



March 2009 – LAG General Program by Michael Skalka

Summary of March Members Program

Submitted by Marleen Cunningham

Michael Skalka, Conservation Administrator at the National Gallery of Art, discussed Color Theory from the earliest scientific exploration to the present. Using Symmetric Color Vision Model, CIE 1976 LAB 100 we moved from Newton's dispersion of white light into the spectral hues to the present day color information technology. We viewed the color solid displaying the three dimensions of color; saturation, lightness and hue, experienced how the average eye sees color via the seven color contrasts, noted the difference between the pigment circle 12 hues for paint mixing, and the light circle 10 hues for seeing objects in natural light and for design. Light mixes according to the additive principle and pigments mix according to the subtractive principle. This was a most informative recap on color theory for all attendees.

Biography

Mr. Skalka is Conservation Administrator at the National Gallery of Art, where he manages the daily operations of the Gallery's conservation division. He is also responsible for the Modern Art Materials Collection and Study Center which maintains a wide variety of late 20th century art materials, as well as current products, and related literature for use in research. Michael's informative newsletter "The Grammar of Color" is both a newsletter and lecture announcement sent to artists interested in the National Gallery's programs and other educational opportunities related to art materials and conservation.

Michael is an eclectic artist, painting plein air landscapes in oil locally in Maryland and in Southern California. He also works occasionally in pastel and watercolor, creates abstract paintings in acrylic and experiments with collage.

Mr Skalka holds a BFA in Art History from Rutgers University and an MFA in museum studies from Syracuse University. He is Chairman of the American Society for Testing and Materials' (ASTM) D01.57, Artists' Materials; contributes regularly to The Artists Magazine's "Aks the Experts" column and has a web log devoted to the discussion of art materials.