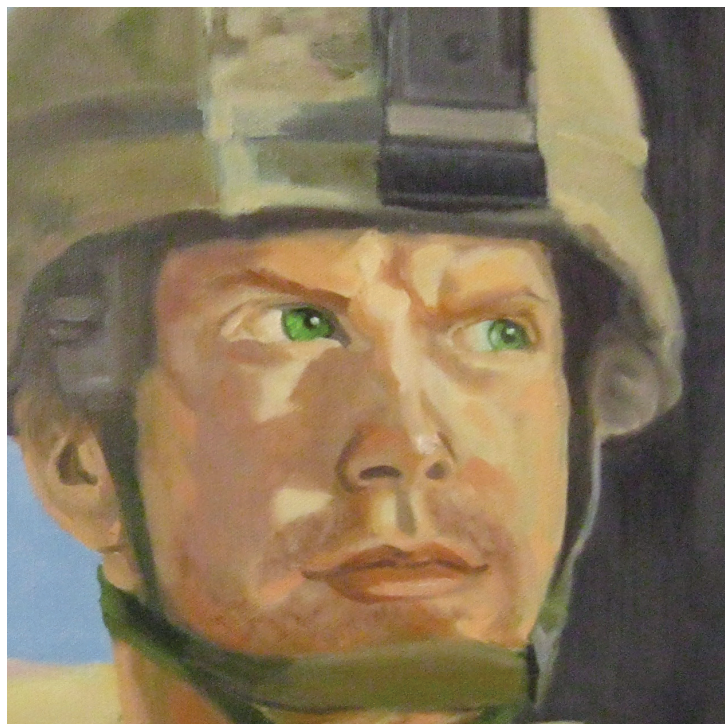


*Passionate*



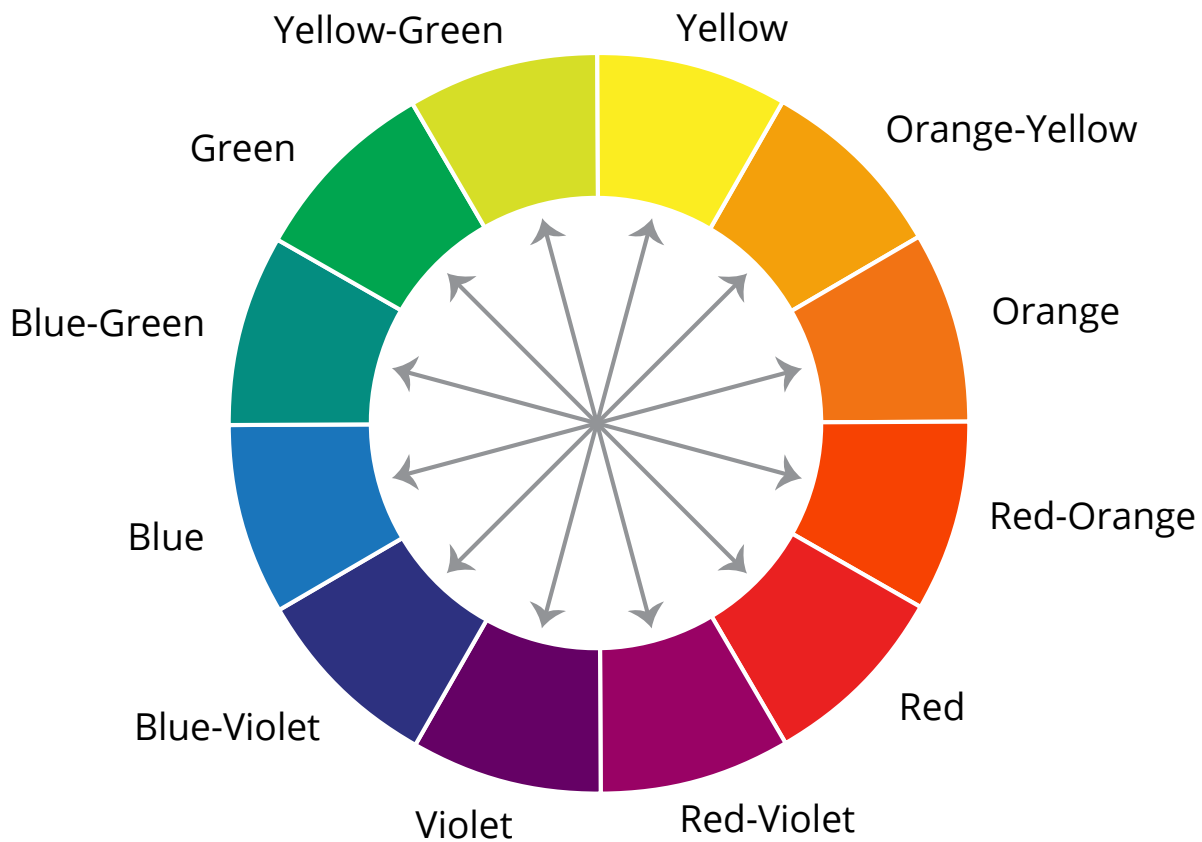
*Painter*

# **The Portrait Code**



## **Non-Muddy Skin Tones**

**PDF guide to accompany MODULE 7**



When you oil paint, you can use a color's **complement** (directly across on the color wheel), or the color to either side of the complement (the complement's **analogous** color) to dull or darken the color.

For instance, sometimes a violet will work better to dull and darken a yellow-orange than blue-violet, its direct complement.

**See example below**

show you where various oil pigments fall on the color wheel, to help you see what colors you can use to dull and darken others.

The color wheel on the next page will

**Y**es, it's a color wheel. Before you run off screaming, haunted by swatch assignment nightmares from 2-D design class, hear me out. We are not going to scientifically dissect your palette by pigment percentages.

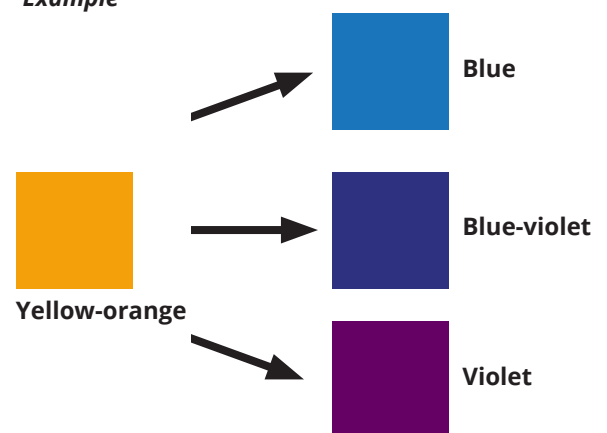
We're going to mix skin tones using **complementary colors + black + white**, as needed, to arrive at the correct value and level of chroma (saturation or intensity).

A color's complementary is the color that is directly opposite it on the color wheel. As noted above, the color to either side of the complement (the complement's **analogous** color) may be used instead of the direct complement.

Using complementary colors or a color from either side of the complement will allow you to get a wide range of skin tone colors and values without killing your color by just adding black.

Muddy, dull, and lifeless colors are usually the result of using too much black to darken your colors.

**Example**



**Yellow-orange may be dulled or darkened using its complement, blue-violet, or either of blue-violet's analogous colors.**



The color wheel PLUS my additions of actual paint pigments, so you can see where they fall in each wedge.

How do you dull or darken a mixture of colors you've made? Try mixing in mixture made from the complements of each pigment used. This is a great way to create a range of hues, chroma, and values, in skin tones.

## Two Ways to Darken and Dull without Black

There are two ways to use the complementary colors to dull or darken a skin tone mix:

### Method 1 (simple but not as exact)

Always use a blue complement, since most skin tones are a “version” of peach/orange

Dull or darken a skin tone made with: **raw sienna** (a yellow-orange) + **burnt sienna** (a dark yellow) + **white** (which comes out as a form of “orange”) using blue, blue-violet, or blue-green, because generally-speaking, blue is the opposite of orange.

