# MIDNIGHT DREAMS

## INSTRUCTIONS

# Getting Started



In this Folk Art Inspired Midnight Dreams scene, you'll create a peaceful mountain landscape under a starlit sky.
From the glow of the moon to shimmering silver peaks and deep blue waters, this step-by-step project walks you through every brushstroke—no experience needed.

There's room to personalize with metallics, bold brush textures, or tiny stars and constellations if you're feeling creative.

Whether you're painting solo or with friends, you'll walk away with a striking, dramatic landscape that's all your own.
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**Painting Title:** Midnight Dreams

**Skill Level:** Beginner-Friendly

**Approximate Time to Complete:** 60-90 Minutes

## Supplies Needed:

- **Canvas** – Pre-stretched , sketched and primed, size of your choice.
- **Acrylic Paints** – Choose from the following colors:
  - Titanium White
  - Dark or Navy Blue
  - Medium Blue
  - Medium Grey
  - Silver Metallic
  - Black
- **Brushes** – A variety of sizes, including flat, round, and detail brushes.
- **Palette** – For mixing colors.
- **Water Container** – To rinse brushes.
- **Paper Towels or Rags** – For cleaning brushes and surfaces.
- **Apron or Old Shirt** – To protect clothing from paint.
- **Easel** (optional) – For comfortable painting posture.

Feel free to tailor the colors and supplies to suit your painting project!

# Painting Instructions

### STEP ONE

**Instructions**:

Use a 1" flat or wash brush to fill the sky area with Royal Navy paint. Start at the top of the canvas and work your way down with smooth horizontal strokes. Extend the paint slightly past the tops of the mountain outlines to ensure clean edges later. Apply an even, thin layer—avoid overloading your brush.

**Tips:**

- Let dry fully before adding stars or shimmer.
- A second coat can deepen the color.
- Don't worry about perfection—texture comes later!

### STEP TWO

**Instructions**:

Using a medium flat brush, fill in the middle mountain range and the moon with metallic grey. Follow the outlines loosely—don't worry about being too precise, as details will be added later.

**Tips:**

- Keep your brush strokes smooth and even.
- A thin first coat will dry quicker and allow for layering.
- Don't stress if lines get covered—final outlines will be redrawn at the end.

### STEP THREE

**Instructions**:

Paint the water area at the bottom using metallic blue. Use a medium or large flat brush and follow the shape of the riverbank. Apply a thin, even coat.

**Tips:**

- Let it dry fully before adding any highlights or reflections later.
- If the paint looks streaky, you can add a second coat once dry for a smoother finish.
- Keep your strokes horizontal to suggest the calm flow of water.

# Painting Instructions *Continued*



## STEP FOUR

### Instructions:

Use light and dark gray tones to fill in the remaining mountain ranges and the large foreground cloud. Choose which side of each mountain faces the moonlight and which side is in shadow. Use a medium flat brush for cleaner shapes.

### Tips:

- Lighten gray with a touch of white and darken it with a bit of black to create subtle variations and more depth.
- Use small dots of each color to map out where each tone goes before filling it in.
- Paint the foreground cloud in light gray to bring it forward in the scene.
- Thin, even layers will dry faster and work best for layering texture later



## STEP FIVE

### Instructions:

Paint the small area at the bottom of the canvas near the river and the center section of the moon using black paint. A small flat or round brush works best for control. Let dry completely.

### Tips:

- You only need a little black—apply it in a thin, even layer.
- This step adds depth and contrast to the scene.
- Be sure the surrounding areas (gray mountains and metallic moon) are dry to avoid smudging or muddy colors.

# Painting Instructions *Continued*

## STEP SIX

**Instructions**:
Once your painting is completely dry, use a palette knife to scrape a thin layer of metallic silver over the white mountains, light and dark gray mountains, the small black riverbank area, and the white cloud.

**Tips:**
- Use the back of the palette knife to scoop up a little paint, then wipe it on the edge of your plate—this helps control how much you apply.
- Think "scrape" rather than "paint." This language usually clicks with people—you're dragging a thin layer over the surface to build rocky-looking texture.
- Less is more: it's much easier to add more later than it is to take it off.
- Follow the angle of the mountains for a more natural texture.
- Gently scrape a bit of silver across the white cloud for added shimmer and dimension—just a whisper of sparkle.

## STEP SEVEN

**Instructions**:
Use the handle end of your paintbrush to stamp stars into the night sky using silver and/or white paint.

**Tips:**
- Dip the handle in paint, then gently stamp 2–3 stars before re-dipping to keep your dots clean and bold.
- Try using different brush handles to create stars of different sizes.
- Group a few stars together or space them out—whatever feels right to you!

# Painting Instructions *Continued*

## STEP EIGHT: OUTLINING

### Instructions:

Once your painting is completely dry, outline your mountain shapes, moon, and any other key details. You can use a permanent marker, a Posca paint pen, or a fine liner brush with black paint—whichever tool you have available.

