



Daisy Bay

A step-by-step painting guide by Richard Robinson

Watch the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/12-Daisy-Bay>

MY PAINTING CLUB

Introduction

Daisy Bay holds a special place in my heart, and I'm thrilled to share its beauty with you through this painting adventure. Nestled in Tutakaka, just over the hill from Sandy Bay, this spot is steeped in personal memories, including my first surf at nearby Woolley Bay during high school. In this chapter, we'll explore the captivating scene of Daisy Bay, capturing its essence with an impressionistic approach. You'll learn how to get the drawing right and mix colors effectively, ensuring the overall color scheme is spot-on before committing to the entire painting. We'll simplify the process to prevent feeling overwhelmed, and embrace the power of big brushes to infuse your work with a looser, more dynamic feel. Adding drama with dark and light accents will elevate your painting, and I'll guide you on critiquing your own work to foster significant improvement. As the sun sets on Daisy Bay, let's embark on this creative journey together, discovering the joy and fulfillment of painting this stunning scene.



“Daisy Bay” Acrylic on Board by Richard Robinson.



REFERENCE PHOTO

The scene as Richard found it.

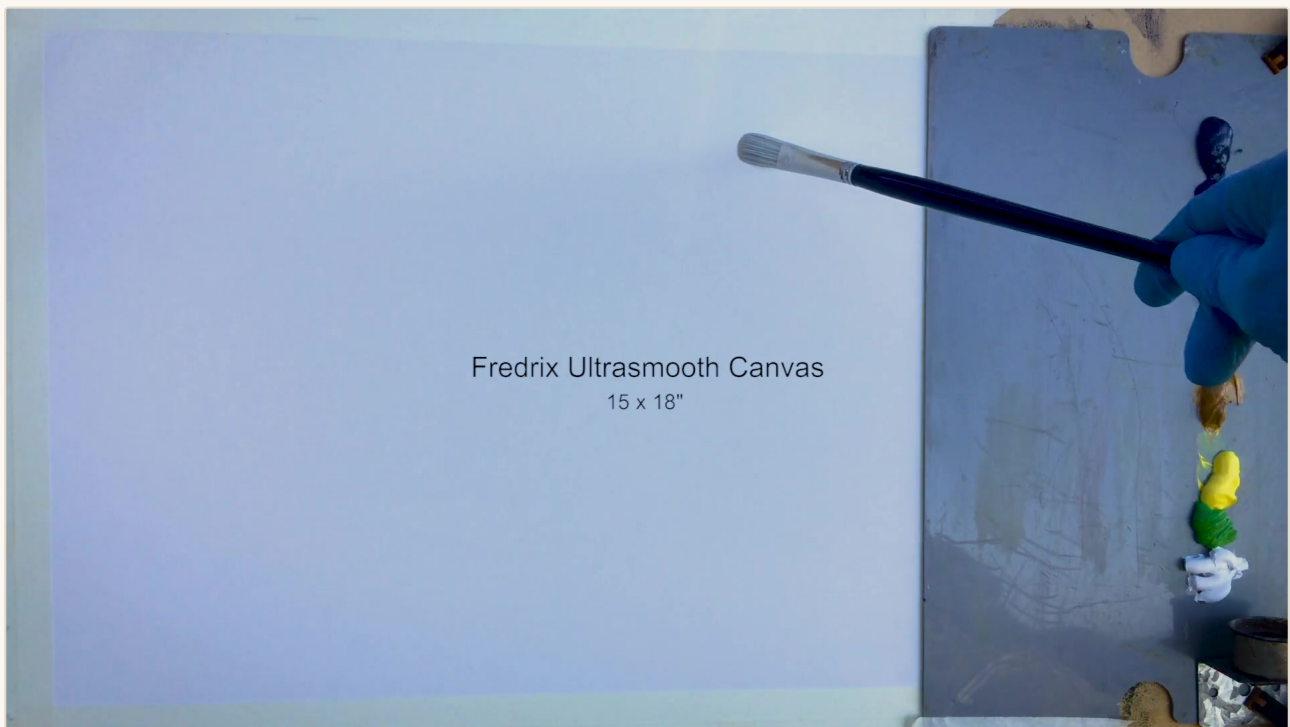
Materials

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 Canvas preparation



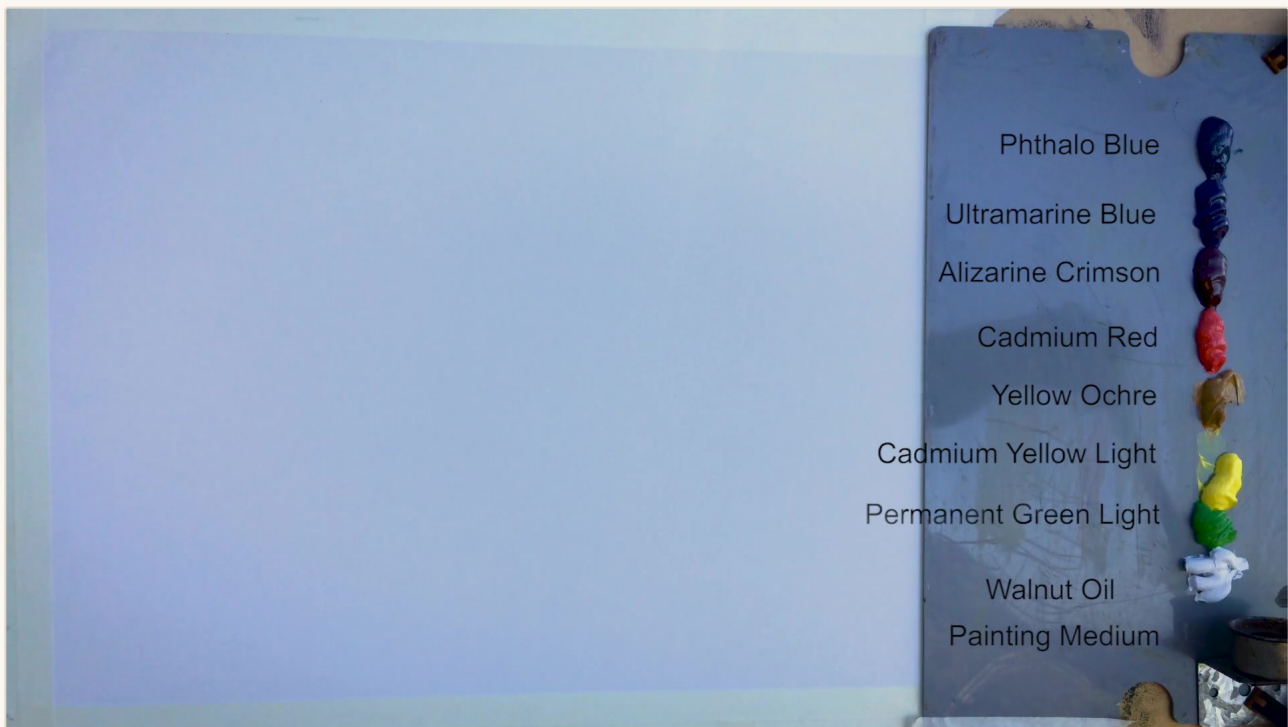
Prepare the Canvas

Use a 15 by 18 inch Fredericks Ultra Smooth canvas for this painting. Lightly sand the surface to create more tooth, which helps the paint adhere better. Securely tape the canvas onto a board to ensure it is tight and free of bubbles.

PRO TIP

Lightly sand the canvas to improve paint adherence.

2 Palette and mediums



Prepare Your Palette

Set up your palette with your chosen colors. This will be the foundation for your painting session.

Use Walnut Oil

Add a small puddle of walnut oil to your palette. Use it to thin down your paints slightly, ensuring they flow smoothly onto the canvas.

