



Let your images sing with color

Tutorial: Painting and coloring with Corel Painter

Take a stroll round an art gallery and look at the painted portraits.

Look closely. Very closely.

You'll discover an intricate world of many colors, and of seemingly abstract brushstroke textures and shapes. As you draw away from the artwork, forms emerge, the subject is revealed. You become aware of only the essence of the subject, completely losing sight of the many colors that make up the illusion of three-dimensional representation.

How do the richness and depth of those colors and tonal values compare to those in color photographs? The difference is striking. The painted colors and tones extend dramatically beyond those in photographs. Therein lies the power of paintings.

With Corel Painter 8 software, you can

give that power to your photographs.

There's nothing wrong with working with only the colors in your original photograph. The key questions in planning a painting are how best to convey the representation of three-dimensional masses on a two-dimensional canvas (form), and how best to evoke the emotion you desire. Form and emotion are conveyed primarily through the use of tonal contrast, vibrant color combinations, or a combination of tone and color.

A *tonalist* approach to painting a photograph would include reducing the color saturation (or intensity) and the spectral range of the colors in the original, while selectively increasing the light-dark contrasts around the focal point of the image. A *colorist* approach would include adding colors that are not present in the original photograph and preserving the relative tonal values as you work with selective color contrast.

Most of my work falls in the latter

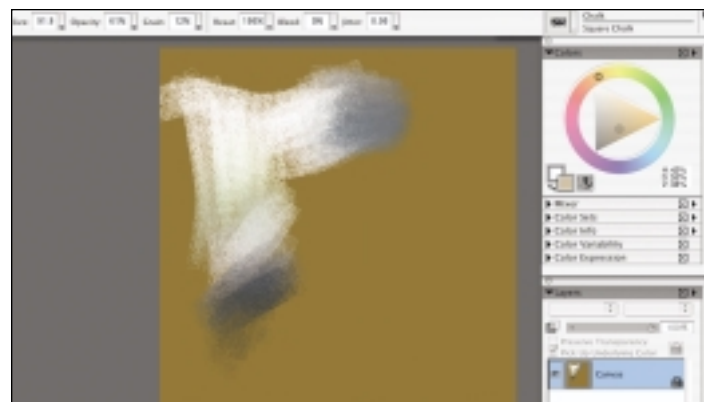
category, but even if you prefer a more subdued color scheme, the color principles expressed here are applicable.

I start the process by stepping back to study my source image. Here, it's a photograph of musician Todd Gilbert that I took in Half Moon Bay, Calif. How does this picture speak to me? What story do I wish to share? In this case I wanted to emphasize the soul and passion with which Todd plays music, so I would focus on his expression and the feel of his music. Now I open the source photo in Painter, and chose File>Clone to make a duplicate image. I immediately rename the new image without the default appellation Clone of...; I use sequential numbers to identify successive versions of the copy.

Before applying any brush strokes, I select a burnt umber from the image to be the ground or undercoat to which I will add highlights, shadows and other colors. Holding



Begin by making a clone copy of the original photograph.



Applying the Square Chalk brush variant using Clone Color.

down opt/alt temporarily changes the brush into an eye dropper, providing the clone color icon is not checked. Now I hit cmd/ctrl-F and fill the canvas with the burnt umber color.

Initially, I make large, almost abstract grainy brush strokes with colors in the original photograph. I select the Square Chalk brush from the Chalks brush category using the Brush Selector in the upper right corner of the Painter interface. I click on the Clone Color icon (it looks like Photoshop's Rubber Stamp icon) located below the color wheel in the Colors palette. With Clone Color active, the color wheel is grayed out so that now the color is determined by the clone source. I make a test brush stroke, then adjust the size and opacity of the brush accordingly. I select a relatively large brush and medium opacity. The numerical values of the opacity you choose will vary according to the source image, so experiment until you get a result that suits you.

After roughly sketching out the main regions of the image with the large Square Chalk, I reduce the size of the brush and start working in more detail on the face, hands and guitar. Now I select the Soft Cloner brush variant from the Cloners brush category and subtly clone in some of the original photograph in the face region.

I want to add some limited color

accents, particularly around the main focal point of the painting, the face. I use a small Sargent variant from the Artists category.

