

Bringing Forth A World

Axioms of Subcreation
by Daniel Mirante

V.01

www.visionary.art

Painting by Joseph Gandy



Axiom 1

*Where is the light
coming from?*



“Let There Be Light”

Light is
visual form.

Everything in this world
is seen through Light.

By asking ourselves about
the source of light, we
begin to move closer to
'subcreation'.





Questions

Does the Sun shine from the top of the piece, the far right, far outside of the canvas itself. Is the sun setting? Has it set completely? Is the moon shining?

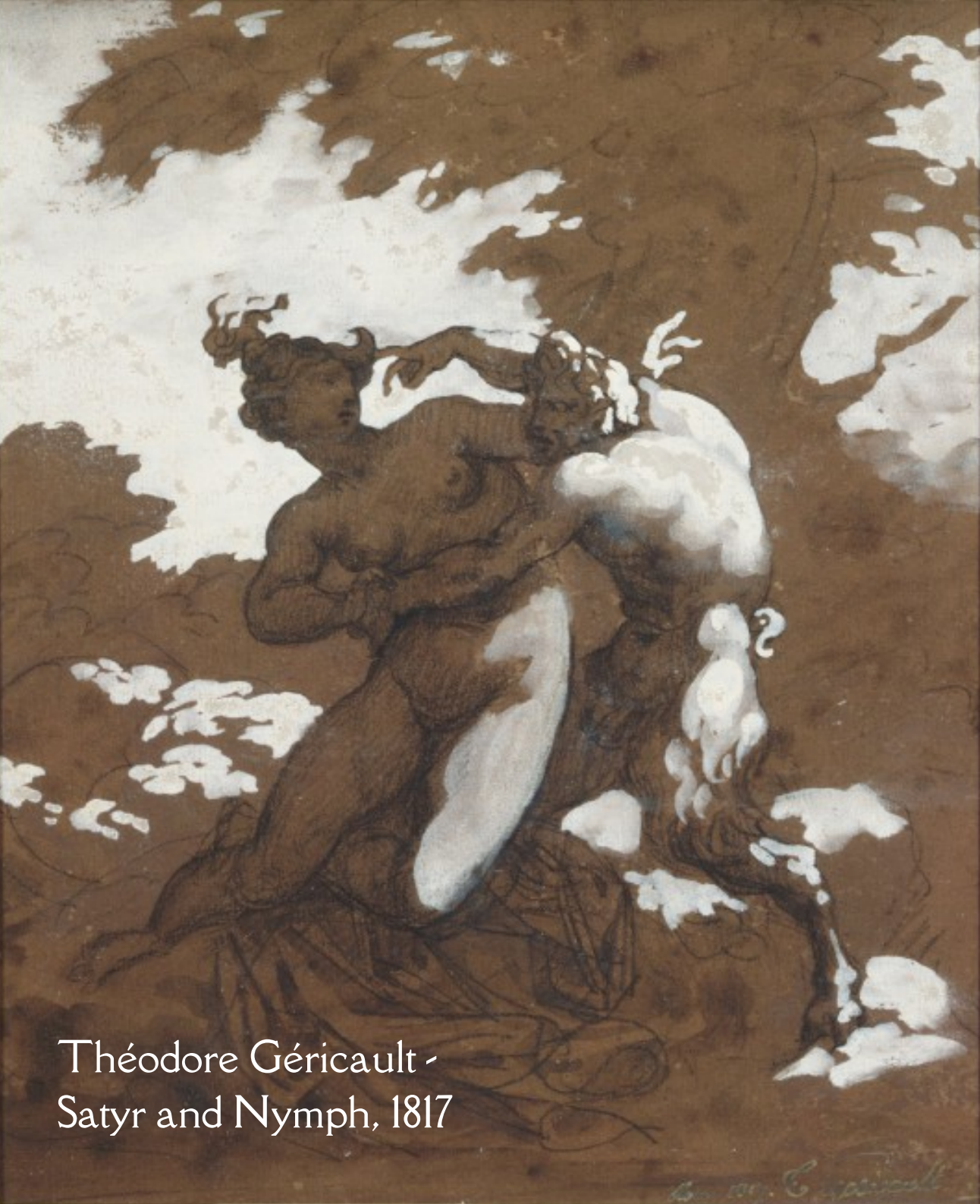
Or is there a candle or a fire? Or is the piece self illumined from within?

Is the source of light - as in some Van Eyck paintings - coming from the direction of the viewer, bathing the whole scene in the illumination of the viewers gaze?

Is the Light a metaphor for Awareness?
Gnosis?

Underpainting- The Study of Light

Because the underpainting is monochromatic, we get to focus on the poetry and logic (psyche and techne) of light to describe not only form but energetics.



Théodore Géricault -
Satyr and Nymph, 1817

Underpainting
means the artist can
sculpt and
understand the form
or values of light and
dark in the painting
before considering
color.

Artists study sculpture,
because they can focus
almost entirely on the
play of value (light -
midtone- dark)



The Logic of Light

We see because of directional lighting, and many of the forms and structures we perceive, we gain additional information through the play of cast shadows. Cast shadows allow the painter to describe additional dimensions of an object or subject represented, but one must have defined the light source.

This appreciation of the logic of light, is what gives something imagined its definition, and solidifies the substance of what is created, allowing it to exist within the laws of light, even if it is a fantastical creation in itself.



