"Dune Slice"

17th & 18th February 2024
Esk, QLD

Workshop Notes

Day 1.

We're going to use our brushes in a way you may not have before, and we're going to make a painting in a bit of a different way too. Generally with a painting, there is a foreground, middle ground and background; all with quite definite transitions. In this painting we're going to create the foreground, mid-ground and background with really no transitions. We're going to play with this to make a really interesting painting, and play with light and dark. We're going to use darker colours in the background and light in the foreground to help create distance and dimension. Generally this is the opposite to "normal" paintings, but in this painting it'll be a bit different. We're going to play with colour in places you maybe haven't thought about much.

Mark is a little obsessed with highlights on leaves. Painting that light is where it's at. This painting is all about the context, to highlight the light on the tops of the dunes and cooler colours in the shadows.

An aside:

So, when we are painting, we are rarely just painting for ourselves. We generally paint with the idea that someone will be viewing this painting at some point. So painting is a form of communication. We are communicating a perspective in the hope that our viewer will connect with it. You will bring your own story to the scene you are creating too - and this is where the juice is.

For Mark, with this scene, the story came with a weekend away in his van down south on the coast, traipsing around the sand dunes and being absolutely blown away by that light hitting the tops of the dunes.

We spent a bit of time discussing why we paint. Leone said "to relax", when asked why, she said "capturing a scene that has a good feeling is relaxing". Glen said he rarely paints what he sees. He paints something else into the scene that gives him satisfaction, and when he completes a painting that he's happy with, can enjoy it for a little while before moving on. Glen enjoys change! However Mark is really leading the conversation in a direction. He asserted that the image is important to document for some reason - but how much time do we really spend dissecting the image? Alan used to take photos on the beach and was never really satisfied. Painting gives him an opportunity to "cheat the light". He's his own photoshop!

Mark said his way of thinking about things is that everything is "wobbling". It can be a delusion to expect that things (scenes) will be the same on any given day or time. You can paint the same scene over and over, and never get the same image.

Cath paints to feel present in the moment and to turn off her brain.

Mark said that expectation = frustration. Releasing expectation is more fulfilling. It's important to look at the motivation to paint because of this. If your frustration is about trying to recreate something perfectly, then this will equal suffering, as you'll never get to "perfection".

A lot of the time we have noise in our brains and are very busy. Painting narrows our focus and can be very meditative. Just notice though, is your desire to paint motivated by fear - ie the fear of the noise in your head?

There's also something about being in the scene **in real life** that can stop you in your tracks. "You" disappear, and something bigger happens. That is sort of what is in the background of all the scenes. A sense of awe, of being connected. A "WOW" moment. These are the moments we are lost in awe. These are the moments that completely shut us up. They're the ones we remember.

So, we should really be in awe of the fact that we actually exist! 13.8 billion years of stars expanding and collapsing for us to be in this hall in Esk pushing coloured goo around with a hairy stick, what are the chances of that?! And we want to beat ourselves up about our paintings! Let's not do that!

What we're going to do this weekend instead is spend 2 days losing ourselves in awe. And feel conscious enough to enjoy it all (hopefully) :D

Set Up Your Workspace:

Set yourself up properly to remove "obstacles". Your palette is for working stuff out on! Not your "real" canvas! It is your workspace. Dish up more paint than you think you'll need. There is 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.** Your palette, and your workspace should support your practise.

We're going to leap right in and play with starting to form up the hills and the dunes/foliage in the background. This painting is set around 4pm in the day.

We're mixing Forest Green, White, Cadmium Yellow Medium and a teensy bit of Dioxazine Purple to create a nice grey/green colour. Take most of the paint off, and using a medium flat sized brush, roll the brush between your fingers and kind of drag it "down the hill" to start to bring some dimension to
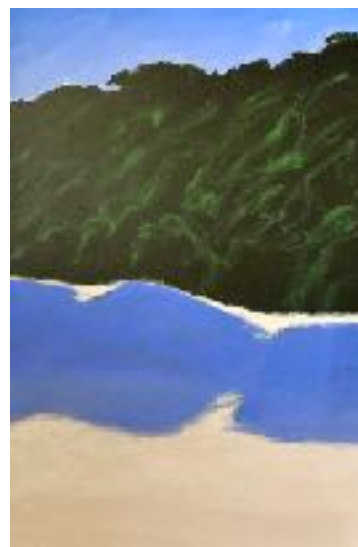
the background.

