



Quality of complements: Among all the colors present, magenta dominates. A small amount of its complement, yellow-green, is used for lively accents.



Value of complements: Light and dark versions of one or both complementary harmonies broadens the range of contrast.

Liven it Up with Complements

by Margie Deeb

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The October 2007 issue of *Bead & Button* magazine published my article about contrasting colors in their “Expert Advice” column. The *Muse* will also tell you all about how you can inject spirit and vitality into a flagging color scheme. Its easier than you might think.

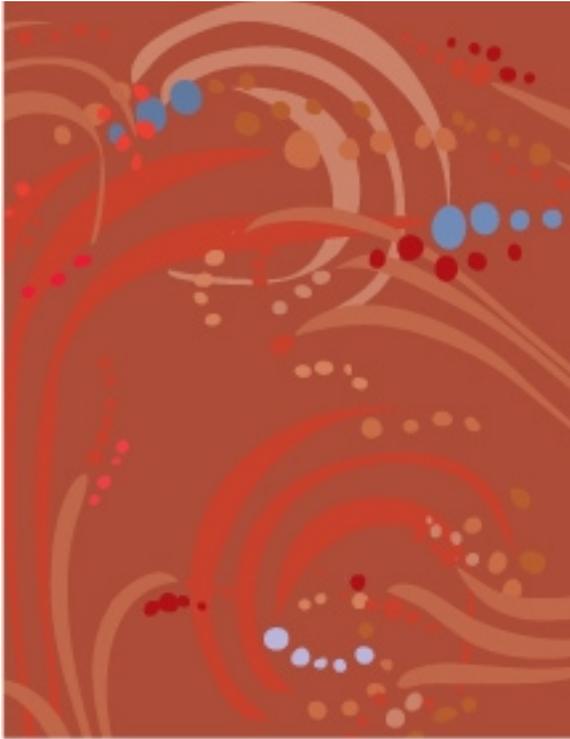
An exciting story of “opposites attract” underlies the complementary color scheme. Lured by their differences, complementary colors enhance one another because they each contribute qualities the other lacks.

A complementary harmony provides the most contrast in hue possible; its colors sit furthest apart from each other on the wheel. Red is less like green than any other color. As you move away from red toward green, the colors are more similar to green, and therefore provide less contrast.

Complementary relationships offer the balance and equilibrium our eyes and mind crave. The phenomenon of after-image, illustrates that the eye will spontaneously generate the complementary color if it is not present. This is why staring at a single color for a few minutes produces the after-image of its complementary color. When the complementary relationship is established equilibrium is restored and balance is achieved.

If your work is lackluster in the color department, grab your color wheel and let it talk to you about complementary colors. Nothing will breathe life into a color scheme like a dash—or splash—of complementary harmonies.

Nature loves complementary relationships. Red and pink flowers against a backdrop of green foliage rivet our attention. Most purple and violet flowers have yellow centers. The orange rock against the blue sky of the American Southwest



Intensity of complements: Varied saturations of a complementary harmony add texture, depth, and intrigue to a color palette.

is a sparkling sight to behold.

Complementary colors require each other. When placed together, they incite each other to maximum brilliance. The color of cyan, a swimming pool blue, will appear all the more vivid when accented by spicy orange.

The most dynamic of all hue contrasts, successful combinations depend on getting the proportions right. The smallest, tingling accent of a complementary color can suscite the weakest color scheme. Too much of one or both complementary colors can collide and pulsate uncomfortably. Balance the contrast by quantity, value and intensity.

Quantity: don't use equal amounts. If your color scheme involves several colors, choose a dominate color family and add tiny amounts of its complement.

Value: use light and dark versions of the complements. Try deep maroon shades with dark greens or light mints. Pale lilacs and lavenders pair exquisitely with pastel yellow.

