

TO DEVELOP
THE WAY
WE
LOOK
AT A
PAINTING
BY
COLIN CHABOT

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For painters and lovers of paintings.

This course entirely theoretical consists of five parts. It is for anyone who loves or devotes himself to painting and would like to go through the steps which will allow him to better understand its subtleties, to master his talent, understand the mechanisms behind a finished canvas, be able to reproduce at will and express himself in a more personal way indeed unique.

I had a career as a professional painter for over twenty years before dedicating myself to teaching painting and the development of conferences on all aesthetic concepts surrounding the practice of this art. All my knowledge is gathered here in 5 pdf which attempt to summarize a vast expertise that painters have discovered, perfected through time. But it is also a very personal look that I take at this artistic expression.

Painting is an art, but it is before anything else a language that has its particular rules. Like any language, it serves to communicate an idea, an emotion, a feeling, a vision from the creator. This can be done under optimal conditions so that the intention of the artist is perceived by the viewer with the greatest possible accuracy.

These basic rules can be divided in five categories.

1: BALANCE AND COMPOSITION

The first large category presents painting as a language that can be learned, grow, to better appreciate its subtleties. Our first perception of a canvas is the balance of all its elements. First the balance manifests itself by the lines, the points and the major axes issued from certain rules and fractions. Then appears to our eyes the general composition which, if it is a success, does not call for any addition or retraction. Basically I counted around fifteen ways to compose, to structure an artwork.

2: PERSPECTIVE AND PROPORTION

The second large category brushes the history of the invention of perspective. It addresses the fundamental basic concepts such as the importance of the horizon, the three types of linear perspectives, five other secondary types and tips to evaluate, report and divide the greatness of each detail. We also learn how these rules help to the realism of a canvas, giving depth, adjusting the proportions, being able to highlight the specific elements and even accentuate some psychological aspects.

3: COLOUR AND FORM

The third large category explains the role of colour and form during various periods of the art history. It addresses the basic theories of the primary, secondary, tertiary, complementary, warm and cold colours, the total values, the masses and their weight. It ends with their symbolic, their autonomy and their values as the personal expression of an artist.

4: SUBJECT AND SYMBOL

The fourth large category is dedicated to the first steps of the creation of a canvas; choice of the subject, frame, format, sketch, diagram and composition. These first choices are crucial for the singularity of the work. For this reason, each of these steps is accompanied with examples and the study of the symbolic of geometrical forms, the numbers, the objects, the universal symbols.

5: STYLE AND TOUCH

The fifth large category shows the range of mediums, the different supports and their stories. We learn to give ourselves the freedom to explore with inexpensive tools to better unfold the gesture, one's imagination. Then we learn self-criticism of our work in order to clear some avenues, some possible paths. We discover how the particularities issued from our daily universe can be transposed in painting. We study ways to provoke situations, moments conducive to the inspiration and discovery of a style that can be summarized into subjects, compositions, forms, a touch and a personal palette. We conclude with examples of various styles.

Note: The reproduced works in my presentations may not respect the exact proportions, nor the exact colours of the originals due to many transfers and manipulations possible. This doesn't detract from their principal role of serving as example.

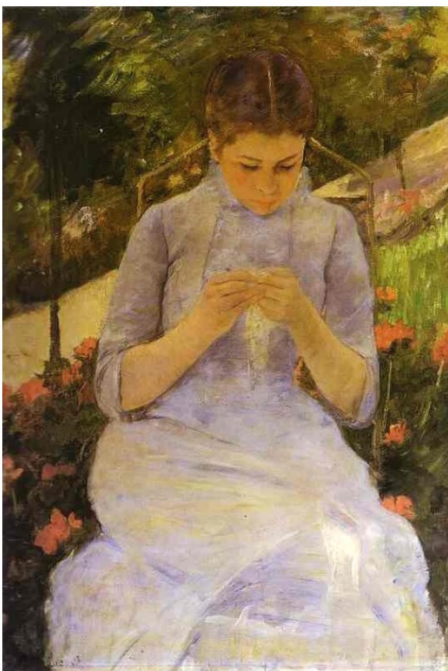
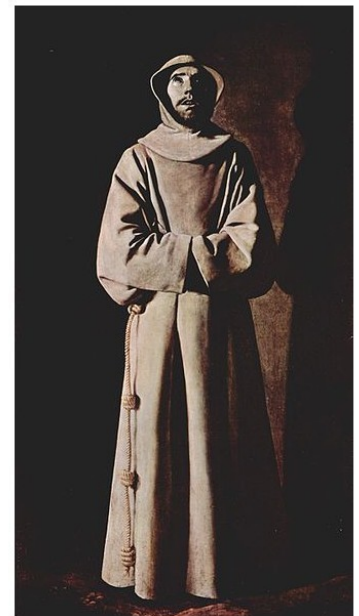
BALANCE AND COMPOSITION

Painting is a channel of expression and communication, therefore a language with its particular rules that can be learned, developed, refined to the point of becoming an art.

A successful painting is a painting that doesn't need an element either added, removed, displaced, shrunk or enlarged, faded, darkened, attenuated, clarified, interpreted or completed by a discourse from the artist. A painting is a universe in itself that needs to be autonomous in its manifestation in space and must include all that it needs to express its intention, its reason to be.

The first look at a canvas goes to the balance of the whole so that if the centre of the base is placed on a certain point (such as a scale) the image doesn't lean either to the left or the right. A balanced canvas is not an abstract concept but a concrete assertion which is confirmed by the simple act of placing it on the tip of a triangle. Here are the first four examples of a successful balance.

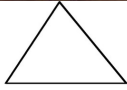
1: This Monk in Ecstatic Prayer by Zurbaran (1645 to the right) is placed right in the centre of the canvas creating a perfect balance but could be seen as a bit static and boring. However in this specific case it reinforces that unique mystic moment of ecstasy without any unnecessary distraction around. Its presence is well defined by the light side of the monk which stands out on a background almost black on the left and his side in the shadow that stands out on a wall lightly illuminated on the right. This background almost abstract emphasizes the voluntary simplicity of this character whose life is dedicated to devotion. The fairly limited palette of colour, also contributes to this effect. In the style of the tenebrous (tenebrosi) with a high contrast of light effect, we have to imagine the impact of this work under a lighting coming uniquely from candles with discreet and flickering flames.



2: This Woman Sewing by Cassatt (1880 to the left), although her pelvis seems well centred, her upper body is slightly leaning to the right and so is her gaze creating a subtle imbalance that would be acceptable except that it is accentuated by the small beige trail in the background which by accentuating it to the right takes the same outflow, the same diagonal. To compensate for this slight imbalance, the artist added willingly or perhaps unconsciously, a small shrub on the left whose vertical straight trunk is parallel to the frame, therefore a stabilizer and is covered with a dark green foliage adding weight on that side to counterbalance.



3: This Pierrot by Watteau (1718 to the left) is standing very straight in front of us but to avoid the static and frozen effect, the artist lightly shifted him to the left. To compensate for this imbalance he erected the bushes and the trees much higher on the right causing a risk of a new imbalance to the right. He readjusted the composition with three characters with light colours to the right versus a dark character to the left (balance between the light and dark masses). The slightly baggy suit of this Pierrot gives him the discreet form of an oval which gives him some melancholic softness thanks to these curves. The secondary characters frame him and draw with him a vague triangle whose summit is the head of Pierrot. Besides his hat suggests the halo of a holy martyr.



4: This Lady by Monet (1868 to the right) at first sight seems balanced due to the fact that she is placed slightly left of centre to balance with the long train of her dress on the right. But the heavy taffeta of her dress and the black hat on the small table on the right create an obvious imbalance on that side. The artist made a remarkable addition on the left, with one darker vertical fold in the tapestry which is perfectly parallel to the frame reinforcing the stability of the picture. Besides, the lady seems to be looking in that direction as to support it. The edge of the curtain to the right of an orange hue, more vivid and perfectly parallel to the frame, also plays its role as a stabilizer.



Here are four other examples of balance but more subtle.



1: The Swing by Renoir (1878 to the left) includes three characters on the left who gravitate around a tree trunk with especially in the foreground, a gentleman in dark blue, the whole creating a weight too heavy on the left compared to the lighter side on the right. The artist rebalanced the composition with the woman on the swing who is leaning the weight of her body to the right and is also looking subtly in that direction. The vertical tree trunk on the left also helps with the balance of the whole. The invisible central vertical line along the front of the gentleman in blue, seems to divide the picture in two distinct scenes which helps with the general stability. This creates also an invisible barrier that isolates the woman on the right side, giving her a vague feeling of solitude despite the other presences. Notice the trembling touch of the artist all over the canvas.



2: The Balcony by Monet (1868 to the right) is imbalanced by the position of the three characters shifted to the right. The width of the louvers is an evidence of this. The man in black, even with his head partially turned to the right, accounts for little because it blends with the dark background while the woman standing in a white dress frankly tips the canvas to the right. The artist resolved the problem mainly by turning the head of the woman sitting to the left and more so by accentuating her gaze. You can do the experiment by putting a small white oval on her face to see the whole picture tilted to the right. The vertical and horizontal lines of the louvers and balustrade are stabilizing elements. The dark plant, the end of the black bench on the left and even the umbrella which points to the left contribute more subtly to balance the whole.



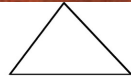
3: The Visitors of London by Tissot (1874 to the left) is a real feat of balance.

The dark mass of the columns on the right; the three main characters on the right who are turned to the right and mainly the child in black looking directly to the right create a very large imbalance. It is not the column isolated and slightly shifted to the left, which is yet very dark and parallel to the frame, that is enough to restore the balance, nor the two little characters on the left but the tiny cigar thrown on the second step and pointing to the left that is saving the whole. I call that the kite effect. A very small element placed on a neuralgic point of the canvas pulls the entire composition towards itself as if there were strings that connected it to the elements too heavy, preventing them from taking everything away. It is a success but risky.

4: The Appearance of the Virgin of Tiepolo (1747 to the right) is almost in the same problematic. A mass of characters unfolds mostly on the right. This mass is crossed by a diagonal that goes from the head of the Virgin on the right to the tip of the cross on the left and another one that goes from the head of the sister in black to the crown of thorns of the sister in white forming a neuralgic point at their crossing on the left. This rebalances somewhat but it is really the horizontal metal rod perfectly parallel to the frame and especially the little bird sitting on top that rebalance the whole.



In these two last examples, do the exercise of hiding the two small rebalancing elements and see the two pictures tilt to the right.



Two last examples



In the Calumny by Raphael (1495 top left) the main action takes place mostly to the right with the movement of two groups of characters that go towards one another to touch on the major meeting point of the vertical line of the right third and the horizontal line of the centre. The imbalance of the masses is mostly done by the two characters separated on the left where one points to the left and the other one in the darker clothing, follows him with his gaze. The darker depth of the arcades on the left somewhat helps the balance that is not totally mastered here. The painters of the Renaissance were not yet very skilled in the compositions that had too many characters. This is what the painters of the baroque period were going to master better.

In the Haystacks by Monet (1890 top right) it is easy to see the imbalance of the composition by the haystack on the right much more imposing than the one on the left. If the biggest one had been closer to the centre and the smallest one closer to the left frame, the balance could have been done with the distribution of the weights on the rest. But to compensate the artist rather chose to add a higher and darker hill on the left in the background and shadows that stretch to the left. These are some additions which improved the balance but here what is the determinant is all the touches of colours and mainly the ones of the blades of grass that point to the left like folded by the effect of the wind, which forces our gaze in that direction. Subtle but efficient.

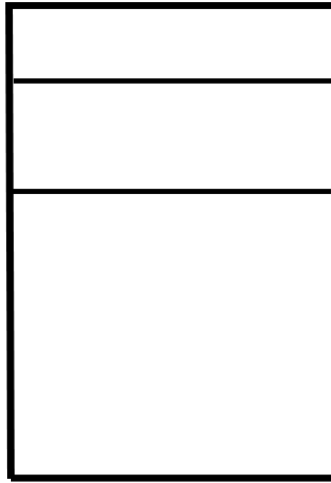
It is important that your eyes get used to perceive in each work that you contemplate or realize, if this concrete balance is found. It is what makes the primordial difference between a major work and a minor work. All the painting styles can and must be submitted to this fundamental rule except maybe if the primary intention is to derogate to this principle as in the Bad painting and even then. I don't know of any artwork from great masters of all eras which doesn't have this primary quality. This is what we will discover in many other ulterior examples.

To achieve this essential balance we must take into account many basic concepts and learn how to master them. It is later in my presentations that you will discover them.

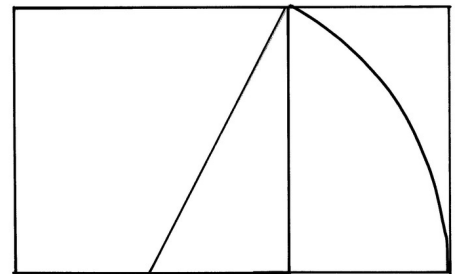
To aim for this balance, first we have to take into account some major lines that provide the framework for the composition, the skeleton of some sorts on which the body of the work will be built. There are different ways to draw these lines.

The lines issued from the golden rule, it is at the basis, the division of the surface of the canvas in height and width by $\frac{8}{13}$ or .618 . This will give the major lines closest to the centre. The parts obtained can be divided again by the same fraction in both ways and so on. This gives the important lines of balance (based on the arithmetic rules of Pythagore).

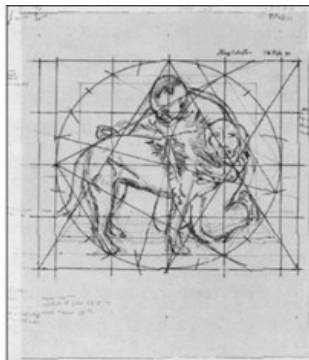
In this Madonna by Raphael (1514 to the right), a first division by $\frac{8}{13}$ gives a line that passes through the heads of the two characters in worship. The division of the top part again by $\frac{8}{13}$ gives another line that passes through the gaze of Jesus. The face of the Virgin stands out also because it is located in full centre of the width of the canvas framed by two curtains. The whole is contained in a rectangle that has already proportions that respect the golden rule.



To create a rectangle (to the right) that has these harmonious proportions, first we must make a perfect square then with a compass with a fixed point positioned on the midpoint of one of its sides and the other point on one of the opposite corners, we draw an arc that goes from the exterior and this way delimits another space that gives a rectangle that respects the golden rule.



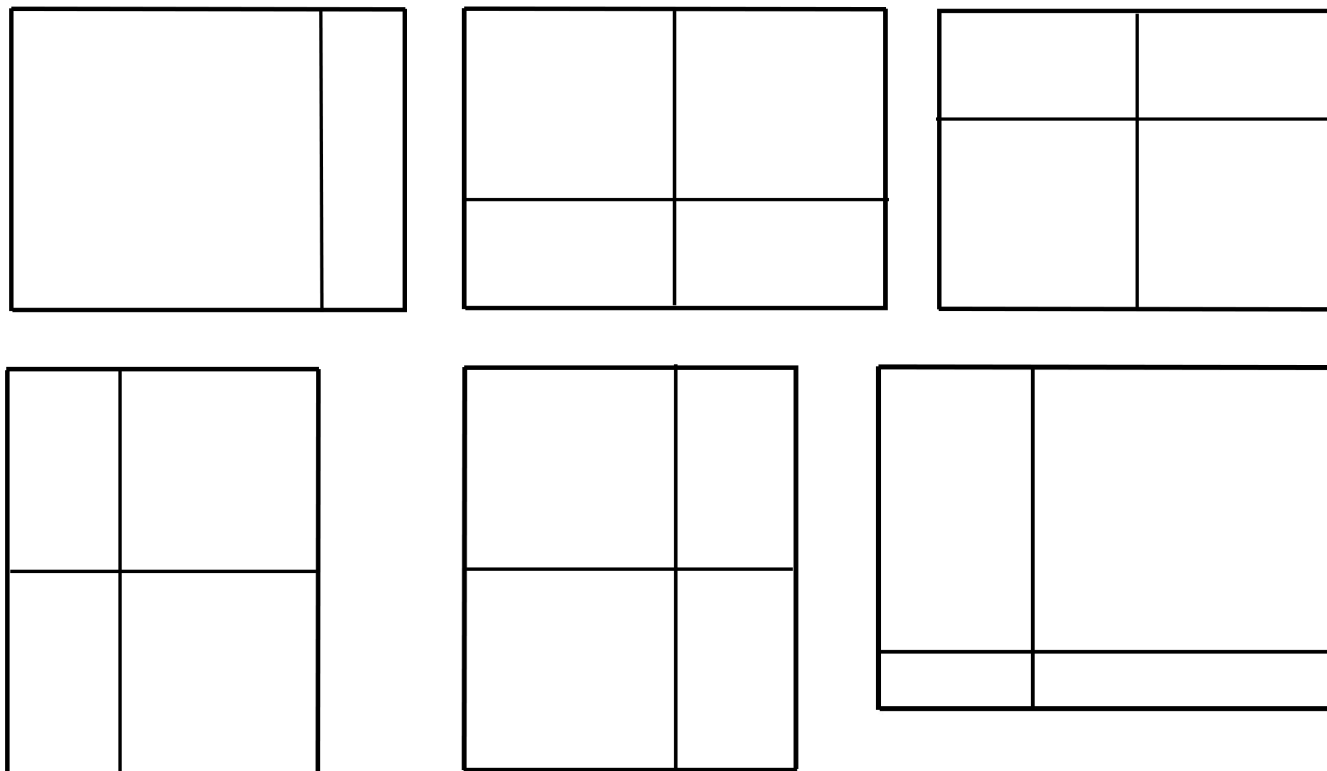
This approach to the golden rule that I made is very short and would ask for more explanations but I will not do it here because even if it has been commonly used during certain periods as much in painting as in architecture it was overestimated in its results. Today not too many painters still use it, due to its complexity to master.



Yet here are two paintings from a contemporary painter Colville (1991 and 1981 at the top) who generally paints mundane scenes often issued from his daily life. It is in taking precise measurements to build his house that he developed an obsession to the composition geometrically perfect that he then transposed in his paintings. This extreme rigour in composition which among other things calls for the golden rule sometimes produces works that immortalize and sanctify the simple gestures of humble people; sometimes freezes in a certain malaise the life that escapes us.

No order at all in a painting expresses chaos and sterile agitation; too much order expresses the rigour and the sclerosing control. Up to each one to find his way between these two extremes.

Here is a first method that can be a simpler compromise to the golden rule, however without making it equal, that consists in delimiting a square on the surface of a rectangle (ex.1 at the bottom). A variation consists in dividing the surface with a line in two equal parts, then in the other direction in delimiting two squares (ex .2 3 4 5 at the bottom). Another variation is to use two perpendicular lines to delimit a square on its surface (ex.6 at the bottom).

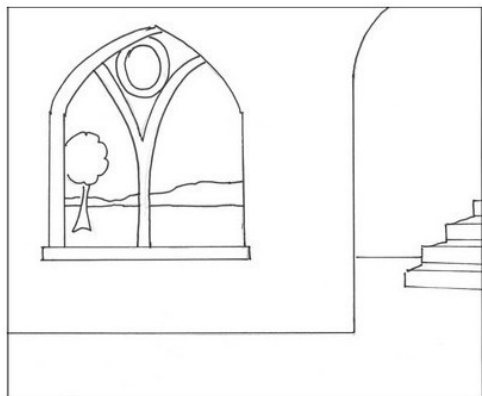
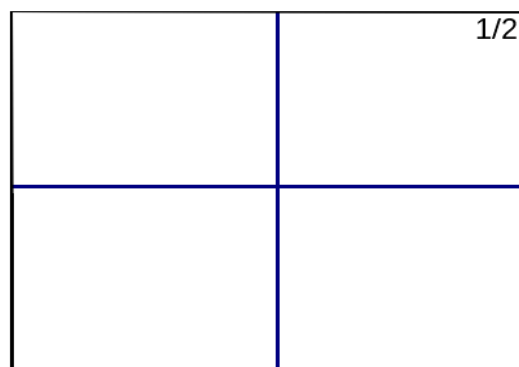


All these examples delimit the areas and give lines that can become obvious major lines of the composition; which means that they naturally catch the eye first.

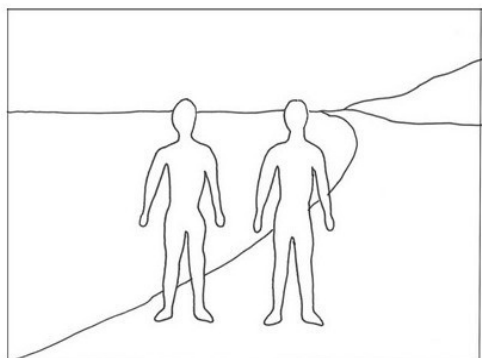
However, the easiest way to divide a surface is to fraction it in two, in three, in four, up to six or more (if necessary) in both directions. It is the method that I personally used the most often because the eye recognizes consciously or unconsciously these harmonious fractions since they divide the canvas in balanced proportions between them.

The fractions of a canvas depend on its width and its height therefore of its obvious divisions. This gives the major lines or called lines of power and the meeting of two of these lines in one point gives the major points or called points of power of the whole surface. You are free to choose the major lines or the major points which will highlight the element of your composition that you consider the main subject or the most important elements.

The division in two of the canvas gives the central line, as much vertical than horizontal. It is that line that we guess at first even if it is invisible and doesn't underline any element in particular. It is the line of symmetry, the perfect balance but that freezes the elements if it crosses them. It is very important because it divides the canvas in two distinctive equal parts and if we ignore it, it can play bad tricks.

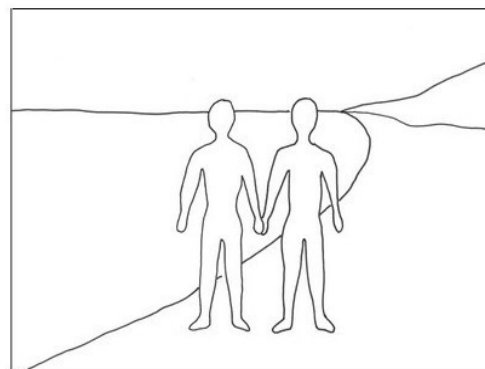


In this schematized example (to the left) the artist wanted to put emphasis on a medieval window and the landscape it contains. But instead of contemplating it the eye of the viewer is drawn inexorably to the right edge of the window because it runs along the vertical centre line of the composition. What was needed was simply to shift the window a little to the left or have it overlapping the central line a quarter or a third of its width to avoid this unfortunate distraction.

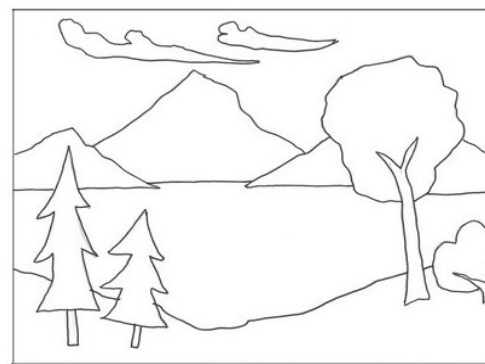


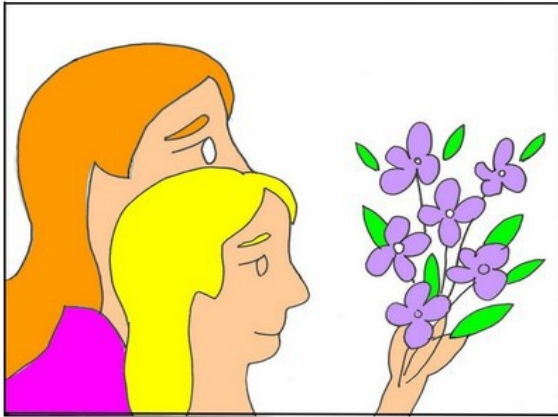
This schematized couple (to the left) who walks on a beach is not in harmony and is on the verge of divorce because the vertical central line separates them in a definitive way. They walk side by side but they are two strangers to each other.

In the second example (to the right) the fact that they are holding hands and that this sweet gesture is exactly on the vertical central line it strengthens their bond and guarantees a solid union. Their friendship seems to be standing and indestructible. This is all caused by the invisible central line. The central line is the most obvious therefore must be used with caution.



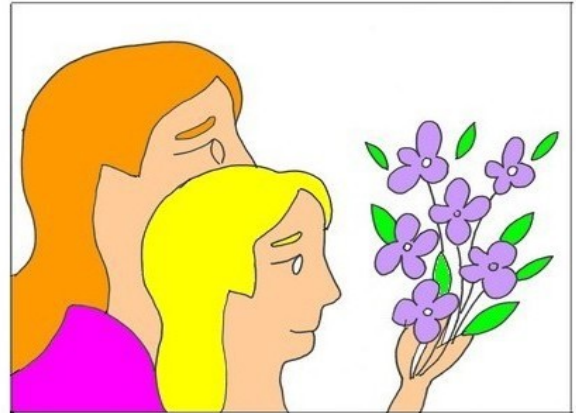
Generally we avoid placing the line of the horizon in full centre of our composition so to not provoke a too big symmetry, sign of stability but also of deadly boredom. Because nature, like life, is always in movement, seeking a true balance but once obtained it pushes us to other challenges. Everything is precarious and changing. But in this landscape of schematic exception (to the right) the line of the horizon in full centre accentuates the almost eternal side, unchangeable (on a human scale) of these mountains and this peaceful lake.





In this other example (to the left), a mother and her daughter admire a bouquet of flowers. Both characters are contained in the left half of the composition separated from the bouquet by the central vertical line giving an impression of two distinct parts. It is even hard to believe that it is the hand of the young girl who is holding the bouquet.

In the second example (to the right) the face of the young girl moved forward and now overlaps somewhat the central vertical line uniting both parts of the composition. The central line even passes through her eye giving an importance to her gaze thus to her fascination in front of the bouquet. A slight move of a simple element in a canvas can change the impact of the subject to the viewer.



Generally, we have to avoid that the subject of a composition runs along the invisible central line, as much vertical than horizontal, because it draws the eye to this line first and this puts the accent on the edge of the object rather than the object itself.

But every rule always has exceptions. In this young girl with lilacs by Tissot (1875 to the right), the artist played with the centre line by making sure that the young girl runs along this line putting the accent subtly on the right side of her body and on the slightly twisted movement that she does by turning her head backwards. This makes her gesture palpable, alive as if she had been seized one instant by the artist in a moment of grace. This is called taking calculated risks.



It is the same that we would not place, a priori, the subject

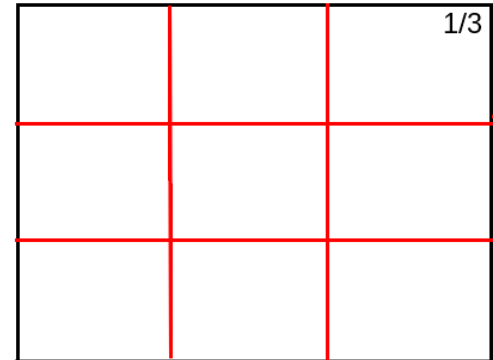


along the edge of the canvas at the risk of causing a very strange partitioning impression like in the example of that still life (on the right) with two objects that brush against the top and the right side. Generally, an element that stops on one side of the canvas, like it would know beforehand that it would be enclosed in that narrow space is unsightly, like this bouquet (on the left) that brushes against three sides and whose flowers will quickly wilt for lack of air.

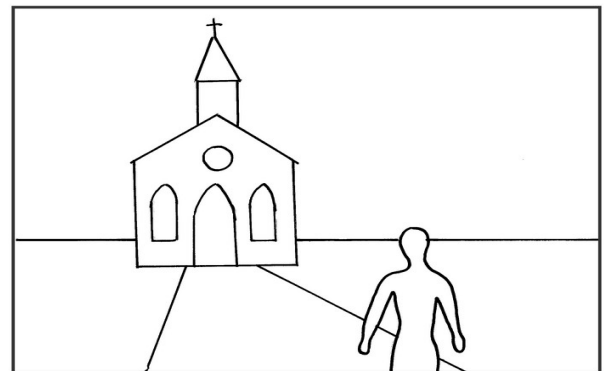
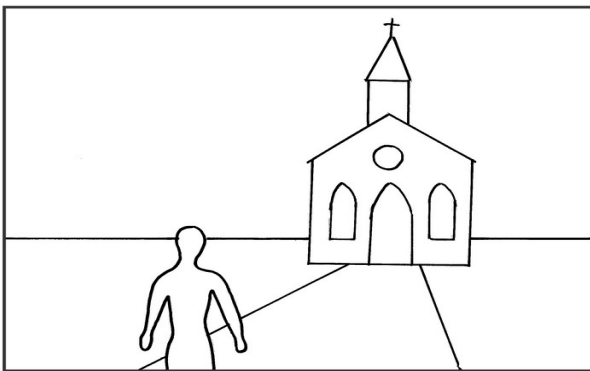


The visualization of the lines and the major points of your subject behind the multiple forms and patterns are important because they are the ones that will structure and solidify the general composition.

The use of thirds is very well known in photo. It is the most common division because it is the most harmonious. It allows to place the main subject in an area close to the centre while leaving room for the deployment of secondary subjects or backgrounds. It would not occur to an experienced photographer to place a character in full centre in front of a magnificent view. The third, as much from the top than the bottom, also allows to position the horizon in an area that separates the sky and the earth in two balanced proportions.



As in the West we read the writing from left to right, therefore it is usually recognized that we naturally look at a painting from left to right. Thus we must take that into account in the sequence of the elements on a canvas. Often a story is told in the chronological succession of the elements left-right.



In this schematization of a photo (top left), an individual is at the place where the vertical line of the third on the left passes through his spine and he is proud to show us a church whose central axis is on the vertical line of the third on the right. The reversal left-right shows a church that is admired by an individual. In arranging these two elements on two lines of the thirds of the same importance this gives the same importance to both subjects.

In this schematized landscape, very simple (bottom right) and yet very effective; one single road in vanishing point on a low horizon; a series of just three poplars on each side that quickly become smaller in receding are enough to suggest a great depth. The very small hills in the distance point discreetly on each side of the road and by this effect contribute to strengthen the main subject. Despite the decentering of the subject to the left, the position of the vanishing point of the road on the line of the left vertical 1/3 and the horizon on the bottom 1/4 give a solid composition in L. With little means we suggest here the vast spaces thanks to this quick perspective and these large open areas.



In this landscape by Gleizes (1902 to the right) the centre of the grove of trees is located on the line of the vertical right third and occupies half the canvas while the left side opens to a distant landscape. There could be a big shock between the foreground on the right very close to us separated by the central line from the plane very far on the left if it was not for the small path that unites them. Notice the apparent rough texture of the brush stroke that is equally distributed all over the canvas helping the general unification. An impression of a simple life, even primitive emerges from the entirety.

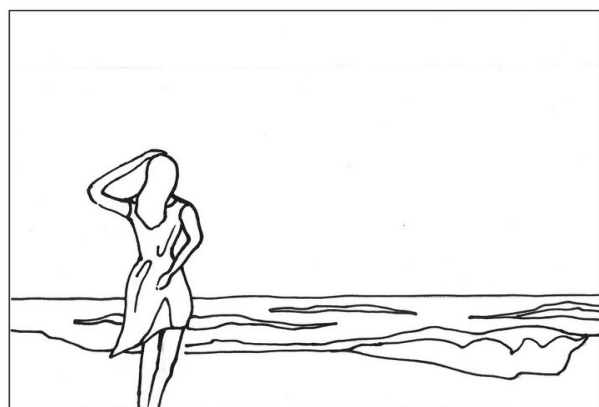


In 'Looking out the Sea' by Marshall Brown (to the left) the young girl in the foreground has her head placed exactly at the centre of the canvas in both directions. Her body, forming a diagonal curve is highlighted because it is in opposition with the front curve of the beach. The other young girl has her head on the line of the vertical left third and the curve of her body follows the curve of the beach. Despite the fact that the scene is concentrated on the left with two dark shrubs it is both their gaze turned

to the right that seem to be looking at the little character in the distance on the right that rebalance the whole.

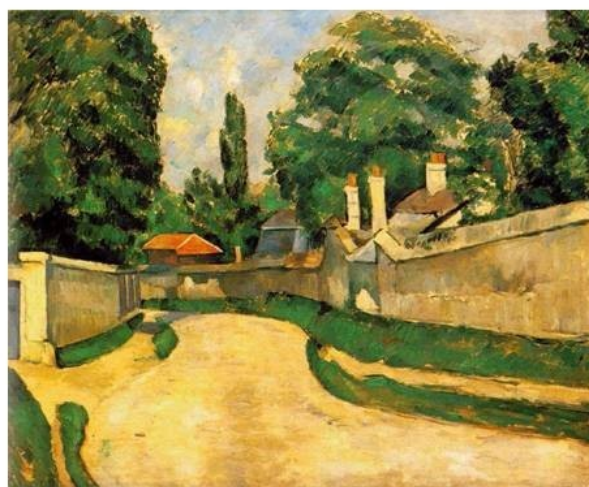
The use of the quarters can help give importance to an element which is yet placed more on the sides. The quarters also subtly enhance the symmetry of the canvas suggesting the central line even if it is not underlined by any element whatsoever. It is ideal also to isolate an element and highlight it in a setting or in opposition to a large environment.

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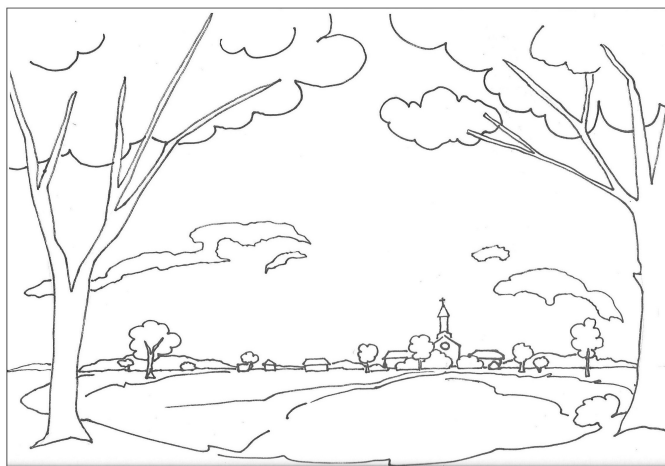
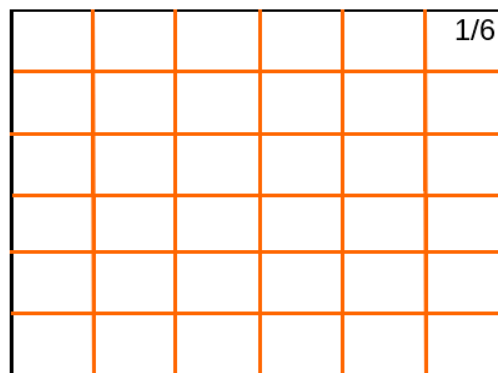
In this schematized scene at right angle (to the left) dominated by simplicity, a girl seen from the back, looks in the distance, maybe waiting for the return of a sailor. Her position is solidified by the fact that she is crossed in her centre by the line of the vertical left quarter which responds very well to the sea horizon which is on the line of the bottom quarter. Despite this pretty solid component, a more important wave is projected to the right to insure the balance of the entirety. The infinite empty space at the top leaves room for imagination.

In 'Houses on the the Roadside' by Cézanne (1881 to the right) the vanishing point of the road on the horizon is located on the line of the vertical left quarter. The extreme width of the winding road in the foreground respects the perspectives and therefore helps us to feel like we are walking in the scene. The dominance of the golden yellows and emerald greens simulates a warm and sunny day. The complementary discreet contrasting touches of red and brown prevent the monotony of the palette. Some cold blue in the sky also calms the effect of the warm colours.



In 'Still life with Onions' by Cézanne (1895 to the left), exceptionally the bottle that is used as a pivot to the entire composition is located on the line of the fifth left vertical, a fraction used very little but that gives an effect of a slight natural disorder. And furthermore the half table completely decentered to the left accentuates the side painted from life without any desire for perfection. Only the white cloth, the lightest shade of the whole canvas, deposited carelessly to the right brings back a semblance of balance.

The use of sixths is more rare but can serve to frame with an element in the foreground, a composition that unfolds mainly in the background giving this way more depth to the subject. A very low or very high horizon on the line of the sixth will give an unusual perspective allowing to accentuate or increase details in the sky or the earth. Useful also for a panoramic canvas all in width.



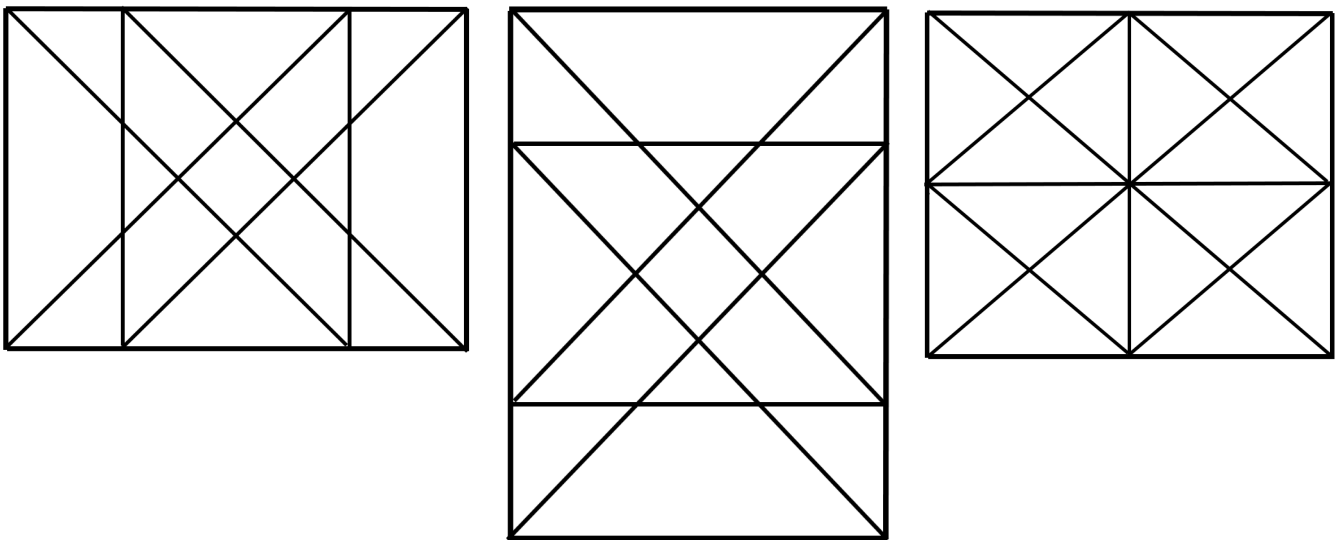
In this schematized scene (to the left) built around an oval, the tree trunk on the left, which is on the line of the sixth left vertical, forms with the foliage of the tree on the right an arch that frames a landscape dominated by a small village in the distance. The village decentered to the right counterbalances with the tree on the left. Notice the clouds and the earth in the foreground that accentuate the oval frame of the composition and introduce the subject slowly.

In 'Romance of the Sea' from an unknown individual (to the right) two palm trees placed exactly on the two lines of the sixth vertical on each side, frame an idyllic view worthy of postal cards, souvenir of a trip in the south. This is an effect said to be repelling to create a foreground that frames and slowly lowers the main subject to the background. Palm trees in silhouette to the right in the background are counterbalanced by a flowery grove on the left in the foreground. A weakness in this kitsch canvas is that the foam of the waves should have been tinged with more yellow to respect the local colour created by the sunset.



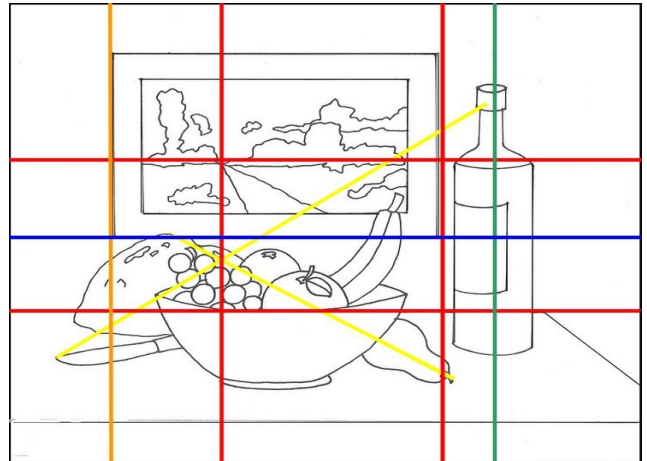
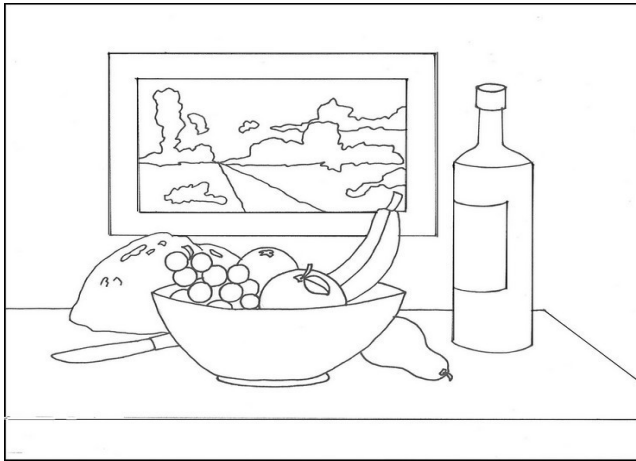
Many also use fractions to quad their subject and their canvas to better seize the proportions and bring them back from one to the other. In the medieval time they used a wood frame on which they stretched strings to make a grid that was placed in front of a subject to better seize the proportions.

There are different ways to quad our subject with horizontals, verticals or diagonals. Here are three of them taken as an example but there are many others.

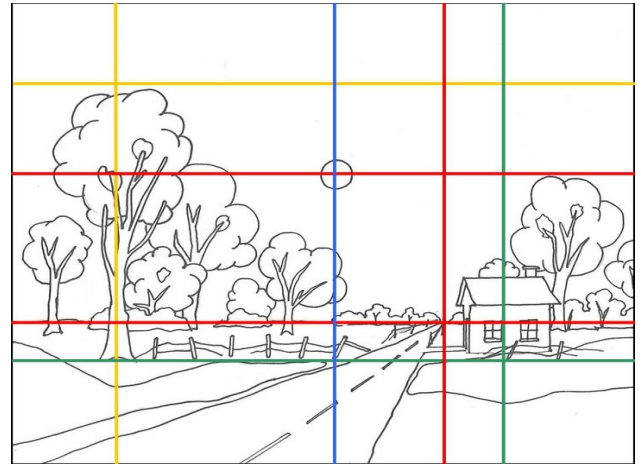


Here are two rectangles (on the left and centre) one of which is made of two squares brought back starting from left and right and then completed by four diagonals and the other one by two squares starting from top and bottom and also with four diagonals. The third rectangle (to the right) shows a classic form of a grid. But the easiest way is to rely on the obvious lines that cover the basic subject, whether they are straight or curved and reproduce them with a schematization of horizontals, verticals or diagonals on the canvas.

The following examples will show you the use of major lines and points in the organization of the subject.

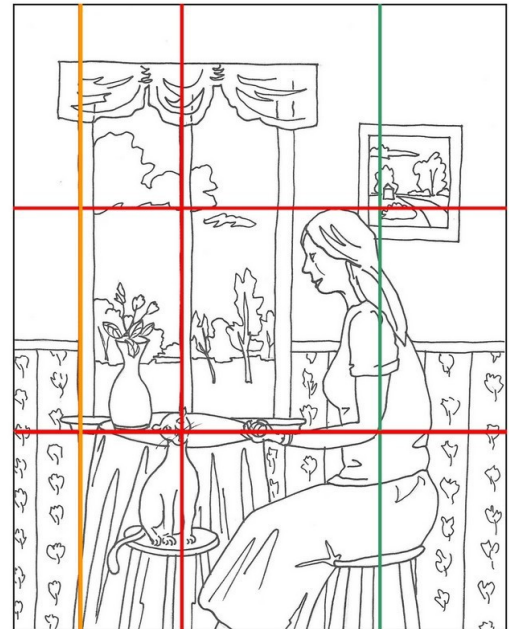


This schematized classic still life (at the top) is composed of a main diagonal that starts from the knifepoint to the left and ends on the bottle cap to the right. Another secondary diagonal goes from the tip of the loaf of bread to the left and ends on the stem of the pear to the right. Here is the organization of the foreground but the artist wanted to give the emphasis to the frame on the wall by placing its base on the central horizontal line and delimiting both sides with the line $1/6$ on the left and the line $1/3$ on the right. But to give depth to the landscape in the frame the point of horizon of the road is located on the major point made by the meeting of the line $1/3$ left vertical and the line $1/3$ top horizontal. By this gesture, our eye seems drawn first by this landscape. Since the entire composition is shifted to the left, the bottle on the right on top of being important for the general balance is located on the line $1/4$ right vertical which gives it even more presence. I emphasize the line of $1/3$ bottom of the back of the table that responds to the one $1/3$ top of the horizon of the landscape in the picture.



This classic schematized landscape (at the top) is harmonious because the most elevated height of the trees to the left is rebalanced with the road that goes and ends to the right. To be on the safe side the vanishing point of the road is located on the meeting of the horizon line situated on the line of $1/3$ horizontal bottom and the line of $1/3$ vertical right insuring a solidarity with this primary point of interest. To the left the trees stop at the line of $1/6$ top and the taller one has the trunk on the line of $1/6$ left. To the right the trees stop at the line of $1/3$ top. The sun is located at the meeting of the vertical centre and the $1/3$ horizon top. The tallest tree, the fence and the house have their foundations on the line of $1/4$ bottom. The

house has its centre on the line 1/4 vertical right. All this to tell you that if the eye is delighted in front of this little composition it is because the balance, the harmony that emerge from this simple conventional landscape are not due to chance.



This schematized classic interior scene (at the top) is well balanced with the presence of the young woman on the right who counterbalances with the window and the table on the left. Even if the line of 1/4 vertical right passes through the centre of the woman and that her head stops on the line of third horizontal at the top giving her a powerful presence it is the gaze of the cat that first draws our eyes because it is located on the major point of the meeting of the line 1/3 vertical left and the line 1/3 horizontal bottom. It is for sure that the vertical central breadth of the window and the window sill cross each other at the height of the head of the cat forcing even more the gaze in that direction. All the other elements of the composition, frame of the window, frame on the wall, bouquet of flowers are located in imprecise areas (between major lines) relaying them to simple optional decorative elements.

Therefore it is you who decides what is important in your painting and what is secondary. An example amongst others to understand the role of major lines and points. There is a difference between painting an animal, whatever its size in its natural environment or to paint a landscape that contains an animal, whatever its size. In the first version the animal is found on the convergence of major lines really highlighting it as the main subject and in the second version the animal is located in an imprecise area, between major lines, relaying it as being simply part of the overall scene.

When we understand the importance of the major lines and points as the spine to solidify or highlight the main elements of our composition, the next step is to structure the space, the surface of our work. We can name at least fifteen kinds of basic compositions that serve as armature, as skeleton to the construction, the organization of a subject.

1: The triangular composition is the most stable due to its base whether it is wide or narrow; the most harmonious due to its impression of a gentle elevation caused by two diagonals that converge towards a point of meeting. Equilateral or asymmetric it is guarantor of a subtle movement that leans on a solid foundation. It is perfect for portraits, still life and scenes frozen in a particular moment.

In 'The Holy Family of Canigiani' by Raphael (1507 to the right), the artist favoured a perfect equilateral triangle creating a symmetry almost static. It is the different layout of the two ladies but mostly the one of the two children that brings a certain movement, a more natural effect. The horizon slightly inclined to the right is reflected again in the different height of both heads of the children and the opposite incline of the road lower to the left by both heads of the women. The irregular layout of the cherubs on both sides at the top helps to give a less frozen aspect to the scene.



In 'The Rest of the Haymakers' by Millet (1849 to the left) the artist used a triangle with a very large base that goes from the dog on the left to the feet of the man on the right. Its summit is the hat of the man standing who is very off-centre to the left and this irregular triangle organizes the characters in the foreground. A second triangle more

discreet organizes the characters in the mid plane. The entire movement of the characters sitting or lying down, in light colours who have their gaze turned to the left is compensated by the darker enormous haystack on the right in the background while the couple standing in darker colours stands out on a light background. An horizontal line at the very bottom calms the agitation a little.

In 'The Virgin and Child with Saint Anne' by de Vinci (1510 to the right) the artist misaligned the point of the triangle to the left creating a slight imbalance which he compensated with the dark tree on the right. Furthermore a small inverted triangle whose point (one foot) is in perfect alignment with the point of the one on top (a head) creates an invisible vertical line that reinforces the stability of the composition. Without any line of perspective he suggested depth to his scene by painting a blurrier landscape in the distance with lighter and bluish hues.



2: The composition in diagonal expresses the movement, the course of action or the scanning of the eye that goes from broad to specific or from specific broad. The diagonals accentuate the movement, the passion, the energy of an element.

In 'Do not Touch Me' by Corrège (1524 to the right), the artist, with two diagonals one of which goes from the right hand of the woman to the left hand of the man and the other one more discreet, goes from the knees of the woman passing through the right hand, then the head of the man accentuates his gesture pointing the greatness of the sky to this possessed penitent. Both diagonals are so powerful that they could topple the painting on its right. A simple stick in the background on the right and leaning to the left seems to serve as a support to the entirety and forms a vague stabilizing triangle. The eye is drawn to the warm orange hue of the woman's dress and thus contributes to rebalance the whole.



In 'The Beach of Trouville' by Boudin (1868 to the left) the artist expressed the peacefulness of an afternoon at the beach with two diagonals very discreet that oppose one another. One formed by the hill in the background that rises to the right, is counter-

balanced with the one formed by the crowd that rises gently to the left. Two mats one of which is on the central line, try to stabilize the whole but it is the darker crowd turned to the left and the mother and daughter that stand aside, that save the unstable balance of the composition. If only one character should return to the right I would not guarantee that the balance would be saved.

In 'Andromeda Attached to the Rock' by Chassériau (1840 to the right), the artist reveals the horror of the scene by two diagonals that form a perfect X that connect more or less the four corners of the canvas and cross one another in one point at the height of the belly of the captive. This accentuates her visceral fear because she will have her entrails devoured by preying birds. By this simple gesture of directing the gaze to this exact point with these two diagonals, they form an emotional strength to the entire composition. A cross barely visible is made by the central vertical line along the naked body of the woman and the central horizontal line of the sea.



As I said before, in the west we read the writing from left to right, therefore it is natural that generally we would read the paintings from left to right.



In 'The Cradle' by Morisot (1872 to the left) the artist has defined two diagonals one of which is a major one created by the lace veil over the cradle. And yet it is the more discreet one, created by the daylight in the background that directs the gaze of the mother towards her child; going from broad to specific. In symbolic words, the vast experience of the mother that we identify with focuses towards this new life that begins.

For me it is so obvious that by reversing the canvas left-right, we have the other impression that because of the same diagonal in just the background, read from left to right, that it is the child, a small universe barely born, who opens up to the vastness, to the already long life of his mother. In reading the painting from left to right, immediately we identify ourselves to the baby in opposition to the mother who seems to preside.



In this orientalist canvas (to the left), if naturally we read it from left to right, we identify with the character by his position that goes from head to feet. While its inverted version (to the right) gives the impression of being foreign to the character by his position that goes from feet to head. This subtlety can make the difference between the fact that we identify or not to the elements of a scene and where is our real place as viewer in the setting.

3: The centred composition accentuates the insistent presence of the subject if it is well in the centre and if the rest of the canvas orchestrates around this focal point. We obtain a static balance, indeed obsessive that must be handled with caution to avoid boredom in the subject. Here are three successful examples of centred composition.

In 'The Desperate' by Courbet (1845 to the right), the artist has expressed the madness of a man startled, indeed horrified to be observed. He is especially frozen in his gesture by the fact that both his arms, even though they are not in the same position, form a perfect triangle. This solidifies and strengthens this moment of stupor. The tight composition, clipped by the frame without anything in the surrounding to distract, accentuates the obsession of the gaze with the eyes that seem to be on the line 8/13 of the golden rule.



In this 'Bouquet of Flowers' by Bruegel (1599 to the left), the artist has put emphasis on the multitude of flowers arranged in a different and varied way on the entire surface thus avoiding the monotony of the centred composition. He also avoids the side too compartmentalized of his bouquet by overflowing it slightly out of the frame accentuating its luxuriance. Notice the great variety and the realism of the flower presentation whose main difficulty for painting them at that time, is the fact that they bloom throughout the season so at different periods. It therefore requested studies, some sketches on the spot.



In 'Prince Edward Island' by Colville (1965 at the bottom), the artist took an enormous risk by putting the binoculars of this woman who is looking at us, in full

centre of the width of the composition. It is the entire background that breaks the uneasiness of that insistent stare. The entire weight of the boat is located to the left creating a big imbalance but which is compensated by its subtle incline to the right. The horizon line of the blue sea, perfectly horizontal, helps to stabilize the composition and the movement of the clouds, to the right, pulls the composition from that side to finalize that audacious balance. A contemporary work borrowed from classicism by its rigour.



4: The composition in a circle highlights the curves that define the space in periphery creating an effect of subtly delimiting the space. Its goal is to make a soft focus on the subject within the circle or the oval.

In this Violin by Braque (1911 to the right), the artist has compensated the stark side of the composition almost abstract with its sober colours and straight lines with sharp edges, with a canvas in an oval shape that brings a little softness with its curves. The oval also allows to direct the eye to the central subject while neglecting to detail the parts of the canvas judged unnecessary in this case. Is it also a discreet recall of the curves of the violin? The variations of browns usually associated with this instrument which is decomposed here in all its facets, seem to have invaded the entire canvas.



