

Color and Texture

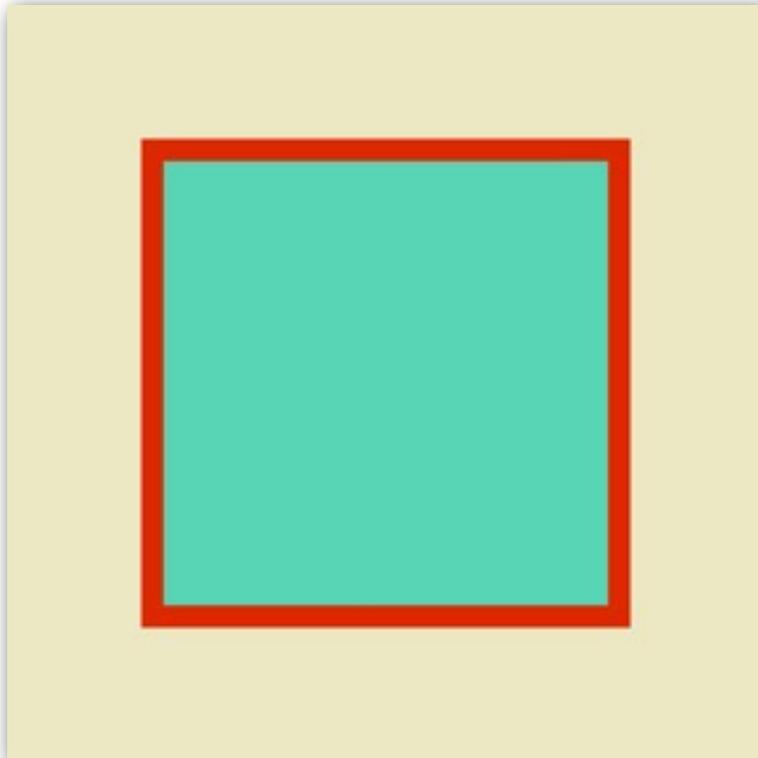
In this lesson we are going to explore ways of layering and texturing to make areas of color more complex. This is not a lesson on color theory, or how to combine colors; it is about the quality and application of color.

After exploring the techniques demonstrated in the video, we will make very simple “colorfield” compositions, which rely on color - the combinations of colors as well as their application - for interest.

There are only two assignments in this lesson because I want you to take your time, especially with the second one - the compositions.



The painting above is demonstrated in the video. It relies on texture as well as color for its impact.



The piece on the left is a digital rendition of the above painting. Its color is completely flat, and it is devoid of texture.

Explorations

The video demonstrates several techniques for creating tone-on-tone texture. Make as many layered and textured color samples as you can. I recommend doing these on 5"x5" pieces of heavy paper. In your explorations, use colors of the same hue - all versions of orange, or several different greens, for example. Your choices can vary in:

- Value: light orange and darker orange for example.
- Intensity: bright yellow and dull yellow, for example.
- Hue, but these must be very close: purple and reddish-purple; turquoise and green.

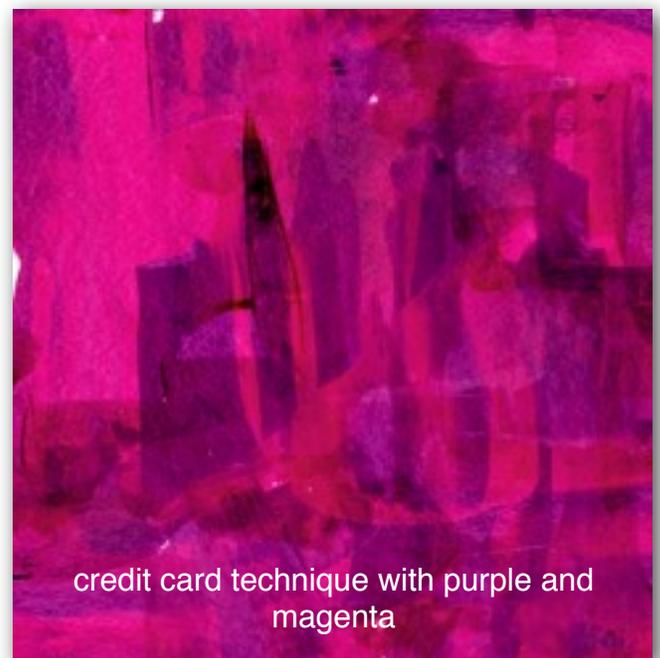
- You can always include white in your mixtures.
- When mixing neutrals, feel free to include white, gray, beige, cream, etc.



