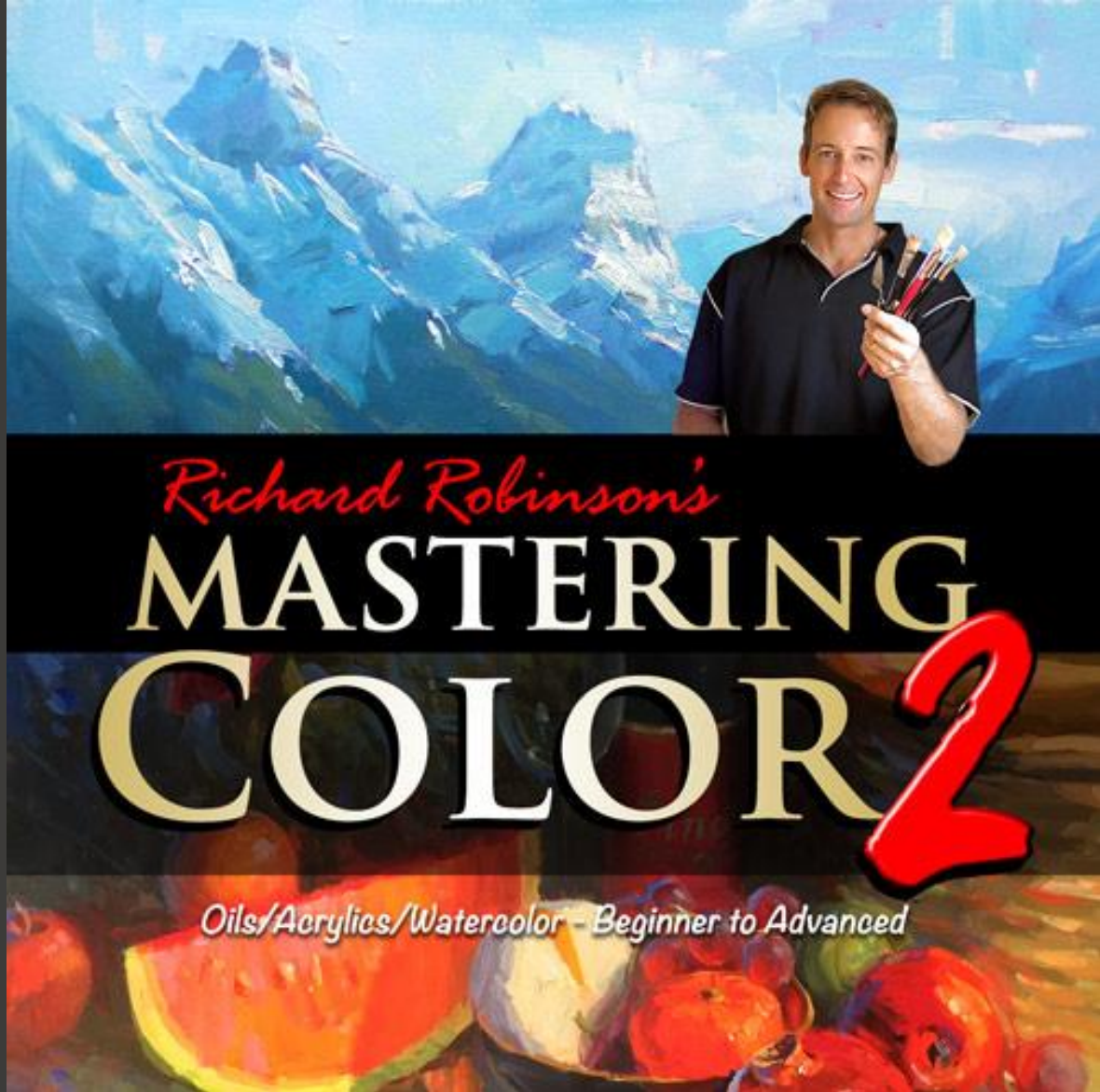




Mastering Color 2

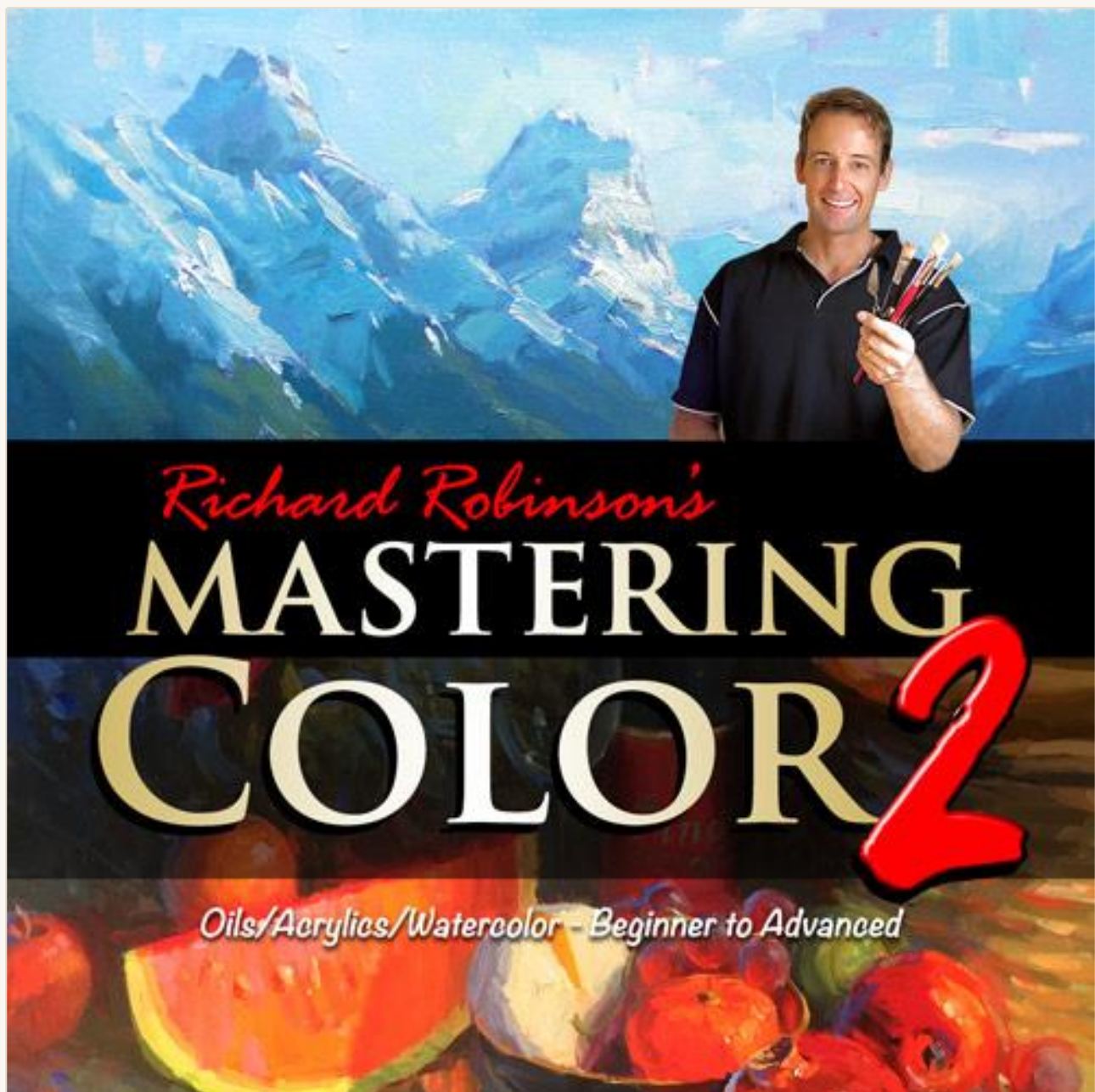
A step-by-step painting guide by Richard Robinson

Watch the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/202-Mastering-Color-2>

MY PAINTING CLUB

Introduction

In this chapter, I invite you to explore the fascinating world of color as light. Imagine each colored object in your painting as its own light source—a red object as a red light, a yellow one as a yellow light, and so forth. This approach transforms the way you perceive and depict light interacting with objects. By visualizing each object as if it were radiating its own glow, you can create a vibrant area around it where its color infuses the surrounding space. This technique will enrich your understanding of how light influences nearby areas, allowing you to capture the essence of any subject with simple light and shadow shapes. As we delve deeper into mastering color, you'll find this perspective not only enhances your paintings but also brings a new level of depth and vibrancy to your work. Let's embark on this colorful journey together and unlock the secrets to making your paintings truly glow.



"Mastering Color 2" by Richard Robinson.

