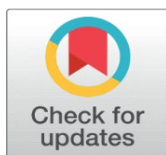
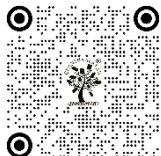


# COLOUR PSYCHOLOGY AND CREATIVE EXPRESSION OF THE INDIAN ARTISTS COMMUNITY

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## ABSTRACT

Art functions as a unique mode of perception that offers extraordinary ways of engaging with reality beyond mere aesthetic decoration, while an artist creates meaning through the thoughtful and skilful combination of elements in their contemporary art practices. Colour, as a fundamental component of human visual experience, carries psychological and symbolic significance that shapes emotions, perceptions, and behaviour. This study examines the role of colour psychology in contemporary art practice, focusing on how artists employ colour to process emotional states, and how these choices affect spectators. Using a qualitative research framework, the study draws on in-depth interviews with contemporary artists, alongside critical analysis of artworks, written documentation, and verbal narratives. The findings indicate that artists frequently project emotional and psychological states onto the canvas, using colour to translate abstract moods into tangible visual forms. This research addresses that gap by integrating psychological, artistic, and experiential perspectives. The study concludes that colour psychology plays a critical role in art-making, offering valuable insights for artists, practitioners, students, and future interdisciplinary research.

**Keywords:** Colour Psychology, Indian Artist Community, Contemporary Art Practice, Emotional and Psychological state, Creative Expression

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Colour constitutes an inescapable dimension of human visual experience. Beyond its purely aesthetic function of enriching the appearance of the world, colour exerts a profound psychological influence on human emotions and actions. Colour plays a decisive role in shaping perceptions and regulating their behaviour. As a mode of non-verbal expression, art integrates personal, social, and cultural dimensions of human existence. Because of its strong psychological influence, understanding colour is valuable in fields such as education, therapy, marketing, and design. The present research aims to investigate the relationship between colours and psychological responses, providing a comprehensive overview of the existing literature alongside its practical considerations. Using a qualitative approach, it examines how colour psychology operates among visual artists, focusing on how colours help individuals understand and express emotional

states. Colour psychology is initially viewed through the lens of clinical art therapy as a healing tool, and then applied to art-making to demonstrate how psychological and cognitive processes can support both students and artists. This investigation examines the output of notable artistic figures, exploring the correspondence between an artist's emotional condition and their chromatic choices, and how those colours affect viewers. Within the context of artistic creation and art pedagogy, this relationship (between emotional state and colours) is explored more reflectively, foregrounding the interrelations between an artist's emotional state and the colours they use to depict it, as well as the impact these colours have on the art viewer. For instance, when an artist is navigating a difficult period or enduring external pressures, the colours they select tend to mirror those emotional conditions — transposing private experience into the public domain of the canvas, deploying colour as an affective signifier.

## 1.1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The selected literature in this review primarily focuses on the connection between colours and psychological responses to artworks, providing a comprehensive overview of the Indian Artist Community. The authors discuss the colour and subject matter in artists' paintings, as well as the documentation of written and verbal conversations with contemporary artists, in their research and manuscripts, also analysing the relationship between emotional state and colour preference—specifically, how an artist's inner condition influences the colours they employ and how those colours in turn affect the spectator.

The study aims to elucidate the relationship between colour emotions and colour preferences. Chromatic choices play a significant role in artists' decision-making. Research in this area explores how individual colours and colour combinations evoke distinct emotional reactions — including excitement, energy, and a sense of calm — and how these reactions shape aesthetic preferences.

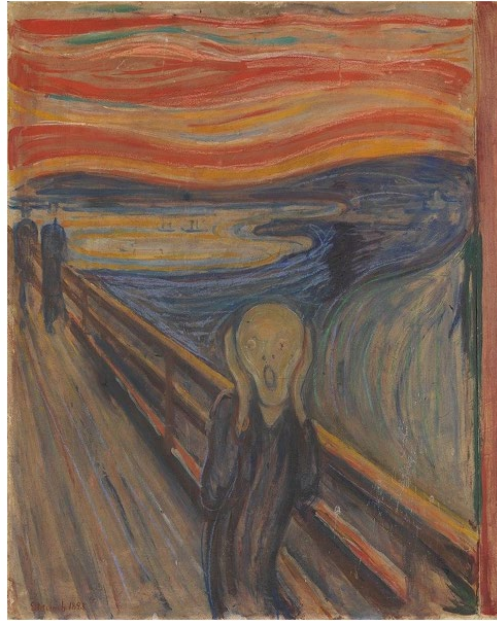
The study examines the relationship between colour and emotion in art and design, investigating how colour affects viewer responses and emotional reactions. It highlights how artists can utilise the positive and negative attributes of colour to convey messages and express ideas that can only be communicated through colour. The study considers non-digital (painting, sculpture) and digital (interactive installations) artworks, focusing on how artists can strategically use colour to create emotional impact.

This paper emphasises the importance of practice-based, student-centred research in fostering innovation in Australian art education. By connecting art, industry, and interdisciplinary collaborations, it shows how experiential projects can produce impactful research and long-lasting partnerships. Case studies, including collaborations with the Liquid Architecture sound art festival and St Vincent's Hospital, demonstrate how such initiatives improve cultural engagement and reshape perceptions of art and the environment.

The research study examined the origins of art therapy, a practice utilised for centuries to promote both emotional and physical well-being across various ancient traditions. Philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle endorsed art's healing power, and cultures such as those of China and Japan adopted practices like natural painting for therapeutic benefits.

The selected literature in this review presents that this paper adopts a qualitative approach to examining the role and potential applications of colour psychology among arts practitioners and students, specifically analysing how colour influences the understanding and processing of complex psycho-emotional phenomena. This paper focuses on how artists utilise colour to engage with emotion, the cognitive mechanisms involved, and possible secondary effects on art spectators. This study examines the work of four artistic masters, Piet Mondrian, Pablo Picasso, Edvard Munch, and Wassily Kandinsky, analysing the relationship between mood and mind state (of the artists) and the colours the artists use in their works.

