

MESSAGE FROM ERIC

- March -

Dear Eric,

I like to paint on location what I see; I like more representational paintings, but my paintings are still a mess! What am I doing wrong? - Janice from Hawaii

Janice,

You live in a nice environment that is conducive to outdoor painting- I see why you would be drawn to that. I think - and this is after many years of working with students- that your problem is an issue of perception; you are not seeing relationships and objects correctly. I would guess that you are letting your mind override what you are observing through your retina and

transposing the information into what you think you are seeing. All traditional artists have had to train themselves to see and not impose, or assume, on their subject. Frequently, I have had to tell my students to pretend they have stepped off a spaceship from Mars and are seeing things for the first time.

Examples of our minds imposing on the visual accuracy of our subject abound- but I will give you a very common misperception: white buildings in shadow. They are a dark, and not a light as our minds may fool us to believe.

How to correct our vision? There are several ways. Squint and compare the values of the large masses- which is darkest and which is lightest, and what falls between. This is true for any subject matter, but especially so for landscapes. Do not assume you know without looking carefully! Values that are similar should be grouped together into one value for simplicity and a strong design.

Secondly, a life drawing class will expose errors in your drawing, as you will easily be able to identify erroneous proportions. We all know what a correct human figure should look like.

Keep your brush wet!

Eric



AWS Gold Medal of Honor Award

