

# THE #1 WAY To Improve Your Artwork

# Acrylics

**TRANSFORM YOUR  
ACRYLIC PAINTINGS**

by discovering the single, most common  
mistake made by struggling artists.



**ArtTutor.com**

by *Bob Davies* and  
*Will Kemp*

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

### Bob Davies

Bob has been teaching drawing and painting for more than 20 years. He passionately believes that anyone can create pleasing artwork when they're shown certain fundamental techniques – something that the schooling system sadly fails to do.



Bob is the creator of what is now the number one selling watercolour instruction DVD series in the world, *Watercolour Secrets*, and the accompanying e-book has been downloaded by more than a quarter of a million people worldwide. He's also the co-founder of ArtTutor.com.

You can see an outline of Bob's Watercolour Video course here:  
[www.arttutor.com/watercolour-painting-foundation-course](http://www.arttutor.com/watercolour-painting-foundation-course)

### Will Kemp

Will is an experienced artist and an award-winning teacher. He has a wealth of experience in the art world, and has done everything from studying in Italy to running his own art gallery, and he loves to share his expertise.



Currently he runs his own online art school from his studio in Cheshire where he concentrates on making the mysteries of painting and drawing accessible to new and frustrated artists.

[You can see Will's course on Acrylic Still Life for Beginners here](#)

You can find out more about Will at [www.willkempartschool.com](http://www.willkempartschool.com)

# CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b>	Page 4
<b>Section 1 – It’s About Creating Value</b>	Page 6
1.1 What is value?	Page 6
1.2 And what is value contrast?	Page 6
1.3 Value contrast applies to colour too	Page 7
1.4 Form and viewing distance	Page 9
<b>Section 2 – Tools To Check Value</b>	Page 13
2.1 Squint and defocus your eyes	Page 13
2.2 Use a grey scale	Page 14
2.3 Make your own ‘redeye’ filter	Page 18
<b>Section 3 – Monochrome Exercises</b>	Page 19
3.1 Exercise 1 – Castle drawing	Page 19
3.2 Exercise 2 – Monochrome painting: Lake Garda	Page 28
<b>Section 4 – Colour Exercises</b>	Page 41
4.1 Exercise 1 – Value match real objects	Page 41
4.2 Exercise 2 – Full colour painting: Russet	Page 43
<b>Section 5 – Extra Value Tips</b>	Page 54
5.1 Abrupt and transitional value contrast	Page 54
5.2 Counter change and focal points	Page 59
<b>About ArtTutor.com</b>	Page 65



## INTRODUCTION

Over many years, I've seen students looking ruefully at their latest painting, wondering why it hasn't turned out as they expected. They've mixed nice colours (not muddy), the perspective has been pretty good and there may have been very little wrong with the composition.

Yet invariably there follows a comment along the lines of:

*"...Well, it's OK, but something's missing and I don't know what is or even if I did, how I go about fixing it..."*

Now lots of skills and techniques go into making a good painting but there is one that stands out. Most of our art tutors and experienced artists agree it's the number one reason why a piece of art looks poor.

This e-book outlines what that is. More importantly, it shows you how to overcome the problem so you'll never be trapped by it again.

You've probably heard of it already but I'd be willing to suggest that you don't have a real **practical** understanding of how it can affect your paintings and drawings.

Don't under-estimate or dismiss the simplicity of what it is. Without it, your pictures will always remain a tantalizing step away from being the minor masterpieces you strive to achieve.

Read and apply the techniques and exercises in this e-book and you will get to understand:

- Why your pictures lack depth
- Why they look flat, dull and lifeless
- Why an otherwise good composition doesn't seem to work
- Why just using brighter colours seems to have no great effect

And you'll discover:

- How to give your picture punch, vibrancy and impact
- How to create depth and that 3D look that jumps off the page
- Simple ways to plan your picture to avoid problems in the future

This e-book will teach you not just techniques but a state of mind.

So what is this number one mistake?

**It's something called tonal or value contrast.**

And if your artwork doesn't make proper use of it, it will have no life, no real form or shape, no punch, and certainly no oomph that's going to make you want to eagerly show it off to family and friends.

You can read this e-book from cover-to-cover in under an hour. A lot of people will do just that... and then never actually work through the exercises. Please don't be one of those people! Follow along. Get your pencils and brushes out and work with these techniques. You'll be delighted with the results!



Image 1

This painting has punch! You might think it's the vibrant use of colour and that helps. But more important are the contrasting values and where they've been placed – something you're about to learn all about!

## SECTION 1 – IT’S ABOUT CREATING VALUE

### 1.1 What is value?

You’ll often hear professional artists and art tutors use various terms when they talk about producing a painting, terms like: hues, tone, value, shades, tints, chroma. All of these relate to the wider subject of colour theory.

Don’t worry, the purpose of this e-book *isn’t* to convert you into an expert in colour theory! The goal is to have you producing much more pleasing and impactful artwork by fully understanding a few key principles on a practical level.

Yep, we need to cover a little bit of theory but it won’t be heavy going and we’ll use plenty of real-world examples and exercises so that it really sinks in.

So let’s begin with one of the terms above – ‘**value**’...

**Value refers to the lightness or darkness of a colour.** So a dark blue has greater value than a light blue. If you imagine a scale of value, black would be at one end of the extreme and white at the other.

### 1.2 And what is value contrast?

As you know, artists work on a flat 2-dimensional piece of paper or canvas. They have to use *illusion* in order to make objects in their pictures look 3-dimensional and jump off the surface.

They achieve this, to a large extent, through **value contrast**.

We already know that value refers to how light or dark a colour is, so let’s get clear on what ‘contrast’ means...

Contrast, in the wider sense, simply refers to the difference or similarity between two or more things we compare. High contrast means there’s a lot of difference. Low contrast means there’s very little difference.

If you’ve ever played around with the contrast button on your TV set, you’ll know the sort of effect it can have...

Image 2 – the effect of changing the contrast control on your TV from low, to normal, to high contrast



In your artwork, all that value contrast refers to is the difference in lightness and darkness between various parts of the picture. Look at the two boxes I've drawn below:

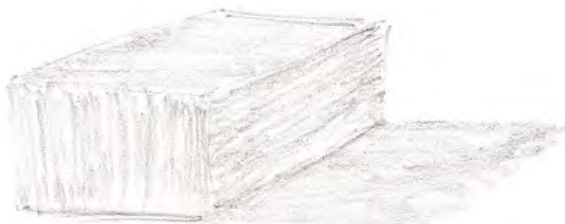


Image 3

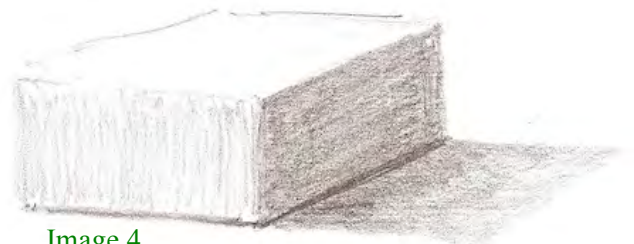


Image 4

The top and sides of the box in Image 3 are similar in value (they're about the same darkness or lightness as each other). So we can say that Image 3 has low value contrast overall.

In Image 4, the sides of the box are obviously very different in their value. We can say that this box has high value contrast.

It probably doesn't need me to point it out, but can you see how Image 4 looks much more 3-dimensional and solid? It jumps off the page.

The number one reason why poor-looking artwork looks, well, less than inspiring is because it makes poor use of value contrast. Poor use of value contrast will make an image look flat and 2-dimensional instead of punchy and solid.

### 1.3 Value contrast applies to colour too

Most newcomers can grasp this concept of value contrast when producing a black and white picture - such as a pencil or charcoal drawing for example. It's obvious that using lighter and darker values is the only way to separate different shapes in a picture that has no colour.

However, in my experience, struggling artists aren't nearly bold enough in the *range* of values they use – their darkest darks aren't dark enough and their lightest lights aren't light enough. The result is often a flat-looking pencil sketch.

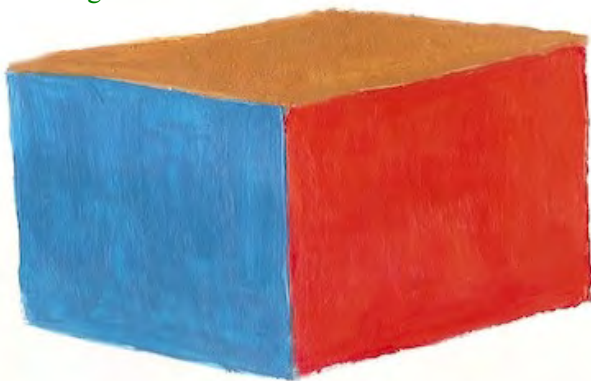
We'll address this problem with practical examples and exercises in Section 3 so that it's never an issue in your artwork again.

But to finish this section, I want to briefly address what happens when you add colour into the mix – because that's when I think problems really start to occur.

By now you know that a dark blue has greater value than, say, a light yellow. But (and this is crucial) did you know that two completely different colours that you might *think* will clearly stand out from each other could actually have the same value?

Let's look at an example...

Image 5

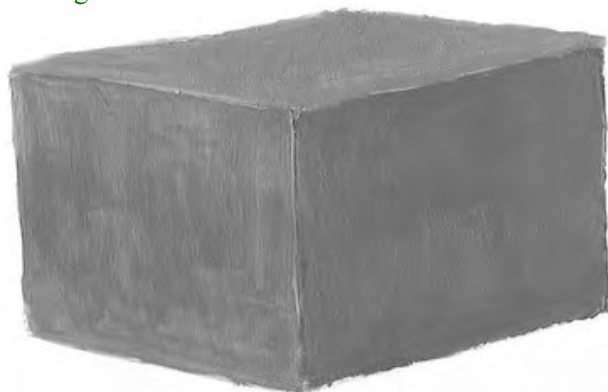


In terms of value, you would say blue is usually darker than red, and red is certainly darker than yellow. The sides of this box in Image 5 are obviously easily distinguishable from one another.

But there seems to be something not quite right here. The colours are bold but despite that, it seems a bit dull and lifeless.

In Image 6, let's strip away the colour to reveal the value in greyscale...

Image 6



Straight away, you can see the value of the three colours – Cadmium Red, Cerulean Blue and Yellow Ochre in this case – are identical.

The eye can be fooled by a variety of colours being the same, or a very similar, value. Sure, a Pthalo or Ultramarine

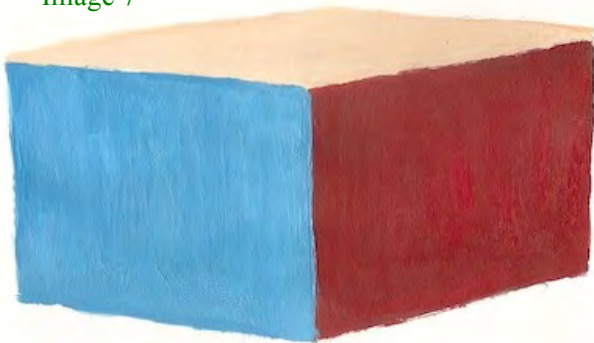


Blue is going to be stronger and darker than a Lemon Yellow, no matter how strong you paint the latter...

*But when you start mixing your colours on the palette to create new ones or to make them lighter or darker, this is when you need to take into account how their value will fit into the overall picture, rather than merely concentrating on what sort of colour you create.*

Let's have another go at our coloured box and the same three colours in Image 7...

Image 7



This time I've darkened the red, slightly lightened the blue and significantly lightened the yellow.

Now the shapes look like a box, with form and light and shade, even without any shadow being cast.

You get the impression that strong light is falling on the top, with a bit less light on the blue side and the red side being in deep shadow. This happens irrespective of the colours I've used because I've adjusted their value to 'create' the shape of the box. To confirm this, look at the new box in greyscale in Image 8...

Image 8



Notice how this box looks much more 3-dimensional?

If you don't understand or check the value of the colours you place on your painting (and where you're placing them), the result is likely to be a flat, lifeless image that you won't be inspired to show off to friends

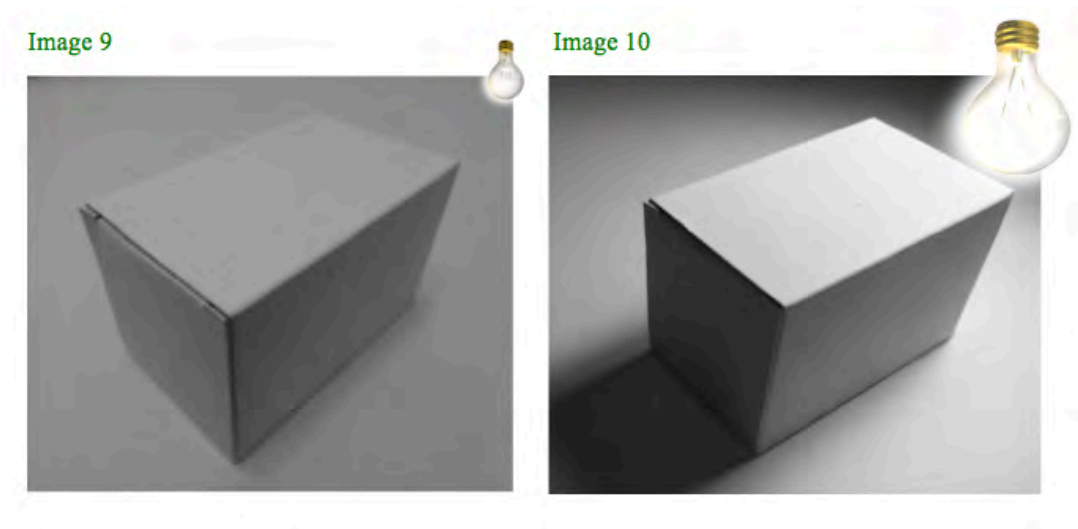
or family.

