LITTLE RED

For this month's class we will be using an original illustration from the wonderful Jason Meents.

Mr. Meents was kind enough to license his drawings to us and so no copyright infringement is incurred.

Getting to know Jason Meents

Jason Meents (pronounced ments) started drawing at a young age. In his teens he fell in love with comics strips like "Peanuts" and "Calvin and Hobbes" which now are heavy influences in the work he does.

Jason went to college in Colorado and graduated with a degree in art education. He spent years doing logo work and illustration for athletes until the expected arrival of his daughter. That was a turning point in the focus and style of his work.

He began doing a lot of kids focused work and self published an ABC of animals book and a children's book "Oh Blue". Since then his work has been focused on re imagining pop culture characters and stories depicting those characters as kids in a style he calls "tykes".

Jason now travels appearing at comic cons and working in comic book industry doing mostly variant covers in his "tykes" style. You can find more information and follow his work on his "Meents Illustrated" accounts on Facebook and Instagram, @meentsillustrated

Overview

For this class we will be coloring an awesome fairy tale drawing.

I've converted the standard black line work to "disappearing" colored lines. Using colored line work allows us to create a more "naturalistic" finished work that is reminiscent of digital CGI.

Our goals for this class are to create distinctions of texture between the various elements in the drawing. Our focus will be on making grass "feel" like grass, and leaves "feel" like leaves, and to keep the two distinct.

Additionally we will work to create pictorial space. The trees in the far background should look far away, while the foreground bushes should close.

To accomplish these goals we will learn to apply similar colors at different values and saturations.

Copic Colors Used For The Study Page

(Refer to the color conversion chart for non Copic alternatives)

E02
E09
E35
E39
E49
E51
E55
E87
E97

B00
B04
B39

BV00

R08
R17
R20
R27
R29
R35
R59

W0
W2
W3
W4
W5
W6
W7
W8

YR00

YR14

YR23

YR24

YR68

Y00

Y06

Y24

Y32

YG03

YG07

YG23

YG45

YG91

G05

G07

G14

G17

G21

G24

G28

G99

RV25

C6

0 Colorless Blender

White Gouache

0.3 Multi Liner

Chapter One:
The Cloak and Dress

We will begin this drawing by coloring the cloak and dress. Both of these items will be colored in values of red. Our goal will be to create the illusion of different red fabrics, with the cloak being a slick, shiny material like silk or satin, and the dress appearing like a softer, more textured fabric like velvet.

# Chapter One - Color Used:

R08
R17
R20
R27
R29
R35
R59

RV25

E09

C6

BV00

OCB

Note: As you can see, I use a large variety of different reds in this chapter. However, very similar effect can be achieved with a smaller selection of reds. If you have a light, medium, and dark value red you have enough to create a similar value range as I do in the video. The variety of red that I use is simply to facilitate the illusion of different fabrics. Don't let the color list bog you down. Use what you have :)
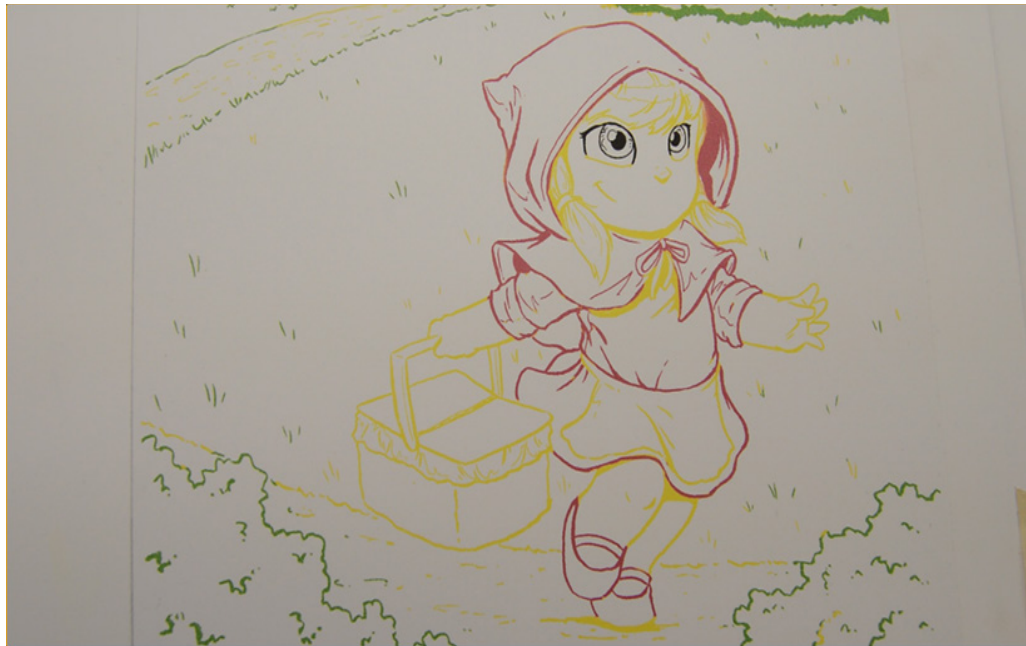
I've converted the line drawing to colored line to help add a level of "realism" to this drawing. As I color up to and over these lines with similar colors and values they will disappear. The result will be more akin to a CGI style image than a traditional colored line drawing.

