



COLOR *and* TEXTURE

In addition to architectural elements and set decoration, production designers rely on color and texture to realize their vision. Often designers devise color and fabric palettes for the main characters in a script. Palettes include fabric swatches and color chips and are usually displayed on a board. Colors can reflect the social and cultural background of a character, as well as his or her personality. A character who always dresses in grays and browns, for instance, is most likely serious and conservative. Colors can also be used to emphasize themes and moods in a story. A set decorated all in red might heighten the violence of a story, while a white set might underscore a theme of purity and innocence.

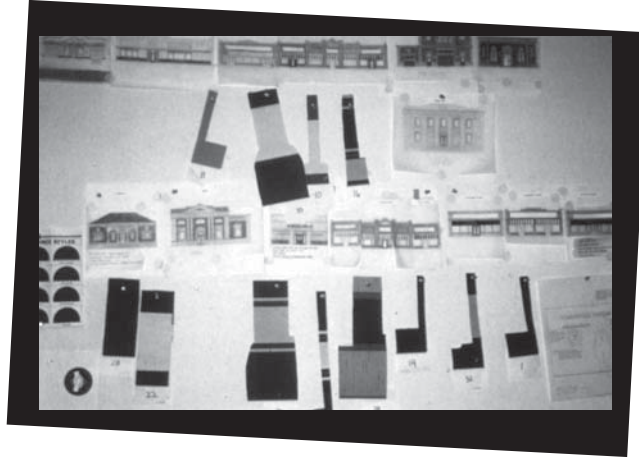
Sometimes colors work by directing the viewer's eye towards a particular spot in the frame. In early Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers movies, Fred Astaire used to be dressed in a brighter white shirt than the chorus dancers so that the audience would immediately focus

on him. Designers also think in terms of tone—how light or dark, bright or dull each color will be. Although more subtle than color, textures, such as you might find in fabrics, can also enhance storytelling. Coarse fabrics, such as burlap or canvas, might correspond to a rough character. A room filled with

smooth, shiny objects, like mirrors and stainless steel appliances, might suggest a reflective, bright personality.

The fantasy picture *Pleasantville* (1998), in which two 1990s teenagers are transported inside a black-and-white 1950s television show, demonstrates the complexity of color in art direction. As the modern-day teenagers alter the dull, predictable 1950s television world, the black-and-white environment gradually takes on color.

Production designer Jeannine Claudia Oppewall had to decide which objects or actors in each scene should be “colored.” The first object to take on color was a single red rose. In the scene, red represented physical passion.



Imagine your classroom entirely in black and white. List which objects you would color and how you would color them, to show the following:

Anger: _____

Joy: _____

Sadness: _____

Strength: _____

What textures do you see in your classroom?

Scout your school or neighborhood and select three spots for location shooting, giving special attention to color.

The locations I chose were:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What were the outstanding colors of each location?

1. _____

2. _____

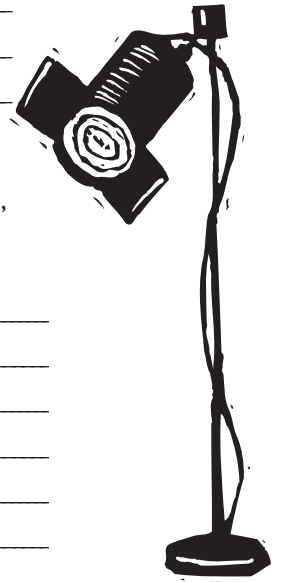
3. _____

Based on the colors you listed above, describe what types of scenes (love scene, fight, chase, etc.) might be played in these locations and why:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____



ELEMENTS OF COLOR AND TEXTURE:

PALETTE: A range of colors used for a particular purpose

TEXTURE: The visual and tactile quality of a surface

TOPE: A tint or shade; hue