

Oliwia Mielczarek
Keywords: Space, Pattern and Colour
P Number: 1800313
Programme of Study: Surface Pattern Design
Module: ADAD5004
Word Count: 2724
Tutors Name: Julia Lockheart

Research in Practice

In this context of writing, I will investigate these three key words; space, pattern and colour, which are vital to my own practice, Surface Pattern Design. Through in-depth research I want to acknowledge the importance and link between these keywords to construct a question for my dissertation. Research will be supported by visual artists that synthesise these keywords within their own practice by exploring how they define, approach space and apply pattern and colour within their artwork.

Within my context space can be defined as “the area around everything that exists, continuing in all directions”(Cambridge Online Dictionary, 2021). In interior design space can be used to communicate visually and can be applied to captivate and capture a person’s attention. As, “experiencing spaces creates a signification in people’s lives, and spaces can have a particular role in originating specialized experiences” (Onem and Hasidic, 2020, p.1). Thus, space can have a purpose and be curated to evoke a variety of emotions which can bring back good and bad memories or invoke our imagination. It is therefore a visual language of communication.

Also, space is a design component that can be used or arranged to connect elements to create a design flow and “flow is designed to make optimal experience easier to achieve” (Csikszentmihalyi, 2013, p.72). These elements could be cognitive and include decorative design features that are harmonised to make a space feel functionally and emotionally relaxed. Other elements can include a piece of artwork or murals (Refer to Fig.1) that can also transform a space by adding volume and aesthetics as, it is the pattern or colour within that space that can communicate visually by telling a story, evoking feelings and memories. This means space provokes emotions as, “space can have a whole lot of impact on how we act or on what we feel.....can also evoke feelings of comfort or stimulate communication” (Harrouk, 2020). Therefore, the interaction between people and spaces can have a psychological affect. As a space can feel warm or cold, be negative and positive, transforming the way in which people associate and feel about certain environments. In the design world that environment can be the space in the exhibition, the actual artwork itself, space in interior design or the space in public.



Fig.1

This mural piece (Fig. 1) by Keith Haring is a representation of how a public space can be transformed into a more meaningful one. It's youthful and bold expressing feelings of joy and evoking childhood memories. Harding's character is expressed "his energy, life, and spirit" (Mural Arts, n/a). This shows that artists can express themselves artistically in a space and tell a story as different colours can symbolise people from different backgrounds coming together, a sign of diversity.

Another designer who transforms space into a more explosively colourful and playful is Camille Walala who is a textile, graphic and an interior designer who transforms a public or an interior space using colour and pattern in order to "transform atmospheres, elevate moods and spark positivity" (Walala, C, 2015). As pattern and colour in a space can influence our mood by visually communicating with our mind. Her work is characterised by a combination of bold colours and playful geometric shapes pattern designs, influenced by the Memphis movement.



Fig. 2

Her style expresses boundless energy that attracts people and allows them to engage with her designs by taking on a playful approach to interact with spaces. This lively and immersive 2D tile concept structure shown in figure two, captures exhuberance. Taking people on a journey, celebrating accessibility and letting people's imagination take over. Inside there is a "unique disco room designed to celebrate self-expression and let the body flow freely. While they explore the space, guests were encouraged to get involved by designing their own patterns" (Walala, C, 2020). This engaging space allows people to enjoy themselves and feel their inner child again.



Fig. 3

This spectacular abstract pattern, mural design (Fig. 3) has transformed the public space and the building itself from looking dull into being eye catching and attractive, through the use of intense, contrasting colours and zig-zag pattern juxtaposing the black windows. Thus, Walala makes people interpret spaces differently and see it from a more diverse and an experimental perspective, whilst uplifting their moods using pop colour that “Brings vibrancy to people’s lives” (Walala, C, 2015). She does this by playing “with the shape of the building itself” (Walala, C, 2015), using distinctive angular pattern shapes which create a sense of balance and professionalism, portraying the space within the building which is a place of work offices. Thus, space can be experienced and expressed in many ways using elements such as, colour and pattern to communicate emotions and evoke memories. Through the use of space artists can express their character, convey a message and create a relationship between a viewer and their artwork, connecting them to the space.

