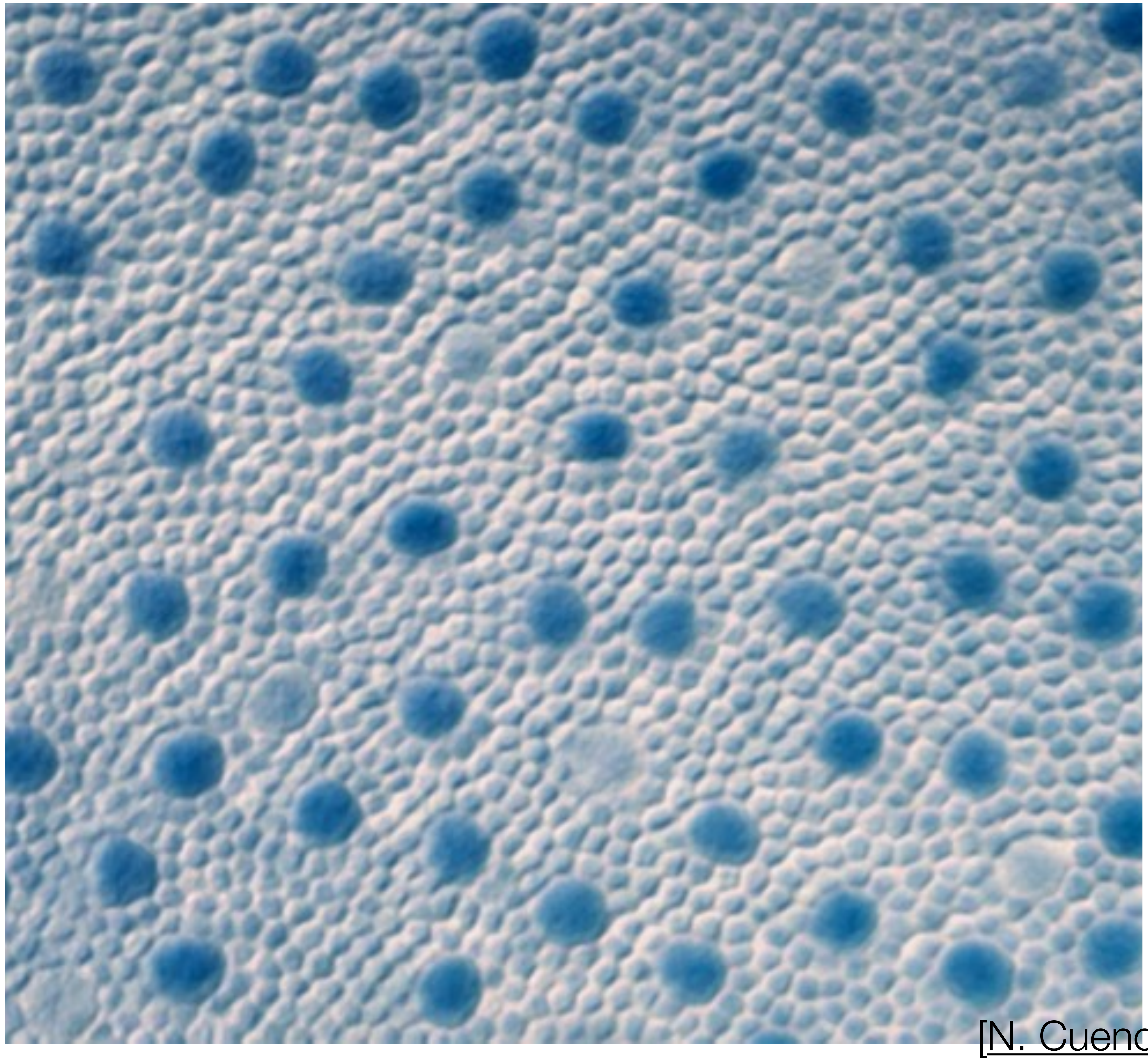
Data Visualization (CSCI 627/490)

Colormaps

Dr. David Koop

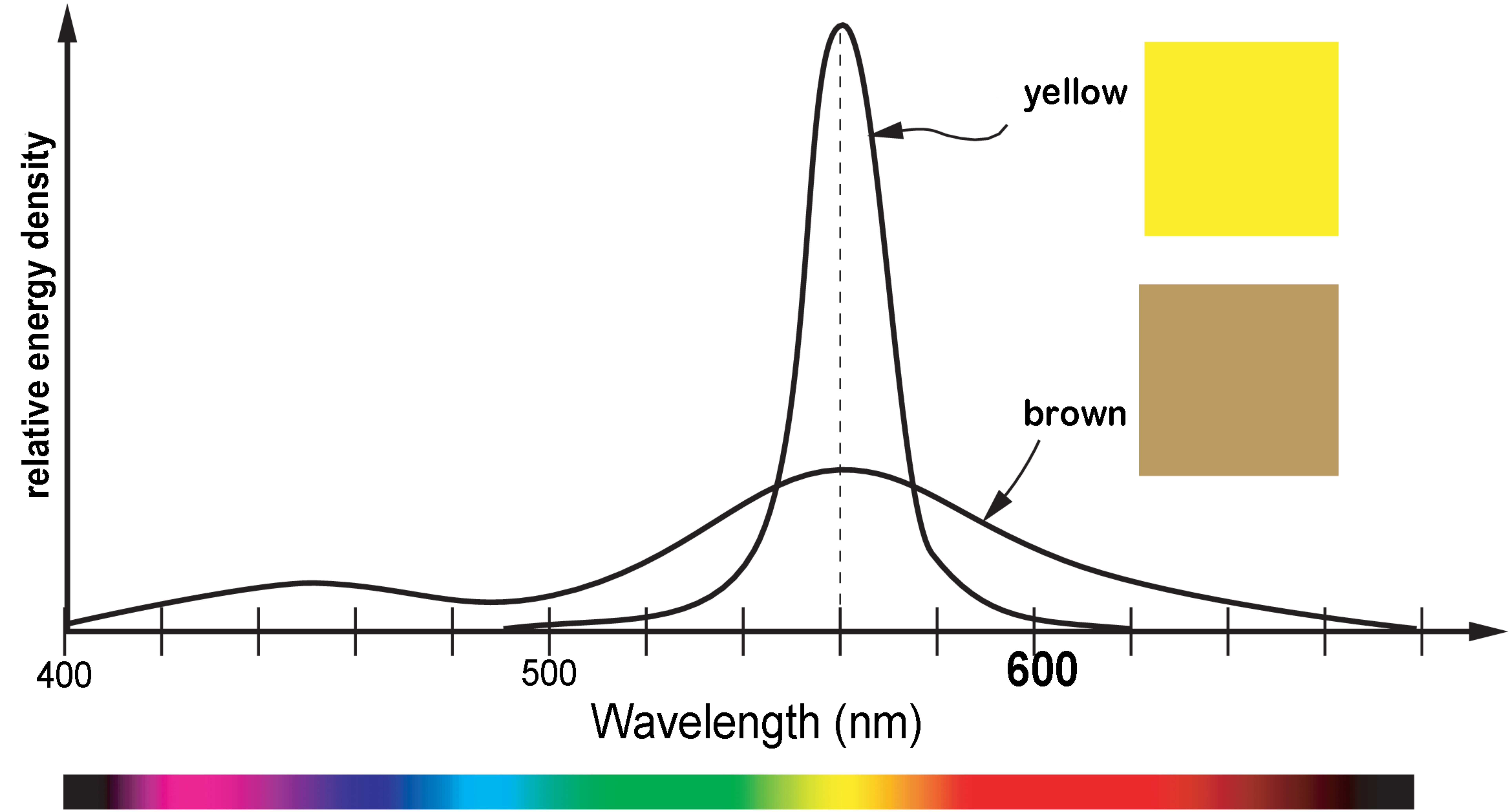
Human Color Perception

- Humans **do not** detect individual wavelengths of light
- Use **rods** and **cones** to detect light
  - rods capture intensity
  - cones capture color



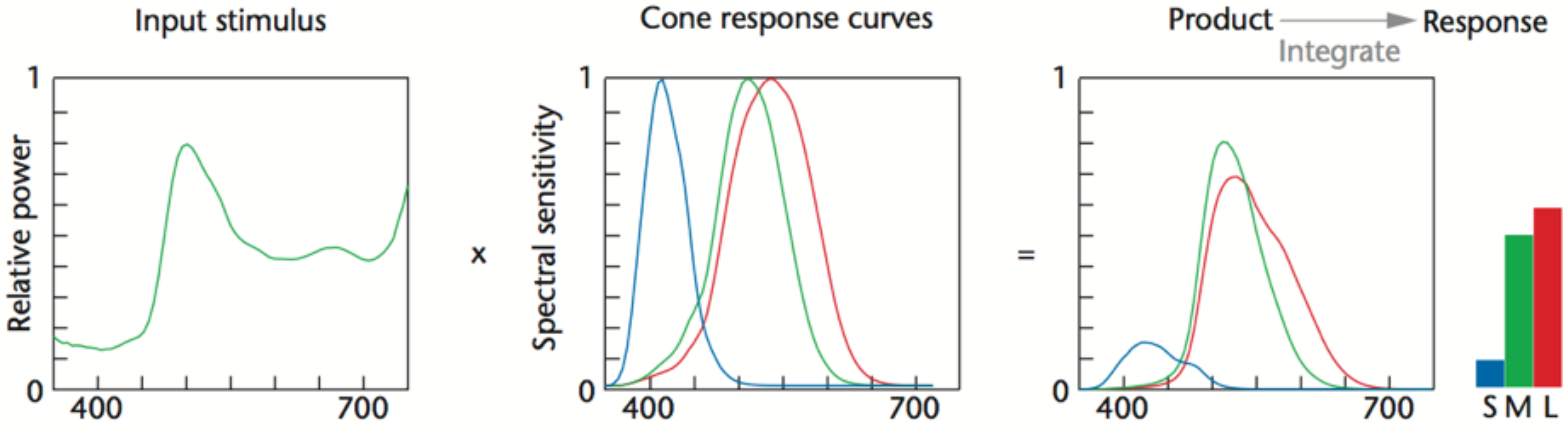
[N. Cuenca]

Color != Wavelength



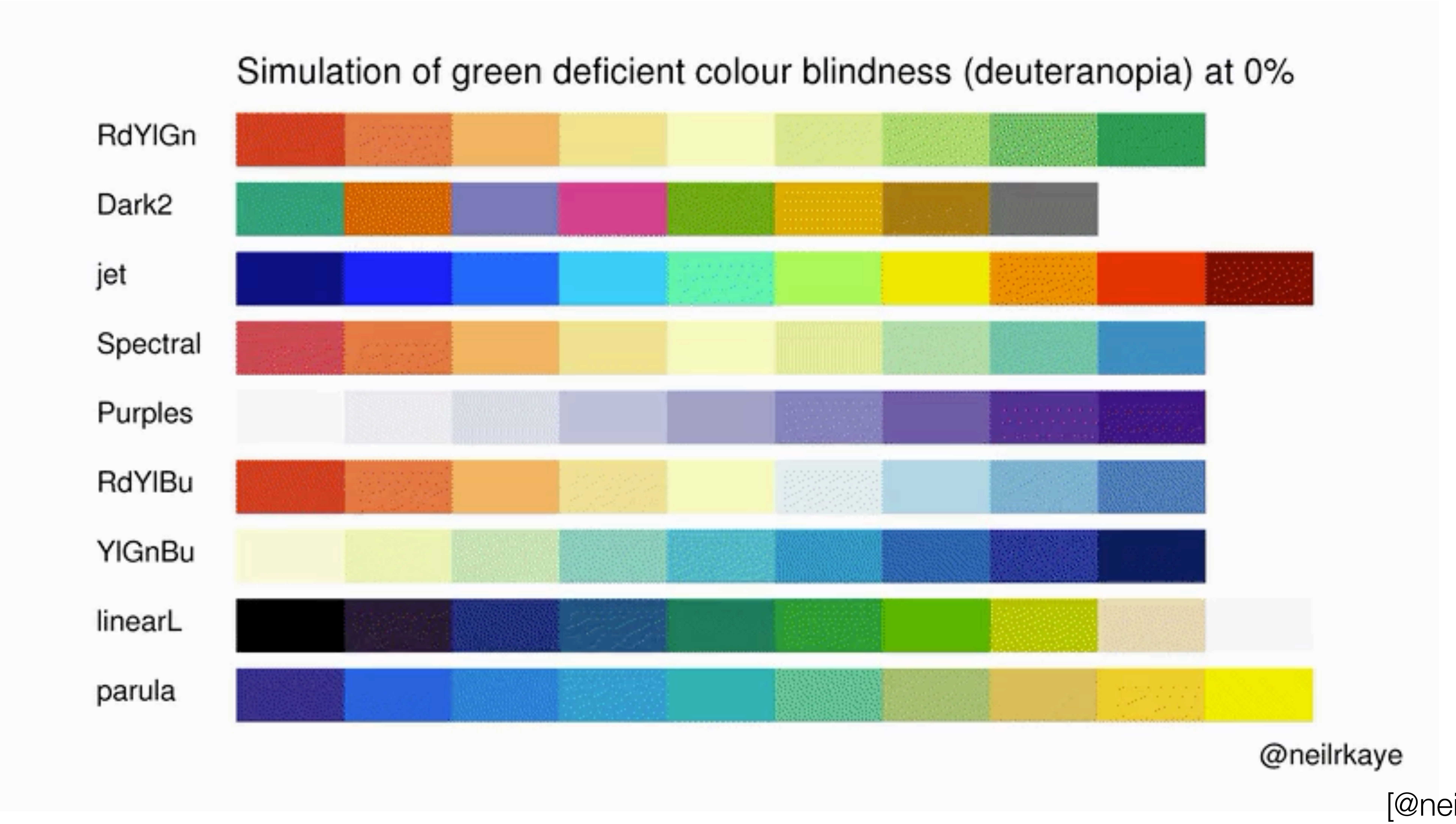
[via M. Meyer]

Human Color Perception



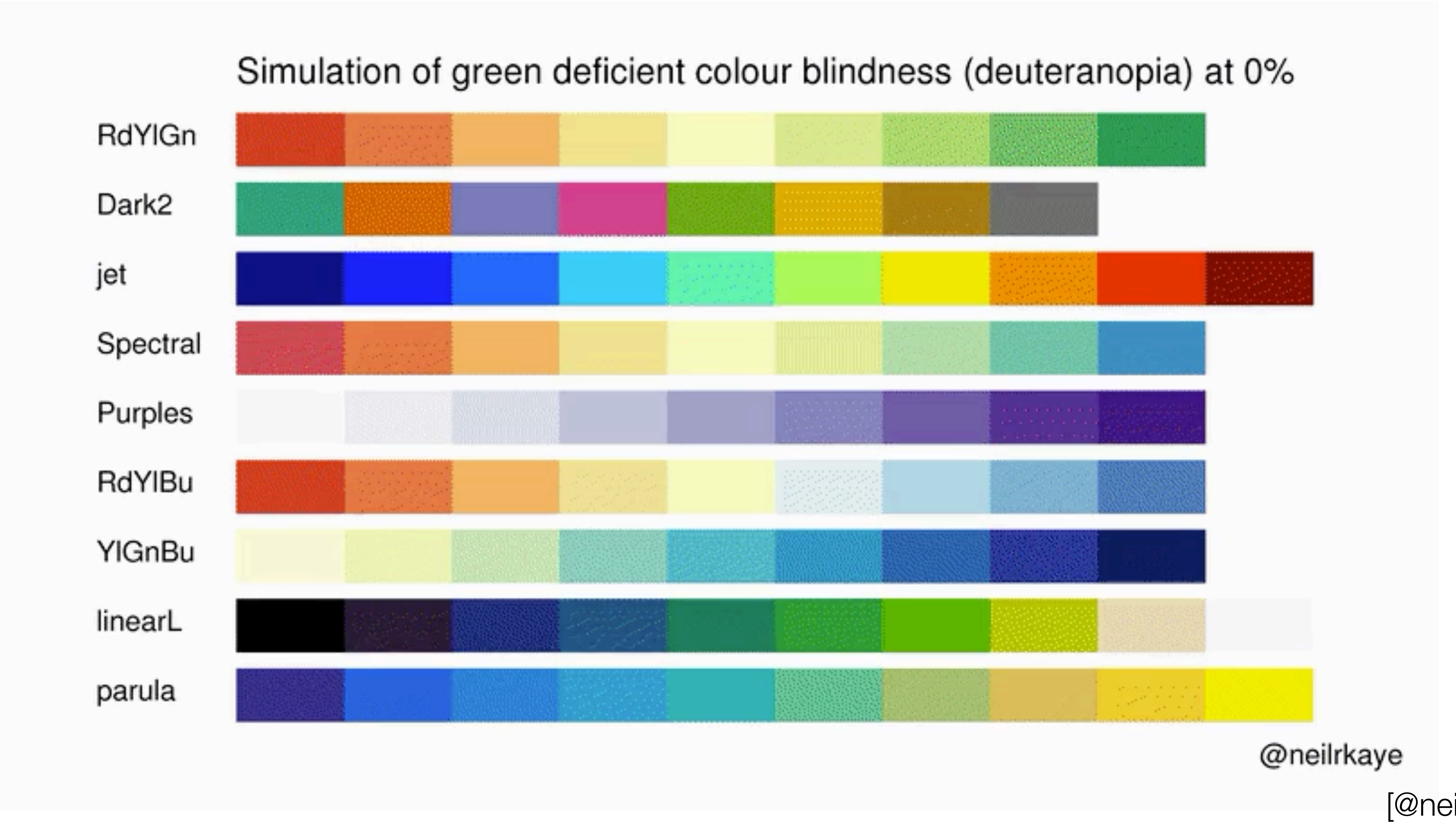
[via M. Meyer]

Simulating Deuteranopia (Colormaps)



[@neilrkaye, reddit]

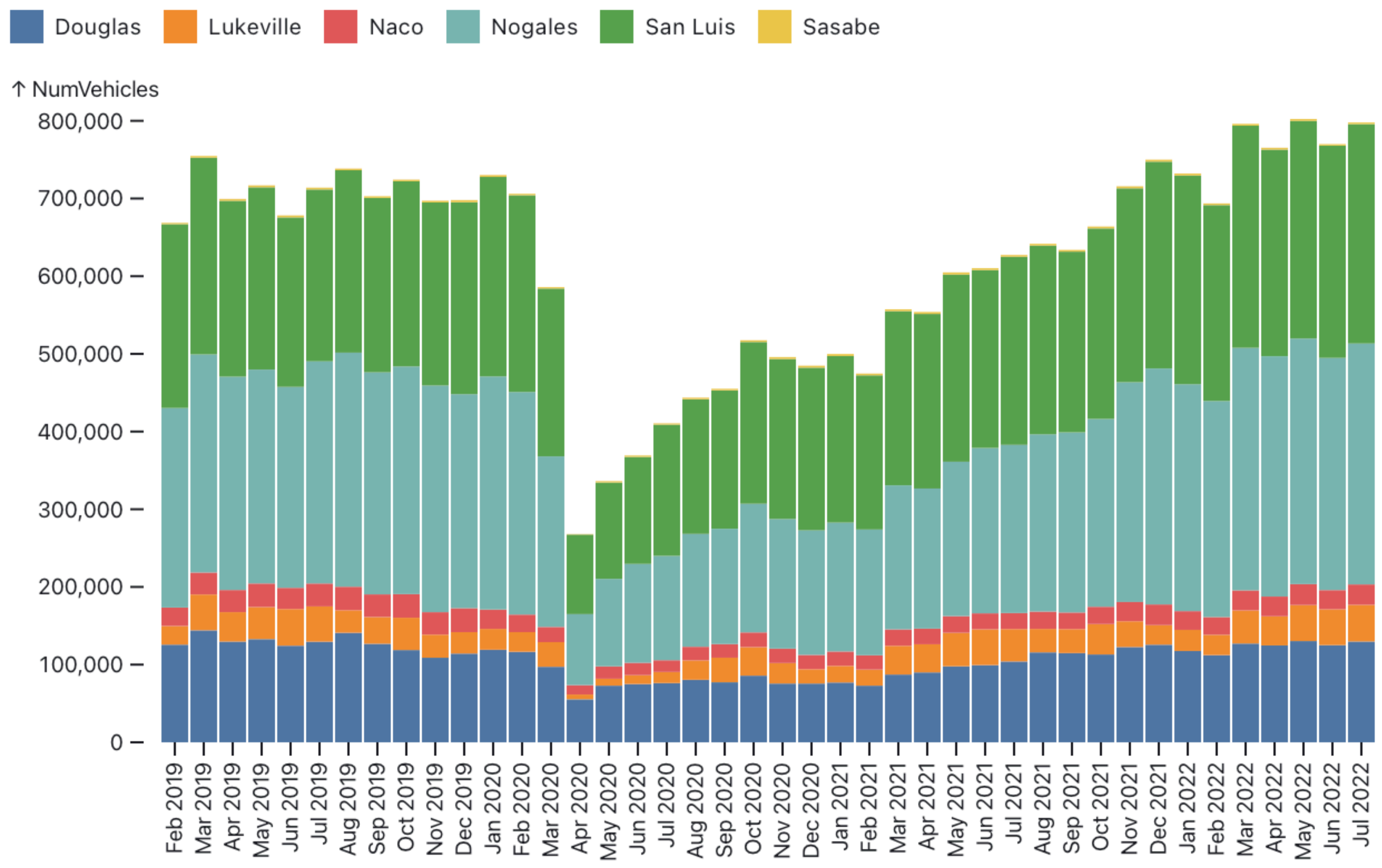
Simulating Deuteranopia (Colormaps)



[@neilrkaye, reddit]

Assignment 3

- Same visualization
- Different tools
  - Tableau (Public or Desktop)
  - Observable Plot
  - D3



Midterm

- Thursday, October 13
- Covers material through this week
- Format:
  - In Person, Pen(-cil) & Paper
  - Multiple Choice
  - Free Response (often multi-part)
  - CS 627 students will have extra questions related to the research papers discussed

Project

- Two Possibilities:
  - Create an interactive visualization
  - Work on a research project
- Dataset Choices
  - NFL Data
  - Colorado River Data
  - Prescription Drug Cost Data
  - Others?

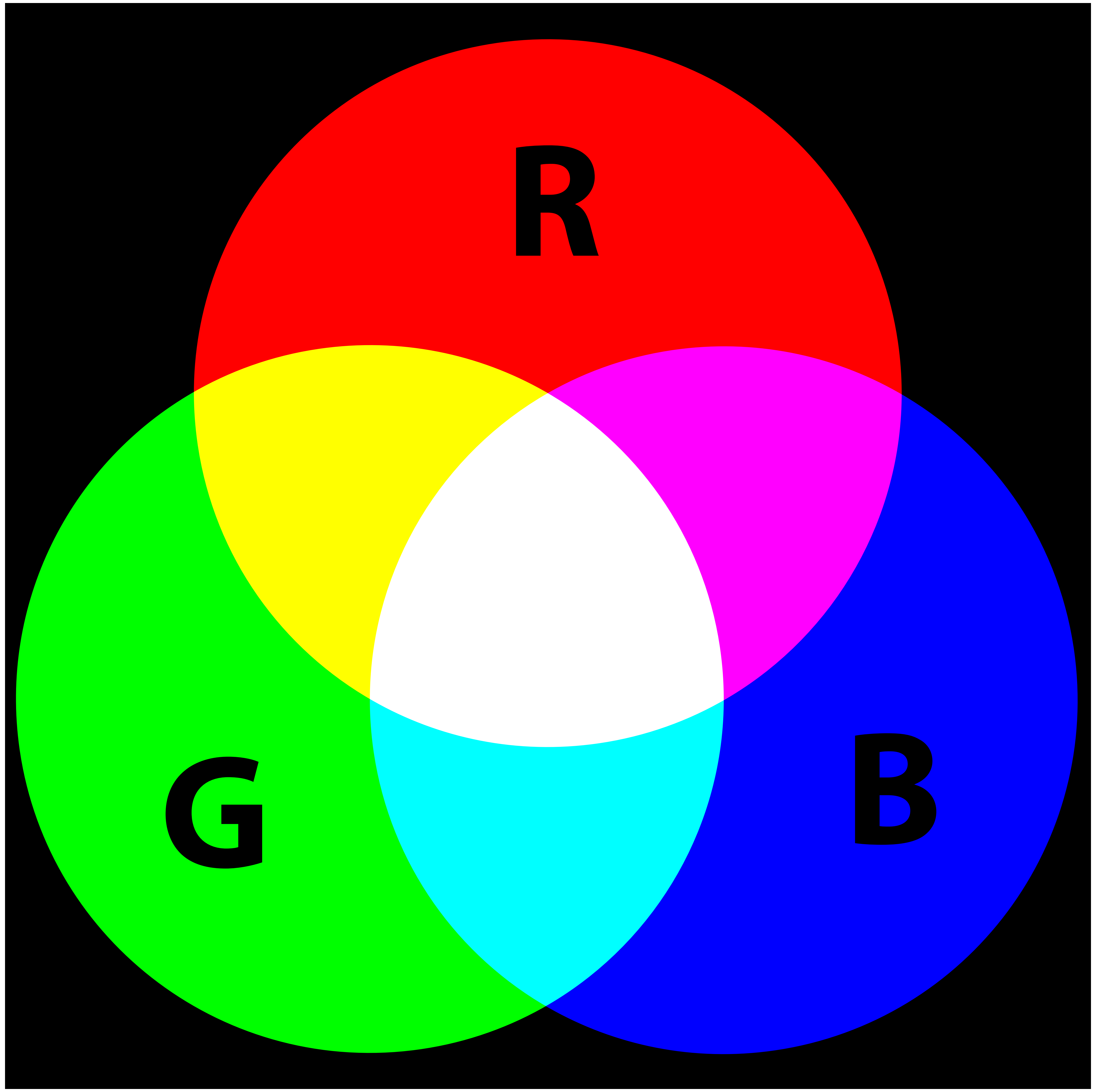
Primary Colors?

