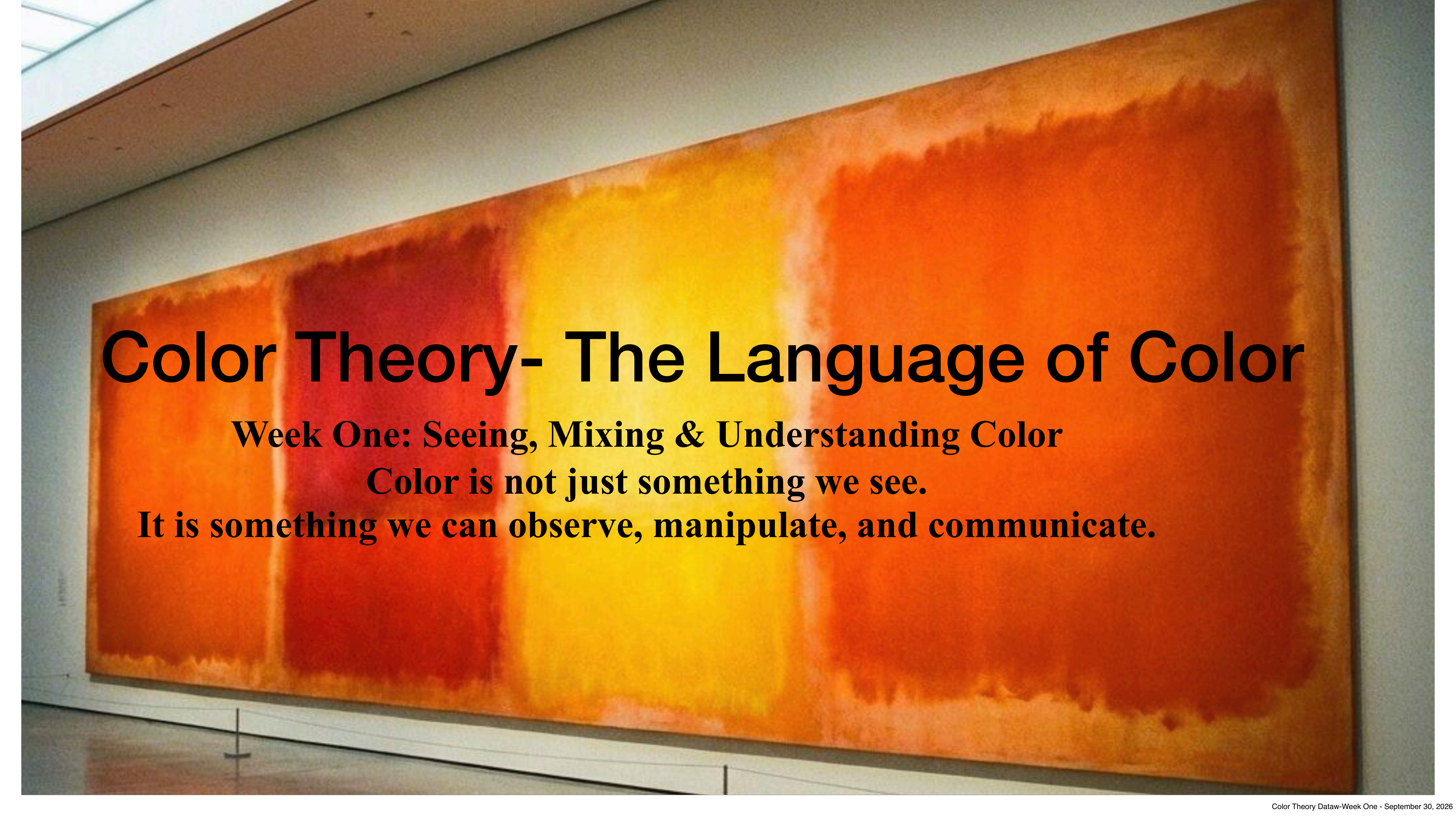




Color Theory- The Language of Color

Week One: Seeing, Mixing & Understanding Color

Color is not just something we see.

It is something we can observe, manipulate, and communicate.

The background is an abstract, textured surface. It features a large, irregular shape in the center that is a mix of yellow and red, resembling a splash or a stain. The rest of the background is a mottled mix of light blue, white, and yellow, with some darker blue and red specks scattered throughout. The overall effect is that of a rough, painted, or marbled surface.

If I don't have red,
I use blue.

PICASSO

COLOR AS A LANGUAGE

Artists don't simply choose colors—they make decisions about how colors relate to one another.

Color mixing allows you to recreate the colors you actually see rather than relying on colors straight from the tube.

- Temperature — warm and cool
- Value — light and dark
- Intensity — bright and muted
- Color relationships — how colors affect one another



Today we'll explore how artists use color to see, mix, change, and communicate.

Color as a Language — How color choices influence what we see and feel.

Color Relationships — Learning how colors behave when they are mixed and placed together

Temperature — Exploring warm and cool color relationships

Value — Understanding light, middle, and dark

Intensity — Discovering bright, muted, and neutralized color

Complementary Colors — Using opposites to change and control color

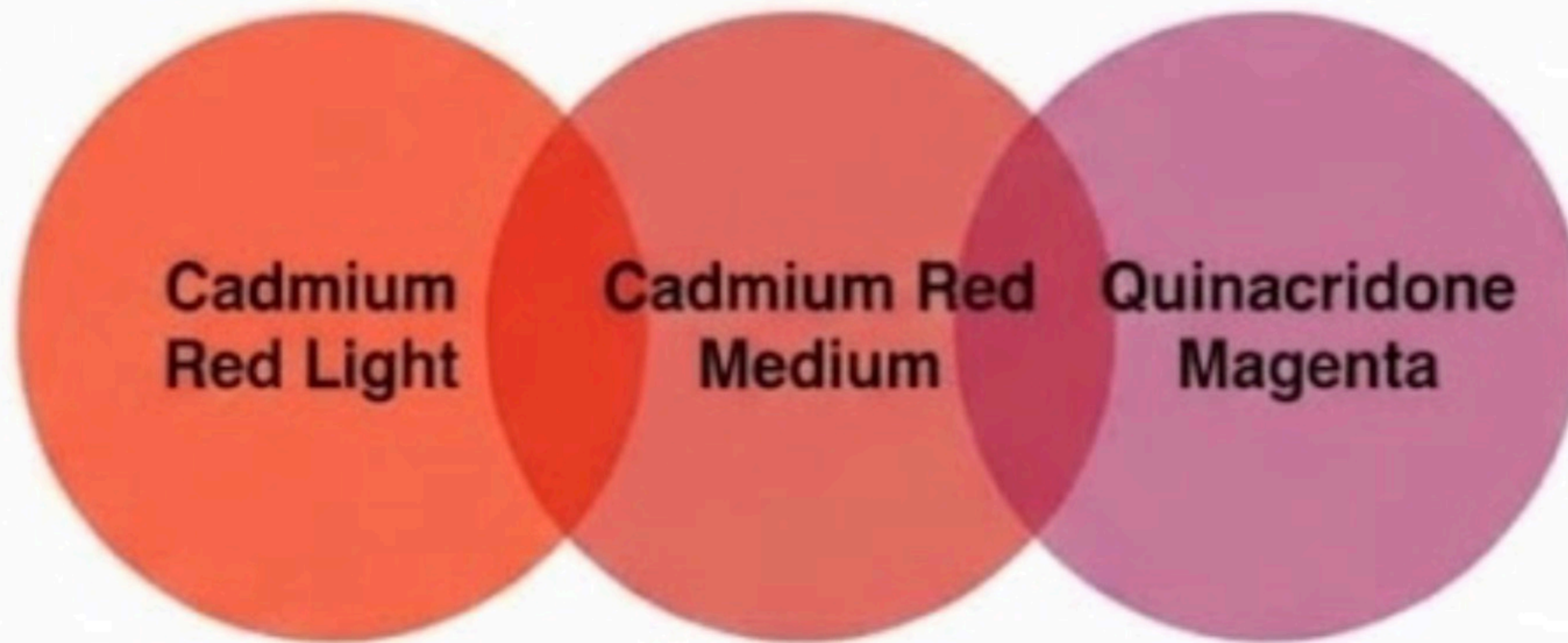
Transparency & Layering — Seeing what happens when colors overlap/glazes

Color in Composition — Using the same colors to create different visual experiences

See it. Mix it. Change it. Compare it. Use it.