The Play of Light

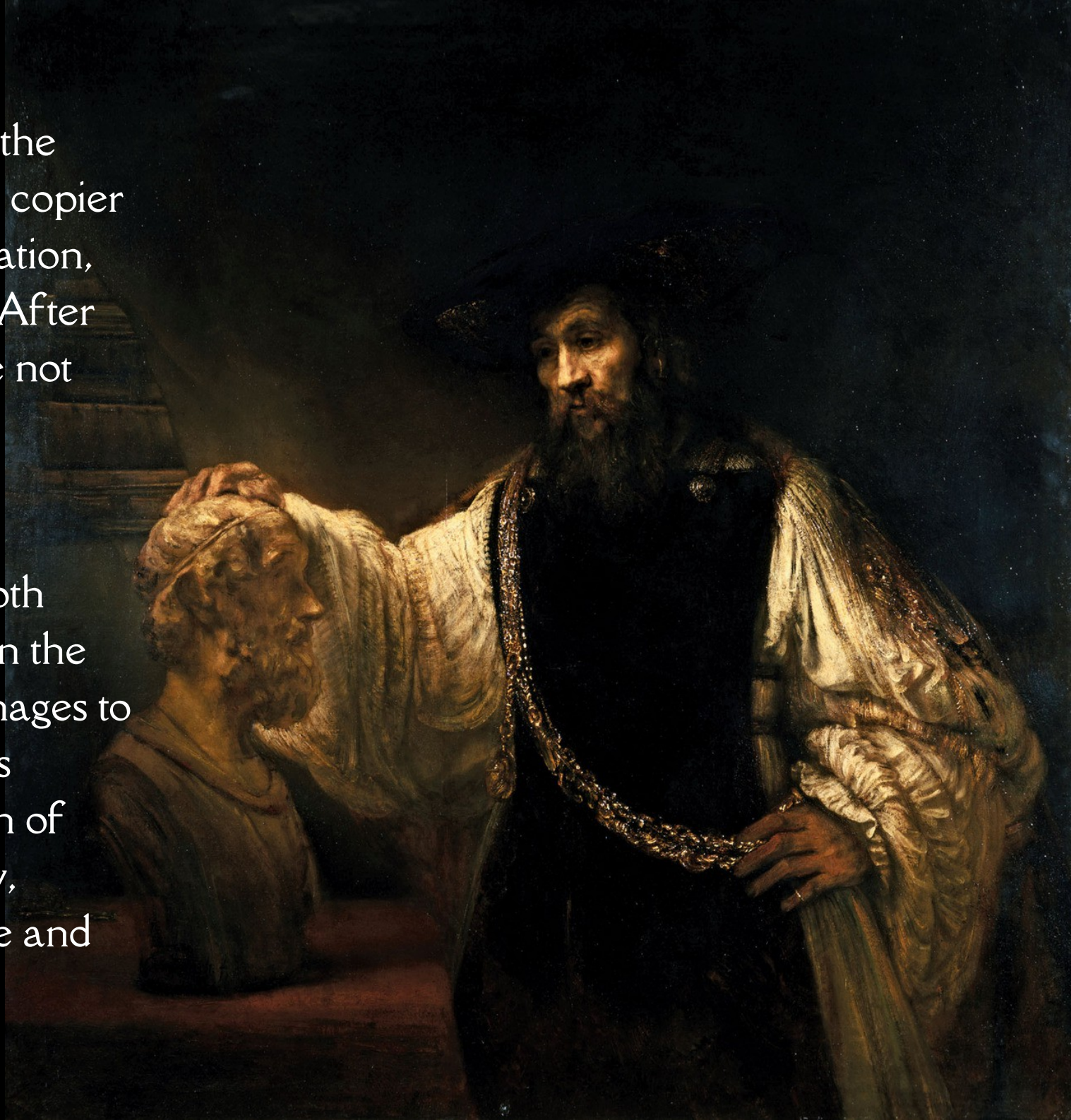
Light is so dynamic in its nature ; reflecting, bouncing, scattering, splitting, that it is experienced as a wondrous play of appearances, revealing a world of infinite complexity.

Therefore the artists study of light also accomodates what we could call the 'play' of light, not only the 'logic'. This could also be called the mood, the poetry, the expressiveness of Light.



The 'play of light': the artist is not merely a copier of optical representation, but a poet of Light. After all, art may describe not just 'vision' but total awareness.

Here Rembrandt both describes the light on the subject but also manages to convey a sumptuous numinous dimension of light through energy, interpretation, shape and brushwork.



'Self-Luminous' Forms

Forms exhibiting an unusual or internal source of light, similar to the way certain crystals channel light like a fibre-optic.

