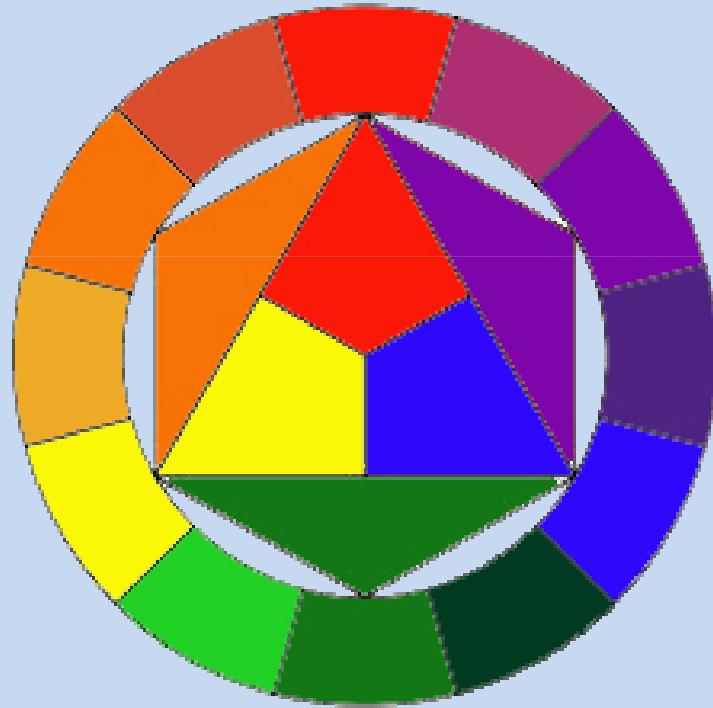


COLOUR THEORY IN ART



COLOUR THEORY- A BRIEF HISTORY

Why are colours so important?

Historically the masses couldn't read and so visual references (what plant is edible, which one poisonous etc) are crucial to our survival.

The church was a wealthy patron of the arts and for a long time sermons etc were conducted in Latin, which your average person couldn't read or understand. It was crucial to have images that conveyed the stories and morals of the Bible and colour was used extensively to give clues.

Colour allowed artists to pick out key scenes/ characters, show if they were good or bad, what mood they were in, what time of day the scene took place etc

Over time with advances in advertising and other visual fields we the viewer start to see and use basic colour theory without realising it is indeed an invention.



Cave painting, Lascaux, France, 15,000 to 10,000 B.C.

15000BC



2015AD



What is a COLOUR WHEEL?

Colour wheels are primarily used in art and art education, particularly when learning to paint and mix colours.

It predates modern scientific colour theory and some parts of their understanding of colour are different! (e.g. In optics- the 3 primary colours when mixed go white - in art you get a lovely shade of brown!

COLOUR THEORY- A BRIEF HISTORY

The Color Wheel

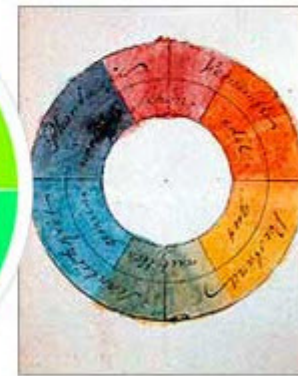
A color circle, based on red, yellow and blue, is traditional in the field of art. Sir Isaac Newton developed the first circular diagram of colors in 1666. Since then, scientists and artists have studied and designed numerous variations of this concept. Differences of opinion about the validity of one format over another continue to provoke debate. In reality, any color circle or color wheel which presents a logically arranged sequence of pure hues has merit.



