



California Cliffs

A step-by-step painting guide by Richard Robinson

Watch the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>

MY PAINTING CLUB

Introduction

Paint Californian coastal cliffs at sunset! Continuing with the previous workshop's theme of coastal cliffs at sunset, this time we learn to invent our own beautiful sunset lighting effect from a midday reference. Tricky, but can you do it!? Follow me step by step as I show you the techniques I use to paint this inspiring sunset beach scene. Painting a large glowing light effect, translucent water, atmospherics and simplifying complex structures are all demonstrated in the video. Enjoy!



"California Cliffs" 13 x 13" Oil on Canvas by Richard Robinson.



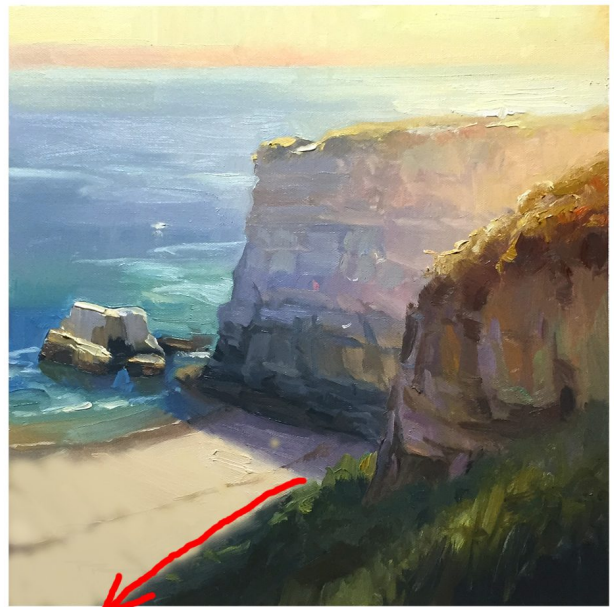
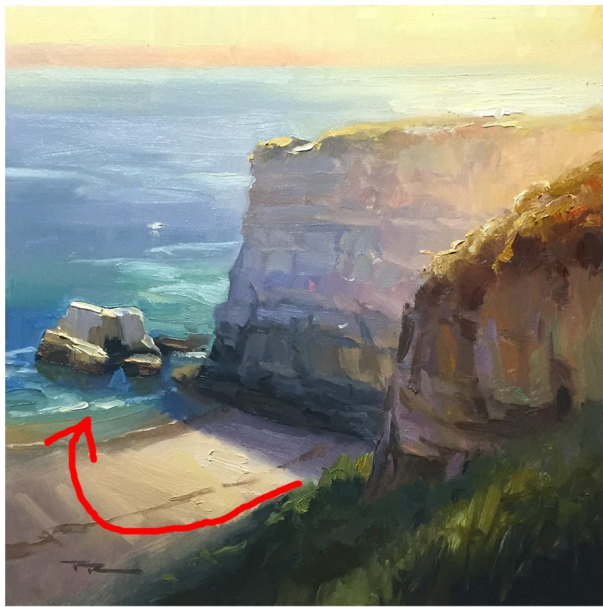
REFERENCE PHOTO 1

The scene as Richard found it.



REFERENCE PHOTO 2

The scene as Richard found it.



REFERENCE PHOTO 3

The scene as Richard found it.

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 Canvas and materials preparation

What size is the canvas used for the California Cliffs painting?

The canvas used for the California Cliffs painting is 13 by 13 inches square. This size provides a nice balance for capturing the details of the cliffs. For more details on materials and techniques, you can visit the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

What type of paint is used in the California Cliffs lesson?

In the California Cliffs lesson, Cobra water mixable oils are used. These paints are convenient for artists who prefer oil painting without the need for harsh solvents. To explore more about the materials used in this lesson, check out the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

Which brushes are recommended for the California Cliffs painting?

For the California Cliffs painting, a larger brush from Rosemary & Co and other brushes from Robert Simmons are recommended. These brushes help in achieving different textures and details in the painting. You can find more information about the recommended tools on the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

Why is walnut oil added to the white paint in this lesson?

Walnut oil is added to the white paint to make it more fluid and easier to work with, achieving a consistency similar to mayonnaise. This adjustment helps in smoother application and blending. For further insights into this technique, visit the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

2 Sketching the composition

What tools can I use to sketch the composition for the California Cliffs painting?