In this still life by Braque (1908 to the left), the artist made the entire composition gravitate around the table and its contents. Despite the abundance of lines, shapes, patterns and the bright colours, an irregular central oval, created by the table, brings a certain stability, indeed a lull in this whirlwind. Slightly decentered to the right, it is the neck of the guitar pointing to the left one red form that

rebalances the whole. The abundant decorative motifs create an obvious festive ambiance.

In this Mother and her Child by Cassatt (to the right), the artist knew how to express the sweetness of these two characters with a palette of pastel colours and in a series of curves that subtly suggest an oval, defined by the shape of the back of the chair. We have to emphasize also the originality of the scene with the mother seen from the back, which puts the focus mainly on the child who has his eyes unfocused in a gesture of surrender. The central vertical line goes more or less along the two characters and separates them but both arms, the one of the child and the one of the mother make a link between the two parts of the canvas and accentuate a certain tenderness.



5: The dynamic composition is made of diagonals, curves, counter-curves and spirals conducive to movement, to agitation. Generally it is used for action scenes with one or more characters; or scenes where nature is excessive; or to express inner torments of the artist even through a subject who a priori can be devoid of them. It is also effective to learn how to manage as much the multitude of disparate shapes than the space around them.

In 'Transversal Lines' by Kandinsky (1923 to the right), the artist created a canvas full of geometric forms that move in every direction because of a series of diagonals and curves. The entirety points nevertheless to the centre preventing a too wide dispersion of the subject and the space slightly cleared in periphery maintains the ensemble coherent.



In 'The Rape of the Sabines' by Rubens (1617 to the left), the artist created a strong impression of agitation and resistance with two bodies of women with curves opposing each other. The low horizon line gives the impression that the viewer of the scene is on the ground, adding to the monumental side of the struggling. She is also at the height of the sex of one of the two Sabines emphasizing the sexual reason for this abduction. Despite the fact that the entirety is covered by a multitude of secondary lines that amplify the disorder of the action, the whole is contained in a circle almost perfect that brings, at the end, a harmonious balance. A mountain on the left rebalances this circle slightly to the left.

In 'Justice and Divine Vengeance' by Prud'hon (1808 to the right), at first the artist exploited the curve for both divine beings in the sky graciously curved at the bottom. The victim on the ground is also shaped in a curve but in the other direction responding in echo to the one of the divine beings. I call this proceeding a counter-curve because by its inverted position it is opposed to another one reinforcing the latter. The assassin who is fleeing rebalances the composition with the diagonal created by his stretched body pointing to the left. The pale moon also rebalances the composition by its position and the lighting that it projects on the bodies of these four actors.



6: The foreshortened composition highlights the rapid, short perspectives: the various extreme sizes of the elements creating the entire dynamic of the subject. This accentuates in an intense way indeed vertiginous the depth, the third dimension.

In 'Alley of Poplars' by Schindler (1890 to the right), the artist has created a great sense of depth with the road that takes the entire width of the foreground, shrinking rapidly in the mid plane to disappear in the background by turning to the right. The most massive tree is located in full centre stabilizing the composition. Two frailer trees on the left are balanced with the only tree on the right and the row of poplars in the distance. The low horizon allows to give magnitude and majesty to the trees accentuated by the smallness of the characters at the back of the road. Although, the perspective of the road is so well respected that it convinces us that we are also part of the scene.



In 'The Flood' by Sisley' (1876 to the left), the artist created a smooth depth by the muted colours and a series of very subtle planes. Without a real line of perspective, he compensated by playing with each size of the plane; the water in the foreground, then the vertical tree stakes, the building, then the boats, again the trees, other buildings in the distance to finish with an irregular horizon. The faded red, white and blue of the commercial building to the left bring a touch of colour that prevents the canvas, all in greyiness to be bland.

In this Mediterranean Port by Vernet (1780 at the bottom), the artist created a beautiful play of light and shadow and a great depth yet with only three principal planes. The first plane located in the dark where most of the action of the characters takes place. The second plane with softer colours where an islet, a small boat and a ship are located. The third plane in the distance, paler and in the fog where buildings and a possible lighthouse are found. To counter-balance the agitation of the crowd on the right and the dark mass of the cliff that rises very high on the right, a discreet movement of clouds stretches to the opposite side culminating in an imposing dark cloud at the top left.



7: The vertical composition, made with many major lines, expresses the height, ascension, energy, vitality, rhythm or simply life.

In this forest of Klimt (1902 to the right) the artist created a strange effect, almost an optical illusion, by the expansion of dozens of small trees fluttering out of sight in the distance. The slight trembling is caused by the series of verticals of the trees of grey-blue colour that contrast with its complementary the orange yellow of the dead leaves on the ground. The high leaning horizon shows that the entire scene is slightly inclined to the left to avoid a too great static symmetry between this multitude of verticals and the edges of the picture. But this incline to the left, accentuated by the greater number of trees on that side, had to be rebalanced with the addition of another darker tree in the foreground to the right. This play of line and colour brushes against the abstract.



In this minimalist work of Davis (1963 to the left), the artist exploits the vertical by a series of stripes that expresses in some sort a rhythm, the passage of time. The alternating of the blue and pink stripes evokes in turn daydream and nostalgia. They are intersected by three stripes, one green that expresses the beauty of nature, one orange that expresses happiness of the earth and one yellow that expresses the sunlight. So two soft shades, slightly cold and repetitive that could founder easily into boredom, are seen here interrupted, hustled by three stripes of warmer

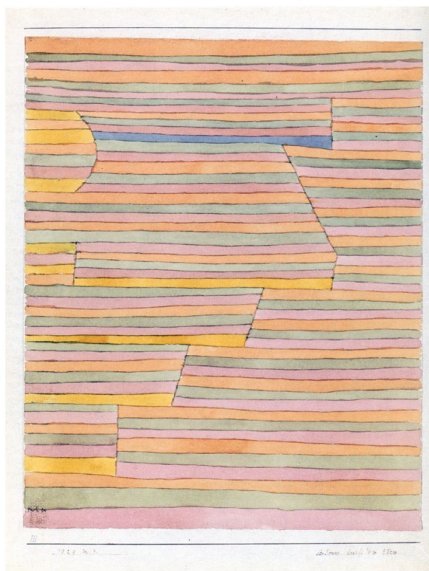
colours having a stronger presence.

In 'The cathedral in Winter' by Oehme (1821 to the right), the artist has expressed spiritual growth by a series of monumental verticals which nevertheless, curve on the top to form arches that close the composition to avoid the vertigo effect. He also used a theatrical technique that consists in treating the foreground in a very dark colour palette and the background in a lighter palette which gives a great depth to the scene. The alignment of the main monk with the central point of the arch helps to stabilize the entirety whose balance is threatened by the facade of the cathedral shifted to the left. The golden yellow lighting of the stained glass windows warms this scene with shades all in greyness.



8: The horizontal composition, made with several major horizontal lines, expresses the width, calm, rest, boredom and even death.

In 'The Peasant Family' by Le Nain (1642 to the right), the artist expressed the simple finding of a poor family who has little hope to see better days. I make this observation first because of the obvious horizontal line that sweeps the canvas from left to right and unifies the height of all characters giving a feeling of a similar fate for these three generations of peasants. The small space above their head supports this feeling of little chance of elevation from their miserable condition. The height of the child sitting on the ground on the right responds to the height of the knees of the grandmother on the left who by the fact that she is detached from the group, rebalances the whole. The dog and a bowl at the extremities contribute also to the balance but accentuate also the enclosed space. The child in the shadow on the left evokes also possible death.



In 'The Sun Touches the Plain' by Klee (1929 to the left), the artist describes with little means, in this watercolour on paper, the warm sunlight that makes the sand and the grass undulate on little dunes. That is so thanks to a series of repetitive horizontal stripes of soft green, pink and faded orange colours and some vertical lines. Without a need for discourse or explanation and despite the abstract side a priori of the work, it is the visual sensation that is felt that must take precedence at first and then become clearer by the given title.

of horizontal planes with slight variations of colour between each one. The yellow-orange colours give very well the brightness and the warmth of a summer day and are accentuated finely by some touches of blue-violet, their complementary spread in the shadows. Even the greens are stimulated by their complementary, the reds also scattered on the canvas.

In 'The Plain of La Crau' by Van Gogh (1888 at the bottom), the artist expressed the calm and sweetness of life by a series of horizontal lines intersected by subtle diagonals. This technique also gives depth to the subject by dividing the space in a series

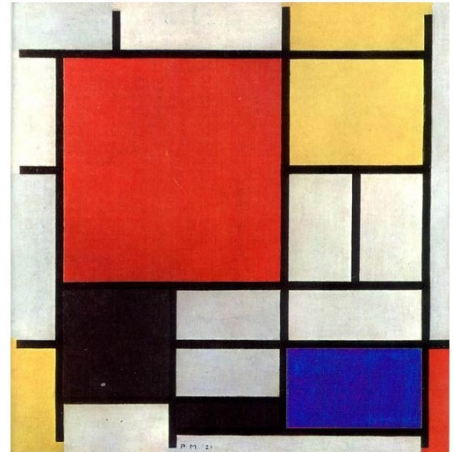


The vertical or horizontal lines, thus parallel to the frame, can accentuate the stability, the immobilism of the subject but their relationship might express this constant search between action and rest, between agitation and tranquility, between life and death.



In 'The Villa Medici' by Velasquez (1630 to the left), the artist knew how to create an effect of contrast between the series of vertical trees expressing life in opposition with the ephemeral character of any human realization represented by an abandoned building highlighted by a series of horizontal lines. The bland grey colour, not too attractive of the condemned building in decrepitude, adds to the contrast with the more stimulating greens of the trees that rise and grow. Some small characters animate the scene to prevent the gloomy side and the desolation of the scene.

In this geometrical composition by Mondrian (1921 to the right) the artist wanted to refine to the maximum the symbolic of lines and colours. At first, in accepting the vertical and horizontal lines as simple and only representation of the play that happens between movement and stability, between life and death. Secondly, in resorting only to the white (mixture of all the colours) and the black (absence of colour) to structure space and then to the three primary colours, blue, yellow and red to mainly animate the space. Take note that to avoid the formal rigidity he allowed himself to use some shades of pale grey to nuance the whites and the black lines that stop unevenly shortly before the edge of the canvas. This canvas expresses also this quest for the ultimate simplification and ordinance of a world that is complex and chaotic.



In 'The Return of Marcus' by Guérin (1799 to the left) the artist concentrated his composition on three major lines. The horizontal line made by the bed and the deceased spouse accentuates this bad inevitable fate. The head slightly tilted of the departed brings a soft emotional angle. The vertical line made by Marcus, with its opposition to the horizontal accentuates its very stoic side, impassive in front of the corpse of his wife which he finds returning from the war. Despite his hands clasped expressing an inner shutdown he holds the hand of his wife giving him some sensitivity. The curved line in diagonal of the young girl accentuates the drama by her

abandonment to an emotional overflow. In her tearful gesture, she is the only one who creates a slight movement in this scene that forever remains.

9: The composition in straight angles is found again in the artworks where a horizontal and vertical join each other and accentuate the empty or airy space around the subject. This structure in 'L' gives a greater presence to the subject by its isolation and character.



In 'Madame of Récamier (unfinished)' by David (1800 to the left), the artist wanted to break away from frivolous painting, all in curves and scrolls of his predecessors, by realizing a portrait built on only two lines, one vertical and one horizontal. This simplified composition brings a voluntary denudation. The lady takes the simplified form on an 'L' with her upper body that is vertical, despite a slightly curved back (this line is brought back in the candlestick on the left) and her horizontal lower body, despite the small point of her knees (this line is brought back by the footrest on the right). The sofa chair

itself which will later take her name, recamier-sofa, is made with a horizontal and two slightly curved verticals.

In 'The Lighthouse' by Harris (1930 to the right) the artist has given a monumental character to his unique subject by isolating it in his composition with the elimination of any superfluous surrounding effect. The subtle variations of blue in the sky create diagonals that point to the subject thus responding to the lines of the cliff and the road in the foreground which also point to the main element. The lighthouse goes along the left side of the vertical central line but the balance is maintained with the building on the right. This creates, however, a slight impression of instability that makes this tower precarious and yet that wants to be permanent.



In 'Mr. and Mrs. Andrews' by Gainsborough (1750 to the left), the artist made a portrait of a couple whose objective also was to show their possessions. To structure and balance his composition, he placed the couple in front of a tree which is on the major line of the left quarter guarantor of a reinforcement to the stability. But unfortunately the incline of this tree to the right compromises that balance. So the artist solved the problem by counterbalancing with the



angle of the gun carried by the man and which made a counterdiagonal. The retreat of the couple on the left allows the realization of the panoramic view of their land. So this is not exactly a romantic country scene but in reading from left to right, the portrait of rich landowners and their domain.

10: The composition in frieze is a succession of heights or disparate forms that create a visual surprise, a melodic rhythm, a spontaneous contrast that is natural, non calculated. It is the art of arranging what is not a priori or on the contrary to observe the harmony hidden behind all things.

In this still life by Dutroux (1876 to the right), the artist knew how to create an harmony with five elements which despite the fact that this is all is needed to have tea, is composed of five disparate pieces that the artist had to arrange to create a certain consistency. It is the simple play of different heights, textures, and forms that creates the diversity and it is the palette that goes from white-grey to yellow-orange-brown that unifies the whole. A triangle is drawn with the tip of the bread loaf, the top of the teapot and both lumps of sugar; and a diagonal by the bread, the cup and up to the top of the milk jug.



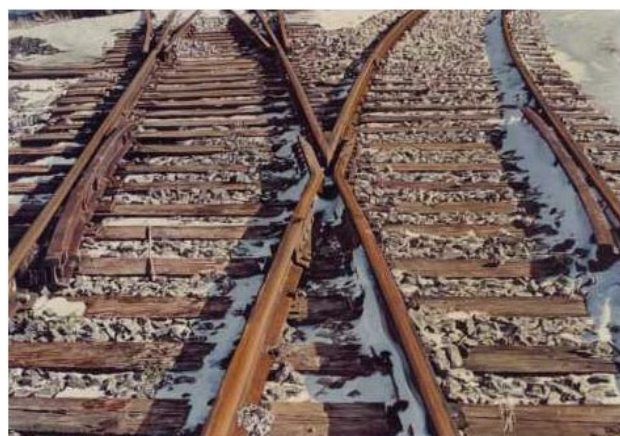
In 'Poplars, Afternoon in Eragny' by Pissarro (1899 to the left), the artist created depth in his composition and a certain movement in the trees by playing with the various heights and shades of green in these latter. The beauty of the whole is not due to chance but to the interaction between a series of forms, colours and heights that is given to each tree. We can compare this to music notes on a partition. If only one note is changed to a different place, line or intensity, the melody might sound out of tune. Often the subtle variations between the elements are neglected.

In 'The Cockfight' by Gerôme (1846 to the right) the artist has placed his four unique actors on four different heights to make this scene natural. Too much symmetry would have killed the spontaneity of this fight. The diagonal made by the couple has no echo on the one made by the two roosters and other secondary diagonals. Although it is the abundance of small and long diagonals spread in all directions across the canvas that make this picture so natural, lively and expressive.



11: The photographic composition is issued from a photo and favours non traditional frames that implies a subject decentered, indeed off-centre or reproduced under an unusual angle. More adapted to the modern world always in movement, it includes some voluntary imbalances mimicking the apparent disarray of reality.

In 'The Racetrack' by Degas (1880 to the right), the artist was the first one to be interested in these unusual frames caused by a photo that does not always control what is introduced in the visual field such as the unexpected elements clipped arbitrarily in different ways by the frame. In this example, obviously there isn't any central subject not even on the important fractions of the composition. The few pieces of elements are all unfolded on the right side and show the back of two mounts, a carriage and an insignificant part of a man's back. Nothing to seduce the eye and yet it is efficient to show the spontaneity, the ephemeral of all action. To compensate this agitation on the right, in the background to the left, a rider pulls on his mount in a movement of recoil to the left in an attempt to rebalance the precarious situation.



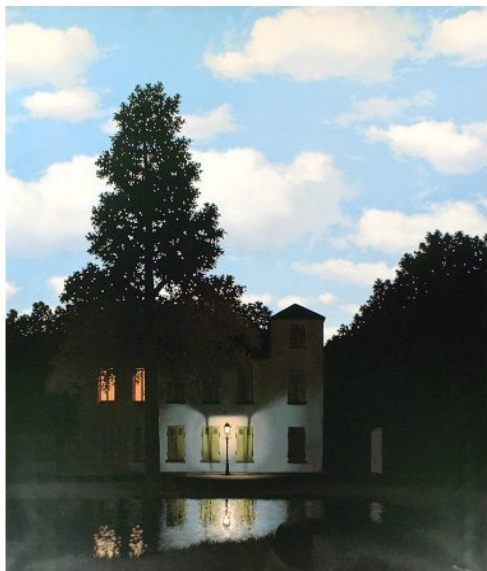
In 'The Switching at Chalon' by Froment (1981 to the left), the artist tilted his head down to make a middle plane of the ground and so to put the accent on the detail of two railways that intersect. How can we not see the symbolic of human relations with these two paths that cross for a moment and then separate. The subject is done in the winter, the dead season, which is what amplifies the cold realization that everything is fleeting. The horizontal wooden ties create a rhythm like a succession of events repetitive in time but the vertical curves of the rails soften somewhat the inevitable.

In this display window of shoes by Eddy (1974 to the right) the artist wanted in a meticulous way to give the splendour of the city and particularly the colourful and stunning razzle-dazzle of the highly touted shop windows. This unusual angle of a street corner where we capture the effervescence of the city through a play of transparency and mirror of a showcase of shoes, beyond the virtuosity of the artist, fascinates us as much as it makes us uneasy. A criss-cross of diagonals on a major part of the canvas contributes to create this impression of looking in all directions. Only a piece of the solid blue sky allows us to soothe our eyes in this orgy of colours.



12: The composition chiaroscuro puts the effect of shadow and light in the forefront of the organization of the canvas. The forms and colours are relayed to the second plane. This type of composition creates a great force that is suggestive, theatrical, indeed dramatic.

In the self-portrait of Rembrandt (1659 to the right), the artist represented himself simply with a lighting that puts the emphasis on his face and his hands. With a palette much lighter he seems to tell us, looking at us, that only his spirit and what he does with his hands is important. The canvas is crossed with a long diagonal that separates it in two even triangles one of which is in the light and the other one in the obscurity. In a dark room, lit only by candles, this portrait must have a presence almost concrete, tactile. Beside the nervous and misty touch of the artist, apparent all over the canvas, imitates very well the trembling effect of the lighting which at the time came from a candle or a lamp.



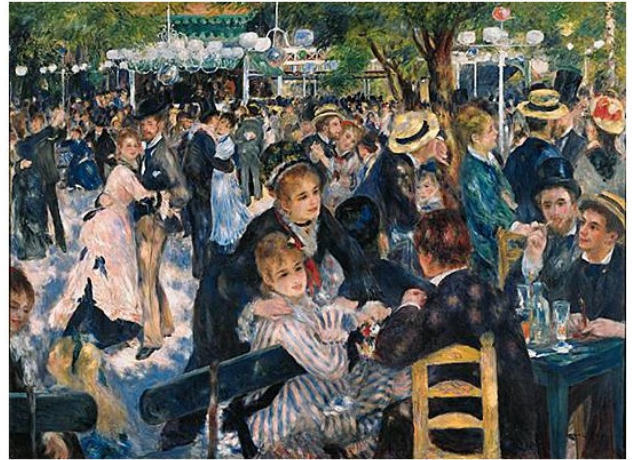
In 'The Empire of Lights' by Magritte (1954 to the left) the artist enjoyed defying the laws of logic by giving to an artificial lighting of a house the supremacy of daytime. But with the separation in height of the canvas in two parts even in volume he suggested a perpetual fight between the natural daylight and the artificial lights of the night. A very nice balance is obtained between the dark indented mass of the tree on the left that rises high in the sky and the lower dark opaque mass of the tree on the right. The lighting in the window on the second floor and its reflection in the water off-centres the composition to the left helping to balance the entirety.

In 'Joseph the Carpenter' by La Tour (1640 at the bottom), the artist created a strong atmosphere very intimate by making his entire composition gravitate around the lighting of a candle. Used as a pivot, and having its point at the meeting of the line of the third of the right vertical with the line of the half of the horizontal, it illuminates violently the face of the child who becomes the main subject. The light is fading gently on St. Joseph on the left. How can we not see in that bright light that illuminates the child, his impetuous thirst for learning; and in the softer light that illuminates the old man, his patience with the long life learning.



13: The impressionist composition is founded entirely on the impact of colours and their expressive values. By a visible touch, indeed pronounced, distributed equally, we unify the surface of the canvas. An observation of the light at various hours of the day, transmits the changing, ephemeral character of the subject.

In 'Dance at Le Moulin de la Galette' by Renoir (1876 to the right), the artist recreated the movement and even the agitation of this dancing in open-air by the many characters who all have different poses and all look in different directions. And yet in this cacophony he knew how to rebalance the whole, at first with a dominating palette of blue-violet but with a few touches of its complementary the yellow-orange; then with that particular way of making the colours shimmer. Despite the evidence of an imbalance to the right, if we take into account the number of characters in the foreground, the whole is rebalanced with these spots of light that pierce throughout the foliage of the trees and are evenly distributed all over this bucolic scene.



In this garden by Bonnard (1914 to the left), the artist treated the composition with a certain liberty to express the natural, the release of a simple garden scene. Both characters are positioned in more or less two unspecific secondary zones of the canvas and are blending in the setting by very apparent brush strokes that cover the entire surface in a multitude of spots. Despite the awkward balance of the composition it is this vibrant texture, as in a mosaic, that appears at first sight and unifies the whole. Nothing in this

scene has any importance, not the characters, not the objects but only the well-being and the insouciance of a relaxation in this garden.

In this couple by Kokoschka (1918 at the bottom), the artist transcribed his vision of this couple in large slab of paint giving an embossed texture very apparent and dominating the subject. This way of painting that seems vulgar and even brutal gives a primitive and unique character to the couple as if they were the first lovers in the world, alone and eternal. The orange shades of the character on the right and his serene face give a feeling of vitality while the other with lighter shades, with a mauve face and only one green sock seem more uncertain but her gaze turned toward the other expresses her obvious feelings.



14: The cubistic composition decomposes the elements in different planes and diagrams and recomposes them taking into account the multiple perspectives. This creates a new order, an ensemble exploring the subject on many angles and facets, indeed even in time.

In this seaport by Braque (1909 to the right), it may take some time to realize that it represents boats that are docked waiting for the storm to pass because it is treated in a muted palette limited to yellow-ochre for all the boats, the rocks and the buildings; then some grey-blue for the sky and the sea. It is the initial principle of cubism to bring back everything to simple forms favouring the line in detriment of the colour which is limited to earth tones, reflection of a certain male austerity. In this case the hard work of the fishermen who affront the sea every day find its correspondence in the right lines that interweave with the obtuse and pointed angles; in those curves that express the swaying movement. But a certain unsteady balance appears however in this chaos at first sight.



In 'Nude Descending a Staircase' by Duchamp (1912 to the left), the artist has decomposed in many sequences the movement of this character closer to an artificial mannequin than a living being. It is a study in all its angles and in time of the corporal mechanic that is involved in the descent of a staircase. Nothing comes to distract the eye from the main objective; not the muted palette of ochre and brown, not any superfluous object. From this canvas, an impression of a cold and objective almost scientific study of a simple action emerges and yet the inclined head of the character on the right and a series of curved lines bring some grace, fluidity, a touch of life to the end result.

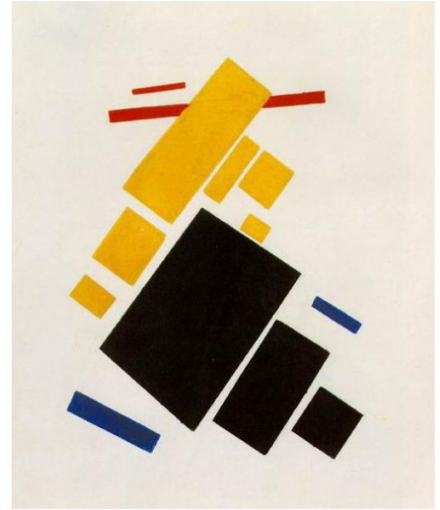
In this still life of the violin of Braque (1913 at the bottom), the artist gave himself the mandate to reproduce a still life composed mainly of rectangular surfaces, newspaper clippings and mostly a violin that he has very constrained to enter in the limited frame

of the straight angles. This initial constraint forced him to resort to a great ingenuity for the violin to keep a certain similar structure but at the same time seems to dematerialize under our eyes. The predominance of the right angles somewhat austere at first, is compensated with subtle variations of textures and shades in each planar form. The final oval result verging on the abstraction is however balanced in its entirety.



15: The planer composition puts the shapes, colours, gestural in evidence of their bi-dimensionality because a conventional canvas is before anything else an object with two dimensions present in the space.

In this suprematist composition by Malevitch (1915 to the right), the artist, in a willingness to get rid of any figurative tridimensional representation, applied himself to summarize his intentions only to the rectangular shape, only three primary colours and black and white dominating. The entirety done on one plane only. Despite these elements that might seem limited, the composition is far from being simple and static. The cold shades of black and blue are in movement to the left thanks to two imprecise diagonals, and the warm shades of yellow and red are in movement to the right thanks to two precise diagonals. These two simple opposite movements accentuated by the opposition of the warm and cold shades create a lot of dynamism on this neutral white background but are also in a perfect balance.



In this blue monochrome by Klein (1957 to the left), the artist expresses his love for the pure colour which is ultramarine. The ultramarine, long obtained with the pulverization of the semi precious stone, the lapis-lazurite which cost a fortune at one time, was synthesized in 1828 which is what made it more accessible to painters among others. Klein was fascinated by its strong coloration and its deep presence in the powder state and would find that its mixture with the usual binders was fading it. He worked with a chemist to find a way to fix it on a canvas in its purer state and patented the process. It resulted in work with a more intense blue that fills the entire space and that nothing comes to distract because its application is perfectly uniform. What might seem banal at first sight contains however a thoughtful personal approach. Note the slightly rounded corners

In 'The Sky of Polynesia' by Matisse (1946 at the bottom), the artist worked on his composition, starting with cuttings only on two essential planes; the background made from an alternation of dark and light blue rectangles; and a foreground made with the cutting of pure white anthropomorphic shapes. Yet with this reduced palette, he recreated the impression of a circle of birds flying above the ocean teeming with seaweeds, corals and starfish. The seaweeds form a lace that delimits the composition and frames it naturally like a pretty picture of a holiday in the south. The pale blue carries you into daydreaming and the implication of all white shapes transmits the essential of memories.



16: The anti-composition is to make a canvas where the pattern, the subject is distributed equally all over the surface. This creates an effect of 'all over' all covered without any focal point or guideline like a tapestry pattern without any beginning and ending and even sometimes without up or down. This can express also a willingness to deconstruct the centred traditional balance or imitate the awkwardness of the beginners or primitives. But even in these extreme cases a certain order appears so slightly.

In 'All Saints' by Fra Angelico (1424 to the right), the artist made the prowess to fill the entire space with three rows of saints who are walking to the left and suggest by this process, a procession without a beginning and ending. This implies also that the quantity of saints is innumerable. The possible monotony of this multitude is avoided by the fact that each individual has a unique costume, pose and face that personalize him. The distribution of different colours all over the canvas unifies the whole and all the characters seem driven by the same devotion and walk toward a single glorious goal.

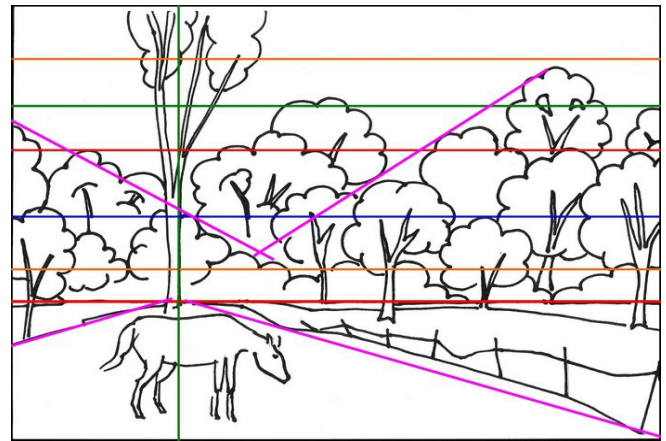
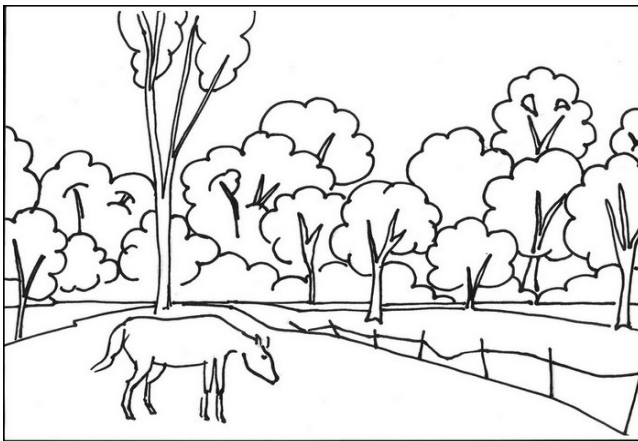
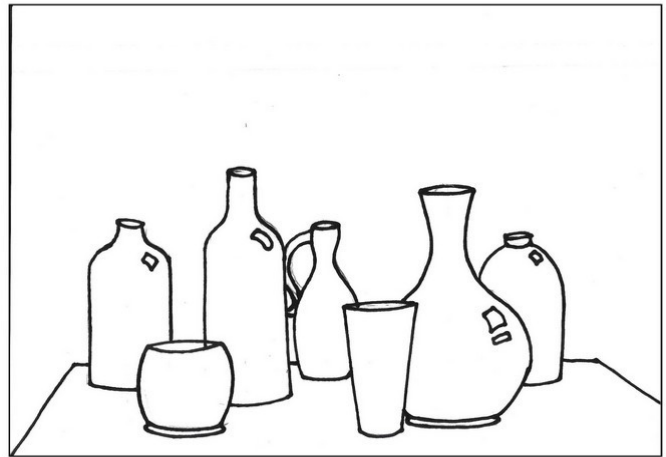


In 'A Hundred Soup Cans' by Warhol (1962 to the left), the artist made a simple picture of a can of soup obsessive by its multiplication to infinity because we can believe that without the frame limiting the quantity this pattern, reminiscent of a tapestry, could have been endless. Tribute to the evidence of unrestrained consumerism, there is no variation of kinds of soup because they are all beef, only the subtle variations of impression of each can breaks up the monotony.

In 'Autumn Rhythm' by Pollock (1952 at the bottom), the artist transposes in an abstract universe the magnificence of the colours of nature in autumn. By a personal and unique process the paint is dribbled in streaks to give lines that undulate in all directions or it is splashed with force to create expressive arabesques that intermingle and overlap. In this composition chance or even an accident are stakeholders in the creation. The entire space is taken and even seems to be only a piece clipped from a larger universe, ad infinitum. It is not necessary at all cost to see an abstract representation of a concrete landscape to finally simply appreciate the final result.



In this last example of a schematized still life in frieze (to the right) composed of only a series of vases and containers of various shapes and sizes, at first sight there is not a logic of composition nor a guideline. But it is in this incongruous accumulation that a certain harmony appears. The eye is surprised and stimulated at every elements that follow each other and imbricate into one another creating a coherent entirety. It is the unicity in the diversity that tries to reproduce a natural, non calculated spontaneous disarray but however stays pleasing to the eye.



To conclude, in this schematized scene (at the top) many types of compositions are taken into account. First the horse is placed on the major line of the vertical left quarter and is enshrined in a triangle whose tip ends at the base of the large tree. This large tree separates itself by forming an angle bracket with the horizon that is located on the major line of the bottom third. The trees in the background have many approximative diagonals that guide the eye to the main subject. They also form a frieze whose heights play with many major horizontal lines. Some are slightly leaning to the right and are higher on the right to counterbalance the horse, the main subject on the left. With the understanding and the use of these very first rules this composition is balanced therefore harmonious and pleasing to the eye.

To each and everyone to see in the pictures these first subtleties that make the success of a major artwork.

Here it is! This is it for the first course called 'Balance and Composition'

Colin Chabot

PERSPECTIVE AND PROPORTION

In introduction here is a very brief historic of the invention of perspectives.

Under the roman empire, according to the remnants of the frescoes of that era, the artist had a good enough knowledge of the perspectives however without having the certitude or the proof that they had totally codified the rules.

In this small fresco of a still life (to the right) coming from the city of Pompeii, we can see that the artist observed his subject very well because he knew how to seize the finesse of many details; the light of the composition that comes from the left and illuminates the elements in giving them a volume and in projecting their shadows to the right, the precise ovals of the top of the vases, the semi-transparency of the fruit bowl on the left and finally the depth of the false stones that supports the whole.



In this fresco of Pompeii (before 79 to the left) representing a daily scene of a couple and their guests, in addition to the finesse of the fabrics and the goblets set down on the small tables, we admire a play of bold perspectives. In the foreground the sofa-bed on the left is seen in an angle and ends in crossing the one on the right in the background which is also seen in an angle but in opposite direction. The only weakness is the front of the sofa-bed on the

left that deserved to be lifted on its left toward a second vanishing point to better respect the perspectives. However, the two small tables are well enough presented especially thanks to the oval of their tops and the position of their legs on the ground. The succession of the characters who are juxtaposed one behind the other adds some depth to the scene.

The first christian artists, living in a certain clandestinity because of the persecutions, were not the most talented of their period and by their naive visions transmitted in an unskillful manner, they lost some of the realistic knowledge of the roman official art.

In this catacomb fresco (to the right) of early christianity, the realist gave way to a transposition of faith with a series of somewhat clumsy pictures where the essential is to transmit a message. The daily life is represented by the peasant on the left who is milking a goat, followed by a character in prayer, the palms of his hands outstretched to the sky (roman way of praying) and the good shepherd with his sheep on the shoulders, a vase of riches and finally a protective goat. Abundant crops decorate the background. This scene represents hope of an idyllic life either on earth or in heaven.



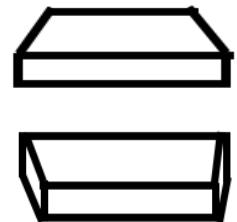
Their successors will continue to reject overall the naturalist vision of the roman culture, because it was either regarded as decadent, either to stand out or for an ideology. The art of the early christianity had the role of exalting faith and to transmit the moral values in the daily life to a population that was in majority illiterate.

In the middle ages, painting was not necessarily naturalist but in general iconographic. Which means that it expressed a certain symbolic and idealist vision of reality.

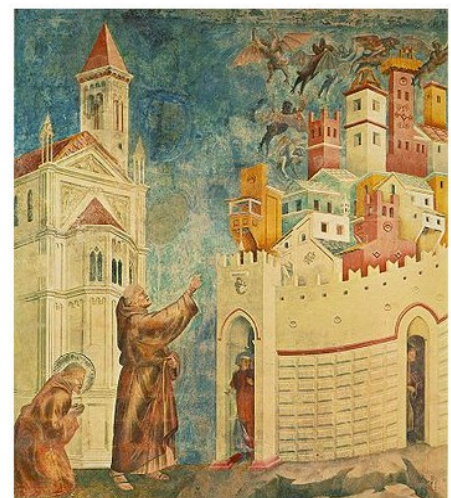
Like in Jesus enthroned (1330 to the right) the size of the characters is directly related to their status, their importance. Jesus dominates the scene in height, followed by the angels and lastly the penitent who is without a doubt the portrait of the donor, the one who financed the realization of this work. There are also minuscule saints imbedded on the side of this partial altar piece and three busts above in medallions with the largest one at the top representing the Virgin. The golden background vaguely suggests an holy site, a church but the gilding mostly plays the role here to recall an unreal, magnified, celestial world. Despite the subtle details of the decor, nothing comes to distract the primary reason of this work which is the fervour of the characters for Christ. The lifted right hand of Christ and the book in his left hand is an ancient roman symbol that represent a scholar who shares his knowledge.



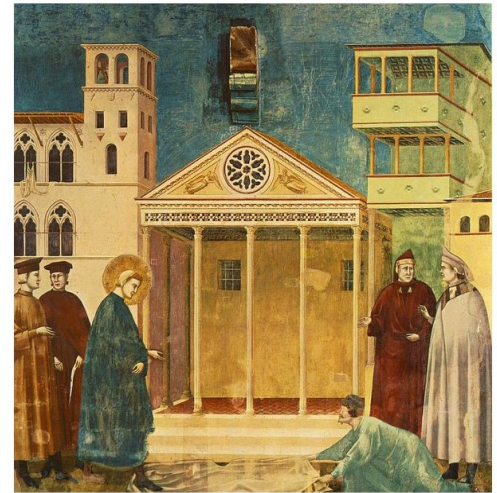
In this Virgin and Child on a throne (1285 to the left), the artist respected the importance of the characters by their size. The Child Jesus is more imposing than the angels. But what is the most fascinating, it is the throne and footstool that is constructed on the perception of the perspectives but from an inverted point of view. Instead of going to a vanishing point on the horizon (top-right) according to the Italian linear perspectives, it is the observer who is the fixed point and who opens himself to the subject (bottom-right). The angle of the footstool and the arms of the throne get larger towards the back.



It is the painter Giotto who will again reintroduce in his painting the beginnings of perspectives more and more realistic and more human features in the characters. In this fresco of Giotto (1290 to the right), the enshrined characters in the doors of the wall are smaller not because of their lesser importance but simply because of their distance in relation to the characters in the foreground. The angles of both sides of the church to the left seem to go towards two vanishing points approximately distributed on each side. The tops of the buildings on the right seem to have also vanishing points towards the horizon which is what gives volume even if the result is still clumsy from a realistic perspective.



In this other fresco by Giotto (1290 to the right) the perspectives of the buildings are again more apparent and orderly but on the principle of a single vanishing point. The facades are all facing right angle, perfectly horizontal and vertical and it is only the wall on the right side that goes to an approximate and single vanishing point to the right. The result is already more convincing. This natural introduction, to more realistic in the perspectives, is also accompanied by more realistic in the characters by the position of their bodies, their gestures and the expression of their faces much more varied and natural.



Giotto is considered today to be the father of the Italian renaissance. It is during that period that the first laws on perspectives will be established mostly by the architect Brunelleschi. These laws will revolutionize painting and create an enthusiasm for the painters who will rediscover at the same time the great work of the greco-roman period.



In this painting 'Marriage of the Virgin' by Raphael (1504 to the left) the subject is only a pretext for the artist to demonstrate his virtuosity in handling the perspectives. All the principal characters are located in the foreground under a line perfectly straight and the whole covers approximately half the surface of the entire canvas. Only the cap of the celebrant in full centre surpasses and insures the balance of the entire composition. The virtuosity is given in the other half of the canvas with the tile flooring, the different sizes of the characters further away, the steps of the monument and finally this ideal, imaginary building, with perfect, equilateral perspectives and proportions. Yet this entire setting is false, prefabricated and wants to be the reminiscence of ancient times, the nostalgia of a grandiose lost golden age.

In this 'Madonna with Child on a Throne and the Saints' by Bellini (1505 to the right), the illusion is complete. Everything is in real proportions to the point of being an optical illusion for a non informed. The painted columns and arch that create an alcove above the Virgin are of such realism that we do not doubt the depth that it generates. Although the contrasts of colours through their variations of shades and tones, which go from the lightest to the darkest, reach here a rare perfection in all the elements. The small portion of the tile flooring in perspective also helps very much to give depth. The precision of the poses of the characters, their clothing and their shadows contribute to a realistic final effect in three dimensions but in return, it takes away some of the supernatural side of divine beings by their making of flesh and bones.

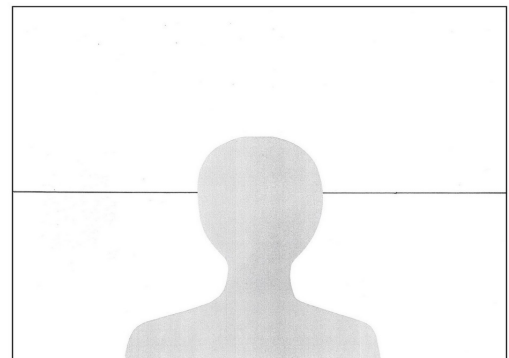




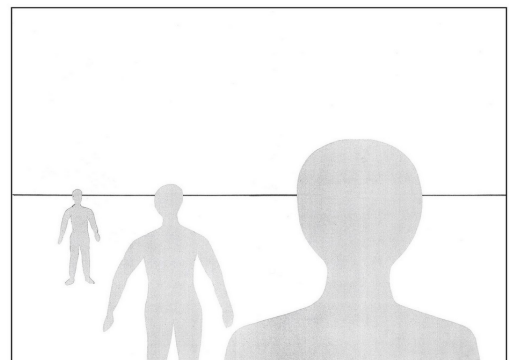
Whether it is in 'The Wedding at Cana' by Veronese (1563 above to the left) with his extreme swarming of characters seated or perched on the balcony, framed with a monumental architecture in a vanishing point which however softens in the distance to open up to a calming sky; or whether it is in 'The Glory of St. Ignatius' by Pozzo (1694 to the right) with these real colonnades of the walls which prolong in an architecture painted vertiginously that converges to a point in the centre of the ceiling, falsely opened on an heavenly sky populated with a myriad of beings who seem to be all flying; as far as the virtuosity of the artist can go, it begins with the understanding of the basic laws of perspectives.

The rules of perspectives that I am going to address here mainly concern the ones that are used in painting and serve to accentuate the depth of the subject and the intention of the artist. The perspective that is generally used is the one that we call the linear perspective issued from the Italian renaissance and which serve mainly to reproduce the tridimensionality of the reality on a two-dimensional surface starting from converging lines. I will address some other variations of perspectives that suggest the third dimension on a canvas and I will make you also discover the entire emotive charge that a simple line might contain.

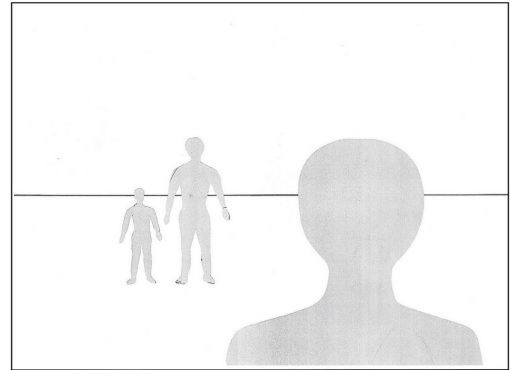
You should know first that a neutral observer (to the right) who is looking straight in front of him necessarily has the gaze, the eyes at the height of the horizon; The horizon that divides naturally the earth and the sky into equal parts. This finding is important because any standing spectator who has his head very straight and contemplates whatever has his sight exactly on the skyline.



If an individual comes to meet him (to the right) and has roughly the same height, automatically his gaze will also be at the same height of the skyline. Regardless of the place or the distance where this character is, if he is standing, he must have his eyes on the horizon. If his size varies in respect to a standard, let's say of 5 1/2 feet (168 cm), he will drop down a little below or will rise slightly above the horizon with respect to the standard observer. We are this neutral observer when we look at a picture and the reference of measure for any composition.

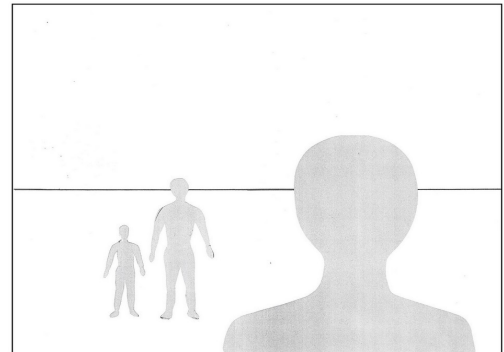


In this example (to the right), two characters are coming to us, one of which has his eyes on the horizon and the other greatly surpasses it. The finding is that either we are in the presence of a being of normal size with a giant or a child with an adult. Since the giants have not existed for a long time, I am inclined on the second hypothesis and the only possible conclusion is that it is us as an observer who stooped at the height of the child thus who has adopted the viewpoint of the child.



In 'The Visit' by Lemieux (1967 to the left), little of what we see of the skyline is located almost in full centre of the canvas and at the height of the little girl's mouth leading us to stoop to her height. By this gesture, the artist has given the precedence to this child and his discreet smile. It is she who is the principal subject because the parents with darker shades seem more discreet in the background and even slightly erased. The father even has the top of his head cut off to signify that he is partly outside of our viewpoint which is concentrated on the child.

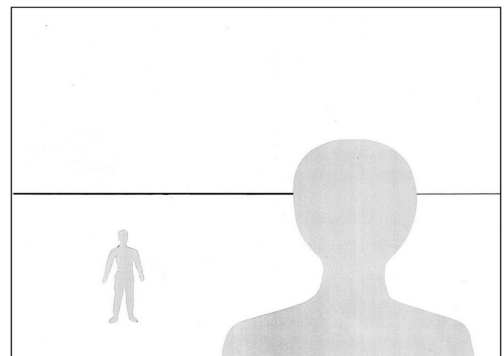
In the example (to the right), both characters show us evidently an adult and a little child but we are adopting the viewpoint of the adult. In another example (at the bottom right) either it is another child or if it is really an adult, it is us who are elevated in the scene and are contemplating the whole from a higher viewpoint.



In 'Christina's World' by Wyeth (1948 at the bottom left), the horizon is placed very high above the head of the young girl giving together the impression that we are slightly flying above the scene and at the same time the fact that the horizon is lower than the doors and the windows of the little house in the distance, this suggests that we are located down a hill. The house



on the right is in balance with the young girl on the left. Some discreet lines in the field converge to the barn subtly suggesting the depth and thereby placing us as a spectator in the scene just behind and above the head of the girl who is in the same vertical alignment. This anonymous, skinny young girl lying in the grass, expresses very smoothly the misery and solitude of life in these vast countries.



First finding; any character in a canvas who is standing, who has his feet on the ground of an average size has his eyes on the horizon if ourselves as a spectator we are also in the same position. Therefore we can say that any object placed anywhere in a composition and whose base is on the ground and its peak touches the horizon has the size of a standard person who is about 5 1/2 feet (168 cm). This can become an unity of measure, a reference to proportion the elements of a canvas. We can lower or raise the horizon from this measure of 5 1/2 feet (168 cm). This gives the impression that the observer (the point of observation) falls or rises in relation to the ground. This can enhance the effect; either to be small, humble or simply bowed to the subject; or on the contrary, big, dominant or simply flying over the scene.

In 'The Gleaners' by Millet (1857 to the right), the artist placed the horizon line at the height of the lady's head who is partially leaning thus placing us, as a spectator, in the same position. It is as if we were leaning to better understand the hard effort of these two gleaners who spend hours this way, even more bent, to gather a few grains of wheat left by the others. This is what make this scene so intimate. Notice also the depth of the field smoothly created with a progressive lightening of the shades into the distance.



In 'The Sower' by Millet (1851 to the left), the horizon is located at the height of the waist of the seeder putting the view of the spectator of the scene on his knees in front of him. This makes us humble in front of this anonymous character who becomes larger than life; the iconographic representation of the noble worker. Despite his simple and frustrated appearance, it is appropriate to bow in front of the person who sows to the wind for a new promise of abundant harvests. The horizon which leans to the right strengthens the opposite diagonal made by the left foot of the seeder giving more weight to his steps and rooting him in the earth that he is plowing. Two oxen and another peasant on the right in the light, are drawing furrows showing the chain that unites everyone.

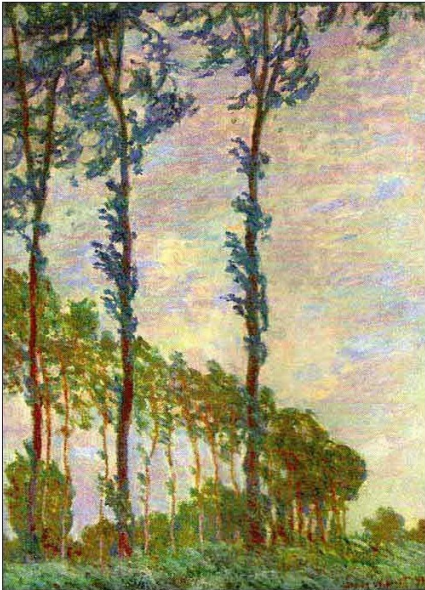
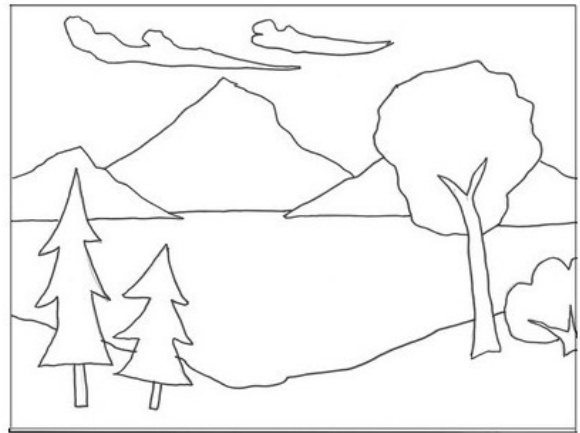
In 'The Clubfoot' by Ribera (1642 to the right), it is really flat on our stomach that we find ourselves because the artist placed the horizon line at the height of the clubfoot of this young boy. This forced acrobatics even makes the landscape in the background not too credible but regardless, the artist really wanted to insist on the fact that the main subject of this picture was the handicap. Slightly shifted to the left but turned to the right to compensate, this little man is all proud for one moment to pose for us before he continues on his way. Posing with his cane like a little soldier with his gun and despite his deformity, a serenity exudes from this portrait, even a joie de vivre. The clouds in the background, that are going to the right to rebalance, follow some diagonals that are in opposition to the reverse diagonal of the stick giving it a greater presence.



The horizon line plays therefore a very important role. It should be the first line that we look for and that we draw even if it doesn't appear concretely in the final result or even if it is located extremist at the exterior of the frame. It is not only the landscapes that must have an horizon line well identified.

We suggest to novice painters to avoid the horizon in full centre because it gives an effect of too much symmetry. But an experienced painter can use it for a purpose; either to amplify the general balance or create a special harmony.

In this schematized landscape (to the right), the almost eternal side (on a human scale) of these majestic mountains and this calm vast lake, without ripple, is separated with an horizon line in full centre that balances and freezes this scene in accentuating its unchangeable side.



A low horizon doesn't allow much plane in perspective but can be counterbalanced with a few elements of different sizes suggesting the depth with little means.

Like in this poplars by Monet (1891 to the left) where the horizon is really very low accentuating the vertiginous height of the trees in the foreground. But to give a third dimension to the scene, other poplars more blurred and under the shape of an S are quickly lost at the bottom and in the far distance of the picture. The darker and cold shades of blue-green of the first three poplars are contrasting with the lighter and warm shades of green-yellow of other poplars and the pastel shades of the sky contributing this way in creating space between the few elements.

A high horizon gives the impression of an elevated view, allowing the ground planes to be plenty, detailed, panoramic, creating effects of great depth.

Like in this autumn landscape by Jiel (2013 to the right) where the high horizon certainly allows a profusion of details in these fields extended as far as the eye can see, that occupies 3/4 of the surface of the canvas. The succession of the different planes and the many elements get mixed up in this orgy of colours that goes beyond the limit of plausibility but which is nevertheless a feast for the eyes. Only the sky more realistic, even anachronistic, with its soft and pastel shades brings a resting zone necessary here to avoid dizziness.

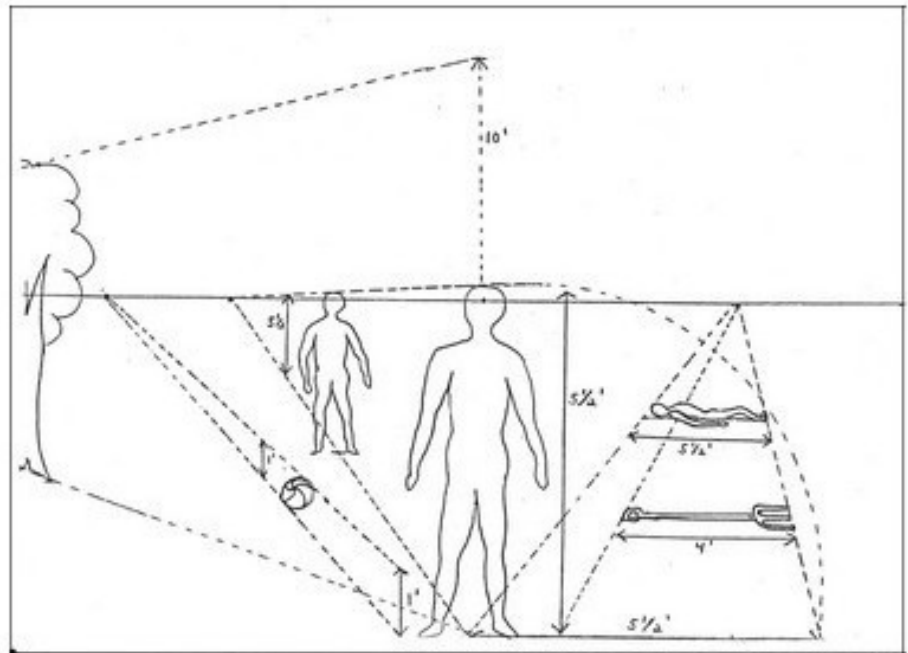


An horizon tilted or deformed can transmit a sensation of imbalance, of vertigo, of dynamic force highlighting the main subject. It can break the monotony of the other lines too symmetric or accentuate the movement of the elements in taking more or less the same angle or by opposing it with a reverse angle.

