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Color its effect on you

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COLOR

its effect on you

By Isabel McGibney
Extension Home Management Specialist

Do You Know What Color Can Do for You? Color is all around us—let's make it work for us. To get full value from color we need to know what it can do and then make a plan for its use. A color plan can do more than anything else to make a room appear as an organized whole. There are no rigid rules for using color but an understanding of a few simple guideposts will help us appreciate what might be expected when colors are used together.

What colors you combine are not as important as **how** you combine them. No color is ugly if used in the right places and amounts.

The first step to developing a color plan is to know the different colors and their relationship to each other and to you. Other considerations will be the amount and kind of illumination; the shape, size and texture of the object; and the relationships of the objects to each other.

Differences in human needs, financial status, structural

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limitations, and others will influence how you apply the rules of design and color.

Imitation is not art. The artist (you) will take advantage of previous ideas but must add something of his own personality.

In a home every room should look natural and appear as though it is used by someone who enjoys it. Also, it should have color personality and organization. Every feature should contribute to a practical, esthetic, or psychological purpose. Nothing superfluous should be used.

COLOR SOURCE

Light is the source of color. When light rays strike an object some of the rays are absorbed and some reflected. Those reflected give the object its color. A lemon absorbs all color rays except yellow. White reflects all colors, black absorbs all colors. Even the terrific heat from an atomic explosion can be repelled by white or near white garments. After the atomic blast in Hiroshima it was noted that those who wore clothes with patterns had the design burnt into the flesh. Deep colors caused very deep burns, lighter tones only surface burns.

The two sources of light are daylight and artificial light. In our homes, we may alter the color of daylight with thin colored curtains or of artificial light with translucent shades (not white) or with tinted bulbs.

A ray of white light (daylight) may be broken into colors by a prism. We can see three basic or primary colors which cannot be broken down. In addition to these we can see three secondary colors.

Physiologists find the eye sensitive to four colors in pairs. Red and green are seen in their pure hue in one part of the eye, while blue and yellow are seen in another part. A third part sees black and white. These parts of the eye coordinate in seeing color mixtures. After-images proves the pairs of colors are inseparable.

A color blind person is "blind" to colors in pairs—never to a single color alone. For instance if he is "blind" to red, he is also "blind" to green, red's complement.

COLOR THEORIES

Workers in each of the fields of physics, psychology, chemistry, and art have different color theories because they are concerned with different aspects of the study of color.

The theory most commonly used and understood is the use of three basic colors—red, blue, and yellow—with

three secondary colors of orange, green and purple. The six colors, made by mixing adjacent pairs of the above, are called intermediate colors.

COLOR QUALITIES

Color has dimensions just as an object has dimensions.

Hue—the color name such as red, green, yellow.

Value—the lightness or darkness of a color. High value is stimulating, middle values are relaxing and comforting, and dark values give one a serious, dignified feeling. Strong value contrasts (black and white) are stimulating.

Tint—adding white to a color—tend to make objects seem larger.

Shade—adding black to a color—tend to make objects seem smaller.

Intensity—brightness or dullness of a color.

Neutralized or dulled—to add complementary color.

Intense colors—stimulate, increase size, brings it closer. Neutralized colors do the opposite.

Warm—colors that contain much yellow or red. These colors are also called advancing. They come forward and seem to make rooms smaller.

Cool—colors that contain much blue or green. These colors are called receding and apparently make the room larger.

EMOTIONAL EFFECT OF COLOR

Color is a basic human need. Every one is influenced in some way by every color one sees.

The effect of color on each of us varies with our age, health, eyesight, personality, sex, or former experience and memories. Therefore there are no rigid rules for use.

Color is emotional. Some have mental color blindness. This is not a disease but a mental blocking and deep-seated emotional inhibition. It is an escape mechanism. They close off their minds and emotions from the things that surround them.

Because of the emotional effect of color upon us, it is largely responsible for the atmosphere of our home. It can be soothing or irritating, cheering or depressing, charming or boring, welcoming or repelling.

The hue, value, and intensity of a color changes its emotional value. Example: pure red will have a different effect than orange-red which is a difference in hue, or from a pink which is different from it in value, or a gray-red which is different in intensity.

Reactions of humans to color is a complex affair. Sensitivity to color has been noted even in totally blind individuals.

Color affects the human mood as well as bodily reaction. We not only feel different on a sunny day but our body reacts differently. Red has been found to increase muscular tension and blue to relax it. In a red light one overestimates time, the size of an object or the weight of the object. A green or blue light has the opposite effect. One underestimates time, size and weight.

