

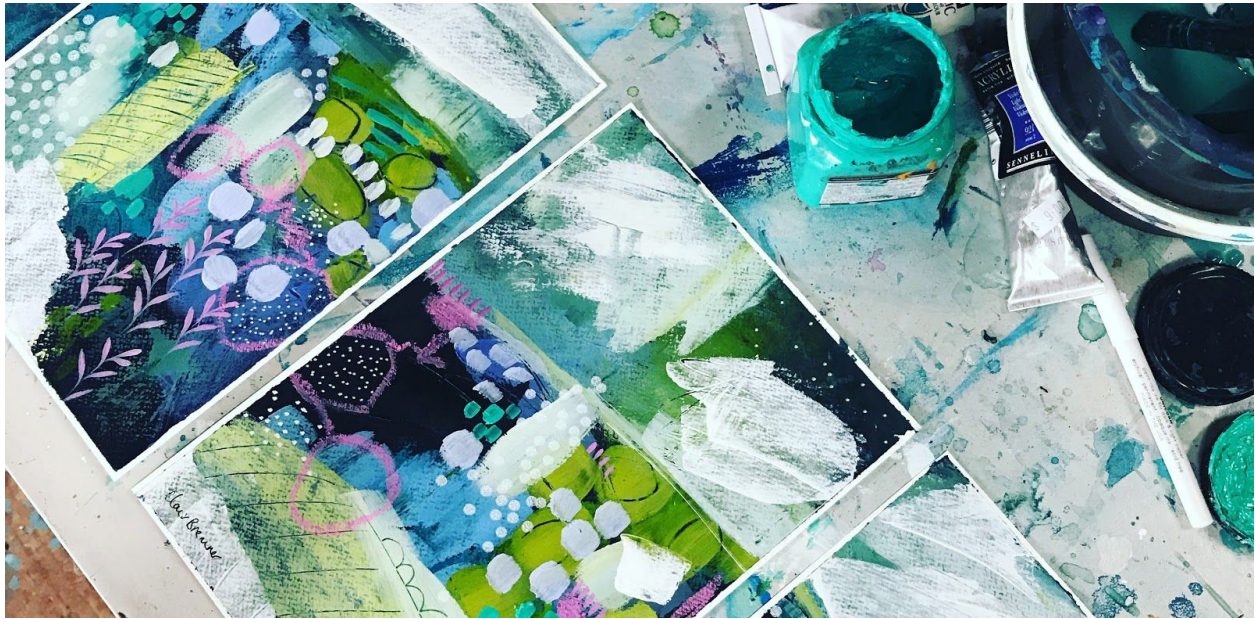


CLAIR BREMNER

COLOUR PALETTE PLAY

HOW TO BE CREATIVE WITH COLOUR

FREE DOWNLOAD



Introduction

One of the questions that pops up most often in my inbox from other artists is : how do you choose your colour palettes?

Colour choice is a very personal thing and everyone is going to have their own ideas on what colours they like and want to use in their art. Choosing the right colours can change the whole dynamic and mood of an artwork and it can often be daunting for new artists.

I have been painting and drawing from a very young age, I have also studied colour theory and although I am no expert, I do have a pretty good understanding of colour. These days, when I paint I mostly rely on my intuition when making colour choices and I mix up colours as I paint, but there are a few techniques and tips that i am going to share with you that might help you when it comes to settling on a colour palette for your next artwork.

Now, I will also mention that generally i work in a loose, abstract and impressionist style of painting. I don't paint realistic scenes or from reference images, so I take a lot of creative licence when it comes to my colour choices. If you are an artist that paints from reference or is interested in more realistic representations in your art then this guide probably isn't going to help...but then again, maybe it will!



Why should you plan your colour palette before you begin painting?

I will be honest, these days I don't always plan out the colours that I am going to use before I begin painting. Sometimes I begin with no plan at all, other times I begin with just a general colour scheme in mind (like cool colours or warm colours). Usually I will resort to planning out my palette only when I am feeling stuck, planning a new series for a show or I am working on a commission.

