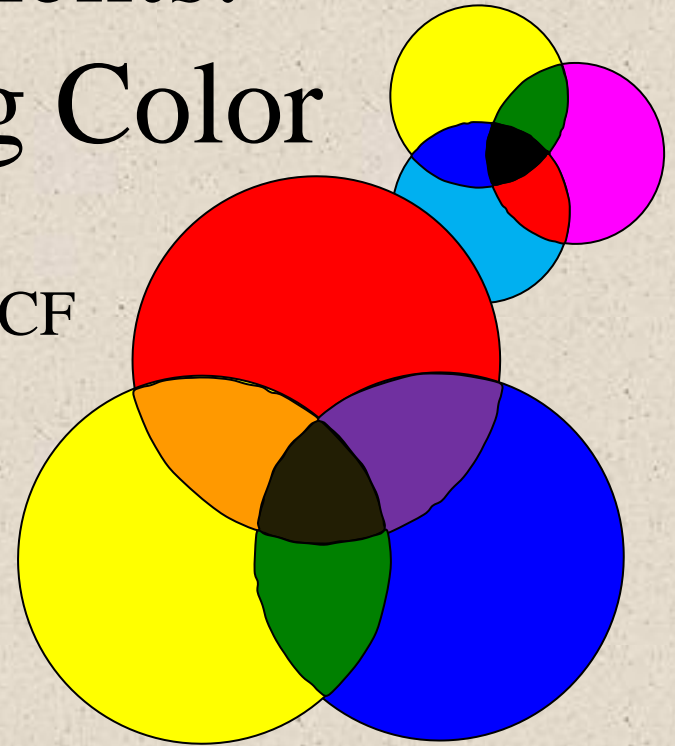


Design Elements: Understanding Color

Chris A. Paschke, CPF, GCF



West Coast Art & Frame Expo, Las Vegas 2024

Color

is the most emotional and
expressive element in design.

Principles of Design

Elements
are the easily identifiable
building blocks

Line

Balance

Color

Texture

Emphasis

Space

Intensity

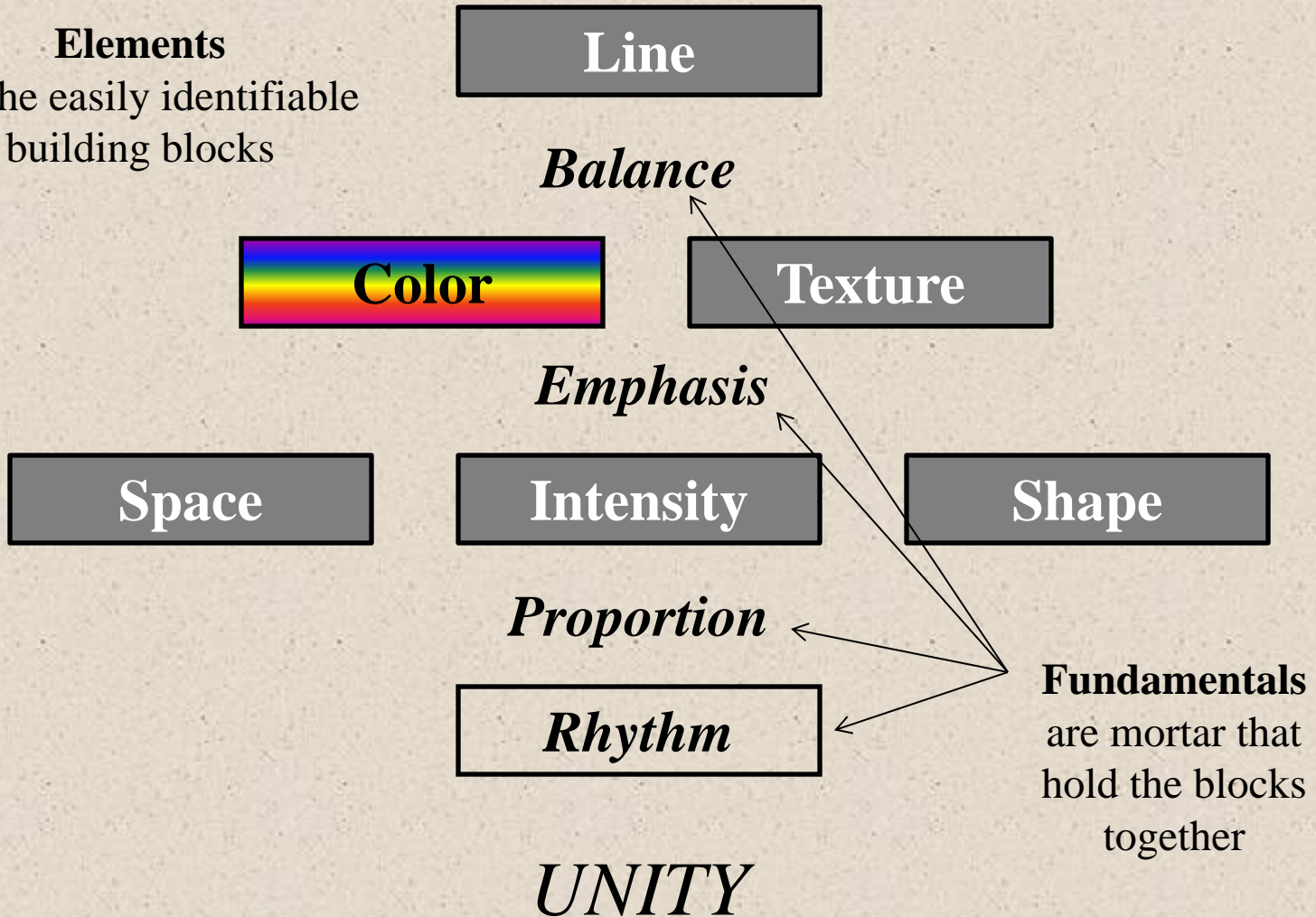
Shape

Proportion

Rhythm

Fundamentals
are mortar that
hold the blocks
together

UNITY



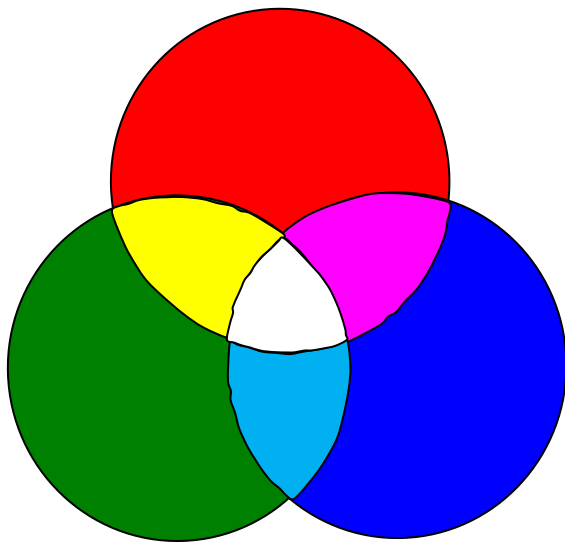
Definition of Color

“Color is the character of a surface which is the result of vision sensitivity to reflected wavelengths of light.”

In other words...in order to see green all other wavelengths are absorbed and green is reflected back to the eye

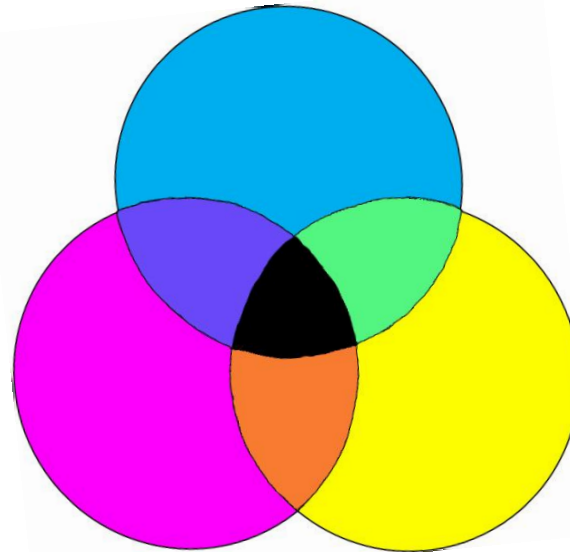
Color Theories

Additive
Light



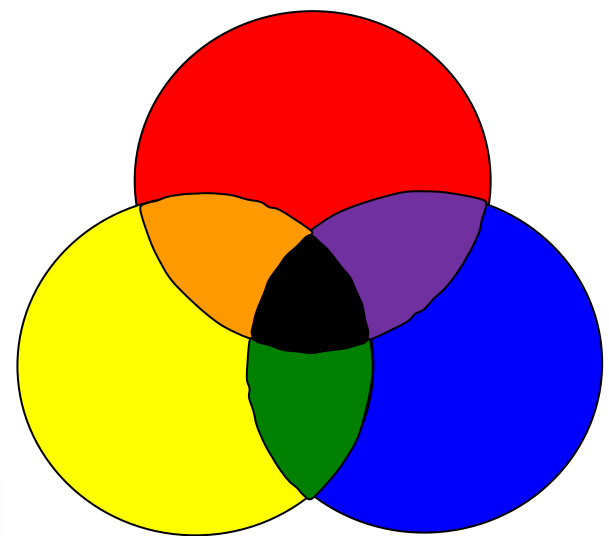
Lighting

Subtractive
Digital Inks



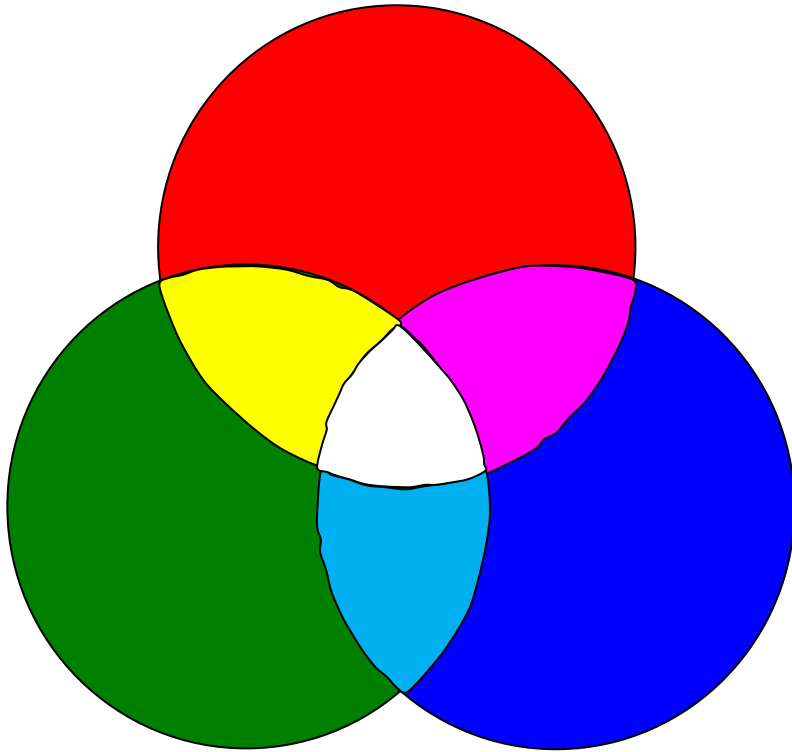
Printers

Subtractive
Artist Pigment



Framing

Additive Color Theory (LIGHT)



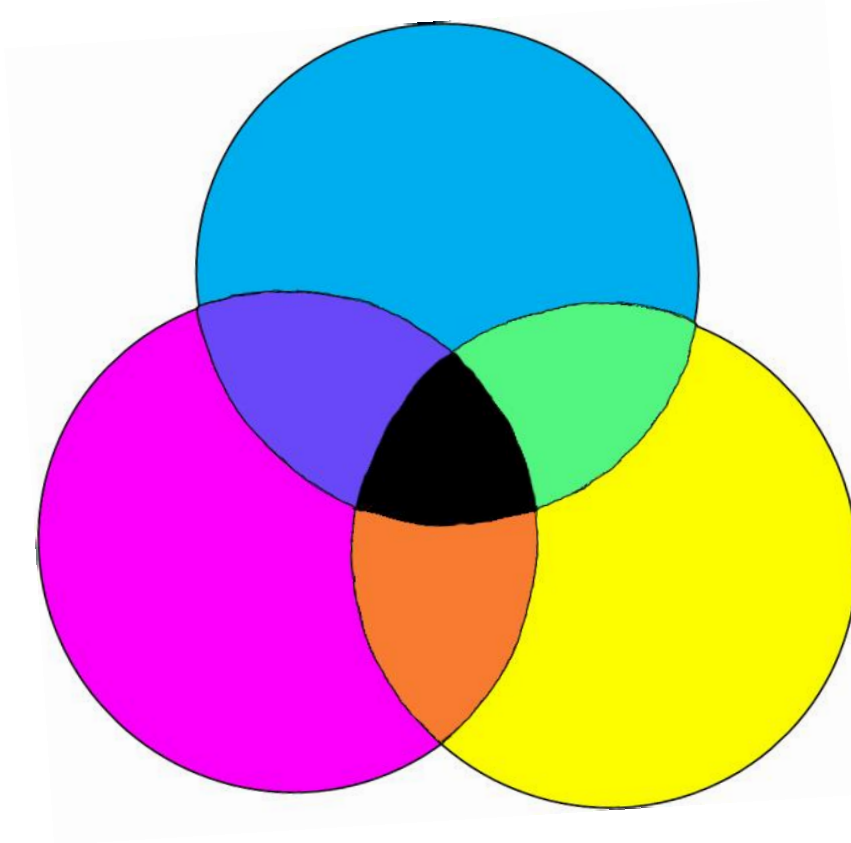
Additive theory begins with black. All six combined create white, as all the colors in light are present and absorbed.