You can use a pencil or charcoal to sketch the composition, as long as you press lightly. However, Richard Robinson prefers to use a brush for this task. For more details on sketching techniques, visit the lesson page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

How should I start sketching the composition for the California Cliffs painting?

Begin by putting in the horizon line, making it nice and straight. Using a ruler can help achieve a straight line. After that, mark in the big shapes, ensuring variation in shapes, angles, sizes, and distances. For more guidance on sketching compositions, check out the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

Why is it important to vary the shapes and angles in the composition?

Varying the shapes and angles in the composition is important to create visual interest and avoid monotony. Ensuring that the distances between shapes and their sizes are different helps to achieve a dynamic and engaging composition. For further insights, visit the lesson page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

What should I do if the paint is too thick in the lightest area of the composition?

If the paint is too thick in the lightest area, you should rub a bit of it off with a cloth. This prevents the thick paint from interfering with the really warm light paint you plan to apply. For more tips on handling paint thickness, see the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

3 Mixing greys for the painting

What colors are used to mix the cool greys in the painting?

To mix the cool greys, you start with blue, red, and white. You can also add a little bit of yellow ochre to tone it down and achieve the desired grey. For more detailed guidance, you can visit the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

How do you achieve a subtle difference between cool and warm greys?

Achieving a subtle difference between cool and warm greys involves careful mixing of colors. Start with your cool greys using blue, red, and white, and then adjust with yellow ochre to tone them down. The key is to ensure there's a noticeable yet subtle shift in temperature between the cool and warm tones. For further exploration, check out the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

What is the value range for the greys used in this painting?

The value range for the greys in this painting extends from quite dark to mid-tones, or slightly lighter than mid-value. This range helps create depth and dimension in the painting. For more insights into mixing greys, visit the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

Which colors are used to mix all the greys in the painting?

All the greys in the painting are mixed using a combination of blue, red, yellow ochre, and white. These colors allow for a variety of grey tones, both cool and warm. To learn more about this technique, you can visit the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

4 Mixing colors for the sun glow

How do you mix a color for painting the glowing sun?

To mix a color for painting the glowing sun, combine a tiny bit of magenta or alizarin crimson with bright yellow. This mixture creates a nice orange that captures the sun's glow effectively. For more detailed guidance on mixing colors for your paintings, visit the lesson page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

Why does Richard Robinson prefer mixing his own orange instead of using tubed orange?

Richard Robinson prefers mixing his own orange because the tubed orange tends to get a little dirtier when mixed with other colors. By mixing bright yellow with a tiny bit of magenta or alizarin crimson, he achieves a cleaner and more vibrant orange. You can explore more of his techniques at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

What colors does Richard Robinson use to create a nice orange for the sun glow?

Richard Robinson uses a tiny bit of magenta or alizarin crimson mixed with bright yellow to create a nice orange for the sun glow. This mixture helps achieve a clean and vibrant color. For further insights into his color mixing techniques, check out the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

5 Applying walnut oil for sun glow

How do you use walnut oil to create a sun glow effect in a painting?

To create a sun glow effect, you can brush a little bit of walnut oil very lightly onto the surface around the area where you want the sun to glow. This technique helps the colors in that area to achieve a glowing effect similar to sunlight. It's particularly useful for large glowing light effects that can be challenging to paint. For more tips and techniques, you can explore the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

Why is walnut oil used in painting to achieve a glowing effect?

Walnut oil is used because it helps the colors in the painted area to blend and achieve a glowing effect, similar to the natural glow of sunlight. This can be especially helpful in areas of the painting where a large glowing light effect is desired, making the painting process easier. For further insights into using walnut oil and other techniques, visit the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

What challenges does walnut oil help overcome when painting a sun glow effect?

Walnut oil helps overcome the challenge of painting large glowing light effects, which can be tricky to achieve. By applying it lightly, it aids in blending colors to mimic the bright, glowing effect of sunlight, making the painting process smoother. To learn more about this technique and others, check out the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

6 Painting the glowing effect

How do you create the glowing effect in a painting?

To create the glowing effect, you can add a little bit of magenta and white and brush it into the outer areas where you want the glow to appear. This technique can also be applied to areas like the beach and distant mountains to enhance the overall effect. For more detailed guidance, you can visit the lesson page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

What should you do to clean your brush after using it for light colors?

