

How Color Works: Color Theory in the Twenty-First Century
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Chapter Four: Colors in Combination

Chapter Summary

A number of aspects of color interaction are explored in this chapter. You will learn how to create composite colors via direct or indirect mixing so that, with practice, you will be able to mix a color to match a sample. Several traditional procedures for using color to describe three-dimensional form in two-dimensional compositions are described. This chapter includes an explanation of the significance of contrast and harmony of colors and details the different traditional types of compositional color harmony.

Suggested Projects

- *Try:* Make a reduced palette painting of your own. Yellow and white will offer the greatest challenge because there is the least amount of contrast between them. Try to get as much value variation as you can out of the two colors (use the white of the paper as a value). Next, try another painting with yellow and white but also add yellow's complement, violet, to the palette. In addition to value variation, you will create saturation variation between the two colors, including the neutral middle mixture. (If using dioxazine violet, be aware that it is a highly-concentrated color, very dark, and it has a high tinting strength, so only a very small amount should be used.)
- *Try:* As with Image 4.3, try mixing paint to match samples of color to see how well you understand the three attributes of color. Begin with the hue or hues that you perceive to be the dominant color, then use white to lighten hues and complements to dull hues. Keep in mind that black has a high tinting strength and should be used carefully. The factory-coated paper surface of Pantone swatches used in this exercise is different than hand-brushed paint on paper, so there will be a slight difference to color appearance no matter how adeptly matched.
- *Try:* Draw with colored pencils or markers to create a variety of line work and pattern that vary in weight so that the value of the hue appears to have a wide range. You can try this with complementary colors, rather than simply creating composite colors like other two-color combinations. The result with complements will be the appearance of duller colors.
- *Try:* Utilizing the Law of Simultaneous Contrast, create a painting that plays with simultaneous contrast effects. Choose a single color as a stable referent and see how many times you can change its appearance throughout the composition through its relationship to adjacent color. The three central concepts to employ here are value contrast, hue contrast, and Albers's principle of hue subtraction (a composite hue will appear to visually subtract the part it surrounds it).

- *Try:* Draw and paint a simple design similar to the decorative parts of the amphora detail in Image 4.8, beginning with black ink on white paper. Paint black in the background and leave the white of the paper in the foreground. Then create another of the same design, but reverse the colors.
- *Try:* Following the example of Lawrence and Davis's uses of strong shapes within a limited palette, create a composition with cut painted paper in which a limited palette of colors performs both positive and negative roles. Try it with two colors, then three, then four.
- *Try:* Draw two identical compositions and paint them with the same single color, but use the Cennini and Alberti systems to alter values in each as you paint. In the first, add color using the Cennini up-modeling approach. That is, create at least five piles of paint with incremental values between pure color and white. Including the pure color and white, you will then have seven values to work with. The pure color will be your darkest color and should be used accordingly. In the second composition, use the Alberti down-modeling approach. The pure color will be your middle value, and your palette will become both progressively lighter and darker (using both up- and down-modeling).
- *Try:* Create four drawings of the same volumetric object, and color each one according to the four Renaissance methods just described; up-modelling, down-modelling, unione, and cangiante. If the same overall color is used (a monochromatic composition), differences in depth and general feel will be especially notable.
- *Try:* Create the same drawing three times, and then apply color to each according to your choice of traditional harmonies, or work against this tradition and invent your own combinations. What happens if you attempt to make a color scheme that is discordant?

Recommended Links for Chapter Four: Colors in Combination

4.3: Pantone© color matching exercise, acrylic on paper, and Pantone© postcards, 12 x 16" overall, 2016.

Link: <https://www.pantone.com/>

4.4: Anni Albers, *Open Letter*, 1958, cotton, 23 x 24 in. (58.4 x 61 cm). © 2016 the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

Link: <http://www.albersfoundation.org/>:

4.5: Giorgione (da Castelfranco), *La Tempesta*, circa 1508. Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice, Italy. HIP / Art Resource, NY.

Link: <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/artists/giorgione>

4.8: Andokides Painter (6th BCE). Artemis, or Diana. Detail from a red-figured attic amphora, from Vulci, Italy. Ca. 525 BCE. Photo: Isolde Luckert. Antikensammlung. Bpk, Berlin. Art Resource, NY.

Link: <http://www.mfa.org/collections/object/two-handled-jar-amphora-with-achilles-and-ajax-153408>

4.9: Henry van de Velde © ARS, NY, Tropon Poster, from the periodical Pan, vol. IV, no. 1 (Apr-

May-Jun 1898). Lithograph, 14 5/16 x 10 7/8" (36.4 x 27.7 cm). Publisher: Genossenschaft Pan GmbH, Berlin. Gift of Peter H. Deitsch. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY, U.S.A. Photo Credit: Digital Image © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY. © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / SABAM, Brussels.

Link: <https://www.architectural-review.com/rethink/reputations-pen-portraits-/henry-van-de-velde-1863-1957/8679104.article>

4.13: Jacob Lawrence, *Builders - Green Hills*, 1998. Gouache on paper. 24 x 18 in. (61 x 45.7 cm). Private Collection. Photo: The Jacob and Gwendolyn Lawrence Foundation /Art Resource, NY. © 2016 The Jacob and Gwendolyn Knight Lawrence Foundation, Seattle / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

Link: <http://www.jacobandgwenlawrence.org/>

4.14: Stuart Davis, © VAGA, NY, *Premiere*, 1957. Oil on canvas. 58 x 50 in. (147.3 x 127 cm). Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Museum Purchase, Art Museum Council Fund (M.60.4) Photo Digital Image © [year] Museum Associates / LACMA. Licensed by Art Resource, NY.