**Figure 1**



**Figure 1** The Scream, Edvard Munch, 1892 Medium- Oil, tempera, pastel and crayon on cardboard, Dimension- 36 in × 28.9 in, National Museum and Munch Museum, Oslo. Source: edvardmunch.org

The paper explores how Colour is one of the elements of nature that make human life more aesthetic and fascinating. Plants, animals, and minerals have been used as primary sources for colourants, dyes or pigments since ancient times. Pigments are organic and inorganic compounds which are practically insoluble in the medium in which they are incorporated. Dyes and pigments are the most important colourants used to add or change colour. They are widely used in the textile, pharmaceutical, food, cosmetics, plastics, paint, ink, photographic and paper industries.

The research study presents that even without language and other forms of communication, colours can still convey information and evoke emotions. Therefore, colour can have both physical and psychological effects on people. In this context, this paper examines the visual representation of colour in painting in relation to psychological factors. The colours in the post-impressionist paintings of Van Gogh and Gauguin are contrasted, and experiments are conducted on psychological factors and colour research. The factors that affect the picture's colour tone and the influence of psychological factors on colour brightness judgment are investigated.

This paper explores the integration of art within medical practice, education, and healing, arguing that artistic engagement enhances clinician-patient relationships and fosters professional growth. Emphasising narrative medicine, music, and literature, it advocates for a more empathetic, holistic, and creative approach to healthcare. Evidence suggests that colour and imagery influence psychological states—calming hues and nature scenes promote relaxation, while abstract art may heighten anxiety. Historically, the art of medicine emerged from times when empathy and bedside manner were the primary tools available, often mistaken for curative power in the absence of scientific understanding.

## 1.2. AIM

The researcher's study specifically aims to analyse how colour shapes emotional understanding, cognitive engagement, and individual colour preferences within the domain of visual art practice. As a fundamental visual element, colour conveys meaning that transcends language, enabling artists to evoke emotions and psychological responses in their audiences. Colour can have both physical and psychological effects on people, affecting perception, mood, and behavioural responses. This research foregrounds colour as a core expressive and communicative element within contemporary visual art practice.

### 1.3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To investigate how artists exploit both the constructive and challenging dimensions of colour to articulate messages and convey ideas that can only be communicated visually, within their artistic practice.
- To understand colour as a non-verbal communicative and explore the significance of colour preferences and their impact on emotional and psychological experience in the Visual Arts.

### 1.4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

This study employs a qualitative framework to investigate the application of colour psychology in art production contexts. The Researcher conducted in-depth, personal interviews with artists, focusing on several aspects of their lives and careers. Secondary data from published sources, including scholarly articles and official websites, is collected. The researcher designed a questionnaire that delved into the artists' artistic journeys, examining the nature of their work and how specific biographical details correlate with colour profiles that evoke defined emotional states. The researcher visited the artists' studios, documenting their work with photographs that captured the creative spaces that shape their artistry. Through this process, the researcher facilitated research which aims to illuminate the cognitive processes by which artists imbue colours with meaning and how spectators interpret and decode these meanings. The central research problem addresses how artists employ colour to navigate emotions and process complex emotional states, and how these processes can be systematically analysed and understood. This methodological framework aims to enhance understanding of the influence of colours on India's artistic community.

Artist, teacher, and curator Pradosh Swain's spontaneous, unplanned approach to painting yields highly expressive, colourful works that captivate viewers. Nature frequently features in his paintings, where the artist blends imagination and reality to create strange and surprising images that challenge conventional perceptions.

**Figure 2**



**Figure 2** UNTITLED, Pradosh Swain, 60 x 42 inches, Acrylic on Canvas, Location - Artist's studio, Delhi, Image courtesy: Photo clicked by the Researcher

Pradosh's childhood in Odisha has had a profound influence on his work. Elements such as cocks, kites, and old-fashioned movie viewers often appear in his paintings, inspired by his early fascination with nature. As a child, he spent hours observing the natural world, which helped him develop exceptional skills with watercolours. In this painting, he possesses a dreamy, magical quality, blending his deep feelings and thoughts with his observations of reality.

This research gap provides a deeper understanding of the psychological and emotional effects of colour within the artist community, specifically regarding their pursuit of creativity through colour in the visual arts. In response to the limited research that investigates colour as a non-verbal communicative and expressive element through studio practice. Additionally, the relationship between individual colour preferences, the eminent artists' emotional response, the artistic

process, and the professional aspects explored in contemporary visual art research, and the maintenance of cultural activities.

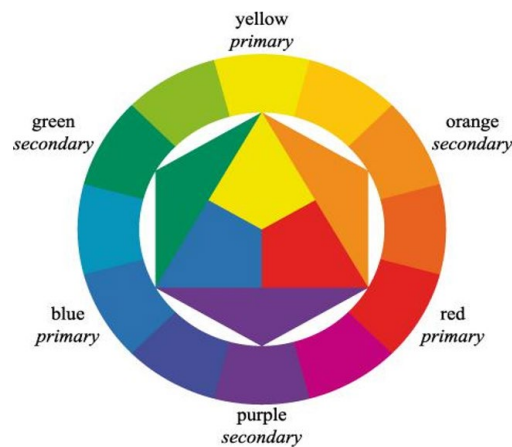
## 1.5. COLOUR WHEEL

Colour is one of the fundamental constituents of artistic expression, employed to articulate ideas, emotions, psychological states, and meaning within a composition. Artists draw on colour to create harmony or contrast, suggest depth and form, emphasise certain areas, and communicate symbolic or psychological significance. Colour functions as a powerful tool for visual communication and aesthetic experience.

“Colour is the keyboard, the eyes are the harmonies, the soul is the piano with many strings. The artist is the hand that plays, touching one key or another to set the soul vibrating.” - Wassily Kandinsky

The colour wheel is a schematic device for organising and comprehending the relationships between hues. Different colour wheels differ in the spacing of the colours around the wheel. The opponent colour theory, Munsell’s colour system, the standard printer’s primaries, the artist’s primaries, and Newton’s rainbow all present different variations of the colour wheel. But the artist’s colour wheel is particularly notable for its close ties to common colour names rather than to scientific structure.

**Figure 3**



**Figure 3** Colour Wheel with Twelve Hues. The Three Primaries (Red, Yellow, And Blue) Combine to Make Three Secondaries (Green, Orange, And Purple). Each Primary Combines with Its Neighbouring Secondaries to Make Six Tertiary Colours.

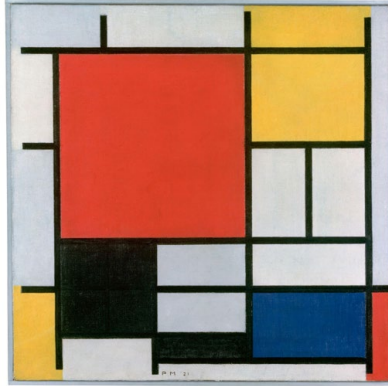
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### 1.5.1. PRIMARY COLOURS

Red, yellow, and blue constitute the three foundational colours from which all other hues are derived; they cannot themselves be produced by mixing other colours.

Piet Mondrian is well known for his geometric paintings structured by black lines and red, yellow, and blue rectangles. Piet Mondrian is the originator of Neo-Plasticism, an artistic movement based on Mondrian's use of pure colours and forms, beginning in 1917. He retains only pure colours (the three primaries: red, blue, yellow). The relationship between the vertical and the horizontal represents the duality of the universe and its laws of nature. The horizontal and vertical black stripes and blocks of yellow, blue, and red against a white background create an active pattern of irregular sequences.

**Figure 4**



**Figure 4** Composition with Large Red Plane, Yellow, Black, Grey and Blue, Piet Mondrian, 1921, Medium- Oil on Canvas, Dimension- 59.5 cm \* 59.5 cm, Dallas Museum of Art. Source commons.wikimedia.org

Artist, illustrator, teacher, sculptor, and curator Madan Lal depicts a life cycle in his painting. The painting reflects his journey and showcases the complexities of life, thoughts, relationships, and the human mind, as seen through various geometric patterns and symbols, a combination of forms in his paintings: cubes, stylised human figures, eyes, and teapots.

**Figure 5**



**Figure 5** Untitled (Madan Lal), Medium: Oil and Acrylic on Canvas, Dimension: 2ft\*4ft, Lockdown', Dated by the Artist, Location - Artist's Studio, Chandigarh, Image Courtesy: Photo Clicked by the Researcher

The artist introduces us to a different kind of brightness that illuminates our lives and helps us connect with our inner powers. The artist used vibrant, bold colours like red and gold on canvas, which symbolised cheerfulness, joy and positivity.

### 1.5.2. SECONDARY COLOURS

Secondary colours are produced through the combination of two primary colours:

- Red + Yellow = Orange
- Yellow + Blue = Green
- Blue + Red = Purple

During the nineteenth century, Michel Eugène Chevreul and Ogden Rood revolutionised the understanding of colour by introducing scientific principles of optical mixing, colour contrast, afterimages, and perceptual vibration. Their findings revealed how colours influence one another when placed side by side and how the human eye blends small units of colour to create new visual effects. These ideas profoundly shaped modern artistic practices, most notably Pointillism, where artists like Georges Seurat applied tiny dots of pure pigment that merge optically in the viewer's perception. This approach produced luminous, vibrant surfaces and a new, scientifically informed method of achieving depth and tonal harmony in painting.

**Figure 6**



**Figure 6** A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte, Georges Seurat, 1884-86, Oil on canvas, 207.6 cm × 308 cm, Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago. **Source:** wikipedia.org

“I want to make modern people, in their essential traits, move about as they do on those friezes, and place them on canvases organised by harmonies of colour.” - Georges Seurat

The artist began work on the canvas in 1884 with a layer of small, horizontal brushstrokes in complementary colours. Seurat's palette consisted of the usual pigments of his time, such as cobalt blue, emerald green and vermilion. He used the pigment zinc yellow predominantly for yellow highlights in the sunlit grass in the middle of the painting, as well as in mixtures with orange and blue pigments.

Anup Kumar Chand is a contemporary Indian artist known for his surrealist, vibrant, and detailed paintings that explore the intersection of nature, wildlife, and human existence. Anup Kumar Chand's artwork serves as a testament to his remarkable talent and the beauty of his surroundings. His colour palette is vibrant, yet soothing to the eyes. Even the elements' colours blend with the background in a smooth transition. The most appealing are those that stand out for a high-textured 3-D effect created by the clever use of colour on the canvas.

**Figure 7**



Anup Kumar Chand, Nature is in Self Isolation, Acrylic on Canvas, 48" X 36", 2020, anupkumarchand@gmail.com

**Figure 7** Nature is Self

Isolation, Anup Kumar Chand, Medium: Acrylic on Canvas, Dimension: 48"\*36", Location - Artist's studio, New Delhi, Image courtesy: Photo clicked by the Researcher

The best thing about his paintings is that they ooze spontaneity and playfulness. His paintings often feature symbolic elements, such as the moon and tigers, to represent contrasts like silence/movement and ice/fire, emphasising a quiet, reflective, and sometimes isolated natural world through his intricate brushstrokes and vibrant colours.

### 1.5.3. TERTIARY COLOURS

Tertiary colours are formed through the mixture of a primary colour with an adjacent secondary colour. Examples include:

- Yellow-Orange
- Blue-Green
- Red-Purple

During the Renaissance, linear perspective was integrated into the practice of painting, and colour was introduced as a vehicle for rendering shadows. In this period, colour technique was used to achieve volume, often with dark colours such as umber or grey overlays. It is evident in the legendary portrait of "Monalisa" (Figure 8) by Leonardo da Vinci. The Old Master's masterpiece has shadows in umber and dark tones. Shadow meant browns or greys. The soft blending (sfumato) creates an ambiguous mood, "mainly in two features: the corners of the mouth, and the corners of the eyes"(E.H. Gombrich, The Story of Art).

Figure 8



Figure 8 Monalisa, Leonardo da Vinci, Oil on Canvas, 77 cm x 53 cm, 1503, Louvre Museum, Paris, France.

Source: wikipedia.org

The portrait incorporates model studies indoors- inside a studio with artificial light sources, emphasising the model and the landscape from the native place of Vinci, which is painted in the background. He studied the objects and figures from life keenly, dissecting and finding the real thing he observed. The desired stance was captured in a dramatic treatment of real strength and stability in his composition, which was effective through a triangular arrangement of forms and figures in architectural or landscape surroundings. Linear perspective and the harmony of line movement across the composition gave a gracious touch of balance and rhythm.

