

# Her Edit

Our issue, our voice



Issue Thirteen  
September/October 2015

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The Colour Issue

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Front cover picture  
Courtesy Baroness Williams

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# Her Edit



## Welcome to Her Edit

**A**t the risk of lapsing into cliché, I don't know where the last two years since we launched Her Edit have gone. During that time we've met some fantastic women and been proud to share their stories.

Every woman deserves to have her voice heard on the things which matter to her and the rest of us. Her Edit is one place where we can speak and not be judged on our looks, our relationship status or our size.

Once again we have some truly inspiring women with some fascinating stories to tell under our theme of 'colour'. Joanna Hall's piece on her friends and business partners in India shows how the colour and vibrancy of the things they make, reflect the energy and warmth of their creators.

Our cover girl this month is the legendary Shirley Williams - an author of political change, but who's commitment, candour and dedication to politics has endured her painful parting from the Labour Party and the creation of the Social Democratic Party.

We love to hear from you - if you have a story to tell, a campaign to promote or a passion to share, please do email [me](mailto:me) or get in touch on twitter. Till next time.



# Her Issue Thirteen

2 The Editor

3 Contents

6 Food

Ellen Parr and Alice Hodge

11 Politics

Shirley Williams

17 Business

Joanna Hall

25 Art

Tracey Moberly

33 History

Jasmine Allen

37 Her Agenda



# The fine art of dining

Moro trained chef Ellen Parr and artist and set designer Alice Hodge met at university in Glasgow and formed a collaboration, the Art of Dining to create eclectic dining experiences.



IMAGES  
All courtesy of Ellen Parr and Alice Hodge



# Her Edit

**T**he Colour Palette was a dining event which fused dining and colour. What was the inspiration behind it?

We wanted to create a one-off event that really brought together the two elements, colour and eating, where the use of colour would really drive the dining experience.

We had a number of inspirations, notably the French conceptual artist and photographer, [Sophie Calle](#) who created the piece The Chromatic Diet 1988. We love her work.

We are always looking at new ways to experience food and dining and we just felt this was a really simple idea, but one with such high impact.

**How did colour and design interact to make this a unique experience?**

We chose the colours first, then we had to think about how we found the right design elements to enhance the experience without making it unrealistic in terms of logistics. For this event, we decided to do five courses and hence five colours.

**‘the atmosphere changed in the room as the different colours came into play.’**

The first colour was green. We had the room filled with trees. Our second course was yellow, and we changed the whole layout to have huge bunches of yellow flowers. Next was white, with white candles and smoke.

We moved on to black where we turned all the lights out, the waitresses had head torches and we ate in the dark. The final colour was orange where we filled the room with orange roses and sprayed orange scent around, so there was an overwhelming smell of orange.

We matched the colours with lighting and music as well which also had a strong impact on the entire dynamics of the room.

It was fascinating to see how the colours and the design made such a difference to the whole experience of the food. Each course was a totally different experience.

**What role did the psychology of colour have on the way you created, and people experienced, the food?**

The atmosphere changed in the room as the different colours came into play. Green was friendly to come in to and quite relaxed. When we moved to yellow it felt very bright and alert and people were excited.

The white course was calm and tranquil and felt quite serene, but when we served the black course we felt the atmosphere change. People were on edge as they couldn't see what they were eating. It heightened the experience for them.

People said they tasted the flavours in a different way and they were trying to guess the food. The orange course put everyone in a good mood again; they were much more relaxed, just hanging out and even dancing.

**How does the colour of food affect the perception of taste and appetite and how do you use this when creating your menus?**



Ellen creates the menus. There are lots of rehearsals and this event was quite challenging as there were so many limitations on what could be served. It was important to think not only about the colours, but also about which flavours go well together.

What was interesting was that we did not have to manipulate the experience at all. The colours were

so powerful in their own right, having the diners essentially engulfed in the colour of each course meant it did not need to be contrived, the magic simply appeared.

Find out more about [The Art of Dining](#) on Facebook or follow Ellen and Alice @ArtofDiningLdn

# Her Edit



IMAGES  
All courtesy of Ellen Parr and Alice Hodge

## Baroness Williams

Shirley Williams' political career is one of the most distinguished in our recent parliamentary history. She was elected Labour MP for Hitchin in Hertfordshire in 1964 - one of just 29 women.