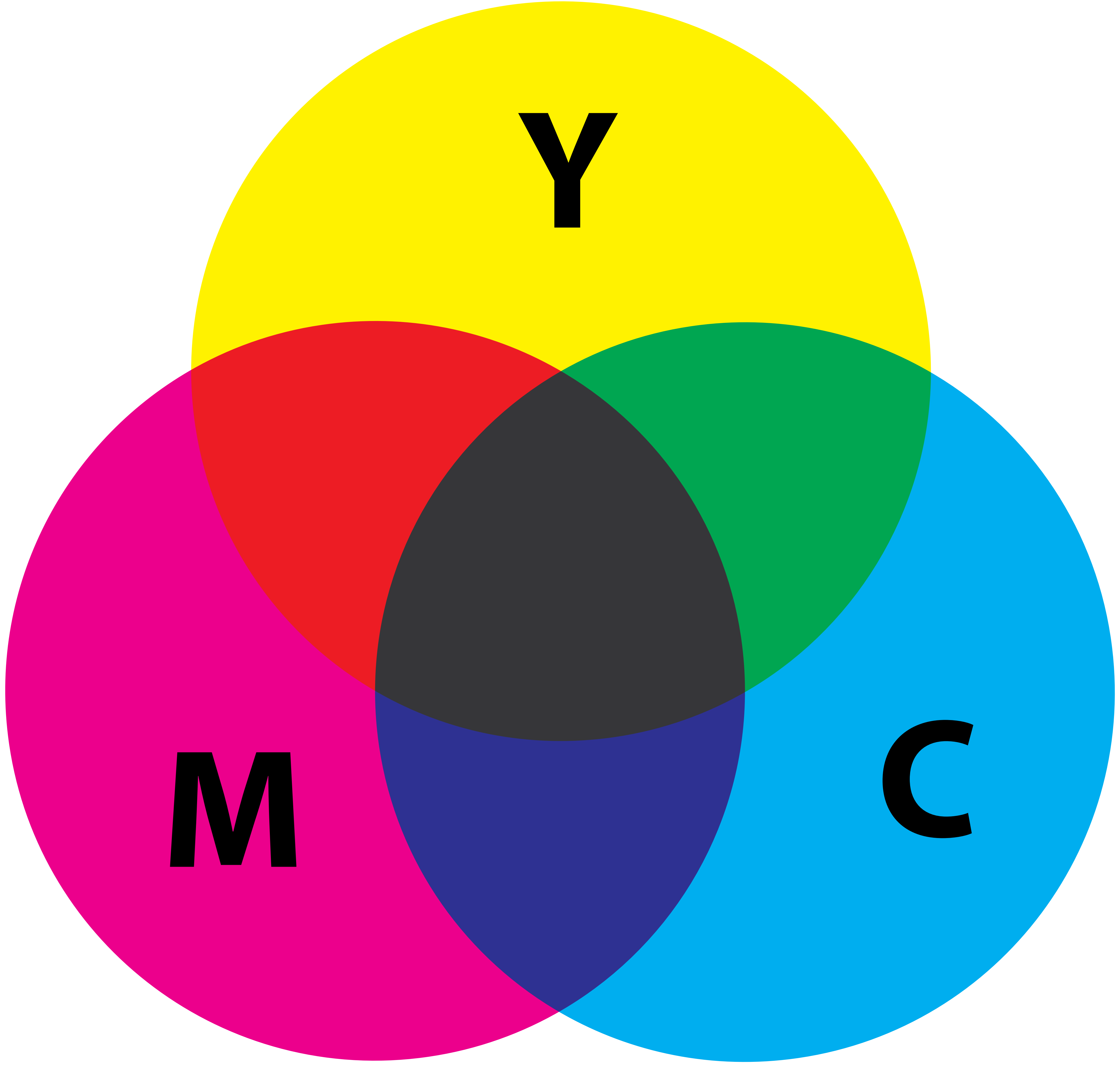
- Red, Green, and Blue
- Red, Yellow, and Blue
- Orange, Green, and Violet
- Cyan, Magenta, and Yellow

Primary Colors?

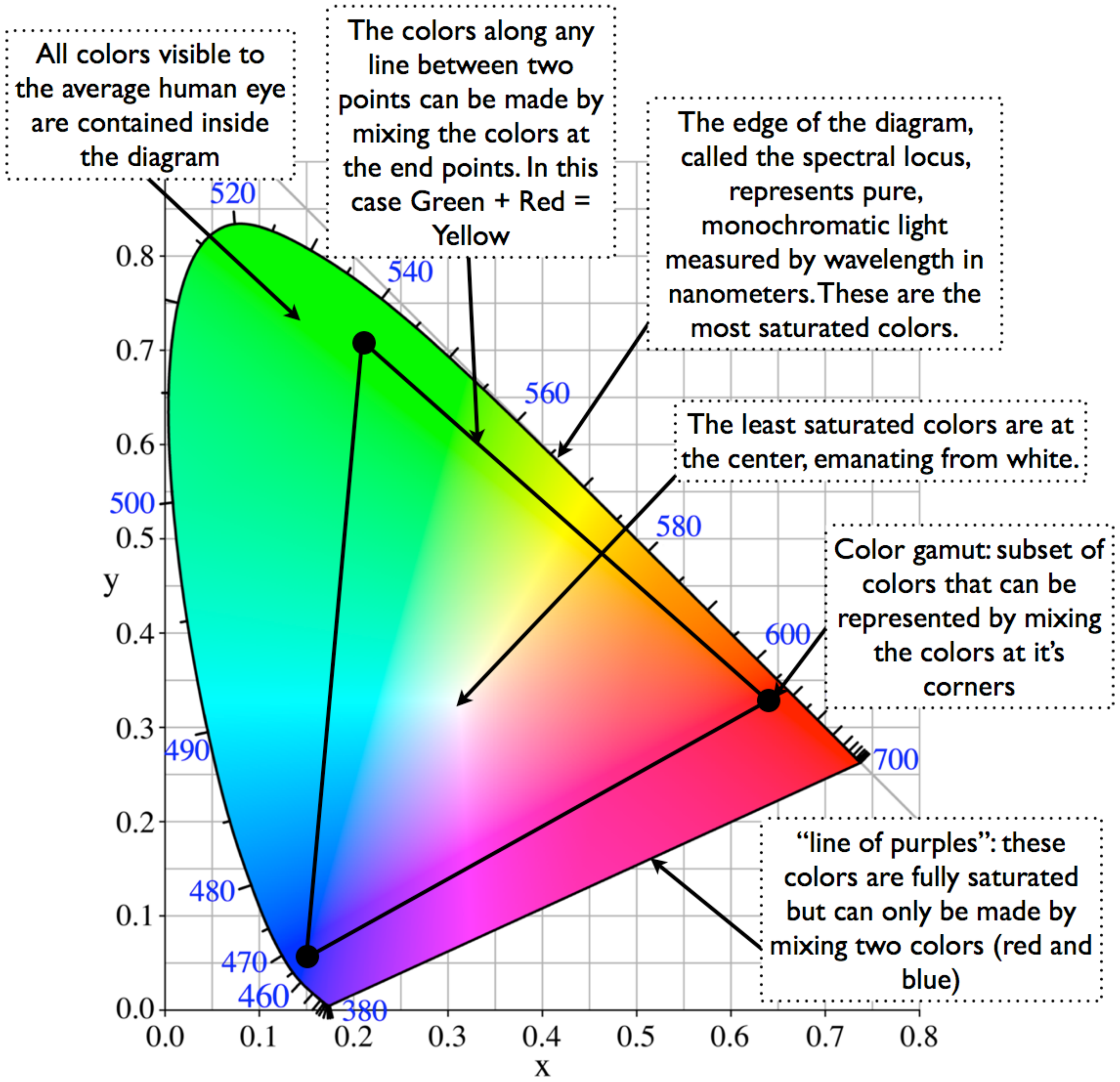
- Red, Green, and Blue
- Red, Yellow, and Blue
- Orange, Green, and Violet
- Cyan, Magenta, and Yellow
- **All of the above!**

Color Addition and Subtraction





Color Spaces and Gamuts



- **Color space**: the organization of all colors in space
  - Often human-specific, what we can see (e.g. CIELAB)
- **Color gamut**: a subset of colors
  - Defined by corners of color space
  - What can be produced on a monitor (e.g. using RGB)
  - What can be produced on a printer (e.g. using CMYK)
  - The gamut of your monitor != the gamut of someone else's or a printer

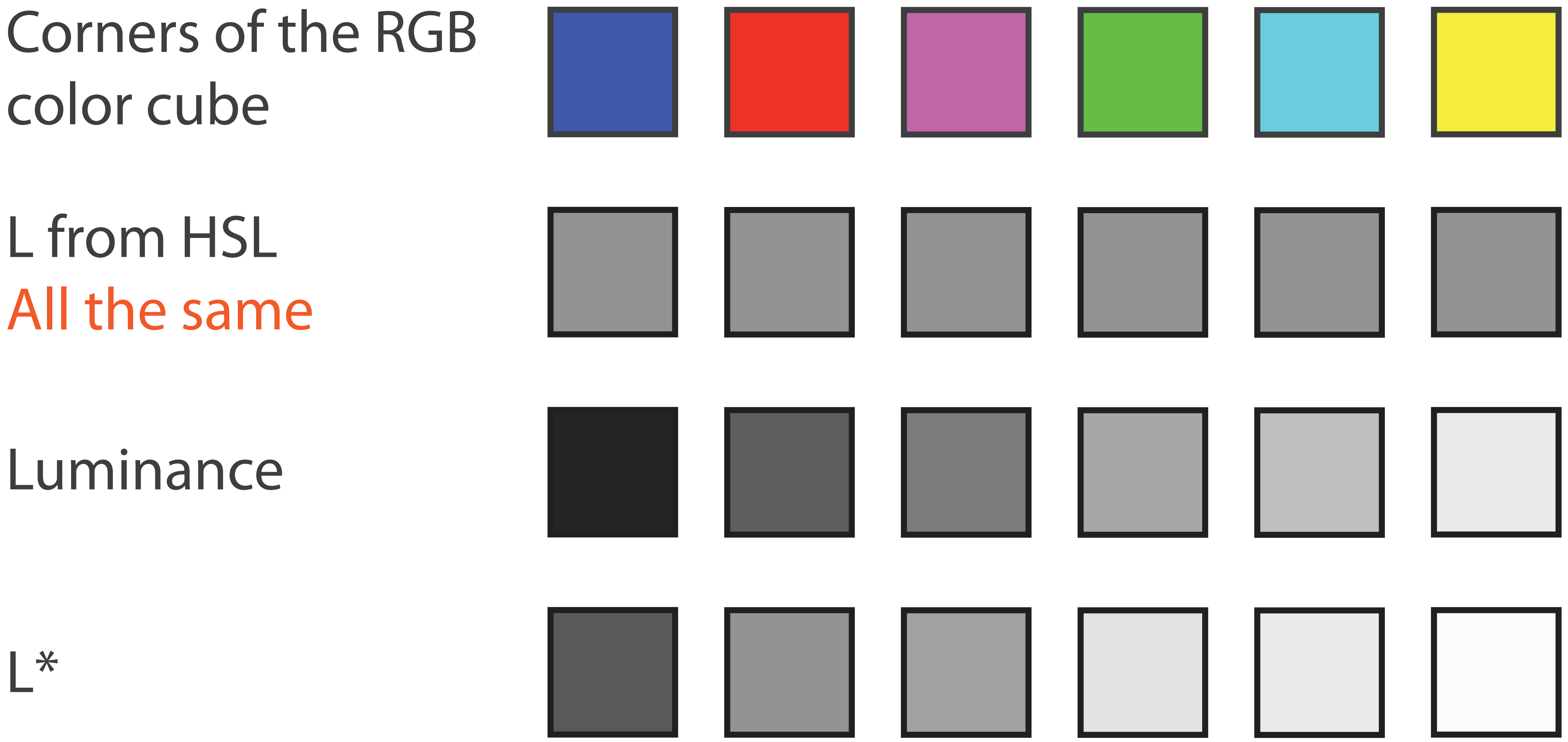
[Anatomy of a CIE Chromaticity Diagram]

Color Models

- A **color model** is a representation of color using some basis
- RGB uses three numbers (red, blue, green) to represent color
- Color space ~ color model, but there can be many color models used in the same color space (e.g. OGV)
- Hue-Saturation-Lightness (HSL) is more intuitive and useful
  - Hue captures pure colors
  - Saturation captures the amount of white mixed with the color
  - Lightness captures the amount of black mixed with a color
  - HSL color pickers are often circular
- Hue-Saturation-Value (HSV) is similar (swap black with gray for the final value), linearly related

Luminance

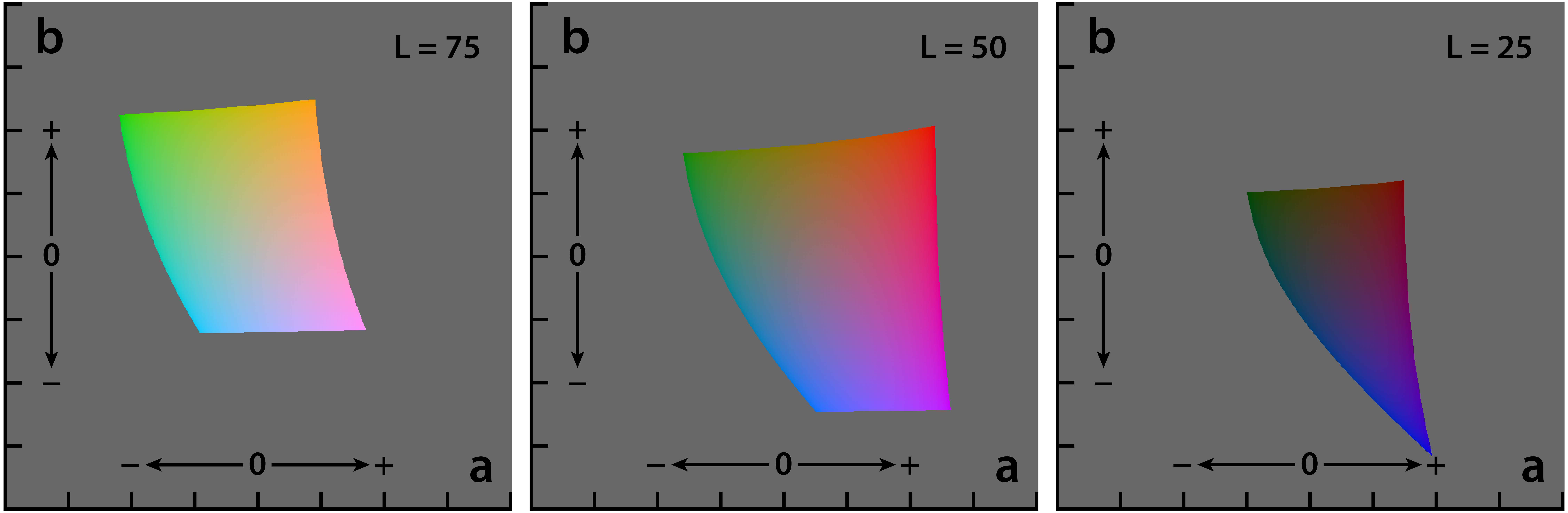
- HSL does not truly reflect the way we perceive color
- Even though colors have the same lightness, we perceive their luminance differently
- Our perception (L*) is **nonlinear**



[Munzner (ill. Maguire), 2014 (based on Stone, 2006)]

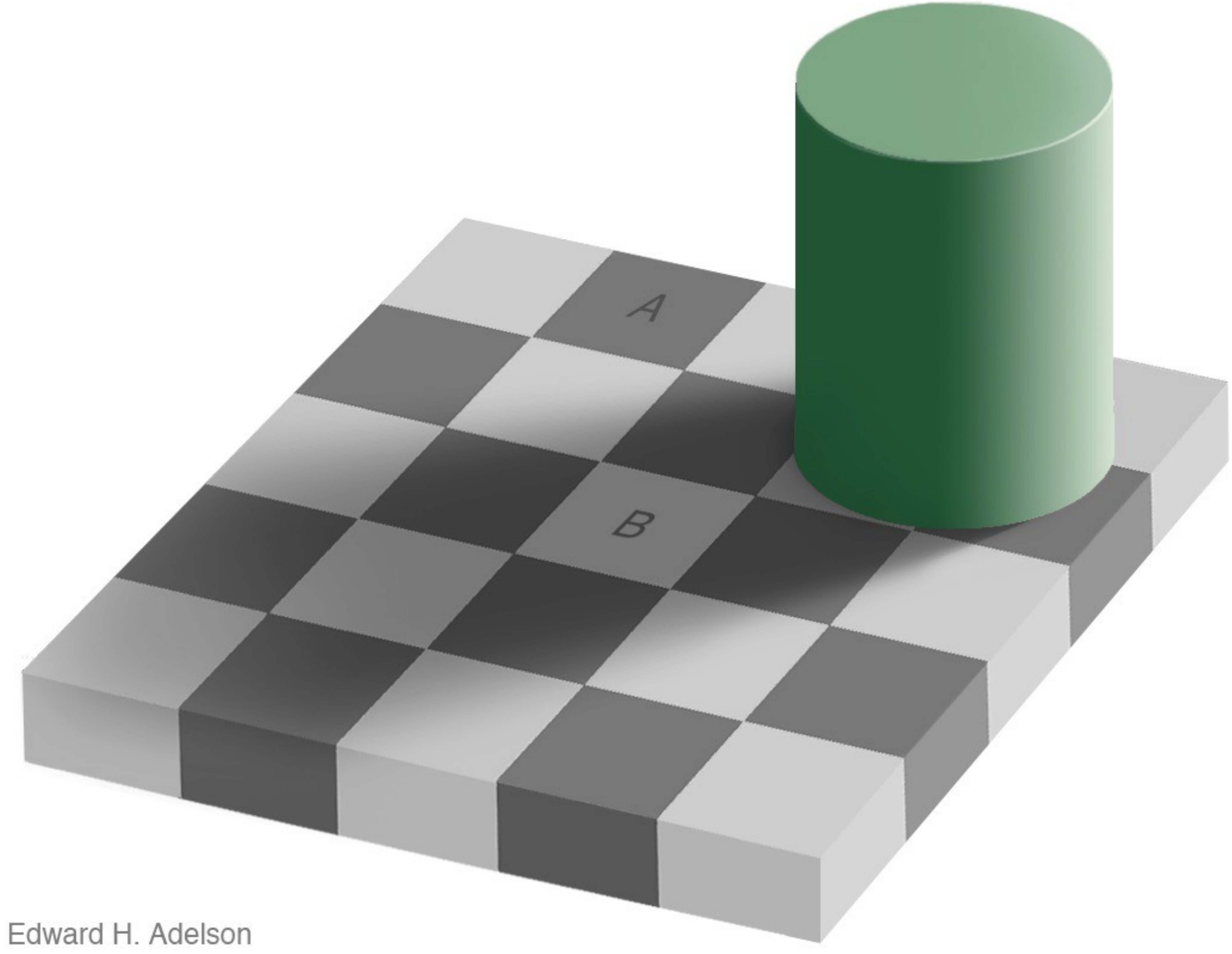
Perceptually Uniform Color Spaces

- L*a*b* allows perceptually accurate comparison and calculations of colors



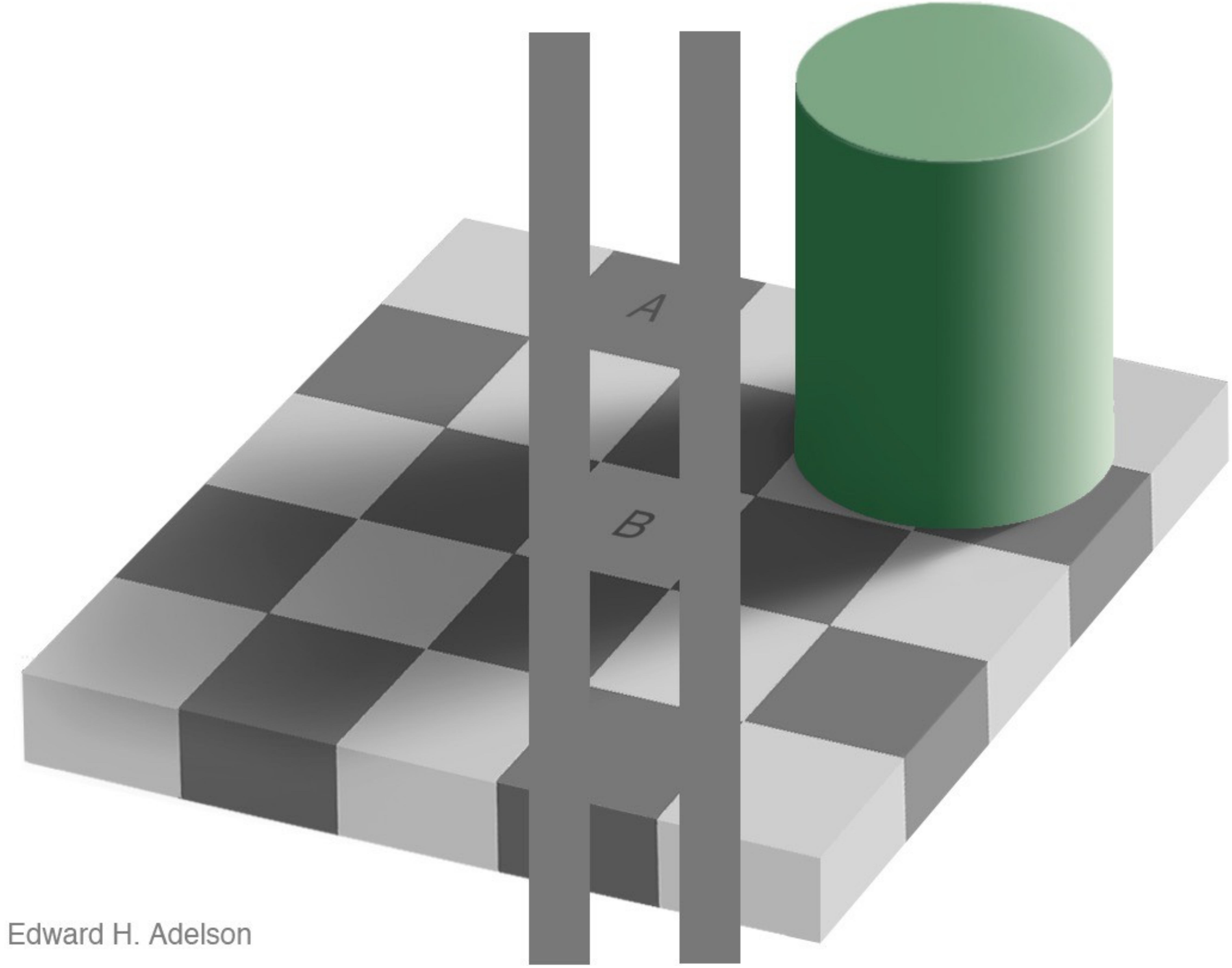
[J. Rus, CC-BY-SA (changed to horizontal layout)]

Luminance Perception (Spatial Adaption)



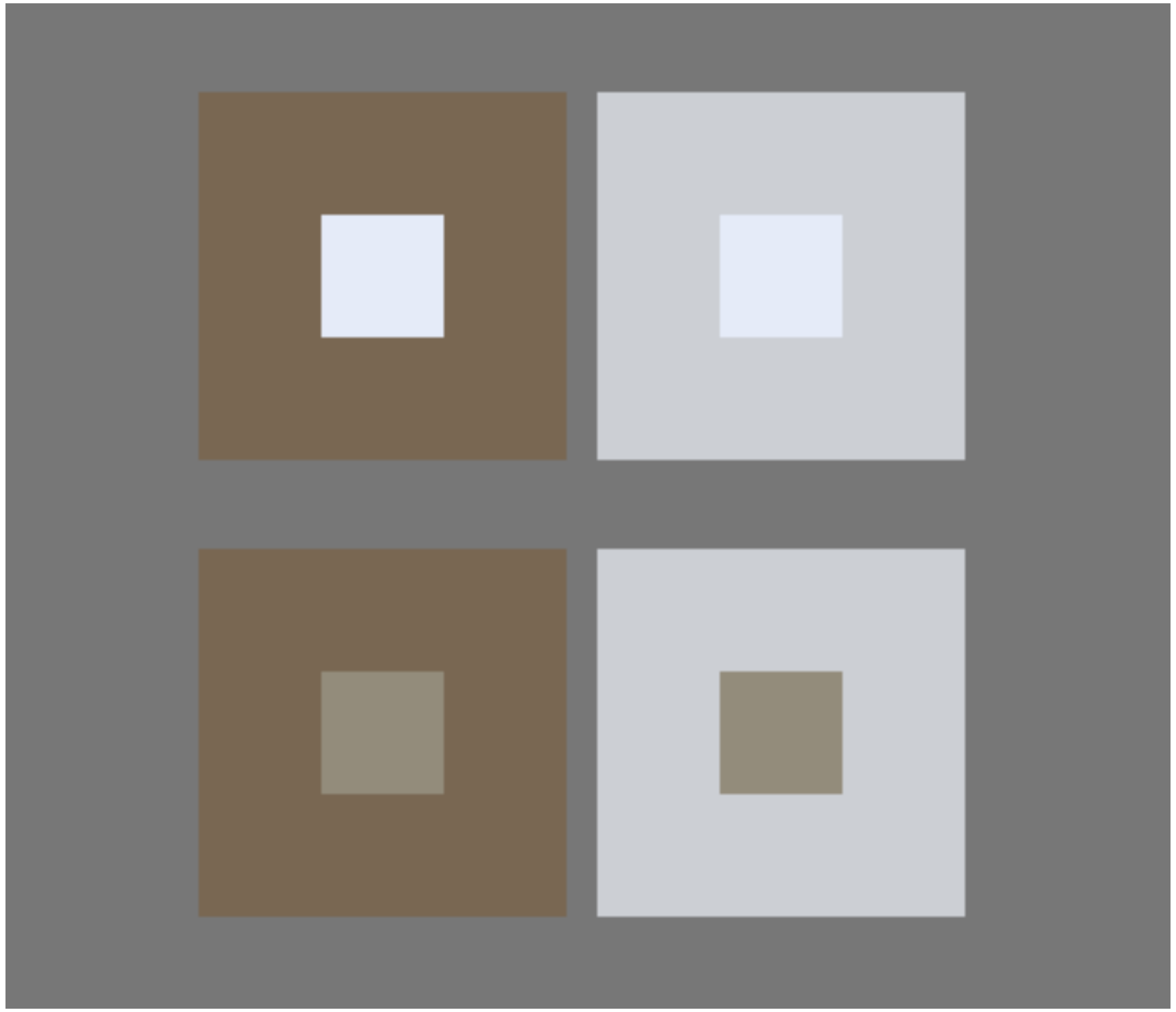
[E. H. Adelson, 1995]

Luminance Perception (Spatial Adaption)

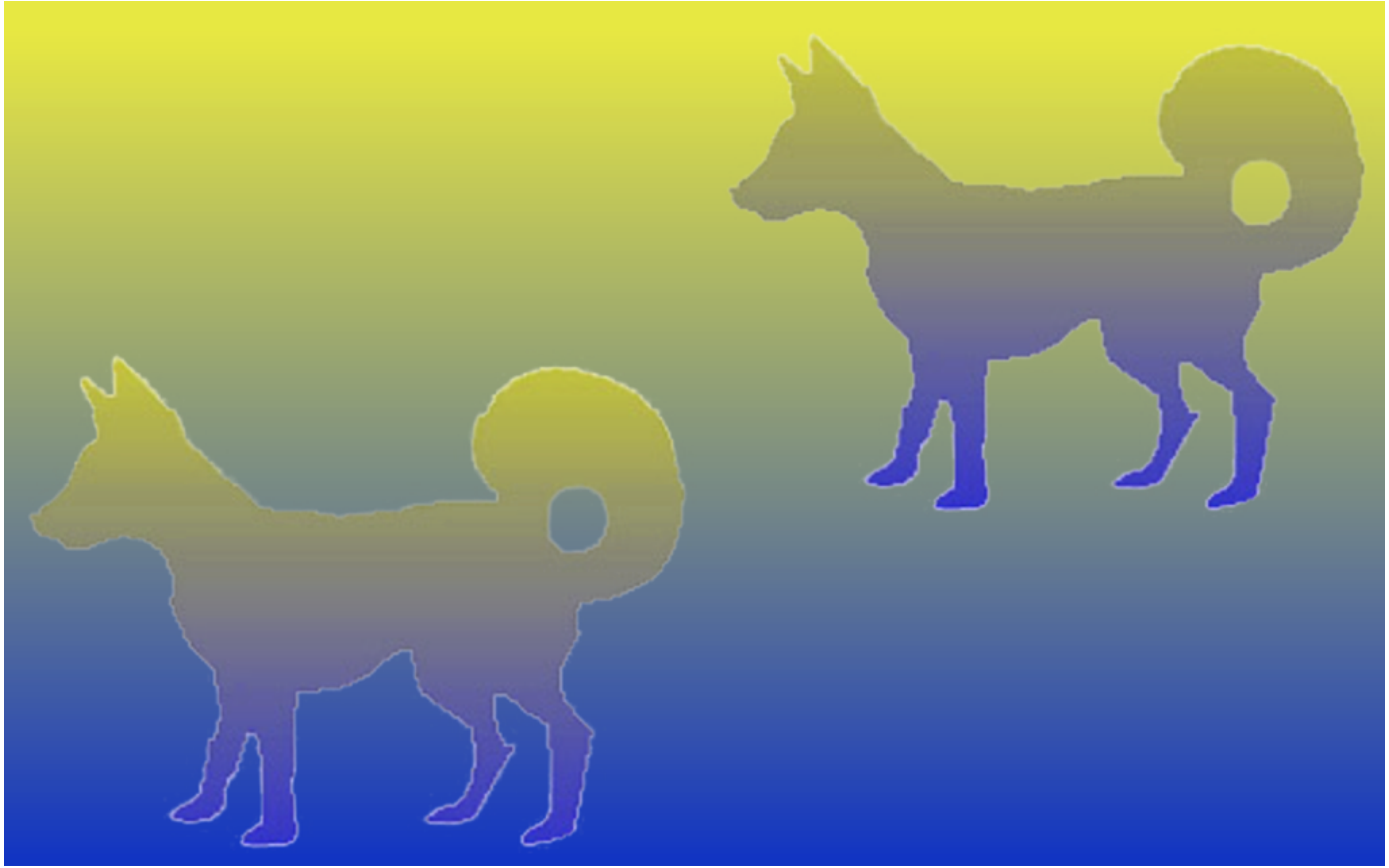


[E. H. Adelson, 1995]

