



MAY 2020 – STUDYING COMPOSITION: Armatures: The O or U (or a tunnel, which open top to bottom.)

The reason for this composition is to frame a point of interest, or create a tunnel leading the eye INTO THE DEPTHS of the scene. This composition keeps the viewers attention TRAPPED within the confined opening, making even a small center of interest seem important.

The opening itself should be an interesting shape, and the focal point within the opening should be located off-center, dividing the shape creatively.

The frame of the the O or U shape needs to touch at least three sides of the canvas¹



There are two types of O compositional schemes. One uses the O as a framing device for the center of interest, as in Ian Robert's LateSummer in the Pays de Sault (below). The larger hay bale in the foreground forms a hurdle that prevents us from running into the center of interest too quickly. We move in and back out again. You

1. Painting Better Landscapes, Margaret Kessler, pg 47
2. Mastering Composition, Ian Roberts, pg 22



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don't want the center of interest to be too dominant, or it will create an "eye-trap" you can't get out of.



In the second O composition, the eye is led around the outside of the picture plane (canvas) The center of interest lies on the O at some point (in the Last Snow in the Valley below) but the momentum of the armature keeps us moving and exploring the different parts of the painting.

So think of it this way. Do you want to trap your viewers inside, or let them roam around outside?

Happy Painting!

Barbara

1. [Painting Better Landscapes](#), Margaret Kessler, pg 47
2. [Mastering Composition](#), Ian Roberts, pg 22