One of the interesting things about all of us painting the same image, is how many perspectives there are, and how people interpret things differently. With that in mind, be particularly attentive about brush technique in this painting.

While we have that colour, we grabbed a smaller brush, a nice scraggly one, and added White and a bit more Dioxazine Purple, and with the tip of the brush, made some long "droopy" marks at the bottom of the dark background foliage are to create the beginning of some Casuarina trees.

We're just feeling our way with the image here, getting some colour down in a non-committal way so that we don't do something catastrophic and at the same time we can build on it.

To the previous colour we then added Cadmium Yellow Medium, Forest Green and White, we're going to start to create a bright sunlit area. Use a smaller, flatter brush that holds quite a bit of paint, and thin the paint out. We're going to use the tip of the brush to start to create the tops of the pandanus trees. Sometimes in these areas there are groves of pandanus trees all bunched together, the feeling in under there is cool, swampy and quiet. At the same time Mark also created a flat spot between the trees going up the hill.

In this painting we're going to put a little more detail in than we need to. You can do this without as much detail too. But doing it this way will give you more skills.

So, Mark asked if we should add some clouds? If so, why? In this painting it can be a compositional tool to manipulate and direct your viewer's eye. Cath is a graphic designer and talked about how different the compositional tools she uses in her work are. Really as a viewer your attention is directed in a different way. In a graphic design application the viewer's attention needs to be captured quickly and held there. Whereas in a painting your attention is directed in different ways. You need to identify the feelings you want to invoke - generally we want room for curiosity in our paintings - there is enough angst in the world.

Trying to capture a sense of curiosity in your paintings is a great idea.

We next dished up some White, French Ultramarine Blue, and a tiny bit of Pthalo Blue somewhere clean on the palette. We're creating some wispy clouds using neat White (thin the paint out then take most of it off the brush).

Mark also added a bank of cumulus/cirrus clouds on the left behind the trees. Whichever clouds you decide to add can also give you a sense of the time of year and create a subconscious feeling (of Winter with the wispy clouds, or Summer with the cirrus clouds for example). If you've overdone your clouds, use the sky colours to re-paint your sky. You don't have to do too much here, just a few marks here and there.

An aside:

Our brains are hardwired to learn something, then know that thing, and then we tend to stop looking. For example, "the cat sat on the ......". Our jobs as artists is to put enough information in our paintings to convince the viewer to connect the dots. We want to regurgitate the information in a powerful way that generates a connection with our viewer. We need to KEEP LOOKING.

We do need to approach what we're doing as if it's the first time we are looking at it - we need to really observe the information, and keep looking at the world with wonder. Your job is to be a storyteller.

Across the top of the hill your trees are a bit broken up. Mark mixed up a sky colour using White, French Ultramarine Blue and a tiny bit of Pthalo Blue, and softened up the imperfections between the clouds. While we have that sky colour, we're going to make that ridgeline look a little more exciting, by putting a few "holes" in the trees here and there. These tiny little brushstrokes can make these ridgeline established trees look really far away, which at the same time makes the hill/dune look huge! You have the power here to decide actually how big that hill is.

Sequencing in this workshop is not super important. You can't really get caught behind, we'll just be to-ing and fro-ing for the whole weekend.

We're going to start shaping up the trees now. Mark wants to create the impression of the light hitting the trees at the front of the background and on the ridgeline, but not so much the middle, as the hill's steepness would prevent the sun from hitting there. Mark used the same tree colour as before but with some extra Cadmium Yellow Medium and Dioxazine Purple added to that.

Warm to cool aside - there will be a transition in the shadows between warm to cool. Everywhere you look there is a transition from warm to cool. This will give you more realism in your realistic paintings.

Mark painted a little bit more definition on the edges of those trees to give the hill/ridge more dimension. We're creating the illusion of the foliage with a little bit more detail.

Mark added White and Cadmium Yellow Medium to that colour, and added more detail to a tree halfway up the ridge line and another one higher up, breaking up the shapes, but making slightly rounded shapes here and there. You want to try and avoid making patterns here.

