

Brown Hare  
(acrylic on stretched hot pressed paper)

1.

I wanted to develop some acrylic painting technique for animal painting and chose a hare, sitting in the hedgerow area of a field in August. I used mixed references for the hare, its pose and the vegetation, taking some of the grasses from a hedgerow for direct observation.

The hare was drawn first, then I carefully placed grasses, wild flowers and a few wheat stems for harvest time around the hare, trying to give a sense of discovery for the viewer and camouflaged safety for the hare.



2.

After painting in some of the plants deciding upon warm greens for a sunny day, I decided to work the hare from the ears down, somewhat surreal at this stage.

I blocked in the mid tones first, then the darks and the lights to establish the basic colouring and lighting. Then I worked on top of these base coats with fine brushes to develop the fur texture of the ears with short strokes, again mid tone to dark, ending with the lightest areas. I wanted the fur to convey tactile softness.



3.

The eyes were next, making sure of balanced highlights, then the face was worked up to completion. The whiskers will have to wait until all the other areas of the ground are finished.

I finished this stage by blocking in the mid tonal areas of the body, working the brush in the direction of growth of the fur.



4.

Using a copy of my original drawing for the fur patterns and details, which kept me on track, I worked up the fur textures for the body. This took quite some time, with a few adjustments along the way.

The painting is now ready for the foliage and environment to be rendered.



5. Firstly, I carried on painting the pre-drawn stems and grasses, then colour blocked in the areas in-between. I painted more stems and details into these sections. The greens on the left were made more yellow for warmth on this side, and the greens on the right more blue-green to suggest a shadow side, which helps give some necessary depth to the scene. I made the grasses directly beneath the hare smaller and crushed looking to convey its weight.

Using wet into wet and some dry brush scumbling I painted in the sky, slightly overcast, but with some vital blue touches to give a complementary contrast to the warm browns and orange irises of the hare. Finally, some lightly painted grasses were overlaid on top of the sky behind the hare, fading into the distance in this tight depth of field composition.

