I'm gonna keep all of my mixing pretty simple. Here on the reference image, the sky is that really pure blue, and then it comes down to that yellow and pink haze, and then the land and sea, if you squint your eyes, you can see it's still like much darker than the sky and it has more of a, maybe a violet undertone. So I'm gonna play that up in my painting quite a bit. I'm gonna go for the magenta, toss that in. As it dries, it's gonna lighten up a little bit, so before I add white, I just kinda wanna see how far along it gets on its own. When you stretch the paint out over the page, it can lighten up quite a bit, 'cause this looks just a bit too dark. Horizon lines that are in the distance, I don't always want them to be a really crisp line, sometimes it looks more convincing to have them be just really softly blended and have soft edges, and then it really feels like something that's out in the distance. I'm just gonna add a touch of white. Okay, I think that's good for now. All right, so I'm gonna let this dry before taking it any further. Although, this color that I have on my brush, I think I'm gonna put it right up into the sky, just a little bit. When the water is still, like it was on this day, the water is almost like a mirror and it reflects the color of the sky. So I always think it's a nice touch that whatever you've put into your water, just drag it right up into the sky, or vise versa. Whatever you have in the sky, just put it right down into the water so that the two elements relate to each other. Okay. This is dry now, so we can start adding in details. I'm gonna grab one of my more distressed brushes. These are gonna be great for getting these really wispy lines where the clouds are really irregular and airy. So, I'll dip my brush all the way down to the bottom of the white, really load it up with a lot of paint. Maybe dab off some of the excess and just really softly dance my brush along the surface. I'm trying to vary my line weight so that there are places where it's really thick and other areas where it's really wispy. As the white dries, it can really blend in to layers below and get absorbed into the paper and kind of lose its opacity, so you might have to do a couple of passes over it to make sure it stays really thick and opaque. Okay, I like these ones up top. One thing that I like to use clouds for, is to sort of direct the eye around the page. There's some really beautiful movement up here where the clouds are starting off pretty broad up top and then swooping into the center. And I wanna capture that motion, just to make for a more beautiful image. Okay, so I think that's pretty good for now, I don't wanna overwork things. I can touch that up a little bit later. Now, let's go in and add some ripples into the water. I'm gonna use one of my sharper medium sized brushes. This is a nice one. Let's just make a pretty dark violet. And the first thing I'm gonna do, you know, all of these lines are so subtle and sort of difficult and where do I start? So moments like that, and you don't know where to start, just go for the easiest, most obvious thing which is this big crest right here. Running out of paint, there we go. Okay, and then I also wanna get, there's a division here where the water is ending and we're coming up to the beach. So I wanna get that, really, sort of beautiful, soft line that sort of travels back and forth with the surf. And the moments where there's the most turmoil in the water is where it's darkest. So I'm going to bring this darker violet and make more marks in that area to create a little bit more value and movement as well. And, again, we are going for more of a finished, completed composition on this day, but we are still beginners and we're just trying to relax and have fun. So I'm not going for perfection here. And then there are some really distant islands you can barely see off in the distance. And I'm going to bring those in, 'Cause this picture was taken in Maine and nothing says Maine more than a little distant island. There's one, and there's another. (water swishing) (clanging) Now I'm gonna bring in just a little bit of this foam that's just at the, where the water meets the land. So I'm gonna go in for some white. And bring that in here. And, again, just really soft motions with my brush. If you have a nice brush, the strokes are really graceful and, you know, you can kinda let the brush do it's own thing.

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You don't have to be so controlling with it. If you paint with watercolor, then you're probably already familiar with liquid paint mediums where sometimes it's nice to try to control the paint and then other times when it's best to let it do its own thing. And now I wanna bring in a little bit of this reflected light onto the surface of the water. You know, the yellow of the sky is coming down pretty brightly over here, all the way onto the wet sand actually. So I'm gonna bring that in now, shouldn't take too long. Just gonna clean off my brush, go for some white, go for that lemon yellow and let's just put it right into the water. All right, and then last but not least, I do wanna add in this orange haze that's right above the horizon line. So, I'm going to grab a, I think a new dry brush for this one, medium size, blunter tip and go for some white, and I'm gonna go for the Indian yellow first, and let's just add that in. I think a lot of my paintings can be summed up as just being color studies, and I like that. I've always put color ahead of drawing, and I think that it's a fine approach. If you wanna take a little bit more time to make sure your drawing is accurate, of course, that's nice too. But I think if you're more fascinated by color, and you're content making a looser painting that just has really beautiful brushwork and clean color, then you will make some really beautiful pieces that you can be happy with. All right, I'd say we're done.

Day 14 - Transformer towers
- Today we're gonna be building upon the sunset we painted on day 11 by adding more drawn details and refining our colors. We got pretty lucky by picking a reference photo and just a memory where it really matched that sunset that we already have painted, so this is a really good opportunity to push this painting further, make it a little bit more complete and polished. I'm gonna grab one of my blunter medium sized dry brushes and here I'm gonna bring the blue sky down a little bit more over the yellow. The yellow is now perfectly dry, so we don't have to worry about new paint mixing with it and creating green once we add in more blue, so this is a great time to do a dry brush blending technique where I'm just gonna softly layer blue on top of this yellow, so that the two of them are pretty much side by side, but not mixing to create a new color. So for this I'm gonna dip right into the white, then I'm gonna grab, I think I might grab that ultramarine blue instead. The process cyan can go just a little bit on the green side. I'm gonna dab off the extra, test it out a little bit, that looks good. I'm gonna press apart the bristles and just, I think I need a little bit more blue there. And a little more white. Maybe a little bit more white again. I know quite a few of you are more comfortable mixing your colors in a palette, so you don't cross-contaminate. I've really never been bothered by dipping my brush back into jars, partially because these FW acrylic ink jars come in two sizes, either six ounces or one ounce. The one ounce sizes are small enough to the point where I can just dip into them freely, use them as I want to, be really comfortable and loose, and by the time a color is altered it's already nearly empty and it's time to get a new one. So I kind of like that they come in small batches. Not only that, but sometimes when you do this technique you do create some really nice earth tones, you know that aren't like a store bought color, and so they're more unique and you can use those, like I have a whole bunch of off white colors from whites that had been contaminated over the years and they make really beautiful touches when I'm doing maybe paintings of feathers or leaves. Just these unique colors you can't buy in a store. Using dry brush painting techniques like this you can see this is exactly how I end up getting distressed brushes like this one. So if you're wondering when will you get a distressed brush that looks like this, dry brush painting is how you'll get there eventually. This one is obviously on the way as well. So just continue blending, making these tones nice and even. I'm feeling just about satisfied with this, at least for the purposes of a short painting. And then let me blend on the other side up top. Whoops,

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that's a bit too much. There we go. And maybe I'll use my fingers there. Okay. All right, so we've managed to bring this blue down a little bit further. Now the last thing I'm gonna do to the sky before we add in that drawn transformer tower, which we'll create using a dip pen, I'm just gonna create a few of these stripes of clouds above the horizon. So I'm gonna clean this brush off, go for a bit of a sharper one. And let's make a violet, so I'm gonna use magenta and the cyan and wipe off a bit of that excess, 'cause clouds are wispy and translucent, I don't want it to be too dark. Gonna separate my bristles a bit. I think one of the most important lessons you can pick up from painting with me would be thinking of each shadow and each change in value as a change in color and not a change in tone. When I see those clouds I don't think, oh, they're darker, so let's add black. It's more of, they're darker, but what color are they? Oh, they're violet. Judge each change in value as a change in color, rather than just automatically adding white or black to create shades of value. Okay. Now that the painting's dry I'm gonna grab one of my dip pens. I'm gonna go for my darkest colors, which is the indigo. I'm also gonna add in a bit of umber and maybe back to the indigo again. And just gonna let it drip off a little. So first thing I'm gonna do, I'm just gonna make a little mark for how tall it is, just sort of getting my parameters. I'm also gonna put in the boundaries for where it falls when it meets the horizon line. That way I have a little bit of guidance as I'm drawing these lines, so my drawing doesn't start wandering off. I'm first gonna do one of the interior lines, 'cause they're pretty much straight. The outer contour is the one that branches off. So I'm gonna start off with the simplest lines, which are the straight ones in the center. Got two of these. When I'm making a straight line it's easier to apply pressure to your palm to steady your hand and then just pull your hand down. And go slowly. So from here I am not going to make this a completely perfect, I'm not gonna be analyzing all the different angles that are in there. I just wanna get the density of lines and also the overall outer contour. So here I'm getting that one outer contour, here's another one. And again, gonna connect these two dots for that guide line I put down early. Oop. Well, oh well. Now I'm gonna add horizontal lines to make these divisions here. And those divisions are not at perfectly straight lines, so I'm gonna bring that in as well. Make sure they're a little bit off-center. But I'm not sure, I think my camera may have just been held at an angle, 'cause I was in a car at the time. But I wasn't driving, I was in the passenger seat when I took my phone out. And then I'm also gonna bring those straight lines across down here. And they sort of make these prism shapes. Line drawings can look a little awkward in this stage, 'cause it's sort of bare looking, kind of funny, but once we start adding in more, like now I'm gonna put in these crosshatching lines. So I'm gonna make these lines that cross each other, just go through and fill them in for all of these side planes of the transformer tower. I love adding a drawn element like this on top of a really atmospheric painting, 'cause again, you get that really beautiful juxtaposition of clean, strong, staccato lines on top of something that's sort of wispy and soft. That just makes for a really interesting image. And I've always liked transformer towers, just 'cause they sort of look like man-made trees to me. And they just make really beautiful silhouettes that are just kind of fun to look at and fun to draw too. Gonna load up my pen with a little bit more. So it's looking just a little bit airy up here and on the real thing up top is where it's the most dense, so I'm just gonna continue adding in some lines, so it just looks a little bit fuller. And again, I'm not exactly looking at exactly how the transformer tower is constructed and more of just capturing its spirit, as I like to do. Now I'm gonna add in these lines that branch off of the primary structure and attach to the power lines. Give a little care to make sure that you're really looking at each individual angle. Like when I look at the reference, this angle here is much more steep than this angle here and I just wanna make sure I'm trying to replicate generally steep angle, a sloped angle, steep angle, sloped angle. All right, so this is one of my favorite spots where we have

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these little swoops, spherical swoops that are next to all these really hard, straight angles and lines. So there's just three of them here, I'm gonna add them into my drawing. That's definitely a detail that I don't wanna overlook. All right, and now we are ready to add in the lines themselves that will sweep all the way across our drawing. This part is always a little bit challenging, just because our eyes are naturally tuned to judging smaller distances better. Really long distances are harder for our eyes to manage. That's why sometimes when I start over here I may get to my reference and I'm way off. So I am just gonna take my time, be slow, be sure I'm being conscious of where I'm heading and be patient with myself more than anything else. Oh, I got it. Okay, second one. I'm holding my pen a little bit further back, so that I can actually see where I'm going. When my hand is up too close I get totally obstructed view. Oh. Whoop. So I'm just gonna get a little water, fill in those gaps. Maybe I don't need to fill them in. Whoop. Good enough. All right, and over here. And there's not just three lines, there's actually, looks like maybe six. So now this second group of lines I'm gonna attach to over here to show that they're like going behind. I need a little more water there. I think it's a good idea to not charge your pen with ink every time, because some of these lines, especially the ones that are really thin and far away are gonna be lighter in color. Maybe charge it with water every now and then instead, so it's a little bit more translucent. And one, two. Gotta get a little bit more ink, 'cause that wasn't visible at all. There we go. All right, we're done.

