

T1450

NC 0020666 0



THE NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

Department of Fashion and Textiles

Faculty: Fashion *DESIGN*

**'The possible benefits of colour to the individual,
through application to the fashion industry'**

by

Dermot Colgan

Submitted to the Faculty of History of Art and Design

& Complementary Studies

in Candidacy for the Degree of Bachelor of Design

1995

I would like to thank May Coyle for her wonderful insight into
Colour and the ways in which it penetrates our lives.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF PLATES	Page	ii
INTRODUCTION	Page	1
CHAPTER 1	Page	4
CHAPTER 2	Page	11
CHAPTER 3	Page	20
CHAPTER 4	Page	29
CONCLUSION	Page	40
BIBLIOGRAHY	Page	44

LIST OF PLATES

- Fig 1 The electro magnetic spectrum.
- Fig 2 An image of the author's hands, produced by
'Kirlian' photography methods.
- Fig 3 A normal human aura, as perceived by
Barbara Brennan.
- Fig 4 An example of Dolce and Gabbana's colourless
advertisements.
- Fig 5 Some of the services offered by the 'Colour Me
Beautiful' agencies, that are in operation since
the publication of Carol Jackson's book.
- Fig 6 Evident poor photographic techniques that
demonstrate before and after effects of a colour
analysis system, by using inconsistent details,
such as posture and facial expression.
- Fig 7 The colour reflection test cards, used by the
'Living Colour' Therapy Centre.
- Fig 8 An interior view of the Blackthorn Medical Centre
in Kent.

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Every day when we wake up, the first thought that enters our minds is usually "what will I wear to-day?". The next thought is often "what colour do I feel like wearing?" A quick assessment of our frame of mind leads us to choose suitable clothing and colour combinations that feel right. This daily ritual is for most of us a completely natural process, where our intuition prevails. But why do we sometimes feel a certain colour is wrong to wear? Colours seem to be inexplicably related to our behaviour.

The possibility of harnessing colour to exert influence on how we behave is an area which has been examined in the broader aspects of our life. The colours for our interior habitation, offices and public spaces, and to a lesser extent the clothes we wear have been extensively documented. However, the challenge of incorporating the more directly related properties and effects of colour, to the mainstream fashion industry is open for exploration.

The aims of this thesis are firstly to determine the way in which colour influences our lives. The level at which the colours exert their influence must then be ascertained. When these basic facts are discussed, I will attempt to bring them into the context of clothing, so a more beneficial approach to using colour can be brought about.

I will approach this investigation by synthesising various views on both the use of costume and of colour in history. As colour is a substance it has to do with chemistry. As we perceive colour through our eyes, it has to do with physiology, as it is a sensation which influences our mind, it has to do with psychology. All of these factors result in a huge contribution of studies that realise and understand the essence of colour, and gives us a wide field from which to relate results which we can utilise in other ways.

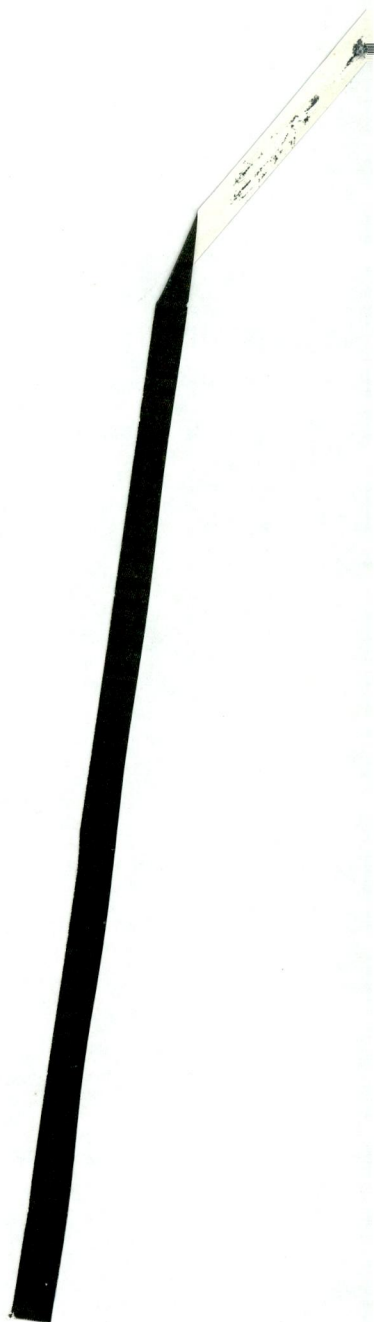
The metaphysical aspect of colour also makes the subject quite difficult to deal with, as there is a lot of speculation as to how colour actually affects us. It is almost like determining how a religion affects a person, in the sense that unseen and unexplained qualities are involved, for example where do the colours in our dreams come from? The question asked by the philosopher Gary Zuvak,

“If I cannot prove the existence of non-physical reality, do I decide that it is nonsensical, do I decide that there is no answer, or do I expand myself to the level at which the answer can be given?”

is one that we should also question. (Zuvak, 1982, p. 92). It is with this attitude that I have approached this thesis, not discarding any unscientific information just because it is not understood.

Ways in which colour are applied to clothes at present do not seem to have any understanding of potential benefits. By understanding and observing colour more carefully, I want to discover if colour can be further applied in the fashion industry, to improve on the present situation. If a change occurs in fashion, it would permeate all of our lives. It is for this reason that we must try to evaluate the possibilities of improving the existing situation.

