

TEACHER EXHIBITION NOTES

BREATHING COLOUR

28 JUNE – 24 SEPTEMBER 2017

INTRODUCTION

Breathing Colour presents an installation-based exhibition by Hella Jongerius, a celebrated Dutch designer. The exhibition is laid out by morning, noon, and evening, with a respective section about the designer's research. It includes a range of 2D, 3D objects, as well as textiles and furniture.

The notes below are laid out to reflect the flow of the exhibition, listing each section in order as they appear in the gallery. Included in these notes is a gallery map to provide guidance in advance of a school visit. Students may participate in the interactives which are indicated on the map.

WHAT TO EXPECT

This exhibition features a series of new commissions especially created which explore the effects of changing daylight, different shapes, materials, and surfaces through 2D and 3D objects, as well as textiles. The impact of daylight has a huge effect on the human perception of colour; there is a complex lighting and sound environment to recreate these different times of day as you move about the gallery space.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE EXHIBITION

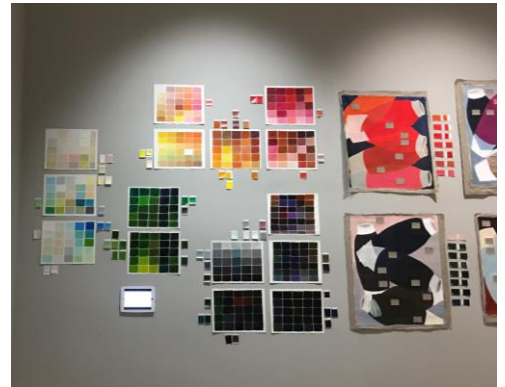
The exhibition is split into the following sections;

1. RESEARCH:

Hella Jongerius' colour research draws on traditional paint recipes that are suitable both for painters' canvases and for use on walls and furniture. This research is not simply a nostalgic plea for a return to traditional recipes and bygone colours, but an exploration of how traditions can be combined with present-day innovations.

In the belief that new insights and deeper investigation arise from experiments with materials, Jongerius decided to paint directly on canvas. Using combinations of 'old paints' and industrially produced modern colours, these canvases were not intended to be finished products, but rather experiments in using colour that informed the development of later products-such as combining and interweaving coloured threads in textile designs.

By consciously using painting as a source for inspiration, Jongerius searched for the many possibilities and expressions that she senses in colours and materials – not to create yet another colour palette, and not to make something new for the sake of the new but to engage users with the beauty of this never-ending investigation.



In this section, you will find:

Coloured Vases (series 3)

This series of 300 vases, dating from 2010, was the result of research into a historic glazing technique using metal oxides. The technique, which produces exceptionally lively and layered colours, reminiscent of old paintings, is now rarely used because it struggles to achieve reliable and stable colour.

The vases that you see were lacquered with different metal oxides to create different colours. Copper oxides result in a green group and the combination of cadmium and zirconium create orange hues. The tin oxides react with iron to produce beige and ochre hues, and the lacquers enriched by manganese dioxide develop purple tones.



2. **MORNING:**

Morning light first appears when the sun is low on the horizon. As the sun gradually rises, the warm shades of dawn recede and cold morning air creates a crystal-clear glow with a blueish hue. The sharp light brings intense and crisp colours and the world feels fresh from the morning dew. Hazy, translucent shadows gradually become opaque shapes as rooms begin to glow and light pours in through windows and around curtains and blinds.

In this section, you will find:

Woven movie

We may think of colours as something constant but they are in fact extremely unstable and responsive to the continuous changes of daylight. Each of these twelve woven textiles depicts a colour catcher – one of the exhibition's recurring motifs- at a different time of day. You can view the textiles individually or as a sequence of still frames in a woven movie.

The textiles are made from different materials, textures and finishes, using processes of mixing yarns to create the desired visual effect.



Paper Weaves

These suspended panels are woven from combinations of paper, cotton and ultra-fine polyester yarns. Varied densities in the warp (background) and weft (cross thread) of the weave subtly alter how light filters through the materials, moving from a fragile translucent quality to a more diffuse, semi-transparent glow.

