

Dear cs137:

I want to clarify the specifications for Assignment 2a. Please e-mail me if any of the following is unclear, or if you have other questions.

Fritz

### **Gradient Specifications:**

Each gradient included on your chart should be chosen for the uniqueness and legibility of its variable quality. That is, it should be immediately clear to a neutral or untutored viewer how and to what degree the gradient is changing at any given point. Simplicity may be a good rule of thumb to insure clarity; if a given gradient has more than one changing quality, it could be difficult for a viewer to determine which is the quality intended for observation. Unusual textures, for example, can be useful in helping to highlight a color gradient within a composition, but the texture should not interfere with the legibility of the color change. In each gradient you make, you should be very clear on the changing quality that defines the gradient and make sure it reads well.

Anticipate, as much as possible, the eventual interaction of your choices for your library. If there are problems when you try to combine them in the layered compositions, you can go back and rethink your choices for the "library".

It might help you to have in mind a natural force (pressure, velocity, viscosity, temperature, gravity etc.) that a given gradient would represent well. Even though the compositions do not need to convey specific information, thinking this way could help focus your arrangements and combinations. Try to have each composition combine distinct or complementary visual qualities.

### **Form of the Chart**

Your final chart, might consist of pasted-up components: at the top, 15 simple gradient swatches, each showing the full range of a particular type of visual variation; below, five larger rectangles showing five coexisting gradients each, with all variation legible. Ideally, some sense of overall dynamic movement, structure or relationship between the variation could be imagined for each composition. the size of the swatches and the compositions should be tied to the medium you are using. Your images should be large enough to be legible: at least 3" for the swatches and 7" or larger for the compositions. You can present electronically with the projector in 368 if you prefer.

### **Gradient Techniques:**

I have included a texture gallery PPT file on the class site, consisting of gradients based on physical media (charcoal, chalk, ink, oil paint), digital media (Corel Painter) and photographs of nature at regular and micro scale. Any similar source might generate some usable textures for this assignment (Don't just use mine!) To make a texture in to a gradient, you can draw its variation in

place on paper by planning, for example, to alter pressure on a charcoal line, or to blend two colors together physically. Photo textures (or photos of painted textures) can be manipulated in Photoshop. The easiest way is the Liquify function under Filters, which will allow you to drag, expand or contract portions of your texture image, or the Transform and Adjust functions under the Edit menu. There is also a gradient brush in the toolbar that automatically paints color fades in various patterns. Photoshop is also an excellent way to layer complex textures and patterns, allowing for adjustable transparency and contrast, and for layering one texture or line on top of another without mixing or disruption.

Of course, if you would like to try to do this assignment with CavePainting, that's fine too. You should save your gradients and compositions as screen shots, and paste them up physically on paper, or plan to project them on the 368 screen.

**Readings:** There are a number of color readings as PPT files on the site: Zwimpfer, Hornung, and Tufte. You should read the entirety of the Tufte, and skim through the other two to gain understanding of the basic structural issues of color use.

There is also a pdf for Block/Martinez on basic issues of Graphic Design. You should read at least the chapter on Simplicity, and at least skim the others. This text will help in your thinking about the organization of your compositions. (Be aware that the Block/Martinez pdf is "stacked"; the text reads across each half page and then jumps down.)

Finally, there is a link to a paper written by David: Loose Artistic "Textures" for Visualization which will put this assignment in context.

Remember, our new schedule specifies that Assignment 2a is due on Monday, and 2b will go out on Wednesday. Technically, you have no assigned work between Monday and Wednesday, if that helps in budgeting your time.