

USING WARM AND COOL COLOURS

Cool colours such as blues and greys recede while hot reds and oranges advance, allowing the artist to achieve a sense of depth. In the painting below, the colours are working hard to establish the background, foreground and areas of interest. The patch of warm colour in the

foreground, reflected from the trees in the centre of the picture, is crucial in bringing it forward. It also adds to the trick the faint perspective lines are playing in taking the eye towards the centre of the picture.



Late Afternoon, Paris, 51 x 61 cm (20 x 24 in)



Cerulean

Ultramarine

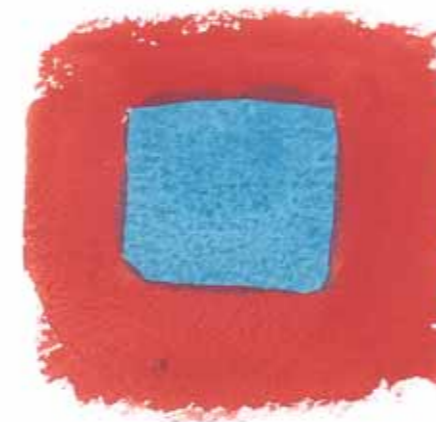
Alizarin Crimson

Cadmium Red

Although we speak of blue as cool and red as warm, there are variations within each colour. Here the blue to the left and the red to the right are both cool, while the two centre swatches are warm. It is a good idea to have a warm and cool version of each colour in your palette.

As with tones, our perception of colours is altered by the colours that are adjacent to them. Don't be afraid of using strong colour at the outset of a painting – it may look too

bold against the white paper, but as other colours are added it will sink back.



We can make a cool colour look cooler still by putting a warm one around it. The red in the swatch on the left makes the blue look cooler and also lighter, as the red is deeper in tone. Against the white paper, the blue looks much darker.

Here you can see the composition of the picture opposite, broken down into blocks of colour to show their tonal values and how they work in terms of temperature. When the lighter tones in the centre of the picture were laid down they looked quite dark, but once the darker slabs of architecture were put in on either side the central area looked both lighter and fresher.



Laying a warm wash over a cool one, or vice versa, also suggests depth. The painting opposite was done on warm-toned paper, and where there is less pigment in the sky on the righthand side the warmth shows through. Depth is suggested there without the need for a second layer of paint.