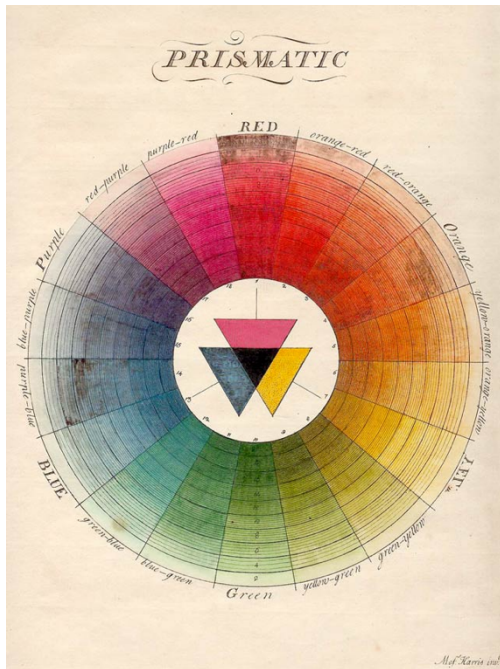


Seminar in Color: Aesthetics, Technologies, Materialities and Philosophies

CMS 597A, Special Topics in CMS.

Friday 11-2.20 pm

Dr. Kirsten Moana Thompson



In recent years, colour studies has emerged as a new interdisciplinary field in the humanities and social sciences and has been taken up by a number of film and media scholars from Tom Gunning to Sarah Street to Scott Higgins and Richard Misek, among many, many others. While earlier research in film has focused on the introduction and development of colour film cinematography, from silent era tinting and toning to later processes like Agfacolor, and Technicolor, more recent work has focused on color media's aesthetic, material and philosophical histories and its relationship with other art forms, from painting to advertising. This advanced seminar will introduce you to these technological and material histories but also engage with phenomenology, aesthetics, spectatorship and race, read in and through colour media. How does colour function narratively, abstractly and affectively? How do our optical and neurological capacities shape our perception of color? How does color cinematography and lighting intersect with questions of race and representation? How have writers, philosophers

and film and media scholars, from Kant to Benjamin, and from Rudolf Arnheim to Giuliana Bruno, among many others, thought about color? This seminar will introduce you to this rich intermedial and interdisciplinary field and encourage you to develop your own research into film & media topics and colour.

Recommended Films to watch will include: *La Cucaracha*, *Willie Wonka*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Three Caballeros*, *Pinocchio*, *Dumbo*, *Pleasantville*, *Blue*, *Imitation of Life*, *Once Were Warriors*, *The Aviator*, *Tonki Bouki*, *Gabbeh*, *Münchhausen*, *The Holy Mountain*, *Raise the Red Lantern*, *2046* and a wide selection of animation shorts. A more detailed range of titles is included below, together with a further list of recommended titles at the end of this syllabus.

Documentary [*Discovering Cinema*](#) (2003) is particularly useful and is available on Amazon Prime (Contains 2 discs, one of which focuses on history of color, and includes all material shown in Week 2 of class. It will also be available on Canvas/Modalis as a documentary.

The Major focus in this class will be on close readings, presentations and thinking through how this will apply to your own research. rather than screenings, especially as we only meet once a week. I will be recommending and providing links to at least 2 feature length films per week for you to watch on your own (and at times I will bring into class to show clips from), as well as additional shorts I expect and encourage you to watch as many additional films as possible on your own, to supplement the readings. Please see list of additional films recommended at the end of this syllabus.

1	annotated bibliographies (April 30) and proposals (May 14)	20 %	Week 5 & week 6
2	Individual Presentations	20 %	Week 3-7
3	Research essay	40 %	June 8
4	Participation & leading discussion	20 %	Wks 1- 10

KEY TEXTS (Required, but most are available as E-books)

Perception

[*Contemporary Color: Theory and Use*](#). Second Edition. Steven Bleicher. Delmar: NY, 2012. Abbreviated as BLEIC in Syllabus below. Not available as E Book but Physical Book only. Individual Chaps scanned to Canvas.

