Painting Watercolor Pet Portraits with Christine Aria Hostetler

Chapter 1 - Pet Portraits

Introduction

(light music) - Hi, I'm Christine Aria, I'm a San Francisco based artist and illustrator and I do a lot of portraiture. A lot of people request animal portraits of their pets and they're really fun to paint, especially in watercolor which is one of my very favorite mediums. I'm gonna show you how to select a good photo of an animal, it could be your pet. I'll show you a little cheat for drawing it. You don't have to be an expert at drawing. We're gonna use a little tracing paper to help us. Then I'll walk you through the process of painting the animal with watercolor and bringing it to life. If you've never explored watercolor before, this is a really fun project to start with.

Materials

- To work with watercolor you're going to want to start with some good paper. A cold press watercolor paper is really nice, it has this traditional grainy look to it that holds the paint really well. You'll need an 11 by 14 or smaller piece of paper for this. I'm going to be working with half of a nine by 12 sheet. You'll also want a little bit of scrap paper cut up to test your colors on. Then, of course, you'll need your paints. I'm a watercolor painter so I have tons of paints. I like working in paints from the tube. You probably won't have this many colors, however, you can get a basic set of some good neutrals and primary colors to work with. Some colors that I would recommend if you're going to buy some tubes are lemon yellow, cadmium yellow, yellow ochre, raw umber, burnt umber, burnt sienna, alizarin crimson, cadmium red deep, ultramarine blue, cerulean blue, Payne's gray, this is like my favorite color, and sap green. You can also find great little travel sets with pats or cakes of paint in them already. Next you're going to need a photo reference to work from. I would recommend making a photocopy of your image and I'm going to go into how to choose a good image. This is the picture I'm going to be working with. It's of my sister's dog and my parents' dog. Then you'll need some good tracing paper. You can find this on rolls or in pads at an art store. You'll need some brushes, I would recommend round, pointed tip brushes, anywhere in the range from size zero to six, and you'll probably want a couple sizes. A medium weight pencil, like a HB or a 2B, some kneaded eraser, or just a good solid eraser, a pencil sharpener, I have an Exacto blade, and this is for if you make mistakes and I'll show you how to use it. Next I have a couple of my crÃ¨me pens, we'll be drawing our animals in with these, I have a black double-o-five, it's a really thin point, and then I have a blue one, as well. You're going to need a pen that's waterproof, these are good felt-tip pens, they just need to dry before you can add water to them so just be cognizant of that when you're choosing your pen. Then you'll need some scissors for cutting up your papers. I have some extra brushes and water and some good absorbent paper towel here, and finally, I have some artist tape for holding the paper down while I paint.

Drawing and Painting Your Pet

Selecting and tracing photo

- It's really important to choose a good photo to work from when you start out with a painting. I actually will take a really long time researching photos or selecting from a bunch of different photos

