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LANDSCAPES

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Whether you want to paint inside or en plein air, from memory or not, we've got everything you need.

So what are you waiting for?



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Use deep and interesting tones





Composing landscapes: Line, tone and colour

Lancelot Richardson gives ten essential tips for composing landscapes using line, tone and colour



About **LANCELOT**
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The composition of an image is the arrangement and relationship between the elements it contains. This is an abstract property that lets us reduce images down their to basic elements, devoid of any identifying details. By looking past the 'window dressing' of details, we can use composition to create more appealing images with greater emotional impact.

Composition allows us to make the most of a subject. A crude drawing can be interesting with good composition. However, an otherwise masterful painting will look boring if the composition is bad; one might appreciate the execution, but it won't be eye-catching.

In landscapes, composition is an essential tool, as it allows us to reduce the complex scenery around us into pictures. Everything we see is material we can select from, and manipulate in order to describe that scene. We are going to dip our toes into this huge subject with ten tips to get you started.

Sketch to explore ideas

Composition is an important step in planning our work. A big challenge we encounter is fighting our human urge to straighten things out and divide them equally. As much as we love to do this, it often doesn't make for an interesting picture!

The solution to this, aside from being more self aware, is brute force; we must make lots of sketches to plan our work. Use these as experiments, and treat them as disposable. Most of them will go no further. By thinking on paper like this, we get to explore and compare the possibilities that we cannot picture in our heads.

They don't need to be pretty sketches – in fact, the opposite is better. If you have a polished sketch, you are more likely to sink time into it without being critical of the foundation, and find yourself with a boring painting later. With 20 napkin sketches that were run off in a few minutes each, it is easier to thin out the bad ideas – when something can look good as a rough plan, it will look fantastic as a finalised piece.

Understanding composition

Whilst these tips may seem close to being rules at times, remember that rules are made to be broken. For every rule or convention, there will be examples of excellent landscapes that break it. Study artists whose work you like and do compositional sketches of their artwork. Make lots of quick sketches whenever you can and try to figure out what works. Furthermore, figure out what doesn't work – learning what kills a good composition is just as important as what makes one.

Credit: Lancelot Richardson

1. Plan and select

One of the easiest steps to improving your landscape drawings and paintings is to plan ahead first

It doesn't take long to make a basic plan. Composition is all about experimenting with the subject in these early stages. If you want to invest hours into a well developed painting, spending 15 minutes filling up a page or two with sketches is a small price to pay to avoid finding yourself working on weak foundations. If you are worried about making a mess in your sketchbook, get some cheap copy paper.

Where to start? Well, first we need to think about our format. Do you want to work in landscape orientation, or in a portrait one? There is no rule you need a landscape format for a landscape painting, and plenty of great works buck that trend. For example, some artists – such as Turner – have even managed to make notoriously tricky square compositions work.

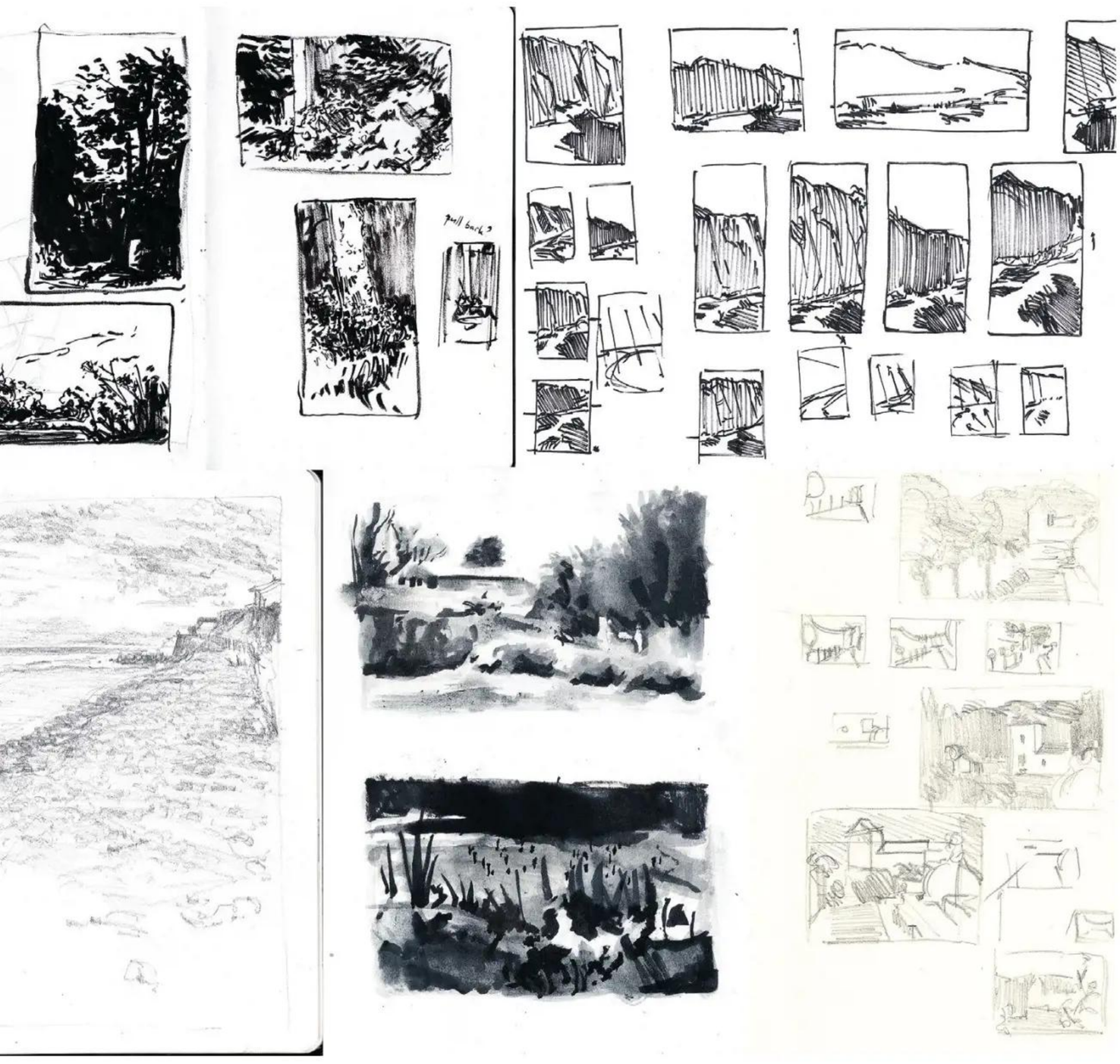
You might have preset sizes to work to, such as primed boards, but if you can cut your own, it is worth experimenting with the proportions of your images. Long, skinny formats can let wide spaces shine their best, whilst more squat, near-square formats can help add a sense of weight, or closeness.

We should also think about selection in this early stage. Given a rolling vista ahead of us, we could select anything from a single tree stump, to the entire expanse. Sometimes the subject leaps out, but usually I will try zooming in and out of the scene with different thumbnails. This applies equally to photos! You don't have to draw the whole photo, just select out what makes an interesting composition.

Silhouettes

Rather than details, think silhouettes! Clear, well drawn silhouettes will add character to your compositions, and help viewers identify subjects.

These are all thumbnail sketches made in sketchbooks, usually to help plan paintings







These sketches are variants of the same scene, using landscape and portrait formats

Credit: Lancelot Richardson

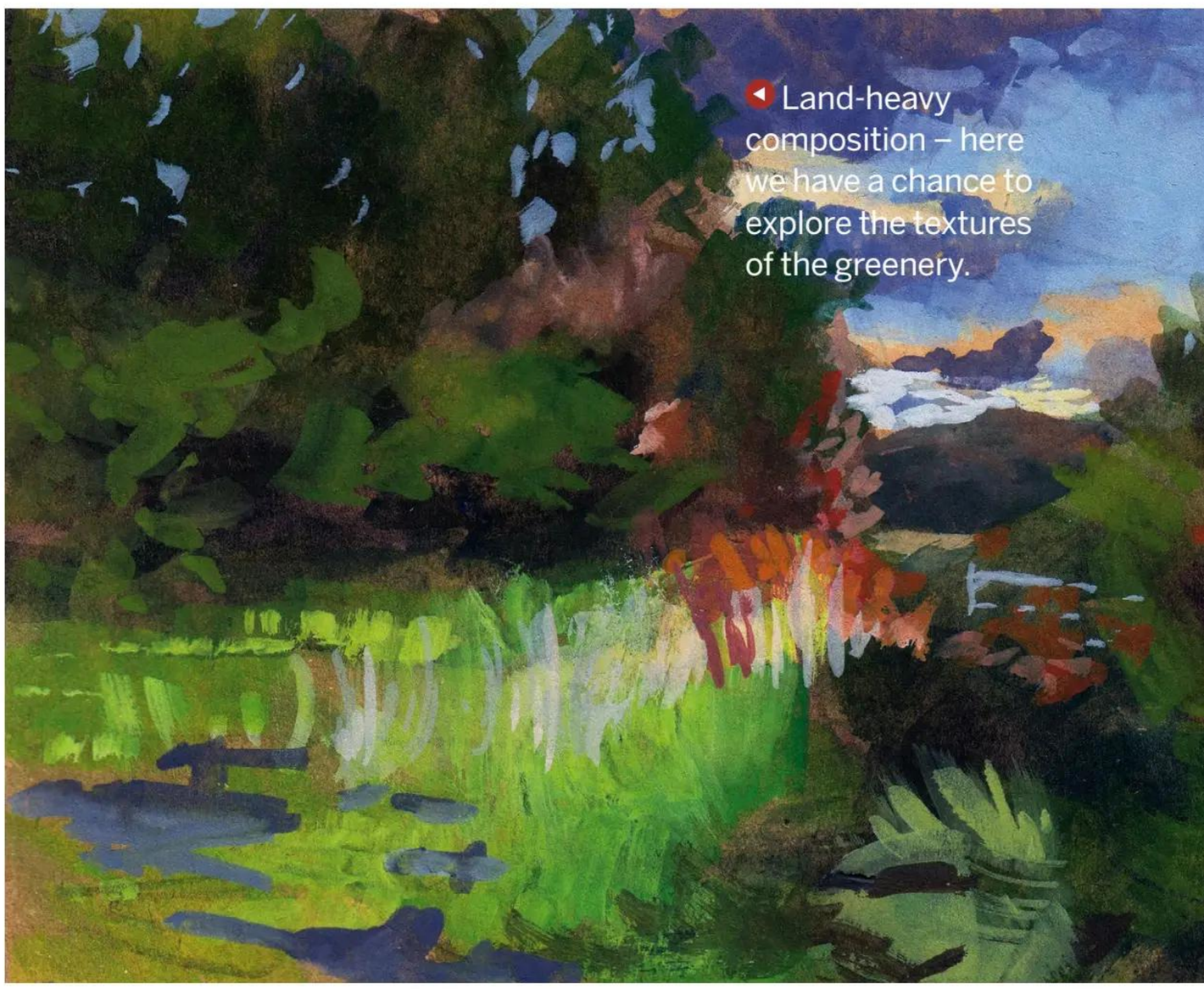
2. Find a horizon

The horizon is a vital element of a landscape – all structure hangs off it

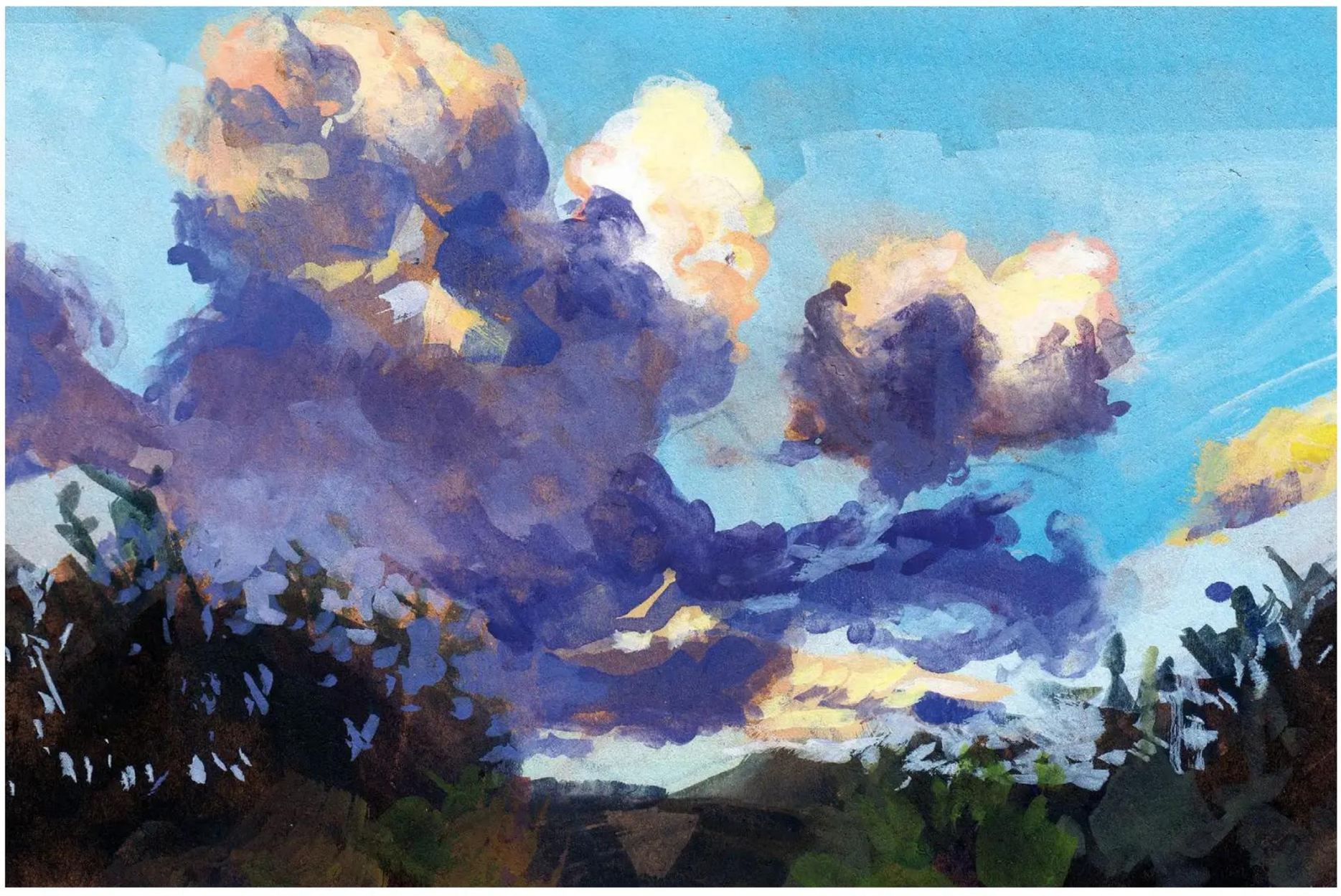
Any landscape painting that depicts a wide space with land (or water) and sky will have a horizon. This effectively is going to break the landscape into two parts, and you want to be mindful of where it is from the early stages of your image.

Placement of the horizon will determine whether you have a land-focused image, or a sky focused image. Avoid dividing the composition in half. Whilst there are a large number of excellent paintings break this rule of thumb, it is generally better to make the division of land and sky uneven. One should be bigger – an even division typically looks boring.

Generally, I see beginners have a bias to land-heavy paintings. After all, there are a lot of interesting things down here. It is worth using thumbnail sketches to try out compositions with a larger sky element to them. Sometimes a large, empty sky space will create breathing space for busy details in a land area. If you are finding your sketches to look too dark or cluttered, try changing the amount of sky you include. Including more sky can also help indicate the scale of your scene and lend your composition a grander sense of space. This also opens up opportunities to show light and weather.



Land-heavy composition – here we have a chance to explore the textures of the greenery.



Cloud-heavy composition – clouds can offer interesting light and colour

Credit: Lancelot Richardson

3. Structure and rhythm

A good composition will lead the eye using lines of rhythm to emphasise its subject

Lines of rhythm underlie a composition. Sometimes people think of them as the 'flow' or gesture. This can be created by edges between different objects or shadows, by repeating elements, or structural components like the horizon.

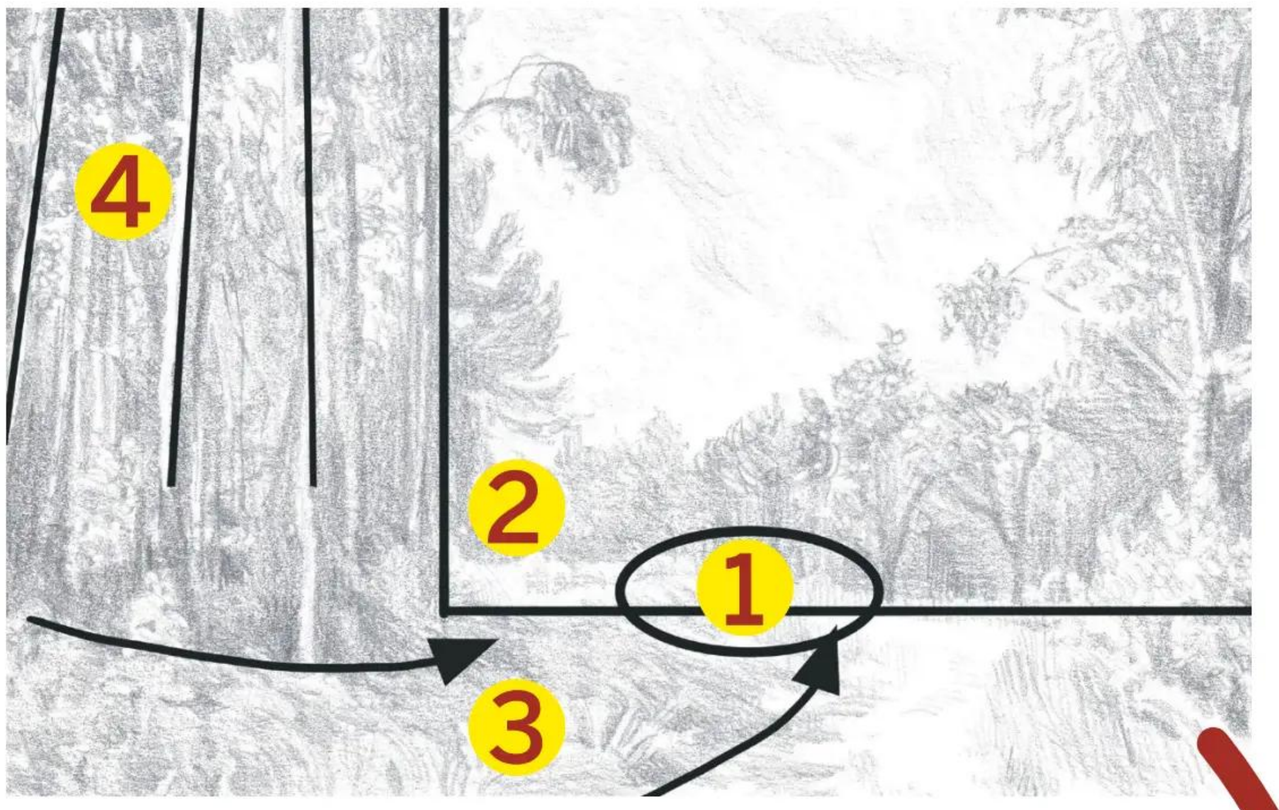
There are different types of line that can underpin a composition; verticals and horizontals, diagonals, and curved lines, as well as many ways of arranging them. Usually eye-catching compositions incorporate a mixture of different rhythm lines to maintain interest, and create a unified whole.

Horizontal lines help calm busy rhythms, whilst vertical lines help stabilise the composition by creating clear stops. Diagonals and curves are more dynamic. If you overdo any kind of line, it can harm the impact of a composition. Too many horizontals and things can get a bit boring and slow. Too many verticals can halt movement and leave the image looking static. The opposite, an excess of diagonals or curves, will start overwhelm the eye and feel overly energetic, even losing structure without the support of horizontals and verticals.

We can manipulate lines in many ways. Pushing the contrast and hardness of an edge will add emphasis, whilst softening an edge will let the eye leave that rhythm. We can break up lines to adjust the rhythm as well – mixing short and long rhythms will keep things interesting.

1 **Focal Point**
This focal point has been created by directing multiple leading lines to the same place

2 **Verticals and horizontals**
The horizon line of the path and brush meets the vertical of the trees at the focal point



3 **Leading lines**
These leading lines for the brush and path repeat the same curve as they lead the eye into the composition

4 **Cascades**
The slight change in the angle of the trees creates a cascading pattern that leads the eye to the left

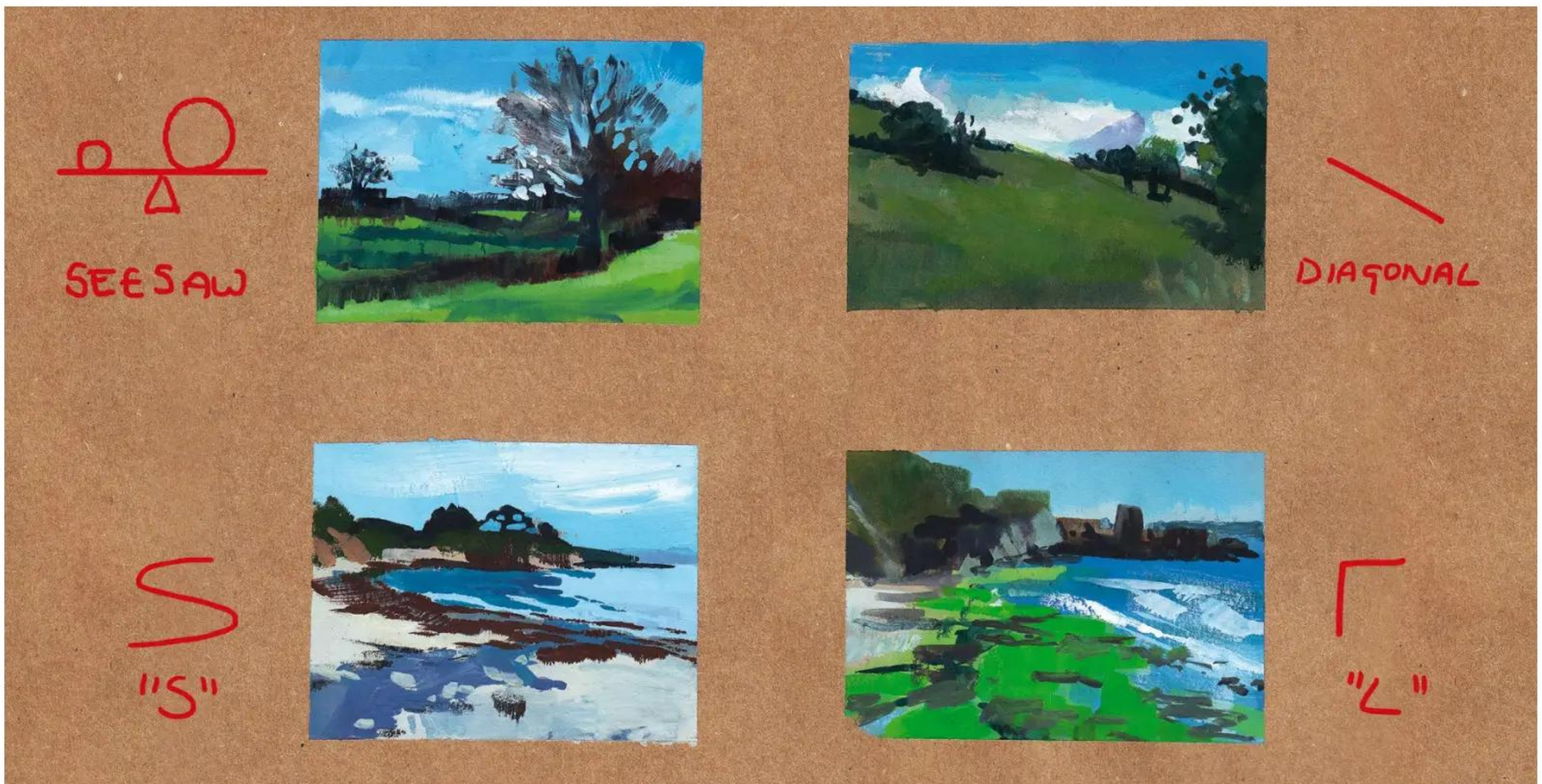


4. Armatures

An armature is a simplified version of the structure of the composition, often reducing it to a few lines

Go small

Alongside squinting to blur details, working small is also an effective way to force yourself to simplify a composition.



These small colour studies are based off simple armatures

Armatures should be simple enough to reduce to a simple icon

Armatures are a way to simply and unify the rhythm lines underpinning our compositions. Whilst I have picked six that are common to landscapes, there are countless more effective possibilities. Letters of the alphabet, and simple shapes or symbols can be effective, so try experimenting. The key thing with these is that they need to be as basic as possible – if it is much more complex than a letter or a circle, you are probably over thinking it.

Seesaw

Two masses balance each other, with the larger being closer to the centre, emulating the balancing of a seesaw.

Letter 'S'

An 'S' line that flows through the image – this is a common composition to use with paths, roads and rivers when painting a landscape scene.

Hole

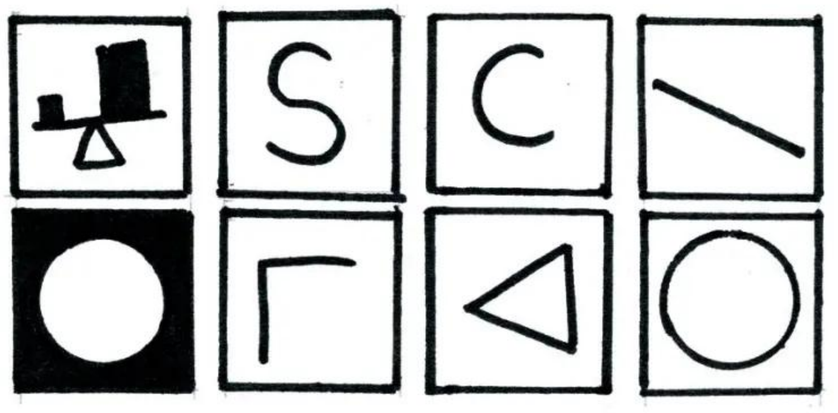
The focal point of the image is seen through a foreground layer, like looking through a hole. This effect is sometimes generated by framing the subject with other elements. Similar to this are compositions that lead the eye around in a roughly circular flow.

Diagonal

A simple layout that creates a strong diagonal across the image. This can be harsh, so it can be a good idea to include some verticals to create a braking effect – otherwise the eye falls off the edge.

Right Angle

Rhythm lines create an 'L' shape, that can be rotated in any direction. Two leading lines work across the image to intersect with a focus, usually at the corner.



Triangle

Leading lines form a triangle structure with a focal point at one of the corners. This is a good way to unify busy subjects in a scene.

5. Design compositions with value sketches

Value, or tone, is one of the most important elements of composition

When you have selected your subject, and have a feel for the rhythm of the image, it is time to think about how you will arrange the values. Simplifying an image to clear value shapes is an effective way to create a composition that presents the subject clearly. We can also use colour shapes to generate contrasts as well.

We want to think in terms of the biggest shapes at this point – no leaves, just entire trees. Ignore the details. One way to help with this is to squint at your subject until the details blur out and you are left with a hazy impression of dark and light shapes. Simple value schemes can underpin complex landscapes. It is a good idea to keep it simple at this stage and use between two and four values – black, white, and possibly a grey or two. Anything else and the temptation to work into smaller details is too much, and our ideas start to lose clarity. Once a lot of fragmented tones come into play, our compositions become weaker and look cluttered. These broad value shapes we help us lay out clear areas of dark and light in more developed work. Try to avoid including any outlines, although you might want to start with a basic sketch underneath.

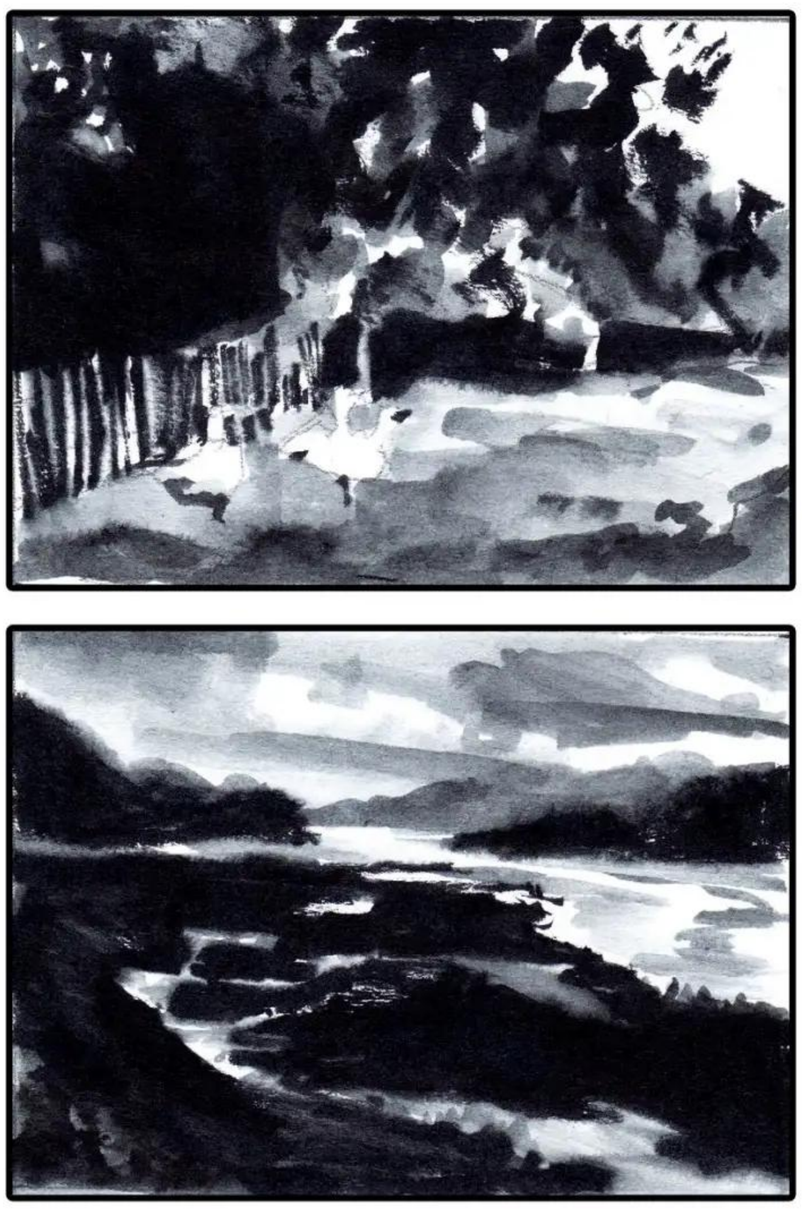
In these examples, the only colours used are black and white, and a wash to create midtones to add some depth. It can be a challenge to ignore the details to find these tonal shapes, but it is a very worthwhile exercise.



Black and white compositions reduce complexity and let us see important shapes

Value shapes

Experiment with different media when you do compositional sketches. Pencils are standard, but black ink is great for value shapes!



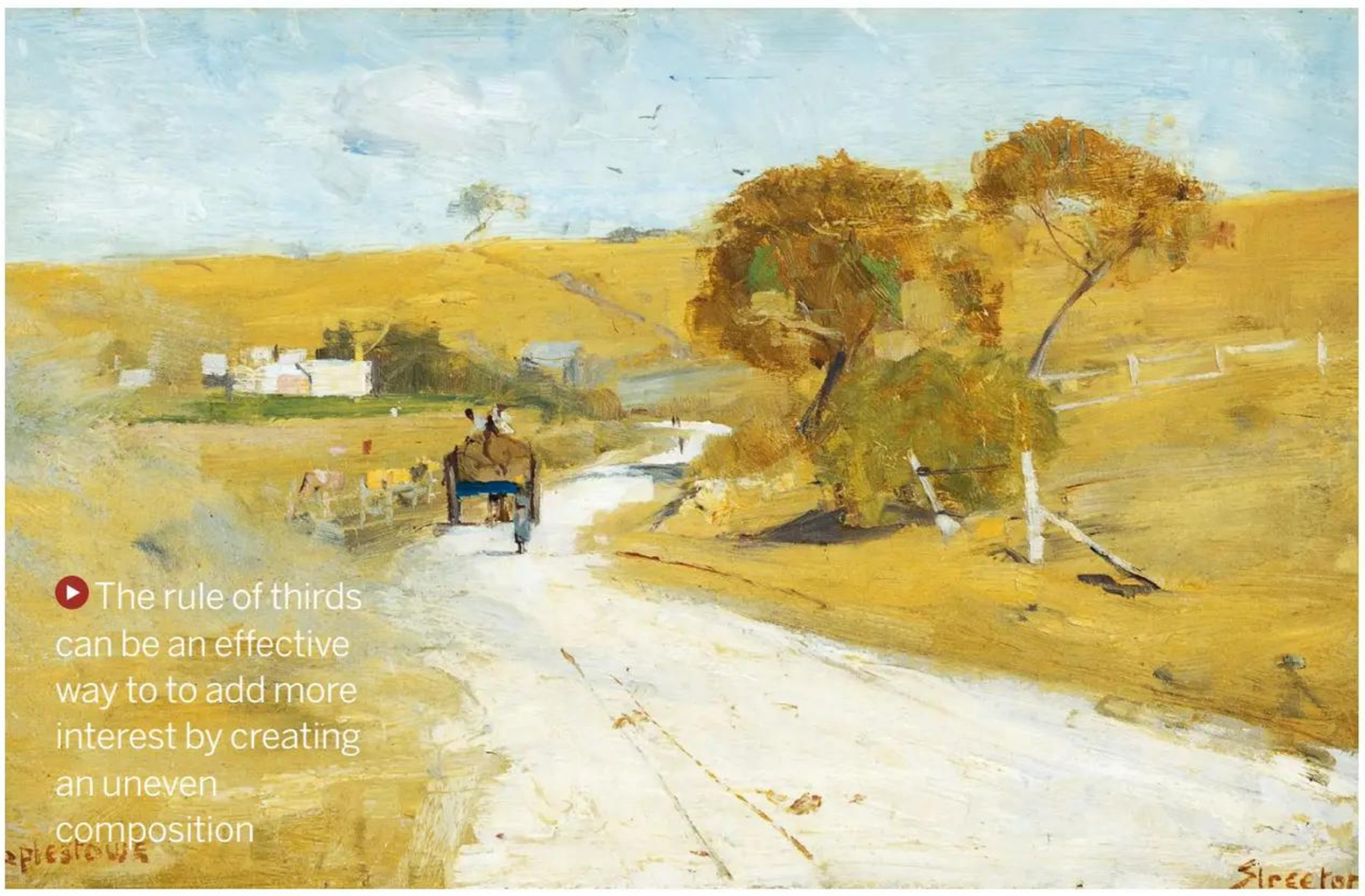
Tonal compositions with ink and wash add a mid tone to black and white layouts

6. Rule of thirds and divisions

The rule of thirds is a popular, and effective, convention, but there are many ways to break up a composition

The rule of thirds is a common way to help break up elements of a painting. It might help with placing a focus point, or give you a good place to put the horizon line. It works by dividing up the frame into thirds vertically and horizontally, the idea being that you place focal points and major lines – such as horizon lines or the edge of a large tonal shape, on those markers.

This is an effective tool, and underpins a lot of great artwork. However, there are a lot of landscapes that don't follow this idea.



The rule of thirds can be an effective way to to add more interest by creating an uneven composition

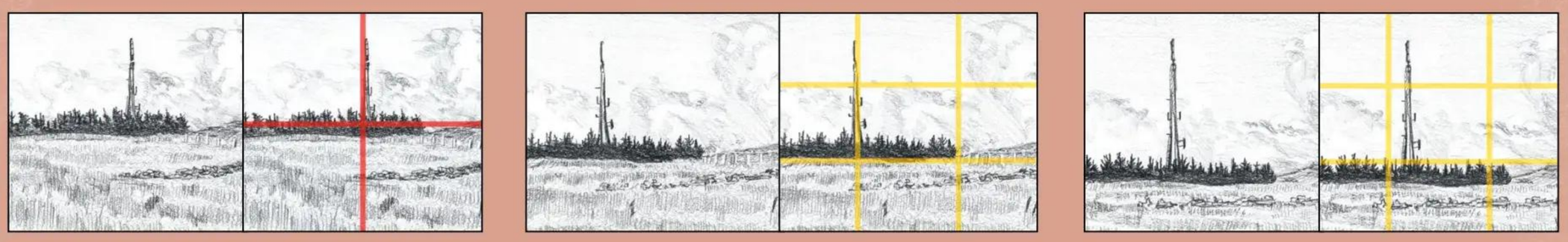
Credit: Arthur Streeton

Rather than the rule of thirds, it is probably better to think of the rule of 'not half'. Dividing or placing elements of an image using halfway markers often results in static compositions. (Like all rules, there are exceptions!) Once we start to introduce unevenness, things start to get interesting. This is why the rule of thirds works well. But it is equally effective to divide into fifths. Or intentionally introduce uneven divisions and placements.

The rule of thirds is so commonly used, it can sometimes be predictable. We can intentionally avoid and ensuring that the way we introduce uneven placement and divisions. Or we can tweak it. One way is to use it, and just nudge elements of the picture slightly off the third division markers. Another way is to use it to place a first element, then subdivide the next part of the image into thirds – this works great for repeating elements.

Apply the rule of thirds

This example shows how the rule of thirds can be applied to a more static composition, and how we can experiment with uneven divisions



1 Divide image evenly

Dividing an image evenly tends to result in static compositions. There is no variety, nothing attracts the eye in any particular direction. We look at the focus of the image, then move on.

2 The conventional rule of thirds

Focuses lie at either a division of 1/3, or at an intersection between a horizontal and vertical 1/3 divider. This is an effective way to avoid placing subjects in the centre of a composition.

3 Push the rule of thirds

The focus has been nudged slightly off the third divisions, but is not on an even divide. This generates a little more unpredictability, as we can create unusual shapes.

7. Compose with value

With good planning, we can use value to add clarity to our compositions, and create striking work

There are so many ways that we can manipulate value to compose a painting. Here are four techniques that can generate more visual interest in tonal compositions in your landscapes.

Uneven areas of value

By picking which values are most and least common, we can create interest by breaking the composition unevenly in terms of the area different values take up – try to ensure one value is rarely used. In the example, there are lots of lights and midtones, with only a few small areas being black.

High contrast vs low contrast

It is a good idea to combine areas of high and low contrast in a composition. If everything was high contrast, nothing would stand out. High contrast areas can create a focal point, whilst less intense contrasts can generate leading lines.

Overlaps

Overlaps are essential in drawing and painting as they are key to showing depth and space. When one object overlaps another, it shows that there is a distance between them. Look for ways to increase overlaps in your images.

Empty vs busy

It is good to have a balance of empty spaces to more detailed, busy ones to create a visual contrast. Don't be afraid to leave large areas as empty sky or shadow – they will let more detailed focal points shine in your scenes, capturing the viewer's attention.

Desaturate

Don't neglect using greys! They might not seem fun, but desaturated colours are important for making bright colours stand out.



1 Uneven areas of value
Large areas of midtones and lights balance the more limited use of dark tones across the whole composition

2 High vs low contrast
Light and dark tones are right next to each other at this focal point, balanced by contrast diminishing to the sides

3 Overlaps
These reeds in the foreground help push the idea of space by overlapping the water and the reeds on the opposite bank

4 Empty vs busy
Here a large area of light tone has been left to give the busier central area space to breathe

Credit: Lancelot Richardson

8. Compose with colour contrast

Hue and saturation are key elements of colour that can create contrast in our compositions

Let's start by clarifying what hue and saturation are, as they accompany value in creating any specific colour we see.

Hue is the place of a colour is on the spectrum, or on a colour wheel. This is pretty straight forward if you have a bright blue or red – the hue is blue, or red. It gets tricky when you get a brown – where does that sit on the colour wheel?

This is where saturation comes in. Say you have a continuum between grey, no colour at all, and lurid, bright orange. In between the grey and the orange, there is a kind of muddy, not very bright orange. This would be our brown. (Of course, there are many browns – some redder, some more yellow.)

You can use hue and saturation to create contrast in an image, just like value. There are a lot of directions to experiment in here, as we have a lot of variables. Using variations in hue and saturation, it is possible to create compositions with little value contrast, because our eyes can use those elements to discern shapes.

Experiment with these properties,

Contrast

Besides value, saturation and hue, we can use other elements to create contrast such as pattern, texture and edges.



In this Van Gogh painting, red and green contrasts create focal points

Credit: Vincent Van Gogh (Pushkin Museum, Moscow)

and don't be afraid to exaggerate the colours you see to create interesting colour relationships.

Composing for different contrasts

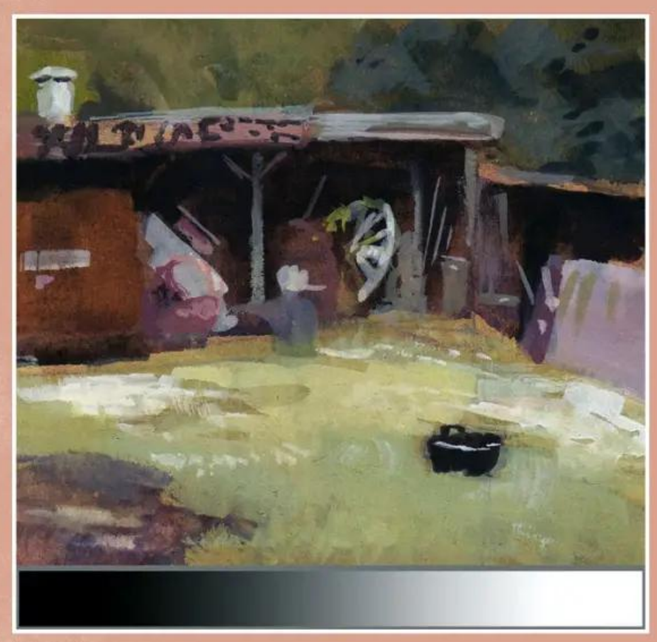
Here value, saturation and hue are used to create contrasts in the same subject

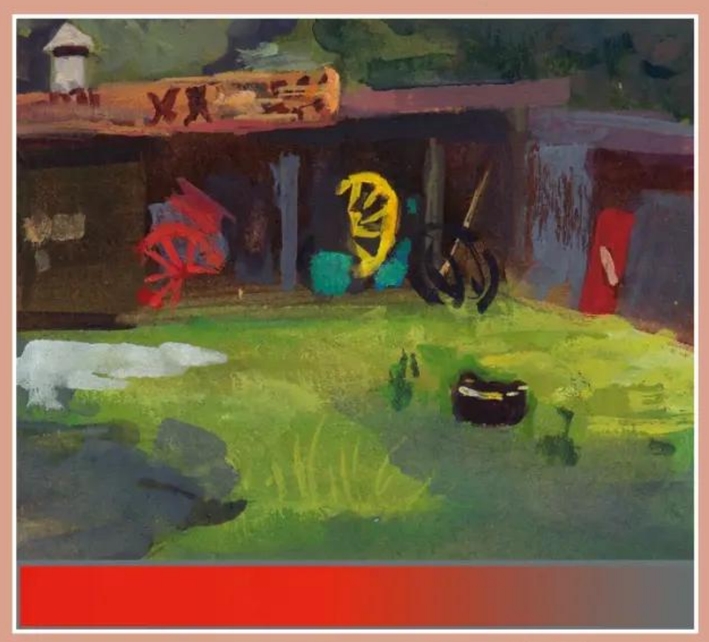
1 Value
This composition has muted colours, but has plenty of contrast from the relationship between the dark shadows and the lights of the items in the shed, and the dark bucket in the light grass.

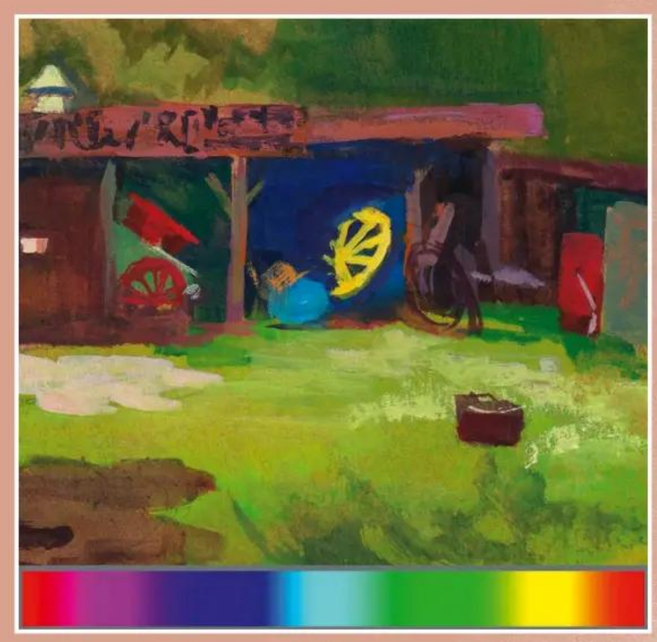
2 Saturation
Saturated colours around the shed and the cart wheels give them more visual dominance.

Note how the red and yellow areas are neighboured by greys to maximise this.

3 Hue
Here contrast is more focused on the colour itself, with the yellow wheel being surrounded by purple shadow and the red cart with green. Complementary colours create the maximum hue contrast.







9. Low key vs high key

Being able to control the 'key' of our images allows us to restrict and control colour to create bright or dark pictures

A full value range encompasses the white of the Sun to the blackness of a cave; however, we cannot achieve that when we draw or paint. White paint is never going to be as white as a light, and black paint, dark as it seems, is still brighter than an unlit cave. So we are limited by our materials already.

'Key' is a term is picture-making that describes the value range an image occupies. Selecting a key is to limit our value range even more. A high-key image is bright, and will not have many, if any, black areas on it. A low-key image is dark, and will generally not have anything brighter than a mid-tone, though it many have some light colours accenting it.

In high-key images, to keep from using shadows, it helps to avoid blacks unless absolutely neccessary, and instead substitute dark areas for saturated colours. A common trick is to put reds, purples or blues into the shadows, as they look darker than yellows, oranges and greens. This helps imply shadow

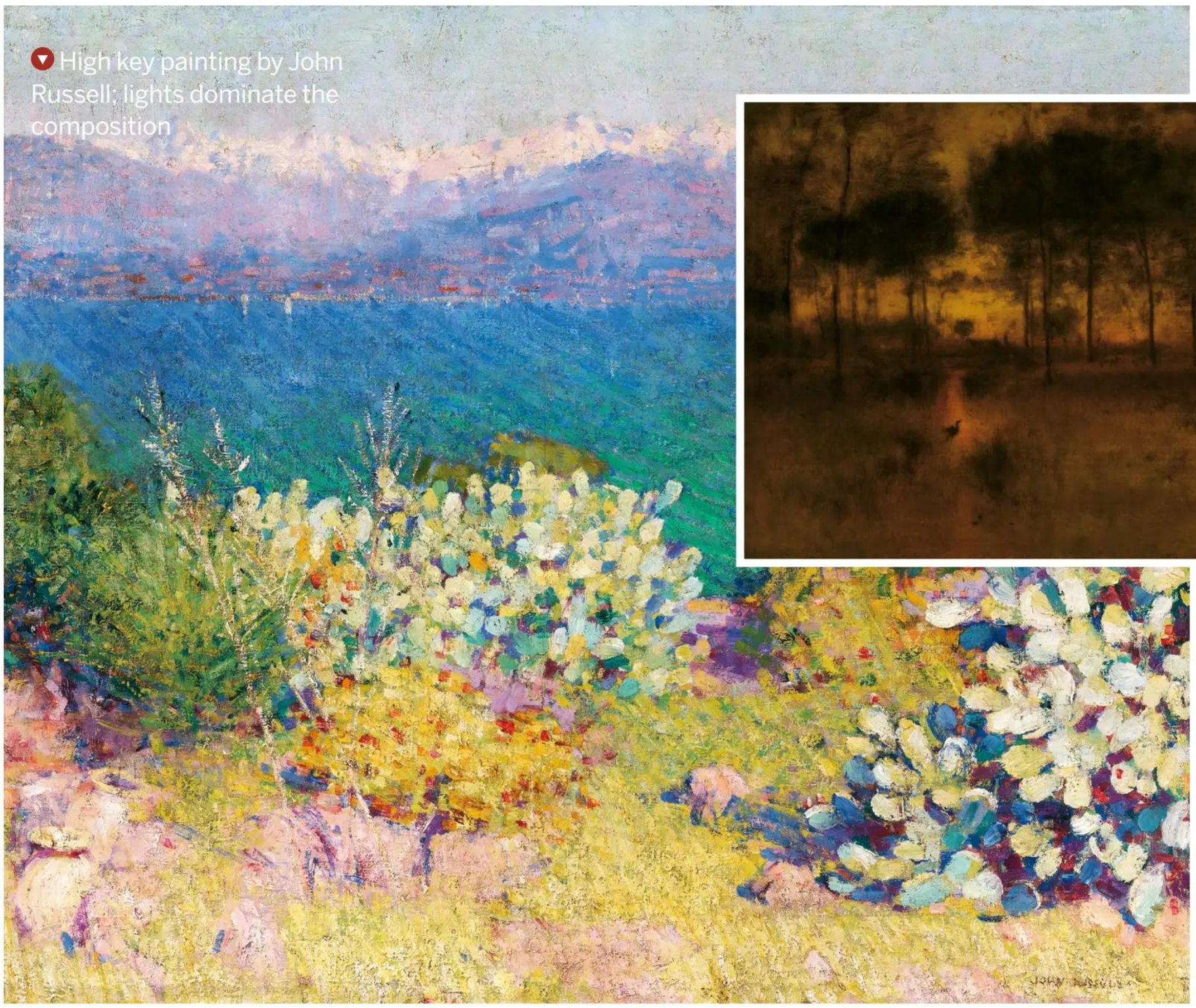
"Sometimes artists will have a small splash of light colour"

Limit it

Limited palettes are great for colour unity. If you find yourself often having to fight clashing colours, cut down to 3-4 colours, plus white.

without pushing into a wider value range, and will keep things colourful and bright. Whilst not a golden rule, there is a tendency for hue and saturation contrasts to dominate high-key scenes.

The opposite is true of low-key images – here we restrict the use of white through the majority of the composition. Often to lighten colour mixes, we can add yellow or occasionally a bright red, to lift them, before resorting to using white. Sometimes artists will have a small splash of light colour for dramatic contrast. Low key images tend to rely more on value contrast, as different hues are hard to make out.



