

Let's Talk About Colour

“Let's Talk About Colour” aims to give a brief outline about colour theory and practice, in a way that the non-artist can relate to.

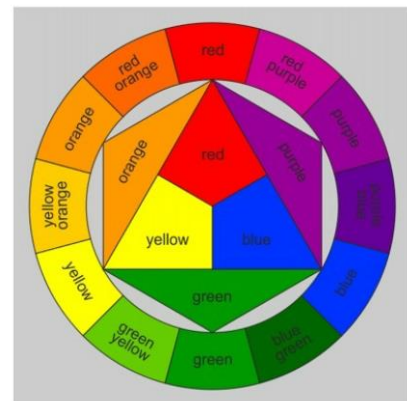
Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Colours

There are 3 pure colours: Red, Yellow and Blue, and these are called Additive Primary Colours. Additive because all other colours in the world are made from various combinations of these 3 colours. Light hits a surface and reflects light of the wavelength of the colour of the surface, and absorbs other light. That light hits our eyes and we see that colour. Overlap all 3 colours and you get white. Neither white nor black are colours by the way, white is a mixture of all the colours, and black is an absence of colour as black absorbs all light and reflects non. Mix 2 primary colours together and you get what are known as secondary colours. Mix Red and Yellow for instance and you get the secondary colour Orange. Mix a pair of secondary colours, or complimentary colours, and you get Tertiary colours.

There are also what is known as Subtractive Primary Colours b- Cyan, Magenta and Yellow, and these are used in the printing process.

The Colour Wheel

This is a Colour Wheel. Look at the position of the primary colours Red, Yellow and Blue. Just consider Red and Yellow; mix Red and Yellow and you get Orange – a secondary colour. Orange is immediately opposite Blue on the colour wheel.



Complementary Colours

Orange is the complimentary colour of Blue.

Complimentary colours produce some striking optical effects. When painting, the use of complimentary colours next to each other brightens both colours, and gives a painting sparkle and life.

Analogous Colours

Analogous Colours are groups of three colours that are next to each other. When painting, the use of analogous colours produces paintings that are harmonious, but lack contrast and brightness.

Why Paint is Like a Starbucks Coffee

You can't go in to Starbucks and just buy a coffee, you have various recipes of coffee that come in 3 different sizes. Similarly, you can't just go into an art shop and buy a paint of a particular colour as there are numerous versions of each colour. If you asked for Blue for instance, you would have choice of Cobalt Blue, Cerulean Blue, Phthalo Blue, Prussian Blue, Ultramarine Blue amongst others. Winsor and Newton Artists Oil paint range, for instance has a total of 11 different paints with the word "Blue" in the title.