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Seven Insider Tips I Learned in Art School to Help You Perfect Your Skill

By Ying McLane

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Hi and... **Welcome!**



Edge of the Light
oil on canvas by Ying

First, I am so glad you are here. It shows you are serious about improving your artistic skill. Great job!

Friends, let me first tell you that it doesn't matter if you are learning representative/realistic art or abstract/modern art. Mastering the basic foundation of art is key to expressing your artistic vision.

Take Picasso for example, we all know his cubism period and surrealism period, but I was floored by how great he could draw realistically like those old masters when I saw drawings from his youth.

Let's start!

Ying McLane
artist/writer/educator

First Things first

I will give you seven valuable tips I learned while studying at various art schools in NYC.

First, we should know four essential elements found in a good painting:

Drawing

Value/tone

Composition/design

Color

I have several tips to help you in each category.

Are you ready?

Ying McLane

artist/educator



If you can dream
it, you can do it.

- Walt Disney.

First , DRAWING

Drawing is the foundation of representative art. And most likely, your first art piece is something you drew with a pencil.

Drawing determines if a realistic art piece is a success or a failure.

Take a portrait painting for example. One could have an excellent color scheme, but if the drawing is not correct, you will find the face is crooked or asymmetrical. Sigh.

To help with drawing symmetrically, I have two tips for you:



01

Take a spare key and hang it on a string. When you draw, constantly put that string in front of your drawing or canvas to measure your lines against the string. The principle here is to allow the nature of gravity to help you find lines that should be straight.



02

Buy a handheld mirror, and check your drawing from the mirror. Do it often. You will be surprised how easy it is to see the areas that need to be improved by simply using a mirror!

