Shakespeare Week Art School

Jane Ray

Art & Design

Watch Jane's Art School video in the video resources section and follow her step-by-step guide to help you draw one of Shakespeare's characters:

"Here is my depiction of Ariel in the book of *The Tempest* retold by Georghia Ellinas, illustrated by me. and published by Walker Books."



Step 1

When I start to think about how to depict any character, I always create a 'word hoard' – a list of words, phrases, ideas and images that say something to me about the character I'm drawing. Here is my word hoard for Ariel:

Spirit of the Air, magical bubble, transparent, winged, puff of air, wind-blown seeds, sky, dandelion clocks, feather light, blown on the wind, fragile, sometimes hard to see, cloud, mist, breeze, wind swept…

If you play around with your 'word hoard' you might find you have a poem!

Step 2



Here's how I created Ariel: I did a rough pencil drawing of Ariel. I planned his clothing: the play was written around 1610 when King James was on the throne, so I did some research about what would have been worn at that time – doublet, breeches, hose, and a ruff around the neck. I also give him a weathervane to hold – a weathervane is something that will show which direction the wind is blowing in and I thought it would give a sense of Ariel being a spirit of the air. I put clouds on his garments and feathers in his ruff. I made his hair tangled and the ribbons on his sleeves blow in the wind…

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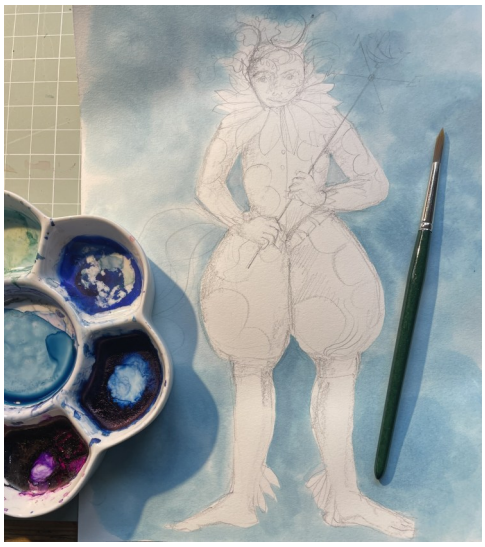
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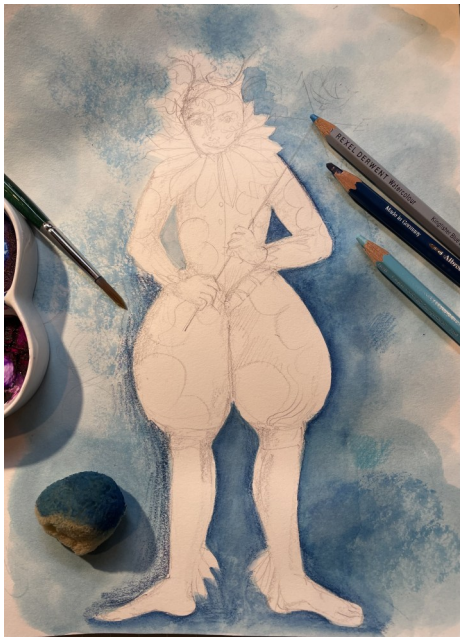
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Step 3

In my third step, I added colour, but working around the figure, rather than on it - painting the background. I use what is called a 'wet on wet' technique, of wetting the paper around the pencil figure, being careful not to go over the line, with a biggish brush, and then dripping my watercolour paint onto the wet paper, where it spreads out and 'bleeds' creating a soft, cloudy mass of colour with no hard lines. The only part of the image that doesn't have any colour so far is the figure of Ariel itself – just white paper. This is sometimes called using negative space – the space around and between the subject of an image.





Step 4

Next, I used a small natural sponge to add texture – this is a really useful technique. You can get a lovely soft cloudy effect. I also used watercolour pencils, which you can blend with water to build depth.



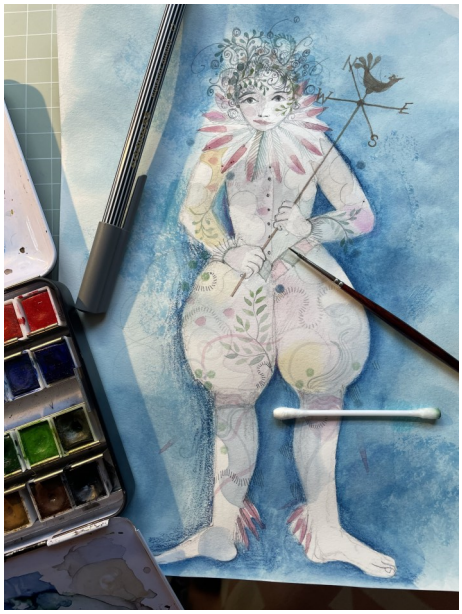
Step 5

Then I started to add colour to the actual figure – I'm thinking of the colours you might see in the clouds at sunset – pinks and pale lemons…

When the paint was completely dry, I rubbed out excessive pencil marks.

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Step 6

Next I added details to the character, working with pencil and a fine paintbrush on the facial features and patterns of clouds and leaves and feathers on Ariel's costume. I sometimes use cotton buds to add dots of paint.



Step 7

Finally I added little details of collage – cut out paper – and touches of gold to add stars and magic.

And Ariel, Spirit of the Air, is ready to fly off to tell his story! Now it's your turn!



We would love to see your finished creations.

Email them to:

shakespeareweek@shakespeare.org.uk

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