

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

CHROMATIC IDENTITIES

COLOURS, CULTURES, TERRITORIES AND CREATIONS

16 — 19 APRIL 2027

Monastir, Tunisia

Higher Institute of Fashion of Monastir

International Symposium "ENC COLOR LAB" 2nd Edition Chromatic
Identities Colours, cultures, territories and creations



Are colours in the light, in the eye, in the objects, in the brain ?

— Hervé Fischer, 2024

This question immediately underscores the philosophical, scientific and anthropological complexity of colour, which for centuries has been a fundamental element in the construction of cultural, artistic, heritage-related and social identities, as well as in the shaping of imaginaries, forms of knowledge and practices. It thus exceeds a strictly scientific approach (I. Newton), opening onto perceptual dimensions to become a genuine vector of meaning, touching on emotion or the spiritual (J. Wolfgang von Goethe, *Theory of Colours* ; W. Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*), on memory (M. Pastoureau), and on symbolic or mythical representation (R. Barthes, *Mythologies* ; U. Eco, *History of Beauty* ; H. Fischer, *Mythanalysis of Colour*). The sociological reading of colour is likewise unavoidable. P. Bourdieu highlighted the importance of culture, education and socialisation in the formation of « cultural capital » (1979), which exists in three forms: « [...] in the form of durable dispositions of the organism, [...] in the form of cultural goods [...] in the form of objectification that must be considered separately » (Ibid.). For Bourdieu, cultural capital — understood as a body of knowledge and competencies that structure individuals' practices and perceptions — is bound « to the body and presupposes incorporation ».

From this perspective, colour can be regarded as a « total social fact » (Mauss, 1950), engaging scientific, aesthetic, social and geopolitical dimensions all at once. The study of colour thus extends well beyond a purely sociological approach. For Pastoureau, colours can be understood as « evolving cultural constructions » whose meaning shifts according to historical, social and geographical contexts. He insists on the need to legitimise this field of study, recalling that « the history of colours was neither vain, nor futile, nor immoral » (M. Pastoureau, 2017), and that the study of their meanings across the centuries « had nothing esoteric about it ». Colour does not simply have a history: it carries history within it, and with it, no doubt, a given society — what runs through that society and what unsettles it, its shifts and resistances, its porosities with other cultural spheres, its complexity and, perhaps too, its paradoxes; the various approaches, scientific or otherwise, that attempt to think it; the human groups that make it up; and the uses and ways of life bound up with it. Could colour, thus contextualised, be envisaged as a marker of identity ?

arts colours culture making boundaries emotion aesthetics experimentation ranges identities perception mythanalysis
palette pigments sensation spatiality territory uses

THE NOTION OF CHROMATIC IDENTITY

Chromatic, coloristic: from matter to sensation

In his C.L.O.M. (Contre l'Ordre Moral / Against the Moral Order) series, the contemporary artist Joël Hubaut calls into question the use of a single, specific colour: instead, he proposes composite installations of objects and people built around colour, declined in all its diversity. In doing so, he depicts mass consumer society, and no doubt the art world as well. His C.L.O.M. pieces mirror — here in a desacralised form — the societal and social practices they reinvent. By criticising the identitarian dimension of monochrome colour, Joël Hubaut opens up plural sets of possible chromatic identities. These, however, rest on the public's reception, which in Hubaut's work extends to active participation, but which — even leaving that dimension aside — can at the very least be grounded in sensory perception.

It is on this basis — the public's reception — that we can understand the notion of chromatic identity. Indeed, the adjective "chromatic" designates colour as sensation, unlike the adjective "coloristic," which, according to Manlio Brusatin (1986), specifies colour as coloured matter. The term "chromatic" thus refers to « phenomena of perception and suggestion, without attempting to distinguish, within the flow of colours, the perceiving subject from the perceived object » (Brusatin, 1986, p. 27). The term "chromatic identity" therefore does not designate the set of materials an artist uses to create a work and that make up their « palette », but rather the palette as perceived — as received through the emotion that the colours it sustains provoke. It would thus be closer to the « range » played out by a given cultural group, according to the imaginaries it nourishes: colours, as Hervé Fischer (2023) puts it, are those of our myths.