Day 15 - Silhouettes of trees

- Today we're gonna create an entire composition using my favorite landscape painting technique, which is sky holes. Sky holes are the negative spaces you see within the form of a tree where the sky is peeking through. And they're a beautiful and easy way to render realistic trees. I really like reusing pages over and over again until I'm completely satisfied with them. This Rorschach painting inkblot technique that we tried on day four I think will make a really good background for a landscape with a lot of heavy foliage and trees. Just because the shapes themselves feel sort of like leaves and sky holes to me. For the most part this image will be completely lost underneath of the painting. But again, even though we're losing this image, little passages of it will still peak through the layers, and will just add a little bit of interest and mystery as to how we got those textures. And so, yeah let's just move forward with this as our underpainting. I'm gonna go for some really heavy opaque paint application here. And so I'm gonna grab one of my larger brushes. And, gonna go for that deep ultramarine blue. I'm also gonna grab, let me see, get a little bit more on the page. May also some indigo. I'm gonna make this a nighttime scene, 'cause you know how I love nighttime scenes. And I'm gonna grab a different brush to load on a bit of white as well, woops. Okay, there we go. The white is really opaque, it's almost like whiteout. So if you need to make a really heavy layer, sometimes that's a nice pigment to just add on the paper. Okay. You know what, maybe I'll just bring this down and make it a complete underpainting for the whole page. Sometimes it's nice to have a really cohesive underpainting like this, because it brings the entire scene of the painting together into one environment. There we go. Maybe my hands. Woops. Okay. I let my page dry, so now I'm gonna go in and refer to the reference image. So I'm not going to be replicating this landscape. I'm just gonna be taking from this picture elements that I want to bring into my painting. And really the only reason that I'm using this photo today is because I love the contour of these silhouetted trees. Sometimes when I'm drawing trees from my imagination they all sort of look the same and uniform, which of course is nothing like how nature behaves. Even just from first glance, you don't know anything about trees, I can tell that this is a different specie from this, and from this, and maybe these two as well are their own species. So there's just some more diversity and interest

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in all these different lines that makes each tree feel unique. So I'm just gonna be referring to the picture to pick up that contour line. And to start, I'm just gonna be doing the outer contour. The next step after that will be adding in the sky holes. But for the most part, right now, let's just grab our darkest colors. I'm gonna go for a really deep violet as usual. Maybe I'll add in a little bit of green. And I have one of my sharper brushes, and now I'm gonna just go through and create, just generally try to capture the unique contour of each tree. Sometimes if I pool up a lot of paint on the surface, then I can kind of use that as a palette and dip back into it. The indigo blue tends to have a little bit more of a translucent and washy texture. Some of the pigments of the ink are much more thick and opaque, and then some are just naturally a little bit more viscous. It feels like I'm using a more viscous color right now. Feels a little washy, so I might go back in later with something a little bit thicker to define that line. So now I'm just making the silhouettes into one shape. So just filling in the shape that I already outlined. And I will go back in to redefine this line later. So, if I go a little bit outside of the lines it's not a big deal. Okay so this is really wet. But, I can still use the wetness of the paint on the page to redefine the outer contour. So I'm gonna grab one of my sharper brushes. This is a really sharp one. And use the paint that I already have on the page to then go back in and touch up that contour that I sort of bulldozed right over. Painting sometimes can be about something that's really simple. Sometimes I have a lot of things that I want to say, a lot of things I want to point out to the viewer. And then other times I might just have one thing I want to say, which is the contour of these trees is beautiful. And that's the only that I'm going for. It's nice and simple. Hopefully easily grasped and communicated to the viewer. This tree I feel that I ignored when I was making my initial lines. And I love how you see these branches extending out instead of leaves, so I'm gonna put that in now. And you do have some real freedom when you're drawing things from nature, because nature is messy so you're allowed to be messy. You don't have to be perfect because nature is not perfect. Yeah, it's a very low stress subject. Low stakes. All right, so now I'm gonna let this dry. And then we're gonna go through to draw those sky holes, redefine our tree shapes. So now I'm gonna go for one of my thicker brushes to do the sky holes. I want those negative spaces to have a little bit of weight and mass to them. So I'm getting a blender brush. I'm going to do pretty thick paint application. I'm just gonna use the, maybe cerulean and a little bit of that ultramarine to start. It's actually process cyan and Romney blue. Okay, and, yeah this is the fun part. I love doing these. I do try to pay a little bit of attention to the original reference that I'm looking at. How there's less density of tree here so you see more sky. Really dense leaves down here so you don't see any sky holes, except for on the outer contour. I don't want to make everything so bare looking even though I do kind of want this to be a wintery scene. Maybe late fall. I want it to have a cold feeling. As I travel around this outer contour of the entire landscape, I notice that I have so much space for the blackness of the land mass. And I kind of want more sky than that so I'm just gonna bring this down a little bit. And just redraw these lines. You can draw the foreground by drawing the background in a way. And then I have to remember to make the land that height for all of them. So I'm just gonna make some little reminders to myself for later on. Okay. Here's a good spot where because this tree had more branches visible that maybe these sky hole lines are more like stripes rather than dots and dabs. And this had a break in the trunk right about there. Again you have a lot of freedom to be messy, so just relax. Have fun. These trees are kind of breaking free from my reference. That's all right, I've already used the reference for its purpose, I can kind of let go. As you create paintings, there will come a point with each piece where the painting will start to stand alone as its own object, and it's no longer a representation of something else. Now it has its own life and its own personality, and you can just start moving forward with that and letting it come into its

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own. Rather than keeping it married to some image that it no longer represents. So the last thing I'm gonna do now is wait for this to try, and then just add a few. You know what, I don't have to wait for it to dry, because it's dry where I'll be drawing. Just gonna put a few stars up in the sky. So for that this time instead of a dip pen I'm gonna use a really small sharp brush. Dip into the white. And, I'm gonna put more stars in the sky here, because it's a rural scene, so you could probably see more stars, because it's dark. I like when you use dots with a brush, each dot is gonna be a little bit different. They're not gonna be perfectly spherical as they would be with a dip pen. So they kind of have that glistening look that twinkling stars have. They all look a little bit different. A shooting star. And another one. Okay, we're done.

Day 16 - Thunderstorm

- Just like on day 14, where we did a landscape and then drew on top with a dip pen, today we're gonna be combining use of brushes and a dip pen with a lightning scene. The reference image I'm using today shows an approaching thunderstorm. It was coming about just as evening was about to fall. And so we see some light on the left side of the page. And I think I'm gonna exaggerate that a little bit more to really increase the drama of the scene. So this is another time where we can really feel free to break away from our reference image. And only take things from it that we really want to employ in our painting. Once we get around to painting the entire scene, getting color to reach all the corners of our page and we have the landscape set, then we'll come in with a dip pen and draw the lightning details. So to mix it up with the blue skies, I'm gonna go for a little bit more turquoise. And then I'm gonna mix in indigo and dark blue coming from the other side. I want my brush work to be really energetic because I want this to be a high-drama image. So really loosen up. Feel like you're painting more from your arm rather than from your wrist. You know, no tight motions like this. Use your whole arm to really lean in to it. And get some big strokes in there. The under painting is gonna be finessed more and more as we build up the image, so you're really free to be loose at this stage and focus more on quality of color. Like, I really like how I have a pure color here and a pure color here, and they're just starting to blend together, but I'm not mixing everything together evenly. Because then you lose those pretty subtle changes in the color. And again, I wanna make it seem like there's a little bit more light on this side, so I am gonna bring in just a bit of white. And I wanna have it so it looks sort of like it's being engulfed by clouds. So now, I am looking to the reference image here, and just sort of thinking about how the cloud is one mass that's encroaching on to the sky. And sort of bringing that same feeling into my drawing, my painting. If you can hear it, it's actually raining right now outside of the studio, so this is a really appropriate painting to be creating. Feels very appropriate. Okay, so starting to get those big swirling cloud shapes. And I'm just gonna create a small horizon line. I'm gonna make the landmass really small to make these clouds feel gigantic and foreboding and intimidating. So I'm gonna grab a smaller brush that's a little bit sharper. Go for some... Sometimes when I'm using a violet, and it's just a little bit too bright, I'm mixing the romney blue with crimson. If I choose a brighter red, that leans more towards orange, it gets a much darker and earthy tone. It's not as magenta. It starts to feel just a little more complex and like an earth tone. Maybe just a few buildings. You can see here, this picture was taken in Morocco. So there are these mud houses, Berber mud houses that were in the desert. We were sort of by Erfoud, or Rissani, right by the Erg Chebbi dunes of the Sahara Desert. But this is a great way to use scale to create a lot of perspective and drama. When I make these houses so small, then all of a sudden, the clouds seem even bigger than they did before. So really thinking more about using relationships of subjects to create a sense of scale and size. The way that they relate to each other

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is what makes the effect. I'm gonna take that dark color just to create some more, just swirling cloud forms in the sky. And gonna let this dry. And once it's dry completely, then we'll go in with the dip pen and draw in some lightning. And this time we're gonna be drawing with pure white. I want it to be really opaque, so I'm going down to the very bottom just to make sure I'm getting that thick acrylic resin, if it's separated. And I want this to be a really big flash of lightning that stretches all the way across the sky. So when I do this, sometimes it's good to sort of really tighten your hand where it feels very tense, so that your point kind of wiggles. It feels tense and charged. And some of these big flashes, you know, they really snake across the sky. That's what was happening the night I took that photo, but it was impossible to time it correctly and I kept getting sort of the afterglow in the sky. So sort of like when you're drawing tree limbs, there's the main channel, sort of the trunk of the lightning rod. And then it branches off into smaller branches, and then smaller ones again. And some of them are sort of curved. You know, they're very irregular shaped. And I don't wanna really overdo it, because I find that lightning, at least when I watch it in real life, it's sometimes just one line that shoots through and it's not these really big full branching lightning rods that you might see in cartoons or movies. I want this to be a little bit more naturalistic. So might do one more branch down here. Okay, I think that looks good. So the last thing I wanna do now is just add some light flashes that's come from this illumination in the sky. So I'm just gonna take one of my smaller brushes and highlight where the light would be falling on these houses below. And then also maybe how it's illuminating the clouds around it. That effect is really why I'm working from a reference image at all. Because I find that this is sort of a confusing situation because it's night time and the light is not coming from the sun. And yet it is in the sky and it's a big piece of space. It does surround the lightning, but, you know the forms around it in the clouds are sort of abstract and confusing. So that's why we're having a reference image. And I'm just gonna look to it any time I feel a little bit lost as I'm going for that effect, I'll just look back to the reference to help ground me and guide me. I think I'm gonna go for one of my distressed brushes again. And I'll go for some white. And I think I'm also gonna get some indigo, yeah. I'm not making it orange just because I feel like I don't remember seeing it very orange when it did that. That was more the effect of the camera with the exposure. Maybe I'll add a little bit in there. And I don't wanna overdo it again. I'm just getting a few of these forms. I'm gonna grab a dry brush now and blend it a little bit better. Okay, so we're not quite done with this but I'm gonna just let it dry. And while that dries, I'm gonna bring that flash of light down onto the buildings below. Oops. That actually looks a little too bright. They're further away from the lightning than the clouds so it's not gonna be as illuminated. That's better. So just enough to suggest that the light, lightning is also illuminating the ground. Okay, so that's dry enough. Now I'm gonna glaze over it with a dark blue again. That way it has sort of, it blends into the rest of the landscape. It doesn't feel like it's kind of sitting out. The way it is, it looks a little awkward right now. So I just wanna bring it back into the background. I'm gonna bring it out just a little bit more again. Okay. I like this effect that we're getting now because we have different shades of blue that kind of feel like the clouds are receding into the distance or that there's layers of clouds there. Okay, and I think we're done.

