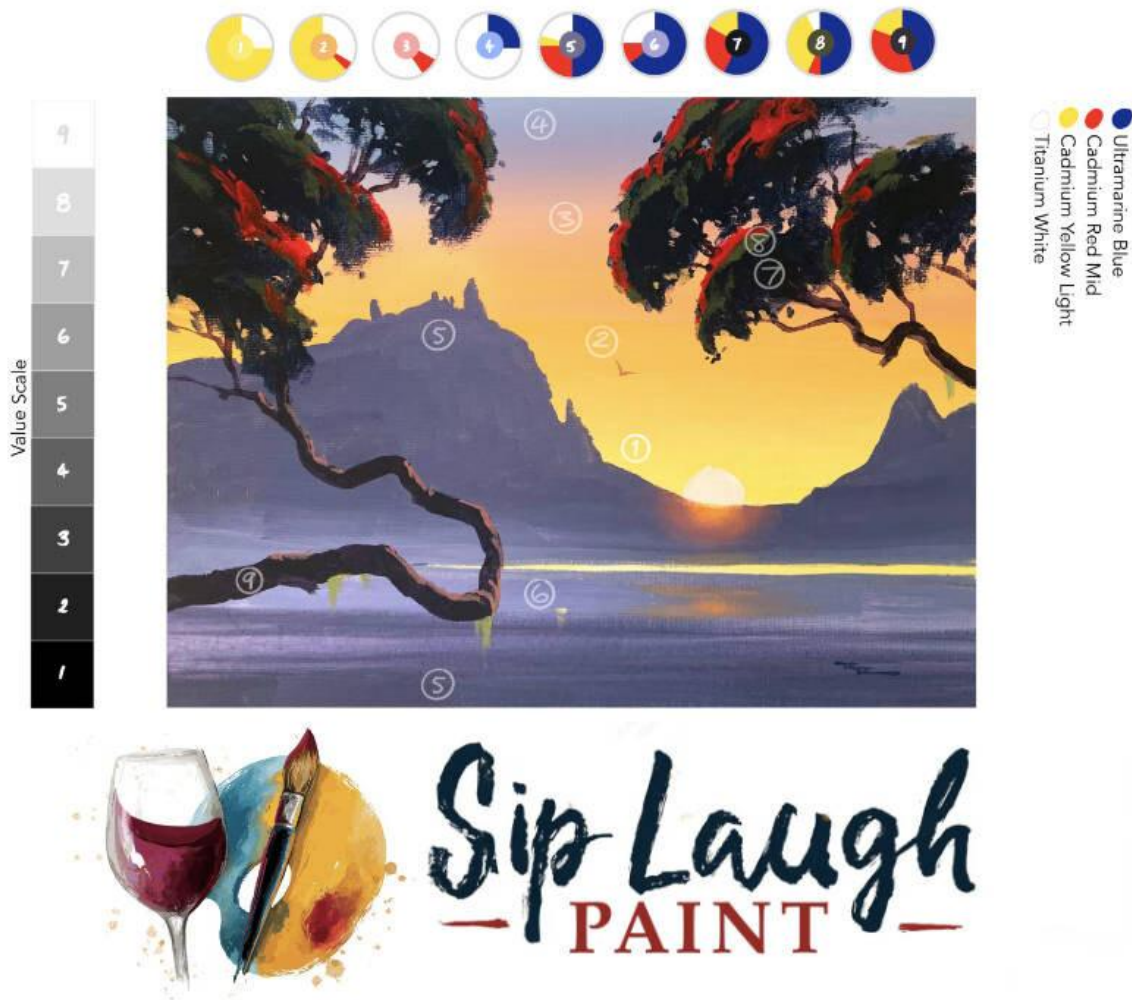




Harbour Sunrise

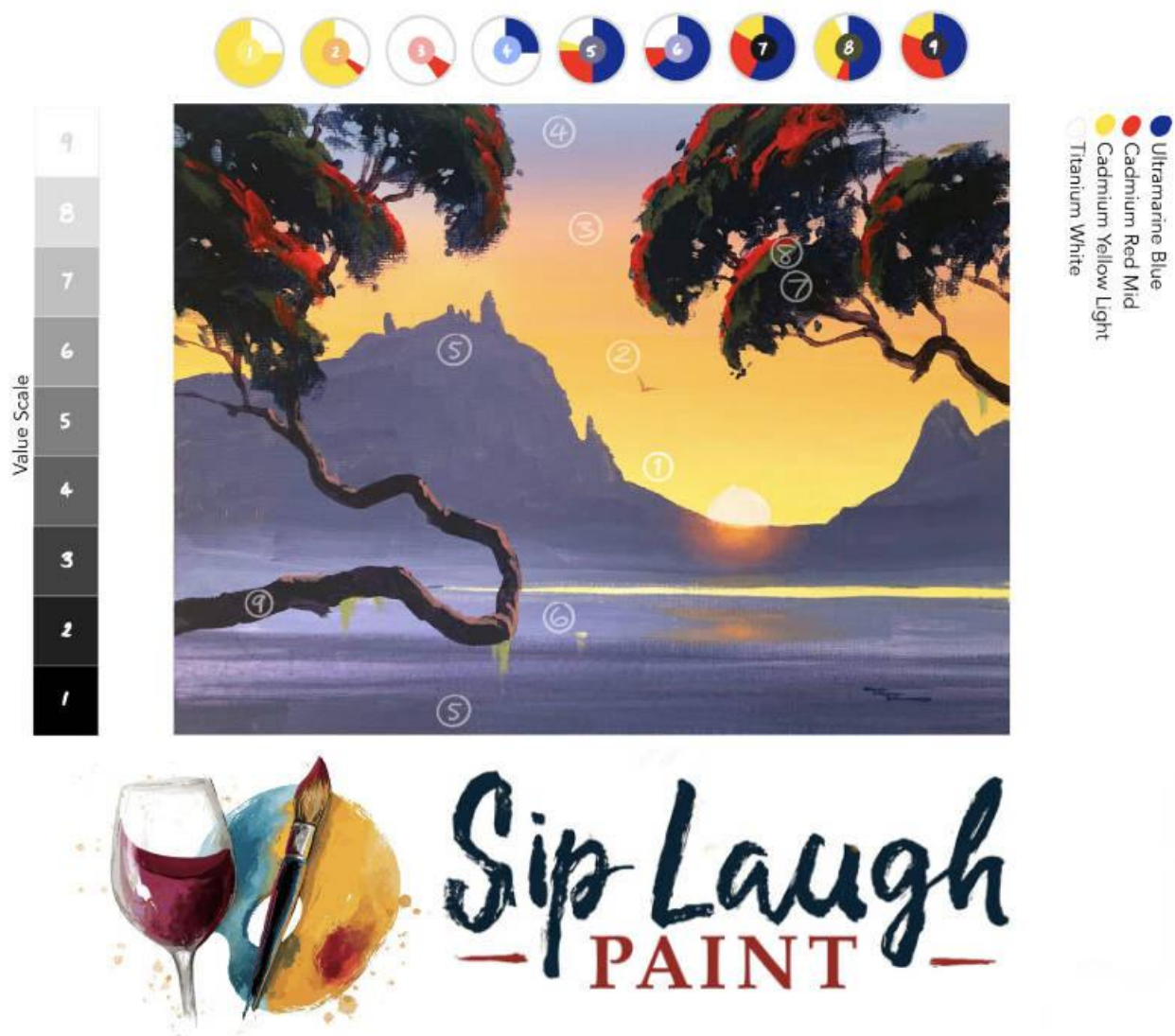
A step-by-step painting guide by Richard Robinson

Watch the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/264-Harbour-Sunrise>

