



Cinque Terre

A step-by-step painting guide by Richard Robinson

Watch the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/242-Cinque-Terre>

MY PAINTING CLUB

Introduction

I am thrilled to share with you a painting journey inspired by my recent travels around the Greek islands, which led me to create a piece reminiscent of the stunning Cinque Terre on the Italian coast. This scene, painted in acrylics, captures the essence of the vibrant, glowing light and the charming architecture that characterizes this beautiful location. In this chapter, we will delve into creating this captivating scene, focusing on achieving a luminous glow and mastering a variety of brushwork techniques. Whether you prefer acrylics or oils, I will guide you through each step, offering insights on how to adapt the techniques for both mediums. This lesson is perfect for those who have some experience and are eager to expand their skills. Additionally, I will introduce you to the exciting world of using artificial intelligence to boost your creativity. Although PaintyBot is no longer active, you can use OpenArt.ai to generate inspiring images in minutes, saving you hours of searching. Join me as we explore these innovative tools and techniques to bring the enchanting Cinque Terre to life on canvas.



"Cinque Terre" 30x30" Acrylic on Canvas by Richard Robinson



REFERENCE PHOTO 1

The scene as Richard found it.



REFERENCE PHOTO 2

The scene as Richard found it.



REFERENCE PHOTO 3

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

- Sorry, PaintyBot is no longer active. Please use
- OpenArt.ai
- instead.
- Chroma Atelier Interactive Acrylics
- Phthalo Blue
- Cadmium Red Light
- Brilliant Magenta
- Arylamide Yellow
- 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 Using PaintyBot for Image Design



Access PaintyBot

Go to PaintyBot.com and sign up or log in to access the PaintyBot tool. This will allow you to start designing your image.

Upload Your Image

Find an image that inspires you, such as one from Pinterest. Upload it to PaintyBot by clicking 'upload image' and adding it to your page.

Set Image to Image

Select the uploaded image and choose 'image to image' to start creating a similar design. Adjust the settings to match your vision.

Input Your Prompt

Type a descriptive prompt that captures the essence of your image. For example, 'early evening, Cinque Terre glowing in the setting sun.' This guides PaintyBot in generating your image.

Adjust Fidelity

Set the fidelity to 0.5 for a balance between originality and similarity to the original image. Lower fidelity allows more creative freedom, while higher fidelity closely matches the original.

Experiment with Text to Image

Switch to 'text to image' mode and input a new prompt like 'masterpiece oil painting.' Explore different settings to refine your image.

Set Image Size

Determine the size of your image. Keep it under 1000 pixels on any side to ensure quick generation. Adjust the size by selecting nodes or typing dimensions.

Generate the Image

Type your prompts and click 'generate and fill' to create your image. This will produce an image within the specified box.

