DESIGNER'S GUIDE TO
color
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Introductory Essay by James Stockton

Introduction

This second volume of *Designer's Guide to Color* is an extension of the first book, a careful, thorough look at more complicated color examples than were treated before. While the first book was basic and clinical, this one deals with the more personal, emotional aspects of color.

In this book, colors have been grouped together—pastels through deep tones as the pages progress. At the bottom of each page are two color squares with polka dots. These demonstrate how shape and size relationships affect color. And from page 78 to the end of this book, the possible combinations of color become interestingly complex by being presented in groups of three.

The adjectives used in the table of contents are for the reader's convenience and are an attempt to qualify the colors presented. Most of the terms are standard enough to be self-explanatory; however, the following terms are used in these specific ways: *Bright*—intense, light valued, transparent; receiving their brightness from the clean white-ness of the paper (much as a watercolor might). See pages 28 through 31. *Brilliant*—intense, strong pigment; a reflected color (more like an oil painting). See pages 36 and 37. *Medium*—soothing and subtle. See pages 76 and 77. *Deep*—rich and elegant. See pages 52 through 55. *Dark*—similar to deep but with much more black added to the colors. See pages 70 and 71. *Subdued*—grayed through either the addition of black, white, or a neutralizing complementary color. See pages 66 through 69. *Concentrated*—intense with strong hue, value, and intensity all combined. See pages 56 through 59. *Clear*—free of graying qualities; can probably be found on the basic color wheel. See volume one.

Short anecdotes accompany the color combinations. They are sometimes instructional, sometimes an attempt to articulate the motives for combining the colors. They may stimulate ideas and suggest extended uses of original combinations.

As in volume one, the colors in this book are produced by combining tint values—that is, screen values—of the four basic printing process colors. Each color is accompanied by the numbers designating those values, and abbreviated designations for the four colors are given with the percentages: Y stands for yellow, M for magenta, C for cyan, and BL or K for black.

To achieve strong areas of flat-colors similar to these color samples, percentages of the same four basic process colors can be printed in almost endless combinations. But it is very important to remember that while the method for reproducing the four process colors is basically the same for lithography and letterpress printing worldwide, the chemical composition and properties of inks and paper vary somewhat from country to country and even from printer to printer.

In the early 1960's, the idea that quick, effective, and relatively inexpensive architectural embellishment could be obtained through
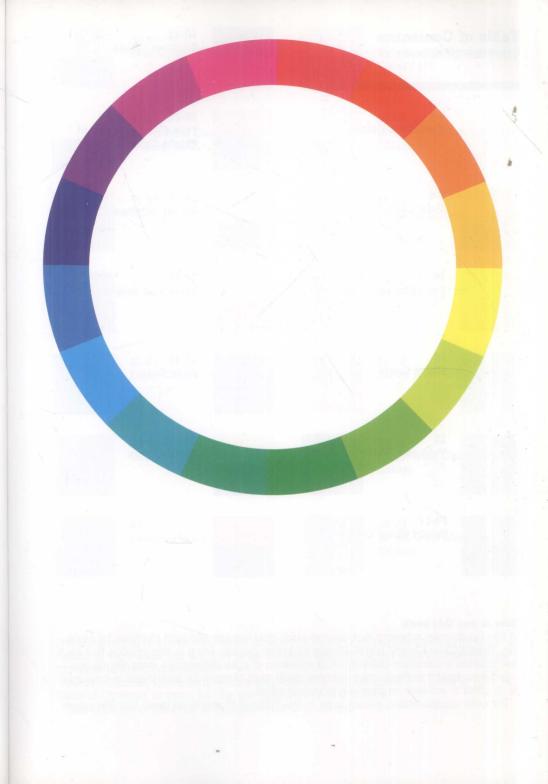
painted surfaces gave rise to brightly colored building exteriors and interiors. Architectural graphics flourished. Today the use of color in architecture and interior design has developed almost exactly parallel to the emergence of postmodernism and ornamentalism. In these two areas color is often either the signal or the confirmation of the designer's intent.

Trendy and fashionable, yes; but these uses of color also set the stage, reinforce the statement, and send the message. The freedom and eclecticism in current fashion derive greater support and vitality from color combinations and variation than from any other influence.

