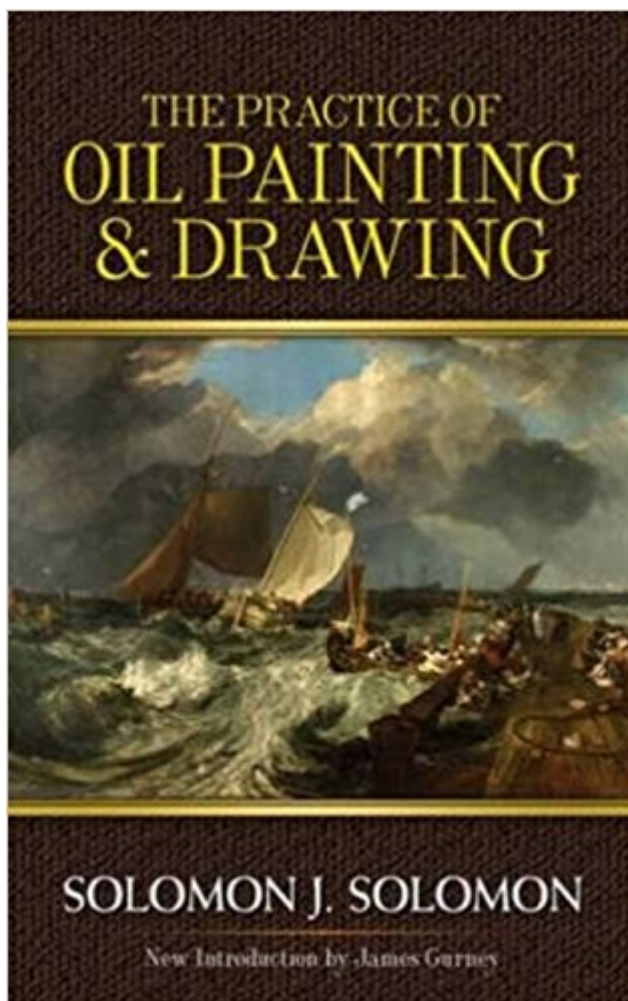


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The Practice Of Oil Painting And Drawing (Dover Art Instruction)



Synopsis

This instructive volume introduces not only the techniques of oil painting but also the underlying principles of figure drawing. Written by a distinguished Pre-Raphaelite painter, portraitist, and book illustrator, the treatment begins by explaining the construction of the figure, head, and limbs. Succeeding chapters illustrate these teachings with examples of images by the Old Masters, including paintings from the Italian, Dutch, Spanish, French, and British schools. The Birmingham Daily Post pronounced this volume "probably the most useful handbook for art students that has yet been published." Students at every level of expertise will benefit from its discourses on light and shade, monochrome study, still life in color, painting from life in monochrome, coloring a monochrome, and painting in color direct from life. Thirty-two full-color pages complement this new edition of a timeless guide.

Book Information

Series: Dover Art Instruction

Paperback: 384 pages

Publisher: Dover Publications (September 19, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0486483584

ISBN-13: 978-0486483580

Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 1.2 x 8.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.3 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars 22 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #255,338 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #48 in Books > Arts & Photography > Painting > Oil Painting #2911 in Books > Arts & Photography > Drawing

Customer Reviews

I bought this book after reading about it on James Gurney's art blog. The book is excellent! I own both Harold Speed's books on drawing and painting, and Solomon's Practice of Oil Painting is a wonderful addition to my small art library. The problem with painting reproductions, as described by another reviewer, has been solved. I own the latest 2012 paperback edition with an introduction by James Gurney. Not only does this book have all the black and white images which were present in the original and are reproduced here in very high quality, it also has a full set of high fidelity classical painting reproductions in the middle of the book. The prints are done in full color on glossy paper and quality of the color inserts is good enough for scanning and doing master copies. I am very happy

that this book has been made available and, with so much attention to quality and detail, I'm sure it will soon reach the must-own classic status which it so richly deserves. Thanks to the good people of Dover Publications, I now own this wonderful manual which was all but lost until recently.