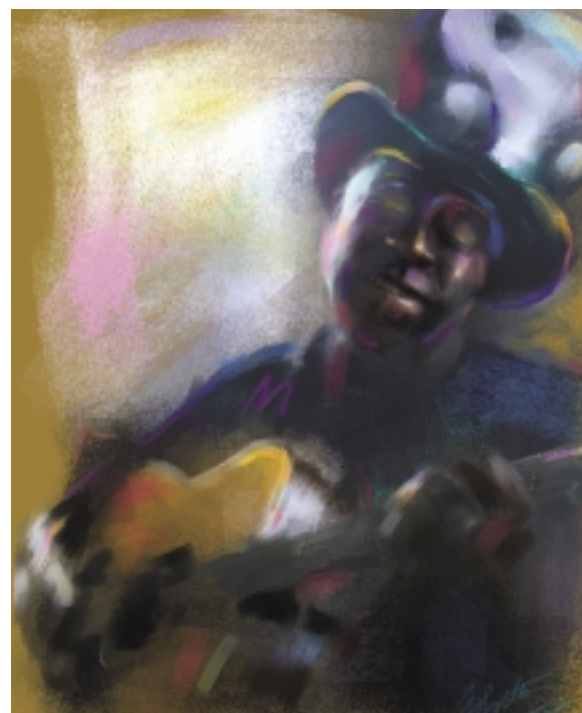
I tend to add small patches of each color in several places around the canvas to create a subtle resonance. My choice of accent colors is intuitive, though I tend to use complementary or analogous colors from the yellow/orange/red and the green/blue portions of the color wheel (complementary colors are opposite each other on the color wheel, analogous colors are adjacent). In all cases I am sensitive to the perceived tonal value of colors I add. If you are unsure about the tonal value of a color, you can temporarily turn your picture into a grayscale (black-and-white) image by selecting Effects>Tonal Control>Adjust Colors, and setting the Saturation slider to 0. The patches where the tonal value is not working in your image will usually jump out at you. Hit cmd/ctrl-Z to return to full color.

Adding color can be scary! I encourage you to take risks and experiment. You can always scale back the color as close to the original as you wish. Here, I use the Grainy Water variant in the Blenders category to soften and subdue some of the color accents.

My final touches are to clone back in some of an earlier version of the painting. This is an advantage of regularly saving

Materials List

- Corel Painter 8 software (www.corel.com/painter)
- Wacom Platinum Intuos2 6x8 graphics tablet (www.coolgraphicstuff.com/jeremysutton.html, use coupon code Jeremy)
- Macintosh/Windows computer with at least 128MB RAM.



"Strummin"



Adding some color accents with Artists>Sargent brush variant.



Smearing color accents with the Blenders Grainy Water brush variant.

sequentially numbered versions of your image as you paint. You can then reopen any earlier version and manually assign it to be the done source (File>Clone Source), then use Cloners>Soft Cloner to gently bring back some of that stage.

In "Strummin'," the color accents draw attention to Todd's face and expression. They also help convey the mood of his beautiful music. Color is the vibration of electromagnetic radiation, just like sound is the vibrations of the air—color can literally allow your imagery to sing. That is my goal when painting.

Exploring color

Here is a painting titled "Precious," a portrait of two very special people in my life, Lisa Evans and her daughter Quinn. The portrait is based on a photograph that captured a beautiful, precious moment. As you can see from the before and after, the painting brings out and emphasizes warmth, vitality and feeling beyond what was captured in the original photograph.

In this case my use of color is not as isolated accents, but is applied throughout the image to bring out luminance and warmth in the skin tones (particularly in the shadows) and the effect of sunlight in the hair.

Seeing Color

Working with color starts with seeing and feeling color. For that reason, I recommend that you visit an art gallery or art museum, choose an artwork that moves you and that you find inspiring and beautiful, and then spend 15 to 30 minutes just looking at the painting.

Think about what story this artwork is telling. What attracts you to it? How has the artist conveyed mood, emotion and power in this piece of art?

Go right up to the painting and examine how the artist has applied his paint. Study the thickness, length, texture, direction, rhythm and movement of his brushstrokes.

Can you see the way he's built up the

image, the way he's achieved the illusion of form, of mass? Look at the painting from afar and observe carefully the basic shapes and blocks of tone and color and the use of color temperature (warm/cool lights and shadows).

Look at the darkest and lightest parts of the painting and see how many colors are in those areas. Look at the skin and eyes and see how they have been rendered, the level of detail used. How has the artist guided your eye around the picture?

When you make your next painting take some time to observe it and ask yourself the same questions. □

Jeremy Sutton is an internationally renowned artist, author and educator. His most recent publications are "Painter's Creativity: Digital Artist's Handbook" (Focal Press), and "Painter Creativity for Professional Portrait and Wedding Photographers," a four-DVD Tutorial Set (PhotoVision). Visit www.paintercreativity.com for info about Sutton's seminars and books.

See Jeremy Sutton's presentation, "Transform Your Photographs with Painter," on Monday, July 26 at Imaging USA.

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Left: Original photograph by Jeremy Sutton of Lisa Evans and her daughter Quinn. Above: "Precious."