

Article 14 – Color Balance

Before I continue with posts on other color schemes I want to take a break here and discuss the concept of **Color Balance**.

Johannes Itten discussed the theory of color balance as it applies to pure colors. He said that the “force” of a pure color is determined by its value and intensity. Goethe developed a ratio system for the pure values and assigned light values to the pure colors.

Yellow (being the lightest) is assigned 9

Orange: 8

Red: 6

Violet: 3

Blue: 4

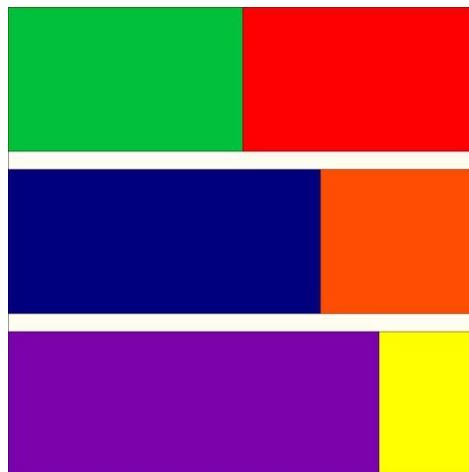
Green: 6

So if you put these in pairs you get these ratios:

Yellow : Violet = 9:3 = 3:1

Orange : Blue = 8:4 = 2:1

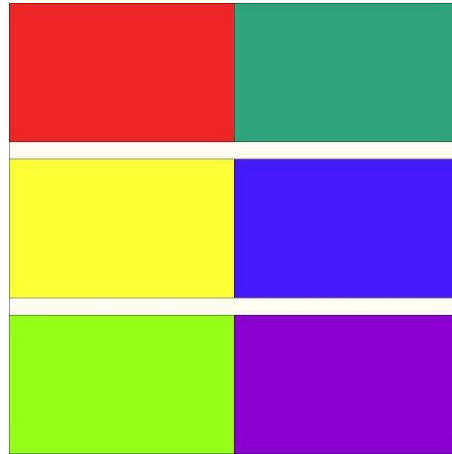
Red : Green = 6:6 = 1:1



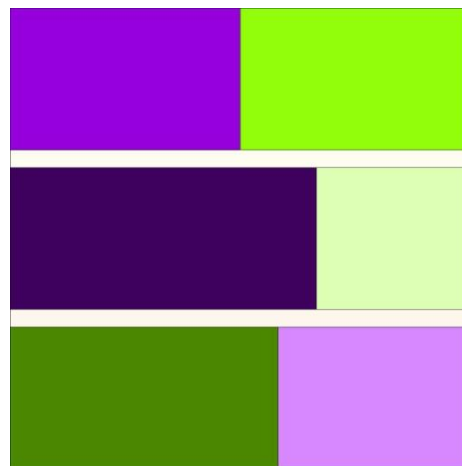
This is how the balance would work. You know all those times you were told to add some bright yellow or yellow green as a “zinger”? This is where that comes from. For balance you only need a small amount of the yellow to make the same impact as the large field of purple.

In this example, Itten and Goethe use a traditional painters color wheel of course. This concept applies to the pure colors only.

Now let's discuss it in terms of Munsell.



In the Munsell system the pure colors are considered in balance with their complimentary colors. Munsell was more concerned with balance of value and saturation. If two complimentary colors are used in the same value and intensity they balance each other. But if the colors are used on different values or intensities they can be brought in balance by using them in different proportions.



The Munsell system has calculations for all of this which I think is way too much trouble for me. I think the point for us is to know that if our quilt doesn't look quite right or is not as dynamic as we want, proportion is yet another tool that we can use to improve our results.

Next time I will get back to color schemes.