Colour realities and the effects on the human psyche..

Ritgerð til BA-prófs í myndlist

Ottó Ólafur Ottósson
Vorönn - 2016
Colour realities and the effects on the human psyche..

Ritgerð til BA-prófs í myndlist

Ottó Ólafur Ottósson

(Kt: 1611903309)
Leiðbenandi: Jón Proppé
Vorönn - 2016
Colour realities and the effects on the human psyche..

Lokaritgerð til BA gráðu – Myndlist
Abstract:

- Colour realities and the effects on the human psyche..

An artistic / philosophical (even scientific) research paper exploring the perceptual undertows and universal possibilities in human sensory influences. With focus on the visual stimulations that surround us in everyday life (in this case colour), explore now a realm you must first perceive in order to penetrate. With determined discrimination directed towards human existential / psychological awareness / conductivity, this paper passionately promotes primal progression. As a strong tool for me to translate my ideas / artistic being to the general public (as well as to alternative audience groups), the relevance of colour stimuli in my work is irreplaceable. It is my belief that this consideration for perception and state of mind is paramount in the meaning of arts logic / identity. All my focus and self development is wrapped up in each piece I create (whether written or other), one by one they build up my identity. Now presenting a written confession of the inner workings of my speculations / mentality, I hope for this document to be as honest as it is educational. Great forces are at work to disrupt and dominate our conscious states, let us work together to ensure our mental liberation / justification. Yes, this being the course this essay is directed, I will stay persistent and push forward.. Our journey awaits..
Essay Index:

Chapters:
- Introduction to a somewhat undefined ideology.. (pages: 5–8)
- Let’s meet the artist.. (pages: 8–10)
- Colour in effect.. (pages: 10–12)
- Understanding colour.. (pages: 12–14)
- Colour vs. light, theory & history examined.. (pages: 14–16)
- Psychological / Neurological conductivity.. (pages: 16–19)
- Application and progression.. (pages: 19–21)
- Subtle summation.. (page: 21)

Extra material:
- Source Index (page: 22)
- Additional Sources (page: 23)
- Photo Attachments (pages: 24–29)
Perception, reality and influence. Dominant man attempting to understand these afflictions that dominate him so.. Questions with indeed only dreams of answers. This paper is about an artists hope in finding universal truth to existence - through the realm of colour. All in order to understand and battle the dangers of perceptual suggestions (with the possibility of even swaying them to my benefit), the promise of progress is primal. Now allowing myself to review the influence channels enabling their power over us in our daily lives, the understanding or even realisation of our domain and our part in it - is of the highest priority. Conclusions must be hunted down and challenged for the greater good of our physical, psychological and even sociological evolution.. If our senses allow us to perceive our existence, then why can’t we use them to uncover it’s secrets / possibilities..?

In every moment, In every nuance of our reality, we are subjected to various forms of influence waves all being channeled through various forms of (in this case) visual exposures. Sensory inceptors overhauling our inbuilt judgement functions and impairing our conscious or even sub-conscious will. These waves manifest in any possible variation, silently targeting our senses and hacking into our individualised mental or even group understanding of life, ourselves and ultimately the universe..

Most potent of these visual inceptors, are the phenomena we call colours.. Stimulating to the core, colours are one of the most commonly influential constants in our conducted / corrupted reality..

Assuming we have a comprehensive understanding of our own existence and its diverse and stimulating realities, lies our most vulnerable weakness. Needing to accept that we are ignorantly un-able to help but charge our mental faculties with stimulations existent only to complicate or benefit our task of living (many manmade).. We need to realise that we are currently nothing more than sitting ducks. We exist as victims cast out into a sensory war-zone of afflictions. Afflictions up until now, man has only dreamt
of being able to grasp fully - and hopefully (optimistically) be able to evoke / utilise properly. Our weaknesses define us as a species and it is up to us to determine what they are. Coveted and cloaked, mankind has long since been aware of the possibilities in universal human sensory weaknesses and has already launched numerous campaigns against us (the general population) throughout our existence. All in order to incept individuals / societies with ideas and ideologies meant to contain, control and command us. Stimulated by the senses, we are merely (mortal) protagonist puppets on the strings of our own oh so easily penetrable and ponderous passions / pathologies.

