

Materials

Choosing materials

- Choosing art materials is a bit like choosing ingredients to cook with, but there isn't always a "recipe" to follow.
- It's useful (and fun!) to try out new mediums and new combinations, but it takes practice and experimentation to figure out how they interact and how to use them best.
- Once you've selected your materials (even if you've used them before), it's a good idea to do few small sketches or tests to make sure you'll be able to achieve the effect or "look" you want.
- Even then, always be prepared to start over if things just aren't working out. That means having supplies to spare and leaving yourself enough time to change directions if necessary.

Common paper types

- **Rag paper:** unlike household/office paper, which are made from wood pulp, many art papers are made out of cotton or linen fibre. Rag papers are strong, compatible with a wide range of art materials (wet and dry media, mixed media, printmaking, etc.), and typically archival (they won't discolour or break down over time). Brands you may find include Stonehenge, Maidstone, Arches, and Rives.



- **Mulberry/kozo papers:** Sometimes called “rice paper,” or “sumi paper,” papers produced in parts of Asia are traditionally made from different plant fibres including paper mulberry and kudzu. These tend to be thinner and more translucent than other papers (though still very strong), and they work well with wet media like ink and watercolour.



Other paper types

- **Vellum:** Papers sold as “vellum” are usually translucent (“see-through”) with a very smooth, non-absorbent surface (great for pen and pencil, less great for things like watercolour). Craft stores sell vellum in a wide range of colours and patterns that can be layered to create different effects (check the scrapbooking section).



- **Yupo:** A very nice (but very expensive) synthetic “paper,” Yupo has a perfectly smooth surface and can stand up to a wide range of wet and dry materials without wrinkling.



Other paper types

- Art supply stores will carry other types of surfaces to work on, including handmade papers, plastic films (Mylar), and canvas (both “pre-sized” and raw), each with different properties.
- If you’re not sure what to get, let a store clerk know what you plan to draw or paint with, and she should be able to point you in the right direction.
- Copy/prINTER paper and newsprint really aren’t usually suitable for most projects, but found/recycled papers can be used in interesting ways.



Paper tone and texture

- **Rough** and **cold-pressed papers** have a “pebbled”, absorbent surface that works well for ink and watercolour but can be too rough for some dry media.
- **Hot-pressed papers** have a smooth texture.
- **Toned** and **coloured papers** are great for experimenting with tone and shading. For instance, you can start with a grey paper and use charcoal for the shadows and white chalk for the highlights, saving a lot of time.



Common dry media

- **Charcoal:** great for shading, comes in stick, pencil, and powdered form.
- **Pencil:** good for small, detailed work. Drawing pencils are rated from hard to soft. A soft pencil (like a 6B) creates a darker mark than a hard one (like a 6H).
- **Graphite:** for shading large areas, graphite and water-soluble graphite sticks can be used. Also available in powder form.
- **Chalk pastels:** similar in texture to charcoal, but available in a wide range of colours.
- **Conté:** like charcoal or pastel, but with an added wax binder. Great for blending and fine detail. Doesn't erase easily.



Other drawing media

- **Coloured pencil:** good for fine detail, but they vary greatly in quality.
- **Oil pastel:** blends (and smudges) very easily. Not great for fine detail.
- **Art markers, permanent markers, and technical pens:** unforgiving but very precise.



Erasers

- With dry media (especially graphite and charcoal), your erasers are useful not just for correcting mistakes, but as a drawing tools in their own right—experiment by evenly shading a large area, using your erasers to “carve out” highlights.
- I recommend getting both a hard plastic or gum eraser and a soft “kneaded” eraser.



Spray fixative

- Any drawing made with materials that can smudge or rub off (charcoal, pastel, pencil, etc.) should be “fixed” before being handed in to avoid damage (to yours and other people’s work).
- Please note that sprays cannot be used on campus, so fix your drawings at home.





Wet media

- **Watercolour, india ink, and acrylic ink:** Hard-to-master but highly versatile media. Best used with watercolour paper which is sold treated (“sized”) to prevent wrinkling, or sumi (“rice”) paper. Opaque watercolour is called gouache.
- **Acrylic paint:** dries quickly and can be used on most surfaces (paper, canvas, glass, plastic, etc.)
- **Oil paint:** should only be used on specially treated (“primed” or “gessoed”) surfaces. Dries very slowly, a nightmare to clean up.
- **Spray paint:** Can be used freehand or with stencils to create interesting effects. Cannot be used on campus.



Lawrence Weiner

American, born 1942

Gloss white lacquer, sprayed for 2 minutes at 40lb pressure directly on the floor 1968

Language + the materials referred to

Purchase, 2010

Digital media

- **Printing:** Large-format digital printing is available at various on-campus locations as well as most print/copy centres. Digital photographic printing is widely available (from photo processors, drug stores, online, etc.) and often inexpensive.
- Many digital artists also produce works intended to be shown as projections or in web browsers or on mobile devices.

Other media

Remember that literally anything and everything can be used to make art (and probably has been). What you may use will depend on class/assignment parameters, but, as a general rule, anything goes if you've got an idea to back it up. Possibilities include:

- Photography (film, digital, colour, B/W)
- Collage and assemblage (“3D collage”)
- Non-“art” materials (food, found objects, office supplies, actual garbage, etc.)
- Handmade/printed books and pamphlets.
- “Craft” media (needlework, knitting, crochet, weaving, etc.)
- Games, apps, websites, and other interactive media.
- Video and animation
- or any combination thereof.





Composition

Composition

In two-dimensional media (drawing, painting, photography, video, etc.) **composition** refers to the arrangement and organization of **visual elements** on the page or screen. These include:

- Line
- Shape/form
- Value (areas of light or dark)
- Colour
- Texture
- “Negative” or empty space

Emphasis & interest

Generally, artists arrange their compositions in order to accomplish one or more of the following:



- To emphasize and draw the viewer's attention to specific **focal points**.



- To establish a certain **perspective** or help create a certain **mood**.



- To create **visual interest**—images that seem “active” or are “engaging” to look at.

Factors to consider



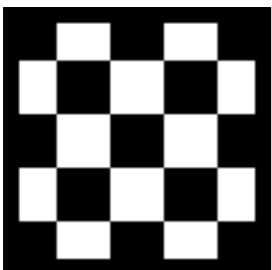
- **Framing/Cropping:** How does content relate to the edges of the frame? Is all of your visual information contained within the boundaries of the image, or are certain parts cut off?



- **Size and emphasis:** What should stand out? Which elements should be largest, darkest (or brightest), boldest, or otherwise most prominent? Do elements in the image draw our attention or “lead the eye” to certain focal points?



- **Positive and negative space:** The balance between “form” and “space,” “emptiness” and “fullness.” In representational work, this is often a balance between “foreground” and “background.”



- **Pattern:** Do certain elements (lines, shapes, etc.) repeat throughout the image? Depending on how it’s used, pattern can create a sense of unity, rhythm, or movement.

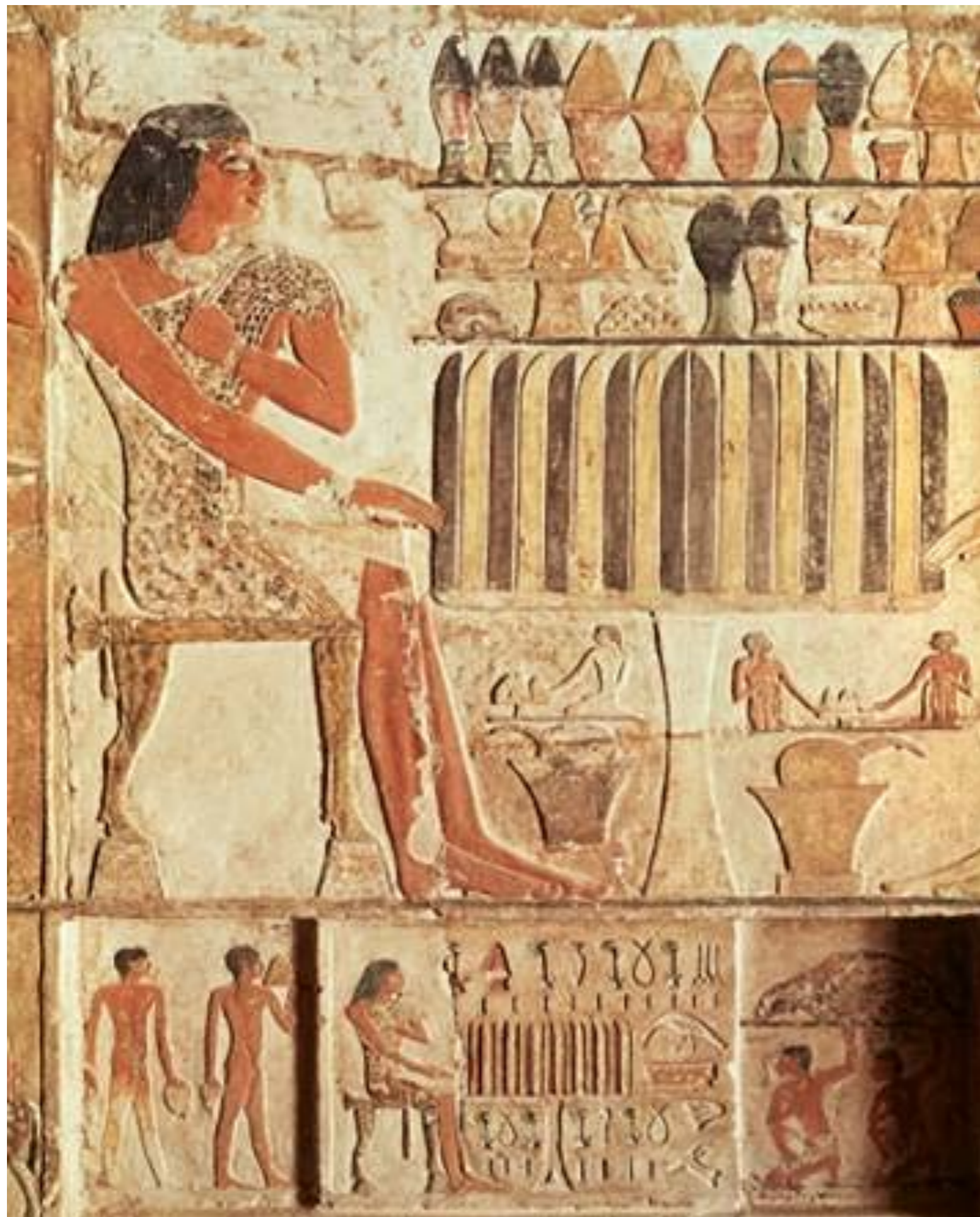


Pietro Perugino – *The Delivery of the Keys* (1481–82)

An early example of one-point linear perspective. The relative scale and position of the figures and architecture serve to locate us in space, showing which subjects are closer and which are further away. The larger foreground figures are emphasized, while the converging lines of the courtyard pavement “lead the eye” to the building behind them.



In this Persian miniature painting, vertical position indicates the relative distance of each figure, but their scale is largely unchanged.



In this Ancient Egyptian wall carving, subjects lower down in the composition are meant to be read as being in front of subjects at the top (vertical perspective). In other places, figures overlap, also indicating their position in relation to one another.

In addition to this rudimentary perspective, subjects are also arranged horizontally to indicate narrative (much like a modern-day comic strip).

In addition to that, scale is used to indicate relative importance: the large figure is meant to represent a more significant personage than the other, smaller figures (a type of hierarchical organization having nothing to do with the depiction of literal space)



In other artistic traditions, though, as in this example of Navajo sand painting, the size and placement of figures conveys narrative and ceremonial information only.



Peter Murray Djeripi Mulcahy – *Wayamba the Turtle*

The elements in this painting by a contemporary Aboriginal Australian artist are arranged to suggest a view from above, but they are organized in such a way as to tell a story in sequence (again, like a newspaper comic strip). From the artist's description: "The painting is to be read section by section (bottom left clockwise). This depiction describes in detail the events that would unfold in this ancient and dramatic story."

Compositional qualities

- **Balanced** (1) ↔ **Unbalanced** (2)

In “balanced” compositions, contrasting elements (light/dark areas, positive/negative space, etc.) are distributed evenly throughout the image. There may be distinct focal points or areas of empty space, but no one part of the composition entirely overwhelms or overpowers the others.

Most of the time, a balanced composition is the goal, but “unbalanced” compositions—compositions that seem “unstable” or strongly emphasize certain parts of the image—are sometimes sought after in order to create a particular mood or effect.

- **Dynamic** (3) ↔ **Static** (4)

“Dynamic” compositions “lead the eye” around the composition, guiding viewers from one part to the next in a way that feels “active.” “Static” compositions draw our attention one spot and hold it there.

Most artists and photographers work to create dynamic compositions, but, as with unbalanced compositions, static static compositions can be highly effective in certain situations.



1



2

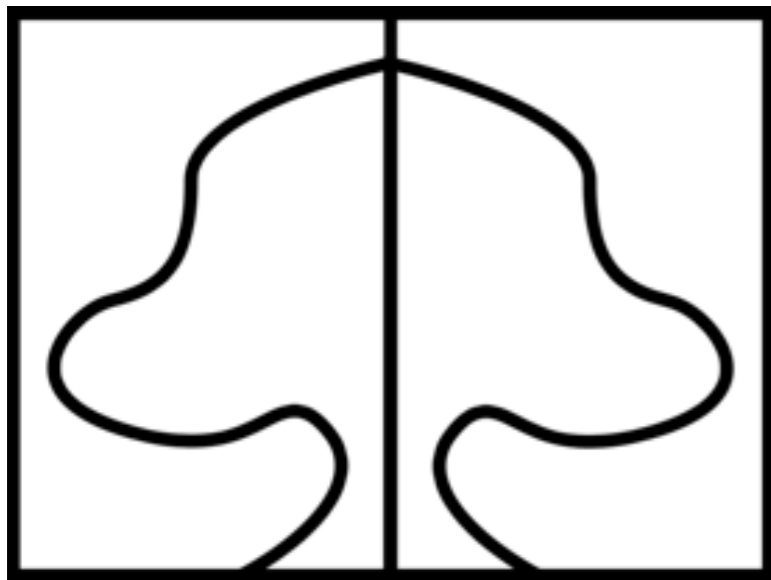


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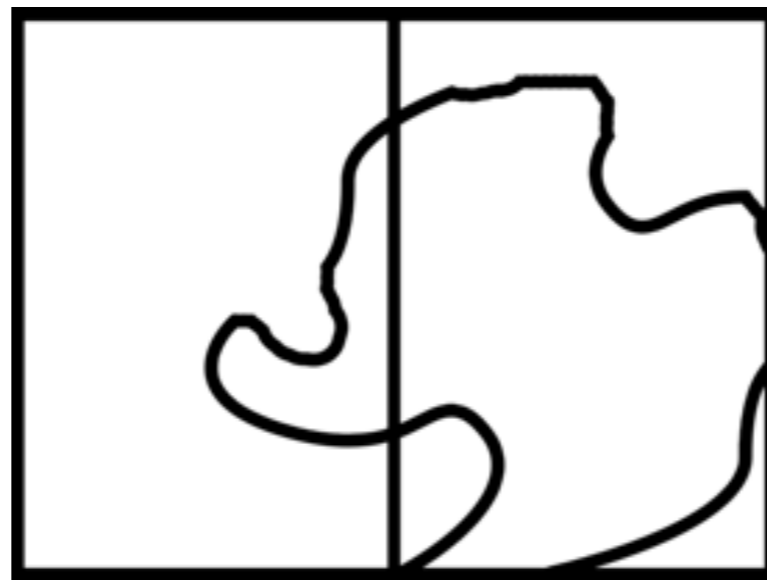
Symmetrical, asymmetrical, & allover compositions



Symmetrical

Weighted evenly around one or more centre line (axis of symmetry). A type of **central** composition

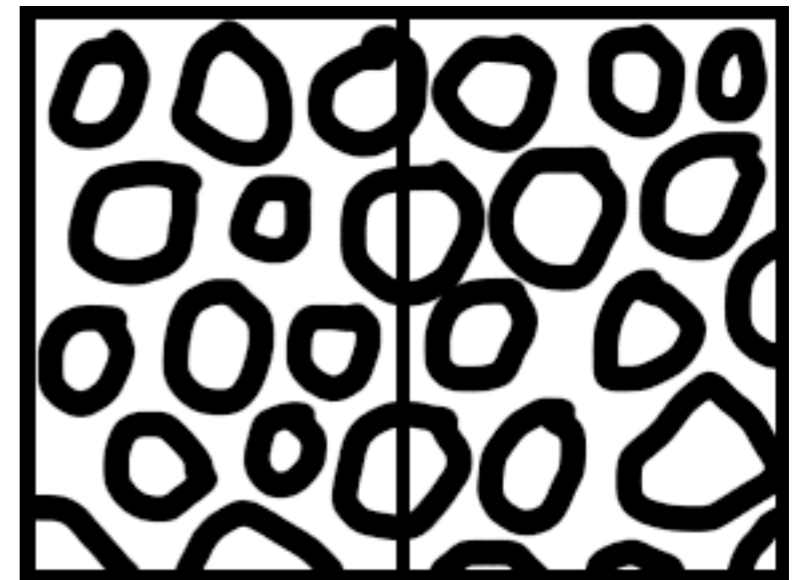
Always balanced, usually static



Asymmetrical

Weighted to one side of the axis of symmetry

Often unbalanced, more likely to be dynamic



Allover

Weighted equally throughout.

Almost always balanced. May be symmetrical or asymmetrical, static or dynamic.



Giorgio Morandi – *Natura Morta* (1956)

The central, symmetrical composition creates a sense of “stillness.”



