

Seascapes - Open Forum

Gold Coast - 21st September 2013

Workshop Notes

Introduction:

The concept of “effortless effort” was introduced. The idea of creating a painting without effort means to get to that point you need to have put a lot of effort in! As painters we often treat our paintings as our “race”. Remember athletes do their training every day, well in advance of their races.

TIP: Practise your fundamentals (like gradation & brush technique) every day!

We want to re-establish that painting is supposed to be fun - take the pressure of yourself - it is only coloured goo and a hairy stick.

We'll start with the light. Without the light you have nothing! Establish the light FIRST.

Everything is an exercise!

Introduced the concept of the 3 areas of your paintbrush:

- A blunt instrument like a hammer or a shovel - a piece of earthmoving equipment. Get the colour down quickly with this area.
- The next area is more controlled, a bit like a rake.
- The last area, the very tip, is used for deft fine touches and is like a softer rake.

Learn to get the most out of just one of your brushes!

It is very important to have plenty of room to work - set yourself up so that your creative side and your logical sides do not have to switch, that is, you can work freely within your creative zone. If you have to think logically it can be jarring to get back into your creative zone.

So set yourself up to make this easy, that is:

- Dish up plenty of paint (pretend someone else is paying for the paint)
- Wear clothing you don't mind destroying
- Set up in a large, well lit area that you don't mind if paint gets splashed around
- Use a large palette
- Use a large water pot
- Know your brushes and their capabilities

TIP: Lose control of your palette, lose control of your painting!

Default Settings: Concept of a “starting point” set of colours.

Tropical Water:

Cadmium Yellow Light

Pthalo Blue

Titanium White

Hills in Distance of Water:

Low Horizon Colour of White & Ultramarine Blue
Burnt Umber

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)

Whitewash Shadow:

Burnt Umber
Pthalo Blue (Add Ultramarine Blue & more White as you come closer to the surface of the whitewash)

Trees & Foliage:

Dioxazine Purple
Cadmium Yellow Medium
Forest Green
Titanium White

Wet Sand:

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

Exercise 1: Make some marks!

See what your brush is capable of! Use the side, the edge, the front. Squish it, load it with paint and then use it very dry and very softly. What kind of marks can you make? This is a great exercise to do if you feel like painting but have “blank canvas syndrome”. Often an idea will come along as you are making marks.

TIP: Poor perspective, poor understanding of light = no illusion of reality

We demonstrated how different points of view mean you see different points of view. You need to put the viewer in your world so they can see things from your perspective! This is why we paint, in a nutshell!

We did an exercise in information gathering - “the cat sat on on the mat”. Our brains are hard wired to skip over information we don’t require in order to build a whole picture. You need to look at the world with new eyes and ask lots of questions about the information that is out there. **Then YOU can decide what information can be left out to convey the concept you want to get across.**

Sometimes our pre-existing “knowledge” of the world gets in the way of what is really there.



We introduced the theory of perspective:

Structural Perspective Exercises:

Draw a horizon line and converging parallel lines to a vanishing point on the horizon. To create perfectly spaced receding lines and therefore draw (or paint) anything with straight lines realistically with correct perspective, here is a great trick.

You can check out our back issue of Acrylics Anonymous Issue 019 at http://www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/Acrylics_Anonymous-acrylics-anonymous-019.html for more information on perspective, and for a detailed explanation on the above concept.

Now draw your bay - start with a "side-on tick shape" - does this work? For more information on this concept have a look at <http://www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/ocean-landscapes.html>.

Water is pretty much self-levelling. Assume the water and whitewash is roughly level.

Atmospheric Perspective Exercises:

This is the idea that things in the distance are altered in hue and colour because of the amount of "stuff" in the atmosphere between you and what you are looking at in the distance. When you look THROUGH anything, air or water, it acts as a filter which affects what you are looking AT.

