

COLOR TEMPERATURE



Temperature ... Fire and Ice – Warm and Cool – Hot and Cold

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All colors are relative to another color; no color stands alone, and color is judged by its relationship to other colors in the painting.

Color has many properties, including temperature, hue, value, and intensity. Temperature is a way to inject life, energy, and, most importantly, depth into our paintings. The easiest way to visualize color temperature is to think about *fire and ice*.

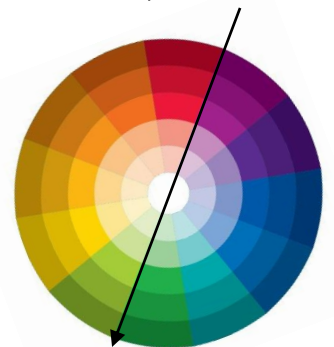
How does Temperature relate to color?

Temperature is an attribute of color that describes how warm or cool a color is. Warm colors contain yellow and red, whereas cool colors contain blue. All colors, including neutrals and earth tones, have a warm or cool bias. Warm earth tones are usually preceded by 'Burnt', and cool earth tones are preceded by 'Raw'.

The standard color wheel comprises twelve colors made from the three primary colors. Cool colors contain 'blue,' and warm colors contain 'yellow.' Looking at the color wheel below, notice where the line is drawn between Yellow-Green and Green, then Red and Red Violet. This illustration divides the warm colors from the cool colors, and it is an easy concept to understand.

Complementary Colors

On the standard color wheel, there are six complementary colors. All complements have one warm and one cool color. Look at the complements of Red and Green. These opposite partners in temperature have nothing in common with each other, nor do any of the other pairs. Opposite temperatures demand attention when used side by side, which is why artists and Mother Nature so widely use these color schemes.



Artists use temperature as a tool to create distance and depth.

Have you ever been told that warm temperatures advance and cool temperatures recede? This statement is not always true. As you can see below, the background is warm, and the cool blue water comes forward. The color that will advance is the opposite temperature of the background color.



Even slight temperature changes will separate objects, but extreme opposites, as in complementary colors, create a vibration that separates and adds space between objects. Notice below the Yellow and Violet color scheme and how this two-dimensional photo looks three-dimensional with much depth. The cool violet color recedes nicely in the background; therefore, the yellow advances forward.



Temperature is all around us and beneath us
Warm colors advance on cool backgrounds.

**Learning to see
Temperature - It's all
Relative**

Judging temperature in terms of 'seeing', or how we visually perceive a color, is *relative to* another color. For example, this floral shows how the background temperature and value are used to add depth. The background *temperature* will determine which *temperature* to use to bring objects forward and recede. Cool objects recede on cool backgrounds; warm objects recede on warm backgrounds.



In this painting, the background is a cool grey. The three background roses are painted with cool red, leaning red-violet, and the light area is a cool grey/white. The three foreground roses are painted with a warmer red and warm white. The foreground leaves are warm, and the background leaves are cool. Tints and accents on back leaves are cool, leaning to violet, and foreground leaf accents are warm red to advance.

Separation—Painting one object cooler or warmer than the other will separate the two. This helps the artist achieve depth since two objects cannot realistically share the same space.

In this leaf painting, the cool blue background leaf is distant in depth from the warm ginkgo leaves on the right. The red stem complements the green leaves and adds distance between them.

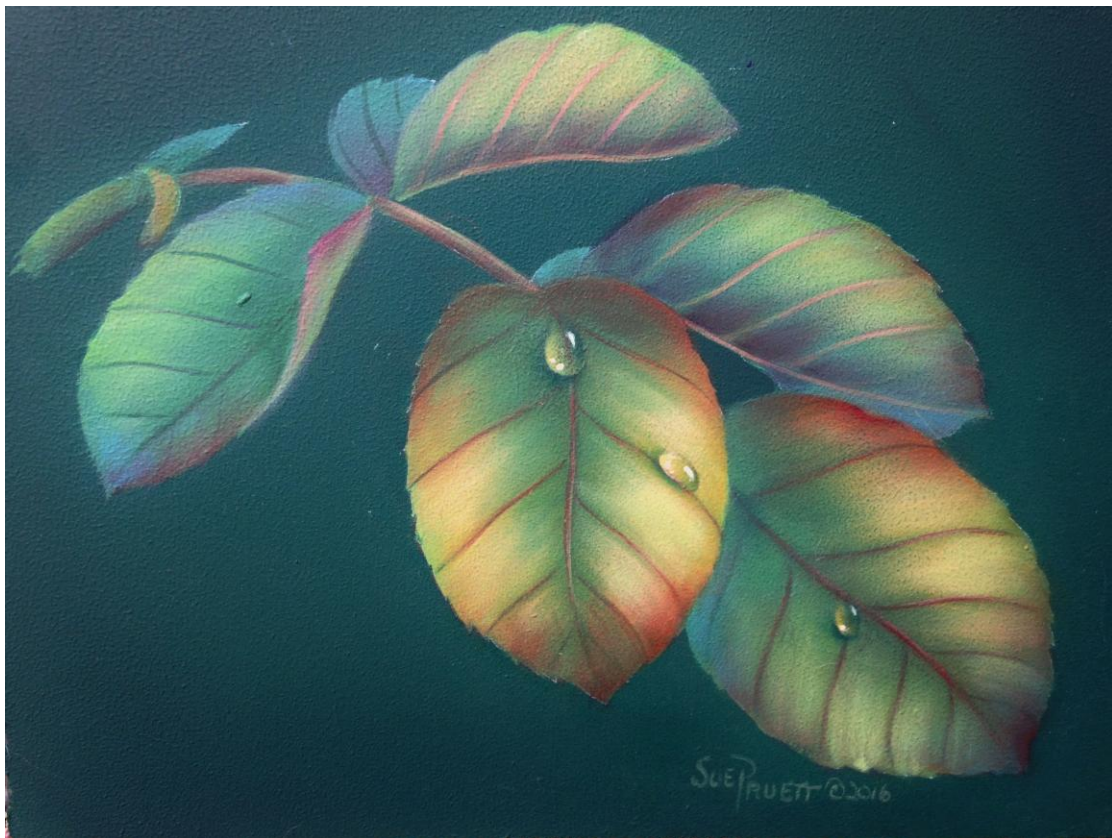


Transition – Similar temperatures will bridge the eye from one area to the next without interrupting flow. An example of this would be similar temperatures in background objects will bridge the eye from one to the next. The warm ginkgo leaves transition/bridge the warm temperature

to the warm side of the green leaves. The left side of the green leaves is much cooler, which helps transition/bridge to the blue-green leaves.

Focal Area—Using cool objects next to warm objects will draw the eye to the Focal Area. This is extremely important in the floral and still life categories certification program. A dynamic focal area will strongly display temperature, intensity, and value contrast.

Relief—Too much of the same temperature throughout a painting will be boring and monotonous. Adding small touches of the opposite temperature will add relief and interest. This is usually achieved using tints, accents, stems, bugs, flower centers, etc.



Temperature and Leaves

Leaves should have interest and character. So often we see just green leaves with no other color utilized to add interest or depth. In this leaf painting, the background is a cool blue-green, warm-green will advance, and cool-green will recede. Cool and warm red accents and tints have been added to add color and interest. The cool red is on the back leaves, and the warm red is on the foreground leaves. Water drops have been added to the two front leaves to add interest and create a focal area. Details draw the eye to a location; and add interest. Leaves in the background should have less interest and contrast, to keep them in the background.

In summary...It's about making something cooler *than* or warmer *than*...Color Temperature is always *relative* to something else.