Francis Bacon – *Figure with Meat* (c. 1954)

The symmetrical arrangement of the beef carcass and the diagonal perspective lines in the background both focus our attention squarely above the face of the seated figure (even though we might rather look away). Those same elements help lead the eye to other parts of the image, so the painting can be said to have features of both static and dynamic compositions. The slightly off-centre axis of symmetry creates a vague sense of unease.



Robert Longo – *Men Trapped in Ice* (1979)

While not perfectly symmetrical, Longo's **central** compositions and extensive, evenly-distributed areas of negative space lock our gaze on the individual subjects, reinforcing the sense of the men being “trapped” or “frozen” in place.



The figures in these drawings by **Egon Schiele** break from the central axis, creating a sense of imbalance. Along with the strong diagonals of the figures create a sense of tension and movement.

Note the similarity between these drawings and Robert Longo's. Unlike *Men Trapped in Ice*, the close cropping of the figures emphasizes the asymmetry of the poses, increasing the tension.

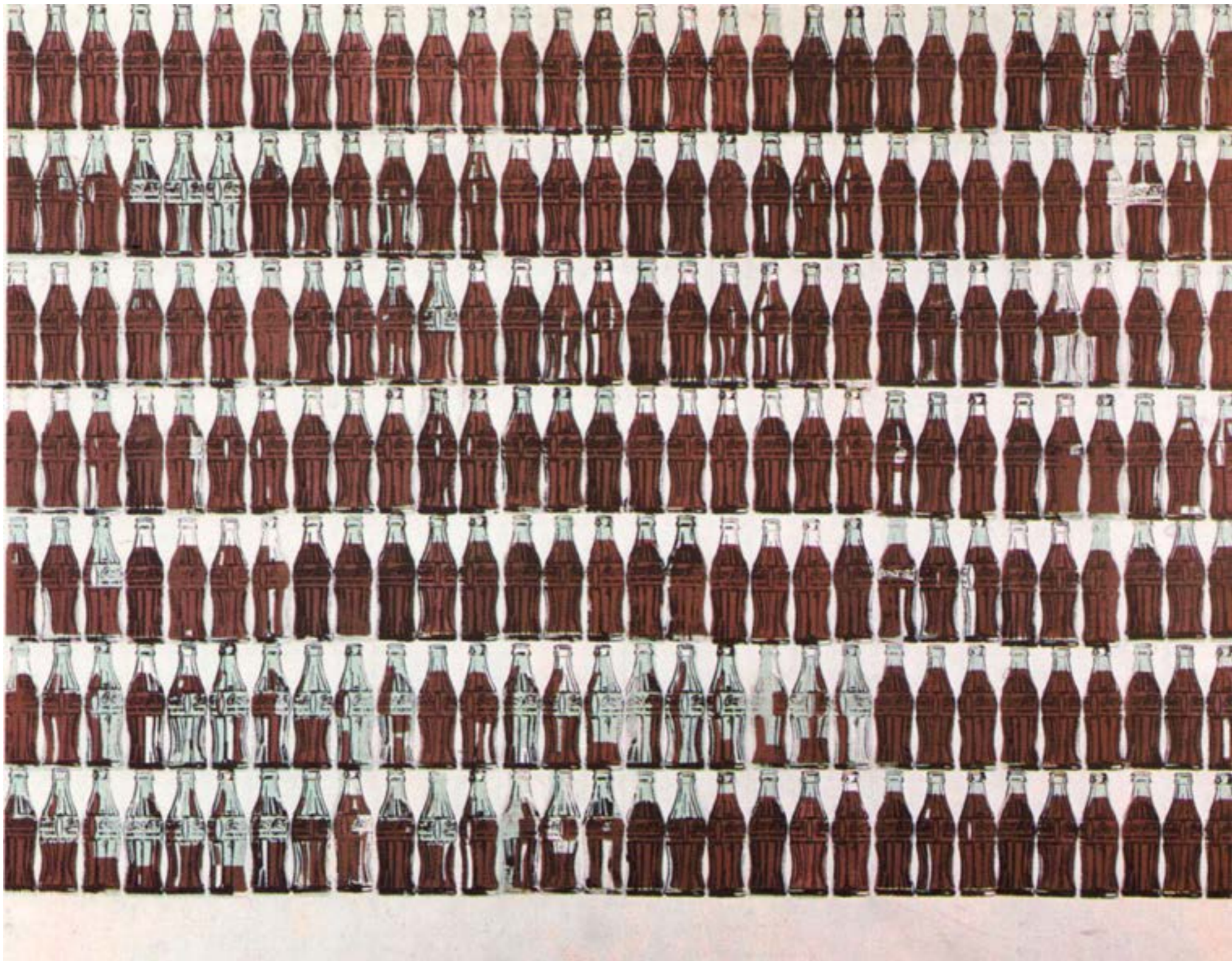


Radial symmetry (compositions weighted equally to either side of both horizontal and vertical axes) in abstract paintings by **Kenneth Noland** (above), **Richard Long** (above right) and **Judy Chicago** (right) focus our attention in ways that can seem either “impactful” and “contemplative.”



Michelangelo da Caravaggio – *St. Francis in Ecstasy* (1595)

In this painting, the heavy weighting of the image to the right focuses our attention on the gaze between the angel and St. Francis, while also emphasizing the scope and depth of the black space receding to the left. Despite its asymmetry, light and dark areas are carefully balanced.



Andy Warhol – *210 Coca-Cola Bottles* (1962)

Warhol's all-over compositions of obsessively-repeated images taken from pop culture create a sense of rhythm and monotony that highlights the ubiquity and sameness of those subjects. The use of patterning gives us the sense that the image could conceivably keep repeating forever.



Vija Celmins – *Untitled (Ocean)* (1977)

Celmins's all-over composition creates a sense of tranquility. The drawing also conveys the sense of "infinite" space or repetition, but to very different effect.



In Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama's paintings of dots and "nets," the all-over compositions create a dense field of visual activity with no "point of entry" or focal point, which for some people communicates a sense of anxiety or even madness.



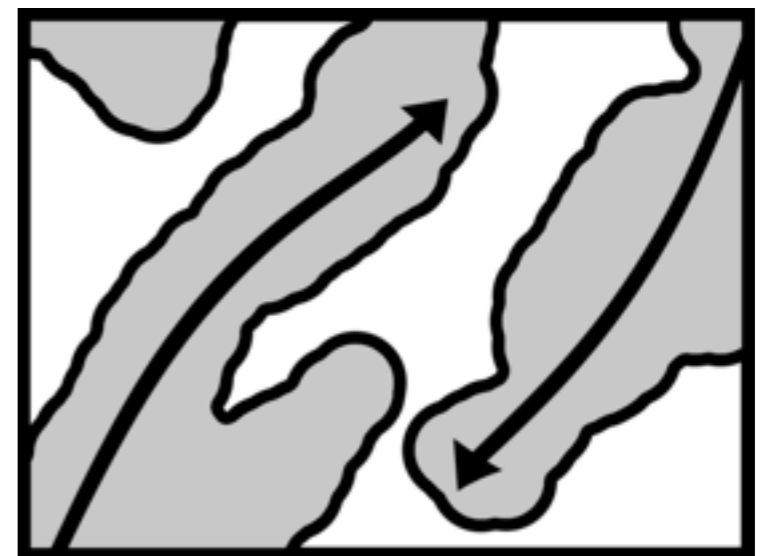
In a recent installation in Australia and reproduced elsewhere, where audience members were invited to cover the surfaces of an all-white room with brightly-coloured circular stickers, Kusama applies the same principle of repetition and all-over composition to three-dimensional space.

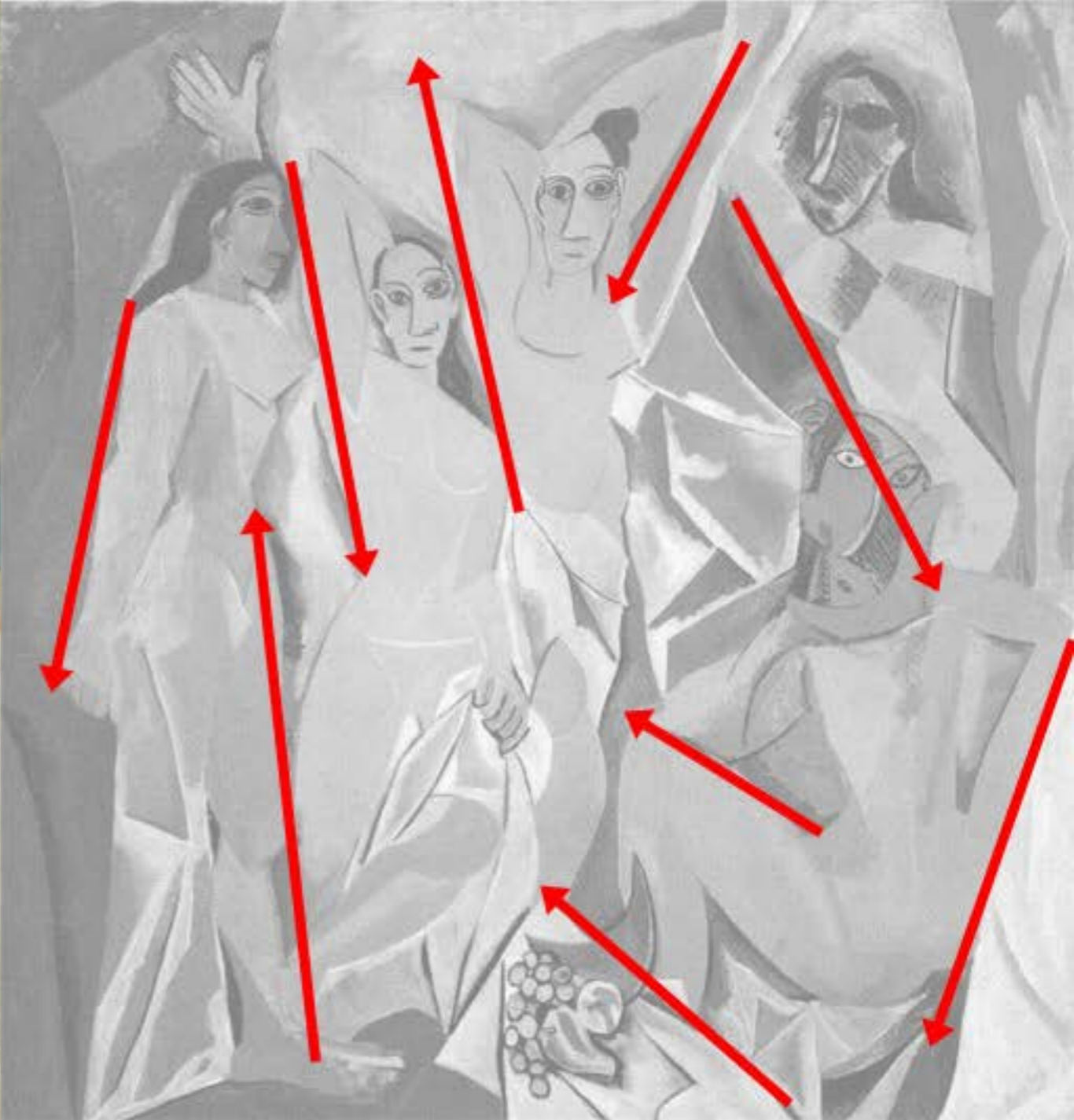


Giorgio deChirico – *Mystery and Melancholy of a Street* (1914)

One shortcut for creating visual interest in a composition is to include a prominent diagonal features.

In the case of this painting, note how the diagonal lines created by the various shadows and buildings as they recede leads the eye back and forth between foreground and background elements.





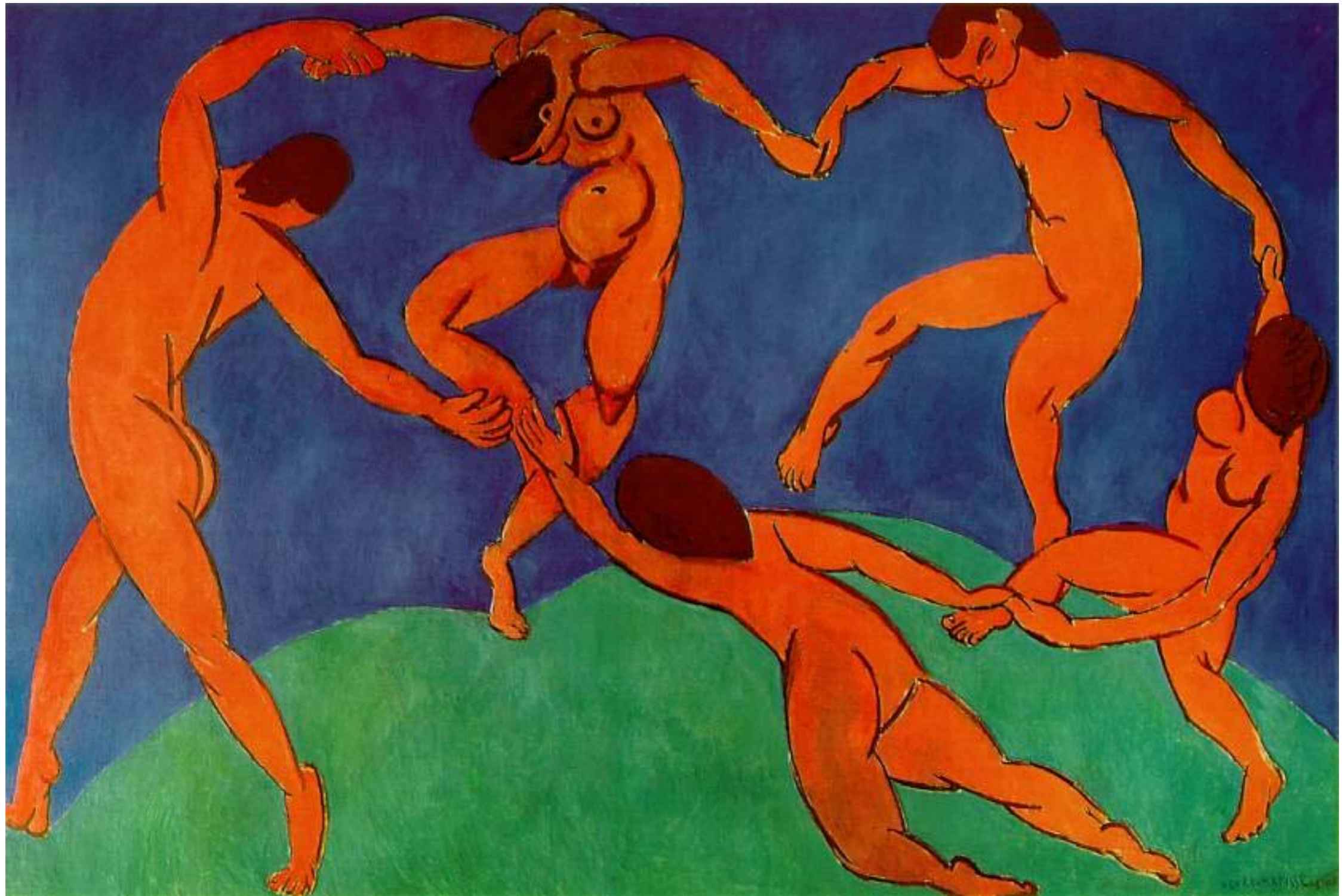
Pablo Picasso – *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J.)* (1907)

The use of diagonal lines to create a visually interesting composition can be more subtle than in the deChirico painting. In this case, Picasso incorporates numerous, conflicting diagonals to “move the eye” around the picture plane.



Brice Marden – *Chinese Dancing* (1994–96)

Despite there being no single area of emphasis, this all-over work uses linear elements to lead the eye around the picture plane.



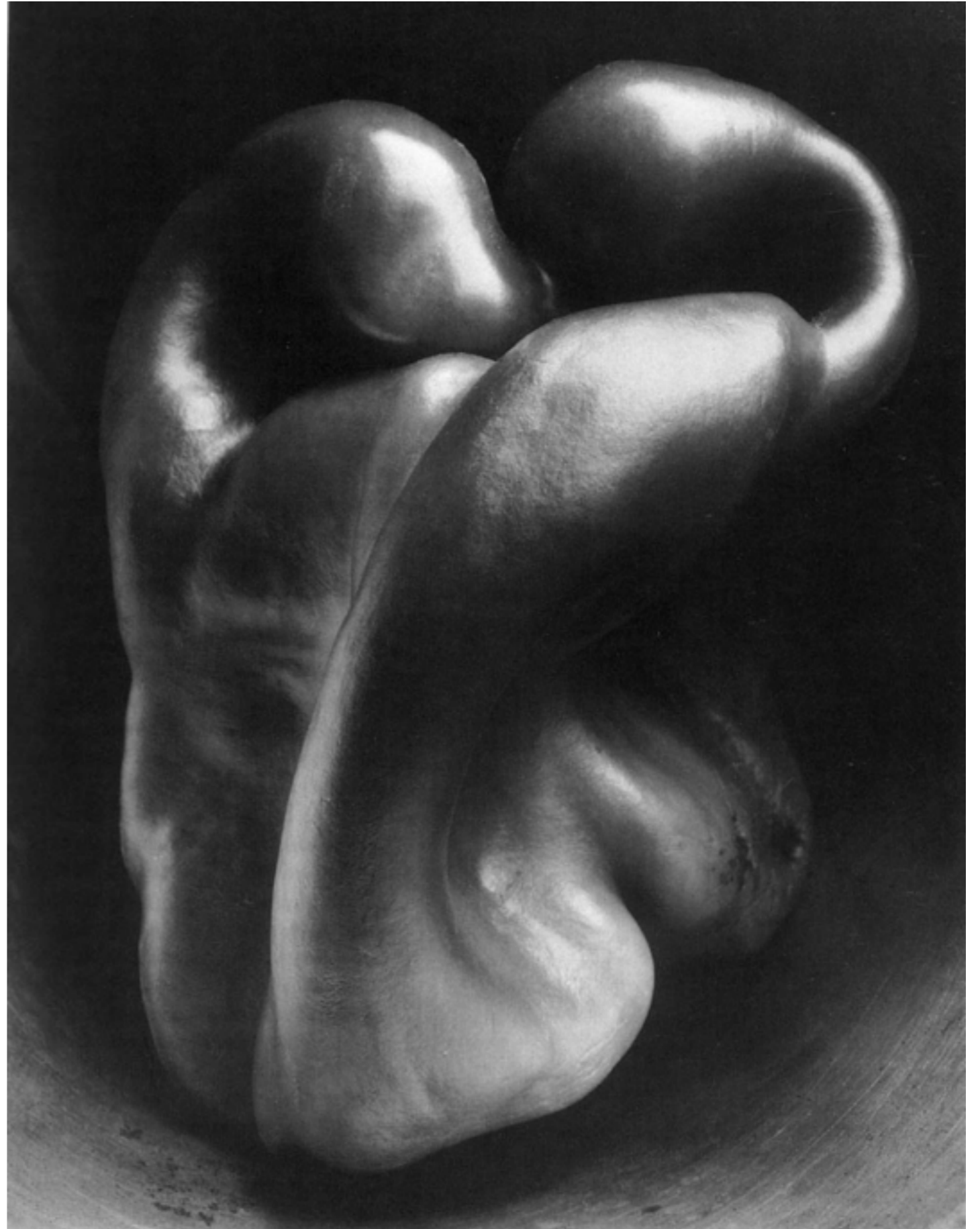
The same principle applies to this painting by **Matisse** — emphasized by the bold outlines, the gentle, repeated curves of the dancers' bodies “move the eye” in a rhythmic, circular motion that echoes the imagined movement of the dancers themselves.



