Gather Art & Design Principles

This guide is to help our internal artists, partners, and contractors to create new art assets that fit seamlessly within the visual world of Gather.

Guiding principles

Pixel art is, in essence, iconography. What we are accomplishing by creating virtual environments with pixel art as a medium is distinctly taking the concept of a physical or imagined spatial environment and reducing it to miniature pictographs. i.e. What Gather accomplishes by layering pixel representations of objects is, in essence, "writing" a robust visual description of the concept of a physical space, furniture, objects, and interactions that take place within.

To accomplish this, our assets (iconography) hold these values:

- **Simple / To The Point**
  How much can be taken away to still get "the point" of the representation across? What needs to be added for the object to "read" as what it is?
- **Literal**
  An asset should represent clearly the concept of the object in reality through pixel art iconography.
- **Interchangable**
  Assets should be able to be used in as many contexts and with as many other objects as possible without alteration.
- **Self–Contained**
  Assets should be standalone and not contain a lot of internal (value / patterning) contrast. This allows for more contrast between the asset and its environment. We call this "colorblocking" within the art team.

- True Black — #000000
- Charcoal — #262e36
- Light Black — #454345
- Steel — #595652
- Dark Grey — #696A6A
- Grey — #847E87
- Light Grey — #9BADB7
- White — #CBDBFC
- Umber — #663931
- Dark Wood — #8F563B
- Medium W. — #C4824E
- Light Wood — #D9A066
- Beige — #EEC39A
- Valhalla — #222034
- Navy — #3F3F74
- Dark Blue — #5B6EE1
- Blue — #639BFF
- Pastel Blue — #98CFFF
- Heartwood — #45283C
- Plum — #502858
- Dark Purple — #76428A
- Purple — #B46ED5
- Lilac — #D5A7FA
- Crimson — #86242D
- Red — #AC3232
- Light Red — #D95763
- Pink — #FF82A1
- Pastel Pink — #FAD2DC
- Rust — #A64B31
- Orange — #DF7126
- Peach — #FD9258
- Yellow — #F0B829
- Butter — #FBE877
- Gold — #FBF236
- Lemon — #F7FF92
- Drab Blue — #306082
- Cyan — #5FCDE4
- Phthalo — #184945
- Emerald — #006C57
- Viridian — #37946E
- Mint — #7ACF9B
- Swamp — #323C39
- Dark Green — #4B692F
- Med. Green — #5F9234
- Green — #6ABE30
- Lime — #99E550


Gather uses a limited color palette for all our art assets. The hex code values are to the left. Black and white are very rarely use, and we outline all our art assets with a dark blue hue we call "Valhalla"
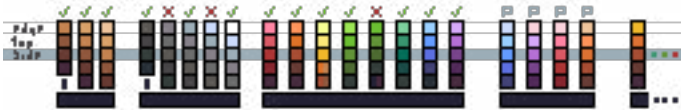

We organize these values into "color ramps", seen above. These are important to reference when creating or recoloring assets, because Gather has all objects of a certain color use a consistent top plane, side plane, and highlight color. This way all "red" objects match other "red" objects. Users appreciate this because our assets contribute to a matching schema they may choose to follow when customizing their spaces-- and it looks better!
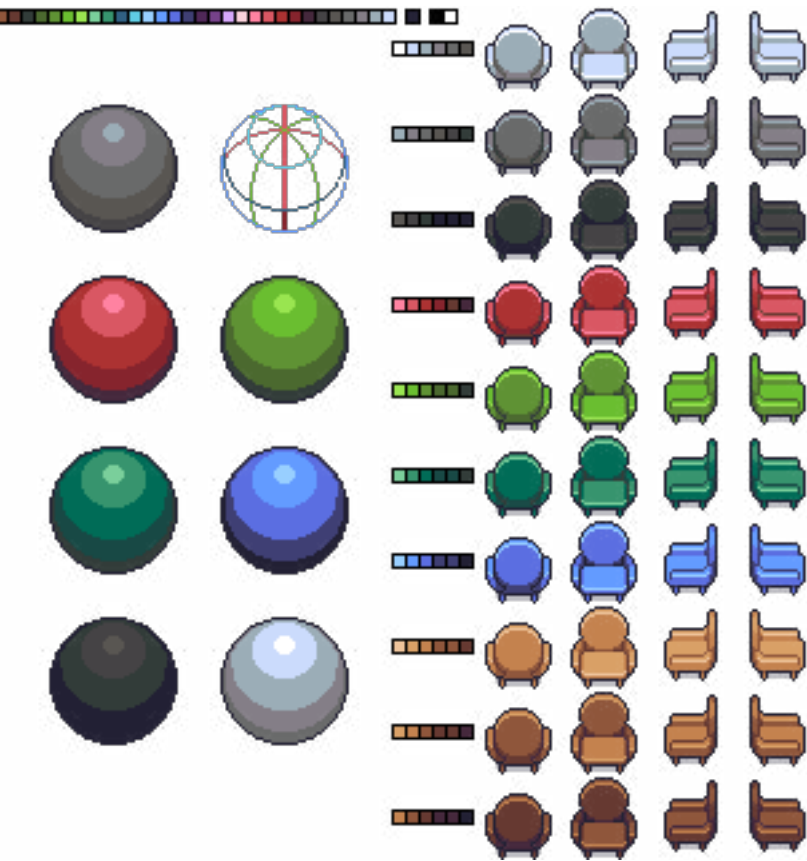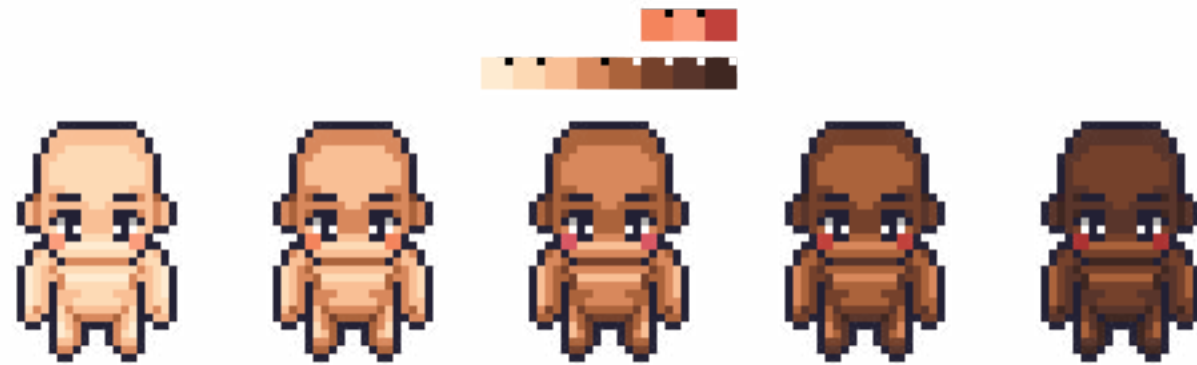
Skin tones are an exception to our limited palette. We don't use the skin tone colors in other assets.
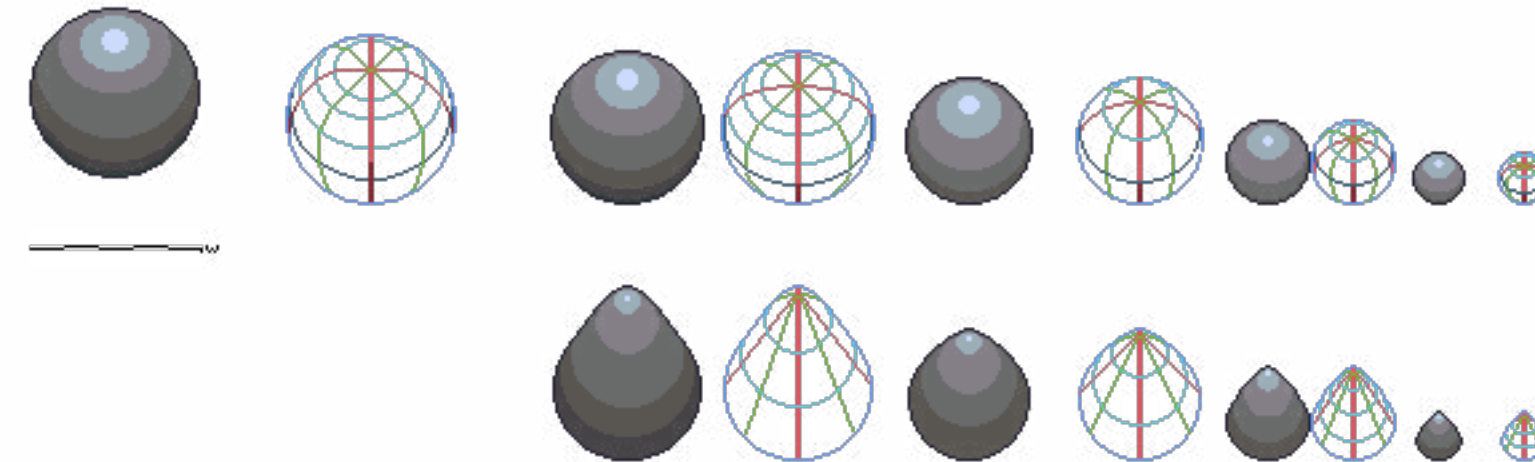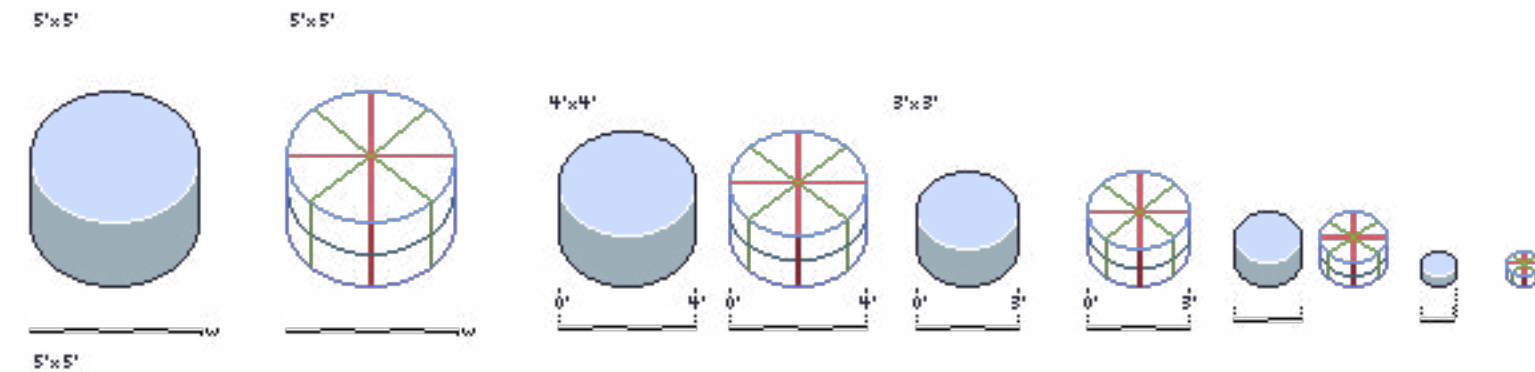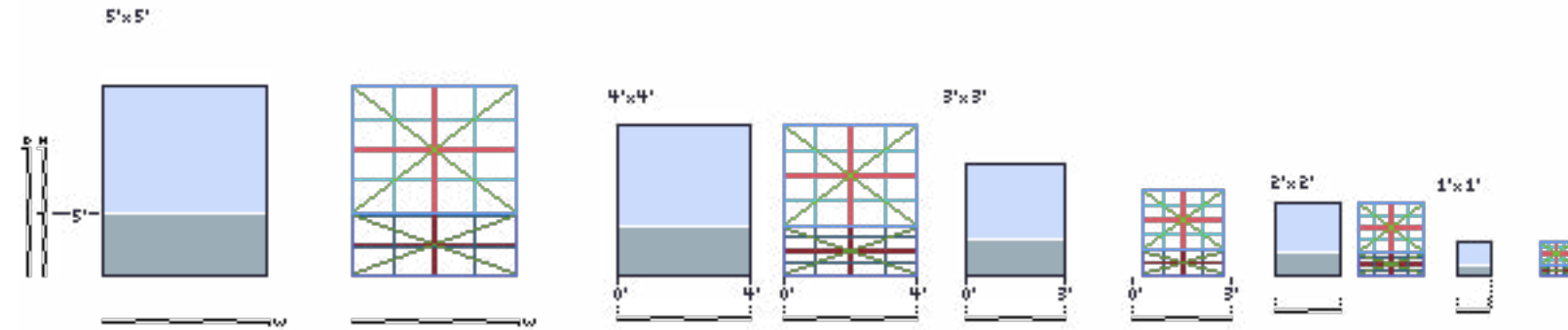
Skin hues:
- #FEEBD1
- #FDDAB5
- #F9BF95
- #D8885C
- #AB633B
- #75412B
- #59352B
- #3F2721

