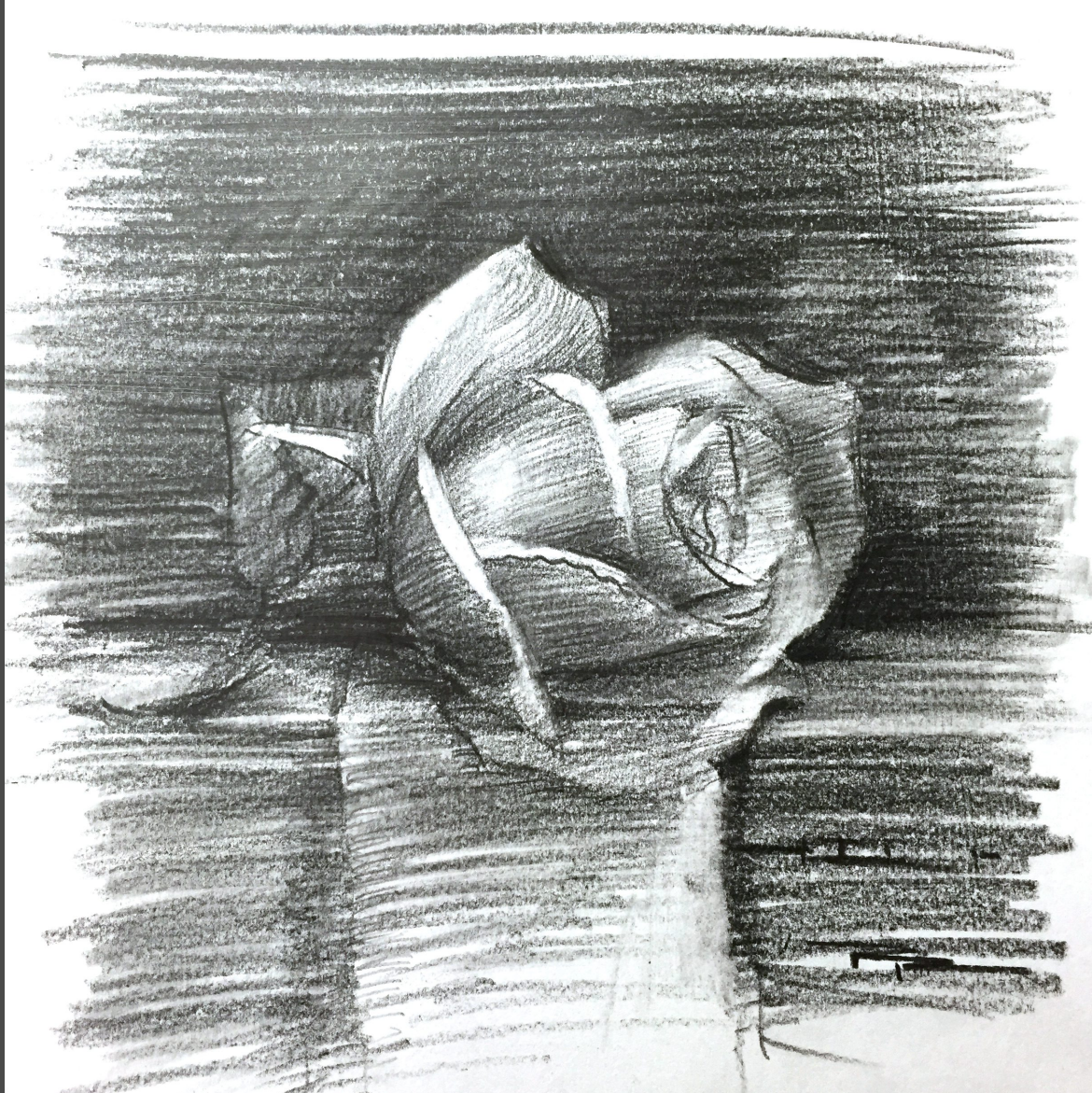




The Yellow Rose

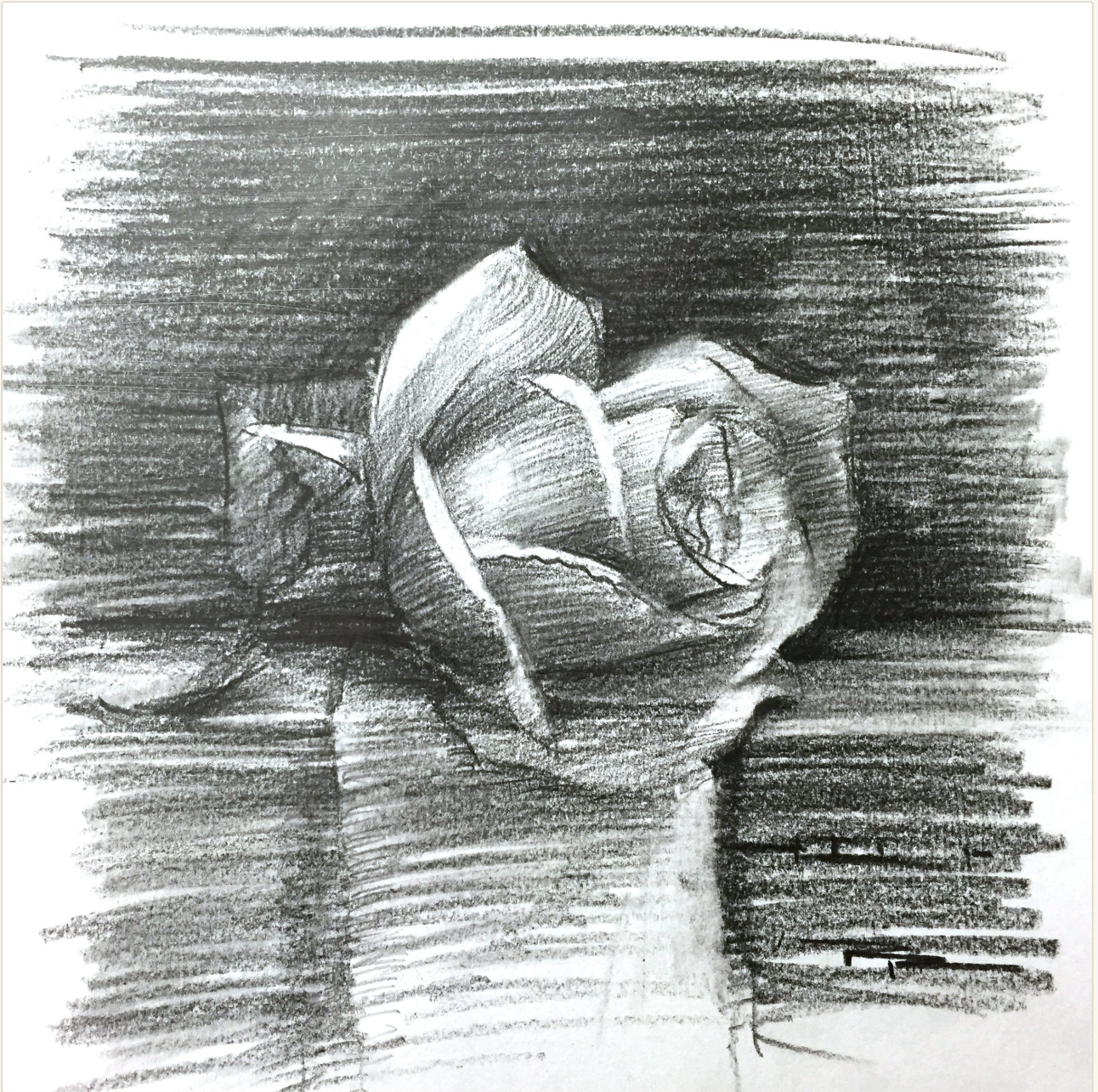
A step-by-step painting guide by Richard Robinson

Watch the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/68-The-Yellow-Rose>

MY PAINTING CLUB

Introduction

In this chapter, we'll embark on a delightful journey into floral painting, beginning with the elegant simplicity of a single yellow rose. This subject offers a perfect starting point for beginners, allowing us to focus on capturing the subtle beauty and structure of a flower without the complexity of a full bouquet. I've set up a straightforward still life arrangement using a cardboard box with adjustable lighting, demonstrating how even artificial flowers can serve as excellent models when real ones aren't available. By positioning your painting setup right next to the box, you can easily compare colors and ensure accuracy in your work. The key is to simplify your light source, which helps in understanding and painting the forms more clearly. This chapter will guide you through creating a manageable composition, encouraging you to crop your scene to just one rose, making the painting process both enjoyable and rewarding. As we progress through this and the next lessons, you'll gain confidence and skill in floral painting, setting a solid foundation for more complex compositions in the future.



"Sketch for The Yellow Rose" 8 x 8" Pencil on Paper by Richard Robinson.



REFERENCE PHOTO

The scene as Richard found it.

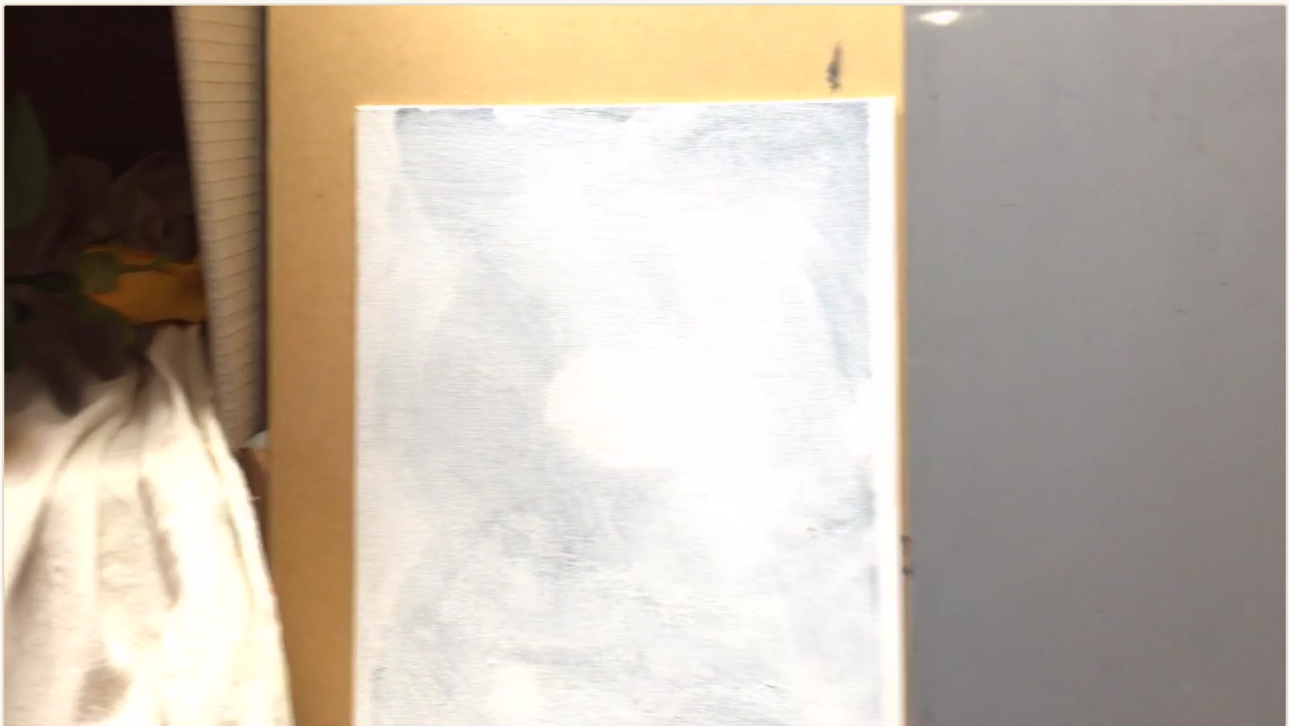
Materials

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

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 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 Positioning and Preparation



Position Your Palette

Place your palette right next to your canvas and setup. This will make it easier to access your paints while you work.

Simplify Your Composition

Focus on cropping your composition down to just one rose. This will help you manage the complexity and make the painting process more enjoyable.

Prepare for Success

Set up your painting in a way that feels manageable to you. Avoid starting with too complicated a composition to prevent feeling overwhelmed.

PRO TIP

Simplify your composition by focusing on just one element, like a single rose, to make the painting process more manageable.

2 Drawing the Rose



Establish the Stem

Begin by drawing the stem of the rose, curving it upwards slightly. This will serve as the central axis for your flower, helping you maintain balance and proportion.

Draw the Central Core

Sketch an egg shape for the central core of the rose. Make sure the ellipse is slightly wider to capture the fullness of the flower's center.

Add the Outer Shapes

Draw another shape around the initial core, similar to an egg within a teacup. This represents the outer petals that revolve around the central axis.

Visualize Petal Intersections

Imagine where the center line runs through your flower and observe where the shapes intersect with it. This will help you place the petals correctly.

Fit Petals Snugly

Ensure the petals in the egg form slide into the outer cup form snugly. Visualize the lines fitting inside the shapes even if they aren't visible.

Consider Light and Shadow

Optionally, continue with shading to explore how light and shadow play on the petals, enhancing your understanding of the form.

PRO TIP

Visualize the center line and intersections to accurately place petals.

3 Shading and Light Comparison



Choose Your Pencil

Use a soft 6B pencil for intense darks by pressing hard. For a smoother, lighter finish, opt for an HB pencil.

Compare Lights and Darks

Identify the lightest light in your drawing, such as a specific leaf. Compare other areas to this lightest point to adjust their tones accurately. Gray down areas that are darker and lighten those that need it.

Smooth the Finish

For a smoother finish with a 6B pencil, blur the drawing with your fingertip and use a rubber to adjust tones. Spend as much time as needed to refine your drawing.