Colours likewise bring together subjective and cultural dimensions, as Michel Pastoureau (1992) already observed. It seems that the collective — through its social imaginaries — conditions our subjective perception: « There is no 'innocent' or 'pure' eye that would register a perception of colour that is itself 'objective', 'natural' or 'universal' » (Fischer, 2023, p. 23). Does this mean that the chromatic identity of a creation — pictorial, or within the broader field of the visual arts, clothing, or more widely textile, architectural or ambient production — would allow one to identify a positioning (ideological, political, societal), if not as such, then at least according to the image it forms of itself, following both Fischer's thinking and that of Castoriadis? Could we also speak of an *evolving* chromatic identity at the heart of artistic practice—an identity that involves the evolution of both subjective experience and the objective logic underlying the use of color (Itten, 2018)? More broadly, is it possible to determine a chromatic identity through our uses or non-uses of colour, as much as through the perceptual and emotional idea we form of it? « Does a chromatic identity of space, of the city, exist? » (Gaillard, 2020). How does it align — or fail to align — with the colour charters applied in practice (such as the Ateliers France and Michel Cler charters, for example)? Can we once again speak of a « palette of the city » (Lecerf, 2000)? What is the degree of agreement, or conversely resistance, with the emerging trends identified by Pantone under the banner of a colour of the year, taken up by the fashion and design industries (« Cloud Dancer » for 2026)? Can a colour's « identity » not only be qualified but also explored?

Six conceptual tensions

chromatic / coloristic

matter / sensation

palette / range

perception / culture

individual / collective

territory / globalisation

TOWARDS FOUR CHROMATIC TERRITORIES

We propose to interrogate chromatic identities by tracing the uses of colour back to their cultural dimensions, identifying territories and their boundaries, and exploring, at the heart of their reception, what is at stake in their making — whether through scientific study, societal consideration, or the artistic creation of the chromatic sets under examination, following a defined discipline or a cross-disciplinary approach. The questions proposed here are indicative and intended to encourage the development of arguments grounded in precise examples.

The conference offers four themes through which to interrogate chromatic identities according to their cultural, artistic, territorial and material dimensions.

THE FOUR THEMES

01

Cultural identities through the uses of colour

02

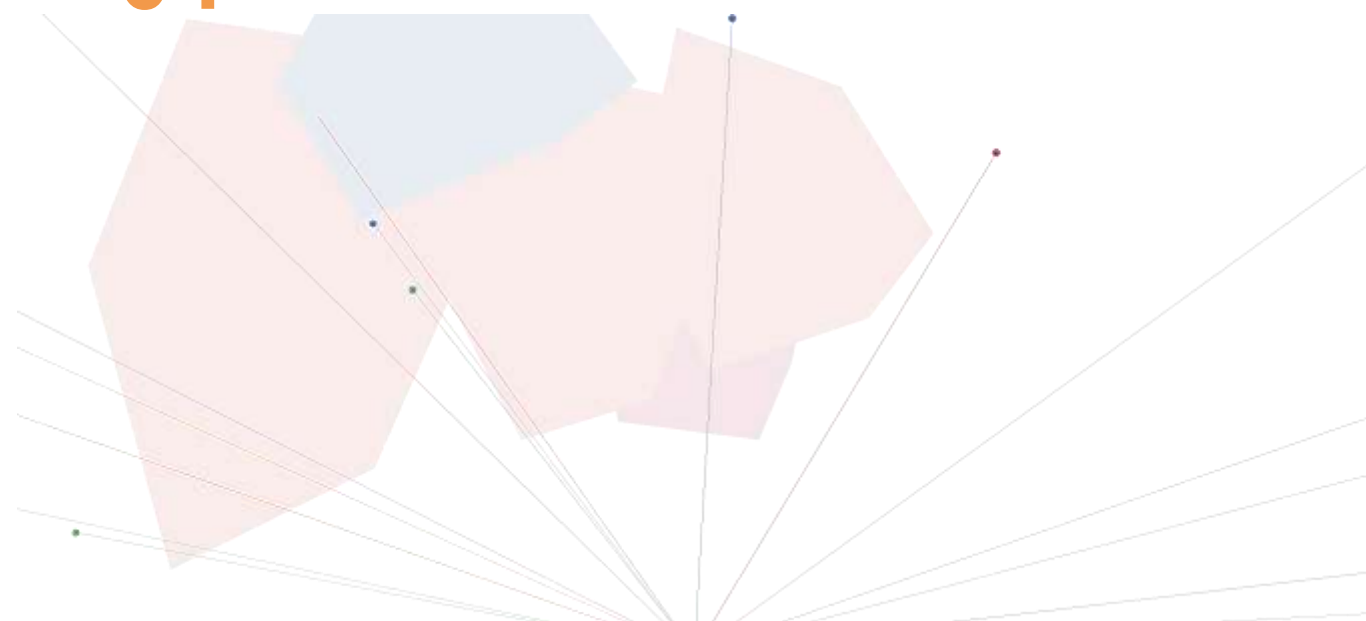
Chromatic identities and aesthetics in the visual arts