Exercise:

Start with a gradation - a low sky default colour (Ultramarine Blue + White), start at the horizon and add more Ultramarine Blue and a touch of Pthalo Blue at the top of the canvas.

Create some distant hills - using the low sky colour plus a touch of Burnt Umber.

Paint in some closer hills using the same colour but add some more "hill colour" and use less "sky colour".

As the hills come forward, add some Cadmium Yellow Medium to emphasise this (more green). This creates a nice illusion of hills receding into the distance with a sunny sky.

A little theory about water:

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

The Four Elements:

- **Substrate** - can be lots of different colours ie pebbles, sand, rocks etc
- **Colour of water** - can also be lots of different colours
- **Surface** - probably the most important element today - 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. If you compartmentalise something, it is easier if you have a problem with your painting to work out firstly where it is and secondly, how to fix it!

TIP: You can't solve a problem until you know exactly what it is!

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?**

Now paint your water - reflect the low sky colour close to the horizon. Add more Pthalo Blue as you come down the canvas to create the illusion of deeper water. To create the illusion of water becoming shallower, add Cadmium Yellow Light and White as you come further down the canvas. Add a strip of reflected sky colour (White + Ultramarine Blue), going into a wet sand colour of Cadmium Yellow Medium and a tiny bit of Dioxazine Purple, then add more white as you come up the bank to create a dry sand colour.

TIP: Practise your gradations ALL THE TIME. Use the three parts of your brush and a cross-hatch motion when doing gradations of colour.

TIP: When using Atelier Interactive colours, use Unlocking Formula to re-work areas which have touch dried.

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

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

Creating the waves:

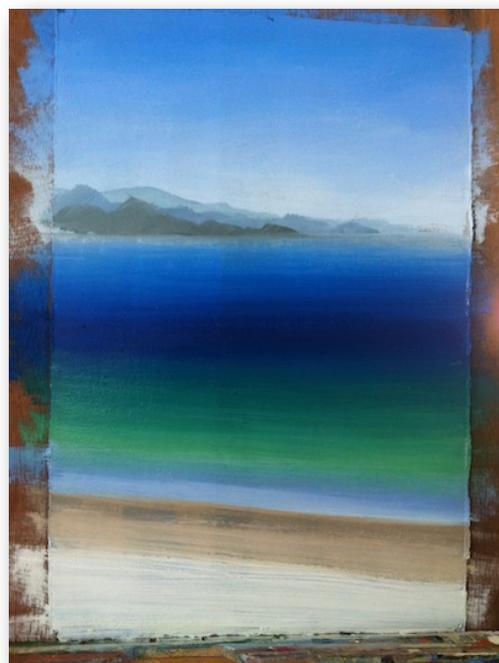
Anatomy of a wave

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

Use Pthalo Blue to add your waves in. In shallower water there will be less of a deep water colour and more of a substrate colour. Areas that are flat will reflect the sky. You can represent the sky on the back of the wave.

Block in your whitewash to establish where, how big etc you want your waves to be. Check that your perspective is correct. Perspective with wrapping bay waves is tricky! Case by case basis, and when in doubt, "indistinct-ify it!". Use glazing and horizon mist to make the waves less distinct and therefore a little more realistic too.

Use your shallower water colour in the face of your waves to



represent the substrate showing through. Also waves will concentrate the light in certain spots as it magnifies here and there.

The face of the wave rearing up will create a shadow underneath, you can paint this in with a thinned Burnt Umber mix.

Add Whitewash (darker areas first) with a mix of Pthalo Blue and Burnt Umber, strategically paint underneath and come up here and there to give your whitewash volume. Add more Ultramarine Blue as the whitewash fills out to reflect more of the warmer sky colour. Add almost neat white to give the whitewash extra volume, and add **vertical and horizontal reflection lines to give instant dimension to your painting.**

QUESTION: Is there a circumstance where painting a water-scape where you wouldn't use the four elements? Can you see the substrate? Can you see the colour of the water? There is ALWAYS light.

