

[INCLUDES THE PHOTOS AND IGUIDELINES FOR CRITIQUED PAINTING SUBMISSIONS](#)

[PAINTINGS DUE 12-12-24. SEND TO \[AZR@NWWS.ORG\]\(mailto:AZR@NWWS.ORG\)](#)

The relationship between dark and light is one of the keys to how readable an image is across some distance. Value or dark and light contrast can be used to entice the viewer to more fully engage with a painting, photograph, and in a multitude other art disciplines.

Value is one of the five basic elements in creating two-dimensional art. In a representational landscape painting, it is employed when describing the chosen subject, typically as light and shadow. An effective dark and light pattern is the framework upon which the artist depends. It should be integrated with it, and not detract from the total work.

By itself, a dark and light pattern is not enough to create a complete painting. The other four elements to consider are line (drawing), shape, color, and texture. All of these can be employed in furtherance of the total art piece. Not all will be employed to the same degree in organizing a painting; some works may be more drawing dependent, or more color oriented, yet another, more value dominant or textural.

Shadows- In the case of a watercolor landscape painting, transparent layers can be used to define the placement of lights. By building up darker values, the artist reveals the pattern of light. You can't have one without the other. All parts of the painting are linked in some way to the whole. In other words, you can't have light without the dark.

Linkage- A compelling value pattern is one that invites the viewer into the artist's world and keeps them there. Shadows are an excellent way of moving the eye through the painting without being too obvious. A work might have large areas of shadow or smaller more intimate sections that allow one to stop and contemplate the work more fully.

Mood- How shadows are employed will determine the feeling of place, time of day, and - atmosphere. For a bright sunny day, the artist might use a more high-key (lighter) palette, and on an evening painting the artist might use more lower-key values to depict the oncoming evening.

Atmosphere- The location of the subject of a landscape painting says a lot about the environment where it is placed. A piece with dramatic clouds may show the viewer of an impending storm. Soft edges in a painting may depict moist air. Strong colorful values with harder edged shapes may depict a sunnier day. It is up to the painter to produce the feeling desired.

Art Elements and their Relationship to Design.

The elements of art, line, shape, value, texture, and color work in service of principles of design, harmony and variety.

Harmony and Variety and the two basic subdivisions of that design. Balance, proportion, dominance, movement, and economy are the visual devices used to establish the artist's intent.

DALE LAITINEN CRITIQUE SUBMISSIONS

Two Subject Photos are on p. 3 of this document.

Painting the afternoon shadows in Hope Valley, near Lake Tahoe in California.

-Make a preliminary sketch to work out the composition by finding the major shapes. The two major shapes in the distance are overlapped, one by the other. See how the light on the snow defines the base of the dark ridge. Notice the dark value of the stream and how it bisects the snowy meadow.

-In the composition, the gate and leaning rail support the direction of the stream, it provides an interesting foreground as well. The dark values on the railings echo the darks of the stream which provides unity by harmonizing the values in the stream and fence. The variety is in the busy-ness of the gate and relative calm of the stream.

-Painting snow. Mostly, paint the dark shadows to show the lights of the snow-covered meadow. Snow is not white, but very subtle high key values that reflect the sky and warmth of the sun. The long shadows on the snow are what evoke drama. The light source is a weak afternoon sun. Low in on the ridge lines the moment of excitement is about to disappear below the horizon.

-Caution. When painting the large shadowed ridge behind the meadow. The photo may fool you into making it too dark or opaque. In any of the shadows consider reflected light of your subject's shadows. There is color in the shade. In the evening shadows may appear cool in color, in a mid-day scenario they may appear warm with more detail.

-In a sketchbook start by making some quick line drawings to refine your composition, and make changes from the photo.

-On watercolor paper or thick sketch paper, make a small value painting using one color. I would use Neutral Tint. This familiarizes you with where the darks and lights are in your subject.

-When you feel confident that your design and value sketches are what you intend, make a full painting in color with attention to the difference between darks and lights.

Cliff Shadows in Zion National Park, in southern Utah

The visual drama is in your face with the abrupt rise of cliffs of Zion. If you squint your eyes, you can see the simplicity of the darks and lights. When working out the design be

aware that the more you make the foreground less a part of the whole the cliff becomes even more dramatic.

Shadows emerge from the left side of the painting and point to the excitement of the butte. To describe the strength of this peak, strong contrasting shadow and bright morning light can be used to show the dominance of the center of interest.

Local color (color of the object,) and reflected color should be used to varying degrees in the shadows. Allow the transparency of the washes glow through the shadows. The color in the shadows should harmonize with the lights in other parts of the painting.

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-On watercolor paper or thick sketch paper, make a small value painting using one color. I would use Neutral Tint. This familiarizes you with where the darks and lights are in your subject.

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Hints on the Layering Technique

Use a layering approach to going from light to dark. Start by wetting your paper then establishing the color and values of the lightest lights. These are very light colors that will glow through in the final washes.

After the underpainting is dry, then paint in the next major shapes that you have identified through observation and drawing. As each layer is allowed to dry, new layers are applied.

The shapes get smaller and deeper in value with each wash. The idea is to work from the least specific to the most specific detail needed.

Final Thoughts

-Simplicity of design will reveal clarity and intent more than cluttering up the composition with too much unneeded information.

-Using the art elements effectively creates compelling art.

(continue to see photos)