After using your brush for light colors like magenta and white, it's important to clean it thoroughly with walnut oil. This ensures that the brush is ready for use with darker colors without any unwanted mixing. For more tips on brush care and painting techniques, check out the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

Why is it recommended to have separate brushes for darks and lights?

Having separate brushes for darks and lights helps prevent the colors from mixing unintentionally, which can muddy your painting. This practice ensures that your light and dark areas remain distinct and vibrant. For more insights into effective painting practices, visit the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

7 Painting the cliff face

What is the first step in painting the cliff face?

The first step in painting the cliff face is to use a little bit of walnut oil to mix a cool dark color with a warm dark color. This mixture is applied mainly at the base of the rocks. For more detailed guidance, you can explore the lesson further at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

How do you soften the dark area behind the cliff face?

To soften the dark area behind the cliff face, you use a slightly lighter, warmer grey. This helps to tuck the dark area around behind the cliff face, which will come in front of it. For a deeper understanding of this technique, visit the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

Why is it important to paint the cliff face first?

Painting the cliff face first is important because it is the key to the whole painting. By establishing the cliff face initially, you set the foundation for the rest of the painting. You can learn more about this approach by visiting the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

What is the process used to paint the cliff face?

The process used to paint the cliff face involves painting the darks first, followed by the next lightest color, and continuing in this manner until the cliff face is complete. This systematic approach ensures a well-structured painting. For more insights into this process, check out the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

8 Understanding and exaggerating color differences

Why are some faces of the rock warmer in color?

The faces of the rock that are turned slightly down towards the beach are warmer because they reflect the warm light glowing off the beach. This understanding helps in placing the warms and cools correctly in your painting. To explore this concept further, visit the lesson page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

Why do some faces of the rock appear cooler in color?

The faces of the rock that are turned more up towards the sky appear cooler because they reflect the cooler light from the sky. Recognizing these differences is crucial for accurately depicting the rock's form. For more insights, check out the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

How can I make the color differences between warm and cool areas more visible?

You can increase the saturation of the colors to make the differences between warm and cool areas more visible. This technique helps in understanding the form of the rock and makes the painting more interesting. For a detailed explanation, visit the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

What are the striations of color on the cliff, and how do they affect the painting?

The striations of color on the cliff are subtle bands of color that go across the rock. These add complexity and interest to the painting, and recognizing them can enhance the realism of your work. Learn more about incorporating these details at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

Why does the rock get darker at the bottom and bluer to the left?

The rock gets darker at the bottom due to the natural shading and possibly less light reaching those areas. It appears bluer to the left where it curves around to face the ocean, reflecting the ocean's cooler tones. For more on how to capture these effects, see the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

How does the sun glow affect the painting of the cliff?

The sun glow coming from the top right-hand corner adds complexity to the painting by introducing additional warm tones and highlights. This effect can be used to enhance the drama and depth of your painting. Discover more about handling light effects in the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

Why should I exaggerate color differences in my painting?

Exaggerating color differences between warms and cools makes the form of the rock easier to see and the painting more visually interesting. It's a matter of personal taste, and you can choose how

much to exaggerate based on the effect you want to achieve. For more guidance, visit <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

9 Mixing and applying color modifiers

How do you mix a pinkish color for painting the cliffs?

To mix a pinkish color for the cliffs, you combine magenta with yellow. This creates a mid-value pink that can be used to paint the larger shapes before adding details. For more detailed guidance on color mixing, you can visit the lesson page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

What colors are used to create a mauve for the cliff painting?

To create a mauve color, mix magenta with blue. This combination results in a mid-value mauve, which is ideal for capturing the subtle tones in the cliff face. You can explore more about mixing colors for this painting at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

Why is it helpful to have color modifiers on your palette?

Having color modifiers on your palette makes it much easier to paint large glowing effects, such as the sunlit areas of the cliff. These modifiers help in transitioning colors smoothly and achieving the desired effect. For more tips on using color modifiers, check out the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

What is the overall color transition plan for the cliff painting?

The overall plan for the cliff painting is to transition the colors from warm to cool in a radial fashion. This technique helps in creating a realistic and dynamic effect on the cliff face. You can learn more about this approach by visiting <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

How do you adjust the neutral gray color for the cliff painting?

