



**ACRYLIC DOT PAINTING with Rachel A. Dillon**

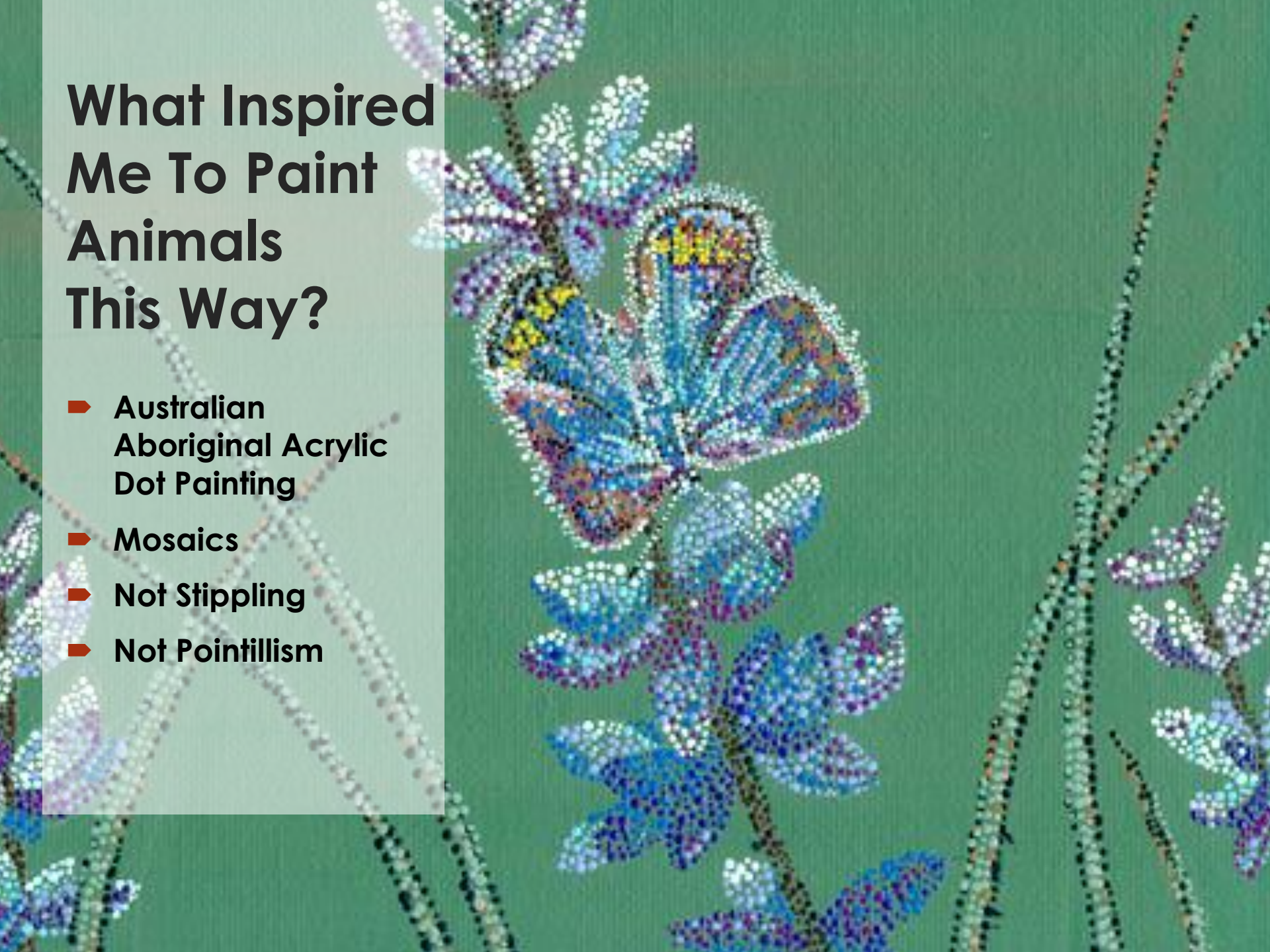
# What we will Cover

- ▶ History behind the dots
- ▶ Tools & Style
- ▶ Working with kids



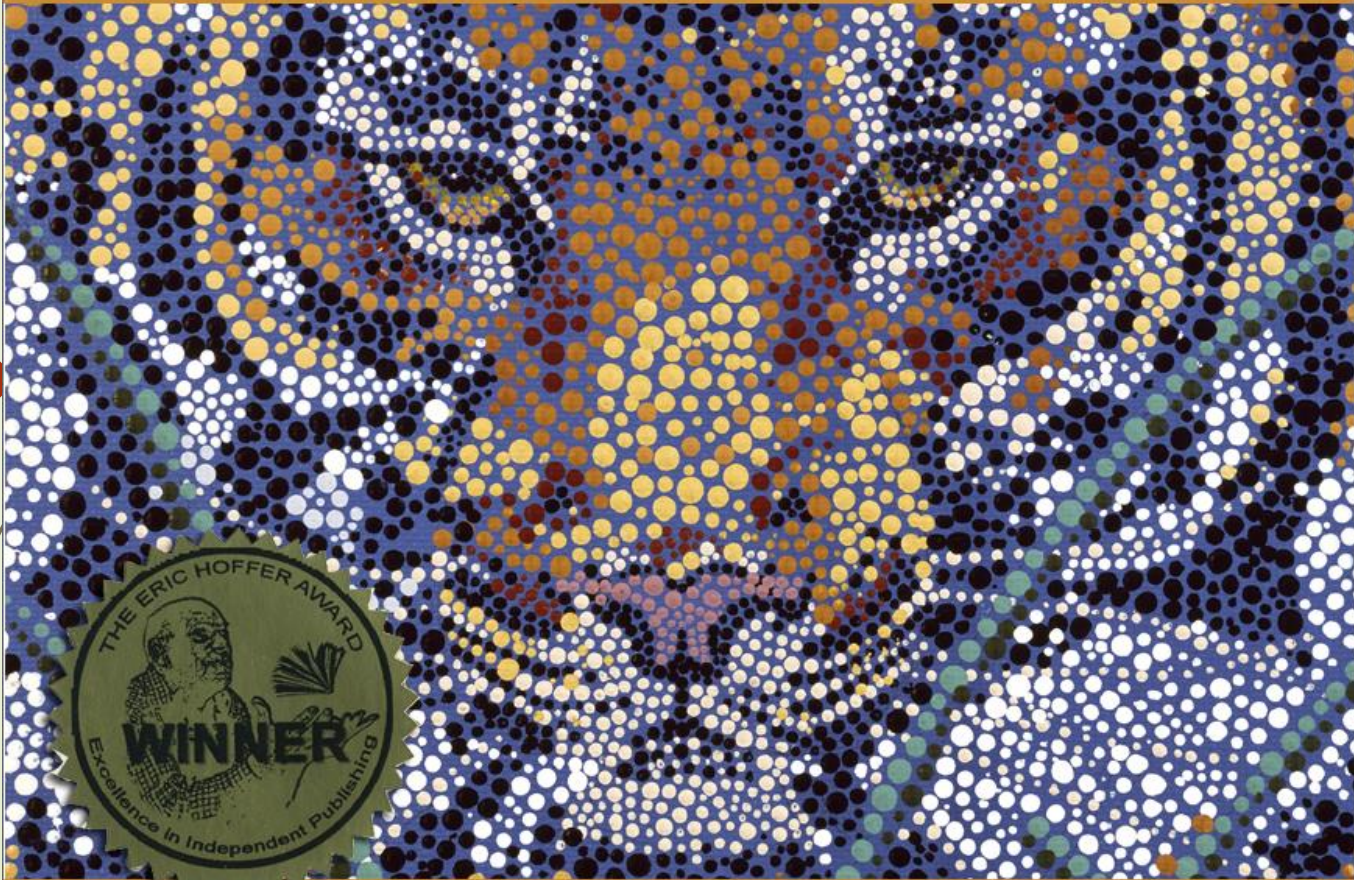
# What Inspired Me To Paint Animals This Way?

- Australian Aboriginal Acrylic Dot Painting
- Mosaics
- Not Stippling
- Not Pointillism



# *Through Endangered Eyes*

a poetic journey into the wild



RACHEL ALLEN DILLON



# Australian Aboriginal Acrylic Dot Painting

# Paintings inspired by Dreamtime Ground Ceremonies

The Aboriginal people of central Australia and western deserts were known for their desert sand art. They used to clear a piece of land, and “paint” a story on sand, using small rocks, flowers, feathers and seeds.

