

LIGHT REFLECTION and the Effect of surrounding Colors on the Subject.

The First and Foremost Important thing that you must know is that when working from a photo, I advice you to never, never, never reproduce the photo as it is on your canvas, you must correct in your mind the Contrasts, Brightness, Color Temperature, and the Saturation of the colors and improve on the composition if you can.

Since that this is not always easy to do in your mind as you paint, I suggest to do like me, as I prefer to FIRST correct the photo on my computer and I Reprint a better version that will be closer to what it should be and how I want to reproduce it on my canvas. Then and only then I can work from my photo.

It is very important that all Artist are also aware of light reflection and the effect it will have on their subjects because when light reflects on anything it does not only reflects the light but also reflect the color where the light reflects from and that color imprints on the subject in the light ray and will effect the subject's color, and specially if the subject is white or with light and bright colors and light rays.

So Under different Light Condition Colors will look different because of the color of the light source and the color of the surrounding objects that will reflect light rays and their respective colors back on another object in proximity. So reflected light rays from nearby objects can change the brightness and color of an object. For example if you where to paint a white and gray dog in nature and it is surrounded by green trees and grass and the sky is blue and the ground is brown near the dog, so all those colors will reflect on the white and grays of your Dog, and since that white absorb more colors then any other colors your dog should have all those colors in his white. In this situation in the Dog's white and gray hair, there should be light shade of PINKS, LIGHT BLUE, LIGHT GREEN, LIGHT BEIGE but not everywhere, just a bit here and there. Like on the dogs back towards the sky there should be some light blue-grays, and on the side and the edges there should be some light green and beige, and towards the bottom and sides some light green and light beige. Also around the area where you can see some of the skin of the dog, there should be light Pink colors mixed in the white of the hairs. Know that there is always a touch of Light Blue in the shaded areas anyway. So the white is never just white unless you are painting a scene in black and white only.

OK this was only one example, and does not cover everything about this subject but it gives you an Idea of what I am talking about here. Doing landscape works also the same way. If you paint a big rock and it is surrounded by grass and green trees, you should expect to see some light green mixed in the grays of that rock near its edges closer to the grass. The same with a tree trunk should have some green mixed in the brown of the tree trunk at it's base near the grass.

THE EFFECT THAT LIGHT HAS ON COLORS:

Know that a White Subject will never be just white unless it is in a photo studio surrounded by only white walls, white ceiling, and white floor. Because any colors around the subject will reflect on the white of that subject. If you paint a scene in the sun, all colors should tend towards yellow since that the sun rays are yellow. This is called color temperature (in Photography) and if a scene is painted in the shade all colors should have a tint towards blue in them. But don't forget that at the edge of the shaded area where it is closer to an area in the sun, the yellow light rays will be reflected at the edge of the shaded area so that there will be less blue in the edges and gradually more yellow.

Shaded areas should be well defined near the subject and fade at the edges the further away the shade is from the subject.

Think of light rays as **A TRANSPORTER of COLORS** and don't be shy to make experiences with it. Use a yellow light source like the one from a flashlight using an incandescent light bulb and another flashlight using a WHITE LIGHT emitted from LED or (Light Emitting Diodes) if you want. Now get some cartons of different colors like the construction paper of different color you can buy at a dollar store, they sometime come in pads with all different colors. Make sure you have one blue, one red one yellow one orange one green and one white and one black. Now place the white carton upright like on the wall or against an object to hold it up and at its base flat on the table place one green carton. Now use a yellow flashlight and shine the light down at a 45 ° angle so the that light will bounce back up on the color carton and hit the upright white carton and notice the effect that the light has on the white carton. Notice that not only the yellow light of the flashlight bounce back up on the white carton but also the green color from the green carton. Repeat this experiment with the white flashlight and notice the difference in the color reflected on the white carton. Try a blue carton with a yellow light and see what happen.

Now instead of the white carton you could use a white cup or a white bowl. Now change the color carton and repeat the same thing. It won't be long that you will see that colors do reflect easily on white and specially on shiny surfaces. Now take those cartons and stand in front of a mirror that has a light over head. Look at your face and put a white carton parallel to the floor just below your chin at about shoulder high so that you can also see your neck and see the effect that the color of the cartons has on your skin. Try it with all the colors you have, one at a time and since the skin is a light color it will absorb easily the colors of the cartons reflected back from the light above you.

You must also know that a shiny surface will reflect more light and will also absorb more colors from the surrounding objects and this is true also for any subject. If the subject surface is shiny it will absorb more of the reflected light and colors and if the surface are not shiny but rough or dull, they will not reflect as much light and as much color either but there will always be some reflected color present near the subject and the adjacent colors. Experiment with different objects and different colors and see for yourself the magic of light and color and from that moment on always remember to use that knowledge in your paintings when painting a subject surrounded by other colors then it's own.

For another example look at my painting # 75 The Lady has a yellow dress and this is a light bright color and she is surrounded by green wall, plants and green floor tiles so it is normal that some of that green reflects back all over on the yellow dress. In nature like in a landscape painting it is not always evident to see the reflection of colors from one object to another because in nature most objects are dark with a rough surface, but it is there and as an artist you must train your eyes to be able to see it and to reproduce that effect on your paintings. Just go out and take a walk in nature and observe the magic effect that LIGHT REFLECTIONS has on colors of nearby objects.

Now you are becoming a better artist then ever before, and you are now on the right track.

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