My goal for the cloak is to make it appear to be a shiny material like satin or silk.

I lay in an overall base color of R20. I'm not concerned with laying it in "smooth" since I'll be coloring over most of this color with subsequent layers.

I add a layer of R17, taking care to leave areas of the R20 where I want my highlights to be.

I add a darker red, R27, where I want my shadows.

Note for colored pencil users: Rather than lay these colors *over* one another the way I have done, you could lay them side by side to match the value structure seen in the photo above as a single layer to reduce the overall number of layers to one.

I add an overall layer of RV25, leaving only the highlight areas untouched, to brighten and warm the colors I used previously.

Then I add a very dark R59 to create folds and the darkest shadow areas.

I soften the R59 with R08. Notice how "patchy" and distinct the colors are at this stage.

I use my original base color, R20, to blend everything together...

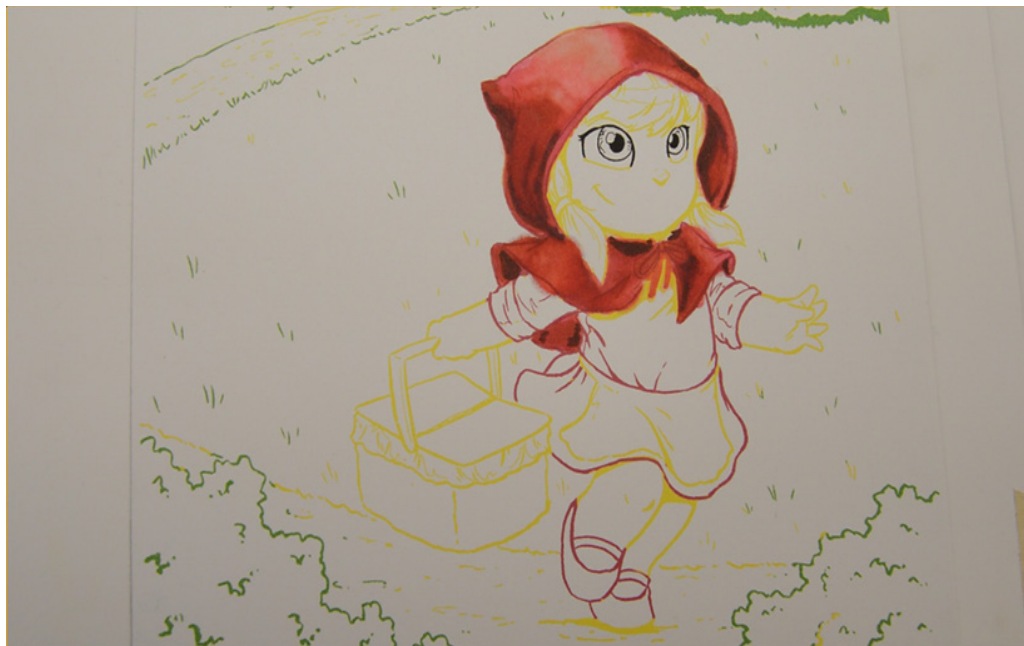...and smooth out the transitions between the color shapes.

I use 0 Colorless Blender to lift...

...lighten...

...and reestablish my highlight areas.

