

Design Elements: Understanding Color

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Lecture Sponsored by Specialty Matboard

West Coast Art & Frame Expo, Las Vegas 2018

Color

is the most emotional and
expressive element in design.

Principles of Design

Elements
are the easily identifiable
building blocks

Line



Texture

Emphasis

Space

Intensity

Shape

Proportion

Rhythm

UNITY

Fundamentals
are mortar that
hold the blocks
together

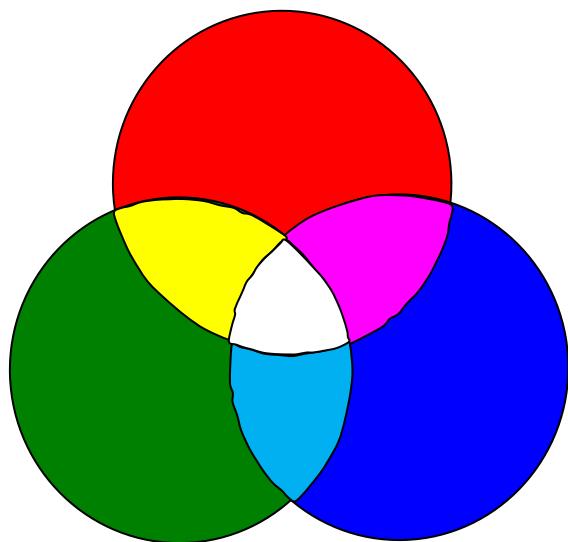
Definition of Color

“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

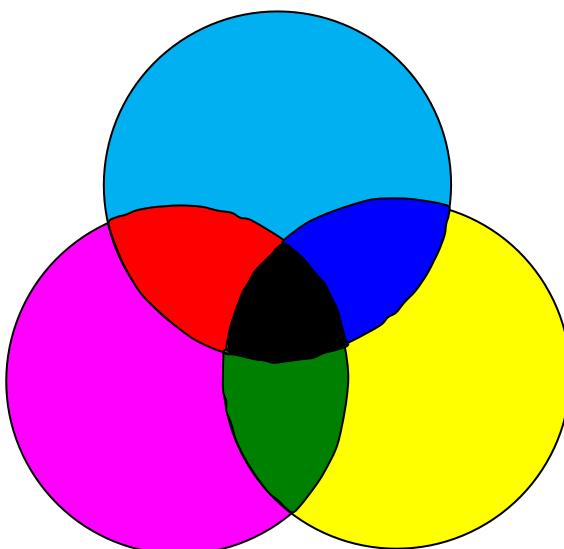
Color Theories

Additive
Light



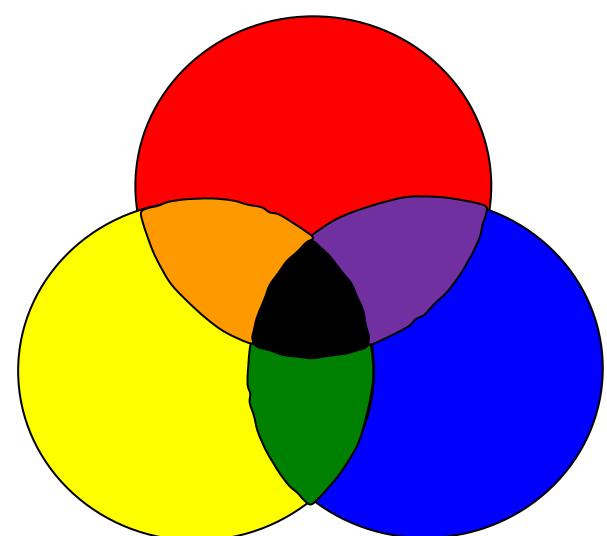
Lighting

Subtractive
Digital Pigment



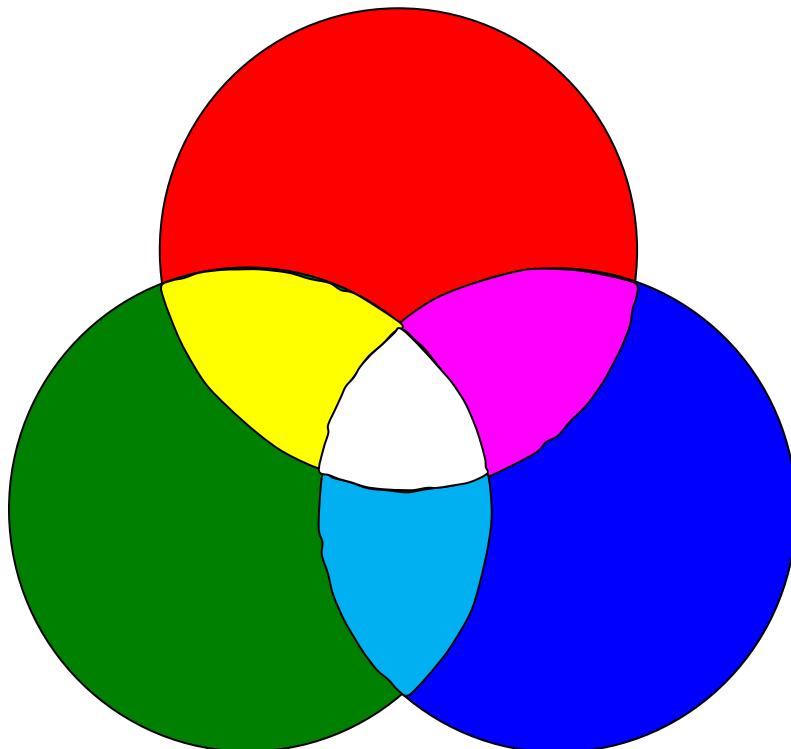
Printers

Subtractive
Artist Pigment



Framing

Additive Color Theory (LIGHT)



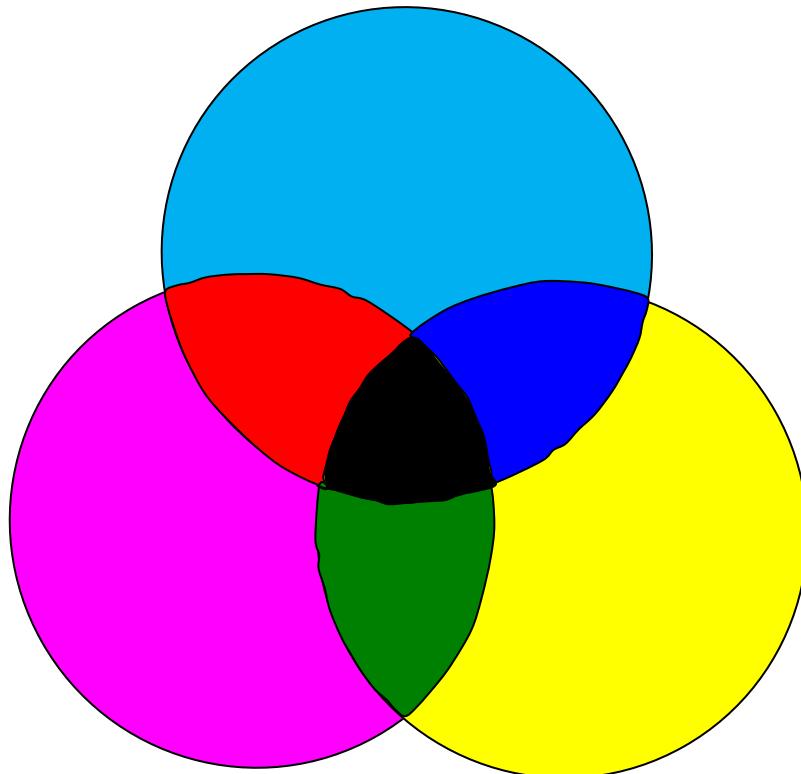
Primaries of red, green, blue (RGB) create secondaries of yellow, cyan, magenta.

All six combined create white, as all the colors in light are present and absorbed.

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

Subtractive Color Theory

(DIGITAL/PRINT)

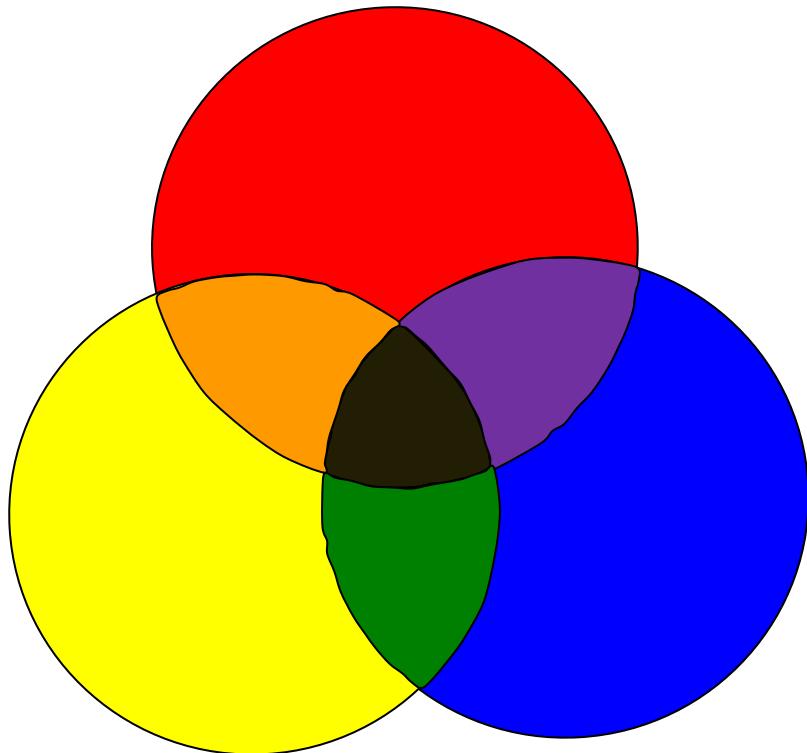


Primaries are cyan, magenta, yellow (CMY) which create secondaries of red, green, blue.

All six combined do not add color, but subtract or absorb all light wavelengths creating black - the absence of color.

Subtractive Color Theory

(ARTIST PIGMENT)



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

When three primaries and three secondaries (all six) are blended...the result is muddy grey, brown or black.

