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“House’s lipsticks color trend evolution from 1960 until to-day”

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this study is to understand the evolution of color of Chanel’s iconic lipstick shades over a 60 year period in order to know the history of colors, to study if there are some specificities in color of the House, and to further inspire innovative colors for the future using Chanel’s historical resources. This transversal project is coming from 2 departments: the Make-Up Research Laboratory and the Fragrance and Beauty Heritage. It combines scientific/technical and cultural / historical exploration. This study presents the evolution of the range of shades from satin to classic in the pillar lipsticks of the business yet does not include short-lived lipstick ranges such as lip pens, matte lipsticks, high-gloss lipsticks.

2. Materials and Methods

Since 1992 the records of the make-up products sold, and their corresponding color charts have been retained and stored by the company. These color charts represent all the available and complete color ranges that have been in the company’s portfolio. These color charts can be found in the form of catalogues and have been archived since 1930. Some of the oldest lipstick shade ranges are missing some of the colors and this is why the decision was taken to work only from color charts since the ranges of colors in them are complete.

To define the color trends, color charts were selected starting from 1960 in intervals of every 5-years unless the color chart of the desired year was missing. A selection of the color charts from 1960, 1963, 1970, 1972, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010, 2015 and 2020 was done [1].

The correlation of the colors between the lipstick and its graphical representation in the color chart was validated by measurement comparison, using an Xrite VS450 contactless spectrophotometer in the CIEL*a*b* color space. The color charts were measured in a laboratory, using a contactless spectrophotometer in order not to damage the documents, some of which were old, and unique items in the House’s heritage collections. Following the comparison of measurements, the decision was taken to work only on the color charts as the range of colors in the charts were complete, and certain lipstick colors were missing in the older ranges. In

addition, there were few differences between the color charts and the actual lipstick colors, meaning that a scientific study could be conducted without bias. It should be mentioned that the upmarket quality of the paper used to make color charts of luxury companies and the appropriate archiving conditions showed that the documents were maintained for a very long time, and therefore the color measurements made several years after printing could be used. At Chanel, all the documents are stored in the dark, in rooms kept at a constant temperature of 19°C and with 60 % relative humidity (hygrometry). In addition, all documents are handled only with gloves.

Measurements were done in the CIEL*a*b* system. In addition, the NCS® system was chosen for graphical representations in order to facilitate communication with marketing because it is a very visual color system. 513 shades references of the color charts were measured with the NCS® Color Scan colorimeter. Duplicate NCS® references (or references with 3 or more identical references) were eliminated using the NCS® Atlas (by eye, D65 light, X-Rite box) except where no NCS® coordinate allowed a distinction to be made between colors [2]. If one is to compare the classification according to the CIEL*a*b* and NCS® systems, the Hue, Lightness and Saturation of the CIEL*a*b* system are respectively represented by the Hue, the Blackness (or black rate) and the Chromaticness (or quantity of color) in the NCS® system as describe Figure 1 [3]. Data was entered in the NCS Navigator® application and displayed in the 3D space. Each color chart measured was characterized (hue, blackness, chromaticness). A comparative analysis between the different years was made [4]. This made it possible to show changes in color ranges over the years and form a color timeline specific to the House. To name the shades, all the lipstick shades on the pure red hue are called Red. The shades placed in Yellow to Red area are called Yellow. The shades positioned in Red to Blue area are called Blue.

