

WORKSHOP: "IDENTITY LANDSCAPE PAINTING"



Summary: Participants learn to create a stylized landscape painting on stretched canvas or gallery board. They can follow along with the instructor creating their own version of the group painting or work from an image of their own in a similar style. Participants learn to break down their image into sections of different sizes, creating depth by increasing the amount of detail towards the bottom or foreground and by underpainting to highlight their painting. The focus is on free creativity and not aiming for realism or specifically replicating the original image. Participants can paint an image of a place they see themselves, and add a wire figure to it.

Materials and Equipment:

gallery cradled board or stretched canvas
semi/opaque acrylic paints in assorted colours
assorted size paint brushes
palette knife
plastic lids or foil for palettes
tracing paper
masking tape
varnish
picture frame wire
large canvas for a group version of the project
landscape or other image to work from
larger canvas or board to work on as a group
instructions/idea sheet

pencil, eraser, sharpener
washable markers
sketch paper
t-shirt scraps
water container
carbon paper
towel
2 d-rings and matching screws
table cover
smock
easel
optional: hair dryer
sample artwork

Class Plan:

1. Prime your board or stretched canvas using a gesso primer like sludge if it is not already primed. This will help the paint stick to your surface, seal the surface and make it absorb less of your paint.



2. Underpaint your entire surface in a colour that sets the theme of your landscape. We used a bright turquoise to create a whimsical feel to this painting.
 - a. This colour will be left exposed between different segments of the painting.
 - b. This colour will also show through translucent and less opaque paints applied over top as a base kind of glow for the overall colouring of the painting.
3. Sketch very simple lines across your painting blocking out just the main sections without adding details. Follow along with the class or work from your own image if you prefer.



- a. We have used diagonal lines to create a landscape scene.
 - b. To create depth, we have left a medium sized section at the top for the sky.
 - c. The land section directly below the sky is are narrow because it is less visible in the distance.
 - d. Sections become increasingly wider working down the canvas. This makes them appear increasingly closer and leaves more space for details in the foreground.
 - e. One section two thirds of the way down the painting is very narrow and will be painted very dark later to look like a river or ravine, adding visual interest.
4. Optional: If you would like to plan the colour scheme of your painting in advance, try using coloured markers to block in the basic colours of each of these shapes on sketch paper.
 - a. Switch out any colours you don't like and experiment with others instead.
 - b. Transfer your basic sketch to your canvas or board surface using carbon paper.

5. Optional: If you are working from your own image and don't enjoy drawing, try enlarging your image with a photocopier and tracing over it with tracing paper to get just the basic shapes and positions of elements.
6. Choose the types of paints you will use for your painting. It is ok to use more than one type.
 - a. Choose based on the consistency of the paint. There are heavy body, soft body, fluid and high flow acrylic paints, with each being more liquid than the previous. We used soft body acrylics so they weren't runny but were fluid enough to get a fairly smooth surface with a hint of brush marks.
 - b. If you are painting over a darker colour and want to completely hide it, choose an opaquer paint. If you want the colour underneath to show through, choose a more translucent paint.
 - c. You can also choose a variety of paints, including craft paints and artist paints, and even use several types on the same painting.
7. Choose colours for your land sections.
 - a. We chose smoky grey green for the most distance landscape segment, right under the sky section.
 - b. We chose progressively lighter and brighter shades of green for the segments of land underneath.
 - c. The thin river segment we chose black.
8. Paint in each land section, leaving a sliver of the background colour showing between each section as a highlight.



9. Add a darker river section about two thirds of the way down with black paint.



10. Apply more than one coat if you want more coverage in a land section.



11. If desired, to make more distant segments hazy, add a wash (mix of paint and water) of the background colour overtop of that land segment. The top image is before the wash and the bottom image is after it. We used a wash of water and white paint.



12. Add vertical short dabs of paint along the horizon to appear like indistinct trees and vegetation in the distance. We used a narrow filbert (tapered tip) brush, but a flat brush would also work.



13. Add tapering rows of smaller vertical paint dabs in a lighter gray colour in the most distance land segment. We used a small round brush, but the side of a flat or filbert brush would also work.



