

Colour Trends & the NCS System



Defining colour trends with NCS -Natural Colour System®

THE IMPORTANCE OF COLOUR

Colour is the very first feature we notice on an object or in a space. This first perception immediately leads us to the conclusion whether we like what we see or not. Colour is important, more so than we generally realise. Research has shown that a purchase decision is based up to 90% purely on what colour a product has. Therefore, it is fundamental for manufacturers and producers to be able to decide on exactly the right colour, at the right time.

The difference between the right colour and the wrong colour is sometimes very small, which means that exact colour description and analysis is important. If you master the ability to define which colour will be trendy and therefore more likely to appeal to consumers, you are also more likely to succeed with your project.

But before we can start analysing colour trends, we need to understand what colour is. Human beings can perceive around 10 million different colours. These 10 million colours are referenced to what we call the six elementary colours; the colours that our mind detects as being “pure”, and we understand from the moment we are born. Two of these colours are achromatic: white and black. Four colours are chromatic: yellow, red, blue, and green.



“Colour is what we see as colour. Colours are created in the psyche, in the very moment we perceive them, and as long as we look at them. It is important in colour science to distinguish between physical colour (physics) and perceptual colour (psychology), what we see as colour.”

LARS SIVIK, CO-FOUNDER OF THE NCS SYSTEM

The Natural Colour System – NCS System, is a colour system that is scientifically based on how we perceive colours. NCS is used around the world for accurate colour communication. With the NCS System, we can describe any surface colour and give it the visual description, an NCS Notation. The NCS System is based on the elementary colours, creating a descriptive model called the NCS Colour Space, which takes a very

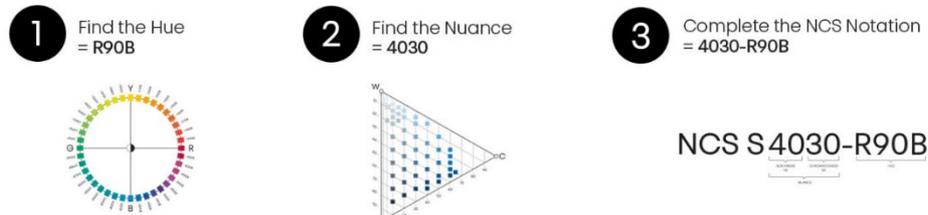
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important role in identifying exact colour positions or colour areas of the hue and the nuance.

The colour space forms two projections: The NCS Colour Circle that describes the hue of a colour, and the NCS Colour Triangle which describes the nuance of a colour.



To be able to describe the direction and the colour movements, and map our preferences, the NCS Colour Space is a necessary tool. By plotting the colours into the NCS Colour Circle and the NCS Triangle, we can analyse the colours of the past, the preferred colours of today, and with this conclude into which direction the colour hues and nuances will move.

WHAT IS A COLOUR TREND?

Colour trends are psychology; it is all about understanding which colours that are important and make us feel happy, meaningful, and functional. The study of colour trends differs from the study of other trends. Trends are often based on innovations. But when it comes to colour, the first thing we must realise, is that all colours already exist. The study of colour trends is to analyse and understand people's psychology, at a given time. Therefore, it is fundamental to understand what is going on in our society, and how these happenings and events are affecting us. This means both which colours are popular and which moods that are dominating amongst us.

“The study of colour trends is to analyse and understand people's psychology, at a given time.”

KARL JOHAN BERTILSSON, NCS COLOUR

A trend is defined as a general direction in which something is developing or changing. Our colour preferences change over time. The definition of the word "preference" itself means both whether we like yellow, blue, or green or if the colour is light, dark, neutral, or chromatic. The colour analysis can never reduce the colour to the hue only, it always needs to be about both the hues and the nuances. Many times, the hue is not that important. The nuance area is key.

Our preferences are both static and evolutionary. We often base our preferences on a specific colour area that has a personal connotation to us. Just like everything else, our interest in a certain colour area can fade, which makes us subconsciously seek for a new. However, our new colour preference is not wholly decided by ourselves. There are two main factors that influences the trends:

1) When a specific group of colours has been trendy for a longer period, our brains get tired of that colour, and want to step into the extreme opposite direction. To be able to do this, we need to go through different steps. This is visualised by researcher Dr. Leonard Oberascher. He mentions seven phases that we go through to complete what he describes as the repetitive colour cycle: The Colourful Phase, The Darkening Phase, The Brown Phase, The Brightening Phase, The Non-Colourful Phase, The Non Colourful/Bright Phase, The Blue/Violet Phase and finally returning once again to the Colourful Phase.



2) When defining and forecasting colour trends, we must analyse what is going on in our lives and society, both on a local and a global level. Which political, cultural, and

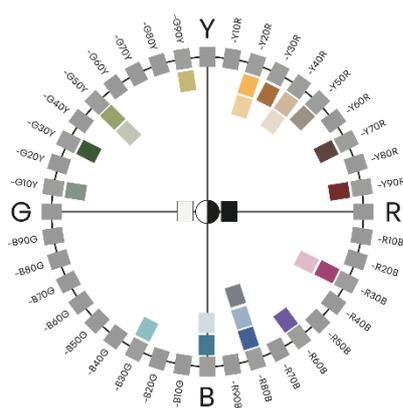
economic events are current, and how do they affect our lives? These events can affect how our colour preferences move into certain areas of nuances and hues. This process takes place over time and it is truly about psychology.

HOW THE PANDEMIC HAS AFFECTED COLOUR PREFERENCES

To look closer at how an event can affect us, we can take the current COVID-19 pandemic as an example. The impact the pandemic has on our society, has made us seek assurance and calmness. This is at the present moment reflected in our colour choices, where we can see a strong tendency to choose YR (yellow-red), also known as brown and beige shades, in our decorating choices. We need these colours because they give us warmth and comfort.

This trend direction already existed before COVID-19, but the pandemic reinforced that direction even more. For example, we have been through a period of accepting chromatic colours which opened the way to adopting even the oranges and the yellows that are some of the most difficult colours to accept. Now, we are clearly heading in the direction of darker colours, brown shades, and the following phase of brighter colours.

So, which colours will have a focus in the following years? We forecast that we will reach the next colour trend phase, the non-colourful phase in year 2022+. Within these main directions and colour areas, we have identified certain colours that are more important than others, driven by external factors. These colours are illustrated in the NCS Colour Circle below.



NCS Colour Trends 2022+.

Find out more

Would you like to learn more about colour trends, the NCS System or our products? Below are a few suggestions:

NCS COLOUR TRENDS 2022+

This limited-edition book gives you a full colour analysis of the 24 most sought-after colours in the following years.

NCS QUICK COURSE

Learn about the NCS System in only 20 minutes. NCS Quick Course is a free e-learning class which you can participate in from your mobile, desktop or tablet.

NCS ATLAS

With the NCS Atlas, you can easily navigate between different colours. NCS Atlas provides an overview of how the colours are related to each other both according to the logic of the NCS System and the relationship between colour and light.

COLOURPIN

With the digital colour reader Colourpin, you can immediately scan and define a surface colour. Colourpin gives you the NCS Notation with translations to RGB, CMYK, L*a*b and lightness values.

Find out more at ncscolour.com