

# Split Personality

23rd April 2016

## Workshop Notes:

Today we're going to manufacture a split perspective scene that is entirely manufactured using "recipes" and "techniques".

You'll discover how versatile using a "recipe" is in that it helps free your mind a little to just create.

We'll talk about atmospheric perspective and whether it applies underwater - and look at creating distance and dimension in your paintings to create realism.

Because this is a one-day workshop, your painting is essentially an exercise, however if you have a practise canvas feel free to test your techniques on this first.

We're going to break down the painting into "above the water" and "below the water" and concentrate on painting above the water before lunch, and below the surface after lunch.

Mark introduced the idea of using paint recipes to make quick decisions to get colour down fast.

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

#### **Tropical Water:**

Cadmium Yellow Light  
Pthalo Blue  
Titanium White

#### **Summer Sky:**

Ultramarine Blue  
Titanium White  
(+ Pthalo Blue as you paint higher into the atmosphere)

#### **Fluffy Clouds (shadows):**

Ultramarine Blue  
Titanium White  
Burnt Umber  
(add more sky colour to create distant clouds - add more White to create high lit areas)

### Shadow Under Water/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

### About Gradation:

Most things in the world are made up of gradations of colour. Tone and hue gradate on every surface you see. Everywhere you look you will see gradation (well, you will now!). Mastering gradation of colour is perhaps THE most fundamental skill you can master. Gradation is your FOUNDATION skill. Everything else is texture and build (loosely speaking!).

So let's paint a sky - gradation first.

Dish up some French Ultramarine Blue, White, Pthalo Blue and a tiny bit of Burnt Umber.

Mix White and French Ultramarine Blue and start painting your gradation from the horizon up - try to avoid painting "bands" and instead use your brush "roughly" to push the colour into the canvas in a cross-hatch fashion. Use plenty of paint and blend it roughly. Gradually add more French Ultramarine Blue to this mix, and pull the bands together using a softer brushstroke (keep the colours separate on your palette as you mix to create a visual history of your incremental shifts in colour - this helps you to mix in the correct increments - do your working out on your palette rather than your canvas).

As you paint up the canvas, add some Pthalo Blue to this mix (the sky appears "cooler" as the sky is higher).

**TIP: This gradation is usually done twice just to ensure good coverage and so no brush strokes are apparent in your end painting.**



**TIP: Use a big brush to dampen and soften the brushstrokes out afterwards.**

Continue to add more Pthalo Blue to the French Ultramarine Blue and White mix until you reach the top edge of the canvas.

**TIP: Use your eye and observation to bring the nuance to the "recipe".**

You can now get a bit fancy and add a bank of clouds if you like. Use French Ultramarine Blue and White to create a bank of clouds out to sea and close to the horizon. Use White for the highlights on this bank and a small brush. Roll it around as you paint to create more realistic highlights rather than one thick, uniform "line" around the edged of the cloud bank.

Use this same White to create upper level "wispy" clouds.

**TIP: Try not to paint "bands" - the sky will appear more natural if it's painted with a cross-hatch technique.**

A little bit of theory now about the world. Mark asked the question "What colour is a cloud?". The answer to that is "I need more information". For example, what time of day is it? Is it stormy/sunny? Etc. Asking questions is great because it teaches us to really look.

We went for a look outside to really assess the colour of clouds. We could see that there were clouds which were white/grey and a little "dirty" as well.

So, to create the illusion of summer clouds on a sunny day - we assume that clouds have volume because they have light and dark areas.

We use our **Summer Cloud Shadow** recipe of French Ultramarine Blue and White (Sky Colour) plus Burnt Umber to create a cloud shadow colour. Apply this colour in the upper part of the sky as the first layer of shadow to your clouds, using a cross-hatch technique.

Clouds closer to us tend to appear bigger - the further away they are, the flatter and smaller they are - and the colour is different.



An aside about atmospheric perspective at this point!

### **Atmospheric Perspective**

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) in this painting. 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.

Back to clouds. To push the clouds further back, add sky colour to this original cloud shadow colour (Sky colour is French Ultramarine Blue and White).