There are now 191 women MPs, still just 29 per cent of the total. Williams has served in the Shadow Cabinet and in Government.

In 1981 Williams left her beloved Labour Party and founded the Social Democrats with Roy Jenkins, Dr David Owen and Bill Rodgers.

she became Baroness Williams of Crosby and continues to be an authoritative and out-spoken voice in the House of Lords and beyond.

TEXT  
Jayne Phenton

IMAGES  
Right: Shirley Williams by Bernard Lee Schwartz, 1977  
©National Portrait Gallery, London



Shirley Williams has a reputation for being one of the nicest people in British politics, but inevitably we can feel slightly daunted meeting our heroes. My first impressions confirmed my pre-conceptions; down-to-earth, no-nonsense, incredibly polite.

Her political career spans most of the latter half of the 20th century; hearing her talk of pivotal events in Britain's political history, about colleagues or political figures felt like a privilege. And yes, she is also incredibly nice, even about fellow politicians.

Harold Wilson 'didn't have a bone of sexual prejudice in his body'; David Steel is 'the least pompous man you could imagine.'

When Williams was first elected we didn't have colour television, let alone the access to news we have today. I'd heard her describe Tony Blair as a 'brilliant communicator' and 'more of an actor than a politician' and wondered if politicians face different challenges today communicating with voters.

'To put it simply we've moved on from an almost complete reliance on words in politics and to being very much more image based. So what that means for politicians is that first of all they are much more conscious of the ability to reach out to people and they're much more conscious of their appearance, clothes and so on.'

In her autobiography, *Climbing the Bookshelves*, Williams describes how when she, David Owen, Roy Jenkins and Bill Rodgers emerged from Rodgers' home to face the press she borrowed a blouse from his wife. She hadn't anticipated being on camera and felt her's wasn't smart enough. She agrees that women are defined by their image more than men.

'Often women are talked about as though that (their appearance) is enough to know about them. With men it's more about their character, their successes, their record. One of the things I would regard as moving on would be if they were more interested in women as individuals.'

The title of Williams' autobiography comes from when she was a child and used to scale the bookshelves in her father's study. The daughter

of political scientist and philosopher Sir George Catlin and feminist and writer Vera Brittain, she was evacuated to the United States during the Second World War and her life almost took a very different turn.

In 1943, there was a competition to find a girl to play the lead in a film about a horse-riding twelve year-old called Velvet Brown who wins the Grand National. Young Shirley did a screen test and was just pipped to the post by a then-unknown Elizabeth Taylor. How would life have panned out differently if she'd got the part?

'Horribly! I'm so glad I didn't. The reason I would have hated it is first of all it doesn't go deep enough. If I'd gone into acting I'd have wanted to be a stage actress - I was a member of the Oxford University Dramatic Society and toured for three months playing Cordelia in King Lear and that I enjoyed, but I'm still glad I didn't go onto acting. Although some experience can be useful for a political career, in the end I wanted to be part of what was going on the world and not just have that relationship via the play.'

Instead her passion was politics and she joined the Labour Party. After graduating from Oxford she was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship and studied at Columbia University, which continued her life-long relationship with America where she still lectures.

During the first part of her political career she served as Shadow Home Secretary and then in both Harold Wilson's and James Callaghan's cabinets. Given the Labour Party was where she had clearly 'belonged' for over 30 years, I wonder how painful it was to leave.

'It was gut wrenching. I can only describe it as the nearest thing to a really bitter divorce, but two things were key. All four of us were all very pro-European. People forget that the Labour Party had led the referendum in 1975 which was won three

'It was gut wrenching. I can only describe it as the nearest thing to a really bitter divorce.'



©National Portrait Gallery, London

to two, but after the 1979 election the Labour Party said it wanted to come out of the European Union which for me was absolutely shattering.'

The 'Gang of Four' promised to break the mould of UK politics and the Limehouse Declaration committed the party to environmentally friendly policies, equality of opportunity for women and ethnic minorities and a fairer distribution of wealth.

By rejecting the Labour Party's move to the left they were accused of dividing the left wing vote and the long years of Conservative administration was the result. Williams says some of her friends never forgave her.

David Owen was not in favour of the merger with the Liberal Party.

