

# Beachscapes - The Complete Picture

19th-20th July 2014 | Sunshine Coast, QLD

## Workshop Notes

### Day 1.

Exercise : Gradation of Colour:

We painted two canvases the same. One from the horizon up using our Summer Sky recipe of French Ultramarine Blue and White, adding more French Ultramarine Blue as you paint towards the top, adding a tiny bit of Pthalo Blue at the top of the canvas.

Then painted from the horizon down using the Tropical Water recipe of Pthalo Blue, Cadmium Yellow Light and White, but starting close to the horizon with French Ultramarine Blue and a tiny bit of White (representing the reflection of the sky close to the horizon); and adding more neat Pthalo Blue moving down the canvas, and as the water becomes shallower we begin adding Cadmium Yellow Light and White, making sure that there is none of that French Ultramarine Blue in the mix. We continue adding Cadmium Yellow Light and White until we end up with our excellent “extremely shallow water” colour (mainly white with a touch of Cadmium Yellow Light).

We then paint a band of sky colour at the edge of this extremely shallow water colour, and blend it these two colours together, leaving the pure sky colour as a sharp edge. We now mix our Sand recipe of White, Dioxazine Purple and Cadmium Yellow Medium and painted that in a band under the reflected sky in the wet sand band. We then added White to that colour, and painted that in a band below the previous band, representing drier sand. Lastly, we then painted the rest of the canvas white, to represent the dry sand.

We put them out to dry.

We began a conversation about painting foliage and about breaking things down into patterns. Is the overall shape of the tree round? Is it square? What patterns does the foliage make? Are the leaves soft and wispy? Or strong and broad.

We grabbed a blank canvas, and started painting silhouettes of banksias and casuarinas. We also created the illusion of spinifex grass and showed how we can shape dunes using that same technique.



We also discussed how to use the “rolly-loose-handle” technique to create different types of tree branches. We discussed the concepts of adding more medium (water, flow medium etc etc) to our brush to draw out longer lines in trees like casuarinas or sheoaks, and a dry brush technique works very well. A drier brush works much better for painting short, “choppy” branches like banksias. All of this was done as a silhouette using a dark colour on a white canvas.

The idea was to help understand the basic shapes of the leaves, and the shapes the branches made, without colour.



These concepts were introduced:

- Perception Skills
- Physical Skills
- Conceptual Skills

Our physical skills are obviously all about making the marks that we needed to convey the “essence” of something.

Our perception skills were obviously about training ourselves to find the information that we needed.

And lastly, our conceptual skills were about how we used the information and the skills that we had to make the picture uniquely you.

We also briefly went into these concepts that affect the marks you make:

- Amount of pressure you apply
- Amount of paint your brush is holding
- Amount of medium you have added to the paint

We got one of our previously painted canvases in, and started to investigate the process of painting water. We discussed the idea of “windows and mirrors” and established that the face of the wave could be seen as a “window” and the backs of the wave and the areas between them flat relative to your eye could be seen as “mirrors”. They would reflect different parts of the sky.

Flatten the water? Add sky. Steepen the water? Don’t reflect the sky.

A wave is a lump of water. Mark did a demonstration to explain the concept of painting a wave. A lump of water (or a wave) broadly speaking, would have more water in it, therefore we add deeper water colour.

We looked at how the “window” or the face of the wave, gave us an opportunity to look “through” the surface, and at the sand beneath, and use this process to create the illusion of clarity.

We also discussed perspective, and about knowing where to place a wave in relation to the horizon.

We discussed also that there were often multiple vanishing points, as waves come from different directions.

We then established the whitewash using White. We then painted the shadows cast by each wave, at the base of each wave. We did this using neat, thinned Burnt Umber. We then painted the shadows in the whitewash, observing that the shadow in the whitewash is a very different colour from that of the shadow painted on the sand at the base of each wave.

We broke the process of painting the whitewash into three sections. The first one, the darker shaded area which was Burnt Umber, Pthalo Blue and White. This went at the bottom of the shadows, and was applied in a thin straight line at the base, and patches here and there extending up into the whitewash. We softened the edges of this colour by adding a pile of white and a touch of French Ultramarine Blue.

