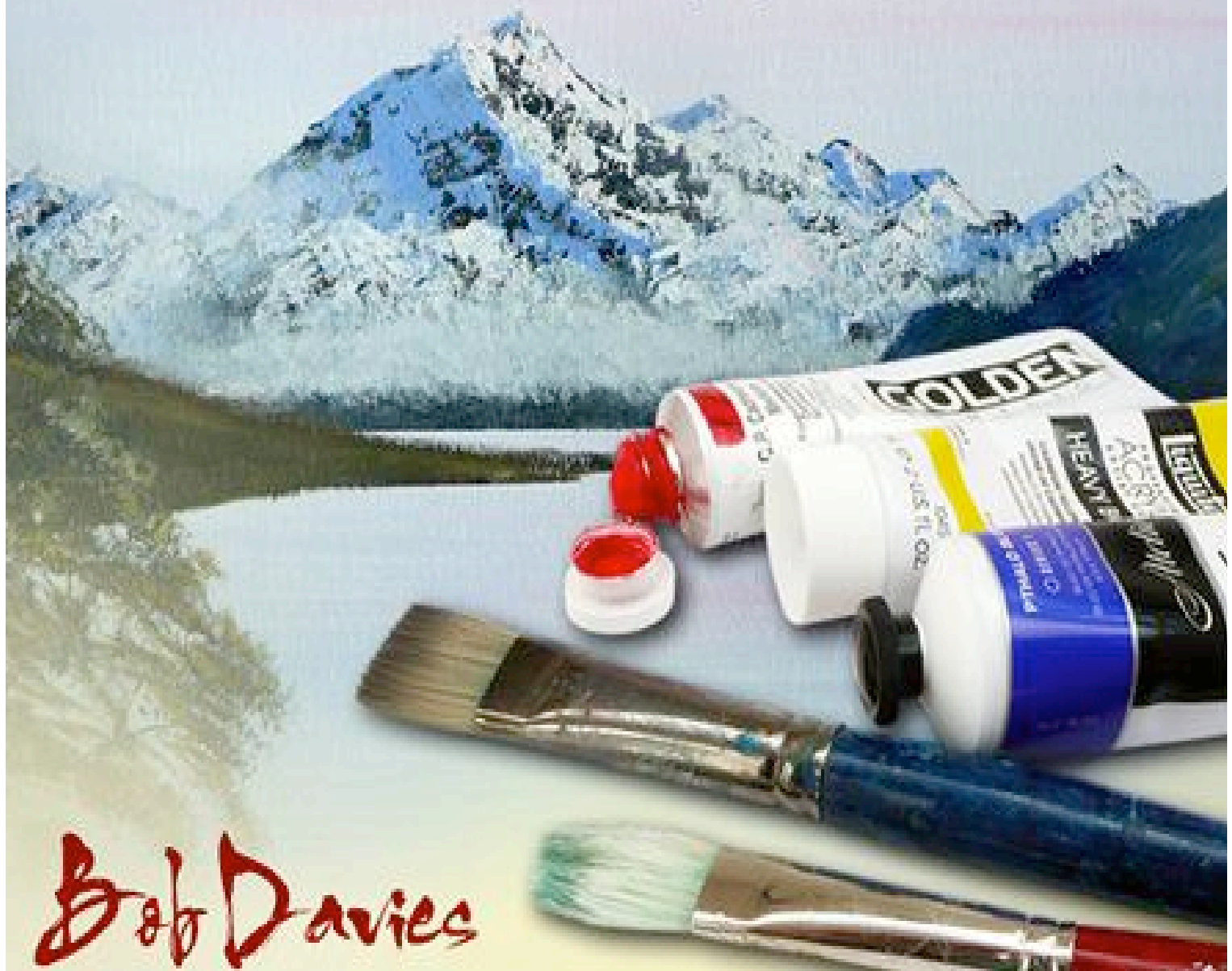


Acrylic Painting SECRETS

Tips & Techniques To Make
Acrylic Painting Easier
& More Enjoyable



Bob Davies

About The Author

Bob Davies is professional art instructor and co-founder of ArtTutor.com.

Bob is passionate about helping others discover the immense satisfaction of producing artwork they are proud of and is a staunch believer that you **don't** have to be born with 'special artistic talent' in order to enjoy the wonderful pastime of painting and drawing.

In this e-book, Bob takes you through some of the basic foundations of acrylic painting that no one bothered to show him at school. In fact, Bob's experience of art at school is like so many others' ...



“ So many of my students have told me that they passed through school wanting to learn art, but were frustrated that they were never taught basic techniques like drawing skills. Far too often they were told to 'follow the rules of art' and concentrate on creating 'mood' and 'energy' and 'themes'.

They tried, but floundered because they were never shown how to draw simple shapes like trees or led through the principles of perspective. So they gave up altogether. Sadly, they lost art - and art lost them...

This mirrors my own experience at school i.e. "...develop your theme and you'll pick up the basics as you go along..."

Well no, actually you don't!

You need to understand some simple building blocks of drawing and painting techniques before you get into the heady heights of symbolism and representation in your work.

Why have so many "TV Artists" enjoyed such popularity in the last decade or so? It's because... they show you how...!

I often wonder how long Catering Colleges would survive if their students weren't shown how to beat an egg before they were let loose baking a Christmas cake... ”

Bob Davies

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1. What is Acrylic Paint?



Acrylics is a vibrant, opaque, water-based paint that offers many of the benefits and style of oil-painting without the smell of turpentine or quite as much mess of cleaning up. It is very quick drying (which can be both a blessing and a nuisance – we'll see why later) and as you can paint light over dark areas, obscuring them completely as in **Photo 1**, it is very forgiving of errors and changes of mind.



Its formula is very similar to the paint you use to decorate the walls and ceiling of your home (**Photo 2**) and is a close cousin of PVA woodworking glue and items like wall & floor tile cement.

Indeed, many artists use all of these materials, freely mixed with their acrylic paint, to create a whole variety of 2D and 3D effects. It's just as easy to create bold, vibrant in-your-face 3D (impasto) works as it is to produce subtle and muted paintings offering a great delicacy of atmosphere.

There are many excellent brands, widely available in any art store, but you can also get hold of very cheap 'starter sets' of paints like the set in **Photo 3**, as well as brushes and paint surfaces from various discount stores and the like, if you're not sure whether to dive in.

Often you can find a set with half a dozen colours, a couple of brushes and a board or canvas to paint your first picture.

These typically only cost about the same as one tube of the better quality paint shown in the picture and whilst the quality may not be up to the standards available in art stores, they do allow you a taster at very little outlay and risk to your pocket.



However, there's nothing to beat the added vibrancy and flexibility of the better quality acrylic brands such as those shown in the large tubes in the photo. Certainly if you intend to paint with acrylics on a regular basis, you'll want to graduate to these as soon as possible.

And as you'll see on the next page, even with better quality materials, it won't cost you a fortune, provided you buy sensibly and avoid the temptation to fall for every 'must have' offer from the art manufacturers!

One of the most prominent features of acrylics is that it's available in different viscosities.

All that means is that you can buy it as thick as soft butter; in a softer formulation like toothpaste; or as a thin ink that you could even use in an airbrush as well as using it painting in a style very similar to watercolours.

You can see three examples in **Photo 4** where the indentations in the brown paint left by the palette knife would dry without moving – ideal for, say, creating 3D rock textures in the foreground.

The red paint in the middle is typical of the way most acrylics are sold – thick enough to retain brush strokes but soft and malleable to allow it to be spread easily across the paint surface.

The yellow acrylic ink is still pretty dense when it comes neat out of the bottle but thinned further with water, will provide an excellent alternative to watercolour paints.

Because acrylic paints are water-based, there's no need for any special fluids or thinners to clean up after a painting session – just water and a little soap as in **Photo 5** to remove any residual paint out of the metal ferrule where it holds the bristles.





You can buy acrylic paints in various qualities. The cheapest is via the economy sets from the previously mentioned discount stores. They're usually in much smaller tubes than the better quality paints, as shown here, front left.

Next is the 'student' quality. The large tub of Titanium White shown in **Photo 6** is from Winsor & Newton's Galeria range. These tend to be the same fairly affordable price regardless of colour and certainly in this size, go a long way, though you can of course buy them in 'normal' size tubes. For many artists, 'student quality' is absolutely fine for most paintings - and ideal if you're going to produce large work such as a mural on a bedroom wall, for example.

At the top end are 'artist's quality' paints such as the Golden 'Open' tube shown here, where there is no compromise on quality of pigment. As a result, various colours are put into different price ranges to reflect the scarcity of different raw materials. Many, but not all, paint manufacturers offer both a 'student' and an 'artists' quality range.

Colours tend to be more vibrant as less filler is used in the paint manufacture but they go a long way and if you regularly paint to commission, I'd always recommend that your customers deserve the use of the best materials you can afford.



2. What Other Equipment Do I Need?



You need only a few bits and pieces to get going and somewhere to paint. If you've nowhere else, then the kitchen table is as good as any place. Just make sure you keep the table and floor areas covered in case of spillages.

Acrylic paint is non-toxic and easily wiped up when wet, but like all paints, certain colours can stain and be very difficult to remove. Its biggest drawback is that once dried, it can be difficult to get off porous surfaces and fabrics (i.e. carpets!) - so take care when you paint and wear old clothes...

Remember, as I said earlier, it's a close relative of DIY paints and adhesives (latex, emulsion, vinyl, tile cement, PVA glue, filler – or whatever you call it in your part of the world). So whatever precautions you take when decorating, do the same with your acrylic paints and you'll be fine.

Photo 1 shows just how little equipment you need to actually get started with acrylics.

Apart from a few paints, all you require are two or three brushes, a board, canvas or paper to paint on, a little water, paper towels to clean up as you go along and a simple palette to hold the paints and keep them moist.

You can buy these palettes in any art store but I'll show you how easy it is to make one for next to nothing, a bit further on...



Having started off by looking at paints, over the next couple of pages we'll obviously have a look at the other items in the picture to explain them in a little more detail so you can quickly get comfortable with them.

There are also a few other useful bits that I'll mention, but for now, this is really all you need as you head towards your first minor masterpiece!



PHOTO 2 – BRUSHES FOR ACRYLICS (left to right)

- Nylon No.2 Round Brush
- Nylon No. 1 Rigger
- Nylon No. 2 Fan Brush
- Nylon ¾" Flat Brush
- Hog No.5 Filbert
- Nylon 1" Decorating Brush
- Round Rubber-Tipped Paint Shaper
- Painting (Palette) Knife

There are many other sizes of these brushes that may work just as well for you. ***So don't go rushing out to buy the brushes here as 'must haves'.*** Use any you have first to see how you get on.

Oil painting brushes – especially hogs-hair brushes – have long been used for acrylics, with watercolour brushes for more detailed work. Acrylic paint is very hard on brush hairs and the delicate nature of watercolour brushes with natural hairs means they get damaged very quickly. So don't use your best sable watercolour brushes with acrylic paints!

In the last few years, synthetic acrylic brushes have come on the market. These have nylon filaments or hairs, which are cheaper and more hard-wearing than natural hair. The first four brushes from the left of the picture are all nylon.

The other three items are: first a nylon decorator's brush for painting large areas, then a paint shaper (this looks like a brush but has a tip of silicone rubber that allows you to create different textures in paint already on the canvas) and finally, the painting knife - ideal for adding thick dollops of paint and spreading it in a variety of lovely juicy textures. It's perfect for creating rocks and stones, as we shall see later!



Although the majority of acrylic paintings are created with brushes, apart from the painting knife, there are a variety of other items you can use as well as in **Photo 3**.

The thick, buttery nature of acrylic paint lends itself to all sorts of textural opportunities and you can see in the picture here just a few of items you could use.

For example, a small piece of mount board is a great tool, used as a squeegee to create texture, or on edge to create thin straight lines for masts.

The edges of a cut-up credit card - probably the best thing you can do with some of them ;-) - can be trimmed to different lengths, as here, so you can 'scrape' straight-edged blocks of colour for doors and windows etc. The blue glue spreader can be used in the same way, or to create rock textures if the palette knife is too large, while the natural sponge, dipped lightly into paint is a great means of creating instant leaf clusters on trees by pressing it gently onto your paint surface.

Masking tape, though not a painting tool as such, is ideal for creating any long straight line such as the horizon in a seascape, or for when you want to retain a straight edge when butting two blocks of colour up to each other. Always look out for items like these that may otherwise be discarded but can provide a free and invaluable painting implement.

The versatility of Acrylics is such that you can paint on a wide variety of surfaces, porous and non-porous, hard and soft, thick and thin. For instance, although I'll be concentrating on 'conventional' painting surfaces in the e-book, you can paint on rocks, floor-tiles, plastered walls, cloth (canvas is a cloth, don't forget!), unglazed pottery, primed metal etc. And there's a lot more etc's if you look around.....

Just have a look at some of the readily available surfaces you can try out for next to no cost. Many of these items are lying round the house or stored in a shed taking up space. Or you might have thought they'd be no good for painting with acrylics.

Left to right in Photo 4:

- 1 - Lining wallpaper used for smoothing minor imperfections in walls. Or the back of ordinary wallpaper.
- 2 - Brown wrapping or parcel paper. Lightweight but tough enough to paint on.
- 3 - Copier or printer paper. Once treated, as below, absolutely fine for acrylics.
- 4 - Newspaper. Yes newspaper. Ditto.
- 5 - Corrugated card. An ideal way to re-cycle something that's probably headed for the tip.
- 6 - Material. Not a good T-shirt like this one but virtually any old cloth that can be stretched flat on a board.



I use a roll of lining paper (1000 grade thickness is good and strong) for many demos, unwinding as I go along and rewinding it to refer back to earlier lessons. Use it on the roll or cut to your preferred size.

Various thin papers and card can be considerably strengthened by painting a coat of white emulsion, latex, vinyl, etc. on both sides and letting it dry. Then stretch it out on a board to paint. That way you've got two surfaces front and back to try out!

In **Photo 5**, the 'stripes' show through a bit on some types of corrugated card but this can add to the textural possibilities. In the Acrylics Secrets Course, I paint a scene of the Toronto waterfront on corrugated card, using nothing other than scraps of mount card to paint with - just to show how easy it is to paint this way without even using brushes!

I once painted an 8' x 4' Nativity play back-scene for a local school Christmas production on a discarded piece of faulty cloth that was destined for the skip. Stretched over a 2" x 1" frame, it's survived several Christmas plays so far and still going strong. And as I've said already, *canvas* is a cloth!



Here are some rather more conventional painting surfaces that you can use. From left to right in **Photo 7**:

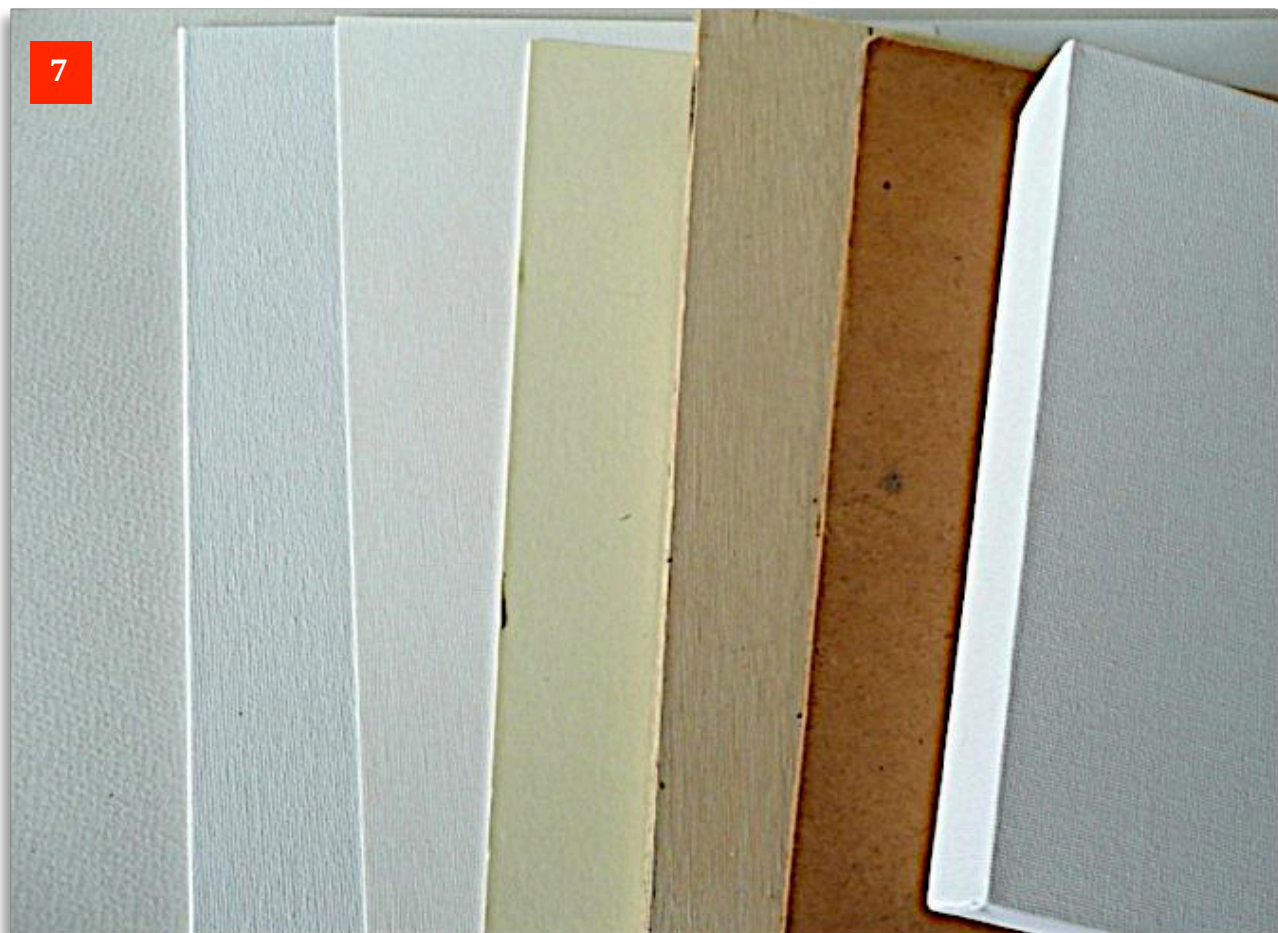
- 1 - Watercolour Paper
- 2 - Canvas Panel
- 3 - Acrylic Paper Pad
- 4 - Mount Card
- 5 - Plywood
- 6 -MDF, Hardboard or Masonite
- 7 - Stretched Canvas

Watercolour Paper, suitably primed is a great surface to paint with acrylics. Canvas boards are an economical alternative to stretched canvas and I did most of the lessons on these in the DVD Course.

Acrylic paper has an embossed canvas-like surface, ready primed, and is available in convenient tear- off pads. Mount Card, use for supporting watercolours, is another excellent stable surface, once primed. If you're looking for a use for the panels left spare after you've cut out a watercolour mount then here's the answer!

