

# Cracking the Color Code

by Dan Bartges

ASSIGNMENT 2 IN A SERIES OF 10



This month, your students will jump into the rich colors of France and Italy. In addition to color harmony, they'll learn about the importance of contrasting values. Helping to improve students' skills and motivate them to keep painting are the goals of this 10-part series. Each exercise is quick and easy, and all your students will need is a standard color wheel.

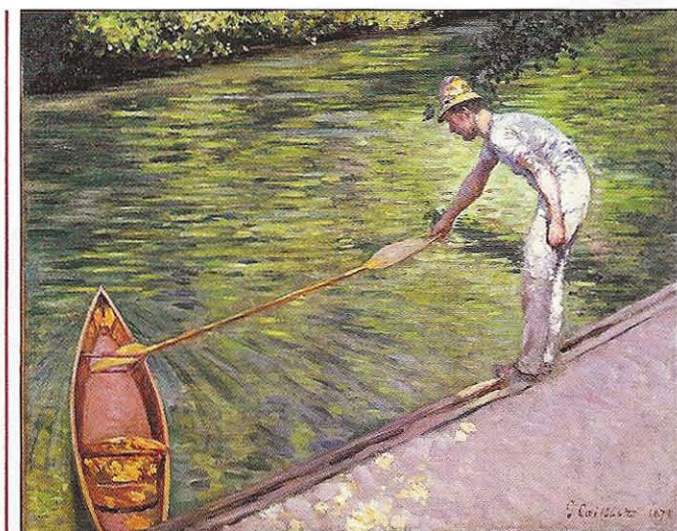
**HOW IT WORKS** Each month throughout the school year, invite your students to participate in "Cracking the Color

Code." They'll learn color harmony and valuable techniques by going to our special student Web page at [www.artsandactivities.com](http://www.artsandactivities.com), where they'll spend a few minutes learning about the month's two featured paintings.

Next, they'll download and print the "Quiz Me" document, write in their answers to three short questions, and hand it in to you. This can be done as a monthly homework assignment or for extra credit.

Each month, the correct answers will be shown on this page (for your eyes only) and, the following month, those same answers will be shared with your students on the student Web page. ■

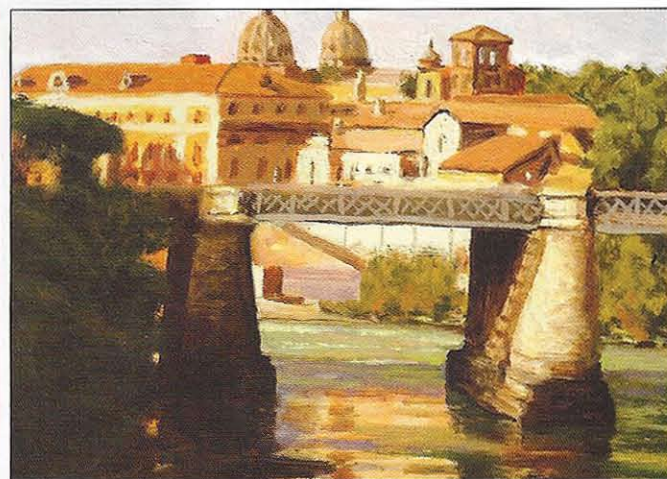
*Color expert Dan Bartges is the author/artist of the book, "Color Is Everything" ([www.coloriseverything.net](http://www.coloriseverything.net)). Visit his website at [www.danbartges.com](http://www.danbartges.com).*



Gustave Caillebotte (French; 1848–1894). *A Man Docking His Skiff, 1878*. Oil on canvas, 29" x 36". Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond. Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon. ©Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.



COLOR SCHEME  
Triad



Dan Bartges. *Tiber Island, Rome*. Oil.



COLOR SCHEME  
Triad

## TEACHER'S ANSWERS TO THIS MONTH'S STUDENT QUESTIONS:

**1|Q** What's the color scheme for *Tiber Island, Rome*?

**1|A** It's a triad, using orange, violet and green.

**2|Q** What color scheme did Gustave Caillebotte use for his 1878 painting, *A Man Docking His Skiff*?

**2|A** Basically, he also employed the triadic color scheme of violet, green and orange.

For advanced students, take a closer look at this painting. Notice how Caillebotte skillfully tweaked the colors to enhance the effect. He pushed some of the oranges toward yellow-orange and red-orange, some violets toward blue-violet and red-violet, and some greens toward blue-green and yellow-green. Why do these six "extraneous" colors work within the predominating triadic color scheme instead of clashing with it? It's because the six are actually three pairs of color complements, and complements always harmonize.

**3|Q** Why do you think Gustave Caillebotte painted this particular scene?

**3|A** Caillebotte loved boats, and was well known in his town for captaining racing yachts. Trained as an engineer, he also took great pleasure in designing racing yachts. Boats, especially sailboats and punts, are the subjects in a number of his paintings.