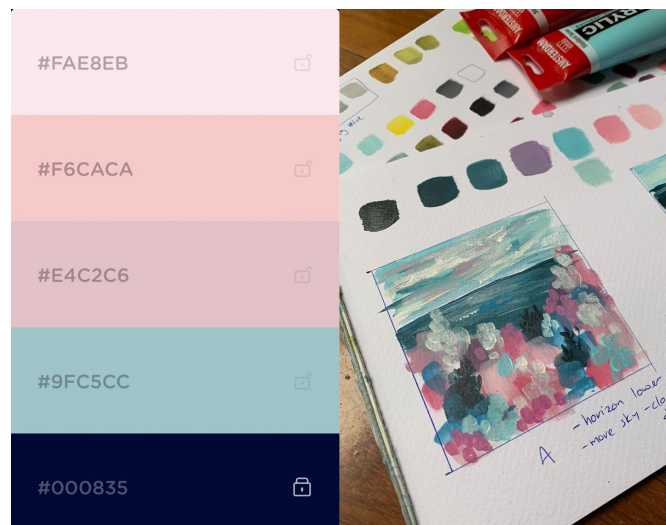
In those situations I find that it is well worth my time and energy to sit down and think about what colours I am going to use before I begin. There are several benefits of doing this regardless of whether you are a new or more experienced artist. Firstly, by planning out your colours before you begin you can focus more on the creating side of art rather than colour choices. When painting intuitively or in a more abstract manner, allowing yourself to get caught up in the flow of things usually results in really amazing things happening. If you have to stop and start every half an hour or so because you are not sure which colour to add next, that flow might be interrupted. Having a colour plan set out allows you to be more free and spontaneous, knowing at the same time that the colours you are using already work well together. Less thinking = more doing.

Planning out your palette also helps to make sure that the mood and feeling of the artwork is on the right track before you begin. Colour plays a really important part in our emotions. Everyone

knows that red makes you feel angry...blue makes you feel calm (generally speaking)...so if you are wanting to create an artwork that represents anger and passion you get the opportunity to work out the colours that encapsulate those feelings before you begin throwing that anger and passion around. Also, if you are basing your artwork on a certain place, or inspirational photos then you can spend some time working on a limited palette of colours that best represent that inspiration.

If the artwork that you are creating is for a client (that could be a private commission, a design client, a gallery or group show) planning out the colour palette before you begin can help make sure that you are all on the same page. One person's idea of "Blush Pink" can be totally different to another person.

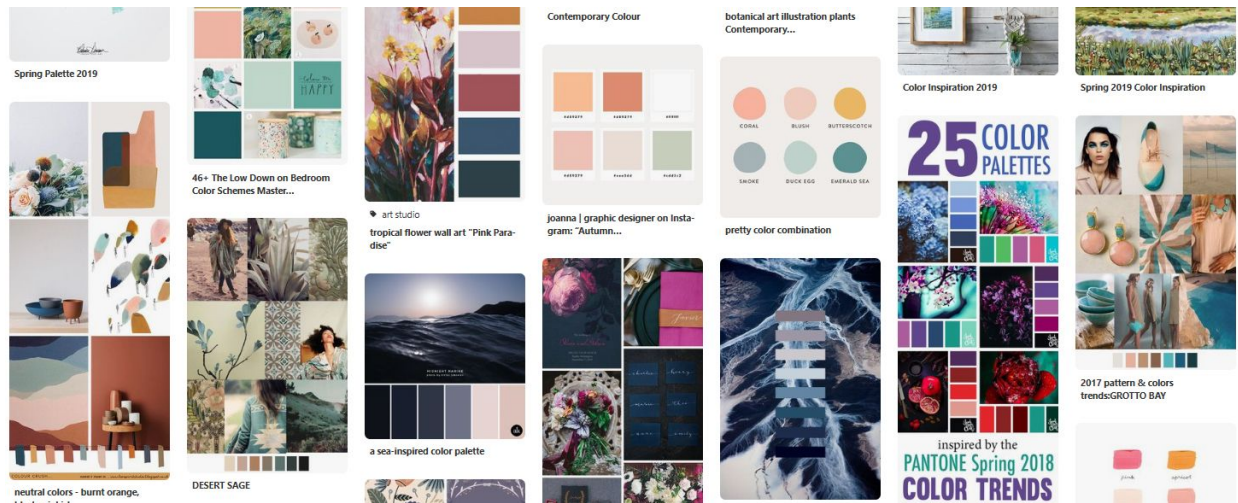
Another benefit to playing around with colour palettes is that you can push your own boundaries as an artist and open up your eyes to different possibilities. By working on small simple colour swatches, you might stumble across combinations that you never would have come up with on your own while working on larger artworks. When i am wanting to test out some colours that I'm not familiar with, I will sometimes create small thumbnail colour studies to make sure that it's going to work.



