the element of value

When you think about it, the basis of all visual art is really *light*.

Light defines objects, and literally enables us to see things.

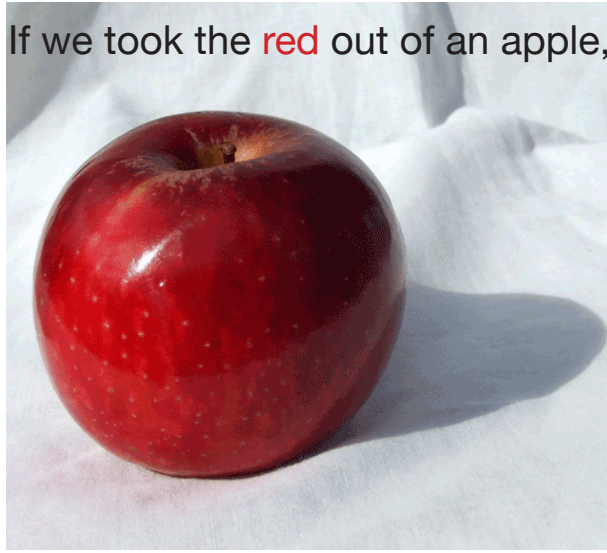Artists create the illusion of light by producing wide range of tonal and color *values* in a work.

But what is **value**?

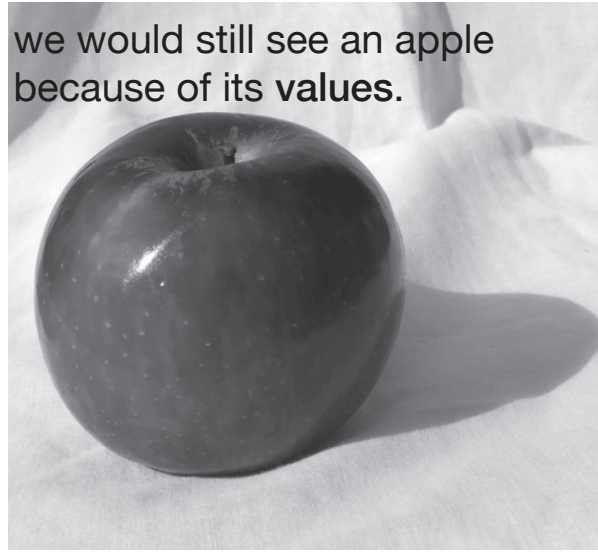Value is defined as *how light or dark a given color or hue is*.

It is best visualized as a **gradient**, or scale from light to **dark**.

If we took the red out of an apple, we would still see an apple because of its **values**.

