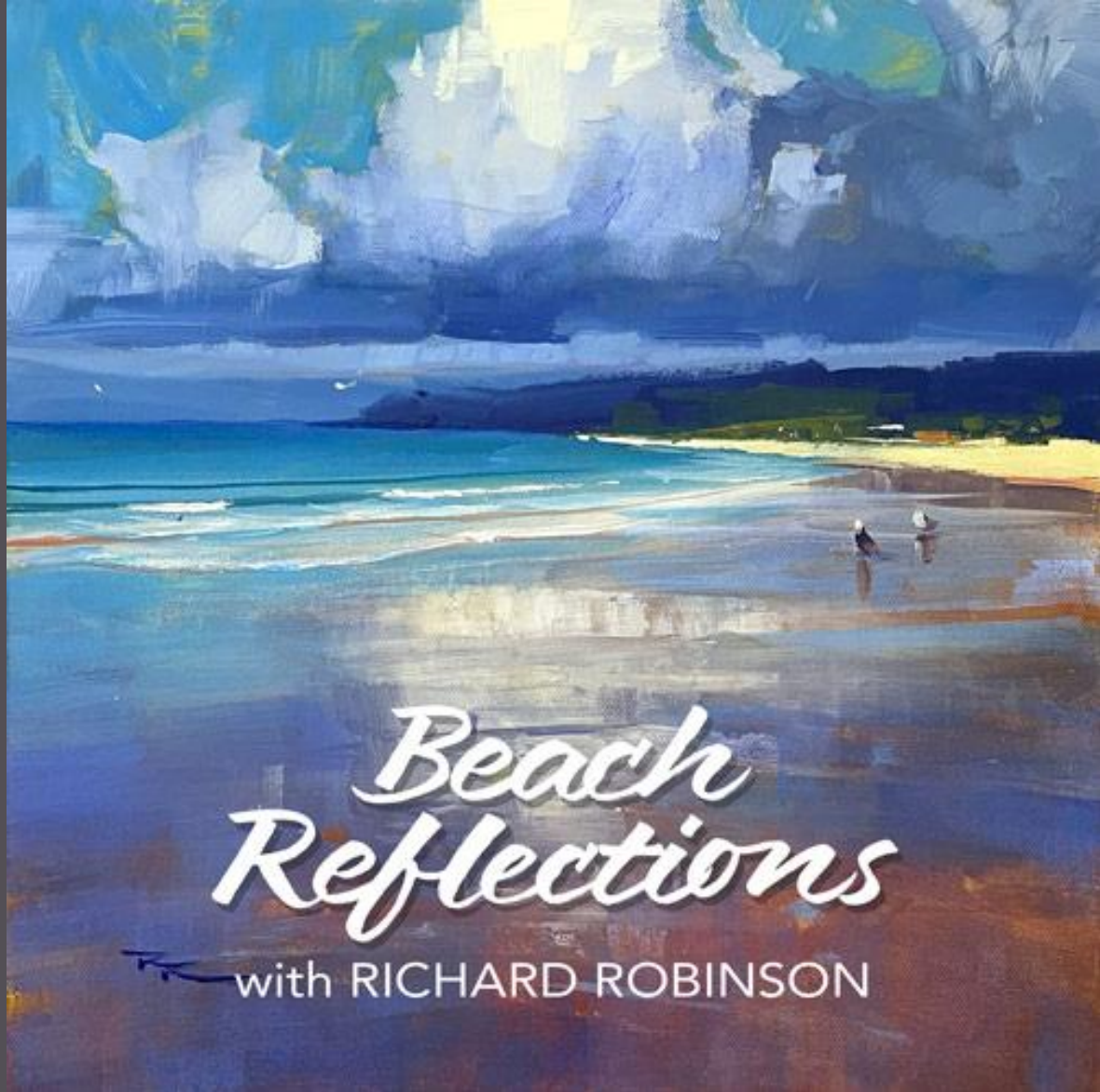




Beach Reflections

with RICHARD ROBINSON

Beach Reflections

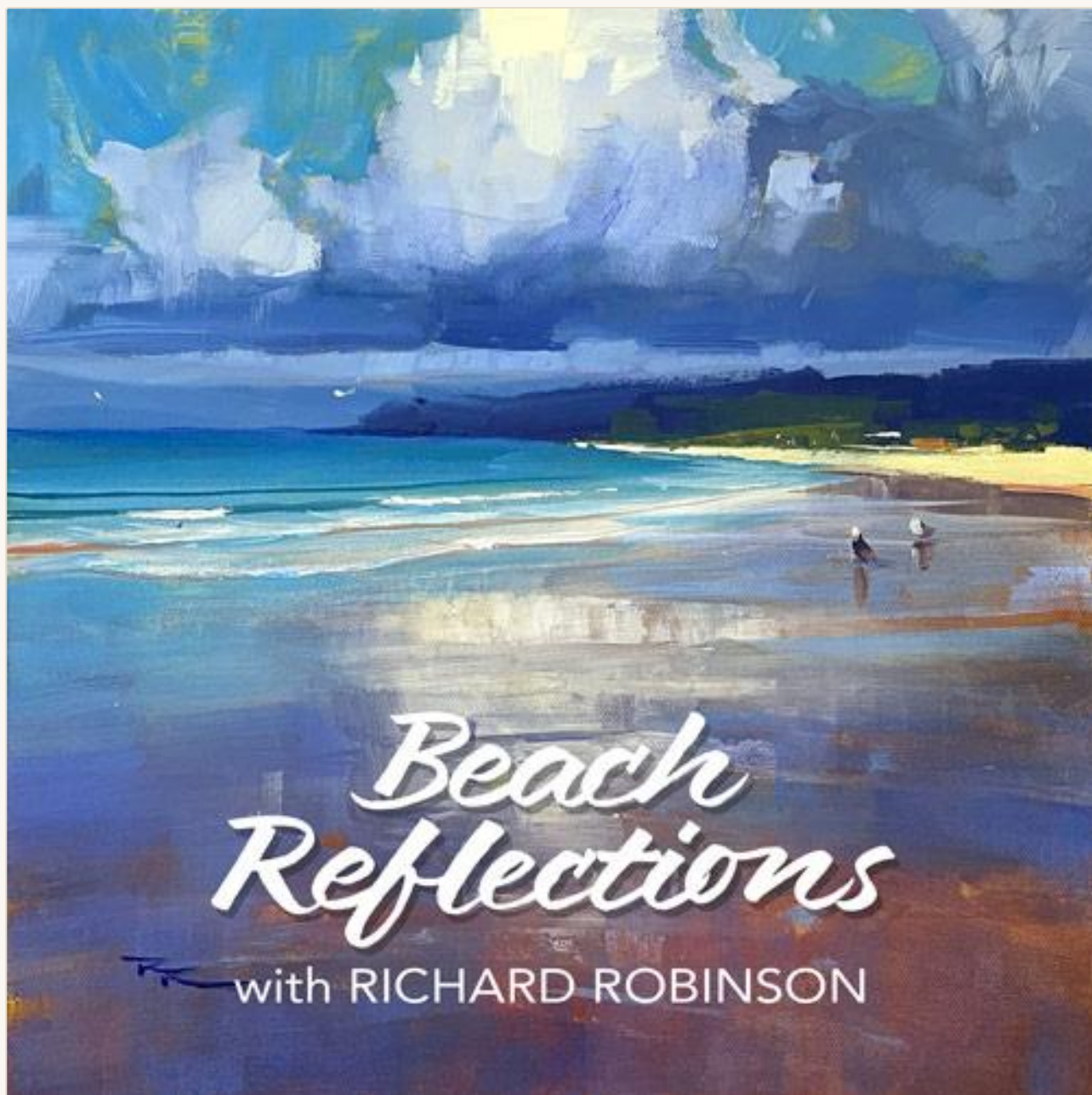
A step-by-step painting guide by Richard Robinson

