



Country Road

A step-by-step painting guide by Richard Robinson

Watch the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>

MY PAINTING CLUB

Introduction

Paint this rustic farm scene with ease. Here's a scene just down the road from my house in New Zealand, right on the main highway. Most people will speed past it without a second glance but to me this is a beautiful little scene just waiting to be painted. Follow me step by step as I show you the techniques I use to paint this rustic country scene. Simplifying a subject, creating glowing light, using edge variety and much more are all demonstrated in the video. Enjoy!



"Country Road" 15x15" Oil on Canvas 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.



REFERENCE PHOTO 4

The scene as Richard found it.

Materials

Here's everything I use for this painting. Don't worry if you don't have the exact same supplies — use what you have and substitute freely.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- M. Graham & Co. Oil Paints
- Alizarine Crimson
- Phthalo Blue
- Ultramarine Blue
- Burnt Sienna
- Cadmium Red
- Cadmium Orange
- Yellow Ochre
- Cadmium Yellow Light
- Titanium White
- Painting medium
- M. Graham & Co. Walnut Alkyd Medium or Walnut Oil
- Solvent
- Gamsol
- Canvas
- Fredrix ultrasmooth canvas (Giving it a light sanding first helps the paint stick better).
- You could use a canvas panel or anything you prefer.
- Brushes
- [Rosemary & Co. Richard Robinson Brush Set](#)
- Palette Knife
- Paper Towels
- Container for solvent
- Container for painting medium

1 Materials and Initial Sketch

What type of paints is Richard using for this lesson?

Richard is using Cobra water mixable oils from Royal Talens for this lesson. These paints are a great choice for artists who prefer the flexibility of oils but want the convenience of water cleanup. You can learn more about the materials used in this lesson at the sales page: <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

What size and type of canvas is recommended for this painting?

Richard recommends using a 15 by 15 inch square canvas for this painting. He specifically uses a Frederick's ultra smooth canvas, which provides a nice surface for detailed work. For more details on the materials and techniques, visit the sales page: <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

What brushes does Richard use for the initial sketch and painting?

Richard uses a variety of brushes for this painting, including long flats, two bristles, one synthetic, and a little signing brush for detail work. These brushes help achieve different textures and effects throughout the painting. To explore more about the tools used in this lesson, check out the sales page: <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

How does Richard start the initial sketch on the canvas?

Richard begins the initial sketch on the canvas using a very thin mixture of walnut oil. This allows for a light, erasable sketch that won't interfere with the layers of paint applied later. For further insights into the sketching process, visit the sales page: <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

2 Painting the Darkest Darks

What is the first step in painting the darkest darks?

The first step is to put in the darkest darks that you can see in the painting. It's important to use warm colors like red, yellow ochre, and a tiny bit of blue, possibly with a touch of alizarin or magenta. You can learn more about this technique at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

Why should the darkest darks be painted thinly?

The darkest darks should be painted thinly to ensure that the paint covers the canvas without being too thick. This allows for easier application of subsequent layers of paint, preventing the need for mid-tones and lights to be applied too thickly. For more insights, visit <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

What might happen if the darkest darks are painted too thickly?

If the darkest darks are painted too thickly, it can lead to muddier colors in the subsequent layers. This is because the mid-tones and lights would need to be applied more thickly to cover the initial dark paint. For further details, check out <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

What colors are used to create a warm dark in the painting?

To create a warm dark, you should use a combination of warm colors such as red, yellow ochre, and a tiny bit of blue, with possibly a touch of alizarin or magenta. This mixture helps achieve the desired warmth in the darkest areas. Explore more about this at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

Why is walnut oil used when painting the darkest darks?

Walnut oil is used to thin the paint, allowing it to cover the canvas without being too thick. This helps in maintaining the flexibility to paint over it easily with the next layers. Discover more about the use of walnut oil in painting at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

3 Adjusting Grass Color

How can I adjust the grass color from green to brown in my painting?

