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SAC Theater and Lobby
 Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska



SAC Theater and Lobby
 Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska

Interior Color Selection

INTRODUCTION

Color is defined as the perceived quality of light reflected or emitted by an object. The term “perceived” is important because each of us views color differently. Some of us are extremely sensitive to color and its application, while others do not consciously take notice. We can hardly ignore the drama of a beautiful sunset or an impressive landscape, but color in interior spaces is often ignored. Color has a big impact on how we feel and behave in a space. In a drab dark room we may feel uncomfortable, while in a bright, vibrant room, spirits tend to be cheery and delightful. Yet we don’t realize that these emotions can stem from color.

The National Bureau of Standards estimates that the human eye can distinguish over ten million colors. Yet, color is much more than reflected light, it is one of the most expressive elements of design because its quality affects our emotions directly and immediately. Successful interior designs harmonize form, space, light, texture, and color. Color is the integral element in every design, for a well-planned color scheme can completely change the appearance and mood of a space.

HISTORY

History shows that color trends change with the times. The following color synopsis for the last century was provided by The Color Marketing Group.

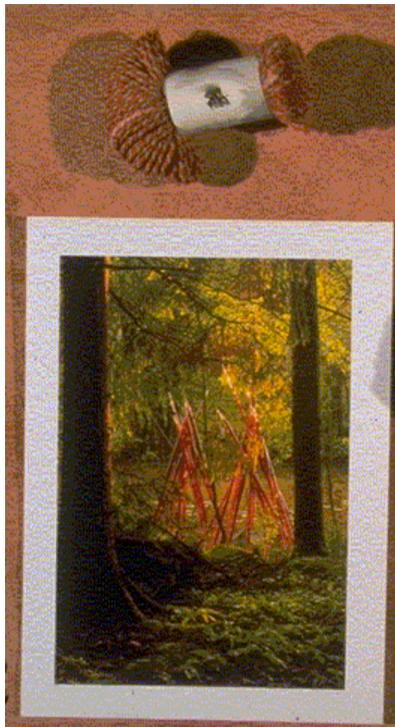
- 1900** – “You can have it in any color as long as it is black.” Henry Ford.
- 1910** – Victorian era clothing is black and white, but color is added to Victorian homes with somber golds and reds.
- 1920** – Color is in full swing.
- 1930** – The depression brings in what is known as the “taupe age”.
- 1940** – World War II brings a palette of heavy grays, somber teals, and thick reds.
- 1950** – Color explodes into bright pastels, appliances in aqua, pale yellow and pink. Another favorite color is chartreuse green.
- 1960** – Avocado green and harvest gold are in homes all across America. Yellows and Orange permeate the culture.
- 1970** – Earthtones dominate.
- 1980** – Gray takes over from beige as the neutral. Light blues and mauve are popular.
- Early 1990** – Colors are rich with jeweltones. Several shades of green are popular, teal, sage and hunter.
- Late 1990** – Corals, soft yellows and yellow greens. Effects such as pearlescent, iridescent, holographic and metallic are changing the future of color.



*Air Force Global Weather Center
Heritage Hall
Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska*



Shade of red



Oranges and Yellows

COLOR AND EMOTION

Some theories suggest that people give meaning to color by an intuitive sense that is universal to everyone. Another theory suggests that associations of color are learned and are dependent upon a society, place and time. More than likely it is a combination of both. The basic reaction of the emptiness of solid white, black and gray, and the excitement of red, yellow and orange seem to be basic reactions for everyone.

Society in the United States comes into play when we think of red, yellow and green as stop, caution and go; pink and light blue for infants; black for mourning; white for weddings, and red, white and blue for the U.S. flag.

Red

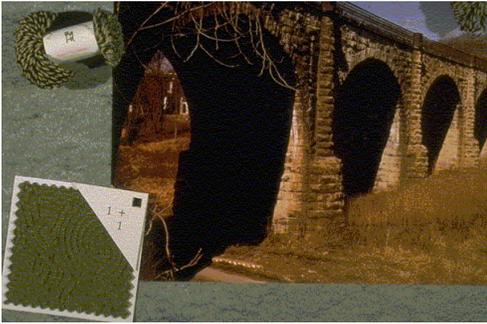
Reds are typically warm colors. They are exciting colors that promote heat, intensity and force. Red is often used on warning signs, such as a stop sign or a fire exit. It is also a cheerful color that is associated with patriotism, Christmas, and St. Valentine's Day. Red is a color that has remained popular throughout the years and never seems to go out of style. It can raise body temperature, pulse rate, blood pressure, and experiments have shown that red will speed tissue healing. When red is tinted to pink, it loses some of its impact and becomes associated with femininity, charm and delicacy. When it is shaded, it becomes a warm brown.

