Evaluating Colors and Concepts

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Abstract
The purpose of this study is to determine whether the use of different extremes of the color wheel can change the intended concept of a work of art. Specifically, what happens to the significance of the message of the piece if it is only colored using warm colors versus cool colors? How does the emotion created by the piece change when the color schemes change?

Previous research has shown a connection exists between meanings and colors. Colors can often be used for symbolism and can be used to evoke psychological feelings within the viewer. For example, red often creates a sense of passion, energy, and intensity, whereas blue is often associated with calmness, security, and trust.

This study is an art project exploring the significance color plays in concept in pastel drawings using warm colors, cool colors, and a color neutral line drawing.

Methods
After creating three works, all with the same image but utilizing two different color schemes with one black and white neutral line drawing as a controlled variable, undergraduate art majors in the School of Art at Northern Illinois University were asked to participate in this study by completing a short survey.

The survey was submitted to randomly chosen classes.

Once the classes had been chosen randomly, I met with the instructors to explain the research project as well as get their permission to distribute the surveys to their class.

Results
The surveys collected from this study show that the majority of the participants believe that the message of the piece changes with the colors used, although some feel as though the message is not affected by the color change.

Conclusions
1. The majority of the participants associated warm colors with love, passion, and romance.
2. The majority of the participants associated cool colors with sadness or depression.
3. The majority of the participants associated black and white line with emptiness, lifelessness, and hollowness.
4. Even though these three drawings were drawn exactly the same, the colors used influences how the viewer perceives the concept or story behind the imagery.

References

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