Painting by Robert Venosa



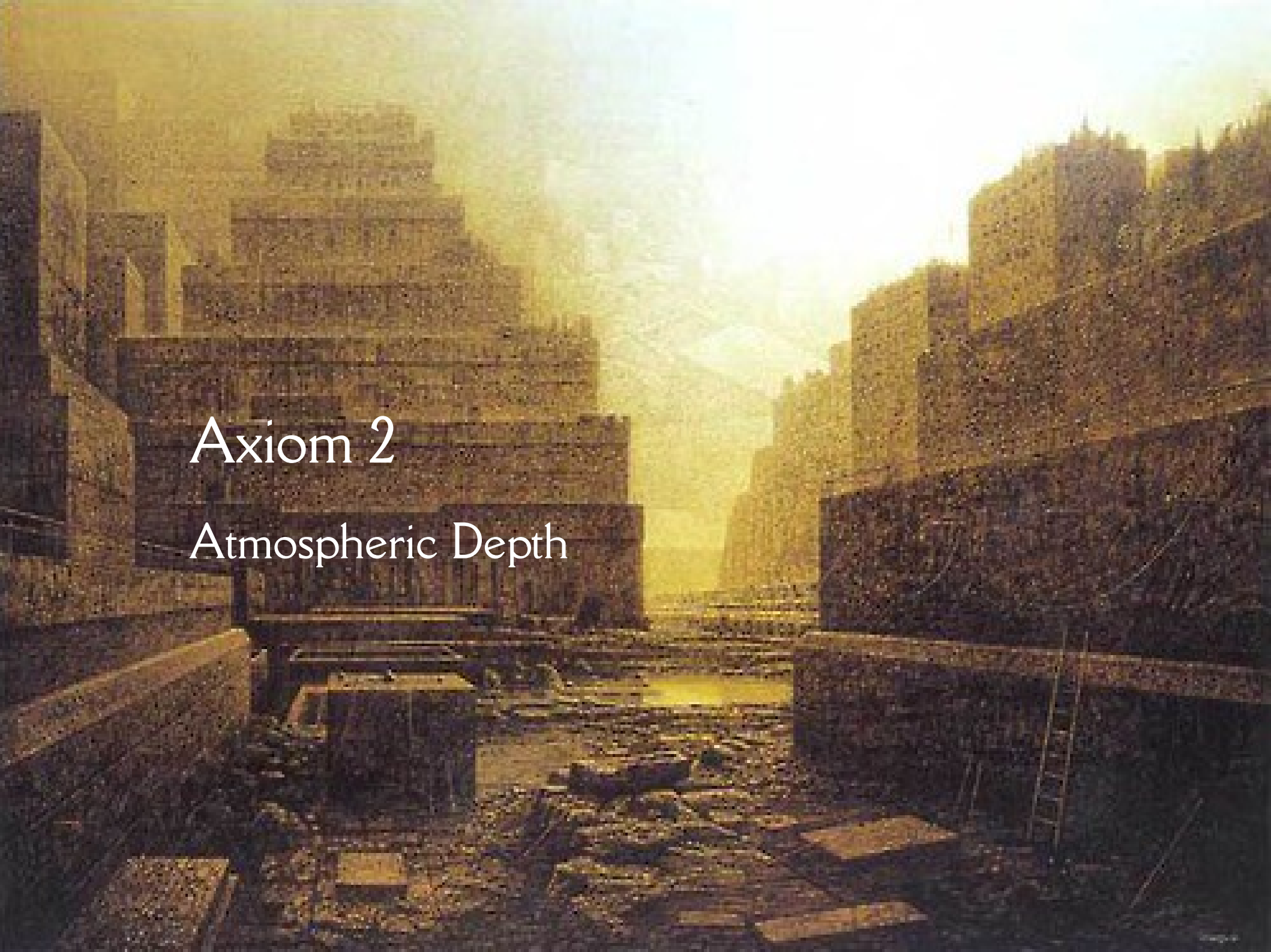
'Self-Luminous' Forms

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Painting by Ernst Fuchs

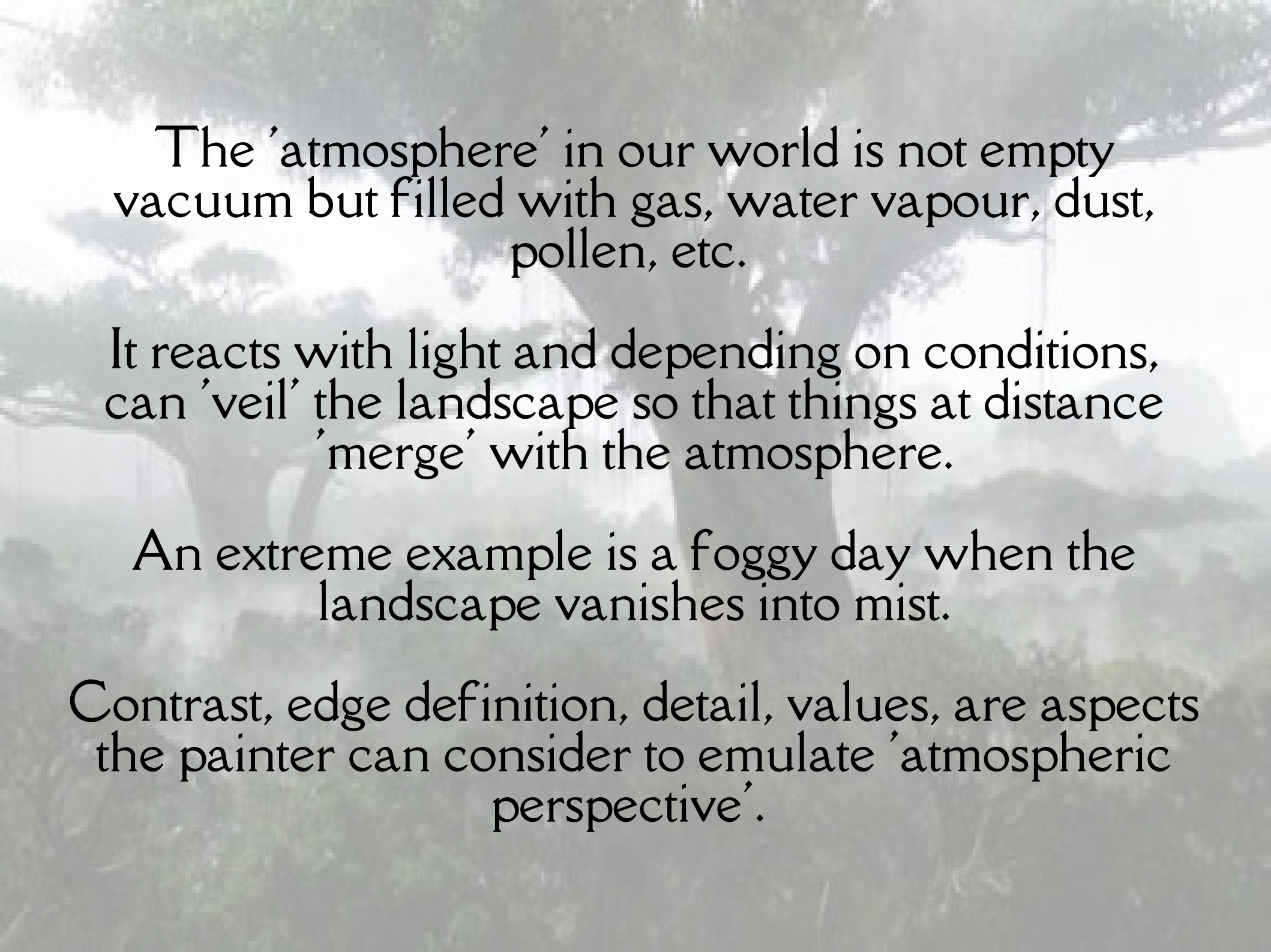






Axiom 2

Atmospheric Depth

A grayscale photograph of a landscape shrouded in thick fog. In the foreground, a path leads towards the distance, flanked by trees and foliage. The fog is dense, obscuring the details of the landscape in the background, which is a classic example of atmospheric perspective.

The 'atmosphere' in our world is not empty vacuum but filled with gas, water vapour, dust, pollen, etc.

It reacts with light and depending on conditions, can 'veil' the landscape so that things at distance 'merge' with the atmosphere.

An extreme example is a foggy day when the landscape vanishes into mist.

Contrast, edge definition, detail, values, are aspects the painter can consider to emulate 'atmospheric perspective'.





Joshua Commanding the Sun to Stand Still – by John Martin

The space in this world we inhabit is filled with a mixture of gases that result in things at distance being perceived more bluish. When one is up a mountain looking across a valley to an opposite mountain, one can sense the blue of the sky filling the space, like a substance with volume.

The general perceptual rule is that things closer to us have more red and yellow in their balance, they are warmer, and as things recede they become cooler.