The finished cloak.

I will readdress some areas of the cloak after I get the colors of the dress established. Again, notice that the clock is still a bit "rough" and unblended. This is exactly the way it should be at this stage of the work. The cloak and dress function as a "unit" and should not be "finished" individually but should be brought to completion together as a whole.

I lay in an overall base color on the dress with R17. I leave the apron and rolled sleeves white for now.

I indicate the shadow areas with E09. I want the dress to look like velvet, so the shadow patterns do not necessarily follow a traditional light source.

I strengthen the saturation of the red with a layer of RV25 over the entire dress. This color also serves to blend and soften the various reds in the under-layers.

With my base colors laid in and my value structure established, it's time to push the color of the dress darker to create contrast between the dress and cloak. I use an overall layer of R29 which is a dark value red of high purity.

I use E09 to darken the body of the dress.

I use this color (E09) with light pressure so some of the under-color shows through. I also leave some areas of the under-color untouched to act as highlights.

As you can see, we are beginning to approach the soft texture of velvet.

I restate my cast shadows with C6 in both the bodice and the skirt.

I then blend an soften the C6 areas with R59.

I do an overall blend layer with R59 to bring the dress to a similar level of completion with the cloak. I'm now ready to address the cloak and dress as a whole and bring them closer to their final forms together.

I use the colorless blender in the highlight areas of the cloak to reinforce the difference in contrast between it and the dress.

The final result is that both the cloak and dress look and "feel" like different fabrics.

I add a "gingham" check pattern to the sleeves and apron with R08. Notice how the lines aren't straight but instead follow the curves of the forms.

I add shadows to the sleeves and apron with BV00.

The cloak and dress are more or less complete. I will readdress them in the final stage of the drawing to bring them to their final form.

Chapter Two:
Face and Hair

In this chapter I will address the face and hair as individual elements and then adjust them both together to bring them to unity with one another.

Chapter Two - Colors Used:

E02
E09
E39
E51
E97

B04
B39

R20
R17
R27
R59

W0
W5
W7

BV00

YR14
YR68

Y00
Y24

0 Colorless Blender

In this image the theoretical light source is the sun which is somewhere high above and behind the little girl. In that scenario her hood will cast a strong shadow on her face as well as block any direct light hitting her face.

I color her irises with B04.

The eyelids always cast a shadow on the eye, so I indicate this shadow with W5.

I color the 'whites" of her eyes with W0.

I add BV00 to shape and round the eyeball.

I soften the whites of her eyes with W0.

I then restate my darkest areas with W5.

I indicate the shadows on her face with BV00.

Then "fill in" the rest of her face with E51.

I add R20 to the "transition areas" where the Bv00 and the E51 colors meet.

Using heavy pressure, I add 0CB to the entire face...

...to soften and blend it all together.

I add E02 to the lower part her face and to the shadow areas...

..then blend it out with the E51.

I lay in my dark shadow accents with E09...

...and then soften them out...

....with R20.

I add areas of lighter but cooler shadow with BV00. You can see this color under her cheek, along the bottom of her chin, under her nose and along the shadow side of her face.

I add YR14 to bring color into the shadow areas.

I add very strong red accents to her face with R27.

I soften the R27 from the previous step with R20.

I restate the shadows in the eyes with W7 to keep their value structure consistent with the rest of the face. I also add B39 to her irises for the same purpose.

I readdress the light areas of her face with 0CB...

...to soften the bottom of her face by creating a hard line cast shadow under her chin with R59. I use this color in the line of her mouth as well.

I shape the bottom of her face by creating a hard line cast shadow under her chin with R59. I use this color in the line of her mouth as well.

I add E51 to the mouth and cheek area to help give them shape.

Finally I use 0CB to strengthen the light areas of her face and add shape to her nose.

At this stage her face may appear a but rough and its contours undefined, but we will use her hair to solidify its outline.

I color the hair ribbons with a base color of R17 and shadow accents of R59.

I use Y00 to lay in an overall base color for the hair.

I also use this color (Y00) to add warmth to her cheeks.

I use Y24 to indicate the mid-tones in her hair.

...then add shadows and "hair lines" with E39. Notice the hard line use of this color under the hemline of the hood.

I add YR24 along the edges of the E39 from the previous step to soften and blend...