Day 17 - Milky way

- Today we're gonna be painting using a splattering technique a bit different from the one that we started off with earlier this month, but in the same spirit. So, we're not gonna be using a reference image today 'cause it's gonna be a very simple nighttime starry scene. This will be the last in our collection of nighttime scenes. I love painting nighttime scenes just because I find them to be really

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atmospheric and melancholic and moody. They just always seem to make really poetic paintings. And they also lend themselves to really simple compositions just because when it's dark outside, of course, you see less. So, I've always had a soft spot for nocturnal scenes and if you're familiar with my artwork, you've probably already noticed that. I'm gonna make this as dark as I can using my blues, maybe throw in a bit of magenta. For that I have so much blue on this brush. I am gonna switch brushes just to make sure that I keep my colors pretty clean, there we go. Okay. Again, I'm not doing much to really mix those colors together. I kind of wanna leave them a little under done and then that can help preserve those little subtle changes and it's greener here, it's more violet here, it's bluer here. I think that helps add interest to especially a simple scene like this. And I'm just gonna add in maybe some of that flame red to make it really, really dark, more indigo. There we go. Okay. So, I'm gonna let this dry and then we will get into using the splattering. Gonna grab one of my older pens, and dip it into the white. I'm really gonna load it up with a lot of paint. I'm gonna hold the pen from the back so that it's a little bit loose in my hand kind of like when you are a kid and you're doing the wiggly pencil trick. Okay and then just kind of. Come on. Need a little bit more apparently, there we go. And you just throw up your page. Sometimes when I'm using a pen and doing stars one by one, they look almost a little too perfectly placed and what I really like about doing this is that they fall so randomly. Some are really close and clumped together and then others are sort of spread out on their own. And that's what the sky looks like at night. So, I think it's actually a pretty true way of capturing the starry sky. Also it's fun. Okay. So, the last thing I'm gonna do here. I do wanna have a feeling of maybe the Milky Way where it's just more densely populated with stars along a channel in the middle. So, I am going to try to get that effect and fill in a single passage so it feels like there's a pathway of stars. Okay. And then maybe just a couple where they are needed. Oop. (laughs) Now we'll let these dry and then there's one last step and we'll be just about done. Grab this small, dry brush, maybe with a more blunt tip. We're gonna create some halos around these largest drops. We're using that glazing technique again. This drop is so big I actually might divide it up into quite a few stars. Or at least maybe two, maybe three, there we go. So this really gives the sense that these stars have light emanating from them. It's a little bit brighter around them. This is one of those moments where we're working on something that feels kind of like doodling if you have maybe a TV show going or a book on tape or some music. It's kind of nice to just zone out and fill these in at your leisure. Maybe choose different blues as you dip back in. Mix it up a little bit, give some variety of color. Sometimes a stage like this might look a little bit funny when you're just getting started, but once they're all filled in, it'll make more sense and then it'll look complete and it'll look nice. Sometimes you just have to trust what you're about to do and see it through. 'Cause sometimes things don't look very nice in the process until they're complete. I'm just going to do a few more of these, just the largest ones in here and maybe this one. I think drawing stars in this way also engages the imagination just because when you look at a star you really don't know if it's just a sun all by itself or if it has a huge network of planets with it or it's a part of some galaxy or if it's just floating off on it's own. There's just so much to imagine and so with this technique I feel like these stars that were getting halos too, they have a little bit more latent importance and you can just imagine that they have a larger network of planets with them or maybe they're just gigantic and more significant. I often like to add words to my paintings, just short, descriptive poems. So, let's add some words to this painting. The last time I remember really admiring the stars was when I was in Morocco in the Sahara Desert, so I'm just going to refer to that here.

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Day 18 - Rustic barn
- Today we're revisiting the barn painting we completed on day nine with the distressed surface and we're gonna add a little bit more complexity, details and help develop it into a more beautiful and polished painting. The first thing I'm gonna do is grab a mid-sized blunt, dry brush and I'm gonna add in these really bright moments that we have because of the golden hour light from this moment. It was one of the reasons why I found this barn so beautiful is because of the light setting that it was in. So, that's something I really wanna capture. I'm going to go and pick out two yellows. I'm just going to generally color those areas. They're gonna be refined later and draw in more carefully when I add in the background color. But I just wanna make sure I have these colors bright and pure. Using the white of the page that shines through to really create that luminosity. Nothing is as bright as the white of the page. Here you'll see I did tape down this painting just because the pages were starting to get a little curly at the end. I'll peel it off and just fill it in with the little yellow. These lit details inside of the barn are my favorite part of this composition. So, just as usual, I am going to save them for last and work around them in the meantime. Okay. So, I have those bright moments. Now it's time to start filling in around them. I'm gonna start with the blue sky and I am eager to get this blue sky down because it'll give me a chance to really refine these edges along the outside of the barn 'cause at the moment it is a really, really loose painting. That's a little bit too pigmented blue. I'm gonna grab a little bit of white using a different brush just to add it to the page. There we go. This barn is still silhouetted. When I squint my eyes and look at the page, I can easily see that the barn makes one strong, dark shape and it helps me prioritize my values and I can see that it's the darkest thing other than this patch of tress on the left. I wanna make sure that my sky color behind it is brighter. All right, I'm content with the sky for now. The ground is a confusing mix mash of colors. There's green, there's violet, there's yellow or sort of a sand color. I'm going to try my best to squint my eyes and average all these colors out into one color. So, if they were all mixed together, what color most describes what's going on there? I think it's going to be sort of a violet-y, earthy violet. So, I'm gonna put burnt on burnt down first. Then I'm going to add some violet, so I'll use magenta. And I'll grab some blue and let's mix them together. This sort of looks like a fall ground. We can go back in to add both patches of green and khaki color later, but I think for now let's just fill this in. So now I have these preserved gold passages that I wanna keep nice and clean. So, I am going to draw those, I think it's golden rod, by defining the space around them. So, draw in the background to draw the object more or less. Okay. I'll fill this in with yellow a little bit later. My objective at the moment is just to fill in this space completely, make sure pretty much all the white has disappeared. Okay, so this is already starting to feel a little bit more complete, especially when we think about how it started with a really rough sketch of a barn on a white page. Okay, so now I'm going to add maybe a little bit more specificity into the barn, start adding details maybe to the trees behind it and in the ground and, yep, just continue pushing it along slowly but surely. Since I'm getting more into drawing details, I'm going to grab a brush that has a sharper point and maybe I'll continue cleaning up this edge 'cause this looks a little bit rough. I do think it's a pretty good idea to remind yourself about being economical with your lines. Make your lines simple. Use as few as possible to describe a form and it's as if you're writing a letter and each line is a sentence in the letter. You wanna make sure that each line is really saying something and is being informative to the form. Keep things nice and simple and then you can add on detail later, but in the beginning like this I think it's good to just make simple statements. Okay. Gonna go in for some sky holes here, my favorite. Okay. Maybe I'll do some sky holes over here too. All right. Gonna bring some green into the ground. Maybe I'll grab one of my distressed brushes. This is the perfect time for them to shine.

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Gonna add a little bit of burnt on burnt to that green 'cause I don't want it to be too fluorescent. See how these brushes, they're so, I mean... They're just perfect. They should sell them this way but I don't think they really do. Okay. Well, this is looking nice. Okay, so let's head back into the barn, add some details there now. The first thing I'm gonna do is redefine the darkest place in the barn which would be the shadow underneath the roof and also that big, negative space of the garage door or whatever that used to be. Okay, I'm also gonna bring this shadow down sort of into the grooves of the paneling. All right, let me redefine this edge. So, that's looking a little sloppy. And I'm also gonna redefine these doors so they're a little bit easier for the viewer to find. I'm starting to think I don't like this green down here. I'm gonna just wipe it away and try it again. This is one of the good things about working with acrylic ink because it's fluid. It stays wet a little bit longer than normal acrylic painting and you have time to make up your mind and if you decide you don't like something then just go ahead and take it out. So now I think I'm gonna go in and define these trees in the back a little bit more. Sometimes when you're stuck it helps to just focus on the most obvious problem and fix that first before moving forward. Theses two white splotches on either side when I was redefining the edges of the barn clearly need to be tended to. So, instead of messing around in the ground a little bit more, I'm just gonna take care of that first. And this drawing is feeling just a little too distressed, a little too messy. So, I'm gonna use this opportunity to just bring a little bit more care and detail into the trees in the back just so that I have a few areas in the drawing that feel gentle and carefully considered. And that'll help the whole thing feel complete. And that way the messy places are obviously intentionally messy rather than carelessly messy. If you have places in your painting that are well-rendered and carefully considered and then other places in your painting that are haphazard and messy, it helps everything feel intentional and not by accident or not careless. And that's how I want this to feel. So not all the trees back there are catching that golden hour light, some are in shadow. So, I'm going to add them now. All right. Now I'm just gonna add a little bit more detail into that golden rod. Sort of some drawn aspects to it. So you can see there is a little bit of a difference if you're using the white of the page with color on top or if you're using a lot of white paint with color in it. They both have the same effect. They're both bright but they just have a little bit of a different feel. This one feels more back lit and pure and then the one that's made with white paint is thicker and has a little bit more weight. So, you just get those differences in texture. I like to mix them up and use both. Let me see. Just wanna touch up some of that teal inside of the barn 'cause it looks a little messy here. Four windows in that door. I don't think I noticed them before. I'm just gonna do two. Okay. It's glary. I have to keep moving to see what it is. All right so now I will add those elements inside of the barn that are catching the golden hour light. And then the painting will feel complete. Oops. So, I just noticed that I have the door extending all the way to the side of the barn which doesn't really make sense because obviously the side of the barn has thickness to it, it's a law. So, I'm just gonna take it out. And let's just scooch the door over a little bit. There we go. And then the reason why I caught that is 'cause I figured if this sunlight's coming from over here that this side of the barn would have light and then I double check the reference and noticed I have that error. So now let me add in that illuminated side of the barn. And last but not least I am going to add in clouds. And then we're done. So I'm again gonna go for a distressed brush 'cause I think I'm gonna make these clouds kind of wispy. And we're done.