03

Chromatic identities and spatiality: rethinking territories through colour

04

Making and emotion: at the crossroads of materiality and meaning



01

THEME 1

Cultural identities through the uses of colour

The use of colour here concerns elements that exceed mere materiality, in order to suggest cultural identities. If every colour requalifies a space and a history, referring back to a heritage, a legacy, an identity and a culture, what then would the protocols of its uses be ? What would be the conditions and elements governing the perception and reading of works ?

Would this use — which implies a reference, or this reference which dictates the use of colour — be indispensable today for reinventing colour within and beyond frames ?

Colours contribute, among other things, to the construction and transformation of cultural identities. They inscribe systems of signs within historical, social, religious, political and symbolic contexts that form genuine « cultural constructions » (Pastoureau, 2017). Their meanings and uses vary according to societies and eras, thereby helping to structure collective representations, to express social and cultural belonging, to distinguish groups, to transmit legacies, and to shape humanity's individual and collective memories. This symbolic dimension is reinforced by the « mythanalysis of colour » developed by Hervé Fischer, who stresses that « chromatic systems and their social uses have always been strictly codified and sanctioned, in every era and every society, by animist, religious and political powers — today capitalist and digital ones » (2024).

To what extent can colours be understood as markers of identity ? How do they contribute to the construction of vectors of memory and cultural heritage ? How are they transformed, reappropriated or reinvented in contexts of globalisation and cultural hybridisation ?

02

THEME 2

Chromatic identities and aesthetics in the visual arts

If an artist's hand can be recognised in their style or palette — notwithstanding the explorations they may pursue through « periods » within their body of work — can we identify stylistic and chromatic communities that do not necessarily overlap with the « artistic movements » or « groups of artists » already identified by art history ? In the fields of art and design, to what extent can we speak of chromatic identities, and what aesthetic effects might they bring about ? If colour exceeds the formal process of visual perception, becoming a concept capable of enriching aesthetic vocabulary and mediation devices, can it then generate new conditions for the reception and perception of the artwork (a sensory, cognitive and cultural experience) ? How do texts, interviews, testimonies or artists' own statements help to identify the meanings and modes of appropriation associated with these conceptual chromatic experiences ? To what extent might eco-creative practices, together with programmatic guidelines, reshape our understanding of culturally embedded ranges ?

« Grasped as a qualitative example » or « treated as a generic mode of the phenomenal appearance of things » (Wunenburger, 2024), colour constitutes an aesthetic experience capable of revealing collective imaginaries, forms of belonging, and singular ways of inhabiting visual, plastic space. How does the creative process at work shape this experience ?

03

THEME 3

Chromatic identities and spatiality: rethinking territories through colour

This theme examines colour as a powerful vector of territorial identity. Whether it reinforces a territorial anchoring or marks a rupture with it, colour traces both the visible and invisible boundaries of a space. Drawing on the concept of « spatiality » — understood as the spatial dimension of social action and the way individuals interact with space — the aim is to analyse how cultures forge singular or plural chromatic identities. Since space is shaped by social relations and carries lived sensory experience, colour acts within it as a marker of multiscale belonging. The « geography of colour » is an internationally recognised concept developed by Jean-Philippe Lenclos and Dominique Lenclos (Lenclos & Lenclos, 1995). It examines the interaction between local materials — geology, climate — and the built environment — cultural traditions — in order to reveal the chromatic identity of a given habitat or space. In urban contexts, colour is a dynamic cultural concept in constant transformation. Its meaning, production and visibility can indeed change radically over time, thereby reflecting the evolving chromatic identity of societies. How does colour define integration within — or tension with — an inhabited space, and how does it contribute to the construction or dissolution of territorial identities ?

