Color Theory and the Venetian School
Lesson Plan
College Level

Summary

Painters of the Venetian school were known for their understanding and manipulation of color. Structural analysis of paintings by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, El Greco, and Tintoretto reveal layers of colors that were glazed, scumbled, balanced, and juxtaposed to achieve a variety of effects. Apply the principles of color theory to works of the Venetian school by observing the relative contrast of various paint mixtures applied over colored grounds and copying a portion of a painting. This lesson teaches the technical art history and theory of color to college students interested in studio art, art conservation, and art history.
Objectives

_Students will be able to:_

- Identify Venetian school painters, methods, and techniques
- Gain an overview of color theory
- Observe and articulate types of color contrasts
- Copy a painting based on an understanding of color theory

Lesson Outline

- Powerpoint introduction to history, methods and materials of the Venetian school of painters
- Lecture on the properties of color and color theory
- Interaction of color activity
- Painting activity
- Discussion/presentation

Activities

- Cut several small squares of acetate for each student. Ask students to mix several colors that vary by hue, value, and intensity and paint swatches on each piece of acetate. Invite them to try open brushwork, dry brushing, and other techniques to simulate the methods of the Venetian painters. Using these custom-made swatches, allow students to experiment overlaying color onto various grounds and ask them to note how their perceptions of the swatches change in the context of different grounds and other swatches.
- Ask the students to copy a portion of a Venetian School painting, keeping in mind that the ground and surrounding colors influence each area of color that they attempt to imitate.
- Invite students to share paint/ground combinations and copies of paintings and articulate the types of contrasts and variations that they observed.

Materials

Color-aid® paper
Precision knives
Rubber cement glue
Oil paint
Paper palettes
Paintbrushes
Acetate pad
Canvas paper pre-primed with a red ochre, yellow ochre, and neutral dark mixture
Printed reproductions of paintings by Tiepolo, El Greco, and Tintoretto
Resources

Internet Resources:

Video: Capturing the Relativity of Color

Color Theory Overview and Tutorials by Worqx.com

"El Greco Historical Reconstruction" on the Kress Reconstruction Website

"Domenico Tintoretto Virtual Reconstruction" on the Kress Reconstruction Website

Books and Articles:


