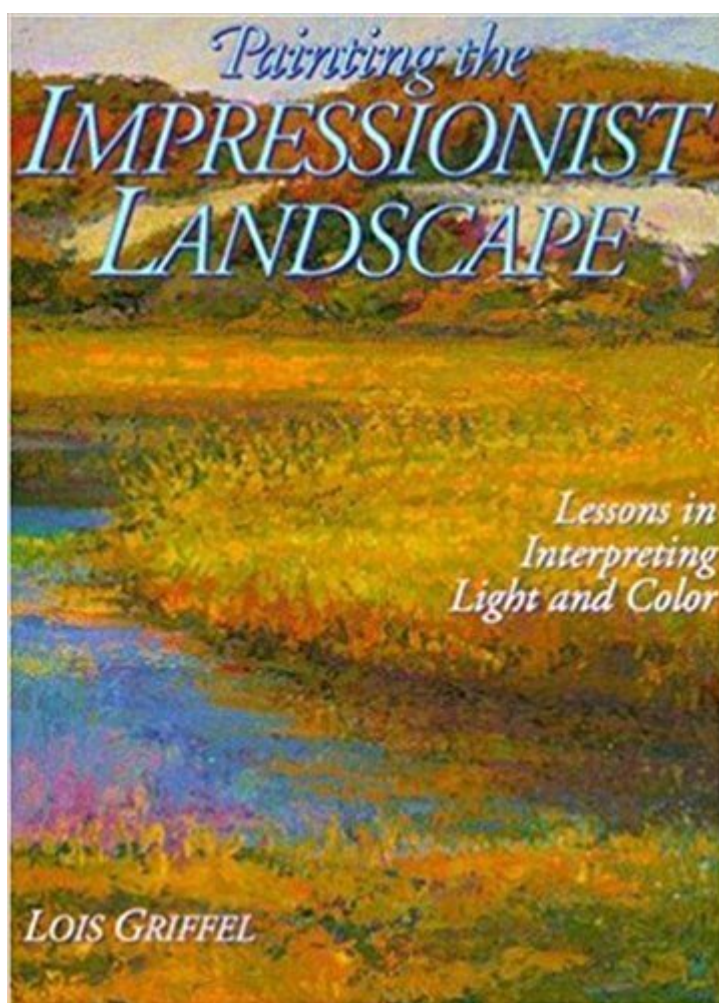


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# Painting The Impressionist Landscape: Lessons In Interpreting Light And Color



## Synopsis

Impressionism—its techniques as well as its practitioners, past and present—continues to excite the passion of artists and art enthusiasts alike. From the plein-air landscapes first painted near the forests of Barbizon outside Paris, through the fields of Giverny that Monet immortalized, to the art of American expatriates such as John Singer Sargent and the European-trained American nativists like William Merritt Chase, the influence of impressionism on American art has had a long and distinguished history. Through artistic principles developed by Charles Hawthorne, an influential American impressionist and educator who studied with Chase and founded The Cape Cod School of Art, the rich legacy of the impressionist tradition was passed on to several generations of twentieth-century American artists. In *Painting the Impressionist Landscape*, Lois Griffel, the current director of The Cape Cod School of Art and an accomplished artist in her own right, explores and illustrates Hawthorne's philosophy and theories about color and light, enabling artists at every level of ability and experience to apply his insights to their own work. The first part of the book, "Fundamentals of Color and Light," elaborates on the circumstances and individuals that contributed to the development of impressionism. The author then outlines the progression of the study of color and light that is covered in detail later in the book, from simple block studies—the most effective way to learn to use pure color to express the effects and quality of light—through the more complex rounded forms in still lifes and portraits, to the most challenging forms intrinsic to landscape. Griffel then discusses the essentials of color—its terms, the impressionist palette, and color mixing—as well as how established color theory expresses and influences the impressionist approach. The second part of the book, "Impressionism in Practice," takes readers through a series of explorations that guides them toward a mastery of the impressionist landscape. Griffel begins by itemizing the materials that artists need to prepare for painting outdoors and describing how the light of the setting affects color within the context of a composition. The detailed chapters on the studies—from sunny day and cloudy day blocks, to still lifes and portraits, culminating in landscapes—are all structured to lead readers through each step, enabling them first to evaluate, then eventually realize in their own painting, Hawthorne's enlightening perceptions about capturing the radiance of nature's light in art. Beautifully illustrated with the art of the author, her colleagues at the artist's colony in Provincetown, and selections by Monet, Sargent, and Hawthorne himself, *Painting the Impressionist Landscape* is a lively and informative guide to expressing light as color in art.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Impressionism - its techniques as well as its practitioners, past and present - continues to excite the passion of artists and art enthusiasts alike. From the plein-air landscapes first painted near the forests of Barbizon outside Paris, through the fields of Giverny that Monet immortalized, to the art of American expatriates such as John Singer Sargent and the European-trained American nativists like William Merritt Chase, the influence of impressionism on American art has had a long and distinguished history. Through artistic principles developed by Charles Hawthorne, an influential American impressionist and educator who studied with Chase and founded The Cape Cod School of Art, the rich legacy of the impressionist tradition was passed on to several generations of twentieth-century American artists. In *Painting the Impressionist Landscape*, Lois Griffel, the current director of The Cape Cod School of Art and an accomplished artist in her own right, explores and illustrates Hawthorne's philosophy and theories about color and light, enabling artists at every level of ability and experience to apply his insights to their own work. The first part of the book, "Fundamentals of Color and Light", elaborates on the circumstances and individuals that contributed to the development of impressionism. The author then outlines the progression of the study of color and light that is covered in detail later in the book, from simple block studies - the most effective way to learn to use pure color to express the effects and quality of light - through the more complex rounded forms in still lifes and portraits, to the most challenging forms intrinsic to landscape. Griffel then discusses the essentials of color - its terms, the impressionist palette, and color mixing - as well as how established color theory expresses and influences the impressionist approach. The second part of the book, "Impressionism in Practice", takes readers through a series of explorations that