Day 19 - Insects

- Today's lesson is a fun and different approach. First of all our reference is going to be a 3D model and not only that, but we're also going to start off with a very careful line drawing made with the

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dip pen and then later glaze color on top. Let's start with a dip pen and I'm gonna just dive in with the more challenging butterfly here and go for the big brown one. I'm going to use the burnt umber, which seems the obvious choice to draw a brown butterfly. Since I have the convenience of having the real insect here with me I'm gonna set it just to the right of my drawing and I'm going to mark where the top of the wings will go and the bottom of the wings. Just to make sure I don't ever make them severely mismatched or overshoot the distances at all. So I'm gonna start off by drawing the body. And the wing doesn't actually start all the way at the top. Good point. I think the top wing is maybe a little too small, so I'm going to extend it just a bit. All right, do that on the other side. So now I'm just gonna take a little bit of time and go through and fill in all those lines of the veins of the wings. It looks like the bottom wings are broken up into larger shapes, there's fewer veins there. As you can tell from the top ones, I'm not copying them exactly. Just paying attention to those qualities to make sure that they somewhat feel like the real thing. Okay, I think this is good for now. We'll let this dry before we start glazing over with a bit of color. Now I'm gonna add that small white butterfly or maybe it's a moth. I'm gonna put it closer up here just to make the composition read a little bit more unique and not so static. So the body of that one is very fuzzy, probably a moth, I guess. I do want their size relationship to be pretty accurate. So I'm making sure this one is definitely smaller. I'm just giving the body a bit of texture. Okay, so where the ink has pooled here I'm just gonna take a little corner of my rag and soak it up a bit. This is actually a place where a paper towel is quite handy, 'cause it's so absorbent. But I think a cotton rag should work just fine. All right, so I'll let this dry and then we'll go over to add some tones. So now we're gonna glaze a color on top of these lines. I'm going to use a burnt umber again for the large butterfly and I want it to be a bit translucent, so I am gonna dilute with water to make sure that we can still see the lines underneath. Straight contour drawings can look kind of awkward, because they're just so, the lines are just so strong and high contrast on a white page and this just subdues them a little bit by enveloping them in one general tone, a midtone, and it just helps them set back a little bit and feel more naturalistic. All right, so there are passages in the wings that are a little bit darker. I'm actually gonna bring in some indigo. It seems to be darker inside and then fades as it gets further out. Get that over here too. Along the edges it's a bit darker. And I almost feel like the wings down below have a sort of a cherry undertone, so I'm gonna bring some red in there. But I always think it's a good idea to diversify your colors and don't just work from colors that are straight out of the jar, 'cause they can be just a little high chroma, a little generic feeling. So if you just add a little bit of a touch of a different color and blend them in it can just make things feel a little bit more unique. Okay, that one's done for now. I actually wanna set all of these lines behind a thin veil of white, so I'm gonna dip into the white, I'm gonna brush some of it off, because I don't want it to be too opaque. And just set all of those lines back behind some chalky white. And now let's take that white, dip it into a bit of the umber, and let's add those really pretty details to the edges of the wings. All right, and with this color we have on the brush I can see that would be a really good choice in here as well for those spots. So let's give that a try. Oh, mm, you know, it's funny, I didn't even notice that the wings weren't dark enough until I did that. So let's make them a little bit darker so that those white spots really pop out. That's not darker. While I let this dry just a little bit let's pop out the forms by putting in a really bold background tone. We're sort of repeating what we had done when we drew those birds, the duckling and the seagull. Let me just try out all of the reds I have instead of just using one. I think I'm gonna have both sides be the same color in this one, so I'm gonna switch to a larger brush, so I can cover more space. I think I want this to be a darker color. I don't, I'm not really feeling the bright red. And then finally, this looks dry enough now that I can add in

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those white spots. So I'm gonna grab a clean brush, mid sized, and add in those white spots. Mm, the only thing I don't like about this is the background is sort of competing with the butterfly. So really quickly I'm just gonna go through and fill it all in with white. 'Cause I really want the shape of the butterfly to pop out. And maybe I won't take it all the way to the edges, 'cause I sort of wanna reveal what's underneath and maybe have those colors kind of frame the whole thing. Take it back, I'm gonna get rid of it. All right, so once this dries I will put those antennae back on and then we will be done. All right, the painting is dry, let's just put those antennae back on for the last step. I hope after watching me work and change my mind over and over again with this painting that you also feel emboldened to take risks and make mistakes and change your mind, because when working with acrylic ink we really do have the freedom to cover up our mistakes and work from dark back to light.

Day 20 - Cat in a window
- Today will be the last lesson where we focus on creating a single painting in composition in one sitting. Today, we're going to be doing the silhouette of a cat in a window. Along the way, we're also going to talk about communicating sunlight and natural light through color rather than value. Today's reference photo is a photo of my cat Thomas. He's an indoor cat that I adopted from the local animal shelter two years ago. He wasn't an indoor cat before he met me, so he's always sitting in the window, remembering better days when he was able to run around outside with the ticks and fox and cars. So we're gonna create a painting of this image; however, as you can tell, this is a portrait orientation, meaning it's taller than it is wide. And we're gonna be converting it to a horizontal orientation. And the way I'm gonna do that is keep Thomas in one area but make the window larger than it is in real life. When I look at the colors in the reference image, the outdoors is not only brighter in value than Thomas, but it's also more saturated with color and chroma. It's more vivid. So rather than relying on white to create the image of a bright scene, I'm gonna rely on color instead, by going for my brightest colors, which is that beautiful spring green and lemon yellow. Gonna start with the lemon yellow first. And my brush looks like was a little bit dirty with some blue on it, but it worked out because it helped make a really bright spring green. So we're just gonna run with that. The border is eventually gonna be a dark silhouetted window pane. So I'm just generally getting in this shape. And that's pretty good. Now I'm gonna go through to create that dark window pane. We'll go for my favorite. I always think shadows are easily portrayed as a violet. So, I'll put down some indigo with some magenta here. Again, if you've watched my classes before, you know that I could care less about dipping my brush from one pot to the next. Again, they're very small pots, so by the time that a color is noticeably altered, it's usually time to just buy a new fresh one anyway. But if you're more comfortable using the ink droppers to pour the ink out into a palette and mix your paint there, you're welcome to do that. That's up to you. All right, now I think it's time to add Thomas. So I've grown up with dogs, and I never expected to get a cat. I was not a cat person, as they say. And I went to the pet store to buy a hermit crab, because I was living in an apartment that didn't allow pets. And so I thought, "I'll just get a hermit crab." And I went to the pet store, and they were handing me all these brochures on how to care for hermit crabs because apparently they live forever if you take good care of them, and they're super high maintenance. And you have to spritz them with water every four hours. And they're nocturnal so they keep you up at night. And you have to find them bigger shells as they keep growing and getting bigger. It just sounded like a big project, so I just thought, "I'll just get that cat instead." And he's been pretty easy. He just sleeps. His head's looking a little small, so let's get that big again. We can further define the outer contours

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of his body when we go back in to refine the background. But this should be good enough for now. He's really not quite wide enough. You know, I'm gotta fix this. I wanna be lazy and not fix it, but I just should. I will erase this tail later. There we go. Those proportions look a bit better. While Thomas dries, I'm going to fill in some of the, just a few details. I'm gonna keep them very fresh and atmospheric and vague because they're further in the distance, so they're not as sharp as an image as Thomas. But I do wanna sort of suggest what's going on out there. We have some flower pots, some flowers, and wind chimes, things like that. Need some tree branches. Now add some, just a little, dots of color to suggest flowers. In the daily practice, we're really just looking to make the effort to try to create something every day. We're not going for perfection, so we'll just make this pretty light and easy and fun. It's hard to do something every day. Now I'm gonna go through with a little bit more of that bright, bright green and yellow. And refine Thomas's form, get rid of that extra tail. Oh, oops. Just dragged my hand right through there. Okay, I'm just gonna bring in some different kinds of greens around just to diversify the palette, suggest different plants. Maybe use different strokes as well. Broad strokes and thin strokes and vertical ones and horizontal ones. Okay. And I'm gonna take one more pass around the cat's form to make sure those lines are pretty crisp. I think I have too much paint though. I've always been really heavy-handed with paint application. Maybe you're the other way around and you find yourself running out of paint on your brush and you have to recharge more often. If you're heavy-handed like me, don't forget, you can always just keep that excess paint on the page, and then continue to dip back in to it as though it were your palette. And that way you don't waste as much paint. But then you also use what's already on the page so that you sort of thin it out and distribute it. All right, so I'm just gonna clean this up a little bit. I'd say, for just a nice simple painting to end our day, this is nearly complete. I might add a few more colors of flowers because it's looking a little homogenous with just pink and red like that. Also, let's clean up the window sill. Also, I should give a little more thickness to Thomas's tail. Got shaved down a bit too much. He has a really stubby tail. I'm not that good of a gardener, and I don't have that many flowers, so I'm gonna take these out. Still learning. I wanna add a caption, just to make it clear that this is my cat. And just because there's some dead space down here. I wanna add a compositional element, and sometimes text is a good way to add a little something where something is needed. So I'm going to write a little phrase. Thomas remembering better days. Since he used to be an outdoor cat, but I'm too much of a bird freak to let him get out there and wreak havoc. If you wanna keep drawing or developing this painting, I'll tell you what I would do. So this is a really beautiful underpainting, beautiful enough it can stand on its own as a finished piece. But if I were to keep developing this, I would probably add more and more bushes and plant life using different marks, different size brushes, all along in here. Maybe up close. In the tree branches. So this composition has a lot of potential to keep going, but also sometimes those simple elegant first statements are enough to really complete the scene and stand on their own. So I'll finish here, but it's up to you if you'd like to keep going.

Day 21 - Blueberries, base

- This is the first day where we will be working on a single painting over several days. It's still gonna be a pretty simple composition, but one that requires layering. It's a scene of Maine blueberries. The reason why I wanted to start off with this painting is that there's a lot of detail in the fact that there's tons of individual blueberries. But it's actually a very simple image when you think that it's really just two colors here, blue and green. And not only that, but the composition is quite simple in that it's just a grid. So we're gonna start off by creating the grid of the boxes first, and then filling in

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each box with just a statement of blue to bring all of the blueberries into their one simple mass. This is a sharp, size five Kolinsky Sable watercolor brush. And I'm gonna dip it into, let's see, I wanna make these green containers really pop. So I'm gonna start off with the Lime Green, and maybe just a little touch of Turquoise. Right, I wanna make sure that all these boxes are generally the same size. So trying to evenly space them out here. Okay, get this a little bit more Turquoise, okay. I want my line weight to sort of vary. I don't want it to be too uniform and straight because I think as probably you know, those boxes can be sort of soft, and the corners bend and fold in. All right, this is good to start for now. So, let's fill in each container with just a simple color statement of blue. I'm gonna get quite a bit of water, and go for the blue. I want this blue to be a mid-tone, meaning not too dark, not too light, you know, a value that's in the middle. Because later on we are going to add dark accents and highlights. So the foundation should be something that's not too dark and not too light. I also wanna make sure that each container is just a little bit different from its neighbor. You know, not all the blueberries are the same color, so we do want it to sort of feel individual. When I go to recharge my brush with more color, I'm dipping in between all those different blues. Some of them I go for the Rowney Blue, other times the Process Cyan, sometimes the Indigo. Again, making sure when you make those changes then each box can just feel a little bit different. For this box, I think I'm gonna fill it up with water, and then bleed colors into it. Sometimes that has a nice effect. These blues are all kind of feeling the same, so I'm gonna go for a different one. Oop, I can't forget, I was almost missing this side by the crease. Make sure I have those filled too. I don't mind if there's a few white spaces 'cause those will get covered later, but I do wanna make sure that the majority of the page is completely filled with color. Our eyes are naturally drawn to detail, but it's really important to avoid the siren's call of detail, and instead focus on the simple shapes and simple masses that give your painting a really strong foundation that you can build off of later.

