



# CHROMATHERAPIE

(25 Sept – 20 Dec)

A meditation on colour in post-war art, exploring ideas from healing to hard-edge.

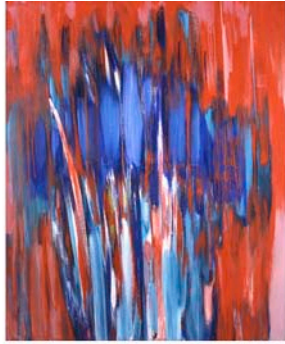


Georges Csato, "Composition 1975", oil on canvas, 65 x 100cm

***"Illuminate your subjects according to your own sun,  
which is not that of Nature;  
be the disciple of the rainbow but not its slave."***

**Diderot**

The evolution of colour theory began as far back as Aristotle, and while Newton's scientific breakthrough in the 18<sup>th</sup> century heralded the formalisation of ideas, it took the German poet Goethe in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century to recognise that colour is a purely physiological sensation within human consciousness. It was this concept that sparked speculation about colour's relationship with the human soul, most notably in Theosophy, with Annie Besant and Charles Leadbeater's *"Key to the Meaning of Colours"* published in 1901, and taken up by Hilma af Klint, and Kandinsky in his essay *"Concerning the Spiritual in Art"* proposing that the wavelength vibrations of colours directly effect human spiritual energy. This association between colour and emotion also gave rise to the more symbolic or "expressionist" use of colour in modern art.

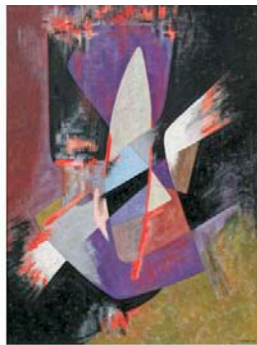


Claude Bellegarde, "Transfiguration", 130 x 107cm

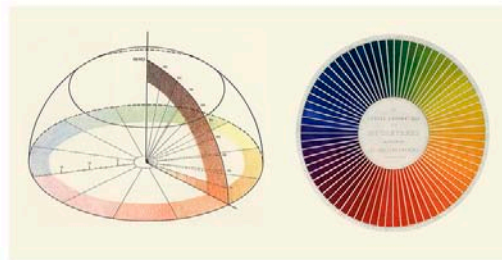


Claude Bellegarde, "Cabine Chromatique", 1965

Other influential discoveries in colour theory include the French Chemist Michel Eugène Chevreul's "*Law of Simultaneous Colour Contrasts*", 1839, which explained how the juxtaposition of complementary colours reinforced and brightened each of them. This technique was greatly influential in the emergence of Impressionism, and especially Pointillism. Further progress in the understanding of the dynamic nature of the way we perceive colour continued to evolve, with significant contributions made at the Bauhaus through Johannes Itten and Josef Albers whose work exploited the Bezold effect of a colour appearing differently depending on its adjacent colour.



James Pichette, "Composition, 1956", 130 x 97cm



Michel Eugène Chevreul, "Cercle Chromatique", 1861

This exhibition explores the evolution these ideas and techniques in post-war European art through a selection of artists for whom colour was their primary medium, including Claude Bellegarde who experimented with Chroma Therapy and its physiological affects; James Pichette who sought to use colour to resonate with the energy of jazz music; and Swiss Art Concrete painter Léo Leuppi whose paintings were designed to evoke a serene harmony.



Jean Signovert, "LASAgH, 1958", 100 x 81cm



Josef Albers, "Interaction of Colour"

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# A Brief History of Colour Theory



Aristotle - "On Colours" (d.322 BC)

(d.168) Claudius Ptolemy - "Optics"

Al-Kindi (d.873)

(d.1037) Ibn Sina

Ibn al-Haytham (d.1039)

(d.1253) Robert Grosseteste - "De Colore"



Nasir al-Din al-Tusi (d.1274)

(c.1435) Leone Battista Alberti - "De Pictura"



Leonardo da Vinci - "Della Pittura" (c.1490)

(1611) Sigfridus Forsius - "Physica"



Francois D'Aguilon - "Opticorum libri sex" (1613)

(1629) Robert Fludd - "Medicina Catholica"



Richard Waller - "A Catalogue of Simple and Mixt Colours with a Specimen of Each Colour Prefix Its Properties" (1688)

(1704) Isaac Newton - "Opticks"



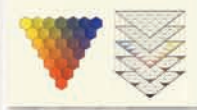
Jacob Christoph Le Blon - "Harmony of Colouring in Painting" (1722)

(1766) Moses Harris - "The Natural System of Colours"



Jacob Christian Schäffer - "Entwurf einer allgemeinen Farbenverein" (1769)

(1772) Ignaz Schiffermüller - "Versuch eines Farbensystems"



Tobias Mayer - "The Affinity of Color Commentary" (1775)

(1794) J F Ritter von Schönfeld - "Complete Book of Samples of all Natural, Basic, and Combined"



Philipp Otto Runge, "Sphere of Colours" (1808)

(1810) Johann Wolfgang von Goethe - "Theory of Colours"



Arthur Schopenhauer - "On Vision and Colours" (1816)

(1826) Charles Hayter - "A New Practical Treatise on the Three Primitive Colours Assumed as a Perfect System of Rudimentary Information"



David Ramsay Hay - "The Laws of Harmonious Colouring" (1838)

(1839) Michel Eugène Chevreul - "The Principles of Harmony and Contrast of Colours."



Charles Blanc - "Grammaire des Arts du Dessin" (1867)

(1901) Annie Besant & Charles Leadbeater - "Key to the Meaning of Colours"



Wassily Kandinsky - "Concerning the Spiritual in Art" (1911)

(1920) Johannes Itten - "The Art of Colour: The Subjective Experience and Objective Rationale of Color"



Gaston Bachelard - "Air & Dreams: An Essay on the Imagination of Movement" (1943)

(1950) Ludwig Wittgenstein - "Remarks on Colour"



Josef Albers - "Interaction of Color" (1963)



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