

Susan Harrison-Tustain's Christmas 2016 Gift to subscribers to my priority mail list.

Complementary Colors

Let's chat about **complementary colors** - there is an easy way to remember them:

Having trouble remembering the complementary colors?

Our primary colours are: **Red**, **yellow** and **blue**.



Please do this exercise physically:

Please pick up tubes of any **red**, **yellow** and **blue**.

Now take two of those tubes in one hand. Let's say **red** and **yellow**. Ask yourself what colour will you get if you mixed **red** and **yellow** together?
Orange - yes of course.

Now what colour are you left with in your other hand - out of the three primary colours we began with?

Yes - **Blue**.

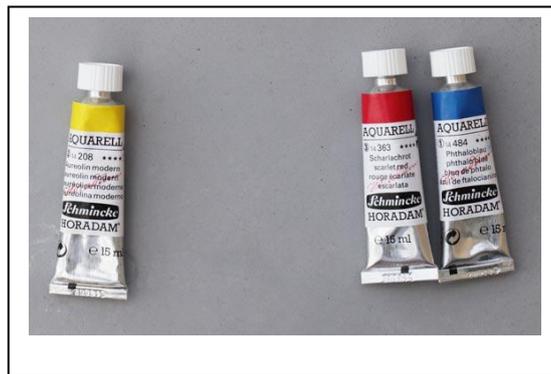
The colour you have left is always the complementary color of the other two colors that you have mixed.

So you now know that **blue** is the complementary colour of **Orange**. Just as **Orange** is the complementary colour of ?

Blue! yes!

Let's do another test:

Take two more tubes: Let's take **Blue** and **Red** into one hand. What colour do we get if we mix **Blue** and **Red** together? Yes of course - **Purple**.



What colour of the three primary colours we began with, do you have left in the other hand? Of course - you have **Yellow** left in your other hand

So now you know that **Yellow** must be the complementary colour of **Purple**. Just as **Purple** is the complementary colour of **Yellow**.

There is one more to go.

Let's take **Blue** and **Yellow**. What colour do we get if we mix **Blue** and **Yellow** together? Yes - it is **Green**.



What colour tube do we have left in the other hand? **Red!** Yes.

So now we know that **Red** is the complementary colour of **Green** - Just as **Green** is the complementary colour of **Red**.

These tubes are *right in front of you* - so if you need reminding of the complementary colours - just do this simple exercise until you remember them by heart. The great thing is that if you forget - the answer is only three tubes away!

Now it is time to learn how to retain this information on complementary colors.

Your task is to play with these tubes. Challenge yourself by asking yourself the complementary colors of **Blue Red Green Yellow** and **Purple Orange**. Use your tubes of color to work this out. Continue until it becomes instinctive.

Exercise

Complementary colours are opposite each other on the color wheel.

Create three circles on your paper or canvas. Now try mixing different complementary colours together in your circles - as suggested below.

Take note of what happens to the colors when you mix these complementary colors together:

Mix:

Blue with Orange

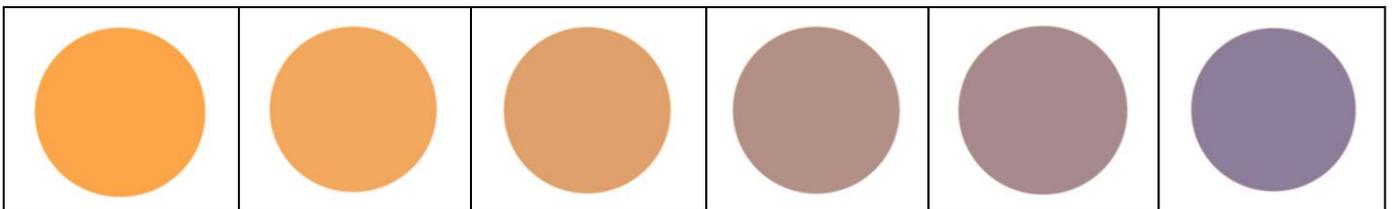
Red with Green

Yellow with Purple

What have you noticed?

Yes - the answer is that each time you mix complementary colors together - the colors become dulled - sometimes grey. The reason for this is the colors cancel each other out.

