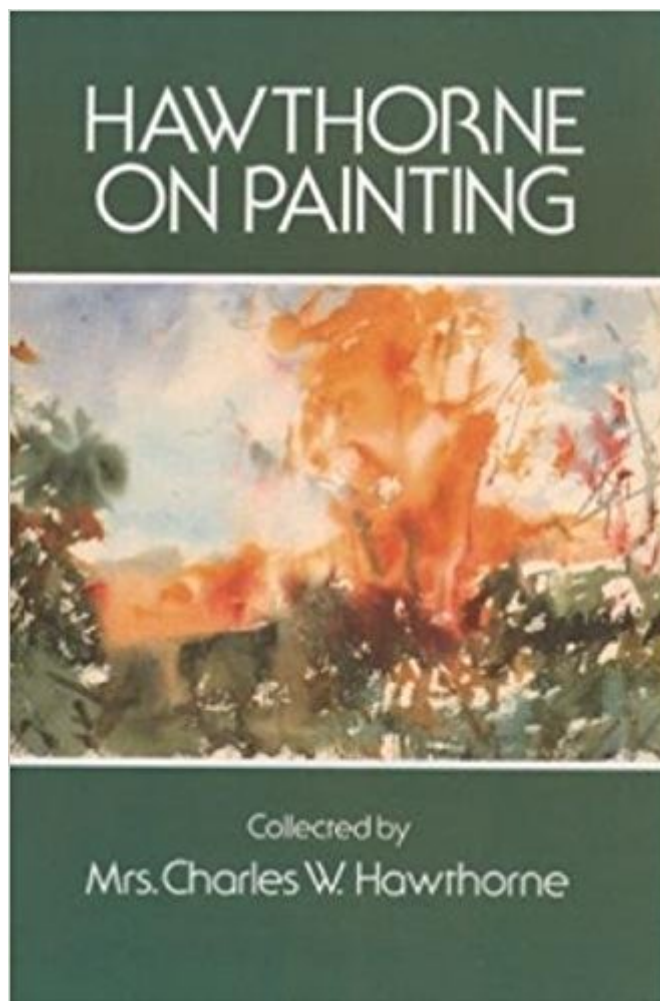


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# Hawthorne On Painting (Dover Art Instruction)



## Synopsis

Look around and select a subject that you can see painted. That will paint itself. Do the obvious thing before you do the superhuman thing. It may have been accidental, but you knew enough to let this alone. The good painter is always making use of accidents. Never try to repeat a success. Swing a bigger brush — you don't know what fun you are missing. For 31 years, Charles Hawthorne spoke in this manner to students of his famous Cape Cod School of Art. The essence of that instruction has been collected from students' notes and captured in this book, retaining the personal feeling and the sense of on-the-spot inspiration of the original classroom. Even though Hawthorne is addressing himself to specific problems in specific paintings, his comments are so revealing that they will be found applicable a hundred times to your own work. The book is divided into sections on the outdoor model, still life, landscape, the indoor model, and watercolor. Each section begins with a concise essay and continues with comments on basic elements: general character, color, form, seeing, posture, etc. It is in the matter of color that students will especially feel themselves in the presence of a master guide and critic. Hawthorne's ability to see color and, more important, to make the student see color, is a lesson that will aid student painters and anyone else interested in any phase of art. Although it does not pretend to be a comprehensive or closely ordered course, this book does have much to offer. It also represents the artistic insight of one of the finest painter-teachers of the twentieth century. "An excellent introduction for laymen and students alike." — Time "To read these notes and comments is in itself an education. One cannot help but gain great help." — School Arts

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

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After a few decades of hiatus, I began painting again. As part of my self-instruction, I collect art books, both the instructive kind and the art history kind. Hawthorne is considered one of the master instructors from the last century. He was the founder of the Cape Cod school, which was later continued by Henry Hensche who married a girl from this town and spent his final years here. I never knew about Hensche until after his death and thereby never had the opportunity to take a course with him. So, I had an interest in Hawthorne beyond his teachings. (There's a little book by Hensche that's also available.) The book is comprised of his instructions as remembered by his students. Much of his philosophy in the book comes through the form of critiques of student work. That's where the book becomes a little murky. Of course, his basic tenets are repeated in the critiques, but without the actual painting to look at, his criticism lacks a little foundation. It must also be understood that Hawthorne's beliefs about painting are centered in painting in a realistic representational manner.

