



Bucklerburn

A step-by-step painting guide by Richard Robinson

Watch the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/262-Bucklerburn>

MY PAINTING CLUB

Introduction

In this chapter, we embark on a journey to capture the enchanting beauty of the Bucklerburn River in Glenorchy, New Zealand, using the captivating technique of contre-jour lighting. This method, known for its dramatic 'against the light' effect, allows us to create a scene brimming with mood and mystery. By positioning the primary light source behind our subject, we achieve striking silhouettes and glowing highlights that bring our painting to life. You'll learn to master the art of balancing high contrast, ensuring that dark areas maintain subtle variations while the brightest spots glow without becoming harsh. We'll explore how backlighting enhances atmospheric depth, with distant elements becoming hazy and warm-toned, and how the foreground shadows can take on unexpected hues. Through a step-by-step process, I'll guide you in designing a successful composition, starting with a purplish-grey base coat and gradually introducing warm, luminous colors as we approach the sun. We'll add texture and detail to create depth, resulting in a vibrant, light-filled painting. Whether you're a beginner or an advanced painter, this lesson in oils (or acrylics) will enrich your skills and inspire your creativity. Let's dive in and enjoy the magic of painting together!



"Bucklerburn" 10.5 x 17" Oil on Linen by Richard Robinson



REFERENCE PHOTO 1

The scene as Richard found it.



REFERENCE PHOTO 2

The scene as Richard found it.



REFERENCE PHOTO 3

The scene as Richard found it.

Materials

Gather these materials before you start. If you don't have the exact same supplies, use what you have and substitute freely.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Winsor & Newton Oil Paints
- Winsor Blue Red Shade
- Cadmium Red
- Cadmium Orange
- Gold Ochre
- Cadmium Lemon
- Titanium White
- Painting medium
- Winsor & Newton Liquin
- Solvent
- Gamsol
- Surface
- Fredrix Linen with a smooth texture.
- You could use a canvas panel or anything you prefer.
- Brushes
- Rosemary & Co. Richard Robinson 'Fun with Filberts' Brush Set
- Palette Knife
- Paper Towels
- Container for solvent
- Container for painting medium

1 Forgotten Brushes and New Style

Experiment with Old Brushes

Use old brushes that have worn down and changed shape, such as from flats to filberts. This can unlock a new style of painting and make the experience more joyful and enjoyable.

Consider New Filbert Brushes

After enjoying the experience with old filbert brushes, consider ordering a new set from a quality supplier like Rosemary and Co to continue exploring this style.

2 Materials and Brushes

Select Your Canvas

Use a Fredericks linen canvas with a fine weave. This type of canvas helps to show brushstrokes better, enhancing the texture of your painting.

Choose Your Oil Paints

Use Winsor & Newton oils for vibrant and consistent color quality. These paints are reliable for achieving rich tones in your artwork.

Prepare Your Palette

Include Winsor blue (red shade), cadmium red, cadmium orange, gold ochre, cadmium yellow lemon, and titanium white on your palette. These colors provide a versatile range for mixing and creating depth.

Select Your Brushes

Use long bristle filberts, which come to a fine edge and can be used in various ways. Choose brush sizes 12s, 8s, and a long flat number 2 for different detailing needs.

Handle Brush Glare

Opt for brushes with black handles to prevent them from shining in the sun and creating sparkles in your eyes.

3 Sketching the Horizon and Mountains

Sketch the Horizon and Mountains

Use a number eight brush to sketch the horizon and mountains. This size is suitable for creating the initial outlines in your painting.

Create the False Horizon

Dip your brush in the liquid and grab a little bit of blue paint. Sketch a line straight across to represent the false horizon, which is actually the bottom of the mountains.

4 Mountain Composition and Perspective

Set the Horizon

Position the horizon line quite low on your canvas. This allows the large mountains to dominate the painting, emphasizing their size and enhancing the perspective.

Place Mountain Peaks

Position the mountain peaks close to the top edge of the canvas, but keep them at least an inch from the top. This prevents a cramped composition while ensuring the peaks remain a significant focal point.

Choose Mountain Shapes

Select the shapes of the mountain tops that interest you the most, starting with the highest peak. Use natural shapes as inspiration, but feel free to modify them to suit your artistic vision.