All the different shapes in Aboriginal dot paintings have a meaning, and as the elders painted pictures they sang a Dreamtime song.

Young clan members were watching and listening, and learned the story from it. Sand paintings were also used during spiritual ceremonies and other religious rituals. Paintings on the sand didn't of course last for long, so what there was to learn from them had to be done instantly.



The Dreamtime stories are up to and possibly even exceeding 50,000 years old, and have been handed down through the generations virtually unchanged for all those years.

# Passing on Traditions Through Art



The first Aboriginal Dot Paintings were created in 1971. A teacher named Geoffrey Barton helped Papunya people in central Australia to transfer their sand paintings to canvas by using dots to paint their sacred designs which they used in ceremony. This became to be known as Papunya Art Movement.

Paintings are also used for teaching, as a visual story. There are strict guidelines on what stories get told and who can tell them.

Example: A man cannot paint a woman's story, and a woman cannot paint a man's story.

There are aspects of a story or ceremony that no one outside the tribe are allowed to see.



# The Size, Scope and Colors are Amazing in These Paintings

Artists need permission to paint a particular story: Where ancient and important stories are concerned, and particularly those containing secret or sacred information, an artist must have permission to paint the story she or he paints.

Traditional Aboriginal artists cannot paint a story that does not belong to them through family lineage.





# Passing Along History

Aboriginal art has fostered cultural revival in an extremely good way for the Indigenous people. As they were placed on reservations, and often stripped of their land, culture and heritage, the Aboriginal Art movement has given its people a greater degree of self respect and standing and an important source of income.

As the older artists teach the young, it has revitalized young Indigenous people's appreciation and knowledge of their ancient culture and drawn them back to it in a way that would probably not have happened otherwise. In essence, Art saved an ancient culture.

On the other side of the coin, westerners marvel at the beauty and spirituality of Aboriginal art - their interest and respect for the Aboriginal people has transcended the old stereotypes to build stronger bridges of understanding.



# MOSAICS



Marine Mosaic, Pompeii Italy

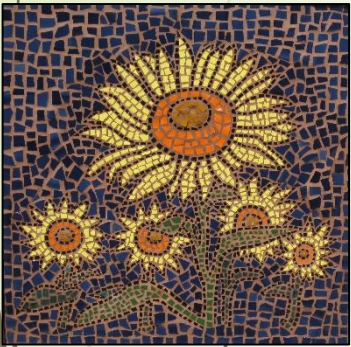
Space between tiles to show background is one important element I like.



# Mosaic History



Mosaics were functional yet decorative feature of Middle eastern and Mediterranean villas, temples, shops, bath houses, and eventually churches and mosques. The images inspired viewers, complemented architecture, and were considered prestigious assets by their owners.



The production of mosaics arose independently in a number of cultures around the globe. The earliest known mosaics are Chinese. They were carefully arranged pebble-paved mosaics. The Sumerians used cone-shaped rods pushed into pillars and walls to produce geometric patterns. In the Americas, Aztecs covered masks and ceremonial objects in precious stone.

Around 800 B.C., the Greeks began producing pebble mosaics. The designs were originally geometric, usually following rug patterns. They became more and more intricate after 400 B.C., when it became more economical to cut cubes from stone rods.



The Romans first emulated and then took mosaic making to the next level. Roman designs included intricate geometric borders, war depictions, stories of the Gods and their antics, and scenes from everyday life. Pavements predominated, but mosaics were also built onto walls and eventually onto ceilings.

Around 480 A.D., glass and gold began to replace stone as the primary media in mosaics. Subject matter turned to religious figures and iconography. Since then, stone has not made a comeback. Today, mosaics are constructed primarily from ceramic tile and glass.



