

Dynamic Paintings - Simplified

January 5th 2013

Workshop Notes

We firstly covered some theory with these fundamental skills:

- Perception
- Conceptual
- Technical

And reiterated the three areas which can affect your technical skills, or more specifically, your use of a brush:

- Amount of paint on your brush
- Amount of pressure you apply
- Amount of medium used (including water)

Managing your palette is especially important when using strong pigments – even a tiny touch of Dioxazine Purple in the wrong place can equal disaster:

Setting Up Your Palette:

Use a warm and cool version of each primary side by side (+ a few extras) and dish out **lots** of paint!

Exercise 1

Using an intermediate sized brush and pigment only (no water or medium added), see how many marks and what different marks you can making using only one brush, one colour. Think pressure, and how many different ways you can use your brush.

Now add medium (like water for example) and see how that affects the marks you make.

Three functions as above:

- Amount of paint on your brush
- Amount of pressure you apply
- Amount of medium used (including water)

You can use your brush like a surgical instrument, or a hammer. The number of marks you can make is amazing! Take the time to figure out what your brush can do – educate and train your brush so you know what it will do in any situation.

This is just coloured goo and a hairy stick, the very worst thing that can happen is you will throw out a bit of coloured goo covered canvas (or paint over it!).

Using your newfound knowledge, you can make different shapes, for example trees, rocks, grass, shrubs. Think nature and do the above exercise again!

You can train your brush to do what you want – for example flatten it out on both sides – shape your brush.

Make sure you put plenty of paint out!!

Exercise 2

Starting your watery scene:

Gradation – use a large brush to paint a gradation using a “mud” colour (mix a few colours together, doesn’t matter which).

Gradually add Pthalo Blue + White and blend down the canvas in a gradation. Use columns to create a “visual history” of your colour.

Add more white + Ultramarine Blue (warm blue), and blend to the bottom of the canvas.

There is a method to these exercises!

Now to add some speckles! Flip your canvas, add water to get the paint to flow and create your speckly substrate (in the muddy coloured section)! This will end up looking like shells and gravel on the shoreline.

Creating the waves:

We covered a bit of theory on waves as windows and mirrors, that is 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.



TIP: With each process, start with the darker colour and then add the lighter colours.

TIP: Draw your waves in with chalk, you can then move them around, add highlights etc.

1. Create the shadow of the wave first using a thin wash of Burnt Umber.
2. Create the “window” of the wave with a thin wash of Cadmium Yellow Light, Pthalo Blue and White (default setting for tropical water). The window will have more Pthalo Blue at the top of the breaking wave, and then add more Cadmium Yellow Light + White as you get closer to the substrate.
3. Then add the “mirrors” to the back of the wave, using French Ultramarine Blue + White.



TIP: The secret to making stuff appear wet and shiny is reflections – use a dry brush technique to make loose vertical marks, then some horizontal marks with the same dry brush technique.

On this occasion white works perfectly as it reflects the whitewash of the broken wave.

Remember wet sand, and even shells and rocks (when wet) are highly reflective!!

Exercise 3

Gradation

Create the water surface. Using my “tropical water” default settings of Cadmium Yellow Light, Pthalo Blue and White, work your way down the canvas, gradually adding more Cadmium Yellow Light + White as you go.



Refraction – hold your small brush on the side (from the front) loosely between your thumb and forefinger (or fingers) and roll it back and forth, and up and down to create a series of loose diamond – irregular flat rectangles. The further away from you, the flatter and smaller the “diamonds” will be.



TIP: When using this technique, try to turn your brain (mostly!) off.

“W’s”

Use the sky default settings of Ultramarine Blue + White and a very dry brush to make a series of loose and flat “w’s” on your canvas which depicts the sky reflecting off the back of the waves.

TIP: If you make a pattern out of the “w’s”, your painting will look like a set for a pantomime!



TIP: At the top of the canvas ie further away from you, there will be more sky reflected, or more mirrors (more “w’s”), or less water showing.

Closer to the bottom of the canvas there will be more water showing.

TIP: How much information can you leave out to get your point across.

Painting is all about illusion and trickery.

Find and paint the information that gets an emotional response, and you are on a winner!

Thanks to everyone for a most enjoyable day!

For more information about what you learnt today, check out these pages:

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

How to paint Water – Refraction on our Youtube channel ExploreAcrylics:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=xzCGPAUXJOg&feature=player_embedded

Overheard in class:

“It looks like flying saucers coming in!!” (in reference to painting the w’s)

“Trust me, standing like a little teapot is as bad as it gets in this class”.

