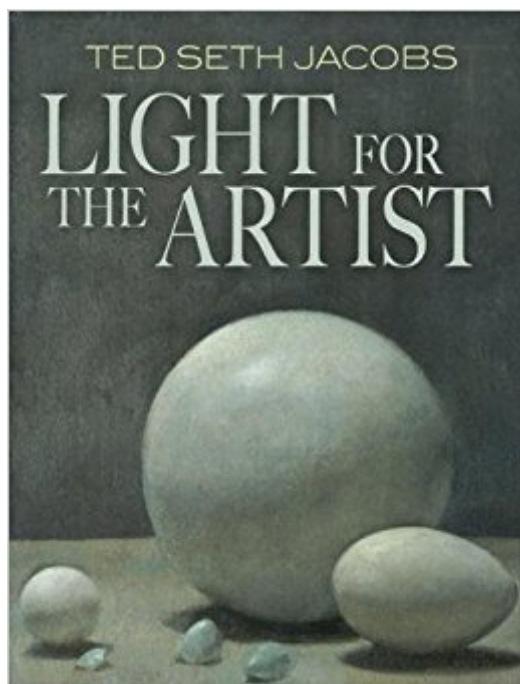


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# Light For The Artist (Dover Art Instruction)



## Synopsis

Intermediate and advanced art students receive a broad vocabulary of effects with this in-depth study of light. The guide offers detailed descriptions that start with the basics – the direction of light, reflections, and shadows – and advance to studies of light in natural and manipulated situations. Examinations of subtler light effects include foreshortening, field effects, multiple light sources, colored light, depicting the light source, and the behavior of light on shiny surfaces. Lavishly illustrated with diagrams and paintings, this volume applies its principles to figure, still life, and landscape paintings. Author Ted Seth Jacobs stresses the importance of comparing real-life vision to the canvas, since no system of rules can substitute for close and careful observation. Jacobs points out common errors, suggests light effects that artists should keep in mind, and discusses how preconceptions can be put aside in order to see the world more clearly.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Intermediate and advanced art students receive a broad vocabulary of effects with this in-depth study of light. The guide offers detailed descriptions that start with the basics – the direction of light, reflections, and shadows – and advance to studies of light in natural and manipulated situations. Examinations of subtler light effects include foreshortening, field effects, multiple light sources, colored light, depicting the light source, and the behavior of light on shiny surfaces. Lavishly illustrated with diagrams and paintings, this volume applies its principles to figure, still life, and landscape paintings. Author Ted Seth Jacobs stresses the importance of comparing real-life vision to the canvas, since no system of rules can substitute for close and careful observation. Jacobs

points out common errors, suggest light effects that artists should keep in mind, and discusses how preconceptions can be put aside in order to see the world more clearly. Dover (2104) republication of the edition originally published by Watson-Guption Publications, New York, 1988.

Ted Seth Jacobs has taught at the Fashion Institute of Technology, the Art Students League, and the New York Academy of Art. His work has appeared in galleries and museums around the world.

I have heard much about Ted Seth Jacobs and his approach to seeing color, and certainly his technical ability is what they say it is. However, I am afraid that I cannot give this book more than three stars. It is not about the content of what he says - what he has in there is accurate, and he has good basic illustrations to prove his points. In fact, I bought this book sight unseen essentially for the information the book contained. So while the content itself is not an issue, I do have some issues with the way it is presented. The two main problems I have with the book are the format and the color reproduction. The format makes the book nigh unreadable; and basically all the color reproductions of the paintings in it make me wonder if Mr. Jacobs really painted in those colors, or if it is some regrettable problem with the color reproduction during printing. The book is absolutely cram-packed with information-dense text in a two-column layout. This works for magazines, where the articles are shorter, but makes for extremely tiresome reading in a large book. As I said, the information is accurate, and Mr. Jacob's illustrations to prove those points are simple and easy to understand. But the text is very dense, and very dry, and it makes it hard to get through without getting tired. Another part of the problem is the lack of chapter breaks. There are a couple in the beginning, but the last half of the book is essentially one long unbroken column of text (which runs the outside length, and the wonky-colored pictures on the inside). The other problem is the color reproduction. The paper in my book is still pristine white, so it's not yellowing of the paper itself. It's also not a problem that the paintings themselves are most definitely dated to the 70s and 80s, with some pretty groovy fashions, starred tapestries, pyramid power and feathered hair - and I will admit they're not to my taste at all, but I bought the book for the information. What really threw me off was that the main paintings have either: A bright yellow color that looks as if the picture was taken through a yellow filter; a very odd and jarring lavender-blue shade; or in a couple of instances, an alarming pinkish-red. In fact, Mr. Jacob's own paintings appear garish in many instances, with the strange shades of bright yellow, or orangeish, or ochre-colored tone really throwing me off. But other paintings, as I have mentioned, have this very weird, unnatural blue tinge that very often turns purple. It's not pleasant to see a painting of a composition made with fresh-baked bread, and the