Histories, Cinematic and Intermedial

Regina Lee Blaszczyk [*The Color Revolution*](#),. (Cambridge, MIT),2012. REV abbreviation
Joshua Yumibe and Sarah Street [*Chromatic Modernity: Color, Cinema and Media of the 1920s*](#) (New York: Columbia University Press), 2019. YUM

Aesthetics & Cinema History

[*Chromatic Color: A History of Screen Color*](#). Richard Misek. London: Blackwell, 2010. CC abbreviation
Scott Higgins [*Harnessing the Technicolor Rainbow*](#) (U Texas, 2007); Abbreviated as “HTR” in syllabus
Angela Della Vacche and Brian Price, eds. [*Color, The Film Reader*](#), (Routledge, 2006) Abbreviated as “CFR” (Not available as E Book but Physical Book only); chaps will be scanned.

Theory & Philosophy

David Batchelor, [*Chromophobia*](#) (London: Reaktion) 2000. BATCH

Patricia Sloane, ed. [*Primary Sources: Selected Writings on Color from Aristotle to Albers*](#), (Design: NY), 1991. Abbreviated as SLOANE. Start browse reading this all the way through.

David Batchelor, ed. *Color: Documents of Contemporary Art*. Cambridge/Whitechapel & MIT Press, 2008. BATCH 2 Start browse reading this all the way through.

Charles A. Riley II [*Color Codes: Modern Theories of Color in Philosophy, Painting and Architecture, Literature, Music and Psychology*](#), (Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, 1995) RIL

There will be many other required and recommended readings on Canvas (abbreviated as CANV) from a variety of other sources. See also Selected bibliography for further readings and additional recommended viewings, most of which are available on Modalis or on DVD in UW library.

Historical Timeline of Colors

<https://filmcolors.org/#> (an amazing Digital Humanities Resource of Bibliographic and Visual Info on Color)

[Widescreen Museum](#) Website on Color Processes

NOTE THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AND MORE READINGS WILL BE ADDED!

WEEK 1/April 2

FALLING INTO COLOR & DIGITAL TIMING

Screening: *A Single Man* (Tom Ford, 2009)

Clips: *O Brother Where Art Thou* (Coen Bros., 2000); *Pleasantville* (Gary Ross, 1998); clips, *The Aviator* (Scorsese, 2004)

Required Readings:

- 1) Steven Bleicher, [Chap 1 'Color Perception'](#) & [Chap 6](#) (Digital Color) BLEICH
- 2) Richard Misek [Chromatic Color: A History of Screen Color](#). A History of Screen Color Intro & chap 5 'Digital Color'
- 3) Kirsten Moana Thompson "[Falling In \(to\) Color: Chromophilia and Tom Ford's *A Single Man*](#)" *The Moving Image* 15.1 (Spring 2015): 62-84;
- 4) Walter Benjamin "[Aphorisms on Color and the Imagination](#)" *Primary Sources: Selected Writings on Color from Aristotle to Albers*, BATCH 2, 65; Roland Barthes "[Color](#)" (1975) "[Cy Twombly](#)" BATCH 2: 163-4
- 5) David Batchelor Chap 1 "Whitescapes" [Chromophobia](#). BATCH

Recommended: *Pleasantville* (Gary Ross, 1998); [The Making of Pleasantville](#)

WEEK 2/ April 9

COLOR TECHNOLOGY I: APPLIED COLOR

Screenings: *Movies Dream in Color* (UK, 2004)

and the films featured in this documentary, individually:

Early Technologies: 1) Applied Processes (Hand painted); Screening: [Blacksmith Scene](#) (Lumière, 1895), [Death of Marat](#) (Lumière, 1897), *Danse Serpentine* (Lumière, 1898); [Execution of Joan of Arc](#) (Lumière, 1898), [Spanish Dancers](#) ((France, 1898)

