

COLOUR & EMOTION

WHY COLOUR PSYCHOLOGY MATTERS IN
DESIGN

COLOUR THEORY RECAPITULATION

White light is that “thing” that surrounds us, and it is composed by seven light colors (the colors of the rainbow); and when it “bumps” in to an object, the object absorbs one or more of the seven colors and reflects variations of the rest, this based on its atom consistency.



COLOUR THEORY

Therefore colour is a subjective experience and no one can assure that they perceive colors the same as the next person. All humans see all the colors more or less the same. But we should not forget that colour is also social and cultural.

For example, what colour is the flower on the right?



Photograph by Philip Schwarz

COLOUR THEORY

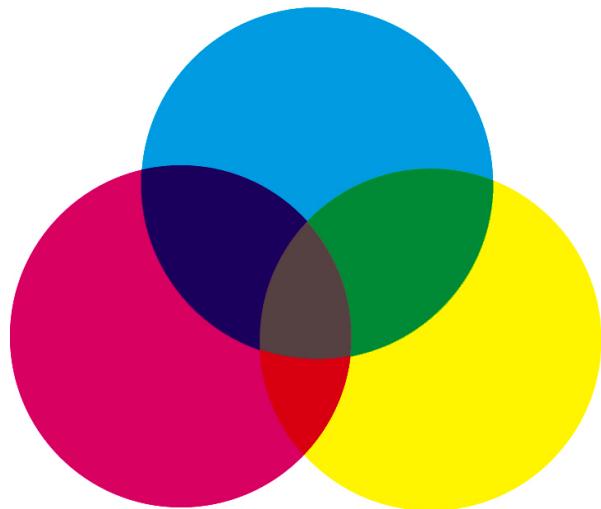
There are two kinds of colors, pigment colors and light colors.

We also know them as:
subtractive color and additive color.

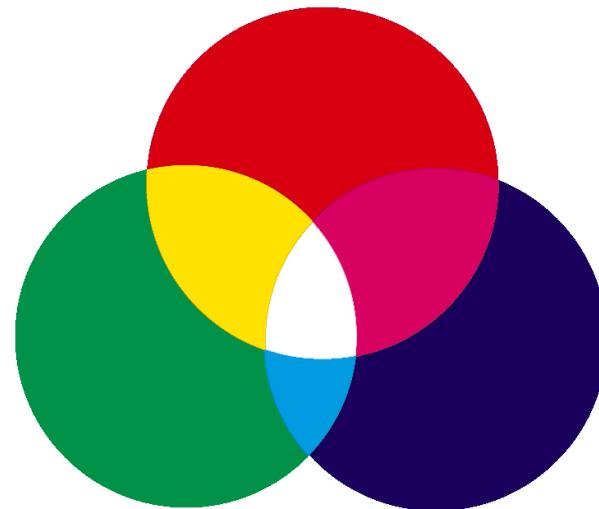
Light color is immaterial and comes from natural and artificial light sources such as monitors. On the other hand, pigment colors are material and they come from artificial sources such as paints and inks in all their forms.



COLOUR THEORY



Subtractive color (CMYK)



Additive Color (RGB)

COLOR THEORY

QUICK REFERENCE SHEET FOR DESIGNERS

SUBTRACTIVE

CREATED WITH INK;
START WITH WHITE, ADD COLOR.
CMYK



COLOR TYPES



PRIMARY



SECONDARY



TERTIARY



COMPLEMENTARY



ANALOGOUS

MEANINGS

█ INTENSE. FIRE & BLOOD.
ENERGY, WAR, DANGER, LOVE
PASSIONATE, STRONG.

█ SKY, SEA.
DEPTH, STABILITY, TRUST
MASCULINE, TRANQUIL.

█ NATURE, GROWTH.
FERTILITY, FRESHNESS, HEALING
SAFETY, MONEY.

█ ROYALTY, POWER.
NOBILITY, WEALTH, AMBITION
DIGNIFIED, MYSTERIOUS.

█ WARM, STIMULATING.
ENTHUSIASM, HAPPINESS, SUCCESS
CREATIVE, AUTUMN.

