

Aurora CATching - Artwork in Progress by Margaret Shaw



CATching the Northern Lights 1

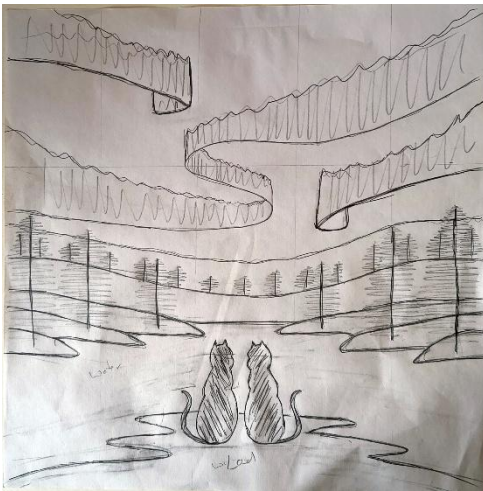
After successful experimentation with a couple of smaller paintings I decided to work slightly larger and continue my CATching the Northern Lights series.

The titles of the new ones Aurora CATching 1 & 2

I worked on 2 paintings together so both are included in this wip document.



CATching the Northern Lights 2



The first step was to create the images. Without any of my own photos of the Northern Lights some research took place to develop the composition.

Here we are at the drawing stage.

The images were drawn to be transferred to a 30 x 30 cm canvas board for the painting to commence.



Initial tonal underpaintings were completed – however I forgot to photograph them. So, we rejoin at the first session where graduating dark skies were put in using a mixture of prussian blue, process cyan and white. The water was painted with mixing white. Cats were filled in with grey as I seemed to have lost my black acrylic marker. Land was painted with a mixture of process cyan, process yellow, paynes grey and mixing white.



Aurora CATching - Artwork in Progress by Margaret Shaw



Marked out the aurora lights and tree outlines with white pastel.



Onto painting the aurora lights. Mixed pale turquoise and pale green. Then with titanium white painted the lights in bands.

Needing to work quickly only took one photo



Here we are with the aurora bands in place.



Aurora CATching - Artwork in Progress by Margaret Shaw



The lights looked a little stripey, so another layer was added to put other colours into the bands. Then scratched back to get some of the sky showing through.



Some more brushstrokes on the lights and I'd overcome the stripes and brightened them. Painted in the moon.



Decided that the bands were too uniform, so bright whites and more blues added.



Aurora CATching - Artwork in Progress by Margaret Shaw



Onto the trees – which is where the compositions changed as having large trees was going to cover all the work done on the lights.

Liking no 1 better, something was required on the trees in no 2



A few tweaks worked on No.1 for the light line on the top of the trees and to increase the amount of light coming through them.

No 2 got rather more work as I found I couldn't paint round the trees, so I eliminated them with a band of light along the horizon. Trees then needed re-painting in. Marked in random stars with pastel pencils



Started to consider the foreground where the land appeared to be floating.

Decided to use my new toy on the tablet “infinite painter” to help with decision making.

And likewise used infinite painter just to check the trees on No2.



Aurora CATching - Artwork in Progress by Margaret Shaw



Made the adjustments to the foreground land with paint and re-added the trees on no 2.

Then went over the horizon land with mixtures of green from light to dark.

The next decision required was to put highlights on the edges of the horizon land?



Again, used infinite painter to have a play with the highlights and put a moon in No 2.

Made the cats black and emphasized the stars. Painted in some water and liked where these paintings were both going.

Just needed to add the paint to the actual canvases.



With paint, put the highlights onto the land. Moon was painted onto No2 and water painted in. After putting a mid-blue in the water changed it to palest blue possible.



Aurora CATching - Artwork in Progress by Margaret Shaw



The final items were the cats, the moon markings and the stars. Happy with the paintings, I signed them.



Then problems occurred. I'd drawn in the cats with my found black acrylic marker and gone over with acrylic paint. After a day the cats still looked a bit wet and shiny. I found that with a splash of water the cats weren't permanent.

It appears that the acrylic markers are not permanent and stopped the acrylic from drying. Several hours were spent carefully lifting and removing the paint and marker from the cats.



Made some tweaks to the water then painted the cats with black acrylic and titanium white for the collars.

Paintings are Heading into white frames.



Added to the [CATching Gallery](#).
Prints and cards available.

© 2026 Margaret Shaw