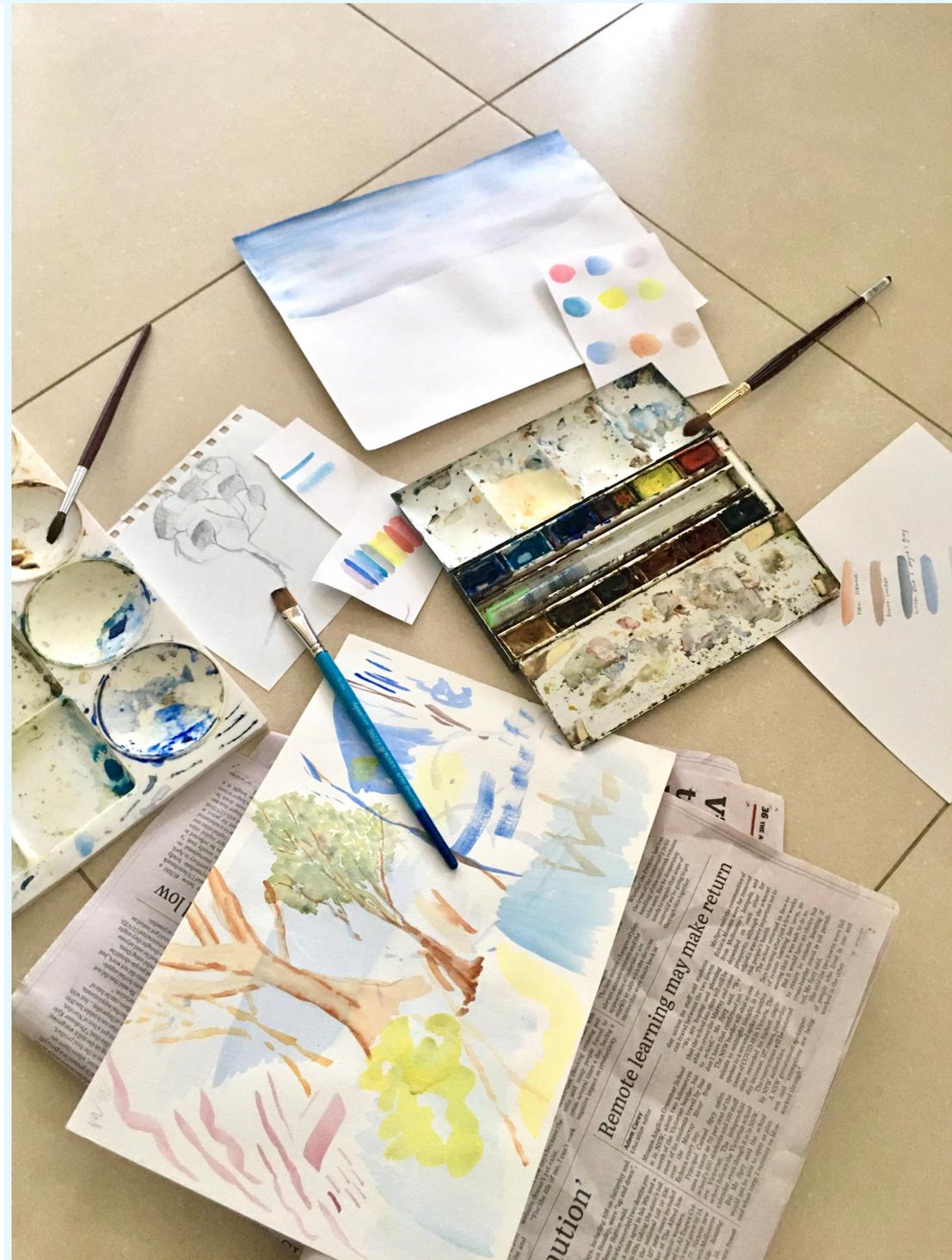


**A beginners guide to the
Australian landscape in
watercolour painting**

A Work In Progress

Jessica Hooker



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Introduction

The apprehension of picking up a paint brush for the first time and beginning your artistic journey is without a doubt overwhelming. Beginner artists are immediately confronted with the foreign terms and unrealistic expectations, which alone is intimidating enough, however are then additionally startled by the countless aspects of painting there is to explore. So, where do we begin then? There is no better place to take inspiration from than the natural beauty that lies in every Australian's back garden.

A Work In Progress covers some of the key elements that make up the Australian landscape, whilst also discussing some of the basic components to water colour painting that will aid the endeavours of aspiring painters. Without the worry of unfamiliar language, inexperience and lack of skills or being inundated with hundreds of techniques to practise, beginner artists can freely express themselves and develop skills whilst also appreciating the stunning nature in their surroundings.



Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once we grow up.

- Pablo Picasso



Supplies

Paintbrushes

The variety and uses of different paintbrushes is quite frankly endless. To put it simply, the characteristics of a paintbrush is defined by its thickness, shape and type of bristles. The hairs that make up the bristles of the brush can be natural and made from sable, squirrel, hog and even goat hairs, but, now it is also quite common to own paintbrushes with synthetic bristles. You can easily over analysis the value and importance of a paintbrushes bristles, so ensuring you are experimenting with the different types is probably the best approach. A brushes ability to hold and smoothly distribute paint as well as maintain its shape is of vital importance to its user. In study 1, you can see a few different paintbrushes and their labelled shape and hair type. In order to achieve the most variety and precision with your paintings, having an assortment of paintbrushes to chose from is necessary. Owning a collection of paintbrushes that ranges in thickness and shape often encourages more adventurous painting and makes a considerable difference in the details.

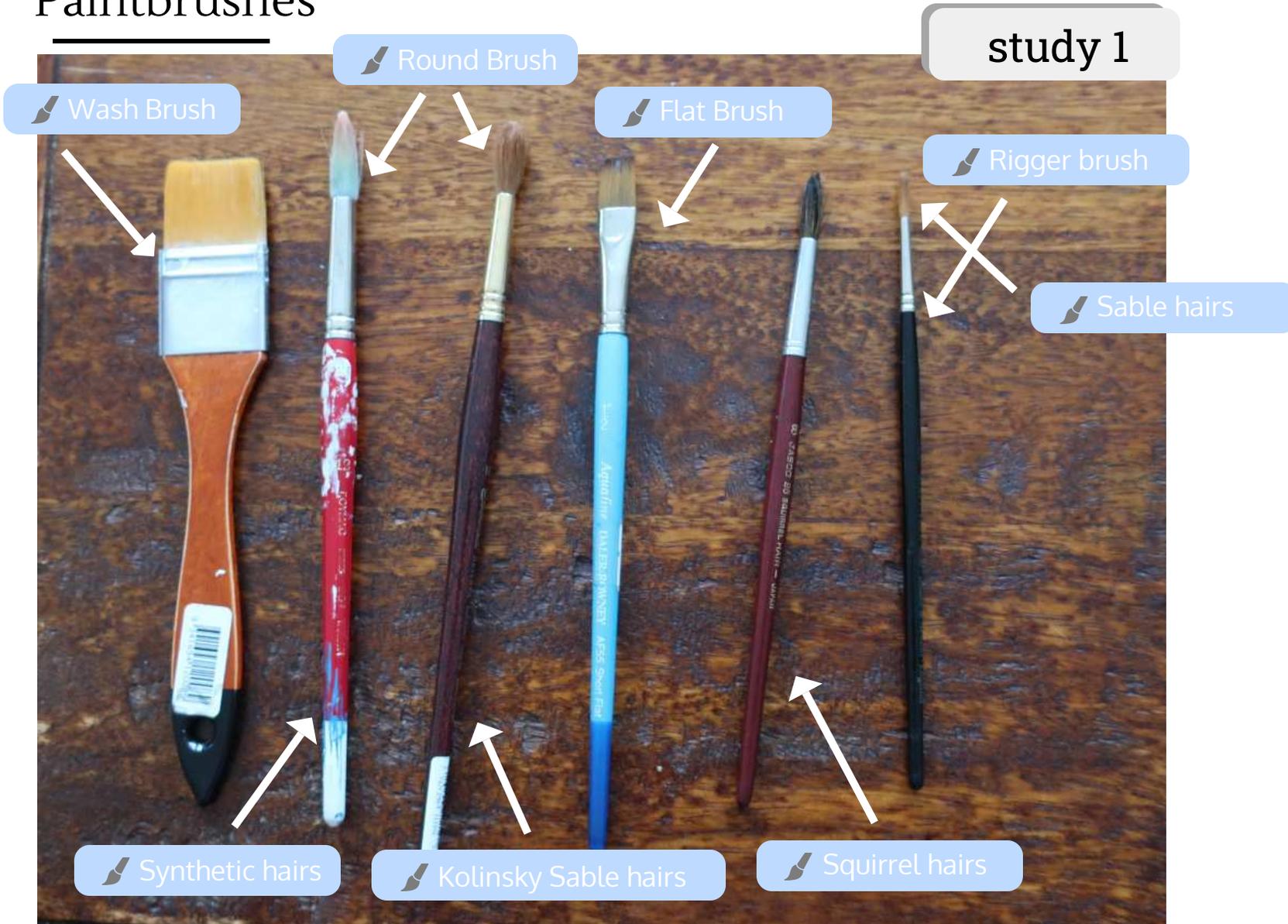
A round brush is the most popular within watercolour painting as its versatility makes it suitable to illustrate an impressive amount of techniques. Unfortunately, a flat brush does not share the same flexibility as the round brush yet are perfect for harsh linear strokes or even for painting washes. Rigger brushes are similar in shape to a round brush, however the ratio of thickness to length significantly distinguishes between the two as the rigger brush has longer bristles. The brush grants the painter lots of control for finer and more intricate strokes. Similar to the flat brush, a wash brush is much wider and designed to apply a large amount of paint and blend easily, or alternatively, is used to wet the canvas with water before painting.