COLOR HAS A NAME — BUT A NAME ISN'T ENOUGH

Transparent Swatch: Three Different Reds



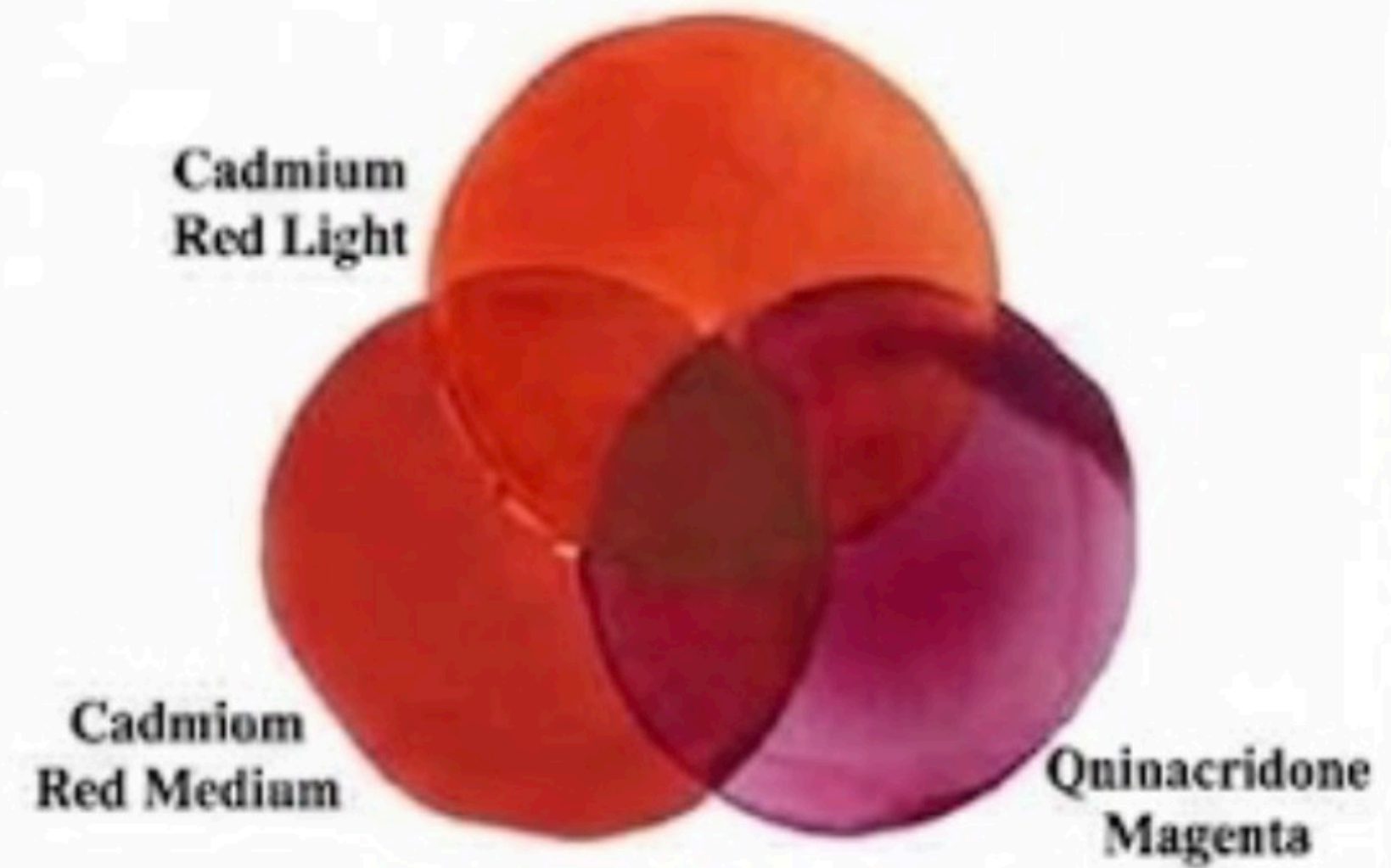
Visual Comparison of Transparency and Blending

MEET YOUR PIGMENTS



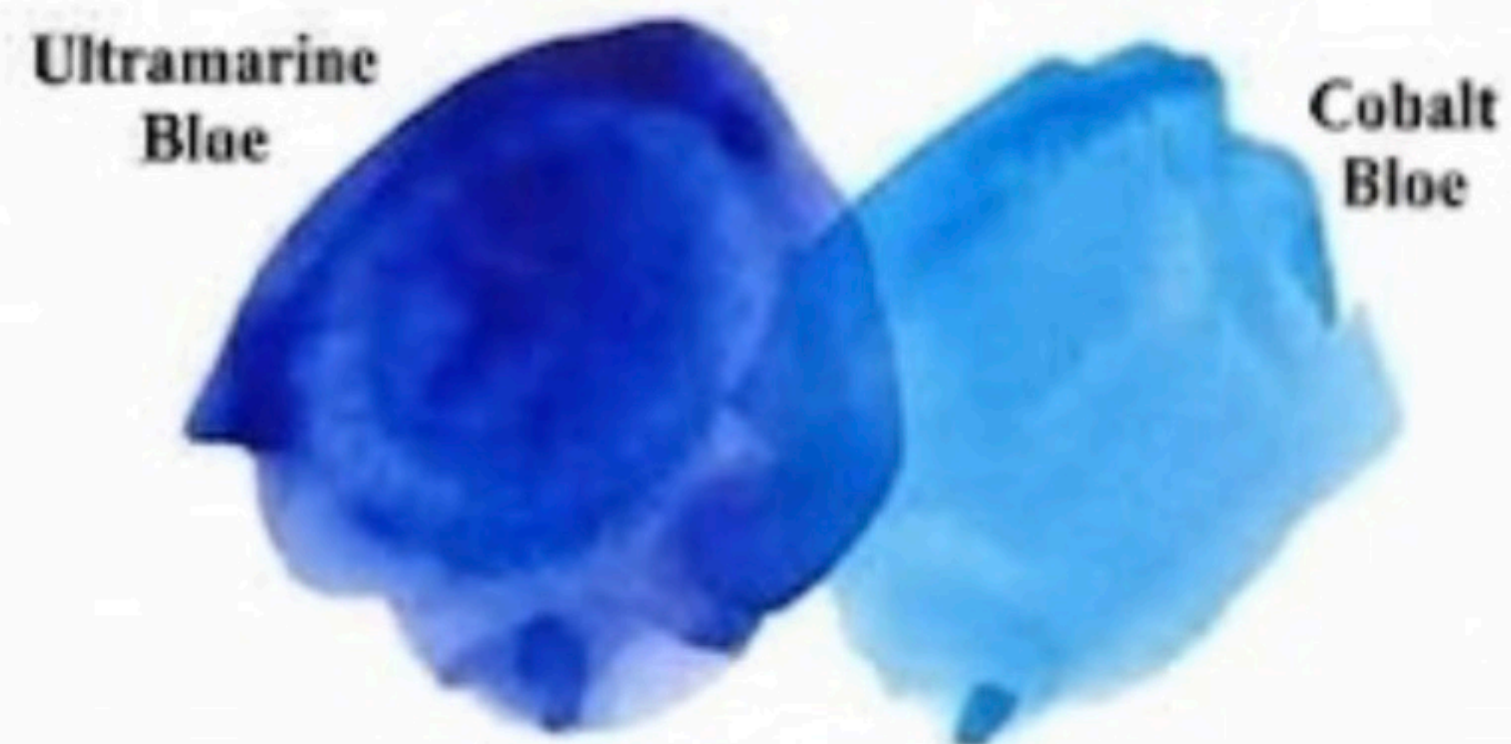
YELLOWS

Notice the range from light and transparent to opaque and earthy.