CHAPTER 1



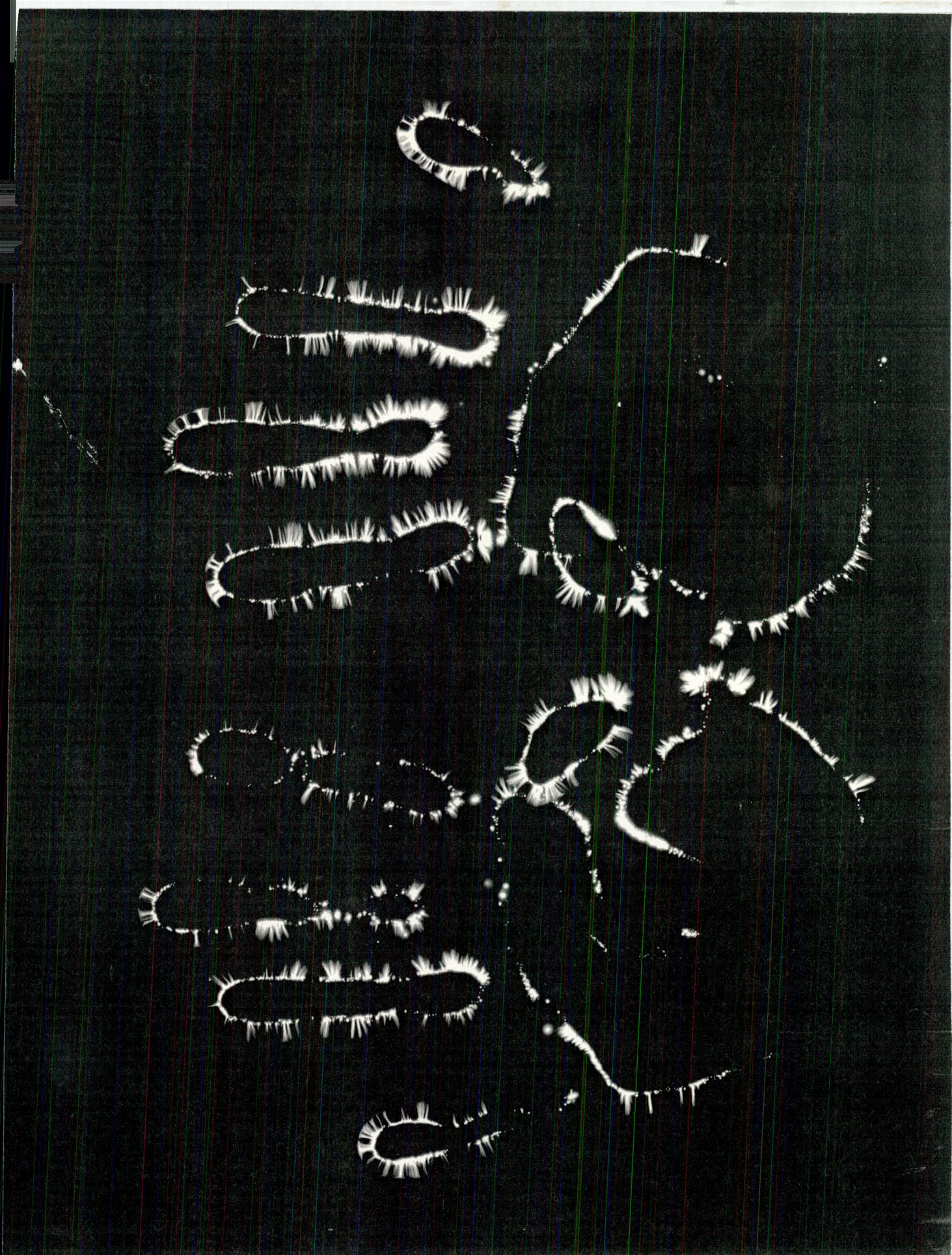


Fig 2. An Image of the author's hands, produced by 'Kirlian' photography methods.

CHAPTER 2

CHAPTER 2

Identifying factors that demonstrate ways in which we can further develop the use of colour in clothing is discussed in this chapter. This will be achieved by observing various documented opinions that inform us of colour properties and by seeing where colour and clothes have reflected changes or exerted influence on humanity. Through these observations, we can further our ability to control the effects of colour when applied to clothing.

Colour is the most important factor contributing to human adornment and is the most applied element to dress and clothing. Adornment can be basically explained as “anything worn above and beyond physical needs”. (Horn/Gurel, 1981, p. 26). The concept of a garment’s symbolic colour value is often viewed as the reason why people wear clothes at all. For example the way in which purple has been identified throughout time as a colour of importance. Another way to view this is that man has inherently used different clothes for relevant purposes because of the benefits a colour could have. This benefit was then associated with the situation that the colour was used and became merely symbolic. This has led to a lack of understanding of a colour’s positive influence.

In What colour are you?, the author Lila Bek maintains that “fashion in terms of colour can be used for personal or cultural change”. (Wilson/Bek 1981, p. 84). It is then possible for personal change to influence fashion trends. In her view the reason we are drawn to certain colours is due to our natural ability to externalise our inner radiations. Gary Zuvak is seen to be one of the best interpreters of frontier science. (Smith, Hudson, 1989, Cover Review). He has stated that “Emotions are currents of energy with different frequencies”. and

“when you shift the level of your consciousness you shift the frequency of your light”. (Zuvak, 1989, p. 94). This would imply that emotions have the same basic vibrational qualities as colour and may account for our natural inclination to associate certain colours with certain emotions.

This is how Bek believes that using coloured clothes can be a means of helping and displaying our personalities. She also believes that when we choose a colour for the wrong reasons we are creating “disharmony” in our bodies through wrong colour vibrations. (Wilson/Bek, 1981, p. 84). This implies that coloured clothing is a means to both reflect our inner psyche and to improve our lives by intuitively surrounding ourselves with colours that we need.

Gimbel sees clothes and fabrics as our way of controlling the amount of colour to which we expose ourselves. It must be understood that most dress materials with very few exceptions, act as colour filters, to the extent to which the body is covered, the body receives a colour treatment. (Gimbel, 1980, p. 49). This treatment, comparable with the reactions that plants have to colour, may be a method of steering our biological or psychological systems in directions we wish to develop.

When we attempt to discover the origins of humans using clothes for beneficial reasons, we see that clothes were originally used to keep us warm. This may have been the case half a million years ago when the first evidence of man clothing himself was known, we must identify what led humans to consciously consider the colour of their clothes. As the humanist, educationalist and colour expert Rudolf Steiner comments:

“Here lies the meaning costume. Modern man may say that clothes derive significance through the fact that they provide warmth, well certainly this is one of the materialistic means, but it creates no aesthetic forms. Artistry arises always and only through a relation to the spiritual”. (Steiner, 1964, p. 25).

This demonstrates that clothes were never purely functional objects, but were always used to aesthetically improve the life of the wearer.

When we surround ourselves with art, our environment is enhanced, so too are our lifestyles enhanced with colour.

Steiner has had a huge impact on colour usage throughout our society, with many Steiner schools utilising specific colour schemes for specific age groups in children's classrooms. He embodied Goethe's colour theories and discarded Newton's theories as being too 'close-minded', as he never approached things in a spiritual sense. Indeed this approach to scientific subjects has been adopted by many great scientists in our time. Albert Einstein, for instance, maintained "that cosmic religious feeling is the strongest and noblest incentive to scientific research".

(Brennan, 1988, p. 1). This is why we must not discard any 'unorthodox' information. By approaching his studies with an open mind, Goethe gained a lot more knowledge than Newton.

Steiner said in 1923 that when man entered a physical body from the spiritual worlds, his environment did not "befit him as a human being" and he felt he must do something to harmonise with his new home. According to him "that is why he carried down from the spiritual worlds the colours of his garments". (Steiner, 1964, p. 24). This was how he perceived the costumes of olden times, as embodiments of harmony. He also discussed the costumes of this century, stating

"that at a time when insight into the pre-earthly has withered, the art of costuming has shrivelled into dilettantism. For modern clothing hardly conveys the feeling that man wants to wear it because of the way he lived in pre-earthly existence". (Steiner, 1964, p. 24).

Perhaps this is a reflection of our inability to utilise the colour of a garment in the most beneficial way, with our present fashion system. Maybe to-day, if more people approach the selection of clothes with a view to garments bringing harmony into their lives through colour, we could understand the spiritual relationship that Steiner believed could result in a finer artistry of clothing.

Goethe saw connections between entire regions and their colour preferences, such as lively nations like the French who preferred intense colours at that time, while sedate nations such as the English wore "straw-coloured or leather-coloured yellow, accompanied with dark blue". (Matthaei, 1971, P. 180).

