

Tori's Painting Pointers for Producing Practically Perfect Paperclay Pumpkins

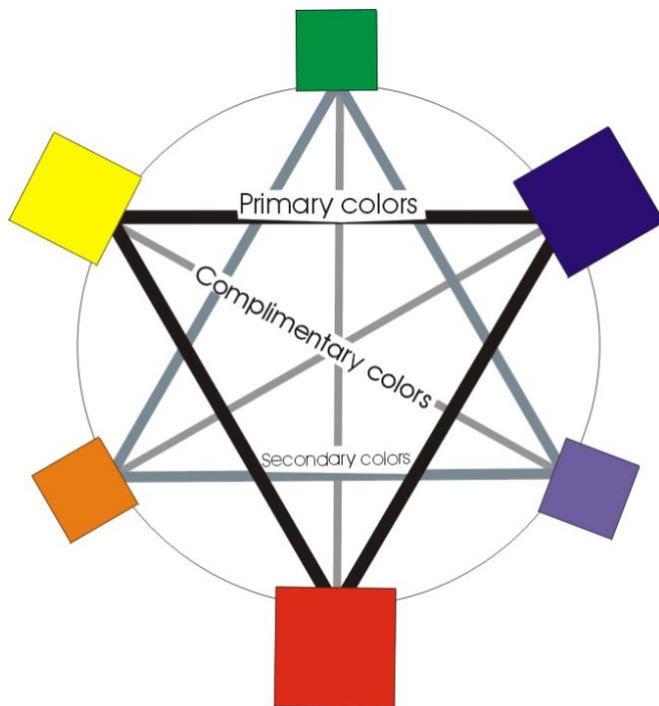
One could say that I get a little carried away on the jack-o-lanterns, after all, there is an actual color of acrylic paint called "Pumpkin" and it would be easy enough to just paint the whole thing with that and be done with it, but I like to try for a more realistic approach and you are invited to follow along if you want to give it a try.

Here are the colors on my palette: (Delta Ceramcoat Acrylic Paints)

- Bright Red
- Opaque Yellow
- Golden Brown
- White
- Phthalo Blue
- Burnt Umber
- Dark Forest Green

Yes, that is Phthalo Blue on the list – here is a little of my color philosophy to explain why I include it:

Most of you are probably familiar with this, but for those that might not be, the example below is a "color wheel". It is divided into groups of 3 colors. The first, or "Primary" colors are red, yellow, and blue. With these primary colors you can mix almost all other colors! Next are the "Secondary" colors; orange, green, and purple, which are the colors you get if you mix equal amounts of the primary colors. The "Complimentary" colors are those directly opposite each other on the color wheel; red/green, yellow/purple/ and blue/orange.



Most things in the natural world are not a pure form of color, so when I am working on creating what I hope will be a natural color I always add some of the base color's complimentary color. In this case, I will want to

add blue to the orange of the pumpkin. If I were painting an apple, I would add green to the red (and so many of them have both of those colors visible together on them as well!).

Here is how I paint the jack-o-lanterns:

Start by mixing a base color for the pumpkin with 1 part red to 2 parts yellow (for one pumpkin/lantern, 9 drops red and 18 drops yellow is a good amount to start with). Then add a TINY amount of phthalo blue (mix red and yellow and just barely dip one edge of the paintbrush into the phthalo blue, then mix into orange). Phthalo blue is a very strong color, so a small amount will do. If you get too much blue in the mixture you may end up with brown instead of pumpkin orange. If that happens just add some more yellow and red to the paint mixture to fix it.



This is a photo of the difference between pure orange (on the left), and orange with blue mixed in (on the right). I had a hard time trying to get the colors to show up accurately on the digital photo, but trust me, the color on the right is a much more natural pumpkin color! You'll just have to try it to see how much better the color looks with the addition of its complimentary color.

Now I have a puddle of basic pumpkin color, hereinafter referred to as the "base color". I'll work from this for all of the other colors, starting with the color for the inside of the pumpkin. To create that I'll pull some paint away from the base color puddle and add in 4 or 5 drops of yellow, 1 drop golden brown, and 4 or 5 drops white. In this instance, it's better to get the mixture too light rather than too dark, since for a miniature jack-o-lantern there is not going to be much actual light coming in from the front (if I'm adding an LED to the jack, I may add a bit more yellow and golden brown if using a white or "cool white" color, or a bit more white paint if I'm using an amber light).

With this lighter color of paint mixed, I'll paint the inside of the pumpkin, making sure to also paint the edges of cut-out areas (and trying not to forget the top!).



Next, I'll create another small puddle of paint with about 1 part burnt umber and a small amount of dark forest green, then pull in a bit of the base pumpkin color. I'll make a wash of this color and apply it to the stem. The wash works well because the thinned paint will be able to seep into all of the textured areas of the stem. I'll then go ahead and paint the outside of the pumpkin and top portion around the stem with my base color.



After I've let the base and top piece dry, I'll brush a light wash of burnt umber of the entire jack-o-lantern, stem and all. This will deepen the colors, enhance the sculpting, and help blend the edges between the inside and outside colors.



When this layer of paint has dried to the touch and I can handle the jack again, I'll highlight the raised sections. I use a mixture of white and yellow with some of the base color pulled in. I want this layer to be quite light as I am just going to be using it as a wash. I dry brush the wash ACROSS the pumpkin and stem just hitting the high spots/raised areas. It may seem like an oxymoron to "dry brush" a wash, but the way I do this is to create the wash, load the brush, then wipe most of it off on a cloth or paper towel before applying it to the pumpkin. If brush strokes are visible, I'll blend them in with a fingertip.



From here I'll go over jack once more with a very light wash of base color, dry brush the stem across the grain with a mixture of burnt umber and white, and then add a final light wash of burnt umber over the entire jack-o-lantern. Well, this is not always entirely true – sometimes I will add a few more layers going back between the dark and light enhancements if I feel the pumpkin needs more age or character. Also, I love to paint.

When I'm satisfied with the paint effects, I allow the piece to dry thoroughly, then buff the pumpkin portion (not the stem) with a crumpled piece of brown paper bag until I achieve a soft sheen.







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