



Safe Harbour

A step-by-step painting guide by Richard Robinson

Watch the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>

MY PAINTING CLUB

Introduction

Learn to paint this beautiful harbour scene, step by step. Welcome to the beautiful medieval village of Yvoire in France. Apparently it closes completely in the winter (Yvoire, not France) but while we were there it was warm, beautiful and begging to be painted. Follow me step by step as I show you the techniques I use to paint this ideal harbour scene quickly and easily in acrylics. Designing with big shapes, inventing warm light, creating atmospheric depth and painting reflections are all demonstrated in the video. Enjoy!



"Safe Harbour" 11 x 13" Acrylic 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. Acrylic Paints
- Alizarine Crimson
- Phthalo Blue
- Ultramarine Blue
- Burnt Sienna
- Cadmium Red
- Cadmium Orange
- Yellow Ochre
- Cadmium Yellow Light
- Titanium White
- 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
- Stay-wet palette
- Water spray bottle

1 Initial Sketches and Studies

What is the first step in creating the painting 'Safe Harbour'?

The first step in creating the painting 'Safe Harbour' is to start with little thumbnail sketches to generate design ideas. These initial sketches help lay the groundwork for the composition and overall design of the painting. For more details on this process, you can visit the lesson's sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

What studies are done after the thumbnail sketches?

After the thumbnail sketches, the process involves moving on to a black and white study, followed by a grayscale study, and then a small color study. These studies help in understanding the values and color scheme before proceeding to the final painting. To explore this process further, check out the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

What is done after completing the initial studies?

After completing the initial studies, the artist goes back to the drawing board to do a few more sketches. These additional sketches are then refined into a cartoon, which serves as a detailed plan for the final painting. You can learn more about this refinement process by visiting the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

What is the purpose of creating a cartoon in the painting process?

Creating a cartoon in the painting process serves as a refined and detailed plan for the final painting. It helps in solidifying the composition and ensuring that all elements are well thought out before moving on to the finished piece. For more insights into this technique, visit the lesson's sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

2 Differences Between Painting and Photograph

Why does the instructor believe that the differences between a painting and a photograph make the painting more interesting?

The instructor believes that the differences between a painting and a photograph contribute to making the painting a more interesting image. These differences allow for artistic interpretation and creativity, which can enhance the visual appeal and emotional impact of the painting. To explore this concept further, you can visit the lesson sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

3 Design Changes for Interest

How did you decide on the changes to make in the painting?

The changes were primarily based on evaluating the shapes in the painting. Initially, there was no clear center of interest between the castle and the boats, so a sailboat was added to create focus. This decision and others were made to enhance the variety and interest in the shapes. You can explore more about these design choices at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

Why did you add a sailboat to the painting?

The sailboat was added to establish a solid center of interest, which was lacking when deciding between focusing on the castle or the boats. This addition helped to create a focal point in the painting. For more insights on creating centers of interest, visit <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

What changes were made to the castle in the painting?

The castle's triangular top was changed to a dome because it was competing too much with the triangular shape of the sail on the sailboat. This alteration helped to balance the composition and maintain the sailboat as the focal point. Learn more about these design adjustments at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

How did you add interest to the foreground of the painting?

Interest was added to the foreground by slightly curving the dock and tilting the angle of the front boat to make it diagonal. These changes made the scene appear more organic and less like a 'car park for boats.' Discover more techniques for enhancing foreground interest at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

What was the purpose of making the dock slightly curved?

The dock was made slightly curved to add more interest and variety to the shapes in the painting, making the scene look more organic. This adjustment helps to break the monotony and adds a dynamic element to the composition. For more on creating dynamic compositions, visit <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

4 Color Adjustments

How did you adjust the colors in the painting to make it more interesting?

To make the painting more interesting, I adjusted the colors by making them a little bit warmer overall. This subtle change can add vibrancy and life to the painting, making it more engaging for the viewer. For more insights on color adjustments, you can visit the lesson's sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

What changes did you make to the background to enhance the painting?

I lightened the background slightly to help push it away visually, which in turn makes the mid-ground and foreground stand out more by comparison. This technique helps create depth and focus within the painting. You can explore more about these techniques on the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

5 Medium Choice

What medium does Richard Robinson use to paint Safe Harbour?

Richard Robinson uses acrylics to paint Safe Harbour. However, he mentions that the same techniques can be applied if you choose to paint in oils. For more insights on these techniques, you can visit the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

Can the techniques shown for painting Safe Harbour in acrylics be used with oils?

