

TIPS + TRICKS

How to Make Your Digital Illustrations
Look...
...Less Digital



SHELLY
LASLO

Take the time to get to know some traditional tools- are they rough, transparent, blendable, etc.



...and practice recreating them digitally.

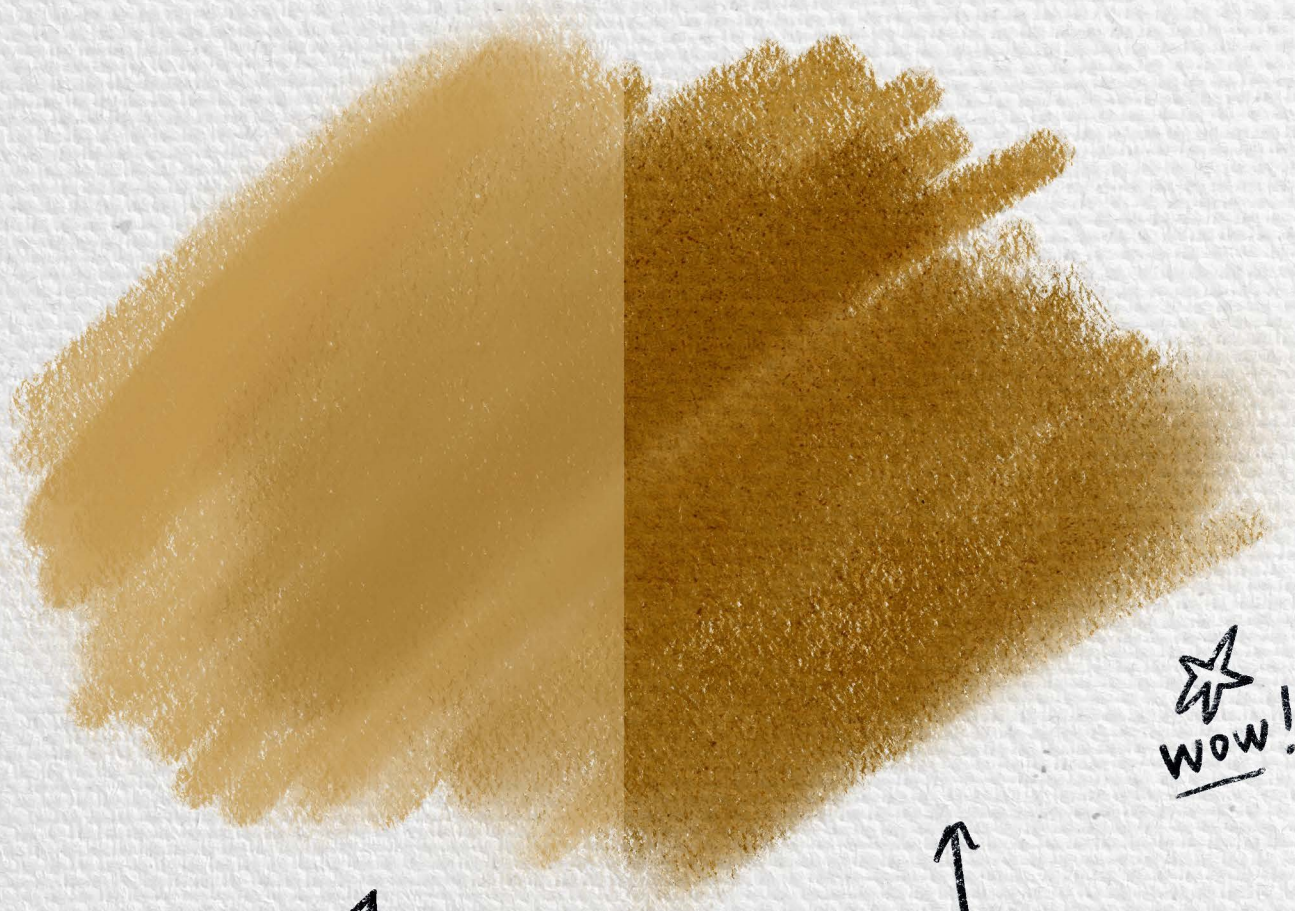




↑
COLOUR
VARIATION

↑
FLAT COLOUR

Try adding some colour variation within a filled area. This can mean a slight shift in hue, saturation, or value. It emulates the not-perfectly-mixed-paint effect.