Early Technologies: 2) Applied Processes (Stenciled) Pathé Process, 1904; [Metamorphosis of the Butterfly](#) (1904, Gaston Velle); [The Flower Fairy/La Fée aus Fleurs](#) (Gaston Velle, 1905) [Le Sorcière Arabe/The Arab Sorcerer](#) (Segundo de Chomon, 1906), [Paris Fashions](#) (Netherlands, 1926)

3) Additive Processes Chronochrome, Lumicolor [Inauguration of the San Marco Campanile](#) (England, filmed in Venice, 1911) [Dr Doyen Color Test \(France, 1912, Chronochrome\)](#); [Sonia Delaunay Color Test](#) (1928, Lenticular); *Tea Time* (France, 1937, Lumicolor) [Wonderland of California](#) (USA, 1930)

4) Early Technicolor [*Toll of the Sea*](#) (Chester M. Franklin, 1922)

Recommended Screenings: [Two Color Reel](#); [Redskin](#); [Mystery of Wax Museum](#)

Readings: 1) [Steven Bleicher Chap 2 \(Color Theory\)](#) & [Chap 3 \(Color Psychology\)](#) BLEICH Sarah
2) “Richard Misek Chap 1 “Film Color” [Chromatic Color: A History of Screen Color](#). CC Karen
3) Introduction , Chapter 1 (“The Colors of Modernity”, Chap 2 “Hand Coloring and the Intermediality of Cinema”, pp 37-58 only. Joshua Yumibe, [Moving Color: On the History of Color in Mass Culture, Modernism, and Silent Cinema](#). Xin Peng
4) Walter Benjamin “A Child’s View of Color” [Primary Sources: Selected Writings on Color from Aristotle to Albers](#) SLOAN

Recommended: Tom Gunning “[Colorful Metaphors](#)” (CANV)

Week 3/ INTERMEDIALITY: THE COLOR REVOLUTION/ April 16

Screenings: [Glorious Technicolor!](#) (60 mins or so); [La Cucaracha](#) (1934); clips, [Becky Sharp Trailer](#) & [Becky Sharp](#) (Rouben Mamoulian, 1935) ; [Funny Little Bunnies](#) (Disney, 1934); [Wizard of Oz](#) (Victor Fleming, 1939); 101 mins; [King of Jazz Trailer](#)

Readings:

1) [Steven Bleicher Chap 4 \(Color Harmonies\)](#) & [Chap 5 \(Pigments , Colorants and Paints\)](#)
2) David Batchelor Chap 2 “Chromophobia” [Chromophobia](#)
3) Regina Lee Blaszczyk [The Color Revolution](#), Intro, Chap 1 “Mauve Mania”; chap 8 “Rainbow Cities”
4) chap 1 & chap 2 , Joshua Yumibe and Sarah Street [Chromatic Modernity: Color, Cinema and Media of the 1920s](#)
5) [Jacques Derrida \(extract\) “Plato’s Pharmacy”](#). [Primary Sources: Selected Writings on Color from Aristotle to Albers](#) SLOAN

Recommended Extra Viewing: *Robin Hood* (Michael Curtiz, 1938); *The Fall* (Tarsem Singh, 2006),

Recommended Readings:

- 1) Flückiger, Barbara, [Color Mania: The Material of Color In photography and Film](#) (Lars Müller: FotoMuseum Winterthur), 2019.
- 2) Kirsten Moana Thompson, “[Rainbow Ravine: Color and Animated Advertising in Times Square, 1891-1945](#).” In Joshua Yumibe, Sarah Street and Vicky Jackson, eds. *The Color Fantastic: Chromatic Worlds of Silent Cinema*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018: 161-178.