The neutral gray used in the painting is a bit lighter than a mid-value gray. To adjust it, you can make it slightly pinker and lighter as you transition to the warmer, glowing areas of the cliff. For more on adjusting colors, see the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

What is the purpose of adding a pinkish modifier to the blue color?

Adding a pinkish modifier to the blue color helps in transitioning to lighter, warmer colors as you move closer to the glowing area of the cliff. This technique enhances the natural look of the sunlit areas. For further insights on color transitions, visit <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

10 Painting the bushes and light effects

How do you paint the shadow side of the bushes in the California Cliffs scene?

To paint the shadow side of the bushes, use a mix of yellow ochre and white. Be careful not to make it too dark, as this can disrupt the illusion of light in the scene. For more detailed guidance, you can explore the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

What should you avoid when painting the glowing area in the California Cliffs scene?

When painting the glowing area, avoid making anything too dark or too different from the glowing area's color, as it will stand out and spoil the illusion of light. For more tips on achieving the right effect, check out the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

How can you prevent a chalky appearance when painting light effects?

To prevent a chalky appearance, brush lightly outwards with a really light warm glow color and be careful not to overdo it. If you go too far, the painting can start to look chalky. For further techniques, visit the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

What technique should you use to add darker details without making the painting muddy?

To add darker details without making the painting muddy, switch to a pinkish color and work outwards, being cautious with the amount of detail. It's important to keep a clean brush and clean it between color changes to maintain clarity. For more insights, see the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

11 Reflected light and striations on the cliff

Why is it important to exaggerate the reflected light on the cliffs?

Exaggerating the reflected light on the cliffs can make the painting more interesting and exciting to look at. By enhancing these reflections, you can create a more dynamic and visually appealing scene that captures the viewer's attention. For more insights on this technique, you can explore the full lesson on the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

How does reflected light affect the appearance of striations on the cliff?

Reflected light helps to enhance the look of the striations on the cliff by adding depth and dimension. Even though the light is not as strong higher up the cliff, it still plays a role in highlighting these natural features, making them more pronounced. To learn more about capturing these effects in your painting, visit the lesson on the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

What changes should be made to the bushes in the painting to complement the reflected light on the cliffs?

To complement the reflected light on the cliffs, the bushes should be painted darker and cooler, especially as they move slightly to the left. This adjustment helps to balance the composition and ensures that the reflected light on the cliffs remains the focal point. For further guidance on this technique, check out the lesson on the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

12 Painting the large rock and highlights

How should I apply the highlights on the large rock?

You should apply the highlights really thickly and crisply. Mixing some walnut oil into the white paint will give it a nice consistency, similar to mayonnaise, which helps in achieving the desired thickness. For more details on this technique, you can visit the lesson's sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

Why is there a channel in the middle of the rock in the painting?

The channel in the middle of the rock is due to a hole that goes right through it, as seen in the reference photo. However, it's not necessary to paint the hole since it might appear more confusing than helpful in the composition. For further insights into simplifying complex subjects, check out the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

What colors should be used for painting the large rock?

Start with a really warm color at the bottom of the rocks, and then work into a much cooler mid-gray. This color transition helps simulate the light bouncing off the beach and the sunlit parts of the rocks. For more guidance on color choices, visit the lesson's page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

How can I create the impression of sunlit rock with minimal brush strokes?

To create the impression of sunlit rock with minimal brush strokes, use your brush in a clever way to simplify the rock's essence. This approach ensures the painting is easy to read from a distance while still being believable. For more techniques on achieving this effect, explore the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

Why is it important not to copy the rock blindly when painting?

It's important not to copy the rock blindly because painting the essence of the rock in a simplified version makes it easier to read from a distance while maintaining believability. This approach helps in creating a more impactful and visually appealing painting. For more strategies on simplifying complex subjects, visit <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

13 Foreground cliff painting

Why does the artist choose to make the foreground cliff darker and warmer?

The artist makes the foreground cliff darker and warmer to ensure it stands out in front of the other cliff, creating a clear separation between the two. This technique helps convey the significant distance between the cliffs. For more insights on this technique, you can visit the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

What colors does the artist use to create the glowing effect on the foreground cliff?

