

COLOR AND COMPOSITION: Art + Design 150 (first semester freshman hybrid studio/lecture foundation class)
Sections 001/005; Monday 2:30 PM - 5:25 PM; Sections 003/007/011; Thursday 8:30 AM - 11:25 AM
New Jersey Institute of Technology

Instructors: Glenn Goldman (coordinator); Taro Narahara; Polina Zaitseva

"It might well be argued that color is a universal language, for it transcends the spoken word. Art museums speak a universal tongue through their exhibits. A work of art in a museum communicates through its color, exactly like a computer drawing, though painters have had a thousand years of tradition to build upon, whereas art produced on the computer is new. It is through the display of color that a computer is able to share what previously was communicated only with canvas and paper – an ability to speak the language of color."

Richard Norman, 1990 ([Electronic Color](#))

TRADITIONAL PAINTING AND TWO-DIMENSIONAL DIGITAL REPRESENTATION

The expression of ideas, both two and three-dimensional, in color is a capability of current-day computer graphics. However, the use of color as a design tool did not start with the digital age. On the contrary, its use is as old as the history of humanity.

Painters throughout time have used color and form to express stories and record history and mythology dealing with government and society, religion, landscape, and architecture – all in color. They have illustrated scenes filled with the artifacts and designed objects that tell stories about people, places, and times. We learn about past cultures through art. We learn about the styles and values of the past. Emotions and mood are communicated with representational and non-representational art. Space is defined and deformed – in and because of the color and form(s). Artists have mixed their own palette with pigments in order to create precisely crafted images. However, now color and traditional media can be simulated electronically – albeit within a different set of “primary colors” in a shift from subtractive to additive systems.

Landscape and site, built and natural context, found and designed objects, people (real and imagined), can be depicted in a variety of ways. Color is used to represent topography, built form, and vegetation which, in turn, can define a place. The following exercise explores a way buildings, landscapes, interior and exterior spaces, artifacts of civilization and those who populated the world in earlier days can be studied and represented with color.

TIF (preferred) or RIF files must be submitted to the instructor at the conclusion of the project!

Part 1: Redraw, *without scanning*, a painting from selected paintings made available in class. Each student must draw a different painting with *Corel Painter* paint software (either version 11 or 12). (Do not confuse image-processing software like *Adobe Photoshop* with raster paint software.) Try to be as faithful as possible to the color and proportion within the resolution of the electronic medium available. **The resolution should be no less than 1920 x 1600.** This is a minimum: **higher resolution is preferred!** **Proportions of the file will more than likely have to be modified to accommodate the painting.** The resolution listed above is for illustration only and represents the minimum number of total pixels (at least 3 million) for your work. (Note: You may make the resolution as high as 7½ million pixels - approximately 3000 x 2500 pixel equivalent, but if you make it too high, each file may become excessively large and will slow you down.) **DO NOT RE-PROPORTION THE PAINTING!** Your image should look like the painting. It is **REQUIRED** to submit the final work in digital format and **YOU MUST INCLUDE** files representing no fewer than sixteen intermediate steps in the creation of the image. Failure to include the interim progress files, captured throughout the entire process will result in a failing grade for the project. Do not include or attempt to include a facsimile of the artist’s signature in the final product.

You may work in either RGB or CMYK color space. In general, there are two ways to start this project and the appropriate process depends on the nature of the painting itself. One can either draw, with freehand lines, the depicted scene from the painting and then start to “fill in” with color or, one can build up areas of color and shape and create the scene with progressive applications of color and texture.