Maintain Variety in Angles

Avoid using angles that are too similar to maintain variety and prevent the painting from appearing man-made. This helps preserve the natural feel of the landscape.

Direct the Viewer's Eye

Ensure the mountain edges rise towards the edges of the painting. This technique helps contain the viewer's eye within the painting, avoiding edges that lead the eye out of the composition.

Explore Shadow Shapes

Identify where the shadows begin and how they interact with the mountain's contours. Understanding this interaction is key to creating a realistic and dramatic depiction of light and shadow.

Understand Mountain Form

Study the form of the mountains before painting to understand how shapes and shadows work together. This understanding is crucial for accurately capturing the mountain's structure and the play of light and shadow.

5 River and Light Direction

Simplify the Scene

Create a gentle curve that leads all the way to the lake, then turns and heads down to it. This guides the viewer's eye through the painting without overwhelming them with too many details.

Adjust Tree Size

Keep the trees at the waterline fairly small. Painting them too large can make the mountain appear smaller, so maintaining their size helps preserve the mountain's perceived scale.

Emphasize Light Direction

Exaggerate the beautiful warm light coming from one side to emphasize the light direction. This creates a backlit effect for some areas, while others will be side lit, depending on their position relative to the light source.

Consider Lighting Variation

Remember that lighting will change across a large scene. While one area might be backlit due to the sun's position, other areas could be side lit. This variation adds depth and interest to your painting.

6 Base Color for the Mountain

Select Your Brush

Use a number 12 filbert brush for painting the mountain. This brush size allows for broad strokes and smooth transitions.

Mix the Base Color

Create a purpley grey base color for the mountain. This will serve as the foundation for the mountain's overall tone.

Transition the Colors

Gradually transition the base color to a purpley blue grey. This shift adds depth and dimension to the mountain.

Warm and Lighten Near the Sun

As the mountain gets closer to the sun, make the colors warmer and lighter. This effect mimics the natural lighting and enhances the painting's warmth.

7 Scumbling Technique

Mix the Dark Base Color

Combine blue with a little bit of red to create a dark color that resembles black. This will serve as your base color.

Adjust with White

Add white to the dark color to reveal its actual hue. Aim for a mid-tone or slightly darker than a mid-tone to start your painting.

Apply the Paint Lightly

Lightly brush the paint onto the canvas to cover it without making the layer thick. This ensures that the next layer can be applied smoothly without excessive buildup.

Overlap Edges

When painting over edges, allow the paint to overlap slightly. This technique simplifies the process for the next layer, reducing the need for precision.

Use a Medium for Better Flow

Add a little liquid or painting medium, such as walnut oil, to improve the paint's flow. This helps in applying the paint more smoothly.

8 Color Transition on the Mountain

Prepare the Canvas

Cover the little white spots on the canvas to create a more uniform base. This ensures that the colors you apply next will appear more consistent and vibrant.

Mix Transition Color

Mix a little red with a little white to create a warm pink color. This pinky glow will enhance the effect of light on the mountain.

Apply Transition Color

Use the side of the brush to apply the pink transition color in a broad treatment. Fill in the area to create a smooth transition effect, mimicking the effect of light coming into the scene.

Consider Color Mixing

When adding colors like yellow to the blue-gray base, be aware that it may mix and turn green. This can still look like sun glow, but it will be a different color than if you used red or pink.

9 Adding Yellow for Glow

Enhance Glow with Yellow

Add yellow to areas of your painting where you want to enhance the glow. This will not only make the area lighter but also give it a stronger glowing effect.

10 Snow in Shadow

Mix Snow in Shadow Color

Add white to the purpley gray color to create the snow in shadow effect. This combination will give you the cool, muted tones needed for shadowed snow.

Apply Thick Paint

Use a dry paint with less painting medium and apply it thickly with a flat brush. This technique will help achieve a textured look that simulates broken patches of snow and ice.

Create Texture

Drag the paint sideways with a flatter brush to enhance the textured effect. This will resemble the natural appearance of broken patches of snow and ice.

Use Artistic License

Feel free to add more snow to your painting than what is in the reference photograph. Use your artistic license to create the effect you desire.