Yes, the techniques demonstrated for painting Safe Harbour in acrylics can also be used with oils. Richard Robinson notes that it's up to the artist to choose their preferred medium. To explore these techniques further, you can check out the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

6 Creating the Background Gradient

What materials do I need to create the background gradient for the Safe Harbour painting?

To create the background gradient for the Safe Harbour painting, you'll need some gesso with a tiny bit of black added, another pile of just white gesso, and a big brush. Alternatively, you can use white acrylic paint instead of gesso. Even if you're painting in oils, it's recommended to use acrylics for this background gradation. For more details, you can visit the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

How do I create the gradient effect in the background of the Safe Harbour painting?

To create the gradient effect in the background, start by blocking in the area with a big brush, transitioning from a slight grey at the bottom to nearly white at the top. This can be achieved by mixing a tiny bit of black with gesso for the grey and using white gesso for the top. You can also use white acrylic paint if preferred. For further guidance, check out the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

Can I use acrylic paint instead of gesso for the background gradient?

Yes, you can use white acrylic paint instead of gesso to create the background gradient. The instructor mentions that even if painting in oils, they would still use acrylics for the background gradation. For additional insights, visit the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

Why did the instructor choose a grey background for the Safe Harbour painting?

The instructor chose a grey background for the Safe Harbour painting to achieve a more subdued and old-school color scheme. While they usually use warmer colors for such gradients, the grey background helps in creating the desired effect for this particular painting. To explore more about this choice, you can visit the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

7 Transferring the Drawing

How do you prepare the drawing for transfer onto the canvas?

To prepare the drawing for transfer, print it out at the desired size, then rub the back of the paper with a 6B pencil. This creates a layer of graphite that will help transfer the image onto the canvas. For more detailed guidance, you can visit the lesson page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

What should you do after rubbing the back of the drawing with a 6B pencil?

After rubbing the back of the drawing with a 6B pencil, stick the paper onto the canvas where you want the image to be transferred. Make sure to draw little marks at the edges of the paper so you can replace it accurately if needed. For further details, check out the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

What tools can you use to transfer the drawing onto the canvas?

To transfer the drawing onto the canvas, you can use an HB pencil or a pen. Press just hard enough to transfer the image without damaging the paper or canvas. More tips on this process can be found at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

What alternative method can be used if you can't print the image to the correct size?

If you're unable to print the image to the correct size, you can use the grid transfer method as an alternative. This involves drawing a grid over your reference image and a corresponding grid on your canvas, then transferring the image square by square. For a deeper dive into this technique, visit <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

8 Brushes and Painting Methodology

What types of brushes is Richard using for this painting?

Richard is using a few filbert brushes for this painting, which is a bit different from his usual choice. Filbert brushes have a rounded tip and are versatile for both broad strokes and detail work. You can explore more about brush choices and techniques on the Safe Harbour lesson page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

What type of paint is being used in this lesson?

Richard is using interactive acrylics for this painting. These acrylics stay wet a little longer than regular acrylics, allowing for more flexibility in blending and creating effects. For more insights into using interactive acrylics, visit the lesson page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

Is Richard using any painting medium with the acrylics?

No, Richard is not using any painting medium with the acrylics in this lesson. He is using straight acrylics and sometimes adds a touch of water to thin them slightly. You can learn more about his painting methods on the Safe Harbour lesson page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

How does Richard achieve the wet-on-wet look in his paintings?

Richard achieves the wet-on-wet look by being methodical and painting the background first, followed by the mid-ground, and then the foreground. This approach allows him to work into the paint while it's still wet, creating the juicy alla prima effect he loves. For a deeper dive into his techniques, check out the lesson page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

9 Painting the Sky

What colors do you use to start painting the sky?

To start painting the sky, I use a mixture of blue, white, and a little bit of toning grey. This combination helps to create a slightly grayer tone quickly, which is ideal for painting with acrylics. For more details on this technique, you can visit the lesson page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

How do you adjust the color mixture as you paint the sky upwards?

As I paint upwards towards the left, I make the mixture slightly lighter and warmer. I achieve this by adding a touch of red through the middle and then incorporating a little bit of yellow and more white as I reach the area where the sun is warm. This gradual change in color helps to create a realistic sky effect. You can learn more about this technique at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

What brush technique do you use for painting the clouds?

For painting the clouds, I use a finer filbert brush and curl it over to make different sorts of brush strokes, applying the paint quite gently. This technique allows for creating varied textures in the clouds. To explore this technique further, check out the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

What is meant by 'impasto' in this painting technique?