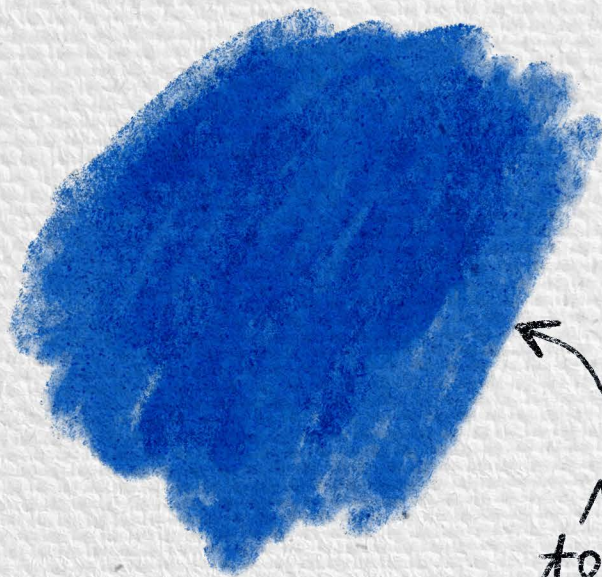


★
WOW!

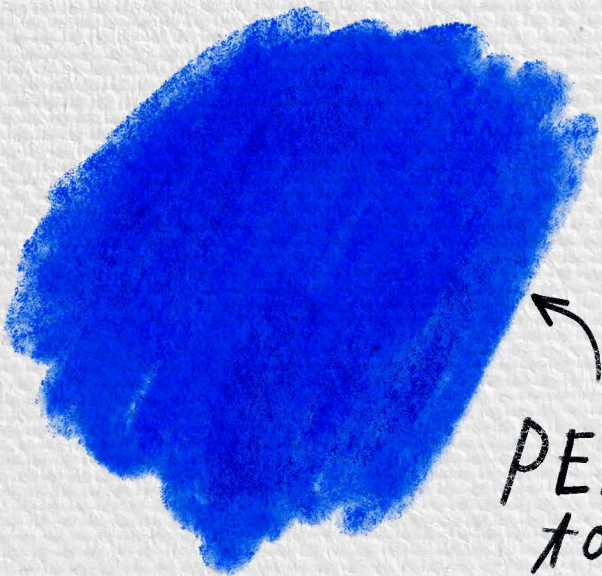
↑
NO CANVAS

↑
WITH
LUSH BRUSH
CANVAS!

Using a specially-crafted canvas file with your brushes will make them really pop. This is better for use with screens, and may need to be removed or tested before sending to print, as the digital texture may interfere with the real paper's texture.

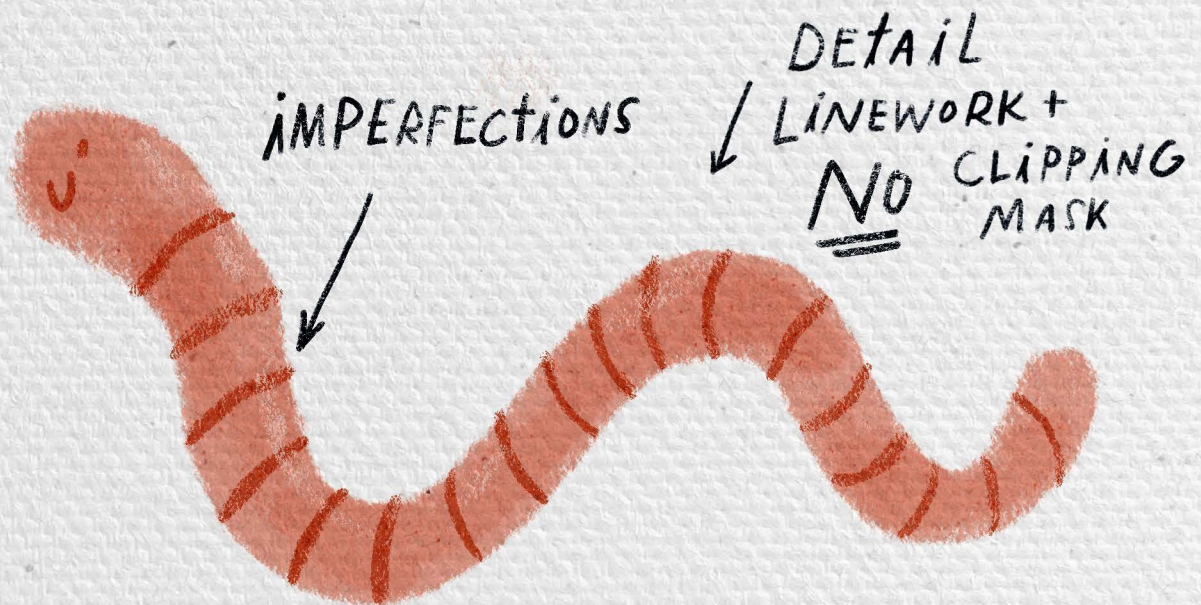


MORE
MUTED
TONE LOOKS
MORE REALISTIC

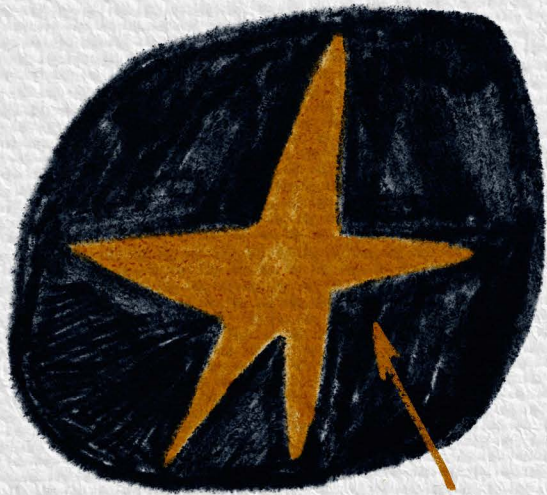


PERHAPS
TOO BRIGHT?

Try to keep the colors within the brightness that traditional media can achieve. Highly saturated colors that are only RGB-friendly are a sure giveaway that your