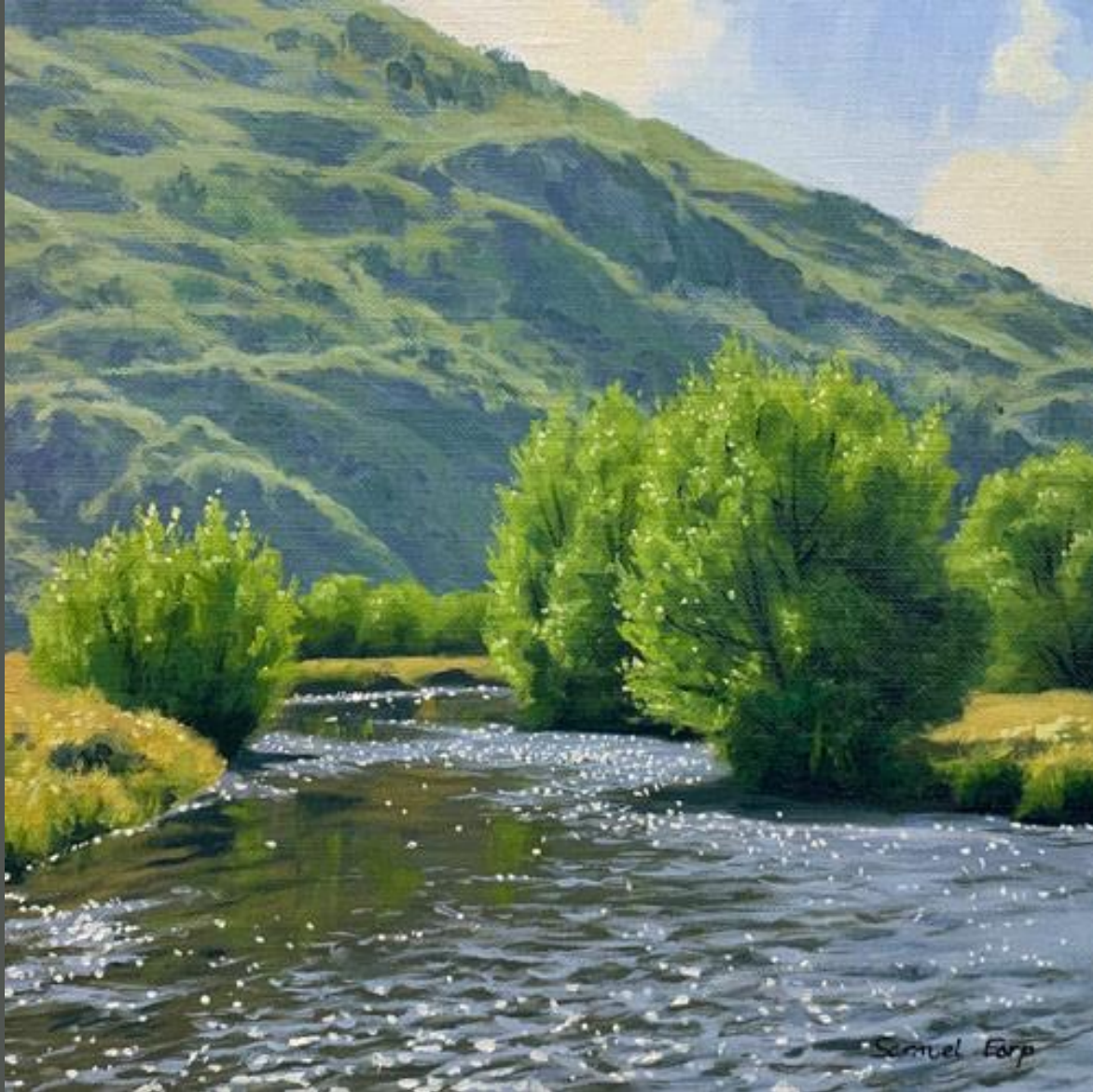




# Summer Willows

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A step-by-step painting guide by Richard Robinson

