



Park Lane

A step-by-step painting guide by Richard Robinson

Watch the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/106-Park-Lane>

MY PAINTING CLUB

Introduction

In this chapter, we're diving into the fascinating world of color harmony, a concept often discussed but rarely mastered. Our journey begins with a practical tool: the gamut mask. By visiting my online page, you can access this tool to create unique color schemes for your paintings. The process is straightforward, with instructions readily available, and any uncertainties can be clarified by clicking on the helpful question marks. The beauty of the gamut mask lies in its simplicity; you define a shape, and your palette is limited to the colors within it, naturally fostering harmony. This technique, inspired by the renowned artist James Gurney, allows you to simplify and unify your color scheme, enhancing the coherence and mood of your artwork. We'll also focus on using a two-value statement to distinguish between light and shadow, simplifying complex scenes and establishing a clear visual structure. By the end of this chapter, you'll be equipped with a powerful method to achieve color harmony in all your future paintings, transforming your approach and elevating your art to new heights.

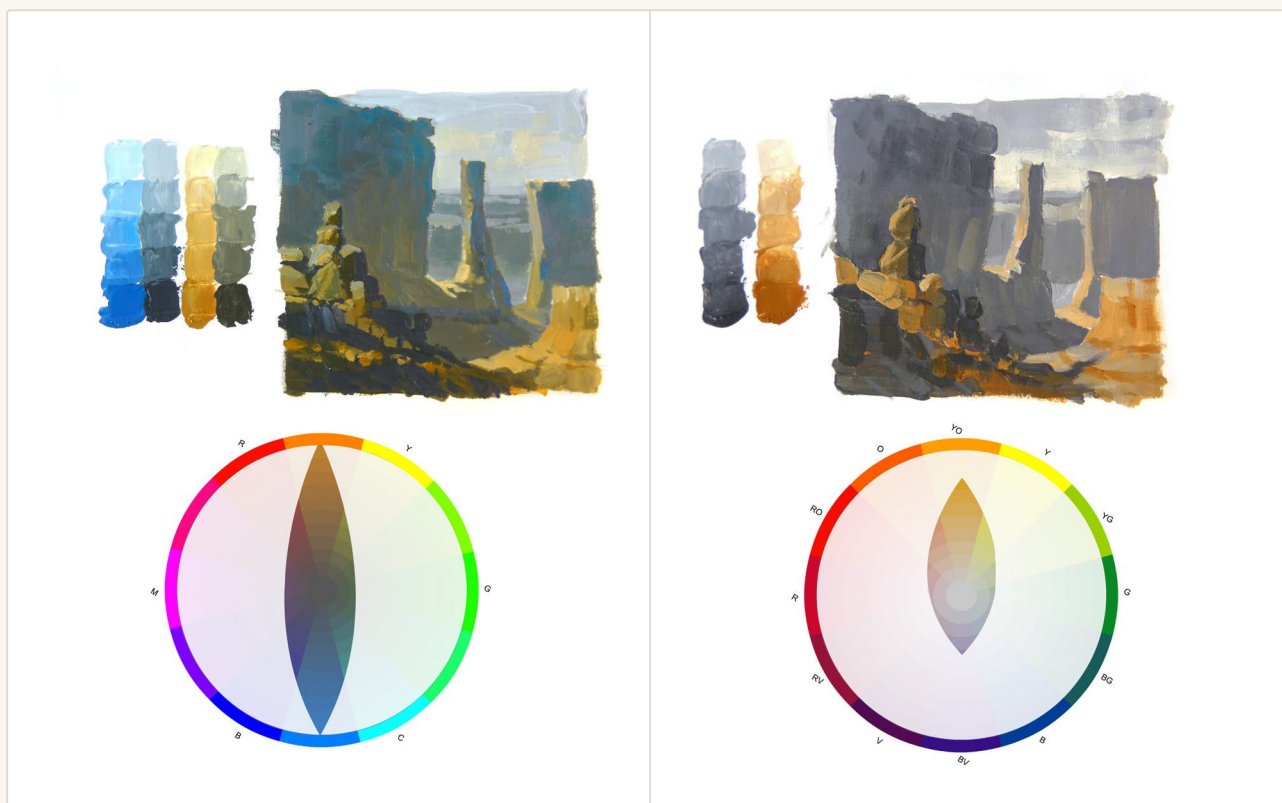


"Park Lane" 10x10" Oil on Canvas by Richard Robinson



REFERENCE PHOTO 1

The scene as Richard found it.



