

Article 8 – Temperature

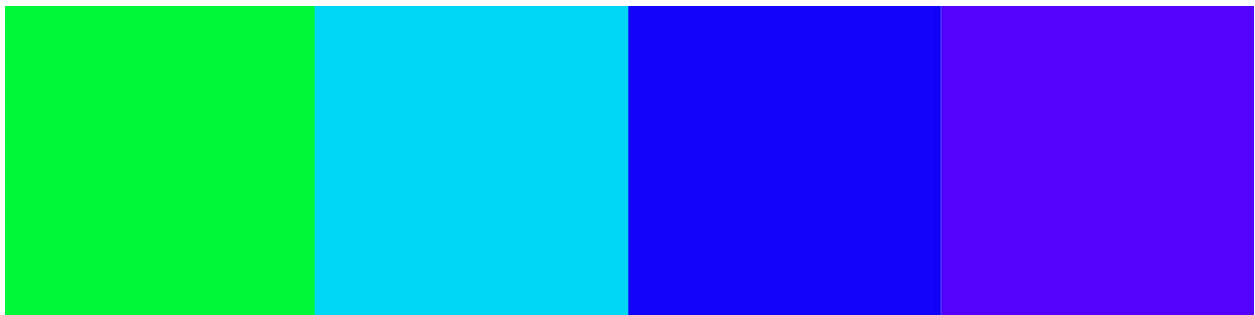
Now that we've gone through the color systems and I have explained to you why I believe that the Munsell system is the best one for me as a fiber artist, let's start talking about some of the characteristics of color. Today we will start with temperature and in future posts we will talk about iridescence, intensity and luminosity.

Throughout the rest of these posts you will start to see the term "hue". In simple terms, the hue is the name of a color. I'm pretty loose about using either and hopefully it will not be confusing.

When I first started reading about the temperature of color I was confused. I had no idea that color had a temperature! But, it turns out that color does give us a sensation of temperature. In *The Elements of Color*, Johannes Itten says that experiments have shown that the color on your walls can make you feel up to 7 degrees warmer or cooler. In a blue-green room the occupants felt that 59F was cold but in a red-orange room the same people only felt cold when the temperature fell to 52 – 54F. This may explain why my husband always wants to crank down the AC to about 65F in our red bedroom.



