



Rustic Farm Shed

A step-by-step painting guide by Richard Robinson

Watch the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/210-Rustic-Farm-Shed>

MY PAINTING CLUB

Introduction

In this chapter, we'll embark on an artistic journey to capture the charm of a rustic farm shed, a subject that offers a delightful blend of simplicity and complexity. As we paint, you'll discover the secrets to achieving a fresh, painterly look while maintaining a sense of realism. This scene is particularly rewarding because it invites us to explore texture, light, and shadow in a way that brings the shed to life on canvas. We'll start by selecting a range of long flat brushes, which are perfect for covering large areas with ease, thanks to their ability to hold more paint. For those intricate details that add character to our painting, small dagger brushes will be our tools of choice. These brushes allow for expressive, gestural strokes that can transform a simple scene into a vibrant depiction. As you paint along with me, you'll have the opportunity to pause, replay, and truly immerse yourself in the experience, just like a live workshop. So, grab your favorite beverage, perhaps a cookie, and let's enjoy this creative process together.



Rustic Farm Shed 10x12" Oil on Canvas



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
- Ultramarine Blue
- Alizarine Crimson
- Cadmium Red
- 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
- Atelier Interactive Acrylics
- Phthalo Blue
- Ultramarine Blue
- Bordeaux / Alizarine Crimson
- Naphthol Red Light / Cadmium Red Light
- Yellow Ochre
- Arylamide Yellow Light / Cadmium Yellow Light

- Titanium White
- 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
- Stay-wet palette
- Water spray bottle

1 Brushes and Materials



Select Your Brushes

Choose a range of long flat brushes for your painting. The longer bristles are preferable as they hold more paint, allowing you to cover larger areas without frequent trips to the palette.

Use Smaller Brushes for Detail

For smaller details, use small dagger brushes. These are ideal for intricate work on a small painting.

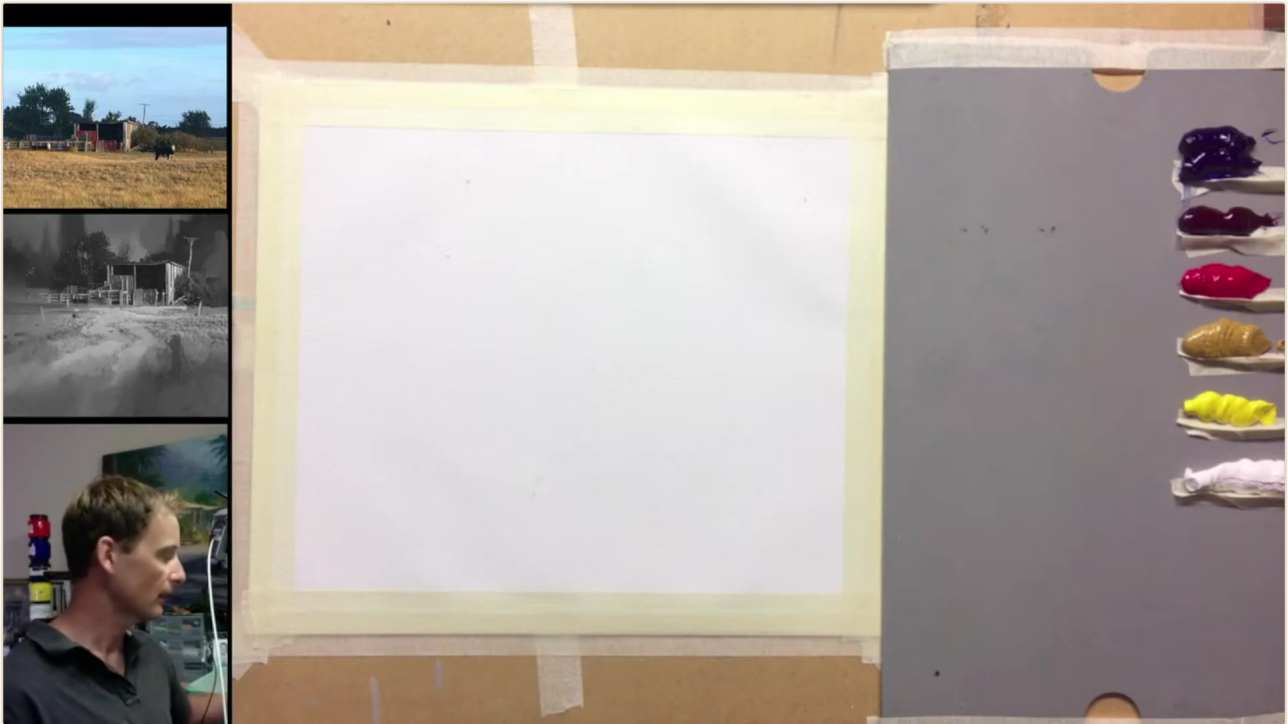
Advantages of Long Bristle Brushes

Long bristle brushes allow for more gestural and calligraphic marks. They bend well to lay paint smoothly on the canvas, unlike short bristle brushes that act more like a rake.

PRO TIP

Use long bristle brushes for larger areas and more expressive strokes.

2 Canvas and Composition



Prepare Your Paints

Set up your palette with ultramarine blue, alizarin crimson, cadmium red, yellow ochre, cadmium yellow, and titanium white. Use walnut oil to help the paint flow better.

