

'ALL ALONE'

This is the starting point for you to make your own paintings and develop your own technique and approach to art. Just as we all have individual fingerprints and eye characteristics so to do we each have our own unique way of arranging shapes, combining colors and rendering an outcome that can only be from you.

In this painting I will show you how to:

- 1. Make a simple starting, 2 part composition from a complicated expression of nature and tell you why such simple settings work.**
- 2. To implant a subject into this setting and by applying a painting technique complete an appealing and believable scene with a story.**
- 3. To use a set of just 3 colors with just 3 tools to do a painting**
- 4. That by following a common sense plan of action and analysis as you advance through the painting you will have the basis to engineer your way to your own paintings**
- 5. Find inspiration in your own experiences and shape an idea in a way to connect with others.**

There are 2 very basic types of paintings: ones that have a narrative and ones that little, to none. My Ezyart technique fits the very popular former approach rather than the latter. So if you like to paint people or animals interacting with their world then you are in the right place.

This first basic learning module is of a bird that lives by the sea, finding themselves strangely alone, on the beach. If you have ever been near the sea or the coast you will have seen this beautiful, wind-weaving coastal marauder.

Here's the final painting we will do together and from which we will discover the wonderful world of painting.



'All Alone'

We start with the experiences and images we have in the back of our head about these birds-their squawking, their riding of the coastal winds, their constant patrolling of the beach for available food and their strangely human type behavior. This along with images we have of what is known as a ‘beach’!

To give us something to get going with we have actual photos of a seagull and a beach as reminders or references to draw from should our memory need prompting.

Reference Photo 1



(Caption Photo 1)

This is a simple everyday photo of an ‘anywhere’ beach. It’s simple, yet complicated with sky, horizon, water, waves, wet sand, rocks and dry sand. We can add a bunch more elements to this but let’s stay with these for now. We will simplify and change this to how we want it as, what I call, a ‘setting’ for the bird.

Reference Photo 2



(Caption Photo 2)

Here is a clear shot of a stationary seagull. It shows a predominately white feathered bird in sharp sunlight. The only color is the spot of black/dark grey wing feathers, the yellow beak and the grey/red legs and feet!

An Aside-The Artist in Us

Before we go on we need to recognize who and what we are as artists. We are all the following: conceptualizers, an architect, an engineer, a builder and a decorator. Because we are totally selecting and arranging elements and juxtaposing and actually doing this with paint loaded on tools held in our hand and guided by our brain from the 'get go', we are every bit all of these! We start alone with thoughts and we 'hunt and gather' our thought based material from which we organize, arrange and then amazingly render some sort of image. If we do all this badly we end up with rubbish but if we do this well we are brilliant!

All Alone-'Mentalizing' It

So what is the concept? Well to me it's a bird standing forlorn just after midday trying to decide what the next move is? Thinking about food or maybe his mate that's late. I'm humanizing him but isn't that what we do with our fellow animals? We like to understand other animals based on our own experiences, thoughts and emotions. Some animals we like to do this with while others like snakes we don't! It's hard to paint an expression on a snake that makes it something you want to sit by.

So the bird is it. To build the story I want to create a force and a mood. For the 'force' I design a 'setting' which makes our troubled bird stand out as the driving subject rather than the eye being pulled away by too many other things. I want to make him the single most important part here!

So I set about simplifying the seascape –editing out many of the elements we find at the beach while amplifying some aspects to make our bird-friend stand out more and the message stronger. How we integrate the elements sets the mood. We can paint them with wild contrasting individual colors or we can have them with common tonal colors. The latter will unify the painting. The more we play with tonal contrast the more we inject mood. We will go this way.

So the beach photo is a handy guide. It tells us what's here and there and the colors and their strength as seen thru the lens and the chemical emulsions that produced the photo. We know some parts are right and some wrong in terms of tones/colors while we know the shapes are 100% correct. But I want to paint the 'setting' according to my parameters!

So I kept a bit of the blue in the sky then darkened into a grey downwards to the horizon suggesting distance then basically left the sea out and came forward to the mauve-yellowish color at the front. It could be a beach, but it

could be a desert I suppose as well. I've really taken out most of the beachy elements to the point where it whatever it is really depends now on what we put in it!

If we put some large bleached white bones the brain will join the dots and make it into a desert but a bird that we know that lives from and by the sea would make it into a beach!

See the point is as architects' its what the end result is that counts! We DON'T need to build in every known function to man to make a building functional. We suggest!



(Caption- My first Beach painting)

My first 'beachy' painting looked like this. There's a danger in looking to much and not reading from what's in the back of your head. You don't need to go out and paint a tree to know what one looks like. A round shape with a stick under it is to 99% of people the shape of a general tree to anyone other than those raised with only conifers around them when the round shape would be changed to a triangular one! See what I'm getting at? For final reference sure we go outdoors, but as magical storyteller artists we begin our painting with what's in the back of our heads that works with our story then pick and choose how far we need to precisely reference things. So the above painting is a 'back of the head' beach based on what I have seen over the many years with many beaches in many countries with some (20%) reference to the photo.

I'll repeat the blue grey of the sky color in the yellowish foreground as a potential vehicle for one of the great painting eye grabs –reflections. This will give us the opportunity to use pebbles and stones as a detailing device and as an example of our prowess in painting detail! This will also give us the opportunity to use the painting knife to body up the foreground with thick glistening oil paint to show the beauty and power oil paint has to our viewer!

