Laszczynski
Design I

VALUE

Value is the relative degree of lightness or darkness. We see images as light against dark, or dark against light. The greater the **contrast** (*difference in value*), the easier it is to see the image. Contrast allows you to sense depth and dimensionality (*space*), and can guide the eye through a composition through patterns of light and dark.

The scale below shows ten steps from white to black. These are **achromatic values** (dealing only with light and dark, not color).
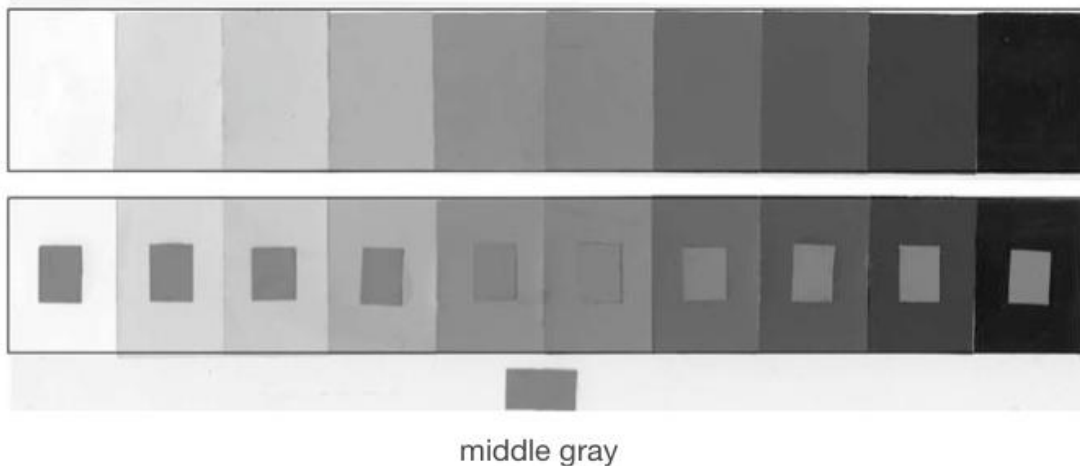
The Value Scale

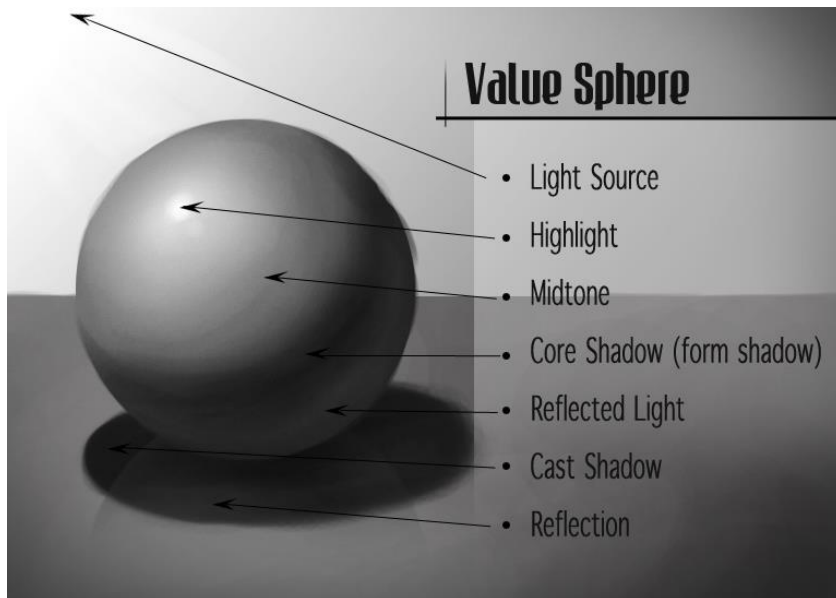A simple drawing tool that helps you see and draw values by comparison.

It ranges from white to black, with the center value being called "middle gray."
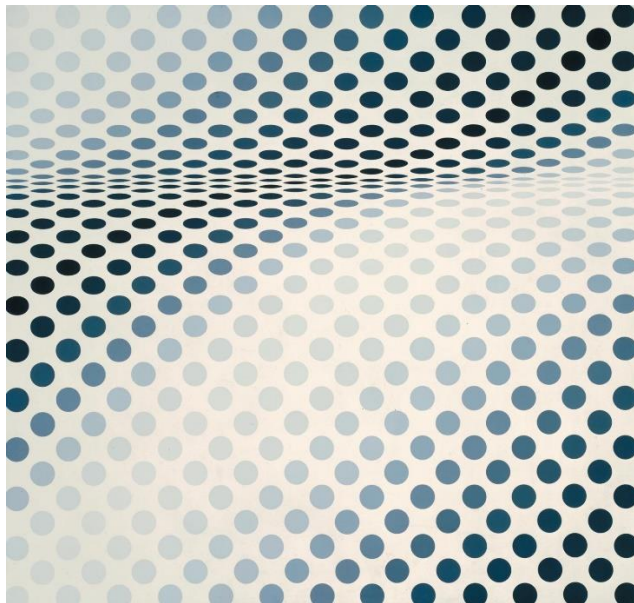
High Key = White to Middle Gray   Low Key = Black to Middle Gray

middle gray

Color also has value, known as **chromatic value**. Generally, a standard yellow has a greater lightness than a standard violet. A value finder (made by punching a circle on each step of the value scale) can be used to find chromatic value.

Value Sphere

- Light Source
- Highlight
- Midtone
- Core Shadow (form shadow)
- Reflected Light
- Cast Shadow
- Reflection

Representational art relies on value to create the illusion of three dimensionality. This image shows the range of value cast by a light source.

In abstract and nonrepresentational (nonobjective) art, value can also be used to create a sense of space, such as in this work by Bridget Riley (left). Contrast creates value patterns, such as in the work of Jisik Shin (right).