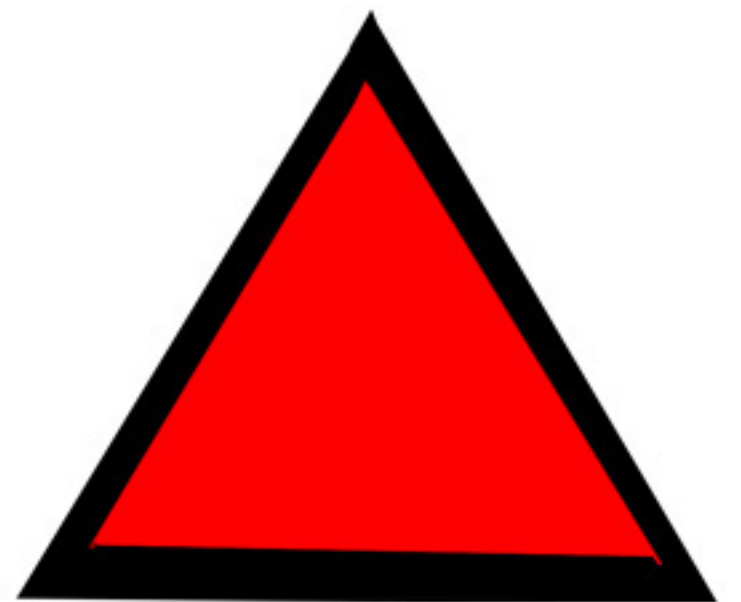
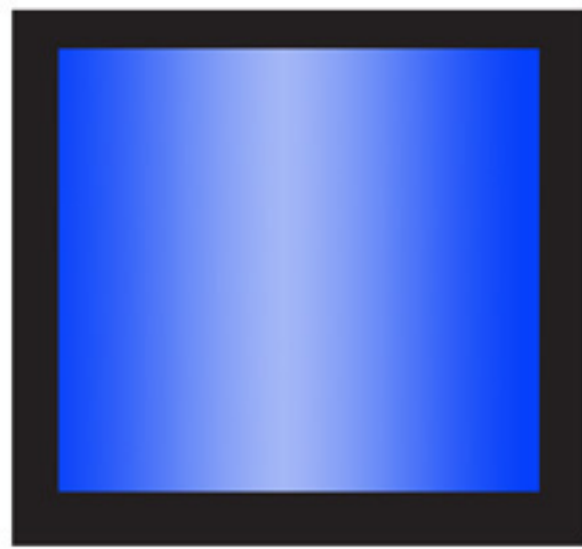
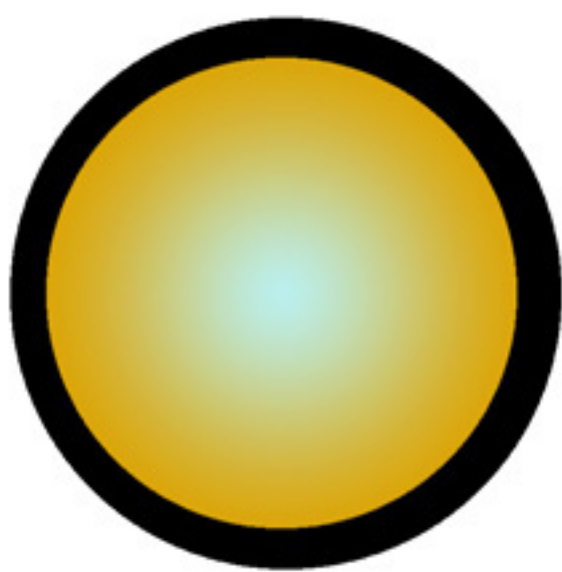


THE SEVEN COLOR CONTRASTS

BASED ON THE WORK
OF
JOHANNES ITTEN



Designed and written by Peter Hoffer and Dennis Corrigan

The seven color contrasts

Materials and assignment information

MATERIALS:

Winsor Newton designer's gouache, primary set of six, 14ml

Assorted lead pencils

Kneaded erasers

Bristol pad, vellum, 11' x 14"

Tracing paper, 11" x 14"

Two watercolor brushes, pointed round, no. 4 and no. 6

Plastic paint storage containers with lids

Metal ruler

IMAGE

All color contrast projects will be based on one original 5" x 5" line drawing consisting of between ten and fifteen distinct shapes. Because of its importance, students are expected to work closely with instructors to carefully develop and refine the design over an extended period of time. This process should begin before the designated time period for color projects. Student should also procure necessary supplies in advance of period scheduled for color projects.



