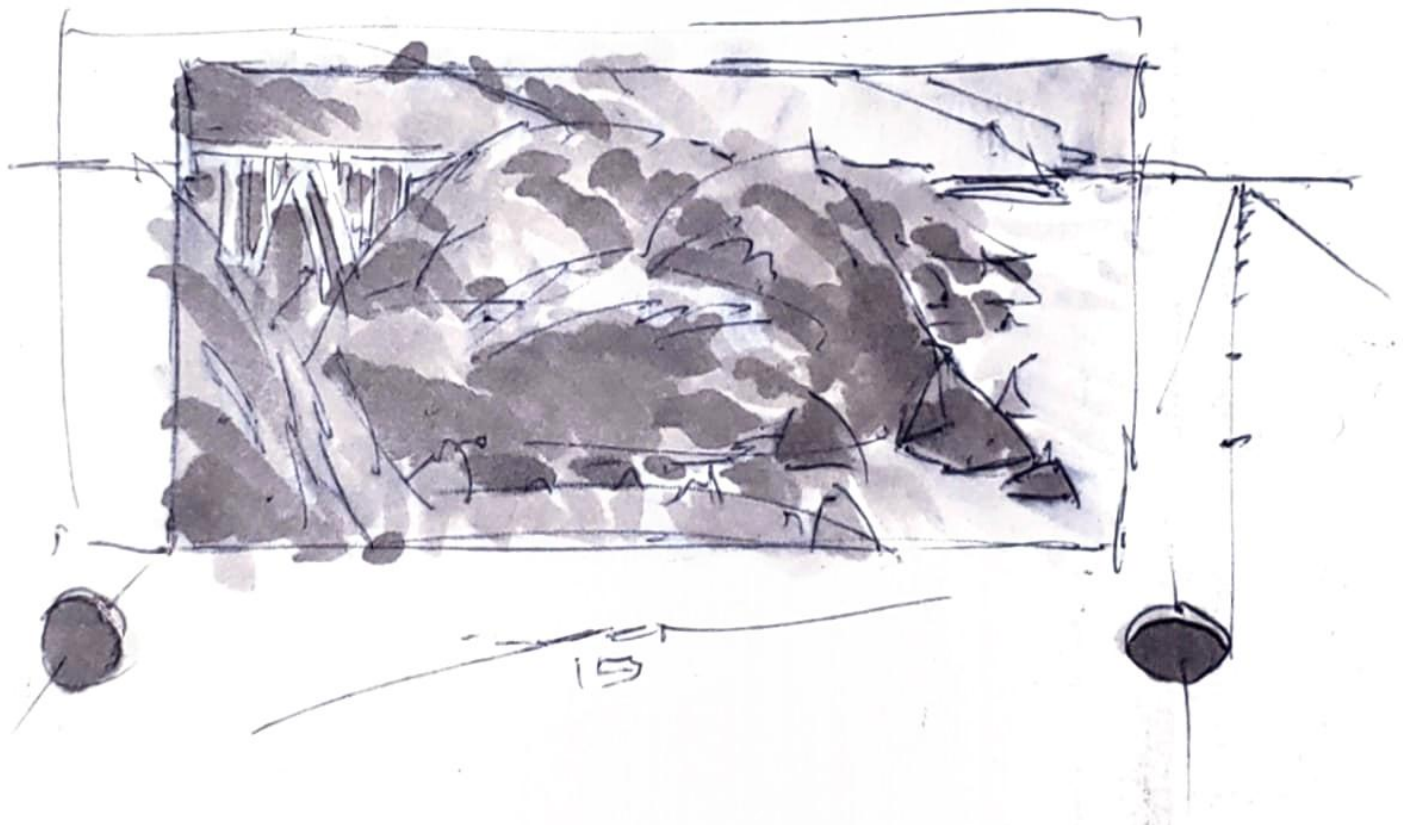




Order of Operations

A step-by-step painting guide by Richard Robinson

Watch the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/187-Order-of-Operations>

MY PAINTING CLUB

Introduction

In this chapter, I invite you to join me along California's breathtaking coastline, where we'll delve into the art of painting with an efficient 'order of operations.' This approach is essential for enhancing your painting skills and maximizing the joy each piece brings. We'll explore the painterly style of master artist Joshua Been, focusing on the key elements of value, shapes, and edges to describe form, light, and viewpoint. To support your creative journey, I recommend using the Day Tripper easel, a product of my own design from Prolific Painter, known for its lightweight and sturdy build. As we work, you'll find tools like the Forever Terp Jar and a selection of rosemary ivory long flat brushes indispensable for achieving the desired effects. We'll begin with a preliminary sketch, a vital step for organizing your thoughts and planning your composition. By drawing a box that matches your canvas's aspect ratio, you'll better focus on the organization and placement of masses in your painting, setting the stage for a rewarding artistic experience.



Value Sketch

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

- by
- ProlificPainter.com
- :
- • Daytripper Easel
- • Turp Jar
- • Nylon Trash Bag
- • Book (Learn to See Learn to Paint)
- Brush Quiver:
 - • Medium size palette knife
 - • Rubber squeegee pointed nib
 - • Mirror/Mahl stick
- Rosemary Brushes:
 - • Ivory Long Flats #s 2,4,6,8 (two of each
 - • A rigger #2
- Paint in order on palette L to R:
 - • Titanium White
 - • Cad Lemon
 - • Cad Orange
 - • Burnt Sienna
 - • Alizarin Crimson
 - • Cerulean Blue Hue
 - • Ultramarine Blue
 - • Dioxazine Purple
- Medium:
 - Walnut oil sparingly
- Mineral Spirits:
 - Gamsol or Sunnyside brand odorless paint thinner

- Canvas:
- Double oil primed linen panels pre-made by Centurion. (Dp deluxe)

1 Boxing the Composition



Create a Preliminary Sketch

Begin by making a preliminary sketch to aid your painting process. This step is crucial for organizing your thoughts and planning your composition.

