

Glaze excerpt from:
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CHAPTER FIVE

OIL PAINT APPLICATION

As with objects, values and colors, different methods of applying oil paint are often treated as individual elements in a composition and thus manipulated during the foundation stage of the work.

This chapter will introduce a few common types of paint application that, for practical use in the exercises, will be grouped into three simple categories:

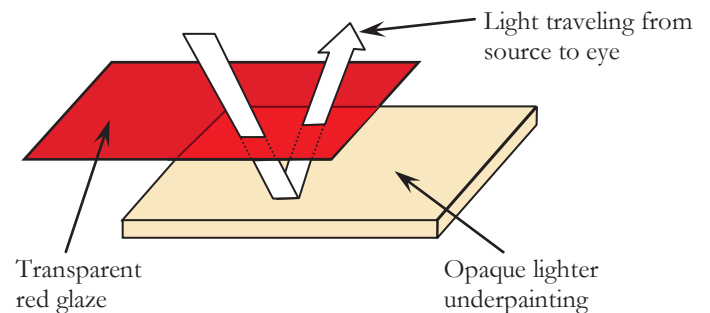
- Glazing
- Scumbling
- Thick textures

After these categories are introduced, variations and combinations as well as illusions and flexibility will be discussed. At the end of the chapter, exercises are included to demonstrate how the various paint application elements can be manipulated as separate elements in a flexible foundation for a multiple pattern composition.

GLAZING

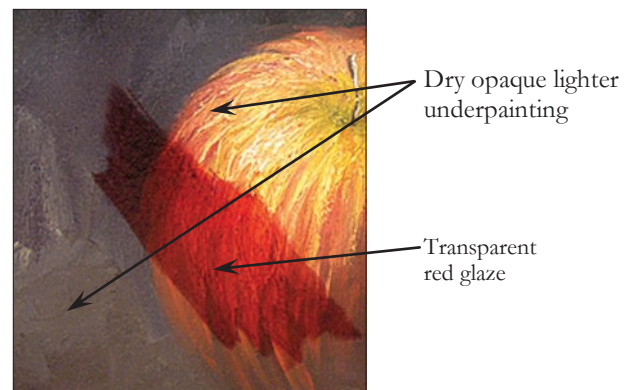
In its simplest form, a **glaze** is a thin, oily, transparent layer of bright color spread over the top of a lighter, opaque, dry underpainting. The underpainting is visible beneath the glaze. Light travels through the transparent glaze and is reflected back off the lighter opaque underpainting.

A glaze will often appear as a rich glowing color. In the diagram to the right, the red layer represents a glaze placed over the top of a lighter underpainting. The wide white arrow represents the light's path from the light source to the viewer's eye.



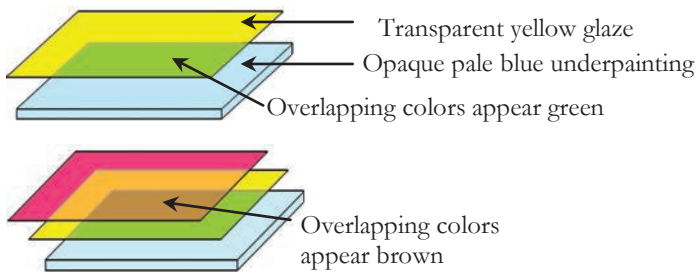
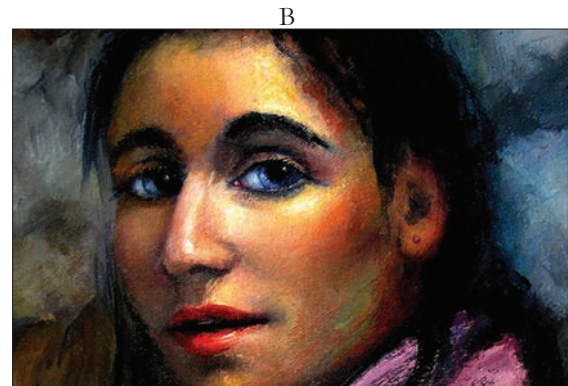
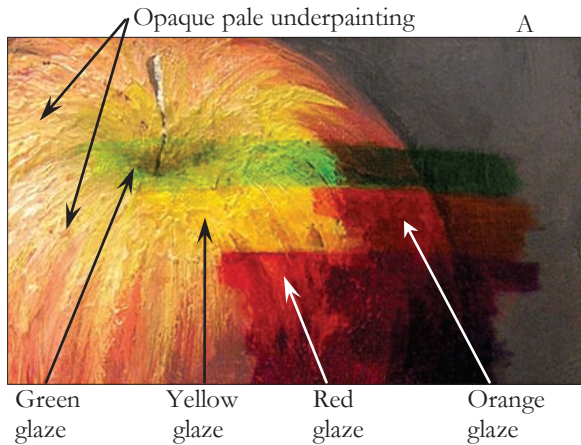
Light travels from the source down through the transparent red glaze. It is then reflected off the lighter opaque underpainting and back out through the glaze to the viewer's eye. To the viewer it appears that the light is emanating from beneath the glaze. This causes a glowing effect similar to looking at a white wall behind a sheet of red cellophane. This typical glazed look can be seen in the painting demonstration to the right.

Keep in mind that this is a printed sheet of paper. The images provided here only approximate the true look of oil paint. Make every effort to view real paintings.



Rarely is an entire painting glazed a single color. An artist can choose any combination of colors, either placed side by side or layered one on top of another.

In (A) below, four different colored glazes were placed side by side. Notice the details of the underpainting are visible beneath the transparent glazes. An artist can choose what color to use for each particular place in the painting. In (B) many different colored glazes were used on the girl's face.



When glazes are used, the colors in all visible layers appear combined. The colors are not physically mixed, since the paint is left to dry before each successive glaze is applied. They appear combined to the eye merely because the glazed colors are transparent.

In the top diagram to the left, light is reflected off a pale blue underpainting then back out through a single yellow glaze. The viewer will see a combination of the two colors, green. In the lower diagram to the left, a brown is achieved by layering red and yellow glazes on a blue underpainting.



When glazing, variations in oil content can be as significant as changes in color. The more oil the artist adds to the paint, the more transparent the glaze. Less oil, or a greater amount of pigment, makes the layer less transparent and the underpainting less visible. There is no “correct” amount of oil. The amount depends entirely on the effect the artist desires at each particular place in the painting.

Look at the demonstration to the left. At the top (C) the red glaze is almost too dense for the underpainting to show through and is barely considered a glaze. Near the center (D) the traditional rich red glow appears. At the bottom (E) the oil content is so high, it barely has an effect on the underpainting at all. An artist can choose one of the extremes or any of the countless options in between.