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whenever I do a portrait. Here are some examples of photos that kind of work or that work really well, or that just don't work at all. These are some things to keep in mind as you are selecting your photo. First of all, here is my friend's childhood golden retriever puppy. She made a photo copy of the picture, which is great. However, you'll notice that half the puppy's body is actually covered by a blanket here, which is cute but you need to keep in mind that that's what you'll end up painting if you don't know how to make up the rest of the puppy. Also, a little bit difficult to see are the details that are in this dark shadow over here on the side. If you're not a very experienced draftsman, you might have some difficulty just making that up and drawing that in, so I would recommend choosing something that's a little bit better lit. Next up is this awesome shot of a turkey that my sister found in my parent's neighborhood. It's great because you can see the animal's whole body. There's nice natural outdoor lighting. However, if you look up close, you'll realize that the image is actually a little bit blurry. This turkey was on the move. Again, this is something that you could work with, but you're not gonna have that much detail to draw in or paint in on this image. All righty here is a shot of some jellyfish. A jellyfish is a really fun thing to paint. However keep in mind that it's translucent so you're gonna be dealing a lot with the background all around the jellyfish here, and not so much just being able to focus on the animal itself. Also with this image you'll notice that the little tentacles are hidden. They're cut off in the bottom. If you don't have a lot of experience drawing, again I wouldn't recommend choosing something like this because you will have to make up the end of this. Next up is this adorable little puppy. I think this is a great photo to start with actually. You can see the whole body, there's good lighting, this guy has a lot of fun texture in his fur that you can draw in, and there are some cool elements that you can work with as well. These really nice colorful leaves would give a cool pop to your watercolor painting. Finally, this is the image I'm actually gonna be working with. This is my sister's dog, Cooper, and my parent's dog, Hutch. Between the two of them have a lot of cool textures going on, a lot of different colors that I can talk about working with. There's also some grass in the background here and I'll show you some tricks for painting some kind of abstract grass later. You'll notice that Cooper's tail is hanging out of the photo here a little bit. This is where I'll use some drafting skills and draw it in, so don't worry about that. We'll learn how to do that as well. Once you've selected your photo, printed it or copied it, you're gonna grab some tracing paper, cut it down to about the right size to cover the whole thing, and I'm just gonna lay it on top of my image. Taking a little bit of artist's tape and pressing it down on the top here so that it doesn't move around while I'm tracing. Then I'm gonna grab my colored Micron. If you don't have a colored Micron you could use a colored pencil, anything to differentiate from the black that we'll be tracing with later. All right I'm gonna smooth down my tracing paper on top of here so I can see as many details as possible. Keep in mind that you will find some areas where it's just really dark, and you're gonna lose some of the detail. Don't freak out about that. It's okay, we're gonna learn how to draw in some details later once we transfer our image. Just start with an area that's super obvious, and start tracing there. So, Cooper's head is super white, I think I'm gonna start right here. And I'm gonna try to get as much detail as I can. But again not worry about moments where I lose it. It's good to kind of work from the outside in to some extent. But once you have a general outline of like the head in here, you can start going in and getting details where you see the color changing on the animal's body. Right here I think I'm just tracing a hard shadow edge, and that's fine. It's good to draw that in if it helps you kind of figure out where you are on the animal. I'm skipping ahead along the side of his body here because I can't see it super well, and drawing in what I can see. This is the bit of the tail that I'll make up later, and so I'm just gonna leave it for now. Now I'm gonna start on Hutch's fur. He's got this great textured curly fur, so

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I'm just gonna use a very light touch with my pen, and mimic the curls of the fur, by making short little curved strokes. That's his teddy bear over here. I'm gonna choose to ignore that, just gonna trace Hutch. Get this shadowy area above his ear. Continue tracing your animal, get as many details as you can and don't worry about the background right now. We'll add that in later. All right I've reached about as much detail as I can get to on here, so I'm gonna go ahead and remove my tracing paper, and put it against a blank piece of paper, and finish the details. Referencing my photo, I'm gonna go ahead and draw in Cooper's side here, this black fur really stands out in the photograph itself against the grass, I just couldn't see it with the tracing paper on top of it. At this point if you're not an experienced draftsman, you might want to do this in pencil, just in case you mess up. I'm gonna go ahead and draw it in pen here. And I'm also going to go ahead and kind of make up what's going on with the end of his tail. I know that he has, he's a border collie, he has a white tip to his tail. I think it would be cute if the tail curved out this way a little bit. I'm gonna mimic the side of his tail which has got these stringy, fluffy bits of fur. And just kind of make that up. While I'm looking at this, I'm also gonna add in a little bit of the highlight detail that I can see in the middle of his back. This will help me when I paint it later. There's a bit on the tail as well. And then I can see a little more detail on his ear. This is enough detail to transfer the image.

Transferring and drawing image
- The next step that we're gonna do is turn our tracing paper into carbon paper, so that we can trace it. I'm gonna flip my tracing paper over, grab my medium weight pencil. I've got a 2B right here. And then applying pressure to the side of the pencil, you're going to shade in the back side of your drawing. So I'm gonna go ahead. Start with the tip of the nose over here. And you want to shade enough so that you have this kind of medium charcoal gray color happening. You need to make sure that you have enough graphite on the paper that it will transfer nicely when you go to trace it later. Make sure that you really cover all of the details. These open parts on the paper are where there aren't really details to transfer. We'll fill those in later. All right. I ground my pencil tip right down to the nub, that's okay, because we're done with it. Now, you're gonna take your paper. I've got a piece of paper that's cut out here and it's about the right size for my photo. And I'm going to position the animal so that it looks good, basically, to you on the paper. This is your judgment call. I would recommend being at least an inch or two away from each edge. These guys look good as they are. I'm actually going to tape my watercolor paper down to the table surface, so that it does not shift around as I'm tracing. Alrighty, so I'm happy with how this looks. Tape that right here. Next I'm going to grab my black Micron pen, or a color that's different than the first one that you started with. Basically you just want to tell where you've already drawn and where you are going over the lines here. So, I'm grabbing my black pen. And I'm just gonna go ahead and start transferring my image by tracing over the blue lines. You could use a pencil to do this tracing transfer. However, a Micron is nice because you get really fine detail with it. At this point, actually, I've only done a few lines. I'm gonna go ahead and flip this up, and make sure that the transfer is working. If the lines on the watercolor paper are too light to see, just go ahead and add another layer of graphite to the back of the tracing paper. And then continue tracing. So, my lines are looking good. I'm gonna keep working until I have covered all the blue lines up with black. Once you've traced over all of your blue lines or whatever original color you had, it's time to remove the tracing paper. Tada. Got our big reveal. You should have a nice, fairly complete image traced in here. And it's in graphite. At this point, you could go ahead and start painting if you wanted to. However, I think it's a really nice illustrative kind of look to go ahead and add in Micron pen on your

