Can colour effect your mood?

How did screen printing become such a popular process?

What is good packaging?

These are the questions I am going to address throughout this essay. I have chosen to concentrate on colour, print and packaging as my three keywords and I will be using the following three thinkers to explore the theory of my chosen words. Marianne Klimchuk (packaging designer), Andy Warhol (Artist) and Isaac Newton (philosopher).



Fig. 1. *Colour Wheel* (1995)

Famous mathematician, astronomer and philosopher Isaac Newton, is less well known for his introduction to the concept of the colour spectrum in the 1660s. "Color psychology is defined as the science or the study of the effects that colors tend to have over moods, behaviours or feelings of the people" (IntroBooks, 2019, ch. 1). I want to explore those effects and how they can be used as influence in graphic design.

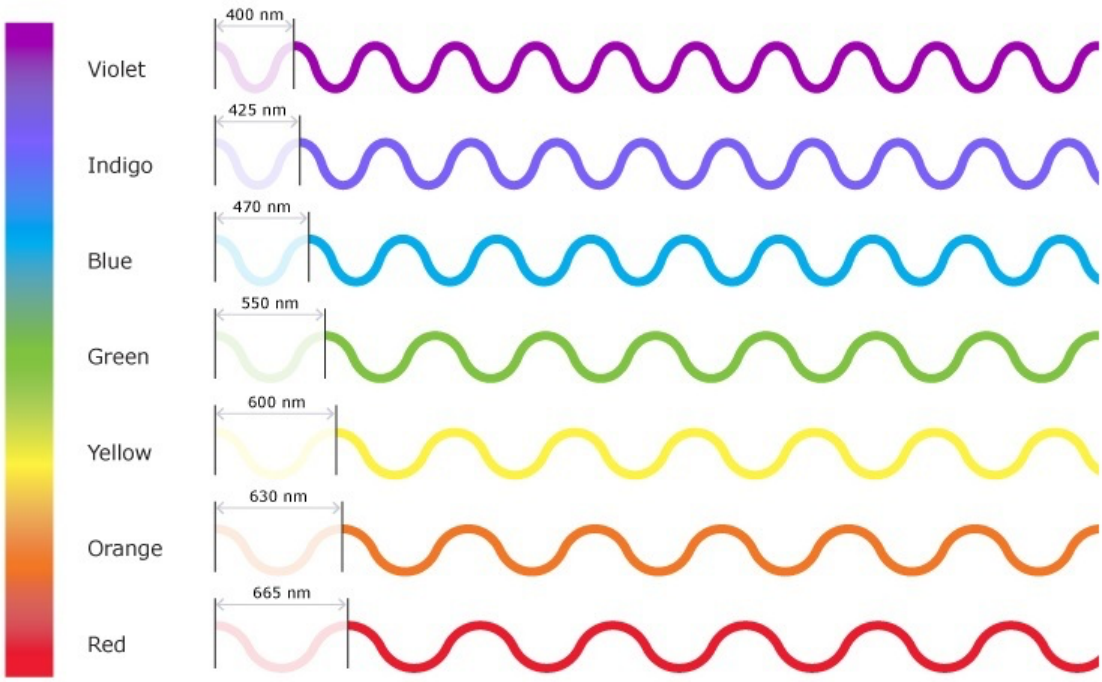


Fig. 2. *The Visible Spectrum* (2012)

Our first thinker, Angela Wright stated that light has multiple wavelengths (see fig. 2) and when each one engages with the eye they do so slightly differently. Red has the longest wavelength meaning that it takes more adjustment and appears nearest whereas colours such as green needs no adjustment and is restful.



