

My dearest watercolourists,

Thank you so-so-so much for your wonderfully supportive and excited response to the online video exhibition. I really enjoyed reading your emails and hearing your excitement on Monday. I am very happy you enjoyed it. It has made my week!

I have also shared some extra watercolour videos on Facebook. As part of this project with Age UK RBH, I made three short tutorials. I will leave the links here:

Hedgehog:

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?feature=youtu.be&v=-gQ8TvOd4o>

Chestnut (aka conker):

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=CK011gf5Pm0>

Birthday card:

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=NEsEnzsjjWo>

In these videos I move through the steps at a faster pace than I would normally during a live class because I had to keep the videos short. The advantage of them being in this format is that you can pause them whenever you need to. In fact, if you watch the videos you will see that I also suggest when to pause them and let the paint dry. You can for example watch the whole video first, look at the steps and check out the final result and then re-watch it painting along or even paint from memory. Let me know how you find these videos and please share with me (and with all of us) your images. I (we) love seeing your work!

I decided to talk about colours today. Understanding colours and how to mix them is an incredibly powerful tool and skill to have as a painter regardless of the medium chosen. It also help understand the way artists created their work and how they looked at the world around them. There is no correct way of combining colours or mixing them and please remember there really are no rules in art!

I will start by saying this, and I cannot emphasise it enough, no two people see the world the same and no two people perceive colours the same. What I am going to talk about here is not a guide on how to use paints, is an introduction for you to experiment

with colours. This is also a great tool if you decide to invest in really good quality paints. It is useful to know this information because then you only need to get three colours.

## Primary Colours

The primary colours (in art-paints not the theory of light) are **RED**, **YELLOW** and **BLUE**. They are known as primary because they cannot be obtained by mixing other colours.

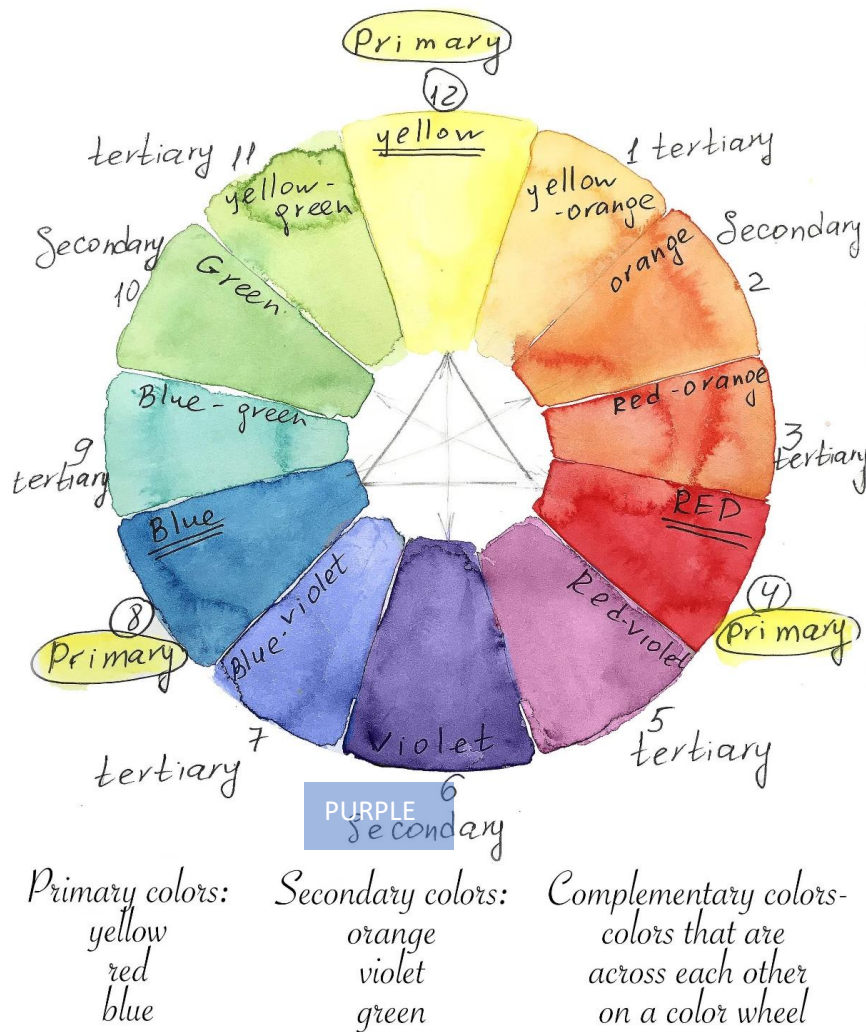


Figure 1 The Colour Wheel (not my picture) I refer to red and blue as Purple -not violet!

