
Creating a 'subtle' colour Scheme

how to mix greys and other 'neutrals'

Edward Penfield designed many covers for Harpers Magazine



His elegant figures, together with striking fonts and text (not on this image) made Harpers Magazine eye catching.

The colours he used were a very "limited" palette. When you look at each cover they have at the most five different colours and the larger spaces of colours were dedicated to greys and browns or shades of

So why didn't he choose to put bold colours in these larger spaces, such as red or bright blues?

My guess is that the image always takes 2nd place to the writing (i.e. Harpers name) and they wanted this to stand out the most.

All colours really shout out at you when placed against a neutral grey or brown, look at the orange touches in this image and see how they draw your eye, as does the strong blue

So greys aren't as dull as they are made out to be then?

Greys are the unsung heroes of many paintings and drawings and they can be made by combining two or three colours together. You can also use ready made greys such as Paynes Grey (which is a great mixer to make some fabulous greens and purples...)

Making greys



If you are interested in colour mixing, you might like to check out the **Stephen Quiller, Painter's Guide to Color** which we work from in class. It is a comprehensive book and goes into all the colours on the provided colour wheel.

If you just want to create your own greys without the book here are my tips:

- grey is made from the 3 primary colours: red, yellow and blue
- depending on which red, yellow and blue you use will determine what type of grey you get



- if a red has a yellow base tendency then is more orange/red. Add blue
- if a red has a more red/blue tendency then add yellow
- a true complementary colour (opposite colours on the wheel) will give you a grey when mixed, they neutralise each other

Colours for greys to try:

Cad Yellow Light	+	Ultramarine Blue
Cadmium Orange	+	Ultramarine Blue
Cadmium Scarlet	+	Pthalocyanine Blue
Cad Red Medium		Green-blue
Quinacridone Rose	+	Viridian
Magenta	+	Permanent Green Light

I also find grey from:

Alizarin Crimson + Viridian

Of course along the way you will make browns! These are also very invaluable for painting