11 Snow in Light

Adjust Color with Red

Add red to darken the color as it moves into a different area of the painting. This adjustment is necessary to capture the depth and variation in the scene.

Lighten with White

Incorporate white into the paint to lighten the color for the new segment. This change is crucial for depicting the effect of light on snow.

Warm the Snow Light

Lighten and warm the color as it moves across the painting to convey the magical effect of light on snow. This technique enhances the realism and beauty of the scene.

Use a Smaller Brush

Select a number 8 brush for painting snow and light details. This size offers more control and precision for intricate work.

Add Liquid for Flow

Introduce liquid to the brush to improve paint flow and speed up drying time. This helps in achieving smoother application.

Tint White with Yellow

Add a tiny speck of yellow to the white paint to significantly change its color. Even a small amount can make a noticeable difference.

Apply Paint Thickly

Squish the paint out, flatten it, and push into it to create a ridge on the brush. This technique allows you to lay paint on thickly for texture.

Shape Snow Chunks

Paint the snow chunks fatter and let them extend into the sky. The sky will be painted down into it later, allowing for further shaping.

12 Sky Painting Technique

Create Sharp Shapes with a Big Brush

Use the very edge of a big brush to create sharp shapes. This technique allows you to add fine details despite the brush's size.

Avoid Muddy Colors

When painting light colors over dark paint, use minimal strokes to prevent the dark paint from mixing with the light paint. Clean the brush if it picks up any dark paint before reloading it with light paint.

Enhance Color Palette with Red

Add a touch of red to make the painting go a little pinker. This can help create a more interesting and varied color palette.

Paint the Sky Last for Effect

Consider painting the sky last to help clean up the painting and create a nice effect. This approach can enhance the overall look of your painting.

13 Upper Mountain Details

Switch to a Larger Brush

Move back to a larger brush to cover more area and create broader strokes on the upper reaches of the mountain.

Mix a Lighter, Warmer Color

Add some pink and a little yellow ochre to your existing color to make it lighter and warmer. This adjustment helps the mountain appear as if light is hitting it, adding realism and dynamism to the scene.

Apply and Blend the Color

Apply the color softly and drag it into the dark areas to blend naturally. This ensures smooth transitions between light and shadow areas.

Leave Gaps for Texture

Leave little gaps to represent rivers, shadows, and bits of forest on the mountainside. These gaps build the form and texture of the mountain, enhancing its realism.

Drag Color Sideways

Drag the color sideways to subtly integrate it without overwhelming the area. This technique enhances the natural look of the mountain.

14 Mountain Form and Perspective

Build Up Light Gradually

Slowly build up the lights on the mountain to create a realistic and gradual transition. This enhances the depth and form of your painting.

Leave Gaps for Depth

Leave intentional gaps in your painting to suggest features like ravines or waterfalls. This creates a sense of depth and separation, making the landscape appear more dynamic and realistic.

Use Big Brush Strokes

Opt for big brush strokes to add detail, creating a calligraphic feel that is more artistic and joyful. Avoid laboring with a tiny brush for a more expressive result.

Reflect Vegetation with Color

Change the color from browner at the top, where there are tussocks, to greener at the bottom, where there are big trees. This reflects the natural variation in vegetation.

Lighten and Warm the Mountain Top

Add a little white and orange to the brown to make the top of the mountain appear lighter and warmer. Brown is essentially a dark orange, so this adjustment enhances the warmth.

Consider Sun Direction

Pay attention to the sun's direction as it affects light and warmth distribution. Planes tilting towards the sun should be the lightest and warmest.

Focus on Color Relativeness

Carefully consider color relativeness to create a realistic depiction of light and form. This makes the painting come alive, as if a world is emerging from the canvas.

Detail the Mountain Tops

Add more detail and interest to the tops of mountains, as they appear smaller and more compressed due to their distance. This enhances the painting's interest.

Enhance Base Perspective

The perspective of the mountain base makes it appear closer, enhancing the grandeur and majesty of the mountain. Keep the major interest in the top part for a balanced composition.

15 Adding Green to the Mountain

Mix a Lighter Green for the Mountain

Add white to your mountain color to lighten it, then incorporate yellow ochre to shift it towards green. This will result in a color that remains quite grey but has a greenish tint.

