



**Always Remember, the presence or absence of light changes our perception of color.**

Artist Often avoid grey or cloudy days because they think of them as drab and uninteresting. With proper training to see color you will find grey days offer beautiful colors to translate in its own right. Understanding color in this way also offers you unending possibilities in nature to paint.

**This exercise should be done outdoors. Try to use a weathered wooden table but if you don't have that, a grey cloth over a surface will suffice. This provides you with a neutral.**

If you do this in more than one sitting, always go back the exact same time of day and with the same light conditions.

Place your easel as close to the still life setup as possible. The videos will give you an idea of this.

**Composition:** When setting up your blocks on a sunny day you were factoring in the shadow shapes as part of the design. In a grey day there are no shadows so placing your blocks closer together creates balance and movement. Try to place your blocks in a pleasing, relatively close way. Have your blocks overlap from your vantage point. The setup above gives you an idea. Place your yellow and green blocks on opposite sides to spread out the warm

**For the exercise of learning to see color we start with only colors from the tube.**

You will need a variety so as **not to use the same color twice.** This will further reinforce the attributes of different colors, such as value, temperature, saturation and hue which will be freeing to you in the future.

**Second,** You will not mix colors for starting notes with the exception of white in the case of some very dark colors. Go sparingly with white as much as possible.

Your color selections should be as bold as possible.

For the most part there will be two colors for each block, the top and the sides. Even though some sides will seem slightly different, still treat as one.

No Blacks or umbers. This is where the color chart you made will come in handy. Match very dark, black like colors in line with black on the color chart.

Before starting and throughout the painting, scan the whole setup looking for differences in Values, Temp, Sat, and Hues. You will constantly need to check this as you go along and make adjustments

**NOTE: You are not painting the color of the blocks.  
You are painting the light conditions**

This will feel awkward at first, that is why I want you to just follow the formula.

When applying your color spots, start in the middle of the block surface, whether top or sides. Try to leave space or lines between colors to avoid them touching at first. Start with the brightest first. (Yellow) They are the easiest to spot and also set the tone for the rest of the painting.

**Follow these colors for your Grey day study.**

**We start with the top planes of each block.**

Grey day procedure is the same as the sunny day study in that you start with the top “planes” or top of the blocks. The difference with the sunny day versus the grey are

1. The contrast between light and shadow on a sunny day will be stronger lending to darker shadow areas.
2. The side areas on a sunny day are cooler than the bright sunlit spots.

The grey day has less contrast and no cast shadows. The shadowed side “planes” will be warmer than the tops of the blocks.

**Again our primary goal is to express how the light of the atmospheric conditions influence color.**

**Remember to Scan the entire setup.** Do not focus on one section too long as this will distort your impression and vision of the colors, temperature and values.

Use squinting and if possible taking a picture and grey out the photo as I demonstrated to get your values correct. Strong bright colors can be deceiving.

Keep in mind the sunny day block study you have done to compare.

**For the top Planes or top of blocks.**

In the grey day study the **yellow block** is the only warm block in the setup. The top plane of the yellow block although warm should still be a cool yellow. Lemon yellow or Cad Yellow light are good choices. If you don't have either of these you can cool down a warmer yellow with white.

The **White Block** is cooler than the yellow block. Permanent Rose with white is your choice here.

Permanent Rose is cooler than Alizarin Crimson but could also be used with white.

**Green block** Viridian with white. Don't forget to scan for value differences.

**Red Block**, Almost any red cooled down with white can be a good choice because red can appear warm or cool. Since there isn't a purple block in this set up Alizarin would be a good choice unless you have used it for the white block. I used Cad Red Deep at first but because Cad Red Deep can really cool down with the addition to white, later I restate with Cad Red. They are very close but the latter is a slight bit warmer. The actual color of the red this block has is pretty warm and strong so we need to keep the color of the block in mind but also how the atmosphere is affecting it.

**Blue Block.** Some colors are easier to see than others like in the sunny day study, Yellow is easy to match from the tube. In the grey day study it's the blue block that is straight forward. Ultramarine with white for the top of the blue block as Ultramarine is cooler than Cobalt.

You will see how I adjusted the I value to be more consistent with the blue block we have in the setup.

Your **Grey Table** top will be Cerulean since when comparing your blue top to the grey table top the table top is warmer.