Primaries of red, green, blue (RGB) create secondaries of yellow, cyan, magenta.

In order to see a red apple all other wavelengths are absorbed, reflecting only the red waves, allowing us to see it as red.

Subtractive Color Theory

(DIGITAL/PRINT)

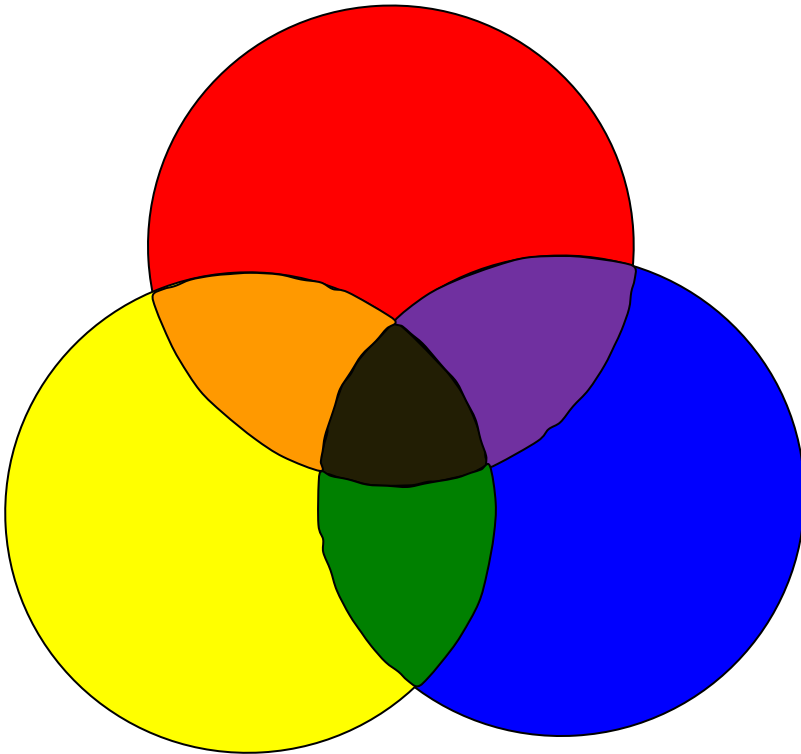


Primaries are cyan, magenta, yellow (CMY). These blend to create other colors such as violet, orange, green...and black.

Final colors integrate the selective absorption of light (altered by light colors) to produce final colors.

Subtractive Color Theory

(ARTIST PIGMENT)



Subtractive theory begins with white, as colors are added the result gets darker to brown, gray or black.

Pure pigmented primaries of red, yellow, blue are mixed to create secondaries of orange, green, purple.

Unlike light waves, no amount of color mixing will ever produce white.

Glossary of Color Terms

Primary Colors - Pure colors that cannot be mixed

Red, Yellow and Blue on wheel

Secondary Colors - Orange, Yellow, Purple

Mixed from Primaries

Complimentary Colors - Opposites

Shade – Color plus black, darker than normal value

Tint – Color plus white, lighter than normal value

Tone – Color plus Grey

Monochromatic – Shades and Tints of same color

Color Properties

Every color has three basic color properties: *hue, value, chroma*

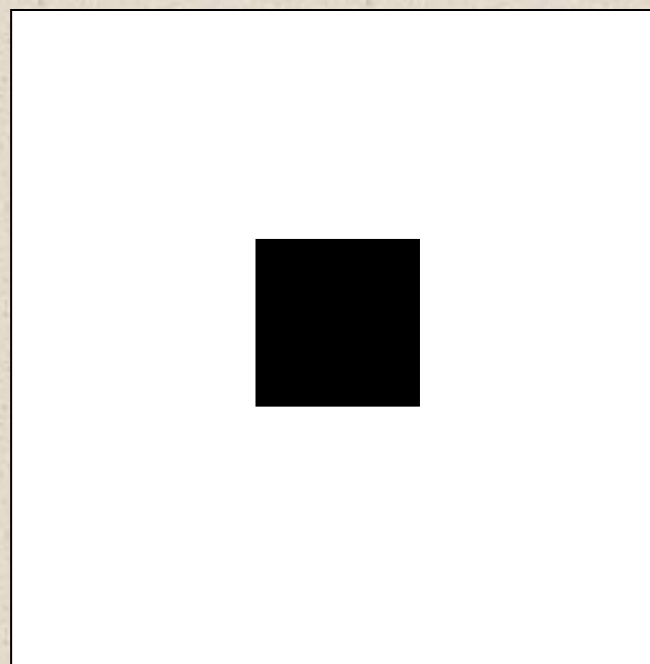
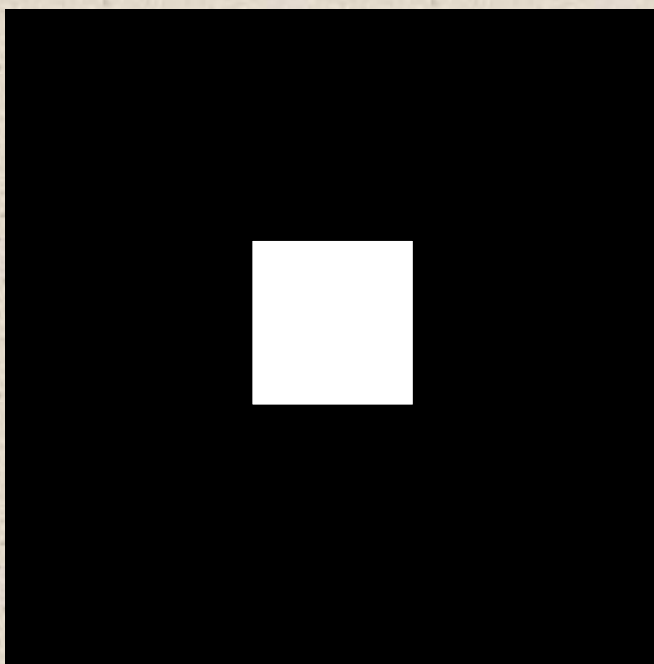
Hue - Position of a pure color in the spectrum that has not been dulled or diluted, no white, black or color added

Value - lightness or darkness of a color in relation to a scale ranging from white to black

Chroma - (saturation, intensity) Brightness or purity
Cannot change value without changing chroma



