



Landscape. Composition & Line of horizon.

We all know that the line of horizon “divides” the land and sky. In spite of the fact that we see the line of horizon as spherical because our planet has a rounded shape. We get used to and accept the line of horizon as an absolutely horizontal line.

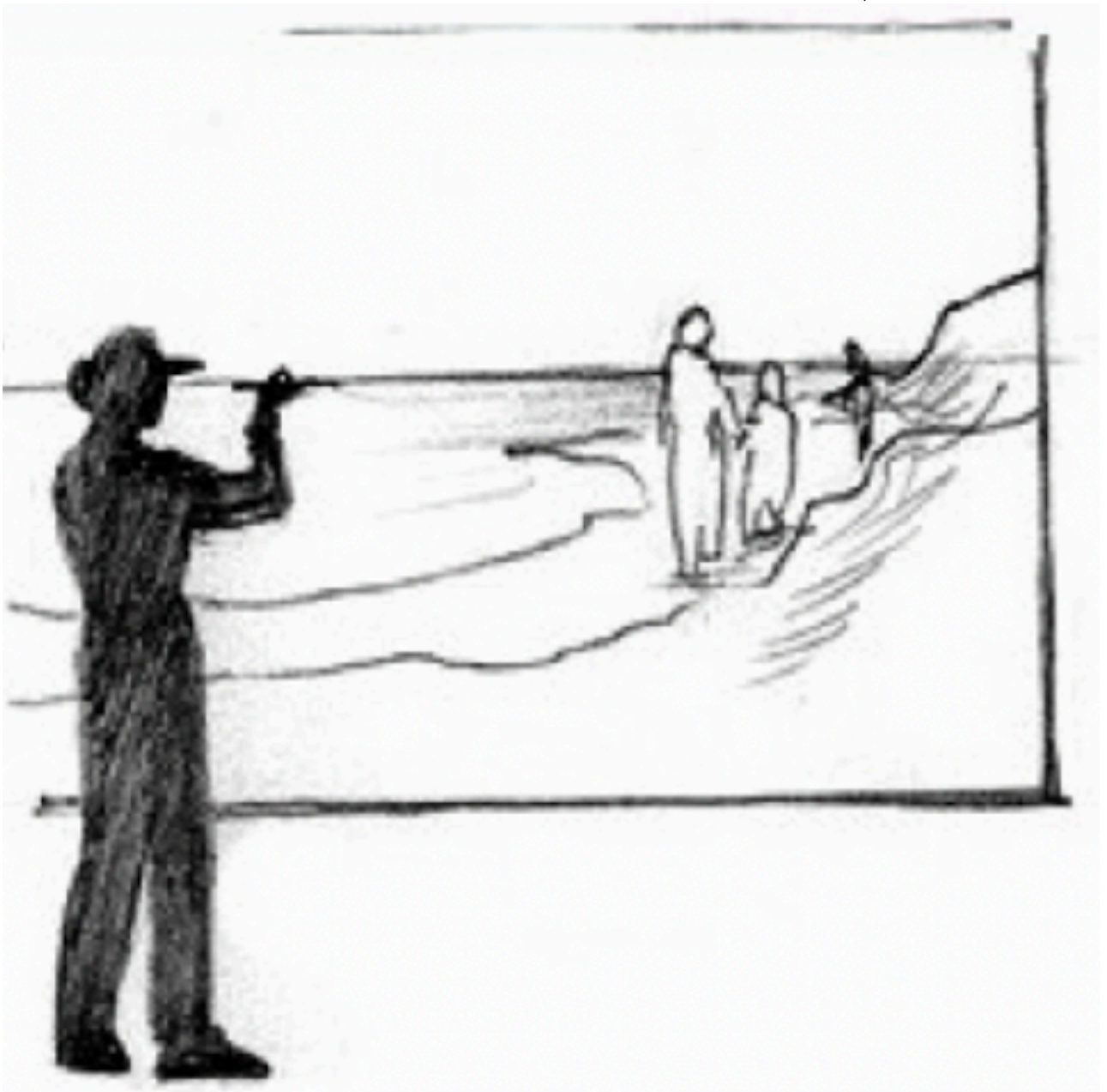
The line of horizon is a visual horizontal line located in line with our eyes. For example, if there are no mountains in a landscape image, we will recognize the line of horizon as a visual line that divides the sky and land.