Day 22 - Blueberry, second pass

- Let's continue building our painting of Maine farmer's market blueberries. We're gonna gradually be adding detail, but let's still focus on the simple truths, and foundation of the work. Let's start with a sharp brush, partially because we will be drawing the outlines of a lot of these blueberries. I'm gonna be doing the darker passages. We will be adding in highlights later, but to start let's go in by getting sort of the darker patches of blueberries. I'm gonna focus on this compartment first, and work compartment by compartment. Okay, so it's gonna be darker around the edges, where the blueberries are meeting the side of the carton. And I'm just gonna be making sort of this patterned effect throughout, and I'm thinking about defining clumps of blueberries by the dark shadows that are sort of in, in between them. So, you know, if we look at the reference, here's a spot of blueberries where they're all sort of illuminated, and so the darkest moments are sort of creeping in around the side of this overall shape, so moments like that. I'm not going circle, circle, circle, because that will feel a little bit too uniform and boring. We wanna add interest, and then also think about how each blueberry, when you get down to it, is an individual shape, and they fit together, and lay on top of each other, sort of with irregularity. And don't forget, we will be going in later with highlights to do this exact same thing, so if I leave this whole section pretty much empty, that would be okay, because I am gonna go through to define individual blueberries with lights later. So I'm gonna have places in the carton where it's really dense with shadowy darker berries, and passages where, you know, I just sort of suggest a few of those shadows, but for the most part leave it a little more open, because again, even though this whole carton is pretty much blue, if you just study it, or even squint your eyes, when I squint my eyes at this carton, I can see that there's like a lighter

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passage of blueberries along here. It's darker down in here. So that's what you're going for. I would suggest making it shadowy around the corners, just because these corners are where it's gonna be the darkest. All right. I'd say that carton is just about done, so let's move onto the next, and then the next, and then the next. This is a good moment where you might wanna put on a podcast, or your favorite album, or a book on tape, and just start doodling, more or less. (upbeat music) All right, we made it to the last carton, and filling it in now. Obviously we're only seeing a fraction of these bottom cartons, so feel free to just let these brushstrokes go right off the page. Just, even pretend that it's not even there. As if the blueberries are just continuing off the page. When we're working on repetitive patterns like this, with the repetitive motion, it's really important to break up the monotony for you and the viewer as well, by varying your line weight, and also using all the different shades of blue, to make sure that there's some variety in your repetitive marks.

Day 23 - Blueberries, details
- Yesterday we added darker shades of blue to create shadows and define the spaces around the blueberries. Today let's continue refining their shapes using highlights. Go for one of my sharper brushes, the medium size. And here when I compare my drawing to the reference, I do see that my blueberries are getting a little bit more on the blue-green side, and I want them to lean a little bit more violet. So as I add in the highlights, I'm gonna be conscious to continue to mix in a little crimson with my blues. I'll start off with a bit of white. I'll go for some blue and add a touch of crimson, maybe a little more white. So I always like mixing right on the page just because it creates a little freshness in your brushwork and then also I find that mixing on a palette can sometimes be futile, just because colors are defined by the colors around them. A cool color will change if you put it on the page next to an even cooler color. Then all of a sudden it'll appear warm. And so since colors are really defined by their relationships, by what's around them, I just find it makes more sense to dive right in. So they don't all have to be really bright. I'm just kinda going for a variety to just give these a little bit more substance. And as I dip back into my blues, I'm sort of mixing up which blue I'm going for. And I'm gonna try working from left to right to make sure I don't drag my hand through my work. If you're left-handed, you should probably go the opposite way. I don't really need to fill all of them in, just enough so that they feel sort of solid and just to give them a little weight and variety. Maybe if I noticed areas where my lines were really messy from the previous stage, I'll go in an just cover up those unnecessary ghost lines. So this stage, the changes seem a little bit more subtle, but once we go through and fill in all of the blueberries after this pass, it'll just help the whole composition feel a little bit more complete and polished. But the changes here shouldn't be too dramatic. We're pretty close to the finish just by adding in those shadows and having the underpainting. Around this point, I'm really letting go of the reference. I feel that we've done a good job in capturing the image of the blueberries in these stacked cartons. And at this point now, I'm really just focusing on my painting and where it needs just a little bit more dimension by adding these highlights where they feel necessary. So places maybe that are a little convoluted like right here and just need some clarity, I'll go through and use these highlights to create more defined forms. Or maybe areas that are really quiet without enough going on, I'll go through and add the highlights in there. I feel that we've been faithful enough to the reference, and now our painting is starting to take on its own life. Looking at just the part of the painting I've already completed compared to the reference, I do feel I've captured what I wanted to get when I first started out, which was leaning the colors a little bit more in the violets, and I think I'm starting to accomplish that. It's feeling more violet now than green. All right, so I'm pretty satisfied with this.

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Maybe just a few dots here and there that I see could use a little more definition. But now I think the last thing this painting needs is just to bring a little bit more clarity to the forms of the cartons, and then we'll be feeling just about done. As I add more color and definition to these boxes, I wanna make sure that I'm correcting the color along the way. As usual in my first pass, I went overboard with the color and exaggerated the brightness, so it's a really strong lime green. But what I love about those cartons is they're such a beautiful teal blue, so I wanna lean them a little bit more blue and enhance that teal as I define the drawing. Luckily, I do have that handy turquoise color that has been so nice. And I want these to really pop, so I'm gonna make them pretty bright and with some thick paint application. I don't wanna completely cover up that lime green. I just wanna add to it. Don't forget the blueberries are still wet, so be careful not to drag your hand through them too much. All right, so just by bringing in some different colors into these lines, feel like we're just adding a little bit of interest. Any moment where I can encourage a viewer to lean in and look a little closer, spend a little more time looking at and enjoying a painting, I'll take that opportunity. The last thing I think we could add is just these holes in the corners 'cause when we think about it, these are cartons with two walls pressed against each other, so there will be gaps. This is feeling maybe a little bit too grid-like, so I am going to do that, and that will be it. I didn't let the paint dry. I could have, but I don't think it's really necessary, so I'm letting this bleed in a little bit. Maybe I won't do this everywhere, just enough places to communicate and describe that form, that they're individual boxes pressed up against each other. At first glance, this seemed like a really complicated painting to tackle because there were so many berries in the picture. However, we were able to break it apart into really simple masses and pretty much break it into two colors as well with the green and the blue. If you ever feel overwhelmed by the amount of detail and you don't know where to start, just put down the simple masses of color and then maybe take a break. Return to it tomorrow with fresh eyes after you've been able to sleep on it, and you might be able to find that it's easier to solve taking small steps.

Day 24 - Sunset windows, base

- Let's continue with another complex scene that we can build slowly over several days. This will combine several practices from earlier this month, as we'll be blending wet into wet to convey a sunset, and then overlay a silhouette on top. Today's reference image is a sunset viewed from a widow's walk. A widow's walk is a small wooden cupola that you see at the top of a lot of New England mansions and houses. And the intended purpose was to allow the sea captain's wife to look out for her husband on the horizon when he was sailing home. This widow's walk is in Prouts Neck in Maine, and it's actually where I also got engaged. For the underpainting, as usual, I want to use a larger brush. This one's a size eight. And I'm gonna start with the lighter colors first. I'm going to put down the sunset, and then when that's dry, put the window structure on top of it. So, I'll just get my brush wet with a little bit of water. I'm gonna choose my brightest yellows. I don't need to stretch it all the way to the corners of the page, of course, 'cause that's where the widow's walk windowpanes will be. Now, I'll get some blue and work it in. First maybe I'll dilute this a little bit. So again, I'm trying to start this painting off as simply as possible. How can I break this scene down into its most elemental colors and forms? Maybe I'll add just a little touch of a darker blue up top. I also do want to add in the seascape below, so I'm gonna grab a bit of a sharper brush. This one's a size four Kolinsky Sable. I'll do the process high end. I'm still gonna keep it a little bit brighter because it's always easier to tone something down later than it is to brighten it up. And I add in just a little touch of green. I'm just gonna lighten up these blues by wiping them away. In this picture, and in that

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moment I remember the light being really peach and rosy, so I want to make sure I bring those colors into my painting early to make sure I don't leave them out or accidentally forget about them later. So, I have dipped into a bit of Indian yellow, and also crimson, grabbed a bit of white. I'll bring in some magenta. I think it's time for me to open a new white. The one I've been using is just getting a little bit muddy. It's barely noticeable, but it is leaning towards cool, so it's still perfectly fine to use when mixing into blues for blue sky, but for that sunlight I want something that's really bright and pure, so I'll grab at my new, clean white now. All right, so here's that new, perfectly clean white, and a bit of magenta. Okay, that's a little bit more of what I was going for. All right, so this is good for now. I can keep moving. Now I want to add in the top of the chimney here, and also the smoke stack. It's in shadow. It's also silhouetted. This is also silhouetted. For two silhouettes, it can be a little confusing, and for judging this color, let's compare these two together. This one's much darker, and this one we can see because it's out in the atmosphere. It's catching a little bit more reflected light that's bouncing around outdoors. It's still a shadow, but it's leaning more towards rows or orange, so I'm gonna use those colors to make that shadow shape, 'cause I don't want those silhouettes all blending in together and looking the same. I want them to be able to read as two separate forms. So, in an underpainting, it is a good idea to include these large compositional elements. The drawing, you want it to be, I mean, you don't want to make too many changes down the road and have to completely redraw it, which I do all the time. It's perfectly fine. But I'm gonna be a little bit more careful now just to make sure that the general proportions are correct. I don't need to make any drastic changes down the road. Down here with my pencil, or my paintbrush, I'm just gonna quickly sketch in where the boundaries of the window are gonna be. All right, so I see I've made a pretty big mistake. The painting itself, the foundation is completely incorrect because I have the chimney surpassing the horizon, and it's up in the sky, and it's way too high. Instead of trying to correct it using white and getting rid of it and redrawing it, I actually think it might be easier if I just cover the whole thing in dark tones. Up until this point, I've been working from lights into darks, but we can actually also do this backwards, if you've reached a point of no return and you've overworked the painting, or maybe you've made some mistakes that can't be corrected. How about let's just cover it all in dark, and then start over working dark to light? All right, so let's black it out. I don't have any black, of course. I do like the impressionistic color palette where all shadows are made from color, so you don't use black at all. So, I'm grabbing my darkest colors. My indigo, crimson. Let's put on some dark green, and there we go. And now that I think about it, this actually makes sense because the image as a whole is mainly dark, and the lights, there's more dark than light in this image. And so, it sort of makes sense to work on a dark page and add in the lights second. So, this will work out. It'll have a totally different feel, but one that's sort of moody and atmospheric, and chiaroscuro. All right, well, doesn't that feel good? Bye-bye, mistake. No more. No one has to know it ever happened, except everyone watching this video. Okay. So now, we'll just let this dry and then start over again. So, as I attempt this a second time, I'm gonna learn from my mistakes and realize that more than any drawing that we've done so far, this one has really careful perspective. It has a lot of depth. There's just more going on in it, and so instead of diving right in with color, I think it will save me some more time to instead draw the bones of the composition. So, the windows, the placement of the chimney. Let's just get those lines down first before we move forward with color. There's a problem. Let's make that wider. Okay. I think this smokestack has to be a little wider still. So, these lines, all these incorrect ghost lines will be covered up later, but I am just going to refine these forms. And now, let's get the height of the horizon and carry it all the way across. Make sure it's even on both sides. That's another thing I often mess up. And then these trees,