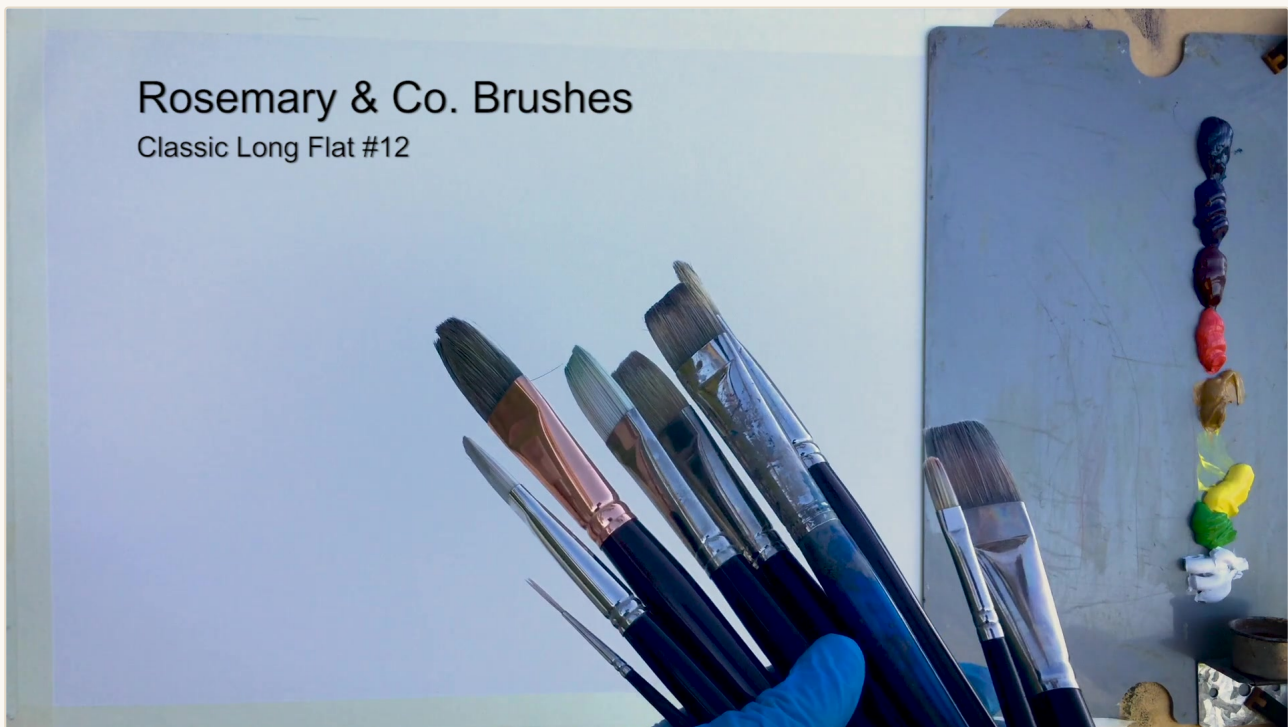
Utilize Gamsol for Sketching

Keep a pot of Gamsol nearby. Use this odorless thinner only for your initial sketching to avoid overpowering the painting with solvent.

PRO TIP

Use walnut oil to help your paints flow better on the canvas.

3 Brush selection and usage



Select Your Brushes

Choose large brushes, primarily size 12, with bristles and flat shapes. These are ideal for achieving a loose, painterly style.

Organize Your Brushes

Use multiple brushes to save time, especially when painting outdoors. Assign specific brushes for dark colors and others for light colors to avoid frequent cleaning.

Prepare for Painting

Dip your brush into Gamsol to clean it before starting your sketch. This ensures your brush is ready for the ultramarine blue.

PRO TIP

Use different brushes for dark and light colors to minimize cleaning time and maintain efficiency.

4 Sketching and drawing techniques



Identify Key Elements

Focus on the big elements in the scene. Notice the big diagonal of the hill and consider breaking up that shape with variations to add interest. Variation in shapes, color, and texture is crucial for creating a beautiful painting.

Establish Visual Concept

Identify the visual concept of your painting. In this scene, focus on the dark shape of the tree against the light background. A strong visual concept guides your painting and makes the process smoother.

Transfer Angles Accurately

To capture the angle of the waves and beach, lay your brush along the water line with the brush perpendicular to you. Close one eye, rotate your body to transfer the angle onto your canvas. This method helps ensure accuracy.

Simplify Curves

Break down large curves into straight line segments. This approach makes it easier to capture the essence of the curve without struggling to match it exactly.

Use Clock Angles

Compare angles to those on a clock face. For instance, if an angle resembles 10 o'clock, remember that and replicate it on your canvas. This technique aids in maintaining consistency in your drawing.

PRO TIP

Use your brush to transfer angles from the scene to your canvas by keeping it perpendicular and rotating your body.

5 Blocking in darks



Prepare Your Brush and Paint

Select your largest brush, such as a size 12, and dip it into walnut oil to thin the paint. Mix a dark green by combining blue, a little red, and yellow ochre. The red tones down the green towards grey. Ensure the mixture is thick enough to cover the canvas without leaving holes.

Block in Major Dark Areas

Use big, energetic strokes to block in the major dark areas of your painting. Consider toning your canvas with an acrylic wash in a warm or cool color to prevent white canvas from showing through. This can enhance the vibrancy of your colors.

