



After the Storm

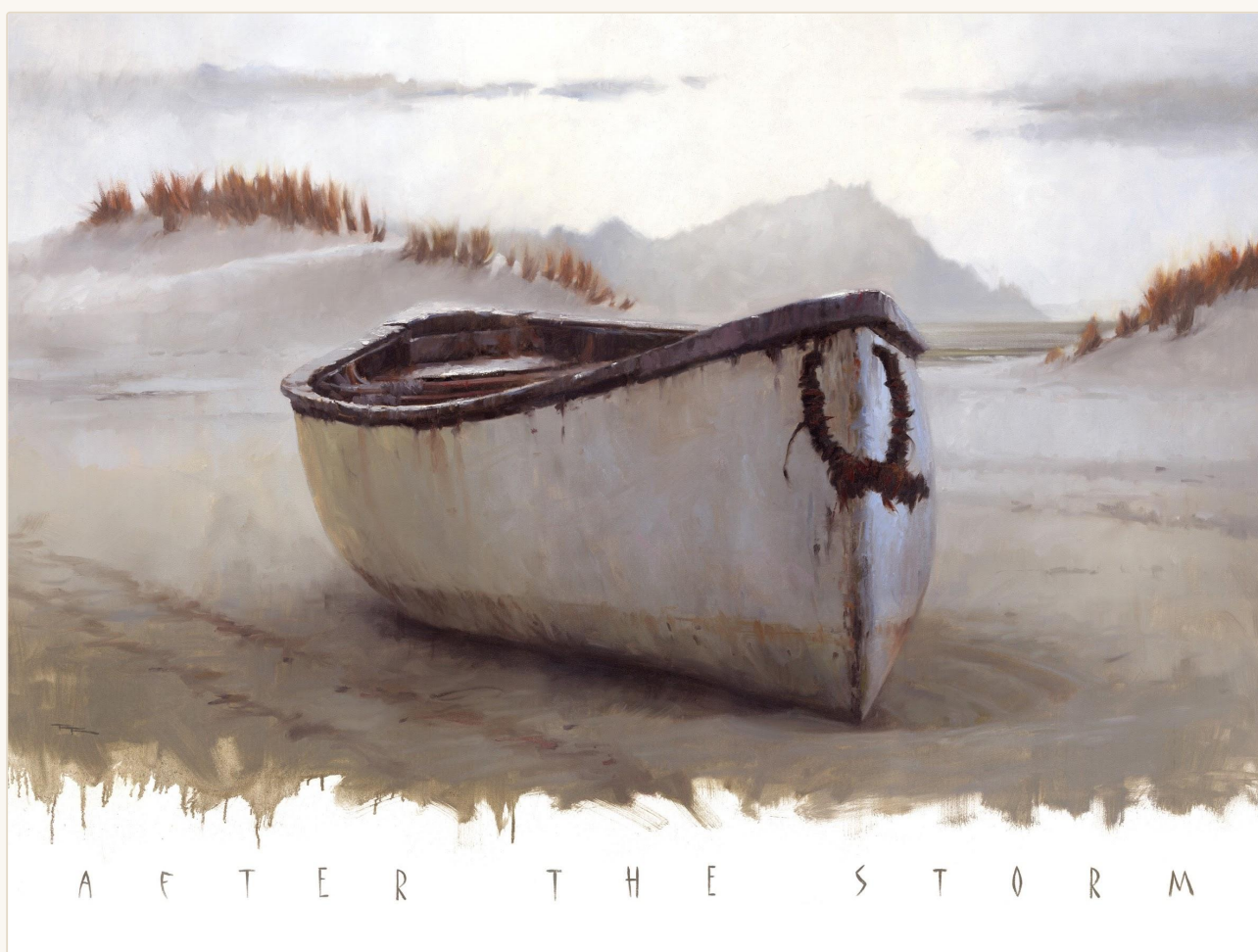
A step-by-step painting guide by Richard Robinson

Watch the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/215-After-the-Storm>

MY PAINTING CLUB

Introduction

In this chapter, I invite you to join me in creating a captivating painting titled 'After the Storm.' We'll be working on a large canvas, ideally 36 by 48 inches, which allows us to capture the full impact of the scene with expressive brush strokes and a dramatic presentation. I've chosen to use acrylic paints for this project, as they are less prone to cracking over time compared to oils, making them a durable choice for large paintings. The setup includes a big bucket of water, a towel for wiping off, and a large palette made from painted wood. For brushes, I've selected a few key ones: a bristle brush for the block-in, a synthetic Rosemary & Co. brush for the majority of the work, and a small pointy one for signing. This lesson is all about painting light, atmosphere, and depth with only three colors. You'll learn to create large gradations, soft-edged brushwork, and sparkling impasto highlights. We'll focus on good design, accurate drawing, passionate brushwork, and a variety of fun techniques. This scene is particularly rewarding because it allows us to explore the subtle interplay of light and shadow, capturing the serene aftermath of a storm. Let's dive in and enjoy the process together!