04

THEME 4

Making and emotion: at the crossroads of materiality and meaning

Colour cannot be reduced to a strictly optical given; it constitutes an ever-expanding medium whose making is a process of chemical, technical and sensory transformation, one that shapes both its symbolic potential and the uses societies make of it. Natural or synthetic pigments, colouring matter, digital devices: the diversity of supports and techniques for producing colour gives rise to chromatic experiences whose emotional, symbolic and aesthetic dimensions exceed the classical frameworks of perception and reception.

To think about the making of colour is also to interrogate its ecological dimension. Between extraction, synthesis and recycling, the processes of dyeing, pigmentation and colouring engage resources, know-how and environmental responsibilities. The emergence of biosourced dyes, low-impact colouring methods and new colouring technologies (Guerry & Diaz, 2025) invites us to rethink colour as a gesture of creation that is at once experimental and ecological, one in which material innovation redefines the relationships between creators, matter, supports and environments.

By examining the techniques and materials of colour, the emotional and sensory dimensions of chromatic experience in fashion and textiles, the processes of creation, production and eco-design, and artistic and design practices, what are the contemporary transformations of coloured materiality in the digital, biotechnological and ecological age ? To what extent do the modes of production, transformation and mediation of colour reshape our perceptual and affective experiences within the field of fashion and textiles ? How do chromatic creative practices renew the relationship between matter and emotion ? What contemporary artistic practices allow us to rediscover a sensory, affective and embodied experience of colour ?

What implications follow for chromatic choices, between artisanal heritage, industrial innovation and ecological responsibility ?

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CALL FOR PAPERS

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

for papers and posters

The presentation may take the form of a researcher working on a specific technique or a particular cultural area, of an artist-researcher addressing their own practice, or of a theorist and an artist presenting joint research on the latter's creative work. It must be grounded in a corpus, a field of study, and precise examples.

It is strongly recommended that the study focus on one (or several, in the case of a palette) precise colour(s), identified and measured, and specified by their hexadecimal code :<https://encycolorpedia.fr/>

Any use of colour-measuring equipment (such as a colorimeter or spectrophotometer) must be identified in the text. A workshop devoted to methods of colour measurement and the use of colorimetry instruments will complete the scientific programme.

Each proposal must include :



Abstract

800 words maximum — including title, five keywords and bibliographical references. Research question, corpus or materials used, methodology, expected results or research perspectives.



Author identity

Surname, first name, status or position, affiliated institution, email address, and a biography of 200 words maximum.



Thematic strand

Indication of the theme among the four proposed — 1, 2, 3 or 4.

A workshop devoted to methods of colour measurement and the use of colorimetry instruments will complete the scientific programme.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

10 OCTOBER 2026

<https://enccolorlab.sciencesconf.org>

enc@usf.tn

Proposals for papers must be submitted before **10 October 2026** on the conference platform (after creating an account) and by email (enc@usf.tn). Presentations given in a language other than French will benefit from automatic French subtitling during their broadcast.

In addition to a long version intended for the publication of texts arising from the papers (**proceedings or edited volume**), presentations may also give rise to **short articles for the Digital Encyclopedia of Colours (ENC)**, at the invitation of the ENC's editorial board, primarily under the Arts and Creation research strand, but potentially also connected to the Technique and Science strand, the Anthropology, History, Culture strand, the Linguistics, Literature, Communication strand, the Aesthetics, Psychology, Philosophy strand, or the Spatiality and Colour strand.

SCHEDULE & ORGANISATION

Evaluation



Double-blind

Proposals will be evaluated on a double-blind basis. Authors will be notified of the acceptance or rejection of their proposal on 10 November 2026.

Practical information



Dates & venue

The conference will take place from 16 to 19 April 2027 at the Higher Institute of Fashion of Monastir, University of Monastir.



Accommodation

Travel and accommodation costs (lodging and meals) are the responsibility of participants. Booking arrangements and preferential rates negotiated with a hotel in Monastir will be communicated at a later date.



Cultural programme

An art exhibition and a cultural programme will accompany the conference. Participants may be asked to take part in associated activities. Part of the conference is expected to take place at the El Jem Museum, where a scientific visit would be organised, along with possibly other heritage presentations likely to enrich the scientific exchanges.

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- Higher Institute of Fashion of Monastir, University of Monastir.

Partners

- Regional Delegation for Culture of Monastir.
- the AIC Environmental Colour Design Study Group (SG ECD) — International Colour Association.
- Monastir Cultural Complex.

Venue & format of the event

Monastir, Tunisia — on-site, in-person event.

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