WEEK 1

THE POWER OF UNDERPAINTING

The Foundation of Every Great Painting

Underpainting is the **roadmap**. It establishes composition, value, light, and form—creating a strong foundation so you can focus on color, expression, and technique with confidence.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand value structure
- Establish composition & light
- Build form and volume
- Create unity and atmosphere

KEY IDEA

Solve the big questions early—composition, value, and light. Then paint becomes freedom, not confusion.

THE UNDERPAINTING PROCESS: BUILDING THE ROADMAP



UNDERPAINTING PRINCIPLES

COMPOSITION
Design with large shapes. Establish focal points.

VALUE
Separate lights from darks. Control contrast.

VOLUME
Model form with gradual value transitions.

PERSPECTIVE
Establish accurate space and proportion.

HARMONY
Create unity through a cohesive tonal range.

MATERIALS

- **Oil Paints:**
  Raw Umber
  Burnt Sienna
  Titanium White
- **Medium:**
  Odorless Mineral Spirits or Gamsol
- **Supports:**
  Canvas or Panel
- **Brushes:**
  Filbert, Flat, Round

STUDIO EXERCISE

Create a monochromatic still life using raw umber and titanium white. Focus on value, light direction, edge control, and volume.



ART HISTORY INSIGHT: UNDERPAINTINGS THROUGH TIME



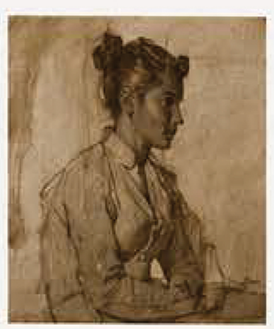
REMBRANDT
1606–1669
Warm earth tones create depth and atmosphere before color is applied.



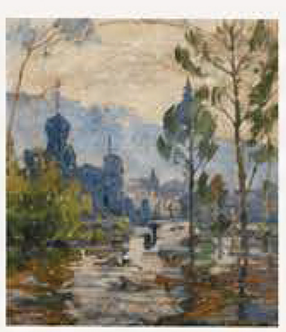
RUBENS
1577–1640
Fluid underpaintings establish movement and form.



VELÁZQUEZ
1599–1660
Subtle value structure creates realism and luminosity.



SARGENT
1856–1925
Direct painting built on a strong value framework.



MONET
1840–1926
Broken color applied over strong tonal understructure.

WEEK 2

GRISAILLE TECHNIQUE

Building Form Through Value

Grisaille is a classical monochromatic method used to establish volume and light before color is introduced.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Develop grayscale value control
- Understand edge relationships
- Create dimensional form
- Transition from drawing into paint

KEY IDEA
Value first, color second.

THE PROCESS: THREE PARTS

1. DRAWING



2. GRISAILLE BLOCKIN



3. REFINED MODELING



STUDIO EXERCISE

Paint a grayscale portrait study emphasizing realistic light and shadow transitions.



MATERIALS

- **Oil Paints:**
  Ivory Black
  Titanium White
- **Medium:**
  Odorless Mineral Spirits or Gamsol
- **Support:** Canvas or Panel
- **Brushes:** Filbert, Flat, Round

ART HISTORY INSIGHT: VALUE MASTERS



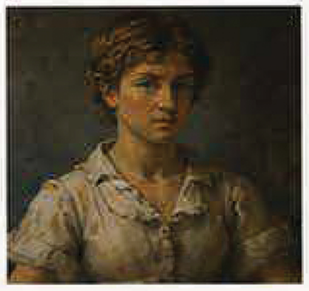
REMBRANDT
1606–1669
Master of light and shadow structure.



BOUGUEREAU
1825–1905
Academic precision built on value studies.



SOROLLA
1863–1923
Luminous value design with strong value.



SARGENT
1856–1925
Confident value relationships create life.

WEEK 3

TONAL GROUND & IMPRIMATURA

Establishing Harmony Before Color

A toned ground unifies the surface, reduces glare, and influences the mood of the final painting.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Create transparent tonal grounds
- Explore warm and cool undertones
- Build harmony through middle values
- Improve value judgment

KEY IDEA
The ground color influences every color you place on top.

THE PROCESS: FOUR STEPS TO A UNIFIED FOUNDATION



1. RAW CANVAS
Bright, flat, high contrast.

2. WASH
Thin, transparent wash establishes tone.

3. IMPRIMATURA
Earth tones create unity and atmosphere.

4. READY TO PAINT
A balanced surface for value and color.

STUDIO EXERCISE

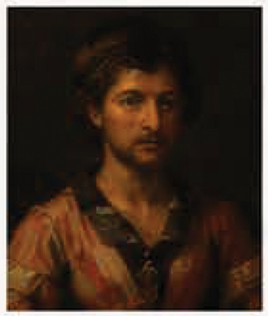
Prepare four panels using different earth-tone ground mixtures. Allow to dry completely before painting.



