

Pixel Art Shading.

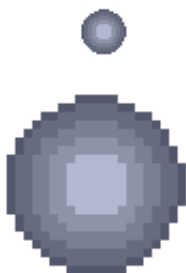
Some simple techniques to shade pixel art.

VZones Art Tutorial #3

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You can shade an image to create a sense of realism and dimension. When shading, think about light and shadow, and from which direction is the light coming from?



(Fig. 1)

The image pictured to the left (**Fig. 1**) is a common shading mistake; shading around the edges and paying no attention to a light source.

Although it may be easier, it is not realistic - it makes it seem like there is a strong light source in the centre of the object.

Realistically, a light source is never exactly in the centre, and more than one light source is common.



(Fig. 2)

This image pictured to the left (**Fig. 2**) has a light source located in the upper right. The ball has been painted a **base colour** (colour 4 in the palette below), and then a **lighter colour** (colour 5) has been applied to the **base colour** where the light source would naturally fall on the object.

While creating your art, you will be working with the VZones colour palette, which are a set of 16 special colours that the VZones server software can process into "paintable" colours, so in this tutorial we will be using some of these colours, but in a smaller palette.

To the right is a 5 colour palette for the ball.

lines	very dark	dark	base color	light
1	2	3	4	5



(Fig. 3)

The image to the left (**Fig. 3**) has had the **dark** colour (colour #3) applied around the **base colour** (colour #4).

The ball now has **basic shading** and is beginning to look more dimensional; however the colours don't look very "blended". We can smooth the transition between colours, with something called "**dithering**". See (**Fig. 4**) below.



(Fig. 4) - Dithering



(Fig. 5)

Dithering is a technique to blend colours, since pixel art generally deals with limited colour palettes. As you have already read, the VZones colour palette contains 16 replaceable colours. These 16 colours are grouped into 5 lower, 5 middle, 5 upper and 1 special.



(Fig. 6)

Adding dithering (blending) to an object

To blend between the colours of the ball, dither around the edges of the **dark** colour (**colour #3**) and the **light** colour (**colour #5**) using the checkerboard pattern in (Fig. 5). This smooths the transition between colours and blends them. See the image to the left (Fig. 6).



(Fig. 7)

Adding a second light source

If you want to add some more realism to your image, a second light source does the trick.

See (Fig. 7) for an example. Imagine the second light source is far weaker than the first, and make the light colour very small, along the lower left edge of the ball on the **dark** colour (**colour #3**).