<https://i.pinimg.com/originals/d5/98/26/d59826f37da0255fb5c1003cdd0ba816.jpg>

## Secondary Colours

The secondary colours are **ORANGE** (red and yellow), **GREEN** (yellow and blue), **PURPLE** (red and blue). They are obtained by mixing together equal parts of two primary colours.

## Tertiary Colours

Tertiary colours are the colours you get when mixing a primary colour with a secondary one, creating many (endless) nuances of a particular colour. For example mixing red with orange (you can play with the proportions of your red or orange) you get a particular nuance of 'vermilion'. If you mix red and purple (in whichever proportions you want) you get a nuance of magenta. Violet is purple mixed with blue. Teal is blue mixed with green. Chartreuse is a green mixed with yellow and nonetheless, amber is yellow mixed with orange.

In your experiments as an artist you will find that you can have so much fun mixing your own colours. You can start by obtaining the secondary colours, mixing equal parts of your primary colours, then move on an experiment with adding more or less of one colour and see what happens. There are endless possibilities and nuances to be discovered. The more you play with these the more you master your palette and the more confident you get. It is an interesting experience getting to feel in control of your palette.

We now have our colour mixed and we are ready to paint, but how do we choose what colours to use next to one another?

Depending on what you aim to achieve in your painting you can use the colour wheel to amplify an atmosphere or capture the viewer's attention.

## Complementary Colours

You can, for example, use Complementary Colours. These are the colours on opposite sides of the colour wheel. A complementary pair is formed of ONE primary colour and the mix of the other two primary colours in a form of a secondary colour.

**RED** and **GREEN** (yellow and blue)

**YELLOW** and **PURPLE**

**BLUE** and **ORANGE**

Using these pairs has a strong impact on how we perceive the subject matter of an image. The colours would both look brighter and bolder, drawing attention to the object. Overusing this pair can make an image look tiring and cramped. I would encourage you to challenge your art practice by painting something using a complementary pair of colour only. Let me know how you find that!

### Monochromatic

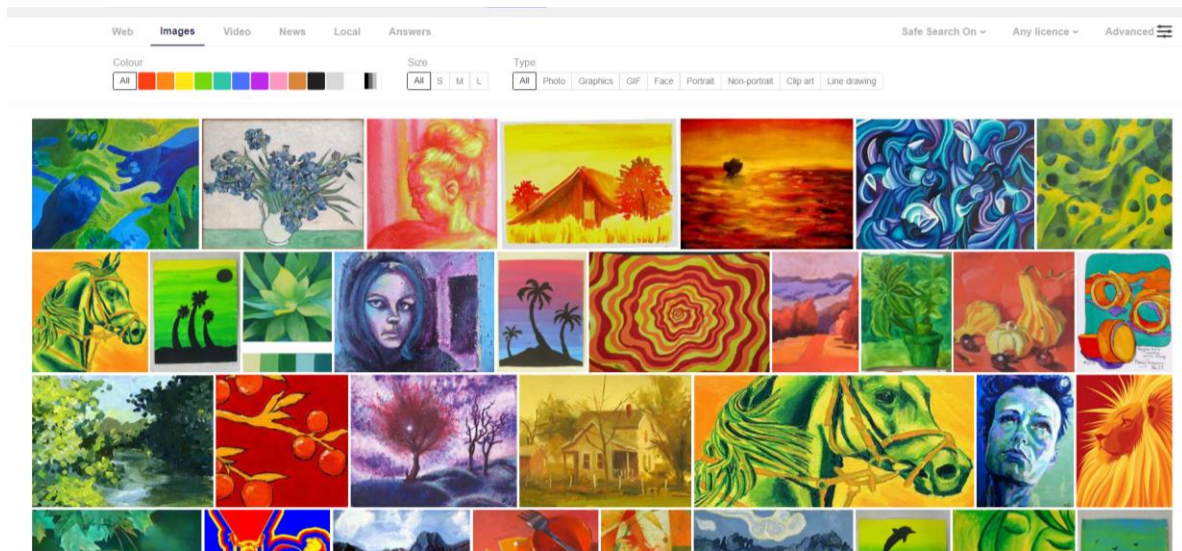
Choosing to paint a monochromatic image involves only using one colour with a variety of its nuances. It results in a calm, harmonious and coherent image, although overdoing this technique can lead to images that may end up looking uninteresting if not boring, maybe diluting the subject matter.



Figure 2 Monochrome painting not my image [https://joannegroff.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/20180314\\_140949-1.jpg](https://joannegroff.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/20180314_140949-1.jpg)

## Analogous Colours

One very daring use of colours is employing three colours that are side by side on the colour wheel. It leaves a very powerful visual impression but it can easily become overwhelming. It is a mastery for an artist to employ this in their practice. I Googled ‘analogous colour painting’ and this is my page. As you can see it has a very strong emotional impact and it has an energy of its own.



