THE BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO ROCK PAINTING:

HOW TO MIX COLORS WITH CONFIDENCE

HERE'S WHAT'S INSIDE!

- Learn about color zones
- How to mix colors to the desired hue, shade, & tint
- Explore color expression and how to use it
UNDERSTANDING COLOR THEORY

What colors go well together? How do I get my colors not to look muddy when mixing?

These are just some of the questions I get in emails from readers about color mixing.

This guide will be covering color theory and how to use the color wheel with confidence.

THE COLOR WHEEL

Knowing how to mix and use color is crucial to any painting. The color wheel is an important tool and should be in every artist’s toolbox. The first thing to know when understanding color theory is that there are three colors that cannot be made by mixing other colors together. These are the primary colors: red, blue, and yellow. The color wheel is broken down into color zones known as primary, secondary, and tertiary colors.
**PRIMARY COLORS**

Red, blue, and yellow also known as primary colors. These colors cannot be made by mixing other colors together. This begins the introduction of the color wheel.

- **YELLOW**
- **BLUE**
- **RED**

**SECONDARY COLORS**

To create more colors on the color wheel, start by mixing equal amounts of two primary colors together to create a new color. For example, by mixing an equal amount of blue and yellow it creates green; red and yellow make orange; blue and red make violet.

- **GREEN**
- **ORANGE**
- **VIOLET**
**TERTIARY COLORS**

Tertiary colors consist of six colors made by combining equal amounts of a primary and secondary color. For example, by mixing red and violet makes red-violet. The other tertiary colors are red-orange, yellow-orange, yellow-green, blue-green, and blue-violet.

![Tertiary Colors Diagram]

**COMPLEMENTARY COLORS**

Complementary colors are colors that are opposite from another on the color wheel contrasting partners. For example, red is the complementary of green, blue of orange, and yellow of violet. This can also include secondary and tertiary colors as well. These colors are high in contrast and intensity making it a harsh color scheme and not balanced.

![Complementary Colors Diagram]
COLOR THEORY TERMS TO KNOW

HUES
Are also known as color and often used to observe the color of objects. Hue refers to primary and secondary colors. For example, the hue of hunter green is green.

INTENSITY
This refers to how bright or strong a color is. For example, an intense vibrant color such as cadmium red loses its intensity when white is added to become pink.

TONES
Tone refers to the lightness or darkness of a color. Tones make vivid colors more muted by adding grey.

SHADES
It’s a mixture of a color with black which reduces the lightness of that color.

TINTS
It’s a mixture of a color with white which increases lightness.

SATURATION
Is a measure of how pure a color is. To reduce the amount of saturation, try adding grey to a hue.

CONSIDER THESE TIPS WHEN MIXING PAINTS:
- Bright colors tend to be more vibrant and rich next to neutral colors.
- Darker tones intensify next to light tones.
- Add white and/or yellow to lighten the color.
- Add blue and/or raw umber to darken the color.
- Acrylic paint will dry darker, so be sure to blend your colors lighter.
- Start with a light color and gradually add a dark color to get the desired color. For example, add small amounts of blue to yellow to make green.
LIST OF ESSENTIAL COLORS FOR MIXING

**CADMIUM RED**
This is a warm and relatively opaque color.

**PHTHALO BLUE**
This is an intense color, but it should be when combined with burnt umber it gets very dark. To create lighter blues only use a small amount of blue mixed with white. A good substitute is an ultramarine blue.

**CADMIUM YELLOW**
You can create lighter hues simply by adding white to it. To darken the yellow, add complementary colors like purple.

**TITANIUM WHITE**
Bright Opaque white; great for tinting colors.

**MARS BLACK**
It's a relatively opaque color; it must be added in small quantities when mixing.

**RAW OR BURNT UMBER**
This is great for darkening the tone of hues. Raw Umber has a lighter cooler shade and Burnt Umber is a warmer rich brown.

**PHTHALO GREEN**
Is a bright green with a bluish tint. This makes it ideal for mixing yellow for a variety of green shades.
COLOR EXPRESSION

Expressing yourself with color says a lot about how you are feeling in that moment. Someone wearing a pink blouse may be in a happy positive mood. In art therapy, color is often associated with a person’s mental or physical state. Warm colors such as red, orange and yellow tend to represent life, strength, and strong emotions. While cooler colors of purple, blue and green can range from restful calm emotions to sadness and passive.
EXAMPLES OF COLOR THEORY IN ART

PRIMARY COLORS
Red, blue, and yellow also known as primary colors. These colors cannot be made by mixing other colors together.

Still Life on a Blue Table by Henri Matisse 1947
Woman in Blue at a Table by Henri Matisse 1923

COMPLEMENTARY COLORS
Colors that are opposite from another on the color wheel contrasting partners.

The Night Cafe by Vincent Van Gogh 1888
Self Portrait by Vincent Van Gogh 1889
ANALOGOUS COLORS
Analogous colors is a collection of three colors that are next to each other on the color wheel.

The Japanese Bridge by Claude Monet 1889

Horizon Ocean View by Richard Diebenkorn

WARM COLORS
Red, Orange, and Yellow

Mandolina and Flowers by Paul Gauguin 1883

COOL COLORS
Blue, Green, and Purple

Fishing Boats, Key West by Winslow Homer 1903
HIGH INTENSITY

Gypsy in front of Musca by Pablo Picasso 1900

LOW INTENSITY

Place du Theatre Francais, Paris by Camille Pissarro 1898

Here's a great video for Mixing Colors for Beginner's Video by Katie Jobling
https://youtu.be/wL-KsjQ39WA

BEST COLOR PALETTE SITES FOR ARTISTS

Choosing a color palette to work with can make you second guess yourself as soon as you start your painting. Here are some nice visual color palette sites to help make that decision process easy. I personally, love Design Seeds, it's offers nice visual photos with coordinating color palettes.

- Design-seeds.com
- Paletton.com
- ColorHunt.co
- Coolors.co
- Colormind.io
- Colourlovers.com
- Canva.com/colors/color-palette-generator/ - Canva makes it easy to upload your favorite photo and generates a color palette to match.
- Plaidonline.com/Plaid/media/PlaidLibrary/eduPDF/color-palette-inspiration.pdf - Color Palette Inspiration PDF
Now you know all the basic foundations of painting for beginners. Check out my rock painting tutorials and get started today!

Hopefully, you enjoyed reading this guide and is excited to start your rock painting journey!

Send me a message to rockpaintingguide@gmail.com to let me know what you think of this guide.

Also, follow me on Instagram @rockpaintingguide and join our Facebook Group where I share helpful rock painting tips & more!