"Creativity Takes Courage"

Henri Matisse

Supplies

Paintbrushes



Supplies

Canvas and Paper

Not surprisingly, because of how heavily water based this type of paint is, regular paper is almost certainly going to buckle and dry crinkled or deformed under the influence of watercolour paint. Not only will this result in the paper being more delicate and potentially tearing or disintegrating whilst painting, but the absorption capacity will be occupied by the water rather than the paint, meaning that the paper actually will not take in the pigment of the colour. If you are painting on a canvas this should not be an issue, however, it may be still worth while exploring and practicing with paper as well. Perhaps the more distinctive features of watercolour paper is its unique weight. Paper weight can be measured in grams per square meter (gsm) and indicates to painters what results can be expected. The benefit of heavy weight paper is that it can absorb more water and is not likely to need stretching, a process undergone prior to painting that aims to prevent the paper from buckling. Another issue that stems from the thinness of regular paper is that as soon as the paint makes contact with the surface the paper acts like a sponge, immediately absorbing the liquid, and therefore the paint cannot be spread easily or smoothly over the paper. Moreover, a benefit of using watercolour paints is that even once it has dried if more water is applied the pigment obtains its water qualities again and can be moved around and painted again. This advantage is lost if an artist chooses not to use special watercolour pads as adding more water onto regular paper will just make it soggy and incredibly fragile. If you look closely at study 2, you can see the difference in paper thickness and texture between the 300gsm watercolour paper (top) and the regular drawing paper (bottom). Being aware of the characteristics and behaviors, both positive and negative of different paper types is fundamental, particularly for watercolour artists. Regardless of what you decide to use, having an understanding on the importance of paper weight and the role it plays in watercolour painting will prove to be incredibly useful throughout your artistic journey.

study 2



Supplies

Watercolour paint

Watercolour paint has many defining features and tendency's that can be difficult to accommodate to as a beginner artist. A key thing to keep in mind is that watercolour paint can be deceiving as it dries a lot lighter than it initially appears to be in the palette. Even though watercolour paint is naturally delicate and subtle in its nature and should not be compelled to vibrancy, you will find that using darker and richer colours overall will yield the best results in your paintings. Using more concentrated paints will also minimize bleeding, especially when a water wash has been applied to the paper prior to painting. The trouble with your paint bleeding is that separate colours will mix and blur on the paper, but also it becomes increasingly difficult to paint intricate strokes and details. Although sometimes, such as in the instance of painting rain clouds or washes, this effect is convenient and beneficial, for the most part, this should be avoided by controlling how much paint is held in the belly of your brush, how watery your paint is and the pressure at which it is applied. Eventually with practice, this balance will be instilled in you and become second nature, but when you start remember to be patient as the behaviours of watercolour paint are challenging to manage.

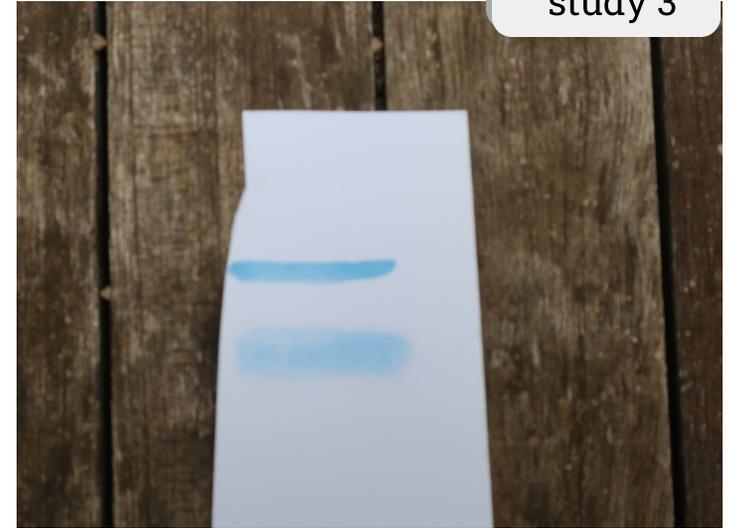
STUDY 3 AND STUDY 4

In study 3, you can see one linear stroke that demonstrates how easily watercolour paint bleeds in comparison to another linear stroke that has been controlled. In study 4, you can see on the top, what the colour looks like in the pan, and on the bottom what it looks like once it dries and the difference in colour.

TIP: Before you begin painting landscapes and natures, get a blank piece of paper and experiment with colour, brushes and techniques.



study 3



study 4

Colours and Mixing

Colour Variety

Although, colour is seemingly limited to those that make up the rainbow, the variety of colour is really much more complex than that. For example, there is a considerable difference between Windsor and Persian blue, however they are both classified as blue. This can be confusing for beginners who are uninformed of the diversity of colours simply within another colour. Not only will lacking this understanding reflect in the authenticity and depth of your work, but you will struggle to correctly identify the right colour to be used for certain aspects of your painting. Familiarizing yourself with some of these colours and what they are typically used for will elevate the quality of your paintings and give them a sense of professionalism.



There are several key terms that describe the characteristics of colour; hue, tone, shade, chroma and tint. Whilst all of these words can be used interchangeably, hue most commonly refers to a colour family, such as yellow hue or blue hue which includes all variations of the colour. The relationship between tint, tone and shade is that all require adding different colours to adjust its original appearance. Through adding white and therefore making the colour lighter, the tint has been altered, the same goes for adding black to change the shade and grey to create tone. By contrast, chroma essentially defines the saturation, intensity or purity of a colour. The different combinations of each of these attributes provide a wider breadth of more complex colours.



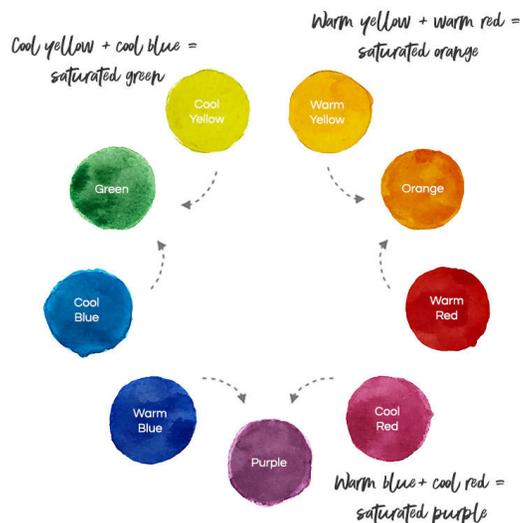
"Colour creates, enhances, changes, reveals and establishes the mood of the painting"
- Kiff Holland

Colours and Mixing

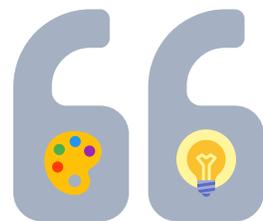
Colour Combinations

There is nothing more frustrating as a beginner artist than not being able to mix the colour you want to use. With only the guidance of intuition, mixing colours is a tiresome and sensitive process which tests the patience and determination of all artists. Having the practiced skill of colour mixing proves to be a massive time saver and equips you with all the colours you could possibly need to bring your visions and ambitions to life.

In colour mixing, there is a lot more than just what is indicated by a colour wheel, and the likes of primary, secondary and tertiary colours. Colour mixing is all very simple as long as the pigments produce a pure colour appearance. However this is not always the case, as it is most likely that the paints you will use will have a colour bias, also known as either being warm or cool. Warm bias usually means the colour gravitates towards the red, yellow and orange side on a colour spectrum, whereas a cool bias suggests that it leans more towards blues, greens and purples. Therefore, you will find that not every blue mixed with every yellow will result in a true green colour, hence where the complications stem. Depending on the bias of the colours you are mixing with, a saturated or neutralized version of a colour will be the outcome. A muted colour can be achieved by mixing primary colours furthest away from the desired colour on the colour wheel. This is demonstrated in the top third of study 5, where a warm red is mixed with a cool blue to produce a neutralized purple.



On the colour wheel on the left, you can see that there is a warm and cool variation of the three primary colours. This is one way that artists can know what colours need to be mixed to produce different results.



**Colour is my day long
obsession, joy and torment.**

- Claude Monet

Colours and Mixing

Colour Combinations

study 5



To produce a pure saturated colour, you mix the primary colours closest to that colour. As seen in the middle third of study 5, cool blue and cool yellow have been mixed to give a saturated green.

