



Orca in the Stars

with Nicole Warrington

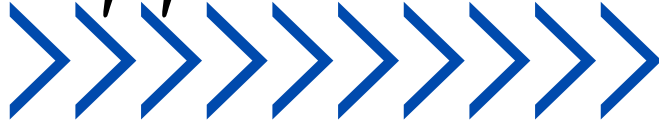
One of the most beautiful creatures where I live in the Pacific Northwest is the orca whale. To me, orcas represent strength, beauty, inner wisdom and resilience. In this lesson, we will paint a watercolour orca whale and a collection of starfish as collage elements. Then we will adhere them to a serene, atmospheric undersea background. We will also capture words that represent our inner wisdom and guidance, connecting them to our sea of stars.



*Follow your stars, whether they
are glistening in the sunlight or
waiting for you in the depths.
Trust your inner wisdom, and let
your own strength guide you.*

xo Nicole

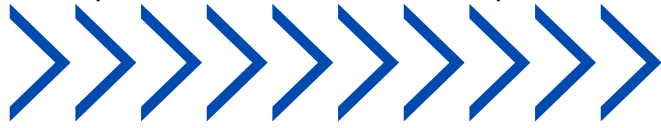
Supplies



- Stonehenge Aqua 9 x 12" coldpress watercolour paper, 2 sheets
- printed Orca whale template
- sketchbook or drawing paper
- H pencil, 4B pencil (or softer)
- permanent black pen (Staedtler Pigment Liner 0.3mm)
- eraser
- ruler
- Washi or masking tape
- circle templates approximately 6" and 1.5"
- scissors or X-Acto knife
- watercolour paints (Daniel Smith, Winsor & Newton, Opus Art Supplies Essentials)
- watercolour pencil crayons or Caran D'ache Neocolor II water-soluble wax pastels
- water jar
- rag
- table salt
- several flat and round synthetic watercolour brushes
- hair dryer or heat gun
- white pen: Sakura Gelly Roll, Uni-ball Signo, or Posca paint pen
- Golden Heavy Gel Matte Medium + acrylic brush
- acrylic paint pens or Gelly Roll pens in iridescent or other colours

Please feel free to substitute supplies

Step by Step



Part 1: The ocean background

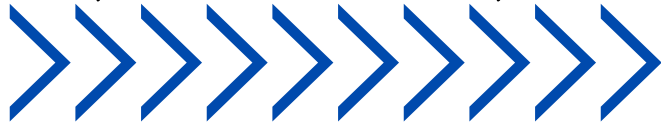
Lightly draw an approximately 6" circle on the 9 x 12" watercolour paper using an H pencil.

Choose your ocean colours. I was inspired by flowing tides, waves, seaweed and kelp. I love dark blues and hues of green. Some of the colours I used were Ultramarine Blue, Indigo, Amazonite, Burnt Sienna, Cereulean Blue Chromium, Spring Green and Winsor Green. Create darker ocean colours at the bottom, and lighter ones at the surface. Remember that the orca will be at the top of the circle, so don't add too much detail there.

Use a large round brush to create loose, flowing strokes around the circle. Use a smaller round brush to create more flowing lines and dotted patterns. Use a flat dry brush to drag out areas of paint and create texture. Use a damp brush to blend areas you want to blend or soften.



Step by Step



Part 1 continued...

Draw in organic lines or patterns using wet watercolour pencil crayons or Neocolor II water-soluble pastels. I used Derwent watercolour pencils in Kingfisher Blue, Olive Green, Copper Beech and Prussian Blue. If you don't have pencils or Neocolors, you can use thin brushes to create lines, or add the lines later with paint pens or Gelly roll pens.

Try dragging an H pencil through wet areas of the paint to create skinny paint lines and to 'etch' wavy lines into the wet paint and paper.

Drop salt into some of the 'puddle' areas of paint - aim for the wettest areas. Let dry fully. When the page is dry, remove the salt by gently rubbing it with your fingers and brushing it away.

Assess your composition and add more layers of watercolour paint dots and lines if you wish.



