

Topic 053

Language of Light: Painting as communication Tool

A collection of reproduction 'paintings' can be an excellent design tool, teaching tool and communication tool. Many of the 'Old Masters' produced work with incredible attention to lighting detail. Some noteworthy examples include: Claude Lorraine, Claude Monet, Edouard Manet, Johannes Vermeer, Jan Steen, Leonardo de Vinci, Edgar Degas, Georges de La Tour, Rembrandt, Renoir and others. Using artwork and a process of 'show and tell' it is possible to easily identify and discuss a great number of different lighting qualities, styles, moods and emotions.

The lighting designer may also produce sketches or renderings, or use CAD (computer aided design) programs to assist in the process of discussing light. Although far from perfect, many new CAD programs do provide photo realistic imaging with very accurate and specific lighting. As a design aid these tools may prove useful, however all rely on the designer first having a complete verbal vocabulary of the objectives of lighting and the qualities of light.