In all of these areas, color doesn't necessarily mean bright color. Enormously satisfying color use and vitality can be found almost anywhere these days: new and renewed buildings, commercial interiors, fashion for any age group, office furniture, and sensitive residential interiors. The most successful color combinations are usually personal and original, muted and subdued. A sense of scale and emphasis applies to color just as it does to size proportion and position in art and music. That is, a small patch of bright color placed next to pale or grayed colors can accentuate their contribution.

The main value of this book is in presenting a large array of color combinations for evaluation and experimentation. Colors are evocative and emotional, and in combinations they can trigger reactions and responses in somewhat the same way letters of the alphabet can combine to spell out messages. There are color combinations here that are absolutely unprecedented by history or tradition, but they work and augment each other in surprising ways. Only individual judgment and preference can determine the most successful and appealing examples. There are enough color examples here to satisfy a passive observer who doesn't need to carry the investigation further, and there certainly is plenty of material to encourage and stimulate additional color innovation.

This book is an invitation to look at color in new ways, to perceive color differently and more acutely, to experiment, and to enjoy.

Table of Contents
Two-color combinations

How to use this book

In this book, color schemes that use the same qualities are grouped together, for example, "Bright Clear Colors" (pp14-17) are all bright pastels, but it is also obvious that each combination is somehow different. And speaking of color differences, even though you may be making a multiple color scheme, you'll want to strive for similarities in tone quality in order to achieve an overall harmonious effect.

For color classifications, please refer to the Table of Contents on these first few pages.

38-41
Bright with Vivid Colors
鲜明 鲜艳

42-45
Vivid with Concentrated Colors
浓艳 集中

46-51
Medium Colors
中调

52-55
Deep Colors
深

56-59
Concentrated Colors
浓

60
Charcoal Gray
炭灰

61-63
Bright with Concentrated Colors (1)

64-65
Bright with Concentrated Colors (2)

66-69
Subdued Colors
柔和

70-71
Dark Colors
暗色

72-73
Black with Vivid Colors

74-75
Black with Concentrated Colors

76-77
Black with Medium Colors

Soft tones are first, followed by tones grouped in order of increasing intensity of color.
Falling in the middle are the gray color schemes and contrasting color schemes including some unique combinations.

As an exercise, take a sample tone from the book and compare it to those in the Table of Contents, to get a feel for the arrangement of this book.

The essence of the book is to experiment with colors.

Contents
Three-color combinations

1   Y20

       Y20   C10

6   Y10   M20

       Y10   C20

2   Y20

       C20

7   BL10

       Y20   C20

3   Y20

       M20

8   Y20   M10

       M20   C20

4   Y20

       BL20

9   M20

       C20

5   Y20

       Y20   M20

10   Y20   M10

       Y10   C20

Very Pale Colors

The differences among the very light colors are subtle and sometimes hard to grasp. However, softer colors are easy to combine: don't worry about colors matching, as long as they convey the same overall message. For instance, in examples 4, 7, and 16 bright gray in combination produces a slightly cool feeling.