work is digital. This is a rule made to be broken, but something to keep in mind.



Imperfections are your friend. Treat your illustrations as you would a traditional piece, and avoid over-using alpha lock and clipping masks.



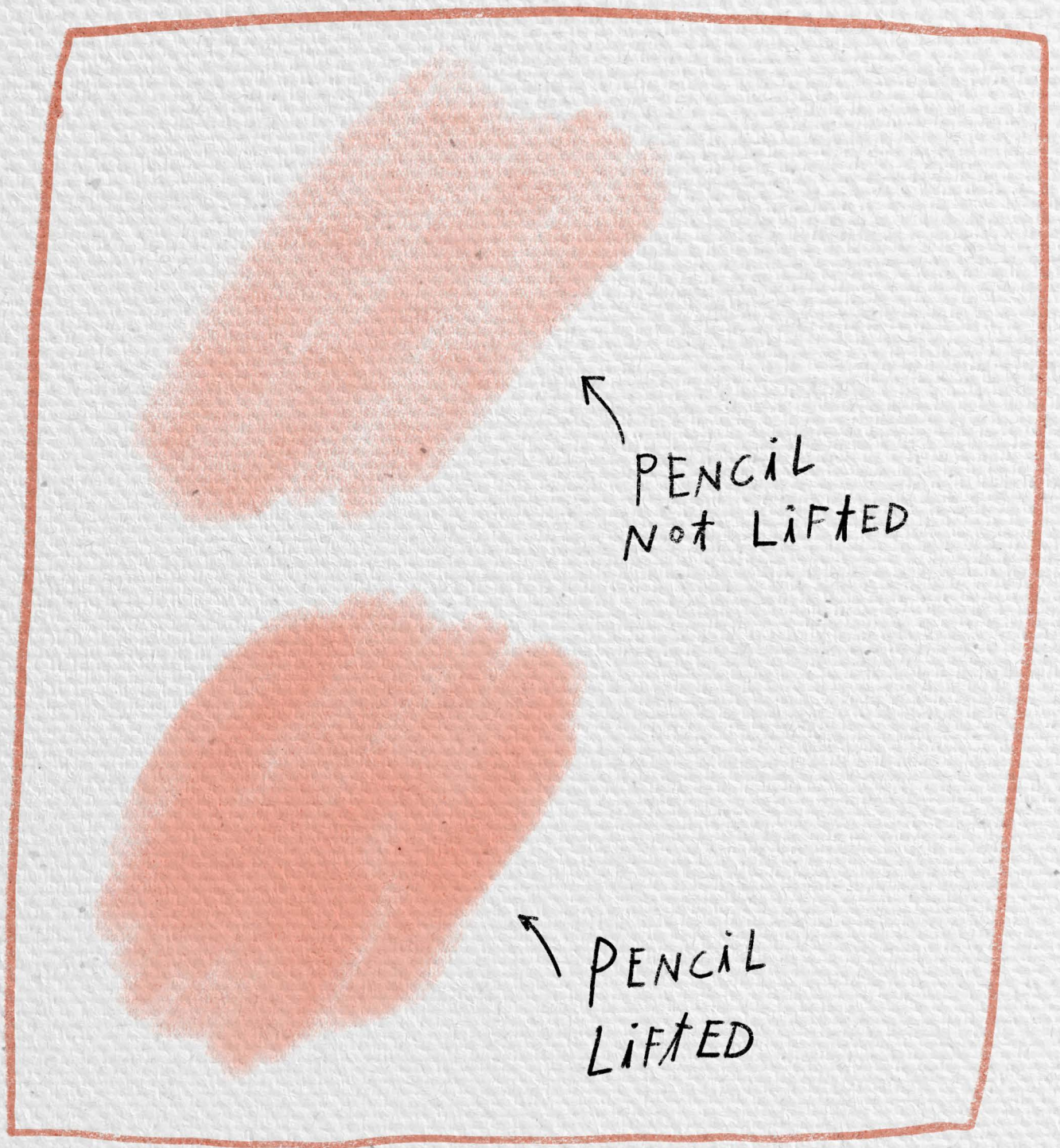
↑
BACKGROUND
COLORED AROUND
STAR.

