

Colour Planning in Town, a non profit colour project

Planificación del color en la ciudad, un proyecto de color sin ánimo de lucro

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ABSTRACT

Colour is much more than decoration. This medium definitely influences human beings –consciously and unconsciously.

The IACC Chapter Europe, was invited in 2017 to create a new colour pallet for a City in Sothern Italy, maintaining the character and identity of the town.

Eleven buildings of the centre were selected to be worked on. The collected 53 old colour samples were the base for the very careful analysis and the strong reduction to 21 nuances of the new pallet.

Finally various colour collages were produced to show the community and the public of the city the change of impression - using just colour.

Colour is definitely an absolute necessity for a balanced environment, indoors as well as outdoors.

A medical statement says that more than 75% of all illnesses derive from stress: In this connection the stress diminishing property of colour is THE MOST EFFECTIVE one to take care of.

Keywords: Colour-Planning, City-Identity, Colour and Human Response, Colour and Orientation

RESUMEN

El color es mucho más que decoración. Este medio influye definitivamente en los seres humanos - consciente e inconscientemente.

El capítulo europeo de la IACC, fue invitado en 2017 a crear una nueva paleta de colores para una ciudad del sur de Italia, manteniendo el carácter y la identidad de la ciudad.

Se seleccionaron once edificios del centro para trabajar en ellos. Las 53 muestras de color antiguas recogidas fueron la base para el análisis muy cuidadoso y la fuerte reducción a 21 matices de la nueva paleta.

Por último, se elaboraron varios collages de colores para mostrar a la comunidad y al público de la ciudad el cambio de impresión, utilizando sólo el color.

El color es definitivamente una necesidad absoluta para un entorno equilibrado, tanto en el interior como en el exterior.

Una declaración médica dice que más del 75% de las enfermedades se derivan del estrés: En este sentido, la propiedad del color de reducir el estrés es la más eficaz.

Palabras clave: Planificación del color, Identidad de la ciudad, Color y respuesta humana, Color y orientación

1 INTRODUCTION

Colour is much more than electromagnetic wave lengths and much more than simply decoration, especially when colour is used for architectural purposes or public spaces. And further on, it has nothing to do with short cuts of time trends or personal taste. This interesting medium can be looked at from many, very different points of view as physiology, psychology, personal experiences, colour and human response, medicine, physics, chemistry, colour metrics and colour theory, colour and environment, colour design and colour planning or art, fashion, food, and last but not least, colour and education. All these themes definitely influence us – human beings – both consciously and unconsciously. Therefore it is our duty to dedicate the maximum of our attention to these subjects and their effects on human life.

In 2017, the International Association of Colour Consultants /Designers, IACC Chapter Europe, was invited to create a new colour pallet for a city in Southern Italy, maintaining the character and identity of the town.

A "no profit project" was offered to the community of the city. No profit means that our knowledge and experience in practice was included in the project, experts and students of our society were working free of charge, compensated for the personal expenses and materials only.

2 THE PROJECT

The small town we worked on, is situated between very high and often snow covered peaks of the Southern Abruzzi and the blue Adriatic Coast.

Figure 1: General view of the project by Lee Jin Hee



In the past, due to its geographic location the city flourished and turned into a meeting point of merchants, travellers and pilgrims, coming from all directions. Nowadays, the city became a preferred meeting point for musicians and students, as well as of music lovers, especially because of its famous summer concerts. Every summer, more than 100.000 tourists visit the city. For this reason the mayor and

the community expressed their wish to give their city a new, fresh and more attractive look but still maintaining its character and identity!

First, the community identified the area of the core of the old city, to be worked on and clearly marked up those buildings on a map, which we should combine as a harmonic ensemble.

3 THE COLOUR COLLECTION

Figure 2: Colour & facade by Lee Jin Hee



Special difficulties appeared when examining the different materials of the facades, as well as their colours. For example, various shades of natural stones reached from pale yellow grey to deep brown, when wet near the basement. We discovered the same wide colour circle in the colour sequence of bricks: they started with white, continued with yellow, okra and light brown, to finish with tender pink and olive green. As a next step we started to take colour samples of each building of the selected area with every single detail of the facades.

A special guided tour through the old centre was arranged.

The explanation of the history of each building, the date of its foundation, the quality of the bricks or natural stone and its enormous variety of colour tones was essential for better understanding the character of the city. All elements were examined as the basis, the facade, its décor, gutters, doors, windows, shutters, balconies, railings, and when visible, also the colours of roofing tiles.

Easily we noted, that the enormous space of time between the buildings of the 12th to the 18th or 19th century, and finally ending up with the beginning of the 20th century, would be a real challenge to combine.

4 THE ANALYSIS

In my studio in Vienna Lee Jin Hee and I started to translate the collected, printed colour samples of the various colour shades into real paint. For this work a local colour producer offered colours for walls and wood in transparent and opaque, silicate and acrylic quality. So it was possible to imitate the effect of old lime paint. As substrate for the paint to be applied, wooden boards, in the size of 30 x 40 cm were prepared.