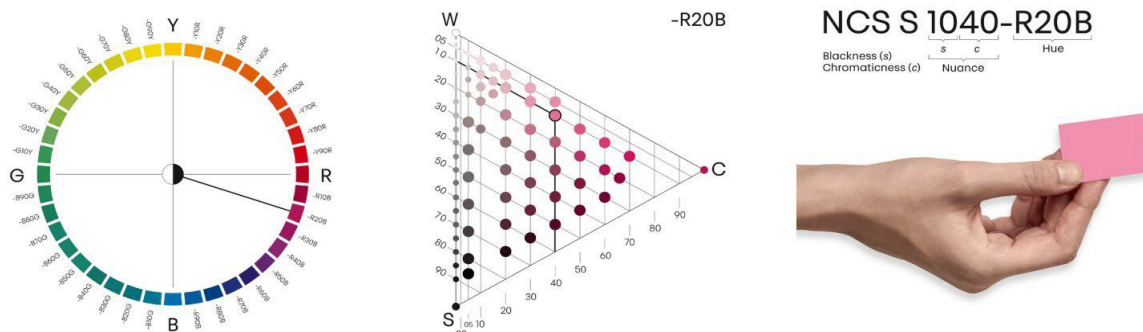


Figure 1. The chosen color space is NCS® System. The 3D representation of hue, blackness and chromaticness are easy to communicate to non-color experts.

Two representations issued from NCS Navigator® presented in Figure 2 were used. In the first representation, the lightness of the shades is highlighted with a low blackness value. Light hues are above the horizontal yellow-blue axis. The dark shades are underneath it. The color distribution between the different tones is done according to the vertical axis: the blue tones. The second graphic representation highlights the saturation and the lightness of the shades. The closer the hue is to the red dot outside the triangle, the more saturated it is. The closer it is inside the triangle and closer to the white-black vertical axis, the more desaturated it is. The lightness is found by the horizontal axis. Above this axis, a hue is classified as light and below, it is considered dark.

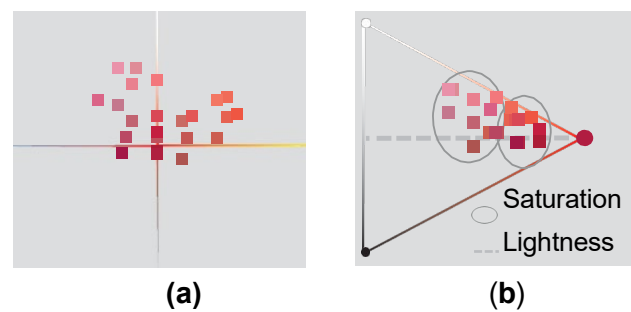


Figure 2. The 2 graphical NCS® representations from the study: (a) Represents hue and lightness or blackness; (b) Represents the lightness and saturation or blackness and chromaticness.

3. Results

The 513 shades of lipstick measured on the color charts correspond to 168 NCS® references, i.e. approximately one third of them. This is due to three reasons:

- Some lipsticks integrated years ago are still present today and have the same color reference
- Some shades have the same color year after year even if the names have changed
- There is no discrimination in the color space selected

The first observation is an abundance of yellowish shades, exempted in 1985 when blue hues were fleetingly the majority and in 2020 when reds prevailed. Thus, the 168 NCS® references measured in the color charts are divided into 110 yellows, 33 blues and 25 reds.

The second observation is the shades were darker from 1972 onwards. Up until then, the range of lipsticks were mainly made up of light shades, i.e. those above the yellow/blue horizontal axis of the figure 2. From 1972 onwards, the number of colors present under this horizontal axis increased to reach peaks in 2000, 2005 and 2010.

The third observation is a strong saturation of hues. Hues are considered saturated as soon as the chromaticness number is greater than 50.

The fourth observation is the number of shades, which increased continuously from 1960 to 2005, from a range of 12 to 55 shades. There was a decrease which began in 2010, with a range that consisted of 37 shades. A second franchise of classic lipsticks was put on the market during the same time. The latter included 43 shades in 2010, some of which shifted from the historical range. The colors of this new lipstick line were analyzed in this research project but are not mentioned in this paper because the results correlated with those obtained on the initial range of lipsticks. The development of certain shades by pearly effects or varying degrees of opacity helped to preserve the differentiation between shades that are sometimes very similar. These effects are not reflected in this paper, as the study focuses only on the color of lipsticks.

Overall the evolution of shades offered to customers is demonstrated. This evolution takes place over time in different stages, which makes it possible to distinct color periods.

