

perspective

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INSPIRING ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN

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MULTICOLOURED RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

By layering the three primary colours – red, yellow and blue – Beijing-based People's Architecture Office cooks up a vibrant office for gourmet sweets franchise 21 Cake

+ SPECIAL FOCUS:

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A brighter shade of pale

Did you know that international studies have shown that blue is the most popular colour globally? Or that green is the only colour that your eye doesn't have to adjust to see? Colour can be used in so many creative and inspiring ways, so this month, we chat to some of the judges from the professional section of Perspective's upcoming A&D Trophy Awards about the ways they utilise colour in their designs

TEXT:
Sophie Cullen
PHOTOGRAPHY:
Courtesy of designers



ANGELENE CHAN
CEO, DP Architects | Singapore

Tell us about a project that you have worked on that has used colour creatively.

Sunray Woodcraft Construction Headquarters – an eight-storey industrial building combining production space, workers' dormitories, warehouse, offices and showroom functions – comes with a yellow façade. Aside from being the corporate colour of the interior fitout company and client, Sunray, we wanted to use yellow to provide a refreshing and cheery interpretation of the secluded industrial factory building. It won Singapore's highest design accolade, the President's Design Award, last year, for aesthetically redefining the local industrial factory building.

What's your favourite colour and why?

My favourite colour is white because it is clean and pure, while allowing for much variation as there are many shades of white to play around with. In buildings, the colour white presents a fresh canvas on which the form can take priority.

During your travels, have you come across any interesting colours that represent the areas they are found?

I love the colours of Bhutan. Colour is seen everywhere in their way of life; it's a very photogenic place because of its bright, bold and beautiful colours.

Do you admire the way any artists or designers in particular use colour?

I'm a fan of the work Singapore's master potter, Iskandar Jalil. He trained in Japan and creates organic, textured clay works that combine Japanese discipline and philosophy with southeast Asian and Islamic motifs. His works are known for the signature 'Iskandar Blue' barium glaze and colour, a vibrant yet tranquil blue that appears on most pieces to convey lightness and joy.



MANUELLE GAUTRAND
Co-founder & principal architect, Manuelle Gautrand Architecture | France

Tell us about a project that you have worked on that has used colour creatively.
At an office building in Saint-Etienne (France), I wanted to use a bright yellow for the façades on the inner street of the building. I was stressed by the narrowness of this street and the density of the building on each side; I wanted, with this playful colour, to illuminate this area, which is like a courtyard for the users. The result is impressive, because the yellow surfaces create a lot of reflections that radiate everywhere in the courtyard, and beyond.

What's your favourite colour and why?

I don't have a favourite colour because the choice of a colour really depends on the context.

During your travels, have you come across any interesting colours that represent the areas they are found?

Travels are always accompanied with a memory of colours. In most cases, the landscape's colours are very important for me and let me preserve deep memories. But my last travels in India were very impressive because I discovered a country where colours are so vivid, and even spectacular!

Do you admire the way any artists or designers in particular use colour?

Of course artists inspire me a lot. With the magnificent work made by Soulages, a French artist, I was impressed to discover the beauty of the colour black, and was inspired by his work to conceive a theatre in the northern part of France, in Bethune. The result is a whole black façade where the metallic panels are successively glossy and matte.

MARK LANDINI
Creative director, Landini Associates | Australia

Tell us about a project that you have worked on that has used colour creatively.

We are using colour increasingly, but never so boldly as in our reinvention of the urban supermarket model for Loblaws in Canada. It was here that we realised that a red or orange floor did not distract from the merchandise under which it sat, but rather drew your eye to it, and engulfed the user in the warmth of the reflected hues.

What's your favourite colour and why?

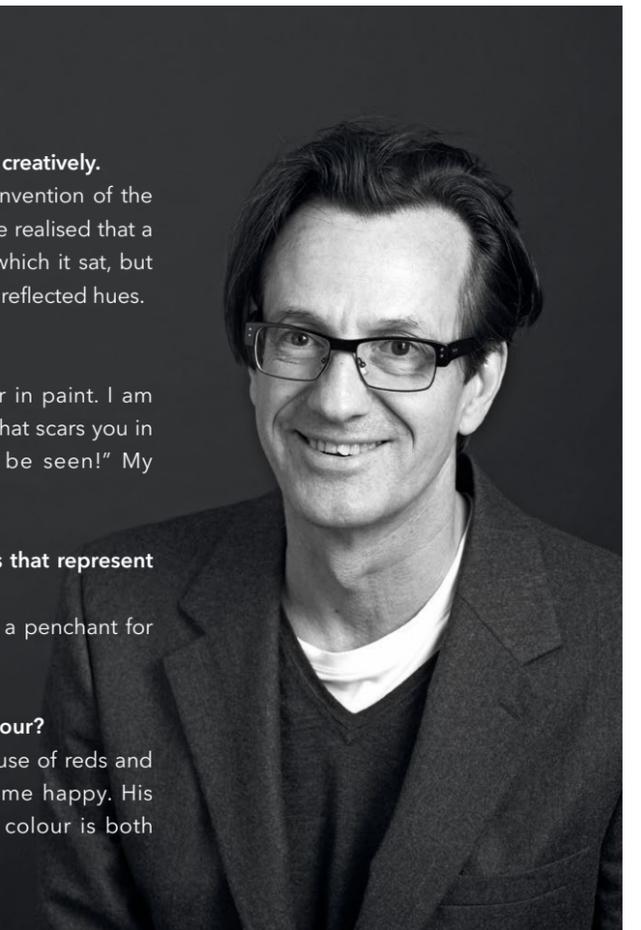
I have no favourite colour, but I prefer colour in nature to colour in paint. I am re-teaching myself about this and unlearning some of the rubbish that scars you in school: "Red and green make me scream and should never be seen!" My demented and alcoholic art master used to chant that mantra a lot.

During your travels, have you come across any interesting colours that represent the areas they are found?

I live by the sea and find it's well represented by blue, and I have a penchant for 'total colour' as seen in the white-covered mountains of Europe.

Do you admire the way any artists or designers in particular use colour?

[Alexander] Calder is my favourite artist of all time. Not only is his use of reds and other primaries incredible, but his work never ceases to make me happy. His objects are often moving in the space they occupy, and so his colour is both engaging but also engaged in its space.



SHALINI MISRA

Founder, Shalini Misra Interior & Architectural Design | England

Tell us about a project that you have worked on that has used colour creatively.

For an 1850s property we renovated in south Hampstead, the paint colours were studied in great detail for the walls, ceiling and woodwork, with the help of a specialist, to use Victorian-inspired colours. Each room has a different colour, and they all flow beautifully, such as the mauve walls, ceiling, window frames and architraves that are set off by the patterned tiles in the study.

What's your favourite colour and why?

I couldn't pick one colour; there are so many tones and shades I adore. However, nature is – and always has been – one of my biggest inspirations. I find all my colour inspiration from the outdoors and enjoy travelling to renew my palette.

During your travels, have you come across any interesting colours that represent the areas they are found?

On a vacation in Maasai Mara, Kenya, we stayed in Cottar's Camp 1920, which has 10 tents in the middle of a larger reserve. The fourth generation of the family was running the camp, a small boutique operation, and the experience could not have been better, as it was very authentic. I was inspired by nature, the contrast and vastness of the area. Watching the beautiful sunset transforming into a melange of blush pink, coral, burnt orange and blood red was mesmerising every night.

Do you admire the way any artists or designers in particular use colour?

I love the beautiful use of colour by Anish Kapoor in his sculptural discs. The cast of colour it reflects when the light hits is stunning. I also admire Bharti Kher, for her beautiful bindi paintings. I find her method of multi-layering multi-coloured circular bindis truly innovative.



JOYCE WANG

Founder, WANG | Hong Kong

Tell us about a project that you have worked on that has used colour creatively.

For Ammo Restaurant and Bar, the material selection in the space was inspired by the different stages of patina undergone by untreated copper. The hues transition between electric orange to dark browns to deep greens and finally verdigris.

