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The Story of Colour An Exploration of the Hidden Messages of the Spectrum

Gavin Evans

Keynote

The Story of Colour tells the story of how we have come to view the world through lenses passed down to us by art, science, politics, fashion and sport, and, not least, prejudice.

Description

Why is green the colour of envy? Why is black 'evil'? Why is white pure? Why do we 'feel blue' or 'see red'? Why do colours have different meanings for different cultures?

When we look at or talk about a colour in a particular setting, we are as likely to see its cultural or symbolic meaning as the shade itself. Why?

Sometimes our grasp of a colour relates to the random way we define it. Light blue is called 'blue' but, over the last century or two, light red has become pink, whereas in Russia light blue and dark blue are separate colours. Does language play a part in our perception of colours?

In most cases, the origins of why we view a colour in a certain way goes back hundreds, if not thousands, of years. Blue was not always a boy's colour; pink was not always a girl's. Indeed, less than one hundred years ago, in the West, it was the other way round.

This book offers a lively, anecdotal treatment of the cultural mysteries of colour, and focuses on the way we respond to colours, the significance we give them – and how these things change over time and from place to place. It tells the story of how we have come to view the world through lenses passed down to us by art, science, politics, fashion, sport and, not least, prejudice.

Sales Points

- A social and cultural history of colour, beautifully designed and packaged with full-colour integrated photos
- Discover the hidden reasons behind the meanings of colours
- The only book that tackles the tricky subject of the culture of colour
- Have you ever wondered why the colour of mourning is black in the West, but white in the East? Or why red represents both desire and rage? Why does yellow stand for cowardice in the USA, but jealousy in France?
- Takes a multi-cultural approach to exploring the symbolism behind colour in different parts of the world

Author Biography

Gavin Evans lectures in Cultural and Media Studies at Birkbeck College, University of London and is a senior lecturer at the London School of Journalism.

He has worked as a journalist for 32 years (writing for *The New York Times*, the *Guardian* and the *Telegraph*, among many others). He is the author of five books, including the memoir *Dancing Shoes is Dead* and *Black Brain, White Brain: Is Intelligence Skin-Deep?*

He was born in London but grew up in South Africa and Texas. Along the way, in addition to working as a journalist and campaigning against apartheid, he completed an honours degree in economic history, an LLB and an MA and PhD in political philosophy. He has lived with his family in London for 23 years.