PROCESS:

Using Winsor Newton gouache only, all color assignments should measure a 5" x 5" image painted on 7" x 7" Bristol, allowing for a 1" border on all sides. All finished designs will benefit through preliminary work (quick color studies/thumbnails) that will be suggested and guided by instructors.

In addition to successfully depicting the particular contrast under study, grade evaluation will be based on qualities of craftsmanship, presentation, adherence to specifications, and meeting due date.

HUE CONTRAST

Hue refers to the name of a specific color (red, green, violet, etc.). Distinguishing one form from another by hue is the most basic and easily understood contrast. The greatest contrast of hue is evident when comparing the primaries: red, yellow and blue.

DIRECTIONS:

Using a variety of primary, secondary and tertiary colors, create a harmonious composition to illustrate the concept of hue.

The examples below illustrate two of many options. The image on the left uses a greater range of value contrast than the image on the right. Notice many of the hues are less than fully saturated or intense. These examples also employ arbitrary or subjective color that conveys an exciting and energetic mood (left) or a more passive, introspective feeling (right).



LIGHT/DARK CONTRAST

Light/Dark contrast refers to the *relative* lightness or darkness of a color, the greatest contrast being the blackest black and the whitest white.

Directions:

Create a harmonious composition in values of a single hue by adding black (shades), white, (tints) or gray (tones) to the hue or by adding a small amount of its complement -in this case a small amount of orange. The idea is to have the essential character of the chosen hue (blue) remain, resulting in a monochromatic (one color) composition.

The two examples illustrated show two opposite approaches in terms of light-dark progression (front to back, back to front). You may want to try something different.



