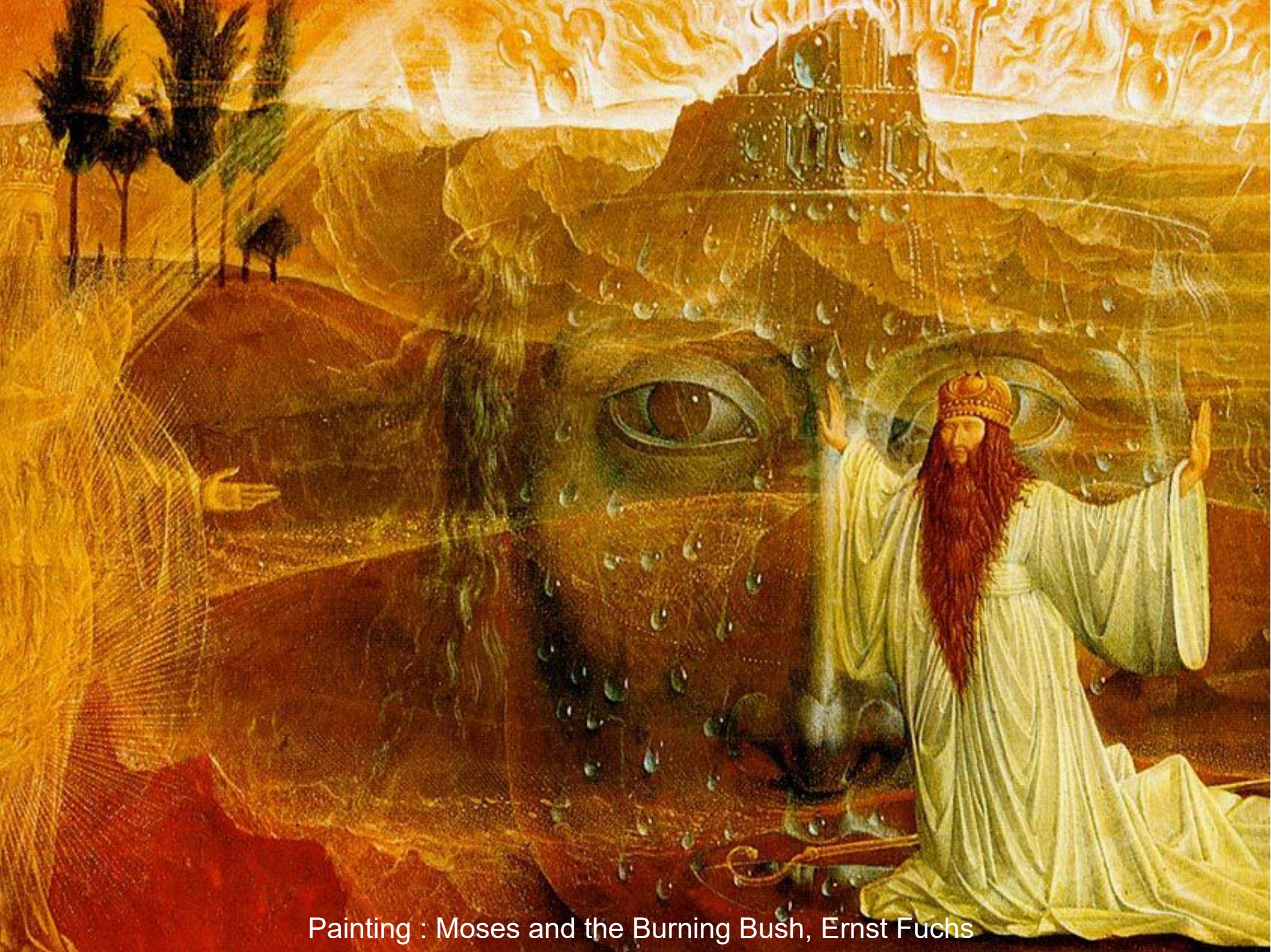


A detailed painting of a king with a long red beard and a golden crown, standing in a landscape with a city in the background. A large, stylized eye is positioned above him, and raindrops are falling from the sky.

Part One

An Introduction to Mischtechnik (and variants)

Daniel Mirante



Painting : Moses and the Burning Bush, Ernst Fuchs

Mischtechnik means :
mixed technique

Modern meaning in visionary art:

A particular sequence of coloured glazes and white value-modelling: e.g Red imprimatura, white egg tempera, yellow glaze, white egg tempera, blue glaze, white egg tempera, local glazes.

**Painting: Cherubim by
Ernst Fuchs**



Contemporary History

The term
'*mischtechnik*' gained
popularity after Max
Doerner's 1921 book
*'The Materials of the
Artist and Their Use
in Painting: With
Notes on the
Techniques of the
Old Masters.'*



Doerner's 'mixed technique': On the white or colored ground, the background composition is drawn in, then applied in tempera.

Then follows a more transparent glaze with oil paint. Then white highlights follow, then colours, again painted over with translucent or semi-opaque oil varnishes.

The finer details are painted directly with emulsive media. The "mixed media" is thus a layered painting with emulsion, oil paints and oleo-resinous glazes.