So where do I begin?

The first place to begin is to go back to basics and look at a colour wheel. The humble colour wheel is an incredibly helpful tool when it comes to working out colour choices. Even the most basic colour wheel will help you to visualize a starting point and a direction for your colour choices. It will help you to visualize contrasting colours, harmonious colours and even more complicated triadic colour combinations.

Another great place to begin is by looking up inspiration and colour combinations online. Pinterest.com is a great source of colour inspiration, in fact there are millions of designers and artists posting colour swatch boards and images onto the web all the time. Here is a sneak peek at some of the colour palette inspiration images currently on my Pinterest board. These are good starting points if you're not sure where to even begin.

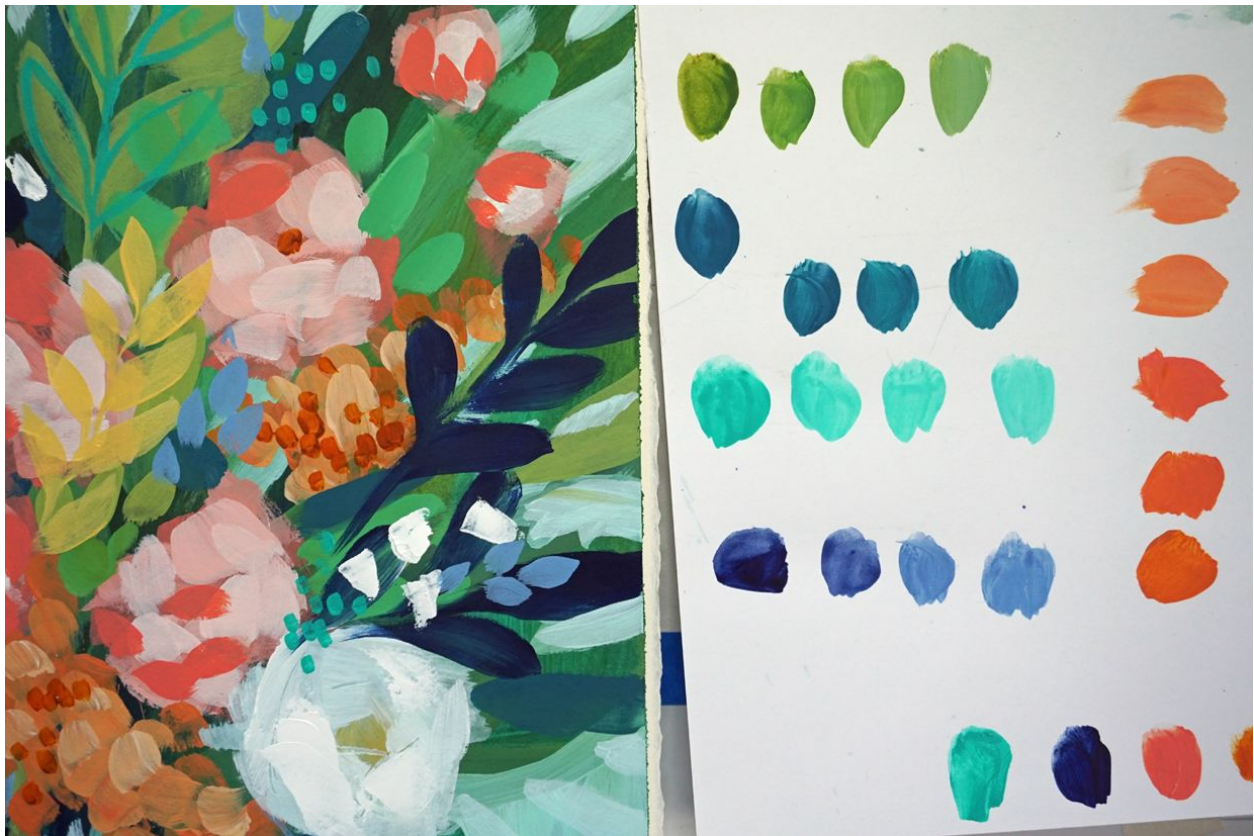


There are also several smartphone apps that you can download that can help you to visualize colour schemes and potential colour palettes. One such App is called Colors, this is a very simple app that creates random colour combinations, you can lock certain colours in place while searching for new ones. Its a tool aimed at web designers, interior designers and stylists but there is no reason why artists can't use it as well.