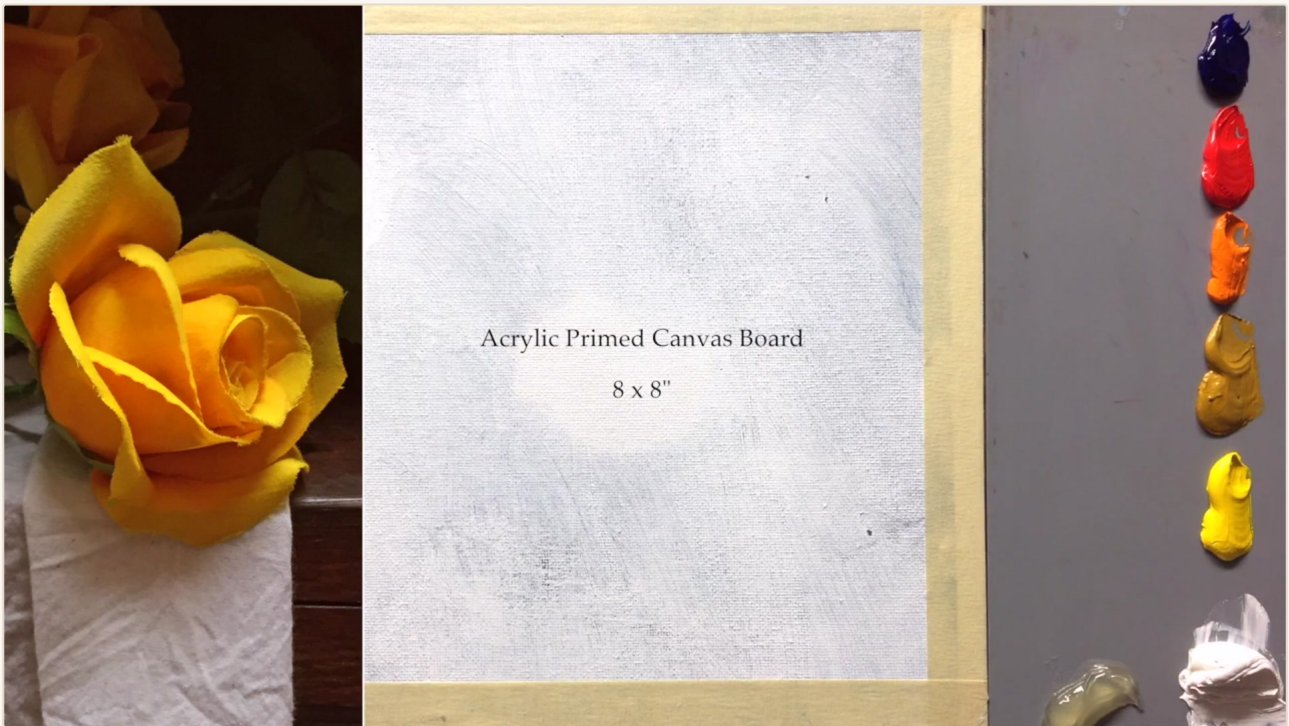
Consider a Black and White Exercise

Try this shading exercise in paint using only black and white for a valuable practice session.

PRO TIP

Compare your lights to your lights and your darks to your darks to achieve accurate shading.

4 Materials and Initial Sketch



Prepare Your Materials

Gather a small canvas board and tape it out securely. Select a crisp synthetic brush with a sharp edge for creating sharp petal shapes and highlights. Have a larger brush ready for gestural work in the background and larger petal shapes.

Use Mediums for Flow

Prepare Gamblin solvent-free painting gel to mix with your colors later for better flow on the canvas. Have GAM salt on hand to thin your colors for initial sketching.

Sketch the Basic Shape

Use a small amount of GAM salt to thin your paint. Sketch the basic shape of the rose on the canvas, focusing on capturing the overall form and structure.

PRO TIP

Use a crisp synthetic brush for sharp petal shapes and highlights.

5 Blocking in Basic Shapes



Establish the Table Base

Paint the base of the table first. This will provide a foundation for the rest of your composition.

Identify the Stem

Focus on the stem as the defining element of the rose. Ensure everything radiates outward from this central point.

Block in Basic Shapes

Use a big brush to block in the basic shape of the rose. Include broad strokes to suggest the presence of color, such as orange and yellow ochre, to start defining shadows and light areas.

PRO TIP

Use a big brush for blocking in basic shapes to quickly establish form and color.

6 Painting the Background



Create a Dark Background

Mix blue and red to create a very dark color that will help the yellow rose stand out. Add yellow ochre to achieve a dark green hue. Use Gamsol to make the mixture more fluid.