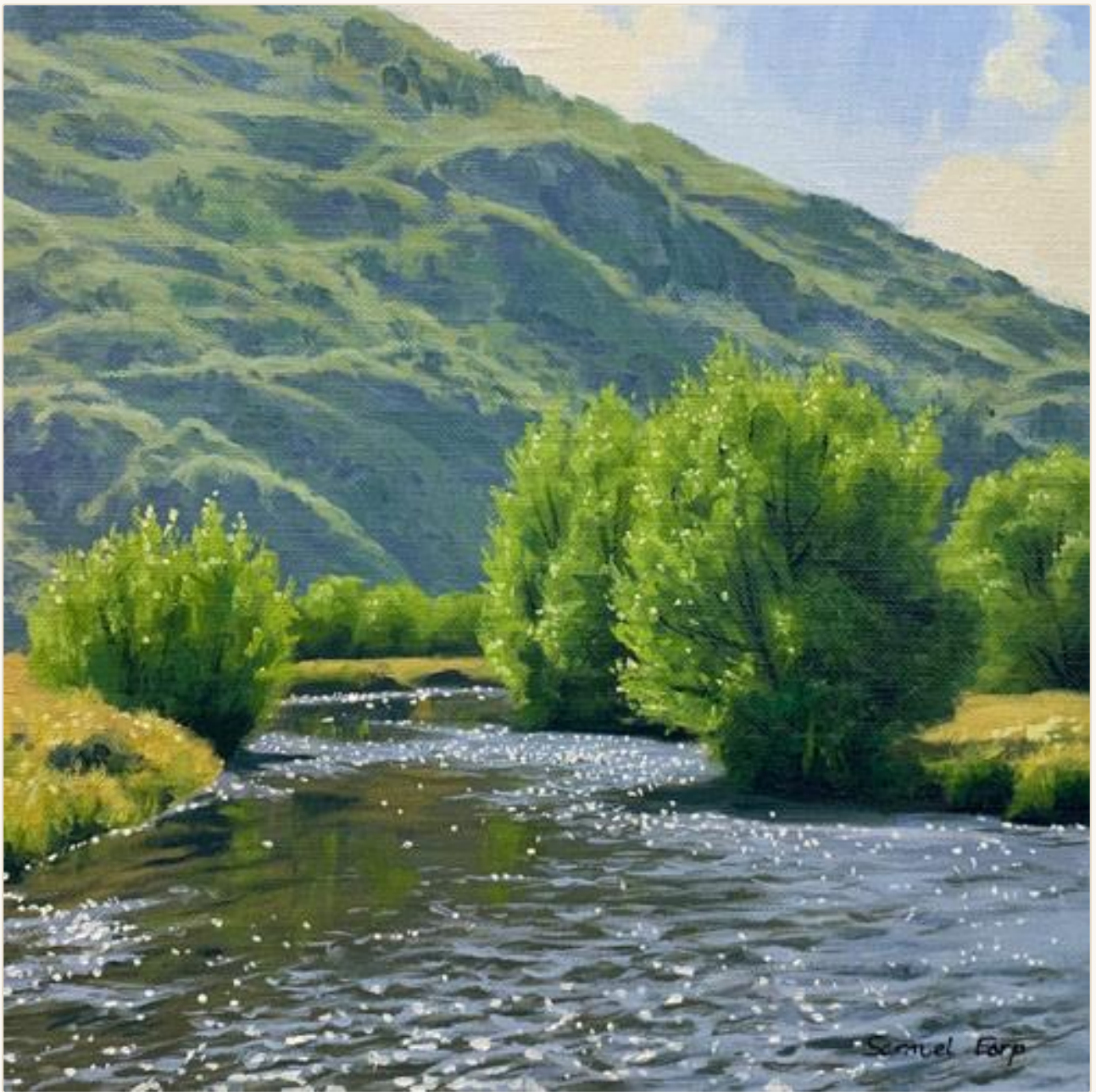
Watch the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/229-Summer-Willows>

MY PAINTING CLUB

# Introduction

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In this chapter, we'll explore the serene beauty of a summer landscape featuring graceful willow trees and a shimmering river under the bright sun. The scene is set with a simple yet effective composition, utilizing an S-shaped curve that guides the eye through the painting, suggesting rhythm and flow. This approach often results in the most compelling landscapes, as it avoids unnecessary complexity. The willow trees stand as a focal point, embodying the essence of summer with their lush foliage. The distant mountains, rendered in lighter tonal values, add an element of grandeur and atmospheric depth, enhancing the illusion of height. Throughout this lesson, I'll guide you in mixing vibrant greens and capturing the play of sunlight on water, all while infusing art theory into our practice. By the end, you'll not only recreate this tranquil scene but also gain techniques applicable to your own artistic endeavors. Whether you choose oil or acrylic paints, this project promises to be both rewarding and enlightening, offering a perfect blend of challenge and enjoyment for your painting journey.



*Summer Willows*





**REFERENCE PHOTO**

*The scene as Richard found it.*



# Materials

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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

- Titanium white
- Burnt sienna
- Yellow oxide (you can use yellow ochre instead)
- Cadmium yellow
- Cadmium red
- Quinacridone crimson (you can use alizarin crimson instead)
- Ultramarine blue
- Phthalo green
- No.10 flat
- No.8 flat
- No.6 flat
- No.4 flat
- No.2 flat
- No.6 filbert
- No.2 filbert
- No.1 round
- No.0 round
- 3/8 dagger
- 1/4 dagger

## 1 Canvas and Materials

# BLOCKING-IN THE PAINTING

### Prepare Your Canvas

Cut a sheet of medium weave oil primed linen to your desired size. Tape it securely to a board to create a stable surface for painting.

### Set Your Painting Area

Ensure the area you are painting measures around 12 inches by 12 inches. This size is manageable and allows for easy handling and storage.

### Choose Your Medium

Use oil paints for this painting, but feel free to use acrylics if you prefer. Both mediums work well on linen and offer flexibility in your painting process.

#### PRO TIP

*Loose linen is low maintenance and easy to store or ship, making it a versatile choice for your painting projects.*



## 2 Medium and Drying Time



### Use Burnt Sienna for Sketching

Sketch out your composition using burnt sienna mixed with liquid original. This combination provides a good base color and helps define your painting's structure.

### Incorporate Liquid Original Medium

Use liquid original as your medium throughout the painting process. It is an alkyd resin that speeds up drying time and improves paint flow.

#### PRO TIP

*Liquid original can make your paintings touch dry within 24 hours, ideal for working on multiple pieces.*

### 3 Colour Palette and Harmony



#### Select Your Palette

Use a simple palette to maintain harmony. Include Titanium White, Burnt Sienna, Yellow Ochre, Cadmium Yellow, Cadmium Red Light, Alizarin Crimson, Ultramarine Blue, and Phthalo Green.

#### Simplify for Harmony

Simplify your palette to improve colour mixing skills and create harmony. Fewer colours ensure similar hues appear throughout the painting, enhancing visual appeal.