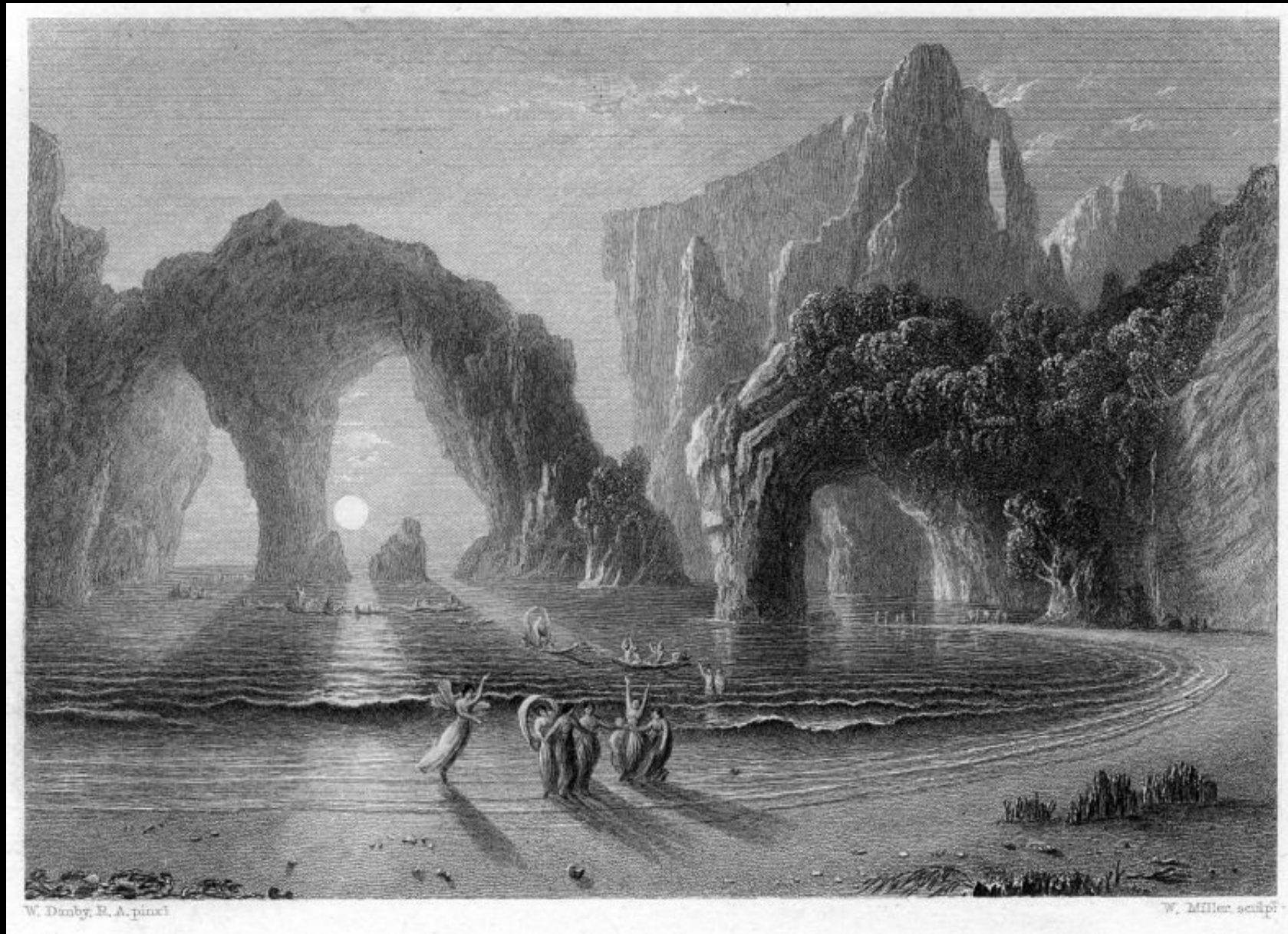


Aleksey Savrasov, Lell

Not only do they become bluish and cooler as they recede, they lose detail, and they lose contrast, and become fuzzy.

Objects further from us contain the highest pitch of highlights and the deepest shadows - objects closest to us are warmer, sharper and have more contrast.

Fairies on the seashore – engraving by William Miller after Francis Danby



The painting depicts a dramatic coastal scene. In the foreground, a dark, craggy rock formation is covered with a large colony of seabirds, likely gulls or terns, their white and dark feathers contrasting with the dark rock. The sea is turbulent, with white foam from breaking waves visible. In the background, a massive, steep cliff rises vertically, its surface textured with vertical ridges and patches of green moss or lichen. The sky is filled with soft, grey clouds, creating a moody and atmospheric setting. The overall composition emphasizes the scale and ruggedness of the natural environment.

The Cradle of the Sea-Bird, 1872, Peter Graham

We work with a mop or dry hogbrush
to create more blending and softening
in our background, and use more
delineation and solidity in our
foreground.

Axiom 3

Temperature
(foreground-background
temperature contrast)



Painting: John Martin



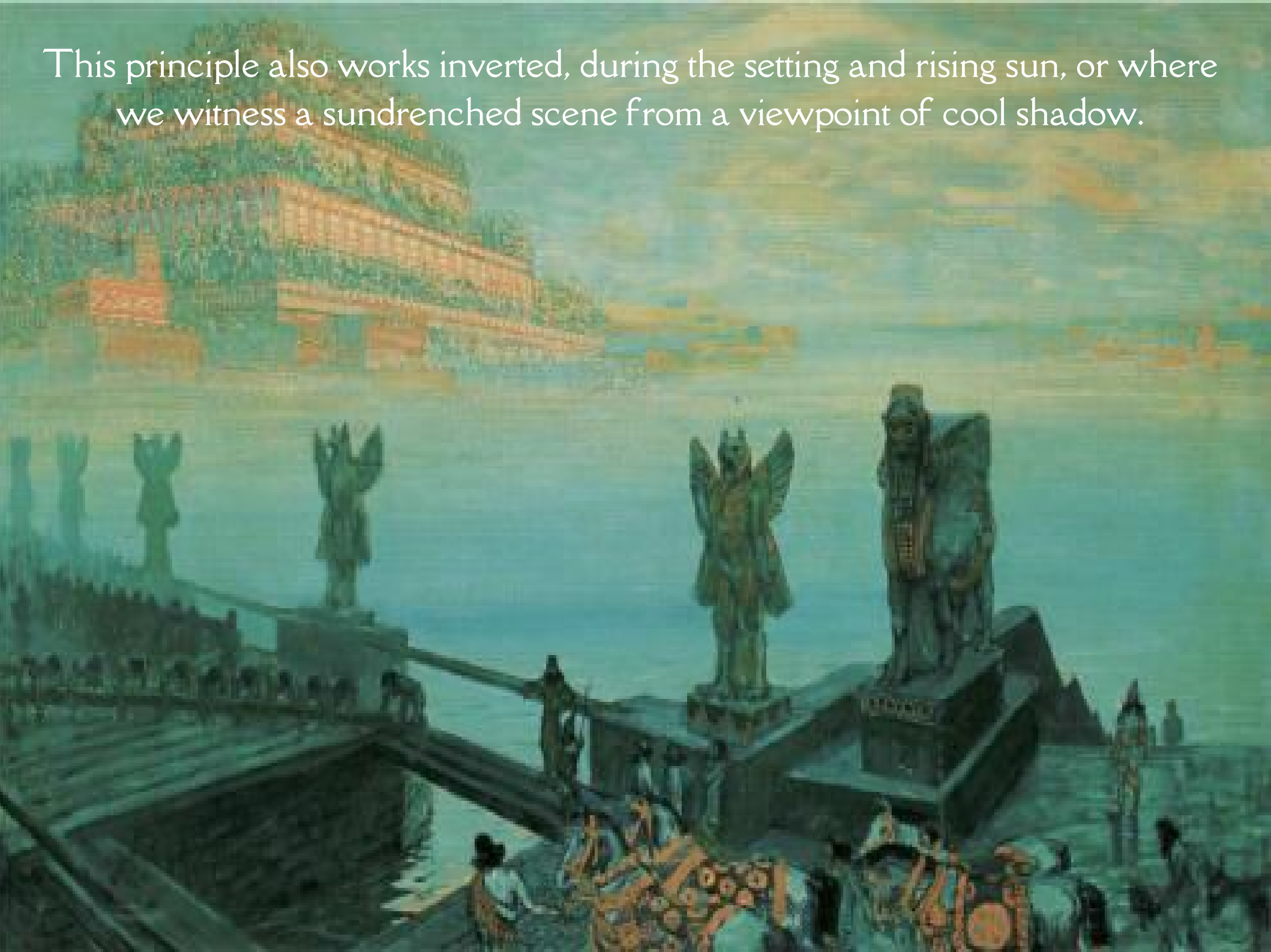
Exploring this general guide as a painter may mean that we distinguish which pigments we use, and use different pigments between foreground and background, we keep the warms more forefront and reserve our cools for the space of expanse.

