



Chromatic Black #16

The Gamblin Studio Notes has a tradition of being used as a technical resource and not as a sales vehicle. This edition is an exception to that approach. We want more of you to know about a color we added to our palette a couple years ago. We think that many of you who have not yet discovered Chromatic Black will thank us for the suggestion that you give it a try.

I developed this color in response to the hundreds of art instructors who do not let their students use black. It has been my belief that this limitation makes the work of color mixing much harder than it needs to be.

Many instructors of Impressionist painting do not allow the use of black because they believe the Impressionists did not use black. Contemporary conservation science has recently shown this to be wrong. And remember, Monet said: "Black is the death of shadows." Science has recently shown us that there is a lot of black in the color mixtures of Monet. There is just not much black in the shadows, here you will find colors such as Ultramarine Blue and mixtures of Alizarin and Viridian.

The overuse of traditional black pigments color mixing can be a problem. Color mixtures can easily become "dirty" looking. I believe that this is not caused by the use of black itself in color mixing but because of the relatively large pigment particle size of both Ivory Black and Mars Black. Chromatic Black solves this problem since it is made from modern organic pigments that are both tiny in size and transparent. Colors are grayed without being made to look "dirty." This also points to a limitation of Chromatic Black: while it is a fabulous mixing black it is not as good as Ivory or Mars or Black Spinel when a true black is needed in a painting.

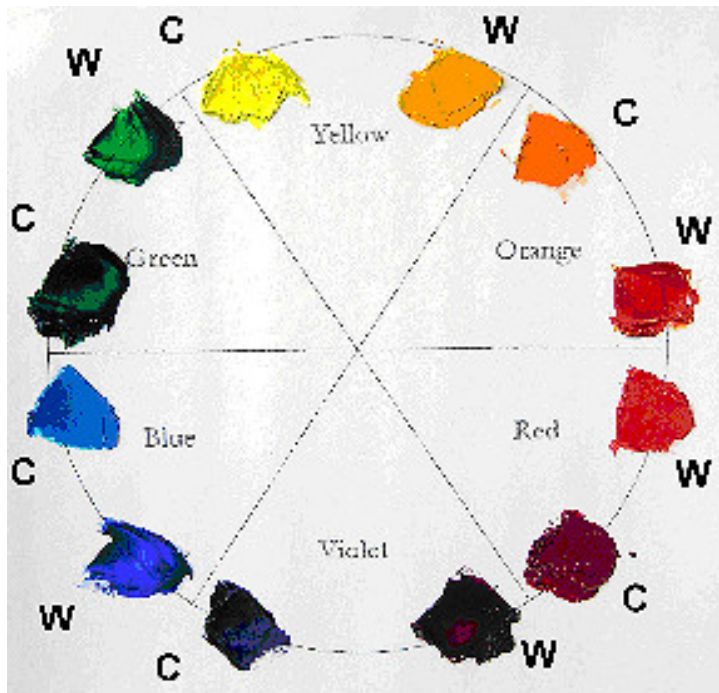
Now here is the problem from a color mixing standpoint: The mixing of color using pigments (the subtractive process) requires us to do four things to achieve the color we want:

1. Determine a target color's hue family (yellow, orange, red, violet, blue, green)



Color Wheel with HUE families

- Determine its temperature within that hue, (warm or cool side of the hue family).



