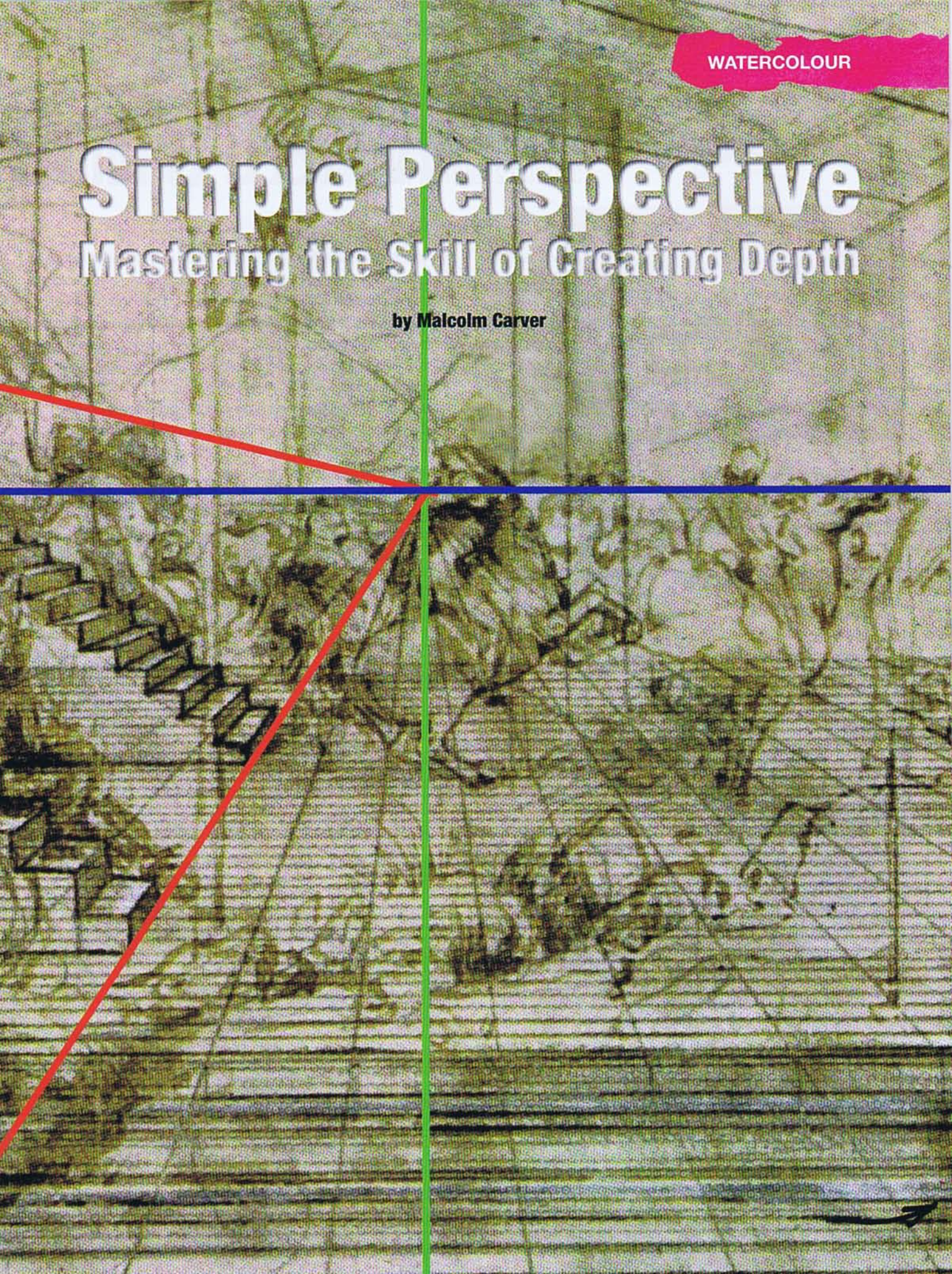


WATERCOLOUR

# Simple Perspective

## Mastering the Skill of Creating Depth

by Malcolm Carver



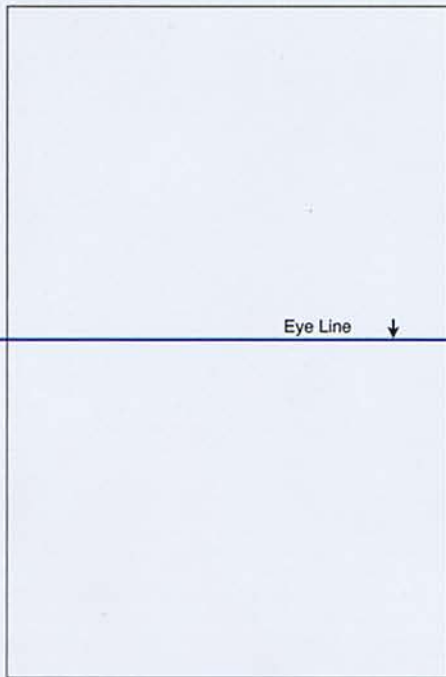
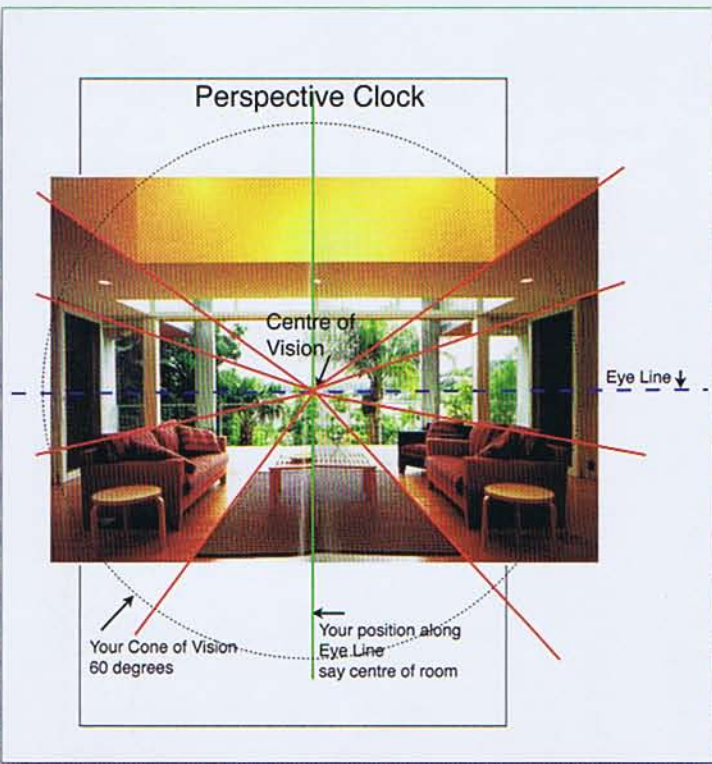


# What's the

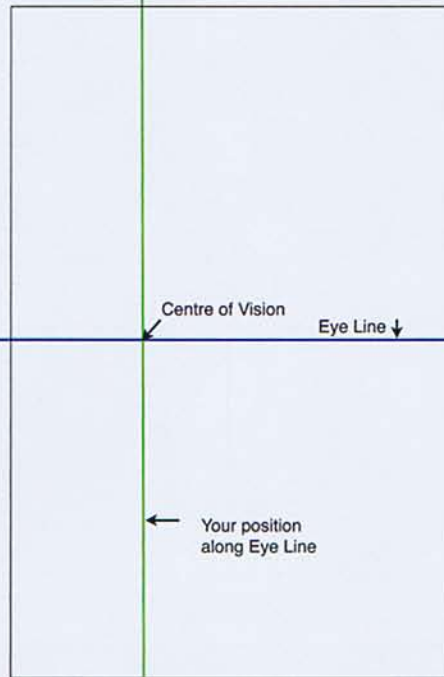
**M**any instructional books and articles on perspective appear confusing, with complex language and a myriad of terms. They were originally intended to show the mechanics of how to set up the framework, to correctly envisage the buildings, streets and context. Since the computer, perspectives are rarely so constructed today and free software programs such as