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*

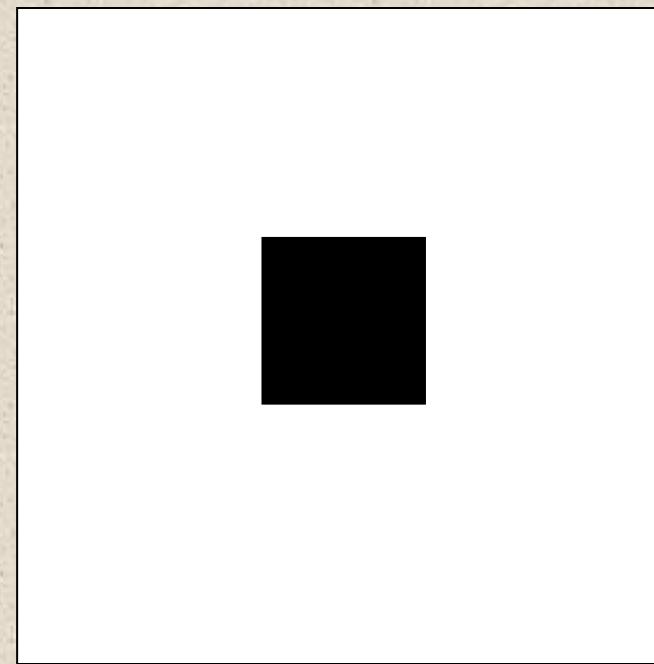
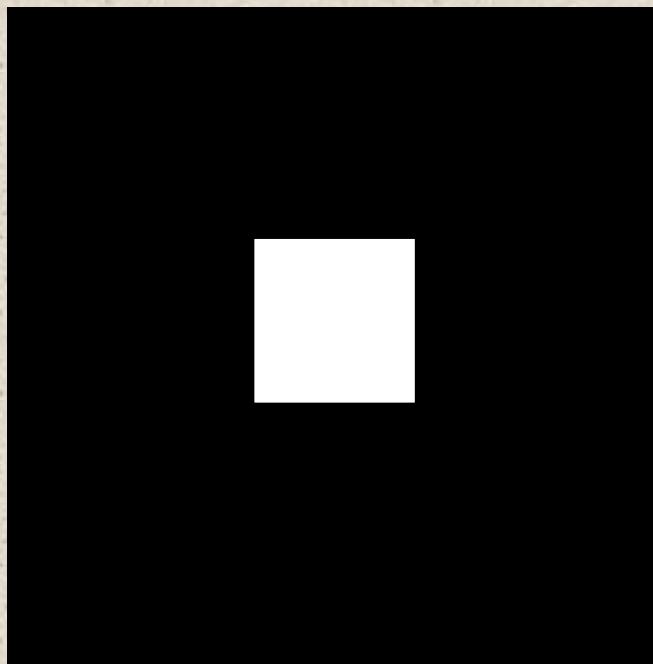
Hue - Position of a pure color in the spectrum that has not been dulled or diluted, no white, black or color added

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



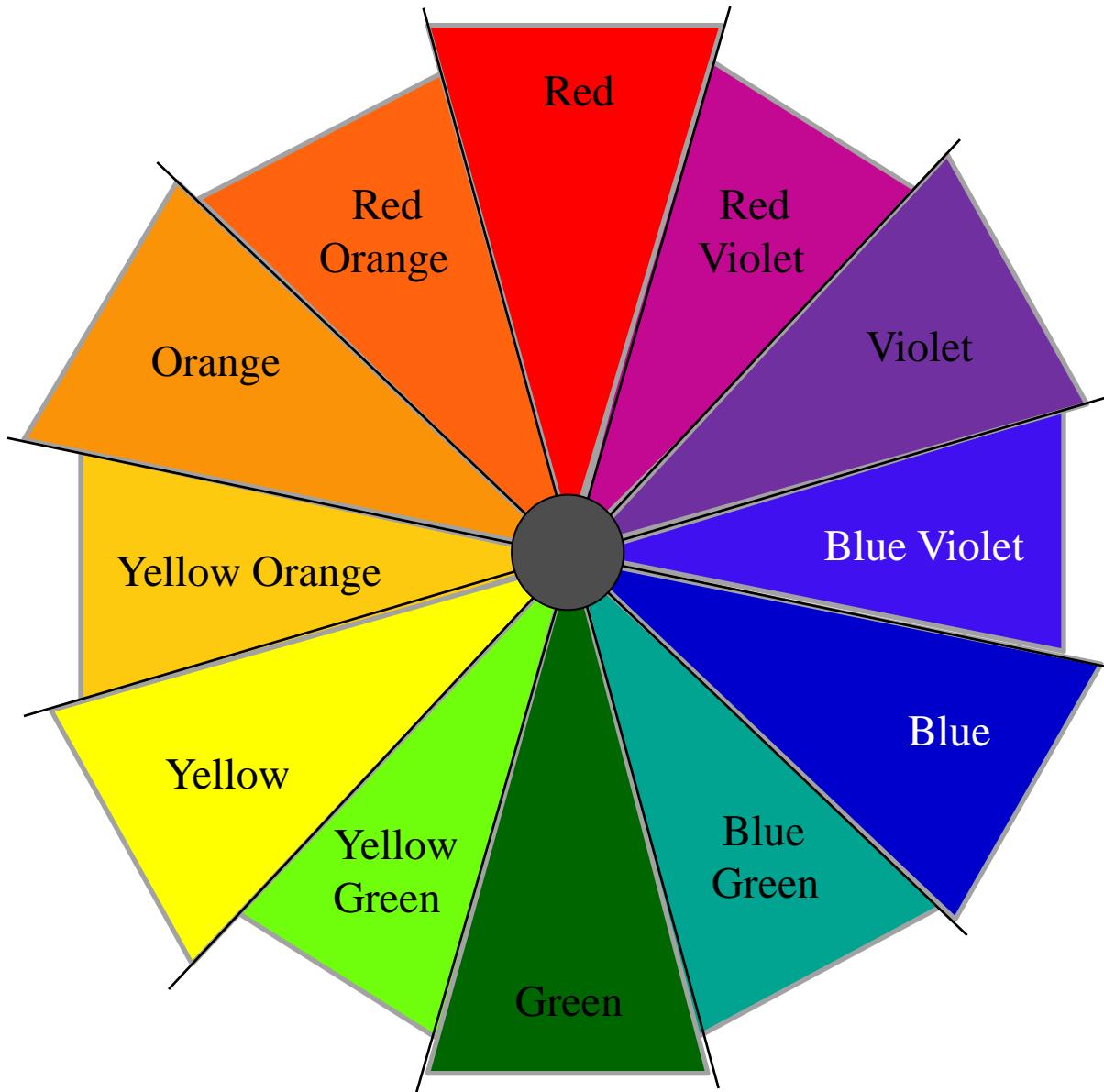
Warm white
expands image

Spacer adds depth
and shadows

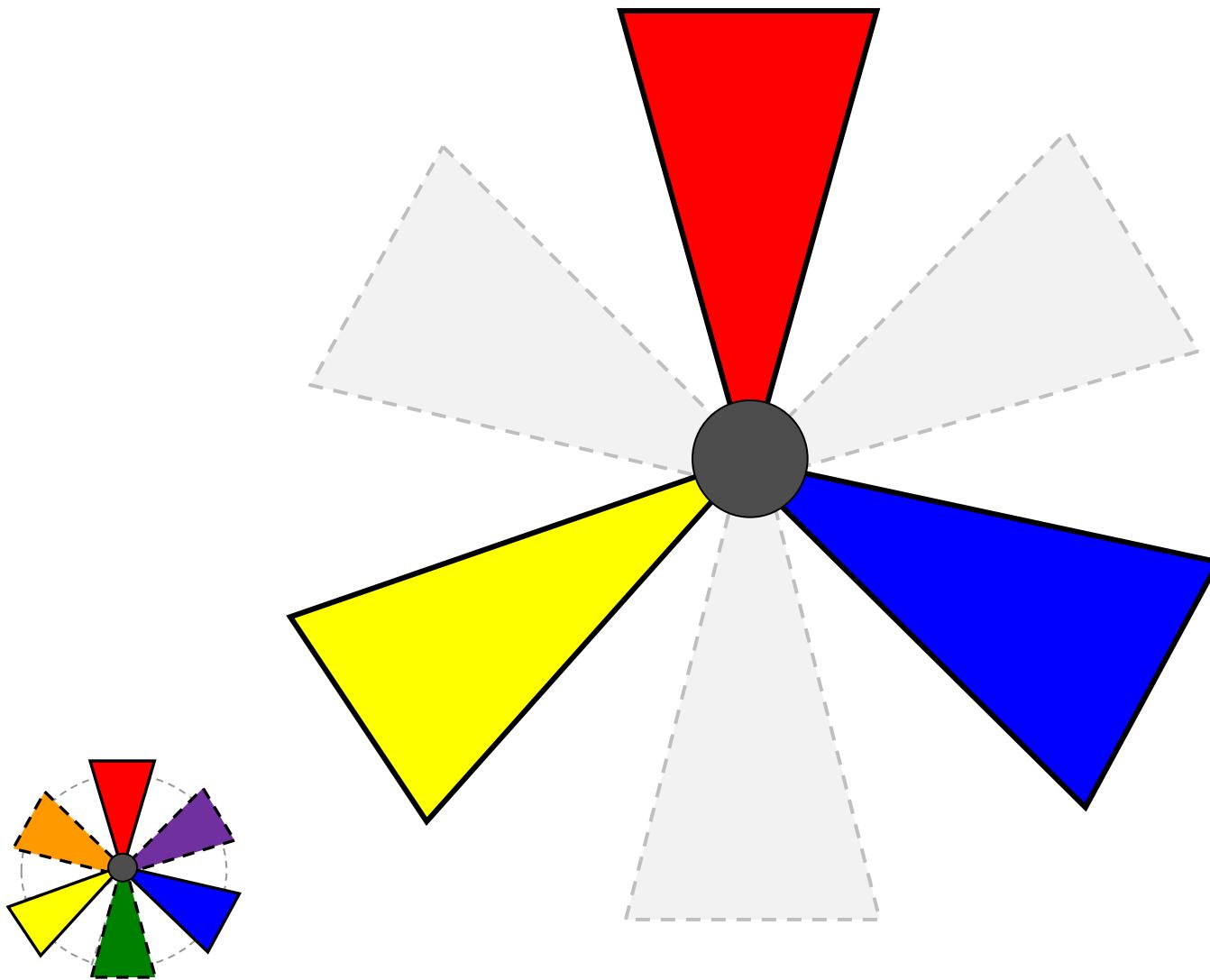
Top warm gray
Draws the eye
into the leaves



