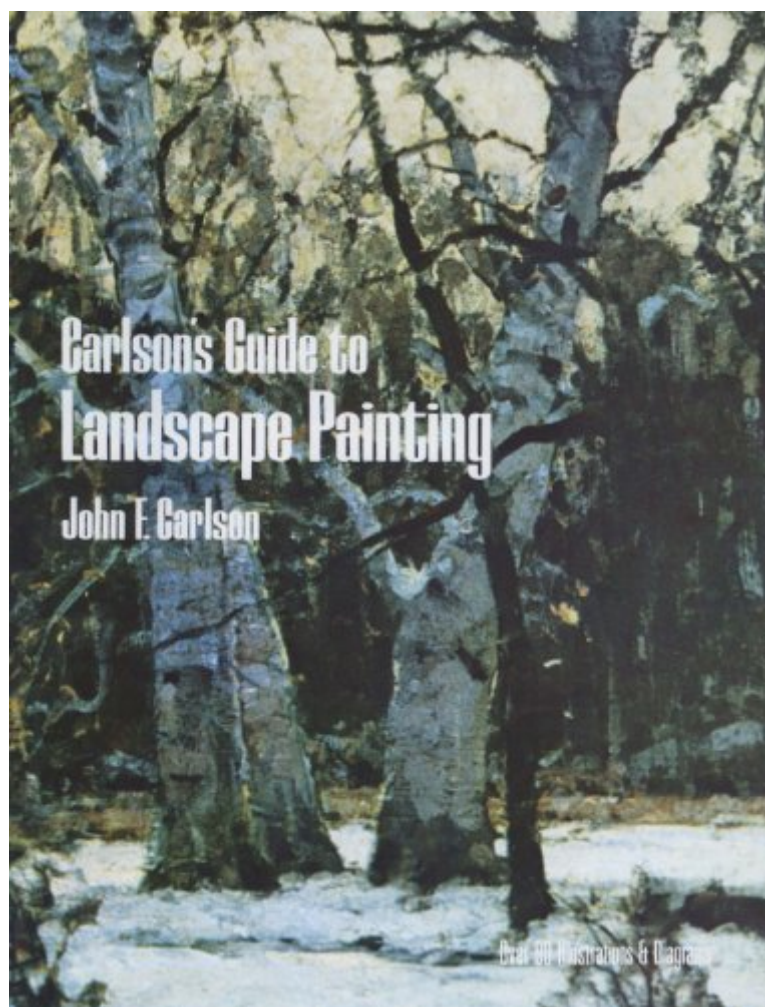


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# Carlson's Guide To Landscape Painting (Dover Art Instruction)



## Synopsis

Written by a famous American painter and teacher, whose landscapes are found in many of the world's most noted museums, this book is known as one of the art students' most helpful guides. It provides a wealth of advice on the choice of subject; it tells what to look for and aim for, and explains the mysteries of color, atmospheric conditions, and other phenomena to be found in nature. Through his profound understanding of the physical nature of landscapes and his highly developed artistic sense, John Carlson is able to explain both the whys and the hows of the various aspects of landscape painting. Among the subjects covered are angles and consequent values (an insightful concept necessary for strong overall unity of design), aerial and linear perspective, the painting of trees, the emotional properties of line and mass in composition, light, unity of tone, choice of subject, and memory work. In the beginning chapters, the author tells how to make the best of canvas, palette, colors, brushes, and other materials and gives valuable advice about texture, glazing, varnishing, bleaching, retouching, and framing. Thirty-four reproductions of Mr. Carlson's own work and 58 of his explanatory diagrams are shown on pages adjoining the text. As Howard Simon says in the introduction: "Crammed into its pages are the thoughts and experiences of a lifetime of painting and teaching. Undoubtedly it is a good book for the beginner, but the old hand at art will appreciate its honesty and broadness of viewpoint. It confines itself to the mechanics of landscape painting but, philosophically, it roams far and wide. . . . This is a book to keep, to read at leisure, and to look into for the solution of problems as they arise, when the need for an experienced hand is felt."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

