

JOHN MCGILL  
4th YEAR  
VISUAL COMMUNICATION.

THESIS: COLOUR IN THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT.

The use of exterior colour and graphics  
to brighten up dull inner city areas.

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## INTRODUCTION

In this paper I have isolated the History of environmental colour and looked closely at the development of colour in man's urban environment from the spiritual and cultural aspects of colour in the past to the application of colour today. I traced colour from the stone age to its modern use or (misuse) and followed its progress through the development of outdoor advertising. It should be kept in mind that the main function of this paper is to discover how environmental colour has progressed and is not related to the progress of advertising although in some cases the relationship between these two forms of communication is sometimes quite similar. While investigating both these aspects - colour and advertising - I touched on some interesting points which could explain why today the city has lost most of its original colourful image, the main reason being the great misconception by architects of the use of colour in buildings, this change is taken as a starting point to help discover the reasons for lack of colour as a natural stimulus in our urban environment.

Delving into preserved examples of Greek and Egyptian wall painting, I followed the stable use of colour up until the Middle Ages and the separation of skills when painters, sculptors and architects formed separate guilds. In architecture the classic styles taken from the accomplishments of the Renaissance led to the international style of Roman and Greek design. But the use of colour became increasingly diminished as a result of the removal of architectural colour by the Puritan movement. (The Reformers.) The development of the billposter at this time resulted in a medium that was to reintroduce more art and colour into the urban environment later in the 18th century. Colour had been transformed from its original medium (architecture) and was now used strongly in advertising. The World Wars in the 1900s saw a rapid development in the use of posters and billboards although the printed billboards of that time were seldom colourful. The 1950s saw an increase in painted colour billboards.

This artistic quality in advertising changed in the 1960s, losing its artistic value to a new medium, T.V. From this period communication had become so specialised and competitive that any visual colour and artistic merit in the outdoor was based totally on commercial needs and the artistic and cultural use of colour was hidden behind the scenes.

The city developed and was redeveloped due to urban decay and as renewal continued the structure of many city's deteriorated. The original structure became confused as buildings were replaced. From this starting point I looked at the possible new medium that reintroduced colour back into the city, not for commercial reasons but purely as an aesthetic need, the "Mural" had been used as a common artistic outdoor canvas, not being commercial and having a strong artistic quality.



It now developed into the most common medium for exterior aesthetic uses. The mural was usually painted on walls of some significance and its subject matter was very controlled having either some historic or cultural intent.

But it quickly developed in the 20th century, to expressing a number of different feelings and ideas, its growth transformed the visual image of the city.

I looked at numerous examples of murals and wall paintings around the world and discussed the subject matter of each style and breaking them down into different categories : Political, Cultural, Commercial and Camouflage. Focusing on the camouflage category and its associated uses, I have discussed the aesthetic use of imagery and colour in rundown sectors of the urban environment and giving examples of numerous countries as well as some of the disappointments. I outlined some results from experiments on the responses to external colour in architecture by Dr L Sivik of Goteborg, Sweden, and observations made by Oscar Newman in the United States of reactions to his colour proposals for external facades, indicate that people will accept much more intense colours in their environment than architects might predict or a 'sophisticated taste' would allow.

After a close look at the work done in England and the numerous effects created, I looked at Dublin as a prime example of a city suffering from urban decay and discuss what has been done in the case of camouflage of eyesores and temporary vacant sites. I followed the history of the hoarding and investigate how it could benefit the efforts to camouflage sites in Dublin, if combined with the suggestions made in the "Natural Colour System".

About the Natural Colour System.:

Notes taken from 'Colour for Architecture' (Tom Porter, and Byron Mikellides, Studio Vista, 1976)

"An interest in colour and colour perception manifested itself several years ago in Sweden Tryggve Johanssen introduced his version of Ewald Hering's theories (1878) concerning opponent colours and called it the Natural Colour System. Based on this work, Sven Hesselgren prepared a 'colour atlas' in the late forties which was published in 1952. 1964 saw the foundation of the Swedish Colour Centre which was established under the directorship of Anders Hard who, after a decade of dedicated work, has produced a new version of the Natural Colour System, the NCS, which is the experimental documentation of Hering's original theories and a practical tool for descriptive colour designations.

This research could have profound implications for designers in simplifying colour communication, specification and psychological findings. As an important means of developing future colour investigations the NCS can be used both in teaching and in environmental perception projects.

A true knowledge of the interaction between colour perception and man is imperative if we are to formulate human requirements in environmental design. In



At the Swedish Colour Centre Foundation we have worked since 1964 on a research and development project to experiment with Hering's theory and to quantify similarities. After ten years of psychophysical research we are now capable of presenting a colour order and scaling system called the NCS. We have also developed a prototype colour atlas which, containing colour samples illustrating the NCS colour system, will meet the need for a vehicle for colour communication and as a tool for future colour research.

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At the British Colonial Centre Foundation  
founded since 1946 on a voluntary and development  
to organize with financial theory and to handle  
charities. After the first of the foundation  
we are now capable of installing a colony  
which called the NCS. We have also developed  
colony which, containing colony, which is  
the NCS colony system, will meet the need for  
colony construction and an effort for future  
expansion.

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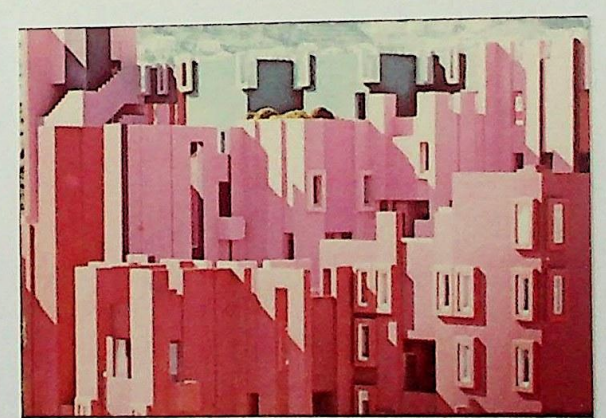
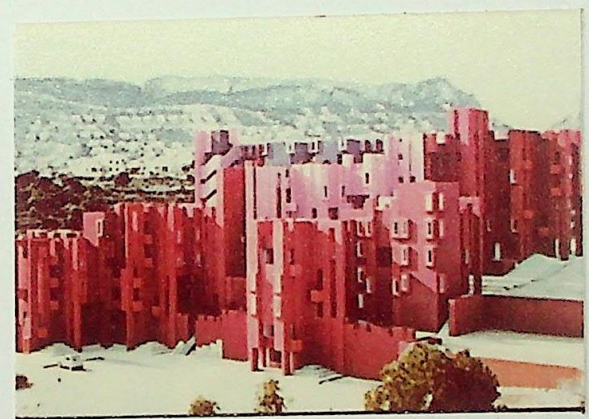
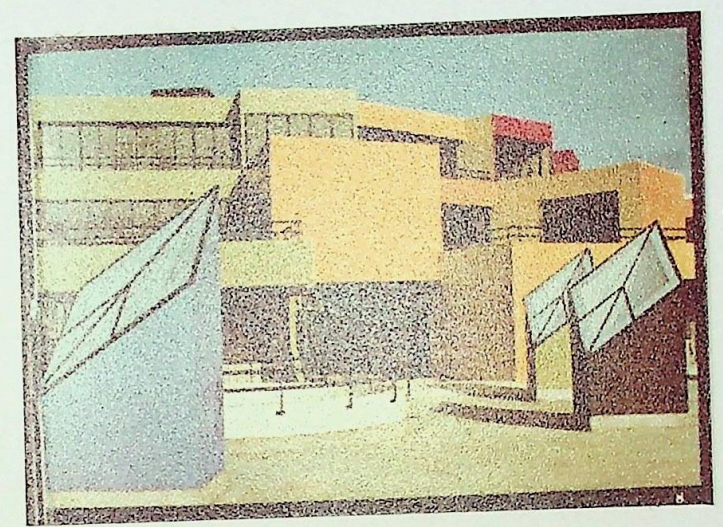
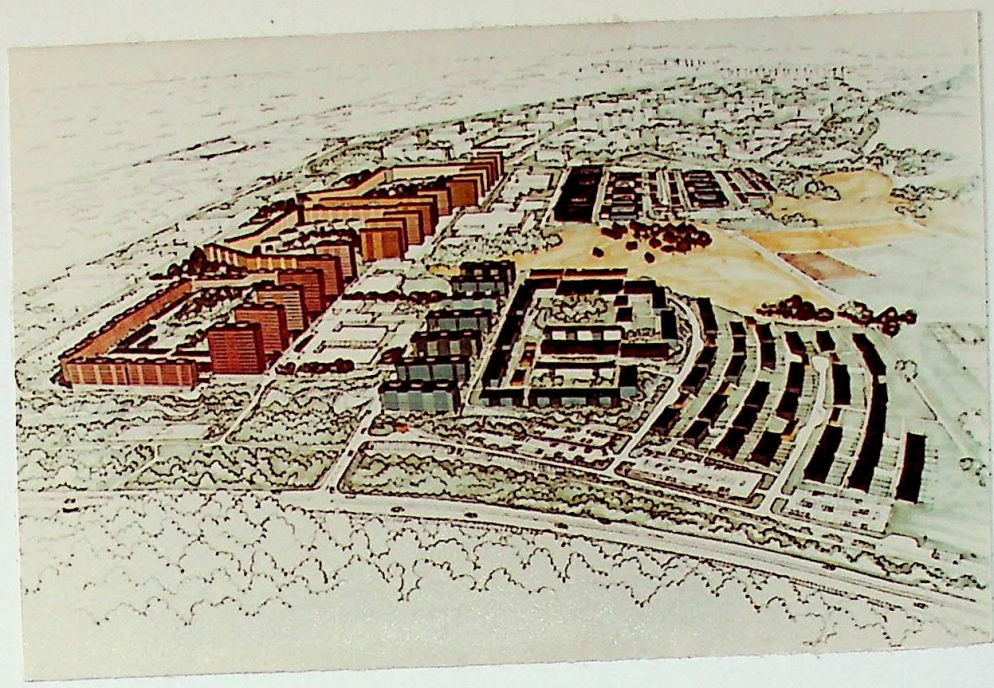




Fig  
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Fig  
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Humans are also mildly coloured from race to race, black, brown, red, white, yellow, and pink; each culture has its own natural colour system organised from their surroundings and cultural background. Everybody has a personal preference for colours demonstrated in the way they dress and the colours they paint their living areas. In recent years man has investigated colour and its effects on people, space, and time, discovering how it can transform situations, attitudes and even the sounds in our environment (sounds seem louder in a white room than in a dark coloured room). But this interest in colour is still young and the reasons for its diminished use in the modern day exterior urban environment needs some investigation.

If we take the city as a basic medium to work around it might be easier to illuminate some of the functions colour has and how it can contribute to man-made environments. Colours original functions are not relevant to today's cities though their symbolic use in the past had transformed the city into a polychromatic wonder.