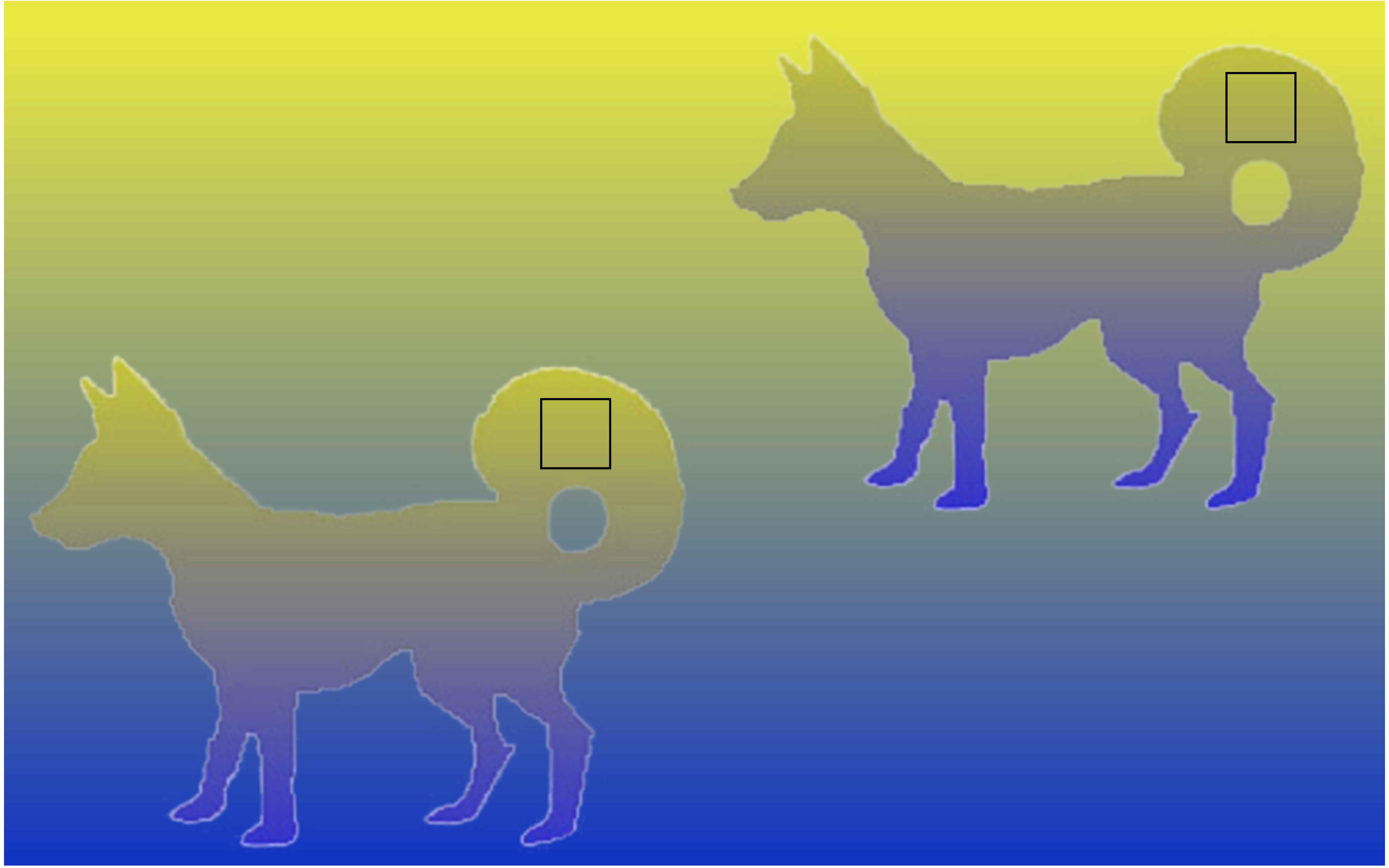
Simultaneous Contrast



Simultaneous Contrast

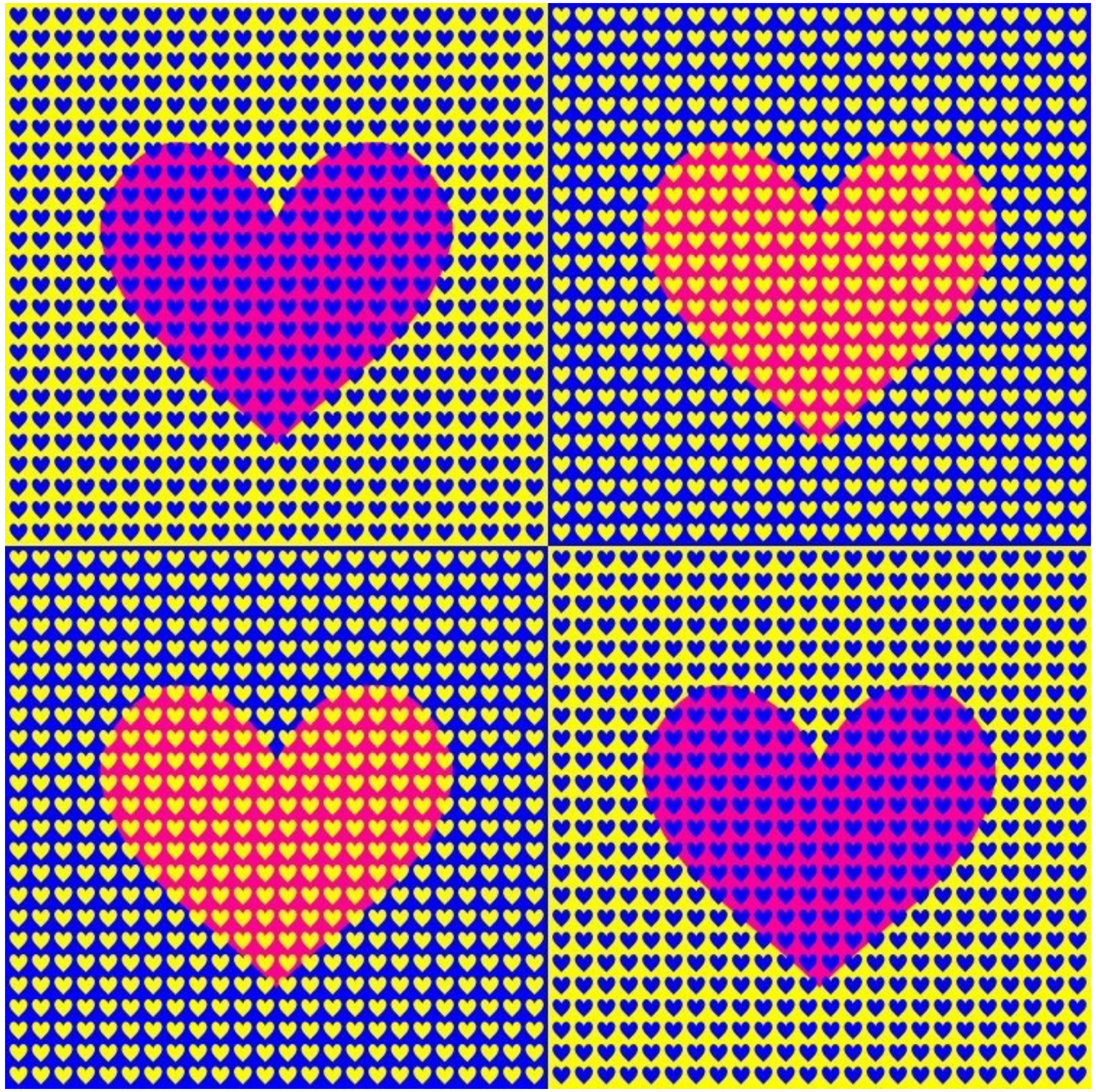


Simultaneous Contrast



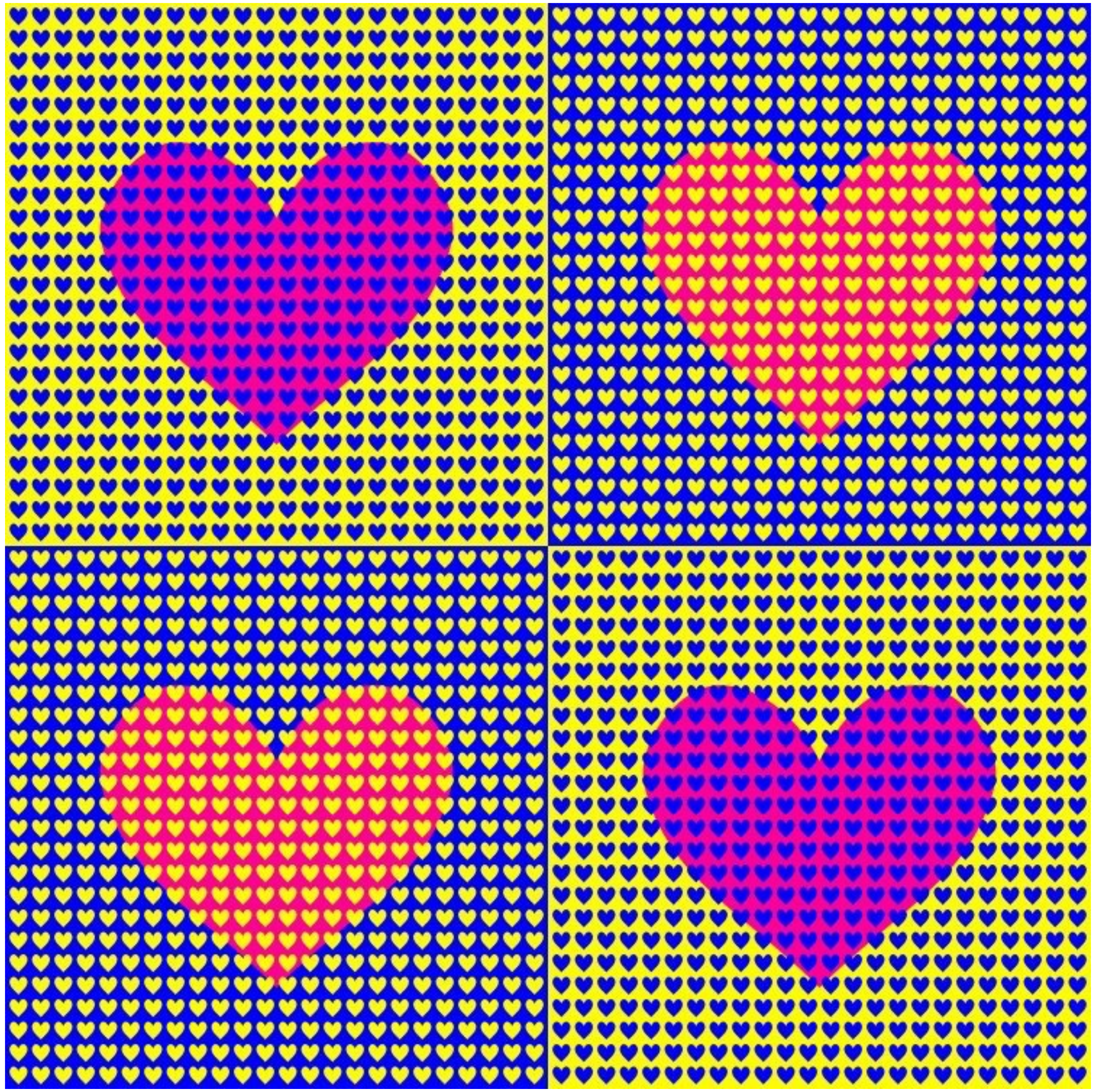
Simultaneous Contrast

What colors?



[A. Kitaoka]

What colors?



Red, yellow, blue

Purple, orange
do not exist!

[A. Kitaoka]

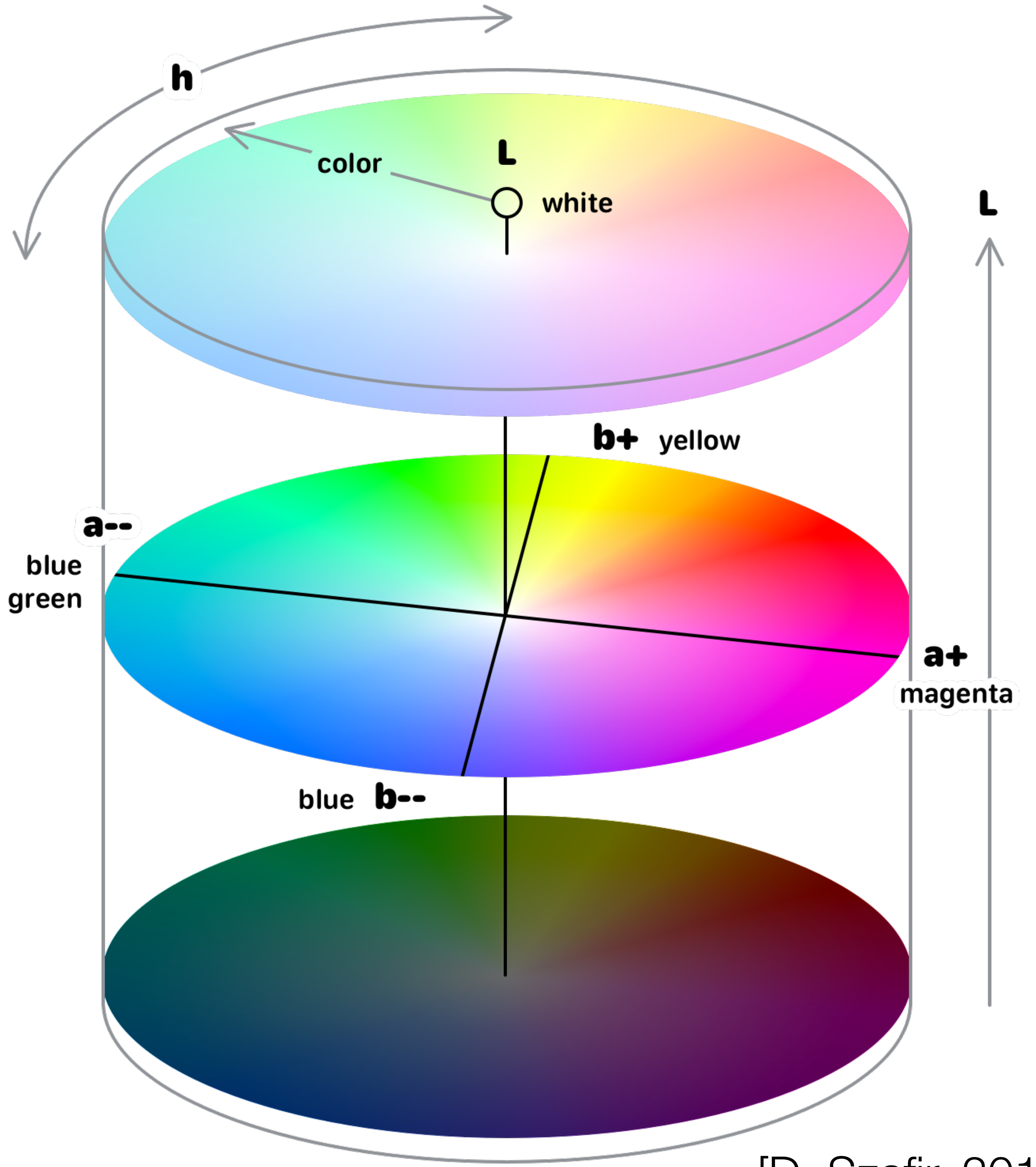
What does this mean for visualization?

What does this mean for visualization?

- We need to be aware of colorblindness when encoding via color
- Our brains may misinterpret color (surrounding colors matter!) even if we aren't colorblind
- Be careful! Don't assume that adding color always works the way you intended
- Use known colormaps when possible

Violations of CIELAB Assumptions

- CIELAB:
  - Approximately perceptually linear
  - 1 unit of Euclidean distance = 1 Just Noticeable Difference (JND)
  - JND: people detect change at least 50% of the time
- Assumptions CIELAB makes:
  - Simple world
  - Isolation
  - Geometric

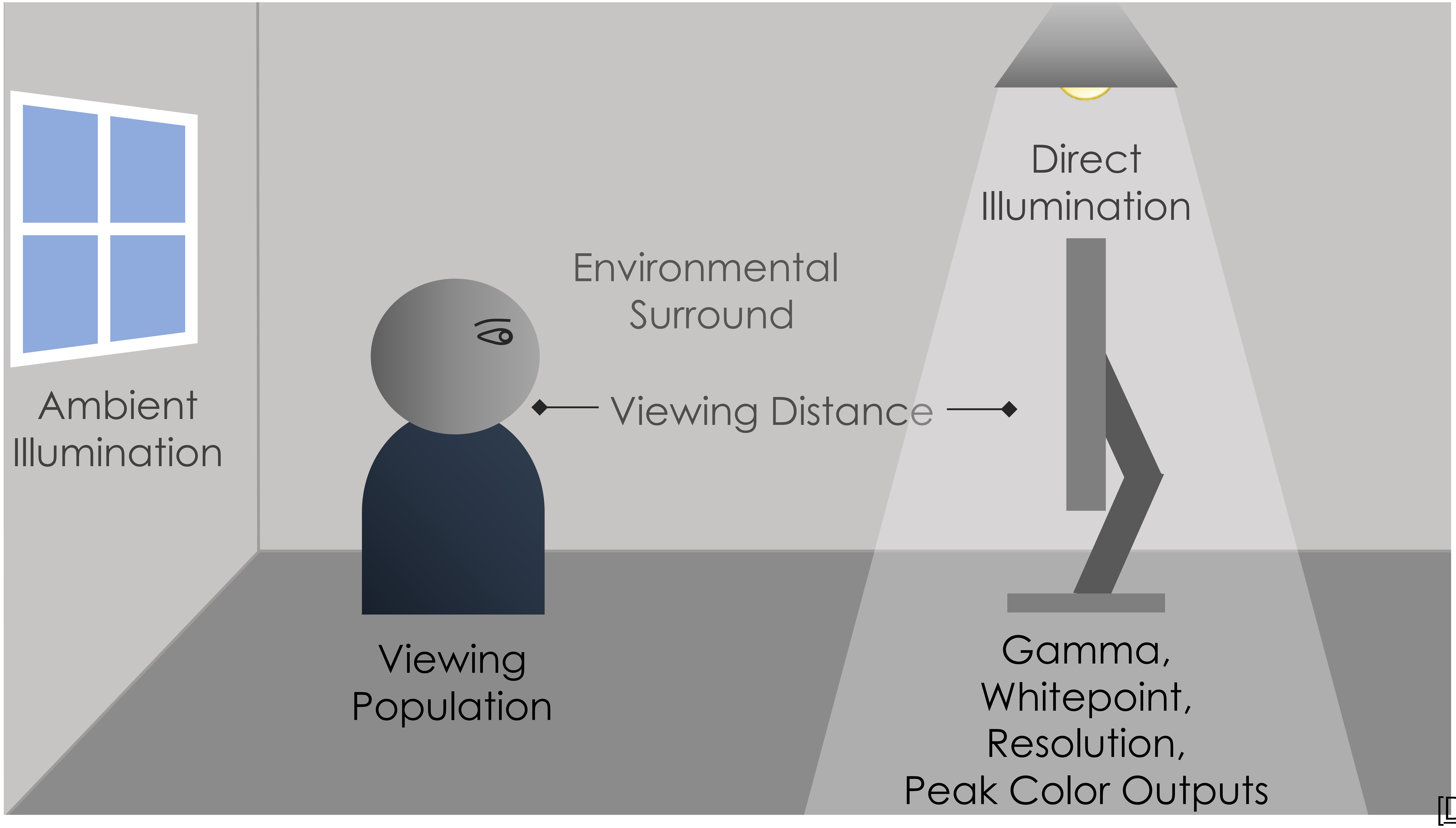


[D. Szafir, 2017]

Simple World Assumption

[D. Szafir, 2017]

Problems with Simple World Assumption

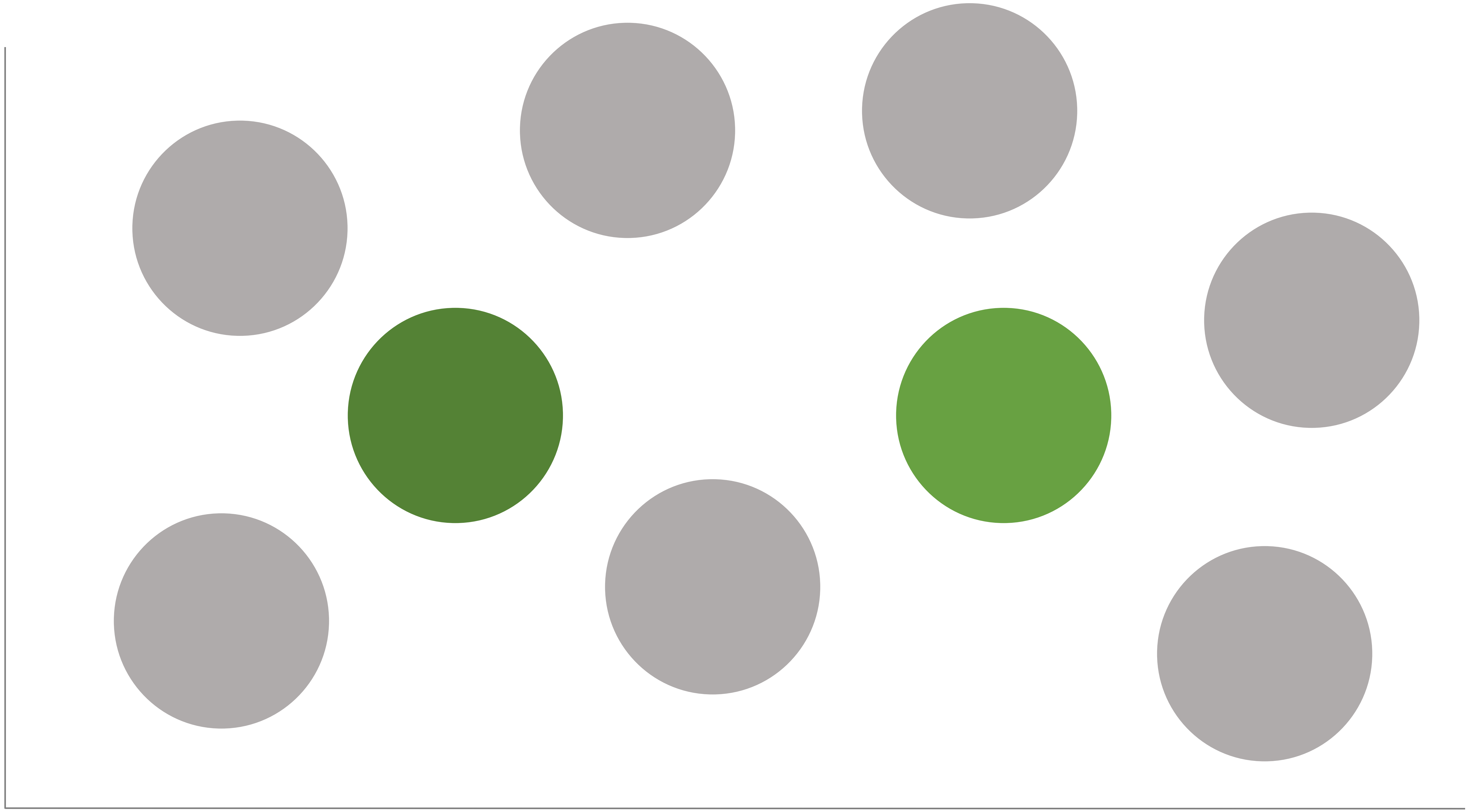


[D. Szafir, 2017]

Isolation Assumption

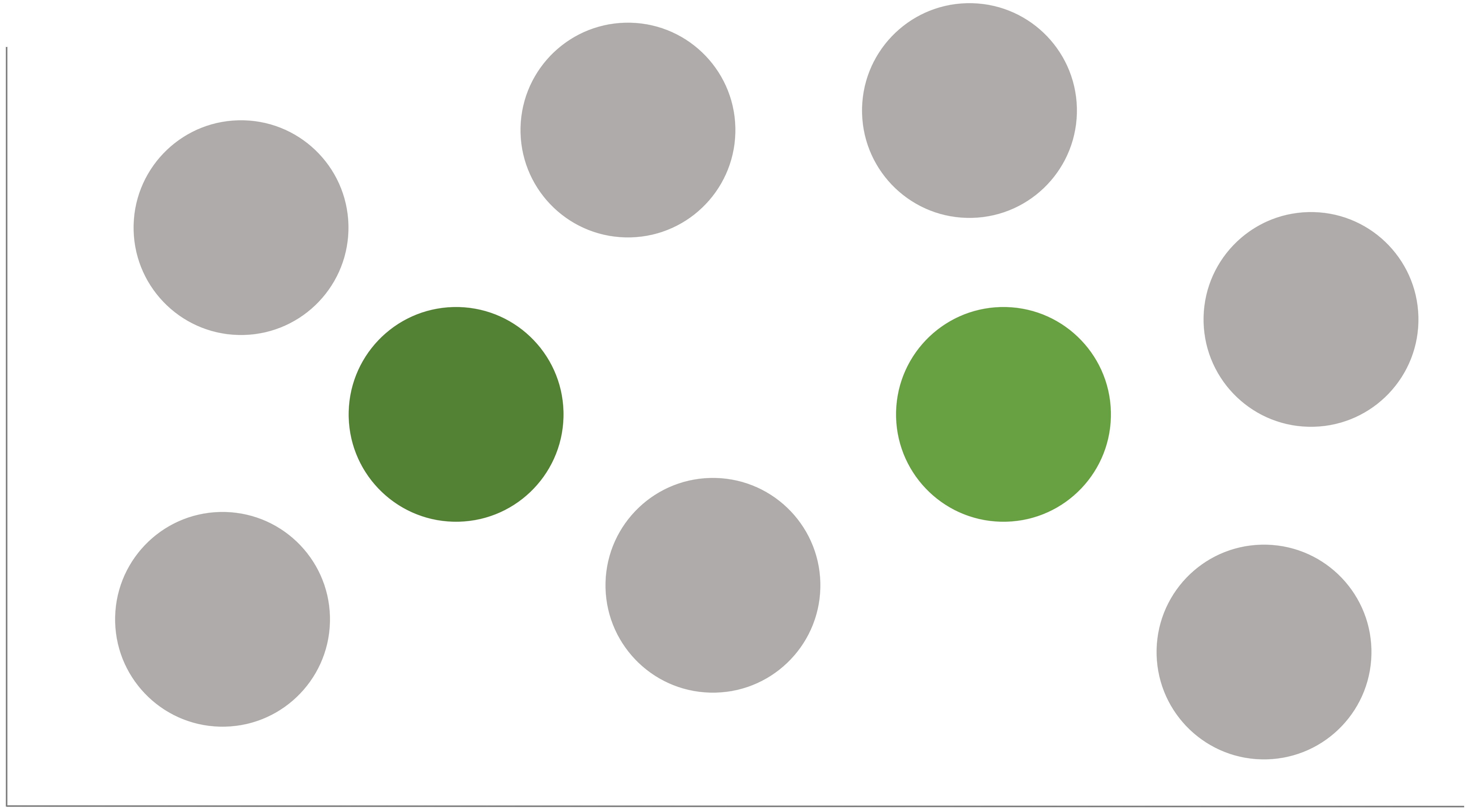
[D. Szafir, 2017]

