

Gill Moon Photography Photo Club



June 2023 Challenge 6 Colour in the landscape

Hello

and welcome to my monthly photo club challenges.

Each month I will be setting a new challenge for club members to work with. The challenges are not designed to be competitive but they are designed to be fun and inspiring and help you grow as a photographer.

During these challenges we will be looking at the work of different photographers who are 'masters' in their chosen field of photography. We will examine how they make their images and discuss how you can use their techniques in your own work. I hope these will be inspiring sessions.

Every monthly challenge will be followed by a 1.5 hour Zoom session (which is entirely optional) on the last Wednesday of every month where we will discuss some of the submitted images and talk about what worked and what didn't. I hope this feedback will be useful.

Thank you very much for being part of the Photo Club and I hope you will find it a fun and rewarding challenge.

Gill.

Colour in the Landscape

Colour is an important aspect of landscape photography and our choices of colour combinations can make a huge difference to the feel and mood of an image.

I will begin with a little bit of colour theory.

We have three primary colours:

Red

Yellow

Blue

These combine to make secondary colours:

Red and Yellow make Orange

Yellow and Blue make Green

Blue and Red make Purple



The colours on the left side of the wheel are cool colours and those on the right side of the wheel are warm colours.

The variety of colours and where they sit within the colour wheel affects the mood and feel of an image.

Looking at colours in photographs



This image was taken in the woods at Staverton. It is made up of a range of similar tones from dark green to blue and brown. These colours all sit side by side on the colour wheel and are known as **analogous or harmonious colours**. They create an image which is pleasing to the eye and is calming and restful.

In contrast the next image which was taken at Saxtead Mill has two principle colours, blue and yellow. These colours sit opposite each other on the colour wheel and are known as **complimentary colours**. These can be used to create dynamic, visually striking images with plenty of contrast.



Monochromatic images such as this shot of the River Deben use variations in lightness and saturation of a single colour.



The very restricted colour pallet in this image allows the shapes of the boat, the vegetation on the bank and its reflections to dominate the image. Any additional bright or bold colours would have distracted from the visual prominence of the shapes.

A monochromatic image is another example of **colour harmony**, where colour is present but doesn't dominate the composition. These images work well for conveying shape and form.

Similarly the following image taken on a frosty morning at Tunstall forest has a harmonious and monochromatic colour pallet. This works well to emphasise the shapes of the trees and the texture in the grass.



How colours behave

Colour in photography is often described in terms of temperatures. Reds, yellows and oranges are warm colours and greens, blues, and mauves are cool colours.

Warm colours will advance in the frame and cool colours will recede. Red is the colour that advances the most and blue recedes the most.

This means that if you were photographing two objects at the same distance, one blue and one red the red object would appear closer and more prominent in the frame.

In the image below the red poppies are very dominant in the frame. This is down to their position and the narrow depth of field but also to their colour which advances much more than the green of the background.



Poppies - the red and green are complimentary colours as they are oposite on the colour wheel.

Where to look for colour

Colour is everywhere in the landscape it is just a case of looking for it. If you want to shoot an image which is all about colour start with a telephoto lens and look for blocks of colour and colour relationships. Focus in close and work with smaller areas of the landscape and simplify your compositions as much as possible.



This image is comprised of complimentary colours - mauve and beige - they sit opposite each other on the colour wheel. For this composition I used the beige grasses to lead the eye through the blocks of mauve heather. The image is all about its colours rather than any one stand out feature.

Use a colourful foreground

Another way to add colour to your image is to seek out a colourful foreground. The image below shows a moody shot at Bawdsey Quay. The tones in this image range from neutral through to darker browns and red. These colours all compliment each other and sit together very harmoniously creating a pleasing image. The dark red of the foreground lifts the darker mood of the image and creates a compelling focal point.



Inspiration Ian Lawson

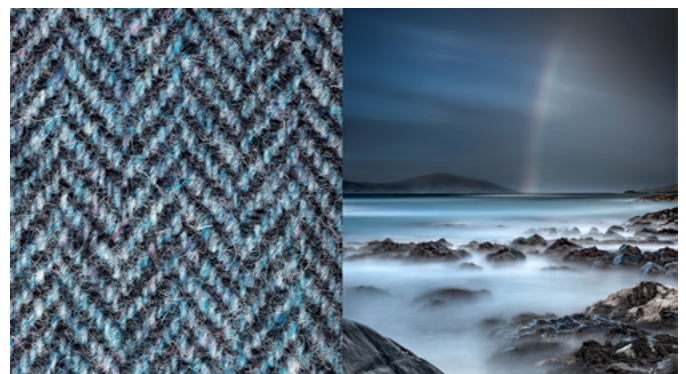
A few years ago I was given a copy of a book by photographer Ian Lawson called 'From the land comes the cloth'. It is a book about the Hebrides, the land and the product that is synonymous with the island of Harris - Harris Tweed.