The principal dimensions of colour in painting include hue, tone, and intensity. Hue refers to the basic colour family, with red, yellow, and blue as primary hues that combine to form secondary colours such as orange, green, and violet. Tone describes the lightness or darkness of a colour, which shapes the overall tonal structure of a painting. Yellow ochre and iron oxides provided warm highlights for skin and embroidery, while umber added depth to shadows. Intensity refers to the purity or saturation of a colour, determining its visual strength and vibrancy.

### 1.5.4. COMPLEMENTARY COLOURS

Complementary colours are the colours that are directly across from each other on the colour wheel:

- Blue and Orange
- Red and Green
- Purple and Yellow

**Figure 9**



**Figure 9** Complementary Colours

Govind Vishwas' Imprito technique is a testament to his innovative spirit and his commitment to pushing the boundaries of traditional painting. By combining material experimentation, textural complexity, and conceptual depth, he has created a unique artistic language that continues to inspire and captivate.

**Figure 10**



Govind Vishwas "Akhandbharat-1" 24" x 46" Mix media 2024

**Figure 10** Akhandbhar, Govind Vishwas, Medium: Mix Media, Dimension: 24 "x46", Location - Artist's studio, Vadodara, Image courtesy: Photo clicked by the Researcher

A significant aspect of Vishwas' technique is his use of minimal colours. His palette primarily includes black, red, orange, white, and the natural tones of the materials he uses, such as rubber. These colours are chosen not only for their aesthetic appeal but also for their symbolic significance. For example, red and orange often represent vitality and spirituality, while black and white evoke timelessness and duality. The restrained use of colour ensures that the textures and forms take centre stage, highlighting the tactile quality of his work.

Surrealism, represented by Salvador Dalí's *The Persistence of Memory*, used precise, often dreamlike rendering and imaginative colour to depict the unconscious mind. The work of Sigmund Freud was profoundly influential for Surrealists, particularly his book, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899). Freud legitimised the importance of dreams and

the unconscious as valid revelations of human emotion and desire; his exposure of the complex, repressed inner worlds of sexuality, desire, and violence provided a theoretical basis for much of Surrealism. Together, these movements show a shift from depicting the visible world to exploring emotion, structure, absurdity, and dream imagery.

**Figure 11**



**Figure 11** The Persistence of Memory, Salvador Dali, 1931, Oil on canvas, 24 cm × 33 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York City.

Source: wikipedia.org

Symbolism Depicted in the Artwork	Analysis of Colour Choices and Techniques
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The melting pocket watches represent the fluidity of time and its subjectivity to perception.</li> <li>The ants crawling on the watches symbolise decay and the relentlessness of time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dali used muted, earthy tones and soft brushstrokes to create a dream-like atmosphere.</li> <li>The use of shadows and light adds depth and dimension to the painting.</li> </ul>

### 1.5.5. WARM COLOURS

Red, Orange, Yellow, and anything in between. They are called warm because they remind you of the sun or fire. Artists use warm colours to create emphasis and convey emotional intensity. The emotions that warm colours reflect are passion, happiness, enthusiasm, and energy.

In *The Fighting Temeraire* by J. M. W. Turner, the warm colours of the sunset evoke a sense of brightness and heat. The artist was renowned for his highly atmospheric paintings, in which he explored the weather, the sea, and the effects of light. Observe the red spreading from the setting sun and the deep golden glow on the water.

**Figure 12**

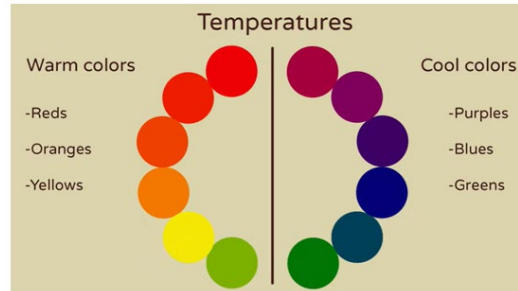


**Figure 12** The Fighting Temeraire, Artist J. M. W. Turner, 1839, Medium Oil on canvas, Dimensions- 90.7 cm × 121.6 cm, National Gallery, London.

Source: wikipedia.org

In *The Fighting Temeraire* by J. M. W. Turner, the warm colours of the sunset evoke a sense of brightness and heat. The artist was renowned for his highly atmospheric paintings, in which he explored the weather, the sea, and the effects of light. Observe the red spreading from the setting sun and the deep golden glow on the water.

**Figure 13**



**Figure 13** Warm Colours and Cool Colours

### 1.5.6. COOL COLOURS

Green, Blue, Purple, and along with all their variations. They're more subdued than warm colours. These and their shapes are the colours of night, water, nature, and are usually associated with calm and relaxation.

**Figure 14**



**Figure 14** Woman with a Parasol, Claude Monet, 1875, Oil painting on Canvas, 100 cm × 81 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC

Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woman\\_with\\_a\\_Parasol\\_%E2%80%93\\_Madame\\_Monet\\_and\\_Her\\_Son](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woman_with_a_Parasol_%E2%80%93_Madame_Monet_and_Her_Son)

In this painting (Figure 14) by Claude Monet, Lady with a Parasol, the cool colours of the ground and sky contribute to the painting's peaceful feeling. The Impressionist work depicts a captured moment on a stroll on a windy summer's day. Monet's light, spontaneous brushwork creates splashes of colour.

### 1.6. DEVELOPMENT OF PIGMENTS

Colour is one of those dimensions of the natural world that enriches human life aesthetically and psychologically. Plants, animals, and minerals have been used as primary sources for colourants, dyes or pigments since ancient times. The most famous Egyptian blue was first produced around 3000 BC and is a very stable pigment, calcium copper silicate (CaCuSi<sub>4</sub>O<sub>10</sub>), made by mixing a calcium salt (carbonate, sulphate, or hydroxide) with copper oxide. The Chinese developed Vermilion, a red pigment, by crushing, washing, and heating the mineral cinnabar (mercuric sulphide) around 2000 years ago. In 1704, Diesbach in Germany created the first synthetic pigment, Prussian blue, while trying to make a red pigment using contaminated materials. This blue pigment is unique because it fades in daylight but restores its colour in the dark.<sup>19</sup> By the end of the Middle Ages, Europe began importing lapis lazuli to grind it into powder and make ultramarine pigment. Ultramarine was used by some of the most important artists of the Renaissance and Baroque, including Masaccio, Perugino, Titian and Vermeer; it was often reserved for the clothing of the central figures of their paintings, especially the Virgin Mary.