## 1.4 Form and viewing distance

In our example of a box with high value contrast above, the different values we used for the three sides of the box reflect the light source -

the way light strikes one side of the box and puts the others in relative shadow.

The stronger the light source, the starker the contrast will be between the lights and darks. Compare these two photos (Images 9 & 10) of a simple white box...



In this sense, we are using value contrast to create form and give an object on a flat piece of paper a 3-dimensional look. Incidentally, a really wide range between the lightest lights and darkest darks, gives the impression of a stronger light source – something we'll look at later on.

Aside from creating form, we also use contrasting values to give an image a sense of **depth and distance**. Landscapes illustrate this point really well...

As an object moves farther into the distance it will have increasingly less value, in other words it becomes lighter. Even a very dark element (like a slate roof on a cottage) will appear relatively light when it's far enough away.

You can show this in a representational form by looking at the following two photos (Images 11 & 12)...



Image 11



Image 12

If you painted a landscape, you'd probably have these three elements of sky, middle distance and foreground. In this case they're represented by streaks of blue, green and brown.

However, they're all a pretty similar value (look at the greyscale version next to it).

Now let's adjust them, in Images 13 and 14, to better represent distant sky, middle distance trees and a foreground field...



Image 13



Image 14

See how the adjustment of the sky and the tree colours has given, even in this abstract example, a much greater degree of depth and distance. It's even more apparent when you compare the two black and white versions.

Moving on to something more realistic, take a look at the two sketch paintings below in Images 15 and 16...



Image 15



Image 16

**Image 15** - The values of the near hills are actually lighter compared to the distant hills. It's hard to distinguish between the middle distance hills because they are the same value.

**Image 16** - The values become progressively lighter into the distance. The edges of the middle distance hills are darker than the hills behind them to create contrast and separation.

With that bit of theory under our hat, let's look at 3 simple tools you can use to help you see values within a painting much more easily...

### Follow ArtTutor on social media

For tips, video lessons, behind the scenes photos and inspirational artwork...

 Facebook - [www.facebook.com/ArtTutorOnline](http://www.facebook.com/ArtTutorOnline)

 Pinterest - [www.pinterest.com/ArtTutor](http://www.pinterest.com/ArtTutor)

 Twitter - [www.twitter.com/ArtTutorOnline](http://www.twitter.com/ArtTutorOnline)

 YouTube - [www.youtube.com/user/ArtTutorOnline](http://www.youtube.com/user/ArtTutorOnline)



## SECTION 2 – TOOLS TO CHECK VALUE

### 2.1 Squint and defocus your eyes

People often squint slightly when they struggle to read something because it's slightly out of focus for them. Subtle squinting reduces the extraneous light and can make a point of focus sharper and clearer.

However, if you squint a bit harder and let your eyes defocus slightly, you'll notice that your picture of the world becomes less detailed. Stripping out the detail allows you to see masses of colour and value (those light and dark areas) much more easily.

Here's what squinting and defocusing your eyes should make things look like...

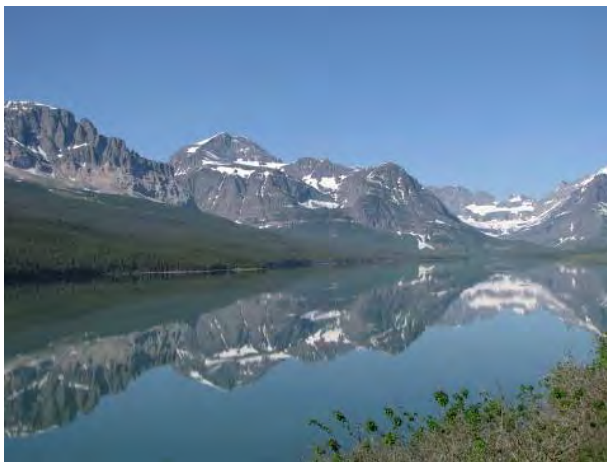


Image 17 – before squinting



Image 18 – after squinting (less detail, darks are darker, lights are lighter)

Squinting and checking for values (both in your own artwork as it progresses and your reference material) is something you should make a habit of. You really can't do too much of it during the painting process.

Let's move on to tool number 2...

## 2.2 Use a grey scale



If you find squinting / defocusing your eyes doesn't make the various values of an image clear enough for you, you should try using a grey scale.

In fact, even if squinting works well for you, a grey scale is so easy to make and so useful it's well worth having one by your side whenever you paint.

What is a grey scale?

For our purposes, it's simply a strip of card or paper with 5-7 values of grey that range from very light grey to a very dark grey.

I created the one on the left with acrylic paint but you can use any paint medium or a graphite pencil using varying degrees of pressure. It's roughly 8" x 1.5".

We're going to use this grey scale to examine a reference photo of Stalker Castle (Image 19) in Scotland and then create a small sketch of the castle itself.

Image 19



We're not going to work from colour just yet, but I want to draw your attention to a couple of things in the colour photo to the left...

Notice the distant hills, how pale they appear. This occurs quite naturally with

dust particles in the atmosphere and makes features paler and less distinct the further away they are.

Notice also how you can clearly see one side of the roof is lighter than the other because of the way the light is hitting the castle.

## Exercise: How To Use A Grey Scale

*Print this page out and cut out the grey scale. Use a 'good' or 'best' quality print settings rather than 'draft'.*

Image 20

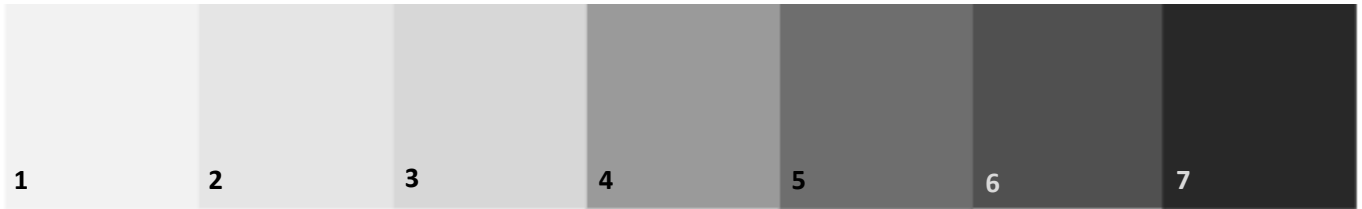


Image 21

### Instructions

Place your grey scale (Image 20) at the side of the black and white print out of the castle (Image 21). You're not allowed to pick it up yet though.

Look at the black and white photograph, screwing up your eyes to defocus them, and try to gauge which value on your grey scale most closely matches the following parts of the picture:

- The blue patch of sky above the castle
- The distant hills
- The promontory (darker land mass just below the distant hills)
- The main castle walls (both sides)
- The water by the canoeist



- The grassy area to the bottom left of the castle
- The castle doors and windows
- The floating seaweed

You won't get perfect matches – just choose the number on the scale you think looks about right. There are probably about 20 or 30 subtly different values even in this photo but you can simplify them down to the seven on the grey scale.

Once you've tried to gauge the value by eye, pick up your grey scale and hold it next the various elements of the image. Here's my attempt...

Image 22



Image 23



Image 24

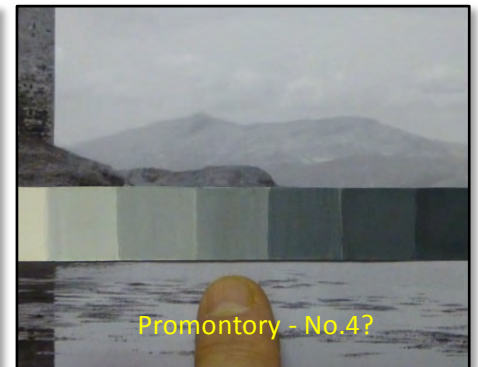


Image 25

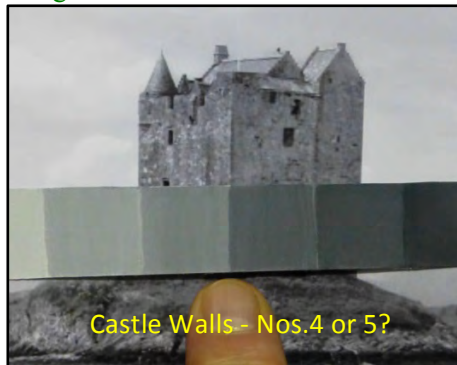


Image 26

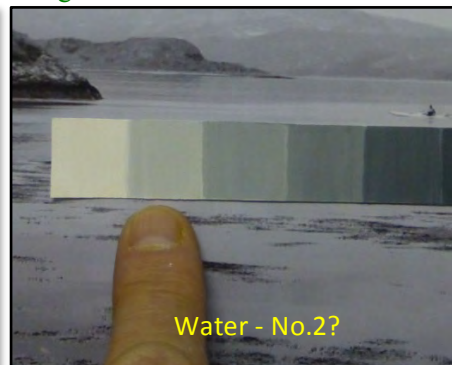


Image 27

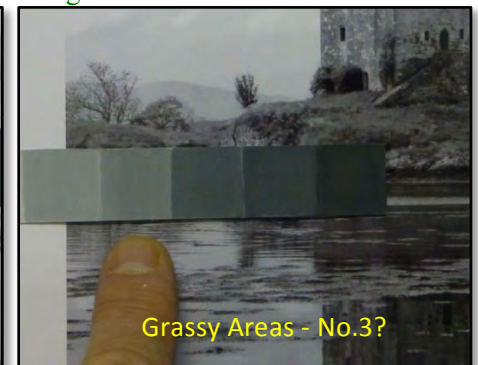


Image 28



Image 29

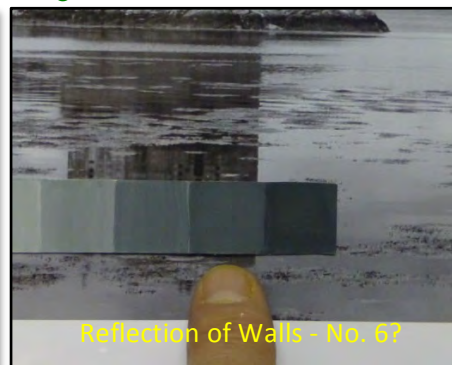


Image 30





So how did you fare? Were there elements of the picture that you found difficult to gauge until you used the scale? Here's one thing you may have noticed...

### Note the castle walls

The two main aspects of the castle walls are quite similar in tone (Image 31). Even when you screw your eyes up, there doesn't appear to be a great deal of difference.

This is where you, as an artist, have a big advantage over a photographer. You have the opportunity to strengthen or lighten one aspect of the castle to create a greater sense of dimension (Image 32).

If it's a bright, summer's scene you want to recreate, you can go to town on this and literally turn on the sunlight. If you're capturing a moodier, more overcast atmosphere you can be more subtle.

Image 31

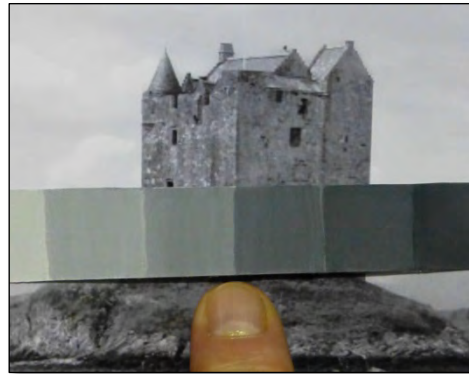
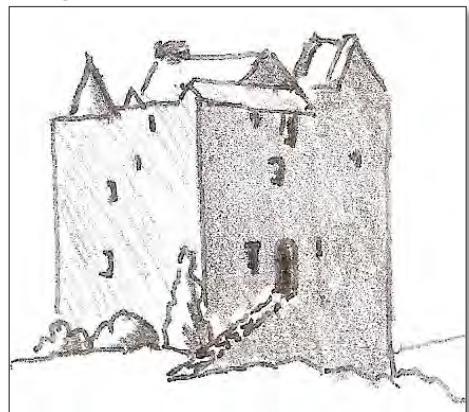


Image 32



A grey scale is a very handy little tool to have by your side – whether it's in your studio or out in the field. Keep several of them handy. Use one at every opportunity. Very soon, you'll hone an expert eye for picking out subtle (and stark) differences in value that give your artwork that master quality.