Another fantastic online resource for colour palette inspiration is the True Colors Art Program, which is a monthly art group run by Kellee Wynne. Kellee puts together a beautifully curated colour palette every month that you can use for inspiration. Also, If you join in on the online workshop group (more info [here](#)) you gain access to monthly videos showing in detail how to create each colour and also guest videos from other artists (you can also follow along on instagram at @experiencetruecolors). I was the guest teacher for April 2019 and i created a 30 minute tutorial showing how i choose a colour palette to create a floral artwork.



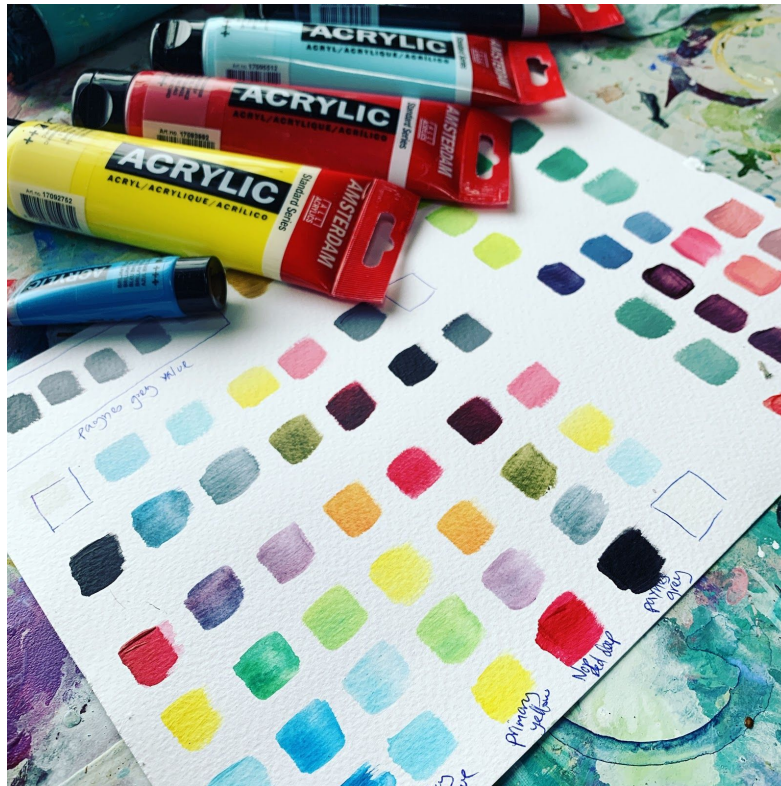


Why is a limited palette a good thing?

As creative individuals, sometimes we can go a little overboard. Colour is one area where a lot of artists come unstuck. There seems to be a myth that if you want to create a vibrant and exciting artwork all you need to do is just add every colour in the rainbow. While there are plenty of very successful and beautiful artworks out there that contain a rainbow of colours, sometimes that can be really overwhelming. Learning to reign in your colour choices and limit your palette means that your artwork will come across as more sophisticated, well thought out and potentially complementary to the environment that it is displayed in.

Limiting your palette also makes colour mixing much easier. If you only have four base colours that you're working with in your artwork, any combination of those four colours mixed together is going to work well. You can't really make a mistake. The underlying hues will all work together (provided you also have plenty of contrast between values, but that will be explained later).