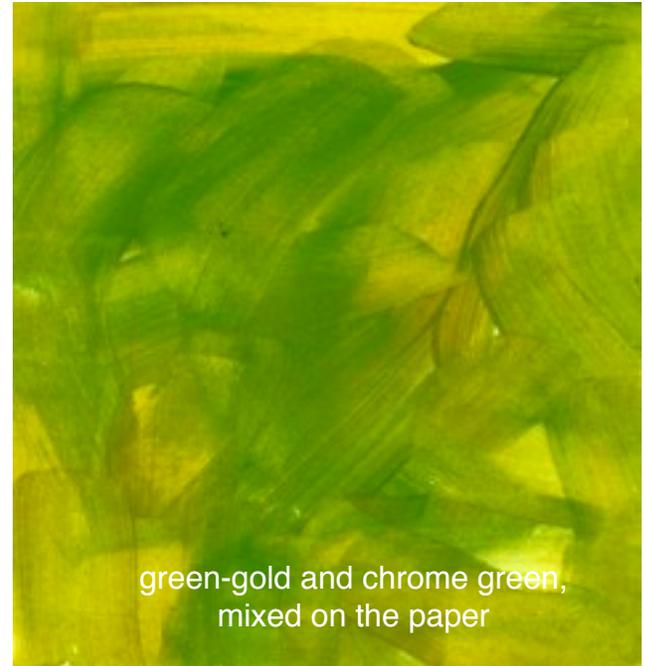
You can see from the above collage color wheel that any given hue has multiple interpretations.



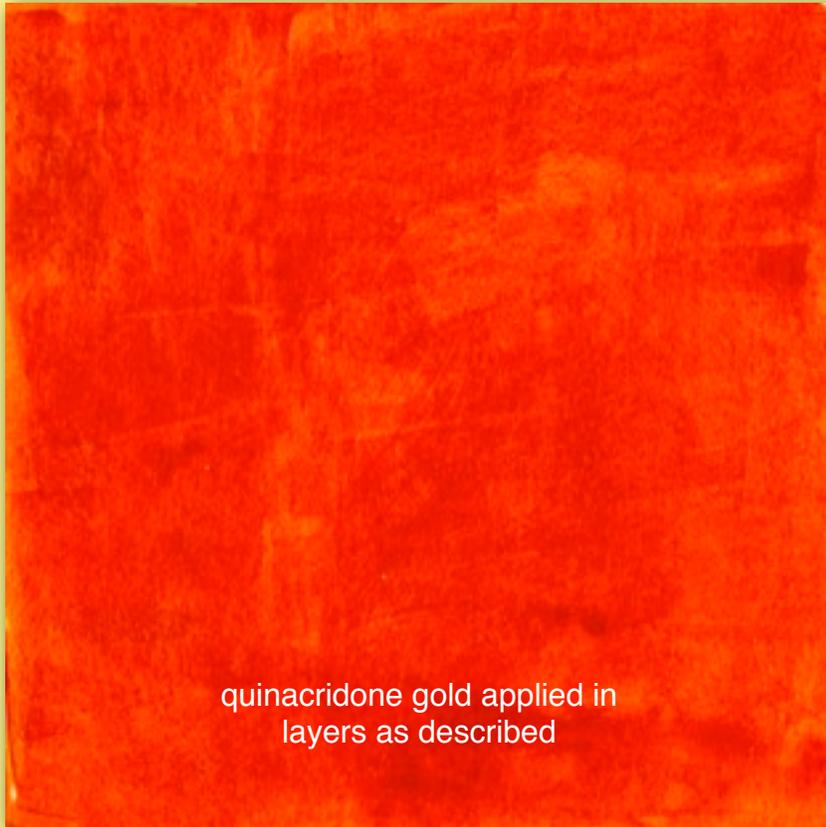
crayon over paint



credit card technique with purple and magenta



Once you have as many samples as you can stand (the above are just a few), you can begin to combine colors to see which combinations look interesting. Take some time to do this before tackling the next exercise.



quinacridone gold applied in layers as described

Tip: to achieve extra luminosity in transparent colors, apply the paint with a credit card to white paper. Then apply a coat of matte medium using a brush, leaving some brush strokes. When the medium is completely dry, apply another coat of your transparent color with a credit card.

Compositions

Color field painting

Choose three colors. What counts as a color? Any of your tone-on-tone textures and layers, as well as any flat color. These colors are the *subject* of your composition, so choose ones that look interesting together.

Contrast is often what makes colors affect each other in interesting ways, but you may find less contrast just as interesting. Here are some ways to make strong contrasts:

Hue: colors on opposite sides of the color wheel have the most contrast in terms of hue.

Value: very light colors contrast strongly with very dark colors.

Saturation: dull colors, earth tones, and neutrals (beige/brown/gray/off-white) contrast most highly with very bright, clear, saturated colors.

Here are some ways to make subtle contrast:

Hue: use colors that are very close on the color wheel.

Value: use colors that are very similar in terms of how light or dark they are.