WEEK 4/ COLOR TECHNOLOGIES II; NATURAL COLOR & GLORIOUS TECHNICOLOR!/ April 23

Screenings: [The Aviator](#) (Scorsese, 2004); [Umbrellas of Cherbourg](#) (Jacques Demy, 1964) [The Worm Turns](#) (Ben Sharpsteen, 1937, Walt Disney); Clips, Ink and Paint studio, [The Reluctant Dragon](#) (1941, Disney); [Bottles](#) (Hugh Harman, 1936), MGM

Readings: 1) James Layton & David Pierce, selections, “Intro” and “The Three Color Boom” *The Dawn of Technicolor* CANV
2) Steve Neale “Technicolor” CFR;

- 3) David Batchelor chap 3 “Apocalypstick” [Chromophobia](#) BATCH
4) Natalie Kalmus ‘Color Consciousness’ CFR

Recommended Reading: Rouben Mamoulian “Controlling Color for Dramatic Effect”

Recommended Further Viewing: [The adventures of Robin Hood](#) (Michael Curtiz, 1935); [An American in Paris](#) (Minelli, 1951); [Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs](#) (1937, Disney)

WEEK 5/ CINEMATOGRAPHY, BROWN, BLACK AND WHITE SKIN & REPRESENTATION/ April 30

Screenings: [Bamboozled](#) (Spike Lee, 2000); [Touki Bouki](#) (Djibril Diop, 1973) Senegal
Clips: [Once Were Warriors](#) (Lee Tamahori, 1995) New Zealand

Animation Shorts: [Lightning Sketches](#) (J. Stuart Blackton, 1907)
[Bosko the Talk-Ink Kid](#) (May 1929, first cartoon in collection); [Congo Jazz](#) (August 1930, second cartoon in collection); [Coal Black and De Sebben Dwarfs](#) (Bob Clampett, 1943); [I'll be glad when you're dead, you rascal you](#) (Fleischer Bros., 1932)

Readings: 1) Genevieve Yue “[The China Girl on the Margins of Film](#)” *October*, 153, 96-116.
2) Richard Dyer “Lighting for Whiteness” & “White”; Nicholas Sammond, (selections from *Birth of An Industry: Blackface Minstrelsy and the Rise of American Animation* (Durham: Duke University Press), 2015, 203-265.

Recommended Further Viewing: [Gone With the Wind](#) (Victor Fleming, 1939); [Once Were Warriors](#) (Lee Tamahori, 1995); [Banned and Censored Cartoons](#) (Compilation which includes Scrub Me Mamma with a Boogie Beat)

Recommended Further Readings:

Kirsten Moana Thompson “[Once Were Warriors: New Zealand's First Indigenous Blockbuster](#)” in *Movie Blockbusters*, ed. Julian Stringer. New York: Routledge, 2003: 230-241;

Kirsten Moana Thompson “[Tattooed Light and Embodied Design: Intersectional Surfaces Moana](#)” eds. Paula Massood, Angel Daniel Matos, and Pamela Robertson Wojcik, [Media Crossroads: Intersections of Space and Identity in Screen Cultures](#). Durham: Duke University Press, 2021:250-261.

WEEK 6/ANIMATION AND COLOR / May 7

Annotated Bibliographies Due.

Screening: clips, Selections from *Three Caballeros* (Disney, 1942); “Aquarela do Brasil’ sequence from *Saludos Amigos* (Disney, 1944); “[Pink Elephants sequence](#)” [Dumbo](#) (Disney, 1940); *Pinocchio* (1940, Disney)

“Transformation Scene of the Wicked Queen’ from *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937, Disney); [Snow White](#) (Dave Fleischer, 1933);

Animated Shorts: (Disney, 1940); *Flowers and Trees* (1932, Disney); *The Reluctant Dragon* (Disney, 1941) [Space Madness](#) (John Kricfalusi, 1991) ; *Der Führer's Face* (Jack Kinney, 1943)

Readings:

- 1) Kirsten Thompson “[‘Quick-- Like a Bunny!’ The Ink and Paint Machine, Female Labor and Color Production.](#)” *Animation Studies*, vol. 9. February (2014).
- 2) Esther Leslie, TBA
- 3) JP Telotte “Minor Hazards: Disney and the Color Adventure”,

Recommended Further Viewing: *Three Caballeros* (Disney, 1942): [Münchhausen](#) (Josef Baky, 1943, Germany)

Recommended Readings:

Richard Neupert “Painting a Plausible World: Disney’s Color Prototypes

Mark Langer “Regionalism in Disney Animation”; Richard Neupert “A Studio Built of Bricks: Disney and Technicolor”

WEEK 7/ HALLUCINOGENIC COLOUR/ May 14

Screening: [Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory](#) (Mel Stuart, 1971) US, 100 minutes;
[The Holy Mountain](#) (Alejandro Jodorowsky, 1973)

Readings:

- 1) Brian Price “Color the Formless, and Cinematic Eros” CF
- 2) Selections, Aldous Huxley, *The Doors of Perception* SLOAN
- 3) Further readings Esther Leslie, TBA

WEEK 8/ COLOR THEORY & AUTEUR COLOR/ May 21

Screening: [Blue](#) (Derek Jarman, 1993); [Composition in Blue](#) (Oskar Fischinger, 1935, Germany) [Begone Dull Care](#) (Norman McLaren, 1949, Canada) ; [Radio Dynamics](#) (Fischinger, 1942), [Muratti Greift Ein/ Muratti Marches On](#) (Fischinger, 1943); *Color Box*. (Len Lye, 1935, UK); [Allegretto](#) (Oskar Fischinger, 1936); [Kreise](#) (Oskar Fischinger, 1933) (all on Modalis); *Clips: 2046* (Wong Kar Wai, 2004); [A Color Box](#) (Len Lye, 1935)

Reading: 1-3) Trond Lundemo “The Colors of Haptic Space” (CFR) ; Peter Wollen “Blue”; Stan Brakhage “Painting Film” (CFR);
4) Chapter 8, Color in Fine Art BLEIC
5) Higgins, Scott. (2011). [Deft trajectories for the eye: Bringing Arnheim to Vincente Minnelli’s color design](#) “ in *Arnheim for Film and Media Studies* (pp. 123-142). Routledge.

Recommended Reading: Richard Misek “Surface Color”, Chap 2 CC

Recommended Further Viewing: Antonioni, *Red Desert* (1964); Peter Greenaway, [The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover](#) (1989),

WEEK 9 / FILMMAKER AS THEORIST & PAINTER / May 28

Screening: [Imitation of Life](#) (Douglas Sirk, 1959): [Raise the Red Lantern](#) (Zhang Yimou, 1991)

Reading: Richard Allen “Hitchcock’s Color Designs”; Mary Beth Haralovich “All that Heaven Allows” (CFR)

Recommended Readings:

- 1) Rudolph Arnheim “Remarks on Color Film”;

- 2) Eric Rohmer “Reflections on Color” and “Of Taste and Colors” (CFR)
- 3) Scott Higgins “Deft Trajectories for the Eye”

Recommended Further Viewings: Jean Luc Godard, *Two or Three Things I Know About Her* (1967), *Pierrot le Fou*, (1965); *Gabbeh* (Mohsen Makhmalbaf, 1996) Iran; Krzysztof Kieslowski, *Trois Couleurs: Red* (1994), *White* (1994), *Blue* (1993)

WEEK 10/ COLOR PHILOSOPHY: NOT BLOOD BUT RED /June 4

Screenings: *Million Dollar Mermaid* (Mervyn Le Roy, 1952); *Pierrot le Fou* (Godard, 1965)

Readings: Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, [*Primary Sources: Selected Writings on Color from Aristotle to Albers*](#), SLOAN 103; Sergei Eisenstein TBA

ESSAYS DUE June 8 (grades entered by June 15)

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED SCREENINGS

Peter Greenaway, *The Pillow Book* (1996), *Belly of An Architect* (1988), *A Zed and Two Noughts* (1985)
Bernardo Bertolucci, *The Last Emperor*, (1987)

Jean Luc Godard, *Two or Three Things I Know About Her* (1967), *Pierrot le Fou*, (1965)

Krzysztof Kieslowski, *Trois Couleurs: Red* (1994), *White* (1994), *Blue* (1993)

Tarkovsky, *Solaris* (1972).