...and then lay in an overall blend layer of Y00. Notice how I'm using the "body" of the nib to blend, not the tip.

I add a very dark E49 to create a strong cast shadow of the hood on the hair.

I add E39 to the edges of the E49 used in the previous step...

...then blend everything together with Y00.

With her hair more or less complete, it's time to work the face, hair, and hood together to bring the entire area closer to its final form.

I restate the cast shadow of the hair on the face with BV00...

...and strengthen the shadow areas on the face with YR68.

I add Y00 to the face with a light touch. The yellow of her hair would reflect this color into her face.

I add strong shadow accents around her eyes with E09.

...and blend them out with E02.

I use the E39 on the shadow side of the hair, on the inside of the hood, and on the outside of the hood.

I add freckles to her face with E97.

I soften the colors in the hood with a light layer of R17...

...and add finishing touches to her face with YR14 and E02.

Here is the final result.

It is important to realize that the back and forth between the face, hair, and hood is an attempt to bring those three areas into unity. Your drawing may require different colors or different steps to bring these areas to completion. It is not important that you do every step just as I have. Instead, assess what *your* drawing needs to bring it all together and make adjustments as you see fit.

Chapter Three:
The Arms and Legs

In this chapter we will address the arms, legs, and shoes. We will color these areas with a more simple color scheme and use minimal detail.

Chapter Three - Colors Used:

E09
E39
E51
E97

R20
R27
R59

YR14

Y00

0 Colorless Blender

I lay in a base color for the arms and legs with E51.

I indicate the shadow areas with R20. This color is lighter than I want the shadow areas to be, but since the shadows aren't "drawn" in with line, using a light color like this helps me "find" my shadows without making them too dark to adjust later if need be.

I darken areas of the arms and legs with E02.

I then strengthen my shadow areas with E97.

I add dark shadow accents with E09...

...then "fill" the shadow areas leaving only a small amount of the E97 showing at the edges.

I add YR14 to the contours of the legs...

...and then soften the YR14 with R20.

I "warm" and blend the legs with Y00.

I then restate my darkest shadows with E39.

I do an overall blend layer in the legs with E02...

...and then darken the fingers (E02)

...and blend both arms (E02).

I add Y00 to give the feeling of sunlight on the arms.

I delineate the fingers with E09 to bring the hands and arms closer to completion, and then lighten areas of the legs with 0CB to bring the legs into color unity with the arms.

I lay in a base color of R20 for her shoes...

...and add dark accents with R59.

I then blend with R27.

Notice how I left some areas of the R20 untouched to serve as highlights.

Chapter Four:
The Path

In this chapter we will be coloring the path that leads through the woods. I will color this area very roughly and rely on the colorless blender to soften everything at the end.

Chapter Six - Colors Used:

E09
E49
E97

W3
W6

0 Colorless Blender

I use W6 to lay in a rough "random" pattern on the area of path beneath her feet.

I do the same thing with E09 leaving plenty of white paper showing through.

I fill the entire area with E97.

Notice the linear nature of these marks, and how they are spaced closer together on the left and further apart on the right.

I soften the colors with a linear layer of W3. I use this as an all over blend layer to soften the entire area.

I add dark accents and textures and indicate her shadow on the ground with E49.

I blend the entire area with 0CB. I use heavy pressure and leave the blender in contact with the paper for extended periods to create the effect I'm after.

The final result is soft and natural looking.

I use exactly the same colors and techniques to finish off the path that leads to the wolf.[45]

Chapter Five:
The Wolf

When coloring the wolf, we will want to be careful with our colors and technique. The wolf should be treated as simply as possible so as not to detract from Little Red Riding Hood.

Chapter Five - Colors Used:

E09
E49
E55

B00

W2
W6

R17
R20

YR14
YR68

0.3 Multi Liner

I left the line work for the wolf predominately black. These lines will still virtually disappear as the darker bush colors are placed around them.

I use B00 on the tops of the forms to indicate areas of sunlight hitting the fur.

I lay in an overall base color in the fur with W2.

I use W6 to create darker areas of fur on the lower portions of the forms...

I then strengthen the dark areas with E49 using linear "hair" like strokes.

I add touches of YR68...

...then color in the ears with R20.

I add accents to the ears and fur with E09.