While he had that colour he also added some highlights to the top of the ridgeline trees too, to start to shape the tops of the dunes. This is where you guys are going to use your discernment. You get to determine and have a little bit of a say over what you want to happen with your trees. You need to think about what would be happening with the tree shadows and highlights as you paint. Just play with this part for a while, but think about where the shadows and highlights will realistically be.

Don't be scared to use the edges of your brush, and let go a little bit. I know some of you are struggling and wrestling, but don't worry, there is another strategy. Trust the process, because there will be other parts of this process that you can use to get yourself out of trouble.

Who's creating repeating patterns? How do you stop this? If you're doing this, try disrupting your brain by swapping to your less dominant hand, or try holding the paintbrush right at the very end!

TIP: Using the edge of the brush and rolling it will also help you break up those patterns.

We're trying to lose our patterns, but maintain some form. It's a real tightrope. You have to really bring your perception into it. Mark asked Cath, "can you see a tree in there anywhere?". So the trick is to create tree looking objects without creating them all the same ;) Tricky!! They don't have to look exactly like trees at this stage - you're building trees, and that is a process!

Some of you at this point are getting a bit weird about your trees. We're going to rush ahead a little bit just to free you up a little bit.

Mix a little bit of Burnt Umber and White, and throw in a bit of French Ultramarine Blue just for kicks; take most of the paint off and use a small brush to create some branches here and there to help give your trees shape. All of a sudden those amorphous tree blobs have a little more structure, and it's a little bit more information for your viewer (think: "the cat sat......").

After lunch:

We're going to look at the sand dunes now!

Can you see a slight difference in tone between the sand dune shadows underneath and on top?

Mark asked if everything reflects light, would you agree? (Maybe not dark matter, but everything else, yes!) One of the things that makes a difference to reflections is the angle of the object's surface in relation to whatever is emitting the light.

Mark mixed French Ultramarine Blue and Dioxazine Purple and White and roughed in the face of the sand dunes again. He then added White and French Ultramarine Blue to that colour and painted this in the bottom of that sand dune (parts of these will reflect the sky). These sand dunes are also kind of tiered, so Mark used this lighter colour to start adding those "tiers" in subtly with a very dry brush. This is the area that the spinifex tendrils get stuck in, generally.

TIP: Set up where your ridges/tiers are going to be, and use a very dry brush after that!

When a sand dune is formed, wind blows dry sand on top of other layers of dry sand, in between rain, wind, foliage etc. There is a quite a bit of layering. Then, when the waves break away the front of the sand dune it will sometimes collapse into "layers" or "tiers". You get to see the cross section in the face of the dune. The waves are undercutting this dune to create a steep vertical ridge area.

We don't have to make too much detail here because we can "tidy" that up when we start doing the scraggly spinifex bits and pieces.

So now, when you look at those dunes, you'll see in those areas where it is collapsed, there will be darker areas in there, and those darker areas will be in under in those layers, some foliage, vegetation etc. Mark used a veryyyyy dry brush here and a mix of Burnt Umber and French Ultramarine Blue, mixed with the previous purple. Mark used the edge of the brush and dragged down strategically here and there to start creating those striations in the face of the dune.

These vertical parts are going to be reflecting different lights. Mark noticed there was an unusual goldy colour present on some parts of the dune face. He worked out that this colour probably was the sand colour being reflected back onto the dune face.

Mark mixed Cadmium Yellow Medium, Burnt Umber and White, and added this to the original purple shadow colour, and using a very soft touch, and a very dry brush, added some very subtle small vertical reflections here and there. This gives the impression that when those ridges have collapsed, they haven't collapsed perfectly evenly. The imperfections in nature help make the realism.

TIP: Don't be scared of using purple in those shadows, it's not a bad thing at all. You'd be surprised how much purple there is at the beach!

End of the day paintings critique:

Ros very bravely brought her painting up the front first. Mark asked her what was wrong and she struggled to articulate what she saw wrong with it. Ros is looking at it from a "want it to be finished" eye. Mark can see where it is going, and participants can't - there's quite a bit of trust in the process involved. Mark suggested the purple is just a little bit too purple in Ros' case, he suggested using a very dry brush with a darkish blue over that purple area to kill the purple a bit.

