

COLOURWHEEL Art Classes

Oil Pastels: Seascape



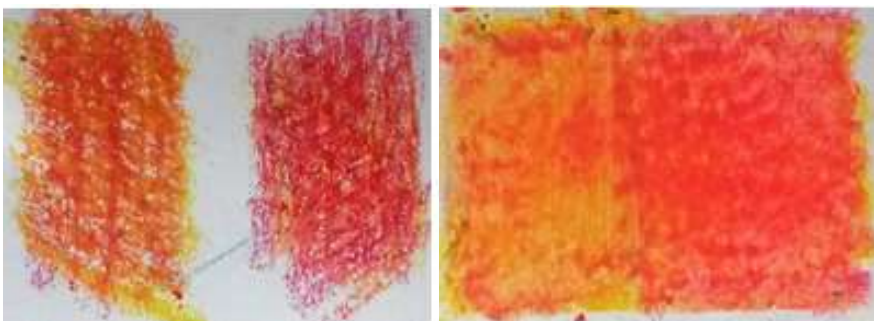
In this session we'll be looking at using oil pastels with a touch of white acrylic, to create seascapes. Oil pastels can be a little like Marmite- you love them or you hate them. I think that there's a real misconception they're seen as a children's medium, but this couldn't be further from the truth. Quite often when starting out, we're just not as bold as we need to be with them, but learn to use them and they are an excellent medium to work with to achieve rich colour, immediacy and a variety of effects.

The art world became freer and more dynamic when pastels, both dry and oil, allowed painters to carry their colours around and translate their observations. Oil pastels are great for quick sketches, free, wide movements and representing a feeling of movement, since a stick can allow us to draw simple, sharp lines, or cover wider areas with different degrees of pressure in a single movement. They are also excellent when used in conjunction with other mediums such as acrylics.



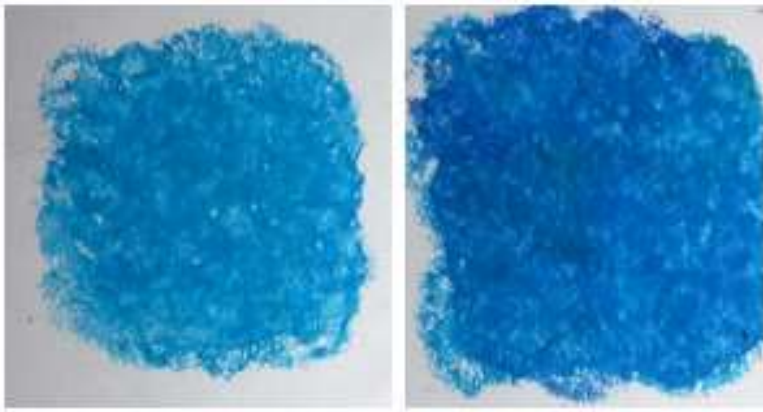
Oil Pastel Techniques

Blending is important when working in oil pastels but do bear in mind that the more we blend pastels, the less vibrant the colours will look and may become muddy. They can be blended in a variety of ways including paper stumps, your fingertips or a cotton bud. Try dipping a cotton bud or paintbrush into baby oil or white spirits and swiping over your pastels – this will almost turn the pastel into paint. On larger areas, try a baby wipe. Colours can be made more intense and luminous with repeated layers of different tones or by applying more pressure on the pastel against the paper.



Light Blending: choose two colours and try scribbling or hatching with a light pressure in one colour. Go over with the same movement in your second colour. Repeat layers if necessary. Repeat but change the order of the colours to notice the difference that this can make.

Heavy Blending: Use a hard pressure to lay down one colour ensuring that there is no white of the paper visible. Go over the top of this in your second colour. Try this method by laying down your colour and using white to blend. Lay down white first and then your chosen colour – this does lighten the colour but also makes a surface whereby your pastel will glide over the surface more easily.



Scumbling: scumbling is the use of small, squiggly, circular motions to fill a space with colour and/or texture.

Try using two or three blues. Cover the area with one colour using a scumbling motion. Repeat with your other colours, trying to eradicate some of the white each time.

As mentioned earlier, white can be an important blending colour when working in oil pastel. Choose a colour and lay down a strip, varying the amount of pressure you use to create a tonal strip. Using a white oil pastel and beginning on your lightest tone, use a fairly heavy pressure to blend along the strip.



A few hints:

- Pastels can be used on end but also on side to cover larger areas.
- Working light to dark is recommended but remember that going over dark with light helps to blend without necessarily lightening a lot - try going over a corner of the light blend and dark blend patches with white or another light colour. Always use lighter colour as blender!
- You can lay down white layer to help coloured layer glide over it
- If you want to keep an area extremely dark or light, it is important to only use colours of like tone in those areas. Don't try to tint darker colours with lighter ones (or vice versa).
- As with chalk pastels, the dark colours can easily become lighter than you want and are hard to make darker again once you lighten them up
- For a dark area that has become muddied with light pigments, you can scrape off the unwanted pigments and reapply the dark colours. But with light colours, if you try to scrape off a region and rework it, you will find that the dark areas underneath still show through. For this reason, some oil pastel artists suggest covering the scraped area with white pastel first.