1776
Harris

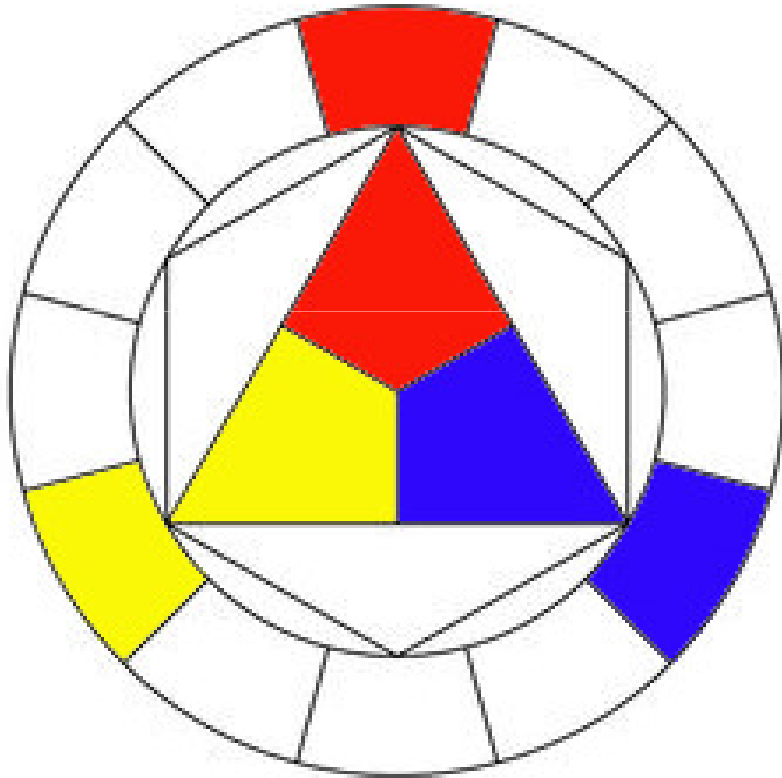


TODAY



1810
Goethe

What are PRIMARY colours?

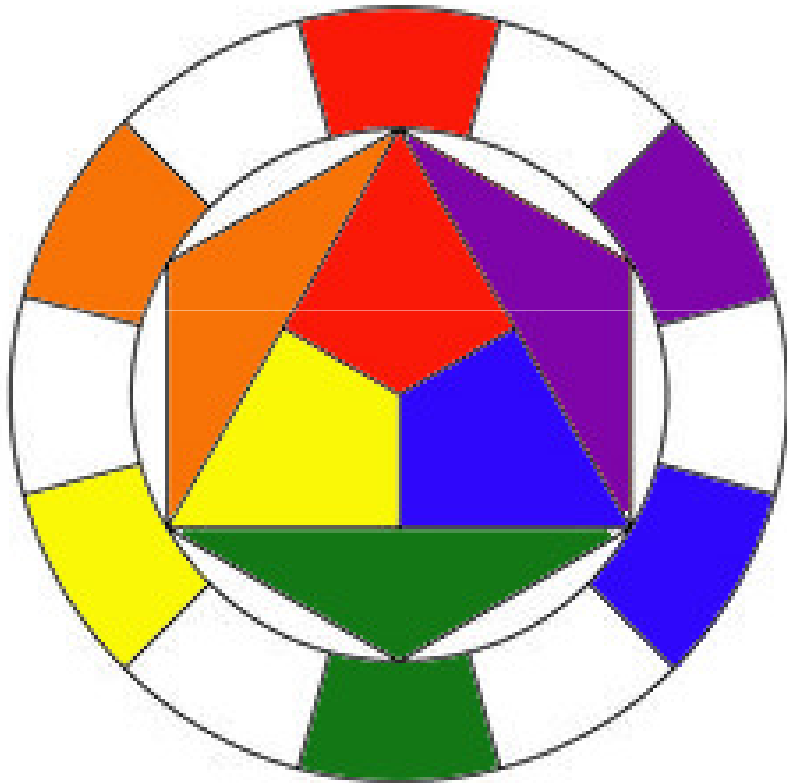


Red, Blue and Yellow

In traditional colour theory (used in paint and pigments), **primary colours** are the 3 natural pigment colours that **cannot be mixed or formed by any combination of other colours.**

All other colours are derived from these 3 hues.