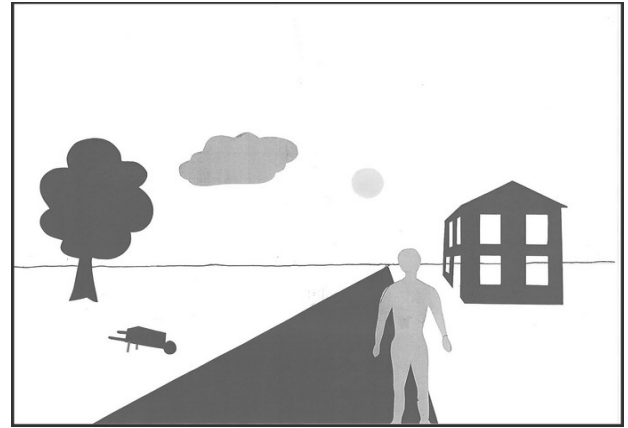
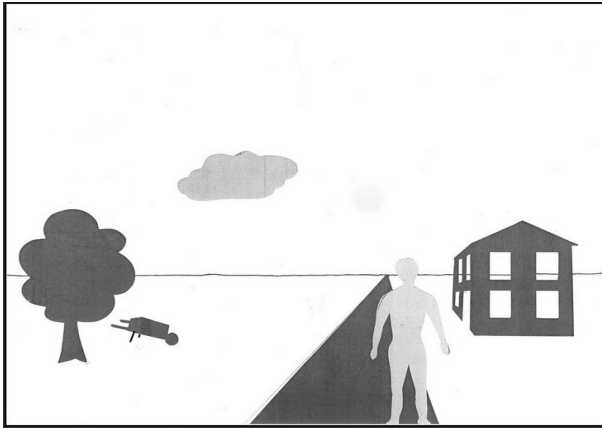
In 'The Evening Visitor' by Lemieux (1956 to the right), the horizon which is on the line of the third from the top, if we measure it in its centre, it climbs slightly to the left forcing the single character located on the line of the right quarter to make an effort in his walk. The snow spread as far as the eye can see makes it necessary. The diagonal made with the front of his coat responds well by opposing the one of the horizon. When there is few elements in a canvas, their disposition in the space is crucial. Here a minuscule forest strip in the distance on the left boldly balances the whole, giving a little depth to the immense landscape almost abstract. This character imposes a great stature by the fact that the horizon, our viewpoint is located at the height of his chest.



When we know the format of an element in a canvas, this measure can be brought back anywhere on the canvas as much in height as in width. Here we take the example of the character in the foreground, who we know is about 5 1/2 feet (168 cm) and of whom we want to bring back the size elsewhere. Simply we just need to start a line from its base and make it pass through the base of the new element up to the horizon in one point. From this point, you start a second line that goes up to the desired



height or length on the known element (here the character) and all that is found between these two lines with the same dimension. In the example, a second character can be drawn anywhere between the two lines. In the same example a ball has been drawn in proportion to the second plane by bringing back a measure taken from the left of the character if the ball would be at his side. We only have to set where we want the base of the element and follow what is described above. See the tree on the left which is proportioned also according to the amplified size of the character. In this case, the meeting point of both lines is always found on the horizon but at the exterior of the frame on the left. In the examples on the right, we can even bring back the size of the character horizontally and then use it as a measure to proportion some elements further away.

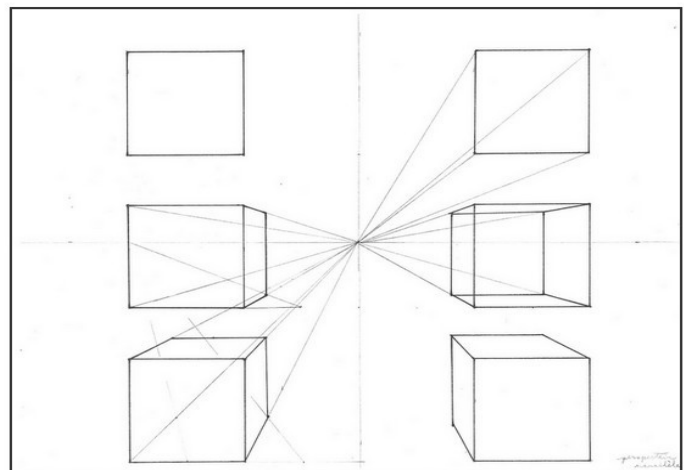


In this example (top left), I gathered a certain number of errors of proportion. First, the character in the foreground is in this scene the element of reference which ensures that like him we have our feet on the ground and the eyes on the horizon. First common mistake, the road in the foreground is not large enough. We only have to lay the character down across to see that it is barely his width. Secondly the two-storey house is not any higher than ten feet (305 cm) because the horizon goes up to the windows of the second floor. If we evaluate that from the base of the house that touches the ground up to the height of the horizon, there is 5 1/2 feet (168 cm) and in adding the top portion, we barely have 10 feet (305 cm) in all. As a proof we only have to make the character move forward to the door and since his head is found at the height of the horizon, it is also at the height of the window frames of the second floor. Only an elevated view could have given this angle but we have our feet well on the ground according to the character. It is the same for the tree supposedly majestic on the left that has in fact only approximately 8 feet (244 cm). For the size of the wheelbarrow we only have to move it horizontally up to the house to see that it is too big in proportion. The same scene is represented on the right with the correctives.

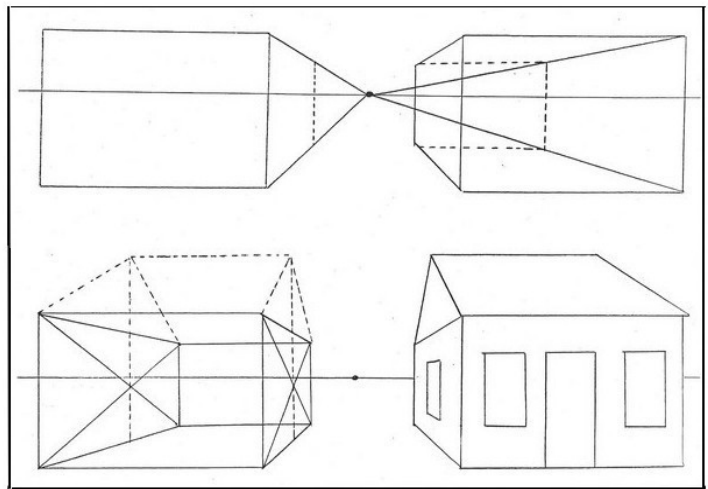
Therefore, we can remember the principle that the size and position of certain elements in a scene can indicate where the viewpoint of the spectator is, which is always found on the horizon in a specific point between left and right. The following will provide more detailed indications.

In painting there are two kinds of main perspectives and a secondary third.

The first and the simplest one is the parallel perspective (or to a vanishing point) which has a series of surfaces facing us therefore parallel in height and width on the edge of the frame. The other surfaces that represent the sides of the elements, which suggest the depth and are more or less perpendicular to the first, go to a vanishing point located on the horizon (the viewpoint of the observer). Here (to the right) from a simple square is how the sides and bottom or the top of a cube appear.



In this example (to the right), we built a house seen from the front whose lines on one side converge to a point in the centre on the horizon. The horizon will be located at the eye level of a normal person if is positioned in front of the door. It is us who decide where this point that we call the vanishing point is, thus the viewpoint of the observer. First we draw two lines that start from two corners of the rectangular facade and meet on that point. Then we trace a vertical line between these two lines to delimit the depth of the house. This depth is left to the visual judgment of



each one because the geometric laws to transpose a width in a depth are rather complex even for me who is only a simple artist. If we draw in transparency both lines of the two other corners to the same point, we can easily trace the rectangle which defines the wall behind. Then in connecting the four corners in a X on a surface in vanishing point, the centre of the X defines in height and width the centre of the surface. Then it is easy to bring up a vertical to define the centred point of the roof. The window on the side has its bottom and top directed to the same vanishing point while its vertical lines are perfectly vertical, parallel to the frame.

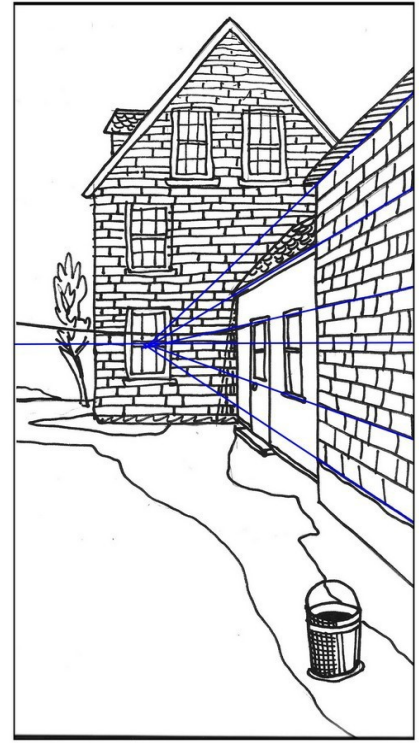
In 'The Painters Building' by Caillebotte (1877 to the right), it is easy to find the vanishing point that organizes the entire composition. We only have to take two lines that converge toward one another and their meeting point defines the viewpoint of the spectator on the horizon, which is found here at the eye level of the man in the foreground. The bottom and the top of the doors, windows, sidewalk of the buildings on the right and left all converge towards the same point. Only a green louver perpendicular to us at the top centre indicates that there is a small wall facing us. Notice the two main characters that are leaning backward in an attempt to rebalance the composition too heavy on the right in attractions and in masses of colours. Even the leaning lady in black who is crossing the street in the distance tries desperately to rebalance it all. The entirety topples slightly.



In 'Oedipus Rex' a surrealist picture by Ernst (1922 to the left), the wall on the left, the platform floor and the wall on the right do not have the same vanishing point and are not located a priori on the horizon creating confusion and a malaise intended to lose ground and find oneself in a fantasy world that doesn't follow the rules of reality. An immense hand in a window, holding a nut, with fingers transpierced by a strange instrument is completed with two animal heads with staring eyes. The whole tells a riddle that only an artist could give us the key but isn't it better to stay in the contemplative mystery.



In 'The Intruder' by Wyeth (1965 to the left), a single vanishing point located in the centre of the bottom window of the house, places us as an observer in the scene. All the vertical lines of the buildings on the right are perfectly parallel to the frame, while the horizontal lines all converge to that point; whether it is the top of the walls, foundation, door, window and the paper brick giving an effect of extreme unusual depth. The wall behind this house is perfectly facing us causing all its lines as much in the vertical direction than the horizontal, to be parallel to the frame. The real horizon in the composition is located lower than our viewpoint giving a slight impression that the

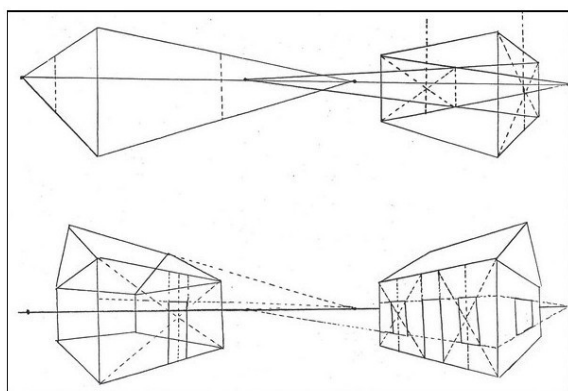
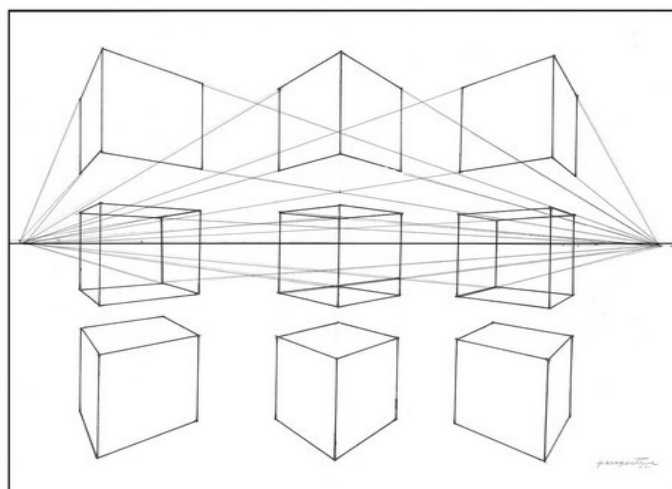


house is on a mound. The palette of colours in the shades of grey-brown creates the nostalgic atmosphere of an old photo. The sketch of this picture (to the right) shows us the vanishing point which is in fact the point of the observer and the principal lines that converge towards him.

In this illustration of a small street (at the bottom) to find the vanishing point on the horizon, we only have to take two convergent lines of the houses on the left or centre to discover that they connect approximately at the centre of the entrance of the house in the back. I say approximately because these old houses have lost a little of their right angles. And unsurprisingly, the horizon is at the height of the $\frac{3}{4}$ of the doors, normal height if we are standing up and are a spectator in the scene. Besides, to look for the height of the $\frac{3}{4}$ of a door in a composition is a good indication to position the horizon which is not always well defined or apparent. The great wall on the right that is facing us is not truly exactly so. Because the moment that we start to see the side of an element, its surface in front of us also starts to be seen from the side even if it is only slightly at first like here in this scene. I support my claims on the boards which the higher they are, more they are pointing down, towards another hypothetical vanishing point located very far on the right outside the frame. As soon as a second vanishing point appears, it is called an oblique perspective.



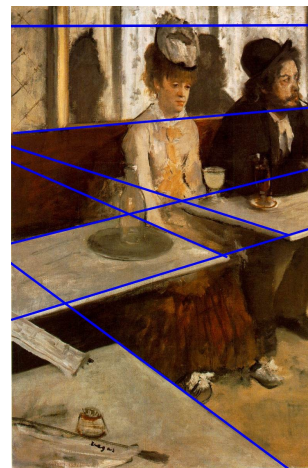
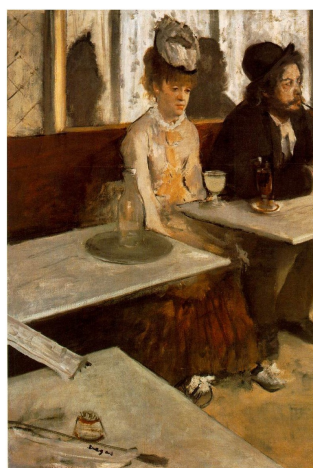
The oblique perspective (or at two vanishing points) has a set of arêtes (corners) facing us therefore parallel in height or in width to the edge of the frame. The surfaces that represent the sides of the elements that suggest the depth and which are more or less perpendicular between them, go towards two vanishing points located on each side on the horizon. Here (to the right) starting from a vertical line (an edge) is how the sides and the bottom or the top of a cube seen from an angle, appear.

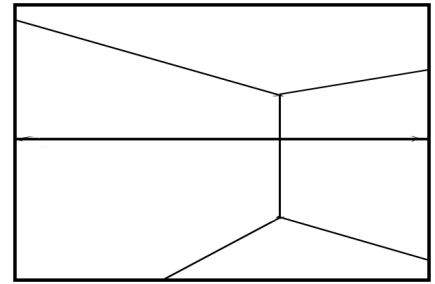
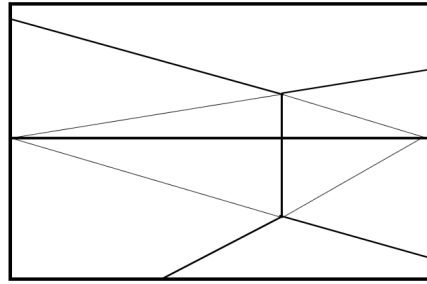
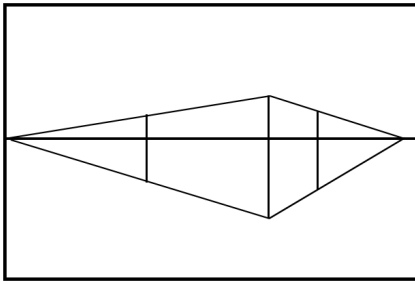


In this example (to the left), we built a house seen on an angle starting from its arête represented by a first vertical line. From the base and the top of this latter is the start of the lines that converge towards two points on the horizon located on each side. It is us who decide where these two vanishing points are placed, but the viewpoint of the observer will be placed between them. Then we trace two vertical lines between these four horizontal lines to delimit the depth of the house. If we draw in transparency the four lines of four other corners to their respective point, we see both back walls appear

and the crossing of these four lines delimits two points which if united with a vertical, give the opposite edge. In realizing some X on any of these surfaces in vanishing point, the centre of the X defines in height and in width the centre of the surface. Then it is easy to raise two verticals to define the centred point of the roof or a door, a window. When we have defined the centre of a surface, it is easy to trace a line to divide it in two equal parts and then draw again two other X in each part to always find the centre of each surface and thus have reference points to align the elements.

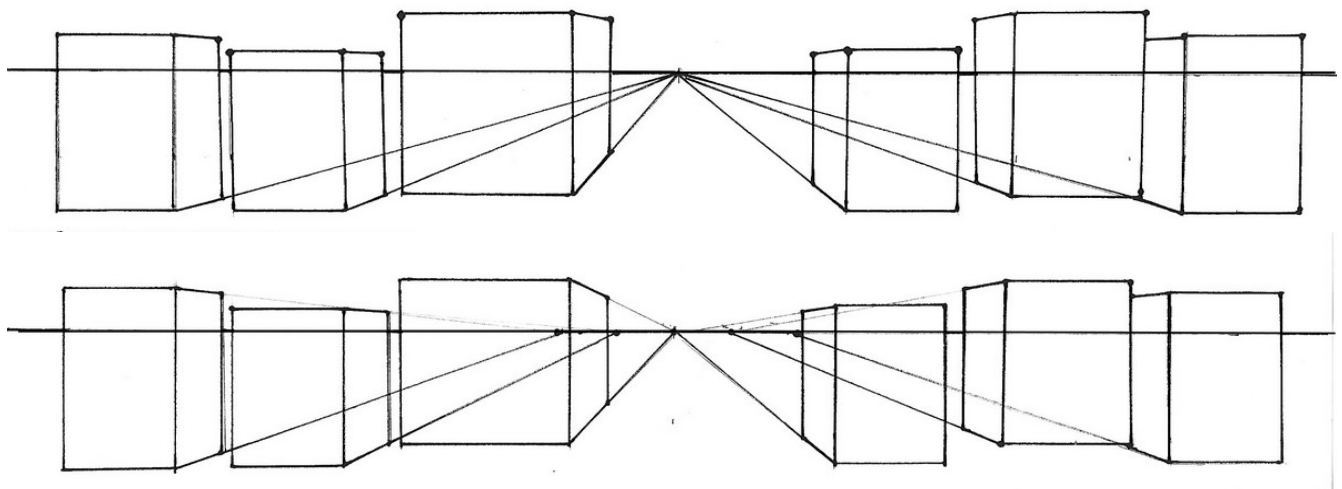
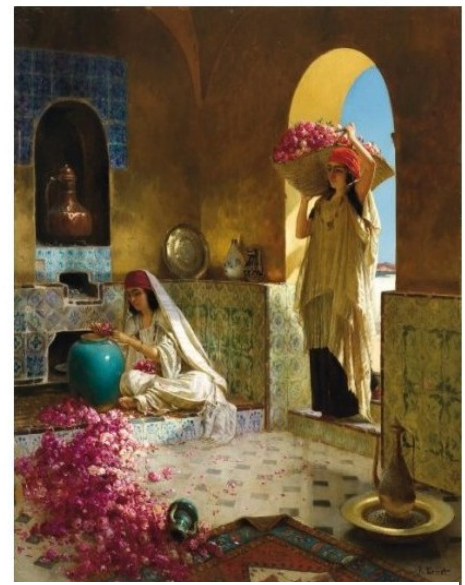
In 'The Absinth' by Degas (1876 at the bottom) as an observer in this bistro where a lady at a table seem lost in the vapours of alcohol, we seem to be completely on the left of the scene and maybe even on the outside of the frame. Our vision which is on an angle as if we were discreetly looking sideways is caused by the convergence of the lines of the tables and the back of the chair which reconnect in two vanishing points placed on the horizon in the distance outside the frame on each side. This puts the horizon slightly above both characters without however giving the impression that we are standing. However this unusual angle forcefully puts us as another customer in the bistro in a little voyeur position.





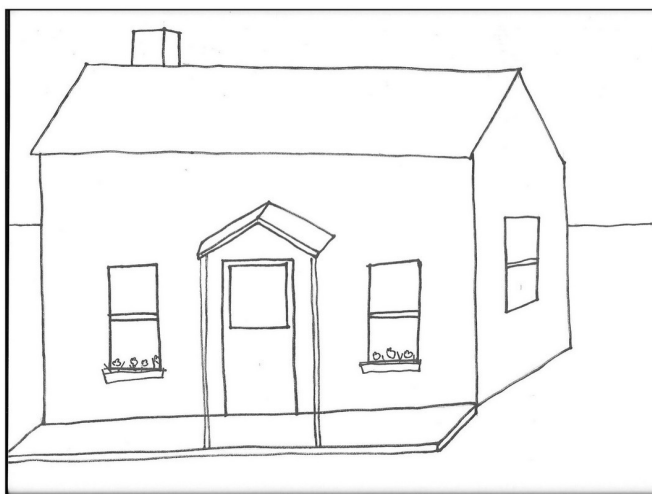
Now you know that when you prolong the extremities of a vertical arête towards two vanishing points on the horizon, it delimits the exterior of an element seen in corner (up on the left). But if you prolong these same lines in the other direction (up in the centre) and then you erase the first lines, you will obtain an element seen from the interior in corner (top right). Therefore to create a view of an interior in an angle, it needs the lines that are crossing one another from two vanishing points.

In 'The Gathering of Roses' by Ernst (1890 to the right) of orientalist style, the viewpoint is located at the level of the corner of the room just behind the sitting lady flaking the roses. Besides, the intersecting lines converge towards the points situated on the invisible horizon placed at the height of this same lady's eyes. The line almost straight of both walls confirms it. This nice crossover of lines is accentuated by the tip of the rug which retakes the angle of the base of the walls and the final result highlights the depth and richness of the scene. Our sitting position gives grandeur and majesty to the lady in the doorway. The exterior light strongly illuminates the top of the entrance and subtly the interior.

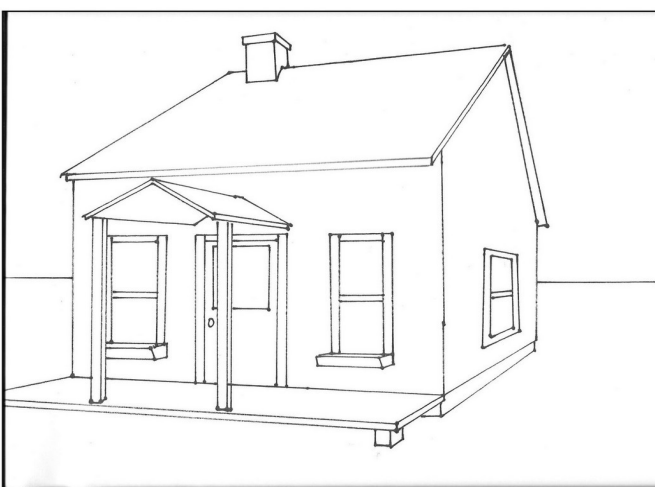


For a picture much larger than high (on top), we can spread the vanishing point in a series of points which takes on a small scale, the rhythmic of the foreground. This gives opening angles of less than 145 degrees (acceptable limit) to the surfaces going towards the vanishing points; even the ones that are very far from the central point.

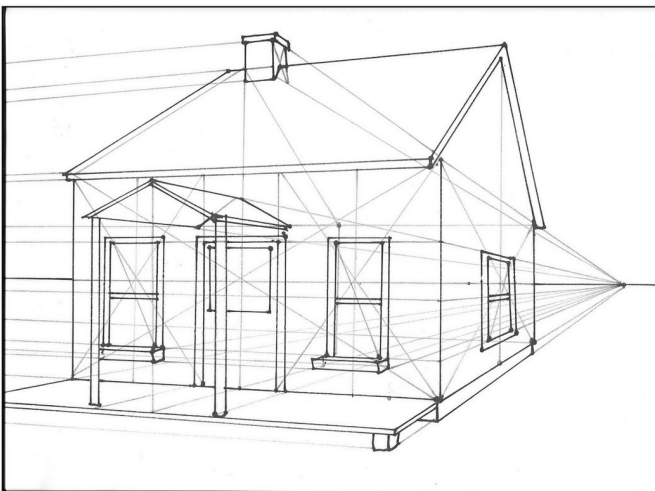
This small house (to the right) doesn't respect at all or little the rules of perspectives. For all that, it doesn't make it devoid of charm despite the naivety of its execution. The laws of perspectives are there to increase the realism if this is your goal but can be partially or entirely neglected if you are targeting first a personal interpretation, a transposition that is seeking to evolve rather than reproduce. The ideal would be that it would be done in all knowledge of cause and effect and not by lack of knowledge. But this must be considered on a case by case basis.



Here is the same house in this first picture (to the right), with the same veranda and a covered entrance that was built entirely with only two vanishing points on the horizon. One on the right that is included in the scene and another one on the left which is immensely far off the frame. I challenge you to follow two lines of the facade to find the place where they meet.



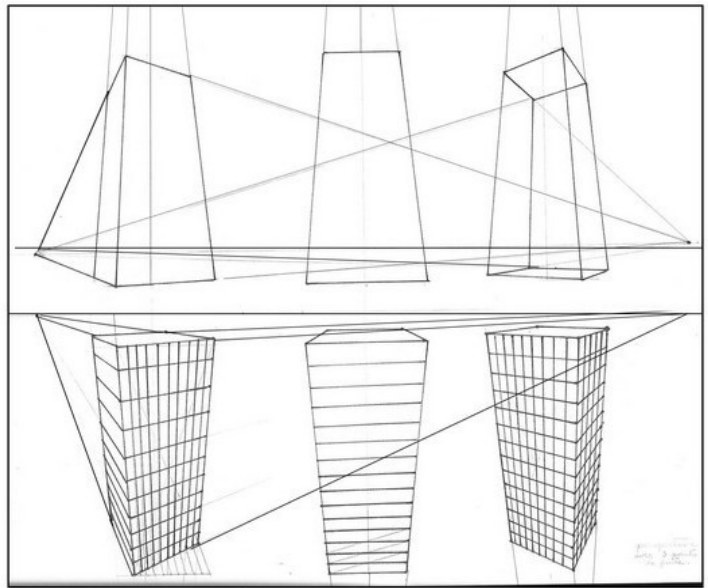
In the second picture (bottom right), we see the important number of lines that have been used to realize it and yet there is only two points where all the horizontal lines converge. However there is also all the X that have been used to delimit the centre of the surfaces. When we have outlined the two main walls of the house, it is quite easy to find which one of the two vanishing points concerns each line of the other elements added. Any element that is parallel to a wall has its lines going towards the same vanishing point. The chimney shows it well. The eaves is a more complex example. The lines of its depth go towards the vanishing point of the right since it is parallel to the side wall. Even the position left-right of the bases of both its columns go towards the point on the right as being the extension of the width of the door while their high-low positions are defined by the point on the left. Despite the imposed challenge, the final result gives a house seen under a different and subtle angle.



When the mastery of the perspectives is acquired, the eye can conceive naturally, without all these calculations, a just and convincing result.

The exceptional perspective with three vanishing points which is not used much in painting has a third vanishing point located at the top or bottom of the elements and suggest the vertiginous height according to a very low or very high viewpoint in relation to the scene. Here I mention it briefly as a complement.

Here is the construction of a skyscraper (to the right) either seen from an horizon plane very low with a third vanishing point located very high or seen from an horizon plane very high with a third vanishing point located very low. You are free to do a deeper research if this angle interests you.

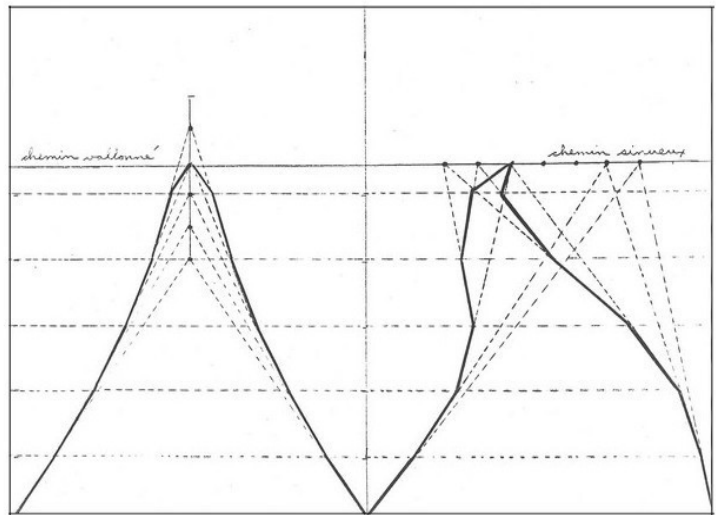


In 'Christ of St. John of the Cross' by Dali (1951 to the left) of a surrealist style, the vertiginous angle of the view that we have as a spectator gives Christ on the cross, high perched and floating in the air, a metaphysic dimension. Are we a bird or a pure spirit to contemplate from this viewpoint what the Christ himself is contemplating? Strictly speaking it is not a perspective with three vanishing points but instead with two points if we do a 90 degrees rotation to the scene. The subject is contained within a triangle in full centre and its lines converge towards a very low point located outside the frame for the front of the cross and a higher one for the thickness. The landscape at the bottom representing a port with a small boat that seems built according to a normal perspective, an angle of a view slightly raised which is creating a certain discomfort. If these two angles are really wanted, we are torn between taking a human viewpoint at the bottom or a divine viewpoint at the top.

In 'Lamentation on Christ Deceased' by Mantegna (1480 at the bottom), the angle of the body is really unusual for the time of its realization. This can be seen as a beautiful example of perspective. Both edges of the bed indicate that the vanishing point is found above the head of Christ outside the frame. It took a good study of a body seen under this angle to make it this realistic in this painting. A warm yellow-orange light splashes the bed and the body and gives a contrast with the cold shades grey-blue of the body. This accentuates the somewhat macabre effect of the death versus the hope of a resurrection not yet seen. The head inclined to the right of Christ counterbalances the addition of two mourners on the left.



A hilly or sinuous road, in order for it to respect the perspectives (on the right), can be created if it is for hilly, by drawing a series of vanishing points under or above the vanishing point of the observer on the horizon; or if it is for sinuous, a series of vanishing points on the left or the right of the same point of observation. We direct our two lines of the road sides to a new point for each section for which we want to change the direction. The more there are vanishing points and different sections more the curves can become subtle.



In this schematized street (to the right), we feel the descent followed by an ascent of the street caused at first by a series of vanishing points lower than the horizon that form the hollow and then some vanishing points higher that form the mound. However all the lows and highs of the doors and windows are going perfectly straight to a single point on the horizon knowing that they have been levelled by the builders. This effect gives charm and movement to a street that at first sight could be banal.



In this street of Paris by Utrillo (1914 to the left), despite the frustrating and naive side of this vision where all seems jolty, there is a bewitching atmosphere of the old suburbs of Paris. It is the rendering and homogeneous texture all over the canvas that give this great plastic quality. But I am showing you this simple work especially to make you notice that we have the sensation that the street climbs a mound to the red mill way in the back because the lines in vanishing point of the house and their openings are pointing an approximative point located much lower than the one where the two street lines converge. By this simple gesture, the

effect is convincing. The approximative vanishing point of the houses, far from causing harm here, accentuates the decrepit side of these old facades that have door frames and sign of life.

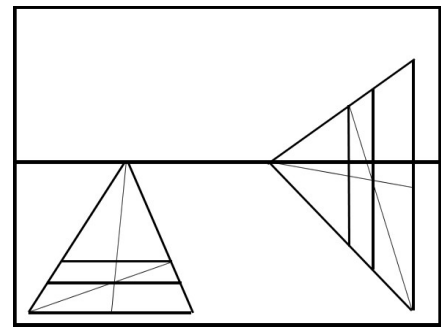
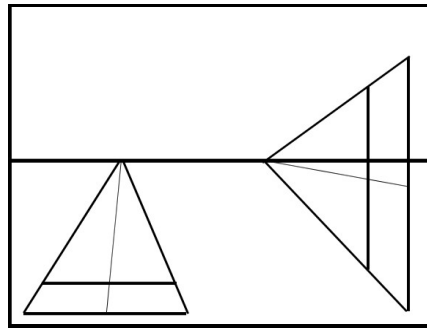
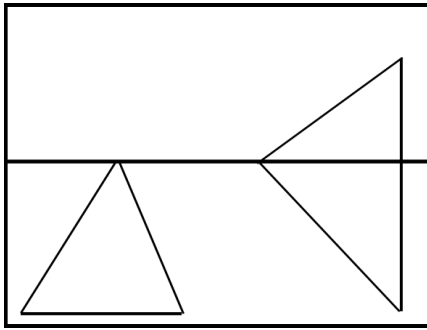
In 'The Houses of Cabassud' by Corot (1840 to the right), it is obvious that we are located high on a hill overlooking a small city. The effect is simply given by the first section of the road in the foreground with both sides converging to a point located at the height of the river therefore much lower than the vanishing point which should be found normally at the height of the doors of the houses. But if we follow the lines of the second section of the road after the gate, they are pointing to the roof of the houses confirming that our viewpoint is at the height above the real horizon. The main subject which is this road where we are, is shifted on the right. The dark mass of the grass on the left, of the river and the mountain delimited by a series of stabilizing horizontal lines, counterbalance with the light mass of the road.



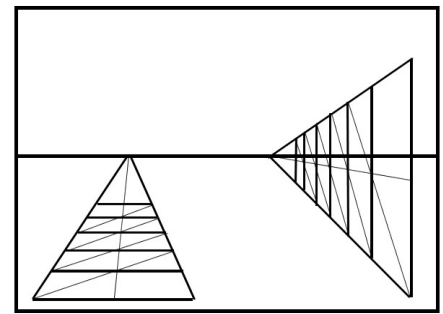
In 'The Road of Anoniers' by Nardi (1910 to the left), the artist really knew how to create the impression that we are marching on that road by giving it the entire width of the canvas and respecting the real perspectives. Despite the fact that the horizon is low in the scene, here the depth is acquired softly in the well proportioned curve of the road. A series of vanishing points very close on the horizon going to the right allows for this kind of perfect sinuosity. This curve is nicely highlighted by the one of the left wall which is as graceful. The soft and bright shades of the whole add a calm effect and it is the few well highlighted shadows that make this omnipresent light to stand out. The great vertical of the cypress on the left forms an angle bracket with the horizontal of the wall framing the sky. The mountain in the distance adds the impression that we are walking on an endless road.

In 'The Plain Near Auvers' by Van Gogh (1890 at the bottom) we can see that the different levels of fields, separated with horizontal lines, go to different points on the horizon, especially on the left, suggesting a rough and winding side to this plain. The enforced, imprecise and serpentine lines that separate the fields add a little harshness to the scene amplifying the symbolic of the hard job of a plowman. The tilted horizon to the right, to counterbalance, also gives movement thus life to the picture. Touches of red, especially in the foreground, highlight this palette of dominant greens and the cold blue of the sky mitigates the entirety.





To draw a series of lines in perspective that have the same space between them as horizontal than vertical (You can imagine all the possibilities of use), at first we must draw a line that we delimit with two lines that go towards a point on the horizon. Then we trace a line that starts from the centre of our first one up to the same point. Then we trace a second parallel line to the first one with a first arbitrary distance of personal choice but that we want to repeat thereafter. Then we start a line from one of the two ends of the first one that we pass through the centre of the second one and goes to the opposite side. At the meeting point we can draw a third line parallel to the first two and this new space is identical to the first. We only have to operate in the same way to reproduce as many times the same space.

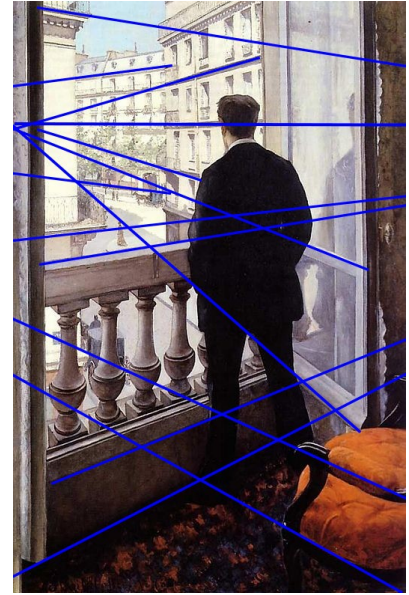


In 'The Bridge of Moret' by Sisley (1893 to the left), the arches of this bridge in vanishing point are a good example to use this astute to create an harmonious gradual diminution of these arches. Then it is the support bases that become the vertical lines as landmarks to separate each arch. The fair proportion of the bridge adds to the realism of this canvas and is the main element that gives depth to the ensemble.

In this small interior scene by De Hooch (1658 to the right), the order of the floor tiles in a vanishing point fascinates us with this precise alternate of the game of yellow and green squares. A vanishing point located around the centre of the map on the wall on the left delimits the vertical lines and a gradual decrease of these spaces delimits the horizontal lines. There are other ways to set this space other than the one I am suggesting but they are in general more complex. This floor tiling contributes to make this scene a tribute to the orderly and peaceful life of the Dutch people in the seventeenth century. Two soldiers at rest are toasting the joy of life.

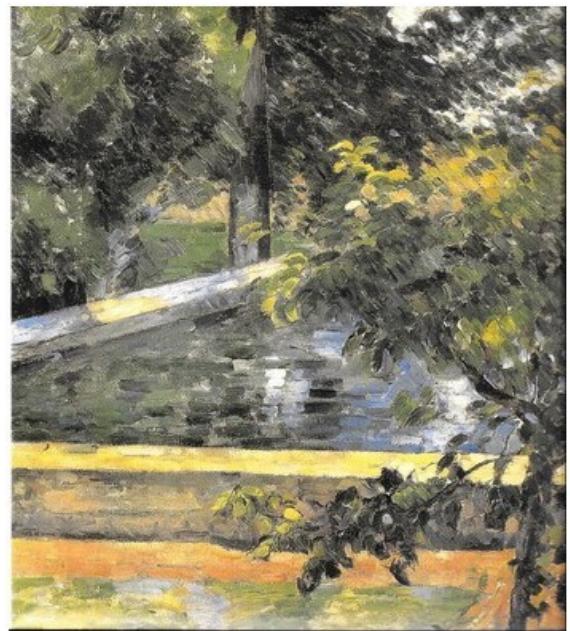


In 'Young Man at the Window' by Caillebotte (1876 to the right), the challenge is to find where the multiple perspectives and vanishing points are. The first line to find is certainly the horizon line which is found at eye level of the young man confirmed by the perfectly horizontal line of the building on the right. Therefore, we are also standing. To find the vanishing point that organize the room, we only have to follow two converging lines that eventually lead to an horizon point which is found, in this case, to the right outside of the frame. The parallel building in front on the left seems to go to the same vanishing point while the perpendicular building on the right has its vanishing point on the left on the horizon. The angle of the open window points to the same vanishing point on the left. The building in the centre back goes to a point on the left on the horizon at the exterior of the frame. This gives an original view angle to this scene that only pretends to tell about the daily life.



The linear perspective of the Italian Renaissance is used the most today. But a picture can only be composed of some elements in perspective or some lines in diagonals to suggest the third dimension.

In this garden by Cézanne (1885 to the right), two lines are enough to suggest depth in this composition. The front edge of the water basin is frankly more illuminated on the top which is what gives it an obvious thickness and it is slightly inclined downwards to the right which is what avoids the symmetry of the horizontal line. Symmetry which generally stabilizes but might also freeze the scene which in this case, would take away some natural movement favourable to a garden. The left edge of the basin is the one which by a simple diagonal, gives depth to the composition. Its diagonal is picked up again by a branch of the tree in the foreground to the right like the golden field in the rear-left is taking up the line of the edge creating a discreet stabilizing Z.



Forms with different dimensions might also suggest depth. We can neglect the perspective in parts or entirely if our goal is not to imitate reality but to make it a particular vision. The experience of an object in three dimensional is also tactile. In examining it from every angle, we experience sensations that the linear perspective ignores.

In 'The Circus' by Chagall (1956 to the right), it is in the bluish twilight of a marquee that a few touches of luminous shades, well distributed, illuminate some of the artists; while some acrobats, tightrope walkers, musicians and the public fill the entire space. The half-circle of the track structures somewhat the ensemble and the arbitrary sizes of all these beautiful people create a certain impression of depth however without respecting any rule. We are here in the presence of a general invocation of the joy of a circus where everything intermingles like in the memories that could very well be in the head of the blue lady who overlooks the scene on the right. The size of the elements, the sparkle of certain colours and the different textures are not really realistic but instead seem to help highlighting their importance and create tridimensionality.



Here in general, are five other types of non-linear perspectives.

1: The aerial perspective or called atmospheric comes from the observation of the space, the air that there is between the different elements and which make them faded as soon as they move away from our field of vision. The aerial perspective tries to reproduce this effect on a canvas. The three main characteristics are: the more the elements are further away, the more they are blurred, pale and tinged with the colour of the atmosphere (which includes all the possible colours of the sky). These three points create depth with the adding of an atmospheric impression between the elements.

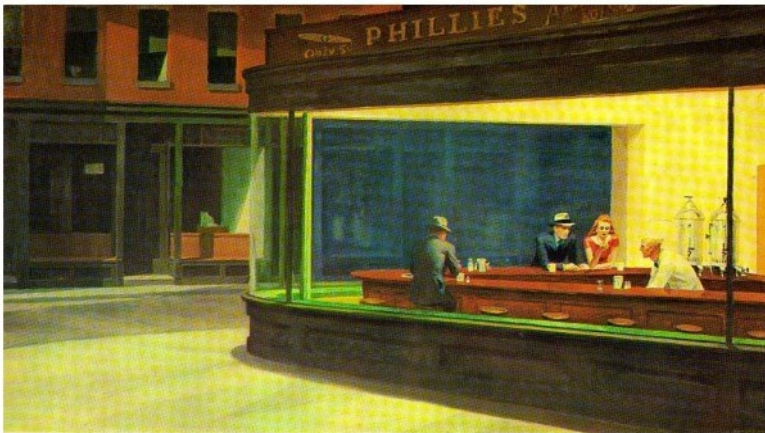
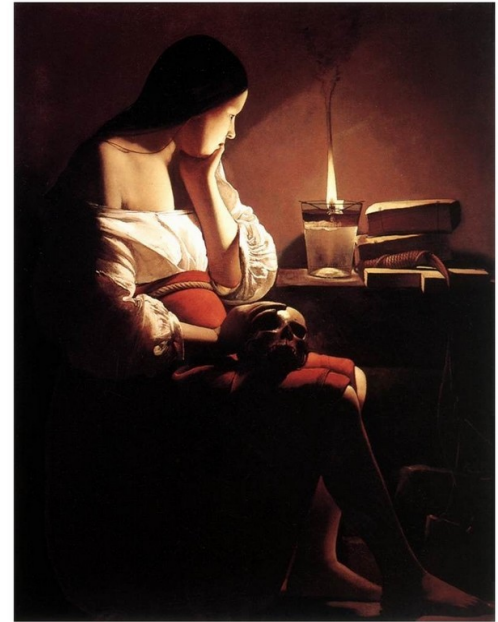
It is De Vinci who formulated this method the best and applied it in many of his paintings like in St. John (1515 to the right) where the landscape in the distance on the left seems to fade progressively in the grey-bluish haze.



In 'The Boarding for the Isle of Cythère' by Watteau (1717 to the left) the young artist represents a gallant scene where couples are getting ready for a romantic walk. Their destination is veiled with mystery because the more we look in the distance the more the scenery becomes pale, blurred and bluish. In moving away, very softly the horizon leaves room to the imagination and daydreaming. The precision of the detail is not always guarantor of a realism and might even harm when the goal is mostly to represent an invocation, a fleeting souvenir or even a felt reality.

The perspective in chiaroscuro wants the play of contrasts between light and obscurity. The light that defines and highlights the forms, illuminates softly or violently the details and puts others in the shadow to create effect of depth going to dramatic.

Like in this 'Vanity' by Latour (1635 to the right) where the candle, which is the focal point of the lighting, draws a subtle oval of light in the centre-right of the superior part of the canvas and balances with the dark part of the centre-left of the inferior part. The skull is the second concrete element located almost in the centre of the picture, from where the entire composition gravitates. It resumes the symbolic which is; young girl despite your youth, your beauty and even your knowledge (books), reflect on the fact that time that passes (candle) will have reason of all this because death is inevitable (skull).



In 'Night Owl' by Hopper (1942 to the left), it is the powerful lighting, completely to the right, in the interior of this restaurant open at night that creates this mysterious and intimate atmosphere. The solitude seems to unite these four small characters.

The facade of the restaurant has a vanishing point at the exterior of the frame on the left while it is the reverse for the buildings in the background creating a crossover effect. The complementary red and green meet in several places. The blue of the display window in the back softens somewhat these contrasts.

3: The tiered perspective is realized with superimposed planes of different intensities of light and colour demanding a successive or sequential vertical lecture of the canvas, creating space and time.

In 'The Valley of Yonne' by Malthus (1957 to the right), a series of horizontal planes with smooth contrasts simulate the depth. It is this alternation of light, medium or dark fields that breaks the regularity and suggests the distance. Here there is a predominance of light colours in the foreground that gradually darken in the distance which is the usual reverse of the practice. The angles of the buildings in the foreground and the curves of the multiple hills in the background prevent it all from being boring.





In 'Main Road and Secondary Roads' by Klee (1929 to the left), we have the impression that the background of the canvas has been made on a principle of the frottis like when we put a paper sheet on a textured surface and by rubbing with pencils or colouring chalks, we obtain a play of markings very expressive. But in this case, it is possible that a simple wrinkled fabric, coated with paint could have made this effect. The multitude of horizontal lines of different lengths and the few vertical lines in vanishing point delimit areas of varied colours which despite this composition almost abstract suggest depth. If we push the realist version suggested by the title, it is the invocation of an aerial view of roads that intersect and end on a sky made with three blue stripes.

4: The perspective of colour contrasts is created by the repelling effect or front projection that certain colours have. The values of light or dark tones; of warm or cold colours

juxtaposed give to the retina of the eye a certain impression of tridimensionality.

Like in 'The three Musicians' by Picasso (1921 to the right), there is few lines that suggest depth. They are the light colours like white, yellow and the warm colours like red, orange that seem to be closer to our eyes. While the darker colours like brown, black and the cold colours like blue, beige appear further. The composition in straight line forms an almost perfect rectangle that hugs the rectangular form of the canvas.



In 'Zulma' by Matisse (1950 to the left) taken from his series of paper cuts, only the angle of both tables reminds us that we are in a tridimensional space but no matter because the main interest is the invocation of this woman. Barely suggested by its exterior blue shape (cold colour), it is still covered in the centre by a strange contrasting orange stripe (warm colour) that seem to suggest the inner vitality of this woman. This stripe covers from top to bottom highlighting her face, her bosom, her belly, her pubic area and her legs with a certain eroticism because this woman has a first name. For the rest all is reduced to the essential that goes from the green background to the yellow rug; from the two pink tables to the bouquets of flowers. The colour strip at the bottom places the entirety like on a platform.

5: The cubistic perspective uses many viewpoints, angles and facets to give the totality of an element creating this way an impression of three unconventional dimensions.

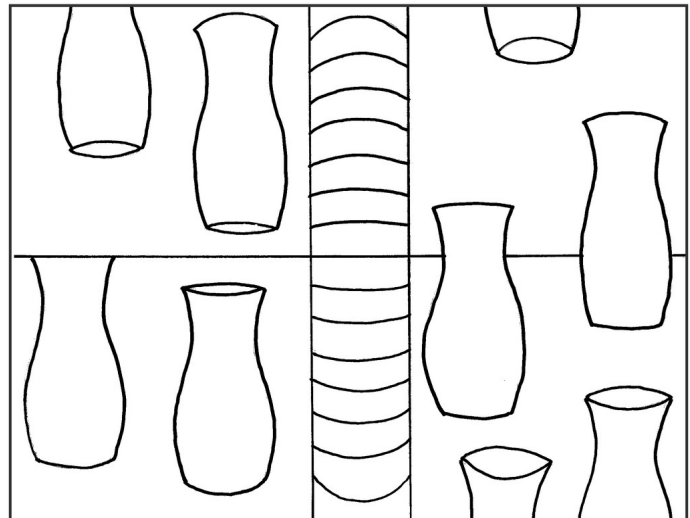
Like in "Journal and Violin" by Gris (1917 to the right) where the vague shape of the central violin seems to reverberate around other angles or other interpretations of the object. The journal also suffers this fracturing but at lower scale. This is all set in a huge approximative vertical oval that suggest a table seen from above and helps to maintain it all coherent in a shaky balance. The shadows and the thickness of certain shapes dominated by the blacks give them a sharper cut indeed aggressive but this what adds a lot of depth to the general composition. The shades of green and blue lighten somewhat this painting which is a change from the usual austere palette of the cubists of the first hour.

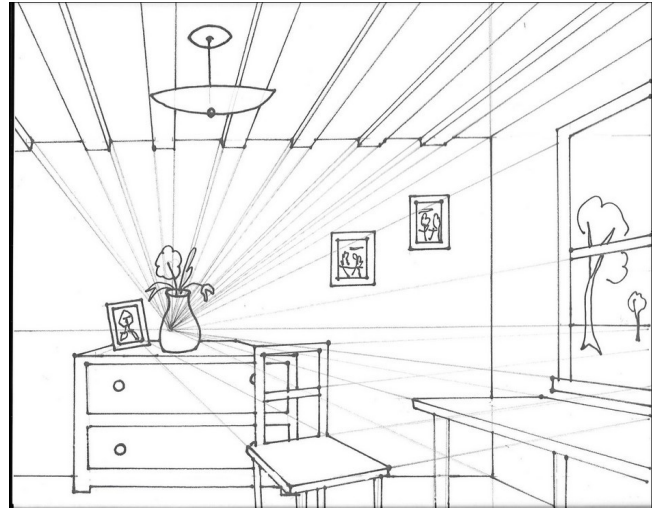


In 'The portrait of Ambroise Vollard' by Picasso (1910 to the left), only one part of the face gives us a semblance of identity of the character.

But the further we move away, more the realism deforms, disintegrates in a multitude of lines. They form pieces of angle like prisms that would show us the subject on all its facets. In wanting to capture the man from all angles, the reality gives way to a truncated, elusive vision that is the human being. In moving away from the centre everything fades in shapes almost abstract enshrined in an uncertain oval. The face with warm colours of yellow-orange catches the eye to what seem to be the only preoccupying element of the artist. The rest of the palette is maintained in sober colours indeed lifeless.

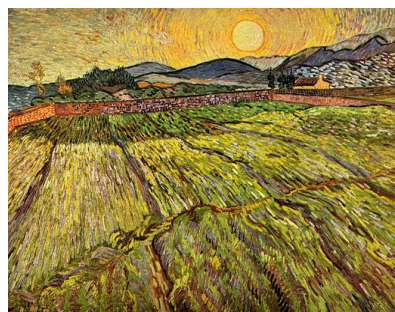
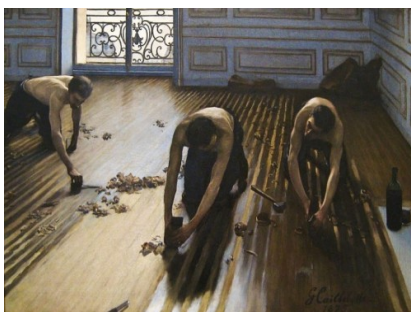
To draw the curves of a form while respecting certain perspectives, know that from the line of the horizon, the lines of a circle appear straight and bend more and more to the top above the horizon and bend more and more to the bottom under the horizon. Like in the example (to the right), the section in the centre shows the curvature that increases starting from a straight line located at the centre on the horizon which is the viewpoint of the spectator. A series of vases shows this effect on the curvatures that it provokes on their tops and bottoms.





In this example, it will explain that we can really amplify the content of a scene with the perspectives. In the first place even if the horizon is only found indicated in the view from the window on the line of the $\frac{1}{3}$ bottom, nevertheless it puts our eyes at the height of someone who would be sitting on another chair facing the flower pot on the commode. However it is on this pot that all the lines of the orderly room will run. The ceiling beams accentuate this effect. The line of the ceiling is found a $\frac{1}{3}$ of the top and the corner of the wall at the $\frac{1}{4}$ right. Thus it is a construction with one vanishing point except for the oblique chair which has two.

Therefore the scene tells that everything indicates that there has been a departure of one of the members of a couple. All the lines of the room indicate a vase in which one of the two flowers is alive and the other wilted. The empty chair, the only element placed on an angle, points from the left side a portrait on the commode and from the right side the exterior of the window whose vanishing point is outside the frame. Two other trees in the window of which one is near and the other far away prolong the idea. Here is how simple lines have subtly given a calculated symbolic emotion to this scene.

