

Venetian Doorway

To keep this Venetian scene simple, I have chosen a square-on view so I do not have to worry about the perspective. This step-by-step demonstration offers an opportunity to create plenty of interesting textures such as crumbling plaster and brickwork. A splash of colour is added to the window boxes. This scene could be any canal-side building, but just by adding the shape of a gondola in the foreground, we have established that this is Venice.

You will need

2B pencil
Masking fluid and masking fluid brush
Golden leaf, foliage, half-rigger, medium detail, small detail and emperor 19mm (¾in) flat brushes
Paints – see page 16



1. Draw the scene with a 2B pencil. Mask the flowers and the boat with masking fluid and a masking fluid brush.



2. Wet the wall with the golden leaf brush and clean water, then drop in raw sienna. While this is wet, drop in burnt sienna.



3. Drop in burnt umber, then use the foliage brush to add touches of shadow, then cadmium red and burnt sienna. Add midnight green along the waterline. Allow to dry.



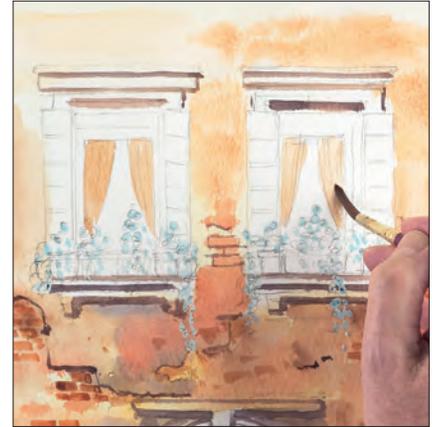
4. Use the half-rigger and shadow to paint round the edges of the cracked plaster. Suggest bricks with the medium detail brush and burnt sienna.



5. Paint the window lintels and sills and the detail above the fan light with shadow and burnt sienna.



6. Paint the fanlight with cobalt blue and a touch of burnt umber. Drop in a darker mix while this is wet.



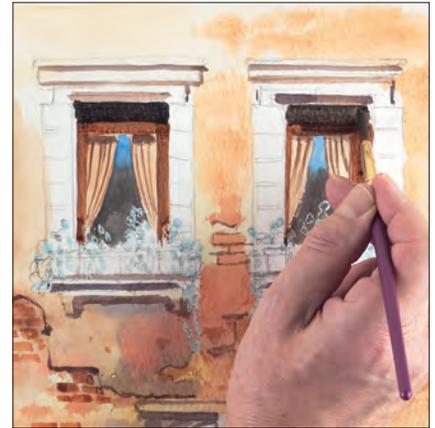
7. Block in the curtains with a wash of raw sienna and allow to dry.



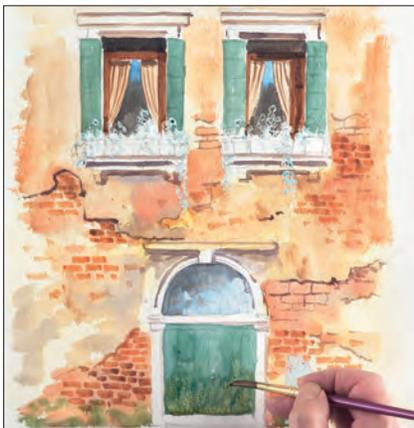
8. Use the small detail brush and a mix of burnt umber and ultramarine to paint the details of the curtains.



9. Paint the top parts of the windows with cobalt blue, then mix in burnt umber to paint the lower parts, going down over the masked flowers.



10. Darken the edges of the windows with the medium detail brush and a mix of burnt sienna and ultramarine. Paint darker shadows at the top with ultramarine and burnt umber.



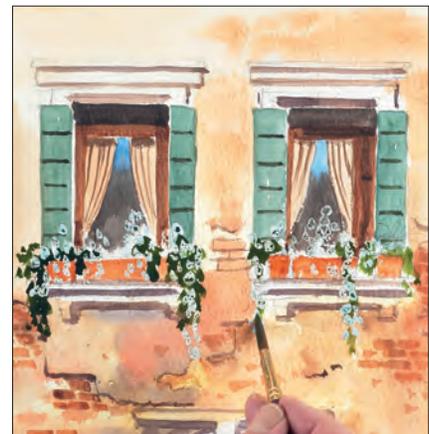
11. Paint the shutters and then the door with a mix of cobalt blue and midnight green. While the green is wet, drop in raw sienna at the bottom. It will push up into the background colour, giving the door a weathered look. Allow to dry.



12. Use the half-rigger and burnt umber to paint detail on the shutters and door.



13. Drop in the colour of the window boxes with the small detail brush and burnt sienna. Allow to dry.



14. Change to the medium detail brush and paint the foliage in the window boxes with midnight green.



15. While the dark green is wet, dot in sunlit green for the brighter parts of the foliage.



16. Paint the detail on the fan light with the small detail brush and a mix of ultramarine and burnt umber.



17. Make a pale mix of burnt umber and use the medium detail brush to paint the doorstep.



18. Paint the gondola with ultramarine and burnt umber.

19. Take the 19mm (3/4in) flat brush, pick up cobalt blue and midnight green and paint the reflection of the door with a zigzagging side-to-side motion.