Pattern is “any regularly repeated arrangement... made from repeated lines, shapes or colours on a surface (Cambridge Dictionary, 2021). In terms of pattern design, patterns can visually create a connection to feelings by evoking them through the use of abstract shapes, “Like colours, humans associate different shapes with certain emotions and characteristics” (Cartwright, n/a). Thus, shapes are impactful, connecting a person's mind with previous emotions that they've encountered through experiences or memories. This can either evoke happy feelings or negative ones, depending on the previous experience. Also, pattern can be juxtaposed using different scales of line at different angles to evoke emotional feeling, as stated by Michael “diagonal line is a very dramatic type of line.. verticals imply, strength, stability and power” (Killen, 2018, video). This portrays that pattern has the power to be energetic and can have a psychological impact, articulating messages through visual language.

Furthermore, patterns are visually pleasing and are used on wallpapers or textile items to add aesthetics to an interior space, characteristic or to evoke certain emotions. As “pattern adds visual interest and is pleasing to most people” (Weinhold, 1988, p.98). Therefore, patterns can attract attention as a person would be visually drawn to it. Patterns can also be composed of elements with meanings and can tell a person's story as, pattern is “An impactful tool, pattern can translate your story into your environment”(Atwood, 2016, p.14). This portrays that pattern can be an aid of expression used to translate an individual's narrative.

Similar to Yayoi Kusama who is a contemporary artist that translates her story by expressing her hallucination experiences. These are seeing the world covered in pattern which her dotted artwork is an escape that gives up identity and allows her to escape from hallucinations. As mentioned in a Bloomberg video “her work really comes from her head, from her feelings, from what she sees and fears” (Bloomberg Markets and Finance, 2018), showing an insight of her mind which we can experience in her installations and a reflection of her vision. Therefore, we can define a person's mentality through shapes. Also, patterns can show an insight into a person's mind and how they portray the environment around them.

Kusma extensively uses polka dots within her infinity installations, breaking boundaries of space using pattern which expands from the floor to the walls, covering an entire interior space which makes us “experience this feeling of self-obliteration” (Tate, n/a), by becoming an imaginary experience.