Watch the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/244-Beach-Reflections>

MY PAINTING CLUB

Introduction

In this chapter, we'll dive into one of my favorite subjects to paint—a puffy cloud reflected in a wet beach, kissed by a sprinkling of sunlight. This scene offers a delightful opportunity to capture the transient beauty of nature, where the ever-changing weather and light conditions provide endless inspiration. As we explore this subject, you'll learn how to experiment with different perspectives, colors, textures, and styles, ensuring your work remains fresh and exciting. Whether you're using acrylics or oils, I'll guide you step by step through the process, making it easy to achieve a stunning result. In just a couple of hours, you'll create a beautiful painting that captures the serene and dynamic interplay of sky and sea. This lesson is designed to be both fun and rewarding, allowing you to enjoy the creative journey as much as the finished piece. So, let's embrace the challenge and joy of painting beach reflections together.



Beach Reflections

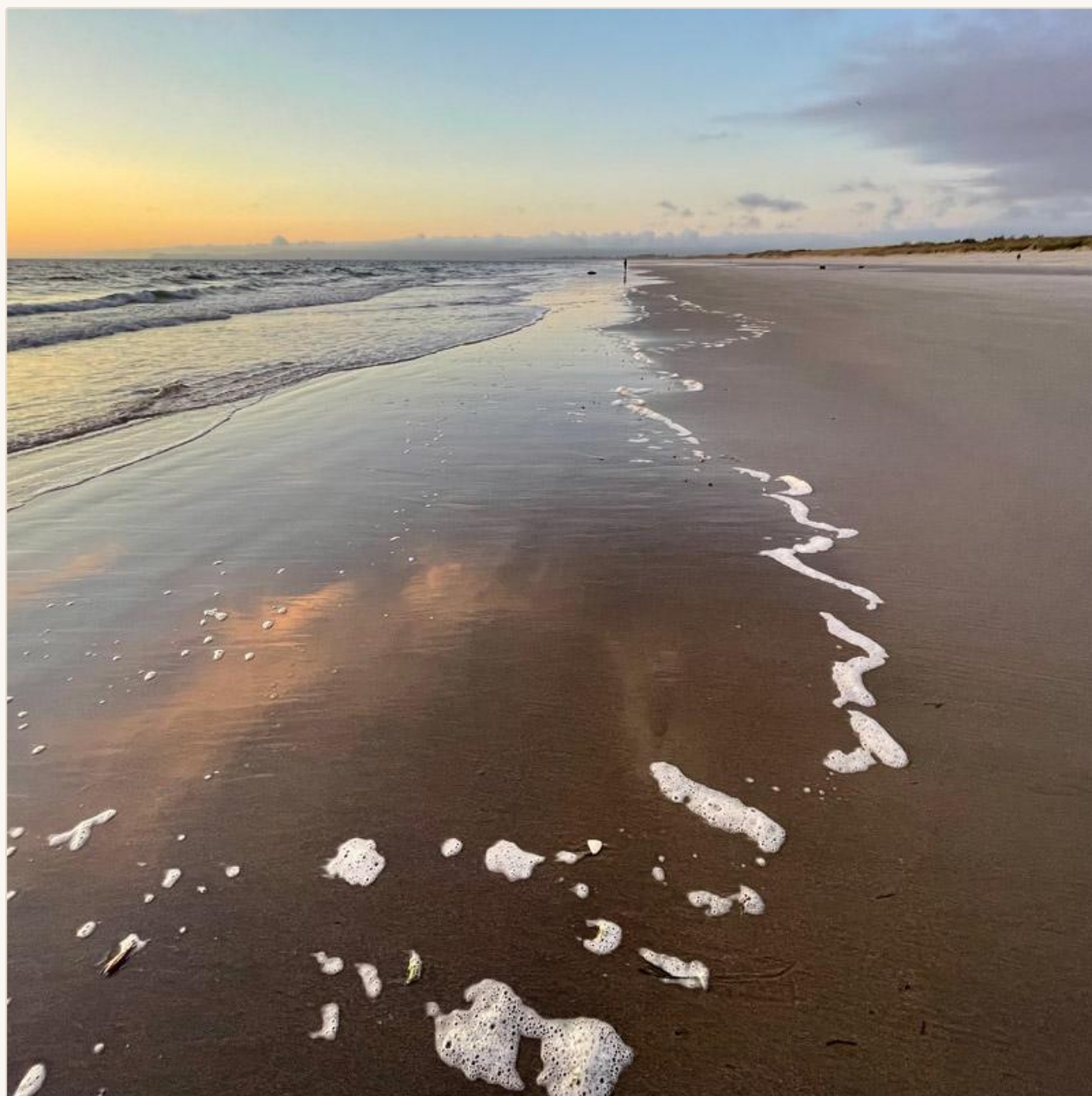
with RICHARD ROBINSON

"Beach Reflections" 14x14" 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

- Chroma Atelier Interactive Acrylics
- Phthalo Blue
- Brilliant Magenta
- Yellow Ochre
- Arylamide Yellow
- Toning Grey
- Titanium White
- Canvas
- Brushes
- [Rosemary & Co. Richard Robinson Brush Set](#)
- Palette knife
- Paper towels
- Bucket of water
- Linen Canvas:
 - 1. Quality and Durability: Linen canvas, made from flax, is often considered the highest quality among traditional canvas materials. It's durable and less prone to stretching or sagging over time compared to cotton.
 - 2. Texture: Linen canvas typically has a fine texture, which is preferred by artists who want a smooth surface for detailed and intricate work.
 - 3. Aging: Linen canvas is known to age well and is less susceptible to yellowing or deterioration over time compared to cotton.
 - 4. Weight and Stiffness: Linen canvas is usually lighter in weight and slightly stiffer than cotton canvas, which can be an advantage for artists who prefer a rigid painting surface.
 - 5. Cost: Linen canvas is generally more expensive than cotton and synthetic canvases due to the higher cost of linen fibers.
- Cotton Canvas:
 - 1. Affordability: Cotton canvas is more budget-friendly than linen, making it a popular choice for artists, especially beginners or those on a tight budget.

