

Beachscapes 101

March 5th-6th 2015

Fremantle, WA

Workshop Notes

Introduced the idea that this is not “the way” - it is just my way! Take what you can use and discard the rest! We all borrow ideas from each other - you will always put your own spin on everything you have borrowed.

We covered some initial theory with these fundamental concepts:

- **Perception** - the ability to find information out in the world. Very important. Find the information that makes the difference. This workshop is designed to escalate your perception skills.
- **Conceptual** - this is YOUR area - relatively handled today.
- **Physical ability** - ability to manipulate your tools - to make exactly the mark you want. To master this will take time, practise and willingness to put the time in. Because we have worked a lot on our perception skills, it's now more important that we continue to develop our physical ability.

Painting is primarily about problem solving - asking the questions is how you will solve your painting problems. The more questions you ask, the more problems you'll solve.

For example:

Q: What colour is water?

A: What's under it? What's above it? What's contaminating it?

Decide what mark you want to make BEFORE you make it. How are you going to make it? Which paintbrush? Which pressure? Which area of the bristles do I need to use to achieve that effect?

Exercise - make some shapes:

Using a long flat brush and whatever pure, thinned colour you like, use the tip of the brush to create some soft, grassy spinifex shapes.

TIP: Be rigorous with your brushes - ask yourself before every brushstroke, what is the mark I want to make? How do I get the brush to make the mark I want it to?



Brushes 101:

A little bit of theory about brushes, and the mark you want to make. There are 3 functions of your paintbrush which affect the mark you make. These are:

- The amount of pressure you apply
- The amount of paint on your brush
- The medium you use

Within each of these areas there are lots of variations, resulting in potentially thousands of different marks you can make with just one brush! So, before you make a mark, ask yourself questions. Is this the mark I want to make? Is this the brush I need? What do I need to do to get the mark that I need? **KNOW YOUR BRUSHES.**

The elements that make up to the appearance of water were introduced and/or reinforced.

The Four Elements:

- **Substrate** - can be lots of different colours ie pebbles, sand, rocks, kelp etc.
- **Colour of water** - can also be lots of different colours.
- **Surface** - probably the most important element - from underneath and above.
- **Light**

Observe. Think of painting water and waves as a series of mirrors and windows. The flatter to your eye the water is - the more will be reflected on its surface. The **face of the wave is a window**, and the **back of the wave is a mirror**. This is handy to think of when you are painting waves in water. When you are looking at water at a flat angle, the water becomes very reflective like a mirror.

When you want to paint a water scene, ask yourself a series of questions so you can work it out:

- **What is the substrate?**
- **What is the colour of the water?**
- **How much of the light is reflected on the surface?**

Then paint it in that order, first the substrate, then the colour of the water, then the surface (and the light).

TIP: At the top of the canvas ie further away from you, (closer to the horizon) there will be more sky reflected, or more mirrors, or less water showing. Closer to the bottom of the canvas there will be more water showing, until you'll be able to see the substrate in shallow water.

TIP: In a low light situation - you will still see the light reflected on the water - but you can't really see through it - low light is more about reflections than anything.

Paint Recipes: Concept of a "starting point" set of colours.

Tropical Water:

Cadmium Yellow Light
Pthalo Blue
Titanium White

Warm Summer Skies:

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

Shadow Under Waves:

Burnt Umber +
Pthalo Blue (into deeper water)
(thin wash)

Sand:

Cadmium Yellow Medium
Dioxazine Purple
Titanium White
(for drier sand add more Titanium White)

Foliage:

Cadmium Yellow Medium
Dioxazine Purple
Forest Green

Exercise: Shaping Dunes

On a white canvas, we used a “wet” dry brush (we thinned out paint and took some of it off) before using the tip of the brush to create the illusion of grasses. We applied this paint strategically to suggest the undulations of sand dunes. The idea being to create a “carved out” pathway in the sand through to the beach.

We used our Paint Recipe for Foliage and created some darker areas with the tip of our brush, loosely creating coastal shrubbery. We added Cadmium Yellow Medium and White to this mix and applied some highlights. We also put flecks of orange and other “WA shrub colours” to suggest the WA beaches. We then used Burnt Umber to create some posts, and applied White down one side to create a highlight. We then painted the shadows on the sand using a mix of Dioxazine Purple, French Ultramarine Blue and White. We “wobbled” the brush stroke to suggest undulating footprints in the dunes, and added more blue and white to the shadows further away.



Atmospheric Perspective

We talked about how with seascapes we like to establish the illusion of depth and dimension in our paintings. We talked about how the air has a colour due to the “stuff” in it, and how we can assume this colour is blue (sky colour - White + French Ultramarine Blue). So in order to push elements further back - we can first establish their colour close up, and then to push back simply add sky colour. To push back even further, add more sky colour.