The line of horizon is always in line with your eyes.

If you are sitting, then you see less ground and more sky.

If you are standing, then most of the time you will see an equal amount of the ground and sky.

If you are on a hill, then you see more ground and less sky. You can see the ground “like a bird”. It is called the “bird’s eye view”.

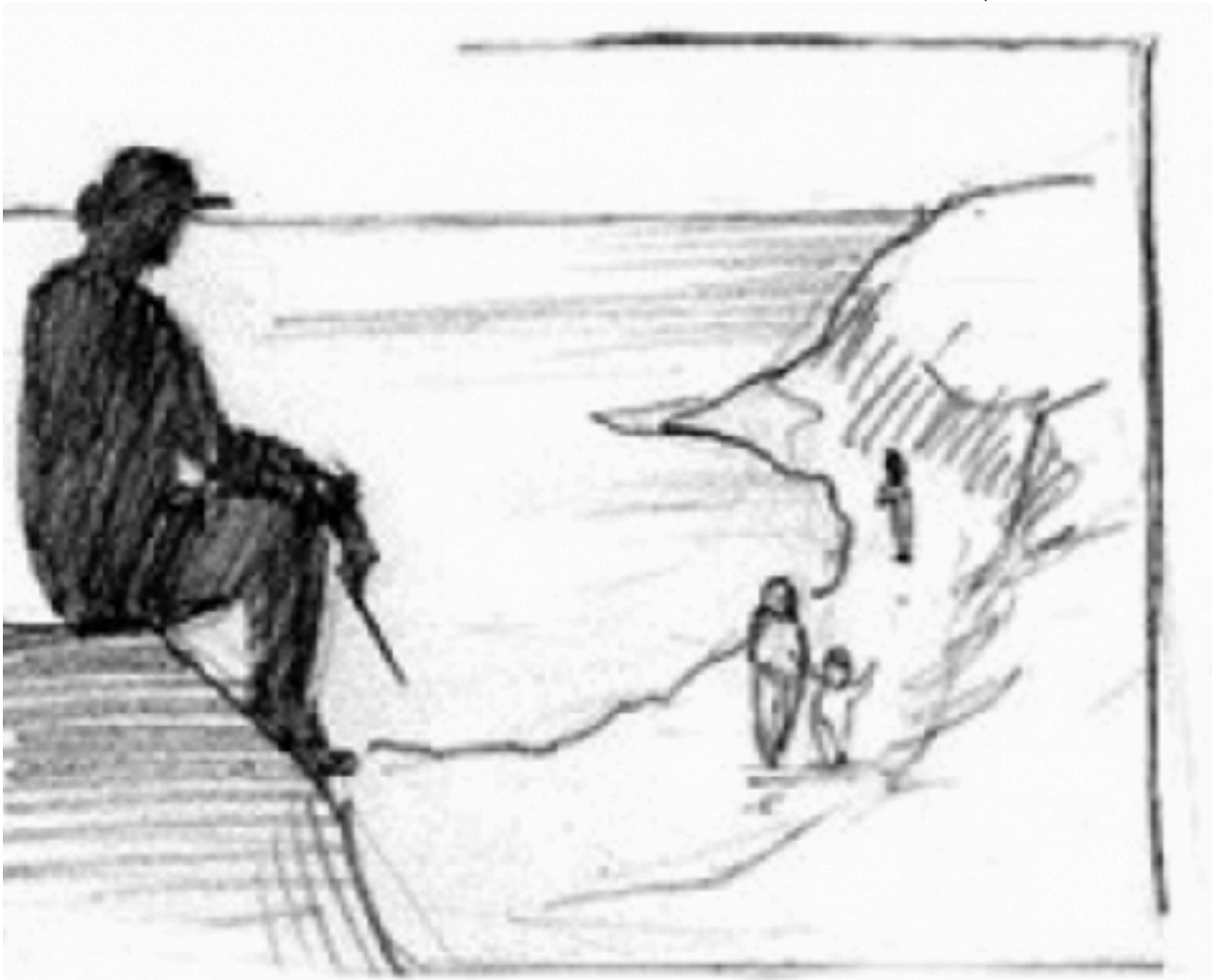


Visual exercise #1.