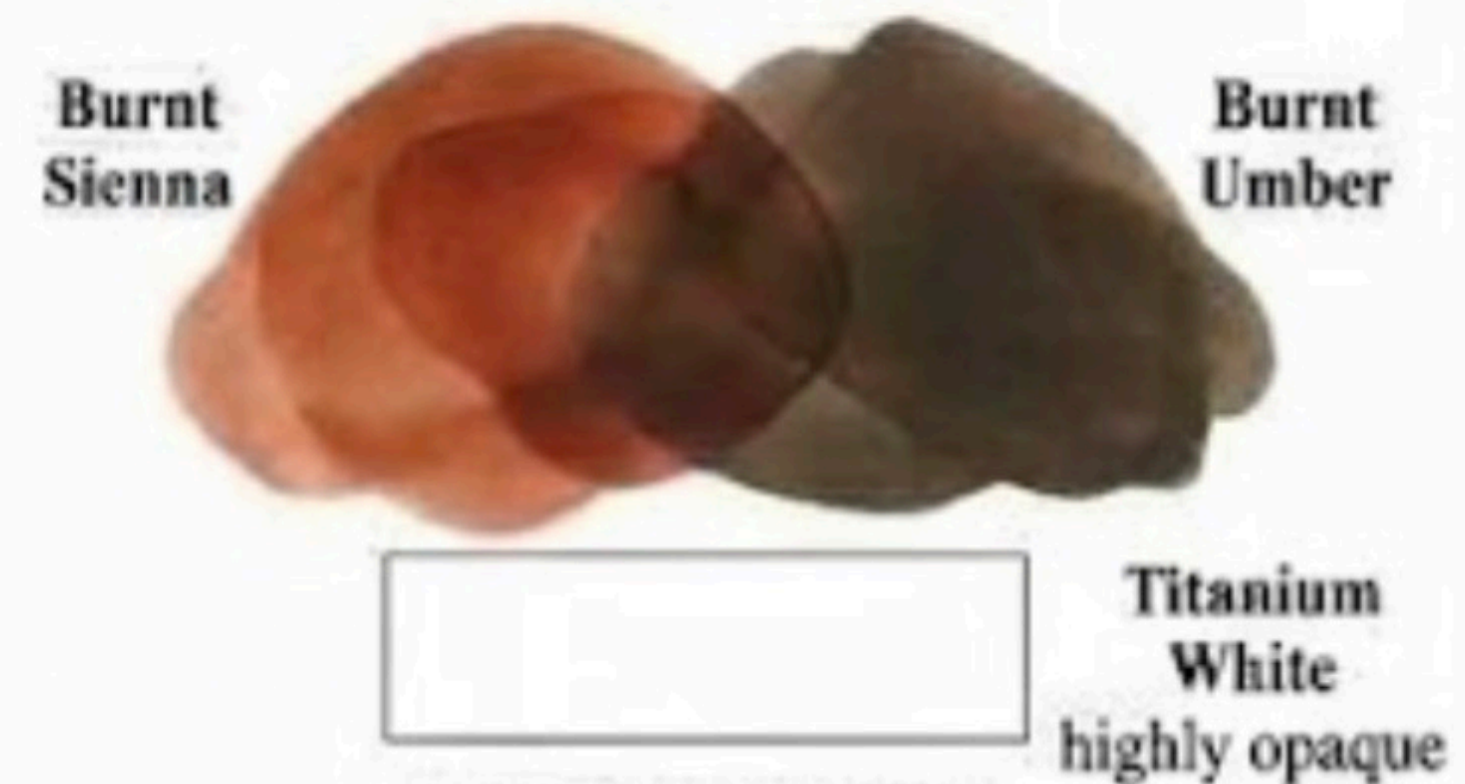
REDS

Compare the opacity of the Cadmiums against the transparency of Quinacridone Magenta.



BLUES

Explore the depth of Ultramarine transparency versus the clarity of Cobalt.



EARTH COLORS

Observe the warm versus cool tones.
Titanium White is essential for its high opacity.

COLOR LAB — Meet Your Pigments

Today our goal is...

- identify the actual colors they're working with
- learn the proper names of the paints
- observe differences between colors that seem similar
- begin noticing **warm/cool bias**
- create a reference sheet

COLOR LAB #1

Cadmium Yellow Light

Yellow Ochre

Cadmium Red Light

Quinacridone Magenta

Ultramarine Blue

Cobalt Blue

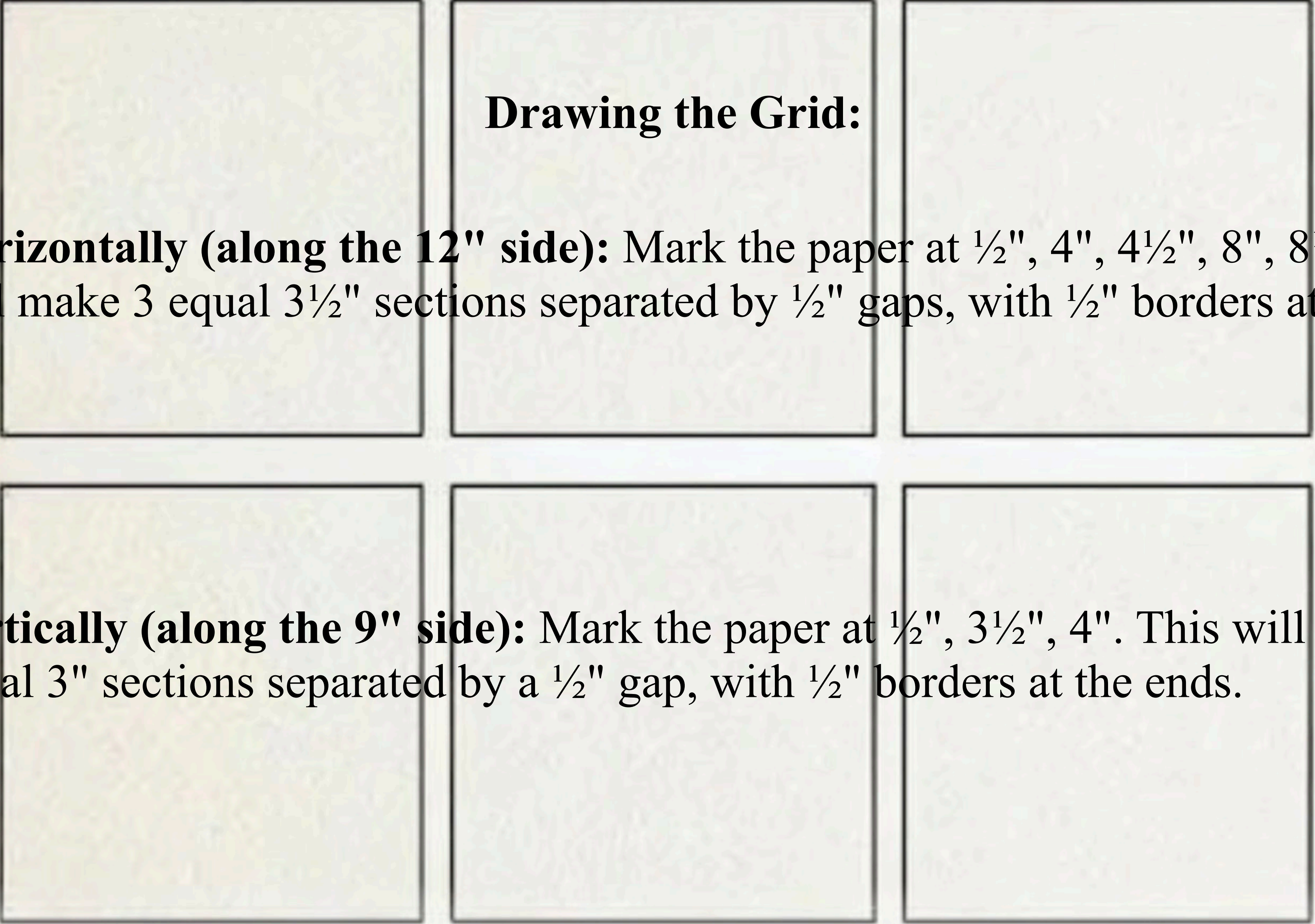
Supplies:

9 × 12 watercolor paper (turn it landscape/horizontal)