## Sides

**The Blue Block Sides.** Cobalt Blue straight out of the tube. An alternative could be violet in keeping in mind the sides would be warm. Try to use your power of vision and perception to determine which to use. Keep in mind you will have to choose a different color for each spot so if you need violet somewhere else you may decide to hold off on that choice. Again, watch your value comparisons. You won't need a lot of white for this.

**Red Block Sides.** You may determine a marked enough difference in the sides of your red block. Instead of painting them as one as we have done so far, you may decide to paint the lighter side as a Cadmium Scarlet and the darker side the Alizarin Crimson making it darker than the scarlet side. I

chose to paint as one and make the change in the top note due to the reflected light.

You See How We Are Now Breaking Away From The Formula Of The Sunny Day Study

**The Green Block Sides.** Permanent Green light is much warmer than Viridian so PGL straight from the tube will be a good choice for the sides.

**Yellow Block Sides.** Light red mixed with white or Orange, red light with yellow ochre with white. Scan your setup for correct value relationships.

**White Block Sides.** Violets can come in warmer and cooler tones. A cobalt Violet with white is a warmer choice than Dioxide Purple.

**Background** If grass is your background, Permanent Magenta or Magenta with white for your background . Scan your setup to get the relative temperature direction.

**The background is not a shadow note but is cool by nature of the atmosphere.**

Do a quick scan, **do not stare at any one part**. Do your best in choosing and accurate hue, temperature, saturation and value.

## SECOND AND FINAL NOTES

### Remember

Grey Day color choices can be deceiving because the “look” of the colors in this light condition look closer to the actual color or “local” color of the objects.

Don't be deceived however. There are light condition attributes still needing to be portrayed. This means, similar to sunny day light conditions where we exaggerate starting notes to relay the light, the same applies to a grey day as well as any light condition you come across.

Opposite to a sunny day scenario where the top notes are warm and the shade notes are cool, a grey day has cool top notes and warm shade notes.



Never stop using your eyes though to see accurately what's in front of you.

Scanning is an immensely important factor to accurate seeing as every color will be affected by what's around it.

Refer to “Simultaneous Color” It is only when you have covered your canvas that you can make these comparisons accurately.

Another difference with the grey day study is the lack of need to add several layers of paint or notes. The possible need to mix a starting note exists, which by now with your new found understanding of the color wheel will help you do this with ease.

Another thing to keep in mind:

As with the Sunny Day Study you start with an exaggerated color but work towards or back to the “local” color allowing a vibration of the layers and partially mixed colors. So if you are starting warm as with the sunny day you “tone down” with a slightly cool, local or warm/cool. The same applies with other light conditions. With the grey day you start with cool top notes but may need to use a warm, cool/warm to tone down or bring back to the local color.

## The White Block

With all the starting notes down you may observe the starting note on the white block looks too pink. After scanning the setup you may observe it needs to be cooler. Using your blue block as a main gauge and scanning the setup, a Manganese with White matching the value of the top layer is appropriate.

**Shadow note** stepping back you may immediately after adding Violet to the existing note once again the red influence within the Violet is too warm.

The gray table top is influencing the color and value of the side plain as if it were reflecting colors on to it although there is some reflection the side plane is actually being neutralized by the lack of strong sunlight while the gray table as a top plane is being late and by the atmosphere as a result the two masses appear very similar.

With this in mind adding cerulean to the side note which makes it look even more like the table

With addition of new color layers, a different “look” or color temperatures etc, will appear.

This is where it's appropriate to wait until other colors are down to make final decisions.

It's best to make a move in order to either correct mistakes or proceed with other comparisons.

# The Yellow Block

Compare the Yellow Block to the revised white block, the top plane of the Yellow Block looks too warm.

if the first note was lemon yellow which is cooler than cadmium lemon it's possible that it wouldn't need to be developed further.

After scanning the setup, there's a bluish quality. A very light Viridian beautifully complements the warmth of the Yellow Block maintains its brightness and better reflects the coolness of the atmosphere. Viridian being made with blue and yellow, also leaning towards a cooler green but has yellow as a component to its make up, when white is added it compliments and cools while maintaining vibrancy.

## The Side Plane

The table appears cooler because of the addition the cerulean note, the side plane of the yellow block looks very warm.