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paper. I'm gonna take my black Micron, or continue with it rather, and start going over my lines. But I'm also gonna reference my original image at this point. So, this is good practice for your eye. You have your general outlines, but you might continue to see more detail as you look at your original image, and you can go ahead and draw that in in pen. I would recommend using a light touch this whole time, and I'll go over this, but you'll want to go and draw in the directionality of the fur. So, I'm gonna start with this bit that's really easy to see on my photo, where Cooper's white scruff meets the black part here. Start with this white. You see where it gets kind of scruffy here. I'm gonna get scruffy with my lines. This is a great way to add texture. You might notice that I'm kind of self-correcting some of the lines as I'm going here, and that's fine to do. If you want to just stick with the tracing you've got, that's fine as well. This tracing step is really nice because you don't have to be able to draw something from scratch in order to do it. And it kind of speeds up the drawing process as well, even if you are an experienced draftsman. You'll see here I didn't trace his eye all that well, but I'm drawing it in in a little greater detail. Now that I can really see my image. I'm gonna do little dash marks where the shadow hits from the bridge of his nose. I don't want a solid line there. But I do want to mark where it is, just for my own reference. I'm adding some detail in the back of him, where I can see their highlights here. He's got this little upwards curly light spot. And the black part of his tail, turns suddenly into little bits of cream and white. Here's that tip that I'm kind of making up. It doesn't exist in the photograph. All right, and here is the edge of Hutch's back, and I'm actually just gonna add it in. All those curls there, a little bit, just so I know where that is. Continue with the detail on Cooper here. So, Hutch has this great curly fur, and just like I did when I was first tracing, I'm gonna make sure that I use short curved lines to mimic what's happening with his fur. Although you want to keep your touch fairly light while you're doing this, you might have some areas that are really, really truly black in your image, and you can go ahead and mark those out for yourself by doing little hatch marks with your pen. That'll look like this. You're just doing some quick little lines that layer on top of each other, and you can even go in an opposite direction. So, something like that. I wouldn't do that in large sections, but I will do that maybe right here where his booty is really dark, and then on the edge of his nose, right here. So, let's start down here. He's got a bit of shadow over here. I don't need to draw it all in, but it's nice to have a little indicator for later, when I paint. Gonna get the edge of his nose here. And then maybe a little bit of this black along the side of his eye. Maybe I'll do the same with Hutch's side of his nose, so that it looks a little more uniform. Your final step before you can start painting is going to be to go in and erase these pencil marks behind your pen. This is kneaded eraser. This is really nice for picking up pencil without kind of rubbing the paper down to a nub. Knead it so that it can pick up graphite. This also gets rid of old graphite that's in there. And begin erasing by rubbing the paper.

Making a test strip

- Before we begin painting, we're gonna make a test strip, which means we're just gonna check out all of the colors in the photograph and try to mimic them on a little piece of scrap paper. And this will be a good reference for when we're going to town and painting the whole thing. So I'm gonna grab one of my brushes. Let's do a six or so. Get it nice and wet to start with. Water color needs to be activated with water. So you always want to get your brush wet before you dip in to a color when you're first starting up. So I'm gonna look at my image and find where the lightest colors are happening and try to create those first on my test strip. Looking at this, I've got a nice pinky tan color happening throughout the fur. And he actually has a little bit of it right there as well. Dip into a bit of yellow ochre here. I can pull it around on my palette. Adding more water to this mixture will