Figure 3: Colour sample and mixed colour by E.Mally



Finally, 53 colour shades were mixed, mainly whites, white-greys, light yellows and light ochre tones. Interesting to us was the discovery that in the surrounding of the town not only the natural limestone had light ochre or grey ochre colours, but also the bricks. In the 19th century they were used for facades without being covered by plaster. So the main impression of the city – at least in the centre, where we worked- was a grey-yellow or pale grey-ochre pallet.

Analysing carefully the plaster and the old paint, we noticed that in some parts of the walls the plaster consisted not of white or yellow sand but of grey, in some parts also dark grey sand.

Therefore, some of the walls looked dirty or full of soot when they only lost their paint, which was washed away over the years. This was the reason why the city gave us the impression of being a sad and abandoned small town.

Three of the examined eleven buildings, except the old church deriving from the 12th century are true eye catchers, because of their strong colours: the so called “House with Sun”, 1920) an other house near by of 1730 and the house of 1920 at the corner of the main square.

The “House of Sun” has a narrow but rather high facade of light ochre bricks without plaster. Parts of the facade are covered with plaster and painted in strong yellow-orange ochre colour. There is a great difference between the pale bricks and the very saturated paint. The observer has to pay attention to this building, passing the narrow street, because the houses nearby are more or less white or pale yellow-grey.

The construction deriving from 1730, is covered with plaster and painted in two shades of terracotta (brownish red), a darker tone and a lighter one. But also here, the lighter terracotta is too desaturated to combine well with the rest of the facade. The dark green colour of the big, wooden shutters of this building is much too dark. If closed, they turn into deep black holes!

And last not least the house built in 1920, is the strongest of all, regarding the quality of its colours: the bricks, probably double burnt clinker catch the eye with its very saturated bright red. The shutters of the big windows and doors are painted in a highly saturated turquoise. Although the strong red could be balanced by a complementary colour green, the high saturation does not allow the balance. Further the red facade is divided by three stripes of plaster, painted in a slightly broken but still brilliant greyish white. This colour combination is very noisy and therefore does not take part of the rest of the ensemble, if not harmonised.

Another interesting discovery analysing the environment was the brilliant and high saturated light turquoise shutters of the pharmacy, facing the main square. The facade obviously was painted after the

2nd World War in opaque white titanium. This colour plays an important role for the harmony in the very centre of the place.

In the very background to the view towards south, there appears the very dark grey façade of another church. This colour has to be respected, because of the natural material, probably not plastered sandstone.

When analysing the left part of the southern facades of the square as well as the right one, it was discovered that each single façade was painted in different colours or different shades of a colour. Looking at the left or the right group of buildings, someone gets the impression, to look at many different but small houses. The total overview is very uniform but at the same time somehow disordered.

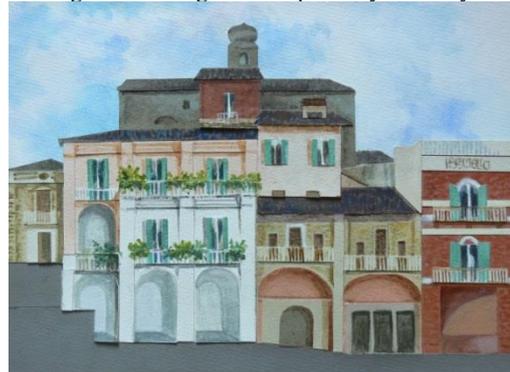
For a clear overview which colour appears where, we decided to use the model of a variable matrix for each single building. It helped a lot to clear the situation how to find the right decision for the main challenge - the new pallet of the city.

5 CONCLUSION

Figure 5: Collage of current pallet by E. Mally



Figure 6: Collage of new pallet by E. Mally



To demonstrate the change of the effect of the new colour pallet to the clients and the public, colour collages with the original colours provided for the final use were executed.

Not using the computer for colour projecting, one avoids the enormous difference between the appearance of colour on the monitor and the final effect of true paint on the wall that can only be seen in reality. This problem seldom is treated as a serious defect, not enough taken care of or taken into consideration. And sorry to say, it is very seldom corrected or adapted to the optical impression and the effect of colour sequences. We have to remember that the additive colour matches,- in spite of all new technical achievements, never can be the same as the subtractive colour mixture. These two worlds of colour never will meet.

The IACC Colour Academy has focused its activity on education of the responsible use of colour, based on scientific research and practical experience. The power of our seminars is the integration of interdisciplinary knowledge and research into colour planning.

Colour is definitely more than decoration. It is an absolute necessity for a balanced environment, indoors as well as outdoors and the wellbeing of human life. Recently a medical statement was published explaining that more than 75% of all illnesses derive from stress: In this connection stress diminishing property of colour is...

...THE MOST EFFECTIVE one all colour experts should take care of.

...Therefore, COLOUR is much more than decoration.