Google 'Sketchup' have facilitated excellent means of creating a credible perspective of buildings, objects and the like.

Most artists in traditional realism are not creating an imaginary world of buildings and the relevance of how to draw perspective is of little benefit. The need to learn to see depth and understand basic perspective principles is now, more than ever, extremely important.

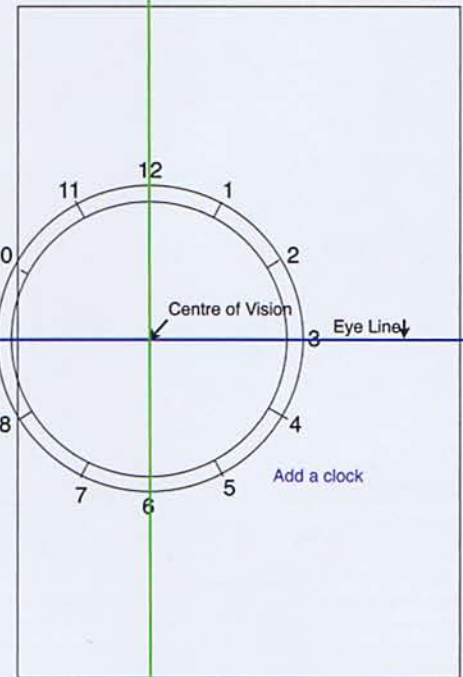
Perspective is the art and mathematics of realistically depicting three-dimensional objects in a two-dimensional plane, yet need not be complicated. In fact, in many situations, simply just read the time.