To achieve the glowing effect on the foreground cliff, the artist uses yellow ochre and other colors to suggest greenish glowing light from the bushes in front of the cliff. Additionally, a warmer, reddish brown is used at the top to indicate the sun's glow. You can learn more about these color choices at the sales page: <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

How does the artist approach painting the major shapes and smaller details on the foreground cliff?

The artist begins by blocking in the big areas with dark grey-brown to establish the major shapes of the rock. After that, they focus on the smaller details, like the bushes on top of the cliff, which curve down over the hill. This methodical approach helps maintain the warm, dark tones needed for the glowing effect. For further details on this technique, visit the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

14 Contouring and detailing the foreground cliff

How should I think about the contours when painting the cliff?

When painting the contours of the cliff, it's helpful to think of it as a rounded object with stripes. This approach helps you visualize how the angles become steeper as they reach the edge of the shape. For more insights on contouring techniques, you can explore the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

Why do you add purple or mauve to the steep planes on the edge of the cliff?

Purple or mauve is added to the steep planes on the edge of the cliff to represent the sky reflecting into those planes. This technique helps the cliff appear to turn away from us, rather than looking like a flat cut-out object. For a deeper understanding of color use in landscape painting, visit <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

What is the purpose of using a slightly darker purple and warmer oranges on the cliff?

Using a slightly darker purple and warmer oranges on the cliff helps to create depth and dimension as the planes move around towards us. This color variation enhances the realism of the cliff's surface. To learn more about color application in your paintings, check out <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

How do you ensure the reflected light in the shadow area doesn't look too light?

To ensure the reflected light in the shadow area doesn't appear too light, it's important to keep all the colors a very similar value. This prevents the reflected light from looking like a direct light source. For more tips on managing light and shadow in your artwork, you can explore the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

What technique is used to add highlights to the cliff?

Highlights are added to the cliff using straight yellow ochre applied thickly with the side of the brush. This is followed by adding lighter paint, achieved by mixing white and yellow, and applying it even more thickly on top to catch the light in a couple of places. For further guidance on highlighting techniques, visit <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

15 Painting the beach and shadows

How do you start painting the foliage on the hill in the foreground?

To start painting the foliage on the hill in the foreground, begin with a cool dark color and add a little bit of yellow ochre. Block in some big shapes while considering where the light might be falling to create interesting patterns. For more details, you can explore the lesson further at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

What technique is used to create a greyish green color for the foliage?

To create a greyish green color for the foliage, use the next lightest cool grey and add some yellow ochre to it. This combination results in a greyish green that can be varied by adding a little bit of orange as you move up to the right, which helps to unite it with the orangey cliff. More insights are available at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

Why is a soft shadow painted across the beach?

A soft shadow is painted across the beach to create a spotlight effect and to prevent a high contrast edge from leading the eye out of the painting. This shadow helps to circulate the viewer's eye back into the center of the painting. For a deeper understanding, visit <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

What is the purpose of mixing colors directly on the canvas?

Mixing colors directly on the canvas can often result in nice painterly effects. By grabbing some yellow ochre and light blue and painting them straight onto the canvas, you allow the colors to blend naturally, adding depth and texture to the painting. Learn more about this technique at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

16 Painting the water and reflections

Why do you use a purplish grey in the shadow areas of the painting?

In this painting, a purplish grey is used in the shadow areas because when you have warm lights, you tend to get cooler shadows. This creates a balanced and natural look in the painting. If you're interested in exploring more about color theory in painting, you can check out the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

What should you do if you forget to paint a shadow in your scene?

If you forget to paint a shadow, you can simply wipe out the area and paint the shadow in. It's important to remember key elements like shadows to maintain the realism of your painting. For more tips on correcting mistakes in your artwork, visit the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

How should the shadow change as it moves over the water in the painting?

As the shadow moves over the water, it should become a little bit darker and bluer. This change in color helps to depict the natural interaction between light, shadow, and water. To learn more about painting realistic water and reflections, check out the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

What color should the shadow be where it meets the dark base of the water?

The shadow should be really quite dark where it meets the dark base of the water. This helps to create depth and contrast in your painting. For a deeper understanding of creating contrast in your work, you can explore the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

How does the color of the water change as it moves closer to the shore?