Choose Your Canvas

Use a 12 by 16 canvas, which is a standard size and easy to find. If you prefer a square format, tape off or cut the end of your canvas, or simply avoid painting up to the edge.

Consider Composition

Position the main subject, like the shed, using the rule of thirds for a balanced composition. Avoid placing it too close to the canvas edge.

Start Sketching

Sketch directly onto the canvas with a brush if you feel comfortable. This allows for a more fluid and expressive start to your painting.

PRO TIP

Use the rule of thirds to position key elements for a balanced composition.

3 Sketching the Shed



Sketch the Shed with a Brush

Use your brush to sketch the outline of the shed. Begin by placing the baseline where the shed will sit, adjusting if necessary to ensure proper placement. Block in the major shapes to establish the structure of the shed.

Adjust the Shape

Ensure the shape of the shed is accurate. If the sketch appears too square, adjust it to be more oblong, as this will better reflect the actual proportions.

Create a Dark Background

Paint a dark background behind the shed. This will help the lighter areas of the shed stand out and guide the viewer's eye to the center of interest, rather than the edges.

PRO TIP

Use a dark background to enhance contrast and draw attention to the main subject.

4 Path and Composition



Add a Path for Interest

Incorporate a path into your painting to guide the viewer's eye toward the center of interest. This path doesn't have to be present in the reference photo; it's a creative tool to lead the viewer on a visual journey through your artwork. Position the path on either side of the composition to best enhance the flow and balance of the scene.

PRO TIP

Use paths in your paintings to direct the viewer's attention and create a sense of journey.

5 Sketching Colors and Brush Size



Choose Your Sketching Color

Dip your brush into walnut oil and use ultramarine blue for sketching. Consider mixing in some alizarin or red to create a purple if desired. Aim for a weak color that won't interfere with the layers you plan to add on top.

Consider Future Layers

Think about the colors that will go on top of your sketch. For instance, if you're planning a yellowy golden sunrise, avoid using blue as it could disrupt the final colors. Opt for a color like yellow ochre instead.

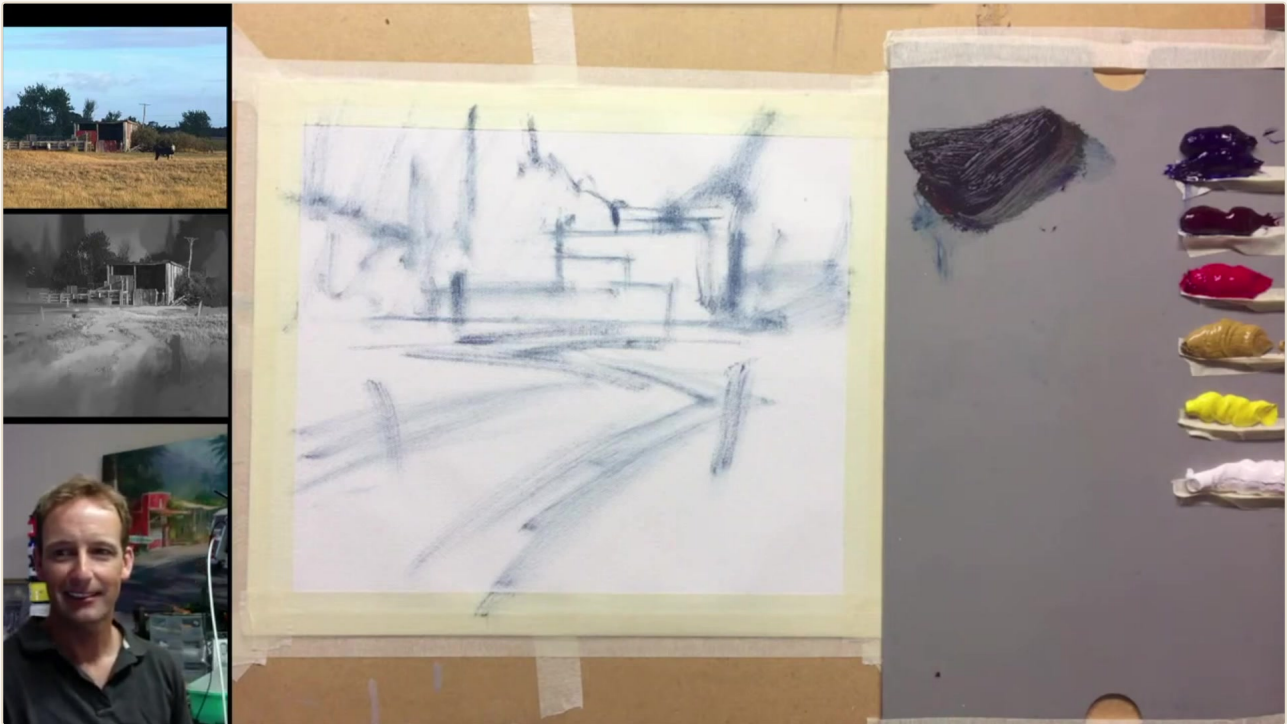
Select Your Brush Size

Use a brush that feels comfortable for sketching. The specific size is less important than your ability to control the brush and apply the color lightly.

PRO TIP

Choose a weak sketching color that won't interfere with the final layers.

6 Acrylics vs Oils Discussion



Start with Watered Down Acrylics

For the initial sketch, use watered down acrylics. This allows for easy adjustments and a lighter touch in the early stages of your painting.

Work from Back to Front

When painting with acrylics, typically work from the background to the foreground. This helps in building depth and layering effectively.