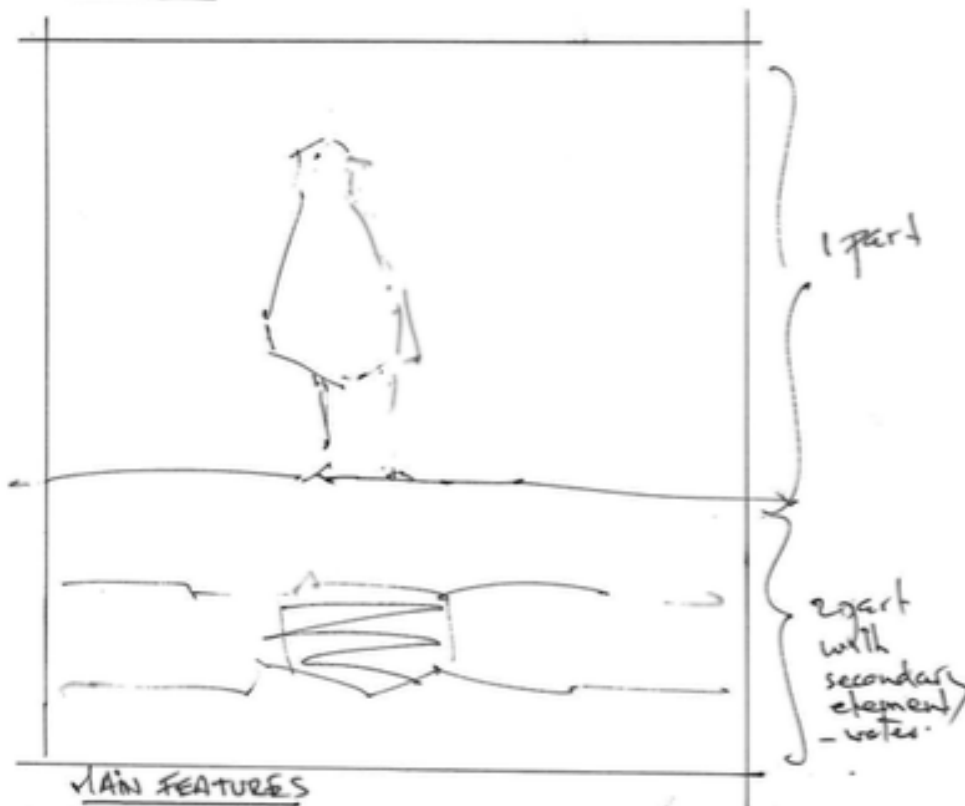
Anyhow our setting will not be exactly the same as we don't want to get into clouds-like waves they are a distraction and a complication at this stage. We just want a simple sky –so why not use just horizontal strokes of blue into grey and into the sand, etc –keep it all horizontal strokes –simple!

So the general rules governing any setting are:

- 1.To have sufficient elements in it to suggest a setting that most people recognize.**
- 2.To support the subject matter and be in harmony with it in terms of color and values yet be sufficient in itself to be individual.**
- 3.To have a composition that lends itself to multiple focal points such that they collectively and progressively reinforce the main subject focal point in an orderly and structured way.**
- 4.To be able to be manipulated such that it retains its identity while being changed to whatever extent needed by the narrative. This beach/seagull combination is a good example of this.**

So here's our plan as a sketch with bullet points.

'ALL ALONG'



MAIN FEATURES

- * BASIC 2 PART COMPOSITION - SKY & LAND
SECONDARY PART WITHIN LAND IS STRIP OF WATER TO ADD TO THE INTEREST BY OFFERING OPPORTUNITY TO DO REFLECTIONS
- * THE SETTING IS UNIFIED BY THE REPETITION OF THE COLOR FROM ONE PART INTO THE OTHER PART. A LIMITED PALETTE ENSURES UNITY & HARMONY OVER THE SPATIAL AREA
- * SIMPLE STUDY OF BIRD ENABLES LEARNING ABOUT MIXING JUST 3 COLORS + 1 LOCAL COLOR (BEAK); ABOUT USING 2 BRUSHES, ABOUT THIN PAINT AND THICK PAINT AND ABOUT MOVING UP & DOWN THE VALUE SCALE TO DEFINE SHAPES AND TO FINISH A PAINTING.

So now we can make a start with a plan in our head. But what are we using to do all this.

Our Paints and Tools

(Limited palette keeps it simple.)

Light Red

Cobalt Blue

Yellow Ochre

Soft Titanium White (like Permalba)

Later we will add Cadmium Yellow Pale .

Our tools:

Liner Brush

Pastry brush

Painting Knife and

Magnifier

Canvas is 9 x 12 inches. One that is dry and has a good tooth. Not linen yet!

Turpentine thinner or solvent with about 20% linseed oil.

An old rag to wipe our brushes.

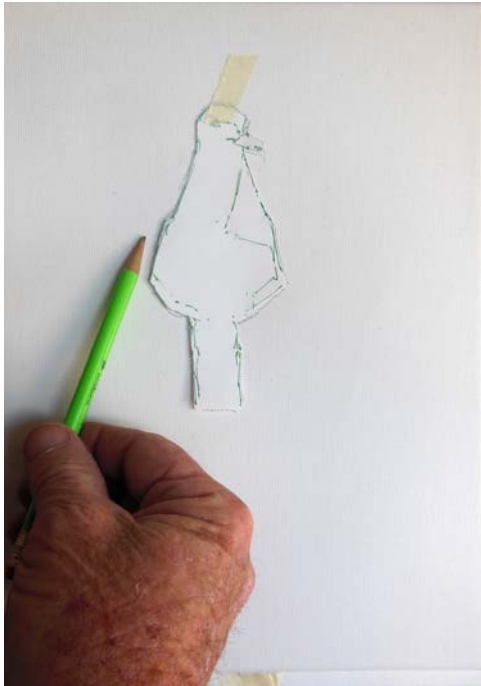
A place where we can mix the paint. I use another bit of canvas taped down to the work table beside the painting. If you have a window then move this closer to there so the light spills over the palette.

Make a cut-out of the seagull so we can just pop it on the canvas and outline it. I did this by getting a photocopy of of the photo done 2x bigger.

The Process

Stage 1

Outline the bird in the position shown in the plan above. Remember we have a reflection below so we keep him up a bit higher than he would be if there was only sand.



