Considering Context

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Ever heard it said: “in light of all the surrounding circumstances”? Courts, judges and lawyers use it all the time. Law doesn’t stand alone. It has to be applied in a real-world context. Legal context influences perception and outcome.

Context is also key to color. Color theory is one of the most interesting areas of arts education and is linked to the physics of light and the science of human perception. We think of objects as having color; but in reality color is a light property. Thanks to Sir Isaac Newton’s light and color discoveries we know that an orange isn’t “orange” in and of itself. It’s orange because of light.

Color changes by what surrounds it—its context. Here’s an example. The gray in the middle is the identical color in both squares; but looks different because of the surrounding color context.

In law and art, context makes a difference in how we look at things.