I also use the E09 in the open mouth, excluding the tongue, then I add R17 in a flat layer to the tongue.

I use E55 to indicate the shadow of the lips on the teeth, and then as an overall blend layer across the whole body.

I add a touch of B00 to the fur on the chest.

I use a 0.3 multi liner inside the mouth above the tongue. This is the only area of this drawing where I use a multi liner.

The wolf has just enough detail to hold its own in the composition, but not enough to detract or draw too much attention.

Chapter Six:
The Sky and Background Trees

In this image, the sky and background trees represent the area of this drawing that are furthest away from the viewer. To create the illusion of distance we will use lighter, more desaturated colors.

In reality, the greater the distance an object is from the viewer, the more layers of atmosphere (air) there are between the eye and the object. These "layers" of air contain particles of dust, smoke, etc. which cause objects in the distance to appear lighter and more desaturated. This phenomenon is known as "atmospheric perspective".

Chapter Six - Colors Used:

E87

B00

W0
W4
W6
W7

Y00

YG03
YG45

G99

0 Colorless Blender

I line out the shape of a few clouds with B00.

Using the same color, I fill in the areas of sky. I make no attempt at even coverage since I want slight value variations in this area.

I create darker areas in the clouds with W0...

...then create the impression of reflected sunlight with Y00.

I blend the clouds (0CB)...

...then lighten areas of the sky with 0CB.

I add W6 to the base of the farthest trees.

I then fill in the bottoms of the trees with a dull green, E87.

I use W4 to color the tops and ensure the proper level of desaturation.

I add a layer of YG03 over the entire area. The dull colors underneath keep this over-color from being too saturated.

For the foreground trees I use E87 to create a kind of "leafy" pattern by tapping the body and tip of the nib against the paper.

Using the same tapping technique, I add a darker G99.

This tapping technique creates a lot of variety in color and value, and gives the impression of middle tones and shadows.

I use YG45 as an overall layer, covering the E87, G99, and any exposed paper.

I add a "glaze" layer of W4 to the bottom areas to unify the colors and maintain the proper saturation.

I then add darker shadow accents with W7.

I color the remaining background trees using exactly the same colors and techniques.

Chapter Seven:
The Bushes

There are a lot of bushes in this image. The challenge is to make them appear both near and far, relative to their positions in the composition.

The techniques I use for the foreground bushes aren't particularly well suited to those of you using colored pencils. For my colored pencil users, please skip to page 68 where I color the bush in front of the wolf. The technique I use for that bush can be more easily adapted to colored pencils.

Chapter Seven - Colors Used:

G07
G17
G21
G24
G28

YG07
YG23

W6
W8

E87

I being by creating a "leaf" pattern with a dark green, G28.

The technique is similar to the one I used for the trees, but I'm using less of the nib to contact the surface, which creates small, uniform leaf shapes.

I vary the direction of the marks and leave plenty of open space between the clumps (G28).

I do exactly the same thing with a lighter G17...

...and again with G07. Notice how my colors overlap but retain the distinct leaf shape.

Here we have the result of the G28, G17, and G07 leaf patterns. Notice there are still areas of white paper peeking through here and there.

Using the same approach, I add a leaf layer of YG07...

...which covers most of the remaining white.

I then add dark accents with W8.

...and blend everything together with YG23.

The result of this technique is an area rich in variety and texture, with a distinct organic feel.

Repeat these steps for the foreground bush on the right.

For the background bushes I'll use exactly the same techniques, with duller, more desaturated colors.

I begin the leaf pattern with E87.

Then add G17.

...and dark accents with W6.

An overall blend layer of G21...

...dark accent with W6...

...more leaves (G07)

...and a final blend layer of YG07...

...to finish it off.

For the bush in front of the wolf I'll be using a different technique more suitable for conversion to colored pencil users.

I lay in an overall base color of YG07.

Colored pencil users should use light pressure, being careful to leave enough tooth for more layers.

I add dark accents with E87.

Colored pencil users should use quick back and forth cross hatch, leaving it rough and unblended.

I accentuate the dark areas with G07.

I add another "open" layer of texture with G17.

I add my darkest accents with W8.

...a final blend layer with YG23 finishes it off.

Note: marker users can try this technique or use the same technique as was used in the foreground bushes.