NOTE: This is a labor-intensive project with a tight deadline! It is absolutely imperative that you back-up your work as you go along. Use multiple back-ups. You do not want to lose a week’s worth of work. You won’t be able to make it up. Hard drives fail and flash

drives fail and/or get lost. CDs and DVDs sustain physical damage. Protect your work. You should always have work on separate physical drives. Do not rely only on virtual partitions or separate folders on a single physical drive. (If that physical drive fails or is damaged, you can lose all of your files at once.) Please note further that **the presentation of deconstructed scanned images in an attempt to complete this project, rather than the submission of a personally created facsimile deprives you of the opportunity to become familiar with raster paint software and will be deemed a breach of the NJIT University Code on Academic Integrity.**

Part 2: Write a two- to three-page (approximate) **analytical** paper (**excluding** images and citations or list of works referenced, using 10 to 12 point font, single spaces between lines, and margins less than or equal to one inch on all borders) about the painting you are studying – with special emphasis placed on composition and organization as well as color palette, color scheme, and use of color in support of form, message, emphasis, etc. You may (and should) include other factors in your analysis including brush stroke, (perceived) lighting, balance and order, geometric order, and so on. This paper is not a biographical summary of the artist although a sentence or two may be relevant in your analysis in some instances. When you describe a comparison or use another’s opinion: **CITE YOUR SOURCES PROPERLY!** *Note: This is NOT a paper about your process of creating a digital facsimile of the art studied.*

If you have not written papers or articles about art, you are **STRONGLY URGED** to read Sylvan Barnet’s *A Short Guide to Writing About Art* before you write the paper in order to avoid the common mistakes he describes and to help you organize your essay. (For example, do NOT start your paper by saying “Pablo Picasso (or any other painter) was an artist.” Do NOT assume the readers of your essay are ignorant or stupid. Do not state without proof that the painting you are studying is “good” or “great” or even that it is “worthy of study.” We already know that – otherwise it would never have been given to you in the first place. Barnet states that “most academic criticism assumes the value of the works it discusses and it is chiefly analytic and interpretive.” He gives you many other tips that will help you as you write this.) **You will be judged on what you write, AND how well you write it!** Students should take care to describe and analyze the painting with precision. While not required, and although she focuses on modern art, *Why A Painting is Like A Pizza* by Nancy Heller may be helpful in describing ways to look at art and a great many of her points are equally applicable all works that could/should be addressed in your essay. Chapter 2 of Barnet gives a list of questions to ask as one begins to analyze and interpret works of art.

To help you start to think about the paper as you look at your artwork, following is a statement from W.H. Auden (*The Dyer’s Hand*, 1963) that was reprinted in Barnet’s book on page 12 in the 10th edition (and page 11 in the 9th edition):

What is the function of a critic? So far as I am concerned, he can do me one or more of the following services:

1. Introduce me to authors or works of which I was hitherto unaware.
2. Convince me that I have undervalued an author or a work because I had not read them carefully enough.
3. Show me relations between works of different ages and cultures which I could never have seen for myself because I do not know enough and never shall.
4. Give a “reading” of a work which increases my understanding of it.
5. Throw light upon the process of artistic “Making.”
6. Throw light upon the relation of art to life, to science, economics, ethics, religion, etc.

You may include photocopies or scans of the painting or analytical work of the painting at the end of your paper. Make sure to credit all sources and list references properly.

Additional reading about color schemes may be found in Lupton/Phillips, pages 70-83; Wong, pages 59-97; and Quiller, pages 26-93 as well as *Color Studies* by Edith Anderson Feisner.

Part 3: Using *Corel Draw* (preferred) or *Adobe Illustrator* produce a composite (11” x 17”) that shows the final version **with intermediate steps**. Include the name of the painting, original artist, and your name discretely (no larger than 16 pt. in a neutral font - *Arial* or equivalent) on the composite. Steps should be laid out in a regular grid. Minimize the use of white space between intermediate steps. Paintings oriented horizontally should be placed on a vertical sheet composite while vertically oriented paintings should be placed on horizontally oriented (landscape format) sheets as per examples shown in class. Extract color palettes and include these on the composite. Provide CDR or AI file with composite. NOTE: If you choose to submit the composite with Adobe Illustrator, it is your responsibility to make sure that you save the file with all images **embedded** and not just linked. A composite without the actual images has little value.