Stage 2

Spray the outline in pencil with hair spray. This will hold it so we can find it after painting the background.



Stage 3

We have our 3 Mother Colors. We mix some red with white and likewise the blue. The true color shows up better and when mixed together they make for a warm grey and a blue grey. We will use these mixes for the sky.



Stage 4

Paint the top of the sky with the cobalt blue with a bit of white. We use the pastry brush and make the mix fairly thin-like a watercolor and we brush this across with horizontal strokes from side to side. Do this till it works into the canvas. Mix the grey made from the blue, red and white and work it into the canvas like the blue. Take this down under the feet of the bird.



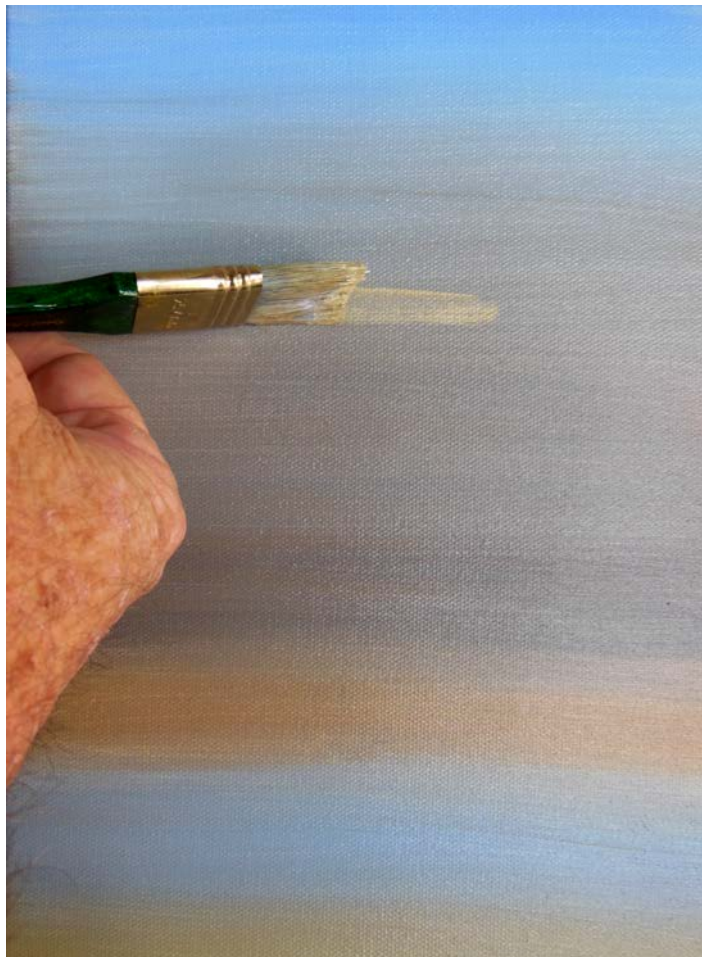
Again horizontal strokes with a thin mix. If you find it too thin then add some more paint and work it into the canvas.

Under that and above the little run of water in front of the bird paint in some yellow ochre mixed with the horizon color and work that into the canvas.

Below that we repeat the blue/grey from the sky and then below that a more direct coat of yellow ochre. One more thing, and its important!

Stage 5

Skies that are streaky like ours frequently have streaky 'glows' in them. This is an element that fits with our horizontal technique we are using AND apart from being a recognizable part of an afternoon sky it is also a very important way of UNIFYING the top of the painting with the bottom. The little run of water for the reflections was one device and here is another! The yellow sand color lightened up a bit and drawn across through the sky about 1/3rd down will be a glow AND a unifier. Perfect. It fits in with the age old saying that 'one part of a painting should be another part of the painting'.



Stage 6

Now it's 'find the bird' time! Use a rag and carefully rub back the paint to reveal the linework.



Stage 7

If you have rubbed away some of the sky while trying to find the outline use the pastry brush to work some paint in the same area back to the line.



Stage 8

Look at the photo and find where the shadows and lights intersect. Mark this line with the pencil as we need to do our serious work on either side of this and not just where this contrast occurs.



Stage 9

Although all the bird we can see is white except for a glimpse of a black wing on the left we cant paint him white! The best starting point is the predominately blue/ grey shadow area on the neck and then down to the body. We deal with general areas of 'sameness' first. We don't look for any detail until we have all the same areas blocked in with a general same color and value. No detail. So the blue in the mix below at 1 is what we color -in this neck area.



We use the liner brush and we make this like a loose mix and apply it. We keep it 'thinish' so it can dry enough to work on again in 10 or so minutes. The paint is about the consistency of baby oil or Baileys. It doesn't 'run' but 'covers' easily.



Stage 10

If we study the body area we see the color changes from the neck-it's a warm yellowish color and a bit lighter in value than the neck. It actually comes from the concrete the bird is standing on-its reflected up to the underbody and even more-its also under his head! So we bring yellow ochre into the grey mix now and block it in.



Here's the mix path for that color. See how they work together but no detail yet. We are searching out general areas of sameness not little bits of detail. So it's from the mix marked 2 that we now use.



Before we get into further this take a look at this analysis using the magnifier. Building a painting is all about finding areas with the same value and same color and finding those with the same value and different colors. The EzyArt magnifier is our perfect tool for helping us find answers to this and arrive at a perfect painting!