Value Scale



Liner warm white
expands image

Bevel wrap brings
eye into tree

Top picks up
neutral tan



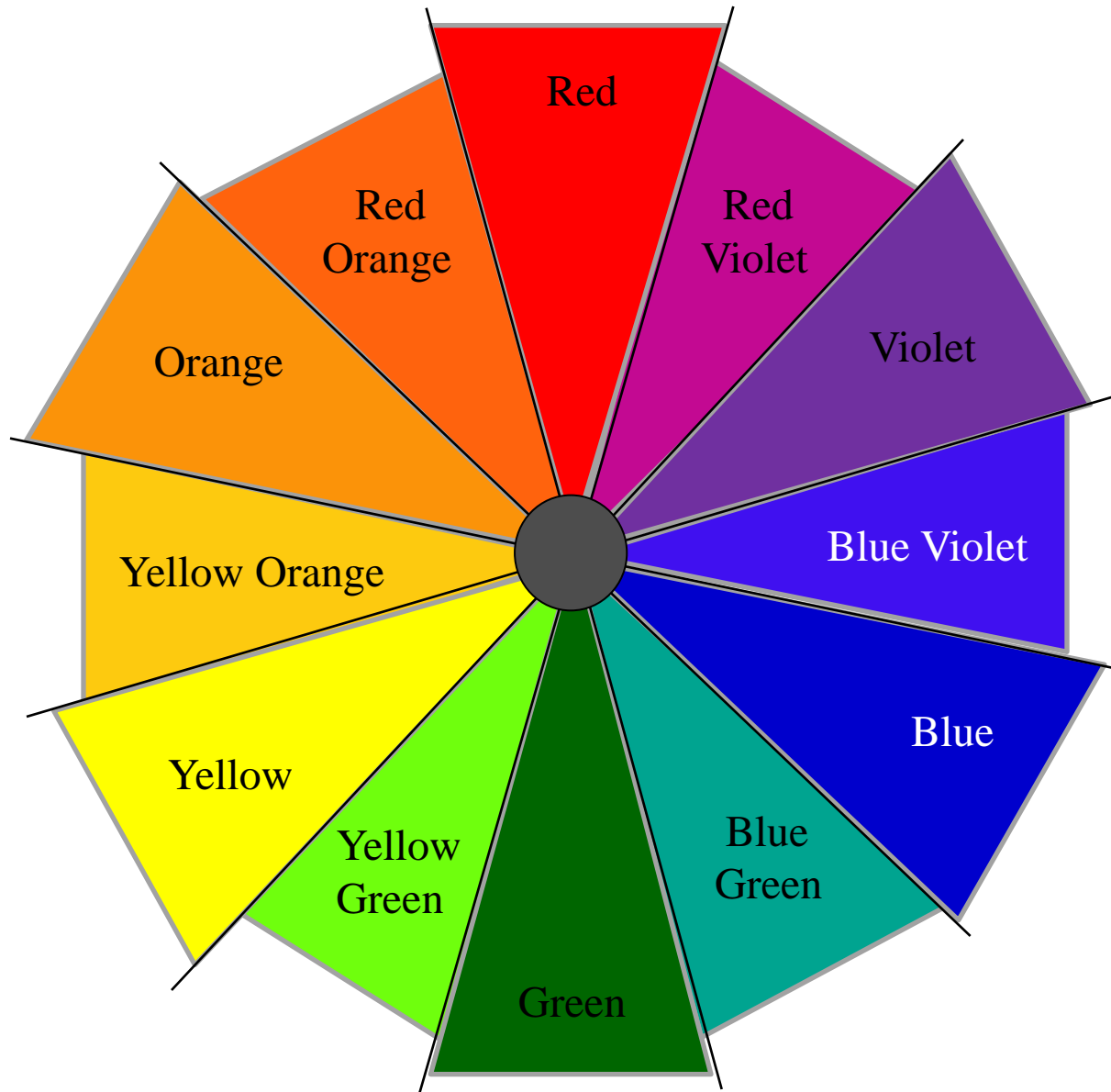
Warm white
expands image

Spacer adds
depth and
shadows

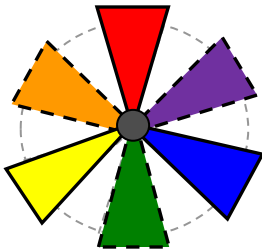
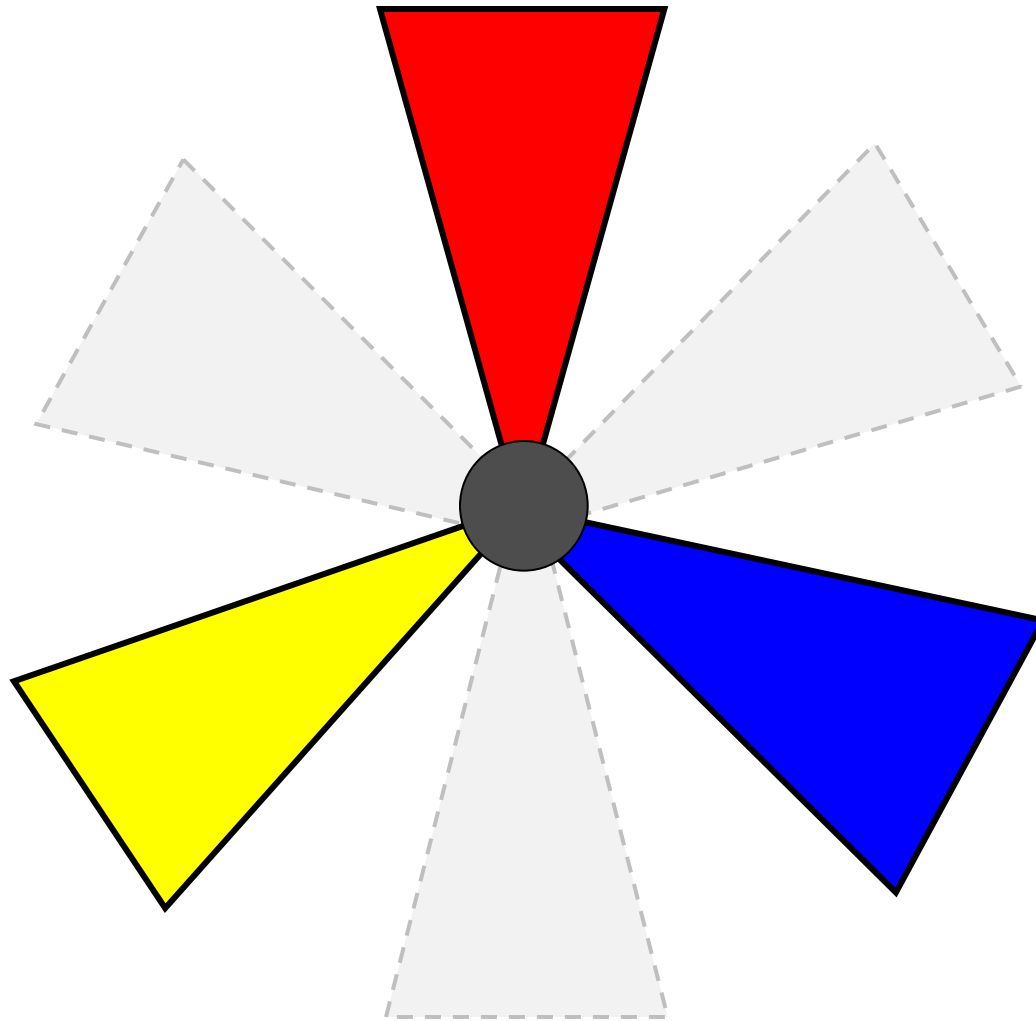
Top warm gray
Draws the eye
into the leaves



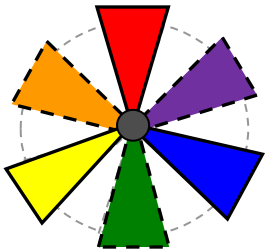
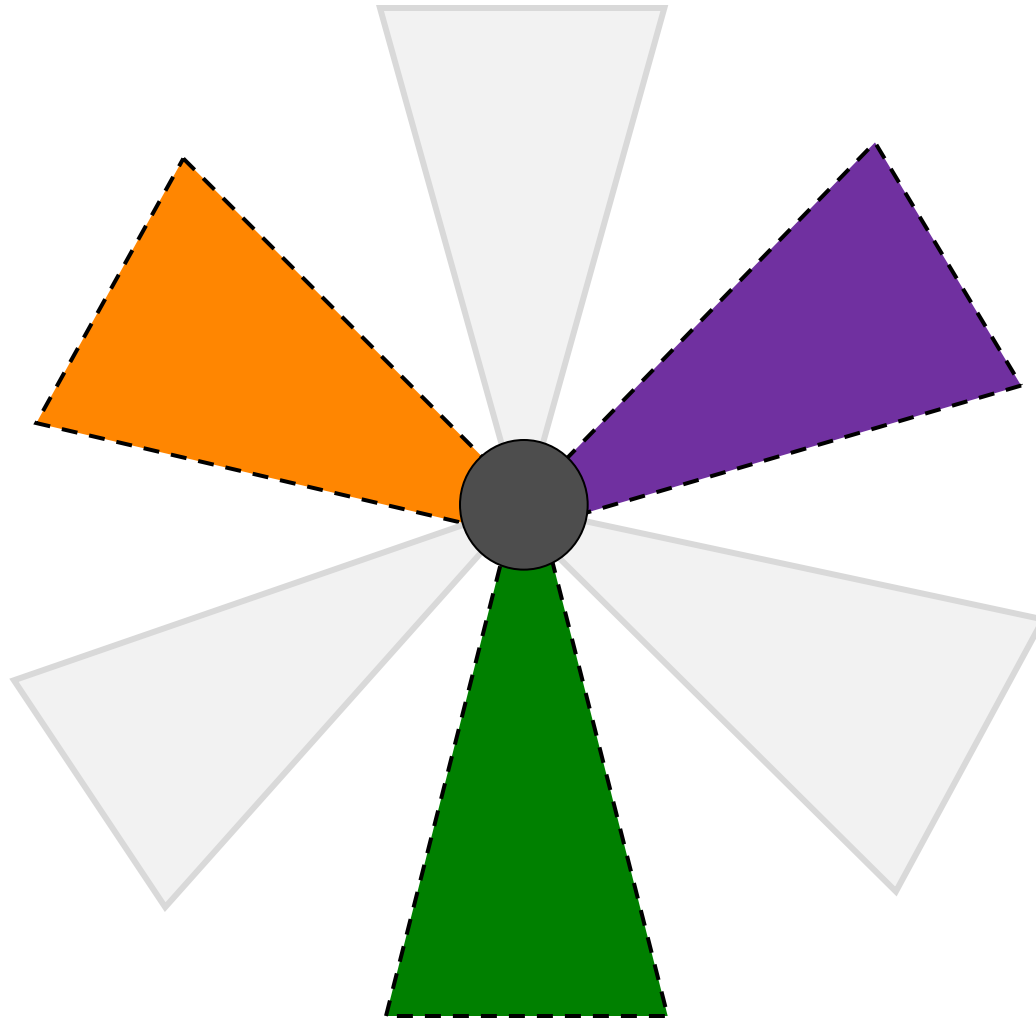
Color Wheel



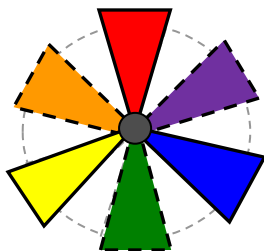
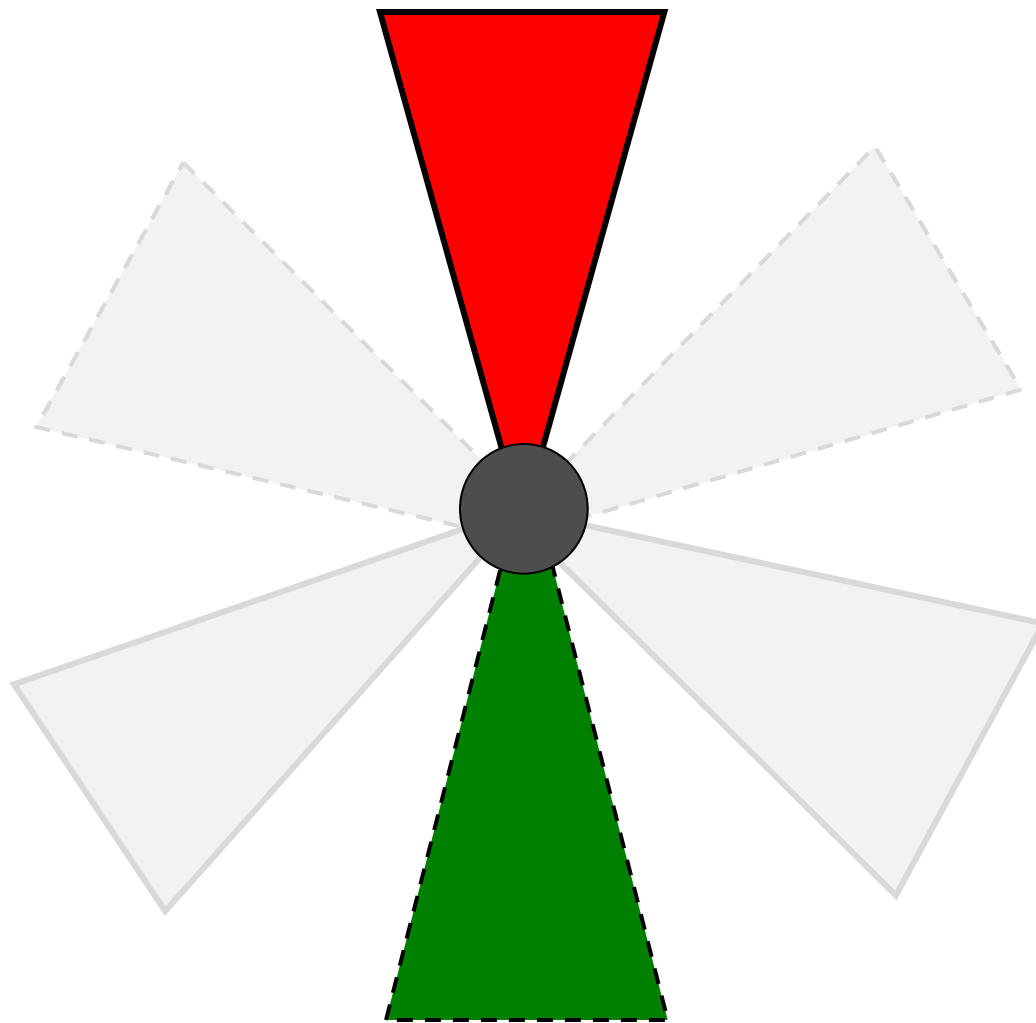
Primary Colors



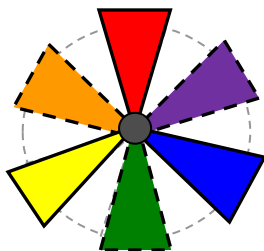
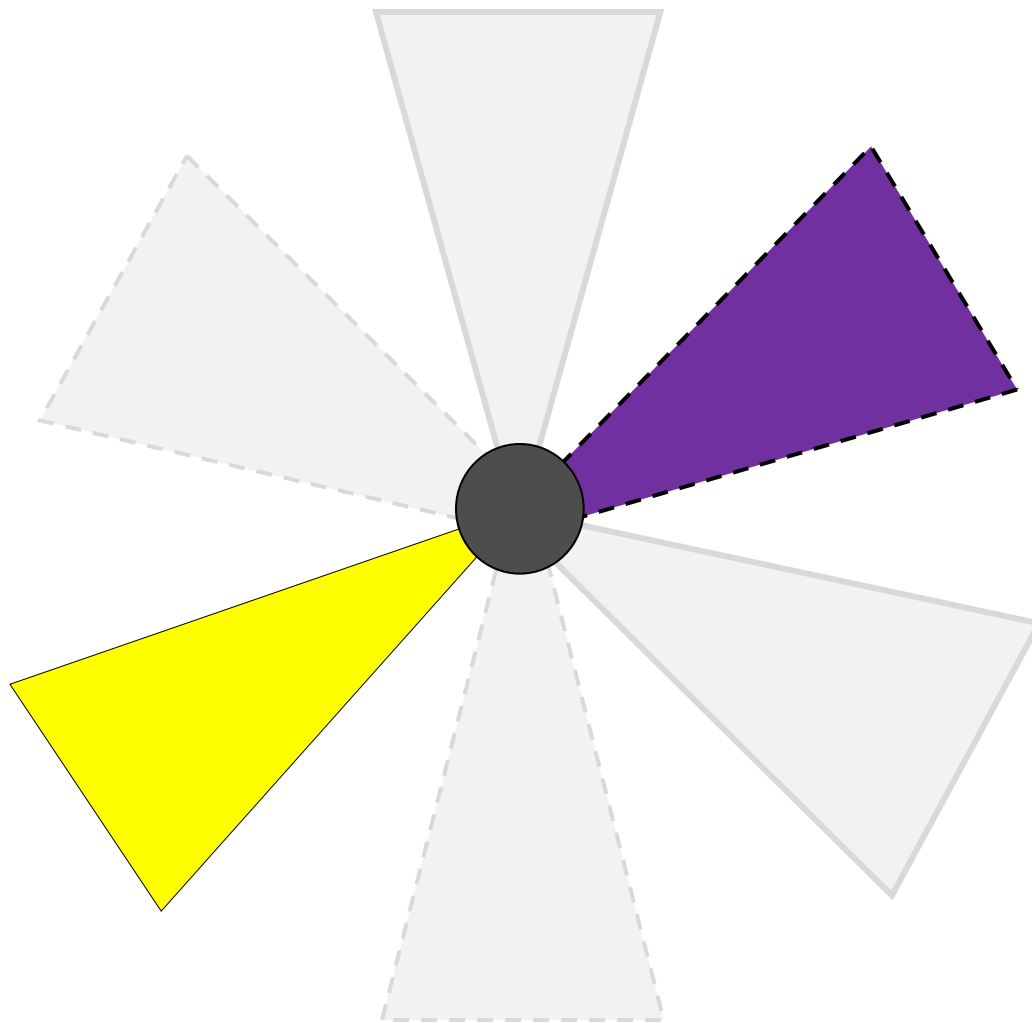
Secondary Colors



