

Matisse defined composition as “the art of arranging, in a decorative manner, the various elements at the artist disposal.”<sup>1</sup> Design and composition are the most important factors in the expressive quality of a painting. It is these elements which will be discussed in this lesson on design and composition.

1. **Shape:** Shapes with interlocking edges. Shapes with a variety of edges. Shapes which are natural. Shapes within shapes. Studying silhouettes will increase your ability to make interesting shapes.
2. **Value:** Value creates form. Think about massing the shapes you see into three or four values.
3. **Line:** Boundary of the outside of the shape; an edge. Line can show serenity or agitation.
4. **Direction:** Vertical such as trees or flowers which have a decidedly vertical growth; i.e. iris, hollyhocks, gladiolas. Horizontal such as landscape formations with obvious horizontal lines. Oblique energized shapes such as cloud movement or rain.
5. **Texture:** Texture is visual as well as sensual. It is rough, smooth, dry, wet, shiny as in satin or dull as in velvet.
6. **Size:** Vary the size of the positive and negative shapes. A variety of shapes will give movement to a painting.
7. **Color:** Color is personal, emotional and the visual excitement in a painting. Colors are assembled in a certain order on the surface of the canvas or china blank and are the essence of the painting.

A. There are different approaches to learning about *shape* and *value*. The **Two value approach** which can be objective, non-objective or abstract.

1. Light represented by white

2. Shadow represented by black



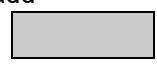
B. **The Three value approach** which adds more form with the addition of a middle or half tone.

1. Light - white

2. Transition Value, half tone or middle tone - #5 gray

3. Shadow - black

add



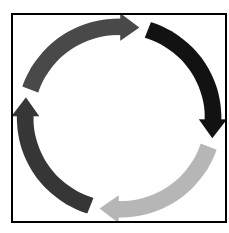
C. **Four value approach** which adds a lower value light in the upper five values. We used four values in our approach to painting landscapes.

1. Highest light - sky

2. Lower value light- flat planes in light

3. Mid value - slanted planes - #5 value

4. Darkest value- upright planes



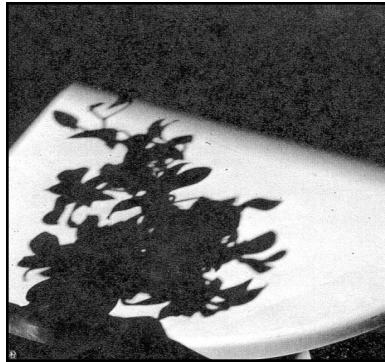
DESIGNING WITH THE TOMBOW PEN © Revised 2019  
PAULA WHITE HOME STUDY SCHOOL OF ART AND DESIGN

There are *six valid value patterns* which can be used in designing paintings.  
Four of these are shown below.

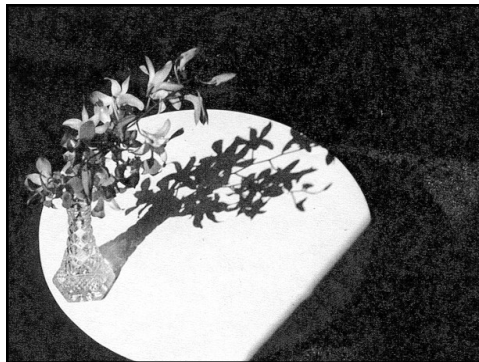
**Large light with a small darks** as in this photograph of daisies. The light pattern is larger than the darks.



**Large dark, small light** as in this photograph of cymbidium orchid shadows. The total light shapes are smaller than the large dark shape. This would make a good notan, which is a light and dark pattern.



**Large dark, small light with middle values** as in this photograph of orchids on a table.



**Large light, small darks with middle values** as in these value sketches made in Lincoln, NM. The white shape is larger than the small dark shapes. The middle values make up the trees and shadows in the buildings.



## Value Patterns continued:

Lets look at how these patterns can be used in designing a painting. I used value pattern number three to design this painting.

Photograph of orchids representing a large dark shape, small light with middle values.