Commandeered by those who would in-prison us using our own involuntary instincts, man is a malevolent menace. Most prominently active in any field that ensures some form of return (whether monetary or other), mans power struggle over his own species and habitat knows no bounds. The fleeting influences of colour are only yet another weapon in this everlasting siege. We’ve been targeted and we are constantly under incoming attack.. From man, from nature and from the breath of celestial light.

Undeniably being pushed further and further into a visually targeted age, where we can only imagine what is yet to come. We learn more and more about our functions and flexibilities with every passing year. Progressing to the point that man has even started to develop his sensory existence to fit his technological advancements, we are now changing forever our evolutionary patterns / destinations. Usage of these influences can / has also been deployed to manipulate and often at times blind us towards pushed process and hidden agendas - (i.e. conformity, superiority, domination and / or other).

Streaming into our lives through any conceivable channel of human day to day life and even identity. Manmade perceptional influences are constant existent entities in our continuity on this sensory subjected plain. Whether we accept and own up to that responsibility or not.. I believe that perceptional influences we bring upon ourselves, as well as existent circumstantial effects are tools we can use to harness our strength as a species and allow us to push forward to our maximum potential. As Oscar Wilde once romantically wrote: “We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars.” (1)

Potential is indeed the operative word here. We are precisely talking about a great and potent opportunity to challenge our weaknesses and subjected realities, freeing us up to take control and become something more than this our current form. We are faced with stimulations waiting to mold and sculpt us, to build us up or break us down, the choice is ours. I am only here reminding you all that the throughway channels are all around you and surely I mean everywhere.

The time has come for acknowledgement, awareness and aggressive strategy determination to counter-act and challenge these realities for the greater good of our joint evolitional mission. Beyond the realm of the visible, I firmly believe that there are many fields in our developmental development that need tending to. The persuasive reach of colour is either for us to grasp or ignore, to utilise our relations to, for our bountiful benefit or dedicated demise.

Infinite possibilities are waiting for us to evolve and in fact make them possible. Just bare in mind and remember that perceptual influence stimuli surround you and can either conspire with or against you. Are we really prepared to surrender to our own vulnerabilities?

Let's meet the artist.

As most artists / art-students, I must admit that I feel both challenged and completely consumed by the idea of describing my practice honestly and effectively. (Especially to somebody who may never have laid eyes upon my work / process before). Eager and constantly mutating, my life is a creative based construction site of chaotic consciousness. Not that it is to say “full blown artistic anarchy” mind you, but undeniably tiresome and in fact rather tedious. Irrationally I must insist however, that irregardless of its insidious intervention upon my indelicate identity, I wouldn’t have it any other way.

Always in search of opportunities to prove my worth / claims to my own existence and perceptions, this BA degree and the preparations leading up to it are just
another right of passage in this already exceptionally demanding field. Now reaching the end of my BA, I should hope that I’ve on some level tapped into the art of creative inception. Being able to impose my thoughts and / or even own ideology (to a degree) in the viewers / readers mind. Using visual / mental suggestions channeled through stimulating use of colours, effect and more. I am perpetually trying to practice my personal mantra, that the most promising tools an artist can possess are nothing more than presentation and of course perception.

With only my ambitions to fuel me, I put my artistry / creativity to the final test in this academic arena.. For years now and prior to this degree, I’ve been in pursuit of understanding my interests in the creative and (more importantly) visual world. In search of that force that pulls me forward and pushes me towards my goals / responsibilities in my craft. I am constantly re-examining our existence. Exhaustedly reaching only conclusions of which I alas find to be more of a continuous staircase rather than an achievable platform. One step ominously leading towards the next, perhaps I am naive in believing in my hopes of absolution (i.e. “ultimate truth”).. Maybe I'm only (childishly) chasing a falling star..

“Melancholy never suited anyone” - Ottó. (2)

In the newly passed semester, I dedicated my time and creative interests in pure visual investigations / propagation (* see Photo Attachment #1 - #2 - #3 ). Attempting to put together an array of visual stimulation / tolerance tests, as well as to find human research subjects for them. My recent / primary goals have been to “break down” (investigate) the centre points of the human visual / aesthetic experience and the psychological relations / receptions to them. Seeing how I personally can use perceptional methods and tools in my own work and displays, I am in the process of expanding my creative horizons in coordination with newly (personally) endorsed visual philosophies, in addition to continuously mutating realities. Whether it is to create a near to hypnotically soothing atmosphere or to introduce an intense stimulating “attack”, I am here to influence myself and others as best I can.