ADDITIVE

CREATED WITH LIGHT;
START WITH BLACK, ADD COLOR.
RGB



COLOR RELATIONSHIPS



MONOCHROMATIC



DOUBLE
COMPLEMENTARY



ANALOGOUS



TRIAD

TERMS

CHROMA: How pure a hue is in relation to gray

SATURATION: The degree of purity of a hue

INTENSITY: The brightness or dullness of a hue

LUMINANCE/VALUE: A measure of the amount of light reflected from a hue

SHADE: A hue produced by the addition of black

TINT: A hue produced by the addition of white

ACCORDING TO WESTERN VISUAL CULTURE

INTRODUCTION TO COLOUR MEANING

COLOUR AND MEANING

The colors that have more excitation power are red, red-orange and orange the quietest are blues and greens or violet blue.

A turquoise is more restless than a ultramarine blue, by the intervention of the yellow in it, and blue in the second one leads to a more violet and cooler sensation.



COLOUR AND MEANING

The most pleasant, sedative and comfortable in colors in interior design are the greens, light blue and light violet, while the creamy shades, ivory, beige, suede, have a warm quality to them, they are cheerful and have some exciting action, but both should be used properly and in wide ample spaces.





WHY?

Because colors express states of mind and precise emotions with psychological meaning, they also have some affects over our physiology.

RED

RED

It's associated with extroverted personalities, with a vital, ambitious and material temperament. It is also associated to people who are impulsive and like to "live the moment".



Photograph by Anthony Glaskova

RED

It is the color of blood, fire, heat, revolution, violence, action, passion, dispute, destruction, distrust, cruelty and rage.

It is the colors of maniacs and mars, also the color of the emperors and roman generals.

It evokes war, evil and demons.



Photograph by Brenda Jiménez

RED

It is a color that requires and absorbs most of our attention, that is why we have to be careful when and how we use it, also in which extent we apply it. In large areas it saturates our view and tires our minds.

Mix with white it becomes frivolous, but innocent and represents vigor of youth, and mixed with black it suggests pain, dominance, tyranny, but curiously this mixture is the one that stimulates our imagination.



Print by Shepard Fairey a.k.a. Obey

RED

Other connotations associated with it are movement and vitality; it increases our muscle tension and activates heavy breathing. It also increases blood pressure and therefore it is recommended for shy, introverted people, that have slow reflexes.



Red Passion Black Coolness By Paco Peregrin

BLUE

BLUE

It is the color of the sky, water and it is serene, represents infinity and coldness.



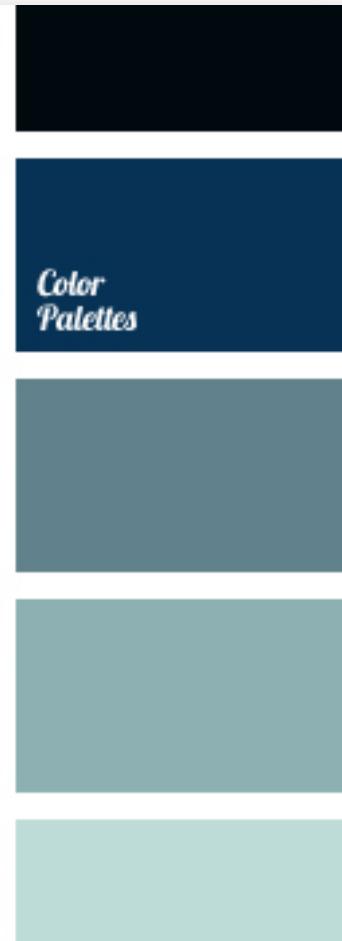
BLUE

Blue is intelligence, truth, wisdom, inner self, space, immortality, peace and quiet; it has the property of acting as a sedative, reduces blood pressure and mix with white it gives us a hue that expresses purity and faith.