### Supplies:

- ◆ #2 pencil
- ◆ Strathmore Bristol, (smooth surface), 400 Series in brown cover, 9X12
- ◆ Tombow pen, water soluble, one side has brush pen the other a fine line pen
- ◆ Mat with 5X7 opening, outside dimensions are usually 8X10



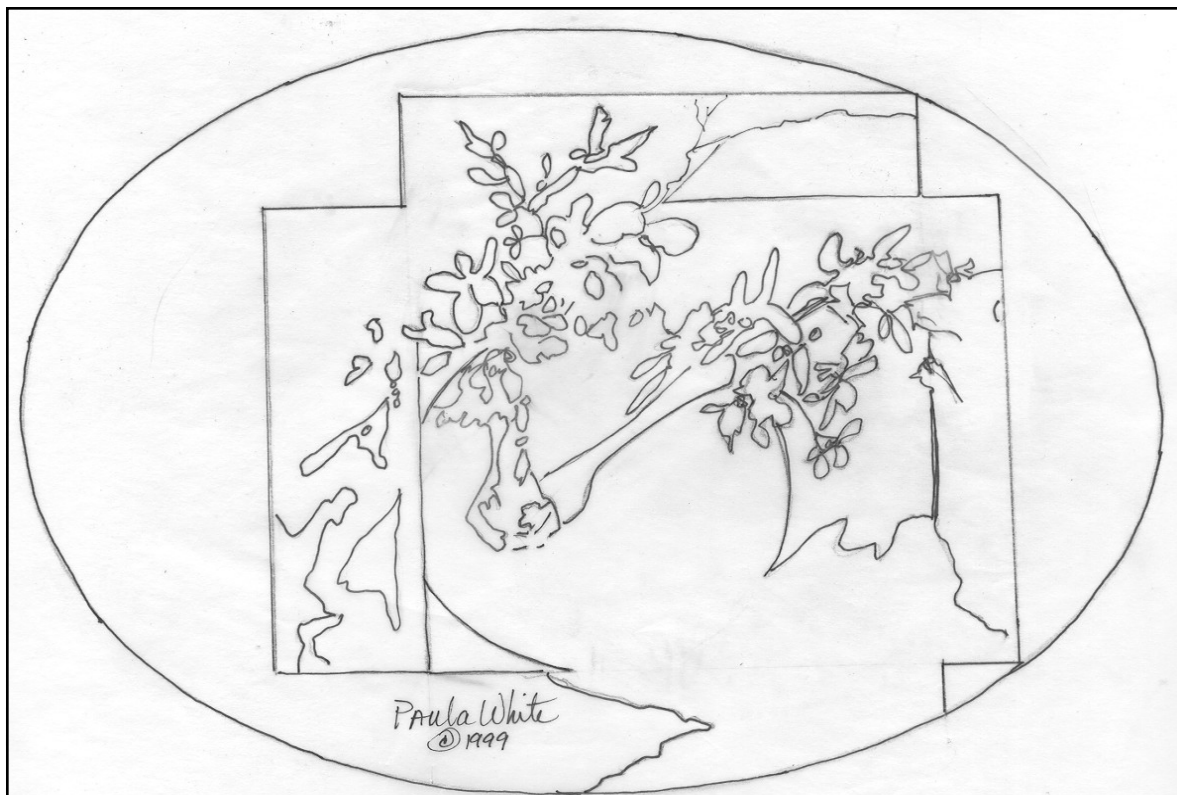
I first sketched in the vase and the flowers with a #2 pencil in the *middle* of the Bristol. Using the waterbase Tombow pen I placed all of the dark *shapes* of the shadows. The mixture of organic *shapes* with more angular *shapes* excited me. After all of the dark *shapes* were in place, I placed the mat on the paper to see where would be the best placement of the medium *values* and where the darks needed to touch the edges. As I worked with the mat I saw where I could get a more interesting design by drawing attention to horizontal and vertical *lines*. This gave the design a more oriental look. I used a #6 pointed brush moistened with water and blotted slightly to create the middle *values*. To create the middle *values* one must touch the end of the dark *shape* with the brush, which will cause the ink to soften and bleed out. If you have too much water in the brush the middle *value* area will get too dark.

**Assignment:** Using one of the value patterns in the lesson create a value sketch with the Tombow pen. Should you not have the supplies listed above make a value sketch with a #2 pencil and good drawing paper. You say you have no mat on hand; make one with a sheet of 8X10 heavy construction paper by cutting the outside to a 8X10 size and the inside 5X7. The heavier the paper the better the mat will work.

In the line drawing, to improve the design I opened up the light *shape* to flow from the edge of the oval box . I anchored the design to the edge of the box in two other places. I worked with each *shape* until I had a pleasing arrangement of the *shapes*. To hold the Largest *shape* as dark, the inside oval background would need to be a low dark *value*.

This would change the left panel to a dark value with some medium dark areas. At this point there are several ways I could complete the actual painted piece.

