

Assignment 10: Color and Sound

Art 213 - Color Theory, Spring 2020, East Los Angeles College

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Assignment #10 (worth 15 points):

This assignment asks you to use color to create a visual response to an audible experience (music). In other words, you are translating your choice of music into visual form, focusing in particular on **color**.

The final work must be 11x14" or larger. You choose the best size for the concept. You may use any medium for this project, including but not limited to Acryla-Gouache, watercolor, collage, marker, digital media, animation (not to exceed 1 minute), photography, tapestry, quilt, sculpture, performance, etc.

Step 1: Find a piece of music that moves you

Not just your current favorite, but some piece of music that every now and then, you *want* to go back and listen to. You might consider music that was composed before you were born — something that has stood the test of time. You might also explore pieces of music that do not rely on lyrics for their power. While there's nothing wrong with lyrics, lyrics involve poetry — and words are simply a different medium than music itself.

Step 2: Take time to listen to your music - just listen.

No distractions.

Just you and your headphones.

Listen repeatedly.

Try listening with your eyes closed or in a dark room.

With nothing there to see, *see what you see*.

What colors, motion or forms do you see while the music is playing?

Step 3: Open your sketchpad and respond.

Have some colored pencils or watercolor pencils, pastels...pencils and or charcoal. The more mark-making options nearby, the better. Try to find the marks, colors and arrangements that express what you are hearing...and feeling. Don't settle for your first marks...keep trying.

Fill at least three separate pages of your sketchbook, listening to the music during at least three different sessions. See how your compositions vary. Note how they are similar.

Step 4: Develop your color response — refine your design.

Refine your sketches, colors and marks. Use your knowledge of color to explore various hue, value and intensity combinations. Play with juxtapositions — explore how combinations of color side-by-side alter mood and quality. Consider Color Harmony and Color Discord. Is your

music harmonious or discordant and how could your choice of colors reflect these sounds? Play with varied proportions — explore how small versus large masses of color change effect. See how many small daubs of color (optical mixing) behave differently than large fields of a color. *Refine your image until it is more and more right to the music.*

*** **Share your Music:** Upload an MP3, YouTube link, or other means of sharing your music with me on Canvas.

Written Reflection

Assignment 10 will be accompanied by a typed Written Reflection which addresses the project. Below are questions you should address in your writing. PLEASE READ CAREFULLY and address all of the topics.

The Written Reflection should be single-spaced, 12 point, Times New Roman. PLEASE CHECK YOUR REFLECTION FOR SPELLING AND GRAMMATICAL ERRORS *BEFORE* SUBMITTING IT. Any errors will negatively impact your grade. Submit the typed reflection to class on the due date along with your project.

Please address the following topics:

- Introduce the music you chose, including the name of the artist, name of the song, and year it was made. Why did you choose this music? Now, describe the materials used, the imagery seen in your work (Abstract? Shapes? A picture of something?) and the size of your project.
- Describe the colors you chose to accompany this music. Please be specific when discussing the color, and use the appropriate names for the colors as based on the 12-part color wheel (ie: say “Blue-Green” instead of “Turquoise”). Describe the values and intensities of the colors as well.
- Describe your method for choosing the colors in your project. Does each color reflect a certain sound or note in the song? Did you hear the song and decide on a certain color scheme (such as Analogous Colors, or Complements, or a Tetradic Color Scheme) based on the feeling of the music? Explain and be specific. Using your knowledge of Color Theory, please explain WHY you chose the colors to reflect this music. What do you feel your choice of colors is communicating to the public?

When you are finished with the assignment, you will upload an image of the project, a file or link to the song, and the Written Reflection document. This final assignment will be graded on how well the directions were followed, the creative use of color, the clarity and accuracy of the typed Written Reflection, and the overall craftsmanship of your finished work.

