

## Being Creative Is More Than Copying

Did you know you won't get where you want to go on technical skill alone? Unfortunately, the "measuring stick" seems to be the closer one comes to replicating the photograph, the better it is.

Wouldn't it be nice if there were an even "playing field?" Your artwork should be a combination of what you see, feel, and understand. Being creative is more than copying a photograph or another artist's work.

If you copy a photograph just as it is, now you have "two of them." The one you copied is probably void of your personality, and emotions because you were too busy replicating the photo.

All art begins by SELECTION. You, as the artist, selects a subject (idea). Then you interpret the important qualities of that idea using skills and creative energy to develop your idea into a distinct form.

How do you incorporate these factors together? "COMPOSITIONAL DESIGN." Design turns nature into art. There is a countless number of subjects in nature, beautiful, ugly, smooth, rough, bright, colorful, dull, etc. but none of it is art until YOU MAKE IT ART!!!

Art is a visual language. Drawing is the vocabulary, and the elements and principles are the guidelines.

Drawing is the foundation of all art. When you draw, you gather information on how things work, how it all fits together. YOU'RE DEFINING WHAT YOU CAN'T DESCRIBE IN WORDS.

So, what is "how it all fits together?" DESIGN! Design is the "blueprint." the organization of your art. It may be simple or complex.

Design is "problem solving." It's the arrangement of the elements and principles of design. All good artwork, whether realistic or abstract, contains the elements and principles.

It's not the object you draw, paint or photograph that speaks to the viewer, "it's how you present it." Weak compositions fail and are ignored by the viewer.

Designing your own original artwork is a challenge. You shouldn't let Design intimidate you. You make design decisions every day.

Design elements and principles are guidelines, not RULES. They can be broken but with a balance.

Your primary destination is UNITY in your design. You feel unity in an artwork intuitively, even before you analyze how the artist designed it.

Unity is the organization of all the “stuff” into a harmonious whole, your main goal in the design process. When you’re finished, you sense that nothing can be added or deleted.

I recently came across a writing by a judge for the CPSA’s national exhibit. He stated he was concerned that so many of the more than 700 entries appeared to be copies of photographs.

Here are some of the judge’s clues:

- >Figures and objects cut off on the margins
- >Selective depth of field
- >Uniform, boring color ranges
- >Predictable poses from vacations
- >Pet or grandchildren photos

While he understood these tendencies, he wanted to make a case, as I have for the “working from life” school.

There is a near magical quality that’s transmitted in art from direct observation that’s not conveyed when copying a photograph. While it’s not always possible to work from life in the field, try and naturalize your pictorial elements as much as possible.

If you are eager to significantly improve your drawing or compositional skills, here’s a great opportunity for you. I’m starting two new classes at the Village Art Workshops. Beginning September 16th, “Foundational Drawing for The Serious Beginner” and starting November 4th, “Creative Composition for The Serious Artist”. Either or both classes will put you on track to improve your skills and be side by side with other like-minded, self-motivated artists.