Wood panels, such as Ply, MDF (Medium Density Fibreboard) Hardboard, Masonite or Chipboard are all excellent surfaces to paint on and self-supporting.

Finally, of course we come to Canvas, properly stretched over a frame. Although a little more expensive than the other items, there's nothing quite like the gentle bounce of a brush putting paint on a real canvas to make you feel like you're a 'proper' artist!

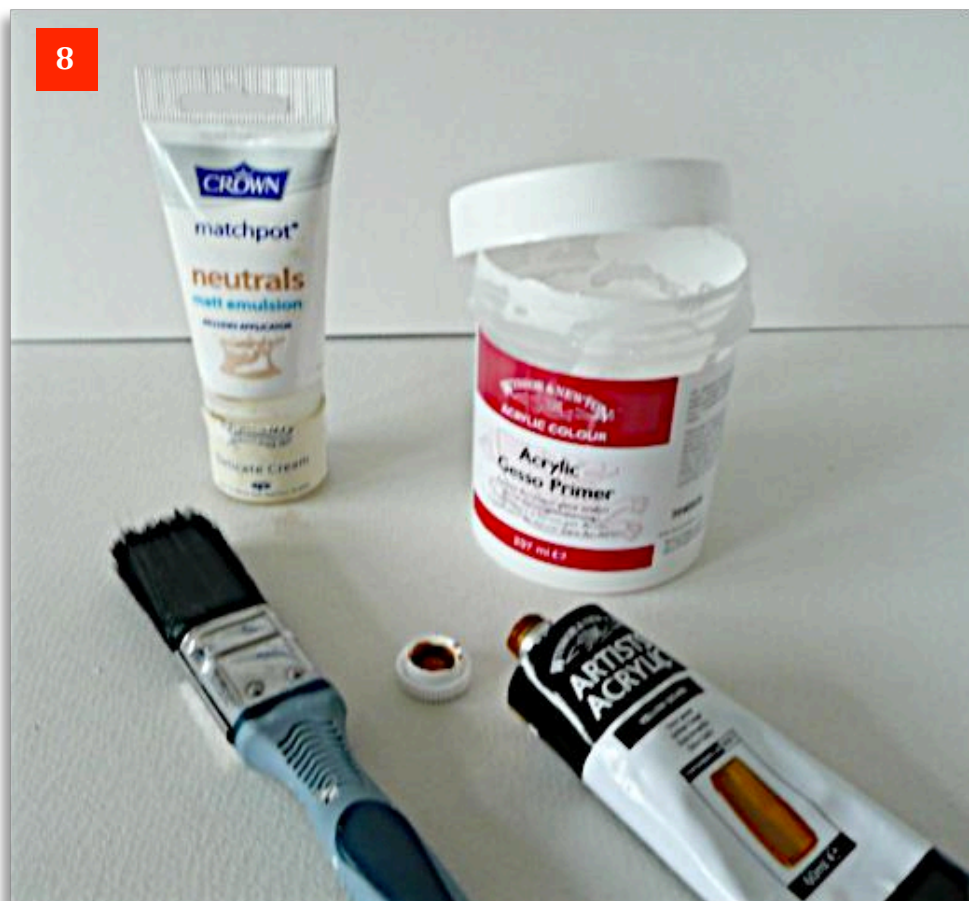


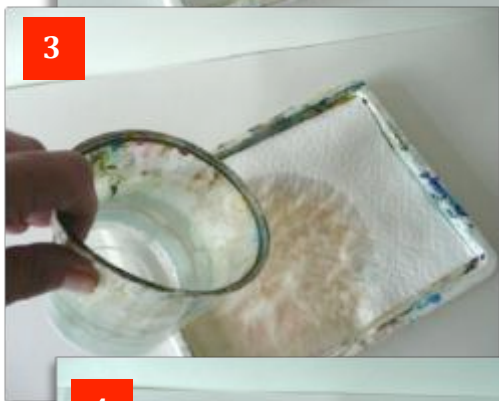
Although many canvas boards and stretched canvasses come ready primed so you can paint straight away, you usually need to prime other surfaces.

This is very easy, requiring no more than a coat or two of white Gesso Primer (a very dense acrylic paint) to be painted over the surface and left to dry. It's best to brush one coat in one direction, let it dry, then the next coat lightly at 90degrees to simulate a canvas texture with the brush marks.

You can add a touch of Yellow Ochre to the mix while you do this. This has the advantage of creating a subtle warm 'glow' that will shine through the picture. More importantly, it helps to unify the painting and also blots out any harsh white bits of unpainted surface that you may miss as you paint.

A cheaper alternative is to use ordinary matt emulsion or latex paint and one of the sampler 'Matchpots' from various manufacturers are ideal for this (See **Photo 8**). You don't have to have one with a yellow tint. Light beige or brown, blue or grey is fine, depending on the atmosphere you want to create.





You can buy special palettes for acrylic paints in any art store. They do the job but are quite expensive for what amounts usually to a vacuum-formed, thin plastic well, sometimes with a detachable lid. The so-called special 'waterproof membrane' and 'unique reservoir paper' is little more than white baking parchment and blotting paper.

Here's how to make your own for next to nothing:-

Photo 1. All the materials you need are in this photo. From left to right - kitchen towel, greaseproof paper or baking parchment, a small shallow tray or plate and a little water.

Photo 2. Fold up a couple of pieces of kitchen towel so it sits comfortably in the bottom of the tray or on the plate.

Photo 3. Add some water so the kitchen towel soaks it up. You don't need it flooded but make sure to replenish it as you're painting if the towel starts to dry out.

Photo 4. Cut or tear a piece of greaseproof paper to the approximate size. It's not vital if it's a bit bigger than the tray or plate.

Photo 5. Place the greaseproof on top of the damp paper towel and put your paints around the edge, leaving the centre area for mixing. Depending on the thickness of the greaseproof paper you use, it will cockle slightly on top of the wet towel but this is quite normal and it will stay intact. By the way, if you can only get brown greaseproof or baking parchment, this works exactly the same. It's just a bit easier to see what colours you're mixing with the white version.

When you've finished painting, carefully wrap up the greaseproof paper with the residue of used paint inside and dispose of it.

You can continue with a fresh sheet if you need to or, if you want to carry on painting the next day using the colours you've already mixed, stretch a piece of cling film over the whole tray to keep everything moist and store in a cool place.

So there we are, it really is inexpensive and simple to make your own palette and to get painting in less than five minutes!



3. Basic Sky & Clouds



It's quite easy to create a basic sky using this technique. You can leave it as it is once it's finished or you can add clouds if you wish.

Just by altering the colours slightly, you can also change the seasons or time of day.

But before we go any further, I want to mention again about the quick-drying properties of acrylics being a blessing and a nuisance. The speed of drying means that it can be a bit of a problem blending colours to achieve the sort of even, seamless gradation that you need in a sky.

This is made worse by the fact that as you brush, friction is generated, which creates a small amount of heat, which of course speeds up the drying process even more!



The solution is to mix an Acrylic Retarder like this one shown in Photo 1 to slow down the drying process and make blending easier.

It's a clear gel, which is added to your paints as you mix the colours. A quick touch on the end of your brush added to the paint is fine.

You can just about see a blob of this gel, in **Photo 2**, below and to the right of the brush hairs. You only need a small amount.

Many paint manufacturers are also improving their formulas to make acrylics stay 'open' longer but these tend to be the more expensive artists quality, so the gel is a more economical alternative if you're

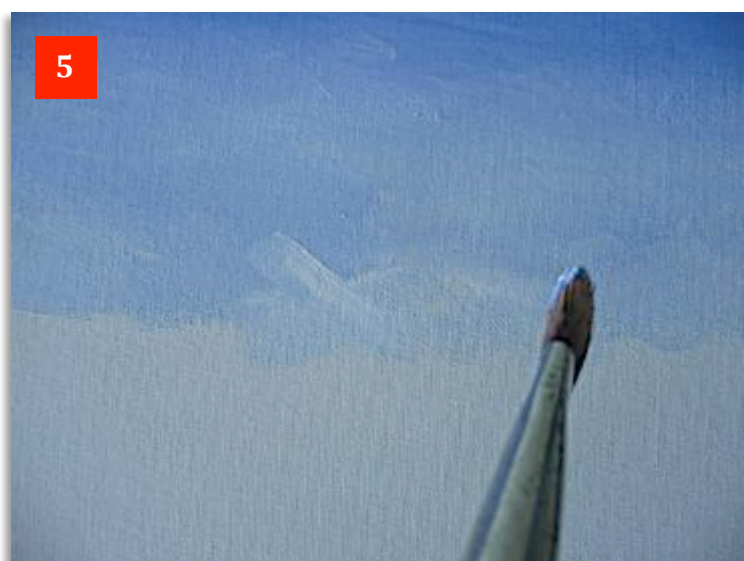
Here's what you'll need:-

- Painting surface - I used canvas panels for all the demonstrations in this e-book.
- Large brushes - this one is a $\frac{3}{4}$ " (18mm) Flat Nylon Brush plus I use No.8 Hogs-hair Filbert for the clouds.
- Ultramarine Blue
- Yellow Ochre
- Titanium White
- Permanent Rose
- Gel Retarder

From **Photo 2** above, I start by dragging a small touch of blue into the white and a little gel retarder. Keep adding Ultramarine until you have a nice shade of mid-blue and then paint a strip at the top of the canvas as in **Photo 3**, using small, criss-cross brush strokes. Then drag and blend from side to side. This will ensure you don't leave any flecks of

Now in **Photo 4**, I've added some more white to the mid-blue mix and repeat as in Photo 3 underneath the first strip of blue, blending upwards and into this painted area. If you feel the paint starting to dry or 'dragging' slightly, add a little more gel retarder and/or a touch of water

As in **Photo 5**, add a little more white and repeat the process, working your way down the picture. You can see one of those criss-cross strokes to the left of the brush that I haven't yet blended.





About $\frac{2}{3}$ of the way down, as in **Photo 6**, your board should look something like this, with a mid-blue at the top graded to a much lighter shade further down. We're now going to paint *upwards from the base*, using Yellow Ochre and White to capture that lovely light at the horizon.

Although much of the base will be covered by your landscape later on, this pale creamy yellow will provide an ideal, warm under-painting that will help to subtly unify the whole picture.

The next task therefore, is to rinse your brush in water (**Photo 7**) to clean out the pale blue. Take off the excess water on a piece of kitchen towel (**Photo 8**) so the brush is just damp-dry. Don't take too long over this though as your paint is drying all the time on the canvas!



Photo 9 - now mix Titanium White with a touch of Yellow Ochre and a little gel retarder. Again you can see that it's rather more White than Yellow.

Incidentally, dragging the darker colour a little at a time into the lighter colour ensures you save paint. If you mixed equal parts of each colour to start with, then you'd use a lot more of the lighter colour (in this case the white) to get to the lighter colour you really want. It works the other way round, of course, if you just want to slightly lighten off a dark colour. Bring the lighter colour into the dark paint a little at a time till you're happy with the mix.



9

In **Photo 10** add this creamy colour to the base of your canvas and work upwards in exactly the same way as you did when bringing the blue colour downwards. In other words, add a touch more white to the mix as you go up towards the blue.

This will need to happen more quickly as of course you only have one third of the canvas to cover this time.



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12



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Look at **Photos 11 & 12**. You need to blend this very pale (almost white) colour with the very pale blue colour on the canvas now. If you find that the blue has dried off a bit, add more gel to the cream so it's almost translucent and blend upwards a bit more. You may then need to put in a touch of the very pale blue on your brush to achieve a smooth transition. Remember those criss-cross strokes!

Don't worry you won't get a green sky by mixing the very pale blue and yellow. Ultramarine and Yellow Ochre mixed with this much white will produce a very subtle grey colour rather than green.

13



In **Photo 13** this is how your finished canvas should look. You can see that even though we have a smooth gradation from mid-blue at the top to a pale creamy yellow at the base, there are subtle variations in colour all over the sky.

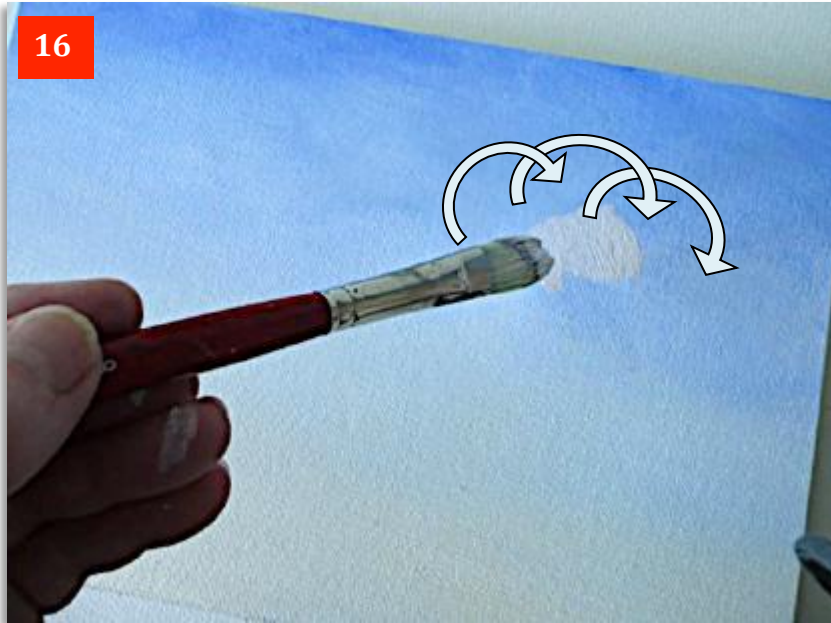
This is fine. It adds interest and in many so-called 'clear' skies in real life, you'll find this sort of mottling if you observe carefully. Now you could leave this exactly as it is if you want a clear sky and go on to add a landscape. However, we'll now see how we can add warm clouds to give an alternative atmosphere.

You can see in **Photos 14 & 15** that I'm still using those three colours plus white. You can now see me mixing a mauve 'cloud shadow' colour. This is achieved by adding a touch of the Permanent Rose, & Ultramarine to Titanium White. You can also bring in a little Yellow Ochre to grey it down a bit if it looks too vibrant.

The reason the Yellow will make it greyer is because you are adding all three primaries (Red, Yellow & Blue) together, therefore cancelling out each other's colours.

In **Photo 15** I'm adding more white to give me several variations in tint of the cloud and shadow colours.





In **Photo 16** I'm using this paler mix for the basic cloud colour. This way I can reserve the pure Titanium White for sunlit highlights.

By using the slightly rounded tip of the filbert brush in a circular motion, I quickly create a whole series of cloud shapes.

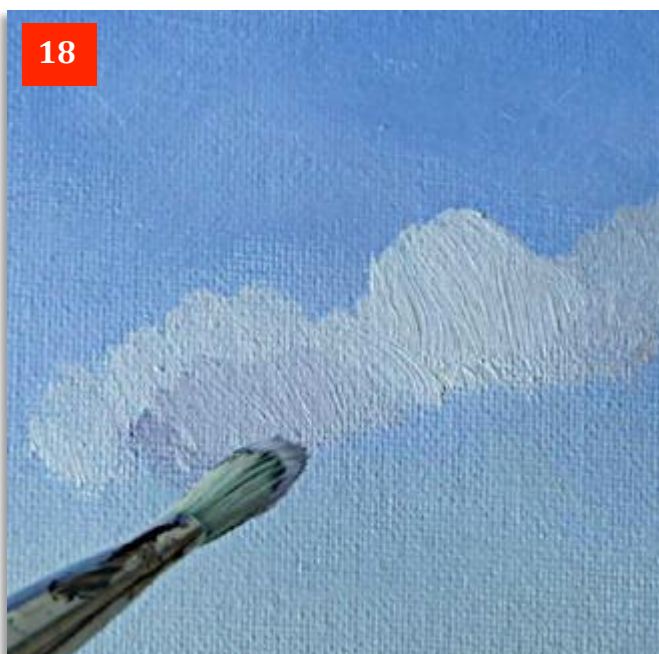
It helps to have a rough idea of the shape of the overall cloud mass in your head, making sure that you have one cloud bigger than the rest, rather than a series of separate little balls of cotton wool hanging in the sky.

Photo 17 shows that I'm also bringing in some of that darker mauve colour I mixed to create variation in the cloud colour on the right and therefore add more interest.

Note from the brush marks in this close-up in **Photo 18** that the paint is still relatively thick at this stage. Don't worry about trying to 'feather' it yet. Instead, concentrate on getting the main cloud masses down on your canvas.



17



18

Don't be afraid to add some individual colours either. In **Photo 19** I'm adding a little touch of Permanent Rose, whilst neat Ultramarine and Yellow Ochre can also be picked out if you look closely.

19



Keep in mind the direction of the sun when you're adding these subtle shadows. In **Photo 19** it's coming from top left so all the shadow areas will tend to be towards the bottom left of each bit of cloud.

20



Now's the time to gently blend the colours - not too much though as you want to retain some individual colour.

In **Photo 20** the brush has virtually no paint on it and I'm feathering the paint on the top cloud so it creates a slightly raggedy appearance. Feathering is no more than *very* gently scraping and dragging the paint that's already there and it's an identical process when you create the edges of distant trees, which we'll see later on.

21



Nearly there now. I've come back to the shadow areas in **Photo 21** and I'm starting to add some lighter cloud colour with neat Titanium White. I'm going to drag it out and blend the bottom right edge of the white paint, leaving the top left edge to 'catch the sunlight'.

I'll also develop some of the cloud formation with the main 'weight' of the clouds towards the top right side of the picture and add a few more highlights (but not too many – less is more in this case).

See also how I've left the bottom quarter of the canvas cloud-free so I can add a landscape later on.

22



In **Photo 22** here's the completed sky. By selectively adding those lighter highlights over the darker shadows, it's helped to create an impression of three-dimensional, overlapping clouds.

Note also that less highlight and detail has been added lower down and the colours are more muted, giving an impression of perspective and distance.



4. Easy Middle Distance Trees



In these next two lessons we'll look at how very simple it is to create the right colour mixes to put in those essential background trees that trail off into the distance. In fact we're going to look at trees in the summer/autumn and some in a colder and more wintry atmosphere.

You'll see, by choosing various colours for the sky, the ground and of course the trees themselves, how you can vary the seasons at will in your painting and also create significant 'depth' in your picture by the strength of colour you use.



If you look carefully at **Photo 1** you can just see a strip of masking tape across the centre. I've painted a simple sky and an even simpler summer landscape in the top half and later on I'll do the same in the bottom half with a winter version so you can compare the two.

For this summer version, here's the colours I'll be using:-

- Ultramarine Blue
- Yellow Ochre
- Cadmium Yellow
- Cadmium Red
- Permanent Rose
- Titanium White



You can see the various mixes I've used in **Photo 2** for the sky and the ground areas. White with a little blue for the upper sky and just a touch of Permanent Rose; white with a touch of yellow ochre for the lower sky; cadmium yellow with touches of ultramarine, yellow ochre and a little white for the ground.

