

# the need for colour

Maximilian Condula

Maximilian Condula was born in Munich in 1937. He has been an advertising artist and an industrial art director and is now a lecturer in graphic arts at the Institute for Graphic Design in Munich. He has participated in exhibitions in Germany, Austria, Spain and the USA as well as at Gallery 101, Johannesburg. His educational tours have included Spain, France and Italy. He is at present on a visit to South Africa. The reproductions, shown here, are of some of his work which was exhibited at Gallery 101.

Life is becoming more colourful... but slowly... at a snail's pace. As purple-red was once prepared from the purple snail so we no longer prepare colour from nature although we still gain understanding. Nature uses colour for specific reasons and these colours have their very concrete duties.

Tomorrows' world will be more vivid because cities need colour. Already fashion is storming the bastions of our grey, everyday life. Are there any cities we remember because of their gayness of colour? An exception to the rule is when an over-dimensional Coca-Cola sign becomes a colourful happening. Other exceptions are the red-brick buildings of Amsterdam with their black-and-white edges, or, in Bologna, the ochre-coloured house facades and their arcades.

In the cities of mere artificiality the street ravines are deeper, the sky appears greyer, the asphalted areas get larger, there is accidental architecture and a narrow gloom of skyscrapers. Man, the 'dot', becomes smaller and pure colour disappears. All natural environment is removed and little that is beautiful is left to take its place.

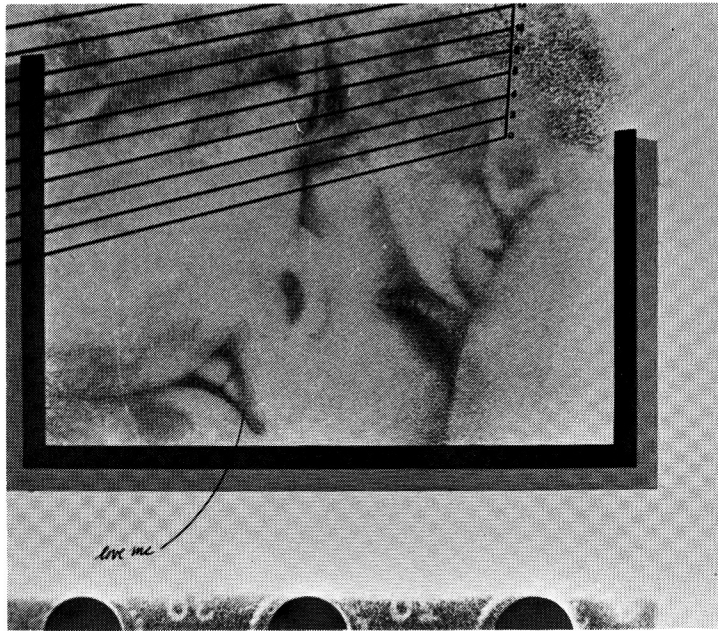
Therefore it is important to point out how a pot of pure colour can be used for more than just protection against corrosion. Architecture – the formed environment – needs colour. The materials of architecture (stone, concrete, wood, metal, glass) only underline the grey-coloured scale except for one or two exceptions of blunt shades. Nor can aluminium frames or plaster decorations change much as all dead material lacks the sap of living nature.

To all of us the sun is yellow and the grass is green. We are conscious of the implications of colour. We are almost over-conscious, sheer subconscious of them. This consciousness is ideal because it has everybody's agreement.

Colour as information is already more than just information: it is stimulation and affection. We need information as a means towards communication. This refers particularly to traffic in the mass in areas of agglomeration. There colour can be of great help. Obviously letters as information media become more and more useless. I can paint a wall red and it *looks* red from each visual point; but I cannot place the word 'fire' so that it is visible from every direction.

Today there are the apparently strange, apparently shocking art forms – Op and Pop – as well as the curve of youth style – the almost forgotten design. These art forms cannot become replacements for the loss of natural environment but they can add cheer to today's dead, dirty and monochrome cities. Indeed, in some places they are accepted as friendly protests, a new part of the city, somewhere between dramatic and utilitarian architecture. Against the sombreness bright colours appear brighter, purer and even stronger than anywhere else.

## Graphic

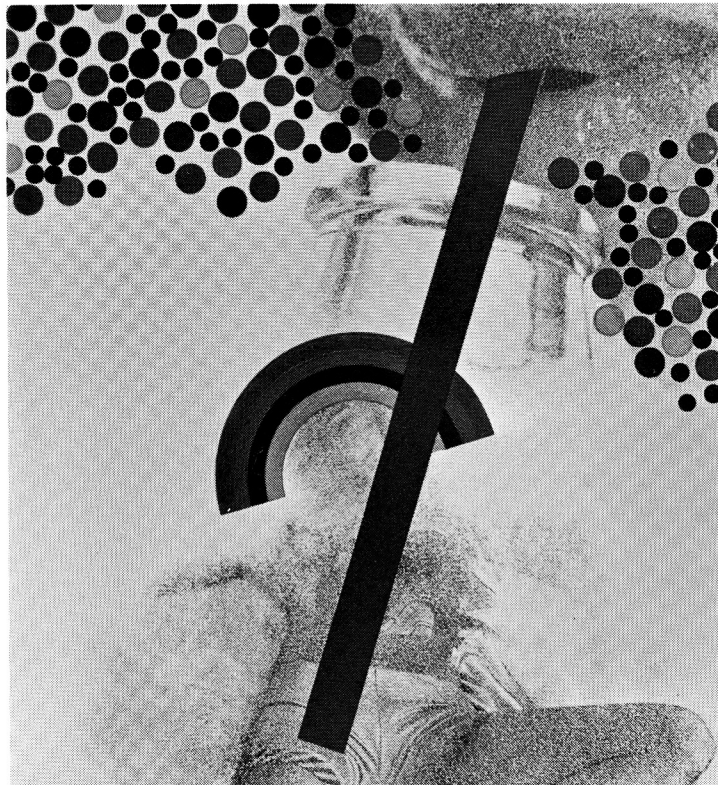


People, on their way to work and home, do not take their bearing by traffic signs. Everybody has got his own points which inform him how far or how near he is to the place to which he wishes to go.

Why should we not put up these information points in general for everybody? At least we shall give the man in the street the possibility of understanding – although unintentionally – modern art design. Perhaps people will be induced to consider whether they are really so happy with

their attitude towards art or whether they should show more interest in new impulses. Then art will have performed one of the most important tasks of our time.

Quite justifiably the question arises: Has the public a real chance of seeing art and coming to an understanding of it? We have to put up signals today for the art of tomorrow – otherwise the popular, realistic paintings by gentlemen water-colourists, hanging on the wall over the sofa beside the china dogs, will remain an irrevocable part of the public's knowledge of art.



Acrylic