Morning Colour Catchers

Devised specially for this exhibition, this series of three-dimensional shapes has been designed to trap colour. These morning Colour Catchers have an open structure that allows morning light and colours to pass through and around them.

3. NOON:

As the sun reaches its highest point the sky, daylight is at its most intense. The powerful light from above produces strong shadows and stark contrasts, creating a lively exchange with the energetic colours of noon. The light embraces objects, making them fully defined. The intense light brings pigments and brightly saturated colours to life. Colours look greener and red tones are reflected in many colours.

In this section, you will find:

Colour Catchers

These strange-looking faceted objects have been created especially for this exhibition by Jongerius to mimic the mass of 3D objects that fill our daily lives. The objects allow colour to be fully explored through different angles, shadows and reflections. See how much one colour can change depending on the angle, the object near to it and the type of light that hits it. Usually an object's surfaces changes shape gradually so it's hard to see the change of the colour, but by using hard facets the change can be seen more obviously.



Gallery Wall Colours:

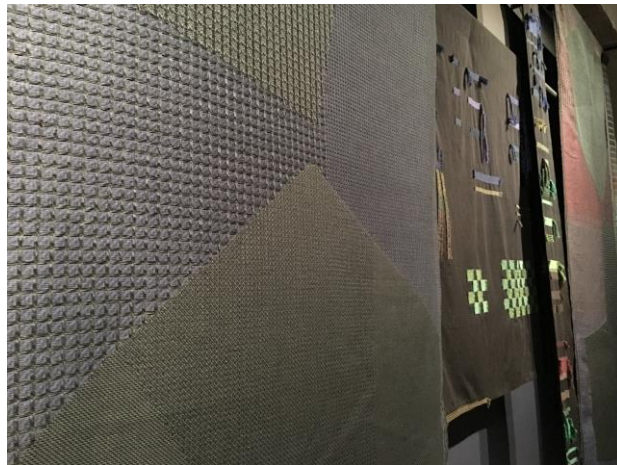
The print industry commonly uses carbon to produce the colour black. This is effective but it lacks intensity and depth. Jongerius believes that this stops the colour from breathing and kills it. In a previous project, she developed 16 different shades of black that did

ultramarine blue, ultramarine green, cobalt green, natural umber, ruby red, and magenta.

The walls of the galleries included in the evening section are painted with a new black pain specially developed without using any black pigment. Replacing carbon black with another black pigment would be revolutionary, it would change hundreds of the colours used in the industrial palette. Pay close attention to the way the colours change.

4. EVENING:

In the evening, when the light is filled with air pollution, more black starts to mix into the hues and colours become more passive. Although there is a similarity between the warm hues of dawn and dusk, evening light has a unique quality. Evening light brings a sense of colour gradually disappearing, becoming consumed by darkness as the shadows of forms take over. A moody world arises where shapes merge with shadows in all kinds of different blacks. Although an object's shadow may appear grey or black, it is a complex mixture of all the colours that surround it.



In this section, you will find:

The Colour Wheel

Look closely at the colour wheel on the wall to see the mixing shades that create the eventual colour. Each small wheel is a mix of colours displayed on the inner sleeve of the wheel itself.



The Gallery Walls

The print industry commonly uses carbon to produce the colour black. This is effective but it lacks intensity and depth. It stops the colour from breathing and kills it.

For a previous project, *Colourful Blacks*, Hella Jongerius developed 16 different shades of black that did not rely on carbon but instead used handcrafted pigments including ultramarine blue, ultramarine green, cobalt green, natural umber, ruby red and magenta.

The walls of the Evening section of the gallery are painted with a new black paint specially developed without using any black pigment. Replacing carbon black with another black pigment would be revolutionary and it would change hundreds of the colours used in the industrial palette.

ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

There are many different aspects of the exhibition that can be explored – some sections allow students to interact with exhibits. Please look for interaction opportunities or ask staff if you are unsure of their location.