After all, a strong red, white or gold is most likely to catch the eye to a focal subject





This principle also works inverted, during the setting and rising sun, or where we witness a sundrenched scene from a viewpoint of cool shadow.



Strongly related to the principles of atmospheric perspective, but also decoupled from it, as it may serve as a preliminary form of 'color contrast' (like the light-before-dark-before light rule) rather than necessarily that of depth mapping





Strongly related to the principles of atmospheric perspective, interleaving warm against cool is like the light-before-dark-before-light axiom, used to distinguish layers against each other.



John Martin, using his skill of 'light before-dark-
before light' with 'warm-before-cool-before-warm'

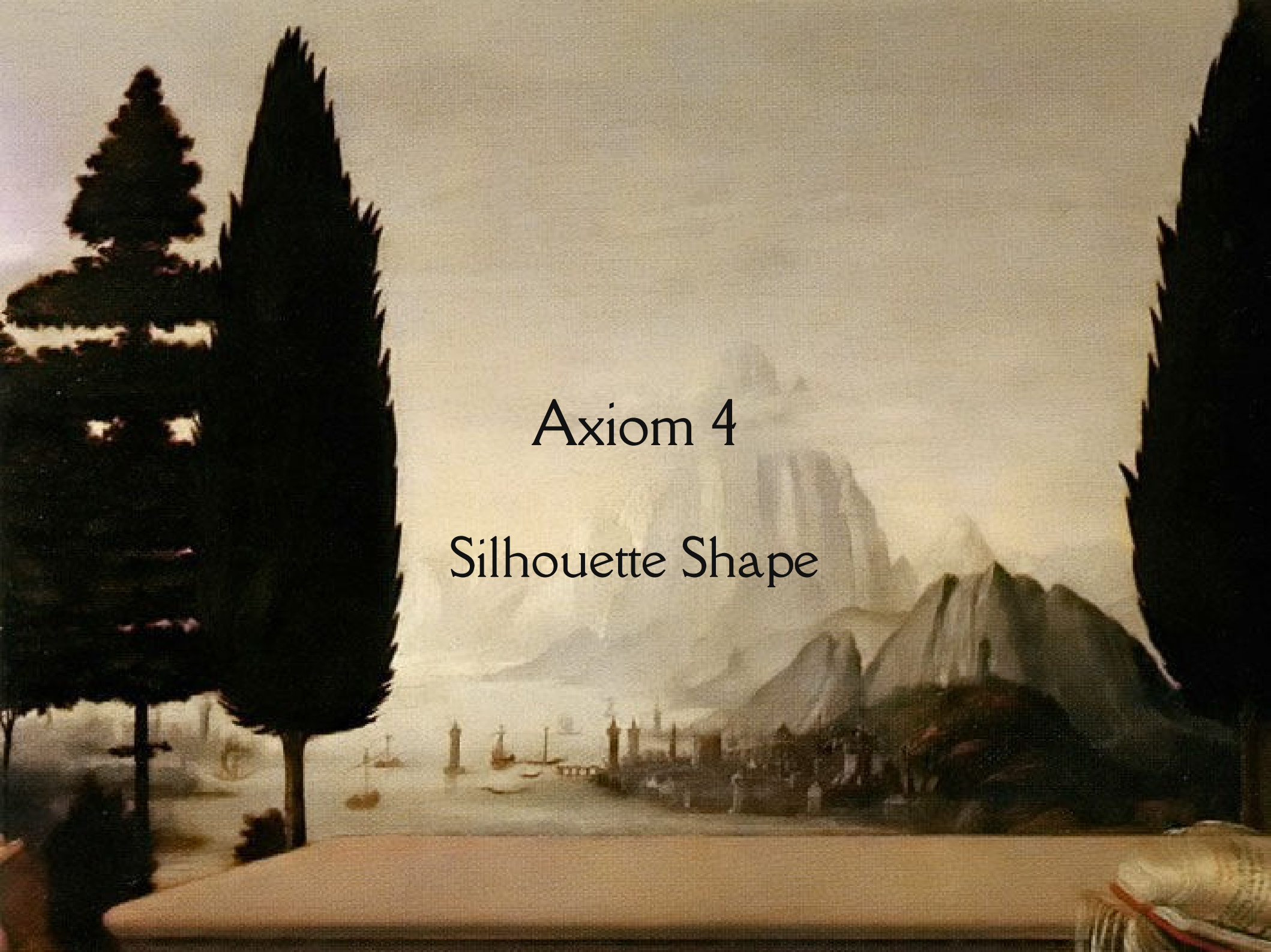


Another example, in this egg tempera by Vitiaco, temperature is to distinguish between different realms of day and night occupying the same painting. So these axioms are useful in the process of upholding a 'fantastic' subcreation, whilst sustaining a 'conviction of reality'





Nicola Samori

The image is a painting of a harbor scene. In the foreground, there are dark, silhouetted trees on the left and right sides, framing the central view. The harbor is filled with several ships, including sailing vessels and a larger ship with a prominent mast. In the background, a large, rugged mountain with a snow-capped peak rises above the harbor. The sky is a pale, hazy yellow. The overall style is that of a 19th-century landscape painting.

