

Let's Paint a Moonlit Dreamscape



A mixed media
demonstration +
support guide
from Melanie Bess



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Before we start...

If you want to simplify this project...

You can either color the coloring page OR

Skip the background and other elements.

Just draw a cairn or stack of stones and paint it with your mixed media materials in the same order as the demonstration.

You don't have to tackle the entire moonlit dreamscape on your first go if you don't feel ready.

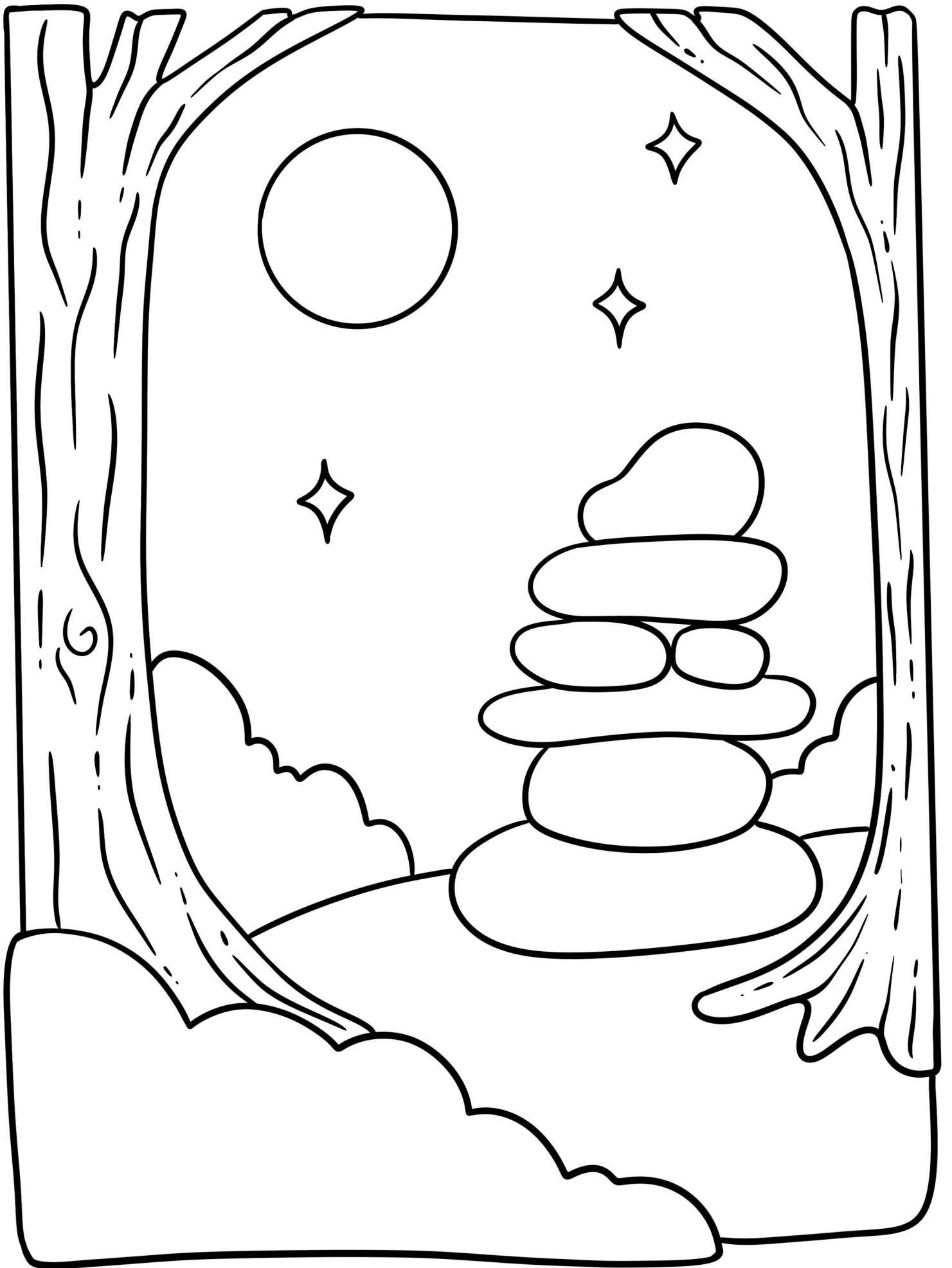
Try a few cairns to start and work your way up to the full scene.

