

Color Contrast I

How you see a color has a lot to do with what's around it.

Try this:

- Place the colored tabs over the small squares. Are the squares on adjacent panels the same color?

What's going on?

On boards 1, 2, and 3, two identical colors look different when viewed against different backgrounds. On board 4, two different colors appear the same on different backgrounds. This visual "trick" occurs because your perception of a color is influenced by surrounding colors—an effect known as "color contrast."

Color contrast affects what everything looks like, but usually in ways that are too subtle for you to notice. But sometimes the effect is dramatic: for example, if you change the paint color of a room, the furniture may look quite different.