the element of color

It's all around us! *Color* is produced when light, striking an object, is reflected back to the eye.

Well, that's the scientific definition. But in art, the element of color comes with several attributes that affect our experience of it.

harmony
when two or more colors are close to each other and produce a pleasant response (like a rainbow!)
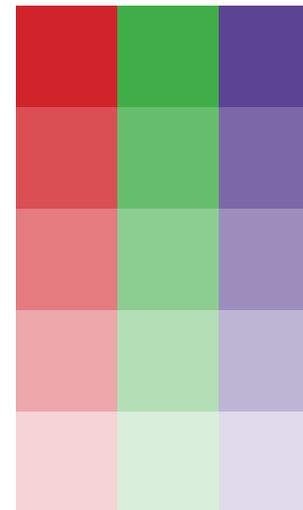
intensity or saturation:
the softness or boldness of a color, based on how much pure pigments is used.

BLUE **YELLOW**

GREEN **hue**
the name of the color itself **RED**

ORANGE

value or luminosity
the lightness or **darkness** of a color, or how close is to white or black

shade: a color + black

tint: a color + white

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Every individual color can be altered by changing its value through tinting and **shading**.

Tinting means that white is added to a hue to make it lighter.

Shading means that **black** is added to a hue to make it darker.

These adjustments can be made to any color. In the space below, use black and white pigment to tint and shade a color of your choice. Crayons, color pencils or acrylic paint may work best!

Sometimes, artists will utilize one central color to create an entire artwork.

This piece or art would be called **monochromatic.**
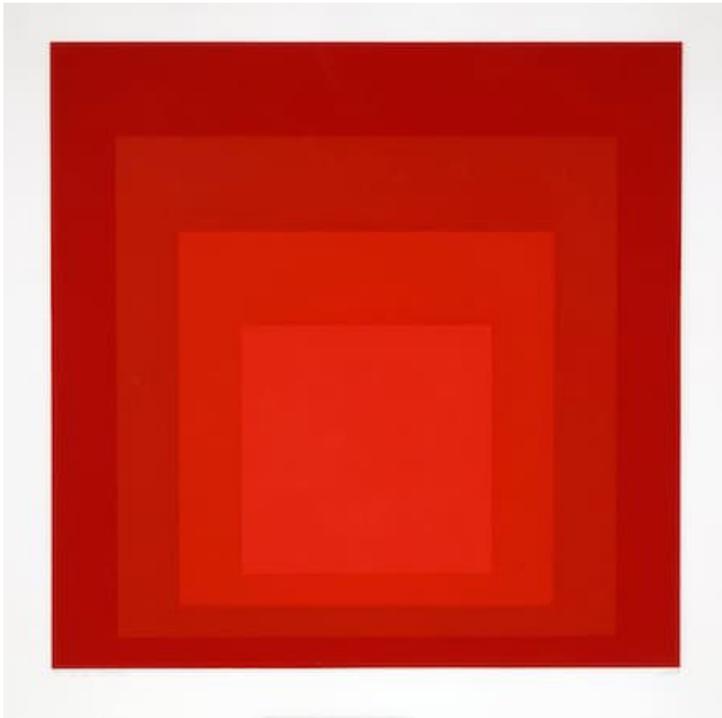
Josef Albers, Homage to the Square I-Sa, 1968, silkscreen, 54.6 × 54.6 cm
Courtesy of Dallas Museum of Art
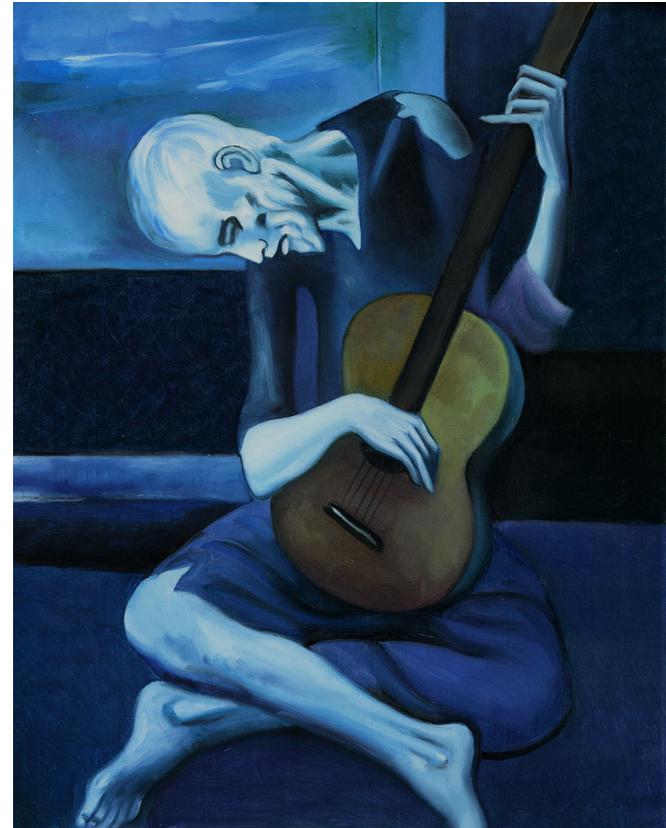
Pablo Picasso, *The Old Guitarist,* 1903, oil on panel
Courtesy of Art Institute of Chicago