Add Variation to the Right

As you move the brush to the right side of the canvas, incorporate more yellow ochre for variation. This will create a subtle shift in the background color.

Lighten the Tabletop

For the tabletop area, add a small amount of white to the mixture. This will create a lighter tone as the tabletop comes forward.

Deepen the Background

Introduce more dark tones into the background to enhance depth. Clean your brush frequently to prevent colors from becoming muddy.

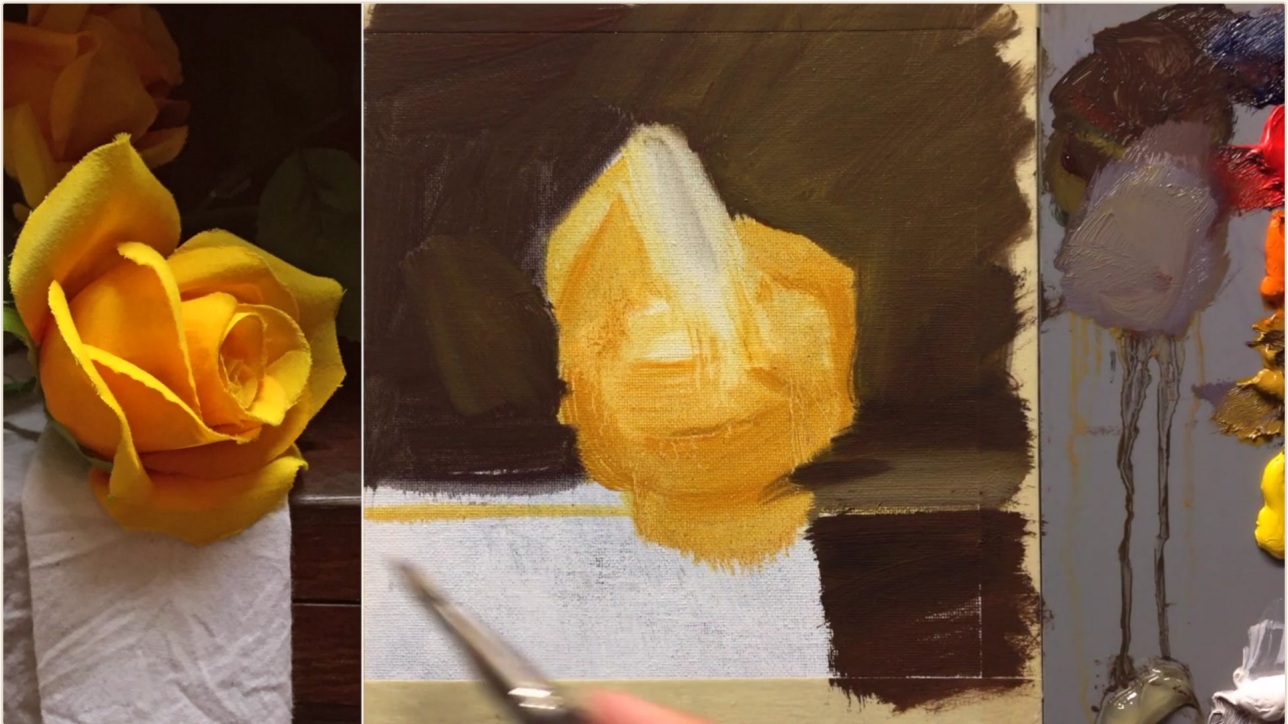
Neutralize with Yellow Ochre

Mix blue, red, and a little white to create a grey tone. If it appears too purple, add yellow ochre to neutralize the color. Use a neutral grey palette to easily judge and mix neutral tones.

PRO TIP

Clean your brush frequently to prevent colors from becoming muddy.

7 Blocking in the Rose



Add Yellow to the Fold

Identify the fold in the rose where the light seems to be filtered through, making it appear greener. Add some yellow to this area to capture the effect of the light.

Lighten with White and Red

Begin with a dark base and gradually add white to lighten the color. Introduce a little bit of red to the mix as you move out into the half light or half tone.

Soften the Edges

Be mindful of the softness of the edges around the rose. Avoid sharp edges as they do not suit the image. Soft edges will help maintain the natural look of the rose.

Add Light and Texture

Apply more light to the top of the rose, ensuring it aligns with the existing lines. This adds texture and interest, enhancing the overall appearance.

Define Shadows

Bring the color up to the edge of the shadow to help define the shadow below. This will create depth and dimension in your painting.

Switch to a Clean Brush

Use a new large brush to block in the darks of the rose. Avoid using a brush with dirty background color to maintain clean and vibrant tones.