* : Photo Attachments #1 - #2 - #3: on pages 24-25
Being rather sensitive to lights, colours and contrasts (with a keene eye for compositions), I can’t help but to ponder the possibilities in utilising these sensory / mental stimuli to ones full advantage. The applications appear endless, from influence in every day life to the direct “weaponisation” of these realities in art and society. It is almost humorous to think how no one never stops to contemplate the looming possibility / ethical issues surrounding such “mundane” influences as colour. After all, when an excel knowledge is reached, who knows what is possible..?

Perhaps even a reflection on my own existent visual afflictions and personal internal responses, this paper is above all a study of man. My highest hope is to on some level be able to discover new ways to hack the individual human or even group interactional behavioural mentalities / patterns, to inspire at my will. Beyond the introverted realm of my artistic / philosophical illusions (“delusions”), I find myself delivering a paper where you the reader may not comprehend my personalised rantings of the importance of visual stimuli (colours) and the influences of currently utilised mental exploitations.. So allow me to illuminate the situation..

**Colour in effect..**

There is no colour without light. It is impossible to differentiate between a red and blue object in a completely darkened room. Colour is channeled by light and is in fact, light in itself. What we perceive as the colour ‘red’ is nothing more than light of a particular wavelength / frequency, while ‘blue’ is light of another but similar one (wavelength / frequency). Light and colour are our, the human way of experiencing one part of what is known to us as the ‘electromagnetic spectrum’.

- **Electromagnetic spectrum / radiation:** All throughout our lives, we are constantly being abundantly bombarded by waves of electromagnetic energy; from the sun, stars and other terrestrial sources, we live by their glow.. But visible light is only one-sixtieth of the full spectrum and force of electromagnetic radiation. At one end of the spectrum we have what is referred to as micro-waves and radar-waves, followed by gamma-waves and infrared-waves. Along the way, we find our ‘visible spectrum’ (visible to us - light
vs. colours - “rainbow spectrum”). And to top it off, “the beyond”; ultraviolet-waves. (3)

But how do we physically distinguish colours / light? The colours in visible light are distinguished by the ‘retina’ at the rear of the eye. (‘Retina’: a sensory membrane that lines the eye inducting lights information). When the lights rays enter the eye, they must first travel through a transparent shield known as the ‘cornea’. After the cornea is penetrated the light is absorbed by a moist watery fluid known as the ‘aqueous humour’ where it is reluctantly released into the ‘lens’. The lights rays are focused by the lens onto the retina, where they stimulate two specialised receptor cells known as ‘rods’ and ‘cones’. Rods are extremely sensitive to light but not at all to colour. They distinguish between shades of grey, white and black, enabling us to perceive shapes in poor light. The receptors that distinguish between colours on the other hand, are known as ‘cones’. Cones come in three different variables, each holding a ‘pigment’ that absorbs one of the three different wavelengths of light. These wavelengths (that allow us to channel colour) are simply referred to as: ‘the long-wavelength’ (red / orange), ‘middle-wavelength’ (green) and ‘short-wavelength’ (blue / violet). (4)

When the cones and rods come into contact with light of the wavelength to which they are sensitive, the pigment breaks it down, commanding this process to send an impulse along the optic nerve, embarking there with a message on route to the brain. Upon reception, it is instantly interpreted and psychologically internalised for future reference / response.

If the light of multiple wavelengths enter the eye, more than one type of cone is stimulated. If your eyes land on a man in a pink shirt, the lights rays stimulate a mixture of cones sensitive to pink encoded waves. From there the signal relayed to the cones deliver a message interpreted by the brain as pink, whilst simultaneously decrypting the rest of the visual information. People who are colourblind have an abnormal number of cones sensitive to particular light frequencies, and as a result cannot see the same range of colours as other / most people do. (4)

But who is to say that such mutations can only be perceived as a handicap..? What is to stop us from evolving / mutating and becoming more sensitive to other fields / waves of the electromagnetic spectrum? Modern sight in itself is a mutation.