As we've seen, most compositions combine a number of different approaches. In this painting by **Vilhelm Hammershøi**, the dark mass of the woman's dress interrupts the generally static, grid-like background (which has characteristics of of symmetrical and all-over composition), creating a point of interest and highlighting the sense of the woman's isolation in the scene.

In this photograph by Edward Weston, the pepper is cropped close, filling almost the entire frame and creating a strongly “central” composition. Weston carefully lights the pepper to highlight its curvilinear form, however, creating looping passages of light and dark areas that guide our attention around the picture.

Note how the form of the pepper echoes the pose of the Schiele figure while appearing considerably more “balanced.”

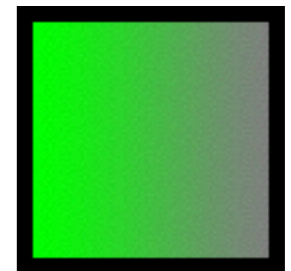
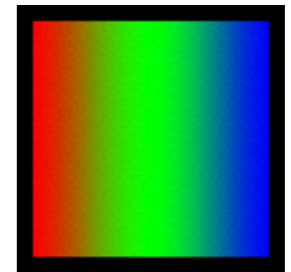


Colour

Properties of colour

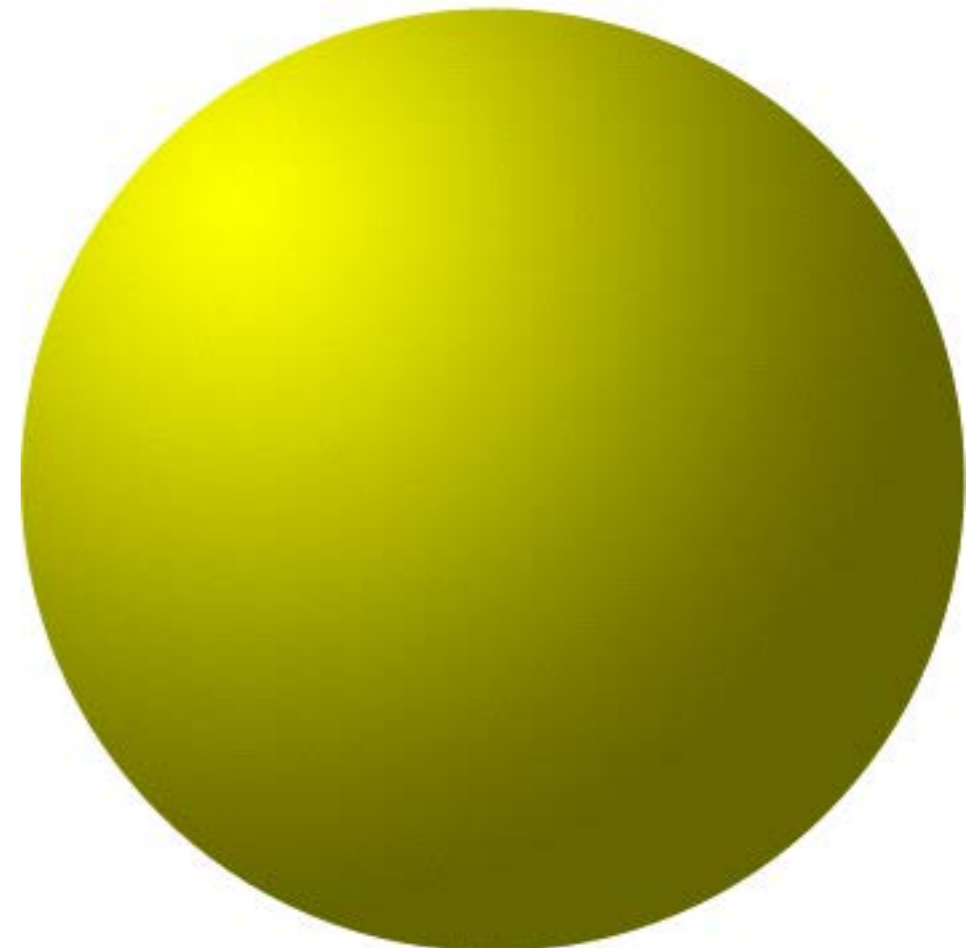
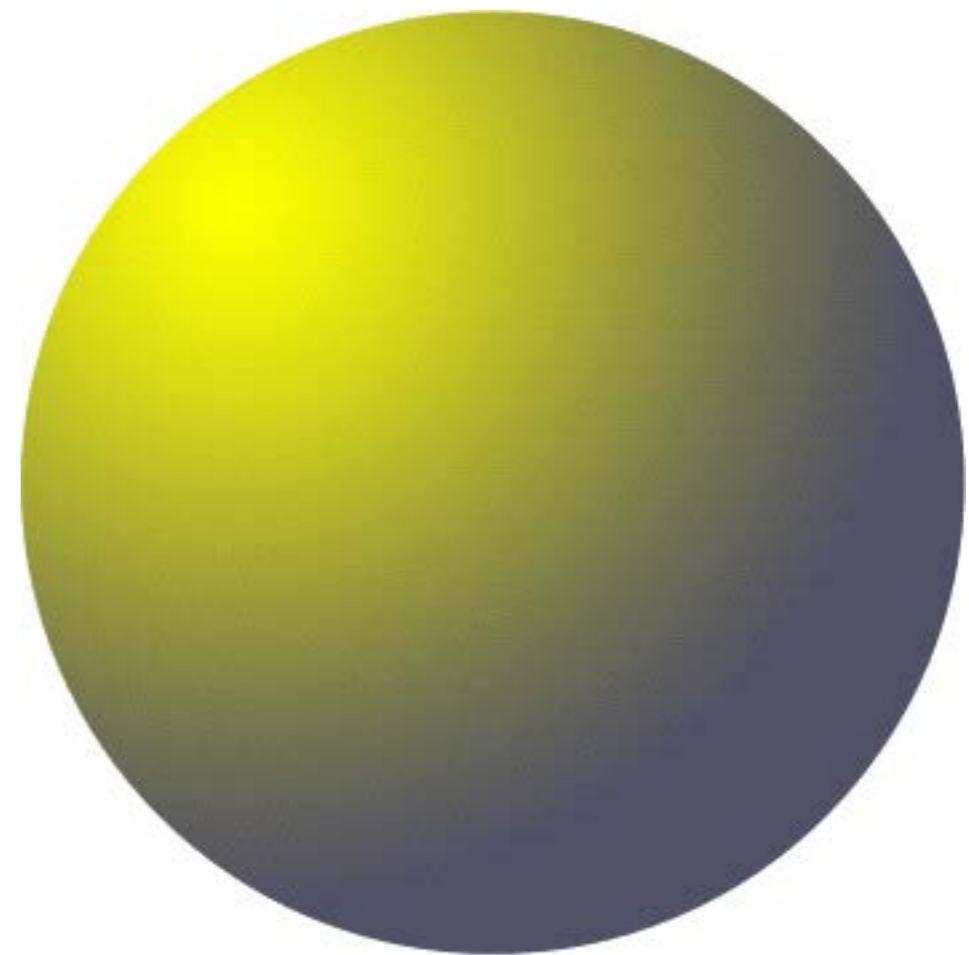
A single colour has three basic properties

- **Hue:** the “colour” itself—specifically, where it falls on the spectrum of visible light. A colour’s “redness,” “blueness,” etc.
- **Saturation:** The intensity of the hue.
- **Value:** The lightness or darkness of the colour. Adding white to a hue produces a “tint,” black produces a “shade,” and grey produces a “tone”



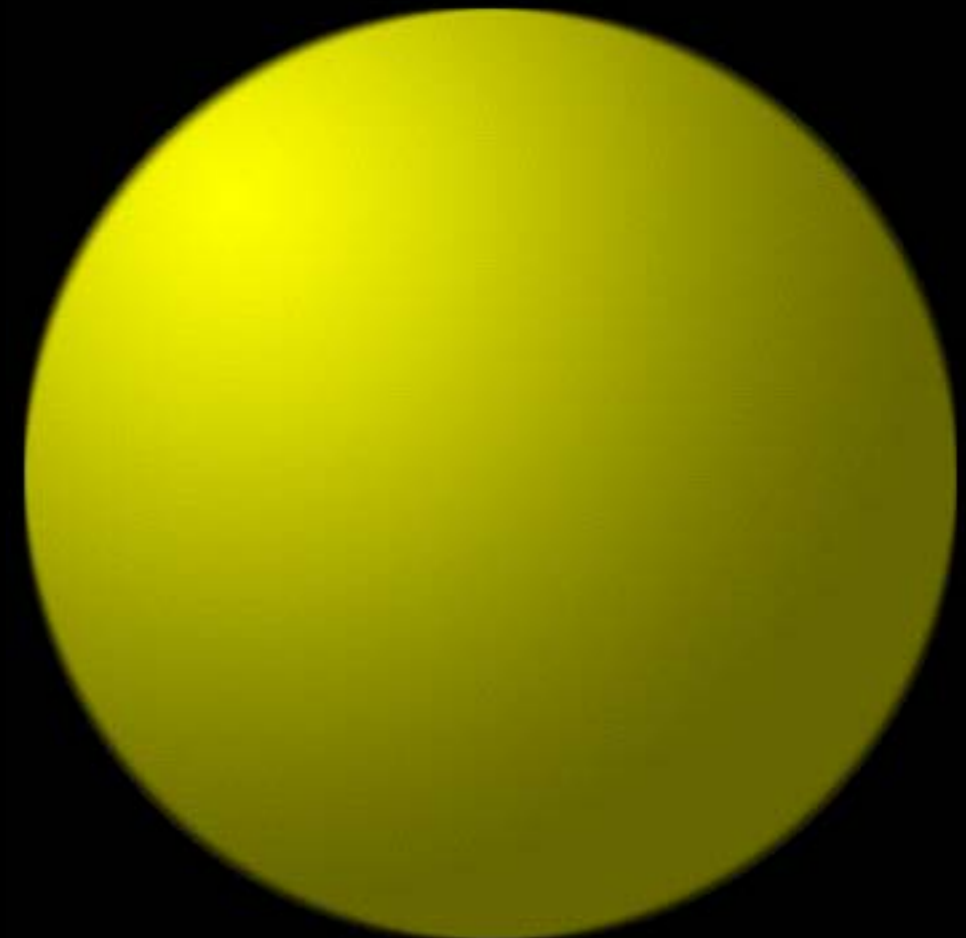
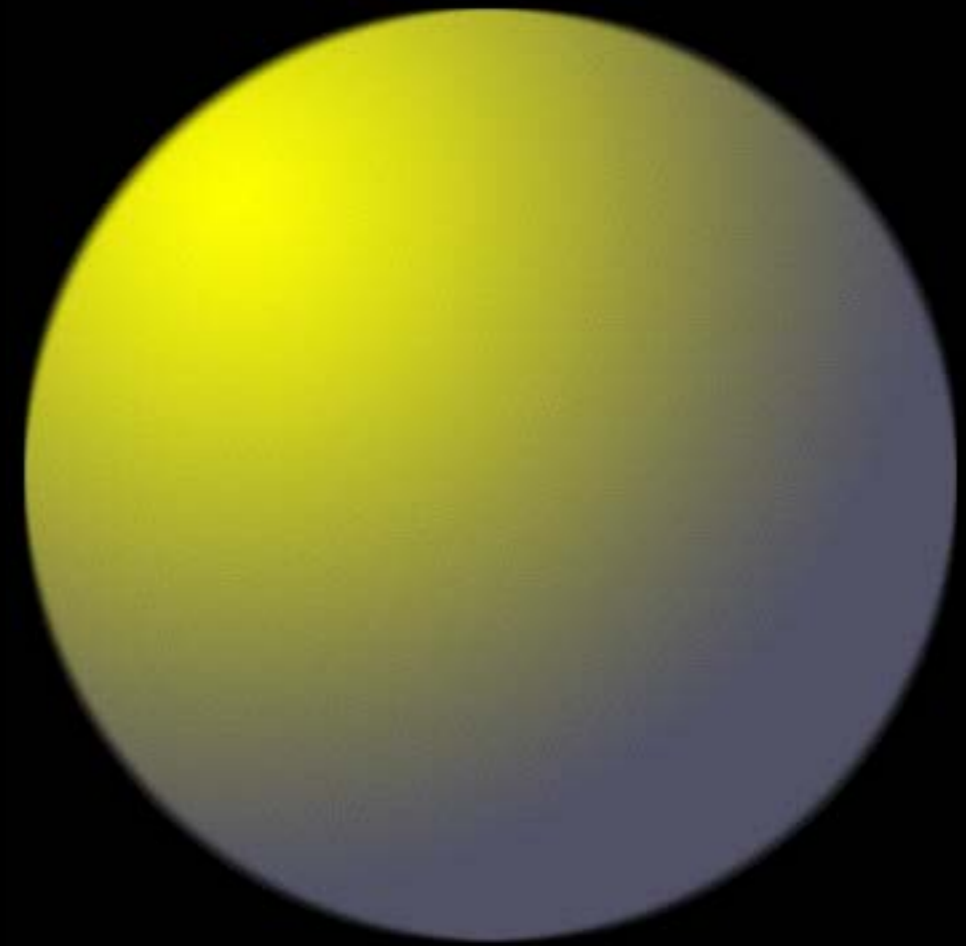
Colour contrast

- Placing colours of contrasting hue, saturation, or value side-by-side often helps to create a sense of depth.
- A “warm”-hued light tends to cast a “cool”-hued shadow and vice versa. Greyed-out colours often appear to “fall back” while more saturated hues tend to “pop.” Shadows are (obviously) darker in value than highlights.
- To create the most believable sense of depth (especially in representational painting), all three types of contrast can be used.
- The top sphere’s shadow is darker, bluer, and less saturated than the yellow highlight. In the bottom sphere, the shadow differs only in value (same hue, equally saturated).



