

Colour and symbolism in popular culture

[Art & Culture](#), [Symbolism](#)



When it comes to literature Symbolism is the practice or art of using an object or a word to embody a complex or intellectual idea. An action, person, place, word, or object can all have a symbolic meaning. When it comes to art Symbolism is a 19th century idea that has evolved over time. It is the expression of an idea of or in the natural world. The term was first started in the late 1880's by a French critic Jean Moréas to describe pieces of poetry. This idea of symbolism grew and expanded and was applied to many other areas outside literature it stemmed into music and Visual art plus many more.

At first it was a very complex international phenomenon. Which at first became increasingly embossed into French art and literal culture. Symbolism has the ability to take on many different directions and forms. It stands a lot on context of the idea object or writing etc. in question. Without context allows there to be error in interpretation. Averse from impressionism the term is inclusive in literature and art. Symbolism took the same path as impressionism but had a completely differing hypothesis as the idea was mostly directing at the meaning behind the shapes and colours as opposed to depicting the visual impression of the moment, especially in terms of the shifting effect of light and colour. The movement brings together different styles and artists from varying genres based on emotions, thoughts and concepts. This part of the movement is very positive for the art community allowing different parts of the community to come together and share ideas with new people and ultimately create bigger and better work.

One will look more into this idea of engagement between different areas. Within this piece I will assess how symbolism has a positive and negative

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consequences on how we discuss colour within artwork. Popular culture is defined as culture based on the tastes of ordinary people rather than an educated elite. Social media)) It has many effects on how people inside and out of the art field views art work. We see this a lot in the amount of pictures and posts we see on Instagram and twitter. Marketing has a lot to do with who goes to different galleries however Instagram twitter snapchat etc have a massive impact the more places like the Tate are snapped and the more likes that are received the more people that will go just to get a picture and to show that they have been to the places for he likes. People are not engaging with the art because they have an interest but because popular culture wants them to. However popular culture has the capabilities of allowing people to explore new art work and engage in work that they may not have been interested in before. A social factor is The facts and experiences that influence individuals' personality, attitudes and lifestyle.

Social factors can be detrimental for art but I can also be very positive. One will explore these implications on art work. What I am an particularly interested in is the idea of colour and symbolism. I want to explore how people engage and disengage with colour and delve into the science of certain topics such as chromphobia (other phobias to explore). One will also discuss how social factors may alter the ways we look and talk about art work. One will discuss how symbolism can sometimes create misunderstanding and misinterpretation how it can also signify qualities and ideas in art works that were necessarily not seen before which allows a person to grow and explore new avenues within work Main body Critically

discuss the implications of the term “ Symbolism” when discussing colour through work/projects.

Discussing colour can be a topic that either comes easily to some or very difficult for others. For me it can come easily when discussing other people’s art works but when it comes to talking about my work it can be incredibly difficult to speak about or I have very little to say for example “ I like the colours I’ve painted with”. Which may come across as a rather inadequate answer. Colour can work in harmony or work against each other. In art it is one of the main attributes of works and projects that are talked about and has much significance in many peoples work. Colour can be interpreted and seen in many different ways Josef Albers gives the example “ Even when a certain colour is specified “ he then goes on to say “ they will still think of many different reds “ pg. 3 Joesf Alder Everyone’s thought process are different this is an idea which compels me a lot. Is this down to an awful experience? Did the look at a picture with this colour and it made them joyful? Each individual is different. When discussing symbolism and colour as I have said previously it is very dependent on peoples own perceptions and these perceptions and the connotations that are drawn can come from certain personal social factors for example people can describe the colour white as pure and angelic and think of the colour in a positive religious way.

On the other hand, people can see the colour as boring plain and rather bland. Theo Van Doesburg discusses white as signifying “ the spiritual colour of our times, the clearness which directs all our actions. It is neither grey nor ivory white but pure white” pg 88 whitechapelVan Doesburg’s work was

mostly symmetrical work and most pieces involved colour and different shades of White and cream. We can assume from this he is largely drawn to the colour and the interpretation of it would be largely positive. However he may not be looking at it impartially.

On the other hand someone like Henry Matisse who believes that black can be identified as a colour and goes on to say that “ Black is a force: I depend on black” preference will alter someone’s idea on symbolism and as a result of this how they talk about projects whether it be in a bored manner or interested manner. Symbolism allows for there to be further communication when talking about and evoke feelings where you possibly wouldn’t have been able to before I believe. Artists such as Frida Kahlo who is infamous for her symbols. For example, her Self Portrait with monkeys. These images came after her bouts of miscarriages and periods of depression. They were a mystical for her. What can be identified from these painting is that after these traumatic experiences within her life is that there was an increase in creature in her portraits. The nature of the monkeys at a young age signified longing for a child, however in Mexican culture we know that monkeys were often seen as symbols of lust. We know she had multiple love affairs. Conflicting connotations of loss and love! One this makes it very hard to understand what she was trying to portray unless you could talk to Kahlo herself. Although for a person it can be difficult to interpret it also allows for people to identify with more emotions and reaches a wider audience to empathise with Kahlo and become invested.

One part the confusion can isolate a group of people and leave them perplex. Or on the other hand can engage with a larger audience. There are also positives to creating confusion through confusion also sparks interest and intrigue. A person may want to find out more. Through gaining knowledge this person may then also become invested in the Artist now they have a new fan within that person, or maybe not! Ultimately they have investigated and enriched their minds with knowledge. Social factors and popular cultures influence can really alter the way that a person talks and engages with art. Circa 2012 the Tumblr era people were obsessed with plants, black and getting cool gallery shots for their feed. Although we were seeing more people attending galleries we were not seeing them attend to go and interact with the art because they were interested in the artwork but just to look cool to a bunch of followers.

On the other hand it drummed up a few more sales for the galleries and even some groups of people were finding pieces that they actually liked. Social media has the power to reach many people and multiple platforms artists such as Hattie Stewart. As an artist she now has the ability to be able to engage with her audience and be in conversation. Instagram stories allow you to get a sense of what the artist is about along with their processes when making work. Buyers also are able to get quick responses. For artists with smaller followings these platforms help build a larger fan base and help engagement along with an increase in sales. Artists are interacting with strangers the unknown. People that may be able to boost their fame such as Celebrities and influencers. It allows for fans who are not able to get to shows to experience them virtually. These platforms allows the glass ceiling

above certain people to be broken it's not about who knows who but it is ultimately about talent. With an increase of artists within the industry it a result in artists not depending on shows and galleries which enable these artists to get noticed on one hand it means that they do not have to pay extortionate commission fees and art dealer fees.

They are also able to get validated within their field without using the galleries. Although this is great for artists, in the future it may mean a small decline in shows and you may lose the authentic feeling of going to a gallery and seeing work up in a curated space along with other pieces. I believe showing your work allows to get first reactions from the audience and that's one of the most rewarding sometimes not (if it's a bad review) for an artist, it's an insightful experience which they are able to learn from. Which I know from personal experience!