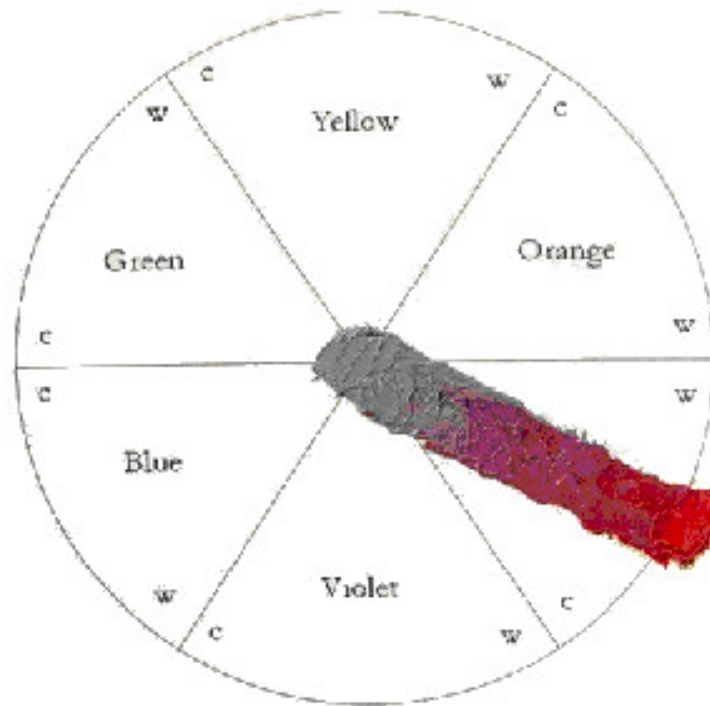
Warms & Cools within each HUE FAMILY of the color wheel

- Adjust the color's value: lighten or darken the color.



VALUE

- And finally adjust the color's intensity or chroma.



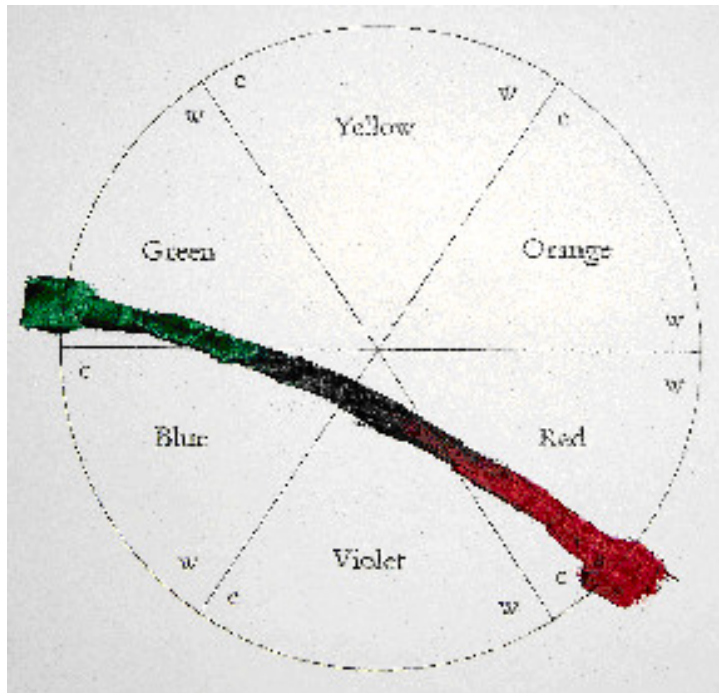
CHROMA

Since most artist's colors have a high chroma this process usually means that we must grey our colors during the color mixing process. Graying a color, by definition, means moving the color towards the neutral core of Color Space. For more information on our DVD program entitled, please refer to [Navigating Color Space](#).

This graying of color can be achieved in two ways, by either adding a neutral (white, black, or neutral grey), or by mixing in the base color's complement.