Acrylic Paints/ Palette

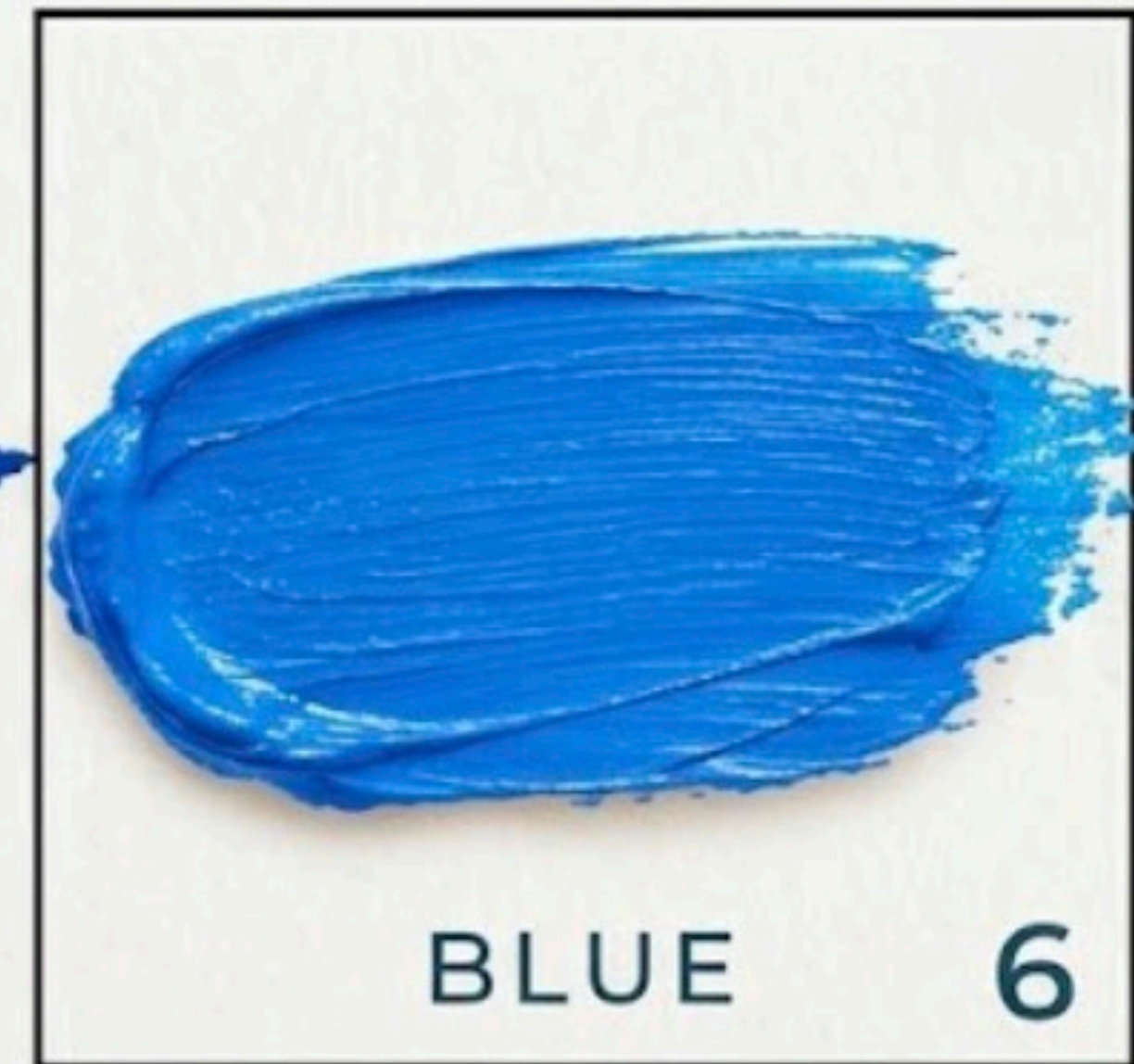
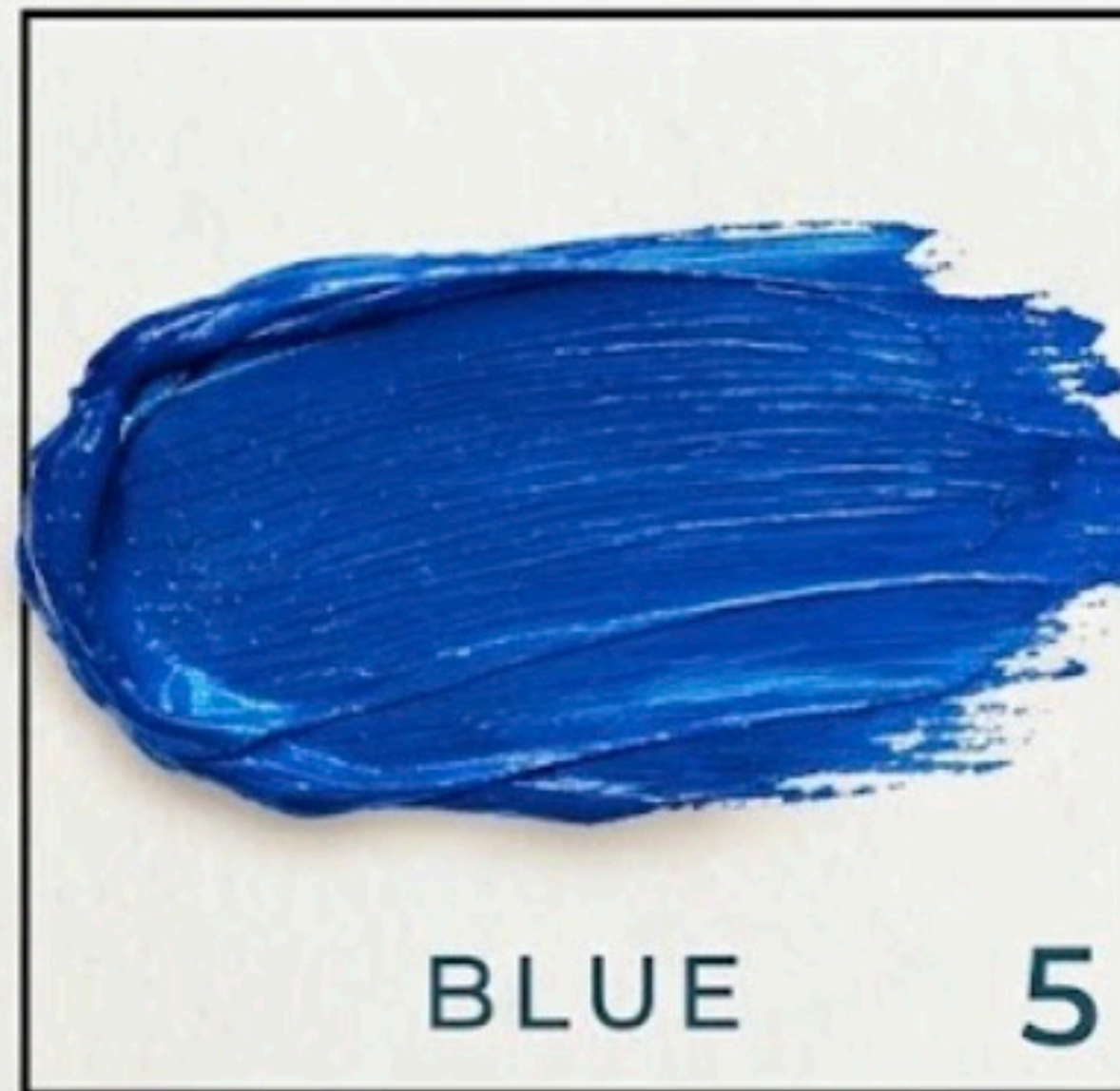
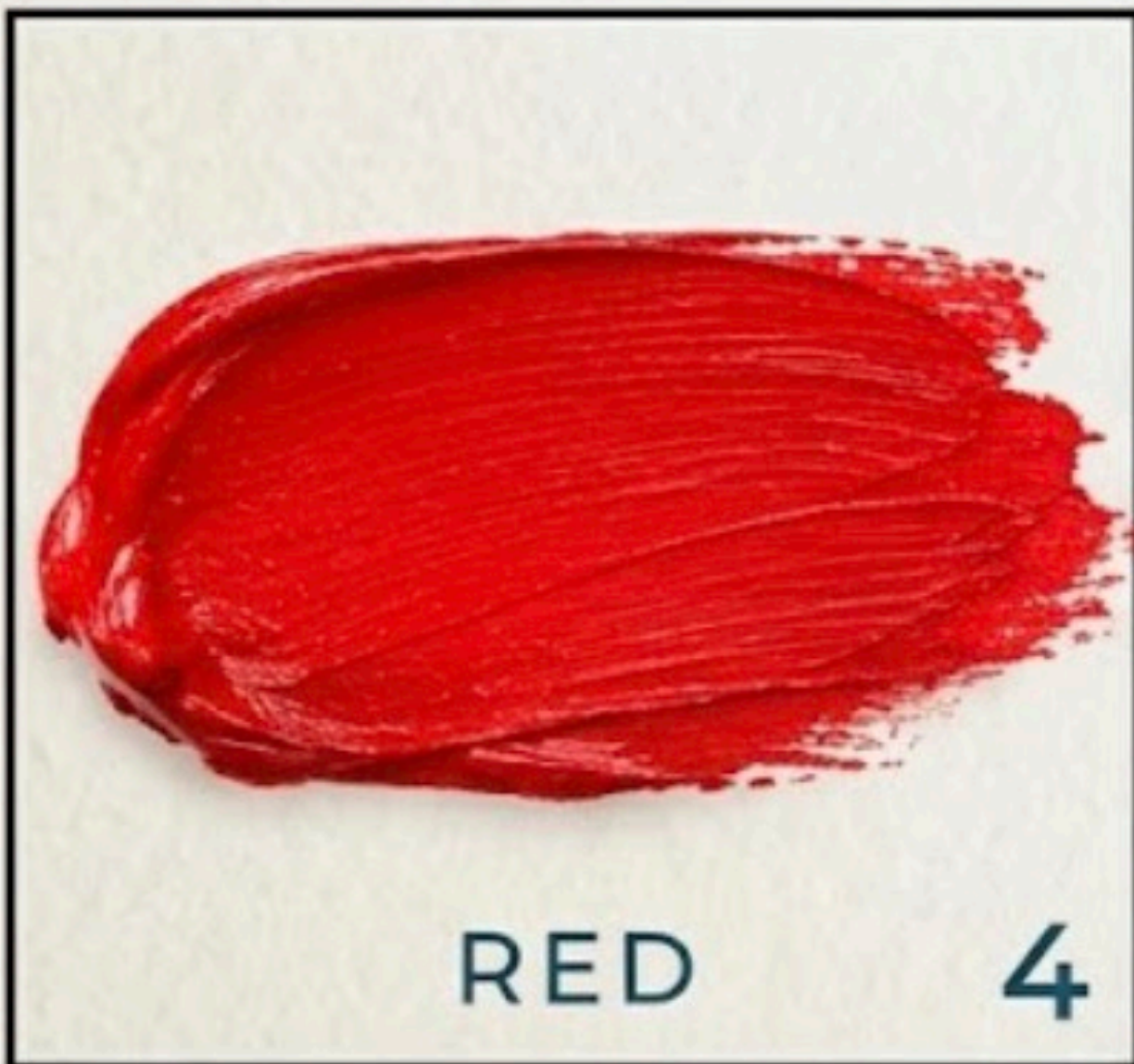
Rulers/Pencil