BLUE

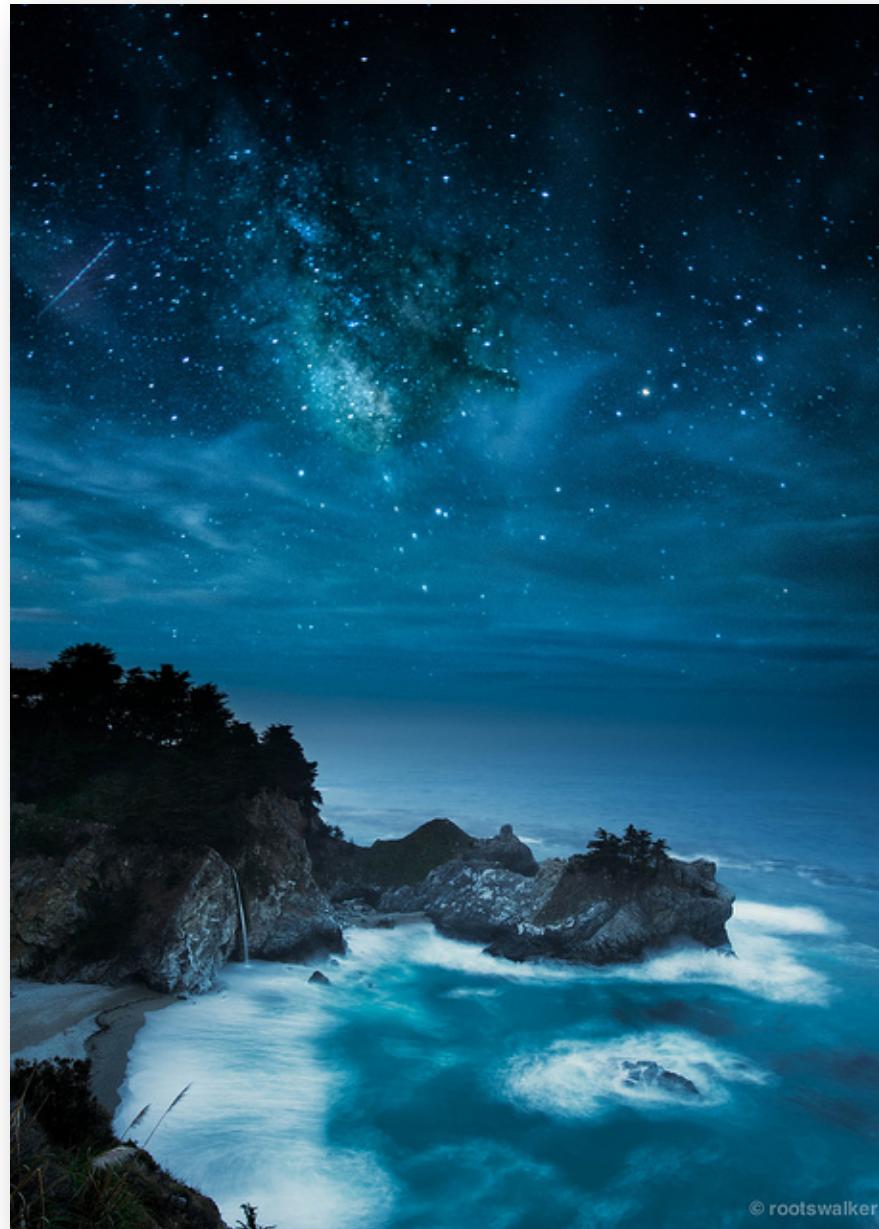
Mixed with black it represents desperation, fanaticism and intolerance.



BLUE

It is associated with introverted, quiet, thoughtful personalities and it is related to deep emotions.

It is also the color of dreams and wonder.



© rootswalker

BLUE

It is also the color preferred to denote science, reason and technology due to its cold nature.



GREEN

GREEN

Green is the color of morning dew and prairies, calm and comforting. It is stillness, spring, youth and hope.

Reminds us of open spaces and nature. It is the color of equality and balance to our emotions. A color that sets our spirits free.