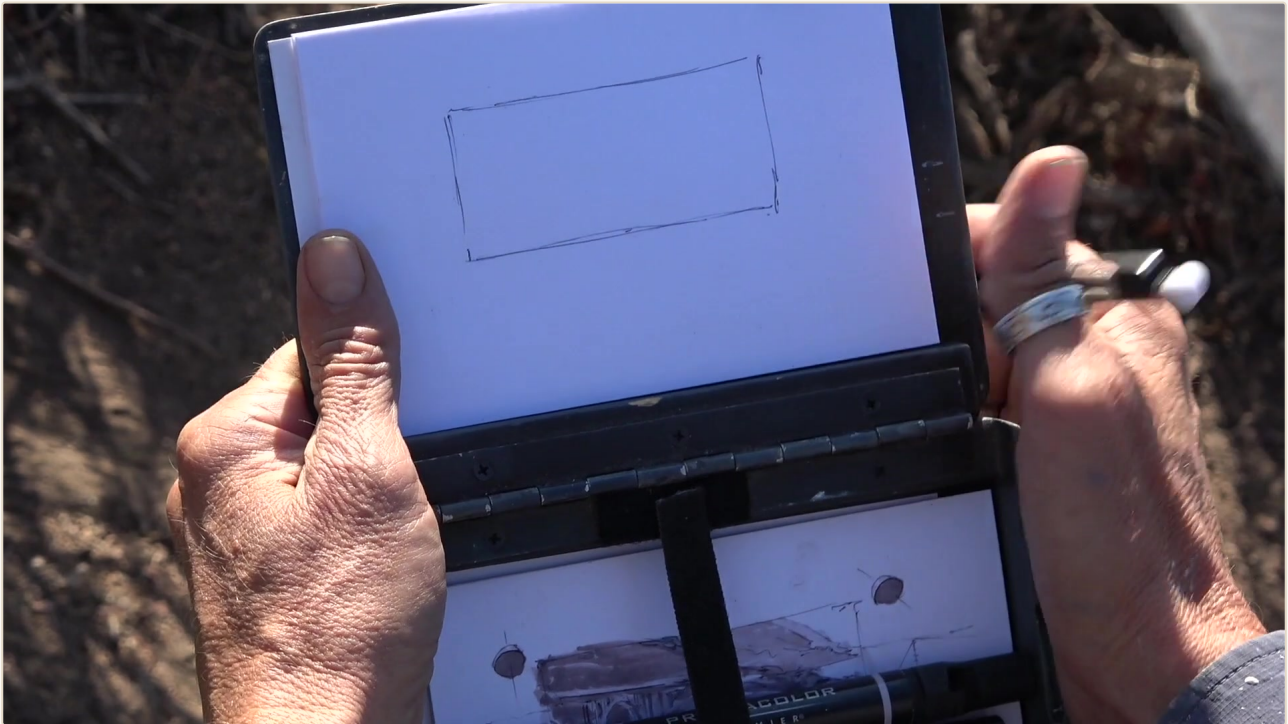
Box the Composition

Draw a box on your paper that matches the aspect ratio of your canvas. Use your forefinger and middle finger to form two L's and determine the vertical or horizontal orientation you need. This box will help you focus on the organization and placement of the masses in your painting.

PRO TIP

Always start with a box to set up your brain for organizing and placing elements in your composition.

2 Assessing Horizon and Light Direction



Determine Horizon Line

Use your finger frame to assess the scene and determine the location of the horizon line. Consider the field of view you want to capture, noting that a higher horizon line will include more of the scene.

Assess Light Direction

Draw a couple of spheres to visualize the light direction in your scene. Observe how the light changes when it is on the left side versus the right side of your scene.

Analyze Light and Shadow

Use the spheres to understand the interaction of light and shadow. This will help you see which planes are lit and which are in shadow, based on your viewpoint and the light source.

PRO TIP

Use spheres to visualize and understand light direction and shadow in your scene.

3 Blocking in Major Shapes



Block in Major Shapes

Start by sketching big, broad shapes to lay in the scene. Focus on major overlapping entities to lock in the entire composition. This helps ensure that all elements, like the bridge on the left, fit within the canvas.

Adjust Shape Sizes

Be mindful of the tendency to paint elements larger than they appear. Compress shapes slightly if necessary to avoid running out of space. A pre-sketch can be very helpful, especially when working with a large field of view.

Refine and Break Down Shapes

From the broad outlines, break down the mass into smaller formations, such as rock formations. Focus on getting the big form relationships correct to ensure proper placement.

Center and Extend if Needed

Place the initial sketch roughly in the center of your page. This allows you to extend the composition outward if needed, ensuring you can incorporate more of the scene without running out of room.

PRO TIP

Use a pre-sketch to manage space and avoid painting elements larger than intended.

4 Using Incremental Value Markers



Organize Your Value Markers

Use incremental value markers organized in 20% increments: 20, 40, 60, 80, and black. The white of the canvas serves as your lightest value. This setup helps simplify your value structure and avoid redundancy.

Identify and Apply Values

Start by identifying the lightest light in your scene, such as a specular highlight. Leave this area as the white of the canvas. Apply the 20% value to areas slightly darker than the highlight, like a lit bridge, ensuring you don't mistakenly leave areas white that shouldn't be.

Adjust Values for Storytelling

Feel free to push and pull your values to enhance the narrative of your painting. You don't have to strictly adhere to the scene's exact values; instead, organize them to tell the best story.

PRO TIP

Use the white of the canvas for the lightest highlights and apply the 20% value to slightly darker areas to maintain clarity in your value structure.

5 Applying 40% Value



Identify Highlight Areas

Leave the specular highlights as the white of the paper. These highlights will serve as the brightest spots in your painting.

Apply 20% Value

Apply a 20% value to areas that need a subtle tone, such as parts of the rocks or the lit side of the bridge. This will create a gentle contrast with the highlights.

Apply 40% Value

Look at the areas that have a 20% value and apply a 40% value everywhere else. This includes the whole foreground and the ice plants. Ensure the backsides of the rocks in the foreground are darker, while leaving the lit sides lighter.

PRO TIP

Use a 40% value to create depth and contrast, leaving highlights and lighter areas with less intensity.

6 Pre-sketches as Sellable Art



Create Pre-Sketches

Use small 4x6 blank cards to create pre-sketches. These sketches can be framed or included with a painting to entice potential buyers. They add provenance to your work and help spread your name.