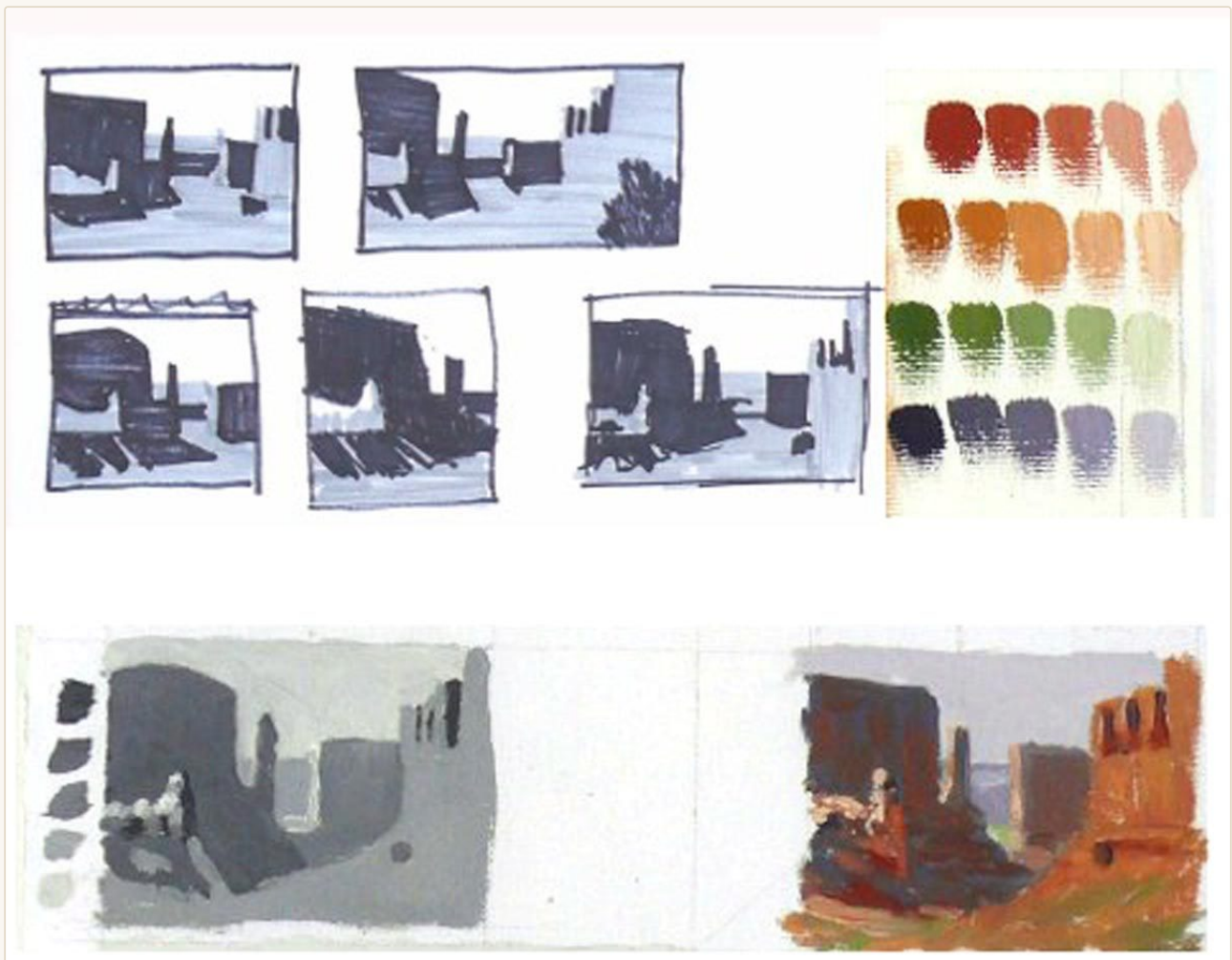
REFERENCE PHOTO 2

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

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
- 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 Landscape and Color Harmony



Simplify the Landscape

Focus on using a two-value statement to distinguish between light and shadow families in your landscape. This approach helps in simplifying complex scenes and creating a clear visual structure.