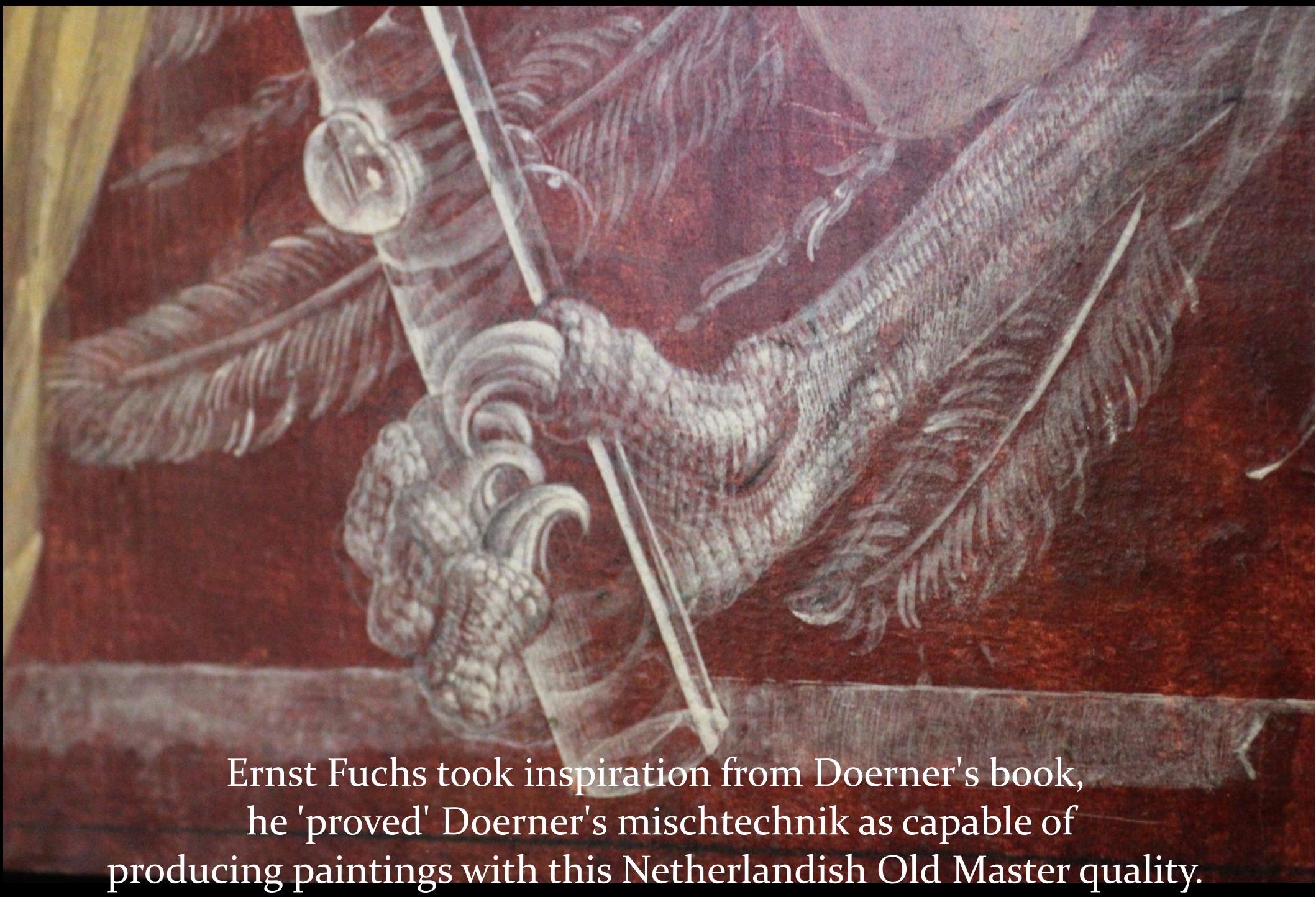
For Doerner his method was the only possible explanation for the finest details and the "optical gray" of the old masters.

Doerner's mixed media: The gummy myth

<http://pookerart.de/kunstblog/2011/12/kritik-doerner-malmaterial/>



Encouraged by the advice of *Paris Von Guttersloh*, professor at the Vienna Academy of Fine Art, the young artist *Ernst Fuchs* attempted to reconstruct Flemish technique following Doerners' theories.



Ernst Fuchs took inspiration from Doerner's book,
he 'proved' Doerner's mischtechnik as capable of
producing paintings with this Netherlandish Old Master quality.





Above, Laurence Caruana, Gerald Dureau and Andrew Gonzalez, with Moritz (Fuchs son) with Ernst Fuchs in the background working.

Through Fuchs to Mati Klarwein, De Es Schwertberger, and Robert Venosa and more. Students of Fuchs from the 1970's organized movements and became teachers of the technique, such as Brigid Marlin.

Another wave of apprentices were involved in the intimate work of the Klagenfurt Chapel of the Apocalypse. These include director of the Academy of Visionary Art **Laurence Caruana, Oleg Korolev, Amanda Sage, A. Andrew Gonzalez, Kuba Ambrose.** Later, Timea Tallian and **Daniel Mirante** assisted Fuchs at his Palais Palfy atelier.

The technique has continued to spread through a branching tree of lineage.

Mischtechnik
can be classified
as an '**indirect**
painting
technique'.

Indirect painting involves procedures in which the final effects in a picture are built up gradually by placing several layers of paint, one over the other, the upper layers modifying, but not altogether concealing, the lower layers.



This contrasts with direct painting methods, such as '*alla prima*' (Italian, meaning at first attempt).

Alla prima is a painting technique, used mostly in oil painting, in which layers of wet paint are applied to previous layers of wet paint.

The artist applies each stroke of paint to the canvas, usually on a white ground, with the intention of letting it stand in the picture as part of the final statement or else be covered by a further opaque application of paint.

Basic comparisons

Direct painting

- Usually painted on white ground
- Wet in wet techniques
- Colours and values treated simultaneously
- No under-painting
- Typically a fast method

Indirect painting

- Use of imprimatura
- Under-painting
- Separation of value and colour
- Consecutive transparent layers of paint
- A slow method

Mischtechnik is a technique involving *glazing* and *scumbling*

Glazing is "*A very thin transparent color layer which is darker in value than the layer over which it is applied.*"

A scumble is, "*A very thin opaque layer of paint which is usually lighter in value than the layer over which it is applied.*"

-Ralph Mayer, The Artist's Handbook of Materials and Techniques.