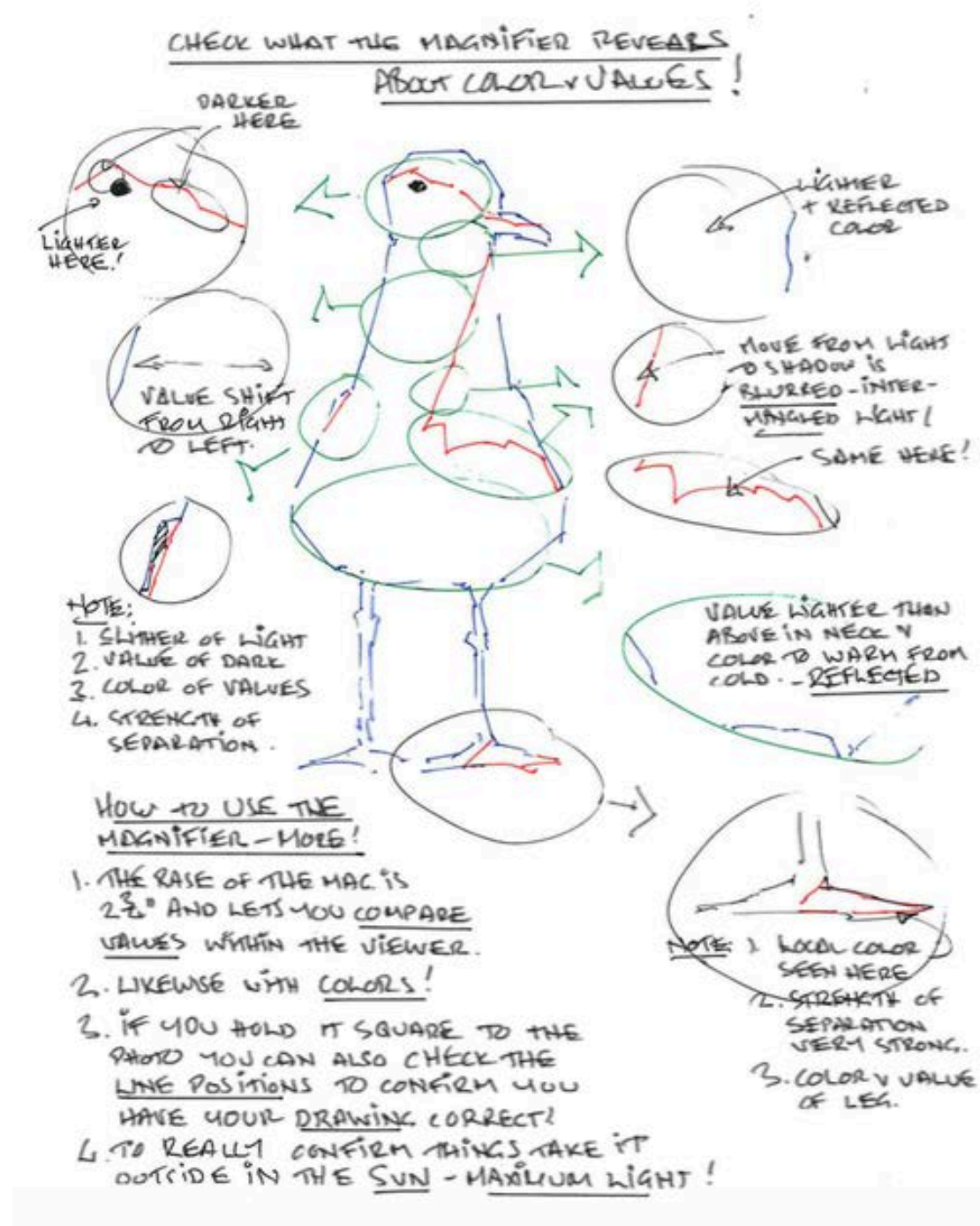
Take your time with this part as much more is revealed than the naked eye and it takes away the guessing. If your not sure go outside and use the sunlight to fill the magnifier and the photograph with light. All will be revealed!



Use the magnifier to see the detail and stop the guessing. To find the levels of light-the shifts from the lowest light to the highest light walk out into the brightest light available-the sun and position yourself so the barrel of the magnifier is filled with sunlight then you will see where they are. You have no excuse for not finding these values!

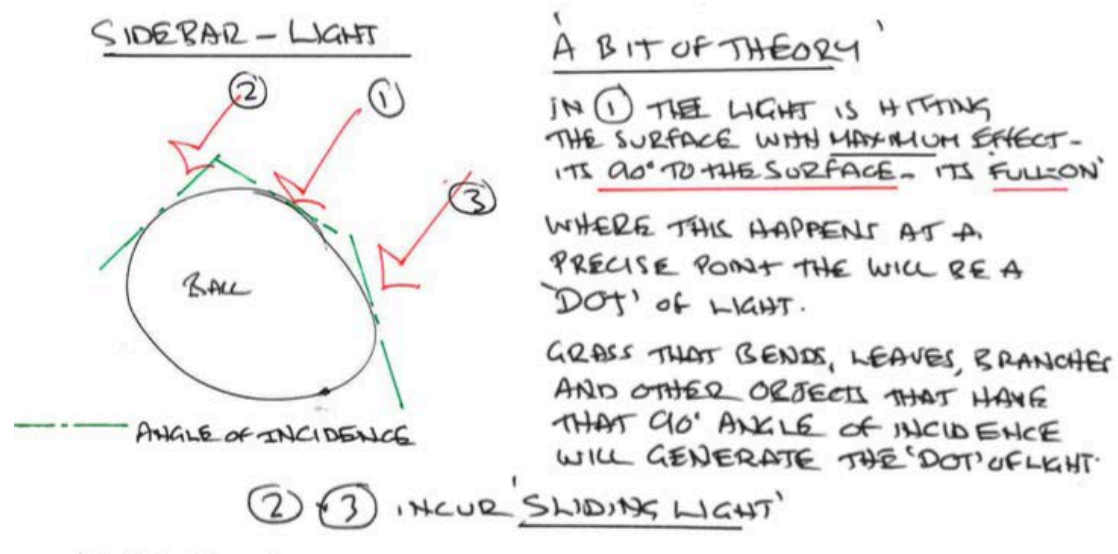


The sun revels everything with the magnifier!