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just gonna generally outline where they are. Some rooftops here, but I'll get those in later. Okay. Now, this window needs to be wider so that they match. Okay, so this is a better place to be. If I do find problems with the drawing later on, I know they're not gonna be gigantic, and I'll be able to fix them. The actual windowpanes, I think I'm gonna get those in later. Those will probably be my last step. We're in a good position now to move forward and get back into color, the fun part. All right, the first thing I'm gonna do, I'm gonna go with the most obvious thing that needs to happen, which is to brighten up the interiors of the windows. So, I'm gonna grab maybe a little bit of a thicker brush. This one's a size four, but it has a blunter tip 'cause it's an older brush, and this will be good for covering an amount of space, while still being pretty exact. I'm grabbing my white, and let's just fill this in. I'm being really heavy-handed with the white right now 'cause I need it to be really opaque. So opaque that it's as if we're returning to the white of the page. This is a nice moment as well, 'cause you get to cover up some of those ghost lines we no longer need, and it's just starting to look a little bit more polished. Gettin' back on track. Okay. I think I'm gonna have this window go off the edge, as well. Make sure the sizes are right. All right, now let's continue adding in the brighter colors. So, the water on both sides, and then finally, we'll put in the colors for the chimney, the smokestack, and the trees. This water is interesting on this side because it is so bright that it's almost a pink or an orange. So, I'm gonna play that up in that stage and make the water orange, 'cause it will be reflecting the sky. I have a few lines there. I have to be a little careful to make sure I'm following the right ones, the ones that I want, 'cause I was sort of trying out a few proportions there. Okay. Okay, and as the water moves over to this side of the page, then it's getting darker 'cause it's moving away from the light source. It's starting to look much more blue, so get that in now. It's probably a little too dark. Now, when I'm dipping into the white for the blue I'm going for that cooler one 'cause it is still useful. And when it's being mixed into a cool color you can't really tell that it's becoming a little muddy. Muddy whites can really come in handy when you need a nice off-white. Like if you're painting something white on a white page, then you can't really see what you're painting at all. But if you use an off-white, then you can draw something white on the white page. Last thing I'm gonna do for today before stepping away and giving myself a break is going to be to adjust these colors of these silhouettes. The trees might actually be all right, but these two definitely need to be enhanced a bit. So, I'm gonna warm them up. I'm warming them up using magenta and Indian yellow. I want to make sure these ghost lines are gone, so I'm just going to run over them a bit. I'm using umber just to push 'em into the background a little bit. Okay, and now the chimney. I think I'm gonna make that, it looks like a pretty vibrant red, as far as shadows go. I'm gonna warm it up with some rosy tones. Even when I look at the reference I can see there's a shadow falling across that chimney. But the majority of the form is this rosy, redder shadow color, so I'm just gonna make the whole thing that shadow color, and then add in that cast shadow falling upon it a little bit later. But sometimes I really like working from simple to complex, even if that means taking one entire form and making it one color, and then adding those divisions later. Okay. All right. That seems good enough for today. I'm gonna let all of this dry. Since the white is so thick, it will probably need to dry for a little bit longer, and then we'll return and pick it up with fresh eyes.

Day 25 - Sunset windows, second pass

- We have the bones of the composition complete, so now let's just move forward with refining the colors and drawing. Gonna grab a dry brush, my painting is now completely dry. The first thing I wanna do is adjust this white so that it's more true to the sky colors. Again, sometimes it's easiest to just start with the most obvious problem, the most obvious thing that needs to be changed. And

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just like before I do wanna be aware that it was sort of a peachy sky. And I wanna make sure that it's obvious that the sun is coming from the right-hand side of the page, so the light will be changing as it moves across. I'm not being too detailed or meticulous right now, I'm just bringing things up to speed. All right, so now let's bring the blue up top. Gonna go for that cooler white that I've created. Can still make use of it. Do the same to the other side. Maybe a little bit darker over there, 'cause it's further away from the light source. All right, already it's starting to look a little more true to the original, and the memory. My medium gets mixed up with watercolor every now and then, or acrylic paint, and I feel like this painting in particular really shows why it is that I love acrylic ink, and not watercolor or acrylic paint, because it stays wet long, it's a fluid medium, it's still more malleable than acrylic paint. But then, you can go over mistakes and work from light until dark, which you can't do with watercolor. So I feel that this medium really has an advantage over those two mediums that really suits my personal style and workflow. I don't know why it's not more popular, but I'm happy you're here to learn about it, because it is such a unique and really user-friendly medium. Okay, so I think the sky looks good for now, so now let's bring some other things up to speed. Looking at the reference, I see that the windows are just a little bit too tall in my painting. The way that I caught that is because I was looking at the smokestack. Its trunk is just a little bit too long. This is an easy fix, again, so not one to be so concerned about, I'll just bring up the bottom of the window panes, and then also adjust the color of the silhouette while I'm at it. So it's not too far off, just enough that I noticed it. That's better. Actually I think it was pretty much the correct height on the other side. Okay. In this silhouette, I have very indigo right now, it feels almost, it's almost a little bit green. I want it to be warmer, 'cause it was such a rosy, warm place. So I'm just going to put hot pink right over this, warm it up. This is actually Process Magenta. Okay. That temperature change already helps this feel a little bit more like how I remember it. Mmkay. I'm just gonna wipe away some of the excess, 'cause it's a little, a little much in some places. Mmkay. Now I'm gonna adjust the color of the water so it's not so orange and blue and it feels more like one entity that's moving over space, moving over the page. The way I'm gonna do that is add a little bit more blue over here and a little more orange over here and they'll meet in the middle. So again, I think I'd mentioned earlier, either in this class or another one, how the underpainting really sets the tone, and here, even though I'm adding blue, you can see that orange coming through from below, and so it maintains a real warmth even as we add a cool color on top. And that is exactly the effect I was going for. So now we'll do the same over on this side. Hm. Maybe a little too bright. I'm content with the steps we've taken today, and the last thing I wanted to do is include a few compositional elements that I've left out. The light coming through the chimney, the trees down here below, and then also the trees and houses down here. I'm mixing quite a few colors right now to make this green, because I wanted it to be kinda dark and earthy, because it is a green thing, the tree, but it's in a really unique and dramatic light situation, so maybe I'll actually just make it an earth tone with this burnt umber and adjust it later, but I'm just looking for a good starting point. The color situation now feels more correct, the warmth feels correct, so I think this is a good place to stop today, and tomorrow we will work on cleaning up the brushwork and linework.

Day 26 - Sunset windows, details
- It's cleanup day. All we're gonna focus on today is cleaning up our lines, shapes, and colors. For this stage, I'm really just gonna employ my sharpest brushes for nice, clean lines. Oops. The very last step is gonna be adding those windowpanes, so I'm just gonna make sure everything is nice and tidy, and that will be the final touch. When I'm dipping into my paints, originally, I started off with

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some greens, which seemed like the obvious choice when working on these trees, but then you might see me dip into a bright red, which I imagine might be a little bit confusing or surprising. If you ever see me grab one of those really contrasting colors it's to bring down the chroma of the green so that the color is just a little more natural and subdued. Always remember that adding in the complementary color, or the opposite color, will make an earth tone and reduce chroma. Chroma means vividness. There are a few areas where my colors are also a little bit muddy, so I just want to crisp them up and clean them up, as well. So, no big changes. Just small tweaks. This should be a fun and relaxing stage. I'm gonna sort of veil this color over colors below, so for that technique, that's when I like fanning out my bristles and just sort of sweeping it over. I'm just looking to make gradual changes here. So, if I change colors, they're just gonna be translucent glazes to nudge colors in warmer or cooler directions. Every now and then, someone will ask me if I work with colored pencils, if I incorporate those at all. I don't, but sometimes this technique can have the appearance of colored pencils. I find myself in a position a lot of times where I just don't have the time to take on a really ambitiously scaled project. But if you get really good and well-practiced at breaking compositions down into simple steps and building, you can actually work on larger paintings just an hour or two a day, or even less than that, as we are doing with this piece. I hope after this painting you feel encouraged to work larger or take on a project you've had in mind, but you feel that you don't have the time for, because slowly and incrementally, you can build up a really beautiful painting by dedicating just 30 minutes a day to it. All right, now I'm gonna add in some sky holes for the trees, my favorite part. I'm also gonna get that light that's being caught on the side of the window frame, and then I also want to lighten up these two aspects in my painting because in the reference photo it's obvious that they're outdoors, and in my painting they're too dark and it almost feels like they're inside the widow's walk, so I want to make sure they feel more a part of the outside atmosphere. I like this color the I put down. It's just a little bit too bright, so I'm just gonna spread around what I put on the paper, and I think that should do the trick. If it is too bright in the end, I can always darken it again. Want this to be more violet. There we go. Okay. Just to make sure that this chimney is reading as brick, I'm gonna put some lines in there of brick, and I'll also use those lines to create this effect of the light falling across the chimney. I still feel like this is a little too dark, so I'll just brightening it up. That's better. Right now, it might seem like kind of a weird thing to have in the painting, but once we put the windowpanes on top it'll recede into the background a little bit more and it won't be such an odd compositional element. All right, so let's put in those sky holes of the trees. I want the sky holes between the leaves of the trees to be the same color as the sky that's behind them, so I'm going to grab the colors I used to make the sky, which was an Indian yellow and the process magenta. And when I paint, I'm pretty intuitive when it comes to colors, and I don't think too much about the exact name of the color that I'm grabbing. It's more of almost as if I'm just trying to guide the colors on the page to be more correct by considering their temperature and their overall tone. So, if right now it feels like the sunlight color is getting just a little bit too yellow, I want to push it more towards the pink, then I'll grab a pink just to sort of nudge it in that direction. And with my primary colors, the red, yellows, and blues that I have, I always try to have two of each. One that leans towards warm and one that leans towards cool, and that way, when I make those adjustments, then I have those options. But I think one of the easiest ways to sum up how I use color is thinking most about temperature. Color outdoors, color bounces off of subjects and shines onto other subjects, and every time it bounces off of a surface, it carries the color from that surface with it, and so light outdoors is just so technicolor. Like it's just layered with all these different tones and subtle changes, so an impressionist's job is to really enhance those

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color changes so that everyone can enjoy them and see them. 'Cause it does take a little while for you to get used to seeing those really subtle changes, but once you look for 'em it starts to become pretty second nature. But luckily, it's something you can practice all the time just when you're walking around. Actually, I think one of the most beautiful examples of that effect is when you're just looking at somebody's face outside. You'll notice that the top planes of their face reflect this sort of violet blue from the sky, and the bottom planes of their face will be catching whatever's below them, either grass or sand. Yeah. Okay, so now let's get back to the frames of the windows. I think we'll be just about ready for those really beautiful window frame lines running through the landscape. Don't want to drag my hand through what I just did so I'm making sure it's dry. Lines are a little wiggly, but that's okay. I don't want to make these lines so arbitrary. When we think the light's coming from here, they'd be hitting this side of the window frame, so I'm gonna leave this dark. The right sides of the frames dark. I do want to suggest the panes below them, though. I'm gonna clean up this line really quickly. As usual, you put something down, you take it away, you add back to it, you just adjust. I often over-correct and have to correct my correction. But it's easier to correct a mistake than an empty page, so I'd rather have something down, even if it's wrong. This is the fun part of the painting where it's just about done. I think I could wrap it up at any moment here, and so on your personal painting, just take your time and add any of those little details that either you remember or that you're reminded of in the reference image. But I am personally, gonna wrap this up. Okay, so in order to draw straight lines for these windowpanes, I'm gonna have to press my hand down on the surface to steady my hand so they're not wiggly as they were over here. So, I'm going to hit this with a heat gun or a hairdryer just to make sure it's really, really dry, and then I'll make those lines. To make this a little bit easier and make sure my lines are steady and I see where they're going, I'm just gonna tilt my page a bit. I'll start off with the center line. Not quite dark enough. Let's darken it a bit. I don't know if you can hear my hand squeaking across the surface, but as we continue to add paint, it just gets thicker and thicker, and it starts getting really glossy. Some of the pages that are the thickest that I think have the most beautiful textures are ones that I had messed up and had to paint over again 'cause they're just really heavily layered. So, that's a little silver lining of that early mistake we made. I made. I'm gonna add these subtle highlights on the wood just to give those panes a little bit more thickness and dimension. And while I'm at it, also maybe thin these areas where I went just a little bit thick. I let the paint dry a little bit, and now I'm gonna go through and add those highlights and thin out this area. Maybe that center line, as well. I add the highlights first. Adding the highlights might actually thin the look of the pane because if it's just this thick black line, it just appears too wide. But if you break it up by adding some interior lines, it can thin them out, just the appearance of them. And I'm adding more highlights than what's actually in the reference, but I like that effect so I'm just gonna carry it over a little bit more. Okay. I'm also gonna touch up this highlight 'cause it just is looking not as bright as I want it to be. And maybe I'll add a little change of color for these highlights just to make them feel a little more individual. That's it. I remember as a child watching a Bob Ross episode where Bob painted the most beautiful landscape, and then at the very end when I thought it was done, he put a big, black window frame over the front of it, and I just thought he ruined it. But now that I'm older I really like that vantage point, and the depth that it brings the painting, and I do it quite frequently.