Fig. 3. *McDonalds Official and Primary Colours - Red* (2023)

“Red affects us physically. It is primary action is to trigger physical responses.” (Haller, 2019, [no pagination]). Red causes the heart rate and pulse to notably speed up, which gives the impression

that time is passing faster than it actually is. Red is able to activate a person's fight or flight reaction which is the psychological response that happens when one is faced with a threat or an attack. The fact that the colour red can seem to make time go more quickly could be a reason that red is regularly included in multiple fast-food businesses branding (see fig. 3). The businesses could be using this as a tactic to get their customers in and out as swiftly as possible to increase their turnover. Cowin and Matusitz's outstanding study shows that "Red is the most passionate and stimulates the most excitement within humans" (2011) This explains why fast-food companies would use this colour in their branding, making sure people are excited and want to talk about their experiences with others.



Fig. 4. *McDonalds Official and Primary Colours - Yellow* (2023)

Moreover, Yellow has a quality that lights up a room which could be why children gravitate towards the brighter colours such as yellow. Karen Haller documented that businesses whose target audience is young children includes the colour yellow in their store because if the children are happy, the parents are more likely to buy the products. Yellow can also affect our emotions and it is used to trigger emotional retaliation "it has an impact on the nervous system – a system that transmits signals to and from the brain to the rest of the body" (Haller, 2019, [no pagination]). This makes yellow, in psychological terms, the strongest colour. Yellow also can fill you with unadulterated joy meaning that it can be engaging for adults not just children. According to Anna Starmer, yellow is energy-boosting and uplifting (see fig. 4). Likewise, as the colour red, fast-food corporate company's use this colour to excite people, get them to talk about the company and make it memorable.

Similarly, “The positive psychological messages in the combination of the tones of yellow and red they have chosen express happiness, excitement and fun” (Haller, 2019, [no pagination]). This is why fast-food companies that target children use these colours in their branding. For example, McDonalds use yellow and red. This persuades children that they are going to have an amazing time when going to a McDonalds store (see fig. 5).



Fig. 5. *The McDonald’s Logo* (2011)

As well as this, red makes you move quickly and induces energy. It is significant for fast-food industries as they want customers in and out as fast as possible. Cowin and Matusitz ascertained that corporations choose colours that intensify and reinforce their corporate image. However, brands such as McDonald’s also amalgamate it with the steadiness and longevity of their logo. Jim Schindler (the creator of the McDonald’s logo) chose these colours purposefully to entice children and their families, whilst making the brand unforgettable.

Moving on, Screen Printing is not taken by direct impression, but by printing through an intermediary surface which is the screen mesh (see fig. 6).

