Today is a crash course in making waves. It's a research and investigation session - every painting you do from now on will be altered in some ways.

We'll be looking at using paint recipes, which are incredibly useful for a few reasons.

Mark discussed a couple of reasons why recipes are important:

- To save time
- For (colour) consistency within a painting
- You end up "looking" at the world "through" the recipes

TIP: “If you're painting realistically, try not to set off anyone's BS alarms”

Having paint recipes in your repertoire is incredibly versatile. They are not complicated, but your ability to use them is HUGE. (For just one example, using the Summer Sky recipe in your reflections). It is an incredibly simple concept with really sophisticated applications.

Mark's recipes are all set with the light bright and sunny, around midday. To alter the time of the day (the light) see the Youtube link at the end of the notes “Painting The Right Light”, which goes into the theory he discussed at the end of this workshop about the light moving through the colour spectrum from warms to cools (day-night), and just how easy it is to alter the time of day using this knowledge and your recipes.

Set Up Your Palette:

Set yourself up properly to remove "obstacles". Your palette is for working stuff out on! Not your canvas! Your palette is your workspace. Remove everything from your workspace except for your paints, brushes and water pot.

Dish Up Lots Of Paint!

Dish up more paint than you think you'll need. It's a hassle 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 across the top of your palette, so that you have your widest paintbrush width between each colour to avoid contaminating your colours with others, and so that you have the largest possible space to mix your colour.
(See the end of the workshop notes for a Youtube link on Mark's palette set-up).

Mark uses Atelier Interactive as it is a superior quality paint, which blends superbly. It also has unique properties which enable it to dry differently to "normal" acrylics, that is it doesn't form a "skin" but dries evenly all over. The bonus is if you dish up a lot of paint it is actually more economically efficient than dishing out a tiny pea-sized amount.

Mark didn't really go into it in this workshop however you may be interested to know, his colours are:

Pthalo Blue
French Ultramarine Blue
Permanent Alizarine
Naphthol Red Light
Cadmium Yellow Light
Cadmium Yellow Medium
Burnt Umber
Dioxazine Purple
Forest Green
Titanium White

He uses the coolest blue and the warmest blue (for example) so that there is the most versatility in the range. Using a limited range really helps teach you about colour mixing.

**TIP: Pretend someone else is paying for your paint!**

Managing your palette becomes very important, and you can keep your incremental colour mixes separate so that if you need to use or mix those colours again, you have a visual history of them.

Before we get into the workshop, here is a list of Mark's go-to recipes which we looked at today:

**Paint Recipes: Concept of a “starting point” set of colours.**

**Summer Sky:**
Ultramarine Blue
Titanium White
(+ Pthalo Blue as you paint higher into the atmosphere)

**Fluffy Clouds (shadows):**
French Ultramarine Blue
Titanium White
Burnt Umber
(add more sky colour to create distant clouds - add more White to create highlit areas)
Tropical Water:
Cadmium Yellow Light
Pthalo Blue
Titanium White

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

Shadow on Sand:
Dioxazine Purple
French Ultramarine Blue
Titanium White

Foliage/Hills:
Cadmium Yellow Medium
Dioxazine Purple
Forest Green

Shadow Under Waves:
Burnt Umber +
Pthalo Blue (into deeper water)
(thin wash)

Whitewash:
Pthalo Blue
Burnt Umber
White

In this workshop, we started by dishing up Titanium White, French Ultramarine Blue (warm blue) and Pthalo Blue (cool blue).

We mixed colour for **Summer Sky** using White and adding small amounts of French Ultramarine Blue to this for our “close to the horizon” sky colour, and painted it in a band.

To create the illusion of the higher sky, we then add to this colour small amounts of Pthalo Blue (this is because closer to the horizon there is more “stuff” in the atmosphere to look through creating a “warmer” effect. As the sky becomes higher there is less atmospheric “stuff” to look through and therefore the sky appears cooler - hence adding the Pthalo Blue).

Mark showed how to pull the colours together using a damp brush to blend.
There is a lot of versatility in this sky gradation in the context of reflections. For example in a curved reflection (ie a wave) there will be differing parts of the sky reflected depending on the angle of our eye to the water. Or on a curved leaf.