temperature

colors are referred to as

**cool
if they have:
blue, green, violet
(think of water)**

colors are considered

**warm
if they have:
orange, red, yellow
(think of fire)**

**Tranquilize
Meditative
Soothing
Calming
Quieter
Cooler
Cold
Sadness**

**Exciting
Cozy
Earhly
Energizing
Dramatic
Fiery
Warmth
Comfort**

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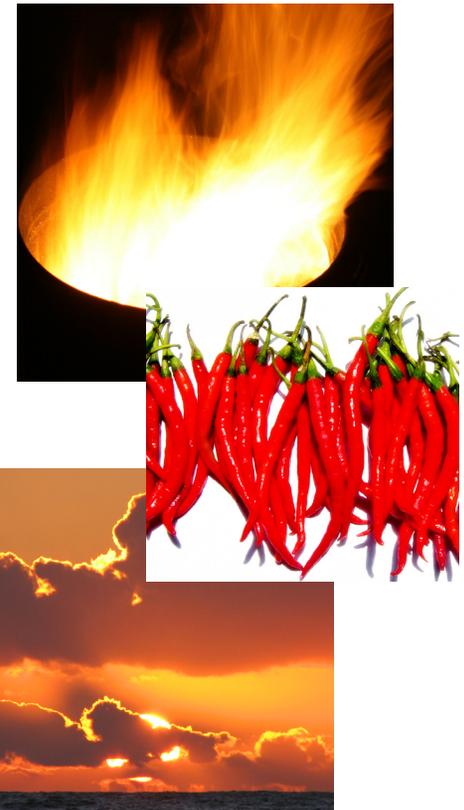
You can use this wheel as reference to remember color temperature:

Seeing temperature in color takes practice.
Here's an exercise to get you started.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Colorize the scene below four times.

- In the first version, paint it using only cool colors.

- In the second version, paint it using only warm colors.

- In the third, paint predominately in one temperature

with just a bit of the other temperature.

- In the fourth version, paint it roughly half cool colors and half warm colors.

Study how each version.

What does the warm colors version make you feel?
Does the cool one feels happier or sadder?

Check the lists in the previous page for more ideas.

Color Fields

So called "color field painters" of the 1950s and 60s wanted to reinforce the idea that the painted canvas is a flat, two-dimensional space.

They made enormous, large-scale paintings that were often comprised of just one or two colors.

The bold, bright colors they used weren't meant to represent anything else. Their art didn't represent anything from the outside world - it reinforced the fact that you're looking at a painting.

It was about **the experience of color**.

Orange and Yellow, Mark Rothko, 1956

Use this page to draw/paint a picture focusing solely one color.