

## Chromophobia

Chromophobia is the fear of corruption through colour and through the piece of text that David Batchelor has written where he refers to colour through the years and centuries where colour was seen as a distraction, I have reviewed the text and drawn my own conclusions on the subject. I read the text and highlighted phrases and words that I wasn't familiar with, from there I made mind maps with patterns of text and how colour was perceived on TV.

It was important for me to understand Western culture. It is a heritage of social norms, ethnic values, traditional customs, belief systems and political systems. Batchelor says that the Western world has systematically criticised, diminished and degraded colour and that theorists have kept this prejudice alive by causing fear and contamination. If colour was seen as secondary and non-specific then the role as an Interior Designer would have been questionable among Architecture practitioners. I'm seeing a pattern of text as colour being referred to as feminine, were women seen as a distraction and so that's why colour was referred to as distracting? Another quote from the text was that women are seen as colour, to be contained and subordinated. If colour was seen as so unimportant, then why was colour so forcibly excluded? With the progression of technology and the introduction to colour on TV, surely it was just a matter of time? Creatively, drawing was seen as successful, but colour was not. Why wasn't colour celebrated as drawing was? To try and find some answers I researched colours and cultures to understand what some colours mean to different countries; I was surprised and pleased how different and how similar some are.

I note from my findings that different colours mean different things for different parts of the world, yet black is still associated with power and linked to masculinity. Why is certain colour definition so negatively ingrained in our brains? In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century why do we feel

the need to only wear black to a funeral to show we are acting respectful, why do men choose to wear black to show their position of power? Why is white considered the purist of colours to wear to a wedding or sacred ceremony? Another thought I had was that when we consider God and the heavenly world we see this as all white. This is all taught, for years we have been pushing those boundaries and changing the status quo and artists continue to do so, not only in terms of colour.

When television first showed films in colour, surely the dramatic scenes like Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz falling into colour in munchkin land was in fact a celebration of colour. Colour made an impact in films, but Hollywood only deemed colour suitable for fantasy, musicals, period and drama, was this because they were still gauging the success colour could make and caught up in the political and social web of people pleasing? Colour was deemed both secondary and dangerous, was this because the shades of different colours made such an impact of how you feel? Bachelor refers to the world of colour being unleashed could be the fall of culture, what were they so frightened of? I'm finding it difficult to understand why this was the case for so long, but I'm also finding that if different colours evoke different emotions which then causes a change in our behaviour, this is probably the reason why colour was suppressed for so long, which then meant people of power didn't know how to handle the change in society.

When I refer to the colour and cultures in different countries around the world, I find comfort in that colour is celebrated so differently. Were these choices made so freely or were they told by their leaders to do so? Le Corbusier said, 'let's leave the clothes' dyers to the paint tubes.' People were able to and still do today, express their feelings through different coloured clothing, and art through body tattoos yet art was seen as masculine and only definitive without colour. Some pieces of art are just wonderful without colour, this doesn't mean that they are more successful but adding colour changes the whole experience. I can only imagine how hard it would have been to

design a home restricted to black and white. How architects were able to design and create homes and buildings without such restrictions. Although I do admire dramatic black and white designs, it can be just as beautiful in colour, this comes down to personal taste and the style you are trying to achieve.

I bought a book that was recommended for part of my studies. The book is called the Secret Lives of Colour written by Kassia St Clair. There is a chapter in book on page 29, where she has written about the politics of colour, chromophobia, chromophilia. St Clair points out that Henry Ford refused for many years to produce cars in colour other than black. He only produced in black for economic reasons to be able to produce the greatest number of vehicles in the least amount of time. But before long his competitors were producing cars in colour, he then did the same. Was he holding back for economic reasons or maybe he was too scared to take a leap of faith and push those boundaries? The text is very similar to Batchelor's text on chromophobia, how colour was a distraction, self-indulgent, sinful and dishonest, these actions are a direct result of how colour makes you feel and of course it would have been seen as a distraction. But we need to remember that no same colour has the same effect on everybody in the same way. Colour can be your friend and if used in the correct way, to achieve positive results then the responses will be positive ones. Thank goodness to Newton for creating the colour wheel, this point was highly influential which had a profound effect on artists that followed. Again, it takes an influential person or group of people to lead the way for all creatives to aspire to be like, to learn from and then go on to make their designs whilst taking into consideration our environment and the impact design and colour has on our ever evolving and changing world.

Newton's colour wheel was highly influential but as colour became meaningful, attempts were still made to restrict their use, colour was made a law to enforce social boundaries just as women's rights were

and still are challenging the law and fighting for justice for their rights, roles and identities. Colour has a big part to play in the world, in our lives, how and why we make decisions, how it affects our mood, this is all rooted in psychological effects and thanks to some colour theorists we can continue to build on this.

Having read this piece of work and learning of the history of how colour first emerged or tried to emerge, only encourages me to follow my passion when using colour and to stop becoming consumed with the latest trends of Interior Design, a spatial design style is a personal choice for a client or demographic, trends aren't a bad idea but we need to remind ourselves that it's ok to magpie ideas from the latest trends but it's always better to switch it up a little, add your own personal touch, push the boundaries and your ability to see something more magical than just following the latest social media posts that at times makes us think there aren't any more options or that we shouldn't follow up on our own ideas.