



Langs Beach

A step-by-step painting guide by Richard Robinson

Watch the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/118-Langs-Beach>

MY PAINTING CLUB

Introduction

As I begin this lesson at Langs Beach, I'm excited to guide you through the process of capturing this stunning scene with a focus on warm and cool color variations and expressive brushwork. We'll start with a very watery mixture of blue and red to sketch out the scene, defining its limits with a simple box and a horizon line. This initial step is all about creating a strong abstract design, known as a no tan design, which balances light and dark elements. You'll select a main element to paint, like the hills or a tree, and choose a single color to represent it. For instance, a greyish blue for the hills or a mid-green for a tree. We'll mix colors to ensure a thick, opaque coverage, starting with the darkest elements. This approach is akin to building with cut-out pieces of colored paper, keeping it simple yet effective. I hope you find this scene as rewarding to paint as I do, and that it inspires you to create something uniquely your own.



The Sketch



REFERENCE PHOTO

The scene as Richard found it.

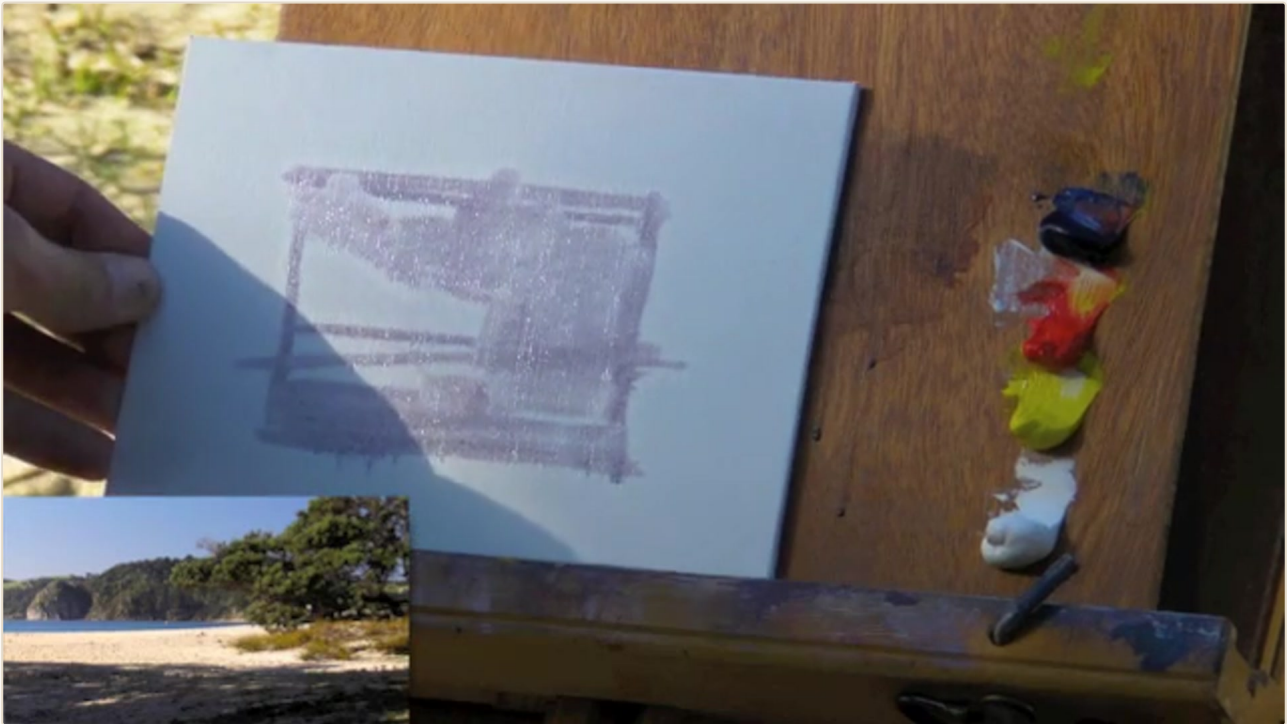
Materials

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
- Pthalo Green
- Ultramarine Blue
- Violet
- Cadmium Red Light
- Cadmium Orange
- 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 Mixing colors for main elements



Understand the Design

Focus on creating a strong abstract design with a balance between light and dark elements. This is known as a no tan design, which emphasizes the contrast between these elements.