Set Up for Wet-on-Wet Technique

If you want to paint acrylics as if they were oils, ensure you have a stay-wet palette and a spray bottle. Spray your palette and painting every four or five minutes to keep the paint workable.

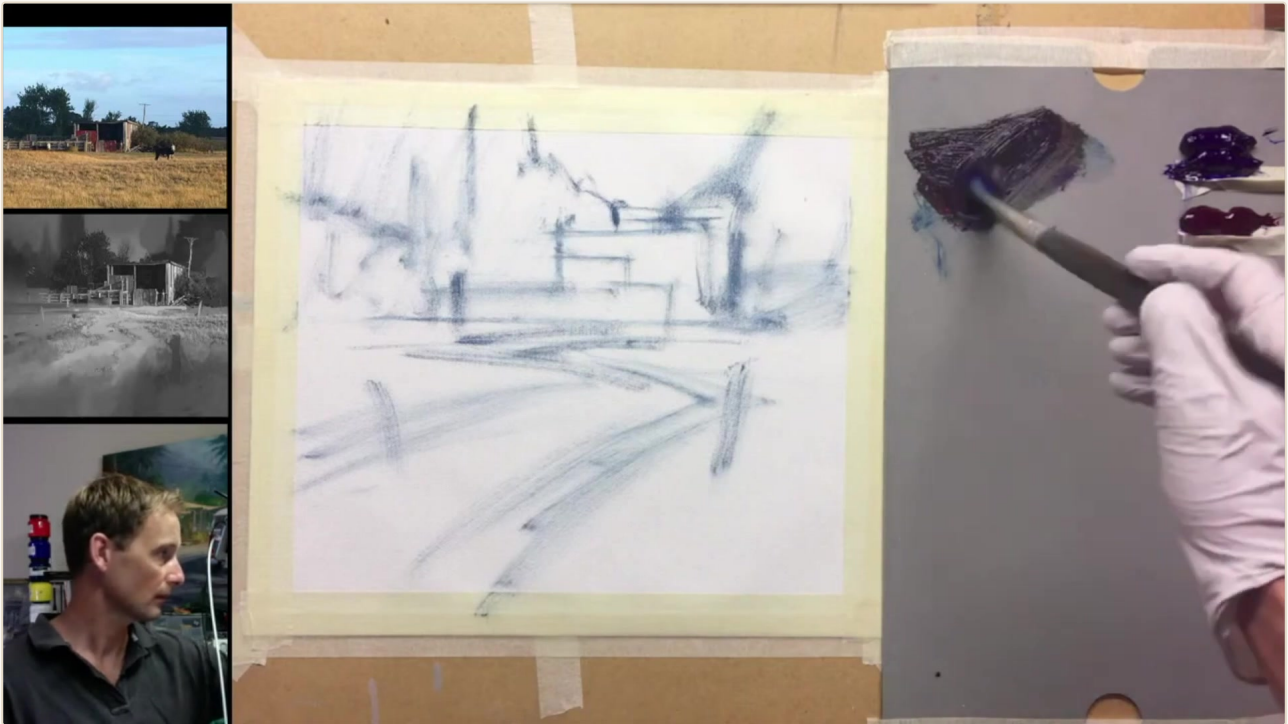
Paint Quickly

Acrylics dry fast, so work quickly to achieve soft edges and blends. This approach mimics the flexibility of oil painting.

PRO TIP

Use a spray bottle to keep acrylics wet and workable, allowing for blending and soft edges.

7 Acrylic Painting Tips



Use Impasto Acrylics

Apply impasto acrylics throughout your painting. This thicker paint slows down the drying process, allowing more time for blending and creating smooth transitions.

PRO TIP

Avoid watering down acrylics to maintain a slower drying time and improve blending opportunities.

8 Blocking in Dark Areas



Identify Dark Areas

Squint at the reference photo to identify the large dark areas in the building. Focus on these areas as they will form the foundation of your painting.

Prepare the Paint

Thin your dark paint with walnut oil until it is just thick enough to cover the canvas without being too watery. This ensures the canvas doesn't show through and provides a solid base for further layers.

Apply the Dark Paint

Block in the dark areas with the thinned paint. Keep the application thin to avoid muddying future layers. This will allow you to paint over these areas without the dark paint affecting the lighter colors.

Progress from Dark to Light

Work from the darkest darks to the lighter darks, gradually moving through the painting. As you progress, increase the thickness of the paint for lighter areas, culminating in thick impasto for the lightest highlights.

PRO TIP

Keep your darks thin to prevent them from affecting the colors you layer on top.

9 Perspective and Background



Mix Shadow Colors

Add yellow ochre to your greenish tree mixture to create a slightly lighter and greener shade. This adjustment is due to the yellow ochre's lighter tone and its ability to push the color towards green.

Create Greyed Down Shadows

Focus on using greyed down colors for the shadows, as shadows naturally lack light and therefore color. Adjust the mixture by adding more blue and a touch of white to achieve the desired grey tone.

Use Walnut Oil

Dip your brush into walnut oil to help with smoother application and blending of the paint.

Observe Roof Angles

Note the angles of the shed's roof, which follow the laws of perspective. The angles slope back towards the horizon, with each side sloping in opposite directions.

PRO TIP

Use greyed down colors for shadows to reflect the lack of light and color in those areas.