Rob brought his up next, and Mark asked him what he thinks about it. He is feeling a bit frustrated about the process and same thing as Ros, is kind of looking at it through a "finished" lens rather than a "this is part of the process" lens. Another thing with Rob's painting is that the canvas is not too great, so it won't handle layers of paint as well as a better quality canvas. If you do have a crappy canvas, give it a couple of layers of gesso first to seal it up well. Rob can't quite see where he's going with it which makes it a little confusing to paint as well. Mark explained the foreground in terms of 2 planes. For example the face of the dune is vertical, the sand coming towards you is flatter. These angles relative to your eye determine which colours you will see where (ie there will be more of one colour reflected on the flat surface - the sky for example, and more of another on the vertical surface - the sand for example).

This is effectively an underpainting, there will be more layers going on top of this tomorrow!

Alan brought his up, he is worried about the face of the dune. He's struggling with what he's looking at in terms of where the shadows are and where the highlights are. So again it seems an issue of visualising where the painting is going maybe.

Mark demonstrated something by adding a highlit line across the top of the dunes, and some highlit areas here and there on the dunes to help create those planes a little more. How important are the striations now that those highlights are there? Less so! Mark showed how you could flatten the dune a little by adding these highlights, making those striations much less important. They are but one part of the picture! There will be some more stuff going on in the background as well that will help pull your eye in a different direction.

Mark decided to rush ahead here as he is a small child and it's very exciting for him :D So in saying that he added tips of spinifex grass being hit by the sun along the sand dune ridge line. Wowsa!

Alannah came up with her painting last of all. Mark asked her where it was an issue for her. She doesn't like any of it! This exercise is about you finding the solutions for your own problems. Alannah figured out that she doesn't like the hill in the background; she thinks the trees don't look right. She determined that she needs to change the colours in the trees in order to make them look "right".

Basically, you need to ask the questions, loads and loads of questions, in order to determine the colour/shape/believability of anything you paint. You need to be **very specific** as well in order to solve a problem. You need to hone your ability to ask loads of questions and find the information in order to problem solve.

Ultimately Mark thinks Alannah could spend a bit more time on the brushes to work on brush technique, and a bit of time on colour mixing too.

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.

There are 3 main 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

Then there is also HOW you hold your brush.

Within each of these areas there are lots of variations (if you think of each area having a scale of 1-10, for example), resulting in potentially thousands of different marks you can make with just one brush!

So, before you make a mark, ask yourself questions. Get really educated about this. 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. Make as many different marks as you can with just one paintbrush. Experiment with how you hold your brush too. You'll be absolutely amazed at the stories you can tell with just one paintbrush!

At this point Mark introduced these three fundamental skills you need to make a painting:

• Conceptual Skills
• Physical Ability
• Perception Skills

Conceptual Skills:

This is your spin on the image, this is unique to you. Is the concept (of the image you want to paint) compelling to you? If it is, that's great! You're not painting for anyone else! Having said that we want to make a piece that is evocative in some way. Your conceptual skills can modify an image (perhaps something as simple as cropping) and make it somehow "something else". And yours. This skill is not AS important in the early days, until your physical ability and perception skills are

honed. When these are developed you will eventually feel more confident in your storytelling ability, and developing your conceptual skills.

Physical Ability:

This is the ability to move your paint around. If you practise your physical skills this will eventually also enhance your perception and conceptual skill areas. To develop your physical skills this is time on the brushes, but TARGETED time on the brushes. Take a corner out of a magazine and try and match the colour. A great idea is to draw up a series of different shaped squares and rectangles, and practise your gradations, first with one colour in all these different shapes and sizes, and then try adding another colour.

Perception Skills:

As artists and humans, we notice when things don't look right. (For example the sunlight shining through a bushfire, instantly looks strange). As artists we should take this further and go beyond this, to see what is wrong, or find the nuance, and investigate.

Our brains don't tend to see everything - we stop noticing the minutiae in the world. As artists it's useful to look at everything like it's the first time we've noticed it. These nuances are the things you can exaggerate and share with the world.