Complementary colours when mixed can be used to create a dull grey or earth hue. Evident in the bottom third of study 5 where blue and orange have been mixed to give a brown.

"Tone is the work
horse of art and
colour the seducer."
- Unknown

Colours and Mixing

Mixing Techniques

There are three essential colour mixing methods that every beginner watercolour artist should exercise. The first is referred to as wet-on-wet, as it mixes directly on the paper, applying wet paint to a wet surface and letting the colours mix but in a uneven and spontaneous pattern. Whilst this technique does not give the artist the same control over how the colours blend, tilting your paper in the directions you want the paint to move will give you a little more influence over the unpredictable nature of watercolour paint. Learn to embrace the liveliness and beauty in the behaviours of watercolour paint, rather than being provoked by not having complete control.

If you are looking to mix a very uniform colour that will apply evenly, the best approach is to mix your desired colour first on a palette, before then painting it on your paper. The third method is called glazing and is quite similar to the first, as the colour is mixed on the paper rather than a palette. The main difference is to allow the first colour to dry on the paper, before applying the second colour paint. Bear in mind, this does not create an even colour and it is likely that the individual colours will still be distinguishable within the new colour.

Becoming acquainted with each technique will grant you the flexibility to use them to enhance your paintings and discover their different uses and what method is your favourite.



PRACTISE
— makes —
PERFECT

Colours and Mixing

..... *helpful tips to mixing*

colour

1 Do not underestimate how much paint you need! If you do not mix enough paint, it is difficult to mix more that replicates the first batch exactly.

2 Only add a little bit of paint at a time and be patient. You can always add more colour, but cannot take away, and will find that you will often have to redo your mix if you are too rash. The most reliable way to ensure that the balance of colours is precise is through developing it gradually.

3 Do not make the colour too diluted as the colour will dry lighter. Chroma is another factor that you can adjust little by little until you are satisfied with the result.

4 Try and avoid using lots of pressure and separating the bristles of your brush when mixing as this will not only damage the hairs but also can affect how smoothly it will apply to the paper. Instead, move the brush back and forth, side to side or in gentle swirling motions.



5 Rinse your brush frequently so you are not contaminating other colours and make use of all the space on your palette.

6 When mixing directly on the paper, assuming one layer of paint has already dried, steadily build up the colours chroma, applying the second colour in separate coats. Bucketing the paint on will overwhelm and disguise the first colour completely.

7 Work fast with the wet-on-wet technique so neither of the paints dry and there is enough water to mix and entangle.

Sketching

Timing

Sketching is a perfect way to practise similar techniques to painting but without the permanency and pressure of making mistakes. Whether you sketch trees, shrubs and other forms of nature or the slopes of mountains and hills is up to you, but regardless, you will be able to recognize your errors, amend and improve upon them, and thus progress as an artist. However, sketching can be an exasperating, and seeking perfection in every sketch is something many people will succumb to. Establishing a time limit for your sketches can help you prevent over complicating your work whilst still providing enough time to finish the basic components of your sketch. Even spending five minutes is plenty of time to illustrate shadow, density, positioning and other major features before attempting to paint them. It is not always recommended that you paint directly over your sketch, the purpose of sketching is just to familiarize yourself with the movements and strokes used to paint elements, not necessarily to act as a stencil for your painting.

Order

Although the order that you sketch elements such as trees and mountains is very much up to interpretation and individual to the artist, you may need some guidance as to where to start. For trees, typically the trunk is sketched first, followed by the outline of the foliage, layers of foliage and then the ground and roots beneath. Once the main structure of the tree has been laid out, you can go back in to add details such as shadowing and dimension, strengthening branches and altering density of the leaves, which can be illustrated through straight diagonal lines, smudging or finer curved lines.

Similarly, when sketching mountains, the outline of the shape is sketched first and then the base. Afterwards you can incorporate shading and emphasis any angles or edges that you want to stick out. Finish off by decorating with forests or other nature you want on your mountain.

TIP: Once you have become comfortable with using a pencil and are willing to challenge yourself, try not looking down at your paper when you sketch. If you are really struggling, it can help to not take your pencil off the paper.



Sketching

The Process

study 6



In study 6, you can see a finished tree sketch, drawn in less than 10 minutes, exercising the skill of not lifting the pencil.

study 7



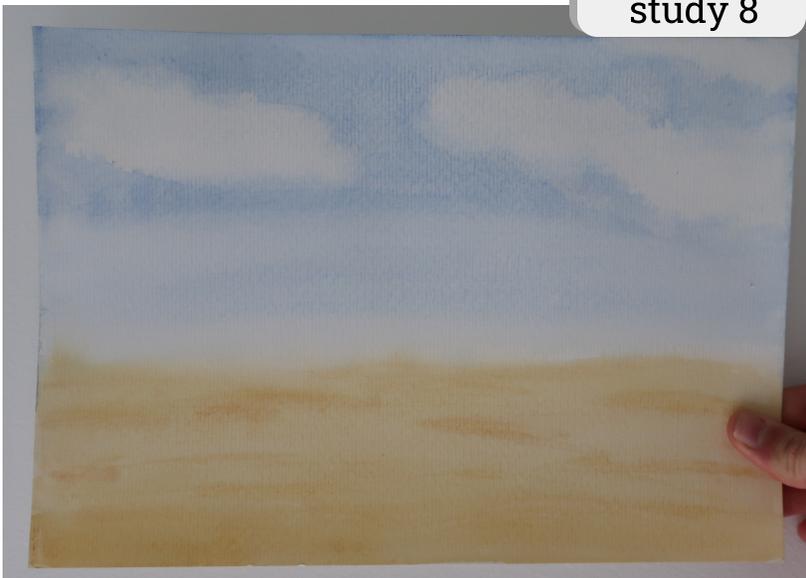
In study 7, you can see a mountain sketch and how the the vague shape evolves with the implementation of the detailed shadows and angles.

Clouds

Fluffy clouds

More formally known as cumulus clouds, fluffy clouds have a cotton like appearance and almost a pure white colour. They can be painted and interpreted in numerous ways, however the easiest technique for beginners is through using absorbent paper. Begin by applying a water wash using your wash brush until the paper is covered evenly. Then mix the colour you want for your sky, a Cobalt or Ultramarine blue suit this type of cloud best, but feel free to play with different shades of gray in your background. Paint your sky, applying less paint at the horizon in a gradient fashion so that it is a darker and more intense colour at the top of the paper. Before the sky has dried, scrunch your absorbent paper and press the length and edges down against the fresh paint. Utilizing the paper to remove the blue paint, form your white cloud, going back in with the paper to adjust their shape if necessary. The absorbent paper should lift the pigment of the paint, giving your clouds a light and natural appearance. Going back in with a small, wet flat brush, use side to side strokes on the outsides of the clouds to continue to erase the sky colour until you have achieved the size and shape cloud you want. If you wish to add shadow and dimension to your clouds, mix a grey colour with an underlying blue dominance and, taking a round brush, paint in brief, faint strokes on the bottom and curves of the clouds. By layering and blending more colour, you will enhance the complexity and depth of your clouds and best convey a fluffy appearance. View study 8 and the neighboring photo as reference of watercolour clouds in comparison to reality.

study 8



Clouds

Rain clouds

Rain clouds, as the name suggests, are dark in colour and signal impending storms. This can be quite difficult to express in your work and requires adequate knowledge on colour mixing, tilting your paper and the movements of watercolour paint. First, mix the colours you need to paint the clouds. Deep purples, blues, greys and reds best convey a stormy effect. Having a variety of different shades and colours is essential in resembling rain clouds, and overall, will make your work more interesting to look at. If you need some guidance with mixing, combining Raw Sienna with Winsor blue gives a rustic, earthy purple which is perfect for rain clouds. Study 9 displays a few variations of colours commonly used to paint rain clouds.



study 9

Begin with a water wash so that your paper is sufficiently covered. Paint the background colour, the combination of Winsor blue and Payne's grey as displayed in study 9 works well for this. Through either using absorbent paper to remove the paint, or the edge of a flat brush to also ebb away at the pigment, form several simple white clouds. Try and make the bottom of these clouds have a flat edge rather than a rounded one as this looks better with the rain pouring downwards and out. Then with a flat brush and a grey colour, line the bottom edge of the white clouds and immediately after, pick up the paper or the easel it is resting on, and tilt until the paint has bled the desired amount down the paper like demonstrated in study 10. The side you chose to tilt your paper on will indicate the direction of rain fall in your painting. This is where the dampness of the paper is important. To add to these downfalls of rain, use the flat brush to follow the direction of the paint with diagonal strokes. Applying a Canary like yellow on a rigger brush around parts of the cloud gives the illusion of sunlight beaming through as seen in study 11. Remember, this approach takes lots of practise to master, and is never entirely within the artists control. Shades of purple and deep browns and reds can also be incorporated into a rain clouds piece for a different stormy effect.

