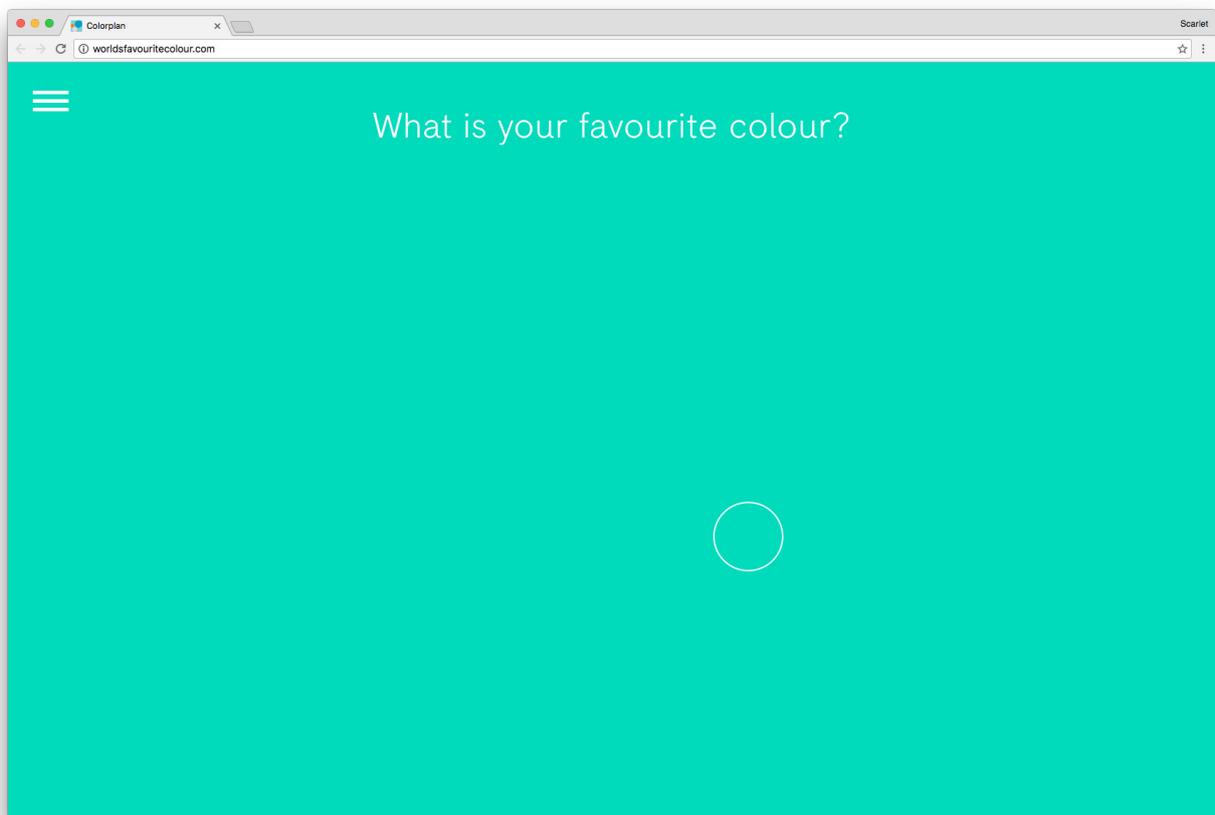


G . F
SMITH
1885 ONWARDS

Press Release – 6 January 2017

The World's Favourite Colour Project

G.F Smith begins its quest to find the defining colour of the age. Starting now, Britain's most creative specialist paper company is on a mission to discover the most loved colour in the world.



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Over the next three months, via worldsfavouritecolour.com, G.F Smith, supported by design consultancy Made Thought and Hull 2017, is inviting everyone on the planet to select their favourite shade, with the goal of discovering the World's Favourite Colour.

Crossing cultures and continents, national borders and language barriers, age brackets and social categories, the project is one of the most ambitious and wide-ranging investigations into colour preference ever conducted, and the insights it will generate have the potential to change the way we think about colour.

