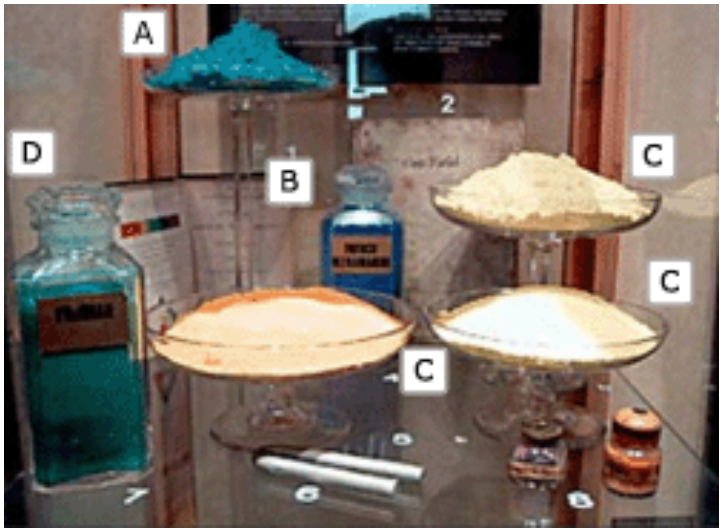
A Cerulean Blue - Cobalt Stannate, a permanent blue first introduced in 1821.
B French Ultramarine - First made in 1824 as a result of a competition sponsored to produce a synthetic ultramarine.
C Cadmium Yellows - Introduced at the 1851 Exhibition, they provide great opacity and permanence.
D Viridian - Hydrated chromium oxide. Introduced in 1859, it is both permanent and transparent.



A Alizarin Crimson - Introduced in 1868, it is more lightfast than Carmine.
B Cobalt Colours - First discovered in 1780, cobalt colors have formed a significant part of a painters' palettes ever since.
C USA Sample Case - Used by our USA representative in the 1880's, it shows a display of Winsor & Newton pigments.

The most rare and difficult colors to obtain became symbols of wealth and status. (Such as purple, which was harvested from mollusks/sea snails)

Coccus insects were used to create reddish dyes and continue to be used today, particularly in food and makeup

Shellac : Seedlac and shellac are used in varnishes, paints, printing inks, sealing wax, micanite compounds, and to coat pills, sweets, and chocolates. Also used in making vinyl records and to color Indian military uniforms. Still found in oriental carpet dyes today.

Indigo and Madder are plant based dyes. Madder is related to coffee and could create pink, orange, purple, and red shades. Indigo is used to achieve a deep blue (as in denim)

Flowers, fruits, bacteria, plants, and funguses were all used to create pigments.

There are about 10 pages of colors (including explanations) from a to z in a list of “Historic colors” on paintmaking.com

Renoir’s paint box and palette, Musée d’Orsay

Renoir’s palette consisted mainly of lead white, Naples yellow, chrome yellow, cobalt blue, French ultramarine, Alizarin Crimson (synthetic madder lake), viridian, emerald green, and vermilion.

Monet is said to have used cobalt blue, cerulean blue, French ultramarine, emerald green, and viridian in many of his works.

The Palette

Spurred on by an increasing demand for dyes to accommodate the growing industrial-scale production of textiles, the process of scientific research into colorants gathered momentum towards the close of the 18th century. As a result, the turn of the century saw the introduction of several new paints - pigments such as Mars reds (synthetic red ochre) chrome orange, and chrome yellow.

The 19th century - essentially the beginning of Modern Art - was a period of huge change for both oil painters and watercolorists. New colors and enhanced versions of established pigments popped up with regularity. Cobalt blue emerged in 1807, while viridian was introduced in 1838. Cadmium yellow appeared in 1820, cerulean Blue in 1860, to be followed by cheap synthetic French ultramarine, zinc white, and cobalt violet. Problems remained of course, notably in pigment toxicity as with emerald green. The main reason for the introduction of new oil and watercolor paints had nothing to do with art. Instead, it came about almost entirely as a result of the huge demand for textile dyes for clothing. Thus when a new pigment was discovered, or an old one synthesized, the first beneficiaries were usually textile manufacturers. Artist-quality versions of the pigments took longer to appear, as the demand for such specialist color products was less.