

Colour impressions

Georgina Wright, textile design consultant, talks Jon Ingleton through the mysterious art of colour palette development and selection for appealing and contemporary interiors

What drives colour trends in interior design?

We can talk about trends as either a move towards something that is developing, or just a fashion. Trends come from a combination of factors and can be seen as a melting pot of responses to our environment. Some factors are slower than others, so the reaction to the political upheaval in the US and Europe might show up later in colour trends. Colours might get brighter and stronger to help us be positive, or subdued or saturated as a reaction to uncertainty. Interior trends are changing faster than ever.



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How do colour fashions vary in different commercial environments?

Commercial environments each have their own emerging trends. Office environments have very different requirements because they need to support work and decision making. Meanwhile, cruise ship designers also look to the hotel and hospitality market for trends, as they cater mainly for people at leisure.

Companies can use their colour palette, whether conservative or avant garde, to emphasise their brand identity for customers. Cruise ship interiors must have modern designs and colours that will remain relevant until the ship’s refurbishment. Colour stories can be used to link sister ships.

Do any colours transcend the fickle fate of fashion?

Black and white are a constant and shades of red are frequently used in fashion and interior design schemes because the colour is classic and beautiful. However, when it comes to passenger ships that sail worldwide, designers must be aware of different cultural attitudes towards colours. In China and the Far East for example, certain colours are considered luckier than others.

How do you work with Elmo Leather to reimagine its colour palette?

I design and develop Elmo Leather’s commercial and residential colour ranges. After we agree the project scope, I analyse the existing colours and develop new ideas based on information I’ve collected, particularly while visiting exhibitions and galleries, and exploring cities and wild places. Working in my studio, I use these ideas to paint new colours, which is an intensely immersive process that involves a lot of mixing and variation. My ideas are combined with colours that will remain in the collection. I discuss ideas with Elmo Leather at various points and gradually we finalise the new collection. It’s an exciting process.



Are there any product-related restrictions that influence your colour choices?

We don’t think about restrictions, at least not in the research and development phase. If it’s technically difficult to achieve certain colours, we work with the technical department to find a way to make our ideas come to fruition.

How do you help Elmo Leather to enhance its appeal to cruise and ferry owners?

I’ve extended and developed Elmo’s product range. For example, the Elmosoft products were previously only available with 30 colours but now there are 70 colour options, which can be combined to assist the interior designers of cruise ships and other commercial environments. We have extended both the natural/neutral and the more colourful areas of the collection. The collaboration has enabled Elmo Leather to differentiate from competitors and strengthen its position as a market leader. **C&F**