

COURSE: ART 312, ART STUDIO

TOPIC: COLOR

UNIT: 2

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In visual perception a color is almost never seen as it really is -- as it physically is. This fact makes color the most relative medium in art.

In order to use color effectively it is necessary to recognize that color deceives continually. To this end, the beginning is not a study of color systems.

First, it should be learned that one and the same color evokes innumerable readings. Instead of mechanically applying or merely implying laws and rules of color harmony, distinct color effects are produced -- through recognition of the interaction of color-- by making, for instance, two very different colors look alike, or nearly alike.

The aim of such study is to develop-- through experience -- by trial and error -- an eye for color. This means, specifically, seeing color action as well as feeling color relatedness.

If one says "Red" (the name of a color) and there are 50 people listening, it can be expected that there will be 50 reds in their minds. And one can be sure that all these reds will be very different.

Even when a certain color is specified which all listeners have seen innumerable times -- such as the red of the Coca-Cola signs which is the same red all over the country -- they will still think of many different reds.

Even if all the listeners have hundreds of reds in front of them from which to choose the Coca-Cola red, they will again select quite different colors. And no one can be sure that he has found the precise red shade.

What does this show?

First, it is hard, if not impossible, to remember distinct colors. This underscores the important fact that the visual memory is very poor in comparison with our auditory memory. Often the latter is able to repeat a melody heard only once or twice.

Second, the nomenclature of color is most inadequate. Though there are innumerable colors --shades and tones -- in daily vocabulary, there are only about 30 color names.