## 2.3 Make your own 'redeye' filter

Even if you find that squinting and the grey scale allows you to easily see blocks of value, I highly recommend you out try this low-tech tool. I call it my 'redeye filter'.

### What you need

A piece of red cellophane - the sort of thing you find in a florist or a sheet of red acetate or even a clear, red file cover. You only need a few square inches.

If it's quite sturdy (like a sheet of acetate) it will work as it is. If it's flimsy like cellophane, make a simple frame out of card and tape the red plastic sheet to it.

If you struggle to find anything local, do a Google or Amazon search for 'red cellophane' or 'red acetate'. You'll be able to pick up something for next to nothing.

### How it works

Hold your Redeye Checker over various parts of a painting or reference photograph. The transparent red will 'lose' most of the colour but will immediately highlight contrast values. Adjacent parts of the picture with similar values will blend into one mass.

This is the equivalent of screwing up your eyes but is easier to check specific parts of your picture. Try it on your existing artwork. If you still have a reference photo you used for a particular piece of art, try it on that too. Is there a difference between the photo and your rendition?

Image 33



Image 34



## SECTION 3 – MONOCHROME EXERCISES

### 3.1 Exercise 1 – Castle drawing

In this first exercise, you're going to produce a pencil drawing of the castle photograph we examined earlier.

What we are NOT aiming for is a detailed, life-like drawing. The entire purpose of this exercise is to get you to 'look past' the details and see overall values.

You're going to make meticulous use of both the grey scale and squinting or defocusing your eyes. If you don't I can almost guarantee what will happen (answer at the end of this exercise!).

You won't have to be this meticulous with your grey scale for future drawings or paintings, but I strongly encourage you to take lots of time checking the strength of light and dark areas for this one. Doing so will really help this habit and skill to sink in.

I'll be creating the drawing along with you and I'll provide plenty of guidance along the way. So grab yourself a beverage of choice and let's make a start...

#### What you'll need:

- A sheet of drawing paper, A5 is big enough. Printer paper is okay, but a heavier weight, smooth drawing paper is better.
- An HB, B and 3B or 4B pencil.
- A putty eraser. Nothing like being optimistic hey!
- A print-out of the next page of this e-book, which contains the line drawing and reference photo.

#### Line drawing, reference photograph and grey scale

You'll find these on the next page. The line drawing will print on to half a sheet of A4 printer paper. Trace your printed line drawing on to your drawing paper (see my [Drawing Foundation Course](#) at ArtTutor for a video lesson on this).

You'll want to then cut out the grey scale strip.

And you're good to go!

1

2

3

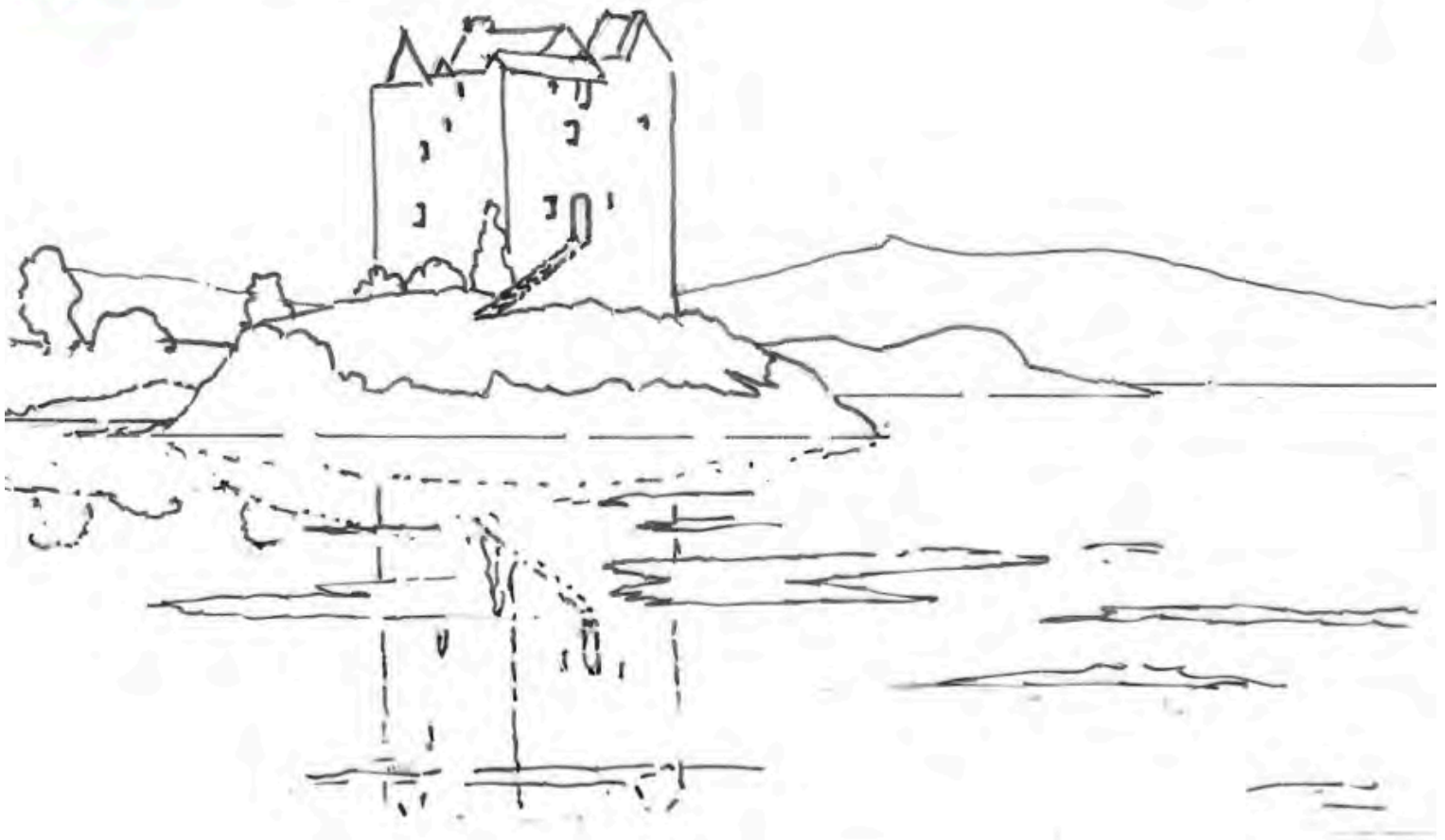
4

5

6

7

Image 35

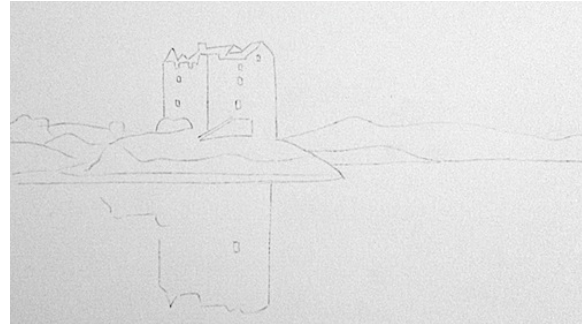
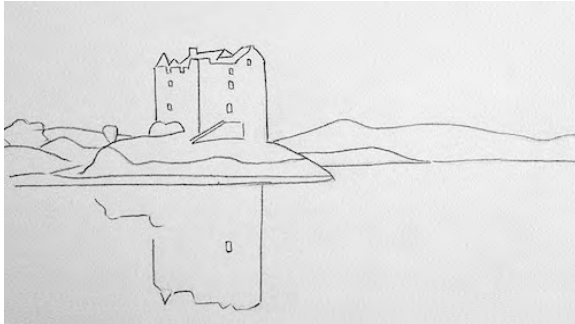




## Preparation

The first thing I've done is lightened off my line drawing using a putty eraser. It probably won't matter for the castle walls, but the distant mountains will look like they have an outline and this can distort your judgement of the correct value in this area. You'll want to do this whenever you trace a line drawing for a watercolour painting.

Image 36



## Sky & Water Area

Look at your reference photo and really defocus / squint your eyes. What value on our grey scale would you say the sky is **overall**?

Overall is the key word here – yes there are patches of cloud and darker areas but if you squint enough and step back from the photo, you should be able to choose a single value that roughly represents the entire area.

I'm going to choose a value #2 and using my HB pencil. I'm holding the pencil almost parallel to the paper and using the side edge of the graphite with the lightest of diagonal strokes to lay down the minimum amount of tone I can. I'll do the same for the water using horizontal strokes.

Image 37

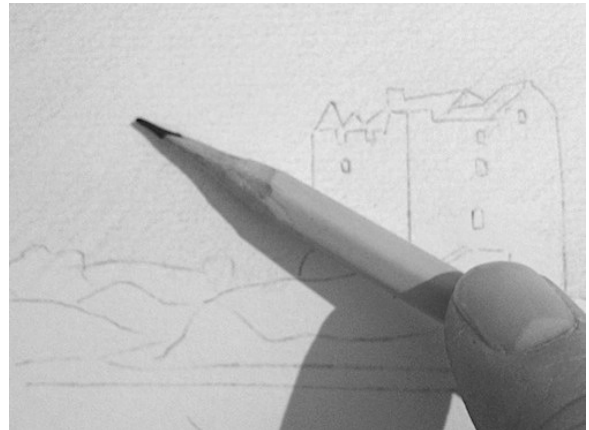
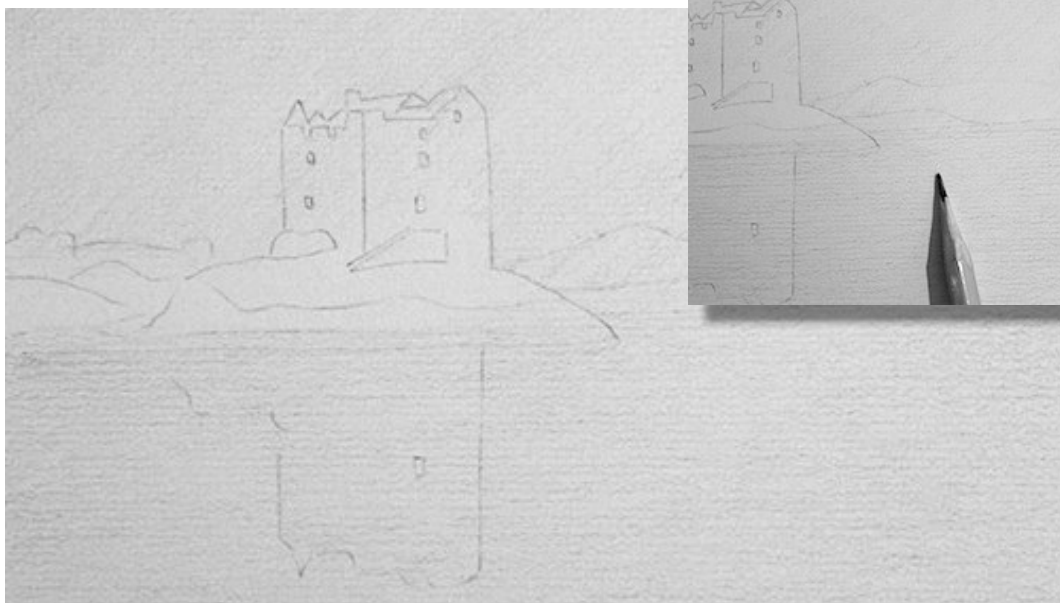


Image 38

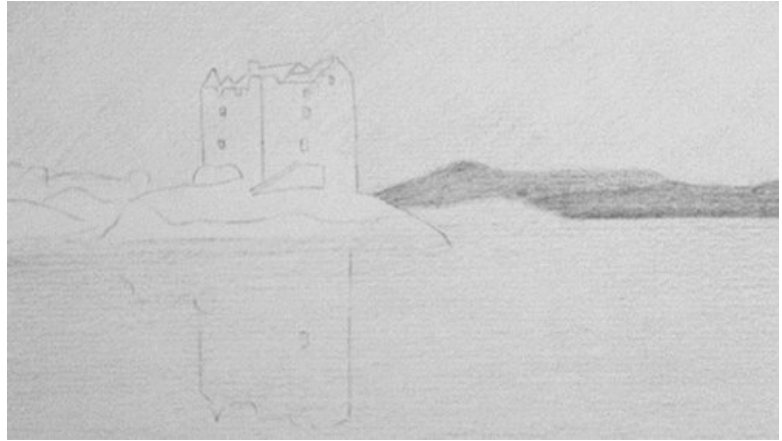


Notice how the water is a slightly darker value than the sky? Again, ignore the details of the seaweed and ripples and cloud reflections. Stand back from the photo, defocus your eyes and compare the area by the canoeist to the sky above her.

## Distant Hills and Promontory

Image 39

What value would you choose for the distant hills as a whole? They are slightly darker to the right but I'm going for #3 with my HB.