Problems with Isolation Assumption



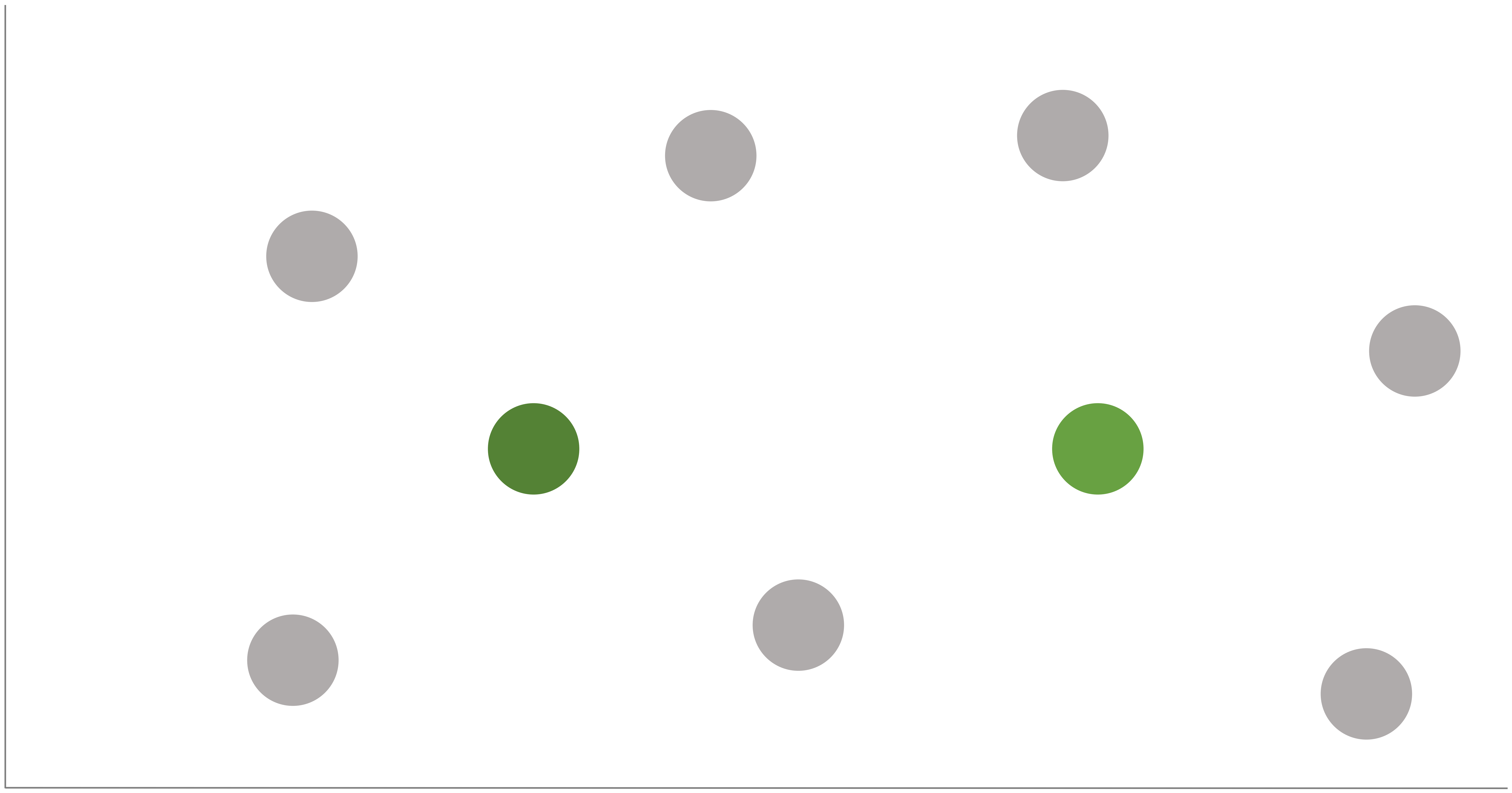
[D. Szafir, 2017]

Geometric Assumption



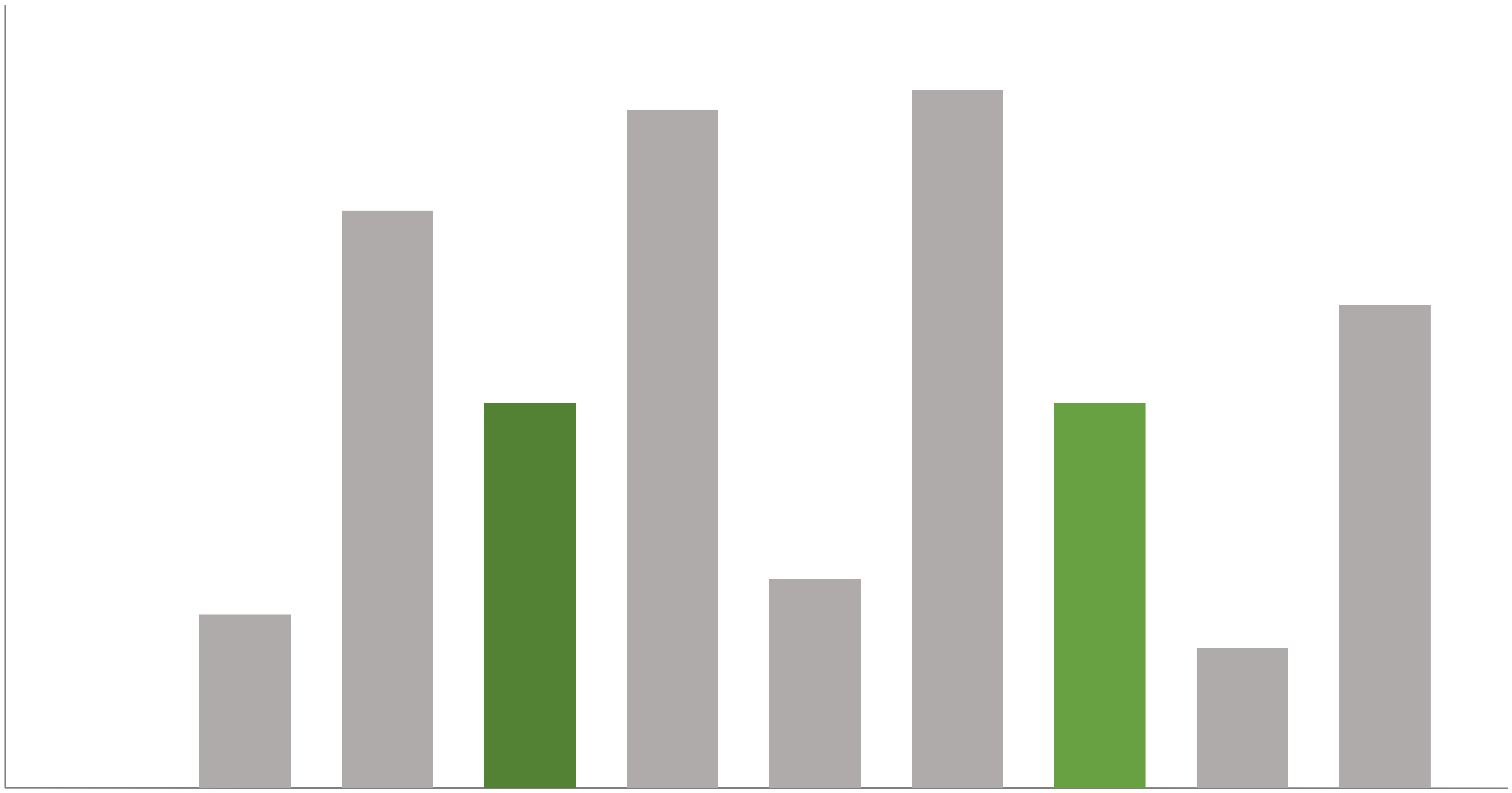
[D. Szafir, 2017]

Size Problem with Geometric Assumption



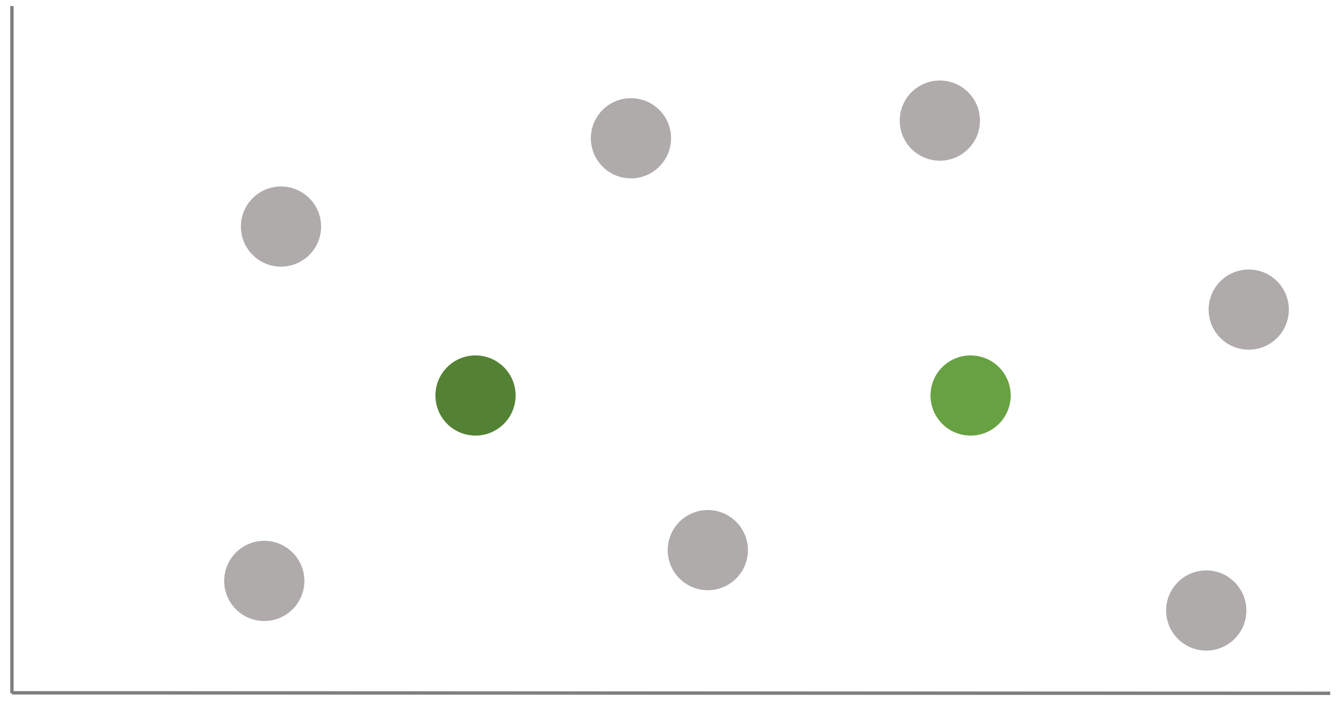
[D. Szafir, 2017]

Shape Problem with Geometric Assumption

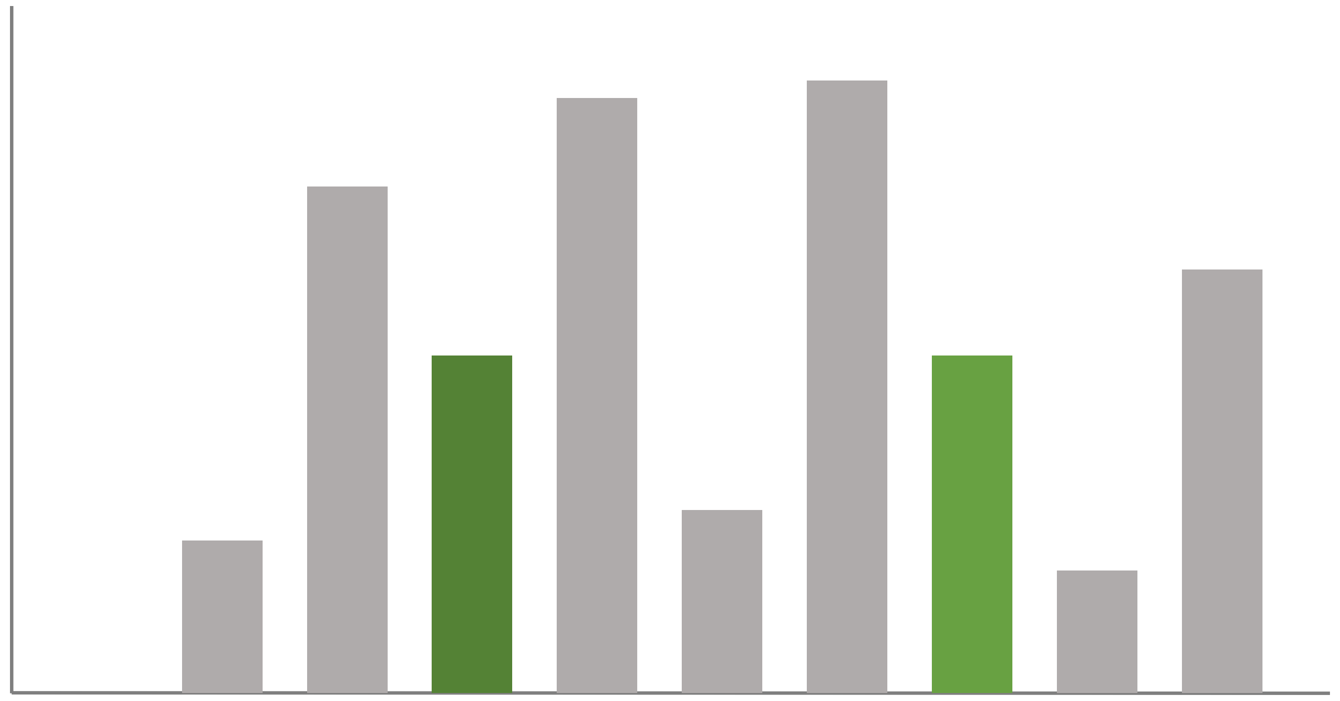


[D. Szafir, 2017]

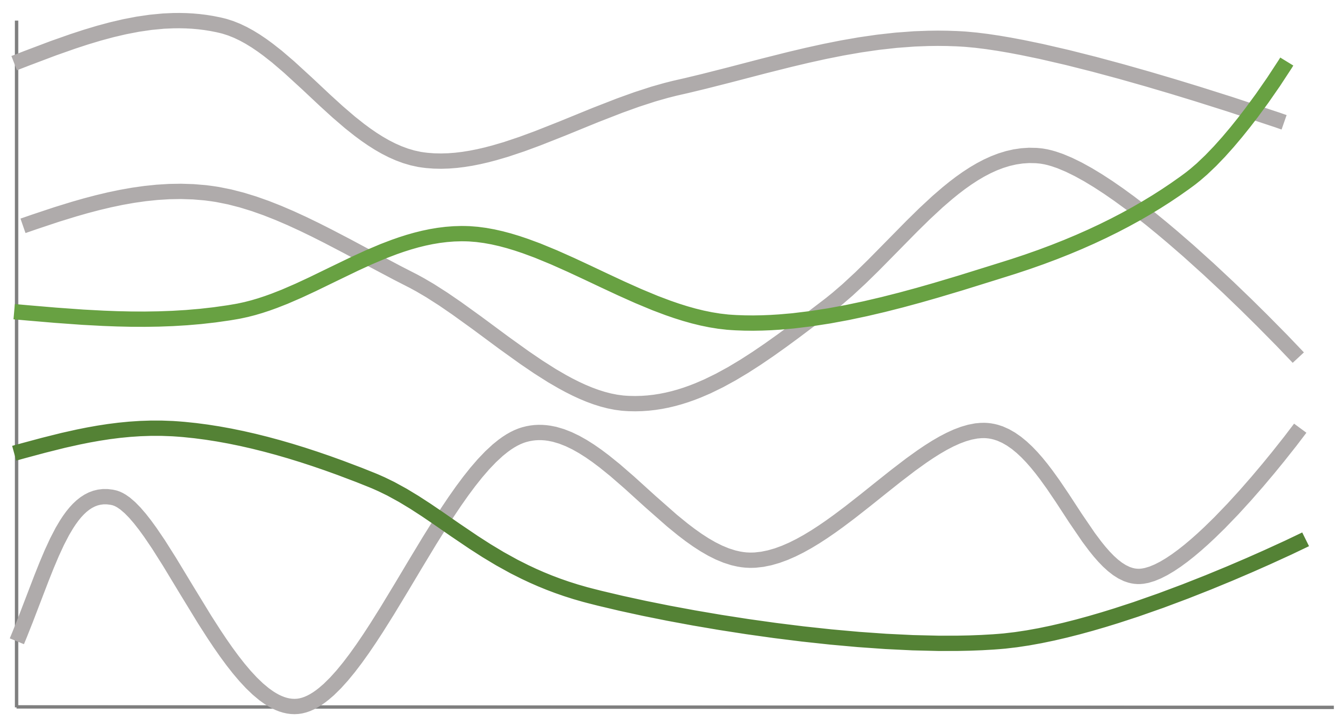
Types of Geometry



Diagonally Symmetric Marks



Elongated Marks



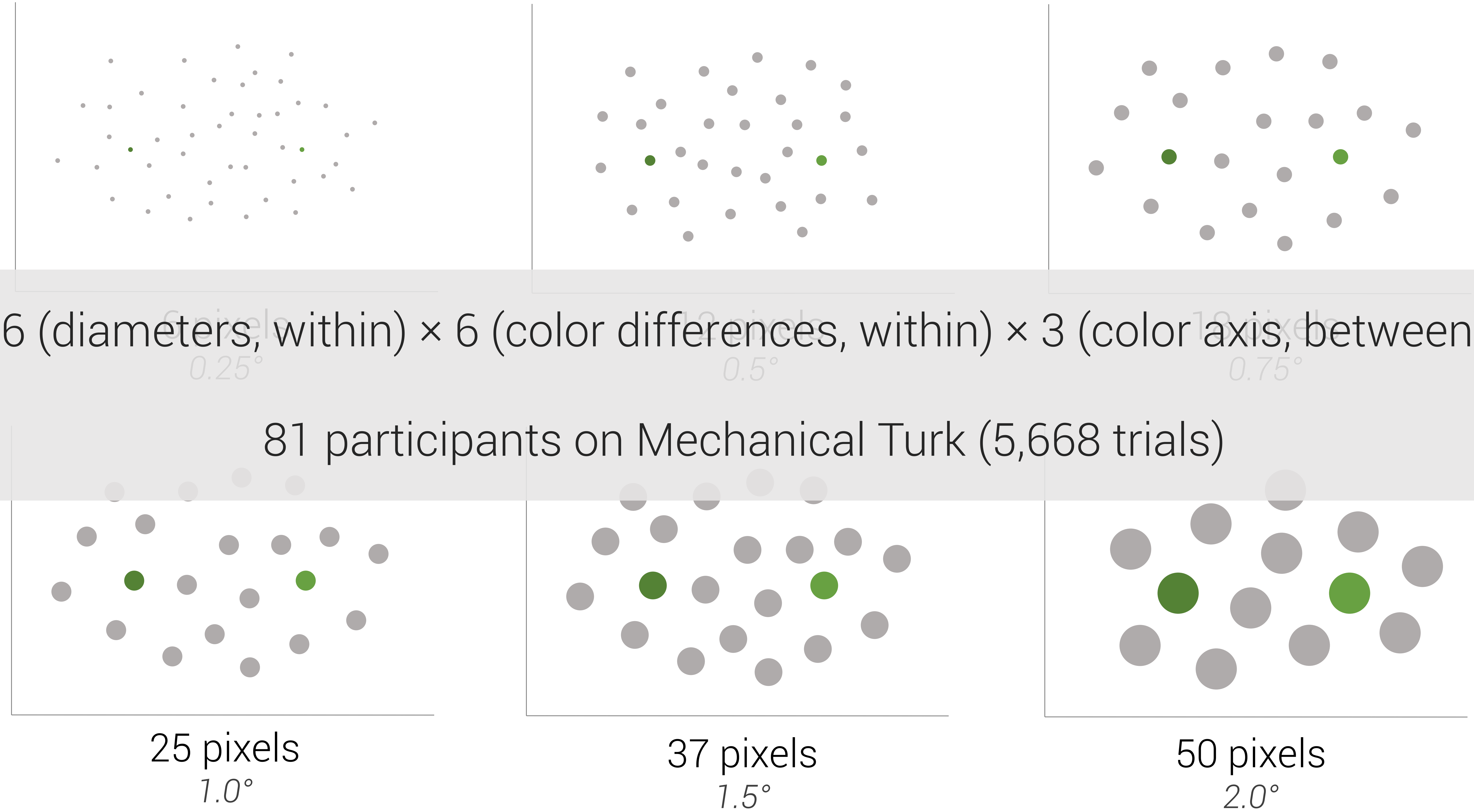
Asymmetric Marks

Area Marks

[D. Szafir, 2017]

Run the tests!

Color Study

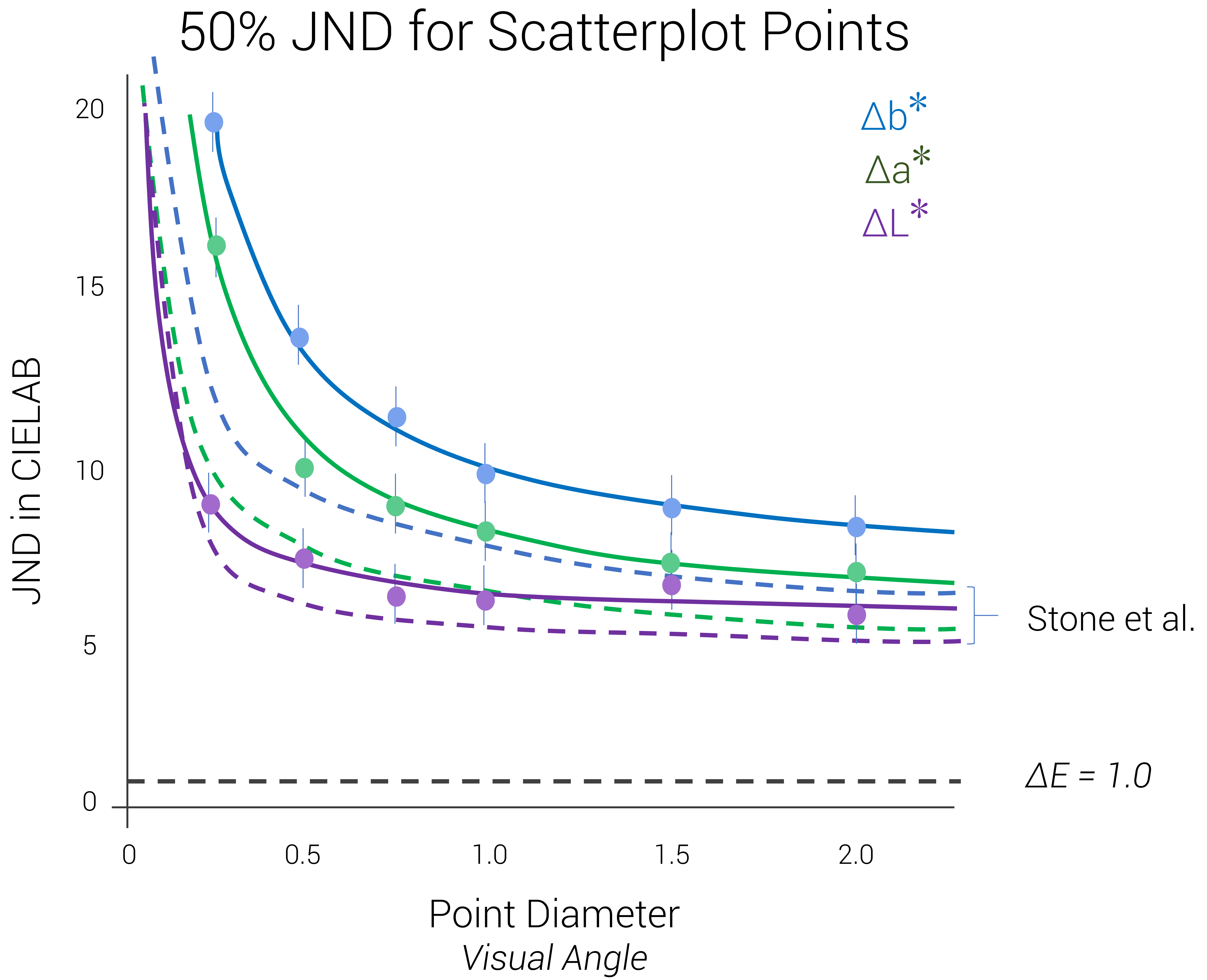


6 (diameters, within) × 6 (color differences, within) × 3 (color axis, between)

81 participants on Mechanical Turk (5,668 trials)