In this painting technique, 'impasto' refers to using very thick paint to create bright silver edges on the clouds. This method adds texture and dimension to the painting. For a deeper understanding of impasto and its application, visit <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

How can you modify brush strokes if needed?

If you need to modify any brush strokes, you can use a clean brush with no paint on it to gently stroke out some of the edges and soften them. This technique allows you to create more variation and subtlety in your brushwork. For more insights on modifying brush strokes, see the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

10 Painting the Background Buildings

How do you start painting the background buildings in the Safe Harbour painting?

To start painting the background buildings, begin on the left with a toning grey, which is a light grey. As you move to the right, particularly around the dome, make it slightly darker by adding blue and a tiny bit of red. This creates a smooth gradation. For more details, visit the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

What is important to remember about the shape of the domes in the painting?

When painting domes, it's important to ensure they are symmetrical across their center line. The specific shape isn't crucial as domes come in various shapes and sizes. For more guidance, check out the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

Why should you avoid too much contrast in the background buildings?

Avoiding too much contrast in the background buildings is crucial because excessive contrast can bring the area forward in the painting, which is not desired for a background. Keeping the contrast low helps maintain the background's position. Learn more about this technique at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

How should you depict light and color on the dome in the background?

On the dome, make the left side lighter and warmer where the light is hitting it, and the right side should reflect the bluer sky. This approach helps maintain the light source consistency, which is from the top left. For further details, visit <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

What is the role of filbert brushes in painting the background?

Filbert brushes are useful for creating smooth gradations and rounded shapes, like the top of foliage in trees. Their fine edge, especially when new, aids in adding subtle details. Discover more about using brushes at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

How can you keep the background colors subtle and less contrasting?

To keep background colors subtle, use a toning grey to grey out colors and reduce contrast. For instance, a warm roof should be a grey warm, not a vibrant red or orange. Similarly, trees should be a greyed, subtle green. More tips can be found at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

What is a simple way to grey out colors in the painting?

A simple way to grey out colors is by using their complementary color. For example, adding red to green will grey it out. This technique is facilitated by using a simple palette of primary colors. Explore more techniques at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

11 Painting the Water Background

What colors are used to paint the water background in the Safe Harbour lesson?

In the Safe Harbour lesson, the water background is painted using a mixture of blue, white, a tiny bit of yellow, and some tinting grey. This combination creates a color that is similar to the background but slightly lighter and a bit greener. For more details on the painting process, you can visit the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

How can you soften the edges when painting the water background?

To soften the edges when painting the water background, you can use your finger or a dry brush. This technique helps to blend the colors smoothly. For further exploration of this technique, check out the lesson on the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

Is it important to avoid painting over the edges of objects when painting the water background?

When painting the water background, it doesn't really matter if you go over the edges of things. This approach allows for a more fluid and natural look in the painting. To learn more about this technique, visit the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

Why is the water background lightened on the left side?

The water background is lightened on the left side to reflect a lighter type of sky in that area. This adds depth and realism to the painting by simulating the natural reflection of light. For more insights into this technique, you can visit the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

How does the color change in the reflection of the sail?

In the reflection of the sail, the color is imagined to be slightly greener. This subtle change helps to capture the realistic play of light and color in the water. To delve deeper into this aspect of the painting, check out the lesson on the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

12 Painting the Sailboat

What base color should I use for painting the sail?

Start off with a warm gray, almost an orange, as your base color for the sail. This will provide a nice foundation for the rest of the painting. For more detailed guidance, you can visit the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

How should I handle the edges of the sail while painting?

Be careful with the edges of the sail to avoid having to repaint the sky around it. Taking your time with this step will help maintain clean lines and reduce extra work. For further tips, check out the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

What colors should I use for the shadows on the sail?

Since the sail is semi-transparent and light is coming through it, the shadows won't be very dark. Use neutral grays or slightly cool tones that are only slightly darker than the sail's base color. For more insights, visit the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

How can I depict the light on the sail effectively?

Use a much lighter version of the original base color, mainly white, and apply it with impasto brushwork to catch the light on the sail. Ensure the light part isn't all the same brightness; make it slightly darker as it curves into the middle of the sail. For more techniques, see the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

What type of boat is being painted in this lesson?

The boat being painted is a traditional sloop, which is a classic style. You can look up images of traditional sloops online for more inspiration. For additional context, visit the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

Can I paint a different type of boat in this scene?