Orange

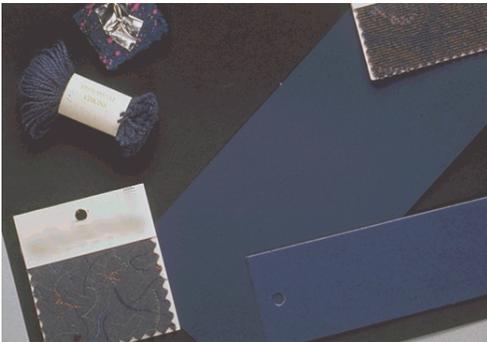
Orange is the combination of red and yellow, and shares their characteristics. It has the excitement of red but is somewhat subdued by the yellow. Orange inherits its sense of cheer from yellow, and is considered a happy color. Bright orange is best used in small quantities; however its tints of beige and tan are favored as background colors. Its shades are variations of brown.

Yellow

Yellow is the lightest of the warm colors and is associated with cheerfulness. It is less aggressive than red, yet it is open and expansive with a high level of reflectivity. It promotes activity and mild stimulation. Yellow's tints are cream and beige that are popular background colors. Its shades are tans, lighter browns and dark brown. Yellow is also a symbol of "caution" with its use on street signs, and on school buses.



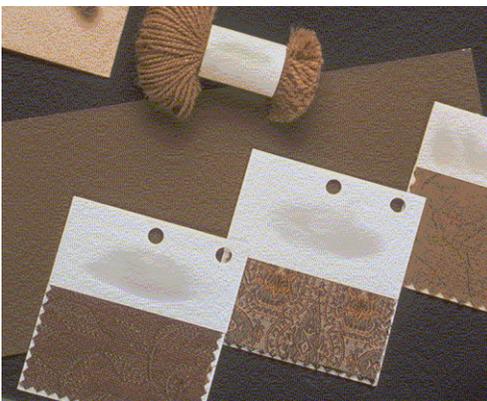
Shades of Green



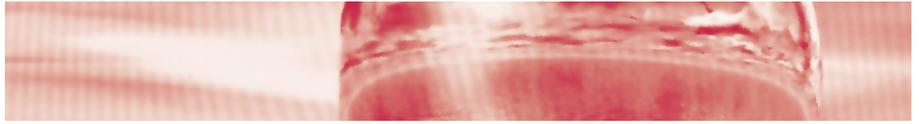
Shades of Blue



Shades of Violet



Shades of Browns



Green

Green is the combination of yellow and blue and is considered a cool color. It is the warmest of the cool colors due to its yellow content. Green has the cheerfulness of yellow, yet holds the calmness of blue. It is commonly used in restful spaces. Green is associated with nature; grass, trees and other vegetation. It is the color of “GO”.

Blue

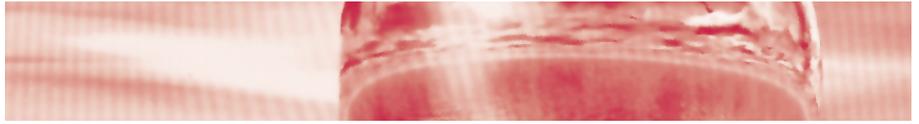
Blue is the coolest of cool colors. It is associated with calmness, rest, simplicity, truth, and purity, but can also have a depressive effect if overused. It can encourage thought, contemplation and meditation and is considered the color of intellectual activity. Intense blue is a good accent color but it lacks the energy of red, orange and yellow. Blue is associated with nature – air, sky, and water. Blue can lower body temperature, pulse rate, and blood pressure, and is said to slow down tissue healing. It is a color associated with authority and its coolness may cause negative implications. Tints of blue have the same relaxing affect while shades of blue tend to be heavy and potentially depressive. Most people, when asked their favorite color, reply “blue”.

Violet

Violet is the combination of blue and red and carries with it the contrast of liveliness and calmness. This may be why violet is associated with tension and ambiguity. Violets and purples should be avoided in some contexts because they can be disturbing to many people. At the same time, violet is viewed as subtle, sensitive and artistic. It is associated with royalty and spirituality. Lavender, a pale tint of violet, is light and playful. Deeper shades are thought of as dignified.

Browns

Browns are the deeper shades of red, orange and yellow. They tend to take on some of the characteristics of these colors and appear warm and comforting but lack energy. They can have the negative connotations of soil and dirt. They also take on positive thoughts associated with the qualities of wood, brick, tile and stone.