**FIG 1** Draw a horizontal line to represent your eyeline or that of the photographer if working from a photograph.



**FIG 2** Draw a vertical line to begin the sketch.



**FIG 3** Imagine a clock.

# Time?

## TRY THIS TIME-HONOURED METHOD FOR ENSURING YOUR PERSPECTIVE IS CORRECT

Leonardo da Vinci was prolific in his drawing and understood the very simple notion of a clock to simply portray perspective - the art of creating depth. His drawing (see the Clock Diagrams pictured here), shows a horizontal line indicating his eyeline shown in blue and a green line where his position is along the line. The intersection of those two lines is the centre of vision (or centre of a clock). Note that all lines are radiating out from the centre.

One point perspective is the most common viewpoint evident in most interiors, and still life. Two and three point perspective development will

come later. The Perspective Clock (also pictured here) shows an example of One Point Perspective. See how the ceilings, the legs of the couch and the edge of the mat converge at the centre of vision and the eye line.

One point Perspective can be read simply by overlaying, or creating a clock on the centre of vision. Follow the Illustrations 1-10 below showing how it's possible to read the time to portray perspective when sketching or working from a photograph. The centre of vision may in some cases fall off the page, as shown in Fig 9. Placing figures is shown in Fig 10. Note that all the heads are on the same eyeline.

“Perspective is the art and mathematics of realistically depicting three-dimensional objects in a two-dimensional plane, yet need not be complicated.”

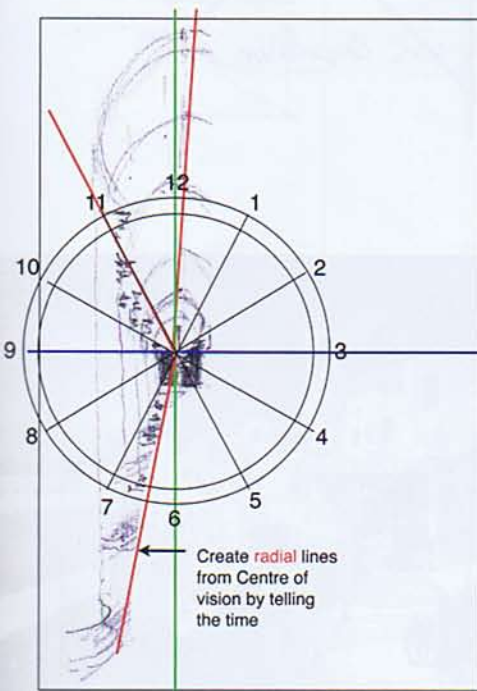


FIG 4 Make some dots along radial lines.

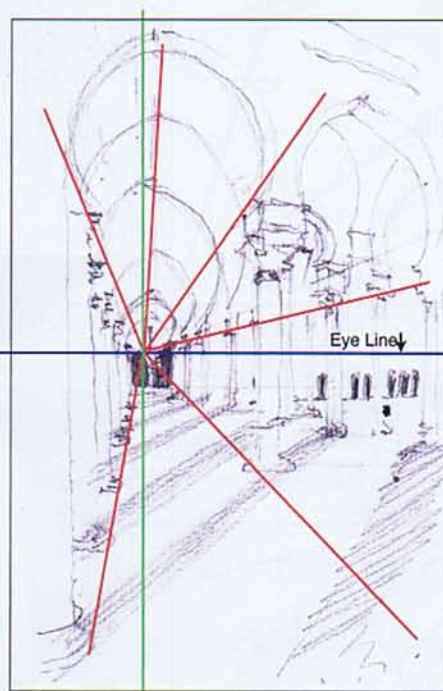


FIG 5 Add additional radial lines.

