

ARC 426 / 597 COLOR CULTURE

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Tuesday 6 - 8:40 p.m.
Hayes 230



We cannot be certain of a set of color 'laws' because no analysis of them and their effects can ever be complete, due, in part, to the relative nature of color. However, it is possible to examine in considerable detail such things as hue, value, intensity, additive and subtractive properties, and color relationships. These devices are used to investigate why we see/experience our environment in certain ways. They are principles of selection or of logic; they are features that can be used to influence the ways we perceive space and material. It is from such features, coupled with a broader cultural study, that we will establish a base of knowledge/experience that will help us to more thoughtfully engage color in our environments.

Throughout history, we have studied color through lenses that have reflected various social and cultural conditions. The filters that have shaped our understanding of color have shifted between philosophy, alchemy, religion, art, humanism, physics, physiology, psychology and politics, to name a few. Given the multivalent nature of contemporary culture and its attendant technologies, the study of color is emerging anew as a discourse of mingled ideologies and as a practice that ranges from non-projective to highly symbolic. In forms that blur the boundaries between art, architecture, design, and other disciplines with visual content, color is operational not only in the development of theories, but as part of a broadened, everyday practice.

This seminar will examine recent approaches to color, and will attempt to redefine color study in light of contemporary shifts in our understanding of space, surfaces, and representation, especially in relation to expanding and overlapping practices.

Questions to be explored include:

- How has our understanding of color changed as the boundaries between cultures and disciplines have blurred?
- How do the various qualities of color affect the space/time components of our environments?
- How do physiological differences and changes affect our perception of color?
- How does language that we use in relation to color influence our understanding?
- How have technological changes affected the experiences of color?
- How do the various indicative and symbolic roles of color co-exist?