4. Discussion

We have identified 5 distinct periods.

The first period identified within the scope of these study was from 1960 to 1970, as shown Figure 3. It is distinctive for the presence of a high lightness level and clear shades, high sat-

uration or the opposite, high desaturation of shades, which represents the creation of classical colors for Chanel and the beginning of chromatic explorations [5]. From 1960, there were twelve lip colors in only light shades. Saturated clear reds were already present. Twelve additional pearlized shades appeared in 1963. These were all light and desaturated colors. This period can be explained by the launch of mica-titanium white pearls in 1959 by the Merck™ company [6,7]. The saturated reds were kept. In 1970, golden and pale beiges were most predominant, reflecting not only the androgynous style first adopted by Twiggy [8], but also a desire by Chanel to be creative and innovative in the colors it offered [9]. In this same year, classic shades were created: Teheran, which is still offered today after 62 years in the historical range which is still sold under the same name [10], and Bombay that would last until 1990. Interestingly, Jackie Kennedy's visit to India in 1962 would influence the names given to Chanel products, with names such as Bombay, Sari Doré, Delhi, Ispahan [11]. NCS S Y-50R and Y-60R were discontinued after 1970 and never relaunched. The hypothesis is that these shades that were too beige were not flattering for the complexion.

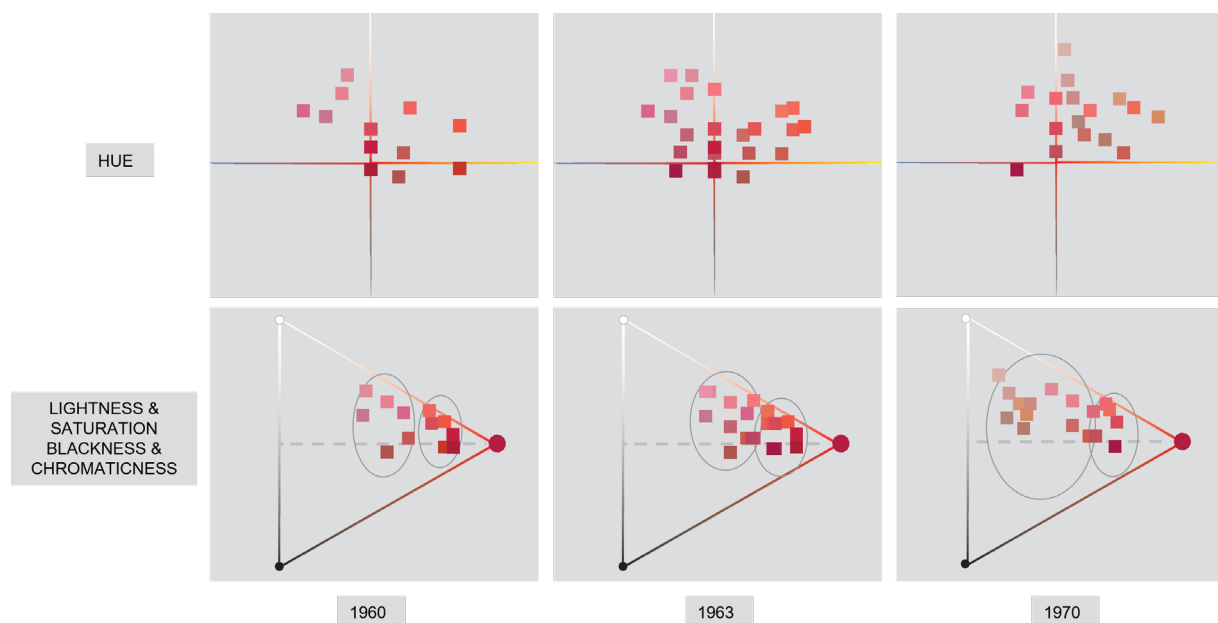


Figure 3. The first period from 1960 to 1970 is characterized by low blackness level, creation of 3 classical shades for Chanel and beginning of chromatic explorations.