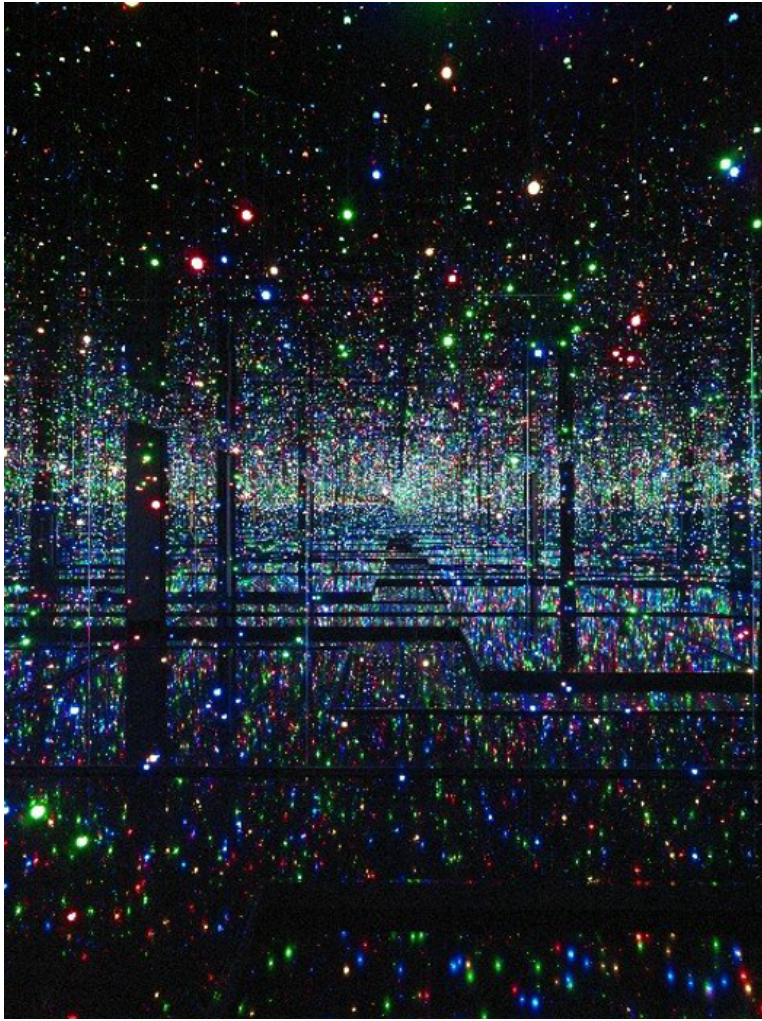


Fig. 4

Kusama's 'Infinity Mirrored Room' (Fig.4), creates an endless space experience through the use of "installing hundreds of flashing coloured LED lights... reflecting endlessly in the mirrors" (Tate, n/a), creating pattern and repetition that, when surrounded by makes us feel engulfed. Kusama almost conveys what her mind experiences, her endless hallucination visions of pattern as the room is full of endless reflections. Also, Kusama takes on a different approach of displaying pattern design, through the use of light, creating a romantic and magical atmosphere, breaking boundaries of space. This portrays that pattern is an impactful tool for evoking feelings, meanings and creating imaginary experiences.



Fig. 5

This is another imaginary experience (Fig.4) created by the artist. It conveys a white canvas becoming covered with a polka dot pattern and an explosion of colour. Also, it explores pattern as an engaging tool because it makes the audience participate by becoming the artwork through interacting with it and placing sticker dots within the space. This playful experience takes the audience through their inner childhood, inviting them to play with the pattern in the given space. Thus, “Shapes and their characteristics such as roundness, angularity, simplicity, and complexity have been postulated to affect the emotional responses of human beings in the field of visual arts and psychology” (Wang et al, 2012, p.1). Therefore, patterns can have an emotional effect due to the human associating certain shapes with meanings.

Kusama's regular spot motif portrays symbolism as stated by the artist herself, “Dots are symbols of the world, the cosmos. The Earth is a dot, the moon, the sun, the stars are all made up of dots. You and me, we are dots” (Kusama, Y, 2012). This means that pattern is more than just aesthetics, it can be meaningful and represent something or symbolise it. Patterns can create an extraordinary experience that can be imaginative.

Colour communicates by creating emotions and meanings as, “It is a uniquely emotional language and a symbolic tool for all designers” (Stone, Adams and Moriak, 2008, p.6). It is an effective communication tool which, depending on choice and relationship with other colours, can “have a huge influence on how a piece of art or design looks and feels and the emotions it provokes” (BBC, n/a). This suggests colour is important because it interacts with our mind by influencing our thoughts, emotions and how we perceive things. Therefore, colour communicates through the sensation that a person will experience. According to semiotics, “colour became a primary visual signalling language”(Haller, 2019, n/a), establishing a meaning by association, thus giving it the power of a sign. An example of this is when we see the colour red we often associate it with danger, knowing that we shouldn't cross the road (Semiotics of colour). This happens due to the way that our brain processes colour by using visual information to communicate. As described by St Clair (2016), the light reflects the colour of an object into our eye by sending a signal to our brain, associating it with a specific colour. This means that the way in which colour behaves in relation to light,

will be the colour that we will see for example, the ocean is blue because of the way that it behaves in relation to light. This means that “Colour consists in a power or disposition of something to produce sensory experiences of colour in a perceiver” (Thompson, 2005, n/a). It is a mental perception.

Colour is also a visual language and it is an artistic expression tool which can affect our own aesthetic consciousness as, “colour invariably conveys moods that attach themselves to human feelings or reactions” (Eiseman, 2017, p. 26). Therefore, many designers and artists use the power of colour to express their own emotions or impact the feelings of others.

Colour is significant in David Batchelors work. Batchelor describes himself as an artist who creates sculptural installations out of found objects and is intrigued by colour in the way in which people perceive and respond to different hues (Batchelor,n/a). Batchelor perceives colour as “a readymade of the everyday world of the city” (Batchelor, 2006, p.2). Thus, his work focuses on colours of the modern urban environment, showing how we can view colour from a new perspective as not being created but already being there. Batchelors work explores surfaces and the colours that they generate, establishing a relationship between both (Fig.6).



Fig. 6

Batchelor's work celebrates unnatural colour as the colours he uses are generated by electricity. An example of this shown in figure six "is a large tower of light boxes, again old commercial light boxes from shop signs....to generate in terms of colour tones a haphazard" (Batchelor, 2006, p.2), communicating the emotions and the energy of a particular environment from where the materials used to build the sculpture have come from. Making us appreciate colour all around us. Furthermore, the tower (Fig.5), takes pleasure in the electrical colour essence as the light can escape from these lit up boxes and reflect on surfaces that will abide. However, the colour will only be there until it is switched off, making it pleasurable as people know that it will disappear, appreciating its essence more. Hence, colour is more meaningful than we think and it can take on many forms to communicate its essence through the use of visual language.