Vary Your Darks

Add more yellow ochre to some areas to create variation in your darks. Mix colors slightly on the canvas to achieve interesting brushwork and suggest detail. Avoid adding too much white to your darks to prevent them from looking chalky.

Introduce Shadow Colors

Switch to a fresh brush for different shadow colors, like a purple-grey for sand shadows. Add yellow ochre to grey down the purple. Lay a thin wash of dark first, then lighten it slightly for variation.

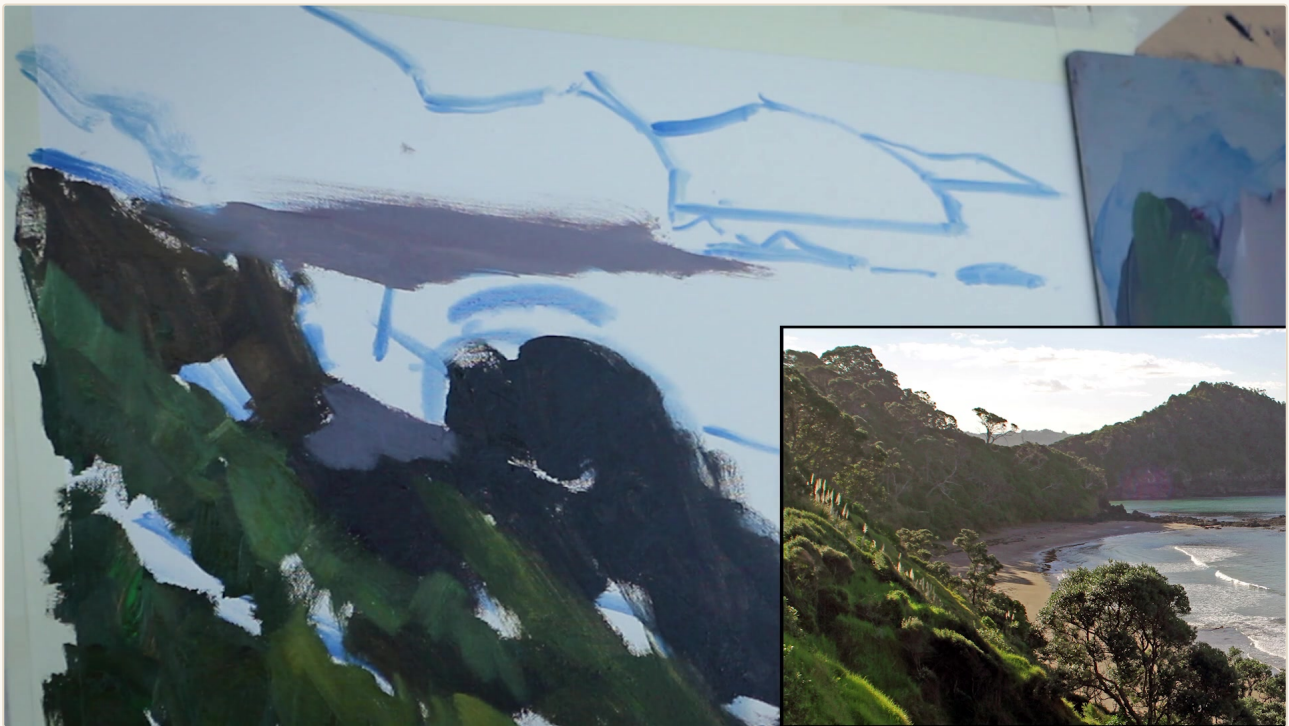
Create Light Effects

Add a little yellow ochre and red to warm up shadows. Leave space for light effects, such as where light comes through gaps in hills. Extend paint beyond where you want it to finish and soften the edges where colors meet in shadow for a mysterious effect.

PRO TIP

Mix colors slightly on the canvas to achieve interesting brushwork and suggest detail.

6 Painting the hill and background



Mix a Neutral Grey

Create a light grey-green by mixing a neutral grey that matches the distant hill's value. This will help the surrounding colors guide you in adjusting the grey to fit the scene.

Apply Gestural Strokes

Use large, gestural strokes to apply the grey-green to the hill. This technique captures the light glaze across the hill and maintains a sense of distance.

Maintain Close Values

As you paint the rocks, slightly darken the color but keep the values close to maintain the effect of light washing over the area. This subtlety ensures the light appears natural and consistent.