The second period is from 1972 to 1980 as shown Figure 4. It is characterized by the introduction of very dark shades, not only breaking away from medium light shades, but also establishing Chanel's basic colors for its lipsticks. The range was still in beige tones but then became more brown and darker. The abundance of yellow-reds was affirmed to the point that only one bluish red was offered in the range of 1972. The Sari Doré color, still present in the House's range today, made its appearance under its permanent name. In 1980, the range offered thirty shades and included an increased number of browns. The shades that became rooted in the brand's DNA appeared. Although the range is darker, a few saturated reds had persisted. Despite the death of Gabrielle Chanel in 1971, the House's color positioning continued to be rolled out with the predominance of yellow-reds, deep shades, the close similarity of subtly different shades to differentiate the range, and the presence of saturated reds.

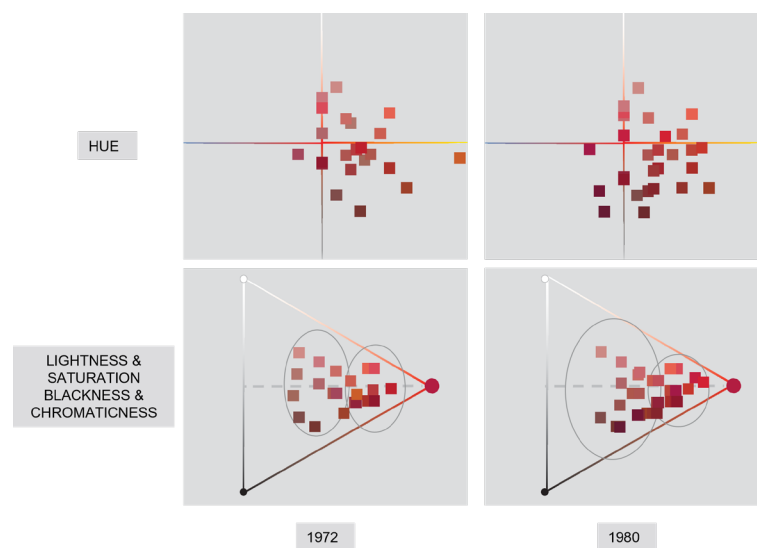


Figure 4. The second period from 1972 to 1980 is characterized by the introduction of very dark shades and the establishment of basic yellow colors for Chanel's lipsticks.

A third period covers the years between 1985 and 1995 as shown Figure 5. It is distinctive not only for the presence of bluish reds – a very temporary phase at Chanel – but also for the consistent offer of darker shades and shades in very similar tones.