The final colour was the absolute highlights - pure White. We then reflected the whitewash on the surface of the water in front of the waves, remembering “dry brush down - damp brush across”.

At this point I did a demonstration of a wave breaking to establish all of the principles we’ve so far discussed.



### Paint Recipes:

#### Tropical Water:

Cadmium Yellow Light  
Pthalo Blue  
Titanium White

#### Warm Summer Skies:

French Ultramarine Blue  
Titanium White  
Pthalo Blue (add a little as you get higher in the sky)

#### Trees & Foliage:

Dioxazine Purple  
Cadmium Yellow Medium  
Forest Green

Titanium White

Sand:

Cadmium Yellow Medium

Dioxazine Purple

Titanium White

## Day 2.

The Painting:

We began establishing our foliage areas and sand dunes. We placed our sand dune on the left by roughing in some foliage, and painting the purply-blue shadows on the sand.

We started the process of building dimension in our banksia tree, by using the silhouette shapes from the day before, and then building colour and highlights on top of that.

So the shadowed area in my foliage is Forest Green, a touch of Dioxazine Purple and a touch of Cadmium Yellow Medium. As I progress into the lighter areas, I add more white and Cadmium Yellow Medium, with tiny touches of the Forest Green. The final colour was quite pale, predominantly White and Cadmium Yellow Light.

We mixed up then a touch of Permanent Alizarine and Cadmium Yellow Medium and added this to White, to create a lovely “apricot-y” colour, which we applied in short vertical strokes at the end of each branch. Voila. Banksia flower pod-y things.

Now to our casuarina/sheoak. Again, using the same strategy, using a silhouette as a basic understanding for the shape of the tree, we painted the branches in, and then mixed up a dark of Forest Green, Dioxazine Purple, Cadmium Yellow Medium and White. Kind of a browney-grey-green colour. This represents the leaves in shadow. We now add Cadmium Yellow Light and White to this mix, to increase the appearance of highlights on leaves. Remembering of course to use a very light, soft touch - use a big brush, and don't paint every leaf.

We now paint using the same technique the lovely spinifex grass around the base of the banksia and the casuarina, using this technique also to shape the dunes. We come back with a little bit

of Burnt Umber, and using the roly brush technique, create spinifex “tendrils” undulating over the sand dunes. We now mix Dioxazine Purple, French Ultramarine Blue and White and paint the shadows underneath the trees.

At this point we discussed why we had particularly chosen those colours to make the shadows. This was a catalyst for a conversation about observing light, and observing nuance of colour and exaggerating it. Remember how many colour shifts there were in the wall.

Back to the shadows. Within those bluey shadows, we realised that there was also a shift. Some cooler colours underneath the tree, but also that the shadow appeared bluer and paler the further it was from your eye. This creates a wonderful, but very subtle illusion of depth.

As part of the final touches being made to the painting, we mixed up some pale creamy colour, using Cadmium Yellow Light, a touch of Naphthol Red Light and a pile of White, and using the edge of the brush and the roll technique again, we put flecks of light in the shadows, representing the light filtering through and striking branches. We did this also in the casuarinas using a longer brush stroke. A couple of small lines here and there under the trees to suggest light hitting grass in the shadows, and almost done. The final part of the painting was using the tip of the small brush to apply flecks of colour here and there throughout the painting. Can't have too much colour I say!