The World's Favourite Colour will be determined by thousands of people from all over the planet – and one of them will be awarded the unique privilege of having their name immortalised in Colorplan, the G.F Smith flagship paper range.

The Colour of our Times

When we are children, everyone has an answer to the question 'What's your favourite colour?'

But something changes as we reach adulthood. Our favourite colour becomes less important as a statement of identity; some of us never think about our favourite colour again – but it's always there in the background, guiding our actions in ways we may not even notice, let alone understand.

Although we may not think about it, colour still touches our lives. It can change our moods, influence our decisions and affect the way we react to the world around us – whether we realise it or not, colour preference is one of the innermost drivers of our psychology. Somewhere inside, all of us have a favourite colour. The time has come to find out what it is.

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The Colour of our History

Colour has been inextricably woven into the history of G.F Smith since 1936, when the first shade of its now-iconic Colorplan range was produced. In the 80 years since, that game-changing paper range has grown to include 50 colours and become the benchmark collection for the creative industries of Britain and beyond. Looking back over the archives, many of the colours selected for inclusion seem to hold up a mirror to the times, capturing the spirit of the age. The range evolved from the ‘Smoke’, ‘China White’ and ‘Bagdad Brown’ of the interwar years to the bold and bright pops of ‘Vermilion’ and ‘Mandarin’ as TV sets across Britain exploded into colour in the 1960s, followed by the muted tones of ‘Mist’ and ‘Stone’ as the 1970s backlash against ‘60s psychedelia placed more emphasis on the natural environment.

But what colour are we now? Is there a shade that reflects the globalised world of the 21st century? A colour for the age of digital communication, transnational culture, democratised manufacture, resurgent populism and crowdsourced creativity?

“No longer limited to a local or national poll, our ambition was to ask a global audience through social media. Colour is believed to be the most important visual experience to human beings, and so this project aims to get people to think about colour and the importance of it in our lives.”

– Ben Parker, Made Thought

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Champions of Colour

G.F Smith's mission is being supported by figures from across the creative world, who will each be sharing their own favourite colours through a series of short films released over the course of the campaign. With representatives from the arenas of art, fashion, design and architecture, the participants include:



Camile Walala, Artist



Bethan Laura Wood, Designer



Johnny Coca,
Mulberry Creative Director



Sam Bompas and Harry Parr,
Bompas & Parr,
Architectural Foodsmiths



Richard Woods, Artist



Sam McKnight,
Hair Stylist

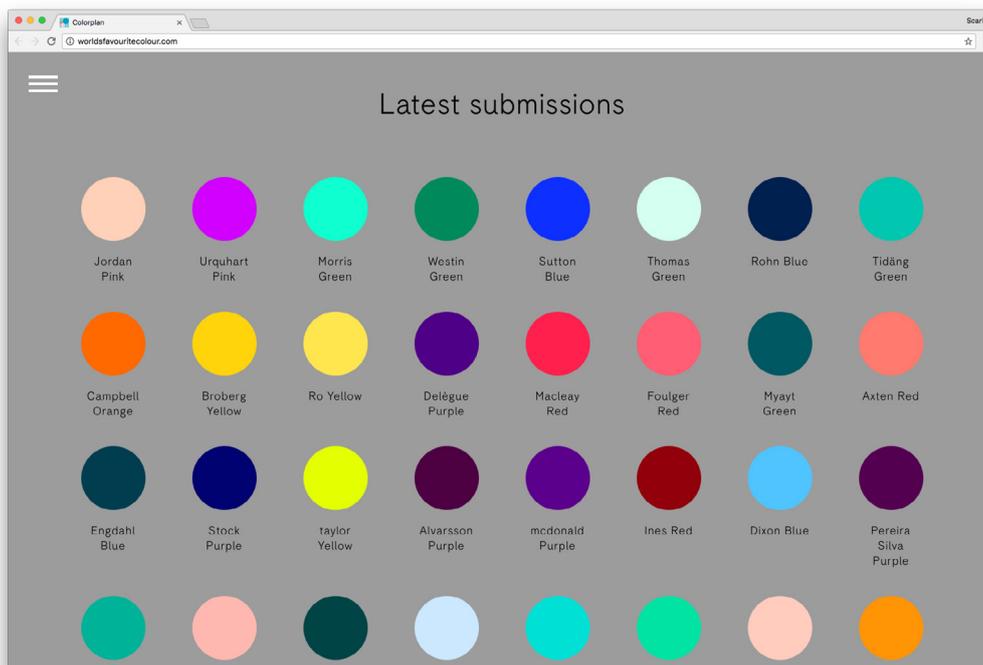
Each of them will reveal how colour informs their life and practice, consider what shapes their own preferences and the impact it has on how they view the world around them.

