

VALUES EXERCISES

A holistic view of what makes up a painting could be the following:

Shapes consisting of Color made up of:

1. Value
2. Saturation
3. Color Temperature
4. Composition of those shapes

Of primary importance is being able to see values accurately. You have the Munsell value scale to simplify the huge number of values into ten basic values. In fact only #2-9 on the scale are of practical usage to us.

The odds of observing true white or black in nature are so minor that there is no point in that exercise. From now on when you see a white shirt, for example, avoid the trap of seeing it as white in hue. In fact it will be anything other than white depending on the nature of the light and reflections.

First Step:

See the values.

Exercise 1: Take the value scale and fix it to your palette. Then mix piles of paint using black and white paint into the values for each number on the scale.

Exercise 2: Once done and you have carefully compared the mixed paint you will need to use that paint.

Using a small panel, eg. 10 x 12, paint a four value painting from a reference photo. Remember that it is best to have distinct value changes between each shape you paint. Therefore avoid having a value 4 against a value 3 for example. Rather combine these into one value.

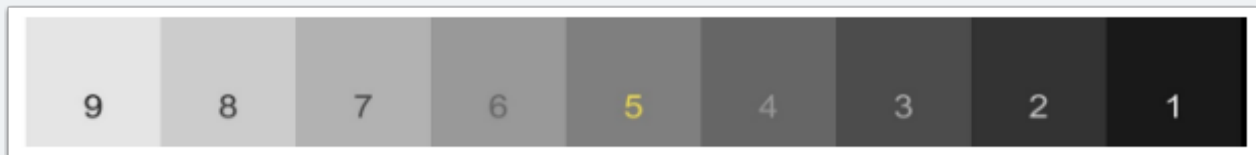
Your painting will also have a few distinct shapes. 4 - 7 shapes. So you will have to simplify your reference into distinct shapes.

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Do another painting like this with your remaining monochrome paint.

Munsell Value Scale

Have this value scale close at hand.



Monochrome Value Painting

Once you feel comfortable with picking out values and simplifying a reference into basic value shapes you can try out a complete painting. **But use monochrome paint.**

Choose a reference photo on your computer for this exercise. You can print it out if you prefer.

I suggest starting with black and white for your first attempt. Now you are painting an entire painting in monochrome. Once done compare it to your reference photo in grayscale. How does your painting compare to the grayscale photo?

Now you can see how important values are to creating a painting.

Spot the Value

Having trouble isolating values? Use your color picker - the card with a hole punched through it. This time you simply want to spot the value and not the hue.

Relationships:

It should also be apparent now that it is the relationships between values that we are after as well. Compare one value to the next one. By arranging shapes of different value in a pleasing abstract design a picture reveals itself.

So always compare one shape to the other shape next to it. Lighter or darker?

Keep working on these exercises until you are confident with values.

TIP: Turn your reference photo upside down. Now you will not be thinking about houses, trees and whatever. You will be seeing abstract shapes only. Easier to spot the values this way.

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