

Hello, my name is Trent Burleson. I teach painting and drawing at the Rhode Island School of Design, and I'm standing in front of a Sébastien Bourdon painting. This is a painting I've looked at over the years because I admire its classical structure, its composition, its geometry, and its order. I would say that this is a painting of a scene that could not actually exist. It's a fantastic painting in many ways. You have a large mountain or hill in the middle with a castle on top, and then another castle in the background, and then Alps-like mountains in the distance. You have a rather unusual and strange passage of water that moves through a mill and waterwheel here.

One area that I've always admired is the trees to the left of the watermill on this beautiful little bit of light green peeking through the dark mass of the trees; sort of a beautiful incident of light coming through shadow. I've often admired the sky because the arrangement of the cloud shapes – dark clouds, light clouds, sky color – sort of in a way is a continuation of the overlapping forms of the trees in the middle of the painting.

It plays a minor role, but we have in the foreground a rather nice painting of a horse carrying some sort of copper vessel perhaps, and a traveler resting and gathering some water. These elements are simply to add a narrative element and to give a sense of scale to various sections of the painting. It's not about some mythological scene or historical event. It is about the landscape.