

Batchelor, D. (ed.) (2008) *Colour*. 5th Edn. Whitechapel Gallery Ventures Limited

Part of the Documents of Contemporary Art series, *Colour* is a chronological anthology of artist's writings on colour's perception within aesthetic, culture and philosophy. The book highlights the opinions of those who have positively looked at colour, such as Fernand Leger and Polly Apfelbaum, and those who have looked at it negatively, such as Bernard Berenson and Milan Kundera.

Being able to read several perspectives through bite-size extracts, collected by an artist and writer who has a large focus on colour within his own practices, allows me to more easily expand my knowledge on the subject while also researching further into the texts, artists, and authors that catch my interest the most. However, Batchelor's apparent love of colour may be the biggest weakness to this book as, while negative opinions on colour are presented, they are far outweighed by the positive.

Ottman, K. (2016) *Overcoming the Problematics of Art: The Writings of Yves Klein*. 3rd edn. Spring Publications, Inc.

This book shows a collection of Yves Klein's writings and lectures that give an insight into the mind, life, and practice of the artist most influential to colour's perception as an art object. It details his many attempts to spread his monochrome as far as possible, both the successful and unsuccessful, by any means necessary. From canvas to the entirety of Paris, from sponges to deadly weapons, he wanted the whole world to be IKB.

Translated from French, this book makes knowledge about Klein and his work more accessible. A downside of this book may be the potential of mistranslation and, where a lecture is reference, a misinterpretation of any original humour, sarcasm, or intention. Though I do feel this potential is outweighed by the positive of having access to see how Klein's wonderful words on colour slowly transcend into a praise of white and nothingness; this part of Klein's career is often overshadowed by his signature blue so having the shift laid out so well in the artist's own words is sure to benefit my dissertation.

Fox, J. (2021) *The World According to Colour: A Cultural History*. Penguin Random House

Fox explores seven colours individually through cultural meanings, philosophy, anecdotes and more, detailing human's effects on colour and colour's effects on humans; "Colour has become a philosophical feast – astrophysics, the origins of civilisation, a palette of moral associations" (Smith, Ed. 2021).

Fox details colour as intrinsically linked to objects using the many words of Shakespeare while also reflecting that the colours we see in said objects are the colours that they are not. He details several artists' focus on particular colour such as Turner's yellow and Klein's blue while

simultaneously showing how colours became such an integral part of art to begin with. The downside of this text is that the colours are presented individually rather than as a whole, so, while relevant to my work in parts, I want my essay to largely focus on colour as the subject rather than separate colours.

Alison, J. (ed.) (2005) *Colour After Klein: Re-Thinking Colour in Modern and Contemporary Art*. Black Dog Publishing

First published alongside the 2005 Barbican exhibition of the same name, *Colour After Klein* explores the work of several artists significant to the exploration of colour within art, paired with several artist writings. It speaks of Klein's "monopoly of colour" (Alison, J. 2005, pg. 45), in way of crediting works he had no hand in creating to him due solely to his chromatic practice.

I feel this is a strong text due to the focus on Klein as such a key figure in the conversation of colour whilst still giving spotlight to artist's less talked about but still whose works still have a heavy influence of chroma. However, I feel the downside to this text is that the exploration of the artist's work is limited to what and who was shown in the exhibition. The writing in this book is also very one-sided in its arguments, leaning positively as Klein himself did. It would be interesting to seek out texts which hold opposing opinions.

Batchelor, D (2000) *Chromophobia*. 11th edn. Reaktion Books Ltd

Batchelor details the omnipresent chromophobia of the West, highlighting several examples of trying to purge it from our daily lives, especially art, throughout history. It is almost the antithesis of Yves Klein's writings, starting with a story of whitescapes before devolving into a wonderful world of colour.

A possible downside to this writing is that anti-colour sentiment is only brought up to be picked apart by Batchelor, the arguments given no chance to manifest into something legitimate. However, Batchelor's love for colour is far from a secret and so it is to be expected; Batchelor didn't chose simple arguments against colour to contest but instead took on several reputable opinions within art history. Through his writing, colour is simultaneously made something heavenly and human, two ideas that can influence what I write about within my dissertation.

References:

Smith, E for New Statements (2021) *Books of the year*. Available at: [Books of the year - New Statesman](#) (Accessed: 3rd October 2025)