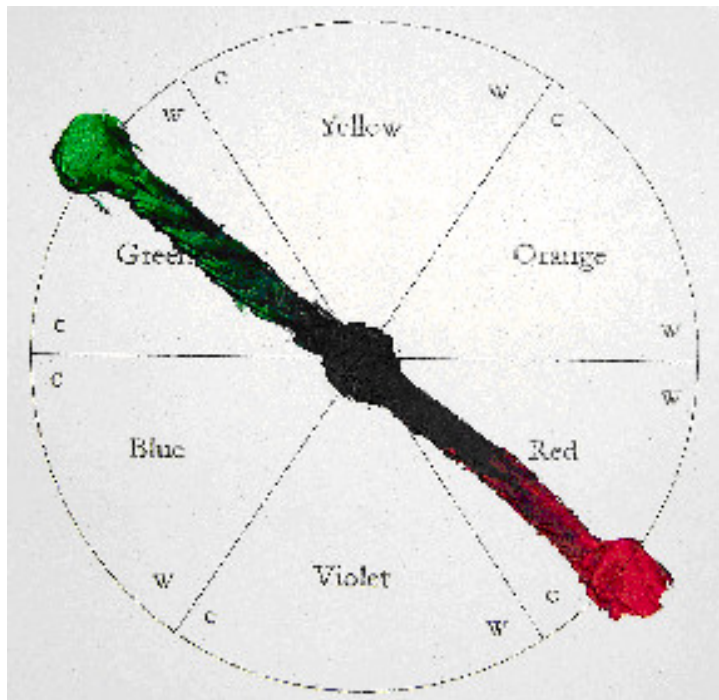
Instructors who do not allow black on the palette leave the artist only one option for graying color: the use of color complements.

I believe this makes the color mixing process more difficult since there are very few perfect complements. Without a perfect complement in color mixing the color will not move directly to neutral. The color being mixed will be grayed, but that grayed color will not be the same hue, its hue will be shifted.



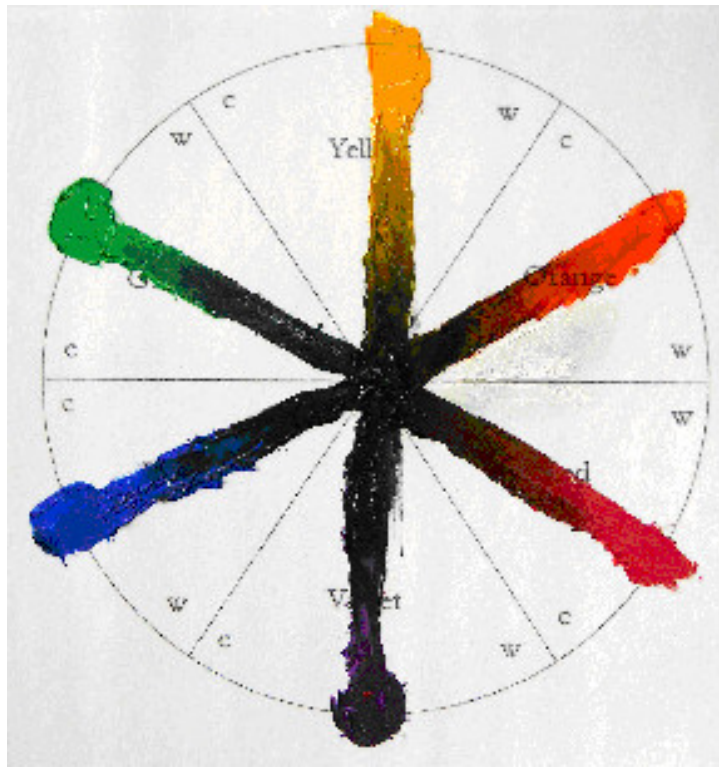
Imperfect Complements: Viridian and Alizarin Crimson

Chromatic Black is the answer to this problem. Chromatic Black is black, but it has no black pigment in it. It is made from two perfect complements: Quinacridone Red and Phthalo Emerald.



Perfect Complements: Phthalo Emerald and Quinacridone Red

So in essence Chromatic Black is the perfect complement to all colors. Which means, when it is mixed into any color that mixture moves directly towards neutral, it is grayed without any shift in its hue.



All HUES mixed with Chromatic Black

If you have any further questions about Chromatic Black,
please feel free to [contact](#) us.

Sincerely,

Robert Gamblin

To receive a 15 ml sample of Chromatic Black (while supplies last) send \$5.00 to cover
postage and handling to:

Chromatic Black

Gamblin Artists Colors

PO Box 625

Portland, OR 97207

Thank you very much for your interest in our Gamblin Studio Notes.

If you are interested in sharing your impressions about Gamblin Artist's Colors,
please visit our [Gamblin Artist's Survey](#)

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