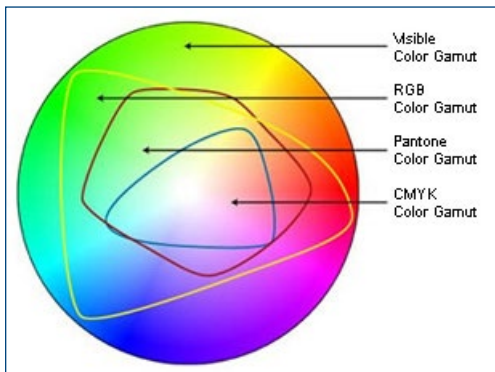SUTTLESTRAUS

HOW-TO

PHOTOSHOP RGB TO CMYK COLOR SETTINGS

At some point in the printing process RGB images are converted to CMYK. There is some debate as to the best time for this conversion. Some printers advocate receiving only CMYK files from their customers, whereas others may request RGB with the intent of converting them on their own. At Suttle-Straus we understand that different customers have different needs. Some may want to maintain an RGB library since these images could be re-purposed for internet use, etc. Others may not know of the final intent of that image—is it to reproduce high quality print or newsprint? In these cases the RGB to CMYK convert is held off until the conversion target is known.

Some customers may have a single project that they know will print high quality press. For this type of project the customer may want to control the RGB to CMYK conversion as it can create a slight shift in color.

To help visualize the reason for this color shift review the chart to the left. The RGB color space has a larger color gamut than CMYK as RGB is based on light and additive color. You can see that in some areas the RGB color space is "outside" that of the CMYK space. It is these colors that will be most affected by a conversion from RGB to CMYK.

We accept files in either form. If RGB, we eventually convert to CMYK with our target profile.
If you prefer to convert, however, then follow these prescribed settings.

First download these 2 items from the Suttle-Straus webpage/downloads:
- suttle-straus.com/GRACOL.zip
- suttle-straus.com/Color.zip

Once downloaded, place the GRACoL2006_Coated1v2.icc in Library/Application Support/Adobe/color/settings (mac)

Then, launch Photoshop and go under the Edit menu to Color Settings. Select Load. Browse to SSI_Creative Suite_Color Settings.csf

Use this to convert RGB to CMYK and review the color shift. In most cases it should be slight and result in a pleasing CMYK image.

Note: these settings preserve embedded profiles