



***Museum  
Color Project***

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## **The Dior Window**

The window display pictured above is from the front window of the Dior store on fifth avenue in Manhattan. The background of the window is a solid bright red hue which covers everything from the sides of the frame to the floor of the frame. The background of the window also features seven gold trimmed rectangular frames, and are all of slightly varying sizes. Each of the frames features a portrait of a woman that looks as though it can date back to years ago. The bottom half of each of the paintings are cut off juxtaposing the black background of the portraits with a solid white bottoms. In front of this background are two mannequins wearing Dior's women's clothing. The mannequin on the left is wearing a light weight jacket, the top half of the jacket has a black and white checkered pattern and the bottom half is solid black with one pocket on each side. The jacket also has a large collar which is white and appears to be lined with a soft material. The mannequin has on a black and white checkered pleated mini skirt that matches the top of the jacket. The top this mannequin is wearing is mostly covered by the jacket but parts of it stick out through the top and we can see the white button up shirt she is wearing underneath. Next to the skirt we can see a gray scarf that is slightly sticking out on the right side and appears to be draped over her shoulder underneath the jacket. In the mannequin's hand is a rectangular black bag with a black and white striped handle. The shoes match the pattern of the shirt and jacket featuring a black and white checkered pattern and there is a very subtle pop of color in the socks which are a dark purple hue. The mannequin on the right is wearing a mid length gray skirt with large pleats. The skirt is a-symmetrical, meaning that the skirt is longer on the right side than it is on the left. The top is a long sleeved suit jacket in a matching gray that has three buttons on the front and a peplum bottom. The mannequin has on a black version of the

same shoes the other mannequin has on as well as the black version of the same mid calf length socks.

### **The Met Art Work**

The artwork pictured above is titled *The Life and Miracles of Saint Godelieve* by Master of the Saint Godelieve and is located at the MET Museum in Manhattan. This is an eleventh-century painting from the Netherlands. This art piece tells a story through five gold framed rectangular panels over seven scenes. The center panel is the largest one and is split into three scenes, the two smaller frames are on each side of this larger panel. The painting tells the story of a Netherlandish saint named Godelieve. Starting from the left the first scene shows Godelieve with her family, then Godelieve feeding the poor, the feast for the count of Boulogne, the marriage between Godelieve and Bertolf, Bertolf and his mother plotting against Godelieve, Godelieve's strangulation, and lastly Godlieve being laid to rest by Saint Josse, Nicholas of Bari, Quirinus, and John the Baptist. The painting uses a variety of colors from yellow-green, red, green and gold.

### **Color**

Color is one of main similarities between the window display and artwork, they both use fairly dark colors and repeat the same colors over and over. The primary color that is used in both the artwork and the window display is red. In the window display it is the main color which covers the entire background, in the painting it is used as pops of color on the clothing of several people throughout each scene. Gold is also used in both pieces as a border for the frames. Tints are created when a color is lightened by adding white, and this can be seen in the first scene of the artwork where one of the women's dresses is a light almost pink hue. The windows display on the other hand does not use any tinted colors but instead just the one red color and of course

pure white. Analogous colors consist of two or more colors which are next to each other on the color wheel. An analogous color which is used in the artwork but not in the window display is yellow-green which is used on the small hills in the background of several of the scenes. The yellow-green is used in combination with a standard green in order to give the hills depth. Both the window display and the artwork use a lot of white, black, and gray; these are called shades. In the Dior window display black, white, and gray are the main colors that the mannequins are wearing except for an extremely dark shade of purple used on one pair of the socks. The images in the frames in the background of the window only use black, white, and gray. The painting uses a lot of black in small details and in some of the clothing, white is used in small sections throughout such as the table cloths, and gray is used for the buildings in the background. Overall, the main connections between these two images are the use of the red hue, although both use red in a different way it works effectively in catching the viewer's eye and telling a story.

### **Texture**

Texture is the way a surface feels to the touch or how we believe it may feel based on its appearance. The artwork is an oil on wood, and this gives it a very smooth and even appearance. There are no visible brush strokes that would make it appear rough or bumpy. The window display has very little texture to it and for the most part looks even and smooth with the exception of the gold framed border. The borders have small indentations that create patterns throughout to give the display a bit of texture. These indentations give a bumpy and textured look to the background.