What is the difference in result between building up a painting through glazing compared to painting it directly?

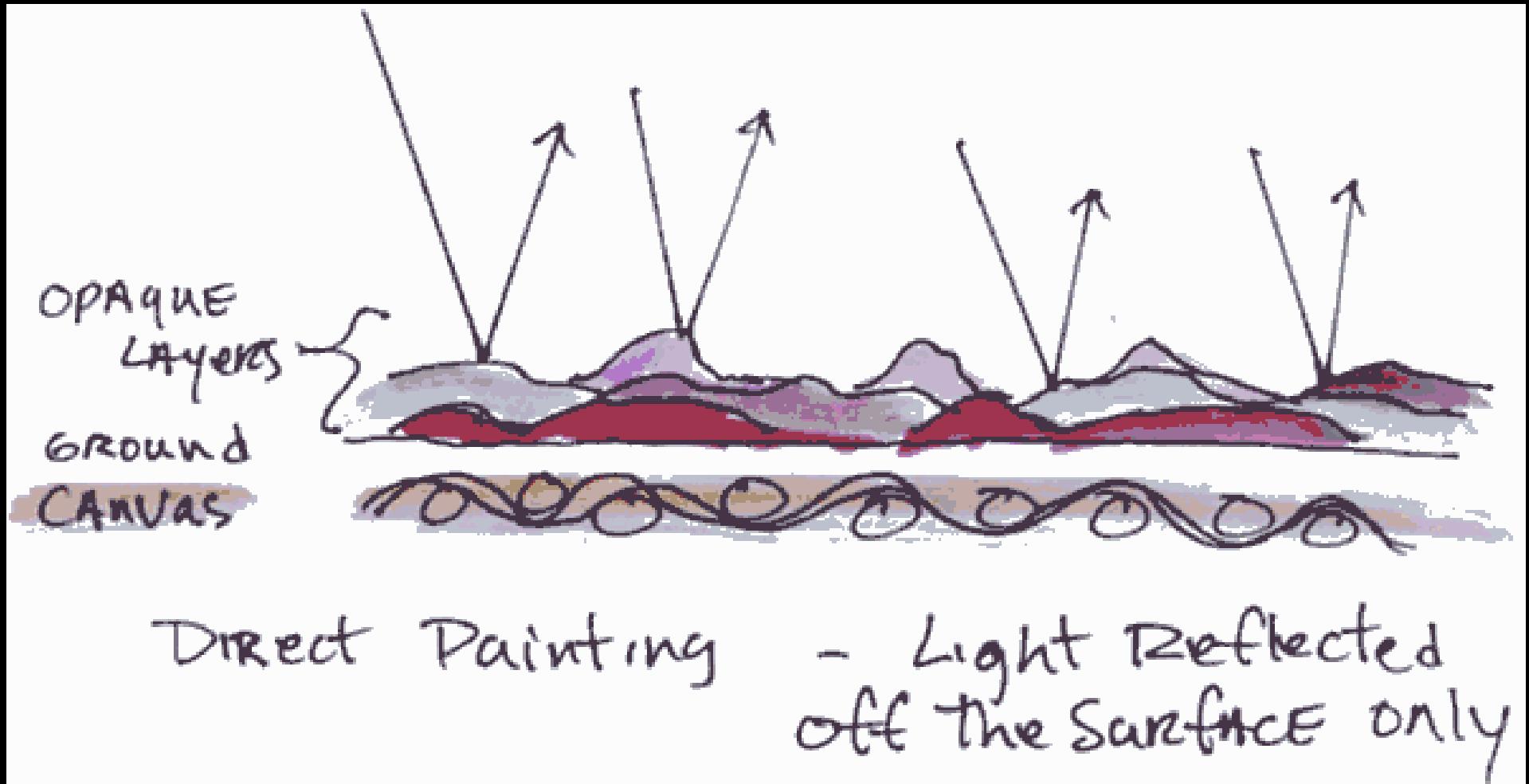
The answer is in the way light is absorbed or reflected by the surface of the painting, giving impression of depth, luminosity, etc...

For instance...