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make it even lighter. I'm okay with what's happening here. And it's kind of got some pink under tones. So I'm gonna grab some alizarin crimson and kinda swish it around on my palette nearby and blend them together. This makes a pretty nice light starting point. I see there are moments where it becomes a bit more yellow or a bit more orange or red. I'm gonna try to mimic where that happens. So I'm gonna grab a little bit of raw umber down here. There's a nice light yellow to get going with. Now I'll take it a little darker and try adding a little bit of this orange over here. You could also just pull in some of your cadmium red if that's what you've got going on. A little more of the raw umber. All right, there's another nice tone. Grab some burnt sienna, pull it in the middle here. I don't know if you can tell, but the pigment is looking really dark, which means there's very little water. That's okay if you need a really dark pigment, but right now I'm just trying to blend things. So I'm gonna add a little more water. And I'll add in a little bit of my raw umber to balance this out. See what that looks like. So you can see I'm just making strokes of paint and color on here. I'm not labeling them or anything. My water color process is very much a natural flow. Typically, I don't even do a test strip beforehand, but it's really nice, especially if you don't paint that often, to familiarize yourself with your colors and the way that they blend by doing a test strip like this. I just kind of create my palette here and then I can go ahead pull from it as I'm painting. In order to keep track of all of my paint colors, I actually made this little palette key. You'll see that my yellow ochres are down here and then it goes up to some lemon yellow. And I've got my cad red, my alizarin crimson. I've got a bunch of different browns. This is a burnt sienna and a burnt umber. Ultramarine blue, Payne's gray. But I've got them all spread out here so I can reference that. Because sometimes the color is going to look different in its dried state than it will on your water color paper. So I've got some burnt umber on my brush that I'm adding into my mixture of raw sienna. It's kind of a dark medium shade brown. I think I need to pull more blue in for this. So kind of swish it around. It's a bit closer to what I want. I'm gonna try to go for some of the really deeper reds that are happening in the shadows of Pudge's fur here. So I'm gonna grab more of this guy. And make it a bit deeper by pulling from my blue and the burnt umber. And I might even pull some red in. So let's see here. So if I painted the whole dog this color, that won't be effective. But it's really nice for moments of shadow. So I'm gonna try to mix this really dark color. Actual black doesn't exist in nature. It's always some combination of a lot of other colors. A good combo is a bit Payne's gray and burnt umber. So I'm going to mix some. And I have an even darker brown on my palette called sepia that I'm gonna pull in as well to help me get really nice and dark. So I'm just pulling back and forth. Not adding tons of water here because it will only be a light gray if I do. And that's a nice dark color. I can make that a little more blue by pulling in some ultramarine. And make his shadows look really nice and dark and cool. I'm just giving you some very basics here with my color mixing. If you want a more in depth tutorial, if you want good tips on color combinations and brush handling, check out Lindsey Stripling's Intro to Water Color Series. Moving on to the shadows on Cooper here, they're very kind of a light blue and a purple happening in there. I'm gonna practice that on my strip. Grabbing a little ultramarine. Swishing it around. And a little bit of the purple. I'll pull it over here so you can see better. Think there's kind of a fresher blue in that. These colors are a bit exaggerated on the test strip. They'll be a little more mixed and muted on the actual painting. Then we can have a shadowy blue right here. If I've got too much pigment, I can dab it off on my paper towel and bring it over here. When I'm painting people's pets, I really try to get colors right. But when it comes to actually painting the background, I'll take liberties with the colors. I like that green for the grass. And then maybe a deeper green right here. I can combine it with a bit of this lighter green. Take it over here. I think that looks nice. And then we'll go extra deep for the shadows in the grass by pulling that

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green over here and adding in some blue and dark brown. There we go. I think this is a nice start.

