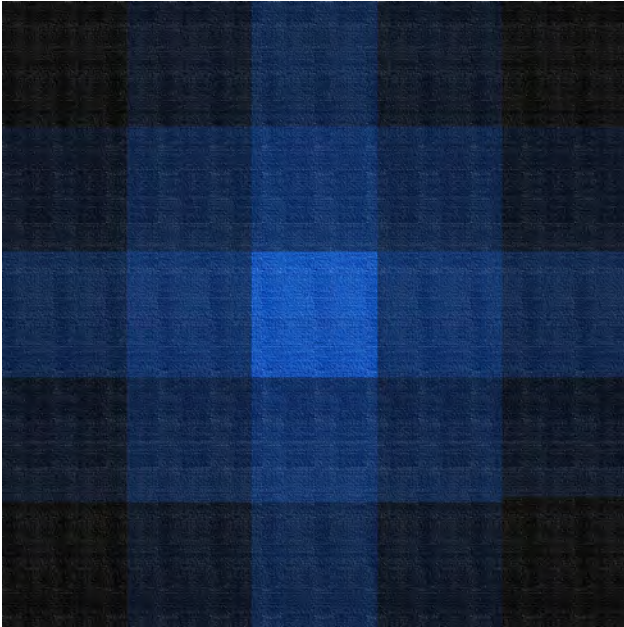


Painter's Tech—Sketches

color effect



Color is the prime material of painting. It ranks amongst the topmost hierarchy of what makes a good painting.

In this issue of Painter's Tech-Sketches I'll discuss two important tools of color.

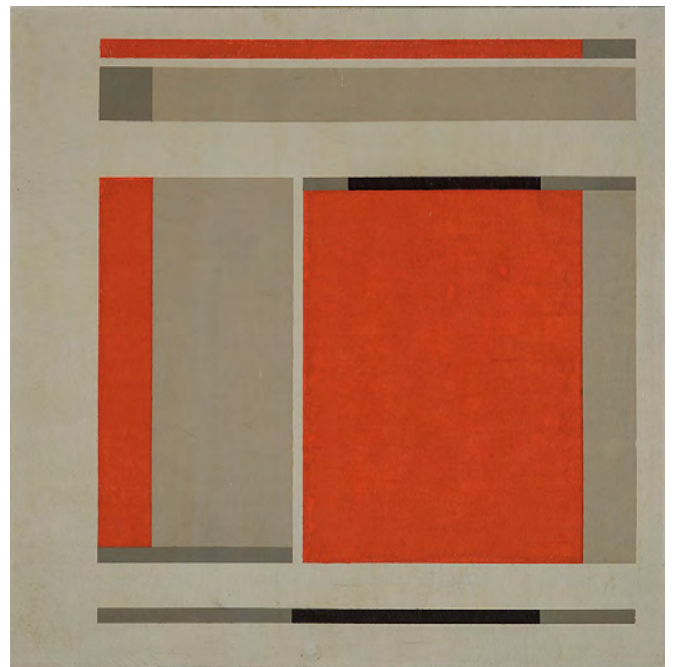
The first is **Contrast of Saturation**. A full saturated hue is enlivened by the tonal contrast around it. This fundamental concept both enlivens and creates spatial depth.

The purer the hue, the more it advances.

Fully saturated hues are best discrete. They work very well as codas—a singular bravura brush stroke that pulls an entire painting together.

Hand-in-hand with good design Contrast of Saturation alone can make for a compelling painting.

However, as with all powerful tools, it should be used wisely and with discretion.



Robert Slutsky, *Composition in Red and Grays*, 1957-8



The blue coda in the upper left quadrant of my alla prima portrait is an example of using Contrast of Saturation to give the painting punch.

The vermilion in the ear is used to a lesser extent as a reciprocal color note.