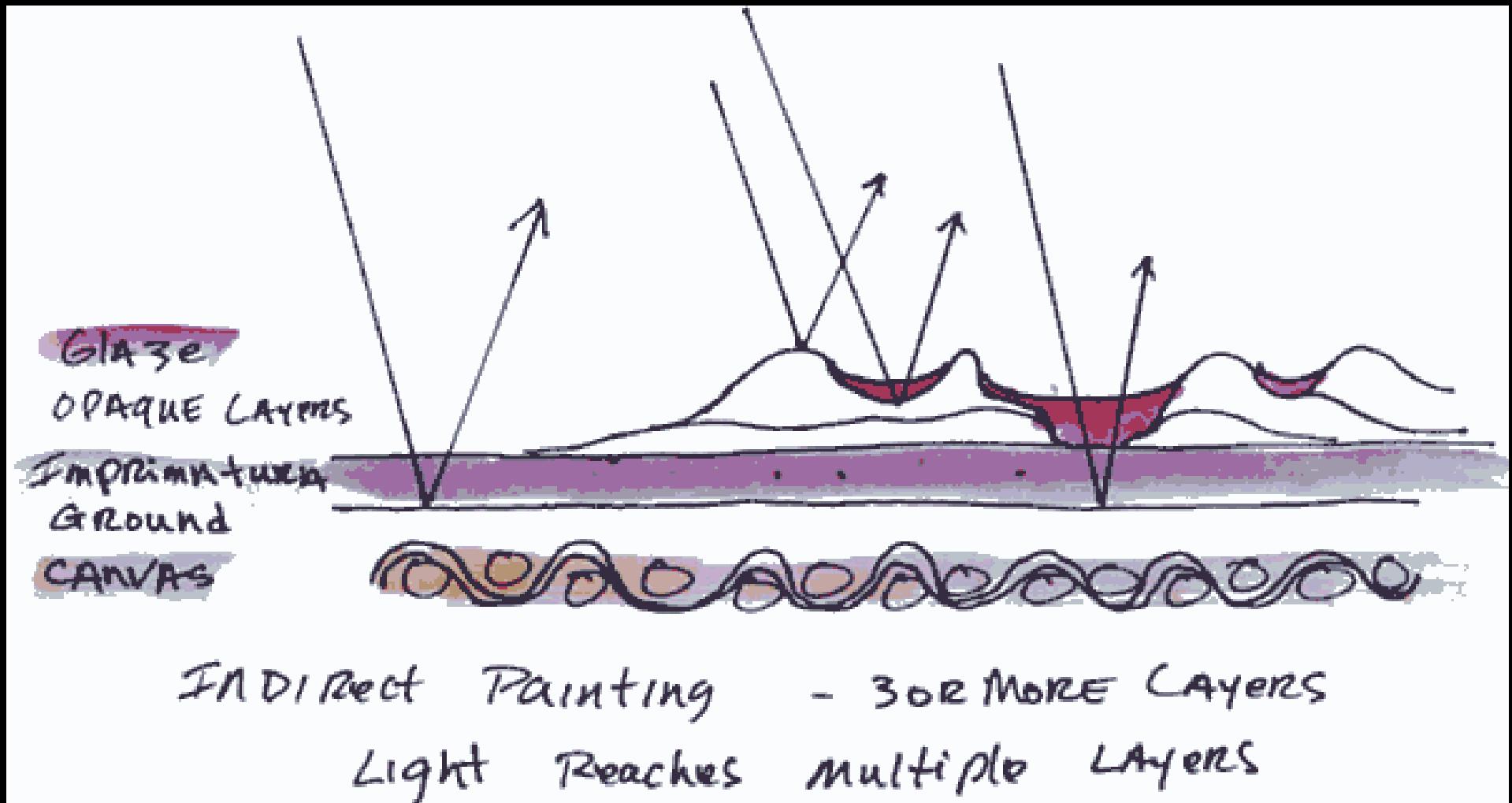
Think of a painting that creates a dark area (like a cave or night sky) by several layers of glaze that absorb different wave-lengths of light, compared to coating the surface of the canvas with a thick layer of black oil paint.

The eye may judge the 'glazed darkness' as a depth. Whereas a thick layer of opaque paint, the eye detects it, sees it for what it is - a black film of paint on a canvas.

Direct painting – light reflects off surface layer of opaque paint



Indirect painting – light reaches through multiple layers of translucent paint (glazes)



Glazes thus "eat" light.

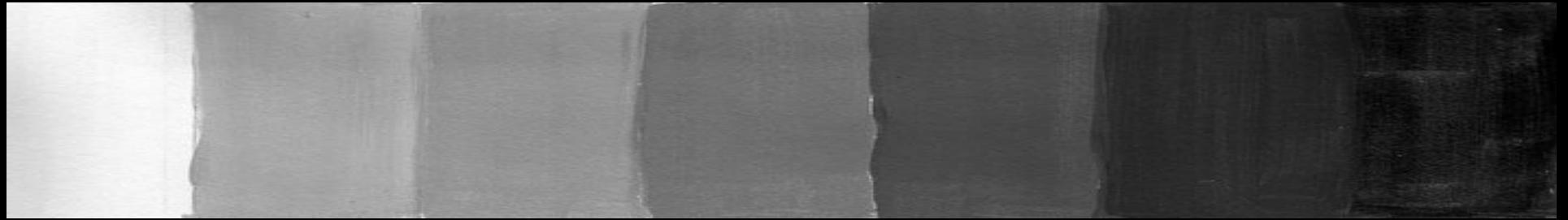
But because they are also semi-transparent, this allows light to reflect back from the whites in the underpainting. Glazed paintings are thus partially 'lit from behind'.

Process

"Basically, the Mischtechnik creates a painting through alternating layers of white in a water-based medium (specifically egg tempera or casein) and coloured glazes in an oleo-varnish medium. It is a "misch" (mixed) technique because of the alternating use of water and oil based mediums. It is a "layered" approach to painting, as opposed to "a la prima" which tends to complete a painting (or section thereof) in one sitting."

