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MAIN FEATURE

Build a City with the Help of a Dot and a Line

By Kim VanDerHoek



Painting on a large canvas can be intimidating as well as impractical for many artists. If you have a small workspace, are just learning to paint, have a tight art supply budget, or are simply overwhelmed by the thought of filling all that white canvas, I can relate. I've experienced all of the above. That's why when I first started to paint, I started small.

Eventually, I scaled the size of my canvases up but working small has become an integral part of my practice.

I was happy to learn about Strathmore oil painting paper early on in my artistic study because there are limitations inherent in a drawing medium that simply won't translate in an oil painting. Texture is a big one. Oil paint has the unique ability to have dimension and as my work has evolved through the years, paint texture has become just as important as design, value, and rendering.

I've used Strathmore Oil Painting paper to sketch out ideas for larger works, explore different color palettes, and paint demonstrations for students. It's traveled with me countless places because it's lightweight and doesn't take up a lot of space. It comes in handy when my painting time is limited but I still need to create.

For this example, I'm working on a 4" x 6" piece of Strathmore Oil Painting paper.

When I plan a painting, I think a lot about how the viewer's eye will move into and throughout the painting. Many of my design decisions are made with this in mind. I prefer a strong lead into the painting like a path, road, or river.

Perspective can be an intimidating concept to learn but once you've mastered it you'll be able to paint a huge variety of subject matter.

In this demonstration I will show how I use perspective to construct a cityscape. You'll see how critical understanding perspective is for maintaining accuracy in roads, sidewalks, buildings, and windows.

To start, focus your attention to the horizontal line I've drawn near the bottom third as well as the blue dot where all the angled lines meet (*figure 1*). The horizontal line is the horizon line and the dot is the

Next, I choose a color palette. In this example, I decided to keep it tonal and work with purple. Then I mixed a large pile of paint of the darkest color. Having a large pile enables me to borrow pieces from the pile and adjust the hue and values as needed for the entire painting.

Using a large brush, I load it with a wash of oil paint that's been thinned with odorless mineral spirits and begin blocking in big



Figure 1



Figure 2

“Eventually, I scaled the size of my canvases up but working small has become an integral part of my practice.”

vanishing point. The horizon line is self explanatory. The vanishing point is the point where all the angled lines you see would meet in the distance. The vanishing point is everything in a cityscape!

Once I establish the horizon line and vanishing point, I draw angled guide lines that radiate outward from and connect to the vanishing point. These angled lines will serve as guides for the bottom of buildings, windows, sidewalks, and a road. They take the guesswork out of getting the perspective right.

shapes. Even though I painted over the guidelines for my buildings, I'm still able to see the lines beneath the thin wash of paint. It's very faint but legible (*figure 2*).

If you lose your guidelines, just remember where your vanishing point is and redraw them as needed.

There are key questions that I ask as I work. What is the main idea in this scene? What can I do to enhance or support that idea? Are there any important elements that must be accurate in shape, size or placement? Should anything be moved, omitted or added? Small details are not important at this stage.

continued

In order to create a feeling of depth, I lightened a bit of the dark purple and cooled off its temperature for each building that steps back in space. The lightest buildings are the farthest away (*figure 3*). To complete the block in, I fill in the road,

Switching to a small palette knife, I add thick paint indicating doors and windows on the buildings. Notice that the tops and bottoms of the windows all align with the vanishing point. The windows are wide where they are closest to the foreground and narrow as they



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6

sidewalks, and sky (*figure 4*). To give this painting some contrast, I selected a very light yellow sky.

Next, I add some dark rectangles on the road that will eventually turn into cars (*figure 5*).

move away. This only applies to the sides of the buildings that face the road (*figure 6*).

Working with thick paint on a palette knife is not an exact science so if my perspective is a little bit off I'll adjust it later with a brush. I aim for as close to accurate as possible.

continued

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There are key questions that I ask as I work:

- *What is the main idea in this scene?*
- *What can I do to enhance or support that idea?*
- *Are there any important elements that must be accurate in shape, size or placement?*
- *Should anything be moved, omitted or added?*

”

Switching back to a paintbrush, on the right side next to the pointed building, I add a few small blue buildings in front of the larger ones to give more depth and interest (figure 7).

I mixed a middle value purple to put between the windows of the large foreground buildings because there wasn't enough separation in value between the two. This gave me the opportunity to adjust any perspective lines that were off as well.

In the foreground building on the left side, notice that it has a corner that turns to the left. Since that side is facing me and not facing the street, there isn't any perspective, all the windows are straight across.

The sky wasn't looking very exciting so I mixed a touch of orange which I added using a palette knife (figure 8). In order to keep my buildings straight, I placed the straight edge of my knife next to the building to lay the color down.

The distant buildings all started with hard, sharp edges. Softening those helped enhanced the feeling of atmosphere.

Next, I worked on the road by adding a reflection of the light in the sky. I also placed a small horizontal line under the cars to create tires and made the sidewalk curbs a bit thinner (figure 9).

Switching to a small script brush, I put in the details that will finish this off such as; taillights on cars and



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9

continued

their back windows, indications of traffic lights, streetlights, lights on buildings, and a few lines indicating windows on the distant pointed building (*figure 10*). I chose to keep most of the lights in alignment with the vanishing point to help guide the viewer's eye down the road.

Once I've completed a few of these mini oil sketches, I'll look them over and use the most successful ones as studies for larger oil paintings. The mini sketches also make great gifts for family and friends.



Figure 10 - Final Piece

ABOUT THE ARTIST



Kim VanDerHoek is an American contemporary fine artist who creates vibrant, textural oil paintings of landscapes and urban scenes in her Southern California studio.

Art Collector, PleinAir Magazine, Fine Art Connoisseur, and American Artist. Recent awards include, Art Renewal Center International Salon Finalist and an Honorable Mention in Southwest Art Magazine's Artistic Excellence Competition.

Kim is represented by Principle Gallery, Alexandria, VA., Charleston, SC., and Chemers Gallery, Tustin, CA.

She believes it is essential to paint with commitment and fearlessly experiment. She has a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the California College of the Arts. Her work has been featured in Southwest Art, American

Learn more about Kim on her [website](#),
[Instagram](#): @kim_vanderhoek
[Facebook](#): @KimVanArt
[TikTok](#): @kim_vanderhoek
[Twitter](#): @vanderhoekart

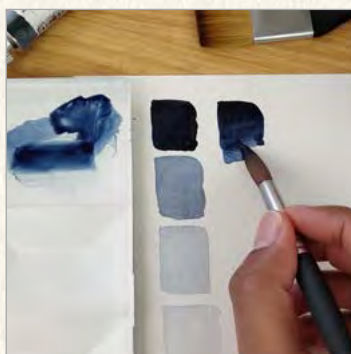
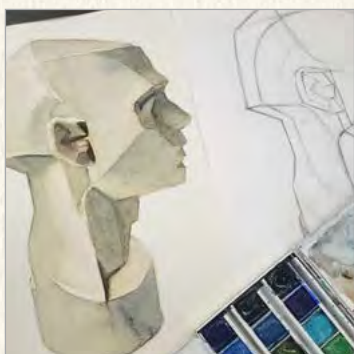
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classroom as instructors guide you through various art topics. After a lesson is released, it remains on the site for viewing the rest of the year.

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WORKSHOP 1: WATERCOLOR & GOUACHE

with Jordan Rhodes - Videos now available online

Learn the different approaches that can be used when painting with watercolor vs. gouache. You'll learn about the basics of using each medium as well as their respective strengths and weaknesses. Paint along as Jordan demonstrates his approach to painting the same subject with both watercolor and gouache.

Lesson 1 - Watercolor Basics: Learn about basic watercolor techniques and exercises to familiarize yourself with the medium of watercolor.

Lesson 2 - Watercolor Demo: Follow along as Jordan paints the Asaro Planes of the Head Statue in watercolor.

Lesson 3 - Gouache Basics: Discover the differences between gouache and watercolor, the strengths and weaknesses of both, and basic exercises to get used to working with gouache.

Lesson 4 - Gouache Demo: Follow along as Jordan paints the Asaro Planes of the head statue in gouache. Learn how the approach differs based on the selected medium.

[VIEW THE WORKSHOP 1 VIDEOS](#)



WORKSHOP 2: EXPLORING MIXED MEDIA

with Shelly Kim - Start Date: May 1, 2021

This fun workshop explores mixed media tools such as watercolor, acrylic inks, and markers to create simple and colorful artwork. You'll learn how to paint various illustrations from loose florals to fruits and veggies, which can then be applied when painting colorful wreaths, patterns, journal spreads, card making, and more!

[LEARN MORE ABOUT WORKSHOP 2](#)



WORKSHOP 3: DRAWING 101 WITH KELLY FOSS

Starts August 2, 2021 • [LEARN MORE](#)

WORKSHOP 4: OIL PAINTING WITH KATIE JOBLING

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Workshops continue through December 31, 2021

Join us for our free workshops at: www.strathmoreartiststudio.com

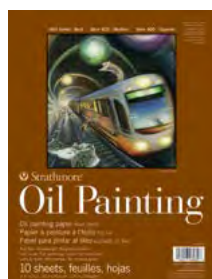




OIL PAINTING SIMPLIFIED!

Oil Painting paper from Strathmore provides artists with a convenient alternative to canvases or boards for oil paints or oil pastels. No gesso is required to prevent oil saturation, just simply tear out a sheet and start painting! The linen surface mimics canvas while providing texture to help blend and hold layers of paint in place. Intended for practice or the creation of final art pieces. Available in 3 pad sizes and large format sheet stock.

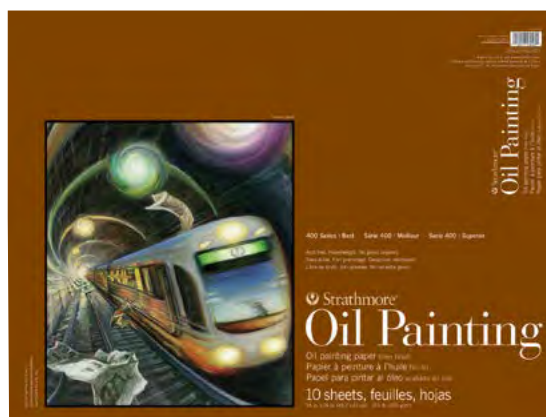
• 215 lb./350 gsm • made in the U.S.A. • acid free • no gesso required



9"x 12"



12"x 12"



18"x 24"



GEORGIAN WATER MIXABLE OILS

A Solvent-Free Solution For Oil Painting

Georgian Water Mixable Oil colors offer artists the possibility of experiencing oil painting without the need for solvent-based mediums.

Colors can be thinned, mixed, and washed using water.

All **Georgian Water Mixable Oil** colors offer high levels of lightfastness, pigment load, and durability. The viscosity and smooth texture mirror traditional oil colors and can be used for impasto techniques, or thinned with water to create wash effects similar to watercolors. Surface-dry between 5 and 7 days with no color shift from wet to dry.

- 40 colors
- Smooth buttery consistency
- Excellent water solubility
- Available in 37ml & 200ml tubes
- Traditionally manufactured in England





ARTIST FOCUS

Shelly Kim



Shelly Kim, also known as [Letters By Shells](#), is a self-taught Modern Brush Calligrapher and Illustrator based in Southern California. During Shelly's journey, she has been traveling to teach others the beauty of Modern Brush Calligraphy and Watercolor Lettering paired with loose backgrounds and leaves. Shelly's journey started when she was unhappy at her full-time job and needed another outlet to relieve the stress and feel in control of her life again. Her goal is to spread positivity through her artwork pieces and to also remind others that they are amazing, worthy, and can pursue anything in life.

1. What inspires you?

My inspiration comes from anything and everything! Whether it's a quick drive to

my local Trader Joes or a coffee shop. I also get excited during each season seeing all the colors change in the air that I can later incorporate into my lettering. I also get excited when I see which fruits and veggies are back in season so that I can attempt to paint them.

2. What mediums do you work with regularly and why?

I love working with brush pens, paints, and watercolor brushes to add more colors when creating my positive messages through my lettering and artwork pieces. Throughout my artwork, I hope that I can spread a positive message when others come across my work.

Read the rest of Shelly's interview and see more of her artwork [HERE](#).

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