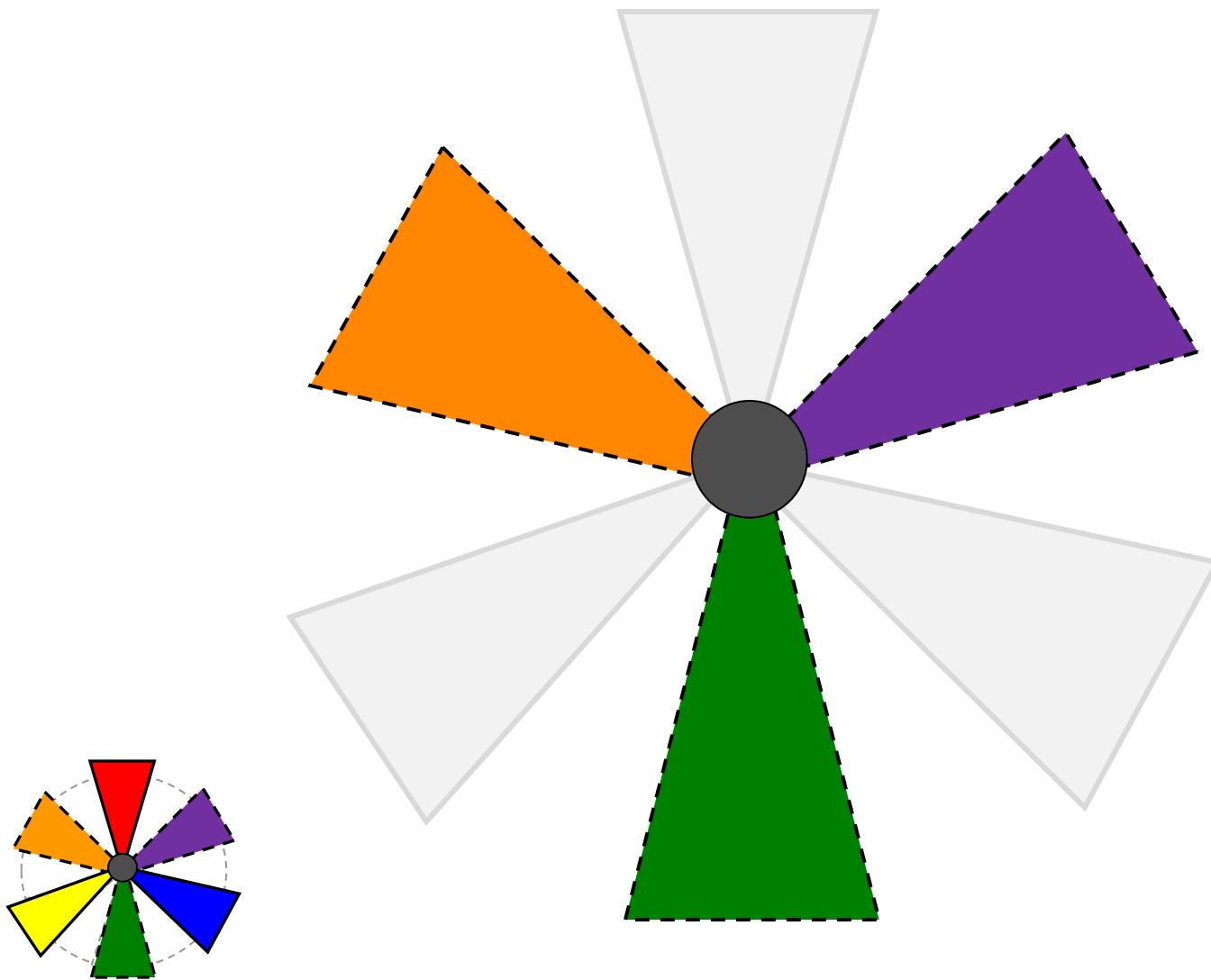
Color Wheel



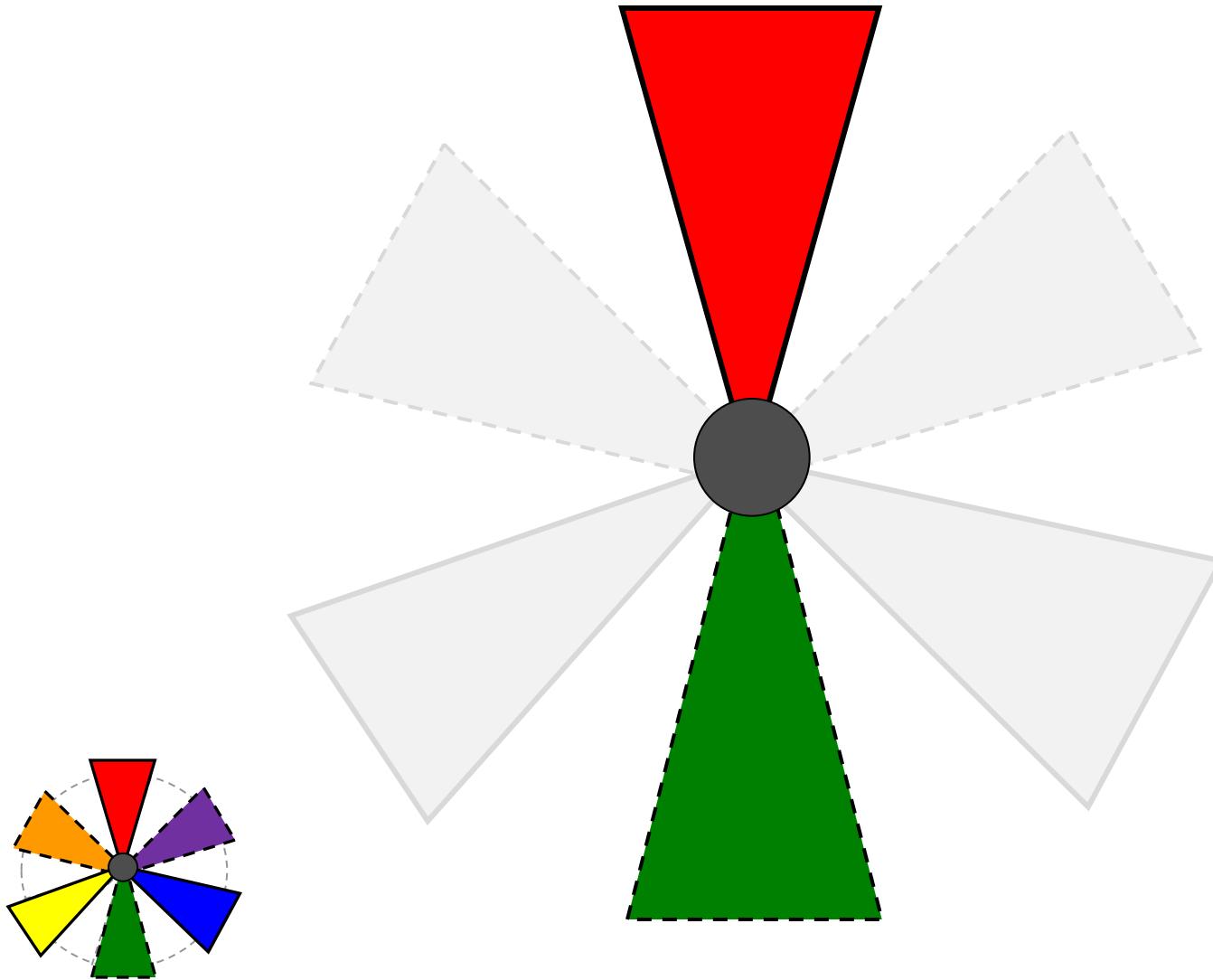
Primary Colors



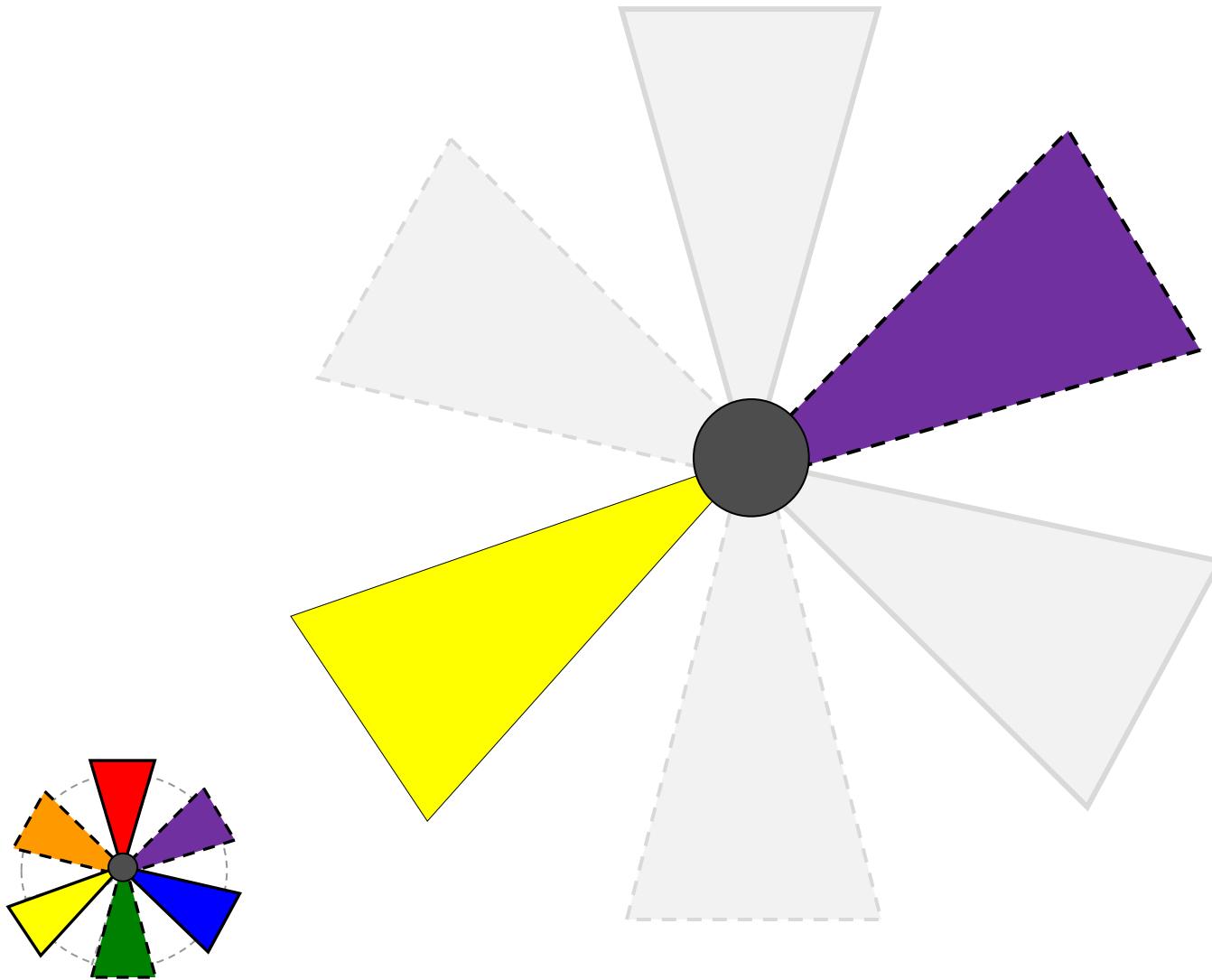
Secondary Colors



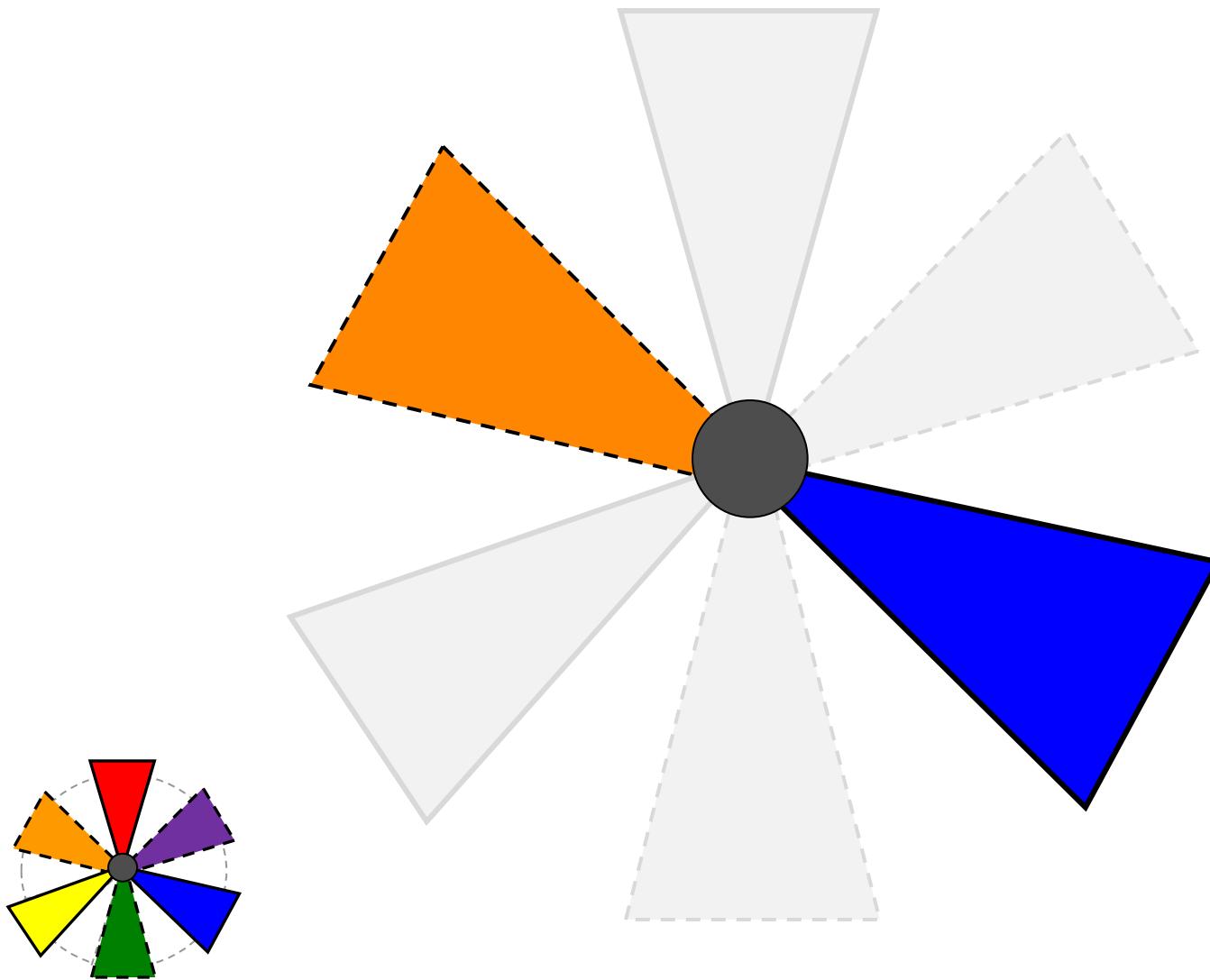
Complementary Colors



Complementary Colors