# Her Edit



'By this time the Liberal Party was fairly small - all those jokes about the taxi stopped and the Liberal Party got out - they were effectively dismissed by the press. I think David thought if we were to be taken seriously being linked to them was not helpful, but Williams and Rodgers were impressed by David Steel.

'He's a man for whom I have great respect. He's very down to earth, very practical; he's got a real political sense as well as being a very pleasant man, not pompous at all. Bill and I saw David had the potential to be a leader.'

For years the Liberal Democrats have been marginalised on account of what Williams describes as 'our old friend the first past the post system' which 'becomes completely unfair once you have more than two parties.'

With that in mind was the vote for electoral reform at the beginning of the last Parliament a wasted opportunity?

'Yes it was - it was bad timing. We didn't do it well, it wasn't a good campaign. The alternative vote is complicated I think we're better to go for straight PR where you have to eliminate the person at the bottom. We have a voting system that belongs to

the past and a growth of parties which form the present and they don't go well together.'

I suggest our political system does not seemingly accommodate a parity of gender given the British Parliament is still some way behind other countries in the number of women representatives. Are there tangible actions which could address this inequality?

'There are two kinds of issues. One is to do with legislation, for example allowing parents to share maternity or paternity leave, but there is also the need for men to share domestic responsibilities. When you consider that people in their 40s and 50s now are spending as much time looking after elderly parents as their children, it's a heavy burden and for too long it's been seen as a woman's role.'

But perhaps sometimes women are more prepared to compromise their ambitions either out of pragmatism, practicality or perhaps we sometimes believe we deserve a lesser role. Williams shares an example.

'Men are more confident. When I was Education Secretary a lot of boys and girls schools were combined to create comprehensive. Most of the girls' schools had a woman head and most of the boys' schools had a male head, so I said to my civil servants I want you to oversee this selection process to make sure there's no prejudice against the women becoming head teachers. Two years later they reported back and we had four male heads to every one female. I was very cross so they looked at the figure again, but that was the exact ratio of the number of applications.

'Same qualifications, similar experience and identical jobs, but women applied for the deputy head positions. It's beginning to be less true, but it was true for a long time. A lack of full scale confidence in one's self is still a real factor with women.'

Williams suggests some of this might lie in a familial favour for boys saying parents 'would celebrate the birth of a boy and would be a bit commiserated by

the birth of a girl.' As I wrote it down I thought this was outdated, but afterwards remembered reading in her autobiography that her mother's 'deepest commitment was to writing, then to my brother and only after them, to me. I don't recall resenting this at all, but it taught me to be independent.'

Independent she may be, but Shirley Williams isn't beyond self-deprecation referring to her selection as Labour candidate for Harwich in 1952 as 'something of a fiddle' because no-one else wanted to stand. Perhaps these are clues as to why she had no expectation of becoming Prime Minister.

'I guess I would say it's a lot harder for a woman to make it to the top. I mean even Margaret Thatcher's rise to the top was because of a misunderstanding. Most people thought she was just a warning for Ted Heath - they didn't mean to throw him out and they didn't mean to have a women leader.'

Just the day before I met Shirley Williams, she had appeared on the Today programme defending the Labour's record in office in the 1970s. What is she proudest of?

Without a hesitation she says 'comprehensive schools' and then fighting for British citizenship for East African Asians fleeing persecution in the 1970s.

'They are probably one of the most successful group of migrants we've ever had. We should have a much more thoughtful policy on migrants. One of the things I like best about Britain today is that it's much less racist than when I was a child and far more tolerant of different cultures, which makes it a more exciting country to live in. We are a much better country than we were in that respect.'

Despite the diminution of the Liberal Democrats in the election, Williams is adamant that if she were 16 now, this would be the party she would join.

'Obviously we were deeply upset. We had produced a group of outstanding MPs, deeply committed to their constituencies. People like Steve Webb who probably did more for pensioners than any minister for years; or Norman Lamb who fought public opinion to ensure mental health receives

**S**omeone who has served in politics for over six decades has earned a political magic wand to make three policy wishes come true. What would she choose?