Clouds

Rain clouds

study 10



study 11



..... *the key to art is*

creativity

.....



Clouds

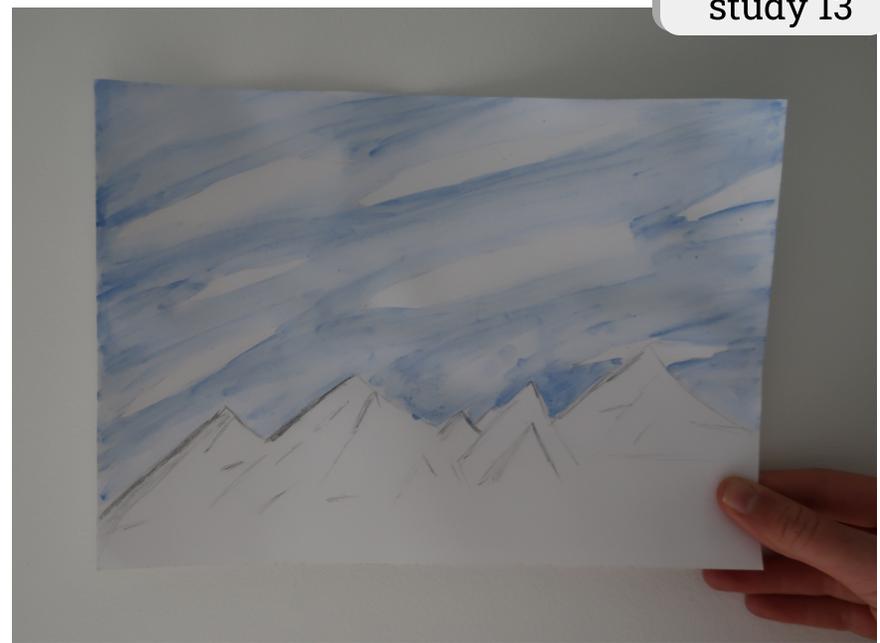
Wispy clouds

Wispy clouds are delicate in their nature and stretch out across the sky in fine tufts. An easy approach to painting these types of clouds is to sketch the outline of the clouds, shown in study 12, very lightly, and then mixing the appropriate blue shade for your sky, paint around the clouds with a round brush. Give the paper a water wash around the cloud outlines before painting the blue sky. Drawing your clouds on a certain diagonal can enrich linear perspective which compliments this style of cloud. It also gives the appearance that the clouds are moving, drifting across the sky. As wispy clouds are gentle and feathery, harsh lines should be avoided. Apply a plain wet round brush and soften the edges by blending the sky colour with the white of the cloud through circular motions. The sky strokes can be slightly inconsistent and streaky as viewed in study 13, as it gives the appearance of softer, finer clouds. A more advanced method is to paint the sky first, and then go in with a grey or white colour in layered, wide U-like strokes. Removing more of the sky colour with side to side movements using wet flat brush will make the clouds more crisp and distinguishable against the background. This technique is quite intricate however the result is rewarding.

study 12



study 13



Gum Trees

Trunk

Painting the trunks of gum trees can be difficult, particularly when using water colour, as artists do not have as much control over the movements of the paint. Moreover, gum trees often have sections of white or grey like shades in their trunk, which is also tricky to illustrate. Therefore, mixing a range of browns, greys, whites and even some reds will aid you in achieving an accurate portrayal of the unique beauty of gum trees. The type of gum tree you are aiming to paint will dictate the proportions of each colour in the trunk. Using a flat brush with an intense warm brown, ideally burnt umber, outline the structure of the trunk in detached, broken strokes, moving your paint brush from the base of the trunk towards the divergence of branches in an upward direction. Giving your tree a slight lean or bends in the trunk will give it character and prevent the tree from looking like a pole or pillar. Mixing Ultramarine blue and raw sienna will produce a grey, which taking a round brush, can be used to fill in the body of the trunk. Go back in with more brown earth hues or a darker grey to add patches and individual markings to the trunk. Including impurities or wart-like bumps using burnt umber will also make the tree appear less perfect.

In study 14, you can see the broad spectrum of colours used to paint the trunk and the patterns that they have been applied in. Whilst the outline consists primarily of burnt umber, the body of the trunk still has the ghost white appearance distinct to gum trees.

Branches

Once the trunk of your tree has been painted, you can begin to shape the rest of the tree through the thickness, direction and structure of the branches. With a flat brush and burnt umber, paint a few light and imperfect strokes emerging from the top and sides of the trunk. These lines form the skeleton of the tree, and will become the main branches. None of your branches need to be particular harsh or bold when you first paint them as you will continue to develop them throughout the process. Parallel to these strokes, paint the other edge of the branch, bearing in mind it does not need to start and end at the exact point as the first set of strokes. By the end of this step, you should have 2-4 thick, though still bare branches extending from the trunk.



Gum Trees

Branches

The next layer of branches should be shorter in both length and width and stem from the main branches of the tree in numerous directions. These branches should be painted as singular strokes, positioning the flat brush on a slight angle to make the lines thicker. Finally, using a rigger brush, paint the thin, weak, twig-esque branches, either extending from the ends of the already existing branches, or sprouting out of the sides of the smaller branches. The ends of the branches should split to form several other ends, resembling a tine of a fork, but growing in a more crooked and spontaneous fashion. With a round brush and the same colours used to characterize the trunk of the tree, layer and contrast the different colours to depict the texture and demeanor of the bark.



Flowering Gums



Foliage

Similar to the other components of watercolour painting explored, when painting leaves and greenery on trees, more than just one variety of green should be used! Although foliage is its most life-like and captivating to the eye when illustrated with bold, bright colours, understanding where and when these colours need to be used is crucial. Before you even begin to mix paints, consider the density and posture of leaves. Observe whether growth is in clusters or if it is reasonably spread out across the length of the tree. Perhaps the tree is flowering, or the leaves changing with the season, accommodating to the weather. Without acknowledging these features, you cannot successfully reflect the nature of foliage in your work. Mix different shades of blues and yellows, together, changing the ratio of colour to produce a green that is darker, lighter or of a more warm or cool bias. If the tree is blooming or just plainly to attract the eye, have access to a few types of blues, reds and yellows as you may want to involve subtle hints of these colours among the foliage.

Gum Trees

Foliage

A round brush is best if aiming to depict thicker groups of leaves, whereas a rigger brush is better when used to paint the individual leaves or smaller collections of leaves. Make the evaluation as to what brush is suitable to your painting prior to beginning. Taking a light green colour first, apply where you have noticed the foliage grows either in short, crescent lines or messy dots with a rigger brush, or thicker crescent lines or splotches with a round brush. With the crescent strokes, layer them side to side to build and form the shape of the bunch of leaves. After you have established the foundation of the foliage, repeat a similar process with a darker green shade. This colour does not need to be premixed, you can simply just add to your lighter green or layer it directly on the paper. Apply this second colour in the same style and direction of strokes, however, focus the darker colour towards the top of the greenery to indicate density. The colour of the leaves are obviously not limited to just two shades of green, so where fitting, continue to delicately integrate further shades of green within the foliage. Complete by taking any shade of the primary colours such as raw sienna and cobalt blue and apply carefully either in floral patterns to indicate the tree flourishing or layered over small sections of the foliage for variety.

Shadowing

Shadowing allows the artist to communicate the position of the sun within the painting, and create dimension. It is used through applying dark colours on the opposing side of the light source. Controversially, the illusion of shadowing can also be explored by making the side of the object in the line of the sun's projection lighter. With regards to trees, shadowing is portrayed on the sides of the trunk, branches and foliage as well as spreading from the base outwards onto the ground. A combination of burnt umber and Cobalt blue develops form shadowing on the sides of the tree. By contrast, a colour with less blue dominance such as the mixture of yellow ochre and light red is better for the cast shadow of the tree on the ground as it is compatible with the paint used in the foreground. This colour should be applied more heavily closer to the base of the tree and gradually get lighter as the shadow expands and of course to align with the size and shape of the tree itself. Form shadowing should be painted using either a rigger or flat brush for control, whereas cast shadowing, being more of a vague shape of the tree can be applied more carelessly with a round brush. Another approach to shadowing is glazing colours by consecutively layering different colours on top of one another. The result will be more saturated and vibrant rather than grey and gloomy. Try and avoid utilizing neutral tints as shadow tones as although they are versatile and consistent with all colours, they can often cause a murky and dull appearance.

Gum Trees

Proportion

Ghost gums, water gums, spotted gums and red gums are all common species of gum trees, yet their characteristics go far beyond the groups they are segregated into. Identifying and mirroring the proportion of a tree in spite of its given name and list of tendencies will augment your understanding as an artist and thus embellish your work. Being informed on the symmetry of the gum, ratio of height to width and foliage to trunk, as well as where the branches begin to deviate and at what angle is equally as important as knowing the trees species. Whilst species determines the generic features including ecological niche, conditions, behaviours and flowers, proportion focuses on the morphology of the individual tree, meaning numerous different species can fall under the same proportions even if having opposite or conflicting attributes. Before you begin to paint your gum trees, really study its curious bends, alluring posture, imposing stature and all the other places you think its beauty truly lies.