Submission Information and Formats:

- The paper (and all subsequent papers) must be “typed”. Hand-written material will not be accepted. It is at the discretion of the individual instructor whether the paper must be printed and/or submitted electronically via email. If submitted electronically, confirm with the instructor acceptable format(s). Students should recognize that only PDF will guarantee that a paper will “look” to the instructor the way an author designs it. This is particularly critical when images are being included. Typical word processing formats (e.g. *doc* or *docx*) do not necessarily preserve formatting or fonts when viewed on another computer. The formatting may vary based on printer drivers installed. While the lab and imaged computers in design studio contain Adobe Acrobat Professional, your personal computer may not so you may end up converting in the lab. Students currently in a design studio with a supported, imaged computer will have access to Acrobat Professional.
- Save graphic files in BOTH native file formats (e.g. *RIF*, *CDR*, *AI*, etc.) and *TIF* or *JPG*. Make sure that the extension is visible when you save the file. The default save on a MAC is to not include this information. This requires any viewer on a Windows computer to guess the file type. If the viewer guesses correctly, he or she may be able to view it. If not, he or she will be unable to see the file. Regardless, it is up to the student and NOT the instructor to make sure that files are viewable. While some students may have Apple products to use at home or off-site, please remember that the default operating system - and the only one supported by the College of Architecture and Design at NJIT is Windows. Students who create files on a MAC that cannot open (or are missing information) will not receive any consideration in the grading. The project will be graded as submitted and viewed by the instructor, not by what was created off-site with a different operating system.
- Final file submission for the course is at high resolution and 300 dpi. This is different from Kepler upload resolution. Do not destroy the original file when creating Kepler files. (Instruction about digital archiving and the Kepler system will be given in each section.)

Objectives:

- To enhance visual literacy with the introduction to works of fine art.
- To provide opportunities to improve information literacy in the process of researching art, artistic movement(s), and artists in the preparation of written essays with appropriate citations and references.
- To provide exposure to a variety of two-dimensional images depicting three-dimensional examples of architecture, interior design, object/artifact design, and/or landscape in an evocative non-photorealistic manner.
- To begin to explore the role of color in the perception of space and surface.
- To begin to experiment with interpretative representation of space and surface.
- To provide an opportunity to learn and become relatively proficient with raster/paint software (*Corel Painter*) that (1) serves as a digital analog to freehand/traditional drawing and (2) is useful in various ways when designing and presenting original work (by “touching up” or modifying algorithmically generated images created with automated processes, as a tool to create original materials for use in the rendering of three-dimensional models for documentation of existing conditions and/or presentation of original designs, and to create original evocative works - especially in combination with wireframe three-dimensional expressions - that may effectively communicate design intent) that may be created by interior designers, architects, industrial designers, and digital designers in a variety of two- and three-dimensional applications.
- To develop an appreciation that the computer does NOT dictate a particular style or image type but that, ultimately, the designer/creator is responsible for whatever is presented – and has the power to modify any image to produce desired results.
- To develop a visceral understanding that the effort required to create good work with digital graphics is as labor intensive as the effort required with traditional/analog media.
- To provide an opportunity to learn and use a limited subset of commands available in drawing software (*Corel Draw* and/or *Adobe Illustrator*) for compositing and layout.
- To assist us in clarifying our thoughts and observation of art by writing about it. To provide opportunity to practice critical writing and communication skills.

References:

- Barnet, Sylvan. *A Short Guide to Writing about Art/10th Edition*. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2010)
- Feisner, Edith Anderson. *Color Studies*. (New York: Fairchild Publications, 2001)
- Goldman, Glenn. *Architectural Graphics: Traditional and Digital Communication*. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1997) Pages 32-36.
- Heller, Nancy G. *Why A Painting Is Like A Pizza: A Guide to Understanding and Enjoying Modern Art*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002)
- Lupton, Ellen and Jennifer Cole Phillips. *Graphic Design: The New Basics*. (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2008)
- Quiller, Stephen. *Color Choices: Making Sense Out of Color Theory*. (New York: Watson-Guptill, 1989)
- Wong, Wucius. *Principles of Color Design: Designing with Electronic Color/2nd Edition*. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1997) Pages 59-97 and 101-144.