To change the grass color from green to brown, you can add a little bit of yellow ochre to the dark areas. This will warm and lighten the color, creating a dark brown instead of a dark green. You can apply this technique to areas like the base of a building or other spots where this color change might be useful. For more detailed guidance, you can explore the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

What effect does adding yellow ochre have on the grass color in a painting?

Adding yellow ochre to the dark areas of grass in your painting warms and lightens the color, transforming it from a dark green to a dark brown. This technique is useful for creating a more natural and varied look in your landscape. For further insights and techniques, visit the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

4 Cool Darks and Fence Details

How do you create a cooler dark color for the side of the shed?

To create a cooler dark color for the side of the shed, mix mainly blue with a little bit of alizarin, a touch of white, and possibly some red. Keep the mixture thin by using walnut oil, and apply it to the darkest cool areas you can see. For more detailed guidance, visit the lesson page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

What is the purpose of adding yellow to the dark mixture when painting the fence?

Adding yellow to the dark mixture when painting the fence introduces color variation, making the painting more visually interesting. This slight addition of yellow, along with a bit more white, creates a lighter shade, enhancing the color dynamics without significantly altering the value. For further exploration of this technique, check out the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

How can you achieve a nice little triangle shape with the brush?

To achieve a nice little triangle shape with the brush, twist the brush as you apply the paint. This technique allows for more precise and varied shapes, adding detail to your painting. For more tips on brushwork, visit the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

How do you create a slightly different color for the top part of the fence?

To create a slightly different color for the top part of the fence, lighten the dark mixture slightly by adding more white, and then incorporate a bit more blue and yellow. This adjustment provides a subtle variation in color that distinguishes the top from the bottom. For more detailed instructions, refer to the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

5 Mixing and Applying Shadow Colors

Why is it important to clean the brush before mixing shadow colors?

Cleaning the brush before mixing shadow colors is crucial to avoid contaminating the new color mixture with remnants of previous colors. This ensures that the new mixture is pure and accurately reflects the intended color, especially when transitioning to warm mixtures. For more detailed guidance on this technique, visit the lesson's sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

How do you mix a shadow color for an orange building?

To mix a shadow color for an orange building, you add blue, which is the complement of orange, resulting in a brown color. To enrich the vibrancy of the shadow, you can add more red and yellow to the mixture. For a deeper exploration of mixing shadow colors, check out the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

What should you do before applying the shadow color to the painting?

Before applying the shadow color to the painting, it's a good idea to do a little test spot to see how it looks. This helps ensure that the color is right before filling in the shape. You can learn more about this technique on the lesson's sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

Why did you add more yellow to the shadow color at the bottom of the building?

More yellow was added to the shadow color at the bottom of the building to account for reflected light off the roof beneath it. This subtle addition helps create a more realistic and dynamic shadow. For further insights into this technique, visit the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

Why was the pole moved to the right in the painting?

The pole was moved to the right to balance the composition better and to keep it out of the way of the main focus, which is the orange building. Adjusting elements in a painting can enhance the overall composition, and you can explore more about composition adjustments at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

6 Foreground Light and Depth

Why do you start with a very dark brown when painting the foreground?

Starting with a very dark brown helps establish the darkest darks in the painting, which is crucial for creating a strong sense of depth and contrast. By setting these darks first, you can effectively build up the lighter values and colors on top, enhancing the overall composition. You can explore more about this technique on the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

How does greying down the background contribute to the painting?

Greying down the background by pushing it more towards blue and lightening it helps to create depth in the painting. This technique makes the background recede, allowing the vibrant colors in the foreground to stand out more prominently. This approach enhances the overall visual impact of the painting. For further insights, visit the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

Why is the background lightened and pushed towards blue?

The background is lightened and pushed towards blue to create a sense of depth and distance, as cooler and lighter colors tend to recede visually. This adjustment helps in making the foreground colors appear more vibrant and closer to the viewer. To learn more about this technique, check out the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

7 Background and Tree Modeling

Why do you use walnut oil for the background?

Walnut oil is used to thin down the paint, allowing it to cover the canvas easily and sit flat in the background. This creates a smooth base that contrasts with the thicker, chunkier lights in the foreground. For more insights into this technique, visit the lesson sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

How do you create the effect of the tree moving into the light?

