

This sample critique page not only shows you what your online personal critiques will look like, but there are also many principals and demonstrations of painting and composition that make it an excellent pre-sign-up Art Lesson.

Below is a sample of a student's painting sent to us and the teachers painted and text responses. This is a very ambitious critique and not typical of all the critiques since this is a Graduation Assignment Critique where we give the student the most information of all their critiques. The first lessons are simpler and therefore the critiques are less complex.

Each student gets a personal WEB folder on the school site where their Lesson Assignments, and personal Critiques like the following are posted. When a student completes their 6 Lessons and 6 Assignments, we send them a CD with all 6 critiques and a final letter from the teacher with comments and next step suggestions.

Index thumbnails of your painting and my painted critique:

(Larger versions shown below.)



Student painting:

Image below of the student's assignment painting captured by the student on the DIGITAL WEB CAM we supply in the course sign-up kit and attached to the student's e-mailed assignment they send to us:

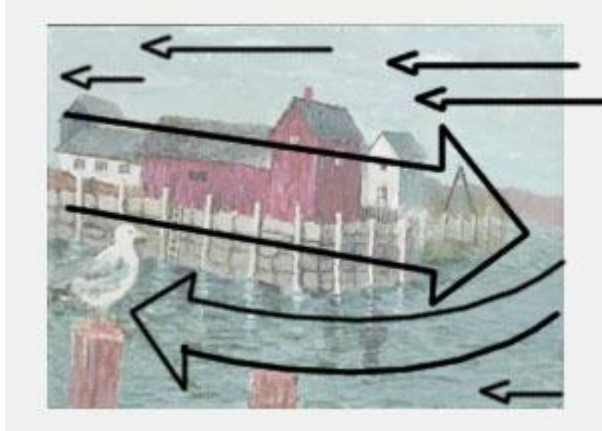


Dear Sample Student:

Good to see you working so diligently on your landscape assignment and getting it to me for review. Your painting image is above, lets start with my painted suggestions page below.



Note how the pencil sketch shows to overall plan of my version, using the shapes both positive and negative (the shapes between objects) to lead the viewer's eye into and around the picture.

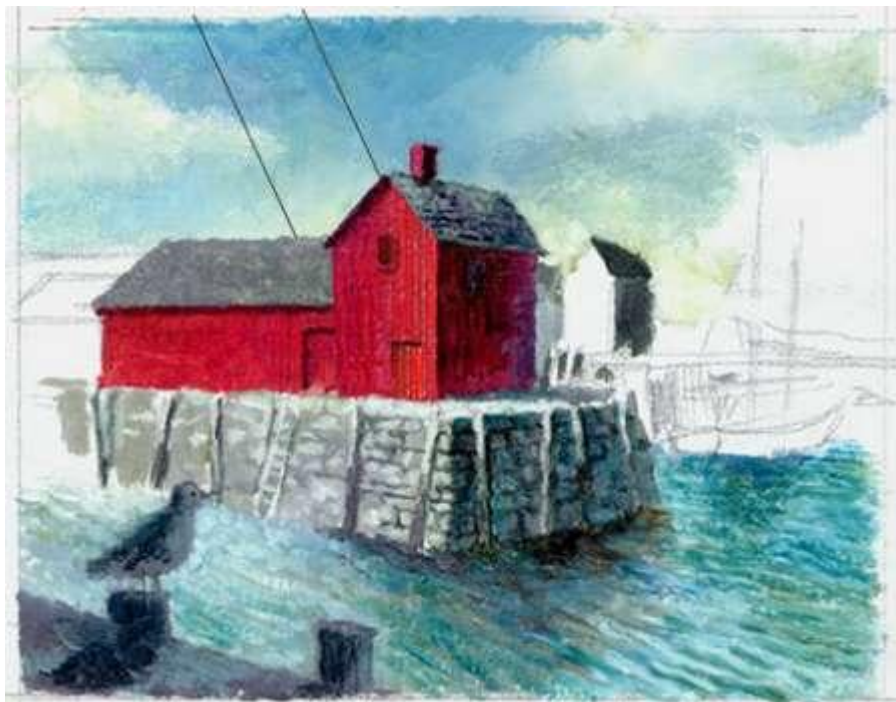


Analysis of your composition shows that the viewers eye is repeatedly led out of the picture. Review composition again in your text books.