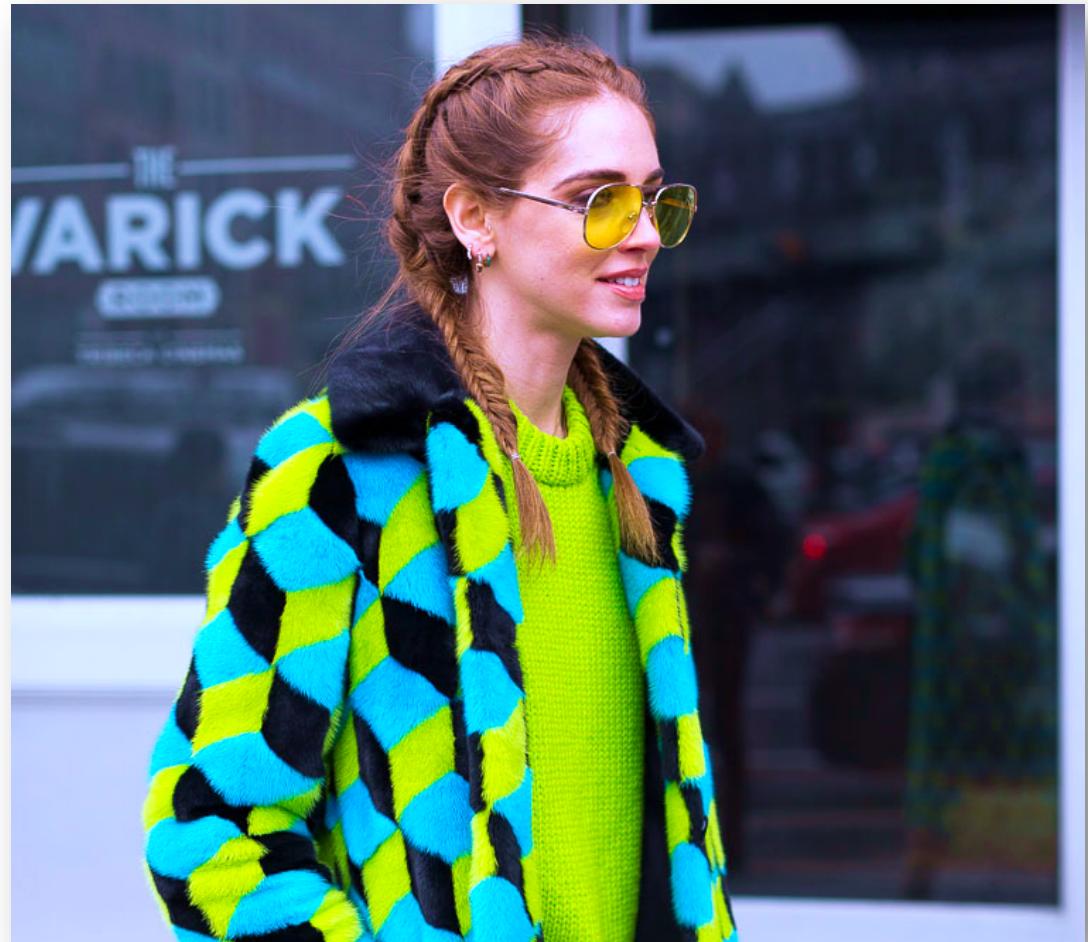
We say that is the most balance color because its composed of a mixture of blue (cold) and yellow (warmth).



GREEN

It is associated with slightly intelligent people (over average) and very social personalities that love the sound of their voice: too chatty.

People who prefer this color hate loneliness and always seek company.



GREEN

It is a symbol of kindness, personal growth. And while blue is the color of reason and inner thought, green is the color of logic and what is real, what is present.



GREEN

On a negative side (mixed with black), it is the color of poison, venom, jealousy, envy, insanity, poverty.



YELLOW

YELLOW

It is the color related to the sun, it is stimulating and joyful, but it can be pretentious and arrogant. It is associated with good humor and good will, it stimulates the central nervous system.



YELLOW

It is the most intellectual of all colors but it can either be associated with a great mind or a mental deficiency . Van Gogh had a predilection for this color, specially in his later years during his crisis.



Vincent van Gogh Factories at Asnieres Seen from the Quai de Clichy

YELLOW

Mixed with black it becomes a sickish green that suggests enemy, false, crime, brutality.

Mixed with white it can express weakness and fear. (Chicken, yellow-belly).



YELLOW

In its primary form, it means anger, cowardliness, low impulses and mixed with red or orange it constitutes the colors of cheerful and vivacious emotions.

In some cultures it is an equivalent of Satanism because it is the color of sulfur, and therefore related also with treason.



YELLOW

It is the color of the sun and power, it resembles opulence and gold, strength, will, stimulation, also alert.



ORANGE

ORANGE

It is warmer than yellow and it helps stimulate shy people, with health problems. It symbolizes enthusiasm and exaltation and when it comes closer to a red it's fervid, passionate.



ORANGE

Used in small doses it becomes an accent, but used in large quantities it could become aggressive and impulsive.



ORANGE

Mixed with black it suggest conspiracy and intolerance.
Mixed with white it becomes a pinkish skin tone that can be very sensual in a delicate way.



BROWN

BROWN

This color is associated with mature personalities, people who are down to earth and always fair.

It is also the color of earth, tradition, and ancestors. It is associated with the origins of humanity and therefore everything indigenous.





MULBERRY

BLACK

BLACK

The color of sadness and grief
can also be the color of
mystery and surprise, you
never know what things are
hiding in the dark. It is the
absence of light.

