CHAPTER 13
Colour notes
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The intention ofthis section is not to make an in depth study of colour as a subject , but r ather to point out sorne of the advantages and disadvantages that certain colours present. A basic knowledge of colour is essential to every painter, and on the assumption that little or nothing is known, the following notes are provided for beginners. lncluded, for quick and easy referen ce, are hints on
various colour mixes, the qualities of colours, selected palettes and specialised or technical terms (used throughout the text).

Primary colours Red , blue and yellow. These cannot be made by mixin g any other colours.
Secondary colours Orange, green and violet . These can be made by mixing two of the primaries.

Palette
A limited palette encourages experiment in mixing, and colour theory dictates that trom the three pri maries, plus black and white , all other colours may be obtained. However, many flat painters adopt a more realistic approach and keep a se lection of ready-mixed colours: the following palettes represent the colour choices of three highly accomplished painters and are included to assist beginners in making their own selection.

1 Scarlet Lake, Crimson Lake, Chrome Orange, Chrome Yellow, lndian Yellow, Yellow Ochre, Raw Sienna, Prussian Blue, mauve (blue shade), Ultramarine (Deep), Burnt Umber, Raw Umber, Burnt Sienna, Titanium White and lvory Black.

2 Scarlet Lake, Cadmium Red, Crimson Alizarin, Cadmium Yellow (Palé), Yellow Ochre, Naples Yellow, Prussian Blu e, Coba lt Blue (Light), French Ultramarine , Burnt Umber, Burnt Sienna, Raw Umber, Raw Sien na, Titanium White, Lamp Black and Blue Black.

3 Cadmium Red (Deep a nd Light), Chrome Orange, Cadmium Yellow, Yellow Ochre (Gold), Prussian Blue, Cobalt Blue (Deep), Burnt Umber, Burnt Sienna, Titanium White and l vory Black.

Qualities

Every colour has five qualities, and colours a remix ed together to modify one or more of these qualities as required:

Hue This is what is loosely termed 'colour' - red as opposed to blue , green as opposed to orange, etc .

Value A colour's degree of lightness or darkness.

Chroma Th e brilliance of a colour: for example , Cadmium Yellow is a more brilliant colour than
Yellow Ochre.

Temperature A colour's 'warmth' or 'coldness' ba sed purely on a esthetics. Red and yellow are cons idered
to be warm colours , whereas blue and violet are cold.

Transparency Opposed to 'opaque' colours (those that have good covering power), some pigments are transparent and are used maynly for glazing.

Basic mixes

The following hues may be obtained by mixing two colours together:

Blue-violet	- violet + blue.
Brown	- orange + violet.
Green	- blue + yellow.
"	- yellow + violet.
"	- yellow + black.
"	- blue + orange.

Greys can be obtained by mixing the three pri-maries together or two of the secondary colours.

Grey (neutral)	- black + white (sometimes called 'dead grey').
" "	- red + green.
" "	- violet + yellow.
" (dark)	- Winsor Blue + Indian Red.
" "	- Burnt Umber + Ultramarine + white.
" (cool)	- Cobalt Blue + vermilion

Technical terms

Flat colour A colour which, when applied to an area, appears uniform all over

Local colour The colour of an object itself. For example, if one is painting a red tunic, that tunic's 'local colour' is red.

Reflected colour When the colour of one object appears (or is refl ected) in another (see Painting metals), *Shade* When a colour is darkened by adding black, or any other darkening hue, it becomes a 'shade' ofthat colour.

Shadow colour Brown, violet and blue are generally regarded a s being 'shadow colours'. However, a shadow can also be represented by darkening thelocal colour.

Tint When a colour is lightened by adding white, it becomes a 'tint' of'that colour.

Notes on specific colours

Black lvory Black leans towards brown, Jet Black towards blue and Lamp Black towards grey.

Blue Prussian, the darkest of all blues, has t remendous 't int ing' power. It al so has tremendous staining power. Always use this colour sparingly and clean brushes thoroughly after use.

Green Greens are made by mixing yellows, or orange or browns, with blues. Winsor Green has tremendous 'tinting' power. When mixed with Prussian Blue and white, it makes a rich turquoise colour (ideal for Ancient Egyptian figures).

Orange Chrome Orange possesses excellent cover ingpower.

Red For many, red is a difficult colour to shade. lnstead of using black or brown, try shading with lndian Red or Crimson Alizarin. Red should never be lightened with whit e, unless a cool pink is required ; use yellow instead. Military uniforms may be a n except ion.

White Seven whites are av ailable in oil colours:

Flake, Zinc, Cremnitz, Titanium, Primer, Foundation and Under painting . Only three may be necessary for flat painting: Flake is excelle nt for general use , comparatively quick drying, has good covering power and is used mostly for tinting other colours; Zinc is the least opaque of the whites, has a pure, cold appearance, and is ideal for tinting and glazing ; Titanium is the whitest and most opaque, and is ideal for highlighting. White cannot be lightened: to highlight white, modify the colour itself by reducing its chroma and add pure Titanium to the highlight areas. It is also the most difficult colour to shade. Do not over-shade and avoid using pure black for

the purpose. White clothing (unless modern) is seldom pure white - avoid brilliance, especially when painting Ancients.

Yellow Always darken yellow with browns, never black. Yellow Ochre may be darkened with Raw Sienna or Burnt Umber; use Chrome Yellow andlor white to lighten . Cadmium Yellow may be darkened with Burnt Sienna , Raw Umber or Raw Sienna; use Naples Yellow or white to lighten .Chrome Yellow may be darkened with Yellow Ochre or Raw Sienna; use Zinc White with or without Naples Yellow to lighten.