

WILD RED ROSES

Finished Painting and Source Image

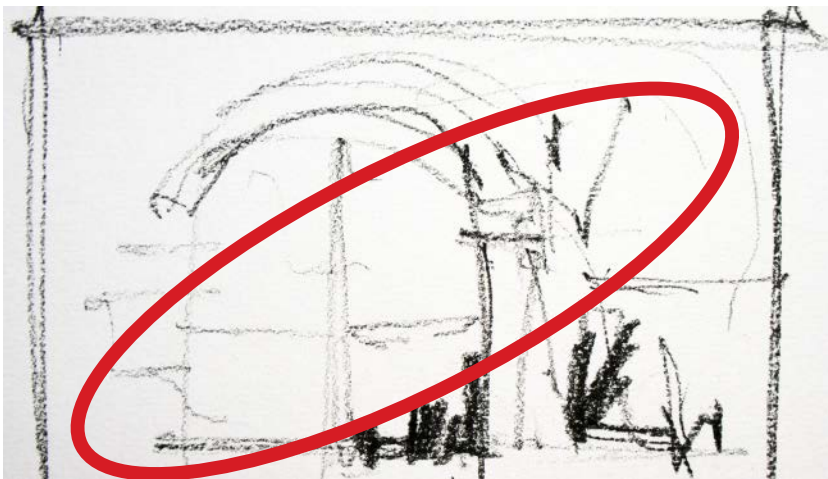


We are going to paint this wonderful old arched door and clump of wild roses. We will try and capture the contrast between the solid, ancient surfaces of the stone and timber and the casual delicateness of the red roses.



Materials

We will use a 1/2 and 1/8 inch flat brush, a small rigger, a rough bristle brush, a charcoal pencil, pen and hake brush. The main colors we will use are either Indian Yellow or Quinacridone Gold, Permanent Alizarin Crimson, French Ultramarine Blue, Phthalo Blue (Green shade is best if you have a choice) and Permanent Rose. You will also need some White Gouache, Gesso and Burnt Sienna (or similar) Ink. I did my demonstration painting on a 27x36cm (quarter) sheet of Arches 300gsm medium paper.



Thumbnail Sketch

The first thing to do is a quick thumbnail sketch to work out the location of our focal point and the placement of the major shapes.

We will focus on a diagonal band of detail to break up the symmetry of the arch. Once we have worked out our composition with a thumbnail sketch, we can then carefully and lightly draw this on to our watercolour paper.



Under Wash

Our first wash will be an under wash for the stone and timber. A mixture of Quinacridone Gold or Indian Yellow, and Alizarin with a little ultramarine so its not too orange.

Try and vary the color slightly as you apply the wash. Use plenty of water and don't make it too dark.

Leave the right hand side of the arch white at this stage. We can slightly darken the base of the doors, then add some more ultramarine to our mixture and suggest some of the ancient timber planks. Don't forget to leave some areas of white paper.

While everything is still wet mix up some Indian yellow or Quinacridone Gold with a little Phthalo Blue and a tiny amount of Alizarin to make a subdued green for the foliage.

Let this bleed into the damp under wash - we don't want it to be too hard edged.

You can then use a dry Hake brush to mop up any puddles.



Dark Marks

Next we will put in some of the dark shadows with a strong mixture of Ultramarine, Alizarin and Indian Yellow. Plenty of pigment and very little water is the secret here.

Putting it on with this rough old bristle brush guarantees some interesting marks. Allow the marks to bleed into the damp areas of the door. This keeps the marks varied and interesting.



Stones and Details

The under wash has dried now so we will paint some stone shapes into the upper right hand corner. Use just the tip of your bristle brush and try and get as much variation into the marks as possible. Vary the size and shape of the stones too.

Once you have the area covered, use a clean damp brush to break up the marks slightly. This settles them into the painting and takes away the foreign hard edged look.

We can do the same down in the lower left corner. This time we will use our one eighth inch flat brush, and again soften off the marks.

With our rigger brush and the same dark mixture we used before, we can start building up some fine detail in the doors.

Some of the planks can be dragged in with our half inch flat brush. Vary the tone and color slightly. Some cool planks, some warm, some light some dark. On the right side of the arch we will warm up the area of white paper with a dirty yellow. Cut it carefully around the two main roses. We will wash these in later.