#### PRO TIP

*Use a limited palette to achieve colour harmony and improve mixing skills.*

## 4 Sketching and Shadows



### Select a Common Color Palette

Use ultramarine blue as a main color throughout your painting. Incorporate it in the sky, shadows, water, and trees to create harmony and cohesion across different zones.

### Sketch Your Composition

Begin by sketching out your composition to establish the layout of your painting. This will serve as a guide for placing elements and shadows.

### Identify and Paint Shadows

Identify the dark values and shadows in your composition first. Paint these shadows in the background hill using ultramarine blue to set the foundation for depth and contrast.

#### PRO TIP

*Use ultramarine blue consistently across different elements to unify your painting.*



## 5 Value Scale and Foreground



### Identify Dark Values and Shadows

Start by identifying where all the dark values and shadows are in your landscape. This helps you quickly build up a tonal range within the whole painting.

### Understand the Value Scale

Recognize that value refers to how light or dark a subject is. The darkest darks and lightest lights are found in the foreground, while receding landforms have a narrower value scale.

### Use Full Value Scale in Foreground

In the foreground, use the full extent of the value scale, from white to black, to capture the darkest darks and lightest lights. This creates a strong contrast and depth in the painting.

### Adjust Shadows for Background

For background elements like hills, use a narrower value scale. Shadows in the background should not be as dark as those in the foreground to reflect atmospheric perspective.

### Mix Colors for Background Shadows

Mix yellow ochre with ultramarine for the shadows in the background. This combination helps create a softer, more distant feel.

#### PRO TIP

*Use the full value scale in the foreground to create strong contrast and depth.*

## 6 Mixing Shadow Colours



### Mix Background Shadow Colors

Combine yellow ochre with ultramarine blue and a touch of titanium white. This mixture creates a simple shadow color perfect for background elements like tree foliage and vegetation. The titanium white lightens the value, making it suitable for distant shadows.

### Mix Foreground Shadow Colors

Use yellow ochre with a generous amount of ultramarine blue, omitting titanium white. This combination results in a dark value with a green cast, ideal for the shadows in the foreground willow trees. The absence of titanium white keeps the chroma low, enhancing the depth of the scene.

#### PRO TIP

*Use less titanium white in shadow colors for foreground elements to maintain depth and saturation.*

## 7 Painting Sky and Clouds



### Mix Cloud Highlights

Combine titanium white with a little burnt sienna to create a simple mix for the cloud highlights. This combination will give your clouds a warm, natural glow.

### Paint the Sky

Mix ultramarine blue with titanium white to create a clean, vibrant color for the sky. Apply this mixture to the canvas, focusing on the upper section.

### Adjust Sky Tone

Add more ultramarine blue to your sky mix to darken the value and increase the saturation. This will give depth and richness to the upper part of the sky.

#### PRO TIP

*Keep color mixes simple to achieve clean, vibrant colors in your painting.*



## 8 Values in Landscape Elements



### Identify Light Values

Recognize that grass and open fields often have some of the lightest values in a landscape. Use lighter greens and yellows to capture this brightness.

### Understand Darker Elements

Acknowledge that rock faces, slopes, and mountain faces are typically darker in value. Use deeper, more muted colors to represent these elements.

### Recognize the Darkest Values

Observe that trees, especially in dense stands or forests, contain the darkest values due to naturally dark foliage and occlusion shadows. Use rich, dark greens and browns to depict these areas.

#### PRO TIP

*Keep in mind the natural value differences in landscape elements to create depth and contrast in your painting.*



## 9 Blocking In and Brushwork



### Block In Main Colors and Values

Focus on marking down the main colors and values without worrying about detail. Use loose painterly brushwork to convey aliveness in the painting. This stage is about setting the foundation for more detailed work later.

### Paint Sunlit Areas of the Hill

Mix yellow ochre, cadmium yellow, ultramarine blue, a little alizarin crimson, and titanium white to create a green that is not too saturated. This pale green will help the hill sit back in the landscape, avoiding it from coming forward.

### Differentiate Foliage Saturation

For the willow trees, use a more saturated green compared to the distant hill. This contrast in saturation will make the willow trees stand out and create depth in the painting. Avoid using the same green for both areas to maintain the landscape's depth.

### Mark Light Areas on Tree Canopies

Use a mix of yellow ochre, cadmium yellow, and ultramarine to paint the areas of the tree canopies that are in light. This will help in achieving the right saturation and value for these parts of the painting.

#### PRO TIP

*Use less saturated greens for distant hills to help them recede in the landscape.*

## 10 Mixing Greens for Vegetation



### Mix Basic Green

Combine yellow ochre, cadmium yellow, and ultramarine blue to form the base of your green mix. This combination provides a versatile starting point for creating various green tones.

### Adjust Green Value

Add titanium white to your green mixture to adjust the value. This lightens the color, allowing for more variation in your foliage.

### Desaturate Green

Mix in alizarin crimson to reduce the saturation of the green. The red in the crimson, being opposite to green on the color wheel, helps create a more earthy and natural tone.

### Enhance with Phthalo Green

Incorporate a small amount of phthalo green to shift the hue towards an emerald tone. Be cautious with phthalo green, as its strong tinting strength can easily overpower your mixture.

### Create Straw Yellow for Grass

Mix yellow ochre with titanium white, alizarin crimson, and ultramarine blue to achieve a low chroma straw yellow with green undertones. This combination reflects the pale straw colors typical of a mid-summer landscape.

#### PRO TIP

*Use alizarin crimson to desaturate greens and create more natural, earthy tones.*

## 11 Grass and Colour Harmony



### Lighten the Grass

Ensure the grass is painted with lighter values than the trees to make the trees stand out in the landscape. This contrast will help define the different elements within your painting.