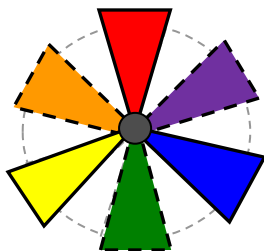
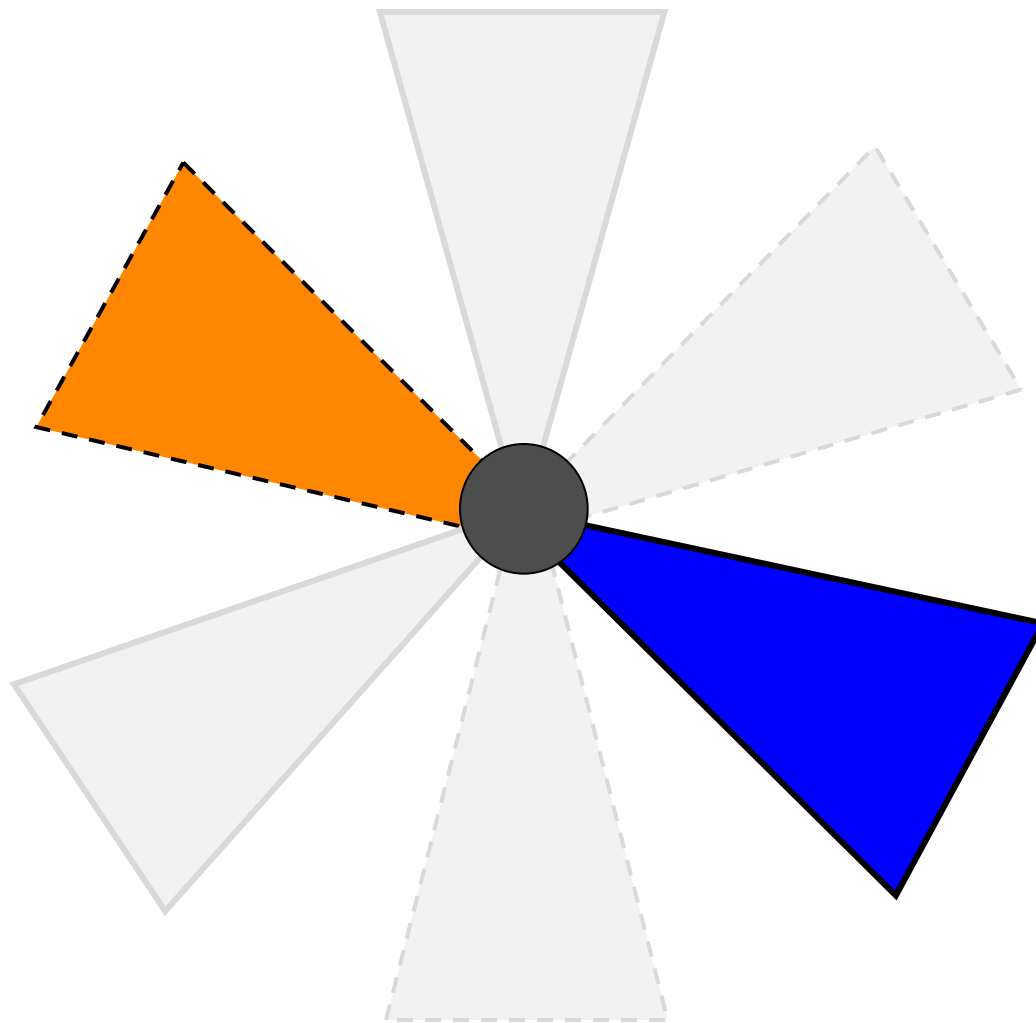
Complementary Colors



