

Christian School Finals Competition

What Catches Your Eye?

December 2010

by Darlene Gaskill



CSFC Event Highlight – Art 300-499

What is it about a painting that catches your eye? What causes you to connect with one particular piece of art over others? This answer, of course, will vary from individual to individual. Thus, it becomes the quest of artists to connect with and cause viewers to experience their thoughts as expressed through a piece of art.

Christian School Finals Competition provides a wide array of art events (300-499) allowing students numerous venues to demonstrate their abilities and mastery of different techniques and mediums. The art events span painting, computer art, design projects, pottery and more. A complete list of all the art events available at Competition is available in the 2011 Competition Handbook.

Addressing the painting events, Darlene Gaskill, Oral Roberts University art professor, discusses observations from her years of service at CSFC and provides some helpful tips for artists.

When grading classroom projects or judging art at CSFC, I look mainly at the following four basic criteria (1) creativity, (2) elements, principles and expression, (3) craftsmanship and technique and (4) focus. I find students often concentrate their efforts in only one or two of the above areas. However, it is the combination of all the criteria that makes a painting stand out. Let's take a closer look.

CREATIVITY

There are many ways that a piece of art can catch the eye—great contrast, color harmonies used expressively or centers of interest that make the eye travel to name just a few. One of the things that we, as judges, look at in art entries is whether or not we can make sense of an art piece. With paintings, one of the best ways to ensure that others will be able to interpret your composition is to paint something from your world. If this seems difficult, start by painting a picture you took of a landscape in your area. You will notice your painting is influenced by your familiarity with the landscape. When painting from your own experiences, the potential for your painting to connect with a viewer increases significantly.

Because you are painting from your world, you should be more



comfortable with your content. This will provide the freedom to take a few risks. Be creative. Try some new materials; be willing to experiment and to make changes. As long as your painting meets the criteria in the CSFC guidelines, it will not be rejected. Use the critique received as a stepping stone to spring forward to a new piece and find your own style.

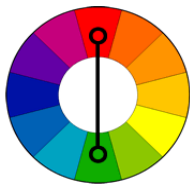
ELEMENTS-PRINCIPLES-EXPRESSION

The areas I see in Competition painting entries that could use some added attention are color harmony, perspective and proportion. Let's take a quick look at each of these areas.

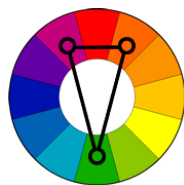
Color Harmony

The basic techniques for combining colors include complementary, analogous and triad. Of course there are other harmonies, but these are the basics, and to start I would suggest limiting the color palettes in your paintings.

Complementary colors are opposite each other on the color wheel such as red and green. Complimentary colors create high contrast, add vibrancy and work well if you want something to stand out. A variation of this color scheme that is less jarring and often easier for beginners uses the base color and the two colors adjacent to its complement. An **analogous color** scheme uses colors that are next to each other on the color wheel. These colors match well, are often found in nature and have a calming effect. A **triadic color** scheme uses colors that are spaced evenly around the color wheel. This color harmony tends to be vibrant as well. When using this color harmony, be sure that your colors are balanced—use one dominant color and the other two colors as accents.



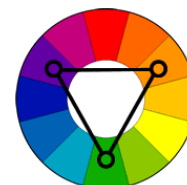
Complementary



**Complementary
Variation**



Analogous



Triadic

Source: www.tigercolor.com

Perspective in art involves creating depth on a flat surface. This is often a difficult area for beginners; however, proper perspective will make your painting appear realistic and accurate which will make your artwork more appealing to the viewer. For Competition, we are looking for your painting to demonstrate some skill using overlapping, linear perspective, atmospheric, aerial or one or two point perspective.

Proportion in art covers the relationship of elements to each other and to the whole. Often proportion is not even noticed until something is out of proportion, such as a head too large for the body. When the relationship between the elements in your artistic piece is correct the relationship is considered harmonious. In striving to create proportion in your painting, remember that completely equal divisions between all objects can create monotony while very unequal division will create a lack of harmony. Aim for subtle differences among elements that are not so great as to appear out of harmony but not so similar that they become boring.

CRAFTSMANSHIP and TECHNIQUE

While you are encouraged to be creative, skill must be demonstrated in your choice and control of the mediums you choose. Do the materials you have chosen work together to produce the desired effect? Do all your elements come together to make a unified whole? Does your finished project demonstrate neatness, care and professionalism?

FOCUS

Beginning on page 54 of the 2011 Competition Handbook, there are many guidelines for the art events. There are specific guidelines about framing, matting and hanging as well as required project information and judging criteria for each event. A focused art project is one in which the artist has followed all the guidelines, not just the principles of art but all of the instructions for the project. This is also a criterion I consider when grading student projects at a collegiate level. It is necessary to know and adhere to the Competition Handbook guidelines completely. Following these guidelines will keep your wonderful piece of artistic expression from being disqualified.

It is always exciting to see the art entries each year. When starting your projects this year, take the time to evaluate your project at different intervals through the four criteria provided above. You will find they will keep you focused and on your way to creating eye-catching paintings!

Bio: Darlene Gaskill received a B.A. in Art Education from Northeastern Illinois University and a M.A. at Oral Roberts University. Mrs. Gaskill teaches art at ORU and has assisted with the Art events at CSFC for many years. Mrs. Gaskill has a heart for seeing students achieve their artistic goals. If you have questions about art or the Art program at ORU, you may contact Mrs. Gaskill at dgaskill@oru.edu.



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