NATURAL
GAPS
APPEAR

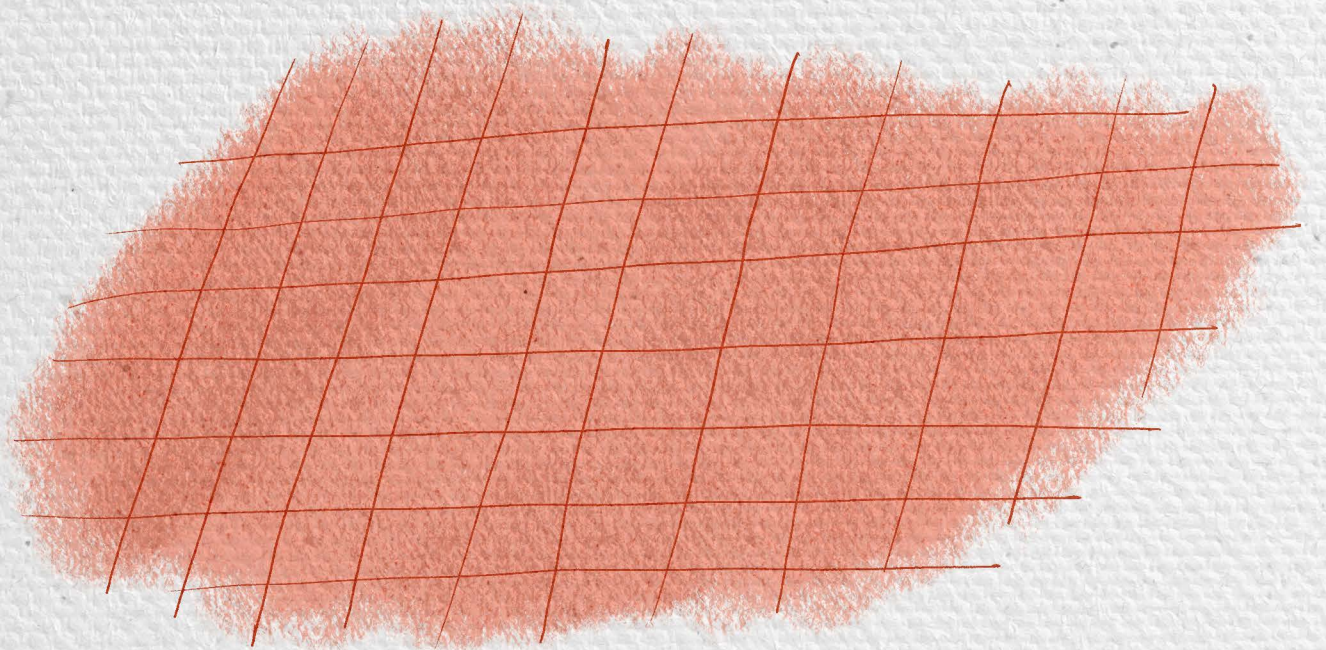
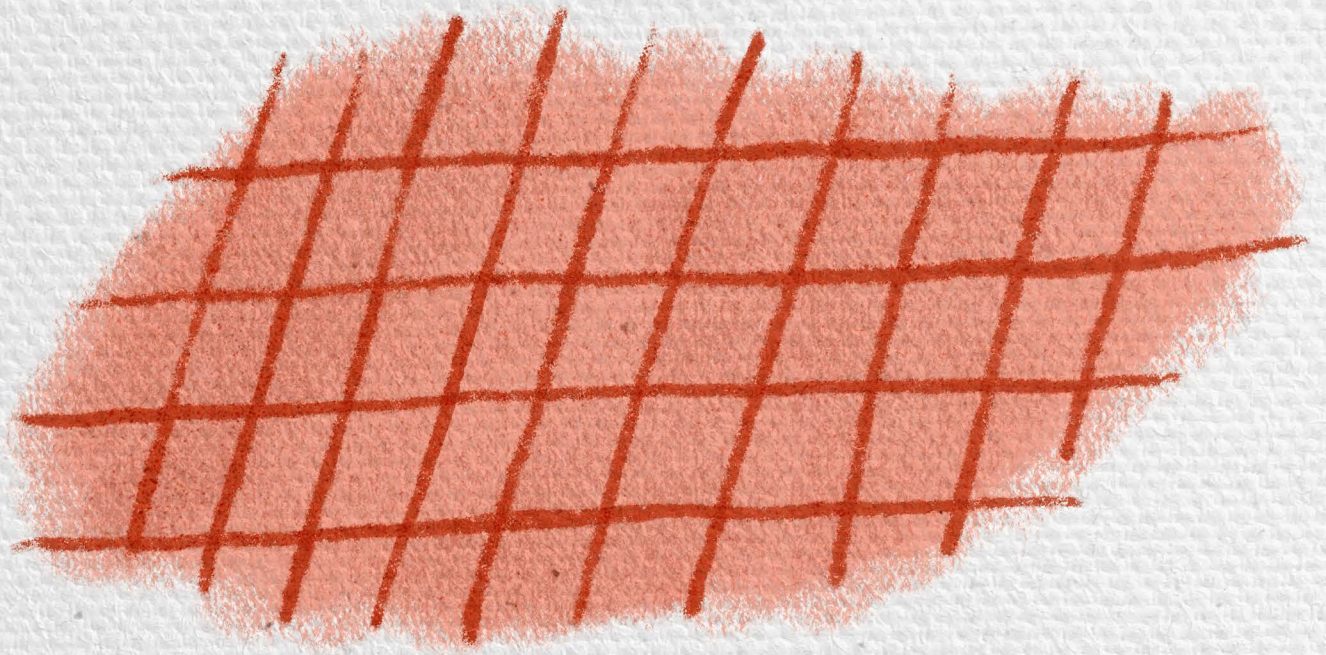


↑
BACKGROUND FILLED
BEHIND STAR.

Coloring around shapes can produce interesting and life-like results. It can be tempting to over-rely on digital layers, but the results can end up looking too digital.



When filling areas with colour, try lifting your pencil repeatedly to build up depth.



Sometimes I see people drawing at an unrealistically small scale, like these line details. Keep in mind the actual thinness your tools could achieve in real life.





CRUMBLY (LB)
+ SMUDGE



SOOT BRUSH
(LB) OFFERS
A VERY
REALISTIC
EDGE.



Fake some happy accidents. Use the smudge tool gently, or add so roughness around certain edges. Leave some areas 'undone'.