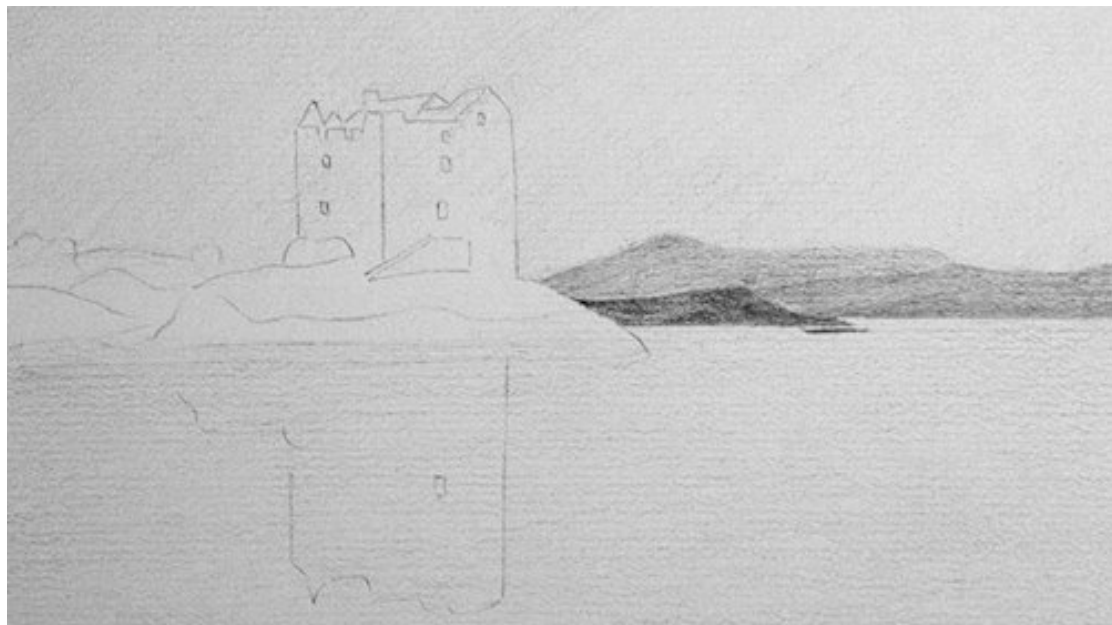


Place your grey scale on a bit of scrap paper and shade a small swatch of graphite directly below the value #3 square. Learn how much pressure and how much graphite you need to apply to create value #3.

Now add this to your distant hills.

For the smaller promontory I'm using value #4. Again, ignore any rocky undulations and details. Just block the area in with your HB. Oh, and while you're doing that make a mental note of whether the promontory is a stronger or weaker value than the grassy bank of the castle.

Image 40



## Castle Walls

This is where almost everyone (in fact, everyone) makes the same mistake. Here's what I'd like you to do (and please don't cheat!)...

On a scrap of paper, WITHOUT using your grey scale or squinting your eyes, lay down a block of tone with your pencil that you think is about the correct value for the left hand castle wall.



Image 41

Blur your eyes. Look at the right hand edge of the castle wall in particular. Look at the contrast with the sky. My castle drawing on the top needs to be at least a value darker.

Again, ignore the details of brickwork and weathering and just lay down an overall value on your paper.

Now measure both the wall in the photo and your block of tone with your grey scale (and squint your eyes). Literally everyone sees the wall much lighter than it is. Why?

Because you can't help but seeing the details – the light bricks in particular. But details come later. The overall value for the castle walls is about a #4.5 on my scale.

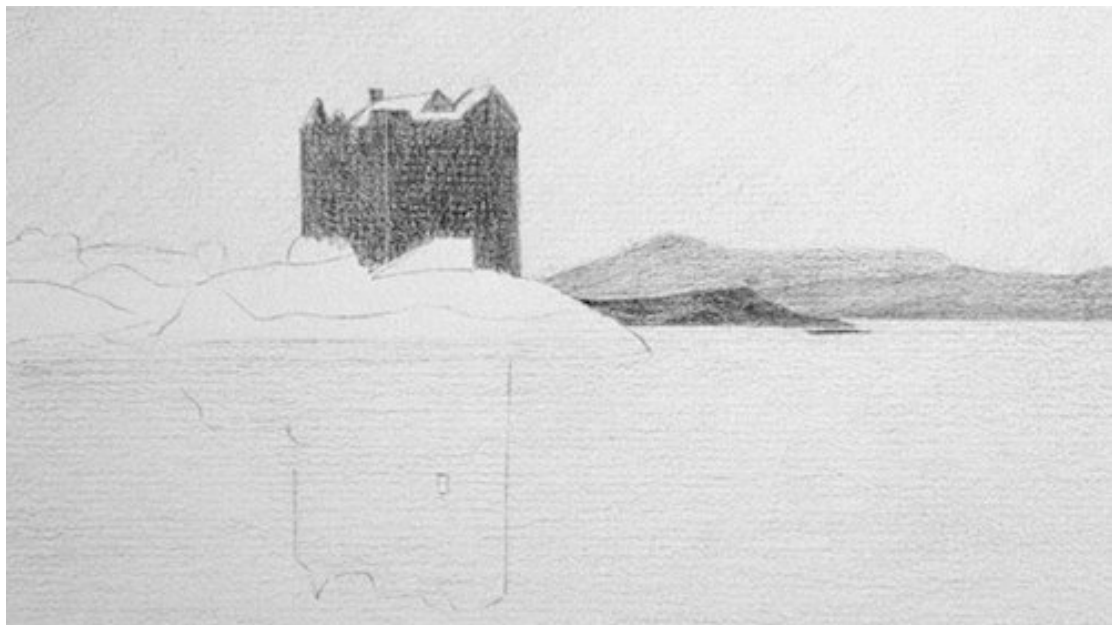


Image 42

Do my walls in Image 42 look too dark to you? I think most people would say so...



Image 43

You can clearly see here they're not! I used a B pencil for this.

### Grassy Banks, Rocky Area and Reflection

By now you should be getting the idea, so I'll move quickly through the next few sections...

The grassy banks are slightly darker than the castle. Let's go with a value #5 using the B pencil. What about the white rocky area just above the water?

This is another area I can see where my students *assume* rather than *observe*. You know they're a chalky white colour in real life so the temptation is to keep them quite light.

Blur your eyes to meld the lights and darks of the rocks into more of a single value. Darker than the sky? Absolutely. Darker than the water beneath the canoeist? Maybe about the same so let's go with value #3. Just block in the area for now – we can pick out lights with our eraser and add in some shadow detail later.



Image 44



For dark area at the bottom of the rocks, I'm pressing very firmly with a B pencil.

The castle reflection is an interesting one. I hope you can see it's a noticeably darker value than the castle itself. Reflections tend to mute value contrast – in other words there is less distinction between lights and darks.

You can see a clear example of this by comparing the very dark doorway. See how it's less distinguishable in the reflection? It's slightly lighter and the brick wall is slightly darker.

## Windows & Other Darks

Using the 4B pencil we can now add the darkest darks – value #7.

I actually erased back some of the graphite I'd laid down previously over the window and doorway areas because this allows me to achieve a darker dark with a bit more of a tooth underneath.

Image 45



At this stage the exercise is complete. Not a particularly impressive piece of artwork but it's given me plenty of practice looking for and gauging values.

I'm happy that the values are reasonably accurate and now it's time to have a bit of fun...

**Finishing Touches (optional)**

Using my putty eraser and moulding it to a point, I'm going to pick out some subtle lights on the distant hills, grassy bank, rocks and castle walls. I'll accentuate these and bring back the overall value by adding some darks.

I'll also knead the eraser into a fine 'strip' (Image 46) and pull out some ripples on the water. Again, I'll define these with some darks and add a few more bits and pieces of interest.



Image 46

And here's the finished drawing in Image 47.



Image 47

**One last thing**

I chose this photograph because unless you really do squint your eyes and use your grey scale, it will catch you out. However, from an artistic point of view we can improve on the photo...

The two aspects of the castle walls are very similar in value. By adjusting one side darker or lighter we can create greater form and a bit more interest (something that would be difficult for the photographer to do).

Let's see what difference creating some contrast between the two walls makes in Image 48...



Image 48

Please do have a go at this exercise. Remember, it's not about producing a highly refined drawing - it's a practical way for you to train your eye to see values relative to one another.


### Follow ArtTutor on social media

For tips, video lessons, behind the scenes photos and inspirational artwork...

 Facebook - [www.facebook.com/ArtTutorOnline](http://www.facebook.com/ArtTutorOnline)

 Pinterest - [www.pinterest.com/ArtTutor](http://www.pinterest.com/ArtTutor)

 Twitter - [www.twitter.com/ArtTutorOnline](http://www.twitter.com/ArtTutorOnline)

 YouTube - [www.youtube.com/user/ArtTutorOnline](http://www.youtube.com/user/ArtTutorOnline)



### 3.2 Exercise 2 – Monochrome painting: Lake Garda

Using graphite pencil is a great way to start honing your eye to really see the various values in an image. All you need to do is increase or decrease the pressure you apply and you have an infinite number of values at your disposal.

Now, let's progress to the next stage and begin to apply this to acrylic painting...

Image 49



In the next exercise, you're going to produce a monochrome painting of Lake Garda in Italy (Image 49), demonstrated by one of our ArtTutor instructors, Will Kemp. You'll be using just one colour.

Now invariably, students think of monochrome as black and white with various shades of grey in between. However, you could use red, blue, purple, brown, green or any colour, as long as it is capable of giving you several variations of value from dark to light.

The beauty of this process is that, with a little practice, it becomes second nature to select or adjust the values in monochrome and mentally translate them into colours.

In fact, many professional artists will produce a monochromatic painting and use it as a reference when producing their final piece. The painting below (Images 50 & 51) are from one of our ArtTutor video lessons and you can see how instructor [Joanne Thomas](#) has used her monochromatic study to great effect!

Image 50



Image 51

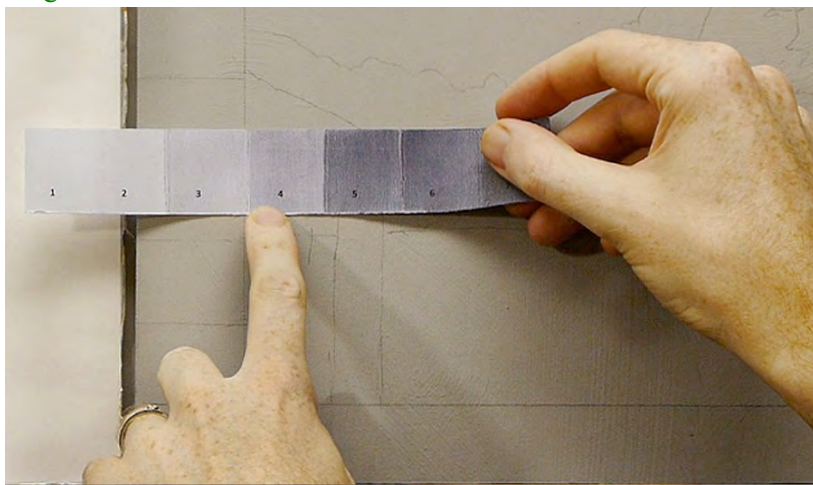




### What you'll need:

- 8 x 10 inch board, canvas or thick paper. I use 6mm MDF double primed with acrylic gesso, to which I apply a coloured ground.
- Prussian blue, titanium white, raw umber (for the coloured ground)
- 2 inch decorator's brush (for applying the coloured ground)
- Small round synthetic brush
- Small filbert hog brush (I use a size 4 black hog from Jackson's art)
- 3B pencil for drawing out
- Small painting knife (I use size 45 by RGM)
- Tear-off disposable palette or stay-wet palette
- A printout of the next 2 pages of this e-book, which contains the line drawing and reference photo.

Image 52



### Monochrome pencil scale for coloured ground

Use a value of about 4 for the coloured ground, start with the white and slowly add the raw umber in: you don't need as much as you'd think!

### Line drawing, reference photograph

You'll find these on the next two pages. The line drawing will print out to the same size as an 8 x 10 inch board. Shade over the back of this line drawing and then trace down on to your painting surface.

### Monochrome Scale

I pre-mix a 'colour string' of 5 values, using pure Prussian blue for the darkest value 7 and white for the lightest value 1. Values 2 to 6 are made by adding more white to the Prussian blue.

Mix these piles with the painting knife so you have more than you think you'll need. With acrylics you need to use more paint than with oils or watercolours.