Painting is a lot about creating illusion - knowing some tricks to help create these illusions is very useful!!

Your perception skills don't only relate to seeing information in the world, it's also a way to see your own process up close. You need to be able to quiet your noisy mind and actually, truly look.

These three concepts (Physical Ability, Conceptual Skills and Perception Skills) can be used as a problem solving tool when you are making paintings. Use these tools to refine your own arts practise.

Next time you're at an arts show, look at the paintings - holding these three concepts in your mind - and really evaluate the paintings. For example you might love a particular concept, but notice that the artist lacked the painting technique. **You can learn a lot about your own painting practise by looking at others' paintings in this way.** Keep asking the questions! "Don't upset people's BS alarms!" (unless of course you're intending to do this :)

See the Youtube link at the end of these notes for a bit more info on these concepts "3 Skills to Make a Painting".

Tip: We paint what we think we know, not what we actually see.

Tip: Nature doesn't put colour together that doesn't work. To paint realistically it is a matter of observing closely. REALLY closely!!

Day 2:

We're going to start today with the sand transition and move onto the spinifex tendrils. So we're going to need to dish out a lot of White paint, and a tiny amount of Cadmium Yellow Medium (and I mean tiny), and we'll dish out a *tiny* bit of Dioxazine Purple too.

Most of us have quite a lot of sand in the foreground. We're going to mix up a slightly darker colour at the bottom of the canvas to represent the damp sand, and then add White to it coming up to represent the dry sand. Mark mixed a TINY bit of Dioxazine Purple and Cadmium Yellow and added a pile of White to this, and painted it in at the bottom of the canvas. He added a pile of White to that colour and painted it in a band above, blending the two colours together. He added more White to that mix and spent a little bit of time where the dry sand meets the shadow, being mindful of the transition of the shaded area and the area that's sun lit.

The trick is to go up to the edge of the shadow area with thick paint, and then start thinning your paint out a little bit as you work into the shaded area.

Then with a dry brush, Mark softened the edge of the transition, like a dry brush blending almost. By blurring the edge of the shadow a little, it creates the impression that the shadow is further away from the top of the dune - this can be a great trick to create perspective.

TIP: The further away from something the shadow is, the blurrier or softer the lines will be on the edge of the shadow.

Mark then painted this dry sand colour along the top edge of the dune just to set up that high lit area. Mark created the illusion of the top edge of the dune with that line. If that line is hard and narrow, it looks like the dune is quite steep. If it's a softer line at the top, then it looks like the dune is softer on the edges.

The lower parts Mark likes to paint with a smaller flatter brush to have a little more control, and he painted down the face of that dune a little bit to suggest those tiers. Making the marks this way gives you the impression that there are little undulations in the sand (eg footprints from kids running up the dunes).

Because we're painting over the purple it may need to be re-established a few times later on.

From this point we should get a good sense of the dune shape.

TIP: Make the line across the top of the dune a little inconsistent - don't make it the same thickness all the way through for example.

Ok, time to gather around and watch this next bit!

We are going to do a dry brush technique, inspired by Evelyn who wanted to paint some rigging. But this will make sense, don't worry. We're going to do this technique a couple of different ways.

Mix White, and the tiniest minuscule of Cadmium Yellow Medium. With this colour, thinned a lot, and a very small brush, Mark painted in along the top of the dunes a couple of fairly strong grass bits, which will be repainted later on with the fan brush. Most of the paint has been taken out of this brush.

TIP: As the paint diminishes on the brush just push a little bit harder.

Now with neat Burnt Umber and hardly any paint on the brush, paint in the line representing the high tide mark between the damp sand and the drier sand. You can bump this up a little bit if you want to, but proceed with caution.

TIP: If you mess this up don't worry, you can drag a dry brush over the top.

Dry brushing technique just hits the high bumps on the surface of the canvas.

While Mark had the Burnt Umber on the brush he added a little bit of water to it, and using the rolly brush technique (hold the brush at the end of the handle and roll back and forth in your fingertips as you move from the elbow - this gives you a lot less control and a lovely scraggly effect, which is what you want in this case - to a degree!), started painting in the spinifex on the top edge of the dune. Mark then very lightly started painting in these vertical spinifex tendrils coming off these.