To create the effect of the tree moving into the light, a little bit of yellow ochre is added to the paint to push the color towards green. This subtle change helps the tree blend into the light side while maintaining harmony with the surrounding colors. More details on this technique can be found at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

What is the purpose of adding darker mixtures to the painting?

Adding darker mixtures to the painting helps to create shadowy depth, preventing areas from looking too flat. This technique adds dimension and realism to the painting. You can explore this concept further by visiting the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

How do you achieve subtle depth in the background?

Subtle depth in the background is achieved by adding a little bit of white and more blue to the dark grey mixture and painting it flatly across the back. This creates a nuanced gradation in color, enhancing the depth without overpowering the scene. For a deeper understanding, check out the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

What changes are made to the color as it moves closer to the sun?

As the color moves closer to the sun, a little bit of red and white is added to lighten and warm the mixture, creating a slight gradation across the area. This technique helps to simulate the effect of sunlight on the landscape. Learn more about this approach at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

Why is it important to keep the background a subtle, large gray shape?

Keeping the background a subtle, large gray shape ensures that it does not compete with the foreground elements, allowing the lights and colors of the tree to stand out more effectively. This technique helps maintain focus and balance in the painting. For more on this technique, visit <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

How do you model the form of the tree with color?

The form of the tree is modeled by adding a little bit of white and blue to the green, which enhances the modeling of form without making the lights too bright. This subtle adjustment helps to define the tree's shape and structure. Discover more about this technique at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

8 Adjusting Overlapping Forms

Why is it important for overlapping forms to have easily readable shapes in a painting?

In painting, it's important for overlapping forms to have easily readable shapes to ensure clarity and visual coherence. When shapes overlap in a confusing way, it can disrupt the viewer's understanding of the scene. By adjusting overlapping forms, you maintain the visual flow and make the painting more aesthetically pleasing. For more insights on this technique, you can explore the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

What decision did the instructor make regarding the overlapping forms in the painting?

The instructor noticed that the big pole in the foreground was overlapping the apex of the building behind it, which made the shapes less readable. To resolve this, the instructor decided to shift the apex of the roof instead of the pole, as it was the easier option. This adjustment helped maintain the clarity of the overlapping forms. You can learn more about this decision-making process in the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

9 Grass Shadows and Light Interaction

What color mixture is used for the shadows in the grasses?

The shadows in the grasses are created using a dark brownish green mixture. This color helps to establish the shadow areas effectively. For more detailed techniques on mixing colors for shadows, you can visit the lesson page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

Why is yellow ochre added to the base of the pole?

Yellow ochre is added to the base of the pole to lighten and warm it, simulating the effect of warm light bouncing up from the grasses. This creates a realistic interaction of light and shadow. To explore more about using color to depict light, check out the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

How can you make shadow shapes more interesting and connected?

To make shadow shapes more interesting and connected, consider how they can form one large shape rather than many small, disparate ones. This approach helps the painting to be easily read from a distance. For more insights on creating effective shadow shapes, visit the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

Why is it important for shadow shapes to be large and connected?

Large and connected shadow shapes are important because they make the painting more easily readable from a distance. Large shapes are more visually impactful than small, separate ones. You can learn more about this technique by visiting the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

How does the color of the shadow side of grass clumps change?

The shadow side of grass clumps is lighter than expected because grass is semi-translucent, allowing light to penetrate and take on the color of the grass. This results in a vibrant shadow side. For further exploration of this concept, visit the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

Why do clumps of grass appear vibrant on their shadow side?

Clumps of grass appear vibrant on their shadow side because the semi-translucent nature of grass allows light to penetrate and reflect the grass's color. This is similar to how light interacts with the translucent leaves of a tree. To delve deeper into this technique, check out the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

What happens to the size of grass clumps as they move away from the viewer?