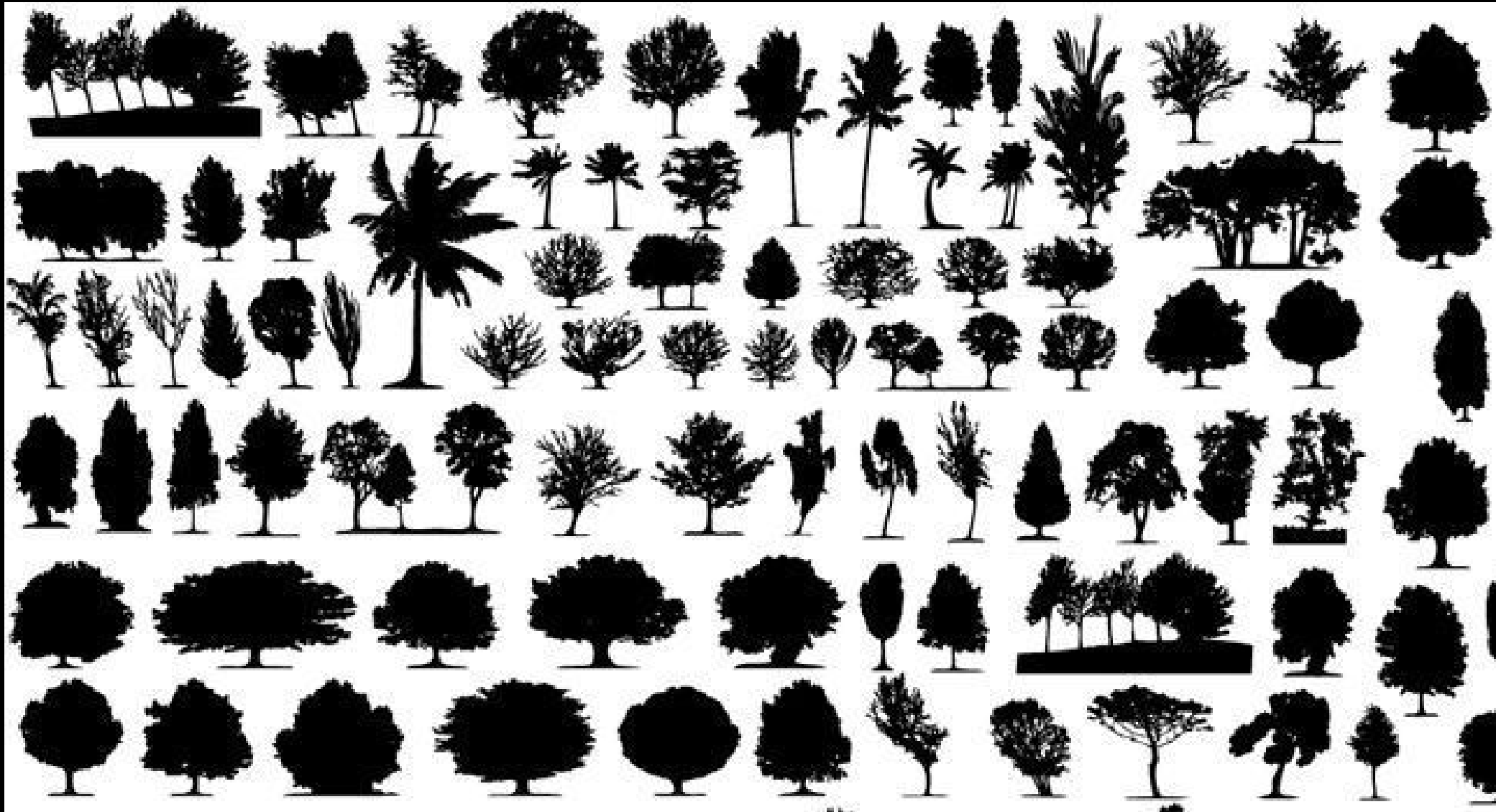
Axiom 4

Silhouette Shape





The species of a tree can be identified by silhouette of whole tree or even leaf, silhouette holds that much information.



In terms of painting plants, this principle is very helpful as it is efficient. Following the axiom of 'general to specific', the tree can be described mainly in blocked in silhouette form, with dapples of leaves being described in 'borderline areas' or where the tree catches light.



Considerations of the power of silhouette shape need not be confined to vegetation but any form.

Anything can be described by strong attention to silhouette and edge.





Silhouette forms allow opportunity for 'nested compositions'