**Figure 15**



**Figure 15** Lapis lazuli, a deep-blue metamorphic rock, is used as a semi-precious stone, composed primarily of the minerals lazurite, pyrite, diopside, and calcite. **Source:** wikipedia.org

**Figure 16**



**Figure 16** Girl with a Pearl Earring, Johannes Vermeer, 1665, Oil on canvas, 44.5 cm × 39 cm, Mauritshuis, The Hague, Netherlands. **Source:** wikipedia.org

Johannes Vermeer used lapis lazuli in the painting *Girl with a Pearl Earring*. It depicts a European girl wearing an "exotic dress", an "oriental turban", and what appears to be an enormous pearl as an earring.

Prehistoric humans used natural earth pigments found in clay, frequently shaping them into simple "crayons" for drawing and painting. Over time, they improved the basic mix of coloured clay and water, developing paints of higher quality and performance. Pigments are organic and inorganic compounds which are practically insoluble in the medium in which they are incorporated. Dyes and pigments are the most essential colourants used to add or change colour. They are widely used in the textile, pharmaceutical, food, cosmetics, plastics, paint, ink, photographic and paper industries.<sup>21</sup> Natural pigments like carotenoids, anthocyanins, and betalains are discussed in terms of their characteristics, biosynthesis, and stability as food colourants.<sup>22</sup>

In 1903, when Picasso painted *The Old Guitarist*, he was enduring significant personal hardship, including the recent death of a close friend, while also living in poverty. His works reflect this state of mind in the Blue Period. He created "icy blue paintings, revealing sadness and suffering in his characters, as in *The Old Guitarist*." Thus, the "icy" blues and sombre tone might be viewed as a form of expiation of the form his grief was taking. The thin, skeleton-like figure of the blind musician also has roots in art from Picasso's native country, Spain. The old man's elongated limbs and cramped, angular posture recall the figures of the great 16th-century artist El Greco.

**Figure 17**



**Figure 17** The Old Guitarist, Picasso, 1903, Medium- Oil paint, Dimension- 48.4 in × 32.5 in, Art Institute of Chicago.

Source: [www.pablocassio.org](http://www.pablocassio.org)

<b>Colour palette:</b>	<b>Blue</b>
<b>Composition:</b>	The painting belongs to Picasso’s Blue Period and thus has many shades of blue. The blue colour symbolises sadness, isolation, and desolation. Thick, visible brushstrokes and painted folds in garments. It also highlights the old man’s vulnerability. The guitar symbolises hope and optimism. The painting is set against a dark background. Distorted proportions of body and limbs. The Old Blind Guitarist is believed to have been inspired by a blind musician Picasso met in a cafe in Barcelona.
<b>Subject matter:</b>	An old, blind beggar playing a guitar. Picasso’s use of colour and form creates a sense of depth and emotion that is both powerful and haunting.

## 1.7. TIMELINE AND ORIGIN OF COLOURS

The timeline and origin of colours trace the evolving relationship between humans, nature, and visual expression from prehistoric times to the modern era. Since prehistoric times, humans have created painted marks—like handprints, artworks, or graffiti—to leave a trace of their presence. Great art of the primitives, in its true sense, shows a connection to the rhythmic progression of life in the lap of nature. Early people may have scratched surfaces to guide others or mark territory, and eventually discovered that mixing certain materials with water or saliva made more effective markings, giving rise to painting.

### 1.7.1. PRIMITIVE ART: FOUNDATION OF PIGMENT, SYMBOL AND EXPRESSION

This paper describes the origins and composition of the earliest earth pigments used by primitive man to decorate cave walls, through to the synthetic pigments developed more recently. Despite modern technology, the artist’s palette remains a mixture of the pigments used by cave artists, natural pigments used in the Middle Ages, and modern organic compounds 19

**Figure 18**



**Figure 18** Depiction of Aurochs, Horses and Deer, Location Lascaux Cave, France, Prehistoric Sites, UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Source: [Wikipedia.Org](http://Wikipedia.Org)

The paintings represent primarily large animals, typical local contemporary fauna that correspond with the fossil record of the Upper Palaeolithic in the area. Prehistoric painters used the earth pigments, soot from burning animal fat and charcoal from the fire. The colours were yellow ochre, red ochre, and black. Water served as the binding agent, allowing the pigment to be sprayed from the mouth or painted onto the surface with the fingers as brushes. The overlapping figures and dynamic silhouettes anticipate techniques that later emerge in formal painting traditions, revealing the origins of artistic intention and visual storytelling.

It remains one of the most crucial painting cycles of prehistory, originating in the Magdalenian and Solutrean periods of the Upper Palaeolithic. This cave's artistic style belongs to the Franco-Cantabrian school, characterised by the realism of its figural representation. The repetition of specific animals—such as bison, horses, and deer—suggests the symbolic value of colour and form in relation to survival, hunting rituals, and communal identity.<sup>35</sup> Primitive man's hunting and taming of animals engulfed his life, and thus, these were incorporated into his expression in silhouettes or line drawings. The expansion of awareness, inventions, intellect, and bonding also expanded.

### 1.7.2. MEDIEVAL ART: SYMBOLIC COLOUR AND TECHNIQUE

The medieval period, spanning approximately the 5th to the 15th century, marked a significant shift from the instinctive naturalism of prehistoric work to structured religious iconography. Two primary techniques dominated medieval painting:

Tempera — a mixture of pigment and egg yolk — was applied over wooden panels prepared with layers of gesso. This technique dried rapidly, enabling fine linear precision while limiting tonal blending.

Fresco — the application of pigment onto wet plaster — allowed artists to create wall paintings of great permanence and luminosity, since the pigment fused directly with the plaster as it dried.

Medieval painters' Figures were often frontal, rigid, and symbolic, emphasising spiritual meanings. The Scrovegni Chapel contains the most important of Giotto's frescoes, which marked the beginning of a revolution in mural painting and influenced fresco technique, style, and content for a whole century. Giotto's frescoes in the Arena Chapel (c. 1305) demonstrate the transition from medieval stylisation to early naturalism. While his colour choices retained symbolic meaning, Giotto introduced greater emotional expression, spatial depth, and human presence. His fresco technique, refined from earlier traditions, foreshadowed the Renaissance artistic revolution.