MY PAINTING CLUB

Introduction

After spending four months exploring the breathtaking landscapes of New Zealand in my trusty camper, I returned to my new home in Waipu with a yearning to connect with my community. This desire led me to start a Sip Laugh Paint class on Friday nights, where we could gather, paint, and enjoy each other's company. Our first lesson, 'Harbour Sunrise,' captures the serene beauty of Langs Beach, a scene that promises both simplicity and depth, making it a perfect subject for beginners and seasoned painters alike. In this chapter, you'll learn to create a stunning 11x14" acrylic painting, guided through each step with clear instructions and helpful pauses. We'll delve into color mixing, using Ultramarine Blue, Cadmium Red, Cadmium Yellow, and White to bring this sunrise to life. The joy of painting is amplified when shared, so I encourage you to invite a friend, sip your favorite drink, and let the music inspire you as you discover the artist within. Let's embark on this creative journey together, where every brushstroke opens new doors to artistic expression.



11x14" Acrylic on Canvas

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

- Atelier Interactive Acrylics
- Ultramarine Blue
- Cadmium Red Mid
- Arylamide Yellow Light / Cadmium Yellow Light
- Titanium White
- Canvas
- 11x14" Canvas Board
- Brushes
- [Rosemary & Co. Richard Robinson Brush Set](#)
- Palette knife
- Paper towels
- Stay-wet palette
- Water spray bottle

1 Mixing the first color

Mix the First Color

Combine three quarters yellow with one quarter white. This mixture will help you achieve the target color shown in the little circle in the middle.

Mix the Second Color

Use mostly yellow, add a fair bit of white, and include a small speck of red. This combination will help you achieve the desired hue.

2 Painting the first layer

Mix Yellow and White

Combine three quarters yellow with one quarter white to create a vibrant base color. This mixture will serve as the foundation for your painting.

Prepare Your Brush

Dip your brush in water before loading it with paint. This prevents the paint from drying in the ferrule and keeps the bristles in good condition.

Apply the First Layer

Start about a third of the way up the canvas and brush the yellow and white mixture across, moving slowly upwards. This ensures even coverage of the area with the base color.

Ensure Proper Coverage

Add a little water to the paint to help it spread more easily, but maintain a consistency that provides good coverage. Avoid making the paint as thin as watercolor.

Paint Yellow Strips

Create a strip of yellow about a third of the way up the canvas and another strip lower down. These strips will act as a base for the yellow in your painting and will be complemented by blue-grey colors later.

3 Mixing and applying the second color

Mix the Second Color

Start with the previous color and add a little less yellow and a tiny bit of red to create an orange hue.

Apply the Second Color

Begin applying the second color at the top of where the previous section finished. Paint across the canvas, then move up again, repeating the process.

Blend into the Yellow

Start back where you began applying the second color and move down into the yellow, which will blend the colors nicely. Stop a couple of inches from the bottom to avoid painting all the way down.

4 Mixing and applying the pink color

Clean the Brush

Wipe the brush off first and then give it a wash to remove all the orange paint. This prevents unintentional color mixing when you start mixing the pink.

Mix the Pink Color

Combine white with a little bit of red to create the desired pink shade for the painting.

Pull Color from Paint Pile

Grab color from the edge of the paint pile and smush outwards. Avoid taking from the middle or pushing towards the middle to keep your paint pile clean.

5 Blending the pink layer

Blend the Pink Layer

Start at the top of the last section and move your brush backwards and forwards using the tip. Avoid pressing hard to achieve a smooth blend.

Continue the Blend

After blending upwards, grab some more paint and start where you began. Blend downwards to continue the smooth transition.

Enhance the Composition

Add a small cloud or a 'zoomy' element to enhance the composition if desired.

6 Mixing and applying the blue color

Prepare the Brush

Clean the brush by washing it and drying it slightly. This ensures no residue from previous colors affects the new mix.

Mix the Blue Color

Combine mainly white with about a quarter blue to create a light blue shade. Add a tiny bit of water to achieve the right consistency for smooth application.

Apply the Blue Color

Start applying the blue color on the tape or halfway over the tape for smooth blending. Use the tip of the brush for more control and precision, avoiding the orange area to prevent unwanted green mixing.

Clean the Brush Again

After applying the blue color, wash the brush to prevent unintentional color mixing in future applications.