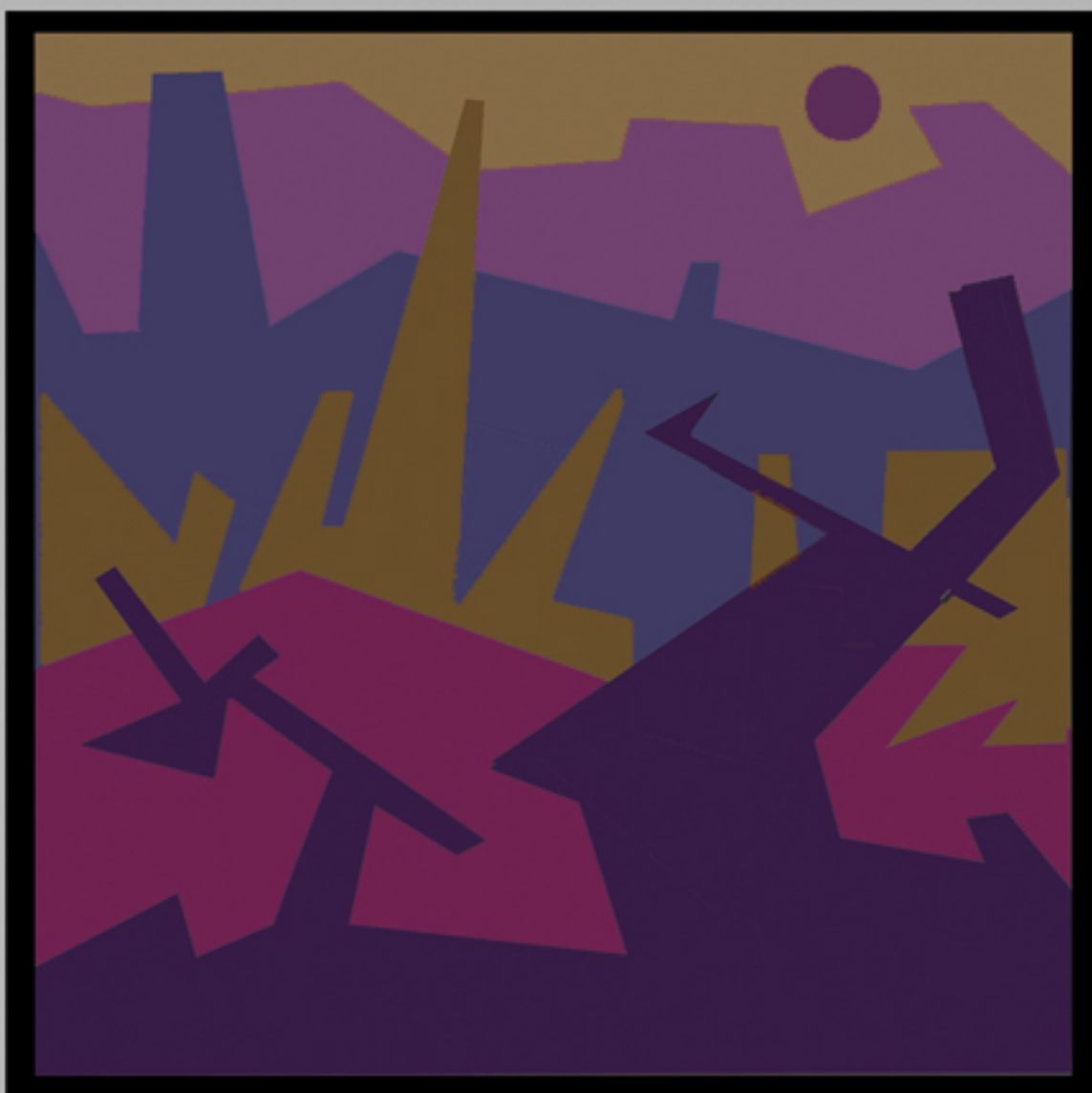
COLD/WARM CONTRAST

Cold-Warm refers to color temperature and its location on the color wheel. The greatest contrast is between blue-green (cold) and red-orange (warm).

Directions:

Create a harmonious composition using a variety of cold and warm hues. Generally the most successful color compositions create balance and unity through an emphasis of one side of the color wheel over the other. In other words, the palette consists mostly of cold colors or mostly warm colors, one side dominant, one side supportive.

The examples below show different approaches in cold-warm contrast as well as light-dark contrast. The example on the left illustrates the importance of hue contrast that allows you to see closely aligned light-dark shapes that would otherwise be difficult to distinguish.