# My Tools and What your Students Can Use

## **DOTTER TOOLS**

- Back of Paint brush (something with a bit of a curve)
- Q-Tips (I use with the younger kids)
- Skewer

## **PAINT**

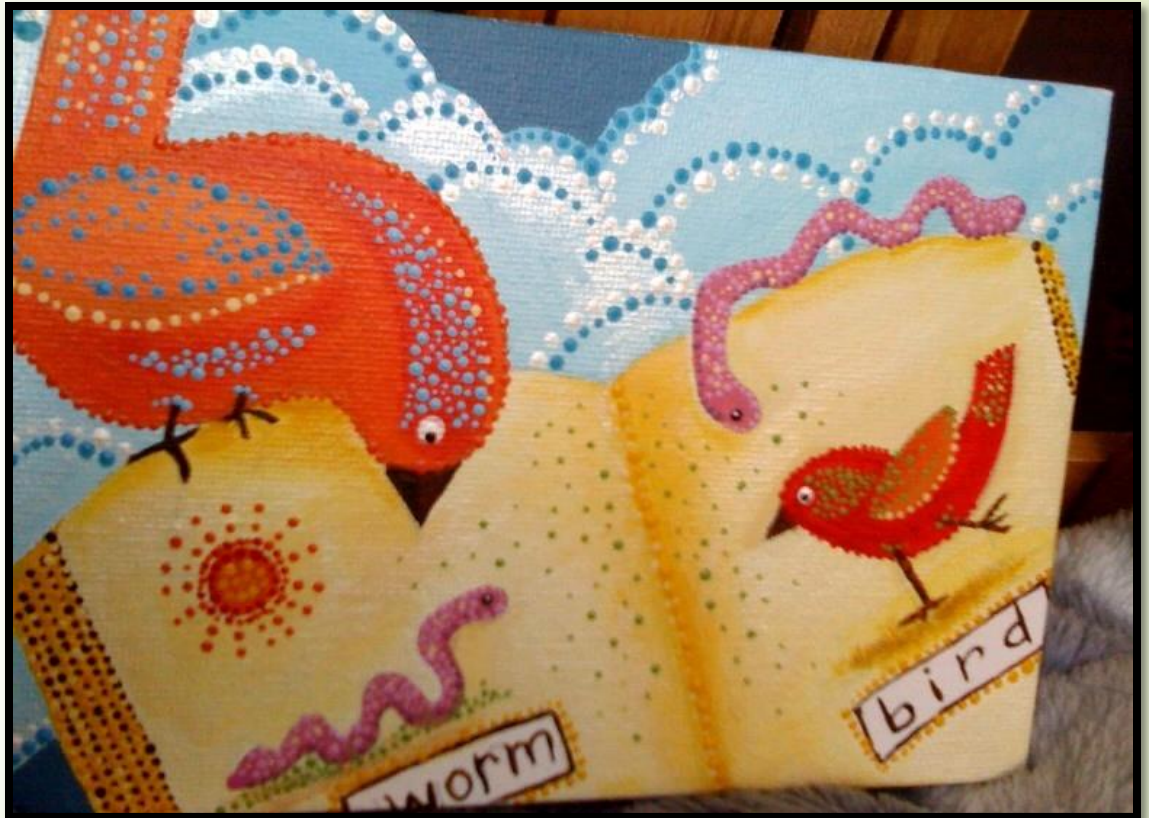
- Acrylic

## **OTHER**

- Palette
- Paper Towel
- Canvas, Paper, or Other Hard Surface

# Color Use

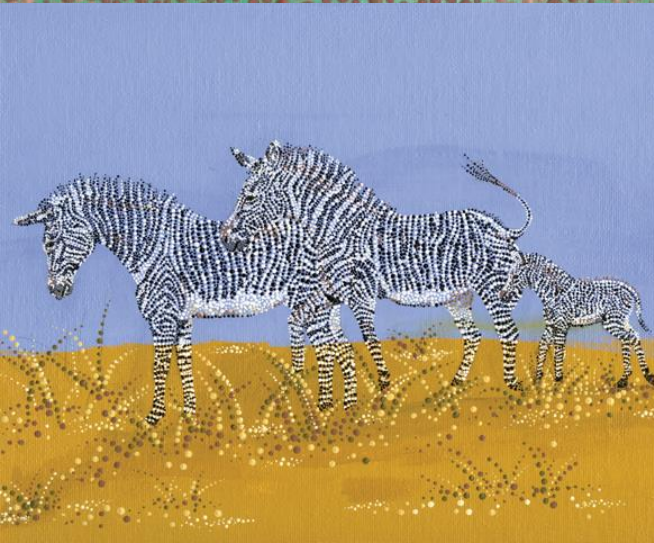
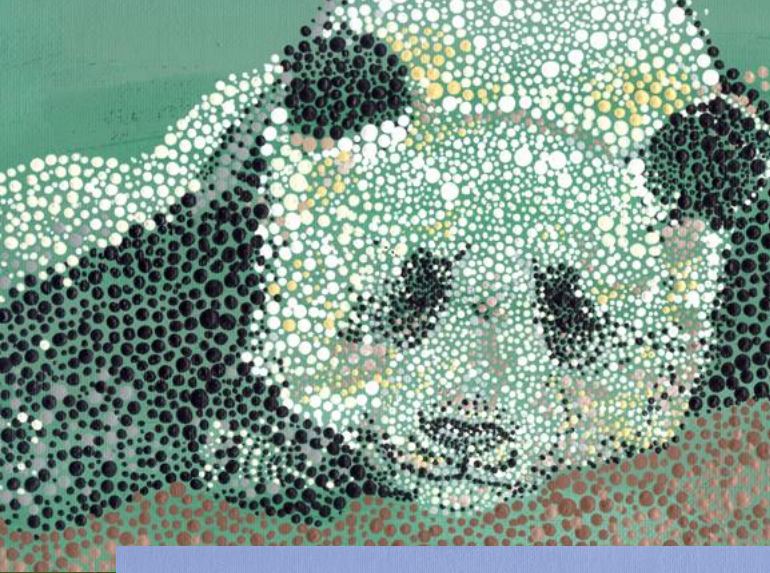
- ▶ Dot painting is a good way to teach color value and contrast.
- ▶ If the color of the dot doesn't have enough contrast from its background color, then it won't show up very much.
- ▶ Play with complimentary colors. If you have a blue background, utilize your oranges as dots. Compliments are fun because they cause a vibrations.
- ▶ For advanced painters have them mix their colors varying them by adding white or its compliment to create more depth in the detail of the subject.