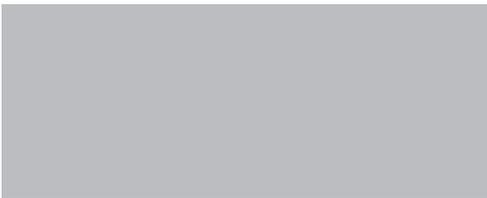
White

White is a safe color that can be used in large proportions. It is associated with cleanliness, purity, clarity and simplicity. White can also be associated with emptiness and boredom. Use of white can make a space seem larger. It can also make space feel stark or sterile. Adding very slight amounts of pigmentation creates a range of whites referred to as “cool” whites and “warm” whites. These hues are used to control the “mood” of white.



Black

Black has strong associations with strengths, seriousness, dignity and formality. It also has negative associations of emptiness, depression, and death. Black is a heavy color that can be depressing if poorly used. When used well, it can be very elegant. When used with white, black is powerful and sharp but also stern and forbidding.



Gray

Gray is the combination of black and white, or mixture of complementary colors. Similarly to white, there are “cool” or slightly blue toned grays, and “warm” slightly red toned grays. Light grays do not project strong associations and are often used as background colors. Dark grays can be associated with depression or authority.

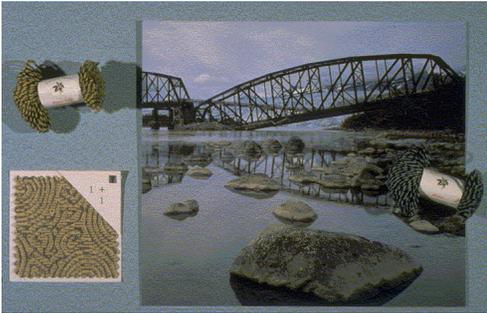


A Rainbow of Color

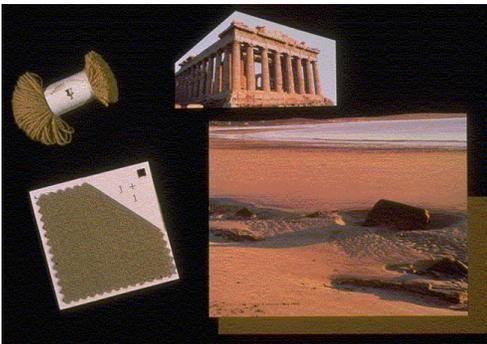
COLOR PREFERENCES

There have been studies that test the preferences of colors at different ages with the following results:

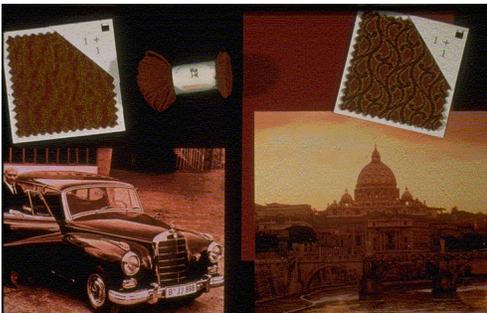
- Babies and children, to the ages of six, prefer bright stimulating colors such as red, orange and yellow.
- At age seven to eight, there is a change from the preference of reds to the preference of blues. The theory is that this is also a change within the stages of childhood development.
- The preferences from age eight to sixty years old are blue, green, and violet, interchangeably, then red, yellow and orange.
- As a person grows older, his or her eyes grow weak and sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between green and blue. Cool greens and blues are preferred.



Northern Light



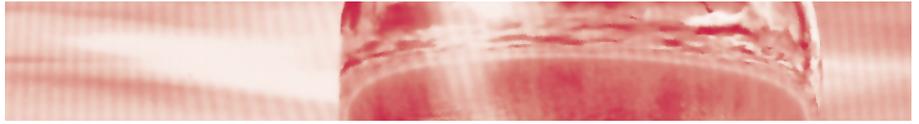
Southern Light



Western Light



Incandescent Light



COLOR AND LIGHT

Determining the source of light is essential when working with color. As a light source changes, so does color. Natural white light is the presence of all color, while darkness, or black, is the absence of all color. The primary colors of light are red, green and blue, and when combined equally, they produce a white light.

When selecting colors, it is very important to look at them in the same light in which they will remain. A certain shade of red in natural light will look very different in fluorescent light. The source of natural light, as well as the time of day, will effect color.

Natural light has the following properties:

- Northern light – cold greenish cast
- Southern light – warm pink cast
- Eastern light – harsh yellow cast
- Western light – red-orange cast

Artificial light has the following properties:

- Fluorescent light – blue cast; however, a color corrected bulb can be used
- Tungsten light – bright yellow cast
- Halogen light – bluish cast
- Incandescent light – yellow-orange cast