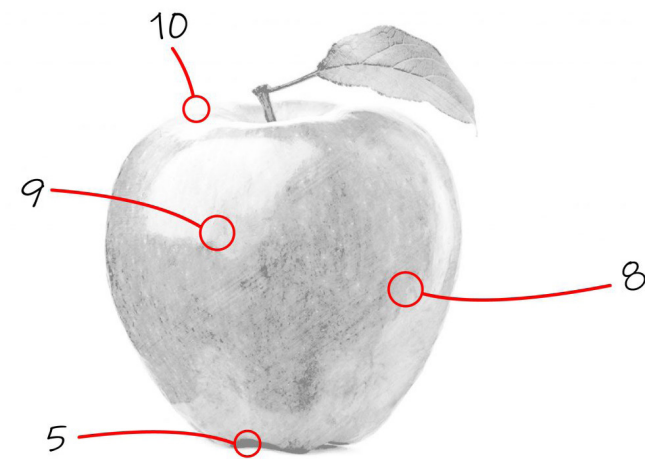shadows → | ← midtones → | ← highlights

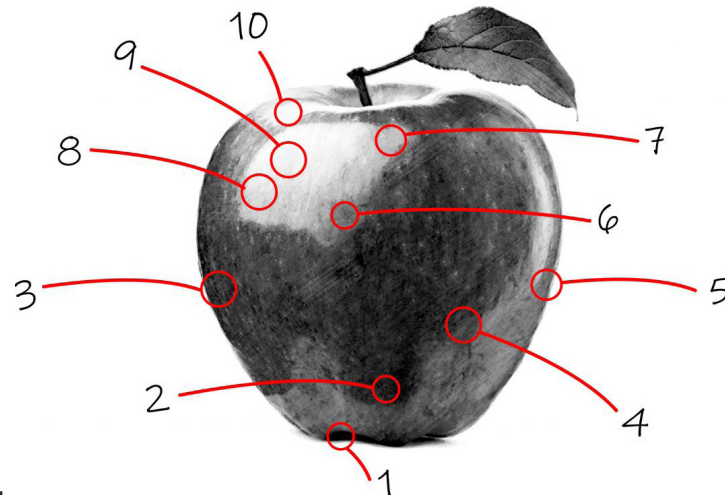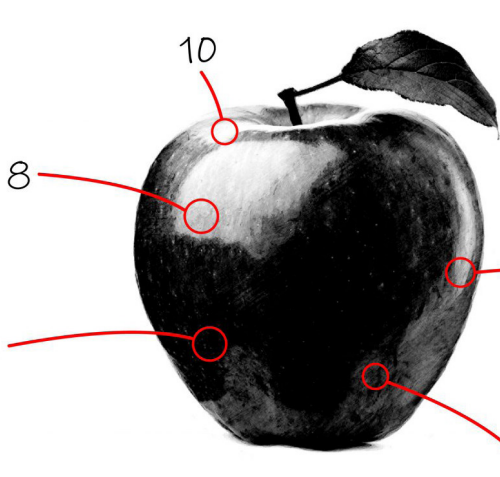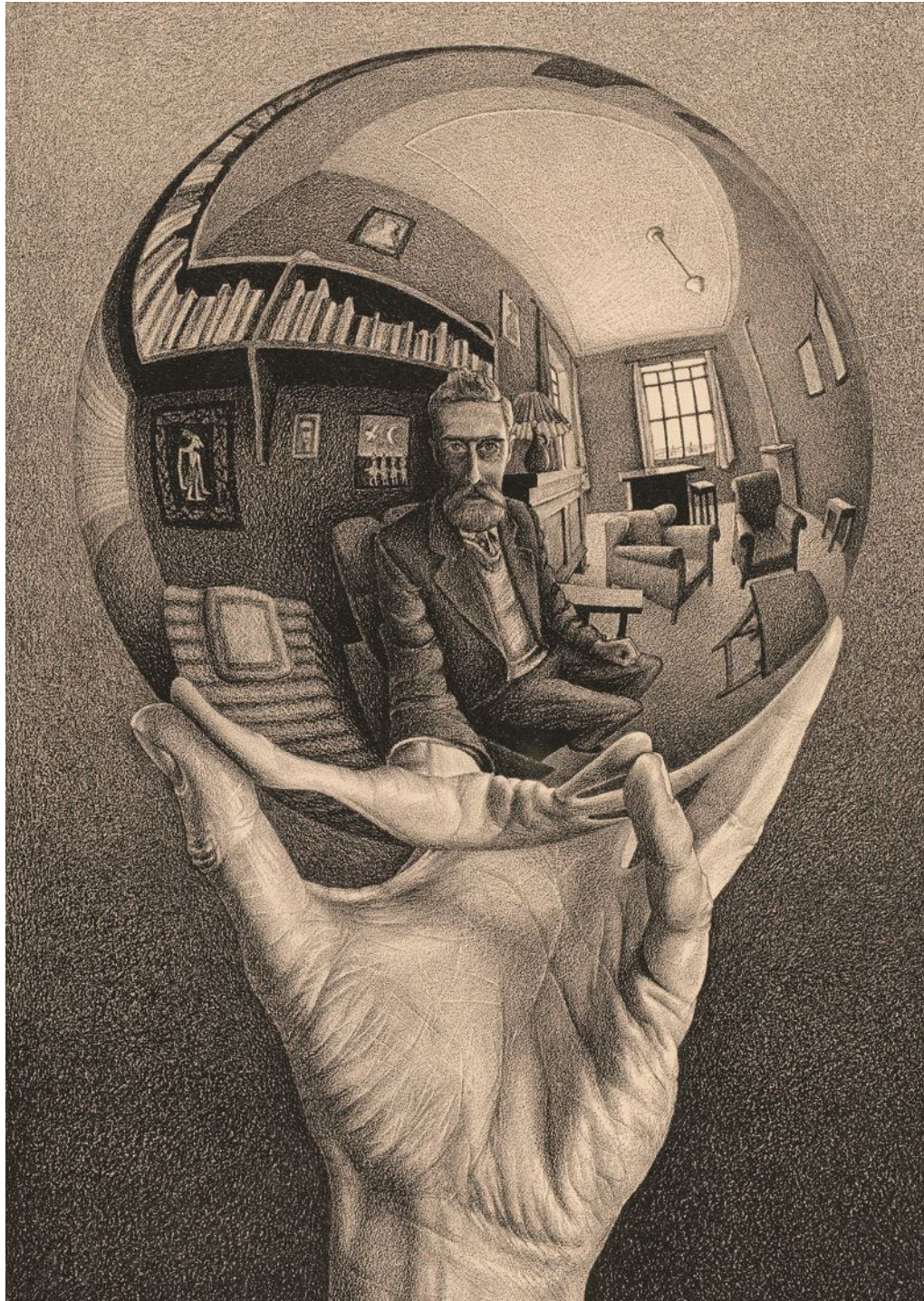| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

A **high-contrast image** contains only a few different values, and quickly jumps from dark to light.

