

If you've noticed that the brownish hue of the coffee art on my website varies with different pieces of art, there is a reason.

For those not familiar with coffee paintings, you may expect that they should all have the same color hue. But they don't. There's a variation of hue due to the unique characteristics of art created with real coffee.

The main characteristic with coffee used as a painting medium, which affects its appearance, is that it separates quickly into two basic components. One is an oily liquid that has a rich, neutral reddish-orange, translucent appearance. And the other is a powder that is tan, with a neutral yellow color. You may not notice this when you are drinking your coffee beverage, but after hours of sitting, the powder will settle. This is probably why fresh coffee has a better taste than coffee that has been sitting awhile.

Since coffee prepared for painting dark areas separates quite fast, it makes it difficult to maintain a consistent balance while painting. As an artist who uses coffee, I continually agitate my mixture to improve its consistency. However, variations always appear in art painted with genuine coffee.

Another factor that gives my coffee art a unique appearance is the way it's applied. The powdery portion of coffee is too coarse to be drawn up into a brush. So using a brush would only apply the oily portion. The powder, which is a lighter color, is opaque. But when applied together with the oily portion, one can achieve a much darker color value. I apply my coffee mixture in small patches using a plastic toothpick. This creates a texture which is visible in the original painting, but not usually visible on a computer monitor or a print. It also allows me to paint fine lines and create a very detailed piece of art. I can also control the value of lightness or darkness.

Another factor that affects the color you see on your monitor is the calibration of the monitor. The average computer monitor is not calibrated for color accuracy. The difference between a monitor's color rendition is generally pretty obvious with full color images. A good example is by looking at all of the color TV's on display at a store. There you will easily see the color variations.

And finally, the scanner used to digitize the art can be a source of hue variation.