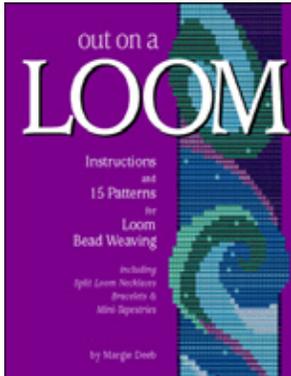
Intensity: experiment with different saturations. Burnished terra cotta shades work beautifully with slate blues. Partner vivids with low intensity tones of their complements, like neon hot pink and hunter green. Carefully calculated proportions of that complementary pair will guarantee one lively color scheme.

There's lots more information about complementary colors in *The Beader's Guide to Color*, and in the January 2007, and December 2005 Margie's Muse columns.

For more issues of Margie's Muse, visit MargieDeeb.com/muse

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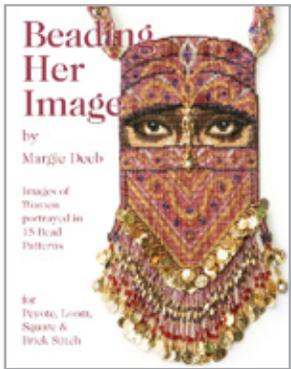
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Out On A Loom is a creative journey through color, design, and form for the beginning to intermediate level seed bead artist.

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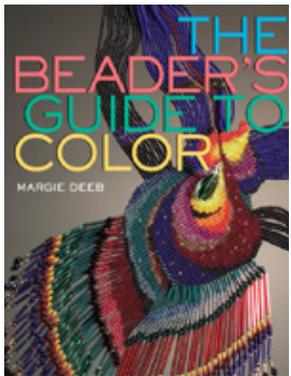
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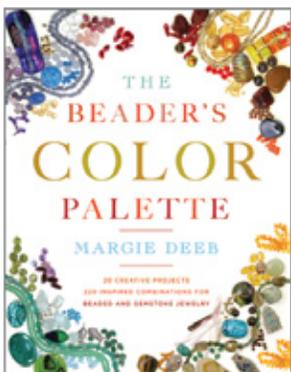
Includes loom building instructions, finishing split loom necklace instructions, and peyote, brick, and looming instructions. (Paperback, 44 pages)

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The only book of its kind written specifically for bead artists, *The Beader's Guide to Color* teaches bead artists of all levels everything they need to know about color to create unique and vibrant beadwork designs. Margie discusses psychological and symbolic color associations, and ways in which color can be used to create and accentuate pattern, rhythm, and movement. 21 color schemes are described and illustrated in detail with accompanying projects for all skill levels. (Paperback, 144 pages)

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The Beader's Color Palette: 20 Creative Projects and 220 Inspired Combinations for Beaded and Gemstone Jewelry opens the door to worlds of color inspiration. Gather colors from around the planet to create stunning color schemes for beaded creations. Gorgeous beaded jewelry illustrating 220 specific palettes for glass and gemstone beads make *The Beader's Color Palette* a coffee table book of inspiration for color lovers working in every medium. Includes detailed instructions for stringing, finishing, looming, and off-loom stitches. (Paperback, 192 pages)

\$24.95 US Dollars

Artist, designer, musician, and color expert

Margie Deeb is the author of several beading books, including the popular *The Beader's Guide to Color* and *The Beader's Color Palette* (Watson-Guptill, 2008).



photo by Marcia Abrams

She teaches color courses for artists, interior designers, and bead artists and her free monthly color column, "Margie's Muse," is available on her website. She produces a free graphically enhanced podcast, "Margie Deeb's Color Celebration," available on iTunes.

Her articles have appeared in *Bead & Button* and *Beadwork* magazines, and she writes a regular color column in *Step-by-Step Beads*. Visit Margie's website for her books, patterns, jewelry, inspiration, and more:

www.MargieDeeb.com

Also available at MargieDeeb.com:

- Exquisite **seed bead patterns** in peyote, brick, square stitch, and loom available as downloadable PDFs or hardcopies
- **CMY Color Wheels** (the ones that Margie uses for herself and in her classes)
- **Accessories** for beading, such as tapestry rods, and unusual findings
- **Gallery of extraordinary bead art**
- Information about **classes/events**
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