10 Soft Edges and Background



Extend Soft Areas

Paint the large soft areas beyond their intended final size. This allows you to paint the sky back into them later, avoiding the need for precise edge work.

Create Soft Edges

Work back into the extended areas to create soft edges in the background. This technique will make the sharp edges in the foreground stand out more prominently.

Replicate Visual Focus

Soften the background edges to mimic natural visual focus, where the eye sharpens on one spot and blurs the rest. This approach enhances the center of interest in your painting.

PRO TIP

Paint soft areas larger than needed, then refine by painting the sky back into them for a natural look.

11 Brush Strokes and Natural Look



Adjust Background Colors

Add a little more blue and white to your mix to create a sense of distance in the background. This will help to send elements like trees further back in the scene.

Vary Tree Sizes and Spacing

Ensure that your trees are not all the same size or spaced evenly. Varying these elements will make the scene look more natural and avoid an unnatural, repetitive appearance.

PRO TIP

Avoid making trees the same size and spacing to achieve a natural look.

12 Painting Outdoors vs Photos



Paint the Sky

Mix white, blue, and a little bit of red to create a dark sky. This combination allows you to explore color freely, as the grayscale sketch doesn't dictate your color choices.

Understand the Influence of Photos

Recognize that photos can mislead your perception of color and light. They often lose color in dark areas, unlike what you would observe in nature.

Appreciate Outdoor Painting

Value the experience of painting outdoors for its ability to provide true color and light information. Nature offers a more accurate representation than photographs.

PRO TIP

When painting from photos, remember they can lose color in dark areas, unlike the richness observed in nature.

13 Trusting the Painting Process



Add Light to the Sky

Mix a little white and yellow together and apply it to the lower portion of the sky. This will create a soft, glowing effect that enhances the overall atmosphere of your painting.

Trust the Process

Remember that at this stage, your painting might not look great, and that's perfectly normal. As you gain experience, you'll learn to trust the process and understand that the initial layers are just the beginning.

PRO TIP

Embrace the early, rough stages of your painting as part of the journey to a finished piece.

14 Foreground Shadows and Light



Add Shadows to the Bush

Use a soft brush to add shadows to the bush. Incorporate some yellow to create soft edges, avoiding any hard lines. Leave gaps for lighter areas to ensure the highlights stand out.

Preserve Light Areas

Avoid placing dark paint in areas where you want the lightest highlights. Apply light paint directly onto the light canvas to maintain brightness and prevent muddiness.

PRO TIP

To achieve the brightest highlights, apply light paint directly onto a light canvas without any dark underpainting.

15 Avoiding Muddy Colors



Avoid Mixing Muddy Colors

Avoid mixing a cool light color with a warm dark color, as this will result in a muddy or grey tone. Be mindful of your color choices to maintain vibrancy in your painting.

Organize Your Palette

Use a larger palette if possible to give yourself more space for mixing. Keep similar colors together in one area to avoid unwanted mixing.

Separate Warm and Cool Areas

When painting warm areas, move to a different section of the palette to keep your colors clean and distinct. This helps maintain the intended temperature and clarity of your colors.

PRO TIP

Separate warm and cool colors on your palette to prevent muddy mixes.

16 Paint Brands and Foreground Colors



Prepare Your Brush

Select a number 12 brush and dip it in walnut oil to start. Use paper towels to wipe off any excess paint from previous use. This ensures a clean start for your painting.

Begin with the Foreground

Focus on the foreground, starting with the soft shadow across it. Use a dark-to-light process, which means starting with darker tones first. Think of the color as the golden brown of dried grasses to capture the rustic feel.

PRO TIP

Use walnut oil to clean and prepare your brush for vibrant, pure colors.

17 Foreground Color Transition



Prepare the Base Color

Mix a dark yellowy brown using walnut oil for a thin consistency. This will serve as the base layer over which you will work with different grays and other colors.

Mix the Gold Color

Combine yellow ochre, a little white, a touch of red, and some blue to create a gold color. These are the three primary colors, which when mixed, can create a range of grays and browns.

Create a Smooth Transition

As you move through the light areas, lighten the color by reducing the amount of other primaries in the mix. Brush softly down to achieve a smooth transition between colors.

Adjust Lightness Carefully

Mix yellow ochre and white for lighter areas, adding more white gradually. Avoid going too light too soon to maintain the ability to add drama and highlights later in the painting.

PRO TIP

Start with more gray tones to allow room for adding lighter and more colorful highlights later.

18 Creating Light Effects



Create a Spotlight Effect

Transition through three colors to create a lighting effect. Ensure the spotlight effect shines on the shed, not the background.

Add Bright Yellow Highlights

Mix in a little bright yellow to lighten the area just under the spotlight. Be careful not to pick up too much dark paint from the edges to avoid muddy colors.

Maintain Soft Edges

Keep the edges soft, especially around the grasses, to blend naturally with the golden paint. Avoid pressing too hard to preserve the golden brown hue.

PRO TIP

Use a soft edge to blend the spotlight effect naturally with the surrounding grasses.

19 Foreground Details and Shadows



Adjust the Light Source

Identify the direction of the light source in your painting. Ensure your strongest light is positioned accordingly to enhance the scene's realism.

Create a Grayed Path

Use the same brush to mix a slightly lighter, slightly grayer color by adding white to your palette. Apply this color to depict the path, ensuring it aligns with the light source direction.

PRO TIP

Use blue for your darkest mixes, as it's essential for creating depth and shadow in your painting.