This outward reflection of emotional qualities throughout garment observation can easily be seen in clothing within our own society. The costumes of men and women have always differed considerably throughout the ages. This can also be said of the ability to express emotions of both genders. While men have always been quite rigid in their choice of clothes, they have also been obviously more reluctant to express emotions in public. "Boys don't cry", has always been the instruction. Laver writes of the dress code of men in the nineteenth century. "It was considered ungentlemanly to wear anything striking." (Laver, 1969, p. 170).

Women however have always been quite expressive of emotions, looked upon as a weakness by men in the past, but now seen as a healthy way to behave by any psychologist. This is also obvious in female attire, where a much broader range of shapes and colours has always been worn.

As men and women seem to be attaining equality in this century, so too are costume changes evident. Women who now hold the same careers as men are wearing more suits and different styles, which in the past have only been associated with men. Especially in the case of situations such as the Courts, and legal institutions, where a certain control of emotions would be expected, the bright colours of the past, female attire, have been replaced by relevant darker and more conservative outfits.

Men are also conforming to this new equality with a bigger and wider range of designs and acceptable colours to choose from. This is most evident in the increase of male fashion magazines in shops everywhere, where a development of possible colour palettes for men, is commonplace. People seem to be approaching colour choices in relation to clothing with more awareness of possible positive effects. Could this be the end of Steiner's belief that costume has "shrivelled into dilettantism?" (Steiner, 1965, p. 24).

One explanation as to why women have chosen to wear more coloured garments is given by Theophilus Gimbel who says that "women more than men choose a colour intuitively and this colour may be worn through a whole phase of their lives, or only occasionally". The reason he gave for this natural female advantage is that

"their bodies and consequently their minds are less deeply steeped in the mineral density, therefore a sensitivity is still prevailing in them which the density level in men does not permit". (Gimbel, 1980, p. 49).

This density level may affect the extent to which a colour vibration can exert influence. As it is a little-understood subject, which has never been taken into consideration as a significant factor, I feel it is a field where further exploration is warranted.

Our society has arrived at a place in time where unlimited usage of colour and fabrics is available, a freedom which in the past was quite restricted to most. In pre-Norman rural Ireland, for instance, people were limited to certain colours relating to their position in society. Both peasantry and soldiers were allowed only one colour, military officers and private gentlemen were allowed two, and so on right up to the ranks of Kings and Princes of the Blood who could wear seven colours. (O'Neill, 1977, p. 46).

The same principle of colour privileges was evident in Imperial China, where only the Emperor wore Imperial yellow, denying this privilege to his subjects. (Itten, 1970, p. 13). When the communists came to power in China the same method of colour control was used to create the opposite effect. A new colourless drab uniform was enforced, which became "an ideological symbol that expressed economic austerity, practical utility and absolute classlessness." Self expression through beauty was now seen as unpatriotic. (Horn/Gurel, 1981, p. 248). An example where colour has been used as a major source of personality control.

In the past the actual pigment of a colour and its availability contributed to giving most colours their economic value. Thanks to modern science, this has been changed. Now all colours in every hue, shade and intensity are available. Fabrics also had their value determined by availability and how difficult they were to produce. This also has been changed today with the production of many previously expensive fabrics being produced on a large scale, but also with the advent of many easily made synthetic fabrics. We must determine, however, if the most effective use of colour is to be realised, how natural and synthetic fabrics affect both colours and the humans who wear them.

Most manufacturers of such fabrics will come to the conclusion that as there are no outwardly visible differences to be seen, using a natural fabric will be no better than using a synthetic one. This may not be the case, however, a lot of synthetic fabrics have some small amounts of chemicals to which people are sensitive, such as acrylic, polyester or nylon. All these are made from petroleum by-products and can give off traces of chemical vapours when worn next to the skin (Horn/Gurel, 1981, p. 361).

Barbara Brennan, an American expert on what she refers to as the H.E.F. (Human Energy Field) believes that these synthetic fabrics interfere with our natural energy flow. She uses nylon stockings as an example of a fashionable product which interferes with the energy flow up and down the leg. To stop this effect, which according to her is related to many modern female illnesses she recommends avoiding the use of nylon stockings and instead to try and find silk ones. The positive affects of natural fabrics, according to Barbara Brennan, is that they are not only safe to wear, but "can enhance the energy fields and help to sustain it". She recommends cotton, silk and wools as the most effective possibility. (Brennan, 1993, p. 121). Bek also agrees with this view, relating the fabrics with their properties as filters of light. "Natural fibres have the natural ability to filter colours". (Bek/Wilson, 1981, p. 86).

Low absorbency of synthetic fabrics can also accumulate moisture on the skin, which can lead to discomfort and irritation. Synthetic dyes also play a role in the effectiveness of a colour. Some synthetic dyes involve finishes which have resulted in allergic reactions. (Horn/Gurel, 1981, p. 362). These negative aspects of synthetic fabrics are evidence, that in the same way a sound proof wall will affect the vibrations of sound frequencies, so too do synthetic fabrics lessen the effect of

colour frequencies, thus reducing the health benefits of clothing.

A harmonious combination of fibres and dyes ^{is} ~~are~~ essential to maximise the effects of coloured garments. Ways in which the fashion industry can benefit from such information will be discussed in a later chapter.

This chapter has shown us that first the symbolic use of colour could merely be the remains of the colour knowledge that Man once intuitively understood. The ability of a colour to exert influences was then attributed to the possibility that our emotions, like colours, are also vibrations, and are therefore more closely related than science has so far been able to prove. This led to the fact that there may be a possibility of using clothes and their colours as a tool for controlling emotions and aiding the development of the spirit.

Further evidence is given that we do express our personalities through colour, by observing the colour preferences of both individuals and entire nations. Finally, the ways in which the body reacts to fabric content, ^{is} ~~is~~ seen as an important factor contributing to the effective use of colour.

So, in this modern age, the age ⁱⁿ ~~which~~ Steiner predicted eventual understanding of Goethean colour theories, we have unlimited access to colours, and must surely start to utilise this privilege to its full capabilities. The only way to do this is by integrating this knowledge into the industry that produces our clothes.

CHAPTER 3

CHAPTER 3

A more thorough study of how we can control and use colour to its best advantage must now be realised. The use of colour in art works of the past is an important contribution to learning the uses of colour qualities. The acknowledgement of the many colour studies undertaken by more recent artists are also important. Through observing how the colours of our clothes are presented by the fashion industry and selected by the public I aim to identify the areas which can be improved.

Artists have used colour as a representation of forms in paintings and colour works throughout history. The qualities assumed by the colours when placed together and the ability of the artist to control these creates many effects that can be used to express different values. In art, colours have been used to express symbolic visual and emotional values. In all cases the ways in which the colours related with each other were noted, learned and utilised. The history of painting expresses this and gives us valuable information on utilising colour in all situations. This element of art is most thoroughly discussed in Itten's Elements of Colour. Itten believed that visual aesthetics could be approached from three directions IMPRESSION being the visual direction, EXPRESSION the emotional and CONSTRUCTION the symbolic direction. (Itten, 1970, p. 13). These aesthetic means were applicable to any art form which involves the expression and utilisation of colour and in my view is the basis on which one should approach garment design.