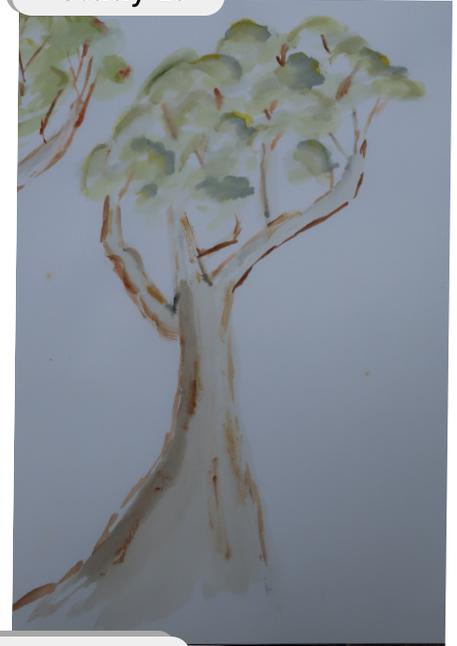
Both watercolour paintings of gum trees in study 15 and study 16 delve into the components that are branches and trunk, foliage, markings and shadows, colour, dimension, height and proportion. For all elements in art, as you become more experienced with a paintbrush and discover your unique style and approach to watercolour, your work will only become more captivating. There is no one right way to painting gum trees, so explore for yourself what is most enjoyable and appealing to you. No gum tree is perfect looking in real life and therefore should not be in your paintings either, so just embrace the freedom and expression paired with watercolour paint.

Painters Problems:

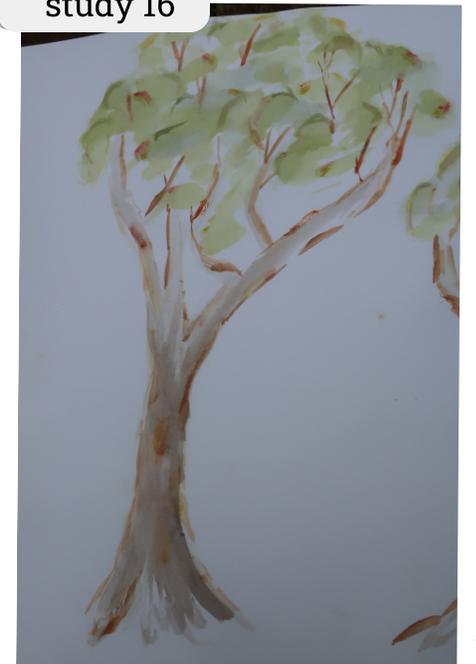
Should copying from real models be avoided?

Painting gum trees can be very difficult without any physical figures for a beginner artist to mirror, so using an existing tree as a model for when you first start painting will develop a good vision of what these trees look like and set you on the right track. Once you have become comfortable and are confident in your perception of gum trees, it is fun to create and design trees of your own to suit your work and really stimulate your creativity.

study 15



study 16



Skies and Background

Washes

The foundation of many backgrounds in water colour painting is a wash. This is a mildly translucent coat of paint, making it a great approach to painting skies. Washes are convenient and flexible as they allow for other objects to be painted on top, can be adjusted or further intensified in colour through glazing, and all in all, are difficult to ruin. Unsurprisingly, the brush designed to apply a wash is called a wash brush. Genius! However, if painting around elements such as mountains or just for more control, a round brush is also a viable option. Washes should be fairly diluted in colour, allowing the paint to possess a water like quality and move naturally and easily over the paper. Applying a water wash first and then the background wash will also encourage the paint to spread smoothly and streak free. Washes should be painted on from left to right with consistent pressure. Cover the whole section before going back in to deepen the colour, unless you are trying to attain a gradient effect which is discussed in the following pages. Washes can be both singular and multi-coloured, this determines how the wash is painted. Washes that contain only one variation of colour are fairly straightforward to paint and require minimal capability and technique to exercise. On the other hand, a wash consisting of numerous colours takes more skill and practise to execute.

Plain Skies

Typically, a sky painted with no clouds and using only one colour is a shade of blue. This colour of blue is really up to the interpretation of the artist as to what shade supports the image being painted, however the most commonly used blues for plain skies are Ultramarine, Phthalo, and Cobalt, which is exhibited in study 17 as a graded wash. Excluding varieties of greys, most other colours are not utilized individually for skies, but rather collaborate with other colours. Where the horizon meets the sky should be the lightest section in colour, gradually ascending up the page and growing in intensity. Begin painting the pigment from the top of the page, and in grand, sweeping motions, drag the paint from side to side towards the horizon. This should allow the paint to be most concentrated at the top, becoming less pigmented as it is spread lower on the page. Turning the paper upside down and working in reverse, from the horizon downwards, is an approach some artists prefer and should be experimented with.

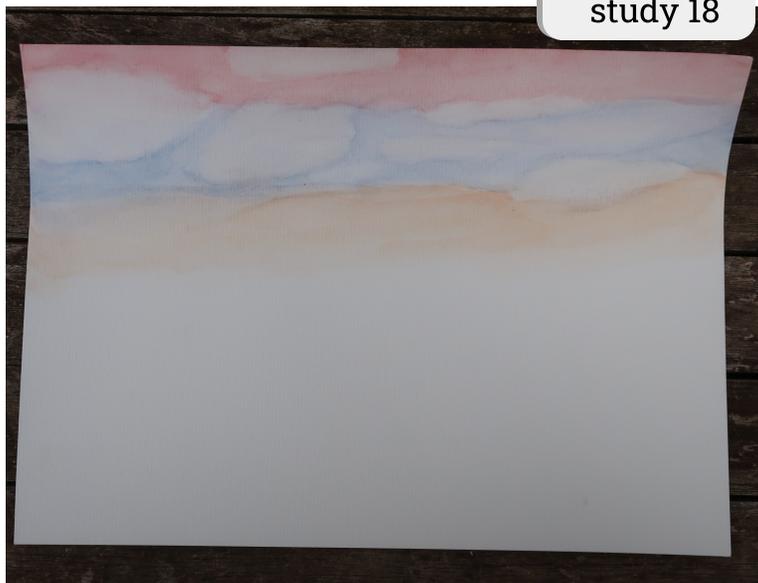


study 17

Skies and Background

Multicoloured Skies

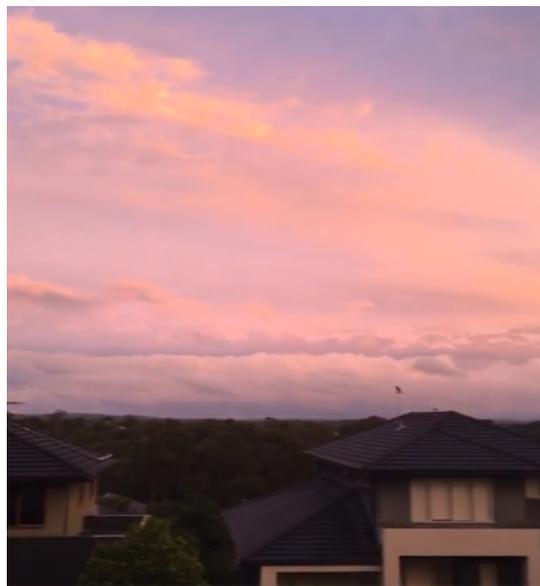
Painting gradients are useful when trying to depict a sunset or if coordinating a mixture of colours into a balanced piece. A gradient is the gradual transition of one colour to another, following similar principals to that of graded washes, as it shifts in a fluent and progressive way. Watercolour paint has unique qualities that can be utilized to capture and incorporate a range of different colours into a sky. Whether this is done in a traditional and absolute fashion, blending the colours in linear phases, or in a more abstract approach, painting by instinct in a less organized form, is up to the impression of the artist. Either way, the different colours will inevitably mix and therefore should be practiced to work to the advantage of the artist. Due to this, the order in which the colour applies has a significant influence in the result.



Usually, painting in accordance to the patterns evident in the sky works best, first painting the colour highest up in the sky, then the middle range of colours, and then the colour closest to the horizon. However, often the sky is not so immaculate in its colour evolution, so having the colours overlap, and entangle in one another should be allowed. In order for the artist to have as much control as possible, use a wash brush to soak the paper with water, and then a round brush to paint the sky. As watercolour paint is translucent, the different colours will be discernible even when glazed on top of each other, so while a new colour will be mixed when this occurs, blemishes of the original colours will still be evident. Avoiding harsh distinctive lines between the colour changes is what will have the greatest impact on replicating cohesion in your scene. Similarly to when painting plain blue skies, the colour should ease in pigment as it travels down the page, permitting the successive colour to overlap but not prevail the above colour. Study 18 presents a sunset sky consisting of pinks, blues and oranges. The pink was painted first, next the blue and finally the orange, encouraging a blend of colours at both intersections. All of the colours have a subtle pigment and are heavily diluted with water to further support colours integrating and to portray the delicacy of this specific sunset. For a more vibrant result, experiment with bolder, purer colours but be cautious as they mix more aggressively and are challenging to paint in harmony with one another.