TIP: The tendrils will collect where there is a change in the surface of the sand. Follow the shape of the sand with your brush. Be really sensitive to the shape of the dune.

Mark then painted the spinifex tendrils in on the other side with a little more haphazardness in the application. This will be tidied up a bit later too. As you get more comfortable you can add more layers and go in a little harder.

TIP: Practise this technique on a spare canvas - see if you can create the illusion of dunes only with this spinifex technique!

TIP: The spinifex tendrils will 99.9% of the time come over the top of the sand dune.

This next demo is for those who have a devil-may-care whimsy attitude to life!

Mark used Burnt Umber and a fan brush, and used the corner of the brush to re-establish those spinifex tendrils.

An aside - Rob asked why Mark adds water to the paint rather than something else. Mark explained acrylic paint is really just glue and coloured grit. If you have a good quality acrylic paint the glue is generally very strong, so it doesn't really matter if you use water or another medium - up to a point.

The problem with most of the additives is that it can become really complicated. Basically Mark uses water because it's there, and it's easy. Atelier Interactive is excellent quality paint, and is formulated to stay open for longer. To stop it from doing this, you can add Universal Medium to it to make it "fast", this stops it from re-opening and is how Mark uses it with a "real painting" in the studio. Generally though for glazing areas, Mark will use a dedicated Glazing Liquid so as to not break down the glue too much.

TIP: If you want a free and chaotic pattern, using the fan brush on it's edge is the way to go.

If you want to use your fan brush now, it's a matter of finding that fine line between enough pigment and pressure on the brush, and following the previous tendril lines.

The idea here is not to create necessarily a beautiful pristine beach, but to tell an interesting story about sand dunes. The story of the storms, waves unearthing the tendrils helps do that.

TIP: Don't worry if you overdo this effect, you can always come back with a dry brush and re-establish the purple a little. It all feeds in to that lovely jumble of chaotic spinifex, dirt etc and adds to the story!

Mark started working on the pandanus in his picture. Using a mix of Forest Green, Cadmium Yellow Medium and Dioxazine Purple, he started re-establishing the pandanus leaves.

Mark mixed a highlight colour adding more Cadmium Yellow Medium and White to this mix to represent some of the leaves being hit by the sun. He then added more Cadmium Yellow Medium and White to create the lightest highlights on the leaves hit most by the sun.

After lunch:

Mark mixed up the blue colour on top of the striations again, French Ultramarine Blue, White and Dioxazine Purple, and added some marks to re-establish some of the highlights - the parts of the dune face where it's flat, the sand has come down and there's a little edge there. What this does is de-emphasises the roots and spinifex tendrils, and gives you an opportunity to "fix" any marks in there that you're not happy with, or bump them up here and there to strengthen them.

Mark paints a few vertical areas too, this is because as the dune collapses it doesn't do so evenly, there will be chunks falling here and there. All Mark is doing here is repeating the same process he did at the beginning, softening the transition areas between highlights and dune shadow colour to make it look round. As this colour dries back, Mark came back and bumped up those highlit areas once more.

TIP: Step back from it here and there to help create random chaos within the brush strokes.

We are hardwired to look for patterns, and conversely also to make them. We sometimes have to consciously disconnect this predilection so that our paintings look more realistic.

Mark then mixed the gold colour from earlier in the painting, Cadmium Yellow Medium, Burnt Umber and White with a tiny bit of Dioxazine Purple, and added that back into the painting. This is to-ing and fro-ing at its best! These gold areas are the reflections of the sand in the foreground bouncing back onto the faces of the dunes. Just a few marks here and there is fine, doesn't need to be any more than that.

Then you can re-establish the spinifex tendrils again with the Burnt Umber if you like.

Also at this point Mark mixed up the sand dune face colour (French Ultramarine Blue, White and Dioxazine Purple), and painted a little bit of this into the cliff face here and there, just for fun. In painting this he's suggesting that there's been a bit of a blow out in the sand dune up higher. This sand area would be entirely in shadow with the angle of the sun. Mark added some Forest Green to this colour and added in some shadows here and there.

TIP: If you mix Permanent Alizarine and Pthalo Blue you can work back into the cliff side tree shadows to create more contrast and depth.

