



Materials list

PIGMENTS

Cadmium Yellow Lemon

Cadmium Yellow Light

Cadmium Yellow Deep

Raw Sienna

Transparent Oxide Red

Cadmium Scarlet

Cadmium Red Deep

Permanent Red Violet

(or Alizarin Crimson)

Ultramarine Blue Deep

Cobalt Blue Light

Prussian Blue

Viridian

Titanium White

BRUSHES

a selection of small, medium

and large brushes (see page 14)

TOOLS

painting knife

rag

mineral spirits or turpentine

walk in swinging

Because your notion of what makes a good composition, your color sense, and even the way you hold your brush are unique, don't adhere too closely to the way I've painted this demonstration. True, all of the demonstrations are presented as though I am standing next to you saying, Do this, and now this and then follow with this. However, your sensibilities are different than mine, so make your own creative choices. Approach the demonstration in a spirit of play. While one part of you thinks about technical principles—light/dark, warm/cool, lines/angles, pigment mixtures and which tools to use—let the other part of you, the wordless part, feel its way along. Many effects will come about by accident. You will discover painting tricks I may not show you. Textures, color juxtapositions and compositional possibilities will emerge as if by magic. Remember these and learn to apply them deliberately.

This high-risk way of painting is not for the timid who need everything figured out in advance. The chances of failure are greater than with other ways of painting, but so are the chances of improving your skills and discovering new and original techniques—learning something new by doing something different. Try painting in this fashion to take yourself a step beyond the boundary of your own knowing.

Painting in the manner shown, there is no difference between drawing and painting. Composition, color and texture are all worked out on the canvas in one organic process. Instead of starting with lines or shapes on the canvas to guide the application of color (as in some of the previous demonstrations) you will simply draw with the brush as you go. As a regular practice, it is best to have some way to visualize your composition in advance. You could do a few thumbnail pencil studies first, but sometimes it can be instructive to simply walk in swinging.



1 < ESTABLISH ASYMMETRY

Use a no. 10 flat bristle to begin composing the painting directly on the canvas. Divide the foreground and distance into unequal halves with a rhythmic horizontal line. Give this line two hills and two valleys—the highest hill just to the right of center and the smaller one far to the left (see “Asymmetry” on page 58). This important line of your composition sets up an asymmetrical balance.

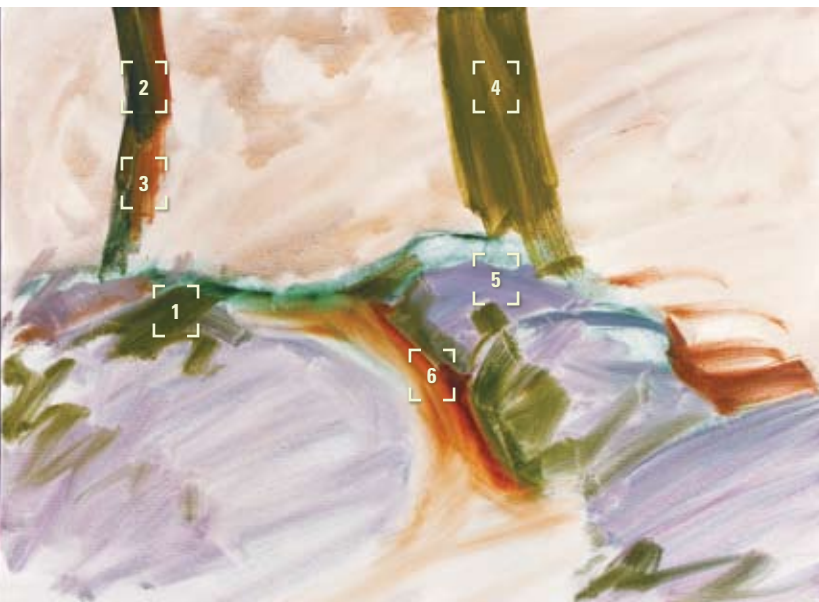
1 Prussian Blue + Transparent Oxide Red



2 < TONE THE CANVAS

Lay a warm, transparent wash above the line using a no. 10 or no. 12 flat bristle, then brush on a few darker strokes of the same color. Dab it a few times with a rag to begin a random pattern in the distant plane. This is underpainting. Now, with the same color as the rhythmic line, tone the lower half of the canvas to lower the value from stark white.