After the Storm 2

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

- Chroma Atelier Interactive Acrylics
- Ultramarine Blue
- Burnt Sienna
- Yellow Ochre
- Titanium White
- 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
- Bucket of water

1 Canvas size and medium choice



Choose Your Canvas

Select a large canvas, ideally 36 by 48 inches, to capture the full impact of the painting. This size allows for expressive brush strokes and a dramatic presentation.

Select Your Medium

Opt for acrylic paints for this project. Acrylics are less prone to cracking over time compared to oils, making them a durable choice for large paintings.

PRO TIP

Acrylics are a great choice for large paintings that will be displayed in environments with fluctuating temperatures, as they resist cracking and fading.

2 Painting popularity and color scheme



Understand the Painting's Appeal

Recognize that this painting is popular due to its ability to capture the mood of the scene, not just the subject. The simplicity and monochromatic feel contribute to its timeless appeal.

Choose a Simple Color Scheme

Use a limited palette to create a cohesive and atmospheric painting. Select ultramarine blue and burnt sienna as your primary colors, with the addition of yellow ochre and white to enhance the composition.

PRO TIP

Focus on capturing the mood of the scene with a simple, monochromatic color scheme.

3 Previous versions and painting evolution



Evaluate Previous Versions

Examine your earlier paintings to understand their strengths and weaknesses. Notice how the values in the initial version may be too light, making it difficult to discern details. Compare this with a later version where darker values enhance clarity and depth.

Enhance Details

Focus on improving details such as the thickness of elements like the rail on the boat and the fullness of sand dune grasses. These adjustments can make the painting more visually engaging and cohesive.

Experiment with Formats

Consider trying different formats, such as a square or diamond shape, to see how they affect the composition. A frontal view might suit a balanced format, while a more elevated view could benefit from a unique shape.

Use Atmospheric Perspective

Introduce atmospheric perspective by adjusting the values at the back of the scene. Make the distant parts of the painting lighter and less contrasted, while increasing contrast in the foreground to create depth.

Develop a Series

When you find a subject you love and that has potential for sales, explore it through a series of paintings. This not only helps improve your skills but also maximizes your artistic and financial success.

PRO TIP

Experiment with different formats and perspectives to find the most effective composition for your subject.

4 Painting boats and artistic choices



Choose a Boat with Character

Select a boat that has character and age, as these features make it more interesting to paint. Avoid painting brand new boats without any flaws, as they lack the unique details that give a painting depth.

Utilize Complementary Colors

Incorporate complementary color schemes, such as the contrast between a red boat and blue-green water, to create visual interest. This contrast will draw attention to the boat and enhance the overall composition.

Focus on Light and Reflection

Pay attention to the light and its reflection on the boat's hull. Use warm colors to depict warm morning light, but be cautious not to overdo it. Aim for a balance that captures the scene's natural warmth.

Experiment with Painterly Techniques

Challenge yourself to be painterly by focusing on broad, expressive brushstrokes. This approach can add a dynamic feel to your painting and help you develop your style.

Direct the Viewer's Eye

Use crisp edges and detailed areas on the boat to draw the viewer's attention. Surround these with softer, swishy edges to create contrast and guide the eye towards the focal point.

Reflect the Scene's Light

Observe the warmth of the light reflecting on the boat's hull. Use rich colors to convey the strength of the light in the scene, enhancing the painting's vibrancy.