So why are we painting the sky, if this class is about making waves?

We can't paint water until we know what the light is doing. Now we've established the light we can establish the other elements of water, i.e. the colour of the water and the colour of the substrate.

So we start with the “water close to the horizon” colour which is Pthalo Blue mixed with the Sky Colour (White and French Ultramarine Blue). The water close to the horizon reflects the sky colour at that angle to your eye.

We then painted neat Pthalo Blue to establish our “deep water” colour.

So, what is a wave?

A wave is fundamentally a lump of water - where there's a wave, there's more water than where there is no wave!

And, water has a colour. The bigger the lump of water, the more “water colour” there will be. The angle of the water will determine how much colour you will see. A wave is a series of angles, your eye angle determines how much colour you will see.

**TIP:** These are broad concepts we are talking about today. What you need to do is extrapolate the concept across your paintings from now on. i.e. understand how the elements affect each other.

What we're doing is establishing a process where you can break down the process of painting water and waves into 4 groups; the substrate, the colour of the water, the surface of the water and the light.

So now we're going to break down the appearance of a wave, on a crystal clear day.

So we've established our water colour as Pthalo Blue, and we've now established our sand colour which we can paint at the same time by adding Cadmium Yellow Light and White to Pthalo Blue.

We mixed deeper water colour and painted in a band, and then added Cadmium Yellow Light and White and painted this in a band underneath, blending it together smoothly, and repeated that process.

This starts the process of looking at the face of a wave rearing up, and looking at a flat section of a wave in front of that wave.
TIP: Don’t worry if your colours aren’t “perfect” here as there are a lot of processes/layers over the top here.

Waves have perspective - but it is less obvious - this is what makes them so tricky to paint. Looking for those flat spots in between the waves will help with that.

Looking through the face of a wave you’ll see a lighter section - as you’re looking through less water.

Waves behave differently depending on different factors, for example if the depth of the water changes suddenly, a wave will break with power. If it is a gradual shift in the depth of the water, the wave will break more “softly”

TIP: The most important thing today is to understand the concepts being introduced.

So, What colour is whitewash? I don’t know, give me more information!!

TIP: Be inherently suspicious of everything. Ask “why?” a lot. Without questions, you won’t look. e.g., where is the light coming from? Why’s that wave that shape? Is that coming from a different angle? Why?

However, in saying all that we will use a recipe for whitewash today, assuming that it is a sunny day, clean water and breaking softly-ish over sand.

So our recipe for whitewash SHADOWS is Burnt Umber, Pthalo Blue and White.

TIP: NO DABBING ALLOWED!

So, a solid tube will break from the top to the bottom. If there is power behind it it will break far in front of the tube. If there is not as much power in the wave it will break on itself. We will paint both versions.

We painted in the shadows of the whitewash on the two separately breaking (and already broken) waves.

We added French Ultramarine Blue and White to that mix to create a new highlight section, using the tip of the brush and a cross-hatch technique.
Anything that has volume has different tones and hue in different parts of the wave, and will reflect light in different places.

Add White to that previous colour to create a soft, fluffy appearance.

**RULE OF THREE - an aside**

From Mark: “For me, my OCD-ness represents itself in an inability to paint a transition without at least three incremental shifts in hue or tone.

The value in this process is that it forces me to look at the object that I’m painting in a series of shifts in hue or tone. It helps me to dissect an element in the image into areas of dark and light, warm to cool, etc. Being able to distill the subject into three areas in this way, allows a complicated subject to be more easily managed mentally. And allows a process to be formed. That rule of three when applied practically, and the colours pushed and pulled together, delivers a surprisingly effective result.

This rule of three, while very effective and efficient (and of course nice and simple) is obviously not the whole answer. There are always additions and subtle nuance that needs to be taken into account. The beautiful thing about the rule of three, is that if you use it as a starting place, a much more complicated image can be more easily broken down. Subtle nuance can be added once the “bones” of the rule of three have been established. These examples are just the tip of the iceberg, and I have many more applications for this rule of three that I’ll dig out further down the track.

