

A Starke Studio Lesson Plan by Phil Starke

"Planes of Color"

Materials Needed:

- sketch pad
- charcoal or 6B graphite
- Cad Yellow Light oil paint
- Titanium White oil paint
- Cad Red Light oil paint
- Alizarin Crimson oil paint
- Ultramarine Blue oil paint
- 6 x 8 or 8 x 10 canvas boards
- 3 landscape photos

Advise on photographic references:

Taking photographs will help your sense of composition. Find areas close by to go to on a regular basis. Go at different times of the day and take as much as you can. Don't be choosy. You can rework the composition in your studio.



Exercise 1:

Pick out 3 landscape photographs that have strong contrast between the darks and lights. Using charcoal or graphite, draw a simple value drawing for each photo. Remember to zoom in on the center of interest and eliminate unnecessary detail. See the four planes as large dark or light shapes of value.

Exercise 2:

Using the same three photos and the value drawings paint 3 color sketches on 6 x 8 or 8 x 10 canvas boards. You're blocking in the 4 planes in flat, simple areas of color. Remember the values are of first importance, then the temperature (warm or cool) then the predominant color. Give yourself a time limit (1 hour). That forces you to simplify and not get caught up in detail. Painting these outside is a good idea if you choose to.

Exercise 3:

Three artists you can search for on the internet and study. They have a good sense of simplifying planes and harmonizing color:

1. [John F. Carlson](#)
2. [Edgar Payne](#)
3. [A.T. Hibbard](#)

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