In **Photos 3 & 4** the sky has been painted exactly as in the previous lesson, except that I've lightly streaked in some wispy clouds at an angle while the blue paint was still wet, with the creamy colour I used in the lower part of the sky. This is really easy to do and gives a lovely summery sky with an impression of a warm, relatively wind-free day.

I used the $\frac{3}{4}$ " (18mm) brush for this but it's not vital what brush you use as long as it's big enough to gently spread the paint from side to side as in these two photos.



Photo 5. These are the two brushes I'm using for this exercise. The top one is a No.2 Nylon Filbert about ¼" (6mm) wide and the bottom one a very cheap, raggedy hogs-hair flat brush about ⅜" (9mm) wide.

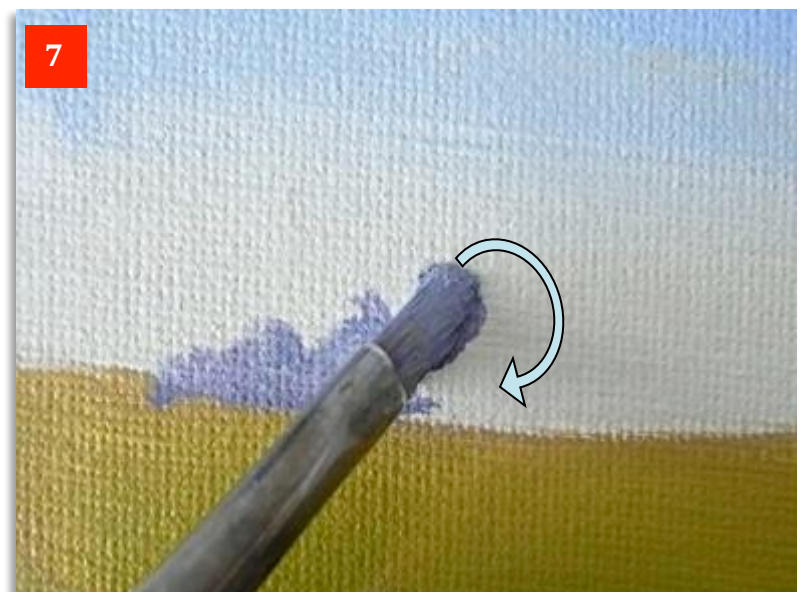
Photo 6. The colours for the most distant summer trees are on the left. It's really just a mix of three primaries which of course will give a grey, once you've lightened it down with white.

You can see that it is slightly biased towards the blue, which being cool and light, will help to keep the trees in the distant background where we want them.



In **Photo 7** you can see that all that is required is to gently scrub the brush in random-sized circular motions. Trees this far away will show only a pale silhouette, hence the light mauve-blue colour.

You can see how effective this is with the bank of trees in **Photo 8**. All the shapes are random and different sizes. Absolutely no detail is needed but in the right hand tree, I've just touched in a little yellow ochre to give some added warmth as the trees get closer to us. Don't overdo this though – you only need the merest hint.





8



9

Photo 9 and I'm now switching to the cheap hogs-hair brush. However, I've just put in a blob of green/grey with the nylon brush to represent the trees getting closer and therefore having slightly more 'tree' colour.

This colour is the same as the original mix but with more blue and yellow ochre and a little less white. Try out various mixes on scrap card before committing them to your picture.

In **Photo 10** you can clearly see the different tree profile made by the hogs-hair brush. It's almost painting the twigs and branches for you!

Instead of scrubbing with a circular motion, you're better off stabbing the paint on to create the ragged outline.



10

11



In **Photo 11**, I've dipped the brush into a little neat Ultramarine blue and stabbed it on the right of the tree. This gives a nice shadow effect, with the sunlight coming from the left.

To complete the impression, I've stabbed and blobbed in touches of blue and yellow ochre here and there in **Photo 12** to give different shapes, strengths of colour and smooth and rough outlines – all designed to add interest. Can you see how this stronger, darker paint has already pushed those pale trees on the left further away?

12



In **Photo 13** we've started to add some Cadmium Yellow, mixed with the Ultramarine, to create nearer middle distance trees. Compare this to the previous picture, where what were the nearer trees have themselves now been pushed back by these brighter, warmer colours.

In **Photo 14** I've started to create those autumn colours by mixing the Cadmium Red, Cadmium Yellow and Yellow Ochre. We've also brought in a little Ultramarine to darken things here and there and get some browns.

13



14





In **Photo 15** we've added the 'autumn' colours above with the hog brush. See how they lose some of their intensity on the canvas, compared to the palette. This is because it's a thinner layer of paint than that on the palette.



To make sure we keep this strength of colour and bring these trees further forward in the picture I've added some Ultramarine and Cadmium Red in **Photo 16**, mixed to a dark blue and then stabbed over the top here and there with Cadmium Yellow, a tiny touch of Blue and some White, to create sunny, highlighted leaf clusters and dark shadows.

To create the illusion of the closest trees, I've added a few trunks and branches, very loosely, here and there in **Photo 17**. I'm using that rubber colour shaper I mentioned earlier. It's not easy to put paint on with it, but it's ideal for scraping paint out as here. A few lines and 'Y' shapes is all you need for a good impression of light trunks.



A strong mix of any red, blue and yellow will give you a good, dark grey/brown for tree trunks as in **Photo 18**. I've added water to make it run easily and I'm bringing in the Rigger Brush just to add a few lines here and there.

19



And there, in **Photo 19**, is the completed exercise – a small forest of middle distance trees that will give a great sense of depth to your picture. Notice also how you can fool the viewer by mere suggestion. The right hand trees clearly belong in an autumn scene and so the eye accepts that the other trees further back are also autumn specimens. However, put your hand over the ‘autumn’ trees on the right of the picture and suddenly the scene is one of mid-summer!

And on the same theme, we’ll now go on to create the same view but, using several different colours, create a much cooler, wintrier atmosphere...

Here I’ve used different ‘cooler’ colours Pthalo Blue, Raw Umber and Lemon Yellow, plus white, to create the same scene, but with a more wintry outlook. Then with the same colours I’ve changed this picture into a snow scene.

You can see from these three different mixes that a much colder atmosphere is easily created.

20



21



22



- Photo 20** Winter grass colours
- Photo 21** Winter sky and snow colours
- Photo 22** Winter tree colours

Look at the warm atmosphere created in the summer/autumn scene by using Ultramarine Blue in the sky in Photo 23. It has a slightly red/purple cast to it, giving a lovely warm effect. This is enhanced by touches of 'summery' colours like Yellow Ochre and Permanent Rose.

By contrast, the Pthalo Blue in **Photos 24 & 25** is rather greener and generates the colder looking sky, which in turn creates the overall mood and atmosphere of the picture.

The small bare tree confirms winter is upon us and is easily worked in this size using just a rigger. I'll show you how to do that in the tutorial on creating basic trees next.



As an aside, in the snow scene, see just how little pure white is used. Most of the 'snow' colour is created with the mixes in **Photo 21** at the top of the page.

Snow, like water, tends to reflect the colours of the sky so it's much more interesting if you reserve your pure white to really make just a few bright highlights stand out.



5. Basic Winter Tree



It's so easy for beginners to worry about painting trees, especially if they've only ever produced the proverbial 'green lollipop'.

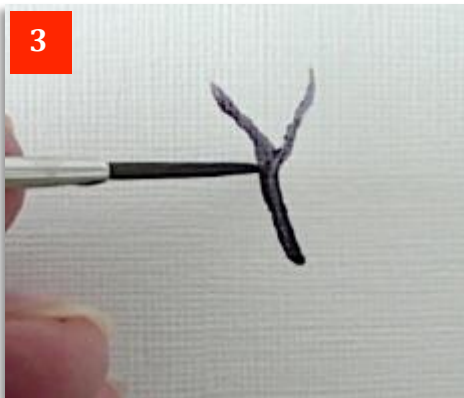
And don't worry if your hand isn't too steady either! Winter tree branches actually look better if they're a bit raggedy and all over the place.

Now, first things first – we're going to replicate this winter tree in the previous lesson (**Photo 1**). It's typical of the sort of tree you might want to put in the middle distance. Not too much detail as it's not in the foreground, but close enough to see the main trunk and branches.



Look at **Photo 2**. Notice how the brown/grey paint mix is relatively thin and watery so it flows easily across the paint surface. We're also using a rigger brush as that will help to keep the branches thin enough for this size of tree. Obviously if you're doing a larger version, you need to use a larger brush initially for the trunk, saving the rigger for the thinner branches and twigs.

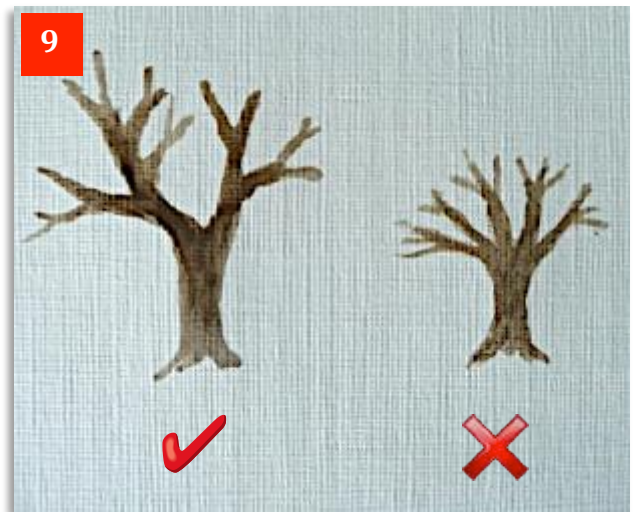
In **Photos 3 – 8** you can see the very straightforward sequence that gets you almost to the finished tree. All you're painting really is a series of 'Y' shapes at different angles and sizes.



Notice that most tree trunks split and then split again a little further up the limb. Very few split into several different branches from exactly the same point like the fingers on your hand. Look at **Photo 9** for clarification.

By the way, you may find it more difficult to paint branches on the 'wrong' side of the tree. In other words, if you're left handed like me, it'll be painting branches on the right hand side with the brush 'pushing' away from the trunk rather than 'pulling' the paint).

No problem. Just turn the picture upside down and continue painting the branches on the side with which you're comfortable. This doesn't just apply to trees of course. It can be anything you wish to paint.



In **Photo 10** I've added a little Raw Umber, Lemon Yellow and a touch of Ultramarine to give a cold, scruffy grass effect.

I've also added a mix of Raw Umber and Titanium White to parts of the right side of the tree to represent the light falling on it.

I've put a blob of this colour next to the tree and you can see that even though it's a mid-grey, it looks very much lighter when added to the trunk, against the darker parts of the trunk and the grass.





6. Simple Summer Trees





There's many ways you can produce authentic looking trees. Here's a simple way to get you started with a good looking specimen like the one in **Photo 1** that can be put into many landscapes. Think it's beyond you? Well just follow the simple steps and amaze yourself!

Its shape can also be adjusted – wider and flatter, longer and taller, different greens, etc. – to represent quite a few other trees as well.

You can actually paint it two ways. You can sketch out the drawing as in **Photo 2** and then fill it in. It doesn't matter if your drawing is a little different from mine. It'll still look like a tree.

Alternatively, you can go straight into paint without the aid of the drawing 'safety net', like **Photo 3**. Again, the actual shapes don't have to be identical to mine to look right. And this is the example were going to follow.

In **Photo 4** you can see the colours I've used. From left to right:
Titanium White
Cadmium Yellow,
Yellow Ochre,
Ultramarine Blue
Raw Umber
Cadmium Red.

In the centre are the colours used for the leaf clusters, i.e. Cadmium Yellow and a touch of Ultramarine for the lightest green, a little more blue for the mid green and a little Raw Umber added for the darkest green.

For the tree trunk and branches in **Photo 5** it's mostly Ultramarine and Raw Umber, with White added for the sunny side. I've also added a touch of yellow ochre and cadmium red to show how you can further vary the greys of the trunk.



OK, let's look again at that first stage. As you can see, in **Photo 6** all I've done is stabbed on some of the lightest green colour in vague banana shapes of different sizes, making sure they overlap slightly.

This gives the basic tree shape, though it can always be adjusted slightly as you add other colours. I've used a nylon round No.2 brush here but any similar size or shape will do fine.





Now we add the trunk (**Photo 9**). Remember a tree has to carry a lot of weight with summer branches and foliage, so don't give it a spindly trunk that couldn't hold it up. I've used a mid-grey here to get the main outline.

Also notice how I've spread the trunk at the base so it appears to be sitting *in* the ground rather than just on it.

In **Photo 10** I've changed to the rigger brush to produce some nice fine branches in between the leaf clusters. It helps if you thin the paint slightly with water to get it run easier for this technique. If it still produces a 'hit and miss' effect, don't worry. This looks very authentic as light plays on branches like this in real life.

All I've done, by and large, is to paint little 'Y' shapes in the open areas to connect the main branches and trunk.

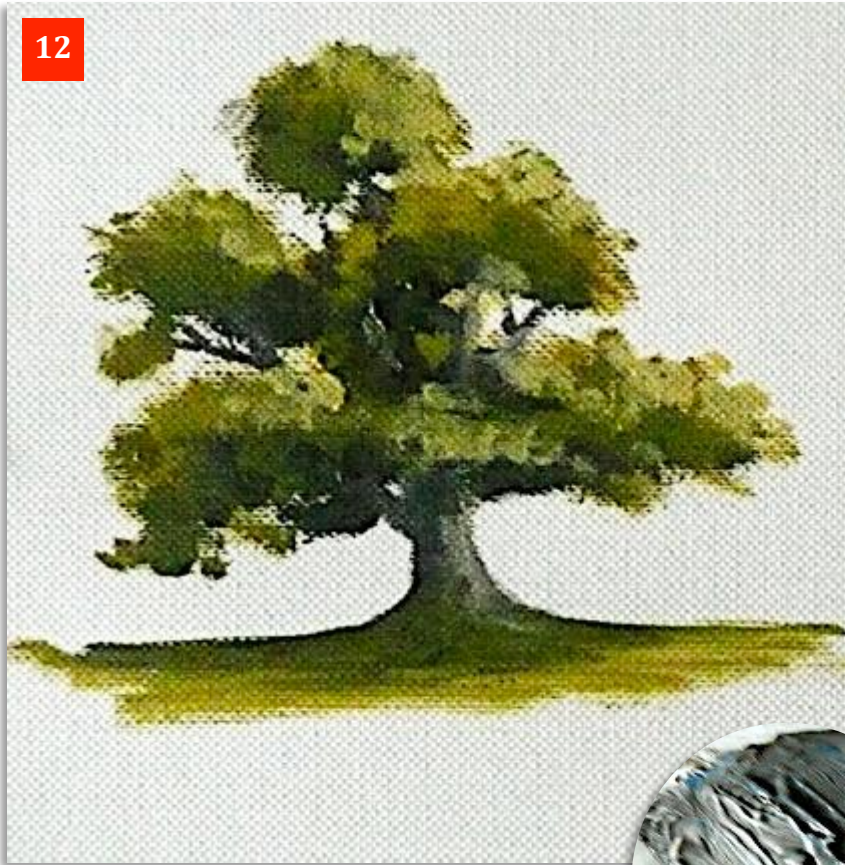
Now in **Photo 11** I'm just going back into one or two areas at the top of the tree and to the right with a few dabs of a light mix of White and Cadmium Yellow (inset).

This is to emphasise the sunlight coming from the top right and catching the tree on that side.

By the way, the texture you can see on the painting surface is from the acrylic practice paper pad I used for this exercise.



12

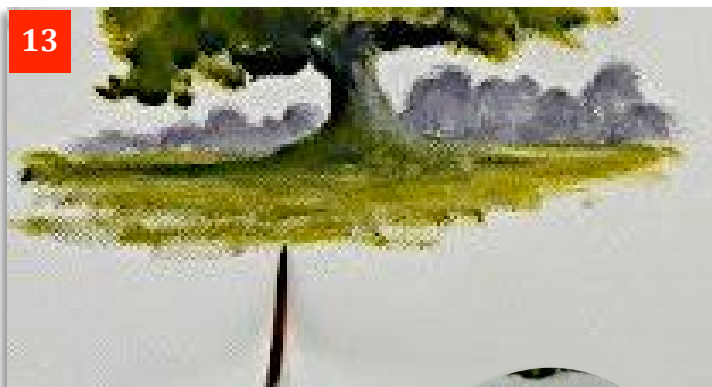


Lower right and inset are the mixes I used for putting a lighter tone on the right of the trunk and into one or two of the branches.

I've also blended the base of the trunk into the ground by dragging some dark green sideways to represent shadow below the tree. Notice that even on the 'light' side of the tree, there's enough overhanging branches to create a shadow on the floor, as well as more shadow on the 'proper' shadow side on the left.



13



Almost there now! To finish off, I've used the rigger to scrape some lighter paint sideways below the tree to give some variation and texture in the ground colour (**Photo 13**). I've also lightened the ground just above the shadow area to define it a bit better from the middle distance land behind the tree.

I've used a mix of the red, blue and yellow ochre with white (inset) to create some warm purple/grey background trees. This is no more than blobbing on the colour with the No.2 round brush, but see how the eye 'sees' them as trees because that's what you've got in the foreground. The purple colour takes them back and gives great depth to the scene.



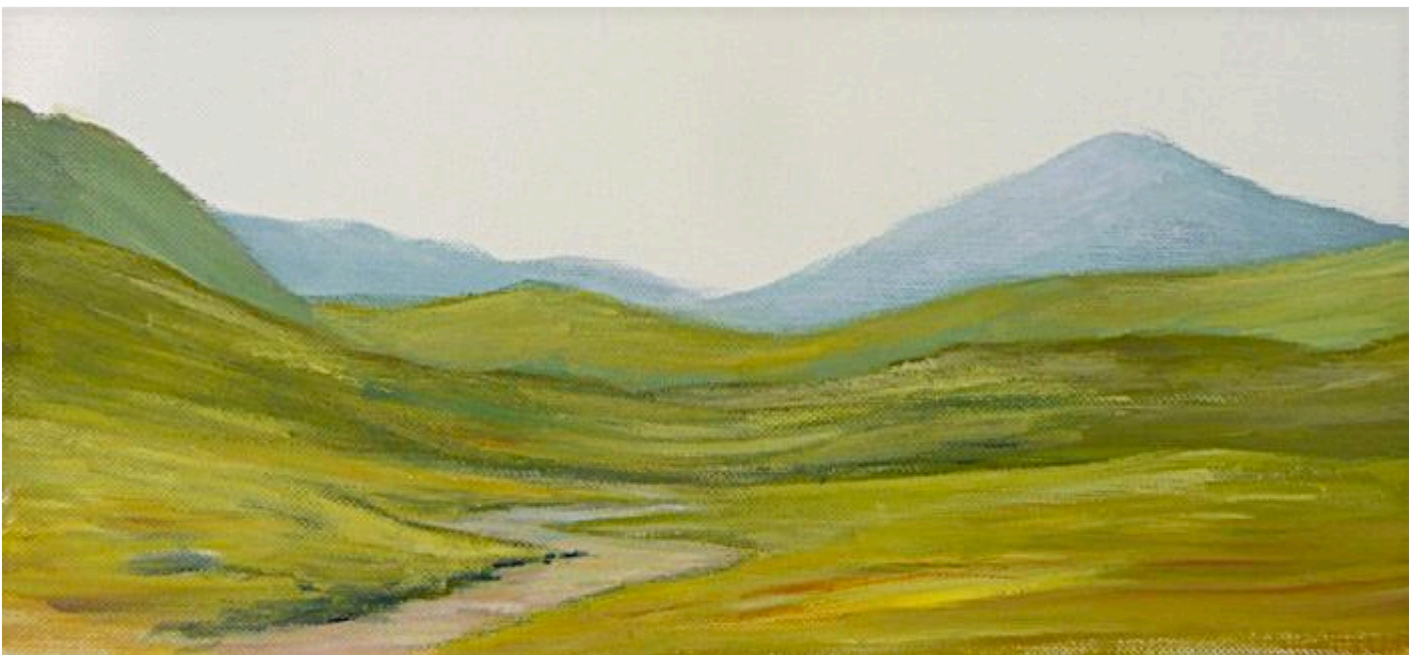
14



So there we are in **Photo 14**. We have a lovely, authentic-looking summer tree that you can produce very easily yourself – or even a group of them of slightly differing sizes and shapes. And notice that even though this is a little practice exercise, the addition of those background trees creates a delightful little cameo scene that's almost a 'proper' picture in itself!