Choose Main Element Color

Select the main element you want to paint and decide on a single color for it. For example, if you're painting hills in the background, consider using a greyish blue. For a tree in the foreground, opt for a mid-green.

Mix the Darkest Color

Start with the darkest element, such as the tree. Mix blue with yellow to create a green. Ensure you have a thick mixture that provides good coverage, preventing the canvas from showing through.

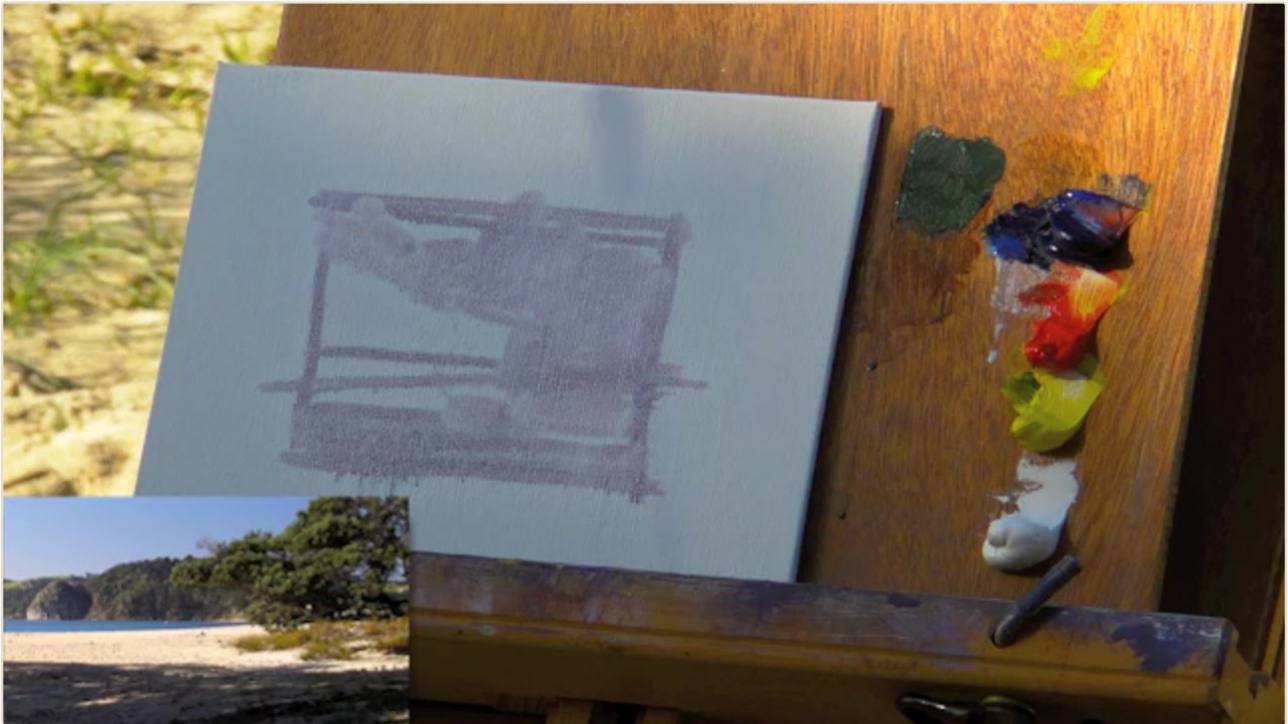
Simplify the Color Palette

Aim to find one color that represents the entire tree, even though it might be a mix of dark and light shades. Keep the approach simple, as if building with cut-out pieces of colored paper.

PRO TIP

Mix enough paint to cover the area completely, ensuring the canvas does not show through.

2 Adjusting green for the tree



Focus on the Tree's Color

Close one eye and slightly blur your vision to see the tree as a large blob of color. This helps you focus on the overall hue rather than details.

Lighten the Green

Mix more yellow into your green to lighten it, as yellow is a light color. If necessary, add a touch of white to further adjust the lightness.

Adjust the Chroma

If the green is too vibrant, add a touch of red, the complementary color, to grey it down. This will reduce the chroma and make it less intense.

Fine-Tune with White

Add white to the mixture to lighten it further and lower the chroma, making the color more grey. Compare the adjusted color with the tree and add more yellow if needed to raise the chroma slightly.

