



The Grand Canyon

A step-by-step painting guide by Richard Robinson

Watch the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>

MY PAINTING CLUB

Introduction

Learn to simplify a complex landscape, easily. One of the biggest problems we encounter with landscape painting is the sheer amount of detail and complexity we are faced with. How do we deal with all of that!? This workshop teaches you about simplifying a scene with the light and shadow families and then using a two value statement to simplify even further. What better place to do this than the Grand Canyon – one of the most complex scenes on Earth!



"Sunrise, Grand Canyon" 10x8" Oil on Canvas by Richard Robinson



REFERENCE PHOTO 1

The scene as Richard found it.



REFERENCE PHOTO 2

The scene as Richard found it.



REFERENCE PHOTO 3

The scene as Richard found it.



REFERENCE PHOTO 4

The scene as Richard found it.

Materials

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

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- M. Graham & Co. Oil Paints
- Alizarine Crimson
- 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 Simplifying with Light and Shadow Families

What are the 'light family' and 'shadow family' in painting?

In painting, the 'light family' and 'shadow family' refer to the areas of an object that are in light and shadow, respectively. Each object will have its own set of colors for these areas. By simplifying these areas into distinct color families, you can create a stronger design and maintain vibrant colors. You can learn more about this technique at the sales page: <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

How can simplifying colors into light and shadow families benefit my painting?

Simplifying colors into light and shadow families helps you avoid getting lost in detail, allowing you to create a stronger design. It also aids in painting form more effectively by making you more aware of light and shade. Additionally, this method keeps your colors pure and vibrant by consciously separating them, preventing them from becoming muddled. For further exploration, visit the sales page: <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

What is a 'two value statement' in painting?

A 'two value statement' in painting involves simplifying the colors of an object into one value for the light and one value for the shadow. This approach helps in creating a clearer and more impactful design by focusing on the essential light and dark areas. To delve deeper into this concept, check out the lesson at the sales page: <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

2 Black and White Shadow Exercise

What is the purpose of using a black and white printout for the shadow exercise?

The black and white printout helps to mentally separate the light and shadow families, allowing you to simplify the scene. By painting over the shadow areas with black acrylic paint, you can start to understand the subject better and simplify its shapes. This exercise is a great way to get in touch with your subject and prepare for adding color later. For more insights, visit the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

How does simplifying shapes help in painting the Grand Canyon?

Simplifying shapes helps retain the character of the general shape while ignoring fine details, making it easier to manage the complexity of the scene. This approach allows you to focus on the essential elements and design of your painting, which is crucial when dealing with a detailed subject like the Grand Canyon. You can explore this technique further on the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

What should you do when you encounter a dark shape that is in the light?

When you encounter a dark shape that is in the light, like the tree in the corner of the scene, you should paint around it with the shadow family in the rock. This approach helps maintain the integrity of the light and shadow families. Using artistic license to introduce your own shadows can also make the composition more interesting. Learn more about handling such scenarios at the sales page: <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

Why is it beneficial to join shadow shapes together in a painting?

Joining shadow shapes together is beneficial because it unifies the dark shapes, helps guide the viewer's eye around the painting, and simplifies the overall composition. This technique allows for a more cohesive and engaging visual experience. For further exploration of this technique, check out the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

What is the main goal of the black and white shadow exercise?

The main goal of the black and white shadow exercise is to come to grips with your subject by dividing it into light and shadow families and simplifying the design for your painting. This foundational step is crucial for creating a balanced and harmonious composition. Dive deeper into this exercise on the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

3 Mixing Colors for Light and Shadow

How do you mix colors for the light and shadow in a painting?

To mix colors for light and shadow, you should create a single color for each family. This involves identifying a large shadow shape and a large light shape in your painting and using one color for each. This technique helps in simplifying the painting process and maintaining clarity in your work. For more detailed guidance, you can visit the lesson page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

Should I practice mixing colors for light and shadow on paper?

You don't need to practice this step on paper, as it's more about understanding the concept. The demonstration is provided to help you grasp the idea of using a single color for large shadow and light shapes. This approach helps in keeping your painting process efficient and organized. For further insights, check out the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

What should I be careful about when mixing colors for light and shadow?