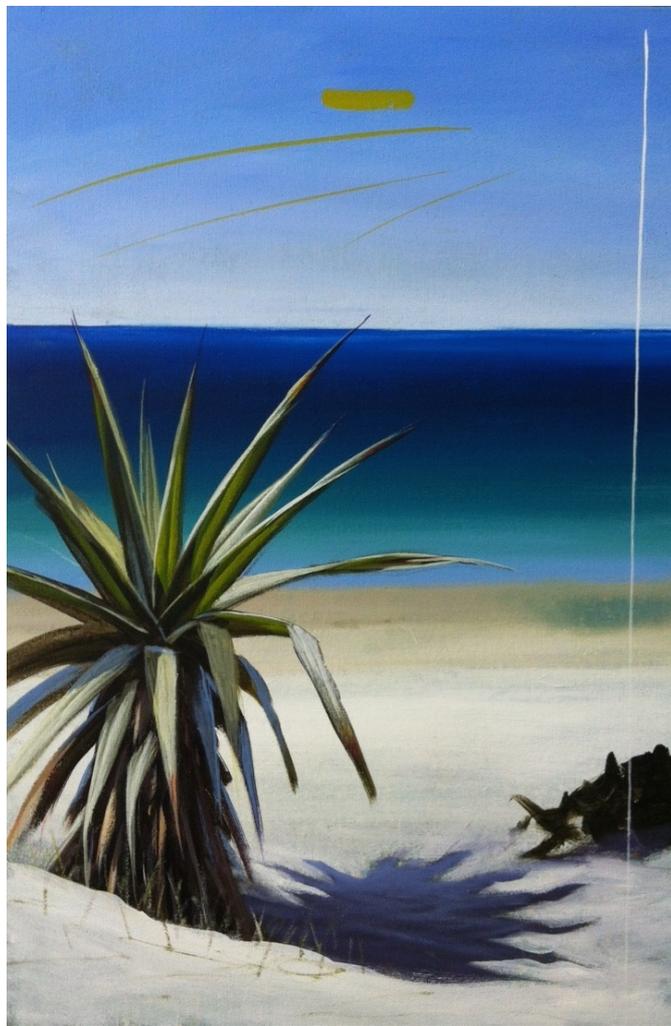
Then I did a demo of a juvenile pandanus tree on the beach and blocked in my darks using my Trees and Foliage recipe of Forest Green, Dioxazine Purple and Cadmium Yellow Medium. I then mixed Cadmium Yellow Light and White, and painted in all the areas which I thought would be high lit (or being hit by direct sunlight).

This then gave us a great opportunity to create some dimension. We added this colour to the major areas of the leaves that were pointing away from us and into direct sun. And then applied the same colour as a thin line on the edges of the leaves that were coming towards us. This meant now then, we had to represent them as being backlit. Our recipe for this was Forest Green and Cadmium Yellow Medium. This colour suggested the shape of the leaf, and emphasised the spine. We also discussed that there would be light bouncing back up from the sand on the underside of the leaves, so where appropriate we did that, noting of course

that some leaves while in shadow, still happened to have the sky reflected on them. All these blues and yellows went towards creating the illusion of depth and dimension.

We mixed some oranges using Permanent Alizarine, Cadmium Yellow Medium and White, and with a loose touch suggested the light on the dead leaves at the base of our tree. We rendered in our shadow on the sand and discussed how the transition from dark to light and from purple to blue created the impression of the shadow receding away from us. We finally came back with a brush and suggested spinifex grass shoots popping out of the sand dune in the foreground.

Time to go home!



Many thanks to everyone for a lovely weekend on the Sunny Coast!

For support material about what you learnt on the weekend, check out these pages:

[www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/ocean-landscapes.html](http://www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/ocean-landscapes.html)  
[www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/color-mixing-guide.html](http://www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/color-mixing-guide.html)  
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and check out these video clips! (subscribe to our [Youtube channel](#) for all the latest clips):

How To Paint Tropical Water - Paint Recipes:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vH8xAeu6njY>

Acrylic Painting Techniques - Shadows in Waves:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OfIAtF-0UoM>

Painting Waves - Perspective in Whitewash:  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TDvlwo\\_e9JI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TDvlwo_e9JI)

Acrylic Painting Techniques - Reflections in Whitewash:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IUDJHY9h9fA>

Brush Technique:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=icWYYJHJFVc>

How to Paint Water - Refraction:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xzCGPAUXJ0g>

Acrylic Painting Techniques - Glazing:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=spJETxwJsdk>

How To Paint Shadows:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Dut2Tma1QU>

Painting Waves - Perspective in Whitewash:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TDvlwo\\_e9JI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TDvlwo_e9JI)

Acrylic Painting Techniques - Glazing - How to Paint Water:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=spJETxwJsdk>

How To Paint Landscapes - Light Effects:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-2\\_JSb9iJVY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-2_JSb9iJVY)

Sunset Painting:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=51fpx0\\_d10Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=51fpx0_d10Y)

Sunset Painting - Gradation Warm Through Cools:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dNJkgJR0fpQ>

