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Color : The Essence Of Design

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Featured: The Little Black Dress & The Red Ferrari

The Little Black Dress or Red Ferrari is a great design, but the association with the color makes these products *Iconic*. Research has shown that customers frequently make purchase decisions in the first 90 seconds of viewing a product, based on their instinctive initial reaction to the product. And further research shows that upto 90% of these snap judgements are based solely on the color of the product (Singh, 2006)

Color psychology is a field of study that focuses on how colors affect perceptions and behaviors.

The Red Ferrari remains an iconic car desired by every speedster. At one stage, more than 85 % of Ferraris sold were red in color. The LBD, or Little Black Dress, is another product defined by its color. Of course, one's evening wear could be any color, but a little black dress is, well, a little black dress, and is a mandatory part of a well-dressed woman's wardrobe.

Color, an element of perception

At the other end of the spectrum, the red **Coke** logo and the blue **Pepsi** logo are synonymous with those products, and actual consumer preferences are very strong, even though in blind taste tests consumers may fail to pick out any difference.

When it comes to luxury brands, a consistent and all-encompassing color strategy results in a subtle but unconditional identification cue, reinforcing the brand presence for a viewer and brand authenticity for the buyer. **Tiffany's** robin's-egg blue color is a case in point. As is **Burberry's** beige, red, black, and white checks pattern or **Hermès's** orange.



Featured: Statement Burberry Checks, Hermès Signature Orange & The Iconic Tiffany Blue Colors



dress, Wellesley neuroscientist Bevil Conway says "... Colour seems to have direct access to our emotions. Yet the way the brain calculates color isn't governed by simple rules: what looks like one color to you can appear as a very different color to me. It is this combination of factors – the emotional power of color coupled with the inherent mystery in how color is determined by the brain – that sparks our collective obsession with the color of that dress." In other words, to a certain extent, we see what we want to see.

Color, and how we perceive it, is a mystery.

An experiment conducted on social media in 2015, #thedress, revolved around people identifying the actual color of a dress – white and gold or blue and black, or anything else altogether. People on either side of the aisle were equally convinced that they had the right answer. The interesting fact, this exposes, is that the brain does not process color in isolation. It processes color along with the ambient context (how colors interact with one another), also the personal experiences, associations, and memories stored in a person's brain. In the context of the color of this



Featured: Iconic Studio 65's Bocca Lip Sofa (Top Left) Eames Lounge Chair (Above) & Rossato's Stamford Bench (Below)



Along with textures, shapes, lines, and points, color is one of the elements of design. Different colors have different connotations in the human brain. Color can be used to establish a sense of harmony or a sense of energy or disruption in a design. The space can become restful and harmonious or formal and professional by merely setting up how color interacts with another in a living space.

Color is also an element of perception. When used consistently over a period of time, color differentiates a product, and establishes brand USPs (as we saw in the case of **Tiffany, Ferrari, LBD, and Burberry** above). The robin's-egg blue will always be associated with Tiffany and subliminally with luxury and taste. As seen from the example of Coke and Pepsi, color helps reinforce brand loyalty and drives sales.

Designers create a product with a specific color in mind, so when the product is displayed in the gallery, it gets customers to respond with an "I want this".

Black leather and American walnut finish **Eames Lounge Chair** or **Studio 65's Bocca Red Lip Sofa** is a clear indication of the importance of color and therefore one can without any doubt, infer that color lives at the intersection of design and perception thus allowing one to customize one's experience with a product. In living spaces, whether it be the rich brown or deep moss green leather 5-9 day bed from the Italian luxury brand **Tacchini**, or the intense blue suede cushions on the raw brown wooden Stamford bench from Italian luxury furniture company **Rossato**, one is transported to a realm of elegance, luxury, and a fusion of contemporary heritage, generating an instant "I want it" response.