

### THE BASIC THEORY OF VALUE AND LIGHT

The relationship of light and shadow is established through “value”, in artistic terminology refers to a tone that may be light or dark. Generally, rendering is the means by which artists contrast, shape and distribute value. The proportion of light and shadow are primary concerns in rendering.

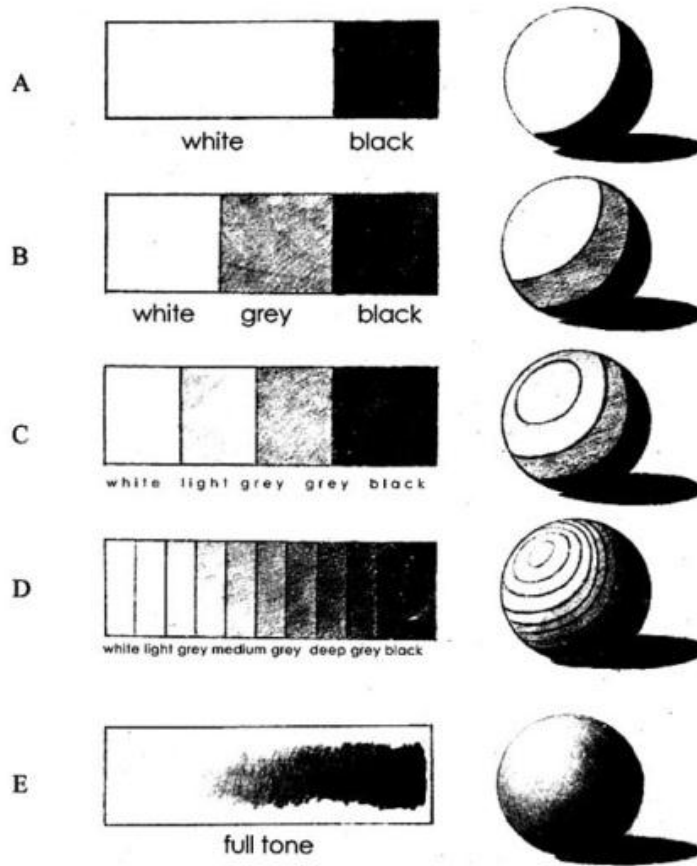


Figure 1  
From *The Still Life Drawing*  
by Xu Ping, China Shichuang Art Press.

Two tones (black and white) can be applied in the ink pen drawing and printmaking (see figure 6). Full tonal drawing can get very subtle details (see figure 3, 5). Sometime, to concentrate the transition of tone is necessary for drawing and painting (see figure 7, 11).

## A Chart of Value

Values A	Values B	Values C
Light	1. White 2. Grey	1. Highlight 2. Grey scales
Shadow	3. Black	3. base tone (always the darkest value) 4. Reflection 5. Cast shadow

Comment: A) On the most basic level, object which has light striking it can be divide into two parts: either light and shadow. B) However, artists always use a minimum three scales to render the object. This helps artists to arrange picture plane and composition. C) From highlight to base tone, there are five tones. It makes the object more realistic and has a strong illusion of space.

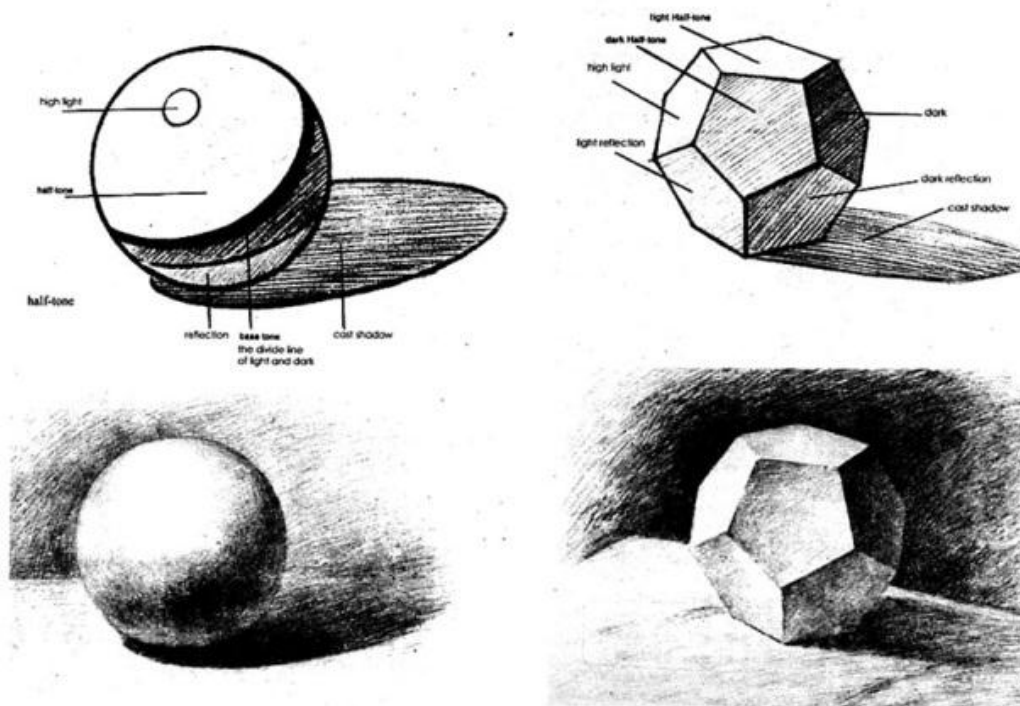


Figure 2  
From *The Still Life Drawing*

Basically, the darkest half-tone in light cannot be deeper than the lightest half-tone in shadow. It means that the light and shadow should always remain unified. Always remember that shadow is not black, but is the presence of a reduced quantity of light. In paintings, the shadow always has color.

**VALUE AND LIGHT**

Light and value produce the visual sensation of this three-dimensional world. All kinds of objects are covered by different kinds of surfaces. Light falls upon them, and creates value. Artists use light and value to see and create art work. After all, light and value are the essential technique for painting and drawing.



Figure 10  
From *The Still Life Drawing*

**THE ANGLE OF LIGHT**

The position and angle of light in relation to the illuminated form influences the proportion of value on object.

**A)** A frontal light makes the object bright with minimal shadow; it loses the strong feeling of 3-D, and appears primarily as a flat shape.

**B)** Backlight can create a dramatic effect. The object becomes a dark silhouette which is surrounded by a light halo, and lacks the full feeling of 3-D.

**C)** The ideal light to show the 3-D effect is an angled light. The illusion of form creates sufficient value on the object, and a distribution of light and shadow which realizatizes an illusion of modeled form.