

The Achromatic Illusion

We are white light — the compositional balance of all primary colours. We create white through refraction in the human eye.¹ White light as optics purely would say “we are white,” rather than “I am white.” Blue, red and yellow being primary colours could say I, however white, purple, and all of the other shades, tones, and colours ought to say we. We exist across cultures in a means of symbolic representation. In Chinese culture, we are death and illness. In Egypt, we are omnipotence and purity and worn at holy ceremonies. We, along with black, are the illustration of opposites, day and night, good and evil. In Taoist philosophy, we are Yang.² We understand why western culture has used us as a symbol of purity and balance due to our scientific definition. Our pigment is created from the chemical combinations of elements. We are visible through pigments of white. The pigment is created by the molecular combination of elements to form, Lead Carbonate, Zinc Oxide, Titanium Dioxide, and Tin Oxide, which are the primary chemical compounds that compose white pigment. For many years I only existed as Lead Carbonate; however, my toxic properties ended up killing human beings. Therefore, most humans use me in two forms of pigments Zinc Oxide and Titanium Dioxide. Digitally, I am simply a combination of ones and zeroes organized in a specific pattern to trigger light embedded within the screen.

I have lived lives on many objects, from cars to airplanes, I’ve lived in the sky and on the ground. I exist on these very pages that you are reading from. I am your porcelain bowl that all

¹ Elert, Glenn. “Color.” The Physics Hypertextbook. Accessed November 8, 2019. <https://physics.info/color/>.

² Ohad, Daniella, and Daniella Ohad. “A Short History of the Color White.” The Interior Collective, July 23, 2018. <https://interiorcollective.com/design/short-history-color-white>.

you humans defecate in. I am the paper that you wipe with, and the paper that you cry in. You use me and discard me. Ironically, I am either tried to be kept clean or meant to get dirty.

Human beings have used me beyond my religious and philosophical representation. I have authority, I have power, as I exist in the realm of the arts. I am used to creating the perception of a hierarchical environment, and a sense of purity and wealth is often connected to me. I am the white cube. I have hosted the movement of art as I exist on the base layer of most paintings. I have held priceless paintings, and through this, humans have added a very elite aesthetic value to me. I have the authority to say what is and what is not art. I exist now taped on an electronics box for a New York light post, framing photographs of trash. As I reflect light into the retina of the human eye, I trigger a neurological response that draws you in closer. Through my authority that has been shaped throughout human history, human beings feel the need to look deeper into what I am framing. You human beings stare at me for minutes, for hours. You stare at this trash that I am bordering, and you would stare at anything I framed. You are told that I frame meaning, and through this meaning, you think you will find the truth. You continue to stare because you have been conditioned too. You have been trained to find meaning within any of my compositions. Now listen to me, I am nothing but a colour — an alignment of electrons that are refracting into your human eyes. If you want meaning to derive it from your own experiences, if the truth is what you are looking for, you must turn to within and build the courage to delve deeper within yourself through philosophical examination. Challenge your knowledge through epistemological questioning. Because this is the only place, you will find the real truth. I am simply an illusion, and if you close your eyes or remove all of the light in the universe, I will simply disappear along with my fake authority. You have begun to believe what I frame, and this

is truly madness. So stop. Stop looking at this trash. Turn away and continue walking. Throw it all away, throw out all of the knowledge of the white cube and its fictitious authority. Throw it out!