

A BIRD OF PREY

The Sam Sidders way!



Painting a Bird of Prey

Our subject for this exercise is this Whistling Kite. All you will need for this exercise are two tubes of paint, a few brushes plus a sheet of watercolor paper and a pencil.

Materials:

- 1 sheet of 300# paper 11"x15"
- **Indigo paint** (or other dark blue)
- **Burnt Sienna paint**
- 1" flat brush,
- #2 pointed round,
- #8 pointed round,
- #2 liner brush
- lead pencil or neutral watercolor pencil

STEP 1: Using the pencil, loosely draw the basic shapes. The idea is not to carefully draw every detail then fill it in, but to get a rough guideline for the major shapes. Don't worry about accurate details, but concentrate on accurate proportions.

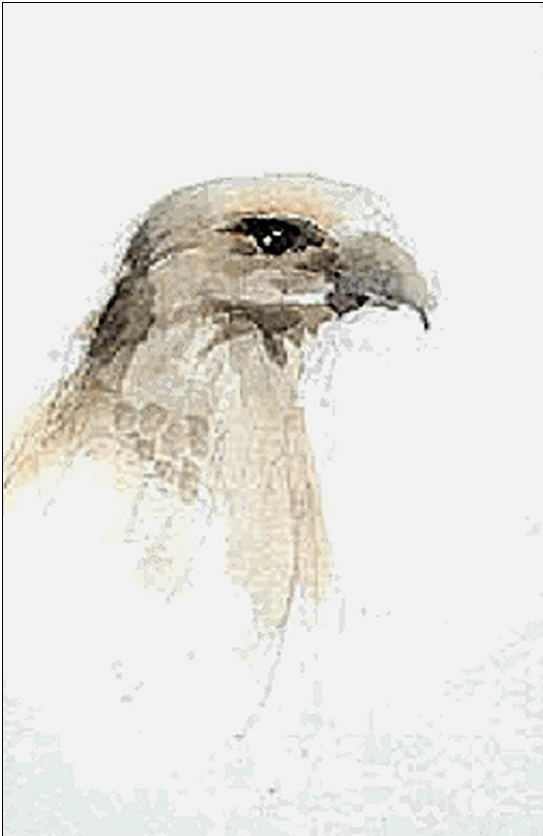


STEP 2: Once you are satisfied with your drawing, a very pale wash of Burnt Sienna mixed with a tiny amount of Indigo can be splashed over the body. Into this damp wash place a little Burnt Sienna and a gray mixture to slightly model the form. A darker gray forms the beak - a little lighter on top.

(1" Flat brush) Finer detailed areas such as the beak may at first seem awkward to paint with the 1" brush but with practice you can do amazing things with the corner of one of these.



(All grays in this painting are mixed from the two colors)



Some more detail can be added with a warm gray - shadows under, and at the back of the head and the suggestion of feathers on the wing. Add the eye with the liner brush and a dark mixture of the two colors. Don't forget to leave a couple of small white patches for reflections. (1" Flat brush and liner brush)

STEP 3: Continue modeling with Burnt Sienna and a warm gray give the bird a nice solid form. Feather textures will add interest to the wing. The liner brush can be used to suggest feathers around the beak eye and head. Splashing some warm gray below the chest area makes a nice random transition from white paper to the



body of the bird. (1" Flat brush and liner brush)

STEP 4: The final step is to add the background.



Because the bird is very warm a cool Indigo background will give more impact. Although the background looks simple and accidental, a fair amount of thought must go into arranging tonal contrast in the right places. In order to draw attention to the area around the eye and beak, the darkest part of the background is placed behind the lightest part of the head. ***Below the dark beak and behind the shadow on the back of the neck the background is much lighter.*** Putting a slight diagonal thrust / through the background also helps draw attention to the head and balance the opposing diagonal of the bird \. Use a large brush (1" Flat brush) for the background, keeping it loose and free. Softening the edges on this background wash is made much easier when you keep a paper towel handy to quickly and simply adjust the amount of water in your brush.



A few reference photos for painting Birds of Prey. These photos were found by doing an image search on the internet. Many more are available online

Basic supplies that I use on a regular basis!

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Watercolor paper :

COLD PRESS 300#, handmade paper such as Arches or Saunders-Waterford
I highly recommend the use of 300 # paper to eliminate the need for stretching

Paint: I recommend tubes of the following 10 colors that I use regularly:

Raw Umber, Alizarin Crimson, Burnt Sienna, Raw Sienna, Yellow Ochre, Thalo Green (Phthalo Green), Ultramarine Blue, Cobalt Blue, Cadmium Red Lt., Cadmium Yellow Light.

Other watercolor paints that you may wish to add:

Cadmium Orange, Burnt Umber, Sap Green, Indigo, Cerulean Blue, Sepia, Hookers Green., Payne's Gray, Davies Gray, Lemon Yellow, New Gamboge and a small tube or bottle of white watercolor or Gouache.

Brushes:

I personally feel that the quality of brushes used in watercolor painting is a large factor in the quality of the completed painting and I suggest that you do NOT purchase the absolute cheapest brushes that you can buy, #8 Pointed Round , #6 Pointed Round, #2 Pointed Round, #0 Pointed Round, #1 or #2 Rigger (Script Liner), ¾" or 1" Flat Wash brush (these brushes should be of the "Soft" hair type) 1 ½" to 2" Hake Flat (for wetting the paper and can be of the house painting variety)



Other Items that are used regularly:

Eraser (Vinyl), Paper Towels, Pencil (2B), Spray Bottle, **white** watercolor palette with mixing area, Liquid Frisket (Masking fluid - I prefer "Masque Pen" or "Incredible White Mask"), Masking Tape (¾" or 1"), Razor Blade (Single Edge), Water container, Liquid Detergent, Table salt, Natural sponge, Small hair dryer, Frisket remover, Old or very inexpensive small artist brushes for use with Frisket



Email: seent@pldi.net or SamSidders@yahoo.com

Personal website: www.SamSidders.com

Other sites: www.ArtWanted.com/seent

www.fineartamerica.com/profiles/sam-sidders