WHAT IS VALUE?

COMD 1100 | Prof. jake Wright

Value refers to the lightness or darkness of a color.

It ranges from low (dark) to high (bright).

Contrast refers to the difference in value between two adjacent colors.

It ranges from low (dark) to high (bright).

High-contrast images use very low and very high values, with fewer *tonal variants* (shades or tints) between light and dark colors.

After Keith Haring, *Keith Haring: Into 84* exhibition poster, 1983
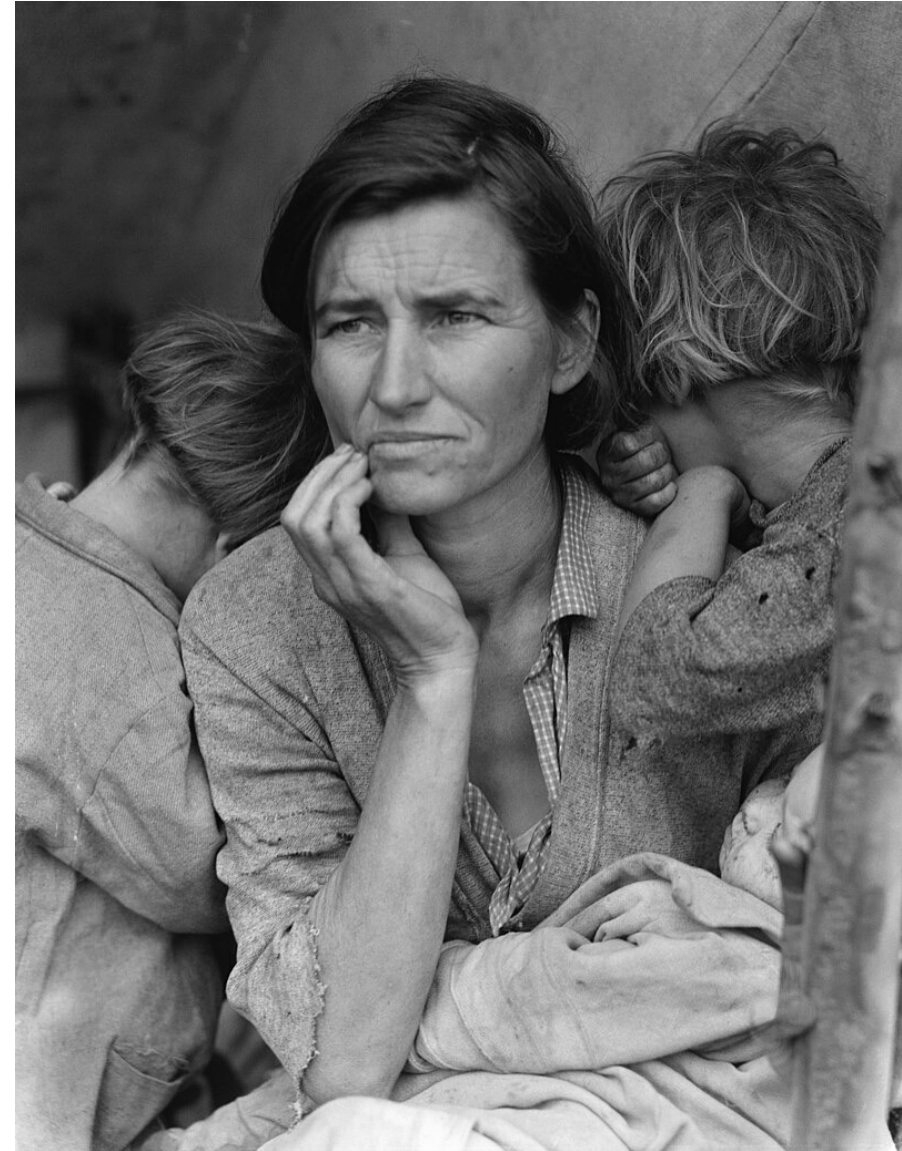
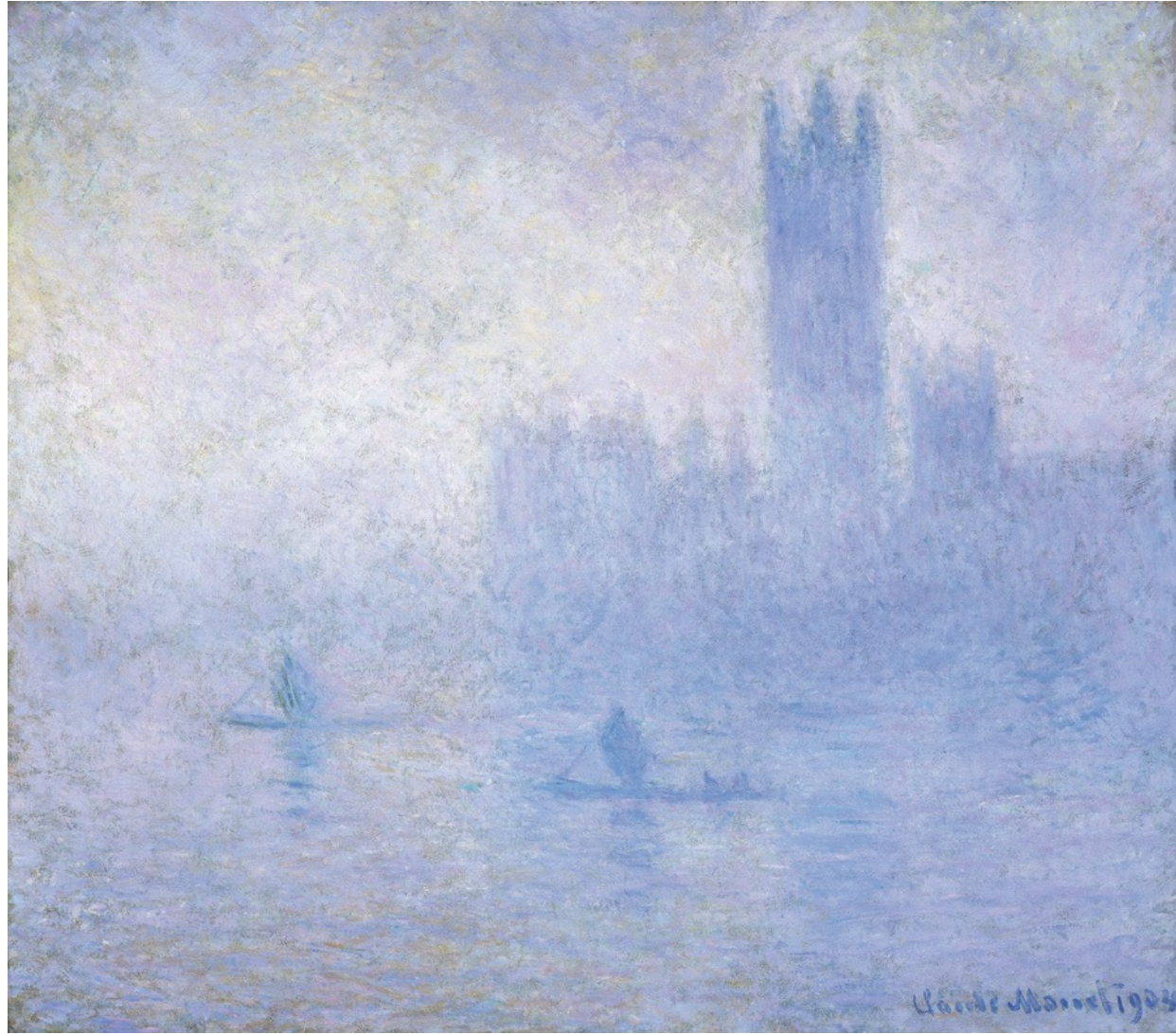Katsushiro Otomo, poster art for *Akira*, 1988