As grass clumps move away from the viewer, they appear smaller. This perspective effect helps create depth in the painting. For more tips on depicting perspective in landscapes, visit the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

10 Foreground Light Effects

Why are the fence posts in the foreground painted light and warm?

The fence posts in the foreground are painted light and warm to contribute to the overall glowing effect desired in this part of the painting. This choice helps to create a sense of lightness and warmth that enhances the visual impact of the foreground. For more insights into creating glowing effects in your paintings, visit the lesson page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

How does the light effect change as it moves towards the bottom of the canvas?

The light effect in the painting becomes stronger as it moves towards the bottom of the canvas. This intensification of light helps to draw the viewer's eye and create a dynamic sense of depth in the foreground. To explore more techniques on managing light effects in your artwork, check out the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

What happens to the brush strokes as you paint the foreground?

As you paint the foreground, the brush strokes become smaller. This technique helps to add detail and focus to the foreground elements, enhancing the overall composition. For a deeper understanding of brush stroke techniques, you can visit the lesson page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

11 Painting the Road

What colors did you use to paint the stones on the road?

For painting the stones on the road, I added some white and a little bit of blue to the base color. This choice helps to tie the color in with the blue grays in the background and the buildings. You can explore more about color choices for this painting on the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

Why did you choose to use blue and gray tones for the road?

I chose to use blue and gray tones for the road to create harmony with the blue grays in the background and the buildings. This helps to unify the painting's color palette. For more insights into color harmony, visit the lesson page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

How does the color of the road change as it moves to the foreground?

As the road moves to the foreground, the color gets slightly lighter. I achieved this effect by adding more white to the paint for the very closest section of the road. To learn more about creating depth with color, check out the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

Could the road have been painted in other colors?

Yes, the road could have been painted in various colors like red, yellow, or brown, depending on the stones present. It could even be green, as seen in the photo where it's overgrown. The choice of color can vary based on the desired effect and reference image. For more on color choices, visit <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

12 Grass Light and Detail

What colors are used to create the light areas in the grass?

To create the light areas in the grass, a mixture of yellow ochre, bright yellow, and a lot of white is used. This combination results in a really light warm mixture that complements the shadow areas already painted. For more details on color mixing techniques, you can visit the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

How should you use your brush when painting grass?

When painting grass, it's important to be mindful of how you use your brush. At the start of your brush stroke, there's a hard edge, and at the end, there's a soft edge. Most of the grass should have soft edges, so pay attention to where you leave those hard edges. For more brush technique tips, check out the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

Where should the strongest colors be placed in the painting?

The strongest colors should be placed around the buildings and in the center of interest. Adding more yellow to the grasses as they get closer to the buildings helps to draw attention to that area. For further guidance on creating focal points, visit the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

What effect do fine details with crisp edges have on the painting?

Fine details with crisp edges help to draw the eye into specific areas of the painting, such as around the buildings. These details add interest and focus to the composition. To explore more about adding details to your paintings, you can visit the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

13 Building Lights and Details

What should I do if I hit a block while painting?

If you hit a block while painting, it's often better to move to another area of the painting and focus on that instead of continuing to struggle with the problem area. This approach can prevent you from ruining your work and allows you to return to the challenging section with fresh eyes. For more tips on overcoming painting challenges, visit the lesson page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

How can I create interesting color streaks for a rustic building?

To create interesting color streaks that suit a rustic building, try not to completely mix the colors on your palette. This technique results in subtle variations and streaks that add character to the building's appearance. You can learn more about this technique in the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

What color should I use for the front edge of the roof?

For the front edge of the roof, mix a neutral grey that is slightly darker than mid-grey. Apply it carefully using the edge of a palette knife. This technique is demonstrated in the lesson, and you can explore it further at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

How do I mix a lighter color for the top of the building?

To mix a lighter color for the top of the building, add some white to your neutral grey mix. This will create a light grey that is suitable for highlighting areas like the roof. For more detailed guidance, check out the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

What colors are recommended for painting window frames?

Neutral grays are recommended for painting window frames. They provide a subtle contrast and complement the rustic look of the building. To see this technique in action, visit the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

How can I push an edge back into the distance in my painting?