Complementary Colors

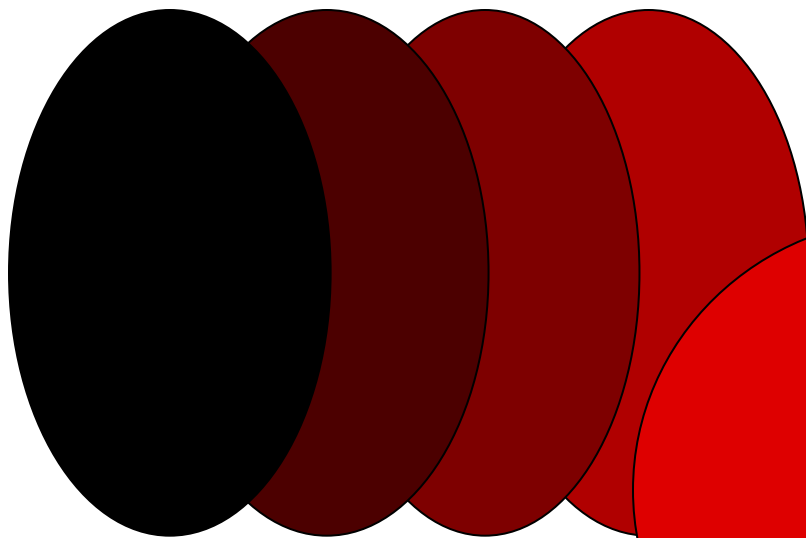


Complementary Colors



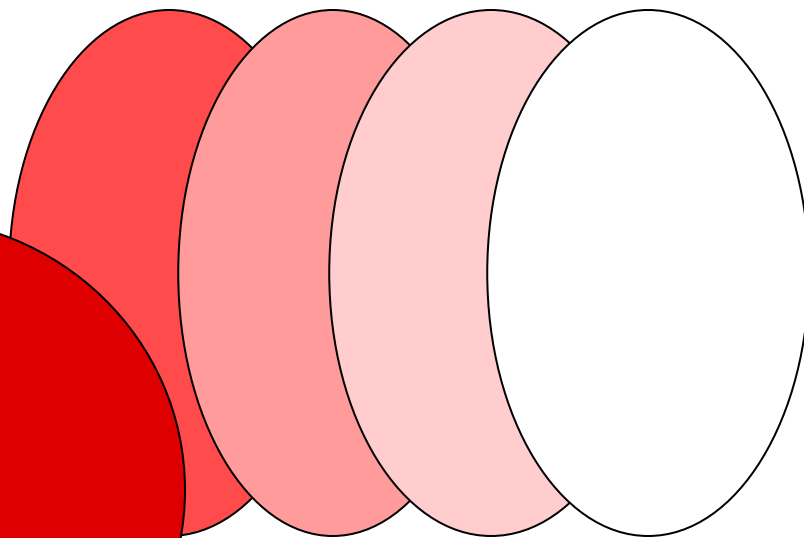
Shade

hue plus black



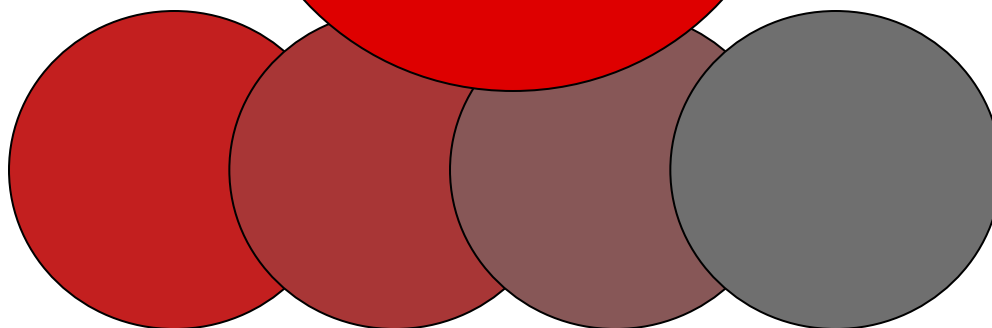
Tint

hue plus white

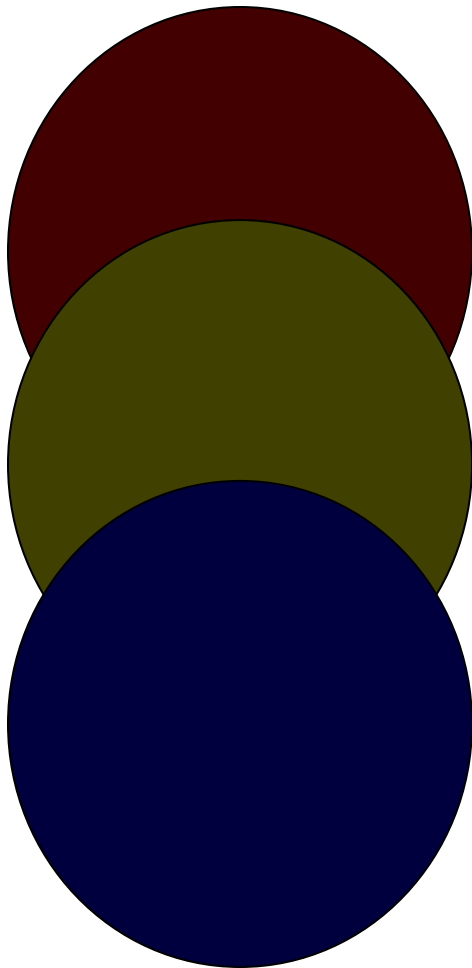


Tone

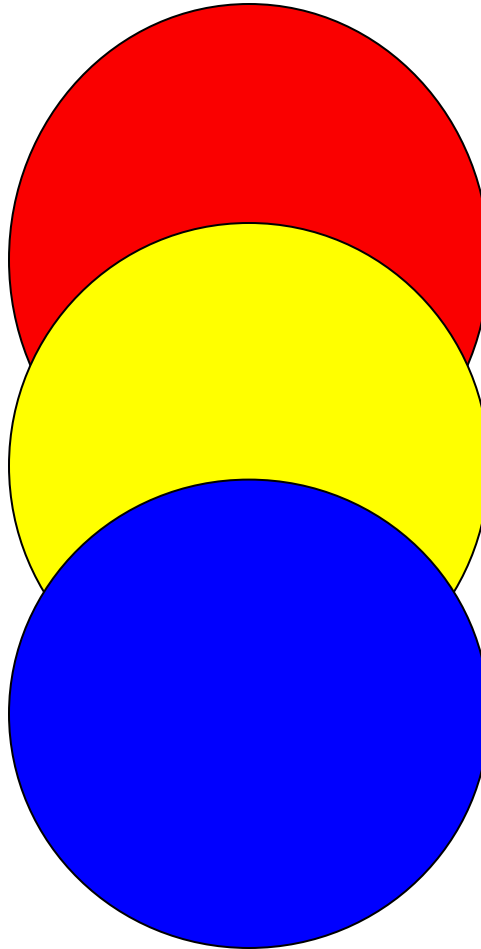
hue plus gray



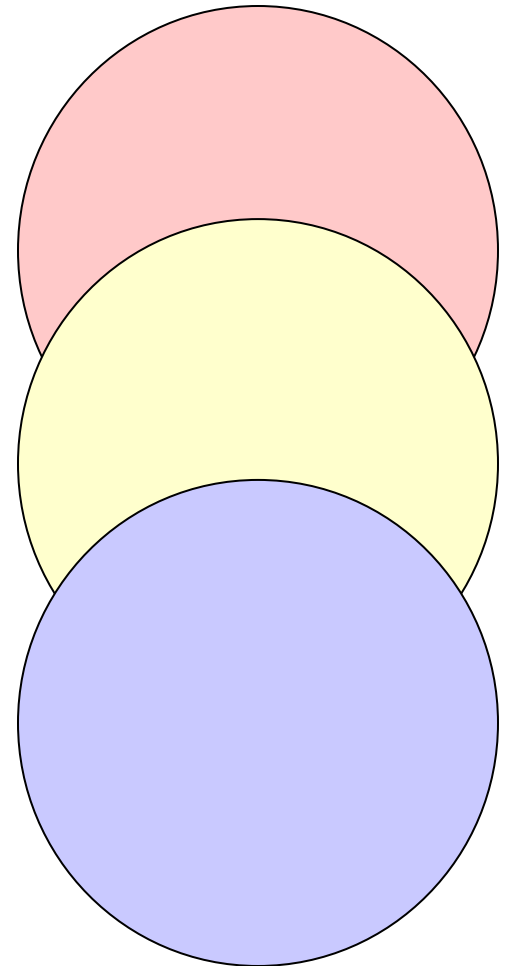
Primary
as Shade



**Primary
Colors**



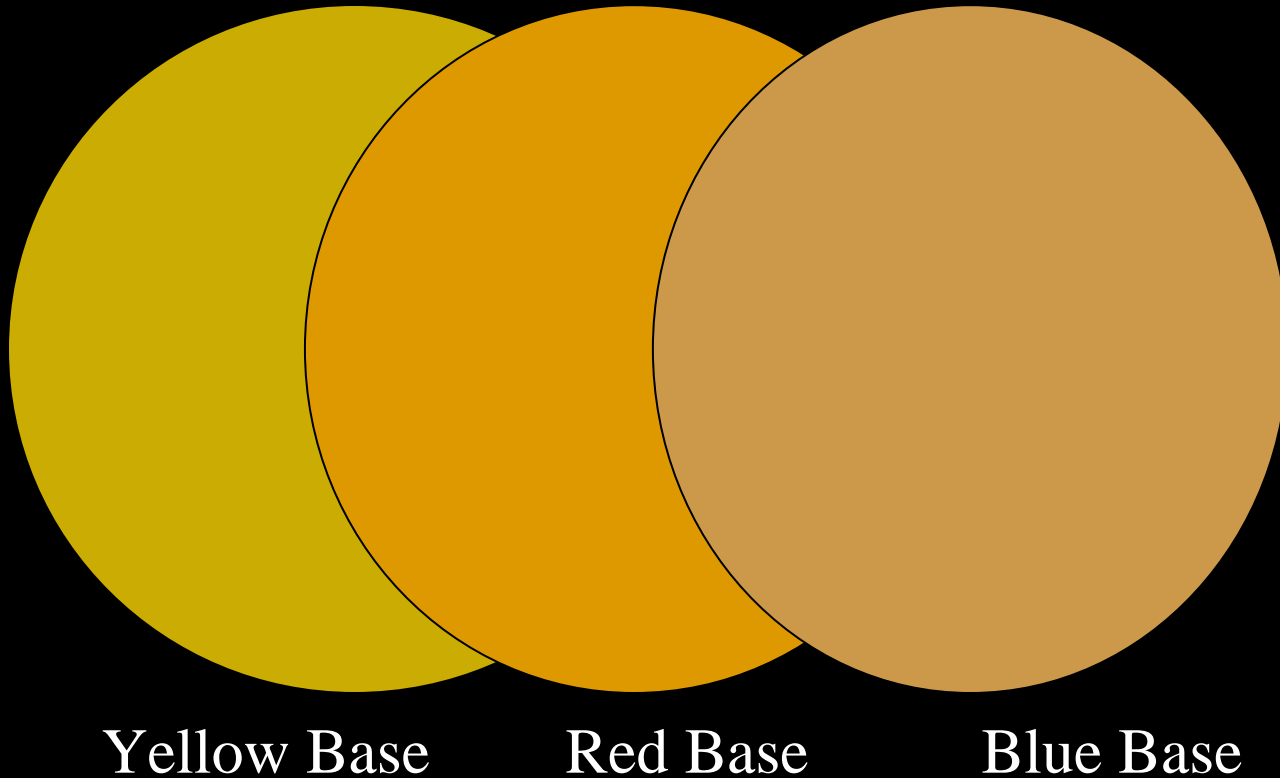
Primary
as Tint



Metallics

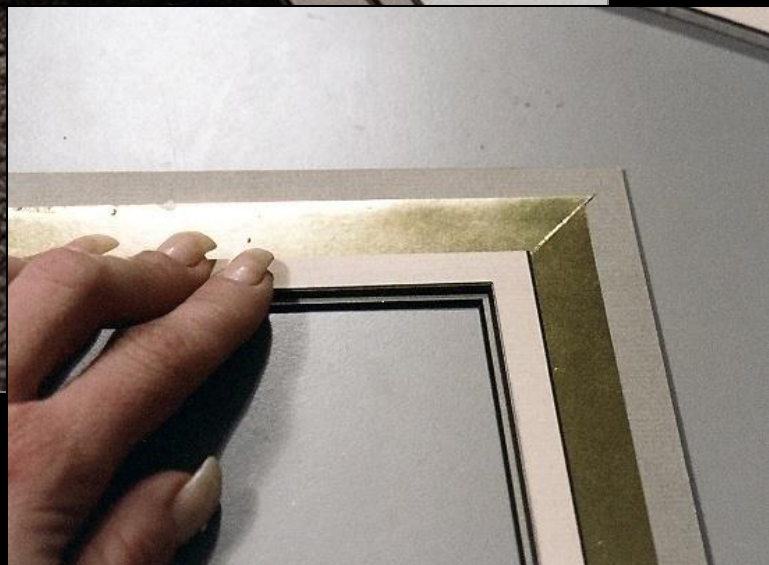
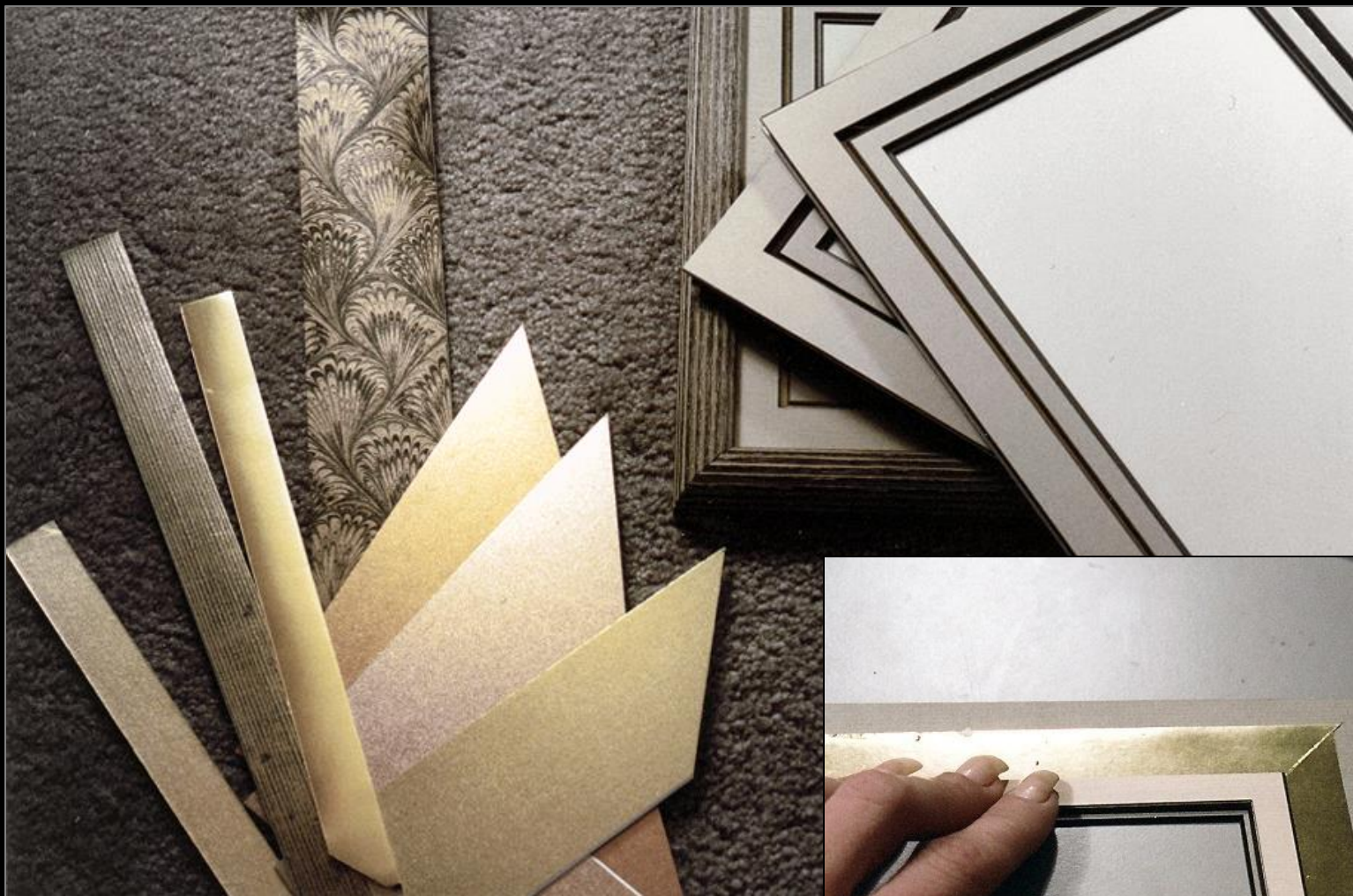


Metallic Bases



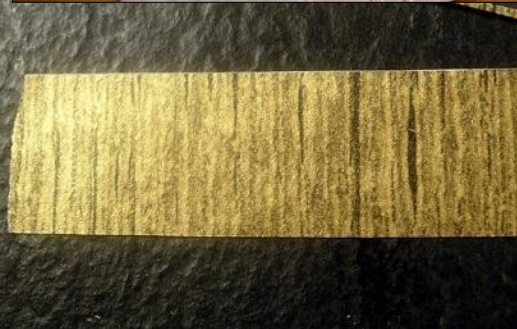
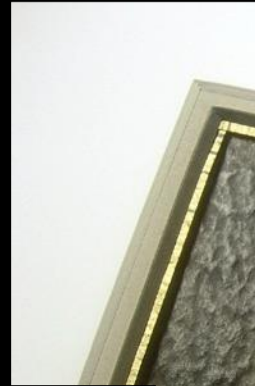
NORIS Gold Leaf (Germany)