Yes, you can paint any type of boat you want in this scene. The instructor is making up the boat in this lesson, so feel free to use your creativity. For more creative ideas, check out the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

What brush should I use for painting the rigging?

Use a rigger brush for painting the rigging. It's specifically designed for this purpose and will help you achieve fine lines. For more brushwork tips, visit the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

13 Painting the Red Boat

Why do you add a little bit of yellow to the bright highlights?

Adding a little bit of yellow to the bright highlights helps keep them warm in the lighting situation depicted in this painting. This technique ensures that the highlights complement the overall warmth of the scene. For more insights on color choices, you can explore the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

How do you ensure the red boat stands out as the center of attention?

To make the red boat the center of attention, I choose a nice red color but grey it down slightly using toning grey. This subtle adjustment helps the boat stand out without being too overpowering. You can learn more about creating focal points in your paintings by visiting <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

What technique is used to make the back of the boat appear darker?

To make the back of the boat appear darker as it curves away from the light, I add a little bit of blue to the paint. This creates a natural shadow effect that enhances the three-dimensional look of the boat. For further techniques on creating depth, check out the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

What details are added to the boat to enhance its realism?

To enhance the realism of the boat, I add details like a rudder and a tiller at the back, as well as shadows on the side for the fending buoys or fenders. These small details contribute to the overall authenticity of the scene. For more tips on adding realistic details, visit <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

14 Foreground Boat and Reflections

Why does the front of the boat get lighter in the painting?

The front of the boat gets lighter because it is curved and is turning towards the light. Understanding how light interacts with objects helps create a more realistic depiction in your paintings. You can explore more about light and its effects on objects at the sales page: <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

How can you create the impression of details on the deck of a boat?

You can create the impression of details on the deck of a boat by adding small elements like bits, rollers, rollicks, seats, and battens. These little touches suggest complexity and realism without needing to paint every detail. For more tips on adding realistic details, visit the sales page: <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

What is the purpose of painting a water line on the boat?

The water line on the boat is painted to indicate where the color of the paint changes underneath the boat. This area is often treated with anti-fouling paint to prevent growth on the hull. Learn more about painting techniques and details like this at the sales page: <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

How do you paint the reflection of a dark boat in clear water?

When painting the reflection of a dark boat in clear water, you can see down into the water and even the shadow of the boat on the lake bottom. It's important to paint the shadow with a soft edge to maintain realism. For more guidance on painting reflections, check out the sales page: <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

How should the reflection of fenders be painted if they are at an angle to the water?

If the fenders are at an angle to the water, their reflection should be painted at the opposite angle. Additionally, making the fender highlights slightly wiggly can enhance the realism. For more techniques on painting reflections, visit the sales page: <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

What happens to the size of ripples as they get closer to you in a painting?

As ripples get closer to you in a painting, they appear slightly larger. This effect helps create a sense of depth and realism in the water. For more insights into painting water and ripples, explore the sales page: <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

Why is the mooring buoy in the distance painted smaller and grayer?

The mooring buoy in the distance is painted smaller and grayer to create a sense of depth and atmospheric perspective. Objects further away appear smaller and less saturated. Discover more about painting perspective at the sales page: <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

15 Foreground Building and Details

Why is the building undercoated with a grayish-brown color?

The building is undercoated with a grayish-brown color to add warmth to the foreground, which complements the overall warm feel of the painting. Even though the building will have purplish shadows, the brown undercoat helps maintain this warmth. For more insights, you can visit the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

What is the purpose of using larger brush strokes in the foreground?

Larger brush strokes are used in the foreground to help create a sense of depth in the painting. By contrasting larger strokes in the foreground with smaller ones in the background, the painting achieves a more dynamic and realistic depth. You can explore this technique further at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

What brush is used for the foreground details and why?

A number 8 filbert brush is used for the foreground details because it allows for larger brush strokes, which contribute to the sense of depth in the painting. This choice of brush helps transition from detailed background work to broader strokes in the foreground. More details can be found at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

How are shadows treated in the foreground building?

Shadows in the foreground building are treated with soft edges to avoid sharp shadows within shadows. This approach ensures that the shadows remain subtle and realistic. For more on shadow techniques, visit <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

How do planes facing the sky differ in color?

Planes facing the sky are painted slightly lighter and bluer as they reflect the sky. This subtle color variation helps enhance the realism of the painting. To learn more about this technique, check out <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

What additional details are added to the foreground building?