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Lois Griffel's lifelong interest in art began at the age of five, when she first entertained neighborhood children with her drawings and paintings. She discovered early in her career that she enjoyed teaching and attended Southern Connecticut State College in order to receive her bachelor of science degree in education. Later, while making her living as a portrait painter, she enrolled at the Art Students League and the National Academy of Design in New York, where she studied with many outstanding artists, including Everett Raymond Kinstler and Harvey Dinnerstein. Her introduction in the early 1970s to Henry Hensche, Charles Hawthorne's protégé, led to her in-depth study and practice of the impressionist theory of painting. As director and instructor at The Cape Cod School of Art, it gives her great joy to combine her loves of teaching and painting, and to share them with enthusiastic students. Ms. Griffel has had a number of one-person exhibitions throughout New England, and has been included in invitational exhibitions in New York, Chicago, Washington, D.C., and Carmel, California. She holds workshops in landscape, portrait, and figure painting throughout the northeast.

First I bought the book and after reading it went online to see where I could take a workshop from the author. I got very lucky that one was scheduled about an hour away so I could commute (well I had to wait a year for it). Others in the class flew and drove many miles to spend a week with Lois Griffel learning the basics so that we could all become better painters. I won't go into exact details (take the course/buy the book) but it was a fascinating step-by-step process. One of the great advantages is that she painted along side us, first starting the painting, giving us the beginning, then we spent the morning working in fantastically beautiful locations. It is a great privilege to watch a nationally known painter paint a landscape from start to finish, what a learning curve. My workshop

was in Sarasota FL sponsored by [...]. We painted at the Ringling Estate gardens and Crosley Powell mansion. Trees, vintage buildings, Sarasota Bay, perfect weather, what more could we ask for. (Saw a famous actress stroll through too). Monet is my favorite artist (Griffels also) and she teaches how to paint in that style, in a way that is learnable. My classmates were some of the nicest people ever, many highly talented and well-trained. I am not but felt just as welcome. If you can't afford a workshop BUY THE BOOK. Plus she has a new one coming out soon (summer 2010).

The title, "Painting the Impressionist Landscape: Lessons in Interpreting Light and Color", is an accurate description, but the book is even more than this. It provides a mini-course in clearly seeing color, translating this information into paint, beginning or "blocking in" the basic colors of a scene, building upon those initial color decisions, and creating a finished study or painting. There is logic to the process that, once explained in Lois Griffel's clear, detailed writing, can be used by any painter, whether they consider themselves an impressionist or they work in any other style of painting. Even abstract painters can learn from this book because the underlying abstract qualities found in a landscape are clearly illustrated in the descriptions and paintings-in-progress that are presented. The information provided in the block studies and the landscape painting sections of the book will be helpful to the beginner or advanced artist. By working on block studies, then proceeding to landscape paintings, a method for breaking down the complexity of a scene to its basic components is shown. The many examples of paintings by a variety of artists (including many by the author) support the written descriptions and reinforce the concepts being presented. While the Cape Cod School of Art is no longer in Provincetown, MA, a search of the web turned up Lois Griffel's website, which you might want to check out. It is still possible to take a workshop with her, something I look forward to doing in the near future.

I would highly recommend this book. I'm a former art student who has recently gone back to painting and this book gave me a huge boost in the right direction. I did one block study and went right to a couple of her landscape demonstrations - matching her technique and color choices. That's all it took for me to understand her theory of how to use color to define the lights and darks in a painting and now I feel I can take what I've learned and apply it to any work I do in the future. That to me is an important tool with any art instruction book. You must be able to take what you're learning and understand how to use it in a more general way - not just within the confines of rote copying from the lessons. In essence the author teaches you to look for warms, cools, or neutrals in the landscape (or any object really), check for its value (where it fits on the grayscale), and simply

use a color to represent that shade you see. (i.e. the shadows of a yellow object could be a deep purple or blue; a mountain in the distance can be underpainted with purples and greens and scumbled with its complementary colors to get a beautiful, vibrant effect.

The author explains the use of light and color in such meaningful and simple to understand ways, this book is worth a year of lessons. Ms. Griffel's selection of sample paintings - including her own works - to make her points are remarkably beautiful. This will remain on my center table for quite a while.

Lois Griffel introduces and explains the color theories of Charles Hawthorn which have been passed down since 1899 through his Cape Cod School of Art in Provincetown, Massachusetts. The color theories and approach to painting presented in the book are exciting and Lois demonstrates the concepts through a series of simple exercises. Throughout the book Lois presents beautiful color images of impressionist landscape paintings and pastels to illustrate the techniques through multiple examples. I bought this book because it sounded interesting even though I was looking for a book on Henry Moore. It was one of the best impulse purchase I have ever made and I highly recommend it to any student interested with the Impressionist techniques of light and color and wanting to advance their knowledge and improve their style.

this book has been an inspiration to me!. It really gave me a better sense of how to bring colors to life with the application of many hues in the same grey scale area. It has encouraged me to use more color and to use it with more passion and pleasure.

great book and delivered on time

This was a very in depth book on the rendering of light in an impressionistic method. I had a hard time understanding the bases of her color choices. Perhaps after I study light in more depth, I will understand why each choice is being made.

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