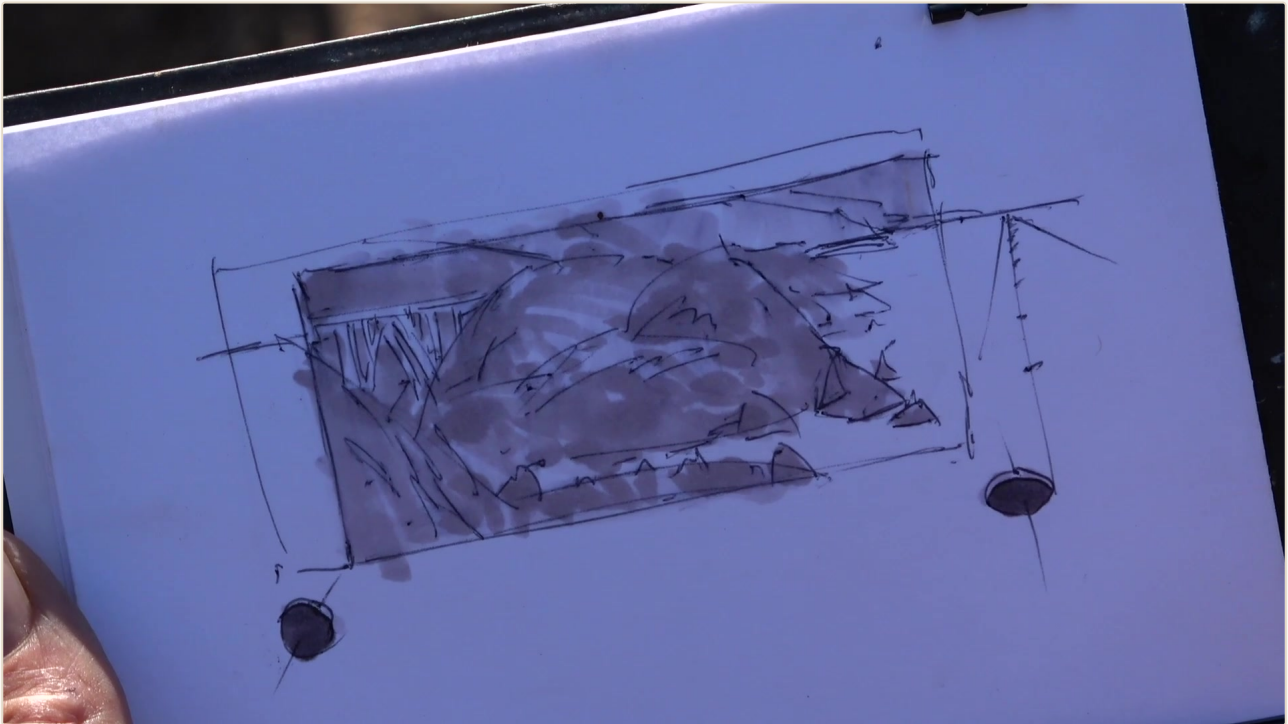
Evaluate and Decide

Assess the quality of your pre-sketches. If they turn out well, consider using them as part of your sales strategy. If not, simply discard them without concern.

PRO TIP

Use pre-sketches to add value and provenance to your paintings, enhancing their appeal to collectors.

7 60% Value and Shadow Patterns



Determine Shadow Value

Use a 60% value for the shadow side of the sphere. Although a white sphere typically has a 40% shadow, using 60% helps to better indicate the light and shadow pattern.

Apply Consistent Light and Shadow Patterns

Ensure that all forms in your painting adopt the same light and shadow shape language as the initial spherical notations. This consistency is crucial for creating a cohesive and realistic depiction.

PRO TIP

Use a 60% value for shadows on a white sphere to enhance the light and shadow pattern.

8 Order of Operations in Painting



Plan Your Painting

Think about the most effective order of operations before starting your painting. This helps avoid time-consuming mistakes and rework.

Identify Key Areas

Look for areas in your painting that require specific attention, like dark spots or highlights. This helps in organizing your approach and maintaining focus.

PRO TIP

Organize your painting process from the start to save time and reduce errors.

9 Building Relationships with Collectors



Create a Personal Touch

Add a personal signature and write a few notes about your painting experience. This personal touch helps build a connection with your collectors and shows them that you value their support.

Prepare Your Artwork

Purchase mats online, which are available for about 30 cents each. These mats often come with bags, making it easy to package your artwork without needing frames.

Send to Collectors

Place your artwork in the mat and bag, then send it to your collectors. This gesture shows them that you appreciate their support and keeps them engaged with your art journey.

PRO TIP

Use affordable mats and bags to present your artwork professionally without the need for frames.

10 Introducing the Palette



Set Up Your Palette

Use a versatile palette based on Kevin McPherson's four-color palette. Include cad yellow lemon, alizarin crimson, ultramarine blue, and white. Extend it with burnt sienna, orange cat orange, cerulean blue hue, and dioxazine purple for added convenience and range.

Understand the Color Choices

Burnt sienna mixes well with blue for balanced darks. Orange cat orange is ideal for capturing the vibrant colors of red rock landscapes. Choose cerulean blue hue for its stronger tint strength compared to pure cerulean blue. Dioxazine purple offers a deep, intense color that can be mistaken for black but provides rich depth.

Mixing and Adjusting

Experiment with mixing these colors to create the desired hues. If a specific color isn't achievable, focus on mixing a harmonious relationship between colors. This palette is adaptable and can handle a wide range of subjects and lighting conditions.

PRO TIP

Choose cerulean blue hue for its stronger tint strength compared to pure cerulean blue.

11 Order of Operations Strategy



Plan Your Order of Operations

Consider the best order of operations for your scene. Start by moving from the back to the front, focusing on getting lighter values in first. This approach helps create natural overlaps during the blocking process.

Block in Initial Layers

Begin by blocking in the initial layers with lighter values. This will establish a solid foundation and create good overlapping edges that can be refined later.

Refine Overlapping Edges

After blocking in, go back to organize or tweak any initial lay-ins. With a well-thought-out order of operations, you avoid unnecessary color corrections and achieve clean, overlapping edges.

PRO TIP

Start with lighter values at the back and move forward to create natural overlaps.

12 Initial Lay-in and Overlaps



Initial Lay-in

Begin by sketching out the major shapes using your initial block-in color. Refer to your pre-sketch for placement, focusing on the overall composition rather than minute details.

Focus on Overlaps

Identify the big overlaps and patterns of light and shadow, as these are the true details that convey the scene's essence. Avoid getting caught up in tiny details like cracks or leaf shapes.

Assess Angles

Use your brush to check the angles of elements in the scene. Hold it horizontally or vertically to ensure accuracy, similar to straightening a crooked picture.

Position Key Elements

Determine the placement of key elements, such as the bridge, in relation to the horizon line. Ensure these elements are correctly positioned to capture the scene's overall feel.

Capture the Essence

Focus on conveying the overall feeling of the scene, such as the coastal drive's magic and exaltation, rather than getting bogged down in structural details.

PRO TIP

Use your brush to check angles by holding it horizontally or vertically, ensuring elements are accurately aligned.

13 Back to Front Painting Approach



Start with the Background

Begin by painting the background first. This approach allows for natural overlaps, making your blocking more effective. Use a high key for the background to capture the light and atmosphere.

