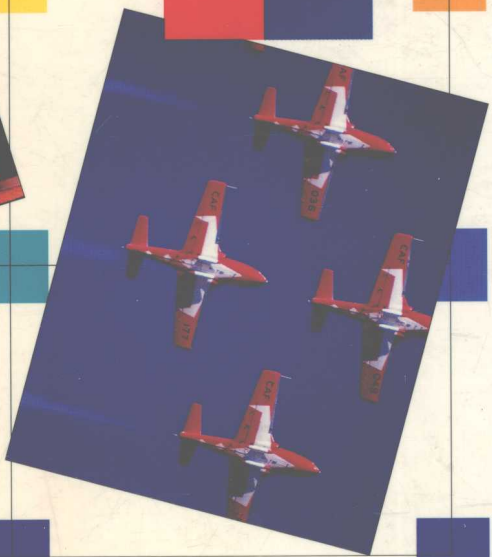
COLOR HARMONY 2



A GUIDE TO CREAT[illegible]R COMBINATIONS

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BRIDE M. WHELAN

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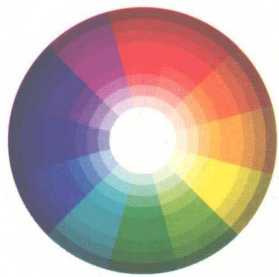
A GUIDE TO CREATIVE COLOR COMBINATIONS

Bride M. Whelan



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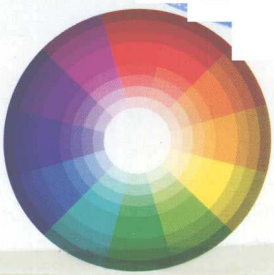

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Introduction

Color affects our life.
Color is physical . . . we see it.
Color communicates . . . we receive information from the language of color.
Color is emotional . . . it evokes our feelings.

Ideas can be communicated through color without the use of either written or verbal language, and emotional response to individual colors alone or in combination is often predictable. For instance, a prestigious law firm sends a message of confidence to potential clients by using rich, deep colors in its office and on its letterhead. Conversely, a dentist's waiting area in bright red or orange sends a stressful message to patients, rather than the calm feeling the dentist wishes to convey.

Colors evoke specific emotional responses. For example, red can be powerful, exciting, passionate, and daring. Within each color innumerable values or tints, and shades generate an even wider range of response. Red goes from palest romantic pink to a sophisticated deep burgundy. Creating powerful color combinations from numerous hues, tints, and shades is the ultimate objective of working with color.

To develop an accurate response to the language of color, it is first necessary to understand the harmony of color. This means knowing what colors to use and in what order and proportion to create a desired mood, to communicate an idea, or to elicit a reaction.

Color Harmony 2 is the perfect guide for graphic designers, interior designers, fashion designers, architects, marketers, artists, and craftspeople, in fact anyone who wants to understand the language of color. It is a working tool for everyone—the fashion designer faced with color decisions for a new fall line, the interior designer working to create a corporate atmosphere or the young mother selecting yarns for her child's new sweater.

Color Harmony 2 sets guidelines on how to create effective color combinations. It explores feelings and moods with a wide variety of colors and color combination possibilities, with 106 color choices and 1,400 color schemes and combinations based on specific emotional messages. A twelve-segment color wheel provides a foundation for determining unique color solutions. Although the basic schemes and their accompanying companion colors give an infinite range of suggestions, only the human eye can judge the final artistic result.

