

Shoot for the Moon

Monthly news and tips from
Landscape Photographer
Gill Moon

August 2020 Vol 8 - Colour

Hello

and welcome to the August edition of 'Shoot for the Moon'

With summer marching onwards and the local heaths in Suffolk about to be transformed beneath a carpet of mauve heather I thought I would explore our use of colour in landscape photography. It is often not something you can plan for but how you use colour in your images can have a huge part to play in the mood and feel of your pictures.

I hope you will find issue 8 interesting and informative. I am always keen to receive feedback so please get in touch if you have anything you would like to share.

Remember to aim high, be inspired and shoot for the moon! Thank you and happy photographing

Gill

If you would like to get in touch please email me at gill@gillmoon.com

Working with colour



Sunrise over the common at Hollelsey.

This month's 'Shoot for the Moon' is all about working with colour in landscape photography and how our choices can make a huge difference to the feel and mood of an image, often as a result of the colours in the landscape.

I will begin with the colour wheel and a little basic 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

Secondary colours then combine to make **tertiary colours**. This is illustrated in the colour wheel.



So how does this affect our photography?

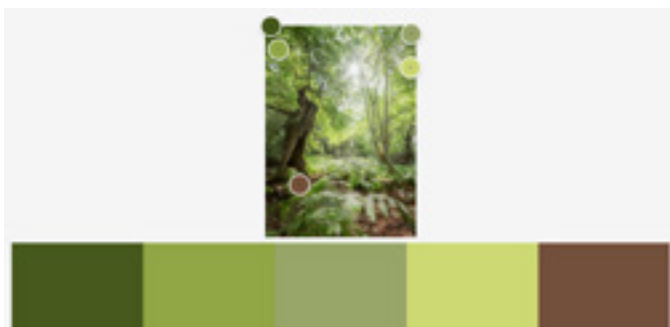
Colour combinations and mood

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

Take this image taken at Staverton Thicks.



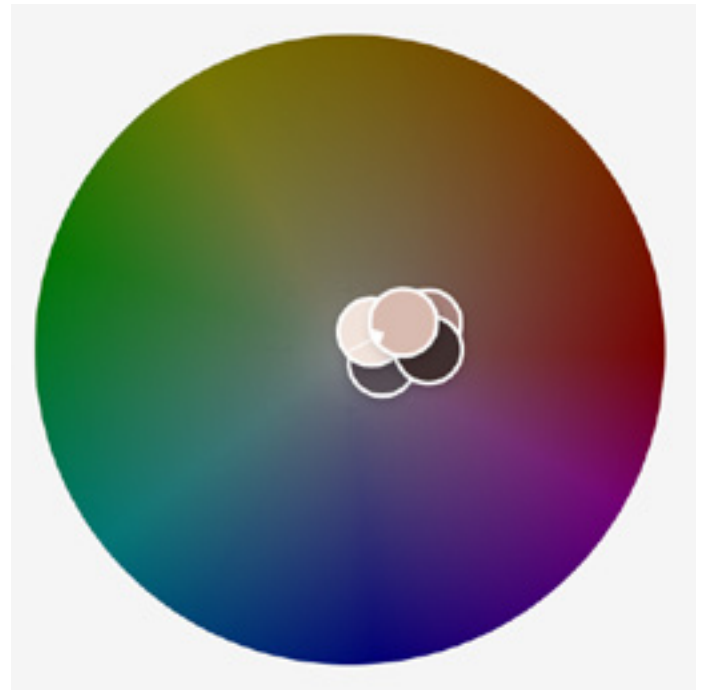
It is made up of a range of similar tones from dark green to brown. These colours all sit side by side on the colour wheel and are known as **Analogous or Harmonious colours**. They create an image which is pleasing to the eye and is calming and restful.



In contrast this image taken at Saxtead Mill has two principle colours, blue and yellow / orange.



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.



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.

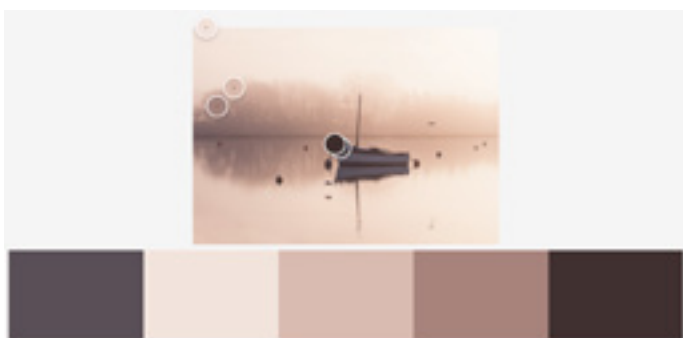
Monochromatic images such as this shot of the River Deben use variations in lightness and saturation of a single colour.



