

Colour Theory

Colour theory for artist goes beyond knowing how to mix colours together (for example knowing that yello and blue make green). We want to be able to understand the **general application** of colour and how we **perceive them**.

The basics: The three primary colours are red, blue and yellow. The three secondary colours are green, orange and purple. These are made by mixing two of the primary colours. There are six other tertiary colours.

Using the primary colours, you could mix pretty much any color in the spectrum.

By using or creating your own colour wheel you can become more used to creating harmonious colour combinations.



ANALOGOUS



COMPLEMENTARY



SPLIT

EXTRA EXERCISE - THE COLOUR WHEEL

To understand the colour wheel better make one yourself!

1. First **test out all the colours of your watercolour set** so you can choose the right primary colours. A typical error is to use the red/orange or crimson as primary. Go for the more red/magenta color.
2. Make a circle with a plate or your tape and paint the primary colours first (see example above)
3. Choose 1 colour, yellow for example and add another primary colour, in this case blue. Do this gradually creating various tones of green until you get to a blue again. **Keep cleaning your brush!!!**

This exercise shows you the range of tones in your watercolour set and is also a great mixing exercise.



The color wheel is divided into **warm** and **cool** colours. When a warm color is placed next to a cool color, there is a very strong contrast. Alternatively, when a cool color is placed next to another cool color (for example, green next to blue) there is a pleasing harmonious effect.

Analysing colour palettes in my illustrations



Midnight Queen makes use of a triadic colour combination of blues and greens with the contrasting colour of red orange as details. You could almost say it's quite basic.

The black works as a way to push the contrast as well to guide the eye to the central figure.



Magic Door works with complementary colours that are very loud but work well to bring the viewer into the scene and main character in the shrine.

The yellow is a good accent colour.



In **Garden of Magical Discoveries** I worked again with a complementary colour scheme but in a more triadic approach - so I've also added more of blue-green tones.

You can see that different from the previous illustration the colours are a bit more muted or toned down, creating a softer atmosphere.