Something major to take into account with the rule of three is that there are usually three sources of light to consider too - direct light, and at least two sources of reflections. (There will usually be light coming in from somewhere else).

**BRUSHES 101 - another aside**

Decide what mark you want to make BEFORE you make it. How are you going to make it? Which paintbrush? How much 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 marks 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 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.

**TIP: Buy a brush to suit a purpose, not to solve a lack of skill problem.**

For example if you know you’d like to make a long thin line, thin the paint and use a watercolour brush. The softer bristles will hold more paint. If you want to push a lot of thick paint around, use a firmer brush.

Start being mindful of the mark you want to make. Look at the marks that Mark is making and if yours are different, ask why!

Hold these 3 functions in your mind when practising. Be rigorous about your understanding of what your paintbrush will do.

**TIP: Develop your physical skills to the point where you don’t have to think anymore - so you can dance with your painting.**

You need to know what your brush will do - every brush has a job. The good news is you don't need as many brushes as you think you do. AND you don’t need to spend a lot of money!

So, what is whitewash? Air in water! And what is a cloud? Water in air!

So we can use the same process for painting whitewash for clouds. Use a cloud shadow recipe of White, French Ultramarine Blue and Burnt Umber, gradually adding more White and French Ultramarine Blue to this mix to build up highlights.

**TIP: Take most of the paint off your brush and use a soft touch, with a cross-hatch motion. Lest you create hovering blobs of dooooooom!!!**

Back to your whitewash - you want to create “random” areas of light and dark to help create volume in your whitewash.

Come back with pure White to help “fix” any errors you may’ve made building up the shadows so far ;) - and also to had the brightest highlights.

*(a little more)* **WAVE THEORY:**
A wave forms a cylinder when it breaks. The outside of this cylinder will reflect light, and the inside of the cylinder will also reflect light. You are effectively looking at/through two cylinders when looking at a breaking wave.

To create the illusion of a wave breaking is to suggest this idea (of a cylinder within a cylinder).

Use Pthalo Blue and White to create the reflections of the sky on the inside cylinder first. Your lines should follow the curve of the breaking wave. You can now see the reflection of the sky overlaid on the face of the wave (through the water curving in front to break). This inside cylinder is going to reflect the sky through the water.

So we've established our sky colour to be White plus French Ultramarine Blue. We can paint this colour thinly across the top of the wave which represents the sky being reflected off the back of the wave at the highest point it is breaking. You can use this colour also to “flatten” any areas of water. Reflecting the sky automatically flattens the areas of water in between.

**TIP: Think of making waves as “windows” and “mirrors”. Ie any waves you want to create will be “windows”, and the areas in between (the flat relative to your eye areas) will be mirrors.**

To create areas of waves further out the back, just paint in the sky reflection, leaving a band here and there of the deeper water colour (this ends up looking like the faces of the breaking waves further out).

Back to our sky colour - the outside cylinder of the breaking wave will show the reflection over the top of the inside cylinder. So in other words, the reflection on the inside cylinder will still be visible out of the breaking wave.
Use pure white and create the lip of the wave, feathering your brush upwards to create the “spray” effect.

You can use pure white on the outside of the cylinder to create the highlit areas where the light would be reflecting the strongest.

After lunch:

We launched into the idea that different shapes will create different reflections, and we need to be mindful that the shapes that will reflect things differently.

For example we can reflect different parts of the sky. Where water is flat relative to our eye, the lower part of the sky will be reflected. Where the water curves, it will reflect higher (and darker) parts of the sky.

We can use the sky reflection to shape things as well, for example curving up the face of the wave.

There are other things being reflected here too. Primarily the whitewash. Use pure White and a dry brush down, damp brush across to reflect the areas between the waves where the whitewash would be reflected.

**TIP:** Shadows will point to the light source. But reflections are all about YOU! Reflections will point to you and are determined by the surface the object being reflected is sitting on.

At this point Mark went into a little more details about how our brains work, with the exercise “the cat sat on the mat x”. ie we don’t need to put ALL the information into our paintings for the viewer to “get it”, just need enough for them to finish the story in their head.

