

4 ways to use a Colour Tool

We have had some feedback that it is not intuitively clear how to use the colour tool when weaving. So here are my personal, best four things the colour tool can be used for. We welcome more suggestions and will include these in a future newsletter. Before starting though, the use of the Colour Tool is all based on a colour wheel where pure colours are called **Hues**, colours with white added, i.e. lightened colours, are called **Tints**, colours darkened by adding black are called **Shades** and colours darkened or lightened by grey are called **Tones**. Keep these terms in mind but they are explained very well in the first few pages of the colour tool.



Figure 1

1 – Before designing a new piece of work, I can go through my stash of yarns and figure out which are hues, tints, shades or tones by comparing them to the individual colours in the colour tool. (I actually store my stash pre-sorted into the 24 colours on the colour wheel (see Fig 1) – but that’s just me!). I like to know this because using a tint, shade or tone of a single colour on the colour wheel can change the atmosphere of a piece of work. Tints will tend to brighten and add light to a piece of work. Shades and tones can add atmosphere and depth. So I can then start to match the atmosphere I want to create in the piece to the particular yarns I choose and figure out if I need to get some different colours.

2 – Sometimes a piece of work starts to take shape because a particular combination of coloured yarn just looks right together or the design looks good in a particular palette of colours. If this is the case I use the colour tool to figure out how these colours relate to each other on the colour wheel. Are they analogous and therefore from a similar portion of the colour wheel which could produce a very harmonious piece of work (see Fig 2.) or are they complementary and therefore from different sides of the colour wheel which could make the work very lively (see sampling triadic colours below). Once I know this I then use the colour wheel to find other colours I could add to the mix – these options are all laid out on the backs of each colour in the tool.



Figure 2

3 – If I want to produce a piece of work which has real energy and vibration to it then I know I should start to look for colours that have a Triadic

relationship of the colour wheel – this is explained in the colour tool but they are often colours you might not have thought of putting together as they come from three different sides of the colour wheel. The way these colours relate to each other can be further heightened or toned down by playing with tints, tones and shades within the colour group. Mixing these colours together in a piece of work make for very interesting pieces and for the adventurous really interesting mixes of yarn in a weft bundle (see Fig 3).



Figure 3

4 – Finally when I have done all this experimenting with colour and I think I know what I am going to use I like to check the **values** of the colours: how the level of lightness and darkness works across all the yarns regardless of colour. To do this I need to be able to see the lightness/darkness of the yarn

weaversbazaar

but not the colour. One way to do this is to take a black and white photo and see if the transition from light to dark works in the order I have placed the yarns. Another way is to look at the colours through the red and green coloured plastic filters in the Colour Tool. I am always surprised how often I assume a colour is dark but when seen in black and white it really lightens up.

So that is my summary. Bear in mind though that some people love to work intuitively and not worry about these kinds of colour relationships and the work is still lovely. Also, that in weaving all rules are there to be understood before being broken! If colour is something that really interests you, and you want to learn more, then look out for specialist colour courses from great tutors such as Pat Taylor (who runs workshops with Jane Brunning), Caron Penney and Rebecca Mezoff (including online courses).



The Colour Tool can be found on our website at <https://www.weaversbazaar.com/product-list/equipment/colour-tool>