- 2. Texture: Cotton canvas often has a coarser texture, which can be desirable for artists who prefer a more pronounced weave or texture in their artwork.
- 3. Absorbency: Cotton canvas is known for its good absorbency, which can be advantageous for certain painting techniques where paint absorption is desired.
- 4. Stretching: Cotton canvas is generally easier to stretch tightly on a frame compared to linen, which can be more prone to slackness if not stretched properly.
- Synthetic Canvas (Polyester or Poly-Cotton Blend):
- 1. Affordability and Availability: Synthetic canvases are often more affordable than natural fiber canvases (linen or cotton). They are also widely available.
- 2. Durability: Synthetic canvases are known for their durability and resistance to moisture and environmental factors. They are less likely to sag or become damaged over time.
- 3. Texture: The texture of synthetic canvases can vary, but they often provide a smooth, consistent surface suitable for a wide range of painting styles.
- 4. Versatility: Synthetic canvases are versatile and can be suitable for various artistic techniques, including acrylics and oils.
- The choice between linen, cotton, or synthetic canvas depends on your specific needs and preferences as an artist. If you prioritize high quality and are willing to invest in premium materials, linen canvas may be the best choice. Cotton canvas is a cost-effective option suitable for many artists, while synthetic canvas offers affordability, durability, and versatility. The decision ultimately comes down to your artistic goals and budget constraints.

1 Design Inspiration and Variability



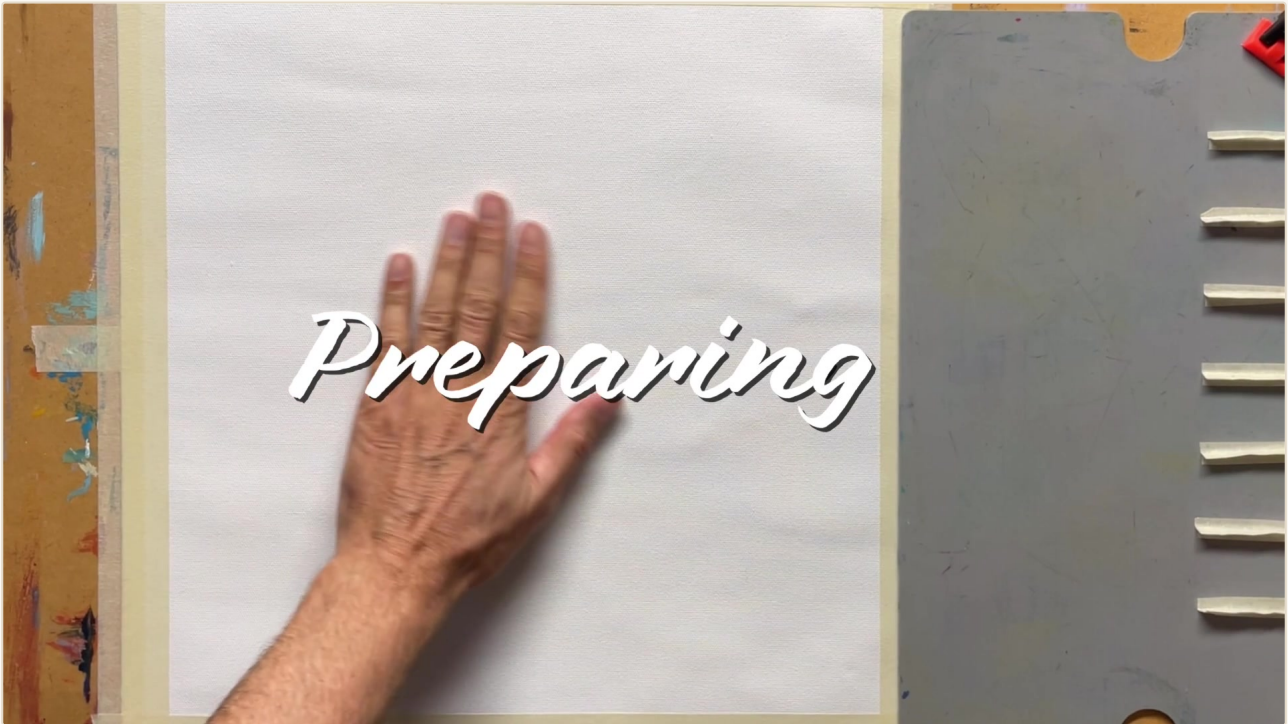
Explore Design Variability

Embrace the ever-changing weather and light conditions to inspire your beach paintings. Experiment with different perspectives, colors, textures, and styles to keep your work fresh and exciting.

PRO TIP

Use the changing environment as an opportunity to try new ideas and techniques in your paintings.

2 Preparing the Canvas



Prepare the Canvas

Tape a 14-inch square canvas onto a board to keep it secure. Use a bright yellow acrylic paint, such as arilamide yellow light or cadmium yellow, to prime the canvas. Ensure the color is warm to provide a vibrant base for your painting.