Introduce Color Harmony

Explore ways to simplify and harmonize the color scheme in your painting. This can enhance the overall coherence and mood of your artwork.

Use a Gamut Mask

Apply a gamut mask to limit your color palette. This technique, inspired by artist James Gurney, helps in achieving color harmony by restricting the range of colors you use, ensuring they work well together.

PRO TIP

Use a gamut mask to limit your color palette and achieve harmony.

2 Choosing a Resource Photo and Gamut Mask



Select a Resource Photo

Choose a photo with large, simple shapes to focus on color harmonies. This will help you explore the process of discovering color relationships and possibilities.

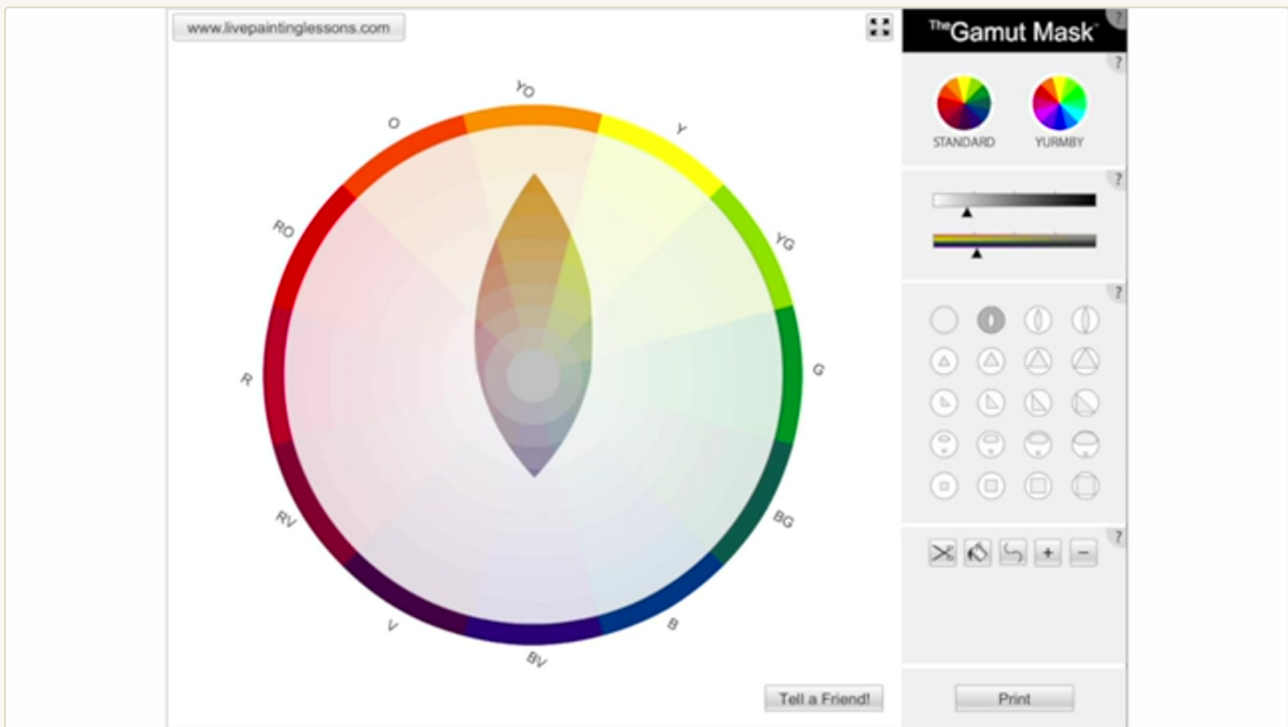
Explore the Gamut Mask

Use the gamut mask to place controls on your color usage. This tool opens up a new world of opportunities by allowing you to explore infinite color possibilities within a controlled palette.

PRO TIP

Choose a photo with large, simple shapes to make it easier to focus on color harmonies.