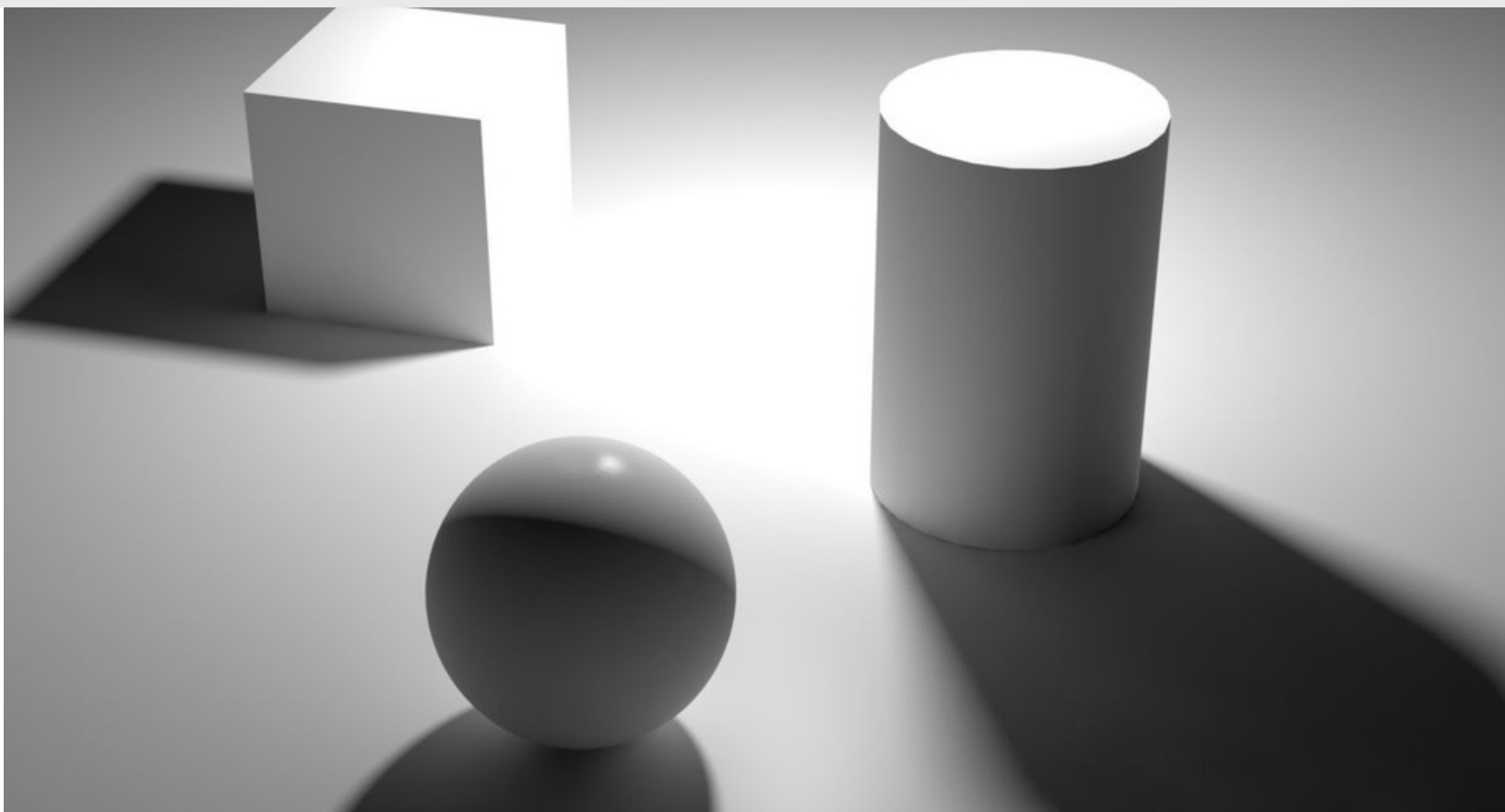


Now let's talk about VALUE.

Value or tone simply implies how light or dark your object is when you strip away color. Just imagine a black and white picture.

Value is so significant that if the value is not right in a painting, it will make the painting look cartoonish.

There are several tips to make your value just right:



01

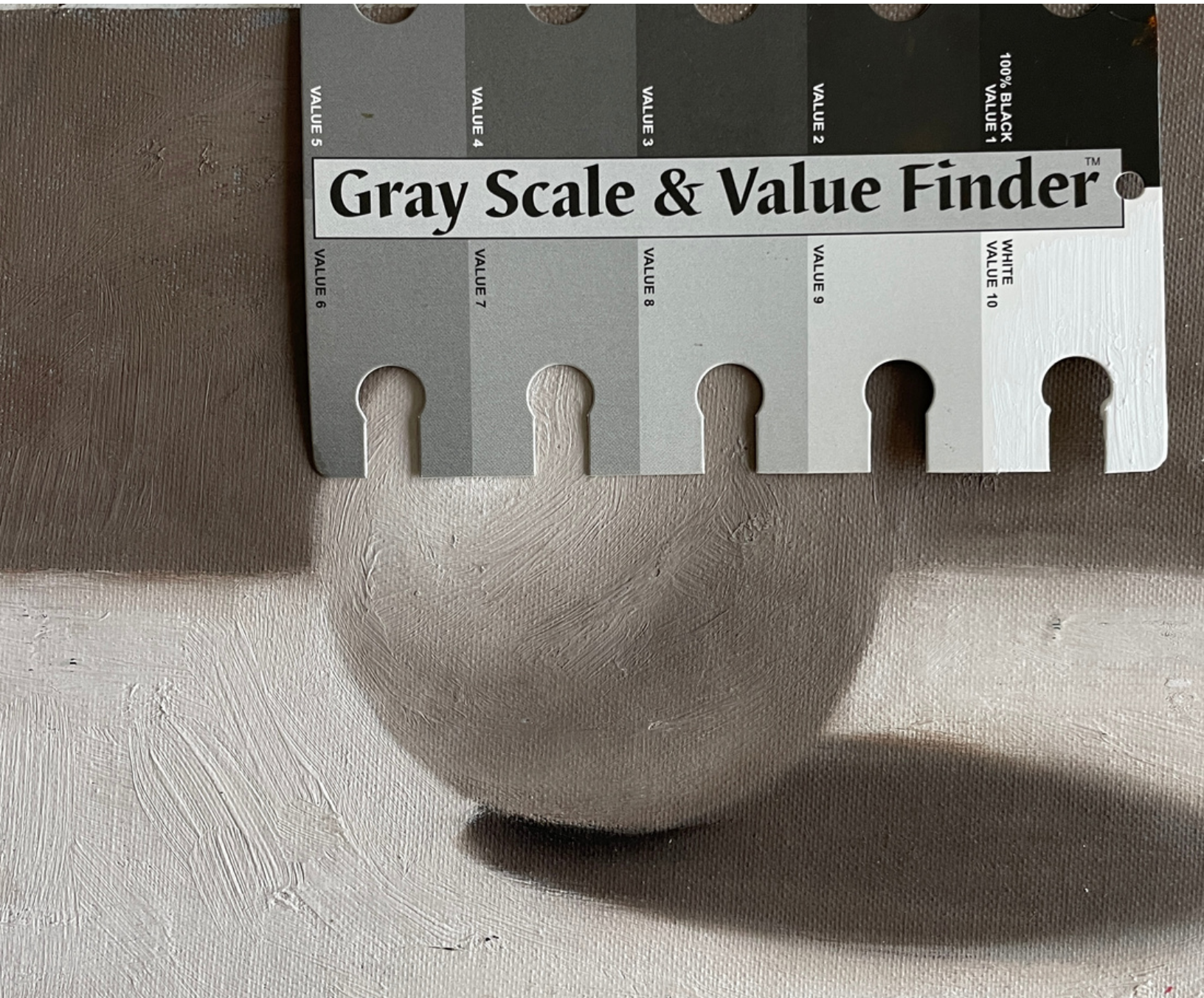
Squinting

Yes, it's that simple. When you want to compare the value of your object and your painting, just squint your eyes to make everything look a little blurry and less defined. This way, you can pass unimportant details and see the principal value of the whole picture.



02

Use a grayscale. You can buy it in many places,



Next let's talk about composition/design.

Composition is vital in both representative/realistic art and modern art. My tip for helping you find a good composition is to use a viewfinder.

My art teacher helped me make one by hand, but you can find in many stores too.



Finally, we move to the lifeblood of art—color!
I love to see demure, subtle color schemes in other artists' work. I myself love vibrant colors!

There is so much to learn about color. One valuable lesson I learned from my art teacher is that colors have temperatures. For example, the color red could be warm in a person's face in the sunlight, but it also could be cool when he/her turns away from the light.



My tip is to make a basic warm color wheel and a cool one to help you become familiar with color temperature.

The warm color wheel on the left consists of cadmium red, yellow, Prussian blue, etc.

The cool color wheel on the right consists of Alizarin Crimson, lemon yellow, ultramarines blue etc.

Learn more about drawing and colors go on my website— <https://www.yingmclane.com>

Or sign up for my email: hello@yingmclane.com for tips, lessons, and updates.



Congratulations on finishing this mini-course!

Now you learned the seven tips, I challenge you do a seven week challenge—do one drawing per week using one of those tips.



weekly SUCCESS

DATE:

DO A DRAWING OF A COFFEE CUP USING THE KEY ON A STRING METHOD

AM I HAPPY WITH THIS DRAWING?

WAS I BE ABLE TO UTILIZE ANY OF THESE TIPS?

WHAT DID I LEARN FROM THIS DRWAING?

weekly SUCCESS

DATE:

DO A DRAWING OF A PET USING THE MIRROR METHOD

AM I HAPPY WITH THIS DRAWING?

WAS I BE ABLE TO UTILIZE ANY OF THESE TIPS?

WHAT DID I EARN FROM THIS DRWAING?

weekly SUCCESS

DATE:

DO A DRAWING OF A VASE USING THE SQUINTING METHOD

AM I HAPPY WITH THIS DRAWING?

WAS I BE ABLE TO UTILIZE ANY OF THESE TIPS?

WHAT DID I EARN FROM THIS DRWAING?

weekly SUCCESS

DATE:

DO A DRAWING OF A WHITE BOWL USING THE GREY SCALE METHOD

AM I HAPPY WITH THIS DRAWING?

WAS I BE ABLE TO UTILIZE AN6 OF THESE TIPS?

WHAT DID I LEARN FROM THIS DRWAING?

weekly SUCCESS

DATE:

DO A DRAWING OF YOURSELF USING THE BLACK MIRROR METHOD

AM I HAPPY WITH THIS DRAWING?

WAS I BE ABLE TO UTILIZE ANY OF THESE TIPS?

WHAT DID I LEARN FROM THIS DRWAING?

weekly SUCCESS

DATE:

DO A DRAWING OF A TREE USING THE VIEW FINDER METHOD

AM I HAPPY WITH THIS DRAWING?

WAS I BE ABLE TO UTILIZE ANY OF THESE TIPS?

WHAT DID I LEARN FROM THIS DRWAING?

weekly SUCCESS

DATE:

PAINT A DAISY USING THE COLOR WHEEL METHOD (USING WARM YELLOW ON THE PETALS FACING THE LIGHT. USING COOL YELLOW ON THE PEDALS IN THE SHADOW.

AM I HAPPY WITH THIS PAINTING?

WAS I BE ABLE TO UTILIZE ANY OF THESE TIPS?

WHAT DID I LEARN FROM THIS PAINTING?