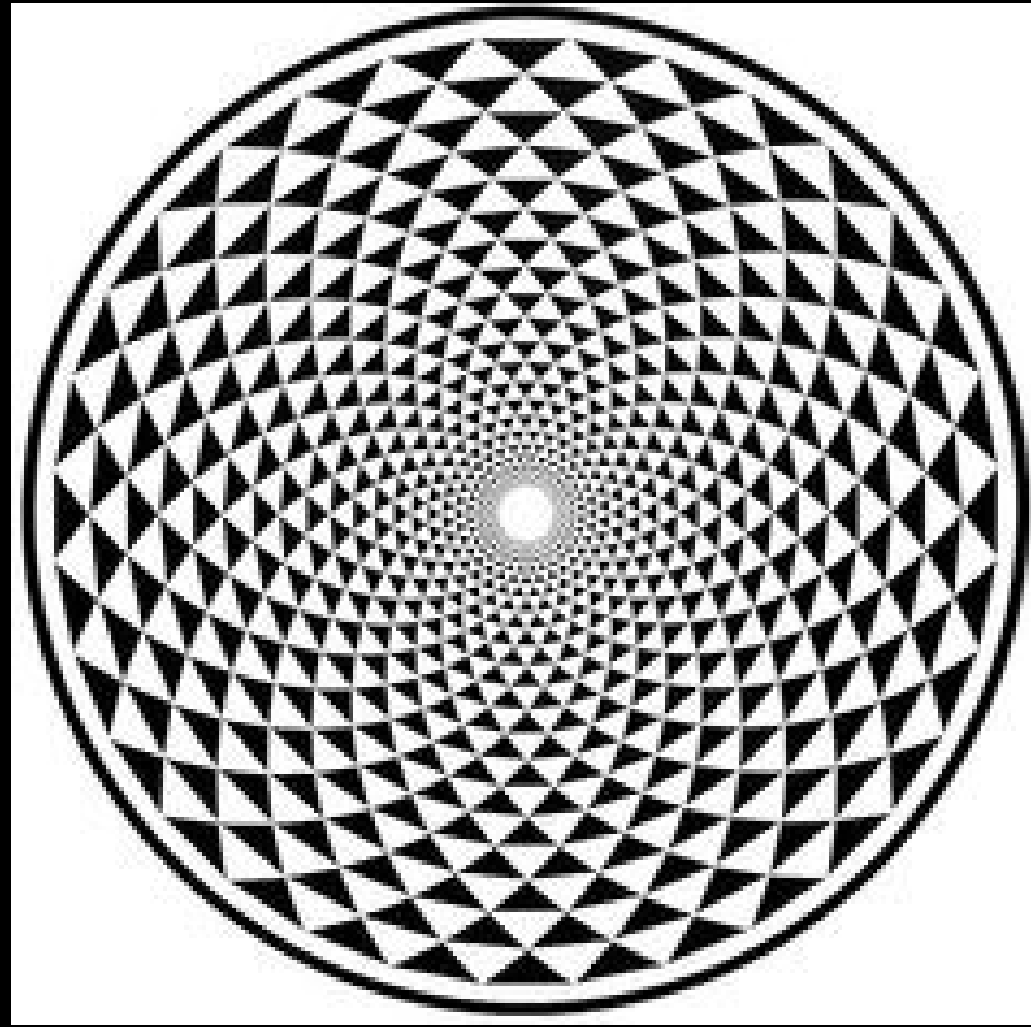
Axiom 5

Scale Cues

The size and scale of shapes or objects play an important role in creating the illusion of spatial depth. A shape motif repeated at different sizes informs our understanding of scale.



This principle applies as much to the concrete as the abstract



Tomas Sanchez



Axiom 6

*Light Before Dark Dark
Before Light*



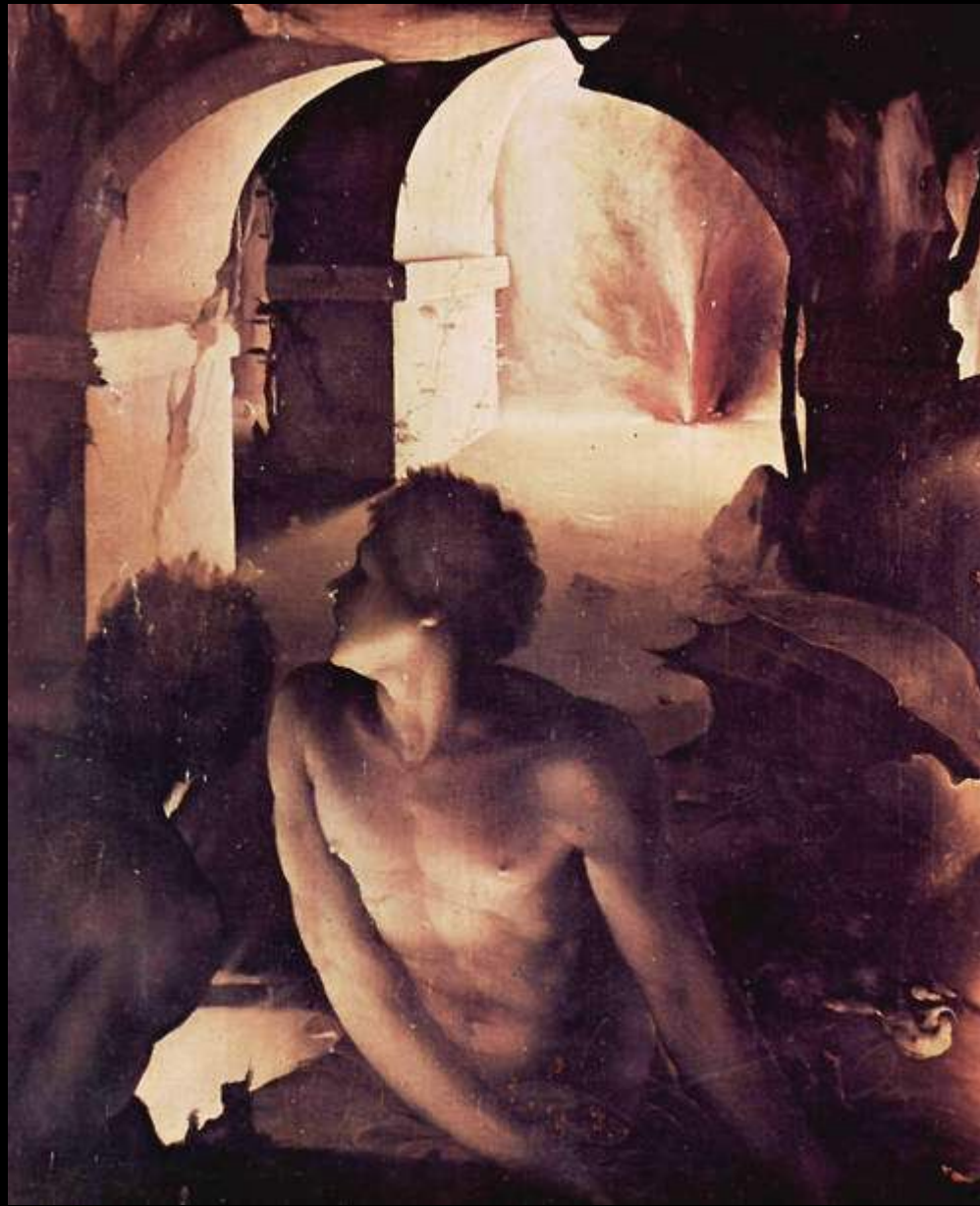
Nicholas Kalmakoff

Light Before Dark Dark Before Light

One way to organise complex layered compositions is to explore the *dark-before-light, light-before-dark* rule.

This rule allows for distinction of layers, of foregrounds and background in a composition, much the way layers of a stage set may be designed to distinguish themselves from each other.