Figure 19



Figure 19 The Last Judgment in the Scrovegni Chapel, Padua, Veneto, Italy.

Source: wikipedia.org

### 1.7.3. THE RENAISSANCE: SCIENTIFIC OBSERVATION AND TECHNICAL INNOVATION

The Renaissance artists sought to understand the world through observation, geometry, light, and anatomy, redefining the roles of colour and technique in painting and establishing individual artistic identities. While still using many earth pigments from prehistoric and medieval times, the artists refined these materials by using new binders, supports, and methods.

#### 1) From Newton to Goethe: The Scientific Study of Colour

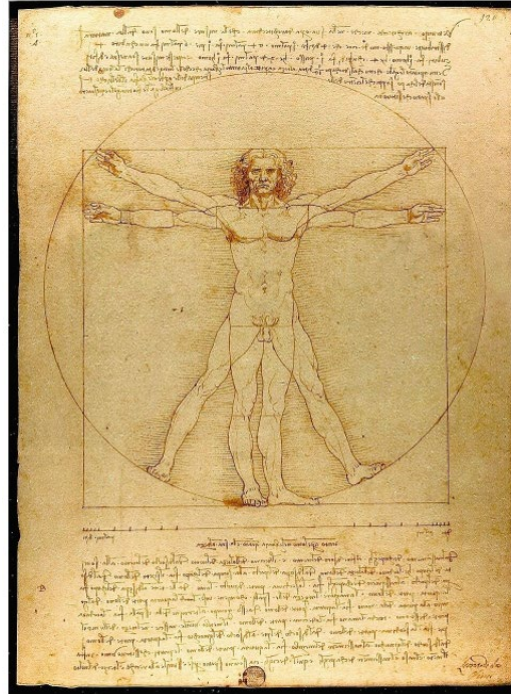
Modern colour theory emerged from the systematic study of light and perception. Isaac Newton's prism experiments (1704) demonstrated that white light contains a spectrum of colours, laying the foundation for optical colour theory. He explained that clear white light was composed of seven visible colours. Opticks, one of the great works in the history of science, documents Newton's discoveries from his experiments passing light through a prism. He identified the ROYGBIV colours (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet) that make up the visible spectrum.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1810) emphasised subjective experience, arguing that colour arises from the interaction between light and human perception. His thinking influenced subsequent generations of artists who engaged with colour as an emotional and psychological phenomenon.

"Colour is light's suffering and joy." –Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Vitruvian Man is a drawing by the Italian Renaissance artist and scientist Leonardo da Vinci, dated to c. 1490.

**Figure 20**



**Figure 20** Vitruvian Man, Leonardo Da Vinci, C. 1490, Pen, Brown Ink and Watercolour Over Metalpoint On Paper, 34.4 Cm × 24.5 Cm, Gallerie Dell'accademia, Venice, Italy.

Source: Wikipedia.Org

Inspired by the Roman architect Vitruvius, it depicts a nude man in two overlapping standing positions, inscribed within a circle and a square. To demonstrate the perfect ratios and proportions found in human anatomy (Palmer, Allison Lee, 2018). Human anatomy, effects of light and shade, chiaroscuro, and knowledge of perspective were applied to buildings and human figures across the entire setting. Man became the scale of measurements.

#### **1.7.4. ROMANTICISM AND REALISM**

Romanticism and Realism are two influential movements whose contrasting ideals continue to shape artistic expression. Romanticism emphasised emotion, imagination, and the sublime, seen in the dramatic landscapes of Caspar David Friedrich or the expressive colour and movement of J.M.W. Turner. In contrast, Realism focused on truthful representation and everyday life, exemplified by Gustave Courbet's "The Stone Breakers" or Jean-François Millet's "The Gleaners." The relationship between these movements is not oppositional but dialogic.

**Figure 21**



**Figure 21** The Stone Breakers, Artist Gustave Courbet, 1849, Medium Oil on canvas, Dimensions- 165 cm × 257 cm, public domain.

**Source:** commons.wikimedia.org.

### 1.7.5. MODERN ARTISTIC MOVEMENTS: COLOUR AS EXPRESSION, STRUCTURE, AND ABSTRACTION

Modern artistic movements emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as artists began to challenge traditional academic styles and established rules of representation. These movements emphasised experimentation, individual vision, and innovation in form, technique, and subject matter. Modern artistic movements reshaped visual language and laid the foundation for contemporary art practices.

#### 1) Impressionism and Post-Impressionism

Impressionists were a group of artists who collaborated with a standard set of artistic expression. It comprised capturing fleeting moments on the surfaces of objects and in nature. The sunlight falling on objects, human beings engaged in various activities, water, fauna, and flora comprised the significant themes of impressionists. Impressionist artists Monet, Pissarro, Renoir, Cezanne and Degas in the period before 1900 used Bold brushwork, unpolished, sketchy surfaces, and bright, "primitive" colours, which were combined with their subject matter — the effects of light, the individual sensation made visible — to establish the modern as visual. The artist who brought about the revolution was Claude Monet with "Impression of Sunrise" (Figure 4.23), exhibited at the "Exhibition of Impressionists" in April 1874. Louis Leroy coined the term "Impression" for the style of Monet's artworks. (Sharma, 2019)

**Figure 22**

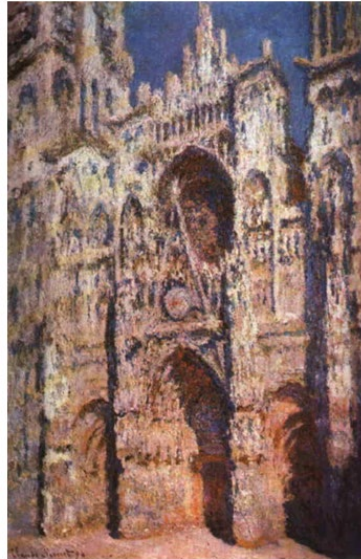


**Figure 22** Impression of Sunrise, Artist Claud Monet, 1872, Medium Oil on canvas, Dimensions- 48 cm × 63 cm, Musée Marmottan Monet, Paris.