Credit: John Russell (National Gallery of Australia)

High key painting by John Russell; lights dominate the composition

Credit: George Inness (Art Institute of Chicago)

Low key painting by George Inness; note how nothing is lighter than yellow

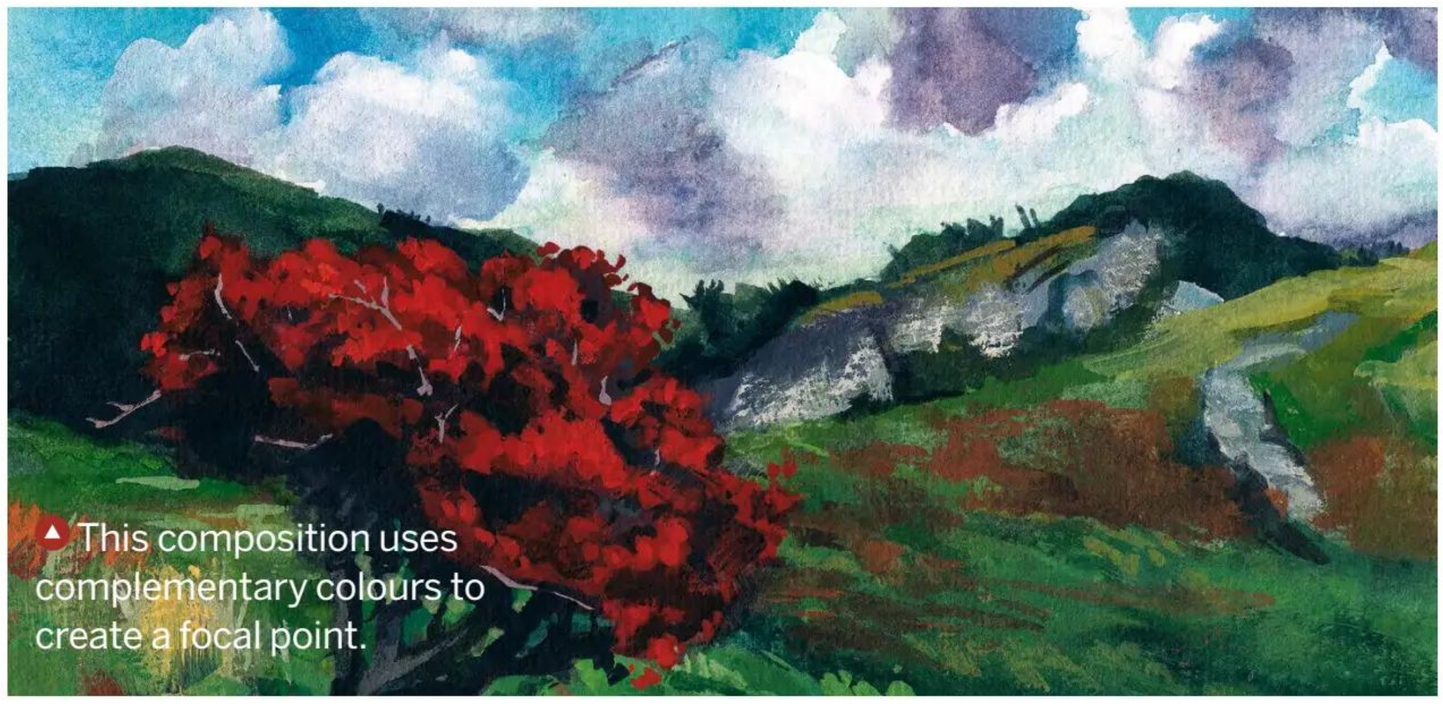
10. Find a focus with contrast

The eyes are always drawn to the part of the image with the most contrast – this is a focal point

There are many creative ways to use colour to generate contrast. Often these techniques can work well by changing value, but will add additional vibrancy to your compositions if you use colour constrasts. Using these compositional techniques requires some thoughtful balancing; if you have complementary and high value contrasts all happening in the same picture with several different focuses, things will start to look cluttered. Remember that you can do mild version of these – you can lead the eye with contrasts that are more or less intense. Treat it like a balancing act.

Contrasting edges

When two colours that contrast each other are placed side by side, they create an edge. This is especially effective for complementary colours – colours that oppose each other on the colour wheel. Often it is too jarring to use two fully saturated colours to do this. A rough rule of thumb to pairing complementary colours is to pair a saturated one with an unsaturated one. This maintains the contrast – now you have saturation contrasts as well – without becoming garish. To include:



Credit: Lancelot Richardson

▲ This composition uses complementary colours to create a focal point.

Flagging of focal point

One way to create a clear focal point is by surrounding it with a contrasting value or colour. This helps create a silhouette that a viewer can quickly recognise, and works well if you want the focus to be on a specific object, such as a recognisable tree, or man-made item.

The Odd One Out

Difference is another way to attract attention. If we have a recurring shape or object, creating a version that is different to the rest will generate an effective focus. This can be done by changing the object entirely, or creating a different colour or value. For instance, placing a yellow flower in a bed of predominantly red and pink ones will ensure the eye travels to that point.

Composing with colour contrasts

These steps show how colour contrasts can be incorporated into the construction of a composition.



1 ▲ Contrasting edges

Red and green colour contrasts create an immediate focal point in this compositional sketch. Different colour edges have been introduced by using a saturated red above the green and a desaturated red below.



2 ▲ Focal point

The saturation of the red and green has been increased in the top left, creating a focal point. This is balanced by making these colours duller along the top edge of the bush.



3 ▲ Odd ones out

In the row of white flowers that are sprinkled across the composition, there are a few red ones to emphasise the focal point. Note that these flowers are distributed in an uneven way.



Make waves with a limited palette

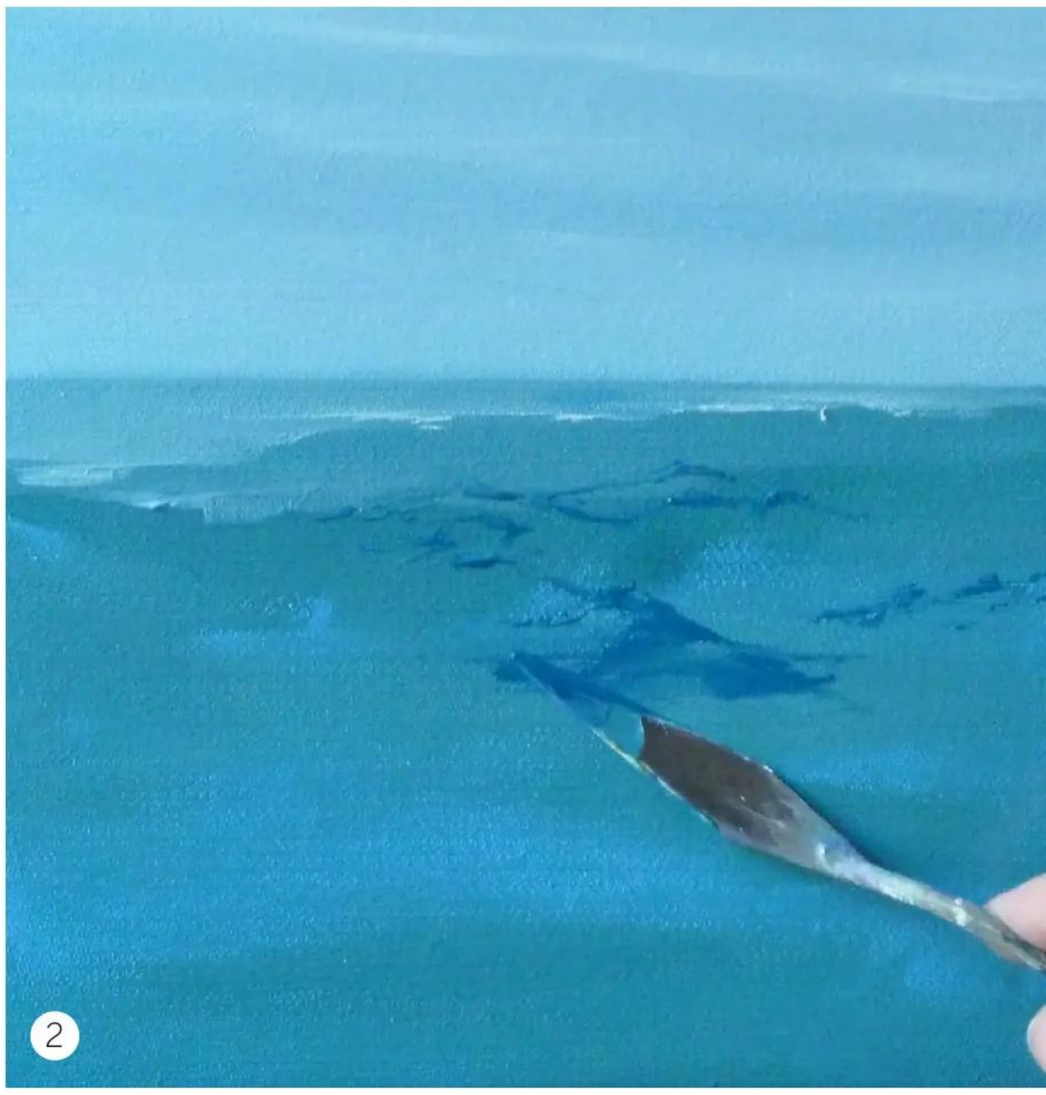


About
LINDA MONK
Leipzig, Germany
Linda is a professional British artist living in Germany. As she grew up on the Wirral Peninsula, her work is mainly influenced by the sea and all things nautical.
www.art-lindamonk.co.uk

WHEN STUDYING A PHOTO, I observe the patterns of waves, and how they fall and move. My aim is to capture the movement of the sea rather than creating a totally realistic copy. I like to work in a free and relaxed way, using my sharp-edged palette knife. It's important you don't overload the knife or brush – keeping your paint fluid will prevent a sticky mess.

It's best to avoid dwelling on fine details when working on a small scale. If you keep it simple, your painting is less likely to look overworked.


1


2

Don't make mountains out of waves!

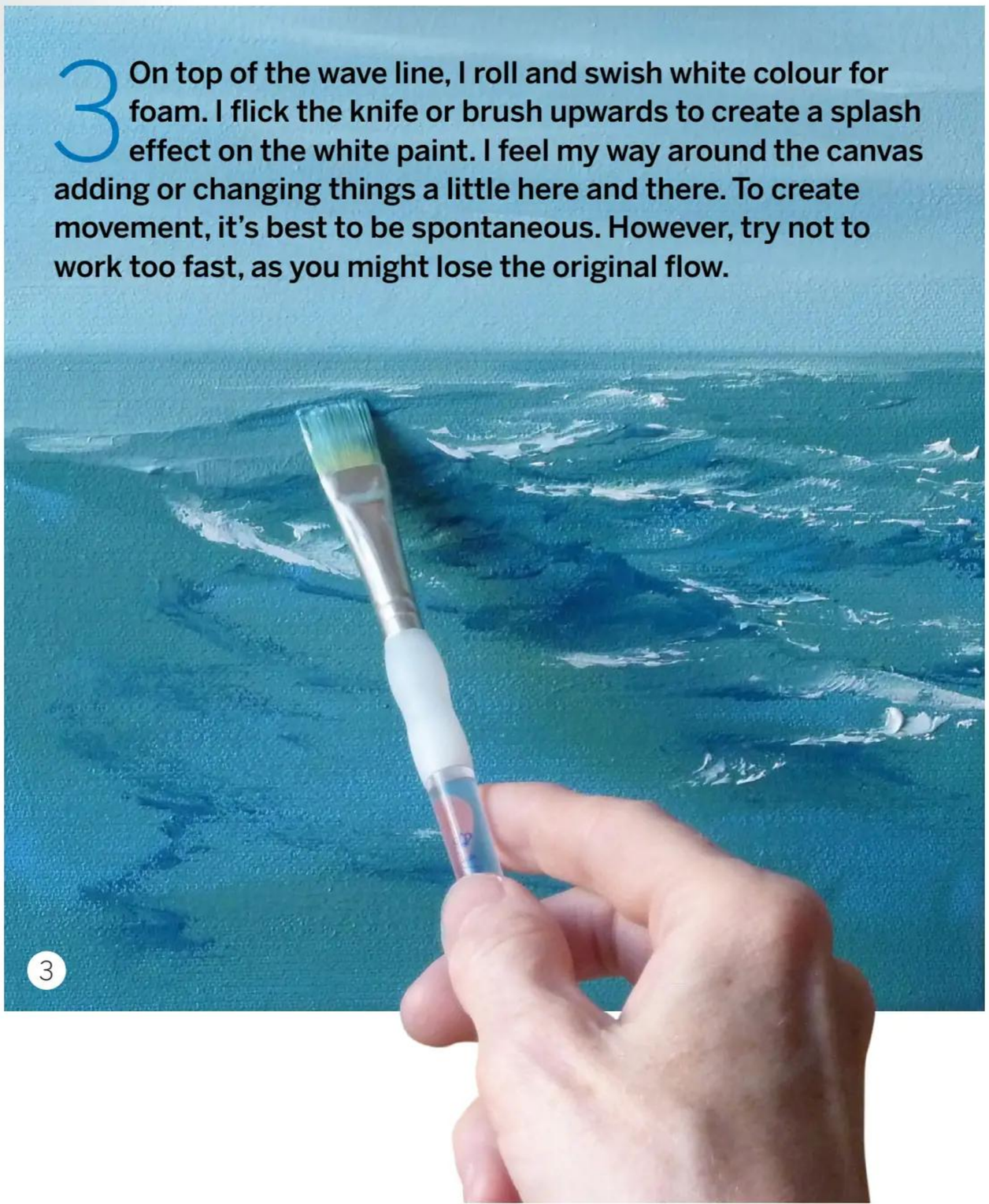
When you paint waves, do not overexaggerate their height or you might create a likeness of snow-capped mountain peaks! Stand in front of a mirror with your painting. Problem areas you were not able to see clearly before might become apparent.

Follow these steps...

1 I begin by drawing my horizon with a pencil onto a 20x20cm canvas. Then I mix a colour for the sea and sky. If you want a bright sea, use a mix of lighter blues; for a more moody feel add more grey. Leave the finished background colour to dry.

2 I merge both sides of the horizon line with a lighter colour to create a feeling of distance. With a flat-headed brush, I roughly paint a darker sea colour in the foreground while leaving part of the underground colour to show through. Use the sharp-edged side of a pointed palette knife to lay out the top of the waves in a dark colour. In parts, you can drag colour downwards with a knife to form the body of a wave.

3 On top of the wave line, I roll and swish white colour for foam. I flick the knife or brush upwards to create a splash effect on the white paint. I feel my way around the canvas adding or changing things a little here and there. To create movement, it's best to be spontaneous. However, try not to work too fast, as you might lose the original flow.


3


4

4 To judge the painting, ask yourself questions. Have you captured the depth and weight of the sea? Have you created snow-capped mountain peaks or foamy waves? Do you have movement? Your answers to these questions will tell you whether your work is done. If I'm still undecided, I'll turn the painting upside down and judge from a new perspective!

Five simple tips for beautiful skies

Valérie Pirlot gives simple tips to successfully paint skies with oils

Materials

The brushes Valérie uses combine the silkiness of traditional synthetic brushes with the firmer feel of hog bristles. The rounded edges offer a softer application. The primed boards have a good absorbency for the style she works in.

- Winsor & Newton Artisan Water Mixable oil colours
- Brushes: Rosemary & Co Ivory Filberts (0,1,2,3,4,7) and Riggers (0,2)
- MDF board primed with three coats of Winsor & Newton acrylic gesso



SKIES ARE ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL things you can witness in nature, and are often a great source of inspiration. However, artists often struggle to tackle them with oils. A common mistake is to treat the sky as the last step of the painting, as an afterthought, which makes it look like it doesn't belong with the rest of the landscape. It should be painted in connection with rest of the painting in order to achieve a convincing and homogeneous result in terms of colours, brushwork, tones and composition. So try to have a think at the beginning of the painting how you want to depict the sky, how much importance and space you want to give it, and the mood that you are aiming to convey.

Another tendency artists have with skies is to over-blend. It is tempting to keep pushing the paint around, but then all the colours end up in a big grey puddle. Instead, try having distinct areas and visible brushstrokes with a combination of soft edges and hard edges to keep things interesting.

Keeping this in mind, here are five simple tips that I've learned over the years, that will hopefully help you achieve beautiful convincing skies with oils. But remember, the main tip should always be to have fun!





About **VALÉRIE**

Bath, UK

Originally from Belgium, Valérie has lived in the UK for the past 11 years. She works mainly in oils and enjoys working plein air. See more of her paintings at **www.valeriepirlot.com**

1 Look at the colours

It is easy to get caught out painting a sky with the brain instead of the eyes. The brain tells you the sky is blue. The eyes, if you make them work hard, will see hues of blue, yellow, pink and green. Really look for the colours and enjoy expressing them freely. You might want to avoid using pure colours, though, as the sky is rarely pure blue and the clouds are rarely pure white. Instead, use various mixes that contain pigments present in the rest of the painting. This will harmonise the whole scene. Embrace the dull grey areas in the sky as they enhance the bright highlights. Indeed, your most vibrant light will often look the most intense next to a grey cloud.



2 Enjoy being bold

Skies are often the most abstract part of a landscape, so you can really have fun conveying energy and drama with big brushstrokes applied with freedom. This is the part of the painting where you can truly showcase your brushwork and your personality as a painter. Reconnect with the two-year-old child inside of you who used to have fun with brushes! I recommend using your largest brushes and being as loose as you can, but try to make every brushstroke count. You don't need to show things exactly as they are, you can adjust elements to improve the composition and create more or less drama. What matters is that you convey the right mood in a convincing way.



3 Use a ground colour

I usually build up a painting with layers from dark to light, ending up with the thickest application of paint for the highlights. However, sometimes, I decide to use the ground colour of the background for some of the highlights, as in this painting's detail. This is a technique I often use to achieve vibrant sunsets. To do this, prime your canvas with a bright orange or yellow and then add the clouds, greys and blues in the skies, making sure you let some of the ground colour show through, especially in the most vibrant parts of the sunset. Finish with some touches of bright yellow mixed with white to really enhance the focal points.



4 Painting clouds

Having clouds that look like sheep or candy floss is a fear that most painters share. Clouds make lovely shapes in the sky, but when reproduced on canvas, they often look out of place. My advice is to view them as solid objects with three dimensions, which are affected by the sun. The sides of the clouds the furthest away from the sun should be the darkest, and the ones the closest should be the lightest. But remember to vary the application of soft edges and hard edges. Thicker or whiter clouds can benefit from strong brushstrokes with hard edges, while thinner or paler ones could be suggested with more subtle marks.



5 Trees and skies

One of the reasons I love painting trees so much is the way the foliage and the sky overlap and mix in a beautiful way. The area where these two meet can be tricky to paint, however, as there is a risk of smudging the various colours together. To avoid this, I recommend working with layers. I usually paint the dark mass of the tree in a thin layer that dries quickly, before applying the colour of the sky around it and filtering through the leaves. Here's a little tip: the colour of the sky through the branches is a little darker than the actual sky. When the sky is fairly dry, I apply some small patches of leaves that detach from the tree to depict the loose branches.

Perfect a sunset scene

Find out how to create warm and deep landscape scenes – particularly complex sunsets – with your limited colour palette



1 Blue skies ahead

The blue sky in this landscape sits above all the drama happening below, so it was important to get just the right mix. The blue sky is also reflected in the pool, so it had to sit well with its surrounding sky and land colours to look authentic. I took some Ultramarine Blue and tinted it down with Titanium White No.1. I wanted to add violet tones so I mixed in a little Alizarin Crimson. The blue of the sky also leaned towards the greens so I added a little Bright Yellow Lake to subtly shift it in that direction.

2 Peachy tones

As the sun gets lower in the sky, the rays of light have more atmosphere to travel through to reach your eyes. This tends to filter out more of the violets and blues, creating beautiful peachy-pink skies as in our subject. To re-create this peachy-pink, I mixed Scarlet Lake with Titanium White No.1. When mixing tints, add the dominant colour to the white, rather than adding white to the dominant colour – you'll save a lot of white paint. I then 'peached-up' my pink by adding small amounts of Bright Yellow Lake until I was I happy.

3 Deep shadows

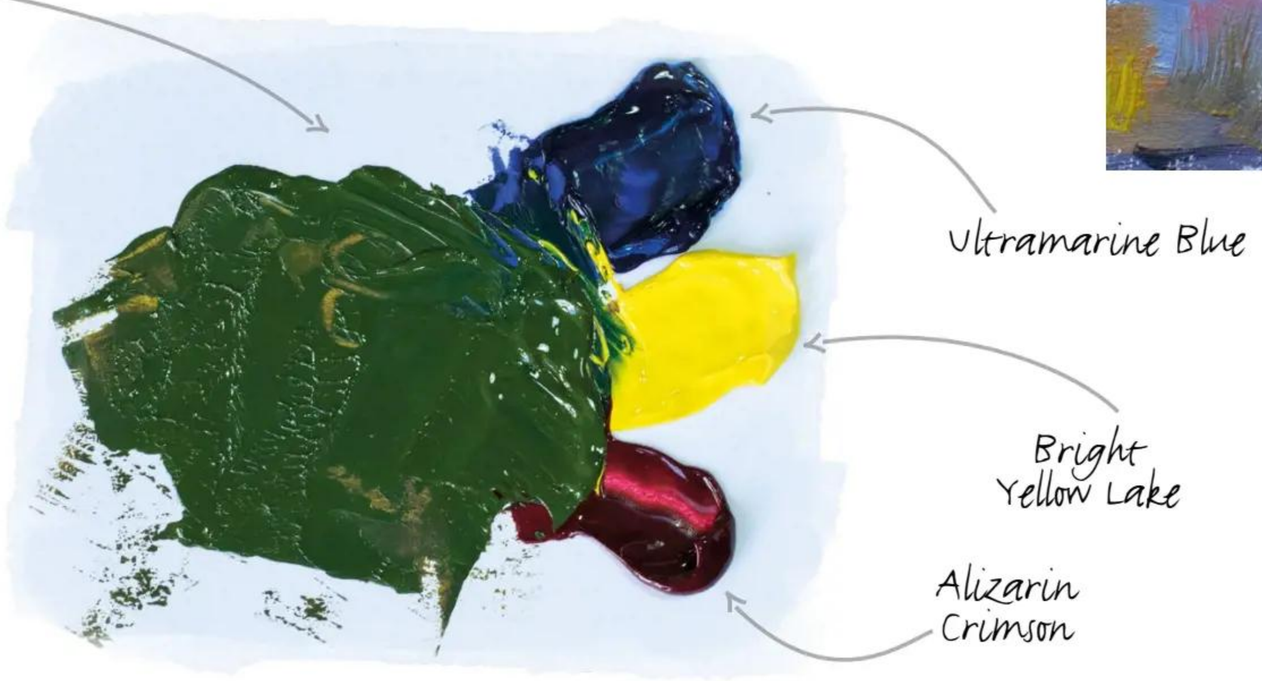
In a painting with such high notes of extreme colour, the composition needs to be anchored and balanced with dark, deep tones. I decided to increase harmony by combining a lot of these into one deep violet. Remember that these deep, dark tones needs to be desaturated with their complementary colour – in this case, Bright Yellow Lake. I didn't want to go all the way to black, so I started with my warmer blue, Ultramarine. I then added Alizarin Crimson to create my violet and Bright Yellow Lake to grey it down.

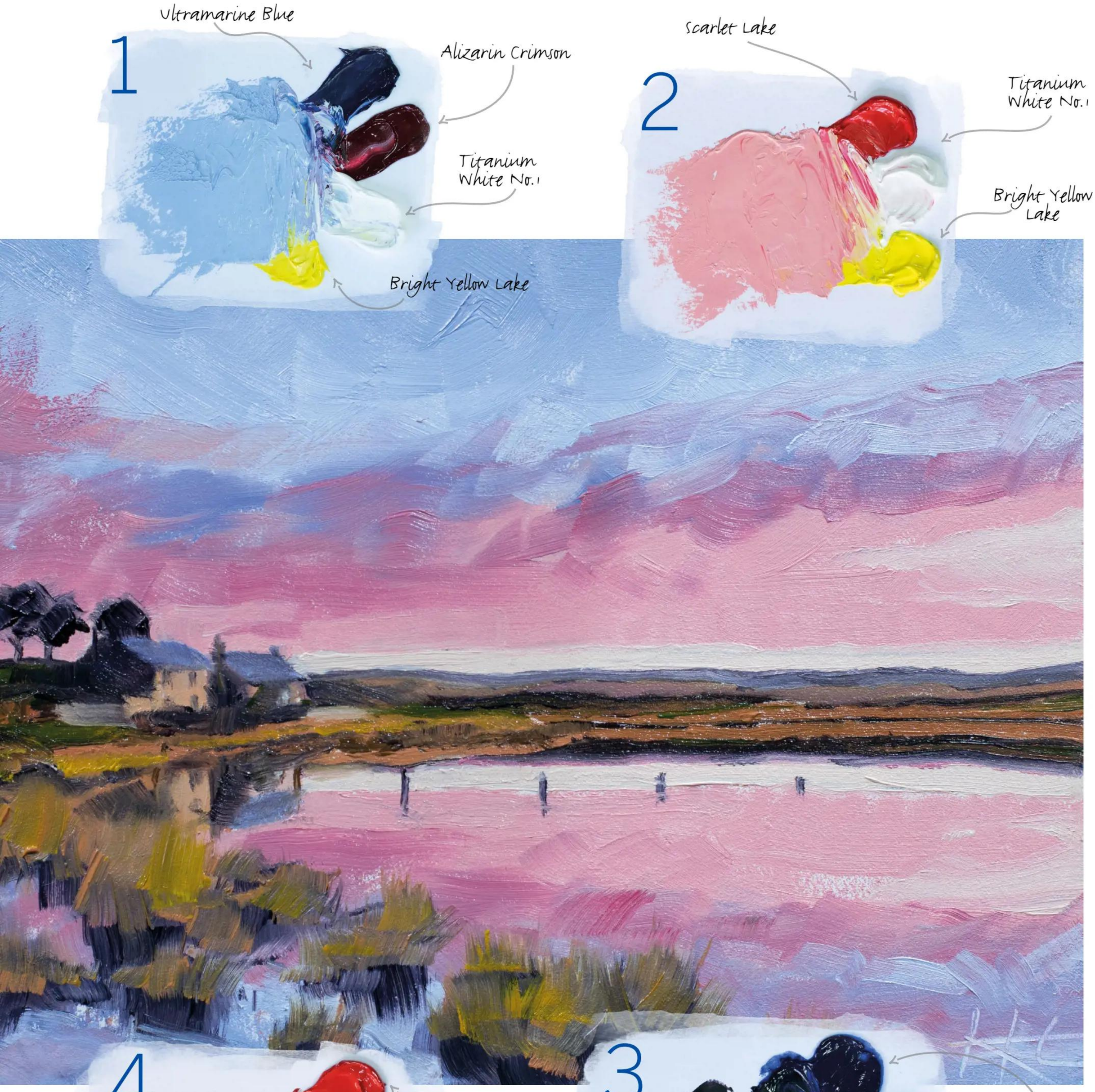
4 Golden grass

One of the strongest colours in the foreground, and counterpoint to the deep shadows, is the sunset kissing the foliage around the pool. I wanted this to be bright and sing out, but it's easy to go in too light and too high in saturation. I started off mixing Scarlet Lake with Yellow Lake to create a strong and warm orange. As Scarlet Lake is the dominant colour, I greyed it down using Phthalocyanine Blue Lake to create a strong desaturation while retaining a good, warm orange. Offer up your palette knife to your painting to see how your mix looks next its surrounding colours before you commit with a brush.

5 Green fields

A cool balancing colour to all those high notes and deep shadows is the green of the fields around the cottage. They lead the viewer's eye towards the cottage and out across the pool, so they're important elements. I wanted the green to be bright and full-bodied but it needed to be desaturated quite a bit so it didn't stand out like a sore thumb. I mixed Ultramarine Blue with Yellow Lake to make my strong green and then desaturated it with a little Alizarin Crimson. Go careful, though – it's all too easy to overdo it and mix a brown.




1
Ultramarine Blue
Alizarin Crimson
Titanium White No.1
Bright Yellow Lake
2
Scarlet Lake
Titanium White No.1
Bright Yellow Lake
4
Scarlet Lake
Yellow Lake
Titanium White No.1
Phthalo Blue Lake
3
Ultramarine Blue
Alizarin Crimson
Bright Yellow Lake



About **REBECCA**

Exeter, UK

Rebecca co-founded The New Pastel School and teaches in the UK and Italy. Her book *Pastels for the Absolute Beginner* will be published in October 2019.

rebeccademendonca.co.uk

Create rocky landscapes

Here, **Rebecca de Mendonça** shows us how to use the edges of pastels

I LOVE TO USE MY PASTELS, Conté crayons and charcoal in as many different ways as I can. By varying my grip of the pastel and the pressure I apply on the paper, I can make all sorts of marks that have different energy. With the same pastel I can draw delicately or paint boldly. It's quick and exciting!

Here I am using charcoal and Unison pastels on their edges, twisting them around the surface to create the feeling of the craggy hills of Dartmoor, a dramatic and inspiring place.

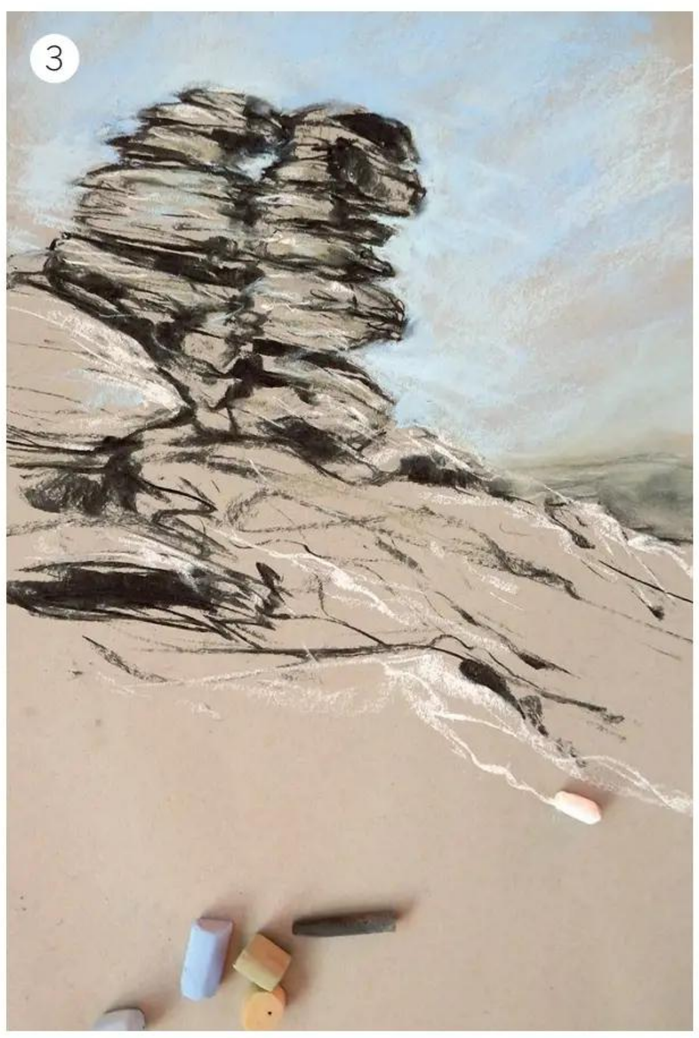
For the rocky tors and tumbled rocks, I lay the edge of a 3cm piece of charcoal on the surface, holding it in the middle. By pressing hard and dragging it along that long edge, I create the dark shadows in the crevices, by pressing gently I can get fine, sharp lines. For added depth, I then use a pastel over the charcoal in places. These linear marks follow the flow of the rocks to achieve a sense of reality in the final image.

Follow these steps...



1 By laying the charcoal or pastel on its edge on the surface, and dragging it along sideways, I make linear marks that have flow and energy. By varying the pressure I apply, I can make strong marks that have weight to them, or fine, gentle ones. Charcoal produces lighter, thinner marks than pastel. It is always good to experiment with what you have.

2 With these edgy, linear marks I sketch the tor, thinking off the hardness and weight of rock, which helps me capture the energy. I draw parallel lines by moving the charcoal up and down, but keeping it facing in the same direction. I apply more weight to the shadowed areas, and let the lines twist and turn for the tumbled rocks below.





3 I build in more shadowed areas by applying more weight to my marks, and using a dark Unison pastel, which gives a much deeper dark than charcoal. For highlights I use a white pastel. The sky and grass around the tor is softened in with Unison pastels, acting as a contrast to the jagged marks of the rocks, which are not smudged.

Mix greens from basic pigments for a more natural effect

THROUGHOUT YEARS of working as a professional artist, I have experimented with a number of purchased greens but have always found them unsatisfactory. Viridian is useful, but only for seascapes. On rare occasions I use Hookers Green, but even though it's a fairly subtle colour it can overwhelm more delicate pigments. Here, I would like to demonstrate how a wide range of pleasant greens can be obtained from mixing basic pigments.



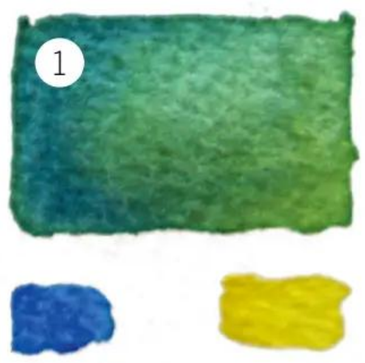
About
MARGARET MERRY
Almeria, Spain
After studying at Falmouth Art School, Hornsey College of Art and Bristol University, Margaret has worked as a artist specialising in watercolour and pastel. She now paints in Spain.
http://bit.ly/pad_merry



Follow these steps...

1 When creating the painting below, the greens needed to be stronger as I approached the foreground. I used Ultramarine mixed with Lemon Yellow and a touch of Raw Sienna, with highlights of Cadmium Yellow and Cadmium Orange. The latter are strong pigments and must be used with care. To vary the intensity of colours, I painted freely using plenty of clean water to dilute the paint. The trees were given a loose treatment to avoid too much detail.





Ultramarine Blue & Lemon Yellow



Ultramarine Blue & Yellow Ochre



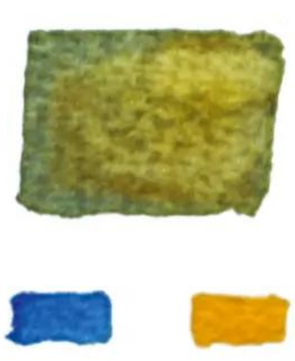
Ultramarine Blue & Cadmium Yellow



Cobalt Blue & Lemon Yellow



Cobalt Blue & Yellow Ochre



Cobalt Blue & Cadmium Yellow

Ultramarine Blue, Lemon Yellow & Burnt Sienna

Ultramarine Blue, Lemon Yellow & Raw Sienna

Ultramarine Blue, Burnt Umber & Yellow Ochre

2 For the trees and bushes below the church and their reflections in the water, I needed even stronger greens. In order to create a feeling of perspective, I warmed up the colours using Burnt Umber and Burnt Sienna. These pigments blended very well with the Ultramarine mixture and they did not lose their transparency. By allowing clean water to flow into the wet paint, the pigments separated and produced a pleasant effect.



3 I wanted soft greens for this painting depicting a Cornish spring but for stronger, summer greens I would have used Cadmium Yellow, as well as Lemon mixed with Ultramarine. Monestial Blue (Phthalo Blue) also produces a strong, bright green when mixed with Lemon Yellow. It's a sharper, more acid blue than Cobalt or Ultramarine and a useful addition to the palette.

Keep watercolours fresh and loose

THERE ARE MANY THINGS that contribute to the attractive and free nature of watercolour, but here I'll concentrate on the simplest and most basic: how I apply the paint to the paper.

I've found the easiest way to make the paint look happy on the paper is to touch the paper once. That is, I know how I want my picture to look straightaway, and don't plan to do any over-painting. I avoid painting anywhere twice, until I have painted everything once. And I don't correct as I go along either– I wait until the end, when it is easier to judge the passages that haven't quite gone to plan. Remember, we are all trying to narrow the gap between our vision and the execution of our vision.



Fishermen's Sheds, Suffolk
An advantage of this one-wash method is I don't have to paint in any set order, plus I remain interested and committed. It's an enjoyable way of painting.



About
ANDREW PITT
Suffolk, UK
Andrew started painting when he was 11. He is a self-taught painter who lives in Suffolk and is well known for his plein air paintings and simple style.
www.andrewpitt.co.uk

Follow these steps...

To get a fresh-looking watercolour

1 The purpose of my preliminary drawing is to ensure the image fits the paper. As my aim – and I don't always succeed – is to go for the end straightaway, I can start anywhere I like. I don't paint to a set formula, but I do like to begin somewhere small and easy.







2 I decide to leave the sky until later. I like to feel my way before tackling large areas. I continue to paint the sheds and some of the greens, all the while going for the final look in one wash. I also keep varying my colour to add interest.



3 The sky is painted in one go, on dry paper. Starting at the top I work down and across. I use the paper to separate the cloud shapes – I find the flecks of unpainted paper add life and movement. I think they give an open, honest look to the painting.

4 Finally, I add selected detail – masts, figures, shadows and texture. I avoid tidying up my picture, in fact, I often 'muck it up'. I think this adds life – I certainly don't start painting everywhere again. That is guaranteed to muddy fresh washes.



Tips to paint vibrant water

Jennifer Branch shows you the secrets behind painting energised water and realistic reflections in any situation



PAINTING WATER CAN sometimes seem overwhelming. Water moves constantly, so capturing a moment without the aid of a camera may appear impossible. But paintings can convey the constant movement of water in a way that photos struggle to, as long as you have a good water-painting technique that ensures your pictures are as full of life as the real thing.

The following top ten tips explain a few basic skills and techniques you can use to paint water that looks spontaneous and vibrant. Although I use watercolours, these tips also translate to the medium of your choice. Practise en plein air whenever you can, but you can work from photos when you need to.

You can't paint the same water twice, since it's ever-changing. Capturing the energy in that movement is what makes water so amazing to paint. I love to sit by a lake or the ocean and paint at different times throughout the day, using several sketchbooks to capture these fleeting scenes. One sketch dries while the others are in play. Take a photo before you start, so that if the light changes you can finish the last wash at home.

Water can be opaque, transparent, choppy or smooth, but you use the same techniques for painting it. Follow these tips to make sure that all of your water paintings are vibrant and lively.

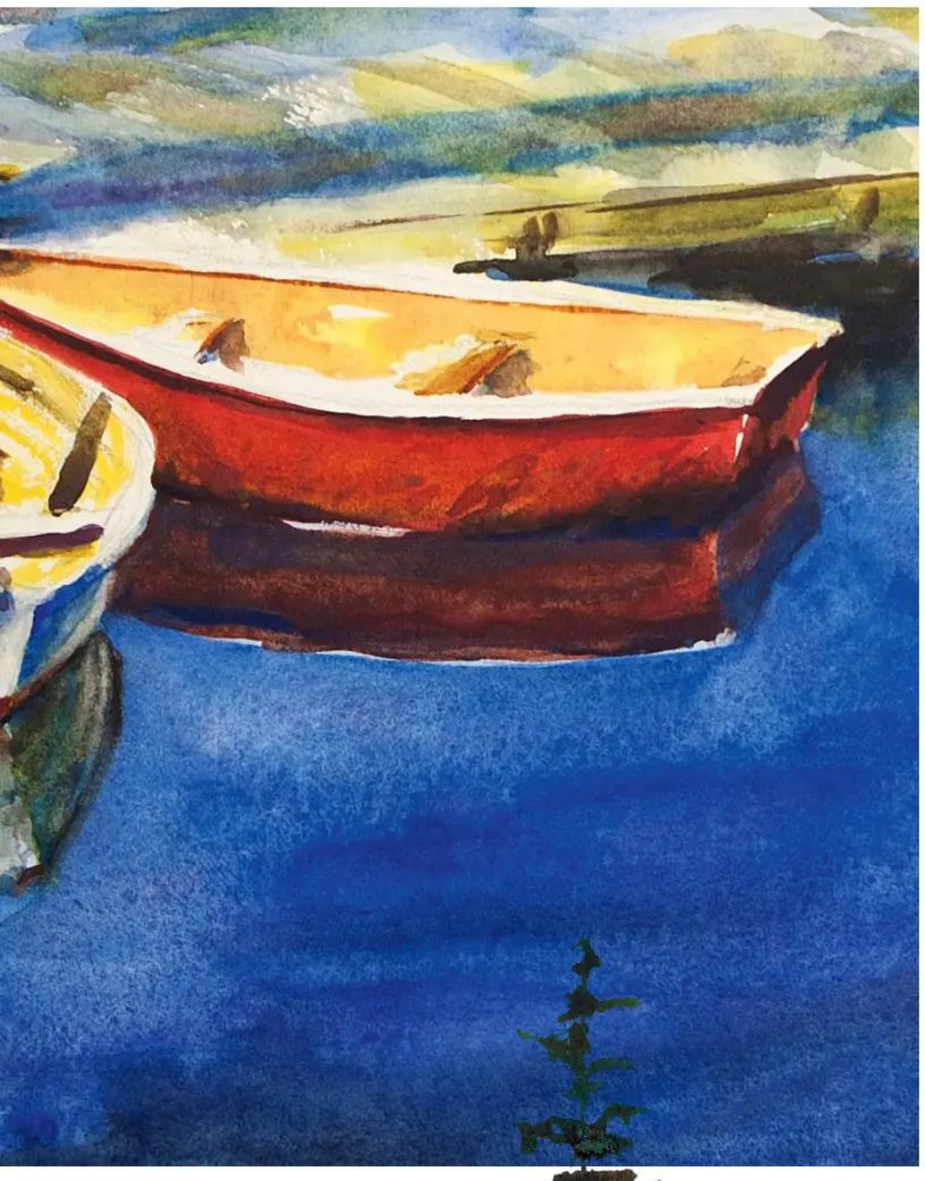


About **JENNIFER**
Northwest Georgia, USA
Watercolour artist and lifelong teacher Jennifer Branch travels the world with her husband and two sons, to find inspiration for her next painting.
paintingwatercolor.com

1 Paint still water first

Start practising when the water is calm and reflective, then later you'll be able to use the techniques you develop here to paint any other type of water, from raging surf to a rippling pond surface. All of the wave and wind action makes the surf seem far more complicated to paint, but the principles are the same as for still water. If you learn to paint reflections and subtle ripples on that calm pond, a crashing wave at the beach will be easy to paint. A wave is just a very big ripple, after all!









2 Reflect down

No matter what angle you're painting from, reflections always come directly towards you from the source. It's simple physics, but sometimes people may expect reflections to follow the same rules as shadows and perspective. To paint them, first pick a simple line in the reflected object such as a tree trunk or building façade. The reflection of that line will always be perpendicular to you, or the bottom of your page. This makes it easy to pull some pigment down from the reflected object into the reflection. All you need are a few dashes of movement on the next wash.

3 Notice colours

Water is only blue if it's reflecting blue! Look at the colours in the reflected trees, sky and objects and use these colours as your palette for any water that's not white foam. Even the hull of a boat or sky not seen in your painting might still be seen in a reflection. To connect the water and landscape, pull the colours from the reflected objects directly into the water reflection, then go back and sharpen the shoreline with a few strokes of strong darks.

4 Flatten distant water

Water appears flatter as it grows more distant, and horizontal lines can convey this flattening of the water's surface and the shortening of reflections. Use a few connecting horizontal dashes to show the distant water and reflections from the shore or objects on its surface. Streams and rivers also appear to flatten at a distance. Almost the same strokes you use for a reflected squiggle (as seen in the tip 2 picture) can look like an entire river as it snakes away.



5 Make reflections dull

Light rays scatter on the surface of the water, so a reflection is never a perfect mirror. Therefore your palette of reflecting colours should be duller than the objects being reflected. Many artists continue their first wash from the objects into the water, then finish by adding duller washes with more movement on the surface of the water. Most bright whites in water are sunlight reflections. Darker colours usually look lighter in reflections and lighter colours darker. Add a touch of complementary colour to your pigment to get very close to the colour you need.

6 Paint pointed ovals for waves

The shape of a wave is an oval, curved in the middle with sharp points on both ends. Use a pointed round brush to paint waves. A flat brush gives you great broad strokes, but it fails you on the points. Start by painting one point of the oval with the tip of the brush, add more pressure for a broader stroke in the middle, then finish with the tip of the brush. The ovals can be evenly distributed or skewed depending on the wind and your perspective.

7 Know your light

Your light direction in a scene will tell you how dark or light the water looks. Backlit trees will be dark, but their reflection will be lighter. Conversely, bright front lighting will give you a darker reflection on the water. The light direction will also tell you whether the top or the bottom of the wave should glow with lovely Caribbean translucency. If the light comes through a wave at the right angle, the wave acts as a lens, focusing bright spots of light on the bottom.





8 Paint in layers

Since crystal clear water, where we can see rocks on the bottom, is actually separate layers of water and rocks, the simplest way to paint these scenes is in layers. The key is to separate the different layers by letting them dry completely between washes. Don't be afraid to use strong dark colours in the first wash. Dry brushing gives you texture that shows up under the water. Paint the water in one bold wash, making wave-shaped strokes. Let your brush dance. You can use gouache for reflected sky or preserve the white paper with masking, wax or precise strokes (see next step).



9 Mix it up

Use a variety of techniques for capturing textured whites. I always like to leave more white paper than I use, as paper is the most sparkling white you have in your toolkit. It's easy to paint over whites, but you can never get the white paper back. However, don't limit yourself to just one shade of white. Permanent wax crayon preserves whites, while white or tinted gouache in a pale colour can give you highlights on the water surface. Lifting pigment softens edges. Wait until your painting is dry, then use a damp rag to pull out pigment.

10 Adjust texture

Hot press paper gives you rich colours and a smooth texture, which is ideal for painting water on a foggy day with no sparks of white reflection. You can use a lot of wet on wet brush strokes for blurred edges. Rough press paper gives you dull colours with reflected sparkles and texture, perfect for the seashore with white reflections, surf and rocks. Cold press paper falls between hot press and rough press, giving you a little texture and brighter colours, which is great for recreating a peaceful pond scene with vibrant flowers reflecting.



Workshop



Winter farm

Using his unique '5 Cs of Painting', **Robert Newcombe** demonstrates how to paint a snow scene in watercolour from a sketch





About ROBERT

Ravenstone, UK

Robert Newcombe has been painting in watercolour for over 30 years. On 3 June 2012 Robert was selected by the BBC as one of 20 artists to paint the Diamond Jubilee Thames Pageant from the Millennium Bridge in London.
www.robertnewcombeartist.com



Materials

- Winsor and Newton (Professional Water Colour range): Burnt Sienna, Burnt Umber, Cobalt Blue, Ultramarine Blue, Brown Madder, Light Red, Indian Red, Cadmium Red, Permanent Magenta or Alizarin Crimson and Winsor Blue (green shade)
- Brushes – a one inch Hake brush for the broad washes and Escoda Perla (8 and 12) for the architectural details and a rigger brush for the trees
- Paper – Whatman Not 140lb (300gsm), size one-quarter Imperial (11 x 15 inches) – Whatman is whiter than some watercolour paper and is ideal for snow scenes
- 2B pencil
- Putty rubber

was in the English Lake District in the early 1980s just after I had taken up watercolour painting as a hobby. It was late November and there had been a fresh fall of snow. Taking the road towards Derwent Water I came across this magnificent view of Skelgill Farm; it was too cold to paint but I did a ten-minute sketch of the scene shown in step 1 with a felt-tip pen, using a soft pencil to shade in the reddish-grey stone walls of the farmhouse and assortment of barns. I added some colour notes. I didn't realise until many years later that Skelgill Farm is mentioned in Beatrix Potter's The Tale of Mrs Tiggy-Winkle, with a drawing of part of the farm by the author as an illustration.

I will now use my '5 Cs of Painting' to show you how I develop a unique interpretation of this subject.

1 The sketch

The concept (the first C) is a Lake District farm under snow. The subject is predominantly cool with a brilliant winter sun coming from the front-left, which lights up the front of the farmhouse and barns creating strong shadows.



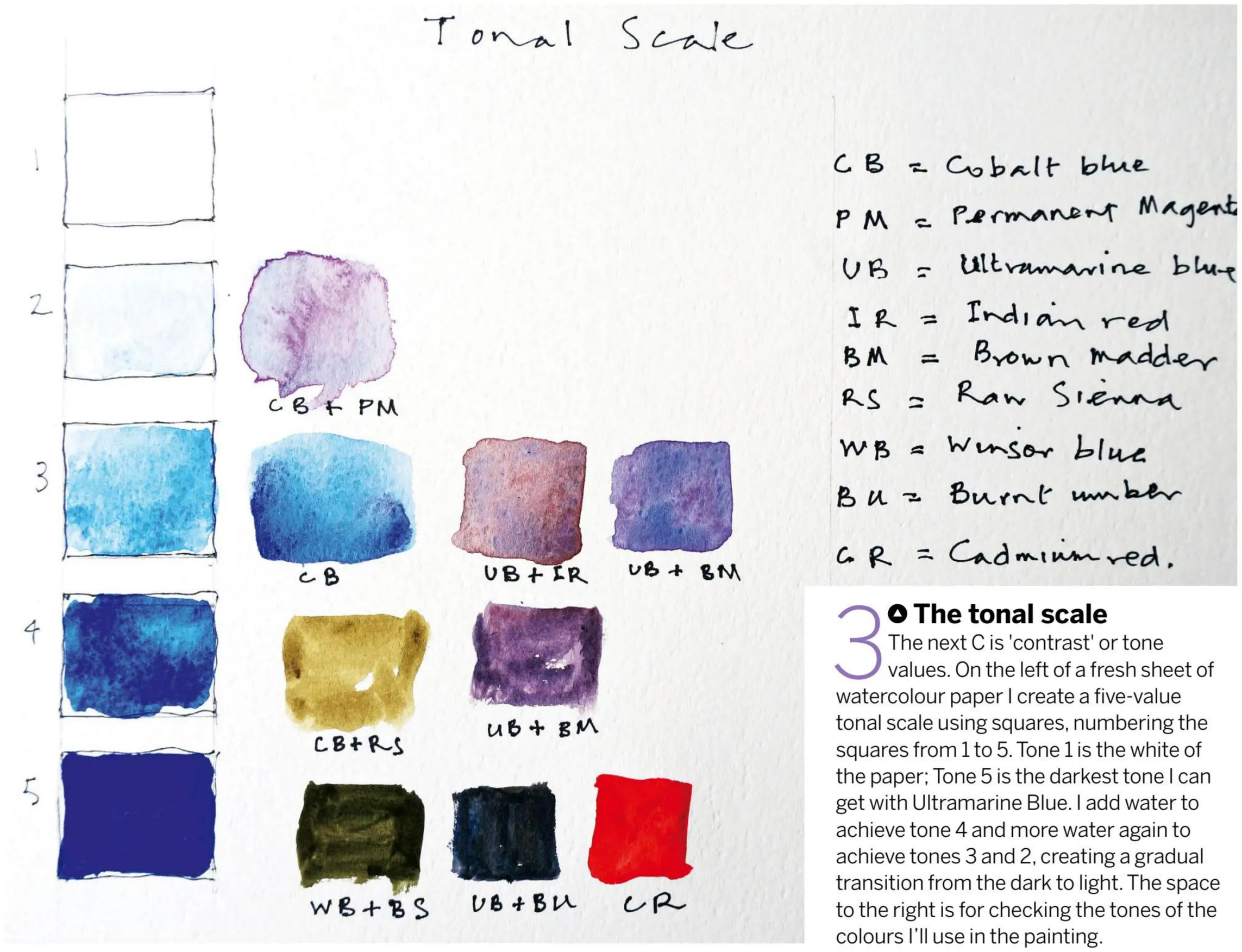
Snow paint

Snow paintings are a gift for watercolourists as the white of the paper represents the snow (no white paint) but the critical skill is to preserve the white paper.

2 The pencil drawing

Composition is the next C and refers to the design of the painting. I felt it was a perfect composition. The snow-covered roof of the farmhouse contrasts with the dark yew tree at the centre of interest, there are some lovely autumn/winter trees and the sloping ground adds to the character of the subject. The mountain (Catbells), which gives distance and depth, will be put in directly with the brush. I raise the horizon in the drawing to give more prominence to the foreground snow.



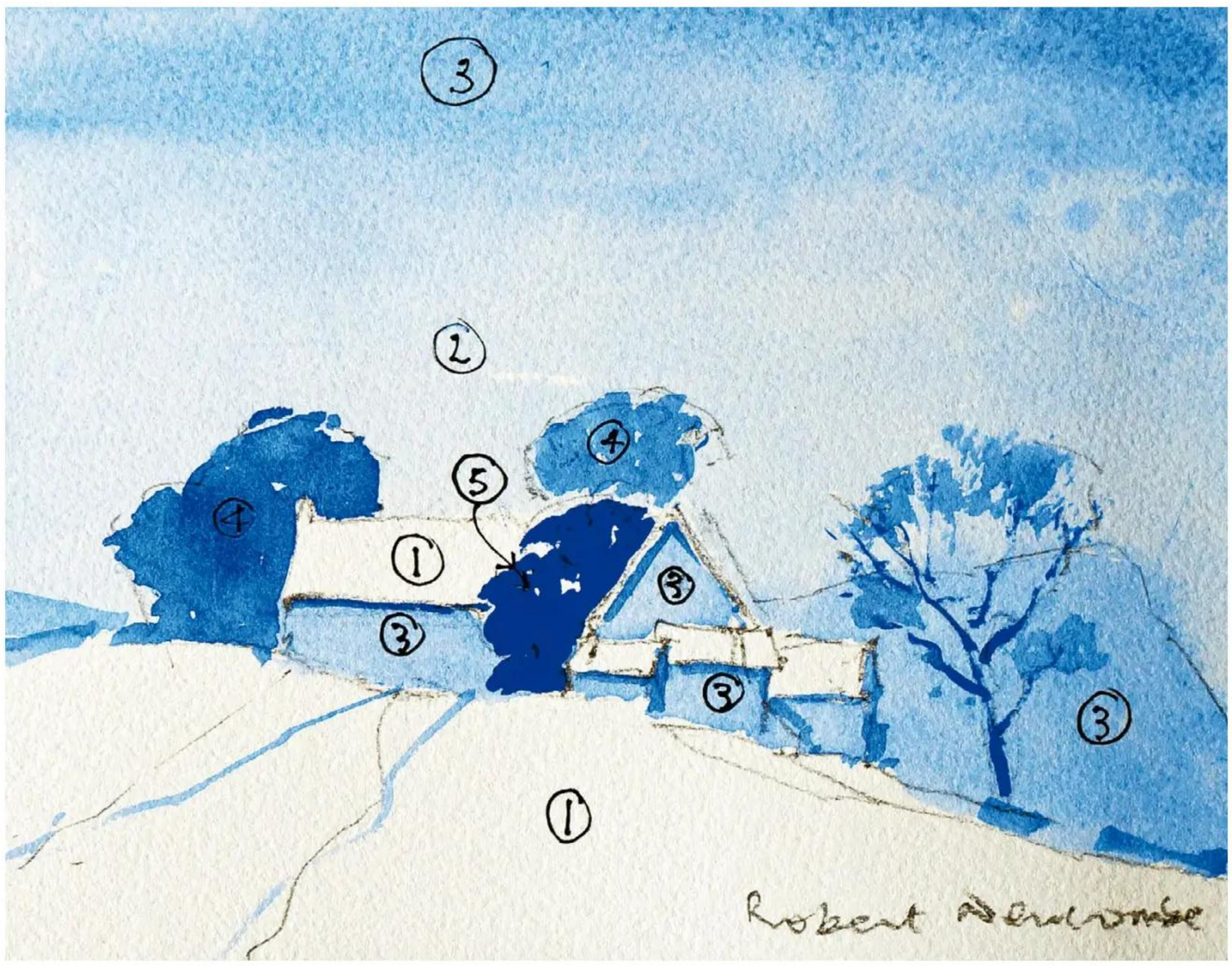


3 The tonal scale

The next C is 'contrast' or tone values. On the left of a fresh sheet of watercolour paper I create a five-value tonal scale using squares, numbering the squares from 1 to 5. Tone 1 is the white of the paper; Tone 5 is the darkest tone I can get with Ultramarine Blue. I add water to achieve tone 4 and more water again to achieve tones 3 and 2, creating a gradual transition from the dark to light. The space to the right is for checking the tones of the colours I'll use in the painting.