3 Developing a Visual Concept



Identify Your Visual Concept

Consider what excites your eye and spirit about the scene you wish to paint. Focus on visual ideas like strong lighting, atmospheric perspective, or interesting shapes, rather than specific objects.

Choose and Solidify Your Concept

Select a visual concept that captures what you love about the scene. This concept should motivate your painting and guide your artistic decisions.

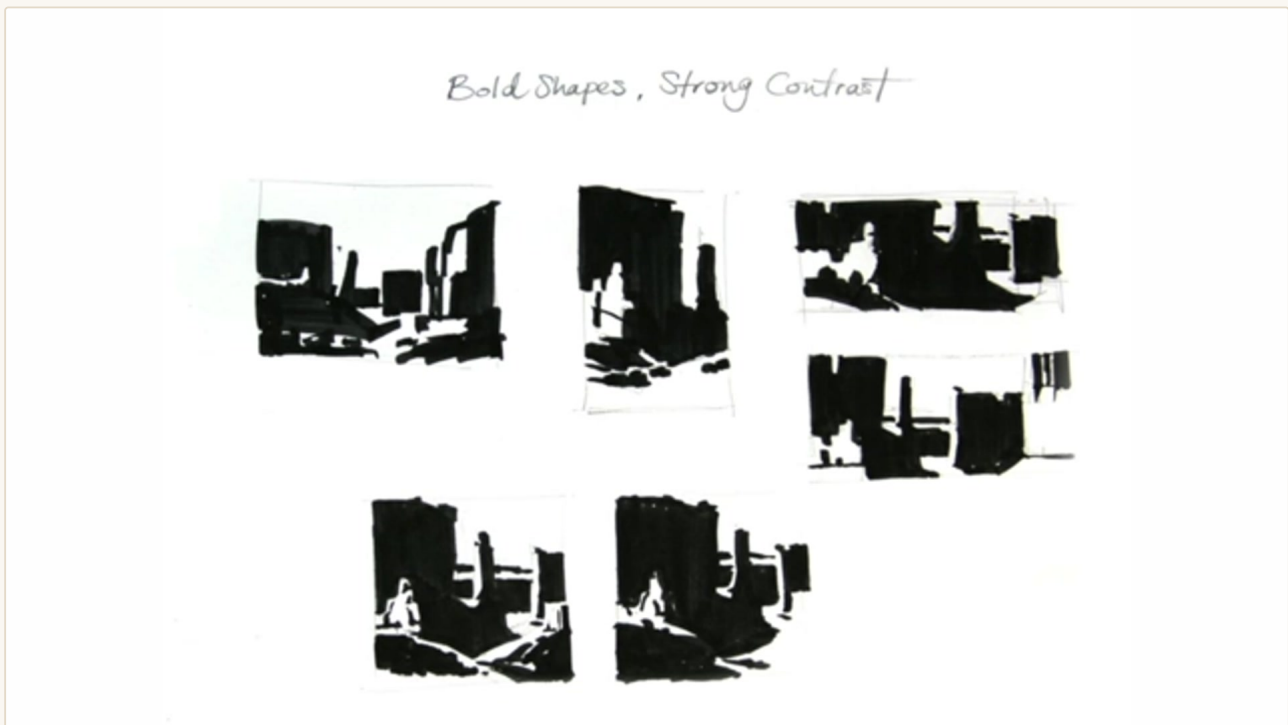
Document Your Concept

Write down your chosen visual concept, such as 'bold shapes' or 'strong contrast'. This will help solidify your idea and ensure it remains the foundation of your painting decisions.

PRO TIP

Choose a visual concept that excites you and write it down to guide your painting decisions.

4 Creating No Tan Sketches



Create No Tan Sketches

Define the dark and light shapes in your composition to create an interesting design. Focus on what you find visually appealing and aim for a well-balanced arrangement of dark and light areas.

Incorporate Variation

Ensure variation in your design by mixing large and small shapes, different lines, angles, spacings, and distances. Avoid regular patterns to keep the composition dynamic.

Link Dark and Light Shapes

Connect your dark shapes to other dark shapes and light shapes to other light shapes. This creates visual unity and helps the eye flow through the design more easily.

