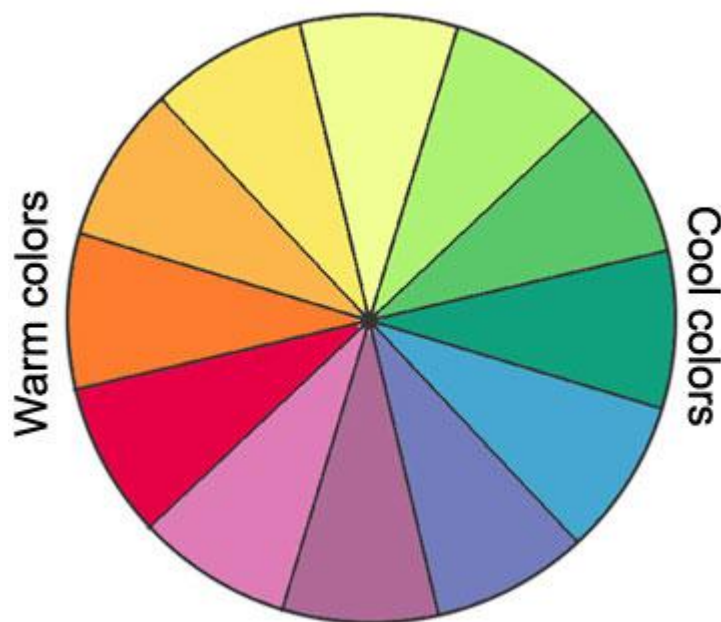# The Color Wheel:

Let's start with the color wheel and "cool" and "warm colors":

The left side of the wheel is has "warm colors and the right side "cool colors"- Why are they warm and cool? what makes them warm or cool?
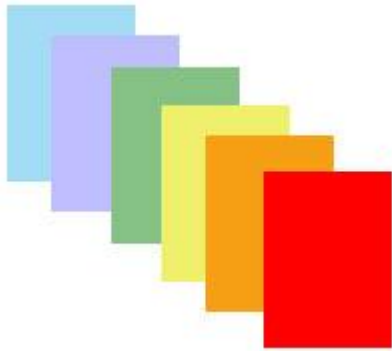
The answer is psychological association.

We associate reds and oranges and yellows with fire, flames and the sun - these give off warmth.

We associate blues and greens with ice, snow, sky and grass - these are cool things.

This very simple explanation will do for this FREE Art Lesson on color theory and color phase.

Color Phase:

Without getting into the scientific explanations of "color temperature" and "color temperature" and the complexities of "warm cool colors and "cool warm colors" which will be addressed in the full paid Art Lessons.

The concept of color phasing is that in nature - the further away from the viewer of a scene objects get, they get cooler and lighter and have less contrast. The opposite is true incrementally: the closer to the viewer's eye any object in a scene is, the warmer in color, stronger in contrast an richer in color they become.

How does this apply to a painting? Like this:

In the painting above, see how the hills become cooler (bluer) and lighter as they get further away from our eye. Also notice that the foreground is more detailed and has greater contrast (between light and dark colors in say the trees). All of this helps enhance the reality and depth of the painting.

**Back to color phasing (and "atmospheric perspective"):**

Here I have superimposed the color phase chips over the landscape. To use color phasing optimally, let's add a couple of buildings to the painting:
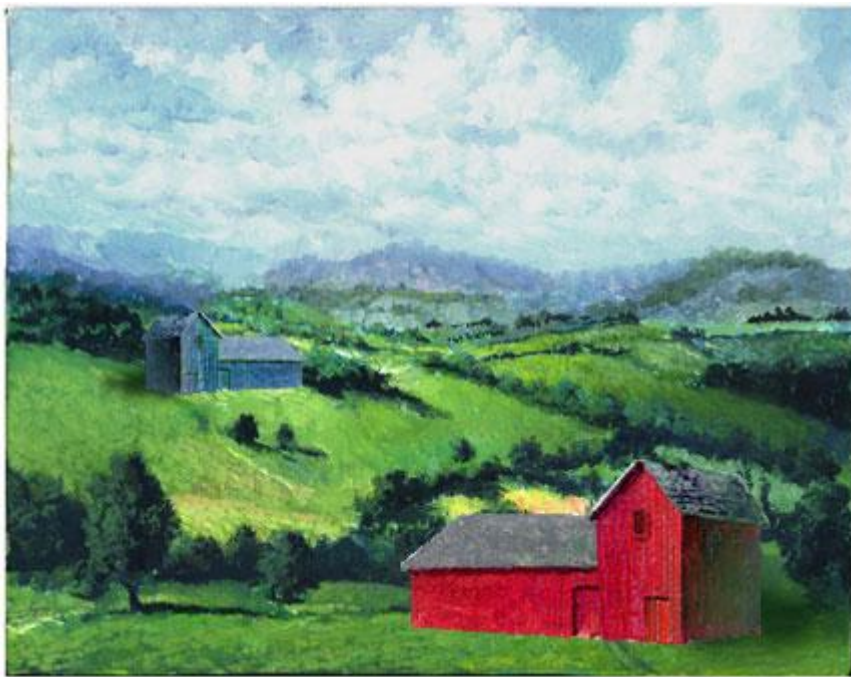
I placed a RED building in the foreground BECAUSE of color phasing. Since RED is a WARM and ADVANCING color, the red building placed in the foreground and the blue one towards the back REINFORCES the depth and apparent drama and reality of the landscape.

What happens if we do the opposite? It looks less real.
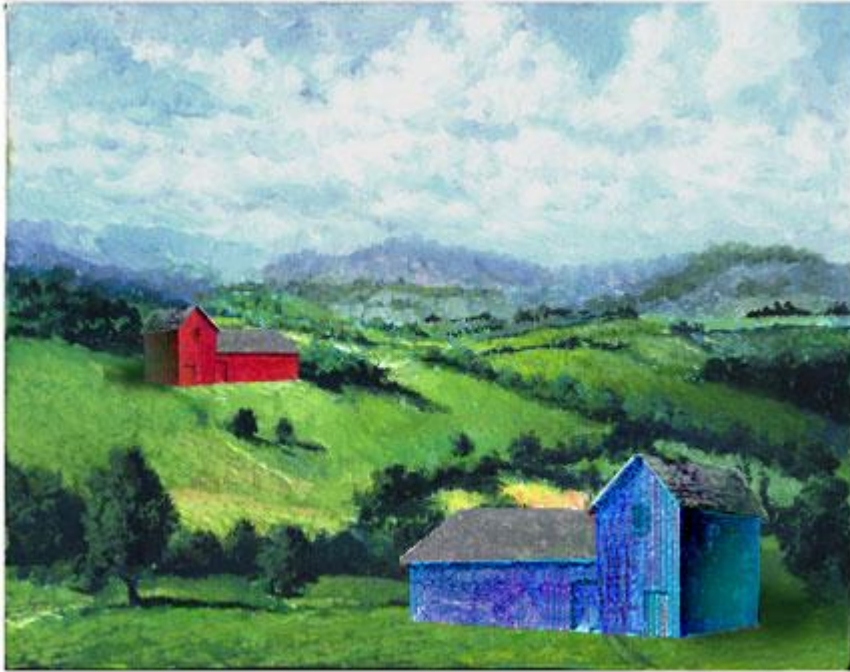
Can you have blue things in the foreground and red in the distance - yes, but that takes more subtle and skillful painting and experience. The foreground blue would have to be "warmer" and the distant red "cooler".