

Cracking the Color Code



by Dan Bartges

ASSIGNMENT 1 IN A SERIES OF 10

Did you know that frustration with color is said to be the number one reason people quit painting? To help your students stay motivated to paint, this 10-part series will guide them to color competency. It's quick and easy, and all they'll need is a standard color wheel, access to the Internet, a printer and a pen or pencil.

HOW IT WORKS Each month throughout the school year, invite your middle- and high-school students to participate in this series. They'll learn color harmony and valuable techniques by clicking on the "Cracking the Color Code" icon found at www.artsandactivities.com, then choosing the appropriate month, and

ultimately arriving on the interactive student page to learn about the month's featured paintings. Next, they'll download and print the "Quiz Me" document, write in their answers to questions about the featured paintings (seen below), and hand it in to you—as a monthly homework assignment or for extra credit.

Each month, the questions and correct answers will be shown here—for *your* eyes only—and, the *following* month, those same answers will be shared with your students on that particular month's interactive student Web page.

This month, we'll take a look at an unusually exciting painting by an eyewitness to the Civil War.

If students want a review of color schemes, they can visit the aforementioned student Web page on www.artsandactivities.com to download the article, "The Magic Moment." ■

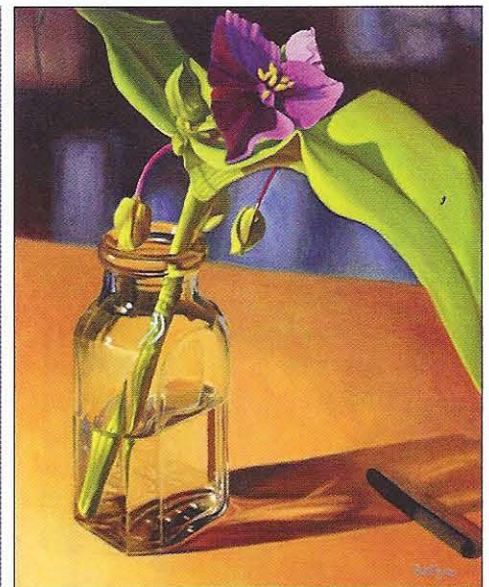
Color expert Dan Bartges is the author/artist of the book, "Color Is Everything" (www.coloriseverything.net). Visit his website at www.danbartges.com.



Eastman Johnson (American, 1824–1906). *A Ride for Liberty—The Fugitive Slaves, March 2, 1862.* Oil on board; 21.5" x 26". Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond. Paul Mellon Collection. ©Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.



COLOR SCHEME
Complementary



Dan Bartges. *Spiderwort in a Bottle.* Oil.



COLOR SCHEME
Tetrad

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

1|Q In *A Ride for Liberty*, what are two ways the painting conveys the sense of speed?

1|A There are several, including the horse's streaming mane and tail, the woman's flowing dress and the galloping hooves.

2|Q What color scheme was used in *Spiderwort in a Bottle*?

2|A The four colors—orange with blue and red-violet with yellow-green—make a tetrad color scheme.

3|Q What's the color scheme for Eastman Johnson's *A Ride for Liberty*?

3|A Johnson used the popular complementary color scheme of blue and orange. The artist's choice of contrasting colors helps underscore the painting's thematic series of contrasts, including freedom versus slavery, day versus night and the future versus the past.