

Color Theory/Color Harmony

Color Spectrum:

Spectrum of Light: visible light is composed of various wavelengths.

The longest wavelength is Red; the shortest is Violet.

Light through a prism will be cast as colors from red to violet.

The Color Wheel is that bar of colors wrapped into a circle.

Primary Colors: Red, Yellow, Blue (Primary Triadic)

All other colors can be made from these three colors.

Complement: Secondary color made from the other two primaries.

Secondary Colors: Orange, Green, Violet (Secondary Triadic)

Made by mixing two primary colors.

Complement: the Primary not used to make the color.

Intermediary Colors: made by mixing a primary and an adjacent secondary.

Red-Orange, Yellow-Orange, Yellow-Green, Blue-Green, Blue-Violet

Red Violet is a color invented to complete the color wheel.

Complement: the Intermediary opposite on the Color Wheel.

Tertiary Colors: made by mixing secondaries to make dull, complex colors

Russet (Orange-Violet), Citron (Orange-Green), Olive (Green-Violet)

Earth Tones: earth pigments

Yellow: Yellow Ochre, Raw Sienna, Raw Umber

Red: Burnt Sienna, Burnt Umber

Properties of Color:

Hue: the name or description of the color by its wavelength

Value: the lightness or darkness of a color (Value Scale)

Intensity: the purity or saturation of the color (dominance) from vivid to dull

Temperature: Warm (red, orange, yellow) or Cool (green, blue, violet)

Each color can be divided into warm/cool temperatures.

Reflection: transparent, translucent or opaque characteristics of pigment/paint

Tonality: the relationship of Hue, Value and Intensity

Alteration of Color:

Tint: add white to make lighter values of a color. White cools colors.

Shade: add black to make darker values of a color. Black warms colors.

Tone: add White and Black to make Tonal Values of a color. Gray neutralizes.

Mute: add the complement of a color.

Dull: add an earth tone to a color.

Harmony: add (touches) of the dominate/control color to all other colors.

Manipulating Color:

