

## 2014

Upheaval in the economy and society leads to a need for abiding values. Color researchers have derived Chrystal Caramel from the crystal vase designed by Patricia Urquiola. It is part of the "Recreate Century" color spectrum.





COLOR TRENDS

# Kristin Jandke's Feeling for Color

**Never mind clairvoyants: if you're looking for new color trends, you need to hold a mirror up to society. Trends are not set; they evolve. Wörwag, too, has its finger on the pulse. You can see that in our creation of new trend colors for exterior paints.**

By Michael Thiem

“One central question is: How much anarchy, how many breaks with convention do we credit our target group, society, with?” Professor Dr. Christoph Häberle



**KRISTIN JANDKE AND  
PROFESSOR DR. CHRISTOPH HÄBERLE**  
from the Stuttgart design agency B612 develop, together with their colleagues, individual solutions for firms in many sectors. The team is comprised of graphic artists, industrial and textile designers, interior decorators, artists, marketers, and technicians.

For Kristin Jandke, this vase is a crystal ball in which the color trend researcher from Stuttgart can see the future. Although that's not what she likes to hear. Jandke found the everyday object with the awkward name “Baccarat Variations Vase 06A,” by the Spanish designer Patricia Urquiola, at the furniture fair in Milan. The object unites handicraft with innovative working techniques and expressive ornamentation. Her thoughts when she sees it are transported to the 17th century. Associations with caramel, melting away in a skillet. Warmth. Sweetness. Hot sugar becomes a metaphor for an entire world. A world of color. A historicizing world that, thanks to a unique glass-cutting technique, is reflected in the crystal vase in rare variety—from dark brown to white, from hard tones to warm and mild ones. “Our sources are not the secret to our inspiration. Art is in how you interpret them,” reveals Jandke. “Inspiration sounds like an oracle, but for me it's just clues.” She calls the new trend color Chrystal Caramel.

#### Creative evidence room

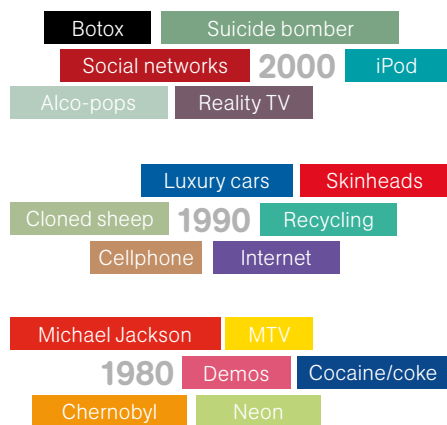
The clues are collected meticulously. They include vacation photos, material samples, sketches, magazine articles, packaging, broken tiles, stones, fashion accessories, cosmetics, and pictures of exclusive products such as the vase. The offices of design agency B612 on Tübinger Strasse in the western part of Stuttgart are an evidence room of creativity. A lot of the items collected are hung on what is known as a ‘mood board.’ This wall is alive. It changes. Rearranging the items, adding to them, and grouping them allows new worlds of life and color to crystallize. The name of the agency—which has worked for Wörwag since 2003 on such projects as discovering color trends for exterior and interior paints—is derived from the eponymous Little Prince's asteroid in the famous story by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry.

A design cosmos has developed in the back-room atmosphere of the agency. “The mood board shows us what the client's brand and product need in order to be a success in tomorrow's world,” explains Christoph Häberle, who founded B612 in 1996. He also researches and teaches as professor for packaging design at Stuttgart Media University. Being able to express yourself through color is the most differentiated form of non-verbal communication. It doesn't just involve individual preferences, but also collective attitudes to life and shared values.

But why should Chrystal Caramel be trendy all of a sudden? Humberto Maturana, the renowned Chilean biologist and psychologist, defines the term ‘trend’ with the image of a man who is standing on the edge of a cliff and still risks a step forward. “Each time he steps into the abyss, the cliff grows under his feet.” This means that, to make trends a reality, you just have to head in the right direction. Courage is one ingredient; precise observation is another.

Jürgen Ortmeier, head of development at Wörwag, sees it this way: “Trends are not set; they evolve within society. That's why we want to know which direction the world is developing.” As a result, the central question for Häberle is: “How much anarchy, how many breaks with convention do we credit our target group, society, with?”

Trends develop out of the *zeitgeist*. A trend can only develop once it has been accepted and is, indeed, desired. The germ cell of a trend is often a subculture. Take baggy pants, for instance. These loose pants, where the waistline is almost down at the knees, developed from the observation that prisoners have to hand in their belts, which makes their pants slide down below their hips. In the nineties, the hip-hop scene picked up this look. That was the beginning of gangsta rap. Snowboard →



**Every era has its own favorite colors: events and themes are a reflection of society**



## 1990

The world is growing closer together. Cell phones and the Internet have made globalization simpler than ever. Home computers have started to get colorful.

But there's fear in this decade, too—fear of wars in Iraq and the former Yugoslavia, as well as the cloned sheep Dolly.



1970

Between repletion,  
tolerance, and  
crisis: colorful doesn't  
have to mean  
cheerful.



**JÜRGEN ORTMEIER, HEAD OF DEVELOPMENT AT WÖRWAG,** *lives with colors. And loves blue tones. That's why he particularly likes the new trend color Diamond Eclipse. He considers it indispensable for Wörwag to set its own trends. This ensures that customers perceive the company to be a skilled partner. Wörwag offers an overall package: new colors and technical innovation.*

→ and skateboard fans followed. The subculture becomes fashion and the textiles industry brings out the designs to match. Trend scouts evaluate the market potential. Because underwear is now no longer covered, the designers can play with materials, colors, and advertising messages here, too.

The germ cell of almost all trends is to be found in the world of fashion. Nowhere else is it easier to change your personality. "Trends have a lot to do with identity," says Häberle. If you want to stand out from the crowd, you change what you're wearing. Once a trend has been established commercially, it spreads irresistibly to other sectors. Not always to all sectors. And always with a delay. From seasonal fashion and long-lasting consumer goods such as cars to architecture. When you consider that today's trend colors won't be seen on the street for four to six years, and new cars are generally driven for around ten years, it's obvious why vehicle paints are less garish than the colors found in fashion.

In 2000, the color white started to experience a renaissance on the catwalk. Apple's iPod followed, and some years later there were countless white variants of basic vehicle paints. The original hospital color is not only a trend; it's become a classic. White's share of the exterior colors exploded from

four percent to at least twenty percent within a few years.

The example of Japan shows that trend colors have to be adjusted to suit different sectors, markets, products, and distribution channels. While luxury vehicles in white sell like hot cakes there, a small car in white is seen as an affront. The Japanese associate white with greatness, freedom, and purity. It also symbolizes death and mourning. For that reason, a little white run-around is left on the shelf.

#### The fastest means of communication

The psychological effect is also enormous. According to a study by the CAR Institute (Center Automotive Research) in Duisburg, white cars are considered to be particularly noisy. We think vehicles that match our own personal tastes are quieter and more pleasant. Do we use color to orient our own behavior? "In every context, color has a learned meaning," according to Häberle. The professor lays a photo of a chili pepper on the table: "Here, we think of adjectives such as red and hot." The next picture is of a red sports car. Red means hot, which, in the case of a car, we interpret as fast. The proof of this is that the police pull over red cars more often. Color is the fastest means of communication. Hu-

Photos: iStock (2), Fotolia, Jos Schmid



**1960**

Being modern  
is the latest thing.  
Life is garishly colored.  
A world on the move:  
the Berlin Wall is  
built, student protests,  
moon landing.



**1950**

People  
moving forward.  
Life after trauma.  
The fear fades  
only slowly.  
Prosperity is on  
the increase.

mans use colors and shapes for orientation. The eye can perceive 1,000,000 nuances.