You are in control of how dull or bright you want your complementary color mix to be. For instance: If you mix the two complementary colors of orange and blue together, you will get a mix that is more orange, more blue or more neutral. The more balanced the mix is - the more neutral it will be. However you may want a color that is a slightly dulled orange. In this case you could use a very small amount of blue to slightly dull the orange down. However - you may want a very dull orange. In this case you would use more blue to dull the orange down. But not so much that the mix is neutral or possibly tending more toward blue than orange. You can do this exercise with any of the complementary colors: Purple/Yellow, Green/Red. You can do with any color at all. Simply decide who bright or dull you want a color, add the complementary color to create the color you are looking for. You are in control of color. Not the other way around. Simply adjust the amount of complementary color to be in control of the brightness or dullness of any color!

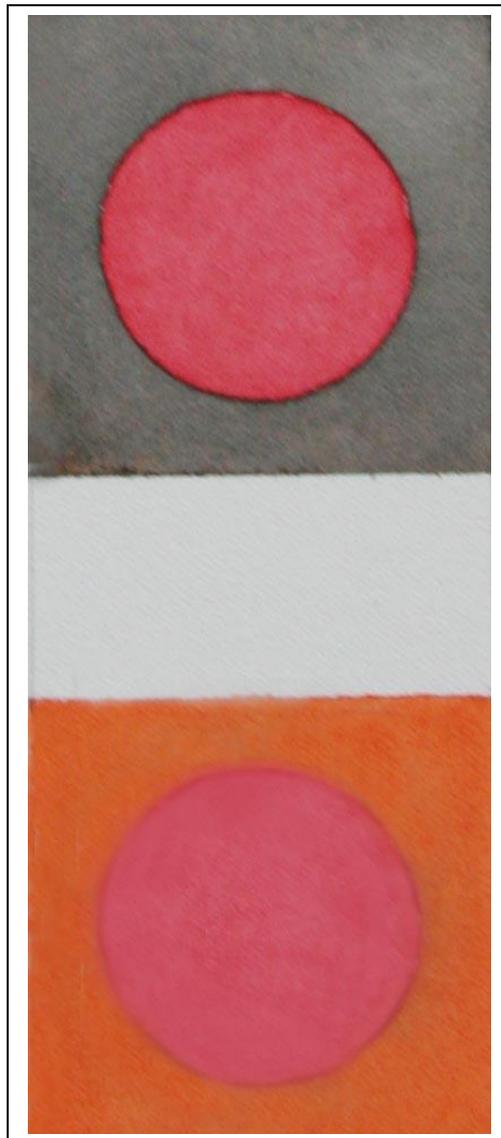


Can you see how adding varying amounts of complementary color you not only can control how bright or dull the color is - but you can also allow the color bias to change. In this case we can see how our orange gradually became blue. The blue became the dominant color.

Often these "Grey power" colors are not particularly attractive on their own. But they are crucial in a painting. If we used only our bright vibrant colors - the strength and power of these bright colors would work against each other and we would find they would appear less strong - less outstanding, less bright and less vibrant alongside each other

This is the secret to making colors appear to be the most strident they can be - and stand out as much as possible is this:

A bright color needs to be placed next to dulled colors such as our neutral mixes if we want it to be as bright as it can be. The more dull the surrounding color is - the more bright our color will look.