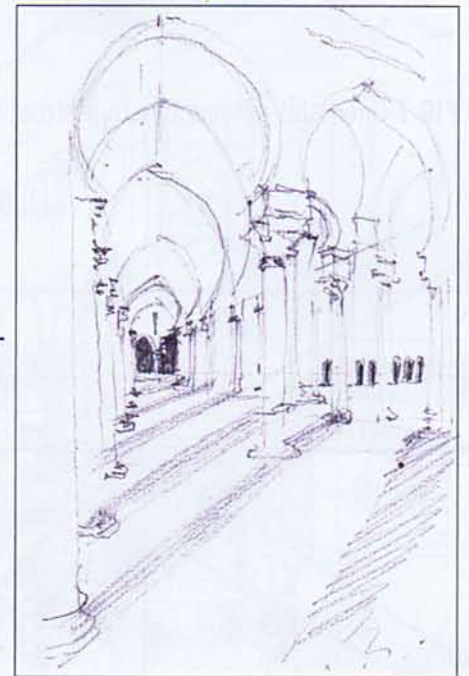


FIG 6 Complete the sketch.



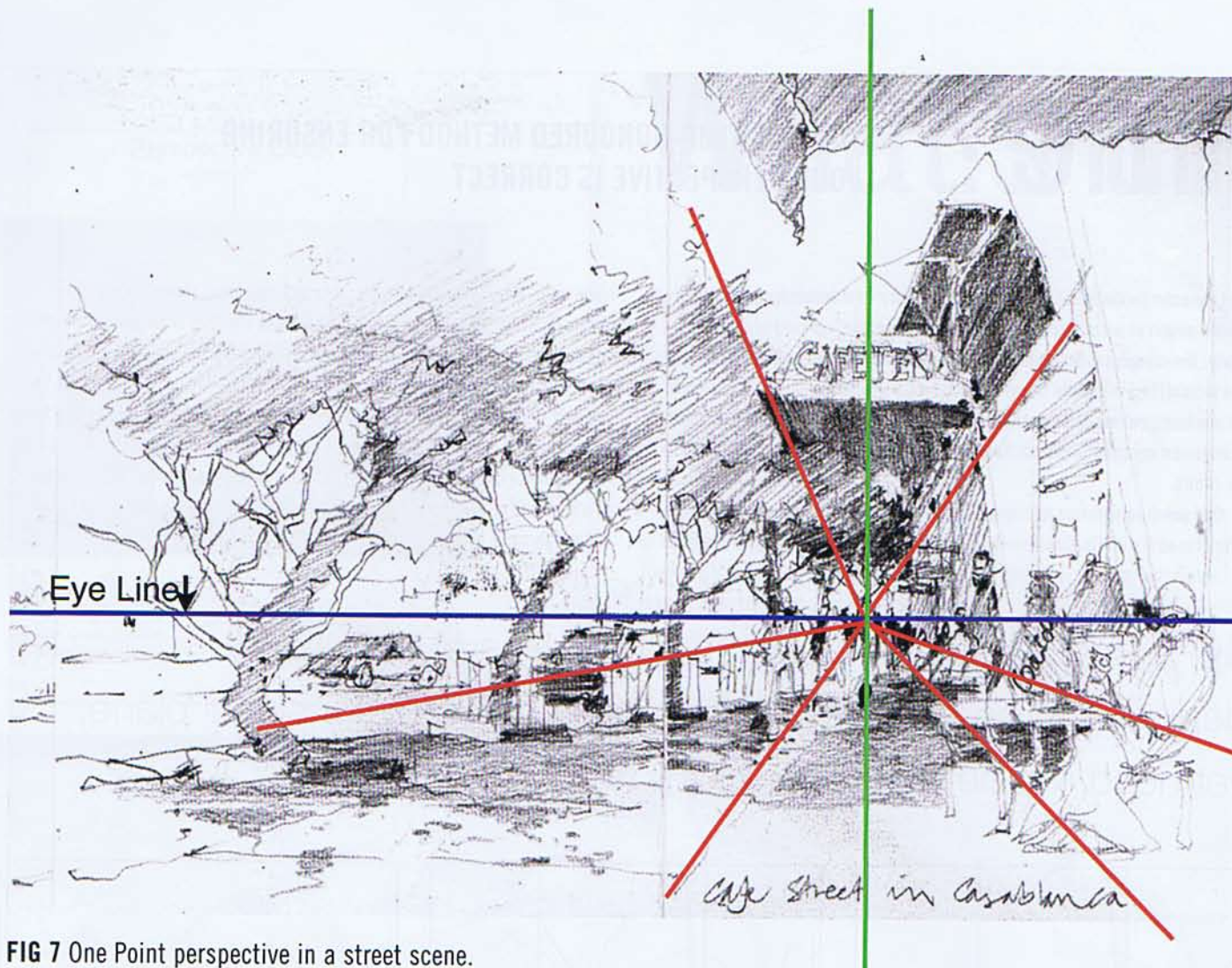


FIG 7 One Point perspective in a street scene.