If the composition reads, iconographically from a distance due to these distinctions, it is then possible to pursue detail whilst keeping iconographic boldness, that will allow a painting to be appreciated from afar or in very small scale, whilst rewarding closer attention and exploration.





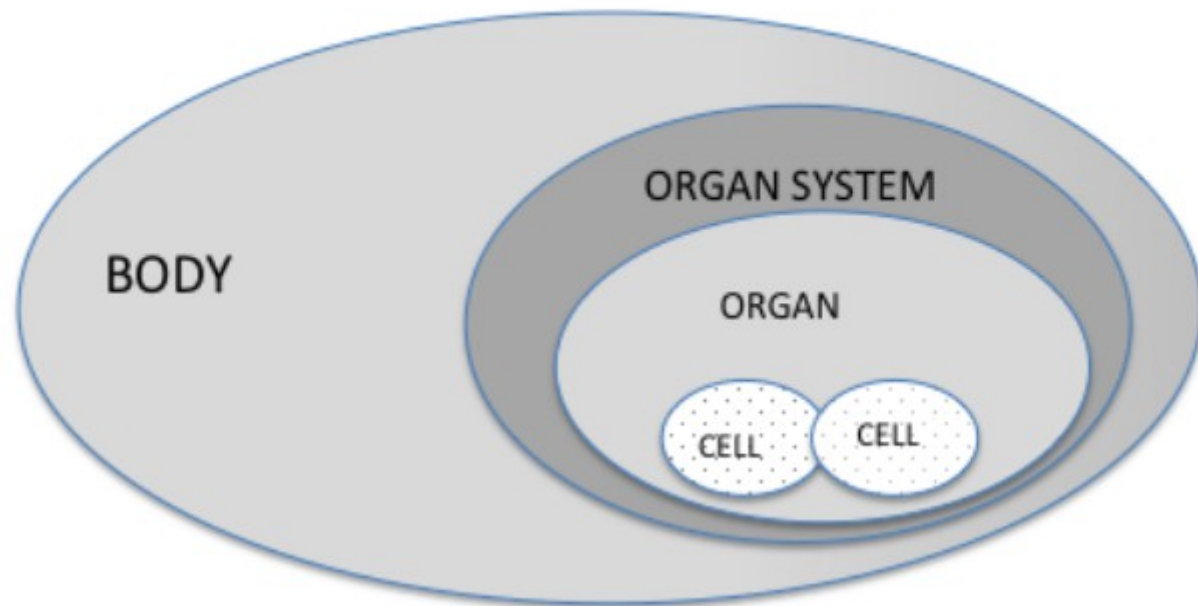


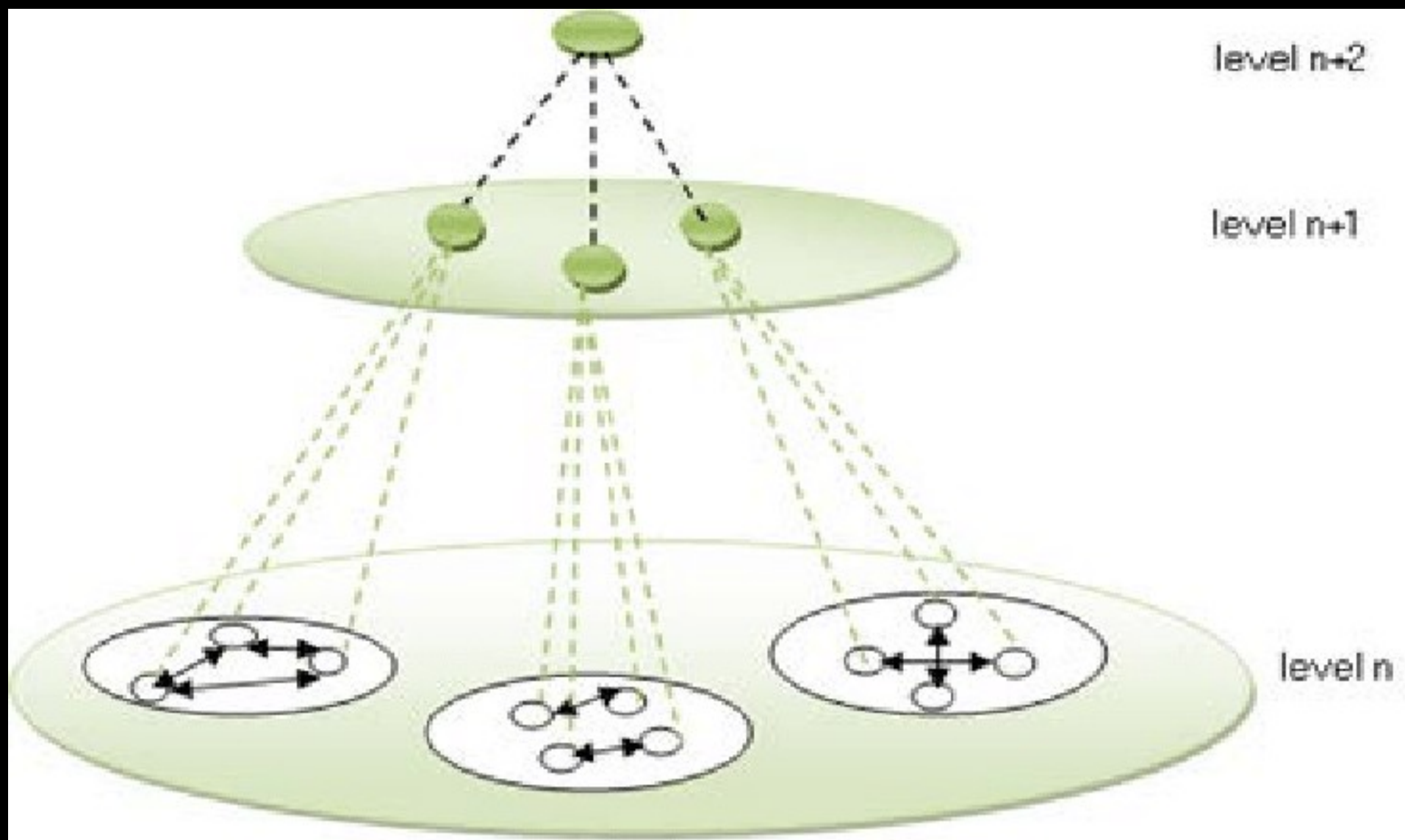


Axiom 7

'General to Specific'

Remember to consider the general macro-view before getting into details.





Intersubjective

