

Using clear values and shapes

Take a look at the boxes below, then compare them with the one at the right.

Do you see any difference?

Yep, the ones below appear three-dimensional – enough to stick your hand through – while the box at right seems flat and static.

The difference is the boxes below show clear intention of value range and shapes. We employ this illusion of space in our painting when we are clear about values and shapes.



Unconvincing 3-D space



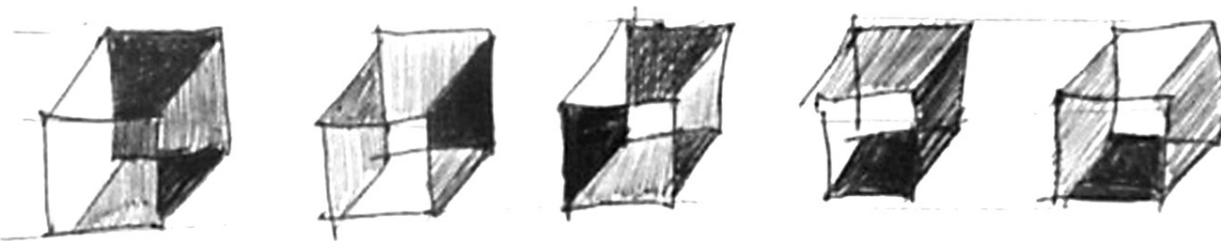
Value scale:

Before using any value or color, ask: Which value do I intend to indicate?

The illusion of 3-D space



The magic of the illusion? The effect is convincing no matter how you arrange different values and shapes – just as long as you are clear about it.



Near-endless possibilities: In addition to being an optical illusion that works in any configuration, the combinations are nearly endless, especially when you factor in the variable of color.



As compositional tool: Whenever you create a thumbnail sketch before painting, apply the same idea to values and shapes in your composition.