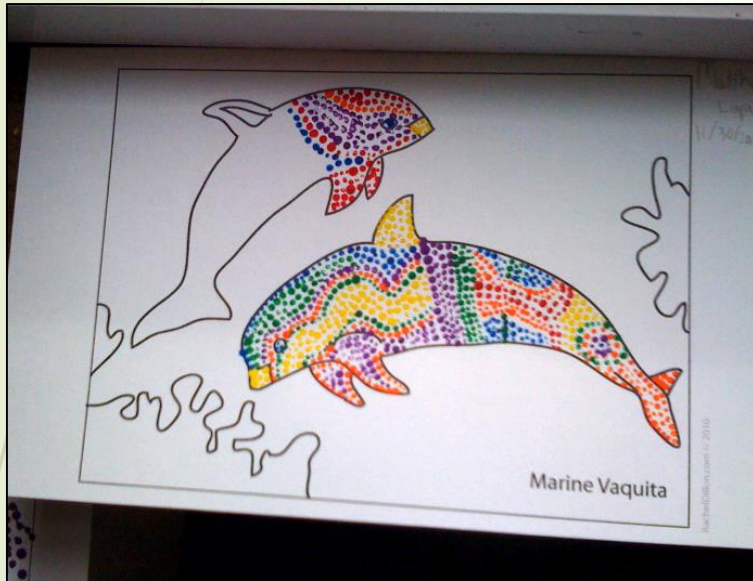
# Tips for Teaching

- ▶ To mimic my style encourage that students keep the dots from overlapping too often. Having the background color acts as a type of grout creates the mosaic illusion.
- ▶ Be careful where the side of your hand goes when moving over wet paint areas. More times than I can count did I set my hand on wet dots and smeared them. There's little you can do once the dots have smeared.
- ▶ I was surprised to see that dots can create the appearance of feathers, fur, or scales on an animal.
- ▶ Vary the dot size. You get about three dots per dip. When the dot edges start to fade, that is the time to redip. How hard you press down with the dotter can also determine the dot size.