I am savoring it. I take just a morsel and let it reveal itself overtime. I let the nugget tumble around in my experience till I have embodied its wisdom then I get another morsel. This way I can enter like a time traveler the start of Hawthorne's school which I have visited. Yet now the book brings the whole scene to life.

The concepts are worth reading for artists, but it really needs images. Clearly most of the writings are from actual critiques of students work so it would be really helpful to have the images that Hawthorne is talking about. Otherwise it all just comes across as conceptual musings.

Great book

I'm really enjoying all the nuggets in this book. Hawthorne's perspectives are thought-provoking at a minimum, even if you don't agree with him or understand exactly what he's saying. As I continue my now decades-long study of watercolor, I find Hawthorne states things in ways I haven't heard before, and I do believe it's made a difference in my painting.

There are very few books to help painters (even fewer for sculptors) that are of any real use. This is the only book, of which I am aware, that successfully deals with the challenges of outdoor painting in an honest (i.e. non stylized in terms of hue and value) manner. Hawthorne encourages his students to de-emphasize drawing and focus on learning to see and mix colors of the proper hue, intensity and value. He insists that it takes very little drawing information to convey a figure or landscape (even the time of day and weather) if the relationships among the large regions of various colors are correct. Yes, Hawthorne does repeat himself regarding "the mechanics of putting one spot of color next to another - the fundamental thing". Obviously he considers this paramount, but there is so much more in this small, inexpensive book. Here are a few examples: "The only way to learn to paint is by painting. To really study, you must start out with large tubes of paint and large palette and not stint in any way as far as materials go" ... "Always be looking for the unexpected in nature" ... "Know when you are licked - start another. Be Alive, stop when your interest is lost" ... "Don't be too reasonable, get a little bit excited" ... "Put on one or two traces of pure color as pace setters" ... "hold up the black handle of your palette knife to compare it with the darks in the subject" ... "You are too careful-but, of course, you can never be too careful. I expect you were careful about the wrong thing." Bottom line, it's a great book packed with useful advice by a real painter/teacher. You will

have to read it carefully, think, and be open to new ideas, in order to really learn from it, but you can't do better for advice on honest, representational, outdoor painting.

Difficult to read, small print.

I am an amateur artist, and found this book very useful. I would definitely recommend it to anyone who is interested in painting from life... or quite the opposite: is NOT interested, as he/she might change the ideas after reading it. This book is a rather patchy collection of C.W. Hawthorne's thoughts, advice and critique given to his students, and is, actually, a rare opportunity to look into the brain of a great master as he paints and to see his reasoning and problem solving mechanics in action. Here are some things that I learned from this book, just to give you an example:- How to perceive and depict the subject as an assembly of spots of color placed one against another- How to convey the atmosphere and mood (the elusive qualities that are impossible to catch on a photo)- How to see the extraordinary in the ordinary- How to progress quickly by doing lots of small studies (this one is being tested right now)- What mistakes to anticipate in your learning process and how to cope with them... and more. That said, I should warn those potential readers who avoid working from life or are interested in a more classical, academic approach to painting, that the book will probably disappoint them. In particular, the superiority of color over tone and drawing that the author advocates, sounded rather strange to me, since many fine painters say just the opposite (including Richard Schmid, yes, I am also from the club of his humble followers...). It is, however, important to keep your mind open to different (good) ideas, and this book does offer another point of view from an accomplished artist.

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