The thing that struck me when looking at the book was the way Ian had used colour to layout and combine the images in the book. Each landscape shot had an accompanying shot of some Harris Tweed. The colours of the landscape fitted perfectly with the colours of the tweed. I assume that the landscape shots were taken to compliment the images of the tweed.

This is a screen shot below which illustrates what I am talking about. The colours of the sea, mountains and sky perfectly match the companion image of the wool.



The following shot works in the same way but this time we are comparing a section of Tweed with the seascapes around Harris.

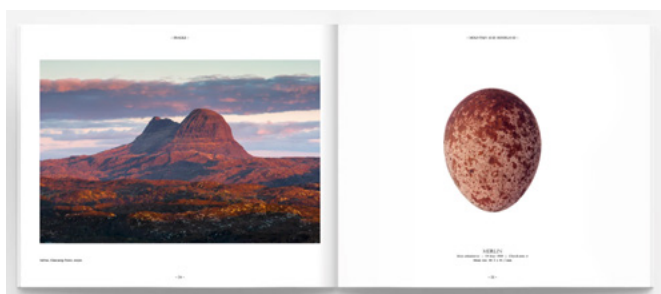


The book that I have has now been updated and you can see the new version which is called SAORSA and explore some more of Ian's colour combinations on his website.

www.ianlawson.com/books/saorsa

Colin Prior

Colin has used a similar idea for his book project Fragile which explores birds eggs and the habitats that they come from. The landscapes to accompany the eggs have been deliberately photographed at a time of year when the landscape colours most match the colours of the eggs.



If you like photography books this is another body of work that is well worth looking at.

www.colinprior.co.uk/products/fragile-birds-eggs-and-habitats

Using both these ideas as inspiration I have put together a few colour pairs which illustrate what you can do if you pay attention to the colours that are around you.

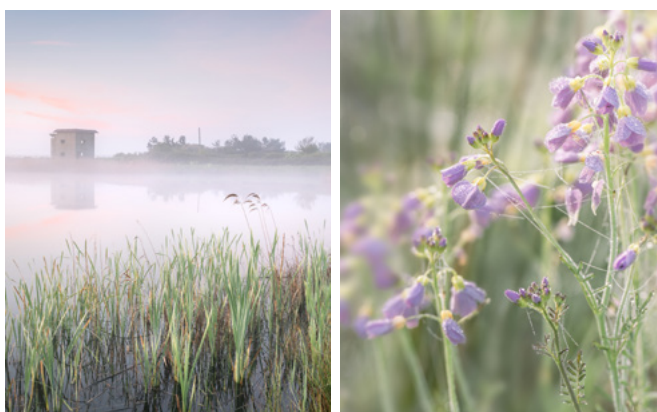
For my colour pairs I have tried to look for colours in the landscape that are replicated in smaller details in the same landscape - in other words both shots were taken from the same location on the same day.

My first pairing was taken in Norfolk on the beach at Wells next the Sea. My landscape shot shows the beach during a heavy shower and the second shot shows a shell that I found on the same beach.



This pairing uses complimentary colours - opposite on the colour wheel.

The next image was taken at Bawdsey and shows the ponds on a misty morning combined with a shot of some Cuckoo flower - Lady's Smock which was growing at the waters edge. Again these images use complimentary colours.



My third pairing shows another example of colour harmony but this time the images are more monochromatic in nature and have a very limited colour pallet.

They show an abstract detail of some fishing nets in Southwold harbour which I have combined with an egret which I found fishing from a mooring rope on the rivers edge. Both shots were taken on the same day so the lighting and conditions were similar.



June's Photo challenge

This month's photo challenge is split into two parts.

The first part is to produce one stand alone image which should consist of either:

Harmonious colours (sit side by side on the colour wheel)

Or

Complimentary colours (sit opposite on the colour wheel)

The next pairing is composed of harmonious colours - blues, greens and yellows, which all sit next to each other on the colour wheel. This pairing was taken in Norfolk in the dunes at Holkham and shows the dunes on a stormy day combined with some dried decaying sea holly.

The second part of the challenge is to produce a colour pairing inspired by the ideas behind the work of Ian Lawson or Colin Prior.



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Your colour pairing should be created using one landscape image and one detail image - similar to the examples I have shown in my work. The colours in both images should be similar so that they look like they belong together.

If you can present the images side by side that would be great but if not you are welcome to submit them as separate images.