6

Y20 — 11

Y20　M20　C20

M20 — 16

BL20

Y10　M10　C10 — 12

M20　C10

C20 — 17

M20　C20

Y20　M20 — 13

Y20　C20

M20 — 18

M20　C20

M20 — 14

Y20　C20

Y20　M20 — 19

Y20　M20　C20

Y20　M10　C10 — 15

M10　C20

Y20　C20 — 20

M20　C20

C30　　　　　　　M30

21 Y30

Y10 C30

26 Y30

M30

22 Y30

M30 C20

27 Y30

Y30 M30

23 M30

M10 C30

28 Y30 M10

Y30 C30

24 Y30

M10 C30

29 Y10 M30

Y10 C30

25 Y30 C30

M30 C30

30 Y30 M30

M30 C30
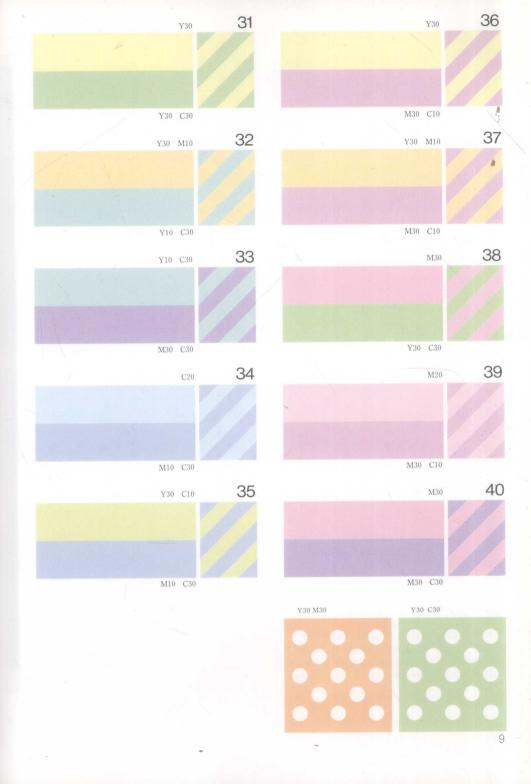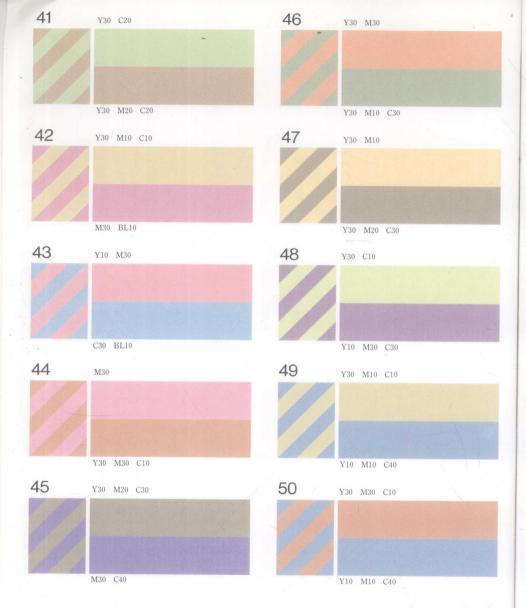
Pale Clear Colors

These light colors have a transparent, cool quality, even though many are from a warm color family. In a dot, stripe, or checkered pattern, the sherbet tones can seem warm, sweet, and sometimes softly sedate.

Y30 | 31
Y30 C30

Y30 M10 | 32
Y10 C30

Y10 C30 | 33
M30 C30

C20 | 34
M10 C30

Y30 C10 | 35
M10 C30

Y30 | 36
M30 C10

Y30 M10 | 37
M30 C10

M30 | 38
Y30 C30

M20 | 39
M30 C10

M30 | 40
M30 C30

Y30 M30

Y30 C30

9

41   Y30   C20

Y30   M20   C20

46   Y30   M30

Y30   M10   C30

42   Y30   M10   C10

M30   BL10

47   Y30   M10

Y30   M20   C30

43   Y10   M30

C30   BL10

48   Y30   C10

Y10   M30   C30

44   M30

Y30   M30   C10

49   Y30   M10   C10

Y10   M10   C40

45   Y30   M20   C30

M30   C40

50   Y30   M30   C10

Y10   M10   C40

Free Combinations

These lighter, duller neutral colors are restful to look at. They may be subdued, but they avoid being melancholy because they contain some degree of brightness.

51 Y30 M10 C10
Y30 M10 C30

56 Y10 M30
Y30 M10 C30

52 M20 C20
Y30 M30 C30

57 Y30 BL10
M10 BL30

53 Y30 M30 C10
M10 BL30

58 M30 BL10
Y30 M30 C30

54 Y30 M20 C10
C30 BL10

59 Y30 M20 C10
Y10 M10 BL30

55 Y30 M10
Y10 M30 C30

60 Y30 M20 C20
M30 C40

Y30 M10

M30 C30

61   Y30

BL30

66   Y30   M30

BL30

62   M30

BL30

67   Y20   C40

BL30

63   C30

BL30

68   M10   C30

BL30

64   Y30   C30

BL30

69   Y30   M10   C10

BL30

65   M30   C30

BL30

70   M30   C10

BL30

Silver Gray

The addition of silver gray creates cool,
elegant, pretty combinations. In Japan,
these are typical spring color schemes.
For greater contrast, try darker gray.