Skies and Background

Sunset and Sunrise



..... *every sunrise is*

different

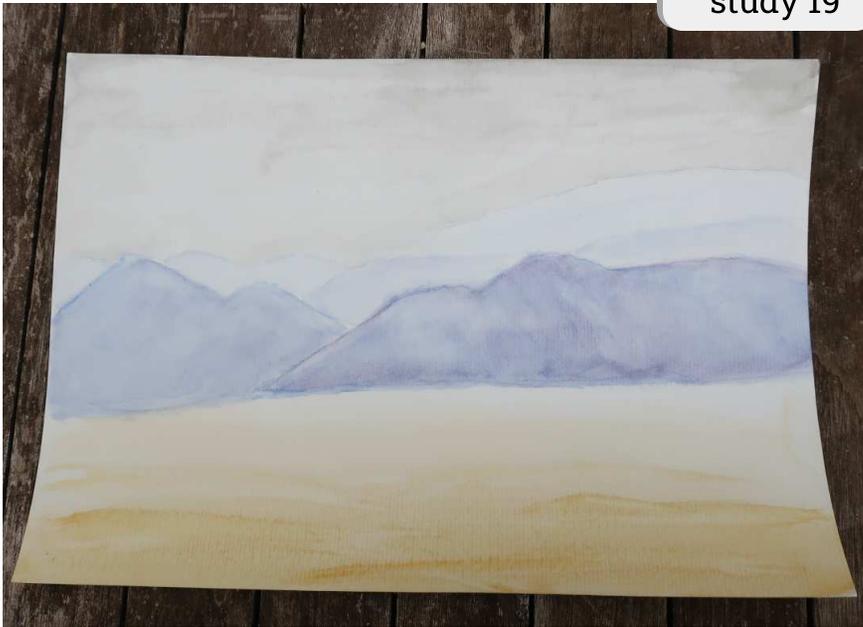
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Mountains

Atmospheric Perspective

Atmospheric perspective, popularly seen in mountainous pieces, explores the notion of distance and perception of depth through contrasting shades of blue. Through consecutively lightening the tint of blue, an artist can indicate the mountains receding further into the distance. By utilizing this technique, artists can juxtapose numerous mountains both next to and behind one another without requiring excessive or tedious details. Due to the coolness of the different blues, atmospheric perspective establishes a misty effect, shrouding the mountain peaks and summits in a haze of faint clouds. The farther the mountains fade and retreat into the background, the weaker in vibrancy the colour becomes. If a white pigment or tube of paint is accessible, the blue can be adjusted using this, otherwise, thinning and attenuating the blue paint with water will also make the colour lighter. A mixture of cobalt blue and light red is a good foundation colour for painting nondescript mountains, however, the final colour must gravitate more towards blue than red, as it needs to have a cool bias.

study 19



King Lake Ranges



Study 19 is one representation of atmospheric perspective, using cobalt blue as the base colour, diluting the pigment as the mountains steadily grow more distant. Alizarin Crimson was then glazed over the front mountain to bring it forward.

Mountains

Shape and Configuration

Mastering the form of mountains relies immensely on the artists ability to balance the sharp, rough, jagged edges of mountains, with their lush, flowing slopes. If zigzag strokes are painted to represent the rockiness of the mountains, the result can be awkward, harsh and have a sense of extreme rigidness. On the other hand, if the sides, slants and outline of the mountains are painted too gently and polished, the outcome will lean towards resembling a hill instead. Enforcing this balance does not necessarily mean finding a solution where both roundness and sharpness are of equal prominence in the scene, but discovering with each painting how both these features can be employed to enhance an artists work. Playing around with different brush strokes and techniques that can be created using both a flat brush and a round brush is just one of many ways that an artist can toy with this counteraction. Include contrasting heights, gradients and inclines as well as bumpy and smooth surfaces, using the different directions and thickness of strokes, utilizing both the body and tips of the brush. It is often easier to outline the frame of the mountain first, and then go in and paint the mountain sides, but ensure that it all flows into one body and there is not a distinct boarder outlining the mountain.

Foothills

A foothill is a low, and reasonably flat area of land at the base of a mountain. Often characterized by farmlands, vegetation, hills and bodies of water, the foothills play an important role in a mountains architecture. More specifically, in art, the foothills of mountains commonly are dotted with trees and shrub like vegetation to fence the perimeter of the mountain base. The foothills also provides a transition section where the mountains can ease into the rest of the land. As the foothills of mountains most commonly make up the background of the painting, and are seen far in the distance, little attention and precision is needed when painting its features. Whatever growth is occurring on the mountain should be carried down onto the foothills. This nature can be illustrated with either a round brush or rigger brush depending on the size the artist seeks, and should be applied casually. Even painting trunks of trees can be slightly superfluous and ambitious, because as long as there is some evidence of vegetation, the desired outcome will ensue. Taking yellow ochre on the edge of a flat brush, and strewing it along the foothills will also bring the mountain forward, blending in nicely with the foreground. Including vague and blurred building structures such as fences, barns and houses should also be painted instinctively and kept to a minimal in complexity.

Mountains

Rock and Vegetation

Rock and vegetation are key features in a mountains appearance. The further in the distance and less focus the artist places on the mountain means the less detail is needed for the nature and earth inhabiting it. Due to this, painting these features are reasonably simple and not a lot of time needs to be spent on them as they should not be thorough and in depth representations. What is most important is colour, quantity and location. Vegetation should not cover the whole mountain side, but should be situated in forest like patches, all facing the same direction of growth. Trees can be painted with a rigger brush to be tall and thin in hair like strokes, smaller elongated dots, or wide shrubbery. Combining the earth colour with the sky colour typically produces a suitable natural green colour that can be used for most forms and variations of nature. Where the greenery is not populous is where rocks and earthy tones should be spotlighted. Yellow ochre, which also should be applied in the foothills, fills in the gaps between plant growth quite nicely. Guiding a flat brush in harsh, scratchy lines as seen in sections in study 20 works well to highlight the terrain. To emphasis rock, the same colour used to paint the mountain can either be painted in circular rock formations near the empty surfaces or in the same sharp, serrated lines as the summits.



study 20

To really complete these mountains, adding small trunks to the greenery at the mountains foothills would emphasis cohesion between the earth and emergence of the mountain.



Gresswell Forest Nature Conservation Reserve



Mountains



Painters Problems:

Australian Land Forms

The stereotypical mountain formation, represented in study 20, is not one commonly found in the Australian landscape, and therefore looks incongruous with the rest of Australia's indigenous nature. Mountains can still be painted in accordance with the instructive information on the previous pages, however there are a few things the bear in mind while doing so to properly establish its position in the Australian environment. Australian mountains are not very tall nor do they have very pointed, defined summits, features more commonly recognized in mountains in central and south Asia. Australian mountains stretch out across the horizon at a fairly level height, rather than having steep and drastic descents on the side. These types of mountains tend to very steadily decline, hence why many artists when painting an Australian landscape chose to position the mountains on the sides of the paper, usually cut off by the edge instead of revealing the mountains entirety.

Bodies of Water

Rivers

Painting bodies of water is an exasperating and tricky task, a study that many artists devote much of their time in perfecting. Capturing the qualities of moving water such as in the form of a river, is a challenging practise and therefore should be approached with minimalism and simplicity. As with painting any body of water, almost every other element in the painting should be close to complete before the river is painted. This is because the river reflects the environment around it and hence everything must correspond. Any colours mixed to paint the sky, banks or other significant elements in the surrounding should be handy as they will make up the basis of the rivers colour. Cover the paper with water using a round brush all over the absent river area, leaving only a slither of dry paper between the bank and the rivers body. This will create a clear division, so once the river has been painted, the banks and the reflection do not blur together. Apply the colours of the bank first on the water wash, reflecting outwards and working towards the center of the river. A mix of browns, yellows and greens work best on the waters edge, progressing into blues similar to that of the sky towards the core of the river. With a plain wet flat brush perform straight, linear strokes quickly downwards, almost as if the movement is plunging towards the bottom of the river. Keeping the flat brush held in the same position, move across the surface of the river in sharp motions as demonstrated in study 21, at a 90 degree angle to the previous strokes.




