



5 TIPS TO BETTER COLOR

1. DEVELOP A VALUE STUDY

This is such an important first step to better color. Once you understand the basic values and shapes in your scene, you'll be able to interpret color more effectively. Solve the critical problem of understanding the values in your scene before dealing with issues of warm and cool color, or which hues to use. You'll be glad you did!

2. CREATE A COLOR STUDY

Creating small color studies is the most important step in developing better color. Be sure to make them small such as 4x5," 5x7" or 6x8" at largest! You will fall in love with making these studies. I call it "risk free painting." Given the small size and minor time investment (30 minutes or less!) you can give yourself permission to take risks and try unique approaches to color. That really is the whole point, trying things you wouldn't do in a larger painting.

3. TRY A BOLD UNDERPAINTING

Vibrant underpaintings are catalytic. They will instantly set the colors of your scene in a unique direction such as orange, red, pink or purple. Warm underpaintings tend to work better than cool, because they stimulate the eye.

4. PICK A COLOR APPROACH

There's no escaping it...you actually have to pick a color approach to your painting. Your favorite color study may have unlocked an exciting new approach for you to explore. Some ideas could be to interpret the scene with an analogous palette of warm colors, or perhaps filter the scene through only blues. Quiet the colors with a muted study, or cut out your favorite colors in a magazine layout and use them to inspire your scene! Pick up a color wheel to assist you. The Color Wheel Company has a wonderful little color wheel with some really handy tools to support you. Keep it right by your easel as you work.

5. USE VIBRANT COLOR ACCENTS

Do you feel like your work gets muddy? Use vibrant color accents to liven up dull areas of your painting. Chromatic (very colorful) marks can give a sparkle to dull paintings and bring them back to life. Try small flicks of orange, red, teal, or other vibrant hues in small amounts. I often call these strokes, "freshening marks." Now have some fun!

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