Colour has a deeper meaning. It can represent sound, express and arouse feelings. Wassily Kandinsky who was a painter and an art theorist, explored the effect that colour has psychologically, on the eye and the relationship of colour to form. As, he "felt that emotions could be expressed through the way colours and lines were arranged in a painting. He linked musical tones to particular colours" (Tate, 2016). This portrays that sound can be expressed through the use of colour, evoking emotions.



Fig. 7

Colour can also influence our emotions which Kandinsky expresses in this abstract painting (Fig.7), consisting of expressive grid layout, showing how colour combinations are perceived. Kandinsky believed that colour and form have affective powers because they act on the viewer, resembling images and objects. As Kandinsky wrote that "colour is a power which directly influences the soul" (Kandinsky, 1912, p.25), shaping the way in which we see the world and providing a point of contact. Kandinsky believed that "yellow could disturb, while blue awakened the highest spiritual aspirations" (Miller, 2014). Hence, colour provokes our own consciousness experience. Therefore, colours are subjective qualities as they are based on our perception, evoking an emotional response through a rhythmic visual experience and can remind us of the ordinary.

Through the analysis and exploration of my chosen three keywords, space, pattern and colour. I have come to the conclusion that these keywords are important design elements that can impact people psychologically through the way in which they are applied. As they affect our mind emotionally, evoking memories and creating new memorable experiences. Thus, they are a tool of communication through the use of visual language. Visual language enables artists and designers to use these design elements which are space, pattern and colour to communicate with the viewer by creating visual experience that evokes certain emotions or sensations that are left to our brain to interpret. This means that it is all about how our mind works in the way in which it experiences colours and pattern in a space or different colours and patterns which, all communicate visually in the aspect of design. They are elements of design and when combined together they can shape our imagination, create an extraordinary experience and influence our subconscious.

Also, throughout my research I have found that in the context of interior design, pattern and colour can change how we perceive an interior space. As, they enable our mind to associate space with feelings due to the impact that colour and pattern has on people psychologically. Therefore, pattern and colour in a space can create an atmosphere, communicate feelings and change how we feel about that space. This is because colour in relationship with patterns work in harmony to curate a space. So, overall my chosen keywords link as they have a psychological impact and artists and designers approach space, applying colour and pattern to communicate visually in the essence of design, overtaking our vision and making us drawn to artworks. As well as, expressing their own emotions.

This research has led me to wonder how environmental psychology of an interior space links an individual and their mind?. Thus, I will intend to explore the psychological impact through the use of design elements on an individual's experience and behaviour. I will do this throughout my dissertation by answering the question of 'How do Interior designers apply an understanding of spatial awareness to create an interior space that impacts an individual's physical experience and their senses?'.

Bibliography

Atwood, R. (2016) *Living with Pattern*. New York: Clarkson Potter Publishers.

Batchelor, D. (N/D) Artist CV. Available at: <https://www.artsy.net/artist/david-batchelor> (Accessed 2 May 2021).

Batchelor, D. (2006) 'Painting as a New Medium', *Art and Research*, 1(1), pp.1-2. Available at: <http://www.artandresearch.org.uk/v1n1/batchelor2.html> (Accessed: 2 May 2021).

BBC (n/a) Colour. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/z9bbk2p/revision/10> (Accessed: 27 March 2021).

BBC Newsnight (2012) Yayoi Kusama Interview. [video]. Available at: <https://youtu.be/L-kWnanXzGo> (Accessed: 27 March 2021).

Bloomberg Markets and Finance. (2018) The Inexhaustible Creations of Yayoi Kusama | Brilliant Ideas Ep. 53 [video]. Available at: <https://youtu.be/reVBAb05VU8> (Accessed: 27 March 2021).

Cartwright, B. (2016) 'The Science Behind Design: 8 Psychology Principles to Apply to Your Next Project' [blog]. 23 June. Available at: <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/psychological-design-principles> (Accessed: 10 May 2021).

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2013) *The Psychology of Happiness*. London: Ebury Publishing.

Eisemma, L. (2017) *The Complete Colour Harmony, Pantone Edition*. United States of America: Rockport Publishers.

Haller, K. (2019) *The Little Book of Colour*. London: Penguin Books Limited.