Painting the portrait
- To get going on the painting, I'm gonna start with my lightest colors first, even to the point that I'll completely avoid painting bits that are white. That's kind of the trick with watercolor, is that you start really light, and then you can build up your layers, you can add more pigment in, or you can even wait for a layer to dry and then add another layer on top. However, it's a lot harder to pull color off of the paper, so you wanna start with the light first and then go darker. And we'll be breaking that rule a little bit later when we're adding in some texture with a dry brush, but this is where we're gonna start out. So I'm gonna grab a size four, a two or a four would be good at this point, and get it really nice and wet. I'm picking the lighter points on my photo here. Just going to note where I'm not going to paint. So, Cooper's fur is like snowy white right here, and on top of his head. Hutch's fur over here with the sunlight is also looking really white, so I'm really not gonna paint much, except for maybe the sheerest layer in those areas. I'm gonna start with the next lightest color, so this kind of peachy color that we made before. And, let's start out with some of these little points in Hutch's fur. I'm doing short, light little brushstrokes here that mimic his fur. You can do a big, heavy wash, but I find this is nicer for layering. My brush is nice and wet still, but I can feel it starting to dry out. I'll need to get more water, soon. All right, I think I'm gonna take this just slightly darker, because we're getting towards his back end here. And here I might do more of a wash, because there are really no white bits in the photo to mind. My brush is really dry. Put some more water. Let's activate some of this brown. See how the two colors kind of bleed into each other when everything is equally wet, it makes a really nice and natural blending effect. This is one reason to really work quickly with watercolor, which gets easier the more you do it. Gonna go back in and grab my light pink. Layer it in a bit more. At this point, I'm really adding in a midtone, which is your next step, once you have these super light colors added in, you'd start taking it darker, little by little. Wherever it needs to be darker. His face here is this nice peachy color. On the side, do that. I think I got a little too much across from there, I can actually even use my finger to dab away a bit of paint while it's really wet still. It doesn't take it all away, but, it grabs a lot of it. Let's get his tail kind of filled in here. You'll see I'm kind of dancing the brush around the palette a little bit, pulling in colors and recombining them as I see fit. I think color never occurs in exactly the same way on different parts of the animal, and so it makes it more natural to go ahead and continue combining the paint as you're working. So the color that I just mixed is slightly darker than that medium tone I just laid down. I'm okay with that. There's a point on the tail, though, where it's actually pretty light, and I wanna pull up some of that color, so I'm gonna get my brush wet, dab it off, grab a little bit of paper towel over here, and I'm going to take my damp, clean brush and just kinda wiggle it around very lightly on the paper, ball up a little corner of this, and dab that spot, and that's a nice way to pick up the paint. Let me do it again right here. Dab it off. I can also simply dip my brush in water, dab it, and then, start pulling that paint away, so that it turns into a more sheer color. I think I want a little more this. See that he has, this dark is disappearing in the locks of fur here. So I'm using my brush to make these short strokes, like this, to mimic that movement of the fur. It gets really nice and dark right here, so, and kind of reddish, too, I'm gonna pull some of that burnt sienna mixture in, and just drop it into that wet paint. It's kind of pooling everywhere, and I don't want it to go quite everywhere like that. Dab my brush off on my damp paper towel here, so it takes off a lot of that pigment, but not all of it. And I'm gonna run my brush through, and pull it around. Now that it's on my brush I'm gonna add it over here to this side. I can deepen that even more, and I think I could go

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a little more pink, too. Gonna pull in a little pink into my mixture. And just ever so lightly touch this and over here, got some red shadows happening. It's looking a little too red, I'm gonna pull in some yellow ochre. It's a little more orangy now. You'll notice that my brush is looking rather dry. You can see the individual bristles here, and that's really nice for making a kind of hairy effect on the page if you are painting an animal with fur. I'm going in, I've got a lot more pigment on my brush, and it's almost as if I'm drawing, rather than painting a super-wet painting right now, but it makes this cool, furry texture on top of that light shade that I already laid down. Gonna add a little bit of dark to these bits of fur here. Probably gonna have to go over this again. That's okay, it's all about building up these nice, sheer layers. He's got a really nice kind of yellowy orange tip in his muzzle here. I added a little too much paint here, if that happens, dab your brush off, maybe dip a bit of water in, dab it off again. Like I did before, I'm going to just suction away this extra pigment, and pull it around, and now it's on the brush, and I can add it to areas that I actually do want to be a bit darker. There are all of these little edges that are super white and glowy in the picture. I wanna give them a little definition on the paper, without being completely heavy-handed, so I'm going to have just a very sheer layer, and then maybe even add a bit more water to that, dab it, and take it to the edges of the fur here. Making him a little texture with this super-light color right here. And this is a moment when I see here, this is his paw, and I didn't really delineate between the tail and the edge of the foot back here. That's something that I can do once the paper dries, I can add some pen to it. However, I cannot draw on wet paper with the Micron pen or it will totally wreck the pen and bleed everywhere. I have a pretty good light to midtone range happening on Hutch the Goldendoodle here. I'm going to head over to the other dog, and, just working in a similar palette range with these kind of tan colors I'm gonna start filling in the areas where I see that occurring on him. So I'm gonna get my brush wet, and keep moving. He's got these lighter, yellowy-orange moments happening right around his eyes. And there are really light spots on his cheeks and right under his eyes, so I'm only going to paint in those really light spots now. And I'm gonna go back in with the heavier color in a minute, once that dries a bit, and add in the rest of the cheek. So I'll take this light peachy color down to this little spot that he has right here. Maybe add a little more orangy sienna and go all the way down to his tail. This is actually maybe a little too heavy, so I just dip this again, dab it, and vacuum up a little bit. So this has dried for maybe 30 seconds, and I'm gonna go add in a darker layer now. This is only partially dry, so it will blend a bit with another layer, but not entirely, which is what I want it to do, I want it to look different. My brush is not very wet right now, it's just got a lot of pigment in it, which will make for a nice, vibrant color on dry paper. I want this to blend even a little more, so I am gonna get my brush a little wet, dab it, and add a little more pigment here, but a bit of a lighter pigment, so that it blends the two shades. And very delicately dab it in. I could use a smaller brush. I should be using a smaller brush, but this also works with a very light touch. You'll get there eventually, it just takes some practice. I'm gonna grab a smaller brush here, get it wet, and add some darker brown details, kind of pulling my midtones into a little bit darker shades. His cheek has kind of dried off here, and I want the middle ridge to be even darker, so I'm just gonna dab it lightly in. And under his jawline, a little bit darker. And then there're some moments in the tail that are a bit darker too. This is a bit dark, and looks a little graphic against this light color. I'm actually gonna add a medium tone in here, so I'm breaking the rule about going light to dark, and there will be many instances of this, and that's totally fine. Light to dark is your rule of thumb. This looks quite light, but it will get a bit darker as it dries, I believe, so I'm not gonna go too heavy with it. Gonna layer in a little bit on the side here. Then I'm gonna get those bits of ear where he's got some beige coloring. While I'm at it, my brush is at a nice kind of barely wet stage, and this is a good point for