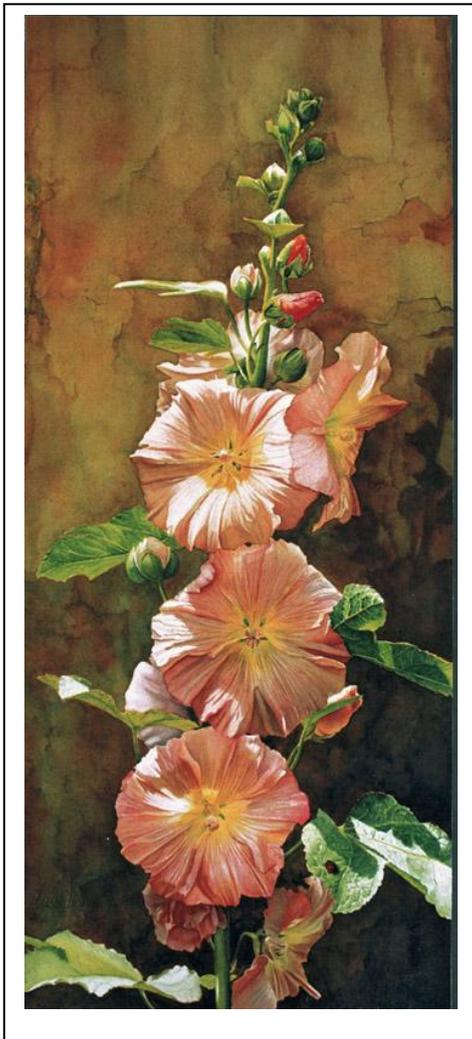


Can you see how our neutral hue allows the red circle at the top example to glow and dominate?

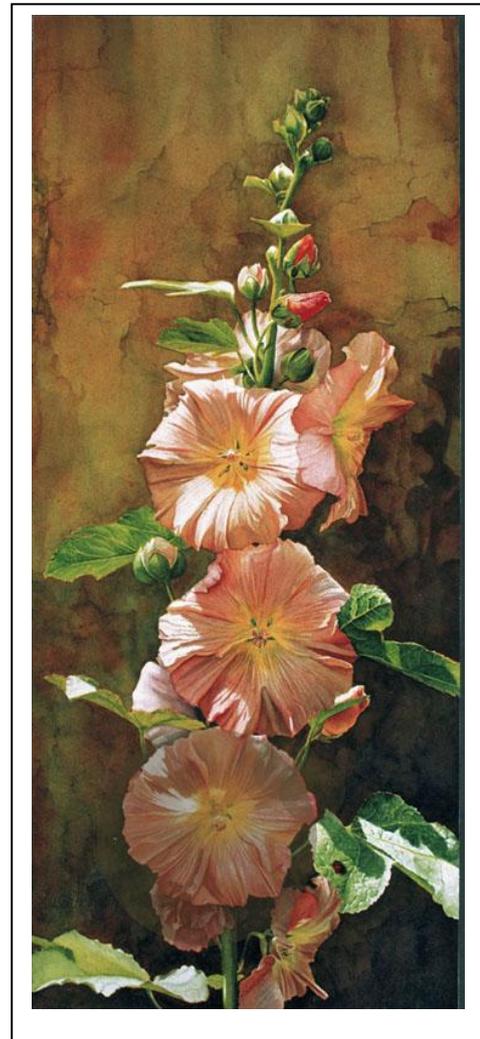
Compare that to the two bright colors next to each other in the bottom example. Can you see how the same bright Scarlet Red is no longer dominant when placed within a square bright orange? These two colors are competing against each other and therefore they are dulling each other down. Neither looks as bright as the red in the top example. And yet the red is the same red and the same strength of red. It is deceiving isn't it?

I use the advantages of each of these scenarios on all of my paintings.

Here is an example of a painting where I have used my complementary color to dull the surrounding colors. This has allowed my main subject color to glow radiantly.



Can you see how I have dulled the background color to allow the flowers to stand out?



Note how I have thrown the lower bloom back into the composition by dulling it with a complementary color. Naturally it now looks 'wrong' but the point of this exercise is to show you the power of complementary colors. Compare this *lower* bloom with the vibrant *upper* blooms. We can push back or pull forward any object by introducing complementary colors

into our color mix. Think of the other applications of this lesson!

Exciting isn't it!

Summary

As artists, this knowledge and understanding brings new awareness's that help us to portray the nature's nuances that delight, captivate and transport the viewers of our work to that place, that moment that inspired us.

I hope this simple but powerful lesson will become a well-used tool amongst all those wonderful breakthroughs you have learned and are yet to discover. The feedback from my teaching workshops / DVDs and downloads allow me to see how lessons such as this empower artists of all skill levels and bring new awarenesses and understanding how lessons such as this can help you gain the power to portray any subject in any medium or painting style .

My greatest pleasure is to see artists find your wings and bring an edge to your work - as you learn how to create paintings that connect, resonate and speak to the viewers of your work.

Enjoy!

Have a wonderful Festive Season!

Susan

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