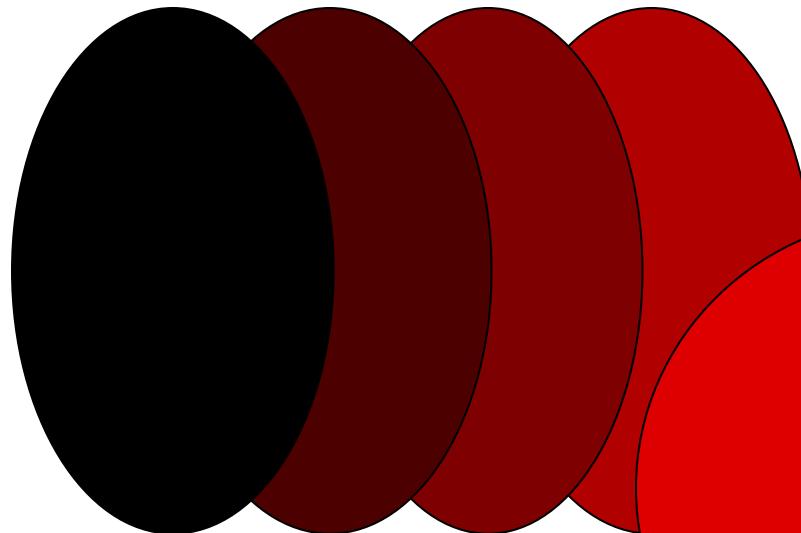


Complementary Colors



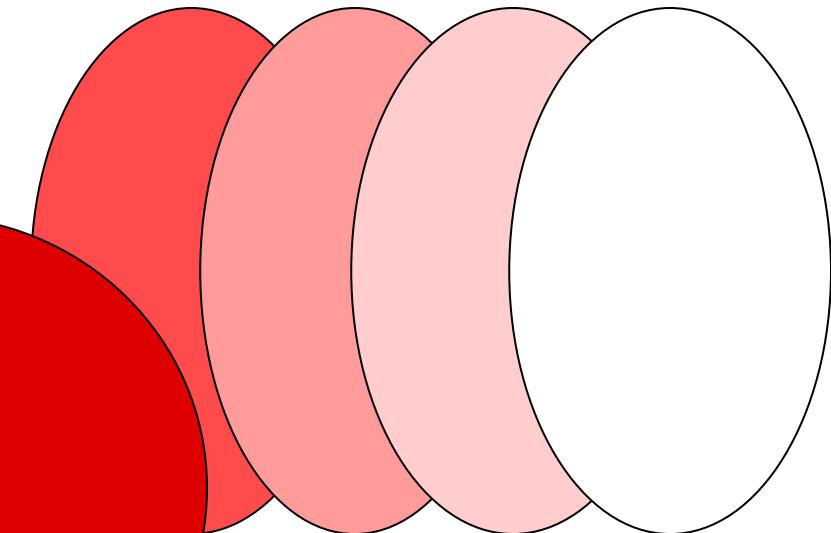
Shade

color plus black



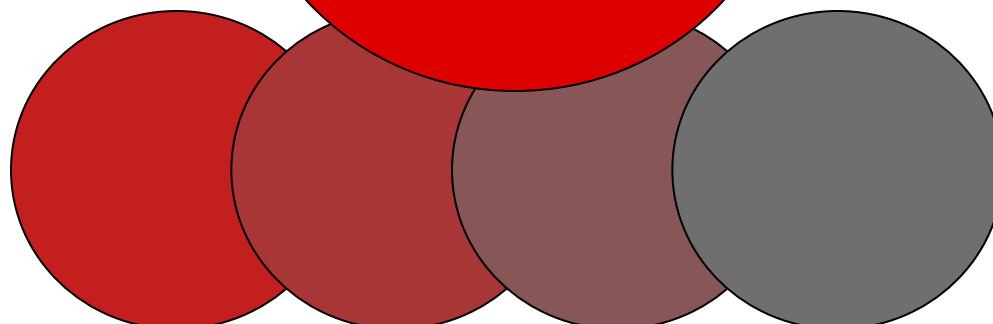
Tint

color plus white



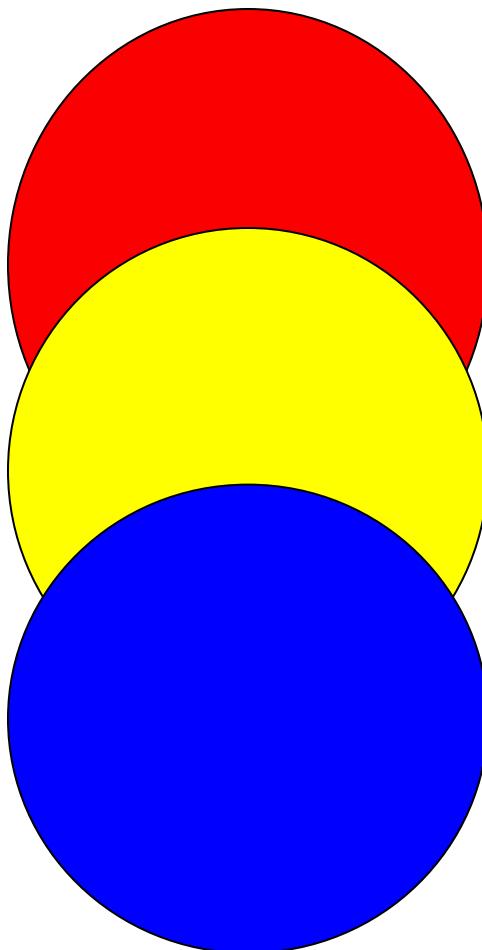
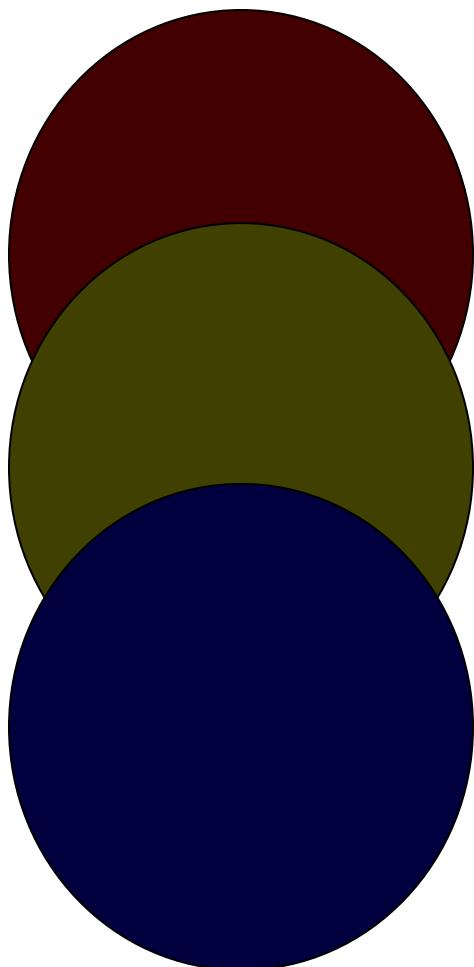
Tone