In Mesopotamian civilization colour was assigned to the solar system and also related to the vertical and horizontal forms of their architecture. An example of this ordered use of colour in their built environment is found in a description of the city "Ectabana" by Herodotus in the 5th century B.C. He described the city as a conurbation of great size fortified by concentric coloured walls, each designed so that successive walls were higher than the one below by the height of the battlements.

There were seven such walls built on a hill which exaggerated the uniform appearance of the city. The inner wall contained the Royal Palace and Treasury and its battlements were plated with gold. The battlements of successive walls were plated with silver, painted in orange, blue, crimson, black and the outermost wall white.

In his book "Ur of the Chaldees", C.L. Wooley describes the "Mountain of Gold" dated at 2300 B.C. It is one of the oldest buildings in history, this Ziggurat was built in four stages, the lowest wall was black and represented the dark underworld, the upper wall was red, and represented the habitable earth. At the very top was a blue tiled shrine with a gilded metal roof, signifying the heavens and the sun, the colour of Ectabana must have also been based on a similar principle.



The walls of the ancient Chinese capital of Peking were painted in red and the roofs within the city were coloured in yellow. Red and yellow symbolised positive-negative and were also associated with good and evil spirits, the yellow roofs acted as a form of camouflage which blended buildings into the surroundings. Landscape and thereby protecting inhabitants from any evil spirits who happened to pass overhead. In ancient Egypt architectural painting was widely practised. Yellow was actually worshiped as part of a colour coded system which assigned yellow to the sun god and black to evil. They believed that colours embodied mystical powers and their temples were often painted with blue to represent the heavens and green coloured floors to symbolise the fertile meadows of the Nile.

The Egyptians sense of colour was adopted from the earlier mesopotamian ideas but the harsh sunlight had a profound effect on the colours used. Their sense of environmental colour was very lively and was expressed in strong and sometimes quite violent tones but it could be also delicate and subdued. Their knowledge of colour was immense and they experimented and investigated effects of colours. The Egyptians loved to juxtapose contrasting colours in a way which reveals a deep feeling for the unique quality of each particular hue. They had studied colour in such depth that they used it as an important element in hieroglyphics, so obviously their colour language was extremely accurate.

This knowledge of colour as a symbolic instrument first compiled in early mesopotamian civilization and refined by the Egyptians was passed on via Asia Minor to Greece. Here it was adopted again to communicate a new form of religion. The ancient Greeks covered their architecture with colour washes believing that the natural colour of wood, marble, ivory and bronze was no substitute for the artistic creation of the city as a total art form, most of the houses and temples were painted in symbolic and sometimes cosmetic colouring, some statues even had "lipstick", false eyelashes and precious stones simulating flashing eyes. The "bodies" of stone were painted in flesh tone.

To be able to visit a bustling Greek capital in those days would have resulted in a dazzling experience of colour: white, blue, yellow, silver and gold. If the city of Athens had been preserved as Pompeii and Herculaneum were, our concept of the appearance of the ancient Greek environment would have been drastically changed. But there is very little evidence of this because the climate of Greece is much wetter than Egypt and the outdoor colour pigments deteriorated rapidly. The culture of the ancient Greeks was more influential than any other present day western civilization and a lot is known about their architecture and society, but until recently little was known about their use of colour.



The Greek use of colour was later adopted by the Romans when they became conquerors of the West. They had an even stronger feel for colour, but being a more practical people they restricted the application of colour to buildings and never bothered to paint their statues. From 1762 to 1767 A.D. excavations in Pompeii by Johann Wincklemann uncovered a range of bright and deep pigment which was much wider and, in some cases, much clearer than the Greek colours.

The Roman command over most of Western Europe helped spread the use of environmental colour. From this Roman influence Medieval architecture was covered in colours as applied pigment, gilding, and stained glass windows. Traces of colour are still detectable on the facades of Notre Dame in Paris, James Ward wrote "The colour occurred principally on the mouldings, columns, sculptured ornaments and figurework. The outside colouring was much more vivid than the inside work. There were bright reds, crude greens, orange, yellow ochre, black and pure white, but rarely blues, outside, the brilliancy of light allowing a harshness of colouring that would not be tolerable under the diffused light of the interior" and "There is also evidence that the greater portion of similar edifices of the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in France were decorated in colour".

So from Greece through to Italy, France, Germany and later in England colour had been painted on exteriors, an example of painted architecture in England has been quoted by Cecil Stewart in his book, "Gothic Architecture" (The great west front of Wells Cathedral) with its one hundred and seventy-six full-length statues was brilliantly coloured. The niches were painted dark red, and the figures and drapery were painted a yellow ochre, with the eyes and hair picked out in black and the lips red.

The use of environmental colour had spread, but from the middle ages a slight change in attitude transformed the developed urban environment to a less colourful habitat. The people in the middle ages held colour in great esteem, but perhaps the "vulgar" way they used it is a direct reflection of the spirit of the people, at the time this caused a reaction against it and was possibly responsible for its removal by the Puritan movement.

All this evidence of the use of colour in early architecture proves that rich colour had been an essential component in the structure of the city. But to understand how it is so lacking in our present urban environment we must return to the Greek classical style of architecture which has influenced architects through out the ages. The inspiration of this style has been based on a fundamental misconception.



The mother of the classic architectural structure, "The Greek Parthenon", is considered as the most renowned example of architectural perfection. It influenced the construction of numerous modern buildings (usually administrative) which represents strength and purity in monochromatic stone and concrete in many of our major cities all over the world. Their starkness would puzzle the parthenons original designer Ictinus and Callicrates who designed it to be completely painted and detailed in rich colours. Our image today is a total contrast to its actual image in 447 B.C.

This total misunderstanding of the use of colours in buildings results from the fact that the pigment disappeared and by the time it was discovered that early developed civilization painted their cities, the message had been passed on and the development of architectve and classic principles were sealed in a monochromatic capsule. As archaeologists made more and more discoveries each new enlightenment shocked our understanding of past influences related to exterior architectural colour.

Caves and tombs which were protected from natural elements became suspended in time. The prehistoric caves in France, Spanish, Egyptian and Etruscan burial chambers; Pompeii and Herculaneum all act as time capsules and provide us with a direct visual link with the use of environmental colour in the past. Their comparatively recent discovery came too late for the ancient use of architectural colour to influence our established misunderstandings of the past. The cave at Altamira was discovered in 1863-1869 the presence of the coloured paintings was first detected. Tutankamun's tomb was discovered and opened in November 1922.

Although aesthetic values in the twentieth century have changed since the Egyptians painted almost every material in colour today we have a stronger interest in the truthfulness of materials. But in the case of grey concrete in our cities, the benefits of colour can contribute to a visual exterior environment, if used properly. Perhaps we would have hated the way Greeks use colour but the almost total loss of environmental colour has left us with a dull and uninspiring cityscape.

The extent of this misconception is graphically illustrated by historical sets for Hollywood films like: Helen of Troy, Spartacus, Ben Hur, etc., Charlton Heston and Kirk Douglas acted out their historic roles against cardboard reconstructions of a white marbled ancient Greece and Rome. It is not surprising that our more recent attitudes and design philosophies are thoroughly conditioned against the use of colour in our external urban environment.



The result of this fundamental misconception has led to a continuing ignorance of colour in our built environment. Although there is some successful attempts to use colour, the extent of this is so weak that its effect is minimal. The largest proportion of colour visually evident is that found in billboard advertising. So colour has survived but its function in a city is diminished due to the commercial dominance of advertising.

By looking at the evolution of colour in advertising we can see how it has contributed to the reintroduction of colour into the urban environment.

The oldest known advertisement was discovered in the Egyptian city of Thebes, written on Papyrus over 3000 years ago. The advertisement is a poster offering a reward for a runaway slave. During the same period Egyptian merchants were cutting messages into Stelae - the stone tablets that were placed on the roadsides and Obelisks bore hieroglyphic stories, (these Obelisks could be the equivalent to a modern day kiosk popular in western Europe and used for billposting).

Fig  
3

Centuries later in early Greek cities wood columns called axones told the public the order of the games, slaves posted signs for Roman businessmen and in Pompeii nearly every wall was hung with billboard messages. Evidence preserved by the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 A.D. shows that numerous bills were calling on voters to end graft and corruption in their city. When one looks at the campaign posters in our streets today the size may have increased but they are still reminiscent of those early eye catchers in Pompeii.

Billposting developed rapidly since the posters in Pompeii and as the written word developed and became more versatile the visual aspects of advertising also became increasingly more effective. Identification became the milestone of both advertisement and outdoor colour and painting. Different buildings had different functions and their identification was very important. Names written over doorways gave enough information, but as in the case of shops, competition caused the shop owners to display their premises more vividly. Samples of merchandise and stalls attracted customers but as the city developed into a complex metropolis, identification became specialised.

When lithography was invented in 1796, by the Bavarian, Senefelder, the scope of advertising expanded, the lithography process facilitated the development of aesthetic qualities in advertising design. By 1870 Technological advances in mechanization had improved poster "Art" immensely. During the Industrial Revolution machines were invented for paper folding and cutting printing and production of lithographic halftones gave three dimensional qualities to images.



Fig  
3





The turning point in advertising came when the Frenchman, Cheret, helped to pioneer the use of colour in the modern poster. His work featured wonderful colour effects that drew the viewers attention to the poster and than to the product. This introduction was the point in time when advertising started to contribute to the reintroduction of colour into the cityscape. These posters were displayed outside although their function was totally commercial they did brighten up the streets,visually.

The use of this more artistic approach was developed by Frederick Walker in England. He developed one of the first art posters in 1871,(Lady in White). The poster was unusual in that Walker renounced the straightforward,literal mundane approach of his contemporaries in favour of a romantic,fanciful,stylized treatment. His work established a standard of grace and beauty for the future commercial artists.

By the mid 1800s outdoor advertising had become a serious art form,many masterpieces were designed for outdoor commercial displays. In France,Daumier and Toulouse Lautrec, had work commissioned by advertisers all over the world. In England poster art thrived under Beardley, Walker and the "The Beggerstaff Brothers" ( Nicholsons and Pryde). From then on poster advertising got better and from the turn of the century and right up to the early 1960s,man enjoyed and benefited from the talent of leading deigners who regarded outdoor advertising as a primary medium. But in the early sixties, however, this creativity diminished because posters tended to be seen as a support medium rather than a main element of a advertising campaign. The slow gradul increase in the exposure of aesthetic images was suddenly knocked by the advent of television which lured design influences away from outdoor advertising.

Another damaging aspect came from the new generation of advertising executives whose skills were being weened on electronic media with its newness and prestige leaving very little enthusiasm for the humble poster. Poster contractors did very little to put right this psychological imbalance and allowed themselves to relay more on the growing level of tobacco advertising revenue that began to pour into the medium in anticipation of some help from T.V.which finally came.

Because of the connection with television a repeated practise emerged of showing " Stills" from television commercials and blowing them up to poster size, this was a misunderstanding of the potential of posters and even today you can still see this fundamental error being repeated. Ideas taught up for a relitively small space are being used on a huge scale panel resulting in some disappointing billboards.