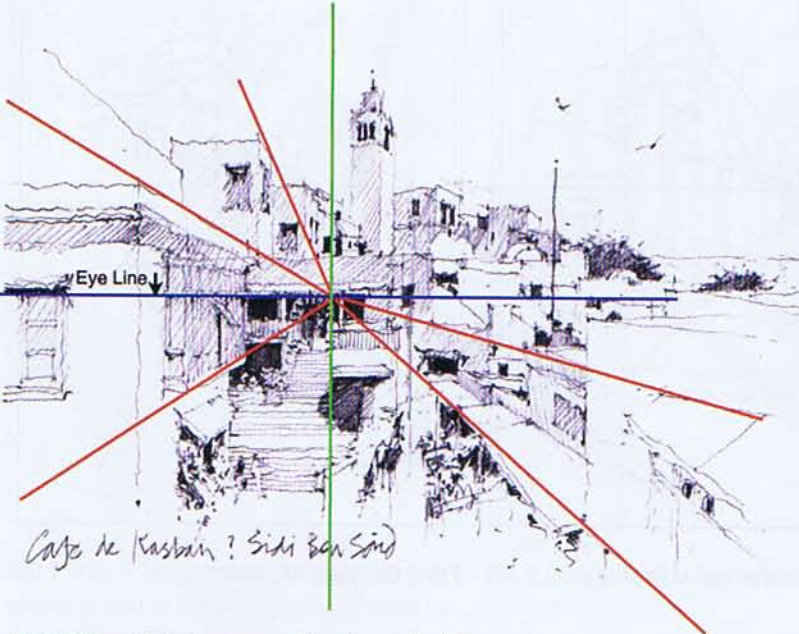


FIG 8 One Point perspective in a sketch...



...then a painting.



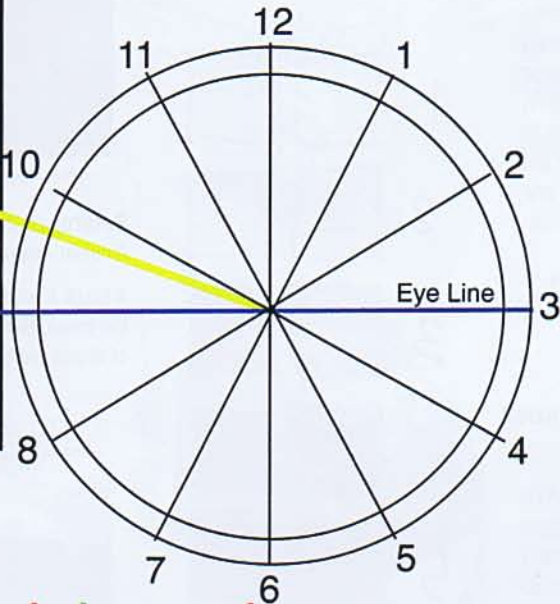


FIG 9 The centre of the clock may be off the page but you can still tell the time.