Over larger leaps of time we find ourselves faced with our own involuntary adjustment and evolvement to our given world / universe. New modalities of living, perceiving and being are inevitable. The question is, will we appreciate it when the time comes? Do we now? We may not be able to stop our mutations / evolutorial development (nor should we), but we can possibly direct the routes / destinations for which we are theoretically bound and acknowledge what they mean to our kind. Who knows what the future holds in store for us.. All that we can be certain of is, that if we prevail in existence, our senses triumph with us.

Understanding colour..

Broken down into three basic dimensions, colour is defined in the following layers / terminology; known colour variables and ‘Hue’ are the one and the same and can be referred to interchangeably. Red, yellow, and blue are what we call primary colours, various combinations of primary colours result in the class known as secondary colours; green, orange and violet. Tertiary colours are then a mixture of the secondary colours and so on, and so forth. The intensity or vibrancy of a colour is referred to as its ‘Saturation’ or ‘Chroma’, and of course the lightness or darkness of a colour is known as its ‘Value’. (‘Hue’ - ‘Saturation’ - ‘Value’). Hue is established by the dominant wavelength whilst the value is determined by the quantity of electromagnetic energy. Saturation however is determined by the intensity of the waves themselves. (4)

“.. We now assert, extraordinary as it may in some degree appear, that the eye sees no form, in as much as light, shade, and colour constitute that which to our vision distinguishes object from object, and the parts of objects from one another. From these three, - light, shade and colour, we construct the visual world” -Goethe (5).

But what is the visual world? What we know as the visual world is only accessible to us through mutations our cells manifested along the way to becoming who and what we are as modern human beings.

Conceived by Isaac Newton, the colour-wheel is an irreplaceably insightful graphic tool for observing / explaining the visible colour spectrum or ‘Hue’ (**see Attachment: #4**). As the name suggests the colour-wheel is a circular display arrangement of the primary, secondary and tertiary colour representatives. Visually illustrating “colour - temperatures” (warm vs. cool) as vital psychological components in delivering an individual colour’s information or message. The conception that colours are perceived as either warm or cool is commonly accepted and is inherited from traditional and universal / given connections. Red, orange and yellow are associated with the warmth of fire and power of the sun, whilst blue, green and violet connect continuously to cooler temperatures, - of the oceans / water, cool nature, the sky / nighttime and on to outer space. (3)

Some experts / theorists believe that human beings are encoded with an “ancient wisdom”. That throughout eons of our evolutionary journey stretching all the way back to the beginning of time itself, we have incased within us an associative memory concerning space, form, patterns and (in this case, most importantly) colours.

Visual data in the form of light energy is continuously reaching the retina and scanning information / images to the visual cortex of the brain. Jumping into action much like a computer assessing retinal information and relaying it back to our data storage (memory functions). It is regrettably somewhat difficult to nail down a clear distinction between the precise functions of the eye and the interpretations calculated by the conscious mind. Due to the fact that our psychological, emotional, and individual aesthetic responses to colour are always growing more and more complex (thanks to our increasingly fast pace visual-exploitation-based reality). We can never really distinguish what we see from what we believe / know, and are through our advancements growing seemingly less and less capable of doing so. To further complicate the situation, not all

* : Photo Attachment #4: on page 27
100% of visual stimulations that leave the eye end up in the visual dominion of the brain - approximately 20% go to the ‘pituitary-gland’, the major endocrine gland of the body (continuously in charge of growth and development).

Out of the full range of colours visible to us, none come close to being a better example of the result of glandular involvement in our visual consciousness, than with the colour red. Effortlessly effecting our body’s chemistry / physical conductivity, the colour red can cause you to breathe more rapidly, increase your blood pressure, pulse rate, heart beat, flow of adrenaline and induce ‘GSR’ responses. (‘GSR’; ‘Galvanic Skin response’; a fancy term for perspiration and other symptoms of physical insecurity, which also serve as the basis for lie detector tests).

**Colour v.s. light, theory & history examined..**

Not many give it credit, but colour plays a crucial part in the natural cycle of the world. In fact, all plant and animal life rely on the cycles and colour exposures of natural light. To regulate / determine our growth and behaviour from day to day and season to season, we are bound to its influences in both the natural and crafted world. All manner of creatures are lead on (in their physical / mental being) by the transition from the lowlight violet hours of night, to the invigorating blue break of dawn. Through the predominant colours we experience during the day, do we channel many of our contributing factors regarding mood, energy and even habits.

