Beachscapes 101

27th & 28th June 2015

Chittaway Bay

Workshop Notes

Day 1:

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.

Set Up Your Palette:

Set yourself up properly to remove "obstacles". Your palette is for working stuff out on! Not your canvas! It is your workspace. Dish up more paint than you think you'll need. Nothing worse than trying to match colours halfway through a painting because not enough paint was dished up at the beginning. These strategies will free your brain for painting.

Dish up your paints so that you have your widest paintbrush width between each colour to avoid contaminating your colours with others.

OUR JOB AS ARTISTS

Your job is not necessarily to recreate nature, but to give people access to the discoveries you've made. You get to exaggerate what's really there, and play and dance.

We discussed how our brains work. That is, we can leave out information (think "the cat sat on on the mat x"), and still create a convincing painting. You can represent things without putting in every tiny detail and nuance - people's brains will do the rest.

We don't fully process all the information. We stop looking, because we think we already know. Forget that you know - look at everything like you're a brand new person, with a sense of wonder.

TIP: Your job is to go and look carefully at everything!

TIP: When painting from photos, try and observe the same scene in real life as well, at the same time of day. You will notice many things that when represented in your painting will give it real life, zest and pop.

BRUSHES 101

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?

There is a mistaken belief that if you buy a different brush it'll solve all of your problems. Your brush is like a swiss army knife - you need to know all the different strokes it will create. You need to know what mark you want to make and how you can make it BEFORE you start.

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.

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!

How do we know what colour the cellophane is? We establish the light. We also discussed that water is exactly the same ie the more water/particles between us and what we're looking at, the more the colour of the object will be affected.

So how do we decide what is the right "colour" for the light. I did a simple demonstration showing how the colour spectrum demonstrates the different times of the day. For a bit more explanation on this, see our Youtube clip at : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XdaWQW3ID4Q

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

I did a demonstration using the recipe of Summer Sky (plus a tiny bit of Cadmium Yellow Light added to the lower part of the sky), and then showed on a separate canvas, how adding Permanent Alizarine to these colours altered the time of day.

Then I demonstrated a simple way to create the illusion of distance in a painting. We established the colour of the foreground trees using the Foliage recipe as a rough guide, and then added the sky colour to this colour to push the hills in the background further away. We created the illusion of hills coming forward, by diminishing the amount of sky colour added. Hills further away = more sky colour. Hills closer = less sky colour.

We then did the same demonstration using the picture with Permanent Alizarine added. We established the colour of the trees at midday. We added Permanent Alizarine to change the time of the day to suit the picture. We then added sky colour to the hills in the distance to push them further away. The more sky colour we added, the further away the hills appeared.

We then looked at how all that related to water. We painted a summer sky, and established the colour of the hills in the foreground, and added sky colour to them to push them further away. We now need to put the water in. We then investigated the colour of the water. So how do we know what colour to make the water? At this point I went into a bit of theory about the elements that make up the appearance of water.

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?**

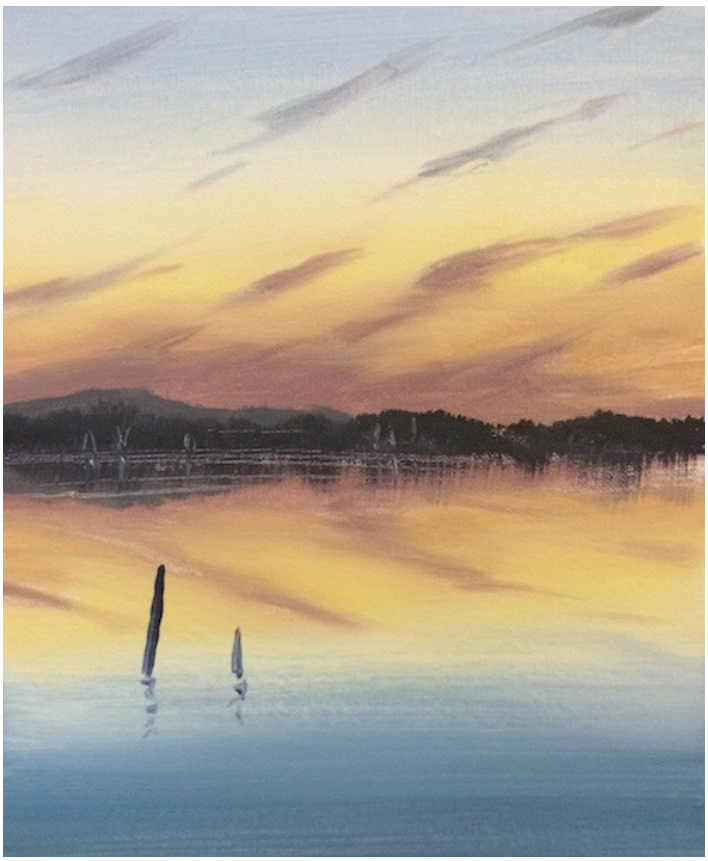
We painted our water in - starting at the horizon. We established the colour of our water, and decided that it was roughly Pthalo Blue. We had to allow for the horizon to be further away, so we added sky colour to our water, and painted it in a small band along the horizon. We then softened that band to create the "indistinctness" of the horizon meeting the sky. We worked our way down our painting, adding the colour of the water (Pthalo Blue). As we came into shallower water, we started to add Cadmium Yellow Light (Tropical Water recipe) and White. In other words, the substrate, or what is under the water, is now beginning to show. In this case, sand.

