



Challenge for January 2026

Let's blend two concepts together. We will start with

The 70/30 Rule

The 70/30 rule in art is a compositional guideline that suggests a 70/30 split between less detailed areas and more detailed, focal areas to create visual interest and direct the viewer's eye. In practice, this can mean using 70% background or filler with 30% subject detail in a sketch or allocating 70% of your time to planning and problem-solving, and 30% to the actual execution. The rule emphasizes balance and focus in different aspects of the creative process.

Applying the 70/30 rule

In the final artwork -

Composition and detail: Dedicate 30% of your artwork to the main subject, detail, and sharpest focus. The remaining 70% should be composed of less interesting filler, such as a blurred background or rougher textures, to draw attention to the main subject.

Shapes and lines: Use a contrast of large, simple shapes for the 70% and smaller, more complex ones for the 30% to create visual dynamism.

The creative process -

Time allocation: Spend approximately 70% of your time planning the composition, value, and color before committing to the final details, and dedicate the remaining 30% to the actual execution of the piece.

Problem-solving: Approaching your work with a strategy where you spend a majority of your time solving problems in the planning stages will prevent major headaches and the temptation to abandon the project later, according to this TikTok video and this Instagram post.

And let's blend that with the month of January.....

January represents new beginnings, transitions, and winter, personified by the Roman god Janus. It is also associated with the birthstone garnet, the flowers carnation and snowdrop, the birch and rowan trees, the ox, and the colors white and light blue, lavender and lilac.

Symbols of transition and new beginnings

Janus: The Roman god of beginnings, transitions, and doorways, represented with two faces looking to the past and future. This is why January is considered the gateway to the new year.

New Year: As the first month, it symbolizes new starts, fresh intentions, and resolutions.

Celtic Trees: The Birch represents new beginnings, achievement, and resilience, while the Rowan symbolizes courage and connection.

Birthstones and flowers

Birthstone: Garnet, symbolizing eternal friendship and trust. It is named from the Latin word granatum, meaning "seed," due to its resemblance to pomegranate seeds.

Birth Flowers: Carnation and Snowdrop. Carnations can symbolize love and affection, while snowdrops symbolize hope and beauty.

Colors and animals

Colors: Immerse yourself in the tranquil beauty of our winter wonderland-inspired color palette, featuring soft, soothing hues of white, light blue, lavender, and lilac

White symbolizes a clean start, and light blue evokes a snowy winter day.

Animal: The ox is the animal associated with January.

Examples of 70/30 paintings and some January colors.



Artist Lori Putnam



Artist Randall Sexton