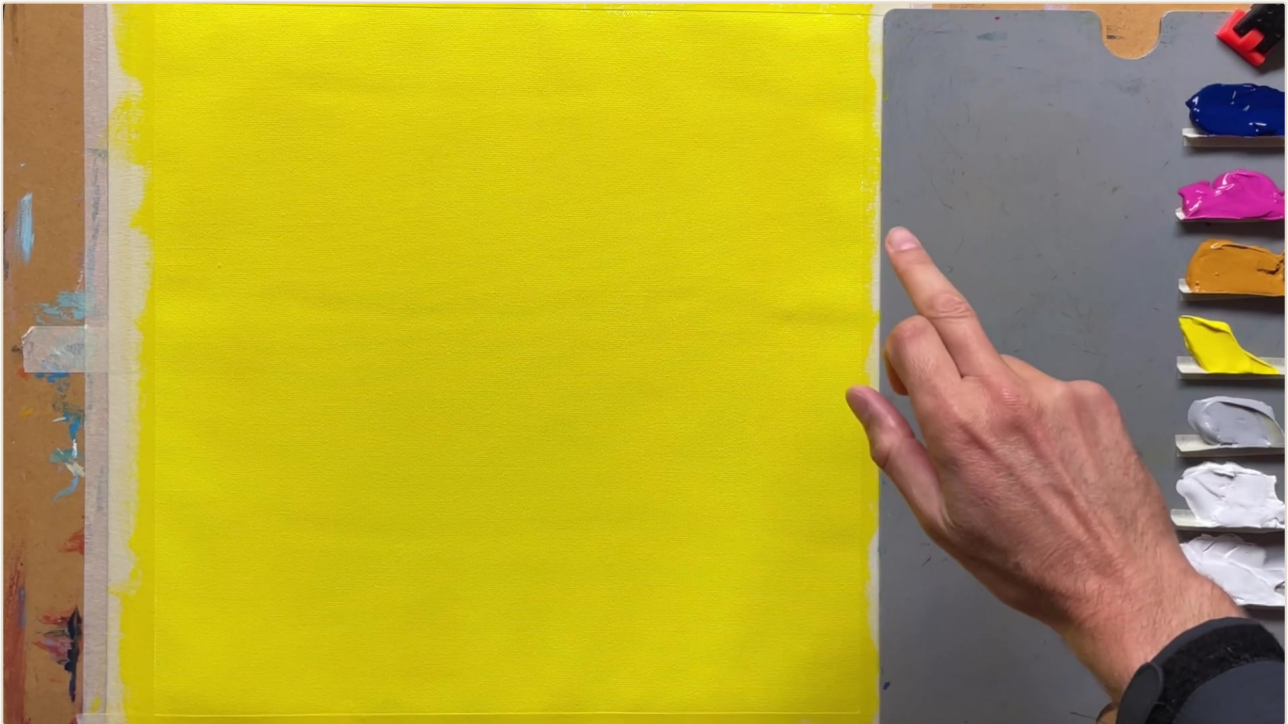
Apply the Yellow Base

Dip a big flat synthetic brush in water to moisten it. Cover the entire canvas with the yellow paint, ensuring an even coat. Allow the paint to dry for about half an hour before proceeding.

PRO TIP

Use a warm yellow to prime the canvas, setting a vibrant tone for your painting.

3 Materials and Tools



Select Your Colors

Choose a range of colors including Phthalo blue, brilliant magenta, yellow ochre, arilamide yellow, mid toning grey, and titanium white. Ensure you have plenty of titanium white for mixing.

Gather Your Brushes

Use big flat synthetic brushes, which are ideal for acrylics. These brushes will help you cover large areas smoothly.

Prepare Your Tools

Have a palette knife ready for mixing and applying paint. It's a versatile tool for creating texture.

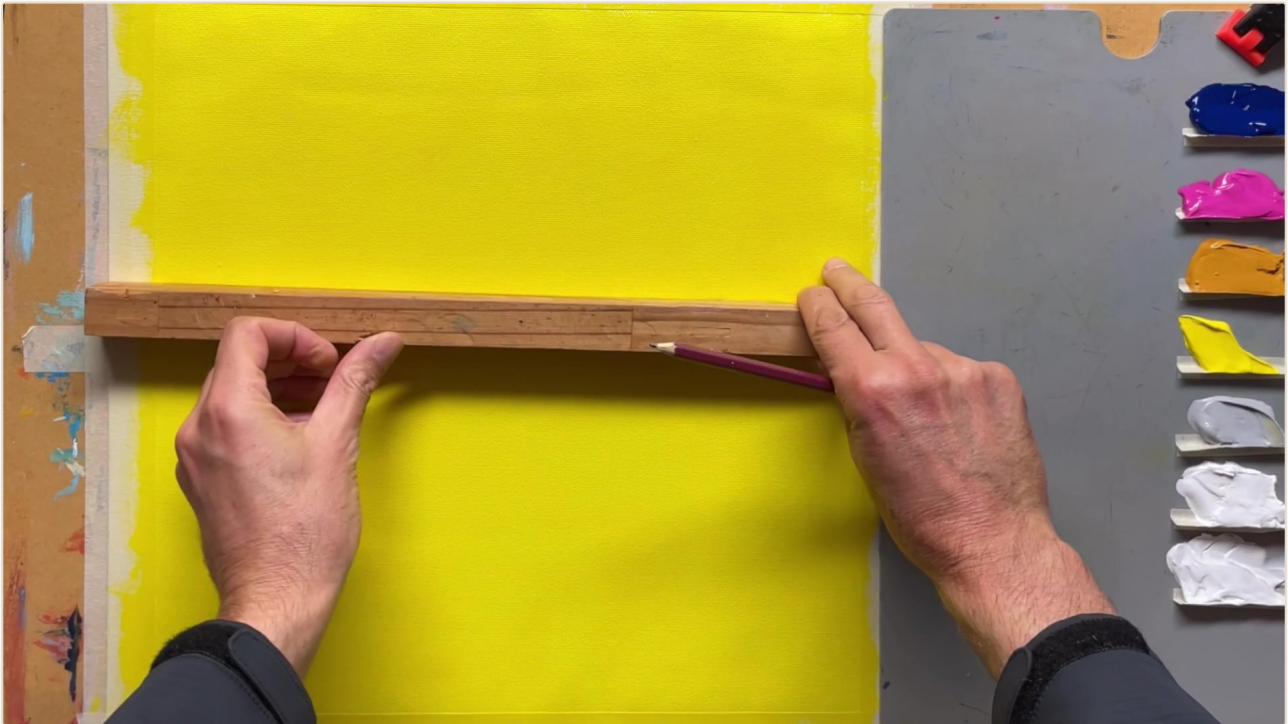
Keep Paints Moist

Use a spray bottle filled with water to mist your acrylic paints every few minutes. This prevents them from drying out on the palette.

PRO TIP

Mist your acrylic paints regularly with water to keep them workable on the palette.

4 Painting the Sky and Clouds



Set the Horizon Line

Place the horizon line slightly above the middle of your canvas. This positioning emphasizes the reflections more than the sky.

Paint the Sky

Use a big brush and dip it in water. Mix white with a little blue and start painting from the top, working your way down. Outline the shape of the big cloud by painting around it, creating the background blue sky.