Materials

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

2 COLOR SIMPLICITY

- Click to Download Course Notes (29mb PDF)
- 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.
- 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

DIGITAL DABBLING

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COLOR MOODS

- Click to Download Course Notes (29mb PDF)
- The Gamut Mask Tool:
- <https://mypaintingclub.com/blog/post/39-The-Gamut-Mask-Tool>
- M. Graham & Co. Oil Paints
- Alizarine Crimson

- Phthalo Blue
- Ultramarine Blue
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GLOWING COLOR

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AVOIDING MUDDY COLOR

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1 Concept of Objects as Light Sources



Visualize Objects as Light Sources

Think of each colored object in your painting as a light source. For example, a red object acts as a red light, a yellow object as a yellow light, and so on. This perspective helps you understand how light interacts with objects.

Consider Light Characteristics

Imagine how each object would look if it were an actual light source. Visualize a glowing area around the object where its color infuses the surrounding space. This will help you depict the light's influence on nearby areas.

PRO TIP

Treat each colored object as a light source to better capture its interaction with light and surroundings.

2 Examples of Glowing Color in Still Life



Observe the Glowing Effect

Notice how the mandarin transforms into a powerful glowing light source. Observe the orange reflection in surrounding objects, including the grapes and the inside of the bowl. The orangey-red glow extends into the atmosphere, creating a vibrant effect.

Extend Color Beyond Objects

Recognize how the color extends beyond the limits of the object into the surrounding atmosphere. This effect is similar with the watermelon, where the orangey-red infuses the surrounding area, enhancing the glow.

Create a Neon Strip Effect

Identify the light yellow-green strip that lightens the surrounding area, making the orange lighter and the background a lighter green. This creates a neon strip effect, enhancing the overall vibrancy.

Reflect Light on Surfaces

Observe how light bounces off the cloth onto the underside of objects, reflecting colors like green, which transitions to blue further away. More reflective surfaces will directly mirror the object's color.

Enhance Mid Values for Glow

Intentionally lighten and saturate the mid values more than usual to enhance the glowing effect. This technique makes it appear as though light is emanating from the object, even in areas that could be darker.

PRO TIP

Lighten and saturate mid values to enhance the appearance of a glowing light source.

3 Glowing Color in Figure Studies



Create a Painterly Glow

Focus on infusing your piece with a dominant color, like green, to create a painterly glow. Allow this color to emanate into the background, creating a soft, romantic effect.

Incorporate Sky Holes

Surround sky holes with a blue haze and soft edges. This technique enhances the glowing effect and adds a sacred, ethereal quality to the painting.

Work with Light and Dark

Use lighter and thicker paint in the lightest areas to enhance the glow. Allow the color to drift into the background, creating interesting color vibrations and reflections.

Highlight Transitions

Focus on the transition between strong light and dark areas. This glowing area is a point of interest where the light color seems to eat away at the dark, creating a striking contrast.

PRO TIP

Surround sky holes with a blue haze and soft edges to enhance the glowing effect.

4 Demonstration: Glowing Effect in Still Life



Prepare Your Canvas

Choose a simple object like an apple for your still life, with a plain background. Use two big brushes and a palette knife, or any painting tools you prefer.

Establish the Apple

Decide where your apple will be on the canvas. Brush green paint into the background, using thinners like Gamsol if desired, to begin forming the apple's shape.

Add Darks and Lights

Introduce dark tones around the apple's location to define its form. Add lighter tones without focusing too much on detail to start creating the glowing effect.

Create the Background

Mix a grey background color. The darker the background, the stronger the glow effect will be. Work the edges of the apple into the background using various brush techniques.

Enhance the Glow

Use your first brush to lightly dust across the surface, adjusting pressure for distinct or soft edges. Stand back to assess the painterly effect from a distance.

Add Edge Variety

Vary the edges around the apple for a more interesting look. Use your palette knife and different brush techniques to create a range of sharp and soft edges.