Move Forward Gradually

As you progress, gradually introduce warmer and darker colors. This creates depth and helps the painting work as a cohesive whole.

Focus on Blocking

Concentrate on blocking in the entire scene rather than getting caught up in details. This helps you see the overall composition and identify areas needing more accuracy.

PRO TIP

Paint from back to front to create natural overlaps and enhance the effectiveness of your blocking.

14 Painting the Bridge



Lay in the Light Value

Apply a lighter value to the lit side of the bridge first. Overshoot the shape slightly without worrying about precise details like support beams or columns. This will serve as a base for the darker values to come.

Add Darker Values

After the light value is in place, use a darker value to carve into the shape of the bridge. This approach helps define the bridge structure and creates interesting brush marks that are difficult to achieve later.

PRO TIP

Overshoot the shape with lighter values to simplify the process of adding darker details later.

15 Value and Detail in Overlaps



Assess Value in Lit Foliage

Evaluate the value of your lit foliage. Remember that even lit areas can be darker than distant atmospheric elements. This understanding helps avoid the common error of assuming lit values are lighter than they are.

Create Contrast with Shadow

Ensure you have a shadow version of the material somewhere in your painting. This provides the viewer with enough information to recognize the material in both light and shadow.

Maintain Atmospheric Depth

Keep the value of your lit foliage around 60% darkness. Avoid going too dark with the shadow version to maintain an atmospheric feel and prevent the headland from being pulled too far forward.

PRO TIP

Ensure contrasting shadow values accompany your lit areas to help define the material.

16 Painting Form and Light



Focus on Overlaps

Concentrate on the overlaps and patterns of light and shadow in the granite. These elements are crucial for conveying the form and lighting of the scene.

Describe Lighting with Patterns

Use the patterns of light and shadow to describe the lighting. This will help you tell the story of the scene through visual elements.

Utilize Visual Language Elements

Incorporate value, shapes, edges, and texture to paint the form, light, and viewpoint. Texture is largely achieved through your brushwork.

PRO TIP

Focus on the overlaps and patterns of light and shadow to convey form and lighting.

17 Specular Highlight Technique



Apply the Specular Highlight

Use white paint straight from the tube and add a tiny amount of cadmium yellow lemon to create a light, warm specular highlight. Apply this mixture to the area where the sun is blasting the surface to capture the intense light effect.

PRO TIP

Apply the specular highlight early to maintain its clean and bright quality.

18 Order of Operations in Detail



Consider the Order of Operations

Think about the order of operations for each section of your painting. This will help you manage your painting session more effectively and reduce frustration.

Apply Darker Values

Add darker values on top of the initial light areas. This method is easier than trying to paint around light areas with pure white, which can be frustrating and may require corrections.

PRO TIP

Plan your painting process to apply darker values over lighter ones for smoother transitions and less frustration.

19 Using Shapes to Tell a Story



Identify Key Shapes

Observe the scene and identify the key shapes that will help tell your story. Focus on the ice plant and rocks, recognizing them as shapes rather than literal objects. This will allow you to manipulate them to enhance the painting's narrative.

Enhance the Ice Plant

Consider the ice plant as a shape that can describe the form of the headland. Instead of copying it exactly, adjust its shape to emphasize the headland rolling out towards the viewer. This will help convey movement and depth in your composition.

Adjust Rock Shapes

Treat the rocks as shapes that contribute to the overall story. Position them thoughtfully, ensuring they have the right lighting and coastal appearance. Study the scene to capture the essence of the rocks, whether they are granite or sedimentary, to maintain authenticity.

PRO TIP

Use shapes to convey movement and depth, not just as literal representations.

20 Artistic Interpretation vs. Documentation



Embrace Artistic Freedom

Remember, viewers won't compare your painting to the actual scene. Focus on creating a piece that evokes a response rather than replicating reality.

Use the Scene to Your Advantage

Utilize elements from the scene to enhance your painting. Don't feel bound to depict everything exactly as it is; instead, highlight the most compelling aspects.

Idealize and Invent

Feel free to idealize the scene by cleaning it up and adding your personal touch. This approach often results in more engaging and epic paintings.

Be a Storyteller

Filter the scene to present the best and most epic parts to the viewer. Your role is to tell a story through your painting, not to document the scene precisely.

PRO TIP

Highlight the most compelling aspects of the scene to create a more engaging painting.

21 Adjusting Headland Shapes



Adjust Headland Shapes

Examine the headland shapes on your canvas. If any shapes are too pronounced or overshot, use a scraping tool to gently reduce them. This adjustment helps maintain the ambiguous and broken feel of the headlands.

PRO TIP

During the blocking stage, keep shapes flexible and open to adjustments.

22 Carving Bridge Details



Prepare Your Brush

Select a brush with well-maintained bristles, avoiding any with flared or unruly hairs. A number six rosemary brush is ideal for this task.

Mix the Shadow Color

Create a shadowed hillside color that complements the background. This will be used to define the bridge details.

Carve Out the Bridge Details

Carefully apply the shadow color to carve out the shapes of the bridge. Focus on precision to define the bridge's structure without needing to make corrections.

PRO TIP

Apply shadow colors over lighter values for easier adjustments and cleaner lines.

23 Painting Shapes, Not Objects



Focus on Shapes, Not Objects

Paint the shapes that suggest the object to the viewer, rather than the object itself. This approach allows you to convey the essence of the subject without getting bogged down in details.

Use a Larger Brush

Continue using a larger brush, like a number six, to maintain a loose and painterly feel. This encourages a more impressionistic style and gives you leeway with details.

Embrace the Imperfections

Allow the viewer to interpret the painting as loose and expressive. The larger brush naturally limits detail, which can enhance the overall impressionistic quality of the work.

PRO TIP

Paint the essence of the object by focusing on its shapes, not the precise details.

24 Block-in vs. Detail Work



Assess the Block-in

Review your block-in and make necessary adjustments. Use a soft focus to assess color harmony, which can help you see the overall composition without getting distracted by details.

Rely on Preliminary Sketches

Use your preliminary sketches to guide your painting, especially if the light or scene has changed. These sketches provide a stable reference to maintain consistency in your work.

Maintain Value Harmony

Ensure that each distance in your painting maintains its value harmony. Avoid chasing changes in the scene, as this can disrupt the structural value system you've established.