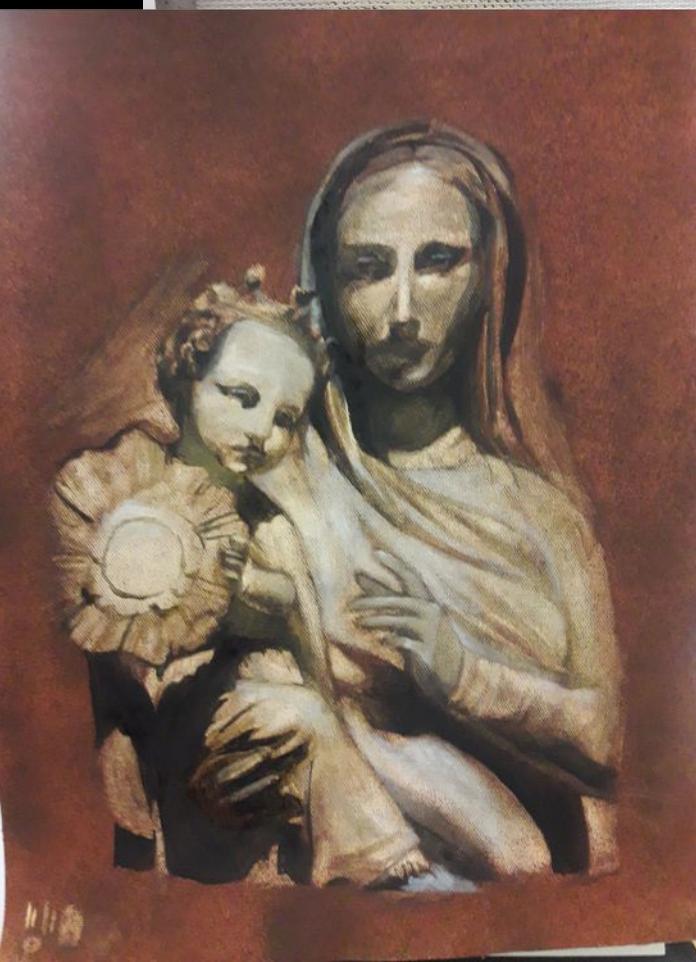
-Laurence Caruana

We start with
UNDERPAINTING



UNDERPAINTING Is an exploration of VALUES (White, midtones, black)

In this painting technique we break down the painting into first a consideration of sculptural values of light and dark and the midtones.



The underpainting in mischtechnik is created through the principle of

OPTICAL GRAYS

This is where the canvas is toned a deep midtone and then whites are used in various intensity from opaque to transparent to describe the highlights and midtones.

Underpainting on midtone –
artist :Jason Morning





After the form is described with optical grays then it is also possible to work up from the darkest values to the midtone.

The midtone of the imprimatura is a bridge between the whites and the darks (usually raw umber + mars black)

Mischtechnik as demonstrated by Brigid Marlin



Red imprimatura (imprimatura - 'first stain') with Indian ink cartoon showing through, then modelled with white tempera, then glazed with cadmium yellow.







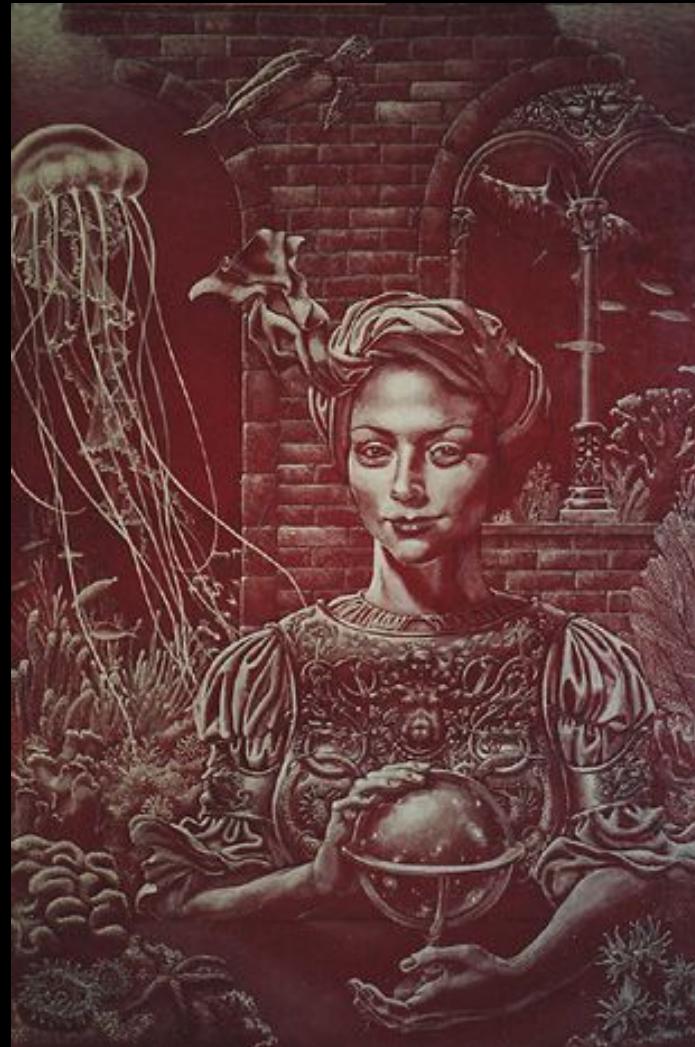
Madeline von Foerster



The imprimatura: a layer is applied to the entire panel



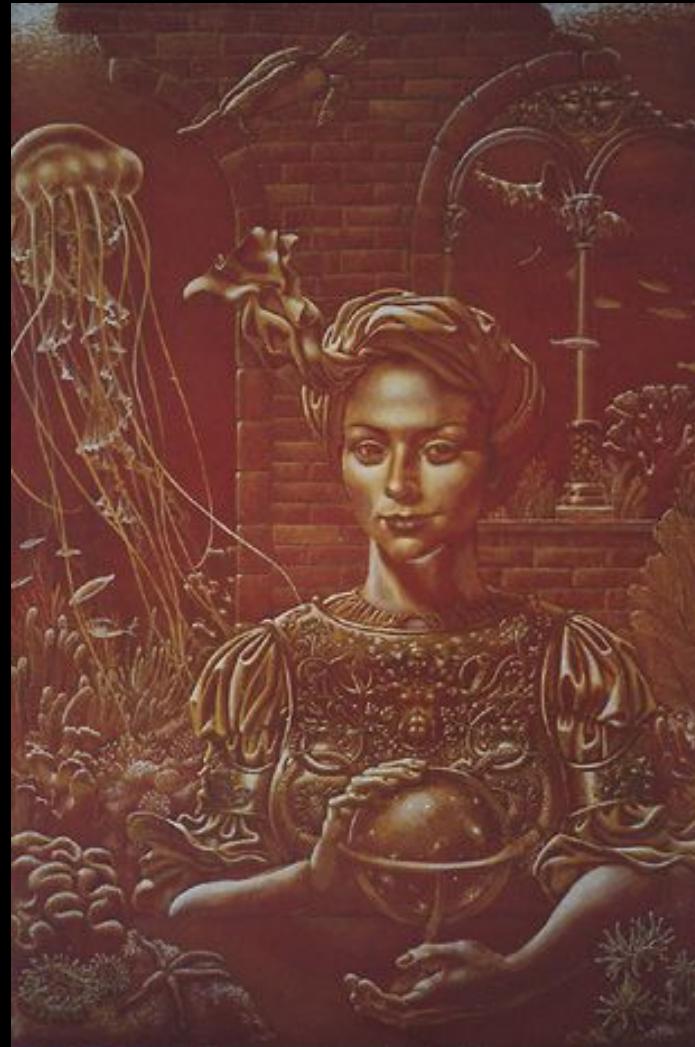
The underpainting: all forms are rendered using egg tempera. At this stage, form is independent from color



An ochre glaze is applied to the panel. Some of the contrast is diminished.



