

PARRISH ART MUSEUM

## Parrish Home Art Studios

### ELEMENTS OF ART: COLOR

The elements of art are the artistic considerations one uses to make art. It's not the paint, but the reason paint (or crayons, markers, etc.) is used: to achieve color. A pencil is used to create lines. A line which closes around to its beginning creates a shape. The elements of art are color, line, texture, shape/form, and space/composition.

This lesson focuses on color, and includes three projects you can create to explore the element of color. Over the next few weeks, we'll explore all the elements.



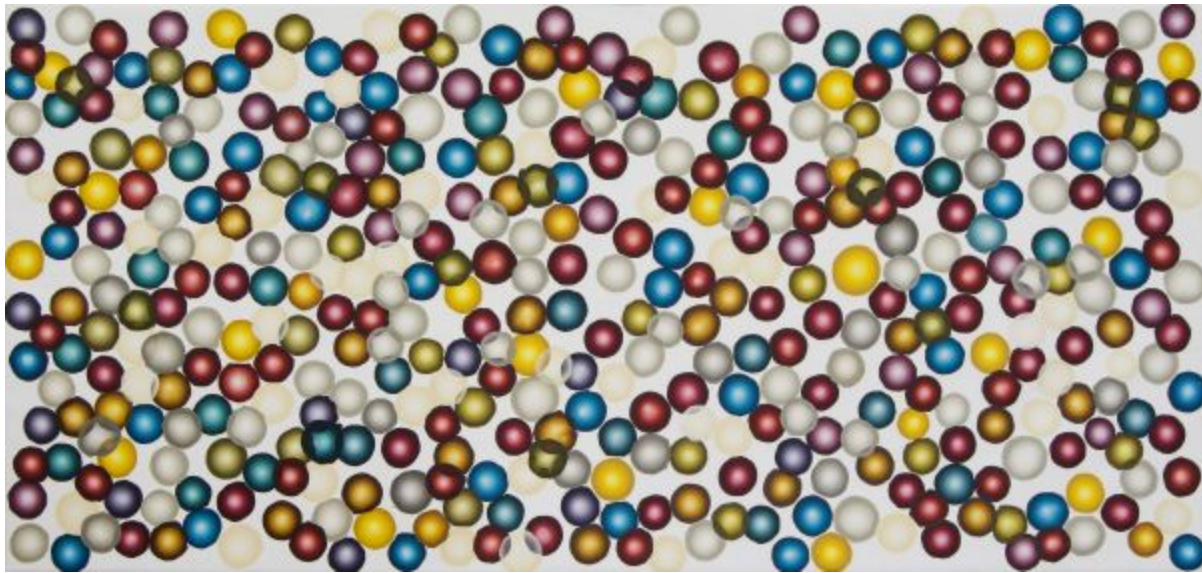
Start by looking at how artists use color.

Take a close look at *Autumn Leaves and Plums* (left). Do you notice different tones of pink, orange, and other colors? By mixing varying amounts of white paint with colors, you can create a tint. Mix colors with black, and you can create a shade. Pink is a tint of red and maroon is a shade. The artist has created a variety of tints and shades that make this abstracted still life a very vibrant and engaging painting.

Nell Blaine, American, 1922-1996, [Autumn Leaves and Plums](#), ca. 1955, Oil on canvas, 19 3/4 x 15 3/4 inches, Parrish Art Museum, Water Mill, N.Y., Gift of D. Frederick Baker in Memory of Ronald G. Pisano, 2010.1.

In *Mysticism for Beginners* (next page) you'll see many circular shapes. Some overlap and some have a three dimensional quality. Some appear to be shimmering and translucent. The artist's exploration of value helps to create this illusion. Each colorful

shape is formed by his use of the dark value of the color blending into the lightest, creating the three dimensional sphere-like shapes.



Ross Bleckner, American, born 1949, [Mysticism for Beginners](#), 2001, Oil on canvas, 83 x 178 inches, Parrish Art Museum, Water Mill, N.Y., Gift of Dana and Andrew Stone, 2014.5.