Use a Black and White Reference

If working from a photograph, print it in black and white and squint at it. This simplifies the masses and helps identify major shapes and forms. Feel free to adjust elements as needed.

Sketch with a Tombow Brush Pen

Use a black Tombow brush pen to create small sketches, no larger than a couple of inches across. Keep the sketches simple to focus on the overall design.

PRO TIP

Link dark shapes to dark shapes and light shapes to light shapes for visual unity.

5 Limited Value Study



Choose a Notan Design

Select your favorite Notan design to develop into a limited value study. This will help you explore the subject and plan how to use limited values to create depth.

Select Values

Use three to five values for your study. More than five is unnecessary for a limited value study.

Keep It Small

Limit the size of your study to a maximum width of two to five inches. This will help you focus on simplifying the scene.

Prepare Your Palette

Lay out your chosen values on the palette as distinct blobs. Avoid mixing them together to maintain simplicity in your study.

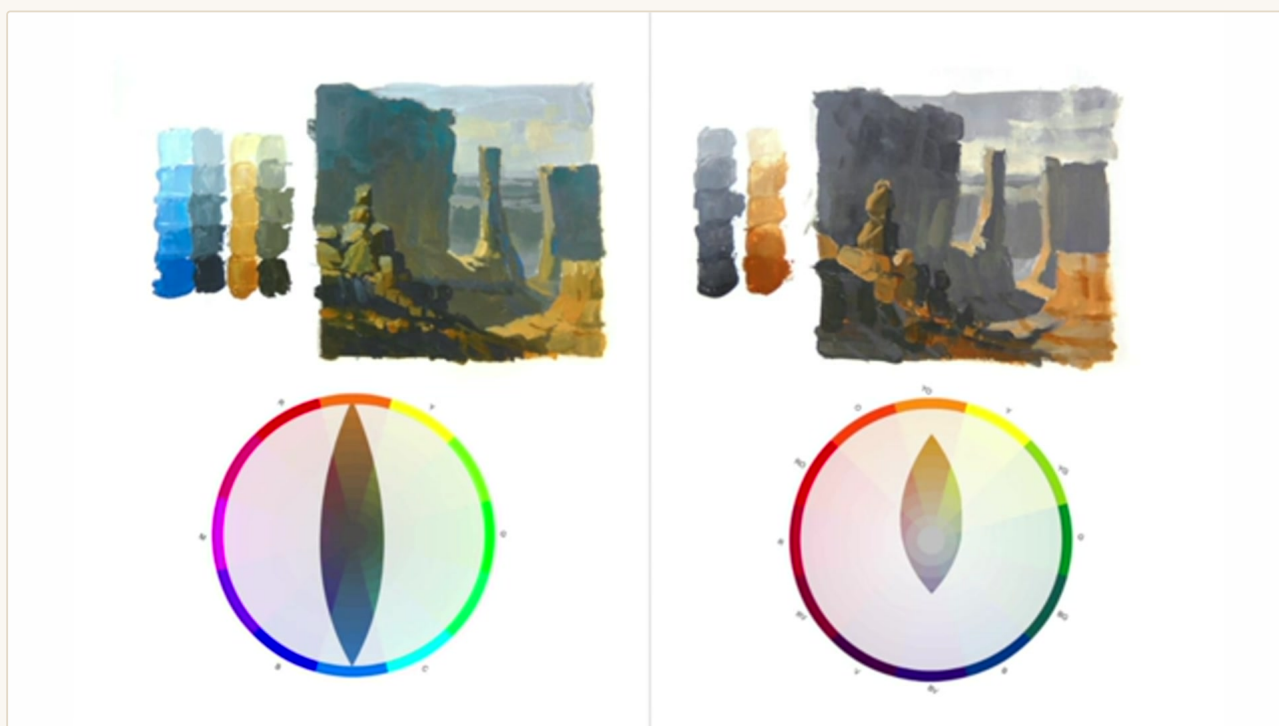
Avoid Extremes

Consider not using black or white as one of your values. These extremes are rarely found in nature, and avoiding them can lead to a more natural study.

PRO TIP

Keep your values separate on the palette to maintain simplicity in your study.

6 Mixing Colors Using Gamut Mask



Choose Dominant and Secondary Colors

Select the dominant color, which is orange in this case, and then choose one or two secondary colors. This will help guide your color mixing process.