Prepare Your Palette

Use a large palette to keep all your colors available for mixing. This helps you see the relationships between different colors more clearly.

Apply the Green to the Mountain

Begin applying the green color to the lightest area of the mountain. Use a large stroke to cover the area, considering the rounding of the hill and the channels as they descend.

Enhance with Vibrant Color

Start with a lighter and greener base, then add a tiny touch of bright yellow for more vibrancy. Be cautious with bright yellow, as it is very powerful, and apply it only where a little more green is needed.

16 Color Transition and Light

Enhance Contrast with Lighter Colors

Add a lighter and stronger color to increase interest by creating contrast and drawing attention to certain areas.

Create a Green to Pink Transition

Mix some pink into the green you've already built, ensuring it becomes a little lighter. This transition helps in picking up light in the shadows.

Simulate Sunlight with Lighter Colors

As colors approach the sun, make them lighter and pinker to simulate sunlight. This makes the colors appear more illuminated.

Add Yellow for a Glowing Effect

Include a tiny touch of yellow to create a nice accent and make the area appear more glowy, enhancing the light effect in your painting.

Reflect Light with Lighter Colors

Ensure colors transitioning towards the light source become lighter than the base color. This reflects the effect of light, making the scene appear more realistic.

17 Dark Accents

Add Dark Accents

Using the initial color, add small dark accents to the painting. This will help reshape some of the valleys and introduce long shadows, adding depth and interest to your work.

Reshape Valleys

Use the initial color to redefine the shapes of the valleys with dark accents. This technique creates a more dynamic composition.

Enhance Depth with Shadows

Drag in long shadows using dark accents to add depth and dimension. This approach enhances realism and increases the overall visual interest of the scene.

18 Painting the Sky

Mix Sky Base Color

Grab a clean brush and mix some white paint with a little bit of liquid. Add a tiny bit of yellow to the mixture to subtly change the color. Be careful about how much paint is picked up on your brush to keep it clean.

Maintain Brush Cleanliness

Wipe off any picked-up paint and reload your brush with fresh paint. Avoid brushing too much to prevent the colors from mixing and maintain distinct color separation.

Adjust Sky Color

Add a little blue to your mixture to change the sky color. Use blue sparingly, as even a small speck will significantly alter the color.

Blend Sky Colors

Blend the colors across the sky lightly, but not too smoothly. Aim for a blended yet textured appearance to allow the brush strokes to show.

19 Sky and Mountain Light Transition

Understand Sky Color Perception

Recognize that the sky may appear green due to the mix of yellow and blue. Your brain will still perceive it as blue, even though the transition creates a green hue.

Capture Light Transitions

Focus on the transitions across the mountains and in the sky. These transitions are crucial for conveying the presence and movement of light in your painting.

20 Palette and Brush Maintenance

Choose the Right Palette Size

Opt for a large palette to keep your mixtures cleaner. A bigger palette provides more space, preventing colors from being too close and mixing unintentionally. This helps maintain vibrant and distinct color mixtures.

Use a Suitable Palette for Your Setting

Select a palette that fits your painting environment. For outdoor painting, use a palette that fits in your easel. In the studio, consider using a larger glass palette for more room to work with your colors.

Maintain Brush Quality

Invest in high-quality brushes that are beautiful to work with and durable. These brushes will last well and enhance your painting experience, even when ordered from abroad.

21 Lake Color

Mix Aquamarine Color

Create the unique aquamarine color of the lake by mixing blue and white with the tiniest touch of yellow. This combination reflects the sediment from light-colored rocks in the mountains, giving the lake its distinct hue.

Apply Aquamarine to Lake

Once you've mixed the aquamarine color, apply it straight across the lake area. This will help capture the unique look of the lake in your painting.

22 Foreground Trees

Apply Base Color

Start with yellow ochre, as it's the closest color for the mid-tone of the willow trees. Use big strokes to cover the area effectively, establishing the foundation for the trees.

Enhance with Impasto

Mix some white and a little bright yellow with the initial color. Apply this mixture with thicker strokes to create an impasto effect that stands out from the background, adding depth to the foreground.

Add Color Variety

Introduce a touch of orange to the tops of the trees. This adds color variety and enhances the natural look of the scene.