The analogous groups are:

**MAGENTA RED AMBER**

**RED AMBER YELLOW**

**AMBER YELLOW CHARTREUSE**

**YELLOW CHARTREUSE GREEN**

**CHARTREUSE GREEN TEAL**

**GREEN TEAL BLUE**

**TEAL BLUE PURPLE**

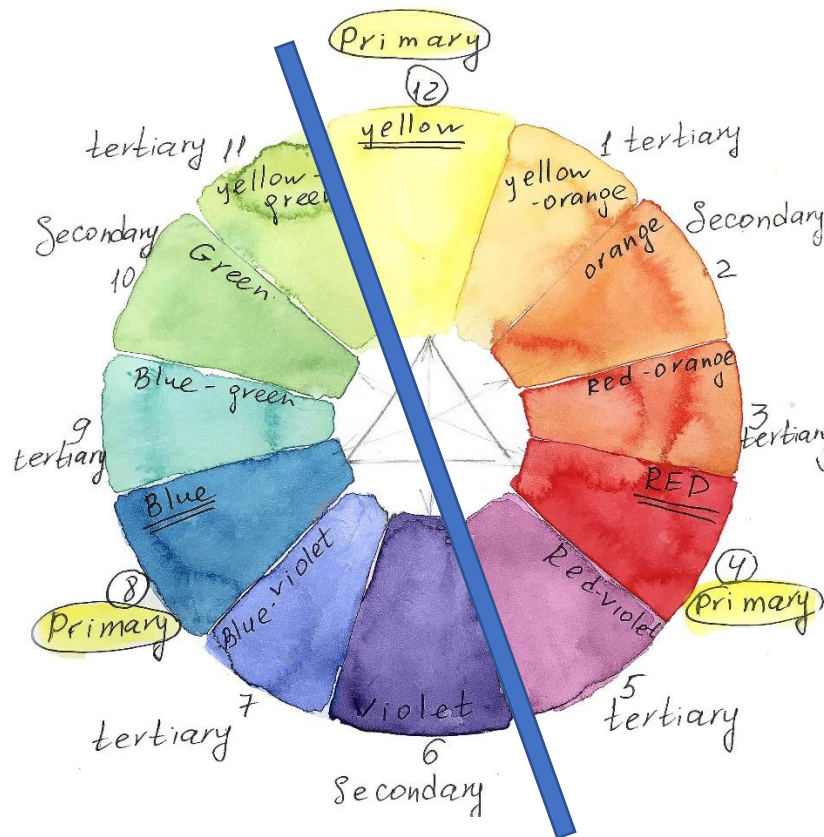
**BLUE PURPLE VIOLET**

**PURPLE VIOLET MAGENTA**

## Cold and warm colours

Cold

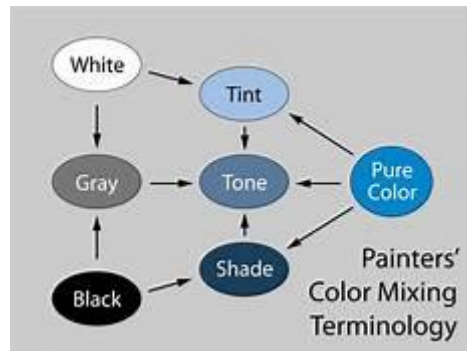
Warm



The wheel can be divided into warm and cold colours as illustrated above. Generally speaking warm colours have a little bit of red in them, while cold colours have blue. Yellow is a bright colour and it is categorised as a warm one. Historically and culturally we attach meaning to colours and tones. When composing an image we might use a warm palette or a cold one depending on our aims and the atmosphere we are looking for.

Like I mentioned last week when talking about Cezanne, one can use this warm-cold palette to suggest light and shadow. This is what Impressionists did.

Another way to create light and shadow is by using more or less water/colour in the medium of watercolour or by adding white to light up a colour or black to darken it.



I found this illustration that explains the terms of tinting, toning and shading. Tinting involves using white to lighten a colour.

Tone means adding greys to a colour. Shading is used when darkening a colour.

You can absolutely use this terminology-tones and shades- when playing with a palette that doesn't use white or black. Again, looking at the example of the Impressionists, we can, for example, tint a colour using yellow-lightening it up, or create shadows using blue-darkening it.

This is useful information and it gives you confidence in playing with colours. What I love about art is how freeing and experimental it is. It is great to know these facts, but it is equally inspiring to fully follow your own sensibility and artistic intuition and use whatever colour combinations you desire or you feel work. Expressing oneself through colour is still, I think, one of the most potent and emotionally captivating experience. So challenge your practice by using pairs of colours to see the results but if you feel you actually want a certain colour in a certain spot on your image, go with your instinct. I think it takes much more practice to re-learn to listen to our sensibility than it does to listen to a set of rules.

Let me know what you think and if you fancy experimenting with any of these colour pairs!

All the best,

Ioana