20 Road and Path Details



Create the Road

Mix white and blue to capture the color of the road, reflecting the blue-gray sky. Paint the road as a series of soft, merging sections rather than a hard zigzag. This approach will help convey the natural, uneven look of a rural path.

Add Natural Details

Incorporate cast shadows from grasses and small stones across the road. These elements add realism and texture, breaking up the road's surface and integrating it into the landscape.

PRO TIP

Avoid painting the road with hard edges; instead, let it blend naturally with the surrounding grasses and stones.

21 Shed Colors and Brush Technique



Mix Shed Colors

Observe the colors of the shed, noting the beautiful old rusty red and greyish tones. Mix a rusty red by starting with a base of red, then tone it down with a little alizarin. Add a touch of blue, but be cautious not to add too much. Incorporate a bit of yellow ochre to achieve the desired rusty red hue.

Apply Color with Clean Brush Strokes

Use a clean brush to apply the mixed rusty red color to the shed. Make one nice, clean brush stroke to avoid picking up dark colors and creating mud. Be mindful of what's on the end of your brush to maintain vibrant colors.

PRO TIP

Always clean your brush to avoid muddy colors and maintain vibrancy.

22 Detailing the Shed



Understand Light and Color

Observe how the light affects the planes of the shed. The side facing the light will appear lighter and warmer, especially during a warm sunset. Keep this in mind as you work on the painting.

Avoid Early Detailing

Resist the urge to use a small brush too soon. Using a small brush early can tighten the painting, making it difficult to maintain a loose, painterly style. Focus on large shapes first to keep the painting open and flexible.

PRO TIP

Stick with big brushes as long as possible to maintain a painterly style.

23 Brush Pressure and Technique



Applying Background Paint

Hold the brush firmly when painting the background. Use strong pressure to smush the paint all over the canvas. Ensure the paint is applied thinly to cover the surface effectively.

Creating Impasto Effects

Use a lighter touch with the brush for impasto effects. Pick up big globs of paint for mid values and lights. Drag the paint lightly across the surface to maintain texture and avoid flattening the paint.

PRO TIP

Use firm pressure for thin background layers and a light touch for thick impasto textures.

24 Foreground Light and Color



Enhance Foreground Light

Observe how the dark background enhances the colors and light in the foreground. Use this contrast to make the light effect stand out more prominently.

Focus on Details

After establishing the light effect, concentrate on adding details to the rest of the painting. This will bring the scene to life and complete the composition.

PRO TIP

Use a dark background to make foreground colors and light pop.

25 Foreground Shadows and Light Source



Mix Shadow Color

Use yellow ochre as your base and mix in a little red and blue to create a slightly darker shade. This mixture will be used for the shadows in the grasses.

Apply Shadows Strategically

Apply the mixed shadow color to the darker sections of the foreground. Avoid using this color in areas where the glowing light effect is desired, as it would diminish the light source effect.

Understand Light Source Effect

Remember that when light strikes an object, it becomes a light source itself. For a strong glowing light effect, keep shadows lighter in the illuminated areas.

PRO TIP

To maintain a glowing light effect, use lighter shadows in areas where the light source is strongest.

26 Lighting Effects and Background



Understand Lighting Effects

Consider the scenario where a storm has passed, leaving a dark sky. This creates a dramatic contrast with the brightly lit foreground, as if the sun has just emerged, illuminating the scene.

Create Contrast

Use the dark background to enhance the brightness of the foreground. This stark contrast will make the foreground appear more vibrant and lively, capturing the essence of sunlight breaking through after a storm.

Reflect Shadows

Paint shadows that are deep and stark, reflecting the dark gray tones of the stormy sky. This will add depth and realism to the scene, emphasizing the lighting effect.

PRO TIP

Use a dark background to make the foreground appear more vibrant and lively.

27 Brush Technique and Grass Details



Load Your Brush

Scoop up the paint onto the brush tip by moving the brush upwards into the paint. This technique helps you control the amount of paint on the brush, especially when the paint is thicker.

Consider Grass Shadows

Visualize the shape of the grass and identify the shadow side of each clump. Determine if the grass is tall enough to cast a shadow across the road, and plan your brushstrokes accordingly.

Create Smaller Shapes

Break down the grass area into smaller shapes and clumps. This approach ensures that your marks are intentional and reflect the light and shadow accurately.

PRO TIP

Scoop paint onto your brush tip by moving upwards to control paint application.

28 Avoiding Patterns in Painting



Consider Light and Shadow

Identify where the light source is coming from in your scene. For example, if there's a clump of grass in the middle of a track, ensure the shadow falls on the correct side, such as the left side if the light is from the right.

Avoid Repetitive Patterns

Be cautious not to repeat brushstrokes in a way that creates a pattern. Repeated marks can make elements look artificial and man-made. Strive for variety with each stroke to maintain a natural appearance.

PRO TIP

Fight the tendency to create patterns by varying each brushstroke.

29 Bristle vs Synthetic Brushes



Choose the Right Brush for Details

Use synthetic brushes for detailed work. Their finer edge and thinner bristles make them ideal for precision and smaller areas.

Opt for Bristle Brushes for Large Paintings

Select bristle brushes for larger paintings. These brushes are better suited for covering large areas, even when adding details on a big canvas.

Acrylic Painting Brush Choice

For acrylic paintings, use synthetic brushes for most work. However, switch to bristle brushes when working on large acrylic pieces to efficiently cover more area.