### Create Colour Harmony

Use the same colors in the grass, trees, and background hill to tie these zones together and maintain color harmony throughout the painting.

### Paint Water Shadows

Mix yellow ochre with ultramarine blue, burnt sienna, and titanium white to create a muddy, organic reflection color for the water. This combination reflects the background hill and trees, integrating the water with the rest of the painting.

### Use Large Brushes

Apply loose, gestural brush marks with number five flat bristle brushes for a painterly effect. These large brushes are versatile and ideal for creating beautiful marks in the early stages of your painting.

#### PRO TIP

*Use the same colors across different zones to maintain color harmony in your painting.*



## 12 Painting Water and Reflections



### Prepare the Water Base

Mix a pale, low chroma blue using your sky mix with added titanium white, ultramarine blue, a touch of alizarin crimson, and burnt sienna to desaturate. Apply this mix to the right side of the painting to reflect the clouds and sky above. This creates a simplified base that will make the water look more detailed later.

### Add Ripple Suggestions

Use a number three filbert brush to paint the suggestion of ripples in the water. Increase the saturation and darken the value by adding more ultramarine blue to your mix. Focus on creating a good solid foundation without worrying too much about detail at this stage.

### Define Water Zones

Identify two major zones in the water: the stiller area reflecting the background landscape and the more turbulent area reflecting the sky. Paint the transition zone between these areas by thinking of ripples as little hills, with darker shadow areas and lighter areas reflecting the sky.

### Fill in Midground Gaps

Use your blue mix to fill in gaps in the midground, avoiding the burnt-out look from the reference photo. Keep the water simplified and prepare a base for adding more details once it's dry.

#### PRO TIP

*Use ultramarine blue and burnt sienna to create beautiful neutral greys, perfect for painting shadows and reflections in water.*

## 13 Blending and Drying



### Blend Colors

Blend some of the colors together, focusing on softening the edges. Use the slow drying time of oil paints to your advantage, allowing for smooth transitions between hues.

### Consider Drying Time

Keep in mind that even with Litquin, you have ample time to blend, as it starts to form a tack within an hour or two. This allows you to work at a comfortable pace before it begins to dry.

#### PRO TIP

*Use the slow drying time of oil paints to blend colors smoothly and soften edges.*

## 14 Assessing and Adjusting Values



### Assess Values and Colors

Evaluate the colors and values in your painting. Ensure that the dark values are strong enough to provide a solid foundation for adding details later.

### Darken Shadows

Identify areas where shadows appear too light, such as the background hill. Darken these shadows by adding more ultramarine blue to your existing mix. Add a small amount of yellow ochre, but be cautious as it can lighten the value.

### Add Texture to Shadows

Enhance the texture in the shadow areas by using sweeping, gestural brush marks. This will add depth and interest to the shadows, making them more effective.

### Prepare for Detail Work

As you approach the end of the blocking-in stage, add a few more details and restate dark values. Ensure you are satisfied with the colors and values, creating a strong base for further work.

#### PRO TIP

*Use ultramarine blue to darken shadows without significantly altering the value.*



## 15 Building Up Lighter Layers



### Maintain Darker Values Initially

Keep the values of your colors darker at the start of the painting. This approach allows you to build up lighter layers gradually, saving the lightest values for the end. This technique adds depth and prevents the painting from looking flat.

### Build Up Lighter Layers

Add lighter layers by mixing a bit more titanium white into the colors you are already using. Focus on forming shapes that communicate ridges, rock faces, and dark areas within the landscape. This gradual lightening enhances the painting's detail and dimension.

#### PRO TIP

*Save your lightest values for the very end to make the painting come alive.*

## 16 Restating Shadows



### Reinforce Willow Tree Shadows

Mix your existing shadow color with more ultramarine blue. Add a touch of cadmium yellow to increase saturation, blending it with the yellow ochre already present. Use this mix to restate the darkest shadows in the willow trees and riverbanks.

### Blend Shadows and Light

Utilize a larger number five flat brush to apply the shadow mix. Focus on creating painterly marks and blocks of color rather than individual leaves. Allow the shadows to bleed into light areas, forming half tones within the tree canopies.

### Enhance Three-Dimensional Form

Ensure strong dark shadows contrast with light areas in the tree canopies. This contrast helps convey a three-dimensional form and adds drama and mystery to the scene, enhancing the effect of bright summer sunlight.

### Add Water Reflections

Use the same mix as for the grass to mark reflections in the still water. This helps integrate the water with the rest of the landscape.

### Prepare for Detail Work

Finish the blocking-in stage by adding a few shadows and tidying up the painting. This prepares the canvas for detailed work once it dries.

**PRO TIP**

*Use a larger brush to create painterly marks and blocks of color, avoiding detailed leaf work at this stage.*



## 17 Detailing Sky and Background Hills



### Add Layers to Clouds

Mix titanium white with a tiny amount of yellow ochre to create a soft, warm white. Apply this thicker paint to the clouds, following the fat over lean principle. This will help shape the clouds and add depth, while reducing the risk of cracking as the paint cures.

### Enhance the Sky

Use the same colors from the blocking stage for the sky: a mix of ultramarine blue and titanium white. Add another layer to the sky to refine its appearance and ensure consistency with the clouds.

### Detail Background Hills

Focus on the topography of the background hills by adding more layers. Start with a basic green mix using yellow ochre, titanium white, and ultramarine blue. Increase saturation with a small amount of cadmium yellow.