# Working with Children & Dots

## Paint



## Markers



- I dot paint with kids of all ages
- Giving them outlines allows kids to focus on the technique. The templates for my illustrations can be found at [www.RachelDillon.com](http://www.RachelDillon.com) click on Teacher Resources



# What I've Learned...

Some are Impatient



Third Grader

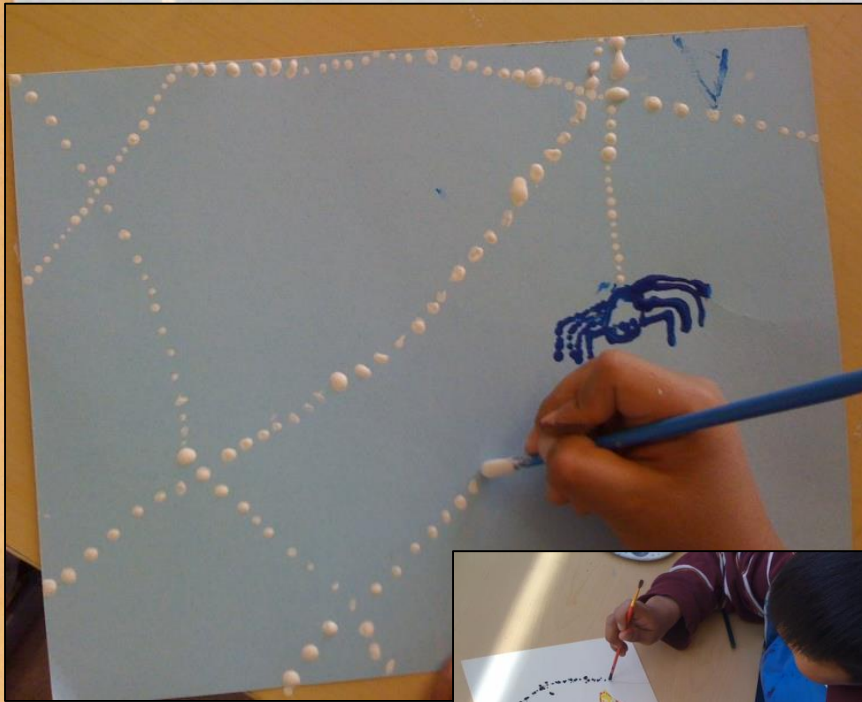
Some LOVE it!