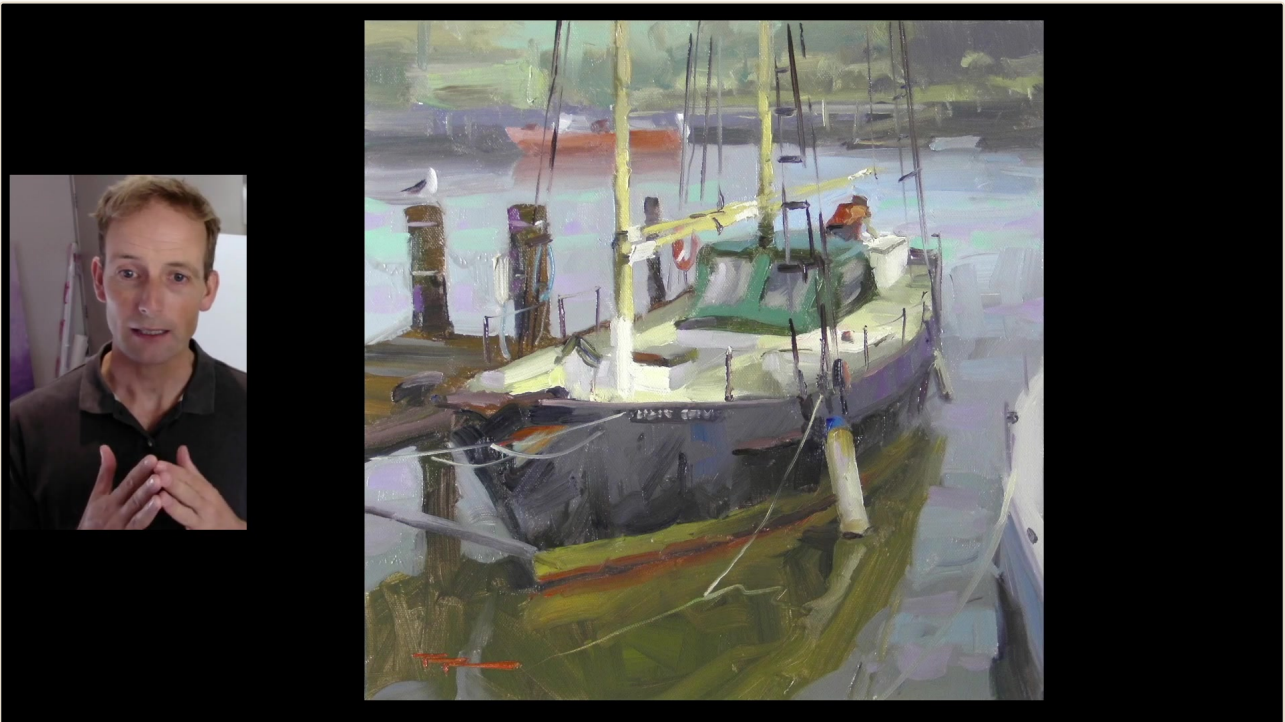
Simplify and Focus on Big Shapes

When painting scenes with multiple elements, simplify by focusing on big shapes. This approach helps in managing complexity and maintaining a cohesive composition.

PRO TIP

Use complementary colors to create visual interest and draw attention to the focal point of your painting.

5 Boat painting inspiration



Explore Shape Contrast

Focus on the interplay of large and small shapes in your painting. This contrast creates visual interest and can make your composition more dynamic.

Experiment with Brushwork

Challenge yourself to see how expressive and swirly you can make your brushwork. This adds movement and texture to your painting, enhancing its overall impact.

Use Complementary Colors

Incorporate a strong complementary color scheme, such as subdued green against a punchy red. This contrast will make your painting more vibrant and engaging.

PRO TIP

Focus on the contrast between large and small shapes to create visual interest.

6 Painting process and edge management



Prepare Your Tools

Use one main brush for most of the work. Have a square palette knife and an HB pencil ready for marking.

Mark the Horizon

Lightly mark the horizon line on your canvas. This helps with the placement of other elements in your painting.

Plan Your Composition

Lightly sketch where you want the main elements to go. This will guide your painting process.

Paint the Landscape First

Start with the landscape, leaving the boat for later. This allows you to create soft edges and blends by working wet into wet.

PRO TIP

Work on the landscape first to maintain soft edges and blends with acrylics.

7 Acrylic painting techniques



Prepare Your Paint

Use Italia Interactive Acrylics for a longer working time, allowing for easier blending and soft edge effects. Squeeze out a generous amount of ultramarine blue, burnt sienna, and a little yellow ochre. Keep the paint in large blobs to slow down drying.

Maintain Moisture

Fill a spray bottle with water and intermittently mist the canvas and palette. This keeps the paint wet and workable, essential for achieving smooth gradients and blends.

Select the Right White

Use interactive white for the background to ensure it remains flat and smooth. Choose impasto white for the boat to create a textured, three-dimensional effect that catches light and adds depth.

PRO TIP

Use flat paint for background elements and impasto paint for foreground elements to create depth and make features pop.

8 Brush preparation and painting order



Prepare the Canvas

Give the canvas a light squirt of water to keep it moist. Remember to also dampen the edges to ensure even coverage.

Wet the Brush

Wet a large brush thoroughly before starting. This is crucial with acrylics to prevent the paint from drying in the bristles, which can damage the brush.

Plan Your Painting Order

Begin painting from the back of the scene, starting with the sky. Progress to the mountain, then the sand dunes, and continue working forward in layers.

Sketch the Mountain

Draw the outline of the mountain on the canvas to guide your painting process.