Blush hues:
- #F4845C
- #Fb9d7C
- #C1413B

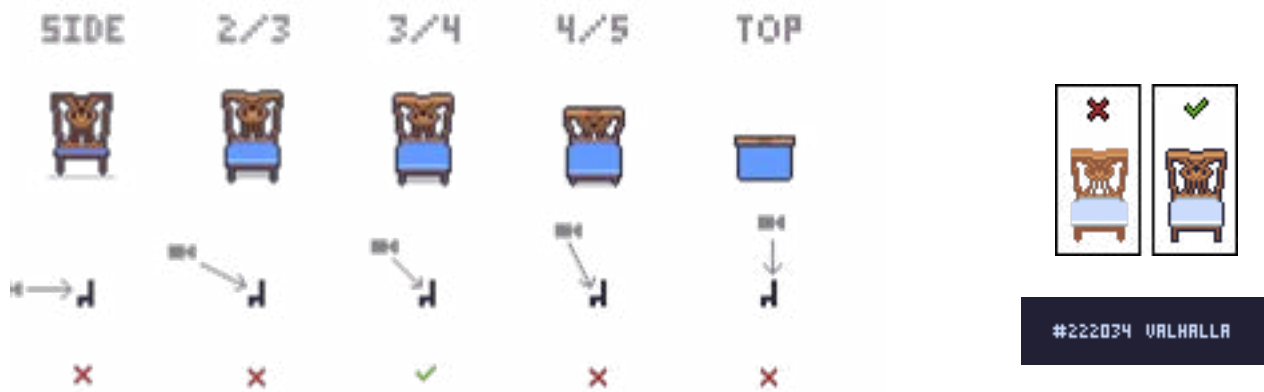Gather uses an orthographic 3/4 "top-down" perspective. All of our objects and avatars follow this rule of perspective strictly, showing only the top surface and front face of every object. Our scale is fairly small. Our avatars are 30px tall, fitting into two tiles of Gather's grid. The grid on which objects and avatars are placed is 32 pixels square per tile. 5 pixels roughly equals 1 foot in our scale, but we make exceptions for legibility. Our smallest objects need to be drawn large enough for what they mean to represent to be generally understood by our users.

We always outline our objects (with "Valhalla"), even when describing delicate forms such as spiderwebs and papel picado. If we make exceptions to this, it is for ethereal elemental forms like fire or occasionally water. We also make exceptions for background textures, like carpet tufts and small tufts of grass.

We will add a softer outline in some of those edge cases, like a darker color on the associated color ramp or our "shadow" hue, which is Valhalla at 30% opacity. Shadows should be added to most objects, it helps ground the object onto the background plane. as little as 1 px tall shadow wrapping around the bottom part of the object can be enough, but objects that rise up off the ground such as tables and chairs should have more shadow beneath.