



Colour Your World Boldly

A Color Wheel Lesson by Tracy Moreau



Most of us understand the basics of the colour wheel, from primary and secondary colours to how certain colour combinations work together. However, how you interpret the colour wheel can be so much more than simply knowing how to mix and mingle red, yellow, blue, orange, purple, and green. Knowing the various colour schemes helps boost our colour knowledge and is essential for creatives, such as artists and designers.

Harmonic Colour Schemes

Although it is fun to experiment with colour schemes by choosing colours randomly based on our personal preferences, there are some colour combinations called “harmonic colour schemes” that are considered particularly pleasing. Harmonic colour schemes consist of two or more colours on the colour wheel that have a specific relationship based on their position and distance from one another. Before we discuss the basics, it helps if you are familiar with some of the most commonly used colour terms:

- **Tint:** A colour that has been lightened by adding white.
- **Hue:** The colour of paint as it appears out of the tube or bottle, unmixed.
- **Tone:** A colour that has been lightened or darkened by adding grey.
- **Shade:** A colour that has been darkened by adding black.

When you are working with colour schemes, you should consider using each colour’s shades, tints, and tones. It will offer the eye some restful colours that have been lightened, darkened, or neutralized. These variations allow the more powerful saturated colours to be used sparingly for emphasis when needed.

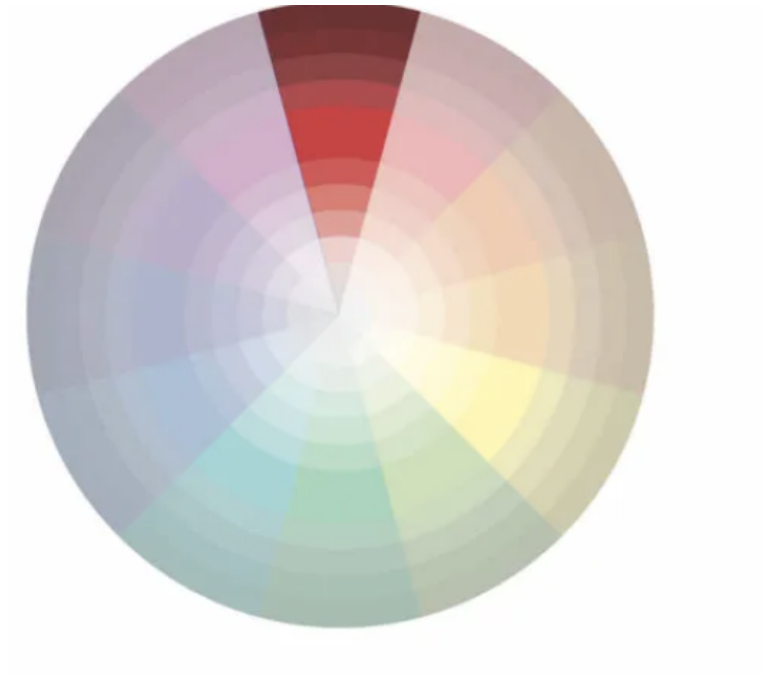
If you want to work with colours of your choice but aren’t sure how to start, it can be helpful to do some quick colour sketches. If you need colour inspiration, go to the hardware store and pick up some colour chips or swatches in the hues you want to work with. It is useful to see the colours together. And, you can easily modify your palette by adding and removing colours to suit your taste..

Common Colour Combinations

Analogous colour scheme: Uses three or more colours that sit next to each other on the colour wheel.



Monochromatic colour scheme: Uses tints, tones, and shades within the same hue or colour family.



Triadic colour scheme: Uses three colours that are evenly spaced around the colour wheel.



Complementary colour scheme: Uses colours opposite of each other on the colour wheel.



Square (Or Box) colour scheme: Uses four colours evenly spaced around the colour wheel.



Tetrad (or rectangular) colour scheme: Uses four colours made from two complementary colours.



Split complementary colour scheme: Uses one root colour plus the two colours that are on either side of the root colour's complement.



Analogous complementary colour scheme: Uses three analogous colours plus the complement of the middle analogous colour.





Colourful Pear

*Using an Analogous Colour Scheme to Create a Simple Watercolour Pear.
Design by Tracy Moreau*

Selecting an analogous colour scheme isn't as scary as you think! Using a colour wheel tool makes it very easy. Simply select three or more colours that rest side by side on the colour wheel. (This also includes their tints, tones, and shades.)

Supplies

A Pocket Colour Wheel (These are available at most art supply stores.)

9 x 12 piece Arches 140lb Cold Pressed Watercolor Paper

DecoArt Americana Acrylics in the following colours: (These are the colours that I selected but don't be afraid to choose your own palette!) Saffron Yellow, Scarlet, Tangerine, Sunny Day, Sour Apple, Asphaltum, Warm White, and Lamp Black.

Brushes: Traditions #5 or 6 Round

Misc: Graphite pencil and Graphite Paper



An Analogous Colour Scheme is a series of colours (3-5 or more) that rest next to each other on the colour wheel. I chose an Orange Red (Scarlet), A Yellow Orange (Tangerine), an Orange Yellow (Saffron), A Bright Yellow (Sunny Day), and a Yellow Green (Sour Apple).