7 Drawing the mountains

Select Your Pencil

Use an HB pencil to draw the mountains in the background. It's ideal for sketching because it's not too hard or too soft.

Mark Halfway Points

Draw halfway marks on the edges of your canvas. This will help you gauge the position of the mountains by comparing points on the mountains to these halfway lines.

Draw the S Curve

The general shape of the mountains is like an S curve. Start by drawing this big shape first before adding any details.

Add Mountain Details

Once you've drawn the S curve, add the 'lumpy bits' or bumps to the mountains. These details give the mountains a more realistic look.

Determine Mountain Heights

Figure out how low and how high the mountains will go by identifying the lowest and highest points on your canvas. Mark these points before drawing the main shape.

Connect the Mountain Line

Start drawing the mountains by marking where they begin, typically around the halfway mark on your canvas. Then, connect the starting and ending points with a wiggly line following the S curve.

Steady Your Hand

Use your little finger on the tape to steady your hand as you add the small marks and details to the mountains.

8 Mixing and applying the mountain color

Prepare Your Paints

Give your paints a little spray every now and then to keep them wet. This helps maintain the right consistency for mixing and applying.

Select and Wet Your Brush

Use a synthetic square brush and make sure to get it wet first. This brush is suitable for mixing and applying the paint smoothly.

Mix the Mountain Color

Mix half blue, a quarter red, and a quarter white with a little bit of yellow. The yellow helps to grey the color down a little.

Mix Ample Paint

You need to mix a fair amount of paint because the mountains and foreground cover a big area.

Create Space for Sun Glow

Leave a little space for the sun glow by figuring out where the sun will be and brushing around it softly to create a soft edge.

Fill and Smooth the Area

Once the soft gap for the sun glow is done, fill in the rest of the area and try to make it smooth.

Detail the Mountain Tops

Use a little brush to do the lumpy bits at the top of the mountains for more precision.

Soften Marks Near Sun Glow

Use the flat brush to soften off any marks that go into the sun glow area to maintain a smooth transition.

9 Painting the mountain details

Paint the Sharp Triangle

Use a square brush to paint the sharp little triangle. Start from the bottom and work your way out patiently, creating a soft edge as you go halfway up.

Mix Lighter Blue-Grey

Add some white and blue to the mixture you've already prepared to create a lighter blue-grey color.

Maintain Control and Precision

Keep your hand, wrist, and arm locked and rotate at your hips or waist to paint a smooth straight line. This technique helps maintain control and precision.

Create Little Waves

Start on the masking tape and brush inwards, letting the pressure off to create little waves.

Achieve a Crisp Edge

Paint with the brush horizontally, using only the very tip of the brush and rotating at the waist to achieve a crisp edge.

Soften for Morning Mist Effect

If the paint is still wet, soften it up into the base of the mountain to create the effect of morning mist.

10 Painting the sun glow

Mix Sun Glow Color

To paint the sun glow, start with red, add a little yellow, and some white. This combination will create a color lighter than the blue-gray it goes onto.

Apply Sun Glow

Begin by painting softly around in a circle or semi-circle on the outside, ensuring the color is lighter than the blue-gray underneath. Keep the brush clean to maintain a bright color for the sun glow, preventing any muddiness.

Create Orange Glow

To create the orange color, start with yellow and add a little red. Apply this softly outwards without covering all of the pink you previously painted.

Add Final Highlights

Add a little white and more yellow to create an even smaller circle or semi-circle right in the middle, applying just a touch.

11 Creating water reflections

Use the Side of the Brush

To create a reflection in the water, use the side of the brush. This technique helps to mimic the natural look of reflections on water surfaces.

Clean the Brush

After using the side of the brush, give it a wash and dry. This ensures that your brush is clean and ready for the next color application.

Apply Orange Highlights

Apply the orange paint softly in the middle of the sections you've created. This adds a gentle highlight to the reflection, enhancing the effect.

12 Painting the sun

Prepare Your Brush

Wash your brush thoroughly to remove any excess water. This ensures that the thick white paint will apply smoothly.

