

Recker, Keith. "Tangerine Tango: Fine Art". *Pantone: The Color of Ideas*. June 14, 2012.



Tangerine is no stranger to canvas: painters have dipped their brushes into red-oranges for a long time. In the first half of the 20th century, Pierre Bonnard paired it with amethyst and violet to establish inviting shadows and sensuous highlights. By the 1950s, Willem deKooning and other Abstract Expressionists brought red-oranges into play to telegraph heat and tension. More recently, red-orange in the form of Tangerine Tango, the 2012 Pantone Color of the Year, seems to combine both sensuous heat and hints of tension in the work of photographers Daniel Gordon and Huang Yan.

Miami-based contemporary painter **Yolanda Sanchez** balances well-observed, abstract depictions of the modern zeitgeist with a personal and inherently optimistic point of view. And she has a deft touch with tangerine, an important element in her expressive palette. Sanchez shares some thoughts on color in an interview with Pantone color studio member, Keith Recker.

**Keith Recker:** Your work consistently combines colors that are at once pristine, thought-provoking, and aching joyful. Where does this sense of color come from?

**Yolanda Sanchez:** I don't know, and I don't really want to analyze it too much! Ever since I was little, I looked at the world through color. One of my prized possessions as a child, especially since we did not have much money, was a gold paper-lined box of Prismacolor pencils. As I formalized my art training, the artists that always interested me (and still do) were the great colorists: Matisse, Bonnard, Van Gogh, Monet, Mitchell,

Diebenkorn.

When I was at Yale, I heard a story – and it became a favorite one – about fellow Yale Eva Hesse. When Eva enrolled in art-world-Titan Albert Albers’ course on color theory, she was a painter. When she finished the class, as the stories goes, she said she no longer knew how to use color as it had now become an intellectual process. She switched to sculpture.

Decades later, I also enrolled in that course. Of course Albers was no longer there, but the class was still taught in the same way. After two classes, I dropped it. The problem was that the class attempted to make conscious what should be – at least for me – a completely intuitive process. My inner sense of color has been developed through experimentation and play, and just being in the world. I am *looking* all the time for inspiration – from the sky, a magazine, the sidewalk, someone’s clothes, what I read or hear. I am constantly trying to expand my vocabulary of color. There are many rules and principles about color, but I don’t consciously think about these. In fact, I avoid them.



**KR:** Do you find yourself drawn to a particular color for a period of time – across which you experiment in a kind of “variations on a theme” way? What color are you fascinated with right now?

**YS:** Yes, there are times when I get involved with a color or color palette for awhile and experiment with, as you say, “variations on a theme” – like Bach’s “Goldberg variations” – sort of extending the range of a favorite color or finding new iterations of a palette. I always say that I would like to do more of this variations on a theme sort of thing, but I often move along. I think I need to clear myself if I have “inhabited” a palette for some time.

Right now I am looking at a lot of sky and water, which is always around me as I live in Miami Beach. I began to wonder why I hadn’t painted a series inspired by water, so I am playing with this now, exploring the lack of distinction between water and sky. I am always fascinated with rose violet and related colors – like periwinkle, lilac, purple. There are several shades of blue that I am drawn to now – including the range of saturated blues found in Iznik tiles.

**KR:** Let’s talk about Tangerine Tango. You explore the reddish-oranges of tangerine from time to time. What does tangerine say to you? How does it sound to you?

**YS:** Tangerine suggests freshness, warmth, fun – especially when paired with certain colors. It is upbeat; it adds a “punch” wherever it is. It sounds like Caribbean beats – something rhythmic, but lush, resonant but not loud. It is kind of a contained joy. My eye

goes there.

**KR:** Tell us something about the series of four paintings you are sharing with Pantone. What are you inviting the viewer to experience?



**YS:** The *Guardian Angels* series on paper was inspired by a walk through Central Park at the beginning of spring. I saw vines of yellow flowers all over. It was a gorgeous, crisp day – joyous – and I was taken by the yellow flowers and the interweaving of the vine’s branches. I had just seen the Bonnard retrospective at the Metropolitan – *twice*. I was feeling deeply energized. I took a bunch of photos in the park, just as way to get the feeling of the day back in my head rather than to capture any literal representation. I transformed what I saw into my own vocabulary – into what I remembered about that moment. This is how I paint, generally. The work captures the feeling of what I experienced. In this case, it was joy, freshness, exuberance, energy.

**KR:** As an accomplished colorist, what do you think works best with Tangerine Tango?

**YS:** Tangerine Tango has a lot of personality. It calls attention to itself. But it works with many palettes. With certain blues it can be very dynamic, building on high contrast. An Indian palette of fuchsias, tangerines and lime greens can be exuberant. Used sparingly, as an accent, it can accentuate other colors and bring a composition or design to life. Within a range of warm oranges and yellows it can be soothing and comforting. I see it as a color that is quite complementary, working with just about any palette. I see strong pink in the same way. The idea is to experiment and not adhere to any specific rules – which means you can’t really count any color out.