color plus gray

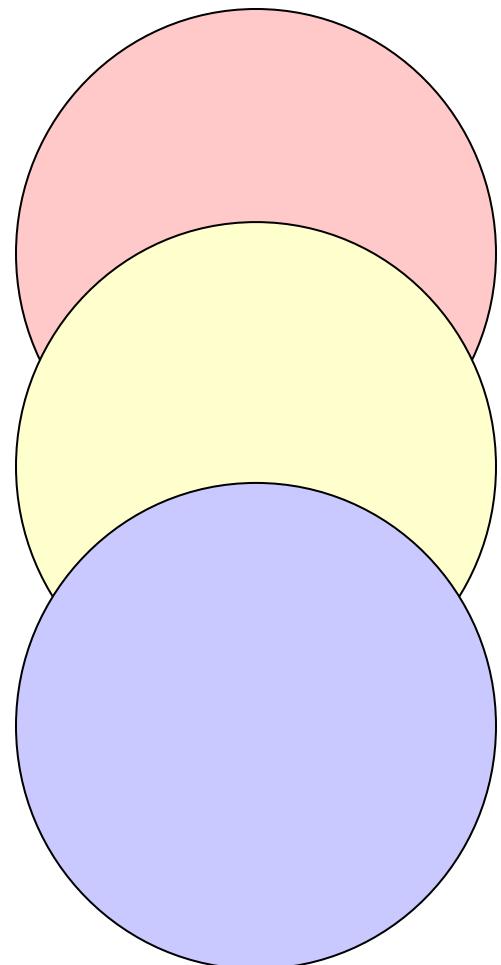


Primary Colors

Primary
as Shade



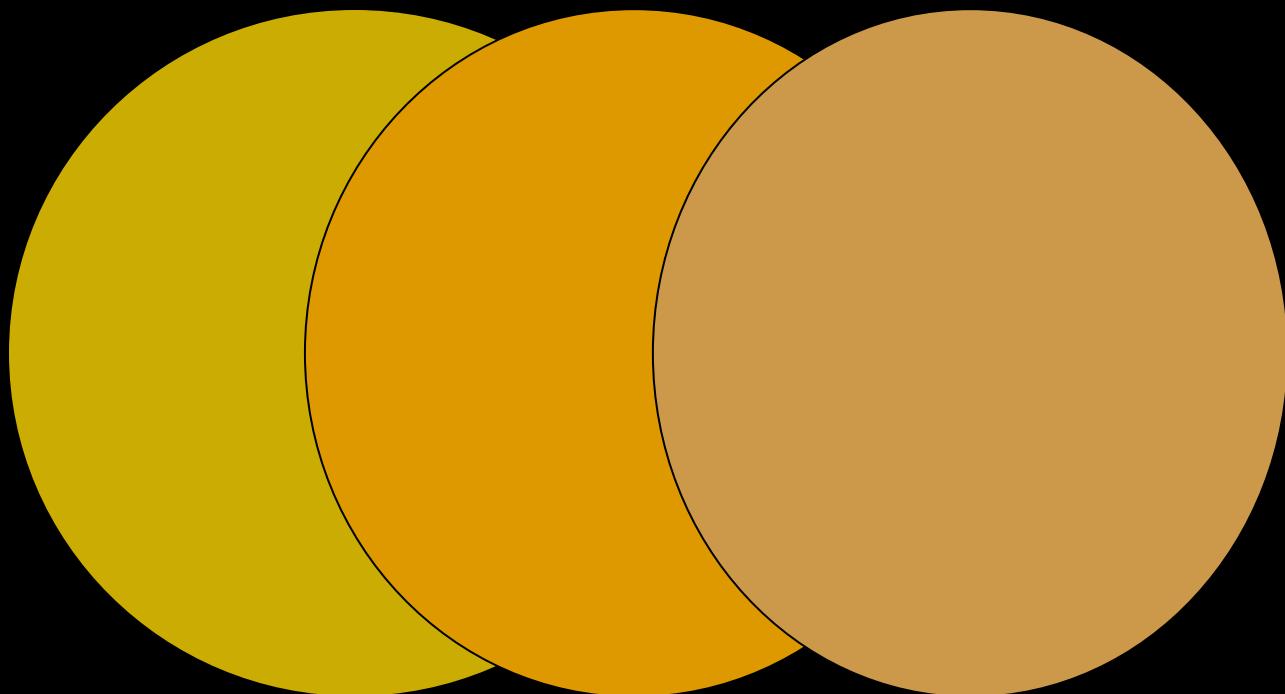
Primary
As Tint



Metallics



Metallic Bases



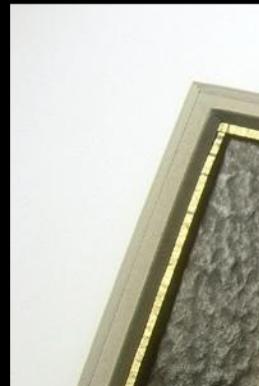
Yellow Base

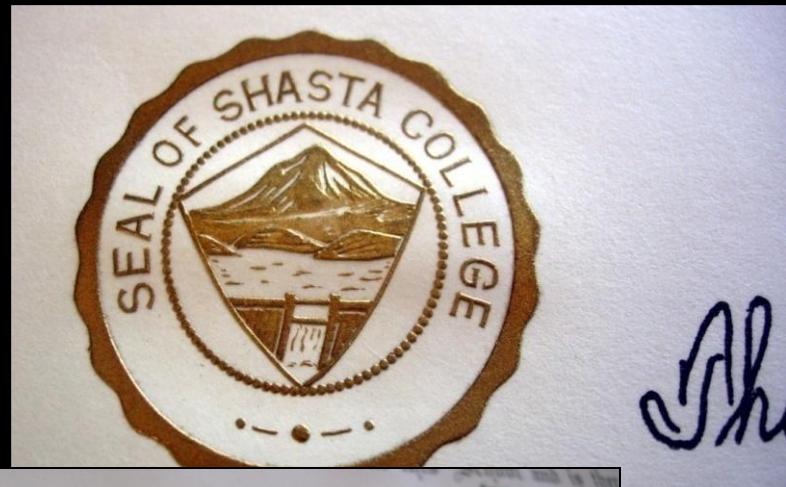
Red Base

Blue Base

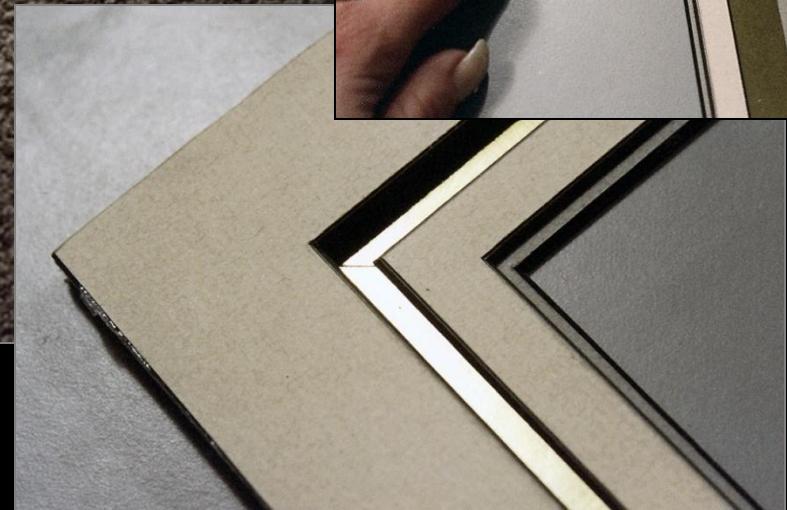
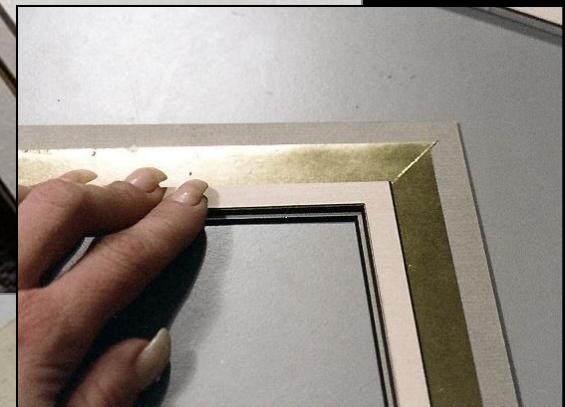
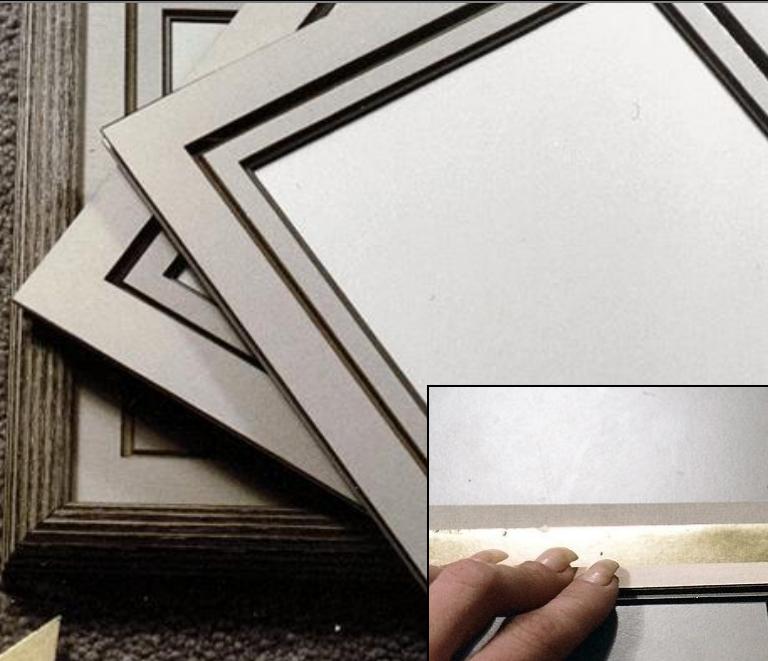
Metallic Bases

