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Fixing PowerPoint

Design principles
for visual presentations

Part 1

Light

Colour

Typography

Part 2

Similarity

Proximity

Ratio

Priority

Seeing Light



**From a light source,
light is the information**
(TVs, monitors, stars, neon signs)



**From light on an object,
light illuminates the information**
(books, trees, people, rocks)

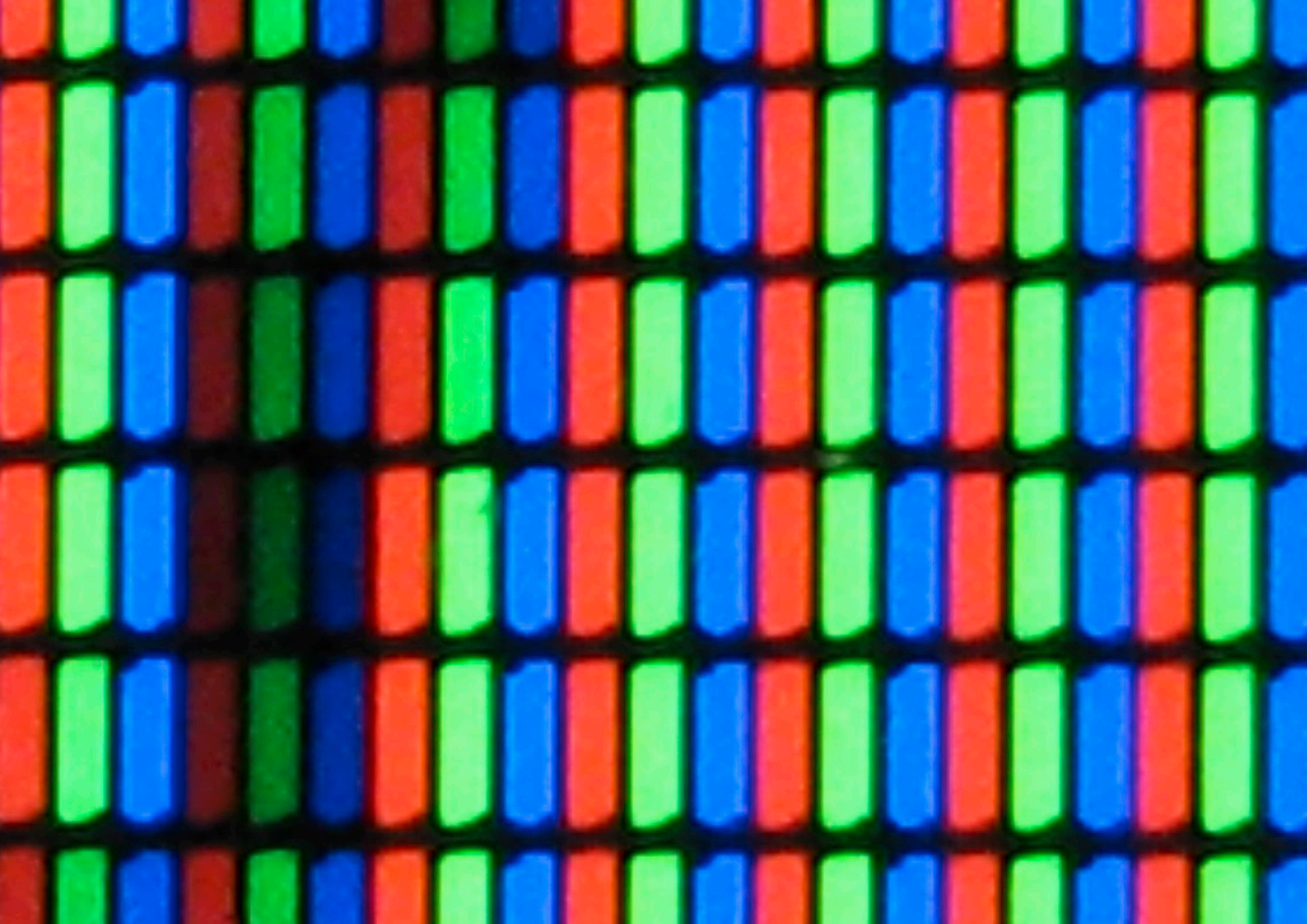


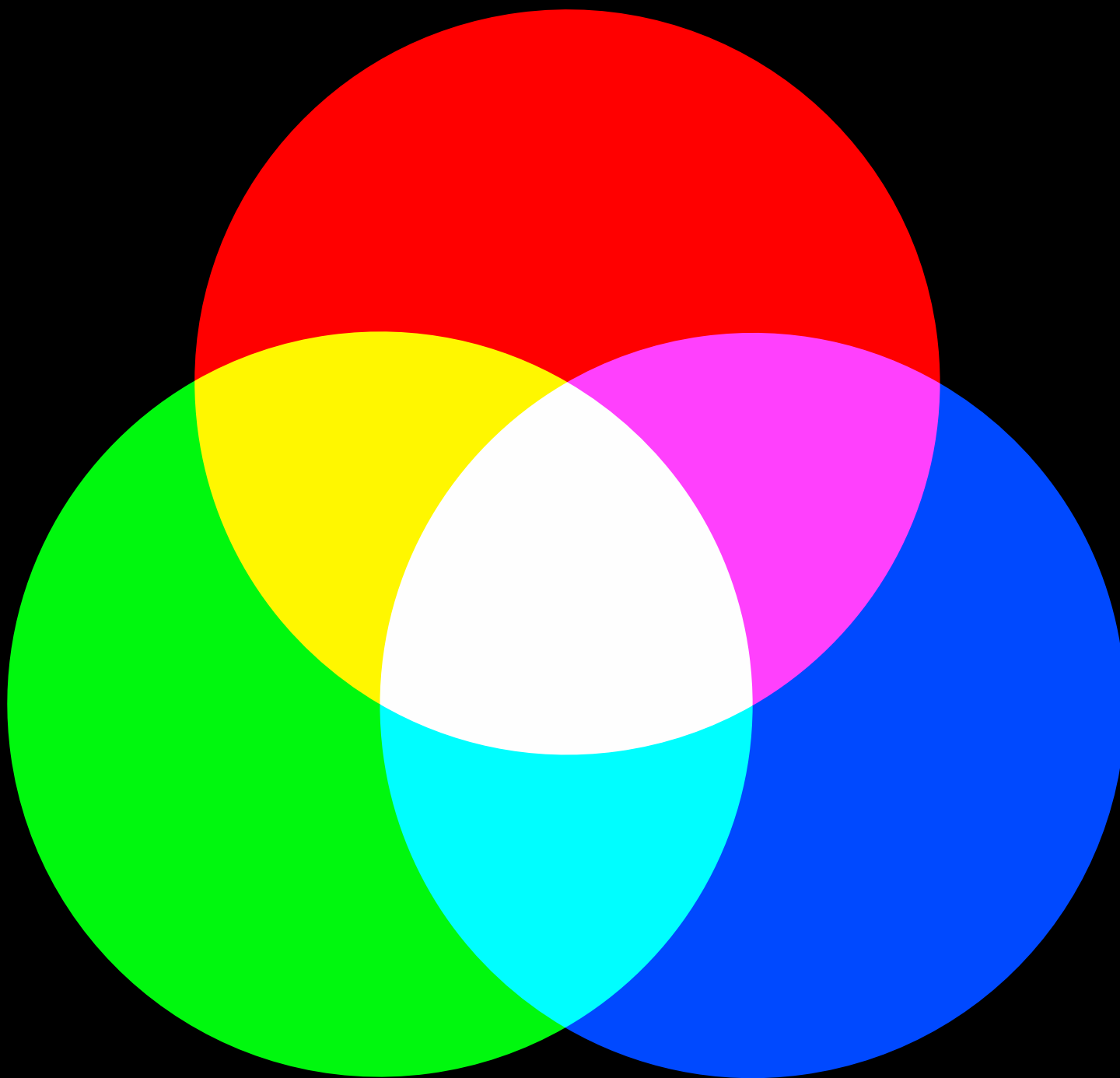
**From indirect light,
the illumination is the information**
(projectors, moon, mirrors)

**An illuminated white background
is physically energetic.**

The eye is distracted by the light.