7. Creating Depth in Mountains and Hills



Let's look first at producing some distant hills and mountains. This is done, very simply, by overlapping one layer after another.

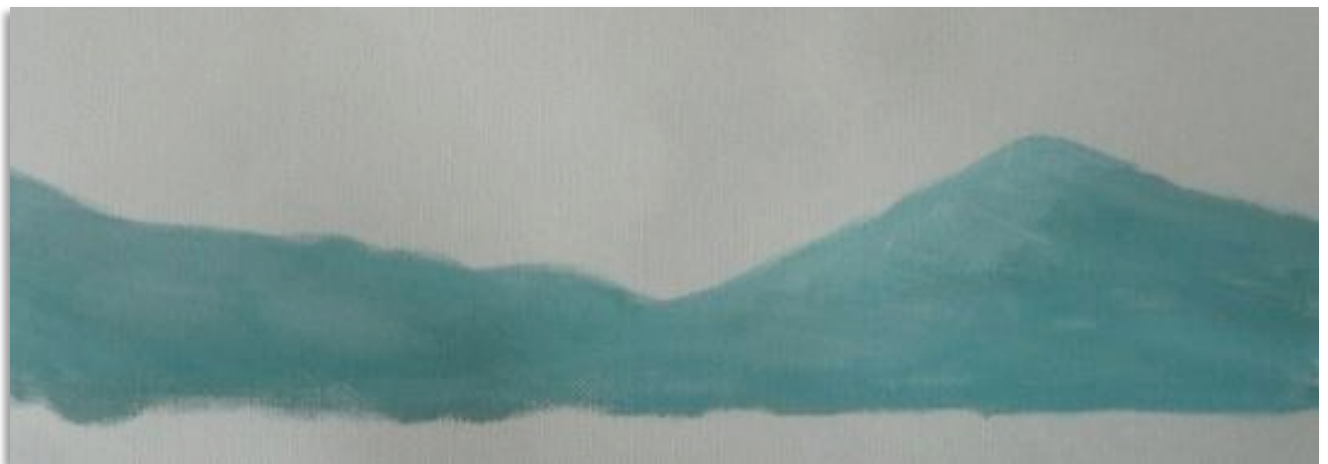
In **Photo 1** here are the colours I'm using for the first layer of distant mountains – Ultramarine Blue, Titanium White and a touch of Raw Umber.

In **Photo 2** you can see I'm painting these with a No.2 Filbert - no detail but allowing the colours to stay partially unmixed on the canvas paper to give a subtle variation of tone and imply that there's more detail there than actually exists.

See in **Photo 3** how the brush strokes have generally followed the line of the hills rather than the paint being slapped on in all directions.

This way, the changes in colour start to take on the appearance of subtle changes in light and shade, which could be valleys, crevices, trees etc.

Below, it looks as if light is falling on the left side of the larger mountain – or could it be snow? You decide!



Now we mix a slightly stronger and a little greener mix using Yellow Ochre, Ultramarine, White and a little Lemon Yellow as in **Photo 4** – right.

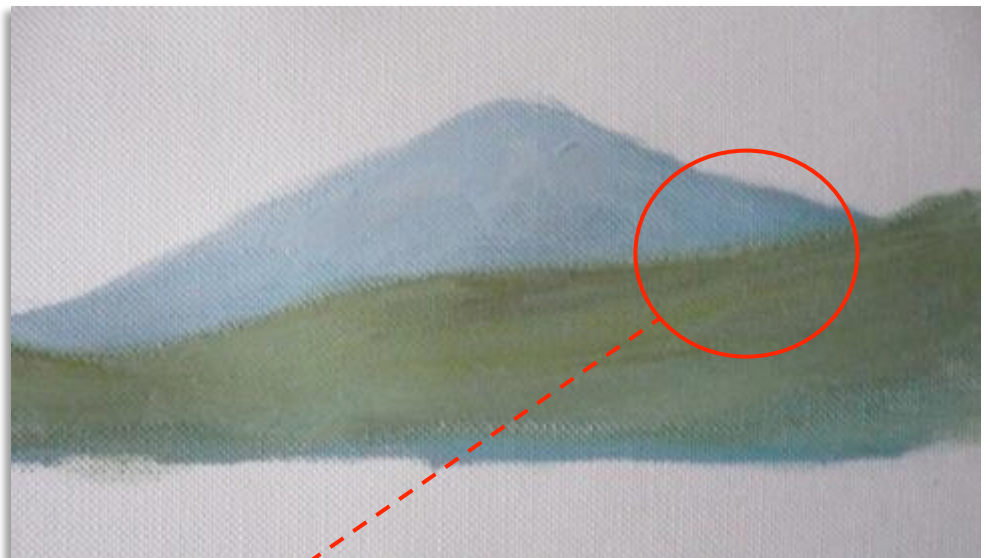
This will help to bring the next layer forward and push the blue mountains back into the distance.



In **Photo 5** on the left, I've varied the strength of colours to create more obvious shadows but the brush strokes are still helping to create the light and shade in the hills.

Photo 6 right, shows a fairly flat, dull looking hillside, but in Photo 7 I've streaked in some white & lemon yellow and just touch of blue, deliberately leaving it not fully mixed on the picture.

Do you see how this 'lifts' that area as if the sun is catching it with bright light? Note also that I've been careful to retain the counter-change (light against dark) with the distant mountain. However, in Photo 6 it's the hillside that's darker, whilst in **Photo 7** it's now become the mountain. Screw your eyes up as you look at the circles in the Photos to see what I mean...



In **Photo 8** I've added Yellow Ochre to the green mix and a touch of Permanent Rose. This gives us warmer colours that will now help to put those middle distance hills in their place.

I've deliberately put *too* dark a shade of green on in places but the user-friendliness of acrylics mean it's an easy task then to streak over light colour to brighten things up as I've started to do on the left hand side in **Photo 9**.

Photo 10 shows the foreground in a lighter warmer version of the colours I've used. See how much brighter and more cheerful things have become!



In Photos **11 & 12**, I've mixed up a pale pink/beige colour from White, Yellow Ochre and Permanent Rose and created a track to lead the eye into the picture.

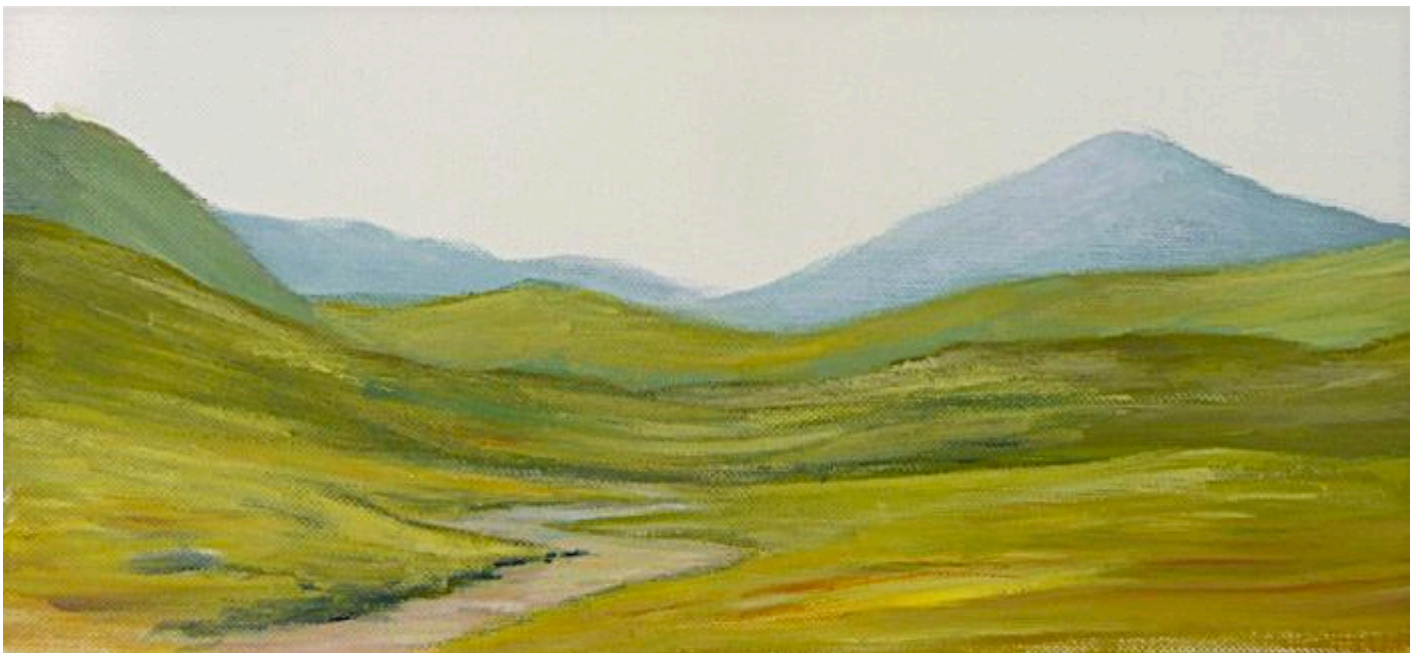
A bit of darker green has been placed along the edges of the track to create shadows and define it a bit more clearly.



Remember, use paler colours in the distance, using blues, purples and greys etc. As you come closer, ease out the blues & greys and introduce more greens. Then in the foreground, bring in your warmer colours including reds, oranges, browns and warm yellows such as Yellow Ochre and Cadmium Yellow. In **Photo 13** I'm adding a very gentle touch of lighter colour in the background mountains to suggest a bit more snow. Notice this is actually pale blue as in **Photo 14** but looks white in the picture.

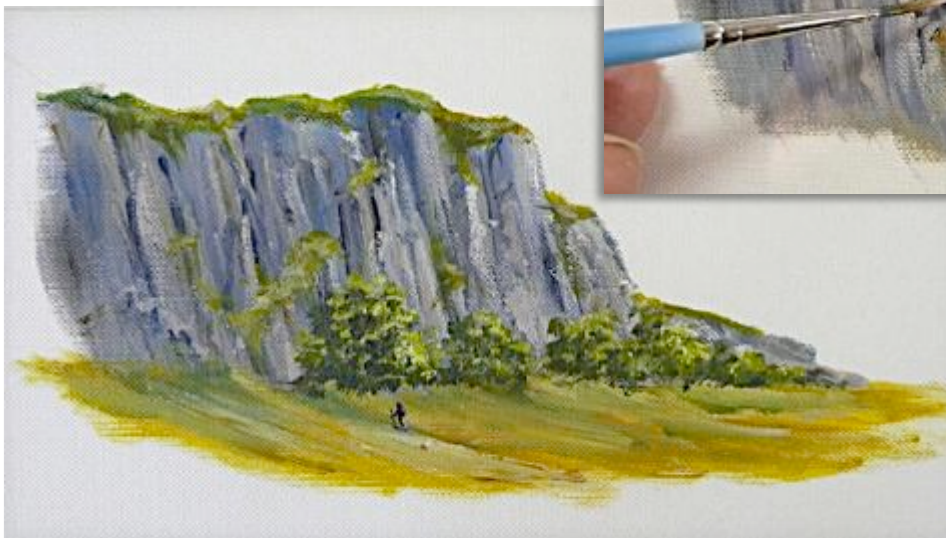
In **Photo 15** is the finished exercise. Although only a simple little practice piece, it gives you a good deal of opportunity to create that essential 'depth' in your picture with the use of layers of hills. You've also learned to create 'ariel perspective' by the proper use of paler and cooler tones in the distance and stronger, warmer colours in the foreground.

By the way, have you noticed that I haven't painted in any sky colour for this exercise? It's only the basic white gesso that was already on the canvas panel yet it looks fine without anything added at all...





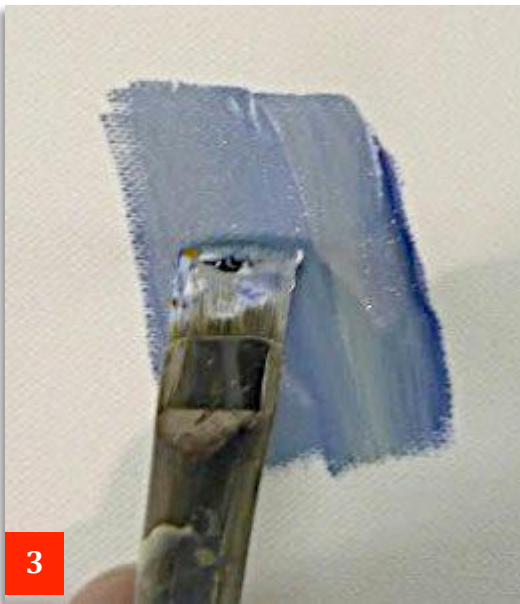
8. Cliffs





Ok, we've looked at distant hills and mountain layers. Now let's come in a little closer to the middle distance and foreground so we can see how to use the lovely, juicy acrylic paint to create rock faces and crevices.

Photo1 (left) might look like a bit of a dog's breakfast, but it shows the colours I'm using to create the cliffs which have been partially mixed on the palette. These are Ultramarine, Yellow Ochre, Lemon Yellow, Titanium White & Alizarin Crimson but you don't need to use these exact colours. They just happen to be ones that were handy on the palette!



In **Photo 2** you can see I've deliberately picked up a touch of blue, white and yellow and I'll start off by spreading this in downward strokes on the canvas as in **Photo 3**.

See how the paint only partially blends which creates interesting textures and light and dark shades without any effort.

Keep dunking your brush in the mix on the palette, perhaps making sure you pick up more white one time, then say, a little more yellow or blue the next time.

In **Photo 4** I've developed this into a simple cliff face and you can see where I've dragged downwards in various shades of blue, yellow and white to give a nice variety of subtle colour.

There's only the merest hint of Alizarin in there. As it's such a strong colour, I've been careful to keep it to just a touch, otherwise it will dominate the whole scene.





I want to develop things a little further by emphasising some lighter outcrops and especially some dark shadows and crevices.

In **Photo 5** I've turned to the rigger and added a fair amount of water to the mix. Using primarily the blue, with a little yellow and a touch of alizarin, I've created a fairly runny dark grey.



Photo 6 shows the rigger already having an effect by dragging down dark lines that we'll develop into gullies and crevices.

I've tried to make sure that these downward streaks are kept randomly spaced and shaped so they don't look like a set of railings.

If the paint is thin enough, you can also use the side of the rigger's hairs as well as the tip to scrape in rock texture.



Photos 7 & 8 show a much lighter grey mix, this time with much more white added and then streaked down the cliff face to create the highlights on the rocks.

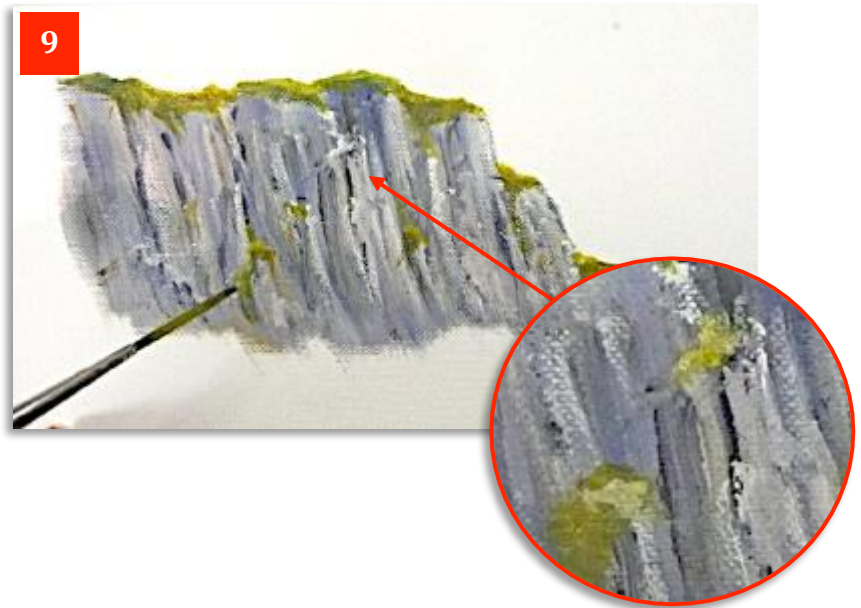
In my mind I've got the light coming from the right so you need to make sure that you apply the light paint to the right of any shadow areas to maintain the illusion.

I've also streaked in some neat Yellow Ochre here and there for a bit of variety. It also helps to warm up the scene slightly.

If the colours are applied wet, they will also blend slightly so you'll automatically get further variations of light, dark and mid-tones – another happy accident for which you can claim the credit!

In **Photo 9** I've added dark and then light mixes of lemon yellow, blue and a little white to create some grassy areas on top of and on the front edge of the cliffs. This was done in exactly the same way as the foliage on the summer tree.