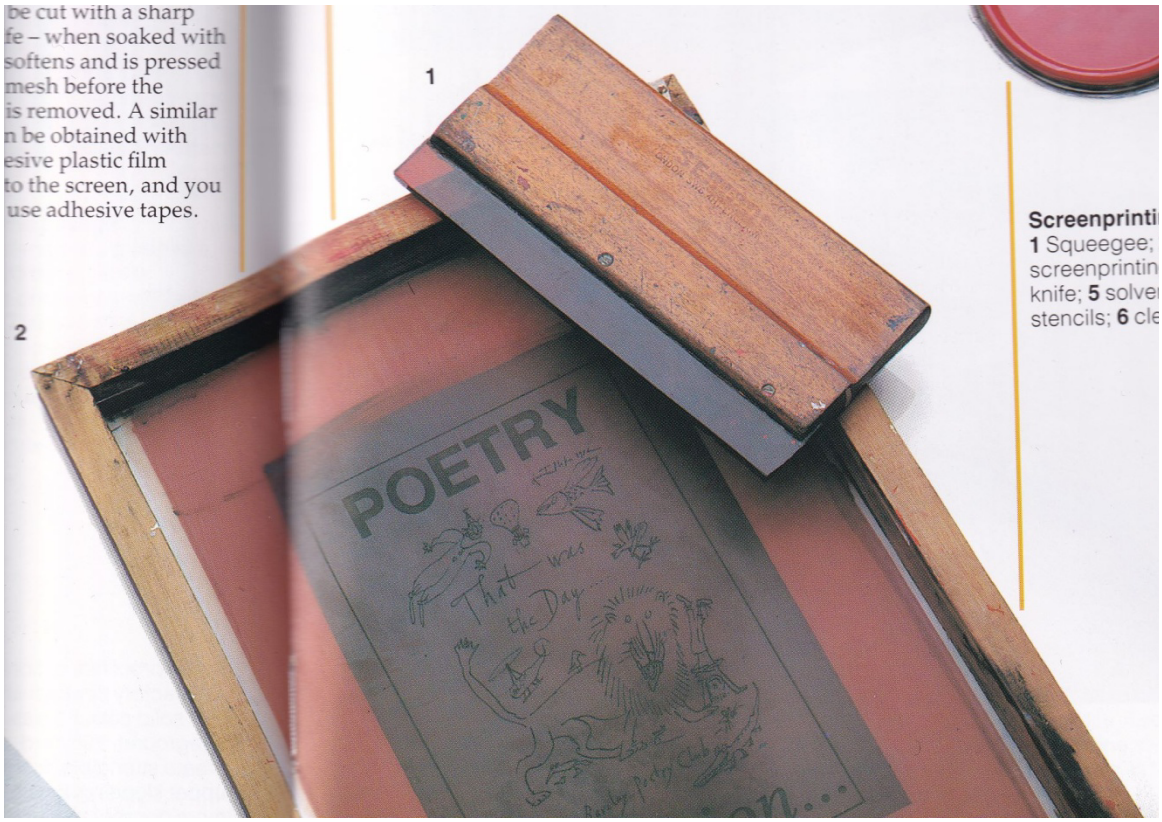


Fig. 6. *Mesh Screen and squeegee* (1993)

Judy Martin believed that other printmaking processes were in some measure different from screen printing. As well as being an art medium screen printing has a direct relation to commercial and industrial printing process. "It is a colourful, versatile medium which you can adapt to the context of your work" (Martin, 1993, Pg 60). I want to research the history of screen printing and how the process became desired.

The process commenced with stencils which were made from plastic or paper, something that can not be destroyed by paint. The book, Print Liberation: the screen printing primer, states that in 1500 BC Fijians made stencils by punching little holes into banana leaves that fell from the trees. They would then push through some vegetable dye which created a pattern once the stencil had been

removed and printed these images onto handmade bark cloth. This was the beginning of screen printing.

However, there was an issue with the craft. Paprone, Dillon and Jenison declared that the biggest issue with stencils is that they will always have bridges to connect the floating parts of the image which can ruin the character of the picture you are trying to print (see fig. 7).

