Properties of Color Hue, Value, Intensity, Saturation and Chroma

Understanding the five main properties of color is a major hurdle. You will find that on many occasions these descriptions will be used to explain the same thing. The same properties will be used to explain differences. This is Very confusing! We will consider hue, value, intensity, saturation, and chroma to be the same for our use, at this time. In particular we will be using the term chroma, throughout this book, when addressing any of the five combinations of these five properties.

Hue

Hue is just another word for color. An apple and a Mango demonstrate many hues of red. The 'hue' of a color is also where that color would be placed around the circumference of the color wheel.

Value

The value of a color refers to how light or dark a color is.

Intensity

The intensity of a color refers to how bright or dull, or how much pigment saturation there is in the paint there is in relationship to fillers or binders.

Saturation

Saturation is also known as a color or intensity or purity. If you used yellow straight from the tube, it would have a higher intensity than if you mixed it with white. 'Saturation' also can be used to explain how vivid or dull the color is: just like value and 'luminescence or luminosity,' how light or dark the color is in value. For the water colorist luminosity is the white of the paper showing through the paint or transparency.

Chroma

Chroma can be used to describe color saturation, intensity or the wow factor, chroma colors that are 'saturated' with color or 'intense' or high chroma colors.