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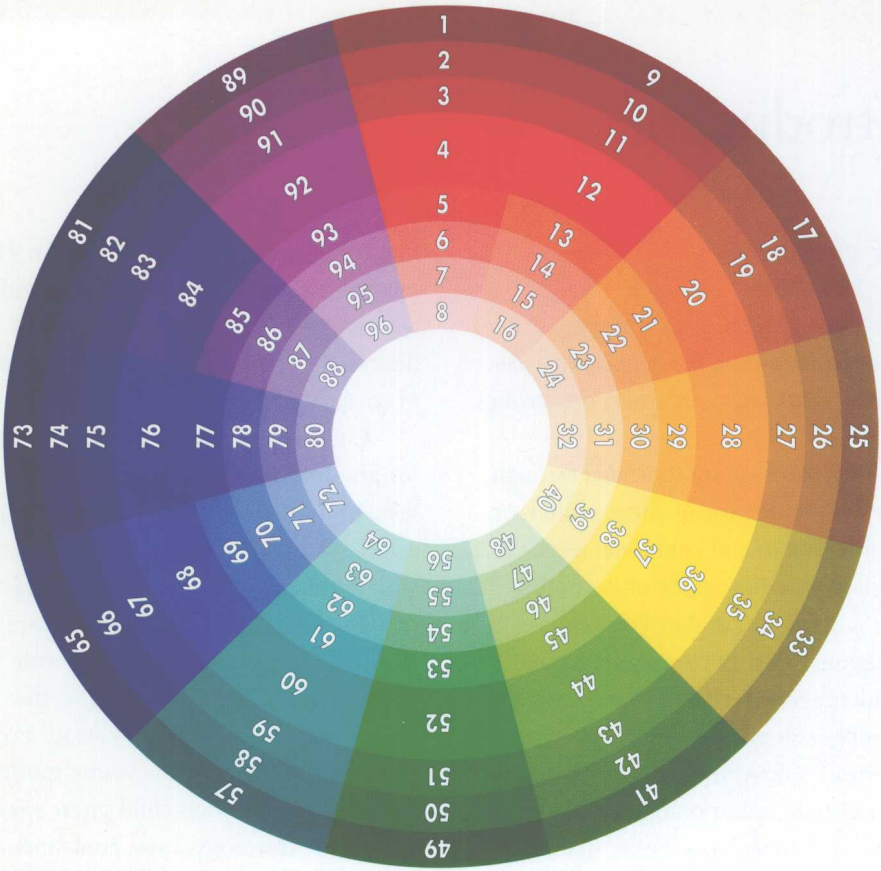


The Color Wheel

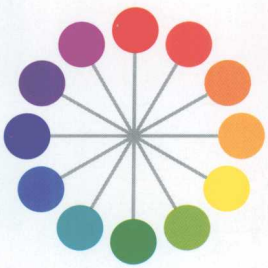
The twelve segments of the color wheel consist of primary, secondary, and tertiary hues and their specific tints and shades. With red at the top, the color wheel identifies the three *primary* hues of red, yellow, and blue. These three primary colors form an equilateral triangle within the circle. The three *secondary* hues of orange, violet, and green are located between each primary hue and form another triangle. Red-orange, yellow-orange, yellow-green, blue-green, blue-violet, and red-violet are the six *tertiary* hues. They result from the combination of a primary and a secondary hue.

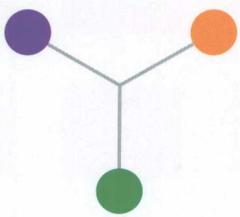
Constructed in an orderly progression, the color wheel enables the user to visualize the sequence of color balance and harmony.

How to Use Color

Working with color to achieve intended results can be a challenge, but it can also be fun! An effective color scheme can make a room feel warm and inviting, a graphic design able to attract attention, or a poster to recall days gone by. Before learning what colors to use in order to achieve the best results, one must first understand some basic color terms.

Each primary, secondary, and tertiary hue is at a level of full *saturation*, or brightness, which means that there is no black, white, or gray added. Color is described in terms of *value*, which is the lightness or darkness of a color, or the relative amount of white or black in a hue. White added in increments to any of the twelve colors results in lighter values of the hue called *tints*. For example, pink is a tint of the primary color red. The incremental addition of black or gray to a hue results in darker values of the hue known as *shades*. A shade of red is burgundy or maroon. These shades and tints are illustrated by the color chart on the following pages.