PRO TIP

Always wet your brush before using acrylics to prevent the paint from drying in the bristles.

9 Mountain drawing and personal story



Incorporate Local Mountains

Include a mountain in your painting to add depth and interest. It doesn't have to be a specific mountain like the Whangarei Heads; feel free to draw inspiration from mountains you know in your area.

PRO TIP

Use familiar landscapes to personalize your painting and connect with your subject.

10 Painting into a couch technique



Apply a White Layer

Apply a thin layer of white paint to the canvas. Smooth it out evenly to create a soft base. This layer should remain wet to prevent hard edges in your sky.

Maintain Soft Edges

Ensure the white layer stays wet to achieve soft edges in your painting. Soft edges in the sky help it recede into the background, avoiding unwanted attention.

PRO TIP

Use a spray bottle to keep the paint layer wet and maintain soft edges.

11 Sky gradient and blending



Warm the White

Add a tiny touch of yellow ochre to your white paint to slightly warm it up. This subtle warmth will create a gentle glow in your sky.

Paint the Central Area

Choose a central spot slightly off-center and paint around it using the warmed-up white. Use big brush strokes to cover the area, ensuring a smooth application.

Introduce Blue Gradually

As you move outward from the central area, add a small amount of blue to the white. Work carefully to maintain a soft effect, avoiding too much color.

Blend the Blue

Start from the outer edge and blend the blue in a circular motion into the warmer white layer. Allow some brush strokes to remain visible, but avoid creating hard edges.

PRO TIP

Add color to white gradually to maintain a soft effect and avoid overpowering the subtle gradient.

12 Color mixing and commission story



Blend the Sky

Add a little more blue and white to your palette to extend your paint supply. Gradually darken the sky by adding blue as you move outward, but keep the blue subtle to avoid an intense color.

Paint Over the Sand Dune

Paint down over the top of the sand dune, focusing on the edges rather than the whole area. This will allow for adjustments later as you work back into it.

Adjust the Color Tone

Mix in a touch of benzina to the blue to grey it down slightly. Aim for a subtle, greyed tone, as this painting emphasizes greys over intense colors.

PRO TIP

Focus on creating subtle blends and greys to maintain the painting's overall tone.

13 Clouds and color theory



Prepare Your Brush and Palette

Wet your smaller brush and ensure your palette is moist to keep the paint workable. This prevents the paint from drying too quickly and allows for smoother blending.

Mix a Subtle Yellow Tint

Combine white with a tiny touch of yellow on your palette. This mixture will add a soft, broken color effect, creating visual interest similar to harmonic notes in music.

Maintain Value Consistency

Adjust the hue of your mixture while keeping the same value as the area you're painting. This ensures the new color integrates seamlessly, adding a shimmering effect without altering the overall lightness or darkness.

Work While Wet

Apply the paint while the surface is still wet. This is crucial with acrylics, as they change value when drying, making it difficult to match colors accurately.

Add Clouds

Mix blue with burnt sienna to create the cloud color. This combination provides a natural, muted tone suitable for cloud formations.

PRO TIP

Apply paint while the surface is wet to maintain consistent value and achieve seamless blending.

14 Variety in painting



Mixing Grey with Complements

Use blue and burnt sienna to create a neutral grey. These colors are complements, meaning they are opposite each other on the color wheel. Adjust the ratio of blue to burnt sienna to achieve the desired shade of grey.

Softening Edges

Use a dry brush to soften some of the hard edges in your painting. Wipe the brush frequently to maintain its effectiveness. This technique helps to create variety in texture and prevents the painting from looking too airbrushed.

Balancing Edge Variety

Assess your painting for edge variety. If you notice too many hard edges, soften some of them to add balance. Conversely, if the painting is too soft, introduce some crisp edges for contrast.

PRO TIP

Use a dry brush to soften edges, but be mindful of the paint's dryness to avoid unwanted hard edges.

15 Mountain painting and client view



Prepare the Surface

Keep the painting surface wet, but not so much that it starts to run or dribble. Use a soft misting technique to maintain the right level of moisture.

Clean Your Brush

Clean the soft brush thoroughly to prevent paint buildup, which can ruin the brush. Proper brush care ensures longevity and better performance.

Paint the Mountain

Begin working on the mountain in the background. Integrate it smoothly with the existing elements by maintaining the wet surface.

PRO TIP

Clean your brushes regularly to extend their lifespan and maintain their performance.

16 Mountain blending and avoiding outlines



Mix Mountain Color

Use the same blue-grey mixture from before, adding a touch more burnt sienna for warmth. Ensure the color is consistent with the rest of the landscape.