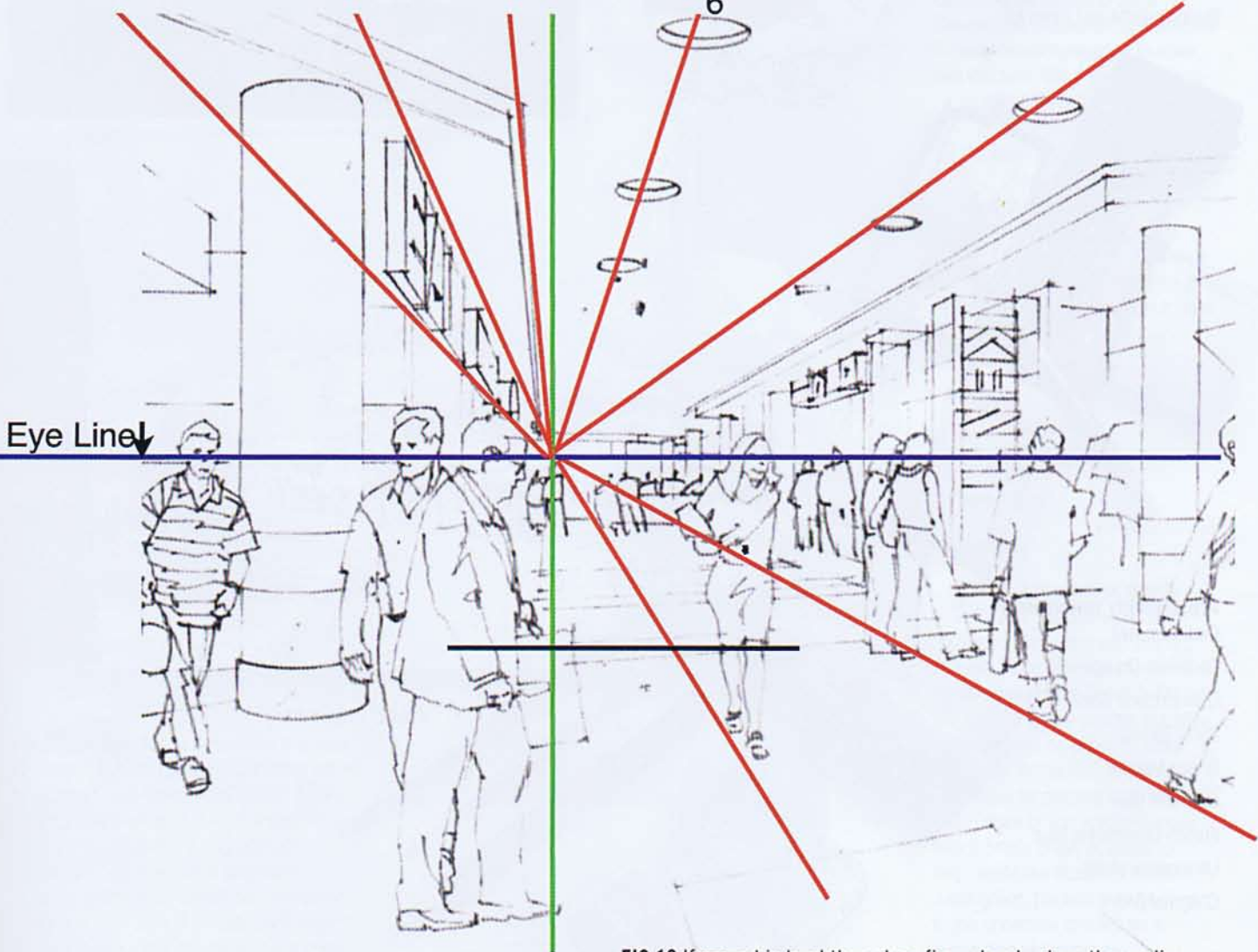


FIG 10 If ground is level then place figure heads along the eye line, hang like pegs on a clothesline to create an illusion of depth.



# my art in the making

## Carcoar, NSW

### What the Artist Used

#### Paper

Cartridge paper sketch book  
185gsm watercolour paper  
(smooth) hot press

#### Brushes

Nos 5 and 8 round travel brush  
(Excellent for maintaining sharp points  
in pockets!)

#### Other Materials

2B grade mechanical pencil with  
0.7 leads

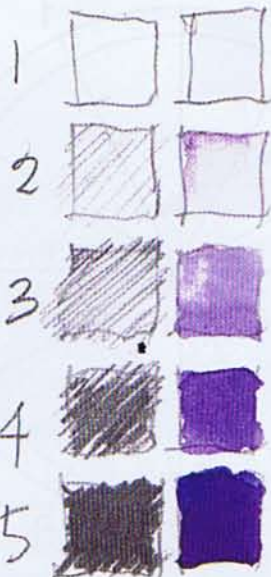
White pen for highlights

Masking Fluid

Kneadable Rubber or Blu Tac

Tissues

Sketch palette and travel kit



TONAL  
SCALE



### Reference photos

A colour image of the scene looking down Iceley Street, Carcoar, NSW.

A black & white image removes colour from the equation and accentuates the tones. Here I have added my Eycline (red horizontal line) and the Centre of Vision (vertical green line) which is my position along the Eycline



### Artist quality watercolour

- Cadmium Red
- Cadmium Orange
- Quinacridone Gold
- Burnt Sienna
- Brown Madder
- Cerulean Blue
- French Ultramarine Blue
- Ultramarine Violet
- Charcoal Grey



### STAGE 1 Sketching

The black and white tonal pencil sketch was done in the sketchbook with a range of 5 tones to use the full tonal range (See Tonal Scale Diagram), to create the midday sunlight. Sketching is an essential part of observing the subject and the actual lighting conditions. Take a photograph to 'freeze' the shadows in case they change during the painting process, or work may be completed afterwards in the studio.





## STAGE 2 A larger drawing

A more accurate larger drawing is then prepared on watercolour paper with your eyeline being the first line drawn, and a vertical indicating your position along the line. Note in particular how the shadows fall across the road. The drawing process requires close observation of the subject with greater detail in the foreground. Sketch lightly, freely and carefully, using a kneading rubber to remove graphite.