Bright, Victoria

Bodies of Water

Lakes

Lakes are an enclosed, still body of water, confined by the hills, mountains, forests and other forms of nature located in the surrounding environment. Lakes can be painted with a similar straightforward approach to rivers, benefiting from the nature of watercolour paints. As lakes are typically encircled by various land forms, these must have been outlined and near finished. Lakes are not painted in sections but rather as a whole, so for those that stretch out and interweave between numerous islands will not be suitable for this technique and should be addressed and painted as more of a river. The vacant space where the lake will soon occupy also needs to be dampened with plain water before going in with any paint. With a round brush and the colour of the earth, apply a continuous section of paint along the waters edge, allowing this stroke to break or be interfered with only if parallel to any objects located on the shore. Essentially, this passage of paint should consume a considerable portion of the lakes surface, and reflect the immediate features inhabiting the strip of land closest to the water. Allow this paint to bleed freely down the paper, possibly through lifting the paper up vertically, before introducing the mirror image of the sky and clouds above. Include distortions in the lake, either tilting the paper or swiping a wet brush between any divisions to unify the colours into one complete ensemble. An example of this concept of becoming whole and complete in itself is perceived in study 22, where the lake has become a mixture of harmonized colours. After all the paint has dried, more water can be gently washed over the lakes surface to give a glistening and polished look.

study 22



Painters Problems:

Reflections and Symmetry

Not every lake is going to have a sharp and perfect reflection, and therefore, attempting to paint this mirror image where it evidently would not be can provoke confusion and an unattractiveness within the painting. Determined by the lighting, sky and of course turbidity of the water, a reflection can occupy all of the lakes surface to as little as just small indications of symmetry along the waters perimeter. Lakes can be painted with the same degree of realism in the absence of a reflection, still consisting of various colours however focusing more on creating shadow, depth and distance. Unless the sky has been illustrated as completely grey, refrain from painting the lake as solely one colour, as this will give the appearance of it being flat and still, perhaps even implying that it is apart of the ground.

Bodies of Water

Lakes



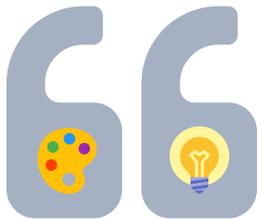
In the photo above, a very clear reflection is given of the trees, sky and land surrounding the lake. The ripples however interrupt and distort certain sections of the reflection such as the tops of the trees, that almost look severed by this illusion. In these instances, the edges of a flat brush should be used to divide and disjoin the trees through leaving narrow gaps in between the reflection and purposefully mismatching the trees alignment.

Bodies of Water

Ripples

Learning how to accurately paint ripples on bodies of water will make any piece more realistic and believable through elevating the liveliness and activity within a painting. The concept behind illustrating ripples is quite an intimidating one, as attempting to create the illusion of movement and living qualities within something as inert as a piece of paper seems remarkably complex and skillful. However, there are several techniques devoid of such intricacies that are astonishingly rewarding and still express water qualities. The first method utilizes white paint and a rigger brush to convey the water splashing as it lapses in small waves over one another, producing a white spray of water and foam. In order to achieve the crispness of the white, pick up the pigment with a lightly dampened brush and apply the paint directly to the paper. Do not further dilute the colour or dip the brush back in water before doing so! Tilting the paint brush so that it is on an angle of around 45 degrees, paint a fine, straight, horizontal line across the face of the water, allowing small interruptions in the stroke where the line is disconnected. Repeat in pairs, so the strokes lay on a diagonal parallel to mimic the waters current. These ripples can occur as frequently or little as desired, not having more than two sets is common and a comfortable number to settle on. This style of ripple compliments the aggressive and spirited nature of rivers.

This second method is appropriate for the calm and gentle fluency of lakes and implies the patterns, strength and direction of the wind. Using a round brush and Ultramarine blue, paint in curved U-shaped arcs towards the horizon. As these ripples progress and travel into the distance, they should become thinner, shorter and closer together, emphasizing linear perspective and indicating distance. Shades of blue do not always layer nicely with every lake colour, so rather than using a pure blue, combine it with the colour of the lakes surface prior to painting, a technique also used when creating shadows and foliage colours. For a more subtle ripple, use a plain wet flat brush and the same stroke motion to remove the pigment of the lake in an arched stroke. Erasing this paint through this movement can be harsh and excessively strip the paper, so afterwards, with a plain moist round brush go over the previous strokes to soften these lines. Study 23 displays the effect of the second method, using ultramarine blue for the subsiding ripples.



A river seems a magic thing. A magic, moving, living part of the very earth itself.

- Laura Gilpin

Bodies of Water

Ripples

study 23



TIP: Ripples do not need to cover the entirety of the body of water. Painting the occasional disruption and wrinkles in the water will still suggest the flow and motions of the current however without dominating the whole surface.



Foreground

Earth

Earth is an element of a landscape prevalent in almost every scenic piece. It is quite literally the basis of all paintings and possess undeniable importance. Although decorated with other nature and beauty, there is significant difference in a well painted and poorly painted ground, as it establishes the structural formation and the illustrations that the painting will entail. The decisions made by the artist in regards to painting the earth will be reflected throughout the rest of the piece, and influence further actions and success. To put it shortly, even though the earth may appear to be simple and a minor, overlooked element in a painting, it is by contrary, extremely valuable.

The surface of the earth is overgrown with grass, laden with rocks and pebbles and carpeted with dirt and soil. Moreover, the ground is uneven and inconsistent, with many puddles, cracks, pits and tracks blemishing the terrain. Therefore, the earth should not be painted as a smooth, level, flawless region blanketed in the foreground. Not to encourage beginners to over complicate or think their work, but more so to recognize the finer details that can develop their work. Linear perspective, a range of colour tones and saturation and stroke movements will assist this interpretation of a rural and rustic environment. Yellow ochre and delicate washes of raw umber work well as an earth colour, usually producing a nice appearance when paired and mixed with other colours in the surroundings.



A round brush is perhaps the best option for when painting earth as it has thick strokes meaning it does not take long to paint large sections, but also has a fine tip that allows for detail. Paint from side to side, rather than up to down, moving from the bottom of the page upwards. Similar to the sky, the intensity of the colour should fade as it nears the horizon, however only slightly. The foreground should rarely exceed half the portion of the page. Be conscious of what is going to be painted on the earth, as this will give an indication of how strong and bold the ground colour should be. Also bear in mind what will be covered and where other objects will be located in the scene. Once the base colour has been applied, bumps in the ground can be created using the edge of a flat brush with the same earth colour but more concentrated. This horizontal line should be roughly painted and spread randomly over the foreground.

Foreground

Earth

With an identical stroke movement but on a sloping diagonal, small hills and inclines in the earth can be forged. The same goes when shaping shallow pits and divots in the earth, reversing the curve of the line so that it dips into the ground, emphasizing the ground surrounding the hole to reinforce the change in depth. Flat ground can be represented with the same technique but with straight, gentler lines. Study 24 explores how these strokes can be utilized to portray unevenness without necessarily any significant acclivity or drops. Furthermore, the notion of the earth appearing to carry on into the distance is also evident as the detail and colour becomes fainter as it travels farther away.

study 24

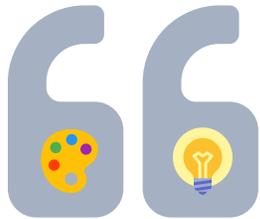


Grass

Obviously, not all paintings contain a foreground that is the dusty, clay colour of yellow ochre that suggests a dry and barren environment. Lush, rich fields of grass can grow either in small patches on the earth, or in vast stretching fields. The green colour can be mixed through combining the sky colour with the earth colour, adjusting where necessary until the appropriate shade and bias is produced. A rigger brush or the edge of a flat brush work well to paint the smaller strips of grass as they encourage precision and control. Quick upwards strokes, mimicking the growth and direction of grass, should be painted, first short and tightly packed, progressing as more weeds shoot out and grow in height in little packs. The dense, neat grass that grows in large even areas, typically near hills, can be painted in the same way as the bear ground, using different curved strokes to change gradients. The texture of soft, luscious grass can be illustrated with a the corner of a flat brush, pressing down into the paper and flicking upwards in very short and compact strands.



Gallery



Watercolour is an alchemical medium - colours mixing with water, joining with it, extended by it - creating new life where none had been before.