Identify Vibrant Colors in the Gamut Mask

Examine your gamut mask to find the most vibrant colors. Here, the most vibrant color appears to be a dull yellow-orange, similar to yellow ochre.

Mix Yellow Ochre Values

Mix white into yellow ochre to create five different values of this color. These values should correspond to the five-value limited study.

Create Blue Violet

Mix ultramarine blue with magenta to create a blue violet. This is the next major color in the gamut, opposite the orange.

Grey Down Blue Violet

Use cadmium orange to grey down the blue violet, as it is the complement of blue violet. Then add white to raise the value.

PRO TIP

Always test a small amount of your color mix first to see how it will work out.

7 Conducting Color Studies



Mix Initial Colors

Observe how the dark mixture appears green but turns slightly mauve-grey with added white. Your mixtures may differ, but focus on the process of achieving this effect.

Create Five Values

Add white to your mixture to create a range of five values. This will form the basis of your complementary color scheme.

Conduct a Small Color Study

Use only the colors mixed on your palette for a small study, no larger than 2 to 5 inches. This helps you see how the colors interact without wasting time.

Experiment with Different Color Schemes

Create a new color scheme using a gamut mask, mix more colors, and conduct another small study. Repeat this process to explore various interactions.

PRO TIP

Keep your color studies small to efficiently explore color interactions without wasting time.

8 Exploring Gamut Mask Variations



Use the Yurmbi Colour Wheel

Experiment with the Yurmbi colour wheel to explore different colour combinations. This wheel offers unique variations that can enhance your painting.

Mix Grey Versions

Create grey versions of each colour string when using complementary colours like yellow and blue. This prevents unwanted colour mixing, such as green, by acting as a buffer.

Explore Gamut Mask Variations

Experiment with different gamut mask variations to discover interesting effects. The extent of exploration is up to you, so enjoy the creative process.

PRO TIP

Use grey versions of colours as a buffer to prevent unwanted mixing.

9 Preparing for the Final Painting



Choose Your Favorite Color Study

Select your favorite color study as the basis for your larger painting. This will guide your color choices and composition.

Expand Your Gamut

Consider using more interesting colors from your gamut. Look for subtle colors like red-orange and yellow-green that can add depth to your painting.

Mix Red-Orange Grey

Add cadmium orange and a little scarlet red to your palette to create a red-orange grey. Mix these colors thoroughly, then add white to create five values.

Mix Yellow-Green Grey

For a yellow-green grey, mix a yellow-green with your starting colors. Adjust the mixture by adding white to achieve five distinct values.

Prepare Your Painting Palette

Transfer all mixed colors to your painting palette. Remove any tube colors or other paints that might distract you from your chosen palette.

Use Walnut Oil

Have some walnut oil ready in your tray to use as a medium. This will help with blending and maintaining the consistency of your paints.

PRO TIP

Remove all tube colors from your palette to focus on your selected color range.

10 Setting Up and Starting the Painting



Prepare Your Canvas

Tone your canvas with a warm acrylic grey. This helps with color harmony throughout your painting.

Organize Your Workspace

Ensure all your materials are set up and easily accessible. Having everything in front of you will make the painting process smoother.

Apply Walnut Oil

Put a little walnut oil on your sketch. This will help the paint go on thinly and flow nicely as you start.