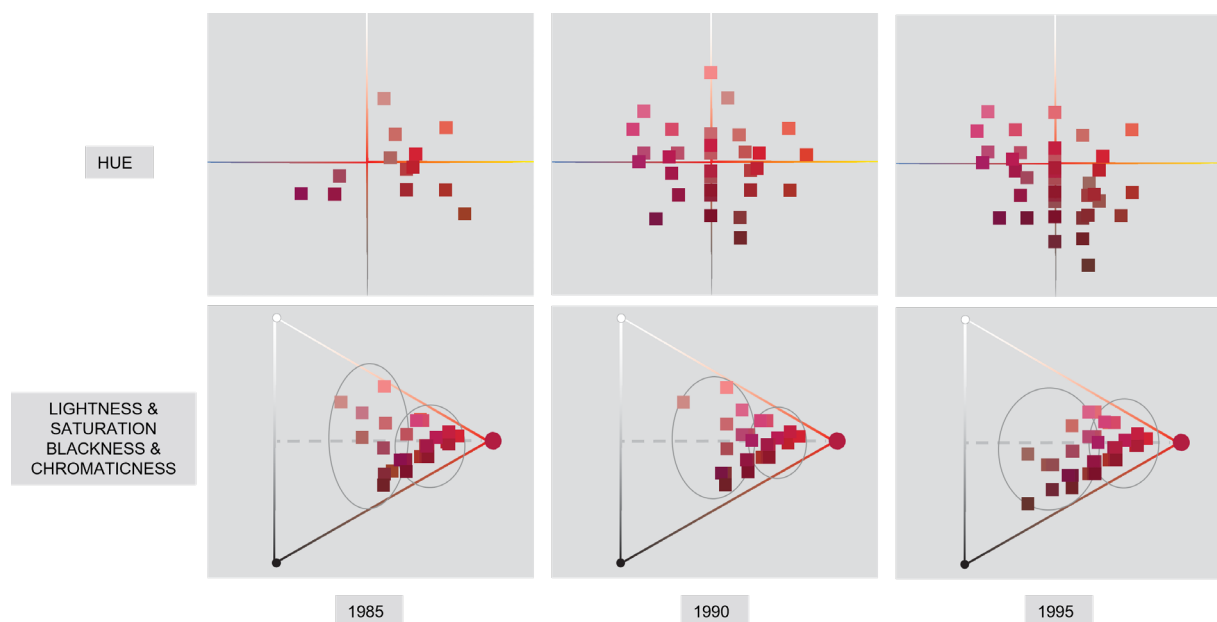


Figure 5. The third period from 1985 to 1995 is characterized by the presence of blue shades and the apparition of very similar tones.

In 1985, the color range was very balanced: the range offered 30 shades, 10 of which were still yellowish tones divided between light and dark shades although the very desaturated browns of 1980 had disappeared. Bluish colors reappeared in light or dark shades and a group of highly saturated reds remained. In 1990, the range of reds expanded to the point that the shades overlap in their color space. The yellowish shades were more individual and brighter than before. The bluish shades were light or dark and sometimes they were highly saturated.

In 1995, Chanel offered 42 shades of lipstick that explored dark tones. The very light shades had vanished. Only 6 light and saturated colors, including Sari Doré, maintained its brightness. Through an innovative blend of black and red, Chanel's Vernis Rouge Noir was created for the Autumn-Winter 1994 catwalk show. A lipstick of that same color was launched in 1996. During this decade, the similarity of the shades created had translated into the existence of a few duplicates: several lipsticks registered with the same NCS® reference. It is interesting to note that D&C Red 8, 9 and 19 were delisted by the FDA for "ingested use" in 1983 because of the Delaunay clause [12]. These 3 pigments that had disappeared in lipstick formulations have given rise to new shades, including all shades of blue. This is even more surprising given that D&C Red 19 is a saturated pigment with a bluish undertone as shown Figure 9. Colorists have tried to compensate its removal by integrating new blue shades that are less saturated and less bold. The boldness of D&C Red 19 was no longer present, however more subtle blue lip colors became available.



Figure 6. The specific color of D&C Red 19 widely used in lipstick formulation until its regulatory removal. Today this organic pigment has been totally delisted.

The fourth period is from 2000 to 2010 as shown Figure 7.