1 Transparent Oxide Red + Cobalt Blue Light



3 < THINK COMPOSITION

Place a tree trunk to the right of the center and a more slender one far to the left with the no. 10 flat bristle. Vary the sizes and shapes of the big rocks in the foreground. The composition flows from the lower right, up to the left and between the two trees (see “Flow” on page 58). Improve the arrangement by nudging objects this way and that.

- 1 Viridian + Raw Sienna
- 2 Ultramarine Blue Deep + Transparent Oxide Red
- 3 Transparent Oxide Red + Cadmium Scarlet + white
- 4 Viridian + Transparent Oxide Red + a little Cadmium Yellow Deep
- 5 Cobalt Blue Light + Transparent Oxide Red
- 6 Transparent Oxide Red

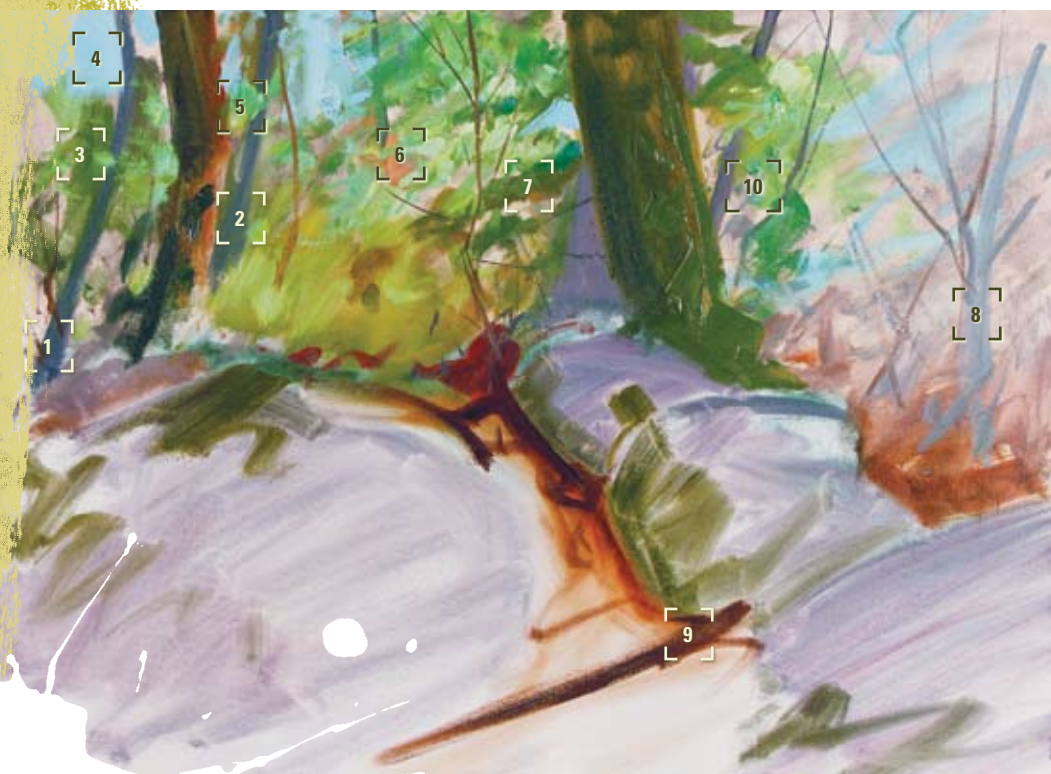
MUSINGS | While painting at my growing edge, there is a magnetic pull to revert to a less challenging subject. I feel the urge to mix colors and manipulate pigment in familiar and comfortable ways. Or to simply run away. How many times have I crossed the boundary of my own knowing, only to pull back?