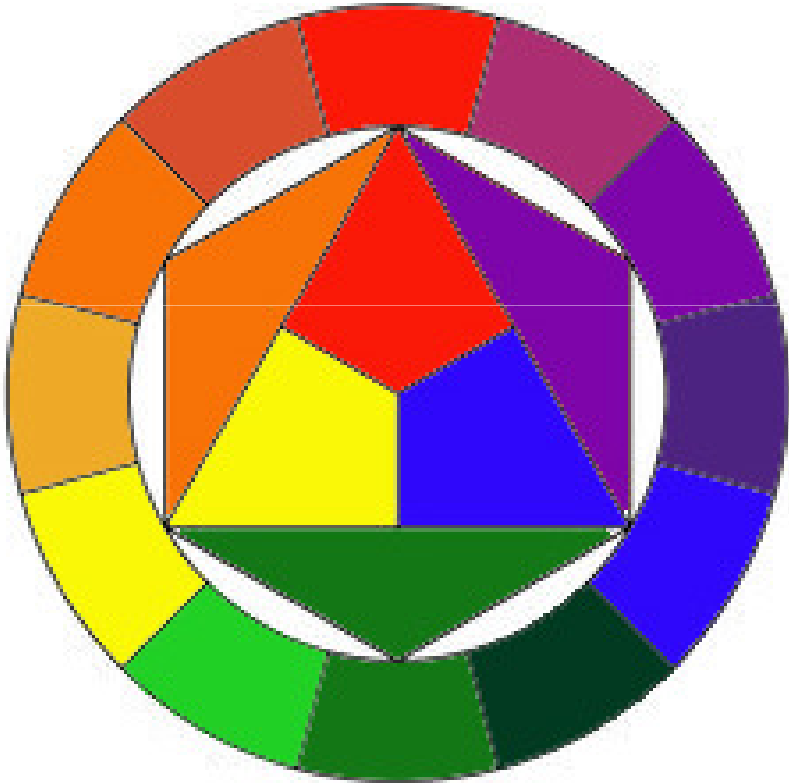
What are SECONDARY colours?



Orange, Purple and Green

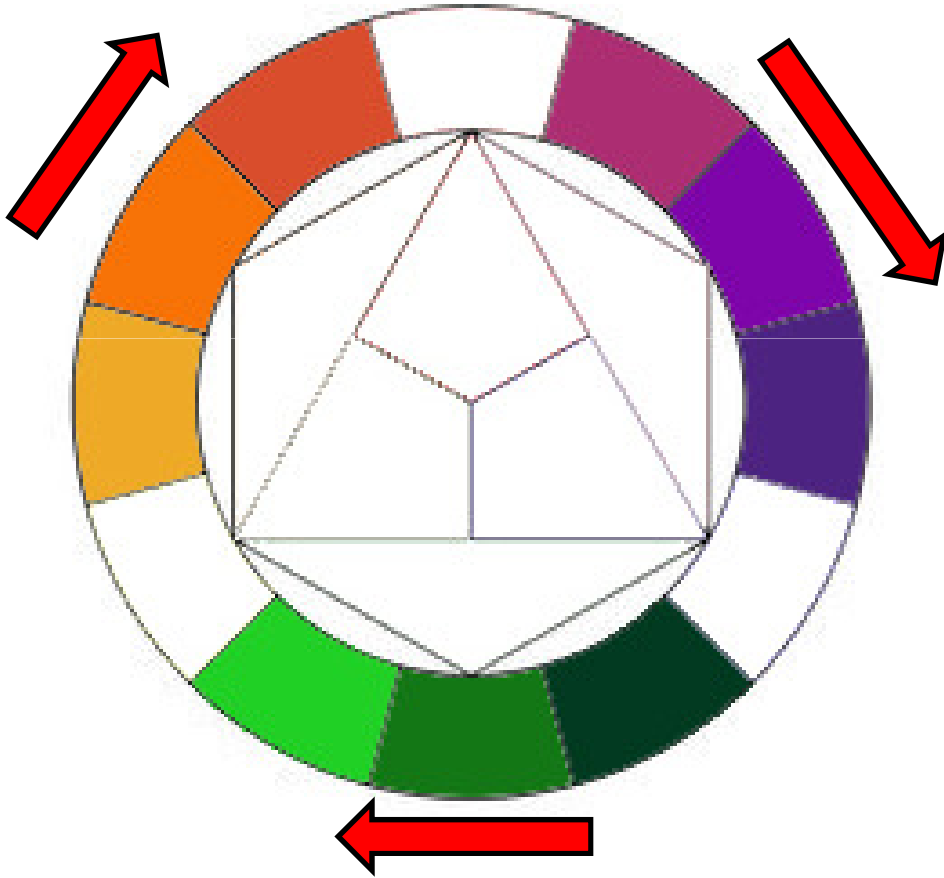
Secondary colours are created or formed by **mixing together two primary colours**.

