

A BEACH LANDSCAPE

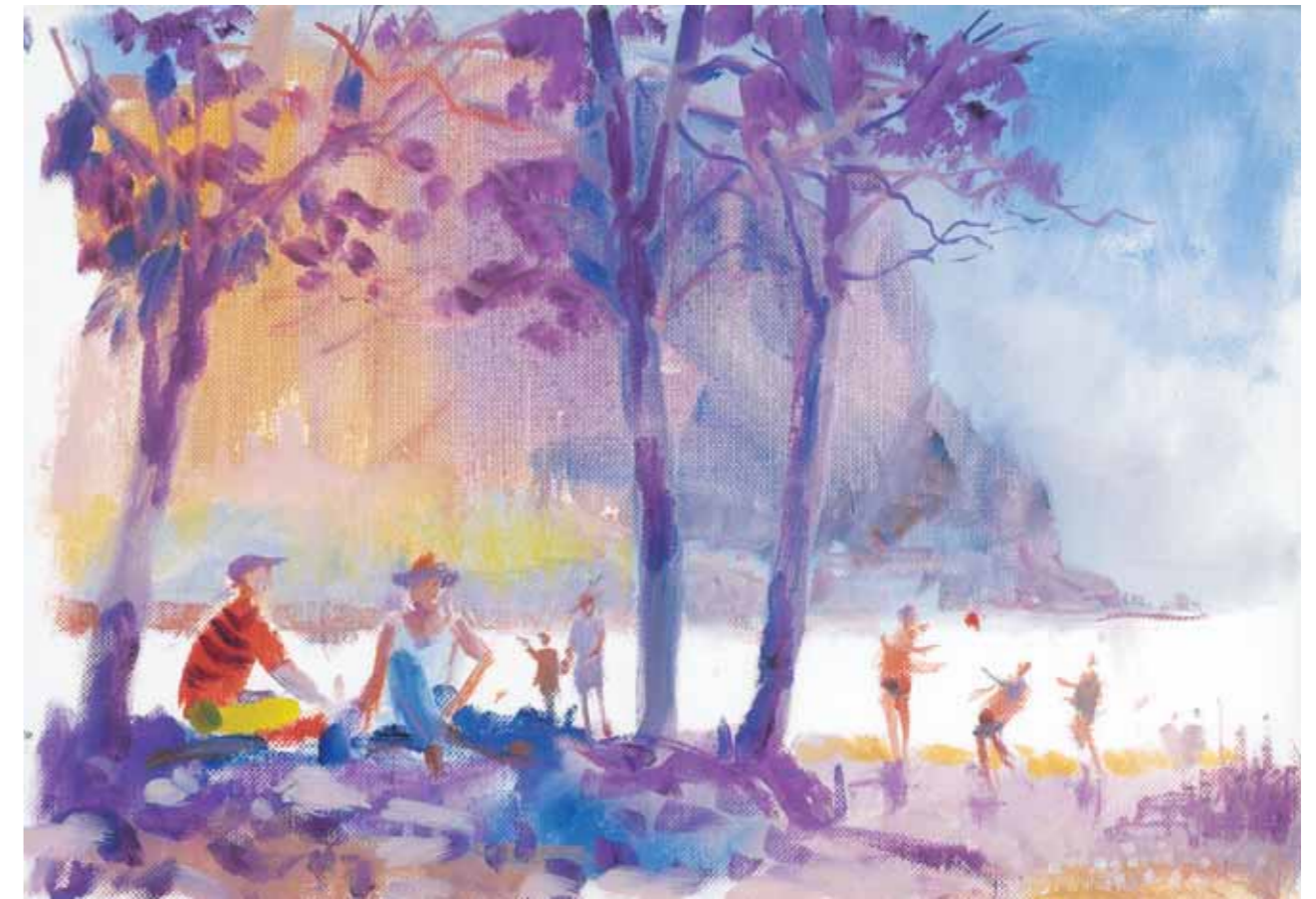
The seaside is an ideal place to sketch people at rest and at play and to set them in the context of a landscape. If you take oil paints to the beach, you will need to make sure that you keep them clear of sand or you risk ruined tubes of paint. Watercolour sketches that can be translated to oils back in the studio are a better choice if you will be working near people kicking up dry sand.



This little pen and wash sketch is a preliminary look at composition to establish where the horizon might be and to explore the tonal values.



To try out some colour ideas I used watercolour pigments for speed. The light on the sea was achieved by reserving white paper, a necessary technique with watercolour but one I thought I might also use with oils later.



I liked the exuberance of the colour, so back in the studio I decided to paint my beach scene in oils. The relaxed figures having a picnic are in strong contrast to the smaller but more vigorous figures seen in the distance. In the background, the colours change from warm to cool as they traverse from left to right. This is echoed in the figures by using predominantly warm colour in the picnickers and much cooler blues and even grey skin tones in the background figures. The trees act as a framing device, bringing the seated figures further into the foreground.



The handling of the trees is done with the same vigour as that of the figures, in keeping with the feel of the scene.



The figures with the ball are sketched in very lightly, allowing the viewer to gather information just from their postures.



The seated figures are much more closely observed; note the subtle changes of colour on the woman's arms.