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

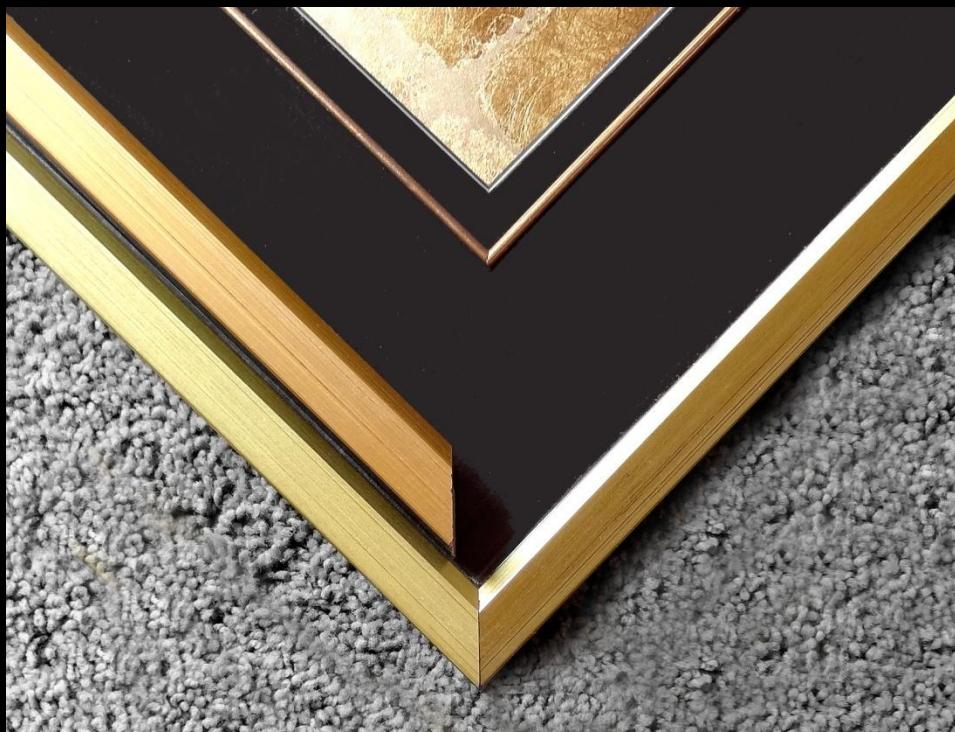




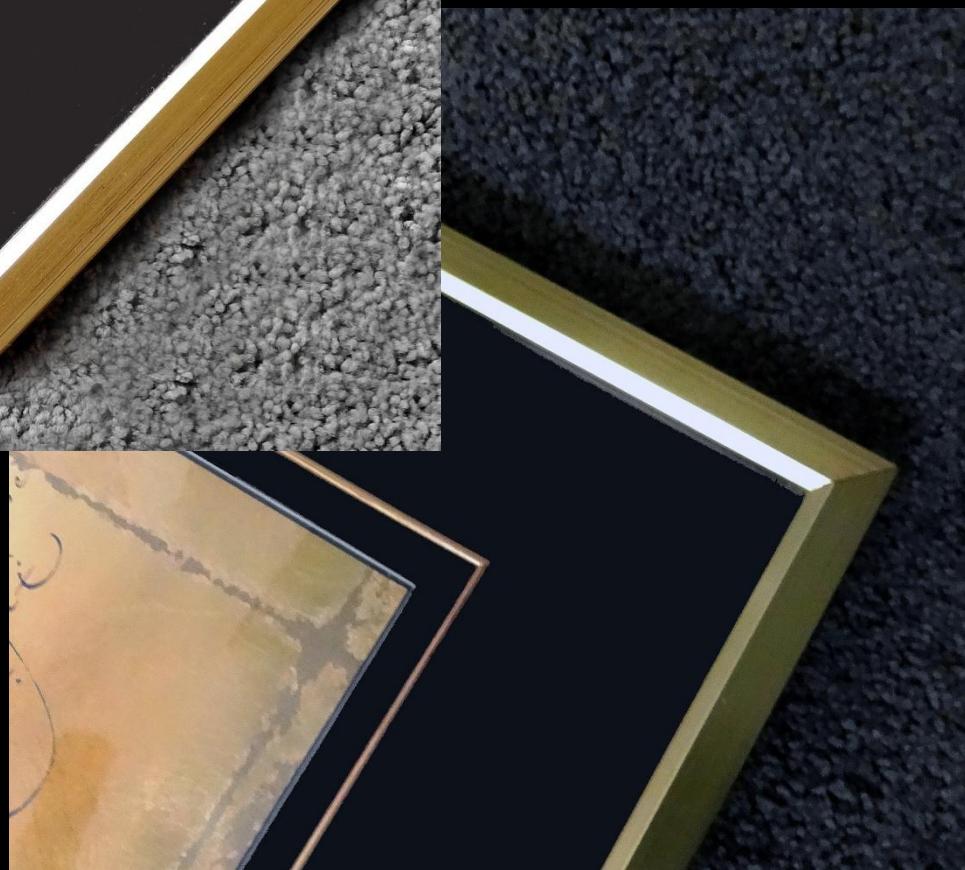
Sh







Faded Gold
Moulding





Specialty Matboard Glitter Collection

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 – Rule of Thumb

1. Dominant art color = top mat color selection

There are exceptions to every rule and if no mat,
this doesn't hold for the frame

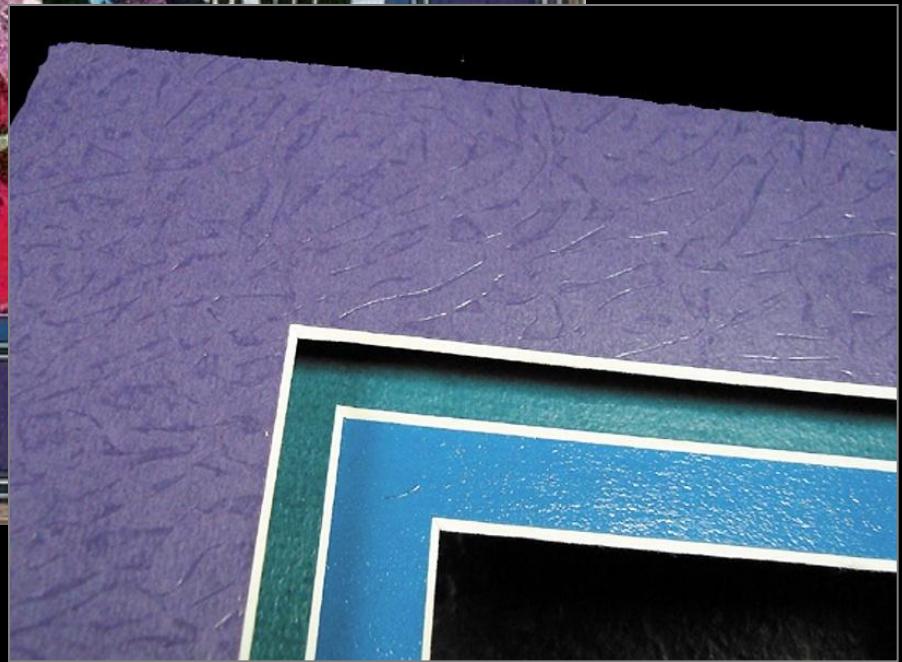
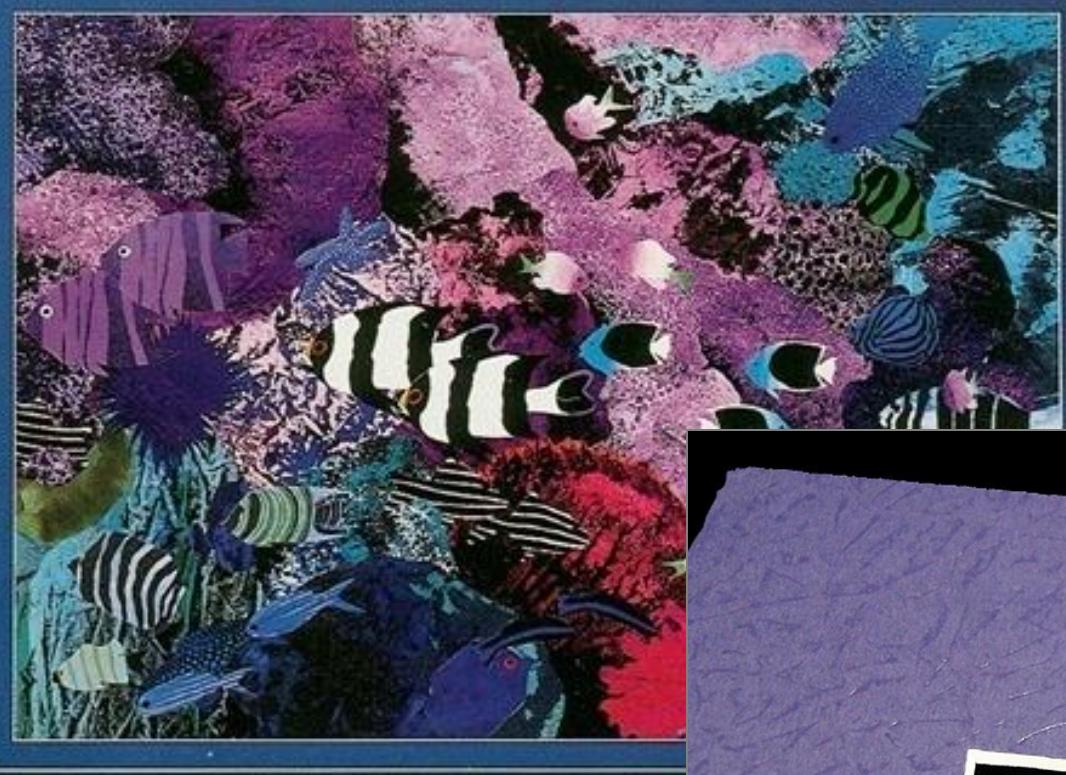
Consider textures and contrasts

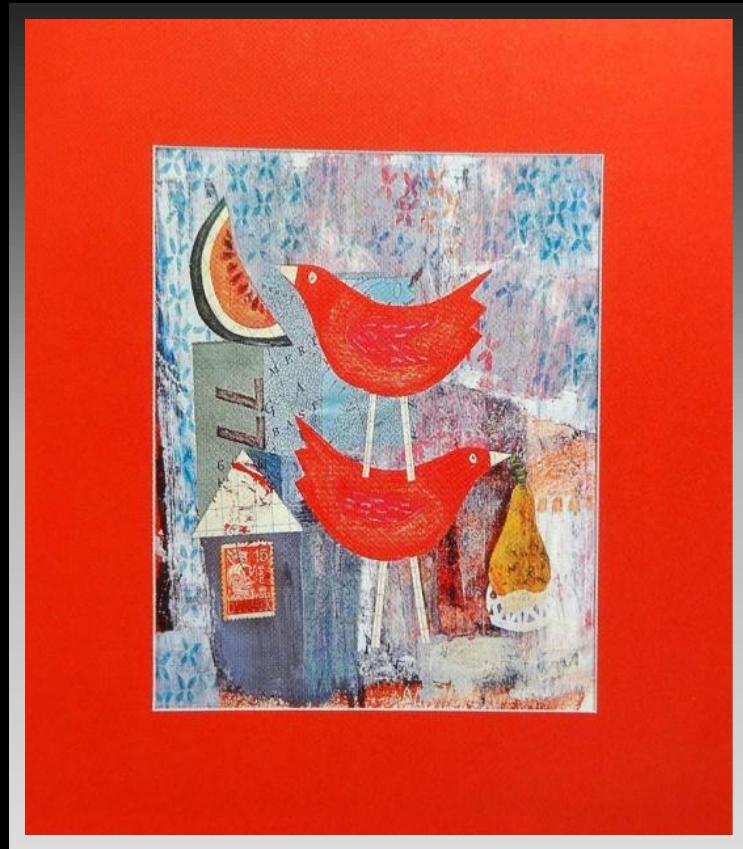
2. Secondary art color = middle mat or first accent