As the water moves closer to the shore, it becomes greener and a little bit lighter. This color transition reflects the natural changes in water depth and the influence of the surrounding environment. For more details on painting realistic water scenes, visit <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

What color should the water be where the sky is reflected rather than the rock?

Where the sky is reflected in the water, it should be a lighter blue. This color choice helps to distinguish between different elements in the scene and adds to the realism of the painting. To learn more about capturing reflections in your artwork, you can view the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

17 Adding details and finishing touches

Why is it important to keep the edge of the cliff sharp in the painting?

Keeping the edge of the cliff sharp is important to maintain the distinct separation between the cliff and the surrounding elements, like the water. A sharp edge helps to define the form and structure of the cliff, making it stand out in the composition. If the edge becomes too soft, you can always go back and sharpen it with the colors of the cliff. For more detailed guidance, visit the lesson page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

How can I make the water in the painting more interesting?

To make the water more interesting, you can add lighter green across the top of the rock and incorporate more brown or ochre into the water in the foreground. This variation in color adds depth and invites the viewer's eye to explore the painting further. For additional techniques on enhancing your water scenes, check out the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

What technique should I use for painting wet sand?

When painting wet sand, use a darker brown and ensure it gets even darker as it transitions into the shadow. This helps to create a realistic depiction of wet sand, which naturally appears darker than dry sand. For more insights on painting realistic sand textures, visit the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

How can I add interest to the water with foam?

You can add interest to the water by painting light foam using a light bluish grey, applied very thinly over the top of the water. On the wave face where the foam is thicker and catches more light, use thicker paint with basically white and a little bit of yellow. When transitioning into the shadow, switch to a light blue. For more tips on capturing the dynamic nature of water, explore the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

What is the purpose of adding more directional brushwork to the beach?

Adding more directional brushwork to the beach introduces movement and texture, enhancing the overall dynamism of the scene. This technique helps to guide the viewer's eye and adds a sense of realism to the painting. To learn more about effective brushwork techniques, visit the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

Why should I add warmth to the shadow of the cliff?

Adding warmth to the shadow of the cliff helps to tie it in better with the color of the beach, creating a cohesive and harmonious color palette. This subtle adjustment can enhance the overall mood and depth of the painting. For more on color harmony and shadow techniques, see the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/72-California-Cliffs>.

Summary & Key Takeaways

In this California Cliffs painting journey, I aimed to guide you through capturing the majestic beauty of cliffs bathed in warm sunlight. From preparing the canvas to applying the final details, each step was designed to help you understand the nuances of color, light, and composition. I hope you found the use of Cobra water mixable oils and the techniques for mixing greys and vibrant sun glows both enlightening and enjoyable.

As you painted the cliff face and explored the interplay of warm and cool tones, I encouraged you to observe and exaggerate color differences to bring your painting to life. The subtle shifts in color and the glowing effects were key to achieving depth and drama in your work. I trust that these techniques have enriched your painting skills and inspired you to see the world with an artist's eye.

Remember, painting is as much about the journey as it is about the final piece. I hope this lesson has not only improved your technical skills but also deepened your appreciation for the art of painting. Keep experimenting, observing, and most importantly, enjoying the process.

LESSON POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Use a brush for sketching to maintain fluidity in your composition.
- Vary shapes and angles to create a dynamic composition.
- Mix your own oranges for a cleaner, vibrant sun glow.
- Apply walnut oil lightly to achieve a glowing effect.
- Keep separate brushes for light and dark colors to avoid muddying.
- Paint the cliff face first to set the foundation for the painting.
- Exaggerate warm and cool color differences for visual interest.
- Use color modifiers to transition smoothly in glowing areas.



"California Cliffs" 13 x 13" 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.

