

## Tip #51

### *Color and Value*

Watercolorist Charles Reid is credited with saying "Value does all the work, but color gets all the credit." And that's so often true - it's in using a good strong value pattern that we can make a 2D work appear 3D.

But color has value, too, and if you learn to recognize that and use it, you can combine the best of both worlds!

Try making a value scale in black and white - a strip of paper with the white of the paper as your lightest light and black the other end of the spectrum. Make about 3-6 shades of gray in between. When that's dry, take a paper punch and make a hole in each swatch of value. Now you can hold the strip of paper over areas of color, the better to judge what value the color is. Squint your eyes, if you need to, wear polarized sunglasses, or look through a piece of red-tinted Plexiglas to help you see the value in colors.

Make a similar value scale with yellow, and one with ultramarine blue - you can see that the yellow, even used straight from the tube, is never going to be as dark a value as the blue. Yellow is just a lighter color!

We can darken colors a bit by mixing in other colors, but if you want to maintain the purity you need to pay attention to what is the darkest value possible with a given pigment.

**Art 51-1**, autumntree (watercolor pencil)

Color provides the values in this watercolor pencil sketch

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Art 51-1