When mixing colors for light and shadow, be careful about the edges where the light and shadow shapes meet. You can choose to make these edges sharp or soft, but it's important not to blend the large shapes together. This technique helps maintain the distinctiveness of light and shadow in your painting. For more tips, visit the lesson page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

4 Setting Darkest Dark and Lightest Light

What type of panel is used for the painting?

The painting is done on a 10x8 wood acrylic prime panel. This type of panel provides a sturdy and smooth surface ideal for oil painting. For more details on the materials used in this lesson, you can visit the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

Which brand of oil colours is used in this lesson?

The lesson uses Gamblin oil colours, which were kindly supplied by Mr. Gamblin himself. Gamblin is known for high-quality oil paints that are favored by many artists. To learn more about the materials and techniques in this lesson, check out the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

What tool is used to sketch the horizon in the painting?

In this lesson, the horizon is sketched using a pencil, although the instructor normally draws with a brush. This approach allows for precise adjustments to the design before painting. For more insights into the sketching process, visit the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

How are the shadow families established on the canvas?

The shadow families are blocked in using a very thin application of red and a bit of walnut oil. This technique helps to define the areas of shadow before adding more detail. To explore this technique further, you can visit the lesson's sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

What is the purpose of finding the darkest dark and lightest light in a painting?

Finding the darkest dark and lightest light sets the limits for the painting, ensuring that no part of the painting will be darker or lighter than these established points. This helps to maintain a balanced contrast throughout the artwork. For a deeper understanding of this technique, visit the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

5 Foreground Rock Colors and Temperature

Why is the value more important than the color when painting the foreground rocks?

In this lesson, Richard emphasizes that the value is more important than the color because it helps establish the contrast and depth in the painting. By focusing on the darkest and lightest values, you can create a strong visual impact, which is crucial for making the rocks stand out. You can explore more about this technique on the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

How does Richard create the lightest light for the rocks?

Richard creates the lightest light for the rocks by using a pure mixture of white and yellow ochre. This choice helps the rocks stand out against the other elements in the painting. For a deeper understanding of this approach, visit the lesson page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

What is the significance of setting the darkest dark and lightest light in a painting?

Setting the darkest dark and lightest light establishes the range of values in your painting, which is essential for creating contrast and depth. This technique helps define the limits of your value relationships, making the painting more visually compelling. Learn more about this technique at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

How does Richard determine the easiest color to use for the rocks?

Richard determines the easiest color to use by choosing the color that is closest to an actual tube color, which in this case is yellow ochre. He then adds white to lighten it, making it easier to block in the color for the rocks. For more insights, check out the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

What is the value difference between the light and shadow on the rocks, and why is it important?

The value difference between the light and shadow on the rocks is about four values, which is important for maintaining consistent value relationships across the painting. This consistency helps create a realistic depiction of the rocks. Discover more about this technique on the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

How does the Grand Canyon's environment affect the temperature difference in the shadows?

The Grand Canyon's environment affects the temperature difference in the shadows because the warm colored rock walls reflect light back into the shadows. This results in a significant temperature difference in the shadows, which is unique to this landscape. For further exploration of this concept, visit <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

6 Systematic Approach to Foreground Shapes

How can I make a rock appear more rounded in my painting?

To make a rock appear more rounded, you can soften the edges of the shape in your painting. This technique helps create the illusion of a rounded form. For more detailed guidance on painting techniques, check out the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

What is the effect of adding blue to the top areas of the painting?

Adding blue to the top areas of the painting makes those areas appear slightly cooler. This can help create a sense of depth and atmosphere in your painting. For further exploration of color techniques, visit the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

Why would you add yellow to areas around a tree in a painting?

Adding yellow around a tree in a painting can make the area appear cooler and greener, adding interest and variation to the scene. This technique can enhance the natural look of the landscape. For more insights on using color in your paintings, see the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

Is it okay to keep areas of my painting flat like a mosaic?

Yes, it's perfectly fine to keep areas of your painting flat, almost like a mosaic, if that's the effect you want to achieve. However, adding variations in color can add more interest to your painting. For more tips on painting techniques, explore the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

What is the systematic approach to painting foreground shapes?

The systematic approach involves moving through all the shadow shapes in the foreground first, and then addressing all the light shapes. This methodical process helps in organizing the painting and ensuring consistency. To learn more about systematic painting techniques, visit the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

7 Painting Light Shapes and Color Bands

Why is it important to be systematic when painting light shapes and color bands?