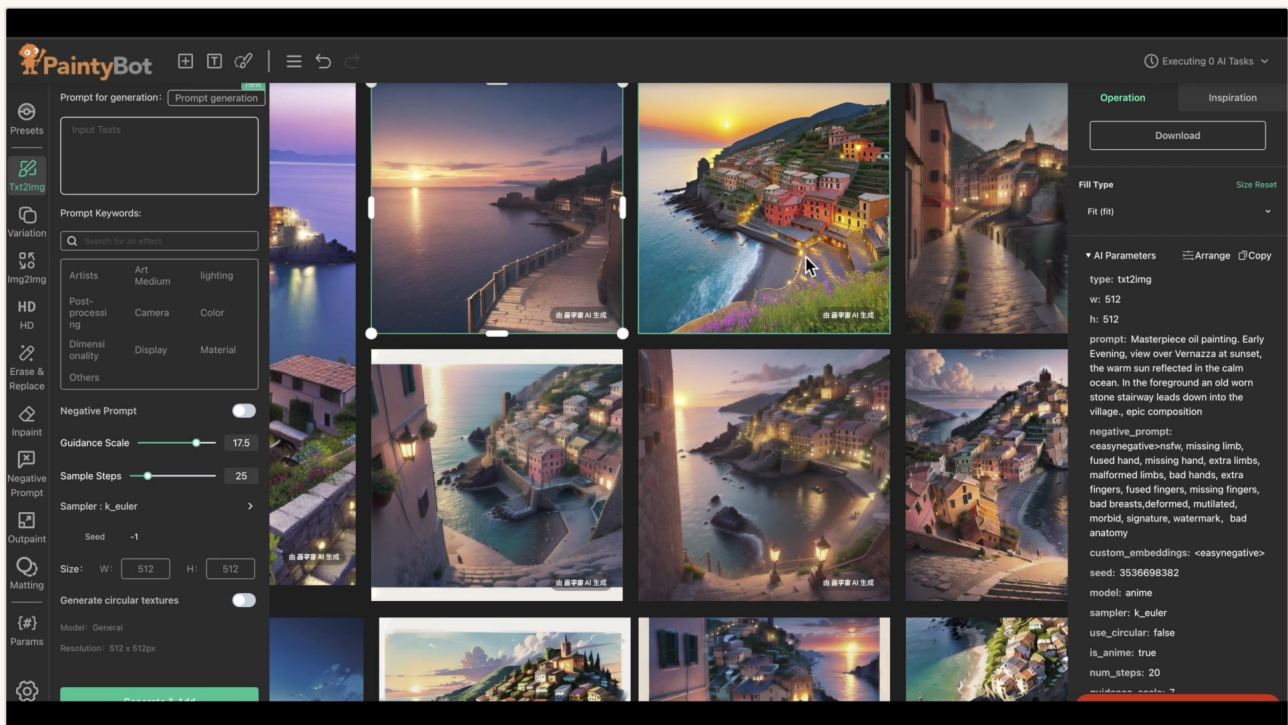
Refine the Prompt

Continue tweaking the prompt to achieve the desired effect. The prompt is crucial for guiding PaintyBot's output.

PRO TIP

Keep image dimensions under 1000 pixels on any side for faster generation.

2 Combining Reference Images



Experiment with Image Prompts

Begin by tweaking the prompt in your text-to-image tool. Make small changes to see how the model responds, using different styles like the 3D anime model for dynamic compositions and softer color palettes.

Explore Different Models

Switch between models to find the one that best suits your vision. The 3D anime model may offer more interesting compositions, while other models might provide different effects.

Incorporate Various Artistic Styles

Try changing the prompt to include styles like concept art, gouache sketch, or painterly brush strokes. This can create unique and visually appealing images.

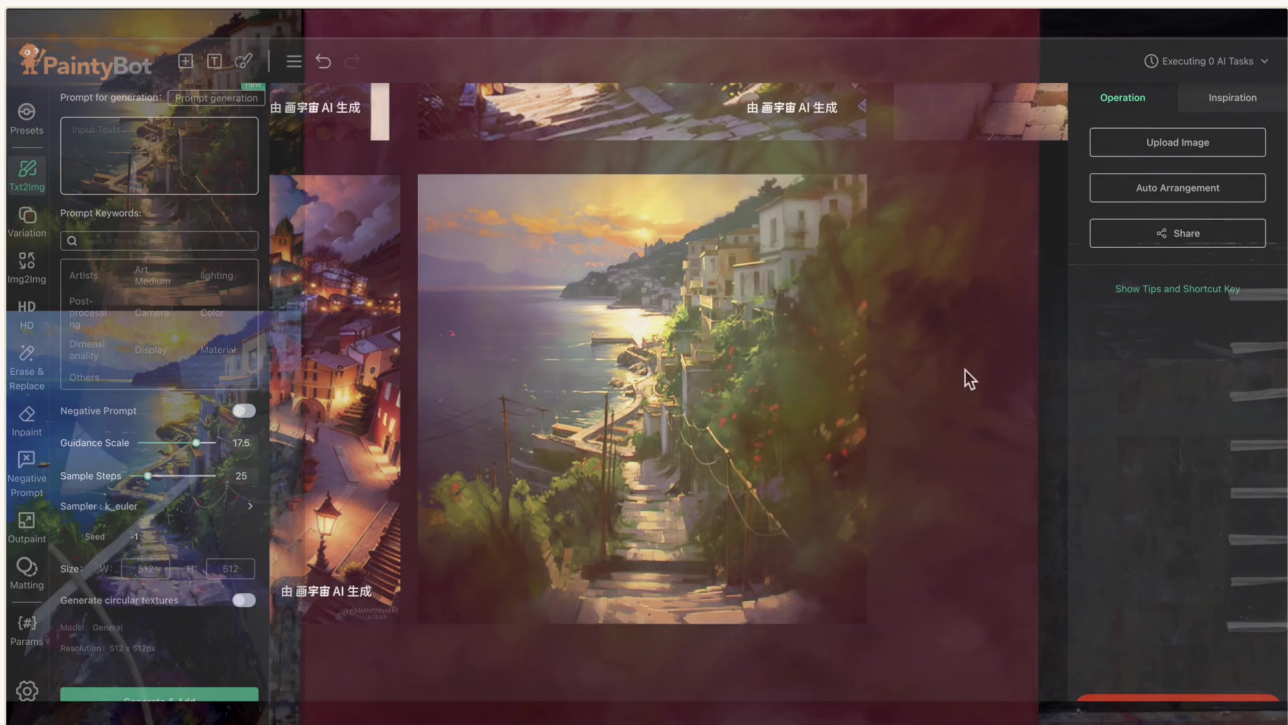
Combine Elements from Multiple Images

Select elements you love from different images, such as water treatments or lighting effects. Combine these elements on your canvas to create a personalized composition.

PRO TIP

Experiment with different models and styles to find a composition that resonates with your artistic vision.