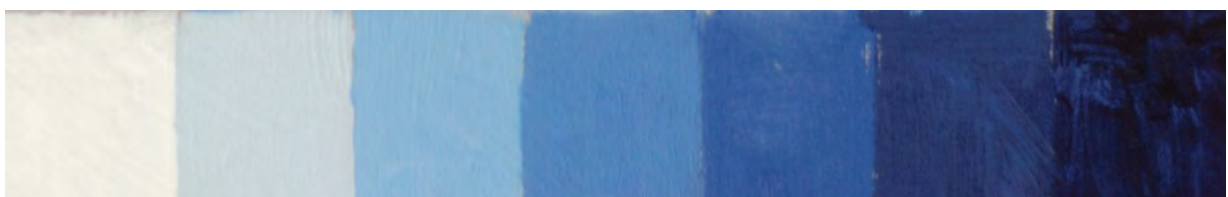
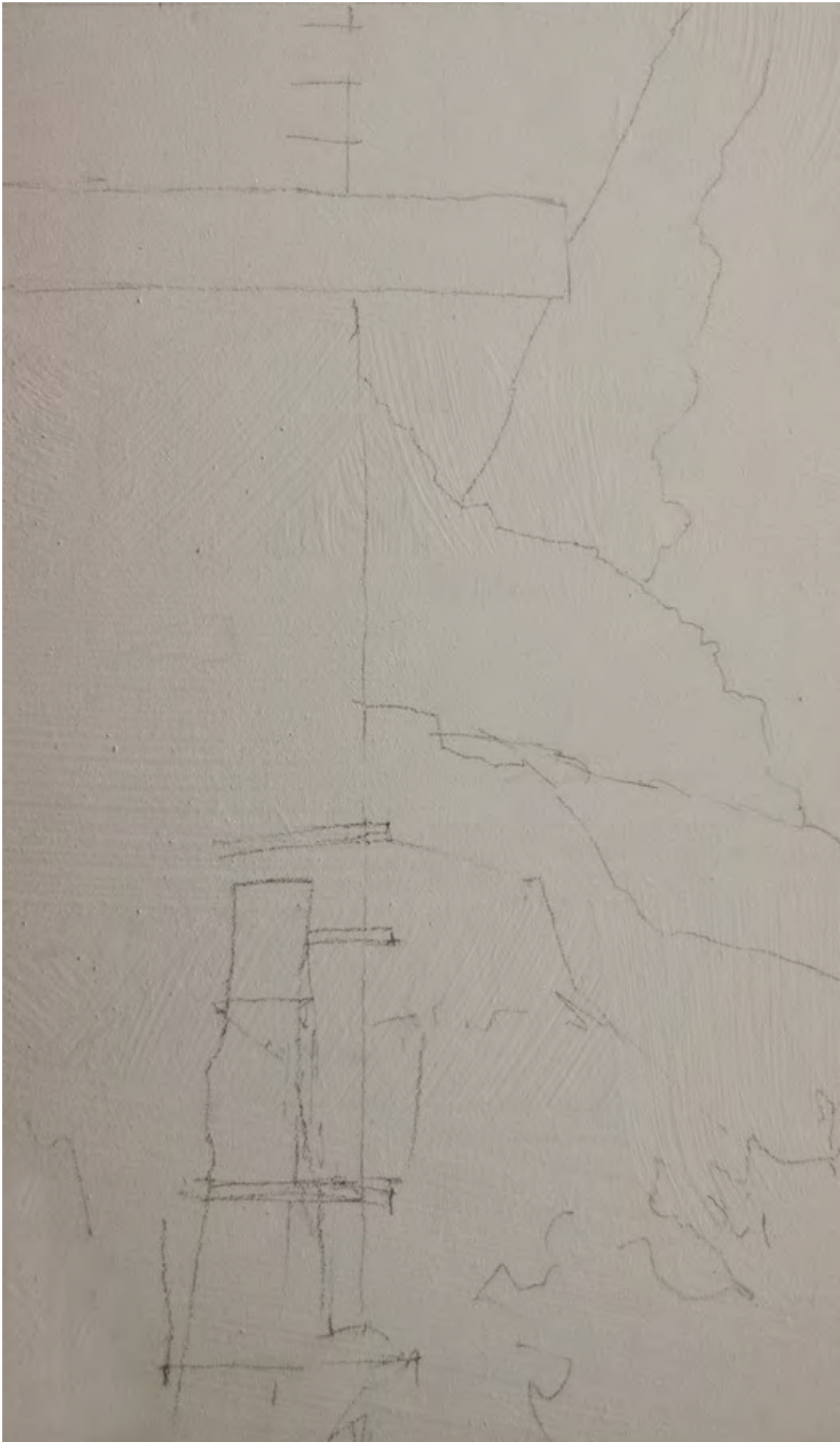


Image 53



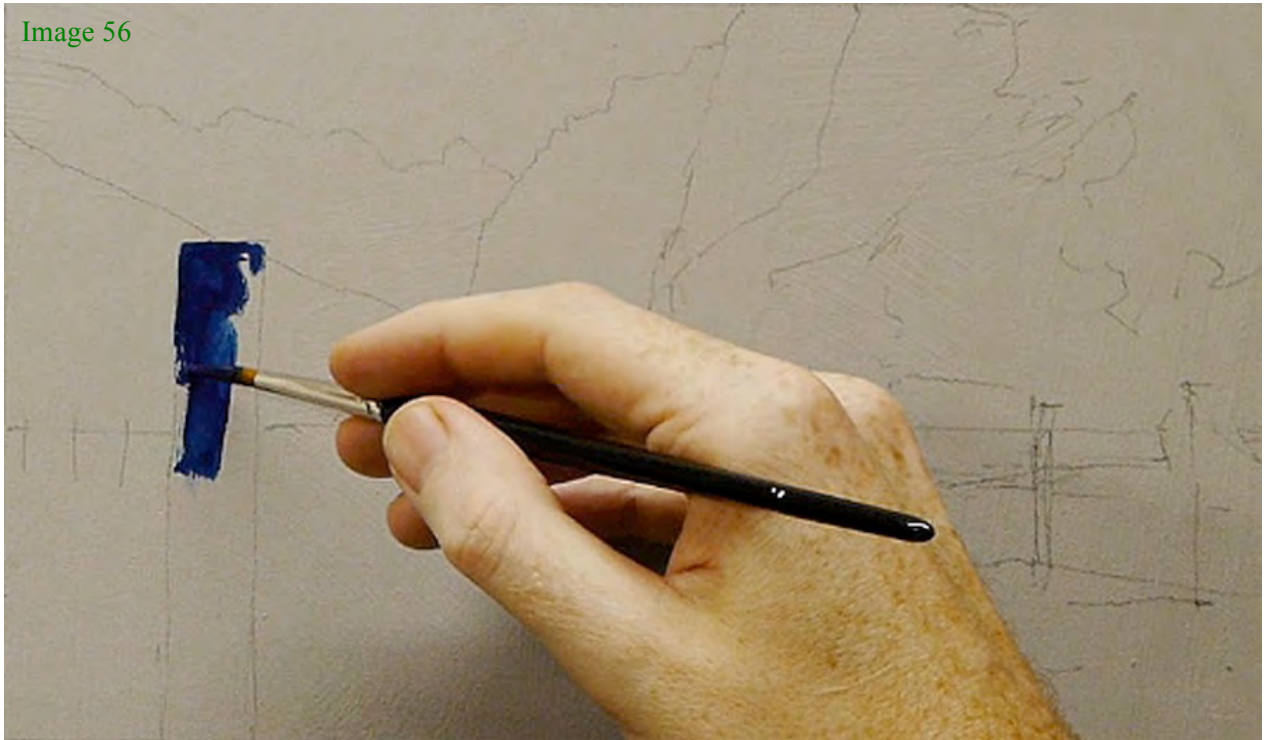






## 1. Adding Value No. 7

Image 56



First let's establish the darkest darks in the painting so apply the Prussian blue straight from the tube. I've dipped the brush in water just to increase the flow of the paint very slightly.

### **Don't forget colour shift!**

Remember, acrylic paint will dry slightly darker than when you first apply it to your painting surface!

If you want to know more about the properties of acrylic paint, why not look at Bob's [Acrylic Painting Foundation Course](#) on ArtTutor.

Image 57

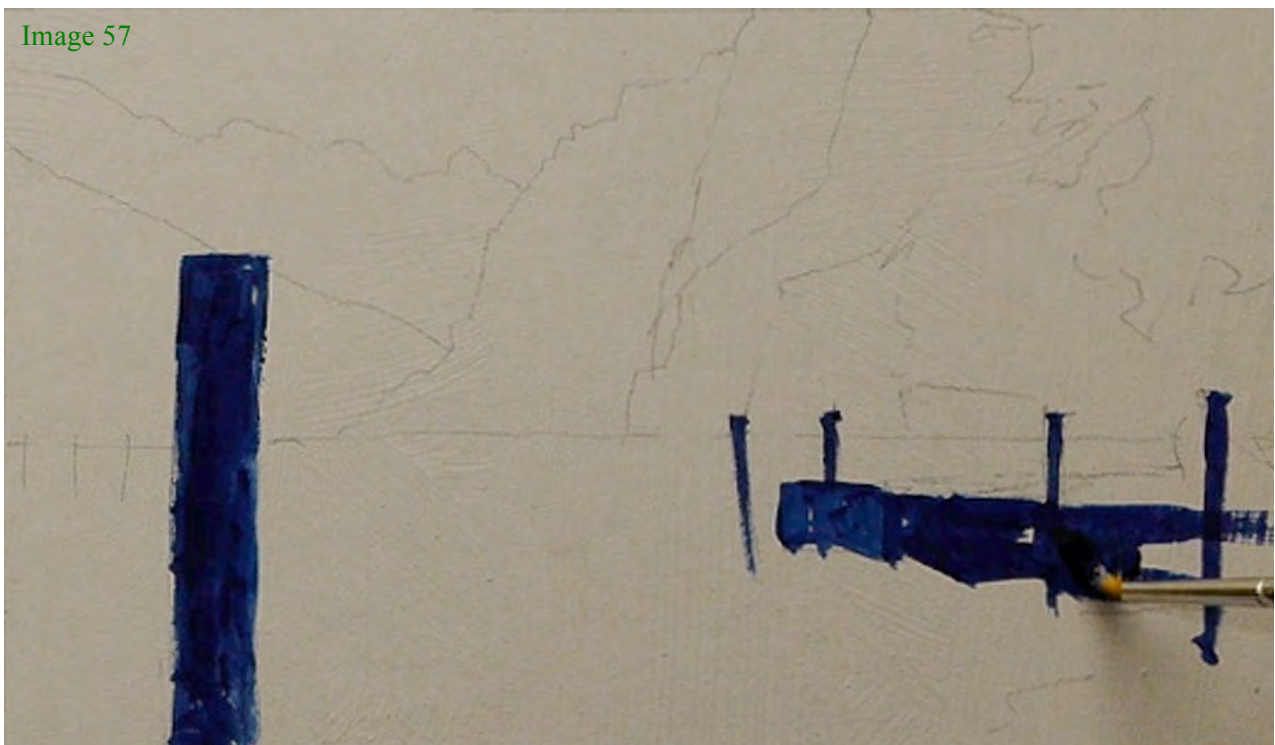




Image 58



## 2. Adding Value No. 1

Image 59



Once our value 7 has dried, we can add some of the pure titanium white: this establishes the lightest lights.

We now have both extremes in our painting: the darkest darks (no. 7) and the lightest lights (no. 1). Everything we go onto paint will fall in between these two values. This makes it much easier to judge the rest of your painting because you always have a clear point of comparison.

### 3. Adding Value No. 2

Image 60



Let's move onto value no. 2. We can use this to add in the lighter areas onto the furthest mountain in the distance. I also bring some of this tone to the right of the image. We can use our filbert hog brush for this.

### 4. Adding Value No. 3



Image 61

Let's introduce the next value down to the top of the sky. If you take a look at your reference photo you'll see that there are no harsh lines in this area, but instead a smooth transition from tone to tone.

The beauty of working in acrylics means that we can blend the paint on our surface. So let's create that soft sky by blending values 2 and 3.

If you need some tips on blending, why not look at Bob's [Acrylic Painting Foundation Course](#).





We can now bring value 3 into the foreground. Notice how I still leave parts of the coloured ground showing through.

I'm blending value 2 in again as I get closer to the horizon – this will really enhance the feeling of depth in my painting as things appear lighter the further away they are.

## 5. Adding Value No. 4



Our monochrome Lake Garda is really starting to take shape now! We have the sky and distant headland blocked in, so moving forward, we can introduce our next value (no. 4) to the next mountain!

Study your reference photograph to see where there are slight colour changes – you'll see I've blended values 2 and 3 into where the mountain meets the lake.

We can also put a bit of value 4 into the foreground – don't forget to blend it in!





## 6. Adding Value No. 5



We can add some of value 5 to the next mountain – see how we’re creating that depth already!

As things gets closer to us we see more clearly, so on the mountain closest to us we’ll be able to see more detail. Study the reference photo and add in the lighter areas using value no. 5.

We can still paint loosely at this stage, so I’m using the filbert brush to keep my marks loose and gestural.



## 7. Adding Value No. 6



We're on our last value now! The right hand side of our painting is quite dark now, but see how by adding value no. 6, the pure white of the clouds stands out even more.

## 8. Adding Fine Details to Adjust the Drawing

We can now look at the finishing touches that will transform this painting from an exercise into something that we can hang on our walls!