Warm Colors

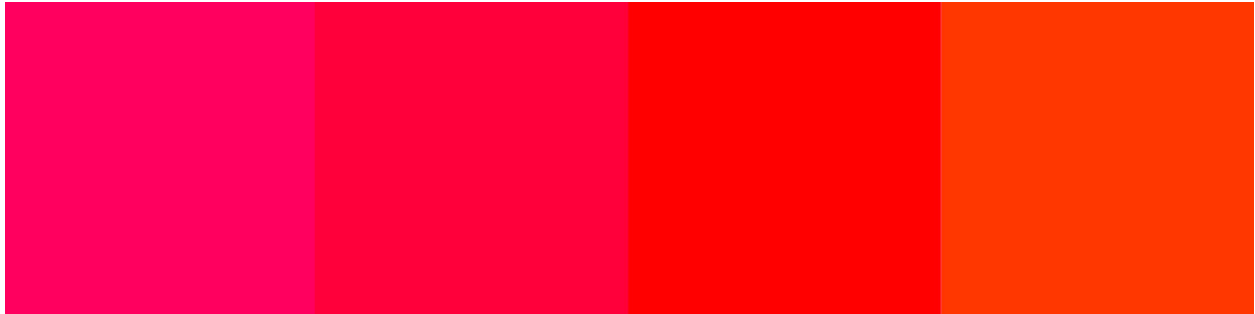


Cool Colors

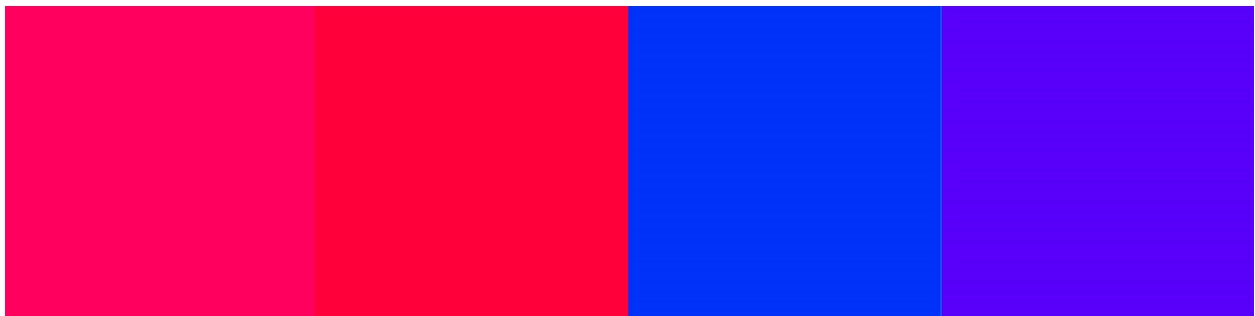
In general the warm colors/hues range from yellow to orange to red-orange to red. The cool colors/hues range from yellow-green to blue green to blue to blue-violet. "In general" is the key phrase here because mixing white and black to any hue alters its temperature. Add white to any hue and the resulting color will be cooler. Add black to any hue and the resulting color will be warmer.

There are also warmer and cooler tones of black, gray and white. We may get into that later but for now let's stay with the pure hues.

In want to talk about temperature in terms of relativity which is more important to us quilters. Every hue, while primarily warm or cool, can change temperature relative to the other colors in your quilt. In other words, while red is a warm color, there are warm reds and cool reds.

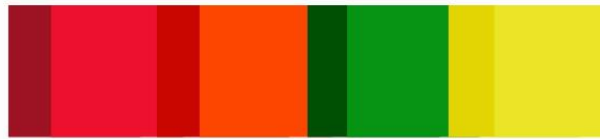


Take a look at these reds. Can you tell that the 2 on the left are "cooler" than the 2 on the right? Cooler colors recede; warmer colors advance. So compared to the more orange reds on the right, the violet reds are cooler and move to the background.



But take those same "cool" reds and put them in a quilt with blue and blue-violet and they warm up and march right to the front!

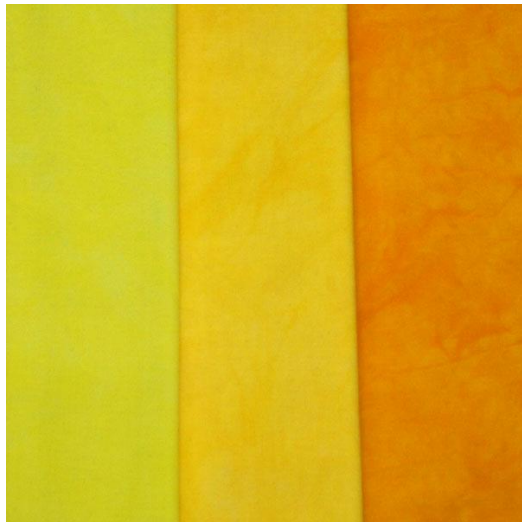
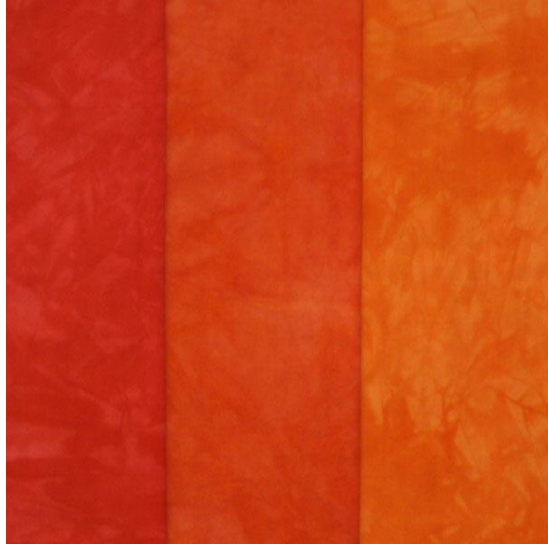
Let's do an exercise with our color palette this month.



Vicki Welsh 2012

Basically we have a Violet-Red, Red-Orange, Green and Yellow and 2 values of each. Let's look at some options.





In each of these I have the cooler version of the color on the left and the warmer color is on the right. They are all “right”! It doesn’t matter what you pick for your palette but if you feel a color isn’t working it may be that you need to either warm or cool the hue.



Here are 2 versions of the palette and either will work just fine. But I think, for example, that if you switched the greens that neither palette would work well. Both versions of the palette have a nice balance.

Now I need to figure out exactly what I will make with one of these palettes!