I found there were good reminders regarding drawing the figure, such as basic proportions, remembering to consider negative space as much as positive shapes, etc. There is a lot of classic and basic instruction for beginning and intermediate artists. I would not call it inspiring or exciting, but it is a collection of rudimentary and essential tools.

'The Practice of Oil Painting and Drawing' by S.J.Solomon is another in the genre of books which strive to elucidate how the old Masters arrived at their station and status, and what one should do to put yourself on the same artistic path. It runs the same course as most of the others like it and can be summed up by this excerpt from the book: 'However imaginative or otherwise gifted the painter may be, he has first of all to be a painter, a sound craftsman. The knowledge of his medium of expression and its capacities are his first essential requirement; without it he is dumb--dumb as a thinker who is incapable of properly reducing his thoughts to words.' An interesting facet to Solomon's formal education is his education at the Royal Academy, which education he then declared virtually valueless, as the 'R.A. [Royal Academy] had 'little or nothing to teach; its students, as soon as they have passed the curriculum it imposes on them then make haste to betake themselves to France to learn, not only how to paint and draw, but to forget as much as they can of the practice and theory acquired at its schools.'" This is the exact same position the R.A. found itself early on in the 19th century, and here it is still floundering, still uncorrected circa 1885. (See 'American Painters on Technique, The Colonial Period to 1860,' by Lance Mayer and Gay Myers, giving an interesting historical perspective on the R.A. and the plight of students.) Solomon obviously still adheres to some of the old beliefs propounded earlier in the 19th century by teachers and Masters in the R.A., such as the use of asphaltum by Titian to achieve the beautiful 'toning' of his canvasses, and declaring the French school after Watteau, whom he declares the 'finest product of French art,' to be 'artificial and over sweet.' He mentions the Wallace collection, but only in reference to Watteau and Lancret. This seems to be a carry over from the very late 18th century to almost mid 19th century, a general despising of art engendered by the French ancien regime, particularly of leading Masters such as Francois Boucher and Fragonard. Solomon mentions the Wallace Collection, but nary a word about Boucher who figures prominently in the collection. (I have a particular fondness for Boucher and have several books re Boucher, one of the best being

'Francois Boucher, Seductive Visions,' by Jo Hedley, The Wallace Collection.) Yet, Solomon doesn't shirk his duty to exposing poor practices, even by a leading light of the R.A., such as Reynolds for his use of destructive materials such as wax in his painting. He gives an interesting anecdote (which I have read elsewhere) about a Reynolds painting warmed in the sunlight causing one of the portrait's eyes to slide down from its proper place towards the chin. This book was published in London in 1911, so I didn't have very high hopes for a spot on analysis of Master's painting techniques, given where conservation and real knowledge about such things wasn't to significantly surface until the late 1960's. However, his exposition on technique of the Masters is actually simply a critique of various paintings in the National Gallery, not really about technique, so that was a wash for me. Coming from other similar books, my favourite in this genre, still, is 'The Materials of the Artist,' by Max Doerner, professor in the Academy of Fine Arts, Munich. This isn't to say that the books coming from people like Parkhurst and Solomon aren't valuable or their content lacks worth; they are grounded in sound atelier working principles and methods and are certainly worth a read. If you are reading treatises that were formulated in the 19th century and speak to the working methods and practices of even earlier Masters, then you and I are on the same page. If, however, you eschew the Masters in their preparation and careful craftsman-like qualities of earlier centuries and embrace the laissez faire conventions of the present day, then none of these books mentioned will probably be to your ilk or liking, however much I think they should be the core of any competent art curriculum. One last note: One nice thing this book did have which others did not, was the inclusion of colour photographs of the National Gallery art works under consideration, unlike some of the other books which, however good, however packed with valuable information, had photographs resembling 10th generation Xerox copies, which certainly diminishes their impact and legibility.

For beginners and experienced artists this is a fine source book. It's not for those who want to peruse pretty pictures, but if you're looking for information and guidance you will most likely find it here.

Famous text. Useful. Modern books rely on step by step photos, sequential states. Tjis is narrative text.

Very comprehensive detail in fine print about techniques of the old masters which can be applied today.

tops the chart in terms of art instruction just like all the other turn of the century masters.

great thoughts from a great master, well worth reading

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