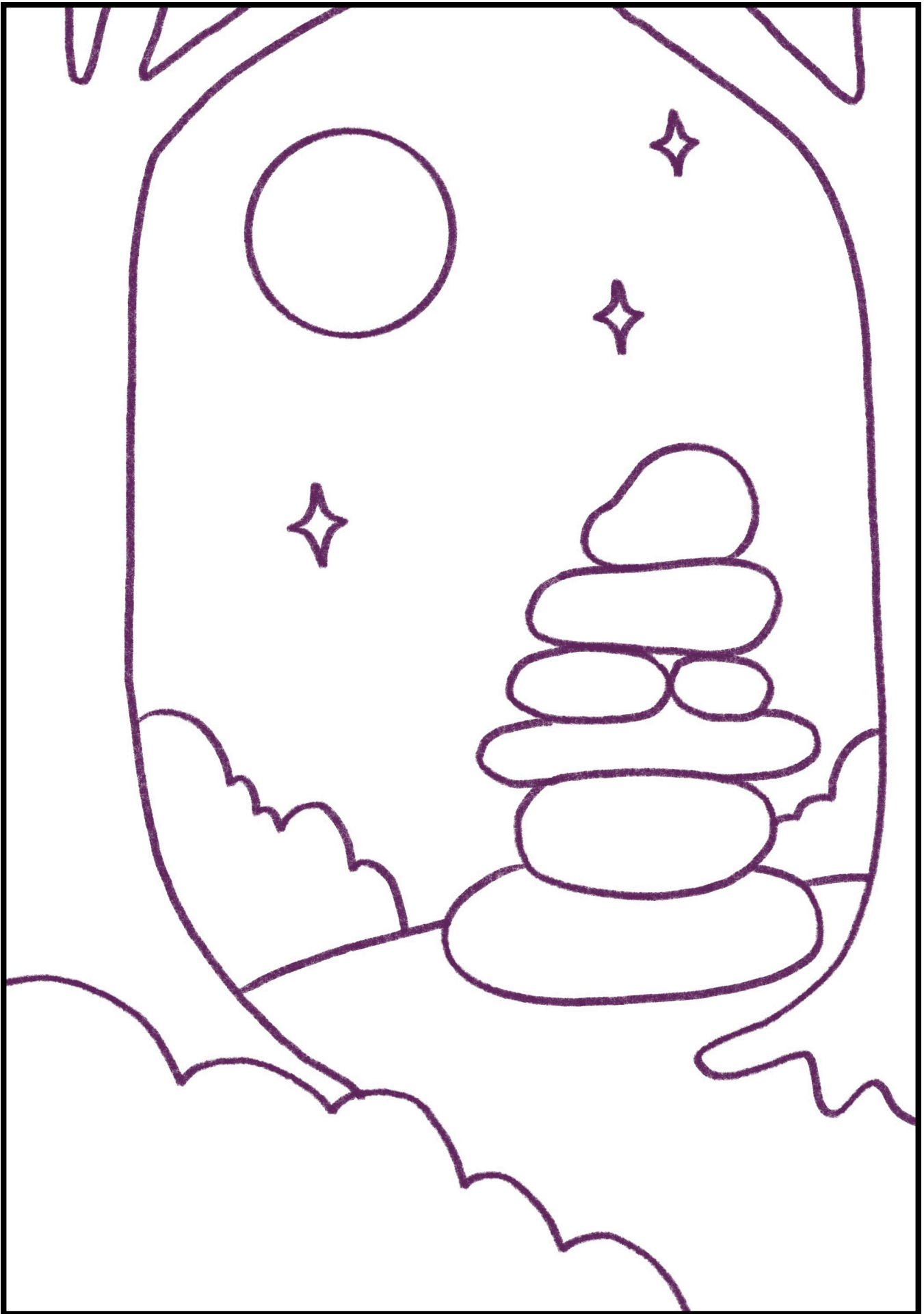
So sketch out a cairn, paint each stone with a wet-on-wet technique, and then embellish the stones however you like with your mixed media materials.