Mark talked about how a wave stops light, by using the analogy of a sheet of glass - held horizontally we can see straight through it and it may have a very transparent or slight shadow. Turn the piece of glass vertically and there will be a distinct line shadow where it is stopping the light. The same thing happens with the face of a wave as it is rearing up.

We painted the shadow of the wave in shallow water using the **Shadow Under Wave** recipe of Burnt Umber, thinned. To create this shadow in deeper water you can either add the deeper water colour to it (ie Pthalo Blue), or because it is thinned, if you paint directly over the top of the Pthalo Blue area in the deeper wave, you will get the same effect.
A wave will stop light however it also concentrates light, and this concentration of light shows up as a lighter band of colour (shallow water colour of Pthalo Blue, Cadmium Yellow Light and White) just above the wave shadow. This was painted in.

**TIP:** These theories will transcend most waves, but in varying increments.

**Whitewash behaviour and rules of perspective.**

We’re all aware of the rule that when two parallel lines converge on the horizon there is a Vanishing Point. Because water is primarily flat, the same is true of whitewash trails.

Mark demonstrated this by painting in whitewash trails, imagining a vanishing point off to the right of the painting. This also has the added benefit of adding some dynamism and movement to a bland composition.

**TIP:** Hold the brush parallel to the horizon to create “scallopy” shapes.

**TIP:** Acrylics will dry darker.

**TIP:** Painting well is all about knowing how to recover from mistakes.

**BONUS: MARK'S COLOUR THEORY - TIME OF DAY**

So, what is the difference between midday and 3pm? It’s a different colour! As the day progresses, it shifts through the colour spectrum of warm to cool.

For example Cadmium Yellow Medium around 3-5pm, shifting through oranges and then into Permanent Alizarine around dusk, shifting into purples and blues in the dark of night.

Your homework - sit down for half an hour and look at the time of day and the light, and see if you can match it to your paints.
Then, when you want to change the time of day in your paintings, determine the colour of that time of day, and then add that colour to every element in your painting. For example, if you wanted to paint tropical water at 3pm, Mix your Tropical Water recipe of Pthalo Blue, Cadmium Yellow Light and White, and then add some Cadmium Yellow Medium (or whatever you determine your 3pm colour to be).

For a clip on this process, go to the Youtube link at the bottom of the page "Painting the Light Right".

THANKS SO MUCH TO ALL OF YOU FOR A GREAT WORKSHOP!!

Overheard in Class:

“One rule that is absolute in the ocean, and that is, at some point no rules apply”
“Is that a science thing? Yep, it’s a science thing”
“Bev, do you have something to tell the rest of the class, hmmm??”

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

www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/color-mixing-recipes.html
www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/ocean-landscapes.html
www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/gradation.html
www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/how-to-paint-water.html
www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/painting-waves.html
www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/brush-technique.html
www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/paintbrushes.html
www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/acrylic-glazing.html
www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/shadow-painting.html
www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/Acrylics_Anonymous-acrylics-anonymous-019.html
www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/atelier-free-flow.html
and these video clips! (subscribe to our Youtube channel for all the latest clips):

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

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

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

**Atelier Free Flow demonstration:**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uicinMfZNy8

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

**Painting Waves - Dry Brush Technique:**
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bgNhoede9Al

**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

**Acrylic Painting Techniques - Glazing:**
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=spJETxwJsdk

**Acrylic Painting Techniques - Glazing - How to Paint Water:**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=spJETxwJsdk

**Artist Palette set up:**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=57krxyDyagY

**How To Paint Tropical Water - Paint Recipes:**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vH8xAeu6njY&list=UUlzzJZa8_Obui-WGHgdUnng

**How To Paint A Wave - Splatter Painting (using Free Flow):**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ll5bKcRtlMU

**How To Paint A Sunset - Paint Recipe:**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ppP8tqkZJSw

**Painting Tips - Large Paintings:**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MK78GTjBDHs

Ensure you're subscribed to our free monthly ezine, *Acrylics Anonymous* for all the latest tips, articles and bad humour you can handle.