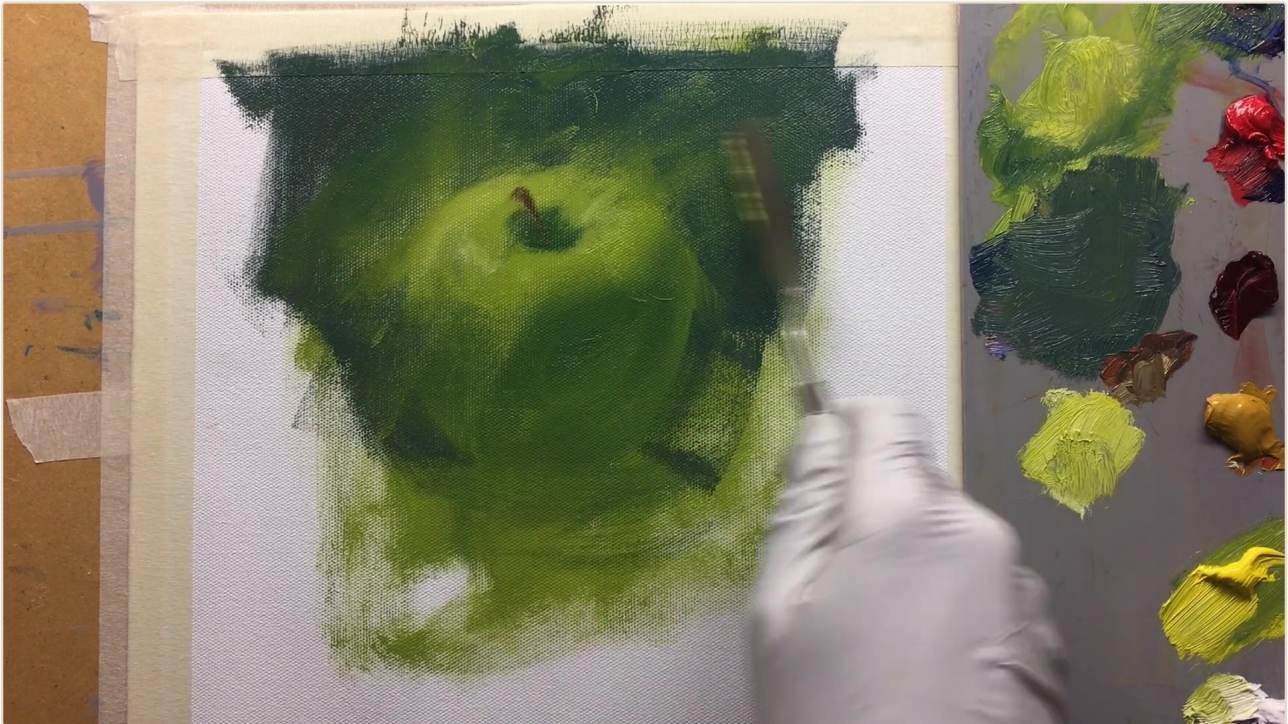
Finalize with Highlights

Once satisfied with the glow and edges, add highlights and details as desired. Stop when further adjustments might detract from the effect.

PRO TIP

Vary the edges around your object to create a more dynamic and painterly effect.

5 Demonstration: Glowing Effect in Landscape



Create a Glowing Grassy Area

Brush out the grassy area beyond where it needs to go. Use broad strokes to create a soft edge. Add a darker background with a few dark notes for rocks and reflections.

Add Light and Texture

Clean your brush thoroughly and load it with a light color. Work into the grassy area to enhance the glow. Use a palette knife for interesting textures and shapes that a brush can't achieve.

Paint Sky Holes in Trees

Begin with a darker blue than you intend to finish with for the sky holes. Use soft edges to blend. Lighten the blue and work inside those areas to create a softly infused blue effect.

Add Final Touches

Add warm reflected light underneath branches and some top light. Include a few flicks of brighter color for added interest.

PRO TIP

Use a palette knife to create textures and shapes that are difficult to achieve with a brush.

6 Tips for Achieving Glowing Effects



Understand Light and Background Contrast

Recognize that a lighter object will have a stronger glowing effect because it reflects more light. Use a darker background to make the object appear even brighter by contrast.

Enhance Saturation in Half Tones and Shadows

Increase the saturation of colors in the half tones and shadows to make the object pop like a glowing light source.

Handle Complementary Colors Carefully

When painting a foreground color into a complementary background color, such as orange into blue, be cautious. These colors can mix to create mud, so use fewer and lighter brush strokes to maintain a glowing effect.

PRO TIP

Use fewer and lighter brush strokes when blending complementary colors to avoid a muddy appearance.

7 Playtime Exercise



Select an Object

Choose a simple object like an orange, apple, cube, or cup. Place it in a straightforward setting with a dark background and a strong light source, or use one of the provided photos.

Create a Small Painting

Paint a small-scale painting focusing on your chosen object. Aim to make the object glow with vibrant color, enhancing its presence in the composition.

Step Back and Evaluate

Regularly step back about 10 feet from your painting. If the painting looks effective from a distance, consider it successful and resist the urge to overwork it.

PRO TIP

Aim to make your object glow with vibrant color to enhance its presence.