Add Soft Edges and Details

Incorporate soft edges in the shadows and add a few calligraphic strokes for variety. Step back to assess your work; if it looks good from a distance, leave it as is.

Lighten with White and Yellow Ochre

Lighten the area where the sun glows through the atmosphere by adding more white and a touch of yellow ochre. This creates a soft, glowing effect without overpowering the scene.

PRO TIP

Keep the values close to achieve a natural light effect across the background.

7 Completing the darks



Block in the Darks

Start with the darkest part of the area on the right. Gradually lighten the color slightly to introduce a bit more sunshine. Ensure the transition is smooth to maintain depth.

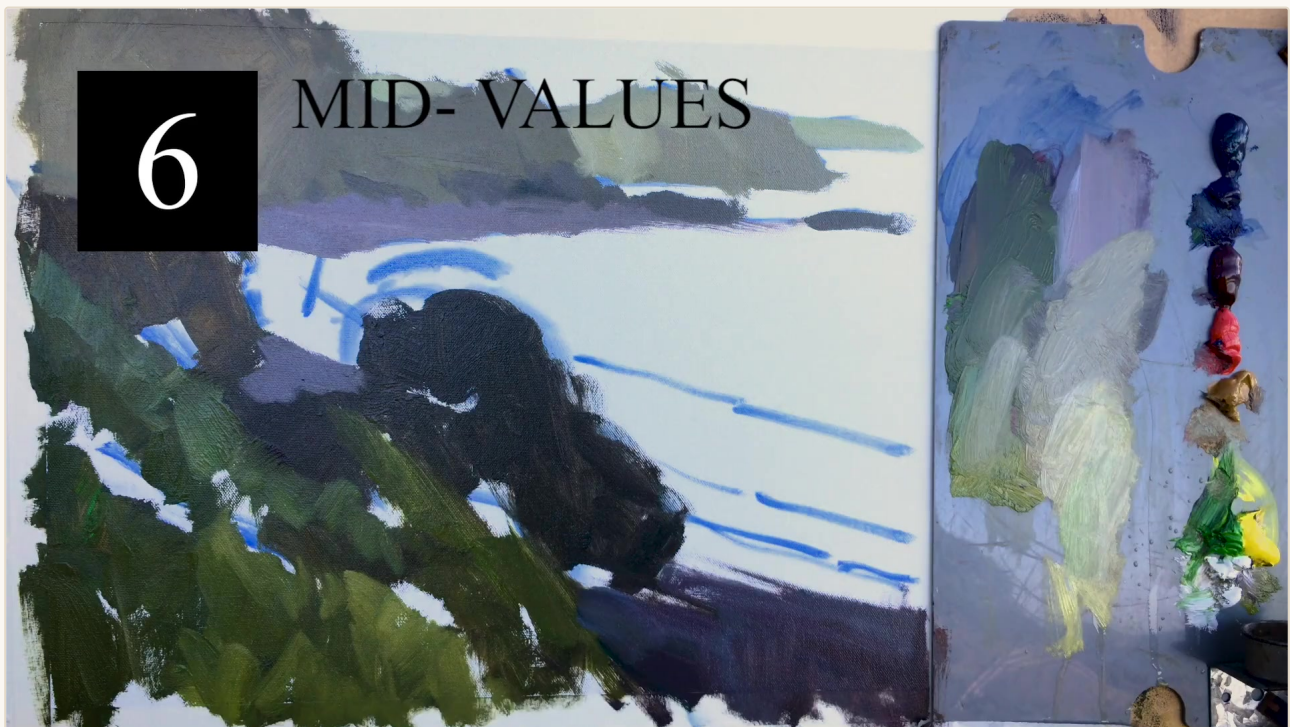
Extend to Lighter Areas

Continue painting into the lighter areas to create a seamless transition. This will help save time and ensure consistency across the painting.

PRO TIP

Gradually lighten the dark areas to introduce a sense of sunlight and depth.

8 Painting the water



Mix the Water Halftone Color

Use a large brush to mix ultramarine blue, yellow ochre, and white on your palette. Aim for a blue-green color that matches the value of the water but is slightly more blue-green. Adjust by adding more blue or green as needed, and lighten with white.

Paint the Water

Apply the mixed color to the water area, ensuring the shape of the island's bottom is straight. Pay attention to small details like the slight rounding at the end to make the island sit correctly on the water.