Create Cohesion

Use some of the colors from the trees in other areas of the foreground. This creates a cohesive connection between elements in the painting.

Prepare for Next Steps

Clean your brush a little bit after applying the colors. This prepares you for the next steps in the painting process.

23 Darkening the Foreground

Mix a Darker Foreground Color

Combine a little red and yellow ochre to create a darker base color. Add a bit of blue to gray it down slightly, achieving a more natural and subdued effect suitable for the foreground.

Adjust the Color Intensity

If the mix is too dark, incorporate a little white and more blue to reach a warm dark gray or 'warm mud'. This adjustment ensures the color has depth and is not overly dark.

Create Softness and Light

Remember that the foreground should not be too dark, as these areas contain light and color, especially with backlighting. Aim for a warm dark gray that conveys the softness and light within the scene.

Paint the Willow Trees

Use soft brush strokes starting from the bottom and brushing up into the willows. This technique helps achieve the softness characteristic of willow trees.

24 Tree Details and Trunks

Mix a Darker Starting Color

Create a darker version of the starting color by mixing yellow with a little orange. Brush this mixture in to add warmth and variety with greeny and ochery tones.

Soften Tree Edges

Brush white into the inside of the tree shapes to soften the edges. This technique helps create a more natural and blended appearance.

Darken Tree Details

Use yellow ochre and possibly some red to darken the tree details. Start applying these colors from the bottom and work up to the densest part of the tree.

Tone Down Strong Colors

Add a little blue to tone down any strong colors. This balances the color intensity and creates a more natural look.

Add a Surprise Element

Introduce an unexpected branch or shape to make the tree more interesting. This breaks away from a standard tree shape and adds uniqueness.

25 Foreground Grasses and Riverbank

Mix Riverbank Color

Create a warm dark color for the riverbank by mixing blue and red with a bit of orange. This combination will give you a very warm dark tone suitable for the riverbank area.

Enhance Grass Green

Add a little bright yellow to your dark color mix to make the grasses appear greener. This will create a greener dark that can be used in the dark notes of the grasses.

Create Spotlight Effect

Mix green with warmth to add a little light to the area, creating a spotlight effect. This will give the impression of a light spot on the riverbank.

Paint Light on Grasses

Add some white to your mix, along with bright yellow and gold ochre, to create a warmer light color. Use this to paint interesting thin shapes that represent light on the top of the grasses.

Adjust Tree Base for Depth

Raise the base of the closer trees slightly higher than the distant ones to create a sense of depth. This shows that the closer trees are not just larger but actually nearer to the viewer.

Soften Tree Edges

Use soft vertical strokes to soften the edges of the trees. This technique helps blend the trees into the background and creates a more natural look.

Indicate Riverbank Slope

Add a little orange to the mix as you paint towards the side-lit areas to depict the slope of the riverbank. This helps indicate the slight downhill slope where the river runs into the lake.

Preserve Darks with Thick Paint

Use thick paint with soft edges to preserve the darks and create the appearance of clumps of grass that are being backlit. This adds texture and depth to the painting.

26 Riverbank Shadows and Details

Mix Warm Grey for Riverbank

Mix a chunk of white with some red and a tiny bit of blue to create a warm grey. This tone captures the sunlight reflecting on the riverbank, adding warmth and light to the scene.

Apply Impasto for Texture

Use thick impasto paint to add texture and warmth to the riverbank. This technique enhances the effect of sunlight, making the scene more vibrant and lively.

Create Shadows with Cooler Grey

Mix a slightly darker, cooler version of the warm grey for the shadows. Apply this color to areas turned away from the light to add depth and dimension to the riverbank.

Add Subtle Color Variations

Introduce subtle differences in color to add variety and a sense of light and shade. This makes the riverbank more realistic and visually interesting.

Blend Soft Edges

Create soft edges by making gentle transitions between colors, especially where shadows merge with other shadows. This gives a more natural and realistic appearance.

Enhance Shadows with Blue

Add blue to the shadows further from the warm light to reflect the cooler, bluer shadows that naturally occur in less sunlit areas. This technique mimics the shadows seen in the mountains.

27 Painting the River

Prepare the Brush

If you're switching to a vibrant color, clean your brush or use a new one. For gray colors, you can keep mixing without cleaning, as the existing paint will help gray the color down.