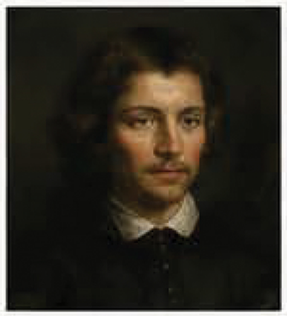
MATERIALS

- **Oil Paints:**
  Raw Umber
  Burnt Sienna
  Yellow Ochre
- **Medium:**
  Odorless Mineral Spirits or Gamsol
- **Support:** Canvas or Panel
- **Brushes:** Flat, Soft Bristle

ART HISTORY INSIGHT: THE POWER OF THE GROUND



TITIAN
c.1488–1576
Warm grounds create depth, glow, and rich color.



VELÁZQUEZ
1599–1660
Earth-toned grounds unify light and shadow.



REMBRANDT
1606–1669
Warm brown grounds enhance light effects.



COROT
1796–1875
Tonal grounds create soft atmospheric harmony.

DIRECT VS. INDIRECT PAINTING

Two Paths to a Finished Painting

Different approaches can lead to powerful results. Choose the method that best serves your vision.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand cast shadows
- Identify light families
- Create smooth gradation
- Model convincing three-dimensional form

KEY IDEA

See the light.
Paint the effect.

TWO APPROACHES

DIRECT (ALLA PRIMA)

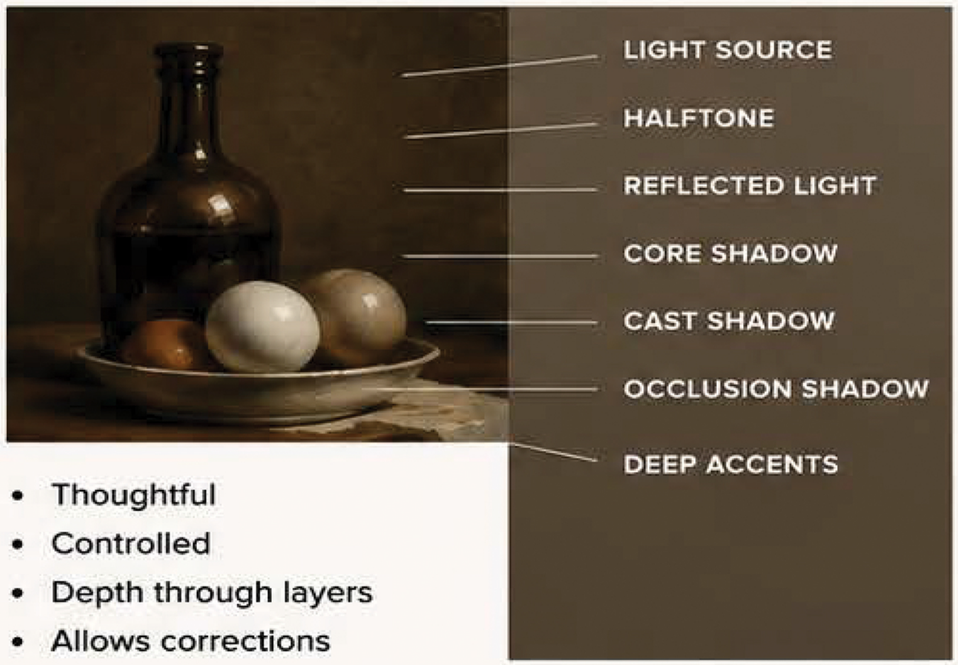
Paint wet-into-wet.
Build form in a single session.



- Fast
- Spontaneous
- Fresh color
- Requires confidence

INDIRECT (LAYERED)

Build through layers and glazes.
Allow drying between stages.



- Thoughtful
- Controlled
- Depth through layers
- Allows corrections

STUDIO EXERCISE

Paint a single object under controlled directional lighting. Focus on value transitions and edge control.



MATERIALS

- **Oil Paints:** Raw Umber, Burnt Sienna, White
- **Medium:** Gamsol or Walnut Oil
- **Support:** Panel or Canvas
- **Brushes:** Round, Filbert

ART HISTORY INSIGHT: DIFFERENT METHODS, SAME PURPOSE



CARAVAGGIO
1571–1610

Dramatic contrast creates form and emotion.



REMBRANDT
1606–1669

Built form with subtlety, glaze layers, and harmony.



TURNER
1775–1851

Atmospheric layers create light and mood.



SARGENT
1856–1925

Direct painting with confident brushwork.

WEEK 5

LIGHT, SHADOW & FORM

Sculpting Form Through Light

Light reveals form. Understanding shadow structure creates believability and a sense of three dimensions.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand cast shadows
- Identify light families
- Create smooth gradation
- Model convincing three-dimensional form

KEY IDEA

The light source shapes everything. Paint the form.

UNDERSTANDING LIGHT



STUDIO EXERCISE

Paint a simple object under controlled directional lighting. Focus on value transitions and edge control.