**On a dark background,
white words are physically active.**



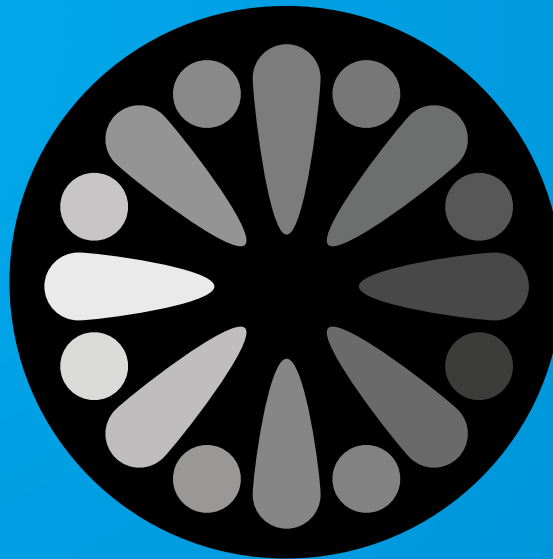


The three characteristics of colour

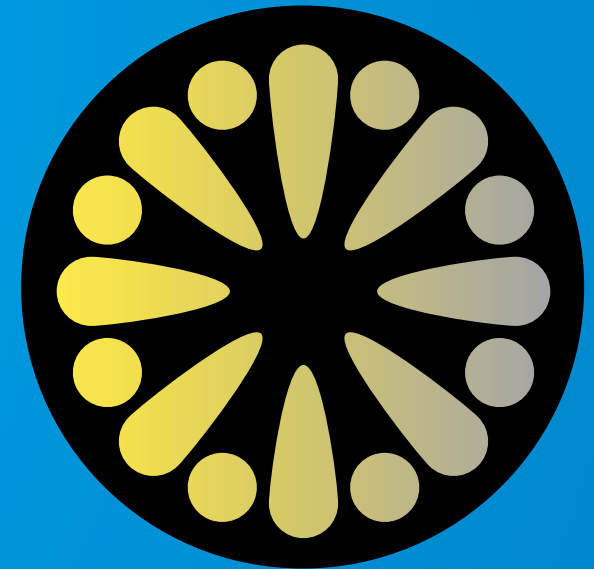
Hue



Value



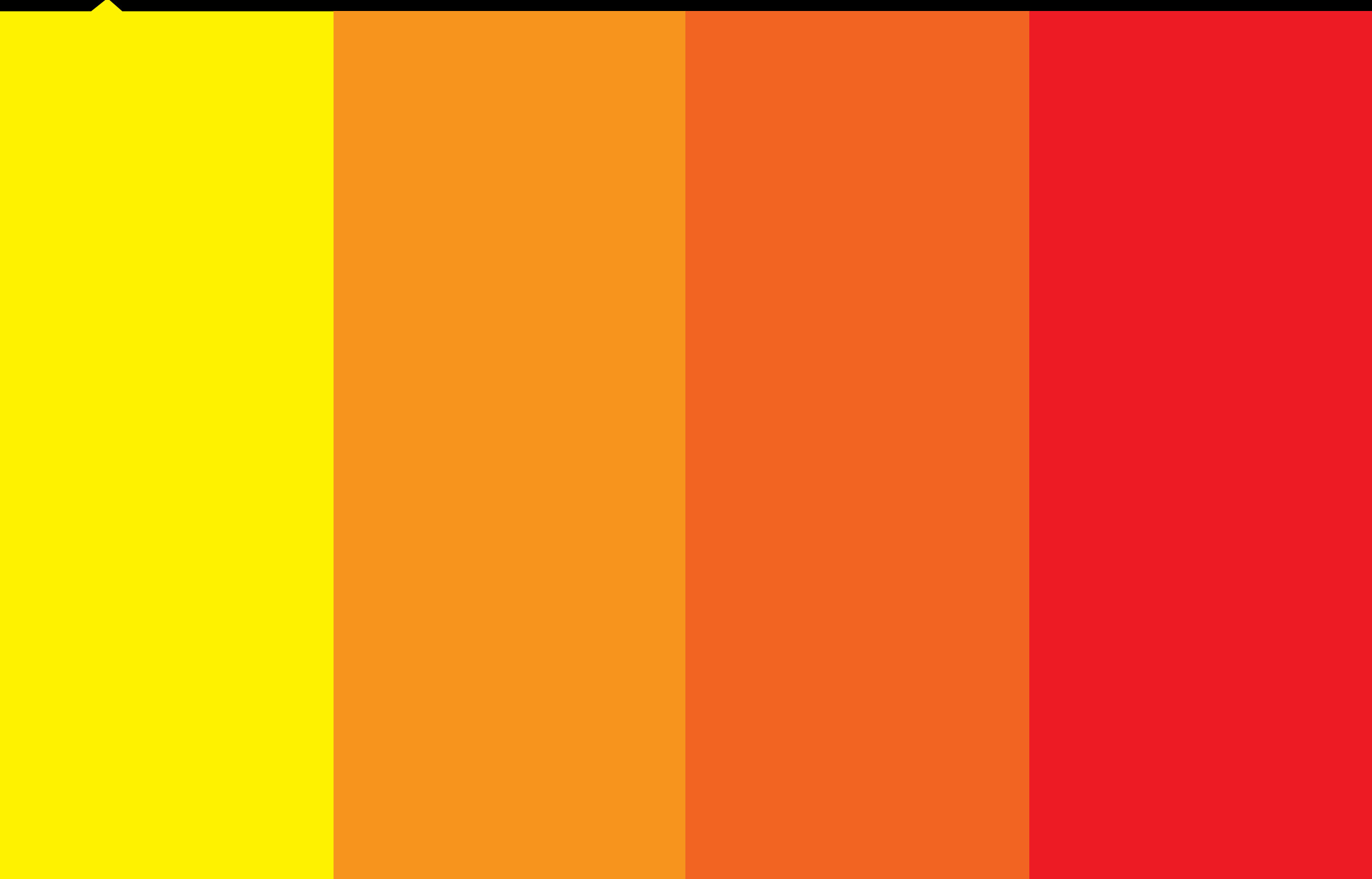
Intensity



How many colours do you see?



Do you see gradients within the bars of colour?



High visibility: white on blue (medium to dark)

There are no absolute colours.

**Every colour we see affects
the colours around it.**

High visibility: white on red (medium to dark)

**There are no
absolute colours.**

**Every colour we see affects
the colours around it.**

Medium visibility: light green on dark green

**There are no
absolute colours.**

**Every colour we see affects
the colours around it.**

Low visibility: similar values of white on yellow

There are no absolute colours.

**Every colour we see affects
the colours around it.**



Low visibility: similar values of green and gray

**There are no
absolute colours.**

**Every colour we see affects
the colours around it.**



**There are no
absolute colours.**

**Every colour we see affects
the colours around it.**





1. Stroke 2. Leg 3. Serif

Elements of a good screen font

1. Low contrast between strokes
2. Large serifs (if it has serifs)
3. Large x-height