Paint the Sun

Use very thick pure white paint to make the sun stand out. Smooth the thick white paint onto both sides of your brush, then use the corner of the brush to create a semi-circle and fill it in to form the sun.

13 Adding details: Seagull

Prepare the Brush

Grab your little brush and twirl it in the orange paint to get a nice crisp end on it. This will help you make precise strokes for the seagull.

Paint the Seagull

Use the very tip of the brush and paint the seagull with little curved wings. This technique helps create the delicate shape of the seagull.

Support Your Hand

Put your little finger down to support your hand. This will help you maintain control and precision while painting small details.

Practice on the Palette

Practice on your palette first. This allows you to get comfortable with the brush and paint before applying it to your painting.

14 Mixing and applying the tree base color

Clean Your Brush and Palette

Wash your brush thoroughly to maintain its quality and prevent color contamination. Clean your palette to ensure you have enough room to mix new colors without interference from previous paint.

Choose the Right Brush

Select a big, rounded brush. This shape helps create the cloud-like forms needed for the tree, which have rounded, cloud-shaped clumps.

Mix the Tree Base Color

Combine 60% blue, 30% red, and a bit of yellow to mix the tree base color. Avoid adding white to maintain the richness of the color.

Prepare Enough Paint

Mix a fair amount of the tree base color to ensure you have enough paint to cover the area without having to stop and remix, which can lead to color inconsistencies.

Adjust Your Brush Grip

Change your brush grip to paint the tree shapes more easily. For right-handed painters, adjust your grip to paint mirror image shapes comfortably, ensuring you can create the desired cloud-like forms.

15 Painting tree clumps

Plan Tree Clump Placement

Decide where you want to start the tree clump and determine how far it will extend downward. This will help you establish the overall shape and placement.

Create Clump Shapes

Use little circular motions with your brush to form the clump shapes. Focus on the edges to define the clumps effectively.

Adjust Brush Grip

Switch your grip so that the brush is at the right angle for D-shaped brushstrokes. Use these strokes to create clumps on the opposite side, enhancing the shape.

Add Small Leaves

With a smaller brush, add a few small leaves around the outskirts of the clump shapes. Ensure the leaves vary in size and avoid creating a repetitive pattern.

16 Adding green highlights to the tree

Mix the Green Color

Start with half blue, a lot of yellow, a bit of white, and a bit of red. Adjust the color by adding some yellow to the side of the mix you've already made.

Apply Green Highlights

Flatten the green paint on both sides of the brush. Use it to make little curved shapes by rolling the brush. Ensure the shapes are different sizes and avoid creating a pattern.

Maintain Clean Color

Reload the brush often to maintain a nice clean color, as the green paint mixes with the dark paint already on the canvas.

17 Adding red blossoms to the tree

Prepare the Brush

Avoid having water in the brush to ensure a sharp edge for applying the red paint effectively. Smooth out the red paint on both sides of the brush to achieve a sharp point, which is essential for creating precise lines.

Apply Red Blossoms

Use a sharp-edged brush to gently touch the canvas, creating small lines on top of the green curves. This technique mimics the way light catches the tops of the clumps, adding realism to the tree.

Reload the Brush

Reload the brush frequently, as you can only get one or two hits before needing more paint. This ensures the paint maintains its vibrancy and texture on the canvas.

18 Painting tree branches

Mix Branch Color

Create a color for the tree branches that is similar to the dark part of the tree but slightly browner. Add more red and yellow to achieve this tone. You can mix it from scratch or modify the existing dark color.

Plan Branches with Pencil

Draw the branches in pencil first to plan their starting points and shapes. This helps especially with the wiggly nature of branches, giving you a guide before painting.

Paint Thick Branches

Start painting the branches at their thickest part, following the pencil line. Use a brush with some water to help the paint flow smoothly and cover the canvas well.

Transition to Thinner Branches

Switch to a smaller brush as the branches get thinner to create a natural taper. This ensures the branches gradually get thinner and look more realistic.

Steady Your Hand

Use your little finger on a dry part of the sky or tape to balance your hand. This steadies your hand for painting fine lines precisely.