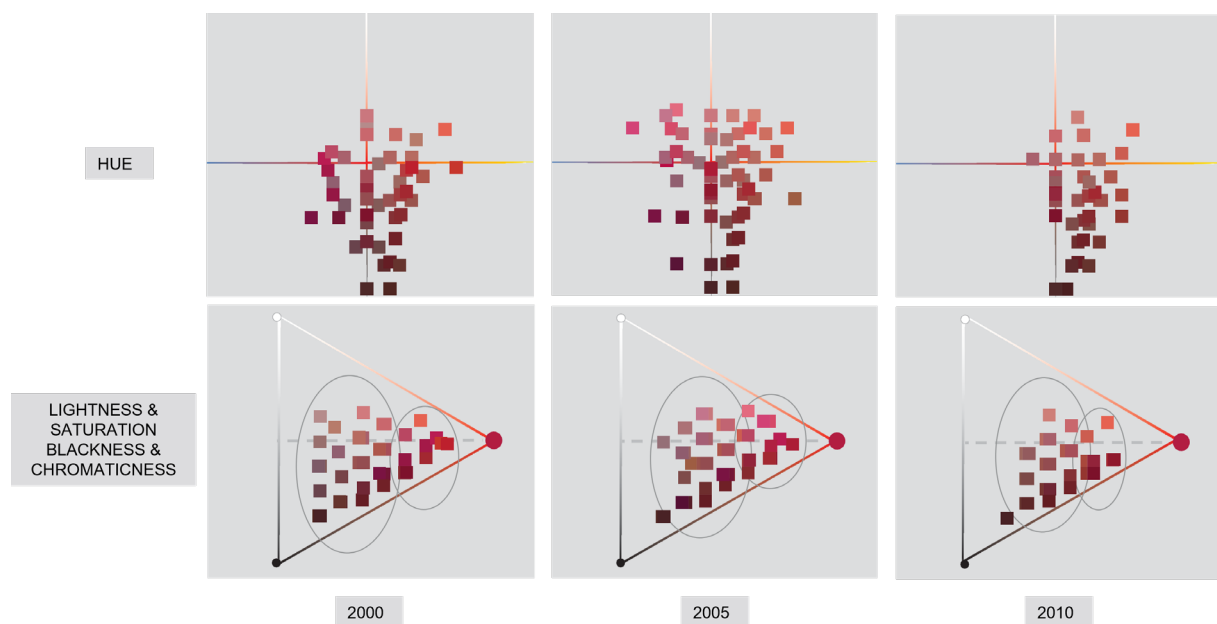


Figure 7. The fourth period from 2000 to 2010 is characterized by very dark shades and desaturation. There is also overlap between all NCS® references as there are lots of shades of close proximity.

It is characterized by very dark shades, a marked desaturation because of the shifting of the center of the color space, particularly in 2000 where there was an over-representation of yellowish-reds and there was similarity of the shades offered. In 2000, dark shades were offered with two particularly dark shades that were included in the range, NCS S 7020-R and

NCS S 7020-Y80R. This time Sari Doré was still the only color that was light and saturated. In 2005, Chanel offered 55 shades to meet the needs of worldwide business. This range was made lighter by the return of desaturated light shades, which were designed for the Asian market, even though dark shades continued to predominate. In 2010, the range refocused on 37 shades but discarded all bluish shades with one exception. It kept an abundance of dark and desaturated shades going to almost black. Saturated shades, except for Sari Doré, were discontinued. This decade showcased the "near blacks" with measurements that fell very low on the clarity axis and very high in desaturation levels. The shades overlapped in the NCS® colorimetric space, which shows that the different shades were worked to the limits of being able to distinguish one from the other.

The fifth and last period is from 2015 to 2020 as shown Figure 8. It is a return to the individuality of the shades and the affirmation of a high saturation.

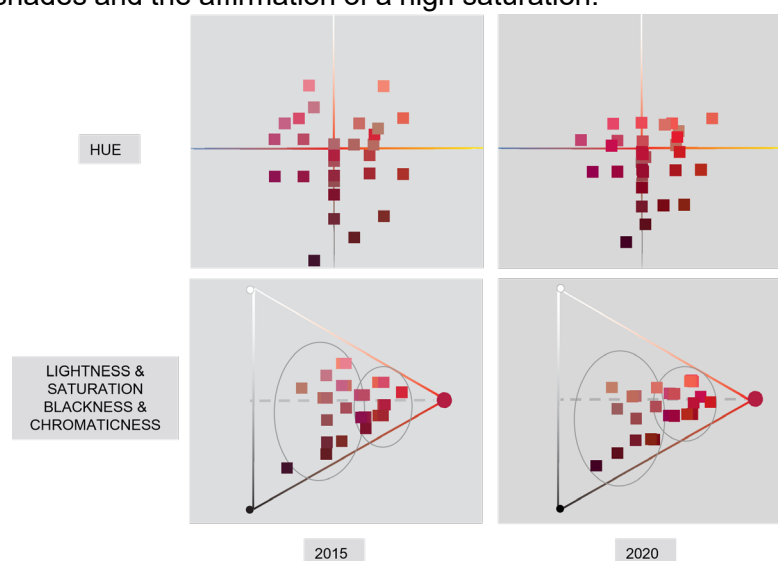


Figure 8. The fifth period from 2015 to 2020 is characterized by a balance between all shades, a removal of extreme colors and an integration of high saturated reds.

