

Tip #58

Differences in Perspective - Aerial and Linear

As you may have noted last time, in Tip #57, linear perspective is most useful when doing, well, linear subjects-buildings, cityscapes-or studies of objects like cylinders (cups, vases, silos, and such.) It depends at least in part on the illusion created by lines on paper, either implied or overt. With linear perspective, where your line of vision falls as you look at your subject defines much, and on that hinges the vanishing points that create the illusion.

Aerial perspective is more subtle. It is of great use in painting landscapes and suggesting distance.

Actually the two can be used together, or overlap-the lines of planted crops in a field that diminish and converge in the distance are affected by linear perspective, but they may also get lighter, smaller, simpler, cooler, or higher in the distance-that's aerial perspective at work.

Art 58-1, "Beanfield"

This small 5" x 7" painting combines linear and aerial perspective-the rows of planted crops draw you into the picture plane, and they get simpler and closer together in the background. Notice how the clouds also become smaller and simpler as they appear closer to the earth-perspective works on them as well, but since they're above your line of vision, their perspective is opposite that of objects on the ground.



Art 58-1





Art 58-2

Art 58-2, Cloud Perspective

This rough little sketch shows what I mean - notice how the clouds closer to the horizon get smaller and simpler than those closer to you. They appear lower in the sky, but if you got in your car and drove closer to them, they'd become the higher, more detailed clouds. It's an optical illusion that you can use in your work!

Art 58-3, "Tupper Lake," 9"x12"

This painting is ALL about aerial perspective! The farther things get from the viewer, the lighter, cooler, higher and simpler they get! (A rainy day in the Adirondacks helped!)

See if you can find evidence of aerial perspective next time you visit a gallery, art museum, or leaf through a book of paintings. Analyze what the artist did and how, and put that new knowledge to work in your OWN paintings!



Art 58-3

Tip #14, "Capturing the Effect of Distance and Depth," covered

how you can achieve a sense of distance, and we talked largely about aerial perspective as a tool to get from here to there-you might go back and check that one, as well!

Read much more on aerial perspective in my Sierra Club books, available from <http://www.amazon.com> or directly from <http://www.sierraclub.org/books/> -just type Cathy Johnson into their search box!

Be sure to look for my NEW CDs for artists in my Cafepress store, http://www.cafepress.com/cathy_johnson., and watch for my fine arts auctions weekly on eBay, <http://members.ebay.com/aboutme/cathyjohnsonart>.