4 < PAINT BROAD PATTERNS OF COLOR

Begin building a loose pattern of brushwork in the distant forest beyond the tree trunks, striving for varied textures. Brush one color into and over another, allowing some of the first layer to show through. Cool color variations will predominate in this distant plane, but it's okay to use a few warmer combinations in the first lay in.

- 1 Raw Sienna + Viridian
- 2 Viridian + Cadmium Yellow Lemon + white
- 3 Cadmium Yellow Lemon + a touch of Viridian + white
- 4 Viridian + Prussian Blue
- 5 Permanent Red Violet + Cobalt Blue Light + a touch of Transparent Oxide Red + a touch of white



5 ^ BUILD LAYER OVER LAYER

Create an array of shapes and colors with thin and thick layers of pigment. Then, place more tree trunks and branches with a variety of brushes. Vary the width, angles and spaces between tree trunks. When painting fine lines with the long-haired rigger, thin the paint so it almost flows, and then load the entire length of the brush hair. Paint wet-into-wet—one stroke; wipe the brush on a rag, reload and make the next stroke.

- 1 Ultramarine Blue Deep + Transparent Oxide Red
- 2 Cobalt Blue Light + Transparent Oxide Red
- 3 Viridian + Transparent Oxide Red
- 4 Prussian Blue + white
- 5 Viridian + white
- 6 underpainting shows through
- 7 Viridian + Transparent Oxide Red
- 8 Cobalt Blue Light + Transparent Oxide Red
- 9 Transparent Oxide Red + Ultramarine Blue Deep
- 10 build layer over layer

6 > DEVELOP THE FOREGROUND

Build the rocks on the right using a range of bristle brushes and heavy layers of paint, but leave some of the transparent underpainting showing through for more textural interest. Contrast with heavy knife strokes. Paint the large sunlit rock in the left foreground, first with a brush and then with a knife.

The composition has a feeling of viewing the scene from a distance, so look about to find an intriguing tree shape to transplant into the foreground.

- 1 white + Cadmium Yellow Deep + a touch of Cadmium Scarlet
- 2 Prussian Blue + white
- 3 Permanent Red Violet + Ultramarine Blue Deep + white
- 4 Cadmium Red Deep + Permanent Red Violet + white
- 5 Cadmium Yellow Light + a touch of Viridian
- 6 Viridian + Cadmium Yellow Light + a touch of Transparent Oxide Red
- 7 underpainting shows through



7 < AND NOW, THE SCARY PART

With a small, clean, dry brush on its edge, draw the borrowed tree trunk lightly into the still wet painting surface to verify the placement, and then paint it in.

Complete the more distant plane first before painting the overlapping branches of the foreground tree. Use more intense color here to draw the viewer beyond the foreground and into the painting.



8 < KEEP THE FOREGROUND SIMPLE

With small and medium flat bristle brushes, build some textures into the path and rocky foreground, layer over layer. Use variations of warm and cool grays to indicate the damp forest floor. Suggest rather than define the foreground rocks to keep them from drawing too much attention from the more important middle distance part of the painting.

- 1 various combinations of Ultramarine Blue Deep, Cobalt Blue Light and Transparent Oxide Red



9 < COMPLETE THE FOREGROUND TREE

Now draw the arching limbs of the foreground tree with the rigger. Look ahead of where the brush touches down and the line will follow your eyes. Borrow leaf patterns from other trees to fit the composition if needed.

Now ask, *What does the painting want?* The foreground has to go because it detracts from the more important middle distance.

- 1 various combinations of Viridian, Transparent Oxide Red and Cadmium Yellow Deep

10 > MAKE FINAL CORRECTIONS

You may resist, but scrape off and repaint the foreground (if it doesn't work, it has to go). Invite the viewer to venture into the distant forest with a few strokes of intense yellow-green.

How much detail? You could persevere for days longer in an effort to give the painting more refinement, but some of its spontaneity would surely be lost.



Forest Entry
oil on canvas
18" x 24" (46cm x 61cm)

Let's Review

Design and paint the painting at the same time. When you stumble upon a happy accident, review how it came about and then add it to your catalog of painting techniques. Don't just copy, create. Push your tools and materials to the limit to find out what they will and will not do. No one can show you how to do this; you have to do it for yourself.