Suitable fonts for presentations

Sans Serif Fonts

Open Sans
Droid Sans
Calibri
Myriad
Helvetica
Lato

Serif Fonts

Minion
Droid Serif
Georgia
Times New Roman

Slab Serif Fonts

Bree Serif
Charis SIL
Arvo
PT Serif

Use no more than two fonts

Droid Sans

abcdefghi ABCDEFGH 123456789

Droid Serif

abcdefghi ABCDEFGH 123456789

Size

144pt

Ea

72pt

Ea

60pt

Ea

48pt

Ea

36pt

Ea

30pt

Ea

24pt

Ea

18pt

Ea

14pt

Ea

12pt

Ea

11pt

Ea

10pt

Ea

Use left-aligned paragraphs

Left-aligned

The format of the body text has no effect on good readers, but many readers find justified type more difficult to read.

Justified

The format of the body text has no effect on good readers, but many readers find justified type more difficult to read.

Centered

Do not center multiple lines of text unless you are a professional.
Seriously.

Use capitals and italics wisely

Capitals

TEXT SET IN
CAPITAL LETTERS
DECELERATES
THE PROCESS OF
READING MORE
THAN ANY OTHER
FACTOR.

Italic

*Italic letterforms
reduce the speed
of reading by
up to 15%.*

The optimum line length for reading is about 2.5 alphabets or 70 characters.

This helps facilitate reading by giving a comfortable measure for the eyes to move down to the next line. However, in presentations, it's rare to consistently fill an entire measure.

