

When glazing, it helps to know which colors are transparent and which are opaque. Whether a particular color is transparent or opaque has to do simply with its inherent chemical makeup. An opaque color will offer more coverage than a transparent one; that much is obvious. But it is important to remember that opacity and transparency have nothing to do with color saturation/intensity or color permanence. Both groups contain fugitive colors as well as powerful ones (red can fade quickly in UV light; blue used in even small quantities will turn the mixture strongly blue). This list is provided to help you determine which colors are best used for underpainting, which are best for glazing right out of the tube, and which may require the use of a glazing medium.

Opaque Oil Colors

Whites

lead white
titanium white

Yellows

cadmium yellow (all tones)
Naples yellow
yellow ochre
jaune brilliant
nickel titanate yellow

Reds and Oranges

cadmium red (light and dark)
cadmium orange
English red
Mars red
Venetian red
terra rosa
vermillion

Greens

chromium green oxide
permanent green
cadmium green

Browns

burnt umber
raw umber
Pozzuoli earth

Transparent Oil Colors

Whites

zinc white
transparent white

Yellows

aureolin (cobalt yellow)
Indian yellow
transparent gold ochre
transparent oxide yellow
stil de grain jaune

Reds and Oranges

alizarin crimson
rose madder (light and dark)
ultramarine red
quinacridone red
quinacridone burnt orange
transparent red oxide
naphthol scarlet
anthraquinoid red
perinone orange

Greens

viridian
phthalo green
phthalo turquoise
green gold
terre verte

Browns

burnt sienna
raw sienna
brown madder alizarin
transparent brown
stil de grain brun

Blues

cerulean blue

Blues

ultramarine blue
cobalt blue
phthalo blue
manganese blue
indanthrone blue
indigo

Violets

cadmium purple
Mars violet
caput mortuum violet

Violets

cobalt violet
manganese violet
carbazole violet
quinacridone violet
rose dore'
dioxazine purple

Blacks and Neutrals

lamp black
peach black
Mars black

Blacks and Neutrals

ivory black
Davy's gray
Paynes gray