loaves are this bizarre, grey-purple color. It's rather unappetizing. And there's at least one picture, a still life of eggs and a whisk, that has an obvious reddish-pink tone, and so it's not pleasant to look at. In short, if this book were still around the 40 to 50 dollar range, I think I could recommend it, if only for the information contained within (assuming you could get past the unfriendly text format and awful color on many of the paintings within). But for the current price I see (around 200 U.S. dollars at the time of this writing), I'm afraid I can't recommend it, because no matter the information within the book, the format and the color reproduction make for a disappointing purchase.

What is written is important, but the artwork and layout of the book are not very impressive, and get in the way of what is written. It is, however, full of information we all should make part of our foundation.

Light For the Artist is a short 100 or so pages that packs in a lot of information. It's the type of read that feels like it was written by an educator/professor and for students: lacking in friendly tones and densely worded, it can be fairly inscrutable. But that isn't to say there isn't useful information in here; certainly, mastering light is arguably the most important discipline of a painter. The book isn't about technique nor style. Rather, the author is careful to note that it is about explaining light in detail so the artist can use that to make their own work more sophisticated. The book is broken down into three sections: (1) Symbolism and Perception: Word Versus Light. (2) The Nature of Light: It's Structure Action, And Effects. (3) Toward a Philosophy of Perception. Within those sections, subjects include directional quality of light, light moving through space, orchestrating light effects, stripping away preconceptions, foreshortening of light, multiple light sources, light on shiny surfaces, light as the teacher, and more. The book is thorough in its approach to light but honestly it does read like a physics textbook - very dry and you have to reread a lot in order to understand the points presented. That isn't to say that we're dealing with hard physics here; there are no prisms, light spectrum, wavelengths, or any of those concepts. But what is discussed is done in a very dry, impenetrable, and blocky way. I found myself rereading a lot. Most, if not all, of the images in the book are from the author. That was a bit problematic to me in a book that purports in the very beginning to not be about one style. In order to really make the points work, I would have liked to see all kinds of examples from different artists and especially different eras. Most of the author's works are from 1960-1980, and of naked women, with a few still life and landscapes thrown in to break up the monotony, so the endless repetition of T&A (tasteful though it is) isn't as useful as variety could be. Especially since those images aren't references to the points of that chapters and

seem to be randomly thrown in for filler. The author does a great job of presenting examples of how light interpretation can be done incorrectly or correctly. I found those images the most useful; side by side comparisons of the same image, one stronger and one weaker. But there simply weren't enough and so I'd end up having to reread and reread to understand the concepts. I also wish there were photographs of the scene to use as a reference to see how the author was interpreting the actual light. It seems too narrow a focus to see only through the author's eyes with his finished works. Even better, I would have loved to see a scene's lighting painted several different ways by different artists. There were other odd contributions by the author - randomly quoting Sanskrit or calling our sun "Aton". In a straightforward, academic-feeling book, those odd inclusions made the concepts within feel less academic and more like a hippy acid trip of nebulous ideas. Had a balance between the two (academic vs new age) been achieved, it would have made for an excellent, modern, straightforward, and very useful reference. As it is, this is a good book that you'll want to take to the park and reread sections at leisure so you can figure them out. Reviewed from an ARC.

This book still speaks to visual artists today. Its too bad it is out of print and sellers are asking for such ridiculous prices. There should be a law against that. Ted Seth Jacobs is one of the most beautiful artists I have seen. His style is natural and not pretentious. He is an excellent interpreter of what he sees and an even better teacher. Great book. I still use it after 25 years of having it. Also, I put him second only to Andrew Wyeth in terms of black and white drawings.

good book

This is such a crappy book I can't believe I wasted so much money on it. First, it's old and the quality of illustrations is real bad. Second, the paintings themselves show nudes that are often far from perfect drawing and painting (anatomical problems). Today's artists create such beautiful paintings of the nudes that these ones seem to be of a student, not a teacher. The info on quality of the light is useful for beginners although this info can be found in other contemporary books. Dissatisfied...

Anyone who is drawing or painting would benefit from reading this book. It sets out what light does and how we observe it in an understandable and logical manner. It is what you are NOT taught in art school, but these processes are fundamental, the core to all observational art . . . a gem.

Good review of the effects of light on a subject for the artist. I find it an excellent reference, when

doing my own paintings.

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