Day 27 - Autumnal walk in the woods, background
- This next painting has a lot of room for complexity and detail that will build over the next four days. But today as always, we're gonna start by breaking the composition into large masses of

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color. To start, I'm going to ignore the trees for now and instead look behind them and bring in the colors of the sky and the sun and the light. Good, pay close attention to where the sun is coming from. If it's positioned down here, most of the blue will be on the opposite side of the page. Again, this is a good opportunity to use that white that's just a little bit cool, a little bit muddy. It's still useful to us. I'm gonna switch brushes to go for the clean whites and a bright yellow. As you know, I love going overboard with the colors to start. So I'm using my brightest yellow, that lemon yellow. This color can really be brought down to that path. I'm just gonna lay the groundwork for the light falling on that path now and anywhere else, I guess. Really this whole side of the forest is what's being illuminated by light. So I might just give that underpainting a little punch right now. Now for the shadows, I don't wanna make them black. I do wanna give them a color. This whole scene has a real warmth to it and so I'm going to create a warmer shadow, I think maybe in the crimson family. Let me bring it down a notch. Let's see how a little bit of green changes it. Looks nice. And as this dries a little bit, I'll start putting in a few trunks on this side. Not gonna pay attention to any branches just yet, but I'll save that for later. Drawing trees can look kind of awkward when they're bare, and they're just simple strokes. Later, we'll add in their foliage branches, the light shining on their trunks and they'll start to look a little bit more normal and recognizable. I'm gonna put down the cast shadows from these trucks. They're not all leaning to the same side. So I'm making sure they don't look too uniform and they look wild. This looks like it might bleed a little bit. So I think I'm gonna wait for this white to dry a little bit more before I continue. Looks like the tree trunks on the right side of the page are a little more slender. The biggest ones are on the left side down shifted to a slightly smaller brush. Again, trying to capture their liens, maybe overdoing it a bit, but it's all right. This is a fall path in Scarborough, Maine. And it always has the most beautiful fall leaves so I visit it a few times a year. I'm gonna darken the shadow on the right hand side because it has a really dark passage, the darkest place in the composition and I wanna make sure I have those limitations down. And I know everything that I add from here on will be within those parameters. And anything I add, I know shouldn't be darker than this probably can't be darker than that. Just because I've made it so dark. The foundation of the painting is set because I have my lightest light, my darkest dark, I have the structure of the trees down by capturing their trunks and then also the division of lights and darks to create the overall golden hour effect. So this is a good stopping point for the day.

Day 28 - Autumnal walk in the woods, leaves

- Now let's add the next largest compositional element, the masses of leaves and readjust our colors along the way. I'm gonna grab my most distressed brush and I'm gonna lay in the leaves on the right hand side. If we look at the reference, there are more leaves than there is sky, in fact, it's so prominent that it even could have been included in your underpainting if you so chose, but I'm gonna just get it in now. So I want it to be a dark green, but then it also sort of has that, an earthier tone and a warmth to it, so I'm adding in some crimson. Gonna brush off some excess, and then let's just, sometimes it helps if I squint my eyes so I can more easily see the overall shape of the leaves and then let's just fill them in. This brush kinda cuts out a little bit of the work because it's so distressed that it's, the bristles themselves create sort of a texture of leaves or foliage. Think I put a little too much on there, let's just, whoop. That really went away. There we go. Okay. These leaves that are coming off into the pathway, I'll get those a little bit more specific and pretty later on. I might just allude to them now. The leaves that are on the other side of the path, there's more light on this side, partially because it's not as dense with leaves, but also the direction of the sun is shining into that area of the forest, so I wanna lighten that up a little bit. I'm gonna grab my lighter

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green. Maybe add in some yellow, that's better. Again, if your, if your green, greens can be mixed, they really don't have to be bought, but if you did buy greens like I did, and they're a little too electric coming out of the jar, just add a touch of something else to sort of diversify the color and make it a little bit more unique. Okay. I'm also gonna add in these really beautifully illuminated bushes. So already, this forest is starting to look much more full. It's not winter yet, it's still fall, there's still some leaves on the trees. While I'm here, I think I should reevaluate the cast light down the, down the path. So it is bright, but it is also peppered with a lot of shadows from those leaves and cast shadows. So the light recedes as it travels down the path and then maybe catches flecks of leaves here and there that are really bright, but overall, I wanna make it clear that the light is dissipating as it travels further away from the light source, which I'm preserving right here. I think I'm gonna make it, I'm gonna add a touch of flame red, maybe a little bit of crimson, and let's just make that light feel like it's, it's dying a little bit as it fades down the path. Okay. You know, since the fallen leaves are so red, the ground itself is really pretty orange, so I'm gonna bring a touch of it just about everywhere. Okay, I think we've accomplished enough for today. We have the largest masses in, including the leaves. We have the light clearly coming from here, illuminating the opposite side of the forest, fading away as it travels down the path. Our shadow colors are all very different, which makes our painting more dynamic and also makes each compositional element a little bit more unique and with its own personality. So this is a good spot, things look fresh and true, so, let's leave it alone and sleep on it and start adding in sky holes and branches tomorrow.

Day 29 - Autumnal walk in the woods, branches
- Our painting is looking very vivid and clean, but as we know, a forest is just a mess of branches and a big tangle of leaves and I think I would be a good idea to now go in with a dip pen and start getting in all those horizontal lines of the branches crisscrossing the sky. Let's grab a new, sharp dip pen and I'm going to go for, how about some indigo and maybe a bit of the green, and maybe some crimson. Doesn't matter too much. And let's just start. Don't drive yourself crazy by trying to do every single branch as it is. Just look at the overall personality and direction of how all of the branches are forming. This is a collection of, looks like oak trees and so all the branches are gonna grow in sort of a similar manner. So to start, I'm just going to capture their overall direction and personality, and then I'll go through to get ones that have a little bit more unique shape. Like there's this one that's really curving down that catches my eye. And down here too, ones that are sort of curly. So I'll get those later, but let's just start easy and get the general effect. I really like how the branches are sort of connecting up at the top, almost like an archway over the path. I wanna make sure I get that. This is one of those moments where things look a little bit awkward, so just stick with it because once it starts to really fill in, it'll be obvious and feel more natural. (artist painting with dip pen) With our underlying paintbrush strokes here and the direction of our pen strokes, we're really creating this nice swoop over to the right side. I'm gonna try to continue when I move over to the right. So adding in tree branches, any time where you have a nice repetitive mark over and over again, try to use those marks to guide the viewers eye and create some motion and a rhythm in your drawing, painting. I think this is looking full enough now. Let me add in some of those smaller trees. I wanna mention something about the sketch book I'm using right now, so this is the Moleskin sketchbook. It's not their watercolor sketchbook, it the normal one. If you accidentally bought the writing journal, you will know now because these dip pens slice right through the writing notebook paper. The sketchbook packaging has a periwinkle wrapper. The writing notebook packaging is lime green. I've made that mistake before. When you're looking to buy your own sketchbook, look for the

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periwinkle packaging. Let's move to this side. So again, when you're drawing natural forms or really dense forest, feel free to get messy because nature is messy. Can't go wrong and you can't really overdo it. (artist painting with dip pen) I'm gonna add in some of those lines that are a little more curly or curved. One time I was drawing a winter scene where there were no leaves on the trees whatsoever and it was dense, dense branches and I was doing this for a while with these marks, and then I finally gave up and I just went like this for the whole thing and it was actually really effective. (artist painting with dip pen) I accidentally tore through some of the paper and it came off on the brush, or on the pen. Just gonna take it off. All right, in the last part for the branches, I am gonna add this tree that's all the way in the distance, and since it's further away from us, it's surrounding by more light and it's less silhouetted, so I'm gonna make the trunks a little bit lighter to show that it's farther away. This is called atmospheric perspective. That means for objects that are far away, you're not just looking at that object, you're also seeing the air that's in-between you and that object and the air in the atmosphere will sort of shroud it in a dusty color, maybe violet, like purple mountian majesty, for example. So this is one of those moments where it's really nice to know that you can convey perspective without having to break out a ruler and practice your vanishing points in one-point perspective and get too technical. You can use color to convey distance and perspective and atmospheric perspective, or making sure things that are farther away are lighter in color and less contrasted, is a really good way of doing that. This looks a little bit too dark, darker than what I'm describing, so I'm going to just blot it out. My painting is slowly approaching accuracy. When I squint my eyes, I can see that my big shapes are correct, the overall colors are feeling true, the light effect is coming about. But when I do squint my eyes, the largest thing that jumps out at me is that this fall path is way too bright and it's really like a central player in my painting, in my memory, and then also in this reference I can see that it's more of a minor role, so I want to tone this down a little bit by adding some more cast shadows, maybe making it a little bit darker, pushing it back a little bit. I'm grabbing another distressed brush and I think I'll go for a little burnt umber and maybe some indigo. (artist painting) All right. I used my dip pen with really heavy acrylic ink application and so the strokes all have pooled ink on the surface of the page. It's important to let this stage dry thoroughly before we go into adding the sky holes and finally add finishing touches to complete the composition. So let's let this dry overnight and return to it tomorrow.