After reading some of the other reviews I must say that I can understand some of the frustration that some of them voice. I think this book is best for those who already have some practice with painting. I don't think this book was aimed at the very most beginner. If I'm remembering correctly he wrote this book for a class that he taught to art students for and out-of-doors painting class in upstate New York around 1915 or so. The book contains many many things that you will have to know in order to paint landscape well. There is a lot of good information to consider here. There is a great section on the importance of capturing the correct values of your landscape. A section on the effects of light, on color, on sky, perspective, composition, trees, clouds, basic materials needed and some very sound advice on varnishing and medium, plus more. Some mention and criticism has been made that Mr. Carlsons work is presented in black and white, but this matter is addressed in the book where Carlson states that, it does the student a great service to study B&W photos of good paintings. The point here is to become familiar with a masters use of value to establish a painting rather than the student getting carried away by the color. Anyway, there are about 20 works of Mr. Carlsons in the book and each are used to teach a particular point. My opinion is that his work is pretty damn good. If you are really interested in seeing them in color just do a Google image search using his name. I paint two to three times a week out-doors and this book has been a real help. I have learned a lot. Highly recommended. Best wishes and Good Luck!!!

This is an essential how to guide for landscape painters. Carlson addresses the real nuts and bolts of how to paint a landscape and effectively deconstructs all aspects of the painted landscape into digestible principles and points. It has many B&W illustrations and examples of Carlson's work. In this day and age, however, it suffers from a complete lack of color pictures. It has been in print for decades and would get five stars and more if the publisher would find a landscape painter to add color reproductions of current painters who incorporate Carlson's principles, into the book. Or a companion book showing how other artists paint, using Carlson's points. There are many contemporary plein air painters, for example, who cite Carlson's tome in their list of recommended

books. Any of them would add a great deal to this book and bring it into the mainstream of technique books that painters clamor for. But for pure technique, it can't be beat. Richard Schmid's book, *Alla Prima*, is also highly recommended, with more personal philosophy and some fantastic color reproductions of Schmid's works. Carlson's *Guide* is, however, noticeably cheaper and too inexpensive not to have on your studio bookshelf.

The book is old, but it's still popular because the advice contained given by Carlson is timeless. Unfortunately the pictures are b&w. One thing I liked is Carlson gives guidelines which help to make realistic landscapes. A teacher such as Hawthorne (highly recommend his book) would say to forget rules and just get the color right. But I find that's not easy to do. Carlson's guidelines, especially comparing values between foreground, trees, mountains, and sky are very helpful. I read his book on the beach while on vacation and I was able to see for myself a lot of the things he claims, especially about clouds. This book is so cheap there's no excuse for not reading it at least once!

This book is an in depth look at the landscape in terms of how to understand what you see and interpret it in paint. I became aware of it when master portrait artist Allan Banks recommended the book to a convention full of portrait artists as a way to improve ..... portraits. It was an intriguing recommendation and, it turns out, on the mark. You get a tremendous amount of information for your buck. Carlson's words hold true today as ever. As to the lack of color illustrations, I looked through my Richard Schmid and David A. Leffel books to see their paintings confirm Carlson's insights. In a sense it was refreshing not to be distracted from the content by beautiful illustrations. The writing style is indeed "quaint". Carlson generally says "man" when we would say "artist" today. With the original copyright in 1929, I think he is allowed. Sure brought back some memories...mailman instead of postal worker. His writing style incorporates complicated double negatives instead of the positive conversational tone we use today. I suggest you just smile and absorb his wisdom. If you are overwhelmed in your attempt to organize all the "stuff" out there in a landscape, this is the book for you.

Regardless of your skill level this classic text can help you perfect or refine your own paintings. The clearly written chapters on specific aspects of landscape painting can be used for quick reference when your faced with a problem in painting. A must for beginners!

John Carlson is unique among artists in his ability to teach painting as masterfully as he did it

himself. This book offers a deeper understanding of the subject than any other I have ever read. All things discussed within its pages seem perfectly logical and understandable and yet entirely new in the way they are presented. Master painter, master teacher, Carlson engages his audience completely and imparts his understanding fully. To read his philosophy of art alone is well worth the price. A must have book for the experienced painter and beginning student alike.

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