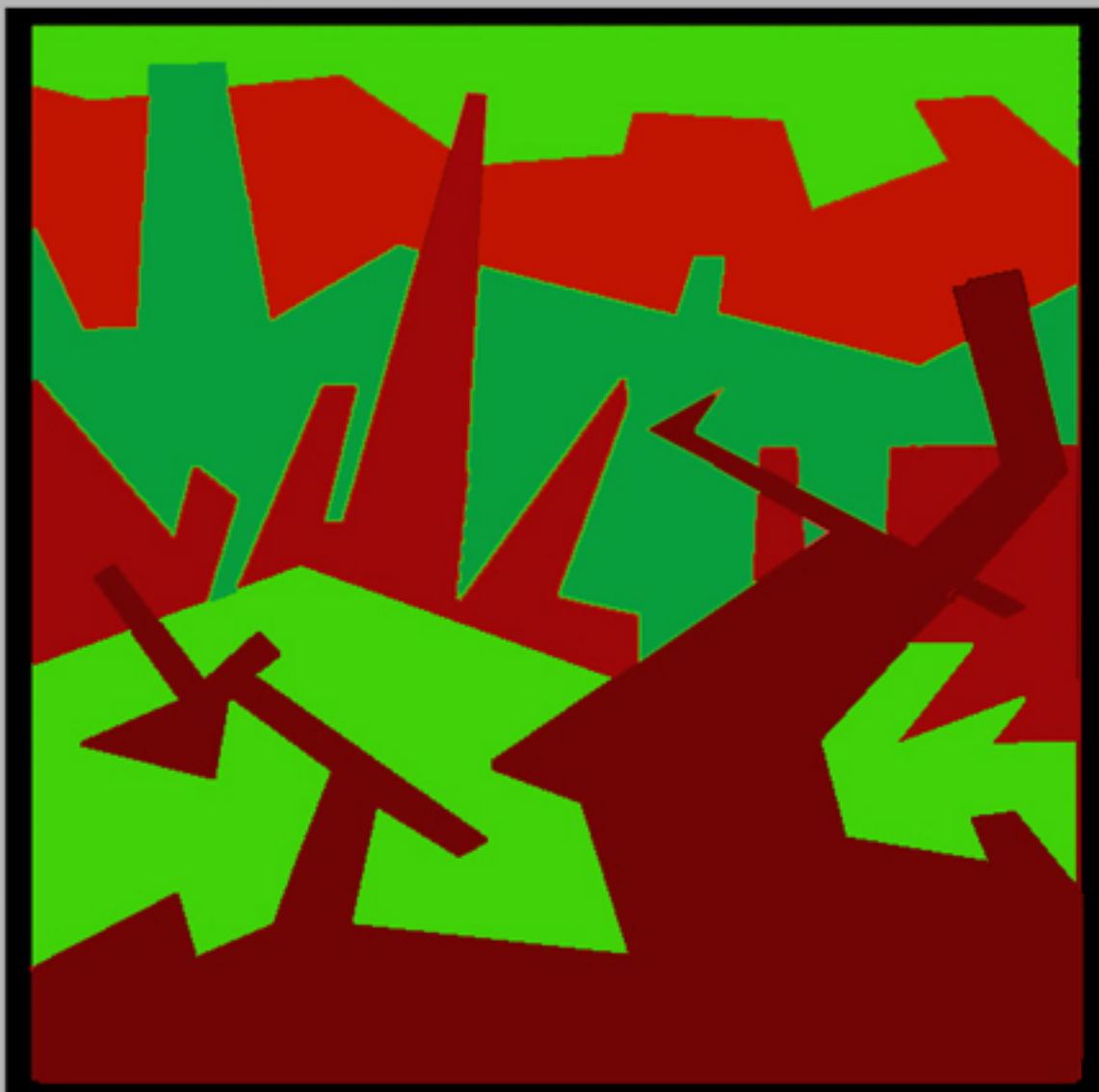
COMPLEMENTARY CONTRAST

Complementary refers to colors that are direct opposites on the color wheel. The greatest contrast is evident in the pairing of secondary colors, such as yellow and violet, and red and green. Color pairings tend to intensify both colors.

DIRECTIONS:

Create a harmonious composition using tints, tones (middle values), shades and admixtures of complementary colors. This can be achieved by mixing white, black, grays, or a color's opposite.

The two examples below suggest different values (variations of white to black) and saturation levels (intensity) of complements. The red-green example does not adhere to atmospheric perspective, the yellow-violet one does. Any approach is valid if it achieves color harmony, or unity and balance. In addition to aspects of complementary and light-dark contrast, notice the use of cold-warm contrast. Often, as in this case, many contrasts are working together in a color composition.