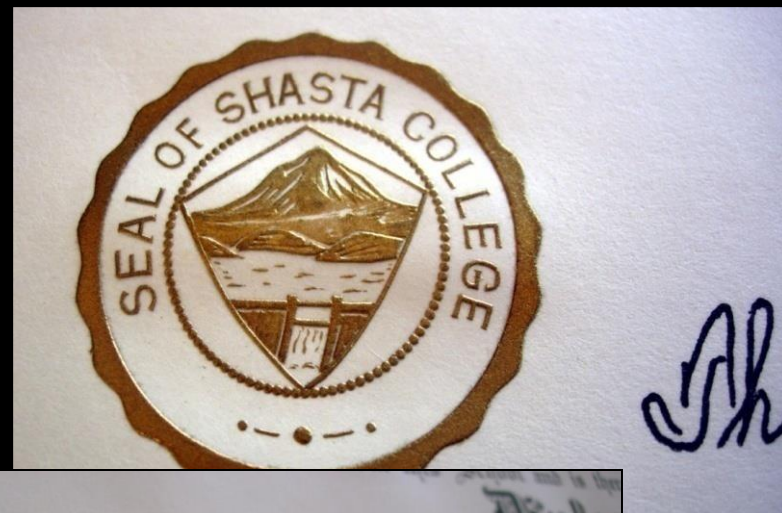


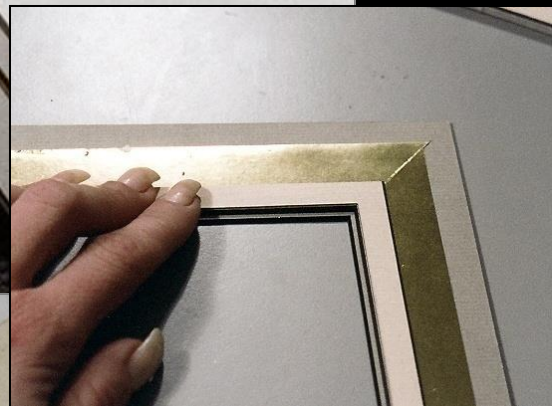


Metallic Bases

Must match frame,
mat, fillet and gold
used within art
or document

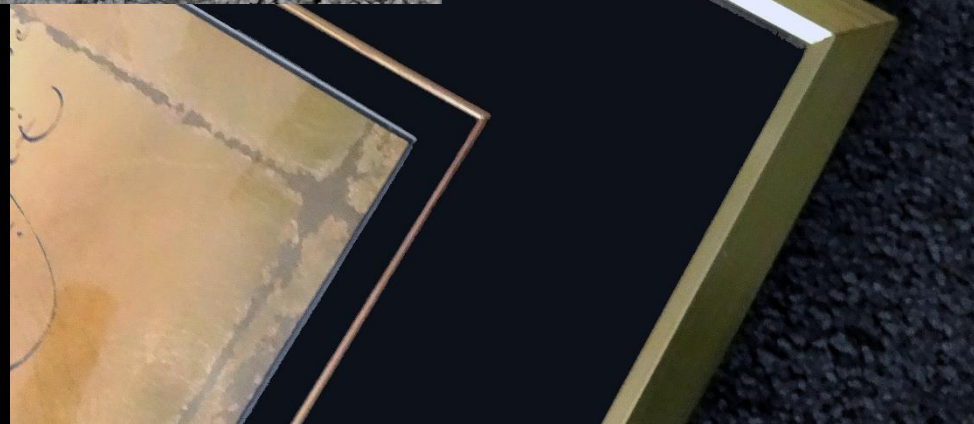
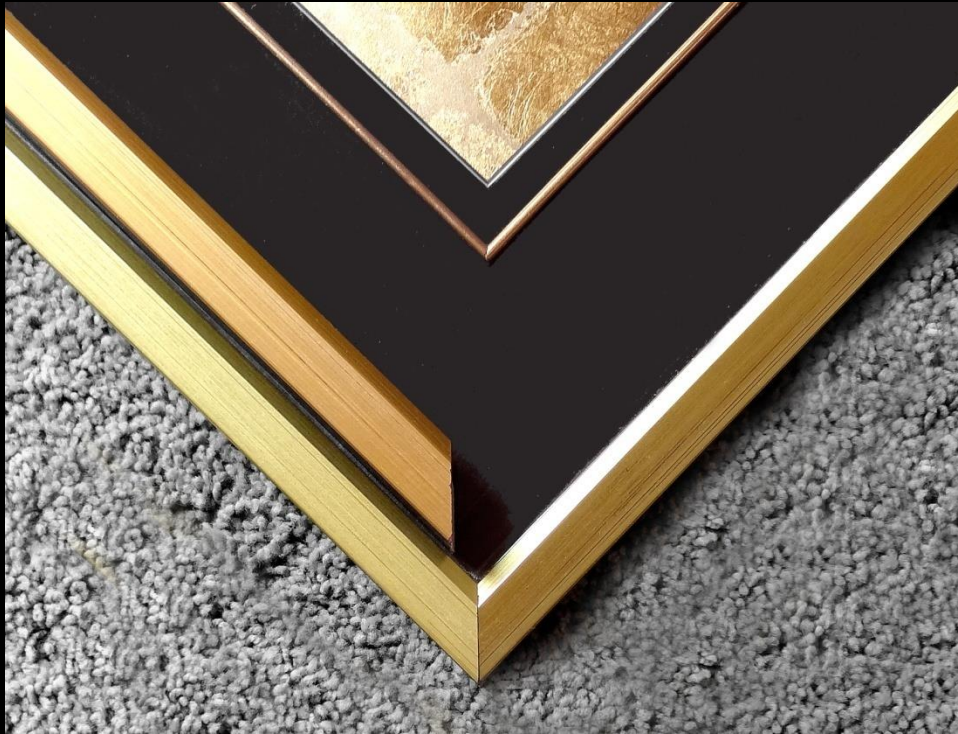








Faded Gold Moulding



Gold matches
tones and warmth
in painting





Common plein air profile
Good color match to cooler tones in art





Soft brushed gold
tones harmonize
with the encaustic
medium



Soft brushed
antique silver
works with melted
opaque waxes





Crème rag top mat

Wrapped textured
bevel for rhythm

Liner white to
match background





Torn paper
accents





Mat color vs. Wide frame color

Mat Color Selection – Rules of Thumb

1. Dominant art color = top mat color selection

There are exceptions to every rule

Consider textures and contrasts

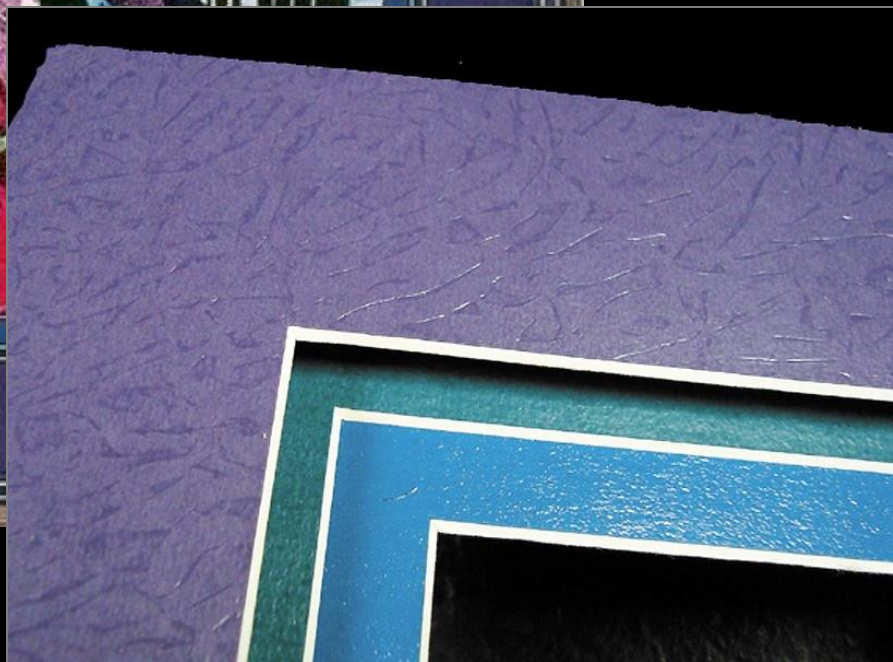
2. Secondary art color = middle mat or first accent

Second mat width does not have to be middle

3. Third art color = third mat or second accent

Can be as simple as red line on frame edge

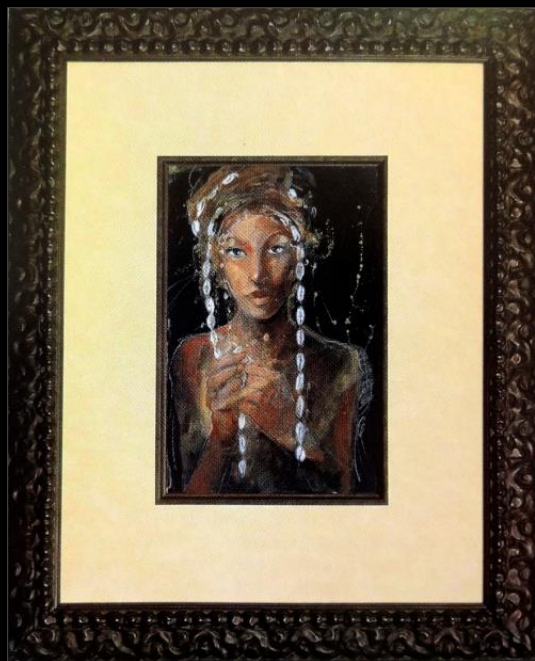
Or under tiered mat





Visual emphasis through color





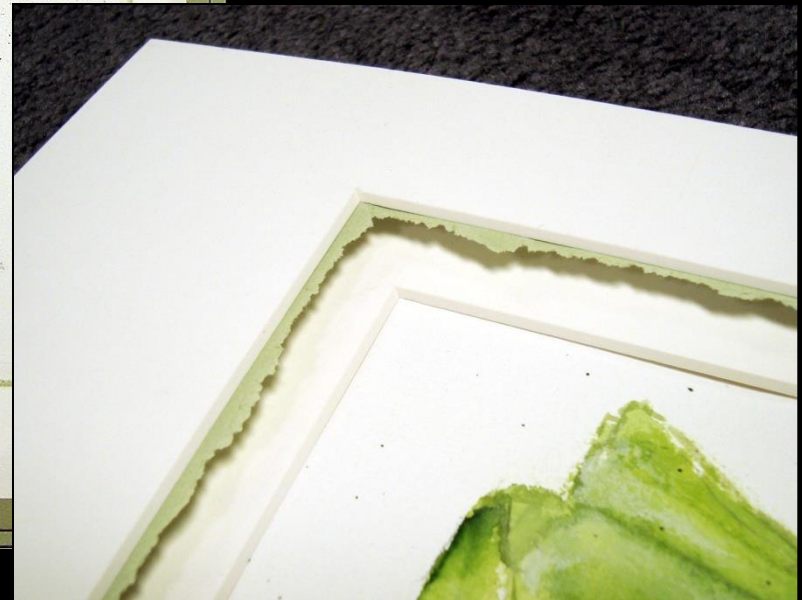
Color and Visual Focus



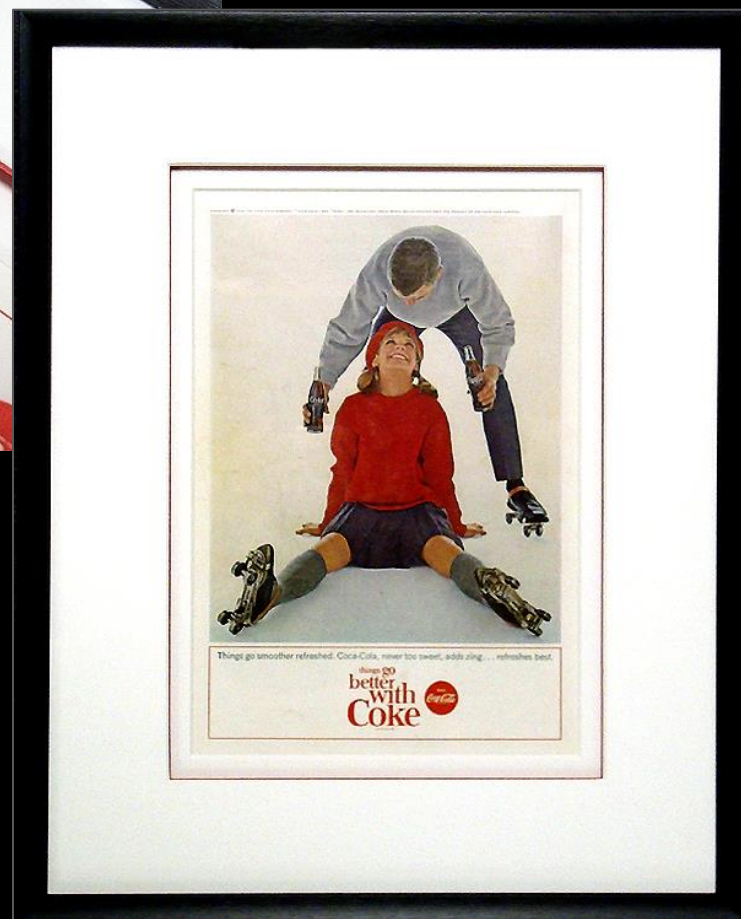
Grey Ansley stem frame pulls into the ink washes
Soft gold Cintra draws into the warmer yellows



White background
Green frame & deckle
Grey edge highlight



Under tiered top mat
Liner mat varied to
match aged ad





Dominant blue is too dark for top mat.
Brushed aluminum accents the airplane.
Deep bevel wrap and gray help integrate.

