

CFP—call for papers

Real Colors and Cultures

—les vraies couleurs et cultures

Places: Université de Haute-Alsace, Mulhouse (France),
Musée de l'impression sur étoffes, Mulhouse (France)
and Goetheanum, Dornach (Switzerland)

Date: Tuesday to Thursday, 23-25 April 2024

This event is a follow-up conference based on the rich and intense work that was done at our first bilingual *Colors & Cultures / Couleurs et cultures* conference in April 2021. Even though we had to transfer that big international event to a ZOOM online format, it turned out to be a great success with many enthusiastic participants who presented exciting papers on the phenomenon of colors in many different places and domains. Our YouTube channel documents these exciting documentations from many walks of life:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLMjo3aWeHvKhfHlh3GBWxfcdoHoetHPTU>

Moreover, in the meantime, a beautiful (again bilingual) volume with many articles printed in color has been published as well:

https://www.amazon.de/COLORS-CULTURES-interdisciplinary-explorations-English-ebook/dp/B0BN8TSCLT/ref=tmm_kin_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=1683562165&r=1-1

It is because of this great echo and because we were able to unite an enthusiastic community of “color” scholars that we have decided to organize a follow-up event, extending our invitation to researchers who may (unfortunately) have missed out on the founding event. Significantly, the upcoming conference is called *Real Colors and Cultures Conference / Vraies couleurs et cultures* because many participants of the first conference very much regretted that they could not attend in person and meet their colleagues in Alsace. This is why, this second time, we plan to organize a 'real' encounter with color specialists and want them to meet in person!

Mulhouse, a traditional center of textile production and dyeing, is showcased in our YouTube channel's contributions. We are delighted to announce that the second colloquium will be co-organized with the prestigious Museum of Textile Printing [Link: <https://www.musee-impression.com/>]. Participants will have the opportunity to explore the vibrant colors of textiles during a museum visit, followed by an late afternoon conference session and a reception.

We intend to spend one day of the conference at the **Goetheanum** in nearby Switzerland [Link: <https://goetheanum.ch/en/campus#building>], which is an important hot spot for color studies.

There are also wonderful demonstrations of old printing techniques that can be seen at the **outdoor museum in Wesserling**, only 37 km away from Mulhouse: <https://www.parc-wesserling.fr/en/textile-museum/>

Colors are not merely visual stimuli, but also social constructs that have a profound impact on our perception, communication, and behavior. Colors can evoke a range of emotions, memories, and associations that are deeply rooted in cultural contexts. The meanings attributed to colors can vary widely across different societies and historical periods, reflecting complex interactions between language, symbolism, aesthetics, and power relations.

For example, in Western cultures, the color white is often associated with purity, innocence, and peace. In contrast, in some Eastern cultures, such as China and Japan, white traditionally represents death, mourning, and funerals. This difference in color symbolism illustrates how cultural beliefs and practices surrounding death and the afterlife can shape the meanings attributed to colors.

The meanings attributed to colors can also evolve over time. For instance, in medieval Europe, blue was associated with humility and the Virgin Mary. However, in Renaissance art, blue became linked with nobility and divine power. These examples demonstrate that the meanings of colors are not fixed or universal, but are instead shaped by cultural and historical contexts.

Understanding the complex and dynamic relationships between colors and cultures requires an interdisciplinary approach that draws on multiple fields of knowledge, such as anthropology, psychology, linguistics, art history, design, and technology. This conference provides a platform for scholars and researchers from diverse disciplines to explore the cultural dimensions of colors and their implications for various aspects of human life, including art, literature, design, architecture, science, and technology.

By bringing together different perspectives and methodologies, the conference aims to shed light on fundamental questions such as: How do cultural norms and values shape the way we perceive, use, and interpret colors? How do colors communicate social, political, and religious meanings in different cultures? How do technological innovations and environmental concerns affect the production and consumption of colors? How do colors influence our moods, behaviors, and well-being? How do artists, writers, designers, and architects use color to express aesthetic, symbolic, or functional ideas? How do scientists and engineers study and manipulate colors in different fields of research?

Through these and other questions, the conference seeks to foster a deeper appreciation of the complex interplay between colors and cultures, and to generate new insights into the ways in which color shapes our understanding of the world around us. We welcome contributions from scholars and researchers at all stages of their career, and from all parts of the world, who are interested in exploring the fascinating and multifaceted world of colors and cultures.

Possible topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Color perception: How do people from different cultures perceive and categorize colors? How does language and culture influence color perception? How do physiological and psychological factors affect color perception?
- Color symbolism: How do colors convey social, religious, or political meanings in different cultures? How do colors express identity, status, or emotions? How do color associations change over time and across cultures?

- Color production: How do cultural practices and traditions shape the use of natural and synthetic dyes? How do technological innovations and global markets affect the production and consumption of colors? How do environmental and ethical concerns influence color production?
- • Color in fashion: How does color influence fashion trends and consumer behavior? How do designers use color to evoke emotions and create visual impact in clothing and accessories? How does cultural diversity influence color choices in fashion?
- Color in art and literature: How do artists and writers use color to express aesthetic, symbolic, or narrative ideas? How do cultural contexts and historical periods shape the use of color in art and literature? How do cross-cultural exchanges and translations affect the interpretation and reception of color in art and literature?
- Color in design and architecture: How do designers and architects use color to create functional and aesthetic environments? How do cultural values and traditions influence color choices in design and architecture? How do color schemes and patterns affect human behavior and well-being?
- Color in science and technology: How do scientists and engineers study and manipulate colors in different fields (e.g., physics, chemistry, biology, computer science)? How do technological advances and applications (e.g., digital media, virtual reality, biotechnology) change our perception and use of colors? How do cultural factors affect the development and adoption of new color technologies?

Keynotes:

- Visiting artist, Zuni Nation
- Raymond HOLBERT (Berkeley)
- David Leiwei LI (University of Oregon)

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Steering committee:

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- Jens HAUSER, Karlsruhe Institut of Technology (KIT)
- André KARLICZEK, Thüringer Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek, Jena
- Chang LIU, Heidelberg University, Germany
- Sämi LUDWIG, Université de Haute Alsace, Mulhouse
- Matthias RANG, Goetheanum, Dornach
- Hertha Sweet WONG, University of California, Berkeley

Languages:

English/French

Deadline for proposals:

Please send a proposal of 250 to 350 words to samuel.ludwig@uha.fr (English) or charlaine.clerc@gmail.com (French) before 30th November 2023. Proposals will be accepted/rejected before Christmas.