Being systematic helps create a well-structured painting with less confusion. By methodically painting light shapes and color bands, you can maintain consistency and clarity in your artwork. For more insights, you can explore the lesson further at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

How should you handle color changes when painting the light on rock columns?

When painting light on rock columns, it's important to keep the color consistent across the columns due to the natural bands of color created by different rock strata. For example, you might add a bit of red to make the color pinkish without changing the value. This technique helps maintain the natural appearance of the rock formations. Learn more about this technique at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

What effect does adding orange to the bottom of the rocks have?

Adding orange to the bottom of the rocks helps create the effect of a soft shadow falling across them. This color choice enhances the natural look of the rocks as the light intensifies and becomes more yellow higher up. For a deeper understanding, visit <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

Why are some shadows in the canyon rich and vibrant in color?

Some shadows in the canyon are rich and vibrant due to reflected light. This light bounces into cracks and overhangs, creating areas of unexpected color richness. To explore this concept further, check out <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

How does the color of the light family in the tree relate to the rocks?

The light family in the tree is painted with a lighter green that has an orange tint to match the orange light on the base of the rocks. As the light travels upwards, it becomes more yellow, maintaining harmony with the surrounding environment. Discover more about this technique at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

8 Background and Atmospheric Perspective

Why is it tricky to paint the background in a Grand Canyon scene?

Painting the background in a Grand Canyon scene is tricky because the value differences are very small, resulting in weak contrast. This requires careful attention to subtle variations in color to effectively convey depth. For more insights, you can explore the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

What colors are used to create the shadow area in the background?

To create the shadow area in the background, a mix of blue and red is used to make purple, which is then lightened with white. A bit of orange is added to subdue the blue, making it more grey. This technique helps in achieving the desired atmospheric perspective. For a detailed walkthrough, visit <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

How should you test your colors before applying them to the canvas?

It's recommended to put a little dab of the color first to test it and make any necessary alterations before proceeding with a big block in. This ensures that the color matches the intended effect. For more tips on color testing, check out the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

How do colors change as they go further away in the painting?

As colors go further away in the painting, they become lighter and bluer, following the principles of atmospheric perspective. This change is done in steps to create a subtle transition. You can learn more about this technique at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

What is the approach to blending colors in the background?

Instead of blending colors directly, the edges are softened a lot to avoid harsh transitions between colors. This approach helps maintain the integrity of the shadow shapes while creating a natural gradient. For a comprehensive guide, visit <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

How do the light areas change as they go upwards in the painting?

As the light areas go upwards, they need to get lighter and bluer, similar to the shadow areas, due to atmospheric perspective. This ensures consistency in how light and shadow are affected by distance. More details can be found at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

Why is it important to focus on the shapes in the painting?

Focusing on the shapes is crucial because they convey the character of the scene and help the audience understand what they're looking at. This attention to detail is key in creating a realistic representation of the Grand Canyon. For further exploration, visit <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

9 Adjusting Light and Shadow Values

Why do the blues appear lighter in the video?

The blues appear lighter in the video because the video camera used tends to render blues a bit lighter than other colors. It's important to be aware of this when painting, as it might affect how you perceive and adjust your color values. For more insights on adjusting colors and values, you can explore the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

What should I aim for when adjusting light and shadow values?

When adjusting light and shadow values, you should aim for the light families to be just a tiny bit lighter in value than the shadow families. This subtle difference helps create a more realistic and dynamic painting. To learn more about achieving the right balance in your paintings, check out the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

How can I add variation to my painting of the Grand Canyon?

To add variation to your painting of the Grand Canyon, you can make the color a little bit warmer and lighter, and then add some of the rocks. This technique helps to create depth and interest in your painting. For a deeper dive into painting techniques and tips, visit the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

10 Blocking in the Sky

What colors are used to block in the sky in this painting?

To block in the sky, ultramarine and white are used. This combination helps to ensure the sky is lighter than the distant hills but not lighter than the lightest rock color. For more details on this technique, you can visit the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

Why are variations added to the horizon line in the painting?