Mix Grey-Green Base

Start with a grey-green color that is a little bit lighter than mid-grey and slightly greener than grey. This will serve as the base for the river.

Darken with Blue

Add a little bit of blue to the grey-green color to darken it slightly. This adds depth to the water.

Paint the Stream

Use the edge of your brush to make thin, slightly curved marks to represent the burbling, moving stream. This technique captures the flow and movement of the water.

Add Shadows

Mix in some darker tones to show where the bank is casting a shadow across the water. This also reflects the darkness of the bank, adding realism.

28 Adding River Details

Add River Details

Use a number two ivory long flat brush to add fine details to the river. This brush is ideal for achieving precision in your painting.

Mix Highlight Colors

Combine white with a tiny touch of yellow to create a subtle highlight effect in the water. This will enhance the natural light in the stream.

Enhance Rocks

Mix yellow ochre, bright yellow, and a little orangey color to make the rocks stand out. Vary the colors slightly to ensure each rock has a unique appearance.

Create Sun Sparkles

Apply white and yellow paint thickly to simulate the sun sparkling on the water. This technique adds a bright, reflective quality to your painting.

Fill White Spots

Identify any white spots left on the canvas and fill them in to make your painting look more complete.

Define Branches and Trunks

Mix a darker brown for the branches and trunks, just enough to add definition without overpowering the existing colors.

Warm Riverbank Area

Make the paint warmer as it transitions into the riverbank area. This will create a sense of depth and variation.

Add Crisp Foreground Details

Incorporate crisp details in the foreground to create depth and focus, drawing the viewer's eye to the front of the scene.

29 Painting the Horse

Use a Fine Brush

To avoid making the lines look too thick, use a fine brush and smooth the paint out. Collect a little line of paint on the end of the brush to create thin lines, which will prevent the painting from looking amateurish.

Soften Stark Lines

If the lines look too stark, lightly use a brush or your finger to smush them a little. This will soften the lines so they don't stand out harshly.

Vary Line Angles

Vary the angles of the lines to prevent the painting from looking too uniform and artificial. Different angles add a more natural and dynamic appearance to the painting.

30 Color Relativity

Understand Color Relativity

Recognize that colors can appear different depending on the colors around them. This is known as color relativity, where a color might seem warmer or cooler based on its neighboring colors.

Observe Warm Grey

Notice how a warm grey can look cool when surrounded by warmer colors. This demonstrates how the perception of a color can change due to its surroundings.

31 Adjusting Tree Density

Lighten Dense Tree Areas

Use a warm mid-gray color to lighten the areas where the trees appear too dense. This adjustment will create a less crowded appearance and harmonize with other colors in your painting.

Integrate Tree Colors

Ensure the warm mid-gray used for the trees complements other elements, like the blue grays in the mountains. This will help to create a cohesive look throughout your painting.

32 Adjusting the Rider

Adjust the Rider's Head Size

Examine the rider's head in relation to the body. If it appears too large, carefully reduce its size to achieve a balanced and proportionate look. This adjustment will help prevent the rider from looking unbalanced or as if they might topple off the horse.

33 Signing the Painting

Choose a Spot for Your Signature

Select a location for your signature that feels appropriate, such as a corner where it won't distract from the artwork. Consider a couple of places before deciding on the final spot.

Select a Color for Your Signature

Use a dull red to sign your painting. This color subtly complements the artwork without drawing too much attention away from the painting itself.

34 Final Adjustments and Clouds

Add a Backlit Cloud

Include a puffy backlit cloud in the sky to introduce more drama. This dynamic element enhances the visual interest and depth of the composition.

Fix Mistakes

If you accidentally ruin a part of your painting, such as the top of a mountain, take a moment to fix it. Repaint or adjust the area to restore its intended appearance.

35 Comparing Warm and Cool Light

Create a Glowing Light Effect

Add the color of the light source, such as pink, yellow, or green, to all the colors as you move towards the sun. Make these colors slightly lighter to achieve a beautiful light effect.

Use Warm Light for Glow

Incorporate warm colors like pink or yellow to give the painting a warmer and more glowing feel. This technique enhances the warmth and glow of the scene.