What are TERTIARY colours?



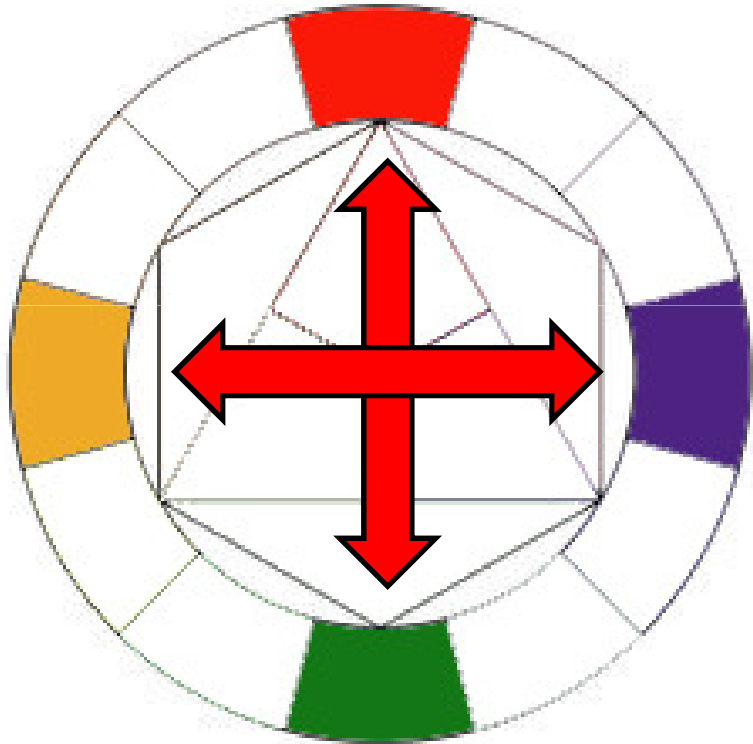
A **tertiary colour** (also called an **intermediate colour**) is a colour made by mixing either one primary colour with one secondary colour or two secondary colours

What are ANALOGOUS colours?



