FOUNDATIONS of DIGITAL ART and DESIGN

with ADOBE® CREATIVE CLOUD

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New Riders
VOICES THAT MATTER™

COLOR AS SUBJECT

When Josef Albers created his *Homage to the Square* paintings, his presentation was more meaningful than you might expect. His placement of colored paint as the subject of the painting, rather than the tool for expression, transformed how artists experimented with the boundaries between media and subject, or process and expression. This emphasis on formal properties such as color as the subject of a work of art has been further explored in new media works of the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

In Brian Piana's online project *Tweeting Colors*, Twitter messages are transformed into a collection of colors (**FIGURE 6.5**).

Jack Hughes's *Colour Clock* (**FIGURE 6.6**) also transforms information into colors. The browser or screen application converts hours, minutes, and seconds into hexadecimal values relating to the red, green, and blue values that can be displayed online.
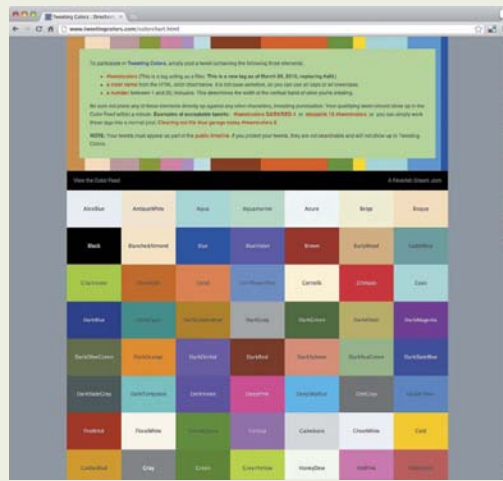

FIGURE 6.5 Brian Piana, *Tweeting Colors*, 2010. Screenshot courtesy of the artist.

FIGURE 6.6 Jack Hughes, *Colour Clock.* Screenshot courtesy of the artist.

WARM AND COOL

Hue can also be used to dictate how the viewer perceives the depth of an image. Warm hues appear closer to the viewer, while cool hues tend to recede into the background. This phenomena is demonstrated in Tiffini Myers' abstract photograph: the warm hues in the center float to the foreground as the cool blue tones at the edges fade to the background (FIGURE 6.7). In the RGB model, when the image is more blue than red, the hue will be cooler. When images contain more red than blue, the hue will be warmer. The green value will influence the degree of warmth or coolness and, of course, the hue itself.

Additive and subtractive processes do not affect the warmness or coolness of a hue.

SIMULTANEOUS CONTRAST

Bauhaus teachers Josef Albers and Johannes Itten developed color studies and theories that influenced abstract, op (short for "optical"), and conceptual artists' perception of color and its role throughout the mid-20th century. Albers's *Homage to the Square* series, consisting of hundreds of paintings of nested squares, illustrates his idea of halation, sometimes referred to as *simultaneous contrast* (FIGURE 6.8). You'll learn more about halation in Exercise 2.

In the exercises in this chapter, you'll create various color studies using the selection tools and adjustment layers.

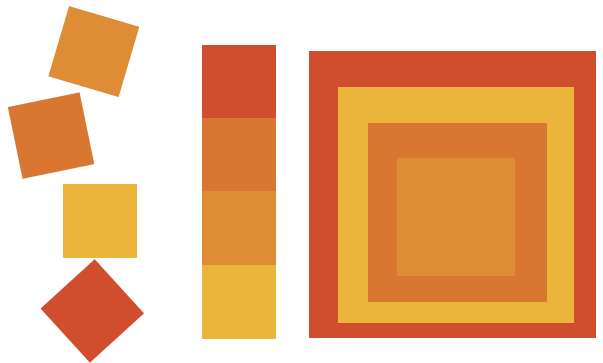FIGURE 6.7 Photo by Tiffini Myers © 2013.

FIGURE 6.8 Screenshot of Richard Nelson's *Albers Homage to the Square: An Explanation* on Vimeo.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

Download the following source materials to complete the exercises in this chapter:

✔ The **chapter6-start** folder from the Chapter 6 downloads area on the companion website.

You could also use your own digital photographs, although your settings will undoubtedly differ from mine.

WHAT YOU'LL MAKE

In the exercises in this chapter, you'll create both harmony and simultaneous contrast using Hue adjustment layers (**FIGURE 6.9**). You'll also learn to use the Levels and Hue adjustment layers to color correct a photograph. You'll see how to apply color to a black-and-white photograph in Photoshop in the Screencast.

FIGURE 6.9 The results of the exercises in this chapter include a study of harmony (top left), contrast (top right), and color corrections ("before" on the bottom left and "after" on the bottom right).

EXERCISE 1 HARMONY IN RECTANGLES

Harmony is achieved when colors near one another on the color wheel or within the color model are juxtaposed in the image. The starting file is a black-and-white image. In the following exercise, you'll convert the image to RGB mode and then apply two Hue adjustment layers to create color harmony within the image.

1. Open **harmony.psd** from the **chapter6-start** folder. This may look familiar, as it's one of the images you used in the Bridge exercises in Chapter 4.

2. Choose the Rectangular Marquee tool and try to draw a rectangle that follows the white frame surrounding the photograph. You'll notice that it isn't possible because the frame is on a slight tilt (**FIGURE 6.10**).

