

Sea Portal Starter kit

COMPANION GUIDE

Paint your first oil sea painting - even if you've never used oils.



Complete this in one sitting.

Switch off. Use your hands. Finish with something you're proud to hang.

Designed for people who think they can't paint

Welcome

You're about to paint your first Sea Portal in oils



This guide and the accompanying video are designed to take you step by step through the entire process - from preparing the surface to adding the final highlights.

Oil paint may feel unfamiliar at first. That's normal. It blends slowly. It stays workable. It allows you to build depth and light gradually.

You don't need experience.
You don't need perfect brush control.

You just need to follow the process.
By the end of this session, you'll have a finished painting.

Let's begin.

© 2026 Jennifer Austin. All rights reserved

Supplies

Keep it simple. Student Quality is Perfect.

Oil Paint

- Titanium White
- Ultramarine Blue
- Viridian Hue
- Burnt Sienna
- Cadmium Lemon Hue
- Cerulean Blue Hue
- Magenta

These colours often come in small starter sets.

Surface

- 20cm round wooden panel
- or
- Round canvas

Brushes

- Medium flat brush
- Small detail brush
- Soft blending brush (important)

Other

- Mixing palette
- Rag or paper towel
- Odourless medium (e.g. Zest-It)
- Acrylic paint for underlayer (any warm tone)

Most of these materials will last for multiple paintings



The Sea Portal Framework

Every Sea Portal is built in clear phases.
Follow these in order and the painting will develop naturally.

1. Ground the Surface

Create warmth and establish the composition.

2. Mix Your Core Colours

Prepare your key sea and sky tones

3. Build the Sea

Block in depth, movement and shadow.

4. Blend & Refine

Soften edges and create fluid transitions.

5. Paint the Sky

Shape the glow and place the sun

6. Adding the Glowing Sun

Shape the glow and place the sun

7. Reflections & Highlights

Layer contrast and finish with restraint



Step 1 - Ground the Surface

Apply a thin acrylic underlayer in a warm tone.
Lightly sketch the horizon and main wave shapes.

Keep it simple.

Loose marks are enough.

Let this layer dry fully before moving to oils.



Warm underlayers create richer sea tones later



Step 2 — Mix Your Core Colours

Before painting, prepare your main tones.

Sea Base

- Viridian Hue
- Ultramarine Blue
- a touch of Magenta
- a touch of Burnt Sienna
- Lighten with Titanium White as needed.

Mid Sky

- Cerulean Blue Hue
- White
- a small touch of Viridian

Upper Sky

- Ultramarine Blue

Horizon Glow

- White + Burnt Sienna

Keep your rag nearby and wipe your brush between colour shifts.

Step 3 — Build the Sea

Using your Sea Base mix, block in the darker areas first.
Keep your brushstrokes horizontal to suggest movement

Introduce lighter tones gradually.

Blend softly using a clean, dry brush.

Avoid overworking the surface.

Step back occasionally and view the whole painting.



**Dark creates depth.
Light only works because shadow exists**

Step 4: Blend & Refine

Use a soft blending brush very lightly to soften edges and create a fluid surface

Refine darker areas where needed.

Add touches of viridian to create subtle translucency.



Blending Tip:
Blend gently and briefly.
Wipe excess paint from your brush between
passes

Every painting has an ugly phase.
Just keep painting

Step 5 — Paint the Sky



- 1) Start in the middle
Cerulean Blue Hue + White.
Add a touch of Viridian



- 2) Deepen the top Ultramarine Blue



- 3) Above the horizon
White & Burnt Sienna.

Blend lightly where the colours meet.
Avoid overworking

Step 6: Adding the Glowing Sun



- 1. Create the glow**
Lemon Yellow + White.
Soften with a clean blending brush



- 2. Expand the warmth**
Burnt Sienna
around the glow.



- 3. Add the sun**
Nearly White
at the centre.

Optional: Add soft clouds for depth. Blend lightly in circular motion.

Step 7 — Reflections & Highlights



- 1. Build the reflection**
Thin layer of orange.
Then yellow.



- 2. Finish with light**
Add the brightest
highlight sparingly.

Tip: Use Viridian Hue for small translucent sparkles.

Well done.

You've completed your first Sea Portal.

If you'd like to share your painting, you can find me on Instagram
@jen_and_pen

If you enjoyed this guide, you might also like to:

- Explore more sea portal painting lessons on my website
- Experiment with different skies, seas, and moods to make this process your own

Thank you for painting with me.
— Jennifer

www.jenniferaustin.co.uk

Just keep painting