**Push up taxes in the higher levels - the NHS is in so much trouble. Those who can afford to should pay more**

**We should have supervisory boards with elected employees alongside directors to have oversight of the running of companies; they should have a responsibility to their employees as well as their customers and their shareholders**

**Banks have a responsibility in the way they handle their business and infringement should be treated as serious crime.**

the same resources as physical health. There were half a dozen men and women with the qualities to become Prime Minister and it's a real set back for them.'

I met Shirley Williams just a few weeks into the Labour Party leadership election. Given half the candidates are women and she herself may have been a contender for the job, I'm interested to know her thoughts.

'Highly unlikely Liz will make it. She's very capable, but personally my advice to her would have been to hang on for another Parliament - three years is a bit too soon. So that brings you to Yvette Cooper, again I think extremely intelligent and very able indeed, but she does come across as rather cold and not someone who empathises with what it is to be poor or disabled.'

Not only are Shirley Williams' intelligence, achievements and contribution to British politics impressive, but she is genuinely as nice as people say. Her party allegiance may have changed, but her political philosophy, her candour and her passion have endured throughout.



A life in colour



Her Edit

# Joanna Hall

Joanna Hall has lived and worked in India for 22 years designing clothing, textiles and jewellery. Her creations are made by a network of craftspeople she has befriended over the years.

She sells her products against a backdrop of traditional Indian textiles through her business, Bazaar, at shows, fairs and events in Kent and across the country.

# Her Edit

I lead a very colourful life. I was always drawing as a child, loved art and went on to study textile and fashion design. I worked for a very renowned design house in London and was told I had 'great prospects', but when I looked at people senior to me they seemed to have what I perceived to be boring admin office jobs. This was not what I was looking for in life!

One day I met a man selling Indian textiles in Sevenoaks market and as I admired his block printed, vegetable dyed fabrics and drooled over the amazing embroidery on his stall he said,

**'I feel very much at home in India. Rajasthanis are very warm, welcoming people.'**

'If you are a textile designer and you love these fabrics then you should go to India and work for the people who make these. The local craftspeople would love an English designer, and after all, it would help them to make designs that people here would buy.'

I went away with a bag of amazing fabric and a seed planted in my head. When I returned to the market the following week that same man, Rob, had a knowing look in his smiling eyes.

Two months and a few faxes later I was in India - wondering what on earth I had done. It couldn't have been a greater culture shock.

I went to work in Jaipur, Rajasthan in the north of India. As you might imagine it was a world of bejewelled women and brightly coloured turbaned men riding camels in the desert. This conservative, traditional and truly amazing place - land of the Rajputs - was a vibrant attack on all the senses and sensibilities of my young Kentish maid.

I lived in India for the next five years, working with the people who made the things I designed - fabric prints, clothing, jewellery. I loved my work and I

loved India; its people, its amazing ability to turn everything you think you know completely upside down, and present it to you differently with a simple,

'No, it is not like that, it is like this!'

These Indian craftspeople have become my dear friends: wood-block carvers, hand block printers, weavers, screen printers, semi precious stone cutters, jewellery forgers, embroiderers, knitters, weavers, tailors.

I have worked with some of the same families since the beginning. Babulal, the very first tailor I ever met in Jaipur, still does some of our stitching and cuts some of our patterns. All the other tailors laugh and say he is my favourite. Then there is Walli who cuts opals and semi precious stones. He has



13 children, some of whom are now old enough to help him in his work. His wife is very busy with the children.

Then there is Kamal and his uncle who have three metal punching machines and make shiny brass sequins in the back streets of Old Delhi.

Coming from a large family, (I am the youngest of seven), I feel very much at home in India. Rajasthanis are very warm, welcoming people. Most live with their big extended family, under one roof, often in just one room so they are used to not having much privacy and treat you similarly, but I don't mind.

They live with strict rules, particularly with regard to how women should behave and having respect for their elders, and I also see how this communal way of life can be beneficial for children and their mothers.

In a typical garment, the weaving, dying, printing, cutting, tailoring, embroidering, buttonhole making, ironing tagging and finishing may well have happened in 12 different towns or villages or households. Some of those places may well be a day, or at least a few hours away. Factor in where the cotton is grown and where the buttons were carved and you begin to realise just how many people are involved in the making of our clothes.



So to produce just one new shirt sample, I usually find myself visiting wonderful Indian families and workshops, dusty storerooms and factories, some big, some tiny, some in the centre of town and some out in the dusty sand, in the middle of nowhere.

