





Soft Edges- Female Cardinal

I think the female cardinal is one of the most beautiful birds you will find in nature. Her subtle tones change depending on the light. I have painted her in many different situations and contrasts. With this lesson we will take a look at how to vary the warm and cool tones you will find in her and also changing the edges for greater contrast. There are so many looks you can develop in a painting. I have made it one of my goals as an artist to paint a wide variety of looks



that will expand the types of paintings that I do. Many artists think they have to develop their own “look”. While I sometimes agree with that, I also think that one should not limit themselves or define themselves by one look. I like to paint. I like to create and with this lesson you will see the possibilities of the design. The potential interest and contrast you can paint in one design. The beauty of painting like this is that each artist can develop the painting as they choose. I do however think as an artist we need to explore many ways to express a painting. Painting things we don’t like as well to expand our techniques.

Paint It Simply Palette

**Base Color- Medium White, White + touch
Black and Hansa Yellow**

Palette Colors

Paint It Simply Colors

Naphthol Red Light
Red Violet
Carbon Black
Phthalo Blue
Hansa Yellow
Titanium White

Additional Palette Colors

Pine Green
Burnt Sienna
Ultramarine Blue

Wood Surface

11 X 14 Wood or canvas panel



Step 1 Mottle a light blue sky color with Phthalo Blue + white and touch Red Violet. Brush over the background with the 3/4 inch brush and a little Extender Medium.



Step 2 Mottle Nap. Red Light, Carbon Black, and Hansa Yellow to make a brown and then lighten with some white.



Step 3 Begin the mantle, coverts and flight feathers on her with some long and medium sized strokes.



Step 4 Start up and around her head with some short form following strokes.



Step 5 Mottle the brush with more Hansa Yellow and add the breast area with lots of paint.



Step 6 Mottle the brush with more Naphthol Red Light and add the top feathers to her head and some orange colors to her cheeks and neck.



Step 7 Mottle more red orange with more Naphthol Red Light.



Step 8 Add the top of the beak. Also add a few strokes of this color to the body to carry the color.



Step 9 Mottle the brush with more reds and cool with some Red Violet.



Step 10 Add the reds to the flight feathers with long strokes and then make more brown and add the tail feathers.



Step 11 Also consider mottling some reds and Burnt Sienna. If you like the cooler version Red Violet and Burnt Sienna make a beautiful color for her feathers.



Step 12 Mottle some Pine Green with Burnt Sienna and reds to tone and then lighten with some sky color and add below her body and up the sides softening into the sky.



Step 13 Now we need to mottle some soft greys with greens, reds and then warm with some Hansa Yellow. Lighten with touch white.



Step 14 Casually begin the shapes of the flowers. They can be painted as open blossoms or roses. Both shapes work well with her.



Step 15 Mottle the Pine Green a little darker and more toned with some Burnt Sienna and add the shadow shapes around the flowers. Use the chisel to add the stems.



Step 16 Soften the back edges of the flower with your finger so the edges are lost.



Step 17 Mottle the brown, oranges with some reds and begin to mottle the tone on her back.



Step 18 Lighten the breast area with more yellow and white and then soften the edges with your finger.



Step 19 Add some strokes of brown under the eye to darken the cheek area. Small strokes for feathers.



Step 20 Add some Burnt Sienna to the back of the eye with the small round brush.



Step 21 Add some Carbon Black to the front of the eye. Tap the color in. No need to make a perfect circle.



Step 22 Mottle Burnt Sienna, Red Violet and touch Carbon Black and add some small feathers around the face between the beak and eye. Keep a small space from the eye.



Step 23 Using the tip of the brush, pull some strokes down the neck and curve some around the cheeks.



Step 24 Add some strokes down the flight feathers. Vary the widths and lengths to add some interest.



Step 25 Lightly sketch in some of the other feathers from the other side of her.



Step 26 Mottle the color with a little more brown and mottle the color into the cheek area and walk the color out with some feathering strokes.



Step 27 Restate the blues in the sky. I like to do this several times during the painting to bring the head forward.



Step 28 Using the tip of the brush, and some soft whites, add the small eye ring and shine to her eye. Keeps these small.



Step 29 Mottle some light toned yellows and begin to decorate around her head with shape following strokes. Start the look of feathers with small strokes.



Step 30 Mottle the brush with some more orange and refine the beak with other tones, varying the color just a little for interest.



Step 31 Using a small flat or round work down the cheek area towards the mantle making small feather strokes in the direction of her feathers.



Step 32 Add some lighter feather strokes to her breast area. Follow the contours of her body and soften them into the background as you go down towards the tail.



Step 33 Mottle the brush with some lighter reds and using the chisel of the brush lighten the edges of the flight feathers and coverts.



Step 34 Use your finger to soften the feathers as they go around towards the other side. Keep the right side softer as it fades away.



Step 35 Mottle the brush with some additional reds and add some color to the cheeks. Follow the contours. Paint back and forth through the tones for interest.



Step 36 Lighten the breast color and add some smaller strokes applying some light strokes over the wing to set the wing into the body.



Step 37 Mottle the brush with some yellows and browns and negative paint out some of the lights restating the darks for more tone interest.



Step 38 Mottle a #10 flat with some of the sky color and clean up around her head and neck to push her forward. Clean edges advance and we want them in this area.



Step 39 Soften the edges of her body that recede into the back. This will keep the interest up towards her head.



Step 40 Use the chisel of the larger flat to add some lighter and darker strokes to her tail to begin the decoration. Keep soft.



Step 41 I will sometimes restate areas with the latger brush as well to give different looks to the feathers.



Step 42 Using a small flat restate some shadow and lights working the tones in the feathers again.



Step 43 Mottle a soft yellow orange and add to the centers of the roses to begin the shapes.



Step 44 Mottle the color lighter with some light color. Begin the shapes of the flowers making more detailed edges in the front of the flower.



Step 45 Keep the flower petals as they go around to the back softer. Vary the amounts of lights on each petal for more interest.



Step 46 Add some additional edges to the other flowers, keeping the more defined edges towards the cardinal which helps support the center of interest.



Step 47 Soften the exchanges of the colors in the centers of the flowers. Paint for movement, working the strokes in and out to create movement and interest.



Step 48 Mottle the brush with some Brunt Sienna and then add to the center of the flowers. Here I also built a stroke across the front of the flower to turn it downwards.



Step 49 Mottle the brush with some light color and add some soft petal indication to the suggestive flowers on the outside edges.



Step 50 Mottle the brush with some darker Pine Green and toned browns. Negative paint around the backsides of the flowers to push them forward.



Step 51 Soften the back edges of some flowers to push them back. Don't negative paint around each flower. Only a few in some areas to add some interest. Others keep soft.



Step 52 I restate one last time around her face to push her forward with the light sky color. Clean edges. Enjoy!

Enlarge 130% for Full Size, or desired size

Female Cardinal



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