Harrouk, C. (2020) 'Psychology of Space: How Interiors Impact our Behavior?', ArchDaily, 20th March. Available at: <https://www.archdaily.com/936027/psychology-of-space-how-interiors-impact-our-behavior> (Accessed: 3 May 2021).

Kandinsky, W. (1977) *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*. New York: Dover Publications.

Killen, M. (2018) *Impact of Shapes, Patterns, and lines On Emotions* [video]. Available at: <https://youtu.be/oqqulhnUI78>. (Accessed: 10 May 2021).

Miller, R.B. (2014) Wassily Kandinskys Symphony of Colours. Available at: <https://www.denverartmuseum.org/en/blog/wassily-kandinskys-symphony-colors> (Accessed: 2 May 2021)

Mural Arts Philadelphia (n/a) *We The Youth*. Available at: <https://www.muralarts.org/artworks/we-the-youth/> (Accessed: 7 May 2021).

Onem, M. and Hasiric, D. (2020) 'Designing Brand Experience in Interior Space', Materials, Science and Engineering, n/a, p.1. DOI: 10.1088/1757-899X/960/2/022005 (Accessed: 3 May 2021).

St Clair, K. (2016) *The Secret Lives of Colour*. London: John Murray Press.

Stone, L.T. and Adams, S. and Morioka, N. (2008) *Colour Design Workbook*. United States of America: Rockport Publishers.

Tate (2016) Wassily Kandinsky, 'Cossacks'. Available at: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/kandinsky-cossacks-n04948> (Accessed: 2 May 2021).

Tate (n/a) Who Is Yayoi Kusama?. Available at: <https://www.tate.org.uk/kids/explore/who-is/who-yayoi-kusama> (Accessed: 27 March 2021).

Thompson, E. (1995) *Colour Vision: A Study in Cognitive Science and Philosophy of Science*. London and New York: Routledge

Walala, C. (2020) Lego X Walala - House Of Dots. Available at: <https://www.camillewalala.com/latest-work/2020/3/9/m3r7pmgiypd2pl7yz0tkqc1sduxa8y> (Accessed: 25 March 2021).

Walala, C. (2015) Profile. Available at: <https://www.camillewalala.com/profile> (Accessed: 25 March 2021).

Wang, J. et al. (2012) 'On Shape and the Computability of Emotions' *HHS Public Access*. DOI:10.1145/2393347.2393384 (Accessed 10 May 2021).

Weinhold, B.V. (1988) *Interior Finish Materials for Health Care Facilities*. United States of America: Thomas publisher.

Zhou, M. (2014) 'On the Interior Space Design of "With and Without", Applied Mechanics and Materials, Vol.522-524, n/a. DOI: 10.4028/www.scientific.net/AMM.522-524.1731 (Accessed: 3 May 2021).

Figures

Figure. 1: Haring, K. (2013) We The Youth. [Art Mural]. Available at: <https://www.muralarts.org/artworks/we-the-youth/> (Accessed: 7 May 2021).

Figure. 2: Walala, C. (2020) Lego X Walala - House Of Dots. [Installation]. Available at: <https://www.camillewalala.com/latest-work/2020/3/9/m3r7pmgiypd2pl7yz0tkqc1sduxa8y> (Accessed: 25 March 2021).

Figure. 3: Walala, C. (2015) Dream Come True Building. [paint]. Available at: <https://www.camillewalala.com/architectureinteriors/2019/1/15/dream-come-true-building> (Accessed: 25 March 2021).

Figure. 4: Kusama, Y. (2011) Infinity Mirrored Room - Filled with the Brilliance of Life. [Installation Art]. Available at: <https://www.tate.org.uk/kids/explore/who-is/who-yayoi-kusama> (Accessed: 27 March 2021).

Figure. 5: Kusama, Y. (2002) The Obliteration Room. [Installation]. Available at: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/yayoi-kusama-8094/yayoi-kusamas-obliteration-room> (Accessed: 27 March 2021).

Figure. 6: Batchelor, D. (2001) Electric Colour Tower. [Installation]. Available at: <https://www.davidbatchelor.co.uk/works/sculpture/1990-1999/i-love-kings-cross-and-kings-cross-loves-me-02/> (Accessed: 2 May 2021).

Figure. 7: Wassily, K. (1913) Squares with Concentric Circles. [Painting]. Available at: <http://www.kandinskypaintings.org/squares-with-concentric-circles/> (Accessed: 2 May 2021).