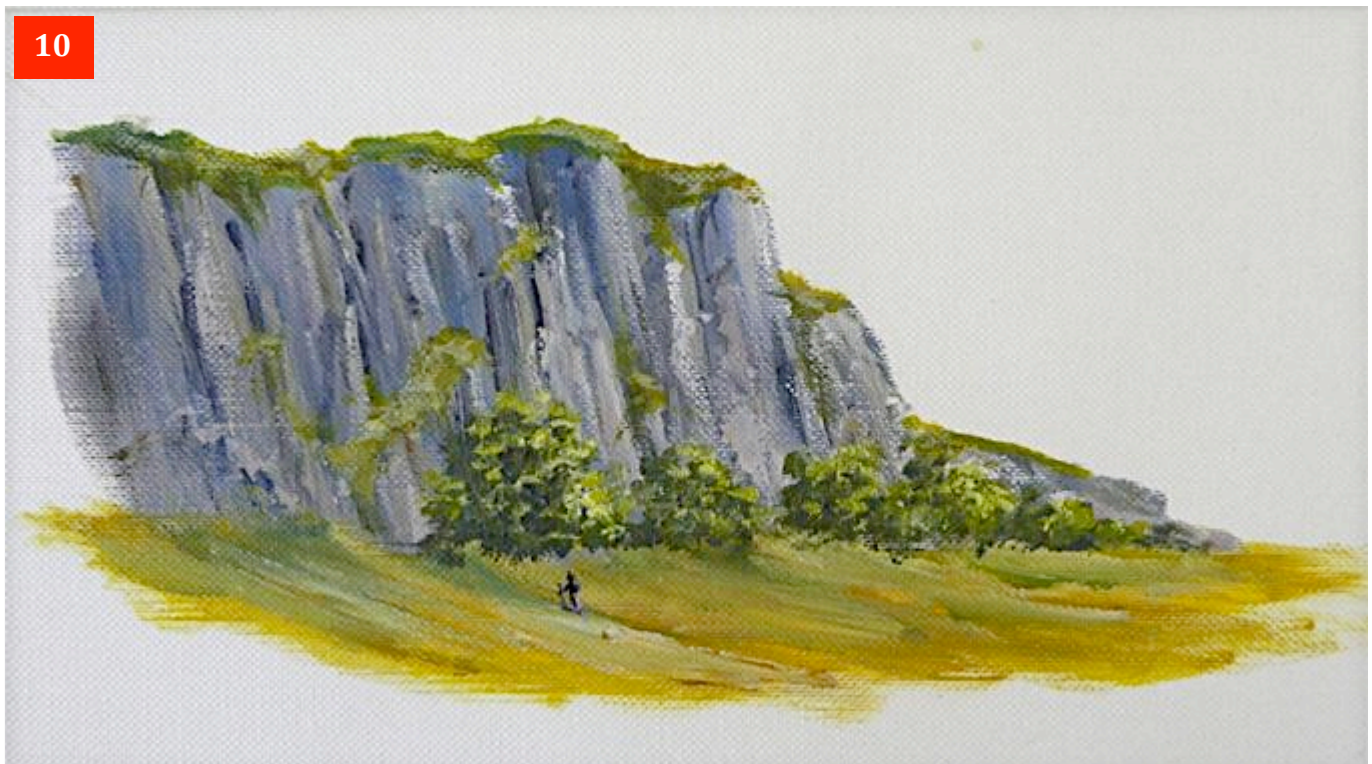
Notice in the inset Photo how I've added two lighter green patches which have been placed against the dark areas of the cliff so they stand out better.



Finally in **Photo 10** below I've added some trees at the base of the cliff and particularly that little figure with his backpack and walking stick, hiking upwards towards the cliff face.

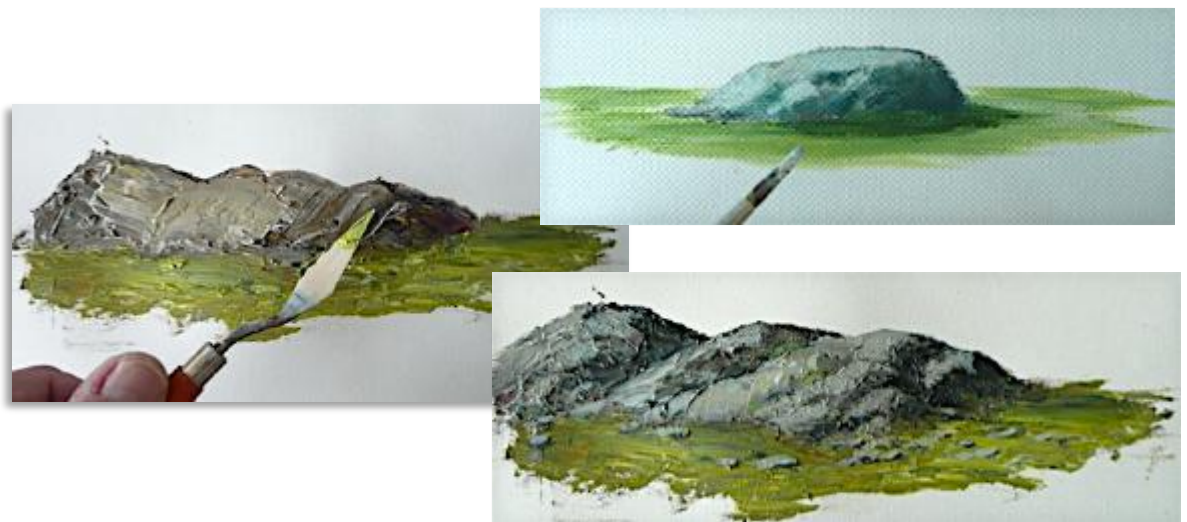
It's always important to give the viewer some idea of scale and to some extent the trees on their own do that. The cliffs could be about 150-200 feet (40-60 metres) high, assuming the trees were around 50-60 feet (15-20 metres) tall. However, they could just as easily be shrubs about 6-10 feet tall (2-3 metres) which would mean that the 'cliffs' would be little more than a rocky outcrop, perhaps 30 feet (10 metres) high.

However, the inclusion of a tiny figure in the foreground, which we know will be around 6 feet





9. Rocks and Stones



Right, we've looked at distant mountains and middle distance cliffs. Now let's have a look at foreground rocks and stones - very easy to produce in acrylics and a real treat as the textures, shadows and highlights appear almost like magic!

It's also a chance to use the palette knife as well as the brushes so you can really make use of the properties of the thick, buttery paint.

In **Photo 1** I've laid out all the colours I could use, but as with any sort of rocks, you can use virtually any colour you wish. It's almost impossible to go wrong!

Just for the record, from left to right are Lemon Yellow, Titanium White, Raw Umber, Pthalo Blue, more White, Yellow Ochre, Cadmium Red, Ultramarine and Alizarin Crimson.



Photo 2 shows a simple, flat-topped rock using the grey mix you can see in Photo 1. I've used the flat brush here so you can get a hard-edged rock shape. A darker mix of the grey has been dabbed on the right side to give a bit more modeling.

In **Photo 3** I've added a dark mix of Pthalo Blue and a little Raw Umber to create a shadow side. No attempt though has been made to blend this colour in so there are still lots of light and dark areas.



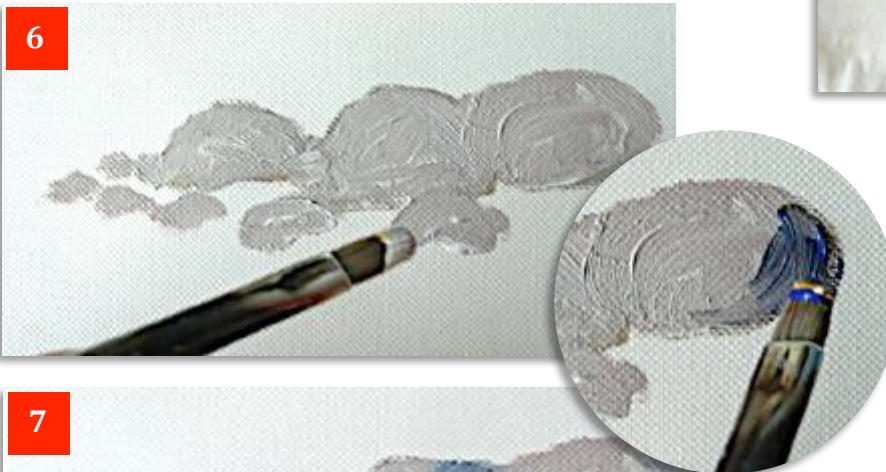
In **Photo 4** we have the finished rock. I've added some of the colour I used at the base of the cliffs in the previous lesson to create some grass and a darker touch for the cast shadow.

A splash of light grey has been dabbed lightly on the top and left of the rock to give some highlights - and that's how easy it is!



To produce softer, rounder rocks then the techniques are pretty similar. The main difference is you need to blend out the hard edges slightly.

In **Photo 5** I've made two mixes. I've started to make a light grey on the left. I subsequently darkened it slightly with a little of the blue/grey mix on the right. The remaining part of the blue/grey mix was used for the shadows.



In **Photo 6** I've created several rocks by scrubbing on the light grey paint, then adding the shadow areas (inset).

You can constantly alter the shape and even numbers of rocks to suit yourself as you go along, due to the opaque nature and covering capacity of acrylic paint.



Photo 7 shows that by adding the shadows, I've created ten rocks from the original grey blobs in Photo 6.

There are two things to look at in **Photo 8**. First, I've added a light, creamy mix to represent sand between and around the rocks.

Again, I've made no attempt to blend it so as to create added interest. However, notice that by taking the sand colour up and beyond the top of the rocks, it looks as if you are looking down on them.

Compare this view with the completed angular rock on the previous page where the top of the rock protrudes above the grass and gives a much lower viewpoint.

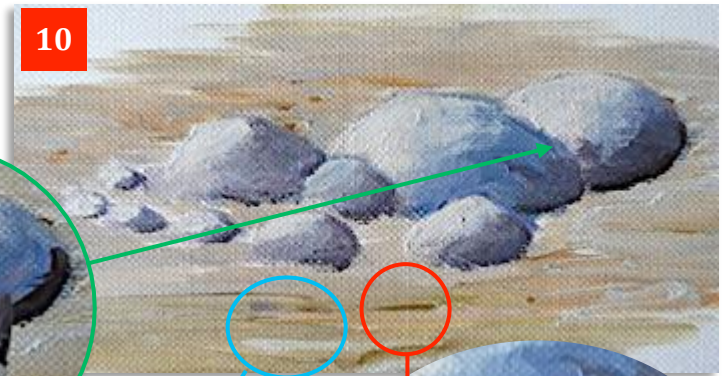




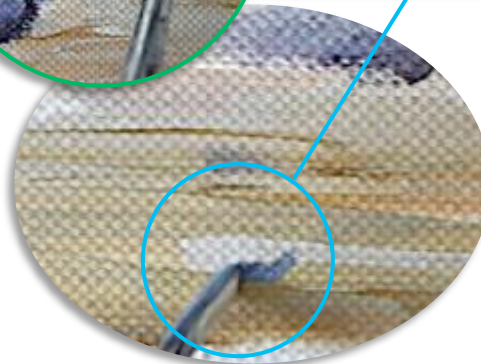
9

Photo 9 shows the mix I've used to create the darker, cast shadows underneath the large rocks.

You can see from the green inset from Photo 10 that we start with quite a strong dark blue shadow, which can be blended out at the edge. I've also added a touch of lighter colour here and there on the sunlit side.



10



In **Photo 10** I've also started to create some smaller stones. This is done quite simply by streaking little blobs of light paint, sometimes on top of a dark area that's already there such as the inset ringed in red. In the blue inset, I've also added some shadow colour to the right hand side of the stone.



11

In **Photo 11**, I've finished off by adding some cast shadow in the sand with a darker yellow/grey mix. Note how this 'melts' the rocks into the sand rather than having them just sitting on the top surface.

Below, in **Photo 12**, is the completed exercise. When painting your rocks and stones, as ever with nature, keep things random in size, shape and positioning and it will look far more believable.



12



13

These almost 3D rocks are produced much the same way and with the same colours as the previous ones. The big difference here is that they are largely produced using the palette knife – a great chance to really enjoy the buttery texture of working with thick acrylic paint!



14

In **Photo 13** you can see me mixing the colours very roughly with the knife and in **Photo 14** I've started creating a rock formation. The value of keeping the unblended colours shows through as subtle changes occur in light and dark in the thick paint.



15

Photo 15 below shows the outcrop developed further with some lighter paint being scraped on to form some very rough highlights. At this stage it appears as if there is just one rock but that will change!

Photo 16 sees me using the same techniques but this time using mixes of Lemon Yellow, plus Yellow Ochre and Ultramarine to scrape in a grassy area in and around the rocks.



16

I've now used a dark grey mix in **Photo 17** (again not fully blended) to start to create three rocks from the single mass by putting in shadow areas on the right of each new rock.

See the realism the knife creates in producing all these crevices and bumps and hollows with no more skill than if you were buttering toast!



In **Photo 18** I've produced three rocks. However, I'm not happy with these as they are all too similar in size and shape.

No problem. As I go along I can change things to improve them.

In **Photo 19** below I've made the right hand rock bigger than the middle one by adding highlights over some of the shadow areas.



Once the paint has dried I've mixed a light green colour from Lemon Yellow and White with a tiny touch of Ultramarine. This will provide a nice mossy colour on part of the rocks.

You can see in **Photo 20** how I'm taking most of the paint off the brush with a paper towel. This is called a 'dry brush' effect.



In **Photo 21** I'm now just sliding the flat brush lightly across the hardened paint and you can see how even the small amount left on the brush catches on the raised areas in a very believable 'hit & miss' effect.



I could leave it at that but I thought I'd show you how to easily change the shape and number of the rocks by adding a bit more paint.

In **Photo 22** I'm using a No.1 round brush (but you could use any other type) with a light grey mix to manufacture some different shaped rocks. Merely by going over dark areas with light paint (or vice versa) you can see in **Photo 23** how different things look compared to the stage we'd reached in Photo 7 (inset), especially on the extreme right hand side.

I've also taken the opportunity to add some small stones in the foreground as we saw when we created the rounded rocks in the earlier lesson.





10. Easy Water and Reflections



Water is a lot easier to paint than you think, especially in acrylics.

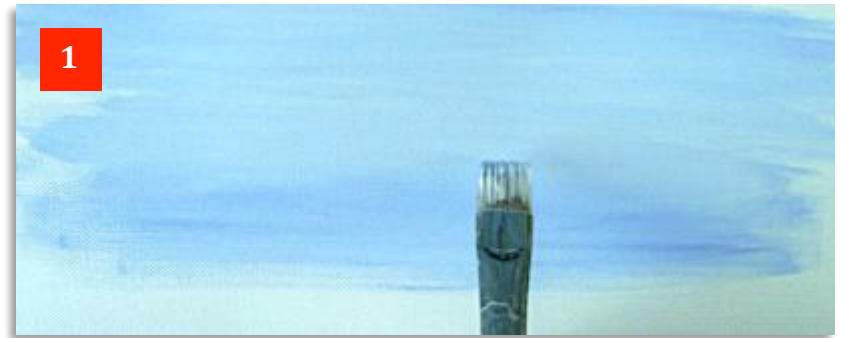
First, we'll see how to create some simple reflections in both still and slightly rippled water and then we'll have a look at some waves running up on a beach.

To start with in **Photo 1**, I've painted a light blue for the water, making sure that my brush strokes run horizontally and flat, not in an arch. This is achieved by moving your whole arm from side to side and not pivoting it at your wrist. **Photos 2 & 3** will clarify this.

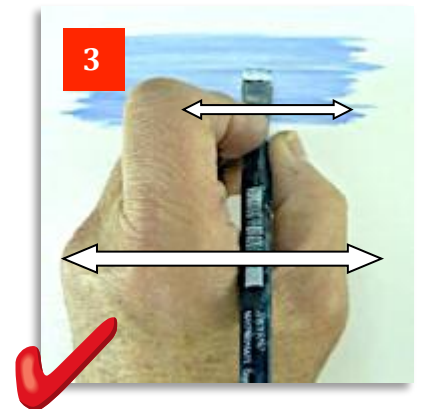
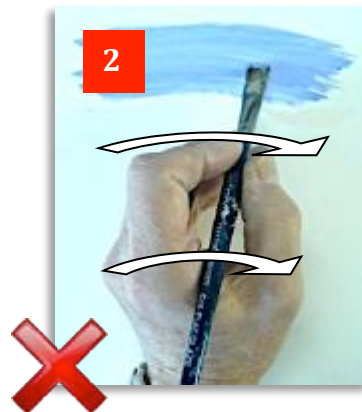
This is important. It's so easy to use curved or random strokes that go in all directions and it really does kill the illusion of water, looking like it's going to run off the side of your picture.

In **Photo 4** I've created a rough, brown/grey river bank. I've used the same flat brush to get the outline and then in **Photo 5** dragged random colours downwards along the length of the bank. You can see them, unmixed, on the brush.

This gives some lights and darks and the sense of it curving in and out along the river, is easily achieved by varying the line of the bank in a series of thick, overlapping lines. You can see an example of the effect you want, immediately above the brush.



Painting straight & flat water ripples is all but impossible if you pivot the brush from your wrist. This naturally produces a curved line. You must *move your whole arm* from left to right to keep the water flat & level.



In **Photo 6** I've strengthened the lights and darks to emphasise the contours of the bank then I've added some grass on top. You can see that you could use this technique just as effectively for cliffs hundreds of feet high.



Next, in **Photo 7**, I've added a reflection in the area where the water is absolutely still. This is a little more difficult to achieve than when painting rippled water because you need to produce an upside down, mirror image. However, this only needs to be added relatively roughly.

By 'roughly' I mean you don't have to make it perfect. All I've done to create the 'mirror' image is to make sure I've added some lighter or darker parts in the reflection immediately below where they are in the bank itself. I've also made the reflection the same depth as the bank that it is reflecting from.



Moving on to the rippled water in **Photo 8**, you can see I've used the flat brush to first paint a little of the bank as if it was a mirror image, but then lower down, to create some broken lines which immediately tell the viewer that the water is slightly disturbed.

Two points to note here. First, the reflection is now slightly longer (extended lower) because of the broken water and second, the brush strokes must be absolutely horizontal for it to look convincing.



In **Photo 9**, I've gone back in with the rigger (or you could use the flat brush) to add some pale blue horizontal lines. This is not absolutely necessary but it will help to emphasise the ripples and allow you to correct any dark lines that have got themselves less than horizontal...



In **Photo 10** I've streaked a slightly darker mid-blue (not too dark) across the water, this time using a round brush. This gives an alternative effect of rippling water, useful where there aren't any immediate reflections, but where you don't want a completely flat calm surface. Don't forget – only horizontal strokes!



In **Photo 11** I've added a large tuft of grass on the bank and two posts – one a bit shorter than the other but closer to the edge of the bank. Notice that I've painted them with light coming from the front right so the shadows fall to the left. The posts are painted exactly the same as the tree trunks in the earlier lesson. By the way, don't get confused by reflections and shadows. Remember, reflections always appear vertically below the item reflected in water, while the shadow will change with the direction of the sun.

Notice how the light and darker blue streaks of paint on the lower right sit quite happily with the smaller ripples immediately below the posts.



Now we've added reflections to the grass and the posts in **Photos 12 & 13**. For the grass, I haven't tried to replicate the image 100% in the water, merely to make sure that the two long centre grasses are curving in the correct direction.

Also note that the light grasses are reflected a little darker in the water. Conversely, dark items are always reflected lighter. The tonal contrast of a reflection is always less than the item it is reflecting - i.e. there isn't quite as much difference between the lights and darks.

The posts' reflections have been painted with just simple short horizontal streaks of colour which, importantly, maintain the 'line' of the posts. Notice particularly how the right hand post leans to the left and the reflection replicates this.