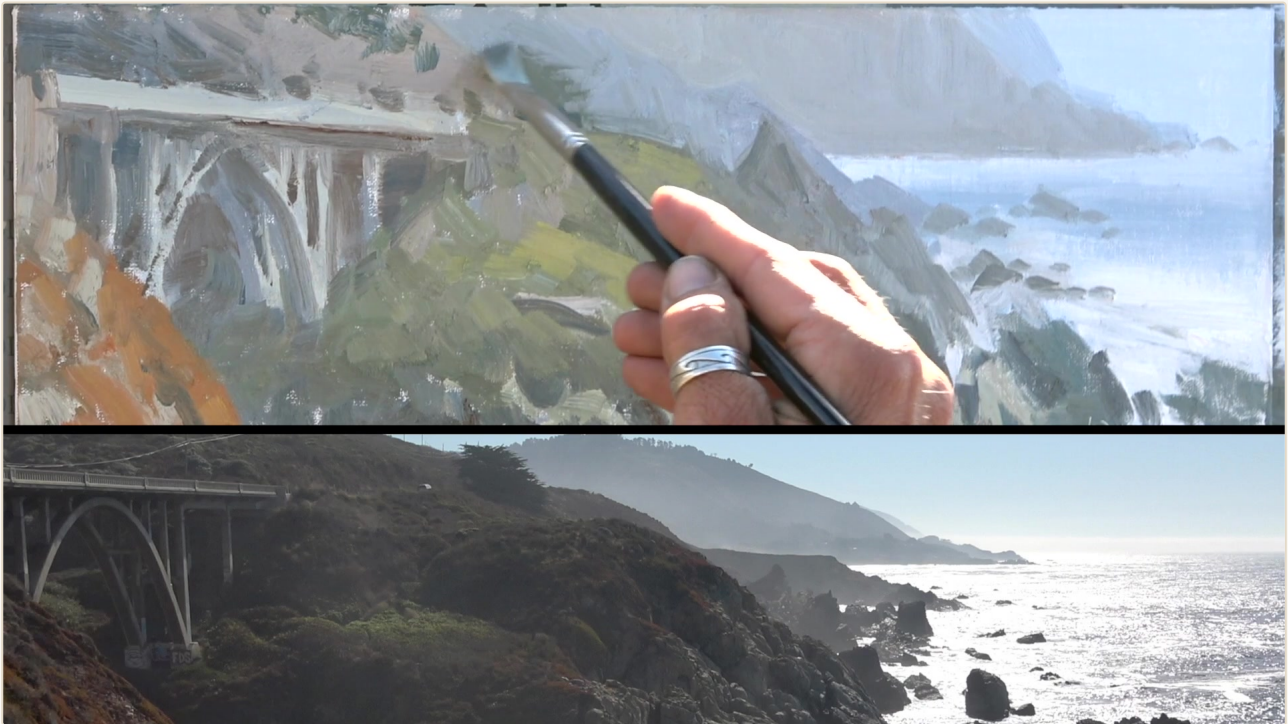
Focus on a Strong Block-in

If you're new to painting, concentrate on creating a strong block-in before adding details. This helps ensure all elements work together harmoniously and prevents value errors when adding foreground elements.

PRO TIP

Avoid chasing changes in the scene to maintain the structural value system of your painting.

25 Following Curiosity in Painting



Embrace the Challenge

Focus on placing the right value in the right spot. This is a fundamental challenge, especially when starting out, and mastering it will greatly improve your painting skills.

Push Your Limits

As your understanding improves, begin to push the envelope by adding new challenges to your painting process. This keeps your work interesting and helps you grow as an artist.

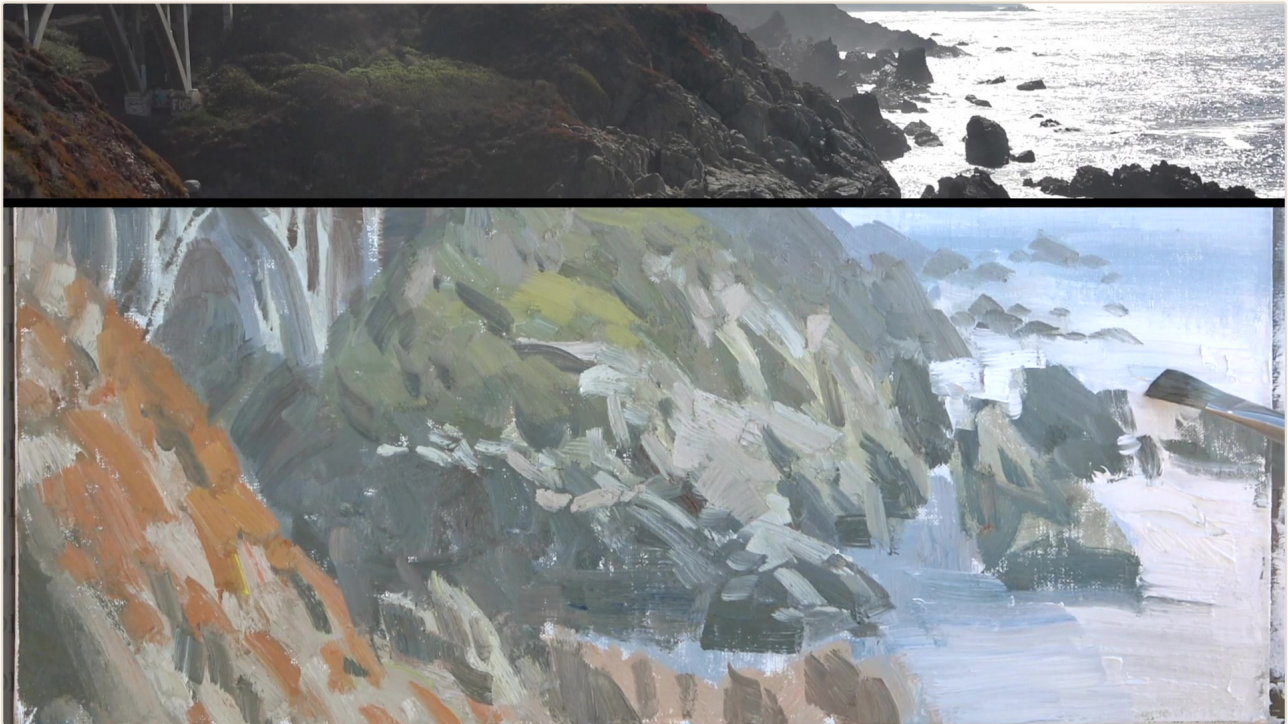
Follow Your Curiosity

Choose subjects that genuinely interest you. This will keep you engaged and bring out your best work, as your curiosity will reflect in your brushwork and overall painting style.