Rotate the Brush

Rotate the brush as you draw the line to apply paint smoothly. This technique helps rotate new paint onto the surface for an even application.

19 Adding highlights and sky holes

Create Fine Branch Lines

Ensure you have enough water mixed with your paint to achieve delicate lines for realistic branches.

Add Highlights to Tree Trunk

Mix a little white with the color used for the branches, then add yellow and red. Apply this mixture to the side of the trunk facing the sun to represent light catching the tree.

Highlight Branches

Place highlights on the right-hand side of the branches that face the sun. Avoid connecting the highlights all the way across to prevent the branches from looking too tightly drawn.

Add Moss Details

Use a bright yellow mixed with a little blue to create thick paint. Apply it in little drippy triangle shapes to represent moss catching the light.

Paint a Boat and Reflection

Paint a small boat using white and a little yellow. Add a line under it and drag it down with your finger to create the appearance of a reflection in the water.

Add Sky Holes

Start with an orange tone using yellow, blue, and a little red for the sky holes. Place them on the bottom parts of the tree's foliage clusters, avoiding areas with branches or green and red foliage.

Vary Sky Hole Shapes

Vary the shapes and sizes of sky holes to make them look natural. Avoid making them all look the same to create a more realistic and interesting effect.

20 Finishing touches and signature

Adjust the Pink Color

Make the pink color slightly darker by using less white. This adjustment will create a contrast with the other elements in your painting.

Add Blue for Depth

Add some blue tones that are a little darker than the sky. This addition will help create depth and interest in your painting.

Prepare Brush for Signature

Grab a small brush and mix some blue with a spot of red and a little bit of water. Twirl the brush in the color to ensure it's well-mixed and ready for use.

Practice Your Signature

Practice your signature on the palette first. This will help you feel more confident and ensure that your signature looks the way you want it to before applying it to the painting.