Contrast is now brought back with the application of more white tempera to the brightest highlights in the painting, giving greater dimension to the forms.



Local glazes are applied to provide general tone to objects and areas in the painting. The image is still an underpainting at this point.



Oil paint is now used to create the painting, at differing levels of opacity, depending on the desired effect. (In this case, areas such as the face were painted with opaque oil layers.



The finished painting



What was the difference between Brigid
Marlin's method and Madeline Von
Foerster's?

Why?



Molly Mae Mitton
(some people prefer
hatching, other blending)



- Clive Hedger glazed a transparent blue on his underpainting to create a range of temperature

(Tempera Grassa workshop with Daniel Mirante)

- Transparent glazes upon underpainting, with addition of more highlights and glazes

Artist, **Emma Garrard**, oil glazes on burnt umber tempera grassa underpainting –

(tempera grassa workshop with Daniel Mirante)

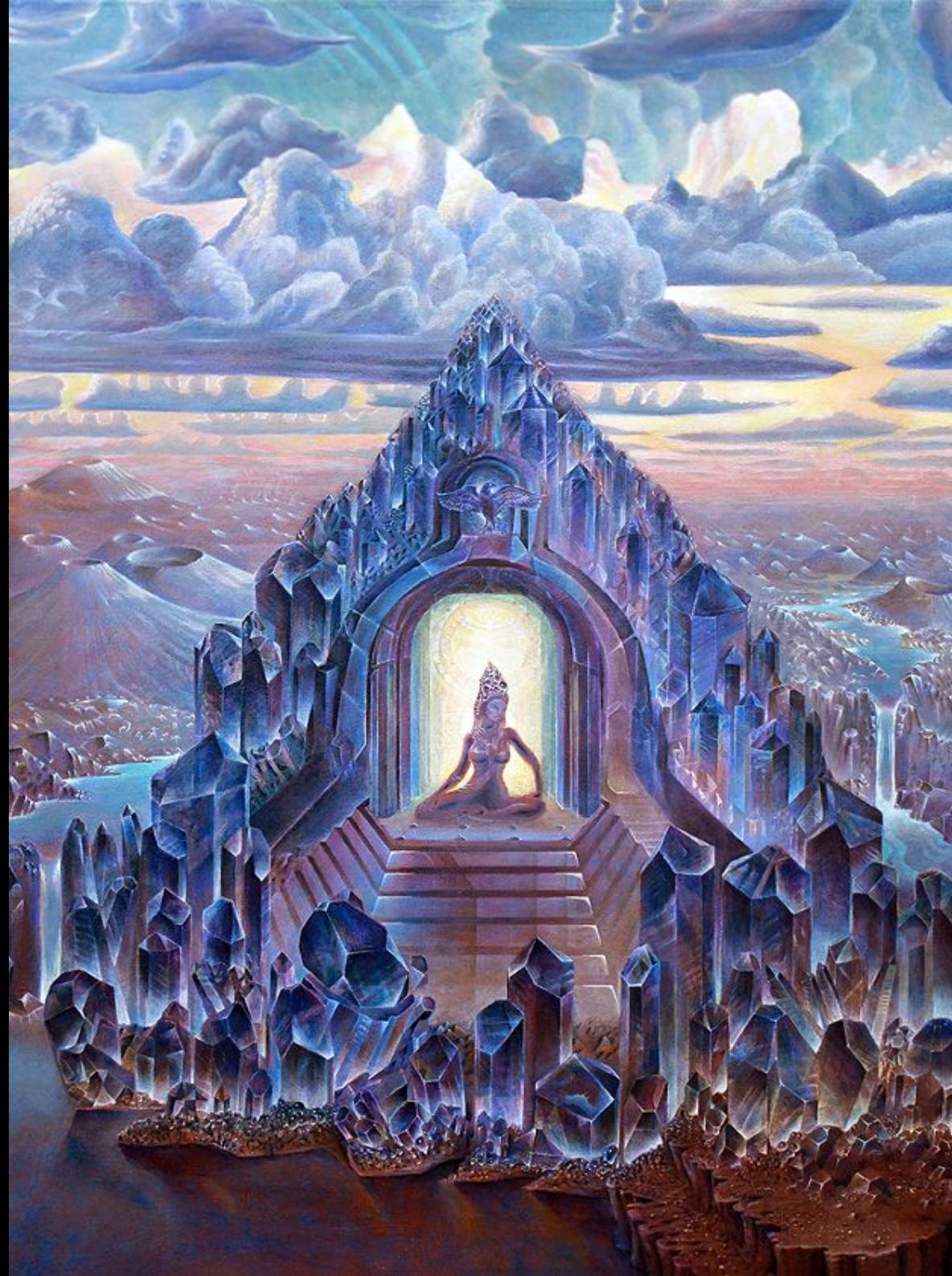


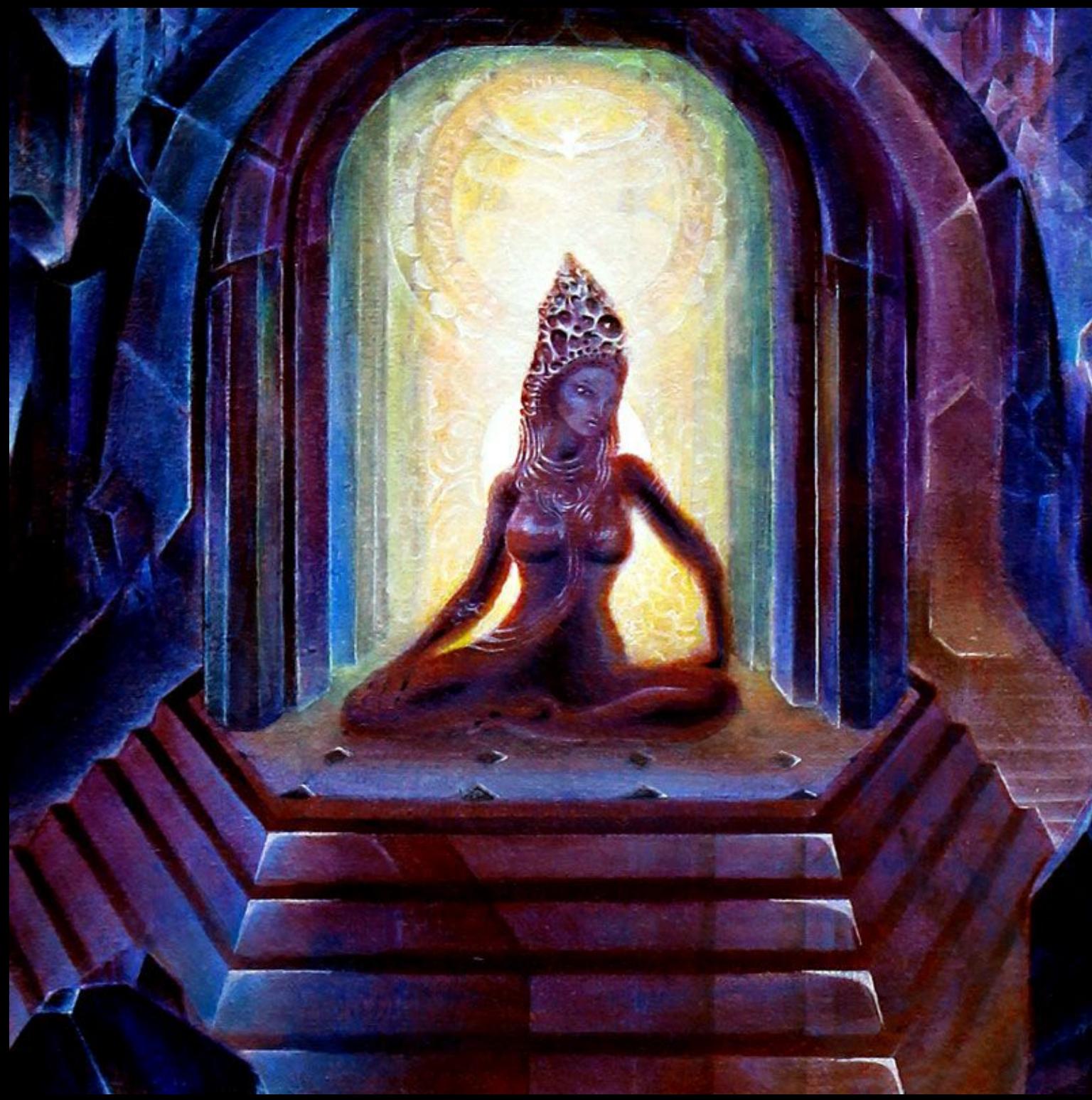
Jason Morning – oil
glazes on tempera grassa
and burnt umber
imprimatura

(Tempera Grassa workshop
with Daniel Mirante)