**It's better to match the
line length of your words
to the length of your ideas.**

Part 2

Similarity

Proximity

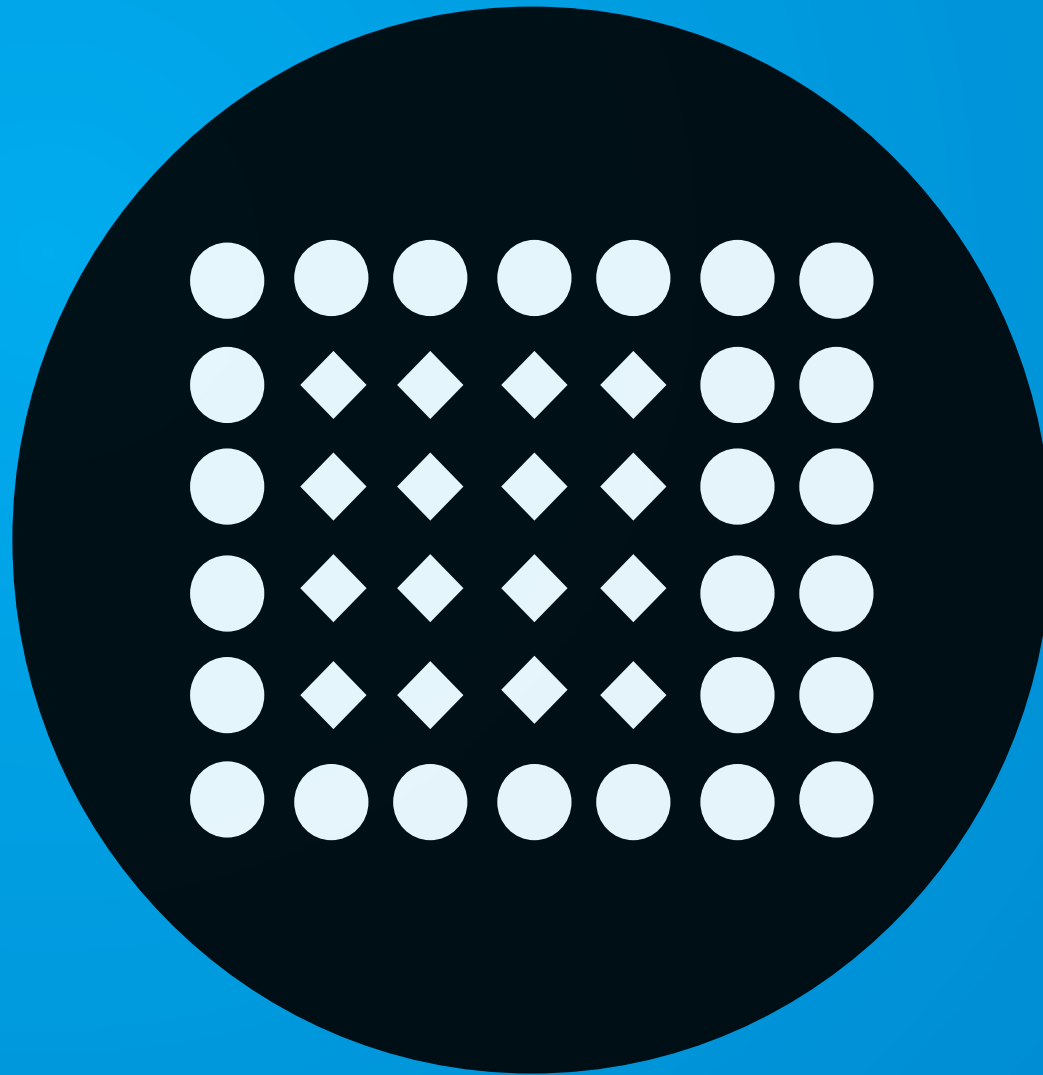
Ratio

Priority

Similarity

We tend to group things together that are similar.