Add Reflections and Adjustments

Dab in dark reflections of objects in the water, then lighten the color with more blue. Use vertical strokes for reflections and horizontal strokes for the water's flat surface. Avoid diagonal strokes to maintain realism.

Incorporate Light and Warmth

Add lighter and warmer tones to the water by mixing a bit more yellow, but be cautious as yellow is strong. Create a soft edge on the reflection to depict a line of swell.

Adjust for Turquoise Water

As you move down the painting, gradually shift the water color to a more turquoise hue. Work downwards first, then blend back into the existing water color.

PRO TIP

Use vertical strokes to depict reflections and horizontal strokes for the flat surface of the water.

9 Adding foam and reflections



Mix Colors for Water Motion

Mix white, green, and a little yellow ochre. Add strokes that follow the motion of the water. Incorporate a bit of turquoise for a stronger color, especially in the center of interest where light meets dark.

Soften Edges

Use a dry brush to soften the edges of your strokes. This helps to blend the colors smoothly and create a natural transition in the water.

Add Sky Reflections

Reflect the sky on the wet sand by adding cool and warm tones. This will enhance the realism of the scene and create a cohesive look.

Paint Foam

Mix a light grey purple using blue, red, and white. Apply with big fluid strokes, lightening and warming the color slightly. Use a big brush tip for fine strokes, and clean the brush frequently to avoid muddy colors.

Prepare for Light Changes

As foam enters the light, it will change to a very light warm color. Leave space for this transition to occur naturally.

Create Tree Gaps

Poke holes through the trees by painting the gaps between branches. Focus on where the branches are to create a realistic effect.

PRO TIP

When painting light into dark, clean your brush frequently to prevent muddy colors.

10 Painting the sky and beach



Paint the Sky

Switch to a different brush and mix a little yellow ochre with a touch of alizarin crimson. Apply this mixture to the sky, making it lighter and warmer as it moves towards the sun.

Paint the Beach

Use the same light, warm color to paint the beach. Apply the paint thickly, using big globs for a rich texture. Clean your brush if it picks up any dark paint, then continue applying more of the light color.

Darken the Beach

As you move further down the beach, mix in a slightly darker and cooler tone. Apply this mixture to create a natural transition from light to dark along the beach.

PRO TIP

Use thick paint to create a rich texture on the beach.

11 Adding details and highlights



Add Tree Details

Use a big brush to add a small tree where it was removed before. Keep the details minimal, focusing on the overall shape rather than intricate elements. Switch to a small brush to add a few branches, ensuring they complement the tree's form.

Introduce Half Tones

Mix a green slightly lighter than the existing darks to create half tones. Apply these to sculpt the tree's clumps, ensuring light hits them from the left. Vary the shapes and brushwork to give each clump a unique character.

Adjust Colors

Modify the color by adding yellow ochre and white for variety. Introduce warm grays by mixing red with green, creating contrast against the cool greens. Focus on building shapes rather than replicating the scene exactly.

Add Light and Highlights

Mix green, yellow, yellow ochre, and a lot of white to add light to the vegetation. Use varied brushwork to create a strip of light that illuminates the bush, suggesting detail. Apply solid brushstrokes in the foreground to mimic grass and detail from a distance.

Highlight the Tree

Refill the brush often to paint light onto dark areas effectively. Use a small brush to add flicks of light, enhancing realism without overdoing it. Ensure the highlights sparkle and contribute to the overall detail from a distance.

PRO TIP

Use varied brushwork to give each clump of foliage a unique character, enhancing the tree's realism.

12 Final touches on water and foam



Enhance Foreground Depth

Use a dark green brush to work in the foreground area. Add more dark accents to connect the area better. These dark strokes should be calligraphic to add depth.

Add Details with Care

Use a small brush to intimate a few details, but be cautious not to drag light into dark areas. Clean the brush between strokes to maintain clarity.

Paint Tree Branches

Add light touches to some branches of the Pahutakawa trees. Ensure the holes through the trees do not form a pattern by varying their sizes and shapes.

PRO TIP

When painting holes through trees, vary their sizes and shapes to avoid creating a pattern.

13 Adding blossoms and final details



Add Detail to the Water

Use a clean brush with a lot of white, a touch of yellow ochre, and bright yellow. Push the paint in to create an edge along the front of the brush, then drag it to form sunlight reflections. Brush down vertically to reflect these in the water for a nice detail.

Enhance Highlights on the Hills

Mix yellow ochre, white, a little blue, and bright yellow to match the existing color. Dab a small point to test; adjust until it blends well. As you move closer to the sun, make the paint thicker, lighter, and warmer.