## Materials

Red, yellow and blue paint (any kind)

Paint brush

Construction paper: red,yellow,blue,orange,purple and green (Or find these colors in magazines or, catalogues. You can also paint those colors onto sheets of paper to be used in a collage)

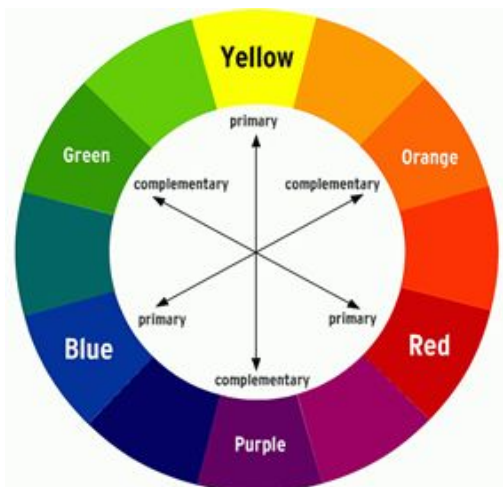
Scissors

Glue

Pencil

## DAY 1

### The Color Wheel



Red, yellow, and blue are called primary colors, as in the first colors. With these colors, we are able to make many more colors. By mixing red and yellow, we make orange. Mix yellow and blue, you have green. Blue and red mixed make purple. Those colors are called the secondary colors.

Go a step further, mix yellow and orange, and a new category emerges: the tertiary colors! The tertiary colors use both primary and secondary colors, and are named with the primary name first, as in blue-green or yellow-green.

If you look at the color wheel, you'll notice colors are on opposite sides from each other. Red is opposite green, yellow opposite purple, orange opposite blue. Those pairs are called complementary colors. When next to each other, they seem to vibrate. When mixed, they can make a gray tone.

When exploring color, keep in mind the "value" or how dark or light the tone of the color might be. By creating darks and lights, or values, you can make two-dimensional drawn objects appear three-dimensional. Those dark and light tones are called shadows and highlights.



Make your own color wheel using the template at the end of the lesson. Paint the labeled sections of the color wheel. In the spaces between the primary colors, mix colors and see what happens. Decorate your color wheel with new colors!

## DAY 2 Complementary Colors Collage



Use red, yellow and blue sheets of paper (construction, hand-painted, or magazine papers) for your primary color backgrounds. You can glue them to a backing sheet side by side as pictured here, or you can arrange them any way you want. The important part is to match the correct colors. Green is the complement of

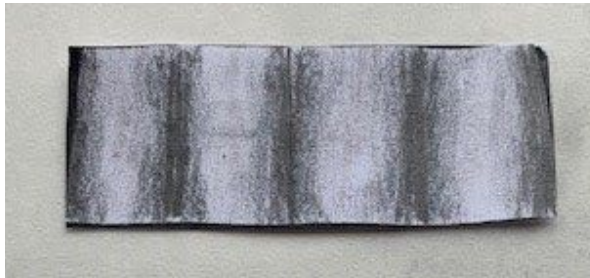
red. Use your color wheel for reference.

Cut out green shapes, abstract or representational, geometric or free form, you're the artist! Glue those shapes onto the red background. Keep going! Orange on blue, purple on yellow!

## DAY 3

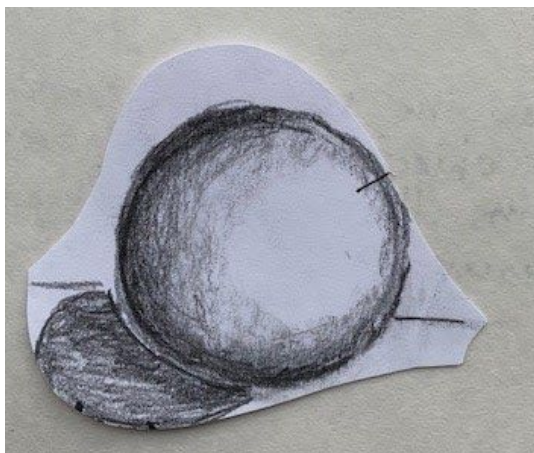
### Value Study

The value of color refers to how saturated a color appears, in other words, how light or dark it is. Values can help to create the illusion of three dimensionality, so an object in a flat work of art can appear rounded.



First, use a writing pencil for this lesson, and then experiment with other colors and art materials to create values. Look at the example as a guide to create your value study. Draw a rectangle. At one end of your rectangle, press as hard as you can with your pencil to achieve the darkest value. As

you move across the paper, begin to press more and more lightly, creating many shades of gray, until you lift your pencil to have a white space. Leaving that white space, begin to press your pencil lightly at first, and move along your rectangle with more pressure on your pencil, to return back to the darkest shade. Keep repeating until you've filled your rectangle with all the shades of gray between the black and white spaces.



Now choose an object, and notice where the shadows and light reflections (highlights) are. Notice your light source: a lamp? A window? Where the light shines on your object will appear white. On the opposite side of the highlight will be your darkest shadow.

Play around with this technique. You'll gain confidence with creating values when you keep at it!



We would love to see what you made! To share, post your artwork on Instagram with the hashtag #ParrishHomeArtStudios

# Color Wheel

