

Nanaimo Group of Artists WINTER 2021 CHALLENGE

DUE: Friday, February 18, 2022

The WINTER 2021 CHALLENGE focuses on the theme 'Passages to Move the Eye'.

Develop an original painting of your choice, using two clearly identifiable approaches to establishing passages. For this challenge, two passages must be evident, but you are free to use more.

Cautionary note: Using all the strategies/techniques in any single painting may cause the viewers fillings to rotate so it is not a checklist!!

For those who want to work on strengthen the focal point...

Begin by making a quick thumbnail sketch of your focal point/area. Cut this out and lightly tape in on the back and then, to a piece of larger sketch paper, keeping in mind the final ratio of approximately 25 % focal area and the remaining 75%ish as blank for passages. Remember that that 75% will be a combination of passages and quiet space. Using 2-3 of the strategies for developing passages, sketch out one or more plans, using different strategies, to see what best moves the eye. (The reason for back taping the focal point thumbnail)

Select the composition and passages approach you believe is strongest and develop your painting. For those looking to push the boundaries, try doing two paintings using the same focal point and two different approaches to the passages. Note: One completed painting is the challenge requirement.

REALLY, it is all about the composition of a painting and moving the eye easily around and through the painting, bringing the viewer to the focal point. For passages to be more than 'wallpaper for the eye', in any painting, regardless of style, there needs to be a great focal point. Thinking back to some of our critiques where we have found a painting stronger by cropping, the question arises as to whether the focal point was too small, unidentifiable or, the passages leading to it, not effective.

ABOUT THE FOCAL POINT/AREA (a quick refresher)

Sometimes we get hung up on a specific 'point' or 'thing', perhaps because the term we hear most often is 'focal point'. In reading, it seems the following messages come through...

Consider the *place of the story*, abstract, impressionistic, or realistic, to be the focal point or area. It should be the place you want the view to ponder; the 'main idea' of the work. Consider making it roughly 25% of your final work. There are many ways to strengthen the focal area:

- place a third way across or down the painting
- something interesting for the eye to stop and see!
- place your darkest dark and your lightest light next to each other
- include the hardest edges and the lightest light
- include something with implied movement such as a person or animal
- include diagonal lines and shapes
- include the most irregular and interesting shapes
- place the most detailed texture here
- overlap but do not center on the center of the page (There are rare times when centering does work, particularly in square format works, but the norm is offset.)

‘PASSAGES TO MOVE THE EYE’

The goal is to move the eye easily through the painting, using the aspects (elements / shapes) that support the star/focal point. Knowing your focal point is key. Sometimes in abstract, or negative painting, this will emerge or change as the painting develops but you need to be going back to the place you do not want overlooked.

Passages take place in the secondary part of a painting, creating a sense of movement or ‘flow’ through a painting. Passages do not make up the entirety of the secondary part of the painting. In most cases, they are most effective within a slightly blurred, less detailed and quieter area (think value and colour).

Passages can be achieved through considering:

- using an overall colour that exists in a scene. In watercolour, an underlying wash. In acrylic and oil, the underpainting. In any, a glaze.
- shapes: Overlapping and Connected versus Stand Alone, Irregular versus Geometric, Light against Dark, smaller versus Larger
- edges: Lost/Soft versus Clear/Crisp/Defined, Smooth versus Irregular
- development colours: using complementary colours near to each other, varying intensity/ saturation of colours near to each other, varying the values of colours near to each other
- variations in line, texture, direction
- repetition in line, colour & / or shape.

Our challenge is about ‘passages’ but did you know...

Passage (pronounced in French, e.g. pä-säzh) is a French term describing a faceting technique used to break up the contours that define objects or scenes, so that surfaces appear to flow together, blurring the distinctions between solid form and space, foreground and background. Pioneered by Cezanne, it is characterized by small, intersecting planes of patchlike brushwork that blend together to create an image.