

EDITOR'S LETTER



FEELING COLOR

experiences via more than one sense at a time. (*Synesthesia* has its roots in the Greek words for *perceiving together*.) They might smell a particular scent when hearing certain sounds or be able to taste words, for example. Maybe that explains why as a kid I would do abstract drawings of music; it seemed like a natural way to capture the colorful images flashing across my retinas.

Why do humans—synesthetes or not—value color? Naturally, it's handy for us to recognize a brightly striped coral snake on a green path. But color doesn't only warn; it stimulates our emotions. Imagine a mossy green forest. Don't you feel calm? Imagine coming upon a vast field of golden sunflowers or orange California poppies on a road trip. You know that feeling of excitement and wonder that makes you want to pull over and grab your phone for a shot.

We do a color issue every April because we enjoy working with shades, hues, and tints while helping our readers understand how to use them. We share the same challenge: how to pick a color palette. Classic color theory is helpful, but I think the key is to tap into something my 10-year-old self knew. All colors are beautiful, so I use the visceral test I mentioned earlier: I want to feel a color right in my solar plexus. Once you really stop, clear the mental decks, and concentrate on the colors around you, I bet you'll feel the colors of rooms in your home. Your choices should make you give a happy, self-satisfied little sigh. If they don't, it's time for a new paint job. Life is too short to not live it as colorfully as possible.

I was in Los Angeles recently and noticed millennial pink is still everywhere. This signature color, something like a sun-warmed dawn, emerged a few years ago as a particular pink tinged with peach that's popular with hip clothing stores, gift shops, and restaurants. It's so popular that it has almost become a cliché. But I love it. You know why? It makes me happy.

Like many people, I really respond to color. I actually feel certain shades viscerally. I can't help but be optimistic around the bright, clear blue of chicory flowers; a summer sky; or a tropical ocean. There's a certain old-fashioned shade of lavender tinged with blue that I favor. It's the color of a lilac sweet pea aging to blue, or maybe wisteria. (You can see I relate colors to corresponding flowers.) When I hear music, I often see colors in abstract forms that move and rearrange themselves. I've always thought this was a normal trait everyone shares, but it turns out it's a fairly unusual phenomenon called synesthesia. Synesthetes perceive certain sensory



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