Learning to mix your own colours can also save you a lot of money in the long run. In my painting workshops, one of the most important things that I talk about to my students is the importance of learning to mix colours from a limited palette.



Choosing just three basic primary colours- blue, red and yellow, then using white and black to tint and shade can provide you with an amazing range of colours. By altering the particular colour of each primary (switching a warm blue out for a cool blue for example) then opens up a whole new range of colour options.

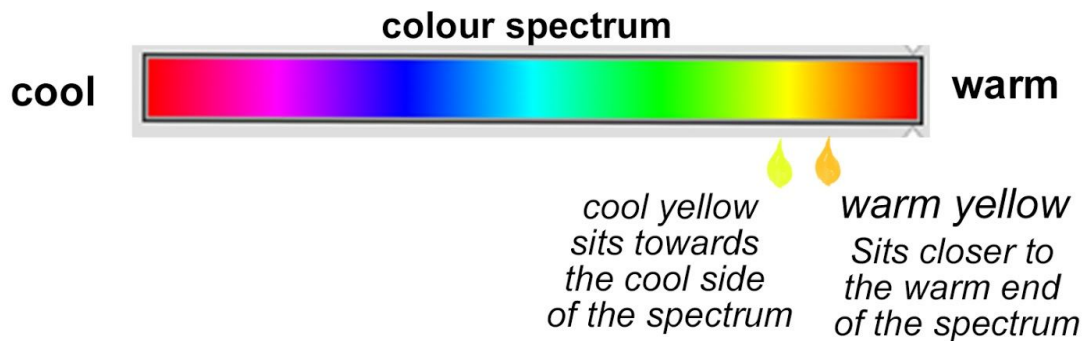
Yes you can just purchase a wide range of pre mixed variations and sometimes if you know that you are going to use a lot of that colour it makes life much easier...but learning to do it yourself is a lot more economical. This is especially the case for emerging or new artists that haven't quite worked out what their personal style or aesthetic is going to be.

Next time you are in the mood to create, pull out the paints that you already have in your collection. Choose one blue shade, one yellow shade and one red shade. Spend a little time mixing with JUST these colours.

Mix them together in different strengths and combinations, mix them with varying amounts of white and then again with different amounts of black. Notice what happens as you tint and shade the mixes, make notes next to the colours describing what you have used to make those

colours. If you don't like the results, change one of the colours to a different temperature (so if you have used a cool red switch to a warm red) and see how that affects the colour mixes.

So...um, exactly what is a "warm" and "cool" colour?