PRO TIP

Use a clean brush to block in darks, avoiding contamination from previous colors.

8 Adding Color Variations



Apply Yellow Ochre

Use yellow ochre with a painting medium to add color to the rose. Once the color is on the brush, look for other areas on the rose where this color can be applied. Use as few brush strokes as possible to maintain clean, vibrant color.

Introduce Darker Tones

As you move to darker areas of the rose, mix in some orange and a little red. If the area is not dark enough, add more red, orange, and a touch of blue to achieve the desired depth.

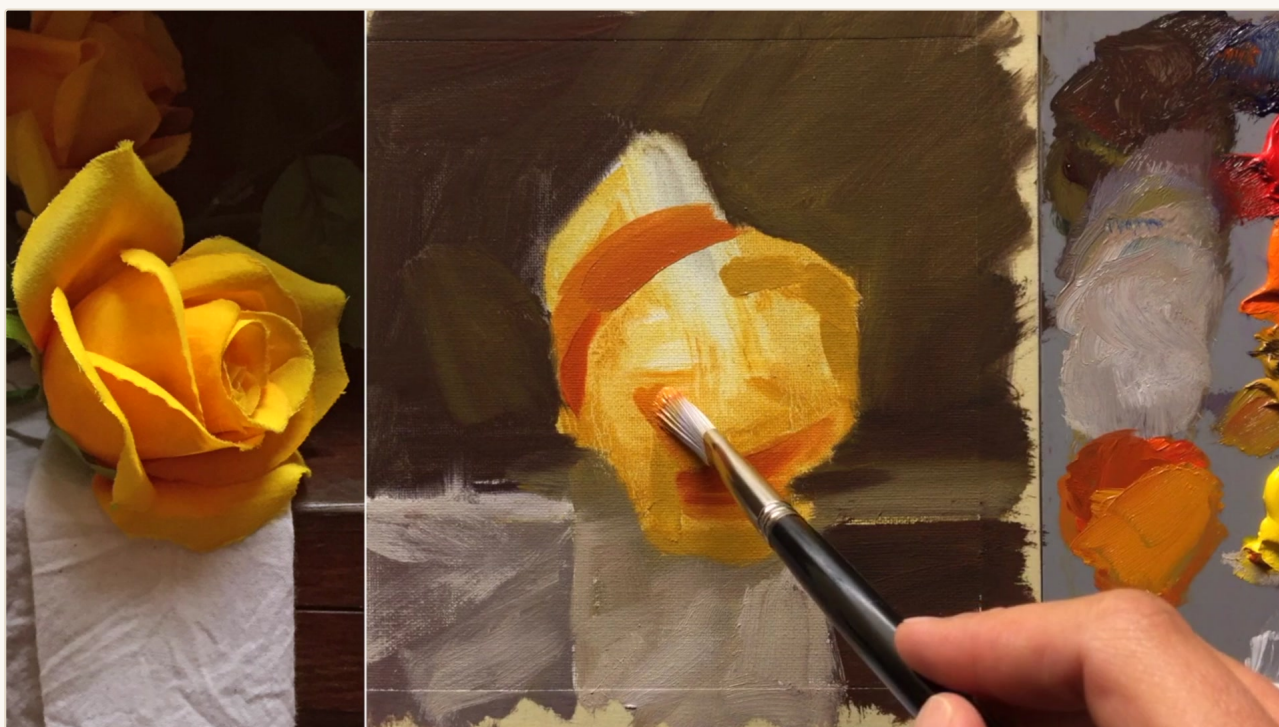
Create Color Variations

Focus on introducing slight variations in color to enhance the beauty of the rose. These variations, along with changes in shape, texture, and contrast, captivate the viewer's eye.

PRO TIP

Use minimal brush strokes to keep colors clean and avoid muddiness.

9 Understanding Color Temperature



Identify Color Temperature

Observe the rose and notice that some parts are cooler, leaning towards green, while others are more orange. The cooler, greener parts are typically in the shadows, while the warmer, orange areas occur where light passes through or reflects off petals.

Block in Big Areas

Avoid getting caught up in fine details initially. Instead, block in the large areas of color and the major transitions you observe. This approach helps establish the overall structure and color dynamics of the rose.

Use Squinting Technique

Squint at the rose to simplify the view into large blocks of color. This technique helps you focus on the main color transitions and ignore unnecessary details, making it easier to paint the big picture.

Paint Halftones

Notice the greenish tinge in the halftone areas, where the form transitions from light to shadow. Focus on painting these areas before moving on to the highlights, as they play a crucial role in defining the rose's form.

PRO TIP

Squint at the rose to see it in big blocks of color, simplifying details and focusing on major transitions.