### Detail 1



## STAGE 3 First wash

Begin painting with a light Charcoal Grey wash and a little Quinacridone Gold and Burnt Sienna. Use recessive Cerulean Blue for soft distant landscape touches, wet into wet. Add a dark wash and splats of Ultramarine Blue and Burnt Sienna to block in areas, leaving the white of the paper around the building, profile and verandah posts. See Detail 1 for leaving a puddle to create blooms or cauliflowers to suggest foliage, which dries as shown in Detail 2.

### Detail 2

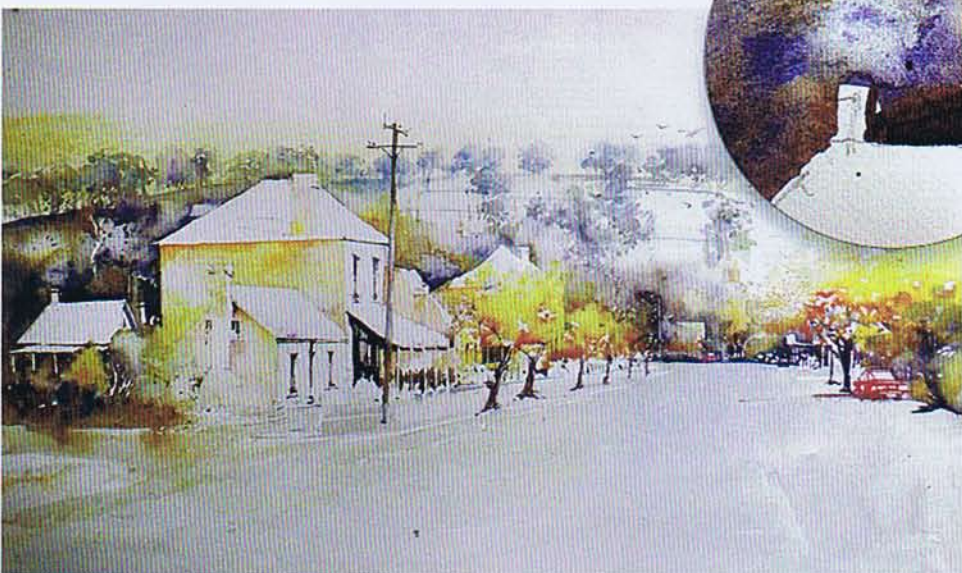


### Detail 3



## STAGE 4 Illusion of depth

Paint over shadow areas with stronger darks and add splats of fresh, juicy, colourful pigments into wet areas. See Detail 3. Do not mix colours on the palette, but allow colours to mix on paper to attain freshness. Remember to create soft edges by painting onto the wet surface or if dry, soften edges with a bristle brush or tissue to help create the illusion of depth. Avoid green, but add grey touches to the underside of trees for a suggestion of landscape.





## STAGE 5

### Shadows, sunlight, figures and objects

Using thicker lines in the foreground and thin lines in the background, paint shadow areas with a juicy pigment of Ultramarine Violet and a little Burnt Sienna. Add people, trees, birds, cars etc. The sunlight has become much more vivid with the full tonal range of white paper to dark pigment. See Tonal Scale diagram.