Link: <https://www.nga.gov/content/ngaweb/exhibitions/2016/stuart-davis-in-full-swing.html>

4.15: *Oh My Beautiful Horses!*, Navajo Blanket, Lukachukai Mountain Weaving District, Arizona, United States, c. 1885 - 1900, Wool, 4 1/6 ft. x 32 3/4", Mingei International Museum, San Diego, CA, USA. Mingei International Museum/Art Resource, NY.

Link: <https://mingei.org/exhibitions/weaving-a-path/>

4.16: Altoon Sultan, *Bound Circle*, 2015, hand dyed wool on linen, twelve-inch diameter. Courtesy of the artist.

Link: <http://www.altoonsultan.com/>

4.17: Giotto di Bondone, *Cella 3: Annunciation*, 1438. fresco, 176 x 148 cm. Location: Museo di S. Marco, Florence, Italy. Photo Credit: Erich Lessing / Art Resource, NY.

Link: <http://www.giottodibondone.org/>

4.18: Raphael (Raffaello Sanzio), *Pope Leo X Medici with Cardinals Giulio de Medici, and Luigi de Rossi*, 1517. Oil on wood, 154 x 119 cm. Inv. Galleria Palatina 40. Uffizi, Florence, Italy. Photo Credit: Erich Lessing / Art Resource, NY.

Link: <http://www.getty.edu/art/collection/artists/503/raphael-raffaello-sanzio-italian-1483-1520/>

4.19: Michelangelo Buonarroti, *The Libyan Sibyl*, Sistine Chapel (Cappella Sistina), fresco (post-restoration), Musei e Gallerie Pontificie, Musei Vaticani, Vatican City / Mondadori Portfolio / Bridgeman Images.

4.20: Melanie Parke, *May Peonies Verde*, oil on canvas, 12x12", 2015. Courtesy of the artist.

Link: <http://melanieparke.com/home.html>

4.21: Anoka Faruqee, *2013P-82*, acrylic on linen on panel, 33.75x 33.75", 2013, with detail. © Anoka Faruqee. Courtesy of the artist. Photo credit Evan Whale.

Link: <http://anokafaruqee.com/>

Link: <http://www.accademia.org/michelangelo/>

4.23: Vincent van Gogh, *Le café de nuit (The Night Café)*, oil on canvas, 28 1/2 x 36 1/4", 1888. Yale University Art Gallery, Bequest of Steven Carlton Clark, B.A., 1903. Public domain.

Link: <http://artgallery.yale.edu/collections/objects/12507>

4.24: Vivian Sassen, *Fantome*, from the series *Parasomnia*, photograph, 2010. © Vivian Sassen. Courtesy of the artist.

Link: <http://www.vivianesassen.com/>

4.25: Jessica Labatte, *Circularity*, 2009, archival inkjet print, 24 x 20 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Link: <http://www.jessicalabatte.com/>

4.26: Ken Price, *A Forgotten Place*, 2008, acrylic and ink on paper. 11 x 8 ¾ inches, 28 x 22 cm. © Estate of Ken Price. Courtesy Matthew Marks Gallery.

Link: <http://www.kenprice.com/>

4.27: *Krishna Accompanied by Gopis, Fluting and Dancing in Spring time*. A folio from the *Rasikapriya* series. Central India, Raghogarh, c. 1700. Courtesy Jagdish and Kamla Mittal Museum of Indian Art, Hyderabad, India.

Link: <http://www.mittalmuseum.com/home>

4.28: Hans Holbein, the Younger, *Jean de Dinteville and Georges de Selve ('The Ambassadors')*, 1533, oil on oak, 207 x 209.5 cm. ©National Gallery, London / Art Resource, NY.

Link: <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/hans-holbein-the-younger-the-ambassadors>

4.29: James Abbott McNeill Whistler, *Nocturne: Blue and Silver - Chelsea*, 1871, oil on wood support: 502 x 608 mm. Location: Tate Gallery, London, Great Britain. Photo Credit: Tate, London / Art Resource, NY.

Link: <http://www.jamesabbottmcneillwhistler.org/>

4.30: Paul Klee, *Schleusen (Locks)*, watercolor on paper, laid down on carton, 20.3 x 30.7 cm. Photo: Jens Ziehe. Nationalgalerie, Museum Berggruen, Staatliche Museen, Berlin. Art Resource NY.

Link: http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/klee/hd_klee.htm

4.31: David Reed, *# 347-2*, 1994–2000. Oil and alkyd on linen. 48 x 112 inches. Collection Mondstudio. Photo credit: Alistair Overbruck, Cologne. Collection Mondstudio on permanent loan to the Kunstmuseum Bonn. Courtesy of the artist and Collection Mondstudio.

Link: <http://www.davidreedstudio.com/>

4.32: Victor Moscoso, *Blue Cheer*, 1967, offset lithograph, 20 x 14" (51 x 35.6 cm). Gift of the designer. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY, U.S.A. Digital Image © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY.

Link: <http://www.victormoscoso.com/>

4.33: Ron Nagle, *Orange Lazarus*, 2014, mixed media, 1.75 x 5.5 x 3.75 inches. © Ron Nagle, Courtesy Matthew Marks Gallery.

Link: <http://ronnagle.net/>

4.34: Olaf Breuning, from *The Art Freaks I*, 2011, color print, 74 3/8 x 34 1/8 inches. Courtesy the artist.

Link: <http://www.olafbreuning.com/>

4.35: Charlotte Hallberg, *\$\$*, 2015, oil on shaped panel, 21 x 10 inches each (diptych). Courtesy of the artist.

Link: <http://www.charlottehallberg.com/>