In this century there has been some attempt to reintroduce colour back into architecture, the separation of artist and architect was partially diminished during the early Bauhaus era as the constructivist and neo-plasticist movements developed. The use of colour in defining form became recognised by the pioneers of urban design and for a short period artistic concepts became transformed to architecture. Although principles of colour and colour psychology were introduced into the Bauhaus teaching programme. Its brave attack on the traditional renaissance categories succumbed, first to intrigues between the art and technological factions of its staff, and finally to the rise of Hitler's regime in 1933.

Fig  
4

Advertisements formed a major outlet for colour in the outdoor environment from the post-war period. In the United States the 1950s saw "The Golden Age of Paint". The billboard was the principle medium and the painted billboard became bigger, sleeker and glossier than its printed counterpart. Abstract Expressionism (pioneered by Jackson Pollock) gave billboard art its first real stylistic freedom. Realism decreased and a more abstract image resulted.

Both these innovations of huge painted billboards and abstract imagery with colour introduced much escapism into the environment and an increased interest in the rebellion against traditional trends. The 50s influenced the next era in the improved colour imagery and its break from the tight realism of printed advertising.

A revival of interest in the power of colour can be seen in a swing towards bright spectral hues. In the 1960s this interest in bright colours was developed by the younger generation rebelling against the colourless urban environment and the dull monochromatic cityscape, with its depressing effects. This new generation also expressed itself in styles of dress when men as well as women began to wear brightly coloured garments, breaking an age old tradition which associated rich colour with effeminacy.

Although this interest in brighter colours was a reaction against the greyness of the post-war period, psychedelic imagery on the outsides of buildings upset some of the dwellers who were totally conditioned to their environment and were unprepared for intense explosions of exuberant colours in the streets. Artists broke away from the categorization of skill and began to move more freely between several media. In 1961 Christo. (C. Javacheff) had formed the idea of packaging in an architectural scale....he wrapped buildings and object.



This interest in the outdoors began to re-establish the fact that art is truly a public affair by its extension directly into the environment and into our lives. Art trends of the 1960s exploded with vibrant colour and energy, using fluorescent paints and optical illusion techniques which had been introduced by billboard art.

- Fig 5 The growing acceptance of drug use by middle-class youth led to imagery like this psychedelic rhinoceros used to promote a record label. Op art, a trend towards disorienting optical effects, gained the viewers attention through repetitive patterns. Other billboards borrowed the spontaneous quality of abstract art.
- Fig 6

During the early 60s the "Pop Art" movement, having caused some holes in the wall between painting and sculpture, appeared simultaneously in Los Angeles and New York, its inspiration coming from the mass pop culture. This separation from formal ideas of art and subject matter made way for the reintroduction of colour. Colours rebirth into the streets came in the form of the mural and supergraphics, to take their place next to the billboards and traffic signs. The increasing size of Pop Art objects helped its introduction into the streets and out of the boundaries of the studio-gallery situation.

The Pop Art period was the most important fine art movement to develop in relation to outdoor advertisement suddenly fine art looked like billboards and billboards looked like fine art. The average man in-the-street got more exposure to pop orientated billboards and could see the different styles and trends in art of the day as well as the new developments in advertising. The Pop artists considered ordinary objects to be aesthetically meaningful even though they were as commonplace as a can of Campbell's soup. In the mid 60s Americans felt a need for a break from the restrictive way of life they had grown used to after the war. Advertisers became aware of this need and visually created a mood of escapism, this helped their sales. Blue sky and water, green grass and trees, earth tones, golden sunrise and brilliant sunsets, provided a perfect background for various products. The viewer associated these products with the free colourful atmosphere portrayed.

These colourful landscapes and natural subject matter provided a visual escape to those walking around dirty streets and commuters caught up in traffic jams. But the strongest motivation for colour was the growing concern of artists of the need to improve the grey urban environment and helping it to make a better connection with the public. These established new links with the community and an increase in civic activity.



Fig  
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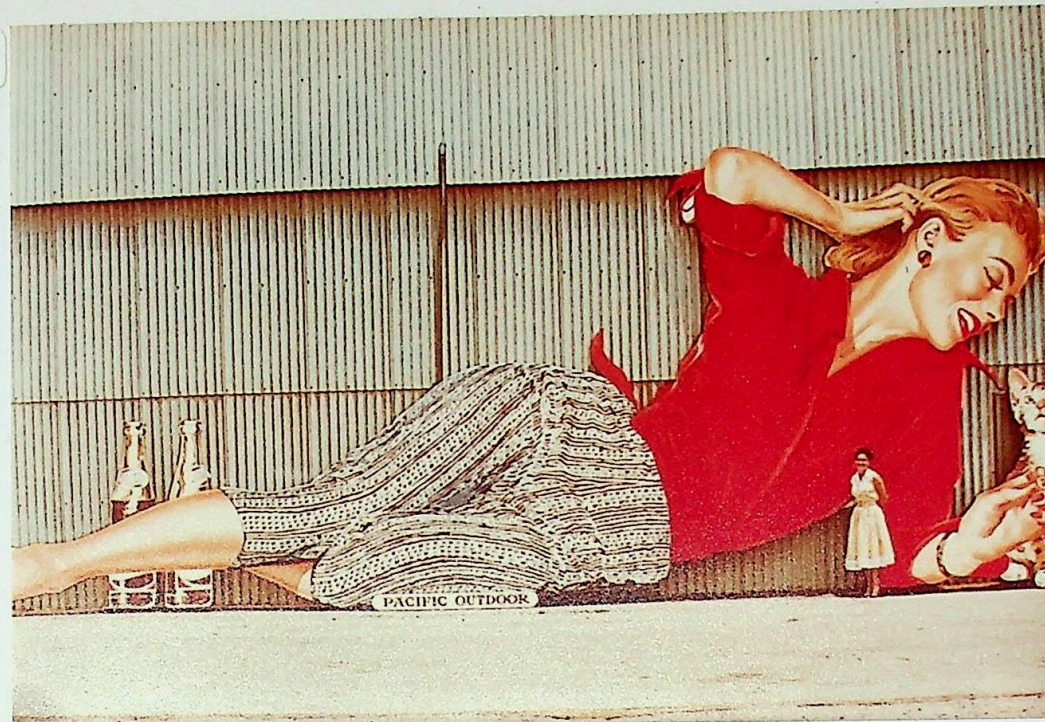


Fig  
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Fig  
6





New York became one of the first cities to obtain a fresh burst of environmental colour. City Walls Inc. (Richard anuskiewicz- Mel Perarsky ) were interested in the ancient use of colour in exterior space. They do a lot of work in the derelict areas injecting fresh colour on vacant gable ends and facades (note; Doris Freedman, the president of City Wall Inc. claims that the transformations have instilled a new sense of pride in local residents).

The murals in New York are mostly of bright colours, but some leave a lot to be desired when viewed today after seeing the work done since then. It's quite normal for people to be pleased by some bright colour, yellows and reds, when they have lived in a monochromatic environment composed of derelict and vacant buildings. So it's very easy to please the inhabitants in nasty zones, like the ghetto areas of New York and other large cities. But things are improving as more research and investigation is done into urban harmonizing and effects of colours. In contrast to the early abstract work in New York exterior painting in Cincinnati, surprised and even shocked the inhabitants, it held an element of humour and visual satire.

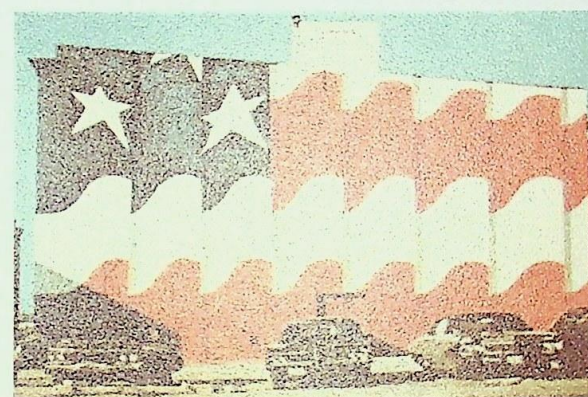
Fig 7 This wall painting of a huge nut and bolt seems to hold together the Cokesbury Bookstore building illustrating the artists ( Paul Levy) attitude to exterior painting. " In creating a wall painting, one must have as much fun as one can as there are too many gloomy walls in the city centres. The absurd is always the rule, the spectator should be overwhelmed and walk away smiling and remembering...." note; Sociologists in Cincinnati have watched the projects with some interest, they maintain that in densely populated ghettos where walls are painted, there has been a drop in the crime rate and an increased attendance in community affairs.

As exterior painting developed and the interest in the meaning and use of colour increased a realization that the human enjoyment of colour was still alive.

Two people who have worked on this aspect of the "Human Environment "specifically the responses to external colour in architecture, are Oscar Newman in the U.S. and Dr. L. Sivik of Goteburg, Sweden. They indicate that people will accept much more intense colour in their environment than we think.



Fig  
7





Oscar Newman.....

Most people enjoy variations in the colour and texture of natural materials in the environments they inhabit, particularly in their homes. Richly textured and coloured environments are not only rewarding to the sight and touch but they are perceived by many as an expression of affluence or gratification in the form of conspicuous consumption.

The capacity to enjoy the purity and severity of raw concrete is a predilection of only the most sophisticated in our society, low and middle class people usually associate the austerity of raw concrete with bunkers and prisons. Surveys of residents in housing both in the U.S. and Britain, shows astounding differences between architects tastes and tastes of their clients.

This was evidenced by the incredible contrast in the colours, materials and textures used by residents in decorating the inside of their own apartments compared with the surfaces of the buildings outside their apartment.

Outside was a world that the architect designed. Raw concrete was the prevalent material, grey and off white the dominant colour. Only the glass areas occasionally broke up the drabness by reflecting a blue sky.



The Clason Point Project....

Oscar Newman...

"As an architect in New York, I was given the opportunity to modify the grounds and facades of a low-income housing project built of grey cement block. The weather penetration and heat loss through the cement block was so great that the housing authority decided to cover the block with three coats of cement. I used this as an opportunity to go beyond this functional requirement and add both colour and texture to the surface of the buildings and the grounds of the project.

My ideas for upgrading this housing project were derived from observation of what middle income residents living in uniform row-houses, do to enrich and individualize their homes. They add surface colours, shutters and awnings. I persuaded the contractor carrying out the work to consider varying the colours in his final coat of cement".

The Clason Point project was an experiment aimed at determining if people would respond to external superficial changes made to their environment. The test results prove most fascinating. Not only did people respond by painting their own doors and windows in the first year, but in subsequent years they made extensive improvements to their gardens and to the interiors of their houses. Rich colours began to appear on the grounds and insides of apartment units.

Our contractor also told us that, where at the beginning of construction his equipment was being so vandalised that he felt it necessary to remove it each evening, but as soon as the effect of our modification became more apparent he found that the nocturnal abuse to his equipment has ceased. Subsequent in depth interviews with residents demonstrated that people were very conscious indeed of colours, texture.. The low-income residents were also found to be very articulate on the subject of colour and texture and knew exactly what they wanted their immediate environment to look like. They were very clear about their likes and dislikes. And their tastes are completely at variance with the tastes acquired by architects in school".