At this point it's best to take some time away from your painting. When you come back to it, anything that looks awkward, or that isn't pleasing to the eye will stand out immediately – this might mean blending in some more tones, or making a light area darker. Similarly, if you feel the focal part of your picture isn't prominent enough, you can go back in and add more detail.



I begin by adjusting the horizon line with some white paint.





Using the round brush I add a few highlights to the tree in the foreground and the reflections on the water.

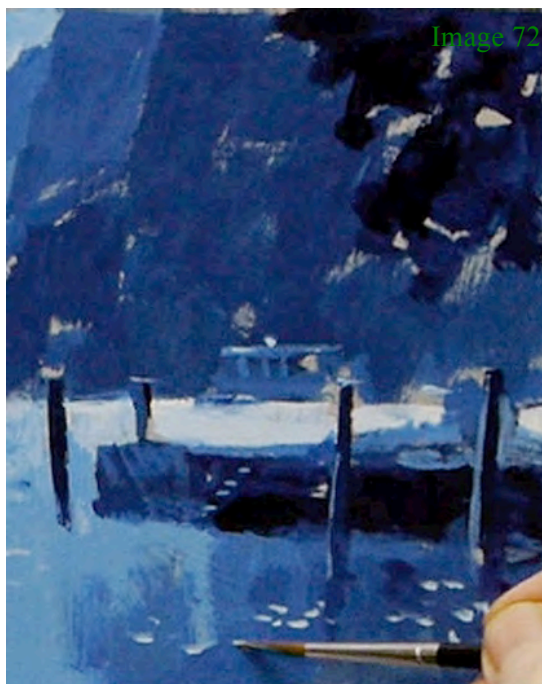
Working between the pre-mixed colours helps to easily alter subtle shifts in tone whilst still being in control of your mixes.

You can see that I'm focusing my detail on the right hand side of the painting – we already said this was the darkest area.

By putting in highlights and some of our lightest tones, we get a real

punch to this area – the contrast between our lightest and darkest values attracts the eye and gives us a very strong point to lead the viewer into the painting.

These final additions will be up to you. If you want to have a more mellow painting, you can leave everything as it is. You could even concentrate on another area of your foreground to add detail to.



## 8. Adding Value No. 7

Now I've added more of my light values, I can strengthen these areas even more by going back in with my pure Prussian blue – my darkest value.

This will allow me to deepen the darks I've already established and further refine the areas of detail.

So let's take a look at the final painting...

Image 73



You can see how all the values from the Titanium white to the strongest darks of the Prussian blue have layered the landscape to produce depth and distance. The dominance of the darks and the scale of the poles have created a scene of great drama and beauty.

### *Lake Garda by Will Kemp*

If you've completed this monochrome study by Will and my Stalker Castle exercise from earlier, you should start to feel really comfortable identifying and reproducing solid value contrast. Just as importantly...

Actually *doing* these exercises will help the concept sink in and become second nature. Reading about it isn't enough; I really encourage you to go through these two exercises before moving on to colour. Which is what we'll look at next...



## SECTION 4 – COLOUR EXERCISES

Look at this image of a red and yellow square next to each other...

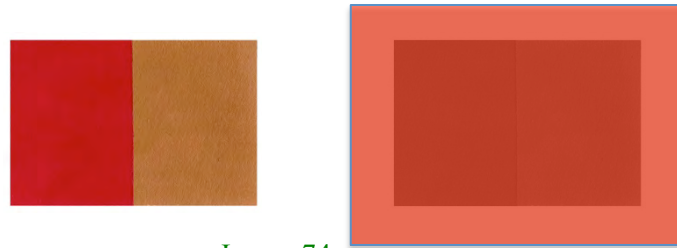


Image 74

In colour, these two squares are easily distinguished from one another. However, if I hold a red piece of acetate over them (my redevye filter) you can see how they merge into one solid block almost.

You might ask the question “*when would I ever view a painting through a red piece of plastic*” and you wouldn’t. But even though an observer’s eye might be able to distinguish between the various shapes in your picture, it will look flat and anaemic.

Moreover, standing at even a moderate distance from a painting has an effect of muting the colours and I’ll guarantee that a picture made up of similar values will look uninspiring at best, from any sort of viewing distance!

### 4.1 Exercise 1 – Value match real objects

This is a simple and fun exercise and also very useful at training your eye to see the tonal value in colour.

#### What you’ll need:

- 3 everyday objects. Anything small that you can place on the desk in front of you. In my example I’m using a lemon, a tea cup and a golf tee peg.
- Your chosen painting surface, paints and brush of choice.
- A grey or monochrome scale (a colour scale will provide more of a challenge than a grey scale, so give that a go!)

Image 75



## Step 1

- Place one of the objects in front of you.
- Look at the object and squint / defocus your eyes.
- Notice the values of various parts of the object – the shadow areas, any creases or folds, highlights, indentations, details etc.
- Identify in your mind the darkest value and the lightest value.
- Hold your grey / monochrome scale against various parts of the object to confirm the values.
- Repeat this for each of your 3 objects.

## Step 2

- Pick the darkest part of one of the objects. For example, I'm looking at the pith at the end of the lemon.
- Mix a colour that you think is the correct value for this darkest area. Don't worry about getting a perfect colour match; your aim is to get an accurate value match.
- Add a swatch of your mixed colour to your paper or canvas (if you're using watercolours, allows this to dry fully).
- Now use your grey / monochrome scale to see how accurate you were.
- Repeat this for the lightest part of the object.
- Repeat a third time for a mid value.
- Finally, repeat the process for the remaining two objects.

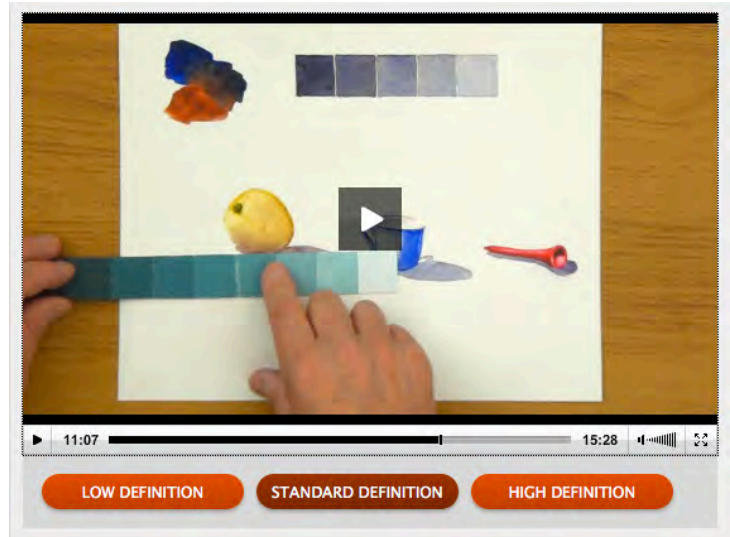


Image 76

You can see a video version of this exercise in my [Watercolour, Acrylics and Oils Foundation courses on ArtTutor.com](#)

This is a great exercise for quickly honing your eye to see the strength of value in various colours. Don't paint the objects in full - there's a danger you'll get caught up in the detail and it's time consuming. Just paint 3-4 patches of colour on your painting surface for each object, and measure. This way, you get cram in lots of learning experiences in a short period of time!

## 4.2 Exercise 2 – Full colour painting: Russet

It's time to move on to a full acrylic painting!

If you've diligently followed the exercises so far, this could be one of the most vibrant, striking images you've ever painted.



We're sticking to a landscape, so hopefully you can build on what you learnt in the monochromatic study.

You'll already be able to notice the contrast between dark values and light values – that's what gives our painting a real punch.

So let me hand you over once again to Will Kemp who'll take you through this painting step-by-step and see how to tackle this fantastic image in colour.

### What You'll Need:

- 8 x 10 inch board, canvas or thick paper. I use 6mm MDF double primed with acrylic gesso, to which a coloured ground is applied.
- Titanium white, raw umber (for the coloured ground)
- Burnt umber, ultramarine blue, alizarin crimson, cadmium yellow & titanium white
- 2 inch decorator's brush (for applying the coloured ground)
- Small round synthetic brush
- 3B pencil for drawing out
- Small painting knife (I used size 45 by RGM)
- Tear-off disposable palette or stay-wet palette
- A printout of the next 2 pages of this e-book, which contains the line drawing and reference photo.

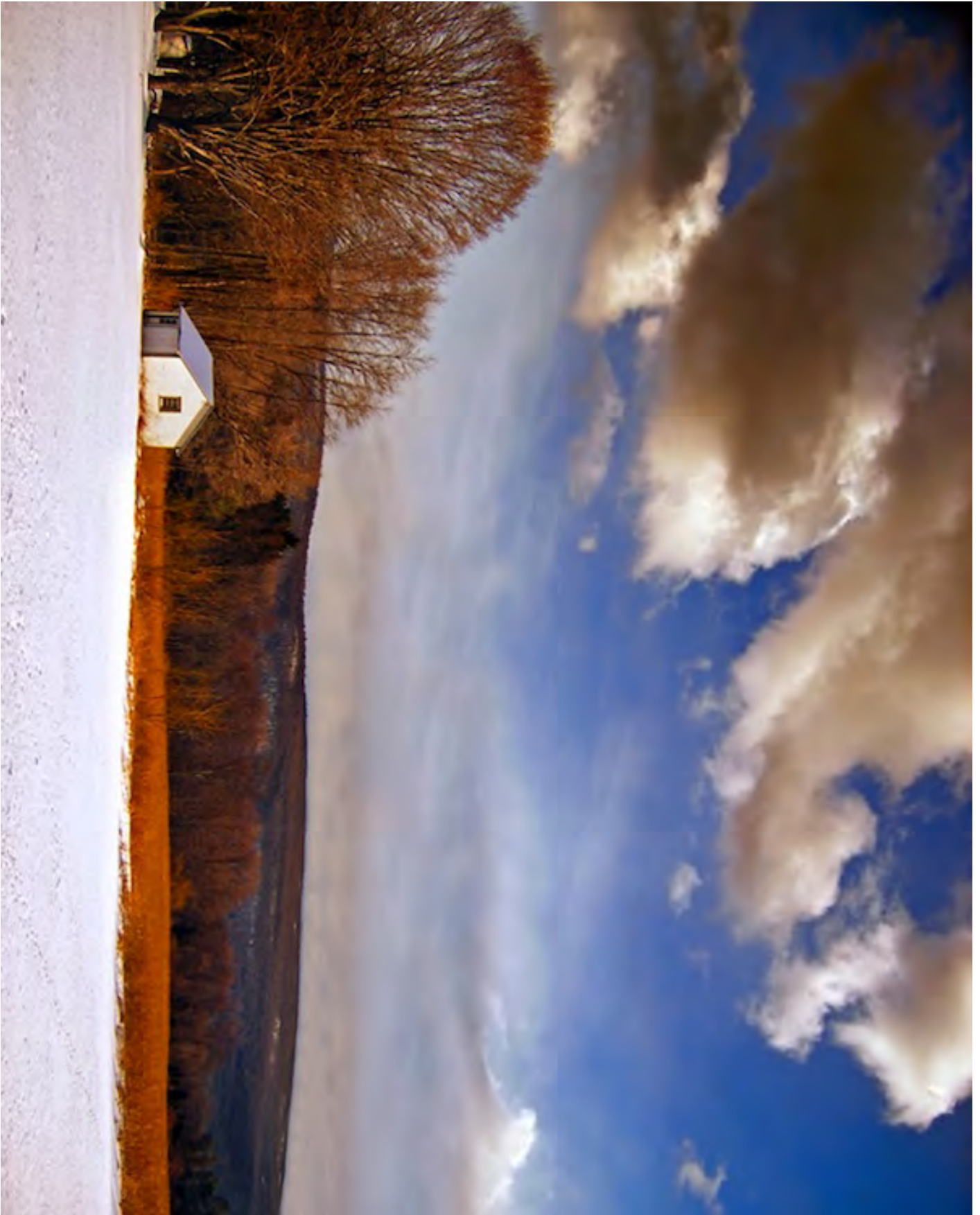
### Final painting and reference photograph

As before the line drawing will print out to the same size as your 8 x 10 inch board.

### Monochrome Scale

Create your scale on a scrap of paper, which ranges from white to an almost undiluted, neat mix of colour in 7 steps.

Image 78



[Russet, New Jersey by Nicholas A. Tonelli](#)



Image 79



After applying the coloured ground to the board and drawing out the scene with a 3B pencil we're ready to go.

## Darkest Darks

The first step is to establish the darkest darks, for this scene I'm using burnt umber.

Remember, if it's not clear to you where your darkest darks are, squint and de-focus your eyes, or use your sheet of red acetate. For this picture the band of trees in the lower third of the image is the darkest area. You can already see how when we get our lights on underneath (to represent the snowy ground) that area will jump out at us.