Warm the Lower Sky

As you reach the bottom of the sky, add a touch of brilliant magenta to the blue and white mix. This warms up the lower part of the sky, adding depth and interest.

Define the Cloud's Edge

Spray the canvas lightly to keep the acrylic paint wet. Use the blue and magenta mix to paint a crisp edge at the bottom of the cloud. This sharp edge contrasts nicely with the softer edges that will follow.

PRO TIP

Spray the canvas lightly to keep acrylic paint wet, allowing for smoother blending.

5 Building Cloud Form and Light



Add Light to the Cloud

Mix a blue-white mixture and apply it to the cloud as it gets lighter. Use varied strokes to avoid a monotonous appearance.

Create Dynamic Shapes

Introduce a little grey into the cloud to form an interesting dynamic shape. Use soft edges by brushing down and across to create lost edges.

Transition Between Shadow and Light

Work on the transition between shadow and light by adding more white and blue. Brush soft edges with a light touch to make the cloud lighter and cooler as it moves left.

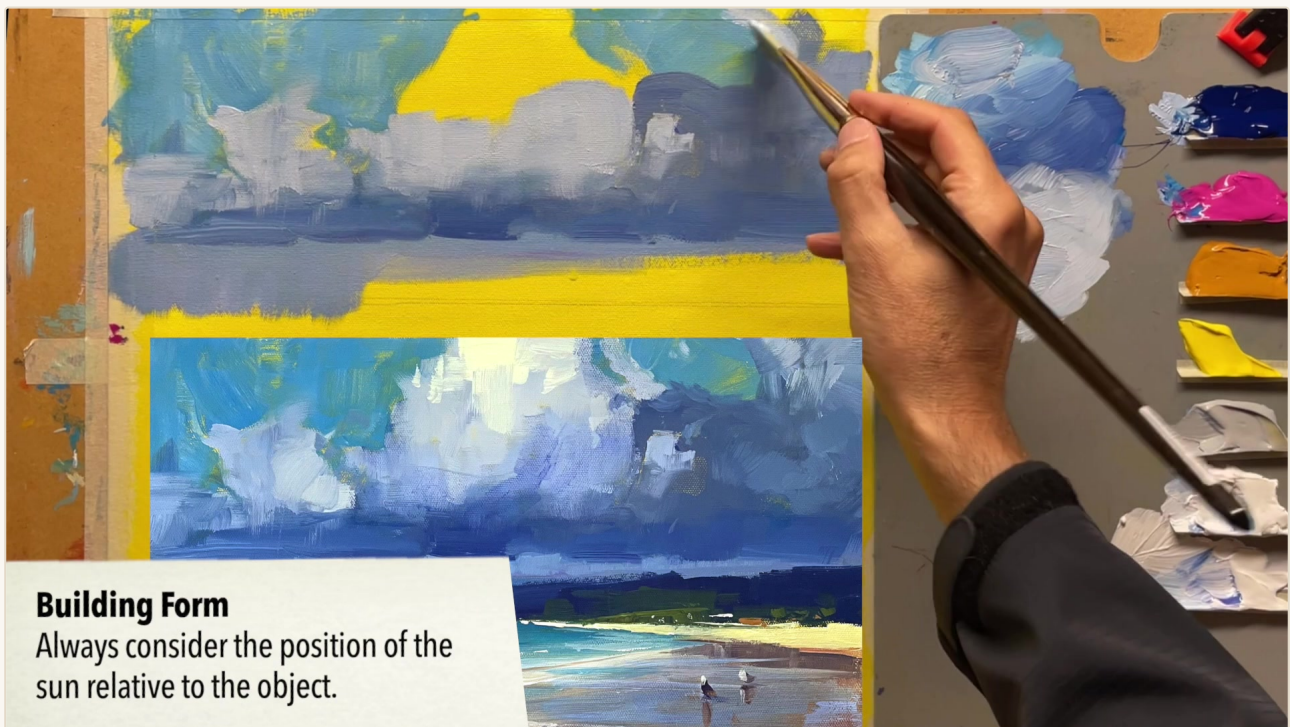
Build Up Light Spots

Add more white to create a blue-grayed version of white and move into lighter areas. Use vertical and horizontal strokes to build a sculptural feel, avoiding flat, cut-out appearances.

PRO TIP

Use a dry brush or your finger to soften edges and create a more natural cloud form.

6 Adding Highlights to Clouds



Building Form

Always consider the position of the sun relative to the object.

Warm Up the Cloud Highlights

Mix a lighter tone by adding a little yellow ochre to your paint to warm it up, simulating direct sunlight. Ensure this new mix is lighter in value than your previous layer.

Test and Adjust the Value

Test the new color on your palette to check its value. If it's not lighter than the previous layer, add more bright yellow to achieve the desired lightness.

Apply with Soft Edges

Use a brush with soft edges to apply the lighter color to the clouds. Be cautious when painting light areas next to dark ones, especially with oils, to prevent unwanted mixing.

PRO TIP

When painting highlights, ensure the new layer is lighter in value than the previous one to create a realistic sunlight effect.

7 Finalizing the Sky



Apply the Lightest Light

Mix white with a little yellow to create the lightest light. This should be the thickest paint on the canvas so far. Apply it to the areas that need the brightest highlights.

Fill Missed Spots

Identify any spots you may have missed and apply a lighter tone to those areas. Ensure the light is consistent across the sky.

Add Interest with Cloud Highlights

Add a little bit of light underneath areas to suggest distant clouds catching light. This adds depth and interest to the sky.

Refine and Adjust

Consider using a palette knife for texture if desired. Add more light to the top areas if needed, but remember to keep the process quick and fluid.

PRO TIP

Use the thickest paint for the lightest highlights to create a striking effect.

8 Painting the Distant Hills



Paint the Distant Hill

Use phthalo blue to establish the distant hill along the horizon line. Apply expressive brushstrokes to capture the hill's form efficiently.

Add Foreground Hill

Mix a darker shade using mainly blue, a little yellow ochre, and a touch of another color. Paint the foreground hill with bold strokes to create contrast with the distant hill.

Highlight Sunlit Areas

Mix a light yellow with a touch of white to create a soft green. Apply this to areas where sunlight breaks through, adding depth and interest to the hill.

PRO TIP

Use expressive brushstrokes to efficiently capture the form of the hills.

9 Painting the Beach



Prepare the Horizon Line

Mix blue with a little white and paint straight across the horizon line. Ensure the line is as straight and horizontal as possible, using a ruler or masking tape if needed.

Add Variation to the Water

As you move closer in the painting, add more white and a touch of grey to the blue mix. Use three slightly different colors to create depth and interest.