Color is of tremendous value in dealing with human moods, in promoting greater comfort, and in lessening neurotic tensions and anxiety. The mentally ill react strongly to different colors depending upon their types of illness.

Relationship between color preferences and personality are many.

Researchers have found humans tend to fall into two distinct color groups. (1) those preferring clear, distinct hues, usually warm tones, and (2) those preferring cooler hues and tones of less intensity.

The person who prefers warm colors is more inclined to be dynamic (outwardly integrated or extrovert) and appreciates modern, abstract, and radical design, sharper hues and color contrasts. Warmth signifies contact with environment. The person who prefers cool colors is more conservative (inwardly integrated—introvert) and has a preference for tradition and sentiment in decoration and for soft, subdued hues. Coolness signifies withdrawal into oneself.

A person who in general reacts freely and agreeably to colors—any and all—is likely to have a responsive personality and will probably be keenly interested in (if not well oriented toward) the world at large. His less enthusiastic neighbor may be of solemn countenance and glum disposition.

Normally people surround themselves with diluted colors of both cool and warm hues, unconsciously seeking a balance.

Yellow, the color of light, gives the effect of cheerfulness, gaiety, optimism, and prosperity. It sings or shouts depending upon the value or intensity. Yellow makes inexpensive materials look richer.

Orange is the most vivid hue and so warm it can be used only in small quantities. It gives the effect of energy, spirit, hope and courage. In a neutralized form (peach, rust, copper) it gives a feeling of hospitality and cheer.

Brown is associated with humility, tranquility and gentleness. Red-browns are easier to use than yellow browns.

Red makes one think of fire and blood. It expresses passion, vigor, power, movement, boldness, force, warmth. It is cheerful but not restful. Cool reds harmonize with blue or purple. Warm reds harmonize with yellow and orange. Reds are usually grayed when used in large quantities.

Purple which is made from mixing red and blue—colors with quite opposite feelings gives a feeling of gentleness, mystery, dignity, reflection.

Blue color of sky and water and associated with coolness, distance, loftiness, dignity, calmness, reserve, formality, restraint. Because of these characteristics blue can be used in large areas. It does not have to be neutralized as much as the aggressive colors.

Green the color of leaves and grass are associated with heat, cool shade, and pleasant things. It is made of blue and yellow so can be made to be either warm or cool. The most usable greens have been reduced in intensity and made subtle.

Black suggests mystery, wisdom or sophistication, drama. Can be used in small accents. Basically depressing, but excellent background for showing off brilliancy of other colors.

White suggests serenity and coolness, luxury and delicacy. White is good background for other colors. Can be made to seem warm or cool.

Gray has no characteristics as it is a mixture of black and white. It can be made to be warm or cool. Should have a warm color to counteract its neutrality. Ideal background for showing true value of other colors.

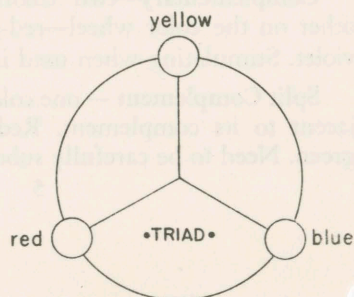
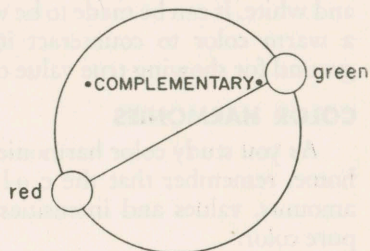
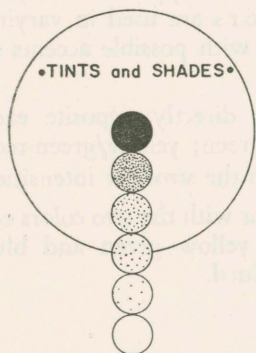
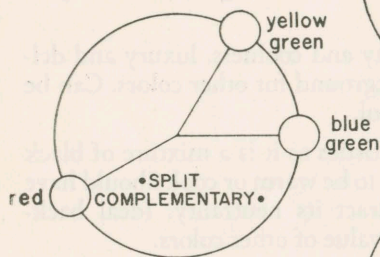
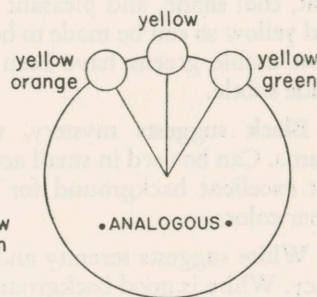
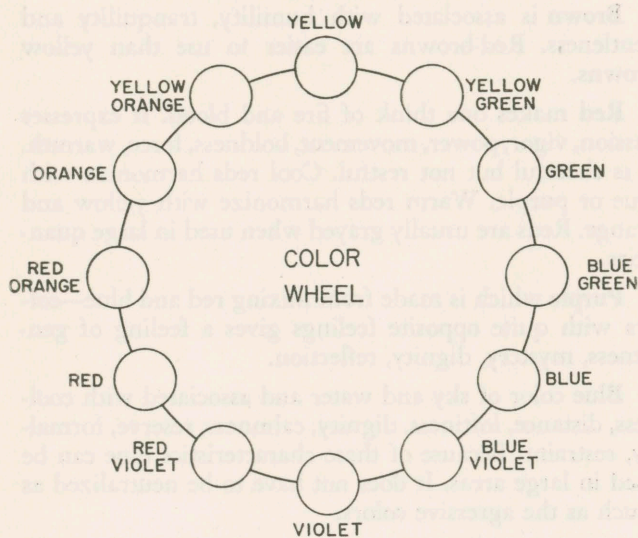
COLOR HARMONIES

