

MESSAGE FROM ERIC

- August -

AREA OF DOMINANCE

A strong painting requires an area of dominance. There are a number of design tools we can use to direct the viewer's eye to the area of dominance:

- Strongest value contrasts
- Warmest color
- Most intense color
- Hardest edges
- Line
- Detail
- Largest Shape
- Animation (especially the human figure)
- Placement near the center

Most of my students are familiar with the above, but may forget to play the flip side of the coin outside the area of dominance:

- Softer edges
- Less detail
- Grayer colors

Harder edges, detail, and intense colors in the area of dominance means little unless contrasted with softer edges, less detail, and grayer colors outside the area of dominance.

These design tools are like the piano keyboard: the combinations are endless. Only a few, or all of the elements can be used. They can be mixed and matched. It is fun to put what is usually assigned to the area of dominance—a warm color, for example—and place it outside. Then use another element—animation—to bring the eye back.

Once, I painted a street scene with two figures near the center, incorporating strong value contrasts and hard edges. Because these elements made such a strong area of dominance, I was able to use all my intense reds outside of it.

Conversely, one can take an element that is normally used outside and place it in the area of dominance. I saw a very effective painting in which the area of dominance was void of detail and soft-edged. But because of its placement near the center and the strong value contrasts, the eye was drawn in.

Don't make a formula of it. Have fun and experiment!

Keep your brush wet!

Eric



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