### Harmonize Vegetation Colors

Add alizarin crimson to the green mix to harmonize the colors and make them look natural. Introduce a small amount of phthalo green in places to create different hues, suggesting a variety of vegetation under full sunlight.

#### PRO TIP

*Use thicker paint layers as you progress to reduce the risk of cracking and enhance depth.*

## 18 Adding Texture and Detail to Hills



### Select Brushes

Use smaller brushes such as number three flat and filbert brushes for adding texture and detail to the hills. These brushes are ideal for creating different marks and are great for landscape painting.

### Mix Shadow Colors

Start with the colors used during the blocking stage: yellow ochre, ultramarine blue, and titanium white. Add a small amount of alizarin crimson to adjust the hue and darken the mix. Include a touch of phthalo green to suggest subtle foliage in the shadows.

### Add Texture to Hills

Use the shadow mix with a number three filbert brush to paint ridges and shadows of trees and shrubs on the hills. Create dark accents to suggest features like rock faces with cracks, adding randomness and interest without over-detailing.

### Balance Detail and Color

Keep detail minimal on distant landforms to avoid overcomplicating the composition. Use lighter values and less saturated colors for the background, reserving more detail and saturated colors for the foreground.

### Enhance Shadow Areas

Mix ultramarine blue with burnt sienna, titanium white, and a little alizarin crimson to create a shadow mix with violet tones. This adds color and interest to the shadow areas, suggesting rock faces and enhancing the overall look.

#### PRO TIP

*Use smaller brushes like filbert and flat brushes to add texture and detail without overcomplicating distant landforms.*

## 19 Highlighting Ridges



### Mix Shadow Color

Use a combination of Alizarin Crimson to complement the green in the background hill. This mixture is ideal for painting shadows and works well in landscape paintings.

### Highlight Ridges

Lighten your existing green mix by adding titanium white. Increase the saturation by adding a small amount of cadmium yellow, as it is a strong color. Use a number three flat brush or filbert brush to mark the tops of the ridges, capturing the effect of bright sunlight.

#### PRO TIP

*Use a small amount of cadmium yellow to increase saturation without overpowering the mix.*



## 20 Detailing Willow Trees



### Block Out Tree Shapes

Begin by treating the willow trees as masses. Block out their shapes and establish the main zones of color between light and dark areas. Keep it very simplified at this stage.

### Refine Tree Details

As you progress, start refining the shape of the trees. Add details to suggest clumps of leaves, but avoid painting every single leaf to prevent the painting from looking labored.

### Develop Canopy Layers

Treat the canopies as areas of darks with occlusion shadows, followed by half tones, and then areas in light. This layering helps create depth and dimension.

### Add Highlights and Final Details

At the very end, sparingly add highlights and a few individual leaves. This technique suggests masses of leaves, allowing the viewer's brain to fill in the details.

#### PRO TIP

*Avoid painting every leaf; suggest clumps of leaves to keep the painting lively and not overworked.*

## 21 Painting Tree Canopies



### Mix Half Tone Colors

Create a mix of ultramarine blue with cadmium yellow for the half tones in the tree canopies. Incorporate some yellow ochre from your existing mix used for the background hills. Adjust the value with titanium white, but use less to keep the value darker. Add alizarin crimson and phthalo green for depth.

### Paint Sunlit Areas

Lighten your existing green mix by adding more titanium white to capture areas in full sunlight. Maintain color saturation by incorporating additional cadmium yellow and a touch of phthalo green. Focus highlights on the edges of the tree canopies to enhance their rounded form.

### Use Appropriate Brushes

Utilize number three filbert brushes or number three flat brushes to build up paint layers in the tree canopies. These brushes help in achieving the natural and random look of the trees.

### Maintain Color Harmony

Use similar colors across different zones of the painting to maintain color harmony. Start with your core green mix from the background hill and adjust as needed to keep consistency throughout the painting.

#### PRO TIP

*Focus highlights on the edges of the tree canopies to enhance their rounded form.*

## 22 Occlusion Shadows and Riverbank



### Mix Occlusion Shadow Color

Create a mix of ultramarine blue with a little yellow ochre and a tiny amount of phthalo green. This combination will provide a rich, dark color suitable for occlusion shadows at the base of the tree.

### Paint Occlusion Shadows

Apply the dark mix to the base of the tree to create occlusion shadows. These shadows are the darkest and help define the tree's structure and the edge of the riverbank.

### Enhance Tree Form

Work on painting the occlusion shadows to build up the forms of the tree canopies. The sharp contrast between the dark shadows and the light areas will enhance the realism of the trees.

#### PRO TIP

*Use dark shadows to bring trees forward in the composition, emphasizing their position in the foreground.*



## 23 Paint Surface and Toning



### Consider Paint Surface

Decide whether to paint on a white or toned surface. A white surface can help achieve cleaner colors and make it easier to gauge values. Alternatively, a toned surface with burnt umber or burnt sienna can provide a warm glow.

### Cover the Canvas

Apply thicker layers of paint to ensure the white of the canvas is completely covered. This prevents the canvas from showing through and maintains the integrity of your colors.

#### PRO TIP

*Use a toned surface with burnt sienna for a warm glow in your painting.*

## 24 Reflected Light on Leaves



### Create Half Tones in Tree Canopies

Use your shadow mix to develop half tones within the tree canopies. This will help to suggest clumps of leaves, adding depth and dimension to the trees.