MATERIALS

- **Oil Paints:** Raw Umber, Burnt Sienna, White
- **Medium:** Gamsol or Walnut Oil
- **Support:** Panel or Canvas
- **Brushes:** Round, Filbert

ART HISTORY INSIGHT: MASTERS OF LIGHT



CARAVAGGIO
1571–1610

Dramatic contrast creates form and emotion.



VERMEER
1632–1675

Soft light achieves quiet clarity and harmony.



REMBRANDT
1606–1669

Master of atmospheric depth.



INGRES
1780–1867

Sculptural lighting models form with precision and grace.



SOROLLA
1863–1923

Sunlight brings vibrant color and life.

WEEK 6

GLAZING & COLOR DEPTH

Building Light Through Transparent Color

Glazing creates luminous color and optical depth by layering transparent color over a dry underpainting.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand glazing mediums
- Build chromatic depth
- Control transparent layers
- Refine luminous effects

KEY IDEA

Each glaze shifts color, adds depth, and brings light forward.

THE GLAZING PROCESS



1. UNDERPAINTING

Establish values in monochrome.



2. FIRST GLAZE

Thin color glaze—warm.



3. SECOND GLAZE

Adjust color, increase depth and unity.



4. FINAL GLAZES

Refine and harmonize for luminosity.

STUDIO EXERCISE

Apply transparent glaze over a monochromatic portrait study. Glaze in three color and depth change with each layer.



MATERIALS

- **Oil Paints:** Alizarin Crimson, Burnt Umber, Yellow Ochre
- **Medium:** Linseed Oil
- **Solvent:** Gamsol
- **Brushes:** Soft Round

ART HISTORY INSIGHT: THE BEAUTY OF GLAZING



LEONARDO
1452–1519

Glazes create atmospheric sfumato.



TITIAN
c.1488–1576

Layered glazes add richness and glowing color.



RUBENS
1577–1640

Warm, transparent glazes create ground color depth.



REMBRANDT
1606–1669

Subtle glazing builds form with depth and emotion.



POUSSIN
1594–1665

Soft glazing for harmonious color balance.

WEEK 7

EDGES & ATMOSPHERE

Creating Depth Through Control and Softness

The way you handle edges and atmosphere determines the sense of space, mood, and realism in your painting.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Control edge transitions
- Create atmospheric depth
- Guide the viewer's focus
- Enhance mood and unity

KEY IDEA

Softer edges and lost detail in the distance create believable depth.

THE LANGUAGE OF EDGES



1. HARD EDGES

Sharp and well defined.
Draw attention forward.



2. MODERATE EDGES

Slightly softened.
Balance detail and depth.



3. SOFT EDGES

Blended and gentle.
Push elements back.



4. LOST EDGES

Very soft and atmospheric.
Create distance and mood.

STUDIO EXERCISE

Paint a simple landscape or still life. Use a range of edge types to create depth and guide the viewer's eye.



MATERIALS

- **Oil Paints:** Raw Umber, Ultramarine Blue, Ivory Black, Titanium White, Yellow Ochre
- **Medium:** Odorless Mineral Spirits or Gamsol
- **Support:** Canvas or Panel
- **Brushes:** Filbert, Flat, Round

ART HISTORY INSIGHT: ATMOSPHERE IN THE MASTERS



DAUBIGNY
1817–1878
Pioneer of atmospheric landscape painting.



TURNER
1775–1851
Used atmosphere to express light, weather, and emotion.



COROT
1796–1875
Soft edges and subtle tones create poetic depth.



BIERSTADT
1830–1902
Masterful control of clarity and atmosphere in vast landscapes.



MONET
1840–1926
Atmosphere and light define form and impression.

WEEK 8

FINISHING & PERSONAL VISION

Bringing It All Together

The final stage is refinement, unity, and expression. Develop your personal voice and finish with confidence.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Refine design and focus
- Unify color and value
- Add final detail with purpose
- Capture mood and expression
- Develop a personal approach

KEY IDEA

Great paintings are finished, not overworked. Know when to stop.

THE FINISHING PROCESS



1. REFINEMENT

Adjust drawing, values, and composition.



2. UNITY

Harmonize color and simplify where needed.



3. ACCENTS

Add purposeful detail to key areas.



4. COMPLETION

Evaluate, refine, and finish with confidence.

STUDIO EXERCISE

Complete a full painting of your choice. Apply everything learned in the course. Make it a personal statement.



MATERIALS

- **Oil Paints:** Use full range of colors
- **Medium:** Gamblin Galkyd or Walnut Alkyd Medium
- **Support:** Canvas or Panel
- **Brushes:** Full range from small detail to large flats
- **Extras:** Palette, rags, solvent, varnish (for final layer)

ART HISTORY INSIGHT: PERSONAL VISION IN THE MASTERS



REMBRANDT
1606–1669

Deeply personal storytelling through masterful technique.



TURNER
1775–1851

Emotional color and atmosphere express inner vision.



SARGENT
1856–1925

Confident brushwork and elegance reflect a unique perspective.



ODILON REDON
1840–1916

Symbolism and imagination bring a personal vision to life.



GRANT WOOD
1891–1942

Individual style and narrative create lasting impact.