Your position - standing on the ground.

What you see:

All subjects and the figures becomes proportionally smaller the further they are from you. The line of horizon will be approximately on the level of their heads.



Visual exercise # 2.

Your position - standing or sitting on a hill.

What you see:

The line of horizon is located higher, above every subject. We will see all subjects and figures from above.

All subjects will be located on the lower ground level. Their size and shape will be proportionally changed. We will have the illusion of a “bird’s eye view”.



Visual exercise # 3.

Your position - sitting on the ground.

What you see:

You will see all subjects from a lower view. The shapes will look proportionally higher above the line of horizon.

The line of horizon will be somewhere between the middle of the body and the feet of the figures.

We will have the illusion of a “warms eye view”.

These are very simple visual exercises you might practice a few times to avoid very a common misunderstanding. Very often beginners create a “bird’s eye view” drawing where they avoid overlapping subjects. Most of the time the first drawing might look like a children’s drawing. Where roads goes straight up and tables, benches or any horizontal surfaces are deformed.



**If you are located on the same ground level
with standing figures,
then the line of horizon is
never
above their heads.**



Expressiveness of landscape with different lines of horizons.

The choice of where to make a line of horizon always depends on you as the artist. You can make the viewer sit on the ground or bring them high into the sky. Depending on the concept of your painting it will have different expressiveness and meaning.

Let's analyze a few different set ups.

Low line of horizon





When you are looking at these paintings you are getting the impression that you are sitting on the ground or are very small. The person in the painting looks bigger than you and very powerful.

A lower line of horizon creates a feeling of space, air and freedom.



High line of horizon



When an artist chooses a high line of horizon, they create the illusion that you are flying like a bird and looking from above down onto the ground.

This method allows an artist to create global, large, interesting landscape compositions.



There is interesting effect an artist creates in still life compositions when they use the high line of horizon. The subjects are “separated” from each other and not overlapping.



Normal line of horizon



The most common and most understandable for viewers is when an artist uses the “normal” line of horizon. Offering the viewers a feeling of comfort and illusion that they are part of the scenery.

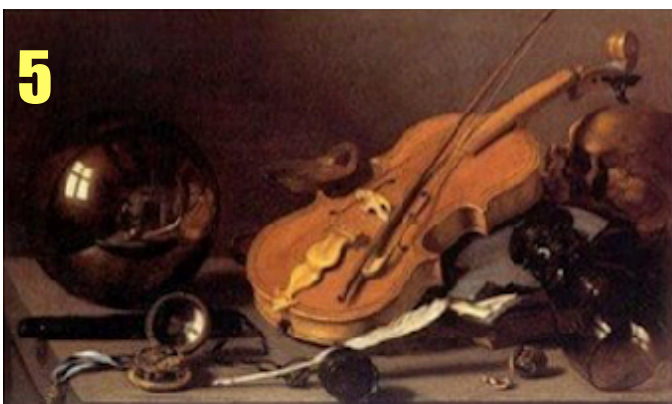
The line of horizon is not a static line.