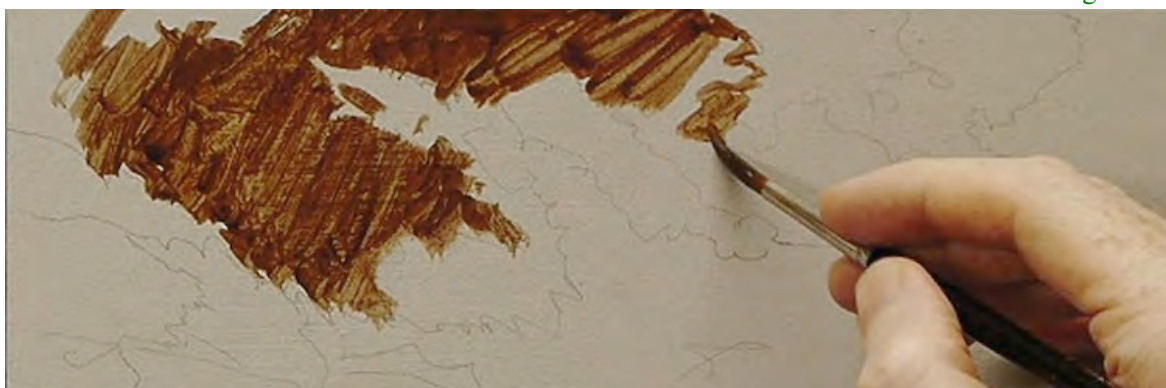
Image 80



Look again at your reference photo – there is a hint of burnt umber in the clouds. Let's use our small round synthetic brush.

We can add a wash of this onto the cloud shapes – we'll do this by adding water to our paint to dilute it. This will give us a great non-uniform base coat, which is perfect for painting dramatic clouds.

Image 81



## Adding White

Image 82



Just like our Lake Garda demonstration, the next step is to add in our lightest lights.

Establishing your darkest darks and lightest lights from the beginning is even more important when you're working with colour, especially if you're new to painting. You know that all your values (whatever colour) will fit in between these two extremes.

If you're not confident enough to judge the value of the rest of the colours, photocopy your reference photo and compare it to your first value strip. You can then translate your findings to the colour photo and see where everything fits together.

So let's add some pure titanium white to our painting using the filbert brush. I can afford to paint this on thicker so I have more 'impasto' whites – this will give our painting a great 'textured' look.

Look how our barn is already jumping out at us – that's thanks to placing our lightest light next to our darkest dark.





Image 83

Let's keep things simple at this stage, and concentrate a little more on our first two colours: burnt umber and titanium white.

We can mix these two colours together to create some tonal variation in the clouds – this will give us the nice soft blends we were able to achieve in our monochrome painting.

We're still working on the foundation of the picture at this point – it's crucial that you take your time over this part, making sure your drawing and values are correct.

### **Adding Blue**



Image 84

Can you see how we've got some great tonal variation in our clouds now?

Now that we've painted in the main areas of the warm brown, we can start to bring in the blue.

Dull down the ultramarine blue with a touch of burnt umber and paint in the shades at the top left of the scene. This darker corner helps to visually frame the scene.



In Images 85 and 86 you can see the other areas of blue that I've added.

Just as we did with our Lake Garda painting, I added white to the blue to create a variety of values ranging from dark to light. This gives us more subtle colours to use and blend together to create the smooth colour transitions we can see in the sky from our reference photo.

Remember to mix your colours thoroughly using your palette knife, and always mix up more than you need – you don't want to run out!



As we get closer to the horizon, dilute your paint with a little water, this will enable some of the coloured ground to show through.



Once we've done this we can take our dark blue (the ultramarine mixed with burnt umber) and paint the distant hills.

This will help to create a solid dark band at the bottom of our painting, which will zing against our lights.



When you work in colour, it's important to get a good harmony across your picture, so our next stage is to balance out the blues.

Mix in a small amount of alizarin crimson with one of the lighter blue mixes (about a value 2) and then paint this on the roof of the building and the clouds near the horizon line.



## Adding Orange



We're beginning to get a good balance of colours in our picture – let's work more on our warm colours.

We're going to mix a dull orange, so take your alizarin crimson, burnt umber and cadmium yellow (if you have some burnt sienna this would also work well for this stage) and mix them together thoroughly with your palette knife.

Let's work using quite a dry brush – this way we can keep our marks loose and impressionistic.

First of all, let's put our orange into the foliage on the left hand side of the painting: see how that area jumps forward!

Take a step back and assess your painting from a distance. At this stage I think adding a subtle purple hue over the white snow in the foreground will mellow it slightly, making it look less stark now we've added in our vibrant orange.



We're nearly there!

Let's bring our orange across the rest of the field area.

We can start to judge the composition as a whole now – see how the warm tones in the tree and field bring them towards us.



We're at the refining stage now, so like we did with the image of Lake Garda, we can assess our picture and see where we need to add more detail and which areas need to pack a bit more of a punch!

You can see in Image 91 that I've added a touch more cadmium yellow to my orange to paint in some lighter areas on the trees – this gives them a more defined shape, and really brings the picture to life.



Image 92

*Russet by Will Kemp*

So there you have it. You've tackled using value in colour. It wasn't that difficult was it!

Please do give this painting by Will a go. If you're a member of ArtTutor.com, why not add your attempt to the acrylics forum? We'd love to see it and you'll be sure to get plenty of encouraging feedback from like-minded artists who've followed this e-book like you.



## SECTION 5 – BONUS VALUE TIPS

If you've read this far (and followed along), you'll have a greater practical understanding of tonal value than 99% of all leisure artists!

There are just a couple of principles remaining that I'd like to cover, to complete your understanding.

### 5.1 Abrupt and transitional value contrast

Let's go back to our grey scale for a moment...

The range of values is wide – one end is white, the other end is almost black. If we take a square close to one end and place it next to a square close to the other end, the contrast between those two is very strong and abrupt (Image 93). In other words, one value finishes and the other starts.



Image 93

This abrupt value contrast is useful for describing angular shapes, with definite sides and strong lines - like a box for example. Stalker Castle in our earlier exercise is a good example.

But not all objects are so angular. Take the obvious example of a ball or sphere.

We still need to make good use of contrasting values to make the sphere look 3-dimensional and solid. The underside of the sphere and cast shadow will be quite a strong value, whilst the highlight will be a very light value.

However, you can see that there needs to be a subtle transition from darks to mid-tones to lights. If any of the steps up or down in value are obvious to the eye or abrupt (as they are with a grey scale for example), the effect of a smooth, round object will be lost.



Image 94

Don't mistake this soft transition for a narrow range of values. The range from darkest dark to lightest light still needs to be adequate to make the object look solid.

Image 95



Spheres aren't the only objects that require a soft transition of values. One of the everyday items I see a lot of hobby artists struggle with is clothing and fabric...

### Rendering Fabric

When I see a pencil drawing of fabric that a student isn't happy with, it's either because the folds in the material don't have strong enough lights and darks (good value contrast), or the transition (blending) isn't gradual and subtle enough – it looks like a series of shapes rather than soft folds.

Look at this photo of a coat sleeve (Image 96). Note the subtle transition from lights to darks and how the shadows and the lights in the folds - especially next to the stitching – help to tell the viewer that the material is soft and undulating.



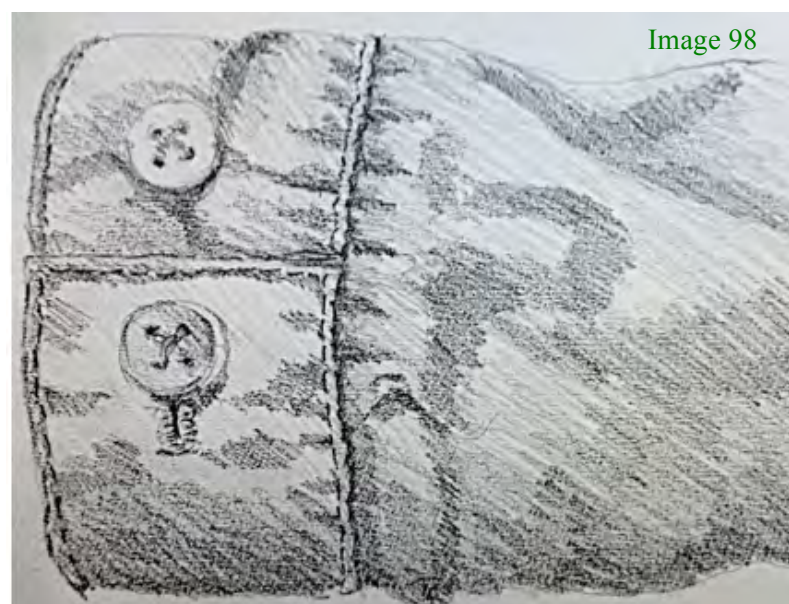
Image 96

Now look at Image 97 of this sleeve. Yes, the general shape and perspective is fine and some lights and darks exist, but limited use of value contrast means the image is insipid and flat looking. The weak attempt at shadows actually looks more like abstract shapes printed on the material than folds in the cloth.



Now in Image 98 we have made more use of value contrast with some better light and shade, especially around the cuff and the stitching.

However, we're still left with those abstract, meaningless shapes that are supposed to represent folds in the material, defined by light and shadows. To make the folds and creases in the cloth look believable, the trick is to create a much more subtle and gradual transition from light to dark, which will immediately suggest soft cloth.





In Image 99, I've started to blend those light and dark areas on the top left of the sleeve to achieve the **gentle transitions**, using a putty eraser and a torchon. See how the initial blending of shades and lifting out of highlights has already improved things considerably?

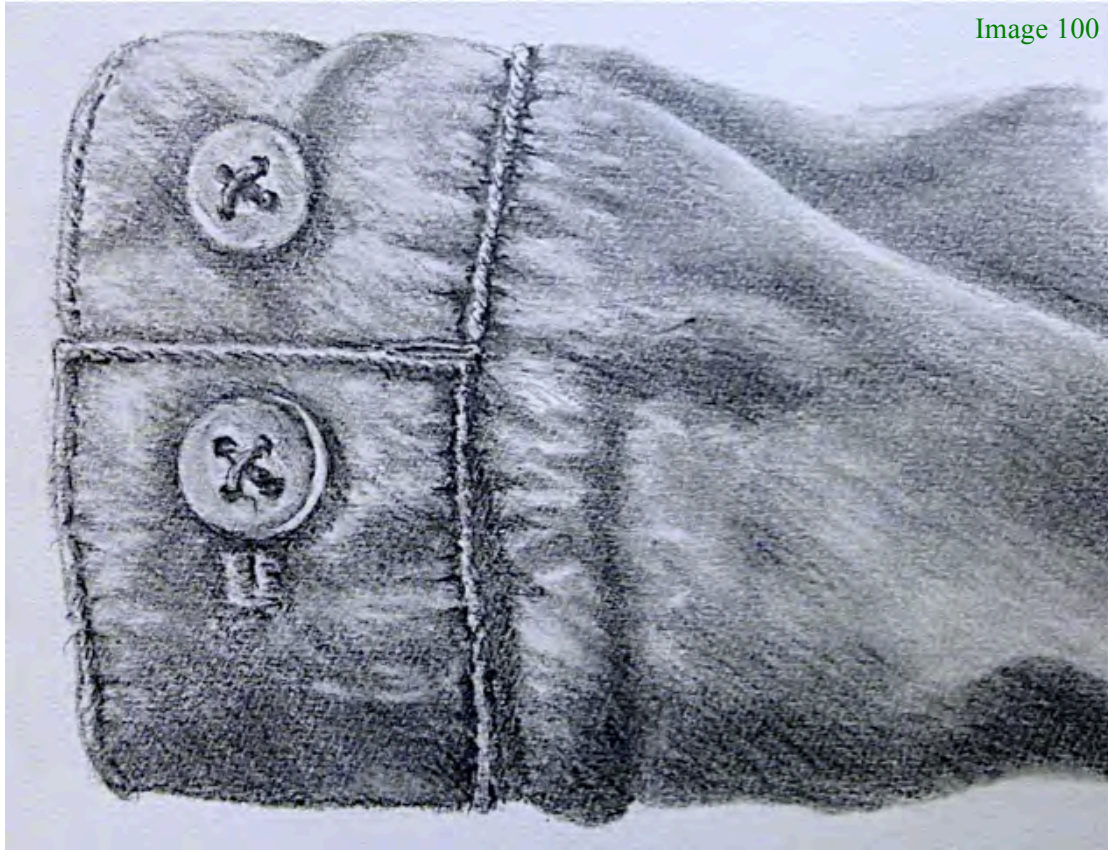


If you haven't got a torchon, use a cotton bud or the corner of a folded tissue. You can use any sort of eraser but the putty version allows you to tear small pieces from it and shape them into fine wedges or points.

Remember, the simple rule with value contrast is that, normally, soft transitions mean round and/or soft material. Sharp, well-defined changes from light to dark generally mean angular and/or hard surfaces.

Finally, in Image 100 we've completed this exercise and even though it's a relatively quick example, you can see the difference compared to Images 97 and 98.

Image 100



At first it'll probably take you time to create a pleasing blend of lights and darks as you develop the skill in getting these transitions just right. However, do keep going. It's enormously satisfying re-creating even a simple subject like this with all the subtle value changes.

So whatever your chosen medium, think about how either abrupt or transitional value contrast will help to create a believable rendition of the object you're capturing.

Within the vaults of [ArtTutor.com](http://ArtTutor.com) we have a number of video lessons on shading and blending using various painting and drawing mediums, which will help you achieve nice transitional values.

## 5.2 Counter change

Understanding what counterchange is and then how to use it in your picture, really is a significant key to a successful painting or drawing.

Simply put, counterchange in art means placing a dark value object or area next to a lighter one, or vice versa, so that they both stand out against each other.

Look at these photos of Bamburgh Castle in Northumberland, England...

Image 101



In Image 101 above we have a very stark example of counterchange – or dark against light – with the castle in silhouette against a bright evening sky. There's no doubt where the castle ends and the sky starts, is there?

Now look at the Image 102 (below) of the same scene. Still pretty good counterchange between the castle and sky because the light stone is still darker than the sky area.

However, look at the walls and grassy slopes on the left of the castle. Because they're all in shadow, their definition is much less clear and if you screw your eyes up, it's not as easy to see where the walls finish and the slopes begin. This is because the tonal strength of these areas is quite similar, even though they're different colours.



Image 102

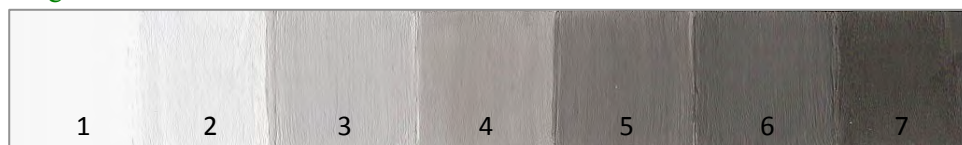


If you were painting this picture you may want to adjust the values to the left of the castle, to make sure that the relevant areas stand out where necessary. Or, perhaps not...

You could leave the value strength as it is, if you decide that you want this area of the picture to be less obvious - quieter if you like - to put the focus on the main part of the castle. And that's so important.

Of course, you'll want to paint more than just silhouettes of castles and inevitably, most parts of any picture do not want or need a high contrast throughout. So counterchange needs to be thought of rather like the grey scale. It's light against dark, sure, but it can be subtle or fierce.

Image 103



Remember, strong counterchange, i.e. the darkest dark next to the lightest light (say Value 1 next to Value 7 on our grey scale) will immediately draw the viewer's eye to that area and artists over the centuries have used this knowledge to create their focal points with this high contrast technique.

Gentler counterchange (say a Value 2 next to a Value 4) still defines adjacent shapes but might be used near the edge of a picture or anywhere where you don't want high contrast.

Think of a picture as the cast in a theatre. You have the leading man and lady as the focal point and the supporting cast who, whilst not the centre of attention, play a vital role by their relative anonymity, in highlighting the main players. Important as the leading actors are, without that supporting cast, they would make no impact at all.

So in a painting, the high value counterchange (the star of the show) is going to give you a strong focal point with real impact – but only if the supporting cast, i.e. the more mundane, quieter areas of the picture are thought through and in their proper place as well.



Image 104

In Image 104 of a bi-plane, we have both strong and gentle counterchange. The strong, red colour of the plane, broken by the white stripes, gives us intense counterchange - the darkest dark against lightest light - and leaves us in no doubt that it is the star of the show. However, the light but varied colours in the clouds provide a much gentler counterchange, especially when set against the slightly stronger blue sky behind the plane.

Let's look at one or two more examples of simple counterchange...

In Image 105 below, a monochrome watercolour of Cockley Beck in the English Lake District, notice how the tree *trunk* is quite light against the dark background immediately above the bridge...



Image 105

Yet the upper branches have been painted quite dark so they stand out against the moonlit sky. You wouldn't see a tree in nature that has a light bottom half and a dark top half! But until it's pointed out, most viewers won't even notice the change – it *looks* natural. As with the tree, you can do exactly the same with fence posts, telegraph poles, ships masts and so on.

Other areas in this picture worth noting are the snow-covered roof against the darker hillside, the snowy area helping the two walkers to stand out, and the dark stone bridge against the snowy banks. It's also interesting to point out that the bridge, though dark underneath, has a snow covering along the top layer of stones to help define it against the dark trees in the background.

Now what happens when you have adjacent areas where two or more of them are the same value? How do you define them without it looking contrived?

Well, this is where the benefit of being an artist as opposed to a photographer kicks in! As the artist you have the freedom to adjust things to make the picture work, where a photographer might have to resort to filters and other devices to create counterchange.



Image 106



In Image 106 of a stag in the Scottish Highlands, you can see if you screw up your eyes that his coat is, tonally, a similar value to the background hills, especially around the centre of his body. However, I've 'invented' a muted light from the left as an excuse to lighten off the rear end and top of his body, thus making it considerably paler against the distant Glen.

At the same time I've added shadow to his chest so now the front of his body is much darker than the hills, not only defining him against the background, but pushing the hills into their proper place in the distance. More importantly it gives him a foreground impact and clearly, the focal point of the picture.

But do you see that even though the rear, middle and front of his body are very different values, he 'looks' right and the light and shade have given him that vital three-dimensional form.

However, let me re-emphasise the really important bit here...

***Using value contrast and counterchange shouldn't be regarded as merely a technique. It's as important to apply value judgments to all areas of your pictures as it is to know what the subject of your painting is going to be before you start.***

Applying value judgments to every part of your picture must become second nature to you. Ideally, you will plan this before you pick up the brush, but more often than not, you need to adjust value and counterchange slightly as you progress through the painting.

Without developing this state of mind, your pictures will always lack that impact, that 'punch', that certain 'something' that lifts it from 'OK' to a minor masterpiece you can justifiably be proud of.

Remember, you're the artist. It's your picture and you decide how much emphasis you put on each part of the picture, using as much or as little counterchange - value judgment - light against dark - call it what you will - as you want or need.

It doesn't matter *how* you do it – as long as you do!

If you'd like to learn about a vast range of other techniques that can help you with your artwork, take a look through some of our [courses at ArtTutor](#).

---

## Follow ArtTutor on social media

For tips, video lessons, behind the scenes photos and inspirational artwork...



Facebook - [www.facebook.com/ArtTutorOnline](http://www.facebook.com/ArtTutorOnline)



Pinterest - [www.pinterest.com/ArtTutor](http://www.pinterest.com/ArtTutor)



Twitter - [www.twitter.com/ArtTutorOnline](http://www.twitter.com/ArtTutorOnline)

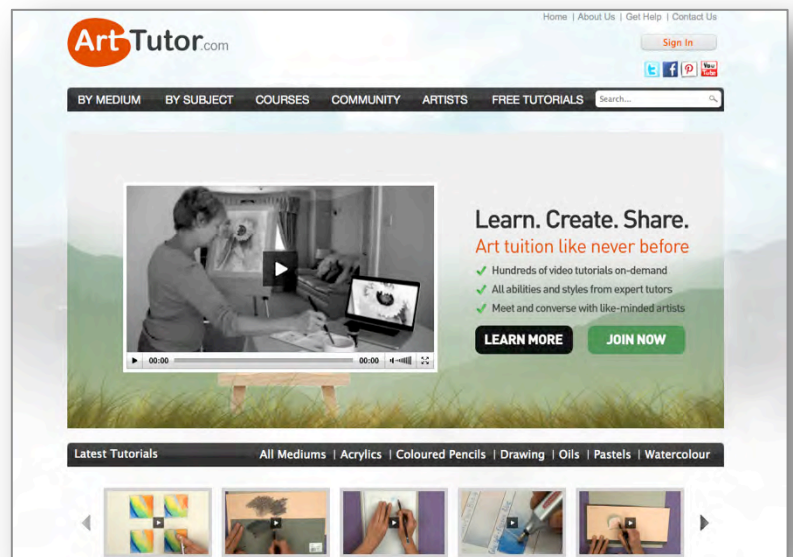


YouTube - [www.youtube.com/user/ArtTutorOnline](http://www.youtube.com/user/ArtTutorOnline)

## ABOUT ARTTUTOR.COM

[ArtTutor.com](http://ArtTutor.com) was built on the back of my passion to help more people take more enjoyment and more satisfaction from art...

It gives you 24/7 access to hundreds of TV-quality video tutorials from more than 35 professional art instructors. We cover everything from watercolour landscapes to pastel portraits... and we add new lessons every single week.



What else will find at [ArtTutor.com](http://ArtTutor.com)?

### STEP-BY-STEP PAINTING FOUNDATION COURSES

Comprehensive video courses that cover all the fundamental techniques in watercolour, acrylics, pastel, oils, coloured pencil and drawing.

### SUPER-FRIENDLY MEMBERS-ONLY FORUM

Where you can post your artwork for critiques from other members or ask your art-related questions.

### A PLACE TO STORE & SHARE YOUR ARTWORK

Our members-only gallery system allows you to easily add your artwork to ArtTutor, where other members can 'like' it and offer helpful feedback.

### MONTHLY PAINTING CHALLENGES WITH PRIZES

A range of challenges to choose from so that all tastes are catered for... and with prizes that are definitely worth winning!

My goal is to make [ArtTutor.com](http://ArtTutor.com) the best place for anyone looking to improve their artistic skills and get much more enjoyment from the wonderful past-time of painting and drawing. We'd love to see you there!

*Bob Davies*



## ARTTUTOR COURSES

[ArtTutor.com](http://ArtTutor.com) is home to hundreds of DVD-quality video lessons across a range of subject matter and styles. We also have a growing number of [courses and series](#) that can be accessed by all members 24/7...

Our courses don't run to a fixed schedule – all the lessons are there permanently for you to dip in and out of whenever it's convenient. Here are a few that might be of interest you...

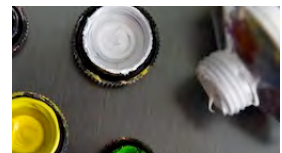
### Watercolour Courses

- Bob Davies' Watercolour Foundation Course
- Siân Dudley's Progressive Watercolour Florals
- Rob Dudley's Watercolour Landscapes
- Joanne Thomas' Expressive Watercolour Landscapes
- Granville D. Clarke's Dynamic Watercolour Skies
- Frank Halliday's Round The World In Watercolours
- Glynis Barnes-Mellish's Watercolour Portraits



### Acrylics Courses

- Bob Davies' Acrylic Foundation Course
- Will Kemp's Beginner's Guide To Acrylic Still Life & Landscapes
- Marion Dutton's Acrylic Flowers & Birds



### Oils Courses

- Bob Davies' Oils Foundation Course
- Gill Adlington's Wet-In-Wet Oils For Complete Beginners
- Roy Munday's Still Life Tonal Values



### Drawing Courses

- Bob Davies' Drawing Foundation Course
- Jane Lazenby's Figure Drawing & Life Drawing Course
- Carole Massey's Portrait Drawing Course



### Pastels Courses

- Michael Howley's Pastels Foundation Course
- Rebecca De Mendonça's Advanced Pastel Figures
- Cath Inglis' British Wildlife In Pastels



### Coloured Pencil Courses

- Jane Lazenby's Coloured Pencil Foundation Course
- Steve Ormerod's Coloured Pencil Workshops
- Jane Lazenby's Coloured Pencil Animals



Why not [join us](#) and start a painting and drawing course today?

## REVIEWS FROM ARTTUTOR MEMBERS

We asked all our members for a fair and honest appraisal of how they feel about ArtTutor... and then posted every single response (good and bad) [here on the website](#). **They are 100% unedited.**

As of writing, there are more than 150 appraisals, 3 of which you could consider negative. Here's a small selection from leisure artists like you:



**George - Glendale, WI, USA**

I am extremely pleased with Art Tutor.

Every artist/instructor I have watched has been outstanding and I have picked up great tips from each one. I just renewed my membership for another six months. At 88 I don't make commitments longer than that.

Thanks for a fantastic service.



**Sandy Greer.**

Upon my retirement, I decided to learn to paint. I've struggled along on my own, purchased a few books to try to improve my painting, but I've always been a visual learner, so books served a purpose, but what I really wanted was to WATCH someone who knew what they were doing with a paintbrush and learn from them. I found that lessons were usually a little pricey for a retiree, then along came ArtTutor!

For a nominal membership fee, a world of "how to" videos in multiple media became available to me in the comfort of my own home ... any time of day or night! As if that isn't enough, it has provided an opportunity to connect with other artists everywhere whose talents range from the beginner to the more accomplished level.

What I like most about ArtTutor is that they continue to provide new videos on an ongoing basis.



**Kathryn - Las Cruces, New Mexico.**

When I joined Art Tutor in the summer of 2012, I found a valuable studio tool. I can access instant answers to technical questions as well as receive excellent instruction.

As an art student many years ago I enjoyed the camaraderie and friendly critique of fellow art students. Today I can create that same atmosphere from the comfort of my own studio.

I am primarily a watercolor painter. Through ArtTutor I can view others' application of this endlessly fascinating medium.