4 The tonal plan

Referring to my five-value tonal scale and using Ultramarine Blue again I produce a small tonal plan for the painting to enable me to see colours as tones. The white of the paper is the lightest tone (Tone 1 – the snow) with almost neat ultramarine blue for the darkest tone (Tone 5 – the yew tree) and the intermediate tones shown as per numbers on the tonal plan. As we paint from light to dark in watercolour this tonal plan will also give me my painting sequence.





5 Paint the sky (tones 2 and 3)

I turn the paper upside down to paint the sky to prevent dribbles running down the white paper representing the snow. After checking my colours on my tonal scale sheet I use my Hake brush to paint a tone 2 purple wash (Ultramarine Blue and Permanent Magenta) starting at the snow-covered roof of the farmhouse and barns and taking the wash down to ground level elsewhere, then gradually changing this to a Tone 3 wash of Cobalt Blue at the zenith of the sky. The paper cockles slightly at this stage but will dry flat.

6 Paint buildings (tone 3)

Following my tonal painting sequence I paint the stone walls of the farmhouse and barns with a tone 3 mix of Ultramarine Blue and a little Indian Red to achieve the warm colour of Cumbrian stone. I use my Escoda Perla 12 brush having checked the mix on my tonal scale.



5 Cs of Painting

I developed my 5 Cs of Painting (Concept, Composition, Contrast, Colour, Completion) to provide a logical sequence of steps in the painting process (see my book Robert Newcombe's *5 Cs of Painting*).



7 7 Paint the mountain (tone 3)

The simple mountain shape is now painted in directly with the same brush with a mix of Ultramarine Blue plus a little Permanent Magenta to give a purplish tinge. I check the tone against my tonal scale. It may look too dark at this stage but watercolour dries lighter and I know the tone 5 oak tree I'll be adding later will push it back into the distance of the scene.

8 The background trees (tone 4)

The tone 4 winter trees to the left of the farmhouse still had some warm autumn colours so are painted a cool green-grey with Burnt Sienna dropped in at the base. The trees behind yew tree and the big barn are painted with the same cool green-grey wash. While the washes are still damp I paint in the trunks and branches with a dark brown mix of Ultramarine Blue and Burnt Sienna, then scrape out some lighter tree trunks with my pen knife.



9 The shadow wash (tone 4)

Switching to my Escoda Perla 8 brush, I use a transparent mix of Ultramarine Blue and Brown Madder to paint the shadows on the buildings. The sun is coming from the front-left so there will be shadows under the eaves of the farmhouse and barns where the roofs overhang and the barns will cast some attractive raking shadows on other barns.

Importance of contrast

I had a major painting breakthrough when I realised the importance of tone values (Contrast) in creating paintings with impact. I spent three months painting only monochrome paintings using different dark colours that enabled me to capture a full tonal range, e.g. ultramarine blue, burnt sienna, light red, indigo etc. (see steps 3 and 4) after which I was able to see colour in terms of tone. Try it.

10 The yew tree and the oak tree (tone 5)

Next the darkest tones in the picture using tone 5 mixes. The dark green yew tree is painted with Winsor Blue (green shade) and Burnt Sienna to create the impact of the darkest dark against the lightest light at the centre of interest. The oak tree in front of the mountain is a mix of Ultramarine Blue and Burnt Umber painted with my rigger brush. I then establish the outline of the tree with quick downward strokes of diluted Burnt Umber.



11 Make the final touches (tone 5)

I'm nearing the Completion stage of the painting where there is a danger of adding too much. Using the same mix as for the oak tree I paint the fence leading the eye to the centre of interest together with its attendant shadows, then the Land Rover and the figure talking to the driver. The last touch is to paint the front door of the farmhouse in bold Cadmium Red to attract the viewer's eye to the centre of interest.

12 The finished painting

At this point I refer back to my concept, Lake District farm under snow. Have I achieved my concept? I feel like turning up my coat collar so I think I have and the painting is finished.





The magic of trees in autumn

Tony Hogan shows how to capture the beauty of autumnal colour





About TONY

Cornwall, UK

A professional artist and tutor, Tony runs art holiday courses in the UK. He trained at Bradford Regional College of Art in the early 1960s and then had a successful career in commercial art before returning to full-time painting and tutoring in the mid-1970s.

www.hoganart.co.uk

Materials

- Painted on Ampersand 'Artist Panel' primed canvas texture, 45.7 x 61cm wide. The Ampersand board was selected for its archival quality alongside its ability to retain purer colour with less shrinkage of the paint as it dries.
- Acrylic initial background wash and first tree positions with Atelier Interactive Acrylics.
- Main painting with Daniel Smith fine oil paints, as well as a couple of Old Holland and Micheal Harding oils. Daniel Smith oils have a superb buttery consistency and retention of glow through the painting process and after.
- Rosemary & Co Ivory range long flat brushes.

am very lucky; from attending art college at a very young age, most of my life has been in the art world – both as a commercial artist for international companies and later revelling in the freedom of living as a painter of fine art works alongside tutoring.



Whether it's tutoring degree students or guiding the hundreds of participants of all abilities on art holiday courses, I have been blessed to pass my vast knowledge of media, materials and techniques on to others.

A favourite quotes of mine is "Learn your techniques intuitively and let inspiration be your guide" – for without a deep understanding of techniques and media, painting is like wallowing in mud... And muddy, confused paintings are often the result!

One of the most frequent questions I'm asked is what to paint. I paint anything and everything – for me it's simple! To be an artist is about continually exploring all possibilities. Whatever captures your eye, you are the only one to view it in that way, and only you can show that vision to the world.

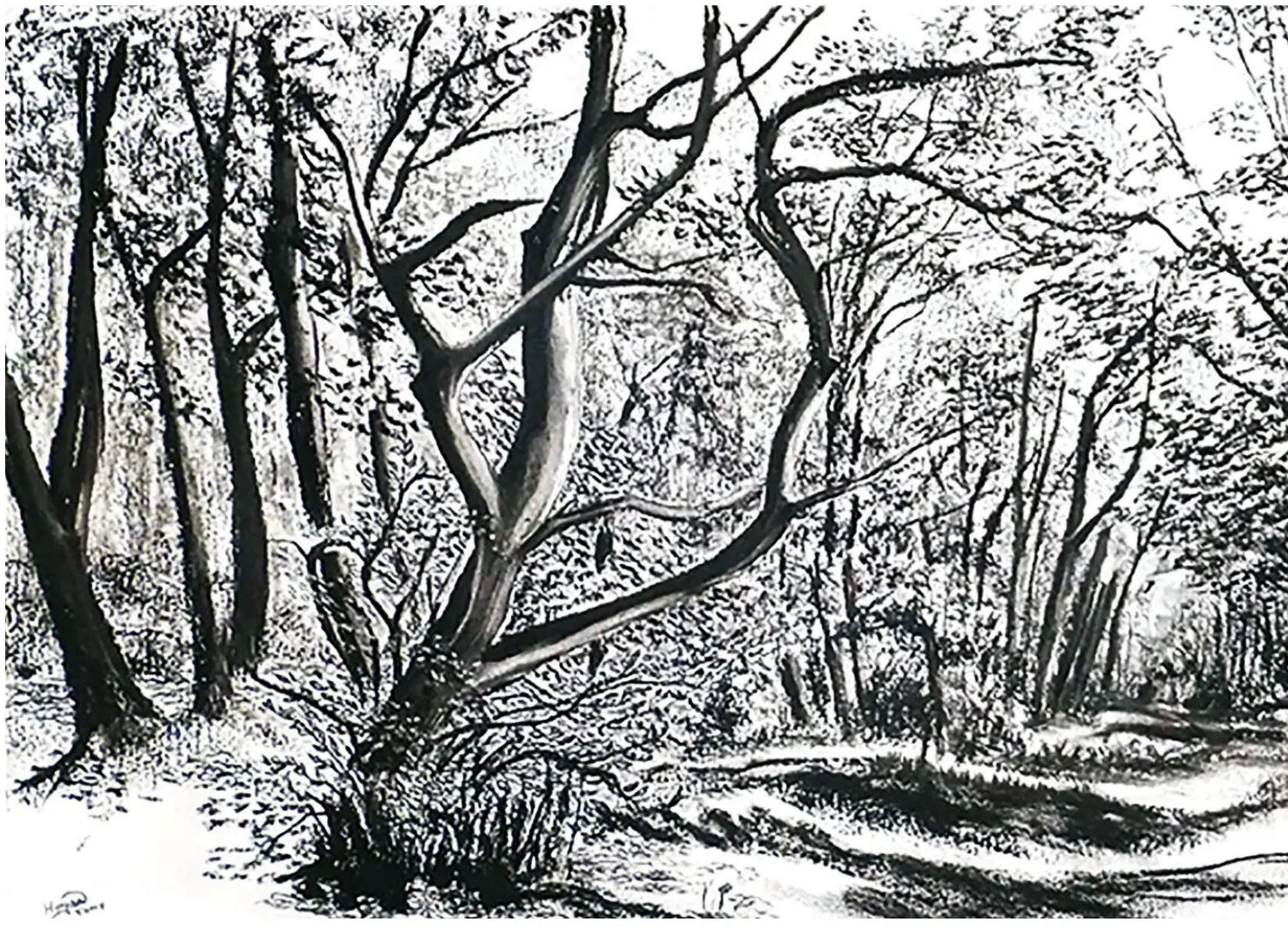
Painting nature is my biggest love – the trees in autumn are particularly stunning, and as I will show here, have a magic that stimulates the artistic flow.



"You are the only one to view it that way, and only you can show that vision"

1 Sketch it out

Working from a previously completed large en-plein-air charcoal drawing I did a few years ago over several wonderful autumn days, I consider the overall composition and tonality on how to develop this into a major oil painting. Although there was no colour reference at the time, my vivid memory of the days I spent working on this are still strong.



Quality

Your painting time is precious. Do not waste it by cutting corners on poor quality paints. Working with the best materials you can afford produces a professional result not attainable with lesser quality materials no matter how talented an artist you are.

2 Balance the background colour

To speed up the painting process I use acrylic paints with a limited palette of Cerulean Blue, Tinting White, Yellow Ochre and Dioxin Purple in a very diluted mix, applying the colours in a loose manner. Having established the tonal values and colours, I then take a rag and rub whilst wet to hide any significant brush marks.





3 Consider the composition of the main tree trunks

Despite having a detailed charcoal drawing, I still need to consider which parts of this original composition will work best as a full colour painting. Still using my diluted acrylics, I mix a range of greys, allowing odd bits of other colours onto the brush as I randomly pick colour off the palette to paint the main tree shapes.

4 Start with the oil paints

Selecting Daniel Smith's Mixed White and Cerulean Blue Chrome, I block in the sky using a loose handling style, working around the previously located trees. I don't worry too much if I go over one or two branches. Note how the blue is deeper near the top of the piece, getting lighter towards the horizon to create visual distance.

The act of creation

To be an artist is to chase the ever-elusive goal of a perfect creation. Some years ago before my mother passed away I was having doubts and asked her for advice on whether to give up or not. Her answer? "Tony, just *paint*"! It's not about instant or even eventual recognition, but *the act of creation itself* and the satisfaction this will bring to your own being.





5 Block in first marks

Using my oils diluted with white spirit for a thin mix (which allows thicker, fatter use of the oils over these areas later), I now make the first tentative loose marks, trying to find the colours that will work. I mix together White, Ultramarine Violet, Indanthrone Blue, Quinacrodine Purple, Green Gold, Hookers Green and Raw Umber at this stage in the painting.

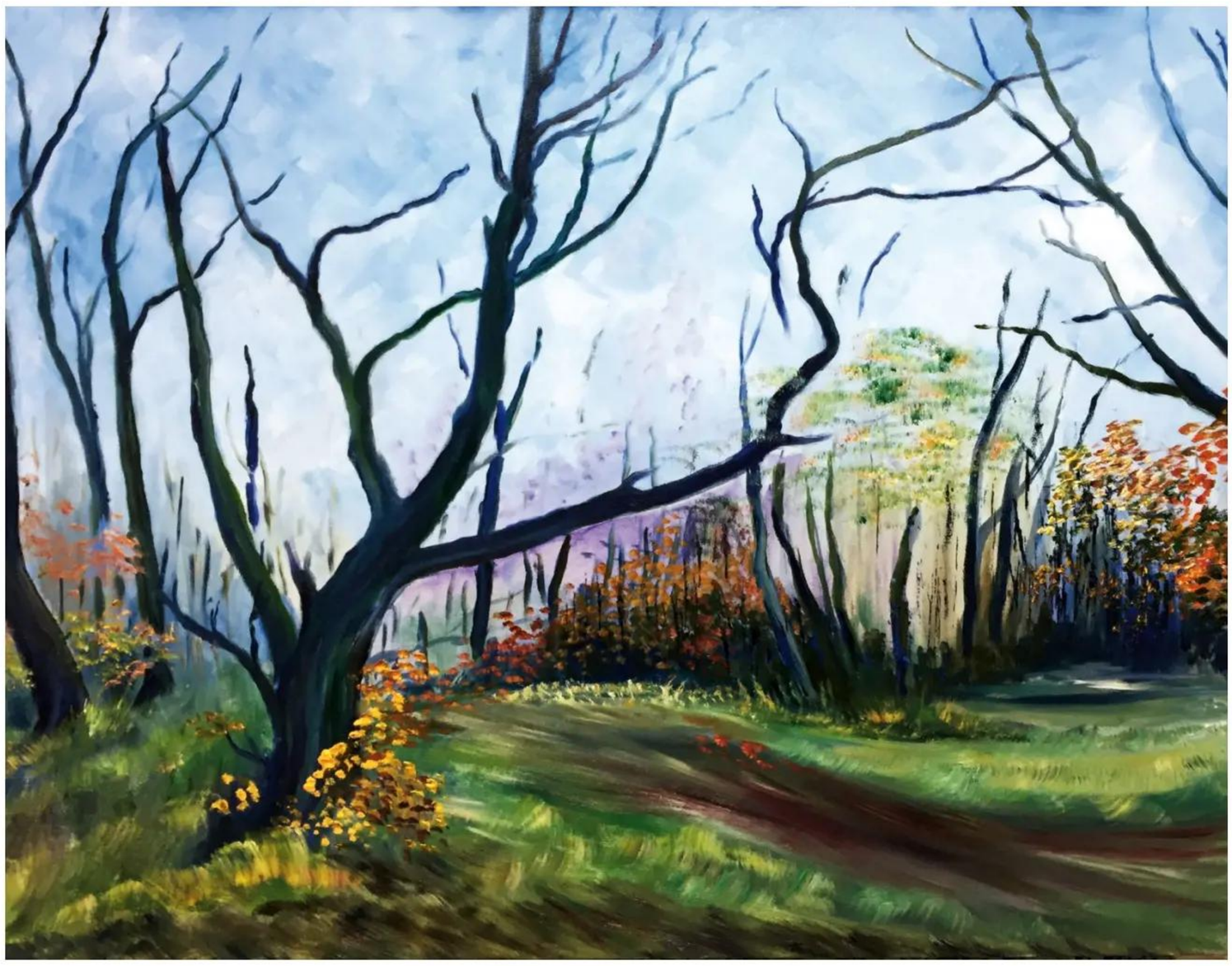
6 Start on the tree trunks

Now using the oils without dilution, I start the first painting of the main tree structures with this 'fatter' paint. Sticking to the same colours, I search for the darker tones, working with up to three colours on my brush at a time like Hookers Green, Quinacridone Purple and Indanthrone Blue. Occasionally I will use other colours combinations, pushing colour into colour.



7 Capture the autumnal colours

Adding Indian Yellow, Alizarine Crimson, Red Gold, Cadmium Yellow Medium to my palette, I start to introduce the positioning of the visually strongest autumn leaves,considering the size and shape of these and painting with the corner of my long, flat brush. Further back more leaves in autumn colours are started, followed by the green blue of the background foliage.



8 Add foliage

With a palette now fixed I am able to really slowly paint additional autumn leaves. At this stage I focus on constructing and balancing size, colours and tones across the lower areas of the painting. I also add more colour to the foreground, keeping the brush strokes
loose as counterchange to the detailed painting of the leaves.



9 Build the painting

By now I have an understanding of where I am going and what I want to achieve. This allows me to concentrate on the balance of the composition, developing with form, shape and colour the most visual foliage around the main tree trunk. In the meantime, I add further foliage in smaller and less defined tones further back.

10 Floating leaves

Looking up, it is impossible to see every leaf and how it is attached to the branch. I term these 'floating leaves'. They appear to be attached to nothing and vary in size and tonality. The ones nearest appear larger with deeper tonality, whilst distant ones are smaller with lighter tonality.



Prepare

Thinking time is the most important aspects before starting a work of art. Rushing into painting without careful consideration of the composition, technique, and materials only leads to disappointment.



11 Build density of your foliage

Using a size 8 round brush heavily loaded with one or more colours at a time, I paint leaf on top of leaf in a variety of the autumn colours. Adding Quinacridone Gold to the palette, I start with distant leaf marks and work forward to strong-coloured larger leaf marks. Using a mixed stand oil/white spirit medium helps the adhesion of wet-in-wet painting at this time.

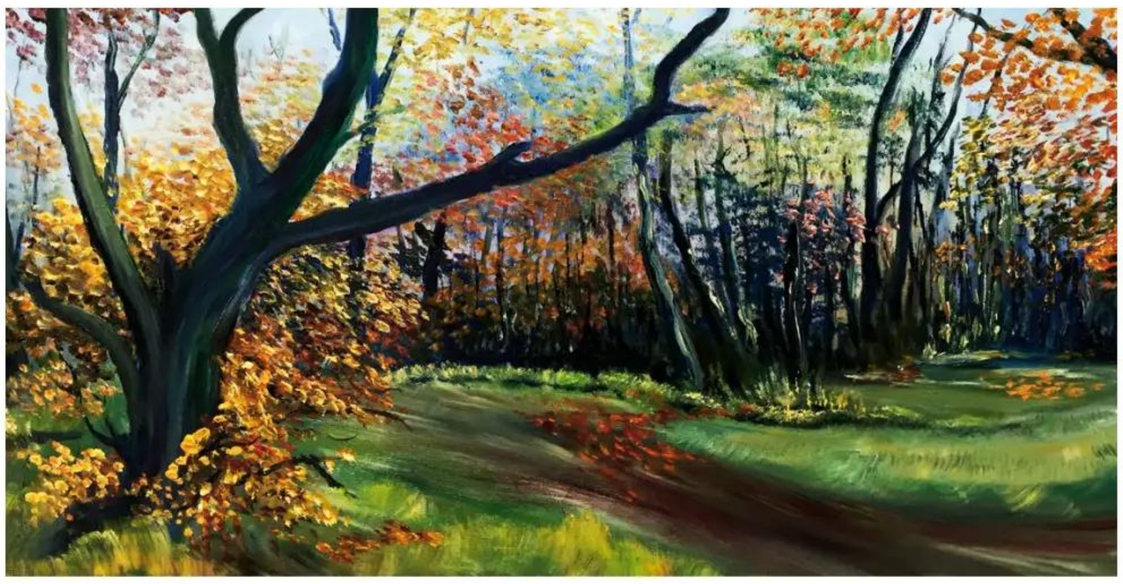
12 More leaves and balances

Starting with the first foliage on the left the size, colour and tones are considered first and foremost. Additional painting of the foreground now comes into play with a deepening of tones and the further introduction of more fallen leaves, which are placed in such a way as to lead the eye through the painting.

13 Approaching the end

With a lot more foliage on the right side to paint, I carefully consider their tonal strength so as not to take the eye away from the main tree on the left, but still maintain the overall density of woodland foliage. I also now work all over and around the painting, balancing colours, form and tones.





"I take the time to sit back and really consider how the work presents"

14 Final detailing

At this final stage I take the time to sit back and really consider how the work presents. Is there anything I can add or take away to improve the piece? After a good think I lighten some of the foreground leaves around the tree base and on the right side higher up, laying still more colour wet onto wet.





Paint a dazzling landscape

Ibolya Taligas shows you her way of painting a vibrant autumn landscape full of engaging textures and zesty colours



About IBOLYA

London, UK

Ibolya is a Hungarian watercolorist living in London. Her inspiration comes from observing nature. Her favourite pastime is sketching during her travels and encourages others to paint outdoors. She organises painting holidays in less explored parts of Europe.

www.ibolyataligas.com

Materials

- Paints:

Quinacridone gold - Winsor & Newton Professional Watercolour
Permanent magenta - Winsor & Newton Professional Watercolour
Winsor blue (green shade) - Winsor & Newton Professional Watercolour
Burnt sienna - Winsor & Newton Professional Watercolour
Vermilion - Mijello Artists' Watercolour

- Brushes:

Pro Arte Series 50 extra large, squirrel hair wash brush
Da Vinci Series 5530 Cosmotop-Mix, size 12 round brush
SAA Kolinsky Sable brush, Rigger size 4
Pro Arte Series 40, Pure Sable round brush, size 2

- Paper:

Bockingford Watercolour block, NOT, 16 in x 12 in

- Other materials:

Rock salt
Plastic palette knife
Spray bottle

- Ibolya finds the medium rough paper perfect for creating textures as well as for applying washes with a large brush . She uses mostly transparent colours to achieve vibrancy.

n this workshop I encourage you to be more daring with watercolours. This medium allows us to create some wonderful effects that may not be possible with other mediums, so let's exploit this quality! I use vibrant, transparent colours, which enables me to paint over previous layers and still keep my work bright and clean. There are also endless ways to create textures which can be seen a lot in my work. I select a few methods to show you how to make interesting marks with little effort.

For this I use everyday tools, such as salt, a palette knife and a spray bottle. I hope I can make watercolour painting a lot of fun for all! In the next steps I guide you through the process of creating a painting of a dazzling autumn landscape from the fascinating Tisza Lake in Hungary.



1 Warm up

I do a basic drawing, marking out the horizon and the shape of the trees, then choose my colours: Winsor Blue (Green Shade), Permanent Magenta, Quinacridone Gold, Burnt Sienna and Vermilion. On a scrap piece of paper I do a quick colour sketch, kind of a mood board. A great warm-up exercise before getting started.

Plan it

Have a plan before you get started with your painting but don't be afraid of making changes along the way. I once turned a badly painted figure into a tree! It worked fine.



2 First wash

I brush a very diluted magenta, gold and blue across the dry paper with my large brush. I tilt my board slightly to let the paint flow downwards to create a smooth, soft layer. I leave out white shapes for the flowers. I add some ripples on the wet paper, using my round brush and a thick mix of magenta and blue.



Inspiration

When I lack inspiration, I take a day off to visit the seaside or countryside. Then I can't wait to get back, re-energized, full of ideas.



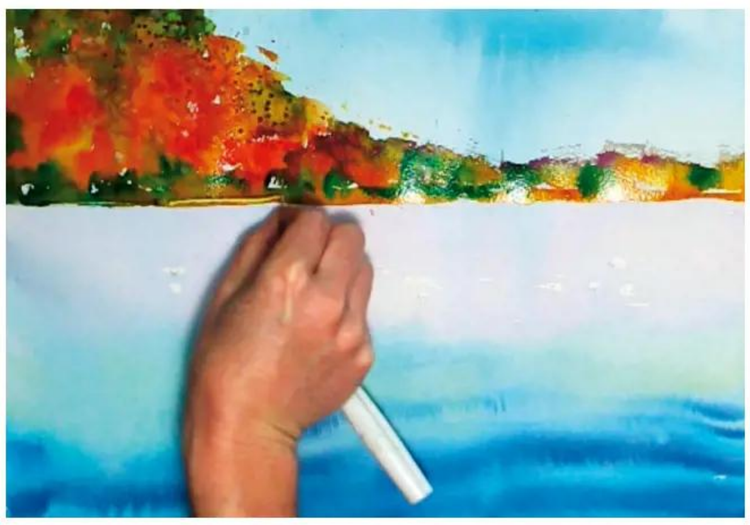
3 Distant trees

I now fill the shape of the trees by placing a thicker layer of clean colours side by side. I'm using the side of my round brush. This also lets me leave out gaps in the trees and gives the impression of foliage rather than a block of colour. I continue across the page varying my colours.



4 Have fun!

Sprinkle some rock salt onto the freshly painted surface. I also spatter paint with my brush. After spraying over my paper gently I can see the speckled effect already. I wait for my paper to dry completely before removing the salt. Once I do, I have a convincing foliage that took such little effort.



5 More fun

I realise that I should indicate the grassy area on the water's edge in front of the trees. So I scrape out some lines and shapes using the side of my plastic palette knife. It seems effective. It's best to use this technique when the shimmer has gone from the paper, or your marks you make could disappear.



"After spraying over my paper gently I can see the speckled effect already"

6 Adding darks

I mix a green first to manipulate the dark blobs with my brush. I also spray over them gently to make them spread.

7 Radiant reflections

I use the same bright colours to paint in the reflections that I used for the trees. I start filling in the whole area I marked out. I'm using vertical brush strokes, adding bright colours first, then greens, leaving out the waterlily field in the middle for now. At the bottom I brush horizontal lines to correspond with the ripples.





8 Dark reflections

While still wet, I drop some darks into the reflections, being careful to keep my colours clean. What's important to know about reflections is that darks reflecting in water will appear lighter and light things will appear darker. So I use a lesser intensity of darks in the reflections.

9 Simplify things!

I now paint horizontal lines with my rigger brush inside the lily pad, avoiding the white shapes I left out. I start with gold, dropping into this some red then green. I paint exactly what I see in the photo. At this scale I can only see bits of colours.



An escape

I realised early in my life that art is what I wanted to do, even though it took me decades to recognise my own skills. Painting and drawing has been my biggest strength. Although frustrating at times, it's like a best friend that picks me up when I fall down.



10 Darker or lighter?

Some parts of the lily leaves appear darker than the water, so I fill the gaps that I left out with a wash of purple grey colour. I use my round brush for this job as I can quickly and easily fill those gaps with its pointy tip.

11 Create contrast!

I now paint in some dark, broken lines for shadows, using a rigger brush and applying little pressure. I draw random horizontal lines. To create high contrast I add these darks around the white flowers. They become a lot more defined and noticeable now. However, my painting seems a bit lifeless still.

12 Foreground detail

I decide to paint in some reed to indicate that I'm viewing this vista from the edge of the lake rather than from a boat. I use a thick dark mix as before. I press my rigger brush firmly onto the paper and lift it away from it as I get to the tip of the reed to make it thinner at the tip.





13 Background detail

I use the same thick mix of paint as before, but this time with a much smaller, size 2, detail brush. This gives me a lot more control when I paint flying birds. These are simple, curved, broken lines resembling birds flying. It's really fun to practise these on a separate paper. All of a sudden my painting comes to life!



14 **Evaluation**

This painting looks so much more alive now. I still think I could add some birds in the water to balance out my composition as there is this large empty space in the foreground.



15 **Final composition**

With my small detail brush I add two swimming coots in the foreground. Now the place appears full of life! It also improves the composition. Memories of the peaceful Tisza Lake are flooding back.



Express your abstract scenes with texture

David Body describes how he paints colourful, expressive landscapes with layered acrylics and emulsion on canvas

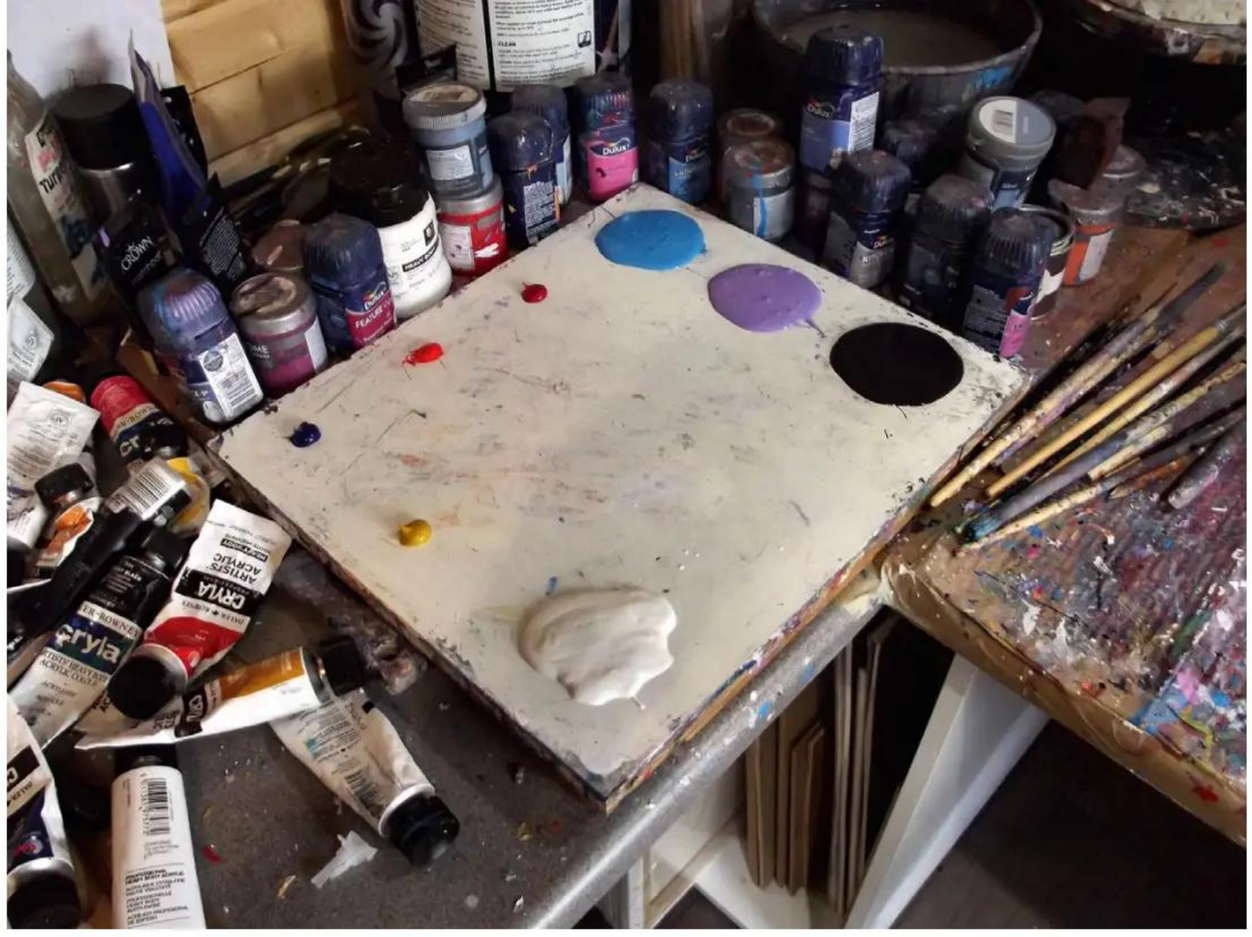


About **DAVID**

Inverness, Scotland

David trained as an illustrator, but worked as a potter for 30 years. He now concentrates solely on painting, with the Highland landscape being his main source of inspiration

www.davidbody.co.uk



When I create my paintings, they're all about colour, composition and memory of a place, rather than a faithful representation of somewhere. I like to have fun and use paint in a decorative way. When painting scenes like the one in this workshop, I tend to use houses for a compositional affect rather than reality, and I always paint places I know well – working this way gives me the freedom to be flexible. I find if I work from drawings or photos of places I get bogged down with the detail and realism.

I tend to reduce the landscape to a pattern of flat coloured blocks, so I can then play around with the composition, size and tone in an almost abstract way. Tone is also used to flatten out the painting by putting the darkest colours furthest away, and placing the lighter ones in the foreground. This flattens out the houses, removing perspective and making them all the same size. The opposite to what would be seen in real life!

I paint with heavy body acrylics and emulsion paints, which I get mixed for me as the colours are not readily available in the standard range. I start by laying out a basic colour palette of white, Yellow Ochre, Phthalo Blue (red hue), Cadmium Red, Alizarin Crimson, a mixed cyan, a mixed mauve emulsion paint (satin finish) and black. Sometimes I add Cadmium Yellow Deep and Chrome Green, too. I also use tester paint pots as they give ready-mixed clean colours, ideal for the underpainting.

The canvases I use are ready made and pre-primed and I give these a coat of flame-red matt emulsion for the background to give the painting a good colour key overall. This also means you can leave accidental areas showing through the painting to good effect.

Materials

David used **Daler-Rowney Cryla Artists' Acrylic paints**, **Homebase tester paint pots** and **Berger satin emulsion paints**. He paints with **hog brushes** for drawing and underpainting, and uses **fine liners** for the detail. The canvas was a 76x51cm **Winsor & Newton primed canvas**. The paintings are finished with **Golden – MSA Varnish (Satin)**.

WATCH THE VIDEO
http://bit.ly/davidbody





1 The first drawing

After the background has dried, it's time to paint the initial drawing. I do this using black paint, and use a fairly worn and pointed hog brush to lay out the outlines and composition. I also include some details, such as doors and windows on the houses.

2 The underpainting

I now add in the colour, as well as finalise the composition. I use a round hog brush and paint quickly. For the houses and finer details, I use smaller synthetic brushes. The same colours are used in different places over the canvas to give unity and balance.





"Leave areas of canvas showing through the painting to good effect"

Splat!

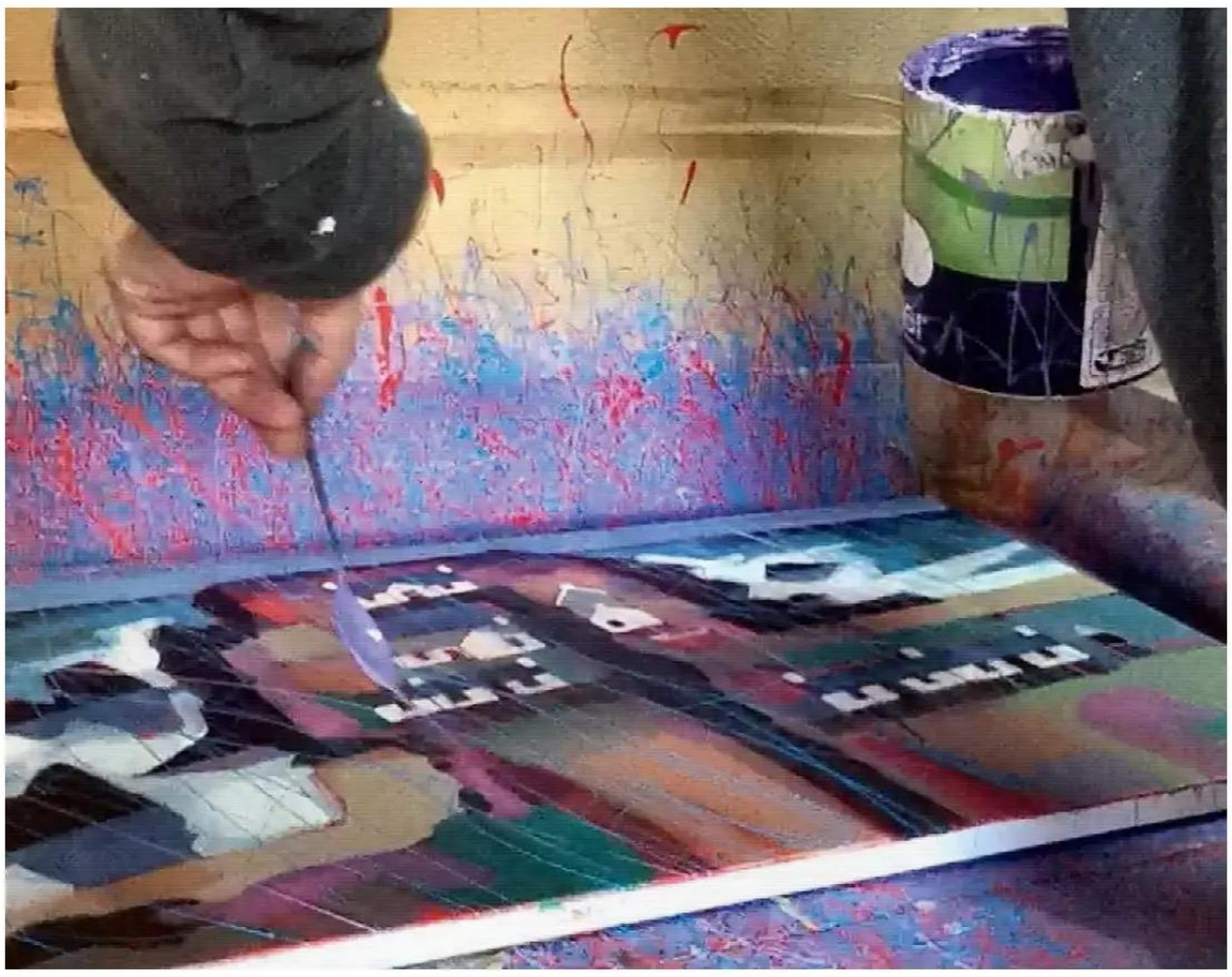
Use cardboard boxes to build a splash booth. It will help keep all the mess in one place (rather than all over you!)

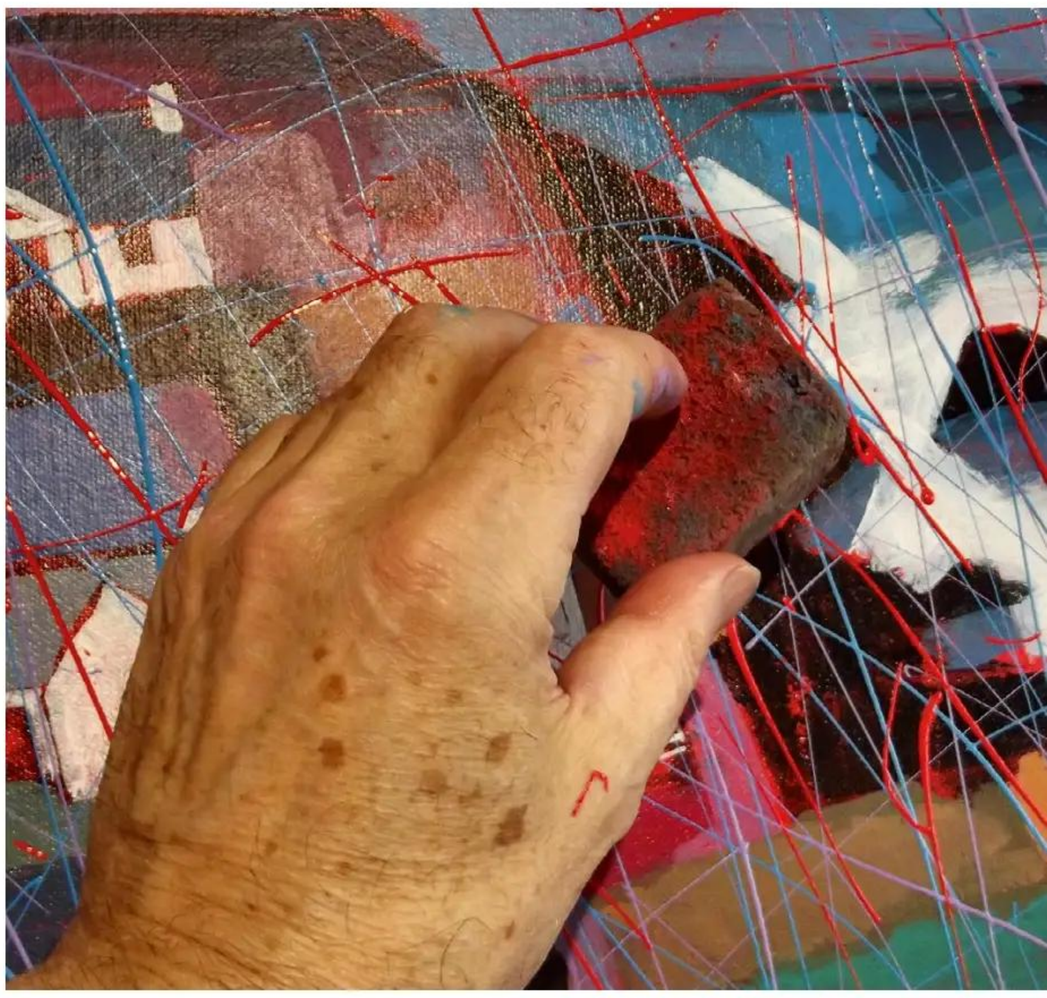
3 Texturing

Through pottery I've developed skills in working with texture and fluid glazes... techniques that I have also used in my painting. My trailing started off as pure texture using a grey paint on its own and was discovered by accident. I now use three main colours... cyan, mauve and red. I use a teaspoon to trail these paints.

4 Trail, flick and blot

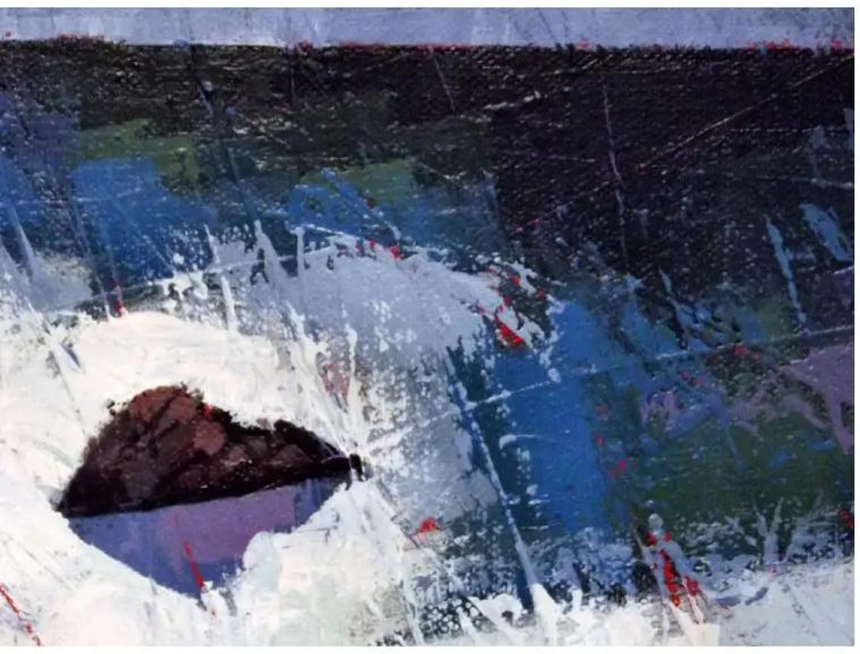
The cyan and mauve colours are satin Berger paints I get mixed because they trail easily. However, the red is stiffer and more flicked about rather than trailed. It's a random process and any larger blobs are sponged off, as these would become too dominant. I work from top to bottom mostly, but I will use newspaper to mask off areas (such as the sky), and repeat the process over that area in a different direction.





5 Work over the texture

I now do a second layer of painting – mostly with a palette knife where possible – using heavy body acrylics by themselves or with a mix of emulsion. The paint can be applied, then scraped back to reveal the textures underneath. Accidental areas of background colour are left showing through. The small unifying flashes of red give the painting warmth. I do not paint up to the edges.





6 Layering colours

I now build up layers of paint, skimming them over one another to highlight the texture rather than making brush or palette knife marks. This offers a random texture that adds movement to the surface. To me, this suggests elements such as moving water, grass or wind and rain moving over the landscape. I am an impatient painter, so I use a hairdryer to speed up the drying process.

7 From dark to light

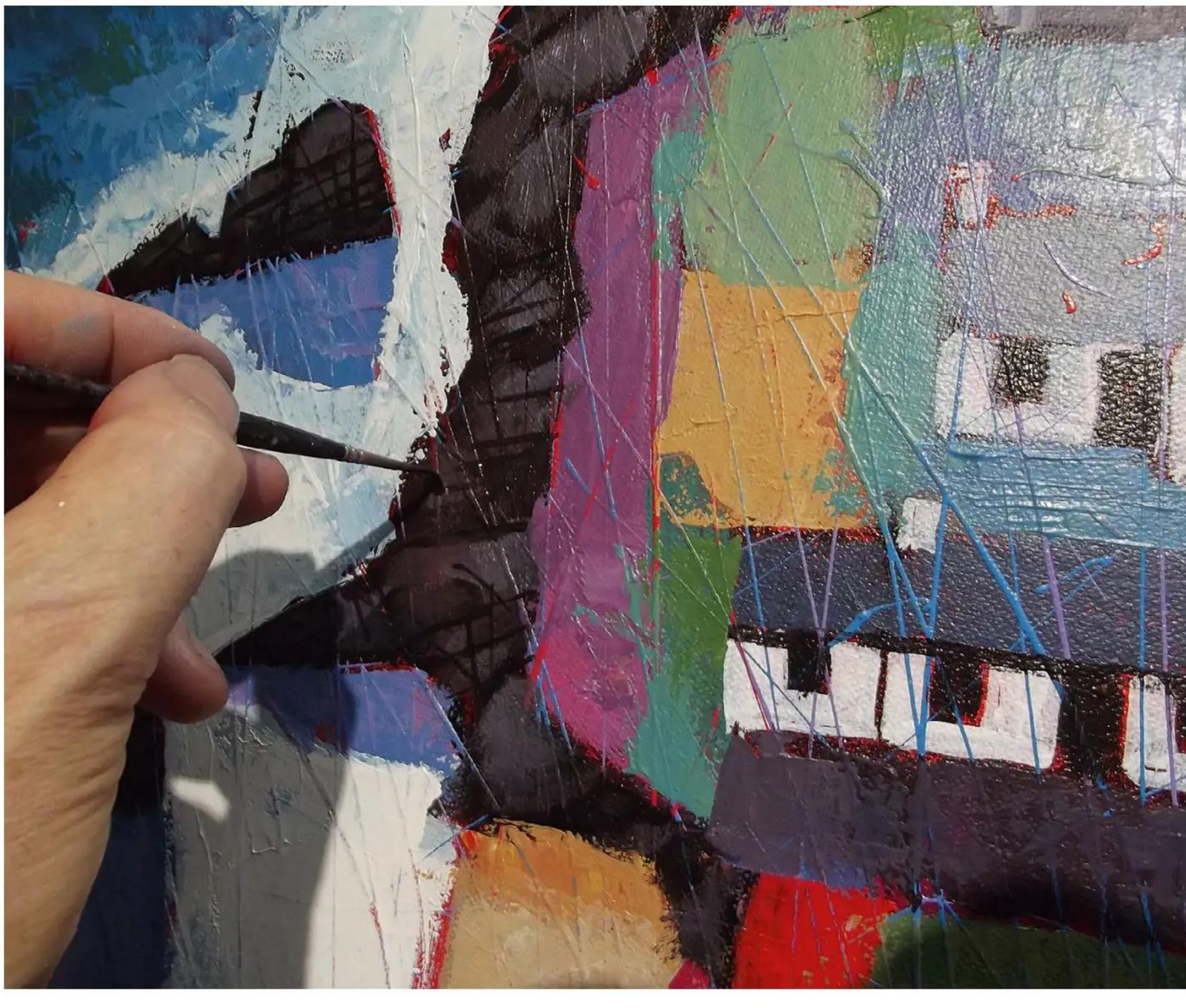
The red background darkens the initial underpainting, so even the same colour applied again will appear lighter. As the colours are built up I work from dark to light. This brings out the texture to its best affect. The layers can be either a lighter version of the same colour or something completely different depending on what I'm trying to achieve or suggest.





On the shelf

I use old Formica shelving for a palette. To remove any dried-on acrylic paint lightly sponge on some water, and leave to soak for five minutes. You can then use a scraper to remove it.



8 The detail

I paint as much as I can with a palette knife but for fine lines, such as the rock cracks, the seagulls and windows and doors in the houses I use a very fine liner brush. These behave like a pen as they hold a lot of paint that is fed into a fine point.





9 More flicking and splattering!

I take a stiff hog brush and load it with colour to flick over the canvas in selected areas. I use the three colours to start with and then add any colour I feel will give accent to certain areas. The final part is to use a watery mix of Alizarin Crimson, splashed on the canvas, then sprayed with just enough water to make it run. This highlights the texture in a different way and is more like glazing. I add in the seagulls afterwards.



10 Varnish

I find Golden MSA UV satin spirit varnish is the best for my work. It suggests on the tin that it should be thinned, but I get the best results using it as it comes. It needs to be used in a well-ventilated area. My studio used to be in the house, but because of the fumes, I now have a studio in the garden that was built last summer. This varnish also has UV-filtering properties to protect colours from fading.

Bring the outdoors in, with ink & watercolour

With a focus on simplicity, **Tony Underhill** reveals how to get the fresh and lively results of plein air painting indoors

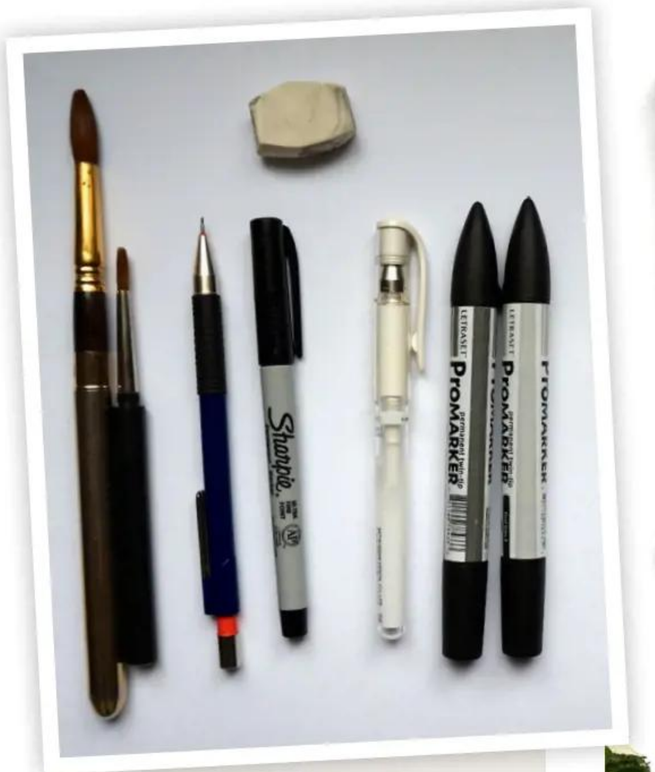


About TONY

Bedfordshire, UK

Tony specialises in line and wash and is a regular contributor to art publications. He prefers to work en plein air and favours buildings. Not surprisingly, he's a keen urban sketcher.

tonyunderhill@me.com





I love to sketch outside in pen and watercolour, travelling as light as possible. I aim to capture the character of the scene in front of me rather than worrying too much about accuracy and detail. This helps me work quickly using a simple, easily repeatable process that delivers the spontaneity I like.

But working indoors with more time and equipment available (as well as a self-imposed expectation to produce better results), it's easy for our paintings to become overthought and overworked.