Also, see how the *reflection* of the right hand post is shorter than the left one, even though the actual post is longer. This is because the right hand post is further away from the bank and therefore its reflection will, in theory, start from where it touches the ground. Have a look at **Photo 14** to see what I mean. The yellow dotted lines are the approximate point where the reflections would start from. Incidentally, I've painted these two reflections slightly longer than the actual posts because of the broken water, which often tends to extend a reflection as it bounces off the ripples. Have a look at **Photo 15** with this shot of the Toronto waterfront and you will see the buildings reflected several times longer in the water than their actual height.



In **Photo 16**, using the same techniques to create the posts, I've added a branch growing out of the water where the larger ripples have been painted.

The rippled reflections have also been painted to follow the larger ripples in the water to keep things consistent. Compare the size of the rippled reflections of the posts with those of the branch.

Again, I've gone back in with pale blue paint to break up some of the reflection of the branch.

And see how (inset) the addition of a small streak of pale blue with the rigger where the branch comes out of the water, not only separates it from its reflection, but also gives a subtle hint of movement in the water.



Finally, in **Photo 17**, you can see all three techniques together. In fact you could quite legitimately use them in the same picture.

Careful observation of any inland stretch of water, whether it is a lake, canal or stream – even a small harbour - will often show stretches of still water protected by a wall or bank and then ruffled water catching the wind, within only a few yards of each other.



Ok, let's move on to waves. The first thing I've done is to stick a piece of masking tape across the canvas as in **Photo 18**. This lets me paint freely over it and will give me a nice straight, level horizon line when it's removed. I've used a mix of Titanium White & a little Ultramarine Blue to create the water.

Note how I'm making sure those distant waves appear level by painting from side to side as I showed you in the reflections section previously...

In **Photo 19**, I've added a little more blue to the mix as I've come forward. This will make a nice contrast with the white of the breaking waves when I add them.

By the way, if you look in the right foreground of **Photo 19**, you will see I've curved the water downwards –precisely what I told you not to do in the previous section!



In **Photos 20-22** I've started adding these breakers and as you can see, it involves nothing more than stabbing on thick paint in reasonably horizontal lines. Although the paint looks white it is actually a pale blue mix. I'm reserving the pure white for the highlighted waves in the foreground.

In **Photo 21** you can see that I've created perspective by making the more distant waves flatter and smaller.

In **Photo 22** I've now painted over some of these waves with really thick, white paint as if they're catching the sunlight.



Now in **Photo 23**, with a mix of yellow ochre and white, I've streaked in some sand in the fore ground. Horizontal strokes again give a nice impression of flat sand which is what we need to depict water running up the beach.



In **Photo 24** with the belly of the brush I've scraped sideways a mix of Yellow Ochre, White and a tiny amount of Ultramarine paint to start to achieve the transition between the deeper water colour and the thinner film of water on the sand.

You don't want this too thick – just enough to differentiate between that area and the dry sand.

In **Photo 25** I've deposited more of this colour in slightly thicker blobs here and there to create foam. Then I've dragged them outward towards the sea to blend them and let the sand colour show through – a bit like spreading butter, but away from you.

I've added a little more Ultramarine and Yellow Ochre to the White and the combination of these colours, which form a pale grey/green, is ideal for this area.





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The rigger helps us to start creating the individual small waves as they spread out on the sand, as in **Photo 26**.

I've used white paint and developed some of the areas I created in **Photo 25** by painting a more obvious white line and feathering the inner edge away from me.



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In **Photo 27** I've now started to add a mid-grey line here and there (stronger mix of Yellow Ochre and Ultramarine) underneath the white foam to define the shadow. I've also added a little of this colour as a shadow underneath the nearest larger waves as well as touching it in very lightly on some of the foreground water (inset).

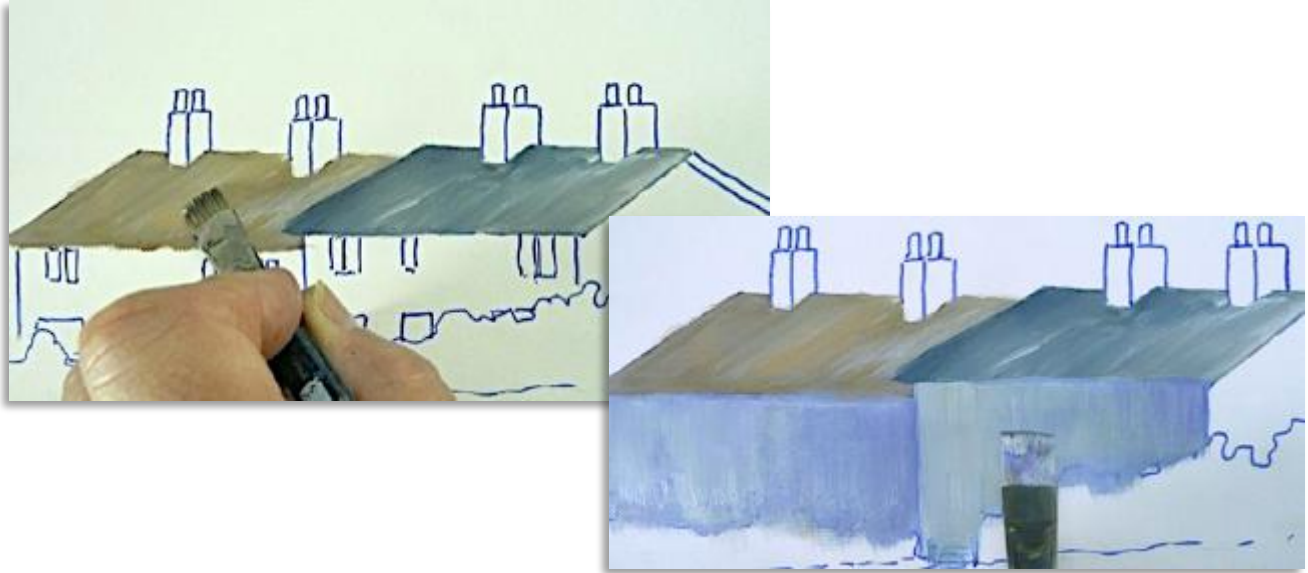


Photo 28 shows the finished scene. I've removed the masking tape and added a small yacht (a couple of red triangles for the sails and a white and blue line to suggest the hull, with two dots of blue paint for the crew).

A streak of white behind the boat gives the impression that it is sliding through the water at a fair old pace and you have a simple but effective beachside scene that you can adapt to any number of situations. What a pity I left that water running downhill on the right hand side - you won't, will you?



28



11. Basic Buildings



In one of the lessons in the Acrylics Secrets Course, we looked at how to create towering white cliffs on the South Coast of England.

However, they were the backdrop to a couple of old cottages which you can see in the title photo and I thought it would be nice to use these to show you some tips and techniques in creating buildings.



In **Photo 1** I've drawn the cottages in blue felt pen so you can still see the outlines when we put the base coat of paint on. Note how little detail is required – for the most part, the cottages are merely a series of oblongs.

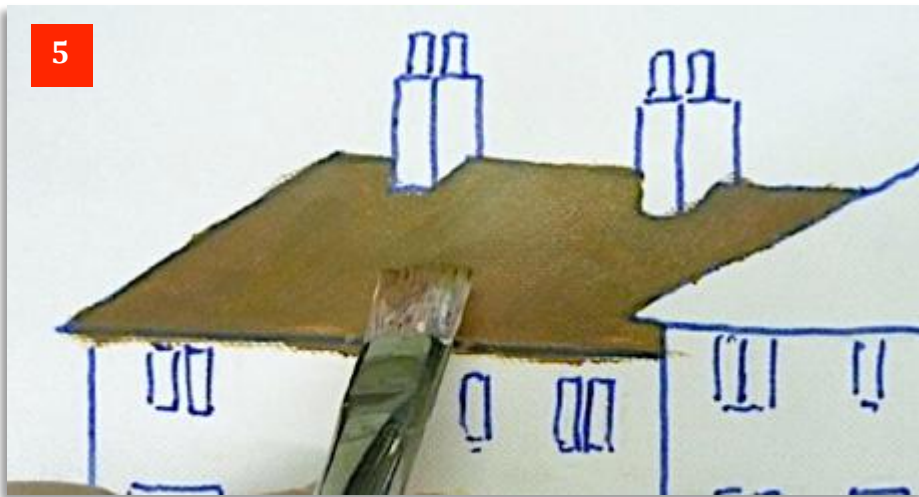
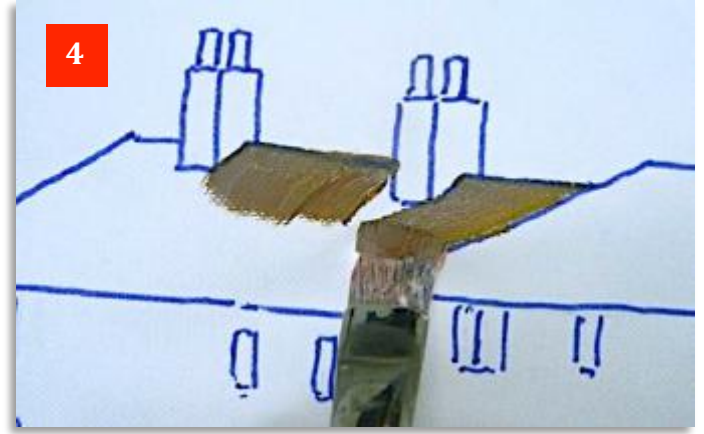
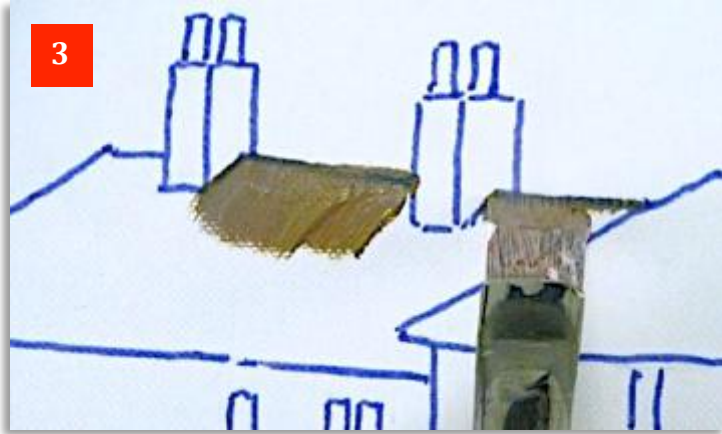
In this exercise we won't put the sea behind them but keep to a simple sky. In doing so, note how your view immediately changes to looking across at the cottages rather than looking down on them in the oval photo.

Here in **Photo 2** are the colours I'll be using but it doesn't really matter which ones you use. They are Titanium White, Ultramarine Blue, Yellow Ochre, Raw Umber, Cadmium Red and Lemon Yellow.

You can see some of the grey/brown mixes I've already made for the roofs. In another context these mixes might be regarded as 'mud' but used at the right time, in the right place, they become the perfect colour choice.

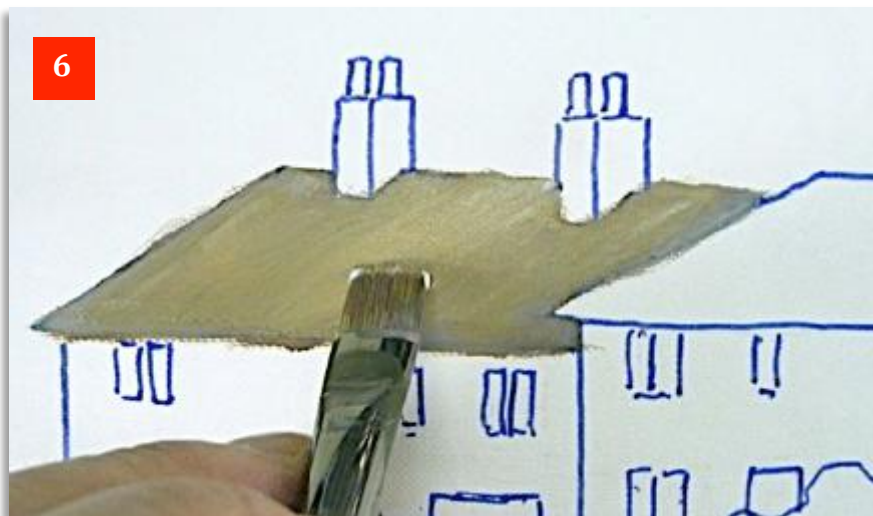


In **Photos 3 & 4** I'm using a ½" Flat brush to slide the paint down at the same angle as the roof. This will imply that there are roof tiles there without actually putting in any detail of them. The flat brush helps to keep a nice straight edge on the top of the roof and will be useful for defining one straight edge against another and when we add the doors and windows, etc.



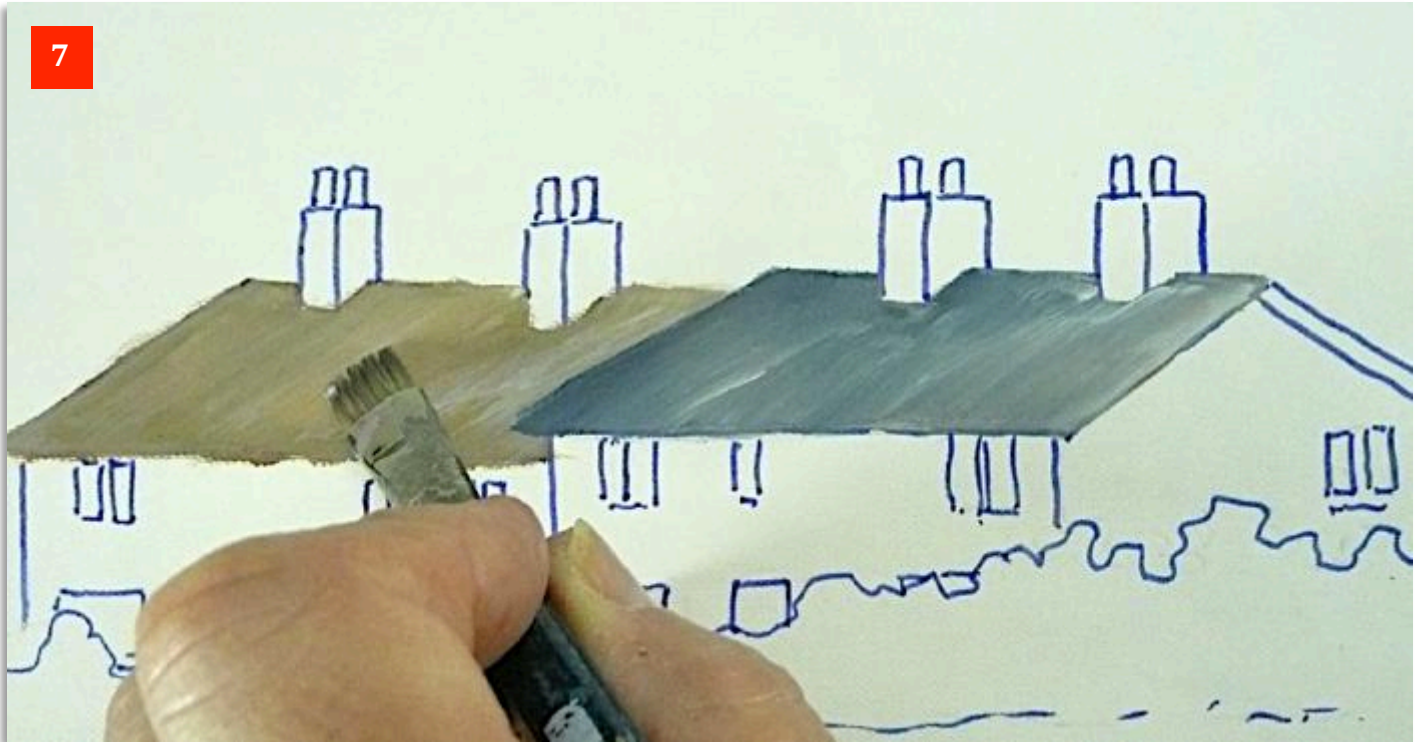
Have a look at the difference in **Photos 5 & 6**. In Photo 5, I've completed the first roof. However, I think it is a bit too dark as the sun will be shining on it, so once it has dried I've gone over it with a slightly lighter mix as in **Photo 6**.

See how the flat brush has enabled me to retain crisp, sharp edges.



In **Photo 7**, I've done the same with the grey roof on the other cottage. Here I've streaked in some added white to suggest highlights on the roof. However, see how I've kept the left edge of the grey roof a little darker to make sure it stands out from the brown roof.

I've also gone back into the brown roof to lighten the right hand edge so we have a nice counter-change of light against dark edges...



In **Photo 8** is the mix for the shadow side of the white cottage walls with the roof mixes peeping in on the left. For 'white' walls it's quite a deep purple/blue isn't it?

In **Photo 9** below you can see I've added this as a base colour and then, I'm streaking in a lighter version of the mix over the top with a tiny touch of Yellow Ochre added to create warmth and interest. You can do this right away if you want because you will probably find that the base coat is already starting to dry.

Note that the brush strokes are vertical to enhance the 'flatness' of the wall.



In **Photo 10** below, I particularly want you to note the way I've darkened the *right* side of the left hand cottage and lightened the *left* side of the right hand cottage so that where they meet it is easy to separate one from the other.

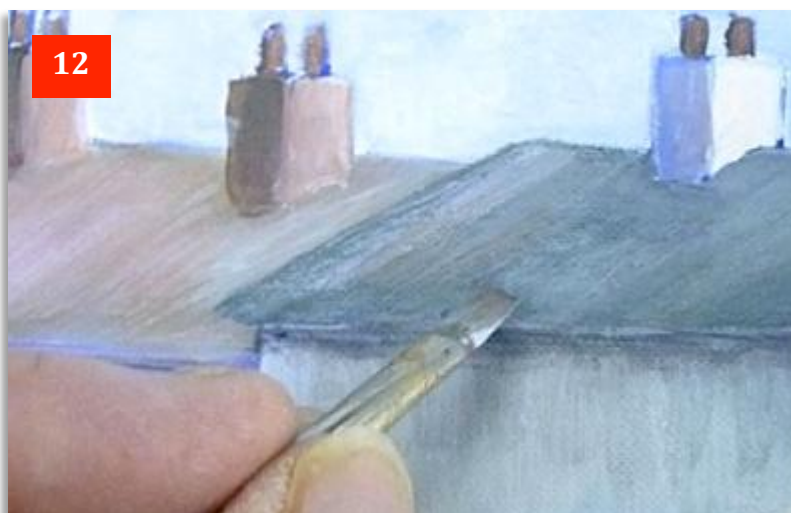
Later on, we'll lighten up these shadows but the underlying counter-change we've created will still show through in a subtle and effective way.



In **Photo 11**, I've started to add some sky. I've used basically the same mix I used for the walls.

I should have done this first because it's not easy to paint accurately around all the indentations at the top of the roof and between the chimneys, whilst keeping a random fluffy appearance to your brush strokes.