“When the fall comes to its end, the decreasing hours of daylight prepare the plant and animal kingdoms for the winter regime, while the combination of colours in the longer days after winters end make possible the regeneration of spring”. (6)

Stretching back to the ancient world, the investigation of light and colour has been underway with strong successions of interest throughout our recorded timeline. Reviewed and realised by the great minds of their own given generations, in this chapter

---

it is only fitting that a few names / accomplishments worth mentioning (for the sake of historical milestone recognition) should present themselves.

In (approximately) 1000AD, the Arab physicist Alhazen discovered through experimental observations, that light actually travels into the eye and is not just veiled in front of it. In 1604 the mathematician and astronomer Johannes Kepler initially elaborated / birthed the modern idea, that light is emitted by outer energy sources (like the sun) and is then reflected from objects into the eye itself. In 1672, with the works of Isaac Newton, came a major leap in the understanding of light in all its elemental glory. Newton theorised and eventually discovered that the colour transmitted through a ray of light is an irreplaceable feature of that lights essence. It is unable to be broken down into any other variation of colour or signal, so multiple colour frequencies must come into play. He also discovered that coloured lights can be recompiled to project a pure white light. (6) (*see Photo Attachment: #5).

Brought on partly by Newtons own experiments, the arrival of “wave-theory” had made its way to the collective think-tank of the ages. In 1802, the polymath and physician Thomas Young delicately observed that irregardless of Newton’s undeniable preference for the “corpuscular theory” or “particle theory”, light must embody some characteristics of waves (or must in some way project so called “vibrations” along the ether it penetrated).

Among scores of other projects / “collaborations”, Newton had eventually engaged the observations / research of Robert Hooke (the inventor of the compound microscope) on the mysterious colour phenomena that are often seen in thin layers of water or oil spills. Discovering that colours and their intensity varied systematically by the thickness of the thinly layered substances, and through the process of related research trials. Young argued / theorised that indications were apparent that light was undeniably wavelike in character. Not before long (by the mid-nineteenth century), a class of new scientists had provided grossing evidence to support the conclusion that light indeed consists of waves / frequencies, justifying Young’s claims. (6)


* : Photo Attachments #5: on page 28
Coming closer now to the modern age, in 1905 Albert Einstein himself, suggested that the accepted “wave-theory” of light was incomplete and that light might in fact possess some attributes relating to particles after all. Einstein argued that there exist undetectable particles (or ‘quanta’) of light energy in every radiant beam. Currently, we recognise that these particles exist, referring to them with a familiar tone as ‘photons’.

- Quantum mechanics: is the mathematical interpretation of how electromagnetic-radiation can sustain both wave-like and particle-like characteristics, and is one of the major contemporary fields in examining our relation to light energy (and therefore indirectly colour). Theoretical physicist James Clerk Maxwell was the gentlemen to at last deduce that light / colour is just one part of a huge continuous spectrum of electromagnetic radiation. Maxwell like too few before him, was changing forever our understanding of our light / colour stimulated reality. Taking us one step closer to acknowledging the full force and functionality of this our visual world. (5)

As we better understand colour, we better understand this universe and our reservations for it. Derived from nature in all its magnanimous splendour, perhaps through our observations will new appreciation be engraved into our existential ego. For the inventiveness and intensiveness lavished onto us by eons of evolution, to what end is all this beauty / display?

Psychological / Neurological conductivity..

It is commonly known that colour and light have profound effects on energy and mood. Colours are a major component in our psychological development, and that primary position demands respect. Without fail, we are weathered and washed over by wave after wave of information spilling into the brain’s visual cortex, hardwiring their way through our “operating-systems”. Their objective; to stimulate or disrupt the release of hormones governing our body, the temple of our conscious / mental state.

Frantically flipping through films, books / writings and other works / documentations of those who have come before me. I continuously fail to see many other artists who stress the seriousness of our ongoing sensory / perceptual battle. More prominent in the writings of neurologists, physicists or even psychologists, they all seem to more eagerly insist that we in the art community should have more insight into the void of the visual. Charmingly in sync with my artistic process at this point, my work of late has most all been focused on this gentle yet grievous situation (presumptuously applying self-insistent insight of my own).