TIP: The 4 elements of water translate to ANYTHING WET. Wet rocks, wet sand, wet people. It is only the colour of the water which becomes negligible.

Exercise (close up of wave):

Gradation:

Paint a gradation using the Tropical Water default settings of Pthalo Blue, Cadmium Yellow Light and White. Add a tiny bit of Ultramarine Blue to this mix and paint this mix on a diagonal angle about halfway down the canvas. Then create a darker version of this colour horizontally dissecting the diagonal shape to create a triangle. Come down the canvas lightening this colour with more Cadmium Yellow Light + White - then add more Pthalo Blue right at the bottom. You will see your wave shape close-up.



Refraction 101

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

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

Add some refraction to this piece using the same default colours, slightly lighter than your previous coat, and gradating lighter as the colour lightens.

Use white to introduce the whitewash and how the wave is breaking. Add your Burnt Umber shadow underneath the wave and the sky colour flattening the back of the wave to reflect the sky.

Drag some white on a soft drier brush, horizontally and vertically to create spectacular reflections!

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

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

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

Shadows in Sand:

Footprints are basically piles of sand! To create the illusion of depressions and hills in sand, you can use various tools including light, shade and foliage to give the illusion of pathways, shadows etc.

To create the impression of footprints in sand, you can "break up" the surface of the sand using a lighter colour than the sand colour. You can use your shadows as "broken" shadows to create an uneven surface in the sand.

Sand is made of silica. So is glass. So sand can be shiny, and therefore reflective. You can create depressions in the sand in the shadow of a tree using a similar process as painting the surface of water.



Thanks to everyone for a fantastic day!

For support material about what you learnt today, check out these pages:

www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/ocean-landscapes.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
www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/brush-technique.html
www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/acrylic-glazing.html
www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/how-to-paint-clouds.html
www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/support-files/aa013defaultsettingtropicalwater.pdf
www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/support-files/AA007SSDefaultSettings.pdf
www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/support-files/default-settings-trees.pdf
www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/Acrylics_Anonymous-acrylics-anonymous-019.html

Please subscribe to Acrylics Anonymous if you haven't already done so!!!

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

Acrylic Painting Techniques - Shadows in Waves:

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

Painting Waves - Perspective in Whitewash:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TDvlwo_e9Jl

Acrylic Painting Techniques - Reflections in Whitewash:

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

Painting Waves - Dry Brush Technique

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

Brush Technique

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

How to Paint Water - Refraction:

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

How to Paint Wet Rocks:

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

Acrylic Painting Techniques - Glazing:

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

How To Paint Shadows:

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

Overheard in class:

“Lose control of your palette, lose control of your painting”

“It's called painting, not watering”

“If you're not confused there's something wrong with you”

“I'm not sure the cat sat on the mat!”

“this is the point I'm going to de-mistify and disempower your disempowerment”

lemon ginger and coconut slice

ingredients

1/2 cup sweetened condensed milk
100g butter
150g Milk Arrowroot biscuits
100g Gingernut biscuits
1 cup desiccated coconut
1 teaspoon grated lemon rind

Lemon Icing

2 cups sifted icing mixture
2 tablespoons butter, softened
3 tablespoons lemon juice
2 tablespoons desiccated coconut



method

Grease and line a 3cm-deep, 18cm x 28cm lamington tin. Place condensed milk and butter in a small saucepan and melt and combine over a low heat.

Place biscuits in a food processor and combine until finely processed. Combine crumbs, coconut & lemon rind well in a bowl. Add warm butter mixture and stir until well combined. Press mixture into prepared tin and place in fridge for an hour.

Make lemon icing. Place icing sugar, butter and 2 and a half tablespoons of lemon juice in a bowl. Beat with a wooden spoon until smooth. Spread icing over slice. Sprinkle coconut over the top. Refrigerate 30 minutes until icing has set & then cut into pieces.

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