Use Cool Light for a Cooler Look

Apply cool colors like white and blue to create a cooler appearance in your painting. This approach contrasts with the warm light effect.

Summary & Key Takeaways

Embrace the journey of painting by experimenting with tools and techniques that bring out your unique style. Start with worn brushes to discover new textures and effects, and consider investing in quality materials to enhance your creative exploration. As you prepare your canvas, choose a fine weave to highlight your brushstrokes, and select vibrant oils to achieve rich tones.

Begin your composition by sketching the horizon and mountains, ensuring the peaks dominate the canvas without crowding it. Pay attention to light and shadow, using them to create depth and realism. Guide the viewer's eye through the scene with thoughtful placement of elements like rivers and trees, and exaggerate the warm light to add drama and interest.

As you build your painting, layer colors and textures to bring the scene to life. Use techniques like scumbling and color transitions to create dynamic effects, and don't shy away from adding your own artistic touches. Finish with careful attention to details, such as snow and sky, to capture the essence of the landscape. Remember, each stroke contributes to the overall harmony and beauty of your work.

LESSON POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Experiment with old, worn brushes to discover new painting styles.
- Use a long flat number 2 brush for signing and adding small details.
- Position mountain peaks at least an inch from the top edge to avoid a cramped composition.
- Keep trees at the waterline small to preserve the mountain's perceived size.
- Exaggerate the colors to create a beautiful warm painting.
- Lightly brush the paint to cover the canvas without making it thick.
- Use a dry paint with less medium to achieve a textured look for snow and ice.
- Use the very edge of a big brush to create sharp shapes and add fine details.



"Bucklerburn" 10.5 x 17" Oil on Linen by Richard Robinson

Student Critiques

Club members painted their own versions of this scene and I critiqued each one. Their paintings — and my feedback — are a wonderful way to see this lesson's ideas in action.

"Acrylic painting at "Bucklerburn" in Glenorchy, NZ" by Eric Hillmer



Acrylic painting at "Bucklerburn" in Glenorchy, NZ

Nice one, Eric, full of your lively style once again. Very vibrant colour in this one and interesting organic shapes. Love that energetic brushwork. You did make a glowing light effect too.

The price you pay for that punchy colour in the mountains and the strong darks back there unfiltered by atmosphere is a loss of depth in the painting. The same can be said for the dark trunks in the trees, which, however are interesting graphic counterpoints to the larger brushwork around it. So again, it's all about what you want to achieve in your painting and the choices you make to get you there.

“Bucklerburn oil on canvas” by **Nancy Newton**



Bucklerburn oil on canvas

Hey Nancy that's really interesting what you've done there. :-) (No I don't mean that in a funny way). When I viewed that from a distance I thought 'Oh that's interesting!' because it looks like you've divided the mountains into 3 separate colour zones from blue to green to pink, which is weird, but interesting!

Zooming in larger I can see that it's born from the struggle to create that gradation from left to right towards the sun and it didn't quite work out, mainly because the central green area is too dark.

So, yes that could do with another attempt to get that skill nailed down, but meanwhile, on the other side of town, the foreground is great! Strong brushwork, bold contrast and interesting shapes. Nice!

"Bucklerburn - 11 x 16 Oil on Linen Canvas Pad. I enjoyed the "Disney" horse story!"
by **Louise Villegas**



Bucklerburn - 11 x 16 Oil on Linen Canvas Pad. I enjoyed the "Disney" horse story!

Hi Louise, thanks I'm glad you liked the horse story - I think we can all do with a little more Disney. I can see you've got a decent helping of it too. Vibrant colours and simplified forms here are creating a happy vibe and storybook feel. You've even got the sparkles in the water! Nice.

Hey just one thing I'd caution is to get that horizon line really straight and horizontal, oh and avoid repeating shapes like the rocks in the foreground which makes it look like it's man-made. Let your horse have adventures in wild places. :-)

“Bucklerburn Oil won Oil Paper” by **Geoffrey Geeson**



Bucklerburn Oil won Oil Paper

Wow that's an interesting take on this, Geoffrey. With all that high value contrast and sharply defined form it's got a graphic feel to it that's still organic. A beautiful cohesive style! Nicely done.