Video 4: Trees and Foliage

Trees create beautiful organic shapes within the landscape. They can be used to further the illusion of space or as a focal point in a pastel painting. Small bushes, brush, and grasses also add to the landscape in a pastel painting. Like trees, the organic shapes that they create break up the space and create the illusion of depth. Drawing trees and foliage in a pastel painting can be approached in a variety of ways. The illusion of their forms can be created by simply focusing on the shapes that they make. The shapes are next developed using combinations of light and dark values of warm and cool colors to create the illusion of form.
Start with the background by adding a light blue to the upper portion of the surface. Work this material in to the surface using your finger. A layer of warm gray is added to “tone down” the brilliance of the blue.

Then, beginning on the horizon line, begin to make shapes with yellow-green to represent trees in the distance. Gently work the pastel into the surface as you work.

Dark blue is added on the shadowed side of the trees, while yellow is added on the highlighted side of the trees. This begins to create the illusion of form and establishes a defined light source.

Fields of color are observed in the photo reference and added to the drawing along the horizon line. To create variety in the greens, a mint green is added in some areas on the trees.
Colors are worked into the surface using a combination of a finger and a blending stump. Detailed areas will require the use of a blending stump.

Inverse shapes are created using the same colors as the trees above. These shapes are the beginnings of the illusion of reflection in the water.

White is added in between the reflected shapes.

Light blue is gently added. These colors are lightly blended with a finger and then pulled downward in order to mimic calm, reflective water.
Blues and yellows are also added to the reflection. As these colors are added, they are pulled downward with a finger.

White and light blue is used to fill in the rest of the body of water.

Yellow and yellow-green is used to define the embankment and create edges around the upper portion of the lake.

Dark blue and dark brown added to the horizon creates contrast between the water and the land.
These areas become more frequent as we approach the foreground. Areas of the foreground will typically be darker in value in most landscapes.

Working toward the middle-ground, the next shapes of trees are established using yellow-green. Blues and yellows are layered next to create consistent highlights and shadows.

Yellow and yellow-green is used to establish the base color for the land. The colors are wrapped around the water and are used to establish a base for the middle-ground.

A few areas of the darker yellow-green are added to create interest and variety in the middle-ground.
A wider variety of greens can be used in the foreground. These greens are worked into the surface to create smooth transitions of value and tone.

Darker blues are used on the trees in the distance in order to increase the contrast in the shadowed areas.

Yellows are used as well to “push” the highlights on the trees.

A warm gray is used to define the shapes of trunks on the trees off in the distance. A simple line is brought down from underneath the defined shapes.
White is used on top of the warm gray and dark brown in order to define a highlight on the trunks of the trees in the distance.

Trees and bushes in the middle-ground are added next using the same approach that was used for the trees.

Yellow-green is used to establish the shape of the bushes. Blues are used for the shadows, while yellows are used for the highlights.

Layering of colors in the appropriate areas lead to the illusion of form in the bushes and trees.
A small grouping of trees and bushes are added to the middle-ground. A bit of dark blue is added on the ground around this grouping to create the illusion of cast shadow.

This process is repeated to create several areas of small bushes and brush.

With much of the middle-ground defined, we can turn our attention to the first tree in the foreground. First, the shape of the trunk of the tree is established using a brown pastel.

Warm gray is layered on top of the brown in order to increase the depth of the color. Blue is layered next to create the illusion of core shadow on the trunk.
A dark brown pastel pencil is used to create some shadow underneath the leaves.

Yellow and a bit of orange is added to the opposite side of the tree to create highlights and further the illusion of form in the drawing.

Cast shadow is added under the tree using a dark blue.

Using a dark yellow-green, the shapes of the leaves are drawn directly on the branches of the tree.
A black pastel pencil is used to make some of the shadows a bit darker. Use black in moderation. The strength of the color black can overpower an image.

A white pastel pencil is used next to “push” the highlights a bit further on the highlighted side of the tree.

Yellow is added on top of the white to add some warmth to the highlight.

Yellow is also added to the leaves to create some form in the leaves. Adding yellow here also creates variety in the greens making the leaves look more realistic.
Another area of bushes is added. Again, we accomplish this by first establishing the shape of the bush with a dark yellow-green pastel.

Then, layers of blue and yellow are added for the shadows and highlights.

The second tree can now be layered on top beginning with the shape of the trunk of the tree.

As we did with the first tree, a warm gray is used to add depth to the color of the trunk.
A darker brown is used to establish some areas of shadow and to add more branches to the tree.

A yellow pastel pencil is used to layer lighter values and warmer tones to the highlighted side of the tree.

Next, the shapes of the leaves are drawn directly on the lines for the branches. Small circular lines are best for creating the illusion of the texture of leaves.

Dark blue is layered on top of the shadowed side of the tree. This furthers the illusion of form and creates more contrast between the highlighted and shaded sides of the tree.
Dark brown is next layered over the dark blue to “push” the darker shadows a bit further.

Orange is added on the highlighted side of the trunk of the tree to add warm and depth.

A cream colored pastel is next used to intensify the highlights a bit further.

A dark brown pastel pencil is used to add some areas of texture as well as a few more branches in the canopy of the tree.
A yellow pastel pencil is used again to create highlights and variety on the leaves of the tree.

A black pastel pencil is used in moderation to make the shadows on the trunk of the tree a bit darker.

Using a white pencil, a few lines are added to create the illusion of branches in bushes behind the tree. White is also used on the trunk of the tree to make the highlights lighter.

A yellow pastel is used to make a few marks that translate as patches of grass at the base of the tree.
By adding darker yellow-green around the base of the tree, the depth of color in the grasses is enhanced.

An area of cast shadow is added under the first tree using layers of dark blue and yellow-green.

Sienna, warm gray, blue, and yellow-green are layered in the space between the two trees. This adds texture and variety to the grassy area in the foreground.

The shape of a bush is started in the extreme foreground using the dark yellow-green.
Once the shape of the bush is established, blues and browns can be layered on top to add depth to the color.

A white pastel pencil is used to draw lines to represent the branches in the bush.

A few last minute touches are made to areas around the drawing.

The image is now complete and can be protected using a fixative.