To push an edge back into the distance, soften it using a little bit of light brown on your brush. This technique helps create depth and perspective in your painting. For more insights on creating depth, visit the lesson page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

What is the color composition for the light on the side of the building?

The light on the side of the building is created by mixing mainly white with a little bit of blue, yellow ochre, and a tiny touch of red. Further down, you can add a little more blue to the mixture for variation. For a detailed walkthrough, refer to the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

14 Final Touches and Details

What color is used to highlight the pole in the painting?

To highlight the pole in the painting, a light neutral grey is used, sometimes with a hint of yellow ochre. This helps to create a subtle highlight that complements the overall color scheme. For more details on color choices, visit the lesson page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

How is the core shadow on the pole created?

The core shadow on the pole is created using a dark neutral or blue-gray color. This adds depth and contrast to the pole, enhancing its three-dimensional appearance. You can explore more about creating shadows in the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

How many sheep are painted in the field, and why?

In the field, eight sheep are painted, reflecting the fun fact that there are about eight sheep per person in New Zealand. This adds a whimsical and local touch to the painting. Learn more about incorporating such details in your artwork at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

What technique is used to apply light to the road and fences?

Thick paint is used to apply light to the road and fences, without any walnut oil in the lights. This technique helps to create a strong, textured effect. Discover more about using thick paint techniques at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

What tool is used to apply the lights in the painting?

A rigger brush is used to apply the lights in the painting. This brush allows for precise application, especially when working with thick paint. For more on brush techniques, check out the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

How is the effect of a broken paling achieved in the painting?

The effect of a broken paling is achieved by leaving out one of the palings, giving the fence a more ramshackle appearance. This adds character and realism to the scene. Explore more about adding such details in the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

15 Final Adjustments and Softening

How can I add more shape interest to the grasses in my painting?

To add more shape interest to the grasses, focus on keeping the colors light. Avoid using really dark tones in the foreground grasses, as this can disrupt the illusion of strong light. You can explore more techniques for enhancing your painting by visiting the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

Why should I avoid using dark colors in the foreground grasses?

Using dark colors in the foreground grasses can break the illusion of strong light in your painting. Keeping the colors light helps maintain the effect of bright illumination. For more insights on managing light and color in your paintings, check out the lesson details at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

What should I do if my colors look too pasty or chalky?

If your colors appear too pasty or chalky, try adding more color back into the painting, especially in the half tones. Yellow ochre is a good choice for enriching these areas. You can learn more about color adjustments and techniques by visiting the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

What are half tones, and how should I treat them in my painting?

Half tones are the transition areas between shadow and light in your painting. It's important to add color to these areas to avoid a pasty look, using shades like yellow ochre. For more detailed guidance on working with half tones, visit the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

How should I treat the edges in the very near foreground of my painting?

Keep all edges in the very near foreground quite soft, except for specific elements like the post. This helps maintain a cohesive look and enhances the overall softness of the scene. For further tips on edge treatment, explore the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

16 Finishing Touches

How do you add finishing touches like flowers or weeds to a painting?

To add finishing touches like flowers or weeds, you can dot them in here and there to enhance the natural look of your painting. These small details can bring your artwork to life. For more detailed guidance on finishing touches, you can visit the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

What is the final step after completing a painting?

The final step after completing a painting is to sign it. This not only marks the painting as your own but also adds a personal touch. After signing, you can remove any tape used during the painting process to reveal the finished piece. For more insights into completing your artwork, check out the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/74-Country-Road>.

Summary & Key Takeaways

In this lesson, we embarked on a journey to capture the essence of a country road, using Cobra water mixable oils for their flexibility and ease of cleanup. Starting with a smooth canvas and a light sketch, we laid the foundation for our painting, focusing on the interplay of light and shadow to bring depth and life to the scene. My goal was to guide you through the process of building up layers, from the darkest darks to the nuanced highlights, creating a harmonious and dynamic landscape.