- **The Paradox of colour:** The experience / perception of colour, on which phenomenology and art are both largely conceived, appears to deliver two contradictory sides to the same argument. (Colours constancy in appearance, and its ability / tendency to change). Joseph Albers once elaborated: “No colour is conceived as what it actually is physically. Without special devices we never see colour singly, or by itself, as we may never hear single tones, but only in relationship to the many factors which influence our vision, which transfer the optical (physiological) susceptibility into a psychological effect (perception)”. It was Albers enlightened conviction that “art was concerned with the discrepancy between physical fact and psychological effect”. (5)

Among other, colour can greatly effect / distort our perception of space and depth, it can shape or alter perceived reality. If implemented correctly, its dimensions can become a sensory building block for uncovering the secrets of form itself.

- **Synaesthesia:** A little known medical condition. Synaesthesia allows its host to see colour when encountering a scent (smell) and / or even experience various tastes as various visible colours. Medical officials believe that the condition appears when genetic mutations cause unusual abnormalities or connections to manifest between the parts of the brain that interpret scent, taste and colour. Entangled or gifted? All kinds of people are able to imagine a colour when encountering a scent, but people with Synaesthesia actually feel the sensation of seeing the colours. (7)

---

Researchers and theorists have long since attempted to identify systematic links between music and colour. Perhaps some of the most renowned inclinational connections come from the fascinating phenomenon of “music-colour synesthesia”; Small groups of individuals, including some distinguished artists (e.g., Kandinsky and Klee) as well as famous musicians (e.g., Scriabin and Rimsky-Korsokov) have been reported to have had diverse cross-modal experiences of colour whilst listening to musical sounds / melodies. As a result of the fact that synaesthetic sound-colour mapping appears idiosyncratic, scientific research into the legitimacy of the affliction has so far proven inconclusive. Hopeful and diligent we break new ground every day. (8)

In the interest of expanding the theoretical extents of colour, a few examples might be in order.. From the creative (and dare I say poetic) side comes the German artist and art theorist Johannes Itten (1888-1967). Itten believed that proper colour application had mental / spiritual healing properties. He also proposed that colour agents (the pigment), and the colour effect (the psycho-physiological perception of colour) have to reach a certain point harmonious synergy in order for colour to produce a properly pleasing / sustainably stimulating and potentially healing influence. “Within a musical context, the colour agent would be similar to actual musical meaning encoded by the composer, and the colour effect would be similar to the perceived musical meaning as decoded by the listener”. - Itten. (9)

Itten attributed particular emotional / spiritual meaning to certain colours. “The 'cold colours' of blue and green, colours which allude to spirituality, contentment and tranquility, are sedative in effect and would thus appear to be the colours of choice in achieving a calmer state. The 'warm colours' of red and orange, both of which allude to radiant activity and passion, act as stimulants and are thus to be avoided if seeking calmness”. (9)

Application and progression examined..

Constantly in pursuit of progress, our understanding of how the brain translates the data it receives (from the eyes) has made massive leaps in the past half a century. Largely indebted to that fact, that for the first time, we have the tools / means to ask the “right questions”. Among these admirable advancements, is the invention of ‘micro-electrodes’. Micro-electrodes allow us to listen in and monitor the activity / functions of ‘single cells’ in the brain, making possible the realisation of how cells are interconnected and interact (6).

Out of all the non-verbal / limited physical forms of communication / interpretation, colour reigns supreme. As one of the most direct ways of instantaneously being able to identify and / or convey silent messages and hidden meanings, colour is applicable in all. Assisted by an intricate mapping of warning signals and gradual guidelines, whether animal, vegetable or mineral. Colour has been / is necessary, and plays a vital role in our self-protectant identification process. Prior to mans ability to appreciate the aesthetic applications of colour, our relation to them served a far more instinctual / practical role in our communication to our world / existence. Our sustainable survival depended (depends) on our very ability to identify and challenge worldly / universal realities.

In the modern world, there is no better arena to take advantage of the powers of colour influence than in the “marketplace”. Colours are a primary component in inferring a positive, approachable and even irresistible portrayal of a product. They are called into action to instantaneously charm the consumers eye and mental responses. From delivering a products message, to building a brand identity, colour is used to make the sale. In the pursuit / world of advertising, colour is used to lock in our attention and attempt to influence us (the potential buyer) to solicit more information about the advertised product or service.