Analogous colours appear next to each other on the colour wheel

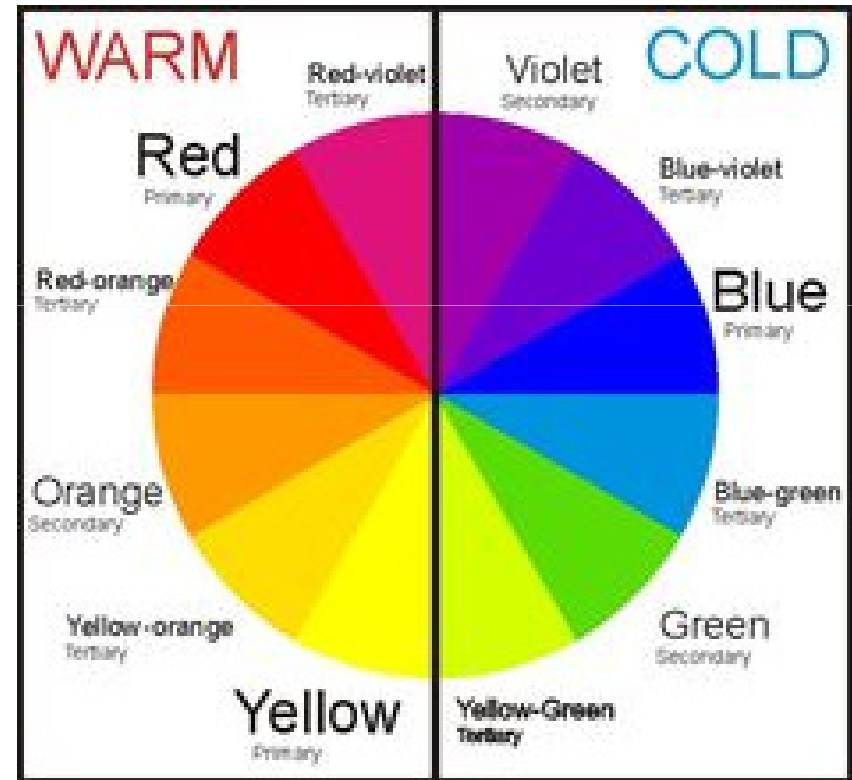
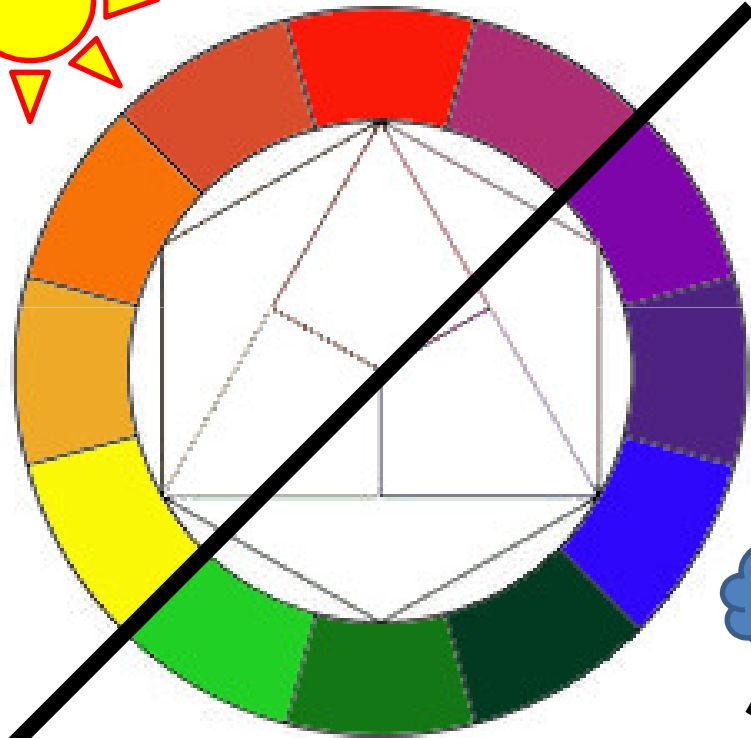
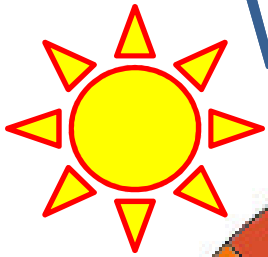
What are COMPLIMENTARY colours?



Complimentary colours appear opposite each other on the colour wheel

These are often used in advertising and design as opposite colours (like black and white) are very eye-catching

What are WARM/COLD colours?



What are SHADES/ TINTS & TONES ?