Part 1 (Written Reflection):

Love Song in the Third Sister of the Liu Family Movie

The music I chose for inspiration is the love song titled *We Shall Remain United for One Hundred Years* closed to the end of the movie *The Third Sister of the Family Liu* (刘三姐), composed by Zhenbang Lei (雷振邦). The movie was directed by Su Li (苏里) and made in 1960 by the Movie Studio of Changchun (长春电影制片厂), and is an award-winning and very popular Chinese musical film, about the legendary folk singer Liu Sanjie (the Third Sister of the Liu Family) who lived during the Tang Dynasty (618 - 907); and it features many traditional songs of the Zhuang, the largest minority ethnic group of China, and extraordinary landscapes along the Li River in Guilin, the Zhuang Autonomous Region. The Zhuang ethnic minority, an ethnic group of Southern China with close cultural and linguistic links to the peoples of Thailand and Viet Nam, has been subject to exploitation, oppression, marginalization, discrimination and forced assimilation by expansionist Han-Chinese landlords and warlords since the ancient time, and has not been recognized as a cultural entity until after the founding of the People's Republic of China. More information about the story is available at <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0054034/>. The music is accessible at the YouTube website at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=25pL8liA8A0>, starting at 1:50:00 in the timeline.

The reasons I chose this music include: (1) the social and ethical values of the movie and of the song, such as long-lasting love between man and woman in companionship, (2) the popularity of the movie that reflects the aspiration of the Zhuang ethnic people in particular, and Chinese people in general, for equality, freedom and social justice, and (3) the beauty of the song's melody per se, which combines the folkloric tradition of the Zhuang ethnic minority people and the modern influence from the West.

The lyrics of the love song reads as follows:

Third Sister Liu's solo singing:

In the mountains, people only see the rattans got tangled around the tree trunks,
 Nobody in this world ever sees the tree trunks winding around rattans.
 Should green rattans fail to wind around the tree trunks,
 Then they shall waste one spring season after another.

When you are presented with bamboos, you failed to accept them,
 When you should keep the bamboo shoots, you failed to keep them,
 When you are given the Embroidered Ball, you failed to take it,
 And you end up picking up sorrows with two empty hands.

The Third Sister Liu and her lover, the fisherman A Niu, singing together or alternatively:

Union! Union! Both of us shall remain united for one hundred years!
 Should one of us pass away at the age of ninety-seven,
 Then what should the other do?
 Looking for the lover on the bridge to the underworld for three years!

The materials used in this project include Acryla-Gouache, color markers, ball point pens and pencils; and the imagery seen in my multimedia work include bamboo and bamboo shoots, embroidered ball, fruit tree, mountains along the Li River, in realistic but cartoonish style with personification of some objects, in an 11 inch by 14 inch sheet of Strathmore Bristol paper. This Acryla-Gouache on Bristol paper will serve as a reference for a 36 inch by 48 inch digital collage to be created in Adobe Photoshop, using images shot from local scenes and those from Google Image Search under Creative Commons licensing scheme. The scaled-down image could fit a Mainstays 18" x 24" Basic Poster Frame, Black (Walmart No. 1732255, \$6.64). With slight adjustments in the position of some graphical elements, the scaled-down image could fit a Mainstays 16" x 20" Format Picture and Poster Frame, Black (Walmart No. 553480768, \$6.84).

The color scheme in my project generally is based on tints and shades of two complementary color pairs: (1) light yellow-green (suggesting growth in love and prosperity in the family) and light red or pink (romantic love and mutual respect between lovers), and (2) light purple (sublime virtue in marital or romantic life) and light yellow (optimism). This is a double-complementary color harmony scheme. The basic values and intensities of the colors are light and fresh. Each color reflects a certain sound or note in the song:

- The words bamboo, bamboo shoots, green rattans and mountains suggest green and yellow.
- The words spring season, embroidered ball (a love-promise gift girls give to boys, or a betrothal gift in the Zhuang ethnic minority group) suggest conjugal love and are reflected in pink and violet.
- The soft, undulating and romantic melody with subtly up-and-down variations of tunes suggests romantic love colored with pink as well.
- The sound of ducks at the end of Third Sister Liu's solo singing suggests intensive vitality in love affairs, in both physical and spiritual realms.

Based on my knowledge of Color Theory and of the cultural interpretation or psychology of colors, I chose the above pairs of complementary colors to reflect the spirit of this music; and the reason for using complementary schemes also suggest that man and woman, the two opposite genders, form a complementary relationship in family and romantic life.