However, the beauty of acrylics is that you can easily retrieve any areas you accidentally paint over.



In **Photo 12**, I've let things dry off a little then painted a dark coloured brown/red for the chimney pots. I've also added some dry brush effects with *very pale* streaks of white added to brown, yellow, red and blue to the roofs. You need to keep this very subtle and it's easy to over-do it. However, if you do, then as we've said before, you can easily go over things and rectify the problem.

Dry-brushing is an ideal technique for acrylics. It involves no more than dipping the tips of the bristles in your chosen colour, then wiping most of it off on a kitchen towel. Look at the 'before, during and after' sequence in **Photos 13 - 15**. If you lightly paint with the residue that's left on the brush, you'd be amazed at just how much colour remains after you think you've deposited it all on the kitchen towel.



In **Photo 16** I've mixed a shadow colour to go on the roofs, under the eaves and also to paint the windows. It's no more than a mid-grey created by mixing the Ultramarine, Cadmium Red and Yellow Ochre, together with a little Titanium White. The blue predominates in the mix but if you vary the proportions very slightly you can subtly change it to a reddish or yellow tinted grey.

In **Photo 17**, if you look closely, you will see I've gone over the walls with a lighter colour of pale blue, dry-brushed on as previously described. Compare this Photo with **Photo 10**. However the definition between the walls of the two cottages still shows through.



In **Photos 18 & 19**, you can see how a $\frac{1}{4}$ " flat brush is used to quite simply paint a streak of colour downwards for the windows and then the chisel edge is used to create the window sill merely by placing a shadow line underneath where it would be.

In **Photo 20** I'm now painting a light grey on the 'sunny' side of the chimney pots. You can see how light the paint is on the brush but compare it to how it looks on the chimney pot next to it, after it has sunk in for a few seconds.





Photo 21 shows the windows completed and the chimney shadows running from the base of the chimneys, but also at the left hand side of the chimneys stacks as well. This tells the viewer that the sun is shining slightly from the right rather than from directly behind the chimneys.

You can see in **Photo 22** that I've started to put in the foreground details that help to take the eye through to the buildings. I've scrubbed in some dark colours – it doesn't really matter which ones – to create the shadow areas for the bushes.



In **Photo 23** I've then stabbed in mid and light greens to bring the bushes to life. This is very simple but make sure you leave some dark areas!



In **Photo 24**, I've just added a warm, pinky/grey to create the path and then some dark blue/browns to define the line of it down to the gateway.

In the finished exercise, in **Photo 25**, I've scraped in a few lights and darks in the field and added the gate. I've also dry-brushed some light blue into the windows to add a bit more character.

And there we have a whole series of techniques to create basic but very attractive cottages that you place in a whole variety of situations in your paintings.





12. Simple Figures

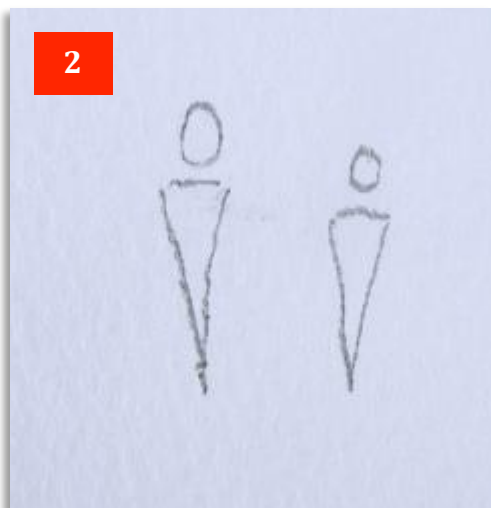
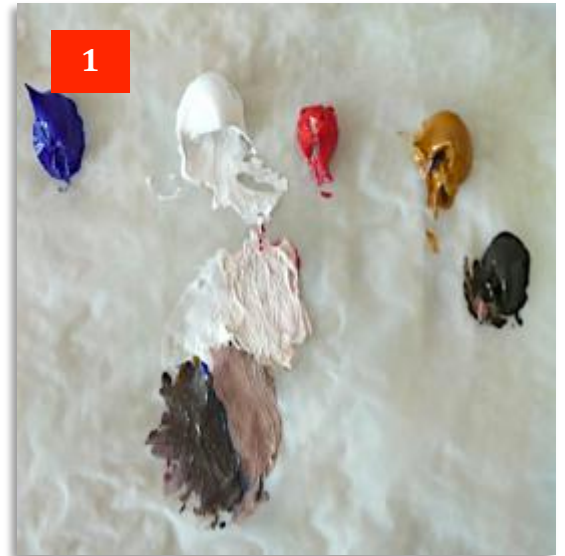


Many landscapes can be enhanced by the addition of one or two figures. However, students are often put off by assuming they'll either make a mess of the figure and spoil their painting when they introduce some 'humanity' into the scene.

In this section, we'll look at some very easy step by step ways to produce basic figures in various positions. This should point you in the right direction to produce your own, in virtually any pose you want.

To start, have a look at the five basic colours I've used in **Photo 1** – Ultramarine, White, Cadmium Red, Yellow Ochre and Raw Umber.

Bottom centre is a range of basic 'skin tone' colours I've mixed. Start with about 10 parts white and add one part of red and two parts yellow. That will give a basic white Caucasian 'flesh' colour. By adding a touch or two of raw umber you can create a series of darker skin tones. These darker colours will also provide shadow colours for lighter flesh colours. By experimenting and adding a small hint of blue, or more red and yellow, you have an infinite variety of possibilities for almost any skin colour, in any lighting conditions.



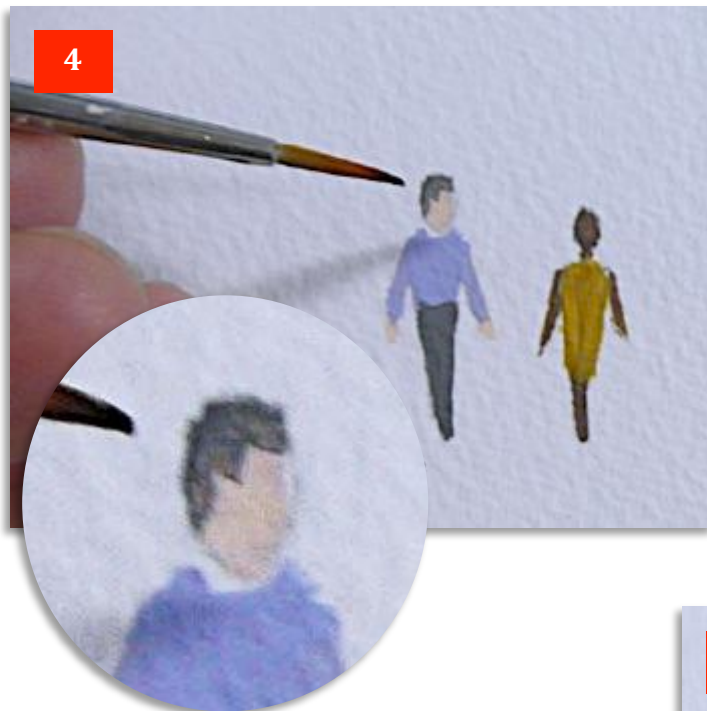
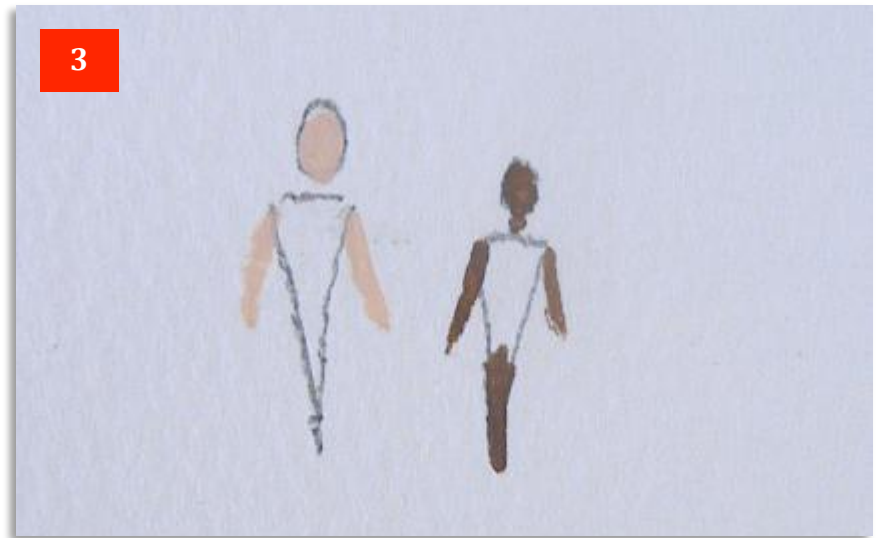
In **Photo 2** is the key to getting your figure proportions correct. You can see that it's no more than an elongated triangle for the body and a small oval for the head. How easy is that?

Typically, adults are about 7 – 8 heads tall. That is, their body is about 7 times the height of their head. We'll see shortly how, by manipulating that triangle, how you can easily create various poses.

Notice that the head has been drawn slightly above the triangle to allow for the neck to be suggested with the gap between the two shapes.

In **Photo 3** you can see I've added a light tone to the figure on the left and a darker skin tone to the right hand one. I've also painted the legs in the right hand figure so already it suggests it is female.

The head of the man on the left appears too large but I will adjust that when I paint his hair, or I can make his body a little larger to suit. It's all very easy to achieve with acrylics.



Moving on to **Photo 4**, I've added some clothes to both figures. In the male figure I've painted over his arms and just left a touch of skin tone showing for his hands.

Now notice in the inset how, by painting his hair with a gap on the right, it automatically makes him look to *his* left.

I've also lengthened his trousers slightly and that, plus painting in his hair, has put his torso back in proportion as against the head that appeared too big for his body in **Photo 3**.

Now in **Photo 5** you can see I've done the same with the woman's hair to make her look left and walking away from us. I've added the obligatory handbag (on the woman!) and on both figures, I've also touched in the merest hint of their other leg (compare with Photo 4 to see what I mean).

Avoid painting shoes or feet if you can on figures this size (they're only about 1" or 2 cm. tall) as the eye is drawn to them and they will nearly always appear too prominent and clumsy.



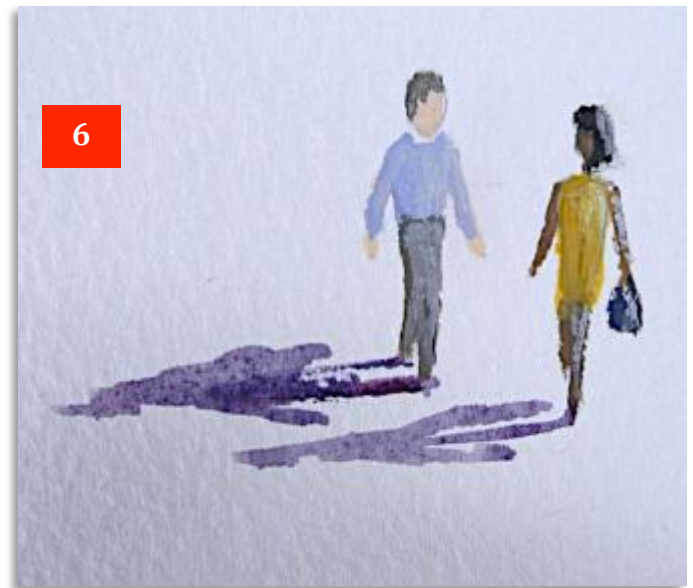
In **Photo 6** we've anchored the figures to the ground by streaking in shadows. This is quite a strong purple colour which is ideal if you're portraying a hot, sunny day.

Notice that I've only painted the shadow vaguely matching the pose of the figures. You don't need to get an exact replica of the figure, especially if it's on broken or grassy ground or somewhere that's less than flat.

It's more important to have the shadow 'melted' into the bottom of the figure so it all looks as one.

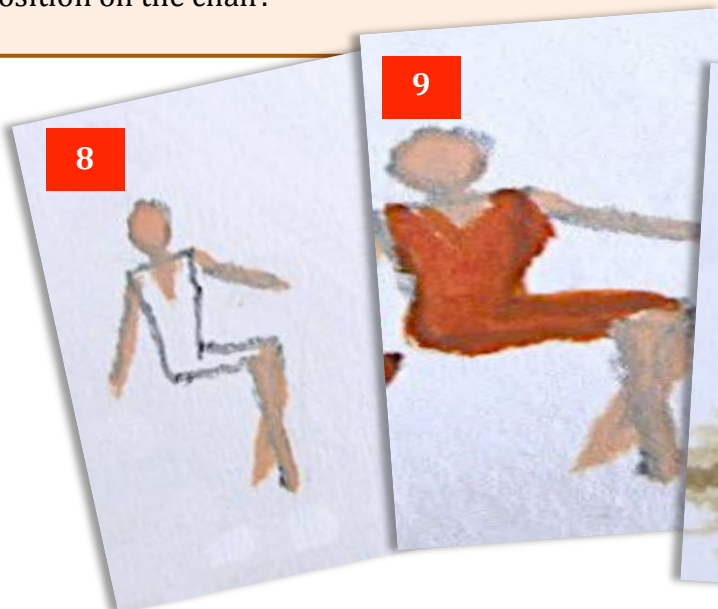
Note also that there is no detail at all on the figures and certainly not in the faces. Remember, we're not creating a portrait here. Whoever looks at your picture will mentally 'fill-in' these details and to paint them in will make the figures look fussy and overworked, especially being part of a landscape picture.

Finally, I've added a little touch of white paint to the right side of the figures to create a bit of sunlight falling on them and there you have two figures that would fit into many landscape scenarios, merely by changing the size, the colours or by positioning them closer, further apart or even on their own.



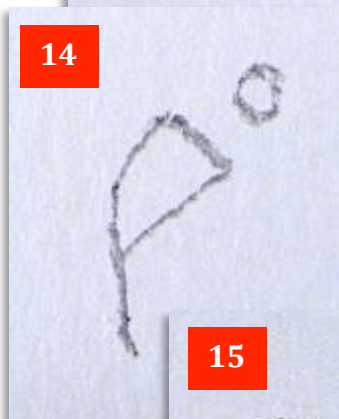
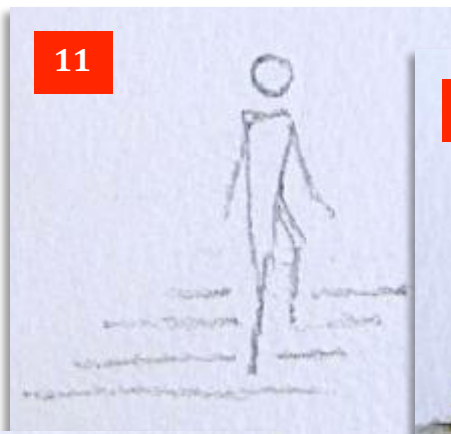
Now let's look at a seated figure in **Photo 7**. Exactly the same ideas apply regarding the triangle except this time I've stretched it into an 'L' shape for the body and a thin triangle below that for the legs. Add two lines for the arms and the oval for the head and you can see it doesn't even need a seat adding to tell you the figure is sitting down. Easy!

Now in the snapshot sequence in **Photo 8-10** below, you can see I've used the techniques previously described to develop the figure to the point where I've added a bench underneath her so she's not sitting in mid-air. Incidentally, I'd always add the seat *after* you've painted the figure. You'll find it's much easier to position the chair, bench, rock or whatever under the completed figure than try to concentrate on painting a believable figure and, at the same time, get it exactly in the right position on the chair.



In the **Photo 11-13** snapshot sequence below we've painted a man walking up some steps. The key point to note here is that in the first drawing we've still used the triangle for the body but added an angled line for his right leg. Because it's bent, note how it finishes slightly higher making it easy to position it on an upper step.

This immediately conveys the impression of movement and the figure climbing the steps. Here some lights and darks to the clothes have been added to the clothes and head (see inset) to give an impression of strong sunlight.



Now let's look at figures in action. Again, there's nothing complicated involved. All that we are doing as a starting point is bending and manipulating that triangle for the body and adjusting the position of the arms.

In **Photo 14-16** snapshot sequence, I've bent the triangle forwards and then started to add a few lines to represent the arms and legs of someone reaching down to pick something up with their right hand.

To show you how easy it is to vary things with more or less the same pose, I've actually painted the figure slightly differently by putting his left leg behind him and with both hands picking up a sack. Again, note how the sack is blended into the shadow to make it appear firmly sitting on the ground.



In **Photo 17** I wanted to create an impression of a figure really hard at work and straining to move something.

Points to note here in the inset are the way the legs are set at a wide angle with the front leg planted very firmly on the ground.

Note how I've positioned the head at the front of the shoulders, angled downwards and right over his front leg to emphasise the effort he's putting into moving whatever it is you're about to paint.

In the main picture I've drawn a rope with a pencil which is taut behind him but dangling loosely beyond his arms, again giving a feeling that whatever he's dragging is just a bit heavy!



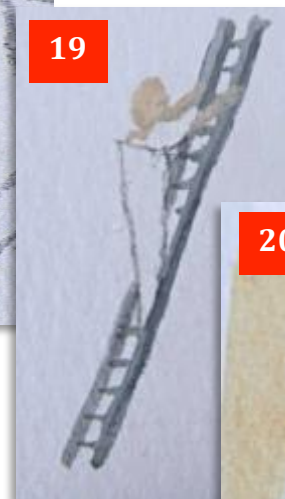
The **Photo 18-20** sequence shows a man climbing a ladder. The only variation on the basic triangle here is to bend it slightly at the base to represent his legs standing on the rungs.

As with the girl sitting down earlier, I've then added the uprights of the ladder once I'd positioned the figure. However, having now got everything in the right place, I had no problem painting the ladder first, confident that the figure 'fitted' onto it.

Note also the angle of the shadow on the wall which tells you the wall is vertical.

The one point you must remember about any figures in action, whether they're lifting, pulling, running or climbing etc. is that they will automatically draw attention to themselves in your picture.

So try to make sure that they are, or are part of, the focal point, otherwise you'll find they will fight against whatever your focal point is intended to be.



21



And finally with figures, if you ever thought it was really a problem making them look convincing appearing or disappearing over a hill, have a look at **Photos 21 and 22** and worry no more.

Basically, it's the triangle shapes with the bottom half cut off. In fact you could draw the full triangles and then decide to sketch in the line of your hill across them to see how much you want actually showing of the figures.

In this case, it's a young couple, with eyes only for each other and a tree suggested in the background by just scrubbing in the blue and yellow paint I had used on his shirt and her hair.

It's another ridiculously simple way of creating a little cameo scene that would add that final little human touch to any number of your landscape paintings!