To avoid this, I bring my outdoor process inside, and try to draw and paint as if I were on location. Using the same minimum equipment and simple techniques promotes confidence and freedom and, therefore, enjoyment too.

So although I'm painting indoors from a photo for this workshop, I'll be working as if I were sitting in front of the scene.

My main aim is to capture the character of the houses and the harbour and I'm perfectly happy to move things around to produce a composition that helps me do that, or to change colours if necessary. And all the time, I'll be reminding myself of my trusted painting motto: 'keep it simple'!

Materials

Tony likes to use the same materials indoors as when he's travelling light and sketching outside.

- Mechanical pencil (2B)
- Sharpie pen (black, ultrafine)
- Soft eraser
- Letraset Promarkers – Cool Grey 2, Cool Grey 4
- Signo white gel pen
- Sable travel brushes: Escoda Optimo, size 12; da Vinci Maestro, size 6
- Daler Rowney Langton 12x9in spiral sketchbook with 140lb Not paper
- Sennelier watercolour tubes – Cinereous Blue, French Ultramarine Blue, Yellow Ochre, Primary Yellow, French Vermillion

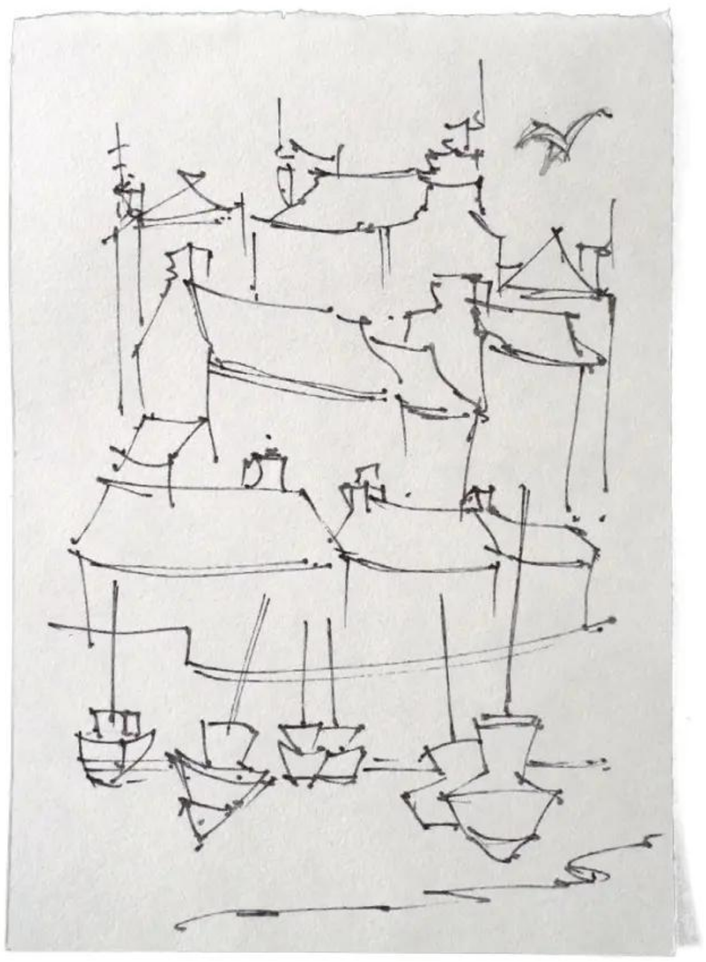


1 Decision time

First I decide what to retain, omit, or change. Tenby's multicoloured houses are the star of the show and we need boats for a harbour. But we're keeping it simple, and focusing on character rather than detail, so we don't want too many of either. The reflections distract from the houses and we can lose the sky and the hill.

Ink & watercolour







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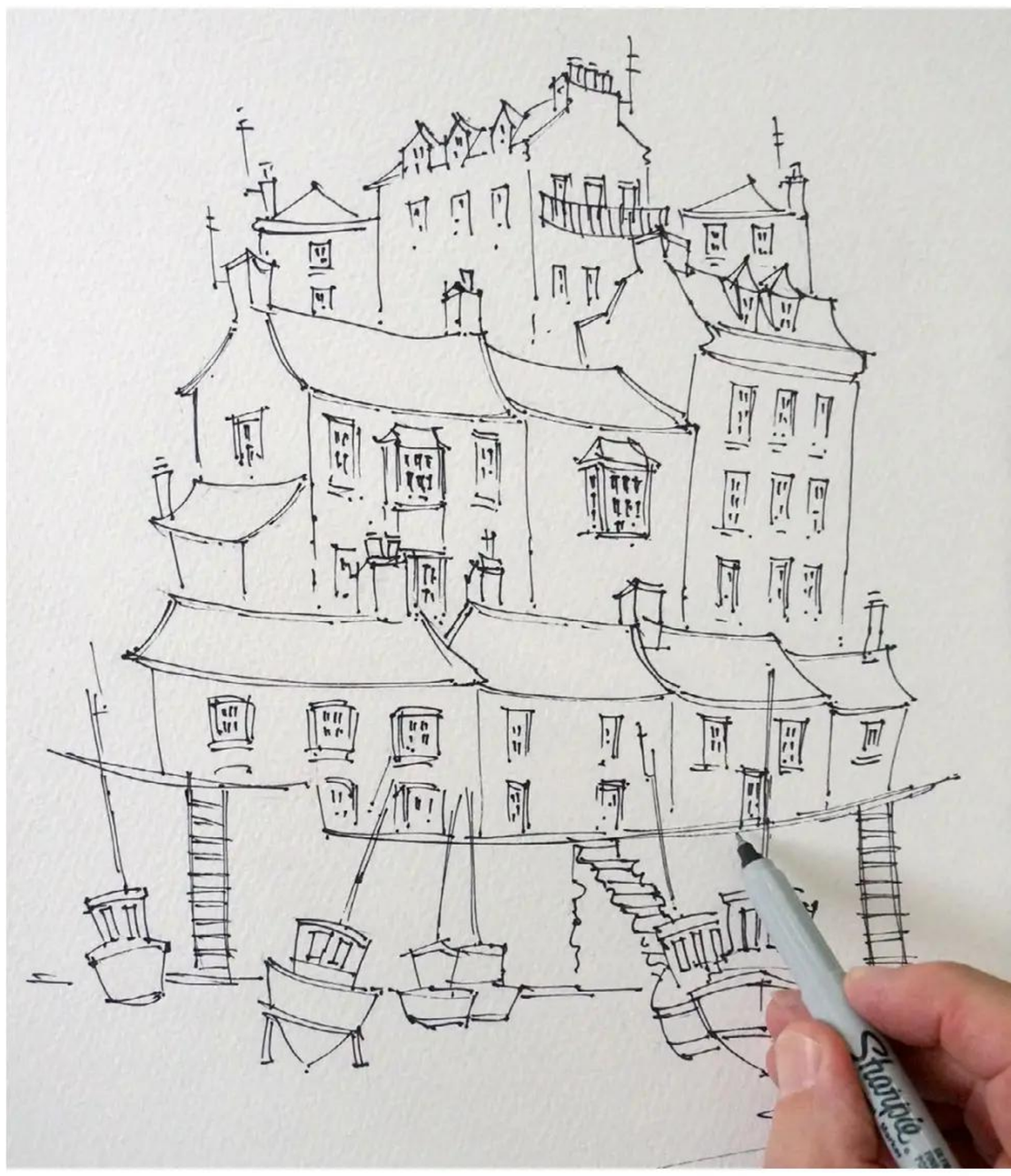
"It's better to spend time planning now than have regrets later"

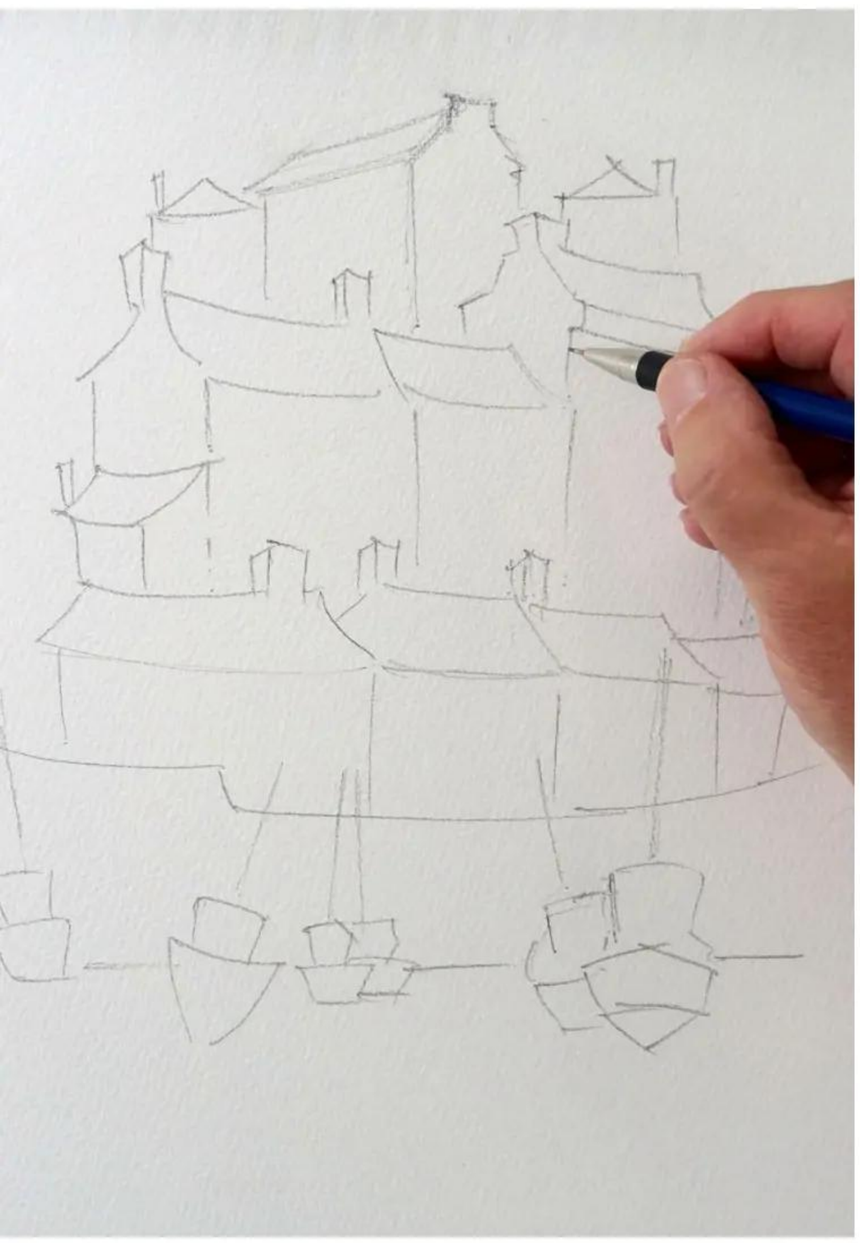
2 Focus on format and thumbnail sketch

A vertical format will give the houses height. I like the central group and I move others to improve the composition. My boats need to break the line of the harbour wall and their masts can link foreground to background. I try this out on a quick 6x4in thumbnail sketch and find I've got room for a seagull!

3 Make a plan

I redraw my thumbnail making a few improvements and use light and mid-grey marker pens to add form and tone. A plan like this only takes a few minutes but helps ensure an effective, easy-to-read end result. It's much better to spend time now than have regrets later.





4 Position the big shapes

Sitting down with my sketchbook and the photo propped up in front of me (as if on location), I lightly pencil in the position of the big shapes. I keep adjusting until I'm happy they look right on the page. With the big shapes done, I know the smaller ones will fall into place once I start the pen work.

Simplicity

My painting motto is 'keep it simple'. I try to apply this to everything: equipment, subject matter, composition and technique. If things go wrong, it usually comes back to this.

5 Start line work

I develop the drawing with my pen working quickly, freely (and definitely not perfectly), just as I would outdoors. I start with big shapes first, then add windows and finally slates. All the time, I remind myself to keep it simple; too much detail or precision won't look spontaneous. And I decide I don't need the seagull!



6 Do a colour test

Although the houses are multicoloured, the fewer colours I use, the more harmony my painting will have. I plan on using five colours and I test these on an offcut of the same paper. I'm more concerned about value – relative lightness and darkness – than colour matching. I also test a shadow wash on each colour.

7 Paint the houses

I paint the house walls using very weak washes, touching the paper just once. Then I do the slate roofs using Cinereous Blue with a touch of French Vermillion and Yellow Ochre, varying the wash as I go. I try not to be too careful – accidental unpainted patches are fine. Finally, I use Primary Yellow and French Vermillion for the chimneys.





8 Harbour wall & beach

I use weak washes of Yellow Ochre for the beach and Cinereous Blue and a little Yellow Ochre for the sea. I use a stronger mix of the same colours (mostly Yellow Ochre) for the harbour wall, adding patches of each while the wash is still wet. I'm not too careful, so the washes complement the style.

Go outside

I much prefer to work outdoors. It forces me to travel light and work quickly, which in turn helps deliver the fresh, lively results I like.





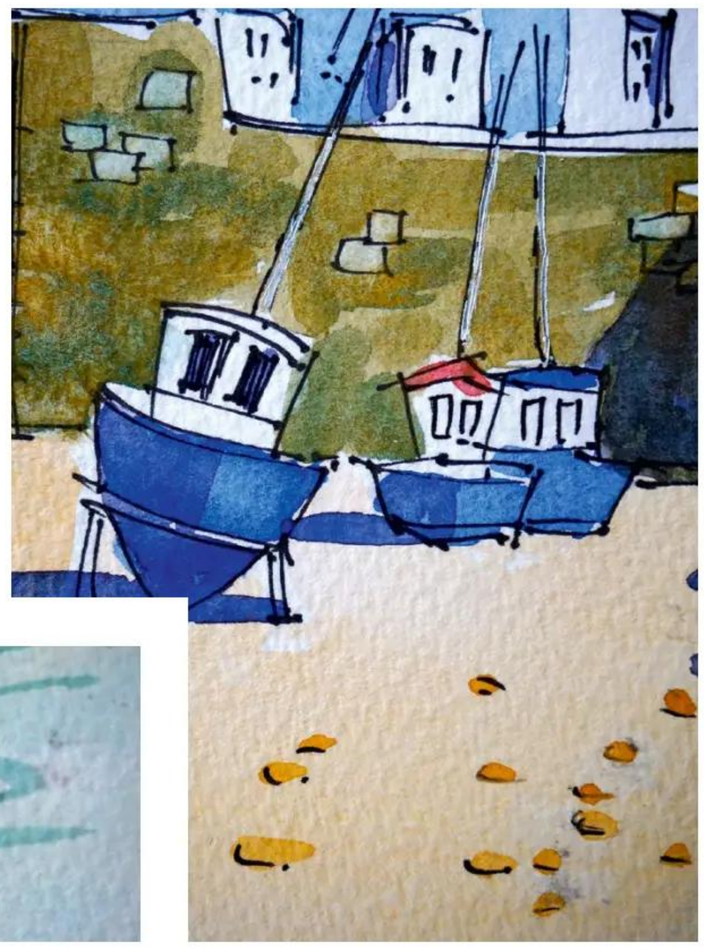
9 Paint the boats

Now it's time for the boats. I remind myself they're supporting players and shouldn't distract from the houses. So I use simple one-wash brushstrokes, although I'm careful to leave the cabins as the white of the paper so that they show up against the harbour wall as per my plan.

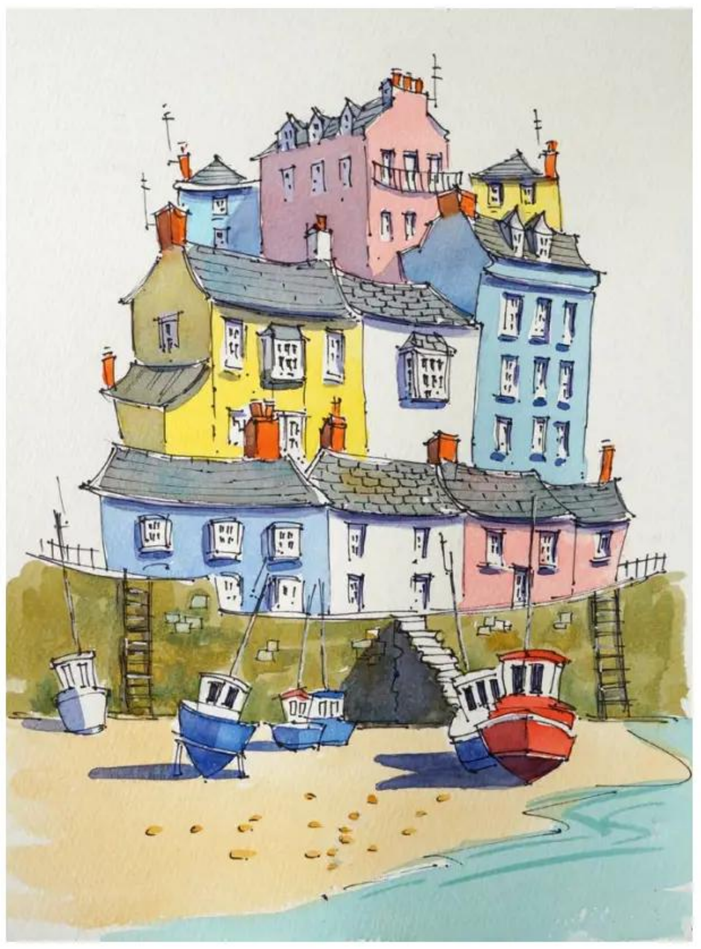
10 Add shadows

I mix a large pool of Ultramarine Blue with a touch of French Vermillion – I don't want to run out midway through! It's transparent, so the underlying colours will show through so long as I use confident one wash brushstrokes to avoid any muddying. Shadows on the side walls, boats and by the steps lead the eye to the white house.









Enjoy yourself

People ask why I don't develop more sketches into fully finished studio paintings. For me, one's quick, intuitive and fun; the other involves time, discipline and a self-imposed expectation of a better result. Fortunately, in art at least, it's fine to do what you enjoy rather than what others expect!

11 Finishing touches

Keeping it simple, I add some shadows in the window reveals, some ripples in the water, and suggest some pebbles on the beach to lead into the picture. Then I lift out some stones on the harbour wall with a damp brush, patting dry with a tissue. I add some white gel pen on the masts and finally some railings.

12 Final review

As always, I review my final painting. I'm pleased with the composition, the line work and the freshness of most of the washes. There's a few things I might have done better, but there's always next time. I like the overall sense of 'seaside fun', I kept it simple and, most importantly of all, I enjoyed creating it!

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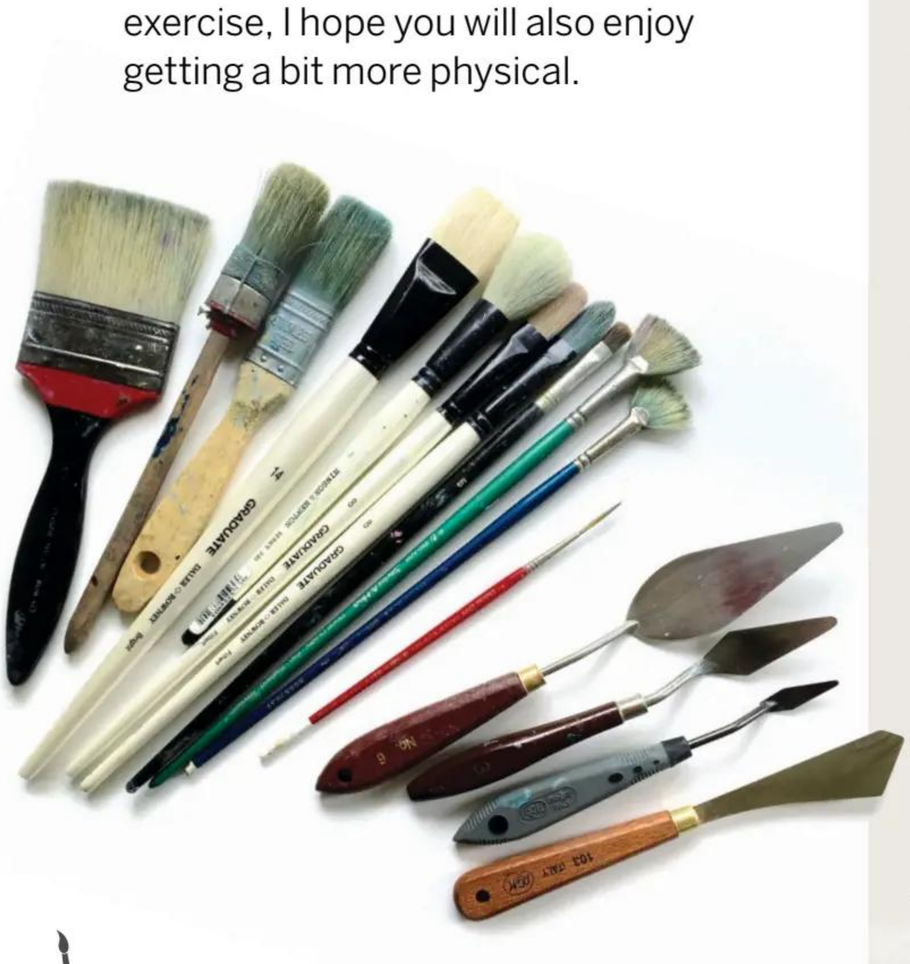
Discover how **Sarah Jane Brown** uses memories of the sea to create atmosphere and energy

If you've ever been on a boat or ship at sea, you might recall the smell of the sea air, the salty spray on your lips and the physical effort required to compensate for the rolling and pitching motion.

For this workshop, I decided to recreate these sensations in the studio using a combination of sketches and photo references, but mostly drawing upon my own vivid memories of what it feels like to be at sea.

For me, capturing feeling and energy is more important than 'photographic' visual accuracy. I'm interested in recreating the emotions that the original experience unleashed.

I never sit down to paint, this enables me to use my whole upper body to inject more energy. I also step back frequently to get a more objective view. So for this exercise, I hope you will also enjoy getting a bit more physical.





About **SARAH**

Pembrokeshire, Wales

In her previous maritime career, Sarah developed a deep understanding of the sea. Now her oil paintings capture its atmosphere and movement. See her website for current exhibitions.

www.sjbart.co.uk

Materials

Sarah paints in oils on a **50x50cm cotton primed canvas** and uses a variety of brushes and palette knives. It helps to have a good range so you can vary the size and shape of the marks you make.

- 2 1/2 inch 'skyflow' brush
- 1 inch natural hair brush, round
- 1 inch natural hair brush, flat
- Bright, size 14, 5
- Goat hair mop, size 3
- Filberts, size 8
- Fan brushes
- Rigger
- Selection of palette/painting knives

Sarah uses various makes of oil colour including some **alkyd white**, which speeds up the drying time considerably. She squeezes a little onto a piece of cardboard to draw out the excess oil and stiffen some of the paint. She also uses a general oil paint medium such as **Liquin** to create transparency and gloss.





Workshop





1 Break the ice

Quickly cover the canvas with a thinned wash of colour. This will also create a sense of unity to the finished piece. I've used a warm yellow ochre to help prevent the later layers of blues and greens from looking too cold. Work fast and loose!

2 Lightly sketch in the composition

Decide early on where your focal points will be and aim to place them with a strong diagonal arrangement. Using a large brush, quickly sweep some blue/grey colour into the sky area. Diagonal sweeps are dynamic to the eye, which is exactly what you want when representing movement.



3 Blend in sky colours

Using the same large brush, pick up some white and stipple it into the blue/grey while it's still wet, blending the edges softly. This white will also blend nicely with the ochre background colour to give a range of natural cloud colours.

Handy tip!

Keep a bottle of baby oil and a roll of paper towel handy. It's the best thing to clean your hands with and much kinder to your skin than solvent.



4 Sweep in the waves

Pick up a roll of the dark sky colour on the edge of a palette knife and, using the knife on its side, sweep in the rough shapes of the waves. Stand back from your canvas and use your whole arm to do this with an energetic rocking motion.



5 Rock your body

Switch to a small brush and continue using an overlapping zigzag rocking motion to build up the pattern of small ‘wavelets’ that make up the bigger wave shapes. As you work down the canvas, change to larger brushes so that the brush marks indicate that the waves are closer to the viewer.



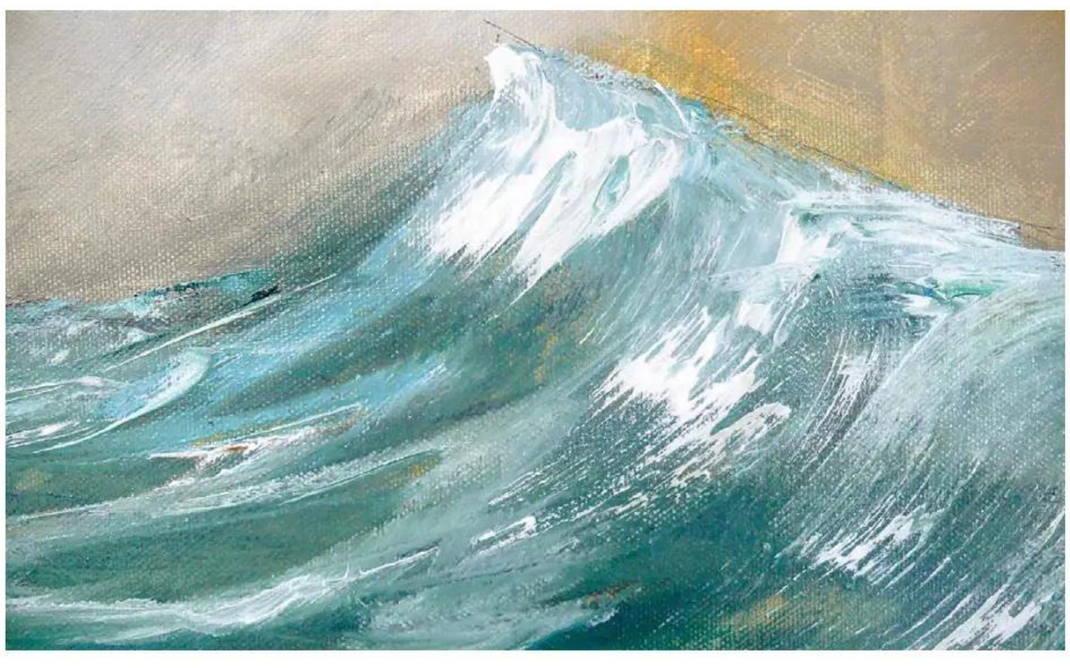
6 Have patience

Begin introducing some thinned turquoise to your zigzag pattern, remembering that colours appear less intense towards the horizon. Don’t use too much paint at this stage or it will obliterate the ochre that is peeping through and make the water look too solid. Now leave your piece to dry. This keeps the structure intact and prevents the colours becoming muddy.



7 Let it flow

When the underpainting is completely dry, you can be more creative with the next layer. Add colour thinned with painting medium to make it more transparent. I often tilt the canvas so that the paint runs and bleeds together, creating fluid effects that are appropriate when painting the sea. It can be messy, but it’s fun! Don’t be tempted to move your piece until it’s dry, or your ‘runs’ will change direction.



8 Sculpt the wave crests

I use a palette knife loaded with thick white to sculpt the crests of the waves. I gently touch the knife onto the canvas at the highest point and then quickly sweep it down the face of the waves in just one pass so that the effect stays clean and fresh.



9 Make an atmospheric horizon

Take a clean dry brush and softly 'stroke' the horizon, blending some of the sea colour upwards into the sky to create distance and a nice misty effect where sea and sky blur into one.

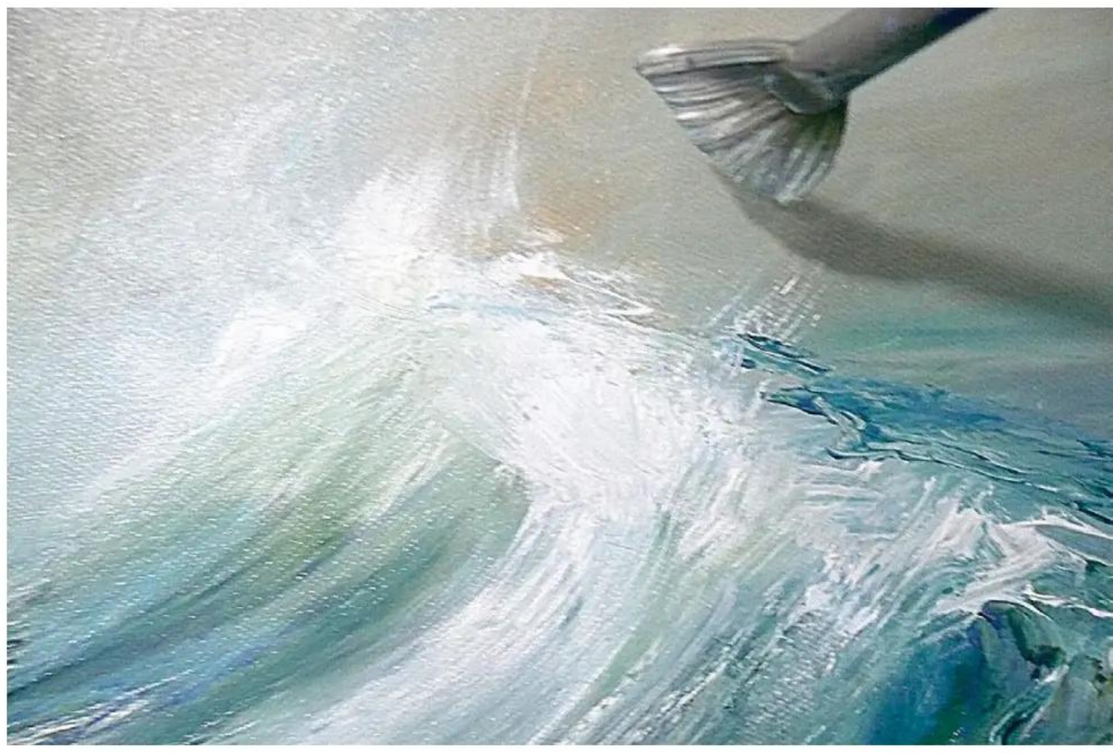
I did it my way!

Close your eyes and imagine you're on a boat. Rock your body, shifting your weight as if you're actually on the deck trying to stay upright! The sensation will translate into your painting.

10 Define with contrast

Adding back in darker areas helps lift and define the whole image again, making it more dynamic and interesting. The more different tones there are in the waves, the more movement they will seem to have.







11 Create an action point

The very top of the main wave is the focal point of this painting, so this is where I want to imply the most energy and create a point of action – the moment that the wave is starting to break. Sweeping some of the white upwards and slightly backwards implies it's being carried on the wind.

12 Add foamy details

Using a rigger brush loaded with a highlight colour (a pale sea green), I lay in the foam patterns, following the structure of the underpainting. The holes in the pattern are more open on the vertical of each wave and then flatten out back to the zigzag shape on the horizontal.



13 Make bubbles

Use a fan brush loaded with some of the foam pattern colour mixed to the consistency of single cream. Hold the brush a couple of inches from the canvas and draw a palette knife across the top of the bristles to make a spattering of air bubbles. This can take a bit of practice so try it on a sacrificial canvas or board first and don't overdo it.

14 Sea spray

Using the same technique, spatter the crest of the wave. This time I've used pure white as it's the focal point. It also appears brighter here, being backlit against the sky. Mix the paint slightly thinner here to create finer, misty speckles. Again, practise before you add to your piece!



More than one

I used to get so frustrated that finished paintings never looked like I'd imagined. When I started making several pieces simultaneously, rather than slaving over just one, I somehow let go of my expectations and enjoyed the process more. Try having two or three paintings in progress so you can rotate between them.



15 Add the final transparent glaze

Let the painting dry fully before you do this last stage. Mix up a glaze of transparent turquoise using plenty of painting medium. Be aware you will need hardly any paint to tint the glaze – it's better to add more pigment gradually if you need it. Applying this glaze over the dry sea areas will create a translucent effect. This creates optical depth in your piece by deepening the dark areas and enriching and unifying the lighter foam colours.



Create calming landscapes

Want to create a serene scene in pastel? **Graham Cox** of Moody Views shows you how



About GRAHAM

Wiltshire, UK

After leaving the Royal Navy in 1984, Graham indulged his love of painting, starting with watercolours and moving on to pastels in 1992. He now works exclusively in soft pastel and pastel pencils, running workshops and demos throughout the South West and south Wales.

www.moodyviews.co.uk



Materials

- Rembrandt soft pastels
- Caran D'Ache pastel pencils
- Canson Mi-Teintes paper in neutral warm grey
- Size 6 chisel-edge colour shaper



Be sure to use the correct surface

Pastel cannot be used successfully on ordinary paper. A surface designed specifically for accepting pastel has a grain or texture within its surface. Its this grain or texture that holds the pastel on the surface allowing you to manipulate and blend without falling off. Some papers are rough like sandpaper, others are much finer. Try to use a neutral toned paper rather than white as this also helps.

Over the following pages, I'll walk you through my approach for depicting a landscape.

Re-creating this view across Loch Carron from the picturesque village of Plockton – made famous by the TV series Hamish Macbeth – I will use my own set of 14 Rembrandt soft pastels mainly for the skies and my own set of 18 super soft Caran D'Ache pastel pencils for the detail. I prefer the smooth side of the Canson Mi-Teintes pastel paper in a neutral warm grey, as this slightly textured surface enables me to blend the colours using my fingers or the number 6 soft chisel-edge colour shaper tool.



1 Build up the basics

Initially create your outline drawing using a light pastel pencil. Once you are happy with it, go over it with a black biro or a fine-point fibre-tip pen. Do not use a pencil because pastel will not adhere to pencil lines. Tape your paper to a piece of smooth board along the top and bottom using low-tac masking tape and prop your board at an angle to allow any excess pastel dust to drift down. Begin using the side of the ultramarine light blue pastel. Lay some colour across the lower sky, covering the furthest mountain on the left and just coming over the tops of the middle mountain and tree tops. Add some phthalo blue into the middle sky and some ultramarine deep across the top of the sky. Allow each colour to slightly overlap. Using your fingertips in small, tight, circular motions, blend and push the colour into the surface of the paper. Add a further touch of ultramarine deep at the top and blend lightly to make the sky a deeper shade at the top compared to lower down. This helps to create the illusion of depth on a flat surface.



2 Create cloud coverage

The clouds are added using a little light cream for the tops, a little pink in the middle and a little blue-violet for the shadow colour on the bottom. These three colours are then lightly blended using a fingertip in small circles. Try to blend the bottom of the cloud until it almost disappears into the blue beneath it, but blend the top less, just leaving it showing against the blue behind it. Further clouds can be added if they are required.

3 Add depth to the mountains

Switch to the pastel pencils. The furthest hill has been done with a mixture of 145 bluish-grey and 212 chromium-oxide green. Use the side of the point and stroke the colour downwards following the contours of the mountain. This is then blended with the number 6 soft chisel-edge colour shaper. The nearer hill needs to be a shade darker and slightly higher. This has been done in the same way but with the addition of the 149 night blue as the final colour. Notice the areas of mist between the three peaks; this has been done with a 901 white.

All images © Moody Views 2019



4 Block out the trees

Begin the trees using the black Conté pastel on its side to create the dark inner part of the trees. Lightly blend this with a fingertip so that no bare paper is showing through the lower part of the trees. The black at the top of the trees is not blended as we still want to be able to see some sky showing through this area.









5 Fill in the foliage

The foliage is added in layers beginning with the 719 dark green pastel pencil (A). Notice how I have left black areas separating the areas of dark green. The light is coming from the top right, so try to create your highlights facing this way. Notice how each separate section of foliage is separated from another by leaving areas of black. Then add the 225 moss green over the previous green, aiming to cover the top half of each area of foliage (B). Finally add the 017 light reseda green just over the top edges of the previous green where the sunlight would be creating the highlights (C). Any areas of unwanted colour that stray onto the cottage can be removed using a clean pencil eraser. Using the 901 white pastel pencil, add a layer of white over the cottage, leaving the left side as bare paper as this part is in shadow (D).

Use quality materials

Cheap materials will only make the enjoyment of painting – in any medium – more difficult. You are far better having a few colours of a quality brand than a large number of cheap ones. If you are looking to purchase some pastels, pick one up and rub it on your finger. If you get colour on your finger it's a quality soft pastel; if you don't get any colour from it leave it alone.



6 Add the details

A little 506 Payne's grey has been added to the roof and the shadow sides of the chimney stacks. This is then blended using the corner of the colour shaper tool to give a smooth appearance. The hedgerow on the right has been done in exactly the same way as the distant trees, with the addition of a few dots of flower colour.



7 Create the horizon line

Take a strip of low-tac masking tape and stick it to your board on either side of your picture (it will not stick to the picture itself). Line the bottom of the tape up exactly with the horizon line of the sea at the base of the distant hills. Using the same pastels we used for the sky, add the colour and blend horizontally with the fingertips, ensuring the colour is pushed right up to the bottom of the tape. The reflection of the sky is a mirror image of the sky above so it should be lighter further away and darker at the bottom. Either using your white pastel pencil or the side of the white pastel, lightly stroke the white horizontally across the paper to create the sparkle on the distant water. Do not blend this.





8 Refine the scene

Now remove the tape from across the picture to reveal a perfect horizon line. I have also added a few horizontal streaks of darker blue to indicate small wave shadows towards the bottom of the picture.

Practise, then practise again

Painting is like anything else in life – the more you do it the better you get at it. Having said that, you don't need to paint a complete picture every time you sit down to paint. If you only have 20 minutes to spare, just try doing some simple trees or a sky with a few clouds. You will be surprised how quickly you will improve and how losing yourself for a few minutes in a picture can help with the stresses of life and put your mind at rest. Enjoy it!

9 Add the finishing touches

The cottage steps have been completed using the 901 Chinese white and 741 dark-flesh pastel pencils in alternate horizontal strokes. The grassy bank on the right was drawn with an 017 light reseda green and highlighted with 232 mid-moss green. The rocks have been added with 009 black, 741 and 901. The picture was finished off with the low cloud over the mountains, the gulls and the boats using the 901 white pastel pencil.

Weather effects

Nel Whatmore invites you to explore the joys of working in pastels to discover the beauty of painting different types of weather, from long summer days to still misty mornings

When first learning about how to paint different types of weather, one of the most important things to consider is what time of day to paint, as it is often key to ending up with a successful painting.

This isn't just because of the possible need to dodge rain clouds, but because the quality of the light, combined with how intense the light is, both vary hugely throughout the course of a single day. These two factors affect the tonal range of a painting and the atmosphere of it.

A very useful exercise is to choose a simple view, such as a field with one tree in it or the corner of your garden, and paint it at different times of day. I have done this on several occasions and I often chosen an early morning, midday and a late afternoon view. It is invaluable to understand how the same view alters as the Sun changes direction and weather fronts move through. Monet was the master of this approach, and he painted many series of paintings of his iconic lily pond at Giverny, the River Seine and Notre-Dame Cathedral.

In this article, I want to encourage you to look more closely at the light and how subtle variations and decisions we make will help us improve our painting of all types of weather. We will uncover how to build a painting up, exploring at how choosing your colours is key, as well as mark making and how we hold and use pastels to help us convey different weather effects.

Of course, it is impossible to cover all weathers here, so I will be concentrating on stormy landscapes, summer fields and misty autumnal mornings.



About NEL

Tadcaster, UK

Nel has worked in pastels for over 30 years, is a regular exhibitor at Chelsea Flower Show and co-founder of the New Pastel School. She is an expressive colourist and fascinated by the evocative nature of colour.

www.nelwhatmore.com

Materials

- Unison soft pastels
- Sennelier Sand Card in various colours
- Colourfix Primer Deep Ultra
- Easel
- Hardboard



Time of day

Understand how light quality and colour intensity changes during a single day

I would like to suggest that you paint the same simple view at three different times of day, for instance morning, midday and late afternoon. In this example I had only a few hours and not the luxury of a whole day, but it was interesting to see that even if you don't have much time, there is still much to learn. These three studies were painted at 4pm, 5pm and 6.30pm in late September. Because I was working quickly, I was looking at where the light was coming from and changes in the range of colours. Painting different types of weather is always initially about understanding what colour palette to use and looking at the tonal range. Are there lots of subtle mid tones, or more dramatic extremes of darks and lights?

4pm Sept afternoon

Always see which way and how strongly the wind is blowing. This will affect the shape of the clouds and also the pastel strokes you make. I used the pastel on its side in order to work very quickly because of the time limit.



The first thing to note is where the light is coming from – it was behind me, but still shining down on the land, so the field in the mid distance is bright as the Sun hits it at an angle, and the tones are mostly in the mid range, with a few darks under the trees. The surface is also a mid tone Sennelier Pastel Card light blue grey.

It was not windy so the edges between the different areas are quite soft and not very distinct as it was late in the afternoon. Because the marks are soft and not very angular, it conveys a sense of late afternoon calm. I changed to a darker paper – dark blue grey – to create a richer field.

5pm Sept afternoon

The clouds are getting heavier, possibly in time for some early evening rain. There is little wind so the contrast between the blue of the sky and the edges of the clouds remains quite blurred and indistinct by blending the colours over each other.



The light is now lower in the sky. The Sun shines on the base of the tree and the tonal range of blues and greens has intensified – there are darker blues and greys, and the blue at the horizon is brighter. The range of greens makes it more dramatic.

The grass is a more yellow-green and the light is shining on it so there is more texture. Vertical short strokes haved been used, in contrast to the bottom left-hand corner, which remains in shadow and is now a darker blue-green.

6.30pm Sept afternoon

Painting a good sky is all about the edges of the clouds and how blurred or crisp they are where they meet the surrounding blue. Look at the top edge of the cloud where it meets the now much richer blue and contrast this with its darker underside that blends into the next cloud below.



The Sun is now very low and is just catching the edges of the clouds. Notice how the tonal range has almost been compressed, making the colours more intense with brighter lights and darker darks.

The light is more dramatic and it also became more breezy, so the mark making changes. I used pastels on their ends in order to hatch colours over each other, but still in the direction that the grass is growing to lead your eye towards the tree. I have also changed to a darker paper, the Sennelier Pastel Card dark blue grey, to create a richer field.

Misty days and creating atmosphere

Creating atmosphere is essential to conveying different types of weather and is achieved by looking at colour and the balance between areas of calm and detail



1 Choose your colours

Misty days are nearly always still, when the intensity of colours is masked by cloud cover and the light is reduced. Restrict your colour palette to a more muted range of colours, avoiding bright, saturated ones to create atmosphere. Imagine your subject is covered in layers of tissue paper, rather like looking at colours through a misty window. Ask yourself if your colour is too bright, and make sure to test them on the paper of your choice. For this example, I chose a mid-brown Sennelier Soft Pastel Card Van Dyke brown, as I wanted lots of the paper to show through and work as a colour in my painting.



2 Composition and areas of colour

Work out your rough composition by lightly applying the lighter and mid tones of pastel. It is harder on soft pastel card to go over darker colours, so start light and get darker later. Make sure the edges between the areas in your composition are soft and not hard as it creates a softness that is in keeping with it being a misty early morning. Use the pastel on its side so you can do broader stokes and cover larger areas – don't hold it like a pencil. Take the paper label off so you have the full length of the stick.



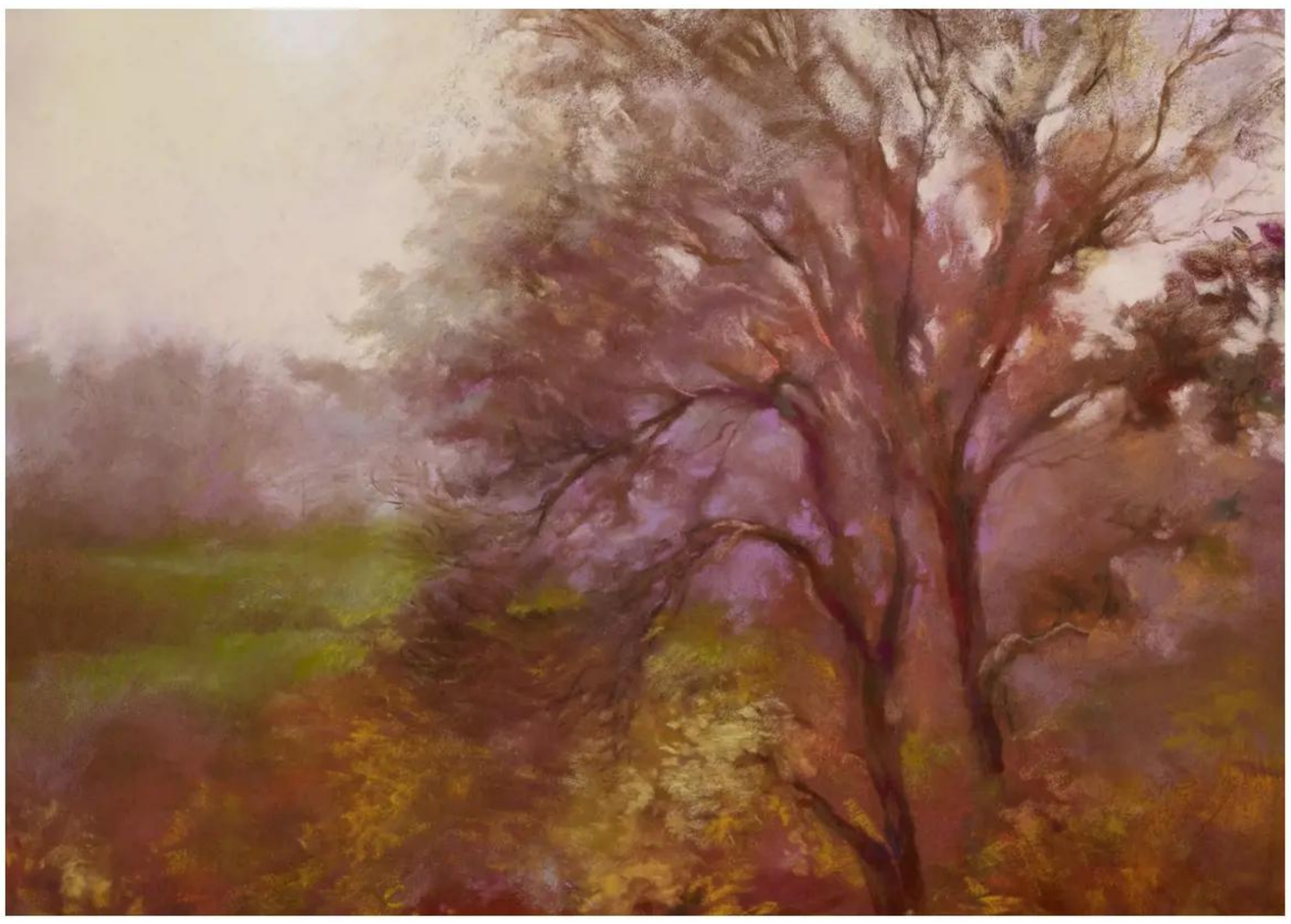
3 Soft edges

To create stillness, always have a definite area of calm where there is not much going on. Make sure your horizon, if there is one, is not a continuous hard line, but a soft interrupted one. I have pressed harder with the light pastels in the top-left corner and moved from soft pink to a light white yellow to white to lead your eye to the Sun. There are no hard lines, just a soft transition. Darker tones come into the foreground to give form very gradually. Create finer detail by breaking your pastel in two to get a sharper edge, or use pastel pencils if you prefer.



4 Introduce detail

Now building on the foundation of colours already laid down, choose small areas of your individual branches or bushes to focus on and apply more detail to give greater depth. Detail always translates into texture, which means that your eye will be drawn to wherever there is lots of it and it will become a focal point. Be selective about where you apply detail – if a painting has the same amount of detail and clarity all over, it will flatten its appearance.



5 Use darker colours

The strength of the colours in the foreground were increased using richer or more saturated colours. To create the impression that the Sun was trying to break through from the distance, warmer greens and hints of yellow were also used to create this effect with shorter, more rapidly made marks being utilised. At this stage it is about adding highlights and deeper shades in order to give the painting more depth.

Storm clouds

Stormy skies are all about drama, composition and trying to convey the sense that the wind is blowing and the heavens are about to open

The painting I have chosen to illustrate this point is a large one called Caution to the Wind, and it concentrates very much on the sky. Getting to know different cloud formations is very useful, and when you get very large ones and torrential downpours, they can be very many hundreds of feet high. The speed and direction of the wind also affect the structure of a cloud.



The blue of the sky goes from a greyish lilac to a more intense blue to meet the brighter white at the top of the painting, so the eye is drawn upwards by the contrast in colours as well as the composition. Increasing the contrast of colours always produces drama.

The tonal variation goes from very dark blue at the bottom of the painting to very light at the top – it's a whole tonal range, but with the emphasis on the light areas of the cloud. Here very broad strokes of pastel were applied and then rubbed in with the palm of the hand to create an even wider expanse to echo that the cloud was just getting bigger and bigger.

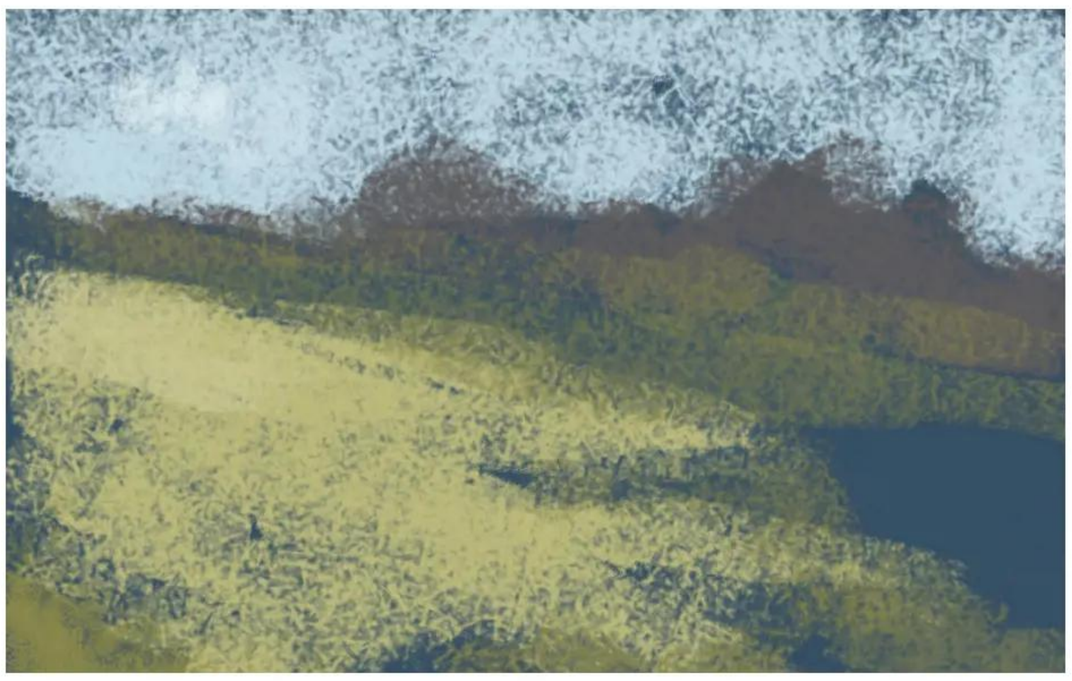
Always know which way the wind and light are coming from. Clouds always have a sunnier side and a more shady side where colours are cooler. A yellowy-white is always better than just a white when painting clouds – you can lay down white, but add a bit of yellow or just use a nice whitey-yellow. It gives the impression of the Sun shining and it has greater warmth and depth. There is just a touch in the cloud at the top.

Where you put the horizon can be key to creating drama. The fact that the horizon is really low and four-fifths of the painting is sky makes us feel that the sky is already really dominant and bearing down on us. The cloud formation is like a huge tilted cone bearing down on the land in an unstable fashion. Diagonals in general convey energy in a composition.

The horizon isn't well defined, so the tones of the sky and the land where they meet are similar as our interest is in what's happening above. There's a hint that rain is falling to the left as the difference between the colours of the land and sky become less defined.