14. Continue adding vertical dabs of paint in colours that contrast more and more with the background land segment, working towards the bottom of the painting.
15. Vertical dabs of paint closer to the foreground can simulate flowers in colours of yellow and red, and waves splashing on the edge of the river in grays and turquoises.



16. Stack dabs of colour more in the foreground increasing detail closer to the viewer to create depth.



17. Add cloud shaped sections of vertical dabs of paint in the sky using white paint with a narrow flat brush.



18. Finish covering the painting with dabs of paint suggesting landscape changes with increasing detail towards the bottom of the painting.



19. Add paint dots on the edges as you go, matching the front surface to continue the image if desired.



20. Apply 1-2 thin coats of non-yellowing archival varnish, using a brush saved specifically for varnishing.



21. Create fun embellishments and details using everyday items as jigs or tools to create fun shapes (see next workshop for more specific instructions on wire figures).
 - a. Try creating a small figure using wire and pop can fragments.



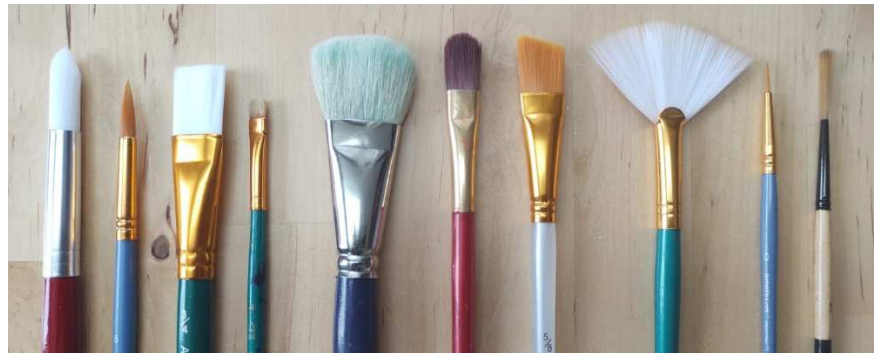
- b. Attach your figure and/or found objects to your painting by sewing on canvas or tiny drilled holes threaded with fine wire on boards.



22. Participants can work on their own individual paintings, and can also contribute to a group painting while waiting for their paint to dry between sections.
23. Optional: for thin coats of paint, a hair dryer on a cool setting can be used to speed up the drying process.
24. Happy creating, and please share pictures of your creations if you feel comfortable.

Useful Information/Adaptions/Variations:

- Simplify your subject matter into basic large shape areas.
- Save adding details until near the end of your painting work, adding them on the final layers. This allows you to consciously apply more in the foreground to help create depth, and to guide the viewers eye to certain areas of the painting for emphasis.
- There are some basic types of brushes that are useful. From left to right they are: round, pointed round, flat, bright, mop, filbert, angled, fan, detail and liner brushes. Larger flat brushes are also called wash brushes.



- For acrylic painting, we are using brushes made of synthetic materials (e.g., taklon, nylon, polyester, synthetic sable) because they withstand harsh acrylic paints and frequent washing and rinsing. Brushes made from natural materials can also be used with acrylics and can achieve unique textures.
- Brushes can have long or short handles. The shorter ones are lighter and can feel like they give you more control. Longer handles allow you to paint further away from the canvas, like when standing at an easel.
- For sizes, the larger the number the larger the brush. It refers to the thickness, length or width of the brush, and is rarely an actual measurement in inches or centimeters. The numbers also vary between brush manufacturers! So, it is a general idea of brush size relative to each other in a series of brush sizes.

Trouble Shooting:

- If your paint seems to be peeling off your canvas or creating little balls of paint as you work, remove the balls with a palette knife and stop working for a bit so your undercoat can dry. Acrylic paint can peel and ball if the underlayer is painted over while half dry.
- If you are finding it difficult to paint over another colour to obscure it, switch your top coat of paint to an opaquer paint. This will provide coverage and concealment quickly. Save more translucent paints for highlights and washes or places you want the undercoat colour to show through.