- Joseph Raffael

July



01/07/20



Experimenting with colour, brush strokes, intensity

July



10/07/20

"Every artist was first
an amateur."
- Ralph Waldo
Emerson



13/07/20



July



13/07/20



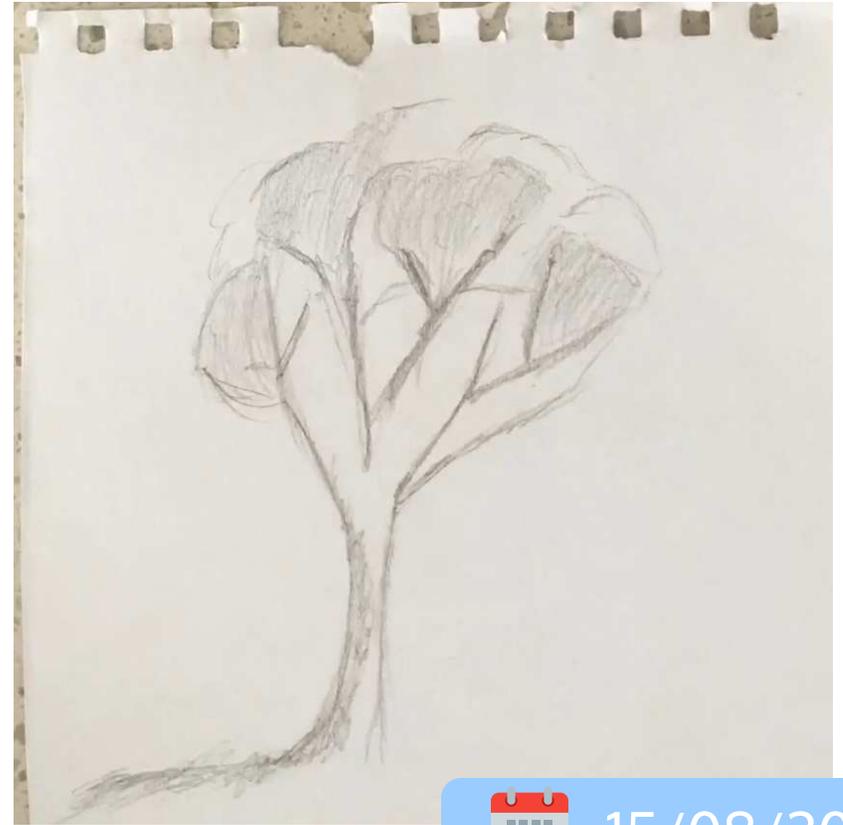
15/07/20



August



09/08/20



15/08/20

August



16/08/20



16/08/20



August

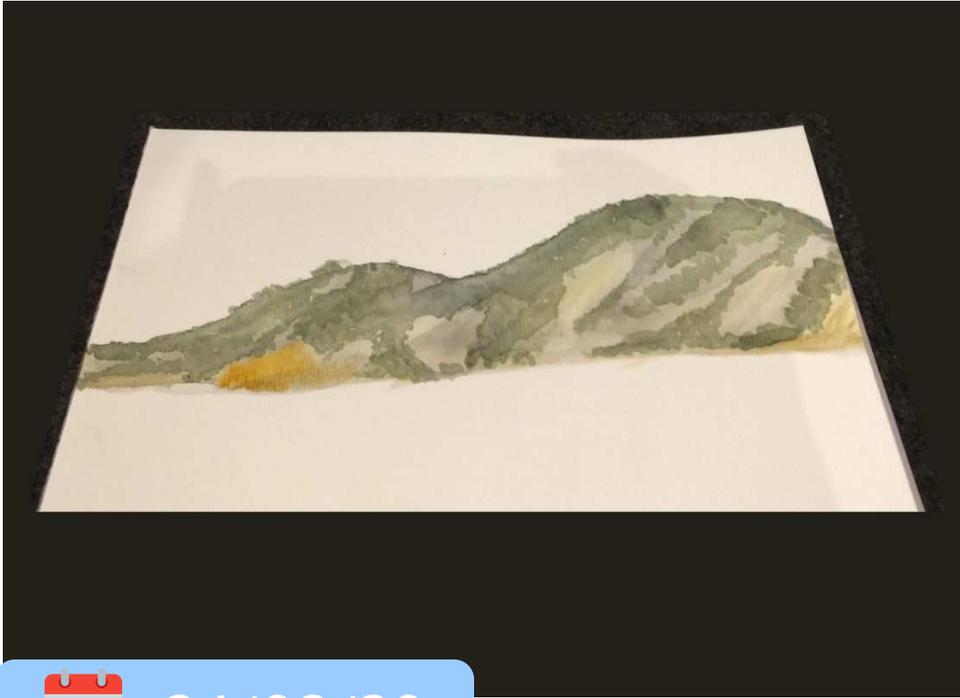


18/08/20

"The principals of true art is not to portray, but to evoke"

Jerzy Kosinski

August



24/08/20

.....*the only true limit is your*.....
imagination
.....

September



29/09/20

THE EARTH **SINGS** WITH A **ZEST** FOR LIFE, **SPRING**
IS ONCE AGAIN **UPON US...**

September



30/09/20



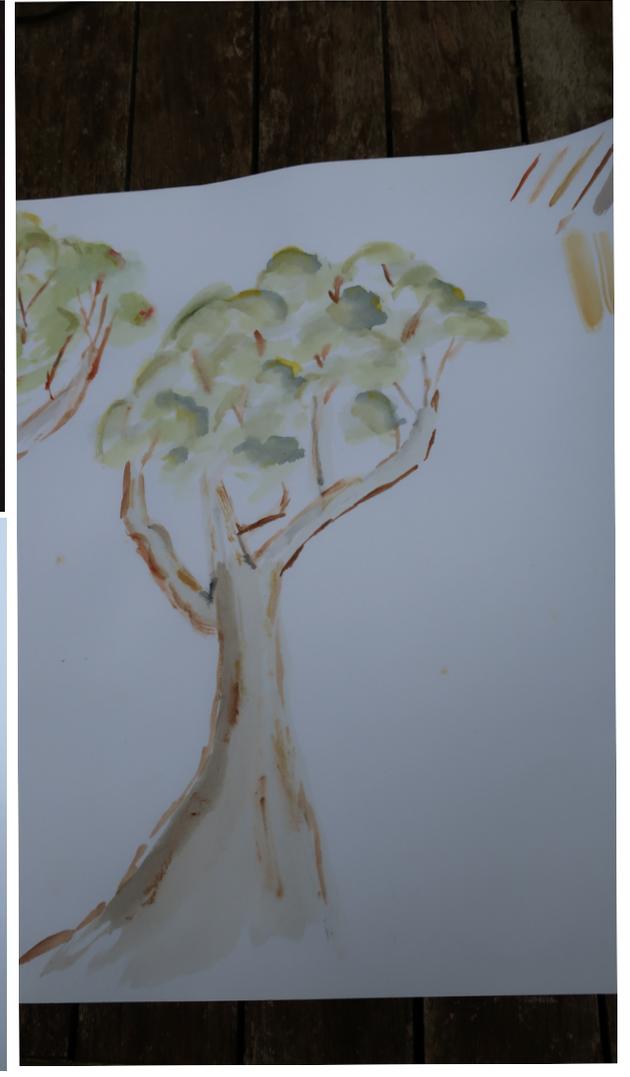
PURPOSE
— fuels —
PASSION



October



01/10/20

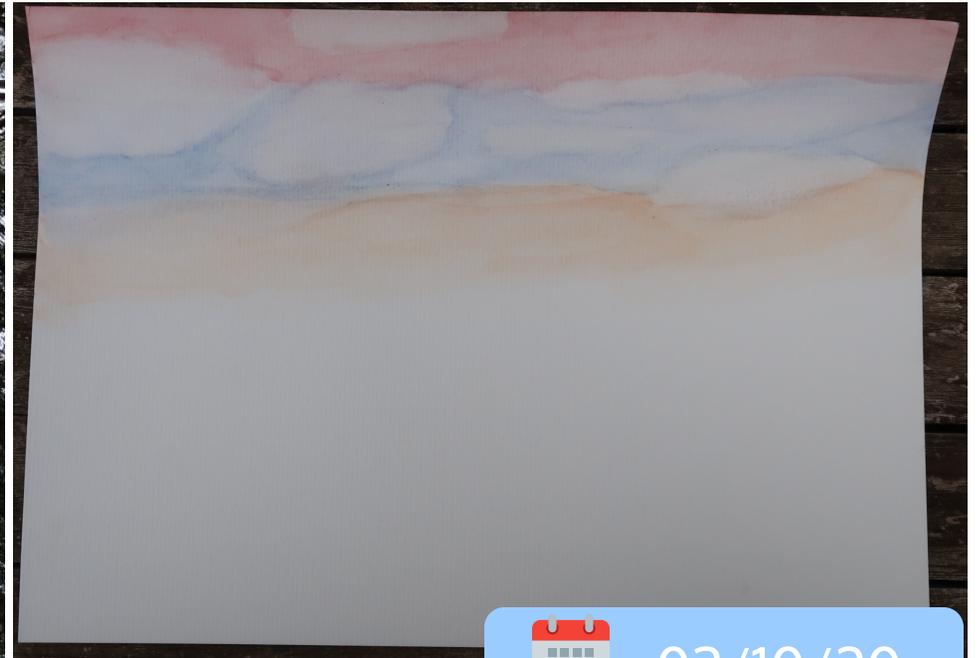


October



02/10/20

October



03/10/20

Summary

As many artists have come to discover, watercolour painting is not an art that can be mastered or tamed, its propensities can merely be learnt and practiced. For beginners, this means finding their own path in a forever growing world of art. The Australian environment adorned by its native species is a landscape that has ignited the imagination and passion of hundreds of artists, with immense opportunities for willing learners to improve their skills and kindle their enthusiasm and admiration for painting.

However, this can be a daunting journey to embark on, particularly without any guidance or mentorship to act as support and a source of wisdom and experience. Whilst this book scarcely touches the surface of watercolour painting, hopefully it has served as a comfortable reassurance and encouragement, and maybe even gave you a few tips that will stick with you throughout your creative exploration. Ultimately, continue learning, creating, developing, and enjoying this hobby that is loved and shared by so many, and dictate your own beautiful and unique artistic course. Remember, it is all a work in progress.



Those who stop dreaming are lost.

- Aboriginal Australian Proverb