Making a cairn like this is a great way to turn this project into something more bite-sized.







7 x 10 sketch



Square Sketch

favorite supplies



PAPER

Arches Cold Press

100% cotton watercolor paper

*If you cannot get Arches right now,
try to get 100% cotton paper*



PAINT

I use 2 main brands of watercolor:

Tube Paints: Daniel Smith Paints

- In this painting I used:
moonglow, rose of
ultramarine, opera pink,
perylene green, amethyst
genuine

This was painted
with Moonglow!



Pan Paints:

Art Philosophy Pan Sets

I used the pastel pan set for this
painting - especially the purple
and light aqua + minty colors

Lastly, my periwinkle color was a
pan from a set by Kuretake.
You can find that set [HERE](#).

OTHER GOODIES

Staedtler Watercolor Pencils

NeoColor Crayons

Alcohol Markers

Regular + Acryla Gouache

Copic White Paint For Details

Metallic Watercolors

White Paint Pen

Ceramic Paint Palette

Washi Tape

Spray Bottle With Water

Any Round Brushes

Circle Making Tool



*anything that is underlined should be
a clickable link. They are affiliate
links that will provide me with a small
kickback at no extra cost to you, the
buyer.



Plan your painting...

choose from
the 2
sketch
options



use melanie's
color
palette or
plan your own



think about
what symbol
or words you
might like to
include on
your cairn...

melanie
used the rune
for "JOY"

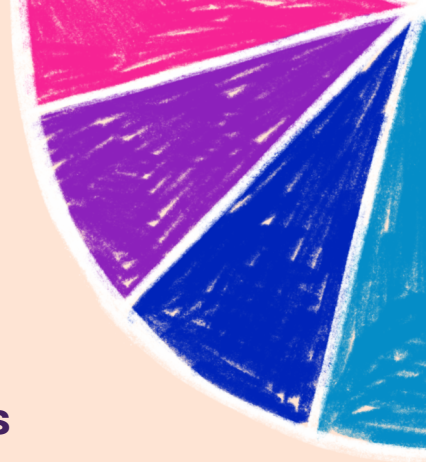




more inspiration



let's paint!



Melanie's typical order of operations:

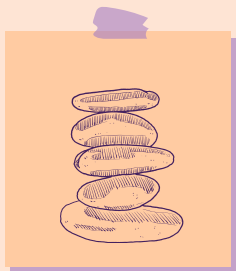
Choose Your Color Palette + Gather Supplies

1. I will often start with an analogous color palette (3 colors that are next to each other on the color wheel) and add in one or two other pops of color.
2. gather all of your favorite mixed media supplies! I use watercolor pencils, neo-color crayons, watercolor paints, alcohol markers, gouache paint, colored pencils, and white inks.

Sketch out the composition

(My painting was done on a 7x10 watercolor block)

1. Add your washi tape if you choose to do a clean line frame, skip if you like the organic broken frame.
2. use a watercolor pencil so the lines will disappear when you paint
 - choose a color that works with your color palette to avoid muddy colors.
 - use a sticky note first to create a thumbnail before drawing on your paper if you need a warm-up



BEGIN LAYER ONE

1. Start with your dry media that can be activated with water, like watercolor pencils and neo-color crayons. Lay down some initial color and texture with these tools first and let loose.... don't be afraid to scribble a bit!



★ You've got this!
remember... you can
take it slow and do one small
bit a time.





BEGIN LAYER TWO

Layer two is all about laying down your ground work of watercolor (or alcohol markers). You will use the wet-on-wet technique with your watercolor. If you choose to add marker, you can simply “paint” in any base colors you like to with your markers.