To create even further distant clouds, add even more sky colour to this shadow colour and apply the shadows to the distant clouds.

Now go back to the original cloud shadow colour and add White to this colour to start building up the cloud highlights.

Again, add sky colour to this highlight colour to create highlights on the distant clouds. Add more sky colour to the furthest distant clouds.

Doing this process with the clouds gives the viewer of your painting enough information to keep their inbuilt BS meter at bay!

It was at this point that Mark introduced his "rule of three". That is, a **minimum** of 3 incremental shifts in colour within clouds - or anything - is best to create realistic depth and dimension.

Now you can come back with pure White for the lightest highlights on the closest clouds, and again, as the clouds recede into the distance, add sky colour to this to push these clouds further back.

**TIP: Put a random White cloud here and there for added realism**

**TIP: Use a spritz of Unlocking Formula and a damp brush and "indistinctify" the edges of the clouds in the distance, this also helps to create the illusion of distance.**

**TIP: White tends to dry back grey-ish and blue-ish, which is kinda great if you're painting something that has an underlying grey-ish/blue-ish colour! Come back when it's dry with pure White for a great contrasty effect.**

**TIP: Avoid the hovering blobs!!!**

We're now going to look at painting the foliage on the islands in the distance. We use our Foliage Recipe of Cadmium Yellow Medium, Forest Green and Dioxazine Purple and paint in the distant island and the top of the coconut palms. To suggest an island further in the distance, add Sky colour (French Ultramarine Blue and White) to this



mix.

Use a mix of Dioxazine Purple and Burnt Umber to create your coconut palm trunks.

Then use pure White around the edge of the island to create the sand.

NOW - we'll be starting on our underwater gradation, using our Tropical Water Recipe colours of Pthalo Blue, Cadmium Yellow Light and White. Mix up a darkish turquoise colour with these and paint in a band close to the horizon line.

Add White to this mix (very incremental shift in colour) and paint a curvy line along the horizon line (this creates the undulating line you see in the split above/below water images, with the lens half in and half out of the water).



Then add more Cadmium Yellow Light and White to this mix and start your gradation coming down the canvas horizontally (this suggests the water is becoming shallower on a angle relative to the distant bay).

As you come into the shallow water corner (bottom right) - add the Sand Recipe colours of (TINY amount of) Dioxazine Purple and Cadmium Yellow Medium - this is a very subtle shift in colour.

**TIP: When you think you can't move your paint around any more, you're probably wrong! Add more water and keep pushing!**

After lunch we started looking at creating some coral formations under the water. First we talked about colour underwater, and how it loses it's intensity as it goes into deeper water. Particularly red - red is the first colour lost underwater. We can use this knowledge to help create the illusion of distance underwater.

We mixed firstly the shadow colour for our coral bombies using a mix of Burnt Umber, White and Pthalo Blue. Again, to create distant coral, add Tropical Water recipe (Pthalo Blue, Cadmium Yellow Light and White) to this colour to help create the illusion of distance.

**TIP: You can make indistinct shadow shapes in the background as the paint naturally diminishes on your brush. Smudgy shapes in the background suggests coral beyond which we can see clearly.**

Now we can have some fun and decide what colour we'd like to make our coral. Using the principle before of red disappearing first underwater, mix up Permanent Alizarine and White and add some colour to some of the shadows just painted.

As the paint dries off the brush, use the dry brush to create the distant colour on the coral. (You could also add water colour to this colour to create the same effect, however this is a shortcut).

Then mix White to this colour to create a highlight colour, and add highlights to the pink areas just painted. Again paint the furthest coral highlights when most of the paint has come off the brush.



Now add Cadmium Yellow Light to create a bright orange and repeat this process as above, adding White to create highlights and remembering to use a drier brush to create the illusion of distant coral.

We now mixed up the Tropical Water recipe (but make it a little lighter than the water colour) and added flecks here and there to create highlights in the colour on the coral.

**TIP: Remember coral further away will be smaller and less distinct. Wield your paintbrush accordingly.**

We're now going to look at refraction. The next part of this process is to represent the refraction of light on the substrate.