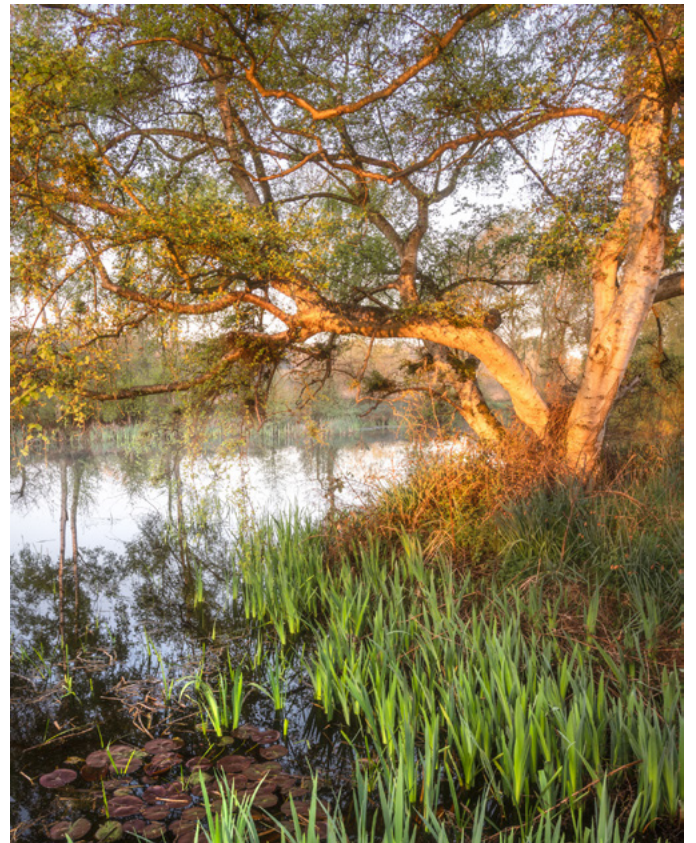
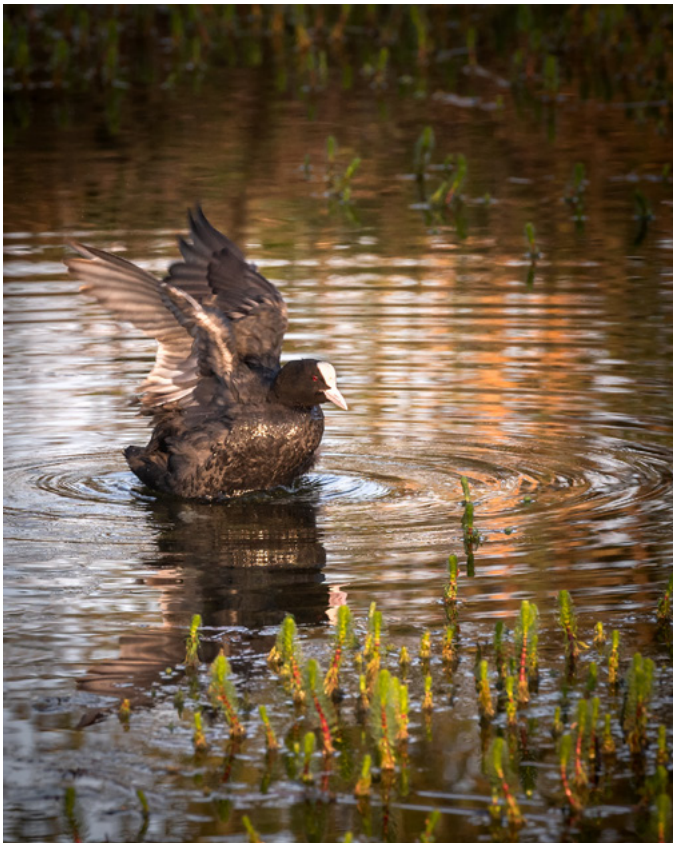
When making my pairings I paid attention to the colours around me and tried to match my intimate shot with the landscape. I spent a long time looking at the colours in the landscape and then tried to find smaller scenes that replicated these.

The two images for your colour pairing should be taken on the same day in the same location. The first image does not need to be related and can be taken anywhere.

With this challenge post processing is important. I haven't changed any of the colours to match but I have lightened some areas to make the images blend better.

The Zoom session for this challenge will take place on Wednesday 28th June between 7pm - 8.30pm.

My final example of colour pairings was taken at Staverton by the lakes. The colours in the water around the coot mirror the colours in the sunlit tree whilst the darker colours of the coot are mirrored in the shadows around the lily pads in the bottom left corner.



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