1. Choose ONE section to begin working on that you are ready to complete the wet-on-wet technique on in one sitting. (a tree, a hill, a bush, the moon)
2. Prepare your color(s) by making a juicy puddle of that color mixed with clean water. (More water = lighter color)
3. Using a clean brush and clean water, paint over your entire section until the area is shiny with water. Mop up any large puddles with a nearly dry brush and tap on a towel to release the water from your brush.
4. Fill your brush with your first color and tap that into an edge and let it start to spread and play in the water you’ve already put on the paper.
5. Start adding in any other colors you want to mix into this section.
6. As the paper starts to dry a little bit, your colors will spread less and you can create more concentrated areas of color for things like star bursts, flowers, rocky textures, shadows, etc.
7. Allow that section to dry (or use a blow dryer) before working on any sections that are close to this one or touching it. Unless you want to encourage watercolor blooms between your sections.



REPEAT THESE STEPS ON EACH ADDITIONAL SECTION IN YOUR PAINTING (Trees, hills, sky, stones, moon, etc.)

OPTIONAL: a 2nd layer of watercolor can now be put down as a glaze on any areas that you’d like to add some extra color or texture to.



★ Look at the magic you have already made! Take a picture of your painting after this stage. 🥰



BEGIN LAYER THREE



Layer three is the time to grab out your favorite colored pencils, alcohol markers, pens, etc. to add some extra fun!

All of these media should layer very nicely over your watercolors.

1. First, let your eyes bounce around your painting and look for any areas that you would like to add more color, texture, or definition to.
2. You can use your pencils to clean up any fuzzy edges and lines that might be bothersome.
3. You can also begin decorating your Cairn or rocks using your pencils, pen, markers. (patterns, wishing lines, hand lettering, symbols, stars, etc. I have some ideas for you on another page)
4. Purples and blues make really beautiful shadow colors.

My favorite colored pencil colors:

Prismacolor: Mulberry, Blue Lake, Light Aqua, White, Any of the Neon Colors (esp. PINK!)

Faber Castel: Heliotrope



★ Infuse your rocks with your own magic and special meaning. You cannot do it wrong.



BEGIN LAYER FOUR

Layer four is the time to add that final layer of magic!

Add your stars, moss, lettering, or any bits that need to pop off the page.

Use materials that will not reactivate the layers beneath. So use materials that don't require lots of water.

1. Use your favorite white pigment to put in your own custom universe! Go star crazy!
2. You can also use your white pigment to add highlight lines, lines of your stones, and any other sparkly bits you like.
3. If you want to add any acryla gouache or acrylic paint details, now is the time! Make that your final layer. Acryla gouache is great versus regular gouache because it won't activate the watercolors below. It will sit on top and dry really nicely without getting muddy.

My favorite toppers:

Copic Opaque White

White Paint Pens

Acryla Gouache mixed with watercolors to create custom colors

NeoColor Crayons for more texture

★ I knew you could do this!
Take a picture of your painting
and make a note of how you
feel about it. ★





FAST TIPS



Prep Your Paints Beforehand

Spray your paint with some clean water to start activating the color a few minutes before you begin. You want nice juicy puddles of paint when you are making playful watercolor art. I often spray my entire palette or tin of paints even if I don't plan to use every single color.

Have 2 Jars of Clean Water

Keeping 2 jars of clean water near you makes life a little easier. Use one jar for putting clean water down onto your paper and the other jar for cleaning your brush. Then when your cleaning jar looks like mud... go get some fresh water.

My paint doesn't move much or "explode"...?

Try adding more water to the pan or puddle of paint and really mix it up. Also, make sure your paper has a nice even layer of water for the paint to move in.

If that doesn't help, it could be that your paint color simply isn't a very explosive color. Some watercolors just don't move much without your help.

Let Go Of Perfection + KEEP PAINTING!

