

## Value: Lightness and Darkness



**Activity page for:**

Image 10: Bernhard Kretzschmar, *Im Fleischerladen/In the Butcher's Shop*, 1921

Image 11: Bernhard Kretzschmar, *Der Auktionator/The Auctioneer*, 1921

Image 19: Käthe Kollwitz, *Brustbild einer Arbeiterfrau mit blauem Tuch/ Bust of a Working-class Woman in a Blue Shawl*, 1903



When we talk about **value** as an element of art, we are referring to the lightness or darkness of an object. Among other things, value can help to establish the illusion of 3-dimensional space in a 2-dimensional work of art. Value can also help to establish a mood; think about waking up to a grey, rainy day vs. waking up to sunshine and a brilliant blue sky.

Click on this link to see examples and read up about some of the effects of value: [http://desktoppub.about.com/od/elements/l/aa\\_color1.htm](http://desktoppub.about.com/od/elements/l/aa_color1.htm)



### Think about it:

**Discuss the following questions with a partner. Refer to the gallery notes for more information.**

1. Look at Kretzschmar's etching, *In the Butcher's Shop*. Compare it to his drypoint piece, *The Auctioneer*. How is value approached differently in each of these pieces? What effect (if any) do these differences have on the mood or tone of each piece?
2. Read up on the term "chiaroscuro". Do you think Kollwitz has used this technique to try to tell us something in *Bust of a Working-Class Woman in a Blue Shawl*?

### Try this:

If you've got a digital camera, try experimenting with the settings: Take a photograph of the view outside your classroom window and watch the scene as you lighten, then darken, the exposure. What do you notice about the mood of this "piece" as you add light or take it away?

If you don't have a camera handy, try this: Find a calm and peaceful – or "happy-looking" – scene in a magazine. Grazing sheep in a green meadow from a National Geographic magazine would do nicely. Then, use your scanner and computer settings or a nearby photocopier to copy the image at various settings (light to dark). Do you notice how the darkening/lightening values can seem to change the mood of the scene?

You might also try this experiment with an illustration from a children's storybook.