

# Lesson 4: Painting Process

## In the past weeks you have:

1. Learned how to simplify a scene into basic shapes of light and dark values;
2. Learned how to compare values using the Munsell Value Scale
3. Mix monochrome value shapes and color value shapes
4. How to simplify a scene - what you leave out is often more important than what you leave in
5. Color relationships and color temperature
6. Composition Essentials
7. How to start a painting effectively
8. How to assess photo references
9. How to Draw difficult shapes
10. And all about aerial perspective and many other tips

**Now it is time to put this all together** and work through a painting from beginning to end. This painting process needs to become second nature to you. The only way to do this is by practice. Many paintings, studies and mistakes will evolve into a solid framework that you can rely upon. This makes getting to the essence of a painting your entire focus instead of fretting over paint and brushes.

[Here is a short video](#) I made up setting out the painting process for plein air. However the same process applies to studio painting too. **Make notes of the steps** and try and follow the steps for a few paintings in your studio. You will soon get the feel of the process and it will become second nature.

Your task is to select a scene that really resonates with you. Follow the painting process from planning, notan, value study in color (a small color notan in effect) and then prepare your painting panel by toning it. Then layout the composition on the panels and begin the loose underlayer. Carry on with a clear set of stages and layers.

**Important:** Ask yourself how you want the painting to turn out. What is emphasised? What is your concept? Can you tighten up the composition? Where do you want to lead the viewer's eye? All these questions help you to paint with purpose and frees up your creative passion. Go with the flow!

# Lesson 4: Painting Process

The painting does not have to be completed on the same day. But try and complete it wet-into-wet as far as possible. With oils this is not a problem overnight. This allows more variety in edges and you keep your focus on the concept. Use a smaller canvas or panel to make this achievable.

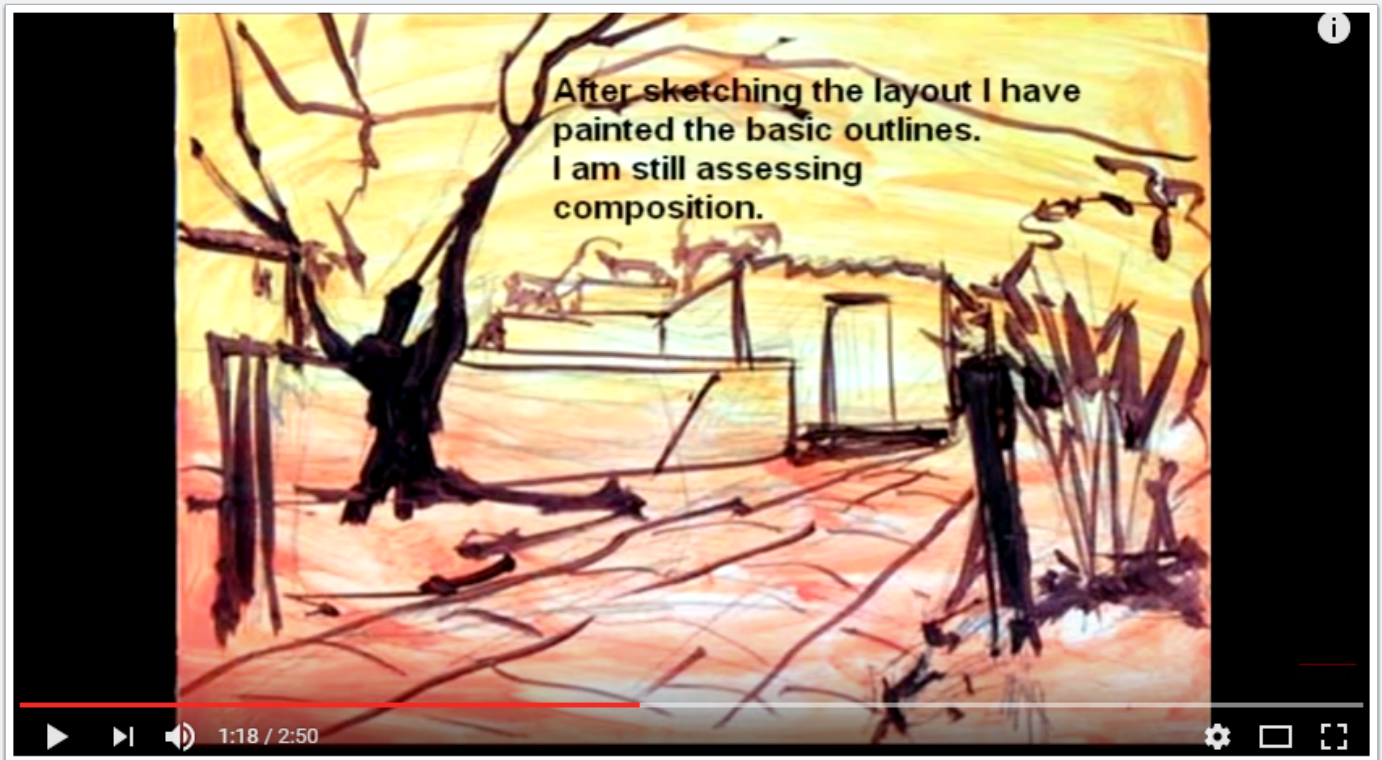
Do not be afraid to scrape off here and there if things do not work out the first time. Press on through these tough patches to build your "painting muscles."

Good luck!

## Process Video

<https://youtu.be/qnrpZvX-B4o>

# Lesson 4: Painting Process



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## Figures

**How to add figures to your painting is a challenge** that requires practice. But fortune favors the brave so put figures in quickly and confidently. They turn out better that way. Here is a short video with important tips to recap: <https://youtu.be/Qgrl0VK-1Wc>



## Mixing Grays

An advanced topic we did cover in aerial perspective to a degree. But it is an area that has more potential than just aerial perspective. **Grays play an important supporting role** to the vibrant saturated colors elsewhere in your painting.

# Lesson 4: Painting Process

Often you get the opportunity to scrape paint off your palette. Next time save the leftover paint into two piles:

1. A warm gray pile
2. A cool gray pile

See where you can use this paint in your painting. Nature has mostly gray colors so it pays to look for this. Look at the cool and warm grays that I scraped up from my palette. See that they are not "dead mud". There is life in those piles consisting of the original colors that went into them. Bits of blue, yellow ochre, green and so on. The painting below shows you how these exact grays were used successfully.

# Lesson 4: Painting Process



## Painting including various warm and cool grays

Grays can be used in foreground areas too as the scene dictates.

# Lesson 4: Painting Process

Now your task is to look for the grays in every scene and use all your paint. Remember that **the rules about applying clean color are still relevant**. Apply your gray color, wipe off the brush and apply fresh grays next to the first and so on. We do not want overmixing resulting in dead mud.



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## Conclusion:

Enjoy your painting journey. That is the whole point. But I believe that the journey improves when you keep learning and working at your painting. Of course you know this so your success is assured. My final word on this is: Your painting will not improve in one perfect arc. Instead it will be through big leaps followed by plateaus then big leaps again. Eventually these extremes settle down as your experience grows. But you will still get frustrated at times then learn something fantastic again. That is the reality. Keep looking for fresh inspiration. Also revisit scenes you painted long ago and see how your painting has changed. Keep exploring.

Happy painting!

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Malcolm Dewey