The visual impression of a colour is the factor that most people take into consideration when selecting colours for clothes that are relevant to a situation. The visual impression is dependent on how people perceive us and is basically an extension of our personality. The emotional

expression relates to the many different emotional values that a colour assumes. This may vary from culture to culture but the basic properties are universally known and even more so intuitively sensed. Itten cites the use of the colour white for grief and death in China as an example of an expression of emotion through colour. (Itten, 1970, p. 13).

The construction and symbolic use of colour in clothes has the same basic properties of a work of art, but is more important in dress, as we are dealing in three dimensions which are constantly around us. This symbolic value is determined by the fabric quality, shape and placement of pieces on the overall garment.

If we are to effectively use these properties of colour in garments whether designing or selecting them to wear, we must understand the basic properties and elements of colours. Itten's work demonstrates many of the important elements we must consider. He also acknowledges that colour is a "superficial external, toying with metaphysical forces". (Itten, 1970, p. 12). This relates to the information discussed in Chapter 1. Itten strives to effectively harness colour so that it can be controlled and utilised to create desired effects. This is what I propose should be a further contribution to clothes design.

Itten's work, which is quite recent (1961) embodies most of the revelations in colour use of the past two centuries, particularly Goethe and Chevrue. His influence can also be seen in practice in the Fashion Industry which will be discussed further in this chapter in the development of personal colour analysis system.

Itten stresses the importance of maintaining an objective overview in our approach to designing. Deciding ourselves if something is attractive or unattractive is a personal sentiment which may obscure

appropriate beneficial results.

“Decorators and designers sometimes tend to be guided by their own subjective colour properties, this may lead to misunderstanding and disputes, where one subjective judgement collides with another”. (Itten, 1970, p. 26).

He believes that there are objective considerations that can overcome these subjective preferences. These considerations are mandatory for the design level of the fashion industry, due to the nature of forecasting which we will discuss later.

Seven kinds of colour contrast are discussed by Itten, each of which is according to him “unique in character and artistic value in visual, expressive and symbolic effect”. The seven contrasts are -

1. Contrast of hue
2. Light/dark contrast
3. Cold/warm contrast
4. Complementary contrast
5. Simultaneous contrast
6. Contrast of saturation
7. Contrast of extension (Itten, 1970, p. 33).

Assuming that each of these contrasts are taken into consideration and understood we can see that endless combinations can be used to create any desired effect. Expressive characteristics are formulated by Itten for each colour. This is done by observation of how the colour has been used in art, and also on the intuitive deduction of a colour's characteristics. These characteristics are quite easily observed and known by any person interested in colour qualities. The effect that these contrasts induce physiologically are always related to their psychological values. This theory is further developed in Itten's chapter on Theory of Colour Expression where he attempts to discover the accuracy of the expressive values of colour. He inquires that if two colours are complementary, then their interpretations should be complementary also, and if a colour is mixed, the expressive interpretation should also be mixed.

“1. Complementary Pairs.

Yellow : Violet = bright knowledge : dark emotional piety.

Blue : Orange = submissive faith : proud self respect.

Red : Green = material force : sympathy.

2. Mixed Colours.

Red + Yellow = orange

Power + knowledge = proud self respect

Red + blue = violet

Love + faith = piety” (Itten, 1970, p. 30).

These demonstrative qualities which are selected here are quite universally understood to express these meanings, yet many different expressive values can be associated with each colour. This is compensated for by the many shades, tints, hues, etc. that can be seen in a colour.

The subjective receptive qualities of a colour are also relevant in this case, as many colours are expressive to individuals through personal experience, such as a memory associated with that colour. An example of this is seen in the advertising methods of designers Dolce and Gabbana. They have realised, that if a garment is depicted in a certain colour in a photo advertisement then the viewer whose subjective reaction to that colour is a negative reaction, then a smaller audience is reached. They have compensated for this factor and leave the fantasy of the observer to imagine their favourite colour, by showing the advertisement in black and white. (Flett, Kathryn, *Arena Homme Plus*, Vol 1. Summer 94, p. 169).

We must realise that colours and their combining effects can be learned with intellect as well as instinct. The important information that Itten provides is that the colours can be perceived and their relationships recognised, which is how we must approach colour in the area of fashion design. He also states that colour's:



Fig 4. An example of Dolce and Gabbana's colourless advertisements.

“inner essence remains concealed from our understanding, and must be grasped intuitively. Hence rules and formulae can be no more than signposts on the way to colour fulfilment”. (Itten, 1970, p. 94).

This leads me to understand that the realm of the intuitive must be further investigated.

A principle where individuals find the best possible colours for themselves which has become extremely popular in our society, totally embodies Itten's theories. This principle involves a personal colour analysis based on Itten's belief that personal colour harmonies are directly influenced by physical features and personal traits. A system of personal colour analysis was developed in America in the early eighties which divides people into four categories, each named after a season. The most widely accepted and popular system was introduced by Carol Jackson's Colour Me Beautiful. Published in 1983, this book sold more than three million copies in the first few years of publication, proving that today's society are extremely interested in gaining knowledge on the use of the most beneficial personal colours. As Israel Abramov states in his study of the topic “A social phenomenon of this magnitude deserves careful attention”. (Abramov, 1985, p. 211). These systems have also induced an apparant change in attitudes towards the buying and selling of clothes. This is an example where colour knowledge has physically adjusted trends in buying and demonstrates an increase in colour awareness. (Fig 5).

In my opinion the basic principles of these systems are quite important in the sense that they lead to an overall improvement of quality of life. They can and have been used to enhance personal harmonies and are the basis for many world wide image consultants. The systems however use a certain amount of hyperbole in their teachings and can limit the use of some colours to a set of people in a particular season,

Fig 5. Some of the services offered by the 'Colour Me Beautiful' agencies, that are in operation since the publication of Carol Jackson's book.



COLOR ME BEAUTIFUL

Looking good EVERYDAY



Everyone deserves to look their best, but taking hours shopping and spending a fortune is neither practical nor possible for the majority of women and men today. Leading Image Consultants Color Me Beautiful, offer personal and objective advice to thousands of women and men each week. Their consultations and fashion updates take the frustration and mystery away, to make looking good easy, every day.

Colour Analysis

When you wear colours that compliment your natural colouring you look younger, healthier and feel confident. At a colour consultation you will discover which of the 12 seasonal palettes is right for you and how to wear your colours in more interesting and flattering combinations. A wallet containing 48 fabric swatches is included as a guideline for shopping.

Style Class

Understanding why particular styles flatter your body shape and why certain fabrics or patterns suit you more than others, are just part of this class. Proportions, personality, lifestyle and budget are also vital considerations when putting your look together. CMB's style class helps you get more value and flexibility out of your wardrobe, so you look great and feel comfortable. A personalised Style Workbook full of tips is included.

Make-up Class

If you feel out of touch with make-up or have been applying yours the same way for years, now is the time for a personal update of simple techniques that suit you. With a little CMB know-how, make-up can help a woman of any age look her best, naturally. You receive your own 24-page Beauty Workbook to help you remember what you have learnt.



