

Foundations of Studio Art: 2D

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Exercise: Color Wheel + Chromatic Value Scale

After Newton discovered spectral colors of sunlight, he arranged the colors into a graphic diagram we commonly know as the **color wheel**, a circular arrangement of the seven colors of the visible spectrum (ROY G BIV). Today, the most common wheel has 12 colors, largely due to the influence of Johannes Itten, a Swiss painter, designer, teacher, theorist, and author of *The Art of Color*. The 12 section wheel contains the 3 **primary**, 3 **secondary**, and 6 **tertiary** colors of the **subtractive colors**.

Each color has 3 separate physical properties that can actually be measured with scientific instruments: **Hue, Intensity, and value**.

Value refers to the lightness or darkness of a color. A **Chromatic Value Scale** shows the progressive changes of a color from light to dark. The example below shows a Red **value scale**, with 6 variations of **tint** (white added), and 6 variations of **shade** (black added). The scale begins with true Red (straight from the tube) in the middle, and transitions to black on one side and white on the other, giving us a full range of **value** for Red.

Specifics:

Color Wheel:

- On a large sheet of paper draw a 15" circle in the middle, using your compass or by tracing a stool from the studio.
- Within the big circle draw a smaller circle 11" or so in diameter.
- Label the wheel like a clock (1-12) and draw dividing lines or "slices" through the circle to make your 12 sections.
- Paint in your **primary** colors at 12, 4, and 8, in no particular order. Mix your **primaries** to make **secondaries** and add those at equal intervals at 2, 6, and 10.
- Mix a **secondary** and **Primary** to create your **tertiary colors** and add them in the appropriate sections.
- You may choose to mix two **complimentary colors** to make a **chromatic gray** in the middle.

Value Scale:

- On a new large piece of paper draw 15 quadrants, each $\frac{3}{4}$ "x6", and label 1-15.
- Paint in section 8 with either Red or Blue, straight from the tube.
- Create 6 tints and 6 shades and fill in accordingly.
- Section 1 and 15 should be true white and true black, straight from the tube.

HINT: Dark colored pigments are stronger than light colors. Trying to add red to black will still give you black. Adding a tiny bit of black to red will give you more control and save you on paint. Always start with your lighter colors and add darker colors to them.

