

Unit 2 Color Theory Art Project

Chapters:

3. Light and Color
6: Principles of Design
8: Painting

Supplies:

For your painting project, you will need the following supplies.

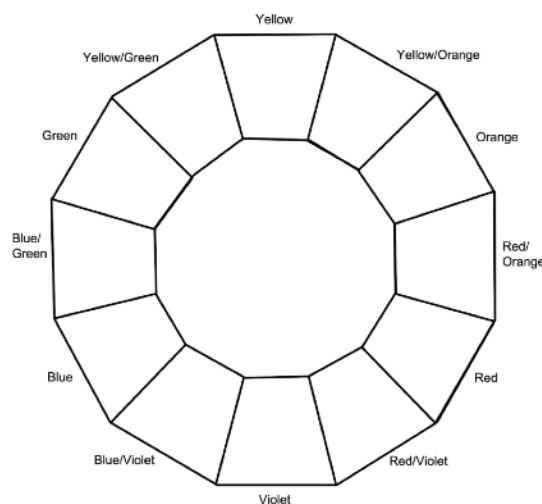
- Small paintbrush
- Any opaque paint in primary red, primary yellow, primary blue, and white. Acrylic or tempera are good paint options. Watercolor is not a good choice since it is transparent.
- White paper that can hold paint (thick drawing paper will work) - 4 sheets of paper at least 11 x 14 inches
- Ruler
- Pencil
- Jar to hold water
- Paper towels
- (optional) palette knife to mix paint colors
- (optional) glass palette or wax paper to mix paint colors on
- (optional) painters tape
- (optional) A small amount of gesso to prime your paper

Objective:

Use paint to explore foundational elements of color theory by mixing paint colors to create a color wheel. Learn about Josef Albers and his Color Squares project and complete the extension assignment on color relationships using his square design.

Color Wheel Instructions:

1. Use one of your papers for the color wheel. Download and print the color wheel template to trace it onto one of your 11 x 14 papers using pencil. You can hold your papers up against a window to trace them or use a light table. Label the the parts of the color wheel in this order.



2. Follow the instructions on the video demo to set up your painting area for this project.
3. (Optional) Paint a thin layer of gesso on the paper and allow it to dry. You can decide if you want to gesso your paper for this project.
4. Use only the blue, red, yellow, and white paint only to mix all of the colors in the artist's color wheel. You should not need much white (if any) for the color wheel. If your paint looks a little thin, the white paint can be used to make a paint more opaque by mixing a very small amount of white to the colored paint.
5. I recommend you sit down and do this all in one sitting so that you are able to reuse the paint you have already mixed.

Watch video demos in D2L.

Readings about Josef Albers:

Read this article on Josef Albers on Artsy. [How to Be an Artist, According to Josef Albers.](#)