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blending. I'm gonna go over here. Pulling the color around his eye. So while I'm near his eye, gonna grab some water. And I know his eye is a light amber color. I can't tell that very well here. However, sometimes it's good to just rely on your memory a little bit here and there. I'll add more shadow over it once it dries so it will look more like what's happening with his eye in the picture here. Moving on to the light bluey-purpley shadows in his face. Gonna get a really sheer mixture going. Let's start back here behind his ear. And then pull it under here. Then get the side of his muzzle. That is looking super sheer there, which is okay because there are moments of really light highlights along the side of his muzzle here, it's not totally a flat shadow the whole time, so I'm gonna let, turn this maybe a little more blue, and then let it dry before I go back over and add some deeper shades of blue and purple for my shadows. There's a bit on the top of his nose here. Whenever I have one color on my brush, you've probably noticed, I like to move all around the paper wherever I see instances of that color, and try to add it in. Gonna deepen this a bit. This shadow gets pretty dark right here under his jaw, so I'm just gonna grab some more pigment while I'm at it. Get some purple, some Payne's gray. Still got some blue mixture happening here. I'm gonna add that in, just drop it into that wet part and it will just spread out and blend out on its own, because the paper is really wet here still. While I let that layer get a bit dryer, I think this is a good point to move on to the black part of his body. So, like I've been doing in general all along, I'm gonna start with the lighter moments, and then add in heavier layers as I go. In his fur here, the only light moments in the black section are where it's highlighted, and it looks to me like a really light bluey gray, so that is the color I have on my brush, I'm gonna add a bit more, and I'm gonna go in and just place that in. That's maybe a little more blue than I want. Gonna just add water to my brush and take it right on here, and make it a bit more sheer. Then there're some highlights in his tail, I'll get a little more water, a tad bit of pigment, and, just put this highlight right down the middle of his tail. We're about to get to the fun and challenging part of turning our watercolors really dark. Gonna grab a bigger brush. This is actually a good moment to show you I added some texture here with the fur. That was maybe a little overexuberant. And this is where I have the X-Acto blade on hand. This is kind of scary-looking on its own, but this is all that I use it for. I just take the little sharp tip and very carefully, on the flat edge of the blade, I start very lightly scratching at the surface of the paper. So this is a good reason to keep your pen strokes pretty light when you're drawing, because they will come out much more easily if you have to do anything like this. Just brush away that shredded paper. And there you go, you can see that the paper is a little more textured there than it is in other places, but it's not a huge deal, and we can even cover it up a bit when we do the grass wash underneath here. Keep in mind that if you do want to fix anything with the blade on the paper, this is kind of your last resort. You cannot do it when the paper is wet, or it will totally tear up the paper, so, wait for the paper to be dry, or only work in dry areas, and kind of get it done, and then you'll be good to go. Switching back to my size four brush here. Dab off some water, and pick up some of this dark dark that I made before. And that is really dry on the palette, so I'm actually gonna need some more water to get it going again. And I'll add in some more pigment. In order to make a color super bright or super dark with watercolors, and with the layering, you'll probably have to layer. You'll have to do a few layers, and that's okay. I've got a nice dark color happening here, and I'm gonna go ahead and start laying it in. Very delicately, especially where white and dark meet. I'm using little, light, quick touches of the brush to make this kind of furry texture at the edge of his scruff. Remember, I've kind of sketched in the highlighted areas, so I'll avoid filling those in completely with the black. It's looking maybe a little yellow, so I'm gonna pull in more blue with my browns. Continue onward. Can even bump the edge of his bum out here a little bit to cover up