### Tips:

- A brush-tip marker (like a Sharpie Brush Pen) works great for this step. You can create thick or thin lines depending on the angle you use.
- Rest your pinky on the canvas as a "kickstand" to help steady your hand.
- Don't worry about perfectly straight lines! The natural wiggle of your hand adds personality and movement.
- If your lines aren't very visible due to the metallic paint, just trace where you can see them or sketch them back in lightly with pencil before going over with your pen or brush.

## STEP NINE: FINAL TOUCHES

### Instructions:

Add small white highlights to the moon, water, and the tops of the clouds to bring a touch of brightness and depth to your night scene.

### Tips:

- Use a small detail brush with just a bit of white paint. Wipe off the excess before applying—you're aiming for a light, dry-brush effect.
- Think of it like "scraping" the paint gently over the surface— this technique helps create soft, glowing highlights.
- Focus on the rounded edges of the moon and clouds, and the ripples or reflections in the water.
- Less is more. Step back to check how it looks—you can always add more, but it's harder to take away.

# You Did It!

You've finished your night landscape painting—great work! Before you hang it up or gift it to someone special, here are a few optional finishing touches to really make it shine:

## FINAL CARE & DISPLAY TIPS

- **Seal your painting** with a clear acrylic sealer (spray or brush-on) to protect it from dust, smudges, and moisture. Be sure it's completely dry before sealing.
- Want to skip framing? Try **gliding a sponge dipped in black paint** along the edges of the canvas for a crisp, finished look. It makes the artwork feel complete and polished on its own.
- If you do want to frame it, floating **frames from Amazon** are an affordable and easy way to elevate your piece. They make the painting really pop!

Now step back and admire what you've created—you brought this canvas to life!

# Behind the Brush

Hey! I'm Susan,

I created ArtGrow Creative because I know what it feels like to doubt your creativity — and how powerful it is to rediscover it. You don't need to be an "artist" to make something beautiful. You just need space to try, play, and surprise yourself.

Whether this was your first time picking up a brush or one of many, I hope you felt that spark. That moment where you realize you're allowed to create just because you want to.

Thanks for painting with us. Let's keep growing — one brushstroke at a time.

*Susan O'Sullivan Choros*

# Share Your Work

We'd love to see what you've created! Post your painting using **#ArtGrowCreative** and be sure to follow and tag us on Instagram **@artgrow.creative**.
**Prefer to share by email?**
Send a photo of your finished piece (or your painting in action!) to susan@heyimsusan.com — we love seeing what you've made.

# Let's Do This Again!

**Paint Kits:** Order a paint kit that comes with everything you need — brushes, paint, and step-by-step instructions.
**Private Events:** Book a Private Party for birthdays, team events, or a creative night in with friends.
**Pop-Up Paint Socials:** Join a Pop-Up Paint Social happening in your community — no experience needed, just show up and paint!
**Stay Connected:** Join our mailing list to find out when the next event is happening near you!

# Troubleshooting Common Acrylic Painting Challenges

*Even the most confident artists run into little hiccups! Here are some common painting issues and quick fixes to help you troubleshoot with ease, but remember, mistakes are part of the process. Trust the journey, and most importantly—enjoy creating!*
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## 1. Paint is streaky or see-through

*Problem:* The canvas is showing through too much.
*Fix:* Let it dry fully and add a second thin layer. Acrylic paint works best in layers—don't try to glob on too much at once.

## 2. Colours are muddy or blending weirdly

*Problem:* You're mixing colours on the canvas that weren't meant to mix.
*Fix:* Let each section dry completely before painting beside or on top of it. A quick blast with a hairdryer helps speed things up!

## 3. Brushstrokes look too harsh

*Problem:* You want smoother blends or softer texture.
*Fix:* Use a light hand and slightly dampen your brush with clean water to help the paint glide more smoothly. Blend while the paint is still wet.

## 4. Paint is drying too fast

*Problem:* You're losing time to blend or adjust.
*Fix:* Work in smaller sections or lightly mist your palette with water to keep paints workable. Some people also use a wet palette.

## 5. You can't see your sketch anymore

*Problem:* You painted over your outlines and feel lost.
*Fix:* That's okay! You can always re-sketch with chalk or a water-soluble pencil, or freehand with a brush or marker during outlining.

## 6. *Paint looks clumpy or uneven*

*Problem: Too much paint or an old brush.*
*Fix:* Wipe off excess paint before applying. Use a thin, even layer and try a softer brush. Clumps can often be smoothed once dry with a dry brush or sanding block.

## 7. The paint is lifting when you try to paint over it

*Problem:* You're going over an area that's not quite dry.
*Fix:* Stop and dry the area completely before layering again.

## 8. You're feeling stuck or frustrated

*Problem:* It's not looking how you imagined.
*Fix:* Take a step back and remember that acrylics are super forgiving. You can always paint over something or adjust it later. Keep going—perfection isn't the goal, progress is.