

**THE ART OF
SKETCHING
FROM NATURE**

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The Art of Sketching from Nature by Thomas Rowbotham

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THOMAS ROWBOTHAM

**THE ART OF
SKETCHING
FROM NATURE**



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THE ART

OF

SKETCHING FROM NATURE.

BY

THOMAS ROWBOTHAM,

PROFESSOR OF DRAWING TO THE ROYAL NAVAL SCHOOL.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS DESIGNED BY

THOMAS L. ROWBOTHAM, JUN.,

MEMBER OF THE NEW SOCIETY OF PAINTERS IN WATER-COLOURS,

AND ENGRAVED ON WOOD BY DALZIEL.

Fifth Edition.

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WINSOR AND NEWTON, 38, RATHBONE PLACE.

Artists' Colour Makers, by Special Appointment, to Her Majesty, and to
His Majesty, Prince Albert.

1851.

PREFACE.

MANY students, possessing a certain degree of skill in the use of the lead-pencil and chalk, are, for want of acquaintance with the necessary rules, entirely at a loss when attempting to commence a landscape sketch from nature.

The principal difficulties they experience being, to determine where to commence the sketch, and how much of the subject before them they ought to include within the limits of the paper.

Attention to the precepts contained herein, will, it is hoped, clear away these, and many other difficulties, that obstruct the essay of the sketcher.

The short course of instruction laid down is purely elementary, and confined to *linear* sketching. The limits of this little work do not admit of the introduction of the more advanced stages of colouring, and its complex manipulations. These, however, are ren-

dered the less necessary here, as they have been already fully entered into and explained, in two works, comprising portions of the series to which the present treatise belongs.* One work, written by the Author of this book, in conjunction with his son, treats of the elementary portion of landscape-painting in water-colours, and in the other book, the subject is continued through its advanced stages by Mr. Aaron Penley, who has laid down, in a full and clear manner, all the details of colouring, and its manipulation, with which it is requisite for the landscape-sketcher to become acquainted.

The instruction attempted to be conveyed in the following pages, is the result of many years active practice of the Author's profession; and his hopes will be realized if he is hereby instrumental in assisting the student in his endeavour to acquire the pleasurable power of "sketching from nature."

SEPTEMBER, 1850.

* "The Art of Landscape Painting in Water-Colours," by T. and T. L. Rowbotham. Winsor and Newton. Price 1s.

"A System of Water-Colour Painting," by Aaron Penley. Winsor and Newton. Price 1s.

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SKETCHING FROM NATURE.

IN the brief course of instruction proposed in the following pages, the object is to lead the student to a successful result by the simplest means. The rules are few; but if carefully studied, they will be found applicable to every object occurring in ordinary experience; and it is hoped that they will be deemed plain and intelligible. A multiplicity of technical terms and prolix explanations would not advance the student to the desired end; but there are yet some terms which it may be requisite to explain, as they frequently, and necessarily, occur in the course of these precepts. They are

The Picture.

The Centre of the Picture: commonly, but erroneously, called the point of sight.

The Distance of the Picture: generally called the point of distance.

The Base Line.

The Horizontal Line.

The Vertical Line.

For the sake of rendering these instructions more clear and perspicuous, we shall recapitulate a few of the general principles of linear perspective. This recapitulation will be rapid and concise; touching only upon those more important points which are in fact indispensable in successful sketching from nature; and we also purpose to explain the general terms given above. In fact, our object is rather to recal to the recollection of the learner certain principles and methods, with which we suppose him to be already acquainted,—the study of the elements of perspective being indeed the very first process to which the attention of the learner should be directed in his introduction to the art of drawing.

All objects which present themselves to the eye in a landscape, such as houses, trees, water, fields, mountains, &c., can be faithfully drawn in corresponding and similar outlines upon a plane surface.

For if a piece of glass be held at a proper distance between the eye and the proposed landscape, so that the part intended to be drawn can be seen through it, it is evident that a tracing of the apparent outlines of all the objects so seen through the glass can be made upon its surface, by the use of any instrument, which when carefully guided over the outlines of the objects

would leave, by means of colour or any other substance, the traces of its path.

As it is impossible to adopt this process in drawing from nature, the material on which the outline is made being paper, it is clear that sketching can be only effected by a distinct apprehension of the *real* forms of the objects themselves, and those *apparent* forms under which they are presented to the eye in their different positions in the landscape.

Now many of these objects have their real outlines, composed of straight lines, or of curved lines, or of both, which either may be irregular in their relation to each other, or may follow in certain given lines. If the latter be the case, these laws are for the most part of such a simple character as to admit of being easily comprehended; and, when once the principles, which we shall by-and-by enumerate, are mastered and understood, in the representation of the more complex forms of outline, the student will find an increasing facility, as his judgment becomes more matured, and his eye more correct.

OF THE HORIZONTAL LINE.

If a spectator were placed in a flat horizontal plain, the water or ground which he would have in view before him would appear to rise from the spot on which he stood, the limit of that rise being bounded by a clear