3 Preparing the Canvas and Initial Drawing



Prepare the Canvas

Use a 30 by 30 inch canvas with an acrylic base coat. Mix white, arilamide yellow, and brilliant magenta to create a glowing spot in the middle. Soften the area with a large brush for a smooth transition.

Draw the Horizon and Headland

Dip a long filbert brush in water and use brilliant magenta to draw the horizon line. Ensure the horizon is straight and horizontal. Sketch an interesting headland extending from the horizon, and create flat stages for the land as it recedes.

Establish Perspective Points

Identify a key point where many roof and perspective lines converge. Mark this point to guide the angles of your lines. Remember, not all lines should converge at the same point due to varying building levels, so adjust accordingly.

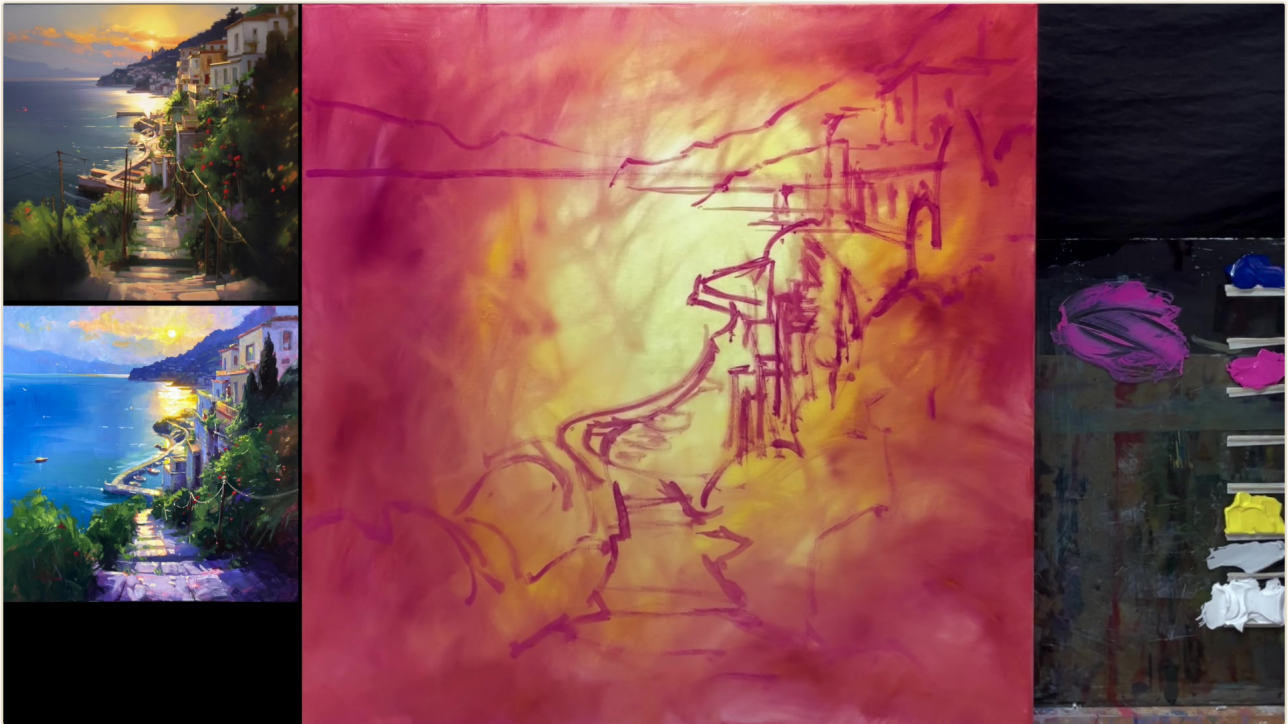
Complete the Initial Drawing

Decide how detailed you want your drawing to be. You can make it precise for ease later, but it's also fine to keep it loose. Once satisfied, prepare to start painting the sky and ocean.

PRO TIP

Use a large brush to soften the base coat for a smooth transition.

4 Painting the Sky



Prepare Your Palette

Lay out phthalo blue, brilliant magenta, arilamide yellow (or cadmium yellow light/lemon yellow), toning grey mid, and plenty of titanium white. These colors will be used to create the sky.

Create a Couch

Use a big flat brush and dip it in water. Brush in a bit of white with a fair amount of water over the central glowing area. This will help the paint flow better and create a glowing effect.

Paint the Central Glow

Mix yellow and white, and start painting from the center of the glowing area. Brush outwards to create a gradient, allowing the colors to blend into the white. Keep your brush strokes visible for texture.

Add Warm Tones

Add more yellow and a touch of brilliant magenta to push the color towards orange. Incorporate more white to avoid darkening the area too much. Work this mix into the existing glow and outwards.

Paint the Clouds

Mix yellow, a little magenta, and white to paint clouds below the sun. Vary your brush pressure and rotation to create different strokes and cloud shapes.