I listened attentively to the music from my headphone plugged into my laptop computer, three times with both eyes closed, using my brain to decipher the meanings of certain words in the lyrics and to imagine their images; I recorded the visual information in quick sketches, in three separate pages of my sketchbook, using color ball point pens and pencils, and bold and expressive marks. I played with juxtapositions to explore how combinations of color side-by-side alter mood and quality. In some areas, especially in the negative spaces or "background," small daubs of color as well as expressive and curvilinear lines have been used to create a "color mixing" effect, which behaves differently than large fields of color used in the positive space of concrete objects; these negative spaces help to bring the "positive" imageries more into focus. After enough refinement of visual composition, I proceed to complete the project.

Part 2: Creation of the Artwork

The creation of the artwork has been completed step-by-step, in five steps.

The 1st step is to create quick sketches of ideation for the final project, as shown in *Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4*.

The 2nd step is to add colors to the quick sketches, on the basis of a double-complementary color harmony scheme, as shown in *Figures 3, 4, 5 and 6*.

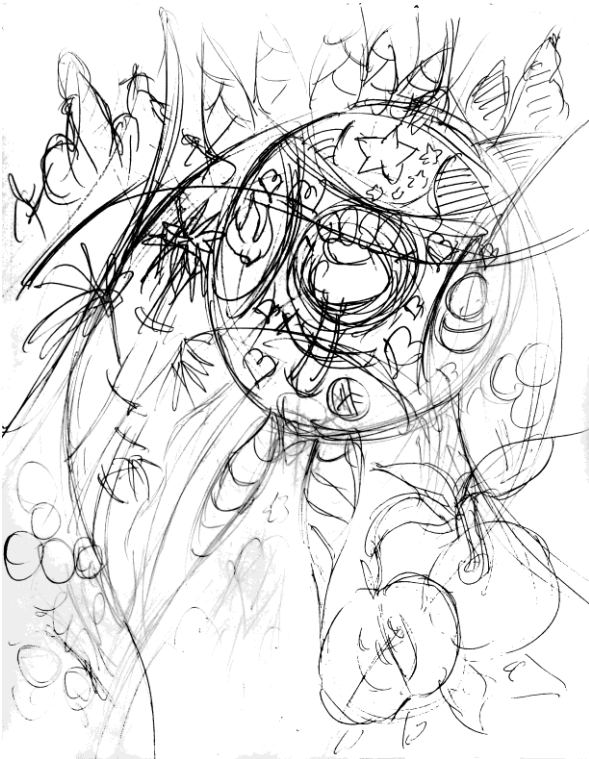


Figure 1. A quick sketch featuring a large Embroidered Ball, bamboo shoots, scenery along the Lijiang River, and others.



Figure 2. A quick sketch featuring images of the Third Sister of Liu Family and A Niu, her lover, tree trunk, Embroidered Ball, and scenery along the Lijiang River.



Figure 3. Additional sketches and rendering with color pencils.



Figure 4. One more quick sketch rendered with Acryla-Gouache.



Figure 5. Quick sketch shown in Figure 2 colored in Adobe Photoshop. This one has been selected as the basis for the creation of the final project in Adobe Photoshop.

Double-Complementary Color Harmony Scheme



Figure 6. Double complements color harmony scheme, with two pairs of complimentary colors, i.e., yellow and violet. Yellow green and pink (or red violet).

The 3rd step is to find relevant images through screenshots. Google Image search and digital photo-taking, and to remove unneeded parts in Adobe Photoshop with Polygonal Lasso tool and Delete key, as shown in *Figures 7 through 19*.



Figure 7. Images of the Third Sister of the Liu Family and A Niu her lover (Source: screenshots from the movie Third Sister Liu).



Figure 8. Images of baboo shoots (Source: Google Image Search, Creative Common).



Figure 9. Textile pattern symbolic of the Zhuang people's ethnic culture (Source: screenshots from the movie Third Sister Liu).



Figure 10. Embroidery Ball, symbolic of love in Zhuang culture (Source: Google Image Search, Creative Common).



Figure 11. Embroidery Ball, symbolic of love in Zhuang culture (Source: Google Image Search, Creative Common).



Figure 12. Embroidery Ball, symbolic of love in Zhuang culture (Source: Google Image Search, Creative Common).



Figure 13. Scenes along the Lijiang River (Source: Google Image Search, Creative Common).



Figure 14. Images of bamboo (Source: digital picture taken on the campus of East Los Angeles College, and Google Image Search, Creative Common).



Figure 15. Peony flowers, symbolic of prosperity and good luck (Source: Google Image Search, Creative Common).



