

Elements of Design: Value

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2D Design – Art 112



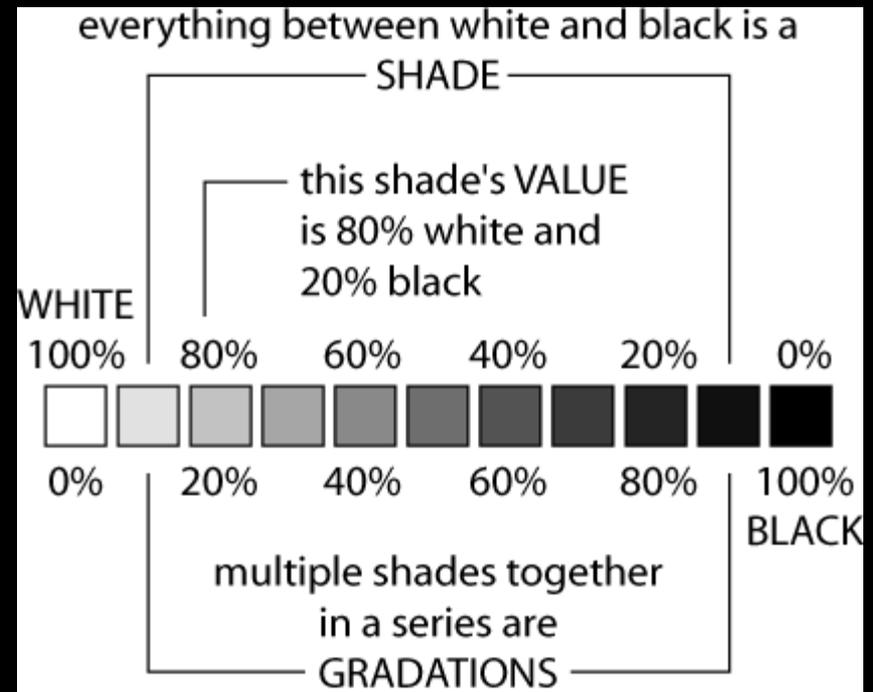
Charles White, *Have a Dream*, 1976, Lithograph, 22 x 30 inches, Published by Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Value

- Value in art is the relative degree of **light** and **dark**.
- It is only because of changes between light and dark that can we see things.
- Light reveals **form** and is essential to our perception of value and color.
- Value is an **Element of Design**.
- Value is also a **Property of Color**.