22





13. Animal Magic

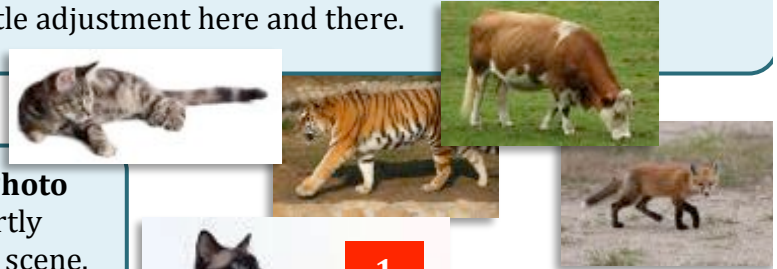




In the same way that one or two human figures can enhance a picture, then so can the addition of a few animals. It could be a dog wandering alongside a couple in a country lane, or a cat lazing in the sun on top of a garden wall.

A group of cattle, horses or sheep can form an ideal focal point in a rural landscape, whilst for a harsher environment we can use any amount of wild game such as deer, bears, tigers, elephants and so on.

This quick look at animals will hopefully show you that they're just as straightforward to create and add as people. Once you've got the hang of drawing the outline of one animal, then you will be able to produce pretty well most other species at will with only a little adjustment here and there.



Let's take a simple figure of a cat sitting upright in **Photo 1**. It's the sort of thing you could add alongside a partly open cottage door to emphasise a homely, domestic scene.

As you look at this particular picture, note how the cat can be broken down into basic shapes. In **Photo 2**, I've suggested a small square for the head and two triangles - one large, one small - in which to fit the front legs. This sketch is barely 2" or 5cm tall. However, this would be a pretty big cat in a landscape painting, even if it was in the foreground.

An oval for the body and one for the tail immediately fixes the sketch in the correct proportions. Don't worry if you don't get it right first time. I rarely do, especially when I'm drawing something I've not drawn before. Look how roughly I've done this sketch - these rough outlines can be rubbed out and adjusted till you're happy.

If you prefer, you can do your sketch on scrap paper and trace it down on to your canvas once you're happy with it. I'll show you how to do this later on.

In **Photo 3** I've gone over the basic shapes with a more realistic outline. Remember, this isn't a cat portrait and you don't need detail. The brushes you use for acrylics aren't going to permit that anyway unless you use something like a tiny 00 size brush.

In **Photo 4** I've erased the guide lines so you can see the cat more clearly, ready for tracing down. However, you don't need to bother rubbing out the guide lines as long as you can see to trace over the main outline.



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Having traced down the image onto the painting surface (see **Photo 23**), in **Photos 5 & 6** I've started to paint the cat in a fairly loose way by stabbing on thin colour to let things blend a little.

Acrylics let you make adjustments even at this stage. For example, if you look closely, I've changed the direction of the cat's left ear in Photo 6 when I've darkened the head, by having it point forward. I've also added lighter paint over other parts of the body to give more depth to the image.



6

I've used the same basic outline to paint a much smaller cat in **Photo 7** but this time with its head facing the viewer.

The painted version is in Photo 8 and I've just concentrated on simple dark shades with some mid grey for the highlights on the right hand side. For a small, middle-distance figure or animal you only need this basic approach.



7



8

Any more detail, no matter how exquisitely produced, will bring it too far forward therefore out of context in your picture.

Remember, you only need detail in foreground items whether they are trees, buildings or figures. In real life, you wouldn't expect to be able to make out more detail on an animal that was fifty yards away from you.

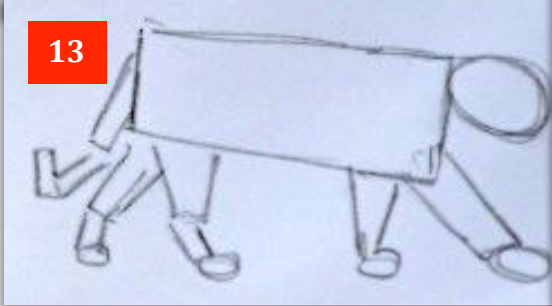
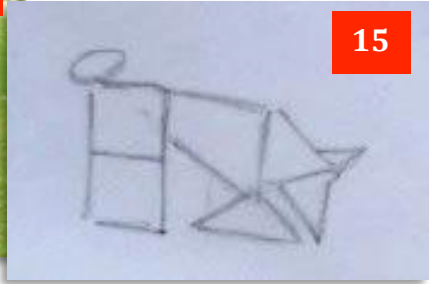
And yes, I know it looks quite crude in the cruel close-up above but have a look at **Photo 9** where the two cat images are placed next to a ruler. In fact if you are viewing this document at 100% size on your computer, this image is reproduced virtually the same as full-size in real life.

You can see that the black cat is less than 1/2" tall (about 1cm) while the brown cat is only about 1 3/4" or 4.5 cm tall. The larger cat, even at this size, would almost certainly be the, or part of the focal point in most average-sized pictures, as small as it is.

We'll move on to looking at animals where there's a little bit of movement (and how to trace them down!) but the principles of drawing and painting them are exactly the same.



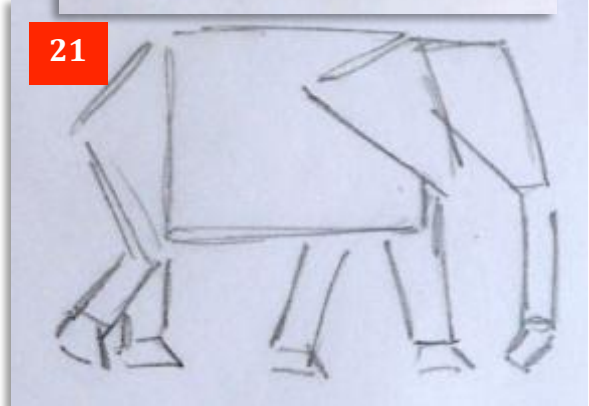
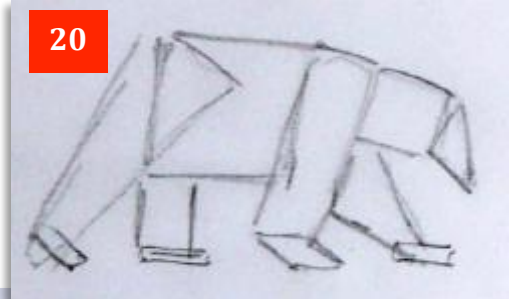
9



Look at the three **Photos 10, 11 & 12**. Even though we have three different animals of three differing sizes they all have basically the same body shape, even though the large and small cats are moving more purposefully than the dog.

For the basic outlines in **Photos 13 - 15**, I've just used simple oblongs and triangles for the cats' legs, whereas with the dog, I've used a square and a triangle to position the front and back feet together. You can see from **Photos 16 - 19** that it makes no difference to the end result.

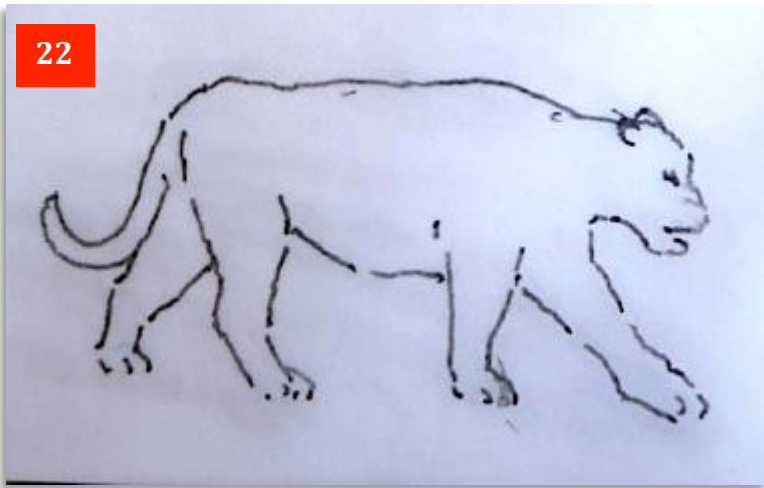
It doesn't matter what shapes you use or what bits of the body you include within a shape. It's what suits you best...



Now most animals have their rear legs jointed so that their 'knee appears to bend in opposite way to a human. In fact what you think is the knee is equivalent to our ankle, with the lower part of the leg below that joint equating to our foot (see the dog sketch in **Photo 19** circled).

Their real knee folds the same way as ours but usually appears just before or below where the leg emerges from the body. Two exceptions to this are the elephant and the bear in **Photos 20 and 21** where the knee appears in the 'human' position.

Ok, we've got our basic doodlings nicely adjusted to a convincing animal shape. Let's have a look on the next page how to transfer this easily onto our canvas or other painting surface.

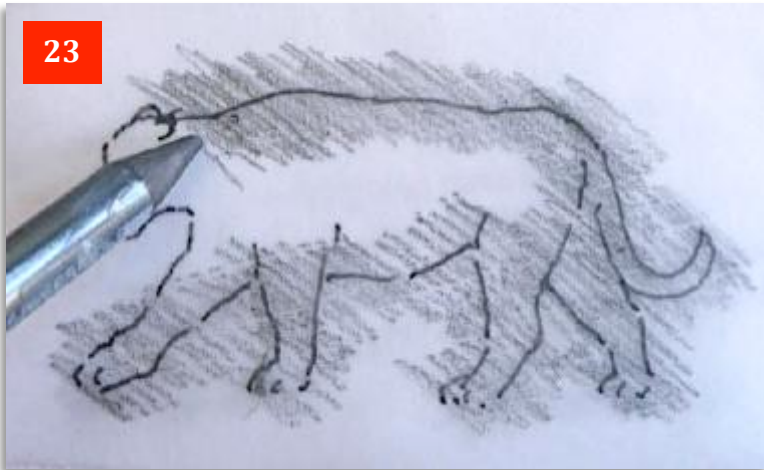


Let's use the tiger as the example. In **Photo 22** I've sketched the outline. In **Photo 23** the sheet has been turned over and a soft 4B pencil is scribbled over the reverse.

I've used tracing paper so you can easily see what's happening but you should be able to see the outline through ordinary copy or printer paper if you use that instead.

The graphite deposited on the reverse will transfer to your painting surface when you go over the 'correct' side with a ball point pen or sharp pencil as in **Photo 24**. You may need to press quite heavily, especially if you're using a primed board to paint on.

You can see in **Photo 25** that I've lifted the sheet back to check the outline is coming through. It may appear a bit faint but it should be good enough to see what you are doing.



If necessary, you can always run a pencil or felt pen or even diluted acrylic paint over the outline to make it clearer as in **Photo 26**. Remember, you don't need to worry about any detail. The paint would cover it anyway.

At this stage, you're simply looking to create an authentic outline of your chosen figure or animal and to transfer it to your painting surface.



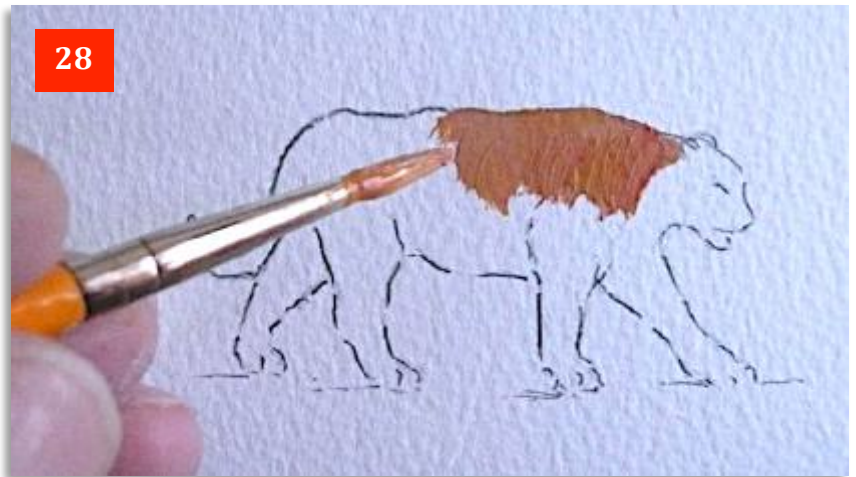


Photo 27 shows the colours I used in this example – from left to right, Yellow Ochre, Cadmium Yellow, Titanium White, Ultramarine Blue, Raw Umber and Permanent Rose.

In **Photo 28**, notice how I'm running the brush strokes downwards in a very flattened 'C' shape to emphasise the curvature of the tiger's body.

I've added a little creamy white with a touch of Raw Umber (not pure white) for the white areas of the legs and underbelly in **Photo 29** and then added rather more Raw Umber to that mix to give the shadow areas under the chest and around the legs as in **Photo 30**.

In **Photo 31**, I've now added a few touches of pure White to highlight areas around the legs and tail and then, if you look closely, I've taken off almost all of the white paint from the brush to create a *very* subtle paler sheen on the body just behind the neck and down over the front legs.

You can see in **Photo 32** that I've mixed Ultramarine and Raw Umber to give a very dark grey/black, together with a tiny touch of Permanent Rose.

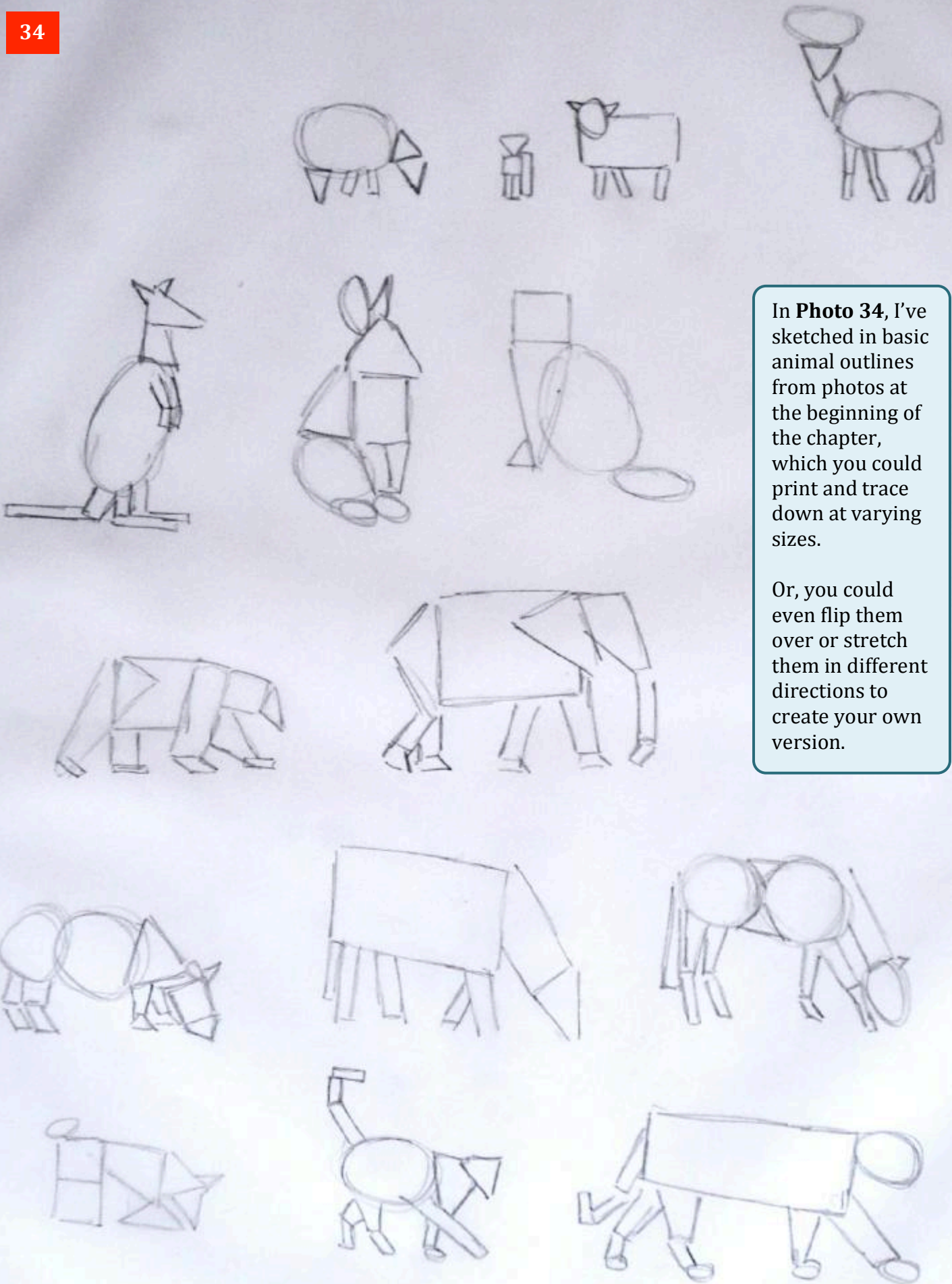
I've also added a drop of water to make it flow better as I want to create the tiger's stripes with different strengths of light and dark.

It's only a small point but it looks much more effective than using a black straight out of the tube which wouldn't give any variety of colour.

You can see from the inset how the density of the stripe is automatically varied, depending on how much paint is on the brush.

Finally, in **Photo 33**, I've completed the tiger and added a little greenery underneath, plus a deliberately indeterminate shadow which confirms both bright sunlight and broken ground.





In **Photo 34**, I've sketched in basic animal outlines from photos at the beginning of the chapter, which you could print and trace down at varying sizes.

Or, you could even flip them over or stretch them in different directions to create your own version.

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ArtTutor.com was built on the back of my passion to help more people take more enjoyment and more satisfaction from art...

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Bob Davies

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- Glynis Barnes-Mellish's Watercolour Portraits



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We asked all our members for a fair and honest appraisal of how they feel about ArtTutor... and then posted every single response (good and bad) [here on the website](#). They are **100% unedited**.

As of writing, there are more than 150 appraisals, 3 of which you could consider negative. Here's a small selection from leisure artists like you:

Dick - Surfside Beach, SC



If you don't belong to Art Tutor, you don't know what you are missing.

If I'm not motivated to paint I just go to Art Tutor watch a couple of instruction videos and try the new technique and I always find something I want to paint.

Art Tutor is good for new information and motivation. I wouldn't be progressing as an artist if I didn't have Art Tutor as my coach. Keep up the great work.

Arlene -Florida, USA



I am so delighted that I came across ArtTutor. My work is showing quite a bit of improvement since I joined 6 months ago. I work in all mediums and the videos are excellent.

I never had an art teacher like Bob Davies. His foundation courses are great and I learned a lot. So easy to follow. I was paying a private teacher \$18 a time and with Art Tutor, I pay \$74 for 6 months and I can use it as often or as long as needed. I can go back and review the lessons as I please.

Also, the work that fellow artists submit is very inspiring. When I post my paintings, the feedback from fellow artists is helpful and I can respond to their paintings as well.

I just renewed my subscription today for another 6 months and I'm

Yael Shany

This is my honest truth:



I love ArtTutor for many reasons I am not so sure be able to mention them all. But some of them are; I truly love the instructors. They are friendly, natural and humble yet extremely good artists and very stimulating to follow as instructors. They give a good feeling "if I can do it, you can do it too" kind of feeling.

The site encourages participation by simplifying the web features for the members. Something in this site so valuable to us artists in its simplicity and friendliness. Careful: this site is addictive! Once I started it became my comfort zone:->]