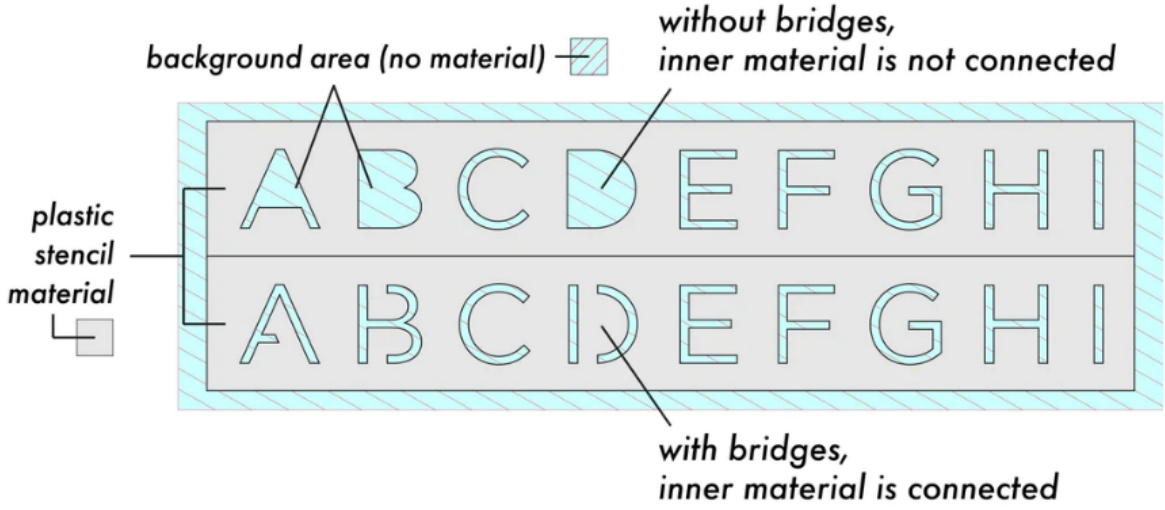


Fig. 7. *Stencils with Bridges* (2021)

It was said by J. I. Biegeleisen that printers in Japan used human hair and silk filament to suspend the floating part of their images to remove the bridges. The bridges were invisible as the ink could easily go through the threadlike material.

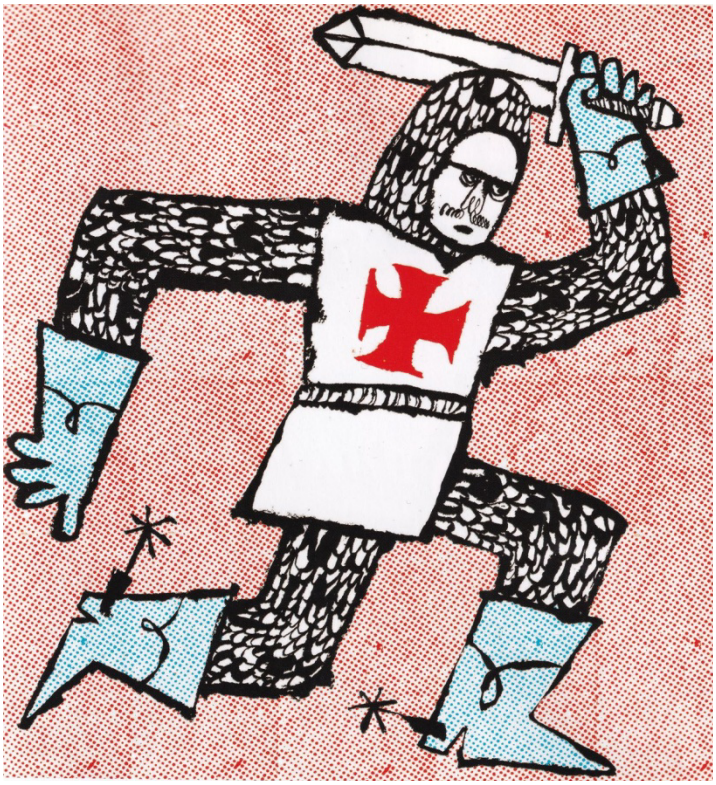


Fig. 8. *Paper Stencil Screen Print* (2008)

Most likely this idea then progressed to the use of a net of threads/screen. The stencils were impervious materials which were cut to form an open design. They then used brushes and dyes to paint over the stencil which when lifted would create a print (see fig. 8). “The Japanese stencils consist of oil-treated heavy paper sheets through which openings were cut in rather intricate detail” (Biegeleisen, 1962, Pg 2). The Japanese would glue a spider like network of human hair across the openings of the stencils to stop the isolated parts of the stencil from dropping out. This would keep the integral parts of the stencil intact. This principle was the forerunner of modern screen stencil according to Biegeleisen

In America, commercial screen printing (see fig. 9) resulted in many hand letterers converting to screen printing roles due to the high demand. It was still in the rough stages of development and images were described as blurry with ragged edges.



Fig. 9. *Commercial Screen Print Advertisement* (2008)

Samuel Simon introduced screen printing to the UK in 1907. “The commercial industry had been the major catalyst for the development of screen-print technology” (Paparone, Dillon and Jenison, 2008, Pg 10). Requiring rapid and continuous ways to advertise their products and the fact that hand painters work was slow and expensive drove supermarkets to adopt screen printing (see fig. 10). Paprone, Dillon, Jenison noted that supermarkets use of screen printing instigated a big growth in this industry.