Summary & Key Takeaways

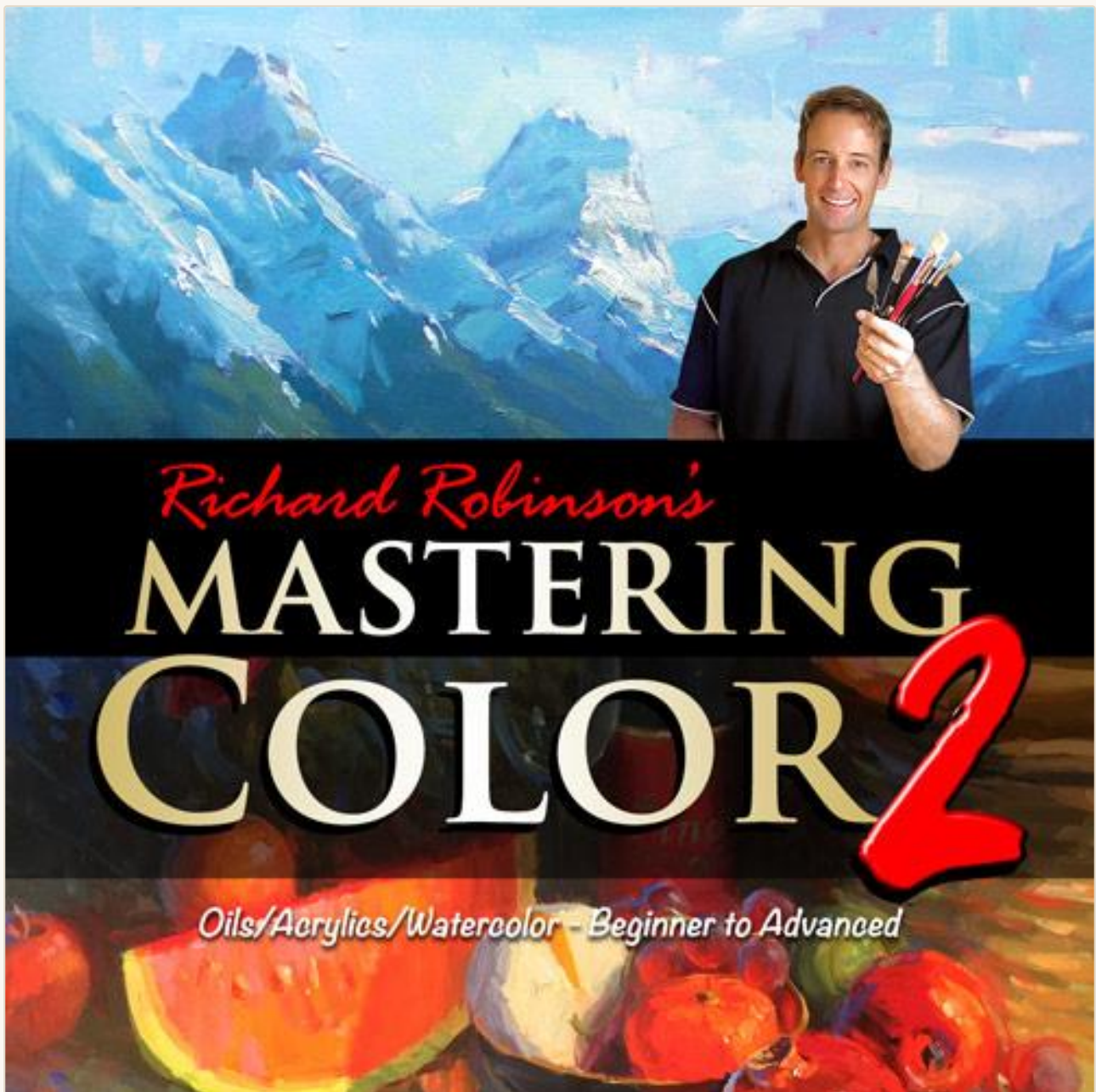
In this lesson, you explored the concept of treating objects as light sources, allowing you to capture the interplay of light and color in your paintings. By visualizing each object as a glowing entity, you can infuse your work with vibrant energy and depth. This approach is particularly effective in still life and figure studies, where the glowing effect can transform the atmosphere of your composition.

You learned to enhance the glowing effect by lightening and saturating mid values, using thicker paint in light areas, and varying edges for a dynamic look. These techniques help create a striking contrast between light and dark, making your subjects pop against their backgrounds. Whether painting still life or landscapes, these methods allow you to achieve a painterly glow that captivates the viewer.