Tints, Shades, and Tones

These terms are often used incorrectly, although they describe fairly simple color concepts. If a color is made lighter by adding white, the result is called a **tint**. If black is added, the darker version is called a **shade**. And if gray is added, the result is a different **tone**.

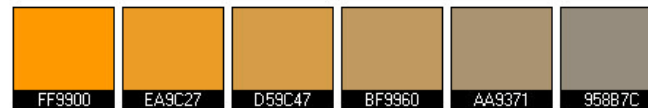
Tints - adding white to a pure hue:



Shades - adding black to a pure hue:



Tones - adding gray to a pure hue:



In history what did certain colours symbolise?

PASSION, BLOOD, ANGER, WAR, INTENSE, LOVE (RED)

INTIMATE, WARM (AMBER)

EXCITEMENT, ENERGY, ACTION (YELLOW)

LIFE, GROWTH, MONEY (GREEN)

COOL, CALM, SERENE, COLD, SOFT, PEACE (BLUE)

ROYAL, LOVE, FUN, PLAYFUL (PURPLE/MAGENTA)

PURITY, CLEAN (WHITE)

STAINED, DARK, SIN (BLACK)

The Significance of Colour in Christian Symbolism

The meanings associated with colour in Christian worship, art, architecture and design are summarised as follows:

Yellow

This is the symbol of light and purity. It speaks of youth, happiness, the harvest, hospitality, love and benevolence. Since it is also taken as off-white, it can be the colour of degradation or cowardice.

Orange

Symbolic of endurance and strength, orange is the colour of fire and flame it represents the red of passion tempered by the yellow of wisdom. It is the symbol of the sun.

Green

Green symbolises the breaking of shackles, freedom from bondage. It is the colour of fertility. In the Christian context, it represents bountifulness, hope and the victory of life over death. It is one of the colours associated with Christmas, and the long season of the Trinity in summer.

Red

Signifies action, fire, charity, spiritual awakening. It also glorifies the sun and the joy of life and love. In the Christian symbolism, it denotes Holy Spirit. It is the colour of Pentecost.

Black

Said to represent the absolute, constancy, eternity or the womb, black may also denote death, fear and ignorance. Black is the liturgical colour of Good Friday.

Brown

Brown is symbolic of the earth and was often the colour of a monks robe, signifying humility and God's connection with the commonplace and the ordinary.

Blue

Blue signifies the blue skies or the life-giving air and often signifies hope or good health. It is an alternate colour for the season of Advent.

White

Purity, virginity, innocence, and birth, are symbolized with this colour. White is the liturgical colour of Christmas and Easter.

Purple

Purple speaks of fasting, faith, patience and trust. It is the liturgical colour used during seasons of penance, Advent and Lent.



Expensive stuff.....

Ultramarine is a deep blue colour and a pigment which was originally made by grinding lapis lazuli into a powder. The name comes from the Latin *ultramarinus*, literally "beyond the sea", because the pigment was imported into Europe from mines in Afghanistan by Italian traders during the 14th and 15th century.

Ultramarine was the finest and most expensive blue used by Renaissance painters. It was often used for the robes of the [Virgin Mary](#), and symbolized holiness and humility. It remained an extremely expensive pigment until a synthetic ultramarine was invented in 1826.



What EMOTIONS can colours symbolise?

In his book on colour theory that appeared in 1810, Goethe studied the psychological effect of colours. He called colour “troubled light”, and there is a no more troubling – yet fascinating – colour than black. Could it even be called a colour? Goethe was not so sure. We see black as a surface that absorbs all the colours of the visible spectrum. And it has always had a special aura of its own. It has also had a major influence on countless artists throughout history.