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where I scratched away the paper. Think I even see some purple happening there, so I'm just gonna quickly grab some and add it right on the paper. And it'll kind of blend everything else. The tip of this guy's tail is white, again, I know that from my head, so I'm just going to make that up and make it look kind of like the scruff, the way that I see the black blending towards the white. You'll see how dry the tip of the brush is here, you can really see those individual bristles. So awesome for a minute, but then I'll have to get it wet again and add pigment. Once a blocky area like this has dried, I can go back over it with the bristle brush and add more kind of a furry layer like that, which I'll do more of in a minute. For now I just wanna get in all my darks here. Watching out for Hutch's curly fur here, I don't wanna cover that up. This is where I did some hatch marks, will kinda guide me. My bristles are super dry, I'm gonna use them to pull at the edges of the highlighted area to add some kind of hair texture so that the highlights aren't totally white. Gonna do it here too. We'll see how much I can do with them. All right, it's at the point that it's not doing anything, so I'm gonna grab a little more water and head back here and get some more dark mixed up. If I want to immediately have a more brushy or bristly effect, I can take a super-pigmented brush like this over to the paper towel, and just dab it a little bit to get some of the moisture out but there's still pigment in here, and head back here, see how that got nice and brushy? I wanna a little purple in here, too. I'm gonna grab it again. And grab a dab of the dark mixture. Could keep moving all the pigment around while it's still a little bit damp. It'll be a little harder to blend everything once it starts to dry more. Again, I've got really bristly stuff happening at the end of the brush, and I'm gonna take that to the highlights that I haven't gotten yet, and kind of get some texture into them. All right, this is looking pretty good. See this area of his tail, where there's a lot of pigment right here, and then this is pretty light right here, and it's dry already. I'm going to add, without adding more water to my brush, I'm gonna go back here and grab more of the dark, and get that area that's not quite dark enough going. So this is super pigmented brush right here, take it right on here. The very tip of this, because I'm working so dry, it's kind of flattening itself out, I'm gonna use this thin, razor edge to my advantage, and kind of use it as a bit of a pen, and draw lines of black fur here that I see coming out into the tail. You don't need a million brushes to get a lot of different effects, you just can get creative with the way you're using water and paint. I'm at the point where I'm gonna add dark around his eye, and that amber that I painted in the middle is dry, so I will be fine to pull this dark in. He's got these great kind of like old Egyptian eyeliner eyes. Gonna add a little bit over here for eyelashes. And then the nose. All of this is worked with a really highly pigmented brush that's not too wet. Although once it dries, I still might have to go in and add another layer to it, which we can try doing down here right now, you'll see that the back is pretty dry. However, this is too light. An easy mistake to make when you're trying to add another layer on top of something that's already dry is to put too much water on it. When you do that, it'll scrub away the paint you have underneath, and it will only make your painting lighter, rather than making it darker. To avoid that, you'll want to have a highly pigmented brush, like mine, with not a lot of water on it, and a pretty light touch, so that you don't rub away what's going on underneath. You just add your layer of paint. It's looking a little splotchy on his back. This is something that happens when you're trying to get something really nice and dark. I'm just gonna continue with my pretty pigmented brush, until I'm happy with it. This point, I've got my darks really layered in here, and I'm gonna go backwards and continue adding in midtones, like the side of his muzzle, right here, can use some slightly darker purples and blues. And using the principles that I've already talked about, pushing and pulling the paint, adding a little bit of water, dabbing with paper towel if need be to pull away water, I'll just keep playing around until I'm happy with the image and I feel like I've got a good, wide range of

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lights to darks.