Dr. Lars Sivik.

The language of colour...colour connotations.

Most people think that colours make them feel happy if this is true, it may also be valid the other way round. If we are happy we see everything in colour-"We want to paint the world". The opposite of this context is the lack of colour-greyness; a concept associated in most languages, with boredom and sadness.

Associations and attitudes to colour are like all evaluation, subjective- unique for the individual. They depend upon the situation and vary over time. Attitudes to colour probably originate to a great degree from early learning processes and, thus have a cultural basis. One can well imagine that our inherent ability to see colours may also be connected with our emotions; There is certainly evidence of affinity between perception and "emotional" behaviour among other species.

The relatively high agreement between people about colour might be mainly due to the fact that colour serves as information about our surrounding world. By looking through a window we can see from colour nuances what kind of weather it is; a banana is yellow when it is ripe and fresh, not green or brown. The connection between colour and moods, affections and associations, has always been seen as something we ought to be able to study.

It seems that many of the investigators of colour connotations had little knowledge of colour systems while the colour metricians were little interested in colour connotations. These were the basic reasons for carrying out a study of colour meaning as a part of the research programme at the Swedish Colour Centre. The starting point was the Natural Colour System.

While investigating people's attitudes to and associations with individual colours, in and awareness that one colour seldom appears alone and in isolation from a context, Dr. Lars Sivik discovered some very interesting points. Working in laboratory conditions the conclusive evidence that resulted gave us a more accurate knowledge of the meaning of colour.

It was suggested, as a spin-off from this study that many of the conventions concerning colour concepts are wrong. For example, Green is more calming than Red, provided that we compare colours of equal colour strength and blackness. There are many other conventional concepts which ought to be questioned. That one cannot predict the level of colour strength on a wall by looking at a small colour sample is something that every colour expert knows. The colour experienced is said to be stronger when applied to a larger area. This is not true, repeated experiments have shown that small colour samples of five centimetres square are not judged weaker than the same colour perceived at a size of two metres square.



On the other hand one may experience a strongly coloured wall which includes an overwhelming impact, but this is something quite different - another psychological dimension, perhaps.

Another common stereotype is that we must avoid strong colours in our immediate surroundings. We are advised that we may 'tire of them in the long run' we may experience headaches or go mad as a result, and so on. Has anyone investigated this? It is most probable that we adjust to the colours and, after a time, accept them without question. Dr. Sivik mentioned these examples to demonstrate that we know far less than we believe about colour experiences and their implications.

In some larger Swedish towns, the use of architectural colour is increasing. It is mostly the older houses which are repainted with colour strengths which would have been unthinkable ten years ago. The reasons for the growing interest in environmental colour are difficult to trace but one reason might be a counter-reaction from the grey suburbs.

The appraisal of the new colour patches in the city landscape is mixed, particularly by those who are familiar with culture, history and architecture. Their opinions often differ from the thinking of the general populace and they are also concerned when the wrong 'colours' are applied to old buildings. Accidental deviations from the proper style, however, do not seem to upset those who are unfamiliar with art history. The great majority of people are very positive to 'happier' colours in the townscape and are extremely critical to lack of colour.

From interviews in many of these investigations carried out in relation to the urban environment, it can be concluded that "people consider it self-evident that colour is an important factor in environmental design."

Investigations into 'Sensory Deprivation' help to show the extent to which we are dependant upon stimulation from our environment, and tests which study subjects in almost total sensory isolation have produced findings which appear to be conclusive. Research work in this field has been carried out by Professor D.O. Hebb of McGill University, in the U.S. The latter has proposed a theory to account for 'Sensory Deprivation' in terms of our need for changing stimulation.



He states "The human cannot long endure a homogeneous situation no matter how good and desirable it is" and in 'Sensory Deprivation' there is no variation and any small stimulus such as a faint light becomes as enjoyable as a desirable experience."

So it has been proven that man needs constantly varying forms of stimulation in order to operate in relation to their environment.

The development of aesthetic exterior painting created by this interest in the 60s has led to a new development of murals in many parts of the world, the murals function was normally associated with religious or revolutionary statements and political communication. they had an overall morbid character and any activating colours were generally found in the revolutionary murals found in Mexico (Diego Rivera, Clemente, David Alfero Siqueiros) These have an exciting and colourful character but their message seems to overwhelm the aesthetic contribution.

This renewed interest in the architectural environment resulted in 'Artist - Architects' who became interested in using Art to transform architecture in a revelent way.



Richard Haas, like other Artist-Architect's, operates in the area of the "Muralists" but his paintings are not politically motivated and are more than just entertaining: he uses mural painting to give architecture a new meaning. His work often includes ironic comments on the meaning of architecture and what it represents or ought to represent. New painting and mural decoration has always helped architecture to communicate more effectively but, sadly in the past, this art form has been considered to have a minor impact on the environment. Some of his work, i.e. "The Prince Street Wall", New York shows how the form of architecture can be changed just by painting. Here the front of the building is continued around the corner onto a vacant gable end wall, suggesting that architecture is basically composed of facades and the actual form can be played with to transform its meaning.

Fig  
8

However, Haas's works can be read in many different ways and on different levels. In some cases his creations look more like Hollywood stage sets. There is often, i.e. an atmosphere of unease as in the shop windows painted on the ground floor of Mulberry Street, New York, with their goods on display, lights, blinds, doors and signs. Haas's painting shows his profound awareness of what architecture consists of and also of how the individual behaves and to what extent he is able to read the urban environment. Who knows how long it will take for a commuter who drives into town to work in his office, to realize the sixty five windows on the 114 Price Street wall are all false?

Fig  
9

Looking at the houses built in Liguria in northern Italy up to fifty years ago, it seems natural to think that painted facades were made in order to save material costs on other kinds of decoration such as stucco, marble, sculpture and bas-relief. The fact is that the people in Liguria have a tradition for being a bit tight-fisted and in the past a reasonable facade decorator cost less than the costly materials and rich ornamentations needed to give the houses a "high class" or elegant appearance.

Fig  
10

Originally painting was very important in Genoese architecture, this can still be seen today, not only in the coloured plaster, but in the actual combination of architectural painting in the creation of the buildings. Painting had a special task - the representation of the sham-decorations, cornices and stucco, were all fake, and some of the windows, window ledges, frames, panes and curtains were often fake too. In a super-realist way, painting represented architecture that was often non-existent. Painting gave the architectural object the appearance that it wanted to have and what it wanted to communicate. It is interesting to note that the "decorative" painting, placed at the service of architecture, was used differently then in advertising displays and murals today. Political or not the architecture is ultimately considered as a "support for the painting".

