

# Color Your Doll Beautiful

By Lauren Vlcek



*Lauren Vlcek created her Angel as a child in a daydream, holding a basket of fairies conceived by her imagination. The purple color scheme enhances the dreamlike quality of the presentation.*

Photos by Gerry Raymond

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Color expresses fantasy, attracts attention, recalls another time or wields its power in infinite other ways. Color produces visual and emotional responses so complex one could spend a lifetime studying color and color theory. Color is a vital key in communicating.

Human beings respond to color in three ways: visually, emotionally, and culturally. The most obvious response

to color is visual or what we actually see. Different wavelengths of energy are transmitted to the eye, which sends information to the brain telling us the colors we see.

Complicating matters, not all of the visual signals that leave the eye go to the visual center of the brain. About a quarter of the signals go to glandular centers, resulting in a physical and emotional response. For example, the

color red actually raises our blood pressure.

We also respond to colors based on our cultural background as well as preconceptions that we have developed. Indian mystics believe that the color green represents harmony. In Chinese culture white is associated with mourning.

# Applying Color Theory to Dollmaking

As dollmakers we should have a basic understanding of color so that we can apply it to our artistry. We can manipulate color in our dollmaking to create an enticing and irresistible work of art. We can use color to enhance depth, express emotion, and even symbolize abstract concepts or cultural meanings.

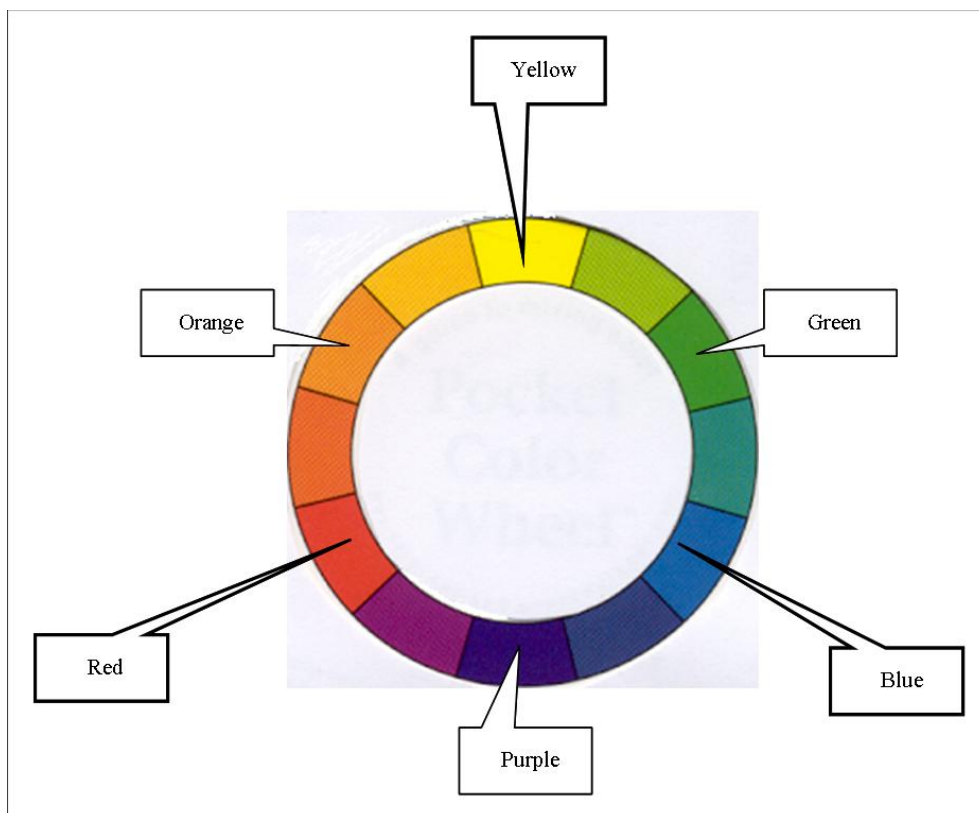
Careful use of color helps to make a doll more interesting and thought provoking. Having a general knowledge of color allows the artist to use it most effectively. An important graphic tool for creating color combinations and understanding the relationship of one color to another, is the "color wheel", which is a circular arrangement of colors. The primary colors of red, blue and yellow are mixed with each other in varying proportions to form the secondary colors of purple, green and orange and all the other colors between.

