

FOREGROUNDS

Here are some possibilities for you to think about when painting a subject that utilizes a foreground. These ideas can also be applied to Still Life subjects.

1. Place the center of interest in the foreground.
2. Add a vertical element in the foreground. When a vertical shape overlaps the distant planes it divides the canvas and introduces the possibility of more varied connecting shapes.
3. Overlapping ground elements, e.g. shrubs and grasses, rocks etc.
4. Use strongly contrasting color in the foreground. Warmer colors will tend to visually advance, whereas cooler colors will tend to recede.
5. Use a change of ground plane – with the ground rising or falling.
6. Lost and found edges to move the viewers eye through the foreground plane.
7. Patterning – large shapes to small shapes and repeated shapes.
8. Use Aerial perspective.
9. Using directional lines, shapes or elements to lead the eye towards the background. This could include, fence lines, shadows, road, river, pathway, rocks, light or shadow edges, reflections, water edge (ocean) etc.
10. Cast shadow in the close foreground.
11. Using a darkened foreground. This will have the effect of causing the viewers eye to pass over the foreground and into the middle and far distance.
12. Using cropped elements in the foreground – this also causes the viewer to look over these objects and on into the next plane.

How to use these ideas –

1. Use the acetate over some of your old paintings to see if they might be changed or improved with the addition of one or more of these ideas. E.g. adding a vertical element, darkening the foreground etc.
2. Plan your next painting (and all future paintings) to include one or more of these suggestions.
3. Paint the foreground first and keep it loosely out of focus.