Summary & Key Takeaways

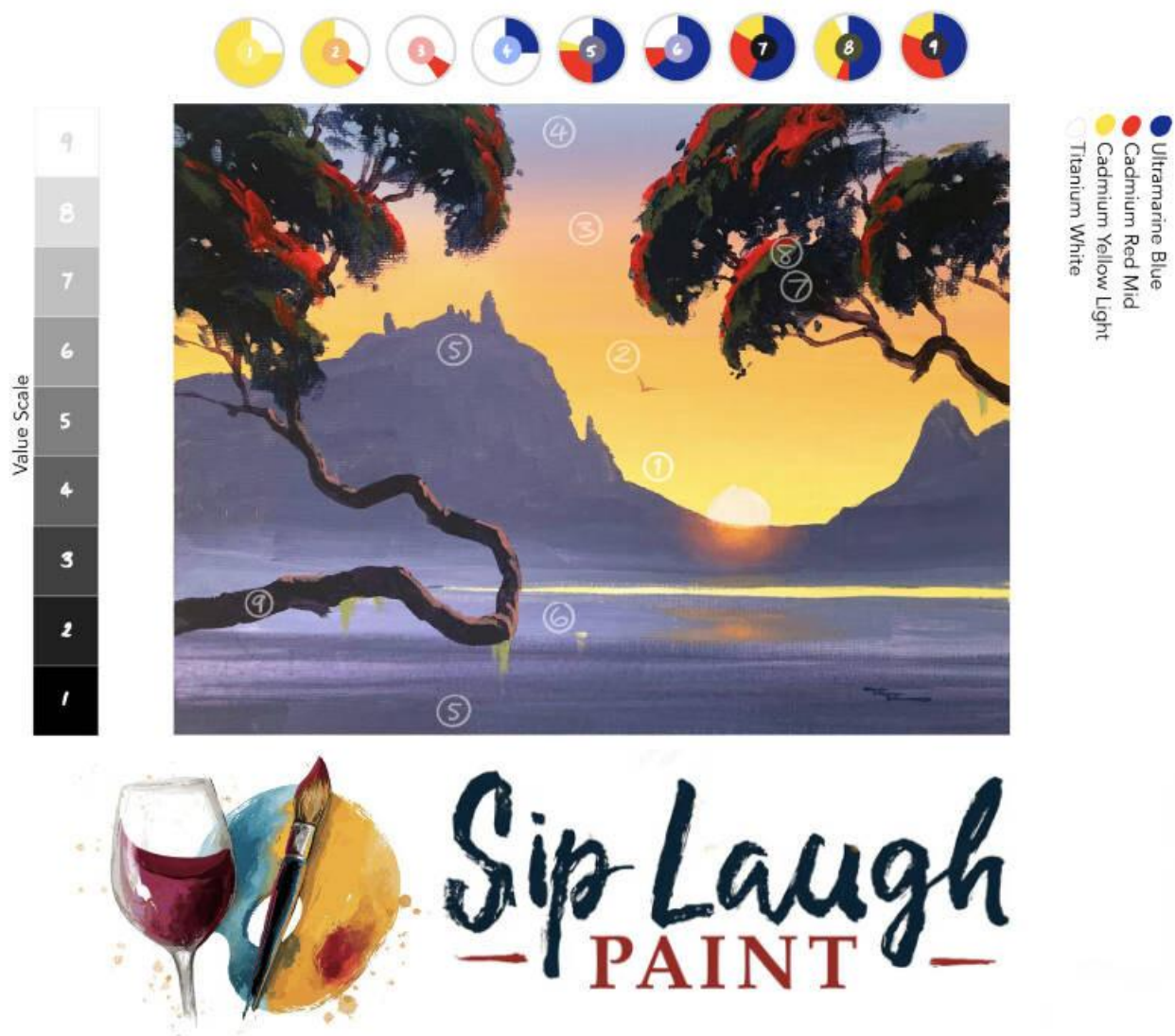
Embark on your Harbour Sunrise painting journey by carefully mixing your colors, starting with a vibrant yellow base and gradually transitioning through warm oranges and soft pinks. Each layer builds upon the last, creating a harmonious blend that captures the essence of a sunrise over the harbor. Remember to keep your brush clean and your paint consistency just right to ensure smooth application and blending.

As you progress, add depth and dimension with the cool tones of light blue and the intricate details of the mountains. Use your pencil to sketch the mountains' silhouette, and then paint them with a mix of blues and reds, leaving space for the sun's glow. This careful planning and layering will bring your landscape to life, with the sun as a focal point, casting its warm glow across the scene.

Finish your masterpiece by adding the final touches: the shimmering water reflections, the bright sun, and the delicate details of seagulls and tree blossoms. Each element contributes to the overall composition, creating a dynamic and captivating scene. With patience and precision, your Harbour Sunrise will come alive, showcasing the beauty of nature's morning spectacle.

LESSON POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Use a small speck of red to adjust the hue subtly without overpowering the yellow.
- Dip your brush in water before loading it with paint to prevent drying in the ferrule.
- Stop a couple of inches from the bottom to avoid painting all the way down.
- Always clean your brush thoroughly before mixing new colors to prevent unwanted color blending.
- Use the tip of your brush lightly to achieve a smooth blend.
- Avoid applying blue over the orange area to prevent creating an unwanted green hue.
- Use your little finger on the tape to steady your hand while adding details.
- Keep the brush clean to maintain a bright color for the sun glow.



11x14" Acrylic on Canvas

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.

“Harbor Sunrise oil on canvas 11x14” by Nancy Newton



Harbor Sunrise oil on canvas 11x14

Nice job, Nancy. Only thing I'd change is to make the sun-glow more gradual - not such a hard edge to it.

""Harbour Sunrise" in acrylics, Toronto, ON,Canada" by **Eric Hillmer**



"Harbour Sunrise" in acrylics, Toronto, ON,Canada

Hey Eric, this all look good except for the colour of the mountains - they're a little too light, and the sun-glow needs to be lighter than the mountain. If the mountain colour were darker it would be perfect. Also, avoid any hard edges from brushstrokes within the mountains and water.