#### Example:



A skin tone that is roughly “orange”

Dull or darken with:



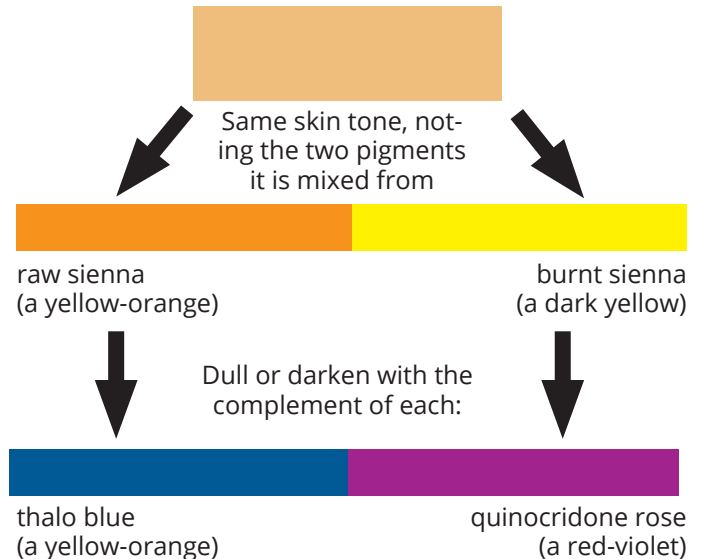
“Any blue” or one of its analogous colors: a blue-green or blue-violet

### Method 2 (recommended)

Break the skin tone down in your mind when you make it by noting the paint tube color ingredients used. That’s the skin tone in its most basic form.

Dull or darken a skin tone made with: **raw sienna** (a yellow-orange) + **burnt sienna** (a dark yellow) + **white** with a mix of **thalo blue** (a blue-green to darken the orange) + **quinocridone rose** (a red-violet to darken the yellow)

#### Example:



**U**sing method 2 (recommended) is not difficult when you note which tubes of paint you used to mix your skin tone. Then, look at the color wheel on the previous page and locate the complement of each ingredient.

You can then try darkening the skin tone with any one complement of the skin tone’s ingredients, or a **mix** of the complement of each (recommended).

Remember, you can try the straight-across-the-color-wheel complement, **or** the one to either side of the complement (the color **analogous** to the complement).

Method two makes it easy, for example, to dull and darken a skin tone that has red in it by adding a green, without wondering, “should I use blue or green to darken this?”

**NOTE:** You may still end up using blue as the complement, but trying the complements of the main pigments is a good idea before deciding, as it gives you options.

**In addition to using too much black, artists who struggle with muddy colors often suffer from a lack of value range in their paintings.**

When we talk about the **value** of a color mix, we're talking about using a variety of a color's TINTS, TONES, and SHADES to create a sense of depth and realism.

**Let's look at each:**

**Tint:** the color mix lightened with white. Sometimes there is no mix, just the straight tube color + white. Since this e-book is about skin tone mixes, though, we're talking about whatever you've used to mix your skin tone + white

**Tone:** the color with its complement and possibly some gray mixed in, not for the purpose of darkening it, but to dull its chroma (intensity or saturation)

**Shade:** the color darkened with its complement and, if needed, black

#### **A Note About Black**

I'm not saying you can't use black at all. It is possible to paint without it, but if I feel I need it, I use it sparingly, as a tool that requires appropriate respect.

I do not use black as my *main method* of darkening my paints. To darken my skin tones, I take the color I got from mixing [skin tone colors + their complementary color(s) + black + white] and I add a mix of the complementary colors. If this method does not achieve the color value I want, I then I may add a little black at a time until I get there.

Used it sparingly, black can darken and adjust the gray scale of your colors without turning them to mud.

#### **The Acronyms on the Charts**

You will see that I mention white (if needed), black (if needed), and gray (if needed) in my color notes. Since these additions to your color mixes are *optional*, and at your discretion, depending on the value you want, I will use a **shorthand** of **WIN** (white if needed), **GIN** (gray if needed), and **BIN** (black if needed).

Please also note that wherever I say you can dull or darken using a color's complement, you can also try the color to either side of the complement to see which you prefer.

How much or how little white or black you use is up to you. While the swatches that follow get to a pretty dark range, note that each of them could be lightened with white more than I have shown, if needed. It all depends upon the value you need from your colors.



#### **The SWATCH KEYS**

The next page will explain the SWATCH KEYS used to show you the make up of each skin tone mix on the "recipe" pages. These keys are a useful info graphic to make it easy to figure out how to darken or dull a skin tone using the complement or analogous of the complement instead of straight black.

**T**he color “recipe” pages to come have SWATCH KEYS on them. These identify the “ingredients” of each skin tone mix, and the complements or analogous complements used to dull or darken them.