The use of sketchbooks and pencils is welcomed in the gallery, and will support all of the suggested activities listed below.

The following activity is a starting point for school and sixth form groups visiting the exhibition:



Design your own

Task A: Create your own colour catchers and place them near a source of natural light. Take photos of the colour catchers and surrounding surfaces throughout the day and track their Morning, Noon and Evening.

Task B: Create your own colour wheel. Get everyone in the class to mix two different colours to create their own colour shades. Make sure each student includes a sample of their two different colours in their original form on their shade sample. Then place all of the shades in a sequence that groups them by colour.

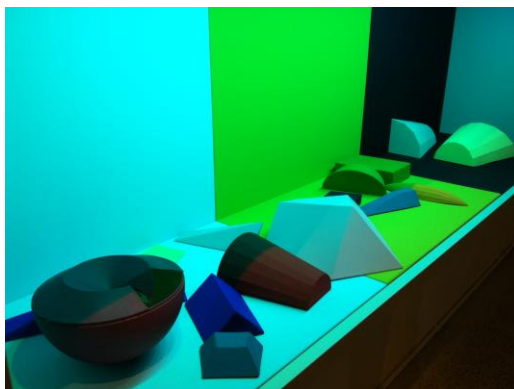
BEFORE YOUR VISIT

Prepare your students by doing some research into Hella Jongerius. Watch videos and research into her previous work.

EXHIBITION GUIDANCE

Objects in the exhibition are on open display rather than in cases. Care should be taken when moving around the exhibition and most objects should not be touched. Any objects that can be touched will be clearly signed. Please ask staff if you are unsure. We would be grateful if you could brief your students accordingly.

Depending on your group and your itinerary for the visit, we would recommend that you set aside approximately 40 minutes to explore this exhibition.



Photography is permitted in this exhibition without the use of a flash.

Please ensure that you read our school visit Terms and Conditions document before making your visit.

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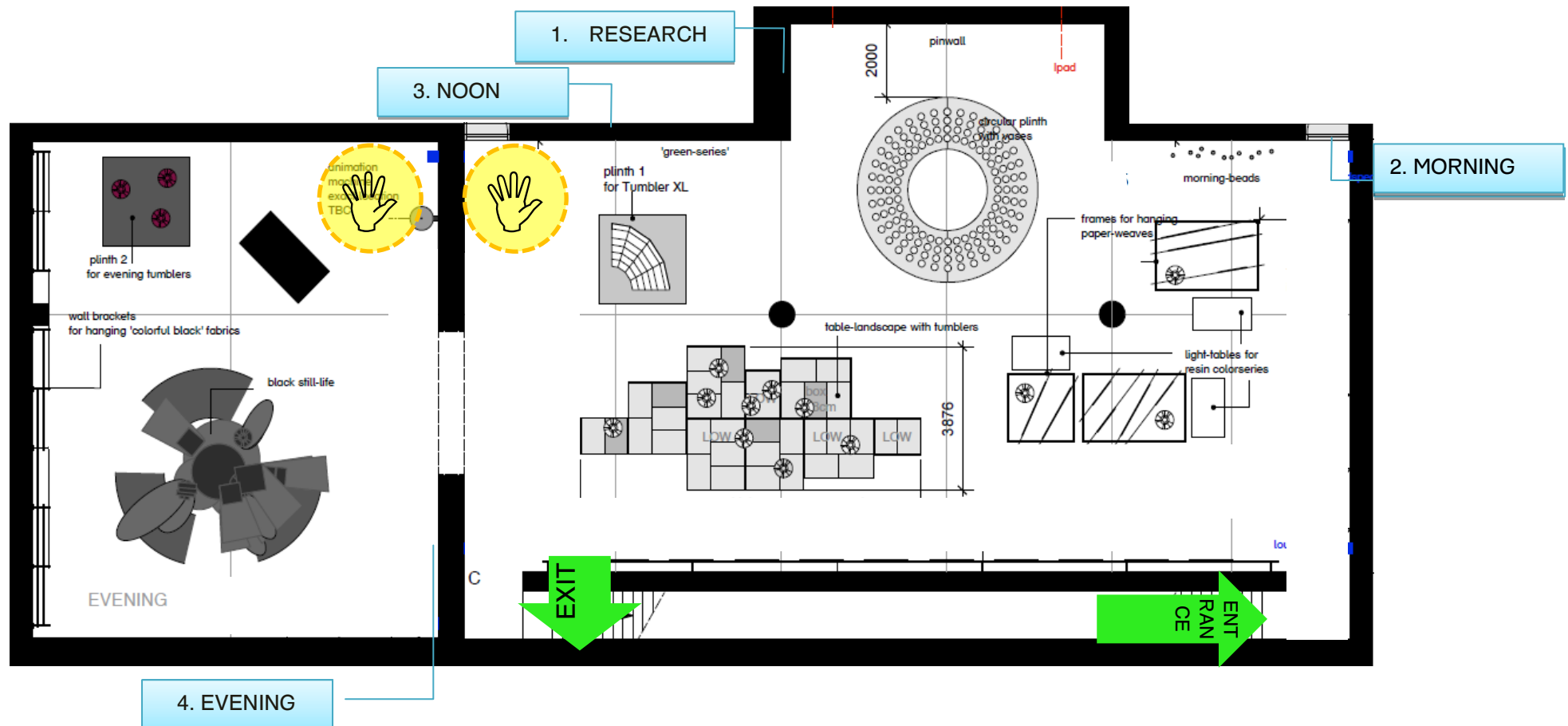
BREATHING COLOUR GALLERY GUIDE