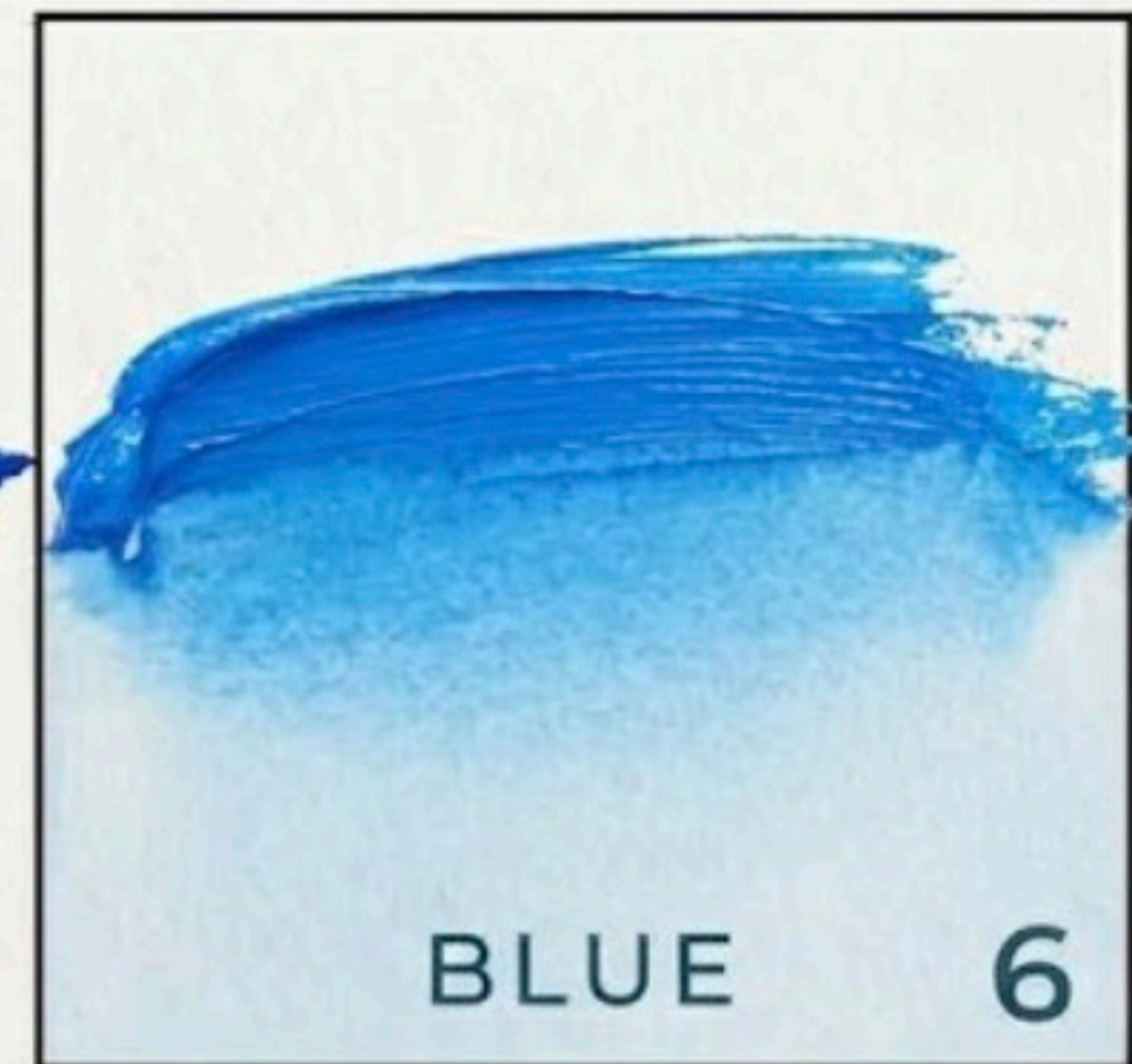
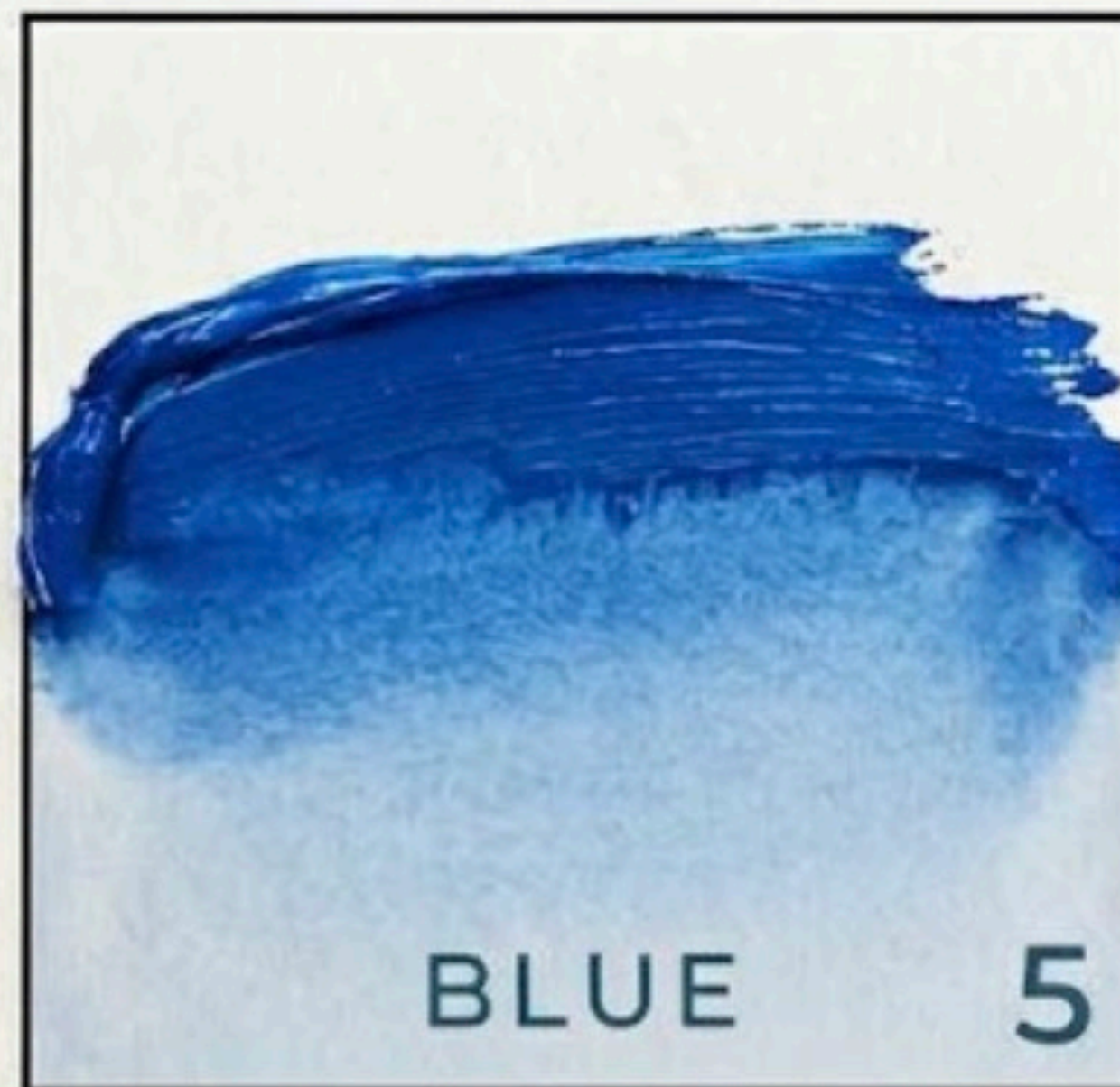
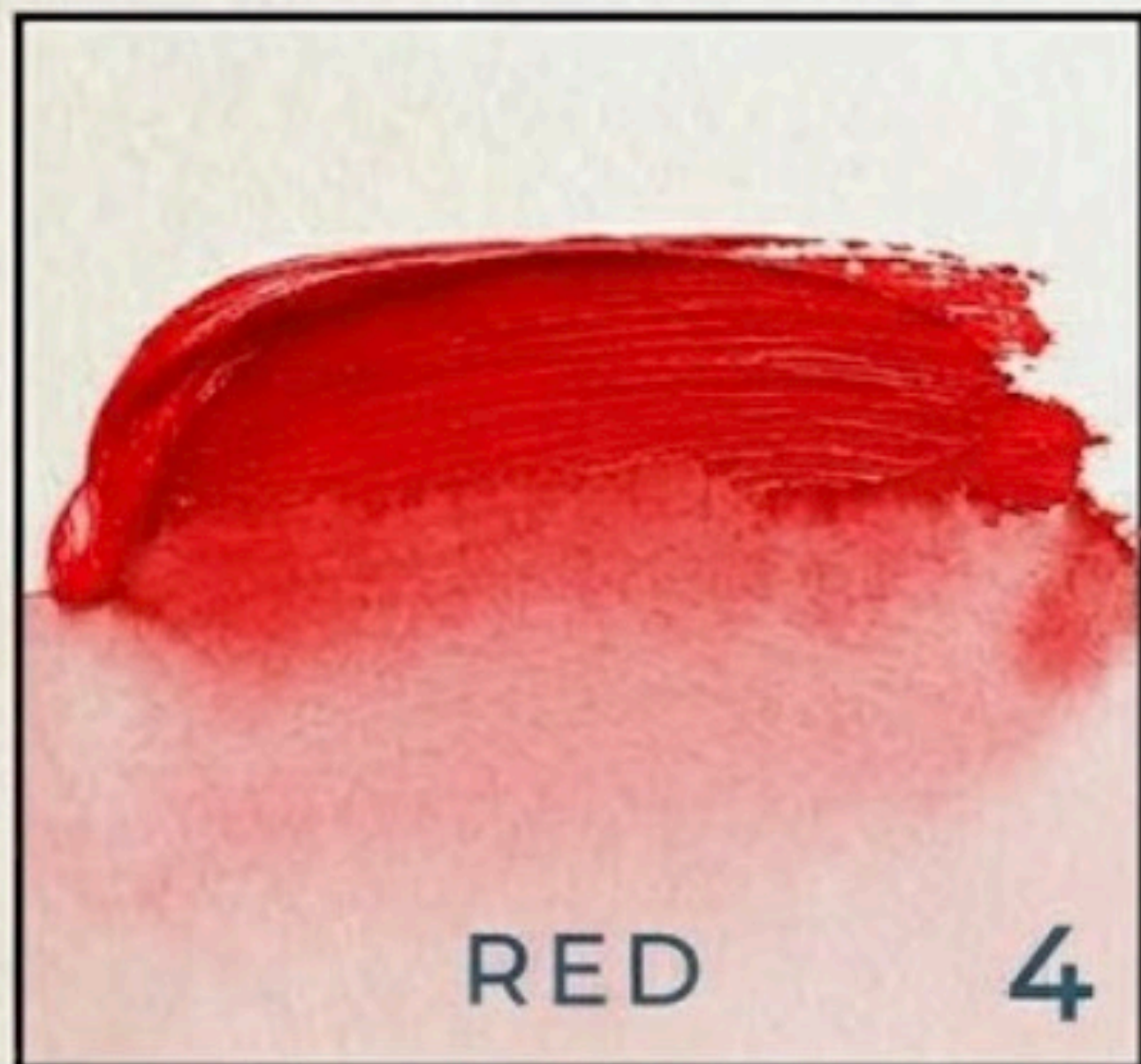