Lightly Sketch Mountain

Lightly sketch the mountain shape with the mixed color. Pay attention to the details, especially if the landscape is well-known to viewers.

Avoid Outlines

Blend the paint well on your brush to prevent creating dark outlines. Outlines can spoil the depth and realism of the mountain.

PRO TIP

Blend paint well on the brush to avoid creating unwanted outlines on the mountain.

17 Mountain light and contrast



Create a Blend

Begin by painting beyond the desired starting point of your blend. This allows you to work back into the area for a smoother transition, similar to blending in the sky.

Mix Light Colors

Add a small amount of yellow ochre to white paint to create a slightly warmer light. Be cautious with the yellow, as it's easy to overdo it in light mixtures.

Blend the Colors

Lay down a band of the mixed color and work back into it with the brush to blend. Once most of the paint is off the brush, continue blending to achieve a smooth transition.

Cover Pencil Marks

Use a big brush carefully to cover any pencil marks showing through. Work the brush over the pencil until it blends into the paint.

Adjust Contrast

Ensure there is enough contrast between the mountain and the sky. Aim for a light-filled effect with subtle contrast that is visible from a distance but not overpowering.

PRO TIP

Use yellow ochre instead of bright yellow to avoid creating vibrant greens when mixing with blue.

18 Softening edges and value contrast



Soften Edges with a Dry Brush

Spray the area lightly with water, then use a dry brush to soften the edge by making very small, light zigzag motions. This prevents the area from looking like a hard cut out and keeps the edges soft.

Enhance Foreground Contrast

Keep the edges in the background soft to allow the foreground, such as the boat, to have sharp edges. This contrast will make the foreground elements pop.

Adjust Value Contrast

Evaluate the value contrast by comparing it to a reference. If needed, add a little more value by darkening the area to match the desired contrast.

PRO TIP

Use a dry brush with light zigzag motions to soften edges without creating a hard cut out.

19 Sand dune and grass painting



Create a Glow for the Boat

Add a soft red glow at the top of where the boat will be placed. This will help blend the boat into the scene naturally and ensure it aligns with the glow.

Paint the Sand Dunes

Use a soft brush, wet it slightly, and mix burnt sienna with a little blue and a touch of white. This lighter value will sit back in the background, ensuring it doesn't compete with the darker elements of the boat.

Add Grassy Effects

Brush upwards to create a grassy effect, adding a little yellow ochre to warm it up. Darken the mixture slightly with more burnt sienna and blue, brushing up from the bottom into the lights without reaching the end of the lights.

Use Light Brush Strokes

Apply a very light touch with the brush to avoid scooping off wet paint, using the tip for small shapes and the flat for larger ones. Ensure variety in the shapes to mimic natural grasses.

PRO TIP

Use a very light touch when painting wet into wet to prevent removing paint from the surface.

20 Sand dune color and light effect



Mix Sand Dune Color

Combine white, blue, and a little burnt sienna to create a neutral grey. Adjust the mix by adding more blue for a cooler tone or more burnt sienna for a warmer tone.

Apply the Color

Spray the area lightly to ensure a soft edge. Apply the color, working into the base of the dune grasses without covering them completely.

Maintain Soft Edges

Ensure the edges remain soft by working in the wet areas. Avoid leaving any white bits showing through.

PRO TIP

Use a light spray to keep edges soft and blend seamlessly.

21 Grass details and drying time



Lighten the Dune Grasses

As the dune grasses approach the light, lighten them slightly to reflect the illumination. Use a soft edge to blend the grasses into the sand dune, creating a natural transition.

Soften Canvas Edges

Avoid sharp edges at the edge of the canvas, as they can draw the eye away from the focal point. Soften any edges at the canvas boundary to maintain focus within the painting.

Balance Broad and Detailed Brushwork

Incorporate both broad, gestural brushwork and tight detail to create a dynamic composition. This contrast highlights the expressive nature of paint while showcasing detailed craftsmanship.

Add Soft Light to the Dune

Use a brush to add a soft light catching the top of the dune. Avoid using pure white; instead, choose a slightly lighter tone to subtly enhance the light effect.

PRO TIP

Soften any edges at the edge of the canvas to prevent them from drawing attention away from the main focus.

22 Dark accents and cast shadows



Select the Right Brush

Use an ivory long flat brush from Rosemary & Co. These brushes hold a lot of paint and allow for long, calligraphic strokes due to their length and bendiness.

Mix a Dark Accent Color

Create a dark accent color by mixing a warm mid-gray, slightly darker than mid-gray. This will be used for adding depth and details.

Apply Dark Accents

Brush up from the bottom with the dark accent color. Ensure the paint is still wet to avoid hard edges in your strokes.