Before



After



before



after



Michelle

before



after



Valene

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

Fig 6. Evident poor photographic techniques that demonstrate before and after effects of a colour analysis system, by using inconsistent details such as posture and facial expression.

bringing about a sense of uniformity. As Abramov says:

“the systems emphasise that each of us is an individual and must be analysed separately, yet they then squeeze each individual into one of four moulds”.

(Abramov, 1985, p. 212).

Various other arguments have been used against personal colour analysis systems, such as the poor use of demonstrative illustrations, using different illuminations and backgrounds for the “before” and “after” pictures. (Fig 6).

The essence of the various systems embody a basic knowledge of Itten's colour theories involving harmonies and contrasts, and they also give guidelines on how these can be utilised in relation to an individual's personality. As with Itten's theories, the systems co-relate expressive qualities with the colours chosen to give an overall view of the personality. The qualities of the seasons can also be incorporated in the analysis of the personality. This is where Itten's theories have really penetrated the world of fashion. Many people who before subjectively chose colours when purchasing garments, are now quite objective, because they realise that their choice of colours must be complementary to the colours of their physical features. People involved in the sales of fashion must now be aware of observing the customers personal harmonies and also must present the garments in such a way that they are complementary.

To see how this all relates and how important it is in the Fashion Industry, we must first see how the Industry has shaped and changed to be the multi-million operation it is today. Garment production as an industry has existed for centuries, but has never changed at the rate we see today. This change first started with the introduction of haute couture at the start of the century. Paris was the centre of the fashion world, the city that everybody relied on to set the example of true style.

The Parisian couturiers were the first global image consultants. Designers dictated every facet of garment evolution. Those who did not comply with the decisions of the elite faced social embarrassment.

From the very beginning the fashion industry was a competitive and cut throat business, the key to which was reflecting the consumers' lifestyle. The skill of prognostication was the way to success, and still is today. As well as silhouettes and fabrics, industry dictates which colours are in or out. Forecasters attempt to use colours which will reflect the consumer's present lifestyle, and thus encourage greater sales. At a glance we can see evidence of this in past colour trends. In Dior's post-war extravagant "New Look" we see a huge shift of shapes and colours, as humanity adjusts to the shift of consciousness with no war worries. Correges's clinical space age clothes are a reflection of humankind entering the previously unexplored space frontiers. The hippie look of the sixties also reflects in colour trends what the youth of that age were exposed to and interested in. These are just some obvious examples of how human consciousness has, through fashion reflected the world around it. If it were not for this occurrence it would be impossible for the fashion industry to predict future trends at all.

To ensure that they are completely objective, forecasters must detach themselves from the present and try to project themselves into the lives of the future population within the relevant fashion season. As Perna says in Fashion Forecasting:

"If we can assess what is going on in personalities, then we can relate this to a colour variety, suitably harmonising with this general frame of mind". (Perna, 1987, p. 49).

Colourists must choose their colours up to two years in advance as textile manufacturers must dye fabrics and yarn before Fashion Trade Fairs,

after which wholesales must sell to shops. All this is before the consumer expresses a wish for a colour trend. As Perna says:

“One needs to write the consumer scenario before the consumer can articulate the desire”. (Perna, 1987, p. 50).

Itten also wrote that:

“If a subjective timbre is significant of a person's being, then much of his mode of thought, feeling and action can be inferred from his colour combinations”.
(Itten, 1970, pl 26).

The fashion industry must work this theory in reverse, by assessing the future mode of thought feeling and action to predict various colour combinations. Fashion forecasters of today alongside colour stories, present a huge choice of images and lifestyles with which they want us to aspire to and identify with. This ultimately proves that forecasters are taking advantage of the consumers' inherent ability to express te-inner self through colour choice.

This chapter has shown that studies of colour properties, can give us informations on how colours exert influence in various ways. The fact that some of this knowledge has been integrated into the fashion industry successfully demonstrates the willingness of fashion markets to take on board any new colour discoveries. Even before systems such as colour analysis were in operation, many people took such information into consideration when buying clothes. However when this knowledge was studied and clarified by these systems, clear changes occurred in the public's colour awareness. This proves that should further benefits of colour in clothes be discovered, the fashion industry can do little but comply with the public's desire for change.

CHAPTER 4

CHAPTER 4

The interaction on a more conscious level, of colour theories and the knowledge which has been compiled on the nature of colour, with the fashion industry, is the main focus of discussion in this chapter.

Clothes are involved with everything we do in life, so it is surprising that the subject of colour in clothes has been approached with very little knowledge in our society. This analysis hopes to develop further how we can benefit from choosing the colours of our clothes more carefully, and if the providers of the garments, can improve their own position by helping their customers.

As we have seen in Chapter 3 a knowledge of colour reactions and elements can be quite beneficial to us when considering the various factors associated with clothes, such as skin and hair colourings.

These reactions we observed can be correlated with human qualities and their reactions to each other. (Itten, 1970, p. 30).

Another artist of the Bauhaus school who has clarified the potential characteristics of colour is Josef Albers. While teaching in America, Albers, with the help of his students, created examples of colour interactions which, in my opinion, are possible guidelines for colour application in the clothing industry. Whereas Itten dealt with colour choices and elements, Albers dealt with the actual interactions. One of the most important factors he realised was that “we almost never perceive what colour is physically”. (Albers, 1975, p. 72). In saying this, Albers makes us aware that the way in which we perceive a colour is always influenced by accompanying factors. In relation to clothes, a garment we may know singularly to be a specific colour will exert an influence which is totally dependent on accompanying factors, such as other garments, accessories and the physical features of the wearer. We have the ability to change the desired effect of a colour through knowledge of colour interactions.

Albers also wrote that “change is a result of influence”. (Albers, 1975, p. 9). This demonstrates that by influencing a garment’s colour with another we can change the desired effect. Perhaps it is also true that colours relate to our personal ability to be influenced by them, and a change of personality is always the result of some type of influence. Can we correlate the interaction of colours with the shifting of human qualities?

If we analyse the many documented studies of colours and how they relate to emotions, from Rudolf Steiner’s embodiment of Hippocrates’ concept of the four states of mind, to the popular colour therapy books which saturate the market today, we can find many definitions of colours and their qualities. (1) Red can be seen as the colour of Love or Anger. Yellow of Happiness, or Intellect. There seem to be so many attributes for each colour, that to embody the recommendations of one study can contradict another. So how can we clarify one system from the other? Albers reminds us of the fact “that one and the same colour can perform many different roles.” (Albers p. 20). This factor has been acknowledged by many colour experts and is in my opinion why colour has been elusive in our attempt to harness its qualities and mysteries.

Albers stated that:

“One is able to ‘push’ light and/or hue by the use of contrasts away from their first appearance towards the opposite qualities”. (Albers, 1975, p. 20).

This means that without changing the actual colour, but by altering its surroundings, we can create an opposite effect. (Illustration). Therefore, in relation to combining garments together, we can determine a quality of a colour and then proceed to use this quality in a way which suits us. This can be achieved by considering the

(1) Steiner relates Hippocrates’ four temperaments, Melancholic, Sanguine, Choleric and Phlegmatic, with various colours.

garment's placement within a combination of other garments. "The more different the grounds the stronger is their changing influence". (Albers, 1975, p. 20). By using this information we see that changing qualities can create colour combinations with greater impact.