I can clearly see the yellow influence but none of the other yellows would match the value and temperature of the existing color.

After scanning my palette then the blocks again I see the yellow warm influence and it has a green cast to it. I decided to paint over, or restate what I had done, which is now dry, with a Cad Yellow.

Cadmium Green Pale would be a good choice over that but also a lighten **Permanent Green Light**

You could also add **some yellow medium with white into the mixture.**

**The final warm green mixture** scumbled into the original note positively illuminates the side plane.

## Helpful Hints

If for some reason you couldn't use Viridian for the top plane you could have used Cerulean or warmed ultramarine blue with a small amount of yellow or pink to distinguish it from the top plane of the white block.

If after you've gained some experience you would prefer to bypass the layering process you can try putting down mixtures for your first notes for example you might have mixed lemon yellow with the slightest amount of Ultramarine Blue or Viridian and possibly white for the top planes starting note.

The result would not have been as vigorous or as saturated as a layered note but it will still have been effective.

You can choose how to add nuances to color spots by either resolving the mixture on your palette or adding a note directly on the mass self.

For instance if you had added the first mixture you created for the side note, permanent green light with white before realizing that it was too cool you could immediately scumble the yellow directly into the note itself.

## **The Blue Block**

Although the coolness of this particular Blue Block actually makes it's top plane appear comparatively warm the top plane doesn't have the pinkish quality that is ordinarily the result of direct light.

You do not want to make the top plain look too Green which is what could happen if you try to warm it with yellow so instead Cerulean which has enough yellow in it to warm the plane and not make it look to Sunny it gives the original ultramarine note the Warmer tendency we are aiming for.

You will see how I needed to adjust my values and that made a difference.

### **Side Planes**

We used Cobalt Blue as a starting note however, a Violet or a purple-blue could have been used giving the side plane the desired warmth.

If you see a situation where a shadow side is slightly lighter you can add a lightened Cobalt

You may choose not to visually break up the block too much as by exaggerating the change in color however the kind of decision depends on how heavy is the difference within the mass. I chose to add ultramarine to the darker more shadowed side leaving the face of it alone.