Opportunity:

While we are reading about and looking at printed and projected copies of fine art, you have a rare opportunity to see great works in person. Located just outside New York City, NJIT students have relatively easy access to the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), the Metropolitan Museum of Art (MET), the Guggenheim, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and many others. We also have the Newark Museum a short walk from campus. By seeing the works in person, you can see the application of color and surface unfiltered by restrictions of the media used for reproduction or display. The changes from original colors as applied are, for the most part, restricted to fading or color change over time, damage due to mishandling, and the influence of the lighting under which a painting is displayed. Every time something is copied and reproduced, one gets further and further from the original colors. For this reason, it is worthwhile actually looking closely at a painting and seeing the application of the paint, the reflection of light on the surface, the intricacy of brush stroke, etc. Until October 16, at the Whitney Museum of American Art on 945 Madison Avenue at 75th Street you may see the a comprehensive exhibit of the collected works of a single artist in **Lyonel Feininger: At the Edge of the World**, which is a “broad overview of Feininger’s career, tracing his relationships with movements and organizations that defined the development of modern art” [<http://whitney.org/Exhibitions/LyonelFeininger>]. From September 18, 2011 through January 9, 2012 the Museum of Modern Art located at 11 West 53rd Street has **de Kooning: A Retrospective**, which is the “first exhibition devoted to the full scope of the career” of the artist. [<http://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2011/dekooning/>]

Schedule:

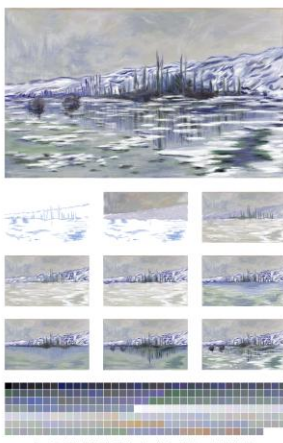
Sections 001/005

Project Assigned: October 3, 2011
Project Presented: October 24, 2011 at 2:30 PM
Paper and Composites Due: October 31, 2011 at 2:30 PM

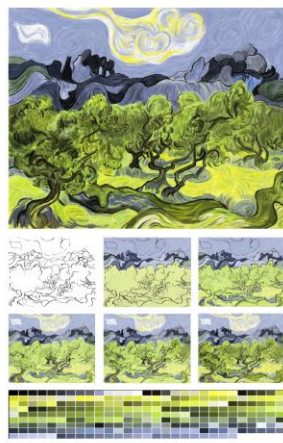
Sections 003/007/011

Project Assigned: September 28, 2011
Project Presented: October 19, 2011 at 8:30 AM
Paper and Composites Due: October 26, 2011 at 8:30 AM

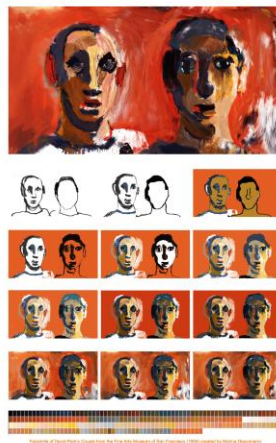
PAINTINGS AND ANALYSES WILL BE PRESENTED IN CLASS ON SCREEN IN “REVIEW FASHION”



Facsimile by Mina Liba
Original: *The Breakup of the Ice*
by Claude Monet



Facsimile by Philip Caleja
Original: *The Olive Trees* by
Vincent Van Gogh



Facsimile by Marina Giocamarro
Original: *Couple* by David Park



Facsimile by Hsin Ting Hsieh
Original: *Soir Bleu* by
Edward Hopper