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Carlson's Guide To Landscape Painting



Synopsis

Written by a famous American painter and teacher, whose landscapes are found in many of the world's most noted museums, this book is known as one of the art students' most helpful guides. It provides a wealth of advice on the choice of subject; it tells what to look for and aim for, and explains the mysteries of color, atmospheric conditions, and other phenomena to be found in nature. Through his profound understanding of the physical nature of landscapes and his highly developed artistic sense, John Carlson is able to explain both the whys and the hows of the various aspects of landscape painting. Among the subjects covered are angles and consequent values (an insightful concept necessary for strong overall unity of design), aerial and linear perspective, the painting of trees, the emotional properties of line and mass in composition, light, unity of tone, choice of subject, and memory work. In the beginning chapters, the author tells how to make the best of canvas, palette, colors, brushes, and other materials and gives valuable advice about texture, glazing, varnishing, bleaching, retouching, and framing. Thirty-four reproductions of Mr. Carlson's own work and 58 of his explanatory diagrams are shown on pages adjoining the text. As Howard Simon says in the introduction: "Crammed into its pages are the thoughts and experiences of a lifetime of painting and teaching. Undoubtedly it is a good book for the beginner, but the old hand at art will appreciate its honesty and broadness of viewpoint. It confines itself to the mechanics of landscape painting but, philosophically, it roams far and wide. . . . This is a book to keep, to read at leisure, and to look into for the solution of problems as they arise, when the need for an experienced hand is felt."

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Customer Reviews

Written by a famous American painter and teacher, whose landscapes are found in many of the world's most noted museums, this book is known as one of the art students' most helpful guides. It provides a wealth of advice on the choice of subject; it tells what to look for and aim for, and explains the mysteries of color, atmospheric conditions, and other phenomena to be found in nature. Through his profound understanding of the physical nature of landscapes and his highly developed artistic sense, John Carlson is able to explain both the whys and the hows of the various aspects of landscape painting. Among the subjects covered are angles and consequent values (an insightful concept necessary for strong overall unity of design), aerial and linear perspective, the painting of trees, the emotional properties of line and mass in composition, light, unity of tone, choice of subject, and memory work. In the beginning chapters, the author tells how to make the best of canvas, palette, colors, brushes, and other materials and gives valuable advice about texture, glazing, varnishing, bleaching, retouching, and framing. Thirty-four reproductions of Mr. Carlson's own work and 58 of his explanatory diagrams are shown on pages adjoining the text. As Howard Simon says in the introduction: "Crammed into its pages are the thoughts and experiences of a lifetime of painting and teaching. Undoubtedly it is a good book for the beginner, but the old hand at art will appreciate its honesty and broadness of viewpoint. It confines itself to the mechanics of landscape painting but, philosophically, it roams far and wide. . . . This is a book to keep, to read at leisure, and to look into for the solution of problems as they arise, when the need for an experienced hand is felt." Unabridged republication of the revised (1958) edition.

Save your money. Even though the author keeps referring to the use of color in landscape painting, there is no one picture in the entire book in color. All of the painting that the author refers to are in black and white. What a shame that a book that is suppose to be a guide to landscapes in really a study in charcoal drawing.

I has expected at least a few more illustrations, more color, more examples of what the author is talking about in fewer words Seems classic but dated.

This book has its strong parts and its. . . well "stuffy" parts. Carlson is very good when stressing the elements of composition. He also wants a landscape composition to have some elements of realism. He does get the techniques for this concept across. This is good for those painters who tend towards a more realistic or literal approach to landscapes My painting stresses more on design

and color than on the more realistic representation that Carlson proposes; however, I still learned a lot from this book. Carlson can clearly point out what makes a landscape look convincing. He is very, very good at communicating this aspect of painting. His observations on the rather "psychic" or "spiritual" aspect of trees is my favorite part of his book. (Like we used to say back in the 1960s, "Oh Woowooow!")

This book is fantastic. I read it initially from the library but felt I needed it in my own collection for a reference. Its a little long winded, but makes so many points that have been very helpful in improving my painting skills.

Black and white illustrations, way too much copy that was written in 1956 that simply doesn't translate well in today's world. There is some good information but it is presented in such a bland and mechanical way that it might as well be talking about how to change out a tube on your ham radio. Actually made me not want to paint. It made painting seem so mechanical and there was no passion in his writing.

Carlson goes from the aesthetic to the nuts and bolts of landscape painting. I had considered the different colors and values in the sky holes of trees, for instance. Also, I have been taught to look, then to paint. Carlson says, to look, to memorize, then go away to paint from memory. Such will bring more creativity and invention in one's art. I was always too much the slave to what was in front of me. Carlson urged me to take the freedom to rearrange my view anyway I want in order to arrive at a better composition.

No easy read, this book is blowing my mind with method as well as philosophy on landscapes and art in general. It is changing the way I see the world around me. I took a workshop with a master landscape painter who told me it was the ONE absolutely essential book to any student or artist. He has several copies and rereads it even to this day after painting for over 40 years. It is in the school of abstract expressionist design to express what you are seeing. It encourages the artist to use nature as a well spring for inspiration and a starting point, and is not at all about dry literal copying of exactly what you see. There are valuable insights as to how to pick an "idea" you are supporting in your image, as well as the tools to render it, because art is an expression, first and foremost. It is technically and spiritually wonderful. Much of the advice could cross over to other styles of art. There are so many lines in the book I would like to quote, but here are two: "Art is a thing of the

imagination. The underlying principles, the fundamentals, should be so hidden away by the beauty they are eventually to support, that it would require much digging to disclose them."and"There is no irresponsible or accidental child's play about the composing of a fine picture. Men like Leonardo, Michelangelo or Rubens were men of fine intellect as well as of sensitivity. Pure beauty is an orderly quality which seldom emanates from imbeciles or charlatans."While you will find very useful basic information on materials, etc, do not expect a "How to draw fence posts" type book. This book is a masterpiece. I plan to read it many many more times. It provides a vehicle for total self expression, which only years of tireless application can yield, yet spares the reader years of trial and error with timeless instruction on elements of atmosphere and technical laws known to the masters, thus delivering hope and inspiration.No serious artist should be without this book. I'm so grateful for it, and I sprang for the hard copy.

The only book you need for landscape painting. Some outdated info on mediums but otherwise all other information is still very relevant. Carlson writes in a very approachable way and simplifies large concepts into two or three sentences.For those complaining about the lack of color photos: you're not ready to paint yet.

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