

(seascape final 2 cropped)

*“Smell the sea
and feel the sky.
Let your soul
and spirit fly.”*

- Van Morrison

Creative Studio

Welcome to the studio, a place to relax, to be inspired and to develop your own creative potential. Here we will explore ideas and create art with mediums and techniques that will have you achieving rewarding results with your own art.

In this lesson plan, we paint a seascape using Faber Castell's Creative Studio Acrylic Colours. This premium quality acrylic paint comes complete with mixing palette and 12 vibrant colors perfect for beginners.

Inspiration

(seascape photo 1)

(seascape photo 2)

Sometimes there is a place in our life that we call special; it holds fond memories, provides a sense of peace and offers an endless amount of creative inspiration. For me, such a place is on the rocky coast of Maine. Here I take my daily late afternoon walks along Shore Road; rain or shine, this scenery and its many moods never seems to disappoint.

It is a cool and blustery late June afternoon, with the sun slowly sinking. Large waves kick up following the previous night's storm.

I take several reference photos on my phone.

Colours

White

Ultramarine Blue

Dark Cadmium Orange

Purple

Yellow Ochre

Emerald Green

Middle Purple Pink

Black

Brushes

Filberts # 2, 4, 6, 8,10,12

Flat #8

Round #0

White PITT Pastel pencil

Acrylic retarder (slow dry medium)

This medium is very effective in slowing down the drying time of acrylic paint. By adding just a drop into the paint as I mix colors, it allows the paint to stay more wet and workable, allowing me to achieve a more oil painted look.

9 x 12 white stretched cotton canvas

paint palette– included in the set or use a disposable palette painting pad

container of water for rinsing brushes

spritzing bottle with water

cotton rag

Composition

I take time to closely examine the photos I have taken and consider how to combine them for the best composition. Reference photos are rarely perfect, so as painters we get to take creative license to **create** the best composition. I improve it by closing up the middle of this shot to remove a chunk of waves. I also raise the horizon line to be able to focus mostly on the waves and rocks below. I will use the more interesting and colorful sky in the second shot. At this point, I intend on including the island in the distance, but it may be too much, so we will see.

(seascape step 1)

Sketch

I begin by toning the canvas with a watery burnt sienna colored wash made up of orange and purple (I mix pale geranium lake and ultramarine blue to make purple). This foundation color will add a liveliness to the overall finished painting. Let dry.

I then loosely sketch out the basic composition with a #4 Filbert brush and the sienna color. The breaking wave in the middle will be the main focal area of the painting; the rocks and sky are of secondary interest.

Tip Try lightly spritzing the back of your canvas with a little water to help keep the front painting surface damp enough to slow down the paints drying time. You can also prevent your paint from drying out on your palette by lightly spritzing it once in a while. These methods help keep the paint more workable for a longer period of time.

(seascape step 2)

Painting a late afternoon sky

Here I begin painting the upper left sky with a mix of ultramarine blue, burnt sienna and a little white followed by a lighter more greyed down blue, pale lavender and grey and then the lightest tones of cream, pink and warm light grey. I let the orange sienna of the toned canvas peek through the lower right hinting to the early beginnings of a setting sun.

(seascape step 3)

The sea

I now turn my attention to the main body of water. I paint the most distant water in a deep dark blue and then paint my way forward getting lighter and a little greener by mixing a teal color with Ultramarine, Emerald green, white and a tiny bit of Yellow Ochre. I lay in the long band of the big breaking wave with a dark teal base and mold the inner curve of it with the blue green, transitioning to the lightest green towards top at its thinnest most translucent spot. I continue to come forward painting swells and ripples with the same blue greens that I have lighted and greyed down with white and a touch of yellow ochre. I begin to lay in the shallow foreground water with a foundation layer of the blue green water tones which will later be topped with the white foam.

I paint the rocks by laying in their darkest value made up of a mix of Ultramarine Blue, and Burnt Sienna. I add a little white to this mix for the highlighted areas where the sun hits the tops of the rocks.

Tip Use a larger brush like a Filbert #10 to keep your brushwork loose and expressive during these early stages. This will add an energy and aliveness to the painting. Final details are added later.

(seascape step 4)

Here I use my white pastel pencil to give myself a bit of a guideline and a little more structure and definition to the rocks. I use darker blues and greens to loosely indicate the darker shadowed areas of the splashing and shallow water in the foreground.

Tip Keep your brushes clean by rinsing them after use and between colors. Once acrylic paint dries on the brush, it stiffens, and is near impossible to get clean. Also replace your dirty water with clean ever so often.

(seascape step 5)

I now spend some time working on the foundation of the splashing wave in the foreground. I add different muted tones of blue, green and purple being careful to keep it all the same value. This darker shaded layer will add great depth as I later “turn on the lights” by gradually layering lighter shades of foam followed by highlights on top.

I begin to paint some of the foam patterns in the shallow foreground with lighter tones of pale pink, teal and mauve which I will be gradually building up to the lightest whites. I add warm white highlights to the crest of smaller waves in the distance.

(seascape step 6)

Here I decide to rework the focal point wave to create a more dynamic look. I shift the direction of the inner part of the wave with simple brushstrokes of color and lines of muted light blue foam. I begin to work on the mass of the crashing foamy top of the wave with the shaded tones of muted blues and purples that I gradually build up to white.

(seascape final)

Details

I add reflected light into the distant swells with subtle shifts of muted color. I also soften the sharp horizon line with a muted grey blue and small flat brush. I use a steady hand, getting the soft line in with few strokes as possible.

I continue to work on all of the rocks creating a balance of both defined and lost edges. I add water streaming over a rock in the foreground. I add more painterly brushstrokes and different tones to the bottom right rocks. I have obviously strayed a bit from my reference photos in an effort to create pleasing shapes.

I add a light purple glaze to parts of the water and a few rocks.

I now add my lightest values made up of white and a tiny bit of yellow ochre. I sparingly add a few highlights to the foamy white water just enough to give the water an effective 3D form. I add some playful splashing water drops on the water and in the air.

As a final touch I add a few seagulls. I paint them with a round 0 and keep them very faint and simple. I position them off to the side of the sky so as not to distract from the rest of the painting.

Remember the island I mentioned earlier? Well I decided to not include it for the sake of the overall painting. Between the sky detail and this very active sea, the viewers eye would not know where to go; I think that it

would just be too much. As much as I love this little island, it is best saved for another painting.

As always, I hope that you enjoyed this seascape painting tutorial. Painting with acrylic paint is easy to learn and very possible to get a desirable outcome early on. With a little guidance you can get started enjoying the process of painting.

I also want to add that choosing a subject matter that you really love is key. If you do this, you are bound to create something that you are happy with.