Figure 16. Peonies and roses (Source: Google Image Search, Creative Common).



Figure 17. Roses (Source: Google Image Search, Creative Common).



Figure 18. Sunflowers, symbolic of loyalty (Source: Google Image Search, Creative Common).



Figure 19. Trees (Source: digital picture taken on the campus of East Los Angeles College).

The 4th step is to place relevant images in the composition, to enlarge or decrease the image size, to change their positions or to rotate their angles, with Move, Free Transform and other tools, and to fine tune their colors and values with the Image→Adjustments→Levels, and Image→Adjustments→Color Balance menus, in Adobe Photoshop, to create workable color compositions, using the rendered quick sketch (*Figure 5*) and the double-complementary color harmony scheme (*Figure 6*) as references, as shown in *Figures 20A* and *20B*.



Figure 20A. Version one of the color composition.



Figure 20B. Version two of the color composition.

The 5th step is to apply the two pairs of complimentary colors (yellow and violet, yellow-green and red-violet) to some graphical elements in the composition. To accomplish this task, the following step-by-step procedure is used (*Figure 21*):

1. Paste a copy of the Double Complements Color Harmony Scheme (*Figure 6*) in the file and use the Move tool to move it to a desired location that does not block the intended graphical elements selected for editing;
2. Select the layer where the graphical element is contained, in the Layer panel;
3. Hold the Ctrl key and press the A key to select the whole space containing the graphical element;
4. Press the up arrow and then the down arrow keys (or the left arrow and then the right arrow keys) on the keyboard to select the graphical element with a marquee;
5. Click on the multiple-stripe icon on the top-right corner of the Layer panel to open the layer option dropdown menu, select the New Layer option, type a name and press the OK button to create a new layer;
6. Select the Eyedropper tool from the Tool bar and click the desired color on the Double Complements Color Harmony Scheme;
7. Select the Paint Bucket tool from the Tool bar; click inside the marquee to paint to with the desired color;
8. Go to the color mode menu to try out different transparency mode, such as Multiply, Color Burn, Linear Burn, Overlay, Hue, Saturation, etc., until a desired result is achieved.

The same step-by-step procedure has been repeated for several graphic elements, to achieve the final results (*Figure 22A* and *Figure 22B*). The completed digital artworks could serve as references for an acrylic painting in impressionistic style and with the intended double-complimentary color harmony scheme.