What's your favourite colour and why?

My favourite colour is yellow. It's a happy colour when bright, and can appear morose when transforming into mustard and ochre.

During your travels, have you come across any interesting colours that represent the areas they are found?

Colour gives identity to spaces and places. I've just been to Norway, and its vernacular dwellings have a distinctive hue of red. I found out later that traditionally this hue was the cheapest to produce and was made using the blood and oil from fish and other animals. Although more rare, I find fish underwater during my scuba diving trips one of the most rewarding visual explorations of colour and palette.

Do you admire the way any artists or designers in particular use colour?

The work of Spanish architects Selgascano is truly a celebration of colour. Their contribution to the Serpentine Pavilion 2015 was like walking through a giant kaleidoscope, woven with threads of colour that would change as you moved through the space.

JOHANNES TORPE

CEO and creative director, Johannes Torpe Studios | Denmark

Tell us about a project that you have worked on that has used colour creatively.

It is a rare chance that you get an opportunity to use a wider range of colours in interior design, and I'm a big fan of colours! As a matter of fact, the most colourful interior design projects we have created are our own studios in Beijing and Copenhagen. I believe that creative people need colour to challenge their brains, so we took the opportunity to make our studios as colourful as possible. In our Beijing studio, we created a huge high-gloss cabinet centrepiece that is painted with a rainbow gradient all around its 40m+ surfaces – beautiful!

What's your favourite colour and why?

I started my career as a lighting designer, so my relationship to colour is not so concrete as to have a favourite colour. It is more along the lines of how you use the colours, in which context the colours appear and what difference it makes to the application. So my favourite use of colours is more about the hue and saturation.

During your travels, have you come across any interesting colours that represent the areas they are found?

I always have a window seat for the same reasons. I simply love looking out the window because of the light and the way the colours change amazingly. Quite recently, I was departing from Iceland, and as soon we got airborne there were the most beautiful Northern Lights I have ever seen!

Do you admire the way any artists or designers in particular use colour?

A Danish designer who really understood that colours can open a channel to the brain that goes beyond imagination is the late Verner Panton. He understood that the surreal is real and that colour overrules mediocrity. He is one of my greatest inspirations.



© Philip Ørneborg



KOSTAS METAXAS

Founder, Metaxas and Exero Consulting

Tell us about a project that you have worked on that has used colour creatively.

A recent project was creating a new range of hi-fi amplifiers which were CNC machined from a solid block of aluminium, so I had the choice of playing with infinite colours and textures. As well as anodising, I decided to have the cases also 'automotively painted' – metallic candy reds and pearl greys – totally subverting the possibilities of what an amplifier or sculpture can look like.

GABRIELE CHIAVE

Creative director, Marcel Wanders | The Netherlands

Tell us about a project that you have worked on that has used colour creatively.

All the work we do will inevitably imprint upon the final phase of the process, with colour being a fundamental component of the whole project. Colour is the outermost skin of any object that surrounds us or any space we experience. It is the first message read by our minds, even before the shapes reach us. Recently, we worked with Safilo for a capsule collection of eyewear. Colour became an essential element for an object which would express your mood and personality, since it's very integrated into your daily life.

What's your favourite colour and why?

Unfortunately, black is my preferred 'non-colour' because of its simplicity. But it also possesses elegance, mystery and a bit of a sophisticated nature.

During your travels, have you come across any interesting colours that represent the areas they are found?

India is one of the places where the celebration and richness of colours are embedded in all of the cultural and social features. Iceland, on the other hand, respects the chromatic range of its natural scenery by only incorporating primary colours and white into their architecture, which is where I would definitely like to visit. But the ultimate expression of colour can be found in places like Norway, where you can experience the phenomenon of the Aurora Borealis. Those colours are pure, immaterial and infused with an infinite range of tones and levels of intensity.

What's your favourite colour and why?

It would have to be red. It seems to add passion to an object.

During your travels, have you come across any interesting colours that represent the areas they are found?