A color wheel is a wonderful tool to keep in your dollmaking toolbox. You can easily identify harmonious colors to help you achieve a peaceful, calm effect with greater depth. On the other hand, maybe you are striving for sharp contrast to create drama. In any case, you can purchase an artist's color wheel at most any art or craft store that carries artist's supplies. This is an inexpensive tool with an amazing amount of information.

A monochromatic color scheme, the use of only one color in varying shades and intensities, can be very effective. An analogous color scheme, a combination of colors that are next to each other on the color wheel, is one of the most harmonious. A combination of analogous colors that span only one quarter of the color wheel insures harmony. The combination is more adventurous if the colors span a larger portion

of the wheel. Complementary colors, which are directly across the wheel from each other, can also make a pleasing and striking combination.

Begin to think about your use of color long before you get to the costuming of your doll. What an incredible opportunity we as dollmakers have in the abundant selection of colors and combinations provided by Seeley's china paint! If you find color selection intimidating grab one of the china paint collections specially formulated by experts to give you a palette of cool colors (Baby Collection) or warm colors (European Collection). This is a perfect place to start. I painted my *Angel* in the cool hues of the Baby Collection.



For a fun challenge, paint the iris of your doll's eyes using paints from the Decorator Line of china paints. These paints are terrific for eyes because of the high-energy gloss finish. *Angel* has eyes painted in lavender and purple hues from the Decorator Line. This is a somewhat daring application because these colors are not commonly found in human eyes.

Seeley's Dimensional Doll Painting Eye Painting Kit has complete instructions for painting eyes and includes single-use packets of the twenty-four china paint colors you need for painting blue, green, brown, hazel, gray, violet and teal eyes.

Where do you start when applying color theory to a specific doll project? Begin by deciding what you want your doll to express. You can even make a list of attributes, then select the appropriate colors to project your concept.

For example, *Angel* depicts a child in a daydream, surrounded by fairies conceived by her imagination. Purple,

the dominant color in the palette, is a glorious yet complex color that can have many meanings from contemplative to regal. It is a blend of the excitement of red and the tranquility of blue, a perfect combination to reflect *Angel's* daydream in her eyes. The monochromatic concept is extended with the use of purple in the *Tiny Fairies* cast in Lilac Haze porcelain slip and in the doll's costume, blurring reality with imagination. To give the presentation some complexity and interest, greens, browns, reds, and a tiny sprinkling of gold are added to the color scheme.

The human eye is always stimulated by novelty; unique or new color combinations hold our attention. Iridescent and metallic finishes are especially arresting, as the eye is fascinated by multicolored effects. The iris is painted in a range of red based

purples and blue based purples to offer the perception of greater depth. Amethyst Glitter from the Glitter Collection of china paints can be blended in the lightest area of the iris to give the eyes an iridescent quality. For a really fun effect, try using Gold Dust instead of the more traditional white for the highlight dot in the eye.

Have some fun exploring the meanings of different colors and use them to express your artistic concepts in your dollmaking. Even if you are the only one who knows what messages are hidden deep in the color selection of your doll's eyes, hats, costumes, etc. your dolls will hold a deeper, richer meaning for you – the artist!

*To give the monochromatic purple presentation some complexity and interest, greens, browns, reds and a tiny sprinkling of gold are added to the color scheme.*



# Painting Angel



← Lauren painted most of Angel's features with the cool toned china paints of the Baby Collection Kit because the colors coordinate well with the purple palette used for the overall presentation. In keeping with the color scheme the lavender eyes are painted with a combination of Royal Blue, French Lilac and Purple Plum.

Cast the mold in Seeley's Lady White slip. Soft fire greenware to cone 018. Clean soft-fired ware in the Dust Free Cleaning Technique and bisque fire.

