



Pen, Ink, and Watercolor Wash Sketching

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Drawing and Painting People

Add human figures to your landscape paintings and sketches.

Prior to the 19th Century, landscapes served mostly as backdrops for depictions of human figures and historic events. Think of the intricate scene behind Leonardo Da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*. But painters such as J.M.W. Turner and John Constable made depiction of the landscape their aim, adding human figures to provide scale and focus.

Including people can greatly enliven landscapes, particularly those with panoramic views. Thus, when we are painting and sketching, we may want to add a figure or group, but we often feel less confident about drawing people than objects and vistas. Drawing human figures sometimes seems difficult simply because we lack practice.

The following exercise sheets are designed to provide practice so that adding people to landscapes will become easy and will open up possibilities for creating interesting new compositions with focal points that have universal appeal.



Practice Sheets for Drawing Figures in Watercolor Wash Landscapes

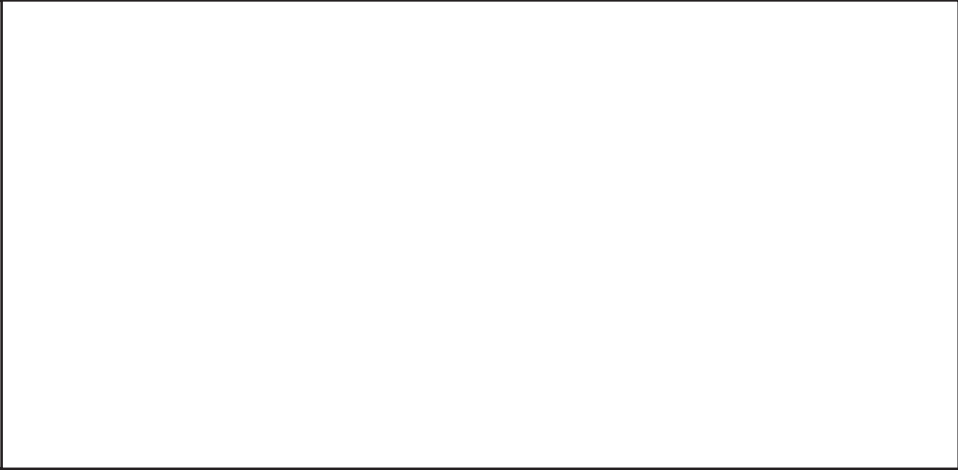
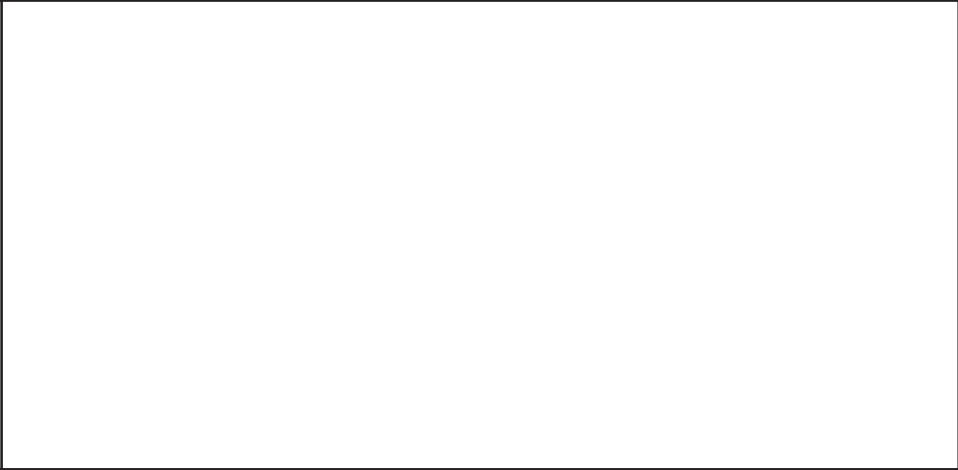
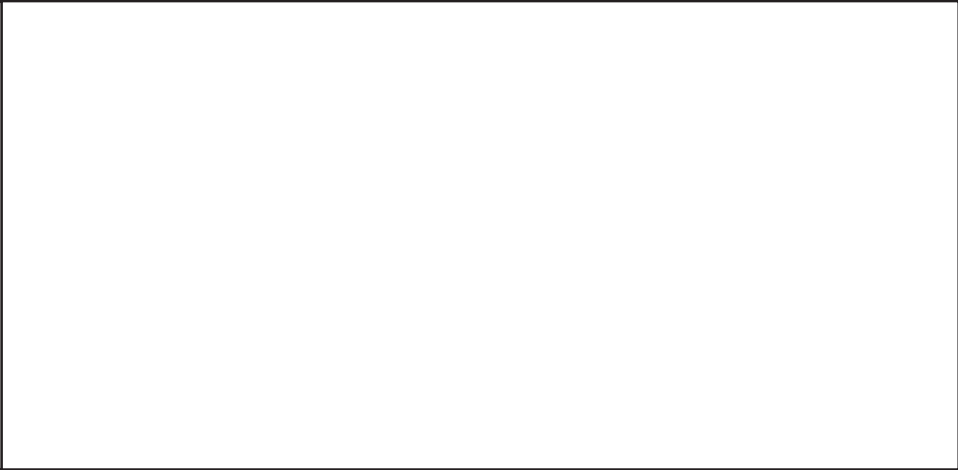
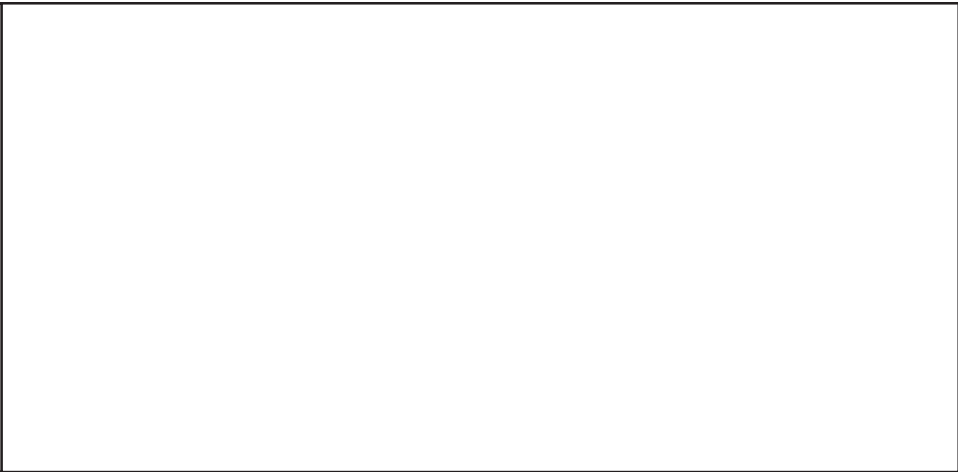
- Use the photo reference above to make a preliminary sketch on the watercolor paper you will use for your final landscape painting. This will let you see the scale for drawing your figures.
- Study the photo references and paintings of people on page 3 and note that the paintings are presented in three levels of complexity. The simplest are silhouettes in either gray or sepia tints. Colored washes are used to paint the second group, but they are still done very quickly with just a few strokes of the brush. The third painting technique uses some dark lines and a little shading to show a bit of detail on figures that might be in the foreground. These three levels of complexity in relation to the reference photo above are shown on page 1.
- Practice sheets for your drawing and painting are on pages 4 and 5. You can print them using either a good quality multipurpose paper or drawing paper that has been cut to 8.5" x 11" to fit the printer.
- A practice area for drawing and painting is at the right of each small reference photo. The photos have been chosen for their simplicity. Try various techniques with different levels of detail, and always use your own style of painting so that the figures you add to your landscapes will be executed in the same way you might add rocks and flowers or other objects to blend into your paintings.
- After you have practiced figure drawing, paint the landscape above and add some people.