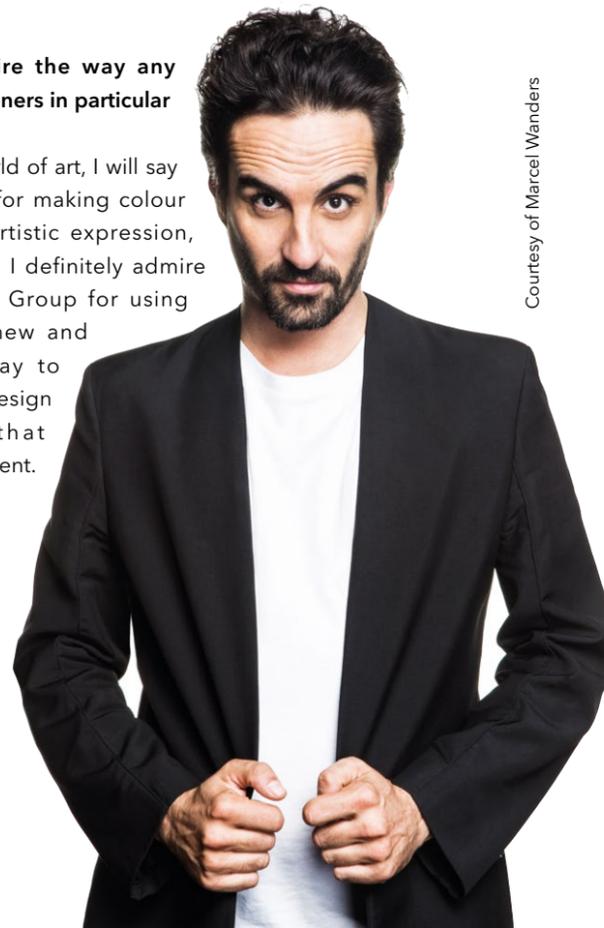
Travelling in China, I was surprised by the muted colours they love – turquoises and pinks, compared to the solid colour versions we're used to in the west.

Do you admire the way any artists or designers in particular use colour?

I always think of Cy Twombly when I think of colour on a canvas, or, of course Rothko's gradients or solids. Then, I also love the strokes of Pierre Soulages.

Do you admire the way any artists or designers in particular use colour?

Within the world of art, I will say Mark Rothko for making colour his primary artistic expression, and in design I definitely admire the Memphis Group for using colour in a new and disruptive way to counter the design scene of that historical moment.



Courtesy of Marcel Wanders

MICHAEL HELD

Design director Asia-Pacific and EMEA, Steelcase | Hong Kong

Tell us about a project that you have worked on that has used colour creatively.

Colour is an important component in every project. In the best case it comes from the material and manufacturing technology and has a real effect on how an object or space makes us feel. It also provides choice for the customer and is often used to communicate specific functions or attributes.

What's your favourite colour and why?

My favourite colour is "rainbow" because my son Edgar loves it. We colour a lot of stuff in rainbow together, especially unicorns.

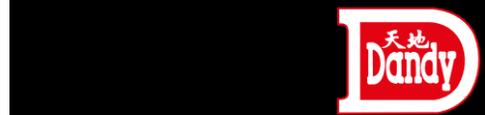


During your travels, have you come across any interesting colours that represent the areas they are found?

Colours I remember are always related to materials and always have a texture component as they come from local crafts. I love the earthen terracotta reds in India and Italy, cedar wood and indigo denim in Japan, or glossy red lacquer and black ink on bamboo scrolls in China.

Do you admire the way any artists or designers in particular use colour?

Yves Klein and his International Klein Blue (YKB). In William Gibson's novel *Zero History*, one of the main characters, Hubertus Bigend, has a suit made in IKB. He claims to wear it because the intensity of the colour makes other people uncomfortable and it's impossible to reproduce on digital screens. Just recently, Anish Kapoor received the exclusive rights for the use of the Vantablack pigment, labelled the blackest shade of black ever created. Both colours are located outside the possible colour space of today's displays and cannot be recreated digitally. In both cases, an artist is attempting to limit the application of a very specific and impactful colour. ●



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