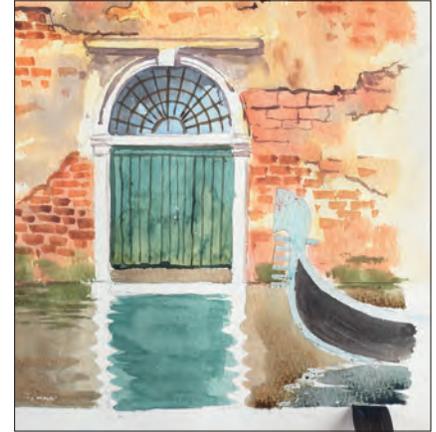




20. Make a pale mix of burnt sienna with a little cobalt blue and paint a reflection of the wall in the same way.



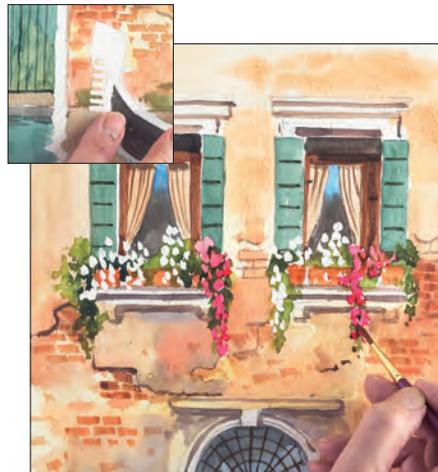
21. Continue painting the reflection, and add country olive to reflect the water-stained part of the wall.



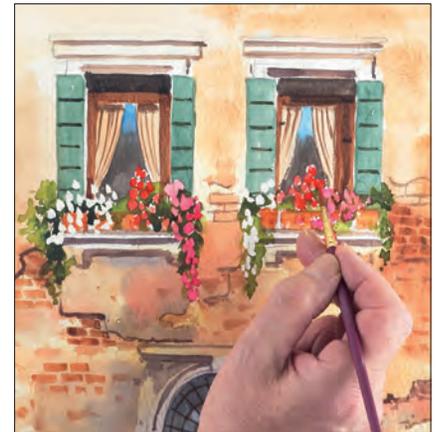
22. Paint the reflections on the right in the same way, then paint the reflection of the gondola with cobalt blue and burnt umber.



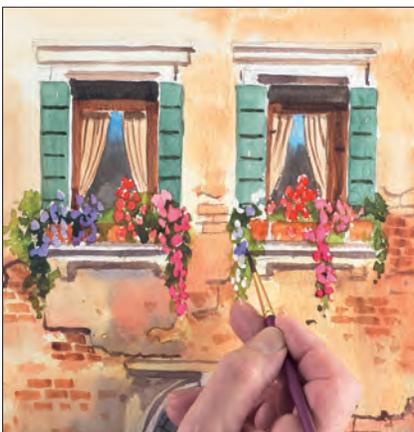
23. Paint the reflection of the doorstep with burnt umber and a touch of cobalt blue. Allow to dry.



24. Rub off the masking fluid with clean fingers. Use the small detail brush to paint some of the flowers with permanent rose.



25. Paint other flowers with a thin mix of cadmium red, then, while this is wet, drop in a thicker mix.



26. Paint the last flowers with a mix of cobalt blue and permanent rose.

27. Make a very pale wash of cobalt blue and use this to paint the outer parts of the gondola with the medium detail brush.





28. Add a touch of burnt sienna to the cobalt blue wash and use the 2cm (3/4in) flat brush to paint over the white parts of the reflection, then add horizontal ripples.



29. Change to the medium detail brush and paint dappled shade under the window boxes with shadow colour.



30. Take the white out of the window lintels by painting on a wash of burnt sienna.



31. Finally paint burnt sienna behind the gondola to make it stand out from the background.

Opposite
The finished painting.



My palette

I am not a great fan of a limited palette, by which I mean that I cannot see the point of struggling with two or three colours when there are so many to choose from. My style of painting is based on a selection of colours that I think is balanced and varied.

Mixing greens is not easy. If it is that simple, why do so many artists struggle to create a green that does not look muddy? To make things easy for you and myself, I have developed my own natural-looking greens, a fresh, light green, a medium-toned green and a cool dark green.

Another special colour I use is shadow, which is a subtle purple hue, ideal, as its name suggests, for painting shadows. It can be washed over a background, and since it is translucent, the background colour will show through.

The last colour on my list is white gouache. Purists might frown at the use of white, but who are you trying to please – yourself or others? I believe Constable and Turner used it with their watercolours, and if it was good enough for them, it is good enough for me.

The colours I use

Cadmium yellow	
Raw sienna	
Burnt sienna	
Burnt umber	
Cadmium red	
Permanent rose	
Magenta	
Cobalt blue	
Ultramarine	
Turquoise	
Sunlit green	
Country olive	
Midnight green	
Shadow	

Opposite

Blaze of Bougainvillea

This striking study of a window and doorway is dominated by the bright, colourful bougainvillea. For this I used a mixture of magenta and permanent rose with the golden leaf brush. The sunlit blue shutters really stand out against the vibrant background, and dark shadows across the foot of the painting help to contrast and highlight the sunshine on the wall and shutters. Texture on the stonework was created by stippling using the foliage brush.