What Albers teaches us are the multitude of changes that can be realised through innumerable colour combinations. We are educated as to how a colour fluctuates in quality, or as Gerstner writes, "the colours not only evoke sensations, they are themselves sensitive." (Gerstner 1981, p. 59). With this knowledge and a basic understanding of general colour qualities, which are too numerous to document within this thesis, we can begin to apply the benefits to our lives.

An individual must first look at his or her present situation, what are his/her needs and where are the general benefits that a colour can possibly offer most needed. In today's society, the most obvious problem to address first is colour balance. Quite often people find themselves in a situation where one colour can dominate their lives. An example of this is the grey concrete of cities. As colours are dominated by grey you can see an immediate depressing saturation which is noticed by those with or without colour expertise.

This particular saturation can be compensated by the use of green, the combination of blue and yellow. This is the universal colour of balance (Bek, p. 85). Green, however, is the least stimulating and most neutral colour. Goethe preferred to study in green rooms, as he was not distracted by any of its qualities. (Gerstner, p. 47). In a place such as Ireland, where green is the dominant colour, we can become overpowered by the neutral effects, and a sense of lethargy can set in, where an inability to be stimulated is evident. In this situation we must try to realise what active colours we can wear that are relevant to combat these effects.

If the fashion industry of Ireland offered suggestions to combat this overpowering influence of green, a powerful and beneficial marketing strategy could be developed.

As we can see, a balance through observation of surroundings is very important when isolating necessary colours to wear. The next consideration we must observe, is what we are really trying to say to someone through our colours. We have already discussed in Chapter 3 the fact that the way in which we are perceived, or want to be perceived is controllable by colour. This is also apparent through general observation of our personal situations. Are we constantly creating the same negative reactions in our interpersonal relationships? Is there also a pattern in our reluctance to change our colours in garments, as well as our situations? In human nature there is a natural resistance to change which is the subject of many modern self-help books in the market today for example Louise Hays', You Can Heal Your Life. This reluctance to change is also seen in many of our wardrobes, where we usually stick to a group of colours from which we rarely deviate.

When people experiment with colours that they would not normally wear, the result is frequently a positive reaction where evident changes such as increase in confidence, alertness and concentration are observed. (Sun, 1992, p. 92). This seems to be the reason for the success of personal colour analysis systems, which are discussed in Chapter 3. Albers also realised this reaction when in using new previously avoided colours in his experiments a change in his reactions occurred. "Usually a special effort in using disliked colours ends with our falling in love with them". (Albers, 1975, p. 17). The reasons why we do not realise the possible benefits of colours are numerous. We can associate a colour with a bad experience, with a

personal character trait that seemingly contrasts with a particular colour, or in many cases because of a lack of understanding of possible combinations that may suit us. Albers writes that the continued use of disliked colours:

“will teach that preferences and dislikes, as in life so with colour - usually result from prejudices from lack of experience and insight”.

This lack of insight can then interfere with the basis on which most people choose clothes, that is through intuition. If we sense a colour is wrong, it can possibly be what we need to wear and thus we are losing out on an opportunity to bring harmony into our lives. Bek writes that

“A colour may repel us because we have a need for this particular vibration. We should try to sense when we are rejecting a colour for the wrong reasons, when to wear a colour to suit, or contrast, our moods”. (Wilson/Bek 1981, p. 84).

This relates again to our resistance to change, and shows us that experimentation and more thorough consideration should be given when choosing colours. It will also help allow us to present ourselves to others as we really want them to see us. In other words, we can show our real selves and our “true colours”.

Should the advertising methods of the fashion industry inform people of this need for experimentation, an incentive could be given for customers to expand their wardrobes to include more variety of colour to choose from. This would create positive results for both the industry and the customer.

The physical qualities of colour and the ways in which they affect us that were discussed in Chapter 1, can be seen to have a powerful link with what we wear. The vibrational quality is the factor that makes

colour so important. We must observe our personal needs and aversions to colour vibrations, by noticing how we feel when we wear a certain colour and use them as guidelines of how we are in or out of harmony. “When we notice how wrong an outfit looks, it may be that our aura is out of harmony”. (Wilson/Bek, 1981, p. 84). Bek sees how auras and chakras are the systems through which colour reacts. This reaction is what allows us to benefit from their qualities. She also shows us how our energy systems relate to clothes by stating that “weather affects the clothes we choose. The chakras react to sunshine and bright blue sky”. (Wilson/Bek, 1981, p. 86). This is one consideration which we do not have to consciously be aware of when deciding what colour clothes are better for us. It does help us understand the instinctual impulse we feel for certain colours during seasons. This is one consideration in which the Fashion Industry specialises.

It has been observed that as seasons change, the fashion industry must offer appropriate colours.

“They expect to see the colours of autumn leaves in fall clothing, reds and greens for the winter holidays, the pastels of spring and refreshing white for summer. All manufacturers include some of these colours in their lines.” (Fings, 1987, p. 29).

This demonstrates the necessity of the fashion industry to comply with our needs, and further proves the importance of objectively choosing colours.

Chapter 2 discussed Edgar Cayce’s belief that we are attracted to the colours that are predominant in our auras. Surely this would then stop us from realising colours that we need for other reasons, rather than matching with that of our aura. Lila Bek explains this factor

“According to our needs, we will attract different vibratory rates to us. Gradually we can begin to know whether we like these colours because we are these colours, or whether we are drawn to them at this moment because we need them”. (Wilson/Bek, 1981, p. 87).

