

## PAINTING SKIES IN PASTEL

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All landscape paintings have sky above and land beneath giving the horizon . Make sure that the horizon does not cut your painting in half! Plan before commencing and decide whether the sky or the land is to be the major feature of interest. Often skies can draw the eye into a painting more easily especially if it has dramatic cloud formation and striking colour.

Remember in whatever medium, a clear sky is lighter in colour near the horizon and warming and deeper in colour at the top. Once you have understood the principles of colour perspective then you can start to paint clouds whatever the kind, cumulus, the cauliflower shape, cirrus, cumulo-nimbus, strato-cumulus and so on. Cloud formations, which are 3 dimensional, change sometimes quite quickly as they are on the move all the time so one needs to practice painting them as quickly as possible. Making charcoal sketches prior to painting to record their pattern is recommended. Also writing notes next to the sketches on how they look, their colour and shape etc is also helpful for later reference.

Now we come to painting them! Those nearer to you appear larger and more defined. As they recede towards the horizon they appear smaller, flatter and closer together. In viewing scattered clouds, their definition and shape is clearer at the top. The underneath of clouds is generally softer with a more indistinct line. This gives them depth. Where the sun shines on them gives them a lemony yellow hue.

Have a selection of blues in different tone values ready for the sky. The top of the sky is usually the deepest in colour as has been mentioned earlier. The warm ultramarine blue can help to bring the sky towards you as warm colours come towards you and cool colours recede. Cobalt is a good choice for the middle section and cerulean the cooler blue gives the impression of receding into the distance. The horizon can be very pale and often with a yellowy tinge. It is a good idea to introduce some of these blues into the landscape which helps to bring the painting together. Be aware of the sun's position as clouds hidden from the sun have cast shadows on them. Generally it is not advisable to include the sun but to rather have its bright source of light out of the picture.

Constant observation and the time of day needs to be considered throughout as well as lots of practice. One can never have too much of that!!