Day 30 - Autumnal walk in the woods, touching up lights and darks
- We're at the last stage of the last painting. We're going to introduce the sky holes and along the way continue to refine the drawing aspects and also colors. So I'm gonna grab a mid-size to small brush. I believe this is a size three. It's a little bit blunter. I want the sky holes to have some thickness so it really gives the light some density and richness and it feels like it's spilling through from behind the leaves. Right before I go in to tackle this, I also wanna just remind myself of the gradation of color across the sky because it has to be matched by the sky holes as well. Over here, it's a really bright blue, and then it slowly fades to a dusty yellow. And then finally at the light source, we really want that light to be bright and colorful. I'm gonna start on the left side of the page and work my way over so I don't drag my hand through my work. The only place that's really off limits for sky holes is of course the trunks, but if it goes over a branch, that really doesn't bother me so much. Also, I'm gonna just take a peek back at my reference and make sure that I'm following the pattern of gaps. Here, there's a lot of leaves, so I'll probably leave that part of the painting somewhat untouched. And then the swoop of the sky holes is sort of up and down and like that. So I do wanna

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leave patches where there's more leaves than sky. But it can be a little confusing in these fall time scenes just because there's so many gaps in the leaves, so it's kinda easy to get carried away, but it's not full winter yet. Okay, so down here. And of course it's more blue up top. Down below, I'm gonna have to get it a little bit more yellow. But that variation can be pretty, not haphazard or messy, but it doesn't have to be meticulous unless if you want it to be meticulous. But I'm happy if I have a little bit of yellowy light up here and a little bit of blue light down there. That's fine. Maybe I'll get some of that yellow light now. So as I pass over to this side of the page, just gradually adding a little bit more yellow into my mixture. Whoops. This side of the forest is more dense with leaves and foliage, so the sky holes are gonna be a little more spare. I'm gonna be a little bit more careful of where I add them. Gonna make them blue as well. Even though I'm mixing up my blue and yellow, because it's so bright, it will all read as sky, so I'm just letting myself take those creative liberties. All right, so now I'm getting down to here. We have a lot of gaps down there, mainly because we're below the canopy of the trees, and so now we're just looking through bushes and branches. So this is where I really want it to be bright and make it obvious that the sun is right there. So I'm gonna go for my really clean white, and then I'm gonna go for my brightest yellows. And I'm gonna be pretty heavy-handed here 'cause I want this area to feel like the light is really thick, almost like it's pooling in this area of the forest. As it gets further away, it'll get a little bit more orange as it recedes from the light source. So gonna tone it down a little. All right, and now finally, the same approach that we've had for the sky holes we can also bring into the light that's being caught on the pieces of leaves that are on the ground because it's very similar texture, sort of little dabs of light that just appear kind of at random but still following a path. So I'm gonna get those in now. So I'm dotting my brush, but I'm following basic direction. And then it's not really in this photo, but I really wanna make it seem like light is spilling through from, rays are coming through from the trunks. So I'm just gonna kinda do some of this. Maybe those are really orange. Okay, the last thing I wanna do here is maybe just refine this area with little dots of individual leaves. For the most part, the only way we've communicated leaves was with broad brushstrokes, so I just wanna bring in a little bit more variety there and include smaller groupings of leaves using a sharper brush. This is a size three. These leaves are still in shadow, so I'm still gonna make them pretty dark. The white sky that I've just put in is really thick, so I'm gonna try my best to avoid it 'cause that will definitely bleed. Just a little too high intensity green, so I'm gonna add a little bit of crimson to bring the chroma down. And again, I'm not looking at each individual leaf. How is this leaf shaped? How is that leaf shaped? I'm looking more at this grouping of leaves. How are they slanted? Are they slanted down? Are they reaching up? That's kinda the effect that I'm going for or the level of detail that I'm looking at and trying to replicate. All right, there's a lot going on in this scene, a lot of marks, a lot of color. I don't wanna overwork it, and this is one I could easily just get lost in and get tunnel vision and continue working on, so I think that I'm gonna leave this one as is and maybe just include a little written sentiment down at the bottom. It's the end of the month, and we've learned a lot. We've learned to apply acrylic ink in thin washes that are translucent. We've also learned to apply it in thick opaque passages to cover up mistakes, work from dark to light, or start over completely. We've also experimented with different tools, using brushes of all sizes, dip pens, straws, fingers, and also a cloth. We've learned to break complex compositions down to simple steps so that we can tackle them over time in a way that makes sense and builds a strong foundation. We've also learned to do drawings that focus just on the foreground or an object, such as the seagull or duckling, butterflies, and then other ones that were much more atmospheric and encompassed an entire environment, like the fall path. Tomorrow I'll show how to maintain the sketchbook and repair damage where

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needed.

Repairing the sketchbook
- I chose to paint inside of a book and I accept that the medium is subject to wear and tear. I like to think that this wear and tear does add character to the paintings, but occasionally I do wanna repair some of this damage. Some of these obstacles include curling pages, paint that bleeds through and dapples other finished paintings from before, and also pages that stick together. So let's take a look back at the paintings that we just completed and make a few changes or leave others as-is. When the pages are really wet and they start to dry they can become quite warped and wavy, as you see here. That will slowly go away with time, so long as you leave the book bound with its rubber band overnight and maybe let it rest under a weight. And maybe over a couple of weeks and longer they'll get really flat. So that will eventually go away. If we look at this first painting this one has had the most amount of damage, because it has endured paintings, many paintings after it. So the areas where the paint has pulled off the page here all happened when I was working on a later painting and it dripped onto these pages and then they stuck together and ripped apart. It's really easy to fix this. All we have to do is grab a brush, create just generally the color that we're going for. It's not going to be a perfect match, just because this surface texture has changed. So I just go for a general match. On both sides. This damage, it's on the periphery of the painting and in a way it kind of frames the painting, so a lot of times I leave it, even when I repair it I'm not too meticulous about it. It's up to you how careful and seamlessly you wanna repair these spots. You'll also find that since the surface of the paper has changed the glossy surface has been ripped off, and so now it's this really soft nubby texture, it absorbs the paint faster, so it doesn't stay wet as long. So we don't really have to worry about it happening again. These areas in the middle, I might repair that one. Sometimes I leave that alone, but maybe this one I'll get rid of. All right, and that's enough. I don't wanna overdo the repairs, because I really like all these textures. Again, this is one of the unique aspects of painting in a book and you're not ever gonna see these kinds of distressed details on a normal flat painting. You only find those details in a book, so I think it sort of makes the medium more special. So I will preserve most of it. This one looks okay. We already had damage from before that I painted over. I really like these surface changes and the texture changes of the paper. Here we have some more of the blue that slipped off from later paintings, but that really doesn't bother me. This is a time when I definitely keep it, so long as it doesn't compromise the integrity of the painting, it's still recognizable what it was, I think it's safe to keep it. So I get a lot of questions about when things stick together, there's an example. It's really not too much of a problem, except for in areas where the paint was applied really thickly and maybe it was just tackier for a longer time and the book was closed before it was completely dry. This is an area where we can see that that happened and as a result some of the paint was pulled off the surface. This isn't too much damage, it's pretty minimal, however maybe I will cover that up, just because the only white that I wanted in the composition was up in the stars and I'd rather have this dark, so that the overall scene still feels cohesive. So again, I didn't bother a lot with making sure that the colors exactly matched. I was just doing a little dab that it just at least recedes into the shadow and it's not as noticeable. I'm gonna dry this really quickly, so that the pages don't stick together again. If you're wondering why I chose to dry this surface and not a previous surface where I did repair, it's because the ink on this surface is still very glossy, the ink was more thickly applied here and so the glossy surface is what needs to be dried, because it stays wet longer. If we look back to that previous page that I repaired, do you see how much more rough it is, because the actual paper was torn off? So this rough surface is very

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absorbent and the ink goes in right away and I don't really have to worry about this sticking to a page ever again, just because the surface is sort of fuzzy and absorbent. This was one of our experimental pages where we were just getting used to a new application method. This is a page that I like these shapes and I like the energy that they have and the colors, but for the most part this might be something that I just put underneath a dark layer and use as a foundation for something else. So I suspect this is a page that I will not ultimately keep. This is a really common form of bleeding. So what happened was ink spilled through the center fold from later paintings where I used a lot of heavy paint application over the center fold and it dappled finished pages from earlier, and then that ink later was pulled apart when I was flipping through. Maybe I would repair this if this was a more final, polished painting, but since this was just an exercise where we were practicing pointillism and drawing with a dip pen I don't think it's really worth the effort to go through and try to salvage all of these little marks, so we'll just leave that one as-is. This is what I love so much about working in a book is some pages get a lot of damage and other pages are completely fine. The only thing that happened here was this really thick glob of yellow pulled off, but I don't think it's really all that noticeable and I think that this page is pretty much spared, so let's continue. This is another page where wet paint seeped through the center fold from a later painting and was later ripped apart. So this is another exercise, I'm not too concerned about its integrity, but maybe, again, just to show how quickly ink absorbs into the rough surface, I'll just go ahead and fill this in with some yellow. It dries much faster when it's not laying on top of the moleskin paper's normally glossy surface. And I don't have to worry about this ripping again or sticking together again. All right, well, onward. And you can see, it didn't really, it doesn't change when I flip on. So this is one of my favorite moments of damage that I actually hope for. I feel like that this is just a natural occurrence of that war shock ink blot effect where it sort of creates this beautiful butterfly effect and even though it interrupts the image, honestly this painting has a lot of quite space in the middle of it and I think it sort of adds something. This is a moment where I would keep this, because I think it makes the painting more beautiful and interesting. This is another page that was pretty much spared. No problems here. Again, I mean, I could touch this up, but like for what reason? It's off to the side, it doesn't bother me. This one seems okay. This is a page that I just painted over, because I'll use it as an underpainting later. Here are the butterflies. Again, getting some of those beautiful butterfly effects in the middle of the painting. I'm gonna keep this, because I think it sort of complements the butterfly shapes. I like that a lot. Thomas. This sort of interrupts the silhouette. This, I do find this a little bit more distracting, because I wanted, I wanted everything to be a really solid shadow and simple shape other than the garden. So this is one that maybe, I mean, you can see how much time I dedicate to this. It's not much. The only time when I really am careful with my repairs and maybe I'm upset that something has been damaged is if there's a face in the middle of the center fold and the face gets compromised. But I've kind of learned to put faces off to the side. But that's really the only time that something is damaged and I really take some time to make sure that it's safe the next time around. This looks pretty wet, so I'm gonna dry this quickly before we move on. Blueberries look okay. The edges might be a little bit dirtied, but that doesn't really bother me. I actually like how it's yellow, 'cause yellow and blue is a really pretty color combination. If it's not broke, don't fix it. Oh, all right, that's, that's a little, I think that this might be worth repairing, just because I think it's an ugly color that clashes with the rest of it. But again, this is something that's pretty easy to fix. I'll just put some blue back over it and maybe some light yellow. When I'm doing these repairs it's almost more like I'm just patching over something. One of the reasons why I don't seamlessly try to repair things is because I really love when the painting itself reveals its age and how it was made and what its

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been through. I think that visual history that's on the surface of the painting, especially when it's being admired by another painter, is something that's really special and coveted by a lot of people. So I leave those marks visible most of the time. Of course, the last page hasn't had any time to acquire any damage. That'll probably happen as I continue painting through the sketchbook, but I do wanna show that the other side of this painting does not have any bleed through of ink. I get a lot of questions about whether or not acrylic ink will seep through the paper and just completely bleed through to the other side. But because acrylic ink has that acrylic resin it gives the ink a little bit of weight, so that it lays on top of the paper, that's why it becomes so thick and glossy, rather than being absorbed through and appearing on the reverse. So, as you remember, I have a really heavy hand, especially in this painting, and I was even carving into the paper with a pen, and yet you can't see any of that on the other side. So I encourage you not to be timid or precious when you paint, especially in a sketchbook. The acrylic ink is hardy and it can accommodate mistakes. The tools should be used as they are most useful to you, since they are tools. And then finally, the book is meant to be portable and carried with you throughout life, acquiring wear and tear along the way. We have filled about 1/4 of this book and so there are still 3/4 left and that part is up to you.

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