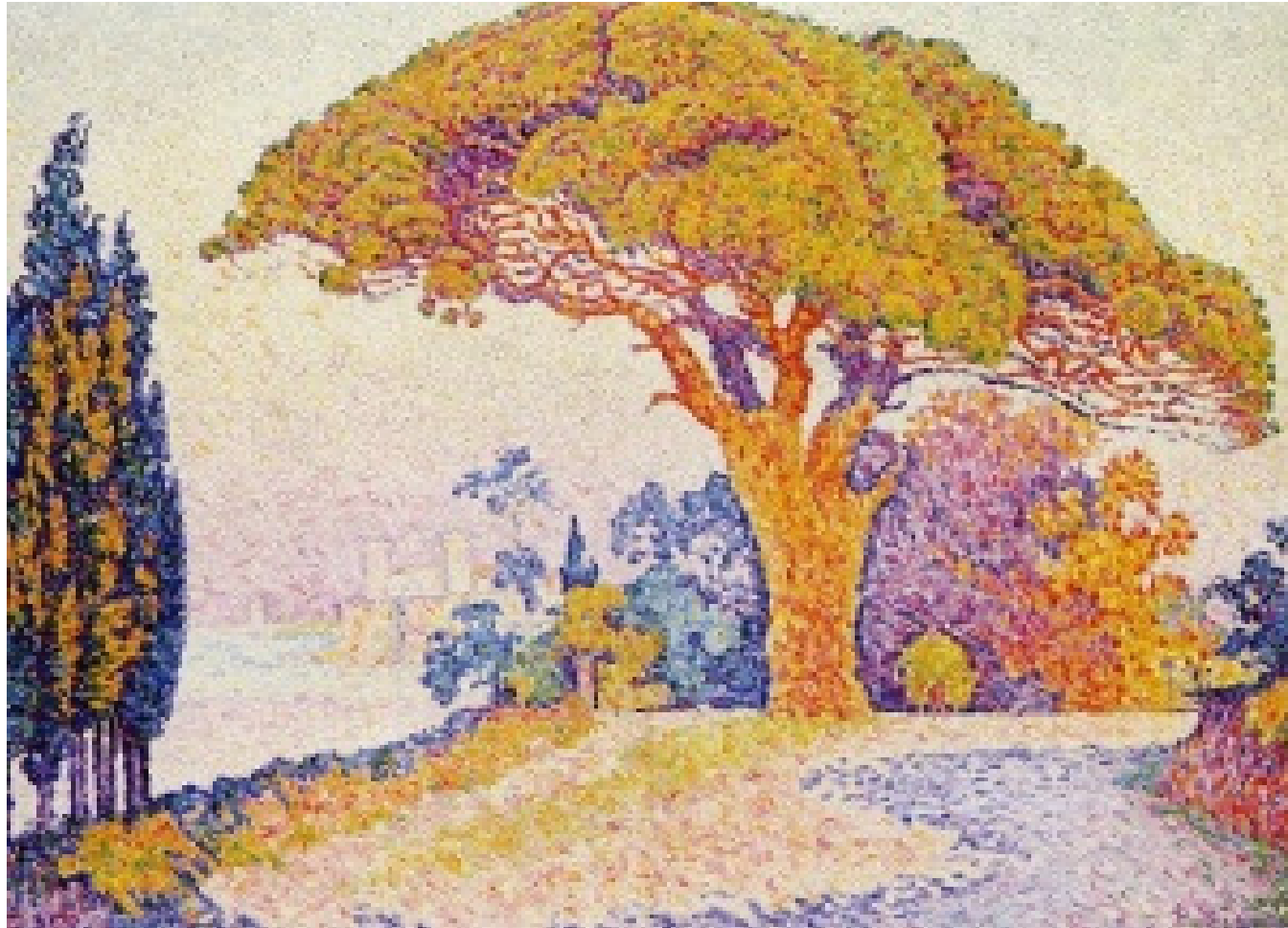
Seurat- Bathers at Asnieres- 1884



Munch- Evening on Karl Johan Street- 1892



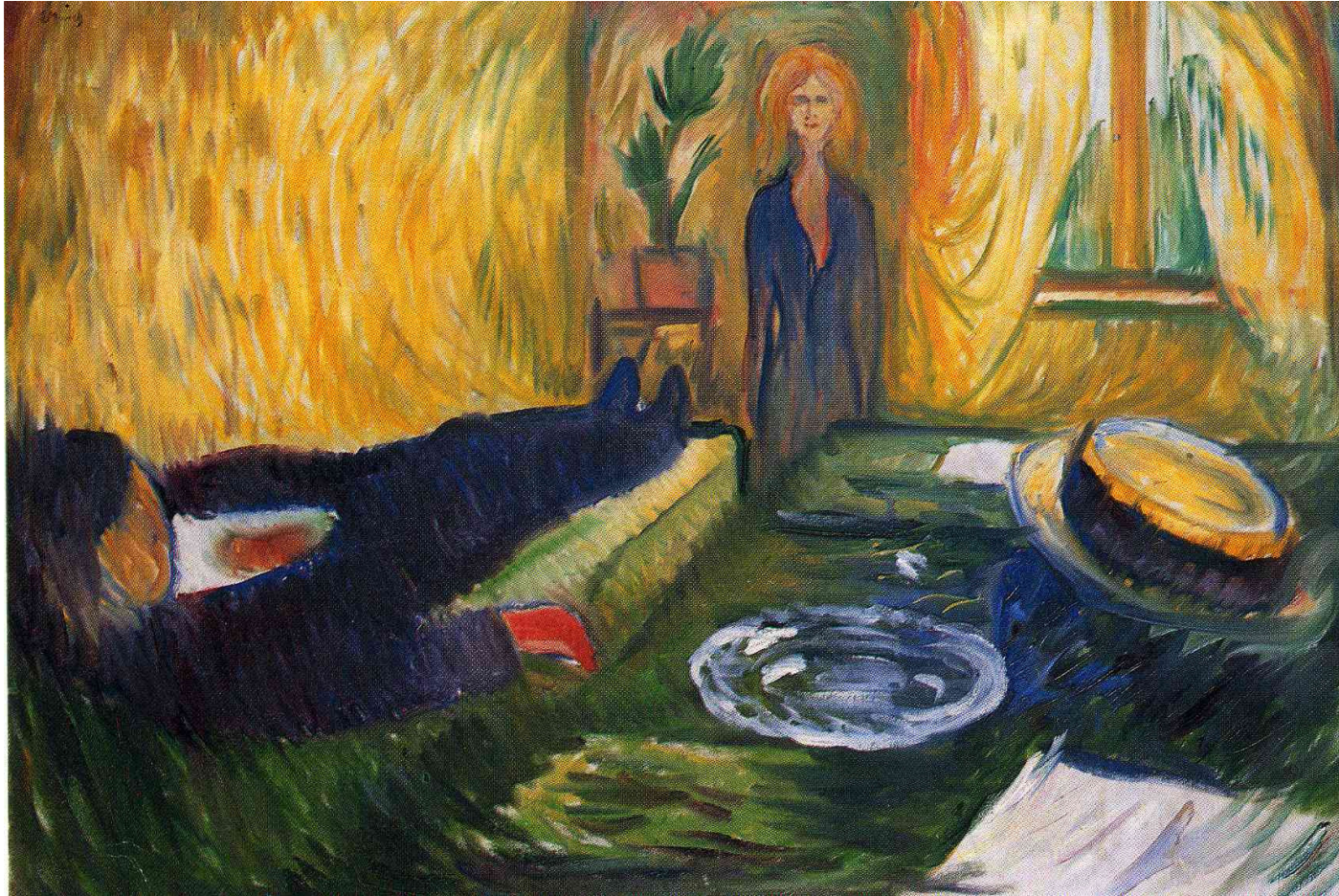
Toulouse-Lautrec- In Bed- 1893



Signac- Le Pin Bertauld, Saint Tropez- 1906

Picasso- The Old Guitarist- 1902





Munch- The Murderess- 1906