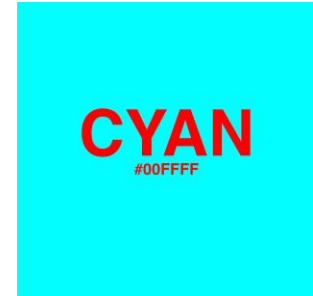


Color is one of the most important elements on our planet, without it people would struggle with expressing emotion. Cyan is a color that looks and feels soothing or relaxing because of its luminosity and it being a cool color. Paintings also use colors such as cyan not only because it is “pretty” but because it makes your mind calmer and it differs with each person the exact sensation.

Cyan, in history, was first recorded in 1897 as “cyan blue”, whose color can be traced back to the cornflower (*Centaurea cyanus*). Cyan can be found naturally in water because of the way water absorbs “red light” more than it does blue, giving it its blueish tint. It can also be found in space, more specifically in Uranus. The reason for this is because of the way methane gas, or natural gas, absorbs red light and reflects blue-green light. This makes red cyan’s complementary color, thus giving it a more contrasting look when used in a design or a piece of art.



Blue, along with similar colors, has proven to make someone feel more at ease and/or relaxed. Since water can be the color of cyan, most people can relate cyan back to the ocean or swimming on a vacation. This very specific shade of blue is more relaxing than a normal blue color because of its luminosity, thus making it more likely to trigger your synapses and make you recall a happy memory. Shades of blue are favored by so many people, it is often viewed as a non-threatening color



One very famous Japanese artwork by Katsushika Hokusai, *Under the Wave off Kanagawa*, uses shades of cyan and blue in its print. His art is comprised of three different elements. The water, or a rogue wave, the Fuji Mountains, and fisherman boats returning to shore. When broken down all three elements play different, yet significant roles in making this a successful piece of art. The waves themselves are comprised of different shades of blue including cyan, making it the dominant color. They also make up most of the actual art, which is in relation

to where the artist lives (Japan) which is an island surrounded by water. Hokusai makes sure to use the wave’s organic shape to make it seem more aggressive. For example, you can see that there are little claw-like crescents in the wave that make it seem like it’s almost trying to grab the fishermen and swallow them. He also makes them seem more aggressive by making them bigger than they would be realistically.

Another important element in this artwork’s visual hierarchy is the fishermen and their boats. The boats and their passengers serve as some sort of Yin to the waves’ Yang. Thus, giving the art a sense of asymmetrical balance shown by the aggressiveness of the waves and the confident experienced fishermen not backing down from one of nature’s fiercest powers.

One of the final elements in this piece of art can easily be overlooked if you aren’t paying attention, however it can be considered important depending on who you ask. The famous Fuji Mountain, otherwise known as *Fuji no Yama*, is the tallest mountain in all of Japan. This is the largest mountain in Japan, yet in this piece of art it is possibly the smallest thing making it an accent piece. This

is important because the waves are shown more than twice as big as the mountain, although one can argue that this is due to perspective and keeping everything proportioned, even the smallest wave is shown bigger than the mountain. Another reason why this element is so important is because of the positive space surrounding the mountain. There are clouds rising in the sky, yet there is no rain or storm. This is important because it shows that these waves will eventually come crashing down and do minimal harm to the fishermen. All these elements in this piece of art depict the sense a balance when you look deeper into the meaning of the artwork if you were to otherwise only get a glance of it.

This artwork also accomplishes the sense of balance with the different shades of blue. Despite the intensity of the waves it also gives a feeling of emotional energy or strength that is shown in the fishermen. Despite the raging waves the fishermen are still able to keep their boats afloat and you can see that they are not panicking or jumping off the boat in fear. Instead they are collectively trying to keep their boat from capsizing and making sure that they are all safe. In conclusion the color Cyan, along with other shades of blue, as well as elements of design such as Organic Shape, Luminosity, Dominant Color, and many more, made this artwork a great success.