Transition to Mauve

Mix brilliant magenta with white and a touch of toning grey. Paint this mauve color to transition from the warm yellow to cooler tones. Vary brush strokes for a natural look.

Introduce Blue Tones

Mix toning grey with white and a tiny touch of phthalo blue. Gradually work this mix outwards, cooling and darkening the color as you go. Add more white and water if the paint becomes too dry.

Enhance the Glow

Clean your brush and mix yellow with white to add more vibrant yellow around the sun. Highlight the tops of clouds with this mix for a backlighting effect.

Refine the Sky

Continue to adjust colors, adding more phthalo blue, toning grey, and brilliant magenta as needed. Ensure the sky transitions smoothly from warm to cool tones.

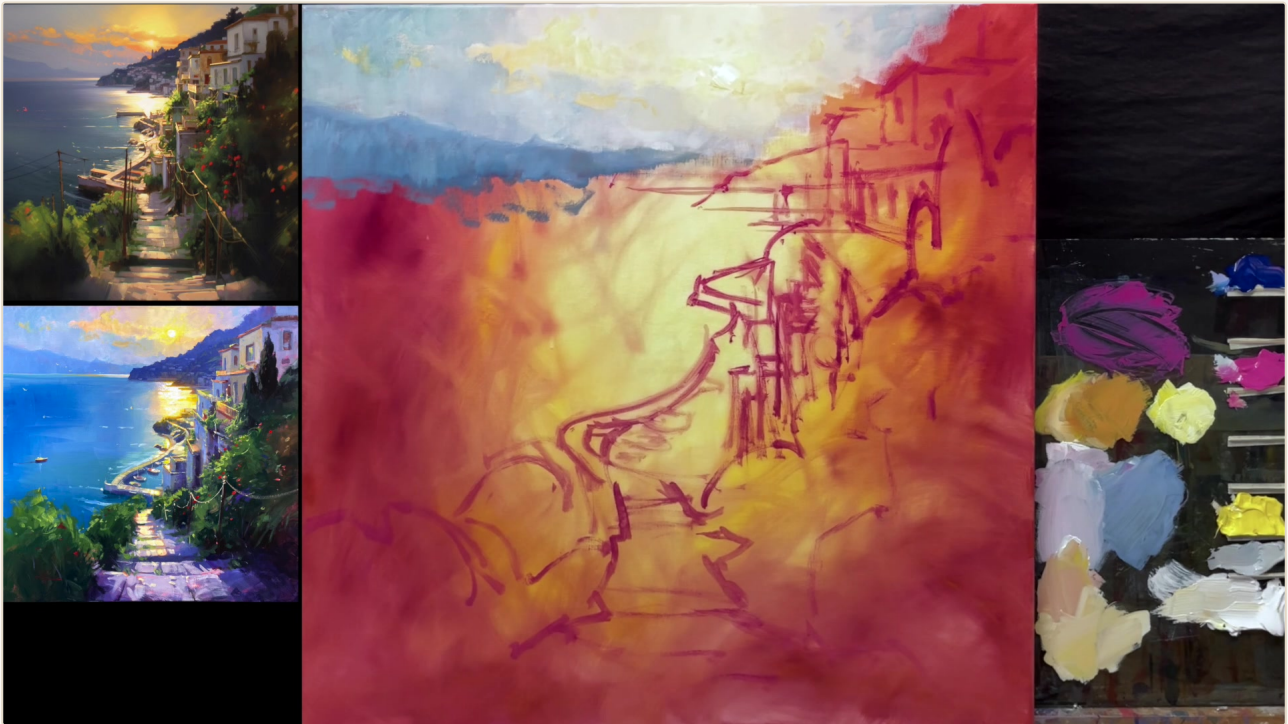
Final Touches

Add more yellow for a glowing effect and adjust any areas that appear muddy. Block in additional cloud shapes for interest and ensure the sky has a cohesive, layered look.

PRO TIP

Acrylics dry darker than when wet, so paint slightly lighter than desired to achieve the right color once dry.

5 Painting the Ocean



Create the Glowing Spot

Start by applying white paint directly below the sun and paint outwards. Use a 50mm synthetic flat brush, dipped in water, to keep the paint wet. Ensure the glowing spot is directly beneath the sun to maintain alignment.

Add Yellow and Magenta

Mix yellow with a little brilliant magenta to create an orange hue. Brush this into the central area, being careful not to cover the white completely. Soften the edges to blend smoothly.

Introduce Gray and Magenta

Wash the brush and mix white with gray and a touch of brilliant magenta. Brush this mixture into the area, stopping shy of the previous color edge. Soften the transition for a seamless blend.

Blend in Blue

Mix mid-grey with a small amount of blue and magenta. Lighten with white if too dark, and blend into the painting, stopping short of the previous color edge. Aim for a gradual transition to cooler tones.