Variations are added to the horizon line to create interest and break up the straight line. These variations, inspired by features seen in the canyon, enhance the painting's visual appeal. To explore this technique further, check out the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

How is the edge of the sky softened in the painting?

The edge of the sky is softened to help push it back into space, creating a sense of depth. This technique is part of creating a more dynamic and realistic landscape. For more insights, you can visit the lesson's sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

What is the purpose of adding warmth to the sky color?

Adding a little bit of warmth to the sky color introduces variation, making the sky more interesting and dynamic. This subtle change enhances the overall composition of the painting. To learn more about this approach, visit <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

11 Adding Detail and Evaluating Simplicity

Why does the tree in the foreground need to be darkened?

The tree in the foreground needs to be darkened because its lightness is not as convincing as the rest of the painting. By darkening it, the tree will align more with reality and strengthen the shadow families, enhancing the overall composition. For more insights on this technique, you can visit the lesson's sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

How can adding green elsewhere in the painting help?

Adding green elsewhere in the painting can help carry the viewer's eye through the composition, creating a more cohesive and balanced visual experience. This technique can subtly enhance the painting's depth and interest. To explore this concept further, check out the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

What is the purpose of taking a photo before adding more detail?

Taking a photo before adding more detail serves as a reference point, allowing you to compare the simplicity of the current painting to the final version. This helps in evaluating whether the additional detail enhances the painting or if it becomes too cluttered. You can learn more about managing detail in your paintings at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

Why is it important to evaluate simplicity in a painting?

Evaluating simplicity in a painting is important because it helps maintain a clear and effective composition, avoiding the risk of overworking the artwork. Simplicity can often enhance the painting's impact by focusing on the essential elements. For more on this approach, visit the lesson's page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

12 Benefits of Two Value Statement

What is a two value statement in painting?

A two value statement in painting refers to simplifying a scene into just two values, typically light and dark. This approach helps in creating a strong painting by focusing on the essential contrasts, which gives a convincing illusion of reality. For more insights on this technique, you can visit the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

Why is a two value statement beneficial for painting on a small canvas?

A two value statement is beneficial for painting on a small canvas because it allows you to create a strong and convincing painting without needing to add excessive detail. This method simplifies the subject and helps manage the complexity often found in landscape painting. To explore this technique further, check out the lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

How does a two value statement help in simplifying a landscape painting?

A two value statement helps simplify a landscape painting by breaking down the scene into basic light and dark values. This simplification allows you to analyze and understand the scene more clearly, making it easier to paint directly and effectively. For more detailed guidance, visit the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

What problem does a two value statement solve in landscape painting?

A two value statement solves the problem of complexity in landscape painting by reducing the scene to its essential light and shade components. This method helps you manage the overwhelming details and focus on creating a strong visual impact. To learn more about this technique, you can visit the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

13 Comparing Paintings

What does Richard Robinson compare in this segment?

Richard Robinson compares two paintings of the Grand Canyon: one that he painted on-site and another that was created during the lesson. He discusses the differences in design and color between the two. For more insights into his painting process, you can visit the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

Which painting does Richard Robinson prefer and why?

Richard Robinson mentions that he prefers the design and color of the plein air painting he did on-site at the Grand Canyon. However, he acknowledges that art is subjective, and others might have different preferences. To explore more about his painting techniques, check out the sales page at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/107-The-Grand-Canyon>.

Summary & Key Takeaways

As I reflect on our journey through painting the Grand Canyon, I am reminded of the importance of simplifying complex scenes into manageable elements. By focusing on light and shadow families, we can create a strong design and maintain vibrant colors. This approach not only helps in defining the form but also keeps the painting process organized and efficient.

Throughout this lesson, I aimed to guide you in understanding the significance of value over color, especially in a landscape as intricate as the Grand Canyon. By setting the darkest darks and lightest lights, we establish a framework that ensures balance and depth in our painting. This methodical approach allows us to capture the essence of the scene while maintaining clarity and harmony.

I hope that this lesson has equipped you with the tools and confidence to tackle even the most daunting landscapes. Remember, painting is as much about the journey as it is about the final piece. Embrace the process, and let your creativity guide you.