Where you have an element that is distracting in this way you can try to remove it by recomposing your image. If this doesn't work you can tone down the visual significance of an element in post processing by desaturating it, darkening it or change the tone to blend better with the rest of the image.

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.

The images above were all analysed in Adobe Colour which will let you see the main colour combinations in a particular shot. [www. color.adobe.com](http://www.color.adobe.com)



Finding colour in the landscape

Colour is a really important part of landscape photography and its use can contribute greatly to the mood of an image.

Working at sunrise and sunset

The golden hours at either end of the day will often give the best opportunities for colourful landscape shots.

Light has a slightly different temperature in the morning to the evening - sunrise tends to be cooler and sunset a bit warmer.

My advice when shooting for either is to:

1. Shoot in RAW - this will allow you to capture the most information in your digital file and will allow you the greatest freedom when it comes to post processing.
2. If shooting in RAW set your white balance to automatic. If shooting in JPEG you may want to choose a cloudy white balance to warm your image a little.
3. Use a ND graduated filter to balance the exposure of the sky with that of the land which is usually much darker.
4. Pick a good composition. Colour will often draw the eye and make an image appear really striking but on its own its not a good substitute for poor composition. A vibrant sunset and stunning sky still needs a foreground to anchor the composition and to give the image some context.



This image of Westleton Heath was shot at sunrise. It has a cool and tranquil feel to it enhanced by the cool colour pallet and the mist in the valley.

I have built my composition around the blocks of colour in the foreground. The neutral colours of the grasses form a lovely diagonal line between the mauve blocks of heather leading in from the bottom right of the frame. There is no real foreground object to this image just the blocks of colour.

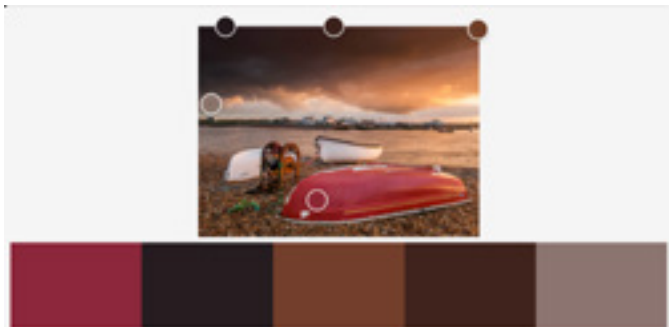
This next image was also taken at Westleton Heath but this time at sunset.



This shot has a much warmer feel to it. The colours in the sky were enhanced by the setting sun and a passing thunder storm which adds to the drama of the image. The land has also absorbed some of the warmer light giving it a range of warmer tones.

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.



Create a focal point with colour

Sometimes it is possible to construct the entire composition around an area of colour. In this image below taken on the banks of the River Deben at Ramsholt I was drawn to the bright green tree sitting in a sea of neutral tones.



I used a 70-300mm lens and zoomed in tightly on the tree to obscure the bright blue sky which would have changed the look and feel of the image and drawn the viewers attention away from the tree.

Similarly in the next picture the image is made up of a range of blue and grey tones with the red bow of the ship adding a striking contrast to the rest of the image.

These contrasts of colour can be found in many natural and man made settings and can add real impact to your images. When using this technique try to simplify your composition and work with colour and shape.



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.

Consider the light

When thinking about colour in your images think about the quality of light when you are shooting.

A dull day with no shadows will produce deeper colours. A bright day with haze and harsh shadows will tend to bleach out colours although this will depend upon the direction of the light. Colours will appear more prominent if the sun is behind you. If you shoot into the sun the colours will appear less saturated and less vibrant.



Use a polariser

A polariser is a filter which changes the way the light travels to the camera's sensor. They are usually circular and screw onto the front of the lens. They are invaluable for darkening and adding contrast to skies, particularly when clouds are present. They also remove glare from foliage and water and enhance colours. They are great for using in general landscape photography as well as in woodlands particularly when dealing with wet vegetation.

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.

Post Processing

There are several ways to adjust the colours of your image in post processing and if done subtly these can really add to the mood and feel of your image.

White balance.