Add Soft Cast Shadows

Incorporate soft cast shadows to enhance the realism and depth of the painting. Pay attention to the placement and softness of these shadows.

PRO TIP

Use an ivory long flat brush for calligraphic strokes and to hold more paint.

23 Grass highlights and light strips



Add Dark Accents

Ensure the dark accents are not too dark. Lighten them as they approach the light to prevent them from sticking out too much. Connect these accents with the sand dune to create a cohesive look.

Break Up Uniform Areas

Identify areas that appear too uniform and break them up with varied brushstrokes. This adds interest and prevents monotony in the painting.

Apply Grass Highlights

Mix yellow ochre with a little white, blue, and brown to create a highlight color. Apply this to the grass areas to add punchy color and bring the scene to life.

Add Light Strips

Remember to paint the strips of light that sneak through the dune grasses. These add depth and realism to the scene.

Highlight Dune Tops

Add a little more light to the tops of the dunes to emphasize the sunlight hitting them. This enhances the overall lighting effect in the painting.

PRO TIP

Lighten dark accents as they approach the light to prevent them from sticking out too much.

24 Ocean painting and color balance



Paint the Ocean Base

Mix blue, yellow ochre, and white to create a subdued ocean color. Avoid using too much blue or green to maintain harmony with the rest of the painting. Start with a darker tone and gradually lighten it.

Create Wave Lines

Add a little blue and white to your mix and paint over the base. Leave some lines of the dark green visible to suggest waves.

Blend the Ocean with the Background

Add more white and blue to your mix to lighten it further. Paint the ocean so it softly merges with the mountain in the background, avoiding hard edges.

Add Foam Details

Mix a bit of white with the existing blue-grey to create a subtle foam color. Apply this along the ocean to suggest foam without making it too bright.

PRO TIP

Maintain a soft transition between the ocean and the background to avoid hard edges.

25 Boat drawing and placement



Sketch the Boat Shape

Sketch the rough shape of the boat on your canvas. Focus on capturing the big shape accurately, not the details. Ensure the placement is correct by measuring the distance from the top of the canvas to the highest point of the boat and from the bottom.

Define the Rectangle

Visualize a rectangle around the boat shape. This helps in determining the correct angles within the rectangle. Pay attention to how the boat's angles relate to the rectangle's sides.

Use Projection or Tracing

For accuracy, project the boat shape onto the canvas or print it to size, rub charcoal on the back, tape it up, and trace it. Press hard to transfer the drawing onto the canvas.

Focus on Negative Shapes

Examine the negative shapes between the rectangle and the boat. Getting these external shapes right ensures the boat's angles are accurate. Avoid focusing solely on internal shapes.

Avoid Common Mistakes

Do not make the boat's shape too round or tip the lines forward. These errors can make the boat look incorrect. Draw the angles you see, not what you think they should be.

PRO TIP

Pay attention to negative shapes between the rectangle and the boat to ensure accurate angles.

26 Background preparation



Assess Vertical Alignment

Compare the vertical lines in your composition. Check if they are slightly off from a perfect vertical. Adjust as needed by comparing one shape to another and one angle to another.

Prepare the Background

Ensure your drawing is where you want it before starting on the background. This will set the stage for adding the boat later.

PRO TIP

Compare shapes and angles to ensure accurate drawing alignment.

27 Shadow and gradation techniques



Prepare the Canvas

Spray the canvas lightly and give it a gentle rub to ensure it's not too wet. This prepares the surface for smooth application of paint.

Mix the Base Color

Combine blue, brown, and interactive white to create a light neutral gray. Adjust the mixture by adding more white if it's too dark, aiming for a soft, subtle tone.

Apply the Base Layer

Use a large brush to cover the canvas with the mixed gray, painting just inside the boat area. Extend the paint beyond where you want it to finish to ensure a seamless transition.

Create Soft Edges

Soften the edges of the paint by working into the previously softened areas. This will help avoid hard edges and create a smooth gradation from light to dark.

Add Structure

Look for areas within the painting where structure is needed, such as thin lines. Plan to add these details next to enhance the composition.

PRO TIP

Paint beyond where you want the paint to finish to ensure a seamless transition and avoid hard edges.

28 Sand texture and dribbles



Start with Dark Values

Begin by painting the darkest areas first. Focus on creating smooth transitions by carefully managing hard edges. Use your finger dipped in water to gently smooth out any harsh lines.

Add Dark Accents

Introduce a dark accent with a horizontal, thin application. Soften the edges slightly to blend it into the surrounding areas. Clean your brush before moving to the next step.

Mix and Apply Mid-Tones

Add a little blue and brown to your main mixture to create a mid-tone. Use water to help the paint flow smoothly. Apply this mixture to create shapes and transitions between different values.