The Big Reveal

After three months of international data gathering – ending in March 2017 – the most popular colour will be unveiled at the ‘Paper City’ exhibition in G.F Smith’s home city of Hull, as part of its City of Culture 2017 celebrations in July.

The World’s Favourite Colour will be introduced into G.F Smith’s Colorplan range, and will bear the name of the survey respondent that picks the shade closest to the overall favourite. As well as the honour of having the most popular colour in the world named after them, the winner and a companion will be invited to G.F Smith’s mill in the Lake District to watch their paper being produced, and take home a full suite of personalised stationery in their eponymous colour.

This 51st Colorplan shade will be available for use by designers, brands and individuals via gfsmith.com immediately after the July 2017 announcement.



Feeling Blue, Turning Green

As well as the World's Favourite Colour, the project will generate a wealth of other data that can be used to analyse the role of colour in contemporary society – and to test the findings of previous studies in the field. Ever since 1893, when a research team at the Chicago World's Fair asked 4,000 attendees for their favourite colour, such studies have repeatedly suggested a near-universal preference for blue. If this were true, it would go some way towards explaining why blue is the colour most commonly used to communicate corporate trust – more than 33% of the world's most valuable organisations feature it in the branding. Aside from sky and sea, blue is the least common colour in the natural world – so does scarcity breed popularity, as the research of the Sussex Colour Group (a division of the School of Psychology at the University of Sussex) has suggested? Or, as human industry and ingenuity transforms the world, moving blue from a rarity into a commonplace colour, might we have overturned that predilection?

Those same studies have also suggested that people share an overall aversion to yellow-green shades. It might be that this is linked to the ubiquity of such colours in the natural world; it could also be that there is an innate evolutionary driver that pushes people away from colours that connote sickness. The G.F Smith survey will also determine whether this holds true today, explore which, if any, other colours we universally dislike, and raise some intriguing possibilities as to why this might be.

A Spectrum of Insight

Based on the responses of thousands of people worldwide, the project will work with futures specialists and colour authority FranklinTill to test previous findings, challenge preconceptions, and explore other fascinating connected issues concerning colour perception and interpretation. The project's findings will enable G.F Smith to begin to answer such questions as:

- Do colour preferences change across ages?
- Are boys really blue and girls really pink?
- Are hotter countries drawn to warmer or cooler colours?
- Is there is a link between colour preference and decisiveness?
(as indicated by user response times)

And, ultimately, go some way to answering the trickiest question of all:

Is colour preference culturally determined, or is it an innate human trait?

Whatever the results of The World's Favourite Colour Project turn out to be, the insights it will offer us into one of the most important components of human psychology – colour – are guaranteed to be fascinating.

There's just one question:

What's yours?

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Notes for Editors

About G.F Smith

After a career travelling the globe selling stationery to printers and publishers, George Frederick Smith founded G . F Smith in London with his son in 1885. Over the following century, George's paper merchants built a reputation for quality and service, and became renowned as passionate pioneers of the paper industry. With the launch of Colorplan in 1936, G . F Smith was well on the way to becoming Britain's foremost supplier of specialist papers to the creative industries – a position secured with the launch of Colorplan Bespoke, which allows brands and businesses to create their own specific shades. Today, it is the UK's largest specialist paper company, one of the biggest employers in Hull, and a creative partner in Hull 2017, the UK City of Culture 2017 events.

gfsmith.com
colorplanpapers.com
worldsfavouritecolour.com

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For more information on the search for The World's Favourite Colour,
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To contribute to the project, visit worldsfavouritecolour.com