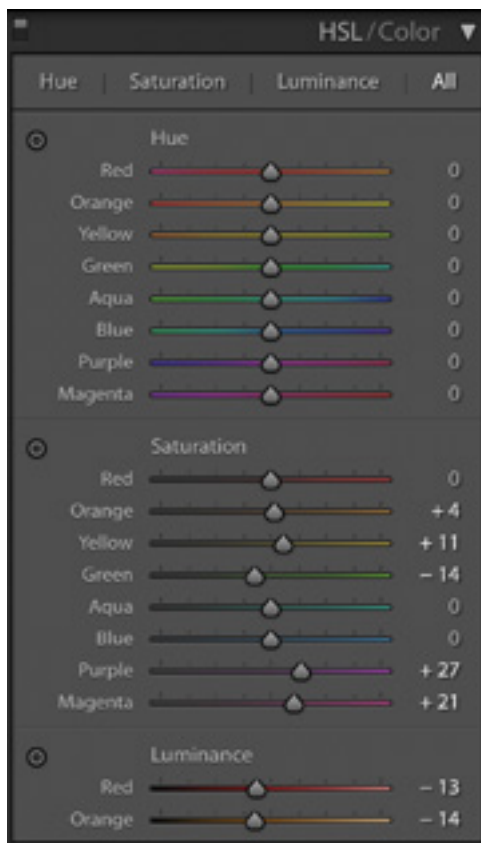
I almost always shoot in auto white balance.

This usually renders the scene as close to reality as is necessary and any additional tweaks can be made in post processing.

If shooting a sunrise or sunset I may warm the image slightly by adjusting the temperature slider in Lightroom. It is also possible to adjust the tint but I don't usually pay around with this too much.

Colour adjustment in Lightroom.

Colour adjustment in Lightroom is fairly intuitive. It is undertaken with a series of sliders within the develop module. These can be found under the HSL/colour. Within this panel it is possible to adjust and fine tune the hue, saturation and luminance of 8 separate colours.



Using these sliders I can change the hue of an image which will let me replace a particular tone with another adjacent tone on the colour wheel. The two images below give an exaggerated example of this.



This image shows the original tones as captured in camera.



This image shows the orange tones at +75 which has introduced a much more yellow feel to the sunset.

These colours can be adjusted more precisely by clicking on the circular icon in the top left of the hue pallet.



Select this then click on the colour in your image that you want to adjust. Hold the mouse button down and move the mouse upwards to

increase the tones and down to decrease. This will adjust the exact tone that you have clicked on so may move more than one colour slider in the adjustment panel.

The same process can be applied for saturation and luminance. The first image below has the saturation increased on the yellows and greens and the second image has it reduced. The changes are subtle but really affect the feel of the image.



Split toning

Split toning is a way of adding a separate colour tint to shadows and highlights.

Sometime you will find that the tones in your image just don't feel quite right and you need to balance them slightly to achieve a more harmonious feel to your image.

Split toning should be applied really subtly but if used well it can help add to the mood of your image.

The image below shows the original tones in my image.



I am not very keen on the yellow effect of the grass and the tones which run across the sky. The image has a rather cool effect in places.

The next image shows the effect of split toning. I have warmed up the highlights by choosing a red / yellow and cooled down the shadows by selecting a blue. The effect is very subtle but I think that it gives the image a much more pleasing feel.



Inspiration

Charlie Waite

Charlie is the man behind the UK Landscape Photographer of the Year competition which he launched in 2007. He is an internationally renowned landscape photographer and has produced a portfolio of stunning images, many of which are all about colour, shape and form.

www.charliewaite.com

Sue Bishop

Sue Bishop specialises in flower and landscape photography. Her aim is to create an image that goes beyond a mere record of its subject and becomes something more, and her compositions are a celebration of colour, light and shape.

www.suebishop.co.uk

August's colour challenge

Take a series of images that depict the following:

1. Analogous or Harmonious colours which are colours next to each other on the colour wheel.
2. Complimentary colours which are colours opposite each other on the colour wheel.
3. Monochromatic colour using variations in lightness and saturation of a single colour.