Fig  
11

Fig  
12



Fig  
8

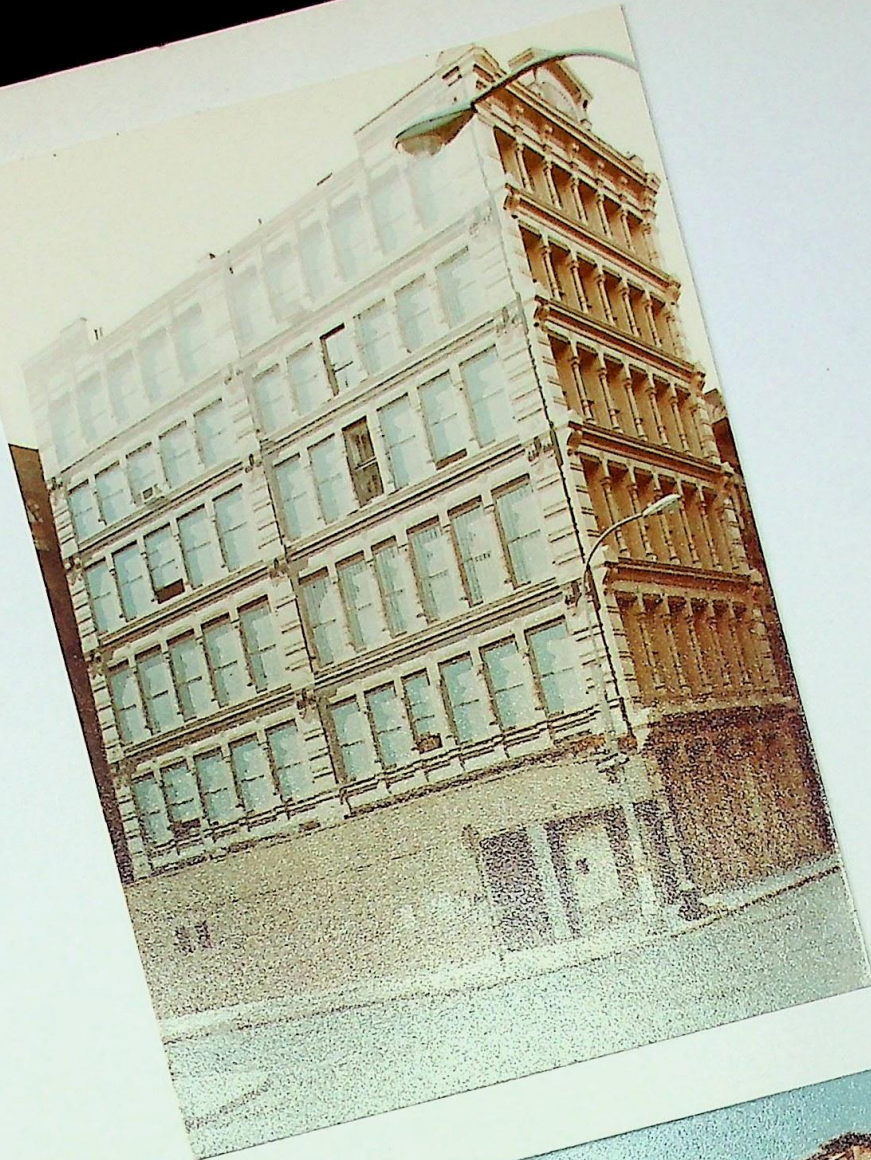


Fig  
9



Haas





Haas

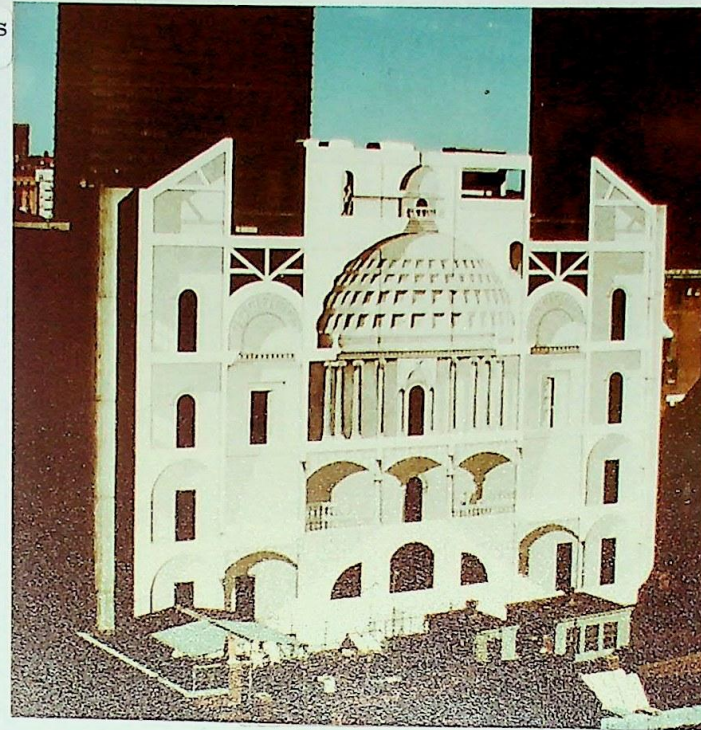


Fig  
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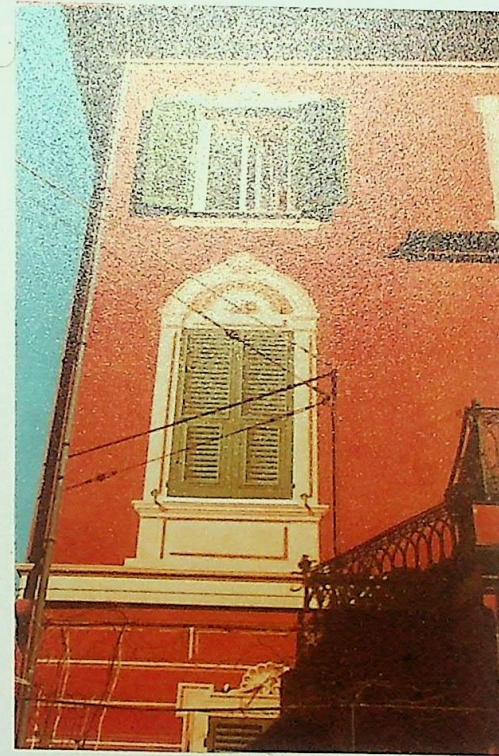


Fig  
11





It is some time since such facade painting was last practised. In the meanwhile the modern movement has swept away all ornamentation and the speculative exploitation of rational architecture has begun the down grading of the environment. The result has been the creation of architecture that is increasingly unable to communicate. The development of an international style has gone hand in hand with the increasing impoverishment of architecture - thus cities are being filled with anonymous architecture.

However despite this poor state of affairs there are some people who are thinking of revitalizing towns by using architecture as a simple support (of murals) or as a frame (for shop windows) - giving architecture an increasingly secondary role. Others have started painting facades again. For these people painting is not just decorating, but is a means to give back to architecture something to enable it to overcome the dull anonymity of facades composed of forms and voids.

False windows painted on a facade with false frames and shutters (open or closed) are quite enlightening examples of how painting can radically change the architectural image of a building's facade. It is conceivable that an architect could use this instrument to change the traditional interior-exterior relationship (Richard Haas). In addition, painting could be used to give architecture all elements of expression, story telling, ambiguity and communication that was lost some three decades ago.

A psychologist has said "Architects know about trends but they don't know where the secret places are" These words are a very clear indication of the great gap in contemporary architecture.



Fig 13 However if the passer by in Rue Quin Compoix in Paris looks up he will see painted windows. At one of these windows there is a figure of a woman. This painted figure creates a mood of solitude, yet it invents an experience that gives the building a specific character. The experience of this passerby however, will be above all a chance to discover a way in which architecture can be made to work for us as a stimulating device. The result is architecture that is able to act on the surrounding townscape and communication (a faculty long suppressed by the international style) by means of revival of personal responsibilities, of local cultures and of "hidden" customers differentiating places in exactly the same way that people are differentiated one from another, using all means (including painting) to eliminate the (visual) poverty, repetitiveness and misery of every day space.

In recent years English muralists have been working on environmental paintings sponsored by city Councils and government departments. In the North west of Britain there was a rapid development in wall painting. Its no coincidence that this area is one of the next industrialised and urban decayed parts of Britain. Other examples in London are often done in dull areas of town. This reflects the desirability of colour in rundown areas. In order to look at these murals, the artists and the different ideas behind these paintings its best to break them up into different groups - Political, Historical, Advent-identification, camouflage, Decoration, and optical illusion. Some of these murals fill more than one of these categories.



### Political Murals.

Established revolutionaries have been with us ever since man started to dominate and colonise other countries, and are fed from minorities. Basically giving messages or making statements about a situation in form of protest, examples of these can be seen all over the world (Portugal, Northern Ireland, Mexico, Cuba, United States etc. ) In England the numerous wall paintings around the country, especially in London, have a strong political motivation from residents revolting to demolition, making statements on Racial collaboration, resentment to nuclear arms, unemployment and lack of social amenities.

S.1 WALL ONE: This wall was painted by Brian Bonard and is a direct criticism on the horror of nuclear war. It also has a satirical message about the politicians and heads of state protecting themselves in a fall out shelter while London is destroyed. This mural is excellently applied and the draftsmanship is very good, it has a wide range of colours but the depressing image does little to cheer up the passer-by.

S.3 WALL TWO: In Bricklane another political statement has contributed to a playground. Its subject matter was compiled from the feelings of the local people about price increases, unemployment, violence and derelict areas. These messages are graphically illustrated (Ray Walker) - in a stylised design of colour and line. The overall effect here is more pleasant than that of the Anti nuclear mural and its extension into the playground (pillers and small walls in the playground were painted in bright colours similar to the mural) contributes to the environment.

S.4 The effect on the public seems quite positive in most cases. These murals are seldom vandalised and the local people seem proud to have them in their area. But in some instances the political subject matter is criticized. While researching London I came across an interesting situation associated with a mural painted by Desmond Rochford who has painted and is involved in murals in London. (Royal Oak, motorway).

S.5 WALL THREE: He was asked to paint the inside of a community centre in a rather politically active district in London where unemployment is high, political fronts clash and the racist problem is quite unstable. He chose his subject matter from the atmosphere and feelings of the youth that use the centre. He illustrated the cooperation of black and white people; unemployment, Fascism and the arms race. The centre was a relatively new building at the time, but within a short time of its opening it was vandalised and almost burnt. It has to be closed, yet these slides were taken after the damage, the mural had suffered no abuse.



Fig  
14

WALL FOUR: As Floyd Road in Charlton London was threatened by demolition, its inhabitants called upon the Greenwich Workshop to express their opposition. the resulting mural, painted on one of the buildings depicts the local people resisting the bulldozers and repairing their homes. This mural harmonises with the surroundings and graphically shows the feelings of the inhabitants. This freedom of expression has become increasingly common in London.



Fig  
12



Fig  
13

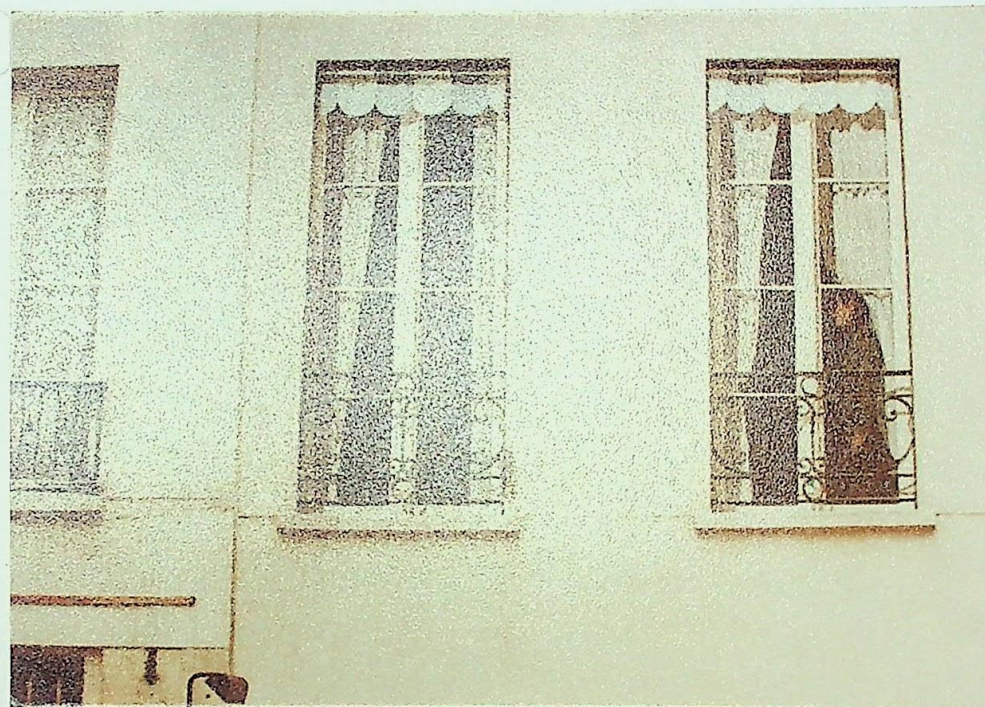


Fig  
14





HISTORIC

Historic murals contribute a great deal to the character of a given area, particularly if some of the environment has been demolished. But in some cases the memory can be replaced by painting a mural describing this built object or person as in this first example.

Fig 15 WALL FIVE: The Golden Lion bridge mural in Flemingway Swindon in 1976 by Ken White commemorates the centenary of the local poet Alfred Williams, it also features Isambard Brunel and the now demolished canal bridge. This mural contributes colour, memories and also makes the gable end of the house it painted on extremely pleasing.

The first historic mural and the earliest of the modern wall paintings in England is the Barbican mural in Plymouth painted by Robert Lenkiewicz in 1972. It depicts Elizabethan characters, philosophers and scholars of the occult. It also shows the metaphysical pursuits of the time such as alchemy, ceremonial magic and the cult of melancholy. This mural has an individual image being painted solely from the artists point of view and is actually an extension from the gallery, with little consideration of the impact it has on the environment, it does not contribute to or harmonize with the immediate area. In general, historical murals have a minimum effect on the cityscape because the trend was unimaginative and quite sterile.

S.6 WALL SIX: But when a muralist like David Binnington decides to illustrate part of the past, interest is his prime target. The image is projected from a birds eye - fisheye view pulling the viewer's eye into the wall. While in London I visited David Binnington at work on this mural in Cable Street, London. At the time the mural was approximately half finished he had been working on it for the last two years. The battle of Cable Street took place in 1910 and resulted in rioting between police and striking workers, the fighting is graphically depicted with intense movement and perspective view. When this mural is finished it should create a strong image giving Cable Street some identification with the past.



ADVERTISING - IDENTIFICATION

When looking at advertising that is composed of imagery used in a very aesthetic way the contribution to the form and feeling of the building can be extremely successful. Originally most small towns and villages had their resident painter, better referred to as artist. He painted shopfronts and signs and sometimes put decorative colours on homes. But this practice has become rare nowadays. One town artist who is making a name for himself is a man called Ed Povey who has worked in Bangor in North Wales for many years.

