

# Color perception-It's all relative.



The eye perceives color relative to its surroundings. The hue, value, intensity and temperature of a color do not change regardless of surroundings, however, your perception of all four properties of color is determined by its setting. Figure one shows the same value grey on both a neutral 50% gray background as well as on a field of white. While the interior blocks are the exactly the same, they do not appear to be identical. The block on the darker field shows its true value while the block on the white background seems darker.

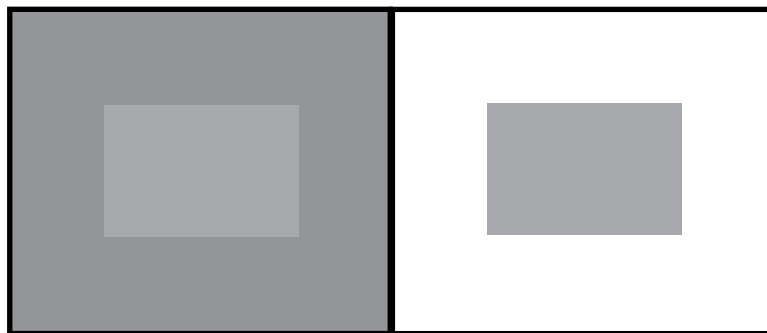


Fig. 1

The above example illustrates the importance of your palette choice when determining the desired values for your painting. A grey palette such as the *Compact Grey Palette* by Rebecca Baer™ provides a truer setting for value judgement than a standard white palette.

When blending on the grey palette you can clearly see the color and value transition allowing you to adequately judge the quality of your blend or float before taking it to your project. This may not seem to be critical, but a poorly blended float on the palette will not magically perfect itself when applied to your surface. If you can't critique your blend on your palette you will spend more time fixing the glaring inconsistencies that become

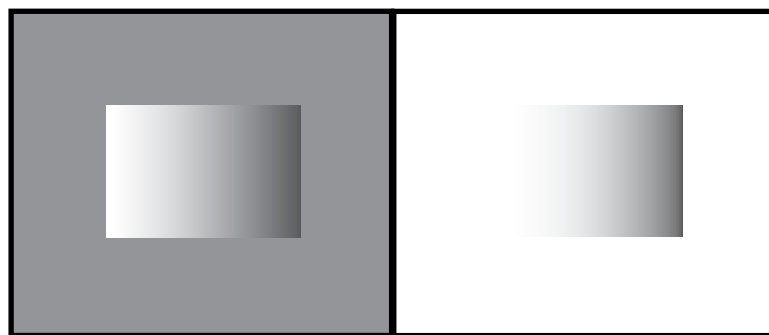


Fig. 2

ever-so-visible on your painting. Notice how the lighter side of the gradient in figure two is completely invisible on the white field. A blend using white paint will be equally invisible on a white palette. A grey palette such as the *Compact Grey Palette* from RebeccaBaer.com™ provides a clearer setting for judging a blend than a standard white palette.

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The neutral grey value of the compact grey palette™ allows for accurate judgement when mixing colors, especially those that are toned. These muted colors can appear muddy and/or dark when mixed on a white palette, which can cause misjudgment of hue, value, intensity and temperature. Figure three shows several variations allowing you to see the same colors on both a grey field as well as white.

The gradient tones of the upper illustration appear dull and muddy on the field of white. In addition, although the antique gold is very muted it still emits vibrancy on the grey.

Notice how the red, yellow, blue and green all lose their intensity on the white background; they are the same bright colors but fail to glow. The warm temperature of the red, yellow and green is more apparent on the grey.

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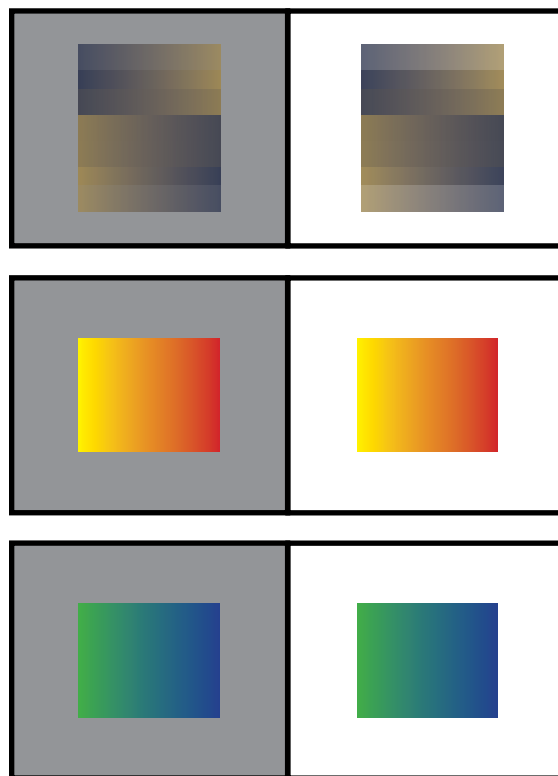


Fig. 3

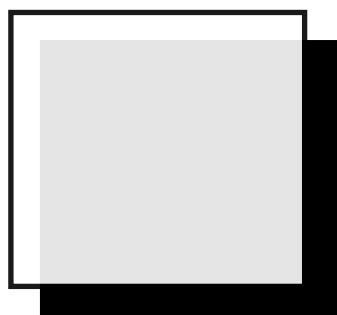


Fig. 4

Some suggest that a sheet of black paper beneath a white palette is comparable, but I have not found this to be the case. While the dark underlay reduces the intensity of the white paper, it does not begin to approach being an equal substitute [Fig. 4].



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