

Looking Forward

Coloring the future with shades of the past

by Donovan Freeland

“Any customer can have a car painted any color he wants as long as it’s black.”—Henry Ford, 1909.

It’s been over a century since Ford championed the radical idea of an ‘automobile for everyman.’ The idea was bold...inspired...impossible...genius...crazy. Ford knew this notion could change the world, but what he didn’t know was that as “black” became “black diamond”, it would also engage our hearts. I wonder how Ford might react knowing that many of his customers believe that looks are as important, if not more so than how the car works! Because today’s consumers seek opportunities to refresh and express their unique personality and preferences through color.

The color continuum is fixed and fleeting, personal and popular—navy blue for example will always have cultural significance, but a navy and white interior may be fashionable one moment, but seem “too dark” within a year or two. For those of us who remember the 1970s, a kitchen in the theme of Harvest Gold was something to aspire to—certainly popular and fortunately fleeting. While Avocado Green and Burnt Orange might today exist mostly in our memory, these colors were revolutionary and part of our journey toward the acid greens, bright yellows and cool blues that today saturate our mind’s eye.

I love the changing colors that make up our collective memories. I’m inspired when I see colors, once shelved, re-invented. I value the freedom to have wildly different color preferences for fashion, home decor, recreation or transportation. I applaud those who choose colors in their lives that inspire, comfort or amuse them. From the brilliant and ever-present colors of nature to the gorgeous hues brought back in shows like “Downton Abbey,” we have given new permission to the subtle, the bold and the joyful.

It’s easy to become overwhelmed by the flood of color commentary available today, and in fact by the myriad

colors being used to capture our attention across the various new forms of media. While I value these discussions and insights, I’ve also given myself permission to glance into our collective past as I move intentionally forward and search for new inspirations that reinvent my surroundings.

Today, color is more than a decoration—it’s a conversation. Whether a banner for a group seeking to change our collective minds or a simple ribbon showing support for the remarkable women in our lives, it has become a powerful tool that can challenge our history and move us purposely toward a better future.

Color will continue to be influenced by our economy, politics, climate, moods and activities. And it will also be a reflection of our past. For me, an appealing perspective for happiness is to maintain a positive attitude about the past, an ability to enjoy the present and a healthy, optimistic outlook for the future.

I’m looking forward and forward-looking, keenly aware that we are indeed influenced and inspired by our past and present favorites—and those that will color the exciting times ahead. For now, I’ll live present among the evolving colors of this journey. I wish the same for each of you. **V**



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Donovan Freeland (A History of Theft)

I have sometimes felt guilty and unoriginal about my practices in stealing ideas from other artists, designers and stylists. Recently inspired by author Austin Kleon's *Steal Like an Artist*, I feel freshly affirmed that 'stealing' ideas from others isn't a new thing nor something I should feel guilty about. I am passionate about collaborating, exploring and using new looks and ideas through my job, in my artwork and for my home décor and I'll guiltlessly continue to embrace and be inspired by other artists.

The article above and "History of Theft" commentary were recently published in the September/October 2014 issue of Window Fashion Vision, featuring Color Trends. This publication goes to over 25,000 decorators and designers and can also be viewed at www.wf-vision.com.