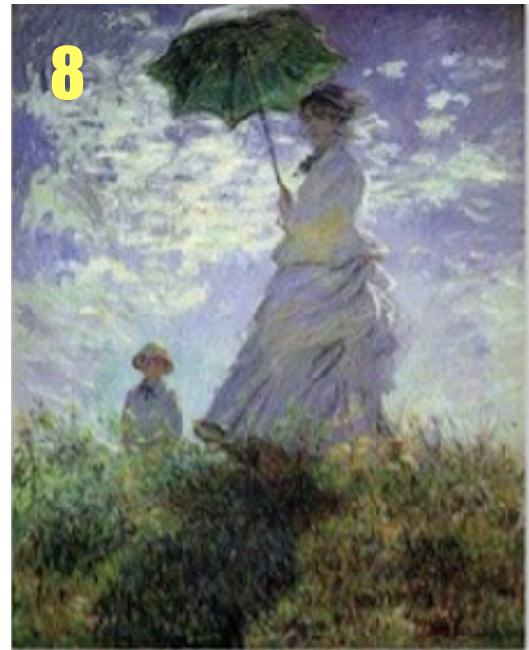
**This is an visual aid
that helps an artist to set up
the mood and expression of the scene.**

Practical exercise # 1.

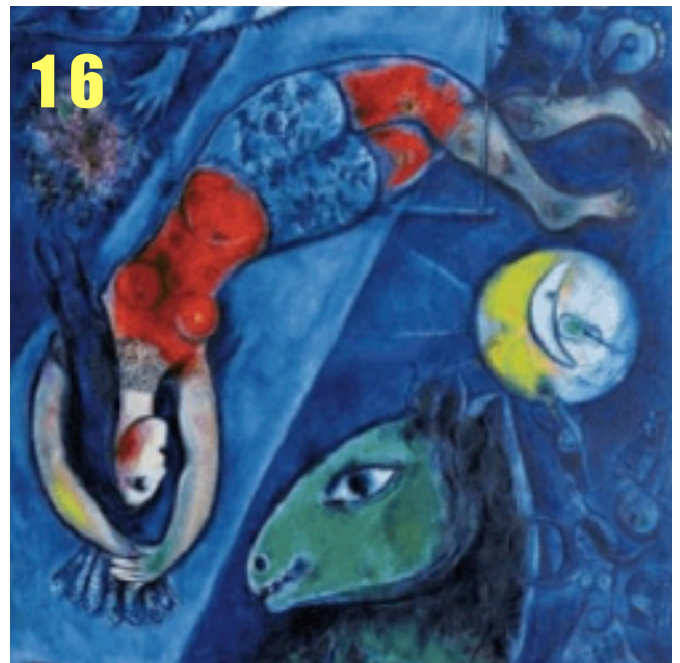
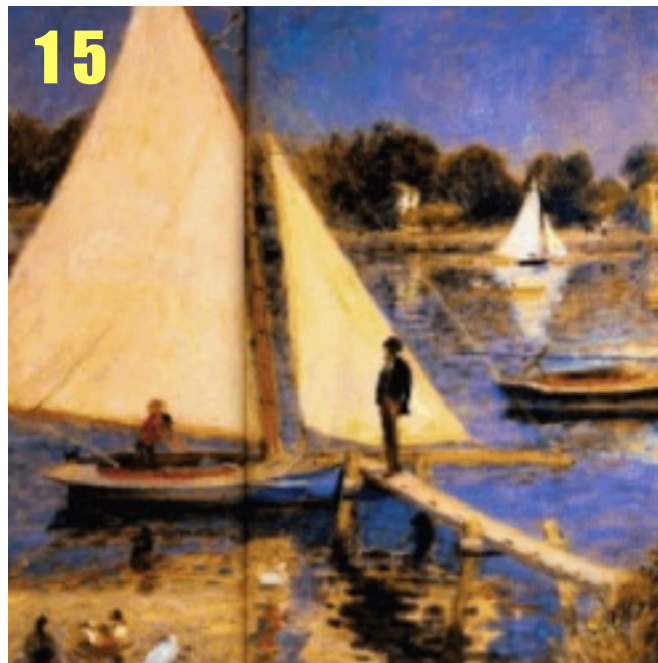
Please identify the line of horizon in these paintings: high, low or normal.

You can compare your answers with the correct answers during the homework review at the following class.











Practical exercise # 2.

Take three photos of the same subject(s) with different lines of horizon.