Avoid Common Misconceptions

Remember that the beach curves away, but avoid painting it as a big curve. Keep your strokes horizontal and vertical to maintain a natural look.

Start Painting the Beach

Begin from the bottom and work upwards. Mix yellow ochre with a little magenta and grey to create a wet sand color. You can also use blue to grey it down if needed.

Apply the Sand Color

Use a big brush to apply the sand color at the bottom of the painting. Use horizontal and vertical strokes, similar to painting clouds, to create texture and depth.

PRO TIP

Use horizontal and vertical strokes to maintain a natural look and avoid painting big curves on the beach.

10 Adding Light and Texture to the Beach



Add Base Color to the Beach

Work your way up from the bottom of the canvas, leaving a little bit of the canvas showing through. This will help tie the whole painting together. Mix a similar color using yellow ochre, a touch of grey, and a little bit of white. Apply this mixture further down the beach.

Maintain Paint Moisture

Give the area a light spray to keep the paints on the palette wet. This will ensure smooth application and blending.

Create Texture with Horizontal Strokes

Switch to a slightly smaller brush and wet it before use. Mix some white with a touch of yellow to create a light tone. Use a wide brush to create very horizontal, crisp strokes, representing dry sand on the flat of the beach.

Highlight the Sand Dunes

Add more white and a touch of yellow to your mixture. Apply this to the sand dunes, being careful as you approach the darker areas to maintain contrast.

PRO TIP

Leave some canvas showing through to help tie the painting together.

11 Creating Reflections in the Water



Create a Ridge of Paint

Use a palette knife to push into the paint, creating a nice ridge. Carefully place the paint and drag it back to form a solid piece. Adjust the angle if needed to achieve the desired effect.

Strengthen the Color

Mix a small amount of white and yellow to enhance the light effect on the painting. Apply this mixture to areas where you want to emphasize the light.

Add Texture and Depth

Create a darker version of the color by adding more red for intensity. Use slight brush strokes to apply this, enhancing the sense of vastness and perspective.

Mix a Gray Tone

Combine blue, magenta, and gray to create a purple-gray tone. Lighten this mixture slightly with white to ensure it is just a touch lighter than the existing colors.

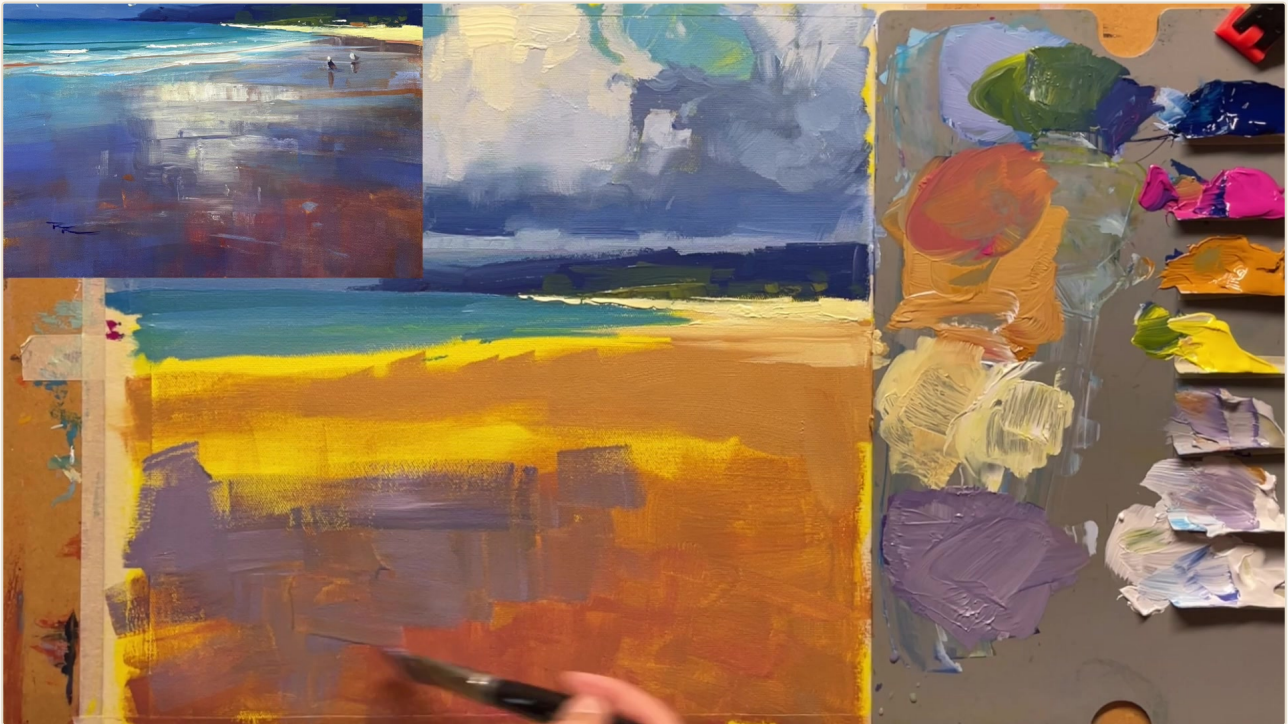
Blend While Wet

With a wet brush, work the gray tone into the brown areas while they are still wet. Use big, soft brushstrokes to blend into the empty areas, creating a smooth transition.

PRO TIP

Use gray to tone down colors without altering their hue significantly, saving time on color balancing.

12 Refining Water Reflections



Begin with Dark Reflections

Start by painting the reflections in the water, similar to painting clouds but upside down and with slightly different colors. Focus on the dark areas first, gradually working towards the lighter tones.

Lighten and Add Blue

Lighten the area by adding more blue to your mix. Work down into the area, creating soft transitions between colors. Keep the surface wet using a fine misting spray to maintain soft edges.

Reflect Light Clouds

Wash your brush and add more white to your palette. Use this lighter mix to reflect the clouds in the water, ensuring the paint remains wet for soft edge effects.

Incorporate Warm Colors

Spray the surface again to keep it wet. Add a little yellow ochre and grey to your brush, using vertical and horizontal strokes. This will warm up the reflections, influenced by the sand beneath.

Adjust and Soften Edges

Wipe your brush frequently to avoid picking up too much grey from underneath. Reload with fresh paint to maintain clarity. While the paint is still wet, adjust and soften the edges as needed.

Use a Palette Knife for Texture

For smoother textures or effects not achievable with a brush, use a palette knife to drag the paint down. Ensure you drag straight to avoid skewed lines. Reintroduce brushwork for added texture.

