

Colors: What They Mean and How to Make Them

By Anne Varichon

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Color, as a means of expression, has been part of human history since handprints were first painted on cave walls. But in order to make the shades they had imagined, people had to unearth pigments and dyes often hidden deep within plants, minerals, mollusks, insects, and other natural elements. They developed complicated, dangerous, and sometimes even revolting techniques in order to achieve deep reds, luminous yellows, and the most beautiful blues.

Archaeologist and ethnologist Anne Varichon takes the reader on a fascinating journey that examines not only the variety and use of natural colorants—and how to reproduce them today—but also their symbolism and mythology. From Confucian China to medieval Europe, from the Papuans to the Inuit, she travels across the centuries and around the world in this absorbing, and often surprising, cultural history of the sources and meanings of color.

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Colors: What They Mean and How to Make Them By Anne Varichon Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #1375582 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Harry N. Abrams
- Published on: 2007-03-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x 1.50" w x 7.00" l, 1.89 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 288 pages

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Editorial Review

About the Author
Anne Varichon is an archaeologist and ethnologist living in France.

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