1. Mother of Pearl, iridescent light blue and black lustres, roman gold and enamel. Because roman gold has a heavier feeling, it can be used as a dark even though it is a middle dark *value*. Liquid bright has a lighter *value* because it reflects more light. Mother of Pearl might be used on the white area and the flowers. Iridescent light blue in the middle *value* and the shadows on the vase and in the flowers. Black lustre in the dark areas, mottled where it needed some other *values*. Roman Gold in the negative *spaces* of the box lid. Enamel accents on the flowers. A fine roman gold *line* could be used to separate the lustres.
2. Overglaze china colors with grounding and liquid bright gold.
3. All metallic lustres with metallic overglaze paints grounded.
4. All enamels with grounding.
5. Any combination of the above.



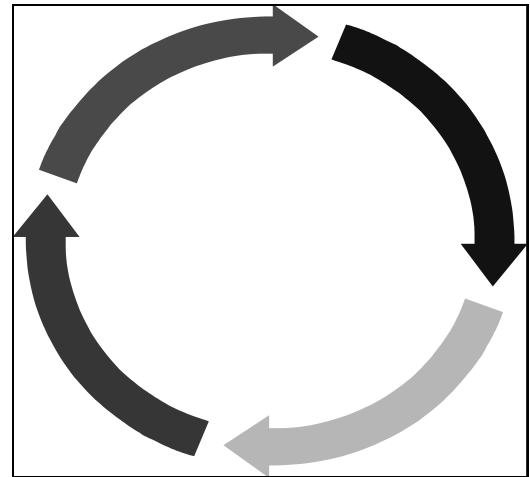
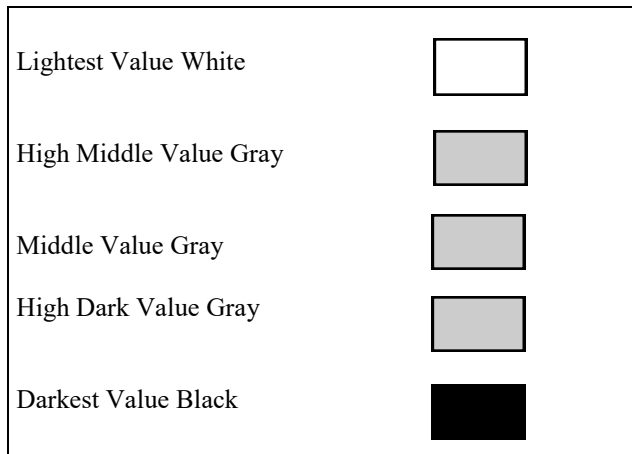
**Assignment:** Choose a *value* pattern, create a sketch using the Tombow pen. Make a *line* drawing from the *value* sketch and transfer to the canvas of your choice whether canvas, paper or porcelain. Make notes about color combinations and *values*. Decide what *color* will be which *value*. It is not necessary to actually do the painting. See how many combinations of *value* patterns you can make with just one photograph by changing the *value* of objects. Which do you like best?

# Painting Grapes in Monochrome, a value sketch

**Monochrome or monochromatic is a work composed of various tints and shades of only one color.**

To increase knowledge of how to create a design of grapes and paint them in monochrome one needs to understand values. **Value: a color's relative degree of lightness or darkness.**

There are commonly 10 degrees of value from light to dark. Thinking in three to five values will simplify using the monochromatic color scheme.



Before I begin to paint I plan the composition of the design with a black and white value sketch. This sketch can be done with a pencil, pen or ink. I use a Tombow water soluble brush pen, Strathmore Bristol (Smooth Surface, 400 series in the pad with a yellow cover) , #2 pencil, an 8X10 mat with a 5X7 opening, and a #6 pointed brush for water media.

Looking at my photograph of the grapes, I sketch with the #2 pencil the main cluster of grapes and main leaf. With the Tombow pen, I begin to place the darkest values I see onto the paper. I look closely at the shapes in the negative background areas. After placing all of the dark value shapes in the sketch; I place the mat over the sketch and move it around to find the best composition. A good composition will touch at least three sides of the paper with either a light or dark path. When designing the composition I pay close attention to the light path as well as the dark path. These paths will direct your eye through the painting. I use the #6 brush and water to create the middle values. Load the brush with water and touch it to a cloth or paper towel. Lay the brush on the edge of the dark shape and draw from that dark to make a middle value. In the middle and dark values there is always more than one or two values when using the water to dilute the ink. Making a black and white copy of the photograph will help in seeing the values when you first be-