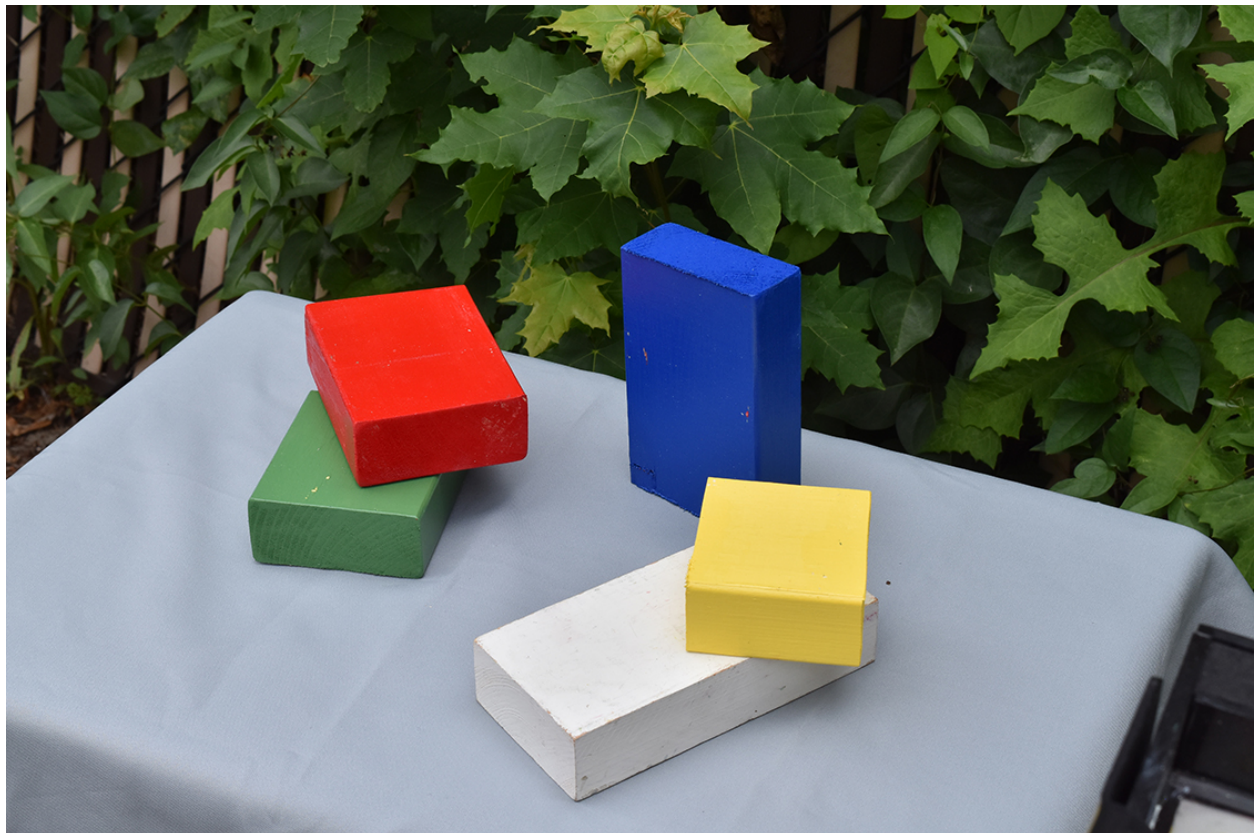
### **The Red Block**

**The top of the red block doesn't need to be changed at this time.**



Waiting until the final round you may see whether any new colors become apparent.

**The Side Note** now looks too bright and saturated. Adding any of the cool reds, red deep, cad red, Chinese red or even Alizarin Crimson which is what I used since it has the properties of both warm and cool. You will cool down the warmth without sacrificing richness of color leaving a vibration of warm cool red.





## **The Green Block**

Because the starting notes of the green block top plane still works, we'll leave it for now.

### **The Green Blocks Side Plane**

Is Permanent Green Light. It now looks too warm. Because green contains blue it will be fairly easy to cool it down.

Sort out your color options by looking at the note within the content of the whole composition and see that the Blue Block is more intensely blue when I compared it to the white block the green block side plain looks both cool and green you begin to see a purplish quality in the note so adding Violet will keep it rich and dark to match the starting note as soon as I put it down however I see that it should be warmer I add red to the Violet to create a warm purple.

## **Helpful Hints**

Either red Chinese red or cadmium Scarlet will warm the Violet it sufficiently as your sensitivity to color develops you'll eventually learn that each color has a capacity for a slightly different warming effect which will influence your color choices accordingly. Also, Here you can experiment with other possible color from the tube such as Purple Madder

## **The Grey Table**

The addition to the second round color notes has helped to see many nuances to the gray table along with strong influence there's quite a bit of warmth you could easily add a complimentary gray mixture of purple and yellow over the original Cerulean starting notes that it might be too dulling but if applied separately and carefully scumbled or dragged over each other without too much mixing this can still be vibrant.

To start scan the composition and see that the grey table purplish elements is more prominent at this point. Scumble Violet over the first color the resulting color Vibrance vibration is wonderful

## **Final Notes**

As in the sunny day study the final notes will tighten up the painting bringing the edges of the notes together will also assist you in your final color analysis as your visual perception becomes more accurate you will find that as you work on a paintings final notes you don't necessarily need to work in an orderly way from one block to the next

You might also be able to finish an entire Mass with two or three color spots before going on to another as you gain confidence your final decision will be based on your expertise rather than a rigid set of guidelines however because the first notes are based on and provide a foundation for the entire setup the procedure for the first and second notes should remain as is for the block studies

## **The Grey Table**

As you learn to see and interpret color you'll notice that big masses and large expanses are not flat or consistent.

As you did with the sunny day round objects you saw there were differences on the table near different objects as well as foreground to background.

Again, seeing subtle nuances like this are best done from life. The camera can't capture these in this kind of light.

I went in the middle area with a bit of ultramarine Blue to darken and cool down that spot.

These types of subtle changes will be addressed as we progress into Still Life, Landscape and Portrait.

I went in and at first tried some things for the tiny cast shadows. Approaching this a little more intellectually, along with what I see, under the red block I see a darker value than under the yellow. I also notice a warmer tone under the yellow. I used a violet blue mixture usually with manganese to start but the under the yellow block I added a little warmer violet red and then over it yellow ochre.