Stage 11

So that's the first stage of doing the shadows-now for the first step in the light! There are generally 3-4 steps or layers we do to get to the end of the light. Same with the shadow areas-so patience here is needed and careful study of the source material-the photo! Before that lets look a bit at how light works and here I refer to the bird's head as an example.



So we use common sense in painting as well as reference material. Sometimes we need an educated guess and a bit of common sense often shows us the way forward.

Our first layer of light is generally a mix of yellow ochre and white blocked in wherever there is light striking the surface. So in it goes with the liner brush and a pretty easy flowing mix



Stage 12

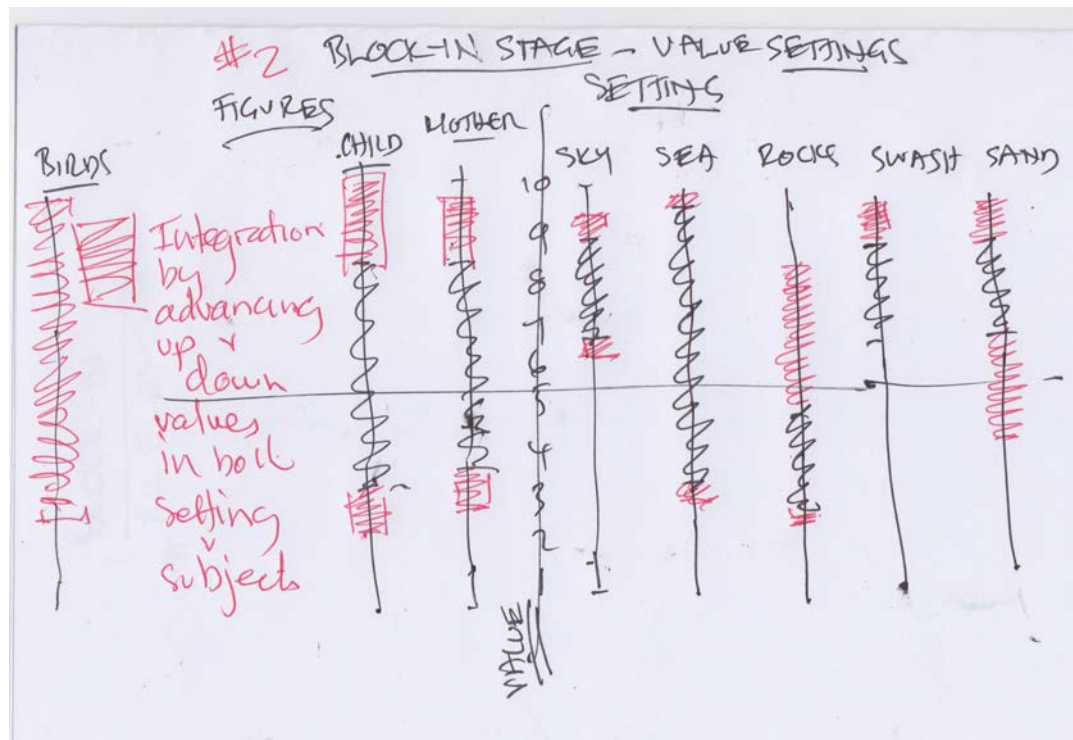
While we are working on the block areas we may as well block in the reflection in the band of foreground water. It is directly below the figure above and we will make it a grey brown (4) from our mother colors above. Run a few lines where it joins with the sand and presto we're looking good. It's definitely a beach now! The reflections have joined the dots for the viewer.



We continue to use the liner brush.



We have now started our 'integration' process. This diagram shows how the various elements - not this painting, but another with a mother and child in a beach setting of sea, sky, rocks, swash and sand - are first all 'blocked-in' with the basic range of middle values and colors shown with black squiggle lines THEN are advanced up and down their values until they are finished. In other words the darks are 'darkened' more and the lights 'lightened' more. This table shows that process in action. Obviously, each advance to the darkest and the lightest occupies less and less area until the last dark and light will be just a dot!

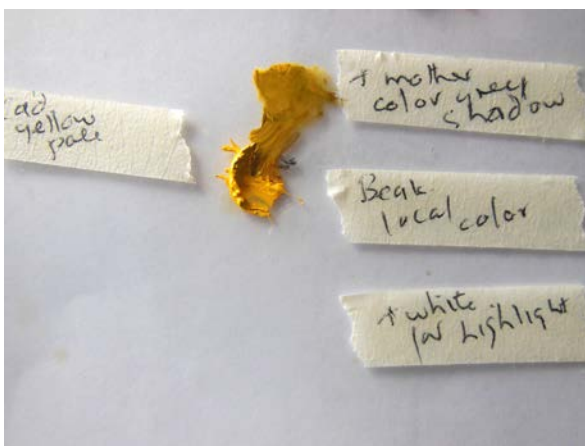


‘Integration’ process



Stage 13

Ok, back to our lone seagull. Now we're onto another small but important element –the yellow beak. We bring in a cadmium yellow pale and mix with yellow ochre to block in this locally different part.