Vincente Minnelli, *Some Came Running* (1958), *The Pirate* (1948)

Douglas Sirk, [*Written on the Wind*](#) (1956), *A Magnificent Obsession* (1954), *All That Heaven Allows* (1955)
Wings of Desire (Wim Wenders, 1988)

Purple Rose of Cairo (Woody Allen, 1985)

Gone With the Wind (Victor Fleming, 1939)

Gabbeh (Mohsen Makhmalbaf, 1996) Iran

BIBLIOGRAPHY (in addition to biblios at end of all textbooks). Key texts in field asterixed

Ball, Phillip. *Bright Earth: Art and the Invention of Color*. University of Chicago, 2001. (excellent on pigments, paints, material histories)

Basten, Fred E. *Glorious Technicolor : the Movies' Magic Rainbow*. Cranbury, N.J. : A. S. Barnes, 1980.

* Batchelor, David. [*Chromophobia*](#) (London: Reaktion) 2000. BATCH

Batchelor, David. (2014). *The luminous and the grey* (Vol. 48006). London: Reaktion Books.

*Batchelor, David ed. *Color: Documents of Contemporary Art*. Cambridge/Whitechapel & MIT Press, 2008.

Birren, Faber. *Color Psychology and Color Therapy*. University Books: NY, 1950 1961.

*Brown, Simon, Sarah Street & Liz Watkins, eds. *Color and the Moving Image: History, Theory, Aesthetics, Archive*. Los Angeles: AFI, 2012

Burwick, Frederick. *The Damnation of Newton; Goethe's Color Theory and Romantic Perception*. De Gruyter: NY, 1986

Byrne, Alex and Hilbert, David R. *Readings on Color*, vol. 2. MIT Press: Cambridge, 1997

Coates, Paul. (2010). *Cinema and Colour: The Saturated Image*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Dyer, Richard. “Lighting For Whiteness” in Graeme Turner, ed. *The Film Cultures Reader*. Routledge: NY, 2002: 95-106.

Dreyer, Carl “Color and Color Films” in Lewis Jacobs, ed *The Movies as Medium*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux: NY, 1970.

Eisenstein, Sergei “One Path to Color: Autobiographical Fragment” in Lewis Jacobs, ed *The Movies as Medium*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux: NY, 1970.

- , "Color and Meaning" (1947) in Eisenstein, Sergei, *Film Sense*. Harcourt Brace: NY, 1975: 113-153
- *Everett, Wendy, ed. (2007) *Questions of Colour in Cinema: From Paintbrush to Pixel*. NY & Oxford: Peter Lang/Routledge
- Fossati, Giovanna, Jackson, Victoria, Lameris, Bregt G, Street, Sarah, & Yumibe, Joshua. (2018). *The colour fantastic* (Framing Film). Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
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- *Gage, John. *Color and Culture; Practice and Meaning From Antiquity to Abstraction*. U Cal Press: Berkeley, 1993
- *Gage, John, *Color and Meaning: Art, Science and Symbolism*. U Cal Press, 1999.
- Gunning, T., Yumibe, Joshua, Fossati, Giovanna, & Rosen, Jonathon. (2015). *Fantasia of color in early cinema*. Framing film (Amsterdam, Netherlands). Amsterdam: EYE Filmmuseum : Amsterdam University Press.
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- *Higgins, Scott *Harnessing the Technicolor Rainbow*. NY Routledge, 2007.
- Jacobs, Lewis "The Mobility of Color" in Lewis Jacobs, ed. *The Movies as Medium* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux: NY, 1970.
- Johnson, William "Coming to Terms With Color" in Lewis Jacobs, ed *The Movies as Medium*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux: NY, 1970.
- *Kane, Carolyn, *Chromatic Algorithms: Synthetic Color, Computer Art And Aesthetics After Code*. U Chicago, 2014.
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- . *Blue: The History of a Color*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.
- . *The Devil's Cloth: A History of Stripes and Striped Fabric*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.
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- *Street, Sarah, Simon Brown and Elizabeth Watkins, eds. *Color and the Moving Image*, eds. AFI: NY, 2007.
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