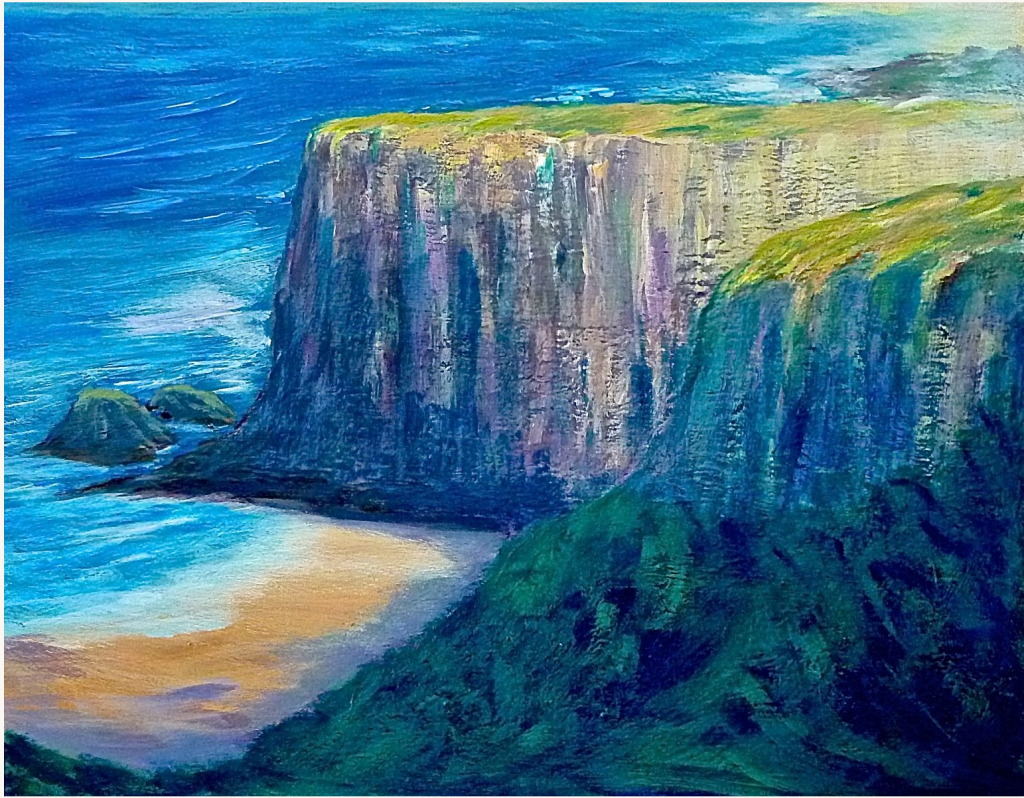
"Two Cliffs" by **Pauline Le Merle**



"Two Cliffs" 16x20" Oil on Canvas Paper by Pauline Le Merle

Hi Pauline, you just about hit the jackpot here. You're painted the majority of this beautifully and I just feel that it loses it in the ocean and sky. The ocean has too many conflicting lines in it and the orange in the sky seems out of place. I've adjusted those two things in Photoshop - see what you think.

"Lucky Bay" by Darby Swisst



"Lucky Bay" 9.5x12" Acrylic on Board by Darby Swisst

Great to see this different approach Darby which looks great. I love how you've utilised the texture of the paint to suit the different subjects and that works particularly well in the cliff face. I feel like you need to put some more work into the foreground cliff and bush. Seems to me that the texture in the foreground cliff should be even thicker, or show some more rock structure to differentiate it from the other cliff. The bush too looks a little formless. Other than that I love this painting. Great work.

"Central Coast Evening Glow" by Stuart J. Gourlay



"Central Coast Evening Glow" 12x12" Oil on Canvas by Stuart J. Gourlay

Nice one Stu. Good drawing and value control. Seems to have gotten muddy between the warms and lights in the cliff and the ocean. Keeping a separate brush for warms and cools will help. The peachy glow in the cliff is not yet consistent with the light in the scene behind it, which should be much more orange and light to produce that same colour in the cliff. Also the transition from pink outwards in the cliff could be smoother and more radial to indicate glowing light. Other than that it's all good.

"Sunlite Beach" by Sharon Bray



"Sunlite Beach" 11x14" Oil on Canvas by Sharon Bray

Good work Sharon. You've achieved an interesting variety of colour in both cliff faces while not getting muddy which seems to be one of the hardest parts of this project. I've made a few suggestions in Photoshop for you.

So I lightened sky and sea a little in the glowing area to make that effect more dramatic and at the same time I lightened the darks in the base of the cliff a little to tie in with that glowing effect and also to provide more separation between this and the foreground. I also softened the shadows on the beach because you have made them look like cast shadows from the hill rather than a soft cloud shadow which was my intention. The sun is the wrong position to cast shadows like that from the hill. I also broke up the hard straight line of the foreground hill against the beach to provide more shape interest. Small things to think about. Nice job.