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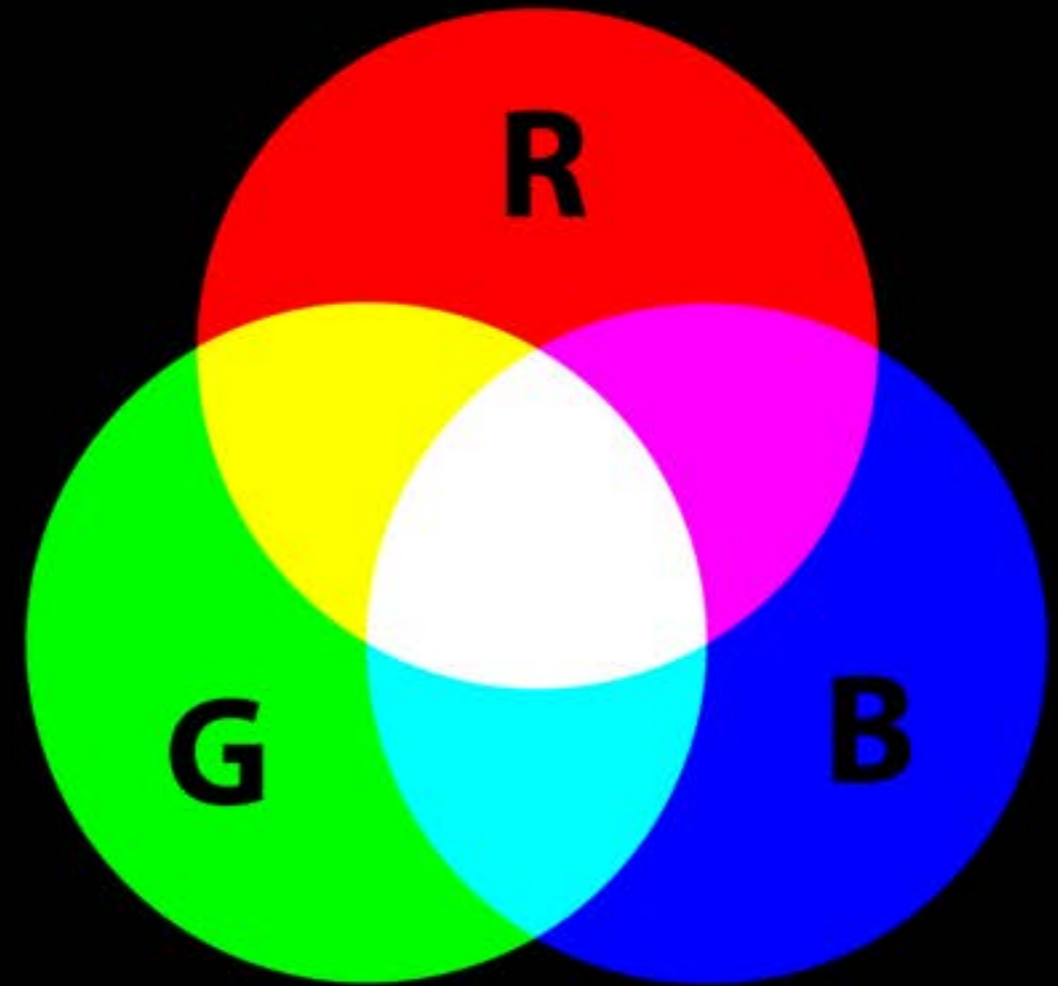
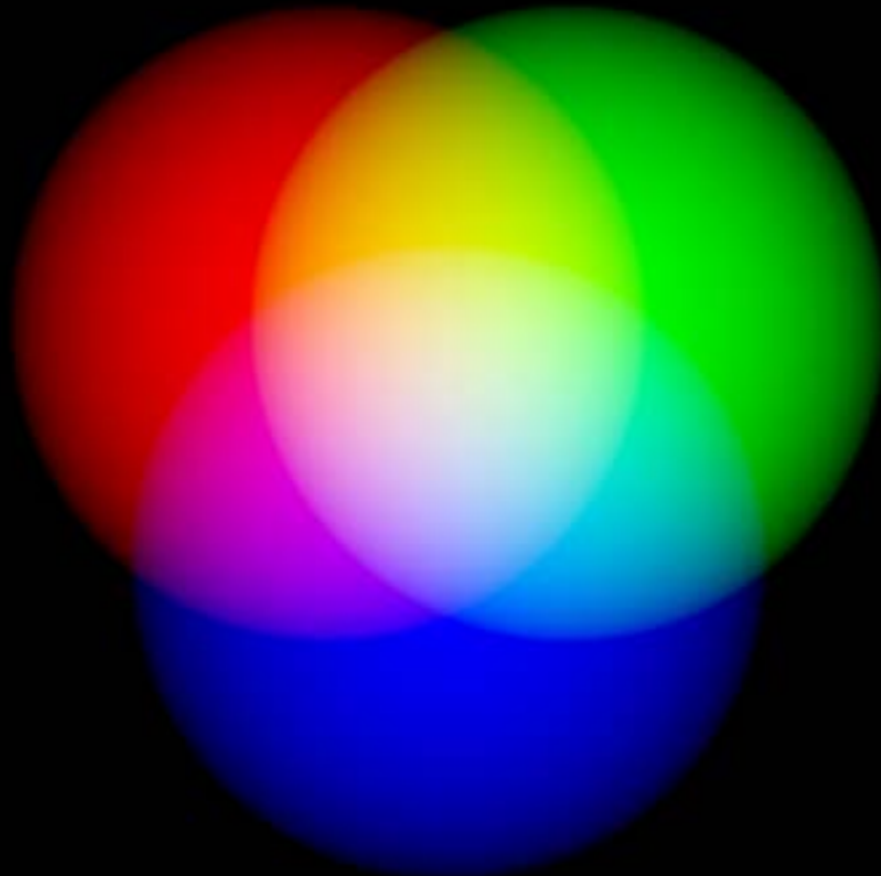


Primary colour systems

- There are many systems for categorizing colours and creating new ones, and each system has its own set of **primary colours**. These can be combined in different proportions to create the full range of possible hues, known as the **gamut**. These are the three most commonly-used models, each of which is named for its primary colours.
- **RYB / Red Yellow Blue** – the historical system that most people learn in Kindergarten (yellow and blue make green, etc.). RYB has been replaced in print and digital media, but it's the standard for drawing and painting..
- **CMY(K) / Cyan Magenta Yellow (black)** – Very similar to RYB, the system used in print, based on overlapping ink colours. Cyan, magenta, and yellow inks overlap to create black (CMYK systems also include black ink for added depth).
- **RGB / Red Green Blue** – the system used for all on-screen and projected digital media. Red, green, and blue light combine to form white.

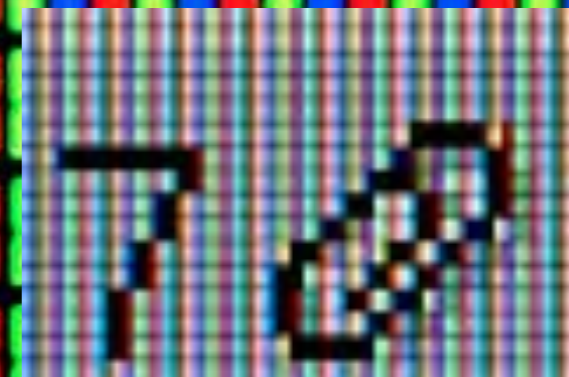
RGB Colour (additive):

- The RGB system is used for coloured light (instead of ink or paint), including all electronic screens and digital projection.
- When red, green, and blue light mix, they create pure white light.
- Combining two primary colours produces secondary colours. **Red** and **green** form **yellow**, **green** and **blue** form **cyan**, and **blue** and **red** form **magenta**.



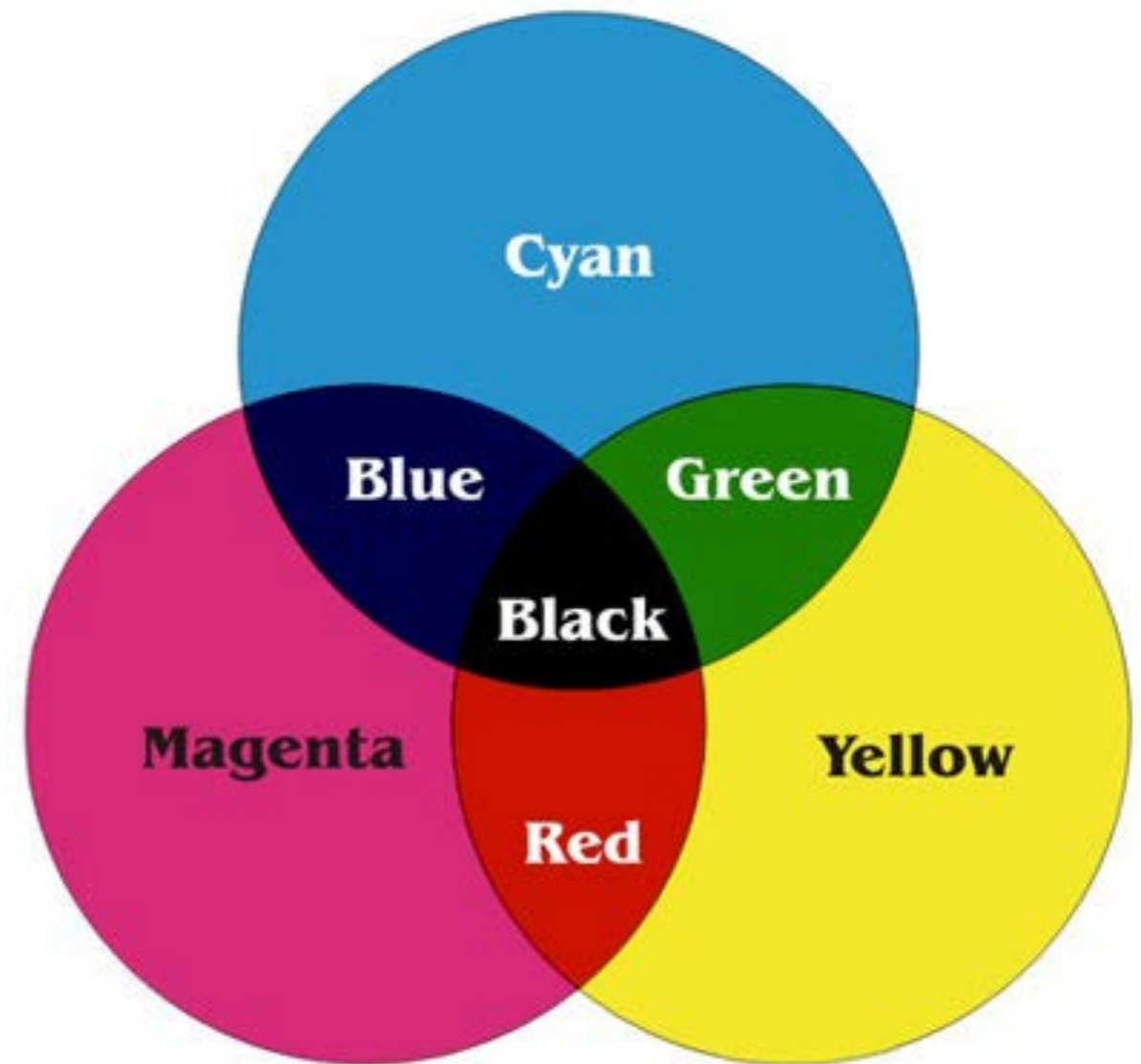
- Different hues are created by reducing the amount of one or more primary colour: reducing the amount of **blue** will create a **yellow** cast, reducing **red** will produce **cyan**, and reducing **green** produces **magenta**.
- RGB colour is closest to the way colour is perceived by the human eye, which has three different types of “cone cell” that absorb and transmit different wavelengths of visible light *roughly* corresponding to red, green, and blue.

Tiny red, green, and blue lights in this extreme closeup of an LCD computer monitor blend together to create pure white and literally millions of other possible hues.

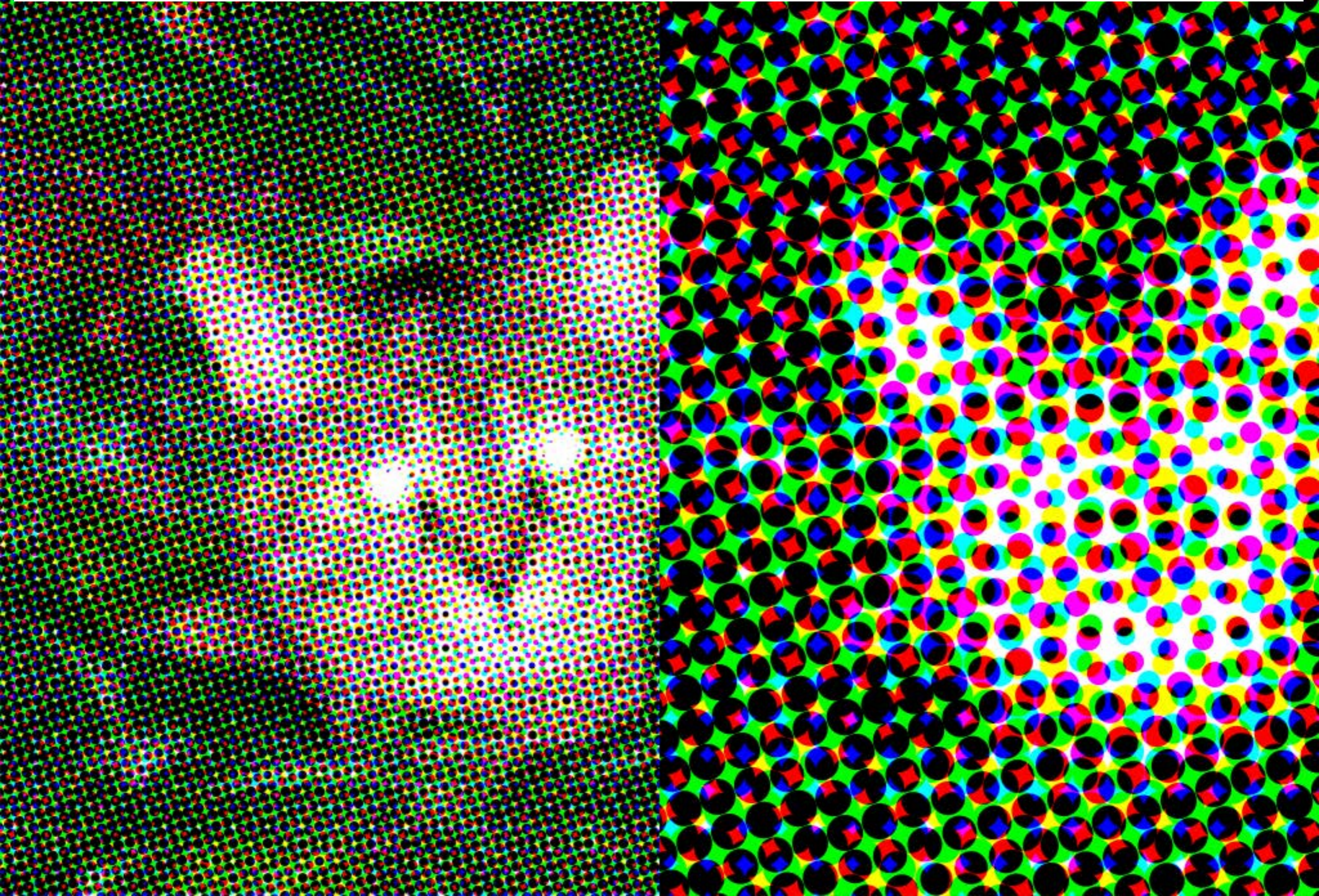


CMYK Colour (subtractive):

- CMYK colour is most commonly used in commercial printing, which uses four colours of printing ink (Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, and Black) to create a full range of hues.
- CMYK reverses the primary and secondary colours of the RGB model. **Magenta** and **Yellow** combine (overlap) to make **red**. **Yellow** and **Cyan** combine to form **green**. **Cyan** and **Magenta** combine to form **blue**.
- Together, the three primaries combine to make black.



In traditional CMY(K) printing, cyan, magenta, yellow, and black dots of varying sizes overlap to create a full spectrum (gamut) of colours.





Colour wheel

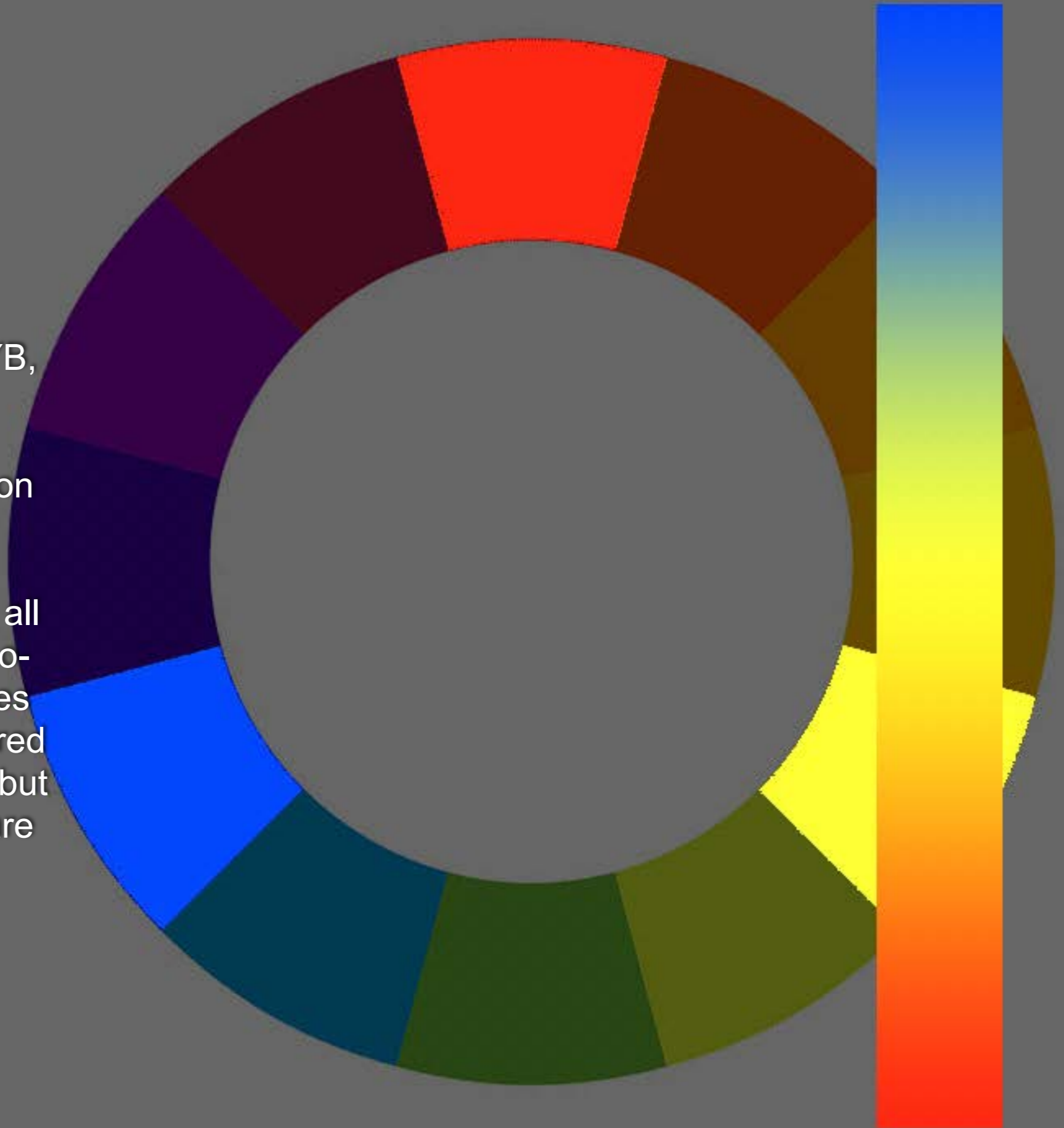
The colour is a tool for arranging colours according to their place on spectrum of visible light.