Fig  
16

WALL SEVEN: Ed Povey's work is reminiscent of super realist bill board artists in the United States. This mural, painted on a grocery shopfront at number fortythree, Holyhead Road comprises of a large table framing a selection of groceries. Its function is obvious at first sight, it successfully identifies the shop and advertises its goods. This type of mural combines advertising, identification and skillfully painted realism, on location. It utilised the power of advertising to its maximum benefit, yet also contributing colour to the surrounding environment. Numerous shop owners in Bangor have employed Ed Povey to paint their shop signs. This subtle promotion of shops through the use of one artists style has given Bangor a strong sense of visual continuity.



Fig  
15



Fig  
15

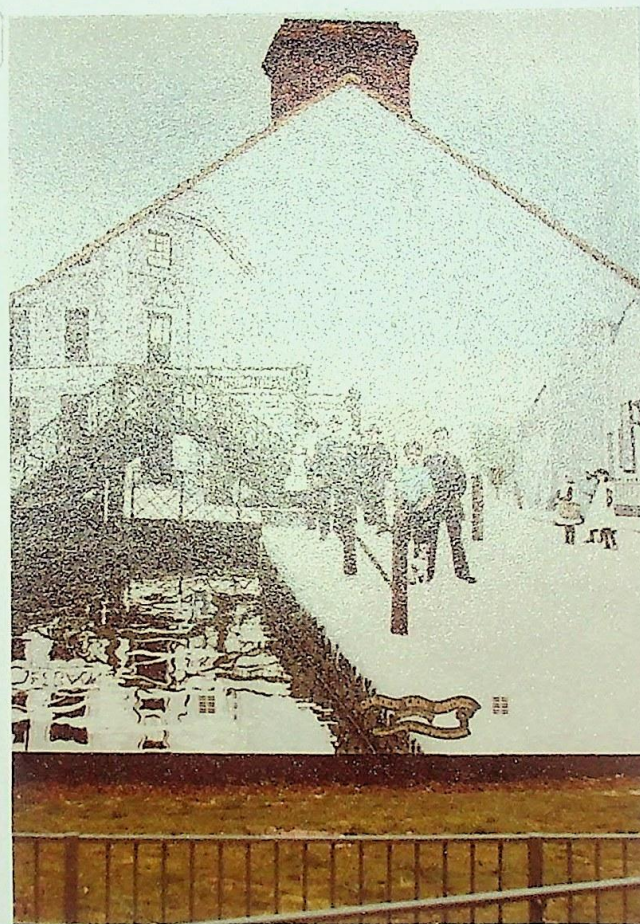


Fig  
16





Advertising or descriptive identification by means of wall painting certainly gives the eye of the viewer an easier time than intense billboards. Less commercial examples identify building for the public and don't force anything on them.

Fig  
17

WALL EIGHT: This machine mural, called 'Locomotion' on the side of the North Western museum of Science and Industry in Manchester, was designed by Ken Billyard and painted by Walter Kershaw after Billyard's death in 1976. The Greater Manchester Council provided the funds, materials, and equipment. Its relevant imagery gives the building a totally unique style of identification. The colours are designed to harmonize with the original character of the building and the involvement of exterior objects such as the cylinder, wheel and fire escape, causes them to blend into the mural results in a subtle optical illusion.

Walter Kershaw is one of the most prolific muralists in England. Together with his friend, Eric Kean, he was responsible for a number of schemes which usually involved groups of up to a dozen assistants including local residents. While the authorities initially viewed the enterprises with suspicion the general public supported the painters and offered them further wall surfaces. Kershaw's latest achievements unlike the earlier works, have been designed and painted mainly by himself, without community participation.

Numerous murals identify more than what a shop sells or what a building's function is. Sometime the message relates to a whole town or an industrial characteristic connection between the public and the jobs they do, creating a bond between the people and their environment.



Fig 18 WALL NINE: This topographical mural organized by the Wallsend Arts Centre was painted by Duncan Newton with the assistance of local people. The details are based on everyday scenes of the shopbuilding town of Wallsend. It has more than twenty different scenes and visual textures which makes it hold interest and does a great deal for the gable end. This mural contains a lot of the local public's interest, therefore blending with the social environment, if you consider the Elizabethan mural in Plymouth (see: Historic) I doubt many people in that city have an overpowering interest in the occult.

Fig 19 WALL TEN: The inner London Education Authority funded the most researched scheme to day, the decorations of the Laycock School in Islington. The designs, based on the brick units of the walls, provide a model of how to incorporate children's ideas. The once dismal walls now express the vitality and self-discovery that ought to take place in every infant-primary school.

Painted with the aid of David Cashman and Roger Fagin. It was decided that the two gable fronts of the building should show the kind of activity that went on within the school. Each of the three hundred and twenty pupils were presented with silk-screen prints of brickwork on to which they were asked to paint designs. The final sixteen designs were chosen after discussion with the children, teachers, and parents. The border designs, painted by the artists are a special feature of these murals. The pupils also painted figures on the outside of the school walls. The above mural helps to identify the school building and its function.

The technique used has a lot of useful suggestions. Following the grid of the brickwork helps the accurate application and drawing up of the design. It also has a similarity to computer block pictures. This could be used as a very precise method of projecting any type of image on a large brick surface. Once you know the grid of the brick's you can adopt the computer grid and work straight from the computer output.

If the public and the artist collaborated more in the production of exterior designs, the resulting murals are more likely to be successful. It is so much easier to please people if you know what they like and don't force your own ideas on them as has been done with so many murals in the past

S.7 WALL ELEVEN: This imaginative commercial was painted by Ken White at the Virgin Record studio on St. Stephen's Avenue in London. Its ironic statement created by illustrating dereliction on a perfect building, works well on a sunny day when the sky blends with the paint. The falling bricks don't scare pedestrians, but are very effective. This is another example of subtle promotion using identification of the vital factor.



Fig  
17

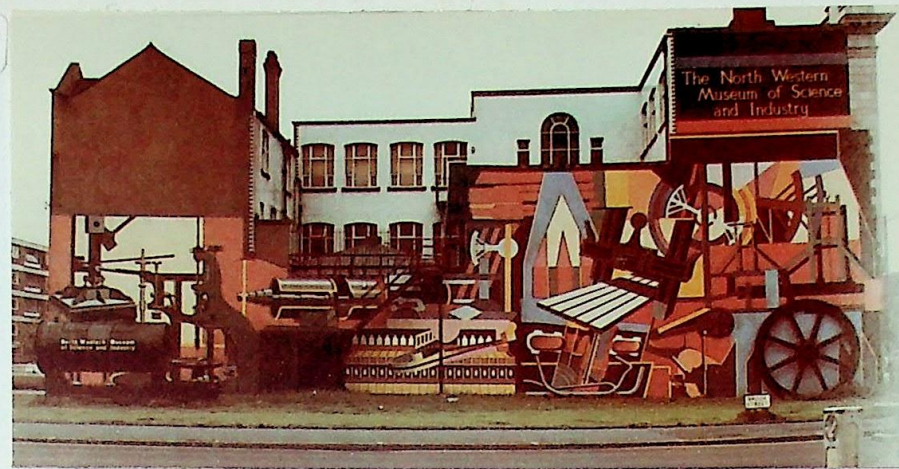


Fig  
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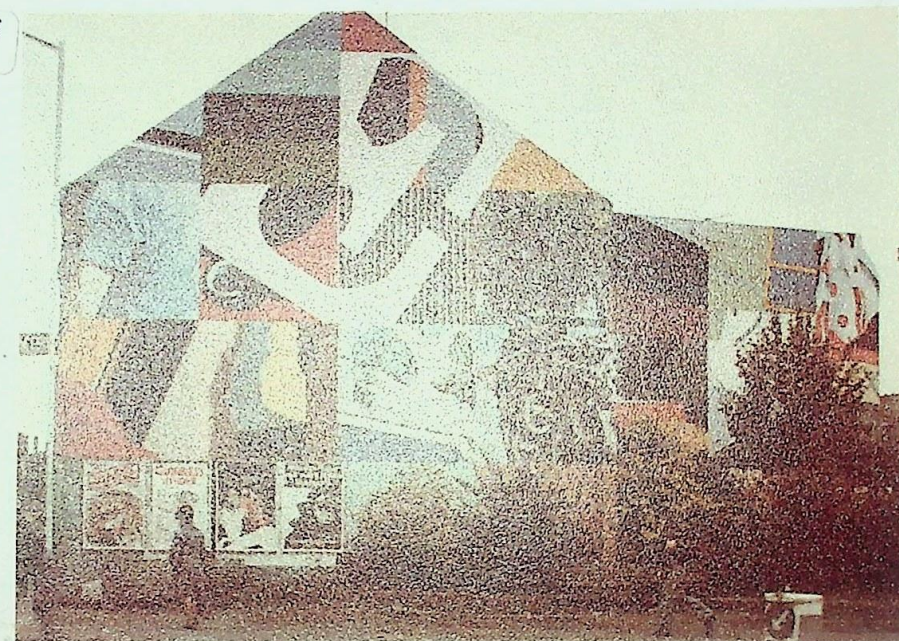


Fig  
19





CAMOUFLAGE:

Camouflage is one of the fundamental functions of wall painting. If you want to eliminate a ugly wall the easy way is to paint it out, using numerous techniques including optical illusion, colours, and decoration. Walls are not the only problem, industrial structures, gas tanks, chimneys and building sites (hoardings) can create eye sores.

Apart from camouflaging the dreary appearance of a building, a mural can also serve to obscure its actual purpose. Reputedly the first of the recent 'big art' mural in North America, painted by John St. John in 1954, was designed to conceal a sewage-works in Miami, Florida.

Fig  
20

WALL TWELVE: This old seaman's general store by Ken Watts, located in Moor Court, Sunderland, owes its existence to the initiative of a local community worker and to the Sunderland Arts Centre. The mural is like one of the artist's canvas paintings. In this situation the gable end was successfully "removed", yet a subtle harmony obtained by following the line of original structures and keeping the colours brighter but not too exuberent.

Fig  
21

WALL THIRTEEN: A more emotional mood is created here by Noel Miller, on the Mourne bar in Foyle Street, Londonderry. The gable wall is non-existent because the viewer's attention is consumed by the subject matter. The envelop covers most of the wall and the hands create depth leaving the wall in the background.

Fig  
22

WALL FOURTEEN: Tim Armstrong had two main objectives in painting this decoration in Adcroft Street Glasgow. He wanted, firstly, to harmonize the colour and the scale of the design with the building and its surroundings and secondly, to provide a decoration that would be attractive to the community. He does not eliminate the wall but uses it as an important part of the design.

Fig  
23

WALL FIFTEEN: In this case the wall is again (wall thirteen) placed in the background framing the image. This mural in Evelyn Estate, London, was part of an extensive project that was undertaken in 1976-7 by the 395 group. The themes were suggested by the residents, approved by the Lewisham Council and elaborated by the 395 group.