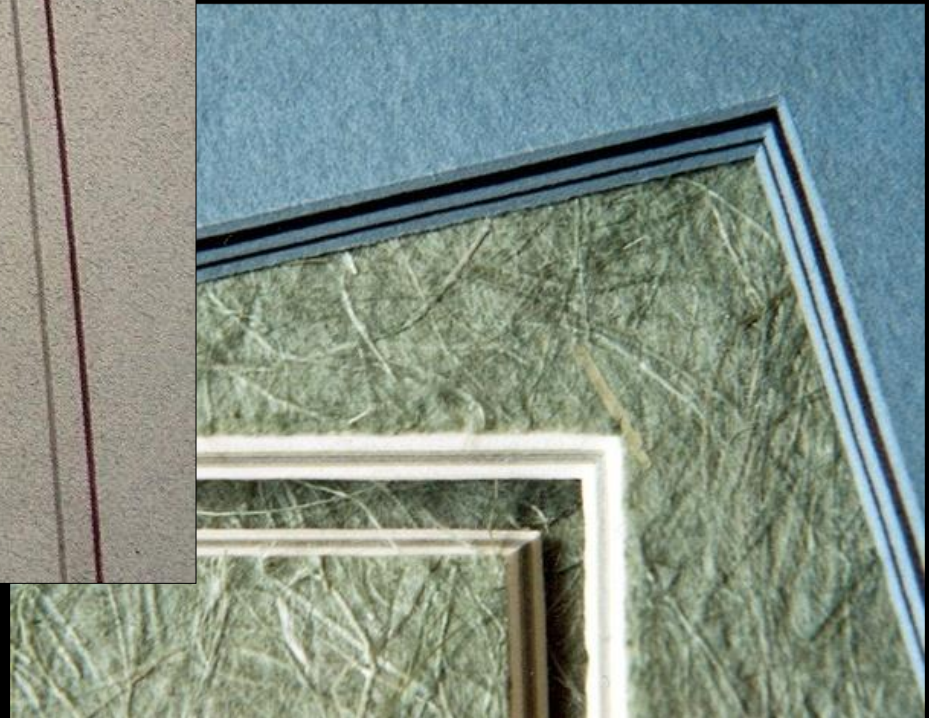


The traditional
pastel concept of
using white mats
to allow the art to
showcase itself

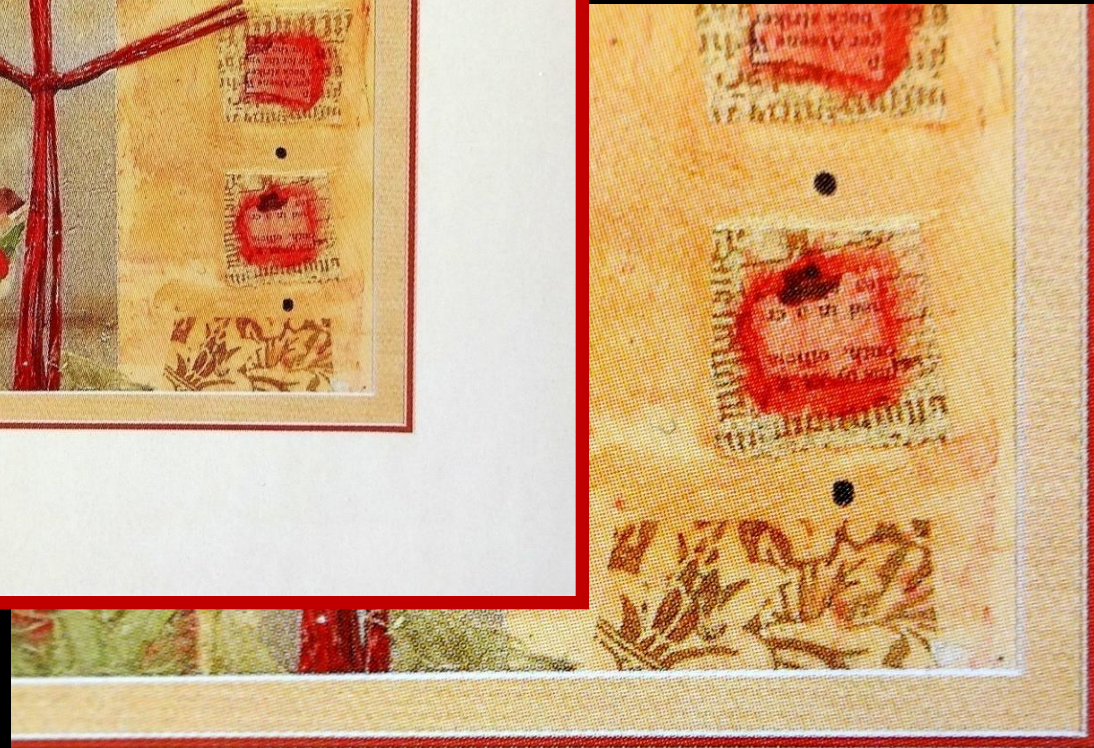


Softened transition
of antique whites,
brightest on top,
using a copper
frame to unify
with color

Color & Line



Color, Line & Repetition



Color, Line & Texture







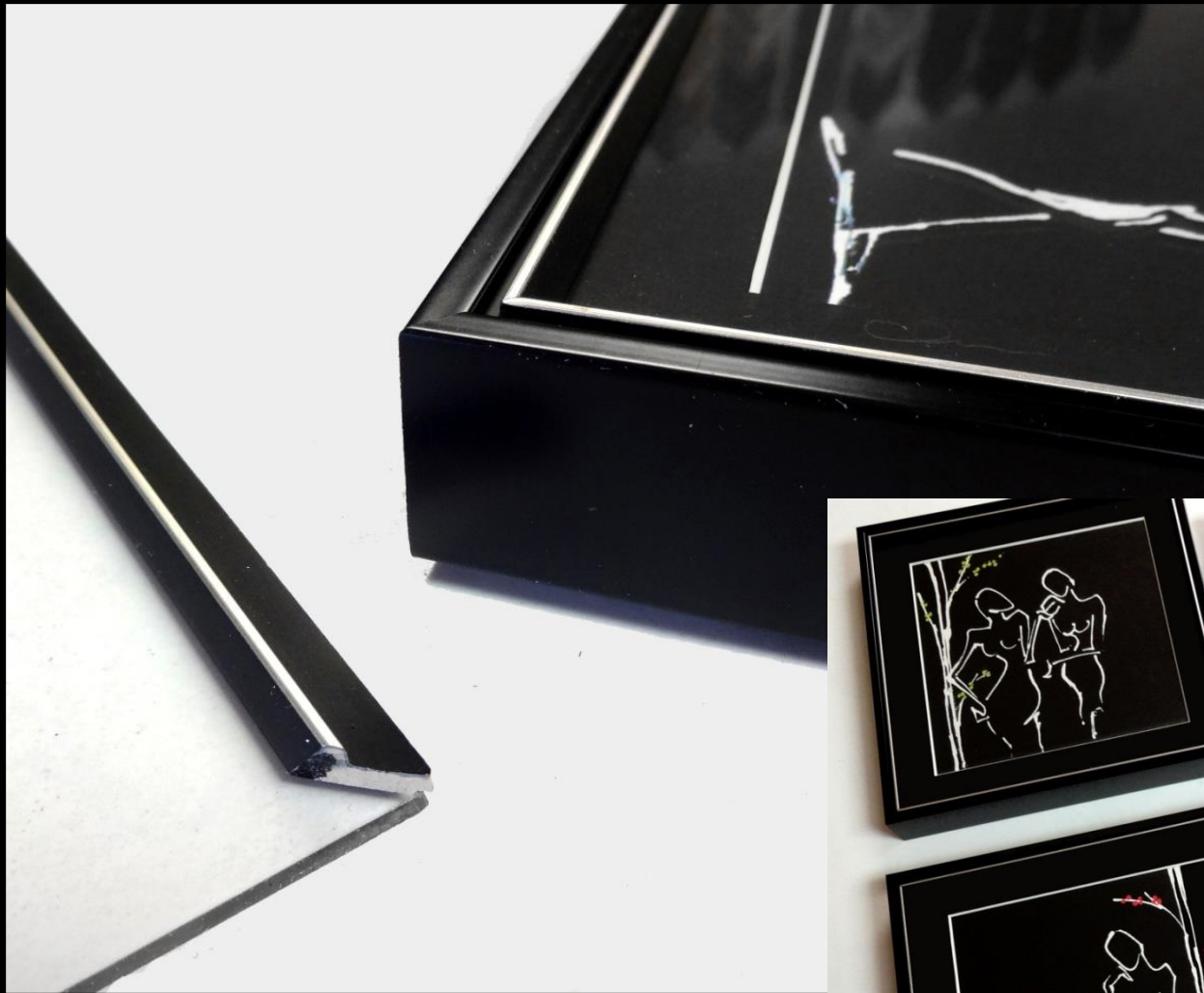


Color & Rhythm





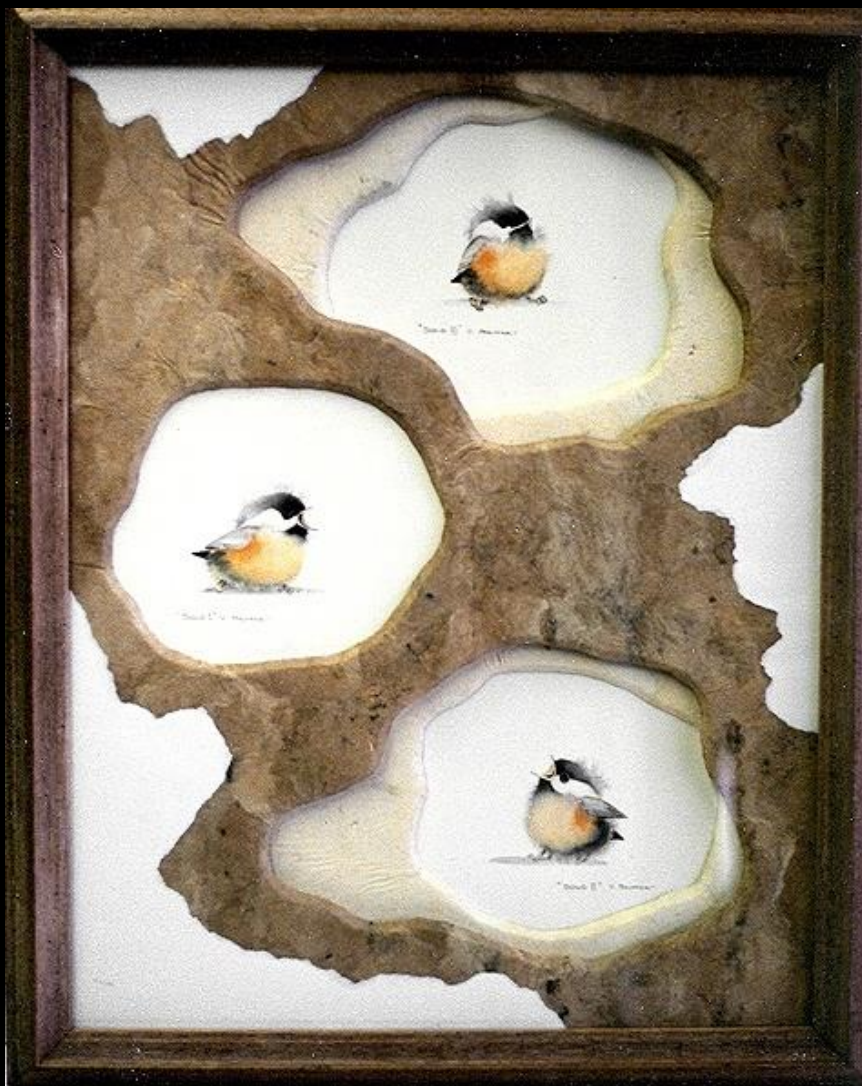
Surface tiered (T)
Matte laminated (B)