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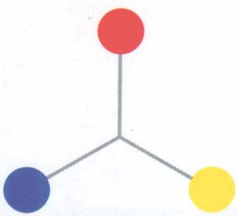

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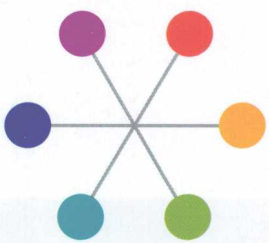

TERTIARY

The Color Chart

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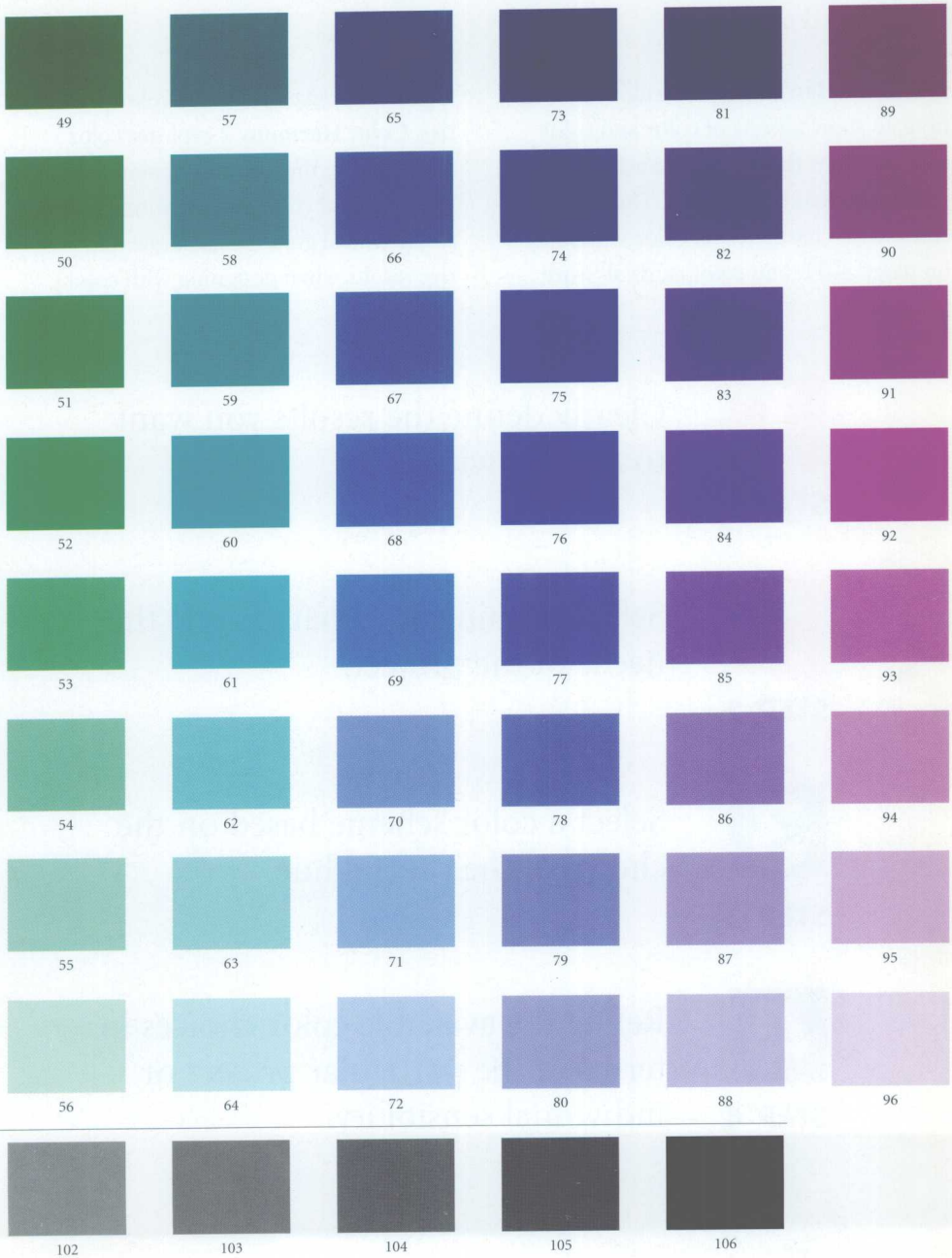
The color chart is the color wheel in chart form. The rows above and below the fully saturated center hue represent the tints and shades of each color. Each hue, tint, and shade on the chart below is numbered 1–96 for easy reference. Numbers 97–106 represent the value range from lightest gray to black. These numbers correspond with the colors used in combination throughout the book and offer a wide selection of balanced and effective color possibilities within each interpretive section.