Create Organic Patterns

Vary your brushwork to form interesting organic shapes. Use big strokes with smaller strokes breaking off to avoid repetitive patterns. This creates a cohesive shape with variations, preventing a 'measles' look.

Add Foam and Swell Lines

Break up large, uninteresting shapes by adding foam. Warm up rocks with sunlight and add subtle swell lines for depth and interest.

Add Blossoms to the Pahutakawa Tree

Turn the scene into a New Zealand summer by adding blossoms to the Pahutakawa tree, which bloom around Christmas time.

PRO TIP

Test highlight colors by dabbing a small point to ensure it blends seamlessly with the surrounding area.

14 Signing and finishing touches



Add Blossoms

Include the blossoms on the tree to create a beautiful color contrast. Start by painting some blossoms in shadow using a crimson red. Then, add white and a touch of yellow to highlight some blossoms in the light.

Sign the Painting

Sign your painting to mark it as complete. Choose a spot that doesn't distract from the overall composition.

Add Birds for Scale

Include a bird or two in the painting. This addition provides a sense of scale and enhances the composition.

PRO TIP

Use a mix of crimson, white, and a touch of yellow to create blossoms in both shadow and light.

15 Self-critique and reflection



Reflect on the Subject

Ask yourself if you love the subject of your painting. Choosing subjects or themes that have personal meaning can lead to more heartfelt and beautiful work. Always aim to paint what you love.

Evaluate the Essence

Consider if you've captured the essence of the scene. Ensure the major elements are present, such as light and dark contrasts that initially attracted you to the scene.

Check Drawing Accuracy

Assess the accuracy of your drawing. Use a mirror or flip the image on your phone to see it with fresh eyes. This helps identify any inaccuracies that might have become normalized during painting.

Review Your Process

Reflect on whether you used a planned process, such as working from darks to lights and from thin to thick paint. A structured approach often leads to better results.

Assess Design Readability

Consider if your design reads easily from a distance. Using big shapes helps create a painting that is clear and impactful from across the room.

Consider Lighting and Color

Evaluate if you considered the scene's lighting conditions, such as warm light sources and cool shadows. Check if there's enough color in the shadows and if darks aren't too grey.

Examine Brushwork and Edges

Ensure you used a variety of brushwork and edges. Different sizes, marks, and textures add interest, while a balance of soft and sharp edges enhances the painting's quality.

Check Surface Orientation

Look for horizontal surfaces that might appear vertical due to uniform color. Use horizontal marks to flatten these areas and maintain the correct orientation.

Evaluate Depth and Recession

Ensure there's a good sense of depth. Avoid areas that jump out or recede incorrectly by keeping values close where necessary.

Focus on the Center of Interest

Place the sharpest edges, strongest contrasts, and most vibrant colors in your center of interest. This draws the viewer's eye to the focal point.

Consider Texture Variety

Check for a variety of textures. Use tools like a palette knife or the side of a brush to create stronger textural work, especially in the foreground.

Final Satisfaction Check

Determine if you're happy with the painting. Take it home, view it under indoor lighting, and spend time with it to decide if it meets your expectations.

PRO TIP

Use a mirror or flip the image on your phone to see your drawing with fresh eyes and identify any inaccuracies.

Summary & Key Takeaways

Embark on your painting journey by preparing your canvas meticulously. Sand the surface lightly to improve paint adherence and secure it tightly to a board. Set up your palette with your chosen colors and mediums, ensuring you have walnut oil and Gamsol ready for smooth application and initial sketching. With your large brushes in hand, focus on the big elements of the scene, using techniques to accurately capture angles and shapes.

As you progress, block in the darks with energetic strokes, creating variation and depth by mixing colors directly on the canvas. Paint the hill and background with gestural strokes, maintaining a natural light effect with close values. Transition smoothly into painting the water, using vertical and horizontal strokes to depict reflections and the flat surface. Add foam and reflections with a dry brush for soft edges and realism.

Finish your painting by adding details and highlights, using varied brushwork to enhance realism and character. Incorporate blossoms and final touches to bring your scene to life, and don't forget to sign your work. Reflect on your painting, considering the personal meaning of your subject to ensure a heartfelt and beautiful result.

