

Painting an Azorean whaling Canoe



The lesson is intended for students with little or no experience. You'll learn to make a realistic painting of an Azorean whaling Canoe. It is a 'How-to' lesson, which focuses on techniques that make difficult things easy, rather than explaining the general background principles. We'll guide you through the process step by step. You'll do a number of things that students in general find difficult:

- Paint water
- Paint clouds in the sky
- Paint sails
- Paint a boat in perspective.

Before starting

- 1) Look extensively at the example picture. Ask yourself the following questions: What are important lines in the picture? What is the color of the sea? The sky? What is the color of the darker parts of the clouds? What is the color of the foam at the bow? What is the color of the sails?
- 2) We discuss some elementary issues:
 - The notion of a vanishing point for the boat.
 - Aerial perspective in cloudy skies: objects far at the horizon have greyish colors due to the dispersion of light because of water vapor in the air. Color blue is darker high in the sky. Clouds are bigger on top of the painting. Clouds have light at the top and shadow at the bottom. Use instable color mix for shade of clouds.
 - Structure of water and its perspective. Bigger waves near the bottom of the painting. On top of the waves the sky is reflected. At the bottom of the waves you look in side the wave in to the darker water.
 - mixing paint: Primary and secondary colors, counter colors, the theory of mixing 2 colors. Mixing 3 or more pigments to get brown and grey instable colors.
- 3) You build up a painting 1) from background to foreground and 2) from dark to light and 3) from lean to fat paint. Mind You: When the paint dries it becomes darker!



The project

Cut a square piece of canvas of 44 x 44 cm and staple it to your work board. Make sure it is flat: stretch it a bit diagonally when stapling.

Define a work area of 39 x 39 cm with tape 2,5 cm from the edges.

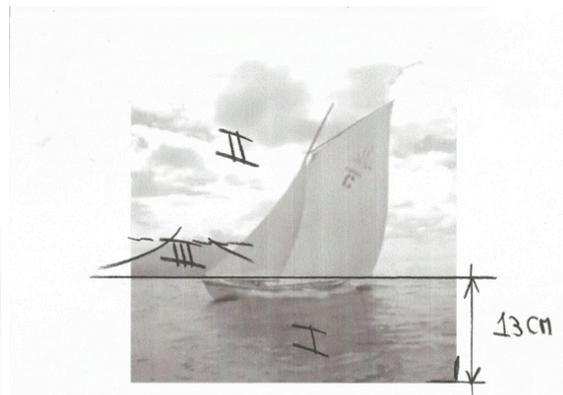
Apply a rough undercoat of burnt Sienna to the work area with a large brush. Do not use



much water. The burnt Sienna acts as a counter color for the general blue tone of the painting. It forces you to cover all of the surface with paint and to use white paint for the lighter parts of the image. Dry the surface with a hairdryer.

With a pencil add marks on the tape on the side of the work area that indicate the horizon, 13 cm from the bottom of the work area. Do not draw in the work area. (You should draw a little as possible in the work area as you will have to remove the lines with an eraser later.)

1) Mix middle tone for water: Phtalo blue, Yellow ochre, Burnt Sienna and Titan White in to a dark greenish hue. Start with a tiny bit of Phtalo blue since this pigment is very strong



(professional painters call it 'Fatalo-Blue'). Add some ochre to get a greenish hue. Add

some Sienna to tone it down. Lighten up with white.

Cover the lower part of the painting in this color to just above the horizon line. This seal-like color acts as a middle tone. Later we add light paint in the color of the sky for the reflection of the sky, and darker paint for the parts where we look in to the water.

Dry the surface with a hairdryer.

II) When the sea is dry you mark the line of the horizon with tape over the dry surface. Make sure you have tape that sticks well, so you can paint a straight horizon.

Mix three sets of tones for the sky:

- Cobalt blue, Yellow ochre and Burnt Sienna in to a greyish hue for the shadows of the sky.

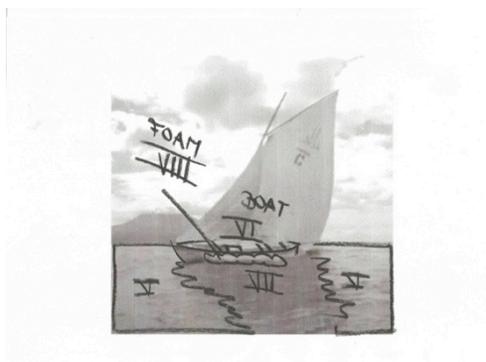
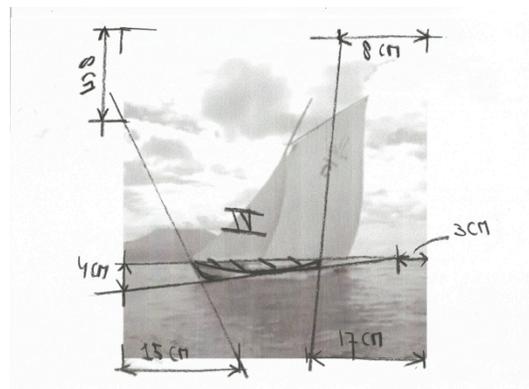
- Titan White and Cobalt blue for the blue patches of sky (somewhat darker for the upper part of the painting). If you want, you can add tiny bits of ochre and/or burnt Sienna to tone the blue color down a bit.

