



REFLECTIONS OF  
**GRATITUDE**

Main Lesson by Juna Biagioni

[junabiagioni.com](http://junabiagioni.com)

# LIST OF SUPPLIES

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- **Printout** of the template on regular printer paper (see page 3).

If you're already familiar with drawing faces you can work without the template if you prefer.

- **Watercolor paper** or other sturdy paper, same size or bigger than your printout.

I used cold press watercolor paper, 24x32 cm (ca. 10x13 inch). It was still attached to the paper pad that it came on, but otherwise you can tape your paper to a sturdy board (make sure you can pick it up and tilt/move it).

- **Fluid acrylic medium** or gel acrylic medium.

This is used both to glue down the template and to seal the page before starting the alcohol technique. I used a matte medium because in the last stage I draw with hard pastels on top, and the surface needs to have a bit of tooth (texture) in order for the pastels to work. If you don't use any pastels or other drawing supplies you can also use a glossy medium to seal the page.

I used fluid matte medium by Liquitex. If you use gel medium and it's too thick, you can make it more fluid by adding a bit of water.

- **Alcohol markers:** one or more in your favorite colors.

Alcohol markers are markers that can be blended with alcohol, as I show in the lesson. There are many brands available. Examples are Copic markers, Prismacolor Premier markers, Spectrum Noir markers, and some Sharpie markers. If you're unsure whether your marker is alcohol-based, just test it out on a small piece of paper that has been sealed like I show in the video. Then add alcohol and see if the ink reacts.

I used Spectrum Noir markers in the colors LV3 (the darker one) and PL5 (the lighter one).

- **Alcohol** in a spray bottle, dropper or other container.

I used 99,8% isopropyl alcohol, but lower percentages (70% and up) will probably work too. It will just take a bit longer to dry. Alcohol ketonatus may work as well, but I haven't tried that so you need to test it out first.

- **White gesso** or white acrylic paint.

I used white gesso by Liquitex.

- **Hard pastels** (optional) in your favorite colors.

I used Faber-Castell Polychromos Artists Pastels in white and cobalt turquoise. Alternatively you can use pastel pencils, regular colored pencils, crayons or other drawing materials. Just test out what you have, to see what you would like to use for this project.

- **Brushes:**

One bigger brush to glue down your template and seal the page, and one smaller brush to paint details.

- **Heatgun** or hairdryer.

- **Paper towels.**

- **Water & plate** for your gesso or paint.

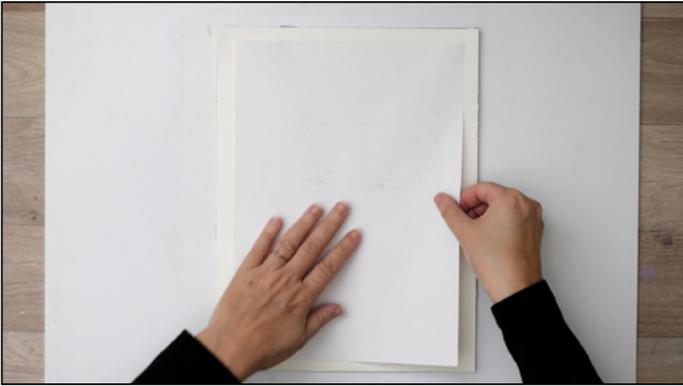
- **Old key card** (optional) or a piece of cardstock or something similar:

To remove any bubbles after gluing down your template.



# THE PROCESS

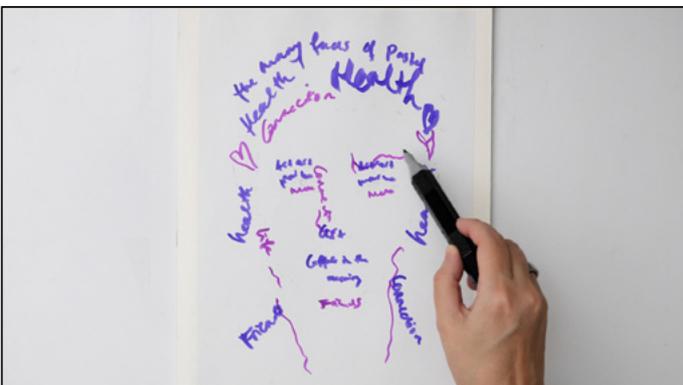
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**1.** I start by gluing down a printout of the template (see page 3) onto watercolor paper, using fluid matte medium. This is just to provide a sturdy surface for the template, so you can use any type of sturdy paper or cardstock. If you're already familiar with drawing faces, you don't have to use the template if you prefer.