10 Adding Highlights



Start with the Lightest Highlight

Use a clean brush to apply the lightest highlight. If the highlight doesn't appear light enough compared to the darks, mix in a little white to adjust the brightness.

Adjust Highlight Intensity

Gradually add a touch of orange or blue to the highlight color to create progressively darker highlights. Apply each highlight with a single stroke to maintain a clean, crisp effect.

Compare and Apply Highlights

Compare the intensity of each highlight to others on the painting. Use a twisting motion or adjust pressure to create the desired shape and intensity with each stroke.

Create a Greenish Highlight

For a greenish highlight, add a tiny touch of blue to the mix. Consider the shape you want to create on the rose and plan your brushstroke accordingly.

Soften Sharp Edges

If a highlight creates a sharp edge, clean your brush and gently soften the edge to blend it smoothly into the surrounding area.

PRO TIP

Apply highlights with a single stroke to avoid picking up other paint and muddying the colors.

11 Final Touches and Details



Add Leaves

Start by adding a few leaves to the background. Begin with the dark tones and gradually transition to lighter shades. Reflect some light from the tablecloth onto the underside of the leaves for a natural effect.

Highlight with Light Tones

Switch to a smaller brush to apply the lightest tones first. Work your way down to slightly darker shades to create depth and dimension in the leaves.

Enhance Depth with Dark Tones

Introduce some really dark tones to certain areas to enhance depth. This contrast will help the composition feel more three-dimensional.

Soften Edges for Depth

Soften the edges of the background elements to make them recede into the distance. This will bring the sharper edges of the foreground elements forward, adding depth to the painting.

Maintain a Loose Finish

Avoid getting too tight with brushwork and finishing touches. Allow some areas to remain loose to maintain a sense of realism and spontaneity.

Sign Your Work

Once satisfied with the painting, sign your work to complete the piece.

PRO TIP

Reflect light from the tablecloth onto the underside of the leaves for a natural effect.

Summary & Key Takeaways

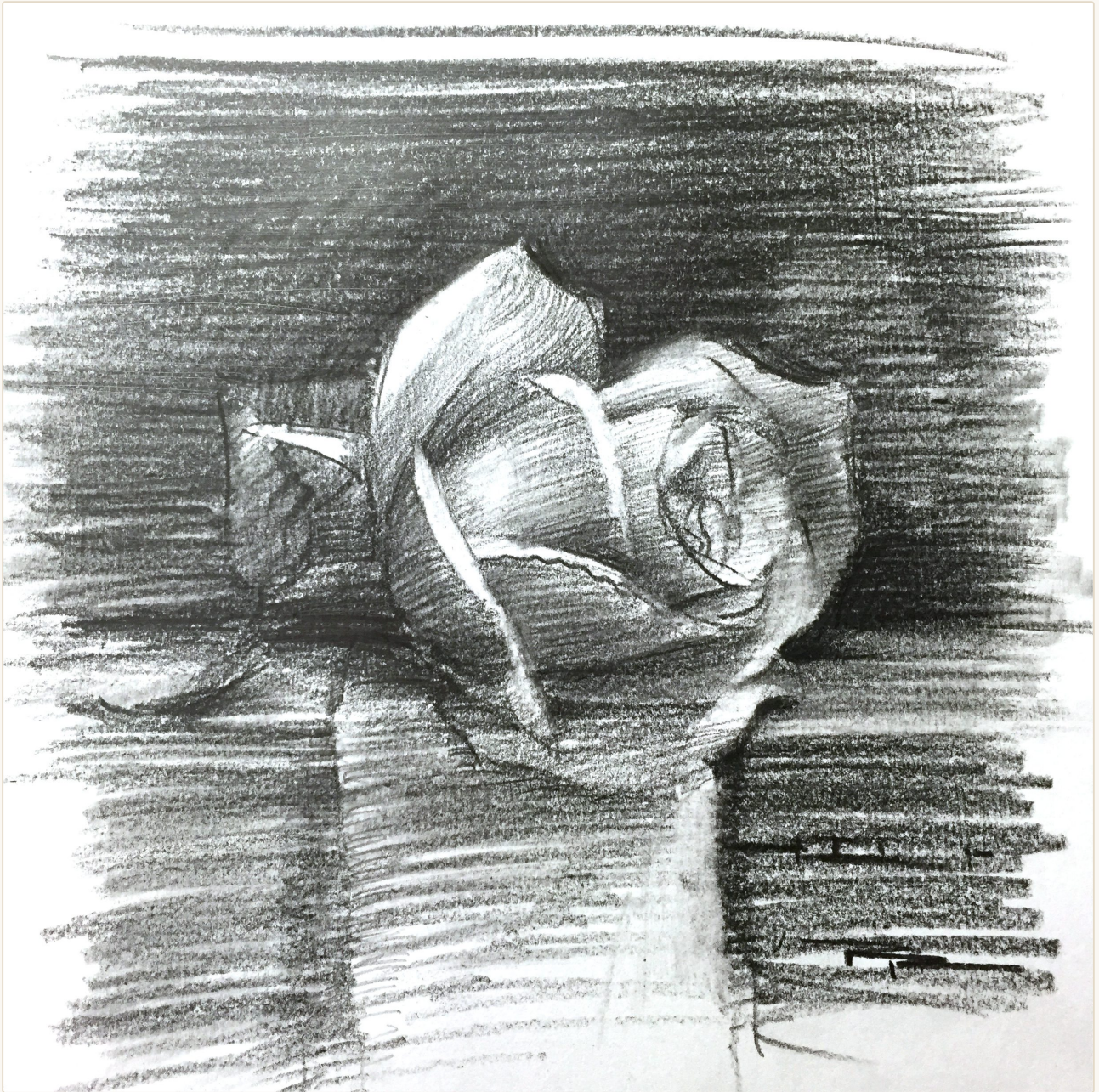
Embark on your painting journey by simplifying your composition to focus on a single rose. This approach allows you to manage complexity and enjoy the process without feeling overwhelmed. Begin by carefully positioning your materials and sketching the rose, paying close attention to the central axis and the placement of petals. Use shading techniques to explore light and shadow, enhancing your understanding of the rose's form.