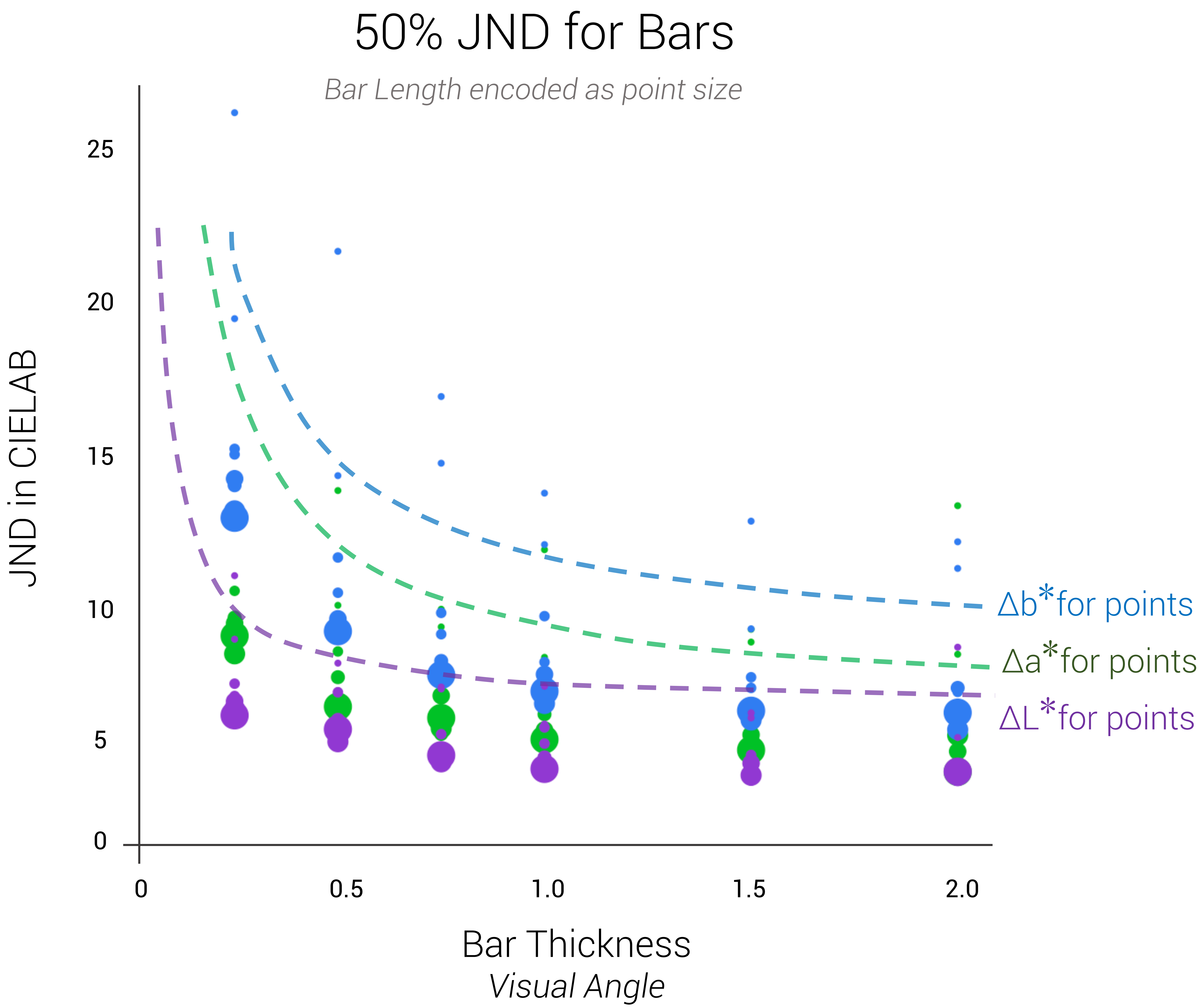
[D. Szafir, 2017]

Point Size: consistent with previous results



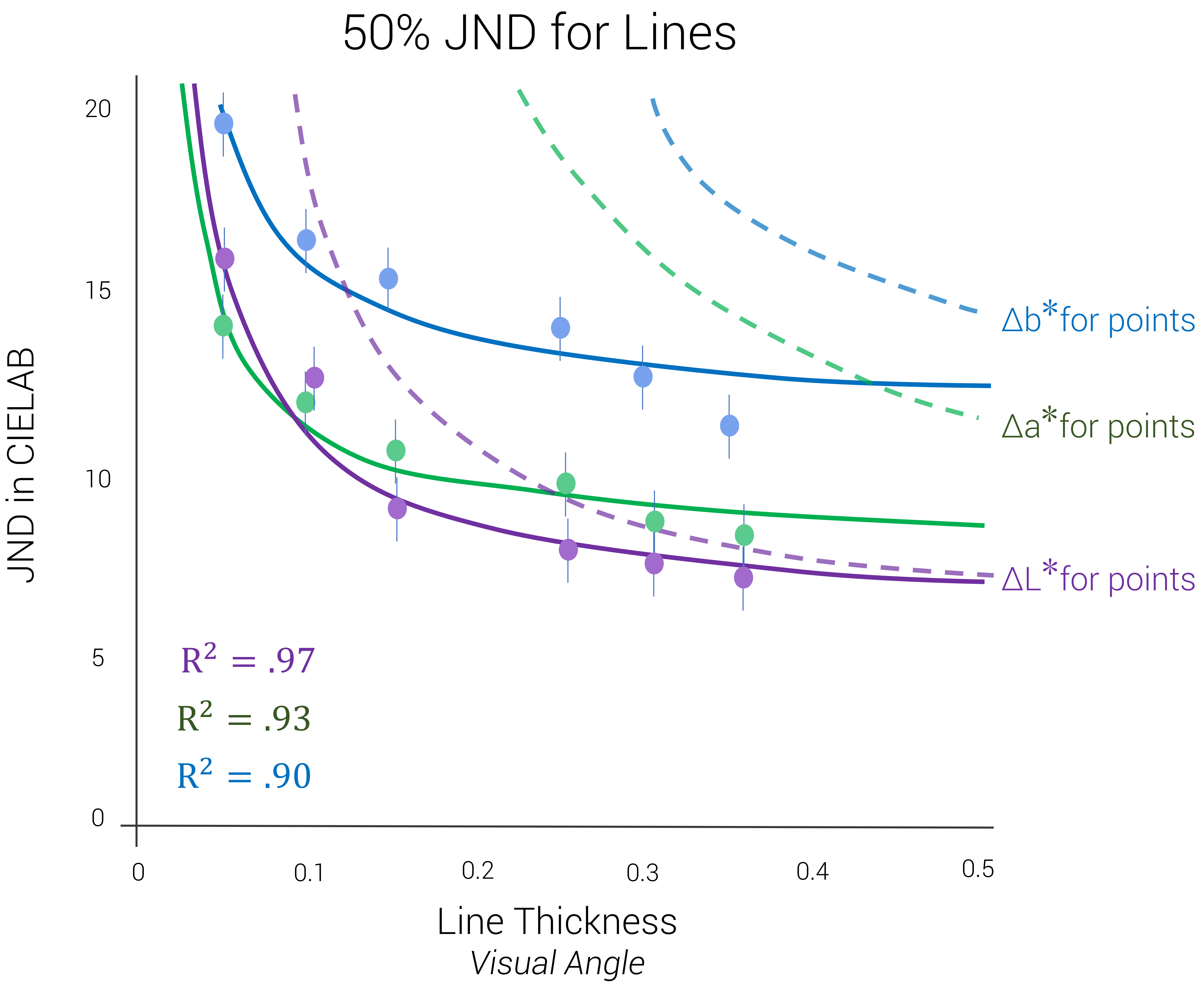
[D. Szafir, 2017]

Bar Thickness and Length: longer bars help



[D. Szafir, 2017]

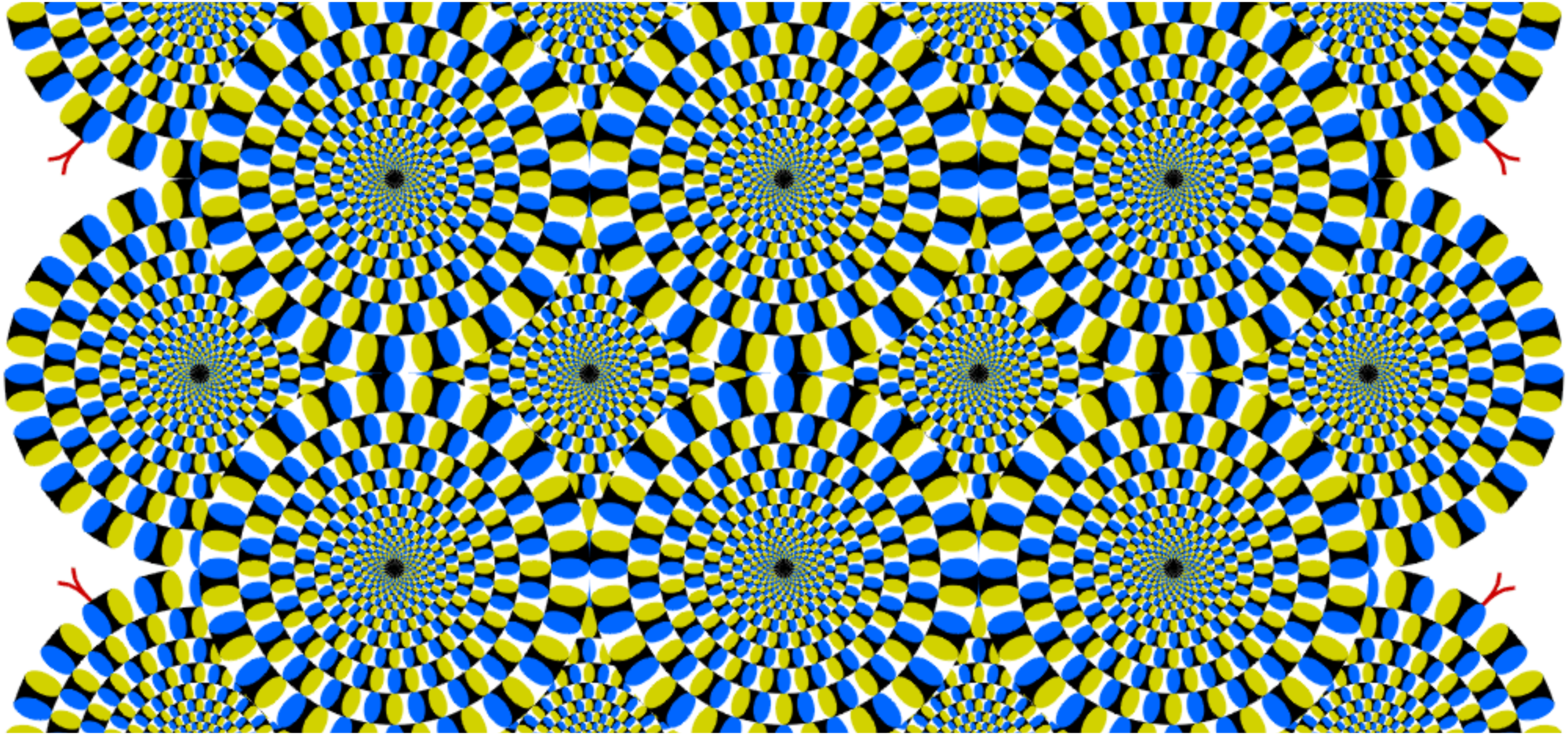
Line Thickness: better than points



[D. Szafir, 2017]

Color perception in real-world visualizations is complicated

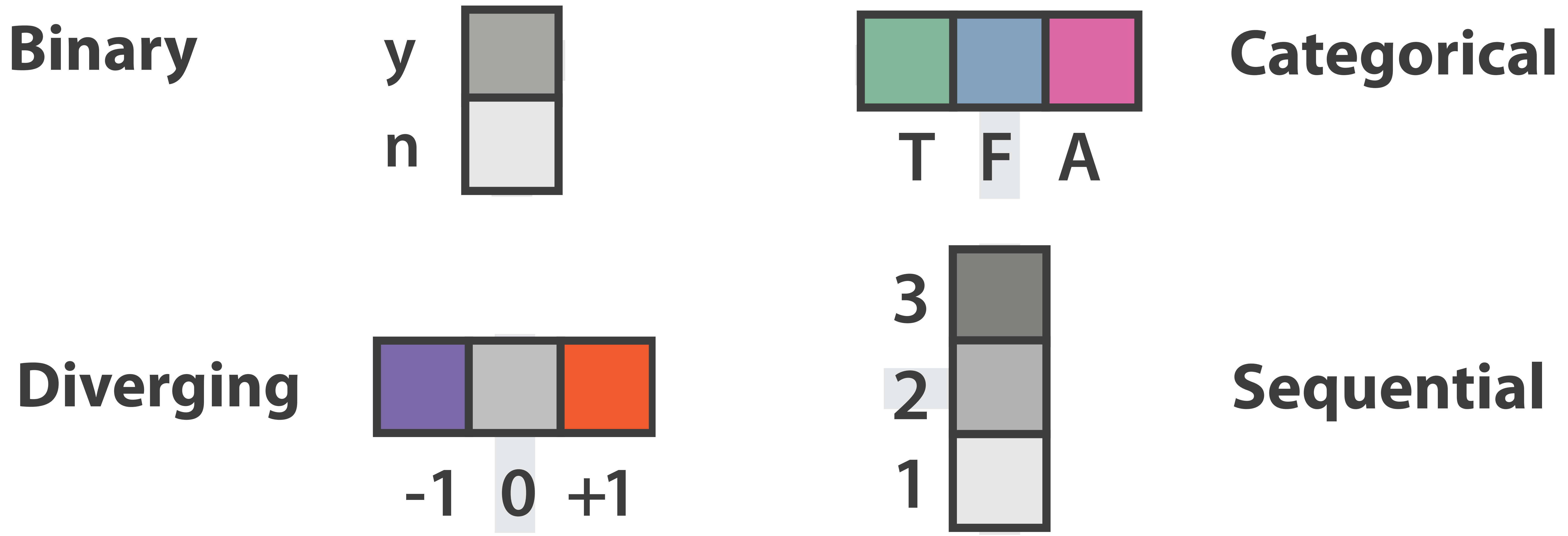
Akiyoshi Kitaoka's Illusion pages



Colormaps

Colormap

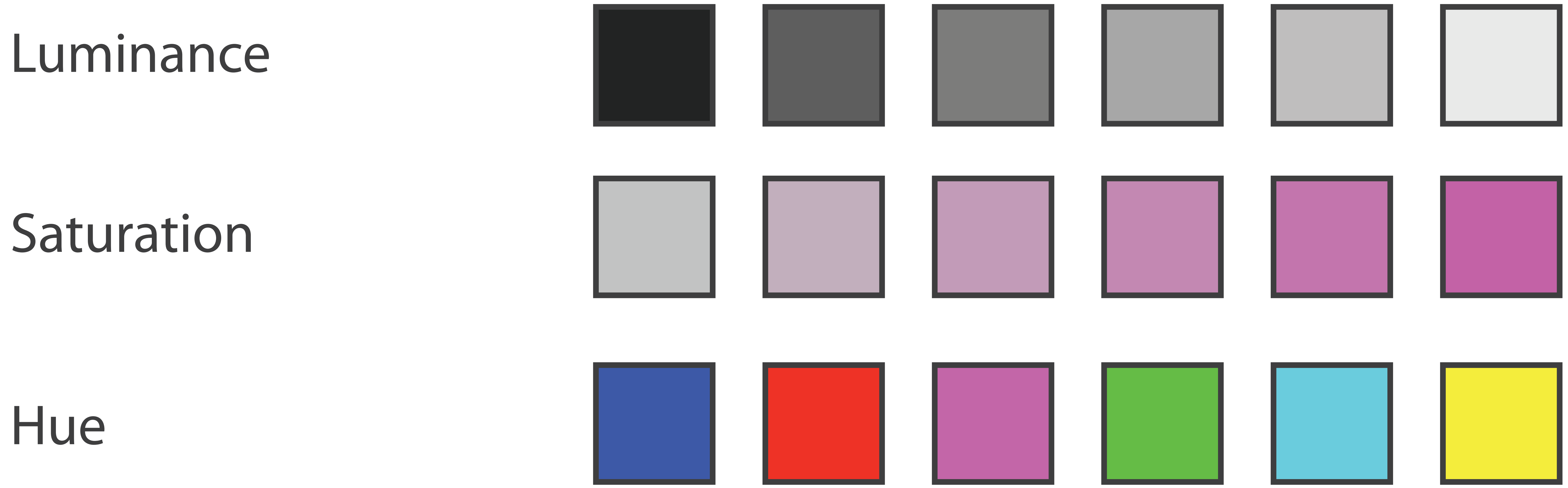
- A colormap specifies a mapping between colors and data values
- Colormap should follow the expressiveness principle
- Types of colormaps:



[Munzner (ill. Maguire), 2014]

Categorical vs. Ordered

- Hue has no implicit ordering: use for categorical data
- Saturation and luminance do: use for ordered data

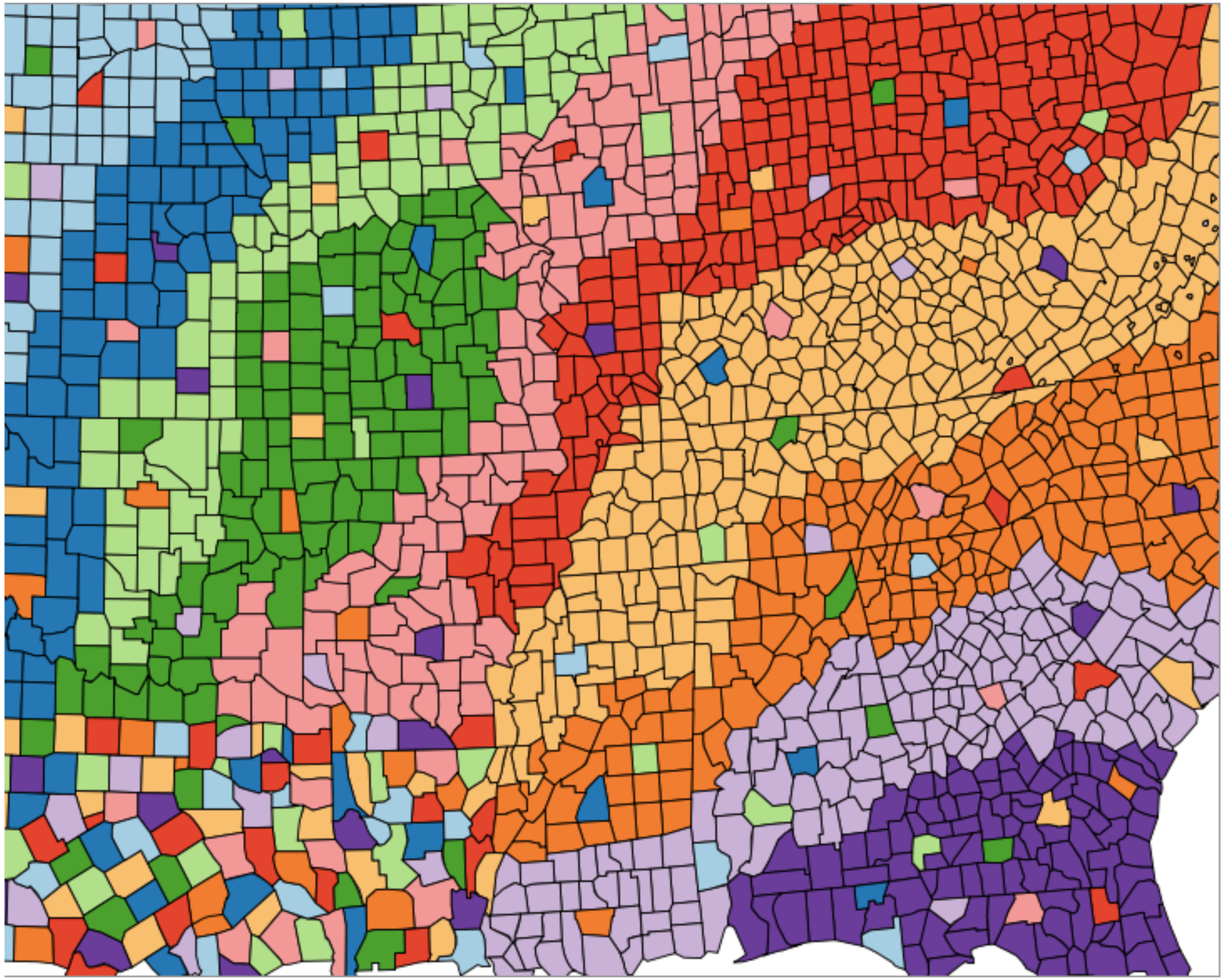


[Munzner (ill. Maguire), 2014]

Categorical Colormap Guidelines

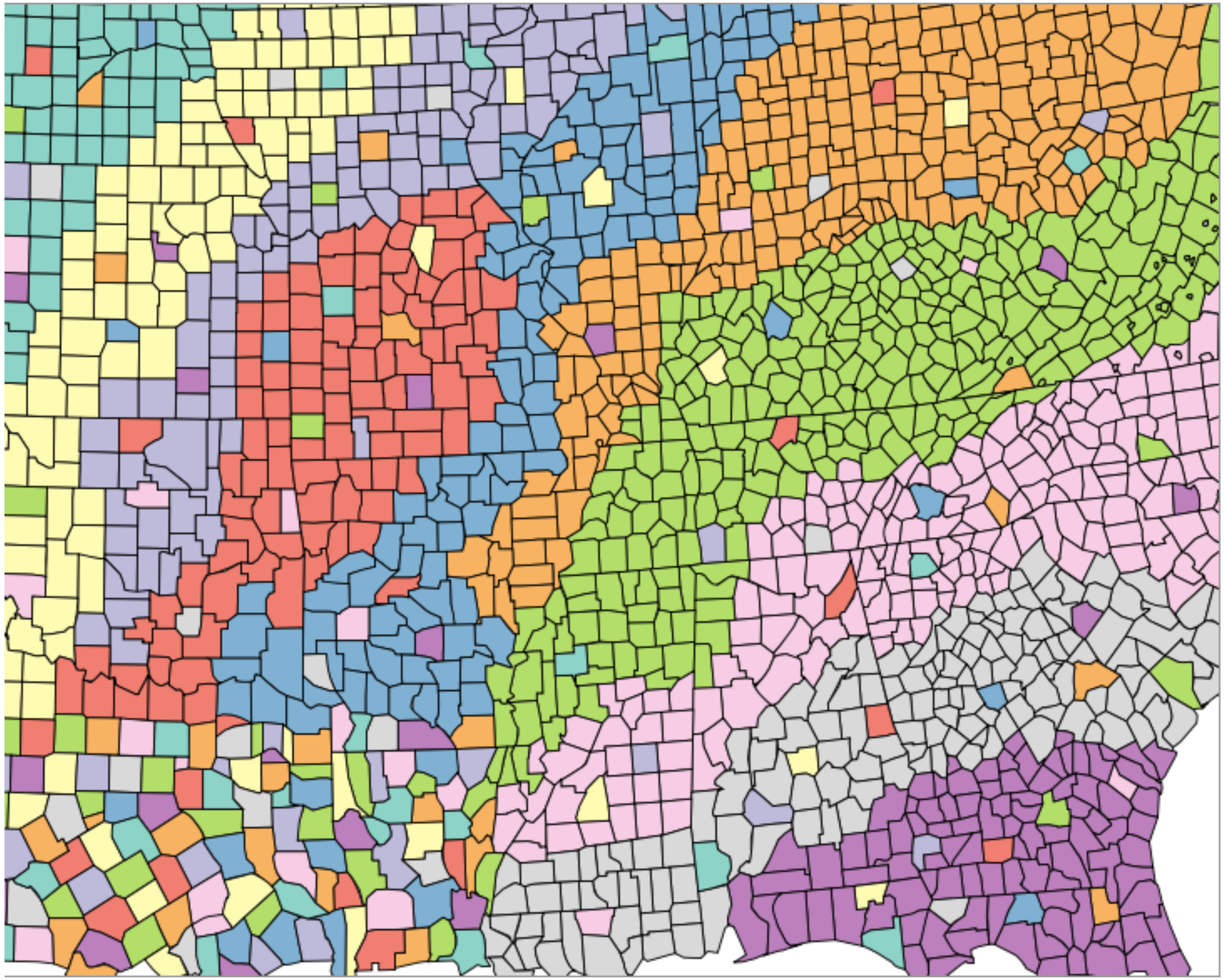
- Don't use too many colors (~12)
- Remember your background has a color, too
- Nameable colors help
- Be aware of luminance (e.g. difference between blue and yellow)
- Think about other marks you might wish to use in the visualization

Categorical Colormaps



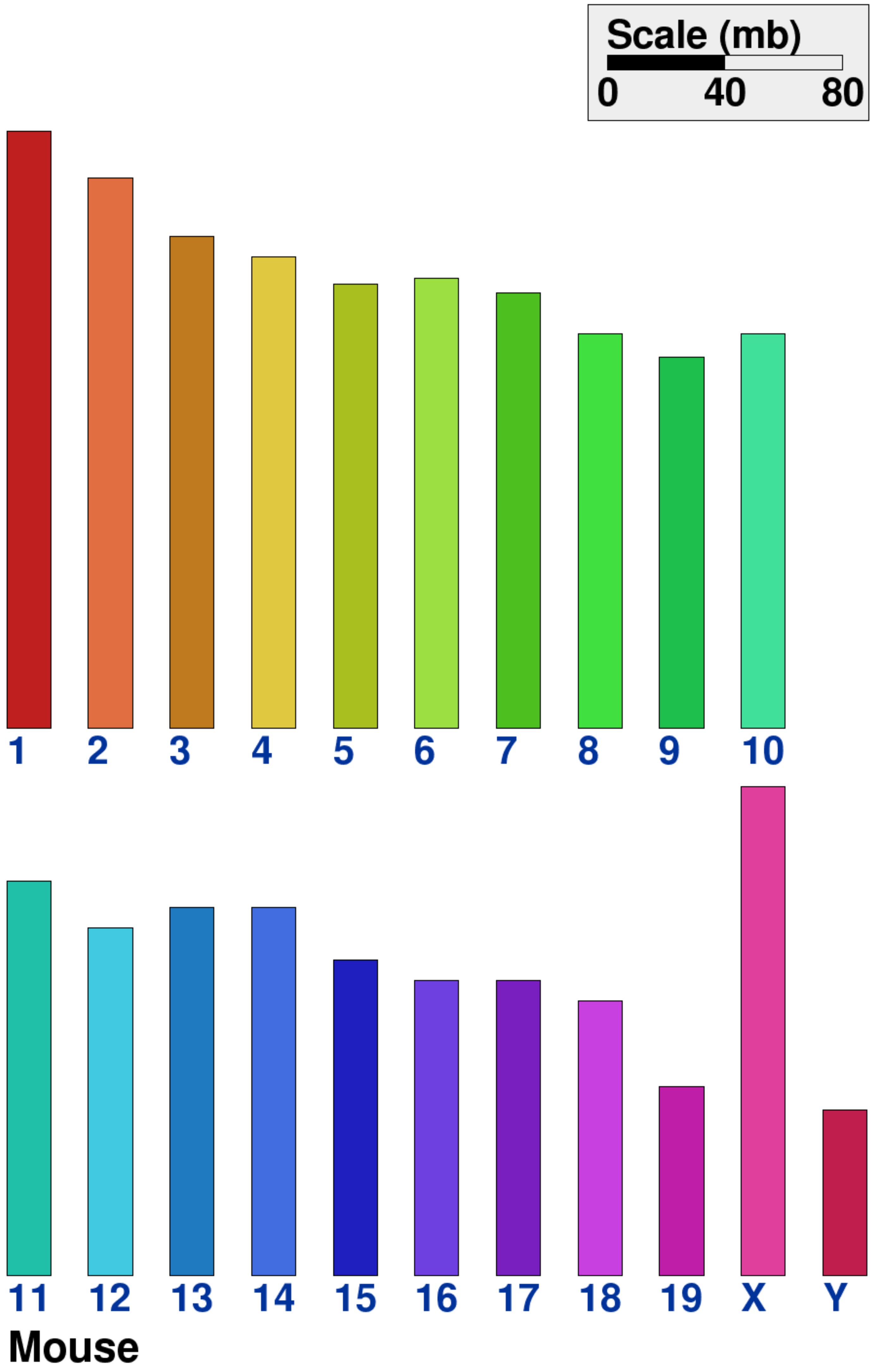
[colorbrewer2.org]

Categorical Colormaps



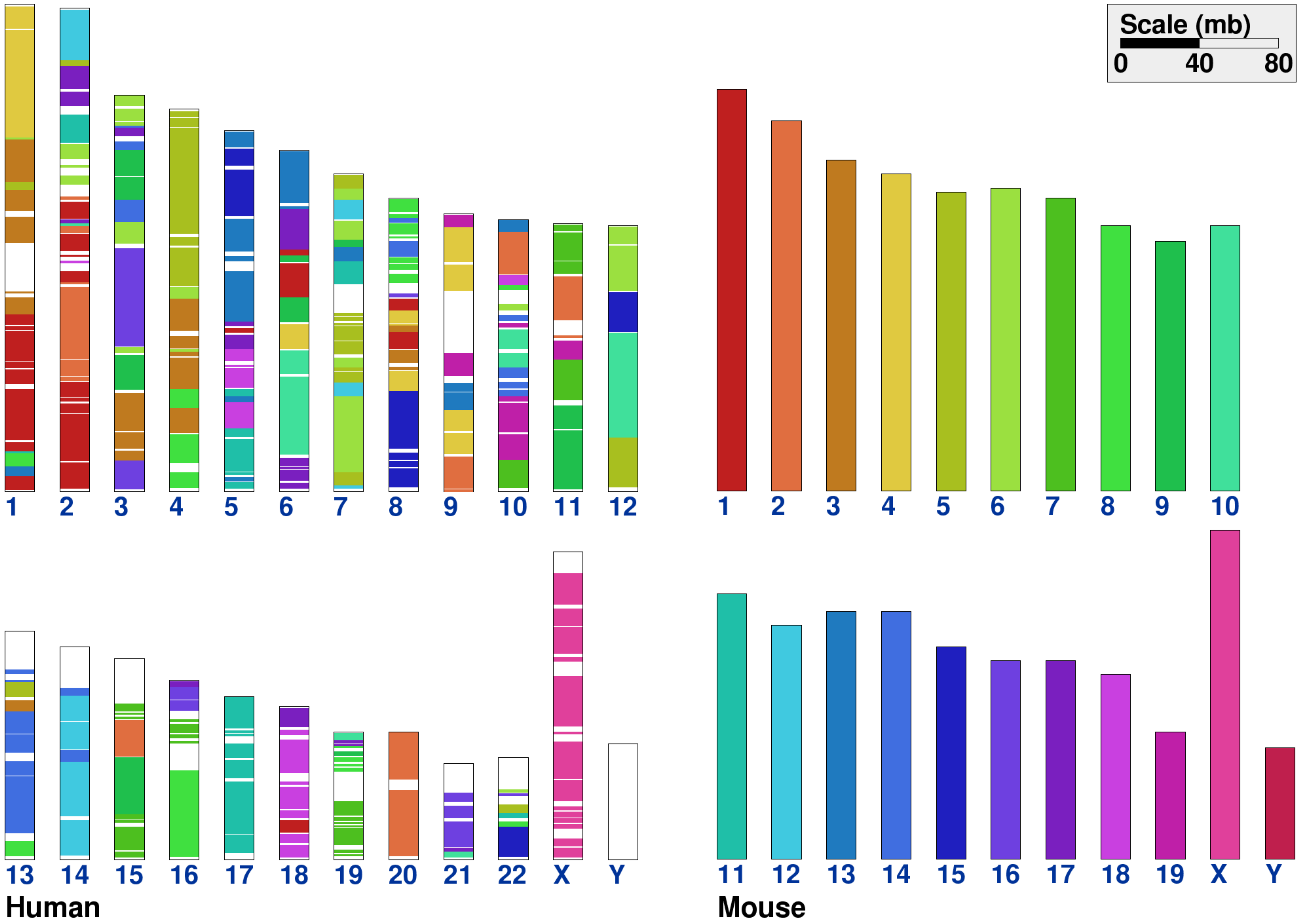
[colorbrewer2.org]

Number of distinguishable colors?