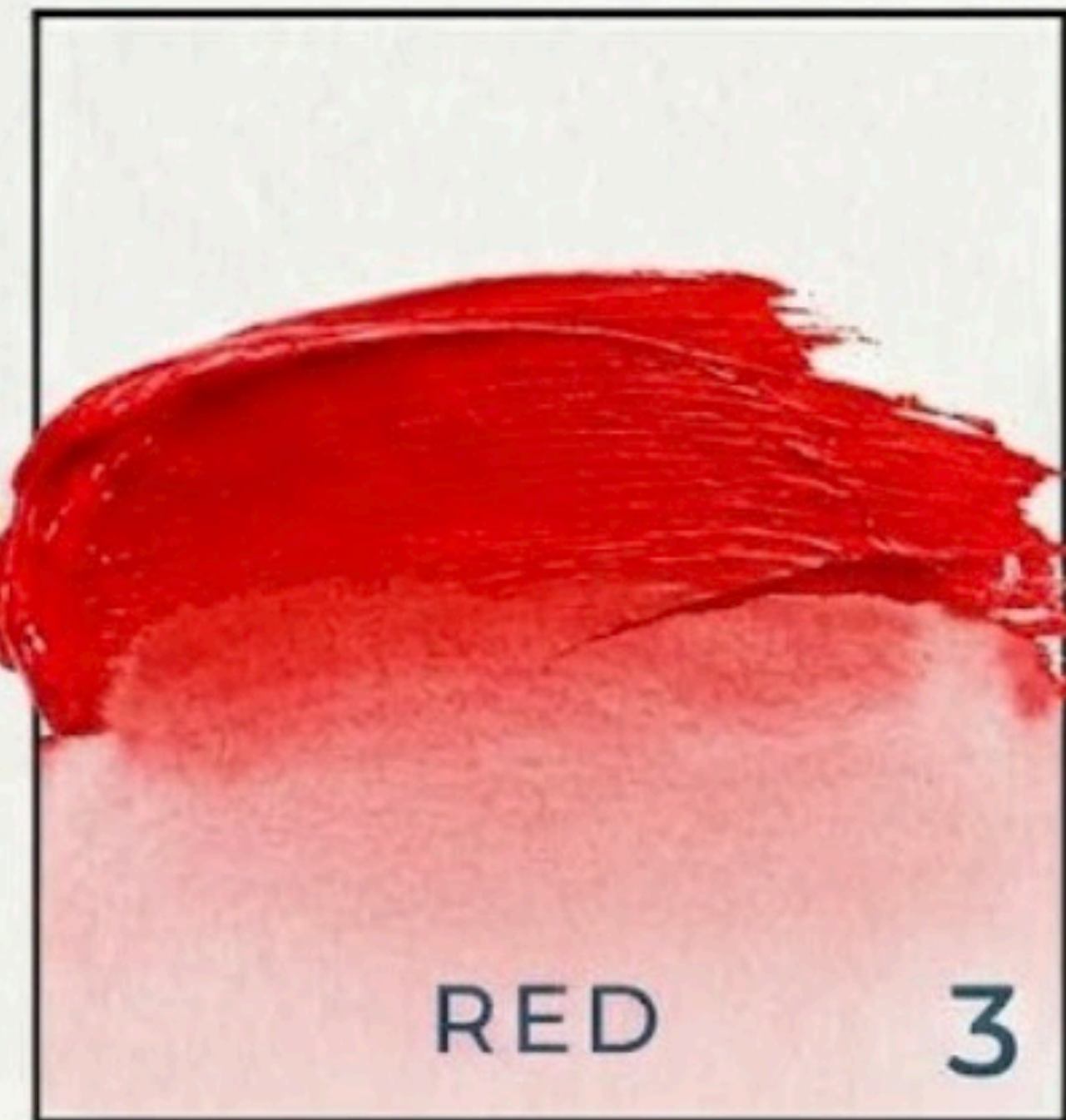
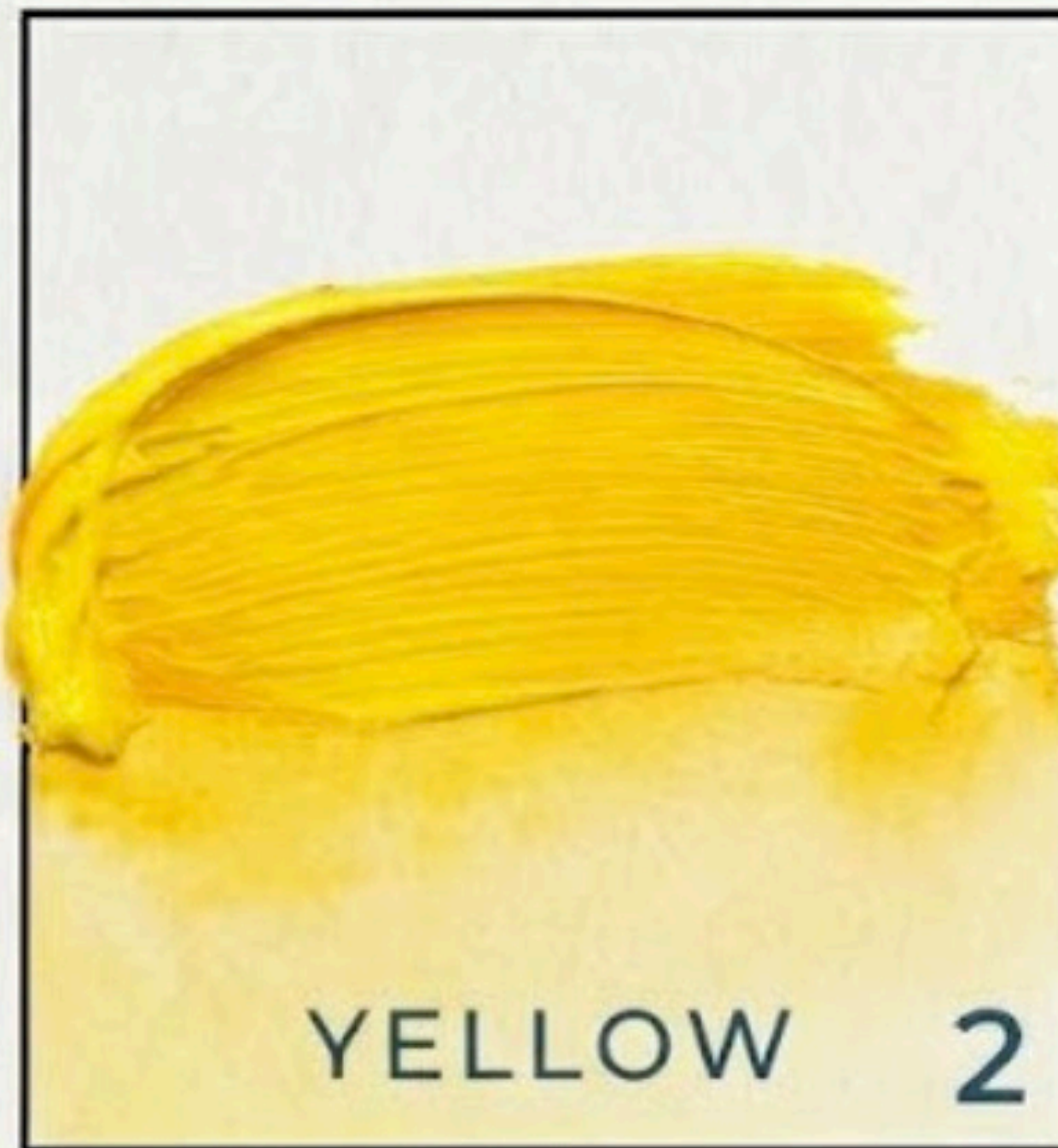
Brushes (small round and medium flat)