Food manufacturers of our world know how much colour means to us and have embraced using visual enhancements to manipulate their consumer. Enhancements such as bright synthetic hues to make processed goods appear more appealing or even healthy. Our experience of colour can be deceiving and if unchecked, can lead us astray. Great amounts of the human reaction to colour is subliminal and consumers are generally unaware of the persuasive reach of it. The power that colour wields is seen in every level of communication between the seller and consumer. In corporate identification; logos, advertisements (television), brazen billboarding, print media / packaging, on the internet and all the way to the point of purchase / sale.

- Colour forecasting: Involves a dedicated perusal of every issue and happening regarding (that which might influence) colour directions in the near future. The internet, various periodicals, television shows, and other colour forecasting organisations are excellent sources for divulging consumer trend information. Since the data is so ascertainable / available, consumer-products destined for incoming colour trends are limited only by the time constraints demanded by: research, development, manufacturing and trend duration. The many areas to be alert for indications of impending colour trends include: the fashion world, the entertainment industry, information media, museum collections, sociological issue forums, lifestyle reviews and more. (4)

Even regarding the simplest reactions, colours come into play. Recently I read that Japanese researchers, Masahiro Kawasaki and Yoko Yamaguchi published in an edition of NeuroImage, results from an experiment they had undertaken into the field of colour preference and psychological response. In completion of conducting their experiments they had established that preference does indeed come into play when noticing colour, and that chosen more often than not “preferred colours were significantly more popular than any opposing ones.. These results asserted that the confirmation effects of preference related colours, have an impact on our choices (10).

Now.. if we are vulnerable to our own colour preferences, would it be possible to stimulate and control such individuals as ourselves with use of colour suggestions in environment and media..? Perhaps even create influences to rally individuals into social groups with joint colour preferences and then take advantage of those preferences / social groups..? Of course, this is what we call business, marketing and advertisement, but in the wrong hands such colour conspiracy could surely be (even more) cruelly corrupted.

**Subtle summation..**

However optimistic I sound that I will be able to comprehend the realities of colour as well as the human mentality towards it, I can’t help but be a little bit critical of myself and question if this chosen path is really the best course of action for my creative consciousness.. Am I merely fetishizing to no benefit..? Am I just embodying some colour / lighting obsessed art student with only his intentions to keep him warm at night..? I suppose I would be the last to know.

Pablo Picasso wrote in a letter to the poet Guillaume Apollinaire: “Colours are only symbols,; reality is to be found in lightness alone”. (6)

Indoriously supplied by my convictions, each piece is an opportunity for self realisation and internal resolve.. These sort of introverted society explorations remind me on many levels of (for example) Fluxus artist Yoko Ono’s mental process when preparing/ executing her work/performances (yet less emotional). Diving inside herself and others to find emotional, psychological and internal truth.. (As writer Laura Pallanck describes in her article “YOKO ONO”): “She is simply channeling artistic experiences rather than creating them”. Or as Yoko herself stated: "I'm always inside myself and listening to what's coming into my head," she says. "I'm like a conduit of some message coming through me. I'm interested in everything, equally, every day. I'm in love with life, the world, every moment”. (5)


- Pallanck, Laura, “YOKO ONO”, Remix, Vol.6(11), p.114, New Bay Media LLC, USA, Nov 2004


Additional / relevant sources:

- Arnheim, Rudolf, “Art and visual perception - A psychology of the creative eye”, University of California Press, Berkley & Los Angeles, USA, 1954,1974


- Gage, John, “Colour and meaning - Art, science and symbolism”, Thames and Hudson, 1999


Photo Attachments
Above: Photo Attachment #1: Ottó Ólafur Ottósson, from exhibition and experiments entitled: “Testing.. testing..”, Dec. 2015

Below: Photo Attachment #2: Ottó Ólafur Ottósson, from exhibition and experiments entitled: “Testing.. testing..”, Dec. 2015
Above: Photo Attachment #3: Ottó Ólafur Ottósson, from experiments entitled: “Testing. . .testing. . .”, NOV-DEC. 2015
Photo Attachment #4: taken from source: http://thechicagomodernquiltguild.blogspot.is/2015/05/may-meeting-focus-on-color.html (Dec.2015) - Erika Mulvenna - May Meeting Focus: “The Artist's Color Wheel as Inspiratio”, Chicago Modern Quilt Guild's Blog, Tuesday, May 19, 2015