### Add Reflected Light to Leaves

Mix a little cadmium yellow into your shadow mix to lighten the value. Add some phthalo green and a touch of alizarin crimson to balance the green and prevent it from looking too artificial. This mix will depict leaves with reflected light from surrounding areas.

#### PRO TIP

*If your green appears too saturated, mix in a color containing red, like alizarin crimson, to create a more natural look.*

## 25 Building Tree Forms



### Paint Sunlit Areas

Use the same green mix as before, primarily yellow ochre, cadmium yellow, ultramarine blue, and titanium white. Add alizarin crimson or cadmium red to tone down the green. Increase saturation with phthalocyanine green for vibrant highlights.

### Adjust and Layer Colors

Apply highlights and adjust colors as needed. Allow individual hues to show through by not thoroughly mixing all colors. This adds depth and interest to the tree canopies.

### Build Tree Forms

Alternate between adding highlights and shadow areas. Paint clumps of leaves with reflected light to enhance the form of the trees. Continue until the trees have a well-developed structure.

### Allow Drying Time

Let the tree forms dry before adding more details. This ensures that the layers remain distinct and vibrant.

#### PRO TIP

*Mix colors loosely to let individual hues show through, adding depth and interest to your painting.*



## 26 Detailing River and Reflections



### Detail the Riverbanks

Use a mix of ultramarine blue, yellow ochre, and a little burnt sienna to create a dark value color. Reinforce the edges of the riverbanks with this mix to add more detail and definition.

### Paint the River Reflections

Start with the still areas of the water, reflecting the background hill and vegetation. Use a greenish-brown color by adding detail with the same mix used for the riverbanks. Adjust the colors as needed while working.

### Add Ripples and Reflections

Use a number three filbert brush to add ripples and reflections in the water. Lighten the mix with titanium white to create a lighter value. Incorporate subtle reflections from the foreground grass using a mix of yellow ochre, ultramarine blue, and titanium white, with more yellow ochre added.

### Adjust Values as Needed

If the water appears too dark, lighten the value by adding more titanium white. Adjust the colors as necessary to achieve the desired effect, taking advantage of oil paint's forgiving nature.

#### PRO TIP

*Use a number three filbert brush for adding ripples and reflections, as its rounded edge is perfect for this detail work.*

## 27 Painting Ripples and Water Flow



### Mix Ripple Colors

Combine titanium white with ultramarine blue to create a base color for the ripples. Add burnt sienna and a touch of alizarin crimson to achieve a pale, low chroma color that reflects the sky and clouds.

### Paint Ripples with Dagger Brush

Use a quarter-inch dagger brush to paint ripples in the water, focusing on the area reflecting the sky. Think of ripples as little hills with shadowed areas facing you and lighter areas on top. This brush allows for fine detail and convincing ripple effects.

### Add Detail to Ripples

Apply lighter value colors over the tops of the ripples to enhance detail. Observe how the water refracts and reflects, painting in the direction of the water flow. As the river recedes into the distance, make the ripple marks smaller.

### Define Riverbanks

Use the same brush to define the edges of the riverbanks, adding depth and realism to the painting. This will help create a shimmering effect later in the painting process.

### Maintain a Loose Flow

Ensure the water has a loose, gestural flow to avoid a stiff appearance. Balance detail with a natural, lively look, focusing finer details in the foreground while keeping the overall composition simple.

#### PRO TIP

*Use the tip of the dagger brush for finer detail and the broad end for creating ripple effects.*

## 28 Preparing for Final Details



### Use a Dagger Brush for Ripples

Select a quarter inch dagger brush to create ripples in the water. This brush is ideal for achieving the fine, fluid lines needed for realistic water effects.

### Prepare for Final Details

Allow the painting to dry completely before adding final details and highlights. This ensures that the surface is ready for the last touches that will bring the painting to life.

#### PRO TIP

*Ensure the painting is completely dry before adding final highlights to avoid smudging.*



## 29 Finalizing Tree Details

# ADDING DETAILS TO THE TREES

### Mix Shadow Colors

Create a shadow mix using yellow ochre, ultramarine blue, and a touch of titanium white for lighter values. Use this mix to redefine shadows on the trees, adding finer details to suggest clumps of leaves and dark accents at the base.

### Add Half Tones

Mix yellow ochre, cadmium yellow, and ultramarine blue for the main green. Add burnt sienna to harmonize the green and a bit of phthalo green for saturation. Use this mix to paint half tones in the tree canopy, creating a rounded form.

### Highlight Sunlit Areas

For sunlit areas, use a mix of yellow ochre, cadmium yellow, ultramarine blue, and titanium white. Add cadmium red to knock back the green slightly. Apply this lighter, saturated green to highlight areas in full sunlight.

### Build Complexity with Lighter Layers

Use a number three filbert brush and a quarter inch dagger brush to apply even lighter layers of green. This builds complexity, making the leaves appear as clumps illuminated by the sun.

#### PRO TIP

*Use phthalo green sparingly to avoid overpowering your mix, as it is very strong.*

## 30 Branch and Leaf Details



### Prepare Your Brush

Load your brush with a thick mix of titanium white, cadmium yellow, phthalo green, and a touch of cadmium red. Ensure the bristles are well charged with paint to effectively suggest leaves and foliage.

### Paint Leaf Details

Use dabs and dots to suggest leaves, focusing on the tree's canopy. This technique adds texture and communicates the presence of leaves without needing intricate detail.

### Add Branch and Stem Suggestions

Mix yellow ochre with ultramarine blue for a shadow color. Use a number zero synthetic round brush to paint fine marks, suggesting a network of branches and stems silhouetted in the shadow.