Add Surface Details

Move down the beach, adding variations to the water surface to suggest wind or different sand patches. Introduce thin white lines, angling slightly up or horizontal, to add depth and perspective.

PRO TIP

Keep the paint wet with a fine misting spray to achieve soft edge effects in your reflections.

13 Adding Waves and Details



Prepare the Brush

Wash your brush thoroughly. Mix some white with a little bit of blue to create a soft sky reflection color for the ocean.

Add Waves with an Angle Brush

Switch to an angle brush or use a palette knife. Mix blue with a touch of green and paint gradual curves to form the waves on the beach.

Create Thin Waves

Use the base sand color to paint thin waves. Add white water into these waves, ensuring the lines angle slightly towards the horizon and get gradually closer together.

Enhance with Palette Knife

Use a palette knife to run a few lines through the waves, adding interest and texture. Apply a few highlights with thicker paint for depth.

Add Reflective Details

Introduce a little purple for contrast and depth. Consider adding darker reflections of the hills using a brown tone to enhance the reflective quality of the water.

PRO TIP

Ensure the lines of the waves angle slightly towards the horizon for a natural look.

14 Final Touches and Signature



Add Impasto Highlights

Apply small impasto highlights using a mix of orange and white. This will add texture and vibrancy to your painting.

Soften Edges

Use a soft brush to gently soften some of the edges in your painting. This will create a more cohesive and pleasing composition.

Paint Seed Holes

With a small square brush dipped in water, add seed holes using a mix of blue, red, and magenta. This adds detail and interest to the scene.

Add Reflections

Create reflections of the seed holes using a neutral dark color. Then, add a light reflection with a slightly brownish tone to enhance realism.

PRO TIP

Use a small square brush for precise details like seed holes and reflections.

15 Adjusting Finished Painting with Varnish



Prepare for Varnishing

Remove any tape from the painting and ensure it is dry. This will allow you to apply varnish smoothly and without obstruction.

Apply Gloss Varnish

Pour some gloss varnish into a lid. Use a big soft brush to apply a thin layer over the painting. This acts as a protective plastic-like sheet, allowing for easy adjustments later.

Dry the Varnish

Let the varnish dry naturally for about 10 minutes, or speed up the process with a hairdryer, which will take around 5 minutes. This quick drying time is an advantage of using acrylics.

PRO TIP

Use a gloss varnish to intensify colors slightly and protect the painting for easy adjustments.

16 Glazing and Final Adjustments



Glaze the Beach Reflection

Mix ultramarine blue with gloss varnish to create a consistent glaze. Apply a light coat over the beach section to darken the reflection slightly, ensuring it is darker than the object. Use multiple thin layers for better control and adjustment.

Adjust Cloud Shape

Add more shape to the cloud by rounding its form. If any areas appear too dull, gently lift off excess paint with a soft cloth to refine the shape.

Enhance Ocean Depth

Add a darker strip at the distant point of the ocean to suggest a cloud shadow. Ensure the line is horizontal for a natural look.

Add Bird Shadows

Paint small shadows under the birds to ground them in the scene and enhance realism.

Glaze with Phthalo Blue

Try glazing with phthalo blue for a lighter variation. Avoid using white in glazes to prevent a chalky appearance, but in this case, a thicker layer may work well to add punchy blue tones.

PRO TIP

Use multiple thin layers of glaze for better control and to achieve the desired effect gradually.

Summary & Key Takeaways

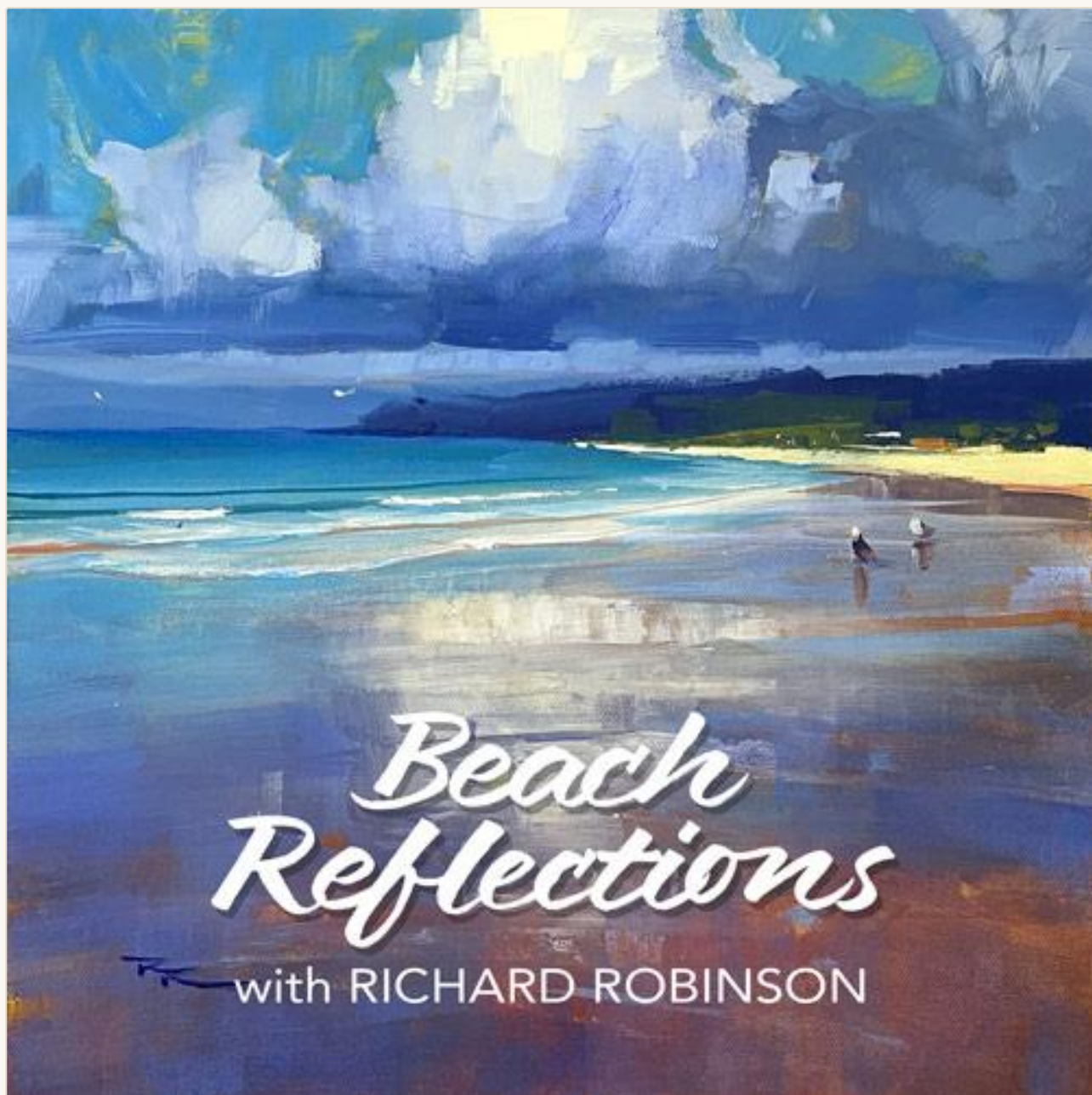
Embark on your beach painting adventure by drawing inspiration from the dynamic weather and light conditions. Begin with a vibrant yellow primed canvas to set a lively tone, and gather a diverse palette of colors and tools to bring your vision to life. As you paint, embrace the fluidity of acrylics, keeping your paints moist and workable with regular misting.