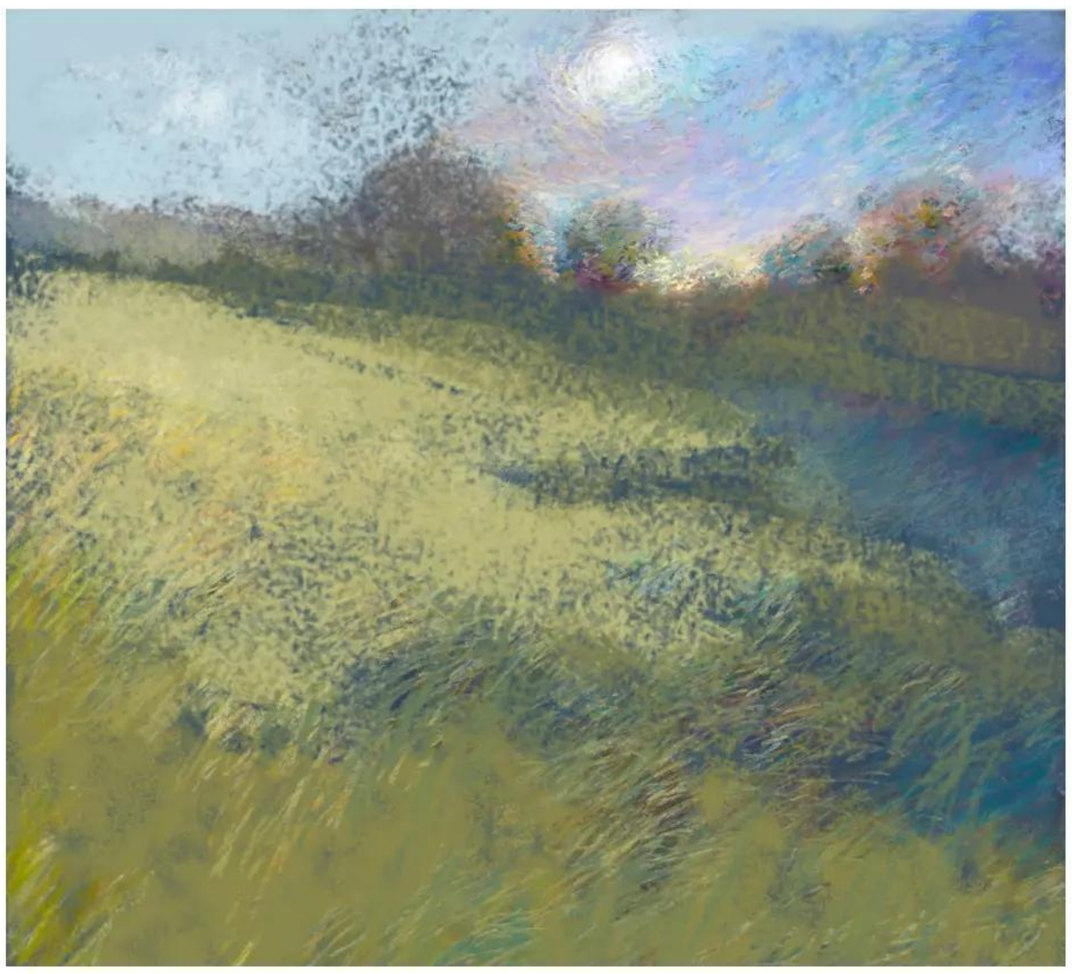
Summer days and fields

Sunshine, texture and vibrancy are all things to think about when conveying glorious summer fields – building up layers using hatching helps us do this



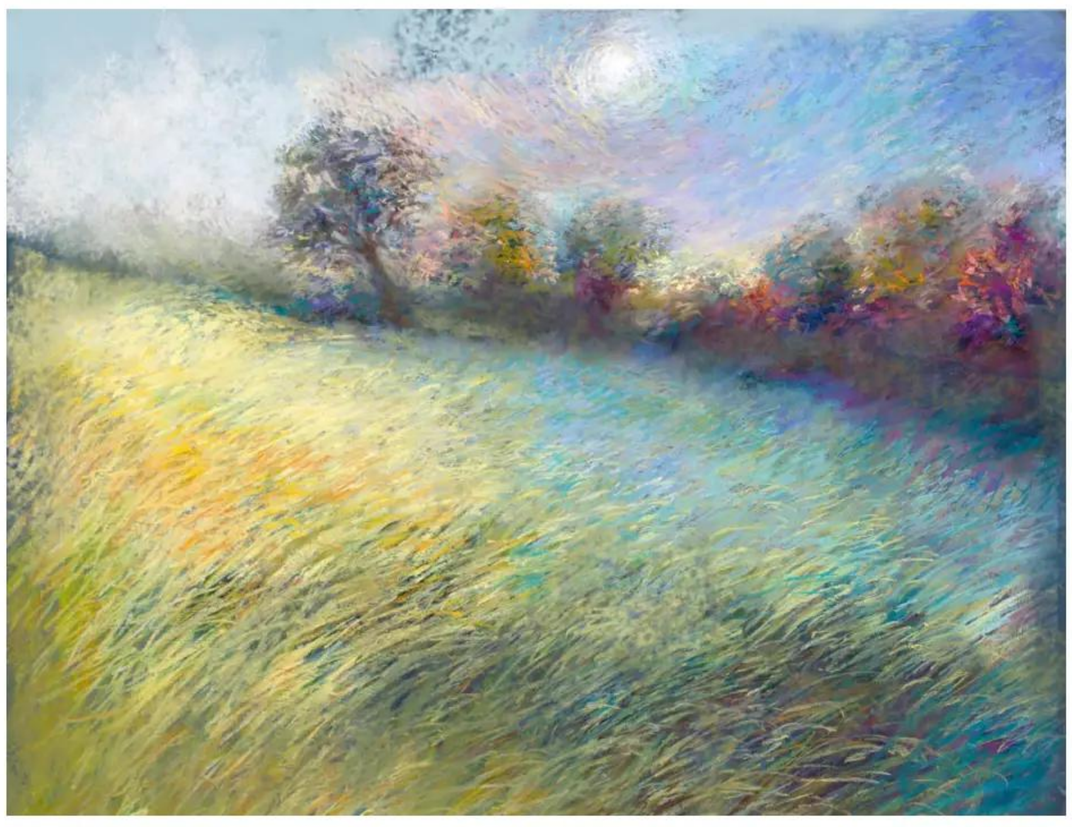
1 Choose your colours and surface

For paintings that need to convey warmth and have a lot of detail in them, such as a sunny cornfield, I often paint a surface like hardboard with a layer of Colourfix Primer first, then choose a range of colours from lights to darks. Using the pastels on their sides, I roughly block the areas in. As this is a very summery subject, I chose more colours with a yellow and yellow-green bias. I used Colourfix Deep Ultra to underpaint the board – you can apply this acrylic-based primer directly from the pot, but it is quite thick and is often better watered down a bit and applied with a two or three-inch brush. It has a fine pumice powder in it, which then gives the surface a tooth, suitable for pastels.



2 Decide where your focal point is

The Sun was behind the trees and it was a very warm day. To create that feeling, as if the air is almost vibrating, 'hatching' is very useful – don't blend the colours with your finger, but instead lay strokes of many colours on top of each other, usually by holding the pastel more like a pencil. I have started with the area on the top right. Degas was the master of this technique.



3 Use lots of colours

The beauty of hatching when done on a harder surface, like hardboard, is that you can build up more layers. Notice how there is a definite cooler area of the painting in front of the trees where the greens have a blue bias, which acts as a nice contrast to the sunnier side of the field. The vibration of all the colours together gives a sense of energy, too, as the wind was blowing across the field.



4 The direction of hatching

While you can hatch colours over each other in all directions, in landscapes it is often best to follow the contours of the land or vegetation. Lines are a strong visual indicator that can lead the viewer around your painting. See how the strokes in the sky follow the curve around the Sun to continue the feeling of movement and energy. It brings all the different areas of the painting together to give the impression of a sunny day.

The power of colour

Increasing your colour range is often the key to conveying the mood of a season or type of weather. Make yourself familiar with different seasonal colour palettes. Being bold and introducing unusual colours into landscapes often reaps rewards



1 The importance of colour

Be brave and try using more colours in your summer skies. Stick to warmer tones and remember that the colours of the land reflect up into the sky, as well as the sky reflecting down onto water. Summer skies have wonderful colours, particularly towards the end of the day.

2 Paper or board dimensions

One of the first decisions to make is what shape paper or board you want to work on. So often people just use the piece of paper they buy without considering its proportions. Remember to think about how the shape of your paper helps you tell your story, and the weather. I chose a very long horizontal piece because I wanted to echo the fact that it was the longest day of the year and that the painting was all about the wonderful expansive Norfolk summer evening sky.

3 Warm surface colour

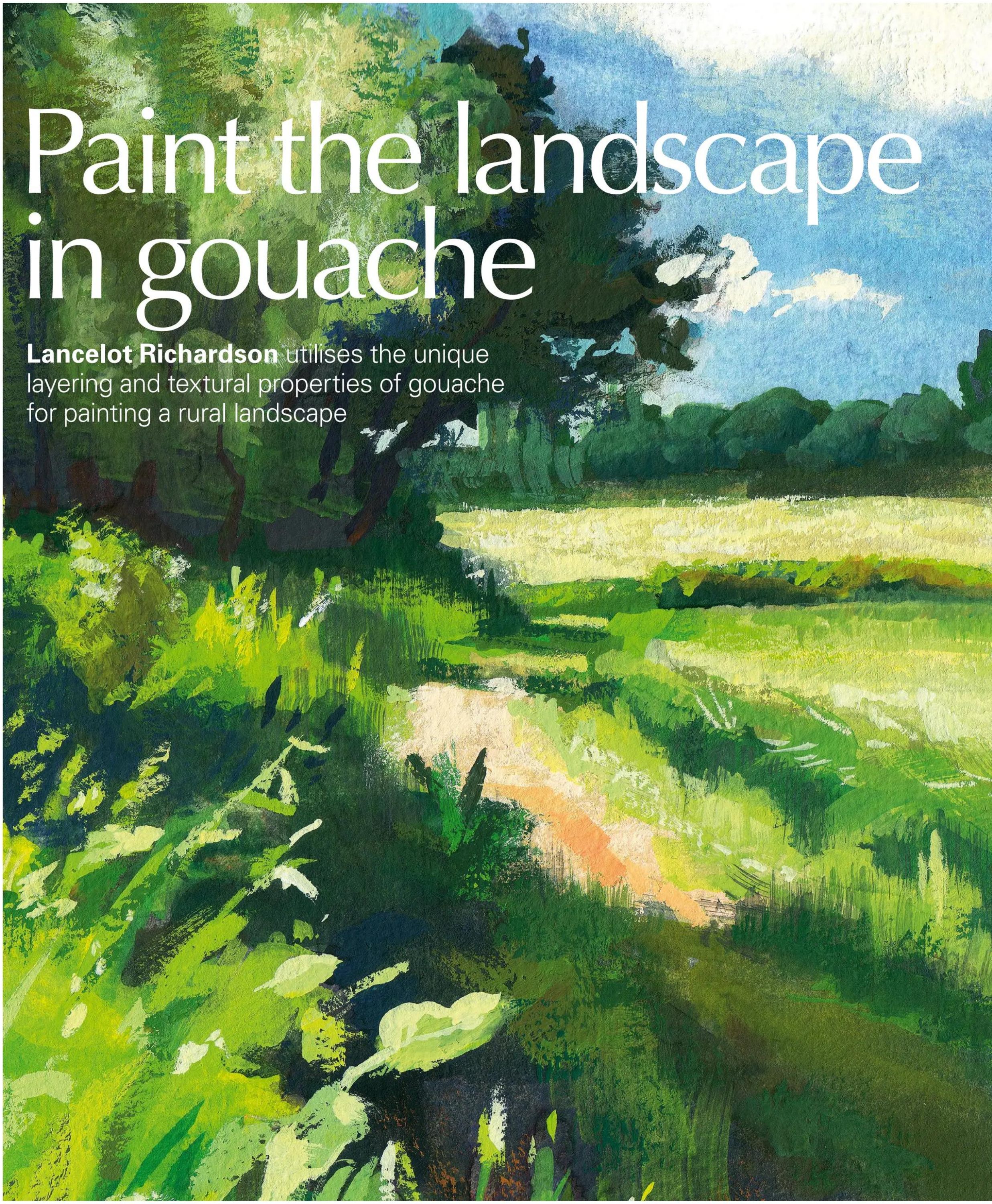
Choose a nice warm mid-tone colour of paper or surface, as that warmth will show through all over your painting if you don't blend your pastels and let the paper work as a colour. If you are not sure what colour to choose, cut a thin strip off one edge and test your pastel colours on it to see which one you prefer.

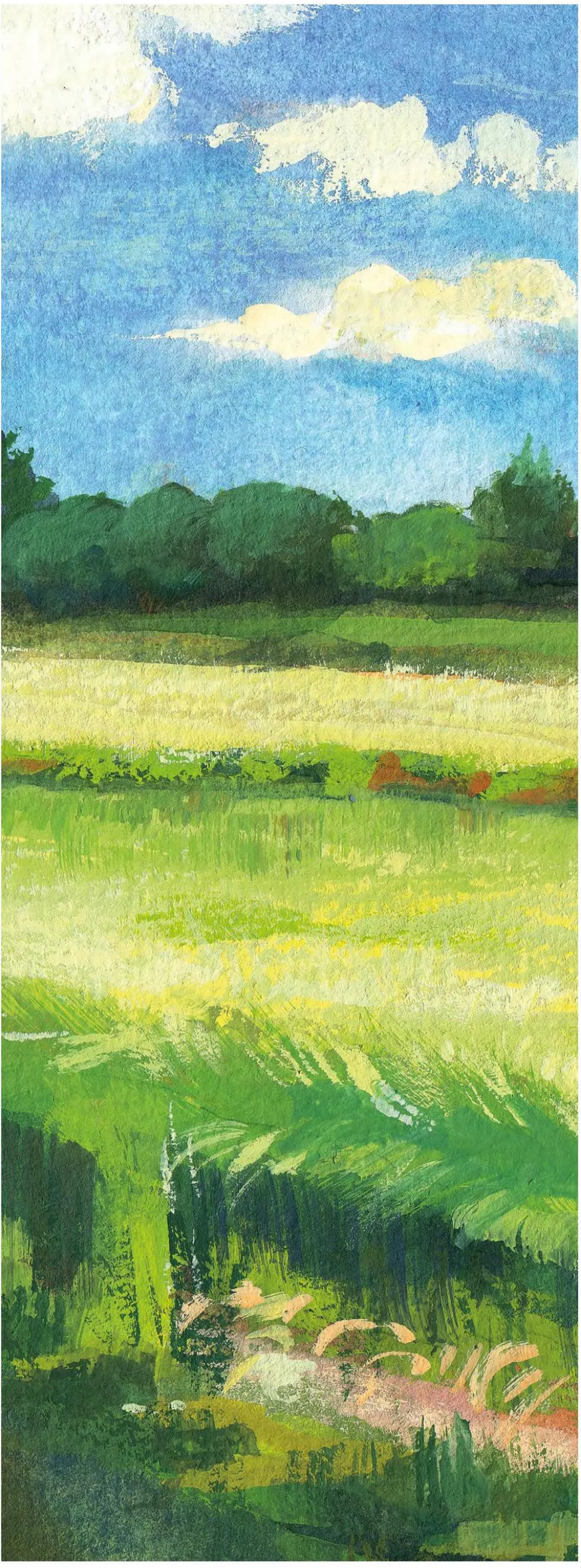
4 Let your layers show through

Laying down a warm tinted layer using a Colourfix primer, or smudging in your first layer then drifting another pastel over the top but not blending, gives your painting depth while increasing energy and warmth. Often when students say their work gets muddy it's because they either blend the layers of pastel together or they apply too much, clogging up the surface. If this happens to you, use the edge of a piece of acetate or even a credit card to lift some of the pastel from the surface.

Paint the landscape in gouache

Lancelot Richardson utilises the unique layering and textural properties of gouache for painting a rural landscape







About LANCELOT

Brighton, UK

Lancelot Richardson is a painter and freelance illustrator. He also works at independent drawing school Draw Brighton as a life-drawing tutor.

lancelotrichardson.com



Materials

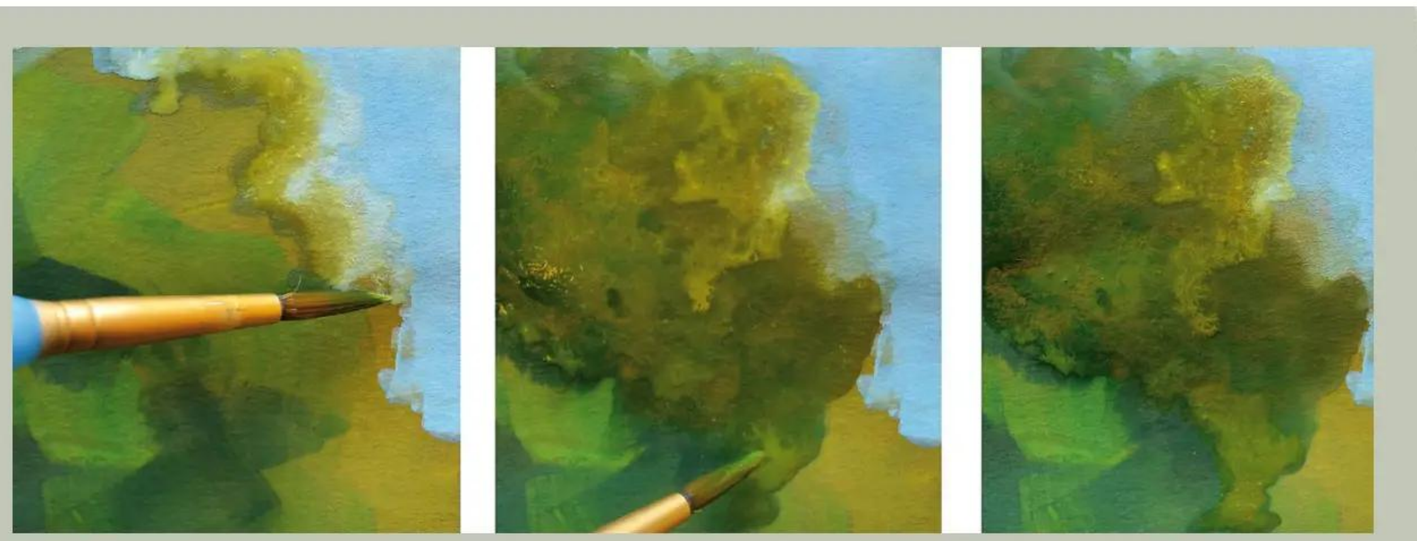
- Gouache Paint: Permanent white, Lemon Yellow, Permanent Yellow Deep, Yellow Ochre, Winsor Red, Quinacridone Magenta, Ultramarine, Phthalo Blue, Burnt Siena, Ivory Black
- Plastic palette – I am using a children's finger painting palette as it has a lot of space
- Kitchen Towel
- Water soluble pencils – any graphite, colour or watersoluble can work with different effects
- Seawhites A4 Watercolour Paper– any watercolour or a heavyweight mixed media paper will work well
- A mixture of flat and round synthetic brushes, ranging from a 1" flat to a #1 round
- Pipette
- Spray bottle
- Jar for water
- Masking Tape

Going further

Gouache is a water-based medium, also known as opaque watercolour. It works in a similar way to watercolours, in that it is watersoluble, and can be used from a dry cake, or fresh paint.

It also pairs beautifully with watercolour paint –they can mix together, or gouache can be kept for opaque accents. Because gouache is opaque, it is more forgiving than watercolour, as it layers readily.

Over the following pages, we are going to be using gouache as fresh paint. This makes the most of its ability to be applied as a thin wash in early stages, working up to thick neat paint in the final highlights and details.



Reactivating gouache

One unusual property of gouache is that it can be 'reactivated' – dry paint can be wetted with a damp brush. This is handy for generating softer transitions and varied textures. When you make the gouache wet, it will initially change colour, but don't worry, it will dry the same. Be gentle when you do this, as rough handling will lift paint off the paper – try to nudge it around.

1 Set up a surface

Gouache is very tolerant of different surfaces, and will go down well on any good-quality heavyweight papers. Here I have watercolour paper, but thick kraft paper, or toned mixed media papers create a nice midtone to work on. Use a low-tack masking tape to create a border.





2 Use a wet palette

A wet palette will help keep paint wet. To make one, take a sheet or two of kitchen towel and fold it into a narrow strip, then spray with the spray bottle until evenly damp. Lay this on the palette and squirt paint on top. Use the spray bottle to keep it wet.







3 Initial sketch

Using an orange, watersoluble pencil, I draw in my initial layer, sticking to big simple shapes. At this stage, we don't need to obsess over details, just tone and colour. Watersoluble pencil will melt, so the sketch will be lost quickly, so you may prefer something more permanent.

Going further

4 Transparent layer

Looking at the dominant hues in the scene, I lay down colour with very dilute paint. This transparent layer kills any white gaps later on in the painting, and will help the greens look more vivid. Don't let things get too dark, or it will be hard to paint on top.



Lights dry dark, darks dry light

Gouache tends not to dry the same colour it is wet, especially for the extremes of light and dark. Usually light colours get darker when they dry, and darks get lighter. This makes things tricky, but the best solution is to compensate for it. If a light colour dries too dark, I will add more white or yellow to lighten it further – it may look bizarre at first, but will dry how I want it.





5 Start with the sky

Although gouache is more forgiving than watercolour as it is opaque, it is still a good idea to preserve any large tracts of light tones early on, as painting over large dark areas can reactivate the gouache and contaminate light tones. I have put in the sky to start with, using wet-in-wet paint for the clouds.

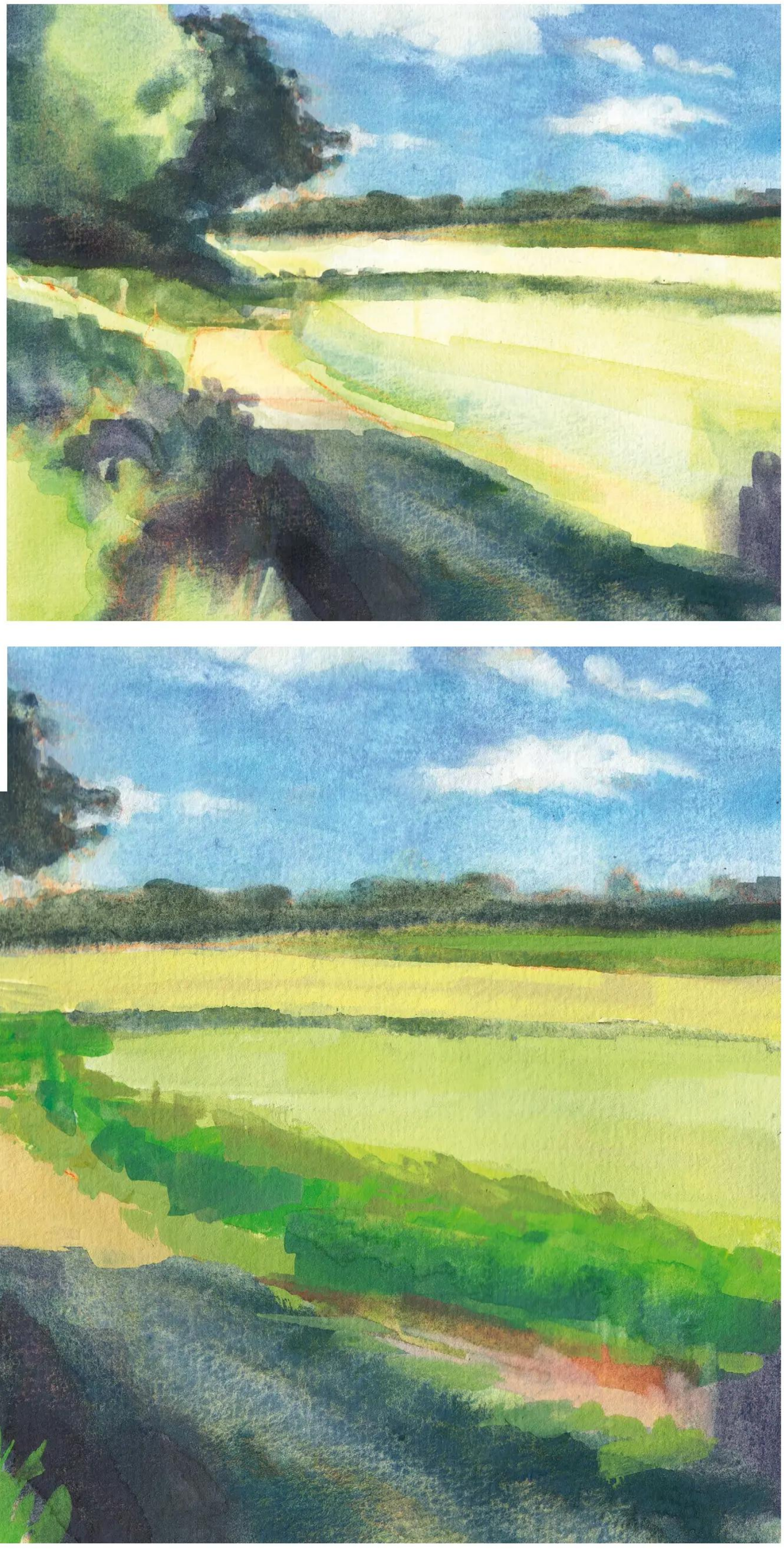
6 Block in darks

Still working thin and wet, I lay in shadow shapes. Try to hold off using black right now and instead mix dark colours to create 'chromatic blacks' – black mixed using complementary colours on the palette such as ultramarine and burnt sienna. I've added magenta or green to add variety in different areas.

"Try to pay attention to the shapes and silhouettes of your major colour areas"

7 Big colour areas

In this stage, the paint is getting more opaque. Try to pay attention to the shapes and silhouettes of your major colour areas, and ignore any fine details. This also mean ignoring highlights; try to paint in the darker colours so we can put lighter ones on later.

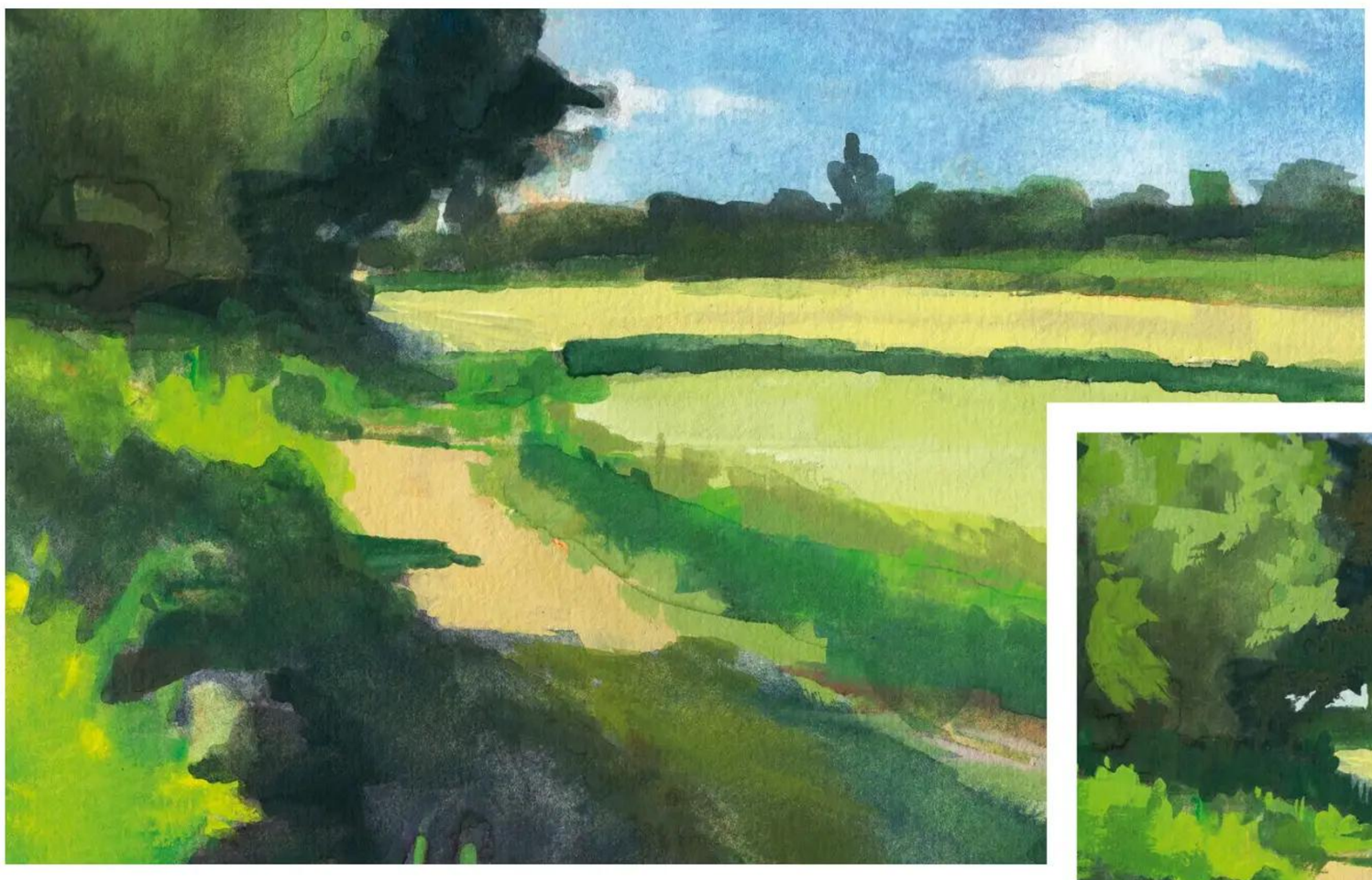


Going further

8 Work wet in wet

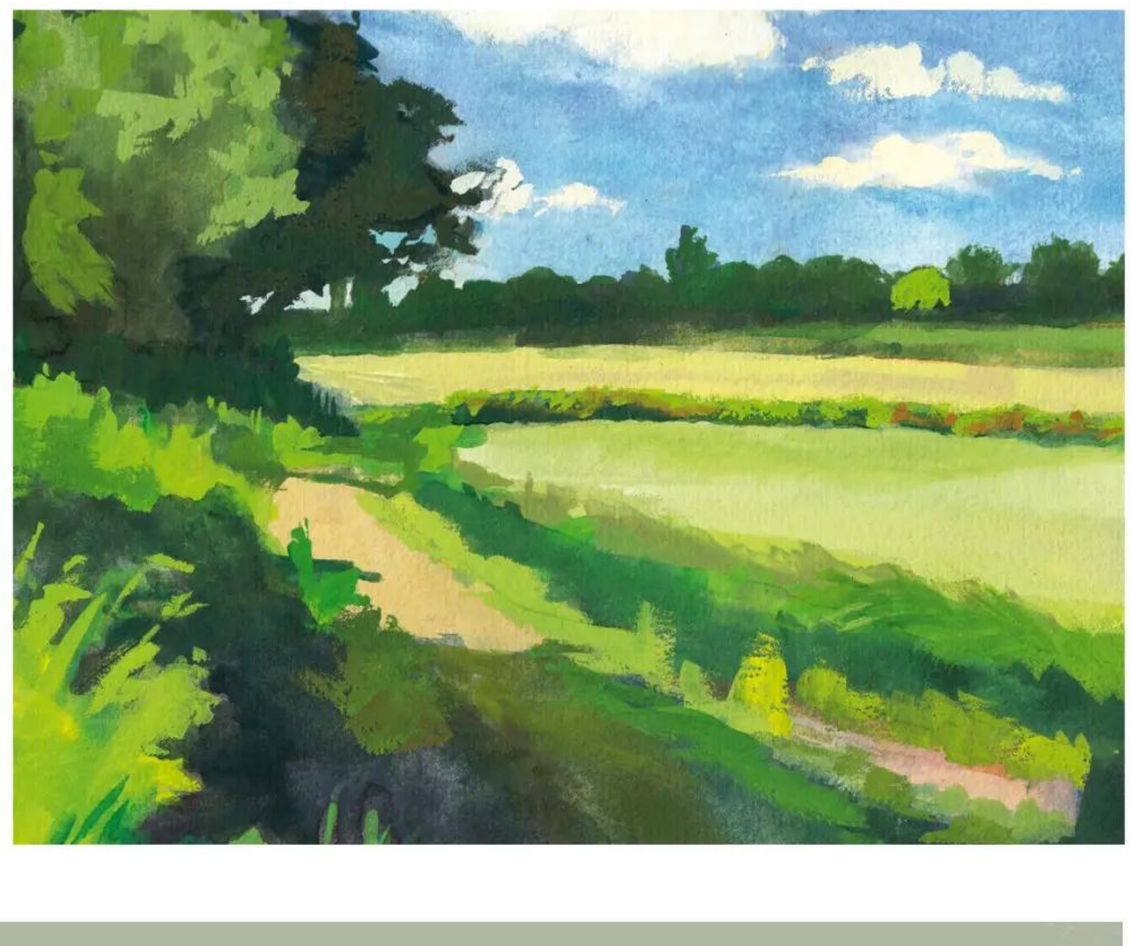
To achieve soft edges and transitions, you can work wet in wet. In gouache this can be done by gently brushing water over an area, and then lightly applying paint, or painting two wet areas next to each other and manipulating them. Try to be gentle to avoid lifting the gouache off the paper.





9 Push the darks

Here I have restated the darks to push the contrast – another layer is enough to give them an extra kick, and the wet boundaries create atmosphere. It is important to work through the painting as a whole, rather than working from one point, to maintain cohesive colour and light.

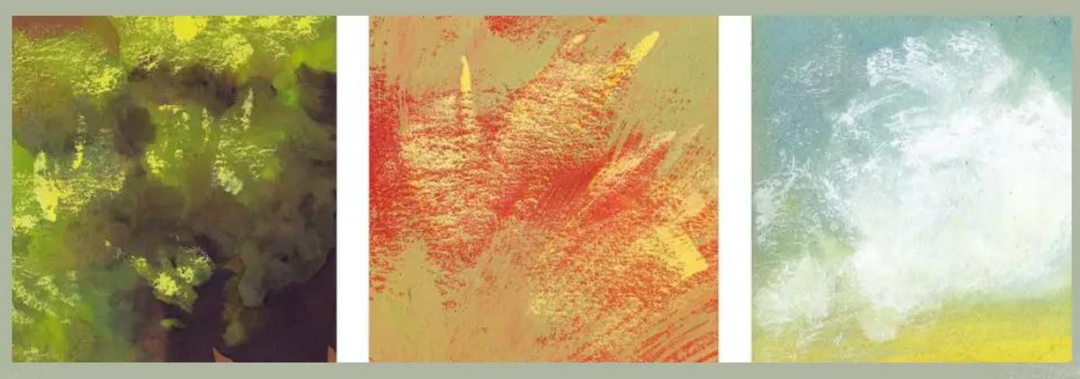


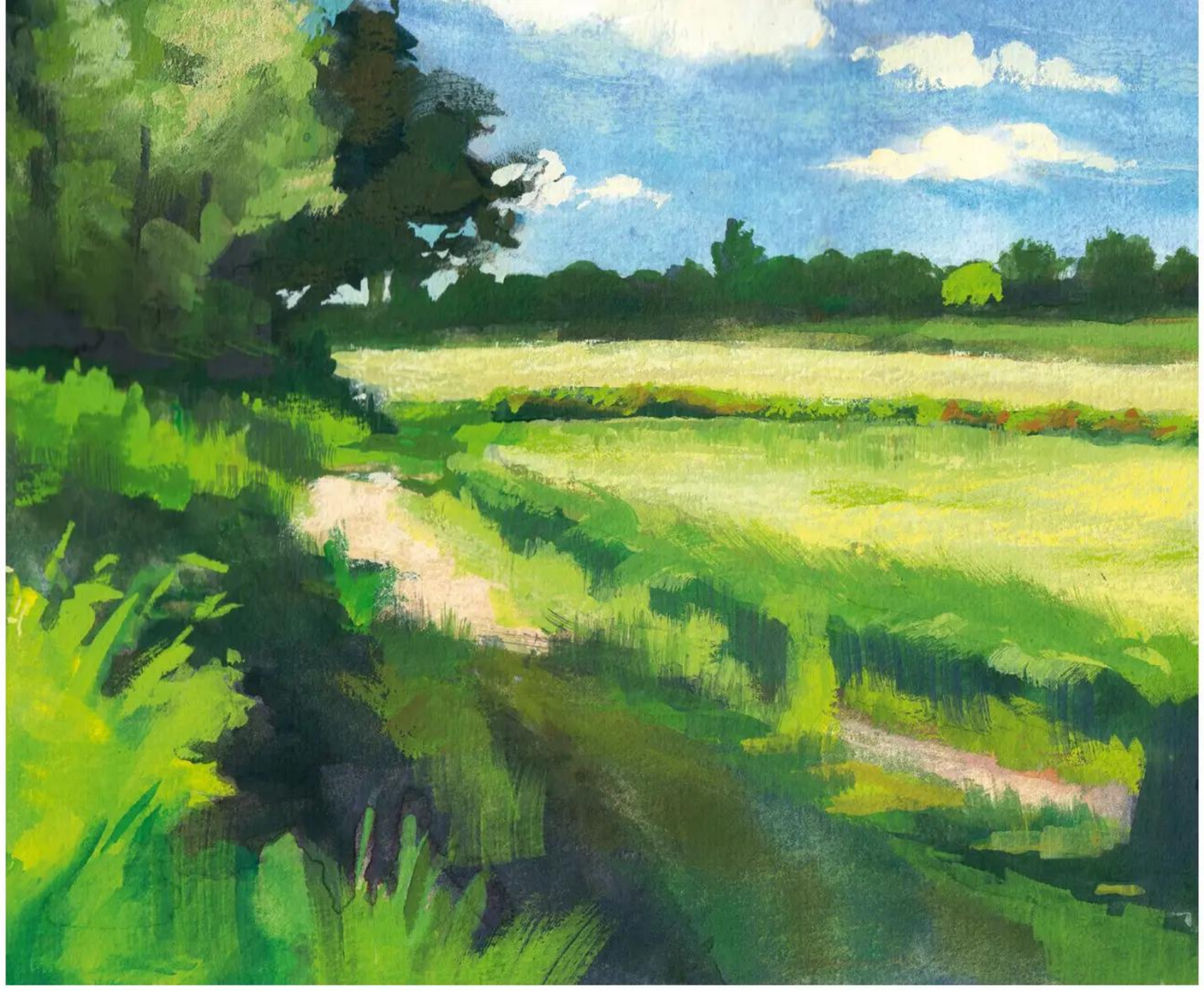
10 Opaque shapes

Once the surface is dry, I use more opaque paint to lay in the lights and refine shapes across the painting. Shape can help us indicate the direction, texture and layers of foliage. There is relatively little water in the paint now, giving it a somewhat creamy consistency.

Create textures with drybrush

Textures are a quick way to add detail. Dry brush is a technique that involves picking up paint with a mostly dry brush, and dragging it over the surface of the paper to create a fragmented texture. This works best with thicker paint, but subtle effects can be made with dilute paint, as long as the brush is dried out with a towel first. Use different brushes and movements (twisting, flicking, dragging) to create varied textures.





11 Apply texture

Texture is important for transforming shapes of colour into more recognisable subjects. A lot of the textures added in the grassy areas and fields were applied using dry brush techniques. We mostly see texture in light areas, and around the edges of shadow shapes, but not in the shadows.

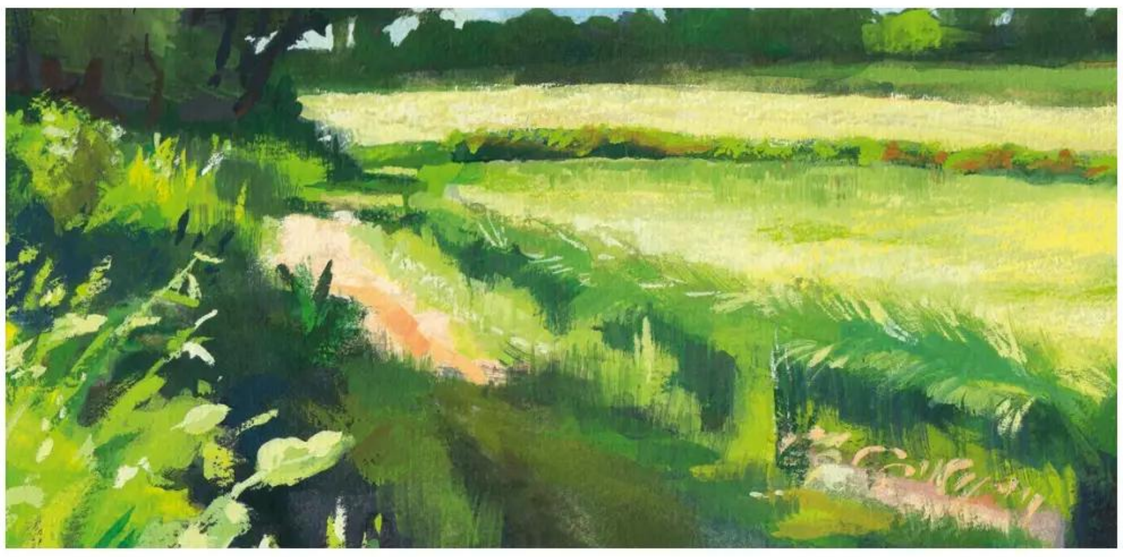
12 Build details

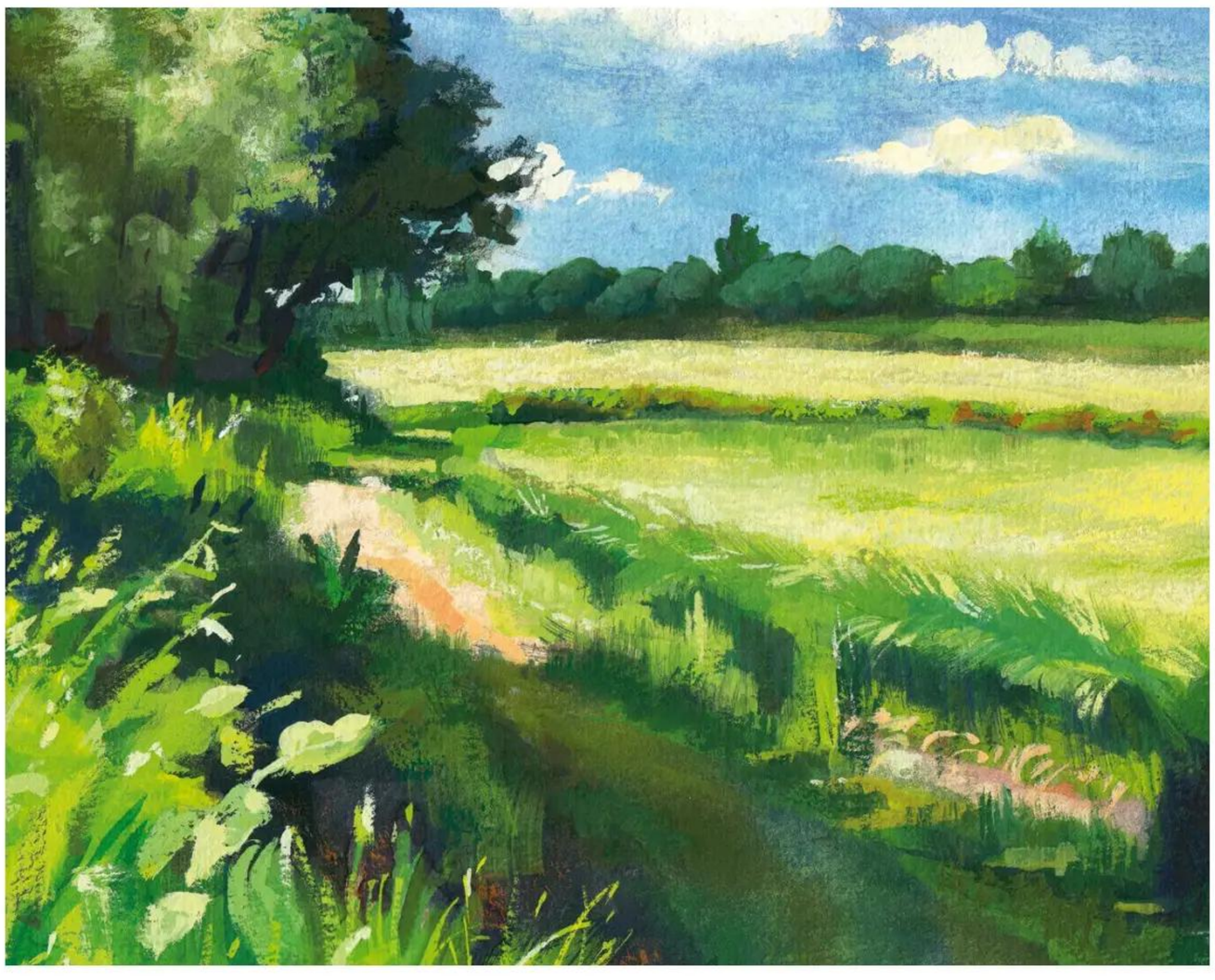
It is finally time to get into the little details. Using a smaller brush, and opaque paint, I am picking out the branches in the trees, and refining the silhouette of the brightly lit grass in the foreground. The alternating light-shadow pattern on the left is important for showing depth, so I'm resolving that too.

13 Add highlights

Here we are really making the most of the opacity of gouache by adding in small highlights with thick paint – a mixture of white with yellow and green hues. Thick paint will sit on top of anything that is dry. Be sparing with highlights, as too many will overwhelm the image.







"The trees have more highlights on them to help convey a more diffuse, leafy texture"

14 Finishing touches

Lots of small changes have been made here. A dry brushed texture has been added to indicate the grass around the path. I've enriched shadows with colours to contrast the grass in the foreground. Finally, the trees have more highlights on them to help convey a more diffuse, leafy texture.

Woodland nightscape

David Farren captures the stunning tones and colours of a night-time woodland walk





About DAVID

Dordogne, France

David Farren has worked as a professional artist for 20 years, exhibiting his work in leading galleries across the UK. He moved to the Dordogne region of France five years ago where he finds inspiration in the surrounding landscape.

www.davidfarren.com

'm very fortunate to live in the French countryside surrounded by oak woodland. In these beautiful vistas, I often take my dog for an evening walk as the sun goes down. I wanted to try and capture this special time of day after sundown when the light fades and I head back home. I worked from sketches and memory in this painting and found acrylic to be the perfect medium to explore my ideas.

I especially like how the fast drying time allows for changes to be made quickly to the composition and how the heavy body acrylics retain the brush marks which help to recreate the textures of the landscape.

Materials

- Liquitex Heavy Body Acrylics in Titanium White, Cadmium Yellow Medium, Alizarin Crimson, Cerulean Blue, Cobalt Blue and Ultramarine Blue
- Daler Rowney Cryla Acrylics in Yellow Ochre and Cadmium Orange
- Flat wash brushes in 1 inch and 3/4 inch, Round synthetic watercolour brushes in sizes 6 and 8, and a rigger brus
- Golden Acrylic Gloss Gel





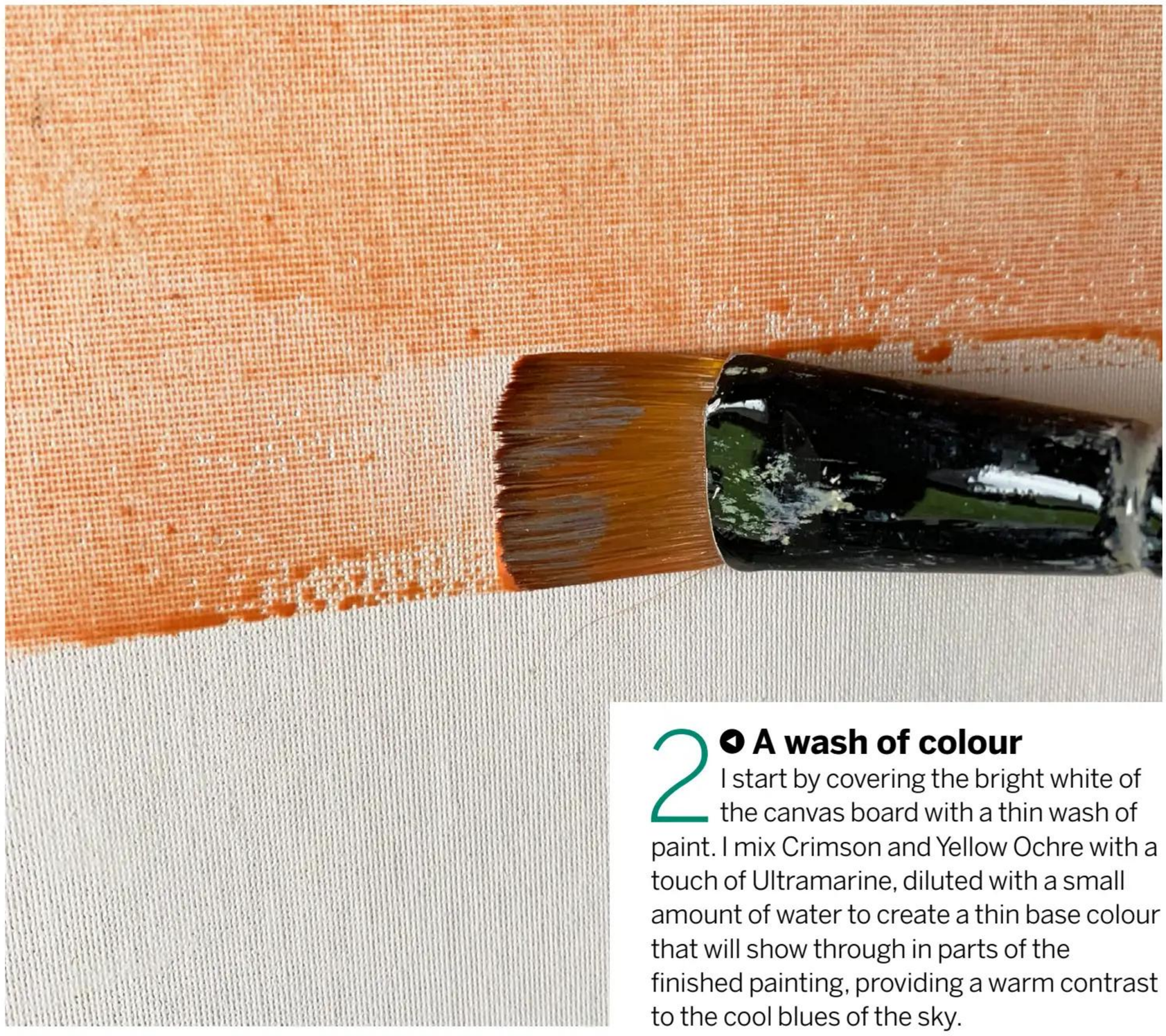
Going further

1 Lay out a palette

In this painting I am going to be using a fairly limited palette of colours; Ultramarine Blue, Cobalt Blue, Cerulean Blue, Alizarin Crimson, Yellow Ochre, Cadmium Yellow and Titanium White. I squeeze out a generous amount of paint onto the tear-off palette, arranging the colours in order from light to dark. I also use a palette knife to add some gloss gel medium.