While we're here we are going to work on our Casuarina trees. These have a distinctive shape, so we need to be sensitive to that. Mark used a mix of Forest Green, a little bit of Dioxazine Purple, Cadmium Yellow Medium and some White. Mark used a short stroke with the tip of the brush to keep that sensitivity to the shape of the tree. These trees are mostly in shadow so you can get away with not putting too much detail in. Mark added White to this mix (these trees have that lovely green/grey look), and started adding in some highlights. This suggests that some parts of the tree are coming forward and some are back in the shadows.

Mark mixed White and French Ultramarine Blue with a little bit of Burnt Umber, to create a mix for the branches and trunks of these Casuarina trees. By painting these branches in here and there you create the impression that there is some dappled light getting through.

TIP: This just has to be a suggestion, and should look like Casuarina trees are popping up out of the shadows.

TIP: We've started with a dark, and built on that with a series of highlights.

TIP: There is a power in starting with silhouettes. By starting with shaded areas and just painting in the highlights, you can see the trees emerging from the dark shaded areas really well. It can give you more options in deciding how close and far away your trees are.

TIP: Don't be too stressed about your picture, there is always another process to hide mistakes.

Mark demonstrated this by dragging a dry brush over his silhouette demo to illustrate how salt spray could diminish the detail.

TIP: If you water down Burnt Umber too much, it tends to go orange. And if it's orange, it then changes the time of the day.

Going back to his fan brush, Mark mixed White, a little bit of French Ultramarine Blue and a bit of Cadmium Yellow Medium, and a tiny bit of Forest Green. He thinned this with some water to create a pale, dull minty "spinifex grass colour", and using the fan brush gently and judiciously, added some grassy spinifex leaves to the top of the sand dune, and a few in the foreground sand (you'll barely see them at first, as they dry back you'll see them a little more). You can paint a few in here and there as they pop out of the shadows (this helps break up the shadow line a little bit too).

Then, somewhere else on your palette add Forest Green and French Ultramarine Blue to that colour to create a "spinifex grass in the shadows" colour, and paint a few of these tufts of grass in the shadows along the top of the dune and here and there in the dune shadows.

Now, here's a fun and exciting part. We mixed French Ultramarine Blue and a tiny amount of Dioxazine Purple with a lot of White, thinned right out to make it nice and runny. Using the fan brush, Mark painted this colour in under the grassy tufts to create a shadow. Remember where the sun is coming from when you do this!

The only other part that remains to be done in this painting now is just a few more strong high lit grassy tufts on the top of the sand dune. Use mainly White with a tiny bit of Cadmium Yellow Medium in it so that you get a sense of the sunlight being very strong.
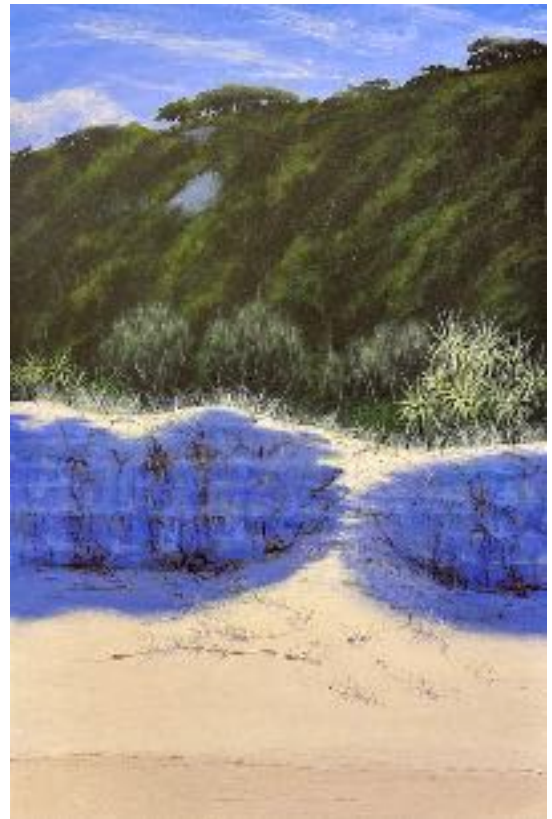
Thanks so much everyone, for a wonderful weekend in Esk!