Deepen with Darker Blues

Add more blue and a touch of magenta to darken the mix. Gradually work into the painting, keeping the transitions smooth. Spray lightly to maintain wetness for fluid blending.

Add Green for Depth

As you move lower, add yellow to the mix to create a greenish hue. This reflects the changing angle of view into the water. Blend softly to achieve smooth gradations.

Create Ripples and Shadows

Indicate wavelets with subtle horizontal strokes. Mix blue, magenta, and yellow for shadows, such as those cast by jetties or boats. Keep these elements soft and integrated into the scene.

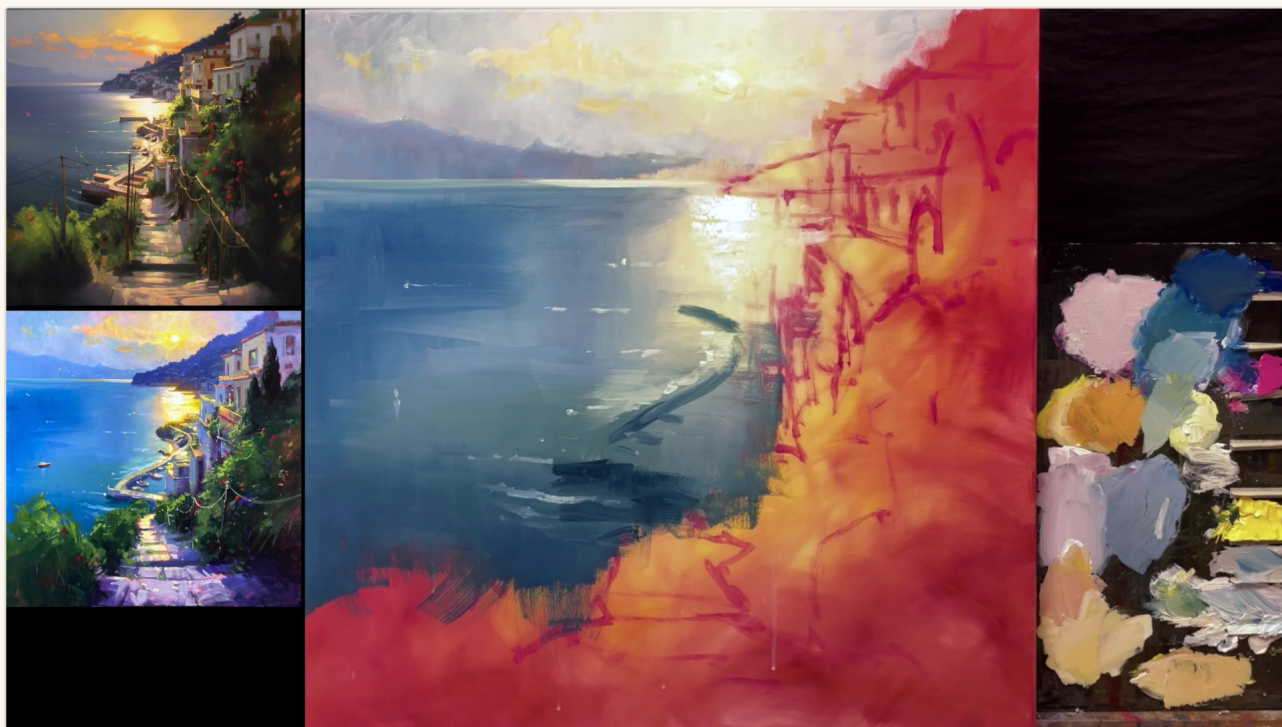
Enhance with Light and Texture

Use a smaller brush to add highlights directly beneath the sun with white and yellow. Fade these highlights out gently. Optionally, add texture for interest, but smooth it if shadows are unwanted.

PRO TIP

Maintain a wet surface to ensure smooth blending and avoid rough brushwork.

6 Painting the Distant Hills



Prepare Your Palette and Brushes

Set up your palette with Ultramarine Blue, Cad Red, Brilliant Magenta, Yellow Ochre, Arillamide Yellow, Mid Toning Grey, and Titanium White. Use long synthetic flats, a size 12 long angle brush, and a quarter-inch long sword or dagger brush from Rosemary & Co.

Mix the Base Color for Distant Hills

Identify the closest tube color, which is blue, and adjust it to be warmer by adding red. Lighten the mix with white or grey to achieve a distant, muted tone. Keep your mix simple with just two colors plus white for easy remixing.

Apply the Base Color

Spray the canvas lightly with water. Use a ruler or masking tape to paint a straight horizontal line for the horizon. Apply the base color quickly to achieve wet-on-wet blending. Add variation to the hill's profile to avoid a man-made appearance.

Create Sun Glow Effects

Mix a lighter, warmer color by adding red and white to your base. Work on the side of the initial color to achieve a subtle variation. Apply this while the base is still wet to enhance the sun glow effect.