Incorporate Lighter Stripes

Paint a few stripes of slightly lighter, bluer grey. This will simulate the effect of light from the sky bouncing off the sand, adding form and dimension. Ensure these lines gradually aim uphill at a slight angle.

Darken and Warm the Foreground

As the sand comes forward, darken it slightly and add warmth by incorporating a bit more burnt sienna. This reflects the reduced influence of the blue light and enhances the warmth in the foreground.

Plan for Shadows

Consider where the soft shadow from the boat will fall. Outline the shadow's position and ensure it is darker than the surrounding sand. Prepare to add dribbly bits for texture.

PRO TIP

Use a smaller canvas if you're not comfortable with large paintings to minimize mistakes and make corrections easier.

29 Dark accents and occlusion shadow



Observe Sand Shapes

Examine the interesting shapes in the sand, focusing on the characteristics of the soft edges. Notice the gentle curves that resemble sound waves propagating out.

Create Occlusion Shadow

Mix a very dark color on your palette for the area right underneath the boat. This is the occlusion shadow, where minimal light reaches. Paint it on slightly darker than you think necessary, as acrylics tend to dry lighter.

PRO TIP

Paint dark areas slightly darker than desired, as acrylics dry lighter.

30 Sand details and tide lines



Add Warmth to the Sand

Mix a little more brown into your paint to add warmth. Use a smaller brush to merge this warmer tone into the sand, creating a slightly lighter version. This will help blend the sand with the boat, avoiding a hard white line later.

Highlight Sand Undulations

Mix a lighter color, being careful not to add too much blue. Use a fine line to apply this color to the tops of the sand undulations, simulating reflected skylight and enhancing realism.

Create Dark Tide Lines

Mix a darker, browner tone with a touch of yellow ochre for warmth. Use this mix to paint dark lines that follow the natural flow of the sand, avoiding straight stripes to maintain a natural look.

PRO TIP

Use a fine line to highlight the tops of sand undulations, adding realism with reflected skylight.

31 Splashy effects and stopping point



Create Tide Line Effects

Use a clean large brush to create the effect of the tide line with flotsam. Ensure the angle aligns with the bottom of the boat, and make the lines thinner as they recede into the distance. This will mimic the appearance of railroad tracks, being closer together at one end and further apart at the other.

Add Splashy Effects

Grab a soft brush and spray the area lightly for blending. Add a touch of yellow ochre for warmth and apply it thinly. Use a moist brush to flick paint onto the canvas, creating splashy effects. Allow it to dry slightly before adding more details.

Enhance with Intermediary Colors

Mix a color that sits between the existing hues and apply it with a brush. Use a fair amount to splash it around, adjusting the speed of your strokes to vary the vigor of the effect. To create dribbles, apply wet paint and add water until it flows naturally.

Know When to Stop

Recognize when to stop adding splashy effects. It's common to overwork the canvas, which can lead to a muddy appearance. Stop before you think you need to, preserving the freshness of the white canvas.

PRO TIP

Stop adding splashy effects before you think you need to, to avoid overworking the canvas.

32 Boat painting and impasto technique



Select Brushes and Mix Colors

Use a number 10 long flat synthetic and a number 4 ivory long flat synthetic brush. Mix blue and burnt sienna to create a dark value for the boat, ensuring it is not as dark as the foreground elements to maintain depth.

Block In the Boat

Carefully block in the boat, paying attention to the drawing for realism. Notice the complex angles and edges, which are crucial for capturing the boat's structure and light interaction.

Add Subtle Variations

Switch to a smaller brush and work into the block-in, adding subtle variations in color and contrast. Adjust angles slightly, as the boat is tilted about 5 degrees.

Apply Impasto Technique

Use impasto white for the highlights on the boat. Apply thick paint with a light touch to maintain texture. Build up to the highlights gradually, saving the purest white for the most prominent highlight.

Enhance Highlights and Texture

Add more white and a touch of blue to create texture and highlights. Use a clean brush to add a soft glow around the highlight area, enhancing the form and light.

PRO TIP

For straight lines, lock your arm and rotate your body instead of using your wrist for a smoother motion.

33 Final touches and depth creation



Apply Mid-Grey to Boat Edge

Add a lighter mid-grey to the edge of the boat where it curves and reflects more light. Use some downstrokes to achieve a weathered look, but not exclusively. This technique will enhance the natural appearance of the boat's surface.

Darken Under the Boat

Mix blue and brown to create a dark shade, nearly black, for the area under the boat. This will add depth and shadow, emphasizing the boat's form.