Sign of error and evil, mistake.
Color of nothing, of void,
abyss, death.





BLACK

Makes things more stylized.
The color of claustrophobia is
also the color of elegance and
nobility. In Chinese and
Egyptian cultures it used to be
a sign of fertility.



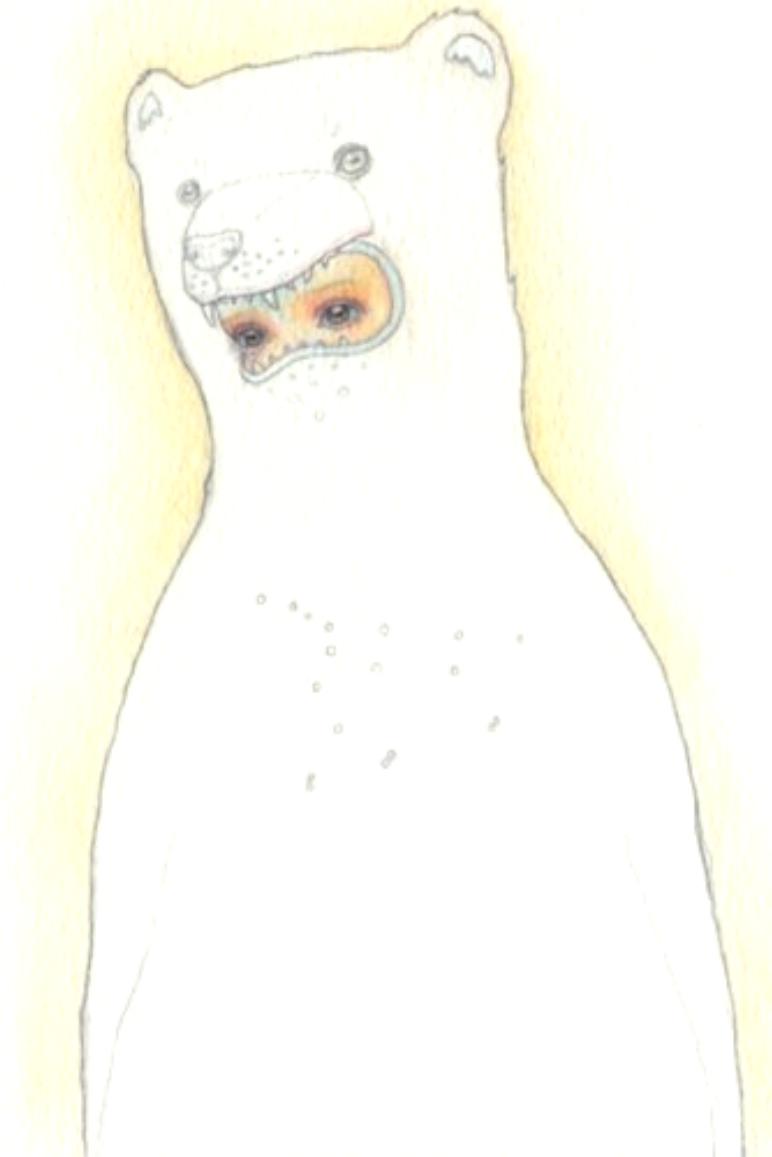
WHITE

WHITE

It's the sum or synthesis of all colors, and a symbol for the absolute, the everything, unity, innocence, purity, humility, modesty, peace and also rendition.

Mixed with any other color it's spectrum of meaning is reduced and it minimizes the negative meanings in them.







GREY

GREY

It's not considered a color but more a transition between white and black, this is why it represents neutrality, but it also suggest resignation, sadness and it becomes a fusion between sadness and joy, good and bad.





VIOLET

VIOLET

Violet is the color of mysticism, melancholy, martyrs, affliction, egocentrism, self-pity, and in a darker shade is the color of royalty and dignity. In a brighter shade it becomes delicate.



Franz Xavier Winterhalter - 'Portrait of Empress Eugenie', 1894

VIOLET

Mixed with black is disloyalty
and misery, with white it
becomes pain and death.



PINK

PINK

It is the colour associated with sweet love and romance. It is flirtatious, fun, exciting.

Pale pink is sometimes associated with daydreaming and childlikeness.

It is often associated with Femininity, Sexuality, Innocence, Sweetness and Good health.

Vivid cool pinks represent immaturity. While warm soft pinks are connected with maturity.