Second mat width does not have to be middle reveal

3. Third art color = third mat or second accent

Can be a simple as red line on frame edge
or under tiered mat





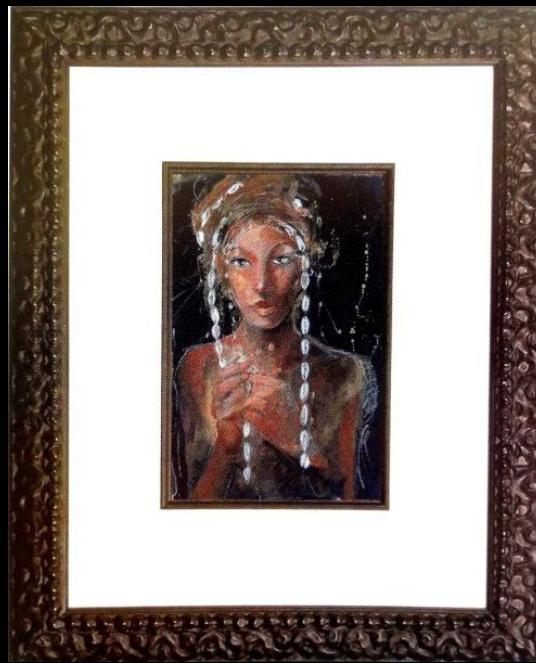
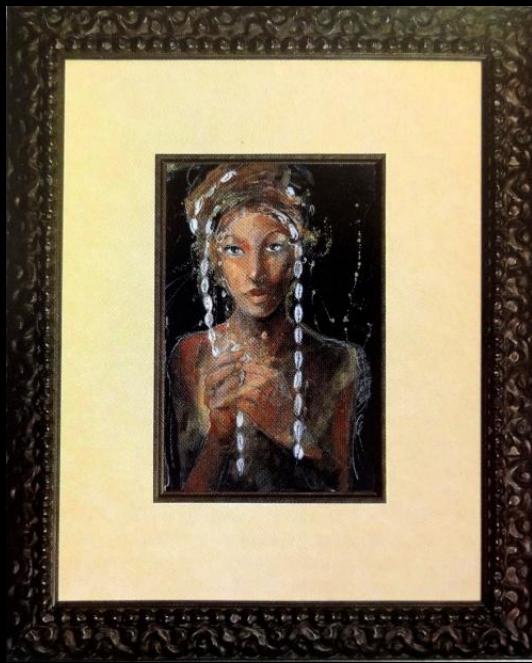
Visual emphasis through color

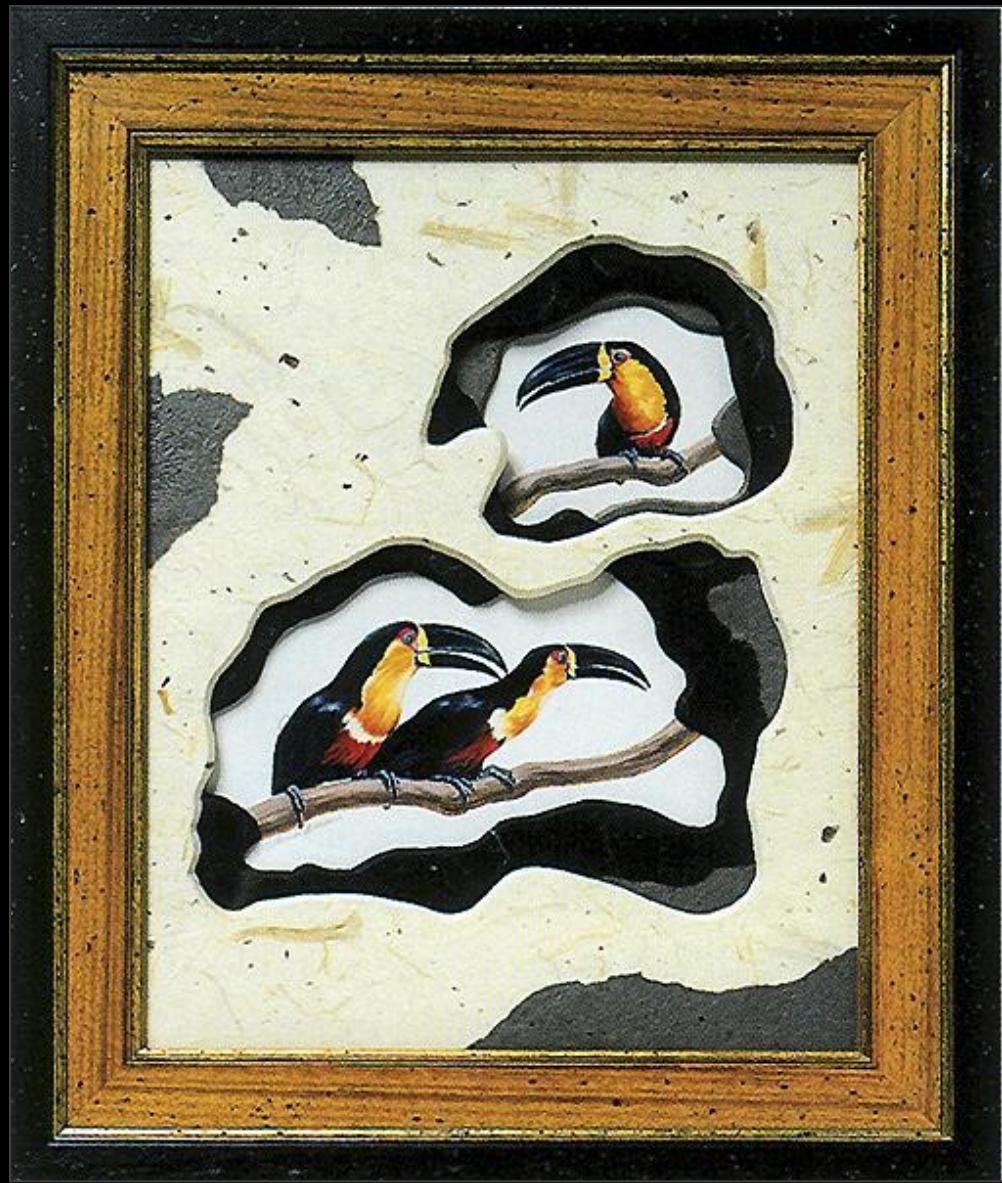


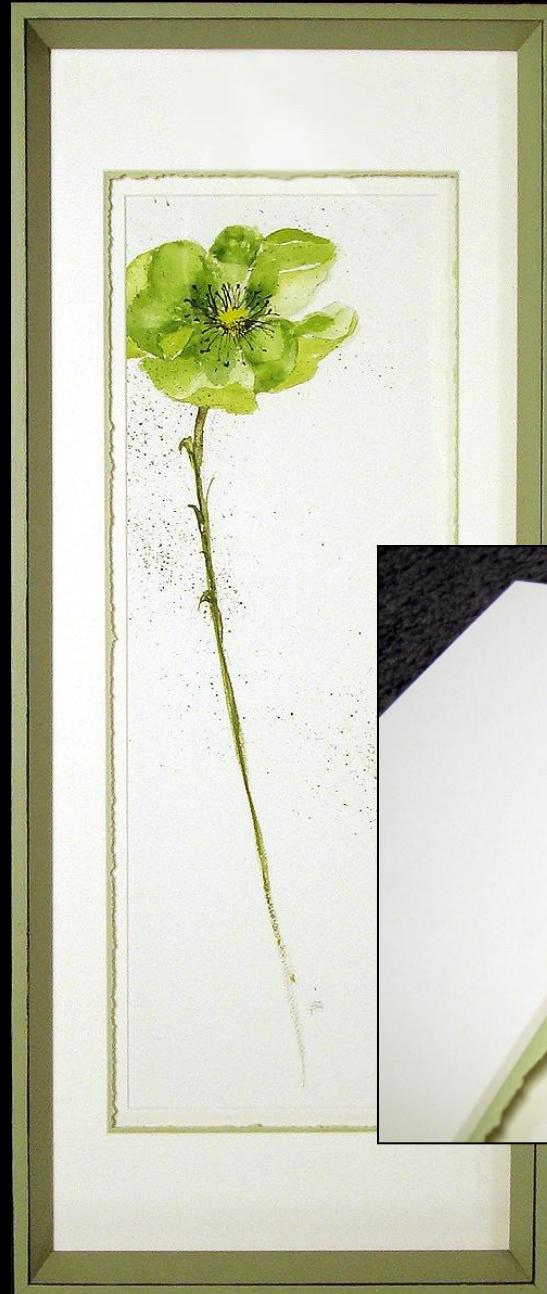
Color and Visual Focus



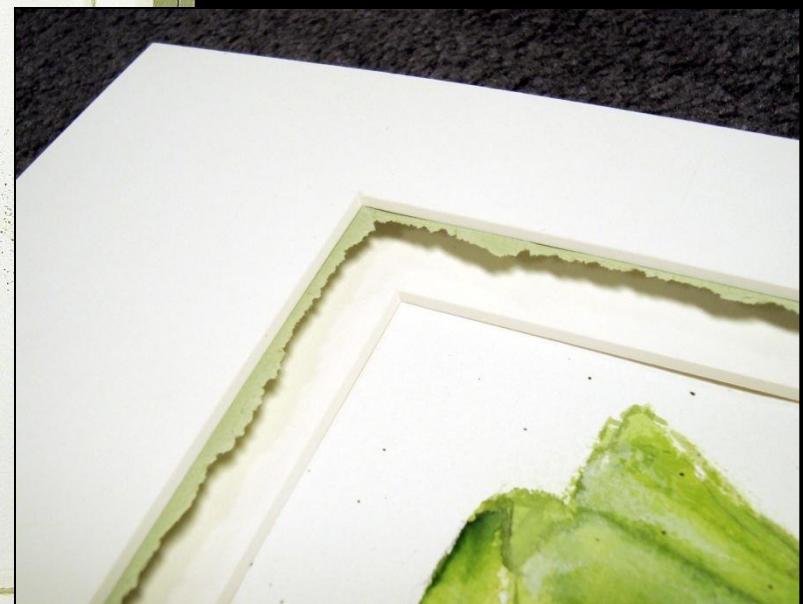
Grey Ansley stem frame pulls into the ink washes
Soft gold Cintra draws into the warmer yellows





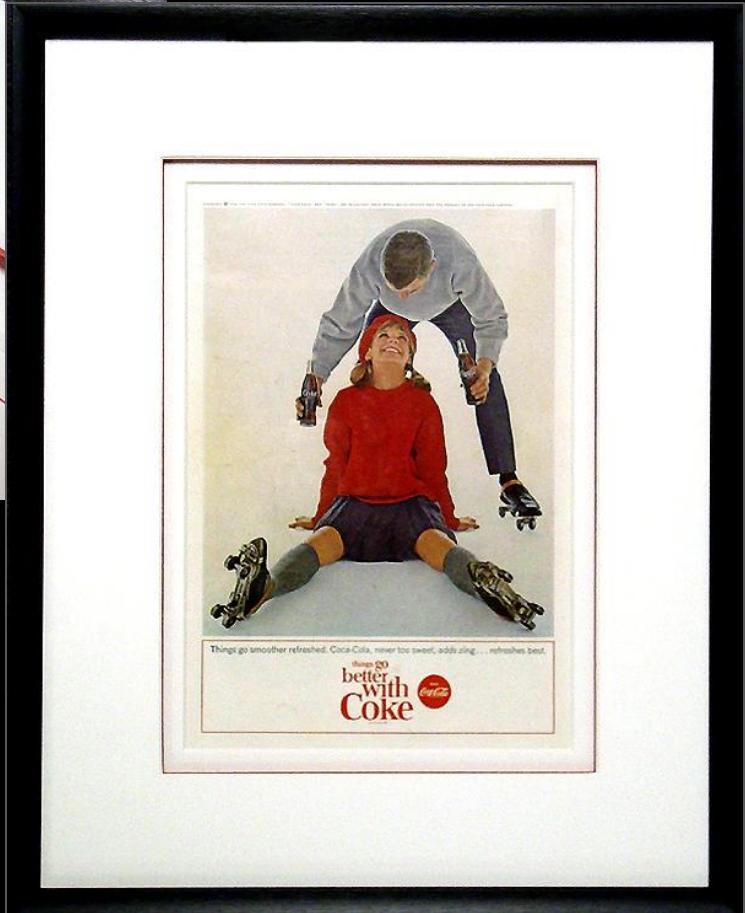


White background
Green frame & deckle
Grey edge highlight





Under tiered top mat
Liner mat varied to
match aged ad



1970s original framing



Reframed to protect
original watercolor





The dominant blue would be too dark for top mat
Brushed aluminum accents the airplane
Deep bevel wrap and gray mat integrate frame and plane