The green/blue block cast shadow I started with the violet/ Manganese but went into it with cerulean and yellow ochre/red light

## The Yellow Block

During this last round of notes as new colors have been added to other objects I noticed the more yellow feel opposed to orange feel so I go over the dried existing colors with a more saturated yellow than the top. This plane is actually could be receiving a little reflected light from the white block. To adequately define its value the resulting note must be darker than the top plane. You could mix cadmium yellow which is dark enough with its complement.

Scanning the mass again you see that it must remain warm but you don't want to neutralize the yellow too much mixing an Ultramarine blue into the cadmium yellow and use the mixture to resolve the side plane is one option. I chose to go over the side with the cad yellow straight from the tube and then take Cerulean a blue/green color to stumble over which also keeps the warmth, the correct value and denotes it's in shadow.

## **The Blue Block**

After comparing the Blue Block to the rest of the painting The darker side can appear more pinkish. The top plane's color choice looks fine but needs a value adjustment.

For the side, Permanent Rose it would be too pink and not quite cool enough for this application. Permanent magenta added to the one side could be a choice but I decided to use Ultramarine Blue to darken smaller side. This darkens without having to touch the facing side of the blue block.

There are many ways to go after this. Trying things is crucial to learning and fine tuning your ability to see the subtitles.

## **The Red Block**

Finalizing the edge of the masses helps see that the top plane of the Red Blocks should look redder or less pink since I started with a cool red deep adding yellow wood make it to strong to Orange and Alizarin Crimson would make it to Violity. I resolved it by adding warm Cad Scarlet.

This final note intensifies the color without sacrificing the individuality of the original starting note and

more accurately describes the Red Blocks local color.

Now that the majority of masses has been resolved the alizarin Crimson side plain the one facing away from the light looks too saturated.

I scanned the set up and see that it should be made darker and cooler because there were both warm and cool components in the alizarin Crimson either of The Two Reds cadmium scarlet and Chinese red will warm.

Because the cooler aspect of the red shade tends toward violet I will add Violet over the Alizarin Crimson matching the value of the previous note with white. Let a lot of alizarin show through and the vibration gives just the right color and temperature .

## **Helpful Hint:**

**Next time you work on a cloudy day painting you will know that you can blend a complimentary mixture into almost any of your starting notes purpose of this step-by-step lesson is to teach you to see when you need us to start with a doll version of a color without reducing its in**

**intensity to the point that you are putting down mud**

## **The Green Block**

The top mass of the green block is also showing some variation within itself the top plane looks lighter and warmer than the side plain so I add permanent green light to just slightly warm up the original Permanent Green/Viridian note.

The first side plane is now a middle tone as our side planes of all the other blocks since I also lightened the top plane when I warmed it I don't have to darken the side plane very much and I also don't want to negate its warmth I decide to try something new I will gently warm and darken the Viridian with a red complement. I used Alizarin Crimson. You could also use Cad Red, Red Deep or any red not too cool or not too warm.



## Helpful Hint:

**Scumbling permanent green light over the Viridian top plane maintains the richness of the original note. If you try to mix the Viridian with a warming element I would also have needed to add white Dulling and cooling it more than was necessary. Scumbling lets you retain greater control over your color especially its richness.**

## The Background

Taking what we've learned from the sunny day study we resolve the backgrounds

Permanent Magenta starting note by loosely scumbling it with one of our greens.

To correct the temperature of the green and maintain the Integrity of the plane you can add a little permanent magenta, a type of green compliment, into the green I keep this more slightly darker than the underpainting to create the illusion of texture to the grass.

## The Summary

Because we followed procedures that were established on the Sunny Day Block Studies

All the second notes in this exercise were based on the starting notes but since this time the starting notes were closer to the blocks local colors the second notes were used to enhance the atmosphere affect.

By seeking answers to a different set of visual problems we explore new color combinations.

We found that grayed and complementary mixtures provide an effective way to express the subtleties of a cloudy day and learned that a color has no single Identity or consistent function as we were able to use each one to solve a completely different set of problems.

By successfully completing a cloudy day study you will now be able to see a sunny day light affect with greater clarity. Every light key educates others and encourages you to paint the infinite variations of nature.