LESSON POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Lightly sand the canvas to improve paint adherence.
- Use walnut oil to help your paints flow better on the canvas.
- Use different brushes for dark and light colors to minimize cleaning time.
- Use your brush to transfer angles from the scene to your canvas by keeping it perpendicular and rotating your body.
- Mix colors slightly on the canvas to achieve interesting brushwork and suggest detail.
- Keep the values close to achieve a natural light effect across the background.
- Use vertical strokes to depict reflections and horizontal strokes for the flat surface of the water.
- Use varied brushwork to give each clump of foliage a unique character, enhancing the tree's realism.



“Daisy Bay” Acrylic on Board 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.

“Daisy Bay” Oils on canvas 50 x 40 cm by George



“Daisy Bay” Oils on canvas 50 x 40 cm by George

The bay I had intended to use at first because of that beautiful big Pohutukawa tree but I arrived to find it had been blown down in a storm. Perhaps in another few hundred years there will be another to take its place. Or perhaps the beach will have moved up the hill somewhat.

I can't be sure if it's just the photograph or not but the darks in your distant hill appear to be the same dark value as the ones in the foreground, so perhaps a lost opportunity there to create some visual depth by lightening the background hills a little. The darkness does help intensify the light on the beach but it also loses the chance to make that nice sun-glow area. Those dark shadows are a result of the camera and processing that are not present in the scene when viewed with the eye.

You did well in depicting the colour change from the cast shadow across the beach and water, though the reddish colour you've used on the sand shadow could do with being greyed down some more with blue so it doesn't compete with the lights for attention.

Your drawing is very nearly spot on. Good to see. I do feel like you missed out on some slightly more interesting shapes in the foreground grass because of oversimplification. I did the same in mine too. Not sure what's going in the sky there – looks confused to me. If you're confused and uncomfortable with part of your painting, others will be too.

You made the trees really blue which reminds me of one of my earlier paintings of this same scene (see below). Making the tree blue so vibrant in my painting moves the focus off the lights and into the shadows where there's no real interest, just the colour blue, which makes me think – why did I draw attention

to blue when thatâ€™s not really what I loved about the scene?â€™ Maybe that rings some bells with you, maybe not. The point is, I would like to gift to you the intention to make everything in your painting work in concert to promote the original spark that you began the painting with. That might sound a bit lofty, but itâ€™s a worthy goal and one that I constantly stumble towards myself.

“Daisy Bay #1” Oil on canvas by Mark Price



“Daisy Bay #1” Oil on canvas by Mark Price

Hey Mark that’s an interesting textural approach in the land contrasted nicely with the smoothness of the water. You’ve achieved a real colour harmony here too – nicely done! The drawing is all good except the left corner of the beach really looks like a corner rather than a curve. Don’t know if beaches do that, but hey it echoes the triangular forms of your hills – a harmony of shapes. Good work bro – nice job.

“Daisy Bay at Sunset” Oils on canvas 8”–10” by Laurena Beirnes



“Daisy Bay at Sunset” Oils on canvas 8”–10” by Laurena Beirnes

Hi Laurena, your lost edges are really interesting. It drew me to it. Those areas look a little unfinished to me though, but it’s a great setup for a glowing area of colour – just needs a few lighter details in there. The big soft edged dark grey shadow on the beach is telling us it’s overcast lighting in a way, whereas the sharper edged shadow further down the beach speaks of stronger sunlight. Be aware of what the colour and edges of your shadows are saying about the overall lighting condition and keep it consistent throughout a painting for a more convincing lighting effect.

Looking over your works I see a tendency to overwork your paintings, well, at least to my eye, and to my eye that takes away some of the vitality of a painting. Your 10 minute studies have more life to them. I would suggest doing a few landscape studies with a time short time limit. The more time we give ourselves, the more we drag out the process – same goes for any endeavour. Squinting helps me a lot to focus on blocking in the big shapes and colour movements quickly, with the last 10% of the time left for details. Whatever you choose, Enjoy.

“Daisy Bay” Acrylic painting on stretched canvas size 12" x 9" Gina Ionescu



“Daisy Bay” Acrylic painting on stretched canvas size 12" x 9" Gina Ionescu

Some really nice work here Gina. Love your assured brushwork which I know is harder than it looks. Good work on the colour change across the beach in the hills cast shadow. Nice little colours variations throughout the painting to add interest. Your drawing is 99% great, just the bottom of the second distant island should be flatter and the horizon needs to extend behind those hills or else the hills to rise up and cover where the horizon would be. Other than that, fantastic!