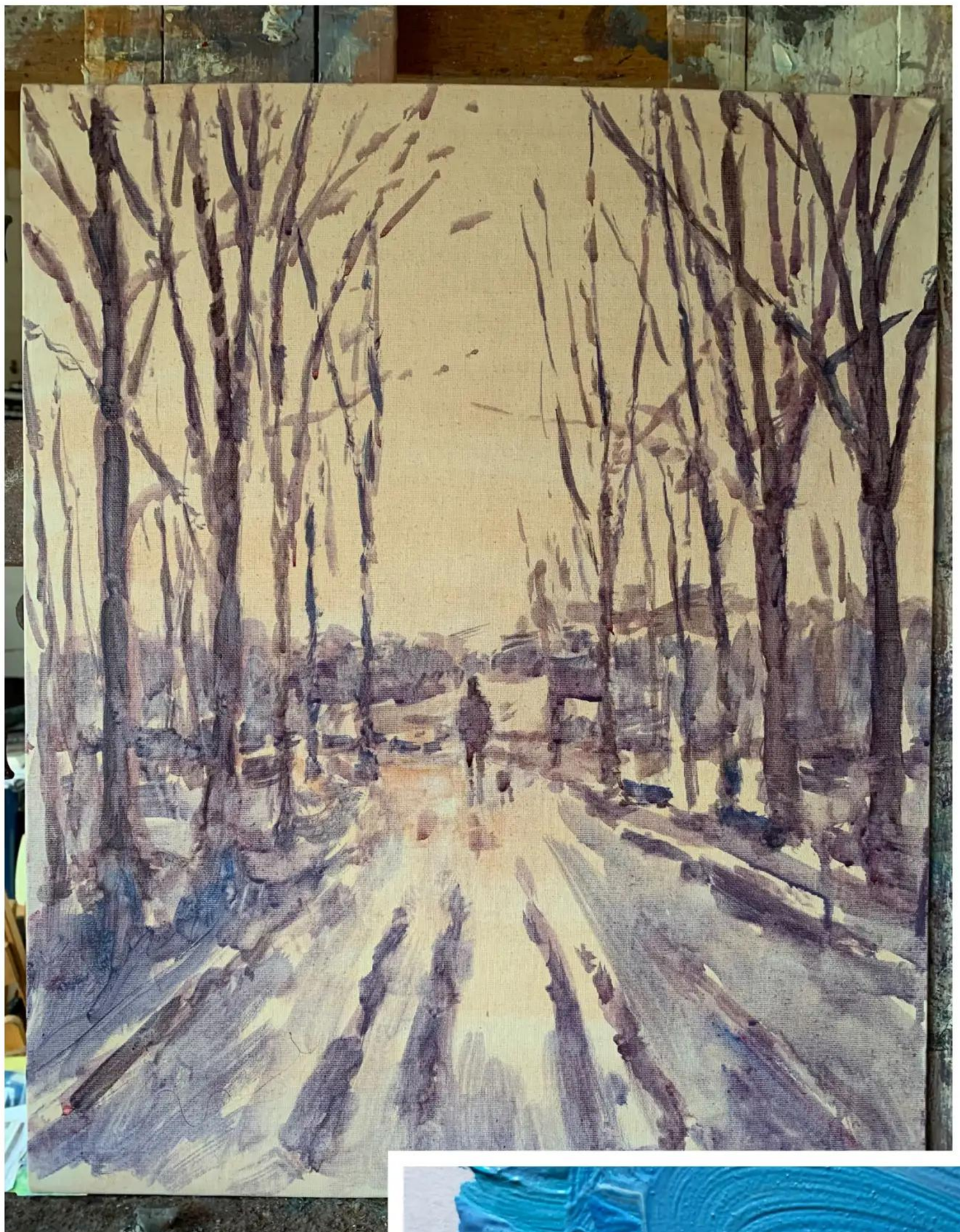
Use a mirror

Looking at the painting in a mirror can help you see it with fresh eyes, help identify any mistakes and clarify where to take the painting next. I use a small pocket mirror which is ideal for use both in the studio and when you are plein air painting in the countryside.



2 A wash of colour

I start by covering the bright white of the canvas board with a thin wash of paint. I mix Crimson and Yellow Ochre with a touch of Ultramarine, diluted with a small amount of water to create a thin base colour that will show through in parts of the finished painting, providing a warm contrast to the cool blues of the sky.



3 Sketch the composition

I add more Ultramarine Blue to the wash and draw the scene, loosely sketching in all the major elements with the corner of a one-inch flat brush. I quickly paint in the trees and the track before adding the figure and the dog. Then, using more of the same colour mix, I brush in some of the darker toned passages of the painting.

"I quickly paint in the trees and the track before adding the figure and the dog"



4 Use gloss gel medium

At this stage I want to use thicker paint with more covering power and texture. I add some gloss gel medium to the mix in a ratio of around 2:1 paint to medium. This helps to give extra body to the paint as well as improving the brilliance and transparency of the colours.

Going further

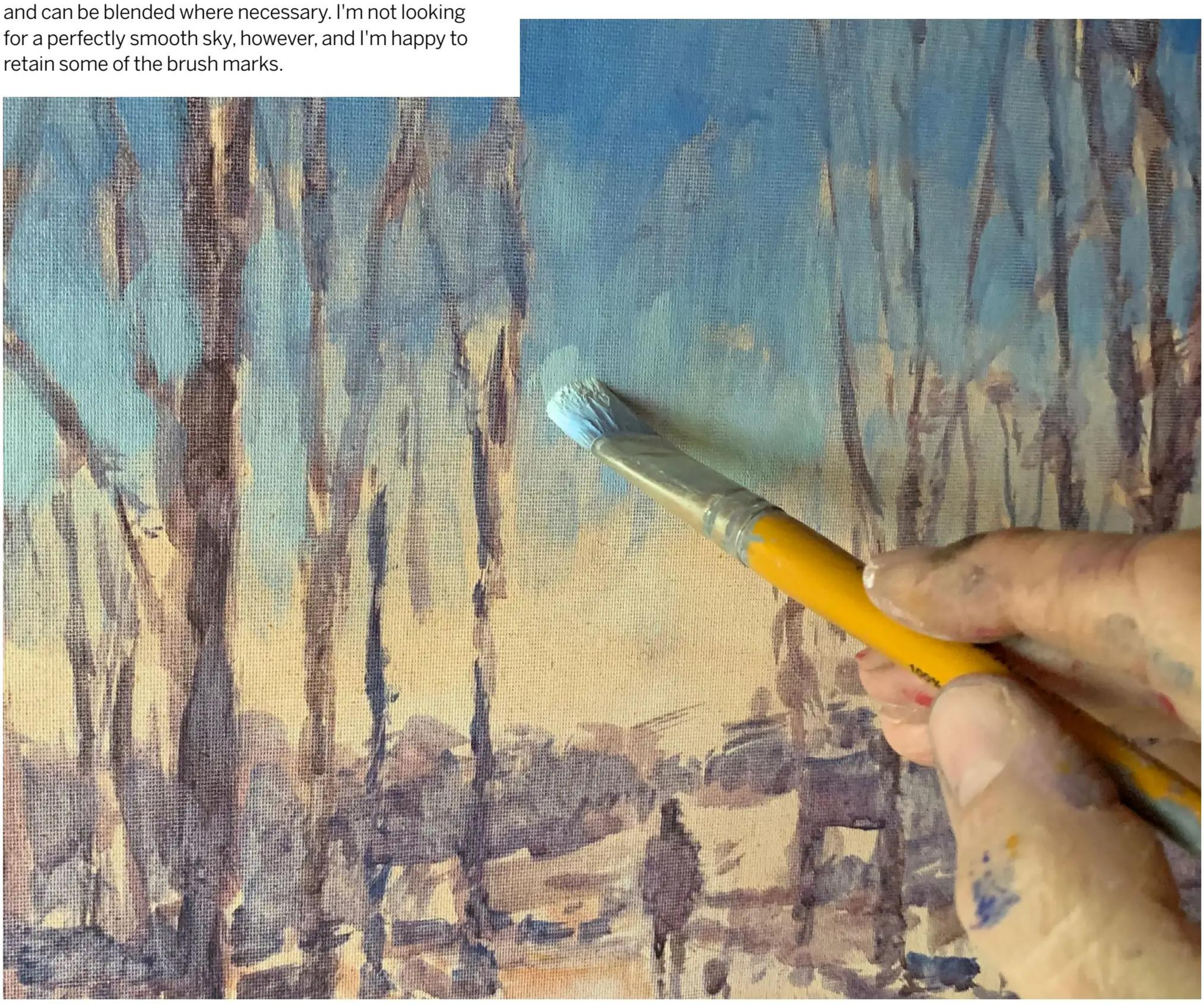
Keep a sketchbook

I nearly always have a sketchbook with me and try to sketch most days – whether it's a quick pencil sketch while I'm out walking or a more considered study in gouache. These sketches can help you find inspiration and act as a reminder of subjects that you would like to revisit and do a larger painting of. They are also a visual diary and are great to look back on.



5 Paint the sky

I begin painting the sky with with a mix of Ultramarine, Cobalt Blue and a touch of Titanium White. Starting at the top of the board, I gradually add more white and introduce Cerulean Blue and as I get nearer to the horizon, where the sky warms in colour. I paint fast so that the acrylic remains moist and can be blended where necessary. I'm not looking for a perfectly smooth sky, however, and I'm happy to retain some of the brush marks.



6 Add light to the horizon

I add a mix of warm Cadmium Yellow and Titanium White to the horizon with a laden half-inch flat brush and then blend the edges into the blue sky above and the distant purple trees below. This passage represents the last of the fading light and will give warmth to the painting and be a contrast to the cool blues and browns.



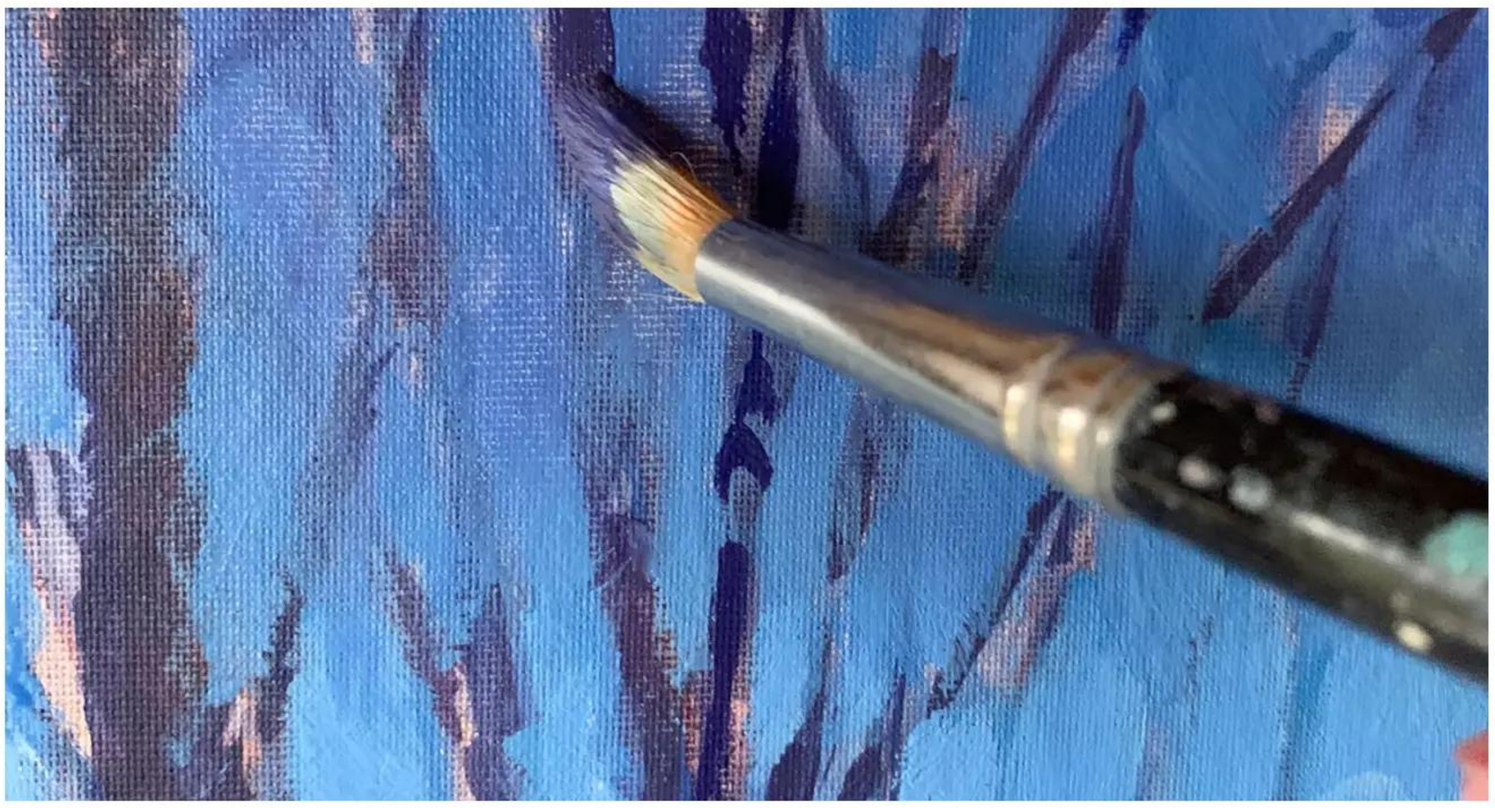
7 Blurred edges

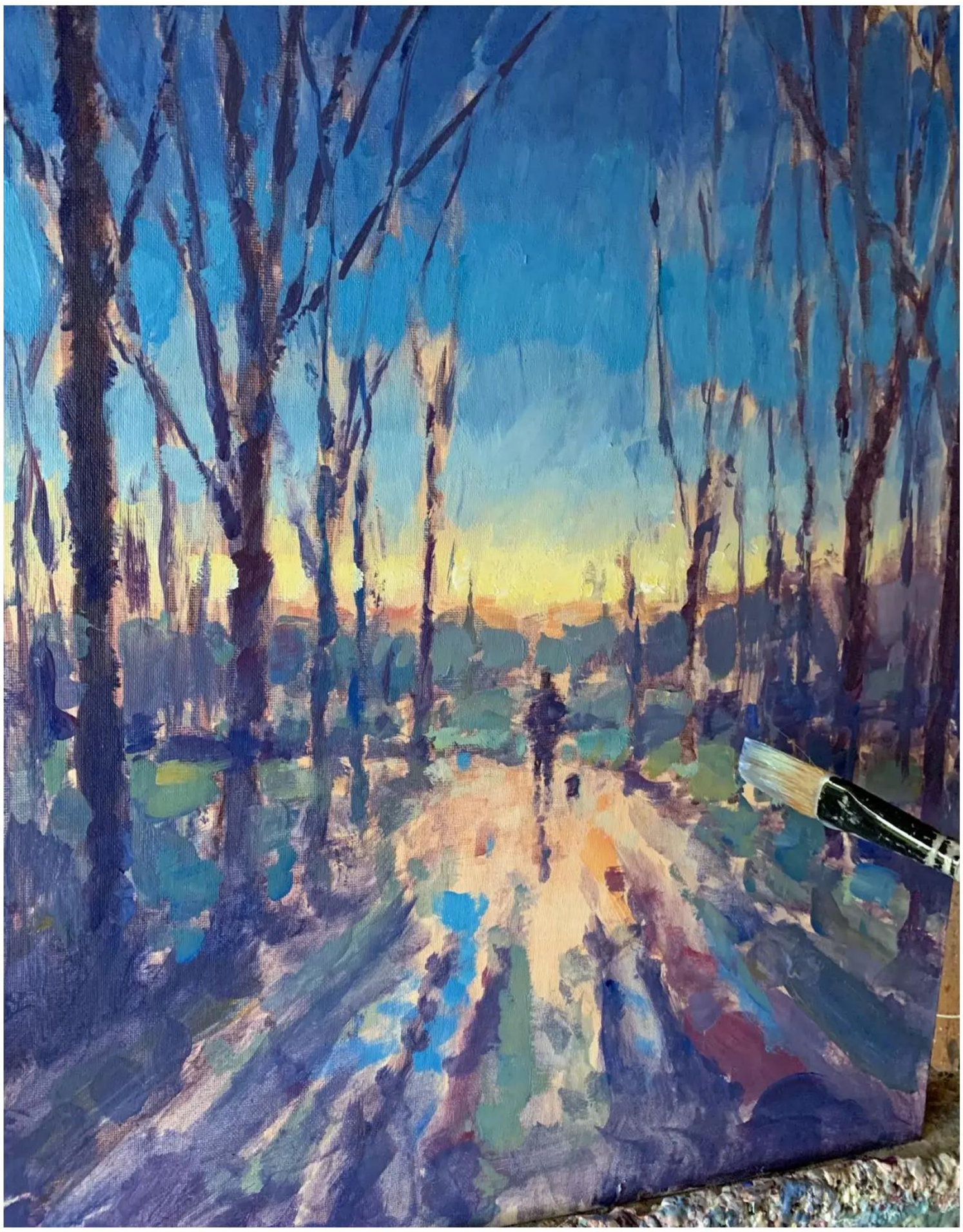
I want to have a mixture of both hard and soft edges in the painting – soft edges are perfect for the evening scene when shapes blur into one another while hard edges catch the eye. Here I'm using a piece of kitchen towel to smudge the background trees.



8 Reinstate the branches

I now return to the foreground trees and go back over the branches with a dark mixture of Ultramarine, Crimson and Yellow Ochre. I use a round brush for the main limbs and a rigger brush to add a few finer branches. I'm careful to remember that 'less is more' and not to go into too much detail and paint every branch.





9 Appraise the painting

At this stage it's important to stand back and take a good look at the painting – all the elements are there but it still needs refining, so it's worth taking a few minutes to think about where to go next and what the painting needs to get it to the finishing line.

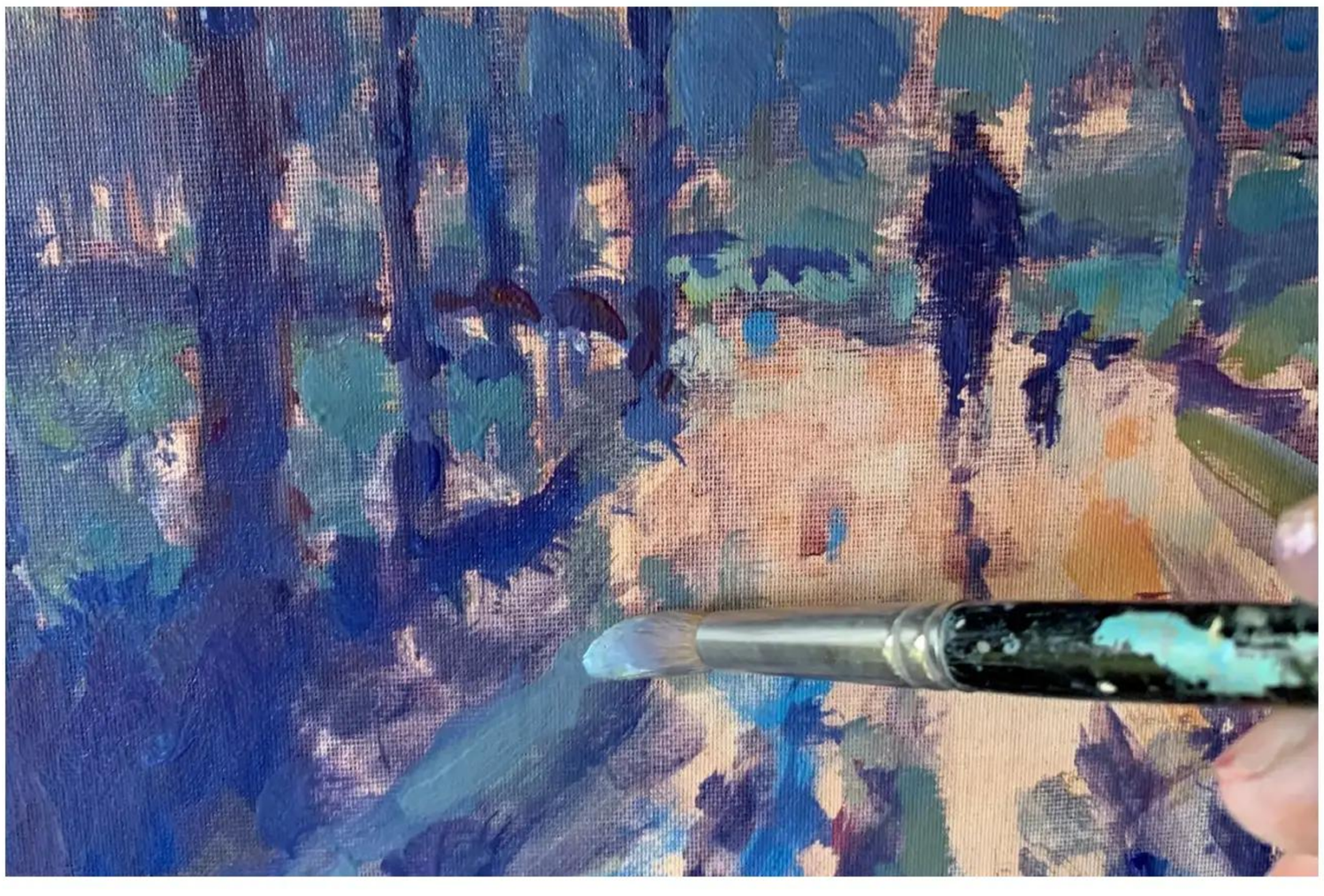
Keep your water clean

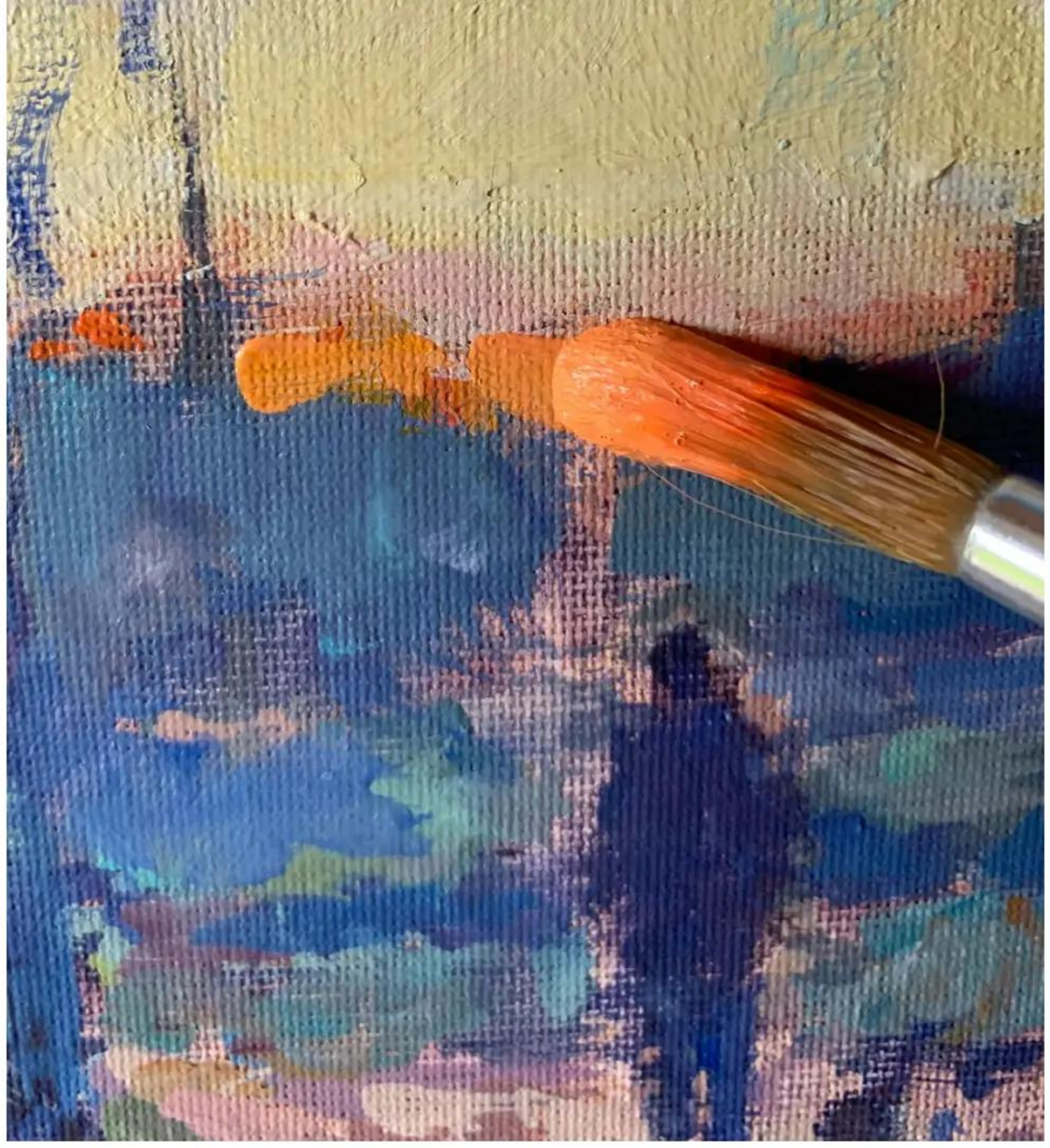
I have a large container of fresh water on my easel that I use to clean my brushes and dilute the acrylic paints. It pays to change this water on a regular basis as the water can become muddy very quickly and will dirty your colour mixes. It also pays to wash your brushes thoroughly after use as dried in acrylic can quickly ruin a brush.



10 Work on the foreground

I add some texture to the foreground working in mixes of greens and browns. I use long, tapering brushstrokes for the ruts in the track which help lead the eye into the painting. I also add a few areas of blue to represent puddles of water reflecting the evening sky. Repeating colours in a painting can be a good way to unify the whole and create harmony.





11 Add colour to the sky

I feel that the painting needs a hit of colour so I add some Cadmium Orange mixed with Cadmium Yellow to the horizon where the sky meets the distant trees. As orange is the complementary colour of blue, the two colours when placed together will enhance each other and lift the painting.

"The two colours when placed together will enhance each other and lift the painting"

12 Work on the figure

I return to the figure, which is the focal point of the painting. I want to keep the shape simple but convincing with some soft edges so that he becomes part of the landscape. I add highlights to the head and shoulders and also to the track in front of the figure to help lead the eye into the painting.



13 Moon rising

I feel that the sky could do with a point of interest and decide to add a crescent moon. I use a rigger brush to do this making sure to place the moon off-centre so that it is not directly aligned with the figure.





14 Varnish the finished painting

The final step is to varnish the painting. Acrylics can have quite a dull, flat appearance when dry so, as well as using gloss gel medium, I also finish my paintings with a coat of gloss acrylic varnish as this really helps to bring out the depth of colour, particularly in the darks.



En plein air with slow-drying acrylics



About **TONY**
Wadebridge, Cornwall
An artist and tutor, Tony also organises art holidays. After art college, he embarked on a career in commercial art. He returned to painting and tutoring in the '70s.
www.hoganart.co.uk

Tony Hogan takes to the great outdoors and explains how to use slow-drying acrylics to perfectly capture the drama of the sea

When I'm painting en plein air (outdoors), people stop to look, pass opinion and chat. I frequently get asked if I have a specialist subject, but I always say "No – I paint anything and everything!" I could stay with a proven successful image that I just paint and sell, but for me, being an artist is about continually exploring all possibilities – a sunset, animals, flowers or whatever captures your eye. You are the only one to view it in that way, and only you can show your view to the world.

Having taken the time and effort to learn secrets and techniques of many different media, I can select whichever one I feel gives the best results for any given painting scenario. For this view above the Cornish North Coast, Atelier Interactive Acrylic Paints were perfect. Their extended drying time and unique reactivation process allow you to paint for long hours in ways not possible with other acrylics, which dry quickly in the outdoor breeze. A further consideration is having no toxic chemicals to contend with – water is all you need. Atelier Interactive also has an Unlocking Formula for reactivation, should you need to extend drying time further.





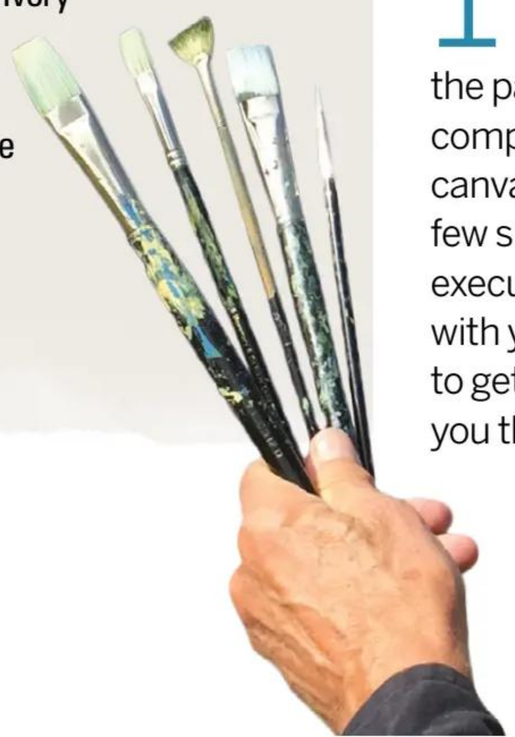




Materials

Slow-drying acrylics offer an extended drying time, so you can use them in ways not previously possible to the acrylic artist. This allows the freedom to create using many techniques that are normally only available with oil paints yet without the health risks of solvents such as turpentine.

- ☐ Atelier Interactive Acrylic Paints
- ☐ Stretched and pre-primed cotton canvas, 24x12 inches
- ☐ Rosemary & Co Ivory acrylic brushes
- ☐ Daler-Rowney Stay-Wet palette
- ☐ Atomiser spray
- ☐ Clean water
- ☐ Old rags



1 Looking isn't seeing

Many people arrive at a chosen view and start straight in with the paints, only to find later that the composition doesn't work or even fit the canvas. I always start with a sketch, be it a few small compositional marks or a more executed piece, as shown here. Take time with your sketching, as this is your chance to get to know the view. It never is what you think you first see.

2 Initial composition marks

Acrylic (and oil) painting is generally painted from dark to light, so I'll start thinly painting the canvas with Dioxazine Purple, giving me a dark yet warm basis to work from. Then using Toning Grey and a size 6 flat brush, I roughly draw the composition. No real detail here, just locating main features to ensure they all fit on the canvas. Use a wet rag as an eraser to make adjustments.

Going further



3 Composing on the canvas

Ensure that everything you need is close to hand – there is nothing worse than being in full flow and finding a tube of paint or brush is missing. Here I'm making the initial compositional marks on the canvas. I've rested my original pen sketch below the work so I can look at it if needed (though I often put this to one side and work afresh from the actual view).



4 Starting the painting

I find it easier to work from the sky down. A trick with these acrylics is to lay down an undiluted covering of Tinting (Pearling) White in the area to be painted. The only water used is to ensure the brush has not dried – I lightly spray areas with my atomiser if they start to dry too fast before I introduce other colours. Atelier's acrylics allow me to paint using oil techniques, keeping the paint moist.



5 Blocking in the sky

Cumulus clouds dance across the sky, so it's up to me where I place them. With Cerulean Blue painted into the Tinting White and using Cobalt Blue above, I paint the overall effect of a summer sky. Quickly picking up a hint of Dioxazine Purple, I add to the blues, and with Titanium White I start to paint the clouds. Note how the blue is lighter nearer to the horizon.

6 Balancing sky, sea and land

To really see how the sky looks, I need to block in land and sea, establishing the horizon and thus sharply clarifying the skyline. I then work further on the sky, concentrating on how clouds reflect the light from above and the side with darker graduating tones below. This is achieved using Titanium White on the top and lighter edges, blending it wet in wet to deeper tones.





7 To the headland

With free-flowing marks I start blocking in, working on Trevose Head. The shape is outstanding, its rugged dark cliffs topped by sweeping agricultural fields thrusting out into the Atlantic Ocean. Here you see my early marks, as I establish the scale, location and colours needed. Olive Green, Naples Yellow and Raw Sienna have been added to the palette to achieve this first step on the headland.





8 Using an atomiser spray

Standard acrylic can dry in 10 to 20 minutes – probably even less on a warm breezy day – but I keep the acrylic active using the atomiser spray 12 inches from the surface. The water gently lands on the work and reactivates it, making it open to blending and reworking. I used plain water but, if required, a small amount of Atelier Interactive Unlocking Formula can be added for very hot days.

9 Taking control

Choosing Turquoise Green, Phthalo Blue, Sap Green and Tinting White, I paint big sweeps of the sea. Often I will have two or three colours on the brush at a time. I also start painting the land mass, taking into consideration the colours, shades and tones of the fields. It's a delight to see the colours of the recently harvested cornfields alongside the verdant greens.





10 Balance, develop

As the light constantly changes I also continually reconsider tonal values and change them if needed, without ending up muddying the work. The sky is lighter and I do some repainting to show this, while more fields are painted in. The sands of Harlyn Bay are visible as the tide drops. I paint this, but also accidentally overpaint into the sea, reducing its scale. I will return and amend this later.

11 Moving to the foreground

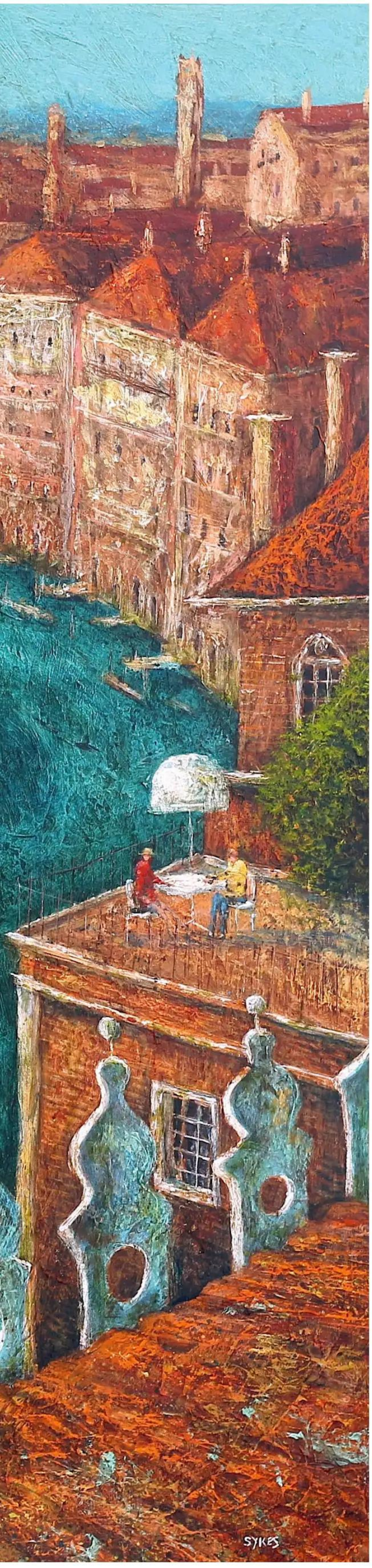
I add in details of distant trees along with other small bits, including some on the earlier painted Trevose headland, as it drifts into my vision. I then concentrate on the lower half of the work, establishing the ruggedness of the slate cliffs as they pierce finger-like out into the Atlantic with white foam waves crashing over them.

12 Final touches

When this is close to completion, it's easy to rush, but remember to stop, step back and have a close look at your work. I see there are lots of little areas to complete, such as a grassy bank in the foreground and a small building on the foreground cliff. There are bushes, hedgerows, and more detailing of the slate cliffs that need attending to. The swell of the sea changes, producing more white water. I revel in the experience of loading the brush with Titanium White and capturing this.







Create texture on board

ADRIAN SYKES reveals how he develops a contemporary detailed cityscape, focusing on vibrant colour, texture and glazing techniques



About **ADRIAN**
Bristol, UK
Adrian is a freelance painter, living and working in Bristol's Jamaica Street studios.
www.adriansykes.co.uk



For this workshop I'm painting one of my favourite cities, Venice. Its vast architectural structures and eerily quiet atmospheric canals and narrow streets have always fascinated me as a painter of cities and townscapes.

I've chosen to take one of my favoured perspectives: an aerial view that enables me to incorporate some interesting foreground detail, rooftops and plenty of opportunity to create texture and happy accidents. I also like to introduce an element of narrative into my work, and have chosen to be inventive with an imagined market scene and a couple on a roof terrace to add further interest.

I work largely from sketches, and my memory and imagination. This can be challenging because I'm constantly making decisions about the work rather than referencing something in front of me. In the end it comes down to finding harmony and balance in the painting, and trusting what I feel to be right.

Often in my paintings I like to try to balance areas of detail with other areas that are more gestural and loose in their mark making. This keeps a freshness and vibrancy to the finished piece.

Materials

I'm painting on primed 6mm MDF board, and will use a combination of brushes, flats, rounds, and riggers and palette knives. I like the effect of scraping paint on and off, using a dry brush technique for added texture and interest. I also use Stanley knife blades to scrape the paint off, and draw into the surface of the paint for added fine detail. I'm working with Liquin Original, Golden Acrylics and Michael Harding oil.

Going further



1 Add texture to the primed surface

First, prime your board well. I use board because the following methods described would be too abrasive for canvas and could damage it. I also like the tough resistance of working on board. Be liberal with the acrylic underpaint so that an interesting surface is created. The more unpredictable the surface, the better! This will help when applying the glazing at a later stage in the painting.



2 Choose your image

I have chosen to work from a basic sketch I did while travelling in Venice. This is a rooftop scene, which gives me the chance to play with scale. I'm painting from memory, which has the advantage of freeing up my mark making and not having to be too precise, enabling the imagination to take over.



3 Initial sketch

I use charcoal to sketch the image, because it's versatile and quite painterly to use. Don't worry too much about making mistakes – just plot out the basic contours first and then apply a little detail once the main shape of the drawing is in place. You can always rub out with a cloth or your hand.

"I'm painting from memory, which has the advantage of freeing up my mark making"

Random marks

Using a textured ground before any painting is applied will add interest to your work. I really love the unpredictable mark making effect of scraping off glazes to reveal the texture underneath.



4 Start painting

Working loosely and freely, I block in the colours using acrylics and build up a vibrant impression. I add lighter tones on top using a dry brush technique to expose the surface underneath and further create interest. I use a flat during this stage, which is ideal for buildings and enables me to develop a great range of marks. It's useful to have a hairdryer to hand if you want to dry the paint quicker!





5 Be bold

I'm aiming for a vibrant, textured impression, so don't worry about detail at this stage. We'll refine the lines when it comes to glazing. I work light to dark so be bold with your colours. The refinement and muting will come later, but at this stage it is good to have the option to scrape back later.

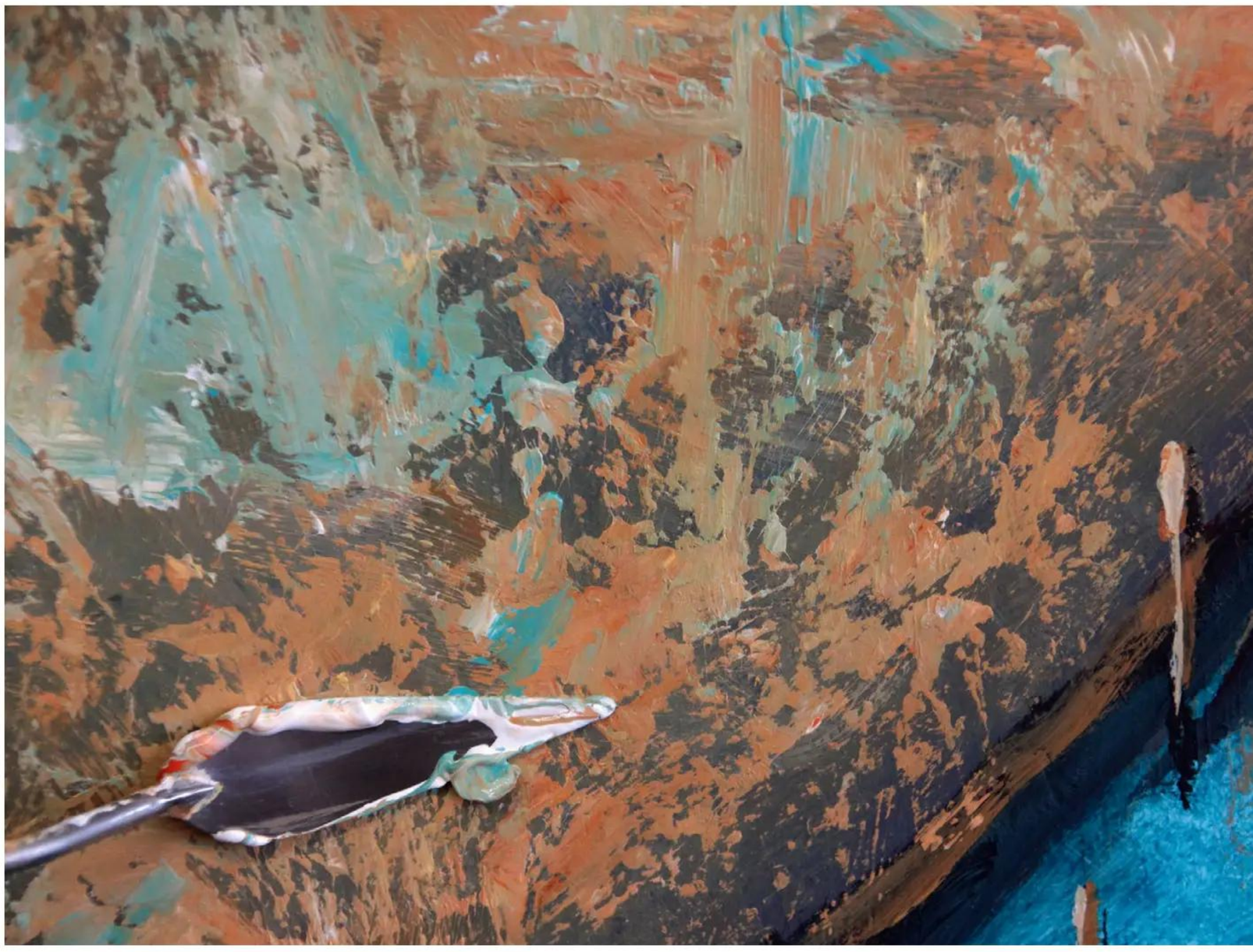
Take a step back

Make sure you frequently stand back from your painting. Getting a balance of what works in close up and what works from a distance is crucial, and gives subtlety to the finished piece.

6 Use a palette knife to create happy accidents

Add further interest with a palette knife by scraping onto the painted surface. Try using some different colours from your normal choices – this can create an interesting effect when combined with the glazing at a later stage in the painting process. Remember, you're aiming for a vibrant impression so let your imagination take over. At this stage in the painting you don't need to be too careful.





7 Apply first-stage detail

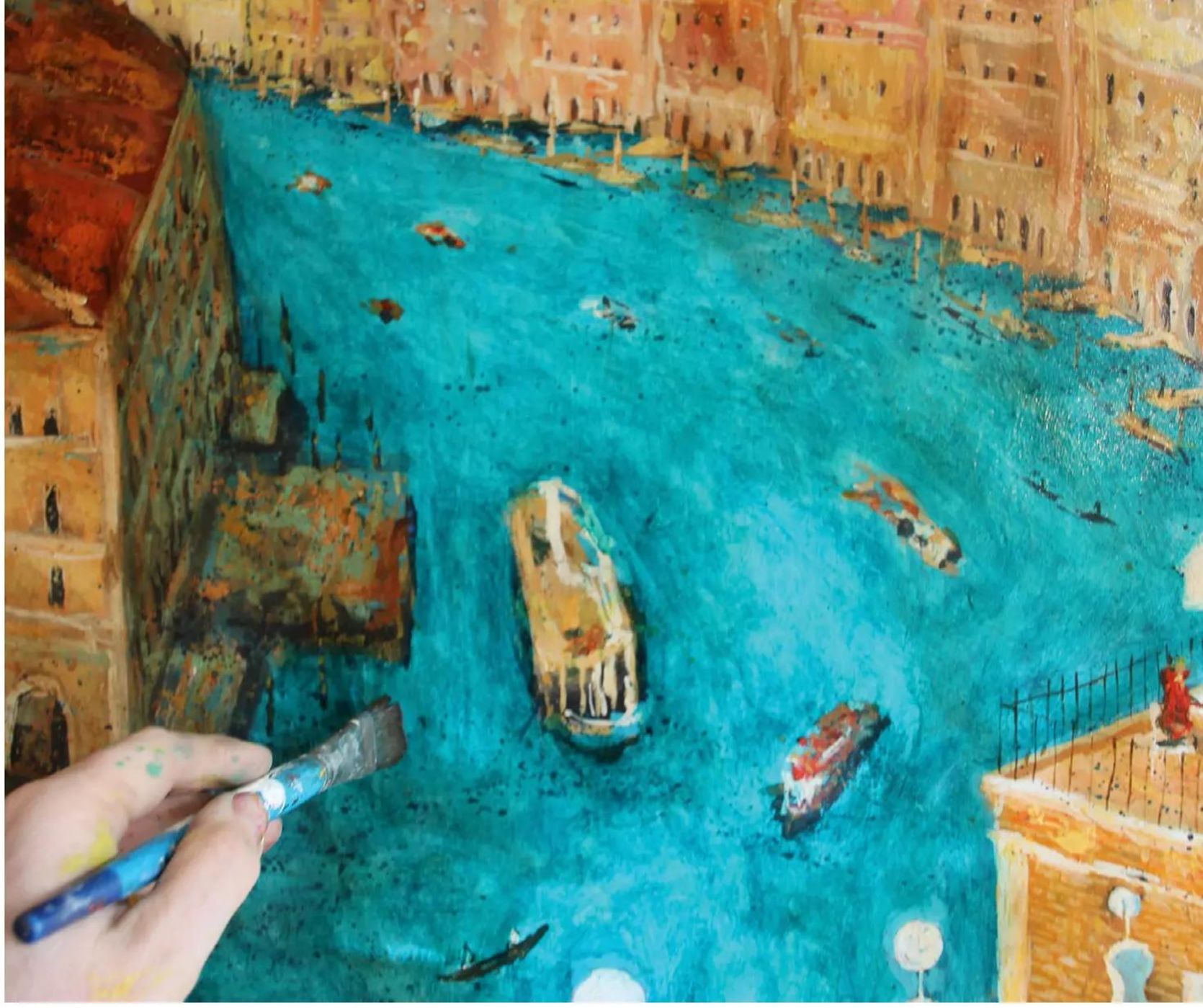
I call this 'first-stage' detail because things are still nice and loose, but I'm adding a little more interest without being too precise. Try using a small flat for the edges of buildings and then use a rigger to sketch in the windows and details.



8 Break up the contours

Use an old stiff brush to create another layer of interest by flicking watered-down acrylic paint on top. This adds colour and stops the lines being too harsh. It can also be used to tone down some of the areas without applying a glaze. Here I'm using it to make the mountainous background recede.

Going further



9 Add depth with glazing

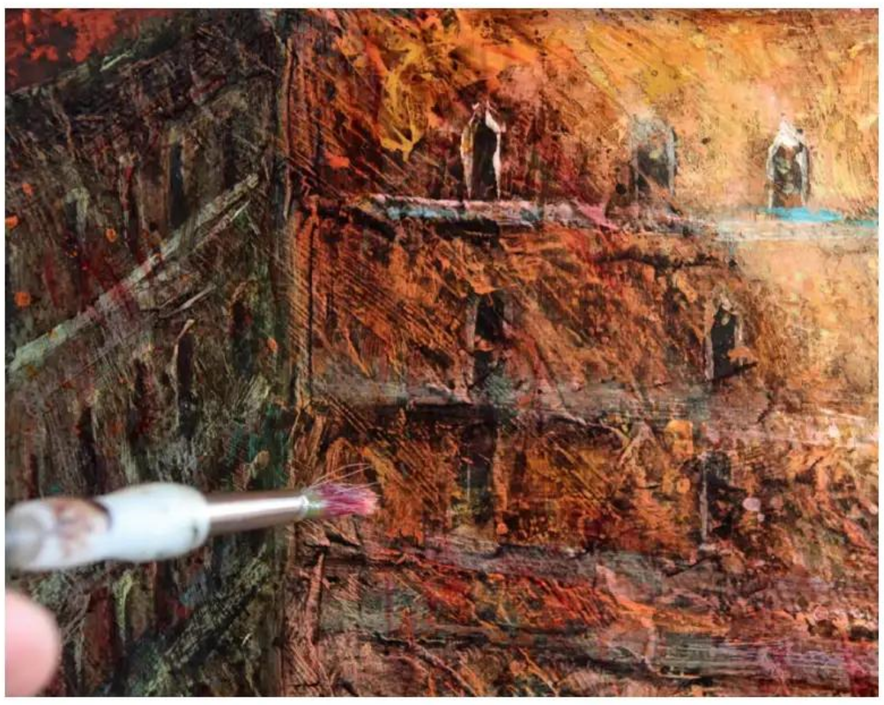
At this stage the acrylic underpainting is finished. I now apply a variety of glazes using Winsor & Newton Liquin Original to speed up the drying time and also add a deeper, wet look to the painting. I apply a dark oil glaze to the entire painting, mixing Burnt Umber and Prussian Blue. Don't worry about going too dark at this stage because most of it will be scraped off. The point of this initial glaze is to expose the texture underneath.

10 Let the texture work for you

When scraping off with a palette knife you can enjoy the wide variety of unpredictable marks that you're now creating. Enhance this effect further by carefully taking a fresh Stanley knife blade, which will take more off than the knife. Remember that the aim of this stage is to balance creating new marks, while still exposing the painting underneath.







11 Build up layers and depth

Allow the scraped back glaze to completely dry before working into it any further, because this will ensure that the surface and the interest will be retained. The painting at this stage is engaging but a little flat, so now we start to refine the piece by adding further glazing and tonal values. The joy of working this way is that you can always take away if you go too heavy, either with a soft rag, kitchen roll or by applying a little clean turps and working into the surface with a stiff round brush.

12 Use colourful shadows

By adding a coloured glaze to your shadows you can make use of borrowed light. Here I'm adding a little Alizarin Crimson to give this shadow on the building a warmth where the dark glaze before it has made it too dull.

13 Using the glaze to refine your lines

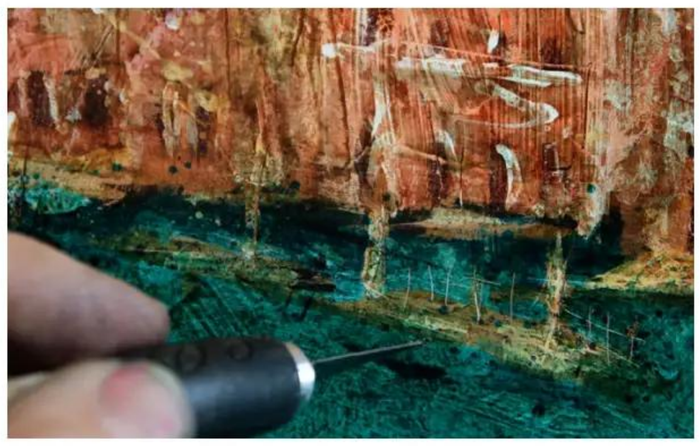
I decide that I need to tighten up some of the detail from the loose acrylic underpainting. Use a dark glaze mix of Burnt Umber to refine some of the edges and add weight to the darker shadow areas of buildings and rooftops. Remember to take frequent breaks from close-up work and stand back to look – this will highlight the areas that need detailed attention or making more subtle.



Career change

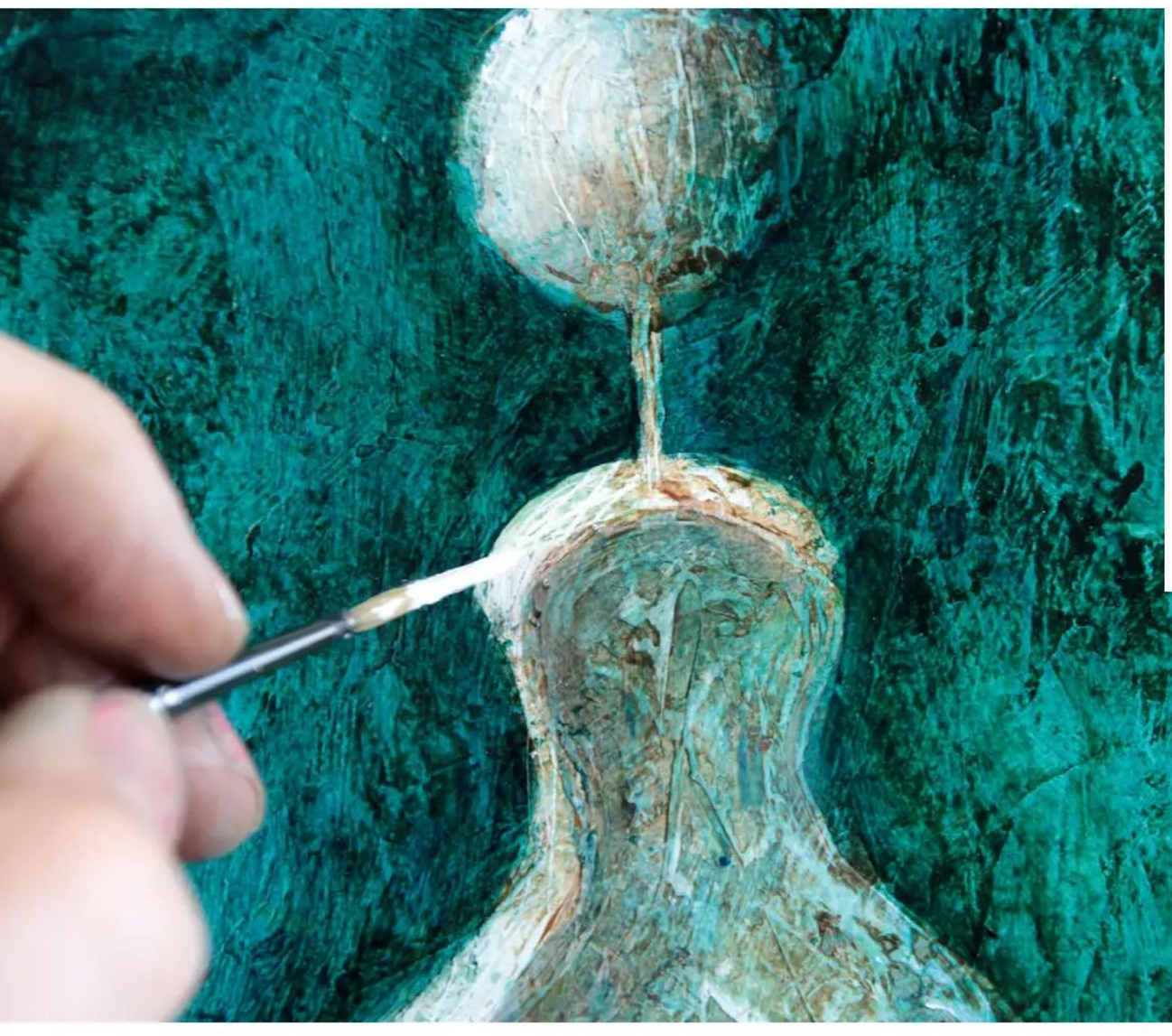
I had stopped painting for about ten years to concentrate on being a musician. I really wanted to get back into painting, but didn't have an outlet for my work. I entered a local arts trail in Bristol, turned a room in my house into a gallery space, got some positive feedback and made some sales. This gave me the encouragement I needed to continue and I haven't looked back since.





