

Module 10: "Color reacts (psychological)"

Lecture 26: "Significance of Color"

The Lecture Contains:

- ☰ The Meaning of Color
- ☰ Significance of Color
- ☰ Feelings and Reactions to Color
- ☰ The Meaning of Color
- ☰ Most people react to color in approximately the same way

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The Meaning of Color

In order to understand the Meaning of Color one has to study the area of Color Psychology. Human beings react and feel differently towards various colors. This is known as color psychology and it is scientifically verified. It varies from country to country. Color psychologists have studies and experimented cultures like Ancient Indians, Chinese and Egyptians have used color-therapy (chromo-therapy) to heal their patients. The effect of colors is perceived differently by different people. It is very much subjective and difficult to quantify. (Article Source: <http://EzineArticles.com/1899008>; June 9, 2012)

"Color in design is very subjective. What evokes one reaction in one person may evoke a very different reaction in someone else. Sometimes this is due to personal preference, and other times due to cultural background. Color theory is a science in itself. Studying how colors affect different people, either individually or as a group, is something some people build their careers on. And there's a lot to it. Something as simple as changing the exact hue or saturation of a color can evoke a completely different feeling. Cultural differences mean that something that's happy and uplifting in one country can be depressing in another."

(Ref: <http://www.smashingmagazine.com/2010/01/28/color-theory-for-designers-part-1-the-meaning-of-color/> ; June 9, 2012)

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Our reaction to color is instantaneous and this lens is a quick look at general responses based on research, historical significance of color and word association studies.

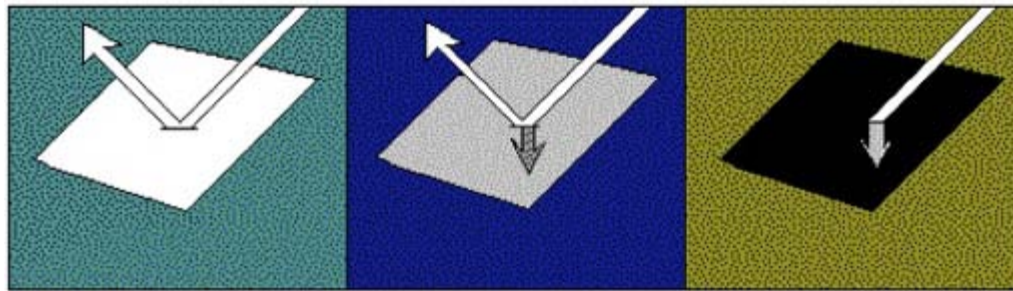


Plate1. Relative absorption and reflection of light by white, gray, and black surfaces

Color and texture also affect the amount of reflected light. While attending a party in night/day one has to carefully select the fabric, which would help to identify or stand out among others.

Meaning of Color could be experienced in various ways which may vary person to person, culture to culture and tradition to tradition. Color has attributes- cool, hot/ warm, bright, dull, etc. In true sense there is no color that is cold or hot (Physically), it is our feeling- warm and cool colors application by analogy to feelings.

Color has many meanings, which varies in great diversity. How color behaves in relation to other colors and shapes is a complex area of color theory. Combination of colors could be from pure arrangement of colors to symbols and metaphors.

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Significance of Color

"The great 19th-century writer and critic John Ruskin said, "Color is the most sacred element in all visual things." Designers agree that color is most vital and expressive of the elements of design."

(Ref. http://www.invitinghome.com/ldias_Advice/Decorating_Colors_Effect.htm ; June 9, 2012)

(Read more: <http://www.sensationalcolor.com/index.php> ; June 9, 2012)

Color is the most powerful non-verbal communication human beings have realized. Color has the power of communicating messages and meanings. In modern days psychologists have found the quality of color stimulation effect the environment (positive). Color because of its impact on human mind symbolizes abstract concepts and thoughts, express fantasy or desires, and helps producing an aesthetic or emotional response.

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Feelings and Reactions to Color

Emotional reactions associated with color are spontaneous. The reaction, often due to the perception of a color rather than to the color itself, may be positive or negative. While examining the scientific nature of color and the aesthetic considerations of color harmony, we have seen that perception plays a large part in the effective use of color. Beyond the mechanics of perception and the recognition of balanced color palettes lies the intangible, visceral reaction that humans have to color. Colors evoke strong physiological and emotional responses both in positive and negative ways. When you develop your color palette, make sure that the colors you select elicit the appropriate response.



Plates.2 Santiniketan Ashram, West Bengal, India

The contrast of color in light and shade creates an emotional impact through its interaction. The mystic quality of the environment has tremendous impact on the viewers and the people who participate in the process.



Plates3 Light Effect Color, Light & Shade Effect in open Space

Product or any experience should not be judged in isolation. Colors are experience in association with other products and environment. The significance of color is realized only if it is experienced through various other factors around not in isolation.

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The Meaning of Color

Color speaks through various meaning depending on culture, tradition, socio-political conditions, etc. However, the effect of color on human being is well researched field of studies conducted by psychologists for many centuries.

Following are some of the examples that the Color Psychologists have tested found-

Most people react to color in approximately the same way:



-  RED excites / stimulates/passion/ action, confidence, courage, vitality
-  ORANGE activates/ pessimism/ sacrifice
-  YELLOW cheers (it stimulates intellect usage in libraries, classrooms)/optimistic/ cheerful
-  GREEN refreshes / retiring / balance/ growth/ self-reliance/
-  INDIGO BLUE intuition/ idealism /ritualistic/ addictive
-  BLUE cools and subdues / relaxing/ trust and peace/ loyalty and integrity/conservatism and frigidity
-  PURPLE imaginative/ creative/ individual/ immature and impractical/ depressing
-  MAGENTA stimulates/ universal harmony/ emotional balance/ Spiritual/practical/ encouraging common sense/ balanced outlook – life
-  BROWN serious/ down-to-earth/ security/ protection/ material wealth
-  GRAY / WHITE neutralizing/ compromise
-  BLACK scary/ evil/ frightful/ fearful/ bad luck/ funeral color/ sadness/mourning/ unlucky

Read more: [What Emotions Do the Colors Represent? | eHow.com http://www.ehow.com/list_7427569_emotions-do-colors-represent_.html#ixzz1oLPSPbSp](http://www.ehow.com/list_7427569_emotions-do-colors-represent_.html#ixzz1oLPSPbSp); http://www.ehow.com/list_7427569_emotions-do-colors-represent_.html ;June 8, 2012)

Colors may mean very different things- you must understand color by their own merit does have any meaning (read Piet Mondrian's *Pure Plastic Art*), it is culturally how human beings have perceived

and their psychological effect on our mind. “For example, red means warmth because of the color of fire. Likewise, it means anger because of the increased redness of the face when it flushes with blood. Purple symbolizes royalty only because the only purple dye that was available for many centuries was very expensive.” (Ref. http://changingminds.org/disciplines/communication/color_effect.htm ; June 8, 2012)

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