As you continue your painting journey, remember to experiment with different tools and techniques, such as using a palette knife for unique textures. By focusing on the glowing effect and its impact on the surrounding environment, you can elevate your artwork and bring a new level of vibrancy and interest to your compositions.

LESSON POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Treat each colored object as a light source to capture its interaction with light.
- Lighten and saturate mid values to enhance the glowing effect.
- Surround sky holes with a blue haze and soft edges for a sacred glow.
- Vary the edges around your object for a dynamic, painterly effect.
- Use a palette knife to create textures and shapes not achievable with a brush.
- Increase color saturation in half tones and shadows for a glowing effect.
- Use fewer and lighter brush strokes when blending complementary colors.
- Aim to make your object glow with vibrant color to enhance its presence.



"Mastering Color 2" 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.

Orange u glad. 8x10. Oil on canvas by Dee Duke



Orange u glad. 8x10. Oil on canvas by Dee Duke

Great to see you trying different colour notes within the bowl and shadow there Dee! Keeping the value of those notes the same as the surrounding colour is key there and you've done that really well. This is really glowing with colour!

Three Amigos. 12x12 oil on wood by Dee Duke



Three Amigos. 12x12 oil on wood by Dee Duke

Really good colour usage Dee. You've seen those subtle colour shifts well and kept the colour pure through the painting. The glow emanating from the yellow and orange capsicums is subtle and believable but the red glow could do with a little tweaking - just where you have a dark edge between the capsicum and the glow on the upper right edge. Great work!

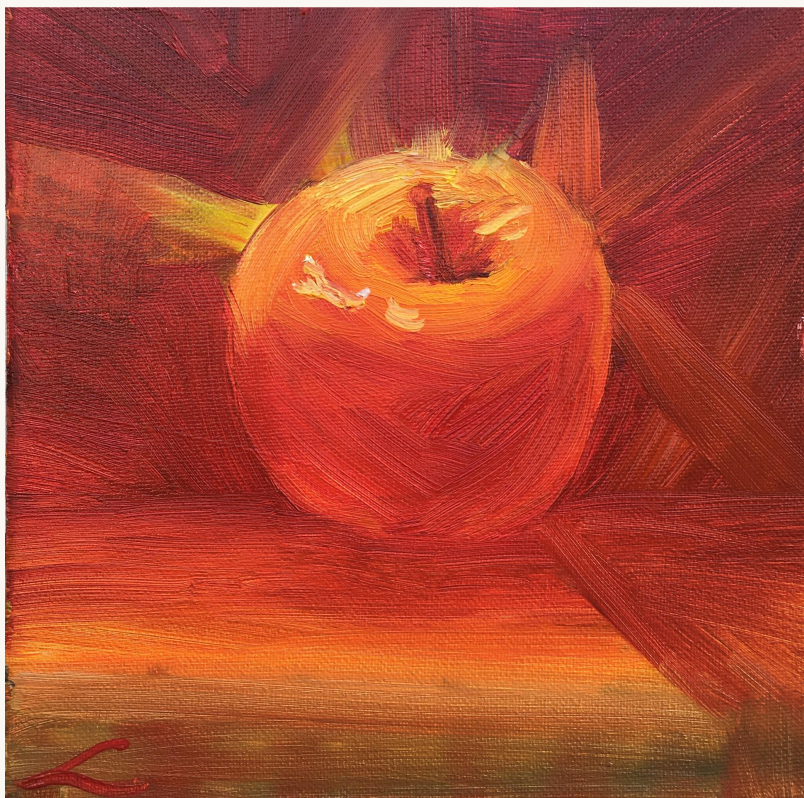
Apple glow 5"x5" oil on canvas by Dee Duke



Apple glow 5"x5" oil on canvas by Dee Duke

Great painting Dee - you're really getting the sense of light falling across the form. You've broken the edges well - in a random fashion. It looks like a high key painting (with no intense darks) and that may be a result of the photographing of your painting, or the way you chose to paint it. Just note that a stronger glowing colour effect is achieved by using the full value range, with dark darks contrasting the lights.

Apple in red, oil, canvas, 20 cm x 20 cm by Elena Sokolova



Apple in red, oil, canvas, 20 cm x 20 cm by Elena Sokolova

Hi Elena, nice work - certainly some strong colour there and great gestural brushwork. Note that some of your large background glowing strokes from the apple seem separated from the apple because of the hard edge between the apple and the stroke. By softening that edge the glowing strokes will look more like they are coming from the apple instead of sitting behind it.