Color Theory/Color Wheel Notes

Color is created by wave lengths of light. These wave lengths can be seen separately when light passes through a prism. Our brain can interpret seven distinct colors: red, yellow, orange, green, blue, indigo and violet.

The Color Wheel - An organization of color hues around a circle, which shows the relationships between primary colors, secondary colors, tertiary colors.

Primary Colors - A color, as red, yellow, or blue, that in mixture yields other colors.

Secondary Colors - A color, as orange, green, or violet, produced by mixing two primary colors

Tertiary Colors – A color, as brown, produced by mixing two secondary colors.

Complementary Colors - Any two colors which are directly opposite each other, such as red and green and red-purple and yellow-green.

Split Complementary Colors – A variation of the complementary color scheme. In addition to the base color, it uses the two colors adjacent to its complement.

Analogous Colors - Any three colors which are side by side on a 12-part color wheel, such as yellow-green, yellow, and yellow-orange.

RGB Color System – An Additive Color System used for representing the colors to be used on a computer display. Red, green, and blue can be combined in various proportions to obtain any color in the visible spectrum.

CMYK Color System - In the print industry, cyan, magenta, yellow and black are used as the primary colors. When you mix all the colors, the result is grey.

Color Theory - A set of principles used to create harmonious color combinations that are pleasing to the eye and senses. Color theory establishes common ground for how colors can be used, arranged, coordinated, blended, and related to one another.

Warm Colors - Vivid and energetic colors, and tend to advance in space.

Cool Colors – Calming soothing colors that create a soothing impression.

Tints – The act of making a color lighter by adding white.

Shades – The act of adding black to make a color darker.

Tones – The act of adding grey to another color.