

Palette Building Exercise

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SOLIDS OR PRINTS?

You can use whatever fabric you would like to use for your composition. I prefer solids because they create the strongest graphic impression on the viewer. Tonals and prints are perfectly fine but the graphic quality can become diluted. That said, I also prefer that you work from your stash. This will help you realize what you have on hand, and what you need to add to your stash.

THE TWELVE COLOR PALETTE

Please be creative here and willing to experiment. Approach your fabric selection with curiosity not perfection. We are here to learn.

SELECT YOUR NEUTRALS FIRST

1. Black or the darkest fabric you have
2. White or the lightest fabric you have
3. Grey or something that reads as grey
4. Brown or something that reads as brown

THEN SELECT YOUR COLOR WHEEL

5. Purple
6. Blue
7. Turquoise
8. Green
9. Yellow
10. Orange
11. Red
12. Pink

If you do not have one of these colors in your stash, be creative with your substitutes.

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS NOT THAT YOU HAVE A TURQUOISE IT IS THAT YOU HAVE BEAUTIFUL EXCITING PALETTE.

STRIVE TO HAVE

1. A VARIETY of COLORS
2. A VARIETY of VALUES

3. A VARIETY OF INTENSITIES
4. EACH COLOR HOLDS ITS OWN

What does EACH COLOR HOLDS ITS OWN mean?

It means that no matter where that color is in the composition, it will not become lost and attach itself to another color. **It is difficult** to create a palette that does not have at least one color that gets lost when it is paired with another particular color. For example, if you have selected a medium value blue and a medium value purple, when they are next to each other they might not have good contrast and/or hold its own. That is okay. I call it a **WEAK LINK**. It is fine to have one or two weak links, but the rest of the palette should be **STRONG!**

VARY THE VALUES AND INTENSITIES OF YOUR COLORS

VALUE Lightness or Darkness of Color. Think Baby Blue vs. Navy Blue. Your palette should have a **range of values**.

INTENSITY This is the **WOW FACTOR** of a Color. Think about Neon Yellow vs. Mustard Yellow. All colors have a range of intensity. I also use these words to describe intensity.

HIGH INTENSITY

Glowing
Vibrant
Alive
Pure

LOW INTENSITY

Flat
Dull
Dead
Muted or Grey

This handout is meant to empower you. If you find it confusing or frustrating, just pick twelve fabrics and move forward. The way you are going to improve your color sense is by doing not by stewing.