As you now know, you can use the exact opposite color on the color wheel (the complement), or if you prefer, one of the colors to either side of the complement (the complement’s analogous color, or “next-door neighbor.” The swatches below were pulled directly from the chart pages, to further reinforce how you can break down a color mix to dull and darken it without relying on black alone.

## BASE COLOR ELEMENTS:



## COMPLEMENT COLORS USED:



Skin tone mix from a yellow, an orange, and a red



Dulled and darkened using a blue (opposite of orange and yellow + red which is again orange)



Skin tone mix from a yellow and an orange



Dulled and darkened using a violet (opposite of yellow + a blue (opposite of orange)



Skin tone mix from a yellow and a red-violet



Dulled and darkened using a blue-violet (analogous to violet, the complement of yellow) + a green (to dull the red in the red-violet)



Skin tone mix from a yellow and a red



Dulled and darkened using a blue + a red-violet  
The skin tone on this one was very orange, so this combination of a blue-violet and a red-violet toned it down nicely.



Skin tone mix from a yellow and a red



Dulled and darkened using a blue (opposite of the combined orange that resulted)



Skin tone mix from an orange and a yellow-orange



Dulled and darkened using a blue (opposite of orange, the predominant tone)

The pages that follow to see some of my favorite color combinations that produce a lovely range of skin tones. This is by no means an exhaustive sample. You can create dozens of skin tones using different pigment combinations, and dozens more by adding white to create tints of the colors, complements + GIN if needed to create tones of the colors, and complements + BIN to create shades of the colors.



### BASE COLOR(S):



Burnt Umber (a dark yellow)

+

English Red (a red)

+

Burnt Sienna (a yellow-orange)

+

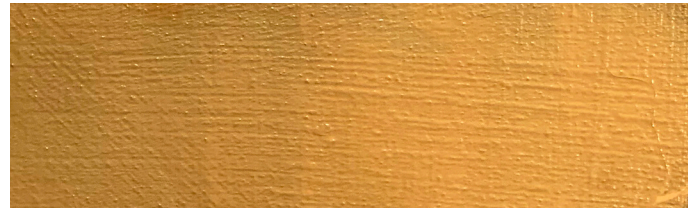
Yellow Ochre (a yellow)

+

White

+

Black (if needed)



### COMPLEMENT(S):



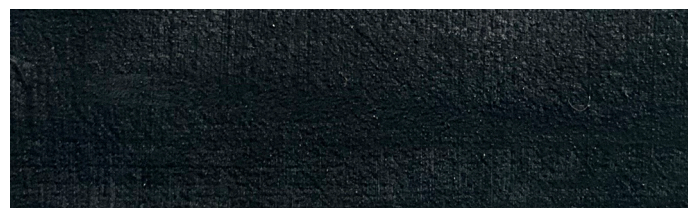
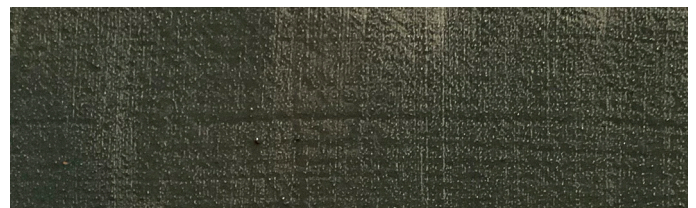
Ultramarine Blue

+

White

+

Black (if needed)



**NOTES:** The base colors selected for the skin tone include red, yellow, and yellow-orange.

You can experiment with the complementary color green (the opposite of red), violet (the opposite of yellow) or blue-violet (the opposite of yellow-orange) to darken and/or dull the base color.

**NOTE:** In this mix, English Red is a very strong pigment, and the resulting color tone from my base mix was too orange, so I used a blue to tone it down.



### BASE COLOR(S):



Raw Sienna (a yellow orange)

+

Burnt Sienna (a dark yellow)

+

White

+

Black (if needed)



### COMPLEMENT(S):



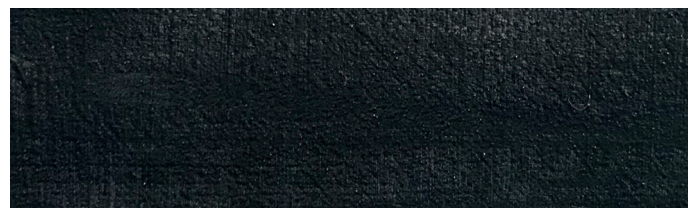
Thalo Blue

+

Quinocridone Rose

+

Black (if needed)



NOTES: The base colors selected for the skin tone are a dark yellow and a yellow-orange.