Mix all china paints with Ultra Fine Line Medium. All china paint firings are to cone 018.

ion Brush into the powder on top of the sponge then blot excess powder onto a Lint Free Towel. Stipple powder around the crevices of the nose and the upper eyelid. Over blend the color smooth with a Small Contour Shader.

## *Blushing*

Use a Small Complexion Brush and Dark Cherry in dry powder form to paint the cheeks in the same method used for the contour shading. You will need a separate jar for each color of dry paint used in this method. Stipple the paint in widening circles, beginning at the fullest part of the cheek. Finish polishing with a Large China Mop to dust away any dry paint particles and achieve a smooth even look. If you are using a porcelain body blush the hands, feet, knees and chest in the same manner.

## **Second Firing**

### *Underbrow*

Mix Mahogany to a creamy consistency. Use a Best Brow Brush to apply a stroke of paint on the brow bone. Blot with a Super Doll Sponge and over blend with a Mini Contour Shader.

### *Contour Shading*

Mix Lavender Mist to a creamy consistency. Use a Multipurpose Blender/12 to apply Line Medium to the areas to be shaded. Use a Modern Liner to apply paint to the lower eyelid, the crease of the upper eyelid, the crevices around the nose, mouth, ears, hands, feet and any other areas you wish to shade and contour. Use a Small Filbert to blend the paint into the deepest part of the recessed areas so that you can not tell where the color begins or ends. Don't get the color too heavy. You only want to enhance the shadows of the face.

## **First Firing**

### *Overall Tint*

Mix 4 parts Dark Cherry and 1 part Gloss Flux to a runny consistency. Apply tint mixture to the head and porcelain body parts with a Multipurpose Blender/12. Blot excess paint with a Lint Free Towel. Blend color smooth with a pouncing motion of a Large Complexion Brush. Over blend with a Large China Mop for a flawless finish.

### *Contour Shading*

Pour some dry powder Lavender Mist into the Blushing Jar found in the Baby Collection Kit. Turn the sponge over several times to evenly distribute powder. Dip a Mini Complex-

# Painting Angel, cont.

## *Iris*

Mix French Lilac to a slightly thicker consistency. Use a Modern Lip Brush to paint a light colored iris that is slightly off center to give the doll a side glancing expression. The iris should be a perfect circle with the upper eyelid obscuring the top of the circle. Over blend with a Mini Contour Shader for a smooth finish. Use a slightly dampened Clean Up Brush to remove a small amount of paint from the lower 1/3 of the iris. This represents reflected light in the iris area. Use a Small Filbert to blend the edges of the color in the lightened area.

## *Lips*

Mix Petal Pink to a creamy consistency. Fully load a Modern Lip Brush and apply the paint in smooth, even strokes. Blend paint smooth with a Mini Contour Shader. Use a dampened Clean Up Brush to make any correction to the shape of the lips.

## *Blushing*

Mix Dark Cherry to a thick consistency. Use a Multipurpose Blender/12 to condition the cheek area with a pale sheen of Line Medium. The medium on the cheeks should look satiny, not shiny. Apply the paint to the fullest part of the cheek with a Small China Mop. Blend color smooth with a Small Complexion Brush. Use a pouncing motion and be careful not to push the color beyond the apple of the cheek. Finish blending with a Large China Mop.

## **Third Firing**

### *Iris*

Mix equal parts Royal Blue and Purple Plum to a creamy consistency. Use a Modern Lip brush to apply another coat of paint on top of the first iris. Use a dampened Clean Up Brush to remove paint from the lower third of the iris. Use a Mini Contour brush to blend the edges of the paint inside the iris.

### *Eyebrows*

Mix Eyebrow #4, Dark Brown, to a light consistency. Use an Ultra Lash Brush to paint light feathery strokes on top of the underbrow. If the paint does not flow well condition the brush by pulling it through a puddle of Line Medium before loading with paint. Vary the length, spacing and slant of the strokes for a more realistic look.

### *Eyelashes*

Mix Eyelash Brown to a fluid (but not watery) consistency. Use an Ultra Lash Brush to apply the eyelashes. Paint natural looking strokes with the length and placement a little uneven. Use a dampened Clean Up Brush to remove any paint from the lower eyelid ridge.