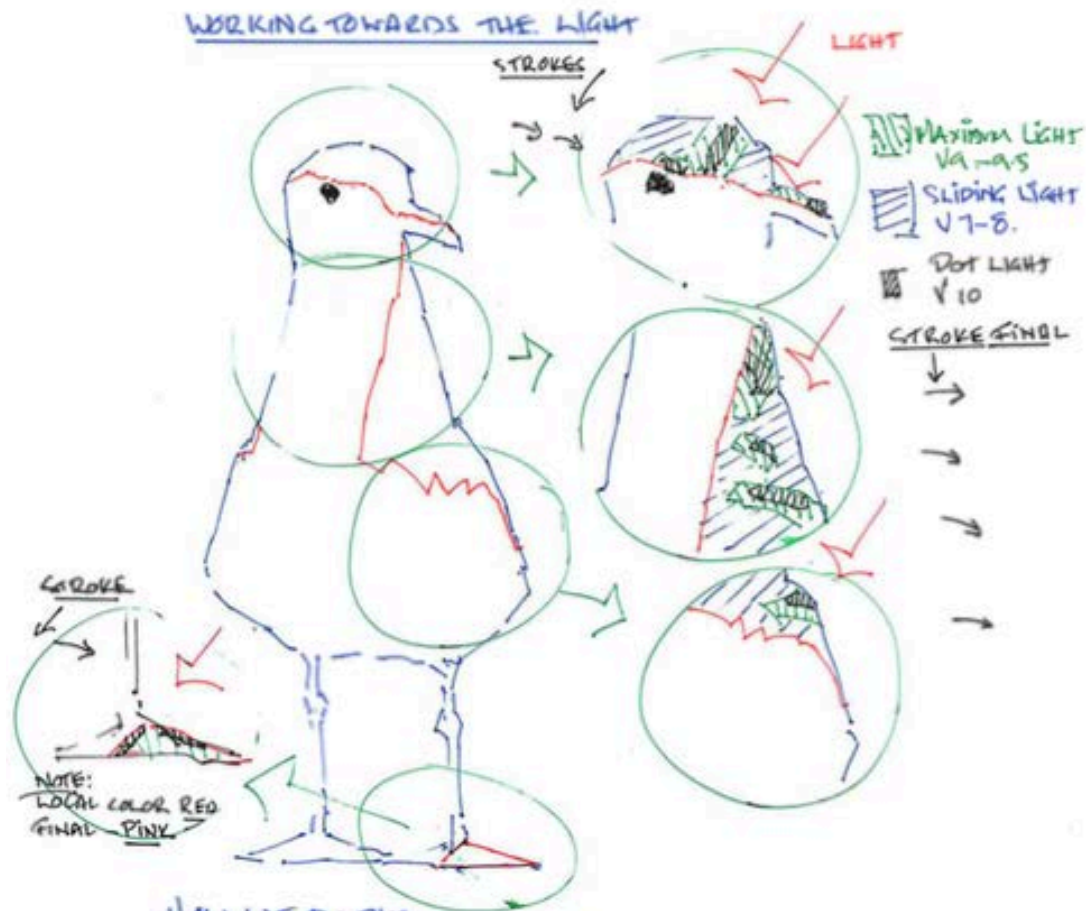




Stage 14

Now we are building our light and our darks. We do this in a systematic way- step by step-looking for areas with the same value. The areas will get smaller and smaller as we creep to the final light and final darks.

Take a look at this diagram where we see the areas where the light gets high in value in smaller areas. We also see the direction of the paint strokes parallel to the light source. We use the magnifier to find this out plus common sense.



HOW WE DO THIS:

1. USE COMMON SENSE LOGIC
2. USE MAGNIFIER TO CONFIRM 1 ABOVE AND TO FIND FINAL 'DOTS'
- 2 * STARTS WITH A BASE LIGHT OF SAY VALUE 7 MIX OF YELLOW OCHRE + WHITE - THIN.
- * THEN MOVE TO WHITE WITH CAD YELLOW PALE - MEDIUM THIN! VALUE 8.
- * THEN LIGHTER STILL - VALUE 9-9.5. PAINT ONLY!
- * FINAL CAN BE AS ABOVE AT 9.5 OR A WHITE 'DOT-DASH'. PAINT ONLY.
4. THE STROKES IN LAST 2 STEPS TO REPLICATE THE FALL OF THE LIGHT. SEE

So our first lay-in of light was yellow ochre and white and a thin mix at about a value 7. Our next one-this one- is a mix of cadmium yellow pale with white and about value 6 and not so thin.

We don't cover the entire area in light. We look through the magnifier to find where there is more light and less light and apply it there. Try to make the strokes one by one rather than over working them. It might look rough up close but that's not where people view the paintings! It's generally 10 feet back! You walk 10 feet back and look and see for yourself-keep it loose!

Stage 15

Now that we are looking more closely into the light on the body we see areas where the move from light to shadow is sharp and clear and other areas where it is blurred. Clean and mostly dry the brush and pull it between your fingers to make a blade and work the paint into each other so there is a more smooth transition from light to dark and vice versa.



Now we have a more realistic distribution of light that fits the rounded shape we know the body has. So this is a bit we get from using the magnifier and using common sense about how light behaves when it falls on something like a ball.

Looking into the underside of the body we can see a shift in color and tone and we swing our brushwork into here. Use the magnifier to compare the value shift over the body. The magnifier opens these doors for you.

Stage 16

Mix a dark blue grey and look along the line of delineation between the light and shadow and find where there is a darker, more stronger shift in light to dark. Where this happens around the eye and towards the beak, under the head down the neck in intermittent spots and then under the body in a few spots mark in this accent. Then go to the darkest dark you can mix from the light red and cobalt blue and after carefully examining what's going on with the shapes the darks and lights mark in this with the liner brush.



These small marks are critical to establishing the shapes and getting the figures correct. They must be done and the magnifier allows you to do these with accuracy and certainty.



Stage 17

Down to the legs and again we need to be patient, deliberate and methodical in how we paint the main driver in the painting. This is where we do our homework. We get this right and the magnifier used correctly can guide you correctly and eliminate most guessing. So the magnifier in good light will tell

us the exact color of the legs, where there is shift in its value and the precise shape and proportions of one part in relation to another. So they are a dark grey but on the red side and there is a dark accent here and there but especially where the webbed feet adjoin the light that falls on the right web.



The liner brush with a not-too fluid mix is brilliant for these touches.



Stage 18

It important to not barge ahead and finish the figure before we let the setting catch-up with it. This is the 'integration' process and we start this about half way through the painting of the subject. We need to bring the background and foreground up to speed in terms of detail and shaping compared with the figure. So while we are working on the legs we can take the same paint on our

liner brush and run some broken lines and add dots and horizontal dashes to the area forward of the bird and into the water run and forward from there to the very bottom.