### Enhance Tree Canopy

Paint clumps of leaves in reflected light to bulk out the tree's canopy. Use ivory dagger brushes for this task, applying lighter layers of paint to create a rounded, three-dimensional shape.

### Feather and Detail the Canopy

Feather the ends of the tree canopies with a quarter-inch dagger brush, suggesting branches poking up over the tops. Use lighter values from your mix to add detail and depth, creating a more scraggly and natural appearance.

**PRO TIP**

*Use thicker layers of paint and a well-charged brush to effectively suggest leaves and foliage without intricate detail.*



## 31 Grass and Riverbank Details



### Add Light Layers to Grass

Mix yellow ochre with titanium white, cadmium yellow, a touch of alizarin crimson, and a small amount of ultramarine blue. Apply this pale mix to the grassy areas to create lighter layers. The alizarin crimson and ultramarine blue help desaturate the color, enhancing the natural look.

### Paint Green Grass by the Riverbank

Use the same green mix as for the willow trees to paint the grass by the riverbank. Blend it with the straw-colored yellow to maintain color harmony across the painting. This consistency in color will make the painting more visually pleasing.

### Add Shadows and Reflections

Utilize the tree shadow mix to paint shadows on the grass and riverbank. Use the same brush from the willow trees to save on cleanup. Paint shadows and reflections in the water using a mix of yellow ochre and ultramarine blue, adding depth and tidying up edges.

### Create Subtle Reflections

For reflections of the riverbank grass, use yellow ochre, ultramarine blue, a little titanium white, and burnt sienna. Make these reflections paler than the actual grass. Use the greens from the tree mid-tones for the willow tree reflections to add depth and complexity to the water.

#### PRO TIP

*Use the same colors across different zones of the painting to achieve color harmony and a more cohesive look.*

## 32 Finalizing Water Details



### Add Final Water Details

Use a lighter mix of ultramarine blue, titanium white, a little burnt sienna, and alizarin crimson. Increase the amount of titanium white to lighten the value, enhancing the water's realism and depth.

### Paint Convincing Ripples

Apply the lighter paint over shadow areas using a quarter-inch dagger brush. The brush's broad edge and synthetic bristles create sharp edges, perfect for realistic water effects.

### Enhance Water Flow

Use sparing highlights to add randomness and natural flow to the water. Focus on areas where ripples indicate faster flowing water.

### Define Mid-ground and Riverbanks

Apply the lighter value color to the mid-ground to add complexity and three-dimensionality. Use it to define the edges of the water by the riverbanks, enhancing the overall effect.

#### PRO TIP

*Use a quarter-inch dagger brush for sharp, realistic water edges.*

### 33 Shimmering Leaves and Impasto



#### Mix Shimmering Leaf Color

Combine titanium white with cadmium yellow to create a light, warm color. This mixture will give the impression of leaves shimmering in the bright summer sun. Ensure the value is the lightest among all the tree layers to capture the glossy, reflective quality of the leaves.

#### Apply Impasto Technique

Use a thick application of paint mixed with liquin impasto medium. This medium allows for a thicker texture, perfect for adding final highlights to the trees. Apply this mixture to create the effect of shimmering white dots in the tree canopy, enhancing the realism and vibrancy of the scene.

#### PRO TIP

*Use impasto medium only at the end of the painting for final highlights, ensuring a thick, textured finish.*



## 34 Sparkling Water Highlights



### Add Tree Canopy Highlights

Use a double zero synthetic round brush to add a few sparing dots to the tree canopy. These dots will suggest leaves shimmering in full sunlight, creating a fuller appearance for the tree.

### Prepare for Water Highlights

Mix titanium white with a small amount of yellow ochre to slightly warm the white. This mixture will be used for the lightest values in the painting, perfect for capturing the sparkle of sunlight on water.

### Paint Sparkling Water

With the number 00 round brush, apply the warm white mixture in small dots to represent the sparkling water. Ensure the brush is constantly recharged with thick paint, using liquid impasto medium if needed, to adhere well to the linen surface.

#### PRO TIP

*Use a double zero synthetic round brush for fine, precise highlights that bring the painting to life.*

## 35 Finishing Touches



### Add Sparkling Water Dots

Paint many small dots to represent sparkling water, focusing on areas where the light hits. Use fewer dots than in the reference photo to avoid a burnt-out look and create a more pleasing effect.

### Work on the Foreground

Continue painting forward into the foreground with small, deliberate dots. Take your time to enjoy the process, as these details enhance the depth and interest of the painting.

#### PRO TIP

*Use fewer dots than in the reference photo to avoid a burnt-out look.*

## 36 Concept Recap



### Establish Composition

Use a simple S composition to create rhythm in your painting, with the river snaking into the distance. Focus on the willow trees as main areas of interest against a pleasing backdrop. Keep the composition simple for a more engaging landscape.

### Paint Dark Values First

Begin by painting the darkest values and shadows. Place the darkest darks and lightest lights in the foreground. As landforms recede, reduce the darkness and lightness to create a sense of distance.

### Desaturate Distant Colors

Use paler, less saturated greens for distant elements. Green and yellow wavelengths don't travel well over long distances, so desaturate these colors to enhance depth.

### Block In with Loose Brushwork

Start the block-in stage with loose, gestural brush marks. Focus on creating a solid foundation without worrying about detail. Let this layer dry before adding more detail.

### Model and Detail in Zones

After the block-in dries, begin the modeling stage by adding detail to the forms. Work in zones, starting with the sky and background hill, then move to the trees and water. Keep detail sparse in the background to draw attention to the foreground.