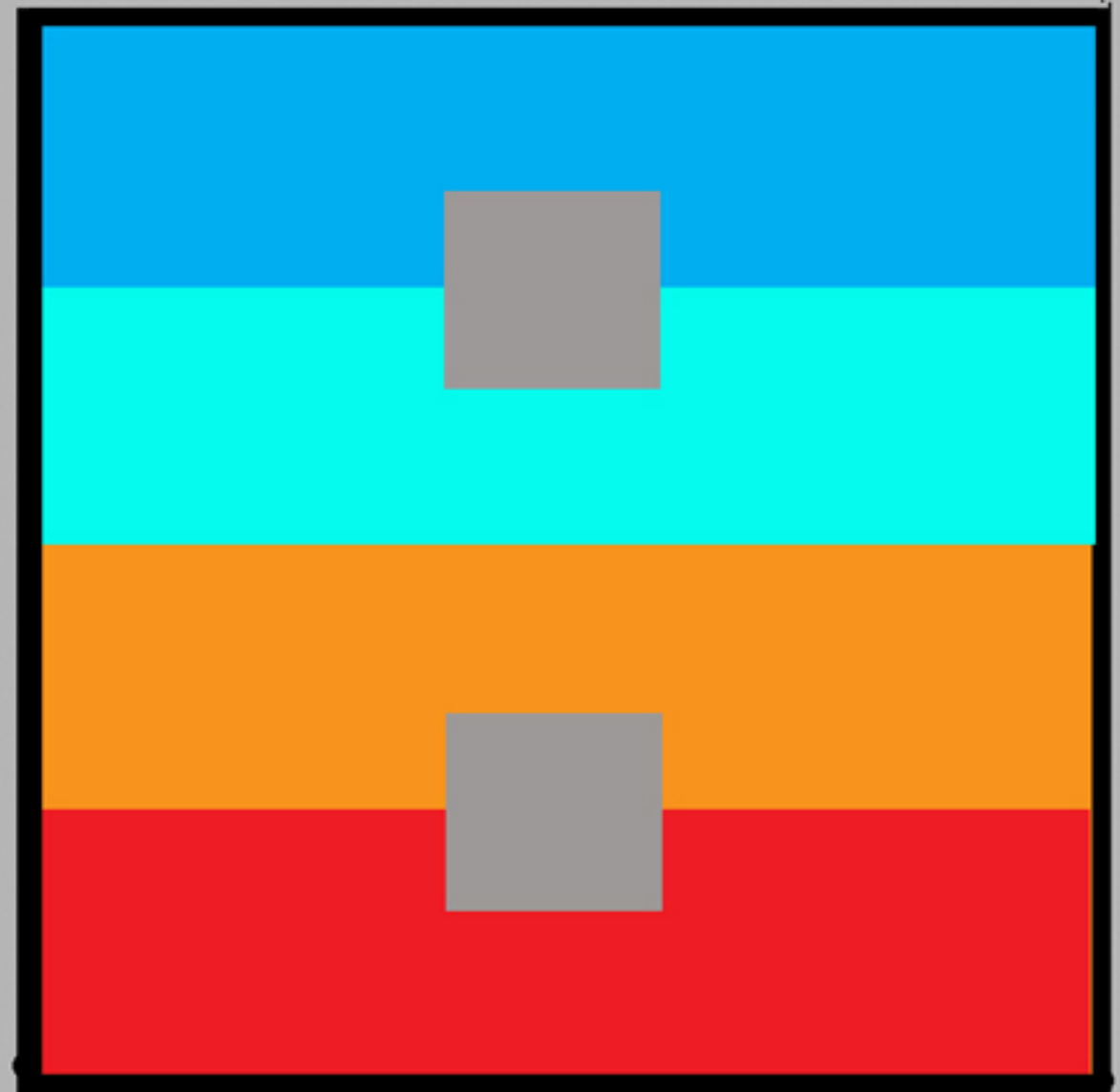
SIMULTANEOUS CONTRAST

Simultaneous Contrast is the effect colors have upon each other in a composition. This is most noticeable when gray tones are surrounded by, or in close proximity to colors of significantly greater intensity (saturation). For example a neutral gray will appear bluish when surrounded by intense orange.

DIRECTIONS:

Mix one neutral gray tone, which should appear at least twice in your composition, creating the illusion of two different grays, depending on your choice of surrounding brighter colors.

The examples below left illustrates the effect surrounding colors have on an identical gray used in two different parts of a composition. Before painting the finished composition try making a series of thumbnail studies to see how the same gray is affected by different surrounding color.