Additional details such as a sign with a slightly different color, red flowers in a planter box, a dark interior for the doorway, curly wrought iron, and a bit of greenery are added to create shape variation and carry through the theme of red accents. These details add interest and complexity to the painting. Discover more about these techniques at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

16 Foreground Seawall and Dock

How do you start painting the shadow side of the seawall?

To start painting the shadow side of the seawall, mix a warm dark purple. Once you've covered the seawall with this color, you can add a slightly lighter, slightly bluer purple on top in a few big strokes to suggest the block wall structure. For more detailed guidance, visit the lesson page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

What technique is used to create the reflection of the seawall in the water?

To create the reflection of the seawall in the water, mix a dark green by adding yellow to your existing mixture. Apply this very dark color to the base, as it represents the reflection of the dark wall in the water. You can learn more about this technique on the lesson page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

How do you create a warm gray for the top of the dock?

To create a warm gray for the top of the dock, add warm colors like red or yellow to your gray mixture. This will give the gray a warmer tone. For further exploration of color mixing, check out the lesson page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

What is the trick for revealing warmer colors in the wood of the dock?

The trick to revealing warmer colors in the wood of the dock is to dab away some of the wet paint, which exposes the warmer color underneath. This technique only works if the first brown layer has dried before applying the top layer. For more tips like this, visit <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

How can you add vibrancy to the water in the painting?

To add vibrancy to the water, use a dark bluish grey and work it up from the bottom in big strokes. Then, incorporate the reflective sky color to create soft undulations, ensuring the edges are smooth and blurred to avoid a choppy appearance. More details can be found at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

Why is the reflection of the dock painted with very dark green?

The reflection of the dock is painted with very dark green because it reflects the underneath of the dock, which is naturally darker. Using sharp edges on the reflected shape enhances the realism of the reflection. Learn more about this technique at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

How should the reflections of the sky be painted in the corner of the painting?

The reflections of the sky in the corner should be kept quite dark to ensure they don't become a focal point. This helps maintain the intended lead-in effect without drawing too much attention. For additional insights, visit the lesson page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

17 Foreground Dinghy and Details

Why is the side of the boat in the foreground painted red?

The sides of the boat in the foreground are painted red to add color, but it's a very dark and subdued red to ensure it doesn't stand out too much. This approach helps keep the foreground in shadow, allowing the center of interest and the light to stand out more prominently. For more insights on this technique, visit the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

How do you create soft edges under the edge of the boat?

To create soft edges under the edge of the boat, the artist makes the area a little darker and ensures the edge is very soft, not sharp at all. This technique helps blend the boat into the shadowy foreground. Explore more about this method on the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

What technique is used for painting the red fenders?

The red fenders are initially painted with a fairly vibrant red, which is then darkened at the edges to help them curve around. A mid-gray or neutral gray is used for the top of the fender to add dimension. Learn more about this technique by visiting the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

How is the grey color used in different parts of the boat?

The grey color is used in various parts of the boat to create shadows and reflections. A mid-gray is used for the top of the fender, the back of the boat, and for some curvature at the front where light bounces off the water. A slightly lighter, slightly bluer grey is used for surfaces reflecting more of the sky. Discover more about this color application at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

What is the purpose of adding light on the back of the boat?

Adding light on the back of the boat is intended to create a focal point by using white, a little bit of yellow, and some toning grey. This technique is applied to the still wet paint to enhance the effect of light shining on the boat. For further details on this technique, visit the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

Why are large brush strokes used in the foreground?

Large brush strokes are used in the foreground to maintain a sense of scale and to keep the details from becoming too sharp, which helps the foreground remain in shadow and not detract from the center of interest. For more on this technique, check out the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

How are shadows and reflections incorporated into the painting of the dinghy?

Shadows and reflections are incorporated by intensifying the reflection of the sky and adding shadows cast by elements like the Rolex and the edge of the boat. These details add depth and

realism to the painting. Learn more about these techniques at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

What changes are made to the tops of the fenders?

The tops of the fenders are changed from grey to black to create a stronger contrast and enhance the overall composition of the dinghy. For more insights on this adjustment, visit the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

18 Final Touches and Signing

How should I add the poles for the dock in the painting?

To add the poles for the dock, you should include a touch of greyish blue light on the right-hand side to represent the reflected sky. This will help integrate the poles naturally into the scene. For more detailed guidance on this technique, you can explore the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

What is the purpose of adding greyish blue light to the poles?