### Adjust Values and Saturation



Constantly assess your values to ensure they are neither too dark nor too light. Adjust values as needed and pay attention to color saturation. Build up lighter layers gradually, saving final highlights for the end.

**PRO TIP**

*Use paler, less saturated greens for distant elements to enhance depth and create a sense of distance.*

# Summary & Key Takeaways

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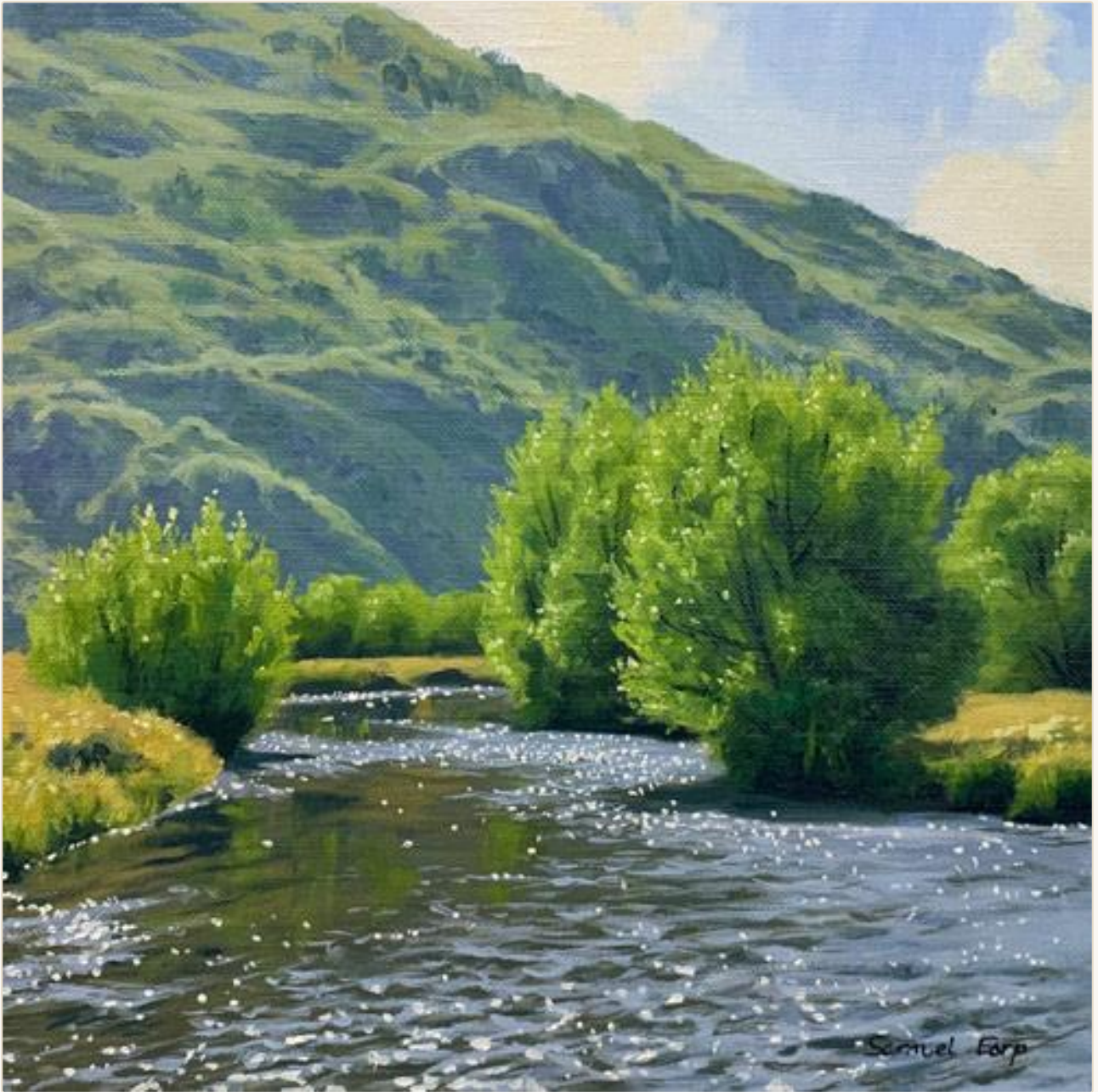
Embark on your painting journey by preparing a stable canvas and selecting your preferred medium. Whether you choose oil or acrylic, ensure your surface is ready for the vibrant colors of a summer landscape. Begin by sketching your composition with a burnt sienna base, setting the stage for a harmonious palette that will bring your scene to life.

As you progress, focus on establishing values and shadows, using ultramarine blue to unify the elements of your painting. Build depth by varying the value scale between foreground and background, and mix colors thoughtfully to achieve natural tones. The key is to maintain color harmony across different zones, ensuring a cohesive and visually appealing result.

In the final stages, refine your painting by blending colors smoothly and adjusting values to enhance depth and contrast. Gradually build up lighter layers to add dimension, and restate shadows to bring out the three-dimensional form of your landscape. Remember to save the lightest highlights for the end, allowing your painting to truly come alive with the brilliance of summer sunlight.

## LESSON POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Use a manageable canvas size of around 12x12 inches.
- Employ a limited palette to maintain color harmony.
- Identify and paint dark values first to establish depth.
- Use ultramarine blue consistently for cohesion.
- Apply the full value scale in the foreground for contrast.
- Mix shadow colors with less titanium white for depth.
- Keep color mixes simple for vibrant results.
- Save your lightest values for the final touches.



*Summer Willows*