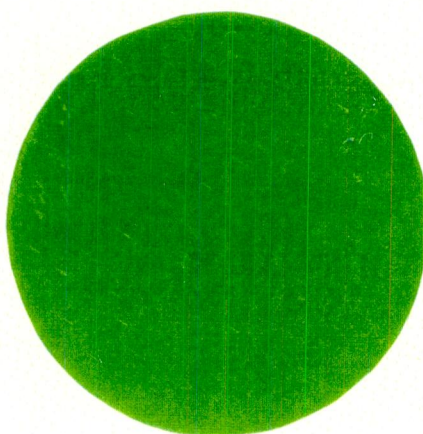
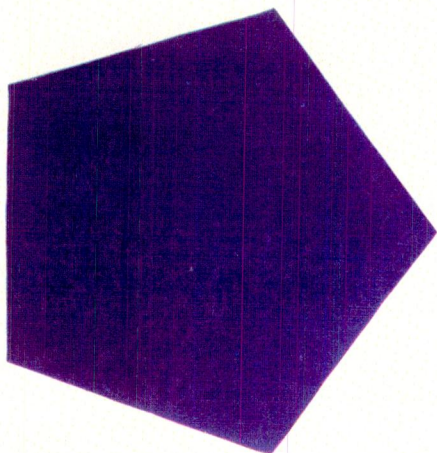
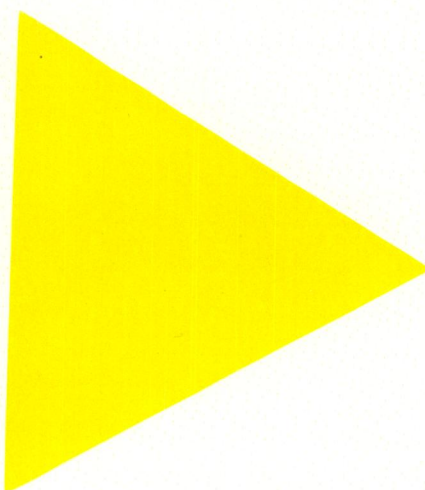
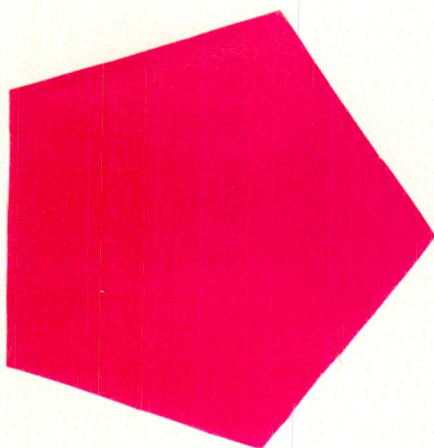
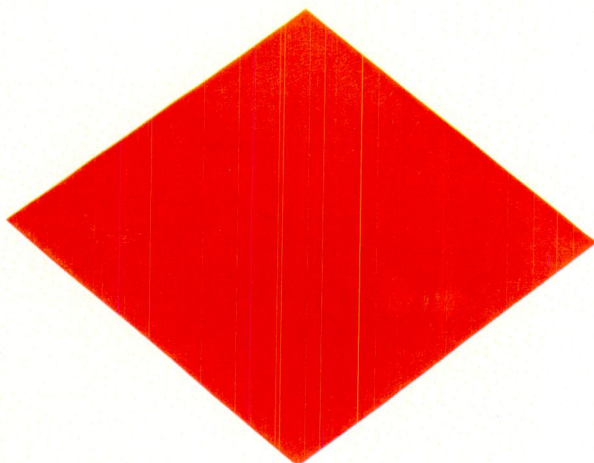
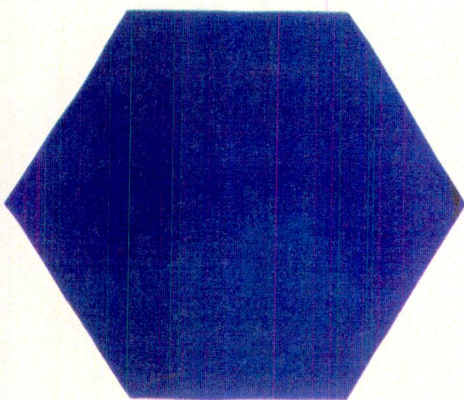
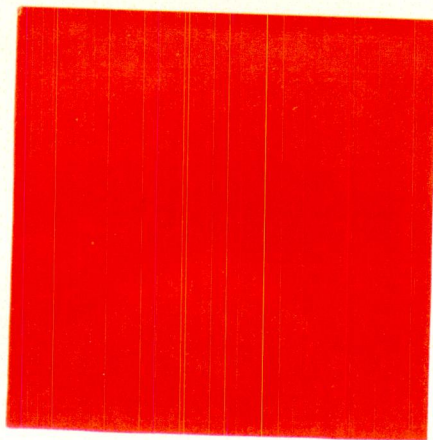
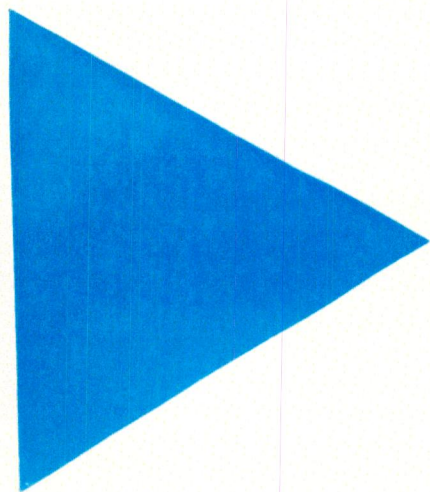
So it seems that only by trial and error can we realise the benefits and possibilities of a colour.

Colour Therapy Centres are also using this knowledge to help individuals to improve their lives. The London therapy centre Living Colour for instance, uses a colour test similar to the scientifically renowned Lusher Test. (Fig. 7). When colours are selected intuitively they are integrated into that person's life and an alteration of their wardrobe in terms of colour is one of the most positive changes observed. The book Colour Your Life includes many case studies giving evidence of colour as positively changing lives, after the relevant lacking colours are identified. (Sun, 1992, p. 92).

These therapy centres are quite expensive thus restricting the amount of clients who can avail of their services. Should retail clothes shops compile a similar method of providing personal colour information the customers would be inclined to avail of this service. In this situation the ability to benefit the customer's well-being would be the marketing strategy and would surely be a good selling point.

The need for a Fashion Industry that offers constant change and choice, is a necessary aid to our personal utilisation of colour benefits. The way in which the Industry itself tries to assess the personalities at which to aim their market has been discussed in Chapter 3. With this constant change of colours, we always have a new stimulus pleading with us to experiment. Bek states that "When we become acclimatised to certain colours around us, our system closes off". (Wilson/Bek 1981, p. 88). This stresses the importance of our necessity to continuously re-evaluate our colour choices.

It may be quite obvious that we get bored with colours after prolonged wearing, but if we look around us we can see many people



who are “set in their ways” when it comes to colour choices. Some men are particularly susceptible to this lack of variety and express an apparent continuous use of drab colours in buying suits. One only has to look at a city commuter train or bus to acknowledge this. By doing this they are shutting themselves off from the benefits of colour. Their professional positions may dictate a sombre dress code, but with some creative thought many colour changes can be applied that conform to the most strict dress codes.

The Fashion Industry also gives us images and prospective identities with which we may identify. This is quite a positive aspect, as we may see an image or character trait to which we aspire to conform. By looking at the colours associated with an image, we are helped to further our ability to change. Changes in fashion have also allowed us to wear colours for situations previously reserved for other purposes. “Colours that used to be appropriate only for evening wear are now used also in sports wear”. (Frings, 1987, p. 131). Colours of clothes that the fashion industry present to us usually accurately reflect season or climate and are relevant to the type of garment i.e. active or office wear. This helps provide the relevant colours when they are needed most.

There are however negative aspects of the Fashion Industry. The designers, manufacturers and media involved have the ability to strike out completely the possibility of using a specific colour, or combination of colours. Colours run in fashion cycles, just as styles do. If colour is needed by a person for a specific reason, the industry may discourage them from using what they sense is best for them. This results in the true meaning of a “Fashion Victim”. It also proves that we should not take fashion too seriously, but realise that it is a commercial industry. In many cases the incentive of colourists is money and the ability to help people create harmony in their lives is never considered.

Finally, we can also use colour through clothes in special circumstances such as ill-health or mental disorders. This is being realised more and more by institutions such as hospitals and psychiatric institutions, where many imbalanced personalities are present. An example of a modern embodiment of colour qualities to aid such people is the Blackthorn Medical Centre in Kent, England, which provides medical care, rehabilitation and social welfare for patients suffering from long term illness. (Myreson, Jeremy, Apr 3, p. 27). Here architect Wolodymr Radysch worked with colour therapist Hazel Adams and doctors involved with the practice to create a “therapeutic environment”. (Fig 8).