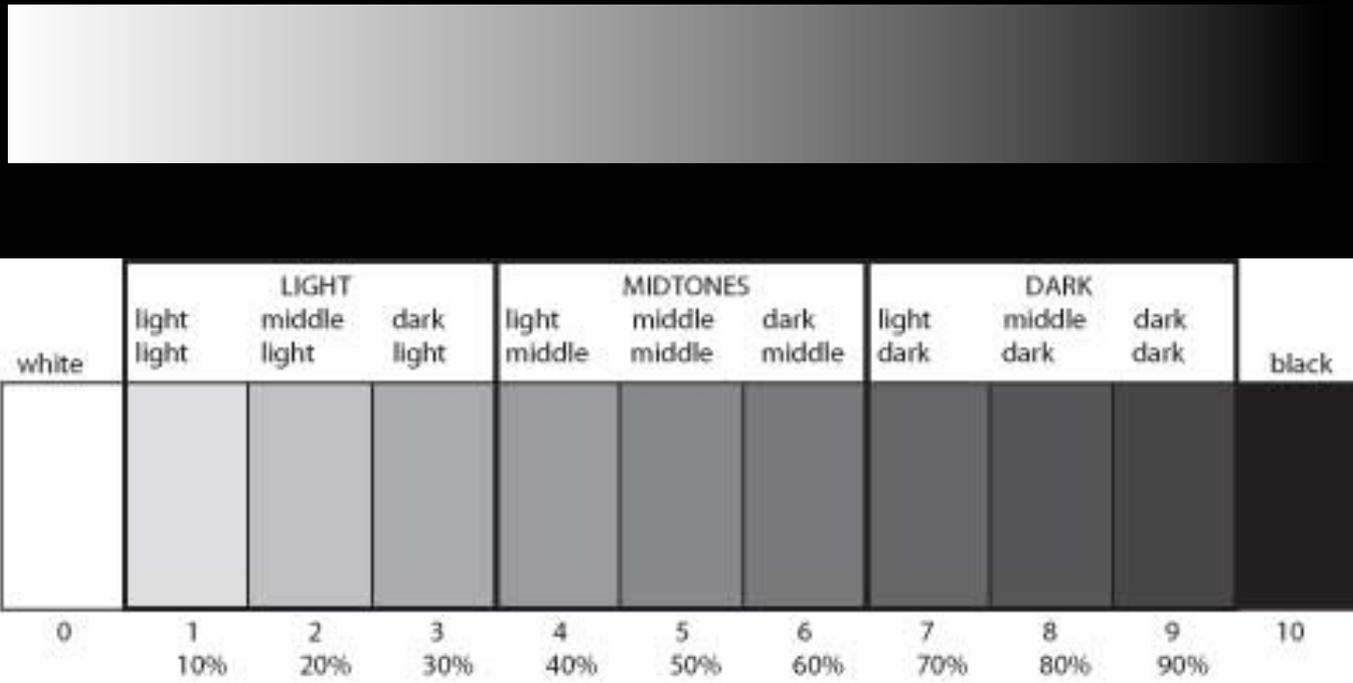
Value

- **Achromatic Grays** refer to grays that contain no color, just shades of gray.



Value Range

- The lightest and darkest areas of value in a particular work.
- A **full range** of values extends from white through infinite shades or gradations of grays, all the way to black.



Source of Light

- **Actual Light** = the light we see around us at every turn.
 - **Source**: sun, incandescent and fluorescent bulbs, fire, street lamps, television, computer screens, etc.
 - **3D media** and **architecture**.
- **Illusion of Light** = what we see as light in most 2D art.
 - **Source**:
 - Representational** image: sun, fire, etc.
 - Non-representational** image: outside the picture but its effects can be clearly seen.

Local Value

Local Value = actual, not illuminated value of a surface.

Determined by:

- Material made of or coated from which the object is made or the material with which it is coated (painted) .
- How material or coating reflects or absorb light.



EX: the vanilla ice cream has a high local value and the chocolate syrup has a very low local value.

Value Contrast

- **Contrast** is the difference in the amount of values.
- **Value Contrast** defines the relationship between different areas of dark and light.
- The average human can see 40 different variation in value (shades of gray.)
- The narrower the **range of values**, the lower the value contrast.
- The term **low-value** can be used to talk about the contrast between any two areas next to each other with narrow value range.

Value Contrast

Low Contrast

High Key: A composition that predominantly contains high values (mid-gray to white).

Low Key: A composition that predominantly contains low values (mid-gray to black).

High Contrast: A value scheme which is dominated by values from the ends of the value scale and with little or no mid-range grays. The extreme of this would be a strictly black and white composition.



Value Contrast



Low/Narrow Value Contrast

- Slight variation between values.
- Subtle and Soft appearance.

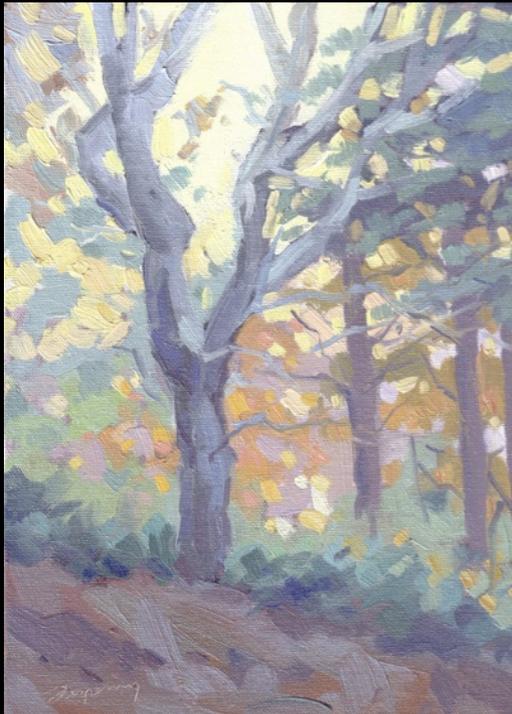


High/Broad Value Contrast

- Large variation between values.
- Juxtaposition of bright whites and dark blacks.
- Dramatic appearance.