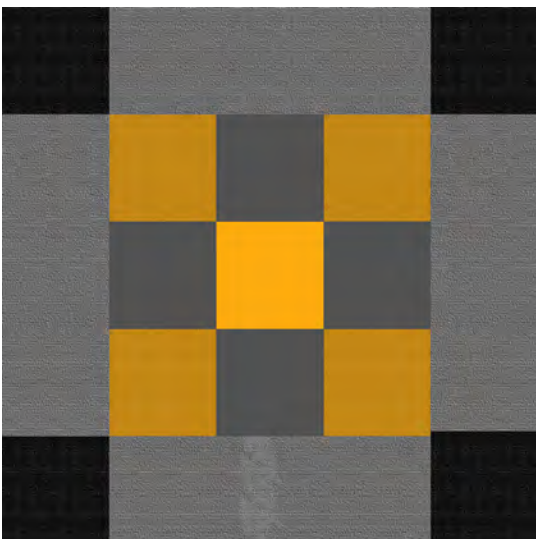
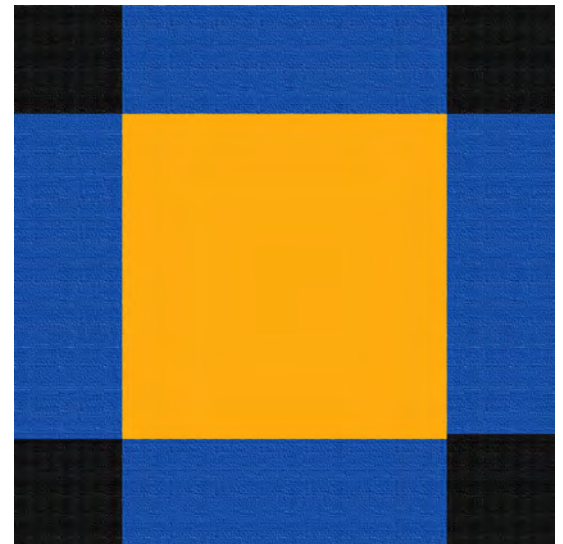
Additionally, the weight and proportionate luminosity of color need consideration.

Fully saturated Blue is assigned a luminosity of eight (8). Red six (6). Green is also six (6). This means that Blue requires a larger area to match the luminosity of Red.

Codas require a careful balancing act. Should a hue 'pop' out discordantly it then requires toning down with its complement to restore balance and focal point.

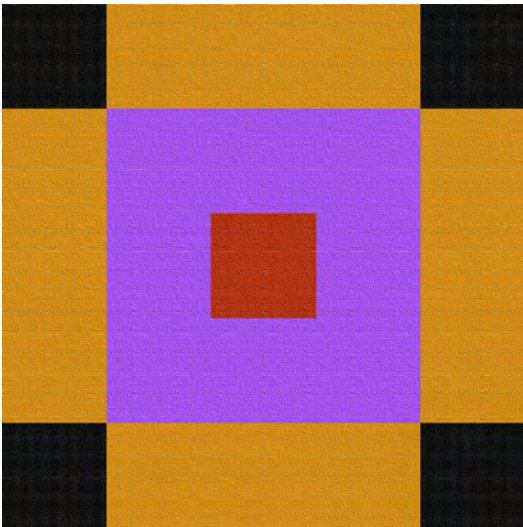
Simultaneous Effect determines the overall brilliance and luminosity of a painting.

Color pushes its neighbor toward its complement. Here, the orange square illumines the toned blue whilst the blue further illumines the orange.



Orange, whose assigned Proportionate Area of Luminosity is four (4), the second most luminous color after Yellow (3), tinges the Black/White grays toward Blue.

Orange, visually powerful, is all too readily corruptible and can appear dirty due to the influences of its neighbors. It needs to be handled with care.



Simultaneous contrast is a double-edge tool: used wisely it illuminates a painting to powerful effect.

Ignoring simultaneous contrast renders a painting dull and unengaging. No amount of alchemy, vis-a-vis mediums and gels, will save it.

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