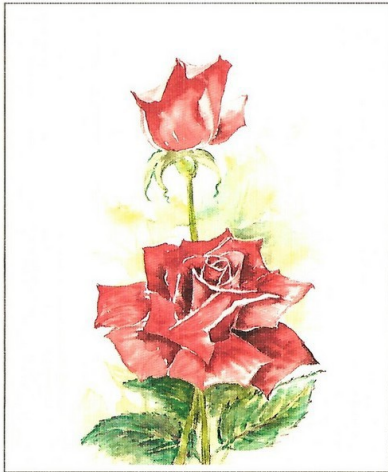


In this composition, whether it is figurative, symbolic or abstract, a series of lines in diagonal or in vanishing point whether they are numerous or rare, can suggest three-dimensionality. It is you who decide their importance in the final rendering of your work in knowledge of cause and effect. Caillebotte 1875, Van Gogh 1889, de Staël 1954 (at the top).

Here that is all for the second course entitled 'Perspective and Proportion'.

Colin Chabot

To complement, I will show here a first series of paintings that have a certain number of blunders, not to diminish the work of these artists but to help better understand the common errors for an educational purpose. Several remarks will anticipate the following content of the future issues but this will be a good introduction.

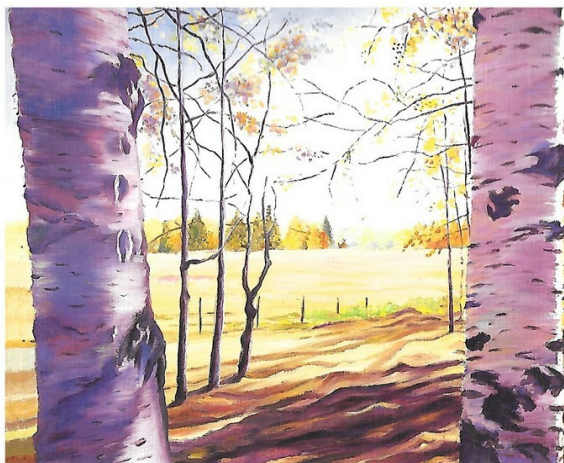


In this representation of two roses (to the left) one of which is open and the other one about to open, despite an undeniable quality of the rendering, their vertical static alignment in full centre lacks natural. If the one at the bottom had been tilted a little more to the right and the one from the top to the left, it would have given some movement while taking a little more of the too empty and symmetric space. The right line is not very evocative of life.

This bird placed on a fence post (to the right) is also too well centred in both directions, freezing it. Furthermore, a grove



of trees on the right imbalances the whole accentuated by the head of the bird turned in the same direction. The vague road in the snow also turns to the right in the distance. The two branches on the left are not enough to rebalance it all and it is often unsightly to put only a small part of an element that is outside the frame. It would have been necessary to move the fence post and the bird to the left.



These two birch trunks in the foreground (to the left), despite the beautiful texture of colours, are too big to marry harmoniously with the very fine elements in the background because there isn't really any elements of transitory sizes at the level of the middle plane. All it needed was for the three small trees on the left to be of more imposing sizes. Furthermore, the two big trunks are distributed on each side of the composition enclosing it tightly, even choking it without any lateral exit door to escape. A scene closed on each side by elements that block the passage can create an impression of claustrophobia.

These four flowers blue-violet (to the right) are of a good realism with a play of shading and light well balanced. But the background going from uncertain and faded greenish tints to earthy and dull browns darkens the entire composition and removes much sparkle from these pretty flowers. The tone values of the background (transposition in black and white) are too similar to the ones of the flowers therefore lacking contrast. A positive point are the opposite diagonals of the background that enhance the movement of the flowers.





This bouquet of flowers (to the left) disappears in a too colourful background that wants the continuity of its movement. The background too present and artificial removes realism to the scene. Even the plate of strawberries on the right barely attracts the attention so much the smear of the table prolongs the visual incertitude. If we really only stare at the bouquet we see an assembly of flowers too scattered that lacks harmony. It is also the continuity of the same palette of colours on the entire surface of the canvas that creates this confusion.

This sea side (to the right) has a huge blue mass on the left that almost succeeds in balancing with the dark and thick mass on the right. A movement of clouds to the left could have saved the fragile balance. The pure and dark greens in the distance draw the eye at first at the expense of the more bland and pale greens in the foreground. It is the opposite that should be the generality; the foreground more vivid and precise for softer and fuzzier backgrounds. The red grove on the right attempts to repair the situation but it is too truncated on the edge which makes its presence precarious and awkward.



This autumn landscape (to the left) seems unfinished because there are sections of trees where the colour is just bedecked and other parts where the foliage has been detailed. We see this effect very well on the ground where a few leaves have been drawn on a plain background. Furthermore, the leaves are placed too regularly as in a wallpaper pattern which doesn't make it look very natural. The same palette of yellow orange distributed on the entirety of the trees lacks variation. There is also the incomprehension to have painted the tree trunk in black and white. Is it the transposition too accurate of a photo with its deformations?

This scene evoking a village (to the right) seems to be a tentative of originality, of simplification of a series of buildings but the result is more than clumsy. There is no obligation to respect the perspectives in a canvas if the whole is treated in the same manner but here there is an obvious incertitude in how to approach the subject. The palette of colours highlights the environment at the expense of the constructions dull in general. The horizontality of the top of the houses trivializes them more, accentuated by the square shape of the canvas. Under the guise of wanting to make a naive style, dear to children, the style is rather botched.



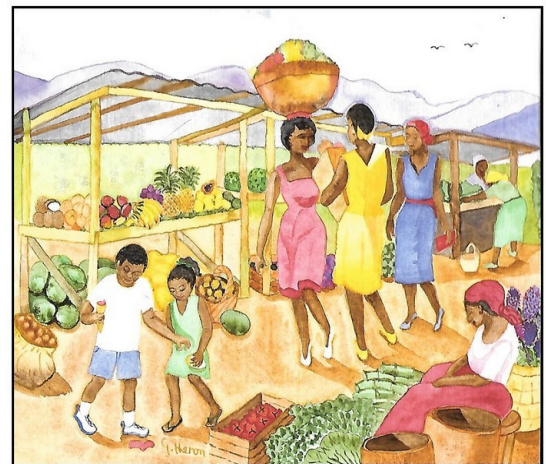
This scene of a sea shore (to the right) has an air of unreality with an endless sea that is lost in the sky but also by all these objects carried ashore that doesn't capture our attention. The reason is that they are all located on the same middle plane, with sizes almost equal. None is apparent from the lot. Despite some vivid colours, the domineering grey of the beach which is the most neutral colour, accentuates this effect of indifference. A bigger and prominent object in the foreground could have changed the entire feeling.



A couple of lions (to the left), yet well rendered in their exact position and anatomy, are in a place that imbalances the entire composition. Their weight tilts the whole on the right side and their gaze turned in the same direction also gives the impression that the interest of the subject is outside the canvas. To solve this problem, they should have been positioned to the left either in moving them further away or in retracting the back end of the female. The space in front of them should have given depth to their gaze. The same palette of colours for the rocks and the lions is a bad choice that makes the entirety pretty

bland. Only the brown background makes a good contrast but it doesn't suggest a real place and thus take away some realism.

This watercolour of a small market scene (to the right) as a whole is a success, with a palette of varied colours but only one element is disturbing. The three women in the middle plane seem too present, indeed too big because the woman sitting in the foreground should have been imposing twice as much. This single change would have given more exact proportions to the rest and would have put the three women in their true place, in the second plane. This change would have created an imbalance on the right side but the adding of an attractive element completely on the left would have readjusted the entirety.



This boat dock near a village (to the left) despite the success of the composition on the left, is seen threatened by a red orange that invades two thirds of the canvas and assaults the eye. This sunset deserved more gradual subtle hues and closer to yellow to avoid upstaging the reds of the boats and the houses. An evening light with a dominating colour must more or less tint all the surfaces with this colour, mainly the white surfaces. It is what we call the local colour which sometimes must harmonize the ensemble.



This violoncellist (to the left) is in itself a beautiful success of composition. The only downside comes from the fact that the hair of the musician and the background are treated more freely away from the pure and hard reality while the instrument is treated with enough realism. This slight style variation of the rendering between the elements of a same canvas might appear as clumsiness. A certain homogeneity to make the different elements of a subject is in general desirable. Only a great mastery of styles can allow us to mix them without a risk of disharmony.

This abstract canvas (to the right) puts two complementaries in contrast, red / green. But these two colours are in equal quantity

creating a constant visual shock without dominance of one over the other. The rare touches of half-shades count for little to break this monotony of tones. The aleatory calligraphy in black, without any artistic goal, doesn't add much to the composition. This canvas that should have been alive with this contrast of colours proves to be of a great blandness.



This haystack (to the left) in the foreground, followed by another one effaced in the light, are in a pastel palette rather cutesy. Fortunately the main point on the left and a big cloud prevent the imbalance to the right. But what is striking here, for someone who has some knowledge in the art history, is the evident influence of the haystacks of the painter Monet. It is obvious as much in the composition, the choice of colours, the rendering of the touch. This comparison creates a malaise hard to ignore. To be inspired by the style of a painter for research can be interesting but unwarranted in paintings intended to be accomplished.

This imprecise silhouette of a character (to the right), covered with textures and

different materials that suggest lace motifs, shows a willingness from the artist to find his personal style. But it is difficult to separate what belongs to the art and its content from what belongs to the handicraft and its content. The formal visual research must not supplant the intention of first expression. The message of an artwork must be what appears in priority to the eye of the spectator even if it is a fraction of a second before the aesthetic aspect. Painting wants to be before anything else a true communication to an individual and not a game of seduction at all cost.





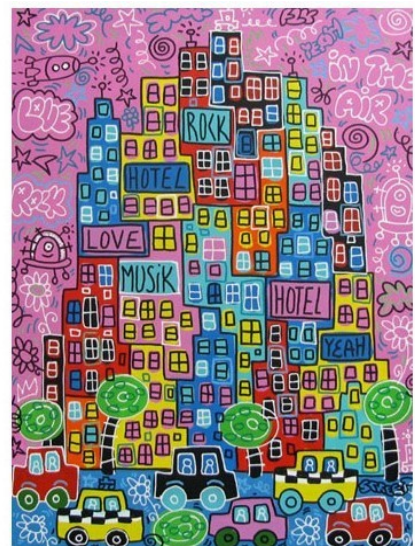
This abstract canvas (to the left) has nothing special to get our attention. The palette of colours doesn't contain any surprise, no dominating colour, no stimulating contrast. The gestural of the spatula is fairly uniform with just a light general incline to the right but without a very varied and attractive play. The abstract painting is surely not to spread paint randomly onto a support like a child who discovers the pleasure of daubing. In the contrary it is a long reflexion and mastery of colour, shape, gesture and space to cover to give a result that reflects a personal authentic approach.

This painting (to the right) that oscillates between the abstract gestural and the fleeting representation of a few elements hard to identify for sure creates a malaise. This malaise can only be resolved in the acceptance pure and simple of the incongruous universe. Like in front of an hypothetic entrance of a castle badly rendered, we get lost wanting to understand the direction of this so called building. But if we only look at the assembly of colours and shapes, the repelling general aspect gives way to an awkward impression of a confused being who is trying to communicate a personal, obscure vision. I am not sure I want to make the effort to decipher the mystery if there is one.



This caricatural woman sitting (to the left) is as a whole of bad taste because she mixes different genres and renderings without specifying any. Does it mean that she is a social critique with the skull that she is decked out with; or a provocation with this body wanting to be awkwardly sexy; or a surrealistic vision with her fingers that are dripping; or an expressive graffiti suggested by the background realized in splatters? Instead of an improvisation more or less spontaneous, a longer preliminary reflexion on his intentions would have helped to create a vision more coherent and compelling. Only perhaps the movement of the Bad-painting can accept certain drifting like this one.

This childish city (to the right) where all is very coloured and outlined in black is a joyful evocation of illustrations in children's books. The pink of the sky, the touting words everywhere, the gayety that is emerging from the entirety makes this work appealing but are we really in the presence of a painting? Aren't we instead in front of an advertising recipe like so many professional illustrators do? What defines a true painting has become today difficult to specify because many extreme channels have pushed its boundaries.



COLOUR AND FORM

Here is an introduction to a very brief historic of the invention of colours.

The first mediums that were used to paint were from crushed minerals, macerated plants or dried insects mixed with different binders but that part of their composition will be studied in an ulterior course. For now remember that the limitation on the number of base ingredients and the rarity of each one will influence their use.



The difficulties in certain circumstances to stock up due to the far distance like the semi-precious stone lapis-lazuli (to the left) which crushed and purified (at the bottom right) gave the blues so called ultramarine because it came from Afghanistan (ultramarine to french is outremer=overseas) and depending on the exchange or territorial conflicts, could attain an exorbitant price. Depending on the case, it was used by the painters mostly for the important elements of a work like an object of cult, a holy character like the clothing of the Virgin or even for a

particular sky.

In the same work different sources of pigmentation for the same colour could go side by side and be used independently from the importance of the element. We have to keep in mind also of the monetary implication of the sponsor who committed on paper to pay for the precious materials, in this way to see his status displayed with the use of certain colour pigmentations. The long fabrication of the final mixture of paint was often entrusted to the apprentices.



The difficulty to stock up due to its rarity like the minuscule insect, the ladybug (to the left) which, once dried and pulverized gave some reds, so called carmine (bottom right) came originally from Mexico, then imported and raised in Europe. Only the pregnant females produced the precious liquid.

So due to the enormous quantity of insects requested to obtain this flamboyant red surpassing in intensity all the other reds, it was reserved for the dyeing of clothing

for the high royal or religious nobility and their transpositions, their representations in the work of art, another sign of the sponsor status.



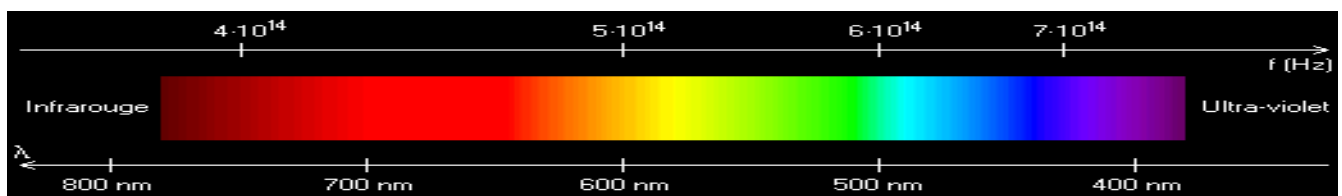
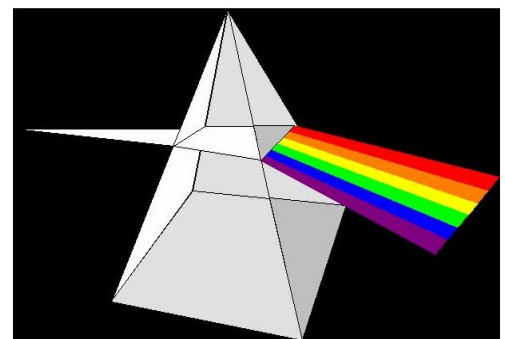
The colours essentially used in the Middle Ages were first; white, red and black; then gold (yellow) and finally; green and blue. The secondary transitory colours were rarely used, much less named. A colour was always named relative to a support and didn't have an abstract value per se; like the shade variations of a same colour on a support were not considered, taken into account.

Certain colours, through history, were sometimes neglected, sometimes adulated. We only have to think about the colours that were first worn by royalty, acquiring this way a privileged status and then spread to the lower levels of the population. By chronological order, red and then black and finally blue represented the supreme power so the supreme good taste; which is what will give to colours, symbolic values changing with fashion and times.

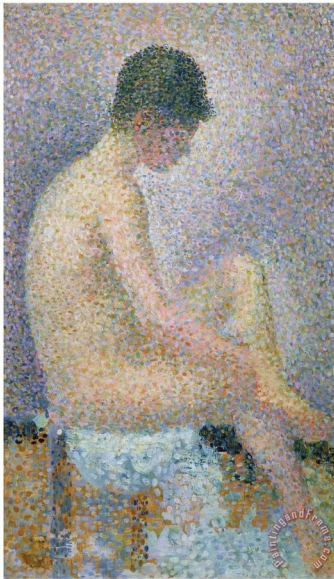


In these partial frescoes of the life of St. Francis of Assisi by Giotto (1290 at the top) the beginnings of the Renaissance are found, as mentioned before in the affirmed perspectives, a greater realism in the movements and expressions of the characters and finally also in the palette of colours that reaches a greater variety of nuances. Whether it is by the softer variations of green, pink, orange passing by the pale or dark blues, the light or other yellows, the red or yellow browns. The mixture of the primary colours, that was almost unthinkable before, here reaches a first rare fineness.

Despite some stammering tentatives to codify the colours before him, it is the scientist Newton who will in the seventeenth century, through a prism, decompose the light in its principal colours and will write a first treatise on the optics. Six fundamental colours will emerge but a seventh, the indigo, will be added to respect the number seven which was very important in the symbolic of the time.

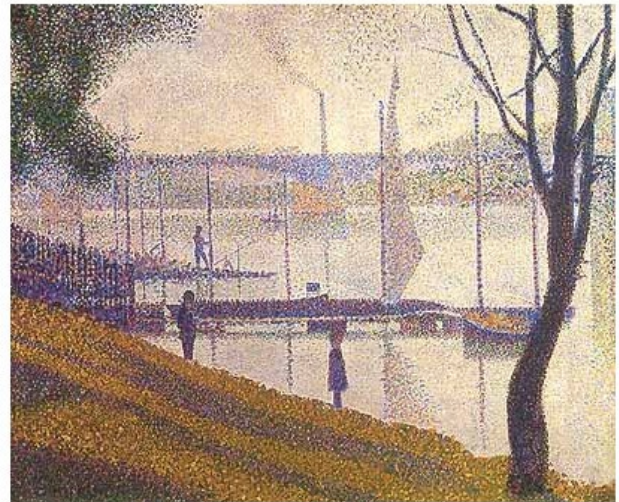


We will have to wait for the nineteenth century, with the release of several treatises on colour, the optical effects and the visual perception to have access to a simplification of the scientific theories on the universal functioning of light. This will advance the understanding on the mechanics of colours by the painters. Several are following these new discoveries with a great interest. The chemist Chevreul was maybe the most important influence on the artists of the era. His greatest contribution was the creation of a chromatic wheel (to the right) of primary and intermediate colours.



The painter Seurat will be one of the first and principal painters to apply these laws to realize his works. Reading, amongst others, of 'The law of simultaneous contrast of colours' by the chemist Chevreul and 'The scientific theory of colours' by Rood will allow him to develop a new and personal theory. It relies on the combination of several colours and that if we apply several simple juxtaposed coloured points and we observe them starting from a certain distance, it recomposes the complex colours but with a more exact luminous vibration. Concretely, instead of applying a secondary green on a canvas, the distribution of small touches closely spaced of primary yellow and primary blue, seen from a certain distance, will automatically blend through the eye, to obtain a secondary green more luminous.

Whether it is in 'The Model Profile' (1887 to the left) or 'The Bridge of Courbevoie' (to the right), Seurat will develop his method that will be called divisionism but will be called by the mockery of a journalist, the pointillism amongst the populace. This style will spread and influence a whole generation of painters. But this method of painting, very laborious, will be slowly abandoned for variations of less rigorous or larger touches. However we will find some remaining traces till the beginning of the twentieth century. Several other artist-painters will try to include different variations of scientific concepts of colours in their works.



Until then, the painters themselves or with the help of assistants made their own paints with the raw materials and in small quantity at a time due to their limited preservation. The invention of the tin paint tube, towards the middle of the nineteenth century, will promote their preservation and therefore the creation of large scale manufacturers who will generalize recipes for colours more and more synthetic, non toxic and at more affordable prices. This will also promote the proliferation of art supplies retailers.

This novelty will liberate the painters from the confinement of their art studio in allowing them to transport their material easily and paint directly in front of their subject wherever it is located. The art of landscape will take a new direction; going from a secondary frozen status being used as a decorative background to a new autonomous field of exploration, speaking in itself and creating new leading artists. The landscape will acquire an intrinsic value as a great art and tend towards a greater naturalism.

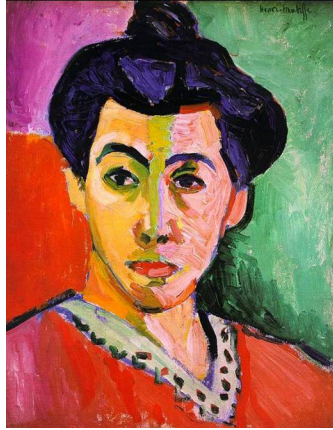


The impressionists will be able to follow outdoor the subtle changes of the light like in this series 'Arms of the Seine near Giverny' by Monet (1897 at the top) where there are nearly a dozen variations at different times of the day or the atmosphere. The competition from the emerging photo will force the painters to move away from the realistic representation to find an interpretation more personal of the subject with an obvious touch.

In 'Pasture with Horse and Pig' by Gauguin (1902 to the right) the play of colours announces an important change. In the wake of impressionists who have opened this path, they no longer want to be representatives of reality but a symbolic, improvised transposition taking into account the different moods of the artist. The flamboyant red of the sky can represent the sweltering heat of this landscape of the south like the pastel hues of blue and pink of the trees can express a certain tenderness and the sweetness of life. But all this is suggestive and open to interpretation if the artist didn't leave an explicative notice. That's no problem, this canvas is bewitching by its warm, luminous colours and is peaceful with its orderly vertical and horizontal lines. This transposition of reality in a magnified vision makes any personal inner perception of the artist, palpable.



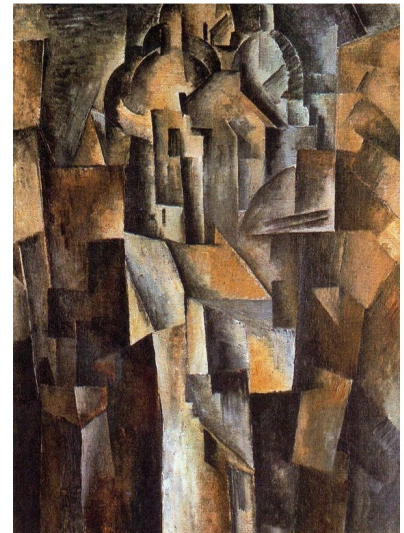
At the beginning of the twentieth century, the retrospectives in Paris of the works of Gauguin and Van Gogh, following their consecutive death, will be a shock for a new generation of painters. It is the beginning of an uncoordinated explosion of the colour that we will call the fauvism. The colour triumphs and takes the entire space at the expense of the line. Unreal, arbitrary, flashy, aggressive, coming out directly from the tube in all its purity; it sings of life in all its excesses.



Whether in 'Bridge on the Riou' by Derain, whether in 'The Green Line' by Matisse or in the 'Improvisation 26' by Kandinsky (1906-05-12 at the top) everything is of triumphant colours.

But his orgy of colours, madness 'temporary' for some, will be brought back to order a few years later by Picasso and Gris who under the influence of african art, will restore to the line its supremacy and will cast off the colours to a secondary role with muted shades, even earthy.

In 'The Sacred Heart' by Braque (1910 to the right), we see the drastic change not to say the opposite excess which also will be temperate in the following years. A church is looming between houses in a composition almost abstract where dominating lines carve some planes and where the range of restricted colours comes down to some variations of warm browns and a few touches of cold grey-blue. Both extreme uses of the colour will widen all the same the expressive possibilities of the painters.

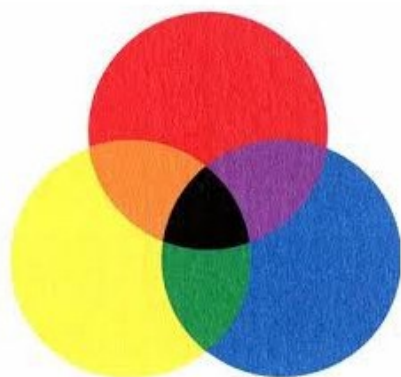
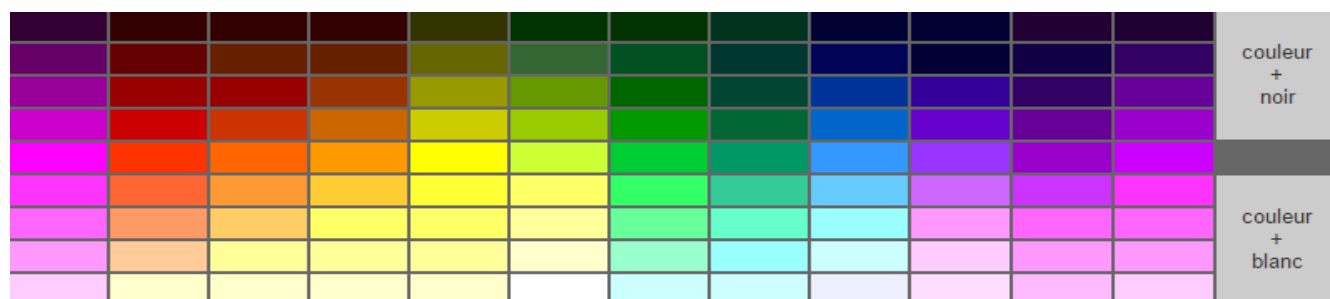
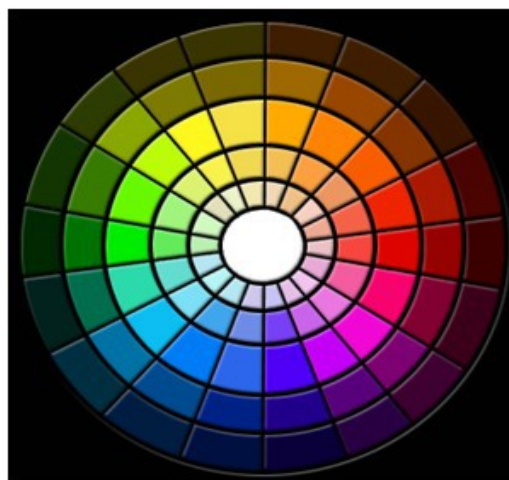


The laws of colours that I will cover here concern mainly the ones that are used in painting and serve to highlight the subject and the intention of the artist. These laws from the latest scientific research are known to us now but the colours have gone through many interpretations through the centuries. The example of blue, that was neglected for a long time, was considered a warm colour when it had a great popularity in the Middle Ages but today it is considered the coldest colour. Therefore it is difficult to say that the actual laws are unchangeable and independent of the cultural context; that they won't undergo modifications in the future with a better understanding of their functioning. Anyway, here is what we actually know about the colours.

The light is considered as possessing a spectrum of frequencies which, decomposed, goes from infra-red to ultra-violet, both extreme colours that are not perceived by the human eye. Between the two, there is a myriad of colours that can be a mixture of different shades. But if we decompose them in these most simple elements, we obtain the three primary colours (that can not be decomposed). When it comes to light, it seems that it is blue, green and red that are primary. But as we are talking of colours in the material, it is the blue, yellow and red that are fundamental.



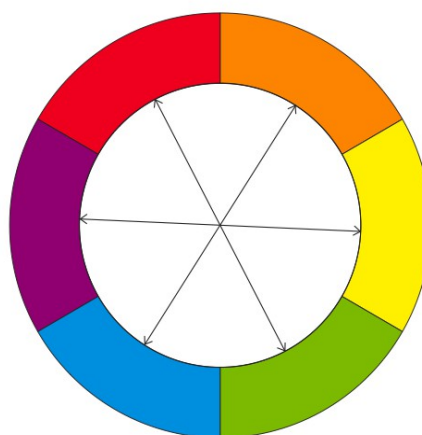
The mixture of the three primaries in the absolute recomposes the white light but in the material (pigment of colours), it gives more or less some greys. Thus, we can declare in theory that with these three primary colours and their places between the light (white) and the absence of light (black), we can create the entire range of colours that is accessible to us. In both examples on the side and below, we see a first palette of colours simply from the mixture of three primaries together and their tone value between the white and the black. Still keep in mind that these charts and the other boards of demonstration are not perfect in the absolute.



The mixture of both primary colours gives a secondary colour. Therefore, the three primary colours engender three secondary colours which are orange, purple and green. All the other colours are called tertiary.



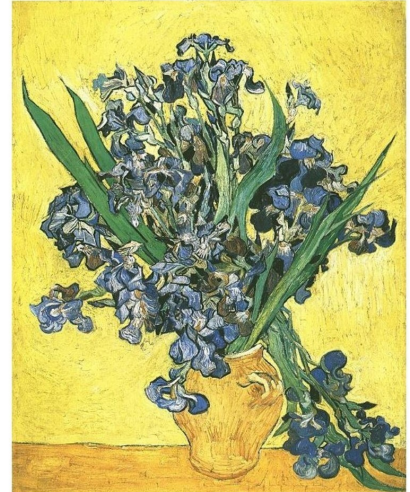
In painting, there was interest in discovering what could make a colour stand out better, give it more shine and it was discovered that the colour that was found on the opposite on the chromatic circle in relation to another one was able to highlight this latter by its extreme opposition. Thus what we call the complementary colours, it is a pair of colours that are found opposite on the chromatic circle and mutually stimulate each other. The first essential complementary to remember are the three primary colours facing the three secondary colours. Yellow facing purple, red facing green, blue facing orange. To remember, know that a pair of complementaries always contains the three primaries. Example: The complementary of yellow is purple mixture of blue with red. Therefore any tertiary shade can be stimulated by its complementary on the chromatic circle.





In these three artworks by Van Gogh, we see his enthusiasm for the use of complementaries. In this self-portrait with a pipe (1889 to the left), his blue cap is shown on an orange background which is cut at an arbitrary location only to highlight the contrast of colour. As a matter of fact, his green coat stands out against the lower part of the red wall.

In the vase with irises (1890 to the right), it is the entire pale yellow background, the ochre yellow of the table and vase that are there to highlight the purple of the flowers. The few touches of soft green of the foliage tone down



this extreme contrast.

In the wheat field (1890 at the bottom), it is the evening blue sky that highlights the luminosity of the golden wheat while both



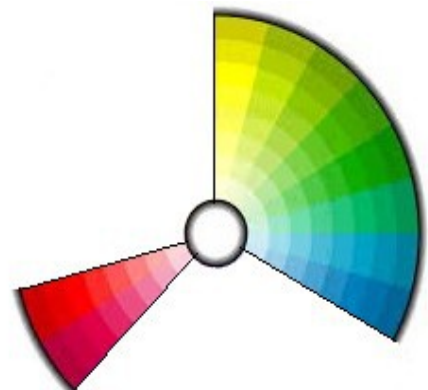
paths share the red and the green in a tug that adds oppressive agitation to the whole. This agitation is caused by the fact that the complementaries are in equal quantity. A flock of crows accentuates the disastrous aspect.

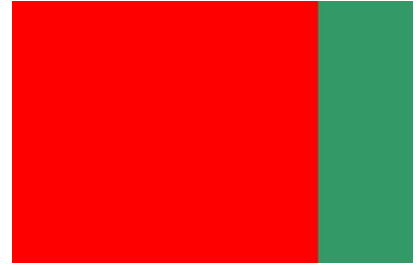
These theories are essential to better control its creation but they ignore the practice because certain yellows find their complements in the blues; certain reds in the blue-green. This implicates also a range of standard colours and doesn't consider the great variety of each colour that we find today on the market. Therefore these basic laws certainly serve as indicator, as reference but not unchangeable dogmas.



The importance of a chromatic unity in a canvas, is to choose a dominating colour, its derivatives, its variations and then its complementary which brings the contrasts. In this other chromatic circle (at the top and bottom on the right) more complex, it is easy to choose any dominating shade, then the adjacent derivative colours and finally the complementary located across and opposite.

A chromatic harmonious composition doesn't support more than one pair of complementary colours; one that dominates or is in evidence and the other which is in a smaller quantity or is attenuated.





So generally in a painting we must avoid to have two complementaries juxtaposed in equal parts (on top to the left), it would provoke a constant battle between both colours to see which one will dominate. The complementary of the dominating colour of the canvas is there to enhance in a lesser quantity (on top centre and to the right).

In 'The Blue Window' by Matisse (1911 to the right), the scene is not intended to be realistic at all but the evocation of an exotic interior in the darkness of the night. The blue-purple, in a variation of intensity, invades the entire space and even colours the trees at the exterior. This dark but mesmerizing colour is conducive to meditation. However, to avoid the monotony, a few discreet touches of colours strew the canvas. It is different for the well distributed yellows that add sparkle with its complementary opposite.

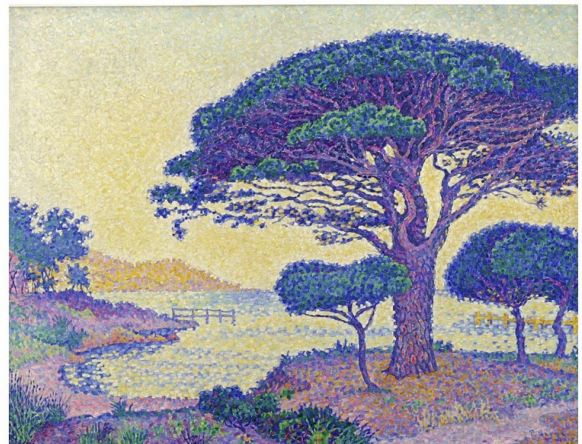


In 'The Red Service' by Matisse (1908 to the left) the elements are simplified, almost naive and the saturated red in a uniform way covers more than 3/4 of the canvas. The other 1/4 is taken by a

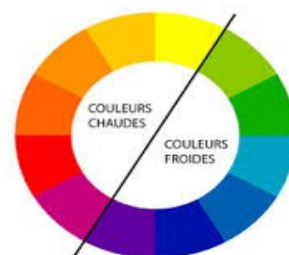


window which opens on a landscape in a dominance of green that excites the eye with its extreme contrast with the red. The few touches of yellow and orange respond well to the few touches of purple and blue. Even the black and white of the woman are retaken in the outside trees. It is a dominance of primary and secondary colours without any real presence of tertiary colours.

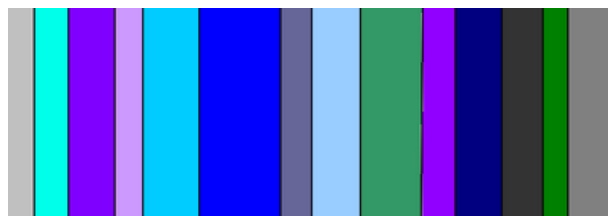
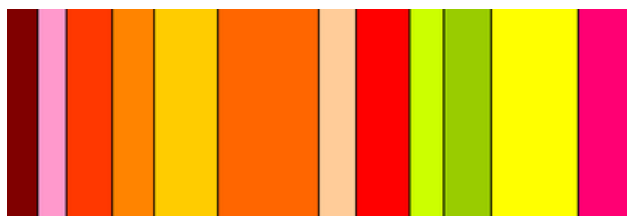
In 'Umbrella Pine at Canoubiers' by Signac (1897 to the right) of pointillism style, the contrasts are more subtle. The cold dark blue-purple colours of the coast, trees and their shadow in the foreground highlight the warm light yellow-orange colours of the sky and the sea in the background. Only two main planes, the darker one in the front and the paler one in the background, create depth. The more there are planes, the more the transition will be long and smooth; the opposite will suggest a short and quick transition. A few touches of pink soften the entirety of this contrast.



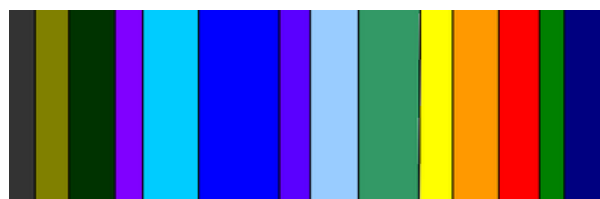
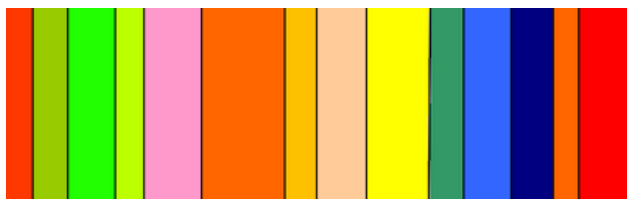
Orange is the warmest colour followed by the shades resulting from it like certain other yellows or orange browns. Its complementary, the blue, is the coldest colour followed by shades resulting from or drawing near it like certain greens or purples.



Here is (at the bottom) a warm palette and opposite (bottom to the right) a cold palette.



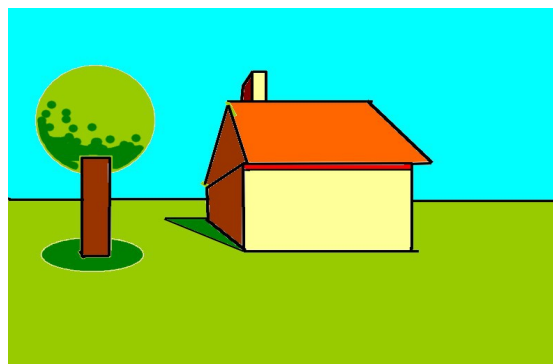
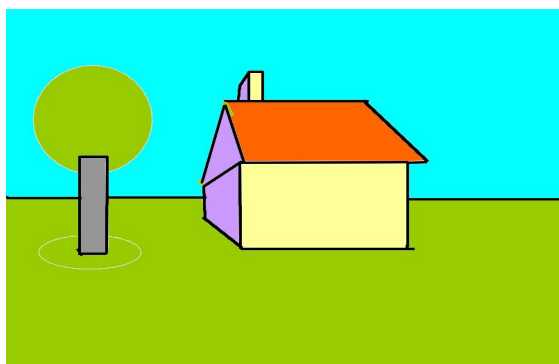
To highlight a palette with dominating warm colours, there is limits in saturating them and it is in adding a few opposite touches of cold shades in certain judicious places that we amplify the first ones (bottom left). The reverse is also true (to the right).



We can do the same thing with yellow (and its variations) which is the brightest colour with its complementary the purple (and its variations) which is the darkest colour (black not being a colour in itself but the absence of colour).

Green (and its variations) which is the calmer colour, soothing with its complementary the red (and its variations) which is the most stimulating, agitated colour.

To give a painting an impression of light, it is not simply to increase the already bright colours but also to darken the colours already dark, the shadows and the parts in the shade somehow.



In this example (top left), as clear and bright as are the colours of this scene, the desired effect of light is rather bland because the shades are all of total equal value. In the example (top right), the supported accentuation of the shading to dark highlights in a way almost palpable the illuminated areas.

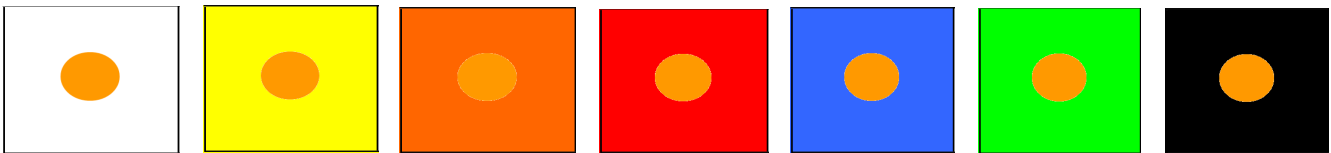
Therefore we have to learn to use complementary opposite colours to create the right dosage of contrast in a canvas. whether it is warm/cold, bright/dark, calm/agitated. This is also true for the elements where textures in a canvas like big/small, straight line/curved line, smooth/rough etc.

Generally, for the beginners the contrasts are rather timid or ill proportioned.

In 'Street of Bavolle, Honfleur' by Monet (1864 to the right) the main audacity is to have dared to make an extreme contrast between the left side of the street in the shade in opposition to its right side in the light. This makes this sunny day a great realism despite the absence of precision in the details. It is the shading on the ground with its shock in tonality that challenges us at first. Notice the blue sky that seems lighter on the left because of its siding with the dark brown buildings while it seems darker on the right because of the light brown buildings.



Most of the colours can see their characteristics attenuate or amplify or even take opposite characteristics if they are put in the presence of stronger or very opposite colours.



The seven orange identical circles (on top) vary at the level of their intensity, their totality and their shade depending on their environment. It must be considered that, with the insertion of a colour in a given frame, it does not lose its primary value.

The impressionists have discovered that the warm or light colours appear closer to the eye and inversely the cold or dark colours appear further away. This way we can create depth, indeed an effect of perspective, only with the play of shades and tones.

In 'Camille with a Green Umbrella' by Monet (1886 to the right), the warm colours of the grass immediately seem closer to our eyes while the cold blues of the lady seem to be in second plane and the sky even further away. Notice the proportions 1/3 of the grass with warmer and darker colours therefore more present and heavy for 2/3 of the sky with colder and lighter colours therefore more setback and light. Perfect balance between two masses but that could be a too big contrast if the green at the bottom wasn't repeated in the umbrella and the yellow in the clouds.



A colour can also have its basic component change the impact in contact with other complex tones. In other words one of the basic colours which comprises a complex colour can be amplified or diminished by being near other colours whether they are single or composed of several single colours. Here are some examples to this effect.



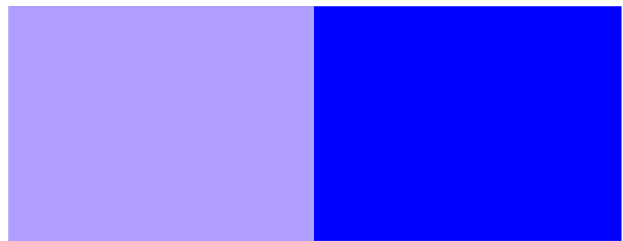
This bright green (on the left) becomes even brighter near a blue (on the right) but also more yellow because the blue mitigates the impact of the blue contained in the



green. These modifications more or less important according to conditions often occur when we go from the mixture of colours on the palette to the application on the canvas.



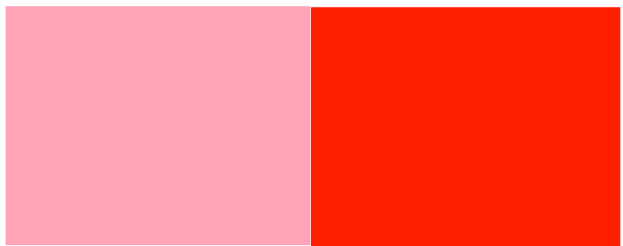
This pastel mauve (left) made from white, red and blue becomes also lighter with the contact of a dark blue (to the right) but also more red because the pure blue



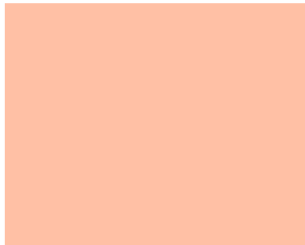
mitigates its correspondence in the mauve and therefore highlights the red as dominant.



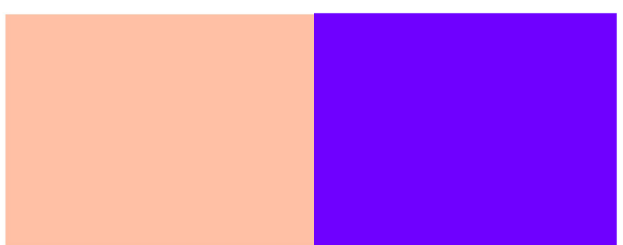
This pink peach (left) sees its internal red lose its intensity adjacent to a very flamboyant red (to the right). The little bit of yellow in it is seen as slightly increasing. There



are variations that can become important.



This pure peach (left) made with white, yellow and red sees its red diminished in presence of the red in the purple (to the right) made from red and blue. It is what



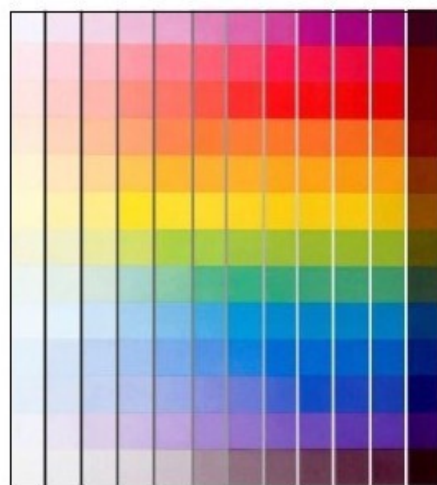
automatically highlights the yellow in the peach. But here the yellow is the complementary of purple; it reinforces even more its presence.



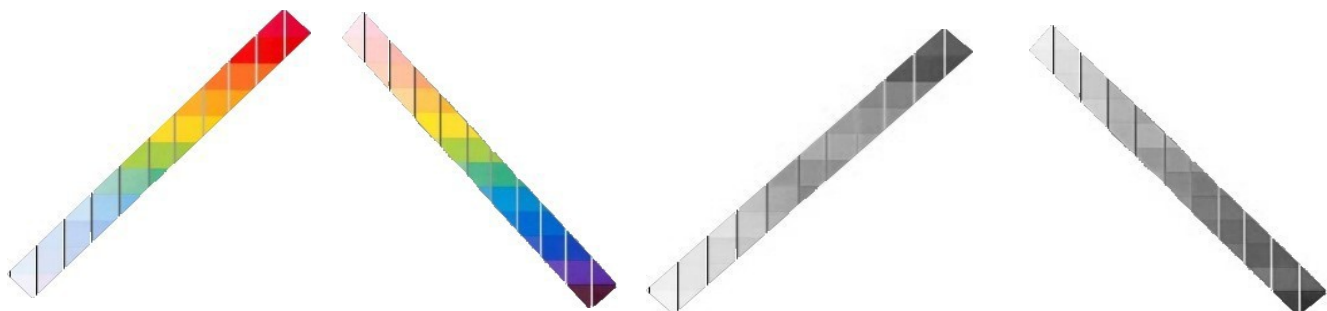
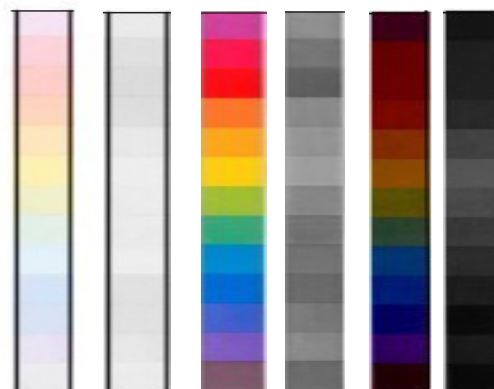
In this refined portrait by Dumont (2013 to the left) we must take into account that the peach of the face stands out on a light yellow background and risks to appear too pink if we don't increase its yellow quantity to compensate and adjust to the local colour. While the peach of her hand should receive a small input of red to compensate with the burgundy red of the couch. Here we talk about a dominance of a yellow shade that becomes the local colour and influences, tints the main elements of the composition.

The tone of a colour is its value, its place on a scale if it is transposed in a range that goes from white to black. To well distribute the values of tone on a canvas, it is to well distribute the light and dark colours or the light between the illuminated parts and the parts in the shade. This is as important as the distribution of the colours.

Here is a palette (to the right) of pure and vivid colours that fade on the left by its tinting of white and with a single tinted stripe of black on the right. It is a very good exercise to choose pure colours and make them degrade towards the white and black in a specific number of shades and in a rhythmic regular sequence.



Here are three verticals of colours chosen from the previous board having each a palette of colours with a total equal value; one light, one pure, one dark. If we transpose them in black and white, we see the little variations of contrasts that they possess. Even the one that has pure and saturated tints doesn't have many variations of tones in black and white. Beside, a vivid saturated palette on the entire surface of a canvas can rapidly disconcert the eye. We must know how to balance the pure tints with the half-tints (the ones mixed with some white or black).



Here are two strips in diagonal of colours (on top) chosen from the precedent board having each a palette of colours of a total varied value. If we transpose them in black and white, we see the larger variation of contrasts of tones that they possess.

Generally, the contrasts must be stronger in the foreground and softer in the background. Too big contrasts at the level of the tones do not necessarily improve the impression of brightness. The intermediate values (half-tone and half-tint) give an aspect more natural and convincing. Too much light and shade dissolve the subject; too many nuances make it mediocre. According to the ideal of Rubens, 1/3 light and shade and 2/3 of half-tint.



In this still-life by Cézanne (1879 to the left), we see that in the foreground the elements have shades of white, red, yellow-orange and purple much purer and contrasting between them, giving them a greater presence in relation to the elements of the background that have the same colours that are more muted and attenuated between them giving them a lesser importance. Also I must say that the foreground is bathed in the light while the background is in twilight. A rustic aspect emerges from this scene thanks to the apparent harsh paint strokes.

At a certain period, after the construction and the sketching of the subject, most of the painters distributed on their canvas different shades of brown going from a canvas almost white to very dark brown. 'Médée' of Dubreuil (1600 to the right). It guaranteed a fair distribution of light and shades without the distraction of true colours. It also had as function to already saturate the canvas with non expensive paints like the different browns before applying the final colours often very expensive like the blues. Three layers of brown and one or two of blue instead of five. Today with the democratization of the paint in tube and canvas already prepared with coats of gesso that plug the pores of the support, this process doesn't really have its purpose. Unless you are unsure of the proper distribution of your plays of shade and light, so of your values of tones.

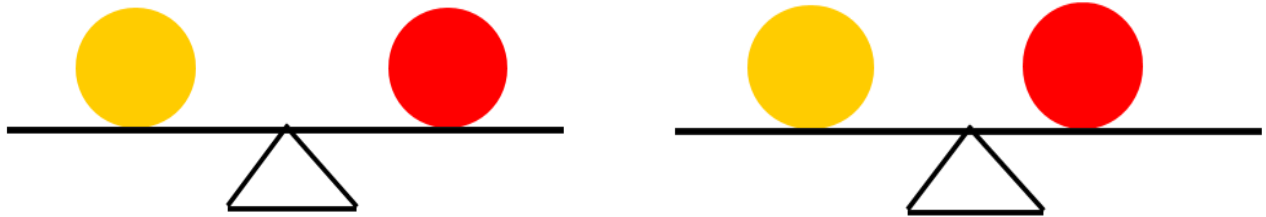


In 'The Fisherman in his Boat on the Pond' by Richet (1880 to the left), the tonal values are well rendered with the light of the sky that is reflected on the pond in contrast with the very dark outline of the trees in the background and middle plane. It is almost a shadowy silhouette if it wasn't for the more nuanced fisherman in the foreground. We can almost qualify this work as monochrome so much the palette is reduced.

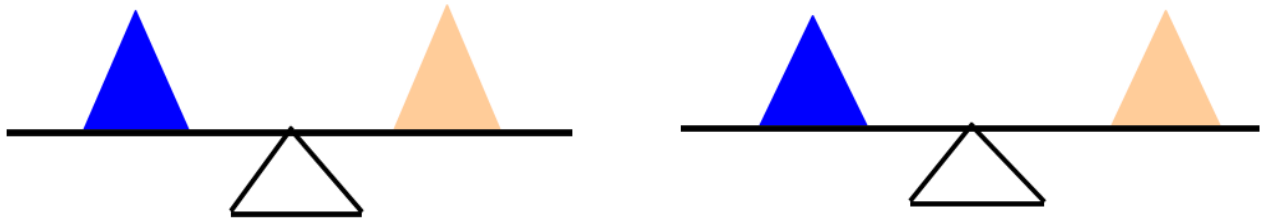
In 'Dream Car' by Monory (2007 to the right), we are in front of a monochrome meaning a canvas realized with only one colour declined in all its shades; except for a hint of a very discreet green in the grass. It gives a mysterious atmosphere, a little nostalgic by the subject drawn from the ancient photos superannuated which describes an action frozen for eternity but also by the colour blue-purple that evokes the dream, a souvenir forgotten in time. Two superimposed images, like two sequences of a film, tell a vague story.



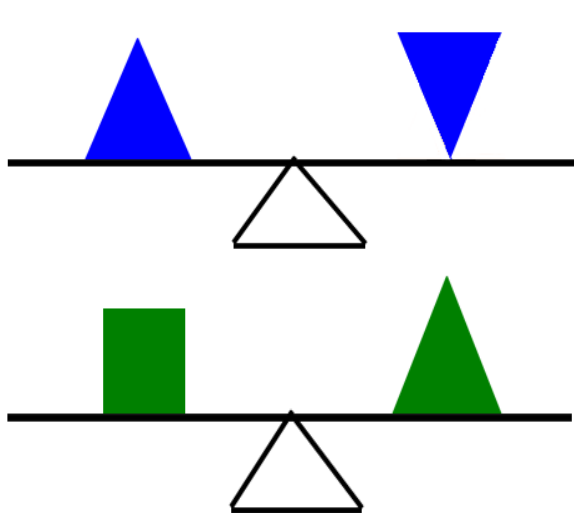
In a painting, the colours have a mass therefore a weight. The colours and forms are also interdependent. The modification of one or the other can entail on the whole, a need for rebalancing. Generally, more a colour is dark, more it seems massive and heavy.



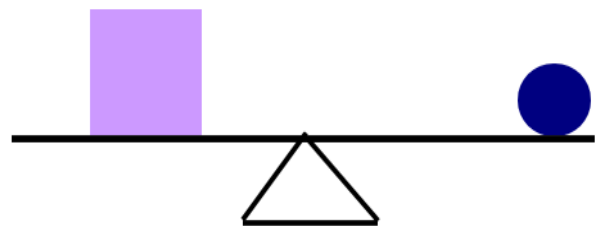
Here on the left are two circles placed at equal distance from the centre of a balance. Despite their identical sizes, the one that is red, by its darker colour in relation to the lighter yellow seems to be heavier and creates an imbalance. Since the two shades are warm, this doesn't have any influence. The solution here on the right is either to bring the red circle closer to the centre or move the yellow circle further away from the centre. The balance is regained.