A **low-contrast image** contains values from only one section of the value scale.

M.C. Escher was an illustrator who famously experimented with value to play with the viewer's perception.
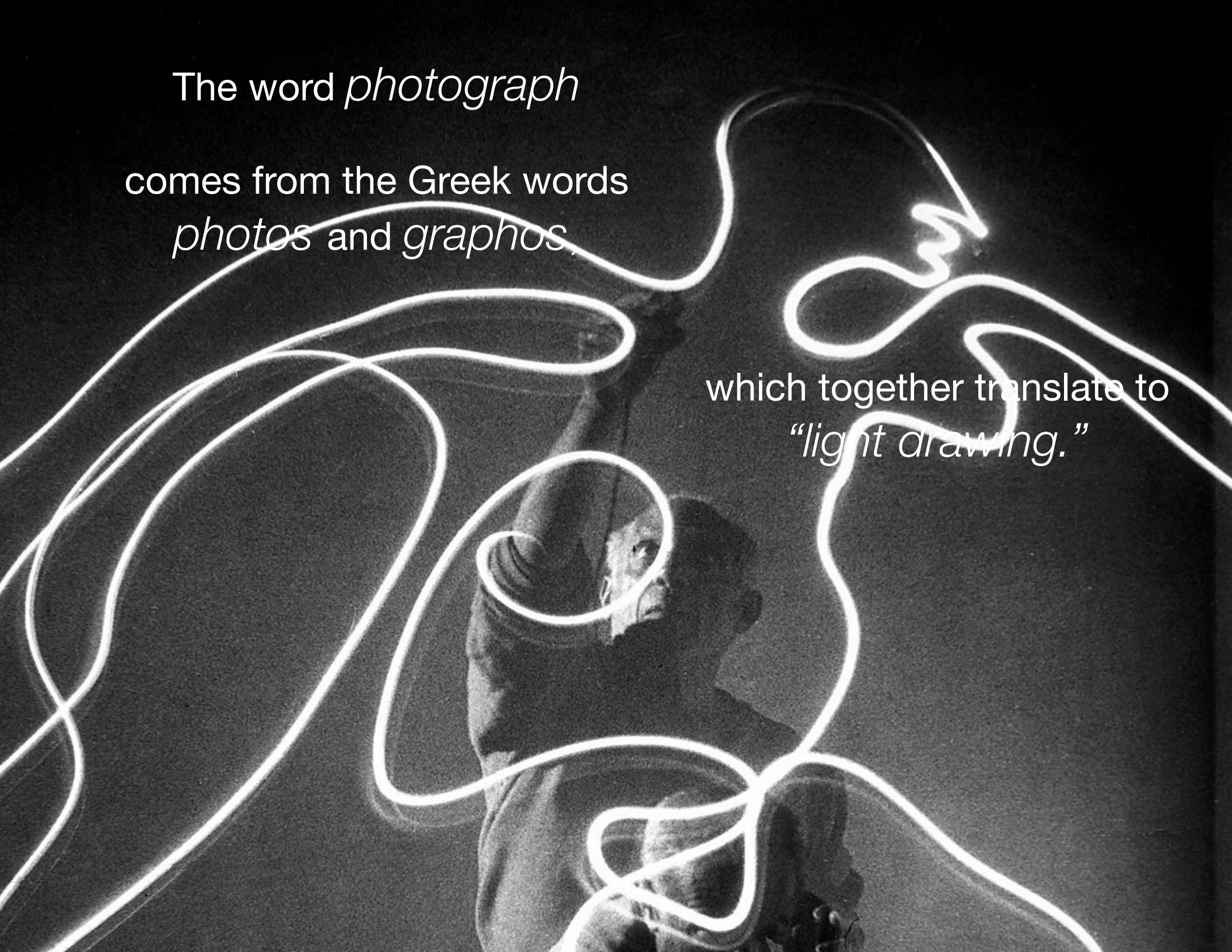

M.C. Escher, *Hand with Reflecting Sphere*, 1935

How has the artist made use of light and **dark** areas in this work?

The word *photograph*

comes from the Greek words
photos and *graphos,*

which together translate to
"light drawing."

Chiaroscuro
pronunciation: KEE AA RUH SKOO ROH
the use of **strong contrasts** between light and **shade**.

This is a prominent technique in Italian Renaissance art -
"chiaro" means *"light"* in Italian, *"scuro"* means *"dark."*

Caravaggio, *Supper at Emmaus*, 1601