

About Landscape Painting

Things to know about painting landscapes

1. Don't get caught up in the details. Much will be suggested, rather than painstakingly articulated. Don't detract from your focal point.



left, Poppy Field at Argenteuil, c.1873 by Claude Monet
right, Detail of Poppy Field at Argenteuil



2. Notice perspective issues. We see more detail in objects closer to us. Objects will also appear larger when they are closer to us. Consider atmospheric perspective as well.

3. Avoid "tube colors." A painting can look very artificial if you only paint with the colors as they appear straight from the container. Color is varied and complex and always changing. So, you must reflect that. Explore what happens when you mix color.

4. Utilize warm versus cool colors. Warm colors will tend to come forward and cool colors tend to move backwards. Add warm colors to places sunlight hits and cool colors into the shadows.

5. Avoid black. Many Fine painters, like Monet, rarely or never use black. Black can be very heavy, potent (a little bit goes a long way), and overwhelming to a painting. Try to create darks with color and use black sparingly or not at all.

6. Work from the background forward. Generally, you will lay the middleground over the background and the foreground over both the middleground and background. If you have ever painted a tree and then gone back to do the sky, you will immediately appreciate the strategy as it is an exercise in frustration that generally never looks as good.



above, Haystacks, End of Summer, c.1891 by Claude Monet

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Landscape Vocabulary

Background- The part of a scene or picture that is farthest from the viewer: the part of a scene that is behind a main figure or object in a painting.

Chiaroscuro- Literally translates as 'light-dark'. In artworks it is the use of strong contrasts between light and dark, usually bold contrasts affecting a whole composition.

Detailing- This is when you use a smaller, pointed brush to add clean lines and details. This is where you use a lot of control to create definite shapes and precise edges.

Dry Brush A painting technique in which a paintbrush that is relatively dry, but still holds paint, is used.

Dabbing- A technique used to “dab” accents of color onto the surface of a canvas. Using a stiff bristle brush or paper towel, simply apply the paint with quick, light pressure.

Focal Point- The focal point of a painting is an area of emphasis that demands the most attention and to which the viewer's eye is drawn, pulling it into the painting. It is like the bullseye on a target, although not as overt. It is how the artist draws attention to the particular content of the painting and is often the most important element of the painting.

Glazing- An acrylic glaze is created by applying one translucent color over another color to create depth and complexity in color.

Horizon Line- The point where the earth meets the sky. It is always at eye level.

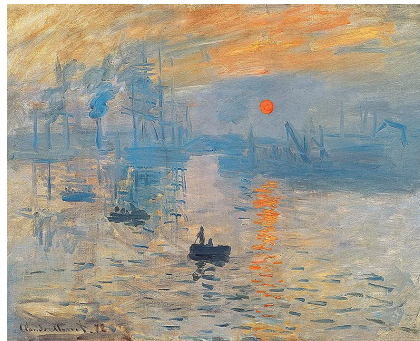
Impasto- Refers to an area of thick paint or texture, in a painting. One way to create an impasto is by painting with a palette knife.

Middleground- the visual plane located between both the foreground and background.

Sgraffito- A technique used in painting, pottery, and glass, which consists of putting down a preliminary surface, covering it with another, and then scratching the superficial layer in such a way as to reveal the first layer.

Underpainting- An initial layer of paint is applied to a ground, which serves as a base for subsequent layers of paint.

Wet-in-wet- applying fresh (wet) paint onto a wet surface or onto paint that is still wet and fluid.



What techniques can you identify in these paintings and details of paintings? More than one answer can apply. Justify your answer.