Each shade asserts its specific character and stands out from the rest of the range. In 2015, the range was comprised of 28 shades distinctive for variety and brightness. Colors that are deployed in the colorimetric space, and that reconnected with the individual tones that had removed since the 1970s. The range rediscovered a balance not only between yellowish, red and bluish shades, but between light and dark shades too. The return of 9 bluish shades restored a firm balance between the three-color classes. The presence of bright colors counterbalanced the presence of desaturated colors which was kept from the earlier decades. The shades that border on black also remained and one of them occupies the place in the color space of Rouge Noir, which had been part of the second lipstick range since 2013. In 2020, a new era with a bias towards red shades began. The beautiful balance found in 2015 no longer existed within the range of lipsticks. The number of bluish shades decreases in favor of 6 red shades which had appeared. Among the yellows, the shades of extreme lightness such as NCS S 1050-Y80R – very light – or NCS S5540-Y90R – very dark – disappeared. The individuality of the shades was preserved, which highlights the work done by the brand to distinguish each of its proposals. The entire range was refocused on intermediate clarity, always with a very strong saturation. The iconic Sari Doré and Teheran are still present currently.

5. Conclusion

This study identified the signature lipstick shades specific to Chanel and also the following conclusions.

Colors

The abundance and constancy of the yellowish colors: These are present as beiges and browns, but also as vivid tones. The most emblematic are Sari Doré, reference NCS S 2070-Y90R which has been present since 1972 with 11 occurrences and Teheran under NCS S 2050-Y90R reference was present since 1963, or 62 years and has had 12 occurrences at the time of the study.

The saturation of the reds: There are fewer of these than there are of yellowish colors, but their saturation makes them stand out. Reds such as Rouge Noir, with 3 occurrences reference NCS S 7020-R, are all intense, and they have become iconic. One can also mention reference NCS S 3060-R, which have been repeated in 9 occurrences since 1972. The reds have exceptional longevity at the House: the red shades remained on the market for 19 years on average. So, there is minimal novelty but there is a real fidelity over time, which showed that the true reds suit 's identity.

The inferiority of blue tones: No signature specific to the House emerged. Only one shade representative of this tonality appears twice in all the ranges once in 1972 and once in 2010. Among the longest lasting blues, reference NCS S 2060-R10B was repeated on 8 occurrences and reference NCS S 2070-R10B was repeated on 9 occurrences.

Lightness

Dark colors are in the majority and include near-blacks. Except for the years 1960, 1963 and 1970, when the ranges only had light colors, since 1972 most colors have been dark. Dark does not mean dull: Rouge Noir is dark, and it is very vivid. The years 1995, 2000, 2005 and 2010 developed darker tones. Since 2000 the dark colors had been very close to the black ones in the chromatic space. There is only one color with this degree of black in the 2015 range, but more than 3/4 of the range was in this category at the apogee of the "near blacks".

Saturation

The presence and consistence of vividness. All of the ranges have many saturated colors for the years considered, independent of the brightness or the tonality of the lipsticks. The years with the most restrained ranges are 2005 and 2010. These years were marked by dark colors. The 3 most saturated ranges were in 1980, 1990, and 1995.

Through analyzing the House's color charts, the history of Chanel's lipstick colors from 1960 to 2020 was discovered. For years, Chanel has always explored chromatic areas under the influence of its Creators, first by offering desaturated beiges in 1970, the almost black shades in 1980, and various saturated reds in 2020.

In the future, the brand's personality will continue to be strengthened by creating a color offering consistent with the Chanel's heritage.

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