**2.** Then I seal the page with a top coat of fluid matte medium. Make sure to cover the whole page. This is an important step, otherwise the alcohol technique won't work because the ink will get absorbed into the paper too quickly.



**3.** Now I use my alcohol markers to write down my words of gratitude and what I've learned and achieved this year. While doing this, I focus on what these words mean to me, what they represent. I also doodle a little bit here and there. I roughly follow the lines of the template, but work very freely. You don't have to write neatly because the words will disappear in the next stage. Just have fun and play!

*Continued on the next page. >>*



**4.** Next I apply alcohol with my spray bottle. This dissolves the marker ink so I can move it around by tilting the page.



**5.** I also use my heatgun to move the ink around, and to dry it as well.

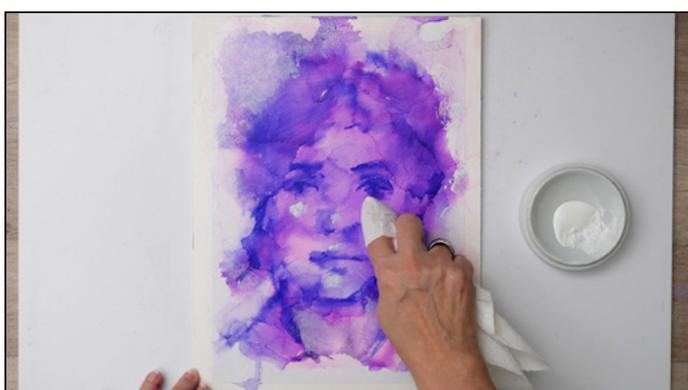


**6.** With a small brush I blend out the alcohol and marker ink, creating some translucent details. It reminds me a bit of watercolor paint.

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**7.** You can repeat steps 3, 4, 5 and 6 as many times as you like. Make sure that each time you dry the page before continuing to work with your markers.



**8.** Next I use a paper towel to add white gesso. I do this to make the background lighter, to add some light and highlights to the face, and to create interesting texture.



**9.** I continue working with the gesso, markers and alcohol until I'm happy with the portrait so far. Remember to dry the page each time before working with your markers again.

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**10.** Lastly I use my white and turquoise hard pastels to draw some details. I also use these pastels to add more color to the background and other parts of the portrait, blending out the pigment which at the same time emphasises the texture of the layers underneath.

When I'm ready, I don't seal the page but protect it with a sheet of glassine paper when I store it (you can also use tracing paper or parchment paper or something similar).

During the whole process I meditate on the words that I've written down, and I integrate this into my portrait. It's a representation of me and my gratitude, achievements and learnings of this past year.

And remember: it doesn't have to look like you. You don't have to create a self-portrait or 'master piece'. So, no pressure! Just give yourself permission to play, to have fun and to create your unique, freestyle gratitude portrait. :-)

# LET'S CONNECT!

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One of the things that I love about making art, is how we can connect with other people. It's so wonderful to be able to share our art, talk about it, ask questions, and cheer each other on. And thanks to the internet, we can make new art friends all over the world so easily!

Here are the ways we can stay in touch:

**Website:** check out my website at [junabiagioni.com](http://junabiagioni.com). You can sign up for my newsletter, receive a free mini lesson, read articles, and find all my online art classes there.

**Facebook group:** if you are on Facebook, come and join my group 'Juna Biagioni's Art Atelier'. This is a Facebook group for art lovers at any level, from beginners to long-time veterans. Post your art and works-in-progress, meet fellow creatives, ask questions, get support, and have fun!

**Social media:** just search for 'Juna Biagioni' and you'll find me on Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest and YouTube. I'd love to connect with you there!



*\*Juna*