If we do this loosely and with some randomness at 10 feet they should resemble broken sand and pebbles and marks of shadow on the sand.



Load the brush with a bit of the blue grey and we can work it in as shadow marks behind and to the left of the dots and dashes. This also goes in as the shadow to the bird itself. Always make these lines and marks broken and a bit lumpy as would normally be the surface on a sandy beach.



Stage 19

Now we move back to the bird and paint in the next level of white. So cadmium yellow pale and white mixed to a value of 8 with just one value of light to go. The magnifier will tell us if there is dot or small mark of white or just under white as the finishing mark of light. See in the photo below how we move up the value scale step by step with less and less to cover in our drive to getting effective and believable light. It's a planned process with order and method-not a hit and miss process.



This follows the 'blending' process and the paint is thinned just a little and is applied with the liner brush in short loose strokes to keep it looking spontaneous.



Look at this diagram below for how this process works. If you understand and follow this you will never get that pasty highlight look but rather a polished and very accomplished result. It's a combination of common sense with the magnifier to find the 4 steps to the building the highlights and the shadows but with practice and patience it can be done with extremely good results.

BODY

LOCAL COLOR IS WHITE! GOOD GRIEF!

IN SHADOW

MARK IN TRANSITION LINE

LINE 20/10

IN LIGHT

STEP 1. ONLY LEAD WE HAVE IS THE MOVE THAT WHITE MAKES WHEN IN SHADOW - BLUE OR BLUEISH!

USE THE TRANSITION LINE TO ISOLATE SHADOWS FROM LIGHT AND BLOCK IN ALL SHADOW AREA WITH BLUE/ GREY VALUES.

STEP 2. MIX STEP 1 ONLY DARKER TO VALUE 4 AND PAINT WHERE THERE IS DARKER SHADOWS. IN THE BODY.
* AT THE TRANSITION LIGHT TO SHADOW ON HEAD.
* DOWN SHADOW LINE NECK
* BIT ON RIGHT SIDE BODY AND BETWEEN LEGS

STEP 3. MIX STEP 1 DARKER TO VALUE 1 - EYES & BIT WISK

STEP 4. MIX YELLOW OCHRE IN THE BLUE/ GREY STEP 1 & LIGHTEN TO VALUE 6 & PAINT BODY REFLECTING FROM GROUND AND UNDER HEAD/NECK AREA

STEP 5. USE A DRY BRUSH TO 'FUR' OR BLEED THE TRANSITION WHERE NEEDED.

STEP 1. CAN'T USE WHITE AS ON PHOTO. GO TO A MIX WHITE + YELLOW OCHRE VALUE 7 AND BLOCK IN ALL LIGHT AREAS

STEP 2. MIX CAD. YELLOW PALE WITH WHITE TO VALUE 6 AND USING MAGNIFIER MARK IN PARTS A BIT LIGHTER.

* USE COMMON SENSE HERE - SEE SIDE BAR ON THIS

NOTE: THIS CAD. YELLOW PALE GIVES MORE 'PINK' OR 'SATURATION' TO THE MIX - WE USE THIS RIGHT THRU TO THE FINAL DOT

STEP 3. SAME MIX ABOVE BUT MORE WHITE TO VALUE 9. YOU WILL COVER PROGRESSIVELY LESS AREA. AS YOU ADVANCE THROUGH THESE HIGHER VALUES

STEP 4

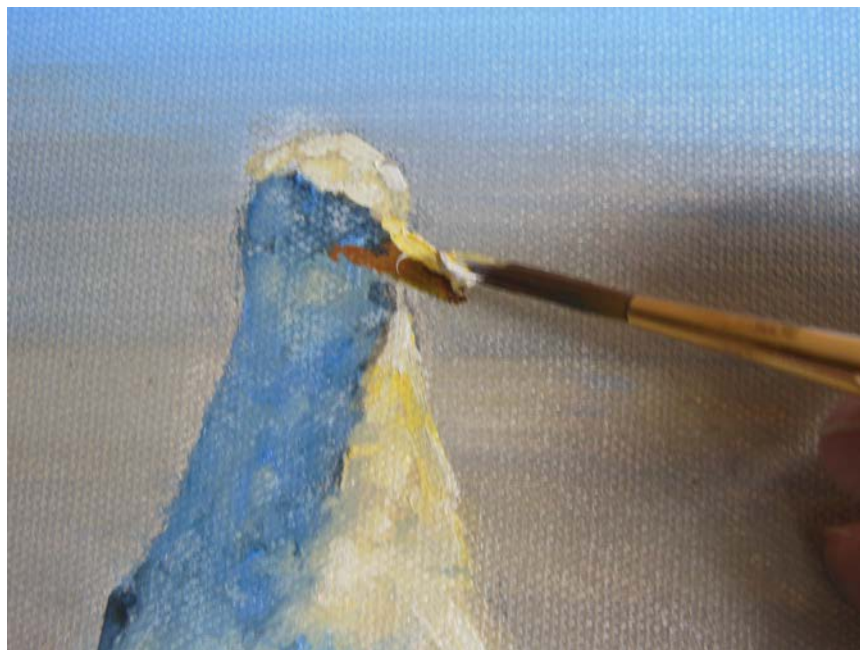
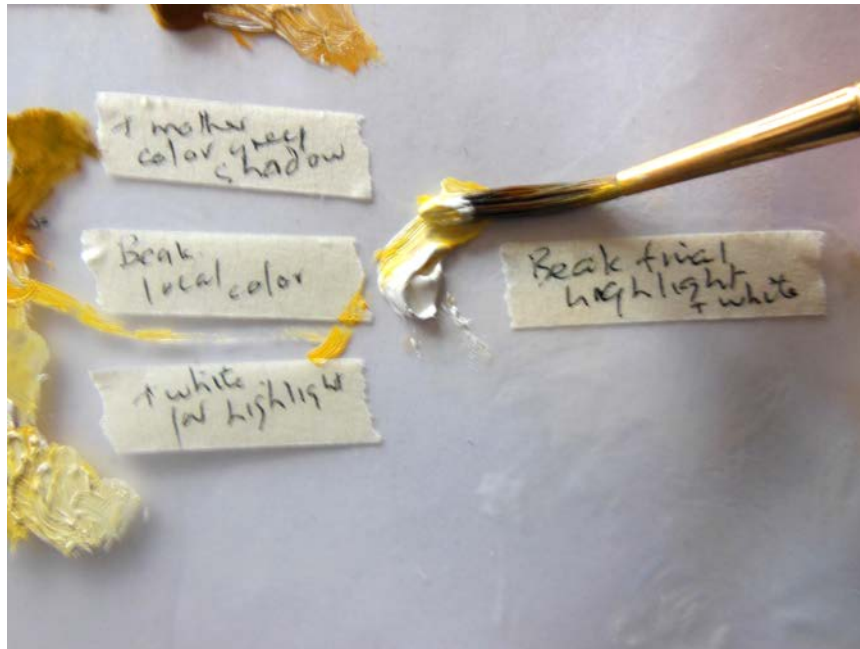
LAST MIX - IT CAN BE JUST UNDER WHITE OR WHITE BUT IT WILL BE A 'DOT' OR A 'DASH'. ONE CLICK OF LIGHT SO YOU DO THIS:



'DECREASING LAYERS'

Stage 20

Now onto the beak which is sitting with one highlight and 2 shadow steps. We mix a highlight from cadmium yellow light and white and slide it on with the liner brush with a horizontal stroke.



Here's the process by diagram.

BEAK

- * LOCAL COLOR IS MIX OF YELLOW OCHRE AND CAD YELLOW PALE
- * MARK IN THE TRANSITION LINE
- * LINER BRUSH

IN SHADOW

STEP 1 MIX LOCAL COLOR OF YELLOW OCHRE + CAD YELLOW PALE BUT TO THE YELLOW OCHRE SIDE. NO WHITE. VALVE 6. MEDIUM THIN

STEP 2 MIX ABOVE BUT ADD SOME RED/GREY MOTHER COLOR TO VALVE 5. MEDIUM THIN

STEP 3 MIX ABOVE + ADD LIGHT RED TO DO DARK ON END OF BEAK. MEDIUM THIN

IN LIGHT

→ SAME

STEP 2 MIX ABOVE ADD WHITE TO VALVE 7. MEDIUM THIN.

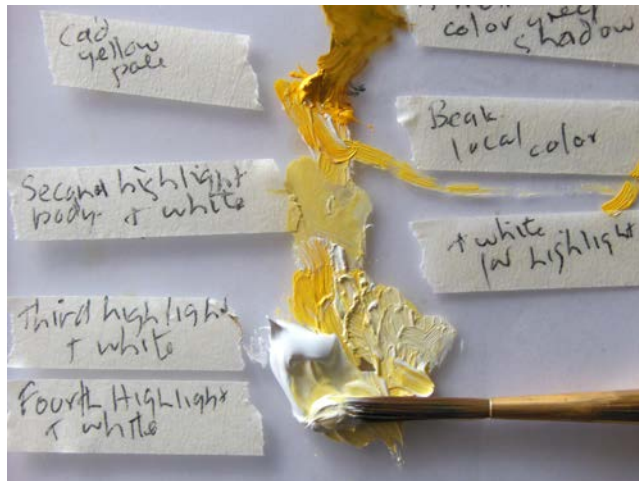
STEP 3
MIX WHITE + CAD YELLOW PALE ONLY TO VALVE 9/10 AND LAY ON HORIZONTAL STROKE.

REMEMBER: THE STROKE SHOULD FOLLOW THE FALL OF LIGHT ON THE BEAK IT'S HORIZONTAL

USE IMPASTO PAINT - NO THINNER FOR FINAL.

Stage 21

Back to the almost- last highlight on the seagulls body. See how we methodically advance our way to the final highlight -there is no guessing. Common sense and the magnifier tells us what to do. We use the magnifier in the best light we can-outside in the sun -to find if there is a few dots of sheer white light. There will be but they take time to find but by doing this we get great results.



Stage 22

There are 3 final highlights of sheer white to find. They are here in impasto paint in small marks.



Stage 23

Lets see if we can do something special to get the 'effect' of sand and water with reflections. Sometimes its best to experiment with other tools. The painting knife is a very versatile tool as it imparts random and unusual effects. The key to using anything to 'build' a 'look' is to return to the color and value upon and over which the new work is going to take place. Because we are using a limited palette we can find those starting colors relatively easily. So we mix and load the knife with that and slide the blade holding it horizontally over the original area. Because it is thick paint we can leave a thick deposit on the surface. By flipping the knife over and repeating the horizontal stroke we get another effect. This is oil paint and playing with it like this can leave great marks and juicy buildups of paint that glistens when dry and varnished.



Easy to find mix from a limited palette



Mix the same color/value as original block in and lay it on with the open blade of the painting knife.



Another mix of paint to apply an impasto effect closer to the seagull. Don't over work the knife. Use it here to but a visible build up of paint.

Stage 24

There are always water lines in water. Mix a light blue (from the sky) and with the liner brush drag some thin horizontal lines through and across the forward run of water. These break up the reflections and adds the look of detail to match the detail in the seagull.



Stage 25

Last mix for the foreground is a light warm which is perfect for the click of light on the right side of peddles and lumps of sand to bring the foreground into line with the light on the seagull.



Stage 26

The highlight of red on the right foot of the seagull needs to do in as well as any other clips of secondary darks and lights to push the lights and darks even more.

The end result- a great painting