Enhance the Sunlight and Water Glow

Extend the glowing effect by blending into the base color. Add a rough edge to the hill to suggest trees. Enhance the glow near the water by adding yellow, red, and white for a punchier effect.

PRO TIP

Keep your color mixes simple with just two colors plus white for easy remixing.

7 Painting the Background Buildings



Add the Headland

Wash your brush and use the same color to bring another headland into the section. While the paint is wet, add a little more glow to enhance the area.

Detail the Background Buildings

Switch to a smaller synthetic square brush, size 6, to add details to the buildings while the paint is still wet. Use blue and toning grey to create rectangles that represent buildings in shadow. Keep the colors dull to avoid drawing too much attention.

Observe Building Placement

Notice the placement of the building shapes. Are they close to the water or spread out? Capture the essence of the scene without copying every detail from the sketch.

Refine Edges and Shadows

Straighten the edge of the headland and add a shadow in the water using more blue. Separate the headlands with a lighter tone and add a touch of green and yellow for variation.

Adjust Colors for Zing

Consider lightening the overall tone with blue, red, and toning grey. Acrylics allow you to paint over dry areas easily, enhancing the contrast between warm and cool tones.

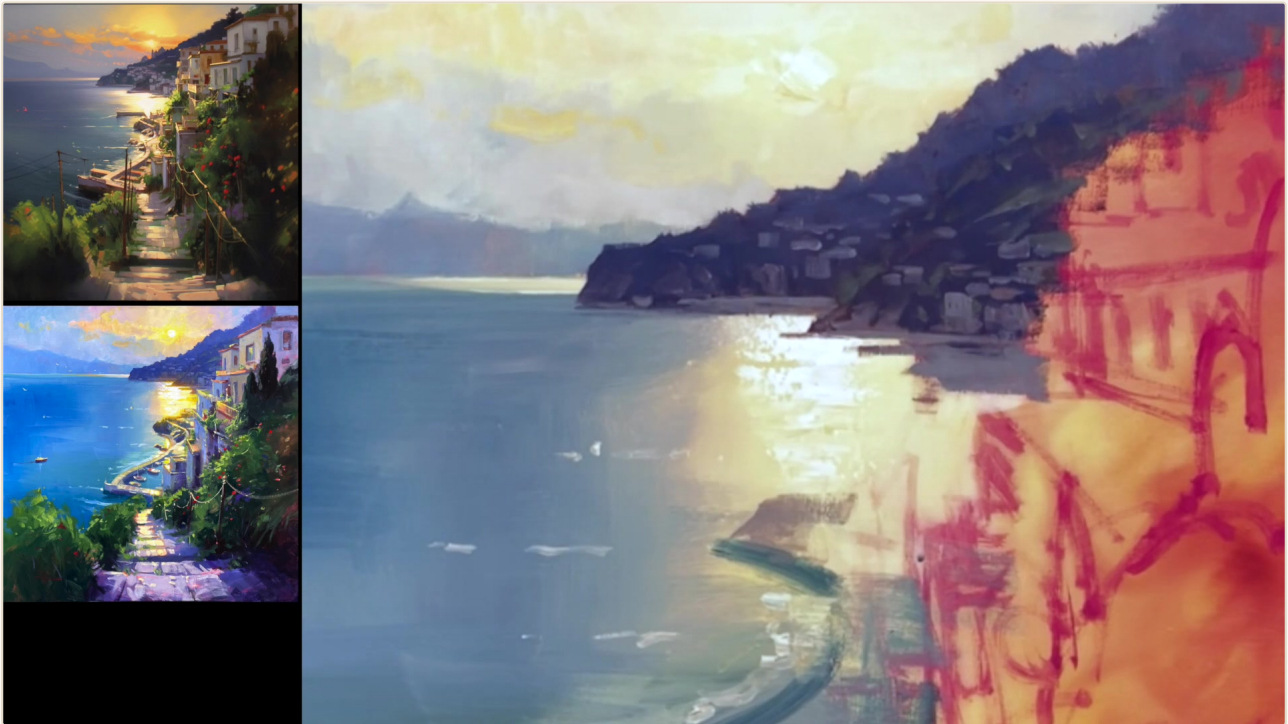
Enhance Cliffs and Foreground Buildings

Use a small square brush to add warmth and green to the cliffs. Paint slightly larger buildings along the front to capture the steep, stacked nature of the architecture.

PRO TIP

Use a square brush for building details to naturally create square shapes.

8 Painting the Foreground Buildings



Establish the Seawall Base

Begin with the seawall as your base. Add some green to indicate where greenery would naturally grow. Use a slightly darker color to block in these areas.

Create the Glowing Light Effect

Mix a strong orange using yellow and red. Apply it around the edges where the light transitions from light to dark, creating a glowing effect.