Chapter Eight:
The Basket

The basket should be treated fairly simply with minimal detail and texture.
We don't want it to detract from the figure.

Chapter Eight - Colors Used:

E35
E39
E55

Y06
Y32

YR24

B00

BV00

R17

W5

0 Colorless Blender

I use E55 to rough in the dark areas of the basket.

I then add areas of E35.

Those parts of the basket are further away from the light source and should be darker.

I add a layer of Y32 to create the lighter areas and to soften the E55 and E35.

I rough in a "basket weave" texture with YR24...

...then add darker accents with E35.

I add Y06 over all to increase the "yellowness" of the entire basket.

I add dark accents with E39 and add touches of YR24 to the light side of the lid.
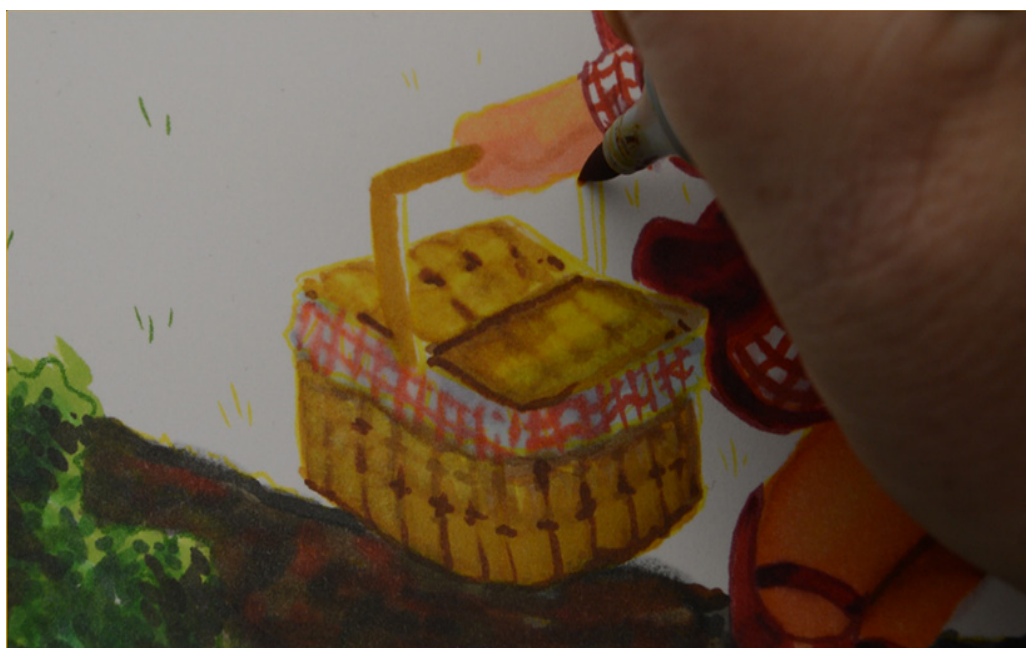

I add B00 to the cloth...

...then create the "check" pattern with R17.

I add BV00 for the darker shadow areas...

...then soften everything with 0CB.

I use YR24 for the basket handle.

..and add shadows and accents with E39.

I add touches of W5 to the side of the basket directly opposite the light source to finish it off.

As you can see, there is just enough detail in the basket to complement the figure, but not so much as to attract too much attention.

Chapter Nine:
The Grass

The grass behind the figure occupies a large area of the composition. To "cover" it in individual "blades" of grass would be distracting. The challenge is to make the area interesting but not overpowering.

Chapter Nine - Colors Used:

E87

G05
G07
G14
G21
G24

YG45
YG91

Y06

YR23

W5

I lay in a base color of G21. I bring this color right up to the edges of the figure, taking care to ensure I don't leave any white gaps between the figure and background.

I use YG91 for the grassy areas further off in the distance.

Remember, things get less saturated the further away from the viewer they are.

The G21 and YG91 are both the same value (their last numbers are the same), but their saturation is different with the G21 being more pure than the YG91.

I add an abstract linear pattern to the area with E87. This is simply to break up the area and add interest.

I soften the edges of the E87 with G05...

...and then add texture with G24.

I add more texture with YG07.

The goal here is just to create a variety of textures in a variety of similar colors.

