

Genesis Heat Set Oils

Cyclone the Macaw

By Brenda Holden

Rich vibrant colours and stunning clarity make this delightful picture of a native bird seem almost real enough to sing and take flight.



FINAL STEP

STEP ONE

After deciding on size and format, I drew the foreground objects to size with as much detail as possible before transferring them onto my prepared board. When I airbrush a background (as in this painting), I mask the bird and the branch with masking fluid.

STEP TWO

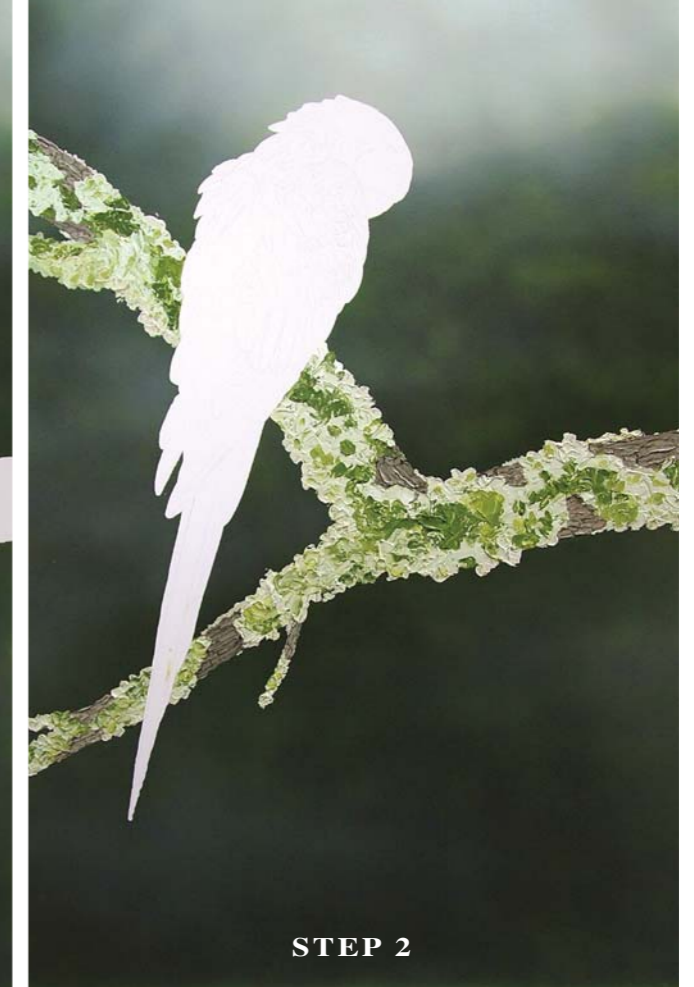
I checked the background colour against photographs taken, making sure that the foreground would stand out and not get lost. Using a palette knife, the moss and bark were added to the branch. At this stage I was not looking for detail, but texture.

MATERIALS

- Genesis Heat Set Oil Colours: Genesis Red; Ultramarine Blue; Genesis Yellow; Sap Green; Phthalo Green; Titanium White; Burnt Umber; Red Oxide; Mars Black.
- Brushes: Roymac Golden Sable sizes 000, 1, 2, 4 and 6.
- Round Tip Palette Knife.
- Background: Four coats of diluted Matisse Gesso, sanded between coats, on Saunders Hot Press Illustration Board.
- GMC 1600 watt Heat Gun, to set the oil paint.



STEP 1



STEP 2

STEP THREE

I decided that another foreground branch was needed. This was added in the same way as the main branch. Using a Number 2 brush, I added the detail to the moss and the wood – darkening the underparts and adding highlights and structure.

STEP FOUR

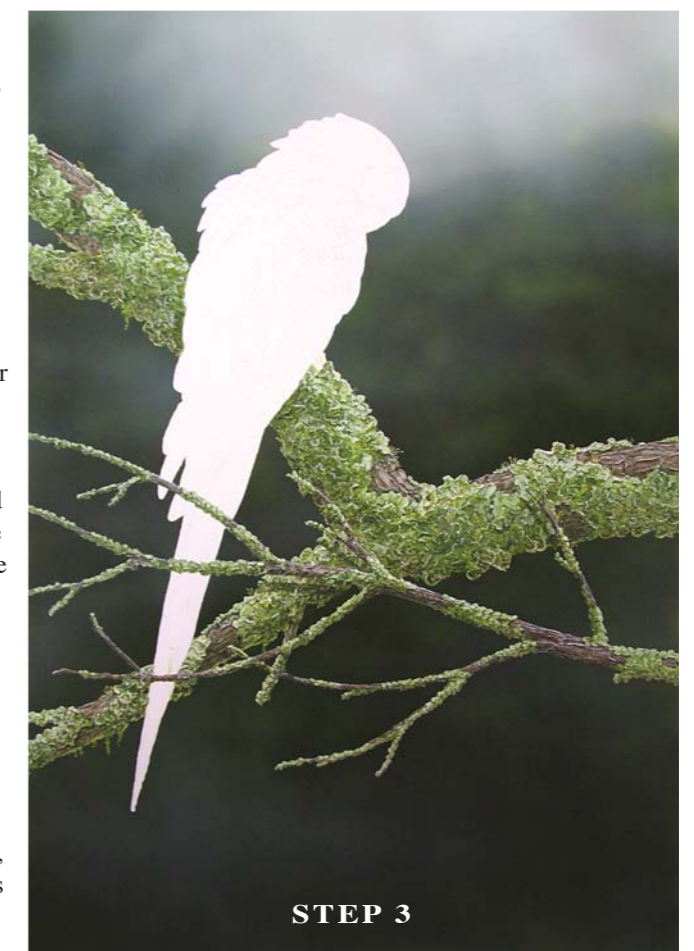
I began work on the Macaw. Using thin washes, I blocked the whole bird in. I did not do any really detailed work – just one thin wash to get overall colour and feather placement correct. This was the stage where character was developed. A feather out of place (or slightly ruffled) can help to make the painting believable.

STEP FIVE

The eyes make a painting. Using a Number 000 brush, I started with a base colour and then added the pupil. Macaws have pale yellow eyes but there is always a slightly darker colour near the pupil. When satisfied with the basis for the eye, I added the highlight – bringing the eye to life. At this stage I finished the head completely before moving down to the rest of the body.

STEP SIX

Working from the tail up, I gave each feather two more thin washes of colour before starting to define each one. A bird's feathers lay over the top of each other, so this is how I worked – doing one row of feathers before moving on to the next layer, from bottom to top. Details like splits in the feathers, as well as darkening under some and highlighting on others, gave the final painting life.



STEP 3



STEP 4



STEP 5



STEP 6

MASTER HINTS AND TIPS

- Get the nuts and bolts right! This means making sure the anatomy is correct, because it is no good having a 'great painting', only to discover that the bird, animal, perspective or anything else is wrong.
- Spend time planning the whole painting. Make sure you have good reference material and study what you're going to paint. Do sketches so that you learn how the bird moves and relates to its environment.
- Through the whole painting process, I constantly stand back to observe my work. Sometimes I look at the painting in a mirror – this tricks the eye, and any mistakes become glaringly clear.
- Last but not least, be passionate about what you are doing ... and enjoy yourself!

FINAL STEP

I left the painting face to the wall for a couple of days so that I could view it with fresh eyes – I find this very helpful in seeing anything that might need to be altered or added. In this case I decided that I had a foreground and background but the painting lacked a middle ground ... so using a Number 6 brush (which I had cut the bristles off), I stippled in the branch in the background. n