Colour wheels help us visualize and understand the relationships between different colours.

Primary colours (RYB)

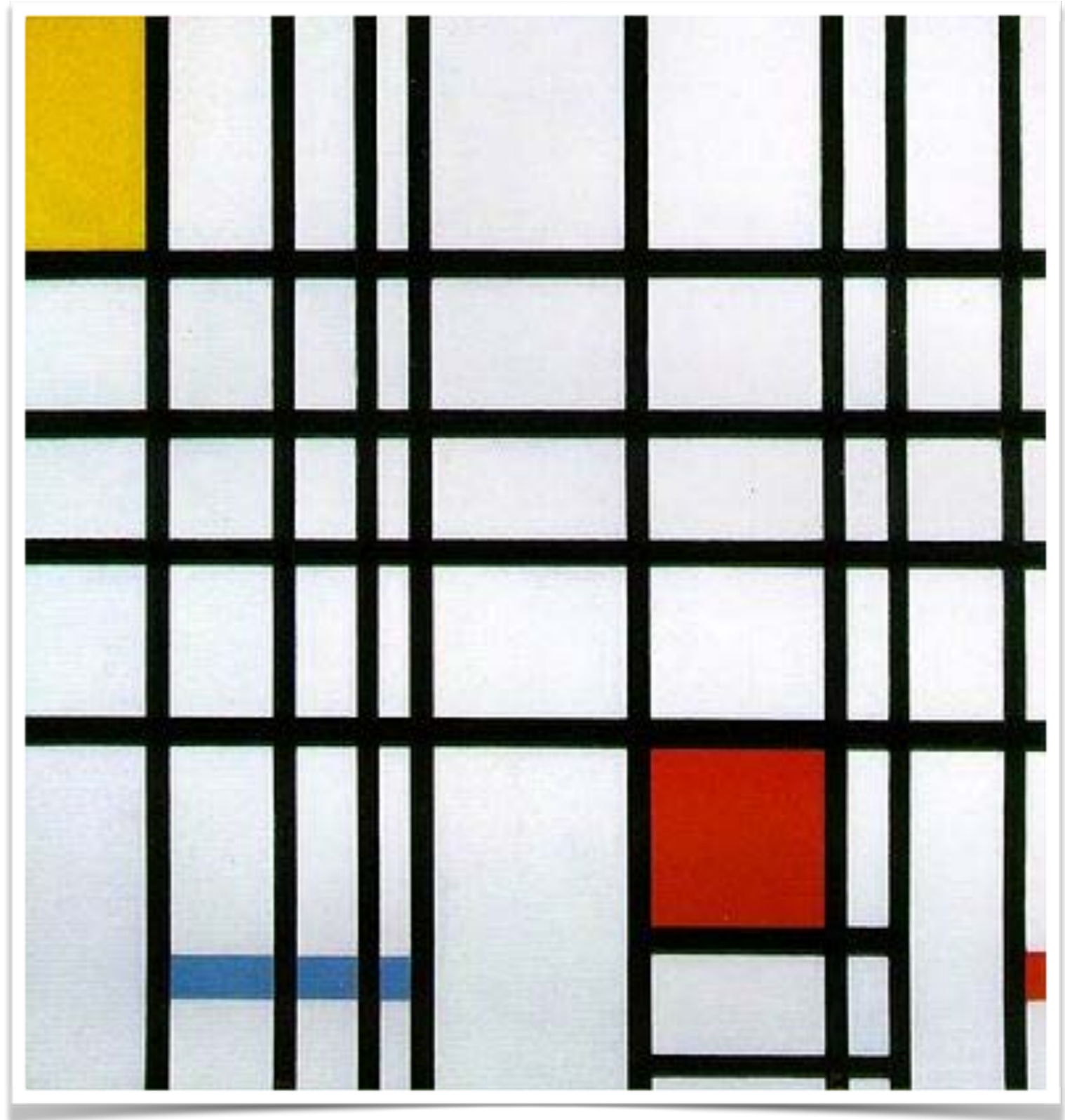
In three-colour (or “trichromatic”) systems (RYB, RGB, CMY[K], etc.), the primary colours form an equilateral triangle or triad on the colour wheel.

Because they sample from all parts of the colour wheel, so-called triadic colour schemes can sometimes be considered “balanced” or harmonious, but more often triadic colours are perceived to be discordant (clashing).



Piet Mondrian used the RYB primary triad to create a sense of visual harmony (which he very sweetly thought could make the world itself more harmonious).

Fast food companies use the same primaries in a very different way, relying on them to “clash” in order attract our attention.

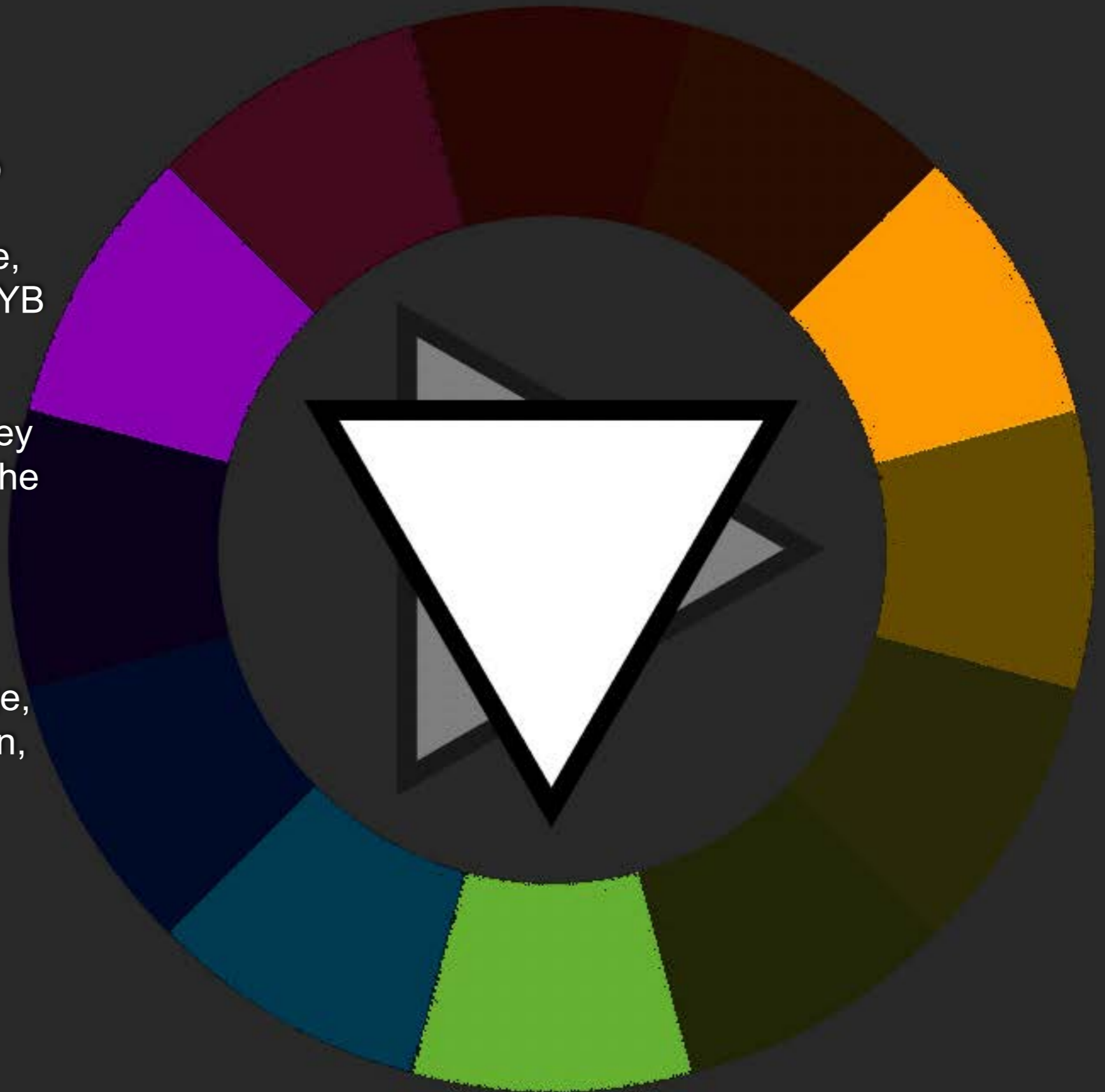


Secondary and tertiary triads

Hues formed by mixing two primaries are called **secondary colours** (purple, orange, and green in the RYB model)

Like the three primaries, they form a triangle or **triad** on the colour wheel.

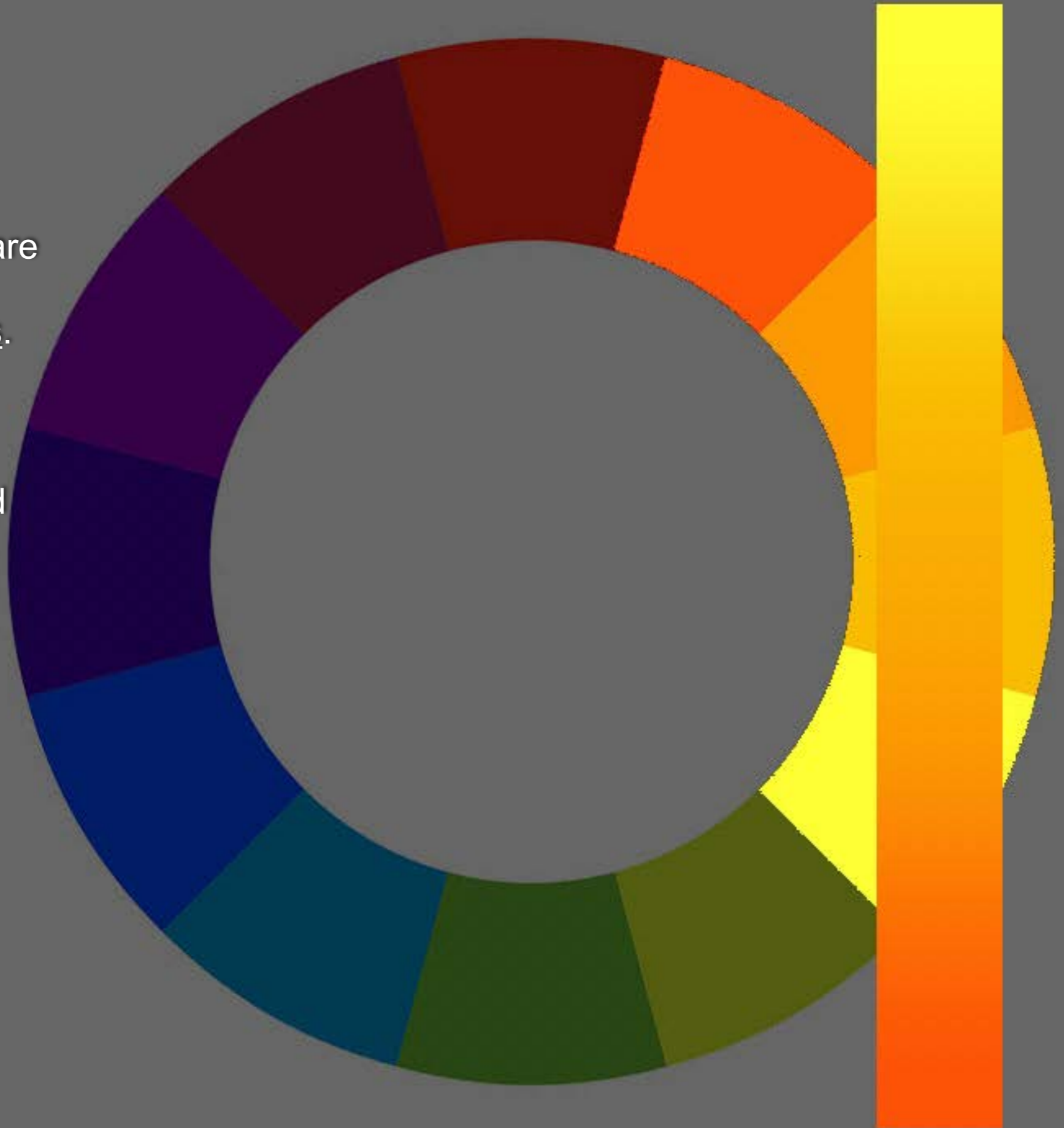
Tertiary colours are found between primary and secondary hues (red-orange, yellow-orange, yellow-green, blue-green, etc.)



Analogous colour

A selection of colours that are all adjacent on the colour wheel are called analogous.

Because there is relatively little contrast among analogous hues, they blend easily from one to the next, creating sense of unity and harmony.



In this painting, **Claude Monet** sticks mostly to an analogous colour scheme of green and yellow-green, which he offsets with flashes of blue-violet for contrast (blue forms part of a triad with yellow, violet forms part of a triad with green).

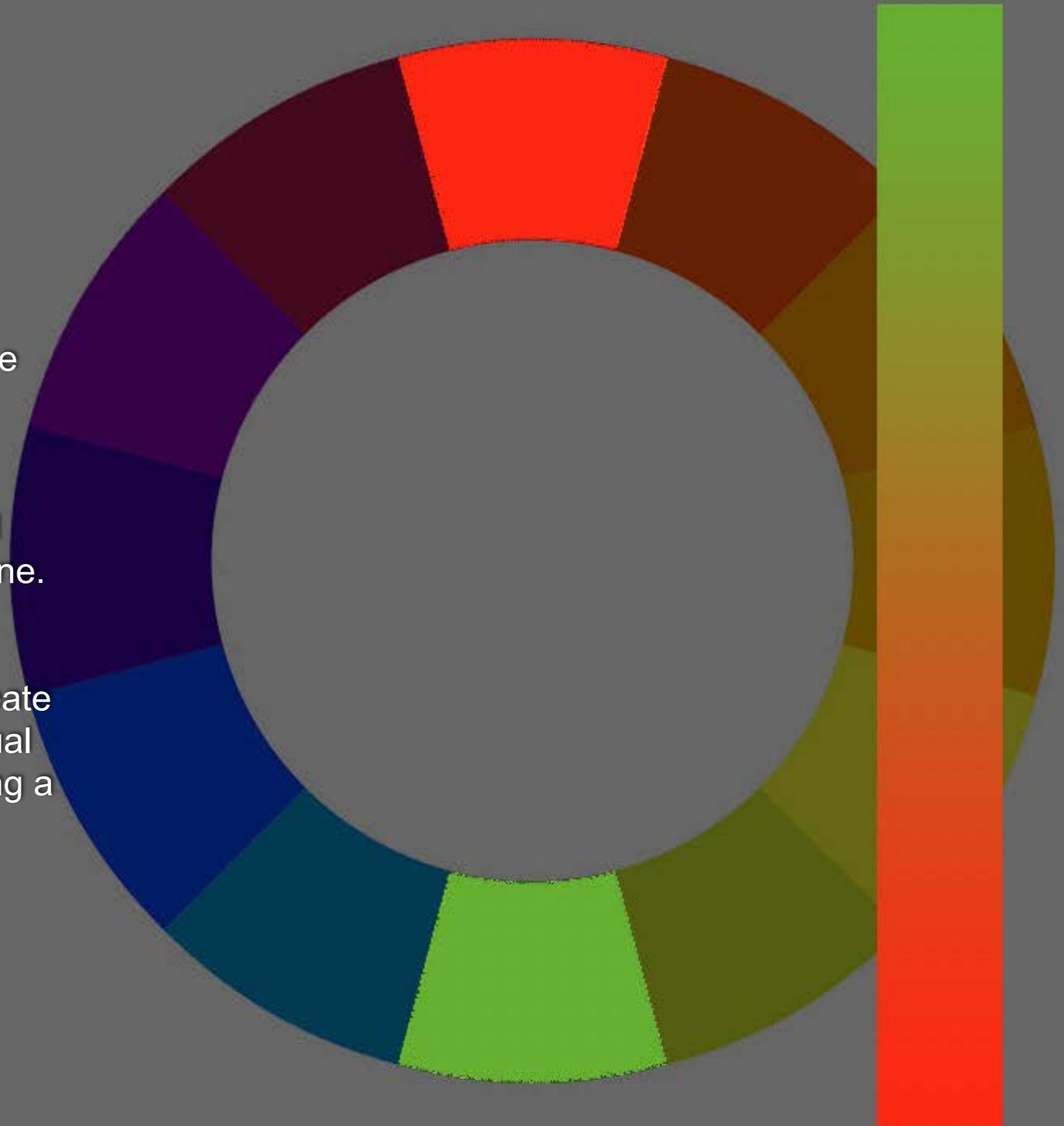


Complementary colours

Colours located directly opposite one another on the colour wheel are called complementary.

In theory, complements will mix to produce a neutral tone.

Placed side-by-side, complementary colours create the greatest amount of visual impact—sometimes creating a “vibratory,” “clashing,” or discordant effect.