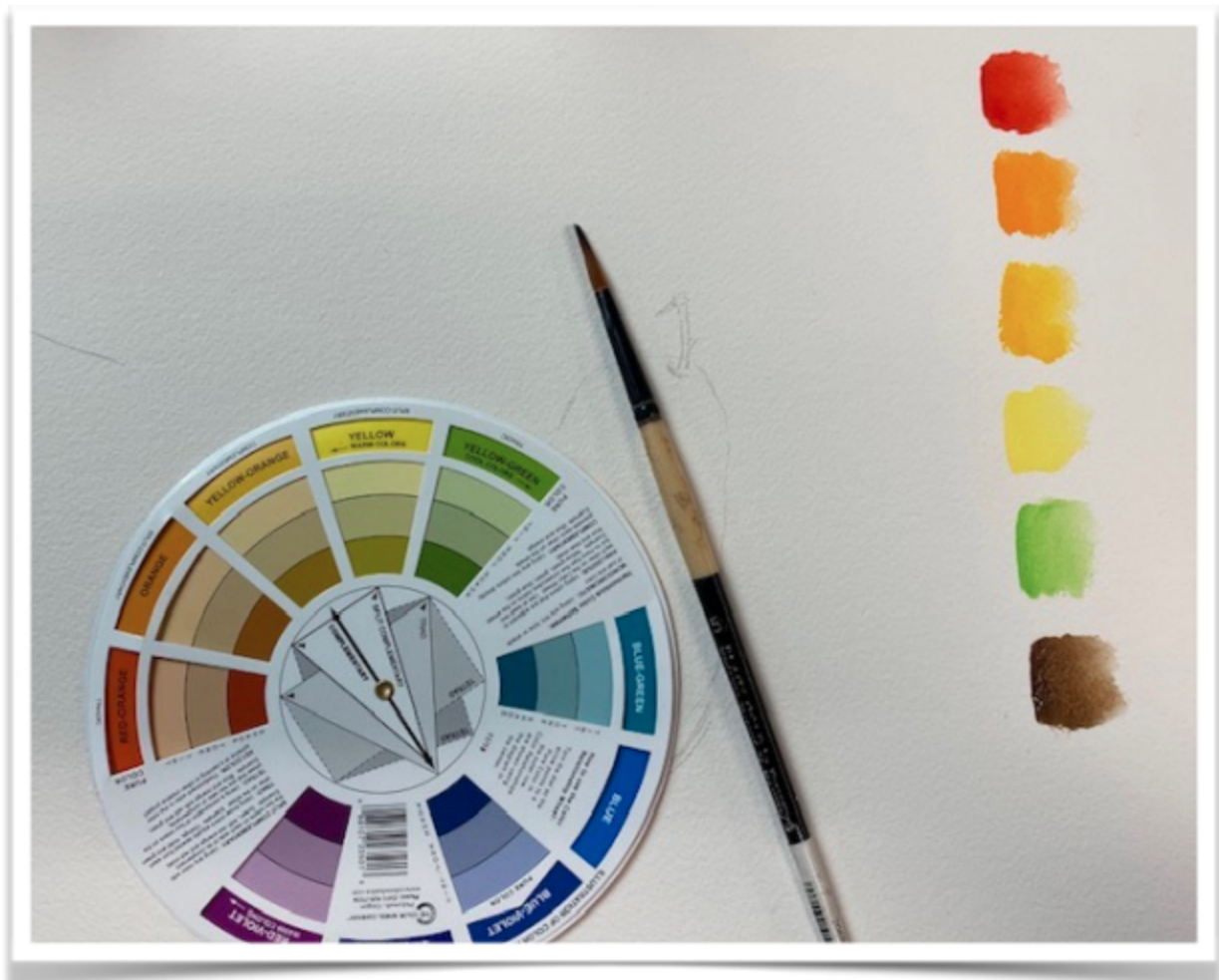
Though they are limited in use here, I included Lamp Black (to make shades), Grey (to make tones) and White (to make tints). The Asphaltum is also a value of yellow. Even with this short colour list we have plenty to work with!

Using your Colour Wheel, Select 3-5 colours seated next to each other. Please don't feel that you must use the palette that I selected. Turn the wheel until you find a colour palette that appeals to you and use that to create your own version of this Colourful Pear.

Transfer the sketch of the pear to the paper (use a light touch when transferring, it makes it easier to remove later.)

On the right side of the Sheet, swatch your colours. This helps you understand how much water you will need to get the look you want, and it helps you visually see how the colours relate to each other.

Start with the colour at full strength and then add some water to pull the colour to the right, gradually letting it become more transparent.



To Begin

With some clean water, wet the inside of the pear outline. Begin to add colour by thinning it slightly, keeping the darker value of the colour to the outside edge colour. I started with the Tangerine.



To the highlight side (the left) I used the Saffron Yellow, again keeping the darker value to the outside edge. I left the center open. Moisten the paper with water from time to time to allow the paint to move.



Add Some of the Scarlet along the bottom of the pear, in the dimple at the base and a little on the upper right. Use the Sunny day to fill in the space at the center and on the left.



Pull a little of the Sour Apple into the Pear and on the leaf. Thin a little of the Asphaltum to deepen the shading on the lower right side and in the dimple at the base.



Deepen the shadows on the neck of the pear on the lower right of the left side. Use it at full strength to stroke in the stem. Over stroke it with a touch of the Sour Apple. Shade under the turn in the leaf

and down the center vein with a float of the Asphaltum. Add a highlight to the belly and the upper portion of the pear (on the left) with a little Warm White.





Deepen a few areas with washes of thinned Asphaltum. You can also add layers of the colours you used to create more depth.

Also, try mixing a variety of tints (by adding white), tones (by adding grey), and shades (by adding black) using the colours you select. Prepare a sheet of swatches for these as well.