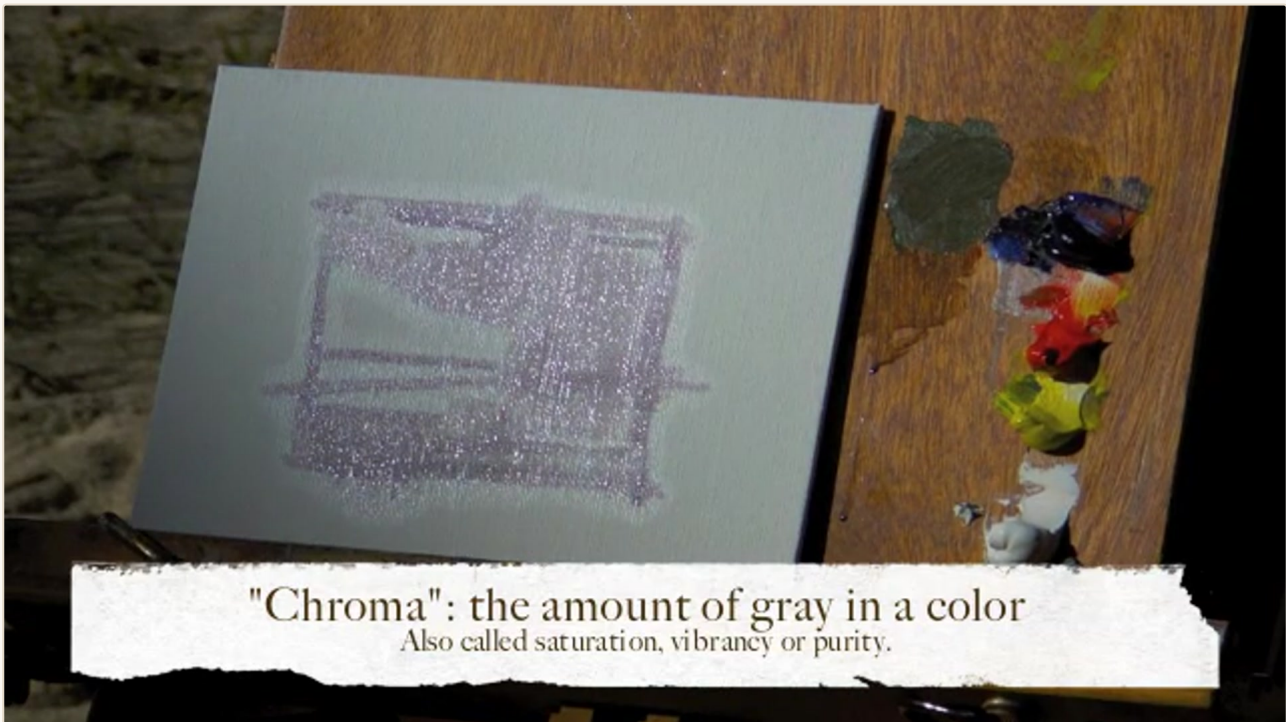
Add Medium

Incorporate a tiny bit of painting medium to your mixture to improve the paint's flow and consistency.

PRO TIP

Use red to grey down a vibrant green, as it is the complementary color and reduces chroma.

3 Using painting medium and applying paint



"Chroma": the amount of gray in a color
Also called saturation, vibrancy or purity.

Add Painting Medium

Add a tiny bit of painting medium to your paint. This helps the stiff paint flow better, especially useful for thinner layers at the start. Use less medium later for thicker paint applications.

Apply Paint with Big Brushstrokes

Use nice big, happy brushstrokes to cover the canvas. Aim to cover the white canvas completely, avoiding small details at this stage. If the paint appears too thin and the canvas shows through, mix a thicker pile of paint.

Mix a Thicker Paint Pile

Mix a new pile of the same color, ensuring it's thicker to avoid transparency. Keep some of the previous mix on the side for reference to match the color accurately. Avoid mixing completely over the previous pile to maintain a color guide.

PRO TIP

Use a big brush to cover the canvas quickly and avoid getting caught up in details early on.

4 Mixing and applying color for hills



Prepare the Brush

Clean your brush thoroughly before starting on the hills to ensure no residual colors affect your new mix.

Mix the Base Color

Choose a blue color for the shadows to separate the background from the foreground. Add white to the blue to adjust the value, making it slightly lighter than the tree to help the tree stand out.