As we progressed, we explored the power of color temperature and subtle shifts in hue to convey the natural beauty of the countryside. By adjusting the grass colors, modeling the trees, and refining the overlapping forms, we enhanced the visual coherence and storytelling of the painting. I hope you found the techniques for creating depth and light interaction valuable, as they are crucial for achieving a realistic and engaging composition.

Remember, painting is not just about replicating what we see, but about interpreting and expressing the mood and atmosphere of a scene. I encourage you to experiment with these techniques in your own work, allowing your unique perspective to shine through. Happy painting!

LESSON POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Start with the darkest darks to establish depth.
- Use warm colors for dark areas to avoid muddiness.
- Thin your paints with walnut oil for smoother application.
- Adjust grass colors with yellow ochre for natural variation.
- Create cooler darks with blue and alizarin for contrast.
- Test shadow colors before applying them broadly.
- Push background colors towards blue to enhance depth.
- Ensure overlapping forms are clear and readable.



"Country Road" 15x15" Oil on Canvas 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.

"Snack by the Sea" by the Sea" 20x25cm Oil on Board by Silvana M Albano



"Snack by the Sea" 20x25cm Oil on Board by Silvana M Albano

Great to see you playing with the scene Silvana. The beach and sky itself are quite believable however you've placed the horizon too high which is throwing everything out of kilter. I've altered it in Photoshop so you can see the difference.

Another few things I altered were to remove the seagulls which were too large for their positions on the beach and also to change the shape of the shadows in the right-hand track because they were making a 1,2,3,4 pattern of equal size and spacing. The horizon is now flat which is always important in painting the ocean like this. While I was fiddling with your painting I also darkened the tree and extended it to the left so it wasn't in line with the edge of the building anymore. The final touch was glazing a soft shadow across the foreground to see how that looked.

So there are a few ideas for you. There's plenty of good work in your painting - the colour is good, if a little muddy in places where you've let the cools mix with the warms in the halftones (between light and shadow). Your brushwork is varied and interesting, creating that rough tussocky texture nicely. Your drawing, apart from the horizon level, is very good. Keep up the good work!

"Country Road" by Shoman Mohamed



"Country Road" 16x16" Acrylic on Canvas by Shoman Mohamed

A nice colourful piece Shoman. I can see you're a very careful person from your crisp edges down to your stylish signature - much like I started out till I got all painterly, which just takes brush miles. A lot of things are working well here from your punchy colour contrasted with the grayed backdrop, the precise drawing and the attention to tonal values. Some observations... the crisp edge where the cast shadow on the drive meets the grass could be more naturally portrayed by darkening the grass there somewhat and making the edge less regular.

A little more textured paint in the foreground and more attention to defining individual clumps would add more realism and depth to the whole foreground. Don't make the roof gutter line bend just behind the big pole because it makes us believe the pole is somehow influencing the shape of the building. The edges of your orange building are swelling outwards slightly which very subtly indicates health and ripeness to us. Better on a decrepit building to bow the edges slightly inwards. That should keep you busy. Well done.

"Snack by the Sea" by the Sea" 20x25cm Oil on Board by Silvana M Albano - Altered



"Snack by the Sea" 20x25cm Oil on Board by Silvana M Albano - Altered

The painting altered in Photoshop.

"Workshop42" by Manneherrin



"Workshop42" 11x14" Oil on Canvas by Manneherrin

Great colour and exciting brushwork in this one, Mannerherrin. Those dark darks are really helping the colours pop off the canvas and you've kept the values really light through the foreground which is creating that beautiful glowing light effect we were trying for. It's a shame those three Stooges (posts) on the right are spoiling the illusion a bit. They're all the same and all the same dark gray which should be a warm gray brown. You see how the colour looks muddy around them too where the warm grass has mixed with the cool gray in the posts? Very easy to fix that.

I'm all for cropping a painting down to its minimum but I do feel that the building is just ducking into the painting - not quite enough head room. Again, your brushwork is really strong but if you'd taken just a little more care with the drawing in a few places like making the poles straight and the top most roof line more sure it would have raised this painting up another notch. Just a few points there because overall it's really a good painting.