

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF COMPOSITION AND COLOR HARMONY IN PAINTING

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Abstract: This article is devoted to the study of the theoretical foundations of composition and color harmony in painting. It analyzes the interrelationship between color and composition in the formation of a work of visual art. During the research, the main principles of composition—such as balance, rhythm, contrast, and unity—are examined, and their harmonious interaction with color is discussed. In addition, the fundamental aspects of color theory, including the color wheel, color contrast, the psychological effects of colors, and their role in visual perception, are analyzed on a scientific basis.

Keywords: painting, composition, color harmony, color theory, color contrast, color wheel, visual perception, aesthetics, color psychology, perspective.

Introduction:

Painting as an art form shapes the main content of visual expression through composition and color harmony, as in every artwork not only form but also the idea conveyed through color plays an important role. Composition is a system that defines the internal structure of a work; it ensures the arrangement of elements, their interrelation, and visual balance. Color, in turn, serves as a means of enlivening this structure and directing the viewer’s emotional perception. In any work of painting, establishing a proper balance between colors and forms is of great importance, as this determines the integrity of the artwork. Through the laws of composition, the artist guides the movement of the viewer’s eye and focuses attention on the main focal point. Therefore, in painting, composition and color harmony are regarded as inseparable concepts.

Main part:

The theory of color harmony studies how colors interact with one another, and this process plays an important role in shaping visual perception. The relationships between colors—such as contrast, proximity, and complementary relations—either intensify or soften the emotional impact of an image. For example, the combined use of warm and cool colors creates a sense of dynamism within a composition. By selecting colors appropriately, an artist can create a specific mood or atmosphere. At the same time, the brightness and saturation of colors also influence the overall appearance of a composition. Thus, color harmony is important not only aesthetically but also psychologically.

In composition theory, the principles of centralization and balance occupy a key place, as they ensure the stability of an image. Through the use of symmetrical and asymmetrical balance, an artist can achieve different expressive effects. Symmetrical composition generally evokes a sense of calmness and stability, while asymmetrical composition conveys movement and dynamism. In both cases, the relative proportion of elements is important. Rhythm and repetition are also essential tools in composition, as they guide the movement of the viewer’s eye. In this way, composition creates the internal order of a work and turns it into a unified system.

In color theory, the concept of the color wheel is of great importance, as it illustrates the relationships between colors. Through the system of primary, secondary, and tertiary colors, the origins of colors and their combinations are explained. Complementary colors enhance one another and create contrast, making the image more vivid and lively. Analogous colors, on the other hand, are closely related and produce a harmonious and calm effect. The use of the color wheel allows the artist to select colors correctly and arrange them in a balanced manner. At the same time, the distance between colors and their placement also play an important role.

In painting, light and shadow are also inseparable components of composition and color harmony. Through light, forms acquire volume and take on a three-dimensional appearance. Shadows, in turn, enhance the depth of colors and increase contrast. The direction and intensity of light have a significant impact on the overall emotional effect of a composition. Light is also used to highlight the main object and define the focal point of the composition. In this way, light and shadow work together with color.

In composition, the laws of perspective also play an important role, as they create spatial depth. Through linear and atmospheric perspective, the artist conveys distance and volume. Colors also serve as an important tool in enhancing perspective, as distant objects are usually depicted in cooler and more muted tones, while nearby objects are shown in clear and vivid colors. This approach ensures a realistic representation of the image. At the same time, perspective enriches the internal structure of the composition.

Color psychology is also significant in painting, as it studies the effect of colors on human emotions. For example, the color red expresses energy and passion, while blue represents calmness and tranquility. By using colors, an artist can evoke specific emotional responses in the viewer. Each combination of colors can convey different meanings. Therefore, the process of selecting colors is important not only aesthetically but also in terms of meaning. Color psychology works together with composition and enhances the overall impact of the artwork.

The concept of contrast is also important in composition, as it represents the differences between elements. Through contrast, the artist draws attention to the focal point and makes the composition more engaging. There are various types of contrast, such as color contrast, form contrast, and size contrast, which can be used together. If contrast is excessively strong or too weak, it may disrupt the balance of the composition. Therefore, it is important to use contrast in moderation. Contrast enhances the dynamism of a composition and brings it to life.

In painting, the principles of unity and integrity are among the main requirements of composition. All elements of a work should be interconnected and form a cohesive whole. Colors, forms, and lines must harmonize with one another and express a unified idea. If there is a lack of connection between these elements, the artwork loses its impact. For this reason, the artist uses every detail to serve the overall purpose, ensuring a professional level of composition.

In painting, identifying and emphasizing the compositional center plays a crucial role in guiding the visual reading of a work, as the viewer's eye is naturally drawn to the most contrasting or brightest point. Therefore, the artist creates a hierarchy within the composition, subordinating secondary elements to the center. This process can be expressed more clearly through the use of color—for example, by means of color saturation or light contrast, the main object is highlighted. The compositional center is determined not only by geometric placement but also by color harmony. In addition, rhythmic repetition and directional lines guide the viewer's eye toward the focal point. As a result, the readability of the work improves, and its conceptual expression becomes clearer.

In painting, the principle of expressing spatial depth through color is also important, as colors help create a visual sense of distance. Typically, distant objects have reduced contrast and appear in cooler, more muted tones, which produces the effect of atmospheric perspective. Objects that are closer, on the other hand, appear clearer and more contrasted in terms of color. The brightness and saturation of colors are also key tools in conveying depth. Through this, the artist creates the illusion of three-dimensional space on a two-dimensional surface. This method increases the complexity of the composition and makes the image more realistic and expressive.

In painting, one of the central elements of the compositional process is the distribution of visual weight. Each color, shape, or detail possesses a certain degree of "weight" within the composition depending on its size, brightness, and placement, and this determines the overall balance. The artist can consciously control these factors to create either dynamic or static conditions on the pictorial surface. An uneven distribution of visual weight often enhances the sense of movement, thereby giving the artwork a sense of vitality. At the same time, small but

brightly colored details can attract the viewer's attention and play an important role in the composition. Through this approach, the artist establishes a hierarchy of information within the work and enriches its content.

In painting, tonal relationships are also important in forming color harmony, as they express the interconnection of colors through their levels of lightness and darkness. Using tonal contrast, the artist enhances the differences between various shapes and renders them more clearly. At the same time, smooth transitions are achieved through colors of similar tone, creating unity within the composition. Through tonal solutions, the depth and volume of the image become more natural. This process demonstrates the complex interrelationship between color and light. As a result, tonal harmony in painting serves as one of the key tools for expanding the expressive possibilities of composition.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, in painting, the theory of composition and color harmony forms the fundamental structural and aesthetic basis of an artwork. When these two elements work together, they create not only visual beauty but also deep meaning and emotional impact. By mastering these theoretical principles, the artist develops their creative approach. Composition establishes order and balance, while color provides vitality and emotional expression. Therefore, every work of painting relies on the harmony of these two essential elements. This, in turn, constitutes the complex and rich theoretical foundation of the art of painting.

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