14.5" x 5.25"
Strathmore
Aquarius II,
Watercolor
Paper,, 80-lb.



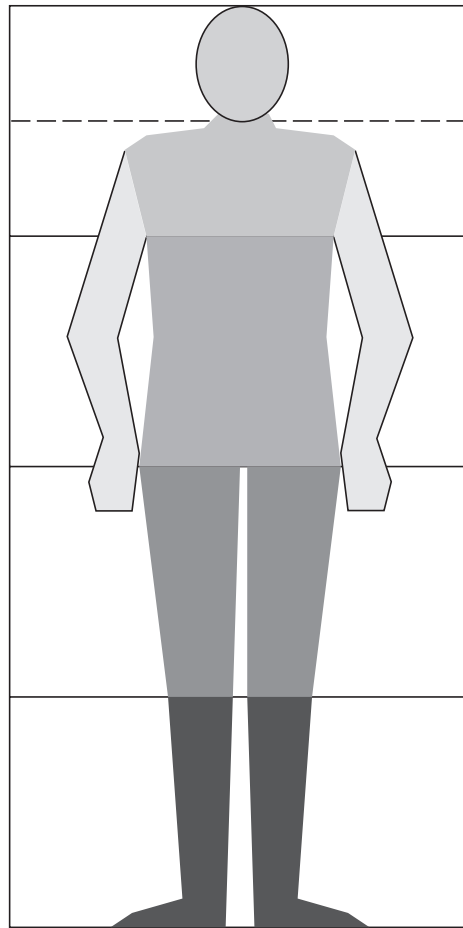






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The Proportion of the Human Body

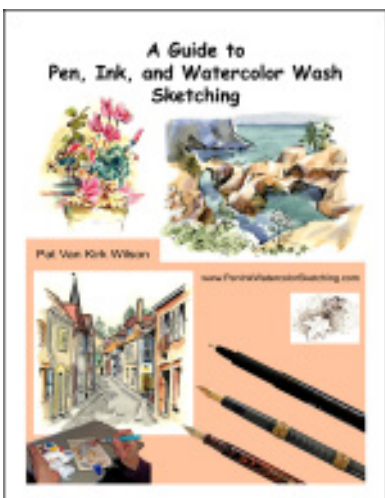
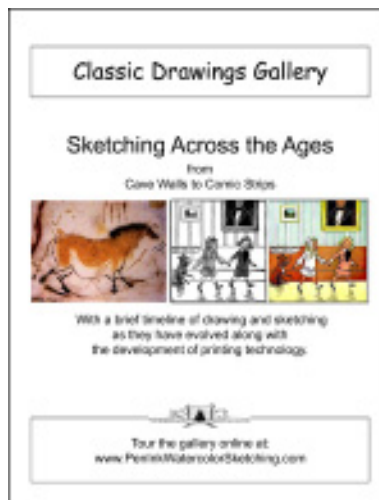
Based on the proportions of Vitruvius, the body is eight heads tall and can be divided into four equal segments as shown above. The top segment can be further divided with the head taking the first half and the shoulders to nipples taking the second. Because of the huge variety of people's physiques these proportions are of course overly simplified, but they are very easy to remember and will serve as an excellent rule of thumb when beginning to make quick sketches in the field.

Best wishes for good sketching with your watercolor washes,
Pat Van Kirk Wilson



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 and
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 Art Tutorial Sketchbook*

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