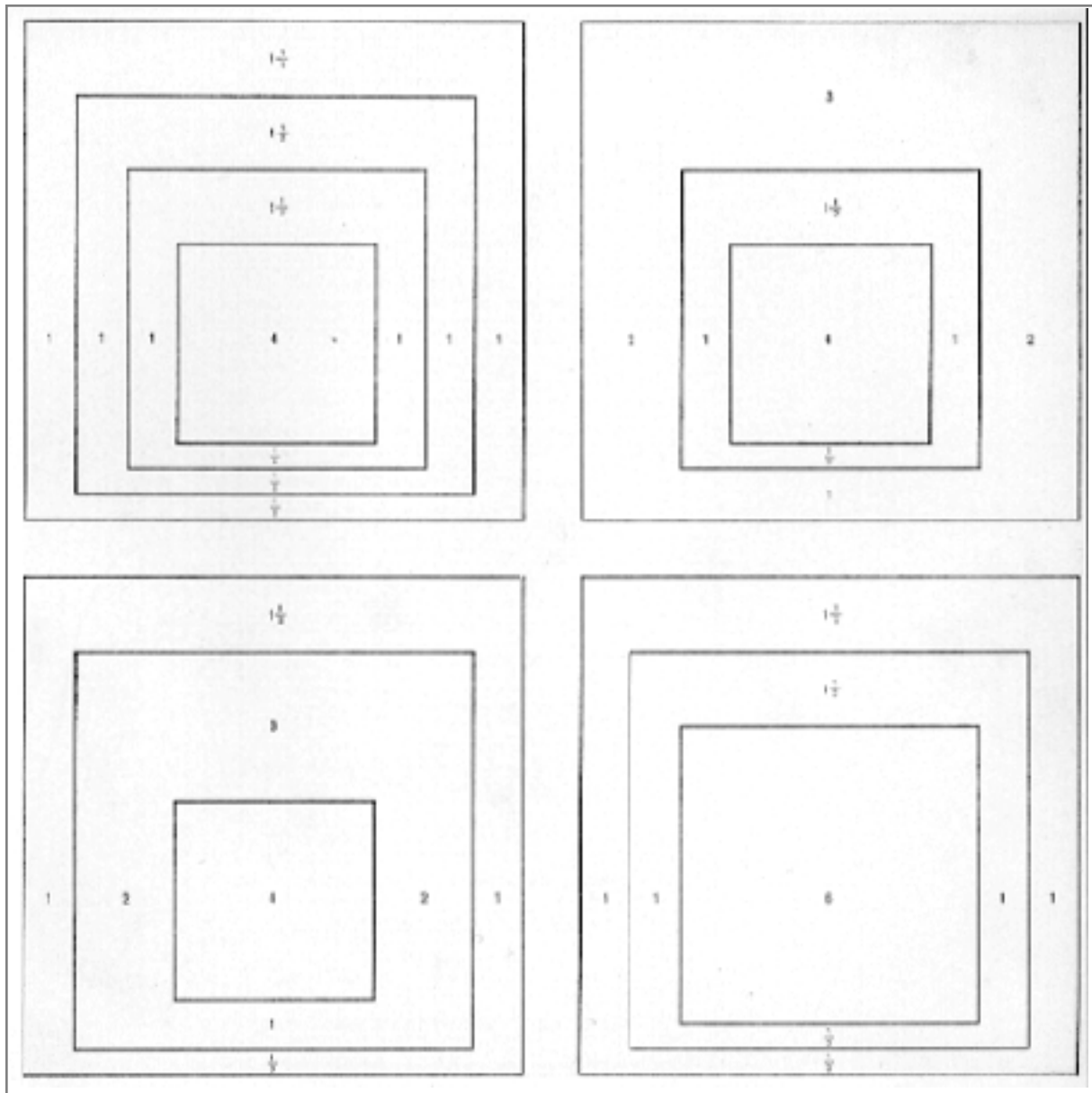
Josef Albers, 1888-1976, German

The work of Josef Albers presaged the art of Minimalism and Conceptualism in the 1960s. In his earlier career, Albers was a major figure of The Bauhaus, an influential German school of design and architecture. The Bauhaus developed out of a movement called European Constructivism, a purely abstract, geometric style that emerged shortly before the 1920s. The Bauhaus Constructivists believed that pure abstract forms, such as lines, squares and triangles were more valid than representational painting. For these artists such pure forms evoked a "universal" reality. [note 2] Albers eschewed representation, in favor of the abstract and hard-edged geometric shapes he employed in his most celebrated works. He said "... art should not represent, but present," and preferred the "anonymity of machine-like precision for personal expressiveness." [note 3]

Homage to the Square, Interaction of Color

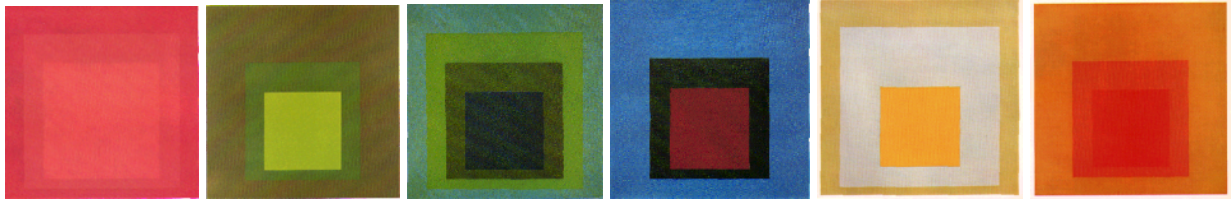
In the 1930s Albers emigrated to America from Europe, teaching at Black Mountain College in North Carolina. Later he taught at Yale University where he worked for 20 years on a series called "Homage to the Square." These paintings investigated the retinal effects of color. He published the fruits of this systematic research in a volume called, the *Interaction of Color* in 1963. Albers used nested squares to investigate color interaction. The simplicity of these designs revealed the way "abutting" colors could expand and contract, recede or advance, or even create a third color when only two were present. The varied use of scale and proportion also influenced the way certain colors interacted. [note 4]