A new approach was taken which attempted to give more importance to design which aids the inner health of people as opposed to practical forms of design. Adam's work is influenced by both Steiner's and Goethe's theories and is in agreement with Goethe's belief that colours have a strong effect on the inner life.

In the hospital Adam's colour schemes change only very subtly from room to room, the objective being “to keep everything feeling part of a whole”. The creation of this environment is a reflection of the increasing awareness that people are gaining in relation to the benefits of colour. There does not seem, however, to be the same awareness in regard to the context of clothes. The Fashion Industry seems to be too preoccupied with the economic benefits to mankind and does not consciously adapt itself to positive motives.

The benefits acknowledged by interior designers can easily be related to clothes, for instance Adams considered the use of natural textiles for furnishing fabrics which are more beneficial, the reason being that “synthetics give off static electricity” (Design, issue 532). This is a



Fig 8. An interior view of the Blackthorn Medical Centre in Kent.

factor discussed in Chapter 2 and ignored by most clothes designers when selecting fabrics. In this age where natural foods and healthy lifestyles are a major concern for the public the beneficial properties of a clothing fabric could most definitely influence customers to buy them. If retailers advocated the effectiveness of colour when used with these fabrics, a perfect marketing opportunity could be implemented.

This chapter has shown that by approaching many already existing factors with more insight we can improve our use of colour through clothes, to balance and harmonise our lives. With the knowledge of colour interactions, combined with observations of colour benefits in other areas, we can start to realise how to improve our own lifestyles. The ability to introduce these factors into the mass market clothing industry, does not seem like a difficult task to accomplish. Instead it could be a major incentive for designers to create and market clothes that benefit both customers and the industry.

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

To effectively connect the contributing factors which enable us to use colour more effectively in garment usage, we must look at all the factors within this thesis together. It is only by embodying all of the concepts, ideas and influences, that we can start to use colour beneficially. With implementation of this knowledge, the artificial manner in which colour authorities choose their palates, and the ways in which they are presented to the customer, will also be more consciously considered.

Firstly, a discussion on the physical makeup of colours, concluded that colour is a vibration and that by radiating from its source, affects us at a level which is difficult to quantify. The level at which colour works is still not certain but many individuals and experts believe it to be a reaction on our own energy fields, of which there is more and more information being discovered.

The historical usage of colour in costume and various beliefs and considerations surrounding the use of colour within the context of clothes was discussed. Here many of the qualities that colour exerts are in evidence and lead to a greater understanding of the subject. The essential elements and qualities of colour, were observed to greatly influence the achievement of a personal knowledge of colour harmonies and relations when applied to dressing oneself. The information was also seen to essentially determine fashion trends, and reinforce the importance of coloured clothes relating to frames of mind, sensations and symbolic meanings. The observations of colour interactions have been suggested as a useful means to apply colour positively to clothing. By putting colours in context with situations and surroundings we can start to define the effect that a colour vibration exerts on humans.

This thesis has aimed to prove that when factors of our personality are taken into consideration and relevant colours applied through the medium of clothes, we can beneficially change our lives. To synthesise many colour laws, and implement them in ways that bring both balance and harmony into our lives, is how the clothing industry should sell their products, considering benefits that are not purely monetary.

I will now give an outline of ways in which these colour considerations can be integrated into the present fashion system.

1. The implementation, by colourists, of colour 'stories', that can identify with certain areas of public life which need to combat specific colour imbalances, such as overabundance of greyness in cities.
2. The consideration of colour properties, discussed in this thesis, by retail fashion buyers, so that they can accurately choose relevant colours for their customers. This would be more effective for specialised stores that cater for a specific client.
3. The introduction of basic colour selection tests which relate to a customer's personality within the retail outlet. Simplified versions of existing tests can easily be produced. Easy to use computer systems within stores would make this easier to introduce on a large scale.
4. The education of sales assistants to ways of assessing colour information relevant to the customer. This would help the customer select their most beneficial choice, and would also create an incentive to buy clothes within a store that provided this service.

5. The use of fashion advertisements, to inform the public, of a colours' possible life enhancing capabilities. This will result in a positive change in buying habits.
6. By endorsing the fact that change and experimentation of colour in clothes has a positive effect on the human system. This encourages people to buy clothes more frequently.

If it were possible to implement those changes I am sure that the reaction would be purely positive. There is definitely an increase in colour interest in the world today. This is evident by observing the amount of colour therapy centres emerging and studies being compiled, where the main focus is learning to surround oneself with beneficial colours. These points are not merely hypothetical and idealistic ideas. They are, in fact, quite practical solutions to catering for the increasing colour awareness that is so popular today. They may not be taken on board by industry giants such as Marks & Spencer, who carefully control every penny they spend. However, if an upmarket specialised boutique implemented the ideas, a trickle down effect, that is seen in all fashion trends, would bring the ideas to many high street stores. I am sure that these changes would have a positive influence, not only on customers, but also on designers and manufacturers within the industry and lead to a more colour integrated form of design.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Albers, Josef, Interaction of Colour, Massachusetts, Yale University, 1975.
2. Birren, Faber, Colour and Human Response, New York, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1978.
3. Brennan, Barbara Ann, Hands of Light, USA, Bantam, 1988.
4. Brennan, Barbara Ann, Light Emerging, USA, Bantam, 1993.
5. Flett, Kathryn, "Dolce & Gabbana", Arena Homme Plus, Issue No. 1, Summer 94, P. 169.
6. Frings, Gini Stephens, Fashion From Concept to Consumer, USA, Prentice Hall Inc, 1987.
7. Gerstner, Karl, The Spirit of Colors, The Art of Karl Gerstner, Switzerland, M.I.T. Press, 1981.
8. Gimbel, Theophilus, Healing Through Colour, England, C. W. Daniel, 1980.
9. Horn, Marilyn and Gurel Lois, The Second Skin, USA, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1981.
10. Itten, Johannes, The Elements of Colour, USA, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1970.
11. Laver, James, Costume & Fashion, London, Thames & Hudson, 1982.
12. Matthaei, Rupprecht, Goethe's Colour Theory, N.Y. Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1971.
13. Myerson, Jeremy "Sensual Healing", Design, Issue 532, April 93, P. 27.
14. O'Neill, Timothy, Life and Tradition in Rural Ireland, London, J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1977.
15. Perna, Rita, Fashion Forecasting, USA, Fairchild Publications, 1987.

16. Preble, Duane & Sarha, Artforms, N.Y., Harper & Row, 1985.
17. Smith, Huston, Cover Review of Zuvak, The Seat of the Soul, USA, Fireside, 1989.
18. Steiner, Rudolf, The Arts and Their Mission, USA, The Anthroposophic Press, 1964.
19. Sun, Howard & Dorothy, Colour Your Life, USA, Ballantine, 1992.
20. Wilson, Annie and Bek Lila, What Colour are You, London Turnstone Press, 1981.
21. Zuvak, Gary, The Seat of the Soul, USA, Fireside, 1989.