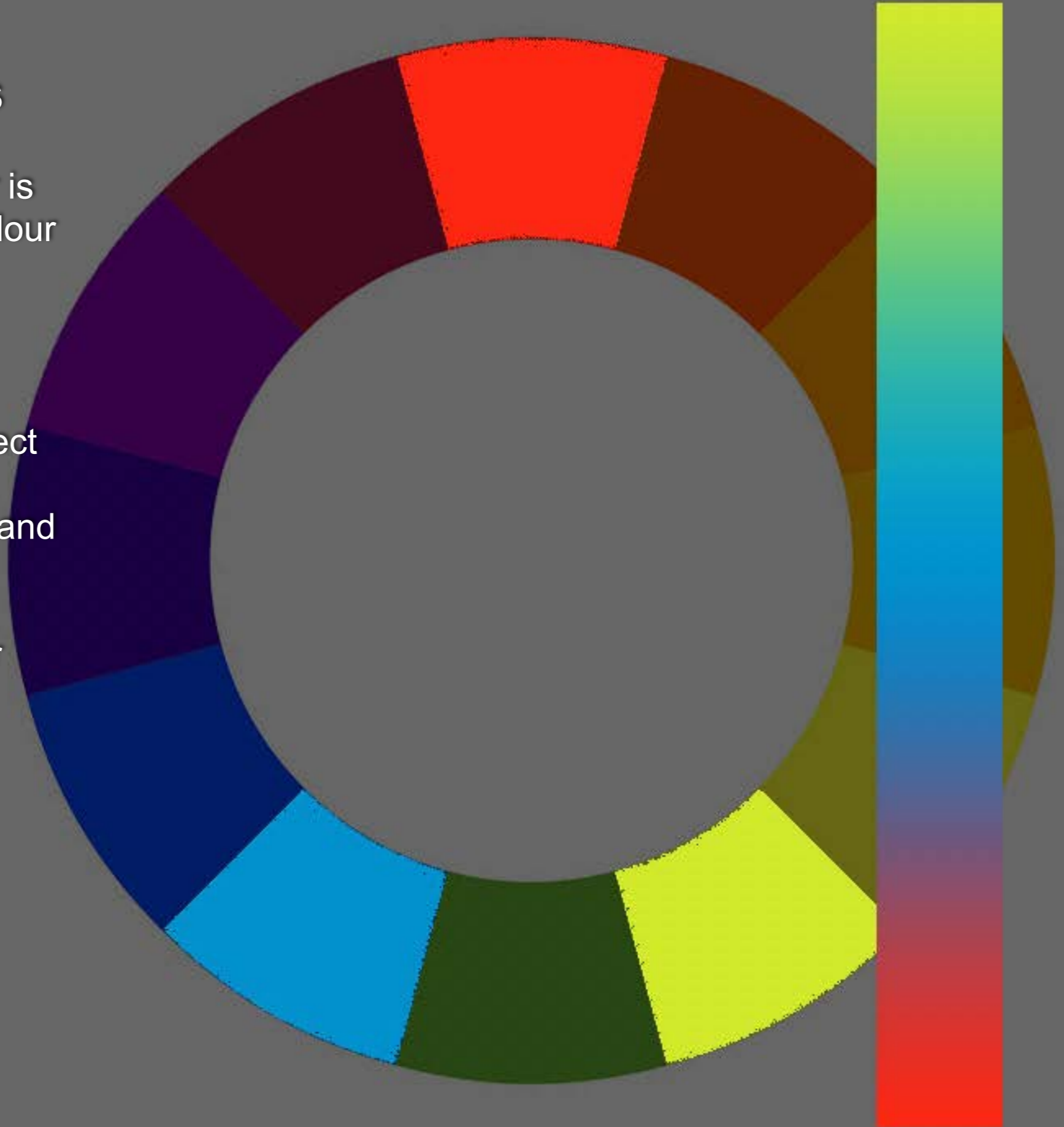


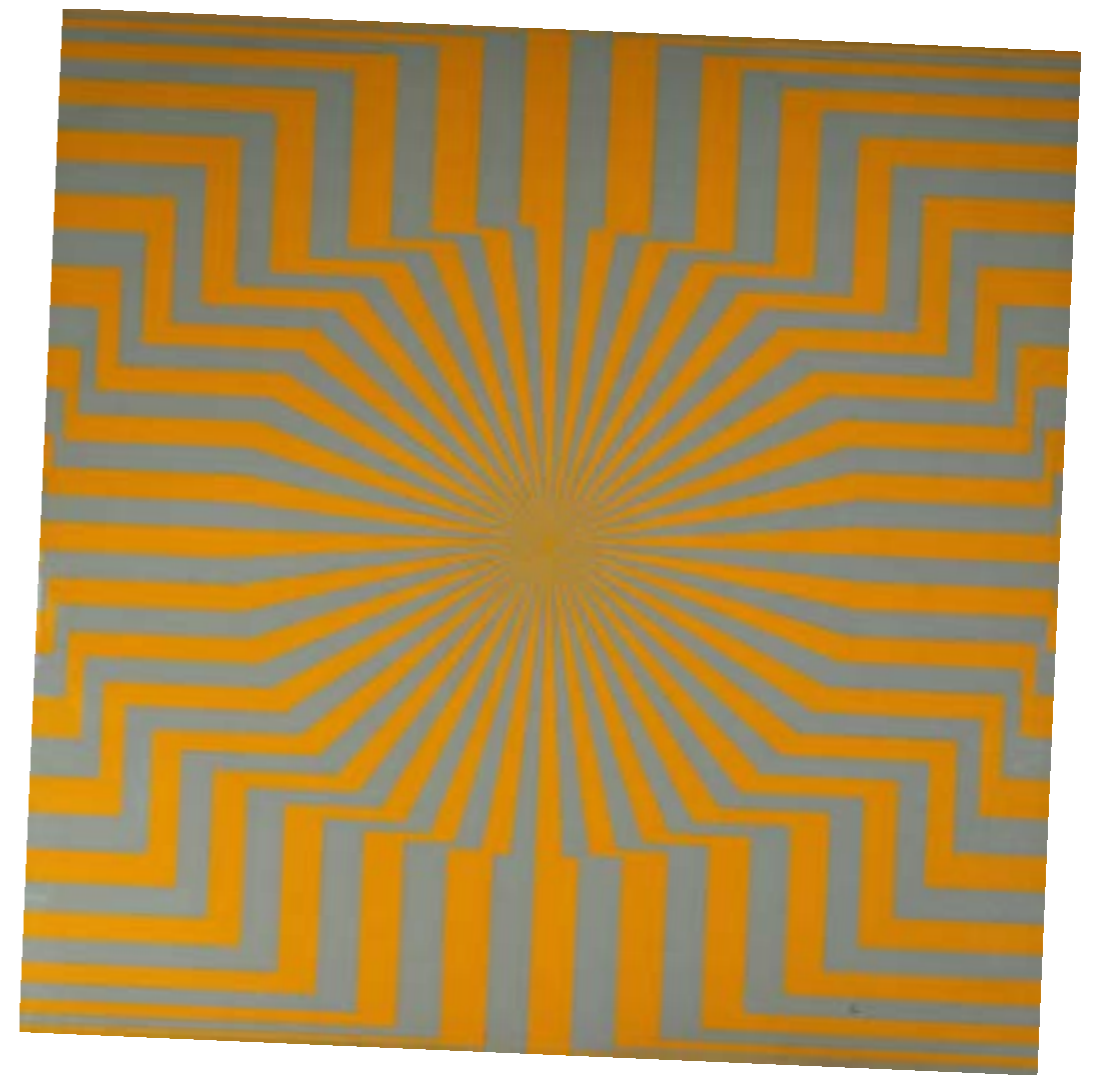
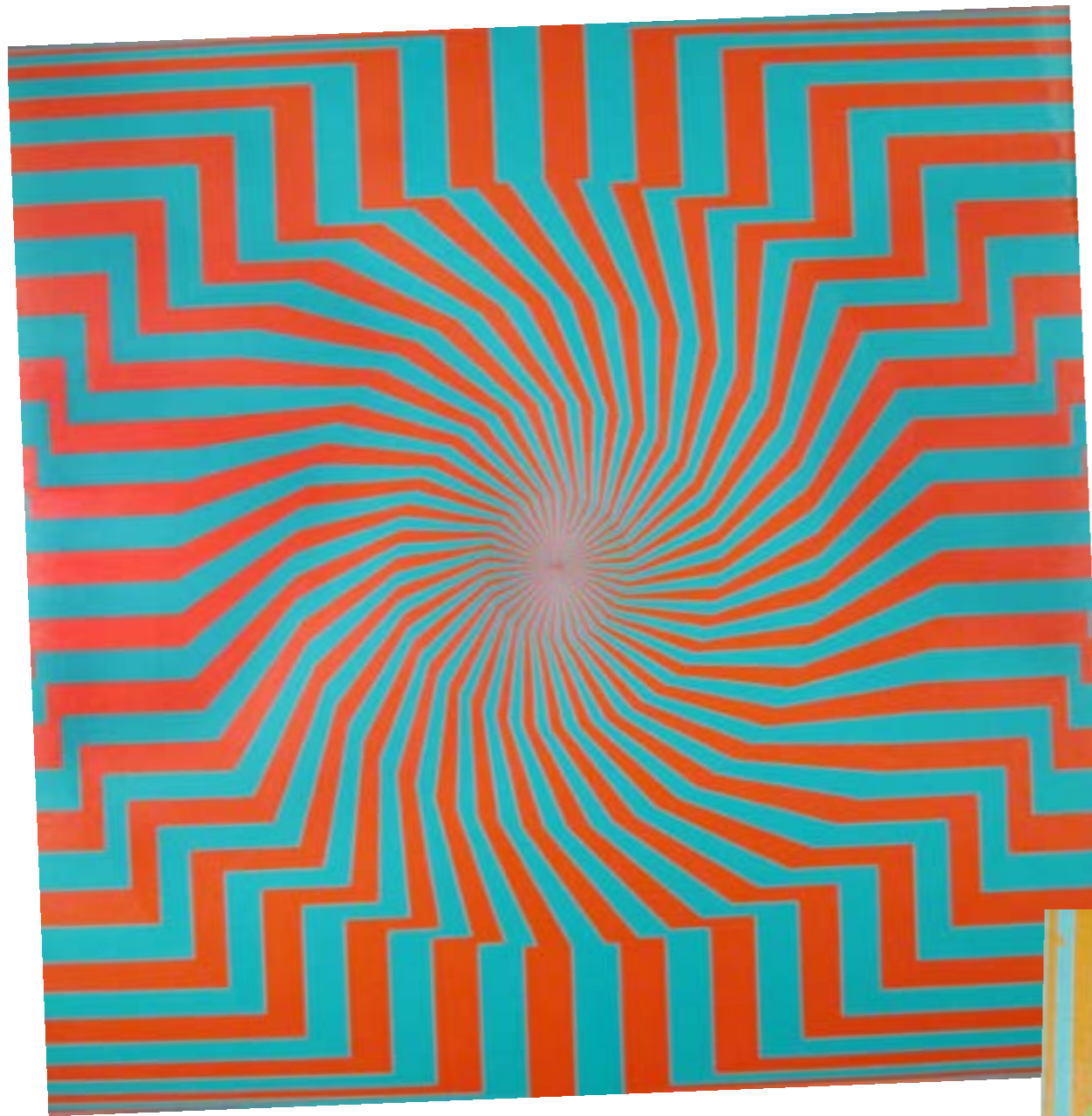
Split complements

A final variation to consider is the split complementary colour scheme, which combines features of complementary and triadic colour.

Rather than using red's direct complement (green), the adjacent hues (blue-green and yellow-green) are used.

Split complementary colour schemes are usually discordant (they "clash").



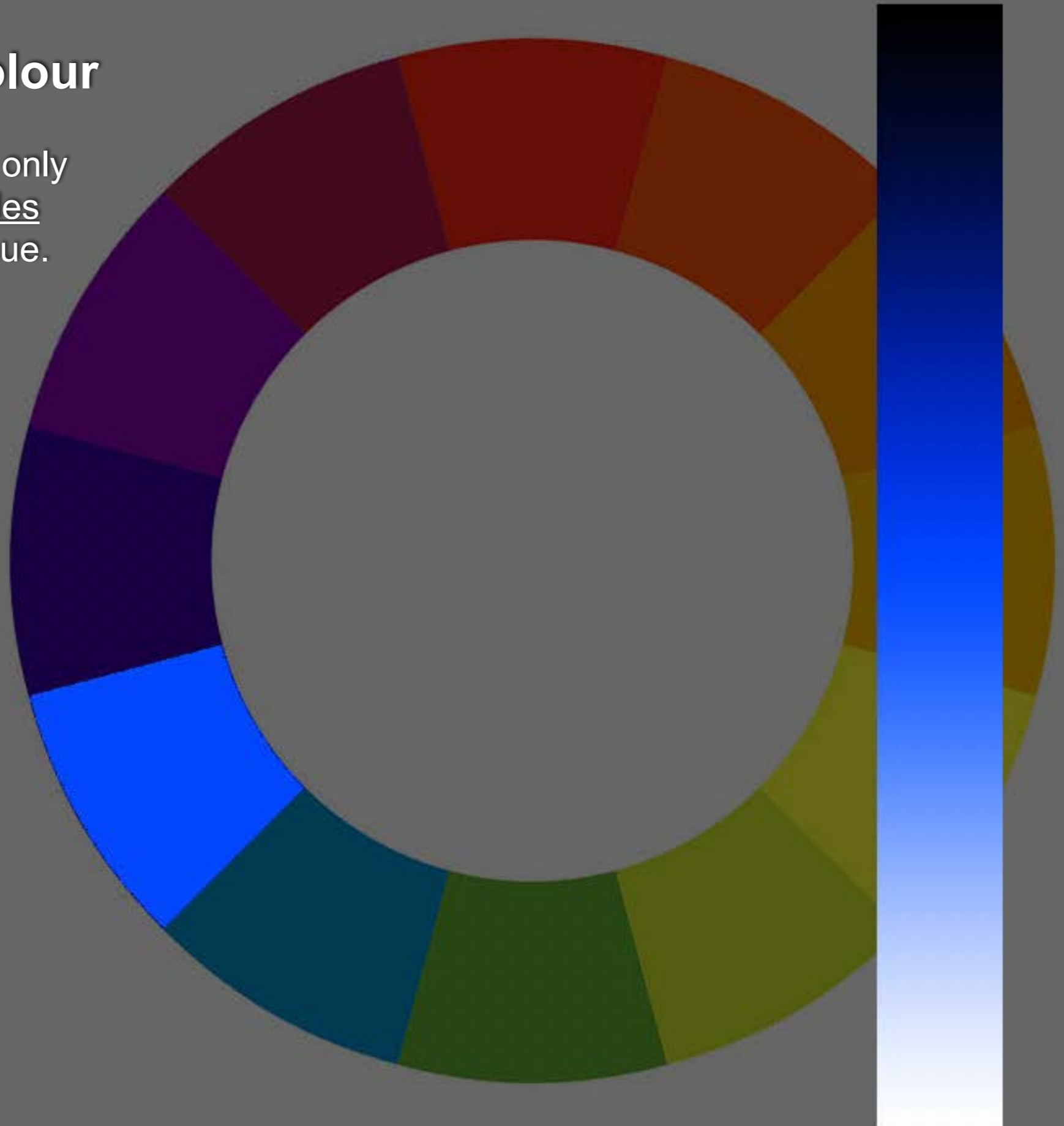


Edna Andrade

“Op Art” was a style of painting that explored the illusions and effects created by placing colours side-by-side. In these paintings, discordant colours (complementary, split complementary, triadic, etc.) put next to each other create a “vibrating” effect where they come together.

Monochromatic colour

A colour scheme that uses only tints (adding white) or shades (adding black) of a single hue.



Yves Klein – works employing
“International Klein Blue”



Approaches to colour:

Local colour (1)

Also called “naturalistic” or “perceptual,” local colour attempts to reproduce hues and values as the eye actually sees them.

Heightened colour (2)

When local colour is exaggerated or diminished to achieve a certain effect. The colours may be saturated (made more vibrant) or desaturated (“greyed out” or made less intense) to change the mood of the piece.

Restrictive colour (3)

When an artist limits herself to using just one colour or a limited number of colours.

Arbitrary colour (4)

An approach to colour that ignores the “natural” colour of the subject being depicted.

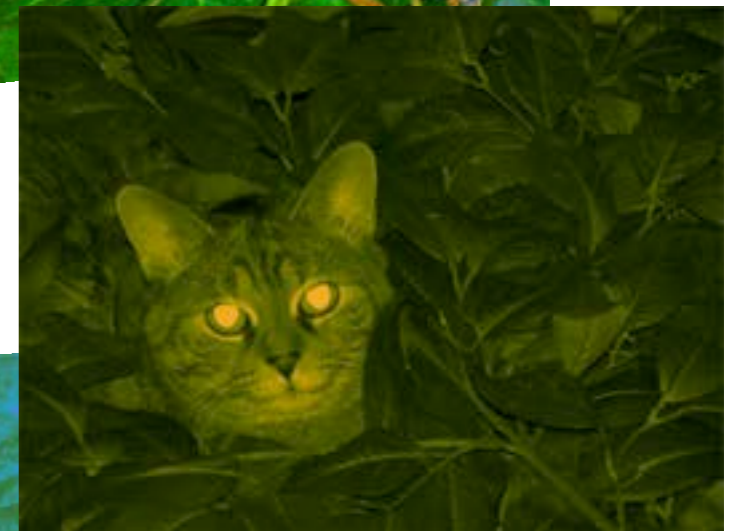
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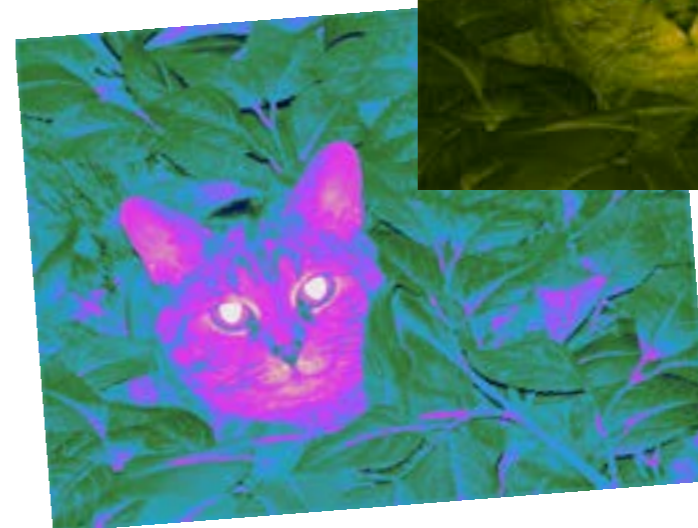
2



3



4



Impressionist painters like Monet were known for their careful observation of local colour. They were interested in capturing the subtle relationships between different colours of light, capturing how they change over time (depending on weather, time of day, etc.)