I used a violet and a blue to tone it down. This addressed not only the yellow, but the orange element present in the yellow-orange color.

NOTE: You can try the analogous color (the color on either side of a complement on the color wheel) if you don't get the result you want from the complement.

*Translation: look to the color opposite the colors in your mix, or one to either side of the opposite (an analogous color) to dull or darken your mix.*

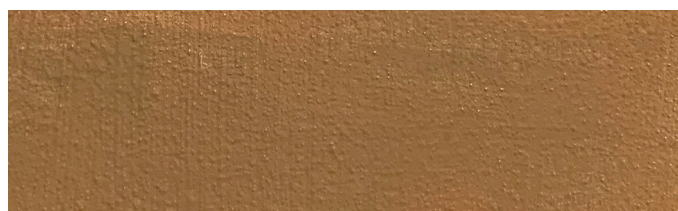
You can really see here how the combination is heading to a neutral in the middle of the scale.



### BASE COLOR(S):



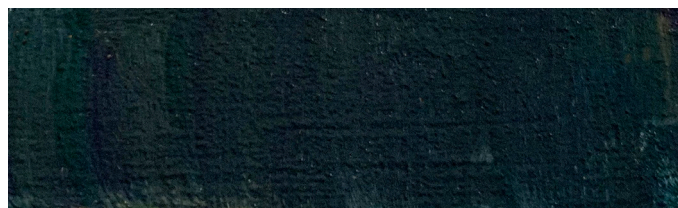
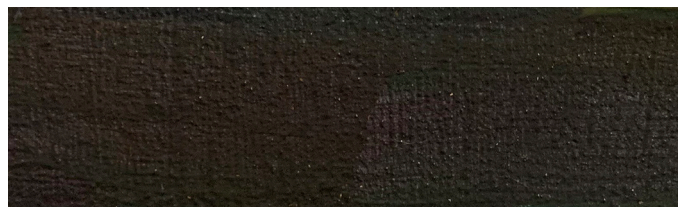
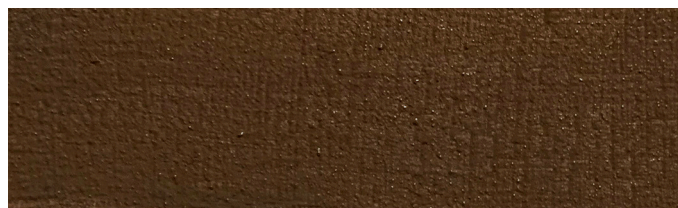
Yellow Ochre (a yellow)  
+  
Quinacridone Rose (a red-violet)  
+  
White  
+  
Black (if needed)



### COMPLEMENT(S):



Dioxazine Purple  
+  
Thalo Green  
+  
White  
+  
Black (if needed)



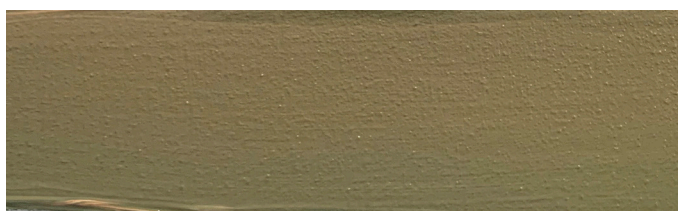
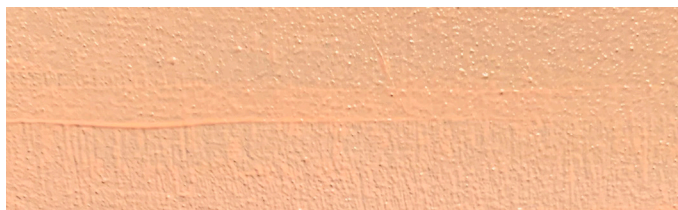
NOTES: The base colors selected for the skin tone include both yellow and a red-violet.

Therefore, adding a violet and a green as complements tones down both colors.