Similarity



**The mountain pine beetle,
whose population has
exploded with the warming
climate, is killing more
trees than wildfires
or logging.**

**Washington Post
March 1, 2006**



**The mountain pine beetle,
whose population has
exploded with the warming
climate, is killing more
trees than wildfires
or logging.**

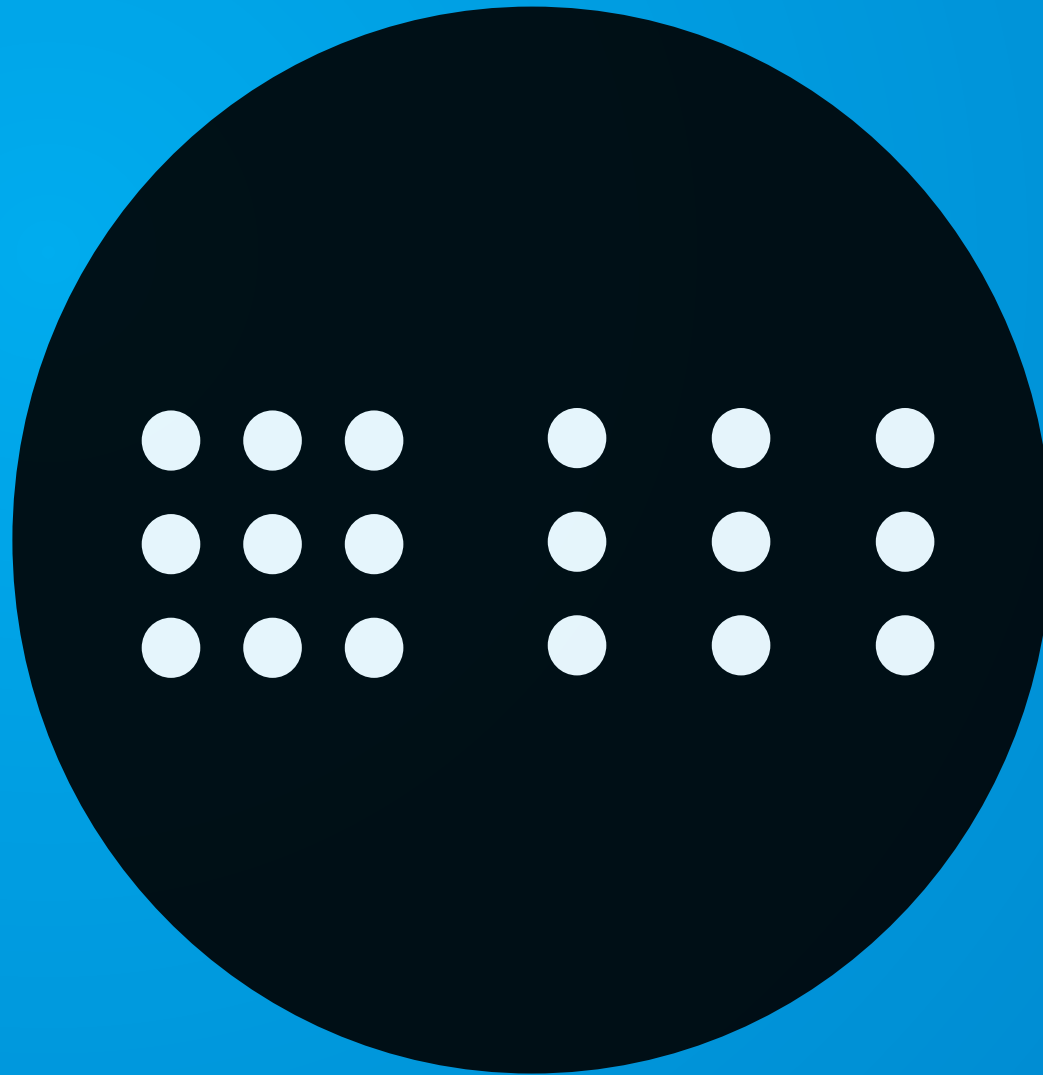
**Washington Post
March 1, 2006**



Proximity

We tend to group things together that are close together.

