

# Color

## ELEMENTS OF DESIGN

Color depends on light because it is made of light. There must be light for us to see color. A red shirt will not look red in the dark, where there is no light. The whiter the light, the more true the colors will be. A yellow light on a full color painting will change the appearance of all the colors.

Auguste Renoir (Ren-wahr) painted *Fruits of the Midi* to emphasize the color and richness of the vegetables and fruit of southern France. The diagram will help you understand his reasons for making each part of the painting a different color. It is basically a cool painting with warm accents. Renoir was an impressionist painter who used color to show depth and volume in his paintings.

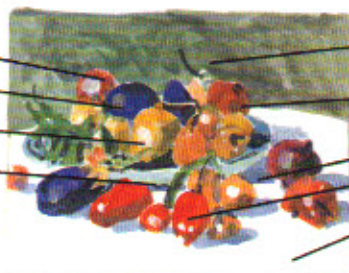


Color is a product of light. A ray of white light passing through a prism is separated into the hues seen in a rainbow.

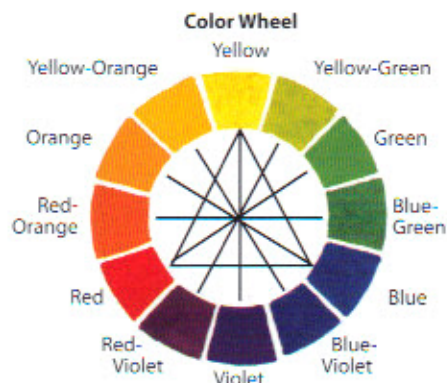
Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *Fruits of the Midi*, 1881. Oil on canvas, 19 1/4 x 25 1/4 in. (50.7 x 65.3 cm). Mr. and Mrs. Martin A. Ryerson Collection, 1933.1176, The Art Institute of Chicago.



Neutralized red shapes recede. Dark forms develop strong value contrasts. Highlights are white, a pure, light color. Cool colors contrast with warm colors.



The neutral green makes the purer colors glow and come forward. Shadows create a sense of form. Shadows are cool. Warm red shapes seem to come forward. White is an intense color containing all colors.



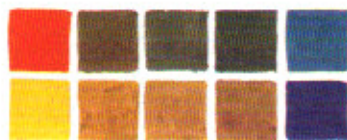
**Hue** refers to the names of the colors. **Primary hues** are yellow, red, and blue. The **secondary colors** are orange, violet, and green. The **intermediate colors** are yellow-orange, red-orange, red-violet, blue-violet, blue-green, and yellow-green.



**Value** refers to the lightness or darkness of a hue.



If black is added to a hue, it is called a **shade**. If white is added, it is called a **tint**.



**Intensity** refers to the purity of a hue. Adding a complementary color (opposite on the color wheel) neutralizes a hue. Neutralized hues are called **tones**.



**Cool colors** (yellow-green to violet) recede. **Warm colors** (yellow to red-violet) seem to come forward.

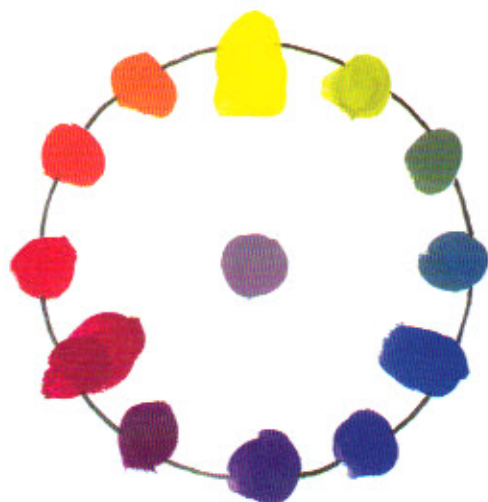


Painters create an illusion of depth by using color relationships.



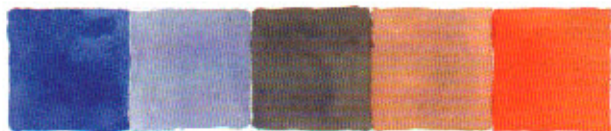
## 1. Make a Color Wheel

Draw a large circle on a piece of paper, then draw 12 circles or squares evenly spaced around it. Paint the primary colors, red, yellow, and blue equally spaced on the circle. Mix the primary colors to make the secondary colors, red and yellow to make orange, red and blue to make violet, and yellow and blue to make green and paint them between the primary colors. Mix the six intermediate colors by mixing a primary color with a secondary color that is next to it. For example, red and orange make red-orange.



## 2. Mix Complementary Colors to Neutralize Them

Draw a chart with five boxes and select two complementary colors such as blue and orange, and paint them at opposite ends of the chart. Mix a little blue with orange and paint it next to the orange, and a little orange with blue and paint it next to the blue. Then mix equal parts of blue and orange for the center, creating a neutral gray.



## 3. Painting with Complementary Colors

Make a painting of a still life, portrait, or landscape using only two complementary colors.



Stephen Quiller

## 4. Triadic Colors

Triadic colors are any three colors that are equidistant from each other on the color wheel. Select any triadic colors and make a painting using only the three colors. This provides more color variety.



Stephen Quiller

## 5. Warm and Cool Colors

Make two paintings of a similar subject using warm colors in one and cool colors in the other. Notice how the mood or feeling of the subject changes.



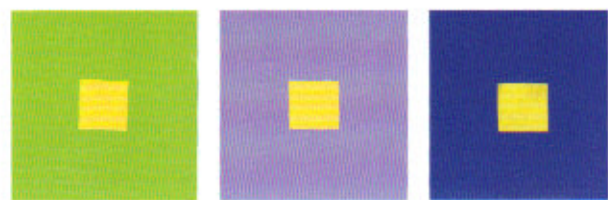
Jim Burns



Jim Burns

## 6. Color Backgrounds

Cut three one-inch squares from a piece of colored paper and three four-inch squares from three different colored papers. Glue the one-inch squares on the four-inch squares and see how different colored backgrounds change the appearance of a color.



## ILLUSTRATIONS / CREDITS

### Color

Pierre Auguste Renoir, French, 1841–1919, *Fruits of the Midi*, 1881. Oil on canvas, 1915/16 x 25 11/16 in. (50.7 x 65.3 cm). Art Institute of Chicago, Mr. and Mrs. Martin Ryerson Collection, 1933.1176.

Robert E. Wood, *Tropical Jewels*. Watercolor, 22 x 30 in.

Gerald Brommer, *Mykonos Impression*. Collage and watermedia, 11 x 15 in.