

Colour, Light and Mind: Five-hundred small paintings as a mural

is the fourth in the series of *Colour and Mind* exhibitions. The first took place at the Nottingham Castle Museum and Art Gallery, 2004; the second, called *Colour and Mind – Static and Dynamic* was at the Richard Attenborough Centre/Leicester University, 2006; and the third, *Colour, Love and Mind*, was held at Northampton Museum and Art Gallery, 2007. My main purpose with this ongoing project is to investigate colour, colour history and their relationship to observation, perception and memory - the three basic elements in modern colour theories. (Whereas there are specific theories for each, there is no universal theory which encompasses all three.)

Colour has, in fact, been the main focus of my artistic practice in the past twenty-four years. I have been interested in colour in the past, i.e. art history; the global, cultural heritage; the future, i.e. science and technology; and the present, i.e. in my own experience, where I live and travel. For nearly thirty years, since I left my native country Iraq, I have lived in different countries and cultural environments. The observation – perception – memory framework has helped me to develop my own understanding of colour, colour history and the meanings of colour.

The theme of the present exhibition is the effect on the viewer in a specific, large environment – in this case the Catmose Gallery - of ‘the colour wheel’ as a physical interpretation of light presented in many small paintings. There are many colour wheels, and they differ depending on the colour theory on which they are based. For me, the two most important ones in this exhibition are first the colour wheel of light, which has eight basic colours (red, orange, yellow, green-yellow, green, green-blue, blue, violet), and secondly the classic one which is called the pigment colour wheel (red, blue, yellow). As an artist I see and observe the colours in the first wheel, and as a practitioner I work with the second in the form of physical, chemical materials, i.e. pigments in the form of acrylics, egg tempera, oil, etc.

In this experiment, which I started many years ago, I have looked at the colours in front of me as I see them (‘local colours’) but when I am doing my painting I rely on both my perception and memory. So, these works were created spontaneously in relationship to my previous, visual experience and different feeling and thoughts. That is why I say that I am speaking colours that I see in front of me and inside me. The subject matter of these small paintings has less importance than the colours presented in them.

In the present *Colour, Light and Mind* exhibition I display five-hundred paintings on paper, most of them in egg-tempera or acrylic. They do not have names but codes and numbers such as ‘image no 022’ or ‘picture no 57’ and so on. That is because there is not enough vocabulary to name the colours. They cover my understanding and development in the past fifteen years. I have chosen from each year the best samples to exhibit in this show. This is the first time that I exhibit them in this way.

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