



The Color Revolution (Lemelson Center Studies in Invention and Innovation series)

Regina Lee Blaszczyk

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When the fashion industry declares that lime green is the new black, or instructs us to "think pink!," it is not the result of a backroom deal forged by a secretive cabal of fashion journalists, designers, manufacturers, and the editor of *Vogue*. It is the latest development of a color revolution that has been unfolding for more than a century. In this book, the award-winning historian Regina Lee Blaszczyk traces the relationship of color and commerce, from haute couture to automobile showrooms to interior design, describing the often unrecognized role of the color profession in consumer culture. Blaszczyk examines the evolution of the color profession from 1850 to 1970, telling the stories of innovators who managed the color cornucopia that modern artificial dyes and pigments made possible. These "color stylists," "color forecasters," and "color engineers" helped corporations understand the art of illusion and the psychology of color. Blaszczyk describes the strategic burst of color that took place in the 1920s, when General Motors introduced a bright blue sedan to compete with Ford's all-black Model T and when housewares became available in a range of brilliant hues. She explains the process of color forecasting--not a conspiracy to manipulate hapless consumers but a careful reading of cultural trends and consumer taste. And she shows how color information flowed from the fashion houses of Paris to textile mills in New Jersey. Today professional colorists are part of design management teams at such global corporations as Hilton, Disney, and Toyota. *The Color Revolution* tells the history of how colorists help industry capture the hearts and dollars of consumers.

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