[Sinha & Meller, 2007]

Number of distinguishable colors?



[Sinha & Meller, 2007]

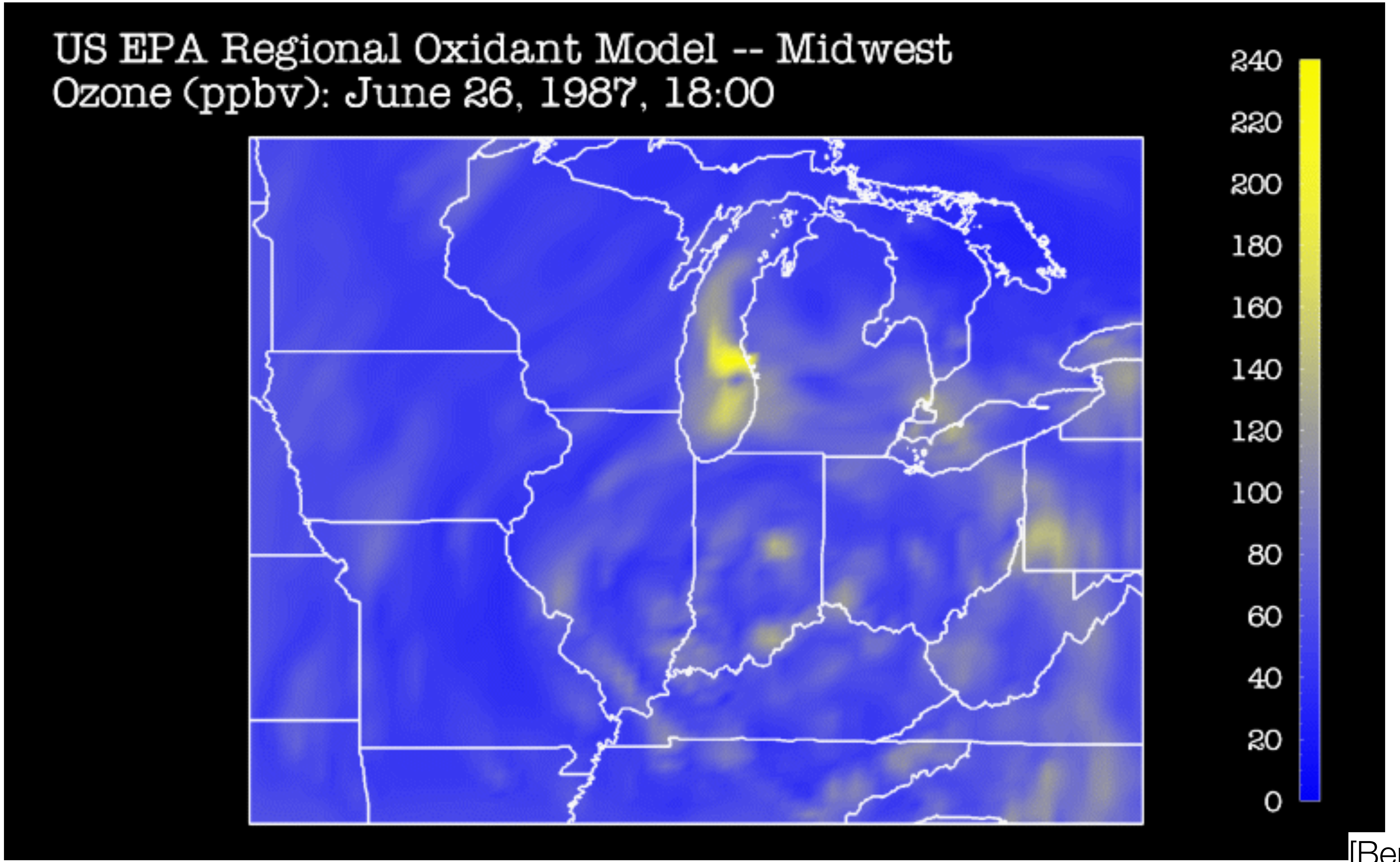
Discriminability

- Often, fewer colors are better
- Don't let viewers combine colors because they can't tell the difference
- Make the combinations yourself
- Also, can use the "Other" category to reduce the number of colors

Ordered Colormaps

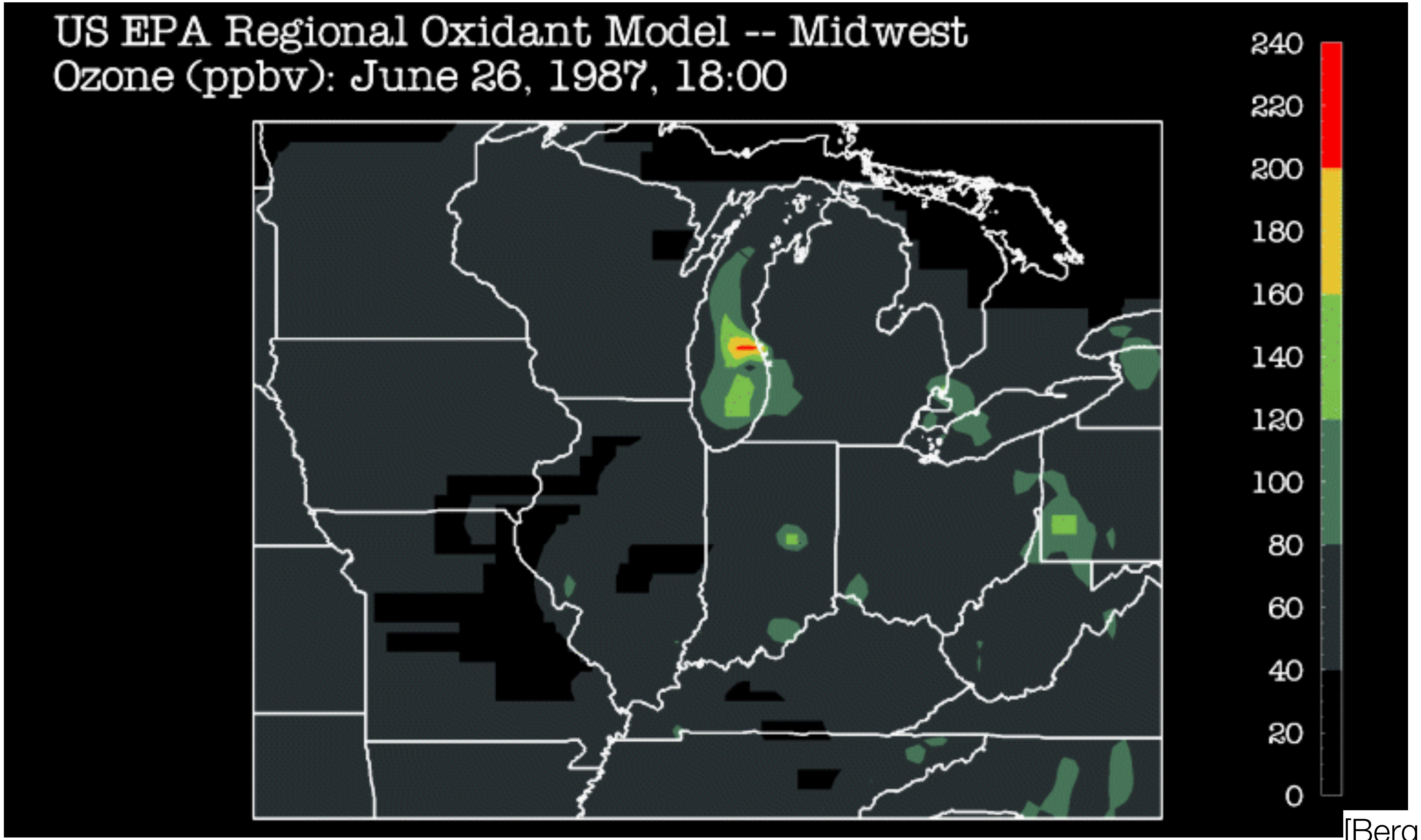
- Used for ordinal or quantitative attributes
- [0, N]: Sequential
- [-N, 0, N]: Diverging (has some meaningful midpoint)
- Can use hue, saturation, and luminance
- Remember hue is not a magnitude channel so be careful
- Can be **continuous** (smooth) or **segmented** (sharp boundaries)
  - Segmented matches with ordinal attributes
  - Can be used with quantitative data, too.

Continuous Colormap



[Bergman et al., 1995]

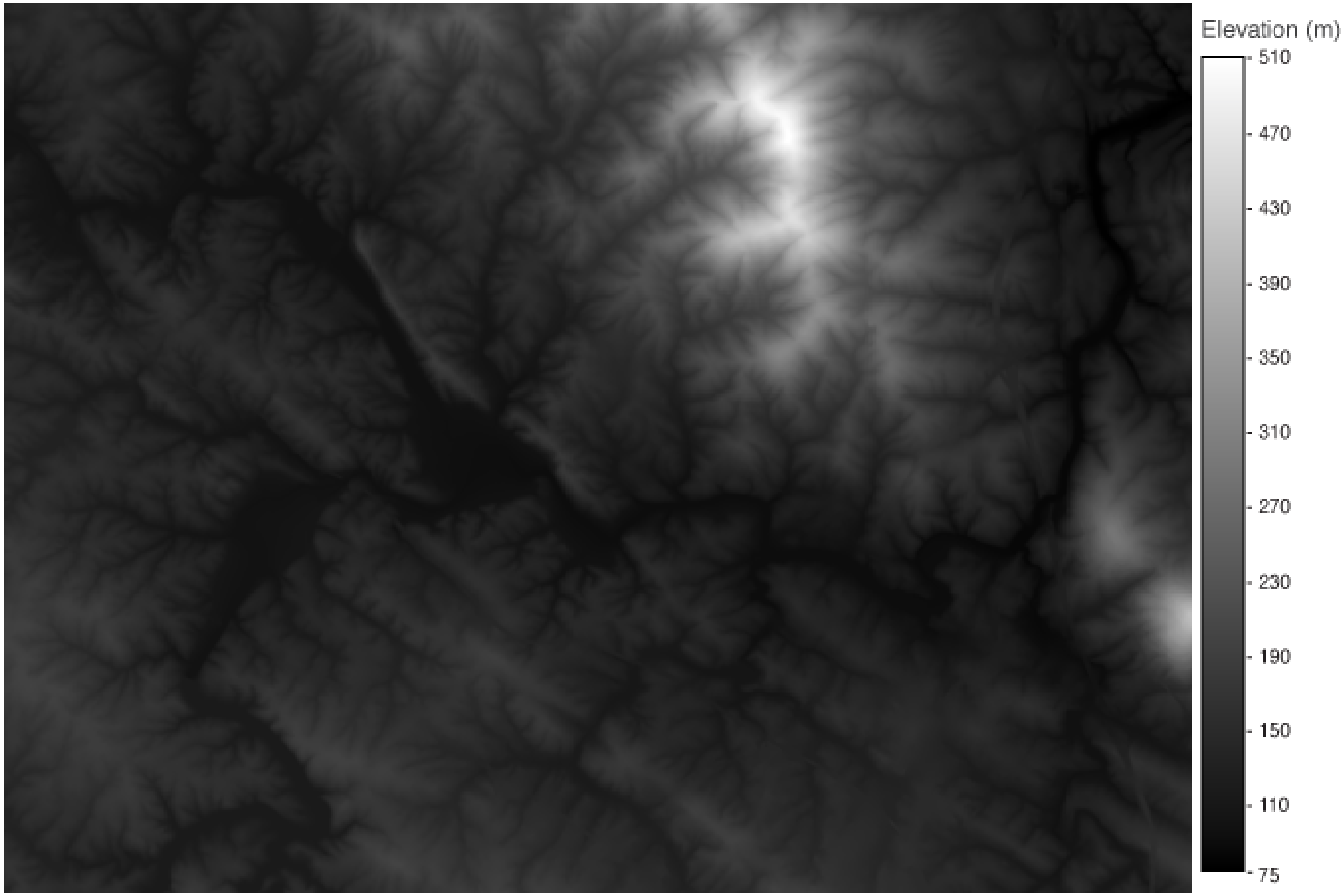
Segmented Colormap



[Bergman et al., 1995]

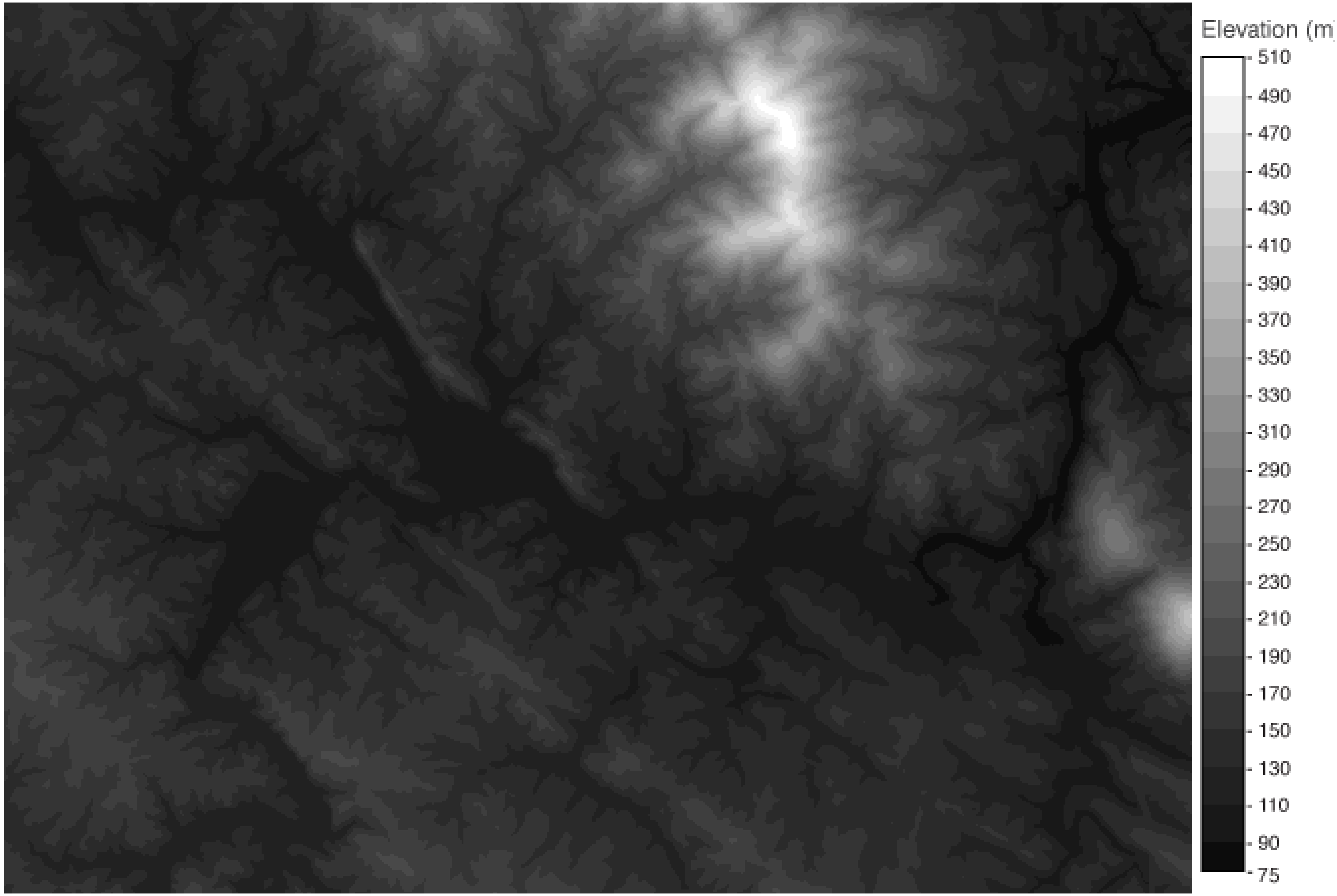
Is continuous better than segmented?

Continuous



[Padilla et al., 2017]

Many Segments



[Padilla et al., 2017]

Fewer Segments

[Padilla et al., 2017]

Types of Tasks

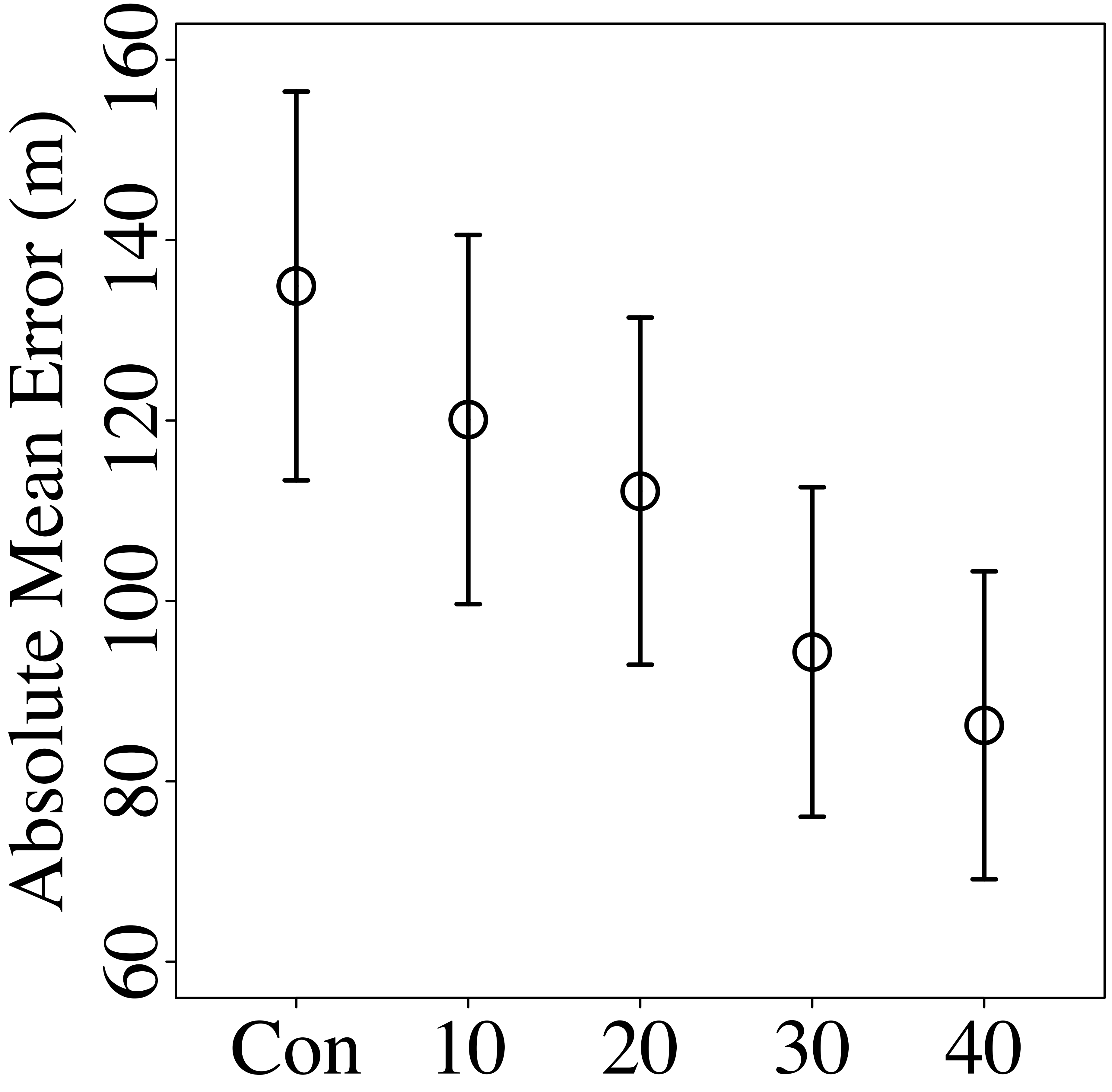
- Locate/Explore & Identify: Highest Point (Global, In Region), 275m
- Locate/Explore & Compare: Height Compare/Rank
- Explore & Identify: Steepest
- Lookup & Identify: Lookup
- Explore & Compare: Steepness Compare/Rank
- Browse & Summarize: Average Height
- Browse & Compare: Compare Average Height
- Combination: Steepest at 355m

[Padilla et al., 2017]

Results

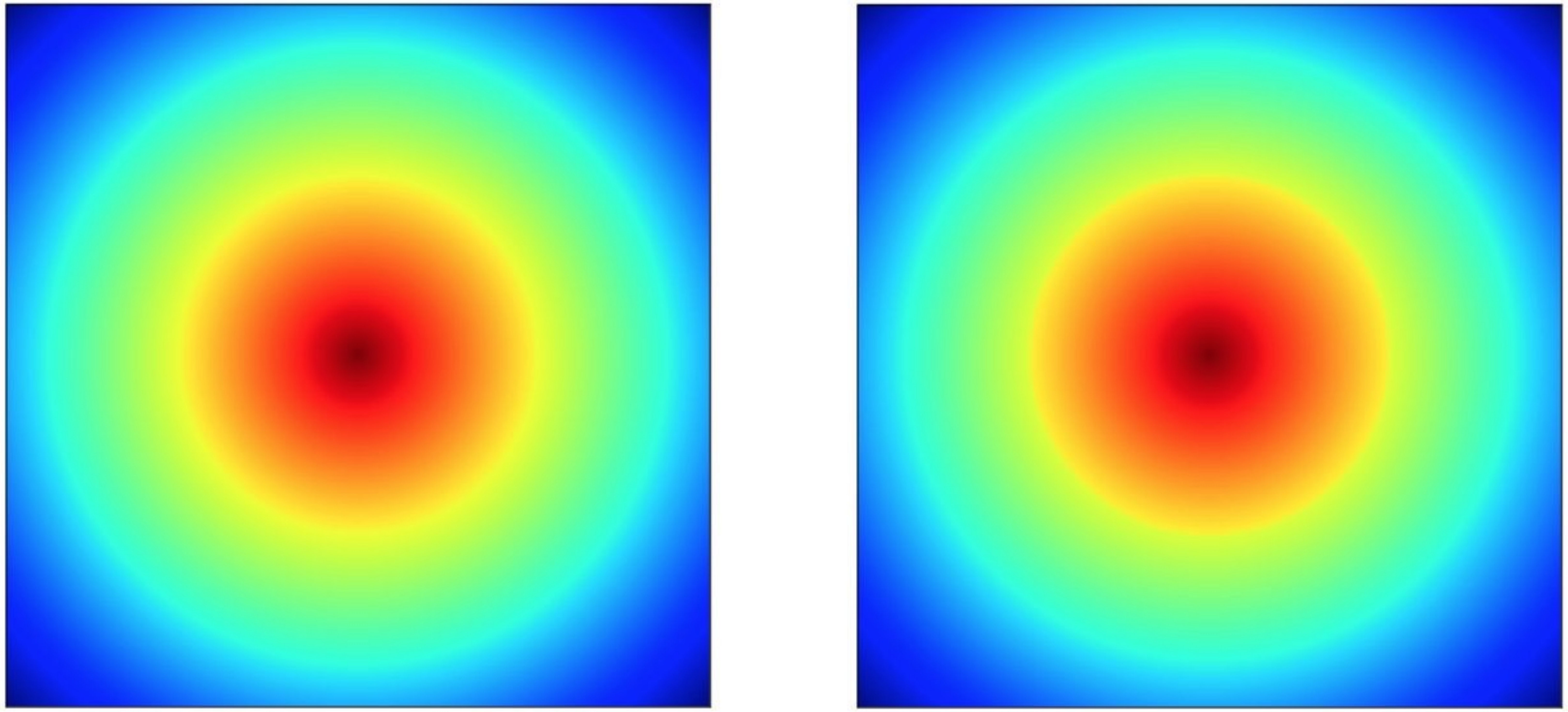
- "[C]ontrary to the expressiveness principle, no cases were found in which a continuous encoding of 2D scalar field data was advantageous for task accuracy, and for some tasks, specific binned encodings facilitated accuracy."
- "[S]upport for the counterintuitive finding that decisions with binned encoding were slower than those made with continuous encoding"
- Word of caution: single image!

