MET: Painting Outdoors
Location: Martha’s Vineyard     June 8 – June 21, 2002
Instructor: Leslie Sills      Course Credit: 4

Painting outdoors, en plein air, is a way to not only to capture the beauty and mystery of nature, but also, to find ones connection to the primal. In Painting Outdoors, we will become familiar with many drawing media – pencils, pastels, and oil sticks – as well as acrylic and oil paints. Techniques will be demonstrated, but students will be encouraged to find their own interpretation of the landscape. A historical overview of nature painting will be presented through slides. Discussion and critiques will strengthen ones direction. This is a course for beginners as well as students with painting experience.

Number of students: Up to fifteen

Daily Routine: Mornings – Demonstrations, Group and/or Individual Discussion of Problems, Painting with Individual Instruction
Afternoons – Free Painting, Lectures, Slides, Discussion/Critiques

Required Texts:
2. Mayer, Ralph. The Artist’s Handbook of Materials and Techniques

Recommended Readings: Many of these books you will find in a library.
4. Gussow, Alan. A Sense of Place: The Artist and the American Land
Leslie Sills, Instructor

About books: I haven’t assigned many art books because they are expensive. But I recommend that before the class begins, you go to your library and look at some. See what appeals to you and bring them to class.

MET DR 250 x1: Painting Outdoors

Course Requirements: Grades will be based on the following
- 25% class participation
- 25% effort and cooperation
- 50% final project

Class Schedule:
Day 1
Sunday
Arrival
Evening meeting – Introductions
Discussion of course objectives/goals
Overview (with slides) on how American artists historically have approached landscape

Day 2
Monday
Morning: (9-12)
Introduction to materials -
Students will choose with which materials (drawing and painting) s/he would like to work. Time will be allotted for playing with materials and becoming familiar with them.
Demonstration of paint application and mixing color – how to begin.
We will do painting exercise in class, then sketch outdoors
Afternoon: (2-5)
Meet to look at sketches and talk about various points of view.
Begin to paint outside.

Day 3
Tuesday
Morning: (9-12)
Meet to discuss any concerns
Talk about finding and simplifying ones subject: We will make viewfinders for this purpose. Then go outdoors to paint.
Afternoon: (2-5)
Talk about perspectives - up close and far away views. What makes an exciting composition? Towards what do you gravitate?
Continue painting.

Day 4
Wednesday
Morning: (9-12)
Meet to talk about previous day’s work and any issues/technical problems.
Lecture and slides: Artists with different viewpoints–O’Keeffe, Avery, Dove
Discussion – Does your work relate to these artists’ concerns?
Paint outdoors
Afternoon: (2-5)
Check in about concerns.
Continue painting.
Day 5  
**Morning:** (9-12)  
Discussion of concerns/problems  
Looking at artists who make light a primary focus - Impressionists, Bonnard, and others.  
Does light play a role in your work? If you paint in the morning, what happens to your subject in the afternoon? How do colors change? Is this important to you?  
Paint outdoors  
**Afternoon:** (2-5)  
Gallery and/or artist studio visit

Day 6  
**Friday**  
**Morning:** (9-12)  
Evaluate where we are at. Look at problems/technical issues  
Paint outdoors  
**Afternoon:** (2-5)  
Critiques. What is working, what isn’t? Why not? What are the main issues in your work? How can you make your work more effective/satisfying for you and the viewer?  
What is this all really about?

Day 7  
**Saturday**  
Free Painting – This is time you can use to finish your work, start something new, look for a new location/subject, and/or relax.

Day 8  
**Sunday**  
Free Painting

Day 9  
**Monday**  
**Morning:** (9-12)  
Talk about layering – How does one create depth? Is that important?  
Lecture and slides: Artists who try to capture the complexity of the natural world - Welliver, Carr, Awalt  
Paint outdoors  
**Afternoon:** (2-5)  
Discuss final project  
Free Painting

Day 10  
**Tuesday**  
**Morning:** (9-12)  
Thinking about the spiritual – straying from what one sees. Are you working from life or an inner reality?  
Look at artists whose works leans toward the spiritual. How is that communicated? What elements make a work spiritual?  
Paint outdoors  
**Afternoon:** (2-5)  
Discussion/Critiques

Day 11
Wednesday  
Morning: (9-12)  
Discussion – Is your painting going in the direction you want it to? How can you maximize all that you have learned thus far?  
Painting outdoors  
Afternoon: (2-5)  
Gallery and/or artist studio visit

Day 12  
Thursday  
Morning: (9-12)  
Lecture and slides: Expressionist approaches to landscape – Imber, Snyder, Burchfield, Amenoff  
Continue painting with these issues in mind.  
Afternoon: (2-5)  
Discussion – What have you learned? Where to go from here?  
Painting outdoors

Day 13  
Friday  
Morning: (9-12)  
Presentation of work - critiques  
Discussion/Conclusions – How to make space in your life for painting.  
Afternoon: (2-5)  
Continued presentation of work – critiques

Day 14  
Saturday  
Departure

Note:  
There is a lot of flexibility in this schedule in terms of order of events. Adjustments will be made for weather and in some cases, students’ preferences. Also, painting locations will vary a great deal. Many types of landscape will be considered. And sometimes we will all paint in the same area, but other times we will separate. You will have a lot of time to find locations that fit your needs and taste.