### BASE COLOR(S):



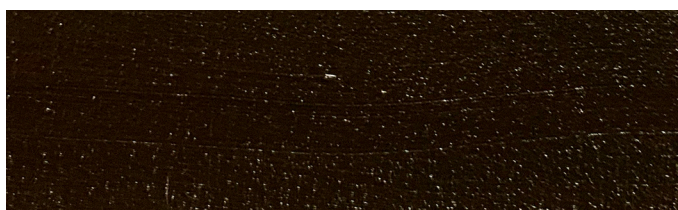
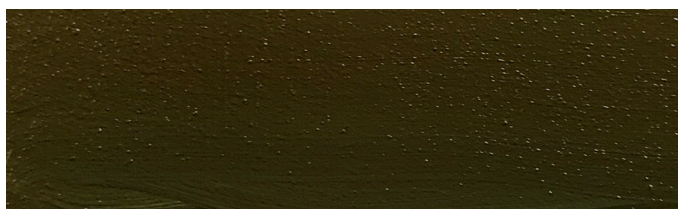
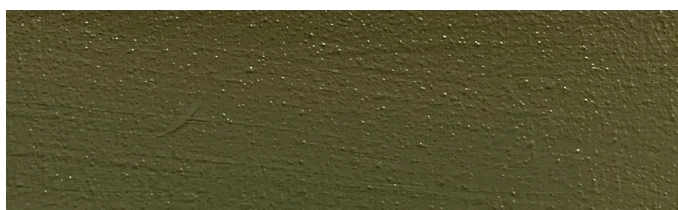
Cadmium Yellow Light (yellow)  
+  
Quinocridone Rose (a red-violet)  
+  
White  
+  
Black (if needed)



### COMPLEMENT(S):



Thalo Green  
+  
Burnt Umber  
+  
Black (if needed)



NOTES: The base colors selected for the skin tone include both yellow and a red-violet.

This one is interesting however, because one might not expect to use the complement of another yellow. The Thalo green cuts down the red in the red-violet however, and the dark yellow of the burnt umber tones down the violet in the red-violet.

The Cadmium yellow harmonizes with it all, as it brightens the overall combination.



### BASE COLOR(S):



Yellow Ochre (a dull yellow)

+

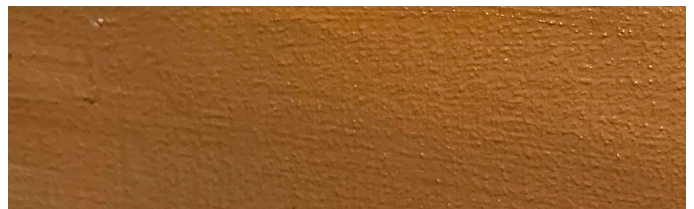
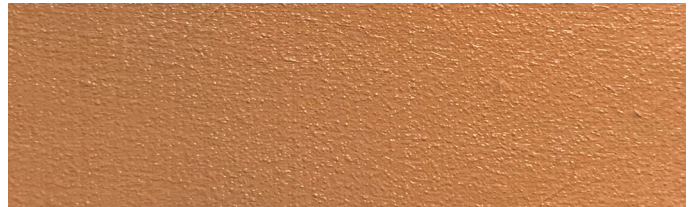
Cadmium Red Medium (red)

+

White

+

Black (if needed)



### COMPLEMENT(S):



Ultramarine Blue (blue-violet)