Add Highlights to the Seawall

Mix white, yellow, and a touch of yellow ochre to create highlights. Apply these to the top of the seawall, adding a touch of blue for sunlit foliage on top of the green areas.

Assess Your Work

Step back to view your painting from a distance. Use a mirror or your phone to flip the image and check the composition and balance.

Paint the Foreground Buildings

Begin with a mid-gray for the buildings, focusing on big shapes rather than details. Use a slightly darker gray to establish mid-values and add yellow ochre for variation.

Define Shapes and Perspective

Add blue, gray, and a little red to darken areas and define shapes. Ensure vertical lines are straight and perspective lines point correctly. Blur areas where foliage will overlap.

PRO TIP

Focus on painting big shapes rather than individual details to capture the essence of the scene.

9 Painting the Foliage



Mix Mid Dark Green

Combine blue with a little yellow ochre to create a mid dark green. Apply this while the surface is still wet to maintain soft edges. Focus on the outer edges of the painting to avoid drawing too much attention.

Add Dark Foliage

Wash out your brush if using acrylics, or switch brushes if using oils. Mix blue with a touch of bright yellow and apply to the foliage areas. Use gestural, soft-edged strokes to build the larger forms of the foliage.

Incorporate Red and Darker Tones

Add a little red to some areas to enhance color interest. For darker areas like the cypress tree, mix in more blue to deepen the tone. Blur these into one cohesive dark shape for better readability and cohesion.

Focus on Shape and Texture

While painting dark shapes, concentrate on the soft-edged shapes you create. Remember, painting is about the interest of shapes, color, and texture. Keep edges soft, as details will be added later with more defined edges.

Use a Big Brush

Enjoy using a big brush with plenty of paint for a painterly effect. Acrylics are cost-effective for this approach, allowing you to use generous amounts of paint.

PRO TIP

Use gestural, soft-edged strokes to build the larger forms of the foliage.

10 Adding Highlights to Buildings



Add Lights Under Foliage

Use an angled brush to apply yellow paint under the foliage. Work while the paint is still wet to achieve a lovely wet and wet painterly look. Create glowy areas of light by painting into the wet paint, then clean your brush and work within that area again for a glowing effect.

Create Foliage Details

Add a few smaller marks to indicate individual bits of foliage. Use thick paint for the highlights, but apply them sparingly. Vary your strokes to avoid uniformity.

PRO TIP

Work with a clean brush within wet paint to achieve a glowing effect.

11 Detailing the Buildings



Build the Structure

Start by mixing a grey with some blue to modulate the colors of the buildings. Paint around the windows and doors to define their shapes, ensuring the tops of windows align with the roof lines. Use a smaller brush to add details and establish the position of each building.

Add Interiors

Paint the interiors with warm or cool colors, depending on the light source. Ensure that the vertical lines are straight, and decide whether the tops are arches or straight. Adjust any areas that are too dark to create a sense of depth and recession.

Incorporate Pathways and Shadows

Add pathways and shadows with a dark grey-purple, keeping the edges soft. As the scene moves into the foreground, allow the colors to darken slightly. This will help the buildings integrate with the surrounding foliage.

Highlight Railings and Textures

Use a mid-value color to outline the railings, ensuring the verticals are straight. Add highlights with a mix of white, yellow ochre, and bright yellow, dragging the brush lightly to create texture. These highlights enhance the believability of the scene.

Add Final Details

Use a large brush for calligraphic strokes, adding small specks of detail and chinks of light. Incorporate touches of red and pink to bring vibrancy. These final details will make the buildings look inviting and realistic.

PRO TIP

Drag the brush lightly to create texture that looks like detail without being meticulously painted.

12 Painting the Pathway and Shadows



Add Details with a Smaller Brush

Use a smaller square brush to add details like windows and doorways. Focus on grays with slight variations, such as a touch of green or purple, to create cooler tones. Refer to the resource image to find areas where these details make sense and adjust as needed.

Work on the Pathway and Foliage

Switch to a big brush and begin with a mid-green, keeping the paint nice and wet. Add a little yellow ochre to define the big shapes of the foliage and pathway with gestural strokes. Think of the foliage as clumps and smaller clumps within those clumps.

Deepen Shadows

Mix more blue with some red and a spot of yellow to create a darker tone. Start in the middle of the foliage and brush outward, varying your brush technique with dragging and splatting motions. Pay attention to the angles and perspective of the pathway and shadows.

Maintain Gestural Strokes

Keep your brushstrokes big and gestural, especially in the foreground. Avoid becoming too detailed or finicky, as it will contrast with the broader strokes used elsewhere in the painting.

PRO TIP

Use your brush in different ways, such as dragging and splatting, to create varied textures and maintain a gestural style.

13 Adding Details and Poles



Create Path Texture

Think about the cast shadow from the tree and bushes, and the shape of the path. Avoid making the path look uniform; aim for a random patchwork feel. Use vertical strokes that fan out slightly to mimic the centuries-old worn look of the path.