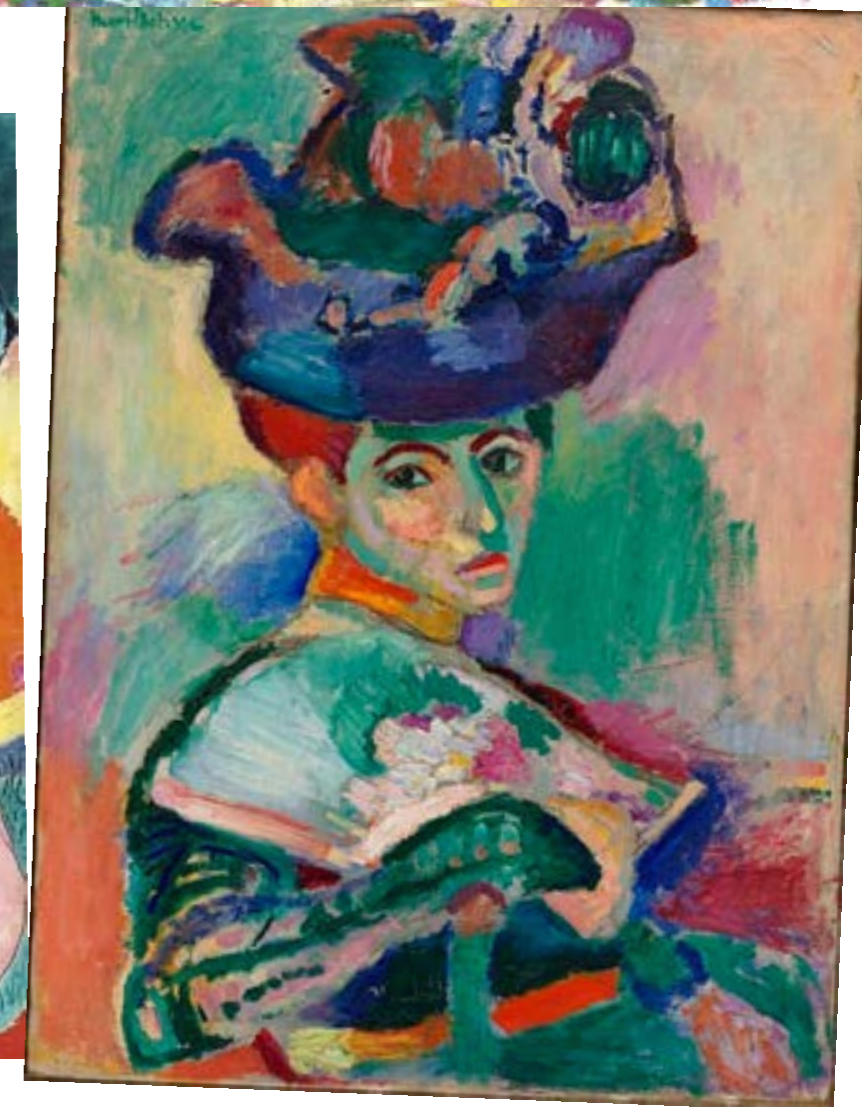
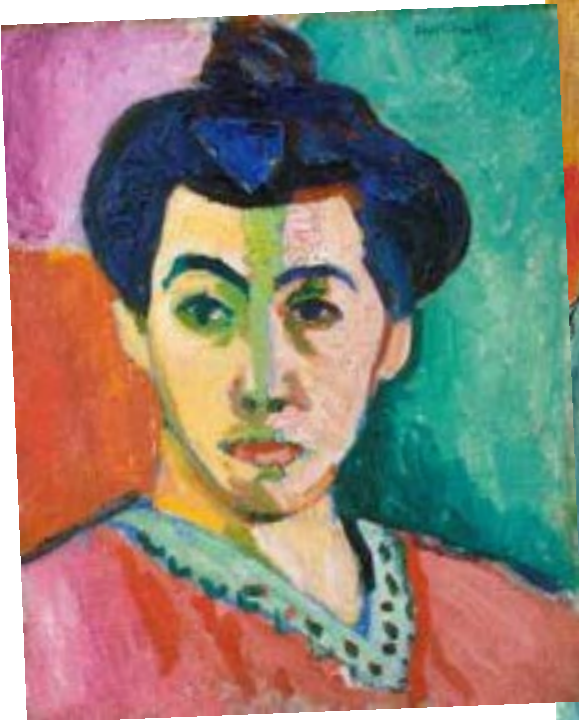


Pointillism (most closely associated with the painter **Georges Seurat**) employed a unique approach to “local” colour. Instead of mixing colours on the palette before painting with them, Seurat placed tiny dots of brightly coloured paint very close to one another on the canvas.

When seen from far away, the colours appear to blend together, an effect called “optical mixing.” Notice how in the small detail (left), the shadow of the man’s chin includes dots of orange, yellow, blue, white, and red. The painting on the right was made the same way — see how the different colours seem to blend together to create the illusion of realistic colour, light, and shadow.

Fauvist painters like Henri Matisse used a combination of heightened colour (exaggerating the colours they saw, making them brighter) and arbitrary colour (using “random” colours that don’t correspond to real life).

“Fauve” means “wild beast” in French, and the Fauves’ use of bright, saturated, arbitrary colour was meant to create a sense of “wildness,” excitement and energy.



Pablo Picasso's "Blue Period" paintings are examples of restrictive colour (using only a limited palette of colours — blue, red/yellow ochre, black, and white) and heightened colour (emphasizing blue tones in his subject matter).



Restrictive / arbitrary / symbolic colour

Nigerian-British painter **Chris Ofili** often paints using a limited palette (restrictive colour) of red, green, and black.

The colours don't directly correspond to real life (arbitrary), Ofili has chosen them for their symbolic value (red, black, and green are the colours of Black nationalism).



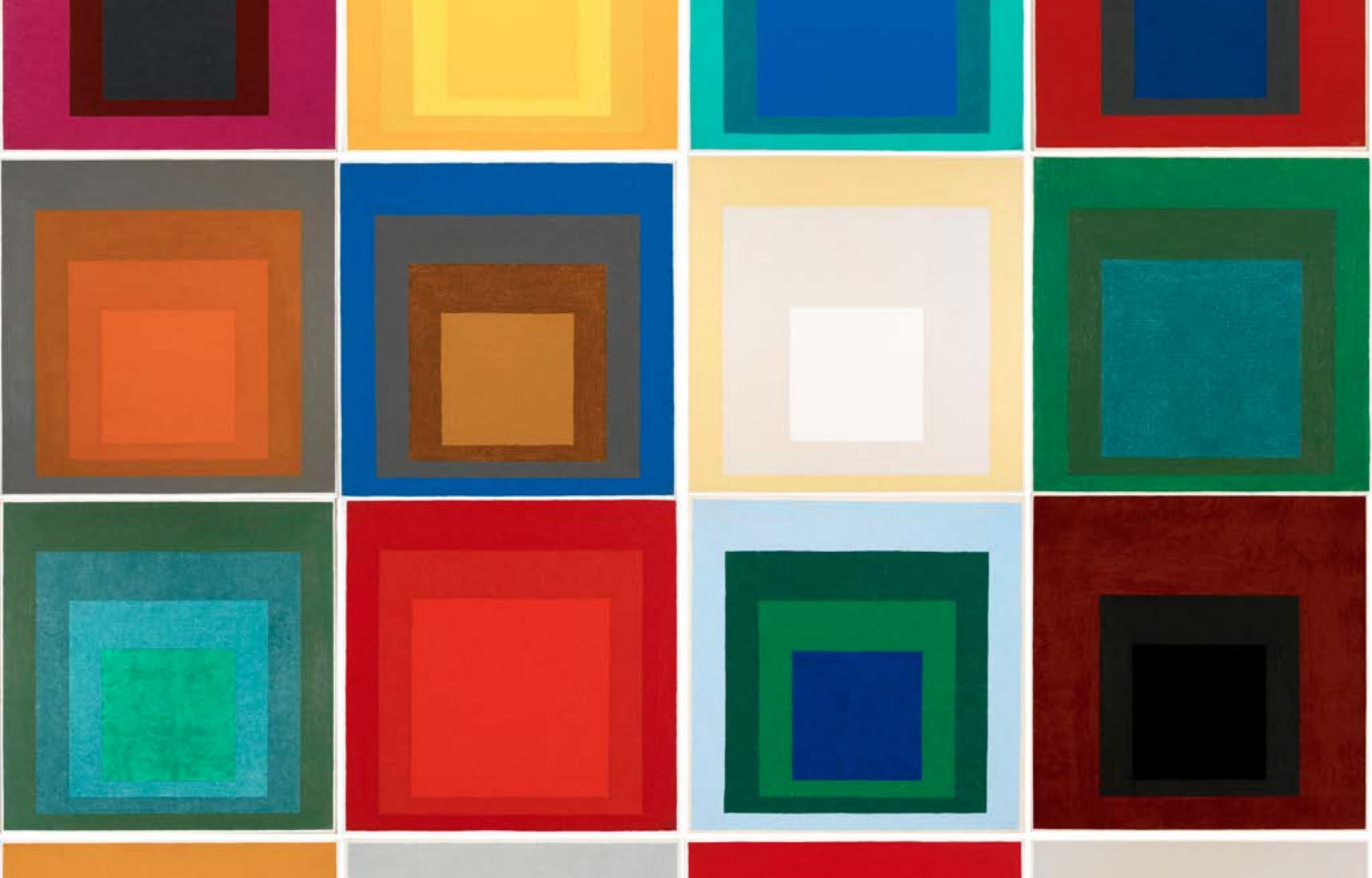


Some of Andy Warhol's best-known works are his silk-screened "paintings" of celebrities, political leaders, and public figures. Warhol would repeat the same image over and over again, printing it in different combinations of arbitrary colour. He wanted to show that we look at images of famous people the same way we look at consumer products, endlessly varied (different colours, styles, etc.), ultimately more or less the same.

This painting by **Tauba Auerbach** was made by crumpling canvas and then spraying it with different coloured paint (red, blue, light green) from different angles. After the paint was applied, the canvas was stretched flat.

The paint lands on the folds the same way light would, preserving the illusion of shadows and highlights, but the arbitrary use of colour





In abstract painting, the relationships between colours are often the primary “content” or “subject matter” of the work, as in these studies by Joseph Albers.

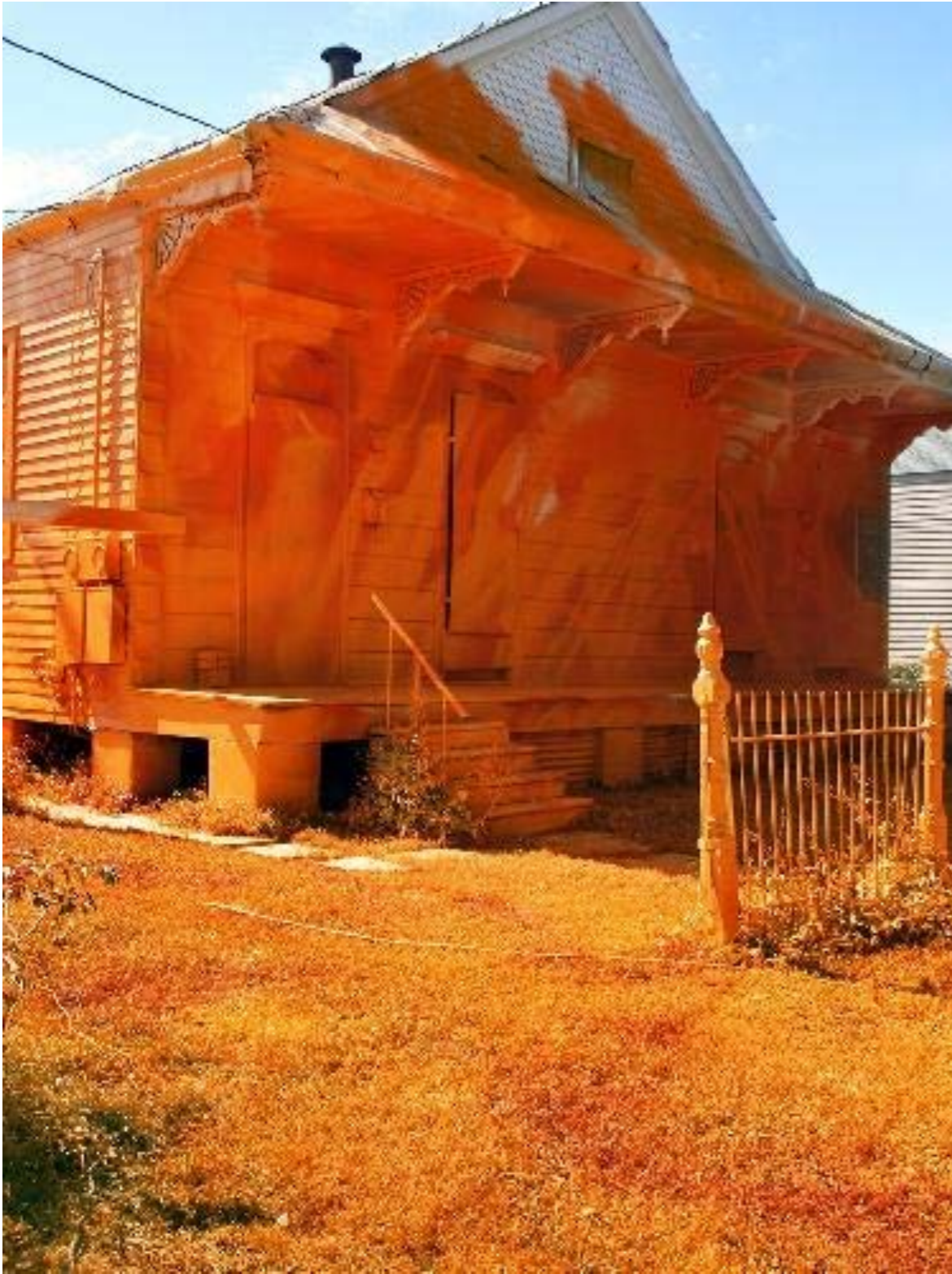


James Turrell - double ganzfeld

“Light and Space” artists like James Turrell made works intended to be “pure” experiences of coloured light. In this installation, a succession of analogous hues draws viewers inward to the centre of the work.



To disorienting effect, painter/installation artist **Katharina Grosse** applies sweeping sprays of arbitrary colour to the gallery's existing architecture...



Katharina Grosse - Untitled (2008)

in this piece, made in a New Orleans neighbourhood ravaged by flooding and fires after Hurricane Katrina, she uses colour symbolically, using paint to recall both flames and “safety” of “hazard” orange.

Appropriation

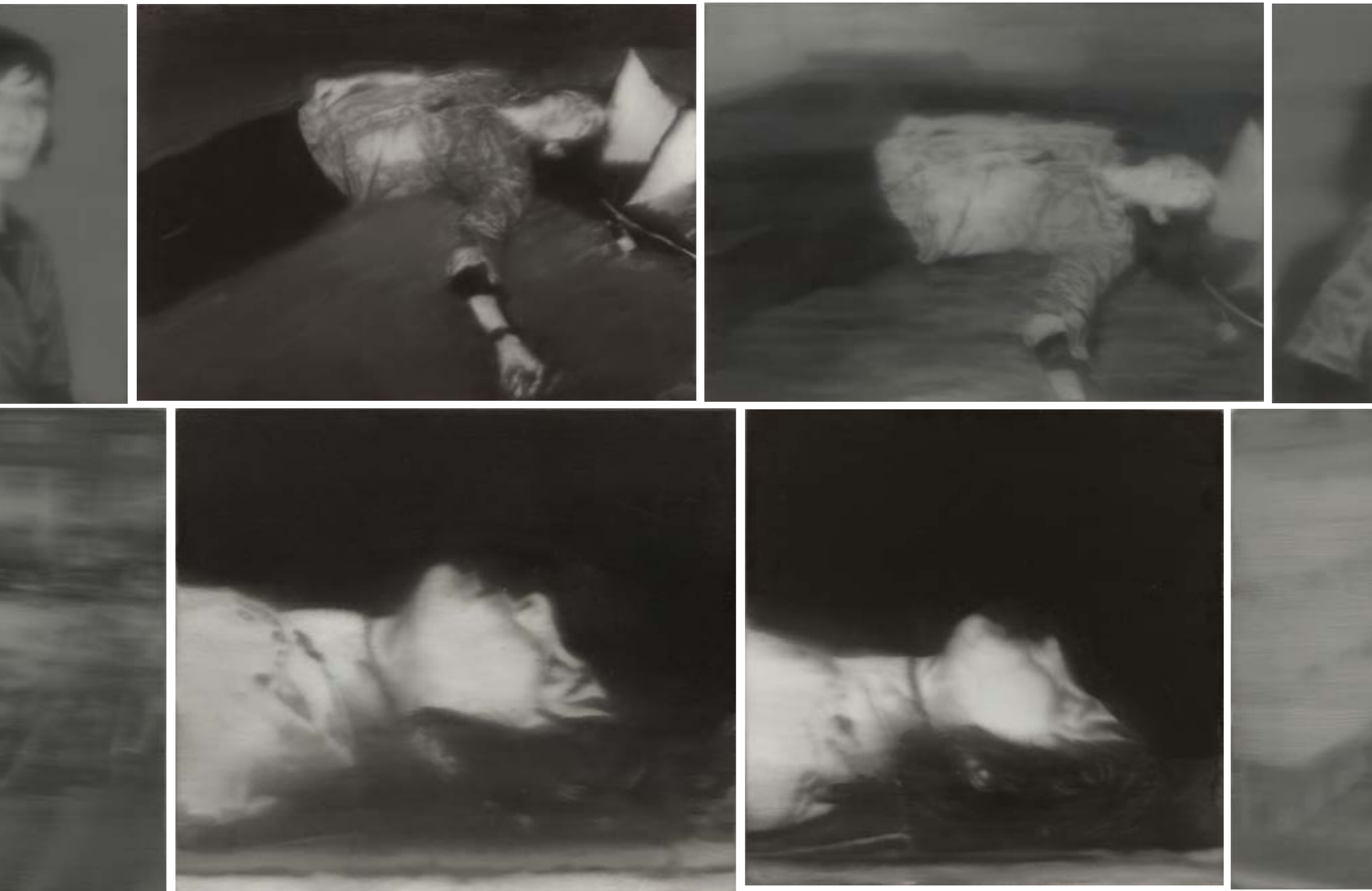
Appropriation

- “Appropriation” is the legitimate artistic use of content that you did not create yourself. This includes imagery, objects, words, ideas, and works by other artists.
- Appropriation can include copying content outright, using found material as part of a new work (such as in a collage), or creating alternate versions, parodies, or remixes of existing works.
- Appropriation has always played a significant role in visual art (painters and sculptors have been “borrowing” motifs and ideas from one another literally forever), but it has become especially important since the 1960s and the rise of movements (like Pop Art in the 1960s and so-called “Identity Politics” work from the 1970s–90s) that were critical of “originality” as a measure of artistic quality.