## STAGE 6

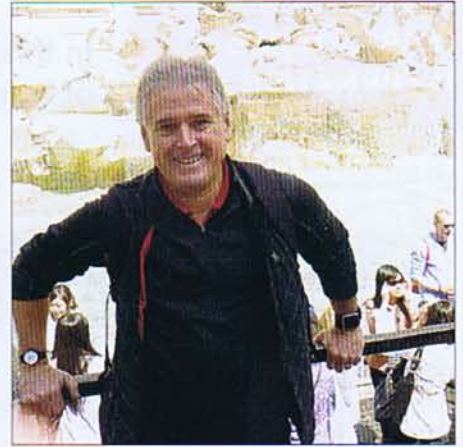
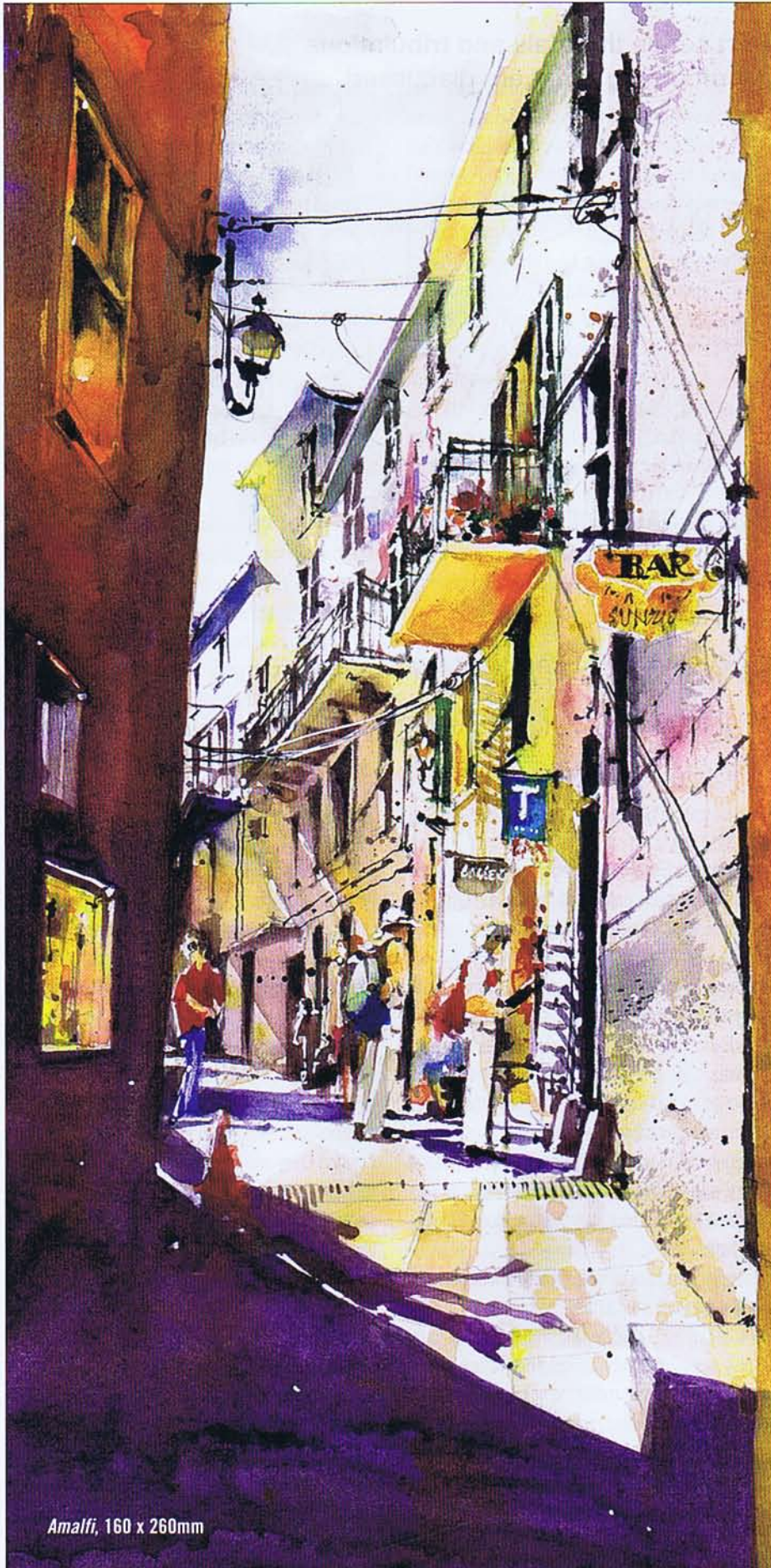
### Finishing up without overdoing it!

Finish the painting with a fine white pen to create some life in the darks and a touch of suggestive detail, but don't outline anything in a black pen. A little splatter and additional detail adds to the completeness. Beware of excessive detail in order to retain spontaneity and freshness. Just add a signature!



*Montsalvat Cottage*, 170 x 410mm





### about the artist

Malcolm Carver is an Architect and has over the past 40 years travelled extensively in Europe, Australia, Asia and the Americas. He has devoted these experiences to creating extensive travel sketch books, providing valuable inspiration for his painting workshops and studio work in watercolour. He also leads contemporary architecture tours each year to special places around the world.

Malcolm has an enlightened and passionate approach to sketching drawing and watercolour painting. He believes that we can all draw to a degree and we can learn to see, like other life skills. He seeks to reinforce the fundamental skill of seeing and sketching before painting, by simplifying detail in drawing techniques and learning to see shapes.

Member of the Australian Institute of Architects

Member of Royal Institute of British Architects

Member Australian Watercolour Institute

Associate Member Royal Art Society

President of Ku-ring-gai Arts Society

Gallery Website

[www.aquarellegallery.com.au/malcolmcarver](http://www.aquarellegallery.com.au/malcolmcarver)

[www.malcolmcarver.com.au](http://www.malcolmcarver.com.au)

Email [mcarver@me.com](mailto:mcarver@me.com)

### FUTURE WORKSHOP

**Travelrite Architecture  
Tour to Europe**

6th - 25th October, 2012

Amalfi, 160 x 260mm