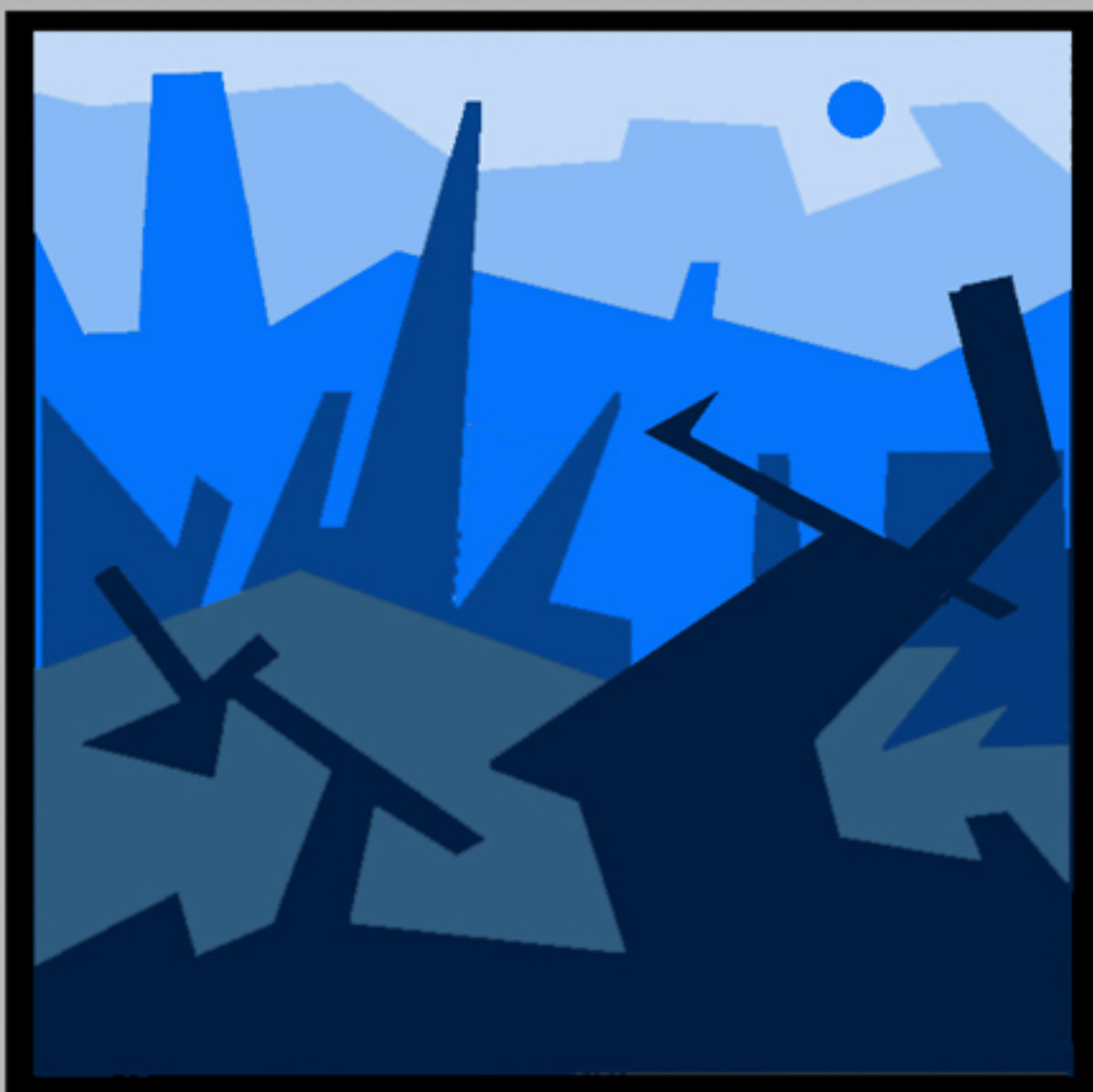
SATURATION CONTRAST

Saturation refers to the purity and intensity of a color. Diluting a color's intensity can be accomplished by adding white, black, gray, the color's complement, or any other less intense colors.

DIRECTIONS:

Choose one primary color and apply it to one of the shapes in your composition. Modify that color in various ways, as described above, for the remaining shapes, to create a harmonious composition.

In both the examples illustrated, the primary color is the basis of all color used and is a unifying factor. Variety is created by modifying to different degrees the purity or intensity (saturation) of the primary hue. In both examples, an effect of atmospheric perspective is achieved.



EXTENSION CONTRAST

One of the most important aspects of contrast by extension is the ability of one color to be greatly intensified because of the **dominance by area** of a dissimilar surrounding color. In a general sense, extension refers to the relative strength or power of hues by creating either dominance or equality of color. This depends on the arrangement and placement of color.

Directions:

Assign the smallest area in your design to a primary or secondary color. Fill in the remaining shapes with tints, tones and shades of one contrasting hue to create a harmonious composition.

In the examples illustrated, the orange on the left and red on the right, command more dominance (given their space allotment) but do not overbalance the surrounding hues that function as supporting and unifying factors. Additional use of either color might jeopardize the harmony of the image.