14 Final stages

I want to bring attention to the figures in the painting, so I add some unmixed colour straight from the tube. Be careful at this stage to not unbalance the painting and be too heavy with your approach. Just a subtle hint of vibrant colour will be enough. At this stage I can also use my blade to draw in some further detail.





15 Finishing touches

Highlights and glazed areas of colour in the foreground will add further interest in the areas you want to jump out, giving the painting a final sense of depth. It's always hard to know when a painting is finished, but when you start to run out of ideas it probably means that it's done!

Images: Getty Images (paint daubs)

Going further



Glazing for glowing skies

SARAH JANE BROWN demonstrates a dramatic colourful sky using just a few colours, some simple glazing techniques and a little bit of patience



About **SARAH**
Pembrokeshire, UK
Sarah Jane Brown is a landscape painter based in Pembrokeshire, and is inspired by the clear coastal light and the rugged beauty of her surroundings. A member of the Guild Society of Artists, she exhibits widely and her work is collected internationally.
www.sjbfineart.com

Take a walk around any large art museum and the chances are you will see some very old paintings that still have such rich, luminous colour in them that it seems they have been lit from within.

The traditional method of glazing can seem daunting at first as it carries an air of mystery. Glazing as a basic technique is actually very simple but does require patience, so expect this exercise to take several days. Each layer must be completely dry before adding the next. For this reason I work on several paintings simultaneously and have them hanging up to dry around my studio, waiting for the next layer. One advantage of this method is that should you make a mistake with a glaze, you can wipe it off knowing that the previous layers will be undisturbed.

Glazing can create a visual depth, optical complexity and intensity of colour that is impossible to achieve by any other method, so it is well worth learning. It can be used for an entire painting, as in this case, or just in places to modify a colour, deepen a dark tone, transition or unify particular areas of a painting.

At its most basic, a glaze is the application of a transparent layer of paint over a dry layer of underpainting. Traditionally, artists would start with a tonal underpainting called a 'grisaille', which is what we will be doing in this demonstration. A painting of glazes is only as good as the structure and values of the underpainting, so it's worth taking your time over this first stage.

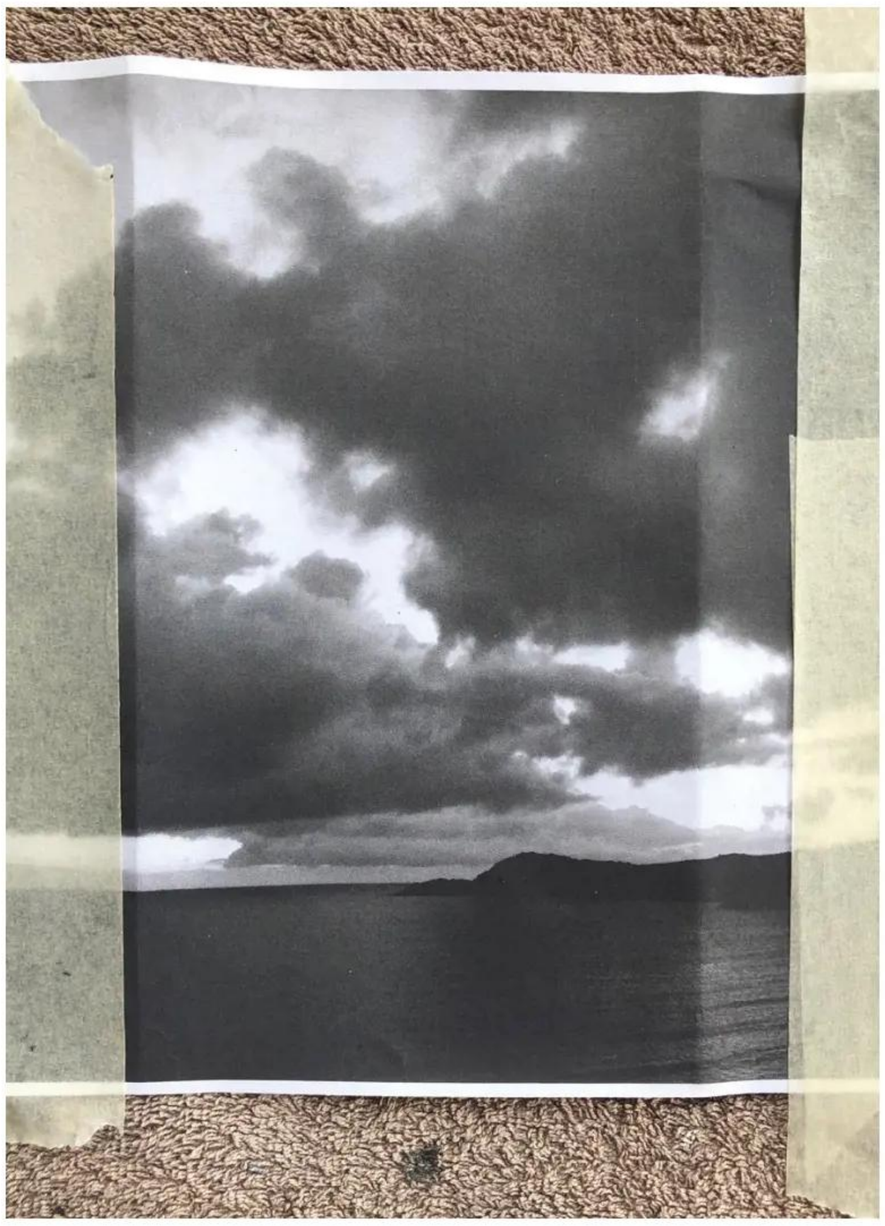
Adding a transparent pigment to a transparent glaze medium such as Liquin speeds drying time, extends the paint and makes it even more transparent. By layering several glazes, an extraordinary depth of colour can be achieved.

Materials

- 40 x 50cm cotton primed canvas
- A range of brushes and knives, the more variety the better, so you can vary the size and shape of the marks you make. e.g. large 2" flat brush, 1" natural hair brushes round, 1" natural hair brushes flat, Size 14 brights, Size 8 filberts, Size 5 brights, rigger/fine-liner brush, selection of palette/painting knives
- Limited palette of transparent oil colours; Lemon Yellow or similar, Ultramarine Blue, magenta or Alizarin Crimson, Burnt Umber
- Titanium White (I use Alkyd for speed of drying)
- Fast-drying flow/gel medium such as Liquin
- Low-odour solvent for brush cleaning
- Rags/paper towel



Going further



1 Preparation, source image and sketch

I chose this image for the purpose of demonstration because it is relatively simple, but you can choose your own if you prefer. I recommend that you work from a black-and-white photograph or drawing because you will find it easier to see the tonality and be less distracted by colour. At the first stage this is especially important because the tonal underpainting, or 'grisaille', will be the foundation for all the subsequent layers. Use some masking tape to isolate a pleasing area of the image, making the orientation and relative proportions the same as your canvas.



2 Lay the groundwork

Using Ultramarine Blue and Burnt Umber, mix up a neutral dark colour. Roughly sketch in the composition, making sure that the key elements are in the right place and pleasing to the eye. I placed my horizon quite low on the canvas, as in the photograph, because I wanted the sky to be the main focus of the painting. I also decided that I wanted the viewer's eye to zigzag around the painting. Mapping out the main focal point and areas of interest at this stage ensures a strong composition, creating a good structure from which to build your painting.





Speed up drying time

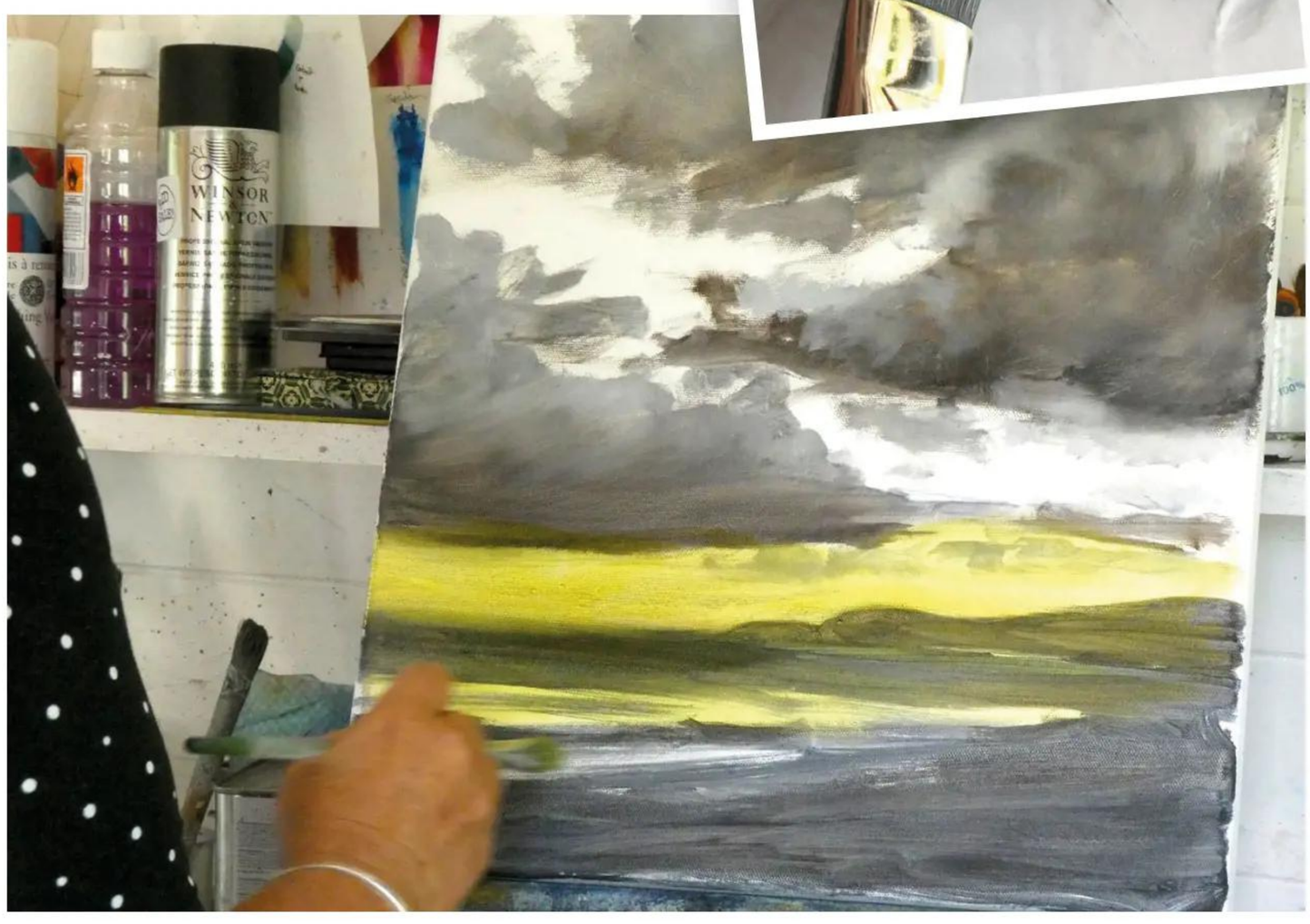
As well as paint mediums such as Liquin, I use Winsor & Newton Alkyd White, which mixes well with other oil paints and speeds up the drying time considerably. Alkyds will usually dry overnight even if applied fairly thickly, whereas standard oil paint takes several days, or sometimes weeks, to dry.

3 Block in tones – grisaille

Slightly dampen a larger brush, pick up some of the paint and thinly block in the darkest areas. Next, add a little Titanium White to create a mid-grey tone in the transition areas. Try not to get carried away here – leave big areas of white where your sky colours will be. Keep these areas fairly separate and clean. Once you're happy that the structure is right, leave it to dry for at least 24 hours, or for speed you could do this whole stage in acrylic.

VERY IMPORTANT: **You MUST let this layer dry completely before moving on.**





4 First glaze

Pour out a little puddle of glaze medium and, picking up a tiny dot of paint with the tip of a clean brush, mix a transparent 'wash'. Make sure there is no white or other opaque colour in your mix, or it will go cloudy. Apply the glaze over all the areas you wish to tint. I started with yellow over the bottom third of the canvas, across the horizon area, for a golden sunset effect. Work the glaze over both the light and the dark areas.

Going further



5 Change colour

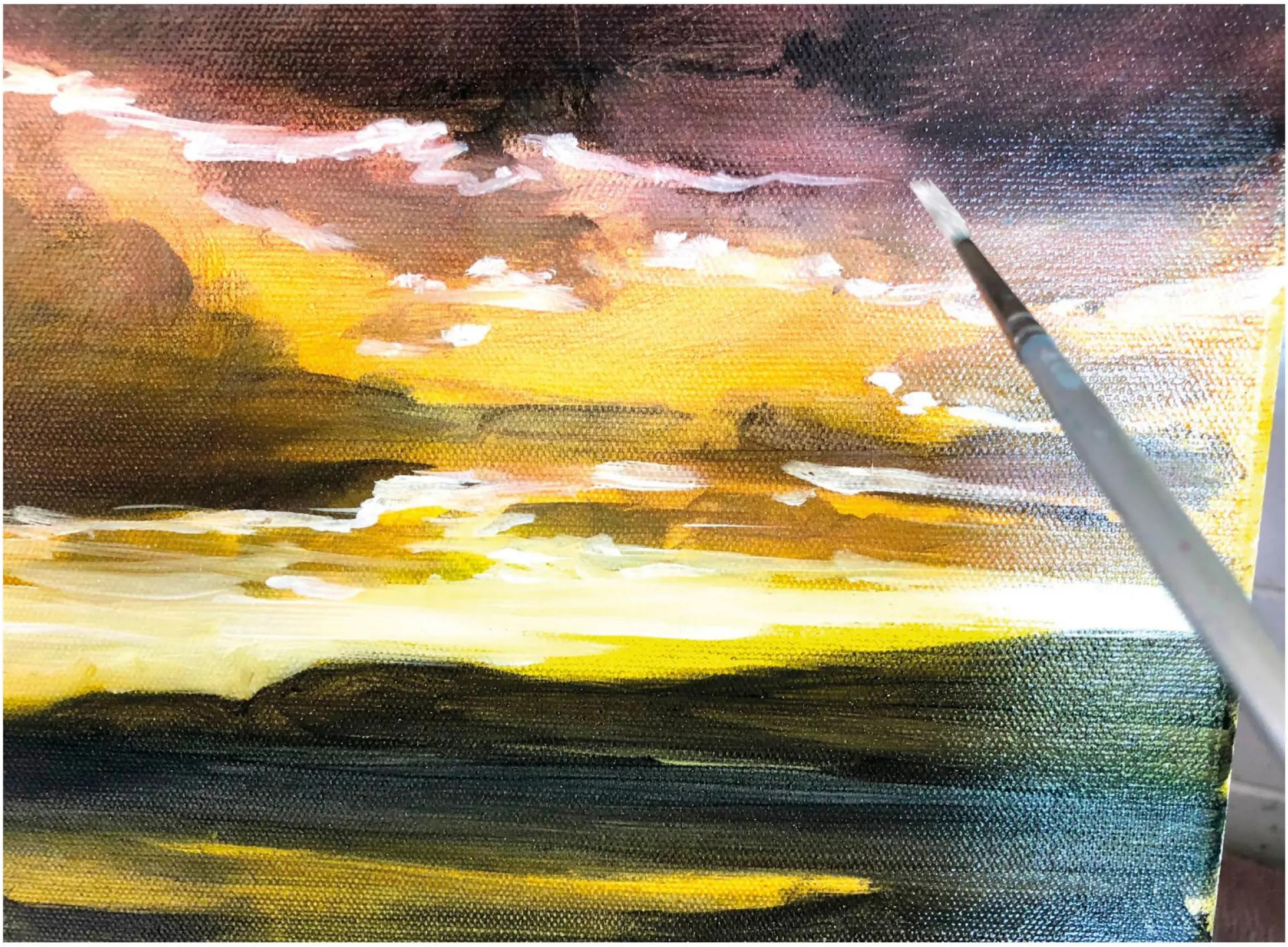
Make a separate transparent puddle with a dot of magenta. Apply it cleanly above the yellow only, blending down into the yellow slightly at the end. Repeat this process with Ultramarine at the top. Work the glazes over the dark tones as well as the light. Make sure you use clean brushes for each colour and be sure not to get the yellow and blue mixed unless you want a dirty green sky! Leave it to dry – this will usually take at least 24 hours. Don't rush this because you need dry, clean layers.

6 Second glaze – optical colour mixing

Once your first glaze is dry you can repeat the process, which will intensify the colours, creating depth and richness. This time you can overlap the colours slightly in places to create optical colour mixes. By layering yellow over some of the areas of magenta, or vice versa, you will get vibrant oranges and reds. By overlapping the magenta and blue you will get optical violets and purples. Glaze a little blue over the yellow below the horizon to get a deep sea green. Add a little of the magenta glaze to the foreground to suggest a reflection of the sky. Be aware that each layer will intensify the colour but also darken it, so don't overdo it in the light areas.

Test first!

It's worth testing out your glazes on a separate scrap surface, especially if you are layering different colours. Optical mixes behave very differently to pigment mixes as the colour nearest the surface will be the most dominant. It's like layering sheets of different coloured glass.

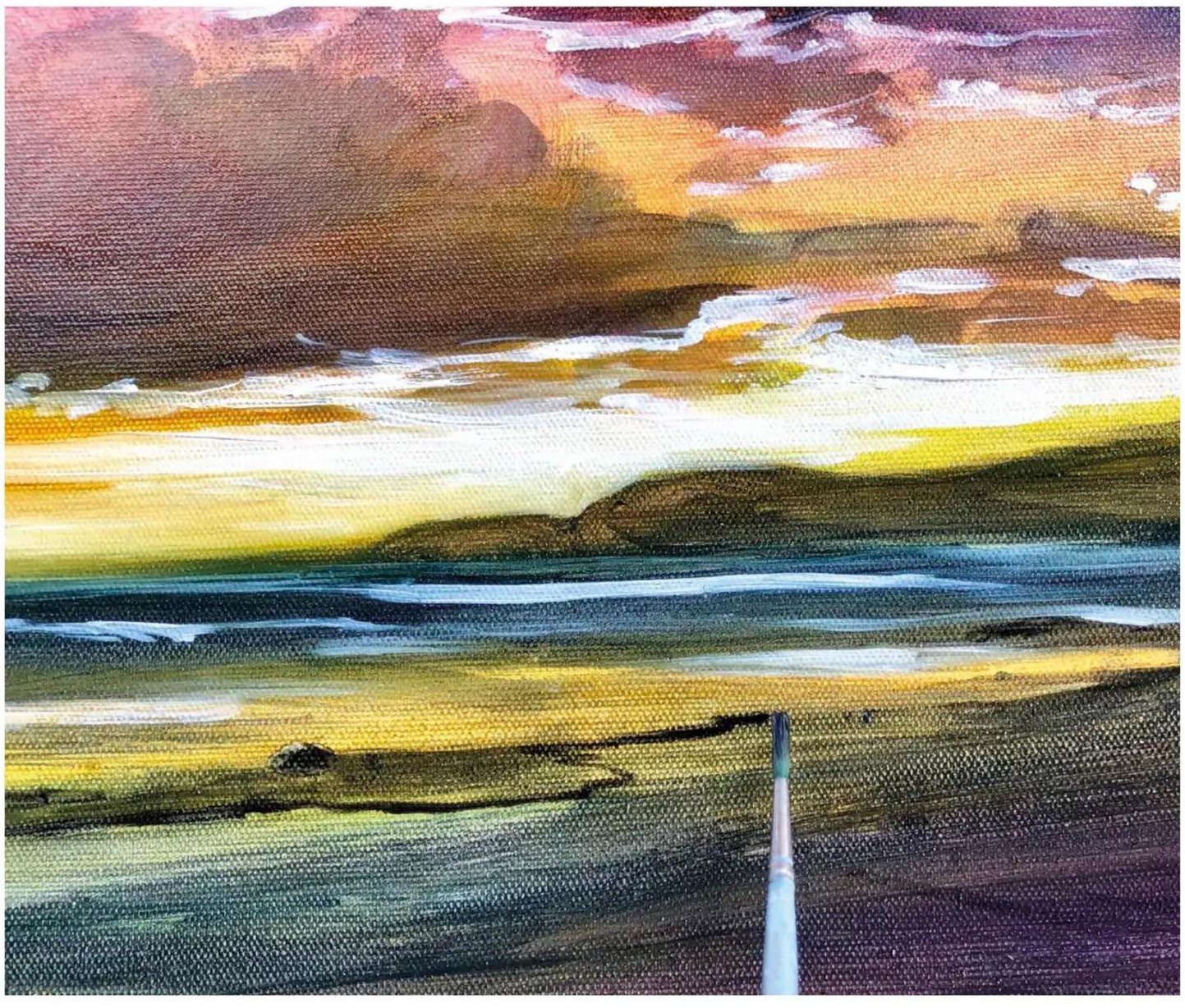


7 Apply a little ‘force’

A white area under a glaze is known as a ‘force’. Light passes through the glaze and is reflected, or ‘forced’, back to the eye, creating the illusion of light being emitted from within the painting. With each layer of glaze, less light bounces back from the original force, so we now need to re-introduce it in the areas where we want a really glowing effect. I used a rigger brush loaded with pure white along the bottom edges of the clouds. Bear in mind that this will look a bit odd until the next glazes go on.

8 Sea/beach/headland

Using the same rigger brush loaded with white, drop in a couple of tapering horizontal lines to suggest breaking waves. Next, with a clean brush, use some of the original dark mix to deepen and define the headland, and then add some details on the beach. Again, you must now be patient and let it dry completely!



Going further

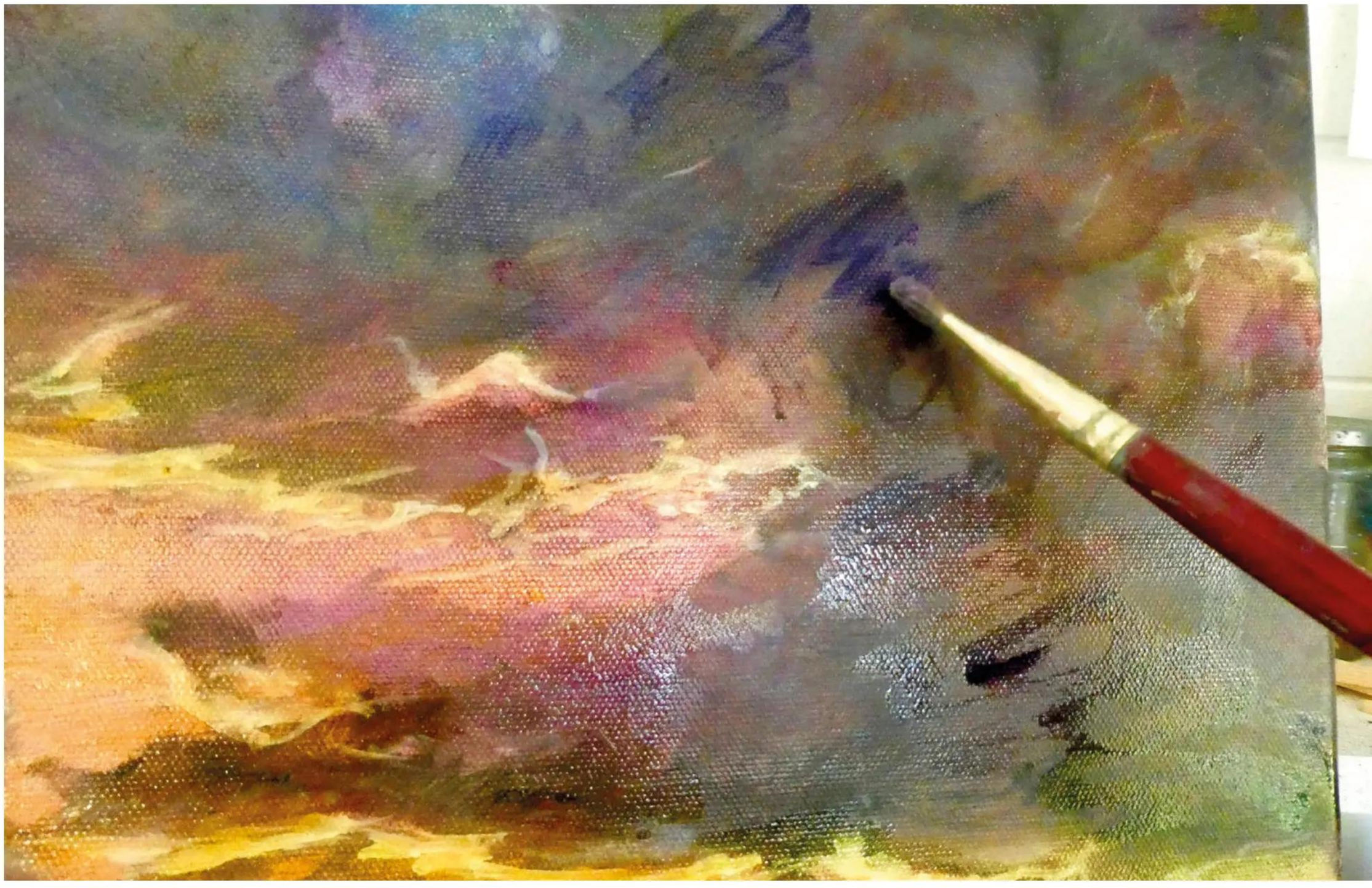


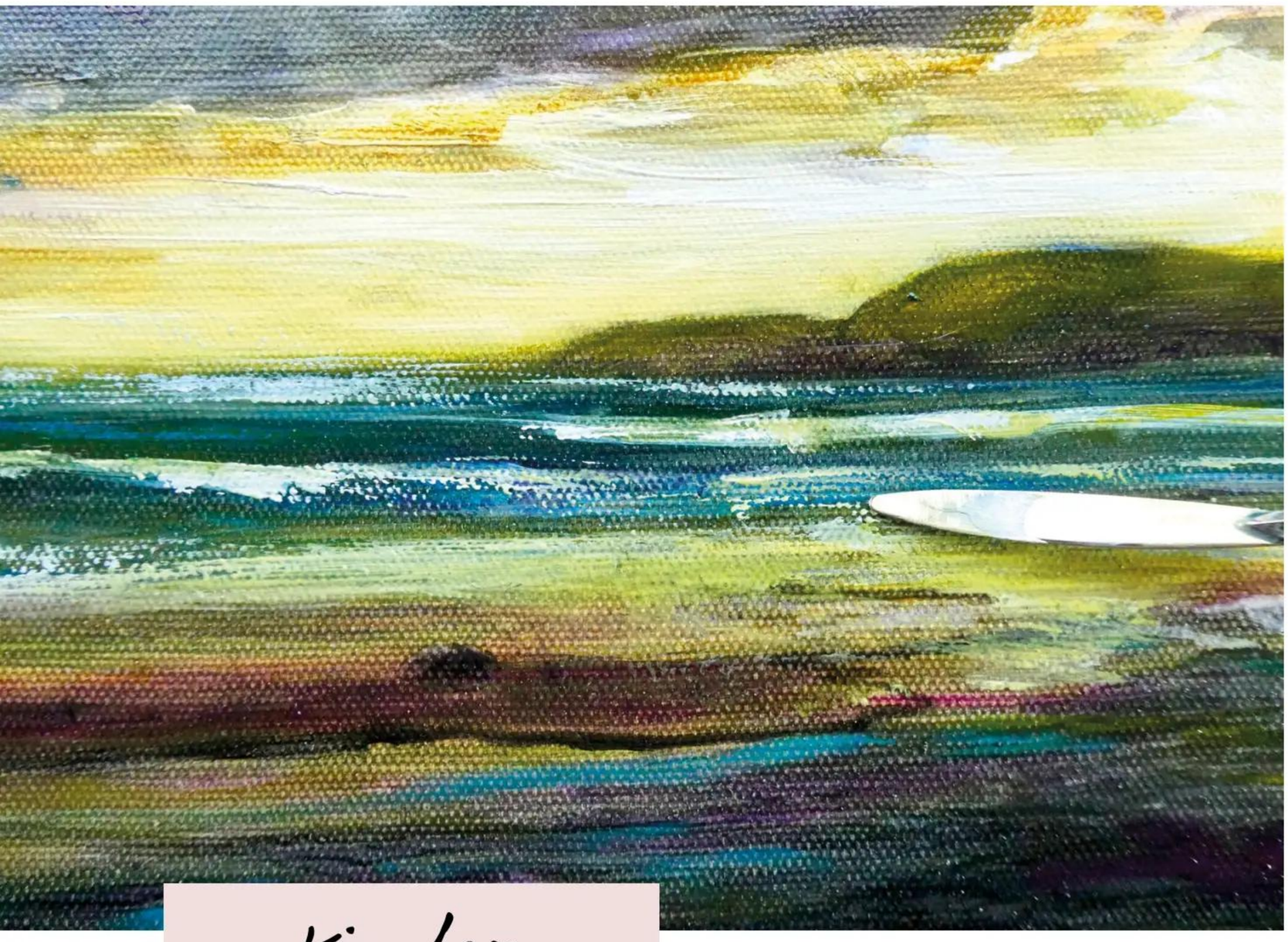
9 Golden glow and deeper shadows

When completely dry, add more glazes, being careful where you apply each colour. Using yellow over the white force areas will produce golden, glowing edges, while over the dark headland shape the yellow will appear a rich, dark green. In areas of the clouds where you wish to create deeper shadows, glaze over the third complementary colour. For example, where you have already glazed yellow and magenta over the dark areas of grisaille, add Ultramarine. Alternatively, you could mix a new glaze using a little of each colour to create a transparent dark that is still cohesive.

10 Final glaze

Reapply the force if necessary, just in the places you want a really bright effect. When completely dry, apply a final yellow glaze over the force to give the clouds their 'golden linings'. I also added a few strokes of yellow glaze to the tops of the waves where they face the sky and reflect its glow. This also helps tie the sea and sky areas together.



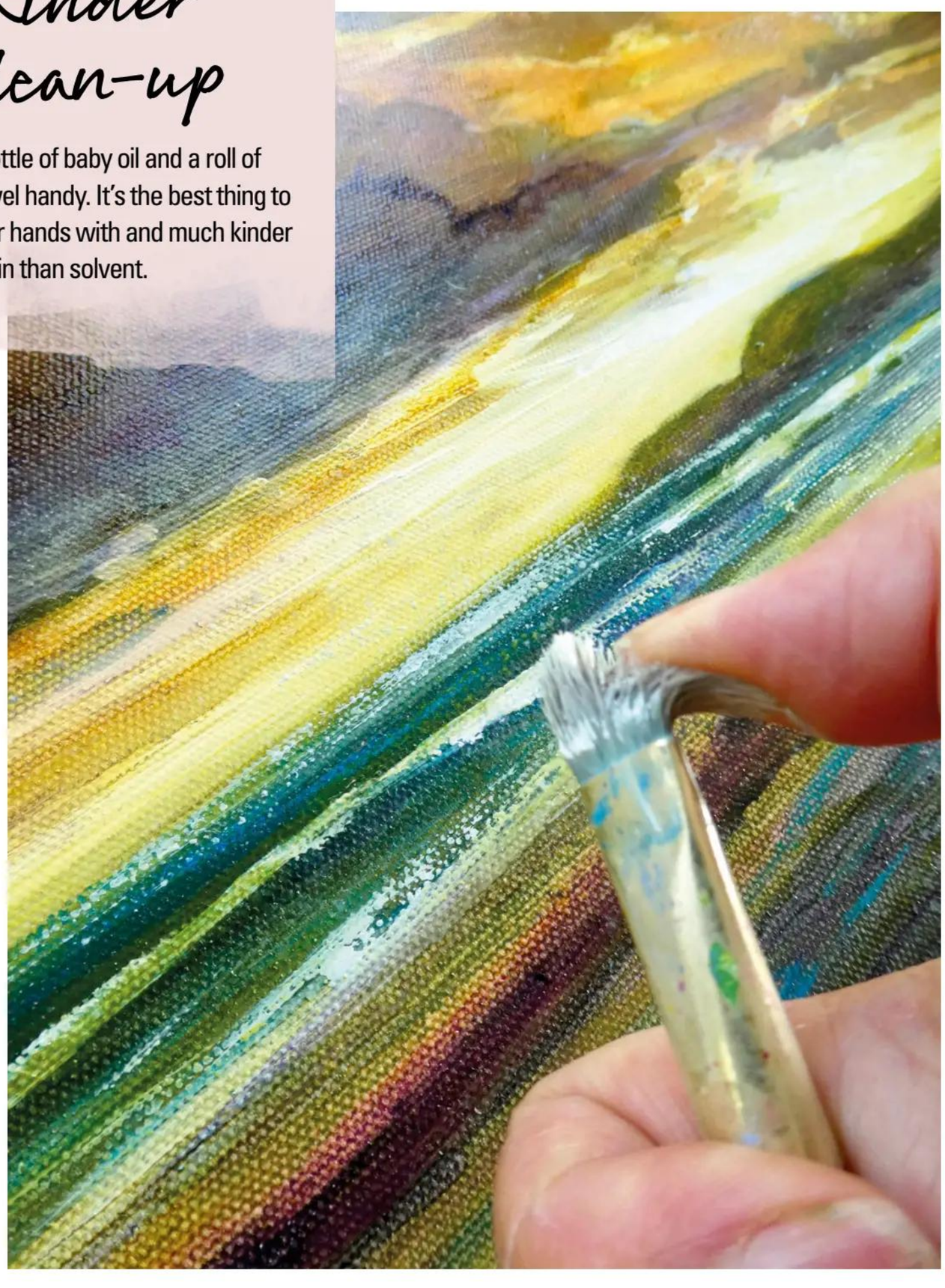


11 Wave highlights

Using the side edge of a palette knife, pick up a very thin roll of white and slice it sideways across the canvas and along the tops of the waves to give them a subtle highlight. The tooth of the canvas will catch some of the paint in a broken line that resembles sparkles on the water. Don't go mad – you only need this treatment in a couple of places.

Kinder clean-up

Keep a bottle of baby oil and a roll of paper towel handy. It's the best thing to clean your hands with and much kinder to your skin than solvent.



12 Create spray and other final tweaks

When the surface is completely dry you can add some finishing touches. To create the effect of sea spray, use a small, stiff brush and mix up a fairly fluid off-white. Holding the brush with the bristles up, draw your fingernail or a palette knife across the top so that the paint spatters in a fine mist where the waves are. Don't do it everywhere, or it will look messy rather than atmospheric. It's wise to practise this on something else first! If you do get it wrong, wipe it off with a clean paper towel and try again. This is one advantage of the previous layers being completely dry. Finally, taking a small brush, add any little shadows or reflections for implied detail and dot in some thicker highlights if needed.



Images: Getty Images (paint daubs)

Start using colour paper for pastels!

Rebecca de Mendonça advises what colour surface to use with your pastels. It all depends on the mood you're after…

Do you ever hesitate when choosing which colour surface to use? There isn't a right or wrong choice, it just depends on the mood you wish to create. Do you want your piece to be calm and peaceful, bright and fresh, or dramatic and moody? The colour that we work on becomes part of our palette, showing through the pastel work and harmonising the piece.

Should it be light or dark, warm or cool? The same palette of pastels will look quite different on each, with lighter colours seeming even lighter when applied to dark tones, but dying back backgrounds of similar tones. An orange on a blue will jump out at you, but an orange on a brown will blend in.

For this article I'll reveal how to create a stormy beach scene, and then show how on different papers the mood can completely change.



About **REBECCA**
Exeter, UK
Rebecca co-founded The New Pastel School and teaches in the UK and Italy. Her book *Pastels for the Absolute Beginner* will be published in October 2019.
rebeccademendonca.co.uk

Materials

Pastel papers come in a multitude of colours. I used Winsor & Newton's Universal paper (Blue, Terracotta and Mottled grey) along with a range of Unison pastels: Dark 18, Blue Violet 9, Dark 8, Blue Green 7, Blue Green 16, Grey 34, Add 35, Add 33, Add 31, Brown Earth 4, Brown Earth 13, Grey 27, Add 7. I also used two Conté crayons: 2340/43 and 2340/18.









1 Explore the palette on different papers

By trying out your palette of colours on an edge of each paper you can see how they look before you paint. Notice how some pastel hues jump off one colour, but almost disappear on another. On the blue, the creams and yellows come alive but the darks are absorbed. I'm already establishing the mood.

Testing time!

It is a great idea to paint pastel swatches on various papers. It's amazing how different a certain colour will look when the colour that surrounds it changes.





2 Sketch with dark colour

I always take the labels off my pastels and break them in half, using them on their side and end. With dark blue broad strokes I sketch out the clouds and trees, hinting at the horizon. With a light I gently suggest the edge of the sea and the beach, giving a framework of light and dark.

"I gently suggest the edge of the sea and the beach..."



3 Smudge in more sky

I develop the sky by smudging in Blue Violet 9. I smudge this and the cooler purple colours into the sky, grey hills and distant beach. This combination of cool blues and softening techniques creates a feeling of distance.





4 Dark blues on the sea

I apply a combination of the dark blue and green and richer Blue Geen 7 to the sea, using horizontal strokes to indicate that the sea is flat towards the horizon. I can get a feel of the light on the water with Blue Green 16. The blue paper gives a deep, rich base to these colours.







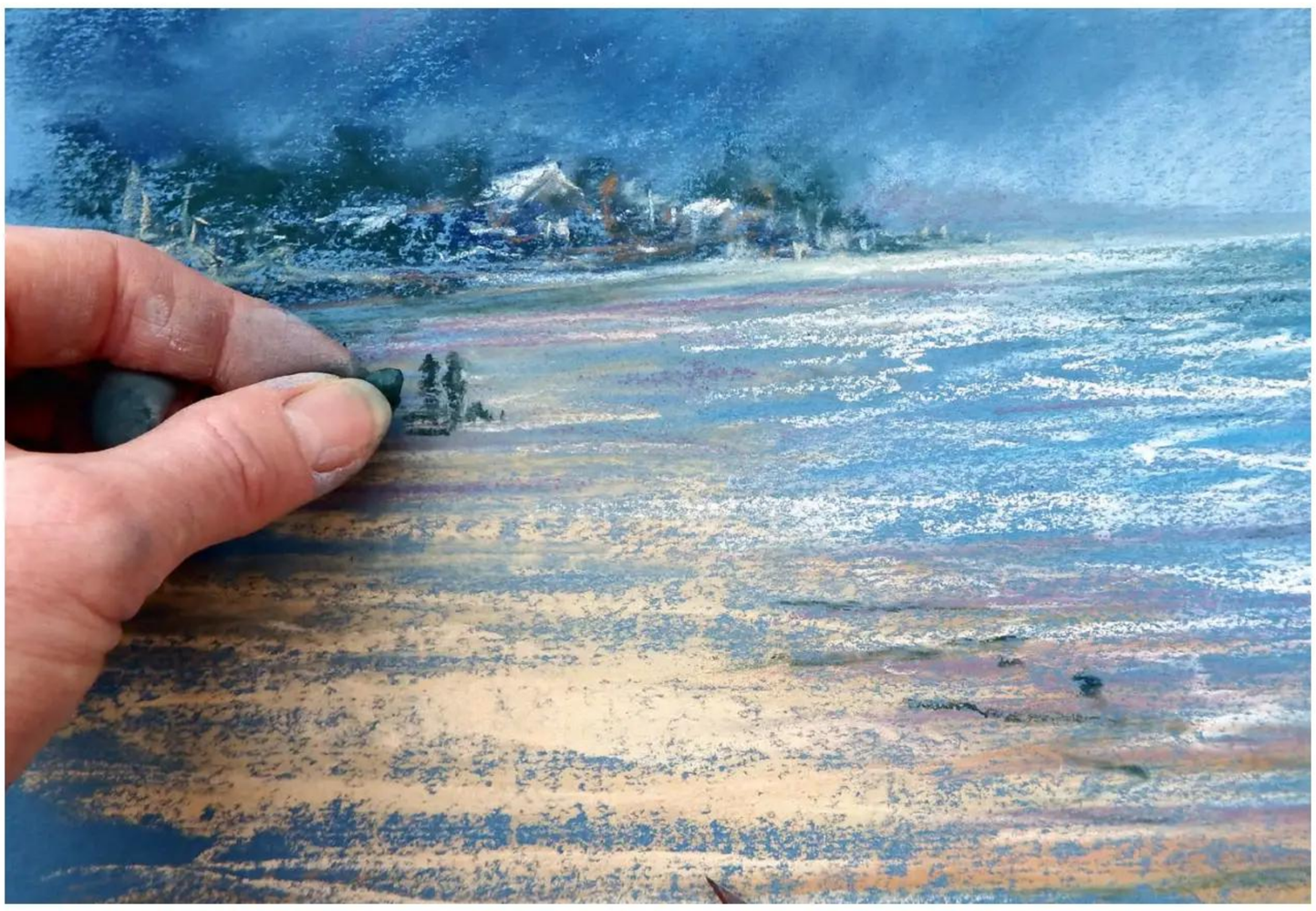
5 Sandy beach

The warm beach colours contrast beautifully with the paper tone. I layer the lighter conté crayon in the distance (above) then the richer conté to create a warmer hue as the beach comes towards us (inset) with Unison pastels on their side to strengthen the body of colour (right) also flicking these colours onto the trees to indicate buildings.



6 Make waves

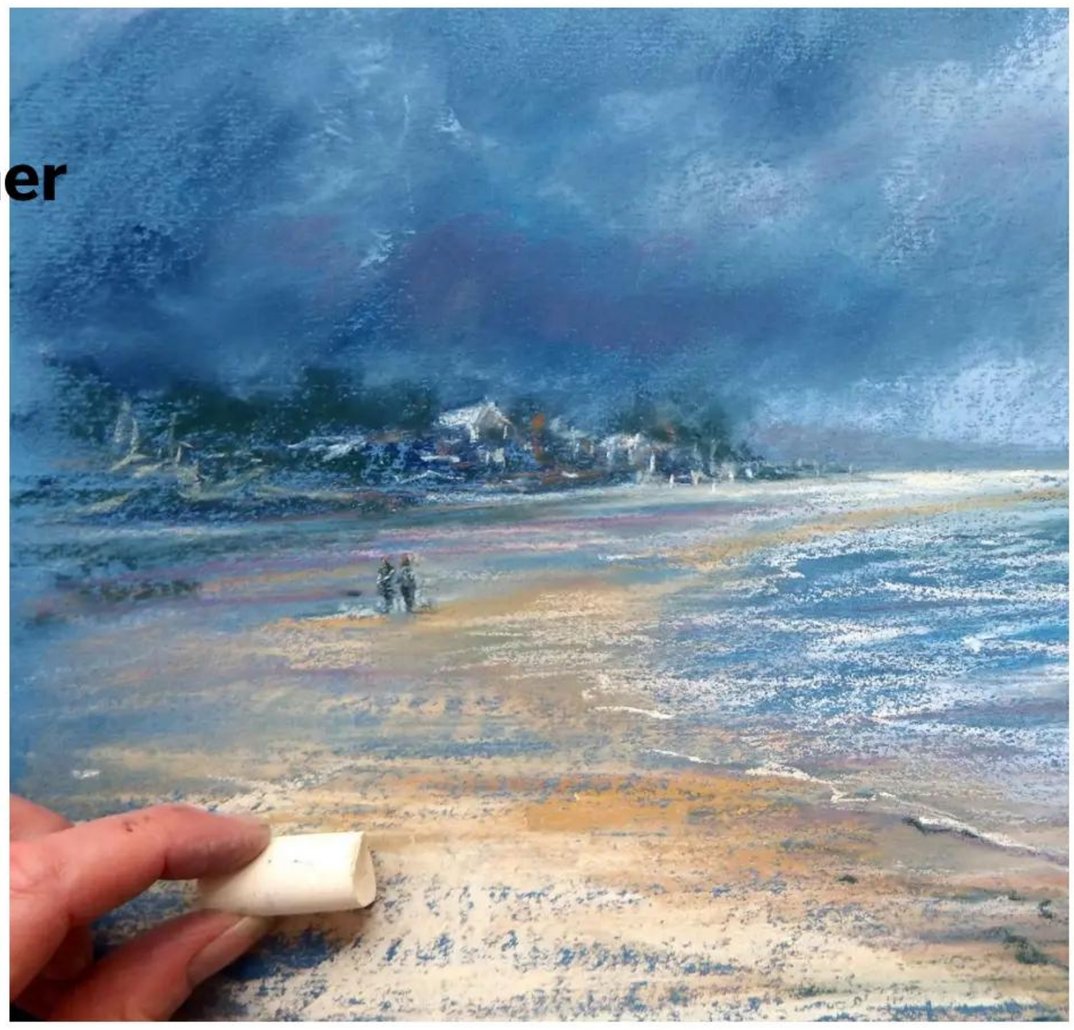
To get the feeling of crashing waves and surf, I first sketch in more blues under the area where the waves will be. Using good-quality pastels means that I can then draw in the waves using light creams with little flicks and twisting marks. I still use some horizontal marks to show that the beach is quite flat underneath.





7 Figures in the distance

I just hint at the figures with the dark green, using a shard of pastel that I've cut off the bigger stick. If I draw them too big I can come back round them and redefine them with the sandy colour of the beach. I also make little flicks to suggest distant buildings among the trees.





8 Some warm highlights

The dark blue paper is dominating the mood. For more warmth I use a pale yellow to highlight the light on the beach in the distance (left) and to emphasise light and warmth in the foreground (above). To further create balance and depth I smudge areas of the beach and sea, add more purples and touch detail to the figures.



9 Seascape sketch on neutral, pale grey

By doing a similar sketch on mottled grey paper, using exactly the same selection of colours, I have quite a different piece. The lighter, neutral paper makes the beach seem bigger and the sea flatter. The sky is still stormy, but the whole mood feels calmer and gentler... and in my opinion, a little boring!



10 Seascape sketch on warm terracotta

This warm orange colour is one that can make blues really sing out, but here it seems to dominate. To stop the terracotta overpowering the piece I would have to smudge the cooler pastels into it even more. So the question is, which colour paper do you feel works best, or do they all work in different ways?

Sharp tools

For small details I cut off shards of pastel with a scalpel. When you drop a pastel on the floor and it breaks, don't throw the pieces in the bin!

Lively landscapes

Rebecca de Mendonça illustrates how to vary your mark making to produce energetic and lively landscapes



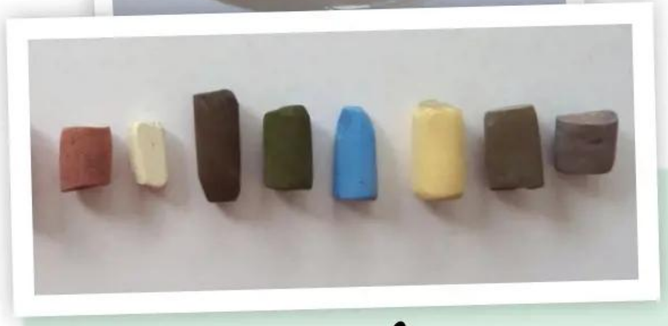
About REBECCA

Exeter, UK

Rebecca co-founded The New Pastel School and teaches in the UK and Italy. Her book Pastels for the Absolute Beginner will be published in October 2019.

rebeccademendonca.co.uk





Materials

For the first examples I used (not photographed);

- Unison pastels, Rembrandt pastels, Conté crayons, Willow charcoal
- Winsor paper, Canson paper, sugar paper, Colourfix Primer
- Pencil eraser

For the final demo I used (photographed);

- Art Spectrum Colourfix primer, rose grey painted onto mount card
- Unison pastels and charcoal

It's all about mark making. A great way to get more life into your pastel work is to vary the ways in which you make marks. Landscapes are wonderful subjects to experiment with here as there is such a variety of shapes and forms, from rolling hills and jagged rocks to windblown grasses, twisting trees and soft, wispy clouds.

The important thing to remember is that variation and contrast make your work interesting. People often think of their use of colour as the way to liven up landscapes, but you can work in monochrome or with a very limited palette and still achieve life and energy.

There are several ways to change the quality of the marks we draw and paint. We can change the pressure with which we push our pastel against the surface, or we can hold the pastel in different ways, using it on its side, edge or end. We could also use pastels of different grades of softness.

To help me to ring the changes, and use different techniques for different areas and forms, I think about the energy of my subject. What would it feel like to touch it? Is it hard and heavy, like rocks? Curved and flowing, like trees and plants, or the rolling hills? Soft and light, like clouds? Moving and sparkling, like rippling water?

So let's look at the variety of marks and techniques we have in our pastel tool kit, and how we can apply them to represent the landscape around us.



1 It's all about the mark making

The best way to liven up your mark-making is to get some big sheets of paper, stand up at an easel or a table, and experiment. Take the labels off your pastels and break them in half so that you can use the side, the long edge and the end. Let your marks change and dance, and smudge them together in places. Change your pressure, and use different grades of pastel. Here, from left to right, I have used a soft Unison pastel, a hard Conté crayon and a medium-hard Rembrandt pastel. Each gives a different quality of mark.

Make time to practise

It is a great idea to just experiment with making marks on cheap paper before embarking on a masterpiece. Time spent practising is worth its weight in gold.





2 Rocks and hard angular marks

For rocks, I want to capture the weight, dark shadows and edges, so I press harder and make sharp changes of direction. I use the pastel on its side and then twist it to make wavy lines. If I press harder, I get a darker, stronger mark.

This quick sketch is done with a dark blue Unison pastel, which I have smudged where I have hinted at the distance beyond the rocks to emphasise their hardness. You will find that charcoal and hard pastels also work well for rocks as they can make even sharper marks.

3 Trees, with gently twisting lines

For trees, you can use the pastel on its long edge and move it upwards, using twisting linear marks. If I press hard at the base of the trunk and then ease off the pressure as I get to the higher branches, I can get a feel for the growing tree; heavy and strong at ground level, but fine and delicate at the tips of the branches.

For trees in the distance, I smudge two or three layers of soft pastel onto the surface and use Conté crayons or charcoal, letting them graze the surface, creating fine, hair-like marks.



4 Smudge skies

Smudging and softening soft pastels with your hands creates mist and smoothness. I apply two or three layers of soft Unison pastel before smudging with my fingers. These could be different colours, blended together, or one colour applied in layers. Without these layers, the texture of the paper would still show through. With good-quality pastels you can smudge lights over darks, such as these wisps of cream and pink cloud over the deeper blue smudged base of the sky.



5 Rippling water

We can use the whole range of mark making for water, from smudging the still surface of a calm sea, to ripples on a pond, or the twists and turns of a fast-flowing stream. Here, at the bottom, I have dragged the pastel along its long edge, varying the pressure, which gives a varied mark, as if the water is slightly rippled.

At the top, where the water is bubbling around rocks, I have used similar marks, but I also used the pastel on its end. Notice how letting the surface colour show through can give the work more life.



6 Hatching wind blown grasses

Hatching is a technique where you make pastel strokes that go in a similar direction, and let them blend together visually, not by smudging them together. By making light hatching marks with your pastels on their end, you can get the feel for grasses blowing in the wind. It is a great way to introduce more colour into your work, and it works well with hard pastels as you can get sharper marks. In this sketch I have introduced the figure to give it scale.



Variety is the spice of life

It is variation and contrast that will make your work lively, so think about the quality of marks you can make rather than copying a photograph exactly.