Proximity



**A small space can make
a big difference.**

Arya
Bran
Catelyn
Eddard
Robb
Sansa
Cersei
Jaime
Tyrion
Tywin

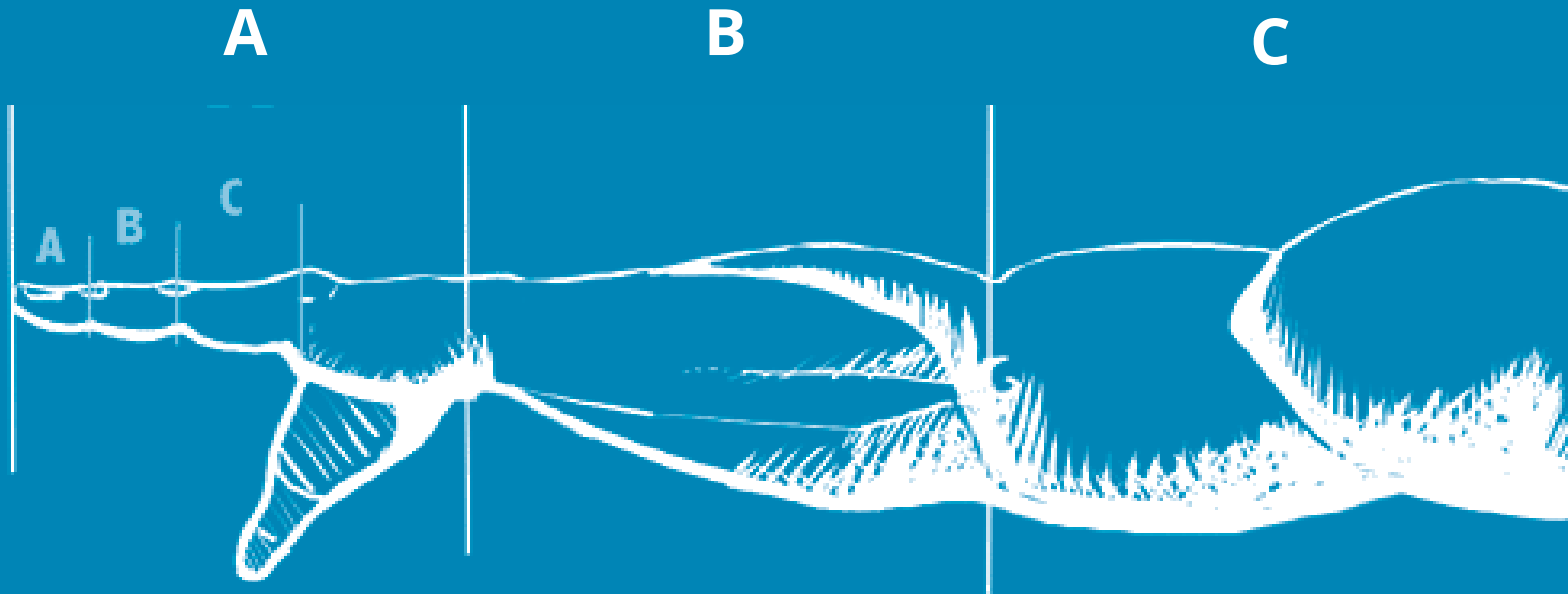
Arya
Bran
Catelyn
Eddard
Robb
Sansa
Cersei
Jaime
Tyrion
Tywin

Ratio

We tend organize
things in terms
of fractional
relationships.

Ratio

The human body is divided by a ratio of 1:1.618 (or roughly 2:3)



The rule of thirds

“Unequal parts and gradations lead the attention easily from part to part, while parts of equal appearance hold it awkwardly suspended, as if unable to determine which of those parts is to be considered as the subordinate.”

John Thomas Smith (1797)

Ratio



Francisco de Goya, *The Shootings of May Third 1808* (1814)

The future of presentations

If you remember the
rule of thirds, you will
be pleasantly surprised.

I remember the first time that I used ratio and proportion for design. I didn't have to think about what sizes I was using, I just followed the rule. Thirds tends to be the most popular ratio but I've also seen quarters and fifths. The key is being consistent.

The future of presentations

72pt = 3:3

If you remember the
rule of thirds, you will
be pleasantly surprised.

48pt = 2:3

I remember the first time that I used ratio and proportion for design. I didn't have to think about what sizes I was using, I just followed the rule. Thirds tends to be the most popular ratio but I've also seen quarters and fifths. The key is being consistent.

24pt = 1:3

Priority

Only one difference
is required to create
a hierarchy.

Size: Large to Small

The future of presentations

If you remember the rule of thirds,
you will be pleasantly surprised
how it will make you feel.