**Source:** commons.wikimedia.org

The term describes the movement in art and indicates one of its fundamental characteristics—the attempt to capture impressions of light and colours. Impressionists and post-impressionists broke the traditional norms. The tone of brown and grey was abolished. Heroic, mythological, and religious allegory in the subject matter was abandoned. Fleeing the confines of studios, they explored the outdoors and the countryside and began painting directly in the open air. The scenes of Sunday crowds by the riverside, women in the garden, street scenes, and boating parties were painted. Impressionism was characterised by concerns with the effects of light and colour, as seen in Monet's contrasting studies of the "Façade of Rouen Cathedral" under varying conditions of light: morning, full sunlight, and evening. The details of arms, legs, and fingers were diminished in the artists' paintings, rendered in the distance as impressions. The study of optics demonstrated that the eye was capable of mixing and evaluating form with clarity when seen from a distance; the observer was called on to look at the arrangement of colour on canvas as much as to contemplate a landscape. (Sharma, 2019)

**Figure 23**



**Figure 23** Claude Monet, Rouen Cathedral, Full Sunlight, 1894, Oil on canvas, 42 in x 28.9 in, Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France. Source: Richard, Shone, *The Post-Impressionism*, London, 1979

**Figure 24**



**Figure 24** Claude Monet, Rouen Cathedral, Facade (Sunset), Harmony in Gold and Blue, 1892-1894, Musée Marmottan-Monet, Paris, France. Source: Richard, Shone, *The Post-Impressionism*, London, 1979.

**Figure 25**



**Figure 25** Claudemonet, Rouen Cathedral, The West Portal, Dull Weather, 1892, Muséed'Orsay, Paris, France. Source: Richard, Shone, The Post-Impressionism, London, 1979.

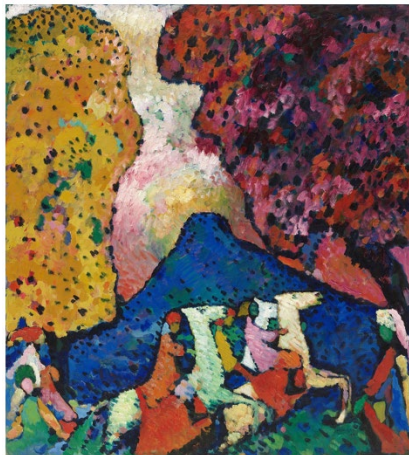
The Post-Impressionist artists were more interested in the underlying essence of nature. Seurat explored the subjectivity of line and scientific colour illusions as seen from a distance. Van Gogh used exaggerated complementary contrasts (blue/orange, red/green) to express psychological intensity. Gauguin distilled the essence of life in his paintings, with a keen sensitivity to colour. Cézanne, the Father of Modern art, wanted to capture the underlying structure of the Impressionists.

## 2) Expressionism, Abstractism, Fauvism, Cubism, Dadaism, Surrealism

Early twentieth-century art movements transformed both colour techniques and subject matter, each in distinct ways.

Expressionism used exaggerated, emotive colour to convey inner turmoil. For Kandinsky, in *Blue Mountain*, “colour and line correspond directly to emotion”; his style became increasingly abstract and expressionistic, and his thematic concerns shifted from the portrayal of natural events to apocalyptic narratives. The artist himself notes that the two focal points are the “tangled lines” and the “moulded summit of the blue mountain” (Figure 2), which are separated by black lines; and that the “yellow is cold. This bright-fresh-cold to the sharp agitated (War) is the principal contrast of the picture” (Nici, 2015).

**Figure 26**



**Figure 26** *Blue Mountain*, Wassily Kandinsky, 1908-1909, Medium- Oil on Canvas, Dimension- 42 1/4 x 38 7/16 inches, Guggenheim Museum, New York,

Source: <https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/1844>

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**Figure 27**



**Figure 27** Woman with a Hat, Henri Matisse, 1905, Oil on canvas, 80.65 cm × 59.69 cm, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco.  
Source: wikipedia.org

Fauvism, led by Henri Matisse, embraced pure, non-naturalistic colour applied in broad, vibrant strokes, as in *Woman with a Hat*, where colour communicates joy rather than realism. The painting is a seated, half-length portrait of Matisse's wife, Amélie Matisse. The size, format, pose, and costume suggest a society portrait but distinctly depart from earlier painting styles. In the work, bold, unnatural colours and swirling brushstrokes make up the woman's face. Matisse's use of vibrant colour to represent light and shadow is evident in the green line separating the face. These brushstrokes and colours define the piece, directing the viewer's attention to details such as the gloved hand and ornate fan. Additionally, the imaginative hat marks a complete departure from painting as a reflection of reality. Finally, the painting's background is ambiguous, making it difficult to determine the chair's position or the setting in which it was painted.

Cubism, pioneered by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque, broke subjects into geometric forms, using muted or limited palettes—such as in Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger*—to emphasise structure over emotion.

**Figure 28**



**Figure 28** Les Femmes d'Alger, Pablo Picasso, 1907, Oil on canvas, 243.9 cm × 233.7 cm, Museum of Modern Art in New York.  
Source: wikipedia.org

Les Femmes d'Alger (O.K. R. Version O) (The Young Ladies of Avignon, originally titled The Brothel of Avignon) is a large oil painting by the Spanish artist Pablo Picasso, created in 1907. The painting portrays five nude female prostitutes in a brothel on Carrer d'Avinyó, a street in Barcelona, Spain. The far left figure exhibits Egyptian or South Asian facial features and dress. The two adjacent figures are in an Iberian style typical of Picasso's Spain, while the two on the right have African mask-like features.

**Figure 29**



**Figure 29** El Greco, The Opening of the Fifth Seal, 1608-1614

Source: commons.wikimedia.org

**Figure 30**



**Figure 30** Pablo Picasso, Nus (Nudes), 1905, graphite on paper.

Source: commons.wikimedia.org

El Greco's paintings, such as "The Opening of Fifth Seal", have been suggested as a source of inspiration for Picasso, leading up to Les Femmes d'Alger.

Dadaism, exemplified by Marcel Duchamp's Fountain, rejected traditional techniques entirely, using found objects and nonsensical compositions to challenge artistic norms.

