

COURSE INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the London Art College landscape painting and drawing course. We aim to give you a comprehensive guide to producing your own landscape paintings and drawings so that you may develop your skills and grow – from whatever point you are currently at. Whether you are a complete beginner or someone who has always painted and drawn from the landscape, this course will aid you and expand your awareness of the subject.

Distance learning methods

To get the most from your investment with us we strongly advise that you work through the set exercises in the order they are provided so you build, step by step, a set of skills and procedures which you can adapt. If you follow the course as intended, sending the work you have done at each stage when asked to, you will establish a rapport with your tutor. Distance learning protocols mean there will always be a short time delay whilst your work is processed and a critique prepared. Allow for this and have the patience to wait until you have received your tutor's comments before setting about the next exercises if you can. This course will occasionally give you interim exercises to work on in the meantime – do these exercises if you are 'champing at the bit' for something to do. Try to avoid rushing forward to the next stage. The tuition you receive will require you to reflect on what you have done and by so doing, you should experience changes in your attitude and see gradual improvement. What is required, especially of adult learners, is that you keep an open mind; accept positive, constructive criticism gracefully and act on the advice you are given. At each stage when we want to see some work from you, there will be a reminder of what to do in the syllabus.

Presenting your work

Often students can be careless at this stage or over careful. When you present your efforts to anyone, including your tutor, try to have a sense of positive self-esteem about what you are doing even if you are unsure of yourself. Depending on whether you are posting it overland or putting it on to the LAC website, you need to ensure it is presented in the best light, without messy, crumpled edges etc. Make it look as though you care about yourself and others will do so too. There is no need to be overweening about this – some students put more energy into wrapping and framing their work than actually doing it. Just ensure it is square on to the camera or scanner (if using those methods), sufficiently well lit and that the whole image is 'in the frame'. Follow the web site guidelines for sending in your work if using this method. If posting your work use a robust enough envelope which will accommodate it (don't fold it or squeeze it in), seal it and address it correctly. Don't use flimsy packaging, your artworks will be damaged or lost in the post if you do. Also, do not use tubes. Rolling your work makes it hard to unwrap and view and a conventional audio tape will not usually fit into a tube.

With landscape subjects, like all images, they can be large or small. Producing work which can be managed in terms of getting it to (and from) the tutor's centre is one consideration. Size shouldn't be dictated or restricted, though it helps if work can be A4 size some of the time. Bigger works take more time and can cost more, but, people with arthritic conditions often benefit from working on a larger scale. Some will be uncomfortable working on a large scale; you have to find a scale that suits you.



Sunbathers at Pevensey Bay by Alan Dedman, 1986.

A group of Afro-caribbean women spend the day at the beach. The colours noted below them are about the local colours of their blouses. Set against the light of the sea and sand and the dark green of the harbour wall, this is enough information to start a painting with.



Windy day at West Bay by Alan Dedman, 2007.

Another fast watercolour, catching the essence of British Summertime at the beach – fragile moments when people dare to expose themselves to the elements for the dubious pleasure of ‘bathing’ in the sea.



Street in Andalucía by Alan Dedman, 1988.

This sketch gives a clear idea of where the artist is stood in relation to his subject matter. The dark, thin mark on the right is the barely visible outline of a nearby wall. Opposite, a shadow cast over the descending steps leading away from the view, cuts across the vertical of another wall. This helps to frame the view. The steps indicate the fall of the land (the lie of the land) away from the station point. The verticals in the buildings and the direction of the rooftops all add cues as to the feel of the landscape/townscape.

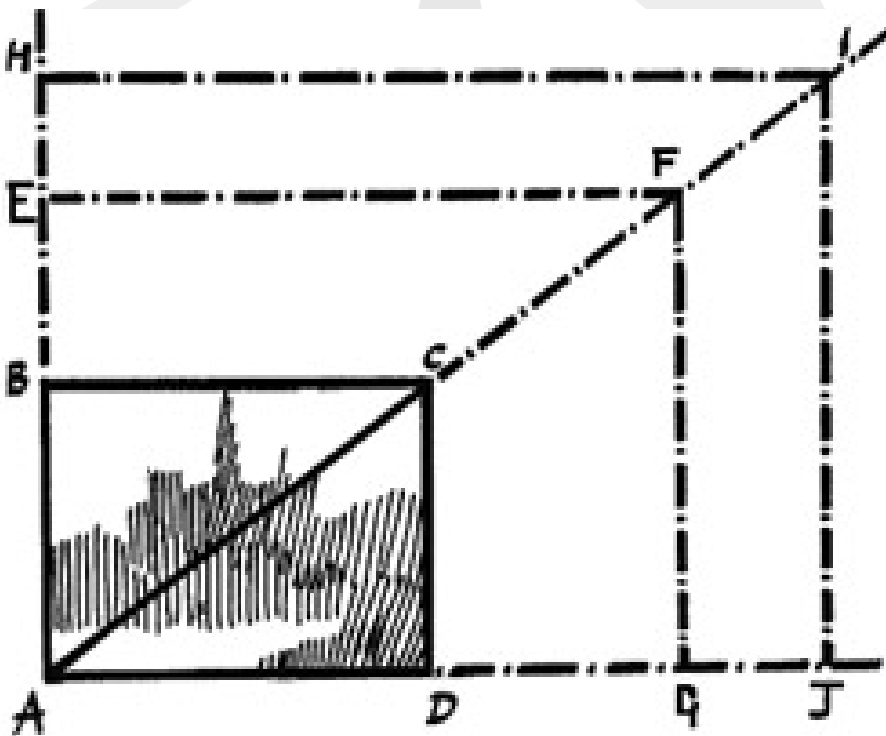


Norfolk landscape by Alan Dedman, 1980.



Barns in Somerset by Robert Polhill Bevan, circa 1850 – 1880.

There is a very simple way of enlarging a picture and keeping the same proportions. Look at the picture below. You will see that anything drawn in relation to the hypotenuse (line C) will be larger but in exactly the same proportion as the smaller picture.



Compare it to this image of another scene with trees in it by Alan Dedman.



Sunrise at Clevedon by Alan Dedman, 2002.

Winston Churchill's painting is a view upon a scene 'as given', he took it as he found it and painted it from observation. What he didn't do, was search around much. He didn't find a point of view that could offer 'the audience' (those who would share his pleasure in the view) a journey, through the scene and out into the space beyond it. It's almost a 'blind' corner within the grounds of an ostentatious estate. The paths suggest a journey beyond the confines of the image, the light and colours are optimistic, but the painter's sense of space could have been greater here.

When you paint a landscape scene, look for ways of allowing your eyes (and ultimately, the viewers' eyes) to wind their way through a series of spatial cues so the scene offers a sense of openness and expansion. Try to include figures if you can – the figures in *Sunrise at Clevedon* aren't perfectly placed, but they animate the scene and add interest. It isn't a lonely scene because of this. Bear in mind the effect your landscape paintings will have on those who look at them and your own state of mind whilst you work. The solitude of painting in the landscape can be a balm for many, but don't let it become a lonely activity. After the death of his beloved Saskia, Rembrandt turned to the landscape around Amsterdam, where he found solace. The landscape and nature can do this for people; be aware of your feelings as you work and if you do feel lonely, try to make contact with friends or family. Be careful of getting into conversation with strangers!