



Kaleidoscope: New Perspectives on the Humanities

Saturday 28 May – Sunday 29 May

Millburn House, University of Warwick

The Humanities have added greatly to our understanding of the world and the societies in which we live. However there has been a tendency for the individual disciplines within the wider body to become isolated from each other and society at large.

The goal of this conference is to expand our conversations and widen the dialogue between subjects and disciplines, between art study and artistic practice, between the academy and the wider world. The event will unite researchers, visual artists, writers, students, dancers and all others with an interest in the Arts for two days of productive discussion and collaboration all around the theme of 'colour'. 'Colour' for us is both a literal focus for our conference presentations and a figurative one. Humanities study is centred on the things that bring colour to our lives – from visual artwork to radical thinking to music to literature. The Arts are colour, and when the individual disciplines are blended and mixed the richness of the world we inhabit is only enhanced.



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WARWICK

Saturday 28 May

9.00-10.00	Arrival and coffee
10.00-11.00	Welcome and Keynote (Professor Jackie Labbe and Professor Paul Smith)
11.00-12.30	Panel 1: Belonging – Colour and the Nation
12.30-13.30	Lunch
13.30-14.15	An introduction to perception: “From surface Colour to film Colour: thoughts on the experience of Renaissance painting” Professor Paul Hills
14.15-15.45	Panel 2: Perceiving – Colour and the Visual Arts
15.45-16.00	Coffee
16.00-17.30	Panel 3: Being – Identity and Colour
17.30-17.45	Close
18.00-19.30	Goodbye to Mogadishu: Somali Art in Italy (Film screening and reading, featuring Shirin Ramzanali Fazel)
19.30-late	Dinner

Welcome and Keynote: Professor Jackie Labbe and Professor Paul Smith (10.00 – 11.00)

Professor Jackie Labbe's research interests lie in the poetry and prose of the Romantic period and cover issues of gender, subjectivity, genre, and form. As the Director of the Humanities Research Centre at Warwick she will open the event with a welcome to all attendees.

Professor Paul Smith was a lead member of an IAS-funded interdisciplinary research project entitled 'Colour, Experience, and Meaning: Issues of Description, Explanation, and Interpretation in Art History, Philosophy, and Psychology'. The aim of the project was to explore connections between the ways in which philosophers and art historians have addressed the nature of colour experience, and its relation to our understanding of colour. He will present insight from his research to lay the foundation for the interdisciplinary focus of the event.

Panel 1: Belonging – Colour of a Nation (11.00 -12.30)

This panel concentrates on colour as a figure in discourses of identity, focusing especially upon its political appropriation and representative significance: the employment of colour in the service or opposition of political interests. Featured papers draw together a range of disciplines with a common focus on colour's political and social power and include:

- Vedita Cowaloosur (Warwick): "‘Not Quite/Not Black’: The Depiction of Blackness in Bollywood"
- Ruxandra Todosi (Nottingham Trent): "Light, Dark, 'In Between': Chromatic Symbolism and Visual Eclecticism in Contemporary Islamic Veils"
- Fabio Camiletti (Warwick): "The Revaluation of Enrico Bottini. Soft Patriotism in the Italian 2000s"

An Introduction to Perception: "From Surface Colour to Film Colour: Thoughts on the Experience of Renaissance Painting", Professor Paul Hills (13.30-14.15)

Professor Hills will revisit the ideas of David Katz about how we experience "surface, film and volume colour" and apply them to paintings by Giovanni Bellini and others as an introduction to the Perceiving panel.

Panel 2: Perceiving – Colour and the Visual Arts (14.15 - 15.45)

This panel seeks to answer several questions: What is the significance of colour for the visual arts? How do painterly perceptions of colour challenge, problematise, and (re)conceptualise notions of colour? The goal of this panel is to 'unweave the rainbow' by exploring the many ways in which artists have employed colour as a key compositional component within their works. Four 15-minute papers will be presented as a stimulus for discussion:

- Deborah Harty (Loughborough), "Black as Paradox"
- Margarida Brito Alves (Universidade Nova de Lisboa), "Hélio Oiticica – Through Colour"
- Carinna Parraman (University of the West of England), "After Albers"
- Richard Kenton Webb (University of the West of England), "Experiencing Colour as Paint – Towards a Grammar of Colour"

Panel 3: Being – Identity and Colour (16.00 – 17.30)

This panel is comprised of three academic papers exploring the role of colour in the formation of identity. The panel is interdisciplinary, analysing identity in literature, film and psychology and is designed to prompt discussion of the role of colour in identity construction across humanities disciplines.

- Hoda Mobasseri (Edinburgh), "Stereotyping Femininity through the Black and White Thinking Lens"
- Frances Smith (Warwick), "Pretty in Pink? Alternative Femininities in the 1980s Teen Movie"
- Federico Fabris (Bamberg), "'Conversing with Trees': Botanical Keywords for a Reassessment of 'Black' in Three Black British Novels"

Goodbye to Mogadishu: Somali Art in Italy (18.00-19.30)

In this session the documentary LA QUARTA VIA/THE FOURTH ROAD (2009) will be screened with English subtitles. The film is about the story of the Italian writers of Somali origins Kaha Mohamed Aden. Kaha narrates her memories of Mogadishu, her birth city, and reconstructs its story in Pavia, where she currently lives. The capital of Somalia is divided into five streets, which correspond to different historical periods. 'The fourth road' symbolizes the civil war that is now destroying Somalia.

