# TIPS ON COMPOSITION OF PAINTINGS
## By Peggy Simmons

## Four "S" Words for Compositions

- See

- Squint

- Simplify

- State

## A good foundation promotes a successful composition

- Divide your canvas or paper into thirds.

- A good drawing (does not have to be really detailed, but it does have to have the basic size and perspective included) and a thought-out composition are essential.

- Spatial relationships – compare the size of one object to the next one and then check that against other things in the composition.   For example, the size of the building to a tree and where the sky meets both in the composition.

- Always compare negative and positive shapes.

- Make sure that your perspective is accurate.

- Thumbnail sketches are good for laying out the composition for your painting.

## Questions to ask yourself

- Why are you painting this?

- Are you inspired?

- Is it a good composition?

- What are the actual colors and textures?

- Are you remembering balance and harmony with colors and shapes?

- Is your drawing accurate?

- How is your perspective?

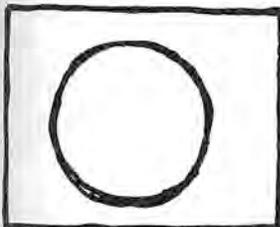- Are you blocking in the whole picture and working the entire picture or panel?

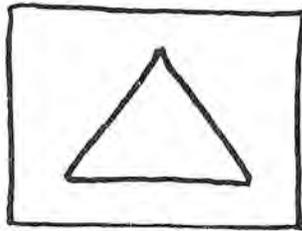Types of compositions:  Copied from Edgar Payne, *Composition of Outdoor Painting*, 1941, 6th edition, 2000, Payne Studios, Minneapolis, MN, pages 117-120.
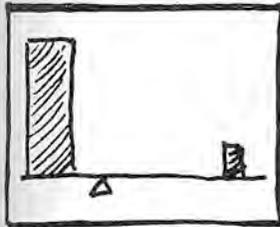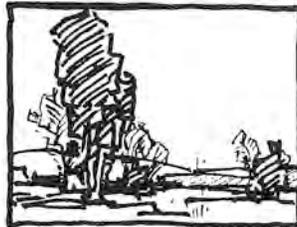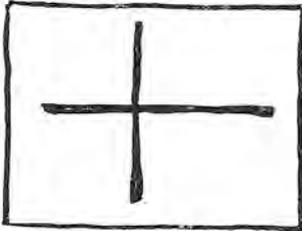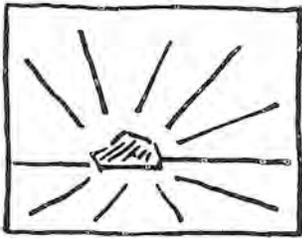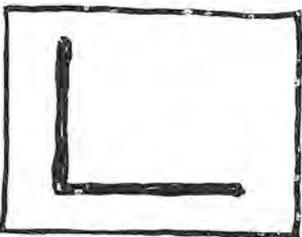


XVII. — FORMS OF COMPOSITION—A

Pyramid or Triangle
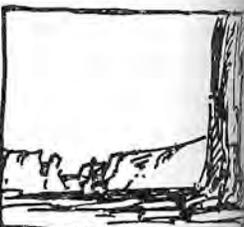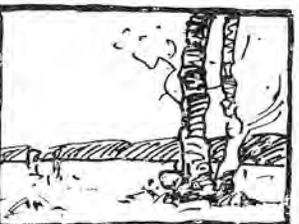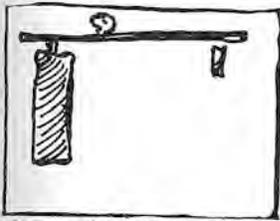
Cross

Radiating Line

Ell or Rectangular

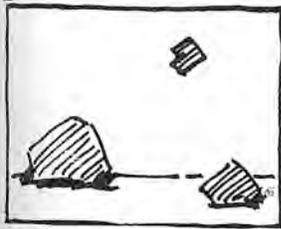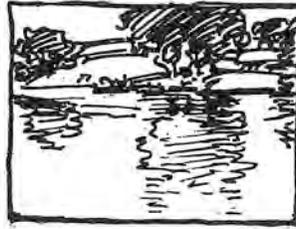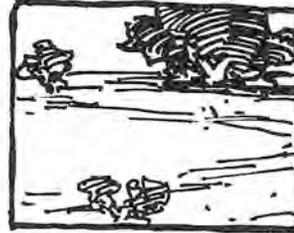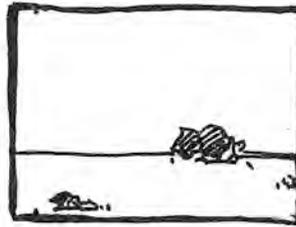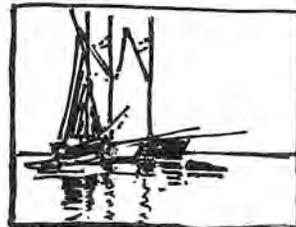XVIII. — FORMS OF COMPOSITION—B
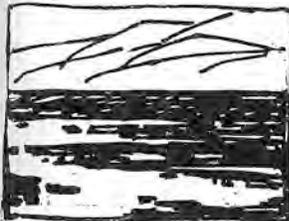
Suspended Steelyard
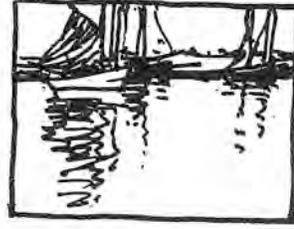
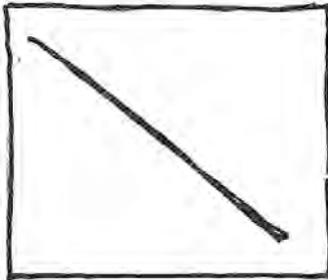Three Spot

Group Mass

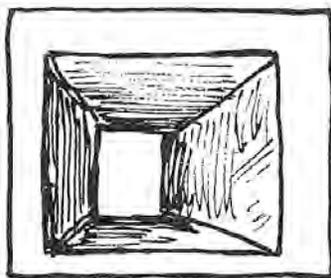Points of Interest in the Center

Scattered Masses Arranged

XIX. — FORMS OF COMPOSITION—C

Diagonal Line



Tunnel



Silhouette



Pattern