+

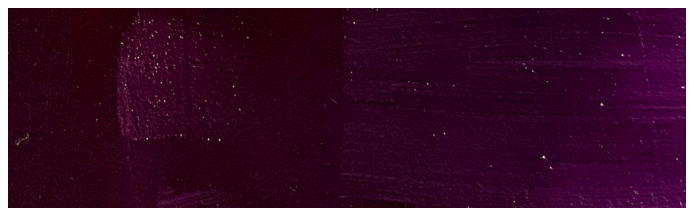
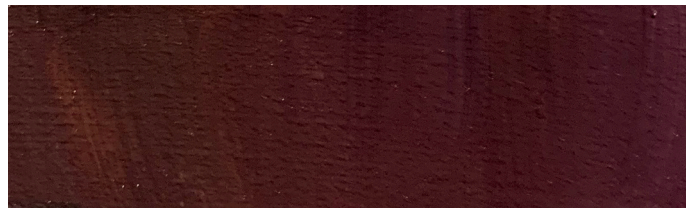
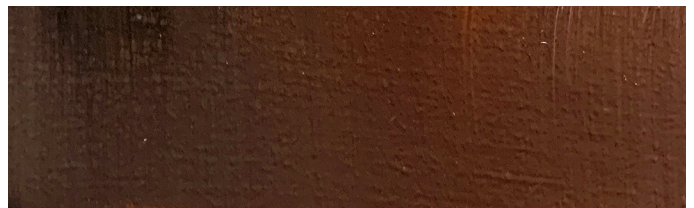
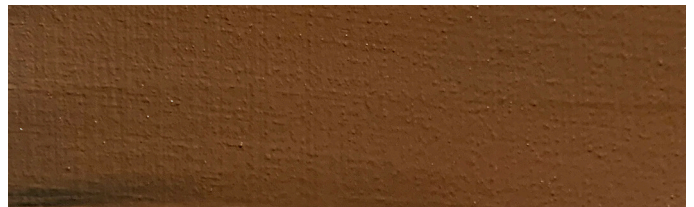
Quinocridone Rose (a red-violet)

+

White

+

Black (if needed)



NOTES: The base colors selected for the skin tone include create an overall orange tone, so this combination of a blue-violet and a red-violet tone it down nicely.

### BASE COLOR(S):



Cadmium Yellow Medium  
(yellow)

+

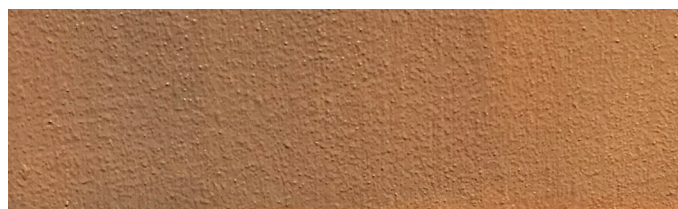
Cadmium Red Light (red)

+

White

+

Black (if needed)



### COMPLEMENT(S):



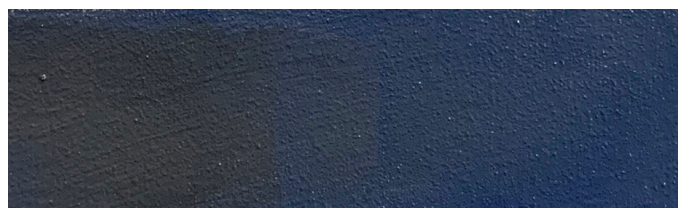
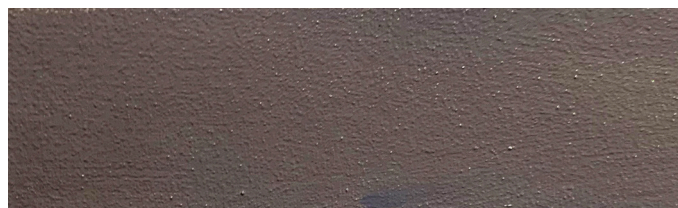
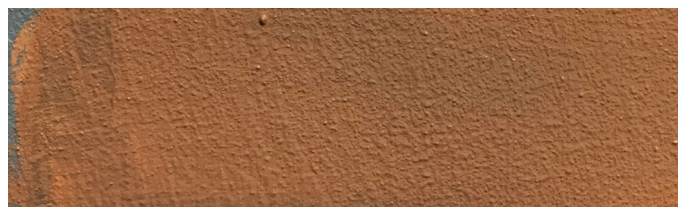
Ultramarine Blue

+

White

+

Black (if needed)



NOTES: This combination creates a nice peach that is darkened by the addition of Ultramarine blue.

You can see how it grays down the more blue you add. The grayer values may not directly correlate with skin tones, but can be used within shadows mixed back into the base mix.



## BASE COLOR(S):

Cadmium Orange (orange)  
+  
Raw Sienna (yellow-orange)  
+  
White  
+  
Black (if needed)

## COMPLEMENT(S):

Thalo Blue  
+  
White  
+  
Black (if needed)

NOTES: The base colors selected for the skin tone are variations of orange, so I added a blue to tone it down.

You can make dozens of color combinations when playing with skin tones.

For instance, the yellow present in the raw sienna means you can play with ultramarine blue as a complement instead of Thalo blue if you wish.

***Experiment and have fun!***

