

# Water - Clearer Than Mud

## Moss Vale 26th-27th October 2013

### Workshop Notes

#### Day One:

#### Introduction:

We firstly covered some theory with these fundamental skills:

- Perception
- Conceptual
- Physical ability - ability to manipulate your tools

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)

These 3 points can have unlimited possibilities.

#### Exercise - Making Marks:

We used a medium sized brush and pigment only (no water or medium added), to see how many marks and what different marks we could make using only one brush and one colour. Think pressure, and how many different ways you can use your brush.

Then we added medium (like water for example) and watched how that affected the marks.

#### Exercise - Water:



#### 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 as a series of mirrors and windows.

## Painting water:

Create your water colour & substrate all at once - gradation technique - use a large brush to paint a gradation using a “Default Setting” mixture for clean, clear tropical water, which is Pthalo Blue, Cadmium Yellow Light & White. Use as big a brush as possible.

Gradually add more Cadmium Yellow Light and White and blend down the canvas in a gradation. Use columns on your palette to create a “visual history” of your colour. **USE YOUR PALETTE!!**

## Refraction technique:

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.

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. **USE YOUR PALETTE!**

*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!*



## 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.

## Sky reflection:

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

*TIP: At the top of the canvas ie further away from you, there will be more sky reflected, or more mirrors, or less water showing. Closer to the bottom of the canvas there will be more water showing.*

*TIP: The area between waves is flat. This area will reflect the sky colour - use a very soft dry brush.*

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

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?

Then paint it in that order, first the substrate, then the colour of the water, then the surface (and the light).

TIP: Clear water is harder to paint than murky water. We can all paint mud with ease.

TIP: Anything wet ie wet rocks, wet sand, wet streets etc can be thought of using the same theories. For example a wet rock, the rock becomes the substrate, there is very little water colour, but the surface is still quite reflective.

Translate this theory to any "wet scene" you want to paint!

TIP: Everything is a gradation of colour. Look around to discover the gradations in your world.

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

## Default Settings:

### Tropical Water:

Cadmium Yellow Light

Pthalo Blue

Titanium White

### Warm Summer Skies:

Ultramarine Blue

Titanium White

Pthalo Blue (add a little as you get higher in the sky)

### Trees & Foliage:

Dioxazine Purple

Cadmium Yellow Medium

Forest Green

Titanium White

### Sand:

Cadmium Yellow Medium

Dioxazine Purple

Titanium White

(for drier sand add more Titanium White)

## DEMONSTRATION: Brush Technique

Showed how versatile a brush technique can be by using a simple cross hatch technique to demonstrate a similar process for painting clouds, whitewash, trees and foliage.

## Workshop Notes

### Day Two:

#### Exercise – Nightscape:

An exercise to show what happens when you diminish the light, and how that affects the appearance of water. It's also a fun, easy way of making a painting, and using your brushes in different ways.

## DEMONSTRATION – Late Afternoon Light:

Using a limited palette of Cadmium Yellow Light, Pthalo Blue, Alizarin, Burnt Umber demonstrated to show the blocking in process, how low light affects the appearance of the other elements of water, and just how versatile a limited palette can be.

## DEMONSTRATION – Wet Rocks:

Give your rocks 3 dimensions! Treat your wet rocks like a water painting. They are the substrate! Establish your rock shapes (and re-establish) using Pthalo Blue & Burnt Umber to create shadow areas. This colour will reflect onto the sand or rocks in front of it. Bring that rock colour down to create a reflection using broken horizontal-ish lines.

There are 3 sources of light on your rocks. The light in front, the light behind and the light above.

Add your horizon sky colour to your rocks first to create your sky reflection (use Ultramarine Blue + White - a little bluer than the sky reflection on your waves). For the light behind, add Pthalo Blue to that mix (higher sky colour) - put this colour reflection on the “cooler” or shadow side of your rock. Remember to reflect your rock reflections on the sand/pebbles as well!

Now add your direct sunlight using a teeny tiny MINISCULE amount of Cadmium Yellow Light mixed with your White. Decide where you want your sparkles, and paint them in. You can then add a few spots within those sparkles of pure White for added sparkle. Add vertical reflections (using White) in the sand/pebbles from underneath the brightest of your sparkles, and horizontal lines too (using White).

Now for added realism you can add a White line along and between the rocks for a shallow broken wave. Add your soupy whitewash trails using White thinned with water as the suds recede into the distance. You can create added shape in the face of your waves by “shaping” the suds up the face of your wave. Add the whitewash reflection along the leading edge of that broken wave, leaving a tiny gap for a shadow. Then you can add your shadow using Burnt Umber along that front edge of the whitewash, and between the elliptical gapp-y shapes in the suds. Add more vertical and horizontal White reflections down from the whitewash to create the illusion of highly reflective wet substrate/sand.

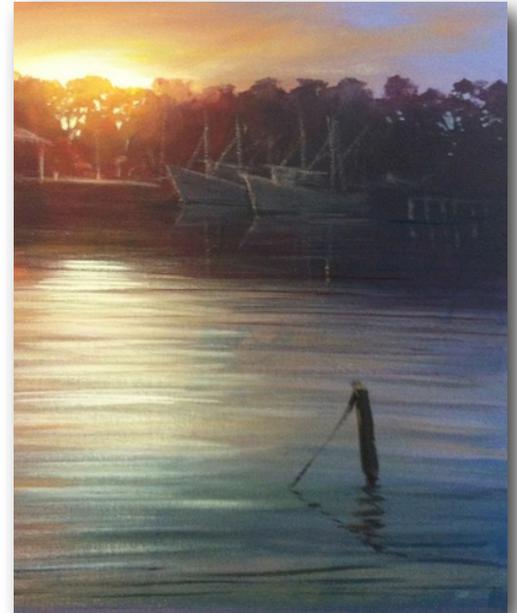
How do I flatten it? Sky-ify it!

How to I make the shells look wet? Sky-ify it!

How do I put the rocks underwater? Sky-ify it!

But how do I sky-ify it?

Mix up your sky “Default Settings” colour of White and Ultramarine Blue and use a dry brush on its edge to paint them.



# Thanks to everyone for a wonderful weekend!

For support material about what you learnt on the weekend, check out these pages:

[www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/ocean-landscapes.html](http://www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/ocean-landscapes.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/how-to-paint-water.html](http://www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/how-to-paint-water.html)  
[www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/painting-waves.html](http://www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/painting-waves.html)  
[www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/gradation.html](http://www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/gradation.html)  
[www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/brush-technique.html](http://www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/brush-technique.html)  
[www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/acrylic-glazing.html](http://www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/acrylic-glazing.html)  
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[www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/support-files/AA007SSDefaultSettings.pdf](http://www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/support-files/AA007SSDefaultSettings.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)

Please subscribe to [Acrylics Anonymous](http://www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/Acrylics_Anonymous-acrylics-anonymous-019.html) 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](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:**

"part of the joy is in surrendering"

"blue-ify, shallow-ify, deepen-ify"

"I'm gonna make this wave break!"