Start by crafting a captivating sky, using soft transitions and varied strokes to build clouds with depth and light. Progress to painting the distant hills and beach, using expressive brushstrokes and a careful balance of colors to capture the essence of the landscape. Pay attention to the reflections in the water, using a palette knife and subtle color shifts to create a realistic and engaging scene.

As you add the final details, such as waves and highlights, ensure your painting is cohesive by softening edges and adding precise touches. Finish with a protective varnish to enhance and preserve your work. Remember, each layer and adjustment contributes to the overall harmony and vibrancy of your beach masterpiece.

LESSON POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Use the changing environment to inspire new ideas and techniques.
- Prime your canvas with a warm yellow to set a vibrant tone.
- Mist your acrylic paints regularly to keep them workable.
- Spray the canvas lightly to keep acrylic paint wet for smoother blending.
- Use a dry brush or your finger to soften edges for natural cloud forms.
- Ensure highlights are lighter in value than previous layers for sunlight effects.
- Use horizontal and vertical strokes to maintain a natural look on the beach.
- Keep the paint wet with a fine misting spray for soft edge effects in reflections.



"Beach Reflections" 14x14" 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.

"BEACH REFLECTIONS 16 X 16" OIL OVER ACRYLIC BASECOAT by **Louise Villegas**



BEACH REFLECTIONS 16 X 16" OIL OVER ACRYLIC BASECOAT

Louise those clouds are beautiful! Very painterly and soft with loads of interesting details and a nice progression from cool shadows to warm lights.

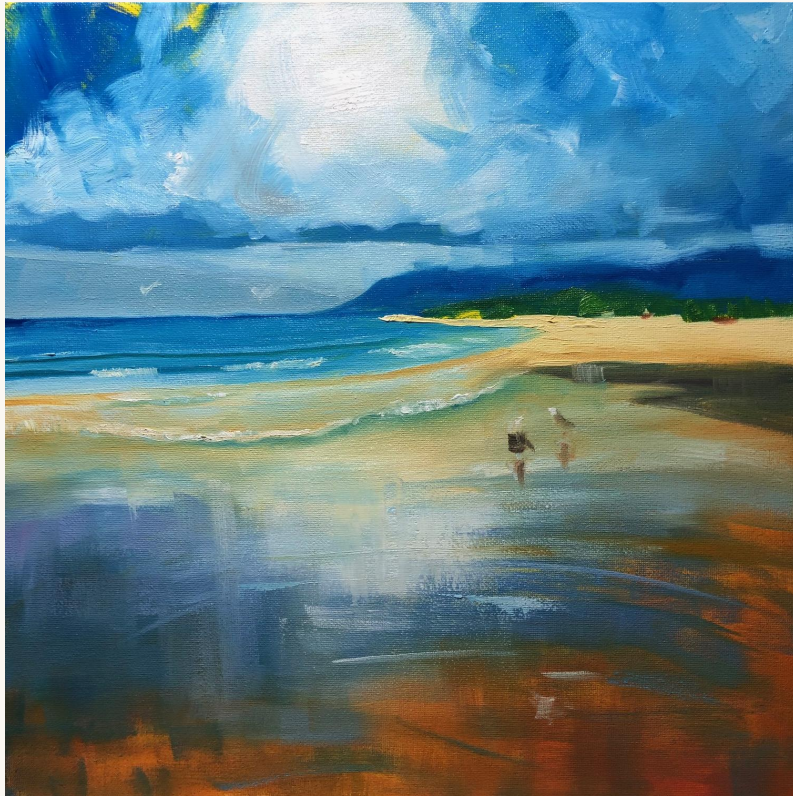
The warm sand triangle is a little thick and that's created a bit of an awkward angle with the waterline, easily fixed. Similarly beware of tilting horizons. Perhaps that's the photo though.

I'd suggest you try balancing your phthalo blue mixtures out with a little more crimson or magenta to avoid a greenish tinge to it, noticeable in the foreground.

Also in the same area you could have used some more vertical strokes to help with the feeling of the cloud reflections and also to add more variety there.

Keep going!

“Beach Reflections Oils on 14"square canvas” by Nancy Newton



Beach Reflections Oils on 14"square canvas

Hey Nancy that's some beautiful brushwork in there! Especially in the clouds. Gorgeous!

I'd just like to see the drawing on this one a little better. Take a look at levelling your horizon, trimming back the golden sand to a long single triangle and have another go at the colour in the water in that yellowish band across the middle - there's no reason for it to be yellow there.

Love those clouds!

“Beach Reflections in Oils” by Geoffrey Geeson



Beach Reflections in Oils

Hey Geoffrey, from a distance this one looks great - powerful contrasts, good shapes and strong colour and exciting brushwork. Beautiful!

Looking closer I can see you had some serious fun with your palette knife in the clouds. It's interesting how that extra texture really pulls the clouds forwards in the picture plane and really draws the eye. Part of me wants to see the whole painting in this same impasto treatment. It must have been difficult to put that knife down!

Some of the colour in the bottom third has gone overly grey and could do with a lick of blue in it to better reflect the sky.

You're going to need a smaller fine brush for doing seagulls too.

Paint on!

“Beach Reflections, acrylic on 40x40 cm canvas.” by Adana VIRNA



Beach Reflections, acrylic on 40x40 cm canvas.

Beautifully done, Adana! You have a fresh painterly style going there. Strong vibrant colour, keep so by not overworking it, and a nice contrast between the blue and orange complements.

The only thing I might suggest is to pay attention to the very slightly curved brushwork in the bottom third of my painting which lends a certain expansiveness to the scene. Something to consider anyway.

Great job.