LESSON POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Simplify colors into light and shadow families to maintain vibrant colors.
- Use a black and white shadow exercise to better understand your subject.
- Mix a single color for each light and shadow family to simplify your painting.
- Set the darkest dark and lightest light to establish value limits.
- Focus on value over color to create contrast and depth.
- Use systematic approaches to organize your painting process.
- Soften edges to create the illusion of rounded forms.
- Add color variations to enhance interest and natural appearance.



"Sunrise, Grand Canyon" 10x8" 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.

"From Up High" by Sandra Kelly



"From Up High" 29x42cm" Oil by Sandra Kelly

Great work Sandra. Finding simplicity was the goal of this exercise and you've managed to keep things simplified despite the larger canvas and the complex subject. You've even managed to simplify the colour banding of the rock strata into four distinct layers. Making all the background have soft edges was a really nice idea and that's lent a real photographic crispness to the foreground rocks.

All the the colours have a lovely warmth to them which is great to see and in that respect you've jumped ahead of my small study and created colour unity throughout the whole painting which is something I only managed to achieve in my larger studio painting after 2 weeks! Beautiful subtle work there with warm grays in the background and you managed to keep all the values in good relationship with each other there which is not an easy task at all. I do feel that I would like to add a little area of slightly lighter interest in the background area somewhere to the the eye more reason to travel back there.

The one thing that is spoiling the effect of light on your foreground rocks is the colour of the cracks there. If you make those cracks that are within large areas of light just a slightly darker version of the rock colour rather than adding blue to them it will really help with the illusion of strong light. Keep up the good work!

“Grand Canyon, Study 2, Bock-in” by Jim Delk



"Grand Canyon, Study 2, Bock-in" by Jim Delk

That's getting there Jim. You've certainly been looking at simplifying the scene and figuring out the major light and shadow families. It looks to me like you copied my own study as much as you looked at the photograph, which is fine but I think you'll get even more learning done next time by trying to figure out how you want to simplify the scene.

As is often the case your painting was actually working better at the end of the block in stage (shown on the left) before you started fiddling with it. By viewing both paintings in grayscale we can see clearly why the block in reads better. You've lost the background's dark/light value structure you had achieved in the block-in. It looks like what you did was lighten all the blue-gray shadow family in the background but left all the lights which made the lights too dark comparatively. You've also exaggerated some warm colours there (that big patch of brown in the middle background) which is out of place - it needs to be much cooler due to atmospheric perspective.

Squinting at your scene really helps with this. Our common problem is that as soon as we focus in on one small area of the scene we lose it's relationship with the rest and in fact our brains go ahead and exaggerate the differences in colour and contrast there so that we can see it better, but that is really confusing for us painters.

That reflected light you have added into the shadows in the foreground rocks has really livened them up and you managed to hold back from adding too much detail there which is great. In fact the foreground is looking pretty good and I would just like to see you tackle the background again. Nearly there! Great to see you have already done two separate studies too - great work!

"Red Rock Canyon" by Ivana Jackson



"Red Rock Canyon" 10x8" Oil by Ivana Jackson

Very nicely done Ivana. Firstly your drawing is very accurate. Compared to the photo you seem to have transferred the image to the canvas remarkably well - so much so that I assume it was traced on. No sin there in my book if you did trace it. The only trouble I ever find with tracing is that it's very easy to then become a slave to the drawing. Either way the drawing is good here and the scene itself is already cropped and organized fairly well in the photo so you can't really go wrong there, and you have made a few conscious changes to the layout that have helped it along a little like removing the little noble of rock in the top left corner which would otherwise attract the eye to the edge of the canvas. You've also given the tree a little more breathing space which is a good idea and introduced a subtle pathway of light in the foreground. Nice work!

In terms of your colour decisions it looks like you have some knowledge of plein air painting because you've corrected the under-exposed shadows by lightening them which is great to see but personally I feel that you've missed a couple of opportunities to introduce some slightly punchier colour in the foreground and midground which would have helped to spice up the scene. You have thought clearly about the light and shadow families which is great to see but perhaps added a little more detail than I would have expected when the goal of this exercise was really about simplifying our subject. Hard to stop sometimes! Anyway, I hope you're proud of this painting because you've certainly done a lot of things well in it and I hope you'll enjoy the next workshop challenge too which leads smoothly on from this one.

“Grand Canyon, Study 2, Final” by Jim Delk



"Grand Canyon, Study 2, Final" by Jim Delk

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