Drawing the Grid:

- **Horizontally (along the 12" side):** Mark the paper at $\frac{1}{2}$ ", 4", $4\frac{1}{2}$ ", 8", $8\frac{1}{2}$ ". This will make 3 equal $3\frac{1}{2}$ " sections separated by $\frac{1}{2}$ " gaps, with $\frac{1}{2}$ " borders at the ends.
- **Vertically (along the 9" side):** Mark the paper at $\frac{1}{2}$ ", $3\frac{1}{2}$ ", 4". This will make 2 equal 3" sections separated by a $\frac{1}{2}$ " gap, with $\frac{1}{2}$ " borders at the ends.

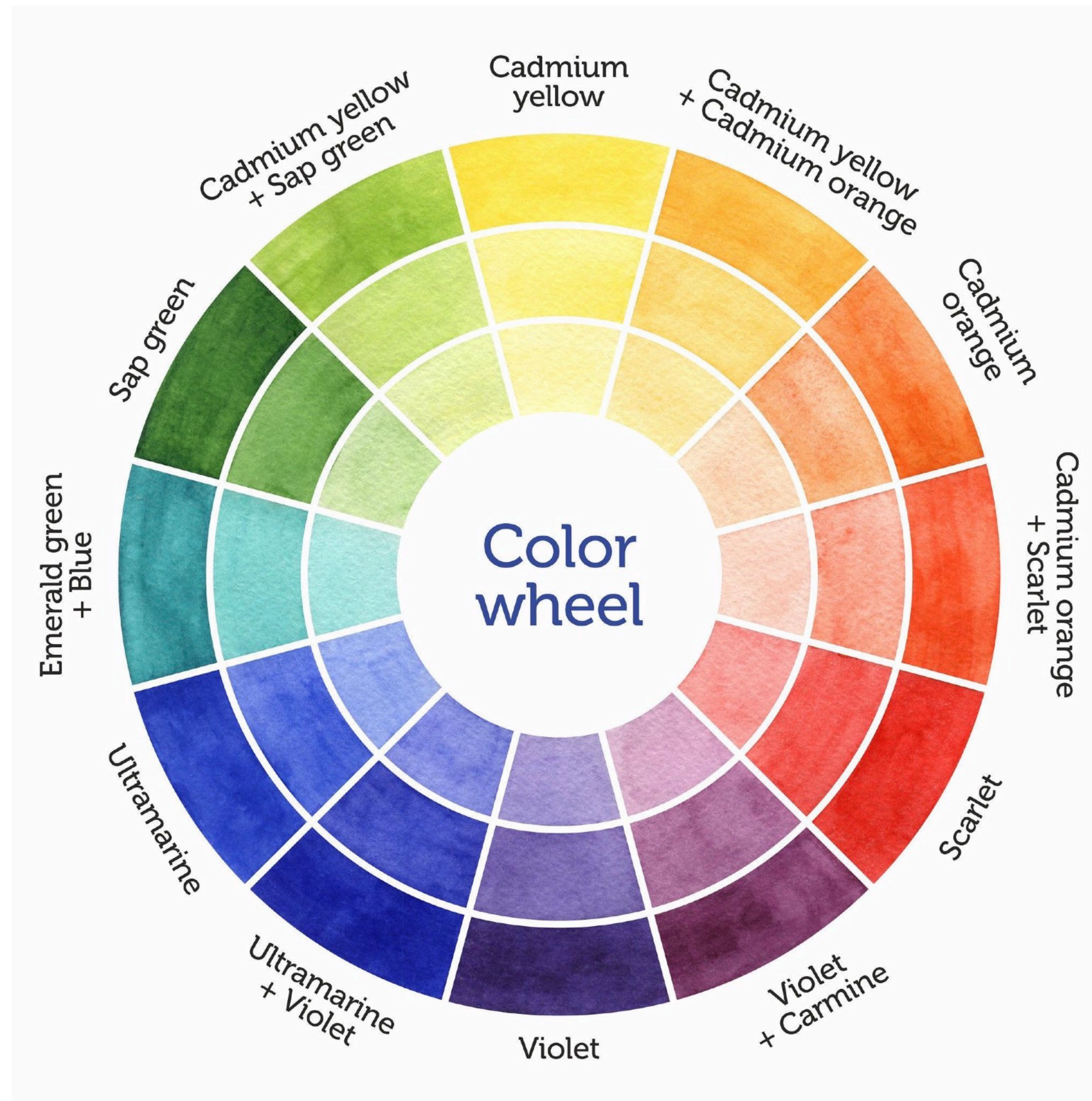




Color Lab — Color Relationships

You've met the colors. Now let's see what happens when they meet each other.

Make secondary colors using primaries.



MUTING & INTENSIFYING

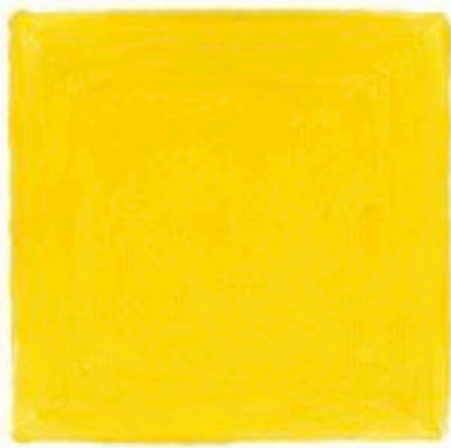
Exploring how the same color can look completely different.

