

## Do you know? – Frank Zampardi

Being familiar with the color wheel will allow you to open the door to color mixing possibilities on your palette as well as the overall color scheme for your composition. If you use your own reference material, this will be far more meaningful to you.

Of course, you know that Red, Yellow and Blue are the three primary colors and they cannot be mixed or formed by a combination of other colors. You can, however, combine the primaries to create the secondary colors of orange, green and violet. You can also mix a primary and its neighboring secondary color to create (complementary colors including red-orange, yellow-green and red and blue violet. Complementary colors are opposites on the color wheel.

Complementary colors do two important things: **They enhance each other when placed next to one another. I say “they fight for attention.”** A green leaf will visually magnify a pink or red flower. The warm color (in this comparison) will advance closer to you than the cooler green leaf suggesting depth and dimension.

It's important that you know that color temperature is relative. Some reds appear cooler than others when placed next to each other; however, both will seem warm compared to a cool color. So, generally speaking, reds, yellows and oranges are thought to have a warm temperature and blues, greens and violets have a cool temperature.

The complementary colors when mixed together create a warm or cool gray. The amount of the complementary colors used determines how gray the other color will be.

Colors side-by-side are called analogous colors. They can be considered as families of colors because they create a harmonious yet interesting visual effect.

When establishing color harmonies or a color harmony, first choose a dominant color. **The colors on either side of that dominant color will form the analogous color harmonies.** The lighter analogous color can be used for light areas, and the darker analogous color can be used for the shadows. For example, if you are painting a rose, you might choose a red as the main color. This means you'll use an orange for the lighter areas and a violet in the shadows.

Now, when determining which analogous color scheme to use, try this.... Use the object's local color (color of the object) as the main color and build the analogous color scheme around that. **Working from a reference photo or on location is a quick and easy way to make that decision.**

A color's temperature can be used to send a message to the viewer. Want to convey a feeling of excitement? Use a warm color scheme. If you want a cool serene scene, use cool colors. Easy!!! By having one **color dominate the painting** your message will be consistent. Remember, have **the greatest degree of contrast near your “focal point.”**