This represents the light which is refracted by the surface of the water, down onto the substrate. Be aware that if you wish to create the illusion of distance then you must adjust the size of the "openings" as they recede into the distance.

This is not an easy thing, however a technique I have developed makes it easier. You need to allow your brush to be controlled in an "uncontrolled" way. We'll use the same Tropical Water paint recipe colours, however always remember to use a shallower colour for this refraction than the background colour you're applying it to. This is actually a gradation exercise too, in a way (as you'll need to adjust this colour going up and down the canvas).

Use a small chisel brush size 4 or 6 and load it with paint. Roll your brush between your fingers whilst pushing it backwards and forwards horizontally across the surface of the canvas, creating extremely loose & wobbly diamond-ish shapes. Allow the brush to make its own way, to a certain extent.

In this painting we're going to represent two "planes" with the refraction. Firstly a flatter plane on the substrate in and around the coral; and secondly over the coral, shaping around them.

**TIP: move from your shoulder and just move your fingertips. If your brush goes flying across the room a few times when you're doing this technique, you're probably holding it with the right amount of pressure.**

**TIP: You can hide any coral "imperfections" or get rid of the impending underwater snail invasion using this refraction technique. This also creates more volume in your coral.**

As you come into the shallows allow the refraction to take on a more loose-diamondish appearance.



Today is about teaching you to create planes - 3 dimensions onto a 2-dimensional surface. (Or is it 1-dimensional??). So there are several ways we have been creating these planes. Another way to create the illusion of underwater is to create rays.

We can actually use our sky colour and most people won't notice (think "the cat sat on on the mat x" exercise), and this will solve a potential problem for us. That is, if we were to do our rays with pure White and a dry brush, we may run into a problem contaminating the lower part of the sky with White. To get around this, we can actually use the lower sky colour to paint our rays. This helps create the underwater plane, immediately putting the coral underwater.

Mark talked a little about the difficulties with acrylics being usually in their drying time, and that every paint has a pro and a con. You just need to be clear about what you want to do. He uses Atelier Interactive because it is incredibly versatile - it does what no other paint can do.

Mark went into **HOW** to use Atelier Interactive to it's best ability - and set yourself up to have a "safety net". He use the Universal Medium to "lock" your painting in when you're happy with it, and use the "Unlocking Formula" to re-open your Atelier Interactive. (NB: You cannot use the Unlocking Formula to re-open paint that has had Universal Medium mixed into it, or painted over it)

Unlocking Formula allows you to "erase" parts of your painting that you're not happy with (as long as you've "locked" your previous layers in with Universal Medium). Check the links at the end of the notes for the video clips on using these products.

**TIP: When you're happy with what you're doing, lock in the layer with Universal Medium first.**

**TIP: Don't mix your paint brands together until you know for sure that they'll work nicely together!**

## USING MEDIUMS:

A quick note on using mediums rather than water to thin your paint. Acrylic paint is basically coloured dirt suspended in glue (or plastic). 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 Glazing Liquid, Clear Painting Medium or the Universal Medium, 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.) It creates lovely luminosity. Mark uses Impasto Gel (also known as Heavy Gel) to create layers and layers of depth in his paintings. His opinion is "the more layers" the better.

Mediums can become very complicated. Mark recommends KEEPING THINGS SIMPLE!! He uses Universal Medium, Unlocking Formula, Glazing Liquid and Impasto Gel (also known as Heavy Gel).

For beautiful luminosity, consider glazing.

Because paint dries quickly, sometimes it's difficult to create subtle flashes of colour. This is where glazing is so great. Glazing is basically using pigment in a clear painting medium (a thin wash of colour) to change the colour incrementally and subtly in some or all areas of your painting. Glazing creates gorgeous depth in your paintings, and is a great way of introducing even more luminosity and depth in your paintings. See the links at the end of the notes for even more information about this wonderful painting technique.

Mark used Universal Medium neat on the whole painting, then came back with Pthalo Blue on his brush (most of it taken off) and then painted into the background water area to intensify the depth of the water in this area. You can repeat this process when it's dry as many times as you like, to build the depth and luminosity. You can see that this has really pushed that area back. By pushing the background water further back, you have the added benefit of pulling the foreground area forward. Bonus!