Here on the left are two triangles placed at equal distance from the centre of a balance. Despite their identical sizes, the one that is blue, by its darker colour in relation to the lighter peach, seems to be heavier and creates an imbalance. Even if peach is a warm shade issued from the orange, it has little influence. The solution here on the right is either to move the peach triangle away from the centre or bring the blue triangle closer to the centre.

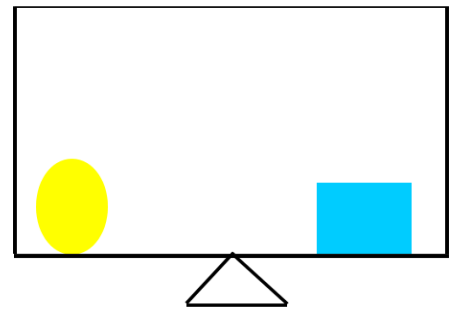


Here on the left are two triangles whose centre is placed at equal distance of a balance. Despite their identical sizes and colours, the one on the left leans on a large and stable base while the other inverted leans on a narrow and precarious point. This is enough to give an impression of overweight on the left.

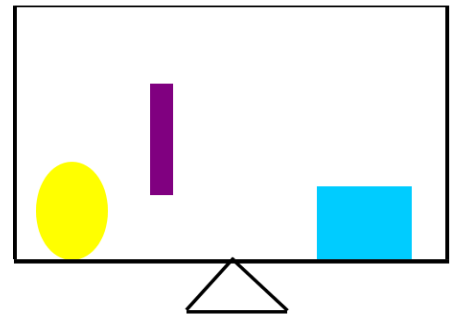


Here on the left are two different shapes but of the same colour which seem to balance. The reason is that despite the difference in shape, they cover substantially the same surface and their bases. To the right, despite its colour light mauve, the square is heavy enough with its surface and large base. The circle, despite its dark purple colour, is light enough with its surface and its unstable base. The solution is either to move the circle extremely further away from the centre like in the example or to bring back the square overly closer to the centre.

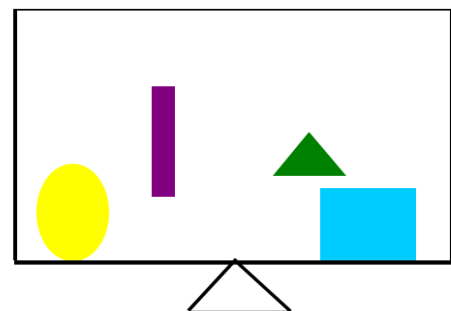
We will create with diverse elements a composition that takes into account their shapes, their sizes and their colours therefore their overall weight. In the first frame a yellow oval of average size, warm, bright with a small unstable base is found further away from the centre to balance with a blue square of average size, cold, light with a large stable base closer to the centre.



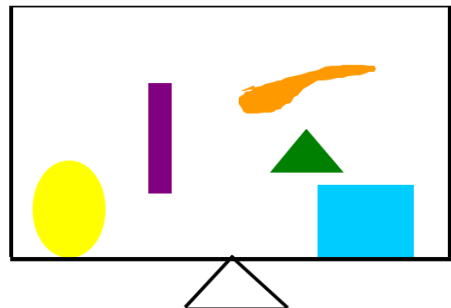
In the second frame, a purple rectangle of a smaller size, narrow, vertical, parallel to the frame creates an upward movement and with its colour highlights the yellow of the oval, its complementary. Despite a certain lightness due to its lifting effect, there is a strong presence by its colour and by its position which is what imbalances the composition.



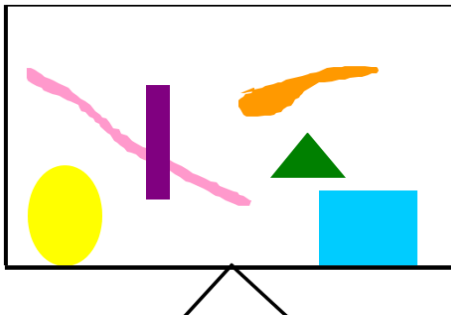
In the third frame, a small dark green triangle, peaceful and discreet placed at the same distance from the centre as the purple rectangle, rebalances the whole. Despite the fact that it covers a lesser surface than the triangle, it is its slightly darker shade and especially its larger base thus more stable that compensates. Its position in height is also well balanced with the one of the purple rectangle.



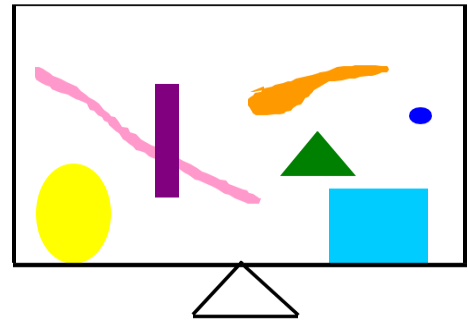
In the fourth frame, a vague elongated warm orange form, floats at the top and by its position in diagonal creates movement in this composition a little too static. The orange which is a derivative of red enhances the green of the triangle nearby. But this elongated form, because of its highest portion that reaches to the right, creates an impression of movement in that direction and makes the entirety lean to that side.



In the fifth frame, to rebalance the whole, a sinuous and long pink line diagonally opposite pulls the composition on the opposite left side. It brings a novelty by crossing the purple rectangle and this way linking two forms. Its soft pink colour is also a shade that harmonizes well with the purple. Despite this tentative to rebalance with the left, once again the balance is broken with this diagonal too long.



In the sixth frame, a small dark blue circle is placed with precision at the extreme right to finish the overall balance. Often a simple small element well chosen and well located can be used to save a generally vacillating balance. This little blue point brings a touch of the unusual with its smallness which by this fact expands the variety of the sizes of the elements. Its colour also harmonizes well with the great light blue mass very close, a derivative that it stimulates. The final composition is balanced.



In 'Blue Star' by Miro (to the left), see how the entirety of abstract minimalist signs balance between them. Despite a composition oriented to the right, the long black triangle points to the left and an intense blue star on the left appears headed in that same direction. Two fine lines form a long V stabilizer supported by an arc. Two scribbles bring spontaneity, a vague pink flower prevents the blandness of the colour palette and two small subtle points finalize the balance.

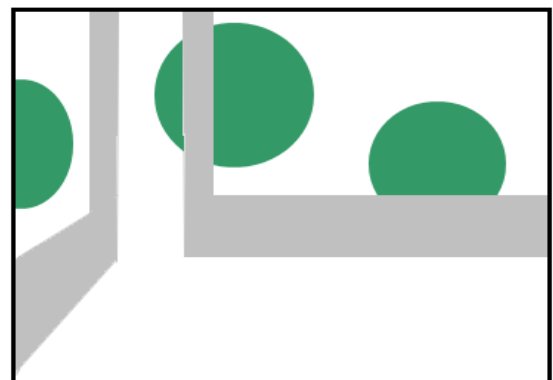
These last compositions are rather abstract but they serve to point out what is a pictorial work in its first state. As said by the painter Denis: "To remember that a painting, before being a calvary horse, a naked woman or some anecdote, is essentially a flat surface covered with colours in a certain assembled order".

Still let's transpose this in a composition more realistic.

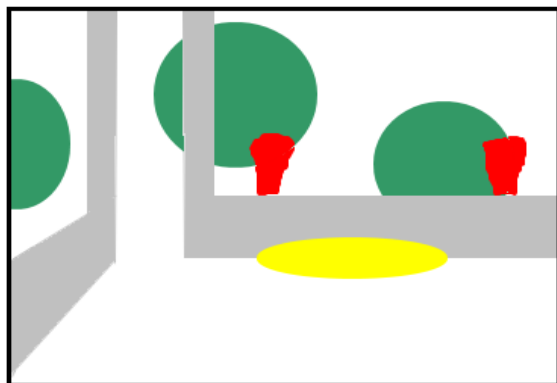
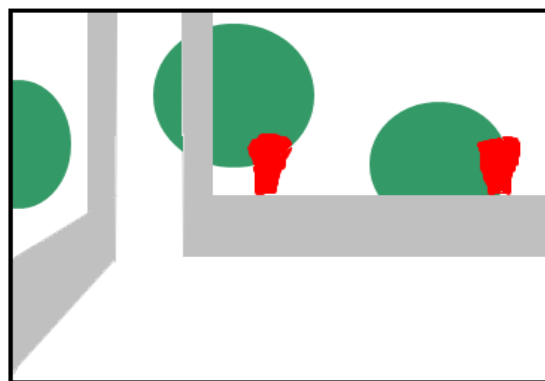
In the first schema (to the right), two walls delimit a space and two columns suggest an entry of what we will define as a terrace. This first organization is already balanced because the structures are all near the major lines. The main wall is located between the central line and the one of the third horizontal down and both columns are located on the lines 1/6 and 1/3 left vertical. Notice the left wall starting from the bottom corner and the 1/3 bottom horizontal.



In the second schema (to the right), three green circles representing three trees form a triangle that softens the effect of the two angle brackets of the terrace and form an intimate arch. The tree on the left is in part outside the frame suggesting a greater space while the other on the right is cut off by the wall. An obvious imbalance on the left is created but it is intentional for the remainder of the composition.

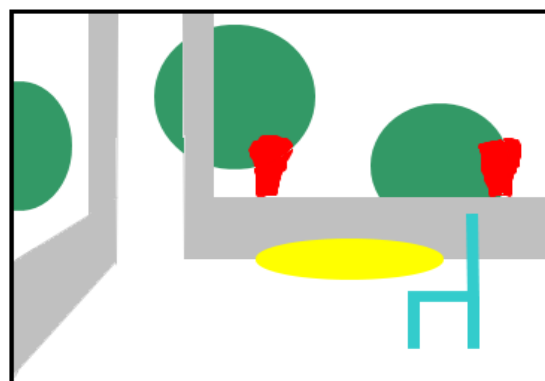


In the third schema (to the right), two red forms representing two pots of flowers on the wall bring a burst of colour that highlights its complementary, the green of the trees and starts a rebalancing on the right in defining a little more where the focus is. These two forms overlap two of the trees but still in avoiding the symmetry therewith.



In the fourth schema (to the left), a yellow elongated oval representing a table, continues to define the focus therefore the main subject. This warm and powerful colour draws our eye and for us seems automatically closer. It is decentered in relation to both bouquets to avoid too much symmetry but its central horizontal line is placed on the line of the third down.

In the fifth schema (to the right) a blue form representing a chair serves to finalize the general balance. A simple small move of this element can lastly readjust an uncertain balance. The position of its back also avoids the alignment too symmetric with the bouquet on the right and centre of the tree in the background. It is welcoming by its position facing the entrance and its soft and fresh colour. The overall balance is successful and harmonious by avoiding too much boring symmetry.



This exercise demonstrates the need to develop the eye to appreciate the harmony of the colours, shapes and their associations beyond the subject. But in counterpart, if the overall harmony of a work seems to appear to our eyes first, even a fraction of a second before the subject, it indicates that the artist tried first to seduce us instead of transmitting his primordial truth. It requires a right balance between the intention and its plastic value.

The paintings of Miro (example to the right) realized with simples shapes going from the plastic abstraction, the anthropomorphic schematization to childish shapes inspired from true elements, are a good exercise to discover if a certain balance is respected. This is what makes the difference between a successful work, in the sense of being overall complete, autonomous and balanced or in the contrary, a failed work in the sense of incomplete, perfectible, imbalanced.

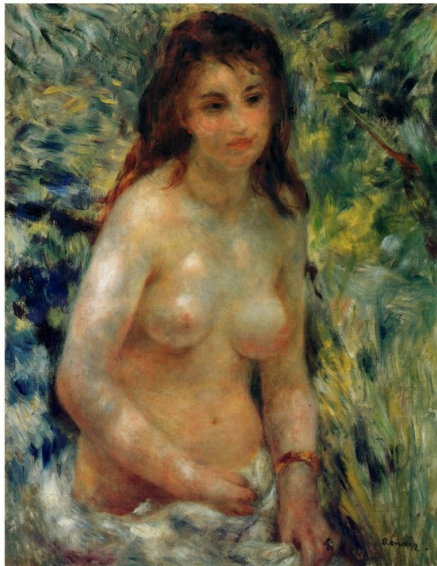


The speck of colour can also be independent of the form and have its own suggestive potential. The distribution of planes, specks of colours, even if it doesn't have any figurative, realistic intentions, generally it still suggests a space.



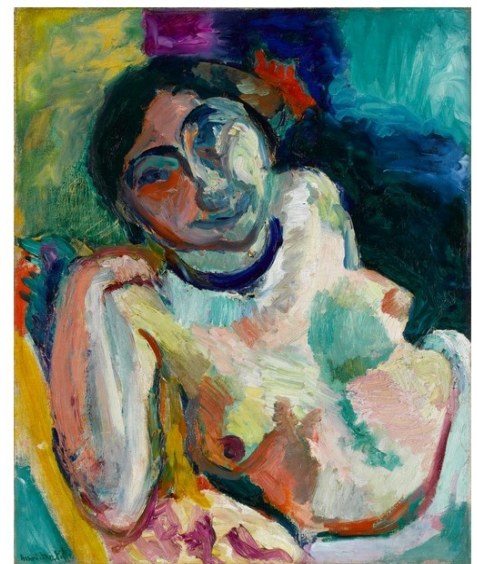
In these two paintings of Dufy, the speck of colour possesses a certain independence from the line that doesn't delimit it completely. In the bouquet (1935 to the left), the line is slight, discontinuous and is there only to emphasize subtly or strongly certain contours. This gives a spontaneous side, unfinished like a sketch but with a nice result full of freshness.

In the second example by Dufy (1930 to the right) characteristics of the artist, the colour is even more imprecise, wandering imitating the brushstroke and the faded shade of the water colour. This transmits the agitation and movement of the motley crowd, captured only by a few lines that sketch more than define like in a confused memory.



The impressionists have created their own equivalence of colour suggesting the subject without copying it literally. Like this nude by Renoir (1875 to the left) where the skin of this young woman reflects the ambient colours of the landscape uniting her at a high level with her environment. Don't forget that this portrait was a scandal in its time because they were seeing a woman whose flesh was in decay because of its greenish, blue and purple shades.

Artificial hues that don't exist in the real motive, can be introduced and convincing if they are coherent with the chromatic harmony. Like in this gypsy by Matisse (1905 to the right) where her half naked body is decked with all possible colours in a direct fashion, without refinement, which is what gives it a character brutally true, without artifice. The primitive side of the brushstroke at the limit of daub makes the scene repulsive at first but the eyes and the smile of the bohemian give her a certain charm.



The symbolic of colours has evolved at the mercy of time, fleeting fashions and enthusiasm. It became more complex, readjusted until more serious studies gave it some accuracy. Despite the undeniable progress in their definitions, the colours remain subject to the influence of time, place and social context.

The symbolic of colours.

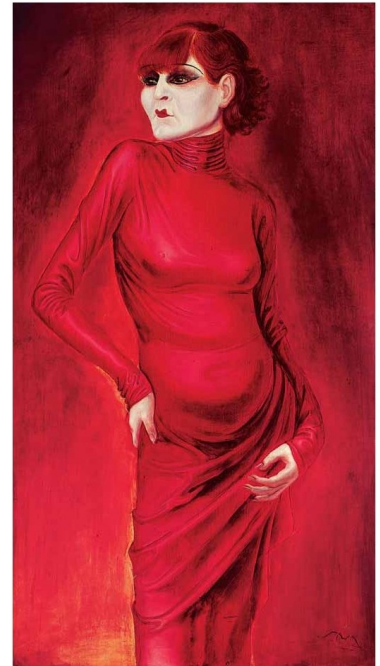
THE RED

Red, invigorating, energizing colour, with a strong psychological impact, associated with love, passion, ardor, the earth as a stimulating force. In negative, aggressive colour, associated with uncontrollable or violent impulses especially when it leans to brown.



In 'Spatial Concert' by Fontana (1968 to the left), the basic intention is to deny any representation of staging the impulsive gesture of the artist which is to do a concrete mark in the space with these seven vertical cuts. The pure uniform red, saturates the entire canvas and draws us irredeemably. These slots on the canvas show a primitive impulse, even destructive, accentuated by the very intense red colour but at the same time, by the harmonious order of the lines and its rhythmic sequence 2-3-2, they want to be artistic.

In 'Portrait of Anita Berber' by Dix (1925 to the right), the red of her dress is there to support the passionate character of that woman who can easily switch to anger and aggression if she is not restrained. The pale lofty coolness of her face and her hands barely hides the vital force, even the sexuality emanating from her body, including her hair, her lips and the shade of the skin. As if it wasn't enough, the red of the background shows that the entire universe where she gravitates is to her likeness. A fine line of complementary green circles her eyes. This woman, a little caricatural, doesn't seem to have any prohibition nor taboo and must satisfy her every desires but beware of her anger if unfortunately someone annoys her.



In 'The Red Workshop' by Matisse (1811 to the left), the colour red that invades the entire room including the floor, wants to be a symbolic transposition, non realistic, of the passion of the artist, of his love, his generosity for his art. His ardor and his inner fire represented by the red, give him the strength and courage of creating despite the difficulties of his trade often ungrateful. A few touches of complementary green prolong the effect of the red, some yellow brightens the scene, pink softens everything, some

widespread blue cools somewhat and white lightens and soothes.

THE PINK

Pink; calm, delicate, said feminine, romantic, it energizes gently, associated intuitively to noble feelings, it suspends time, eternalize the situations. In negative, if too pale or in too great quantity, it devitalizes, fades, makes the subject childish.

In 'The Pink Swarming' by Klein (1960 to the right), the pink doesn't only cover the entire canvas but fills with colour the sponges of different sizes that are integrated in the work. Searching for a maximum purification of the elements for his creations, this artist reduced his palette to three fundamental colours chosen for their intrinsic beauty; blue, pink and gold. Derivative from the three primary colours, they are for him the three colours present in the flames of a fire. Here, pink is seductive; it saturates the entire surface to be palpable through the texture of the sponges. It is a voluntary tribute to the pure colour.



In 'The Flute of Pan' by Picasso (1923 to the left) this canvas, from its short period classic, two young teenagers almost naked with pink-peach skin, represent happiness, tenderness and the vitality of youth. One sitting down plays the simple flute spontaneously with a certain concentration and insouciance while the other one standing has the already slightly anxious look facing his future. It is the space in front of him that gives the depth to his gaze. But for now, the grey-blue of the ocean and the sky brings a peaceful calmness and the subtle colour of the walls and the ground gently warms the scene.

In 'Marilyn Monroe' by Warhol (1967 at the bottom), all the colours are laid flat as in a poster accentuating the impersonal side of the picture. Here the pink, a little garish in the background and on the eyelids on her face, accentuates the artificial femininity of this woman-child falsely naive. Her hair of a flamboyant yellow and her lips burgundy red are the attributes of an eternal seductress. However, her eyes have a vague sadness, a nostalgia perhaps of a past innocence lost too soon. Pink has the faculty of prolonging the emotional state of mind. If it is used too much in childhood, it can eternize a certain naivety in adulthood. The square canvas immobilized this icon woman forever.



THE ORANGE

Orange; warm colour, toning, enveloping, enticing to the eye, associated with balance in general being the mixture of physical passion of red with the intellect reason of yellow. In negative, too intense or in too large quantity might be hypnotic, even upsetting for most.

In 'Harlequin with Guitar' by Gris (1919 to the right), the subtle variations of orange which go from almost red to yellow-gold give a warm ambiance to this scene although reduced to a few schematized shapes. The orange colours suggest the subdued lighting of a lamp that draws shadows on the wall. A musician alone plays for his own pleasure expressing his good humour, his creativity and individuality. His shadow on the floor with its realistic pattern of wood boards is the only element suggesting depth in a classic manner; for the rest, it is the colours that go from the lightest and warmest to the darkest and coldest that suggest it.



In 'The Quarries of Bibemus' by Cézanne (1895 to the left), the variations of orange reproduce the oblique light of the evening sun that illuminates the mounds of land and the houses that blend with the colour of fire. The touches of green-blue of the trees and shrubs make a harmonious transition with the light blue sky. Anyway, this small strip of sky certainly brings a little calmness and softness in this mesmerizing landscape

but with agitated landforms, invasive and with a fragile balance. A few diagonals point to the centre to restore a semblance of stability.

In 'Orange and Yellow' by Rothko (1956 to the right), the colours are immaterial, evanescent. The minimalist simplicity of this work, doesn't take away its power of fascination. How to be optimist and happy in front of this yellow rectangle and red rectangle, with harmonious proportions, that vibrate in contact of the orange background. It is mostly their imprecisions of application and their fuzzy contours that give them an uncertain and at the same time deep and hypnotic presence. The art of stimulating the senses and creating big effect with little means. Meditation work by excellence.



THE YELLOW

Yellow; luminous, stimulating, fascinating colour that excites the retina of the eye, associated with the intellect, reasoning, awakening of the spirit. In negative, too intense or too much can be obsessive at the expense of other colours, even blinding.

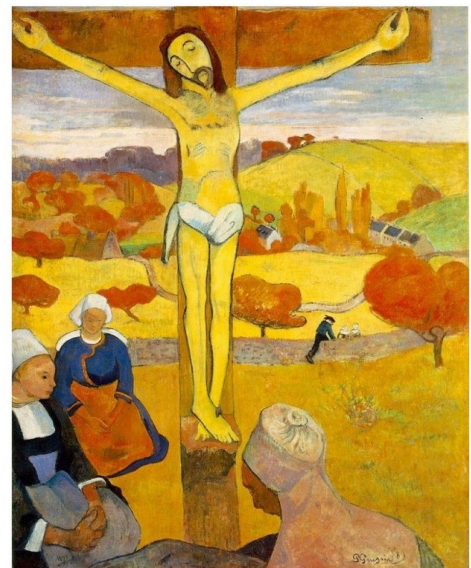
In 'The Sunflowers' by Van Gogh (1888 to the right), yellow is triumphant; either by the flowers that look like a bouquet of suns that stand out against a background moiré very pale yellow or either by the floor of a warm yellow that highlights the vase with two reversed colours in the background. A few touches of soft or very dark green bring some variations and reliefs without insisting. This bouquet of flowers symbolizes the celebration of summer with its light, warmth and joy of living. It is as pretty as fireworks.



In 'The message' by Merida (1960 to the left) it suggests that the character on the left, who arrives running (position of the legs), brings good news to someone else or receives good news from someone else. Both characters in brown and black have their arms up in the air in this moment of excitement. Even if their heads don't express anything at first sight, the light

yellow and the purer yellow that cover the entire background give a sense of joy, even a festive atmosphere between two friends. We could even see them dancing to celebrate what they just learned. Beyond that interpretation, the well balanced disposition of the horizontal, vertical and diagonal lines creates a rhythm, a movement that brings life to this geometrical composition almost abstract.

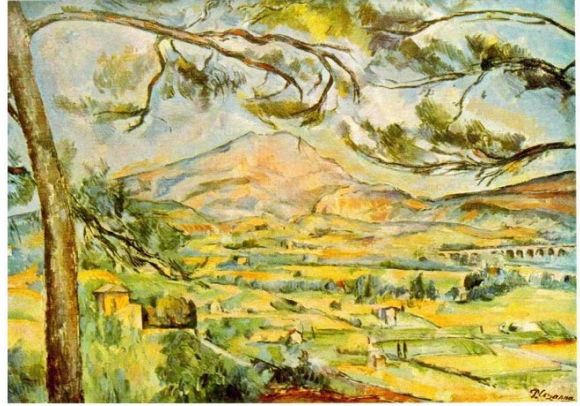
In 'The Yellow Christ' by Gauguin (1889 to the right), the yellow colour of the body of Jesus with a few green accents expresses well in a macabre way that life has escaped. This yellow is also the symbol of lies and treachery. It is spread around the entire scenery bringing a general sadness. Even the touches of red in the trees remind us of the blood shed by him. Only the peasants in blue, kneeling in prayer, bring a bit of rest and meditative peace in this scene. The tilted head of Christ to the left and the composition of the foreground decentered to the left create a subtle incline, an imbalance that accentuates the emotion conveyed by this pathetic fate.



THE PALE YELLOW

The pale yellow; soft, delicate colour that caresses the retina of the eye, associated to the morning light, the awakening of the consciousness of the spiritual world. In negative, in too great quantity dissolves the matter, shapes, rendering it all bland, unreal.

In 'Mont Sainte Victoire' by Cézanne (1887 to the right), the touches of light yellow, pure yellow and orange interweave subtly to the touches of light green, soft and bluish that suggest a sunny spring morning. The branches of the principal trees, in the foreground, bend and move under the effect of the wind and give a light movement to the entire scene. We are located on a hill and we contemplate an idyllic valley bathed in light that seems to all dissolve in a multitude of shimmering halftones that complete each other.



In 'Nazareth' by Denis (1905 to the left), the shades of brown, red and green in the lower part of the canvas represent earth and all that it means to live in matter. But for a fixed time, these five characters at rest listen and reflect on the words of the child Jesus standing who is pointing and looking at the sky. The upper half of the painting bathes in a golden light that renders almost all things immaterial in a vision of a taste of paradise. It is the light yellows that are the most blinding, that sharpen the mind and transmit the spiritual message of Jesus. A child looks at us

either by distraction or to invite us to adhere to his faith.

In 'The Clowness Cha-U-Kao' by Toulouse-Lautrec (1895 to the right), it is the flamboyant light yellow of her tulle hoop skirt that catches the eye at first and the yellow ribbon at the top of a ridiculous hairdo. Here the yellow is uniquely flashy, loud to announce that this woman doesn't take herself too seriously and defies many taboos. Women of 'easy virtues' have nothing to lose and must at all cost attract attention to survive. The dark red of the sea, the cold blue of her dress, and the excessive whiteness of her skin are violent contrasts with the yellow and bring a certain discomfort. In an intimate gesture, this woman seen almost from the back, tilts her head and her hands are busy adjusting her bodice. The entirety puts us a little in a voyeur position.



THE GREEN

Green, soothing, regularizing, toning, colour associated with nature and its changes, to the balanced functioning of things, to healing. In negative, might be discordant, even unstable, in opposing some other colours.



deep blue in the shrubs soften the whole.

In 'Young Girl in Green' by Lempicka (1930 to the right) the green dress iridescent by its vivid sharp edges proper to realistic cubism mesmerizes us completely. Covering 2/3 of the surface of the canvas, this colour gives to the girl the look of youth and freedom. Between the nonchalance and the maturity, this young woman has everything to seduce with the orange shade of her skin and her golden hair that highlight with a good dose the green of her dress. But the bluish white-grey of her gloves, her hat and the background which are more neutral tones bring an impression of cold, artificial as if we were instead in front of a mannequin. The colours too neat and the angles too well structured of this girl take away much realism but in the same time elevate her to the rank of an icon.

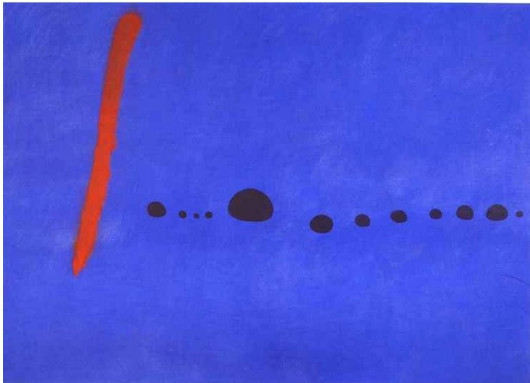


In 'Entrance to the Port at Port-en-Bessin' by Seurat (1888 to the left), a multitude of small points of colour creates a vaporous effect as in a dream. Two types of green here complete each other. The one from the shore that can be realized with the ultramarine blue which generally is lightly purplish and which combined with yellow gives these olive greens characteristics; and the one from the sea that can be realized with the phthalo blue and which, combined with yellow, gives these turquoise green characteristics. Two pigmentations, of different base can suffice to create variety in a painting even if one colour dominates. The horizontal lines in the water plane stabilize and accentuate the calm of the sea while the bent diagonals of the earth plane create movement, preventing boredom.



THE BLUE

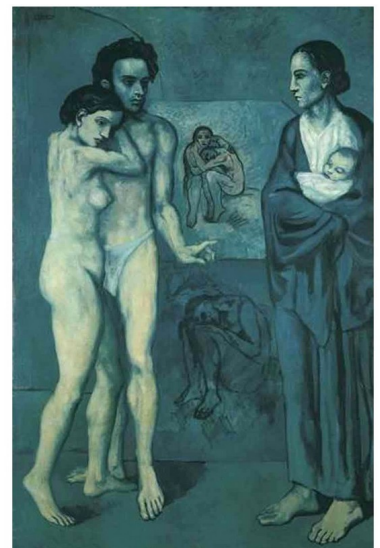
Blue, the coldest, deep, intense colour, that calms the mind, associated with the will, tenacity but also the good life. In negative, into great quantity expresses stubbornness, isolation, obsession and a certain conformity.



In 'Blue II' by Miro (1961 to the left), this deep blue lightly moiré takes all the space and forces us to enter in its world of calm and serenity. There are only a few elements that break up this absolute peace. A series of black dots of different sizes crosses the canvas horizontally like a trace left in passage by who knows who or what. Like a forgotten writing, it seems to contain a secret message reinforced with the black. And here this red-orange diagonal vividly animates this immense immaterial area with its sparkle, its warmth and its strong presence. Its light incline suffices to

create movement and balance on the left with the black dots on the right.

In 'The Life' by Picasso (1903 to the right), period called blue, the artist expresses by the omnipresence of blue the cold observation of the life of ordinary people. An oppressing melancholy floats in this picture especially when we know that it was painted at the time of the artist's misery. On the left side a couple is stripped of their clothes and creates a balance with a lady carrying a baby on the right. Between these two scenes, pictures in the background discreetly suggest that we are in a workshop. The central vertical line of the canvas separates irrevocably both duos. Only the finger of the man placed on that line points to the baby while his companion sadly looks to the ground. Everything is truly indicating that this child is not desired and that he is disrupting the life already precarious of this young couple.



In 'Interior' by Matisse (1918 at the bottom), the use of a blue muted with black confers to this room a mysterious atmosphere but at the same time welcoming. The pronounced light effect coming from the window on the right animates the room and highlights the dark effect in general. The dark mass of the flower pot on the left is counterbalanced by the mass of the window on the right and its content that retakes the same colours of the flowers. The dark back of a chair contributes also to the balance. A few touches of yellow-ochre warm and prevent the monotony. The disorderly papers on the table in the centre suggest life, a presence in this house too tidy.



THE PALE BLUE

Pale blue; colour of creativity, of constructive imagination, associated with the inspiring sky, to the highest aspirations. In negative, too pale or in too great quantity it suggests a passive imagination, a sterile reverie.

In 'The Infinite Recognition' by Magritte (1963 to the right), to the imagination in an infinite space. Twin strollers, dressed in an outfit rather conformist English style discuss peacefully without realizing that they are without gravity in a blue sky dotted with fluffy clouds. Their location in the blue sky suggests that their conversation brings them either in the high philosophical spheres or in the daily banalities that make them forget time and location. Despite their position offset to the right potentially unbalancing they are placed on each side of the line of third vertical right creating a strong anchorage and their arms are crossed on top avoiding an impression of separation. It is also a major point because the central horizontal line crosses them reinforcing their presence.



In 'Fire-Swept, Algoma' by Johnson (1920 to the left), a blue light but cold, almost glacial, covers mountains in the distance according to an aerial perspective. In the foreground, this more discreet blue evokes the ashes on the ground after a forest fire where nothing alive survives amongst these charred trees. The composition is particoloured in all directions by the gloomy black trunks but it is the ones that are vertical that dominate and put rhythm in the scene with their threatening aspects. Yet this same blue soothes somewhat the whole and brings a palpable silence that makes us reflect on the

ephemerality of life. The mountains in the distance, covered with forests, suggest a revival.

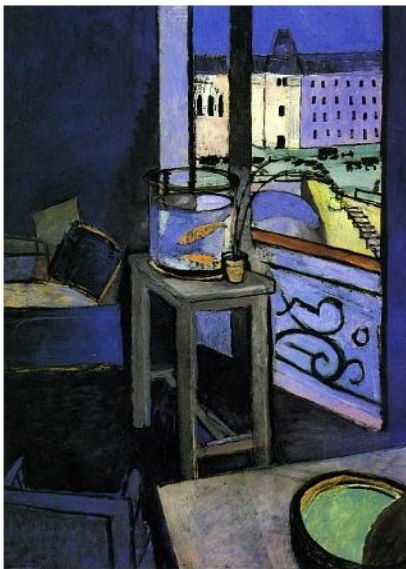
In 'Regatta' by Dufy (1930 to the right), very expressive pale blue spots sweep the entire canvas horizontally. The apparent gesture is large and spontaneous to give a natural freshness to this pleasant scene of small sailboats on the sea. There is a voluntary imprecision of the line to give a certain general movement, the wind, amongst others, that stirs the sails. Despite the effect of a water colour, according to the particular habitual technique of the artist, it is an oil painting. The variations of light blue give a subtle depth to the scene and the touches of pink, orange, green surrounded with red gently animate it all. Certain elements, barely sketched like an unfinished work, give a feeling of fleeting memories of past holiday.



THE PURPLE

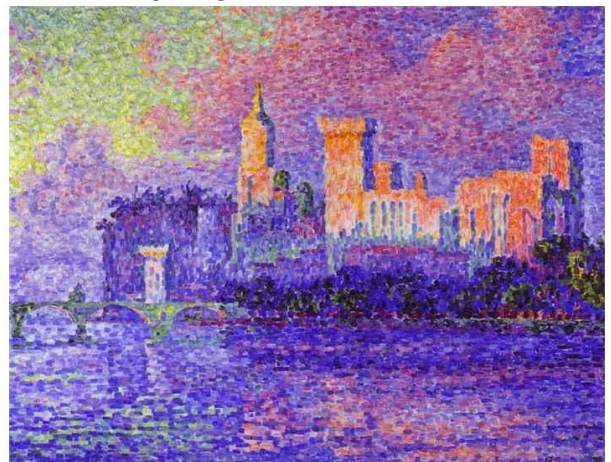
Purple; the darkest, mysterious, bewitching colour associated with introspection, the inner eye, time of rest for the body and spirit. In negative, in too great quantity at the end of something, the transition to the unknown.

In 'The Nymphs' by Monet (1920 to the right), a weeping willow projects its shadow of a soft purple on a pond lightly tinted with pink. Surrounded with these pastel colours, we imagine ourselves meditating at the foot of this tree in front of this peaceful pond. We are invaded by a soft melancholy under the falling branches of this weeping willow. That tree, with its dark brown mass on the left, is in balance with the purple mass, paler but larger than the pond on the right. No complementary contrasting colours; only some green a little colder than the purple animates this delicate harmony.



In 'Interior with Goldfish Bowl' by Matisse (1914 to the left), the shades of dark purple of the room bring us in a state of introspection a little worrisome. This partial and small view of an interior turns to claustrophobia and to a vague sense of solitude that pushes us to escape through the window. Both goldfish cramped in the small bowl seem to confirm our feeling and our desire to escape. Many confused lines in diagonal create also the impression of an internal disorder. The touches of lighter and more luminous colours including the simple complementary of purple in the window are a call to take a good breath of fresh air and discover the world; except of course if this protective cocoon is appropriate to a secret being who loves to surround himself with mystery.

In 'The Papal Palace' by Signac (1900 at the bottom), the coarser pointedness becomes visual perturbation accentuated with blue-purple pushed to the limit of verisimilitude. The yellow-orange hues of the buildings again add a violent contrast that fades a little in their reflections in the water. The pink tinges in the sky on the right could bring a little moderation and softness to the whole but the tints of yellow-green on the left, that are complementary bring a well marked dissonance. The small bridge and the horizontal line of the dark trees attempt to calm the global agitation but with little success. Nevertheless, we are here in the presence of a success in respect to the omnipotence of the pure colour that makes us tip in an unreal world that could make us blind if we stare at it too long.



THE WHITE

White; mixture of all the colours, expresses the primary state, perfection, purity, associated with the innocence of before, the virginity of all things. In negative, in great quantity captures little attention because, by its saturation, reflects the observer as in front of a mirror.

In 'Delta Iota' by Louis (1960 to the right), there is no central subject as it is wanted by tradition, even in abstract painting, but it is the whiteness of the virgin canvas that dominates the greatest space. Alone, coulisse of three primary colours in diagonal on each side seems like the remains of an unfortunate accident. But no, this is contradicted by the wanted symmetric repartition, therefore the red colour, the most intense, starts exactly from the high opposite corners and ends at the bottom in equal distance from the centre. Alone, the formal variations of six stripes avoids the monotony of the perfect symmetry. It is not by chance that it is the luminous yellow that is found in the centre of the three stripes and the cold blue at the extremities. It is the impossible search of the white light at the origin of everything, the first silence.



In 'Snow on the Trees' by Harris (1920 to the left), the white almost pure is found in the snow in the second plane creating an effect of light and depth. The snow in the twilight in the foreground is tinted of grey-blue and purple adding a touch of mystery, even of magic, and contributes to highlight the other more illuminated planes. An oval is drawn with the canopy of dark foliage on top and frames a luminous blue-turquoise sky of winter. The very small spread touches of orange and mostly the ones of the hill in the distance gently highlight the blue shades. Here the white is tinted at different degrees to avoid the impact too cold and saturated of pure white.

In 'The Crucifixion' by Picasso (1930 to the right), a stunning palette of colours very loud, exacerbated by the juxtaposition of many complementaries, expresses all the agitation around this sad Christ on the cross. All these characters seem to tell a complex story that intermingles, difficult to decipher and transmits very well the absurd chaos of life on earth. In counterpart, this white Christ, who is the sum of all the colours therefore the finality of all the ambient rowdiness is the only element frozen, impassible invested from the white of innocence, of the divine light that makes it unreal. The white announces also the cadaverous whiteness of this body drained of its blood.



THE BLACK

Black; absence of colour, expresses the unknown, the undisclosed, the unconsciousness, associated with the original chaos, at the hidden side of everything. In negative, in great quantity fascinates, absorbs the observer's moods creating unease, even fears in front of mystery.

In 'Tragic Clown' by Rouault (1911 to the right), black, inspired from the outline of old stained glass is spread insidiously and engulfs the colours on this clown's face that first should be happy. Like in the dim light after the circus projectors have switched off, this clown is frozen in a moment of silence, of withdrawal into himself where sad memories come back. The dissonant opposition in equal part of red of his outfit with the green of the decor contributes to the unease initiated by the black. The rough brush strokes, awkward and even violent on this character reflect what the artist thinks of the tragedy of a life making the public laugh.



In 'Tar on Glass' by Moulages (1968 to the left), as indicated

by the title, the artist used an unusual material, tar to transmit his affection for the colour black. Five vertical streaks obstruct the view almost totally of a background that we guess to be white but which is in fact a transparent glass. Double irony to discover from black, which is the absence of colour, a window that expresses an emptiness. It is like a refusal to see life in colour; it is to clog the view so nothing reaches

us maybe with the awkward goal of opening up to the unknown, to make room for the never seen. This black attracts us, absorbs us and we could easily tumble into it and get lost.

In 'The Witches' Sabbath' by Goya (1823 at the bottom), to escape from the Spanish Inquisition, the artist took refuge in a country house where he starts to paint frescoes on the walls that express his hauntings influenced by this troubled period. In this left part of a larger fresco, black is at first the devil sitting viewed from the back that we recognize from his horns who in the obscurity chairs this reunion, this sabbath of witches. A disorderly agitation covers the assembly with that apparition. On the left a grotesque witch bows in respect while the other one on the right is horrified by what she sees. Here the austere and dark black is the quintessence of the night that hides our anxieties, our inner torments, our fear of the unknown, of death that we try to exorcise with desperate actions. In this work, the black that absorbs the whole seems to fight with the little bit of white, its rival that reflects all.



THE GREY

Grey; neutral colour because the mixture of two opposites that cancel each other thereby, between the affinity of the black that absorbs all colours and the white that reflects all colours; therefore the eye is only slightly stimulated. In negative in great quantity it doesn't give much sensations, even indifference. It is for that reason that we recommend tinting it with another colour to give it an impact on the viewer.

In 'The Kiss' by Picasso (1969 to the right), grey reinforces the cold finding that despite the passionate ardour, even sexual of the man, a certain feeling of unease seems to emanate from the woman. Grey reinforces her neutrality, indifference, even her disgust, in front of this approach too direct. The hand of the man tenderly grasps her neck but it makes her captive. Three horizontal lines on the left stabilize the picture which would tilt to the right without it. If the reproduction is accurate, beyond this bland grey from where emanate a great sadness and a feeling of solitude in a twosome, a hint of peach colour tints the skin of this couple and humanizes somewhat this intimate gesture.



In 'Grey Coloured Variation' by Gervais (2008 to the left), despite the fact that we are in front of an abstract work, how not to see a hazy grey autumn sky. If the reproduction is accurate in the upper part, the grey-blue is barely tinted of pink-orange that subtly inflames it. In the lower part, which corresponds to around 3/4 of the total surface, the grey-blue is tinted of more pronounced blue on the left and of an approximative beige on the right. This light colouring and the discreet horizontal line are enough to avoid too much sobriety and even the monotony of the pure grey. It is for sure a minimalist work seeking neutrality, purification by simple renunciation.

In 'Silver Tree' by Mondrian (1912 to the right), how not to see in this representation of a tree the first tentatives of the artist to schematize its structure in a few curved lines that reverberate all over the surface of the canvas. Its quest for the essential brings him to slough off all realistic colour that would distract the eye and to stick to slightly coloured greys. Intellectual rigour and a certain desired austerity characterize these future abstract geometric works. But for now, the black curved branches of this large tree, almost threatening, are a last blip of a nature that we strip of its life before reducing it to the mere boredom of a straight line.



Generally, we have to avoid the use of pure grey, mixture only of white and black in diverse proportions, because it is the colour that the eye recognizes the least, in other words which stimulates the membranes of the retina the least. Therefore, It is suggested to tint it with other colours even slightly to give it a little life.



Here are two examples of palettes of coloured grey (at the top) that demonstrate one part of the possibilities that we can obtain in adding a tint to the grey or otherwise, in adding black to some shades, depending if we want a dominance of grey or the shade.

Some artists privilege a palette of pure and sparkling colours, and others, a palette of muted colours (attenuated) in their creations.



The very muted and subtle colours of this painting by Wyeth (1965 to the left) give to this humble, bare room an air of sadness and nostalgia.

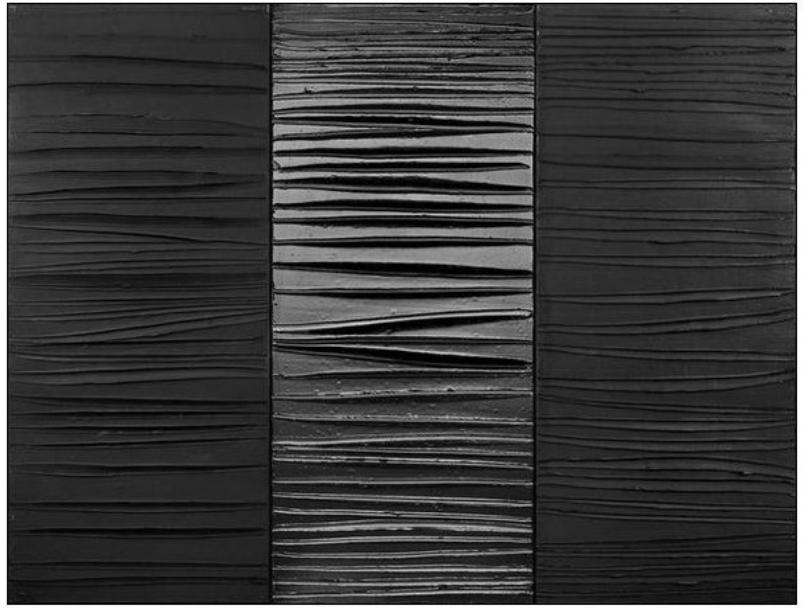
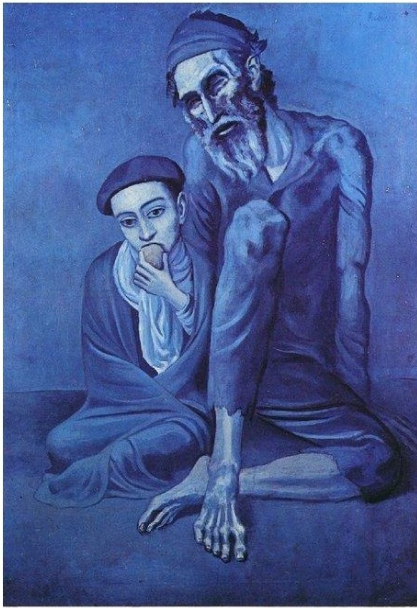
The vivid colours, even extreme of the canvas by Cordeau (2014 to the right) burst and flood this building with light and festive joy.



Generally, the use of too pure or saturated colours should be applied with caution in knowledge of cause and effect. It is especially true for white; grey or black that are the extremes.

Some artist-painters and teachers of painting banish the black from their palette for obscure reasons like amongst others that it is a dirty colour. It is true that during ancient times, the use of certain browns as background blackened with time and that some blacks of poor quality that had tendency to spread and invade the other colours gave it a bad reputation. But this is no longer true today with the colours being tested in laboratory and proved more stable. Certain ancient colours were the only ones used because they were the only ones accessible at the time while today the choice largely diversified and have made several of them outdated. Certain traditions in painting are to be saved and others are not, according to the evolution of materials and techniques.

The colour could be a self vocabulary that interprets the reality without copying it accurately. Each painter manifests preferences, constant or periodic chromatic tendencies independently of the paintings or on the contrary, associated to a specific series.



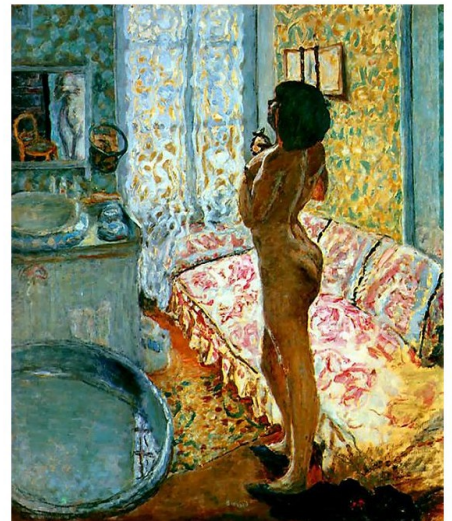
The blue period of Picasso's youth (1903 top left) marked by the suicide of a friend and his precarious financial situation, expresses the observation on people without resources and resigned. But the whole oscillates between denunciation and compassion on the part of the artist.

The constant obsessive black by Soulages (2009 top right) that will haunt him his entire life, will end up by invading completely all his paintings. Whether it is matt or gloss, divided in strips, streaked with horizontal lines sunken or embossed, it is those few elements that animate a little the dreary surface of this omnipresent black.



Generally, the novice painters do not master the effect of contrasts of light and colours enough to dare using it. Like in 'Interior Forest' by Rohifs (1889 to the left) which is not devoid of a certain charm but harsh and austere.

The juxtaposed light and darker shades create an effect of distance. The most powerful colour contrasts are obtained by bringing the complementaries closer. The intensity of values of the shades and colours make the distances appear larger or smaller between the planes. Like in 'The Bathroom' by Bonnard (1908 to the right) which, despite the awkward perspectives, possesses a good play of contrast.



We can create subtle planes with very little contrasts that express the depth smoothly like in 'The Last Voyage of Temeraire' by Turner (1838 to the right); or on the contrary some very contrasting planes that express the depth forcefully like in 'Mill in the Sun' by Mondrian (1908 to the left). We have to find the balance between too many planes



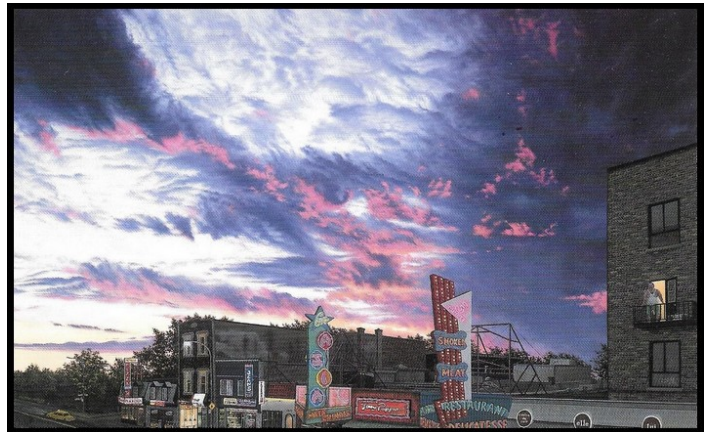
of transition that fade or too many contrasts that might remove some ambiance.



Those studies of colours have allowed me with time to define only six essential colours to reproduce all things. Science explains that there are three primary colours (primordial) which located between light and darkness (white and black), have given birth to the entire palette of the universe. After meticulously scrutinizing the range of colours offered on the market I have come to define my own palette to these few colours below.

Here is my personal choice (acrylic):

Titanium white
Mars black
Medium cadmium yellow
Naphthol carmine red
Ultramarine blue
Phthalocyanine blue



This simple choice has allowed me to paint my entire production for more than twenty years. See 'The Circus in Flames' by Chabot, me (1987 above to the right). But everyone is free to complete this list with as many colours that you will judge necessary according to your personal choices. However, you have to know that too many tubes of basic paint diminish the pleasure to find, create your own nuances that will characterize, personalize your work. The step in the mastery of colours is one of the important gratifications in painting.

Here! That's it for this third course entitled 'Colour and Form'

Colin Chabot

SUBJECT AND SYMBOL

We have learned during the first three presentations, that a successful painting is before anything else a balanced painting. Which means concretely that if it is placed on a scale, it wouldn't tilt to the left, nor to the right. The balance reflects primarily lines and major points; second, the framework, the obvious basic structure that forms the general composition. Third, it considers the perspectives that give the viewing direction and depth; fourth, these same perspectives proportion these elements into a harmonious relationship. Fifth, it considers the colours, their uses in value of shades and hues; sixth, the masses and shapes that define them. The six points above encompass the content of a painting.

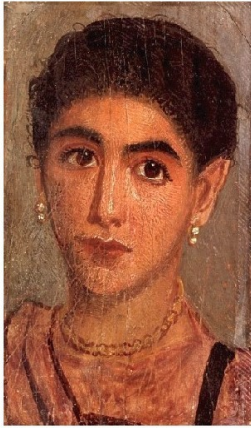
Now we will address the content of a painting that can be resumed in four points; the subject, the symbolism, the style and the touch.

Here is an introduction to a very brief history of the topics and the evolution of the symbolism through time.

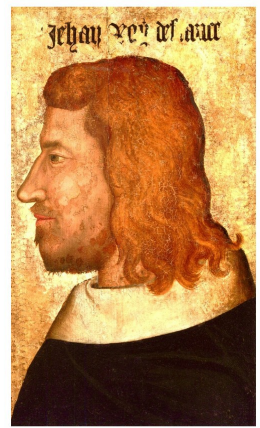
The first millennium of the christian era has seen the art of the fresco, so popular during the roman period with the wealthy, fall more or less in oblivion or at least lose some of its vigour in this long period of troubles and transitions in art. The representation of human bodies and figures, dear to the ideal of perfection with the greeks and the romans, is seen with the first christians confined to a symbolic representation of the principal actors of their faith. Here (on the right), this little fresco of the catacomb represents Jesus teaching to the apostles and is midway between a clumsy realist vision and at the same time a symbolic transposition of the subject.



Here (on the left), we have a simple medallion whose symbolism is drawn from the roman art. It represents a shepherd carrying a ram on his shoulders, surrounded by two sheep, shrubs and two birds. It symbolizes the guardian of this flock by the ram on his shoulders. He is surrounded with plants signifying abundance and the birds refer to the sky. It is an idyllic image of a peaceful country life in a fair abundance on earth as in heaven. This will become with the first christians the image of Jesus, the good shepherd who guides and protects his flock of faithful here and in the hereafter. Many roman symbols will be recovered this way by christianity.



The art of the portrait, during the Roman period, served mostly to represent the deceased which was considered necessary for the passage to the afterlife, like the one of this woman painted with encaustic (melted wax) on wood with very expressive eyes (to the left). It was only during the late Middle Ages (fourteenth century) that we see reappearing proofs of this art; like in this oldest portrait known in France, the one of Jean Le Bon (to the right). This profile surprisingly very realistic for the period is nevertheless embellished with a gold background, remains of an older iconographic method.



In this large fresco of a Romanian monastery (to the right), we see the role that played these images placed in a series of paintings. They describe the holy history during an era where the great majority of the population was illiterate. These representations are like an illustrated book, a comic strip, a painted memory where the essential is told to stimulate the faith and keep it alive. The paint is applied on a fresh coating (fresco).



Painting, because of the cost of its realization, will remain for a long time a luxury first reserved especially to the religious communities. In the beginning it will serve to maintain the religious fervour then slowly impose its role as spiritual director. Also it will slowly serve the interest of the leaders by immortalizing their appearances, their ranks and this way establish their authority amongst their subjects. The processions in the street of religious statues or icons of saints, much later the portraits of monarchs, will serve to galvanize the enthusiasm of the crowds.

Here are two portraits of royalty of a making fairly realistic-classical in their respective frame. The king of France, François 1st (1527 on the left) in a very sophisticated and well rendered pageantry attire, stands out on a background of red tapestry. Thereon, we notice subtle abstract arabesques, shade on shade, and also the discreet pattern of a crown at the height of his head.