Layer option Dropdown menu

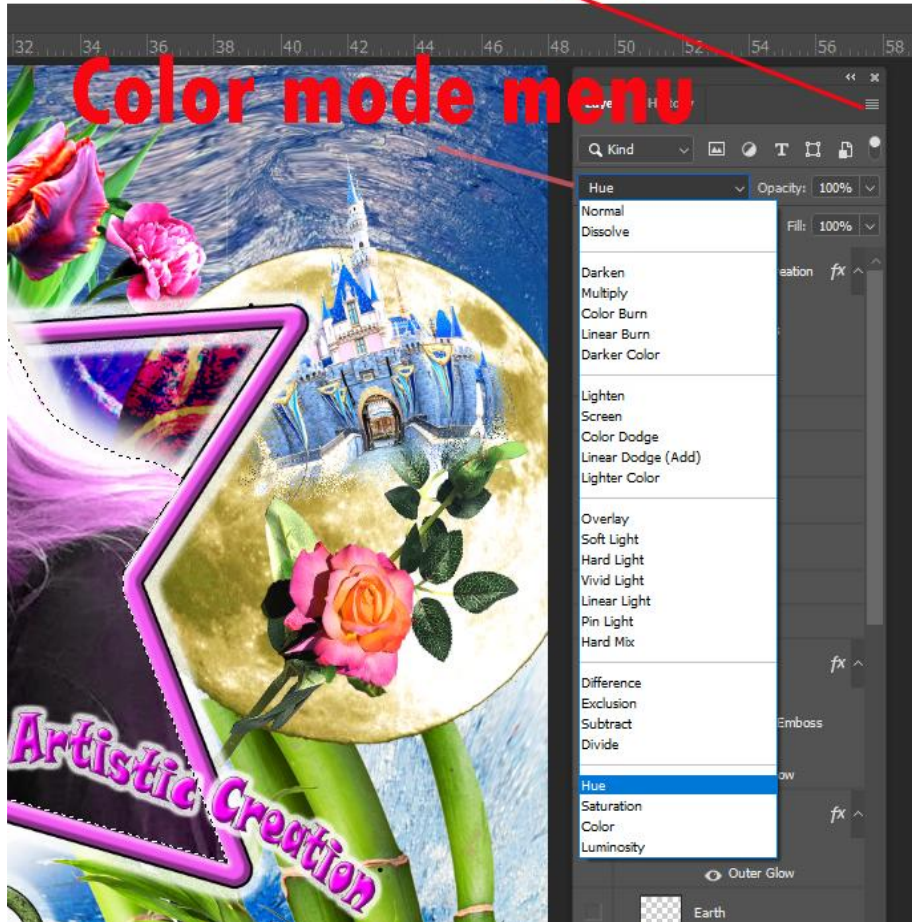


Figure 21. The Layer panel and its options dropdown menus.



Figure 22A. Version one of the completed digital artwork, *The Love Song of Third Sister of Liu Family and A Niu*.



Figure 22B. Version two of the completed digital artwork, *The Love Song of Third Sister of Liu Family and A Niu*.

Extra-Credit Project Goddess of Artistic Creation

This project is to (1) in general, celebrate American women's contribution to artistic creations, to the great cause of peace, freedom, equality, and social progress; and (2) in particular, celebrate Professor Christine Frerichs great achievements in artistic creation (<https://www.christinefrerichs.com/christine-frerichs-studio-aboutPage>). It will be a reference for artworks under *Edward Locke's Creative Plan (2020-2025)*, available at <https://suniseacreation.weebly.com/research-interests--creative-plan.html>. It will be under the *Major Project No. One: America the Heroic and Beautiful*, which "will celebrate America's heroic spirits and scenic beauty with images of heroes and national parks as principal motifs. In some of the paintings, natural scenes will be integrated with images of American heroes who have made significant contributions to the causes of peace, freedom, justice, and progress in the past, as well as images of ordinary citizens from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds."

Double-Complementary Color Harmony Scheme



Figure 23. The color harmony scheme.

The color scheme in this project generally is based on tints and shades of two complementary color pairs: (1) yellow-green and light red or pink, and (2) violet and yellow. In addition to these two pairs of complimentary colors, which constitute a double-complementary color harmony scheme, blue is also used. The basic values and intensities of the colors are light and fresh. For the meanings of the colors, relevant articles on color theory, such as *Color Meanings and The Art of Using Color Symbolism*, by Anna Lundberg, in the 99 Designs website, at <https://99designs.com/blog/tips/color-meanings/>, have been used as valuable references. These colors are intended to reflect the traditional as well as modern characteristics of American women, their social values, and their aesthetic inclinations.

The meanings of the colors are explained as follows.

- Yellow: Optimism and idealism, sunshine and summertime, power and wealth, joy and happiness, imagination and hope, friendship and positivity, gold and sunflowers, smiley faces and youthfulness.

- Green: Nature and environment, health and youth, rebirth and renewal, spirituality and inspiration, adventure and prosperity, serenity and harmony, exuberant growth and fertile land, prosperity and stability.
- Pink: Love and joy, happiness and romance, caring and tenderness, acceptance and calmness, femininity, sweet, cute and charming little girls, cotton candy and brightly colored bubble gum.
- Violet (or purple): Royalty and nobility, spirituality and mystery, ceremony and honor, temperance and transformation, wisdom and enlightenment, luxury and prestige.
- Blue: Peace, composure and tranquility, coldness and calmness, harmony and unity, trust and loyalty, truth and confidence, stability and security, order and cleanliness, sky and water, immortality and spirituality, wisdom and introspection, intelligence and responsibility, coolness and relaxation, depth and power (dark blue).