Add Thick Blue Highlights

Switch to a slightly bluer and lighter shade, applying it thickly to the closest part of the boat. Use a generous amount of paint to make this section jump forward, creating a sense of depth. Avoid over-mixing on the palette to allow for interesting paint effects.

Enhance with Color Notes

Introduce more intense blue and other color notes to add interest. These pops of color will create visual intrigue and enhance the painting's dynamic quality.

Detail the Bumper

Apply pure burnt sienna to the bumper, the most worn part of the boat. Use a palette knife if desired to create organic textures and scratches, emphasizing its beaten-up appearance.

Highlight with Pure White

Use pure white on the end of the brush to lay a line along the bumper. Allow the edge to be broken and uneven to reflect the boat's rough condition. This will add a glowing effect and further enhance the contrast between light and dark areas.

PRO TIP

Use thick paint and avoid over-mixing to create interesting texture and depth.

Summary & Key Takeaways

Embark on your painting journey by choosing a large canvas and durable acrylic paints, setting the stage for expressive brushwork and a dramatic presentation. Embrace the simplicity of a limited palette, focusing on ultramarine blue, burnt sienna, yellow ochre, and white to capture the mood of the scene. As you progress, reflect on previous works to identify areas for improvement, such as enhancing depth through darker values and experimenting with different compositions.

As you paint, select subjects with character, like an aged boat, and utilize complementary colors to create visual interest. Pay attention to light and reflection, using warm colors to depict natural warmth without overpowering the scene. Focus on broad, expressive brushstrokes to add dynamism, and use crisp edges to draw attention to focal points. Simplify complex scenes by concentrating on large shapes and maintaining a cohesive composition.

Throughout the process, manage your materials wisely by keeping paints wet for smooth blending and soft edges. Start with the landscape to establish a background, then move forward in layers, ensuring each element integrates seamlessly. Use techniques like the 'painting into a couch' to maintain soft edges, and apply color gradually to preserve subtle gradients. Regularly assess your work for edge variety and maintain brush cleanliness to ensure longevity and performance.

LESSON POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Choose a large canvas and acrylic paints for durability and expressiveness.
- Use a limited palette to capture the mood and simplicity of the scene.
- Select subjects with character and use complementary colors for interest.
- Focus on large shapes and expressive brushstrokes to simplify complexity.
- Keep paints wet for smooth blending and soft edges.
- Start with the landscape and work forward in layers.
- Apply color gradually to maintain subtle gradients.
- Regularly clean brushes to extend their lifespan.



After the Storm 2

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.

“Washed up” by **Lindsay Shaw**



Washed up

Great work Lindsay! Love that intense glow in the sky and the real sense of light on the mountains. Beautiful subtle shadows cast by the dune grasses too, though the grasses themselves could do with a little fertiliser. The drawing of the boat is pretty decent and there's a lot of nice expressive brushwork in there. If you darken the foreground sand a little more it will connect with the boat better and also provide a stronger sense of depth as the eye travels from the shade into the light. Nice job!

“After The Storm Oil video lesson 3.21” by **Jill Frazier**



After The Storm Oil video lesson 3.21

Hi Jill, nice work. Great to see this on a smaller scale. I love your expressive brushwork that ties the whole painting together. Looks to me like you may be using a little too much painting medium with your oils and it's letting the weave of the canvas show through. Try painting with less medium and use bigger piles of paint. Other than that I've only got praise for this one. Nice!

“‘Quiet Beach’ in (ordinary) acrylics!” by **Barbara Magor**



‘Quiet Beach’ in (ordinary) acrylics!

Hi Barbara, yes it does feel like a very quiet beach! The tighter your style, the more quiet the beach will seem. Looks like you've come to appreciate how fast normal acrylics dry, so you've ended up painting over dry layers and that gives you the grainy dry brush look with lots of hard edges. Maybe that's what you were after, but it wasn't what I was teaching. You know, that was about the seventh time I've painted that boat, so of course I can paint it very quickly now, which, combined with the techniques I showed in the video, gives a very painterly wet in wet look akin to oil paints. If you were to paint this one again you'd be able to paint it a little faster and avoid much of the dry-brush look. Also, check your boat against the photo in a mirror. The drawing's a bit wonky. You've created a good sense of light and space in the background. Good on you!

“"After The Storm" watercolour & gouache, by Eric Hillmer, Toronto, ON, Canada.”
by **Eric Hillmer**



"After The Storm" watercolour & gouache, by Eric Hillmer, Toronto, ON, Canada.

Hey Eric, nice to see this one in watercolour! Great job too with all the colours and sense of light. Just the drawing letting you down a but and I'd spend some more time experimenting with making those splashy foregrounds on separate paper. Watercolour is perfect for that. Just takes a bit of practice.