Add Glare and Weeds

Lighten the path slightly with a mix of yellow ochre, white, and a little bright yellow to create a glare effect. Add some weeds using white, yellow, and a touch of toning grey for areas catching the light. Use more toning grey, blue, and yellow for the shadowed weeds.

Enhance Light and Shadows

Add more light to areas needing it, especially on the left side. Use an angle brush for calligraphic work on trees. Darken the corner with big brushstrokes and add a few branches. Introduce more orange and red for flowers, and enhance wave action with white and a touch of yellow for brightness.

Paint Poles

Mix blue and red, mainly red, to paint poles. Consider their spacing and how they get smaller and thinner as they recede. Allow the angle to change naturally for a more organic look. Add light to the light side of the poles using white and yellow ochre, ensuring the paint flows well.

PRO TIP

Use vertical strokes that fan out slightly to create a random patchwork feel on the path.

14 Revisiting and Adjusting the Painting



Enhance the Boat Size

Increase the size of the boat to make it more prominent in the composition. This adjustment will help balance the painting and draw attention to the boat.

Create a Glowing Effect

Dip your brush in water, then into gloss medium. Apply the gloss medium around the area where you want a glow effect. Mix red, a little yellow, and white to create a light orange. Start painting closest to the light source and work outwards to blend the colors naturally.

Add Warmth to Glowing Spots

Around each light spot, apply yellow or orange depending on the brightness. Blend it softly into the surrounding areas to create a sense of light emanating from the spot. This subtle effect enhances the painting's warmth.

Brighten Areas Around the Sun

Use white and yellow to add glow around the sun. Increase the white as you get closer to the sun to intensify the brightness. Apply this technique to other areas that need a warm, inviting glow.

Warm Up Faces of Structures

Apply gloss medium to the faces of structures you want to warm up. Mix a gray with the right value and add yellow to achieve a warm tone. Adjust the mixture until the desired warmth is achieved.

PRO TIP

Use gloss medium to create a glowing effect and enhance the warmth of light spots in your painting.

Summary & Key Takeaways

Embark on your painting journey by harnessing the power of digital tools like PaintyBot to design your ideal composition. Start with an inspiring image and refine it through creative prompts and model selections to craft a unique vision of Cinque Terre. Once your digital design is ready, translate it onto a 30 by 30 inch canvas, laying down a glowing base coat to set the stage for your masterpiece.

As you bring the sky and ocean to life, focus on smooth transitions and vibrant colors. Use a variety of brush strokes and color mixes to capture the dynamic interplay of light and shadow. Pay attention to the drying properties of acrylics, ensuring your colors remain vibrant and true to your vision. Gradually build up the landscape, adding depth and interest with each layer.

Complete your painting by adding the intricate details of the Cinque Terre architecture and lush foliage. Use a combination of broad strokes and fine details to convey the essence of the scene, capturing the unique charm of the coastal village. Balance warm and cool tones, and use highlights to bring your painting to life, ensuring a cohesive and captivating final piece.

LESSON POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Keep image dimensions under 1000 pixels on any side for faster generation.
- Experiment with different models and styles to find a composition that resonates with your artistic vision.
- Use a large brush to soften the base coat for a smooth transition.
- Acrylics dry darker than when wet, so paint slightly lighter than desired.
- Maintain a wet surface to ensure smooth blending and avoid rough brushwork.
- Keep your color mixes simple with just two colors plus white for easy remixing.
- Use a square brush for building details to naturally create square shapes.
- Use gestural, soft-edged strokes to build the larger forms of the foliage.



"Cinque Terre" 30x30" Acrylic on Canvas by Richard Robinson

Student Critiques

Club members painted their own versions of this scene and I critiqued each one. Their paintings — and my feedback — are a wonderful way to see this lesson's ideas in action.

“Cinque Terre Summer Sunset in oils.” by Ian States



Cinque Terre Summer Sunset in oils.

Nice light summery feel to this, Ian. Your drawing is very good - I can see a lot of effort has gone in there. It's difficult to keep good drawing and use expressive brushwork at the same time and it's got a little tight in the buildings compared to the rest of the painting. That comes easier with practice. A lot of expressive work in the bushes though which is great, but it's come at the expense of some of the drawing.

That is, it's important even when painting complex shapes like trees and bushes to keep in mind the overall interesting shapes of the darks and lights. When I lose that sense of structure I sometimes restate the dark shapes and then the midtones and lights again to get that structure back.

**“Mediterranean town at sunset, acrylic with oil glazing, canvas, 50 cm x 50 cm” by
Elena Sokolova**



Mediterranean town at sunset, acrylic with oil glazing, canvas, 50 cm x 50 cm

Great work Elena. Really nice glowing light effect in the sky and water and everything vertically in line with the sun. The yellow oil glazing really paid off there. Lots of interesting detail in the houses. Nicely expressive brushwork.