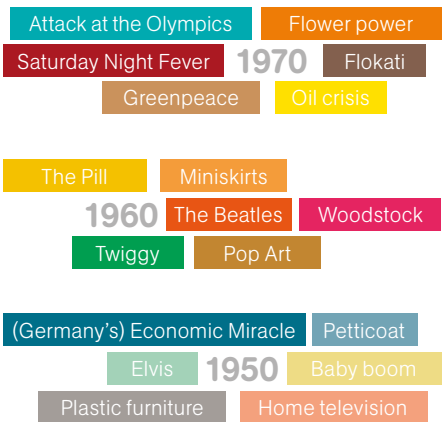
Every era has its favorite colors. At the end of the fifties, bright, fruity colors were dominant. This decade was marked by contradictions: much of the world was rising out of the rubble of the Second World War into an economic miracle. The expansion of the economy was pitted against a desire for security within the family and society. Buzzwords like Elvis, TV, economic miracle, and petticoat were in everyday currency. Things got more off-beat in the next decade. The Beatles electrified an entire generation and Pop Art and the miniskirt raised quite a furor. In the seventies, the colors were even more lush, including as they did psychedelic patterns in striking orange, dark brown, and garish green. They were the accompaniments to flower power, the oil crisis, and bell-bottoms.

Another indicator is cinema. Blockbusters confirm the mass appeal of color trends. *The Lord of the Rings*, for example, contained a mythical pallet of colors—from the iron gray of the armor to the idyllic green of the Shire. "Cinema shows us how willing the masses are to engage with a theme," Jandke explains. Filtering a single color tone from the orange vase is just one part of the color researcher's work. Technical feasibility is an-

other factor that determines whether something will become a trend. Surface, texture, and working all result in an unusual effect. Jandke works hand in hand with the developers at Wörlag. Anyone can do orange. But it takes that special Wörlag touch to make, say, Valencia orange. An audacious undertone and a flip—the way the color changes depending on the angle of the light—can turn an almost bronze brownish orange into trendy Chrystal Caramel.

#### Appearance alone is not enough

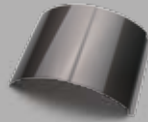
"The future will tend towards the green; that's no secret. But we need to define how this green will look," adds Ortmeier. The head of development knows that color can't just look pretty. "It won't sell until it works technically." The new trend colors from Wörlag therefore fulfill the requirements for use in the resource-saving IPP (Integrated Paint Process). The chief developer does not doubt for a moment that the research is worth it. You will only stand out if you take a stance. Three of Wörlag's twelve current trend colors are being brought to production maturity for an automobile manufacturer. Rosy prospects. Even if pink will probably only become a trend color for vehicle paints in Japan and South Korea. ■



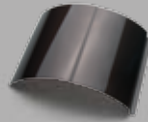
**From pastel to funky:  
colors from era to era, between  
fear and transformation**

2014

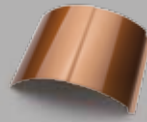
# Color trends



Romantic  
Seduction

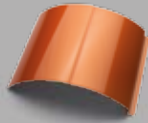


Shaded  
Ebony

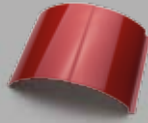


Chrystal  
Caramel

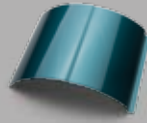
RECREATE CENTURY



Mango  
Lassi

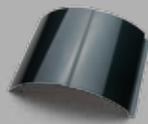


Red  
Spot

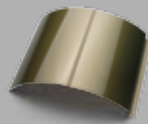


Aztec  
Diamonds

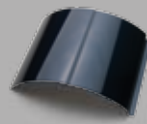
GLOBAL PATCHWORK



Moorland  
Green

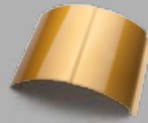


Greeneye  
Butterfly

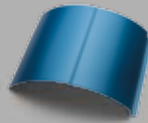


Diamond  
Eclipse

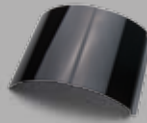
THEATRICAL NATURE



Yellow  
Dioxide



Bombastic  
Blue



Dramatic  
Depth

SENSE OF TOUCH

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