Pope Clement XIII (1630 to the right) dressed in red and white, colours of the wealthy on velvet and satin, sits on a golden throne. With his quite jovial face, he blesses us with his right hand in a relatively natural pose.



In some countries, far from the oppressing royal and religious influences, painting will be the only witness of the everyday life.

In 'Woman Reading a Letter' by Metsu (1666 to the right), a young woman, sitting, leaning towards a window that gives her light, reads a letter attentively. A servant standing raises the curtain hanging from a frame that protects a painting representing a boat navigating on an agitated sea. The symbolism is simple and clear because the message from the letter is very well contained in the frame on the wall. The small dog, symbol of fidelity at the time, looks at the servant and expresses the nervous anticipation of the return of the master of the house. Yet all is treated gently in this view of a cozy interior where peace and order reign. Many elements like the window, the frame, the chair and the rug are only partly included in the canvas strongly suggesting that this is an intimate look into a much larger space.



In different periods of history, a symbolism will be codified in painting, reflecting and flattering the hermetic culture of an elite.



In 'The Lender and his Wife' by Metsys (1514 to the left), it is a whole series of elements which testify that this painting might not be a realistic scene but an allegory on the opposition between material and spiritual life. First, it is the coins and the scale that define the occupation of the man but the scale is also the symbol of justice and in this case, attests either of his assured honesty or his cupidity towards money. The woman is represented looking at what her spouse is doing, maybe reflecting on her implication in his affairs, but the most important is that it is what diverts her from her holy book which affirms that she is literate and religious. This painting confirms that the lure of material goods can separate us from our spiritual path. Other symbolic objects in this painting accentuate this finding like the mirror in the centre,

symbol of vanity, the pearls on the left, symbol of infidelity. Many other obscure elements lend themselves to other interpretations because the origin is forgotten.

The painting 'The Burial of Atala' by Girodet (1808 to the right) tells, in a simple and accessible symbolism, the story (drawn from a novel) of this young indian girl (dressed in pure white) converted to catholicism who will poison herself to not succumb to the advances of a pageant suitor (dressed in passion red). A monk helps the young lover with the burial and their bent backs are retaken by the shape of the cave entrance. Outside in the evening light, a cross points and illuminates the body of this virgin. The shovel, in the foreground, points in the direction of the guilty.



Here is a list of basic subjects helping to clarify the multitude of possibilities of painting.

First of all, they are divided in exterior or interior subjects.

1: Exterior scenery where the focus is put on the environment in general, whether it is a field, plain, mountain, forest, desert, village, city, etc.

The painting 'The Hay Wain' by Constable (1821 to the right), representing a scenery from the English countryside, went unnoticed when exposed at the Royal Academy of London in 1821 while in Salon de Paris in 1823 it was received with enthusiasm and even decorated with a medal. It was a great revelation for many painters and launched the fashion of landscape painting which up till that date, was seen as a minor genre. The landscape would become a subject in itself but mostly the one that represented an authentic and intact countryside during a period where industrialization was spreading everywhere. That style will assert itself with the painters of the Barbizon School.



The painting 'Landscape at l'Estaque' by Derain (1905 to the left) is from the fauvism time (1905-07) where the colour embraced everything, becoming free of any faithful and even garish representation by putting in contrast mainly the pure colours and their complementaries. This small village almost unreal is dominated by the warm shades, which although they are partly arbitrary, transmit a sunny summer day. A certain naivety of the rendering with clumsy details amplifies the rustic and simple side of the village life. The dark plane at the bottom on the right gives depth to the scene.

The painting 'Central Camera' by Walsh (to the right), structured under a metro rail expresses the modern era in its intrinsic reality. After many decades where abstract painting was all triumphant and seemed irreversible, here some audacious painters dared to bring back the figuration in painting but in renewing the genre. The goal was to be simply the witness of his time with all that it implies. This included representing his daily life in a city whatever it was, like in this hyperrealistic painting. Notice the balance between the iron columns on the right counterbalanced by the black shop windows on the left and the cars that point in the same direction.



Interior scene where the focus is on the environment in general, whether it is a house, church, theatre, store, restaurant, manufacture, etc.

The painting 'The Bedroom' by Van Gogh (1888 to the right) reflects the simple life of the artist devoted to his art. The warm and luminous shades of yellow and orange are softened by discreet contrast with the cold and calming shades of blue and green. Some lines do not respect the symmetry and the perspectives, making everything waver slightly and give a precarious side to this way of life. Some variations of shades have been applied on each surface, giving them a richness but also suggesting the passage of time to dilapidation.



The painting 'Mme Hessel in her Living Room' by Vuillard (1904 to the left) is a great success in the rendering of all textures of this plush interior. Without having sought to make clear each printed pattern and their simple delimitations, these latter, with their expansions, melt into each other in an effect of velvet that makes it all homogeneous to almost abstract. Even the lady, seen from an angle and comfortably sitting with a book, also seems to melt in the painting and be an integral part of this luxurious decor. The unity of the whole is what

strikes first.

The painting 'New York Movie' by Hopper (1939 to the right) represents the interior of a cinema where, while some people watch a movie on a screen truncated on the left, an usher, alone standing in the lighted corridor on the right, leans and reflects on her life. How not to see in this painting the parallel between these two findings, the disillusion of this woman versus the false images of dreams offered by the cinema. The crude and cold lighting of the corridor, distinct from the dark room, brings her back to the harsh reality.



The painting 'Boxing Match at Sharkey's' by Bellows (1909 to the left) is taking place in a closed and dark space where two men, under a direct light, face each other in a fight. The strength of each one is highlighted. On the left side, a rising diagonal pushes with force and on the other side, a curve with aggressive spikes counter-attacks. The scene, surrounded with a motley crowd in the shadow, is frozen in a time when the final outcome is still uncertain. This style is intended to be populist in what it has as the crudest, where survival plays shoulder to shoulder with winners and losers.

2: Still Life where the focus is put on elements in particular coming from nature, objects created by human, harmonious or heteroclit mixture of particular things on which we want to attract the eye.



The painting 'Still Life with a Chinese Vase' by Ladell (1856 to the left) is a great example of the virtuosity of the paintbrush in respect to the very realistic representation of each element of the composition. As the matte, velvety or shiny textures of the fruits are convincing, so are the ones of the leaves and porcelain. The richness and the variety of colours are a great feat here. The only flat is that no element of the composition overflows from the frame except the table, which is what removes the impression that this still life belongs to a broader decor. The uncertain background accentuates this uneasiness of being in front of a perfect but artificial arrangement.

The painting 'Poultry' by Soutine (1924 to the right) represents an emaciated and very gamy chicken placed on a rough white soiled cloth, along with a flared pitcher pouring an uncertain liquid, all on a small wobbly table. It all describes well the underlying misery of this painting. Issued from a very poor environment, prolonged by a precarious life of an artist, it is the very expression of a tragic survival in the topic, drawn shapes, palette of colours and brush stroke.



The painting 'Bananas and Grapefruit' by Lichtenstein (1972 to the left) is a minimalist representation that reduces this bowl of fruits to its simplest yet effective expression. Influenced by the flat colours outlined with black, the comic strips and publicity posters, the result captures the essence of the subject in its extreme simplification. The stripes in the background point in opposite direction to the one of the bananas giving movement and strength to this balanced composition realized with only three colours.

The series 'Ketchup' by Goings (1981 to the right) plays with a realism and an optical illusion that relates to photo-realism. Often issued from the advertising art, some artists use brushes as much as the caching technique and tools like the airbrush. This is only possible with a basic photo that is projected on the canvas to capture the smaller lines and then render the precision of each element including their textures. We can only be fascinated by this photographic imitation.



The subjects include the vegetal and animal kingdom (including humans).

3: The floral art where the focus is put on the flowers, the plants in general and their multiple layouts.

The painting 'Almond Tree in Bloom' by Van Gogh (1890 to the right) is evidently inspired by the Japanese art that was very popular in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century. A few flowering branches carefully orchestrated set against a simple blue sky. The beauty of the work is due to a series of curves, twists and arabesques in the branches that express the hard fight from this tree that has to brave the elements which are sometimes ruthless. But despite this, each new spring, it always blooms more beautiful.



The painting 'Hemerocallis' by Monet (1917 to the left), late work realized at the end of his life, expresses the thirst for living again and again. From a making almost brutal, this bunch of flowers seems to shake in the wind above a grove of disheveled leaves. A simple diagonal separates the turf of the pond and is enough to set the stage by giving it a certain depth. With little means, nervous brush strokes and a sloppy finish, the artist has shown the ephemeral and precarious side of life. This canvas was also realized during the trouble period of the first world war.

The painting 'Garden of Klint' (1913 to the right) represents a flowering hedge that runs diagonally out of sight and almost fills the entire space with its very high horizon. A small building, at the very top right, defines the subject and prevents the painting from bordering on abstraction as the effect of the colours scattered in small various touches is confusing. It is in the technique of this artist to multiply the contrasts and the small abstract patterns in yet realistic scenes. Notice the simple white flower on the right that rebalances the composition too massive on the left.



The painting 'Wild Flowers' by Miki (to the left) is an explosion of vibrant, intense colours, very well distributed on the canvas despite the appearance of a great involuntary disorder. Bordering on abstraction, these wild flowers seem to be fighting with each other in a joyous anarchy of shapes and colours (like in nature) to occupy the foreground and seduce the flighty passer-by. Despite the darker shades on the right, a general movement to the left rebalances the whole. The palette of colours is of an extreme diversity and yet there is no confusion, on the contrary, there is a great harmony between them.

4: The animal art where the focus is on the animals, insects, fish, whether isolated or grouped, close-up or integrated in their natural habitat.



The drawing 'The Hare' by Dürer (1502 to the left), realized in water paint and gouache on paper, is not a preparatory study for a painting but a work in itself. The quality in the making of the animal in every detail makes it an exceptional work at a time when the naturalism wasn't yet very assured. The challenge of this hare was to realize it in perspective from a point of view in height and with a diagonal that goes from third top left to the low right corner. That sheet is almost square, stabilizing and freezing for a moment this small wild animal. Despite the neutral background, the shadow on the right gives it a very tactile presence in the space.

The painting 'Red Horses' by Marc (1911 to the right) doesn't have the pretension of being an accurate and precise study of horses. It is a spontaneous and lively capture of three specimens frolicking in their natural environment. This canvas could be the work of a skilled child by its simplicity and its vibrant colours more or less truthful but the organization of the space betrays an artist who knows his art well and tries to transmit the essence of a subject in a more sensitive way.



The painting 'Nesting of Geese' by Bateman (1978 to the left) because of a sober palette in the main shades of browns, emits the sweetness of life transmitted in this couple of wild geese on the edge of a lake. The male on the left of the composition and the two heads turned in the same direction are balanced with the land mass on the right. Maybe this composition, realized from a photo and cropped in the goal of obtaining a great perfection of balance and rendering, by doing this, it lacks some natural.

The painting 'Landscape of Cows' by Chopy (1981 to the right) was realized with oil pastel and acrylic paint on mounted paper. It represents an hallucinating vision of cows, barely recognizable, brought in all directions by a whirlwind of biting lines and psychedelic colours. There is no landmark that could stabilize a little the overall result. Like in an original chaos, life hasn't yet found its balance and its place in the universe. This artist has everything to excess and juggles with madness.



Here I set apart and emphasize the nudes which have always been important in painting.

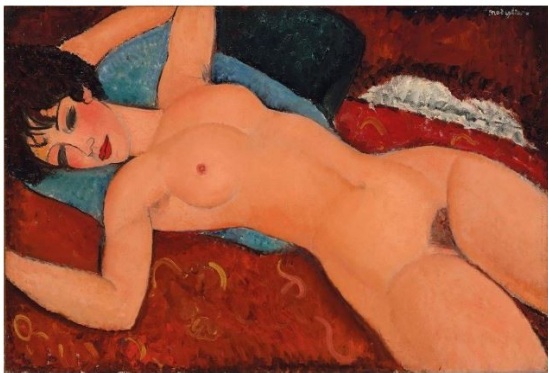
The painting 'Patroclus' by David (1780 to the right) refers to a greek hero dead in combat from a spear in the back. The red of the cloth evokes his spilled blood and his bow and arrows are lying at the bottom right. This muscular body, with plays of well proportioned shades, has its strong shoulders in the most lit area. His dirty feet, highlighted in the opposite corner, testify to the hard battles he led before falling. This magisterial study of a masculine body, in spite of its evident neoclassical style, is nevertheless charged with a great sensitive load. The movement of his dark messy hair towards the right rebalances the dark mass of the wall on the left.



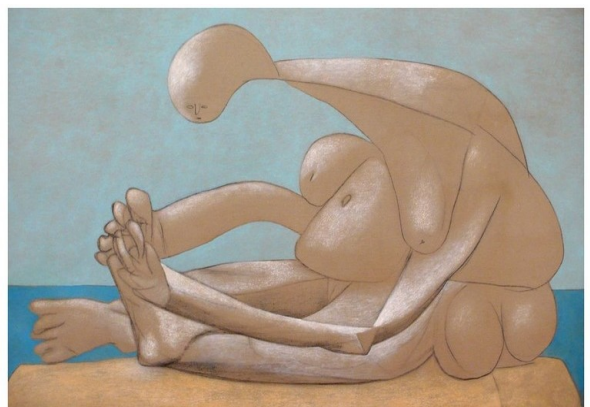
In the sketchbooks 'Study of a Character' by Delacroix (1827 to the left) how not to see the spontaneity and the capture without hesitation of a model seen from the back, who might be considered as a work in itself. Many painters, who will come later, will consider the hesitations, the repentances and erasures in a painting as an integral part of the final work and will not hesitate to keep a visible part. The original pose and the sinuous curves of this model are far from the classic style, but rather announce romanticism.



The painting 'Reclining Nude' by Amedeo Modigliani (1917 to the left) is not his usual style of slender and slightly sad portraits. Here we are dealing with the body of a woman all in curves and sensual volume that awaits us languorously in an unequivocal pose. But instead of being vulgar, it emerges a well balanced eroticism from this perfect body that is more of an ideal of beauty according to the artist. The little blue-green cushion cools this dominance of warm shades in a well proportioned way.



The painting 'Woman Sitting' by Pablo Picasso (1937 to the right) shows us a buxom nude woman beside the sea, examining her toes. So much grace and beauty in this intimate scene of peace and serenity, accentuated by its pastel shades. The audacious deformations of the body amplify the generosity of its masses. First you have to know how to greatly reproduce, master the human body in its reality, then be able to transform, personalize it in a great diversity of styles, even extreme and that it still remains credible.



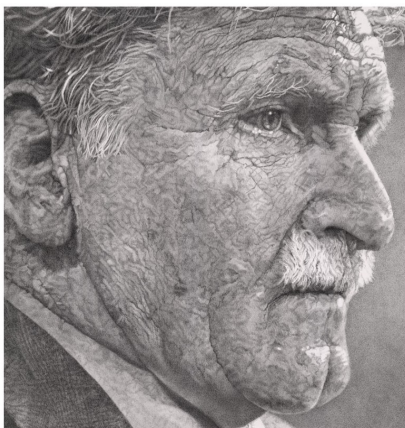
5: The characters where the focus is first put on the face, the portrait in bust.

The portrait 'The Monomaniac' by Géricault (1822 to the right) is one of five studies of physiognomy done by the artist in a hospital for mental patients. This one represents the desire that he stigmatized in the sideways glance, the particular mouth and the hunched back of the old lady. The challenge was to reproduce a characteristic very typical of an individual by freezing her in her physical traits. Here we break away from the usual portraits of the time that generally were orders placed by the bourgeoisie or the official elite. Some painters sometimes represented the humble peasants or the street vagabonds but with an anecdotal and trim look. While here, it is an act of bravado and audacity to seek inspiration from the most outcasts of society, the insane and to represent them without artifice, nor complacency.



The portrait 'Crying Woman' by Picasso (1937 to the left) expresses the pain of a woman in tears. Only the voluntary deformation of this face could as intensely render the emotion felt by the subject. The pure, complementary colours clash on this face around a white and cold mass where the fingers, the tears and the wrinkled handkerchief interweave. The yellow and the green make the expression of the woman a bit macabre. The background, soft, calm and warm contrasts and accentuates this tragedy of the moment. All the pointed shapes, outlined in black, bring a brutal and excessive side to the scene.

The triptych 'Study for a Self-Portrait' by Bacon (1976 to the right) shows three variations on the theme of his face caught in perpetual metamorphosis. Unreal in the present, deformed by his inner world, reflective facing the reality, he could disappear at any moment. It is the finding of what life is all about and of what these portraits contain. How to immortalize the elusive and the ephemeral. The gloomy dominance of black and grey tones are somewhat softened with delicate pastel shades.



The portrait of 'Romeo Dallaire' from an unknown (2012 to the left) is realized with lead and fills the entire space. His whole life is written on each groove, each wrinkle, each asperity of his face. Nothing distracts our observation; not a slightest pleasing colour, nor a distracting decor. This omnipresent cold grey doesn't allow any sentimentalism and yet the mouth of this man speaks volume about his past and his eyes take us far into the future. Here he is alone, captured in an intimate moment where his inner universe shines beyond the mask. The great variation of grey tones, going from the lightest to the almost black, prevents a certain blandness.

The characters where the focus is put on a person seen in part or totally.

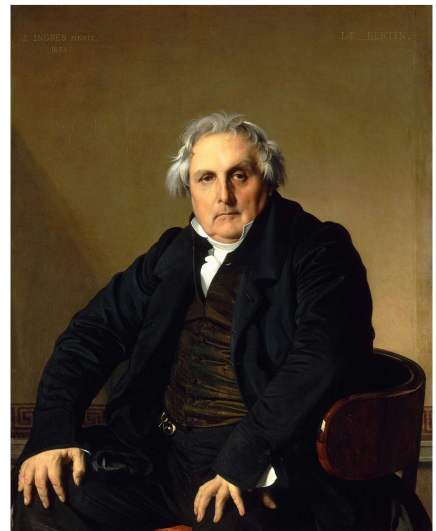
The portrait of 'The Gypsy' by Hals (1630 to the right) is full of freshness and spontaneity. Her naughty sideways glance, her sweet and frank smile, her highlighted ample bosom and her messy hair is enough to seduce any frisky young man. Even the falsely clumsy brushstroke is voluntarily frivolous and undisciplined. This slight voluntary imprecision of the final rendering naturally amplifies the non-sided character of this young girl. Her body turned to the left, her frontal face and her eyes looking to the right create a slight twist making the pose very lively. The neutral and imprecise background prevents us from any other distraction.



The painting 'Madame of Conti' by Coypel (1731 to the left) is in the Rococo style where the grace and finesse of detail are purely feminine, which is what was dear to the influential women of the time. Two great diagonals, underlined by the limbs of this lady and prolonged by two cherubs, form an approximative X that orchestrates the entire composition. The low horizon places our gaze well below this divine presence and gives it a certain monumentalism. But I want to draw your eyes on the rendering of the fabrics that goes from the velvet finish of the blue cushion passing through the grey-blue one that surrounds her chest and finally the beige satin of her dress. The key point to remember is that more an element is shiny, more the contrasts between its parts that are in the light and the ones that are in the shadow, are great and sharp. The opposite is also true and this is the

way we can give a finish to everything. We see in this painting the difference between the matte effect of the blue velvet and the shiny effect of the beige satin through the dosage of light contrasts between the two. The rendering of the skin as much of the woman than the cherubs, is located between these two extremes.

The portrait of 'Louis -François Bertin' by Ingres (1832 to the right), despite the very realistic rendering proper to neoclassical of the nineteenth century, is nevertheless loaded with a very strong sentiment that the artist knew how to capture. In a dominance of sober colours, the face and the hands stand out as identifying this man as self-willed, determined with a touch of arrogance. Like an eagle with its pointed nose and his hands like claws, he looks at us harshly without a smile, on the defensive, ready to respond to any attack. His strong character is barely softened by the roundness of his back and his arms and the back of the chair. The few touches of white-grey of his hair, the collar and the sleeve break the sobriety of the general palette.



The characters where the focus is put on people in feet; static or moving.

The painting 'Third Class' by Daumier (1864 to the right) represents passengers sitting in a dark third class wagon of a train. Lit somewhat from two windows on the left and others invisible on the right, a man in the centre holds his hat remaining dignified and pensive while an old woman on his right is dozing off and a mother on his left tries to occupy an agitated child. Confined in an enclosed space, the working class lives its condition with a certain resignation not devoid of nobility; this is rendered by the eye of the artist and through the touches of his brush.



The painting 'Family Portrait' by Dix (1920 to the left) is located in the vein of the expressionists who, in the way of painting, seek to render the emotion that is felt in front of the subject. Bordering caricature with suspicious colours surrounded with dried lines in a lame spatial organization, here is the portrait of an inter-generation family sprawled and aimless. Each one is immured in his bleak universe. Only one standing woman, from the back, is looking at herself in the mirror and still seems to cherish the hope of using her charms to reach her goal. Everything in this painting wobbles and vacillates

reflecting this chaotic family.

The painting 'Leisure' by Léger (1949 to the right) breathes calm and joy of life to this beautiful vacation day where two woman on a bicycle stop one moment to let themselves be courted by two gentlemen. Two children suggest that perhaps there are two families. The simplification a little naive and personal of the shapes surrounded in black that we find in all the elements of the painting that are well structured, transmits a good feeling of quiet happiness.



The painting 'Unknown Title' by Hanna (to the left) is impregnated with a mysterious atmosphere, even mystic, by this saturation of yellow, colour of the spirit and its characters in part unreal. Some are even about to disappear like fleeting ghosts. Is it a street scene, without its decor, that stays engraved awkwardly in the memory and that time erases inexorably? A naked child turned to the left and a young girl with a hoop stand out from the crowd and rebalance the whole.

They finally include the narrative and non narrative topics.

6: The narrative art where the focus is put on the story told, whether it is historical, anecdotic, of the order of a fable, a legend or from pure invention. Even a still life tells something.



The painting 'The Beggars' by Brueghel (1568 to the left) has many interpretations but the one I like is the one of a dance by five disabled in a courtyard of an institute in preparation for a carnival. They are disguised by the artist with five hats, of which one is a cardboard crown symbolizing the monarchy; another one is a fur hat representing the bourgeois; another one is a bonnet for the peasant while there is a miter for the ecclesiastic; and finally the last one is a paper hat representing the army. Is it a warning for all dishonest people whatever his rank, like in the Flemish proverb 'A lie walks like the cripple with crutches'? But independently from its interpretation, the painting is a good rendering of a class

of society often neglected, even forgotten in painting, bringing an exceptional beautiful testimony to the time.

The painting 'Gallant Scene' by Watteau (1774 to the right) is a simple romantic anecdote where a young boy courts a young girl who came to get water from a well. He seems to insist by leaning on her, holding her by the hands and talking softly to her ear. The young girl seems happy from the conversation of the young man but remains distant because a lady, maybe her mother, looks on lurking in the shadows. Faithful to his style, the artist rendered well the intimate atmosphere of this scene full of softness and gallantry. The great clear surface of the sky and the basket on the left rebalance the whole and emphasize a great diagonal that crosses the entire canvas.

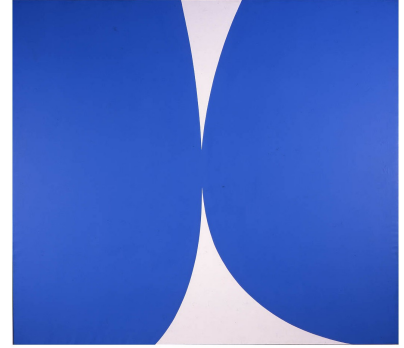


The painting 'The Shootings of May 3rd' by Goya (1808 to the left) describes in a realistic and overwhelming way, unfortunate events that brought the French army to repress a rebellion from the Spanish people. Beyond the truthful fact of the story told, the rendering is surprisingly modern and gives to this painting an emotive charge very powerful. A white and yellow lantern placed on the ground illuminates mainly a convict with the same colours, who with arms outstretched, accepts his faith looking straight in front of him. There is a monk instigator of the rebellion, some victims on the ground and others who wait in the background.

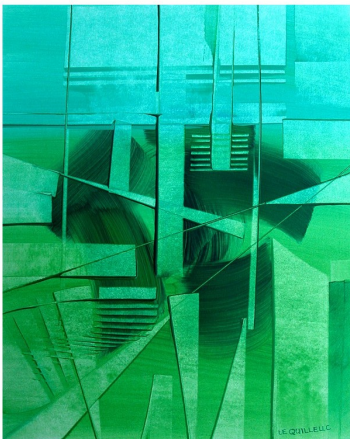


We don't see the faces of the soldiers who form a monolithic block. A village is drawn in the distance in the black night. The angle of the composition forces us to watch the scene.

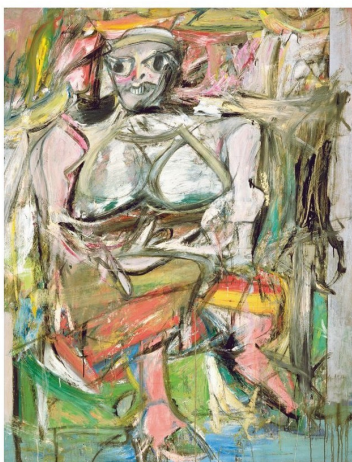
7: The abstract art where the focus is put on the plastic value, whether it is with a dominance of spontaneous or expressive gestures like in the work 'The Duke marries the Duchess of Burgoyne' by Mathieu (on the left) whether it is with a geometry on two complex or minimalist planes, like in the work 'Blue White' by Kelly (to the right);



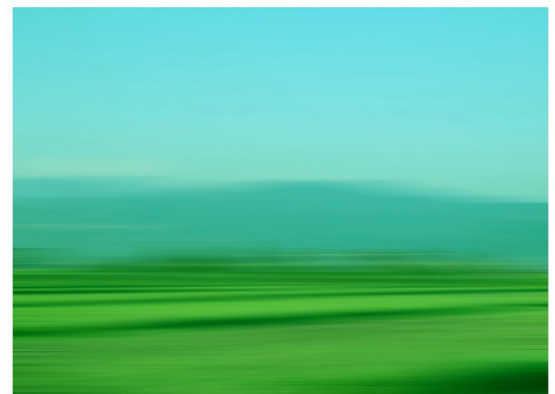
whether it is with a dominant, invading colour that triumphs with its excess, its just simple supreme presence like in the work 'Caribbean Blue' by Eston (to the left); whether it is made with subtle, reflective shades of colours that are located between the formal organization and the simple gestural spontaneity like in the work 'Jetty II' by Horthy (to the right).



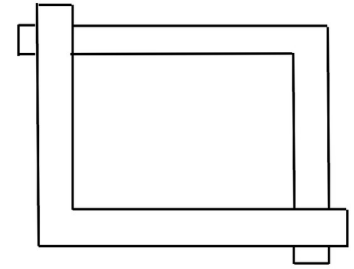
whether it is a spatial construction where the depth, the effect of the third dimension is created, accentuated by the colours and the different lines like in the work 'Delphes' by Le Quilleuc (to the left); whether it is a classic abstract universe where we treat and bring back timidly, in different ways, various simple and recognizable elements of reality like in the work 'Untitled' of this unknown artist (to the right);



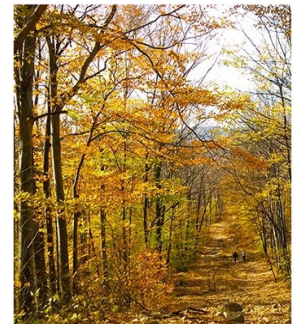
whether to reintroduce, after many years of pure abstraction, a figuration that retakes its rights in all possible ways even extreme, grotesque like in the troubled work 'Woman 1' by Konning (to the left), whether it suggests without detour blurry landscapes, even unreal like in the work 'Untitled' by an unknown, (to the right).



The framing of the subject is the first gesture of the creator. It serves to focus at first on certain elements that we chose amongst so many others, to simplify by removing the superfluous elements; to amplify certain details, characteristics that we highlight; to combine and put in order some elements that we chose to express the intention of the artist. A frame made from two L (angle bracket) in cardboard allows to quickly make several tentatives of cutting of a view or an image.



Here is an ordinary picture of a fall landscape with dominance of yellow-orange shades. The road in full centre makes the scene too static and leafless trees on the right are of no interest. The new framing moves the little road to the right which is counterbalanced by the dark tree trunks on the left.



Here is another interesting picture of a garden but with two blue blocks verticals on the foreground, to each extremity, that enclose the subject. A reframing towards the left gives to the balustrade a feeling of intimacy and natural but with however an opening on the right.



This ordinary picture has no centre of interest giving a simple impression of confusion. A close up of the older man sitting with his wife and now the subject is definite. Several passers by in the middle plane including a man in blue who rebalances it all with his gaze, complete this scene. The full objects in the front can be readjusted.



The interior of an ancestral kitchen can, by a simple focus on the right side, shed the superfluous and become a composition of a great geometrical simplicity. However the window becomes the main subject with the pink cloth that subtly evokes a presence. The decor in the window can be better detailed.





A photographed evening landscape can be reinterpreted by putting the focus on an element, like here the magnificent sky which then becomes the main subject. Many variations can come out from only one basic photo. See how the balance is maintained in the variations.



This still life is a little lost in the space and deserves at first to be more arched. An element on the right a little out of the frame suggests a larger place. The effects of light and shadow deserve also more contrast and the colours a little brighter without excess.



Everything that is around us in daily life can become a subject to paint. Like in this bric-a-brac of a display at a discount store (to the left) where we have choices. Also maybe your basement or garage (to the right) conceals a mountain of ideas to reinvent still life. It is the personal way of composing that makes the difference, the originality.



Everything is in the art of how to present the most humble element. Like in this padlock in



closeup (to the left) on an old golden wall that gives an nice evocative composition. But if you don't like the enclosed space, escape simply in sceneries stripped to the extreme. Like this magic place (to the right) in omnipresent sky blue.





A simple back alley brings together the best and the worst of the hidden face of humanity. It can hold treasures of possible subjects. The reconciliation of details, some highlighted elements but mostly the mastery of the final balance of the composition are a source of endless creation.

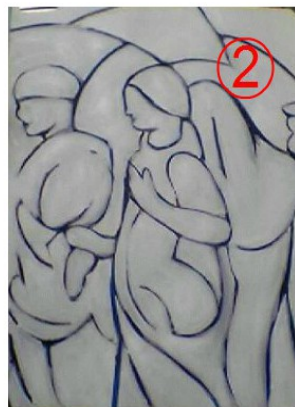


The abstraction is everywhere when we make the effort to observe closely any subject, any surface, any texture like here with this deteriorated wall of cement (to the left). Without the information that it is a closeup of a wall, we would have believed that we were in front of an abstract work where the complementary blue and orange meet. The framed abstract gestural painting might be an obvious answer to our modern walls too perfect and smooth.

A closeup on an old and poor window (to the right) timeworn with all its richness of shades and textures is a good starting point to a more complex work. Off-centre to the right to avoid a too great symmetry, the composition will ask for a readjustment with one or many elements on the left whatever they may be. These additions can be tested by making preliminary drawings, then can be cut, repositioned, re-proportioned before finally being traced and painted on the canvas. Here this can be elements that accentuate the misery of the scene or on the contrary give charm, lighten it all.



A picture from a magazine, representing two classic statues (below), served as a base to this unknown artist to make at first a sketch summarizing in a few lines the essential of the subject. Then, with a great audacity, the artist reinterpreted the picture to make it a unique work.



This to tell you that we shouldn't hesitate to change, to personalize a subject even if at the starting point it is very realistic. Your creation belongs to you.



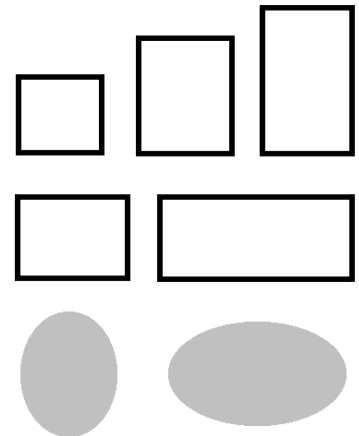
The choice of the shape of the subframe, whether it is a square, a rectangle, a vertical or horizontal or any other unusual shapes, must contribute to accentuate the main intention of the subject of the work. The subject should be totally or in part already defined at the starting point; unless the chosen shape of the subframe will be the starting point to the inspiration.

The square is the most stable shape, symmetric but also the most static that is suitable to the fixed immobile subject, where we want to create a pronounced centre of interest, without distraction.

The vertical rectangle suggests vitality, elevation, energy that grows and radiates. The more it rises, the more it accentuates the effect of greatness, the imposing side of the subject up to vertigo.

The horizontal rectangle suggests movement, unfolding of the action, progression in time, rhythm of life. The more it lengthens, the more it accentuates the effect of the duration of the passing time, the time it takes to look over the subject and see it in its entirety like a vast panorama.

The circle where the oval proposes a subject softened by its contours and where the eye is focused towards a centre where the essence is found.



The painting 'The Turkish Bath' by Ingres (1826 to the right) was realized in a perfect circle that accentuates the curves of all his goddesses who seem to frolic in a harem. But by its concentric shape contained in a square, he imprisons also his women in an enclosed static space, even stifling. This painting expresses well this boredom, this sensual languor interspersed with some festivities that occur in this kind of vicious circle.



The painting 'Man Standing' by Clarke (2014 to the left) is a format of several meters high all in vertical length. The slender format of the canvas emphasizes the silhouette of the character and excludes all other unnecessary artifice around. For the little story, this monumental painting is part of a series that pays tribute to some anonymous victims of a genocide so that they would be remembered. Like a graffiti on an old wall, this image, which seems faded with time, captures this feeling of fear of being forgotten.

The exact dimension of a subframe can play an important role to emphasize the primordial subject and its location on the canvas. This choice will reinforce or attenuate its impact in the eye of the spectator.

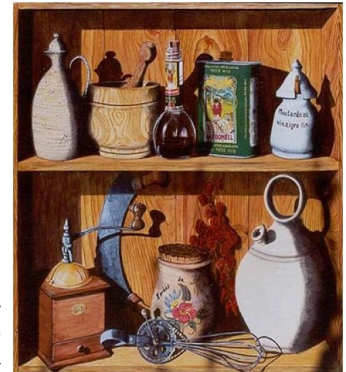
A small painting gives the feeling of an intimate universe on which our vastness looks, focuses to appreciate its fineness. We must restrict our large vision for a moment, stop on this small parcel of space which timidly tells an anecdote. A large painting, on the contrary, gives the impression of a vast universe on which our limited viewpoint opens, enlarges to capture the whole. It is to broaden our limited vision for a long moment to try to understand what this immense space tells with emphasis what is so important.

The size of the main subject in a painting in relation to its real size in reality is also important. Its impact on the viewer will be modified.



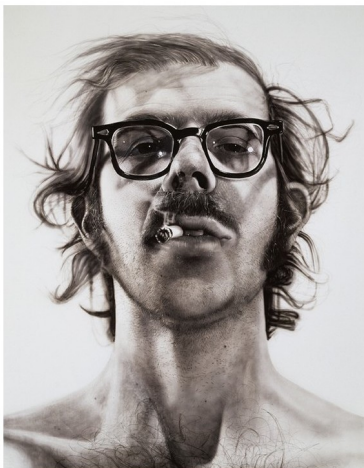
A smaller size suggests a transposition at a smaller scale of a subject that becomes this way more intimate and delicate. We perceive ourselves as a vast universe, a giant that bends down to contemplate a small reduced piece of reality. Like in the painting 'The Odalisque' by Boucher (1745 to the left) where this naughty nude presents herself to us in a reduced size forcing us to a small indiscretion by approaching and leaning as any good voyeur. I must say also that there is no ambiguity on the intention as the buttocks of the lady is in full centre of the canvas.

An identical size suggests a will to reproduce the reality as it is and to compete with it. Like in the painting 'As Time Goes' by Sache (on the right), this shelving, with all the objects it contains, is at the same size than it is in reality, giving it the adjective of optical illusion. The crude lighting that gives the shadows is very well achieved reinforcing the impression of depth. That name optical illusion is given to a style in painting that plays with the illusion of reality.



Like in the fresco of the villa Barbaro de Véronèse (1561 to the left) where all the complex ornaments, including the columns, the doors, the statues and the landscapes in the alcoves are painted. It is the art of creating a sumptuous decor cheaply. Only the mouldings of the doors with their triangles above are real. Notice the painted little girl who opens ajar a false door on the right.

A bigger size suggests that we want to elevate the subject to a status of icon, of archetype, an amplified representation, magnified as carrier of a meaning beyond the subject itself. Like in the painting 'White Flower' by O'Keeffe (1932 to the right), this flower is immense by the space almost total that it occupies on the canvas and whose frame format is also enormous in relation to the size of the subject. This flower becomes unreal, emblematic of all the flowers with a hypnotic power by its shapes that gravitate around a concentric circle.



The important enlargement of a subject gives it an impact on the onlooker who then feels small and humble. Like in the painting 'Large Self-Portrait' by Close (1968 to the left), inspired from the small black and white photos from the photo booths, his own face here is magnified on a canvas close to three meters high by two wide. This makes his face originally ordinary, with a powerful emotional charge. We are in front of a man larger than life in every sense. His entire universe is inscribed on his face and, despite his air of a wandering planet, he looks at us proud with a hint of provocation.

The subject can be treated in an intimate plane, medium or panoramic.



The painting 'The Lacemaker' by Vermeer (1670 to the left) is an intimate view where the artist placed us at the height of this young girl all applied in achieving her lace work. The fact of being placed close to her height puts us into confidence and we expect that she will lift her head to talk to us. The precise touch but with a slight effect of velvet warms the scene despite the cold and neutral background. No element of decor puts the scene in a recognizable environment, this way wrapping the subject in a certain mystery. Nothing here distracts us from the subject and it is the same from this young girl whose concentration on her work is brilliantly rendered.

The painting 'Bathtime' by Sorolla (1909 to the right), with its mid plane, has the freshness of a watercolour with its faded, imprecise and spontaneous touches. The original and off-centre framing with its characters a little truncated is inspired from the photo. A view slightly elevated, in movement, some characters placed in an arbitrary way help also to make this beach scene very natural. Between the intimate scene and a larger plane, the painting oscillates. There is a beautiful light, pastel harmonious shades and a slight exuberance in the characters that give overall a feeling of exhilaration.



The watercolour 'Panoramic of Arts Bridge' by Duval (at the bottom) shows an overview that encompasses an entire bridge with its banks. An impression of light mist in the pastel shades of grey-blue and purple-pink adds a lot of charm to this scene making it almost unreal like a fuzzy memory of a past trip. The purple-mauve is a good meditative and introspective colour. The elongated shape of the work accentuates the impression of an out of sight urban sprawl. There is an aerial perspective well achieved by the progressive erasing of the buildings in the distance. The shades lighter and lighter in the distance add a lot of depth. The dark mass of the sky on the left counterbalances the massive and dark buildings on the right.



The second gesture of the creator is to schematize the work, define the general composition. At the origin of a composition so slightly complex, there is always a sketch, a preparatory outline or at least a study of composition, regardless of how it materializes. Depending if it is the line, the shape, the colour or the light that prevail in the painting, the sketch will capture the essential.

'The Virgin, the Child Jesus and Saint Anne' by Vinci (1519 to the right) shows a preparatory drawing that will endure important modifications in the course of its execution but contains already the basic premises of the final work. A considered fourth character will disappear; the child Jesus and the lamb will shrink by slightly changing location and the lady in the foreground will lean furthermore. Vinci, likely inventor of the aerial perspective, demonstrates it here with the landscape in the background well defined with pale, bluish and fuzzy colours. The blue tunic repeats it. The indented tree on the right prevents the cut to be too brutal and balances it all.



The painting 'Breton Port' by Commissar was preceded by a drawing in colour (1920 on the right), realized surely at the location of the scene and places the composition quite accurately. The final result, still more structured will be realized in the workshop. The imposing and dark mass on the right is readjusted by the darker colour of the water on the left, by the isolated character in red and especially by the fifteen vertical masts that rhythm the canvas full width and stabilize it.



The sketch can also be an exercise to do new research of composition, try new mediums, untie the hand or simply keep it supple to find new solutions for ulterior works.

The drawing by Giacometti (1961 on the right) can be seen as a work in itself as numerous tangled and spontaneous lines rendered this face very expressive. Between its very strong presence and the impression that the space between the lines will dissolve it from one moment to the other, time is suspended. We also believe to be in front of an imprecise trace left by a living being or in front of the fleeting appearance of a ghost.



The sketch can serve, during the execution of a painting, to add a new detail or well understand the structure of an element. A drawn element on paper or cardboard can be corrected, started again at the angle level, the format, the colour before being cut then placed on the canvas until the wanted result is obtained before finally being traced and painted.

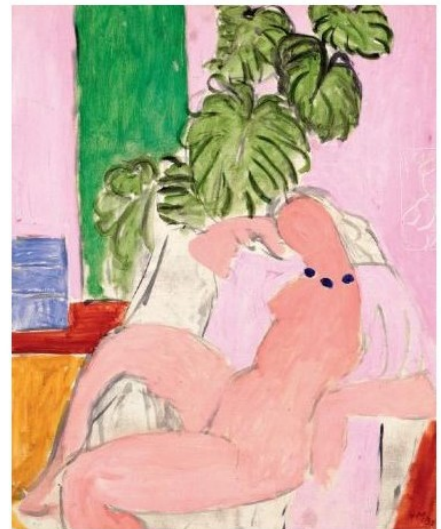
Some painters make a sketch on the canvas and treat it as an important element, even leaving it apparent in the final result as revealer of hesitations, of the first draft, the stages of the creation process. Even a finished painting can give birth to some variations on a sketch and becomes premises to other paintings.

The painting 'Woman Putting On her Stocking' by Lautrec (1894 to the right) is surprisingly modern for its time by the fact that the artist left the sketch very present in the final result. He only put application on a few elements this way emphasizing their importance; the red hair, the made-up face, the contrasting blue scarf, a little white on her breasts and buttocks and finally the black stocking. It is a call to eroticism with these highlighted fetish elements, even if the woman seems foreign and indifferent to our voyeurism.



The painting 'Paul Arlequin' by Picasso (1924 to the left) is full of tenderness and naivety for his young son. It is a period of the artist when he comes back to his roots, among others, in this classic composition. For the essential, the face and the hands are well rendered and also part of the harlequin costume, character dear to the artist. But the lace of the costume is barely touched, the feet repositioned in pencil are absent and the chair only has its velvet covering. Yet why do more when the essence is captured, the sad and pensive look of the child.

The painting 'Nude on a Couch' by Matisse (1937 to the right) has the making of a draft where nothing is precise and all is left in its first state. The important here is that the rendering 'rough draft' is present in all its elements therefore equal on the entire canvas giving it an overall homogeneity. It is more an evocation than a real representation but has the charm of spontaneity, naivety with however a palette of contrasting colours well balanced.

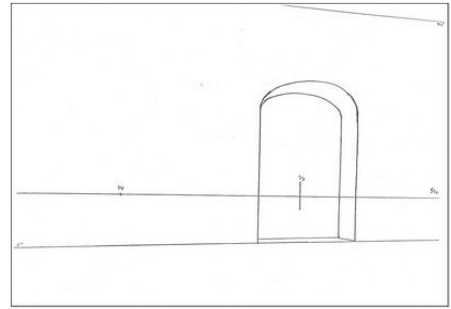


You can start with a well structured basic composition that equals success or more general that requests adjustments gradually and a trained eye. Each painting is a new challenge of composition, a new arrangement of all components of the subject. In a painting, we can lose details but if the basic composition is solid it will have less impact on the final balance.

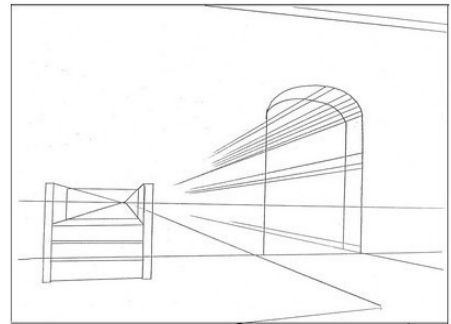
The preliminary drawing for a painting can only be a starting support for the contrasts of colour and light. Because these last two elements can bring a rebalancing of the whole during the execution of the painting. The contrasts animate a painting and give an impact to the desired elements. We shouldn't be afraid of contrasts of colour, light, line and shape. Even it is preferable to foresee them at the start.

The third gesture of the creator is to realize a plan, a whole vision of the major lines, general shapes that help with the exact proportions of a composition.

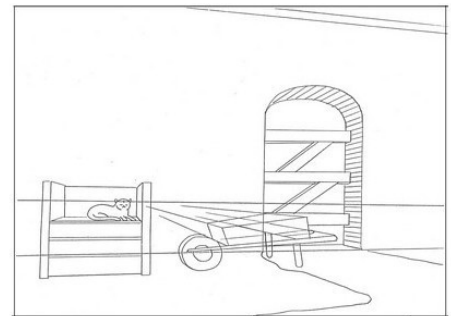
Here is an example of a composition in its stages of creation. I started by locating the line of horizon at the 8/13th (golden rule) of my canvas; then I fixed a first vanishing point on the horizon to the quarter left where the main subject of interest will be located; then I traced the lines of the bottom and the top of a wall that goes to a vanishing point on the horizon very far outside the frame on the right. A last line to the third right became the central axle for an entrance.



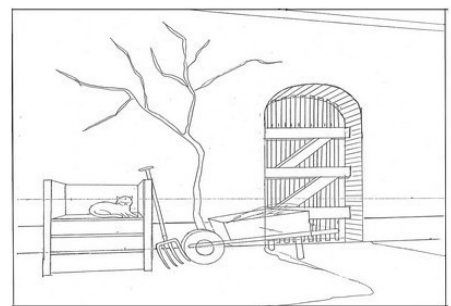
After drawing the door with its rounded top and its depth around the vertical line of the third right, I drew the heights of the bricks in its depth by leaning on the main vanishing point on the left. In the same momentum, I traced the small road that goes to the door towards the same vanishing point on the left. The road in front which is parallel to the wall goes towards the same vanishing point on the right. Then I drew the wood furniture around the main vanishing point and I used it to give some depth.



I drew the small cat on the furniture whose head was already chosen at the start, as the focal point of the composition. Besides, this is what explains the low unusual horizon which places us as the viewer at the height of the cat, therefore squatting. The door received a first finishing with its transversal boards. Then to embellish the original composition, I drew a wheelbarrow, always respecting the main vanishing point for its sides (depth) and the angle of its paws.

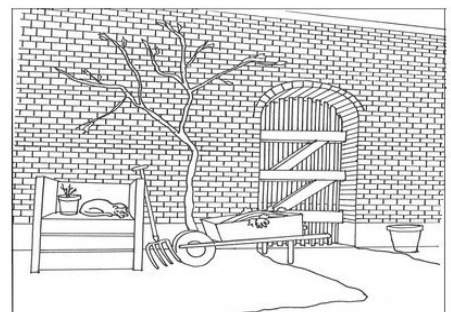


I drew a tree climbing on the wall bringing movement and grace to the composition, then a fork leaning on the furniture to enhance and detail. The door received its final vertical boards. The hardest was to realize the multiples horizontal lines of the bricks of the wall with a long ruler towards the secondary vanishing point located far enough to the right outside the frame. These last ones were not mandatory in the basic sketch.



A pot without flowers was added to the right to balance the composition and form, with the other elements, a diagonal that softly brings the gaze to the cat. A pair of gloves put on the edge of the wheelbarrow discreetly suggests a person who is gardening.

The line of horizon, the vanishing points of the perspectives, the lines, the major geometric shapes of our subject are the base to structure a solid composition.



The curved line expresses flexibility, adaptability, tenderness of life but also abandonment, weakness, blurry objective, endless detours.

The painting 'Swing' by Fragonard (1769 to the right) is only a string of spirals which go in all directions creating this way a lot of movement but also confusion. We are in the era of Louis XVI where the all feminine frivolities dominate the court and influence the arts. This young lady is swinging from a tree pushed by a religious person while a young suitor, hiding in a bush, tries to get a glimpse of her legs and her undies. Atmosphere naughty and light under the gaze of the statue of a cherub. Time is to insouciance and festivities among the nobility and the many curves of this painting accentuate this somewhat superficial whirlwind. The goal here is only the endless pleasure.



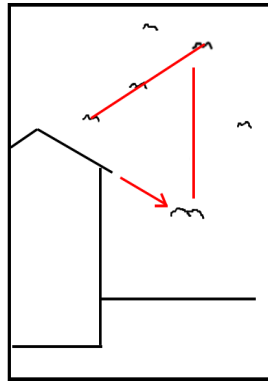
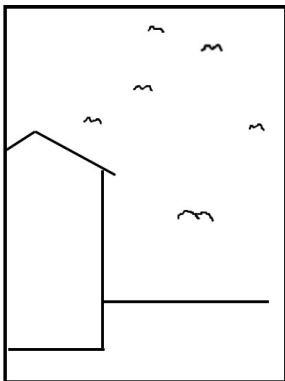
The straight line expresses the righteousness, directional clarity, strength, specific objective, direct purpose but also the inflexibility, hardness, rigidity of death.



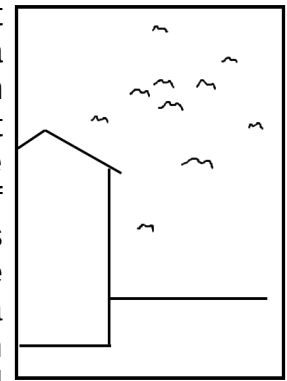
The painting 'The Oath of Horaces' by David (1784 to the left) is only a series of straight vertical, horizontal or in diagonal lines, orderly but of great static rigidity. It is after the French revolution, when morality, the all masculine values dominate anew the political scene and influence the arts. This painting tells the roman story of three brothers who receive the swords from the hands (central vanishing point) of their father to go fight the potential enemies, some of whom have links with the sisters of the three Horaces. It is for that reason that we see on the right these women sitting, bent by the

feelings of grief while the men standing, straight and inflexible prepare for the battle. The goal is to defend one's honour and country.

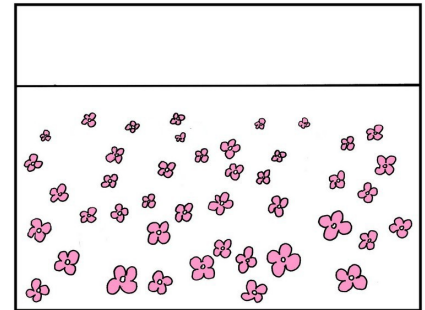
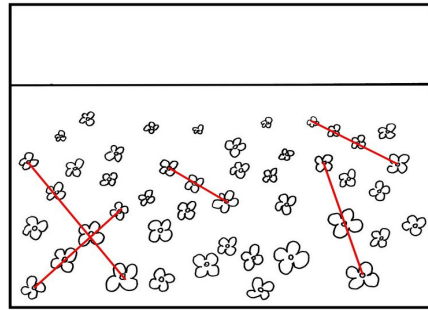
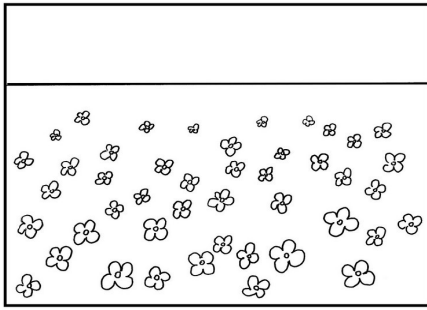
The straight lines, whether they are drawn or the result of a set of aligned elements, have an influence on the stability or the general movement of the composition.



Here (on the left), we have at first a flock of birds near a schematized simple house. In the second picture, we see that a bird is in the continuity of the roof line which has the effect of freezing it, removing this way its natural flight movement. Three other birds at the top form a straight line that freezes them also and two are almost aligned



on a vertical. These three invisible lines give little life to this flock of birds beside being dispersed in a regular and awkward way. The third pictures (on the right) shows a layout with a more natural concentration and dispersion.

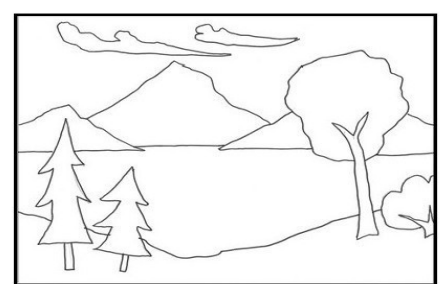
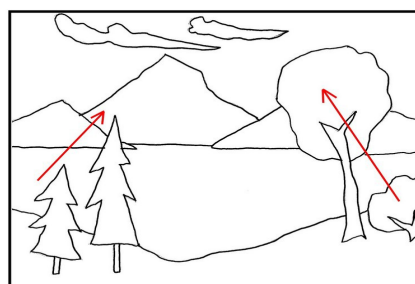
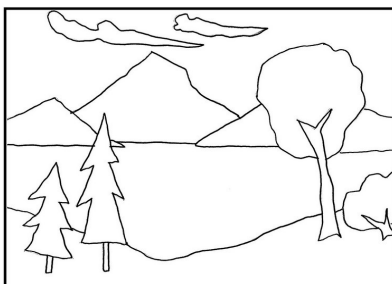


Here (at the top), we have first a schematized field of flowers that seems relatively natural. But there is some awkwardness in the fact that there are many straight alignments of more than two flowers like we see in the second example. This takes away a lot of natural and makes them static therefore lifeless. In the third example, the problem has been greatly corrected.