Overheard in Class:

"You know, you can tell a lot about people by how they paint"
"Just another 10 minutes on this as I don't want you to get
bogged up in it"
"I'm sensing a tad of resignation"
"I'll come and bully you - you all heard that!"
"I'm where paintbrushes go to die"

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

Have a look at this page first to do some of your own exploring!

http://www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/sitemap.html

www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/color-mixing-guide.html
www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/how-to-paint-water.html
https://www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/how-to-paint-trees.html
www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/gradation.html
www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/brush-technique.html
www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/paintbrushes.html
www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/atelier-interactive.html
www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/acrylic-sealer.html
www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/atelier-unlocking-formula.html
www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/create-unique-paintings.html
www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/workshops-past.html (to access previous
workshop notes)

**and these video clips (make sure you <u>subscribe</u> to our Youtube channel for
all the latest clips):**

Beachscapes Paint Recipes Playlist:
https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLbRTq9lnYzEDR-XCIKTCjzn_494YZHai_

Atelier Free Flow demonstration:
https://youtu.be/uicinMfZNy8

Painting The Right Light:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XdaWQW3lD4Q

Painting Coastal Foliage:
https://youtu.be/C2rg0quufjw

Know Your Brushes!
https://youtu.be/20CjkSzXICc

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

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

Learn How To Paint - Gradation:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vy-Z0FQ2kpg

Acrylic Painting Tips - Colour Matching:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A5gzJuX8EEU

3 Skills to Make a Painting:
https://youtu.be/WPflMs32kXk

Atelier Interactive demonstration:
http://www.atelieracrylic.com/atelier-interactive-acrylic

Unlocking Formula demonstration:
http://www.atelieracrylic.com/atelier-unlocking-formula

If you'd like to order Mark's book "It's All About the Light", click here!

If you're interested in using 100% recycled ocean plastics Sustainable Canvas, use code EXPLORE10 for 10% off.

GF chocolate slice

ingredients

200g block dark chocolate, chopped
90g butter, chopped
1/4 cup caster sugar
2 eggs
1.5 cups almond meal

make it

Preheat oven to 180°C

Spray a small baking pan and line with baking paper (I used one roughly 20cm x 20cm).

Melt chocolate and butter in 30 second bursts in a microwave safe bowl until melted and mix until smooth. Beat sugar and eggs with an electric beater until pale and fluffy.

Gently fold in almond meal and chocolate mix. Pour into pan, bake for 25 minutes or until skewer comes out clean. Cool in pan. Turn out onto a board, cut into squares. Voila! This made about 30 very small bite size squares. Dust with icing sugar or dessicated coconut if desired!

enjoy!

lemon bundt cake

Ingredients:

3 cups sifted plain flour
1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon baking soda,
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 cup sour cream
1/2 cup buttermilk
1/3 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice
1 cup softened butter
2 cups caster sugar
1/3 cup lemon zest (you'll need about 5 lemons in total)
4 large eggs

2 teaspoons vanilla extract

Icing:

2 tablespoons lemon juice

1 to 1and 1/2 cups of sifted icing sugar

Method:

Preheat oven to 180˚ C. Grease and flour a 10" bundt pan, ensuring all creases are covered.

In a bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt.

In a liquid measuring cup or pyrex jug, combine the sour cream, buttermilk, and lemon juice (lumps are okay).

In a very large bowl, use an electric mixer to beat the butter, sugar and lemon zest until fluffy.

Add the vanilla extract, then mix in the eggs one at a time.

With the mixer on low, alternate adding about 1/3 of the flour mixture and 1/3 of the buttermilk mixture. Pause to scrape down the sides of the bowl. Repeat until all dry ingredients and buttermilk are incorporated.

Spoon the batter into the prepared bundt pan, smoothing the top.

Bake for 50 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted comes out clean.

Let the cake cool in the pan for 30 minutes before carefully removing it.

In a bowl, whisk together the lemon juice and icing sugar until the glaze has a whitish translucence, and thin enough to drizzle. Adjust the consistency by adding more icing sugar or lemon juice as needed. Once the cake is fully cooled, drizzle the glaze over the top.