You can get clues from the photo to help place the ink lines. The timber arc at the top of the arch can be loosely suggested. More recent boards have been patched in over the original timber - these little details add to the old weathered look of the doors.

It might seem like a waste of time fussing over all these small details, but they are what give the building its character, and they're the things that hold attention when someone looks at your work.

Foliage and Ink marks

Add a little Phthalo blue to the dirty yellow mixture and put in some of the lower plants. If you use just the tip of your rough bristle brush and lift it off as you make the stroke you will get that nice tapered appearance to the leaves.

More Phthalo Blue and water added to the mix now to make a couple of loose splashes. Use your rigger to build up some fine detail.

We can add the shadows to the bottom of the old planks with the same dark mixture we used before. Do this with your rigger brush and add some more texture to the planks.

Your clean, damp half inch flat brush will help soften out some of these fine lines. It's that variety we are after - not all hard and not all soft.

We can add more variety with a few Burnt Sienna Pigment ink marks. Draw on a few marks then, before they dry, gently spray them with a mist of water to feather them out.

I love the way these lines tie everything together and add a weathered look to the building.



Wild Red Roses

With our one eighth flat brush we can pick out some individual leaves on the rose bushes. Vary the tone and color of the greens slightly and vary the size and spacing of the leaves.

It's that random variation that is so important in making these organic marks look convincing.

Make sure every thing is dry then put in the two main roses with some nice clean pure permanent Rose. Next we will mix some Permanent Rose with white Gouache and splash on some more flowers. Make the mixture fairly watery so the splash will work. Practicing on a scrap of paper is a good idea if you are unsure.

Finer detail

While that dries we can add more detail on the other side of the arch.

Use your rigger brush and a dark mixture to bring out more detail and add contrast to the stones.

We can move on to the rocks on the other side and do a similar thing. Don't forget to soften some of the lines with a damp brush.

While we have this dark color on our rigger brush let add some detail to the rose bushes.





Cool Relief

The painting is very warm, so a light wash of Ultramarine over the lower wall and foreground will provide some cool relief. Make sure everything is dry then apply the wash and quickly soften the edges with a clean damp brush. Don't make the blue too strong - just enough to provide some cool relief.

Next we can add some more variation to the roses. A mixture of permanent Rose and varying amounts of White Gouache will give us tonal variation. We also want to vary the size and spacing of the flowers to make them appear wild and natural.



Gesso Glaze

To keep the lower left corner soft and lost we can cover it with a translucent gesso glaze.

Apply the gesso, straight from the container, to the lowest point of the corner and work it out across the area.

Once the gesso is spread across the area quickly wash your brush thoroughly clean then soften the outer edge of the gesso.

Work the wet brush back into the gesso, diluting it as you go. Repeat this process two or three times until the gesso is wet and milky with a soft damp edge.

Next take your hake brush and with a single stroke back across the gesso from the dry area of the painting to the outer edge lift off some of the milky mixture. Clean the brush on a piece of towel before repeating this single stroke technique. Four or five single strokes are usually enough to lift off most of the moisture, then it's just a matter of gently feathering the dry brush across the surface to make the glaze as evenly graduated as possible.

As soon as the glaze looks OK stop.



Gouache Stones

While the glaze dries we will add some subtle stones to the area above the gesso.

Use a mixture of Indian Yellow, Alizarin and White Gouache to make a color as close as possible to the under wash we will paint on.

We can go a little lighter as the mixture usually darkens slightly as it dries. Put in some stones then soften them with a clean damp brush.

As they dry they will be almost invisible, but will add a subtle interest to the area.



Loose Charcoal Marks

A few more dark leaf shapes will help the focal point stand out.
The final job is to add some loose scruffy charcoal marks.

Although this is a very simple subject, the contrast between the ancient weathered textures of the building and warm soft freshness of the flowers really makes a captivating painting.

Once you have finished this project, go on to the other images included on the PDF. Use the techniques you have learned here to interpret the subjects in your own way.

Remember start with a thumbnail sketch
 use confident, economical drawing
 apply a simple, varied underwash
 leave whites around your focal area
 add confident calligraphic dark marks
 build up the detail with contrast and variation

All The Best,
And Keep Painting!

Cheers John