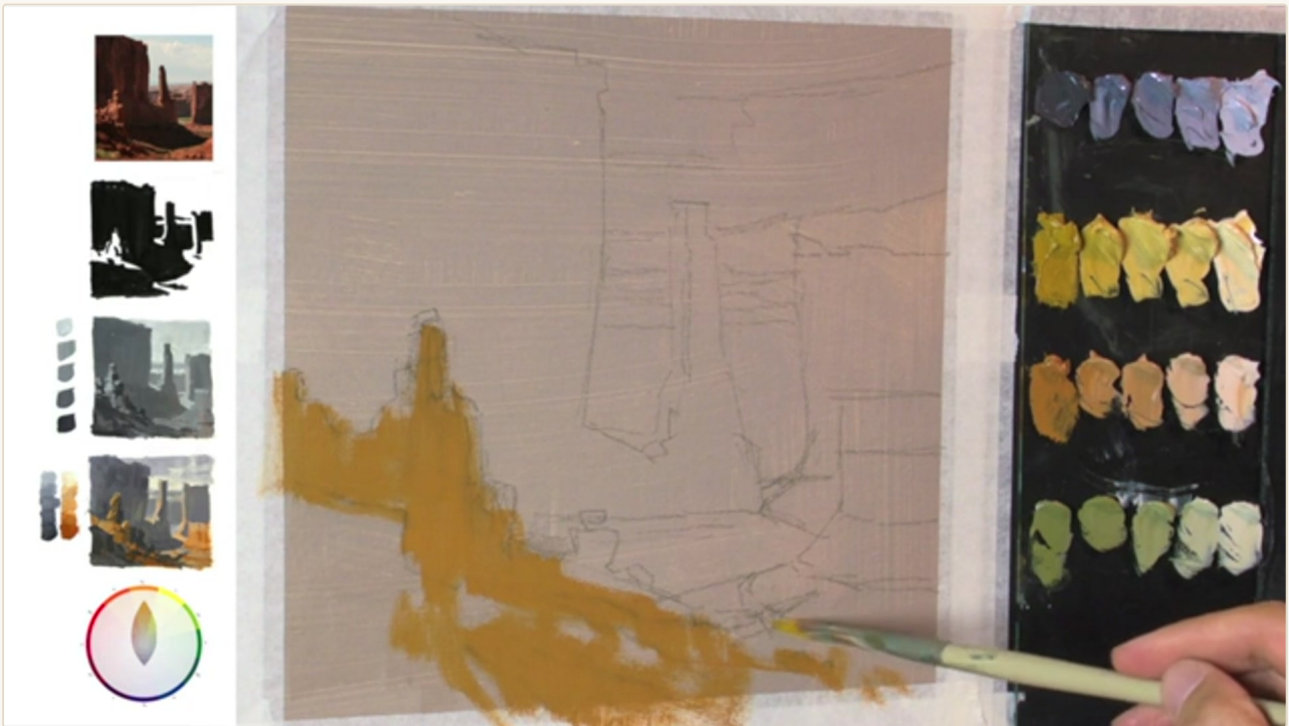
Sketch Your Drawing

Use a pencil to sketch your drawing on the canvas. This preparation gives you a clearer sense of your painting and helps simplify the process.

PRO TIP

Tone your canvas with a warm acrylic grey to enhance color harmony.

11 Applying Paint and Mixing Colors



Organize Your Colors

Take the time to organize your colors and complete any preliminary studies. This preparation may take longer initially, but it will lead to a more satisfying painting by resolving potential issues early on.

Avoid Over-Referencing the Photograph

Resist the temptation to constantly refer to the photograph. Instead, rely on the preparatory work you've already completed to guide your painting process.

Correct Mistakes with Value

If you apply the wrong value, don't hesitate to wipe it off and correct it. Use the value on your brush to adjust other areas if needed, then reapply the correct value to the initial area.

Apply Colors with Intention

Apply colors methodically, working from dark to light and thin to thick. Start with the thinnest dark layers and gradually use thicker paint as you move to lighter values, reducing the amount of painting medium and using larger amounts of paint.

Mix Ample Paint

Always mix more paint than you anticipate needing. It's easy to underestimate the amount required, especially with colors like greys, which may need remixing if you run out.

PRO TIP

Mix more paint than you think you'll need to avoid running out mid-painting.

12 Center of Interest and Edge Control



Enhance the Center of Interest

Focus on the long chimney of rock as the center of interest. Keep the edges sharp and make the top darker and more saturated to stand out against the lighter background.

Exaggerate Lightness

Increase the lightness on the tops of the rocks to draw the eye. This contrast helps emphasize the center of interest.

Shape the Clouds

Create square and blocky clouds to match the overall style of the painting. This consistency enhances the composition.

Control Edges

Use soft and sharp edges to guide the viewer's eye. Place the sharpest edge directly above the center of interest to subtly lead attention.

PRO TIP

Darken the top of the chimney to make it stand out against a lighter background.