Most of the graphical elements included in this piece of art are shown in *Figures 25A through 25F*. They include

- Image of the artist: Peace sign in a pendent, pink star frame with the inscription “Goddess of Artistic Creation” and with the image of the artist.
- Masterpieces of the artist: Professor Frerichs oil paintings *Beacon* (*Figure 24A*), and *Wet Moon* (*Figure 24B*).
- Earth and Moon: The moon in the oil painting *Wet Moon* changed to a photo superimposed by the image of a fairy tale castle (Disneyland). NASA photo of the Earth appears at the bottom of the photo-illustration. These imageries are symbolic of the permanent values of artistic creation.
- Vincent Price Museum: A symbol of art program at East Los Angeles College and of the artist’s great inspiring instruction.
- Plants and flowers: Tulips (the artist’s favorite flower), bird of paradise, rose, sunflower, bamboo, cactus and other plants found on the campus of East Los Angeles College.
- Women’s Power sign on a Greco-Roman column: Symbolic of women’s creative power.
- Yosemite National Park: Symbolic of the natural beauty of California.

Two versions of *Goddess of Artistic Creation* photo-illustration are shown in *Figures 26A and 26B*. These serve as foundation for further works to apply relevant colors.

The four colors in the double-complimentary color harmony scheme plus blue are applied to selected graphical elements:

- Yellow: The artist’s image (*Figure 28B*. version two), the Greco-Roman column.
- Violet: Scene of Yosemite National Park and the artist’s two oil paintings.
- Yellow green: Bamboo.
- Pink (or red violet): The artist’s image (*Figure 28A*. version one), and background content inside the star frame.
- Blue: The Earth.

To apply the colors to the selected graphical elements, the same methods explained in the 5th Step of the previous photo-illustration, *The Love Song of Third Sister of Liu Family and A Niu*

(page 14) have been used. The two versions of the photo-illustration with the four colors in the double-complimentary color harmony scheme plus blue applied to selected graphical elements are shown in *Figures 27A and 27B*.



Figure 24A. Beacon, oil and acrylic on canvas, 71 x 51 inches, 2017, by Professor Christine Frerichs.

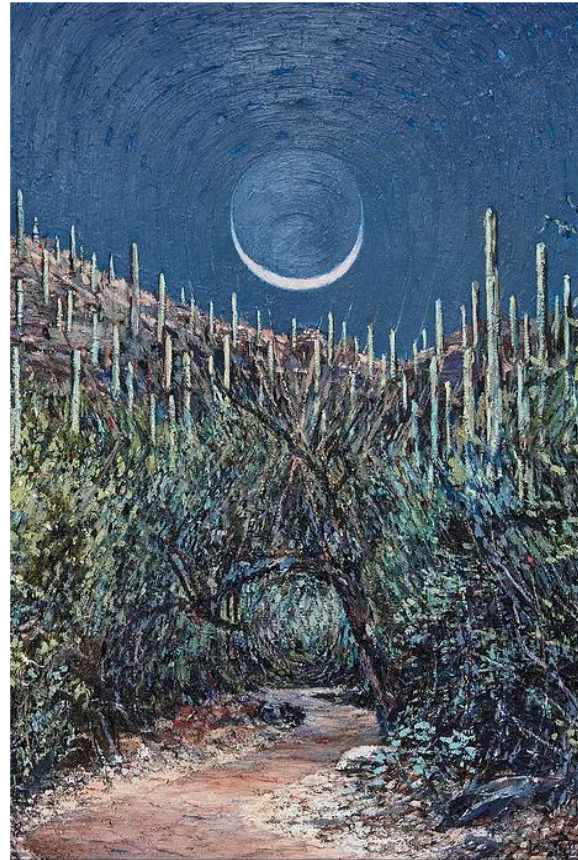


Figure 24B. Wet Moon, Clear Path (Tucson) DETAIL, oil and acrylic on canvas, 71 x 51 inches, 2017, by Professor Christine Frerichs.



Figure 25A. Tulips (Source: Google Image Search, Creative Common).



Figure 25B. Cactus and other plants at ELAC campus.



Figure 25C. Women's Power sign.



Figure 25D. Birds of paradise plants and flowers on the campus of East Los Angeles College, and from Google Image Search (Creative Common).



Figure 25E. Greco-Roman columns (Source: Google Image Search, Creative Common).



Figure 25F. Scenes of Yosemite National Park (Source: Google Image Search, Creative Common).



Figure 26A. Version one of the photo-illustration.



Figure 26B. Version two of the photo-illustration.



Figure 27A. Version one of the photo-illustration with the four colors in the double-complimentary color harmony scheme plus blue applied to selected graphical elements.



Figure 27B. Version two of the photo-illustration with the four colors in the double-complimentary color harmony scheme plus blue applied to selected graphical elements.