Finishing
- You might be at a good stopping point for your animal portrait. However, I would say once you've got your light tones to dark tones laid in, it's actually really good to kind of step back and take stock of what's going on. Everything is dry at this point. I could actually go in with my pen and add a little more detail if I want to. I think I'm going to in some bits of the white on Cooper and also the white highlights Hutch's fur, just to add a little more detail where there is not much paint. Let's start with the top of his muzzle here. There's kind of like a darker bit of fur above where nose is. Hutch's looks kind of the same. Add some whiskers in here, too. And then in this white bit just adding some light directional brushy strokes. Up here, too. Basically everything you do at the very end is what's gonna tie your final piece together. So it's good to just look for those details and be patient and take the time to add them in. Tail is looking a little cartoonish. Gonna give it a little more detail. All right, and then over here Hutch has all of his highlighted area. Gonna give him a little more fur. Realized it's super washed out where his elbow lies next to his body, so I've gone ahead and just kind of shaded it a bit. This is where having a good knowledge of anatomy helps when you need to kind of make some stuff up. Using multiple photo references is also a good idea when you're painting a pet. There's also this bit where his leg is sitting right up between his body and his tail. I couldn't tell that when I traced it. So I'm just gonna delineate between the leg and the tail by adding in texture here. I think I'm happy with how this looks here. It's time to go ahead and put in a little bit of a shadow and grassy detail under where the dogs are laying. Using a larger brush like a six, gonna keep it pretty wet. And starting with a lighter color just like we did with the dog fur, I'm gonna drop in a wash for the grass. And you might, I'm gonna grab even more water here. You might have something besides grass. You might be painting an underwater creature. In which case, you'll be grabbing some blues I would imagine. This is just a really loose take on the background so as to ground the animal image without distracting from it. Gonna add even more water because I want this to be nice and loose. And this is where you get to kind of pull in the watercolor effect rather than controlling it. Got a little bit of bleeding happening there. I can just get my brush a little bit drier on the paper towel and vacuum away that color. Even dab away some of that so it doesn't continue bleeding. All right, now I'm gonna grab greens. Some good grassy mid-tones. Throw them in here, too. I'm really referencing very loosely the colors here and not worried about making it look exactly like the photo at all. Adding back in some more water and pulling the paint around. Just kind of playing with it. I'm gonna add a little blue closer to their bodies so that it looks like some shadow. Because it's very clear in this that the sun is coming from up here. So I'm gonna grab some of this dark indigo that's happening on my palette. Maybe even some brown. There's a lot of brown in grass, obviously, and dirt. All right, so. Again, just having a very light, loose touch. Gonna put some shadows under their bums. You'll notice when I get up close to their bodies, to their fur, I'm using those really light kind of brushy strokes and mimicking what I did with their fur so that I don't mess with the furry texture that I have going on there. Adding even more pigment here. You can see as it dries it kind of lightens and spreads. Mmm. I'm gonna grab a little brush and get really dark green on there and start mimicking blades of grass. This is still pretty damp, but that's okay. We're gonna do a lot of wet on wet and then like we did before, kind of dry brush in our details. As we go a little bit and definitely after the fact. So see this nice effect of the dark on the light. Get good grass texture. Make sure your grass doesn't go in the same direction. Grass kind of points every which way, even if the wind is blowing. There's a little bit of differentiation in this, in the blades. Maybe make it a little

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lighter on this side which is the sunny side. Being very careful when I'm closer to his body that my brush is not too wet so it doesn't run all over. Rather than just filling everything with grass, I'm clumping it a little bit. This is kind of a suggestion of grass rather than mimicking the photo, like I said. You also see I'm using a lot of different shades of green for a more natural look. A few scattered down here. These are looking a little too blurry. I think I need to wait for that to dry a bit more. I'm grabbing a little bit of brown on my brush and maybe a little purple as well to just add some accents into the grass so it's not just all green. Just here and there. Add a little more water, keep it loose. Then I want to make sure I don't have any white spaces right around their bodies. This needs a little more green right here. I'm gonna drop some water in because it got a little dry. Add in the sheerest little bit to keep this kind of loose and interesting. And as I'm looking at this, I think there's a bit too much white happening right around here. I want to add a little more shadow in here, so I'm gonna go back and grab some light brown and just deepen the color of his fur a bit. This is more of a wash here. Be careful when you're doing your final touches that you don't end up just dumping a ton of paint everywhere because it will, all of your delicate layers will be for naught. But it is good to be a little bit of a perfectionist with it, I think, if you're really going for likeness to your pet. All right. I really like the way Cooper and Hutch are looking. I think this will be really fun to give to my mom for her birthday or Mother's Day or something. The more you practice, the better you're gonna get at drawing. Hopefully you'll get to the point where you don't even have to trace it anymore and you can just look at your reference photo, draw your image, and then watercolor it all on your own.

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