

Fun & Joy

Newsletter from YongChen.com

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Color Study Process

Color Study is a process of experimental color composition and value arrangement. It is especially helpful when you need to combine two or more reference pictures for a painting. For example, in my recent watercolor painting commission, my reference pictures were two photos of maple trees, and a picture of a morning scene of the house.

Here is my method for this color study in brief

Most often, I use red, blue and yellow, the three primary colors, most often, mixing them as needed for orange, green and purple. I also use burnt umber for brown and to tone down the other colors.



For this color study, I first did a simple drawing on 11 by 15 inch watercolor paper. Keep in mind, this is an experimental process. You will be exploring the color and value relationships between the major subjects in the painting, not addressing the details and small subjects.



Start from the main subject

I started by laying the basic wash on the house. Then I decided where the clouds would be and washed the sky area with

blue, leaving the space for the clouds untouched.



Add trees behind the house

I made the trees in various colors. You might worry that there could be too many different colors, but go ahead and try. I laid in the colors for the trees and moved away. I don't stay in one area for too long, especially in the beginning stages.

Cover the front of the house

I mixed yellow and blue with a bit of red for a warm green for the front yard grass, then mixed burnt umber and blue for the warm gray for the driveway and the road.



Add darker colors to trees

I added darker colors to the trees on the left, middle and the right. I also lightened some areas by lifting off color with a clean brush. This gives the trees dimension and depth.

Second round on the house

I wanted to add a yellow-colored tree in front of the house, so I first lifted off some color at the right of the house, then worked some yellow into the area.



Final adjustment

I increased the definition by introducing darker color lines and shape. To make an area warmer, I add a thin red layer of glaze onto it.



Things to remember:

1) Stay away from going into detailed rendering. 2) Always focus on the overall color composition and value arrangement.

To learn more about this color study, come to our web site to view a [quick movie of this painting process](#).

■ This demonstration is provided by Yong Chen. For more painting technique demonstrations, please visit our [online learning center](#).

Suggestions



Design elements in a landscape painting

Original painting by Kai Chen
Suggestions by Yong Chen

Here are what I consider to be the issues for this watercolor landscape painting:

Breaking the hard lines

If you look closely at this painting, there is a big "X" in the middle of the design. It is too hard, as it draws your attention to the area where these two lines intersect. This element needs to be a secondary element. My first suggestion for improvement: break the "X" and push the background back, by moving the line of the mountain on the right higher.

Create a deeper sky

I would also suggest making the sky deeper and richer. To do this, paint a thin layer of blue glaze in the sky area.

Give the foreground more attention

By making the two strokes of ski tracks on the snow darker, they will appear to be deeper. This color contrast will bring more attention to the foreground.

Final touches

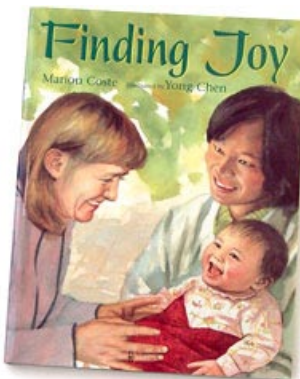
There are three areas

I would suggest that could use some final attention. By giving each of these areas a thin layer of glaze, focal points are separated and more interest is added. On the mountain at the upper left, add a blue glaze, to make it recede more. Add a blue-gray glaze to make the shadow on the mountain at the right deepening the shadow. Adding a bit of yellow at the front will make the foreground more interesting.

■ For the full version of this critique, visit: www.yongchen.com/suggestions



What's New



Yong Chen's new children's picture book – "Finding Joy" is available online and in your local bookstores now! This new children's book is written by Marion Coste. Yong brings the story to life with 13 full-color watercolor paintings. Illustrating this picture book has been an adventure for Yong, requiring a trip to China to trace the steps of the story. "Finding Joy" is published by Boyd's Mills Press.

Where can you buy this children's book?

You can buy this book from your local bookstore or from one of these online websites:
www.amazon.com, www.barnesandnoble.com

■ Be sure to visit YongChen.com/findingjoy.htm to view the illustrations.

Instructions to Submit Materials for Critique

Send an email to:
critique@yongchen.com

In your email, please state clearly your name, your age, and the medium of your art work. You must attach a digital picture of your artwork in JPG format (no smaller than 300 pixels by 200 pixels). The image you submit must be of an original work of art created solely by yourself.

We thank you in advance for your interest in our critique service, but we must also apologize because we simply can't critique every entry submitted. We do reserve the right to display all submitted works on our site without compensation or notification; however, you as the artist will receive full credit for works used on our site.

About the Artist: Yong Chen

Born in China, Yong Chen developed an interest in art at the early age of 4. A natural artist with a superb eye for beauty, Yong has been teaching painting techniques since the age of 13.

After graduating from college in China and teaching high school art for five years, Yong moved to Boston and studied illustration at the Massachusetts College of Art. Starting soon after his graduation until 1998, Yong taught Watercolor Painting, Watercolor Portraiture classes and workshops at the Massachusetts College of Art and Rivier College. Since then, Yong has been a successful graphic artist and corporate branding expert as well as a children's book illustrator. His published works include *Finding Joy*, *Miz Fannie Mae's Fine New Easter Hat*, *Starfish Summer*, *Swimming with Sharks*, and *Maria's Loose Tooth*.

Yong has also had several solo exhibits of his original artwork in Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

In addition to painting and teaching, Yong works with fellow artists to promote their works in the global marketplace through www.worldgalleryonline.com.

To learn more about Yong Chen, we invite you to visit www.yongchen.com/chen