Think of the world having layers of coloured cellophane between you and whatever you are looking at. The further away, the more layers of cellophane, the closer to you, the less!

Your Painting!

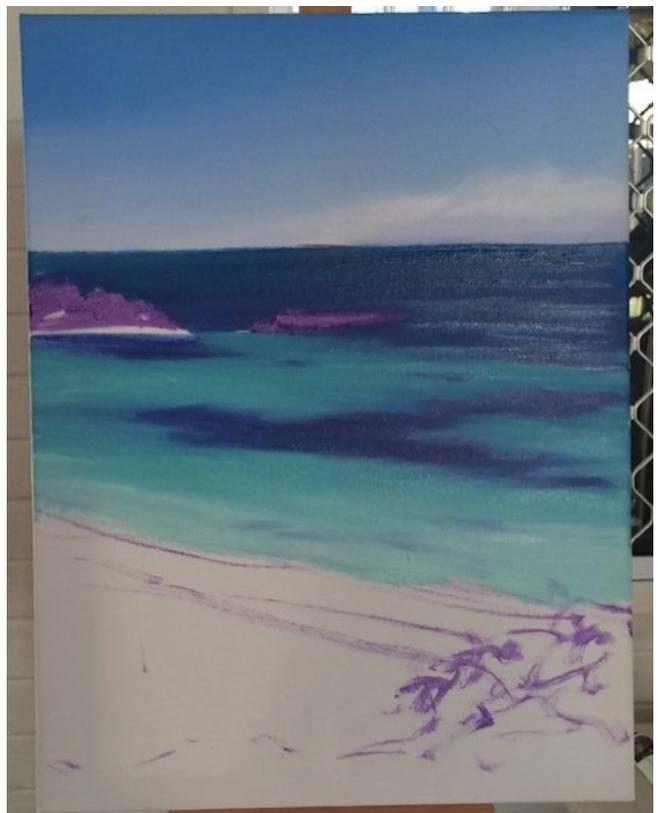
Exercise : Gradation of Colour:

We started our beachscape canvas, and roughed in the picture with Dioxazine Purple. We then painted 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. We threw in a bank of clouds using White as a highlight, and the tiniest touch of Dioxazine Purple in the shadows.

Then we started painting 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. We stopped here in order to get our horizon right. Take the time to make sure the horizon is reasonably straight and slightly blended with the sky. “Gallileo discovered the world was round so that you don’t need to use masking tape on our horizons!”.

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, leaving gaps for some rocky outcrops. 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 now mix our Sand recipe of White, Dioxazine Purple and Cadmium Yellow Medium (noting that the sand in WA has less Cadmium Yellow Medium in it) 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 of shallow water, representing drier sand. Lastly, we then painted the rest of the canvas white, to represent the dry sand.

We put it out to dry.

We then did another gradation exercise for Tropical Water into shallow sand.

Start with the Default Settings colours for tropical water of Pthalo Blue, Cadmium Yellow Light and White. Start at the top of your canvas with mainly Pthalo Blue & a tiny amount of Cadmium Yellow Light. As you move further down the canvas add more Cadmium Yellow Light and White & back off the Pthalo Blue.

If you add a tiny amount of Dioxazine Purple (TINY - like 3 hairs on your paintbrush) to a Cadmium Yellow Medium & White mix, you will end up with a lovely “sand colour” at the bottom of your canvas.

TIP: When painting gradations (particularly sky gradations), get plenty of colour down, then pull the colours together in a cross hatch fashion to blend. Then use the tip of a clean, large-ish brush to soften the transition even more.

TIP: If you want to paint a luscious cool water, use lovely cool colours.

TIP: Determine the sky first - the light will determine everything in the rest of your painting.

TIP: When doing gradations of colour, shifts in colour as well as tone will make your paintings POP!

Theory - Anatomy of a wave

The steeper the wave, the harder and sharper the lines are going to be (shallower water = sharper lines).

You can chalk in your waves - Decide where you want your waves to break etc. You can also use White to paint them in initially “non-committally”.



Create your waves by using a very dry brush, and create the flat spots on the backs of the waves (using the sky colour of Ultramarine Blue & White, this creates the reflection of the sky on the back of the waves). Use the tip of your brush on its edge. At the bottom of the wave you will see more of the sand showing - add some "greeny-yellow colour (shallow water colour) using some Cadmium Yellow Light - cool yellow - gradating to a greeny colour in the middle of the wave. Then add a shadow line to your wave using the default setting (very thin wash) of Burnt Umber & Pthalo Blue.