Lookup Task (Lower)



[Padilla et al., 2017]

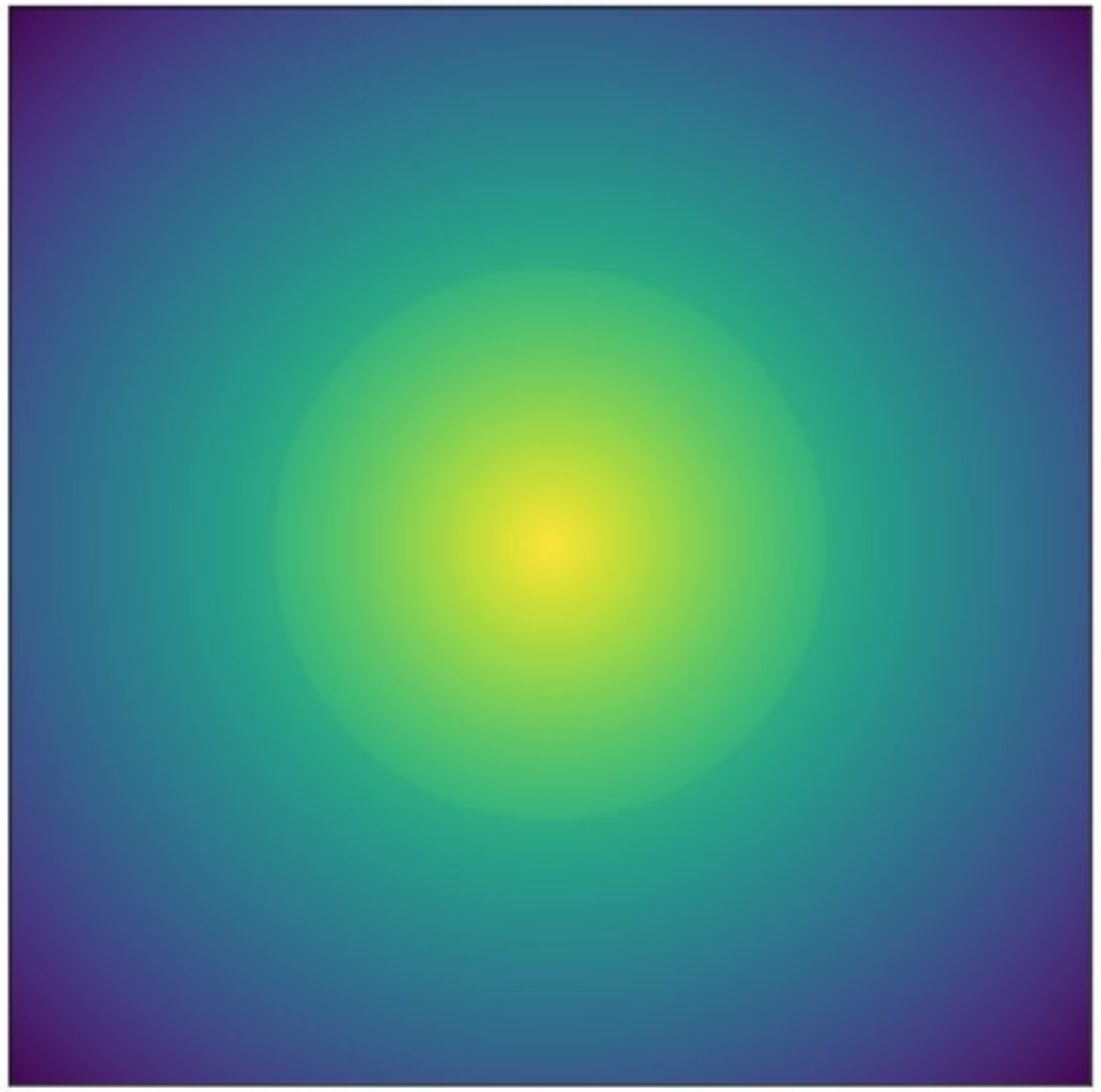
Don't Use Rainbow Colormaps

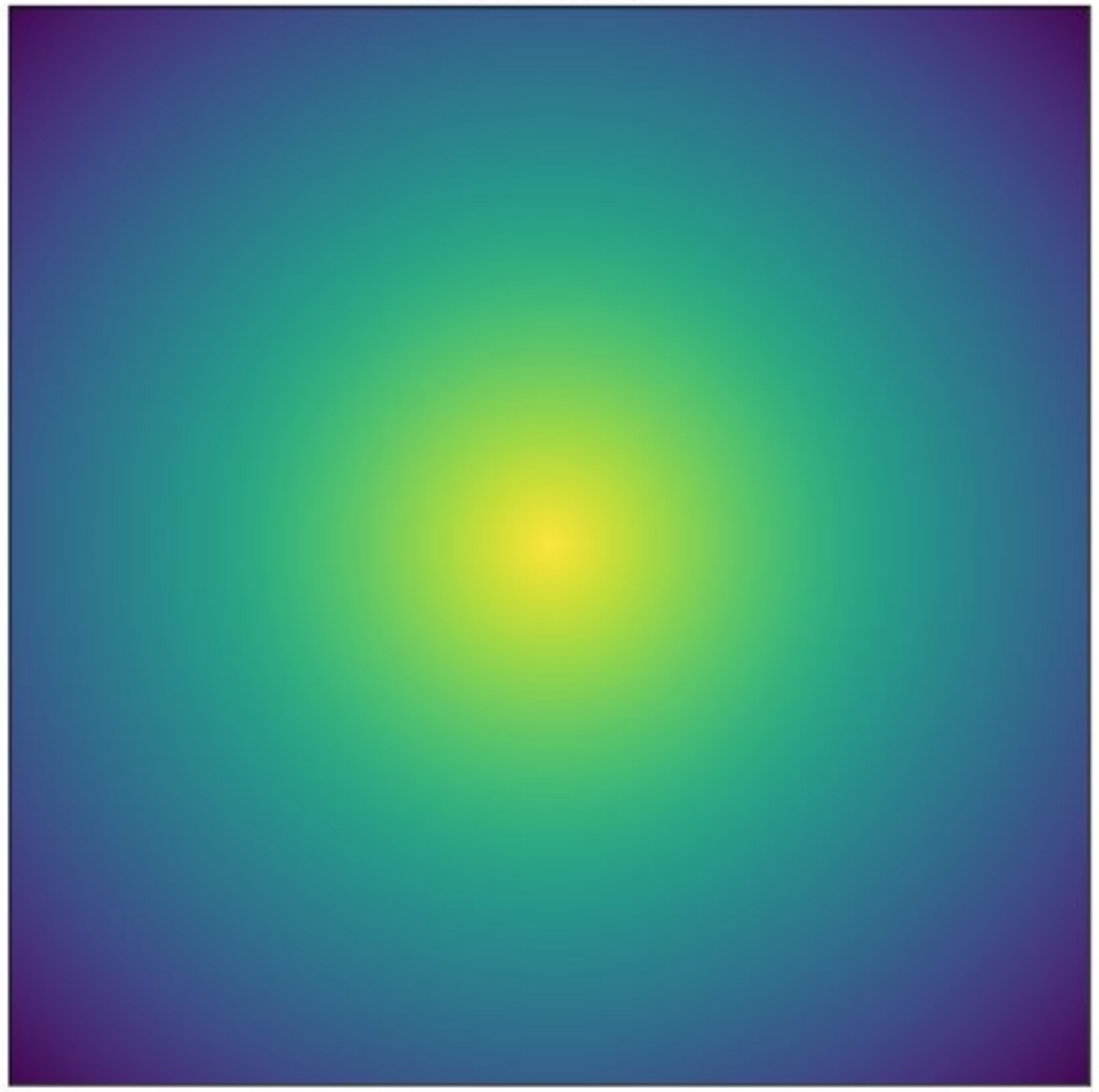


Which has a discontinuity?

[M. Bussonnier]

Other Colormaps Work Better

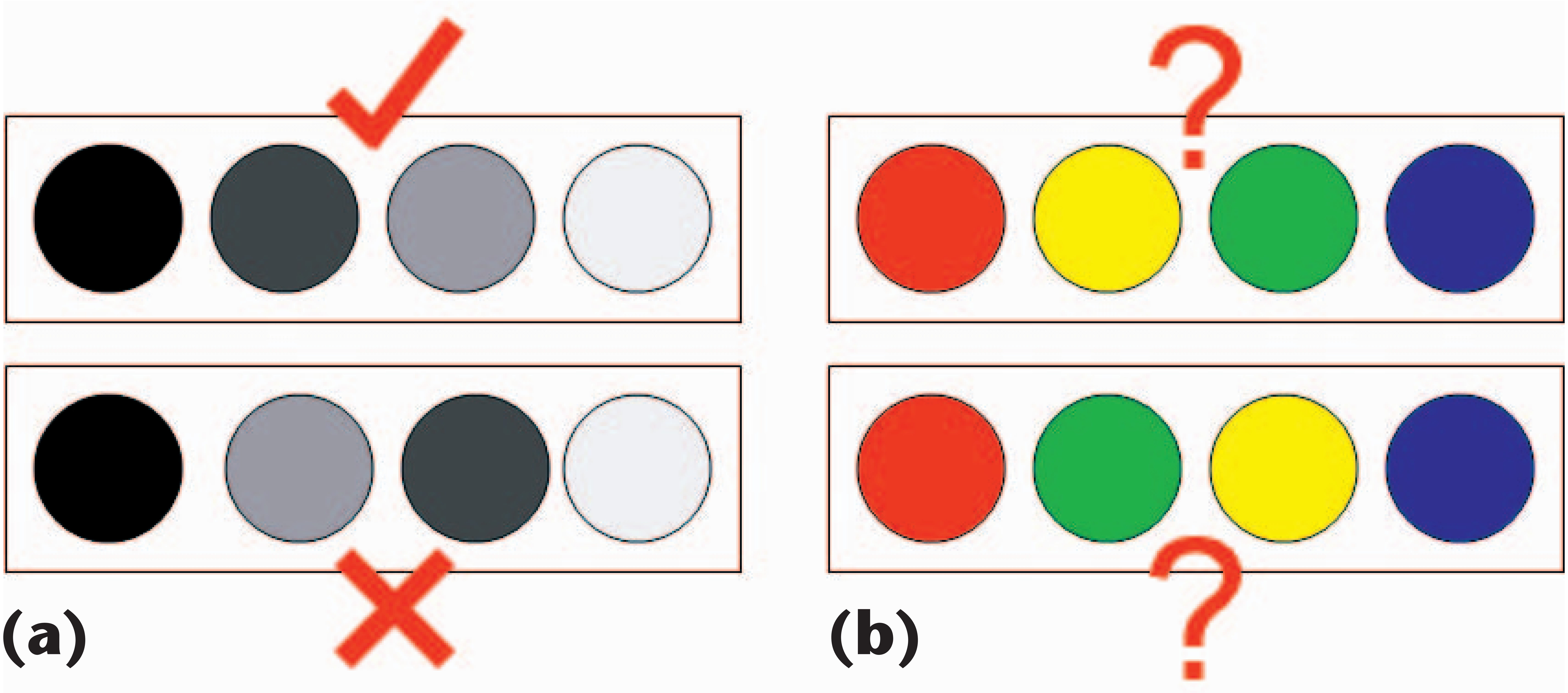




Which has a discontinuity?

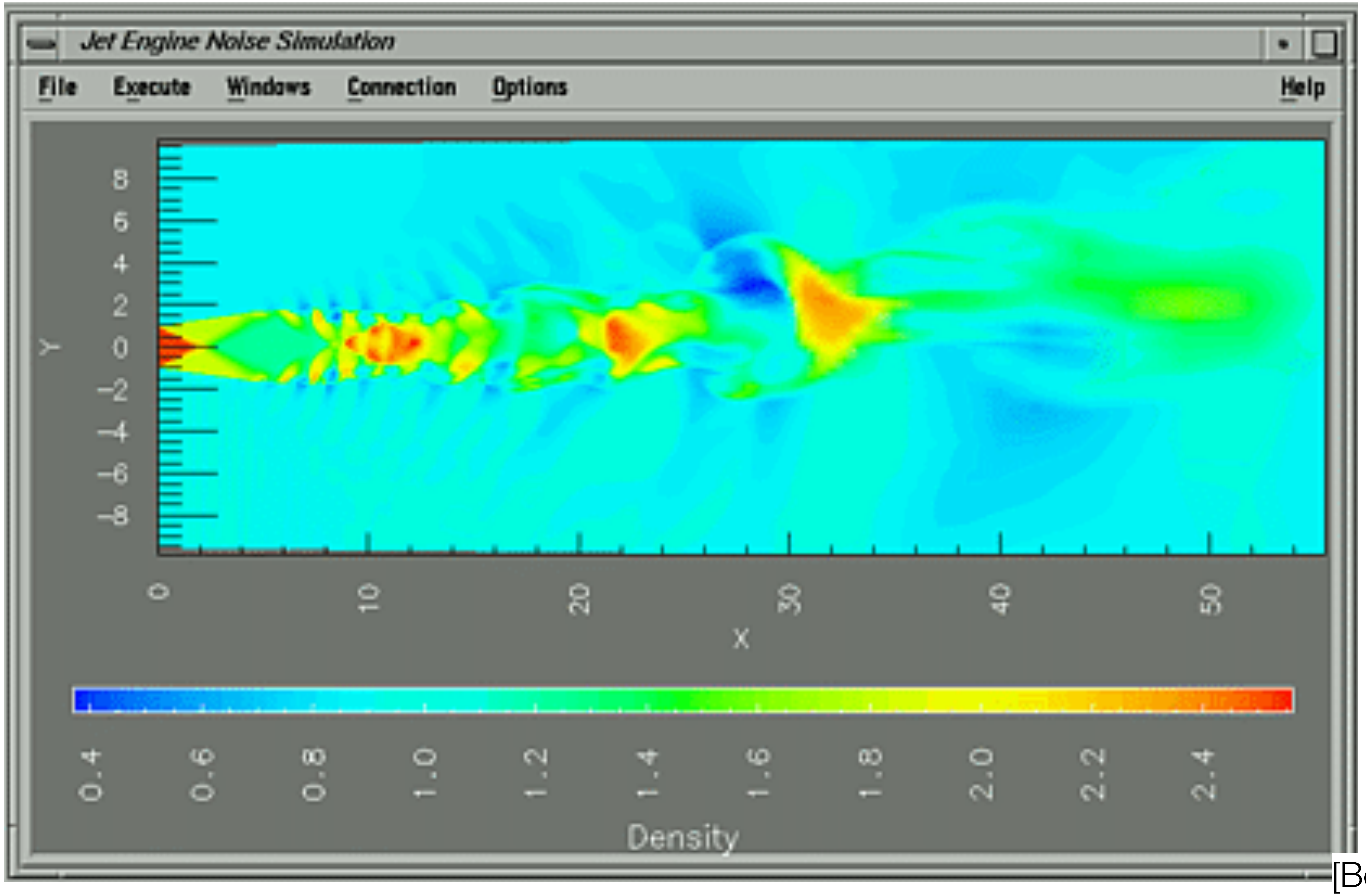
[M. Bussonnier]

Ordering Color?



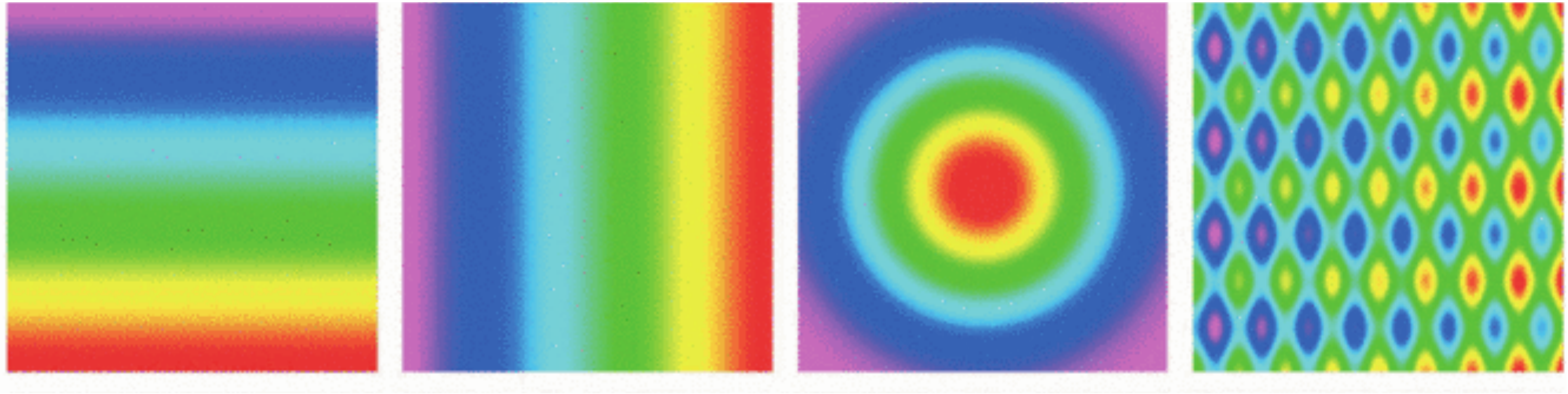
[Borland & Taylor, 2007]

Rainbow Colormap



[Bergman et al., 1995]

Artifacts from Rainbow Colormaps



[Borland & Taylor, 2007]

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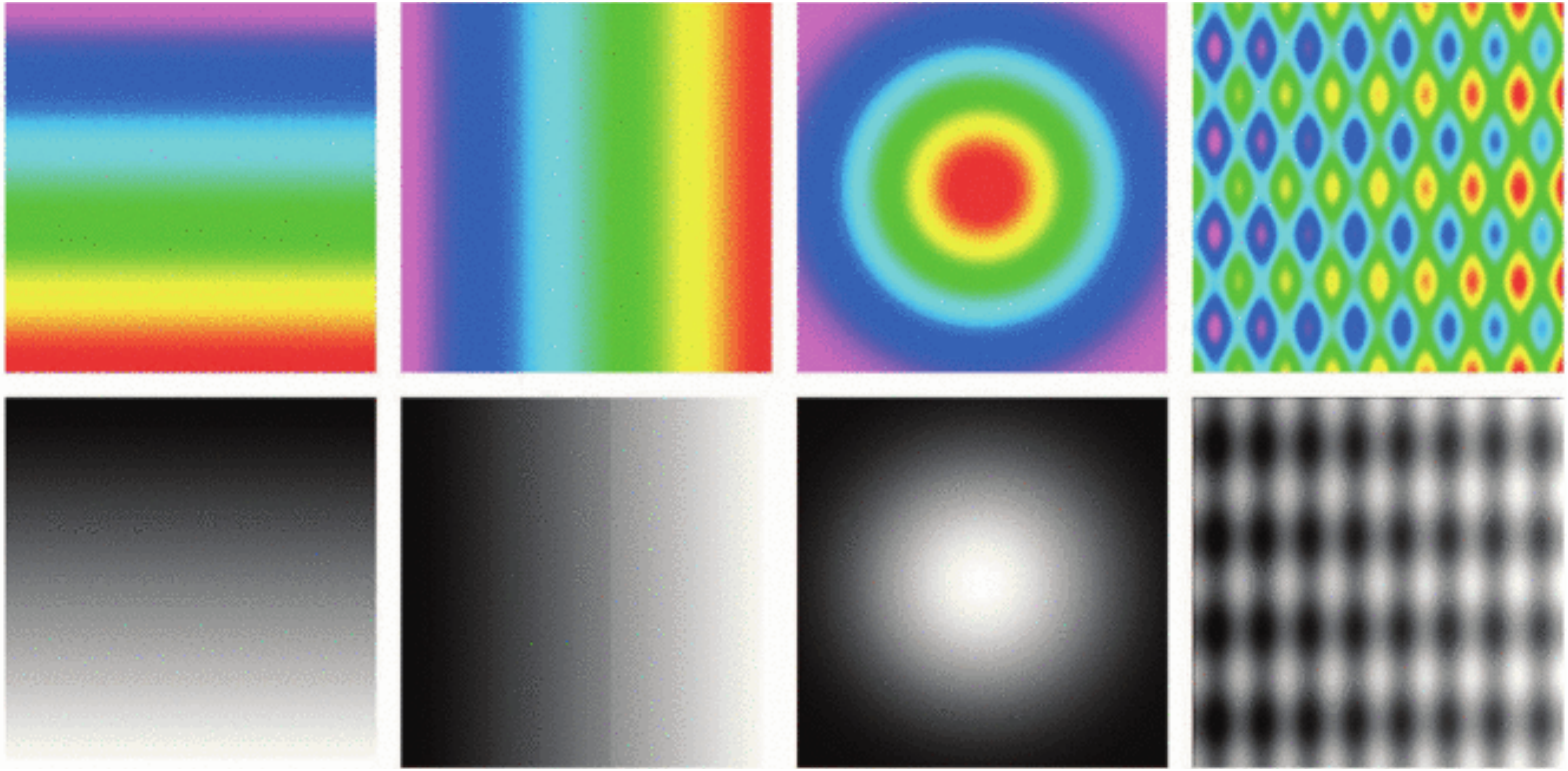
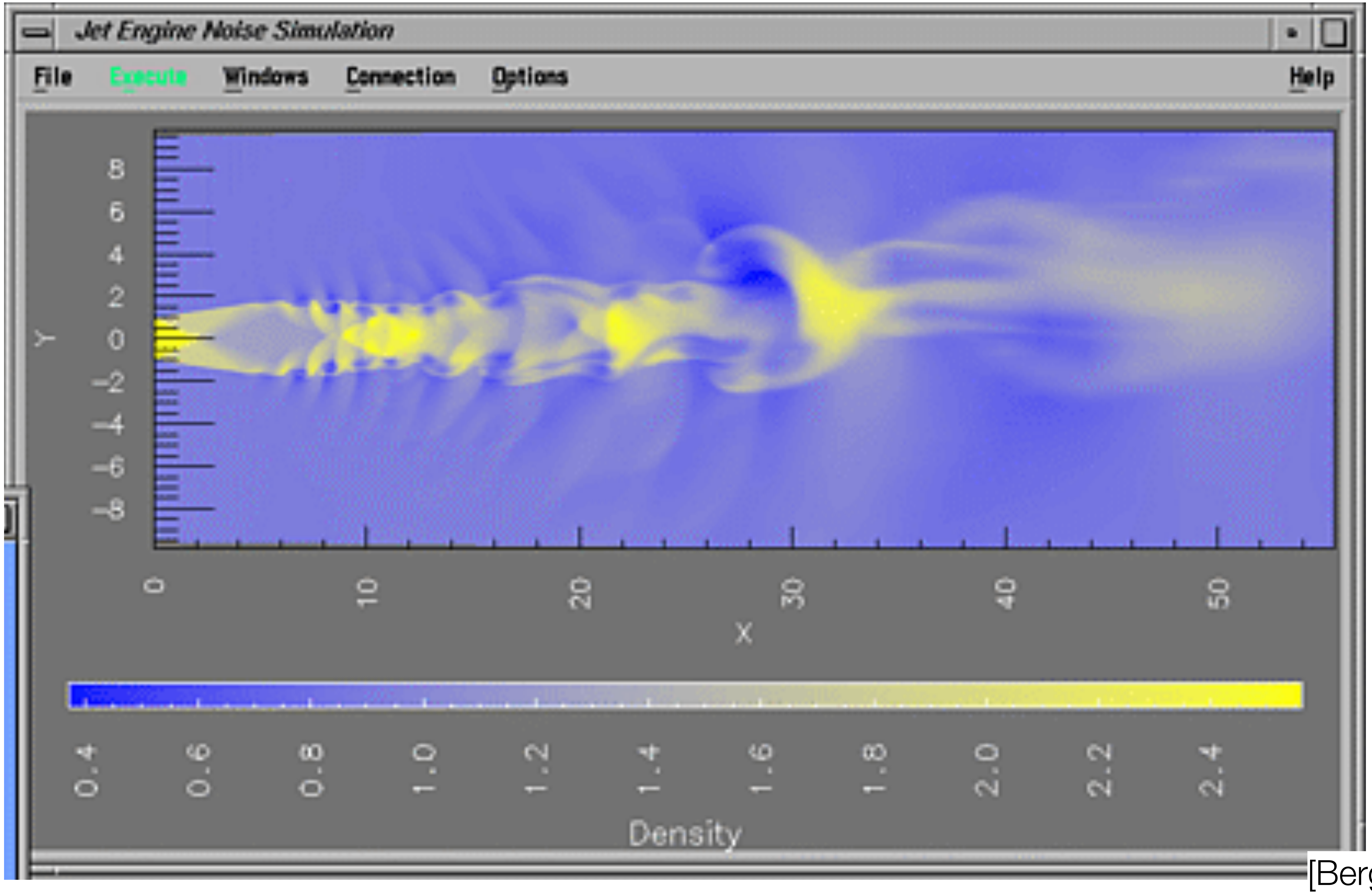


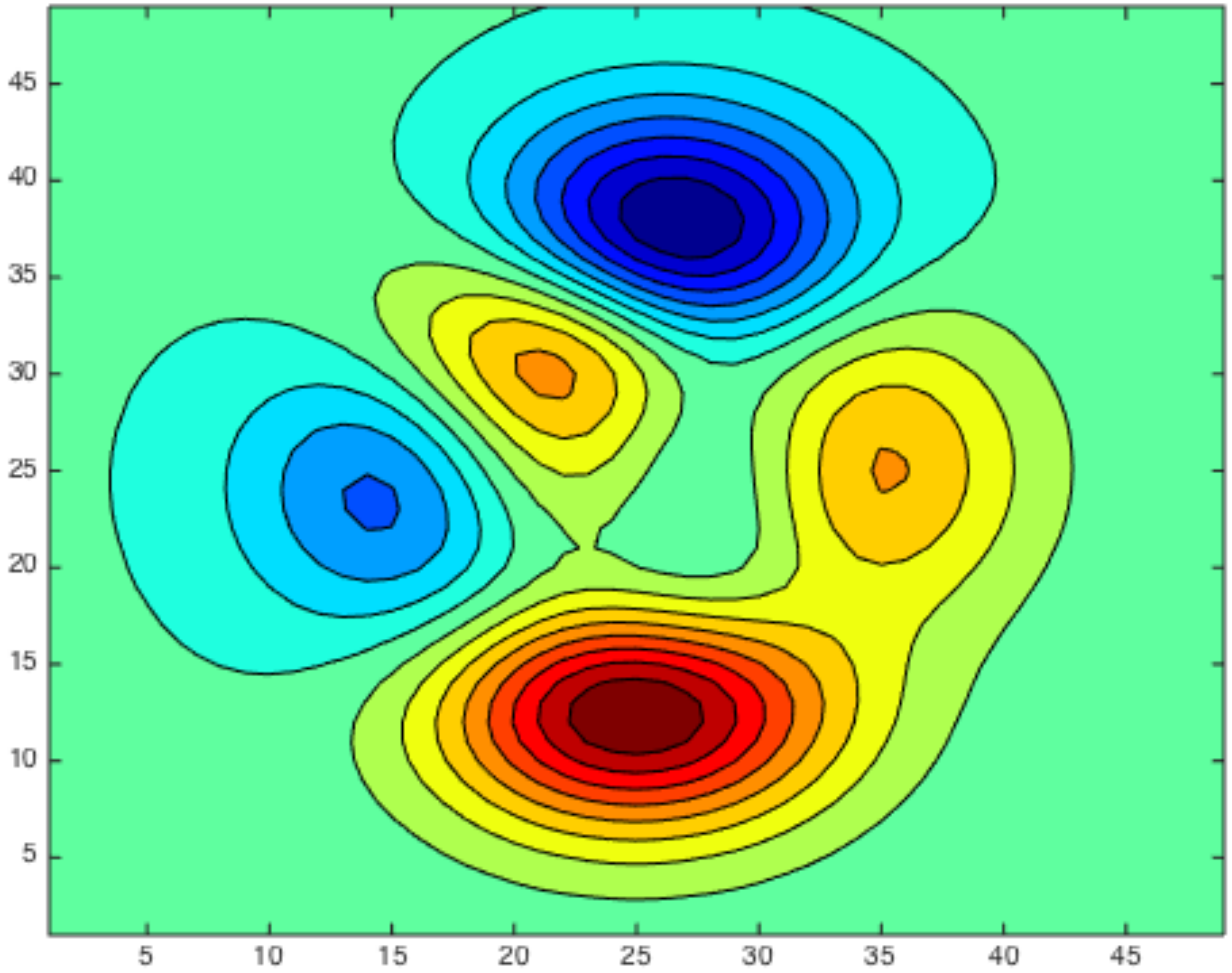
[Borland & Taylor, 2007]