PRO TIP

Use synthetic brushes for fine details and bristle brushes for covering large areas.

30 Foreground Depth and Brush Strokes



Add Foreground Shadows

Introduce a little bit of shadow in the foreground. This will help create depth and make the scene more dynamic.

Adjust Brush Stroke Size

Ensure that your brush strokes are larger in the foreground to enhance the sense of depth. Avoid making large strokes in the background, as they can disrupt the perception of distance.

Refine Background Strokes

Make your brush strokes smaller, thinner, and more horizontal as you move towards the background. This technique helps maintain the illusion of depth and space in your painting.

PRO TIP

Use smaller, thinner, and more horizontal brush strokes in the background to enhance depth.

31 Foreground Shadows and Light



Mix Shadow Color

Create a neutral dark purplish gray by mixing mainly gray with a hint of purple. This color will complement the warm light and create purplish shadows on the light-colored track.

Adjust Shadow Intensity

Ensure the shadow on the road is lighter than the shadow on the surrounding areas. If the shadow appears too strong, lighten it by wiping or adjusting the mix.

PRO TIP

Shadows on lighter surfaces should be lighter than those on darker surfaces to maintain a natural look.

32 Understanding Light and Form



Understand Light and Form

Recognize that when starting out, you may focus on replicating a scene without understanding the underlying reasons for its appearance. This is a natural part of the learning process. However, as you develop your skills, aim to understand why things look the way they do. This understanding allows you to creatively alter and enhance your paintings, giving you control over your artistic expression.

PRO TIP

Understanding the reasons behind light and form enables you to creatively modify your paintings.

33 Foreground Shadows and Recession



Create Foreground Shadows

Use a big brush to apply paint for the shadows in the foreground. Allow the shadows to become lighter and warmer as they move into the area of light. This creates the impression of depth and recession without getting too detailed.

Smooth and Refine

Smooth out the paint by pushing it with the brush, creating a little ridge of paint at the end. This technique allows you to make very fine marks even with a large brush, resulting in soft edges and an interesting texture.

PRO TIP

Use a big brush to create fine marks by pushing the paint to form a ridge at the brush's edge.

34 Revisiting Old Photos



Embrace Unique Outcomes

Understand that each painting is a unique collection of mistakes and solutions. Attempting to replicate a painting exactly may result in a piece that lacks the original's texture and depth. Embrace the uniqueness of each creation.

Revisit Old Photos

Use old photos as inspiration for new paintings. This approach allows you to explore new interpretations and techniques while maintaining a connection to the original subject.

PRO TIP

Revisiting old photos can inspire fresh interpretations and unique paintings.

35 Warm vs Cool Colors



Understand Warm and Cool Colors

Warm colors include red, orange, and yellow. Think of fire to remember these. Cool colors are blue and green, reminiscent of water and trees.

Recognize Relative Color Temperature

Color temperature is relative. For example, alizarin crimson is a cool red because it leans towards blue, while other reds can be warmer. Similarly, ultramarine is a warm blue leaning towards red, whereas phthalo blue is a cool blue leaning towards green.

Mixing Vibrant and Grey Colors

To mix vibrant colors, choose colors that are close together on the color wheel. For grey colors, mix colors that are further apart, such as complementary colors.

PRO TIP

To mix vibrant colors, use colors that are close together on the color wheel.

36 Mixing Warm Grays



Select the Right Brush

Choose a small synthetic brush with long bristles for fine detail work. A thin bristle provides a sharp tip, perfect for painting intricate elements like poles.

Mix a Warm Gray

Look at the colors in the original painting to guide your mix. Aim for a warm gray to capture the rustic feel of the farm shed.

PRO TIP

Use a long-bristle brush for sharp, detailed lines.

37 Detailing the Shed



Adjust the Color Balance

If the color appears too warm and lacks grey, add the complement to balance it. For a yellowy color, incorporate purple, blue, and orange. Purple, being directly across from yellow on the color wheel, effectively neutralizes the warmth, creating a grey tone.

Embrace Expressive Detail

Focus on adding expressive, gestural details to the painting. Begin with detailed painting to understand how elements work and appear realistic. This foundation allows you to create painterly work that looks real from a distance.

PRO TIP

Use complementary colors to neutralize and balance overly warm tones.

38 Brush Technique and Unique Strokes



Explore Brush Techniques

Experiment with using the brush in different ways to create varied shapes and textures. Consider whether a lighter or harder stroke is needed for the effect you desire. Use the edge of the brush for finer details or unique marks.

Avoid Repetitive Patterns

If you use the brush the same way consistently, you'll end up with repetitive strokes. To avoid this, consciously vary your technique to make your work look special and unique.

PRO TIP

Vary your brush strokes to create unique textures and avoid repetitive patterns.

39 Shed Lighting and Color



Mix Light Red for Shed Side

Use red and add a touch of yellow to create a lighter shade. Apply this mixture carefully to the side of the shed, aiming for a single stroke to avoid picking up dark paint beneath.

Highlight with Lighter Section

Add a lighter section where the light catches the shed more strongly. This will enhance the effect of sunlight on the structure.

Create Neutral Light for Sunlit Areas

Mix a very light grey that remains neutral, avoiding pure white. Incorporate a fair amount of yellow to reflect the warm sunlight on any white surfaces facing the sun.