PRO TIP

Always paint subjects that spark your curiosity to maintain interest and vitality in your work.

26 Negative Space and Overlaps



Define Negative Space

Use watercolor to paint the edge where the foreground rock overlaps the water. This creates a positive shape for the rock by defining the negative space of the water.

Carve Back Shapes

Overshoot the shape of the rock initially, then carve it back with the background water shape. This technique enhances the edge quality, helping the viewer understand the material of the overlapping object.

Enhance Material Understanding

Focus on the edge where the lit rock overlaps another rock. This edge provides crucial information about the nature of the material, making the overlap more convincing.

Soften Foliage Edges

Soften the edge slightly where foliage, such as ice plant, overlaps another rock. This subtle adjustment conveys the softer nature of the overlapping material.

PRO TIP

Remember, the detail is in the edges.

27 Detail in Edges and Overlaps



Focus on Overlaps

Concentrate on the overlaps and the light and shadow patterns in your painting. These areas are where the viewer naturally seeks information, even subconsciously.

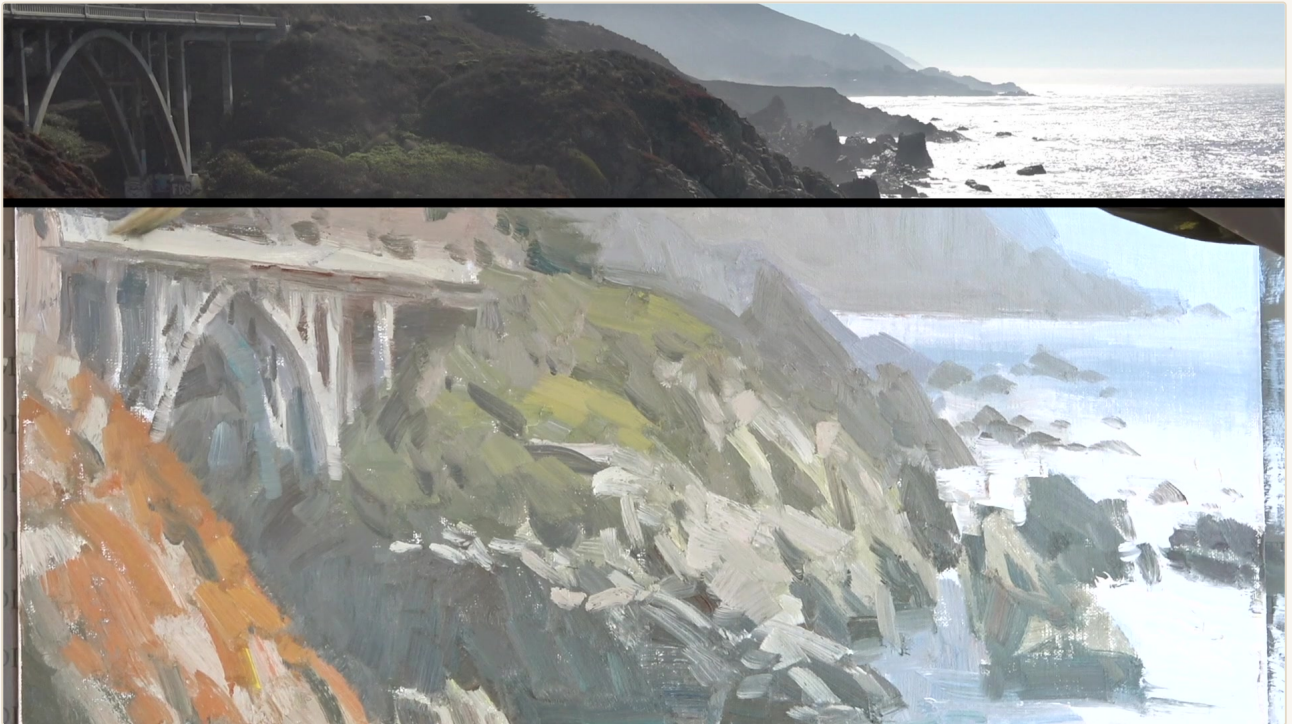
Dial in Important Information

Identify the important details in your painting, such as overlaps and shadow patterns, early in the process. This helps guide the viewer's eye and enhances the overall composition.

PRO TIP

Emphasize overlaps and shadow patterns to guide the viewer's attention.

28 Bridge Pilasters Detail



Darken the Pilasters

Add a slightly darker value to the area where the pilasters are on the side of the bridge. This will help define the structure and create depth.

Indicate Pilaster Connections

Use the darker value to suggest the connection points of the pilasters to the side of the mountain. This adds realism to the bridge structure.

Enhance Middle Section

Apply the darker tone to the middle section of the bridge to emphasize the pilasters and enhance the overall composition.

PRO TIP

Use a slightly darker value to define structural elements like pilasters for added depth.

29 Order of Operations in Water



Focus on Big Lighting and Effects

Concentrate on capturing the big lighting and effects in your painting. This approach allows the viewer to fill in the details, creating a more engaging piece.

Plan the Order of Operations

Decide on the sequence of elements to paint, such as rocks and water. Choose an order that makes the most sense for your composition and workflow.

Add White Water Last

Consider adding the white water on waves as one of the final steps. This can be a fun and impactful addition, but it can be done at any stage that suits your painting process.

PRO TIP

Focus on big lighting and effects to let the viewer's imagination fill in the details.

30 Avoiding Tangents



Establish Gradations First

Create a smooth transition from the dark greenish-blue to the lighter bluish tones. Ensure these gradations are well-defined before adding any white water. This foundation will prevent the need to remove and redo the white water later.

Add White Water

Once the gradations are complete, apply the white water on top. This sequence ensures that the underlying colors enhance the realism of the water's movement.

Avoid Tangents

Be mindful of tangents, where two shapes meet awkwardly. Adjust your composition to prevent these, as they can disrupt the visual flow of the painting.

PRO TIP

Always establish your base gradations before adding details like white water to avoid unnecessary corrections.

31 Framing Considerations



Consider Frame Type

Determine the type of frame you are using for your painting. A floating style frame allows the entire image to be visible, reducing concerns about tangents near the edges.

Paint to the Edges

Ensure your paint reaches all the way to the edges of the canvas. This is especially important for floating frames, as the entire image will be visible.

Avoid Tangents

Be mindful of tangents along the edges of your painting. Avoid placing important shapes, like tips of mountains or trees, within a quarter inch of the edge if using a standard frame.

PRO TIP

Ensure your paint reaches all the way to the edges for a floating style frame.