Interact with
these displays!



Gallery policies

- No food and drink, water in closed bottles only
- Rucksacks must be carried by side
- Photography is encouraged, please no flash
- No leaning on plinths or tables



BREATHING COLOUR GALLERY GUIDE

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

- An installation-based exhibition divided into the 3 phases of a day: morning, noon and evening
- At these times the impact of daylight has a huge effect on the human perception of colour; a complex lighting and sound environment to recreate these different times of day
- A series of mostly new commissions especially created for this exhibition; each section explores the effects of changing daylight, different shapes, materials and surfaces through large 3D objects as well as textiles, some of them hand-woven
- This exhibition blurs the boundary of design and art

ABOUT HELLA JONGERIUS

- A celebrated Dutch designer, graduated from Eindhoven Design Academy founded her own studio, Jongeriuslab in 1993
- Has worked on diverse projects from furniture brands, airlines and the United Nations
- Highly regarded for combining craft industrial processes and experimental use of colour
- Art Director for Vitra design company

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IN THE SHOP

- 📖 A huge range of books on colour theory, there is no exhibition catalogue but the key book on Hella Jongerius is available, *I Don't Have A Favourite Colour*
- 📖 A large range of Hella textile products
- 📖 Lots of colour-themed games, homeware, stationary, materials and accessories at all prices!



EXHIBITION TEACHER NOTES 10

Ticket-holders will receive a free gallery guide which is an exhibition companion as the interpretation in the gallery is very light-touch, allowing the installations to be as accessible as possible

The guide is split into sections:

Introduction to Colour Theory

How we describe colours, how humans have used colour in history, how we actually see colours, how colours are made and reproduced

Morning

The sharp and intense morning light, how colours can feel fresh, zingy. Reflections and weaving

Noon

The sun is at the highest point in the sky; its powerful light produces strong shadows and stark contrasts

Evening

As the sun goes down and the air becomes more filled with pollution, dust and haze of the day, light becomes more obscured, colours look flatter and more subdued. Shadows and contrasts



WHAT IS A COLOUR CATCHER?

- ◆ These strange-looking faceted objects have been created especially for this exhibition by Hella to mimic the mass of 3D objects that fill our daily lives
- ◆ The objects allow colour to be fully explored through different angles, shadows and reflections
- ◆ See how much one colour can change depending on the angle, the object near to it and the type of light that hits it
- ◆ Usually an object's surfaces changes shape gradually so it's hard to see the change of the colour, but by using hard facets the change can be seen more obviously