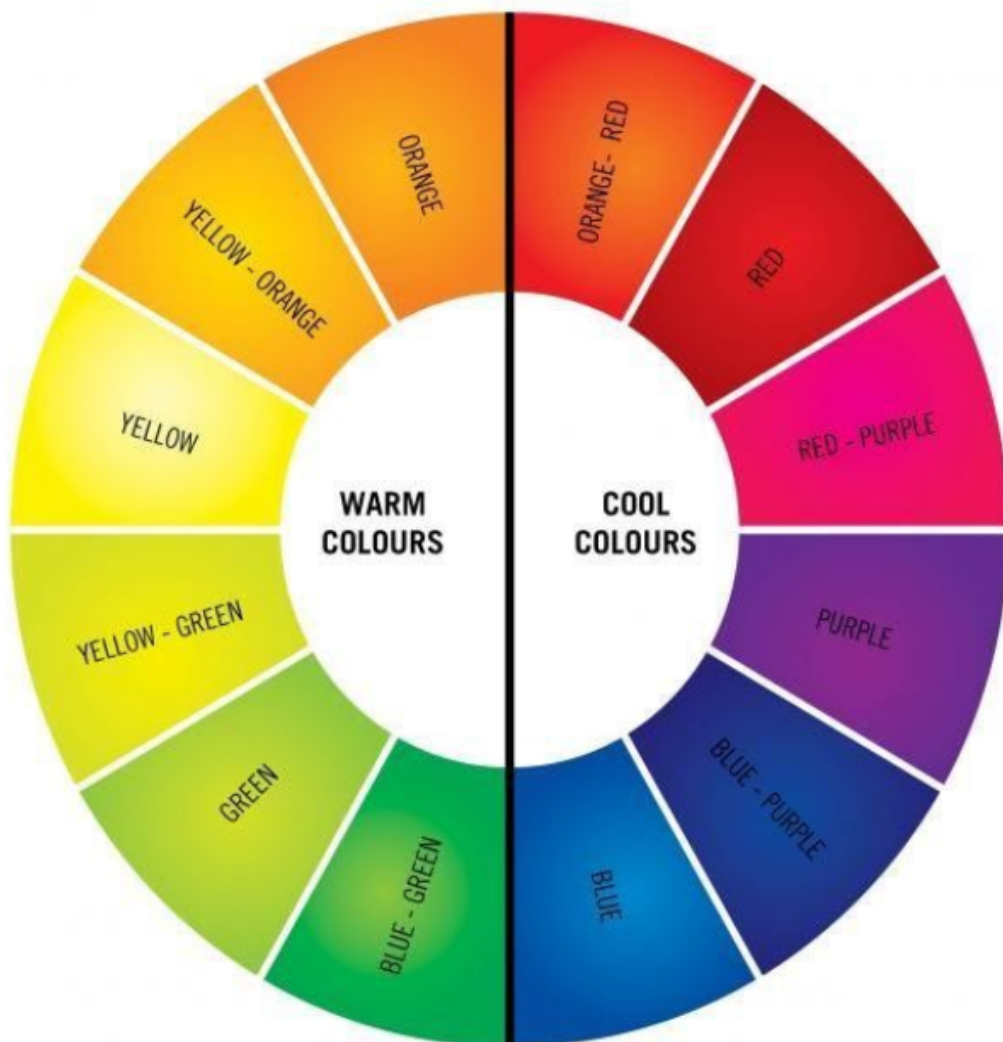


DecoArt®

Colour Temperature

Lesson By Tracy Moreau



Colour Temperature Is Relative

The temperature of a colour is not absolute! When you are determining colour temperatures, keep in mind where they would sit on the colour wheel and how close to yellow or blue they are. The closer to yellow, the warmer they are. The closer to blue, the cooler they are.

For example: When you paint red-violet next to red then the red-violet appears cooler because it contains some blue. But when red-violet is placed next to blue, then the red-violet is perceived as a warmer colour. You can determine if a colour is warmer or cooler simply by asking yourself if it has more yellow or blue in it.



The Power of Temperature In A Painting

Understanding colour temperature and learning how to control the temperature of the colours you mix can greatly improve the quality of your paintings. By controlling temperature, you can:

- Create depth
- Create a sense of light
- Define the relationships between objects
- Establish mood for your paintings
- Convey the dimension of objects within your work

Each colour, depending on its temperature, can be associated with a mood. You can learn to manipulate temperature in order to trigger certain emotions. This skill allows you to infuse your artwork with a very specific feeling or perception.

Warm colours are generally considered exciting and energizing, as well as homey and earthy. A painting that is predominantly warm shines with glow and radiance.

Cool paintings can be more calming, soothing, and meditative. At the same time, a cool colour scheme can convey a sense of coldness and stillness. In some cases, cool colours can be associated with a sad feeling.

Temperature Can Convey Emotions

We use colour to convey emotions quite often, but it is generally the temperature of the colour that pushes that emotion forward. Intentionally using colour to communicate an emotion is done through careful selection of the colour palette.

Cool Temperatures: Tranquil, Soothing, Calming, Quiet, Cold, Melancholy, Sadness

Warm Temperatures: Excitement, Energizing, Dramatic, Comforting , Cozy, Fiery, Warmth, Anger



Warm Colours Come Forward and Cool Colours Go back.

The scientific explanation for this is that the wavelength of warm colours is seen sooner by our eyes, while cool colours have shorter wavelengths and are seen later.

When you paint, you are trying to create the illusion of a three dimensional space on a two dimensional surface. For a successful representation of depth in your painting, consider that warm colours advance and cool colours recede. This is very important to understand when you are painting distance. You can create an immediate appearance of distance and depth by using colour temperature to your advantage. Using warmer colours in the foreground and forward elements and cooler colours in the background. If you paint the background warm, it will compete with the foreground.

Sometimes things at the horizon are really warm, and it's difficult to make a decision on how to paint them in a way that they fall back and look far away. Usually, making them lighter and duller than the foreground will solve that problem.

How do I dull a colour?

This is a simple fix. Well, sort of. The general rule of thumb to dull a colour is to mix in a small amount of its complimentary colour. (The colour directly across from it on the colour wheel.) Use very small amounts, evaluate the colour and adjust by adding a little more if needed. The chart below can help.

Base Color	Complementary Color
Yellow	Violet
Yellow-Green	Red-Violet
Green	Red
Blue-Green	Red-Orange
Blue	Orange
Blue-Violet	Yellow-Orange
Violet	Yellow
Red-Violet	Yellow-Green
Red	Green
Red-Orange	Blue-Green
Orange	Blue
Yellow-Orange	Blue-Violet