Narrow Value Contrast: High Key

- When the range is limited to **light values** it is referred to as **high key**.
- Create a subtle (and often calming) feeling.
- Overall Lightness.
- Non-threatening, meditative, airy.



Ed Tarpene *Faint Sunset (Buena Vista Park)*

Narrow Value Contrast: Low Key

- A limited range of **dark values** is called **low key**.
- Overall Darkness
- •Mysterious, dramatic, aggressive, etc.

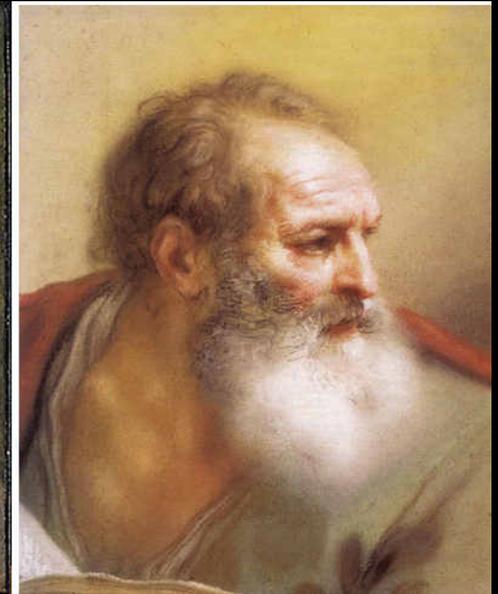


Value as Emphasis

- Value add **emphasis** as areas of high contrast will stand out in areas of low contrast.
- **Value Emphasis** - Use of a high contrast between values can draw the viewer's attention.
- Emphasize a character or feature.
- Create a focal point.



Renoir



Benedetto Luti

Value and Space

- Value can be used to make a 2D shape appear volumetric through gradations of light and dark.
- Areas with **high value contrast** come **forward**.
- Areas with **low value contrast** recede into the **distance**.

Value and Space

Chiaroscuro = use of value to create the **illusion** of actual light and shadow on a 3D form, on a 2D surface.

Italian: *chiaro* (light) and *scuro* (dark) “light/dark”

Suggest the **volume** and **modeling** of the subjects by using only **high contrast value** without any lines outlining the forms.

Renaissance.



Giovanni Baglione. *Sacred and Profane Love*. 1602–1603, showing dramatic compositional chiaroscuro

Value and Space

Tenebrism = exaggerated chiaroscuro.

Italian:

tenebroso = "the dark manner"

tenebrae = darkness

- Dark shadows
- Abrupt value changes
- Bright highlights.
- Little mid-range gray

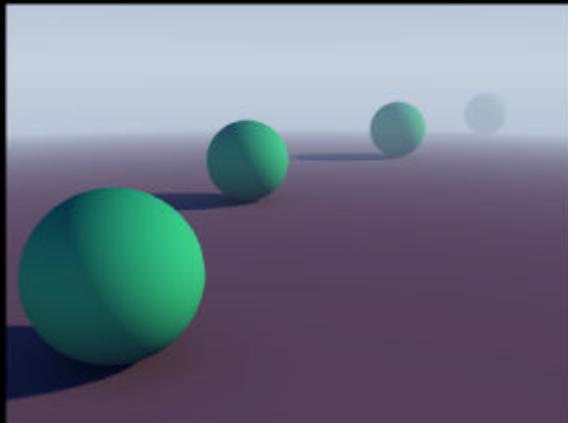
Christ with St. Joseph in the Carpenter's Shop, c.1640
Georges de La Tour (French, 1593-1652) Canvas
H 1.37 m; W 1.02 m
RF 1948-27 Louvre <http://www.louvre.fr/>



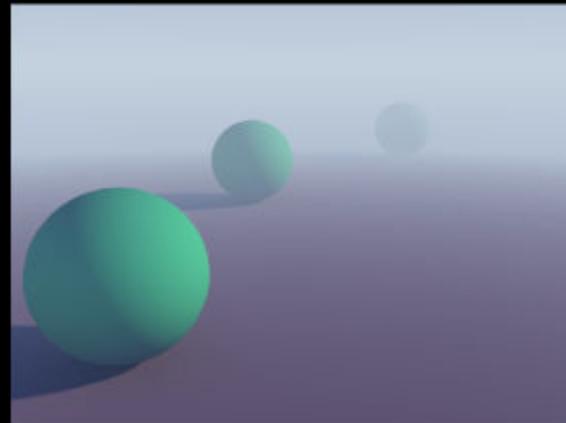
Value and Space

Atmospheric Perspective = illusion of spatial distance by lighter and middle range values.