Fig  
20



Fig  
21





Fig  
22

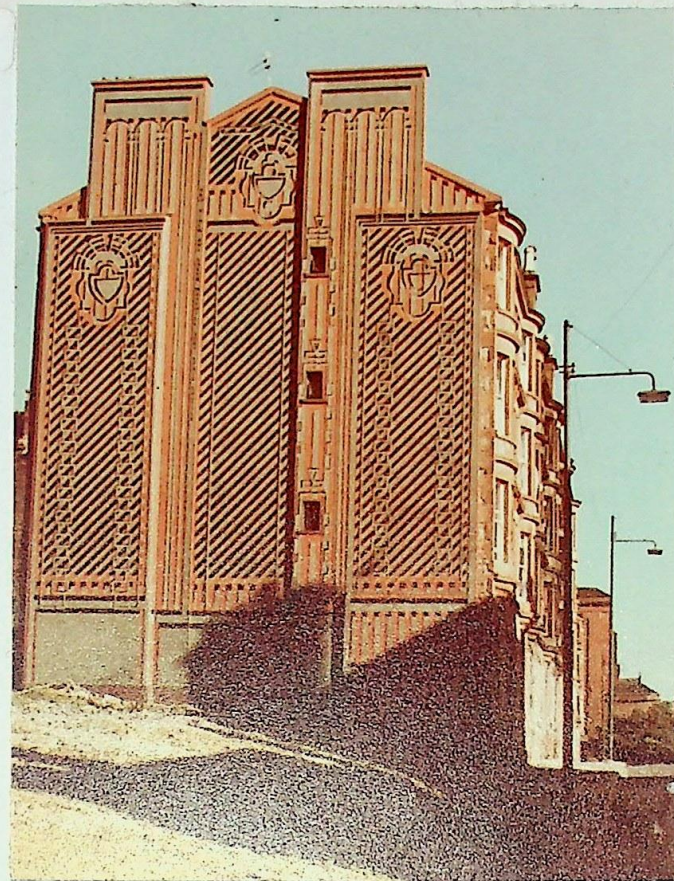


Fig  
23





OPTICAL ILLUSION:

I looked at two examples of optical illusion in England - one is in Derby Street in Rochdale Lancashire, interpreted by Walter Kershaw and Olive Frith

Fig  
24

WALL SIXTEEN: The owner of the house, Mrs Scholfield, is sitting in an imagined Living room watching television. The wallpaper and carpet designs were created by students from the Local art College. This is a very attractive mural basically because of the idea and the amount of different things to see. The viewer's attention is held for some time, you just can't walk straight past this mural - it takes a while to "look into" the house and observe all the objects and happenings. It entertains, which is probably the most important thing when it comes to presenting an image to the masses, people like visual tricks - it makes them smile.

Fig  
25

Peter Rich's mural on a wooden fence in his back garden in Dunboyne Road London, creates the illusion of space.

S.8

A lot of the work done in England seems quite controlled, possibly because of the way they are organised and the financing arrangements. To get financial aid from the town council one has to get your idea approved and, of course, obtain agreement of the local people. The financing of the mural can be surprisingly expensive. Usually they are painted in emulsion paint which is relatively economical. It's best to use Kiem mineral pigments (silicon based) for proper application of these pigments. The surface has to be in perfect condition: brickwork must be rendered with a layer of concrete to absorb the pigment. Desmond Rochford and David Binnington used this media on the Royal Oak motorway mural. David Binnington's Cable Street mural cost £15,000 just for the rendering.

Kiem also takes a long time to apply. It has to be worked up in several light glazes, it took Binnington two years to get to the stage when I photographed it. But in the case of a newly built building that has already been rendered, Kiem can be applied immediately. This reduces price and time. The advantage of working on a new wall has been adopted in West Germany where any new building projects automatically puts aside one percent of the total financing to the promotion of painted environmental images. The Germans have caught the disease at the beginning and created a situation where environmental graphics and colour is automatically introduced into the environment instead of having to introduce it later when it's more difficult and expensive.

Germany has quite a reputation for creating environmental projects and it seems to come naturally to them.

S.9

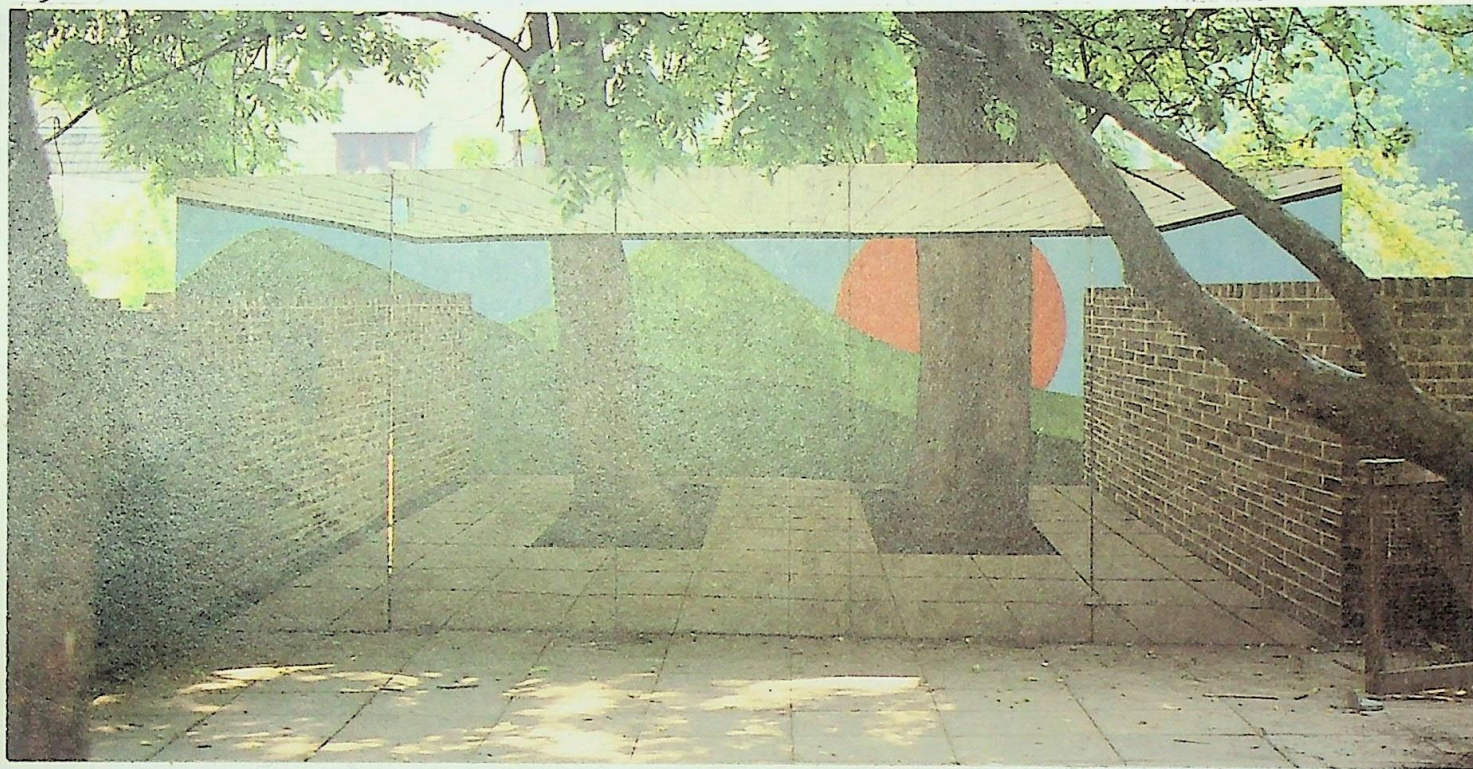
At this site a new subway station is under construction. The building directly behind the site has been painted to harmonize with the building and the surroundings. (Harburg 90 Hamburg 2100, West Germany 1979).



Fig  
24



Fig  
25





Architectural paint, decoration or imaginative, has helped bring more colour back into the urban environment.

Another medium that has a strong impact on the cityscape is the construction barrier, better known as the hoarding.

Fig

26

The hoarding was originally developed by the English and was used to hide construction sites or refuse areas. They consisted of a plywood wall and was usually covered by billposters, creating a useful newsboard. Today the hoarding forms an expected part of the street level scene and facilitates advertising associated with any periodical affairs that need fast but cheap exposure such as concerts and plays.

Fig

27

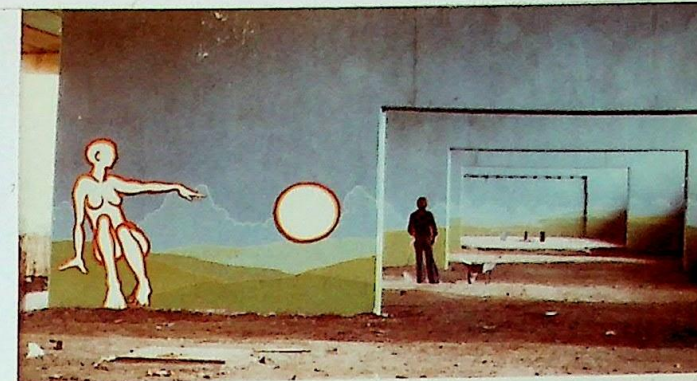
After a new hoarding has been erected within a few days the first bills are posted. After a few months the surface is usually like an old wall with several layers of peeling wallpaper, eventually turning into eyesores.

S.10

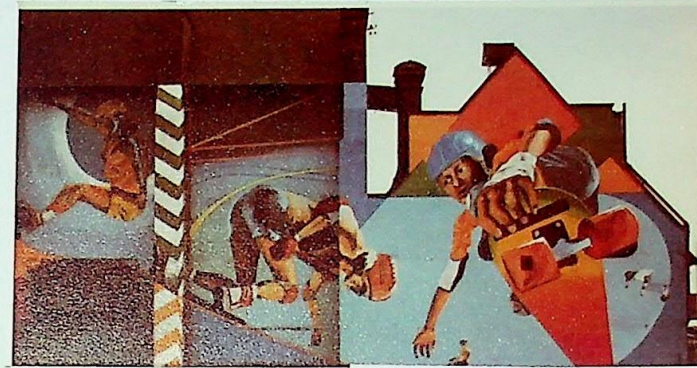




EXAMPLE A.  
Court St.  
Dundee.  
Robert  
McGilvray.  
Intro-Outro\*  
1976



EXAMPLE C.  
Sheperd's Bush,  
London.  
Harrow Club  
(Dave Bent)  
Skateboarders.



EXAMPLE D.  
Earlham Street,  
London.  
Stephen Pusey.  
Garden.....

