

Artists are problem-solvers. They thrive on their ability to SEE, UNDERSTAND and visually RENDER the realities of their external or internal world. These artists are inquisitive and, like a child, see the world with wonder. “I wonder why...?” With that in mind, read the following questions and answers only as reinforcement for what you already know and only after developing your own inquiries into the task posed on the introduction sheet.

Some Questions & Answers

1. Is the plexiglas or water transparent, reflective or both?

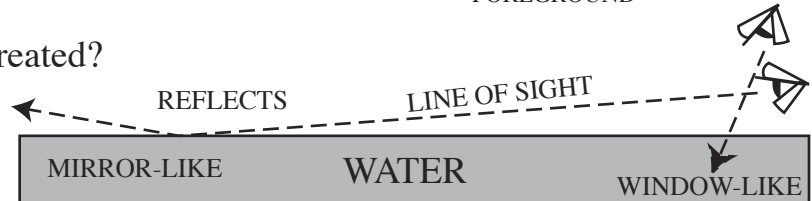
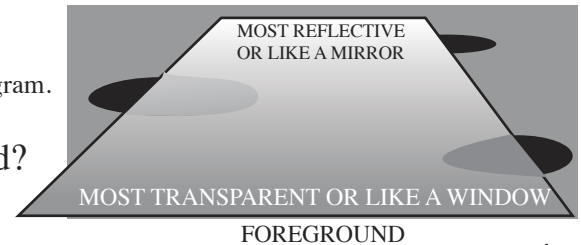
Ans. Both. We can see the checker board which is under it, but we can also see the flowers and sky reflection. You might wish to think of it as shown in this diagram.

2. Why is the plexiglas more transparent in the foreground?

Ans. As with a skipping stone on water, our angle of vision is steeper in the foreground, and like the stone, it fails to skip along the surface.

3. How can the visual phenomenon be recreated?

Ans. First, observe the following: Compare the three black ellipses in the top diagram. Observe how they appear outside and inside the plexiglas. Note the value contrasts are greatest in the foreground and disappear in the background. Follow the same painting strategies used when painting veils. Begin with a graduated wash over entire painting. Foreground color will generally be darkest.



4. Why would an artist tackle such a complex problem as painting forms in or on water and shiny surfaces?

Ans. Every artist has his own reason for choosing a subject. For some, the challenge is reason enough. For others it may be the magical transformation of paper and paint into believable illusions.

5. What aesthetic purpose does a reflective surface play?

Ans. The aesthetic reasons promise a reward which should not be overlooked. As in all forms of art, repeating themes or ideas in a variety of ways links all parts to a whole. Reflections serve as a vehicle for linking what is happening visually above or below that surface. A red sky is reflected in the ocean; uniting the two under a common color.

6. Where in our visual world will we find evidence of similar surfaces, that is, surfaces which can be both reflective and transparent or varied in their degree of reflectiveness?

7. Where in art history do we find an emphasis on surfaces?

8. What are your personal concerns and interests in surfaces?

EXERCISE: Paint a simple watercolor composition which incorporates these visual phenomena.