TIP: The area between waves is flat. This area will reflect the sky colour - use a drier brush & a soft touch.

Refraction technique:

The refraction process is what happens when the light hits the surface of the water and creates tiny rainbows of patterned light on the substrate. Refraction is affected by the depth of the water. Hold your small chisel brush on the side and from the front, parallel to the canvas, and loosely between your thumb and forefinger (or fingers) roll it back and forth, and up and down to create a series of loose diamond-y irregular flat rectangles.

The further away from you (ie the higher up the canvas & closer to the horizon), the flatter and smaller, and less distinct the "diamonds" will be. Remember perspective - that is, objects further away from you will appear smaller and flatter and less distinct.



TIP: When using this technique, try to turn your brain (mostly!) off. This exercise is more difficult than it looks! When you master this technique it can be used for a number of different things including representing spinifex grass on the beach, or highlights on clouds on the horizon. Random chaos!

Add the waves - to do this you paint the sky reflection! Use the tip of your brush on its edge. You can decide where the waves are - where the lumps in the water are, where everything is!

To accentuate the "face" of the waves, use a thin wash of Pthalo Blue (a glaze) to create gorgeous windows in your waves.



Afternoon Wave Demo:

You can loosely chalk in or paint with white paint where you want your waves to go. Mark painted a wave to demonstrate.

Start with your darkest shadow areas in the whitewash - use a mix of Pthalo Blue, Burnt Umber & White. For the next level of shading add a pile of White to this mix & Ultramarine Blue. Then add pure White to build up the final highlights of the whitewash.

Add your vertical and horizontal reflections to the front of the whitewash and your paintings will zing with realism! You can create the illusion of a steeply breaking wave, or a soft crumbly wave using these White horizontal (ish) and vertical reflections.

Add some soupy whitewash trails to your foreground using perspective and a loose elliptical pattern, with a vanishing point in mind to create realism in your painting. To give even more zip add a light shadow within the soupy pattern of a very VERY thin wash of Burnt Umber. Instant depth in the shallows.

Add your vertical and horizontal reflection lines right down on the wet sand. Wet sand is highly reflective.

TIP: Any time you wet something, the principles of water apply. That is, wet rocks, wet roads, wet sand. Anything wet you can treat in the same way you would a water painting!

TIP: Remember whitewash has perspective. Use the edge of the chisel brush held flat and softly add the "soup" trailing behind the waves. This soup should point towards the vanishing point.

We went back to our beachscape painting and Mark demonstrated how to paint the rocky outcrops, using a mixture of Burnt Umber, Dioxazine Purple and some highlights using White and Burnt Umber.

We then moved onto the beach. We used the techniques that we learned painting our waves, and painted all the small waves, breaking in the distance on the shore. These were done using a Burnt Umber line to suggest the shadow. We painted the lovely shallow water highlight in the centre of the wave, and we suggested the lip of the wave as it broke into the shallow water. We also painted the whitewash, and painted reflections in the wet sand using a dry brush down, wet brush across.

We then shaped the sand dunes using the same techniques we practised the day before. Bam. Finished painting.

*Thanks to everyone for a most excellent workshop
in Treco!*

For support material about what you learnt over the weekend, check out these pages from our website:

www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/ocean-landscapes.html
www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/color-mixing-guide.html
www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/perspective-in-painting.html
www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/how-to-paint-water.html
www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/painting-waves.html
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www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/support-files/default-settings-trees.pdf
www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/Acrylics_Anonymous-acrylics-anonymous-019.html

and these video clips! (subscribe to our Youtube channel for all the latest clips):

Brush Technique:

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

Painting Waves - Dry Brush Technique:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bgNhoede9AI>

Learn How To Paint - Gradation:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vy-Z0FQ2kpg>

Acrylic Painting Techniques - Shadows in Waves:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OfIAtF-0UoM>

Acrylic Painting Techniques - Reflections in Whitewash:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IUDJHY9h9fA>

Acrylic Painting Tips - Colour Matching:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A5gzJuX8EEU>

How to Paint Water - Refraction:

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

Acrylic Painting Techniques - Glazing:

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

How To Paint Shadows:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDut2Tma1QU>

Painting Waves - Perspective in Whitewash:

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

Default Settings - Trees:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rXbtL9HrgUs>

April 11th 2014 Webinar Promo:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LETOyuON6yk>

Tropical Beach V-log Episode 1:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0fiDO1UagEU>

How To Paint Tropical Water - Paint Recipes:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vH8xAeu6njY&list=UUlzzJZa8_Obui-WGHgdUnng

How To Paint Wet Rocks:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y4qv1uzfW7E>

Artist Palette set up:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=57krxyDyagY>