Two-Hue Colormap



[Bergman et al., 1995]

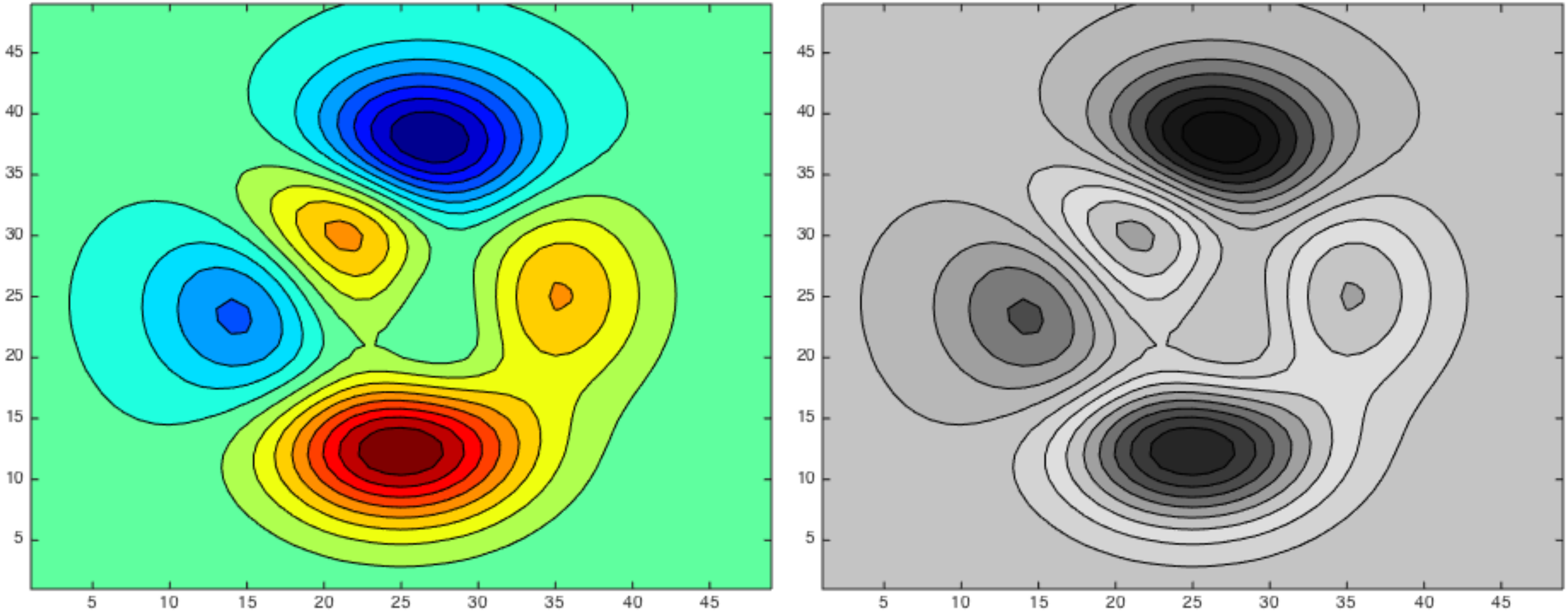
"Get It Right in Black and White" - M. Stone



jet colormap

[S. Eddins (Matlab Blog), 2014]

"Get It Right in Black and White" - M. Stone



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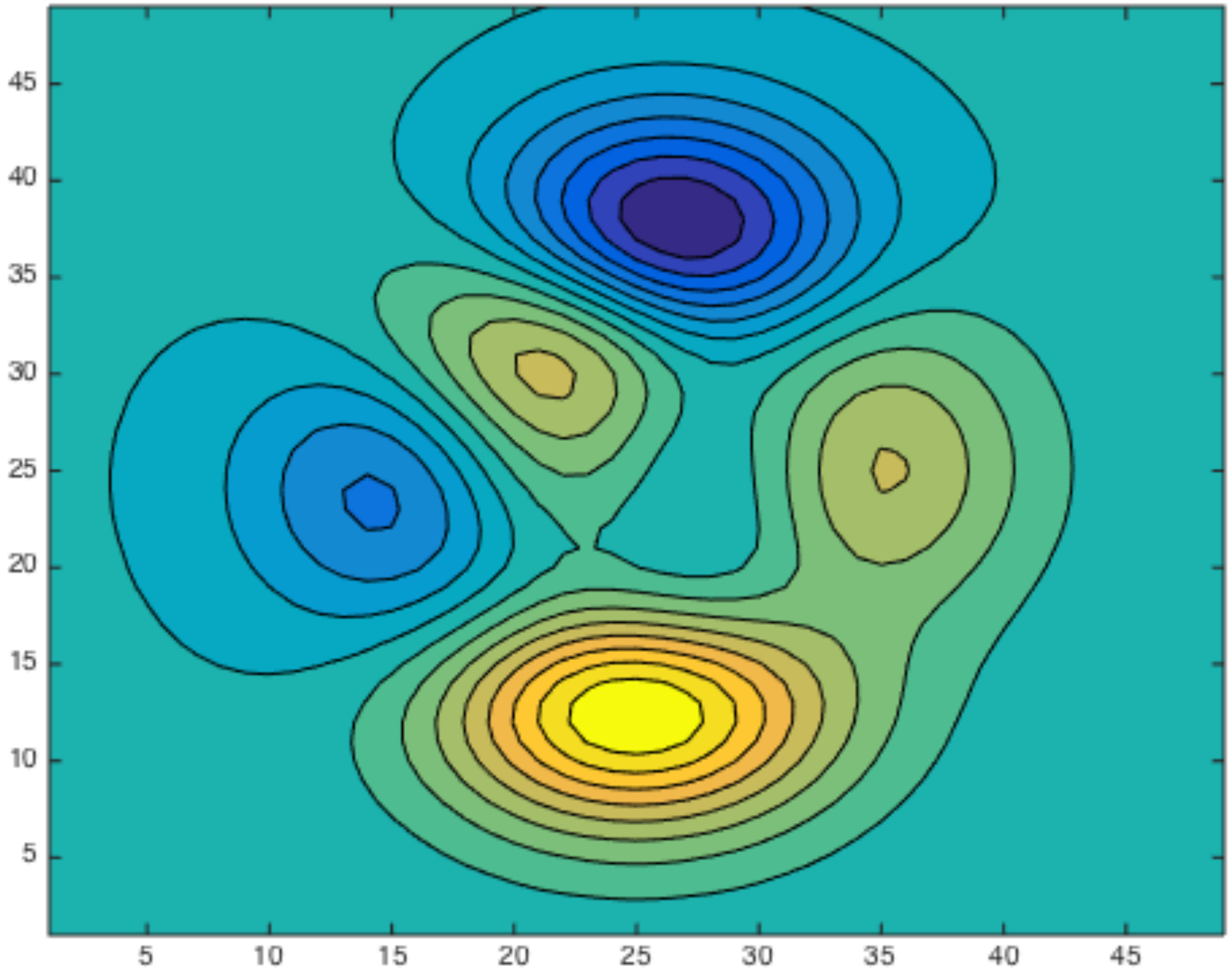
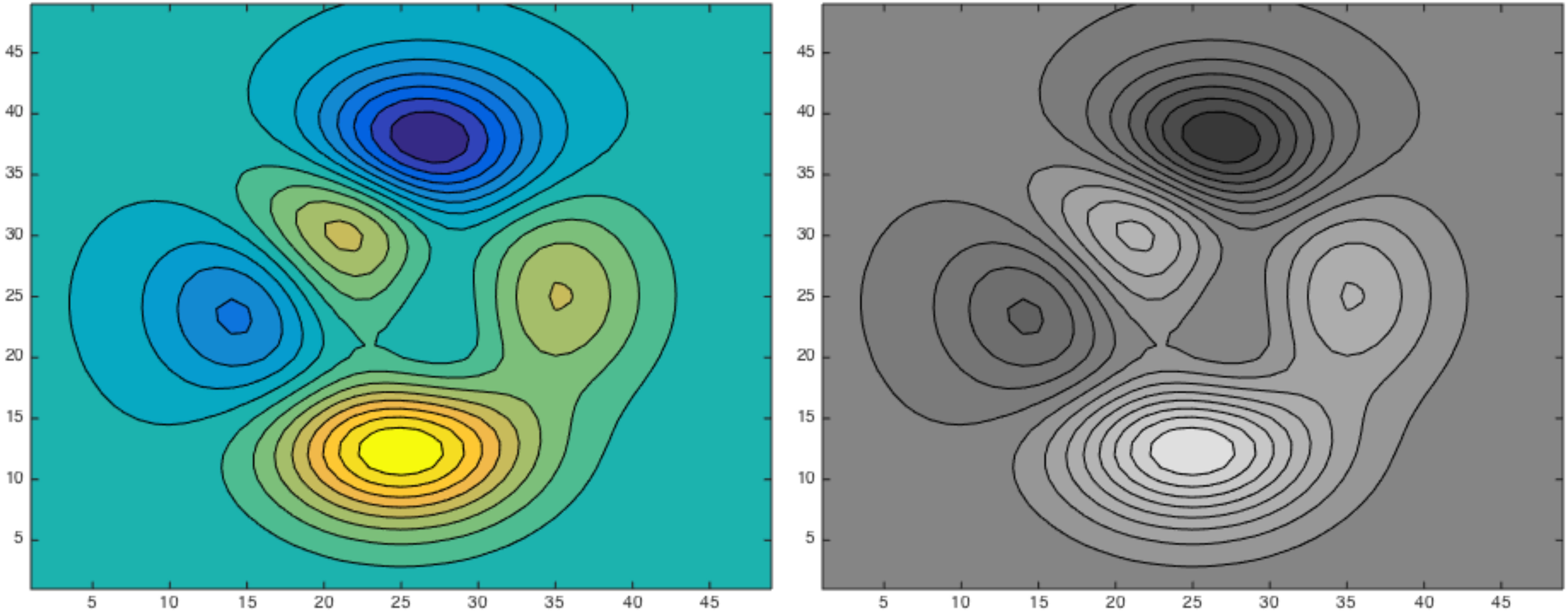


parula colormap

[S. Eddins (Matlab Blog), 2014]

"Get It Right in Black and White" - M. Stone



parula colormap

[S. Eddins (Matlab Blog), 2014]

Isoluminant Rainbow Colormap

Original

Isoluminant

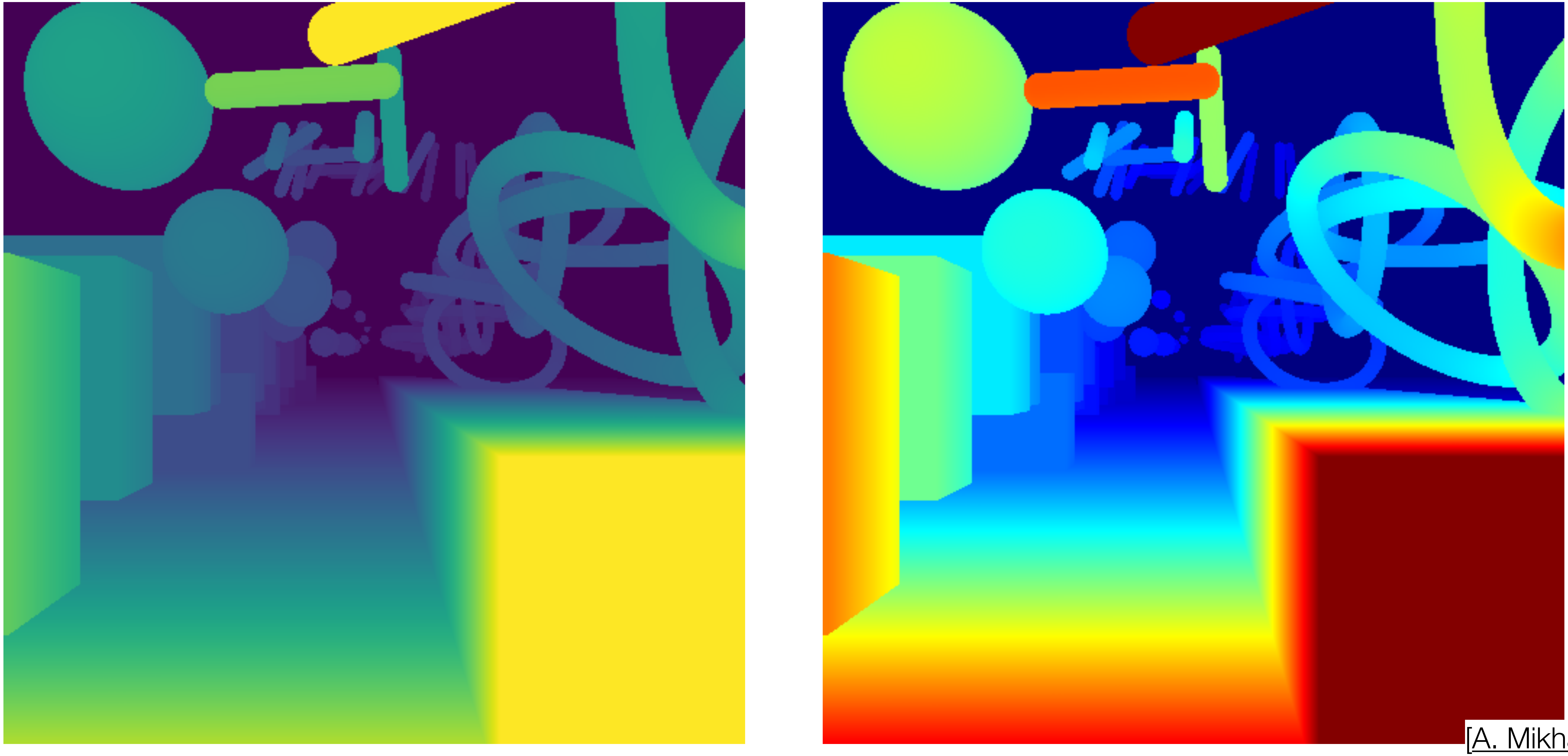
[Kindlmann et al., 2002]

Turbo Colormap (August 2019)

Jet

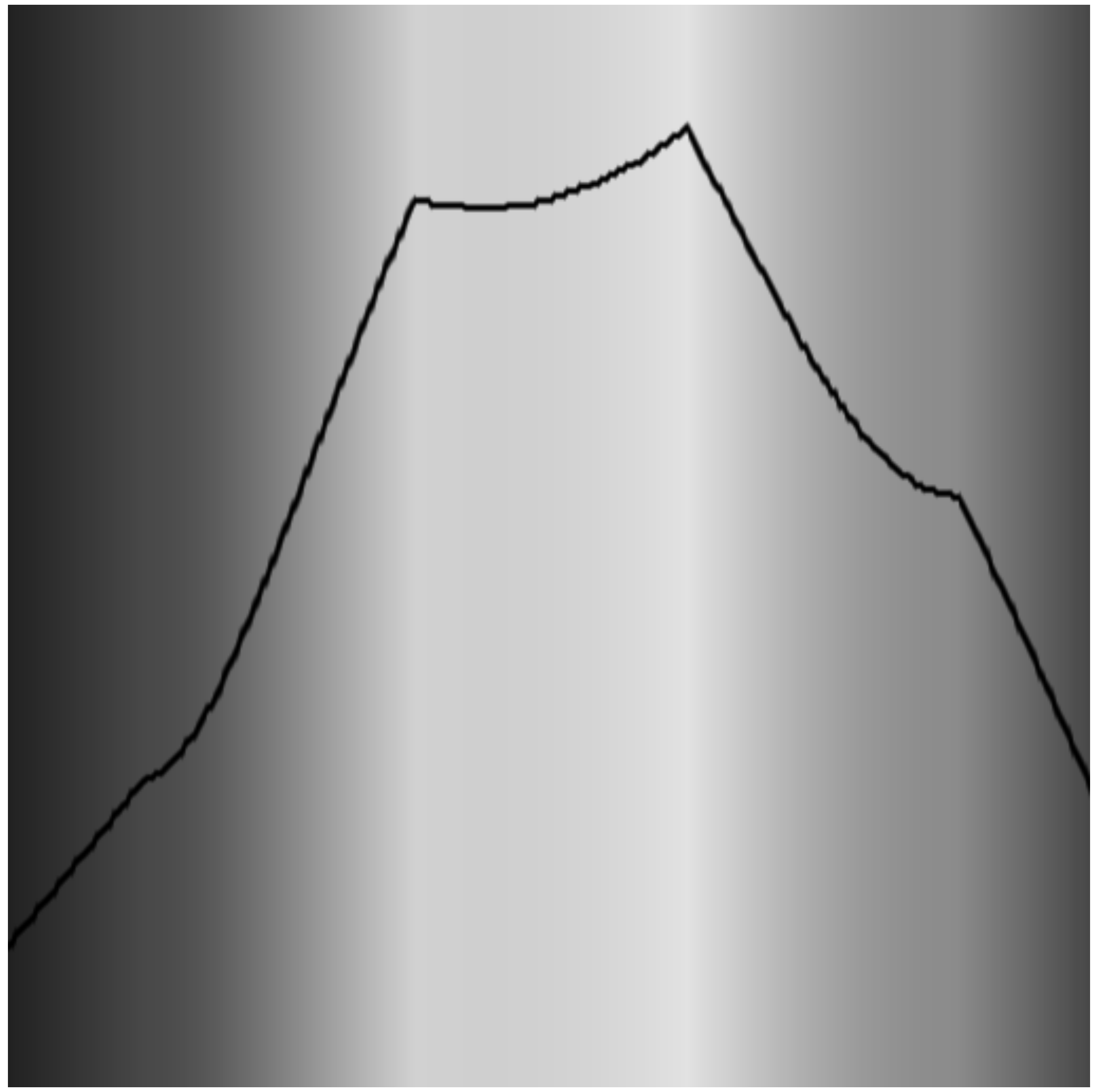
Turbo

Turbo: More Detail in Disparity Maps?

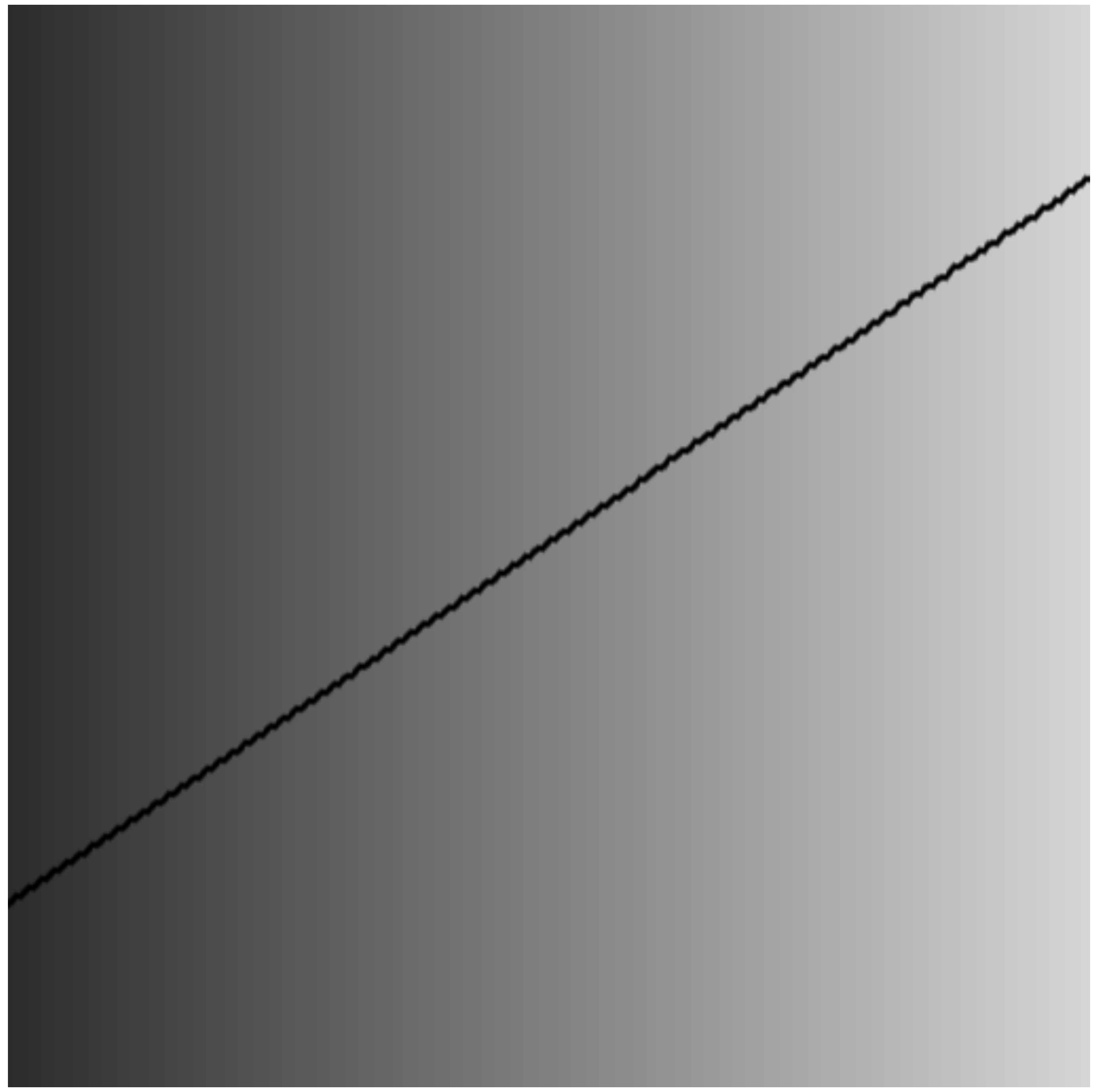


[A. Mikhailov]

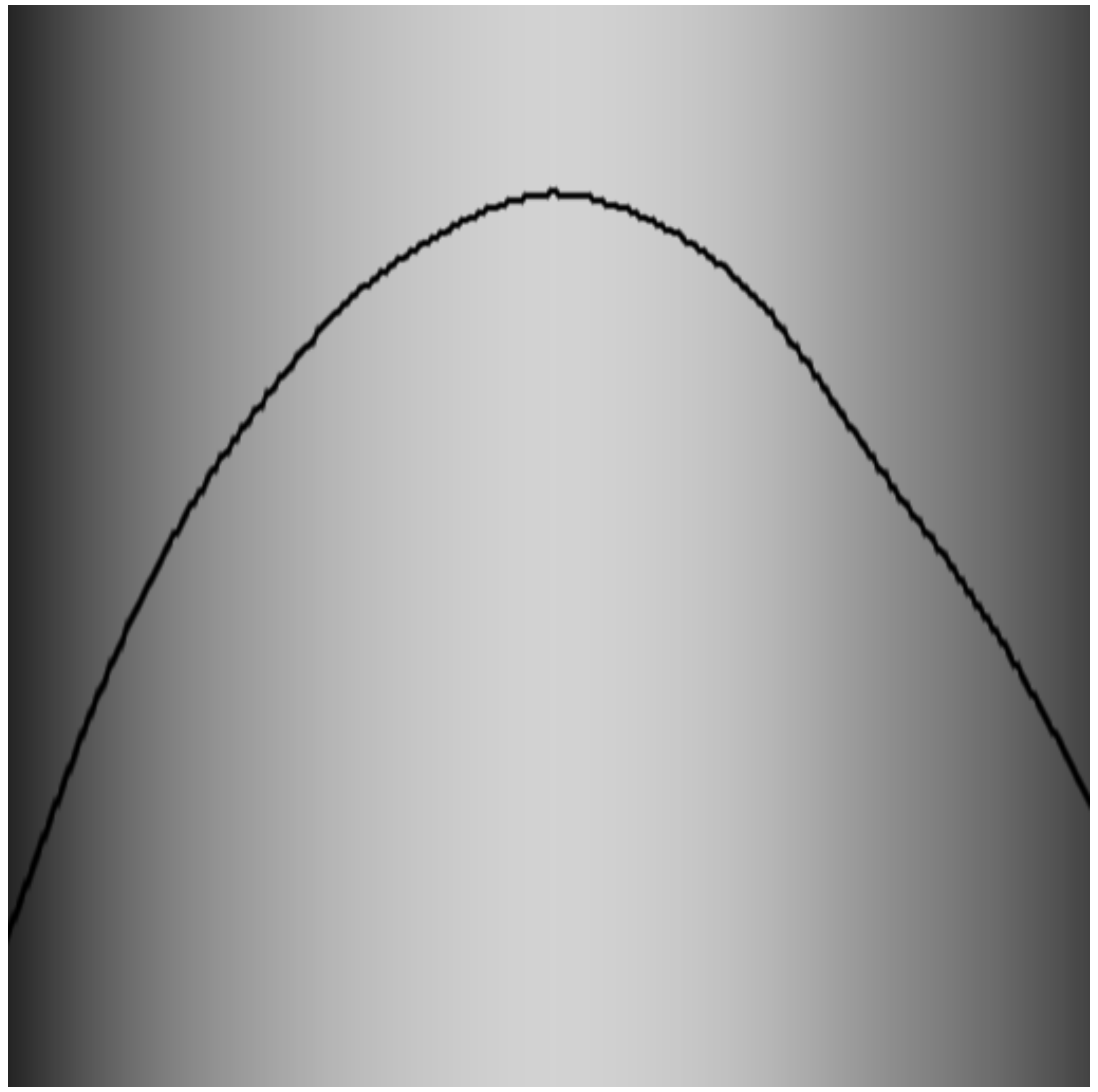
Turbo: Lightness Profiles



Jet



Viridis



Turbo

[A. Mikhailov]

Turbo Discussion

- Turbo is an improvement over jet
- Some fields (e.g. meteorology) have long used rainbow-like colormaps
- Argument is that segments are more easily located
- Turbo post claims that hue is prioritized in attention, but this seems to misinterpret the study…
- Brightness and saturation are more important than hue in attracting attention [Camgöz et al., 2004 h/t J. Stevens]

More Guidelines

- Nice set of articles by Lisa Charlotte Rost:
  - https://blog.datawrapper.de/colorguide/
  - https://blog.datawrapper.de/beautifulcolors/
- Her guidelines on choosing colors:
  1. **Copy from others**
  2. **Use Tools**
  3. …