Position: Top to Bottom

The future
of presentations

If you remember the rule of thirds,
you will be pleasantly surprised
how it will make you feel.

Value: Light to Dark

The future
of presentations

If you remember the rule of thirds,
you will be pleasantly surprised
how it will make you feel.

Contrast: Form

The future
of presentations

If you remember the rule of thirds,
you will be pleasantly surprised
how it will make you feel.

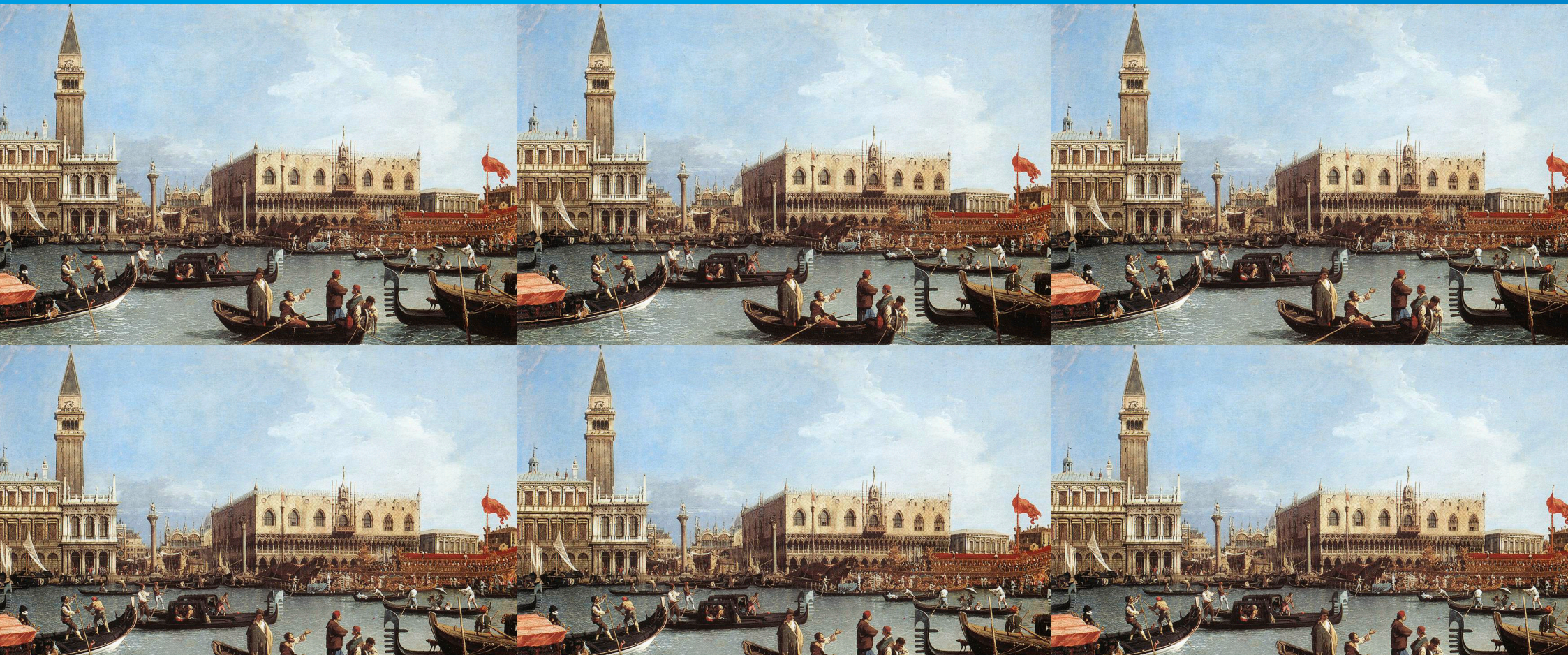
Priority

Quantity: Singular image



Priority

Quantity: Multiple images



Priority

Personality: Faces to Non-faces



Light

- High contrast is good
- Avoid white backgrounds

Colour

- Hue, value, intensity
- Colours affect each other

Text

- Use one or two fonts
- Use screen fonts
- Keep sizes above 24pts

Similarity & Proximity

Ratio

- Use the rule of thirds

Priority

- Size
- Position
- Value
- Contrast
- Quantity
- Personality

Thank you.

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