To illustrate the point of the colour of the sand, I placed a strip of sand recipe colour at the base of one of the islands.

We grabbed another canvas to demonstrate what difference changing the light makes, particularly to the surface of the water.

We established our sky as in the previous late afternoon exercise (adding Permanent Alizarine to our middle of the day foliage/hills and sky colours). Except this time, we created a mirror image of the sky on the bottom half of the canvas (in other words, created a reflection of the sky on the surface of the water). We added a tiny bit of Cadmium Yellow Light (and of course a touch of Permanent Alizarine) and blended this into the bottom part of the canvas. This was to suggest that we were beginning to see through the

reflection, and see the colour of the water close to us.



We now painted a range of distant hills by adding our late afternoon sky colour to our foreground hill colour. We reflected those hills in the surface of the water, by painting the exact shapes of those hills upside down. We diminished the sky colour with our foliage colour (in other words, darkening it) and added another range of hills and reflected them in the water also. We then created the illusion of some tree trunks in the distance, and reflected them in the water, and suggested the surface of the water by dragging some very pale lines where the surface of the water meets the tree line.

Both these exercises were designed to illustrate how altering the light affected the colours, but also affected how much of the colour of the water and the substrate could be seen.

In preparation for Day 2, we blocked in 1. of these two canvases.

1. A WA-esque beachscape in the middle of the day.
2. A WA-esque beachscape (the same scene as 1.) late in the afternoon.

Initially I drew in my lines using a thin mix of Dioxazine Purple.

I spent a little bit of time going over perspective, and the particular shape that a bay makes when viewed from the beach level and from above. Getting the shapes right here is very important, as it is a structural element that affects

and determines the size and shape of objects in the vicinity. The shape, when viewed from the beach, is like a backwards tick.

The blocking in process is designed to get all of the elements roughly in the right place. It's not super important though, as this will all be painted over again, and adjustments made. No pressure.

We used our Paint Recipe for Summer Sky, our Paint Recipe for Foliage to represent the headland in the background, our recipe for Tropical Water to represent the water, although we made adjustments for the colour of the water and reef in WA, and a recipe for Sand.

The only real divergence from the recipes was in the water and the sand. We assumed the water was fundamentally Pthalo Blue, and reflected the sky on it close to the horizon in the same way as the previous exercise. This time however, as we painted down the canvas, we added some Dioxazine Purple to the Pthalo Blue, to suggest patches of reef. We then mixed our Tropical Water recipe, although this time used slightly more Pthalo Blue and slightly less Cadmium Yellow Light. We painted this in between the patches of reef, and added more White and tiny increments of Cadmium Yellow Light as we came into the shallows. This then blended with our wet sand to create a soft transition. The sand in WA is quite white, diminishing the Cadmium Yellow Medium and allowing more Dioxazine Purple creates a pretty close representation.

I mixed some Burnt Umber and Pthalo Blue (Shadows Under Waves paint recipe) and represented a wave breaking along the sand in the shallows. I put some white highlights on top just to get the elements in the right place.

Day 2.

We talked about my painting process.

A quick note on using mediums rather than water to thin your paint. Acrylic paint is basically coloured grit suspended in glue. If you use water to "break down" your pigment, you will start to break down the glue, and you may end up with patchy results.