Dada was an artistic and literary movement that began in Zürich, Switzerland. It arose as a reaction to World War I and the nationalism that many thought had led to the war, and was influenced by other avant-garde movements - Cubism, Futurism, and Expressionism. Dada artists are known for their use of readymades - everyday objects that could be bought and presented as art with little manipulation by the artist. The use of the readymade forced questions about artistic creativity, the very definition of art, and the purpose of art in society.

**Figure 31**



**Figure 31** Marcel Duchamp Fountain, 1917, Society of Independent Artists exhibit.  
**Source:** wikipedia.org

Of all the unaltered readymades by Duchamp, Fountain is the best known because, according to Dave Praeger, the symbolic meaning of the toilet takes the conceptual challenge posed by the readymades to their most visceral extreme.

Surrealism, represented by Salvador Dalí's *The Persistence of Memory*, used precise, often dreamlike rendering and imaginative colour to depict the unconscious mind. The work of Sigmund Freud was profoundly influential for Surrealists, particularly his book, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899). Freud legitimised the importance of dreams and the unconscious as valid revelations of human emotion and desire; his exposure of the complex, repressed inner worlds of sexuality, desire, and violence provided a theoretical basis for much of Surrealism. Together, these movements show a shift from depicting the visible world to exploring emotion, structure, absurdity, and dream imagery.

**Figure 32**



**Figure 32** *The Persistence of Memory*, Salvador Dalí, 1931, Oil on canvas, 24 cm × 33 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York City. Source: wikipedia.org

*The Persistence of Memory* is a 1931 painting by the artist Salvador Dalí and one of the most recognisable works of Surrealism.

"Surrealism is based on the belief... in the omnipotence of dreams, in the undirected play of thought." - Andre Breton-  
Manifesto of Surrealism

## 1.8. PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECT OF COLOURS

Colour exerts both intuitive and symbolically mediated effects on the human mind and body. Hues that evoke positive feelings in the artist can generate positive moods in their work, while contrasting tones may be employed to express negative emotions. In this process, the artist actively summons a mood, and the spectator, drawing on a shared register of emotional associations with colour, interprets and infers its meaning.

- Red: Typically associated with energy, passion, and urgency. It can elevate heart rate and produce a sense of arousal or perceived danger.
- Blue: Known for its calming properties, cultivating feelings of trust and steadiness. Widely employed in corporate and healthcare environments.
- Yellow: Evokes happiness and optimism, but may induce visual strain or frustration when applied excessively.
- Green: Connected to nature, equilibrium, and growth. It exerts a relaxing influence and is frequently used in healing and learning environments.
- Black: Symbolises authority, elegance, and sophistication, but may also be associated with grief or negativity.
- White: Represents purity and clarity, but can feel cold or sterile when used in excess.

For practising artists, colour is used to “explore visual perception and to represent or evoke emotions. The psychological effects of colour, hue, saturation, and brightness” are understood to evoke particular “psychological responses” in the artists and the viewer. (Schewe et al., 2011). For the artist, who is experiencing “negative” psychological and emotional states, the effects of colour Psychology could be used in a remedial sense. Engagement with colour can be a means for the artist to confront, navigate, and process emotional states, helping them overcome bad moods or negative mind states, both conscious and unconscious. Specifically, this entails the artist selecting colours that are reflective (for them) of the problems they are facing at that time, whether or not they can precisely define them. Indeed, the “art-making process can be a powerful catalyst for the expression of unconscious material”, and colour has an important role here: as a form of (psychological) “transference” for the art practitioner, allowing the art object to “embody” the emotions which the artist is dealing with. (Rifkind et al., 2013)

Anup Kumar’s paintings can envelop the viewer in their scale, space, and beauty. Their expansive spaces usually contain an intricate, carefully crafted narrative, slightly off-centre. His paintings feature fantasy shapes that are confusing because of their improbable nature. Anup’s initial paintings, in which spaces are in transition, find parallels in surreal transformations that adapt to the engaging moment of change.

**Figure 33**



**Figure 33** Untitled, Anup Kumar Chand, Watercolour on paper, 35 × 22.3 cm

Although Anup’s creation shapes a strong perception of the crisis of understanding with a child, he tries to connect it to the present tiring society, which has no more time to understand a child intimately. He works for pleasure and makes

a voice to edify society, driven by his love for the blooming humanities, and creates happiness for future generations. Since the series is based on child psychology, in the present-day context, it provokes viewers' aesthetic and intellectual faculties, featuring human figures, especially babies and children, against the backdrop of his previous series.

His colour palette is vibrant, yet soothing to the eyes. Even the elements' colours blend with the background in a smooth transition. The most appealing are those that stand out for a high-textured 3-D effect created by the clever use of colour on the canvas. The best thing about his paintings is that they ooze spontaneity and playfulness. The styles in paintings are rich and varied; often closely connected and sometimes developing and changing rapidly.

## 1.9. FINDINGS

The findings of this study confirm that colour psychology plays a decisive role in the emotional processing and expressive practice of visual arts practitioners. Colours do not operate solely as formal elements; they function simultaneously as psychological and therapeutic resources through which artists address and communicate emotional experience. Artists invest colour with personal meaning through both conscious intention and intuitive response, while viewers bring their own emotional and perceptual frameworks to bear in interpreting those choices. Colour is a subjective emotional experience, varying across individuals and closely linked to personal perception and emotional response.

The study demonstrates that artists draw on both the generative and the challenging dimensions of colour to convey messages and meanings that would be inaccessible through any other medium. It encompasses both analogue artworks — paintings and sculptures — and digital interactive installations, focusing on how artists can strategically use colour to create emotional impact. Overall, the findings confirm that colour is a vital component of art production, deeply connected to the artist's emotional state and contributing significantly to emotional and intellectual engagement within visual art practice.

## 1.10. CONCLUSION

Colour psychology and art therapy together represent essential resources in the creative and productive life of the visual artist, shaping human experience at a fundamental level. Evidence gathered through scholarly research and extended conversations with practising artists consistently demonstrates that colour is a primary medium through which artists engage with, process, and communicate complex emotional conditions. In projecting their inner lives onto the canvas, and in transforming abstract psychological states into tangible chromatic forms, artists demonstrate the profound reach of colour psychology into the practice of art-making. This practice highlights how colour psychology strongly influences art-making and reflects the artist's emotional state.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

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