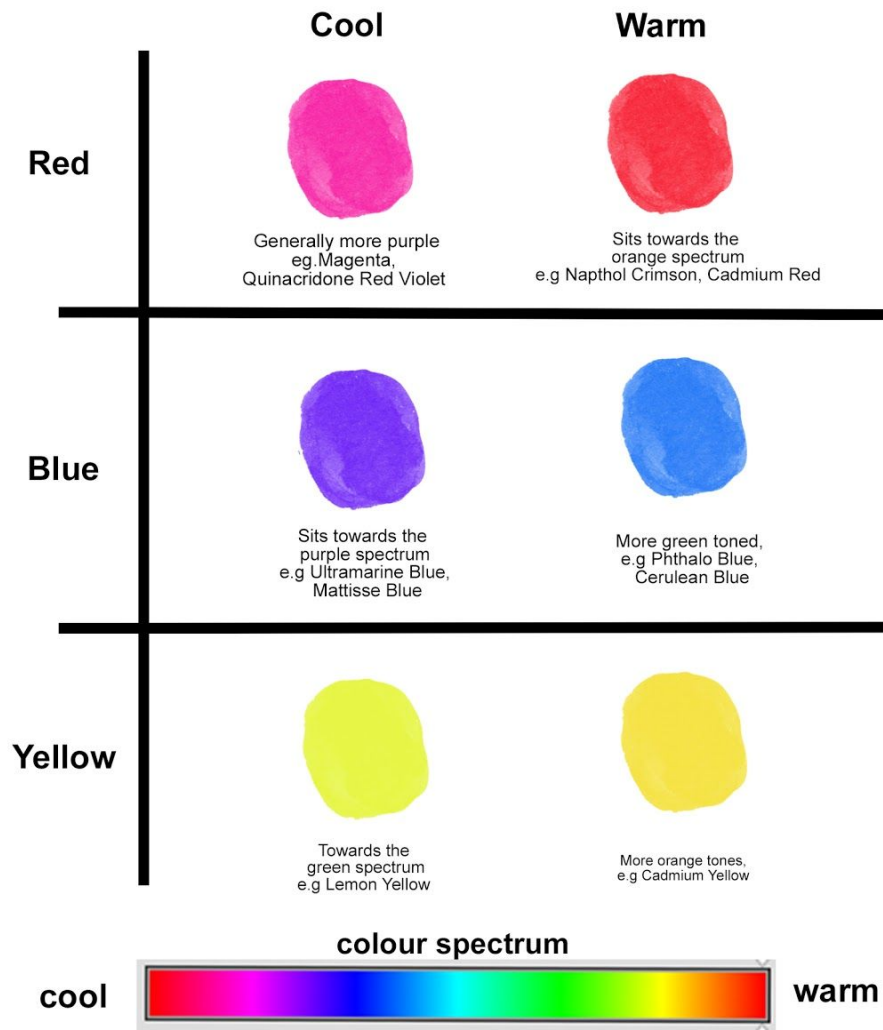


Without getting TOO technical, all colours have an undercurrent of either warm or cool tones. Even a yellow, shown in the example above (which you would immediately presume is generally a warm colour) has a cool version that sits closer to the cool side of the spectrum.

This difference is referred to as temperature and it can greatly affect the results of colour mixing. If you have ever attempted to mix purple by blending a blue and a red, only to end up with yuck brown instead... you have experienced the trouble that colour temperature can cause.

Here is a quick cheat sheet to help you get your head around telling your cools from your warmes. This is just using the primary colours as an example, secondary and tertiary colours also have temperatures depending on which primaries you have used to make them. If you look at a colour spectrum, you can also work out where each colour sits in regards to temperature.

Colour Temperature Cheat Sheet



if you're not sure where a certain colour sits on the temperature scale compare it to the spectrum to see where it sits.



Why is contrast important?

Most successful colour combinations have one thing in common ...contrast.

When I say contrast I am talking about a few different things but I'm mostly referring to contrast in value. You can have a successful colour palette that is totally made up of one colour, the contrast is made up in the different **values** of that colour.

In order to have an interesting variety of tones and values to work with you need to make sure that there is a combination of dark and light colours.

Contrast can also be referring to using contrasting colours. Contrasting colours sit opposite each other on the colour wheel and they visually bounce off each other.

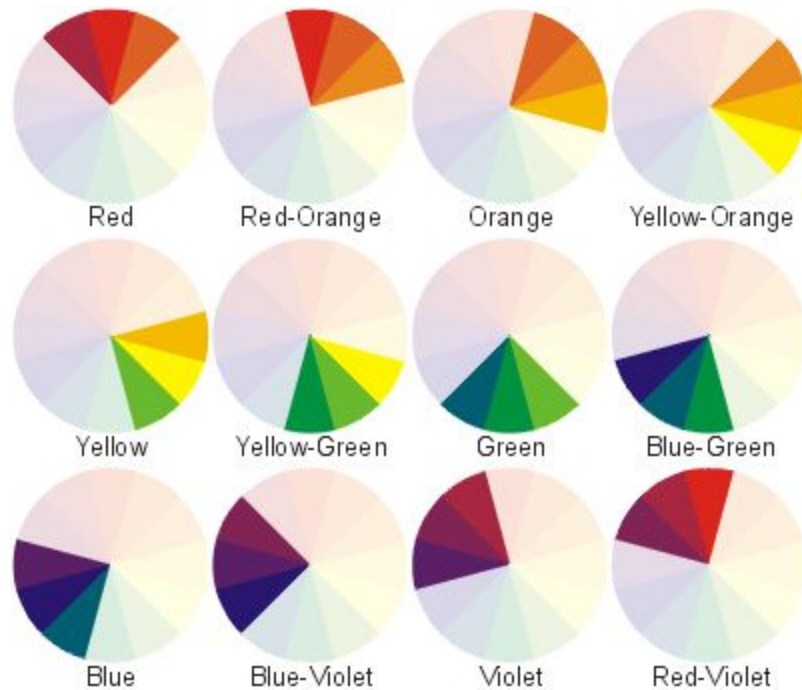
The saying "opposites attract" describes contrasting colours well. If you want to lift an average, boring colour palette to the next level try adding in a touch of contrasting colour. In the palette above, I have added in a touch of a warm, sienna brown which is part of the orange colour range. This is the opposite on the colour wheel to blue which is where most of the other colours in this combination sit.

