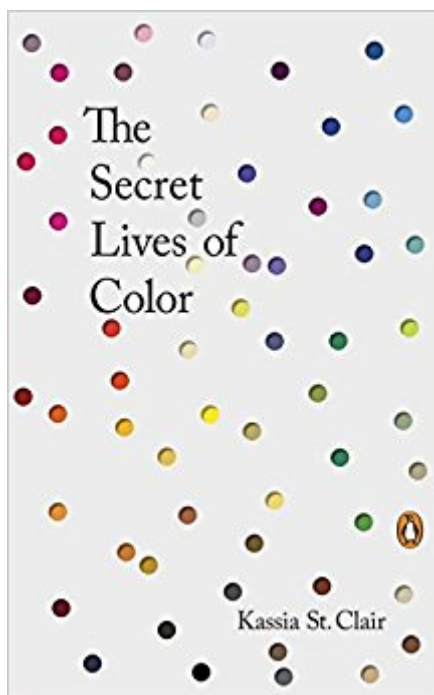


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# The Secret Lives Of Color



## Synopsis

The unforgettable, unknown history of colors and the vivid stories behind them in a beautiful multi-colored volume *The Secret Lives of Color* tells the unusual stories of seventy-five fascinating shades, dyes and hues. From blonde to ginger, the brown that changed the way battles were fought to the white that protected against the plague, Picasso's blue period to the charcoal on the cave walls at Lascaux, acid yellow to kelly green, and from scarlet women to imperial purple, these surprising stories run like a bright thread throughout history. In this book, Kassia St. Clair has turned her lifelong obsession with colors and where they come from (whether Van Gogh's chrome yellow sunflowers or punk's fluorescent pink) into a unique study of human civilization. Across fashion and politics, art and war, the secret lives of color tell the vivid story of our culture. A mind-expanding tour of the world without leaving your paintbox. Every color has a story, and here are some of the most alluring, alarming, and thought-provoking. • Simon Garfield, author of *Just My Type*

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A BBC Radio 4 Book of the Week "A mind-expanding tour of the world without leaving your paintbox. Every color has a story, and here are some of the most alluring, alarming, and thought-provoking." • Simon Garfield, New York Times bestselling author of *Just My Type: A Book About Fonts* "A kaleidoscope of charming, discursive essays . . . A light and lively guide [that] offers plenty of fresh clues for the brain's colorful

calculations. **The Economist** "This is a gorgeous book. **The Guardian** "St. Clair delivers a mix of science, humor, and art history in this collection of bite-sized essays on the cultural and social lore of colors. . . . Her sentences guarantee sustained reading. . . . [Her] rhetoric beautifies the form of the brief essay. **Publishers Weekly** "The Secret Lives of Color" holds surprise and satisfaction at every striation of the rainbow. **Booklist** "Brimming with facts, historical insights and curious tales. **Elle Decoration** "The weirdly fascinating history of your favorite hues . . . Drying paint just became more interesting. **Wired** "Charming. **The Financial Times** "Inspiring, compelling and beautifully designed . . . this will appeal to anyone. **The Lady** "Discursive and anecdotal . . . this book holds many surprises. Nothing is quite what it seems or how it is seen. **The Oldie** "Fascinating insights . . . a lexicon of colors, simultaneously revealing the cultural attitudes that determine our responses to them. **Country Living** "A vivid exploration . . . [St. Clair] finds colorful threads running through the tapestry of history, gives them a tug, and follows them into interesting and unexpected realms. . . . [She] is able to dance effortlessly through an astonishing range of subjects. . . . It's impossible not to thrill at the scope and to marvel at the connective threads. . . . What The Secret Lives of Color offers really is, in some sense, a flash portrait of human civilization, a zigzagging and unpredictable exploration of how significantly colour has shaped histories and disciplines, fuelled empires, changed the nature of war and caused species to flourish or face extinction. **Chemistry World** "Kassia St. Clair writes with style, energy and knowledge, working through a huge range of material and explaining many mysteries of color succinctly and wittily. . . . The Secret Lives of Colour is snappily designed and . . . presents its subject as an encyclopaedic Pantone swatch-book annotated with good-natured and diverting anecdotalism. . . . An excellent, innovative book [that] will color your thinking. **The Spectator** "Well-researched and engaging. **House & Garden (UK)** "If you want to fall back in love with color, read The Secret Lives of Color. **The Sunday Telegraph** "Almost every page throws up an unexpected detail and insight. . . . Extraordinarily full and interesting. . . . An ideal crib and a valuable resource not only for the design-conscious but for students. **The Times** "Beautiful . . . See how a single color can tell different stories across the globe. **The Daily Mail** "A dazzling and vibrant

history of color. [• Mail on Sunday](#) "A must for anyone interested in color [or] decorating, but also language, culture and art." [The Chromologist](#) "A work of art in its own right, *The Secret Lives Of Color* is a beautiful tactile book whose pages are filled with fascinating anecdotes about every color from blonde to puce." [The Pool](#) "[A] fascinating volume about the history and cultural significance of all the hues of the rainbow and more." [Hampstead & Highgate Property](#) "Heliotrope, gamboge, umber: the names of colors are as luscious as the hues themselves. Kassia St. Clair serves up a chromatic buffet of the chemistry, history and cultural associations of 75 dyes, pigments and shades." [Nature.com](#) "From pink boys' clothes to blue warpaint; why orange spells danger and other colorful tales." [The Daily Telegraph](#)

Kassia St. Clair is a freelance journalist and author based in London. She graduated from Bristol University with a first-class honors degree in history in 2007 and went on to do a master's degree at Oxford. There she wrote her dissertation on women's masquerade costumes during the eighteenth century and graduated with distinction. She has since written about design and culture for publications including *The Economist*, *House & Garden*, *Quartz*, and *the New Statesman*. She has had a column about color in *Elle Decoration* since 2013 and is a former assistant books and arts editor for *The Economist*.

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