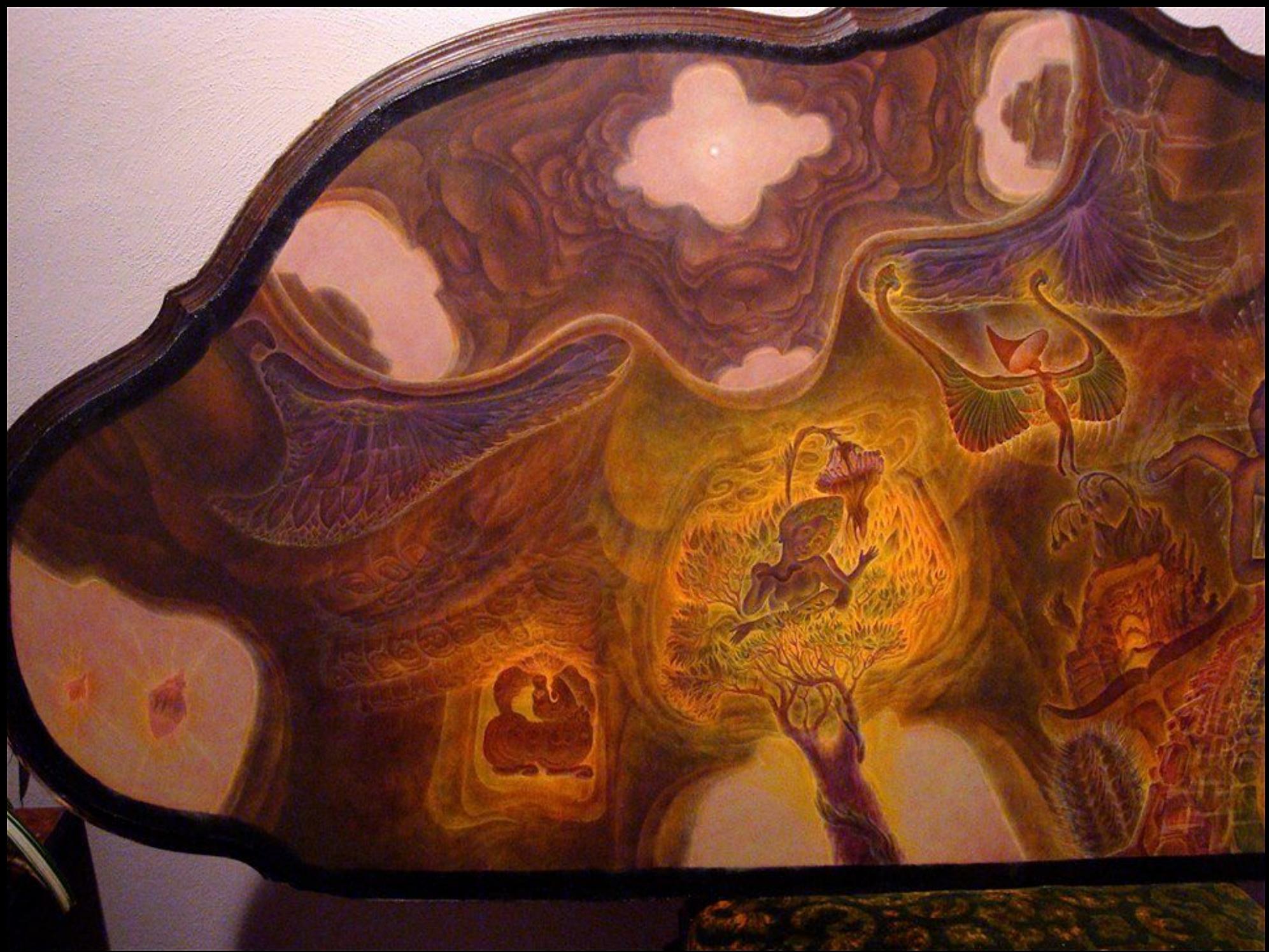


Painters have been pulling apart
and experimenting with the
mischtechnik for years and
improving it to their own ends.

Maura Holden







Not mischtechink! But working with the same principles of underpainting – opical grisaille, optical color mixing through glazing.

Lead white oil is being used instead of egg tempora.



Green, or blue, or purple underpainting
... rather than red... yet still achieves the famed optical
greys/opalescences, the 'look' of a Fuchsian mischtechnik painting...





Why would the artist pursue such an indirect method?

The answer is in

Optical Color Mixing

the effect that blue over yellow over red, with layers of washes and hatching of white egg tempera in-between will produce. In the best situation, the procedure produces a secondary color triad.

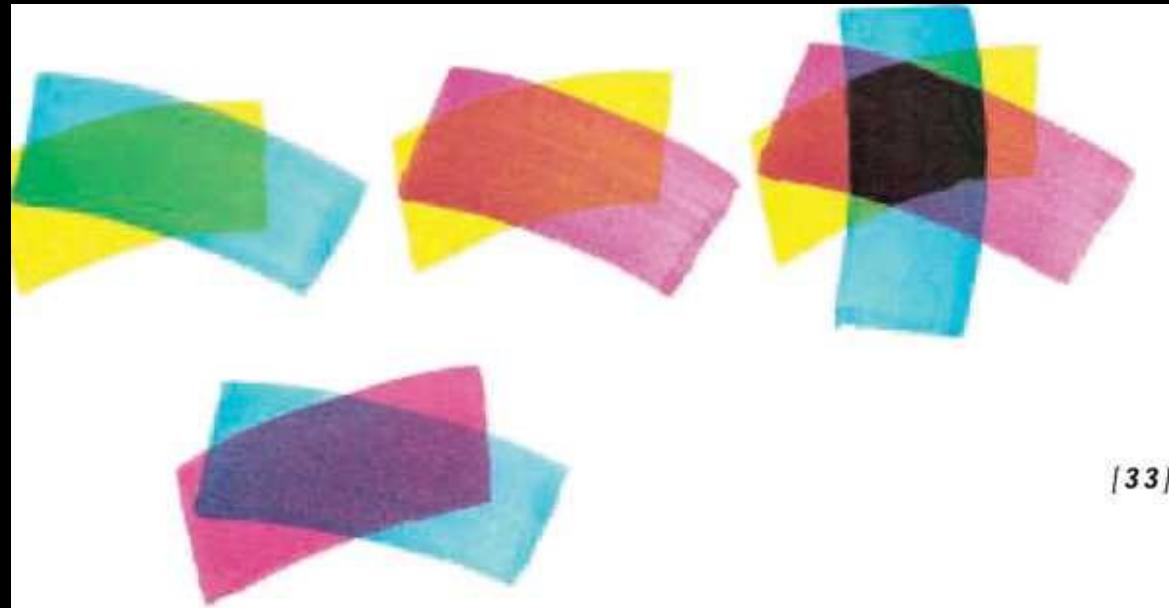
Red + yellow = orange

Blue + yellow + orange = greens/browns

Blue + red = violets/grays

How well the colour artifacts can be exploited in mischtechnik depends on the understanding of glazing pigments. The exact pigments we chose as our red, yellow and blue layers will have a big influence on the optical mixing due to the differences of the hue, transparency and other qualities of the pigments used.

Optical Mixing



Glazes can establish color on a monochrome underpainting, or adjust hue and chroma to pre-existing colors, as given the analogy is panes of colored glass or cellophane. Historically when the pigment range was limited, glazes allowed colors to be created through '*optical mixing*'.

Whether you glaze or scumble, the overpainting color appears to optically mix with the underpainting, and the two visually combine to create a third color.

When there are fine semi-transparent and opaque lattices of hatching, and scumbles, between glazes, optical color mixing produces 'opalescences'.

End of Part 1