Hedi Slimane, photography and album art for *The Fame Monster*, Lady Gaga, 2009

Low-contrast images show less difference in value between adjacent colors, and more tonal variants between dark and light areas.

Dorothea Lange, *Migrant Mother*, 1936

Claude Monet, *Houses of Parliament: Effect of Fog, London*, 1904

Jake Wright, monitor loop from a presentation I did for the 2018 *What's New What's Next* design expo

VALUE SCALES AND GRADIENTS

- a *gradient* is a gradual transition from one color to another
- a *scale* breaks this transition down into intermediate steps
  - at the halfway point on a gradient or value scale, the color will be exactly 50% each; at 10% it's 10/90, etc.

0%

20%

40%

60%

80%

100%
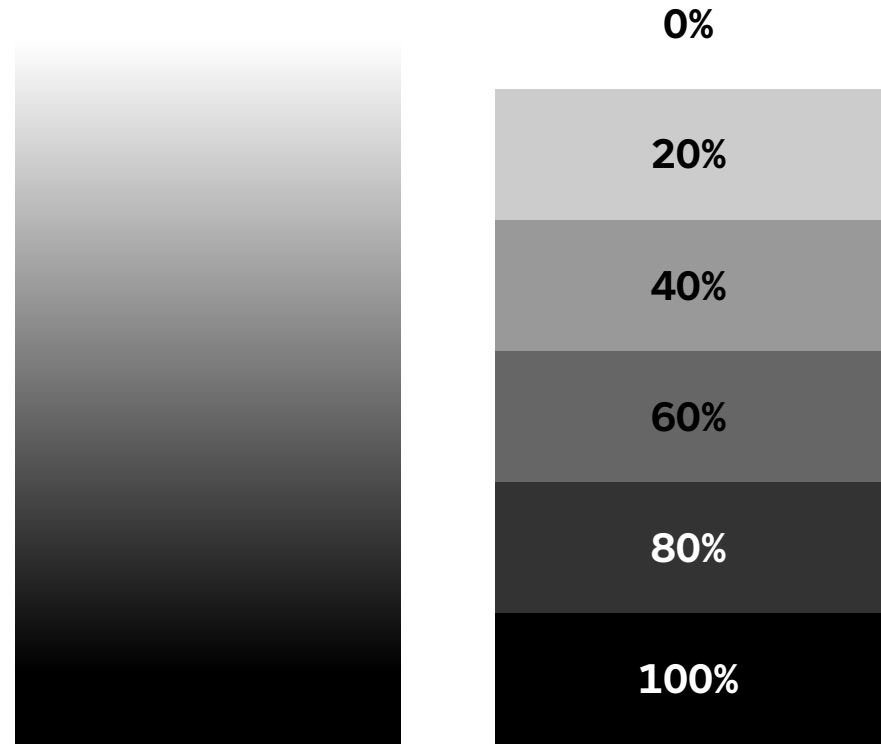
MIXING VALUES

- 80% gray is 80% black and 20% white

- this can be done by combining pigments

- also possible via *optical mixing*
  - when two small areas of color are placed next to each other, your vision combines them to create the illusion of a third
  - a black and white pattern will optically mix to the shade of gray with the same ratio of black to white

- Ben Day screens (right) were early patterns used to replace shades of gray in industrial printmaking

FIG. 15. SOME TYPICAL BEN DAY SCREENS.