PRO TIP

When painting light details over dark areas, aim for a single stroke to prevent mixing with the underlying dark paint.

40 Painting Sessions and Techniques



Plan Your Painting Sessions

For larger paintings, consider breaking the work into multiple sessions. This approach helps manage the complexity and size of the piece effectively.

Initial Block-In with Acrylics

Start with an initial block-in using acrylics. This allows you to establish the composition and basic color scheme quickly, as acrylics dry fast.

Layer Oils Over Acrylics

Once the acrylic layer is dry, apply oils over the top. This technique prevents cracking and allows for richer textures and details.

PRO TIP

Use acrylics for the initial block-in to avoid cracking when layering oils on top.

41 Paint Usage and Medium



Apply Thick Paint for Highlights

Use thick paint for the highlights to ensure they stand out prominently on the canvas. Apply the paint with a light touch, creating a ridge that sits on the canvas surface.

Lay Out Ample Paint

Lay out a generous amount of paint on your palette. This allows you to paint without interruption and is especially useful if you tend to paint thickly. Use as much paint as needed, and don't worry if some remains.

PRO TIP

Use thick paint for highlights to create a striking effect on the canvas.

42 Shed Interior and Reflected Light



Add Warmth to Shed Interior

Mix a dark warm neutral color to add warmth to the inside of the shed. This will create the effect of reflected light while maintaining the overall darkness. Apply this color to the interior to avoid it looking like a black hole.

PRO TIP

Use a dark warm neutral to add depth and warmth to shadowed areas.

43 Paint Storage Tips



Preserve Paint with Wrap

Cover your oil paints with Saran Wrap or Glad Wrap to prevent them from oxidizing. This method stops the paint from being in contact with the air, keeping it fresh for longer.

Use Clove Oil

Add clove oil to your oil paints. This helps to extend the life of the paint by slowing down the drying process.

Store Paint in the Freezer

Place your palette with covered oil paints in the freezer. This method is effective in preserving the paint for future use.

Alternative Water Method

For oil paints, place them in a small dish and cover them with water. This can also help in preventing oxidation.

PRO TIP

Cover your oil paints with Saran Wrap to prevent oxidation and keep them fresh.

44 Brush Storage and Maintenance



Store Brushes in Safflower Oil

Use a long tub filled with safflower oil to store your brushes. Place a piece of wood across the tub for the handles to rest on, keeping the bristles submerged. This method prevents the bristles from drying out and eliminates the need for frequent washing.

Clean Brushes Before Storage

After painting, give your brushes a quick clean to remove excess paint. Then, place them into the safflower oil tub. This simple step ensures your brushes remain in good condition and ready for the next use.

PRO TIP

Store brushes in safflower oil to keep bristles from drying out and reduce cleaning time.

45 Background Details



Enhance Background Depth

Mix a darker shade for the background by using similar colors as before. Apply this darker tone to the far side of the background to add more interest and depth.

PRO TIP

Use darker shades to create depth and interest in the background.

46 Shed Pole and Detail



Apply Thicker Paint

Use a slightly thicker paint to add depth to your work. This will help create a more textured and lively appearance.

Paint the Shed Pole

Select a dagger brush, long rigger, or the edge of your palette knife to paint the pole. Mix a neutral warm gray for the pole color. Avoid being too precise to maintain the painting's joyful and spontaneous feel.

PRO TIP

Use a dagger brush or palette knife for loose, expressive lines.

47 Acrylic Painting Order



Prepare Your Palette

Load your palette with plenty of paint to ensure you have enough to work with. Use a spray bottle to keep the paint wet, mimicking the oil painting process.

Use Retarder Medium

Incorporate retarder medium into your acrylics to slow down the drying time. This will give you more flexibility to blend and work with the paint.

Consider Golden Open Acrylics

Golden Open acrylics are a good choice as they remain open and workable for a longer time, allowing for more fluid painting.

Paint from Back to Front

If not using the oil-like method, start by painting the background elements like the sky and trees. Progress forward to the more detailed elements in the foreground.

PRO TIP

Use a spray bottle to keep your acrylic paints wet and workable, similar to oils.

48 Golden Open Acrylics



Understand Golden Open Acrylics

Golden Open Acrylics are not suitable for impasto effects as they do not allow for wet-on-wet techniques like oils. Use them as a base layer for your painting.

Layer with Impasto Acrylics

After applying the Golden Open Acrylics as a base, paint over them with a more impasto acrylic. This will help you achieve the desired impasto effects in specific areas of your artwork.

PRO TIP

Use Golden Open Acrylics as a base layer and add impasto acrylics on top for texture.

49 Foreground Details and Color Vibration



Add Foreground Details

Introduce a few small, thin shadowy elements in the foreground to enhance depth and interest. These details should be subtle but will add to the overall texture and complexity of the scene.

Create Color Vibration

Apply a slightly blue-grey tone through and around the foreground elements. This will interact with the existing orange tones to create a visual shimmer, utilizing the complementary nature of blue and orange to achieve a vibrant effect.

PRO TIP

Use complementary colors like blue and orange to create visual vibration and shimmer.

50 Color Saturation and Editing



Experiment with Color Saturation

Take a photo of your painting or subject. Use photo editing software to adjust the saturation, either boosting it for more vibrancy or reducing it for a more muted effect. This helps you visualize different color possibilities and decide on the mood you want to convey in your painting.