YOUR PALETTE



YOUR BOXES

1. ORIGINAL



Use Cadmium Yellow Light straight from your tube.

2. MUTED



Add a touch of Burnt Umber (or White).

3. INTENSIFIED



Add a touch of Cadmium Red Light (or Quinacridone Magenta).

4. OPPOSITE COLOR



Add a touch of Ultramarine Blue (or its complement).

1. ORIGINAL



Use Cadmium Red Light straight from your tube.

2. MUTED



Add a touch of Yellow Ochre (or White).

3. INTENSIFIED



Add a touch of Quinacridone Magenta (or a bit more red).

4. OPPOSITE COLOR



Add a touch of Green (mix your own or use a blue + yellow).

1. ORIGINAL



Use Ultramarine Blue straight from your tube.

2. MUTED



Add a touch of Burnt Sienna (or White).

3. INTENSIFIED



Add a touch of Cobalt Blue (or Quinacridone Magenta).

4. OPPOSITE COLOR



Add a touch of Orange (mix your own or use a red + yellow).

THE GOAL

See how adding white, earth colors, or the opposite color can mute a color or make it more intense.

*Same color...
new possibilities!*

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1** Start with your first color. Paint a solid square with the color straight from the tube. This is your ORIGINAL.
- 2** Create a muted version. Add a small amount of white, burnt sienna, or burnt umber. Mix and paint a second square.
- 3** Create an intensified version. Add a small amount of the opposite color (or a deeper version of the same color). Mix and paint a third square.
- 4** Create an opposite color version. Add a touch of the complementary color (e.g., blue to yellow, orange to blue, red to green). Mix and paint a fourth square.
- 5** Repeat for each color. Do this for yellow, red and blue (or any three colors you choose).



QUICK TIPS

- Use a small brush and mix well.
- Keep your mixes subtle at first.
- Be sure to use a clean, dry brush for each square.
- Let each square dry before you add the next layer.

*Notice how the same color
can tell a completely different story.*

Color Can Mix Without Being Mixed

OVERLAPPING COLORS + GLAZES = NEW VISUAL COLOR

The magic isn't just in the paint — it's in how the colors interact.

Overlapping Colors

When colors overlap, they create new colors, even if they aren't mixed on the palette.



Yellow + Blue
= Green



Yellow + Magenta
= Orange



Blue + Magenta
= Purple



Red + Blue
= Deep Neutral

Layering vs. Mixing

The same colors can create very different results depending on how you use them.

1. PHYSICALLY MIXED

The colors are blended on your palette.



Yellow + Ultramarine
(mixed on palette)

2. LAYERED GLAZE

Transparent layers create depth and vibrancy.



Yellow base
+ Blue glaze
(satin or gloss)

3. LAYERED WITH TISSUE

Tissue paper adds texture and soft, translucent color.



Yellow + Blue tissue
(overlap and layer)

Glazing

A glaze is a thin, transparent layer of color. It lets the color underneath show through, creating depth, richness and new color effects.

- Adds luminosity
- Builds depth
- Creates subtle shifts in color
- Keeps colors vibrant



For a soft, velvety finish
(less shine)

For a clear, luminous finish
(more shine)

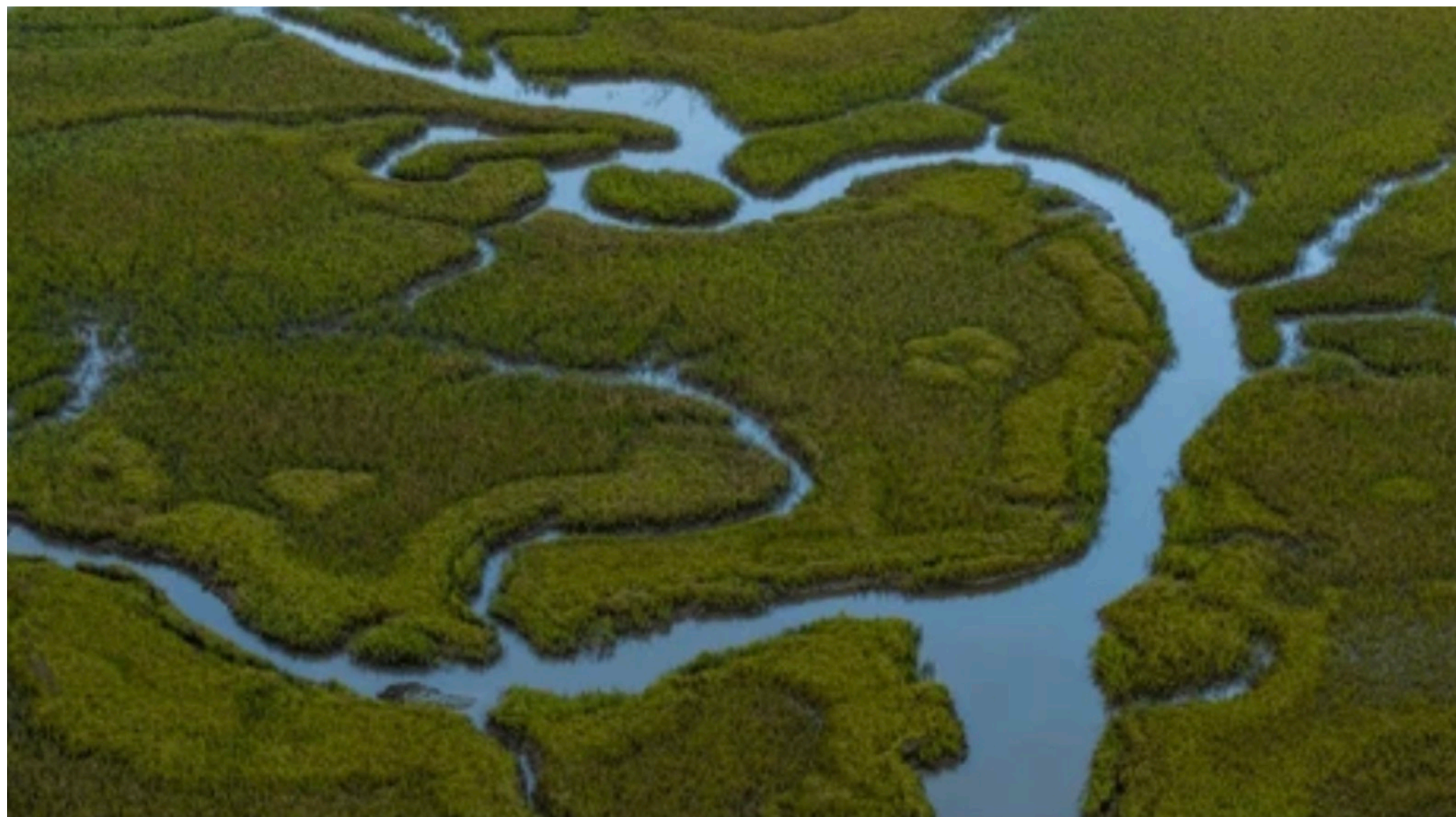
A Closer Look

Try the same color combination using:

- Physically mixed paint
- A satin glaze
- A gloss glaze
- Tissue paper (optional)



*Some colors are created on the palette.
Others are created on the surface.*



Topography Painting

8 x 10 CANVAS

Layers, movement and color create the feeling of place.

PALETTE



Finished example – 8 x 10 canvas

COLOR MIXING IDEAS



DIRECTIONS

- 1 SKETCH YOUR MAP**
Lightly draw flowing contour lines across your 8 x 10 canvas. Think about the natural shapes you see in the landscape — hills, valleys, rivers, or coastlines. Keep your lines loose and organic.
- 2 BLOCK IN BASE COLORS**
Apply your lightest colors first, using a flat or medium brush. Don't worry about blending yet. Think of this as your underpainting or map foundation. Let it dry slightly if needed.
- 3 ADD LAYERS & DEPTH**
Begin layering darker and mid-tone colors. Use a slightly smaller brush to follow your contour lines. Let colors blend where needed, but keep some edges crisp for definition. Vary your brushstrokes and pressure.
- 4 REFINE THE DETAILS**
Deepen shadows, add highlights, and refine your transitions. Use complementary colors (for example, blue and orange) to create rich, natural contrast. Add light touches or white for highlights or ridge lines.
- 5 FINAL TOUCHES**
Look at your painting from a distance. Adjust any areas that feel too flat or too busy. Make sure your color transitions feel natural and your "contour lines" flow together. Sign and let it dry completely.

Let the colors tell the story of your landscape.

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