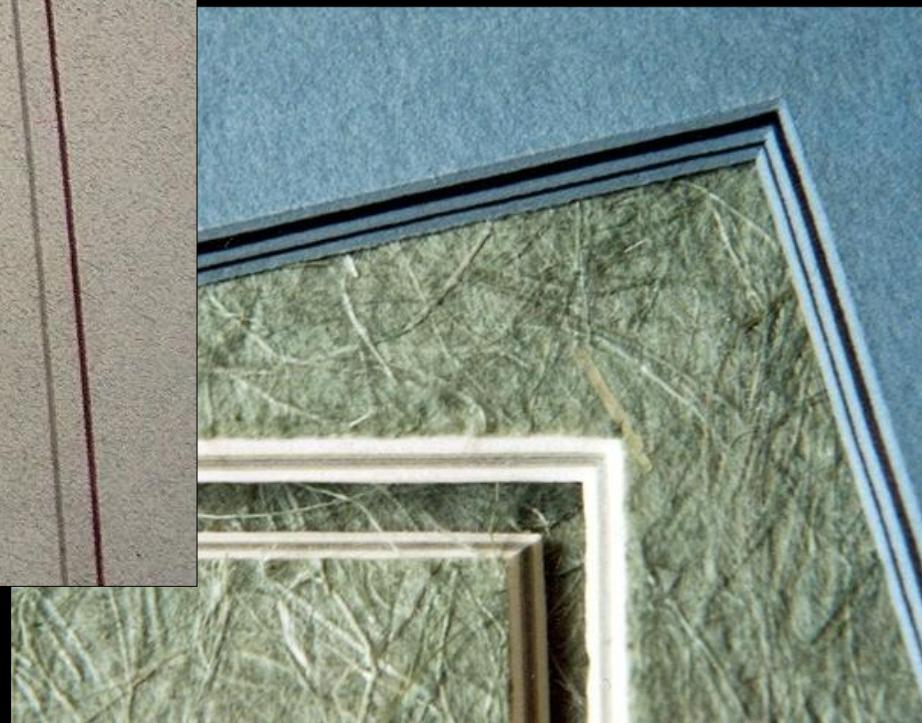
The traditional
pastel concept of
using white mats to
allow the art to
showcase itself



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



Color and Line





Color, Line & Texture









Color and Rhythm





Warm white and Gray repeated as top mat and deep bevel.

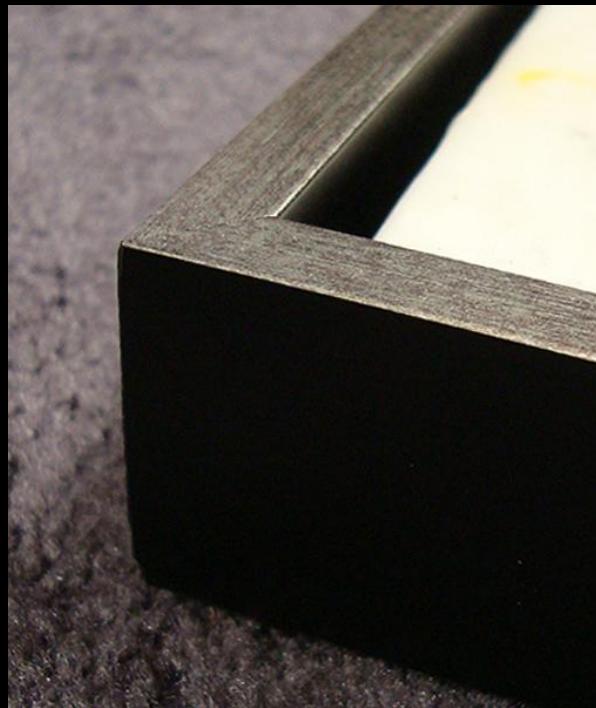


Surface tiered (T)
Matte laminated (B)





Color can be contrast
and intensity.
Brushed antique ties
to gray in the art.





Color and Shape



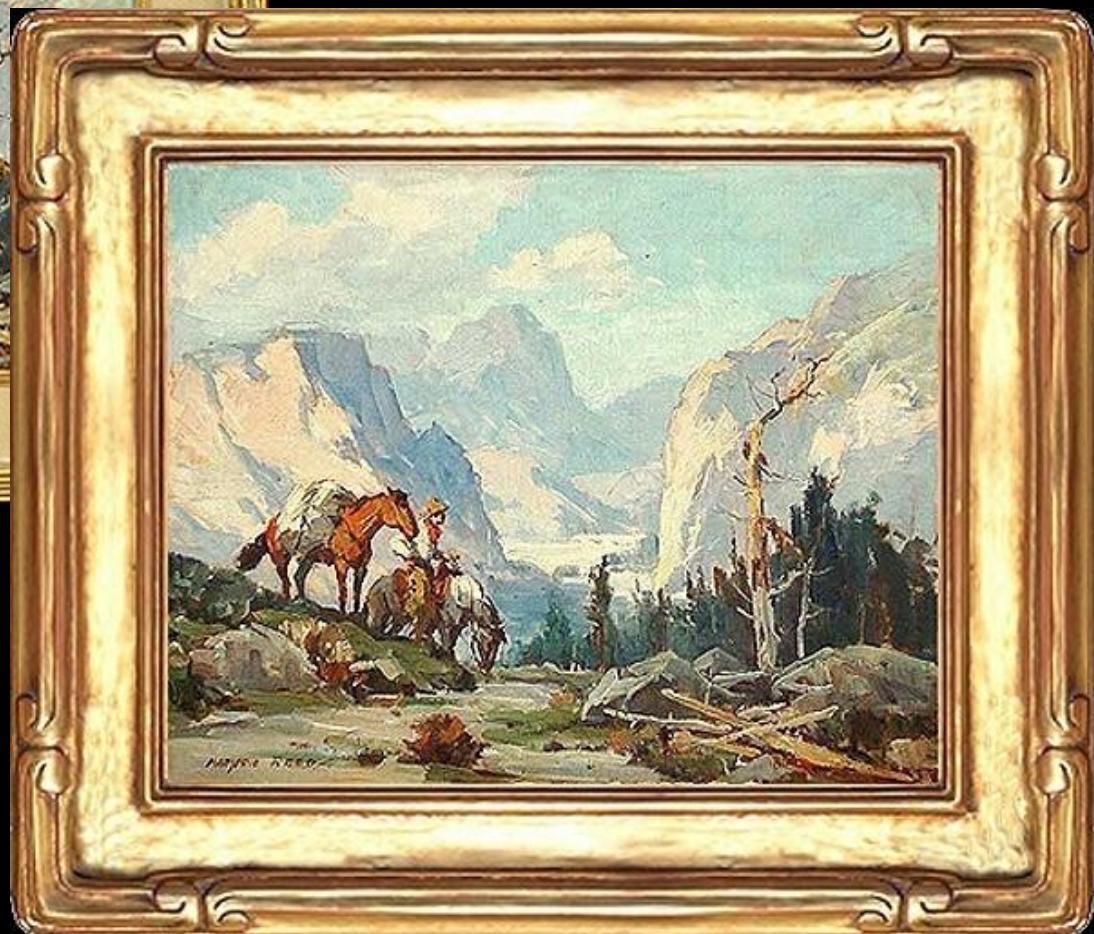


Color and Style









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.

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Psychologists tell us how color affects us physically and emotionally.

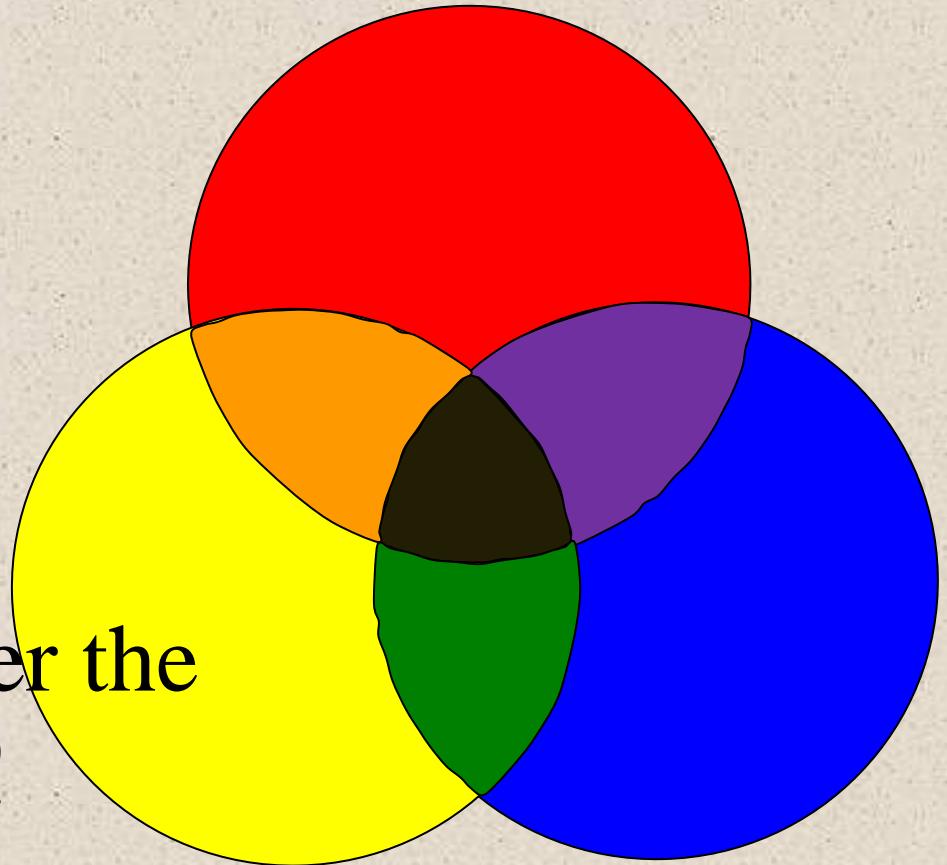
Science of Color

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 2018

Mastering Mounting: Creative Mounting

Lecture = Tuesday, 12:30-3:00 pm

Workshop = Tuesday, 3:30-6:00 pm

Design Elements: Shades of Gray

Wednesday, 10:00am-12:00 pm

Paschke Online Article Archive and Reference Library

<http://designsinkart.com/library.htm>

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





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