The Process

Color Harmony 2 is divided into sections to show aspects of color and color combinations that visually explain the effect color has on our lives. The color conversion chart and the color wheel, on pages 8–11, and color cards all work together to develop unique color possibilities. **Color Harmony 2** explores color terminology, the aspects of color, color schemes, and color combinations. It serves as a practical guide for accurate and positive results when designing with color.

STEP 1

Clearly define the results you want to achieve with color.

STEP 2

Select a main color that reflects the needs of the project.

STEP 3

Select a color scheme based on the choice of the central hue.

STEP 4

Refine the available color choices in terms of the particular project or individual sensibility.

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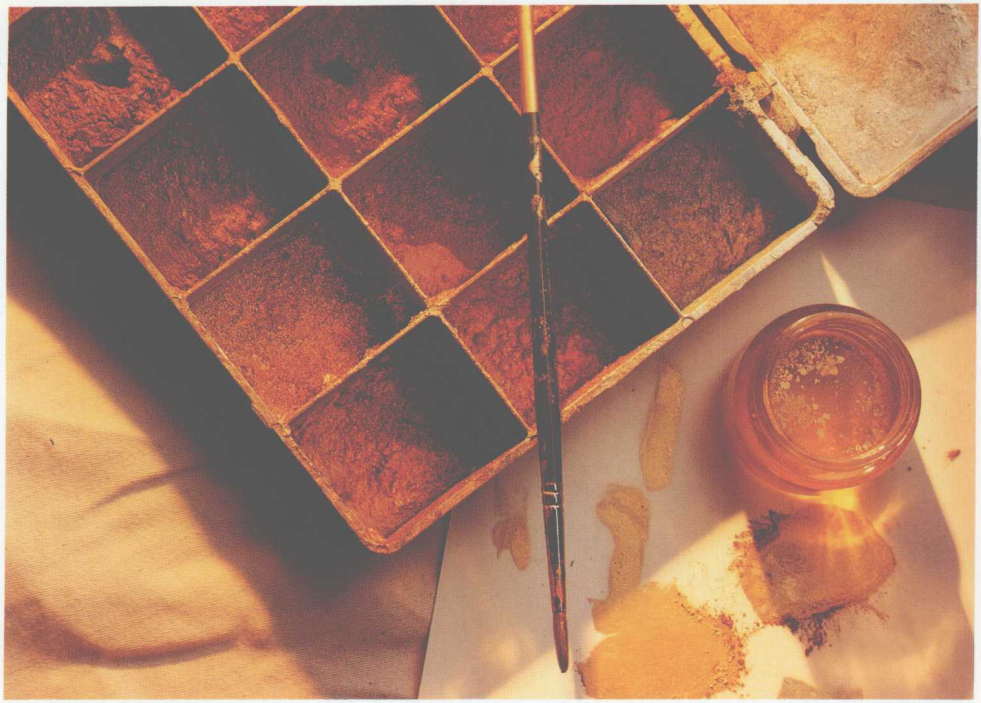
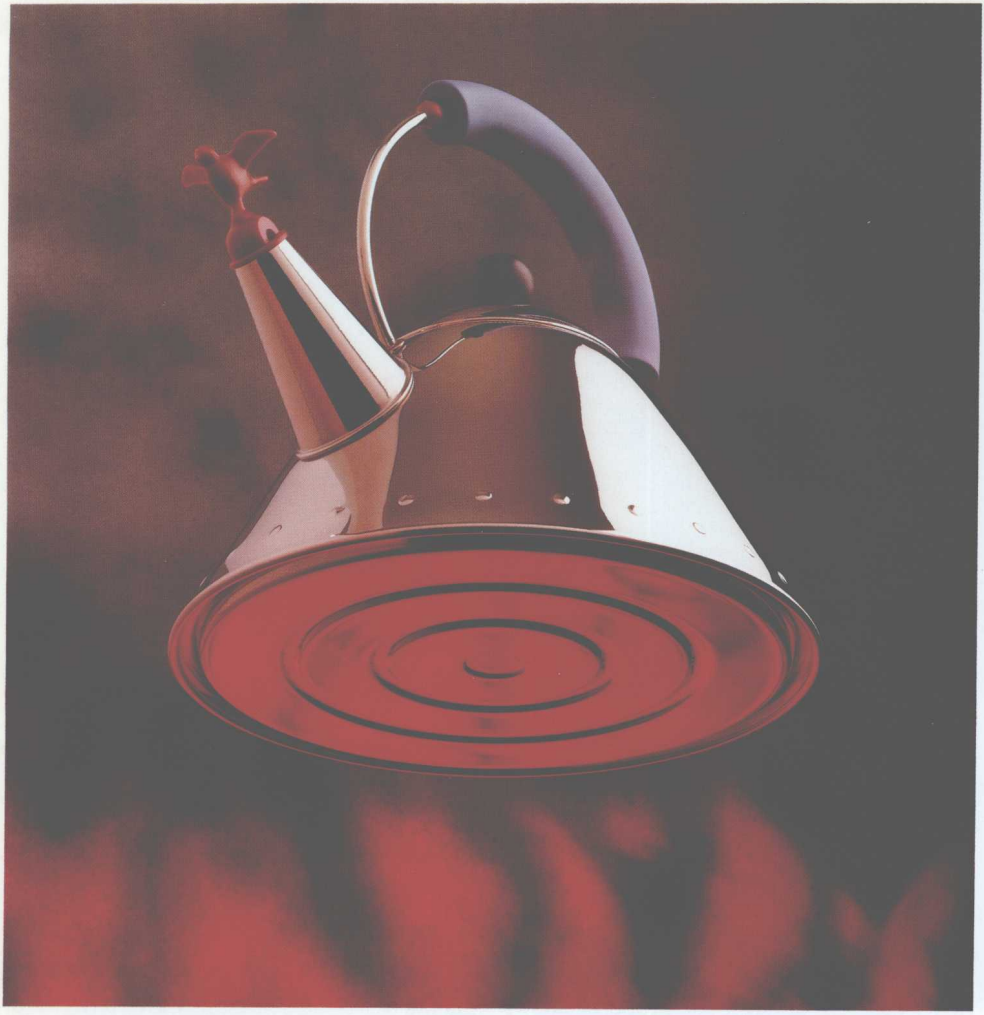


Aspects of Color

The aspects, or qualities of color, refer to colors and color combinations that evoke certain emotional responses. We use many words to describe the properties of individual colors and to compare and contrast them, but *light* and *dark* is the basic distinction. Without sunlight or artificial light, there is no color. We depend on light for color, which we use in countless combinations to express our ideas and emotions.

The following aspects of color contain color combinations that exist in harmony with each other, and are in spectral balance. *Spectral balance* occurs within the eye as thousands of waves of electromagnetic energy of different lengths bounce off (or are absorbed by) the chemical components of any object. Light waves reflect red, yellow, and blue, and the rods and cones in the eye's retina simultaneously mix and sort these reflected colors into thousands of tints and shades, which work to offer endless possibilities for specific color use.