- Pure Titan white for the lighter part of the clouds. Add some lemon yellow and crimson close to the horizon. Use a separate brush for the white to make sure the color stays clear! Look at the sky, clouds above you in front are much bigger than the ones afar, and the sky is lighter blue (with more yellow) and clouds are very small at the horizon.



III) Look at the shape of the volcano Pico and how high it is in relation to the boat. Paint it with the pigments used for the sea.

IV) Now there are four lines that define the contour of the boat. The measurements are on the handout. From the right upper corner 8 cm, 3 cm, 17 cm, 15 cm, 4 cm and 8 cm. Only draw the lines that are directly around the hull of the boat. Mark the curve of the gunwale with a smooth curved line that touches the lower horizontal line.



V) When you have drawn these you can start with the water. The top of a wave reflects the sky. So use lighter color of the sky to mark the waves with horizontal brush strokes. Paint the waves in perspective. Large at the bottom of the painting with space around the strokes to suggest the parts where there is no

reflection of the sky. They become smaller towards the horizon and at the horizon you only see reflected surface. Make sure the lighter color also defines the shape of the boat. Leave space for the reflection of the boat.

VI) Define the gangway of the boat and the interior. Suggest the gunwale of the boat with one curved fine brushstroke of burnt umber. Put a fine line of crimson above this and mix it with white on places where the light is reflected (under the jib). Indicate the benches in the boat. Note that they roughly make a 90-degree angle with the mast in the direction of the slope of the volcano. Don't bother about the top of the boat, It will be behind the sails.

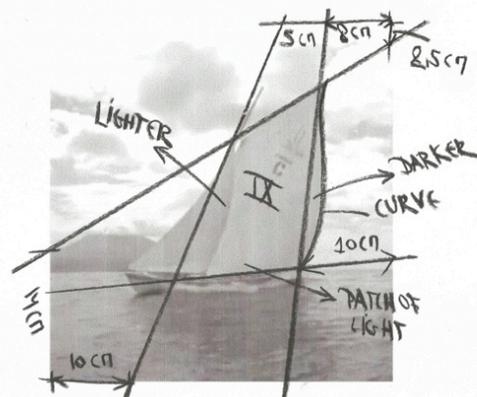


VII) Add the darker shades of the boat using horizontal brushstrokes with a mix of burnt Sienna and Phtalo blue.

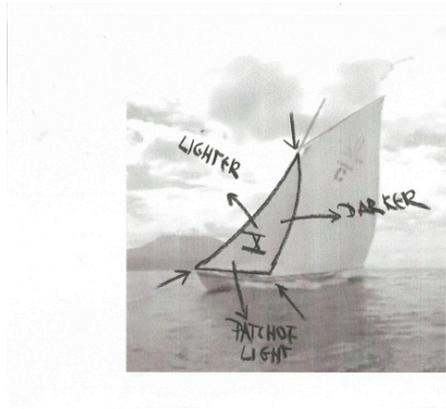
VIII) Paint the spray at the bow. Note that the foam is not purely white but roughly has the color of the shades of the clouds. Note that the waves lag behind the boat. There is roughly a wave at the bow and one at the stern. Use some pure whit for the light patch under the jib.



IX) The mainsail is defined by four lines that can be marked on the taped edges of your canvas. The measurements are (clockwise from the right upper corner): 5 cm, 8 cm, 2,5 cm, 10 cm (note that the boom of mainsail ends more or less at the horizon), 10 cm 14 cm. Adjust tape around the form of the mainsail. Make sure that the top of the lower gunwale is covered with tape but that the horizon is free. Mark the typical S curve at the leach of the sail with tape. Mark the hump of the curve by wrinkling the tape on one side and the hollow part of the curve with pieces of tape (See picture below). Paint the sail with yellow ochre, umber cobalt blue and titan white. Be sure that the front of the sail is lighter, and so is the bottom. Remove the tape.



X) Let the mainsail dry before you tape the form of the jib. Three points define it: 1) close to the mast just under the upper part of the mainsail,



2) near the bow, 3) in the lower left part of the mainsail. Paint it in the same way as the main sail. Note lighter parts of the jib.

XI) Paint the mast, gaff and booms under the sail, with a maulstick as a ruler and a thin brush. Sign the painting. Done!