Fig. 10. *Commercial Screen Print Advertisement* (2008)

New materials such as screen meshes, inks, films and emulsions were created to make printing more efficient and affordable. The book, Print Liberation: the screen printing primer, determined that because screen printing was regarded as a purely commercial process it took a long time for the art world to recognise screen printing as an art medium. In the 1930's people started using screen printing openly as a medium in art however, it was not until the 1960's with the work of Robert Rauschenberg and Andy Warhol that screen printing became a mainstream art form in its own right.



Fig. 11. *Screen Print of Campbells soup* (1969)

Warhol started using screen printing in 1962 (see fig. 11). The Andy Warhol Museum believed that even though screen printing was still known as a commercial process at the time, it allowed him to easily replicate the images that he appropriated from popular culture (see fig. 12). Warhol stated

that “I tried doing them by hand, but I find it easier to use a screen. This way, I don’t have to work on my objects at all." (The Andy Warhol Museum, 2023). Warhol also said that anyone would be able to reproduce his images as well as he could which is one of the reasons he fell in love with the medium.

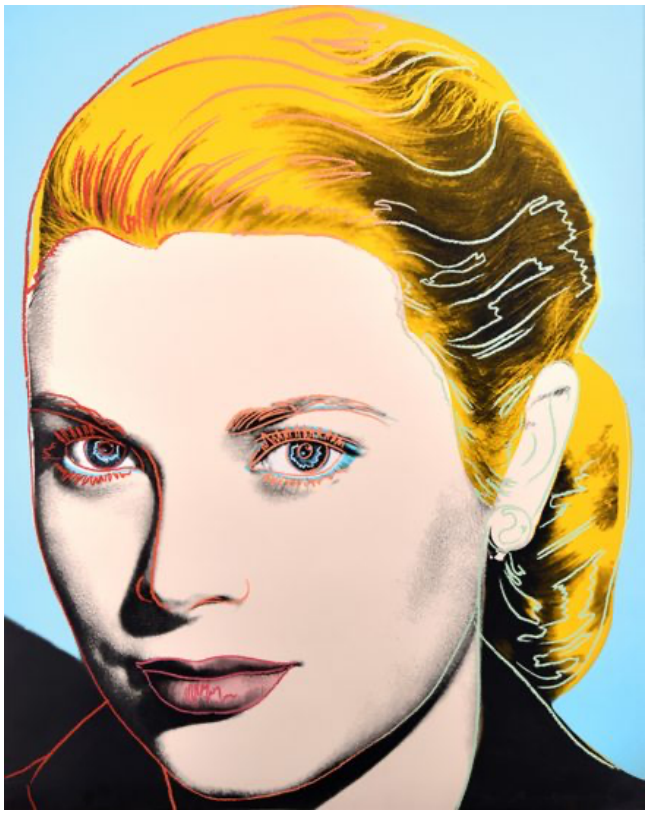


Fig. 12. *Screen Print of Grace Kelly* (1984)

Warhol popularised screen printing as an art form. He wanted to work quickly and efficiently, and screen printing is exactly that. He said, “The reason I’m painting this way is that I want to be a machine” (The Andy Warhol Museum, 2023). I think he liked the fact he could produce multiples of the same image in a short amount of time.

Next, we will look at packaging and what is effective design. Bronwen Edwards stated that you know you have found distinctively designed packaging when “It’s iconic, redefines a catalogue or you just buy it to have it, not to consume it” (Edwards, Klimchuk, Wallace and Werner, 2009, Pg 9).

What is really good design? The difference between good and really good packaging is its ability to instigate behavioural changes. The packaging should open up the door of experience and opportunity for whomever encounters it. Design, well executed, should stimulate, mentally transform and educate the observer. “Great design has an extra element: an idea behind it. Injecting a truly original, relevant idea into a design transcends subjectivity.” (Edwards, Klimchuk, Wallace and Werner, 2009, Pg 7).