The Sky:

In your painting the sky is painted in a single color with only the clouds varying from that single sky color. Study nature and you'll see that the sky is darker towards the top of your view and gets lighter and warmer towards the bottom (horizon).

For a more natural, interesting sky note the color of the critique painting sky is achieved by using blues for the top and then adding white and a touch of yellow towards the horizon and then blending the two mixtures in the interpolation highlighted by the two black lines below. So the sky both is dark and bluer at the top and lighter and less blue, with a touch of yellow and white towards the horizon.



The seagull - several points:

1. In your painting the seagull's tail just touches the left edge of your painting creating a "tangent" - the viewer's eye is drawn to that tangent, away from and out of the picture
2. The size shape and brightness of the seagull, it's prominent position draws the eye away from the main element - the red building - in my suggested version (one of many possible solutions) I have reduced the seagull in size and thrown it and the foreground pilings and the now seen dock into shadow (from say a passing cloud). This stops the seagull from fighting the red building for dominance and makes for an effective foreground "pointer" into the picture.

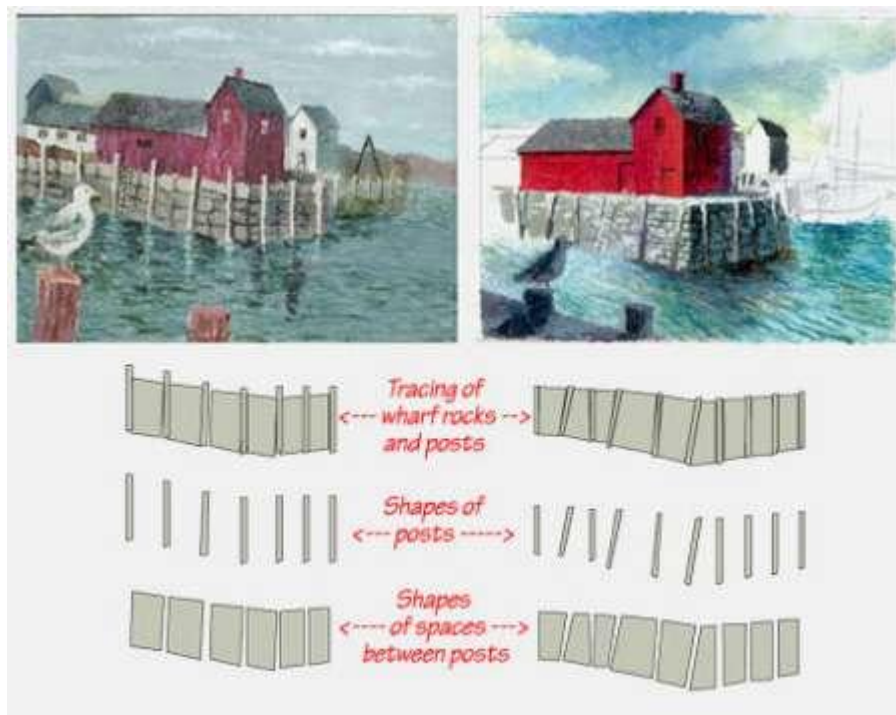


Varying elements and shapes for interest:

The shapes of the upright pilings and the shapes of the rocks between the posts in your wharf are all similar.

I have traced both the upright posts and the shapes between them paintings and shown them in the sketch to the right.

A principle of picture making is that "variety creates interest"



Dominance:

Every picture must have a dominant element, a subdominant element and then subordinate elements to organize the picture for the viewer (review your composition text book).



Study your painting and the critique sketch.

In your painting the seagull, the white fishing shack behind the red one and the red fishing shack compete for dominance - for attention - for primacy. That confuses the viewers eye.

Why are the three elements fighting for dominance?

1. The seagull is in the foreground, has a strong white contrast with the rest of the painting's middle values and that tangent with the painting's edge brings more attention.
2. The white fishing shack also has a strong contrast with the overall middle tones of your painting as well as a central position.
3. The red fishing shack is most central, larger than the seagull and the white shack but is middle toned in a middle toned painting and has less contrast (light or dark) than the seagull and the white shack.

