

## **The Claude Glass**

by Philip Gebhardt

### Purpose

The Claude Glass (also known as a *Black Mirror*) was developed by Claude Lorrain, a French painter in the 1600s. It was widely used by 17th- and 18th-century landscape artists. The Claude Glass reduces the brilliance of the sunlight and therefore reduces the tonal range of the scene. This restraining of the colours makes the scene easier to evaluate than when it is in brilliant sunlight.

### How to Use a Claude Glass

To use a Claude Glass, stand with your back to the scene and view the scene as it is reflected by the Claude Glass. Position the mirror by tilting it up and down and swivelling it left and right until you see the composition you want. (Keep in mind that the Claude Glass reverses the scene left to right.)

### Constructing a Claude Glass

To construct a Claude Glass, remove the back of a picture frame and place a piece of shiny, black Bristol board against the glass. Replace the back to hold the Bristol board in place.