As you progress, block in the basic shapes and colors using broad strokes. This will help establish the foundation of your painting. Pay attention to the background, using dark tones to make the yellow rose stand out. Introduce color variations to the rose, focusing on temperature differences between light and shadowed areas. This will add depth and interest to your work.

In the final stages, add highlights and refine details, ensuring each brushstroke is deliberate and enhances the overall composition. Soften edges where necessary to create depth and dimension, and remember to keep some areas loose to maintain a sense of realism. Once you're satisfied, add your signature to complete the piece, celebrating the journey of bringing the yellow rose to life on canvas.

LESSON POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Simplify your composition by focusing on a single element.
- Visualize the center line and intersections to accurately place petals.
- Compare your lights to your lights and your darks to your darks for accurate shading.
- Use a crisp synthetic brush for sharp petal shapes and highlights.
- Use a big brush for blocking in basic shapes to quickly establish form and color.
- Clean your brush frequently to prevent colors from becoming muddy.
- Use minimal brush strokes to keep colors clean and avoid muddiness.
- Squint at the rose to see it in big blocks of color, simplifying details and focusing on major transitions.



"Sketch for The Yellow Rose" 8 x 8" Pencil on Paper 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.

"My First Yellow Rose..." by Silvana M Albano



"My First Yellow Rose..." 24x30cm Oil on Board by Silvana M Albano

Nice work Silvana. I can see from your painting that adding more space around the subject suddenly makes it a quieter, more restful image. The drawing is pretty accurate, colours are good, brushwork a bit tentative in places, like the centre of the rose where you've lost a few more edges than necessary because of dabbing, whereas a single confident stroke would yield a crisper edge. I like that you've thought to lightly over brush the textured board to suggest the texture of rough cloth. Nicely done.

"New Zealand Rose" by Siobhan



"New Zealand Rose" 20x20cm Oil on Canvas by Siobhan

Great work, Siobahn. Plenty of subtle colour changes, strong drawing, bold design, elegant brushwork and interesting shapes. Perhaps an edge or two could be softened around the perimeter but that's really nit picking. Good job!

"Valentine Rose 2" by Sharon Casavant



"Valentine Rose 2" 9x12" Oil on Canvas by Sharon Casavant

Wow Sharon you've really looked hard at this beautiful rose and seen all the subtle variety in there. It looks great! The low key (overall lower value) treatment adds a touch of mystery to this as the flower reaches up for the light. The only thing I could pick for improvement in this painting would be the drawing of the subsidiary roses that look a bit clumsy compared to the big one. Loose is good, but not at the expense of good drawing. Touch those up and you've got a winner here. Good one.

"Roses" by Elena Sokolova



"Roses" 40x50cm Oil on Canvas by Elena Sokolova

Beautiful movement and simplification of forms in the painting, Elena. That's something I strive for in my own work too. The variety of colour in the background is adding a lot of interest as well. The drawing could be a little better and some of the shapes in the two large upward roses could be altered or removed in order to make the rose shape more easily readable. When I paint an object that has an odd looking shape in it that somehow spoils the form of the object, I modify or remove it for the sake of readability. Overall a very pleasing painting - something to be proud of.