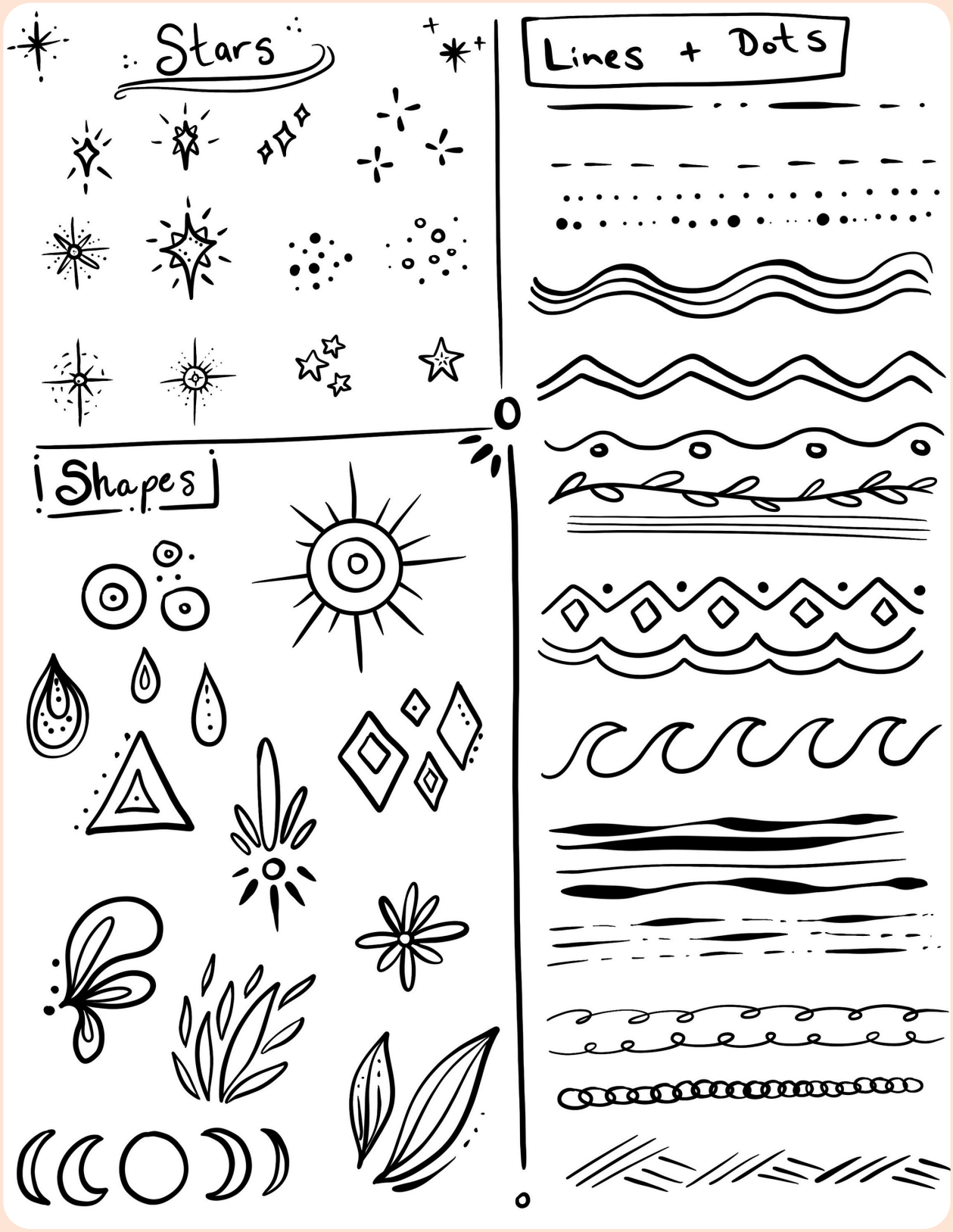
Please speak kindly to yourself.

Watercolor is not always an easy medium but it IS a playful one if you can let it just do its thing. The more you just jump in there and use it... the more confident you will become and the easier it eventually gets.

You are NEVER wasting your art materials when you use them. Promise.



Fun Embellishment Ideas



go get your
freebies!

cosmic
coloring
library



scan me:



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