Other colour combinations that work well based on their position on the colour wheel are harmonious combinations. I probably use harmonious colour palettes more than any other. They

refer to colours that sit alongside each other on the colour wheel, they are good friends that will always play nicely.

They can sometimes be a little bit boring though, but that's where the contrasting colour can help as mentioned earlier.

The more you play around with different colour combinations the greater your knowledge will be and you will begin to predict ahead of time how colours are going to work together.



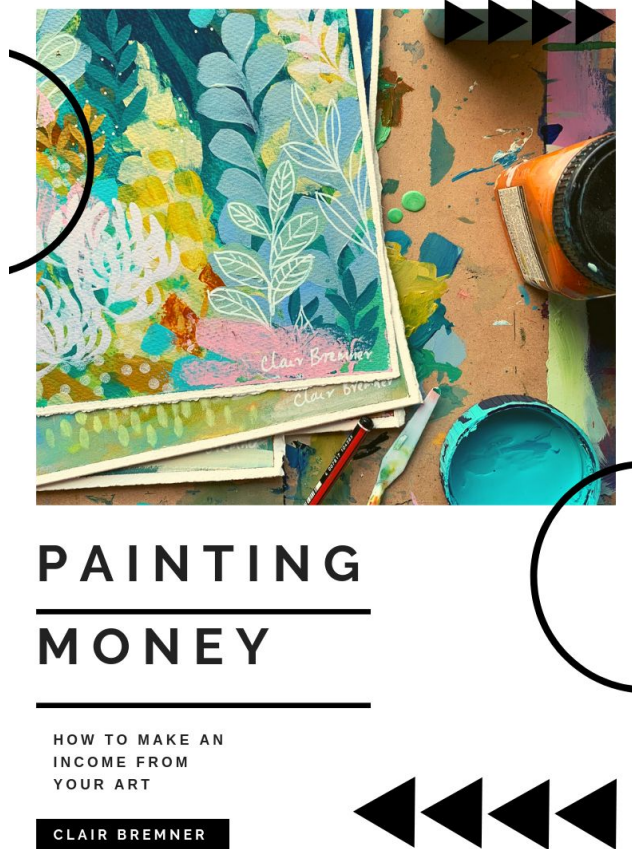
Here is an example of an artwork created using only harmonious colours.



So there you go, I hope you have found some of this information helpful. As I mentioned earlier, I am certainly not an expert in colour theory but i do have a basic understanding which i have tried to pass on to you in an easy to digest way.

The most important thing to remember is to have fun. Go with your gut and trust your instincts. Play and experiment. Learn and grow

..... But most of all have fun creating.



Did you enjoy this Free Booklet?

If you found this information helpful then you might enjoy my other Ebook "Painting Money". This full sized, over 70 page PDF is full of information for emerging artists that want to learn how to make money from their art.

The information in this book has been compiled by me based on things I have learned after taking myself from nobody to full time artist in just five years. I am not a marketing or business expert and the information I am sharing is not original or unique - if you

spend enough time online you would come across this information on your own. However i have made it easier for you by putting it all together in one place and creating a comprehensive "How To" list that talks about all the things you need to consider when thinking about becoming a professional artist in a modern, online driven world.

To find out more and purchase your copy, visit the following link:

<http://www.clairbremnerart.com/workshops/painting-money-ebook>