If you use a dedicated medium like Fast Medium & Fixer or Glazing Liquid, the pigment is then suspended in a layer of plastic, meaning your paintings end up more luminous (as light travels through the "plastic" down to the layer of pigment, and back through the "plastic" before it hits your eye. Lovely luminosity.

I often use layers of Impasto Gel (Atelier Heavy Gel) in between different layers of paint to generate luminosity and depth in my paintings.

We then blocked in our second canvas (appearance of late in the afternoon). We drew in all our major shapes and lines with thinned Dioxazine Purple as above. We then started with the white of an intense sunset behind the headland. We gradually added Cadmium Yellow Light to this, radiating out from the light source, gradually adding Permanent Alizarine as we got further from the light source, and eventually adding a little French Ultramarine Blue. This was repeated in the water, although the light source occurred as a "band" below the sun, and the other colours radiating out from that horizontally rather than in a circular pattern. (This is because water is inherently flat and reflections will generally point towards you in the water). We left a rough band of Dioxazine Purple in the shore break to represent a small wave there.

We went back to our middle of the day beachscape. As the blocking in process was only the beginning, the second coat tightens everything up. We re-established the sky. We then painted a band of colour to represent the sea close to the horizon, and spent plenty of time getting the horizon right. Some of us made some clouds by using a little bit of Dioxazine Purple and adding it to the sky colour. Highlights were added with White.

We then went back to the ocean, adding our Pthalo Blue as we came down the canvas. We started to add Dioxazine Purple to the Pthalo Blue and pushed down into the reef, painting patches - using a flat brush on its edge, and horizontal marks. We then mixed our deeper water Tropical Water colour, using a little less Cadmium Yellow Light (beautiful turquoise). We added White and a smidge of Cadmium Yellow Light, and blended down into the shallows. We

then mixed French Ultramarine Blue and White, and pushed that up into the shallow water, leaving a hard edge against the sand. This represents the sky reflection where the transition of land and water meet.

We went to our recipe for Sand, diminishing slightly the Cadmium Yellow Medium and painted a band against the blue, and down into the drier sand. To paint the dry sand we added more White, and painted the remainder of the canvas. We now came back with Pthalo Blue and Burnt Umber, and re-established the shadows in the wave. We added White as a highlight on the top of the wave.

We went into a little bit of theory about waves at this point.

ANATOMY OF A WAVE

What is a wave? A lump of water = "deeper water colour" if you are looking through the face of a wave in deeper water. Think of waves as windows and mirrors. The back of waves reflect sky (mirrors) and you can see through the front of the wave (windows).

Water isn't "perfect", you can get away with a lot in your painting because of this.
The steeper the wave, the harder and sharper the lines are going to be (shallower water = sharper lines).

Where the face of the wave is (ie unbroken), we added some slightly deeper water colour to the top of it, and added some shallow water colour to the base increasing in intensity, to create the illusion of light being concentrated down by the curve of the wave.

We added a very thin mix of Burnt Umber to create the illusion of the face of the wave casting a shadow on the sand beneath it.

Let's look at the wet sand now. The wave breaking behind is reflected in the wet sand. We grab White, and with a very dry brush, drag soft vertical lines down the canvas (in this patch of wet sand). We then add horizontal lines using thinned white paint and a damp brush, to create the illusion of whitewash reflected on the undulations in the wet sand. Very simple, but effective technique. Then with neat White, created a smaller, whitewash-y wave in the foreground. We used a relatively wet mix and a flat

brush, and on it's edge created the illusion of suds being left behind by that smaller wave.

Finally, with pure White we reinforced the whitewash on the breaking wave behind it, and painted the lip of the wave. To paint the lip we used a small brush on it's edge, marked the line that the lip made, and flicked off the back strategically to create the illusion of spray. Everyone did a great job here. The homework was "use the information gleaned over the weekend, and techniques, to finish to sunset painting. Remember to alter the colours to represent the light (time of day) and remember that anything closer to the light source will appear warmer, and things further away will appear cooler. This will happen in the whitewash, in the hill, and in the everything." I did a quick demonstration to show this.

Thanks so much to all you wonderful people in the Central Coast!!!

For those of you interested in the upcoming Fiji workshop, for more information go to:

http://paradisecourses.com/discovery-inspiration-and-technique-with-mark-waller/

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
www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/gradation.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):

Painting The Right Light:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XdaWQW3ID4Q

Create Distance In Your Paintings | Atmospheric Perspective:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ecBhJUiFXU

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=lDut2Tma1QU

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=UUIzzJZa8_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