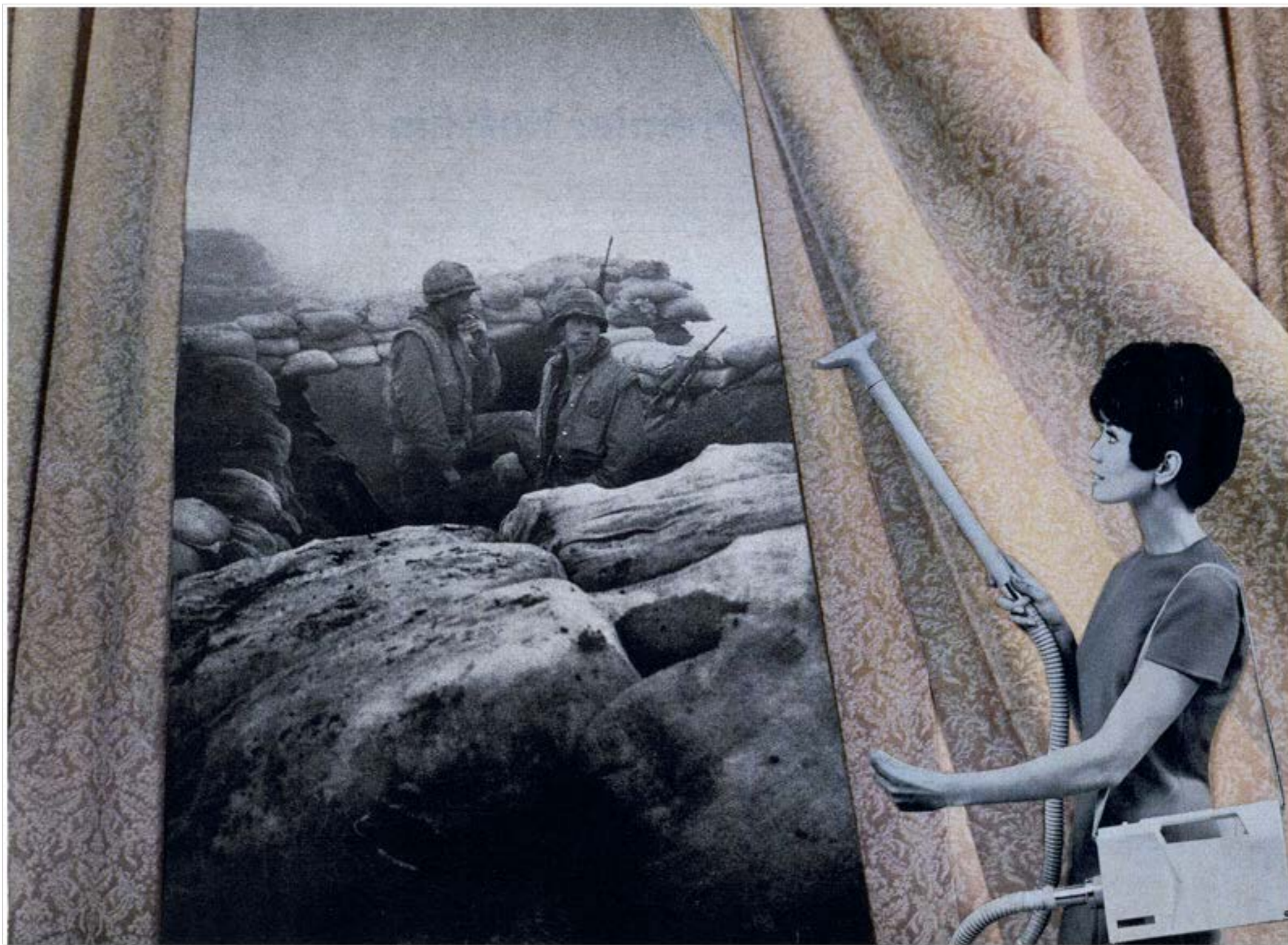


Elizabeth Peyton





Gerhard Richter – *October 18, 1977* (1988)



Martha Rosler – *Cleaning the Drapes* (1967–72)



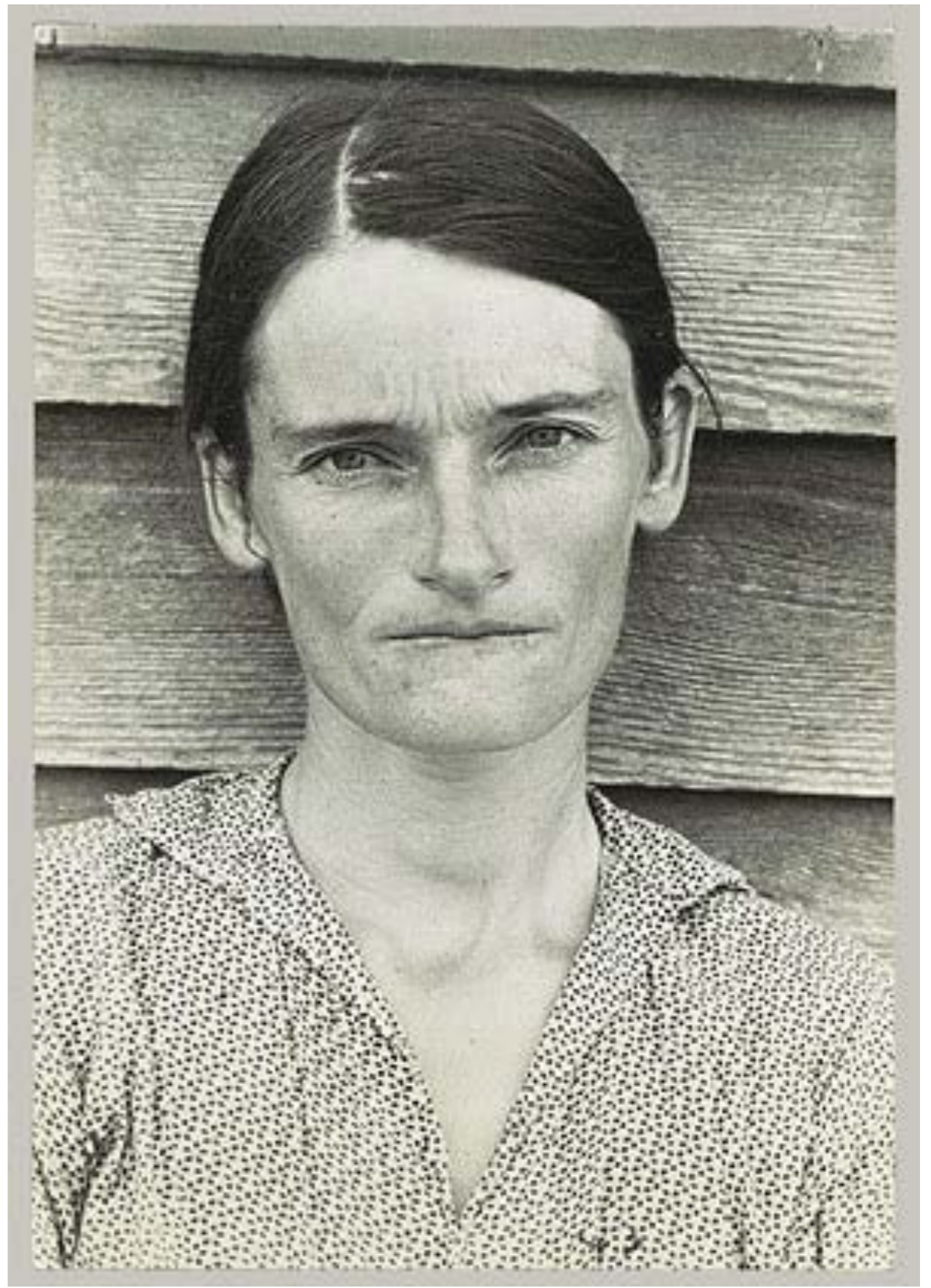
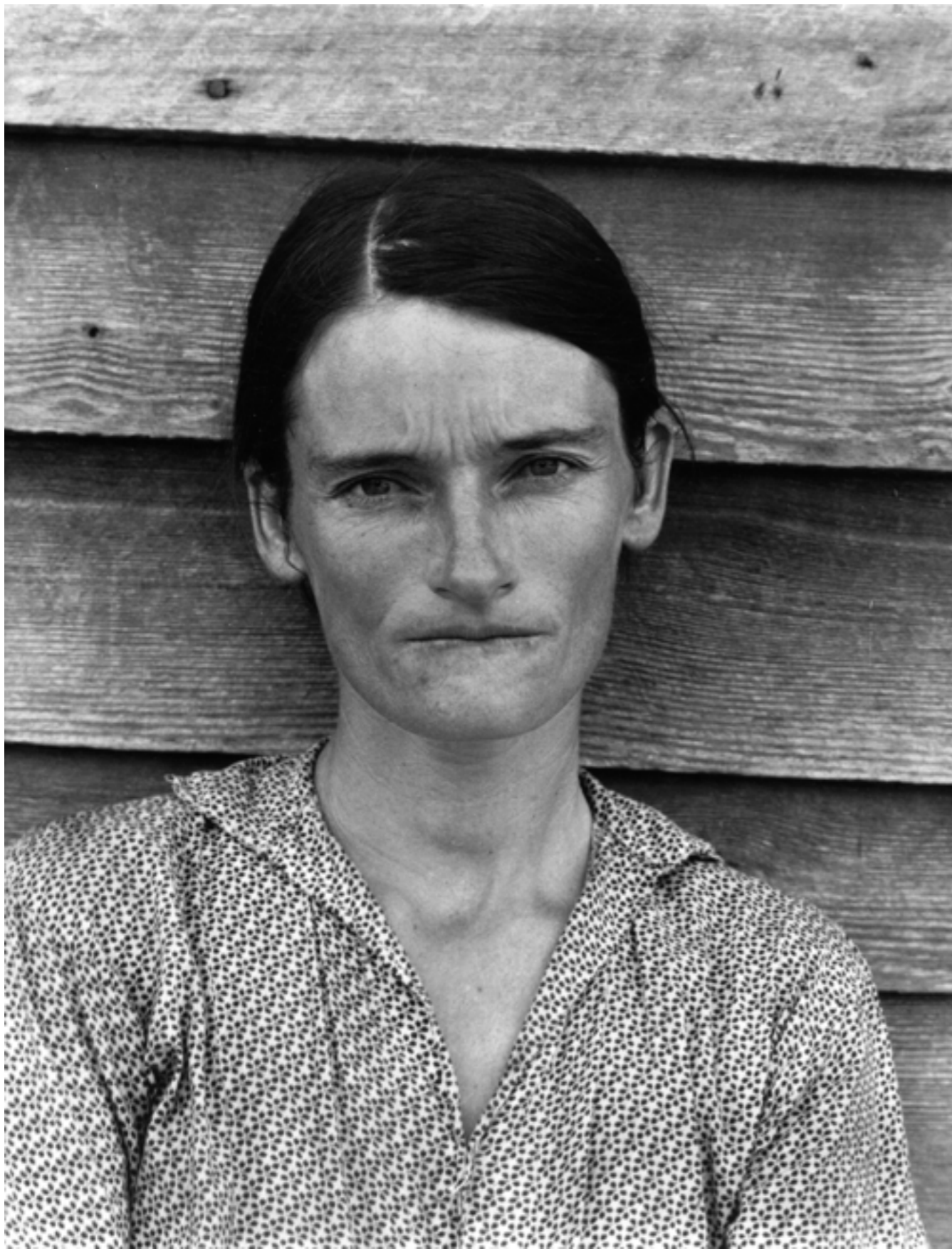
Barbara Kruger – *I Shop
therefore I Am* (1987)



Richard Prince – *Untitled (Cowboy)* (1989)



Richard Prince – *New Portraits* (2014)

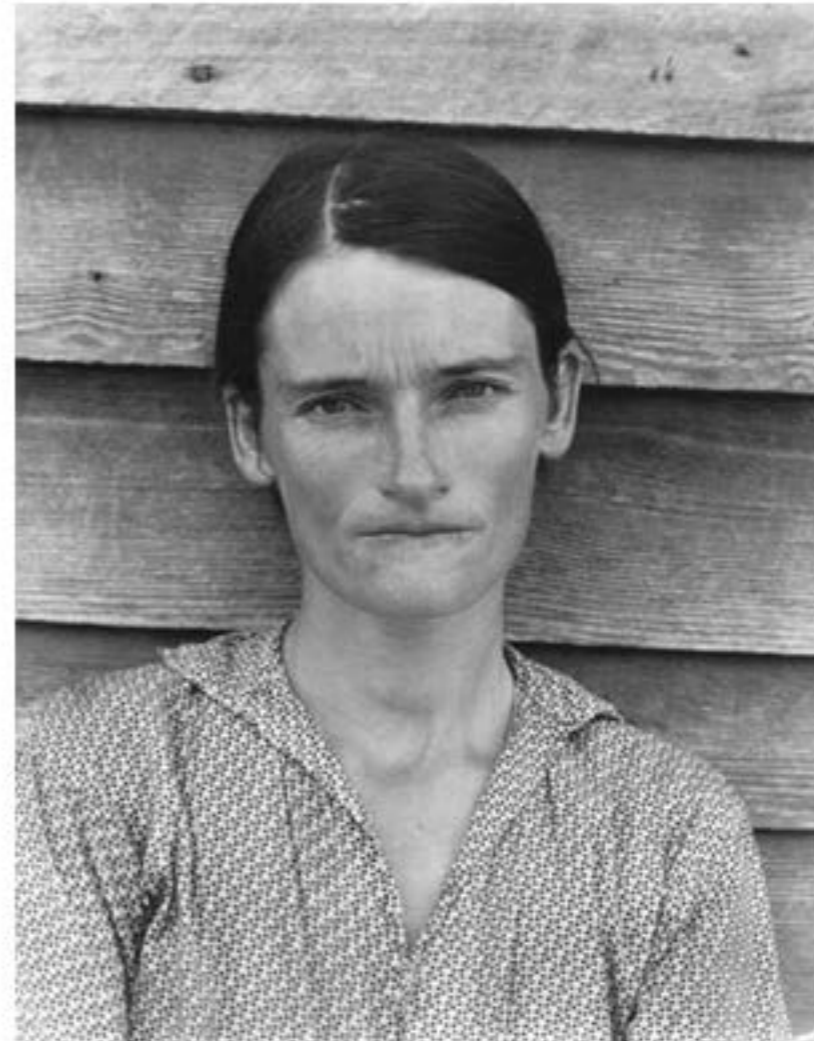


Left: Sherrie Levine – *After Walker Evans* (1981)

Right: Walker Evans – *Alabama Tenant Farmer Wife* (1936)



next ▶



Untitled (AfterSherrieLevine.com/2.jpg)
Michael Mandiberg, 3250px x 4250px (at 850dpi), 2001
[Right-Click\(PC\) or Hold-Click\(Mac\) here](#)
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Renee Cox – *Cousins at Pussy's Pond* (2001)

Robert
Rauschenberg -
*Erased de Kooning
Drawing* (1953)



Fountain by R. Mutt

Photograph by Alfred Stieglitz



THE EXHIBIT REFUSED BY THE INDEPENDENTS

The Readymade

Marcel Duchamp (under the name "R. Mutt") – *Fountain* (1917)



Sherrie Levine –
*Fountain (after
Marcel Duchamp)*
(1991)

Appropriation vs. plagiarism

Before you incorporate someone else's imagery or ideas into your own work, ask yourself the following questions:

- ✓ Am I being honest about the appropriation?
- ✓ Is my intended audience likely to recognize the appropriated content?
If not, do I take measures to clarify my method and sources for them?
- ✓ Is the fact that I am appropriating content important for the idea/s that I'm attempting to communicate in my work? (If you're not sure, the answer is probably "no").
- ✓ Does my work help "create new ideas" about the content that I appropriate? Does it invite new interpretations?
- ✓ Would it be impossible (or very nearly impossible) for me to explore/communicate the same ideas using only content that I've created myself?

The answer to all of these questions should be "yes." If not, there's a good chance you may be engaged in plagiarism rather than legitimate appropriation.