3. Deselect this area by clicking anywhere outside the selection or by pressing **Command(⌘)-D**.

4. Redraw the selection using the Polygonal Lasso tool—choose it from the Tools panel (**FIGURE 6.11**). To use this tool, click just once inside one of the four corners of the frame. Release the mouse. Drag the mouse to the next corner of the frame (move in a clockwise or counterclockwise direction)

SELECTION TOOL
The Rectangular Marquee tool is sometimes referred to as the Rectangle selection tool because all of the marquee tools are used to select parts of a bitmap image.

FIGURE 6.10 The Rectangular Marquee tool creates square and rectangular selections. Since the frame of the image is slightly tilted, the selection does not fit the frame.

FIGURE 6.11 The Polygonal Lasso tool is grouped with the Lasso and Magnetic Lasso tools in the selection area of the Tools panel.

FIGURE 6.12 End the Polygonal Lasso selection by clicking on the location where you started the selection.

ZOOM ZOOM

To zoom in or out easily, you can use the key commands ⌘-+ (zoom in) or ⌘-− (zoom out). You can also press **Space bar-⌘** (zoom in) or **Space bar-⌘-Option** (zoom out). Using the **Space bar-⌘** shortcut loads the Zoom tool, so you can click exactly on the area you want to magnify. ⌘-+ (or -) simply enlarges the magnification while leaving the center of the image in your viewing area.

and click once. Release the mouse. Repeat this until you've clicked on three of the four corners. To return to the fourth corner, zoom in and be sure to click the Polygonal Lasso tool in the same location where you began this selection. You'll see a small circle next to the bottom of the tool icon, indicating that you're closing the selection (**FIGURE 6.12**).

5. To add the first wash of color to the image, use the Hue adjustment layer. If you try to click the icon to add an adjustment layer for hue, you'll notice that it's unavailable (**FIGURE 6.13**). You can't add color to the image until you're working in a color mode that supports color information. Choose the Image menu > Mode > RGB Color to convert the bitmap image from Grayscale mode to RGB.

WATCH OUT! If you thought you were creating a selection with the Polygonal Selection tool but received the message "No pixels were selected," then you probably didn't close the selection. Be mindful while making that last click. Or you may have double-clicked in the process of selecting. This tool is a bit finicky.
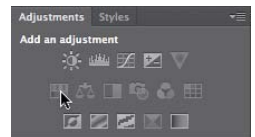

FIGURE 6.13 The Hue adjustment starts the second row in the Adjustments panel.
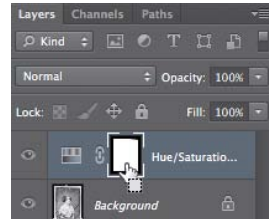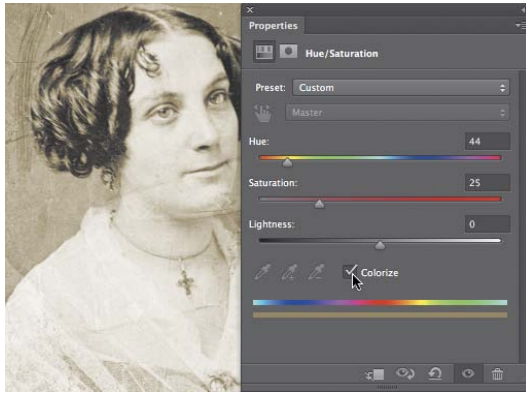
6. Now press the Hue adjustment layer icon. Inside the Properties dialog, you can adjust the hue, saturation, and lightness of the selected area of the image. Notice that your selected edges have disappeared. Press the Colorize button toward the bottom of the Hue/Saturation window and drag the Hue slider toward a warm orangish-yellow (**FIGURE 6.14**).

7. The Hue/Saturation adjustment layer is saved in the Layers panel. Notice that the adjustment layer has two thumbnail icons on it: the layer thumbnail and the layer mask thumbnail. The mask is where the original selection you made in Step 4 has been saved. The adjustment for hue and saturation has been applied only to that area. Press the Command key while clicking once on the layer mask thumbnail (**FIGURE 6.15**). The Properties panel changes to display the mask properties, and the selection is loaded in the document.

8. Choose the Select menu > Transform Selection. Now you'll scale the selection edges. This won't scale or transform the image, just the selection. Press the Shift key and hold it while you drag one of the selection edges in toward the image to decrease the size of the selection (**FIGURE 6.16**). Press the Commit Transform button on the top right of the Options panel when you're satisfied with the new selection.

9. When any of the selection tools are loaded, you can move a selection around the image without transforming the image or the selection size by clicking and dragging from within the selection—the selection tool will transform to a white arrow with a small selection marquee to its bottom right. Click and drag the selection so it's centered in the image space (**FIGURE 6.17**).

10. Return to the Adjustments panel and add a new Hue/Saturation adjustment layer. Press the Colorize button and drag the Hue slider to the left of the warm yellow to add an orange hue to the selected area (**FIGURE 6.18**). You may need to increase the saturation.

FIGURE 6.16 The Photoshop interface for transforming a selection looks similar to the interface for transforming a layer or image. Notice that the selection, represented by the "marching ants" or dashes, has decreased in scale while the image remains the same size.

FIGURE 6.17 Move a selection by clicking and dragging it with any selection tool.

11. Repeat Steps 7 through 10 to make a third rectangle inside the second one. Adjust the selection to include a deep magenta wash of color using another Hue/Saturation adjustment layer (FIGURE 6.19).

12. Save your final file as **harmony-final.psd**.

FIGURE 6.18 A second Hue/Saturation adjustment layer is added on top of the first within a smaller selection area.

FIGURE 6.19 A third Hue/Saturation adjustment layer is added on top of the first within a smaller selection area.