32 Painting Water and Land Interactions



Paint Headlands and White Water

Use a rosemary number two ivory long flat brush to add small shapes of headlands. These shapes should have an atmospheric haze, so apply darker tones right on top of the existing white. This blending creates a natural atmospheric effect.

Add Light and Shadow

Introduce light and shadow to the headlands by casting shadows from the rocks onto the white water. This technique grounds the headlands and enhances the three-dimensionality of the scene.

Focus on Water and Land Interaction

Pay close attention to the edge where the water meets the land. This line is crucial for creating a sense of depth and three-dimensionality in your painting. Ensure it aligns with the horizon to enhance the overall composition.

PRO TIP

Ensure the line where water meets land is precise to enhance the painting's three-dimensionality.

33 Core Shadows and Specular Highlights



Enhance Core Shadows

Accentuate your core shadows where the light transitions to shadow. Use a slightly darker version of the shadow color at this edge to create the illusion of reflected light. This technique helps describe form and adds a three-dimensional feel to your painting.

Add Specular Highlights

Apply specular highlights on forms like rocks or foliage where light refracts the most. Be subtle to avoid making the surface appear too reflective or wet. Place highlights on the convex parts of the form, such as the top of a rock, for a natural effect.

PRO TIP

Use core shadows and specular highlights sparingly to maintain their impact and avoid overemphasizing reflective surfaces.

Summary & Key Takeaways

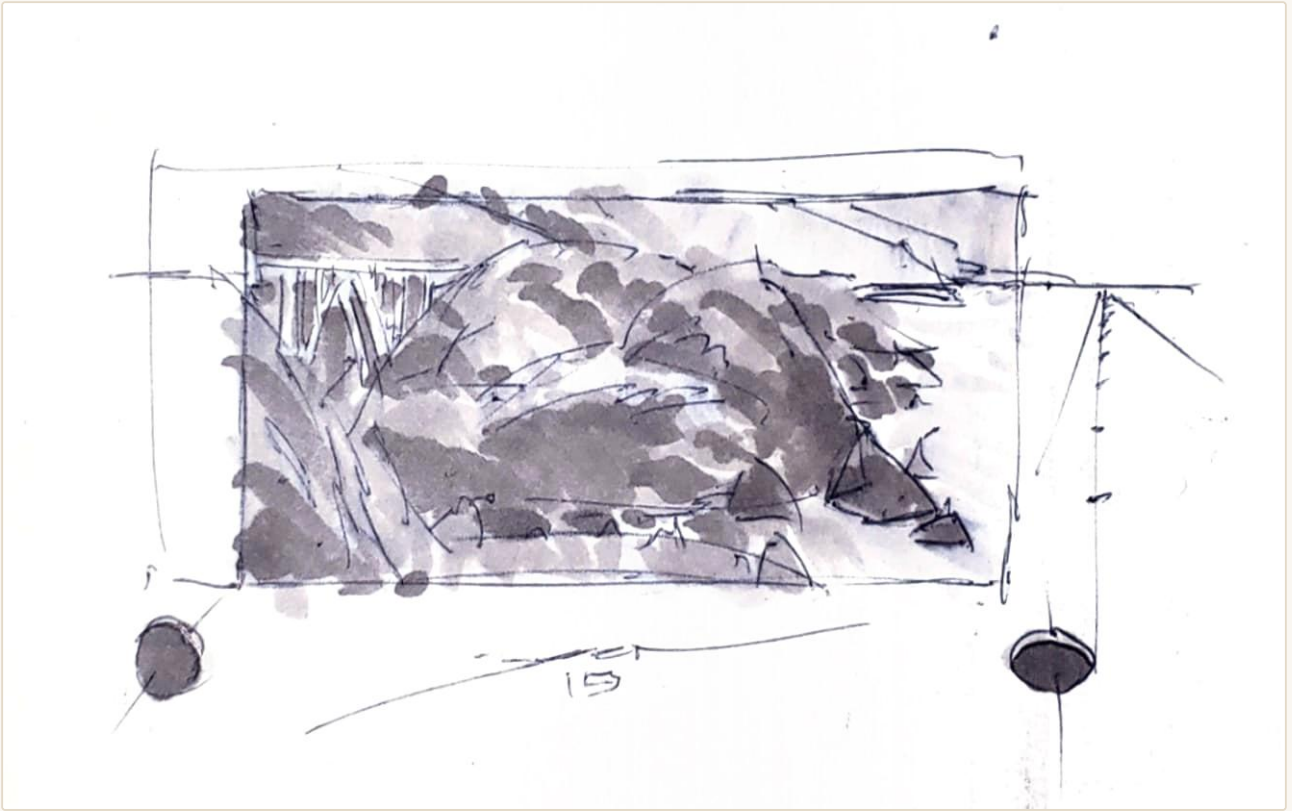
Embark on your painting journey by thoughtfully organizing your composition. Begin with a preliminary sketch and a boxed frame to guide your layout. Assess the horizon and light direction using simple shapes like spheres to understand the interaction of light and shadow. This foundational work sets the stage for a cohesive and well-planned painting.

As you progress, focus on blocking in major shapes and using incremental value markers to establish depth and contrast. Start with lighter values and work your way to darker tones, ensuring that your composition remains balanced and harmonious. Use pre-sketches to refine your ideas and potentially add value to your work as sellable art.

Finally, pay attention to the order of operations. Move from the background to the foreground, applying lighter values first to create natural overlaps. Use your palette wisely, mixing colors to achieve the desired hues and maintaining a harmonious relationship between them. By planning your approach and focusing on the essential elements, you can create a painting that tells a compelling story through its shapes, values, and textures.

LESSON POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Always start with a box to organize your composition.
- Use spheres to visualize light direction and shadow.
- Use a pre-sketch to manage space and avoid oversized elements.
- Apply lighter values first to create depth and contrast.
- Use pre-sketches to add value and provenance to your paintings.
- Paint from back to front to create natural overlaps.
- Overshoot shapes with lighter values to simplify adding darker details.
- Plan your painting process to apply darker values over lighter ones.



Value Sketch

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.