13 Reflected Light and Color Adjustments



Mix Reflected Light Color

Mix a color for the reflected light in the shadow of the big cliff. Ensure it is lighter than the existing grey to capture the correct light effect. Adjust the mix if it appears too dark.

Add Reflected Light Details

Refer to a photo of the scene to identify details and major areas of reflected light. Apply reflected light to the big cliff and also to a smaller cliff, keeping in mind that the smaller cliff should be lighter as it is further away.

Adjust Cliff Contrast

Darken the top of the big cliff to make it stand out more. Lighten the area behind it to enhance the contrast and separation between elements.

Tone Down Vibrant Colors

If the color of a cliff appears too yellow and vibrant, tone it down by making it more orange, red, and slightly grey. This will prevent it from drawing too much attention.

Re-establish Darks

Re-establish some of the dark areas to maintain depth and balance in the composition. Grey down any colors that are overly bright and distracting.

PRO TIP

Ensure reflected light colors are lighter than the surrounding shadows to accurately depict light effects.

14 Adding Highlights and Restraint



Add Highlights to Rocks

Apply highlights to the rocks to enhance their form. Be cautious not to overdo it, as too many highlights can overwhelm the painting.

PRO TIP

Remember that taste equals restraint when applying highlights.

15 Adding Details and Texture



Add Grey-Green Details

Introduce a touch of grey-green into your painting. Apply it in select areas, focusing on the foreground to enhance depth and interest.

Include a Cactus

Use a small brush to add a cactus to your scene. This detail will reinforce the desert theme and add character to your painting.

PRO TIP

Use a small brush for adding fine details like a cactus to ensure precision and clarity.

16 Final Touches and Signing



Add Reflected Light

Add a little bit of reflected light to sharpen up a few edges. This will enhance the details and bring more life to the painting.

Enhance Foreground Texture

Use the flat of a palette knife to add texture to the foreground. This technique will create depth and interest in the scene.

Darken and Sharpen Edges

Darken the top of the rock and sharpen its edge. This will help define the rock and make it stand out more prominently.

Sign Your Painting

Sign your painting to complete it. This personal touch marks the artwork as your own.

Remove Tape

Carefully pull off the tape from the edges of your painting. This reveals clean borders and gives a finished look.

Final Adjustments

Make any final adjustments to enhance the painting's composition. Adding small details can guide the viewer's eye and add interest.

PRO TIP

Use the flat of a palette knife to add texture to the foreground for depth and interest.

Summary & Key Takeaways

Embark on your painting journey by simplifying the landscape and achieving color harmony. Begin with a two-value statement to distinguish light and shadow families, and use a gamut mask to limit your color palette, ensuring a cohesive and harmonious color scheme. Choose a resource photo with large, simple shapes to focus on color relationships, and develop a visual concept that excites you, guiding your artistic decisions.

As you progress, create Notan sketches to define dark and light shapes, ensuring a dynamic and balanced composition. Conduct limited value studies to explore depth with three to five values, and experiment with gamut mask variations to discover unique color interactions. Prepare for your final painting by selecting your favorite color study and setting up your materials, including toning your canvas with a warm acrylic grey for enhanced color harmony.

During the painting process, apply colors methodically from dark to light, focusing on the center of interest and edge control to guide the viewer's eye. Add highlights and details with restraint to maintain balance, and use texture to enhance depth. Complete your painting with final touches, signing your work to mark it as your own. Remember, each step is an opportunity to explore and express your creativity.

LESSON POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Use a gamut mask to limit your color palette and achieve harmony.
- Choose a photo with large, simple shapes to focus on color harmonies.
- Link dark shapes to dark shapes and light shapes to light shapes for visual unity.
- Keep your values separate on the palette to maintain simplicity in your study.
- Mix more paint than you think you'll need to avoid running out mid-painting.
- Darken the top of the chimney to make it stand out against a lighter background.
- Ensure reflected light colors are lighter than the surrounding shadows to accurately depict light effects.
- Remember that taste equals restraint when applying highlights.



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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.

Dania Bree



Dania Bree

In terms of a personal favorite this would have to be mine - beautiful subtly grayed colours with plenty of variation in warms and cools. Note how the green is threaded throughout the painting. Great work!