So the three "tie" for the viewer's interest . . . but note how the red fishing shack is clearly the dominant element in the critique sketch:

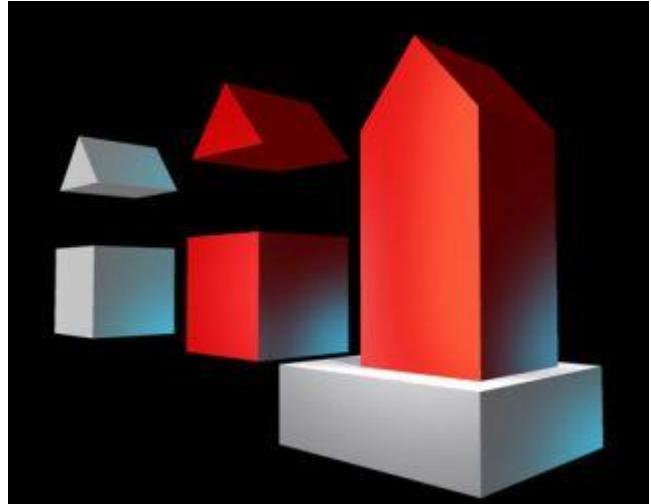
1. The seagull is in the foreground, has been reduced in size, thrown into shadow and has been moved away from a tangent with the painting edge so it is now subordinated.
2. The white fishing shack is made smaller.
3. The red fishing shack is slightly enlarged, made more "heroic" using dramatic perspective and the color of the light-struck side has been made more colorful

and varied so the viewer's eye is drawn to it and it becomes the clear dominant or important element in the painting

Form:

Restudy your basic form lesson. [Click here](#) to see a pop-up window with the basic forms - cube, cylinder, sphere, etc. from your basic form lesson.

Now see how you take the basic forms studied in the forms lesson and apply them to more complex forms like the fishing shack.

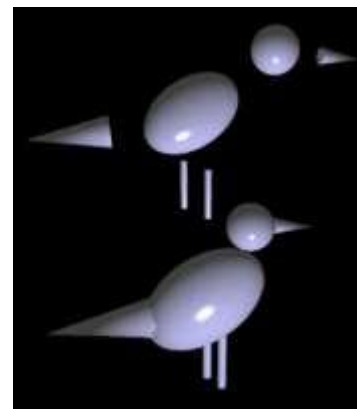


Here - we combine the triangular roof shape with the basic cube, change the color to barn red and sit the fishing shack on another cube that becomes the wharf in your painting. WITHIN the basic forms, you then do the variations of texture that becomes the shack and the wharf, keeping the underlying basic forms intact.

Note additionally the hint of reflected color on the shadow side from the blue water.

Form applies to everything - before you sketch or paint an object, consider the basic forms it is made of, where the light that reveals the form to us comes from and how that affects the form.

Example - look at the seagull, in my sketch shown in the shadow receiving it's form revealing light from the reflected light from the water. Shown here in simple 3d forms (cones, spheres and cylinders) and then combined into a basic bird. The details (feathers, patterns on the feathers must be applied without violating the form).



Painting the weathered fishing shack realistically:

For the sun struck side of the shack, try these steps:

1. Paint the dark "ground" level using alizarin crimson, blues - try your own mixes.

2. Using the side edge of a palette knife - make a thin mixture of black paint and painting medium and turpentine (experiment with the fluidity) and then stroke the board divisions vertically. Let the two bottom layers dry some . . . then . . .
3. Make mixtures of thick, lighter, brighter reds and yellows and "dry brush" using a bristle brush that fits between the board and drag down the "boards".



Perspective:

Study your perspective text book again - here is a quick sketch as to how the perspective works in the critique sketch and also is part of the making of the main red fishing shack into the "hero" - the dominant element of the picture.



Congratulations on your substantial effort in completing and sending us this landscape assignment. Next steps - reread the areas pointed out above in your texts. You also might want to try sketching this assignment image again implementing some of the ideas above and then go on to reading your next assignment texts.

Looking forward to your next assignment,

Your teacher, Barry Waldman