The Keel cliffs at Achill by Mairo Piroue



The Keel cliffs at Achill by Mairo Piroue

This piece has a lot of corrects, but not a lot of BANG. Looks like a great spot to paint, and upon first discovery this, or something like this, would also likely be my first go at it. This critique will be great reasoning for returning to a spot time and time again to see it in all the ways that it shines. So, while this is a fine piece for many reasons, and has many areas of stellar rendering, it has a few things as well that are hindering its performance. The mountains all are of similar height. Even if they look just like this, vary them more. The one most left, take it off the top of the canvas, for instance. That might be enough. Doing this just made the whole cove feel more intimate, deep, yet ponderous. I must say, the wave sparkles, and brings life into this piece, and the whole painting could be zoomed in on just it. That's what I mean by returning to a place and painting the finer points of the area, as opposed to this, what is the entirety of the inlet. Perfectly ok, to do this, but is a overview of the experience, a broad-brush of the subject. There's another painting zooming in on where the water meets the land on the far left. Another where you've chosen to really pop that spire out from the cliffs on the left. All of those are worthy compositions, where sky is not mandatory at all. A great piece overall. Cheers. <3 JB

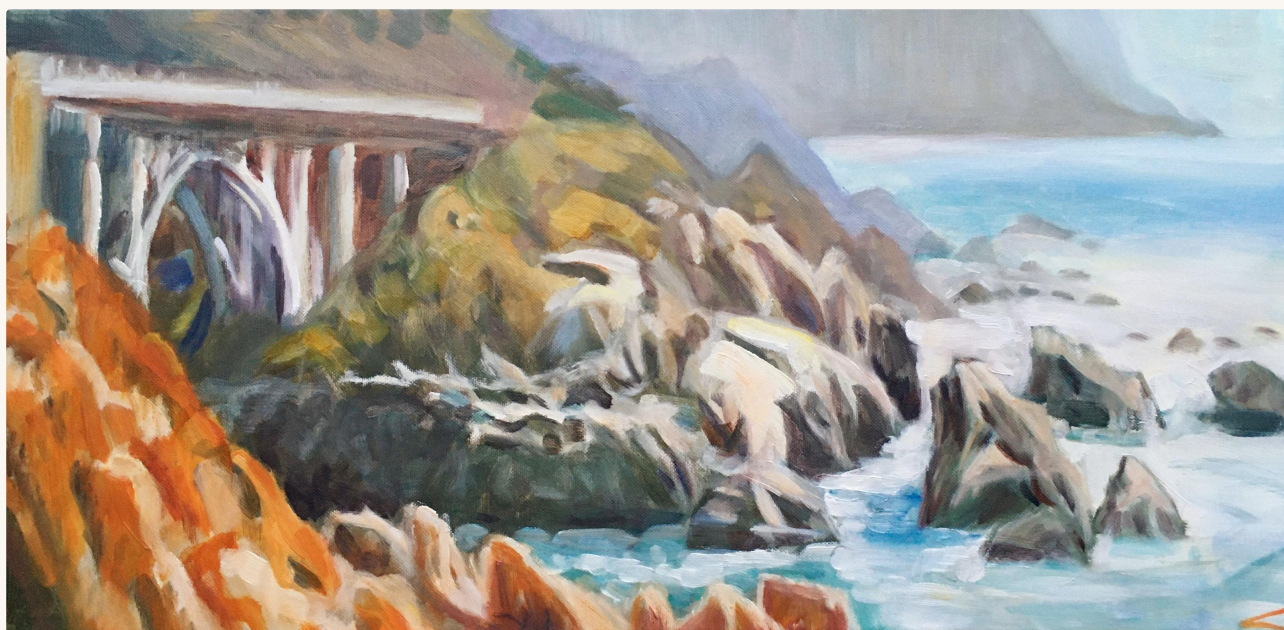
Along Hwy 1 by Nancy Newton



Along Hwy 1 by Nancy Newton

The linear perspective and atmospheric perspective are both showing a high level of understanding. Great job with the foreground having the highest saturation in color, this really is effective in bringing it forward in the painting. The middle ground, the land just across the bridge may be exaggerated slightly in this regard, it could go more saturated and have slightly more contrast in the light and shadow, thus anchoring it more solidly in the middle. The background is wonderful beyond this overlap. In the foreground the shadows in the rocks could be darker, and this would pull it even more strongly forward. These are slight tweaks to your already solid understanding of this concept of atmospheric perspective. The next stage for you to concentrate on is edges. I'm seeing most of your edges as too same or similar across the painting. This is actually a great foundation for exploration while the painting is wet. On your next session, get it to this point, then try out one or two super sharp edges in your area of focus. Then try softening edges where there are similar values overlapping similar values. Just as in all of the other foundational Visual Language Elements, it's not one edge that does anything, but a relationship of all edges painting wide. To have sharp, there must be examples of soft, and vice versa. Cheers!!! <3 JB

Garapatta, oil, canvas, 30 cm x 60 cm by Elena Sokolova



Garapatta, oil, canvas, 30 cm x 60 cm by Elena Sokolova

You've done an amazing job with the colors/values, and the shapes are also quite effective in selling the illusion of space. The thing you should be working on in your work is edges. There needs to be more variety in the relative sharpness or softness in this poetic visual language element. The most effective one in your piece is where the orange iceplant overlaps the dark cliffs below the bridge, but it's sharp where it needs to be softer and soft where it should be the sharpest. Where the lit sides of the rocky spires of the foreground overlap the dark cliffs, the edges need to be sharpest, as this is a very rigid material. Where the iceplant overlaps the darker cliffs, the edge should be firm but softer than the rock overlap edge. Where the shadow of the rocks in the foreground overlap the dark cliffs, is an opportunity to be a lost edge. Deliberately losing the edge all together gives a painting an arty feel which makes people want to give you money. They can't help themselves. It also gives the viewer amazing insights as to the material nature of what is overlapping what, helping the read, and adding to the poetry. Cheers, and very well done!! <3

On the Salmon River, Idaho by Nancy Sands



On the Salmon River, Idaho by Nancy Sands

This is my type of painting. I've had the Salmon River on my bucket list of stuff to float and paint for years. Great sense of space due to effective rendering of the atmospheric and linear perspective. The distant water looks great, where it is smoother and more reflective. It loses its watery effect as it gets closer due to overworking it a bit. With water often less is more. A layered rendering is best, and for this reason requires some forethought. Just as in the video, I set things up, then do the white water, white caps, or surf last. Look for a slight gradation across the surface, a green to deeper green, or blue to deeper blue, keeping the gradation slight, but obvious. Then place white caps etc. on top of these, and be careful to not place them everywhere, but place them in very specific places to help describe the banks, or rocks, or other information. Let none be in there that are unnecessary. This is how to edit with INTENTION. Think this out at length while in the process. Where the water meets the land is one of the most important elements in paintings like this, so this information should be spelled out very well for the viewer, as this is what they look for. This is extremely well done here, so cheers to that!! <3 JB