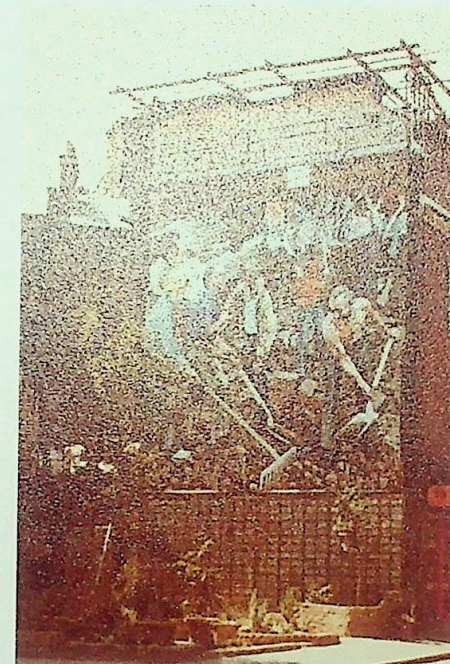


Fig  
26



Fig  
27





In recent years some interest has been taken in the hoarding and its potential as an exterior canvas and, civic communication device has been realised by a number of town planners and designers. In 1970 an American designer Gerry Berman, decided to try out some ideas on a construction barrier in San Francisco. He noticed the negative effect that contemporary hoardings had on the public. They were clustraphobic and depressing. Their contribution to the environment and as a communicative device was overwhelmed by their untidiness. Berman decided to redevelop the hoarding so as to create a link between the public and the activities of the construction companies working on the other side. He realised that people had a strong curiosity about what went on behind that barrier between the street and the buildings. He got cooperation from architects and decided to give the hoarding a face lift. Berman covered the hoardings with full scale photographs of men at work inside the site and introduced rimmed holes so people could see the transformations inside.

Sections of the panels had public information boards and copy informing the passer-bys about the building and its function, how long it would take to complete etc. On other sections he painted a series of young trees and as the seasons changed he painted leaves different tones, in autumn he removed the leaves to give the effect of the approach of winter. Berman considered harmony as a vital part of the design. Everything was coated in plexiglass protecting it from vandalism and the elements.

Gerry Barman revolutionised the hoarding in San Francisco. Independently in England and Europe its function was transformed as designers saw the public interest in the transformation of their environment. It was more feasible to break the hoarding up into vertical segments. This helped eliminate billposting and the public could see what was happening inside, but in some cases the view was quite ugly, especially when segmented hoarding was used on permanent refuse or derelict sites, that had no activity inside. Some interesting adaptations have arisen from the need for public relationship to their environment. Hoardings have ended exterior painting as walls have done in the past, an example of this could be seen in Belgium.

Fig  
28

Paul De Gobert a Belgian mural painter has altered the atmosphere of a central Brussels Street, transforming the fence around a large building site into a "strip". Painted scenes contrast with real ones.

Because hoardings are usually erected for a short period the amount of visual information is continually replaced on new hoardings, therefore continually changing visual stimulation in the urban environment. This replacement creates a medium that can carry a contrasting array of information to that used as gable walls and facades.



Fig  
28





been turned into a large car park. The street side is left derelict and is rapidly deteriorating, within the last few weeks since this paper was written "Gallagher" has been liquidated because of financial problems. The result; the public are left with another major eyesore. Its most likely that this eyesore shall be with us for a number of years to come.

S-15

The visual image of Dublin looks very drab at the moment however there are some examples of recent work that may change the evolution of this image for the better. Although they are on a small scale at the moment these endeavours could result in a new generation of environmental projects. Most of this new work is performed on hoardings painted by Dublin Corporation ranging from consecutive colours, red white, blue white, light blue - dark blue, - light and dark red, light and dark green. Of course the Corporation painters have elaborated slightly by mixing their colours, this could be out of boredom.

Fig 31

I found one example of a hoarding painted by students from the Parnell Square college of communication and marketing.

Fig 32

This unique hoarding is situated in Parnell Square, considering that its a rare example of imaginative outdoor painting

Fig 33

it contributes immensely to the visual environment. But its a matter of one being pleased by a "crumb" when one is starving. This hoarding erected on a building site is painted in a naive style and is very colourful, depicting the students painting the hoarding while pedestrians walk past. It is quite humorous and creates a gayful mood, people do smile and find it interesting.

One part of the problem is a lack of communication between artists and designers with town planners architects and builders. If this barrier can be broken down there are many artists and designers who would be willing to work on walls and hoardings helping expose more art and colour into this dull city. Hopefully the progress discussed earlier in other capitals will materialise. Accepting that this might happen, Dublin could become a more visually stimulating city. The other part of the problem results from Dublin Corporation

S-16

widespread road widening plans. This will effect the overall fabric of the city and have a much more devastating effect

S-17

then the original version of the controversial Eastern by pass motorway. In the inner City alone, a total of 82 streets are effected. To make way for these schemes literally hundreds of buildings would have to be demolished. The vast majority of these road plans are unlikely to be implemented even by the end of this century. In the meantime, because of the long delays inherent in the process of planing and land acquisition. The very existence of the Corporations plans is directly responsible for the environmental degradation of the affected areas; The phenomenon known as "planning blight" is now rampant throughout the city. Therefore the question is; "Would it be better to try and visually transform these doomed buildings so that they look better, or to leave them the way they are because they are going to be demolished within five or fifty years anyway?."





Fig  
31

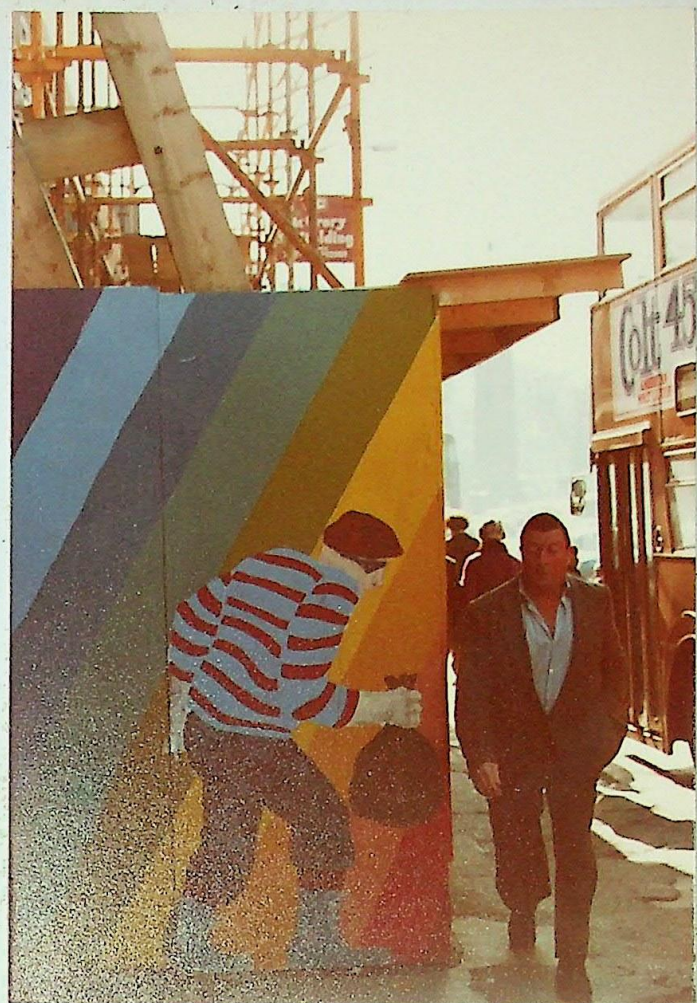


Fig  
32



Fig  
33



## CONCLUSION.

We have seen early mans desire for colour and how it was used symbolically in interior and exterior situations. After following the development of colour through Egyptian, Greek and Roman civilisations, we find that environmental colour was a vital part of the cities visual structure. But as we come to the end of the middle ages and the start of the Renaissance we find that environmental colour has lost a lot of its original symbolic functions and became a 'crude' addition to the cities image.

Throughout history the evidence of early environmental colour was rare and our interpatation of our ancestors colour language has a lot to be desired. After looking at the almost total lose of environmental colour in the cityscape we have seen how it re-emerged through advertising and was latter exploited by muralists.

We have seen the interest taken in colour by environm-ental designers, psychiatrists, architects, socioligists and artists, and the results from some of their expiriments. From these investigations conclusive evidence has proposed that man needs colour as a mental stimulation and communicative device in his environment. From these investigations we can see the development of a complete natural colour system the NCS and how this can be used to transform our monochromatic cities into less depressing places. From these studies it has been shown how the attitudes of architects who create our urban environments, differ from the people who live in these environments.

Seeing the effects of exterior art in murals and advert-ising on the cityscape led to the investigation of another medium, the hoarding. We looked at its advantages and disadvantages and how it can be used in an imagenative way. Finally, looking at Dublin as a city that needs a visual facelift. The root of the problem could be the lack of communication between the architect and the artist which leads to little communication between the building and the inhabitants.

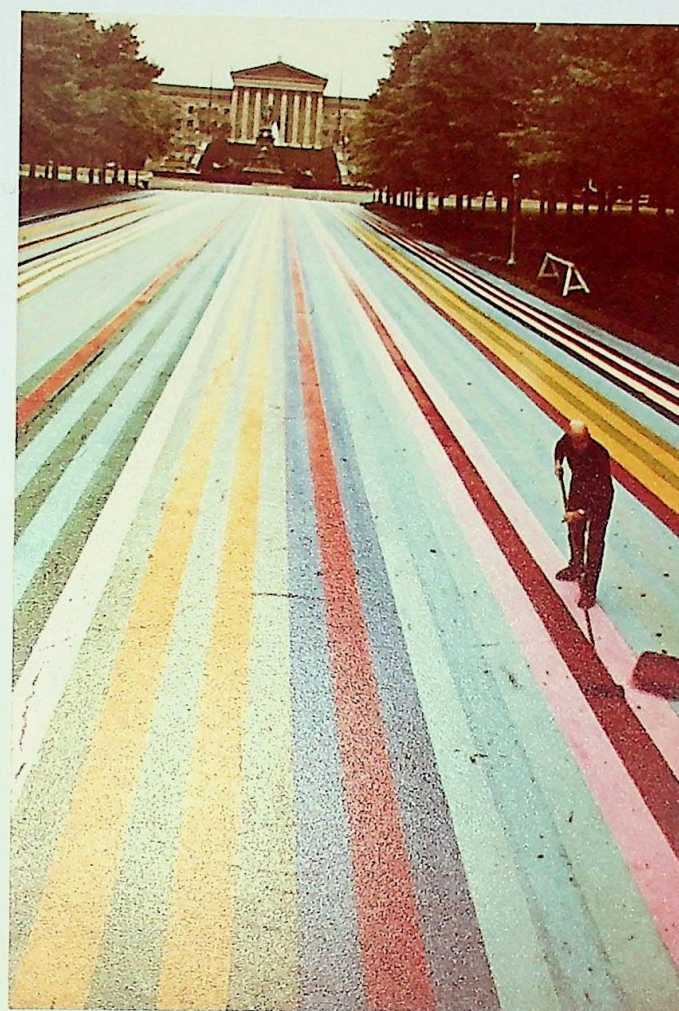
With the knowladge man has obtained from investigations into the machanic's of colour and, the complex effects colour has on people and their surroundings man sould be able to create a cityscape that works visually with the inhabitants. Using the colour atlas compiled in the NCS the whole environment could be transformed to communicate in any situation.



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