Color is both simple and complex. It means different things to different people in different cultures. No color is seen the same way by any two people. Color is personal and universal, sending messages full of endless variations.



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Hot

Hot refers to red in full saturation on the color wheel; this is red at its strongest.

Hot colors project outward and attract attention. For this reason, red is often used in graphic signage and design.

Hot colors are strong and aggressive and seem to vibrate within their own space. The power of hot colors affects people in many ways, such as increasing blood pressure and stimulating the nervous system.

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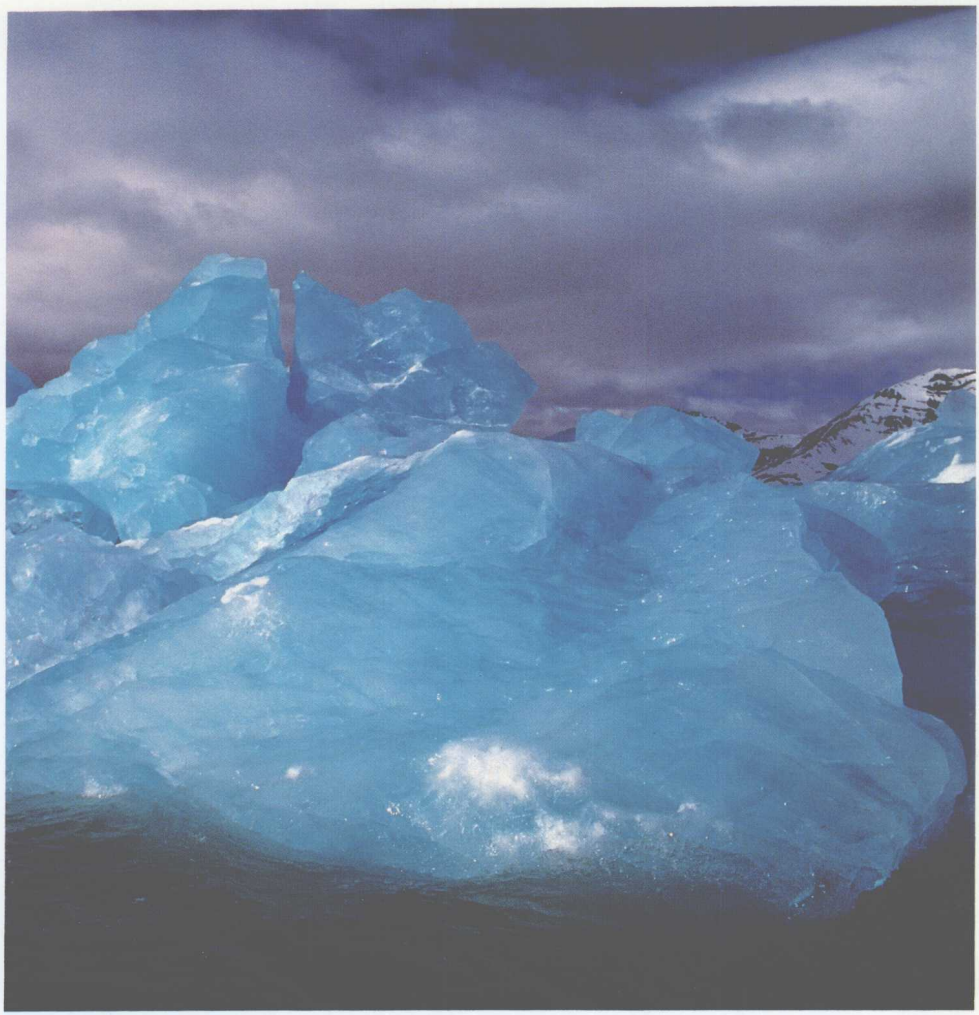
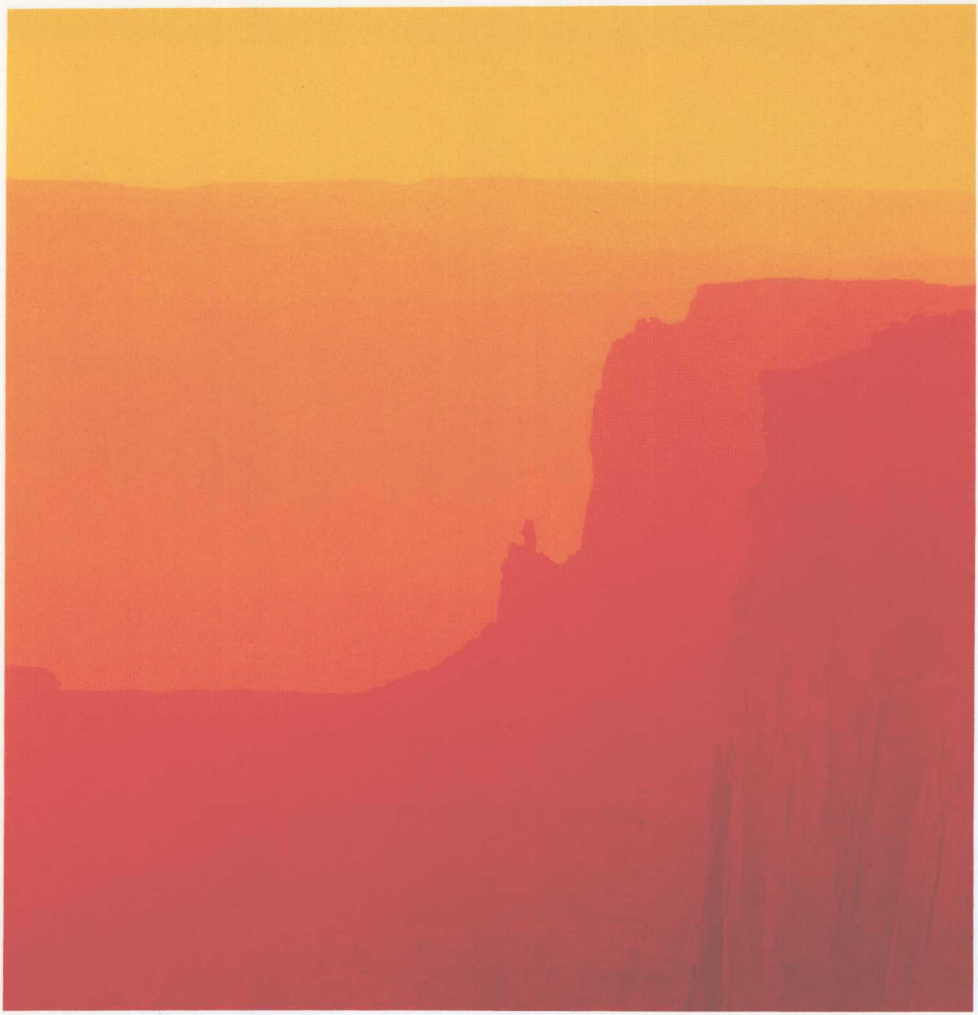


Cold

Cold refers to fully saturated blue. At its brightest it is dominating and strong.

Cold colors remind one of ice and snow. The feelings generated by cold colors—blue, green, and blue-green—are the direct opposite of those generated by hot colors; cold blue slows the metabolism and increases one's sense of calm. When placed next to each other, cold and hot colors vibrate like fire and ice.



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Warm

All hues that contain red are warm. It is the addition of yellow to red that makes warm colors substantially different from hot colors. Warm colors, such as red-orange, orange, and yellow-orange, always contain a mixture of red and yellow in their composition and encompass a larger part of the emotional spectrum.

Warm colors are comforting, spontaneous, and welcoming. Like an Arizona sunset, the warmth of these hues radiates outward and surrounds everything in reach.

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