Understand the Power of Color

Observe how changes in saturation affect the overall feel of the image. Use this understanding to make informed decisions about color intensity in your painting. Remember, you are not bound to replicate the photo exactly; instead, use it as a guide to explore your creative options.

PRO TIP

Adjusting photo saturation can help you explore color possibilities before committing to paint.

51 Signing and Taping Off



Sign Your Painting

Add your signature to the painting as the final touch. This personalizes your work and marks it as complete.

Remove the Tape

Carefully peel off the tape from the edges of your painting. This reveals a clean white border, giving your artwork a framed appearance.

Check for Composition Issues

Use a mirror or flip the image in a camera to view your painting in reverse. This fresh perspective can help you spot any drawing or compositional issues that may have gone unnoticed.

Adjust Any Odd Elements

If anything looks strange, make necessary adjustments. Often, issues like incorrect angles or disproportionate elements become apparent with a fresh view.

PRO TIP

Viewing your painting in reverse can help identify compositional issues that are not immediately obvious.

52 Canvas Priming and Preparation



Check Canvas Priming

Ensure your canvas is adequately primed before starting. If it's not double or triple primed, apply an additional coat of gesso to prepare the surface.

Apply a Warm Wash

Consider doing a light wash of acrylic over the entire canvas. Use a warm color like yellow ochre to add depth and interest to your painting. This technique will allow warm tones to peek through in the final artwork.

PRO TIP

Use a warm acrylic wash on your canvas to enhance color interest in your painting.

53 Fiber Board and Outdoor Painting



Choose the Right Fiber Board Size

Select a fiber board that's approximately 24 by 36 inches. This size is ideal for outdoor painting as it provides a large background to shield your eyes from the sun.

Protect Your Eyes While Painting

Use a large fiber board behind your canvas to block sunlight from entering your eyes. This helps you see colors more accurately by keeping your pupils open, especially when painting towards the light.

PRO TIP

Use a large fiber board to shield your eyes from sunlight when painting outdoors, ensuring better color visibility.

Summary & Key Takeaways

Embark on your painting journey by selecting the right tools and materials. Choose long flat brushes for broad strokes and small dagger brushes for intricate details. Set up your palette with a range of colors and use walnut oil to enhance the flow of your paints. Begin your composition by sketching directly onto the canvas, positioning your main subject using the rule of thirds for balance.

As you progress, focus on blocking in dark areas to establish the foundation of your painting. Use paths to guide the viewer's eye and create a visual journey. Pay attention to color choices, ensuring your sketching colors do not interfere with the final layers. Whether using acrylics or oils, keep your paints workable and blendable to achieve soft edges and natural transitions.

Trust the process as you add layers and details, knowing that the initial stages may not look perfect. Embrace the rough beginnings as part of the creative journey. Use light and shadow effectively to enhance realism, and be mindful of color mixing to avoid muddy tones. With patience and practice, your rustic farm shed painting will come to life with depth and vibrancy.

LESSON POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Use long bristle brushes for larger areas and expressive strokes.
- Position key elements using the rule of thirds for balance.
- Use a dark background to enhance contrast and draw attention.
- Choose a weak sketching color that won't interfere with final layers.
- Keep your darks thin to prevent them from affecting top layers.
- Paint soft areas larger than needed, then refine for a natural look.
- Avoid making trees the same size and spacing for a natural appearance.
- Separate warm and cool colors on your palette to prevent muddy mixes.



Rustic Farm Shed 10x12" Oil on Canvas

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.

“Rustic Farm Shed 12x12 Oil on Canvas” by Nancy Newton



Rustic Farm Shed 12x12 Oil on Canvas

Great job, Nancy. Your colours are spot on, and there's some good expressive brushwork in there, especially in the foreground. The old shed is looking suitably ramshackle and there's a nice variety of colour and brushwork in the ground plane, which has the potential to be dull if not treated this way.

Couple of things that would lift the centre of interest even more would be to add more variety in colour and value to the wooden fencing and the red doors.

“Ruakaka barn, 12x10” oil on panel” by Mark Price



Ruakaka barn, 12x10” oil on panel

Nicely done, Mark! Lots of interest in here with punchy colour and big textured areas contrasting the finer details. One word of advice: keep working on making a mark (Mark) and leaving it, rather than overworking it and obscuring it.

“Rustic Shed 8 x 10 Oil on Canvas. My personal challenge was to complete this in one hour!” by **Louise Villegas**



Rustic Shed 8 x 10 Oil on Canvas. My personal challenge was to complete this in one hour!

Great idea, Louise, giving yourself an hour to complete this painting. That shows in the expressive brushwork and bold colour. I like the effect you've achieved in the foreground by softening the brushwork there - that pushes your eye to the other areas that are more in focus with sharper edges.

I've got three tips for you: 1. Add some colour variety into the ground plane with grey browns. 2. Avoid using purple for shadows (like inside the barn). Add yellow or orange to purple to grey it down. 3. Sharpen up the top edges of the barn, because it's your center of interest so should be in sharp focus.

“Rustic Farm Shed Oil on oil paper” by Geoffrey Geeson



Rustic Farm Shed Oil on oil paper

Beautifully done, Geoffrey! I think I prefer it to my one. Lots of interesting lyrical brushwork is laid down confidently and left to speak. Intensifying the darks in the foreground has added more gravity to that section, and there's more to look at; more interest. You've made beautiful organic shapes in there too, and throughout - clearly defined like interlocking puzzle pieces. Great work!