

Beginning Color Theory - 101

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Color Wheel: (large or small has the same information)

Front:

“How to use a color wheel”

Definitions:

Primary, Secondary, Tertiary, Warm and Cool colors

Hue, tint, tone, shade, Key color, Neutral gray, intensity or chroma, and value

Gray Scale: 10% black to 100% black

Colors with what happens if you add red, yellow, blue, white and black to them.

Back:

“How to use the Color Relationships Wheel”

Definitions:

Mono-Chromatic, Analogous, Achromatic, Color and Light, Color and Distance

Complementary Colors, Split Complements, Diad, Triad, Tetrad

Illustration of Color Relationships

How the color looks when you add a Tint, Tone, and Shade

Diagrams to find complementary split complementary, triad, and tetrad of colors

Vocabulary List:

Basic:

7 Visible Colors: Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, Violet (ROY G BIV)

Primary Colors – Red, Yellow, Blue

Secondary Colors – Orange, Green, Violet

Tertiary Colors – Red-Orange, Orange-Yellow, Yellow-Green, Green-Blue, Blue-Violet, Violet-Red

Analogous – Hues lying next to each other on the color wheel.

Complementary – Colors that lie opposite each other on the color wheel.

Ex 1: Red/Green, Yellow/Violet, Blue/Orange

Ex 2: Red will look most saturated against green.

Ex 3: The result of mixing complements is a middle value color (brown or grey).

Split Complementary – A color combination whereby a hue is used with the hues lying to either side of its direct complementary.

Ex: Red/Yellow-Green and Blue-Green.

Double Complement – A color combination in which hues adjacent to each other on the color wheel are used with their respective complementary.

Ex: Red and Red-Orange/Green and Blue-Green

Triad Color Scheme – The use of three colors equally spaced from each other on a color wheel.

Ex: Orange, green, violet

Warm – Red-Violet through Yellow (see color wheel)

Cool – Yellow-Green through Violet (see color wheel)

Intermediate:

3 properties of color: Hue, value, and saturation

Value - Lightness or darkness of a color.

Hue – The name of a color, where it's placed on the color wheel.

Saturation – intensity or purity of a color.

Ex: A dull color can be made to appear more saturated when placed next to a dull color.

Full Range – Colors from every range on the value scale.

Achromatic – With out color. Black, white, and gray.

Monochromatic – A color harmony that utilizes only one color.

Tints – Adding white to a color.

Tones – Adding gray to a color.

Shades – Adding black to a color

Earth Tones – Colors which come from mineral sources.

Value Keys – Groups of value on a value (gray) scale.

Ex 1: To make a dark color look lighter in value, place it against an even darker background.

Ex 2: A light color against a dark background will appear larger.

High Key –The light end of the value scale.

Middle Key – The middle range of value scale.

Low Key – The dark range of the value scale.

High Contrast – Extreme light and dark colors.

Additive Colors – The combination of pigments which result in mixtures that are lightened; or, color mixing that utilizes light.

Subtractive Colors – The combination of pigments which results in mixtures that are darkened.

Ex: Red mixed with white makes pink. (Pink is darker than white.)

Advanced:

Expressionistic Color – Color which expresses emotional qualities rather than visual truths about a subject.

Color Constancy – The psychological tendency to see colors as we think they are rather than as we actually perceive them.

Atmospheric Perspective – When distant areas lose color contrast and value contrast and may be tinted with a blue haze.

Simultaneous Contrast – The tendency of complementary and strongly contrasting colors to intensify one another when placed side by side.

Simultaneous contrast may cause color to change in value, saturation, and hue.

Suggested Book:

Color by Paul Zelanski & Mary Pat Fisher

Suggested Materials for Practicing:

Based on the college color class of Sharon Forsmo at GCC.

Suggested paints for learning color theory:

Liquitex Acrylic (small tubes as you will want to use gouaches or watercolors for scrolls)

These paints can be expensive, but last a very long time are well worth it.

Ivory or Mars Black

Titanium White

Cadmium Red (light or medium)

Cadmium Yellow (light)

Ultramarine Blue

Dioxazine Purple

Permanent Green

Use mat board, illustration board, or watercolor paper. Do not use drawing paper, as it will disintegrate when wet.