**TIP: If you're painting with any clear painting medium, don't keep working over it and over it, as you'll aerate it, trap air and it will dry milky!**

**TIP: Make sure your painting is well and truly dry before glazing!**

**TIP: Don't glaze or varnish over a hot painting (ie one you've just brought in from drying in the sun. Let it cool first so nothing strange happens with the hot paint and the cool reacting. And trust me, strange things do happen.**

We now come back with Dioxazine Purple and Forest Green and a small liner brush to create the detail in the branches/trunks of the coconut trees.

Mark added Cadmium Yellow Medium to this mix of colour to create areas of highlighted foliage on the island. You can then mix more Dioxazine Purple and Forest Green and paint some shadows in under the trees.

You can add glorious colour into your shadows - probably much more colour than you think you can. Mix Dioxazine Purple, French Ultramarine Blue and White to create shadows on the white sand of the foliage and coconut trees.



**TIP: The secret to making interesting paintings is not the highlights, it's the amount of colour you can get into the shadows.**

### Surface of the Water "line":

To create the undulating line you would see in front of your goggles or camera lens, mix the Summer Sky colour (add a tiny bit of Pthalo Blue to this) and paint a line where the sky is reflected on the surface of the water.

This undulating line will reflect areas above the water, as well as areas below the water. To this end you can mix the lighter Tropical Water recipe colour and add it here and there to the undulating line. Same with the coral, (you can reflect it here and there on that line). Mix Burnt Umber, Pthalo Blue and White to reflect the coral underneath. Anything above the surface or below, you can reflect on this wavy surface line here and there.

Come back with White and establish the water "line" (this is the thickness



of the surface of the water pressed against your goggle or camera lens). You can spend a little bit of time going over this line to reflect different areas.

**Overheard in Class:**

"There are several ways I can think of to destroy the friendship at this point".

"This is a good technique to get rid of the marauding snail army".



*Thank you to everyone for such a relaxed and fun day!!*

**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](http://www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/color-mixing-recipes.html)

[www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/how-to-paint-clouds.html](http://www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/how-to-paint-clouds.html)

[www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/ocean-landscapes.html](http://www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/ocean-landscapes.html)

[www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/color-mixing-guide.html](http://www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/color-mixing-guide.html)

[www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/perspective-in-painting.html](http://www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/perspective-in-painting.html)

[www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/gradation.html](http://www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/gradation.html)

[www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/how-to-paint-water.html](http://www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/how-to-paint-water.html)  
[www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/free-painting-lessons.html](http://www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/free-painting-lessons.html)  
[www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/brush-technique.html](http://www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/brush-technique.html)  
[www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/paintbrushes.html](http://www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/paintbrushes.html)  
[www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/acrylic-glazing.html](http://www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/acrylic-glazing.html)  
[www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/shadow-painting.html](http://www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/shadow-painting.html)  
[www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/support-files/aa013defaultsettingtropicalwater.pdf](http://www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/support-files/aa013defaultsettingtropicalwater.pdf)  
[www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/support-files/default-settings-trees.pdf](http://www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/support-files/default-settings-trees.pdf)  
[www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/Acrylics\\_Anonymous-acrylics-anonymous-019.html](http://www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/Acrylics_Anonymous-acrylics-anonymous-019.html)  
[www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/using-impasto-gel.html](http://www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/using-impasto-gel.html)  
[www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/atelier-free-flow.html](http://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>

**Painting Pandanus:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gIrE9oIY8KM>

**Painting Highlights on Leaves:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w7a4RGOY6TE>

**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 Tips - Colour Matching:**

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

**Acrylic Painting Techniques - Glazing:**

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

**How To Paint Shadows:**

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

**How To Paint Shadows on Sand:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bVrX8001Scw>

**Acrylic Painting Techniques - Glazing - How to Paint Water:**

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

**How To Paint Landscapes - Light Effects:**

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

**Default Settings - Trees:**

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

**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](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=LI5bKcRtIMU>

**How To Paint A Sunset - Paint Recipe:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ppP8tqkZJSw>

**Artist Palette Set Up:**

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