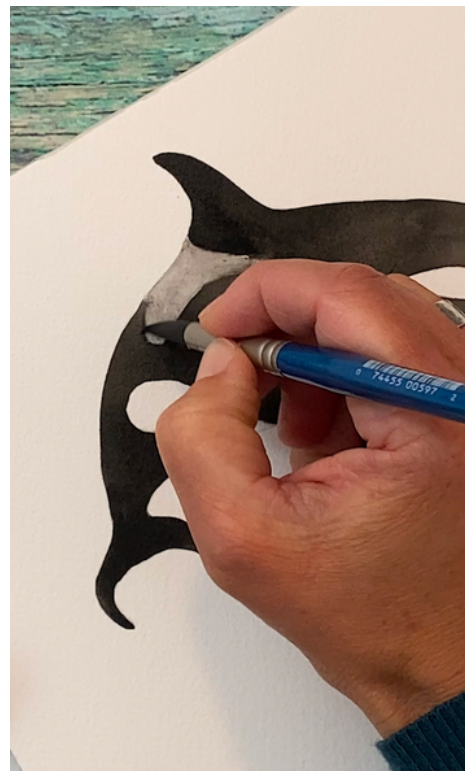
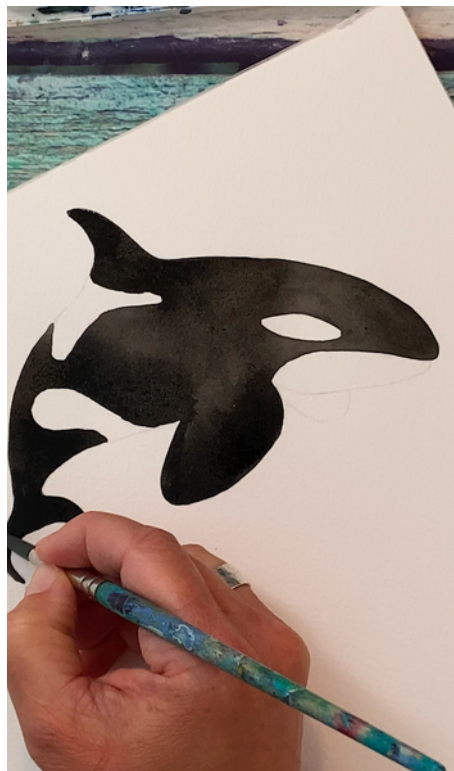
Step by Step



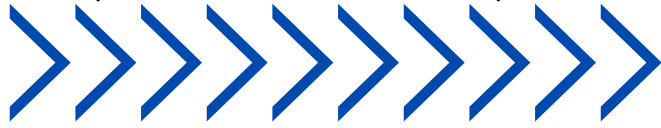
Part 2: The orca

Print out your orca template. Rub a soft pencil (4B) on the backside of the template. Tape the template to your watercolour paper. Trace the orca onto a piece of watercolour paper using your H pencil.

Paint in the orca using a rich black or dark blue paint. I use Yarka black. Pull some of the black into the 'saddle' patch on the whale's back and the belly patch to create grey areas.



Step by Step



Part 3: The starfish

Decide on the scale of your starfish. I used my washi tape roll as my template which is approximately 1.5". Practice drawing the sea star shapes into circle guides using a pencil. Remember to curve the arms at the tips or even overlap them. Give them some character!

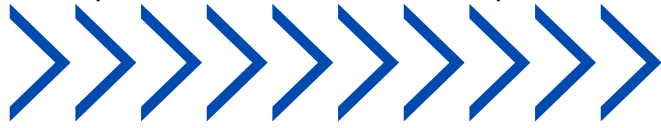
Transfer the stars to the watercolour paper using the same technique as the whale or freehand drawing. It's a good idea to create a few more than you think you need. Lightly erase the lines.

Paint the starfish with purple and orange watercolour. I used Alizaron Crimson, Ultramarine Blue, Cadmium Red, Cadmium Yellow, Burnt Sienna. Let dry fully.

Add the white spine (dots) details using an acrylic paint pen, Gelly Roll Pen or Uni-ball Signo pen.



Step by Step



Part 4: Finishing your painting

Carefully cut out your orca and stars using scissors or an X-Acto knife. Be mindful of the skinny part of the tail! If there are any rough white areas from cutting the edges, you can touch them up with some black paint. Use a damp brush and make sure the paint is as dry as possible so that you don't make water runs on your orca.

Play with the composition of your orca and the stars in your ocean wreath. I like to work with odd numbers, just like flower arranging.

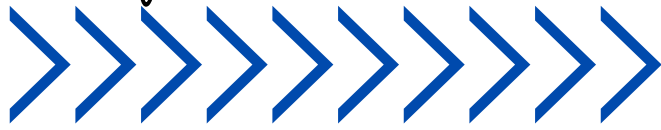
Use a pencil to mark the location of your elements with a few dots.

Adhere the collage elements to the circle using a heavy gel medium or glue stick. Check for any medium that oozes out the sides. I like to put a scrap paper on top while I rub the collage elements.

Add in final details using the watercolour pencil crayons, paint pens and Gelly roll pens. Add words or phrases that represent your inner wisdom and guidance.



The finished art





Hello artist! I'm Nicole Warrington. I'm an artist, mother, teacher, and nature lover. I live in Comox Valley on Vancouver Island where I adore spending time in nature, expressing myself creatively, practicing yoga and meditation, and teaching art classes.

I create watercolour paintings and mixed media art journals. My art is deeply inspired by my connection to the landscape and natural world. I'm passionate about using my creativity as a practice in mindfulness and self-care. I enjoy running, hiking, yoga and meditation, and exploring the forests, mountains and beaches with my husband and two daughters. Trained in Fine Arts, Art History, and Elementary Education, I love teaching online classes and in-person workshops, connecting to both local and international communities.

Let's connect

- Subscribe to my newsletter and get [downloadable Ebb & Flow Wisdom Cards](#) with an art journaling video tutorial
- Learn watercolour and journaling in my [self-paced class Mystic Mountains](#)
- Follow my creative journey on Instagram [@coastalnicole](#)