### *Lips*

Deepen the Petal Pink mixture with Dark Cherry. Use a Modern Lip Brush to apply paint in the recessed areas of the lips that you want to shade. Do not shade any areas that you want to appear fuller. Blend with a Small Filbert.

### *Blushing*

Deepen the color in the center of the cheek and any other body parts as needed.

### *Nostrils*

Mix equal parts Petal Pink and Eyelash Brown to a slightly thick consistency. Apply color to the deepest part of the nostrils with a Petite Lip Brush and blend to a soft shadow with a Small Filbert.

## **Fourth Firing**

### *Eyebrows*

Mix Mahogany to a light consistency. Paint light feathery strokes as in previous firing. This color variation will give your doll a natural look.

### *Iris*

Mix a few grains of Onyx Black into the iris mixture from the third firing. Side load an Angular Shader and apply the paint to the uppermost portion of the iris. If necessary, blend with a Mini Contour Brush. Use an Ultra Lash Brush to paint an outline around the rim of the iris.

### *Pupil*

Mix Onyx Black to a thick consistency. Use the small end of a Double Ball Stylus to apply a dot of paint to the center of the iris. In a circular motion, extend the paint until you have reached the desired size of the pupil.

### *Contour Shading*

Mix equal parts Shading Gray and Eyelash Brown to a light consistency. Deepen contour shading as needed. Be sure to contain this application within the previous shading.

## **Fifth Firing**

### *Underbrow*

Darken the previously painted underbrow with the Mahogany mixture.

### *Iris*

Add a few more grains of Onyx Black to the iris mixture. Paint around the rim of the iris and deepen the upper part of the iris again to achieve a well-shaded look.

### *Highlights*

Mix Gloss Rochard Paste to a very thick consistency. Load the small tip of a Double Ball Stylus and make a crisp dot at 2 o'clock between the pupil and the iris. Make a slightly smaller dot at 7 o'clock between the pupil and the iris. Repeat for the other eye.

### *Lips*

Intensify and deepen color where needed with Dark Cherry.

# Materials and Credit

## MOLDS

**S873** Angel head mold  
**ALB9873** Angel body mold set  
**S871** Tiny Fairies head mold (both heads in one mold)  
**ALB9871** Tiny Fairies body mold set

Optional body for Angel: Modern composition body  
**MB140S**

Doll Size: Angel 18" (46cm)  
Tiny Fairies 6" (15cm)  
Head Circ.: Angel 10 1/4" (26cm)  
Eye Size: Angel 16mm, Tiny Fairies 2mm  
Wig: **MOWIG7** Classic Brown Mohair Locks

Suggested patterns for Angel (not shown on doll):  
**CP931** High waisted summer dress and underwear  
**CP2301** Dress and pinafore

Porcelain Slip: Seeley's **Lady White** for Angel,  
**Lilac Haze** for Tiny Fairies

## CHINA PAINTS AND MEDIA

Baby Collection China Paint Kit:

Petal Pink  
Dark Cherry  
Eyelash Brown  
Mahogany  
Shading Gray  
Lavender Mist

Eyebrow #4  
Gloss Rochard Paste

French Lilac  
Purple Plum  
Royal Blue  
Onyx Black  
Ultra Fine Line Medium  
Line Medium

## BRUSHES AND TOOLS

Large Complexion Brush  
Small Complexion Brush  
Mini Complexion Brush  
Large China Mop  
Small China Mop  
Multipurpose Blender/12  
Small Contour Shader  
Mini Contour Shader  
Best Brow Brush  
Ultra Lash Brush  
Petite Lip Brush  
Modern Liner  
Modern Lip Brush  
Small Filbert  
Clean Up Brush  
Angular Shader  
Lint Free Towel  
Super Doll Sponge  
Double Ball Stylus  
(2) Blushing Jars (One is included in Baby Collection Kit)

*All molds, porcelain slip, china paints and media, brushes, bodies and most other dollmaking supplies available from Seeley's.*

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*For information about Doll Artisan Guild seminars contact:*

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*The Tiny Fairies in Angel's basket were cast in Lilac Haze porcelain slip.*