Saturation: use colors that are similar in brightness or dullness.

Create a composition that is extremely simple, something you would find very boring if not for its color and texture. We are going for extreme *unity* here, with as little variety as possible in the layout. Here are some examples:

- A square centered within a square (see example on page one).
- A circle centered within a square
- A square or rectangle divided in half or in quarters
- A square or rectangle divided equally in three parts (wide stripes)
- A donut centered within a square

You may make things a tiny bit more interesting by off-centering a shape, but don't get clever with the layout. This is about color and texture.

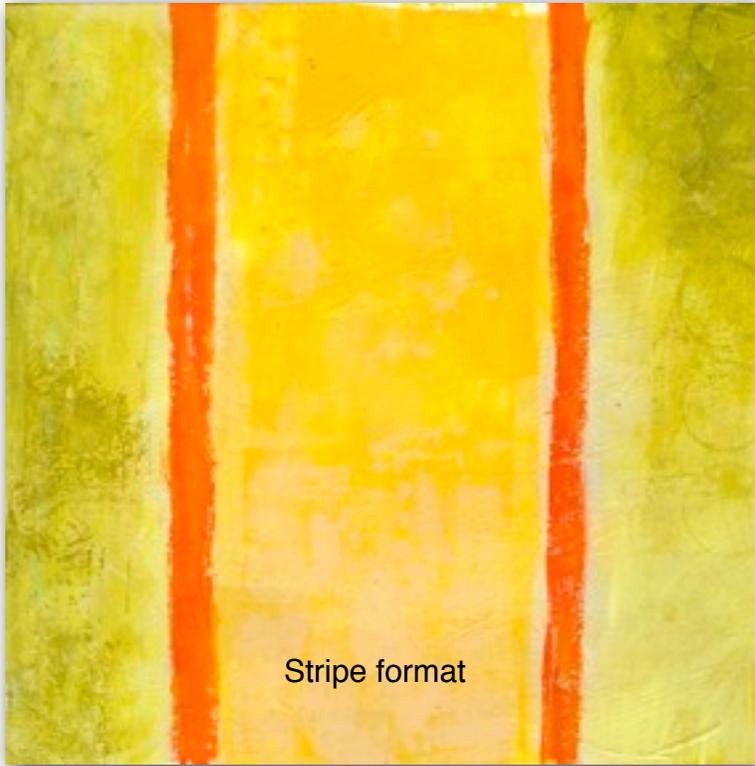
Use your three chosen colors to "fill in" the composition. Take your time to use the texture and layering techniques to make your colors interesting. You might make one of your colors flat, while the other two are textured. Or you might use all three flat or all three textured. Make as many of these as you can stand, but take your time with each one. Here are my examples:



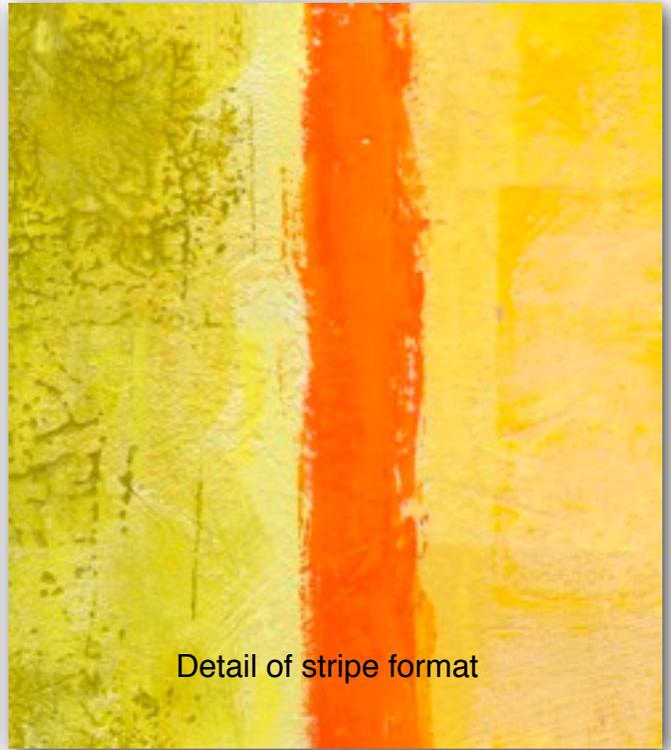
Detail of piece to the right



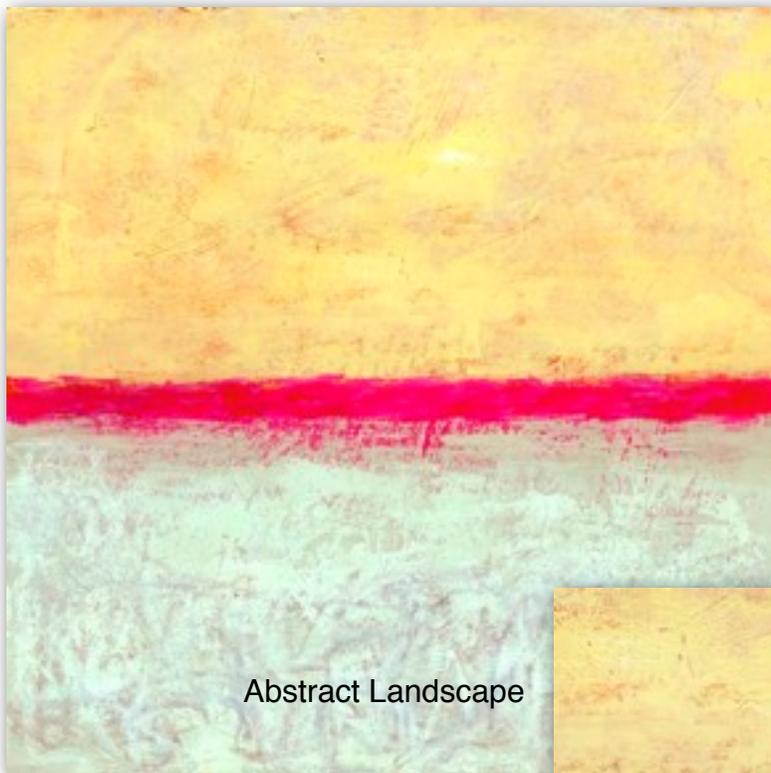
Gray, Red, and Black



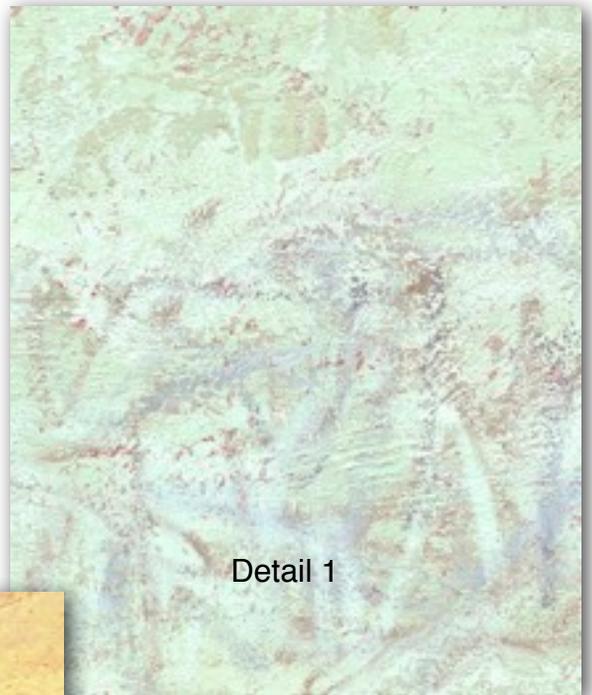
Stripe format



Detail of stripe format



Abstract Landscape



Detail 1

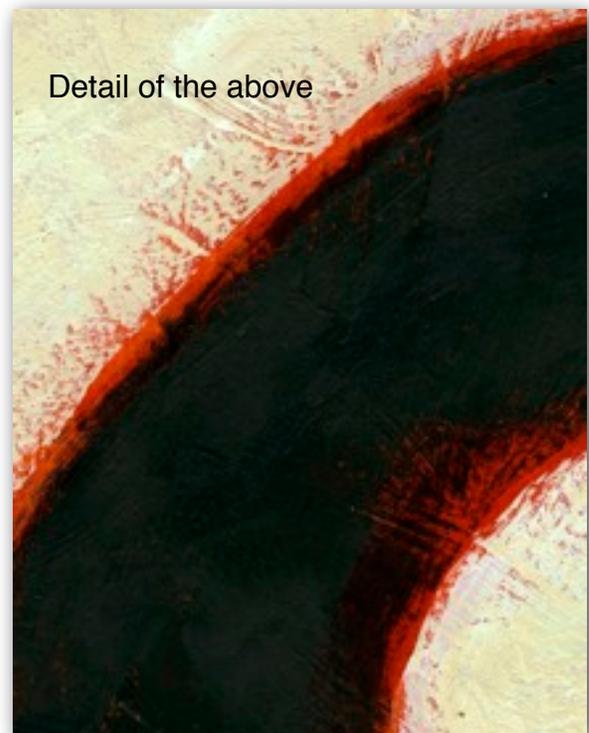


Detail 2



Black, Neutral, and
Quinacridone Burnt
Orange

I've used a lot of texture here. Feel free to combine texture with flat color, or use all flat color. Remember to keep the layouts simple, and let the color and texture be the subject. Have fun!



Detail of the above