Main Task: Seascape

Equipment needed: cartridge paper or multimedia paper, white acrylic, cotton bud, round brush, palette, oil pastels: colours used in this demonstration are white, ochre, Indian red, Vandyke brown, blue green, ultramarine light, cobalt blue, Prussian blue,
Additional extras: watercolour pencils, 6B pencil



I've chosen to use white paper for my seascape but do consider other options if you have them.

Choose the surface of your preference, from sugar paper to mount paper, for their different textures. Colour choice can also be important. Consider using toned papers to allow their colour underneath the pastel to come through, or to allow the background you are working on to become part of the colour scheme for a given project.



Ultramarine light and
Cobalt Blue

I begin by taping down my paper. The only line I draw in to start is the horizon line and then go straight in with my colours, laying these down to block in the different areas. Do not be alarmed – it will look childish at this stage.

Tip: to keep a straight horizon line, lay a piece of scrap paper down before applying your colour.

Prussian blue

Blue Green

Vandyke brown and Ochre

Now I want to begin to use lighter colours and a harder pressure to blend. For the sky, the lighter ultramarine is used over the top of the cobalt to begin to blend. White is then used over the top of this to blend further. Take note of the direction of the clouds and begin to move your pastel in this way when blending. Repeat for the sea, using ultramarine light over Prussian blue. Repeat using white





Begin to blend the sand using your white pastel and add in the headland. For this, lay down Indian red or a dark brown if you don't have this colour, over the headland lightly and then use a harder pressure to darken up the darker areas. Work a Prussian blue, or a navy blue, over the top of these darkest areas using a heavy blend and an ochre over the top of the lighter areas.

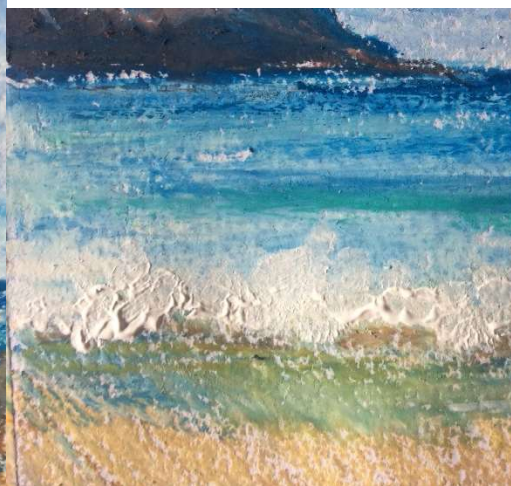
Work into the sky a little more, defining some clouds with a heavier pressure in white. Use a scumbling motion for those fluffier ones. The sea on the left hand side is lighter so work into this a little more using a heavy blend of white.

Begin to plot in the rocks in the foreground using an Indian red or the same dark brown. Press on harder for those darker areas and use less pressure for the lighter parts. I've missed out the rock in the bottom of the image for a more pleasing composition.



As before with the headland, use a Prussian blue or navy type blue to darken up the darker area of the rocks. Using more pressure with your Indian red, add mid tones and use ochre to blend lighter areas. The Indian red is also used to put in the tide line and line beneath the splashing waves. Lightly apply white oil pastel to the lightest side of the rocks.

Put a small amount of white acrylic onto your palette and begin to use this to show the foam splash. Keep the paint thick and use a damp brush – begin in the dense areas and push the paint outwards in gently stabbing motions. Use the white acrylic in the sky to brighten up the lightest clouds – follow the directions in which these move when applying the paint.





Once your first layer of acrylic is dry, apply a second layer to brighten areas up further. A small brush was used to add a little foam splash.

Now it's time to start looking at some of that finer detail.

- Once the acrylic is dry again, take your Prussian blue and softly add some of the shadows you see in the wave. Use a cotton bud to blend this into the dry paint.
- Add some of the fissures in the rocks. If you're working on a larger scale, this can be done with an oil pastel; if you're working on a smaller scale, a soft pencil such as a 6B or higher B number can be used. Alternatively, a dark blue or brown watercolour pencil could be used – if you find that this is simply taking your oil pastel off your page, then stop using it as this means the pencil is not soft enough
- Add the reflection of the rocks in the shallow water by gently applying Indian red in horizontal strokes. Use a white oil pastel to blend this (this will also help the reflective look).
- Work into the shallow water in front of the waves. Using an ochre and a cobalt, blended with white will help to achieve the effect. Using your dark brown refine the line beneath the waves and the tide mark.



Reference Image Used



Additional Images or use your own snaps of your favourite beaches