The degree of contrast between two values in the distance appears less than they would appear if seen from a closer vantage (both black and white appear grayer from a distance).



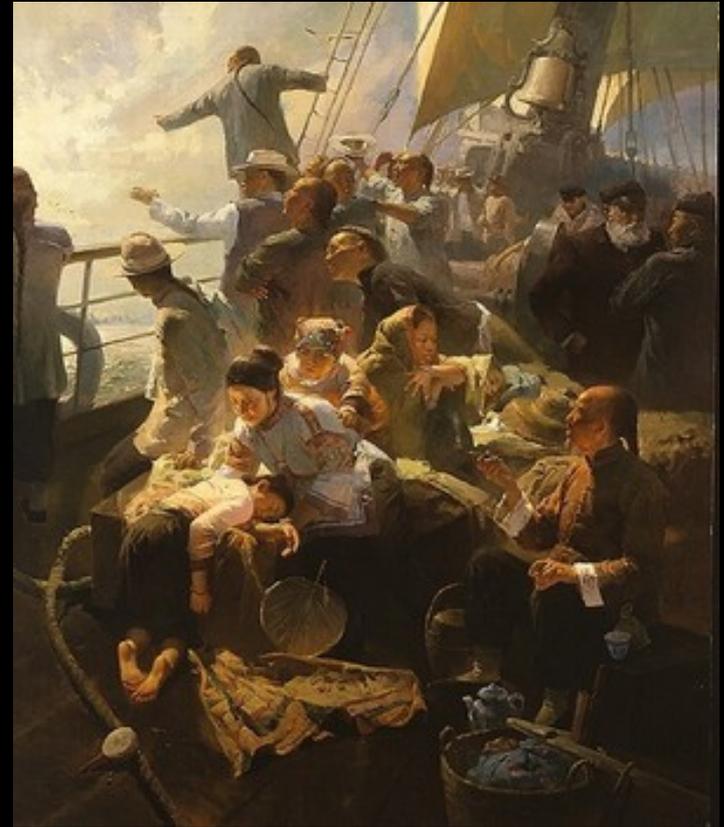
Weaker atmospheric perspective



Stronger atmospheric perspective

Value

- The light values of high key images convey the sense of happiness and lightness, mid-range values evoke sadness and depression, and the dark values of low key images create feelings of fear and mystery.
- In terms of visual weight, darker values feel heavier than lighter values.



Some Ways to Create Value



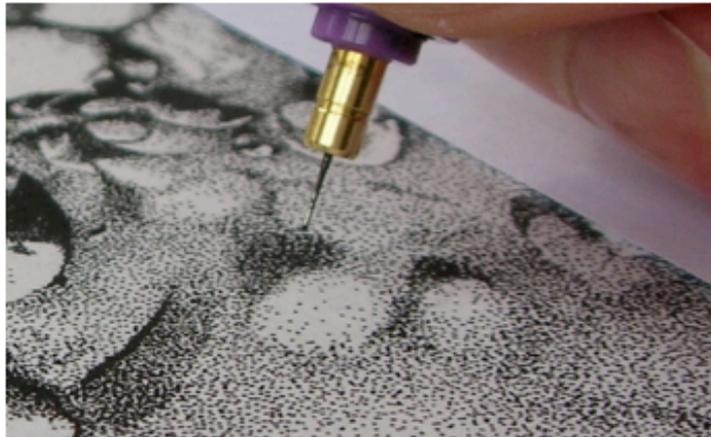
Shading (pencil, charcoal)



Cross Hatching
(pen, pencil, charcoal)



Pixels (computer,
newspaper and magazines)



Stippling (pen/ink, pencil)



Washes (paint, ink)

Value and Grids



Chuck Close

Value and Grids



Chuck Close

Value and Grids









Detail