

# A Bright Smile

Trinity Hendricks  
Oil on Canvas, 24 x 30 inches

I saw these cute little plastic unicorn and pegasus figurines while shopping for art supplies at Hobby Lobby, and I knew I had to include them in a painting somehow. I had to make a mixed media this semester, so it worked out well that I came across the figurines when I did. I just had to come up with a composition to include them in. Here are two pictures of some of the figurines:



I pasted the unicorn and pegasus figurines onto the painting to make it appear as though they were a part of the scene. From a distance it is difficult to tell they are not painted onto the work. I also used larger unicorn and pegasus figurines as a reference for the unicorns and pegasus painted on the painting. This design choice further integrates the figurines into the scene. Here are the larger figurines I referenced.



I also faced the challenge of finding a suitable way to attach the plastic toys to the canvas surface. My painting was done in oil paint, so only adhesives compatible with the oil paint film could be used, and I needed something that would not deteriorate the oil painting over time. I ended up using a special product called Res-n-Gel, which is a medium/paint additive for artists.

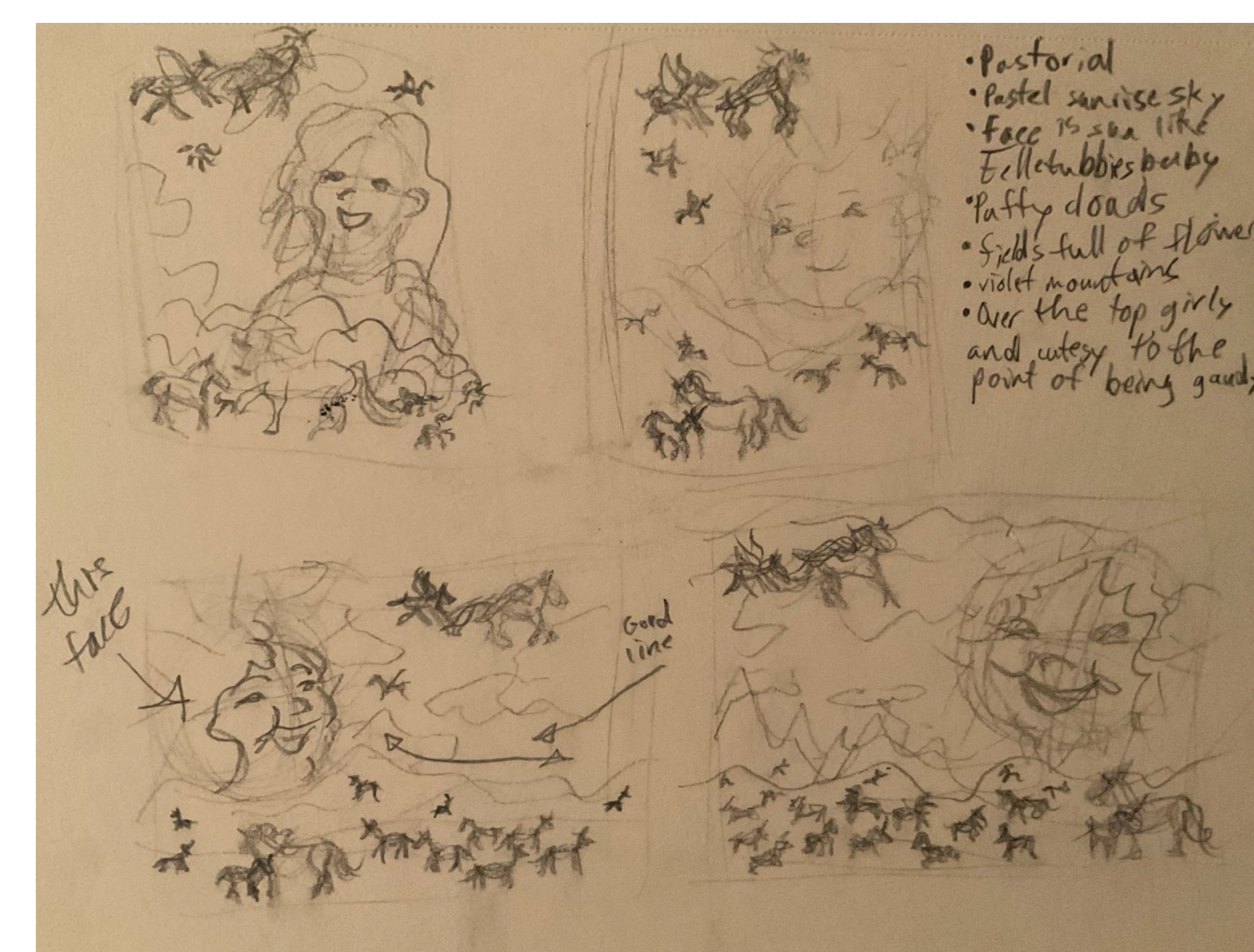
First, I mixed the Res-n-Gel with white oil paint. Then, I used the Res-n-Gel and paint mixture to stick the figurines to the canvas surface, and finally, I left the painting lying flat to dry. It was important that the painting lay flat because if it didn't the figurines would just slide off. This securely cemented the figurines to the surface without compromising the paint film. Here is a photo of the Res-n-Gel I used.



I decided to create a self-portrait with my own grinning face as the sun, à la Teletubbies' sun baby, rising over a colorful fantasy landscape. (Conveniently, I was also required to paint a self portrait this semester, so I could knock out two requirements in one project!) I used a 24 by 30 inch canvas, so that all the elements of the scene could fit onto it. Here's a picture of the Teletubbies sun baby:



Some challenges I faced were converting my flesh tone into a glowing, hot sun color, and getting lighting and colors consistent throughout the contrived image. I worked with reference materials, such as photos, a mirror, the previously mentioned larger figurines, and sketches from various angles to combine the imagery into one cohesive product. Here are some pictures of sketches I made to reference as well as a reference photo of my face in a mirror.



This was a satisfying project to create because I love painting fantastical scenes where real life problems don't exist. It is a form of escapism for me, and I want to share that escape from reality with other people. Real life is stressful, and sometimes we need relief from that stress. I also enjoyed creating this painting because I love painting with bright colors, and this is a colorful painting. Also, unicorns make me happy.

If I were to redo this painting, I would spend more time trying to get the perspective right, because it looks a little flattened in my opinion. I would also add more detail to the mountains, so they would look more like rugged mountains and less like smooth mounds. I also wish I spent more time getting the lightning on the clouds right. I learned a lot about my art style while making this piece.