This screening will be followed by a presentation from the acclaimed Somali-Italian writer Shirin Ramzanali Fazel, author of the novels *Lontano da Mogadiscio* (Roma, Datanews 1994) and *Nuvole sull'Equatore* (Cuneo, Nerosubianco, 2010). Shirin is one of the first immigrant authors to write in the Italian language and will talk about her literary work, her experience of migration to Italy and the effects of Italian colonialism in her native country.

Sunday 29 May

9.30-10.00	Welcome and introduction	
10.00-11.30	Responding Workshop 1: Touch and Vision	Warwick Writing Collective: Creative Writing Workshop
11.30-12.15	ALL YOUR HOUSES (Vahni Capildeo)	
12.15-13.30	Lunch	
13.30-15.00	Responding Workshop 2: Sound and Movement	Nine Arches Press: Creative Writing Showcase
15.00-15.15	Coffee	
15.15-16.30	Plenary	

Responding – Experiencing Colours

These workshops take as their basic premise the fact that colour produces powerful experiences in our lives and plays a great role in how we understand the world around us. Through interaction, participants will be invited to explore the nature of their experience and response to colour through workshops that investigate the effect of colour upon the body through vision, hearing, movement and touch. Using sculpture, dance, video art and multi-sensory experiences, participants will explore creatively their experience of colour in order to challenge their ordinary understanding and perception of colour.

Responding Workshop 1: Touch and Vision (10.00 – 11.30)

How can we experience colour? Are we not always already within it? In our skin, in our clothes, within the world? Most of us are fortunate enough to see everything in multi colour - so what is there to experience? In the first session of the responding workshops, acclaimed sculptor Brigitte Jurack will

lead a workshop exploring how colour can physically affect our sense of self and of others. Workshop participants will engage in constructing large scale coloured surfaces and interactive objects. Additionally digital photography will be used to simulated experiences.

This session will also include Monica de Murgia who will invite participants to explore 'The Abnormal Colour Experience' by considering the phenomenology of those who have synesthesia and the process of formerly blind adults learning to see and how these "abnormal" experiences can further our understanding and experience of colour. Monica will lead a workshop on multi-sensory perception, where participants will create a multiple sensory study of their own and compare their creations with others. The workshop challenges participants to dissect an original source of inspiration and to draw another sensory reaction from the original image.

Responding Workshop 2: Sound and Movement (13.30 – 15.00)

The second session will focus on how we respond to and experience colour through sound and movement. The two sessions will be lead by audio-visual artist, Michael Lightborne and dancers Amy Voris and Natalie Garrett Brown. Michael will work with participants to explore the relationship between audio and visual in experiencing and responding to colour, focusing on how sound can enrich our experience of colour.

Amy and Natalie will work with participants to explore 'Experiential Play with Colour: Movement as Process'. This workshop will offer movement explorations to enhance awareness of all the perceptual senses as a way to respond to colour from an embodied place. Grounded in a phenomenological approach to being, the workshop will pose questions as to how the dynamic, looping and very moving nature of 'responding' to sensory stimuli is analogous to the creative process itself. The workshop seeks to be an open space for a variety of modes of creative response (e.g. writing and drawing).

Warwick Writing Collective: Creative Writing Workshop (10.00-11.30)

This workshop will invite attendees to develop their creativity through imaginative and playful activities centred on producing a piece of creative writing on the theme of colour. Expect to be pushed, challenged, stretched and immersed in the process of scripting an original piece of work

while challenging your preconceptions of the creative writing process. All ability levels are welcome – and art analysts are especially encouraged to attend.

ALL YOUR HOUSES: Vahni Capildeo (11.30 -12.15)

ALL YOUR HOUSES is an ongoing collaboration between the Trinidadian artist Andre Badoo and poet Vahni Capildeo. The work combines Vahni's words with Andre's images and was inspired by the French Caribbean poet Aimé Césaire's groundbreaking epic poem the *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*. Vahni's poetry layers place and memory and dwelling and migration and interweaves with Andre's photographs of vacant urban spaces in Port of Spain, Trinidad to create an exploration and presentation of absence, disappearance, feast and decay. Originally presented in an outdoor show at Alice Yard in Trinidad, the performance of ALL YOUR HOUSES will transport the audience to the in-between space its text and images evoke.

Nine Arches Press: Creative Writing Showcase (13.30 – 15.00)

Nine Arches Press is a Midlands-based, independent poetry imprint established by Matt Nunn and Jane Commane in 2008. This session will bring together established and emerging talents from their roster of writers for a showcase of groundbreaking new work connected to the theme of colour.

Plenary (15.15 – 16.30)

This closing session will be an opportunity for researchers and practitioners to come together and share their experiences of interdisciplinary work, either over the course of the event or the course of their careers. Our goal is to use this session to explore how we define disciplines, how these definitions affect and/or constrain our work, how the idea of the 'discipline' has altered in an age of digital information networks, and how we can break free of traditional disciplinary boundaries to create new insight.