### **Lines**

Lines help to guide the viewer's eyes across the work and lead their eyes to what you want them to focus on. The lines in both the window display and the artwork are mainly vertical.

In the painting we can see two vertical columns used in the center frame creating lines, as well as several of the buildings in the background of the scenes creating vertical lines. In the window display the larger rectangle picture frames help to create vertical lines which bring focus to the mannequins that are tall and thin creating more vertical lines. We can also see vertical lines created in the center of the window through the spacing between the frames. This helps to bring attention to the clothing and guides the eyes from the tops all the way to the socks and shoes.

### **Proportion**

Proportion is the scale and size of various design elements within a display or art piece. In the display window proportion is used in the sizing of the frames, they were intentionally made to be extremely big in order to fill the wall and look unified with the mannequins. The large proportions of the frames make it visible from a distance, having several small frames in the background would have made the window look clutter, take the emphasis away from the merchandise, and made it difficult to see the details. Proportion is also used in the artwork with the size of the people in the front sections of the paintings compared to the details in the background. In order to create depth the details in the background are painted a smaller size compared to the people in the front who are much larger and more detailed. This helps the viewer to focus on the story being told towards the front while also creating depth and makes the background look far away.

### **Balance**

Balance is an important element which helps to create a unified presentation with symmetry. In the Dior window display the mannequins create a formal balance because they are evenly spaced apart and of the same height. In contrast, the frames in the background use informal balance. The frames are slightly unaligned on the edges but it is done in a way that

looks intentional and unified. The frames used in the artwork are formally balanced with the large frame in the center and two smaller frames on both sides. Throughout the artwork there is formal balanced used, such as in the center scene where we see the same amount of people standing on each side of the priest conducting the wedding and in the background where each side looks the same.

### **Repetition**

Repetition is when a design element repeats itself, this can be anything from size, color, or shape. Using repetition is also an effective way to emphasize what is being sold and what you want the viewers to immediately look at. Effective emphasis is achieved through color or repetition. We can see the use of color repetition in the artwork where the color red is repeated throughout each scene as an eye-catching color. The repetition of the red helps to create unity and balance within the painting and ties each scene together. The display window uses repetition with the mannequins, they are both put in the same position, are the same height, and are both white. Having the mannequins look the same creates a unified feel and ensures that one doesn't stick out more than the other allowing both of them to be emphasized. There is also repetition in the frames used in the background of the display as each frame has the bottom half of them painted solid white.

### **Contrast**

Contrast is when the viewer is able to see sharp differences in the art work or the display. Color is used as contrast in the Dior window display with the bright red background compared to the gray artwork and the gray clothing on the mannequins. The contrast of the clothing compared to the background helps to emphasize what is being sold and guide the viewer's eyes to the merchandise. There is also contrast in the artwork that is framed in the background, the top half

is a gray painting with a black background while the bottom half is white. This is also done to emphasize the clothing. If the frames did not have the white bottom then the clothing would get lost in the background and not be emphasized. By using the white the contrast created lightens the background and the merchandise stands out to consumers passing the window. The artwork also uses contrast through colors, the background of each scene has buildings which are painted more muted and not very bright eye catching colors, while in the front half of the painting uses a wider variety of colors. The people in the front of the art work are wearing clothing that is painted in colors such as red and gold. The contrast in the artwork makes the viewers focus on the people and the story being told through them in the front of the artwork, while focusing less on the background.

### **Conclusion**

This Dior window display is the perfect example of how art influences life. Within the window display there is artwork that looks similar to the artwork above. The images in the background of the display are a major part of this display and tie together all of the colors. The way in which the women are painted in the frames look similar to the women painted in the artwork, showing how an art style from decades ago can be used again in modern times to sell merchandise. It could be a possibility that the merchandiser creating this window display was inspired by artwork similar to the one used in the frames and that is how the display was created. Historic art has heavily influenced all modern day art, and this display window is a form of modern day art that is clearly heavily influenced by art. Although we may not realize walking down the street passing this window, art is always able to find its way into our everyday lives.