Sixth Grader

# Dot Project Ideas

Favorite Design, Patterns, Animal, Combination of Both



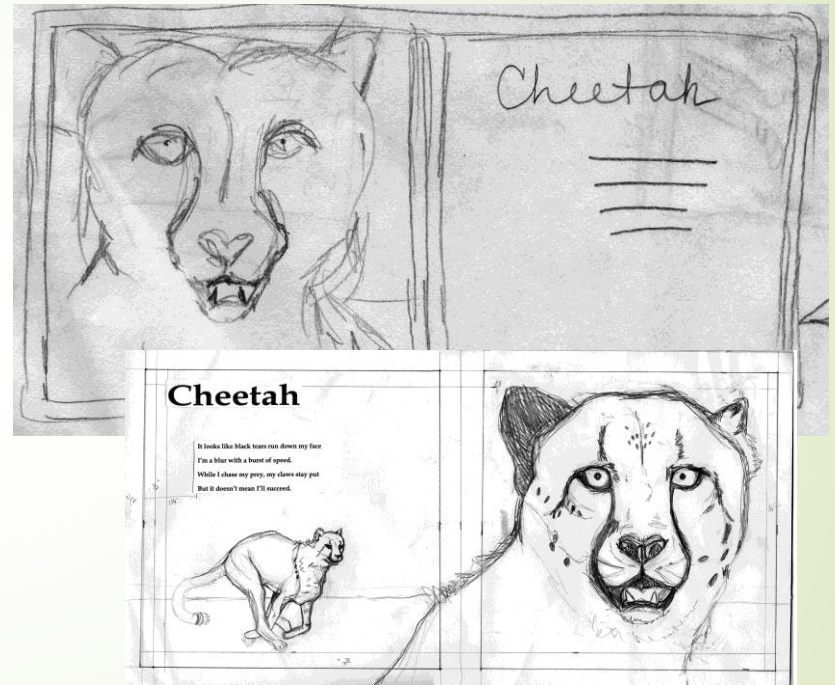
# Cheetah Painting

Sketching helps me really find proportions

Cheetah



Rachel Dillon © 2010



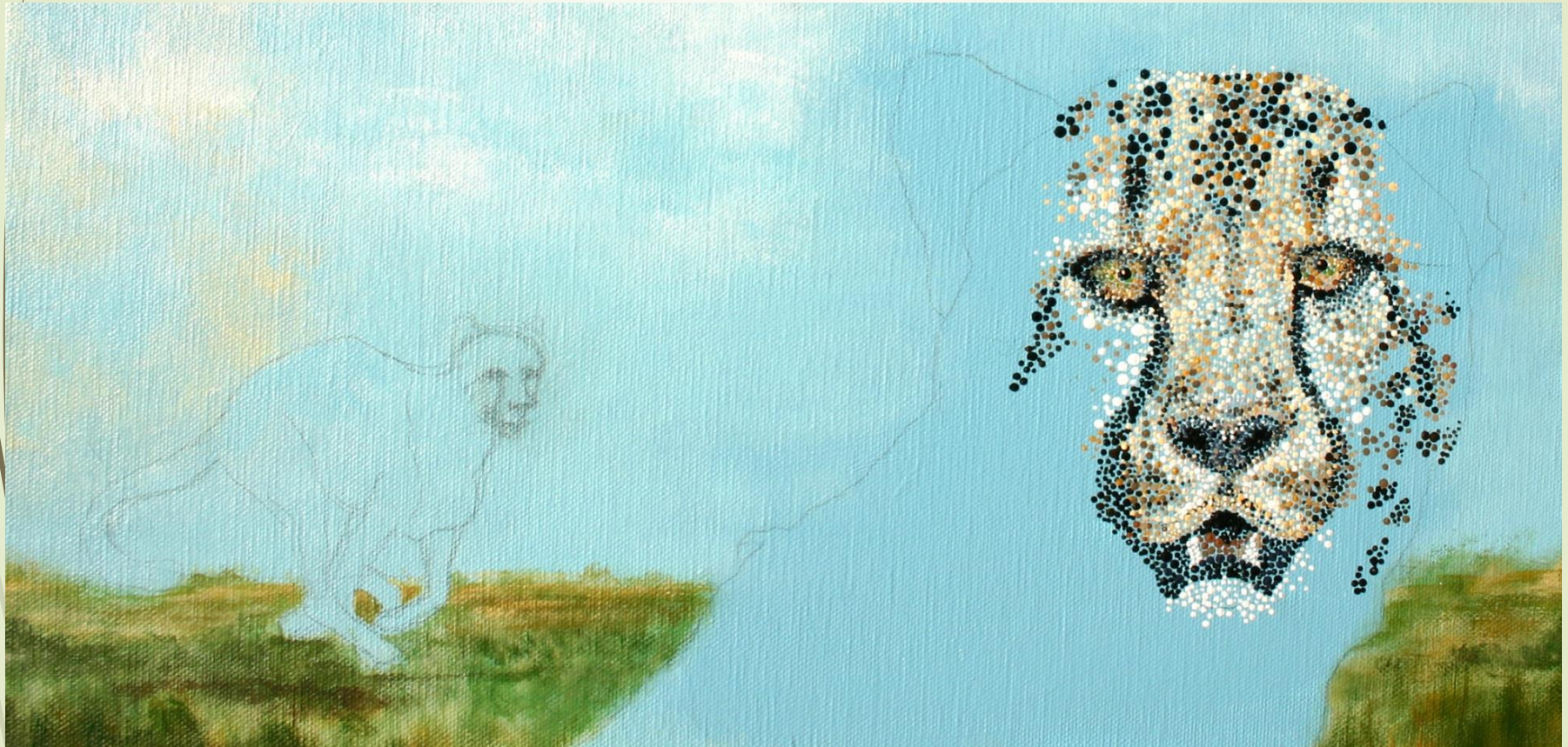
## Cheetah

It looks like black tears run down my face  
I'm a blur with a burst of speed.  
While I chase my prey, my claws stay put  
But it doesn't mean I'll succeed.



# And then Painting...





10 Hours



14 Hours to Complete

# Cheetah

It looks like black tears run down my face  
I'm a blur with a burst of speed.  
While I chase my prey, my claws stay put  
But speed doesn't mean that I'll succeed.





# Now Let's Paint a Mandala!

If you would like any of my book illustration handouts for your students to dot paint go to:

[www.RachelDillon.com](http://www.RachelDillon.com) and click on  
Teacher Resources

My book will remain on sale in the book store here until the end of the conference.