The painting 'Bouquet of Peonies' by Fantin Latour (1878 to the right) has a simple and natural layout. The three flowers on the left form an approximate triangle while the following five form a curve that highlights them. A last flower to the right stands out to rebalance it all. The variations of sizes and angles of the same kind of flowers prevent the monotony of the subject and no unfortunate alignment takes away the freshness of this bouquet. The lines that could border straightness bend and undulate lightly. In a composition that must express life, we must watch for the potential straight lines, like we must avoid a repartition of elements too equal on the canvas reminiscent of the repeating pattern of a tapestry.



The directional lines indicate the main subject; in other words, direct the eye of the viewer to the centre of interest wanted by the artist.



Here in the schematized picture on the left (at the top), a lake at the foot of the mountains is bordered with trees. We see in the second picture that these trees, on each side direct our gaze to the sky which doesn't seem to be the main subject. In the third picture, the problem was resolved by the inversion of the two fir trees on the left now pointing to the lake. The two other trees on the right continue to point to the sky and the movement of the clouds on the left rebalances the whole.

The painting 'Liberty Guiding the People' by Delacroix (1830 to the right) has two important lines that direct the gaze to the French flag and this way form an immense triangle.

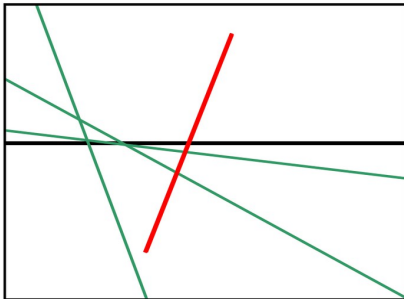


The vertical or horizontal lines, therefore parallel to the frame, help to stabilize a composition especially if they vacillate or if there is too much movement in relation to the desired intentions.

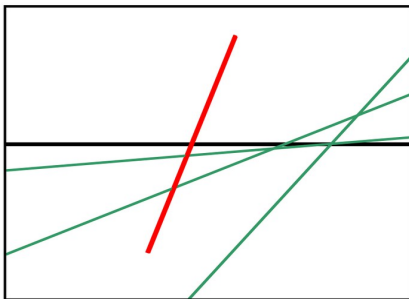
The painting 'The North River' by Thomson (1915 to the right) is composed of a multitude of dark vertical lines, especially on the right in the foreground, which solidify the composition in relation to the sinuous river on the left that crosses the entire background. These scrawny and dramatic trees in the front in the shadow highlight with an extreme contrast the luminosity of the other planes and this way give a lot of depth.



The counter-diagonals are secondary lines that give strength, power to a main diagonal with a simple contrary incline that is opposite.

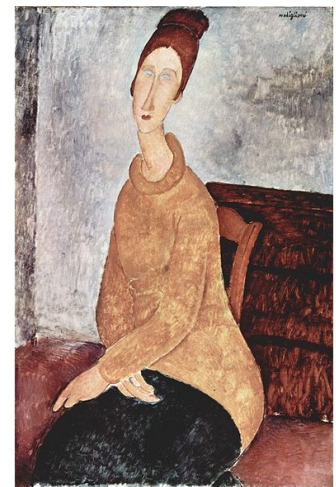


Here (to the left), there is a black line that represents the horizon and a red vertical line that represents the main subject. This red line tilts to the right while three green secondary lines seem to tilt to the left or at least indicate the opposite direction giving a palpable resistance, a greater force to the presence of the red line.



If the green secondary lines are a variation of the angle of the red main line, this softens, weakens, prolongs it subtly and can even accentuates its movement, making it waver.

The painting 'Jeanne' by Modigliani (1919 to the right) shows a woman sitting whose body, in the shape of a pear, leans to the left. The lines of the furniture around resume the same incline accentuating a certain weakness in that body. But the head tilted in the other direction in relation to the body gives a little character to this woman too conciliatory especially with her arms crossed.



A painting must have normally dense areas, actions with a certain accumulation of details but also aerated areas, calmer with little details to nuance, highlight the first ones. Except, if it is understood that it is the wanted intention.



The painting 'Bathers by a River' by Gerôme (1893 to the left) is of a very suggestive exoticism. It represents small characters in the foreground bathing in a river slightly blurred in front of dark buildings and palm trees that reflect in the water. Everything is in the shade but highly enhanced by a luminous, clear evening sky that exudes calm. It is that space however empty which is the main element that gives warmth and serenity to these southern countries.

I will show in the next two pages other paintings with a rendering more or less gauche to better make you understand certain basic principles.

A painting must represent unity in the variety. A composition shouldn't be too unitary or on the contrary too dispersed.



Here (to the left) in this first unskilled painting, despite a good rendering of the apples, the symmetry is of great boredom even if each one presents different angles. Their realism is also spoiled by an uncertain fuzzy environment that retakes the same shades without contrasts. There is no element partly outside the frame which would have helped in making us believe in an existing bigger space.

In this second very unskilled painting (to the right), the elements are too small for the space they occupy. Furthermore they are isolated from each other, without any link except the half orange that brushes against a knife but doesn't hide it enough (at least a quarter) to be united. All the elements are the same size therefore none of them stands out as the overall pivot. Strangely the light comes from the back right and yet doesn't illuminate the dark wall on that side. The perspectives of the table and teapot give the impression that it all topples towards us.



The different sizes of the elements of a painting must contribute also to create a harmonious and attractive diversity that holds the attention of the eye.

In this third painting a little weak (to the right), the imposing size of the trough in the foreground creates a visual shock with the barn too small in the background. One or two elements of average sizes in relation to the first two and placed in the middle plane would have improved the whole with a smoother transition. In this case, it would have been enough to enlarge the two small shrubs in the centre to make both trees of a respectable size.



Sometimes a slight imbalance in a painting brings a little dynamic, natural, spontaneity like in real life.



In this other painting rather weak (to the left), the path on the left, the dark hills and the imposing mountain create an imbalance on that side. The problem is accentuated by a surge of clouds that goes in the same direction. Even if in this case the clouds take nicely the curve of the mountain, their movements in the opposite direction would have given an overall balance. The values of tone are also a bit too equal giving a blandness to it all.

The symmetry expresses order, stability, the unchanging. The asymmetry expresses disorder, movement, the ephemeral. A painting has advantage to be located between these two extreme poles, sometimes leaning towards one, sometimes towards the other.

In this other dull painting (to the right), its transposition in black and white demonstrates that it has a palette of colours in the same register between light and obscurity. This is accentuated by the same colours distributed in a way too equal everywhere and overly blurry. No subject dominates the scene and it is not the small house in the distance on the right that imposes. The positive side is the mountain and the sky that are in cold shades which contrast and bring some freshness.



In another register, this double portrait (to the left) has many weaknesses. Despite the recommendable effort of wanting to make these two faces realistic, the basic structure that allows to master the symmetry of the elements wasn't respected. Both eyes must be aligned perfectly with each other; the mouth parallel to the eyes and the line of the nose perpendicular to them; which is not case here and spoils any other tentatives of realism. The smooth orange background is also too present, hypnotic and makes the other colours bland. Furthermore, there isn't any texture

like the one of a wall which is what makes the scene unreal, in a nowhere therefore less credible and realistic. The choice of a type of rendering must be homogenous on the entire surface unless the exceptional talent of the artist allows him to derogate from this fundamental principle. A botched background can also be harmful to a well rendered subject.



This other imprecise painting (to the left) showing the closeup of the head of a giraffe has a texture and an interesting brush stroke but with an awkward framing. The head is very bent and touches the edge on three sides, without really exceeding it, highlighting the close space that confines it. Because of this, we have difficulty imagining the rest of the body and even less the environment. The signature on the end of its snout is also not in the best of taste.

This painting (to the right) is a greater success because the closeup of the head of this elephant only includes three quarters of it and this way we guess the rest of the body. With little means, he rendered well the skin of the animal without getting lost in the details but by making the way of painting uniform. However a slight overview of the other ear on the right below would have been preferable but it is the only downside. Here the palette of earthy and monochrome browns with just a little grey-blue is very successful.



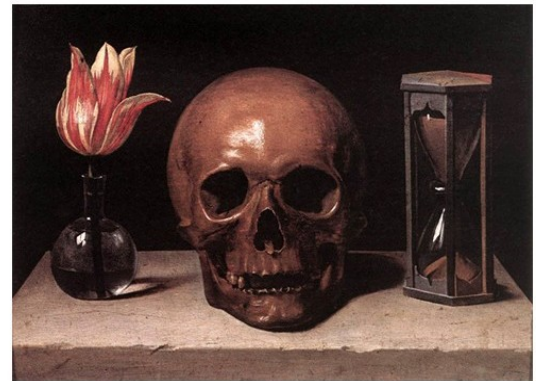
The symbolism in painting is the way that we use various elements to represent a reality, a vision, a concept, an emotion by direct representation, invocation or by analogy, comparison.

The painting 'This is not a Pipe' by Magritte (1929 to the right) is a mockery to make us aware that this image is not really a pipe but its representation in two dimensions with paint on a support. Between reality and the interpretation that we make from it, there is a journey. The viewer also interferes in the process. The brain, to move in the multitude of information that it receives, tries to simplify the exterior chaos by simplifying and cataloguing in simple images and easily recognizable the elements received.



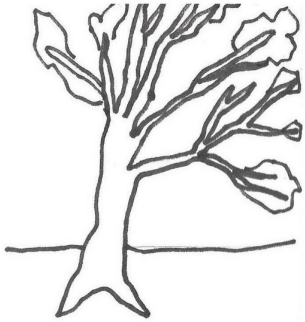
The painting 'The Beautiful Captive' by Magritte (1967 to the left) shows to a certain point the absurdity of the artist who is trying to seize on a canvas what is not seizable. Like on a theatrical scene that wants to show us the true life but the curtains only shows us part of it. Here, the artist is trying to prove to us that his capture of reality is really the reality and yet everything is only a false staging. Even the black enigmatic ball really only makes sense to rebalance the composition. Between the real sky so changing and the one frozen on the canvas, doubt and illusion is born.

The painting 'Skull Still Life' by Champaigne (1646 to the right) contains a universal, clear and orderly symbolism. A blossomed flower in a vase full of water expresses the freshness and the beauty of life but unfortunately it is cut. A skull, facing us, looks at us and reminds us that all is ephemeral and death will sooner or later be waiting for us. An hourglass which expresses the passing of time emphasizes this reflection. This painting was painted at a time when we liked to moralize on the finality of life.



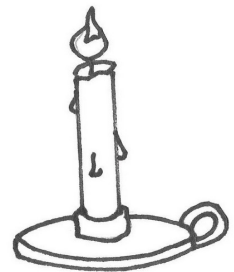
The painting 'Wouse Mask of Astonishment' by Ensor (1890 to the left), which is very caricatural and carnivalesque, describes a society that is festive and at the same time ridiculously decadent. Its particular symbolism is drawn from his childhood memories where his grandmother kept a seaside shop with oddities for tourists, where he was fascinated by the shells, the carnival masks and the stuffed animals. Therefore these objects will become the bases of his personal grotesque imagination, which without any doubt singularizes him to the extreme.

With analogy and comparison, the human being comes to decipher and understand how the universe functions but at the same time, he often reduces his environment in a series of archaic symbols that might be common to a certain group or very personal.

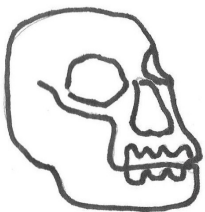


As an example, the mental picture that people have about a tree is rather simplistic if it isn't compared to reality or a photo. Then a painter must exercise his faculty of observation and develop his senses to a greater level of capturing the nuances of reality. Up to him after to re-simplify it all in his own way. To personalize the reality, at first we must seize it with the greatest possible precision, then to be able to put it through its own filters. If not, his vision can only be a delirium that makes any sense only to its instigator but is certainly not a communication with the other.

We have to understand the difference between a personal symbol and a more universal one. As an example, a candle generally expresses warmth and light in the cold and obscurity; therefore hope on one side and at the same time, time that is passing and consumes everything. If you have already been burned with a candle in your childhood therefore expressing pain and fear for you, do not expect to provoke the same emotions in representing it on a canvas.

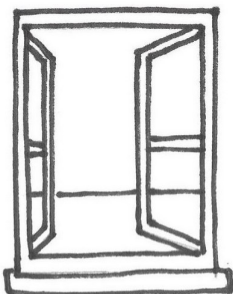
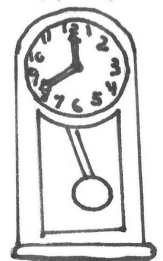


The study of the universal symbols can help you to better transmit your intentions in painting. Here are some examples that will help you deepen this concept.



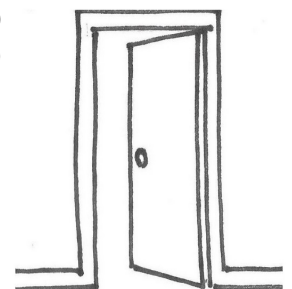
The skull is one of the symbols the most universally known and used to represent death, the inevitable fate of life, the finality of all things. It took certain nuances through the ages in the moral, religious, philosophical order, but without really losing its first meaning.

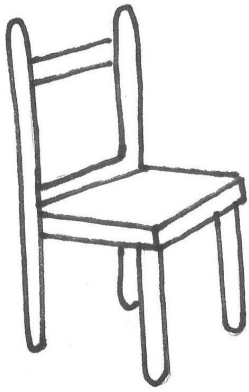
The clock, or all forms of timepieces, express also the passing time, the rhythm of life; the past-present-future that lingers in the waiting moments or spins at high speed when life brings us in its whirlwind. It accentuates also the present moment but sometimes in its ephemeral side.



An interior open window expresses an opening on the world, the desire to escape or simply the occasion to daydream about other universes, other alternatives. But this remains limited to a desire not necessarily fulfilled, realized; to possibilities in suspense.

However, an interior door opened to the world expresses a concrete desire to go on an adventure, to the discovery of greater new spaces or simply go contemplate one's own vaster territory. It is also a symbol of hospitality, welcome, trust towards all exterior elements. The layout, the number and the size of the openings of a building can speak volumes on what the artist wants to transmit as a message. However, the closed windows and doors express the need for intimacy, even protection against the exterior, unknown and sometimes threatening.





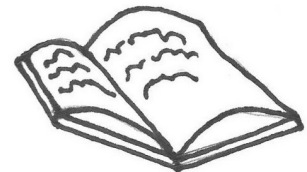
The chair is also a symbol of hospitality, a presence that we want to install comfortably. Its style can express the taste or the social status of the host and even some traits of his personality. Well placed or misplaced, it can also betray some secrets.

Pieces of clothing disposed in a location can very well replace a concrete human presence by the evocation that they suggest. The more they are of a type, characterized, the more the portrait of the absentee will be precise. The same goes for any object or instrument that defines a trade, a physical or social condition.

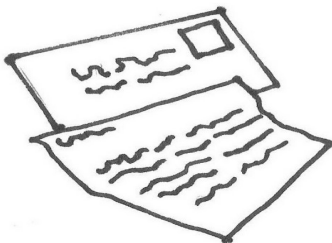


Also the same goes, as another example, of a tea set placed on a table that will suggest an amicable intimate meeting if there are only two cups, or rather cordial if there are many. Each element of a decor tells something that is never insignificant. We have to know how to play with the symbolism of things to harmonize them with each other and therefore amplify the underlying intention.

A simple book can transmit several information on the level of culture of its owner, his interests in life, his need for intimacy and dreaming. Like any element, its symbolic significance can be greatly modified by its location, position and interaction with the other elements of the composition.



These two birds take a meaning completely different in relation with their reciprocal environment. One expresses the isolation, limits, a bleak prison life and the other expresses insouciance, joy of living and freedom.



There are symbols that are greatly modified with time and even have lost a lot of their impact, like the letter that was for a long time the symbol of the correspondence between lovers or the reception of important news that were expected with impatience. With the development of new ways of long distance communication, it became outdated but still remains a very clear symbol in the memory.

The state of an element can reveal a lot on its significance like in this chipped pitcher that expresses the wear and tear of time. Time that bashes everything and overcomes things that seem to be the most durable.



However, there are symbols that pass the test of time like this bread that contains the promise of plenty; of an insured daily survival; of the unconditional sharing for the most humble to the most affluent. It is the reward of a hard labor and the vital basic element that unites people around a table.

The subject of a painting can be treated in seven basic ways:

1: Classic; which respects a certain tradition, aesthetic canons established by previous painters.



The painting 'Venus Asleep' by Giorgione (1510 to the left) is a discreet invitation to share the bed of this nymph. A certain nonchalant sweetness emanates from this woman with the perfect body and porcelain skin. But her right arm raised in a sign of openness and her left hand hiding her pubis while highlighting it isn't without sexual innuendo. A village on a hill in the distance behind a very dark mass of greenery on the right balances with the mound of earth and the head of the young woman on the cushion on the left. The

passion red of the cushion is well balanced with the virginal white of the satin sheet.



The painting 'Venus of Urbino' by Titian (1538 to the left) takes sensibly the same pose than the one by Giorgione but in this version, the woman looks at us directly. A curtain placed in full centre of the canvas at the vertical of her genitals, separates us from a room where two humble servants are busy around a trunk. Surprisingly rather modern for its time, she moves away from the representation of a goddess to become a real woman. However the idea is wise because the trunk is the trousseau of a bride and the small sleeping

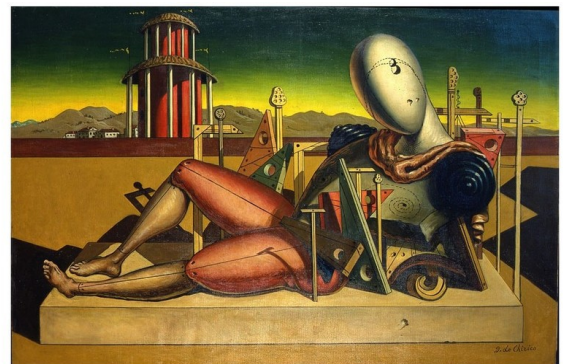
dog symbolizes fidelity. The companion can sleep soundly.



The painting 'L'Olympia' by Manet (1863 to the left) is an interpretation very modern of the Venus of Titian. The public wasn't wrong and cried foul. Because of the necklace, bracelet and the mitt, it isn't a goddess of another time but the representation of a semi-mundane who receives flowers from her next client. She looks at us impudently in a harsh light while a black cat at her feet gets up lifting its tail. Simple changes of details or nuances of the rendering can be enough to give a new interpretation of this ancient

work.

The painting 'The Weary Troubadour' by Chico (1950 to the right) is a metaphysical representation of the same classic pose of an elongated character but constructed with pieces of mannequins and motley objects diverted from their original direction. Mystery hangs around this character issued from a dream or an hallucinated world. Like in a mechanical creation reflecting its author, it leans its head pensive, hesitating in wanting to come to life.



2: Historical: which tells a fact more or less historical, important, whether old or recent, of actual events.

The huge painting 'The Raft of Medusa' by Géricault (1819 to the right) testifies, in a dramatic rendering, of the sinking of a boat that hit the headlines of the time. A few survivors, on a fortunate raft, form a double triangle whose bottom point culminates with the body of a dying on the right and the other point at the top ends with the cloth that a black man waves to alert a minuscule boat in the distance. A sailboat, pushed by the opposite winds, rebalances the composition to the left but diminishes the chances of these castaways to be rescued. Darkened with time because of the use of bad materials, this monumental painting is nevertheless a feat of composition and execution where the fate of humanity is played on this small restraint space. Despair, sacrifice, violence, fight for survival, cannibalism; nothing spares these desperate people. The study of the artist, from the dying and the dead, makes this painting a striking testimony of realism very far from the historical, academic, conventional and embellished paintings of the time.



The huge painting 'Guernica' by Picasso (1937 at the bottom) is the answer of the artist to an air raid on the small village of Guernica on a market day, where there were only women and children. Located in Spain, country of origin of the artist, it is a cry of horror against the barbarity and atrocities that the war generates. Organized in a frieze that is read from left to right; first a woman wails at the death of her child in her arms; an impassive bull looks at the scene; an immense triangle organizes the central part created by the light of a lamp waved by a woman at the window; under this lamp a wounded horse writhes with pain entangled with the dismembered body of a soldier; a woman with a knee on the ground stares at the sky while another one, on the right, screams amongst the ruins. Fear, suffering and chaos is everywhere. Like a photo in black and white of a newspaper, the news is treated coldly without any colour to distract the eye from this finding already overwhelming.



3: Realistic; which imitates, in the most truthful way possible the natural, the daily life, the simple representation of life in what it has sometimes as the most trivial.



The painting 'The Bath of the Child' by Cassatt (1893 to the left) pretends to represent only a small trivial moment of daily life; the bath of a child by his mother. Seen in counter-diving as if we were a standing viewer, this point of observation gives us a certain distance in front of the subject which is what removes any sentimentalist complacency. The gesture of the mother is precise with just a bit of tenderness without excess, giving it a simple value of routine. The diagonal line made by the body of the mother is counter-balanced with the diagonal of the little girl, this way reinforcing the first one by its opposition. Their crossing brings also the gaze towards the centre of the canvas. The dominance of blue-green is enhanced by its complementaries, the peach of the skin and the red of the rug but however coming in a smaller quantity.

The painting 'Eaters of Potatoes' by Van Gogh (1885 to the right), in a misery style shows a family of five peasants in an attic room sitting at a table around a meal of only simple potatoes. Despite its dark and earthy shades, the atmosphere gravitates around the lighting of an oil lamp that warms and illuminated the scene, giving the impression of a certain festivity. To give the effect of a convincing light on, it is necessary that no colour in the entire painting be as clear as this latter. The thankless faces of the characters do not necessarily express misery but also a healthy acceptance of their condition. It was what the artist wanted to achieve.



The painting 'Red Mill' by Lautrec (1895 to the left) renders well the effervescence of a bar in the evening under its artificial lighting. As a client, we are seated on a balcony behind a balustrade and we are observing a group of men and women in their Sunday best where everyone seems locked in their solitude. A lady in black seated near, on the right, truncated by the edge of the canvas and illuminated from under, seems to solicit us. This weird cut is influenced by the painter Degas and his modern framings inspired from the birth of the photo. In the background, a stiff character is only passing by while two coquettes strut. The warm colours of yellow, orange and red that dominate the site are battling against the cold shades of blue and green, rendering well the contradictory and superficial atmosphere of the location.



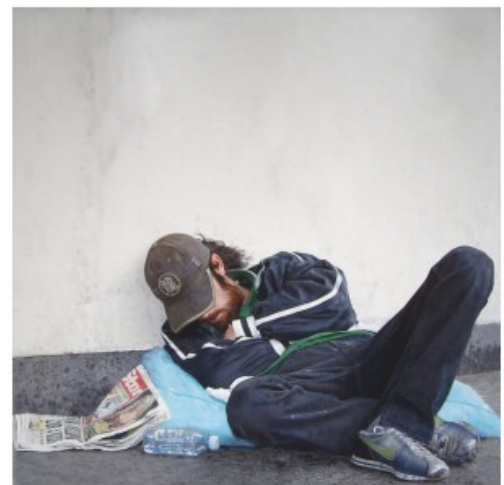
4: Unconventional; which seeks the unusual, the effect of surprise with its original side, extraordinary, far from the established norms.

The painting 'The Sleep' by Courbet (1866 to the right), despite its demure title, is not fooling anyone and shows without bashfulness two women in an amorous embrace. Masculine fantasy or a taste for provocation, this painter dares to show a scene of a reality that the majority of the population doesn't want to see. The table on the left, in the foreground, forms a subtle diagonal with the vase of flowers in the background on the right, reinforcing the diagonal of the bed and the two bodies which are in opposition. The presence of two nudes is that much more intense. Between tenderness and passion, the artist froze this scene and ourselves we hesitate between the lure of the observation and the embarrassment of being somewhat a voyeur. The very clear and harsh shades of the main scene placed in a decor in the dim light add to the shock of the first look.



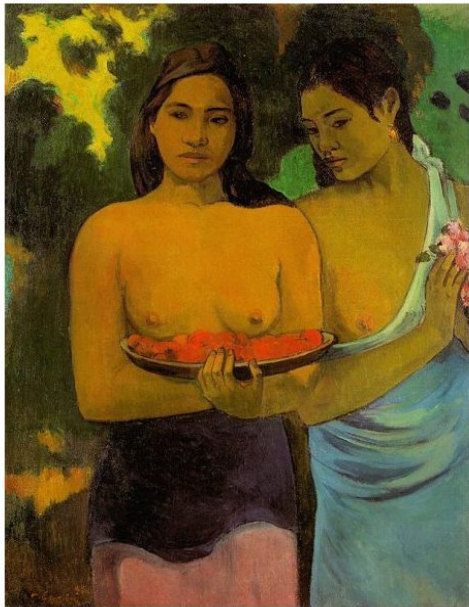
The painting 'The Orchestra of the Opera' by Degas (1870 to the left) places us in a seating position very near the musicians of the pit. There is in this painting this boldness of showing us an unusual viewpoint not generally represented in painting. This is accentuated by what is happening on the illuminated scene, which is placed very high in the composition and where some heads of the ballerinas border amputation. A series of alternating subtle diagonals start from the bottom and take us to the scene. At first, the ramp in the foreground that climbs to the left, then the clarinet that goes up to the right followed by the handle of a bass pointing to the left to end with the dancers inclined to the right. We are located possibly at a budget place, that doesn't allow us to appreciate the show but makes our viewpoint truly original.

The painting 'Dust to Dust' by Peterson (2006 to the right) is like a momentary stop on an unknown character dozing on the edge of a wall like we see in the big cities. We give a look and we continue on our way. Secondly what strikes, is the entire empty space around where the greys dominate; neutral, dull colours without emotion with just a point of sadness that here relays well the content of the painting. The youth, dressed in blue, has a red beard, complementary colour, that highlights the little of what we see of his face. Off-centre to the right, it is the incline of his body towards the left, emphasized by the white floor line and the newspaper that create the balance. The pale blue accentuates the dreaming of the sleeper and the square canvas freezes and immortalizes this fleeting moment.



5: Exotic; which explores the cultural disorientation through other cultures, other ways of life here, somewhere else or simply marginal.

The painting 'The Snake Charmer' by Rousseau (1907 to the right) is a naive representation, idyllic of the charms of these far away and exotic countries. A naked woman, charms with her flute a snake coiled around her neck and two others on the ground. An abundance of tropical plants on the right is compensated by a clear and open space on the left. A calm horizontal lake meets well with the verticals of the low and clear plants to the right. The artist has never travelled very far and was rather inspired from the garden greenhouses, the plants of Paris to realize his compositions.



The painting 'Two Tahitians' by Gauguin (1899 to the left) reflects calm, simplicity, even the serenity of living under the tropical sun. The yellow of the sky on the left, the peach of the tanned skin of these two young girls, their breasts offered naturally like this plate of food and a few flowers on the right; it all exudes simplicity and at the same time the majesty of these two pagan goddesses. Having lived the first six years of his life in Peru, this artist will never forget the charm of a free life, far from the constraints of modern societies. He will try to find this primitive liberty at first in the rural and ancestral Brittany, then in travels to the confines of the Pacific islands where he will spend the last years of his life. In a Europe in full industrialization, many artists like him will try to escape this reality in the nostalgia of a lost paradise.

The painting 'The Jungle' by Lam (1943 to the right) is a testimony to the boisterous and rhythmic life of Africa. The mother of the artist was a mixture of black from Africa and Spanish and his father was Chinese from Canton. He spent a majority of his youth, including his studies, in Cuba where his art so particular will be produced. Mixing the cultures of his family with the tendencies of the modern art of his time, his paintings are full of symbols making reference to all of that. Here, a series of long verticals create a rhythm that is chanted by the surrealist indigenous with primitive masks, prominent buttocks and massive feet and hands. It is in the middle of a bamboo jungle, that in all likelihood we assist to a frenetic tribal festivity.



6: Symbolic; which transmits an idea, an emotion through elements taken as equivalence, allegory.

The painting 'Tree with Crows' by Friedrich (1822 to the right) has as a single main subject a solitary tree that the years and the wind have sculpted and twisted. On one side, the dense trunk leans to the left as a sign of resistance against the adversity while the branches, more fragile, unfold to the right. How not to see in this maltreated tree the whole tragic and heroic condition of human life. The crows that live under its branches or fly in the distance express the ephemeral of all things. Stumps around and ends of branches on the ground confirm this inevitable fate.



The painting 'Jupiter and Semele' by Moreau (1895 to the left) shows the beautiful Semele, lover of god Jupiter, who will perish struck down for wanting to see him in all his glory. At a time when the realistic art took centre stage, some painters revive the symbolic painting that look in the ancient imagery or in the mythological tales for superhuman beings conveying life lessons. Between nostalgia of past heroes and dreaming of fantastic worlds, this painting, beyond its content, is a stunning, sumptuous decor worthy of a thousand and one nights. The complex ornamental, superabundant details expressing wealth and splendour, invade the entire space. Jupiter, on his throne, triumphs in the middle of this luxury, reflection of his glory and his immense powers while the heroine is dying in her candid whiteness.

The painting 'Love Song' by Giorgio de Chirico (1914 to the right) is a desire to create an enigma that doesn't have a solution. A head of a Greek sculpture, a rubber glove and a green ball in the foreground stand out on an architecture with ambiguous voluntary perspectives. In the distance, the shadow of a train emerges with its cloud of smoke. The disproportions of the elements between each other add to the mystery. The stage is set to confuse us and ultimately make us say that everything in the universe cannot be necessarily explained. The artist brings in his grave the few answers that we could have had. The obsessive fascination is successful.



The painting 'Personal Values' by Magritte (1952 to the left) is a dash of humour on the value that we give to usual objects of every day life. An ordinary bedroom with a proportioned bed and a dresser is covered with a tapestry imitating an endless sky and objects with exaggerated proportions. These objects take a unique value and their amplification becomes excessively invasive. The walls opened on a sky, even in the mirrors, invite us to run away from our oppressing daily life and escape in the distance.

7: Contemporary; which wants to be a testimony of its time, of the present time, by sticking to the current events without compromise.



The painting 'Self-Portrait with Spouse' by Corinth (1902 to the left) sings life, wine and women. It is an audacity to represent himself as he is, drinking from one hand and caressing the breast of his wife with the other. Between wanting to be true and shock the prudes, this artist, wavering to the left, leans on his wife who is standing very straight. Like for many artists, it is the companion who brings stability in this aimless bohemian life. The touch is fluid and nervous but not without tenderness. For the moment, the hour is for festivities. He doesn't have anything to hide and is proud to show the beauty of his muse. A few traces in opposite diagonal on the wall counterbalances the movement of his body.

The collage 'What makes our interiors so seductive?' by Hamilton (1956 to the right) is between the tribute and caricature of a lifestyle dear at a given time. It is an accumulation of commercial and soliciting elements cut in magazines advertisements. Even the man and the woman come from flashy publicity and refer us to an imposed idyllic image. In this enclosed space a window allows us to see other means to dream and the ceiling announces a vision at the planetary scale.



The painting 'Danger of Avignon' (2013 to the left), in a hyperrealist style, shows us an environment not often represented in painting. A wire fence warns us of the danger of going further. Behind, there is a confusion of signs, rusted iron beams, cables, rails, vehicles. A light blue sky brings a rest and escape area above this entanglement. Many people would like to ignore this kind of view and yet, this is part of our modern world. There is a certain challenge to find beauty and harmony in what seems to be lacking it.

The painting 'The Baptismal' by Basquiat (1982 to the right) refers to the baptism that the character in a trance on the right seems to receive from the haloed character from the left. In a graffiti style issued from street art that oscillates between naivety and aggressiveness, it is a very personal contemporary tribute, a loan of passion and chaos. Yet this artist, of good culture coming from a bourgeois and religious environment (Puerto Rican/Haitian), will die at the age of barely 27 years old from an accidental drug overdose. His life, like his painting, will be of all excesses.



The painting 'Unknown Title' by Goncalves summarizes well an imagery where reality mixes with dreaming and diverts from its original meaning elements yet thousand times seen. The poetry and a touch of mystery await you. These repetitive arcs that become the blue sky have meaning only in the transition that they create between the clouds and the sailboats. The pale and cold, dominating blues, colour of the imagination by excellence, contrast well with the warmer yellows, colour of the spirit. Despite a symbolism a little confusing facing our Cartesian mind, it is not necessary to apprehend everything to appreciate the final result. A small part of unresolved mystery in a painting holds the observer longer and gives him a more insistent inner footprint.



Whatever the subject you want to paint and by what symbolism you want to achieve it, don't forget that it is a transmission of what you are. Unless the painting is for you only a solitary pleasure that only serves to express yourself for your own understanding and satisfaction, it is especially a dialogue with an interlocutor who doesn't necessarily know what is going on in your head. Therefore, you have to do it as clearly as possible by using an accessible language which takes into account the other.

Here it is! That is all for the fourth course named 'Subject and Symbol'.

Colin Chabot

STYLE AND TOUCH

In this fifth and last part, we will address and explore certain trails that allow an artist to discover himself as a unique being and understand how to transpose it in his creations.

In the creation of a personal style, the first questions to ask oneself are: Who am I? What differentiates me from the others? What are the personality traits that make me a unique being and at the same time, unite me to others? What are my tastes, my passions? In what kind of environment do I like to live? What do I do in my time of leisure? Do I have hobbies or collect some things in particular? What are the places where I like to go?

As possible examples: I like animals in general and horses in particular. I am a recluse and I like to walk in mysterious forests or on the contrary I am very sociable and I like the crowded cities at night. I am fascinated by everything that touches history and especially the great scientific discoveries or instead, the comic anecdotes of people. I am housebound because the outside scares me and I escape in my inner world, or sometimes I am obsessed by the small details of my closed environment. I have visions of special universes that haunt me or I am kind of down to earth and I am satisfied to observe the world with a critical, neutral view or tinted with my convictions. I am passionate about my work and I share it or it is a source of frustration that I deny. I have dreams and ideals that I would like to transmit or it is the injustices that affect me the most. I love life and it is the small everyday joys that move me or I am often bored and I don't have anything original except that I collect salt and pepper shakers that I have 300 of. I like to stay up-to-date with current events or it is my childhood memories that I hold most dear, etc.



The painting 'Boots' by Danby (1969 to the left) might be really considered as an original still life that shows a closeup of a simple pair of boots. But this scene, if bare and ordinary, tells so much of someone's life and his every day condition. The discreet evocation gives room for our own imagination and awakens in us so many memories. The palette of muted colours, like an old photograph, gives a nostalgic vision of what is no longer there.

The painting 'Towards the Hill' by Danby (1967 below) taps also in the nostalgia of a happy childhood where we went cycling to conquer the neighbouring hill. A particular, ordinary memory but rendered in a singular way, can become a touching work because it reconnects with the universe of everyone by its true side. It is not necessary to go to the end of the world to find extraordinary moments worthy of being immortalized. Everything is in the way of presenting the already seen with a new angle. For this, we just have to have enough knowledge in art to try to find a new approach.



There is nothing that particularizes you that isn't worthy of interest or workable through an artistic talent. We only have to be honest and see ourselves as we are and start on these solid bases to construct a true and sincere expression of our real identity. We have to know how to identify our universe and find the links that unite it to the universe of others. In other words, be able to transmit our own experience in the clearest possible language for others.



El Greco (1541-1614) was one of the first painters in the occidental history to singularize his character to the extreme in new dramatic positions despite the constraint of limited subjects of the time.

The painting 'The Resurrection of Christ' (1600 to the left) shows Christ in levitation while an opposite character takes the same inverted position. Characters move around in ecstasy or in a frantic revulsion. Everything is in some kind of disorder, even an extreme confusion never represented before. The bodies writhe in all directions. Notice the strange diamond shape halo of Jesus and the unusual whitish colour of his skin.

The painting 'Death of Laocoon' (1610 to the right) tells the story of a priest who will be killed, along with his two sons, by a snake sent by the gods for trying to warn the residents of Troy about the trap of the horse sent by the Greeks. Yet the background represents the city of the artist, Toledo. It is especially these whitish elongated bodies in the foreground who with dramatic contortions, fill the entire space. Three straight women on the right bring a little stability in this scene under a hallucinated sky.



Claude Monet (1840-1926) doesn't hesitate to move, live on a boat, leave his wife and children for many months, time needed to implement a series of paintings.

This painting from the painter Manet (1874 to the left) represents Monet painting on his boat-workshop in the company of his wife. Settled in Argenteuil and walking along the Seine, Monet will realize more than 250 paintings of its riverbanks in the region of Argenteuil but he will deliberately hide the factories that are beginning to emerge.

Including more than thirty paintings, the series of the Cathedrals of Rouen (1892 to the right) was realized by Monet living on site several times and in different places situated more or less on an angle with the building. It is a subtle play of the changing atmosphere throughout the day and seasons with the obsession of capturing all the possible variations.



Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901), born in a noble family, will have his destiny completely shaken because of his health problems (inbred disease). This will influence his choice to become a painter and to patronize marginal venues that he will portray shamelessly. All his work will be marked by his new lifestyle.

Like in this painting 'Dance at the Moulin Rouge' (1890 to the right) where a crowd of night owls surround and assist to a quadrille realized by a couple of star dancers. It is the night of all follies where we escape from the ordinary and the hardship of daily life. Dazed for a few hours, Lautrec forgets his painful condition.



In 'The Salon of Mill Street' (1894 to the left) Lautrec represented the whorehouse 'The White Flower' where he made regular visits and even according to legend, had a room permanently. Prostitutes on a red sofa wait for potential clients in a flashy decor. Lautrec played the role of confidant to these ladies, spoiled them and that way was entitled to their intimate favours despite his disability.

Jean Dubuffet (1901-1985), born into a bourgeois family and therefore being liberated from financial problems, he decided, after art studies, to reject this academic universe. Collector of works realized as therapy by mental patients in asylums or prisons, he will use them as inspiration to create his own works that he named Art Brut.



Like in this painting 'DHôtel nuanced with Apricots' (1947 on the left) a bust of a surly character seems to be a bad caricature done by a child or a very unskilled simpleton. The texture very apparent and coarse amplifies this grotesque face.

'The Cow with a Subtle Nose' (1954 to the right), funny and colourful is a nice example of naive and childish art that doesn't care about artistic conventions. It is simply to have fun to communicate in a spontaneous way, without artifice like in the folk art.



In 'Affluence' (1961 to the left) the crowd of the street here takes a zany twist where dozens of smeared faces cover the entire space. Despite the apparent chaos, the uniform colours and the figures treated in a similar way bring an overall harmonious coherence. Close to graffiti but with a dash of humour, this style celebrates the found again childhood.

Also a way to discover ourselves is to explore our inner world with a medium and an inexpensive support in giving ourselves a freedom of graphic, gestural and sensitive expression. This allows a greater spontaneity and a boldness that we might not have if we were self expressing directly starting on a subframe with brushes and oils. What we call the syndrome of the white canvas and the medium reserved to the great artist. We shouldn't forget also the pressure that we give ourselves in wanting to make a masterpiece at its first realization.

Some inexpensive means like simply paper, colouring pencils or gouache are often enough to let out our madness, loosen the rigidity of our hand, sketch out ideas, discover the basics of a style, then even to transpose our greatest successes through the finest materials (stronger and more durable over time).

Here is the list of different and main mediums with a brief historic for each one.

LEAD OR GRAPHITE: Crystal of carbon discovered in England in 1560. Originally, the romans used a lead stylus to write when a mine was discovered in England of what we believe to be lead but which proved to be graphite. Less volatile than charcoal, it is shiny grey/black and will become essential for the sketching of the artists. It is from 1795 that the pencil appeared as we know it today. It is a mixture of graphite and powder argil kneaded in a paste, then pressed, dried and finally baked to be put between two pieces of grooved wood.



For the artists the pencil serves mainly to put on paper or on the canvas, the rough outline, the sketch or the major lines for the composition of works and then realized with a medium more resistant. But some artists do not make it less a means of expression entirely like in this drawing of Morisot (1889 above), which contains fine details that bring it to be considered not only as a sketch but a finished work in itself.

Lead can serve to explore the plays of light and shadow in a work without the distraction of colour to really learn how to manipulate the subtle or intense contrasts of the tone values. In this abstract work by Lacaille (2013 on the right), a simple movement and depth are suggested by a multitude of diagonals and a play of grey up to black.



The work of Sirjacq (2015 to the left) with a closeup of these interlaced hands is a beautiful feat of rendering, almost photographic.

The lead pencils go from the driest, harder but greyer up to the oiliest, softer but blacker; the scale going from 9H (driest) then the middle HB to 9B (the oiliest).

COLOURING CRAYONS: Made from pigments of mixed colours in hot water containing additives and binders made from gum, resin and wax. This gives a paste that is pressed, cut and spun in a thin rod, then to be dipped in a chemical wax that will adhere the pigments to paper or other adequate supports. The palette of colours accessible today is made of more than a hundred shades and it is the concentration of pigments in the lead that defines the quality.



In this photo of part of a work by Canvas (to the left), we see that the colouring crayon can compete with any other mediums when it is well mastered. Even if this hyperrealist face is realized from a photo, it transcends it by the fact that the artist transmitted a soul with his hours of work and his application to render the least detail of this man.

In the drawing of this rose by Papuaku (2015 to the right), what stands out mainly, is the control of the application of pencil stroke, which goes from slightly brushing the paper to give very delicate pastel shades, to more pressure to saturate other areas with bold colours. Despite the improbability of the multicoloured shades of this rose, we believe in it and the greens surrounding it make it stand out by contrast.

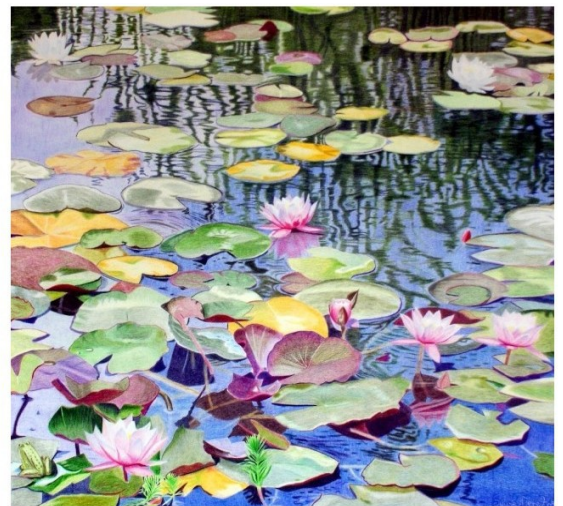


In the drawing by Pi au Carré (2015 to the left), the pencil stroke is robust, hatched, even aggressive and the colours are supported, bold and saturated. Freedom of expression where there is no restraint, only the pleasure to let go to their hearts content in this emotional release. Only a round moon prevents the psychedelic chaos to be totally anarchic. Don't we all have sometimes the secret desire to surrender to the fate of a pencil stroke? But despite this explosion of colours, the artist controls very well the art of matching them with a certain concentric unifying movement.



In this drawing by Madeleine (2010 to the right) which represents a pond of waterlilies, there is only what is needed in precision and a small part of imprecision so the final representation stays evocative. In contemplating this picture of a beautiful realization, we can't help but to think of the paintings on the same theme of Monet.

Today, there are many variants of colouring pencils like the watercolour pencils which after being applied on a paper, can be diluted and spread with a brush and water to give the comparable effect to a watercolour.



CHARCOAL: The softest of the materials, the one that is the most widespread is obtained from the carbonization of willow twigs, vine that gives a matte black. Used since the Renaissance but very volatile, it is in the nineteenth century that we will successfully secure it and thereafter it will become very popular. It has the advantage in relation to its competitors, like the black stone or the sanguine, to allow making specific features, delicate molten and opaque flat areas. It remains a very current and versatile medium in use.



In the portrait of his mother by Dürer (1514 to the right), the artist didn't try to embellish his subject but on the contrary, reproduced it cruelly with all the ravages of time like in a very rigorous clinical exam. Mainly realized with marked features, there is just enough degrading to give what is needed in relief and therefore nuance and soften this ugly face.



The work 'The Intoxication of Silene' by Daumier (1850 to the left) is a rare mythologic painting of the artist, more inclined to a representation of scenes of his time. Realized with charcoal with an estompe (instrument realized in different compact materials to make more specific degrading than the finger), he takes a composition dear to the baroque period but in infusing a side more dramatic with contrasts accentuated and enhanced with pure white.

This nude in charcoal by Labat (2012 to the right), has a good balance and the imprecise, lightly blurry rendering is homogenous on the entire surface. Whatever way, manner of making the subject to create a particular finish, generally it must be identical on the entire surface.



This face by Redon (1882 to the left) strikes us with these very expressive eyes behind the grille door. Are we outside or inside? Who will open the door? This look, a little sad tells a story but some elements are lacking to understand the surrounding mystery accentuated also by the black mass of the door.



Many put their charcoal drawings between two sheets in a rigid binder. It is easier today to preserve them thanks to spray fixatives.

BLACK STONE: Shale cut into round or rectangular sticks that go from black to matte grey, used at the end of the fifteenth century up to the eighteenth century to do studies on shades or preparations for a painting. It will be replaced progressively by the charcoal. We still find it today and also in pencil form.



Here is the drawing of a cherub realized by Bartolomeo (to the right) of the fifteenth century that shows well the use of the black stone as a principal medium to do studies of all



kinds, like here this body of a child seen under an angle difficult to grasp. This avoids a too great number of alterations directly on the canvas.



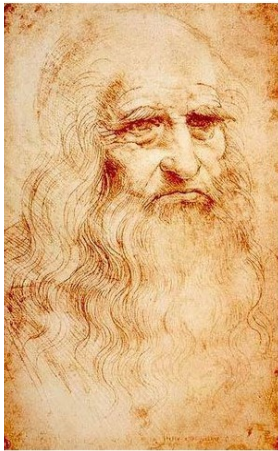
Here is a landscape at night, in the nineteenth century of an unknown source (to the left), that goes beyond the simple sketch but is a finished work in itself. Realized on a brown paper with black stone, it is possibly enhanced with charcoal but mostly with white chalk to create the effect of light. It is those delicate touches of white in the background, in contrast with the dark shade in the middle plane, that give mainly the depth of this magical, unreal atmosphere.

The black stone is used today by artists who are seeking new ways and rediscovering old materials too forgotten. The characters in black and white realized on paper by Pignon (to the right) renew the genre with their format often full-scale and inspired from the current social causes that challenge him. As much as he is influenced by the classic and eternal drawings of the great periods, likewise he exposes his own drawings regularly in the street to the gaze of passers-by and enduring the ravages of time. No complacent colour distracts the eye from the grey/neutral observation of these anonymous beings.



The urban view by Denes (2015 to the left) shows the buildings seen in bird flight, in diagonal and covered with imprecise traces creating a blurry effect. Etheric vision of an invasive lifestyle, threatening with all these erect spikes without the slightest bit of sky. It is the use of a pastel powder that blurs the whole and creates a certain uneasiness like in front of a mirage that will define itself or disappear from one moment to the other.

SANGUINE: Red argil containing iron oxide, that was used by the cavemen. From orange red to purplish brown, at the end of the fourteenth century, it served to enhance drawings made with other techniques and then it became autonomous. However its use declined after the eighteenth century.



In this self-portrait by Vinci, realized with sanguine around the age of 60 years old (1515 to the left), it is the entire story of his life that transpires through his face which is treated without any complacency or hardness. It is his eyes then his mouth and finally the rest of his face that prevail. The rest of his head, including his hair and his beard, are barely sketched as to not distract the eye from the essential.

A technique very popular and developed during the Renaissance, that was called the one of three pencils, consisted in using the black stone, the sanguine and the white chalk to reproduce live models in all their subtlety including the nuances of the skin and this on a coloured paper. In the example of these two young girls by Watteau (1717 to the right), the three shades of black, red and white are enough to achieve the fineness of these two youthful faces with just enough precision to render their expressive charm.



Here is a simple landscape of classic making realized by Sylvester (1743 to the left) where there is a beautiful contrast between the vast, clear and uncluttered area of the background and the smaller, darker and detailed area in the foreground.



In this goat and its kid by Simon (1850 to the right), sanguine is used in broad flat areas which gives soft warmth to this maternal scene. The kid is enhanced with white chalk, as are illuminated parts of the goat. The paper, with the background slightly moiré, amplifies a lot the unity of the scene.



In this contemporary work, representing a scorpion by Wols (1951 to the left), is a beautiful success while using an old medium considered by many as outdated. With a series of delicate arabesques and a subtle fading by smearing, he knew how to make the presence of this animal convincing without however defining it beyond measure. The evocation of a scorpion is however indisputable like a fossilized trace in a stone, a forgotten vestige of a past life. The paper with a grey moiré background accentuates this effect.

WHITE CHALK: Natural stone, made mainly of limestone, which is white or bluish and slightly shiny, dry and powdery. It was used for a long time to enhance a drawing realized with another medium and mostly when the support was of colour.

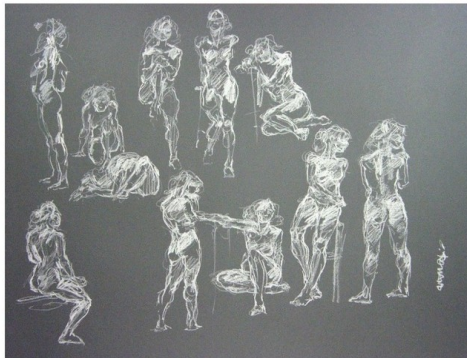
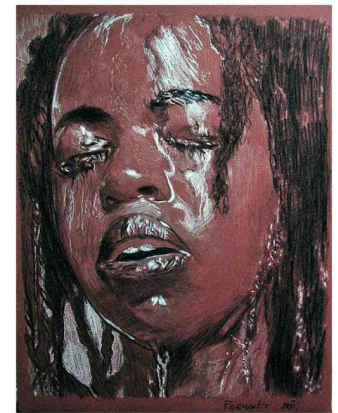


Like in this drawing of a draping of clothing by Delacroix (1798 to the right) where chalk makes the light appear on the body of this lady and where the paper used as a base is really yellow/beige. The papers and the supports of the time didn't have the whiteness of today and it is for that main reason that they used white chalk to avoid blandness.



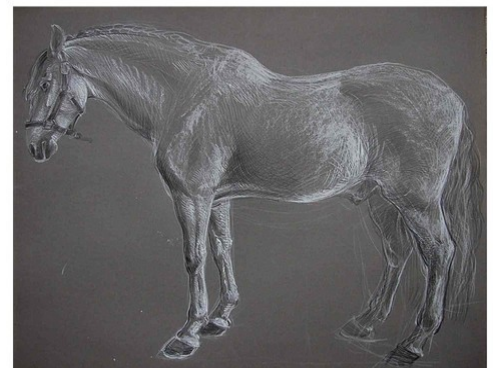
The drawing with the black stone enhanced with the white chalk by Daviau (to the left) expresses well the impact of white as lighting in this intimate scene realized on a soft brown paper.

The drawing on dark brown/red paper by Cormault (2007 to the right) shows the face of a black lady in a moment of ecstasy and even maybe of frenzy. It is the adding of a few touches of white that suggests the sweat or water shining on her skin that animates the whole by contrast.



Here is a grey paper by Rolland (2014 to the left) containing small quick captures of live models with white chalk. The organization of these small sketches on the surface is not devoid of interest because everything fits. The neutral grey, almost metallic omnipresent of the background, brings an impression that these bodies are in a dismissal.

The profile of this horse by Bhavsar (2011 to the right) is a successful anatomic study that acquires an unreal aspect, even unique, with the white chalk on this dark grey background. A few discreet touches of black give a little more presence to this horse almost ghostly.



The drawing of this silhouette seen from the back, therefore anonymous, by Schommer (1890 to the left) realized with charcoal, receives a spark of bold light across its entire front through the adding of a pronounced white in relation to the grey of the paper. We could believe it is a classic drawing of another time, if the clothing of the man wasn't betraying the current period.

DRY PASTEL (soft or hard): Its origin is unknown. It is issued from a mixture of pigments of pure colours, white chalk, glue, lead, talc and arabic gum. In the sixteenth century, it serves mostly to enhance the portraits but in the nineteenth century, slowly it becomes an autonomous technique.



It is mostly through the pastels of Degas, at the end of the nineteenth century which will bring letters of nobility to this underestimated medium. Like for this ballerina (1885 to the right) captured in an unusual pose where she laces her slippers. Grace gave way to realism of an intimate gesture. The position of the body in diagonal, contained in a circle and seen from the top, gives her a strong and original presence.



In this port of Dahan (2013 to the left), the saturated colours play with the improbability, this way brushing the abstraction like in the boldest fauvisms. This port with its boats is only a pretext to make the colour vibrate.

It is difficult to believe that this iris by Yernaux (2010 to the right) was realized with dry pastel as the precision of the rendering is so impeccable. The fineness of the shades and nuances of the gradation reaches here a rare perfection of realism. The slight gradation of the background, which goes from the darkest at the bottom left up to its lighter part on top right, highlights discreetly the provenance of the light.



In this portrait of a young girl by Baffou (2015 to the left), the very soft pastel grey/blue of the background paper highlights the pink/peach of the delicate skin of this child and her sweater. What could appear a little bland and childish is counterbalanced with touches of black in the hair and in her deep gaze. There is also this successful balance between the more precise parts of the face and the one more fuzzy, but without being sloppy, from the rest of the drawing.

A grey half horse by Frison (2004 to the right) seems seized on the spot by the adding of many whitish features in diagonal that give the effect of movement and wind in its mane. Even if this process is not realistic because it is borrowed from the comic strip, it adds life and an ephemeral sensation to the scene. The grey shades of the horse which could be boring are enhanced with a few touches of dashing black and blue.



OIL PASTEL: Made from the same materials as the basic pastel but where the arabic gum is replaced with oil and this way can be diluted with turpentine; or replaced with wax so it can be diluted with water and a brush.