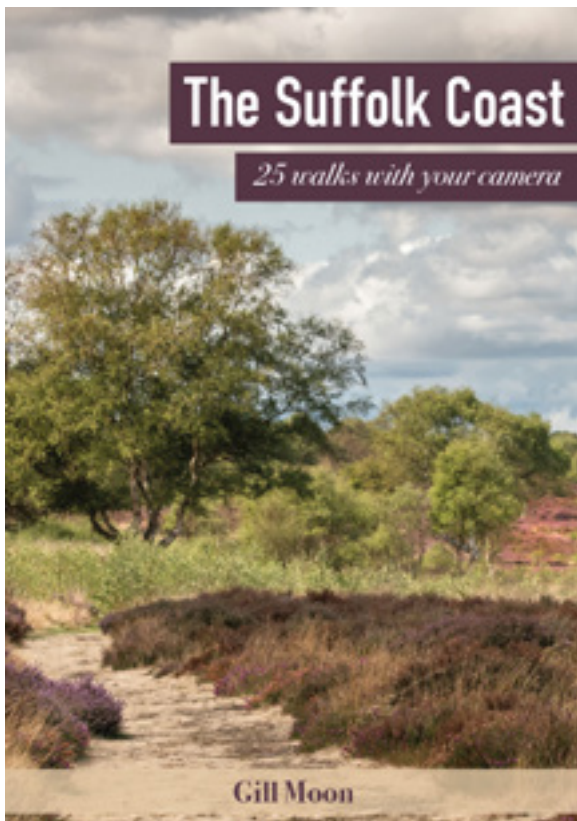
4. An image that is all about blocks of colour depicting shape and form. Use some of the images in Charlie Waites New Images Gallery as your inspiration

www.charliewaite.com/gallery/show/category/new-photography

I am really happy to offer feedback and would love to see your images so please get in touch gill@gillmoon.com



Walking with your camera



Route Directions

1. From the car park walk on the...
2. Head back to the car park...
3. Head to the car park...
4. Head to the car park...
5. Head to the car park...
6. Head to the car park...
7. Head to the car park...
8. Head to the car park...
9. Head to the car park...
10. Head to the car park...

Photo Points

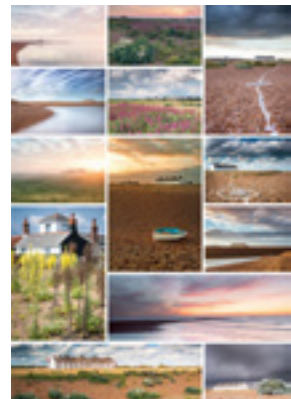
1. Head to the car park...
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The Walk

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Photo Scavenger Hunt

1. Find a...
2. Find a...
3. Find a...
4. Find a...
5. Find a...
6. Find a...
7. Find a...
8. Find a...
9. Find a...
10. Find a...



My new book “The Suffolk Coast, 25 walks with your camera” is out this week.

The project which comprises the book and a series of free photography walks around the Suffolk Coast has been undertaken with funding from the Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) via their Sustainable Development Fund and Amenity & Accessibility Fund. It is hoped that the walks will take place from July in small groups of 5 to comply with current social distancing guidelines.

The walking book consists of 25 walks ranging in length from 2 to 6 miles and cover some of the most beautiful parts of the Suffolk Coast. Each walk comes with route directions, a map, route notes, local information and a photography scavenger hunt for each location. The walks can be undertaken with any camera from a phone camera to a DSLR and are all about observation and connecting with your surroundings.

Orders are now available from my website
www.gillmoon.com/product/the-suffolk-coast-25-walks-with-your-camera

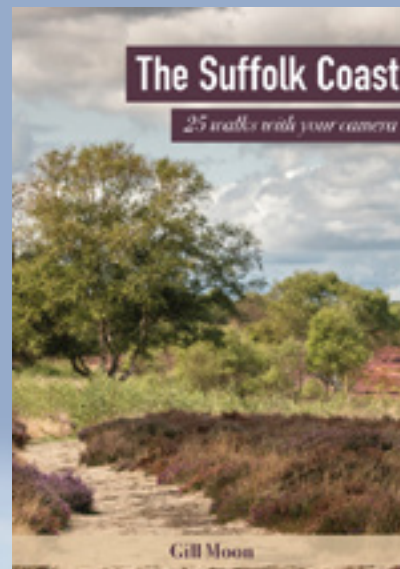
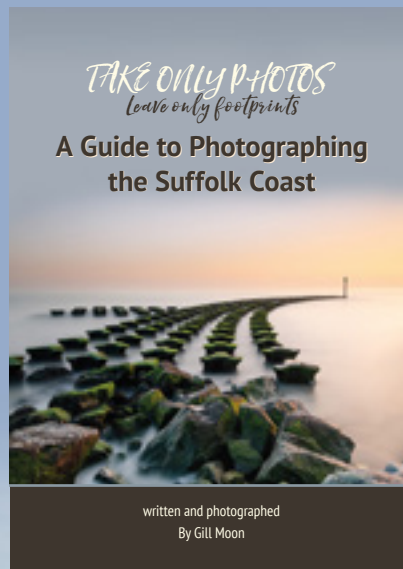
For more information about the Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) please see their website www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org

Suffolk Guides

from Gill Moon Photography

£8

Pre order £6



These Guides have been produced with funding from the Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) via their Sustainable Development Fund and Amenity & Accessibility Fund



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