Fig. 13. *Heinz Baby Food Range* (2009)

To start, I wanted to look at the Heinz baby food range (see fig. 13). The design perfectly fits the product as children are the target audience. Heinz realised that to convince parents to buy the product it would have to entice children. Klimchuk stated that the baby’s food range was a fresh set of designs that deserves a standing ovation and is sure to create a buzz. Children will be attracted to the bright colours and the eyes brings the product alive. “With eyes on these characters that look over the viewer’s shoulder, these cans leap off the shelf.” (Edwards, Klimchuk, Wallace and Werner,

2009, Pg 35). As Bronwen stated, great design needs an extra element and the interactive experience this can provides definitely ticks the box as great design. Klimchuk expressed that she could see kids wanting to sleep with the characters at night and I completely agree. It Is an interactive packaging design that is bound to entice children and if parents see a happy child, then they are more likely to buy the product.



Fig. 14. *Frijj Milkshakes* (1966)

Next, I investigated the Frijj milk shakes packaging (see fig. 14). I love the bright colours and how playful the packaging is. Clibborn-Booth states that the designers showed the immediacy of the milkshake by building a component of change within the brand identity. He also said that they showed the fresh nature of the drink through the packaging. The drink is consistent and has elements that can be used in multiple different designs for the brand. It is convenient, fresh and eye catching for children and adults. Clibborn-Booth noted that there were less sales during the winter

and cleverly Frijj created a limited-edition range of labels for Halloween, Christmas and Easter which attracted new customers and increased sales. Klimchuk states that “Achieving a high-level of success in design, I believe, is most often the result of a clear methodology that focuses on the end customer” (Clibborn-Booth, 1996, Pg 115).

Springett Associates (Design team) achieved this when creating the following packaging.



Fig. 15. *Kshocolat’s Range of Chocolate Bars* (2009)

Finally, I investigated Kshocolat chocolate bars (see fig. 15). They are slightly different from the other products previously discussed and look high end. I think the packaging for Kshocolat bars are sleek and professional. The design is consistent and is able to be continued over multiple design elements (see fig. 16).



Fig. 16. *Kshocolat's Hot Chocolate Range* (2009)

The simplicity, muted colours and earthy tones make the product feel sophisticated, eco-friendly and adult. "Kshocolat's bars look special and expensive because more has been done with less. They command more money because they reduce visual clutter, use less materials and processes that consume energy and resources, and do so without being self-righteously green." (Kirkpatrick, 2009, Pg 015). I think the packaging is eye catching despite it being so simple. Simplicity is key with designs like this and that is what makes them popular.

To conclude, I found throughout my research that colour can affect one's mood. As I have shown there are many psychological effects when looking at colour making it a powerful tool for designers. In addition, I have established that screen printing became popular through the commercial industry however, Andy Warhol made it acceptable as a medium in the art world. In my opinion, I have

discovered what elements equate to good packaging and found examples and opinions that I agree with. The three words I have chosen are: Colour psychology, screen printing and packaging.

My three chosen words are similar in that they are powerful design tools. However, they can be distinguished in the following way. Colour affects people's mood and emotions and if designers understand the psychology, they can manipulate people to buy a product. Similarly, good packaging design will attract its target audience through their desires and beliefs. However, screen printing is a design process and needs elements of the other two areas to be successful.

Despite this, these three words are linked in design and can be put together to create a process. For example, these words could guide me in creating packaging that is printed using screen printing and focuses heavily on colour psychology to see if the packaging would attract the correct target audience. In researching this essay, I found colour psychology in design very interesting and feel the following question would work well for my dissertation: How can colour and print influence the decisions of consumers?

For the independent project in Year 3 I feel a potential idea could be to create packaging with an element of screen printing which creates less waste and uses minimal colours to influence consumers into purchasing the product.

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