Color + Shape, Space

Shape = positive, object use
Space = void or negative use



Little Birds

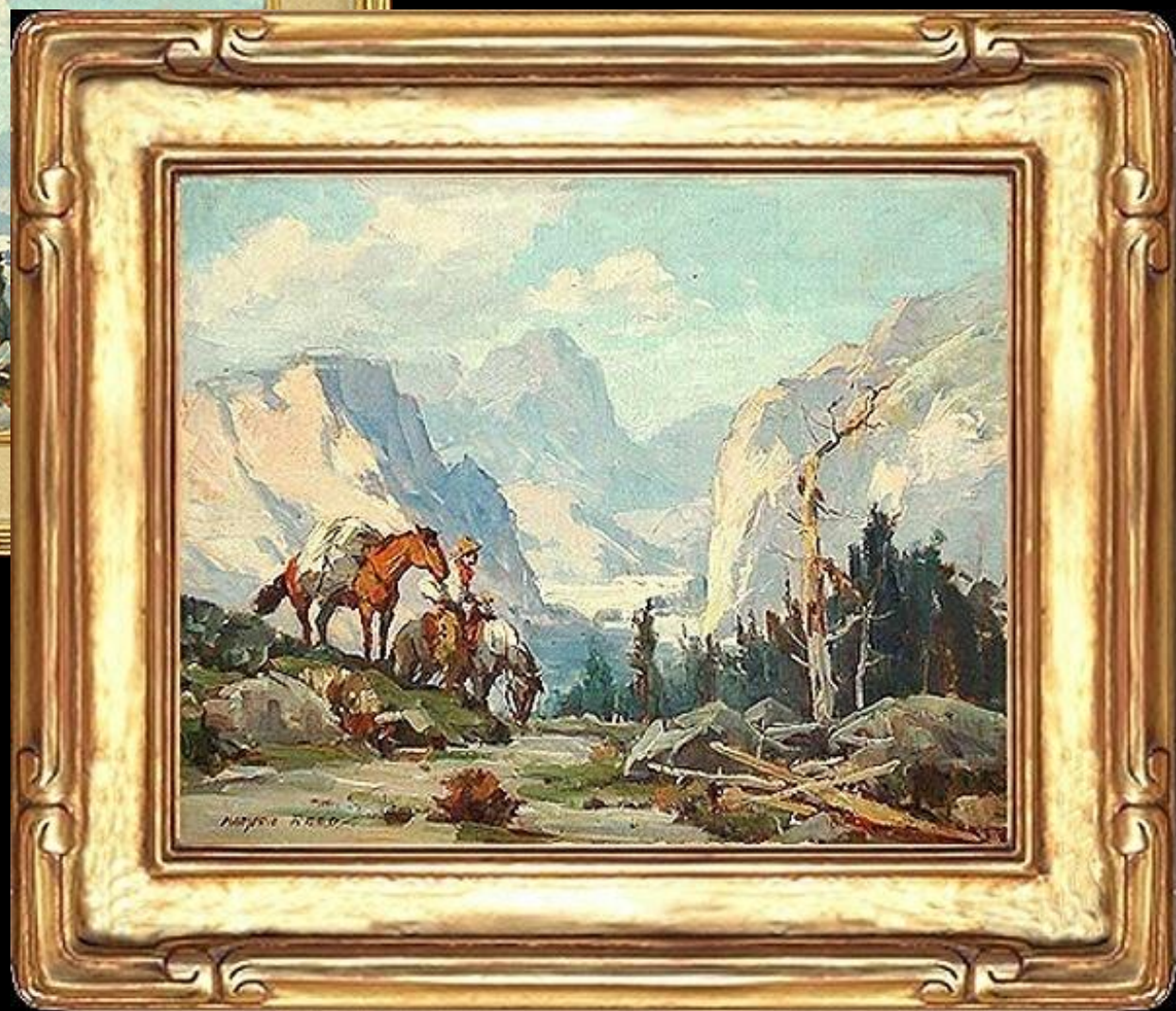
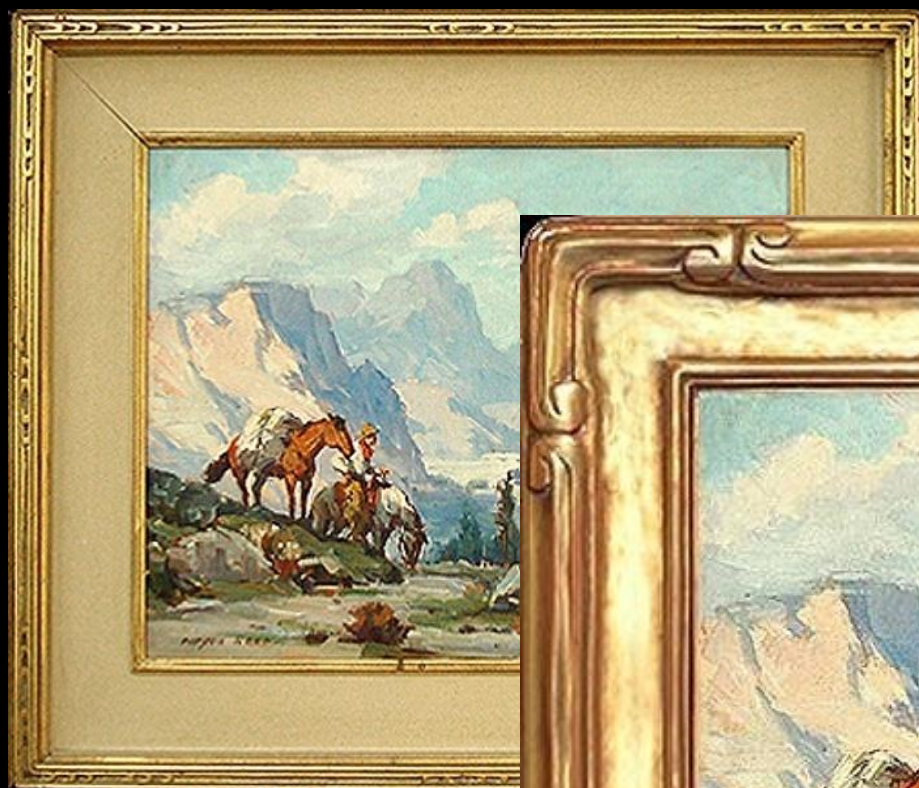
Double deep wrapped
bevel freeform window
mats of 3/16"
AF foamboard, spacers,
topped with white rag
paper shaped to break up
the textured bark paper.

Color & Style (Era/Period)









European

Black = Grief, death, void, nothingness

White = Purity, innocence

Yellow/Orange = Warmth, newness

Pink = Tenderness, poetry

Red = Love, passion, desire, fire

Violet = Meditation, mystery, occult, exotic

Purple = Aristocratic, royal, worldly

Blue = Loyalty, isolation, honesty, sadness

Green/Blue-green = Earth, naturalism, Zen

Brown = Earthiness, solidity, firmness

Asian

Black = Immortality, knowledge, power

Grey = Dullness, indefinite

White = Death, mourning, spirits, ghosts

Yellow = Clarity, reliability, royalty

Orange = Change, spontaneity

Pink = Love

Red = Wedding, luck, happiness, joy, life

Purple = Spiritual healing, strength,

Blue = Healing, calmness, immortality

Blue/Green = Vigor, vitality, longevity,

Green = Calm, healing, health, harmony

Brown = Industriousness, grounded

Science of Color

Physicists tell us about the make-up of color composition and explain how the human eye perceives a given color.

Science of Color

Physicists tell us about the make-up of color composition and explain how the human eye perceives a given color.

Psychologists tell us how color affects us physically and emotionally.

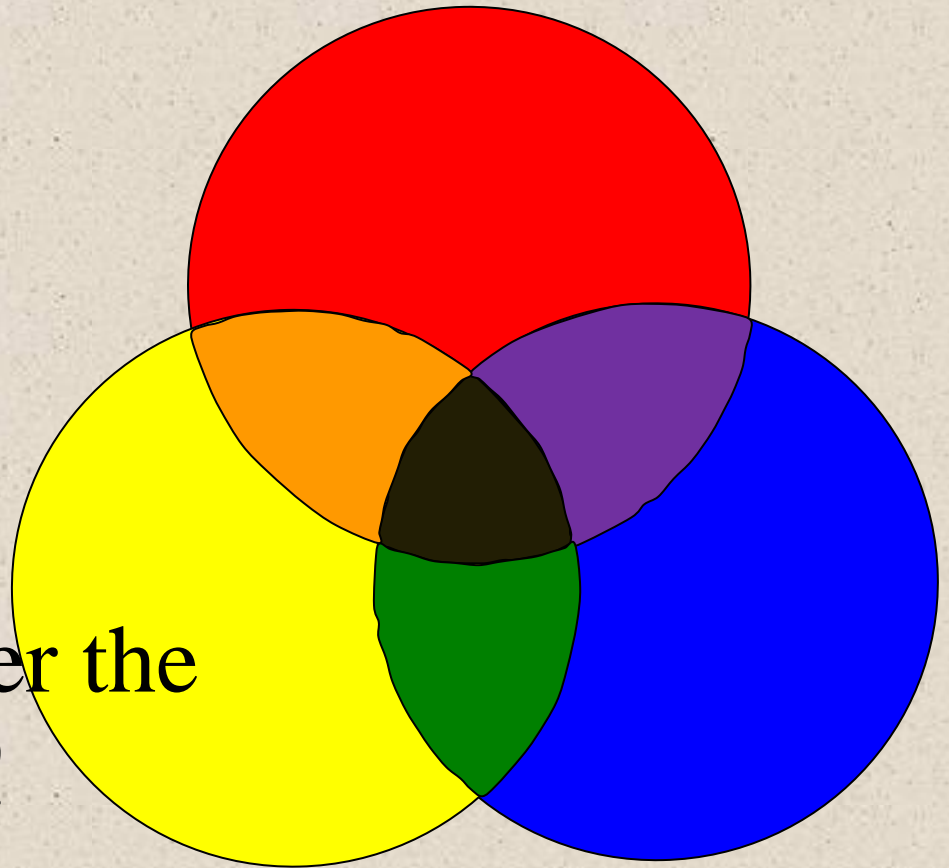
Science of Color

Physicists tell us about the make-up of color composition and explain how the human eye perceives a given color.

Psychologists tell us how color affects us physically and emotionally.

It is up to the frame designer to assimilate all of this information and sell it to the client as the most dynamic solution possible.

Color...consider the
possibilities!



Additional Resources

Bevlin, Marjorie Elliott. DESIGN THROUGH DISCOVERY.

New York: Holt Rinehart Winston, 1984.

Graves, Maitland. ART OF COLOR DESIGN. 1951.

Itten, Johannes. THE ELEMENTS OF COLOR. New York: Reinhold, 1970.

Leland, Nita. THE CREATIVE ARTIST. Cincinnati: North Light Books, 1990.

Mayer, Ralph. A DICTIONARY OF TERMS AND TECHNIQUES.

New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1969.

Perkins, Greg. GREAT FRAME DESIGNS. New Jersey: PFM Books, 2009.

Wong, Wucius. PRINCIPLES OF COLOR DESIGN.

New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1987.

Paschke, Chris A., Designs Ink, <http://www.designsinkart.com/library.htm>

***"The Design Process"*, PFM, 12 part series, 1994.**

***"Design And Critique"*, PFM series, 1997.**

***"The Essence of Design"*, PFM, 12 part series, 2000-2001.**

Other Paschke classes WCAF 2024

Design Elements: Shades of Gray

Monday, 1:00-3:00pm

Mastering Mounting: Sensitive Items

Monday, 3:30-5:30pm

Mastering Mounting: Float Frame Trends

Tuesday, 9:00-11:00am

Mastering Mounting: Handling Digitals

Tuesday, 12:30-2:30pm

Paschke Online
Article Archive and Reference Library

<https://designsinkart.com/library.shtml>

Articles by Subject:
West Coast Art & Frame PowerPoint and PDF



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