All these mediums more fragile but nevertheless easier to use than oil paint allow us to explore our universe with less pressure and waiting. Like the children who do not have too many preconceived ideas, we have to know how to surrender in good faith, naivety and create spontaneously.

In 'Lollipop' by Platel (2012 to the right), realized with oil pastel and acrylic, it is the festivity of naive and abstract shapes, spontaneous textures and lines that dance. To find its meaning doesn't have any importance as long as we have fun drawing.

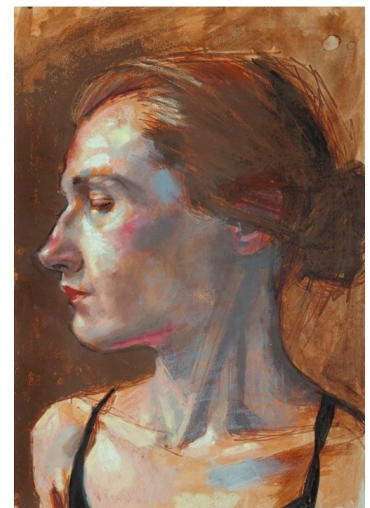


This drawing by Zaü (to the left) represents a busy and colourful market with a crowded bus in the back ready to leave and all under a burning orange sky. The scene is just precise enough to be recognizable but vague enough to not lose the effervescent side. The orange of the sky is also omnipresent everywhere and renders well the intense heat of a hot day in the tropics.

This profile face of Hanna woman (2012 to the right) is a beautiful play of colours where all the shades intermingle without trying to reproduce reality faithfully. But when the shades harmonize between each other and form a coherent whole, the result becomes credible. I call this the local shades that create a plausible entirety. The dominance of browns give character to this face but also a little hardness that is counterbalanced by a few touches of softening pastel shades.



This garden of flowers in dry pastel on canvas by Sexier (to the left), through a powdered and velvety touch on the entire surface, renders well the charm of these flowers in an undeniable effect of an impressionist dream. The bunch of pink flowers on the right, too heavy, is rebalanced by a few blue flowers that lean softly to the left and the darker background at the top on the left. This work has nothing to envy from a painting realized in oil paint.

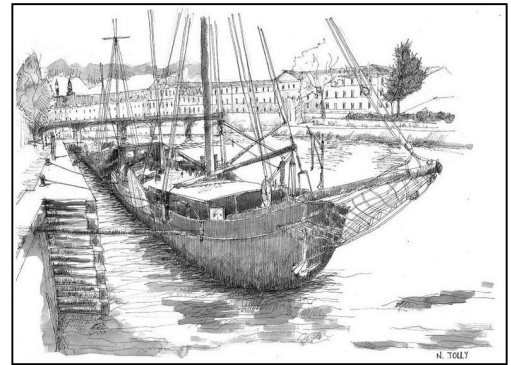


BLACK INK: Made from boiled wood soot or like the sepia, from squid ink. Used at least since the sixth century.



This small drawing 'Dock of the Seine' by Jolly (to the right) is a nice study with just enough details to highlight, put in perspective this berthed boat. There is a good dosage between the

precise line and the shaded surfaces; between the bare parts, aerated and the covered parts, shaded with grey.



This drawing in ink and wash 'The Hillside' by Vlaminck (1925 to the left) represents strongly the harshness of these fields on the hillside swept by the winds and winter storms. Some nervous and dry features render well the low and dark sky and the trees partially depleted that struggle for their survival. A series of short and long diagonals contribute to create movement and make the agitation of the scene palpable.

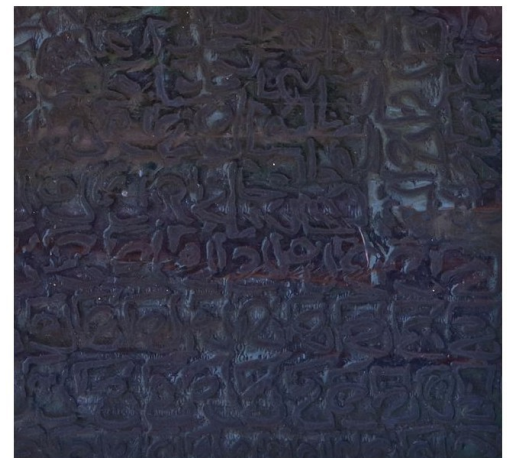
The painting 'Very Ancient 1' by Philippi (2011 to the right) is an immense tangle of lines where faces and animals that seem to refer to an ancient forgotten symbolic, appear. Traces of a symbolic language left by people who didn't yet know writing. It is an overabundance of enigmatic shapes.



This tormented face by Delattre (to the left) is like a skin off its flesh, a live mask of a tortured being whose blurred contours are lost in the various spontaneous and aggressive arabesques. The white omnipresent all

around contributes to isolate him and render him more gruesome (2010).

From the series 'Travels in my Silences' the artist John (to the right) saturated this work with black ink. It is only a calligraphy in relief, close to an unknown writing, that animates the monochrome surface. Between matte and shiny reflections, the signs of a dead language remind us that time erases everything except maybe in the unconsciousness of some.



COLOURED INK: Liquid solvent in which we add dyes which were at the origin vegetable or mineral but today are completely synthetic. The inks were generally rather volatile when they contained only arabic gum in the solution but the new inks containing shellac are more resistant.



In this nude by Amande (2008 to the right) the line is precise but the simple colour escapes, caresses the shapes and overflows just what is needed to give it some shading. The light is created with the whites of the paper left blank. A mastery of the hand gesture is necessary to avoid alterations.



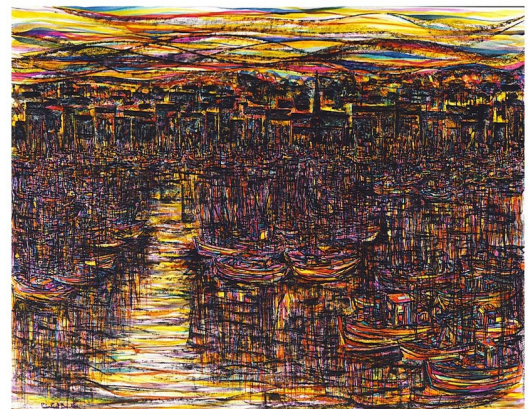
In this abstract expression by Leroy (2007 to the left) the colour is liberty, movement and even music. The black lines that zigzag in all directions try to contain the colour but in vain as they are also taken in an uncontrollable frenzy. Ah the joy of pure gesture!

In these 'Summer Colours' by Beetz (2008 to the right) in watercolour and ink, these two stylized flowers sing the omnipresent, saturated colour. All is surrounded with fine nervous black lines that define well the flamboyant yellow-orange of their complementaries, the purplish blues. Even the few greens highlight the shades that border the red. The fundamental complementaries here are exploited to the maximum.



'Anamorphic' by Added (to the left) is a tangle of stylized and dancing bodies, like in a voodoo meeting, where we surrender to all the excesses of contortions. A real nude sneaked into the scene creating a malaise. The loud red and yellow of the background splash everything while accentuating this lust for life.

In 'Storm' by Bertin, (1993 to the right) it is a profusion of small boats that are waiting in a port of a city for the storm to pass. A dominance of hundreds of horizontal lines made with the three primary colours, yellow, red and blue make a contrast with the multitude of black vertical lines. An impression of gloomy oppression emerges from this confused scene provoked by the invasive blacks.



WATERCOLOUR: Made with mineral pigments ground with water and arabic gum. First of all used to enhance the drawings with colours, it will become an autonomous genre in the eighteenth century.



In this 'Winter Landscape' from an unknown (to the right), everything is lightness and finesse. Only the dark lines of the tree trunks and their branches put rhythm in the composition. A brown important mass on the left is counterbalanced by another one smaller on the right. The subtle yellow of the sky highlights the delicate purple blues (2010).



This simple flower of an almond tree (to the left), that takes almost all the space outlined against a blue sky, recalls the splendours of summer and the abundance to come. The shadings of the petals and the stamens give it a nice depth all delicate. The few touches of pink, orange and green of its centre animate the work and the dark brown stem gives body to the whole.

A close-up of a small face (to the right) of a young child and a world opens up to us. Two eyes, a nose and a mouth ready to discover the entire universe. The pale skin leaves room to the very detailed penetrating look and the full bright red mouth has just enough precision to express a certain avidity. The naive beauty of childhood is remarkably well rendered.



Half a face (to the left) looks at us with insistence and it is only a few faded shades of yellow, peach and pink enhanced with a little bit of purple black that emphasize that it is an anonymous young boy. He seems wreathed in mysteries as no details can tell us more about him.

This bouquet of flowers with a Chinese vase by Wynne (2008 to the right) is a nice success of composition between the precision of certain details and a certain fluidity of others.



The watercolour is a medium that requires a great practice to develop the steady, natural and spontaneous gesture contrary to the oil or acrylic painting, since there is very little room for hesitations and remedial touches.

GOUACHE: Close to watercolour in its components, it contains an addition of binder mainly glycerin that gives it its matte and more opaque aspect. Used in the thirteenth century for the illuminations of manuscripts, it will stay for a long time a minor medium that will be used mostly to differentiate preparatory studies or today a joy to children.



'The Sadness of the King' by Matisse (1952 to the right) is its last work realized from sheets of paper covered with gouache more or less uniform, cut, then pasted on a solid support. At the end of his life, having to stay in bed, the aging artist extended his work in these cutouts easier to manipulate with the help of an assistant. The colour of this fauvism is still singing.



This landscape by Bellon (2003 to the left) made from spontaneous lines and where the variations of blues dominate, expresses the changing time blown by the winds. The weight of the house on the banks on the left is rebalanced with the movement in diagonal of the clouds and the water that point to the right. The values of dominant light shades are enhanced with very dark small masses well distributed.

In 'Return from Hunting' by Dallaire (to the right), most of the colours are put in opaque flat areas favoured by the medium. The pure colours of the hunter highlight him by contrast with the decor with a dominance of pastel shades. A certain naivety of the rendering of all the simplified elements and perspectives gives personality to this painting.



This illustration of a book by Salomon (1942 to the left) expresses, with a nervous and clumsy touch, the serenity of three characters who are engaged in creation. A good number of objects swirl around in a joyous untidiness of a possible artist workshop. It emerges a certain charm from this making, this unskilled touch.

This abstract composition by Kirkeby (1964 to the right) is a nice play of tone value where the contrasts of the light colours in the centre are stimulated by the darker and darker colours in periphery. A continuous movement seems to agitate all that is contained in an approximative oval.



It exists four binders of pigments which, through history, have given durable works.



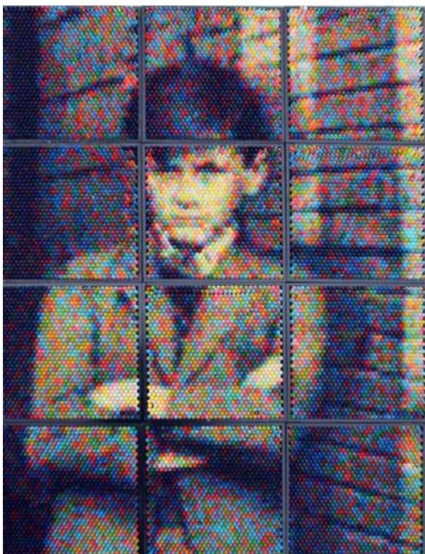
WAX: Going back as far as ancient Egypt and being used mostly for the frescoes and writing on wood. If it is mashed with more heated pigments, therefore liquified before use, this process is called encaustic.

Here is a funerary portrait (to the right) of the Egyptian period of a young man deceased too early. His sad and pensive eyes are now closed forever and his mouth hides his last unappeased desires.



This self-portrait by Cognée (2008 to the left) is shameless, even oppressive like a fool who is looking at us ready to attack. Thirsty for blood with all this red that sticks to his skin, he has an imprecision like a nightmare that we try to forget. Life disturbs, upsets, intoxicates and leaves us unsatisfied.

In 'Birth of a Woman' by Lafon (2006 to the right), the shades of purplish pink of this woman nestled in blue-green foliage bring us to daydreaming, to question the origin of the world. It is like a stain glass with smooth and translucent colours surrounded with fine lines. The light travels from the heart that palpitates to the hollow of the arms of this Eve.



This original work by Faur (2010 to the left) is in fact a stack of wax pencils piled on top of each other. This arrangement of colours gives life to portraits like this young boy with his arms crossed. With a worried look like a schoolboy too serious, he is leaning on a wall and takes the pose of a future man before his time. Closed cases retain in section thousands of pencils whose tips are upon us.

In 'Vanity 6' by Cognée (2006 to the right), yellow skulls cover the ground and throw their macabre shadow on a crimson rose that attempts to brighten the scene. Absurd picture that mocks death and its fatality. Their disposition, like an endless tapestry pattern, evoke the broader decor of an ultimate battlefield.



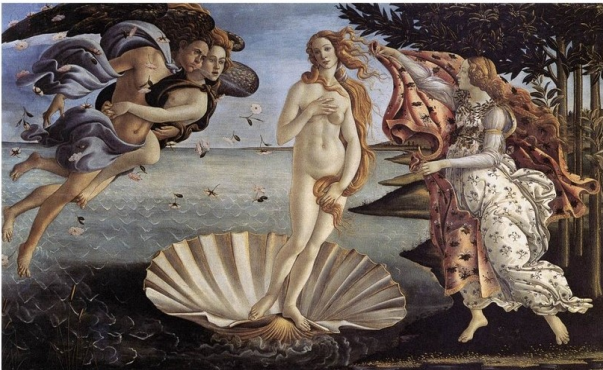
EGG: The yellow by itself or with white, is known since the ancient time as an excellent binder. It is mentioned in the books of the fourteenth century. Today, it is sold under the name of Tempera.



Here is 'Madonna and the Child' by Duccio (to the right) from the fourteenth century painted with tempera on wood in a typical achievement issued from the byzantine art.



But a humanist touch with more natural poses, plays of light on the bodies, the soaring of the faces and hands announces the gothic art.



In 'The Birth of Venus' by Botticelli (1486 to the left), the bashful goddess Venus emerges from the water while the wind zephyr blows on her left and a feminine gent attempts to cover her with a cloth on the right. It is all the mastery of this technique with the egg that is offered to us in this refinement of flesh and cloth. A triangle slightly off centre to the right stabilizes this harmonious composition.

In this embracing couple by Klimt (1909 to the right), drawn from the painting 'The Tree of Life' different mediums were used like tempera, watercolour and gold paint. It is an overload of geometric shapes and swirls, inspired from very ancient illuminations that is verging on abstraction. It is only the apparent fragment of the head and arms that reminds us that this is a couple wrapped up in a colourful cloth. This accumulation of patterns might seem too decorative if it wasn't for the talent of the artist to transcend this first vision.



In 'Sycamore' by Wyeth (1982 to the left), it is the special beauty of a tree trunk ravaged by the years that calls to us. The dull palette of its golden browns accentuates, without distracting us, the impact of this symbol of strength and survival. The general balance is insured by its slight incline.



In this untitled work by Kirkeby with oil and tempera (2006 to the right), we are in front of an abstraction that borders figuration. We find ourselves imagining some sort of seashore, the universe of a wandering planet or even a snail stuck in a storm. The true sense, if there is one, escapes us and leaves us wondering.



LINDSEED OIL: Appreciated since the end of the Middle Ages, is today the binder used the most even if other oils can replace it.



It is by the Flemish painters like Eyck in 'The Virgin of Chancellor Rolin' (to the right) that the mastery of the oil painting appeared even if it was created well before then. At first it was used as a cover to protect works in tempera. For a long time we believed that it was the brothers van Eyck who were

the inventors of this technique since their works have a level of rendering, precision and plastic quality so remarkable (1435).



The invention of paint tube in the middle of the nineteenth century will allow painters like Monet in 'The Oak Tree, Forest of Fontainebleau' (1865 to the left) to break free further from the workshop and travel the countryside in search of subjects more naturalistic. A majestic tree in the blue-green sides takes 2/3 of the space and is enhanced by yellow-orange ground which takes 1/3 of the space.

sometimes constrain many painters to work more loosely in trying to capture the essential, unadorned or without superfluous precision. Like in the 'Sailboats on the Seine' by Monet (1874 to the right), the basic atmosphere is well captured with however a certain generalized imprecision on the entire canvas. A way of rendering the subject must in general be uniform on the entire surface of the work.



The use of knives or spatulas instead of brushes will have its moments of glory and will bring a way of painting still more rudimentary, trying to capture the essential even more, sometimes grazing abstraction like in 'Autumn Morning' by Orlowski (to the right). The simple alternation of warm and cold planes in tiers gives contrast and depth to this scene made with large strokes.

The simplicity of these horses by Densborn (to the right) is achieved by wide and fine strokes with a spatula. The whole is realized with a great mastery and virtuosity. The technique of the well controlled spatula, doubled with an affirmed talent, can give works of great refinement.



ACRYLIC can be diluted with water. It was invented and commercialized by the company Liquitex in 1963 and became a new sustainable binder with a synthetic resin base (latex). Drying quickly with a faint odour and toxicity, it since seduced many contemporary artists.



In 'Radioactivity 4' by Hurtubise (1961 to the right) the pure colours, slightly tinted with white, saturate the canvas in irregular flat tints. Everything seems to jostle and clash like in a carnival where the colourful crowd is dense. But maybe the title suggests another side to this festival of colour.



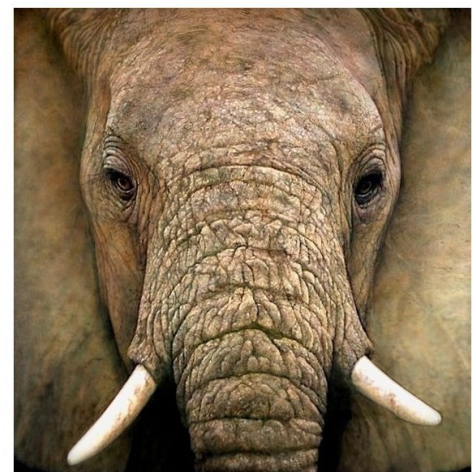
In 'Mallorca in Spring' by Camargo (2009 to the left) a field of red flowers, enhanced by the greens in the foreground, is lost in the distance up to a small village perched in the hills. The depth is created by the regular shortening of the flowers and the lightening of the greens on the ground. The cold blue of the sky brings also a good contrast.

like in this painting 'Girl with Ball' by Lichtenstein (1964 on the right) inspired by the popular comics of the time. This allowed opaque solid tints and also patterns, like here the tiny red dots of the face.



In the special work by Scapitch (to the left) the paint brushes are replaced by superpositions of bands of sticky tapes, various stencils where the acrylic paint very diluted is applied with a sponge or a roller.

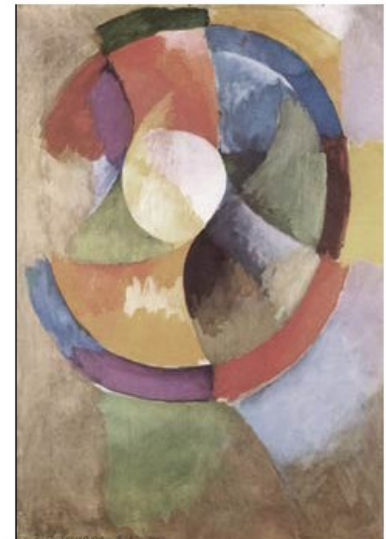
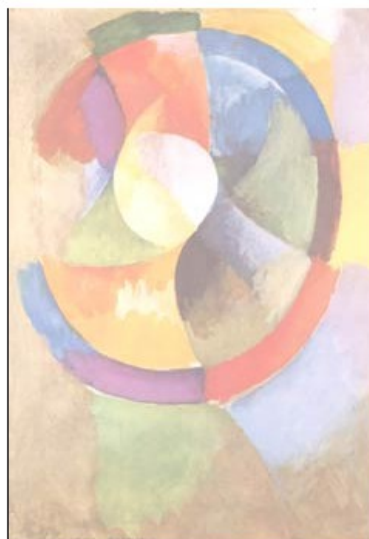
This magnificent head of an elephant by Hare (to the right) is of great virtuosity of the paint brush where the artist reproduced, larger than life, every detail of the skin of this elephant. It is of a pure plastic beauty with a monochrome of earthy shades, a slight difference in the position of the tusks to avoid a too big symmetry. Realized from a photo, how to surpass it if it wasn't for the hundreds of hours that the artist took, applying himself to transmit life that palpates in this animal.



It is important, whatever the medium and the support that we adopt and mainly use, to come back regularly to free expression with non expensive materials. It is in the intention of provoking, forcing the imagination to explore new avenues especially in the periods where there is risk of redundancy and stagnation with our usual material.

For those who start the exploration of their talent, it is a privileged moment to try with non intimidating materials, ways, subjects, styles that we wouldn't dare otherwise. Because to favour a medium, a subject or a style, it shouldn't be done by the inaptitude of doing something else but by a conscious choice after having experimented a vaster field of possibilities.

After being given the freedom to express ourselves through a multitude of possible experimentations, there comes a time when we must step back and contemplate our realizations. At that moment self-criticism must intervene which calls for a certain plastic objectivity but also the capacity to analyze the deep inner feelings that touch us in front of this accumulation of creations. We must be able, at first, to chose the works that catch our eyes and talk to us the most and put the others aside. Then, to be able to a certain point, define why they are talking to us. Is it a question of particular colours that represent us; is it the subject that corresponds to our interests; is it the gestural that we find very expressive and representative of our personality; is it the fineness of the line that reflects our sensibility; is it the organization of it all that affirms our taste for a solid structure? When we are able to make first choices, it is the start of the personalization of our creation.



Like in these examples of variations on a work by Delaunay (1913 above). Do you prefer the pure and sparkling colours, pastel and light or dull and dark?

A style is not only the choice of a subject or one other particular element. It is a set of components that includes the choice of subjects; the way to include them in the space of a surface; to represent them with a transformation more or less symbolic or personal; the choice of a palette of colours; the way of painting them including the gestural and finally how to define a continuity of a work to another one while progressing, evolving without radical break. Here are some examples of painters with the definition of their style.



Watteau (1684-1721) with his delicate style, very gentle and pre romantic will influence the behaviour of the amorous courtesan of his time. It is through small romantic scenes, located in the shade of a garden where gentlemen flirt with ladies that the sensibility of the artist is expressed. We can't forget the delicate and refined touch of the paint brush all jagged and nuance like in this painting representing a musician (1719 to the left) who surrenders to the intoxication of the music and who surely will charm the heart of a beautiful lady.



Main creator of the style called 'Chivalrous Festivities', it is the insouciance of an entire period that we find in these gentle scenes like the one (1712 on the right) where a solitary Pierrot is found between two loving couple.



Puvis of Chavannes (1824-1898) will have some difficulty imposing his style that stands out from his time. He is not looking for an accurate and flattering rendering in grandiloquent scenes but instead sobriety of the compositions, sober colours with soft contrasts, gestures imprinted with nobility and dignity. In 'The Prodigal Son' (1879 to the left), he captured the moment when the son wasted the entire inheritance of his father and standing against a dunghill near a herd of pigs, he is reflecting on his sad fate. Almost naked, his head is tilted and he folds his hands on his heart in a sign of a first repentance. The

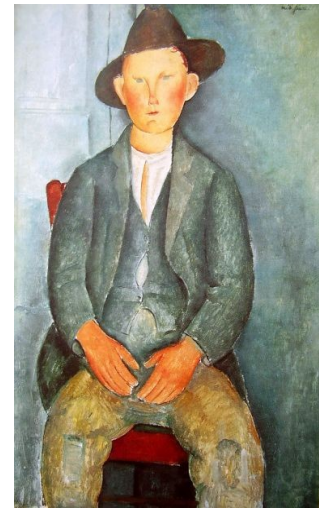
power of this picture is there.

'The Poor Fisherman' (to the right) tells with little means the difficult life of a fisherman who, each day, must feed his wife and child. The scene is frozen in the moment that he recollects or interrogates himself (tilted head) before leaving. During that time, his family seems unconcerned. This moment is serious and imprinted with great sadness for anyone who is only trying to survive. The diagonals of the tip of the land respond well to the angles all over the canvas.



'The Dream' (1883 to the left) is an open door on the blessings that goddesses bring in the night. The soft blue-purples bathe the painting of a calm and mysterious atmosphere. The sleeping woman and both trees leaning to the left are in balance with the three pristine apparitions. The whiteness of these graces are a contrast with the black blanket of the dreamer. Efficiency of the symbolic in this scene that only contains the essential.

Modigliani (1884-1920) and Soutine (1893-1943) two friends; represent two facets, two styles, two personalities that marked strongly the works of their interior universes. They belong to what we will call 'The School of Paris'.



Wanting at first to be a sculptor and influenced by the statues of archaic women, the Italian Modigliani (above) will have to renounce to it because of his poor health. But his paintings, mainly portraits, will keep this sculptural taste of elongated shapes with eyes without pupils inspired from a certain antique art. Only his nudes will express a certain softness and joy of life. This primitive simplification of his characters, with a hint of melancholy in the bare decors, reflects well his condition of a cursed artist since being ignored from the public, collectors before a posthumous glory.



From a poor background, Jewish and refractory to the arts, the Russian Soutine (above) will have to flee from the family environment to exercise his talent as a painter. His work is all imprinted with his very precarious condition, even miserable, where it is a daily fight for survival. Then he carries a crude and caricatural look on the small people that he meets and paints. The few bourgeois that he dares to immortalize go through the same treatment. The landscape scenes that he realized in the countryside are also filled with passion, violence which no doubt he goes into a trance state bordering madness to realize his paintings. The good fortune will smile at him in the second part of his life but without changing his extreme style.

The old paintings were in general smooth, without appearance of brush strokes (except with a magnifying glass) trying to be faithful to reality. With the arrival of the photo, during the nineteenth century, as competitor to painting, the brush stroke will become important, the mark of the artist, the trace of the gestural, the effort, the emotion.

The touch really takes its flight with the romantics (Delacroix, Gericault) like in this self-portrait by Delacroix (1837 to the right) where the traces of the paintbrushes are apparent on this voluntary face, the dishevelled hair and the background swept negligently.



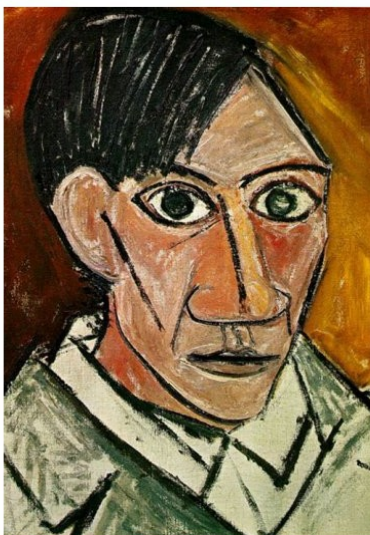
The touch becomes a big value in itself with the impressionists (Monet, Renoir, Degas, Pissarro) like in this self-portrait by Monet (to the left) with a persistent and interrogative look. The inspiring variations of blue do not cover the canvas entirely like a draft, an unfinished work that only details the essential (1886).



The touch becomes a unique way to stand out with the post impressionists (Seurat, Gauguin, Van Gogh) like in this self-portrait by Gauguin (1888 to the right) with a severe and suspicious look. Several arbitrary shades are found in the shapes surrounded with dark lines to contain them. The profile of Van Gogh, on a green monochrome drawing, rebalances the whole.



The touch becomes originality, exploration with the cubists (Picasso, Braque, Gris, Léger) like in this self-portrait of Picasso (1907 to the left) where the stain is quick, brutal, falsely gauche and the contours outlined with big lines.



The touch becomes a way to transmit our emotions with the expressionists (Soutine, Modigliani, Molde, Kirchner) like in this self-portrait of Soutine (1918 to the right) where violence of the brush stroke is grotesque barbel, self-destructive.

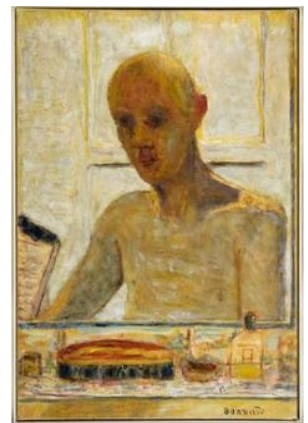


The self-portraits can be a good way to affirm our personality, our style through this intimate look at ourselves.

Many painters will occasionally immortalize their images in their works but some will do it as a way to take the stage regularly.



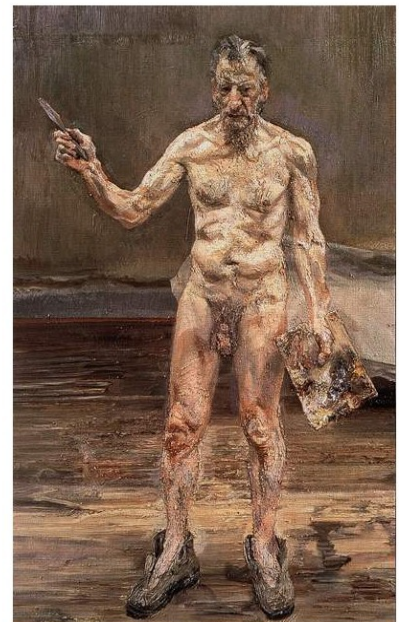
Like Schiele (1890-1918 above) where a good number of his paintings represents him bluntly in all kinds of intimate positions; alone or with his companion and reproduced in a unique style with accentuated angles, with a colourful touch, even aggressive very recognizable. Deceased too soon (28 years old) of the Spanish flu, we will never know to where the provocative style of his youth would have had evolved with age.



Like Bonnard (1867-1947 above) who all along his life, represented himself always with this vaporous and vibrant touch that unifies all the elements by blurring them. It emerges this way from his hazy portraits a vague feeling of melancholy and introspection.



Like Freud (1985 to the left) where sentimentalism gives way to a ruthless look on himself. It goes as far as a certain cruelty of wanting to make himself ugly beyond reason. Like in this cruel nude (2002 to the right) with just old shoes on his feet and his rudimentary material of a painter. Here is the conclusion of his life!



The touch becomes a pure and free expression with the gestural abstracts (Kandinsky, De Kooning, Hartung, Mathieu, Pollock).

The abstract painting is a vast pictorial trend that started around 1913, with the watercolour by Kandinsky (to the right) and had its hours of glory between the years 1940 and 1980. Whether it is done based on gestural, free or structured, on geometrical, aleatory or formal composition, the abstract painting is everything except a primary daub close to what a child can do.



It is the result of a long reflection that arises from the high mastery of the language that is painting; the comprehension of the effects contained in the shape, colour and the gesture of the hand with a highly developed look of the harmony between these three elements. Like for Mathieu (1960 to the left) where the brushstroke is shared between the spontaneous gesture and the one mastered like in the Japanese calligraphy.

Not having in oneself any apparent subject, only a personal approach to purify our intention to a few visual signs, aesthetic or of an emotional order counts. Like for Hartung (1950 to the right) with a pure, spontaneous and expressive gesture.



After the 1960s, abstraction will seek in its last and ultimate retrenchment the last possibilities not yet explored. Like for Baxter (2013 to the left) where the stain is an endless pattern like on a shimmering fabric; or to the extreme like for Tomboy (1961 below) a bunch of scribbles like we do so many times while talking on the telephone or stains when we drop some substances on the ground which we try clumsily to erase.

Some artists begin on a blank canvas with no starting point other than the gesture of surrender, of expression but the result is often aleatory and with little artistic value. The abstract gestural art is also an expression partly spontaneous but that relies on a wealth of knowledge that encompasses the symbolic of the shapes, colours, expressivity of the rendering. It is like the abstract poetry that relies at first on the mastery of the classic poetry with its precise rules; this allows then to surrender to the unrestricted, less formal poetry and finally to the abstract poetry, whose words no longer have any meaning and all that remains is the phonetic impact of the sounds and its variations.





The landscape has evolved through history, reflecting the time and the opinion of people towards nature. A theatrical framework idealized for the characters of the classic period (Lorrain to the left), sometimes sublime or divine during the romantic period (Friedrich to the right), a subject in itself for the school of Barbizon (Dutilleux to the left), then changing by the day during the impressionist period (Monet to the right). The landscape might be natural, wild and untamed or tamed constructed and harmonious.



A realized landscape with many elements drawn from different sources can become an exercise of composition with its personal symbolism with the same title than a still life.

A theatrical way to treat the landscape that gives a lot of depth is to make a first plane in the darkest tones, then a lighter second plane, and so on to the last one that has the most luminous palette. The enlightenment of the elements, the further we move away, like any type of soil, guarantees the effect of depth in a landscape. A variation also is a random alternation of dark, pale and medium planes.



The group of 7 (1914-1935) wanted to renew the vision too classic of the landscape in Canada that was influenced at the time by the styles coming from England. This genre represented badly these new virgin and unexplored regions. So they instilled a truer, wild and even very rugged side to the landscapes and at the same time grandiose even divine.



MacDonald (top left), Thomson (bottom left), Varley (top right), Harris (bottom right).



The touch of a painting can be very apparent, predominant, defining its basic structure, creating rhythms, juxtapositions of texture. The different textures can serve to define the elements of a painting but it is important to maintain a certain overall unity.



In 'The Swimmers' by Munch (1908 to the left) the way of rendering the characters and the beach with the same hatched spots leaving white traces of the canvas creates a great homogeneity to the whole. This recalls a finish close to watercolour.

The brushstroke can serve to animate a drab surface of uniform colours, to outline the contours of the elements, to show the different stages of creation including the hesitations. The mixture of many varied ways to work on the same painting must be maturely reflected as to not create a visual shock.



In 'The Rejected Lover' by Kokoschka (1966 above), despite the caricatural disturbing side close to daub, a coherence of the touch on the entire canvas renders it all harmonious and the contents credible in ricochet.



The touch of a painting can also be delicate, discreet, fluid being only the simple signature, a calligraphy, a characteristic of the way the hand of the artist moves on the canvas.

Like the multitude of small subtle and nuanced touches in 'Pond in the Sun' by Pinal (1910 to the left). Like the fluid strokes of the brush with a few trembling touches in 'Mary and Margaret' girls of Gainsborough (1759 to the right). There is still the remains of an unrealized cat.



The touch can be, on the opposite, the impasto of a medium that gives a visual and tactile presence unique to a painting, insisting on its physical presence in the space even before its representation.

Like the sharp cut in small squares on the entire canvas gives character to this portrait by Guillot (to the left). Like the great masses of paint, applied with a spatula, shape autonomous planes in relief in 'The Life in Blue' by Attard (to the right).



Notice various complementaries for all 5 series.

A painting is before anything else an ensemble of lines, shapes, arranged colours to form an entity that exists in itself. Therefore we must know how to manage a flat surface in two dimensions to create a representation of the reality, which is in three dimensions, or of its imaginary universe that is limitless.

The talent of the artist is to translate in bi-dimensional planes, the illusion of tridimensional space. The bi-dimensional has its own rules that the tridimensional doesn't have. The exact transposition of the tridimensional on a canvas surface doesn't always give a happy result.

The best example is the faithful reproduction in painting of a photo that suggests that it is an exact replica of reality. The photo of this landscape (to the right) that seems so real however hides obvious deformations like the blue colour of the sky that is too pronounced and the grass of an irradiating artificial green. In general, the contrasts of light are amplified, like what is in the shade is saturated with black like the mountain on the left and what is in the light is saturated with white. The perspectives also bend often in the extremities and deform especially the panoramic views. If we work from photos, we must take into account these deformations and readjust them for greater realism. But this is also to forget the basic support that has served our creation, if it is your intention.



In the example of this small painting (to the left), regardless of the style of the artist, errors issued from the photo are apparent. In the background, the blue of the sky is too strong and unreal; in the middle plane, the sand in the light is of a pure white without nuance; in the foreground, the green foliage of the plants in the shade turns rapidly to black. Notice also the small trees with foliage too white and their trunk, their shadow on the ground too black.

The artist must oscillate between a realist representation of the subject, but without artistic quality and the opposite, a plastic design too highly sought that doesn't give the impression of reality.

The sensations as aesthetic than emotional felt in front of a subject must be well identified to be able to emphasize them in the composition. The essential is to transmit them first. Like in this marine by Faust (to the right) where a scene by the seaside, relatively ordinary, has been transposed with a personal spontaneous and nervous touch that renders well the harshness of the climate. The vast tormented sky, in movement to the right, testifies well to the precarious life of those who live on the coast.



The rhythm of a work is determinant to create a sustained appeal. It has its own value and is somewhat, independent of the subject. This gives vitality, strength to the composition. The rhythmic interpretation goes from the increase, decrease, addition or removal of certain aspects of the real pattern whether it is a line, shape, colour or light.

In this first example of a still life by Antonov (1990 to the right), all the elements occupy awkwardly the space of the canvas by being too off centre to the right and leaving this way too much unoccupied space on the top left. Excluding the violin, the rest of the elements seem like an unorganized mess whose respective sizes are too much the same, therefore monotonous. The colors of the lighting background adds to confusion. Despite the diversity of the elements, none really stands out.



In this second example of a still life by La Porte (1765 to the left) all is found well structured in a composition in frieze. The elements are linked creating a rhythm that is going from one surprise to the next, this way maintaining the interest. The elements comprise different containers and fruits made from materials, shapes, textures, sizes and various colours. An effect of light to the right third creates an area of interest slightly off centre. But a few blue flowers rebalance it all in animating the void at the top and in creating an overall triangle.

Here is an unusual still life by Chardin (1826 to the right) composed of three elements that are not, at first sight, very compatible between each other. But that's the whole point of creating a surprise and thereby capturing, retaining the eye of the viewer. Placed in front of a blue fabric as decor, the artist will tell us that it is not a natural composition due to chance but a disposition well thought of and organized. Three different elements of shapes, colours and sizes clash in our rational brain which is looking for a meaning to this incongruous amalgam. Notice the orange of the carrot that makes the blue of the background stand out.



Often the painters can be divided in two large categories. Those who at first work with the value of tone. The light and the shadows can suggest the main shapes of our painting; what we call the masses. Many light masses and a few dark ones suggest strongly the light. This way we can create depth in alternating the planes of different intensity or more precisely the darkest in the front going to the lightest in the back. Like in this painting by Poussin (1651 to the left).

The composition by masses, taken directly from the concrete elements of the subject that have large areas of light and shadow, has its own organization. The size of the shapes, relative to each other, the distance that separates them and the degree of luminosity of each one, must be included.

The elaboration of chiaroscuro starts with the strongest contrasts between light and shadow of the main elements; this is what places the composition. It continues by the intermediary values, the halftones that shape the secondary forms. The overall balance of the composition consists in balancing the weight of the large masses generated by their dimensions, their shape and the intensity of their colour.

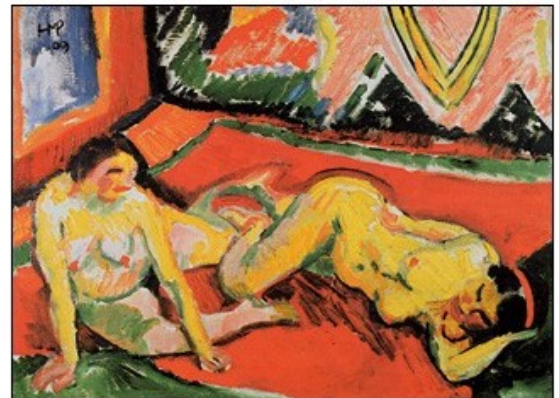


In this still life by Vlaminck (1907 to the left), the play of light is shaping the forms and their shadows on the table give them a greater presence. All is accentuated by the fire orange that contrasts with the colder blue. The shades of pale blue on the tea set and the yellow of the oranges soften somewhat this violent contrast. The background is treated in the same colours but heavily darkened.

The second category are the painters who work with the colours and their relations.

A painting can contain arbitrary colours, unreal in relation to the subject but if they are harmonious with each other, they can become credible in a coherent entirety.

Like in these two expressionist nudes by Pechstein (1909 to the right) where the yellow and the green, that dominate the palette of the two bodies, are not at all realistic. But these nudes participate to an overall vision of the scene where the colours fit together in an efficient and credible harmony.



It is also interesting to apply at first the proper colours to the subject; then to include colours that I call intrusive because they bring variations that can be dissonant but broaden the palette; then ending with again the application of colours closer to the subject.

Like in 'The Midday Sun' by Krotov (to the left), the play of shadows of a tree on the ground and on this naked woman has variations of colours opposite to the logical palette. Yet, the ensemble contains undercoats of subtle colours unrelated to the true shade but which creates a wealth of nuances that adds metaphysic dimension. This way of superimposing a dissonant layer between

two harmonious layers creates also a richness in depth that slightly breaks the too beautiful harmony of the palette that can be sometimes monotonous.

Sometimes, one colour dominates the composition and becomes the local colour. This colour must slightly tint the other neighbouring colours to create an effect of overall unity. The light in a painting can be made with a nuance that must colour at different degrees the objects to create a link that unites the whole.

Like in this village by Schiele (1917 to the right) where the colours of grey-brown of the atmosphere impose their mark on the entire canvas, darkening all the bright shades that we find on the houses and the clothesline. Notice the contrast between the dreary horizontal lines dominating in this landscape and all these small vertical lines that structure and give life to the composition.



The first layers of colour must be applied more roughly to give the general aspect of the composition or saturate the background of the canvas. This to avoid giving too much of ourselves; wear out before our intention, the subtleties of the final touches are precise. In general, in a painting, some colours must be purer or more pronounced especially for the main subject while others must be more mixed or attenuated especially for the secondary elements or the backgrounds.

To make areas of light appear on an element or composition, we must respect a certain number of intermediary colours that announce the lighter final touch.

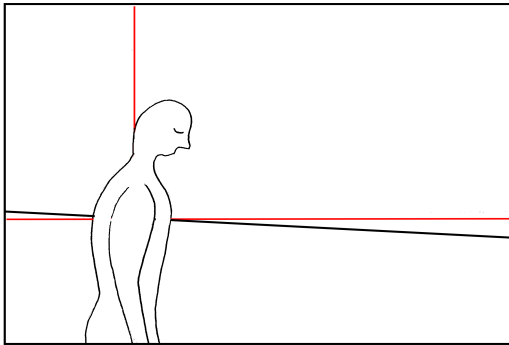


Like in these trees by Weber (to the left) where the roundness of the trunks is rendered by at least 5 shades that go from a brown almost black to a beige almost yellow. The number of shades (colour) or tones (luminosity) depends on the intensity of the ambient light that we want to render but also the level of brightness of the element. More an element is matte, more the variations of intensity will be made smoothly with many transients and within a narrow range; more an element is bright, more the transitions will be distinct and less numerous and in a wider range.

In this portrait by Genie (to the right), it is a whole series of superimposed layers of colours, realized with different tools, that makes this face hallucinatory. Like a piece of land in clearing or tortured by some hostile elements; only an eye that is staring at us brings us back to the reality of the portrait of an anonymous character scoffed by life. We could also see in it an itinerant that the sticky back alleys of the big cities have rendered unrecognizable. The violent gestural through all these spots partly accidental, dominates and borders pure abstraction. This taste for the extreme deformation, even sordid, characterizes well the vision of many of the contemporary artists that are looking for some sensationalism, the originality at all cost.



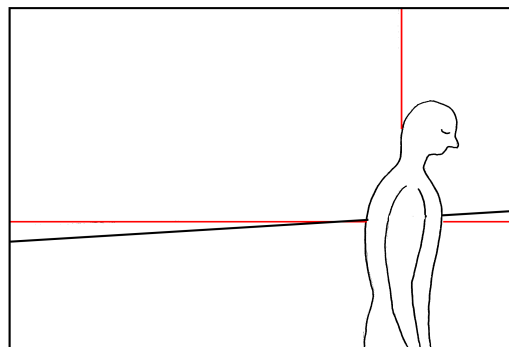
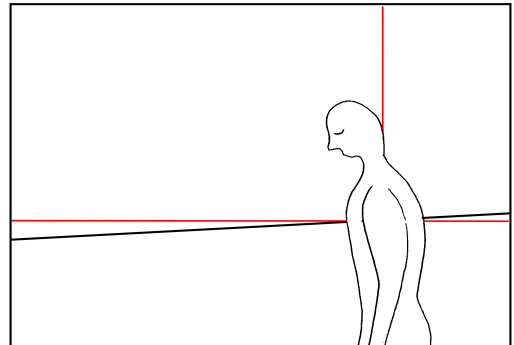
The mastery of the symbolism can be a long learning process if it is not innate in us. Here is an example and its variations that will help you to understand its subtleties.



Like in the West we read from left to right, it is natural that we look at a painting sweeping it from left to right. In the first schematized picture (to the left), we identify, up to a certain point, with the character because he seems to be walking in the same direction as we are. His head is bent down which suggests a certain introspection, a look turned inward. Since the space is greater in front of him than behind, it is to the future that he is thinking, to the road that he still has to travel. The

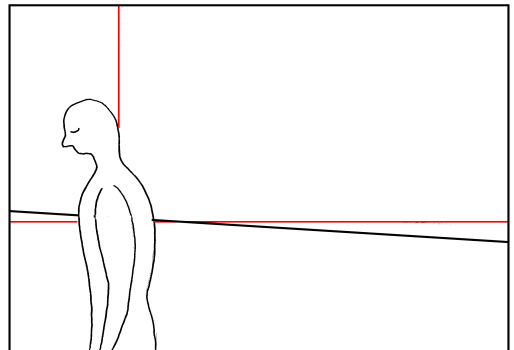
horizon is in a downslope amplifying the angle of his head and the surrender to his destiny. An upslope would have suggested the future efforts to accomplish.

In the second example (to the right), the picture is simply reversed and this way the character seems to be going towards us which makes us less concerned by his condition, which is nevertheless the same.

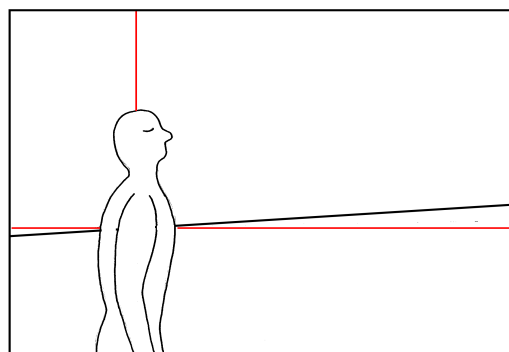


In the third picture (to the left), the character still has his head bent down and seems in introspection with his past suggested by the space more important behind him than in front. The horizon ascending to the right symbolizes the efforts, even the hardship (if the angle is more pronounced) that he had to overcome in life to arrive where he is.

In the fourth picture (to the right) simply reversed, the character seems very close to us. Is he going to confide in us or simply cross path with us and disappear, locked in his inner thoughts?



In the fifth picture (below), the character has his head up as a sign of courage, inner strength and ready for the challenges that his future holds.



The example of this young boy and his dog by Daly (to the right) contains the symbols described above; the head tilted, reflecting on his very short life behind him, leaning on a wall that

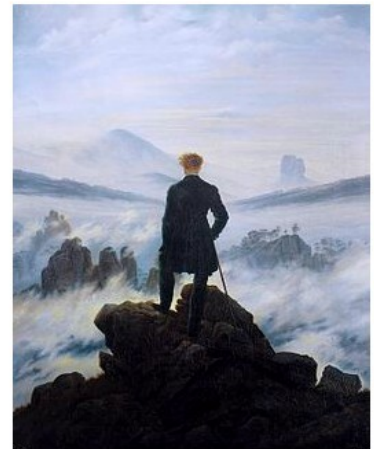
doesn't allow him to go back and a limited future.



The numbers that we find through the number of elements in a painting are not harmless and must not be taken lightly. Here is the general symbolic definition of the numbers with a cosmological personal touch as I perceive them.

One, it is the single, the centre, the source, the first energy, the original everything, perfect but alone, independent and unconscious.

Like in this single being by Friedrich (1818 to the right) seen from the back, who from the top of a mountain, contemplates the immensity that unfolds at his feet. He seems to be the extension of this dark rock that stands out on the blue azure which brings to daydream.



Two, it is duality, double contrary, the first division, the origin of rhythm, polarities, all in front of nothing, the meeting of the other, inverted reflection of oneself.

Like in these two friends by Cezanne (1895 to the left) where friendship and rivalry gently face each other in this card game. United by the table where their four arms are resting but separated by the fact that they are each concentrated on their game and their inner world.



Three, it is the creation; thought, word, action that give the evolutive consciousness, the union of two elements that oppose each other and create all

personalized life.

Like in this young fox by Dumont (2014 to the right) where three small mushrooms in the foreground subtly emphasize that even if it seems alone for the moment, this small fox has parents not too far. It is the number three, symbol of the meeting of a couple and its offspring that is simply suggested here. Many unique elements in the painting could have unconsciously suggested the opposite, that it was an orphan.



Four, it is the stability, consciousness which, in prolonging itself, creates the basic perceptions common to everyone, the solid matter; earth, fire, water, air, balance, the permanence of the universes.



Like in this still life by Zurbaran (to the left) where four various containers line up in a very static way without the appearance of an artistic intention. But the play of shapes, colours, light on the textures prevent the monotony of accuracy. It is a challenge or an irony by the artist to take risks with the number four which is at the base, very stable but dangerous to manipulate as it freezes all scenes (1633).

Five, it is the experience, the exploration of the universe with its senses; touch, sight, hearing, smell, taste; it is freedom, the adventures with all that it entails of the unknown, imbalances, even trials with its law of cause and effect but also of rewarding discoveries that elevate the being.

Like in this dance by Matisse (to the right) where five naked women are led into frantic circle in the image of life that carries us. Some control their movement, others indulge but one seems taken against her will.



Six, it is the deepening, the search for kindness, beauty, truth that become love, harmony, knowledge; it is the balance obtained by the assimilation of the basic mechanisms that rule the universes and their role in the global evolution.

Seven, it is the realization, the quest for serenity through the rest, silence, meditation, inner peace; it is the unification of all possible parts of the personal being, the perfection of the matter that opens to a first vision of the whole from the spirit, the eternal.

Eight, it is the revelation, the growth with the accumulation of knowledge, the mastery obtained with the repetition of the gestures, the integration of the different components of the universe in a new cosmic balance that serves as a base and challenge to explore new realities.

Nine, it is the willingness, our full capacities, the taking control of our actions in all the possible directions up to accelerate the process of our own evolution so it becomes revolution; the outcome that triggers the beginning of the return towards oneness.

Ten, it is the wisdom, movement in the balance, evolution in the constancy, the ultimate understanding that all is in permanence and illusion at the same time that all that we live is created by us with the sole purpose of discovering ourselves as perfection.

Eleven, it is the accomplishment, the spiritual mastery, the end to all duality, the hour of the last revelations, the return to the first unity through the interrelationships of our own facets.



Twelve, it is the number of perfection, the one that contemplates itself as multiple and the multiple as one; it is the full development of one of the three times of the complete cycle of all things.

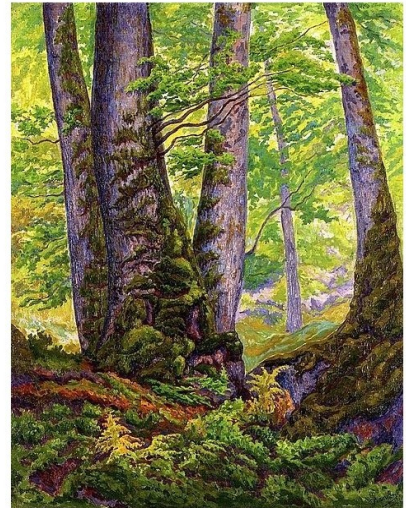
Thirteen, it is the rebirth, the beginning of a new era resulting from our past heritage.

In this scene by Cortes (to the left), there is one house in the background, two trees highlighted in the middle and three characters in the front near a small boat. Harmony of the numbers in progression for a calculated gracious result.

All these numbers can be added, subtracted, multiplied and divided to give variations to the infinite that help you better understand the hidden meaning of the essence of all things. Summarized in one word:

One = single	Seven = realization
Two = duality	Eight = revelation
Three = creation	Nine = willingness
Four = stability	Ten = wisdom
Five = experience	Eleven = accomplishment
Six = deepening	Twelve = perfection

In this landscape by Ranson (1905 to the right), there are three trees regrouped in the left centre, a fourth isolated to the extreme right and a fifth very small in the distance. This relation of numbers is not fortuitous but follows the understanding of their deeper meaning and their use in all knowledge.



All the rules that you have learned in these pages are there to help you better appreciate painting, its language, its refinement and use them as you wish in your own works. They may perhaps appear restrictive at first if they are not innate in you but it is like when you learned to talk or write, you must have had to restrain yourselves to a long learning before it became natural.

Don't forget that like each sentence that you say or write doesn't contain all the rules of grammar but only the ones needed in the circumstance, it is the same for a painting. You use the rules that are necessary for a work in particular or to solve a particular problem and you might even ignore some if you are sure of your intentions in knowledge of cause and effect. A naive or primitive style in painting is not necessarily a sign of clumsiness or ignorance. The choice of a favourite subject of an artist shouldn't be made because of the inaptitude of doing anything else but for the love of doing it and by deliberate choice.

In painting, there are fashions that you have the freedom to follow or not. But do not lose your true identity in wanting to follow them at all cost as only their initiators have the advantages. Be yourself. Painting is before anything else the pleasure to chose subjects that are calling you; to organize a composition that satisfies you; to mix colours as you wish; to spend hours to apply yourself to render well your intention. In summary, it is to realize with your hands and your wealth of experiences, concrete works that are the extensions of yourself. It is an open window on your inner world.

Murillo (1670 to the right)



Here it is! That's all for the fifth and last course called 'Style and Touch'.

Thank you for your interest and attention.

Colin Chabot