From Werner Spies: "Albers"
Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York
From the Homage to the Square series, p. 49



Because colors have powerful emotional associations, each combination of colored squares created a distinct psychological impact on the viewer. [note 5] While the squares he used to convey color interaction were simple, hard-edged geometric shapes, Albers saw his paintings as profoundly inventive and more expressive than a representational painting. "When you see how much color helps, hates, penetrates, touches, doesn't that parallel life?"

From Werner Spies: "Albers"
Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York
From the Homage to the Square series, p. 51-57



Paintings from *Homage to the Square* are best experienced as a series. Albers is often considered the father of "series" art along with other late modern approaches such as Hard Edge, Minimal art, Op art and Conceptualism.

Citation: dartmouth.edu

Color Squares Instructions:

1. On each of the remaining 3 pieces of 11 x 14 inch paper, draw 2 6-inch squares in the style of Joseph Albers. You will have six total squares, 2 per paper. Use the image above that shows the measurements to determine the square style that you want to use. You should mix and match square styles so that you create a visually interesting final project.
2. On one paper, paint in the squares using one cool and one warm color scheme. Mix your own colors.
3. On one paper, paint in the squares using two different analogous color schemes. Mix your own colors.
4. On one paper, paint in the squares using a two different complimentary color schemes. Mix your own colors.
5. Be sure to label your papers with the color schemes that you've selected.

Watch the video demo in D2L.

TIP: When working on the Albers squares, experiment with color mixing. Take the complimentary color scheme of blue and orange for example. Mix a blue and orange and then come up with other variations of the blue and orange by adding white or adding a little bit of the opposite color (such as adding a touch of blue to the orange).

Instructions to submit your project

Submit this work by taking a picture of your finished project and uploading it to the D2L assignments page. Save all of your pictures into one PDF document and upload it into the Assignments Folder for this project. Make sure your pictures are well lit and focused. Crop the pictures at the edges of your paper. I recommend taking them outside in the sunlight.

Your project will be graded on the following rubric.

Category	20 points	15 points	10 points	5 points
Color Wheel Colors	Student carefully and successfully mixed colors to accurately represent an artists color wheel	A few colors on the color wheel are slightly off	Some colors on the color wheel are slightly off	Many parts of the color wheel have poorly mixed or incorrect colors
Labels	All of the project is correctly and neatly labeled	A few parts of the project are incorrectly labeled	The project has some instances of incorrect or incomplete labels	Many parts of the project are unlabeled or labeled incorrectly
Josef Albers Squares, Warm/ Cool	Artist has creatively shown a warm and cool color scheme in the style of Albers, colors are clearly mixed and applied neatly and cleverly to the final design.	Artist has a basic warm and cool color scheme in the style of Albers. Colors may appear messy or right out of the bottle.	Artist has made a mistake on one of the color schemes.	Artist has not achieved a warm and cool color scheme.
Josef Albers Squares, Analogous	Artist has creatively shown two different analogous colors schemes in the style of Albers, colors are clearly mixed and applied neatly and cleverly to the final design.	Artist has two basic analogous color schemes in the style of Albers. Colors may appear messy or right out of the bottle.	Artist has made a mistake on one of the color schemes or used the same colors multiple times.	Artist has not achieved analogous color schemes.
Josef Albers Squares, Complimentary	Artist has creatively shown two different complimentary colors schemes in the style of Albers, colors are clearly mixed and applied neatly and cleverly to the final design.	Artist has two basic complimentary color schemes in the style of Albers. Colors may appear messy or right out of the bottle.	Artist has made a mistake on one of the color schemes or used the same colors multiple times.	Artist has not achieved complimentary color schemes.