

Elements of Painting Design

Throughout the painting process, but especially near the completion of a painting, it is good to consider your work in the context of the various design elements we use. The following checklist looks at 7 key elements and asks if the painting does what you wish.

VALUE:

- Is there a range of values in the painting?
- Do the dark shapes create an interesting pattern and create a structure to hold the painting together?
- Are the light and dark areas distinct? The darkest color in your light areas needs to be lighter than the lightest color in your dark area.

COLOR:

- Is there a color scheme to my painting: analogous, triads, monochromatic, split complements, complementary?
- Do the color choices recall the light and mood that I sought to create?
- Does the use of color create depth and distance in the piece?

LINE (referring to the boundary between shapes and the directional elements that move the viewer through the painting):

- Are they organic or natural elements?
- Do they create varied edges?
- Do these elements move the viewer's eye through the painting (brush strokes can also do this.)

SHAPE:

- Is the picture plane divided in an interesting way?
- Is there a foreground, middle ground, and background of varied size?
- Are the major shapes of various sizes and unequal distances to the canvas edge?

FORM:

- Do the Masses have form with light and dark colors to illustrate the effects of light on them?
- Is there a sense of space in and around forms and is this negative space interesting?

TEXTURE:

- Is there a variety of textures in the painting?
- Do they represent the visual elements with appropriate brushwork and shading? (E.g. Do rocks look heavy and water reflective?)

COMPOSITION AND FOCAL POINT:

- Is the focal point in one of the golden sections?
- Does the foreground lead your eye to it?
- Have you created contrast at this area with color and/or edges?