As you study color harmonies and apply them to your home, remember that the colors are used in varying amounts, values and intensities with possible accents of pure color.

Complementary—two colors directly opposite each other on the color wheel—red-green; yellow/green-red/violet. Stimulating when used in the stronger intensities.

Split Complement — one color with the two colors adjacent to its complement. Red-yellow green and blue green. Need to be carefully subdued.

COLOR HARMONIES



Triad—any three colors equal distance from each other on the color wheel. Red, blue, yellow. Needs to be subdued to obtain harmony.

Analogous—any three colors next to each other on the color wheel—blue—blue green—green. Likely to be too cool or too warm unless carefully handled. Only one primary color should be included.

Monochromatic—Values and intensities of one color. Likely to be monotonous but assures one of a harmonious scheme. Especially good for small rooms.

Dominant color—in any type of color harmony one color should dominate in amount or area. A second color may be used but in less quantity. The accent may be a bright value of one of the colors. The smaller the area the brighter the color may be.

A basic guide to remember: if the dominant color is cool, the accent should be warm; if the dominant color is warm, the accent should be cool.

As colors are increasingly neutralized they become more harmonious with each other but if all are the same value, the effect may be monotonous.

Example: dominate area—wall, floor, ceiling
medium area—draperies, large upholstered furniture, bed covers, etc.
small area—small upholstered furniture, chair seats, pillows, table covers.
accents—welting, fringe, small accessories, small pattern in wall paper, textiles, flowers.

COLOR PLANS

Color plans need to be related to your family's personalities and activities. After that, the room size, shape, exposure; the mood you wish to create; the style of your furnishings; the use of the room and personal preferences will be considered.

The purpose of the room and the time of day it will be most used will help determine the color scheme.

Entrance hall—as a passage way may be decorative and colorful.

A living room should express cheer and hospitality as well as provide relaxation. Colors should be chosen under artificial light. This room is used mostly in evening.

Dining Room—a colorful decorative scheme does not become tiresome as the room is not occupied very long at a time.

Kitchen should be cheerful and bright. Flat surfaces should be light but not glaring. Colors should be stimulating enough to make the cook feel creative.

Bedroom may have a more personal scheme. It is a place for rest and should give that feeling.

Bathroom small and used for short periods may have more stimulating color. A feeling of unity is desirable. This is difficult because of the fixtures in this room.

COLOR TODAY

Because our present day life is fast and full of turmoil our home should be a place for rest and relaxation. We relax best in a place of soft colors and simple forms. The television provides stimulating entertainment but we can turn it off. Brilliantly colored flowered designs, ornate woodwork, many accessories cannot be turned off and on. Intricate design and multicolored decorations have no relationship to the tempo and character of our modern life.

Remember, When Choosing Colors:

1. Their stimulating or relaxing qualities. Meet your emotional needs. Be guided by your natural reaction to colors plus your knowledge of their effect.

2. The reflection factors. If a room is to be light, choose tints.

3. Warm colors advance and make rooms appear smaller. Cool colors recede and make rooms appear larger. Tints make objects seem larger. Shades make objects seem smaller.

4. Kind of light—daylight—artificial.

5. Purpose of room.

6. Psychological effect—cool colors in near values have a calming effect while warm colors are apt to give you a lift. Most people enjoy a balance of color. To get this balance use warm and cool colors in varying values and intensities.

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