I add more texture in the form of dots with G07...

...and then add an additional linear pattern (G07).

I add areas of YR23 to give the impression of sunlight hitting the grass.

I then add additional "texture" in the form of "grass blades" with G14. These are almost invisible, but you can "feel" that they are there.

I add more blades with G07...

...and even more with G17.

I desaturate the furthest areas of the grass with W5.

The result is an interesting combination of colors and textures that accentuate the overall image but doesn't draw undue attention to itself.

Chapter Ten:
Finishing Touches

In this chapter I will work over the entire image, lightening some areas, darkening others, and adding additional textures and strong highlights.

The goal is to assess the image as a whole and bring it to completion.

Chapter Ten - Colors Used:

W2
White Gouache
0 Colorless Blender

Using heavy pressure, I lighten portions of the foreground path (0CB)

...as well as the background path with 0CB.

I darken the underbelly of the wolf slightly with W2.

Using 0CB, I lighten areas of the hood...
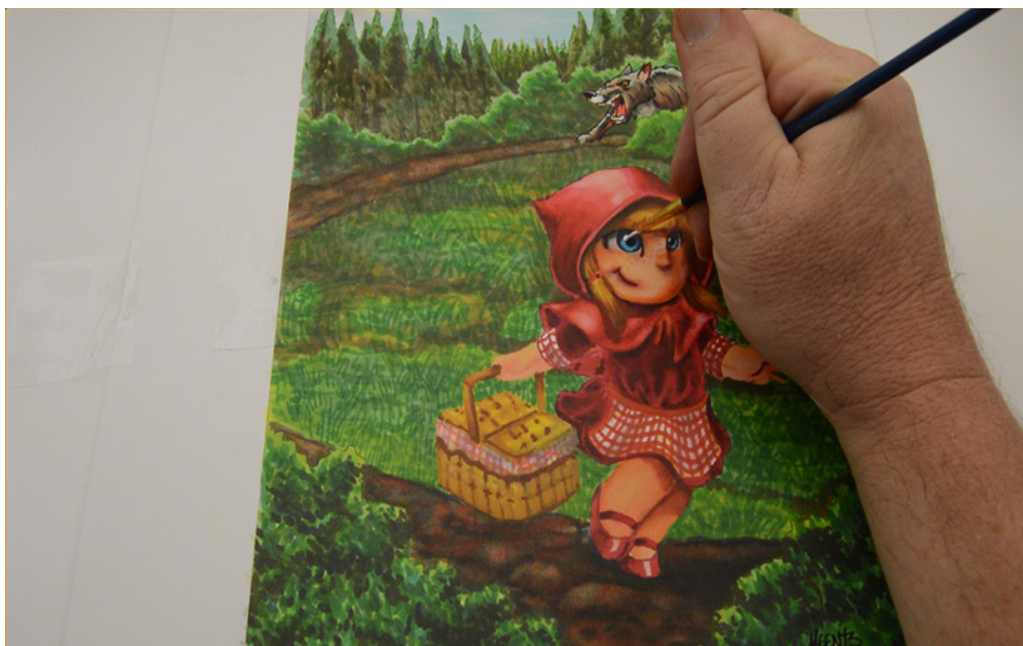

...and the cape...

(0CB)

(0CB)

(0CB)

I add "catch lights" to the eyes with white gouache...

...and add highlights to the cheeks and nose (white gouache)...

...on the chin and in the hair (white gouache)...

...to the hands...

...shoes...

...and cloak.

I add white to the dress...

...and the basket...

...the bushes...

..and grass.

In an effort to finish the work, the truth is, I have a tendency to overdo my white highlights.

For example, in this photo the highlights on the hood and cape are too distracting...

...and don't make a lot of sense.

Never fear!

The white gouache is completely removable!

Using a clean brush dipped in clean water, I drop a small amount of water on the offending highlight.

I then *dab* the area with a clean paper towel. DO NOT RUB!

I repeat the process – wet then dab...

...until the offending highlights are removed.

Conclusion

If you carefully scrutinize any particular element as an individual unit, it may appear a bit rough pr unfinished, but that's not a bad thing!

The soft edges and total lack of outlines lends a "painterly" sense of naturalism to the work as a whole.

Real life is seldom clearly delineated :)