7 Putting it all together

This piece, of a winter stream on Dartmoor, has all of these marks in it, but not much bright colour. This means that I really need my marks to describe the forms and the capture the atmosphere of the moment. To start with, I use charcoal to sketch the flowing curves of the hills, making the composition strong by using wide, sweeping marks to widen the stream as it comes towards us. I start to smudge a pale base layer for the soft sky and distance, and sketch some colours on to positon rocks and grass.

8 Smudging the distance

I add layers of colours in the distance and smudge them into the base layer with my fingers. The gentle pinks and greens of the middle distance hills also have some of the sky colour smudged in to lighten them. I start to add a blue base for the harder rocky areas, using the pastel on its side and twisting as I describe curves. This colour also acts as a shadow for grassy areas. I like to unify my paintings by using colours in more than one area.



Going further



9 Dark marks on the rocks

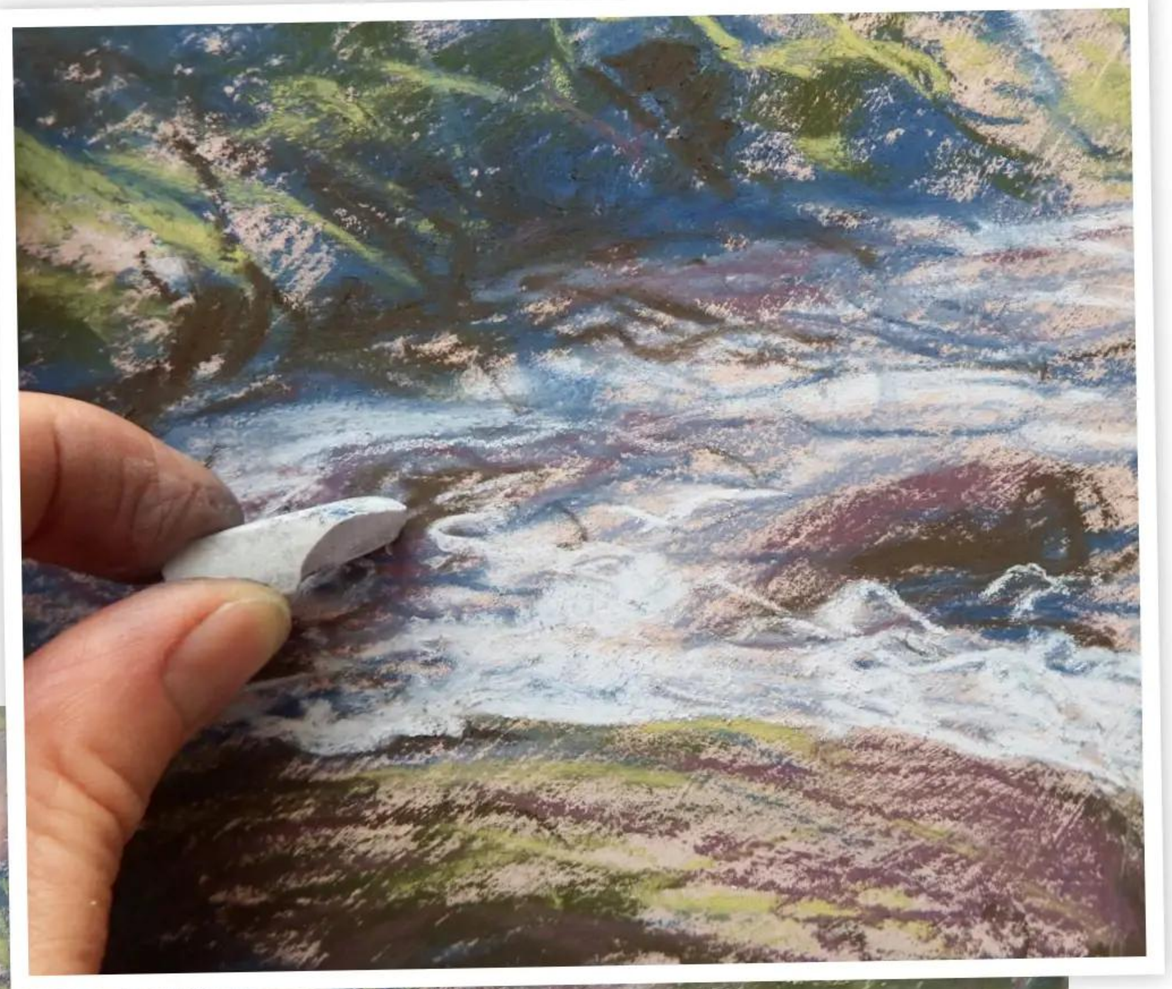
Now I really firm up some of those rocks with a dark brown pastel. I am looking for dark shadows at this stage, and I put them in with sharp edges in places to act as a contrast to all of the curves. I use the direction of my marks to follow the forms, but also to lead the eye of the viewer down towards the stream. I then use dark greens to create an under-layer of shadows in the grassy areas.

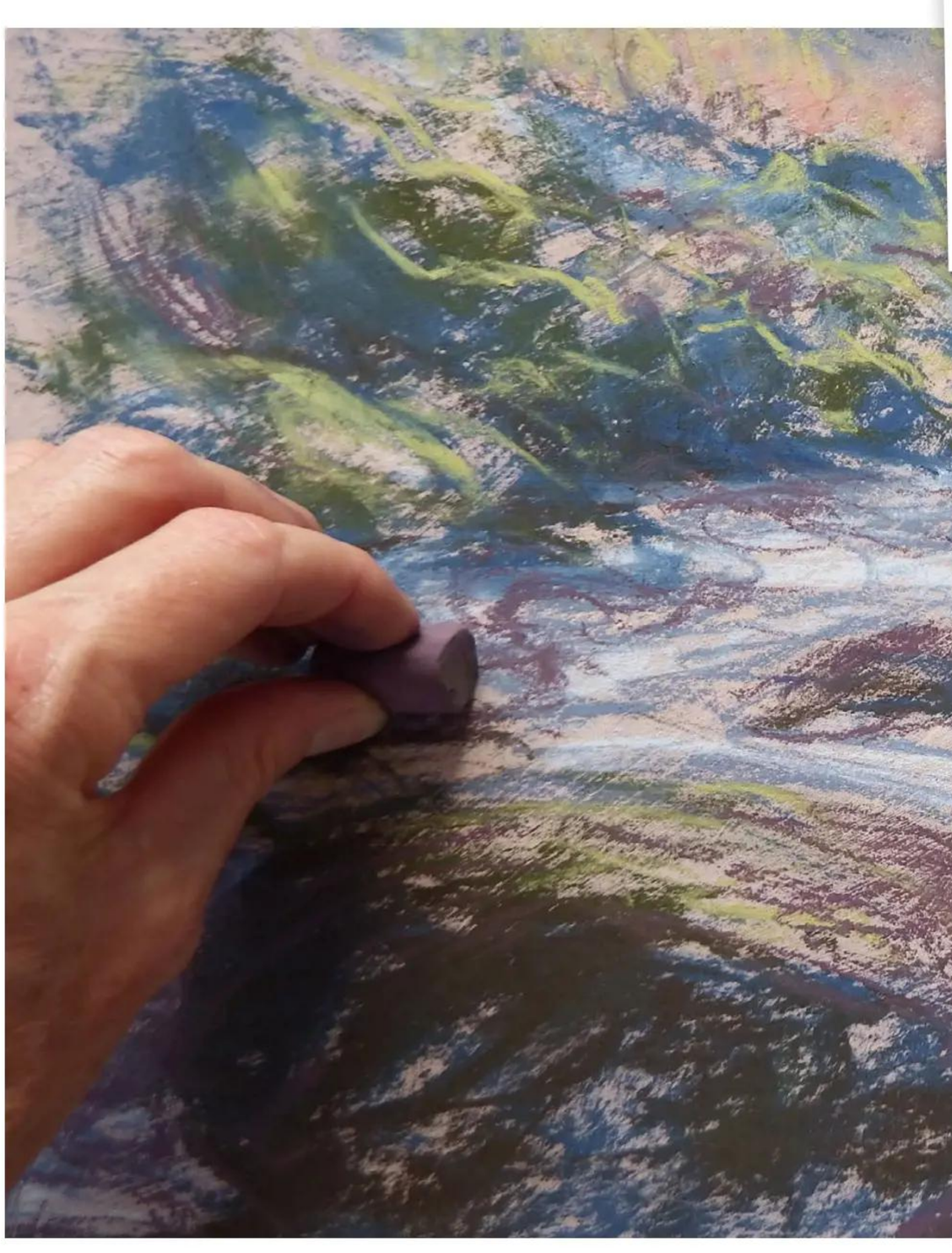
10 Swirling water

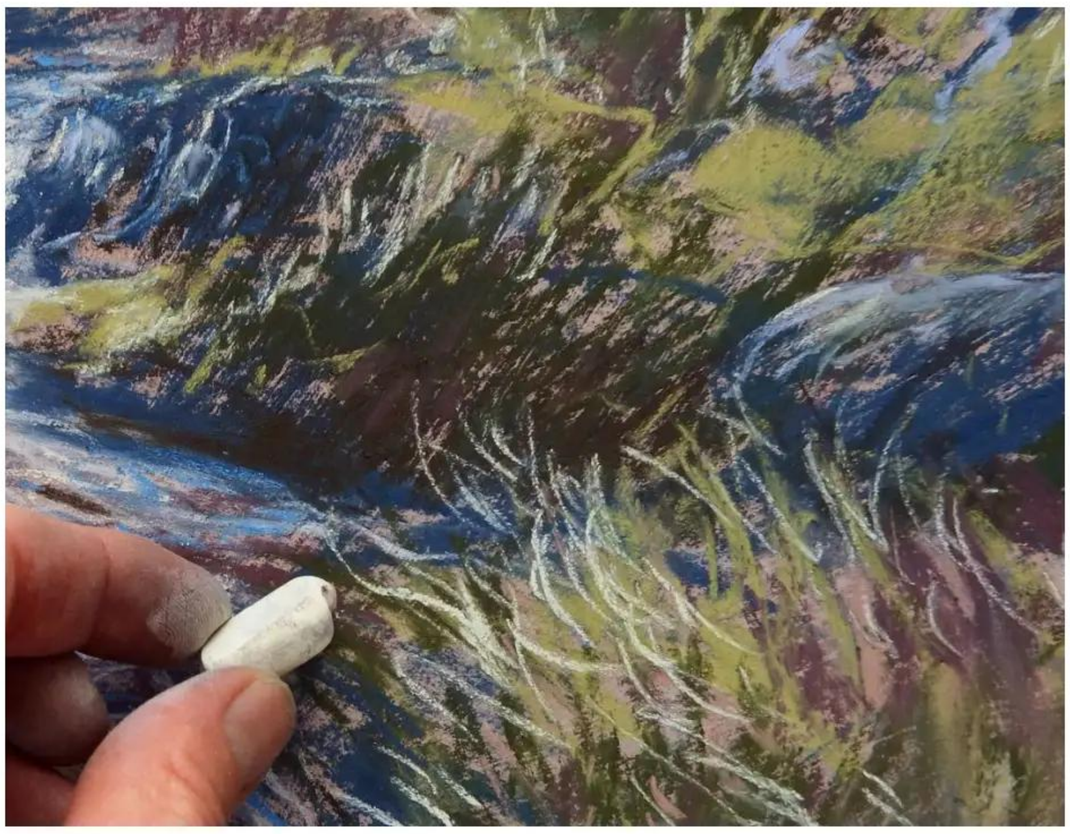
The water is made up of several colours, but I always try to simplify everything into a dark, medium and light colour. Here I have the first layer of light blue, with some grey blue as a medium, and a grey purple as a dark. At this stage I don't smudge them, but let the marks dance around on the surface. I also apply hatched layers of greens on the grasses in the mid and foreground.

Give yourself a time limit!

If you give yourself a time limit, it will encourage you to work quickly and freely, and not to copy exactly from a photograph.

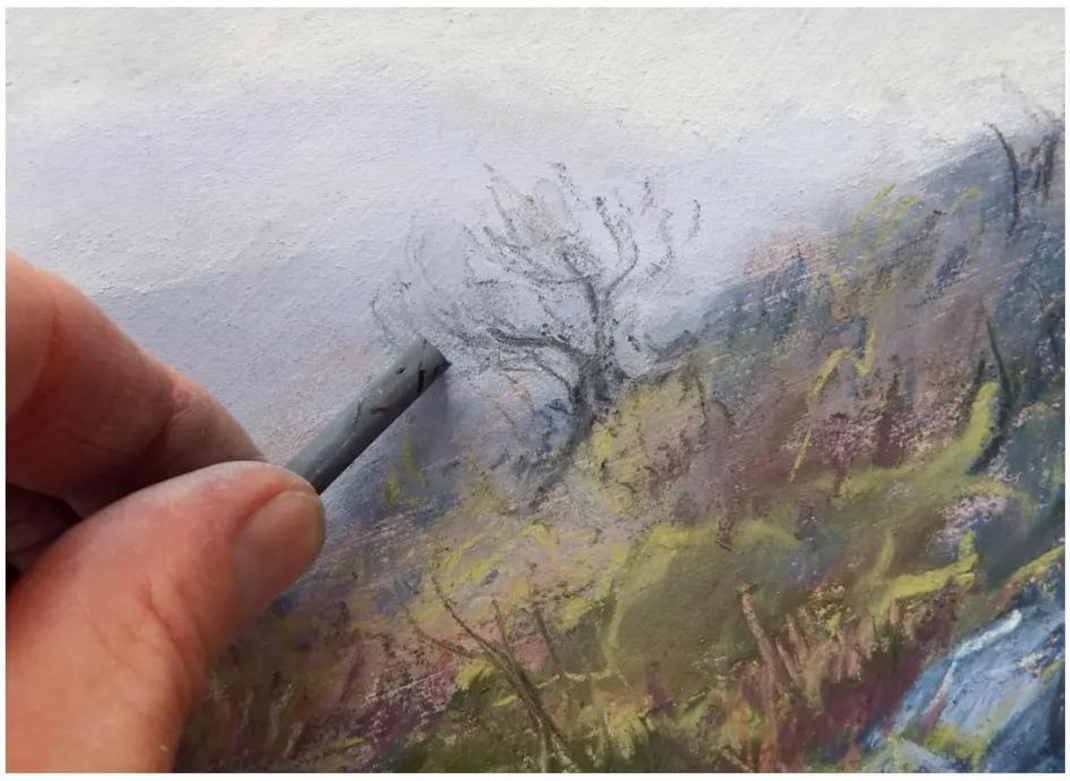






11 Wisps of grasses

Gently curving hatched marks will describe the windblown grasses. Here I have started with layers of dark colours and then gradually added lighter ones, but to give a feeling of a windy day, I have let the direction of the marks change. It will add life to your painting if you work quickly, and you don't need to worry about being exact. I like the way that the lighter grasses show up against the dark rocks behind.



12 Distant trees

For the fine, twisted tree in the distance, I need light marks, and a thin stick of willow charcoal is perfect for this. It blends with the sky as I make the marks, some of which disappear completely. This 'lost and found' approach is great for forms in the distance. I then use the charcoal to hint at grasses and twisted bushes on the hills. To finish, I soften and remove some areas with an eraser. I always think less is more, and the joy of pastels is that you can take it away again.

Mount your artwork

When framing your art, a mount is also essential to help protect it. **Rodney Dive** shows you how it's done

At the end of this book, we're going to show you how to create a simple but professional-looking frame for your art. But right now it's time to enhance your art by using a mount or, as it's sometimes referred to, a mat. A mount will add an aesthetic quality to your work and create the perfect environment for the viewer to experience your pictures.

Mounts aren't just for decorative purposes, they also serve as protection by allowing the art to expand or contract depending on temperature and moisture content of the surrounding air. The mount also prevents the delicate pigments on the page from coming into contact with the glass of the frame. This is particularly necessary if you are framing media like pastels or oils, which will stick to the glass, and with prolonged contact they can be difficult to remove without damaging the art.

Although, it's simple-looking the humble mount is more sophisticated than it first appears. Most standard mounts will have the window edges cut at 45 degrees to create a bevel and have a pleasing angled corner. Cutting through the board at an angle creates a nice finish but requires a completely straight and clean cut that meets at the corners perfectly.

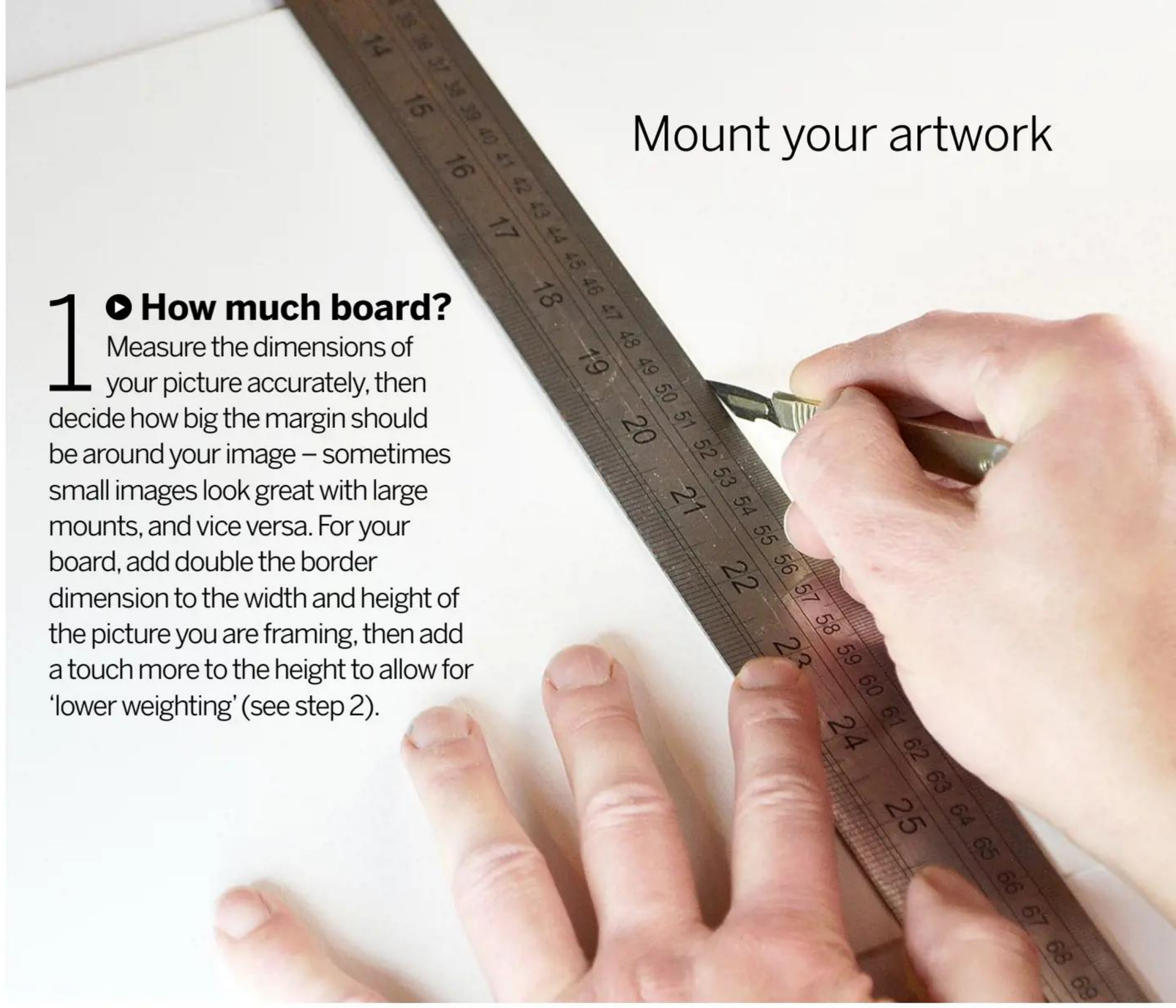
To create the mount you will need a clean, flat working area and a few basic tools. This workshop shows you the basic methods you need to mount your art, but the more you do, the better you will get and develop your own style.



About **RODNEY**
Bath, UK
Rodney has been framing for over five years, initially as a way to save money on framing his collection of prints and art. He develops traditional techniques and methods with every new commission.



Mount your artwork



1 How much board?

Measure the dimensions of your picture accurately, then decide how big the margin should be around your image – sometimes small images look great with large mounts, and vice versa. For your board, add double the border dimension to the width and height of the picture you are framing, then add a touch more to the height to allow for 'lower weighting' (see step 2).



Materials

- Artwork
- Mount board
- Cutting mat
- Metal ruler
- Mount cutter
- Pencil
- Scalpel
- Hinging tape
- Double-sided tape (optional)



2 Mark the aperture

Make sure your working area is clean and dry, then place the mount board face down. With a sharp pencil and ruler mark out the area you will cut away to make the window. I prefer to make the border slightly larger at the bottom; this 'lower weighting' has a pleasing proportion (most doors have a larger bottom panel or the bottom drawer in a chest of drawers is often larger). Extend your pencil lines beyond the area to be cut.



Cutting room

Buy spare mount board to use as a cutting mat to protect the surface you're working on. Also, you can practise cutting windows on scrap mount board – remember you'll only get one chance to get it right for real.

3 Prepare to cut

Now you have marked your cut lines, it's time to make the actual cuts. Because we're cutting at a 45-degree angle through the board, it's important to work methodically so all cuts are in the same direction. Align the centre marker of your cutter with the right-hand perpendicular cut line and press firmly on the cutter so the blade goes all the way through the board. Maintain this pressure and slowly slide the cutter along the straight edge until the centre marker is just past the the next vertical pencil line.







4 Check and repeat

Flip your board over to check the blade has cut all the way through and left a clean incision. Now turn it back over and rotate 90 degrees. Align your ruler to the next pencil line and make another cut. Flip and check that your cut lines meet at the corner and create an accurate bevel – sometimes you need to slide a sharp scalpel blade in at 45 degrees to help release the corner without tearing the surface.

All about mount board

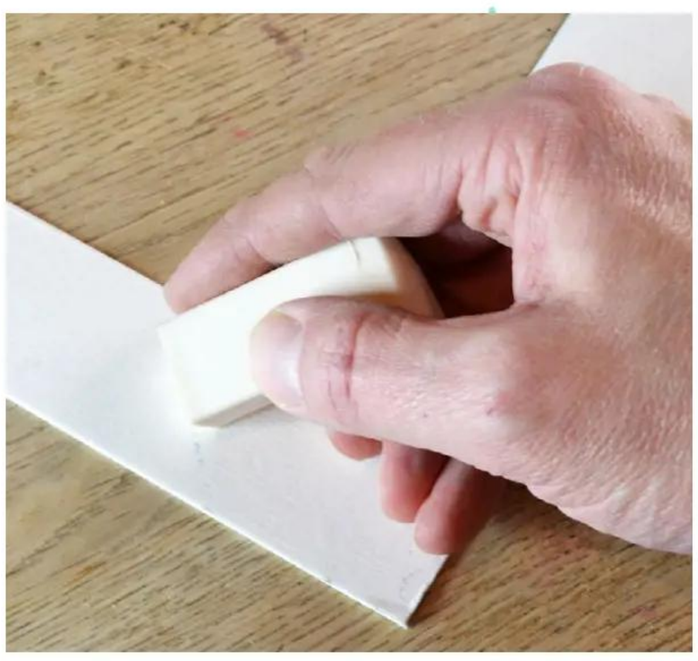
There are many options when it comes to mount board. Here's a quick lowdown:

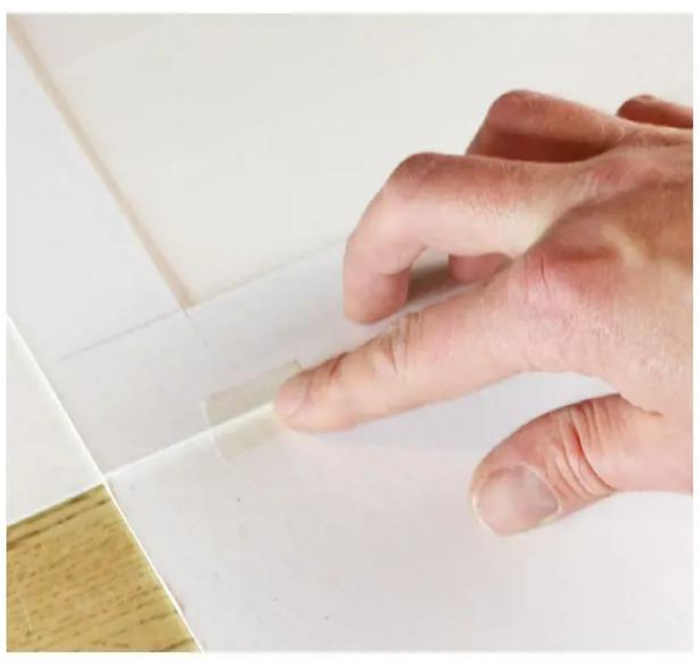
Museum grade: Top-quality board that's acid free with a high cotton content and fade-resistant finish, these are the kind of expensive boards museums use to preserve precious pieces of art.
Conservation grade: A high-quality board, which is acid free and fade resistant – it's more than good enough for most uses and is cheaper than museum-grade board.
Standard grade: Cheaper, easier to use and widely available from most art shops, ideal for practising mount-cutting techniques or framing projects.

Aside from different grades, the board can come with different colour cores, such as black, white or cream. So, regardless of the surface colour, the board that is exposed at the core of it (when the bevel is cut, for example) will reveal a different colour.

Finally, most mount board come in several thicknesses, typically:

Standard: 1400/1500 microns or 1.4/1.5mm thick
Thick: 2000/2200 microns – 2/2.2mm thick
Extra thick:3000 microns – 3mm thick



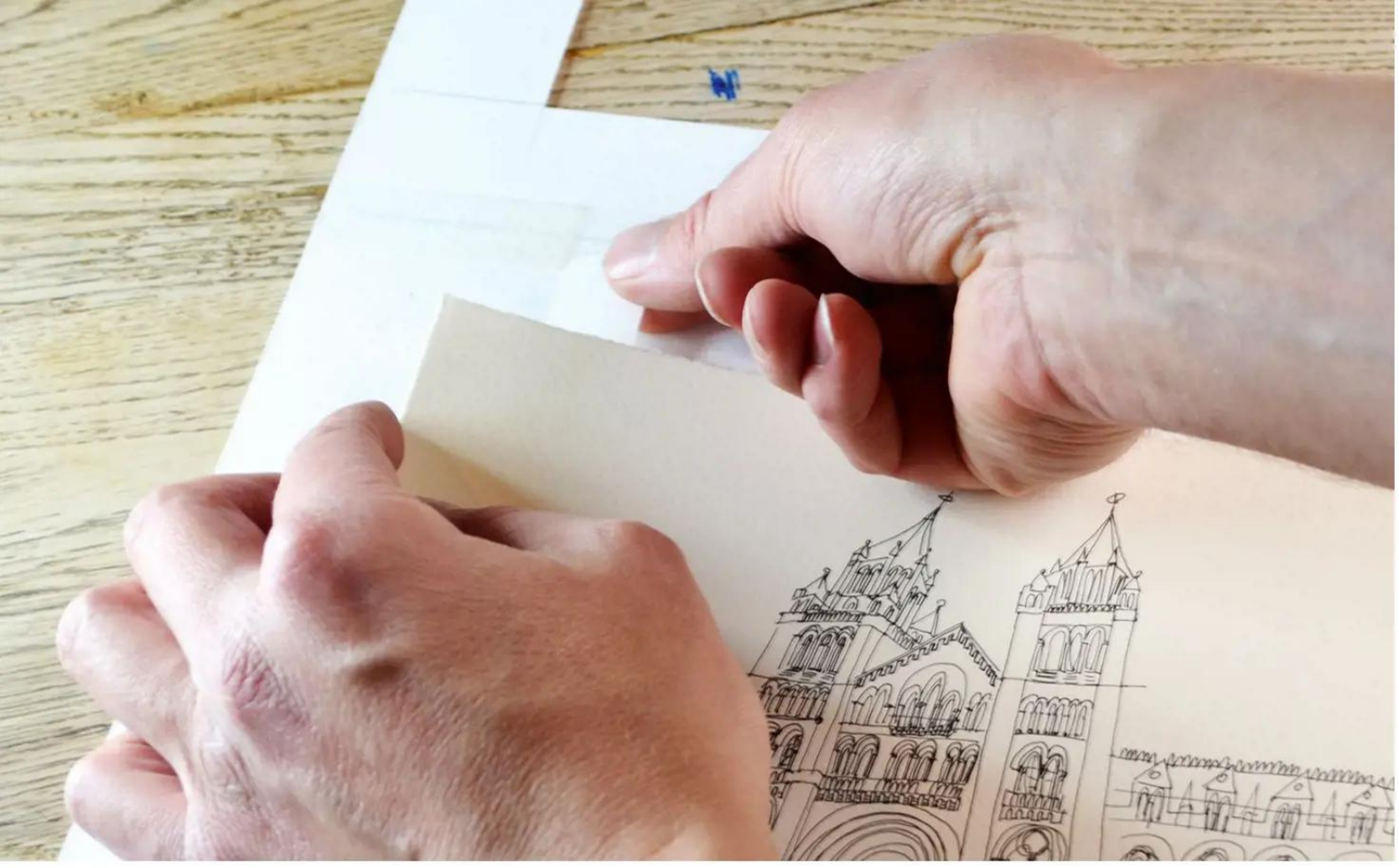


5 Book hinge the mount

Now that the aperture is cut, have a close look at the face of the mount and remove any blemishes and marks with the eraser – be very careful if you're using a black mount as they mark easily. Take your backing board and place it face up on your work surface. Place some waste board at the top and align your window to the top edge of the backing board face down. Place a couple of small pieces of tape across the two boards to hold them in place while you apply a long strip of tape across the whole length of the card. Raising the front piece of board will stop the tape from stretching when the boards are folded over.



Mount your artwork



6 Align the art

Place your image between the backing board and the window mount and align it centrally. Close the mount together to check it's aligned accurately. Next lift one of the top corners and place a small length (approx 5cm) of tape face-up underneath the corner so about 5mm is underneath the picture itself, press the picture on top of the tape to form a bond. Repeat with the other corner, being careful not to move the position of the picture. A weight placed on the picture will help.

7 Finish the hinges

Take a 5cm length of tape and place it across the top of the exposed tape facing upwards from underneath the picture, press this down firmly. Repeat for the other side. These two hinges will hang the image from the backing board behind the window mount, it will allow the paper to move around as it expands and contracts. Don't be tempted to add more hinges down the side or the bottom, as these will restrict movement and the art will buckle.







8 Finishing off

Once you're satisfied with the hinges, flip the window mount back over and check everything is lined up. Once happy with the mount, stick a small strip of double-sided tape on the lower portion of the backing board and then press the window mount firmly on top. This will stop the two pieces of board from moving around. Your mount is now finished and ready for display or framing.



Frame your own art

Rodney Dive shows you how to make affordable, beautiful picture frames to protect your precious artworks and make them shine



About **RODNEY**

Bath, UK

Rodney has been framing for over five years, first as a way to save money on framing his ever-growing collection of prints and art, developing the traditional techniques and methods with every new commission.

Getting your art professionally framed can be expensive. Ready-made frames are a cheaper alternative, but they're only suitable if your work is a standard size such as A4 or A3. If you want a cost-effective solution, with the flexibility to accommodate unique-sized art, then make your own frames. It's not as hard as it sounds.

In this guide (part one of two), I'll explain how to frame your art at home, without using the expensive automated equipment you see in a professional workshop. With a little practice and an eye for detail, there's no reason why your frames can't be as good as the ones your local framing shop makes.

You'll initially need to invest in a minimum set of tools to get started, but you'll quickly recuperate the cost of those when you produce your first few frames at home. And the more frames you make, the more value you'll get from your equipment. You can pick up good quality second-hand equipment from websites such as eBay or Gumtree. When buying tools you get what you pay for, since cheap tools generally produce inferior results and don't last as long. The best buying advice I can offer is to start making frames with whatever equipment you have to hand (making sure your tools are clean and your blades are sharp), and it will soon be apparent what you'll need to buy. As with most things, the more you do it, the more you will develop your own working methods and practices, then you can buy tools to suit.

In the next issue we'll explore cutting mounts to complement your art and attaching your artwork with hinges.

Safety first

Always wear protective equipment when using power tools. Make sure you have enough room to move around your work without over-stretching, as this could make you lose your balance. Take extra care when cutting glass, since the cut edges are razor-sharp. If you don't feel confident using some of the tools or methods in this guide, please consult a professional for advice.



1 Measure up

Make sure you have an area to work in that's clean, flat and large enough to fully support the piece you are working on. First, measure your art. If you're not using a mount board or mat then your frame should match the length and width of the artwork. If you are using a mount board then the measurements of the mount will of course determine your frame size. Once you have the dimensions, put your artwork out of the way to prevent any contamination from dust or glue. When working on a particularly precious piece of work, I make a blank out of card, the same size as the art I'm framing, to use for test fitting in the workshop to avoid damaging the original painting.



Materials

- Art to be framed
- 2.5mm MDF
- 2-3mm float glass
- Frame moulding
- PVA wood glue
- V-nails
- Gummed tape
- Framer's points or panel pins
- Cord hangers and picture cord
- Hand v-nailer tool
- Pin hammer/ framer's point gun
- Mitre saw
- Mitre guillotine
- Glass cutter
- Craft knife
- Adjustable square or T-square
- Band clamp
- Long metal ruler
- Marker (similar colour as your moulding)

2 Work it out

To work out how much moulding you will need, first calculate the perimeter of the whole frame by adding your measured width and height dimensions together, then doubling that number. Next, measure the width of the moulding you'll use, multiply this measurement by eight and add it to your total length, to account for the mitred edges (the 45-degree cuts that will match up to form the corners of the frame). Add on 10% to allow for wastage. Examine your sticks of moulding for knots in the wood or transit damage, then cut around these so that they don't affect the final finish of the frame.



3 Mark your lengths

Measure the frame moulding from the inside of the rebate (the tab of material that sticks out at the bottom of the moulding. Once the frame is put together, the rebates make the aperture that holds the glass and art in place). This needs to accurately match your artwork's dimensions to ensure a snug fit. Aim to cut slightly larger pieces than required, since it's easy to skim off a few millimetres to fine-tune the size, but once something's cut too small, nothing can be done. With this in mind, cut the longest lengths first so if you do make a mistake then it can be re-cut to make one of the smaller sides!

Moulding material

Mouldings come in all sorts of materials for many different purposes. Wood mouldings are easy to work with and can accept dye, varnish and oil finishes. I prefer to work with hardwood such as obeche, which has good working qualities and will stay straight and square. Metal mouldings are modern-looking and can look attractive with the right art and environments. Metal needs specialist blades to get an accurate, clean, burr-free cut. Plastics are cheap, light and easy to work, and are ideal for pictures in a child's bedroom, for example. But they're affected by heat and sunlight, and over time they may warp and become brittle.

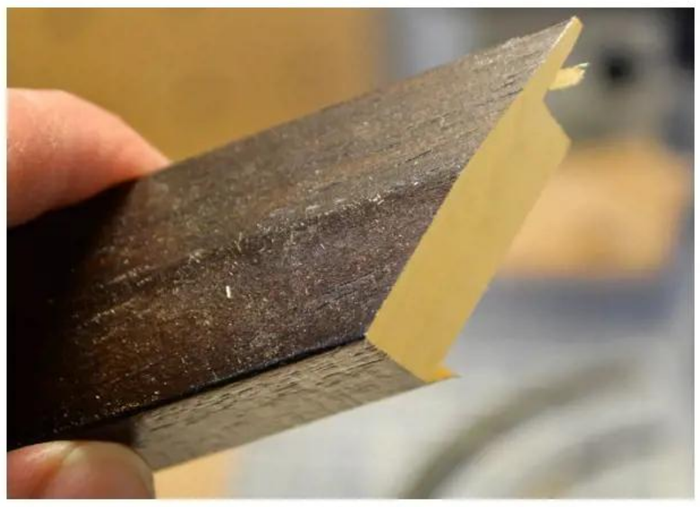
Chop shop

A host of online framing retailers offer a chop service so you can order your frame moulding ready-cut to your specified size. Some will even supply you with perspex or small panes of glass cut to your required size (see p80). Because these companies use professional equipment, the mitres are clean and accurate and will bond together well. This is a great way to get started and build up your framing skills without needing to buy any equipment yet. Sites offering this useful service include DIY Framing (**bit.ly/diychop**), Ashworth & Thompson (**bit.ly/ashchop**), Lion (**bit.ly/lionchop**) and Brampton Picture Framing (**bit.ly/bramptonchop**).

4 Cut the moulding to size

Cut the moulding lengths in two stages, first using a mitre saw to rough cut the lengths. It's worth investing some time in setting up your saw to make sure it cuts true – use some of the spare moulding to do test cuts to check the angle accuracy and to see if the saw blade will splinter the finish. If this does happen, wrap some sticky tape around the area you're cutting to prevent it from splintering. Use the finest-toothed saw blade you can get hold of – the finer the teeth, the cleaner the cut.







5 Prepare for joining

Finish the moulding cuts with a mitre guillotine, which will hone the edges to be joined to create a flat, smooth surface that will bond well and produce a good-looking perfect mitre once joined. Use the guillotine to shave off a millimetre or so from the edge of your rough-cut piece of moulding, then check that all the edges are angled at either 45 degrees or 90 degrees. Hold your two lengths and two width pieces back-to-back to make sure they're exactly the same size, so the finished frame will be square. Before joining them, use a marker to colour around the top of the cut edges to hide any slight imperfections in the join.



If you buy one thing...

The FrameCo PushMaster (**bit.ly/pushmaster**) hand v-nailer is worth investing in. A cost-effective way to professionally finish your frame joints, it also doubles up as a handy point-nailer for attaching backing boards. It has a magnetic head that holds the v-nail or point in position ready for insertion, and a solid metal construction that can take a bash with a hammer if you need to push some v-nails in to hardwood. The starter kit costs about £45, including enough points and v-nails for 50 frames.



6 Join the lengths

Test-fit the pieces to make sure they sit flush together. Do this on a clean, level surface to also make sure the frame is flat. Make slight adjustments if needed. Next, use some PVA wood glue to bond the faces of the mitres together, then run a band clamp around the perimeter of the frame and tighten it to apply even pressure around the edges while the glue dries.

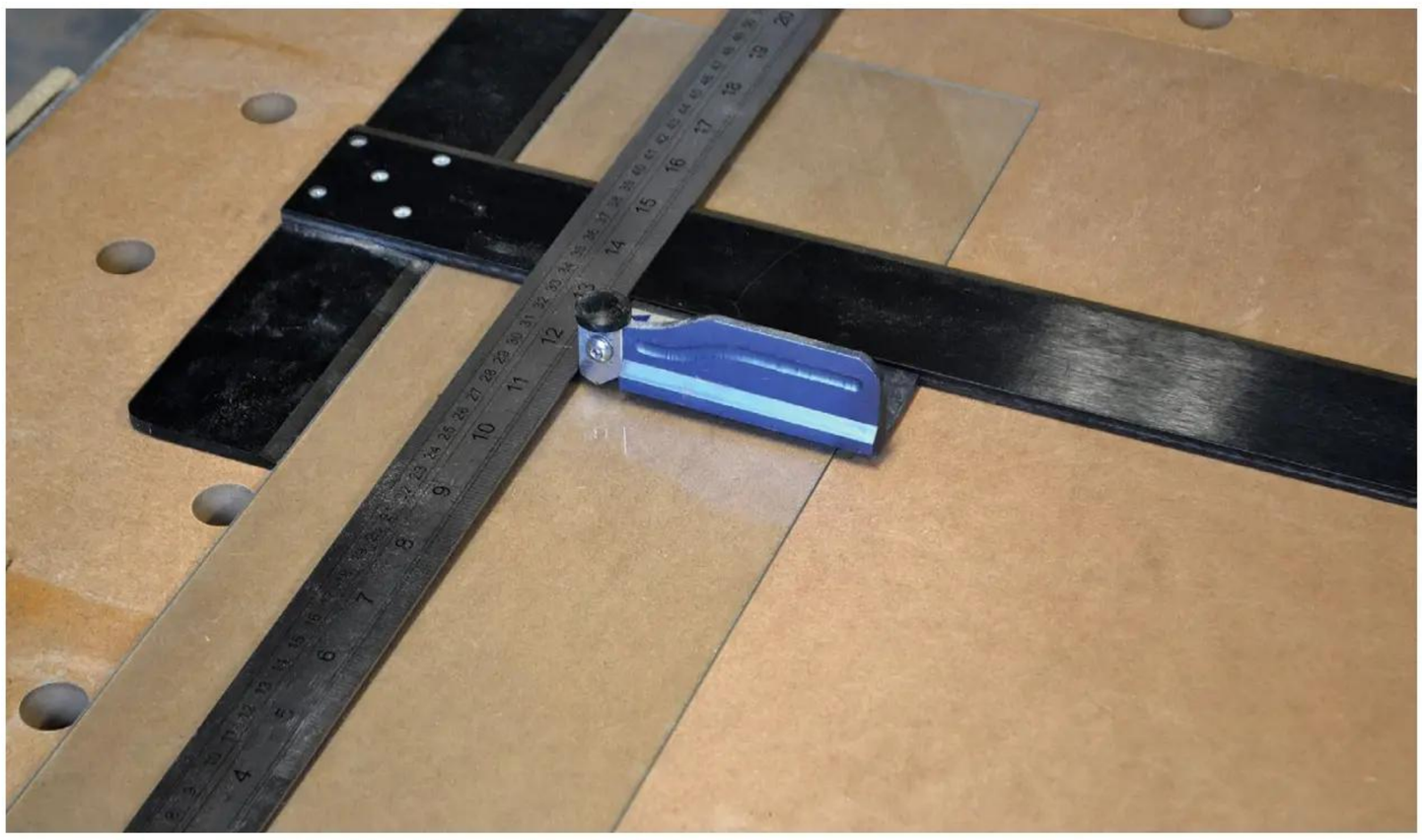


7 Underpin

Push a v-nail into the underside of each corner, using a handheld v-nailer tool (see the 'If you buy one thing' box, left, for my favourite). These metal v-shaped wedges will pull the frame edges together, adding strength and preventing the weight of the frame from deforming it when it's hanging on the wall. Make sure you get the v-nail into the wood the right way around, with the sharper end facing down into the back of the frame corner, with the point of the v-shape meeting the angled join. If your moulding is wide then you should put a number of v-nails along the join – here I've used two v-nails to add strength.



Going further



8 Measure the glass

Lay the glass for your frame on a flat, clean surface that's big enough to support the whole surface of the glass. Use a sharp cutter and a sturdy straight edge that won't slip – a T-square is ideal and will help you to make straight, square cuts. Measure the glass to fit your artwork by putting the square underneath your ruler and moving the square into the correct position, remembering to allow for the width of the cutter itself. Before you commence cutting, make sure that everything is in the correct position and that you have enough room all around you to cut the full length of the glass without any obstructions or distractions.

Types of glass

PLAIN GLASS
Also referred to as standard, float glass, soda lime glass or picture glass, it's usually 2-3mm thick and is available in all glass merchants. It's also very cost-effective.

NON-REFLECTIVE GLASS (NRG)
Available in specialist glass stockists and most bespoke picture framers, this is more expensive than plain glass. Non-reflective glass has an etched finish that dulls down the surface, cutting down on reflections but also flattening colours in framed images.

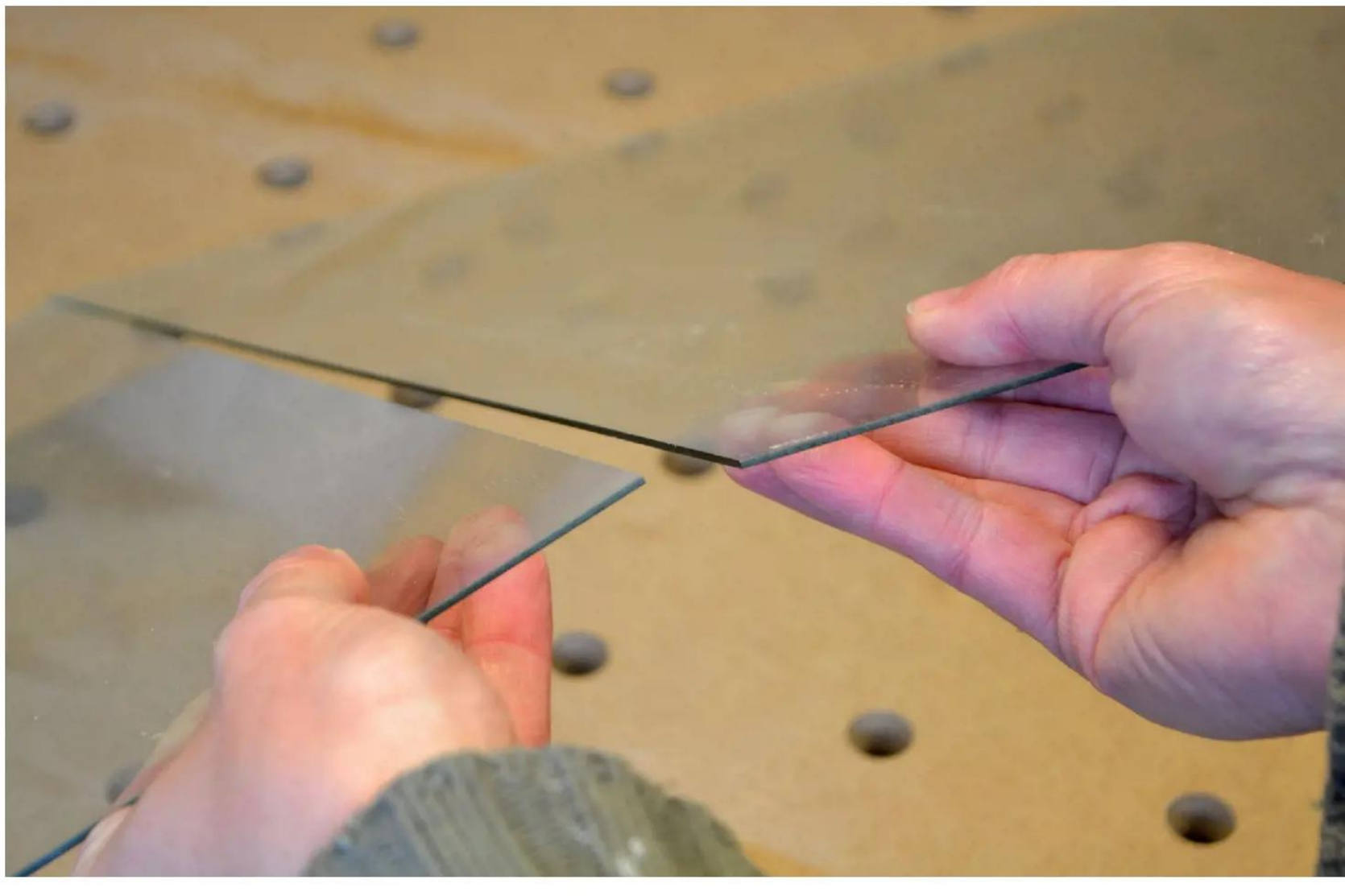
PERSPEX
Sometimes called Plexiglas, this clear acrylic is easy to work with and doesn't leave any sharp edges once it's cut, plus it's fairly inexpensive. It scratches easily, though, and it sometimes turns opaque over time and exposure to sunlight/UV light.

CUT TO SIZE
Whatever the type, glass merchants will usually cut glass to size, but you will have to be accurate with your measurements and be prepared that there could be a tolerance of up to quarter of an inch in its finished size. I prefer to cut my own glass so I can get an exact fit – it's not hard to do (see step 9).



9 Cut the glass

Cutting glass is all about confidence. Scribe the glass firmly with the cutter along the straight edge (if you use enough pressure it should sound like frying chips). Make sure you only scribe the surface once, as this creates a single fault line along which the glass will snap cleanly. Once marked, hold either side of the scribe-line and apply an even upward pressure until the glass breaks cleanly. Alternatively, place one side of the glass on an elevated surface (the edge of the T-square, for example) and apply a gentle downward pressure to the other side until it snaps. These newly cut edges are very sharp, so be careful when handling.







10 Cut the backing board

Use 2.5mm MDF or standard hardboard, available from all good hardware merchants. Measure and mark your backing board with a ruler and square. Use a sturdy straight edge and a craft knife to cut the board to shape – you might have to take several passes through the material to cut right through. Once cut, sand or plane the edges to prevent splintering.





11 Make it shine

Clean everything, then clean it again. Vacuum up all of the dust, polish the frame and clear away surplus tools and equipment. Remove the band clamp and place the frame face-down on your clean, flat surface, then run around the rebate with the vacuum to remove any dust or debris. Next, clean the glass on both sides using a quality cleaning agent to prevent any smears, leaving a crystal clear finish. Lay the glass into the frame, handling it as little as possible. Again, run the vacuum around the inside of the frame to clear any debris. Next, lay the art on the glass and finally put the backing board in place.









12 Add finishing touches

Pin the backing board tight into the frame with some framer's points or panel pins. Carefully insert these with a pin hammer or a specialist framer's point gun. Or you could use a PushMaster, which has a handy groove for inserting points by hand. Give everything a wipe down and then run a length of gummed tape around the frame and backing board, cutting it into the corners with a sharp blade to seal the back of the frame. Finally, position a couple of cord hangers on the frame edges and run a length of picture cord between them. Knot these securely and your frame is ready to hang.



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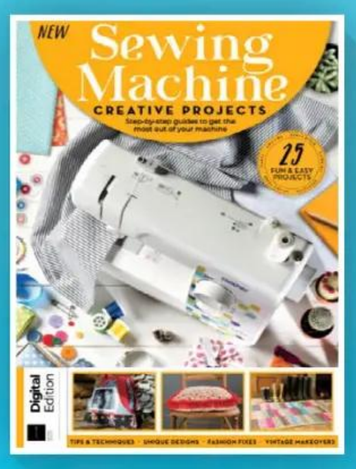


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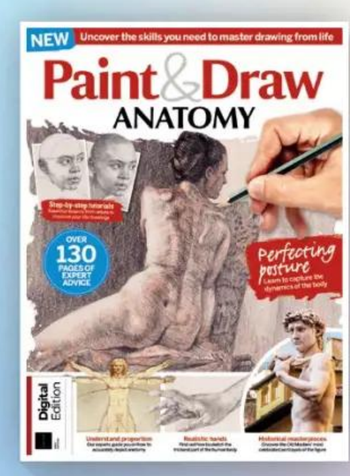














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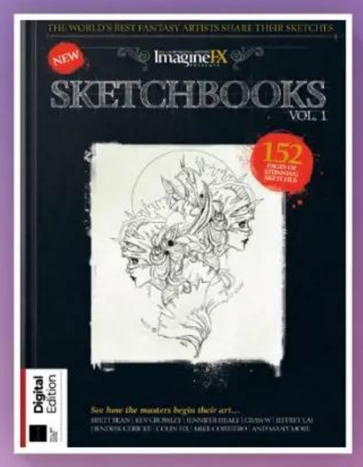
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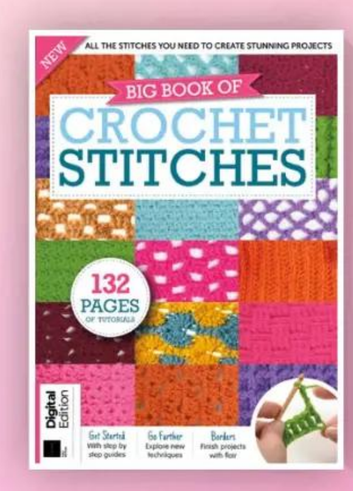














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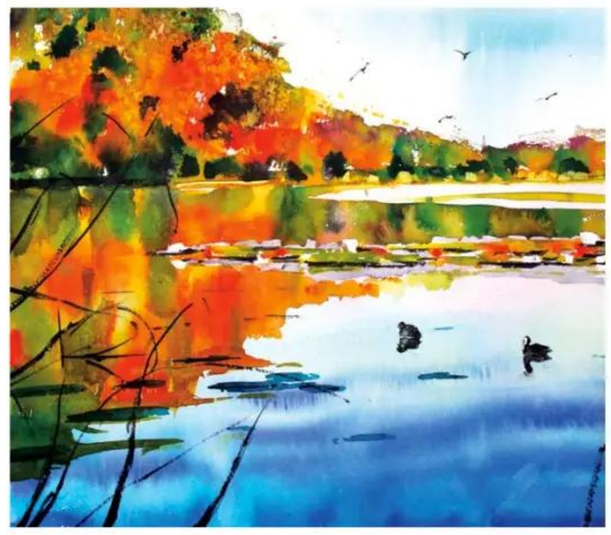
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