Check and Adjust the Value

Dab a bit of the mixed color onto the green area and squint at it. If the dab disappears, the values are too close. Adjust until the dab is visible when squinting.

Adjust the Chroma

If the blue is too vibrant, gray it down by mixing a little red and yellow to create orange, then add it to the blue. Check the value again using the dab technique.

Apply the Color

Apply the color with big, bold strokes, avoiding too much detail. Be mindful of reshaping the tree as you cut into it with the blue paint, creating both the hill and tree simultaneously.

Create Sky Holes

When painting gaps through the tree, ensure they make sense structurally, even if they don't match exactly what you see. Focus on the overall color study rather than detailed accuracy.

PRO TIP

Use the dab technique to check color value by applying a small amount and squinting to see if it blends in.

5 Foreground shadow and color intensity



Mix Foreground Shadow Color

Use the same color mix as the hill in the background for the shadow in the foreground. Adjust the hue by adding a little more red to make it warmer. Keep the value consistent while shifting the hue towards the warmer region.

Intensify Dune Grasses Color

Mix an intense orange using pure red and yellow for the dune grasses where they meet the beach. Once the value is correct, add a touch of blue to lower the chroma slightly, ensuring the color isn't too garish.

PRO TIP

Adjust the hue of the foreground shadow by adding more red to create warmth.

6 Using lighting effects in painting



Choose Your Color Palette

Decide on your color palette based on your mood and the scene's atmosphere. You can use a full spectrum palette with high chroma colors or stick to very gray colors. Let the environment guide your choice.

Apply Thick Paint

Apply thick paint to your canvas, focusing on the center of interest. This helps express the beauty and vibrancy of the scene.

Observe and Simplify

Look at the scene and identify key elements like clumps of dune grass. Simplify these elements to capture their essence without copying them exactly. Vary the size and space of these elements to create a natural look.

Mix Shadow Colors

As the orange color moves into the shade, mix it with blue to create a darker brown. This adds depth and realism to your shadows.

Soften Shadow Edges

Keep shadow edges soft and indistinct to draw the viewer's eye towards sharper edges in the center of interest. This technique enhances the focus of your painting.

Capture Lighting Effects

When you notice a striking lighting effect, such as sunlight breaking through clouds, take note or capture it with a quick sketch. These effects can add a special touch to your work.

PRO TIP

Keep shadow edges soft to enhance focus on the center of interest.

7 Painting the ocean



Mix the Ocean Color

Start with the blue-grey mixture used for the distant hill. Adjust the color to be lighter in value and a bit greener to match the ocean's appearance.

Test the Color

Apply the mixed color to the canvas to compare it against the existing colors. If it appears too dark, lighten it slightly until it looks correct.

Paint the Ocean Line

Ensure the line of the ocean is very straight. Use a straight edge and your brush if necessary, especially for larger paintings.

PRO TIP

Always test your color on the canvas to ensure it matches the surrounding hues.

8 Painting the sky



Assess the Sky Color

Observe that the sky is a couple of steps lighter than the ocean and slightly bluer. Use this observation to guide your color selection for the sky.

Paint Sky Holes

When painting sky holes through trees, remember they are generally darker than expected. The smaller the sky hole, the darker the color should be.

PRO TIP

Sky holes through trees are typically darker than anticipated; adjust the color accordingly.

9 Painting the sunlit beach



Mix a Warm Beach Color

Start with an orange and add white to it to create a warm, sunlit beach color. This should be warmer than what you see in reality to match the enhanced color in the dunes.

Apply Thick Paint

Apply the paint thickly to the sunlit beach area, as it is the lightest and the center of interest. Use a good amount of paint to ensure this area stands out.

