

Color in Esthetics

by Victoria L. Rayner

The introduction of new dyes and pigments and the increase of color usage has created a color explosion in the 1990s. Not since the psychedelic 60s have we been exposed to so much color.

It is literally impossible not to respond to a color-oriented environment. Color is everywhere—from the flags of nations to the hues of human skin. It is as vivid in art as it is in nature. Color speaks a silent yet suggestible language because of the psychological effect it has on us. Every color sends out its own subliminal message.

People attach great meaning to colors. Bright, bold colors located on the warm end of the color spectrum such as red, orange and yellow are considered exhilarating and interesting, whereas soft, muted colors from the cool end of the spectrum such as blue-green are perceived as soothing and tranquil.

In our culture, bright vibrant colors are symbolic of good health, vitality and constant activity. Cheerful, vivid colors are frequently worn by models and actors in magazine advertisements and television commercials to promote athletic equipment, sporting goods, vitamins and other health aids. High intensity, brightly colored uniforms

are worn by professional athletes, as well as by enthusiasts. Warm hues tend to raise our spirits and stimulate us to be more active.

People look at and process colors in different ways. The way we respond to color is heavily influenced by past conditioning, our cultural environment and by pure learning experiences. Age also has an effect on our color preferences. As we mature, we are less attracted to bright, high saturated colors, preferring instead soft, more subtle shades.

Color has temperature. Warm, sunny colors appear to radiate heat; in contrast, pale shades create lighter and cooler sensations. As a result, clothing made from light-colored fabric is preferred in hot climates and dark-colored attire in cooler climates. Fortunately, color is adaptable. It can be modified by tinting, shading, dyeing, painting, or staining.

Color has the ability to transform our moods. When color is used persuasively, it can either elevate



Selected colors reflect personalities

The selection of certain colors and color combinations reflect our personalities. Individuals with outgoing personality traits tend to favor warmer attention-getting colors, while introverts, who are shy, shun flamboyant colors and favor cool colors that are more in keeping with their personality type. Some people use color more often than others, depending on their imagination and ingenuity. Color can be insightful and tasteful or obtrusive and tacky. Too many colors in one setting are disconcerting, whether they are used in a room, or in the design of a dress.

our spirits or lead to passivity and depression, depending upon our response. Dark, drab colors have been linked to depressive mood states, whereas bright, gay colors are associated with an energized and stimulated frame of mind. The radiance of a room with brightly-colored walls would make it sunny, even on a dreary day.

Experiments are routinely being performed by scientists to monitor the therapeutic use of color through the application of colored light transmitted through the body. The aim of this color science is to combat disease by restoring the normal balance of color energies to comfort patients, inhibit the growth of tumors and heal superficial skin disorders.

Fall makeup colors from Aveda.

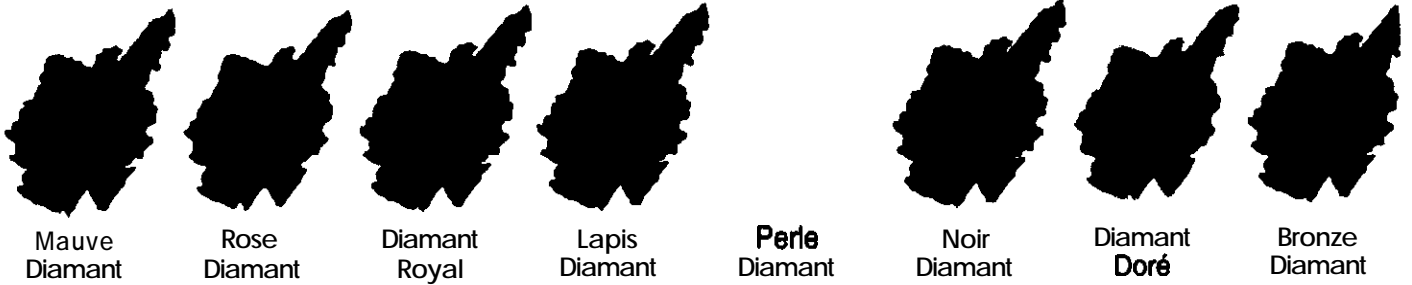


Color enhances our looks

Color can also be used as a powerful tool with which to enhance one's skin tone, hair, and eyes. When color is focused, it creates a unified and pleasing look. Although working with a color expert to discover your own special color palette is frequently dismissed as a passing fad, there is more validity to color analysis than most of us think.

The cool/warm color concept is universal. It is the foundation for all color systems and theories because it is soundly based on the science of light. Colors that tend to compliment the skin also soften the complexion and make fine lines and wrinkles less noticeable. In addition, advancing and receding colors can be

continues



Colors available from the EyePowder Pens of Lancome's Collection de Fete.

used to balance the extremes of the upper and lower proportions of the body. The diversity of color assists us in recognizing objects in proportion and relation to one another. Whether a color is receding or advancing depends on the actual color used, its brightness, and the saturation of the pigment it contains. For

gundy blush and recommend any of the popular new lip shades for cool seasons such as mocha, fuchsia, or burgundy. ■

Much of the information contained in this article is taken from *Clinical Cosmetology: A Medical Approach*



example, warm colors advance and cool colors recede. Bright colors surge forward and colors low in value retreat. Colors high in saturation appear to proceed, whereas shallow colors decline.

Cosmetic colors for fall & winter

The client's seasonal color palette should always be your first consideration when making cosmetic recommendations. The following suggestions will serve as a guide to help you in choosing the correct make-up shades for your clients. Eyeshadow shades to choose for clients with warm undertones (golden-based tones) in their skin this winter are: creamy caramel or golden coffee shades. For just a hint of cheek color, recommend a warm terra-cotta blusher and for lip color, suggest one of the new fashion lip shades for Fall and Winter (such as golden bronze or deep russet).

Eyeshadow shades this Fall and Winter to choose for clients with cool undertones (blue, rose or gray based tones) in their skin are subtle grays, deep wine shades, plum, espresso or blue-green shades. For cheek color suggest a vibrant red or deep bur-

to *Esthetic Procedures* by Victoria L. Royner, 1993, Chapter 5: **Understanding Color**, Milady Publishing, Albany, New York.



Victoria L. Rayner

Victoria L. Rayner, an esthetician and a Dermatology Associate at the University of California Medical School, San Francisco, is the director of five camouflage therapy clinics, all of which are located in teaching hospitals. She is the owner of the Advanced Skin Care Training Center which provides advanced esthetic training programs for estheticians and nurses wishing to work in a medical setting.

Ms. Rayner has devoted the past four years to writing the first textbook on clinical cosmetology, entitled *Clinical Cosmetology, A Medical Approach to Esthetic Procedures*, published by Milady Publishing House, 3 Columbia Circle Dr., Albany, NY, (800) 347-7747.