Adding greyish blue light to the poles is important for depicting the reflection of the sky on them, which adds realism to your painting. This subtle detail helps to create a cohesive and believable scene. To learn more about incorporating reflections in your artwork, visit <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

What should I do after adding the final details to my painting?

After adding the final details to your painting, you can remove any tape used during the painting process. This helps to reveal clean edges and gives your artwork a polished look. For additional tips on finishing your painting, check out the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

What is the last step in completing the painting?

The last step in completing the painting is to sign it. This personal touch marks the artwork as your own and signifies its completion. For more insights on finalizing your painting, you can visit the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/61-Safe-Harbour>.

Summary & Key Takeaways

As I reflect on our journey through painting 'Safe Harbour,' I am reminded of the importance of laying a strong foundation with initial sketches and studies. These early steps are crucial for understanding composition, values, and color schemes, setting the stage for a successful painting. By taking the time to explore different ideas and refine them into a detailed cartoon, we ensure that our final piece is well thought out and cohesive.

Throughout the painting process, I emphasized the creative freedom that distinguishes painting from photography. By making thoughtful design changes, such as adding a sailboat for focus or adjusting the castle's shape for balance, we can enhance the visual interest and emotional impact of our work. These decisions, along with subtle color adjustments, help to create a dynamic and engaging scene.

I hope that as you continue your painting journey, you embrace the flexibility of your chosen medium, whether acrylics or oils, and experiment with techniques like creating background gradients and transferring drawings. Remember, each brushstroke is an opportunity to express your unique vision and bring your painting to life.

LESSON POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Start with thumbnail sketches to explore composition ideas.
- Use black and white, grayscale, and color studies to understand values and color schemes.
- Embrace the differences between painting and photography for creative expression.
- Make design changes to create a clear center of interest.
- Adjust colors to add warmth and vibrancy to your painting.
- Use acrylics for background gradients, even when painting in oils.
- Transfer drawings accurately using graphite or the grid method.
- Experiment with filbert brushes for versatile strokes and effects.



"Safe Harbour" 11 x 13" Acrylic 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.

"French Harbour" by Charles Post



"French Harbour" 11x14" Acrylic on Canvas by Charles Post

Charles you have an interesting style - crisp edges versus soft transitions, simplified forms versus fine details. I love the central boat - such good shapes. The drawing of the front 3 boats is at odds with each other because if you can see that much inside the front boat there should be a gradual reduction in the internal view of the other two, whereas you've drawn them with very little elevation, as they would be if placed further away from us. Beware of making soft shadows where you intend there to be strong sunlight because in most situations strong sunlight will produce hard edged shadows. Cast shadows from clouds and mountains are the usual exception to this. An overcast day will produce soft edged shadows. Great work!

"Come sail away on the Sloop RR47" by Lori Ippolito



"Come sail away on the Sloop RR47" 11x14" Oil on Canvas by Lori Ippolito

Great work Lori! I like the dramatic swoosh of the background echoing the smooth curves of the sail. Great atmospheric perspective there! The colours seem to be working very well together with a few blue exceptions in the reflection of the central boat and the midground water on the right becoming a bit too punchy. The drawing of the dock and buildings are very good but the boats could do with a little straightening, most notably the waterline of the black yacht needs to be flat and horizontal on the water. Nice to see you varying the colours in the shadows which many people have made too dark and colourless in this project.

"Hot Summer's Day (Yvoire - vue du port avec le ch teau)" by Jon Main



"Hot Summer's Day (Yvoire - vue du port avec le ch teau)" 50x65cm Oil on Canvas by Jon Main

You captured a great sense of warm light in this painting Jon which you mentioned was your particular goal for this piece. Mission accomplished! Beautiful greys in the shadows of the buildings particularly and great relationships with their counterpart sunlight colours. Subtle! You've also displayed excellent drawing skills and attention to detail without going overboard.

My only real concern with this piece is the confusion in the foreground water where you've tried to stick with the detail in the photograph instead of simplifying it a little so it is more easily readable. Australian artist Joseph Zbukvic does this exceedingly well - worth having a Google.

"Day Sailing" by Jim Baldoumas



"Day Sailing" 11x14" Oil on Canvas by Jim Baldoumas

Nice work Jim with strong colour and interesting variations throughout. The drawing is all good except for the shape of the dome which is a little squat. We're missing the strong shadow across the pier and the shadows cast by the white fenders onto the side of the boat. You've achieved a good light effect across the scene with the values getting much lighter and closer together in the background - not easy but you've done it well. Overall a solid result - good to see.