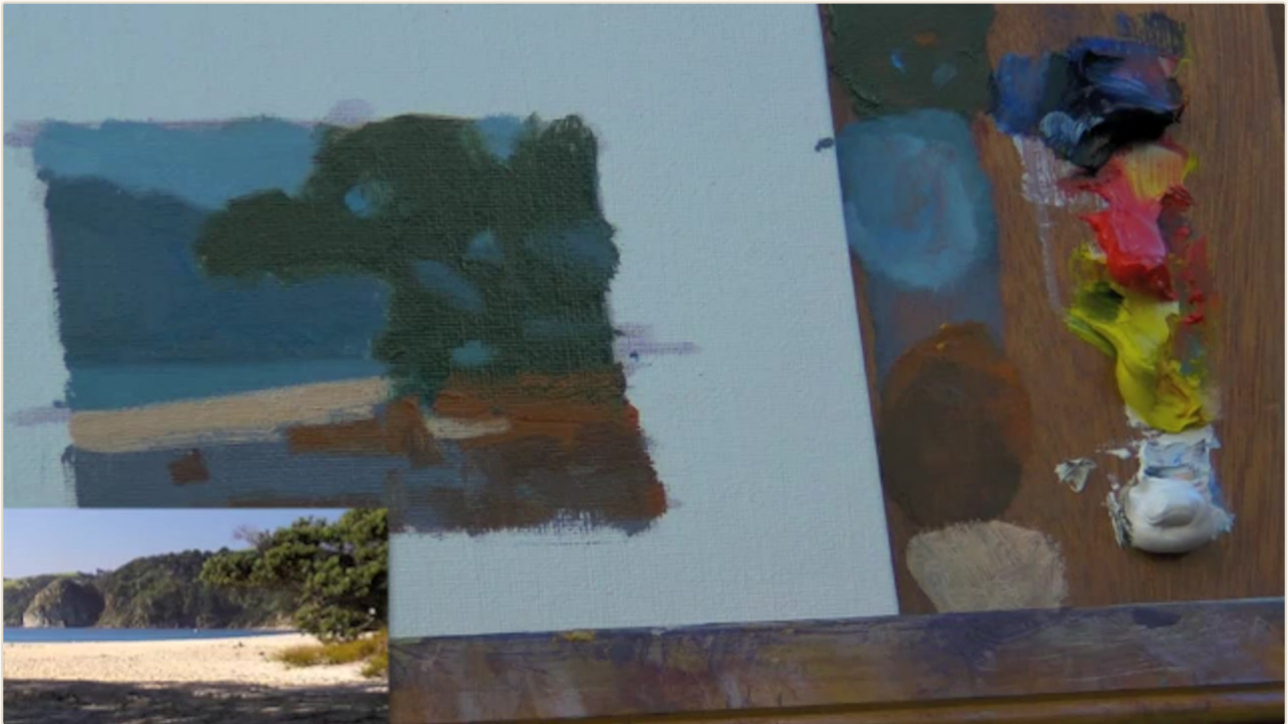
Reload Your Brush Frequently

Reload your brush with fresh paint often to keep your colors pure and avoid a muddy mess. Beginners often make the mistake of trying to stretch the paint too far, which dulls the colors.

PRO TIP

Reload your brush frequently to maintain pure colors and avoid muddiness.

10 Final touches and review



Use a Large Brush for Detail

Carefully use a large brush for small details by twisting it as you lay the paint off. This technique allows for precision even with a larger tool.

Evaluate the Composition

Step back and review your painting. Ensure the light flows naturally across the beach and into the dune grasses, creating a cohesive scene.

PRO TIP

Twist the large brush while applying paint to achieve fine details.

Summary & Key Takeaways

Embark on your painting journey by focusing on the foundational elements of your composition. Begin with a strong abstract design, balancing light and dark elements to create a compelling no tan design. Mix your colors thoughtfully, starting with the darkest elements and ensuring you have enough paint to cover the canvas completely. Use broad brushstrokes to lay down your base colors, avoiding the temptation to dive into details too early.

As you progress, refine your colors by adjusting hues and values. Use complementary colors to tone down vibrancy and incorporate painting medium to improve flow. Pay attention to the relationships between foreground and background elements, using techniques like the dab method to ensure your values are distinct and harmonious. Apply your colors boldly, reshaping elements like trees and hills to maintain a cohesive design.

In the final stages, focus on lighting effects and the details that bring your scene to life. Use thick paint to highlight the center of interest and keep shadow edges soft to draw the viewer's eye. Test your colors directly on the canvas to ensure they match the surrounding hues, and remember to reload your brush frequently to maintain vibrant, pure colors. Step back often to review your work, ensuring a natural flow of light and a cohesive, engaging scene.

LESSON POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Mix enough paint to cover the area completely.
- Use red to grey down a vibrant green.
- Use a big brush to cover the canvas quickly.
- Use the dab technique to check color value.
- Adjust the hue of the foreground shadow by adding more red.
- Keep shadow edges soft to enhance focus on the center of interest.
- Always test your color on the canvas.
- Reload your brush frequently to maintain pure colors.



The Sketch