The export of clothes is a huge part of the Indian economy making fortunes for business men and the emerging middle class, but it also employs many of the most disadvantaged and marginalised members of Indian society who depend on it for their livelihoods.

Some of the women I work with in remote rural areas are very humbling to be around. They wake before dawn and go quietly together for their morning ablutions in the designated area in the sand. Toilets have not reached these parts of India yet.

Then they walk to get water, make a fire, milk the buffalo and brew the tea. They grind wheat to make chapatis and churn milk to make butter. They take the animals out to graze on a few shoots and they collect twigs for the fires. They also collect animal dung to mix with wheat chaff to make mud pats which are baked in the sun to make fuel for the fire.

Then the kids go off to school and the women embroider cushion covers and wall hangings and bedspreads, in between washing clothes and cooking. Sometimes I look at them and in my broken Hindi say, 'your life and my life are very different.'

They laugh and nod knowingly, but I'm aware they are oblivious to how spoilt I really am. I am constantly amazed by their kindness and their generosity of spirit. In the UK we are so sickeningly privileged, but seem so devoid of joy in comparison.

I no longer spend six months in India and six months in the UK. I now have two little children in the mix and they are at school. We take them out of school on one big trip every year.

**'I am constantly amazed by their kindness and their generosity of spirit.'**

They go to school in India whilst we are there, but it is playing with the children of the families that we work with out in rural India where they enjoy a real education.

Our shows in the UK are a celebration of the craftsmanship of these people and the beautiful things they make; embroidered wall hangings, ethnic jewellery, incense, terracotta pots and carvings. We travel to shows and fairs across the country and run our growing wholesale business from our dining room table office. I still see Rob, the man from the market in Sevenoaks and he has become a life-long friend since he changed the path of my life with one simple comment.

Now, 22 years after this all started, I never feel I have left India behind even though I may not physically be there. In the midst of our crazy western lifestyle, I sometimes wish I had a simple, plain, white room to retreat to, but I love my colourful life.

# Opposite ends of the spectrum

Tracey Moberly is an artist, activist, author, lecturer and adventurer. During a prolific career spanning over 20 years she has exhibited at Tate, co-founded the Foundry arts venue in Shoreditch with Bill Drummond of the KLF, engaged in activist campaigns with comedian Mark Thomas and published Text Me Up! containing every text message she'd received since 1999. Here she tells us about the rare sight condition which has literally coloured her view of the world and her work.

TEXT  
Tracey Moberly

IMAGES  
All courtesy Tracey Moberly

# Her Edit

Colour is my first language. My colour vision lies somewhere on the tetrachromatic scale. A tetrachromat possesses four types of colour-sensitive cone cells in their retina instead of the usual three. While I lack full-blown tetrachromatic vision, I can see a wider colour gamut than the normal human eye.

In a tetrachromat the sensory colour area is four dimensional - their visible spectrum is composed of four primary colours. Most mammals had this condition in the past, but a genetic condition caused a majority of species to lose one or two of their four cones. Tetrachromacy is still prevalent in birds, amphibians, fish, reptiles and insects.

I was first aware that I had developed a strong language of colour definition when I was very young. My mother was always saying, 'If she has her father's artistic ability and my sense of colour then I'm sure she will follow a career in the arts or fashion world.' I had totally made up my mind up that I would do this by the age of seven - if not before, maybe due to my mother's belief and encouragement as a parent or maybe because what she was saying made sense and the way colour and form used to make me feel (and still does).

My mother's complete certainty over hues and shades of colour was always correct. I first realised this with her decisiveness on the mauve vs lilac debate: I knew I saw more colours within a spectrum than she did when discussing colour with other people especially across the range of blue and red hues. I instinctively knew that I saw colour the same way as my mother did.

'I had totally made up my mind up that I would do this (follow a career in the arts) by the age of seven.'

My dad heralded a different story. My teetotal parents loved dancing: a social norm of the post war era which grew from when they first met at The Cafe Ballroom in the Welsh Valleys. Both parents enjoyed the clothes they wore as part of the dance culture paraphernalia.

My father wore colour combinations that I had never seen a man wearing until recent years. Whenever I questioned him on his choice he seemed to not know any language for colour apart from black and white. He would reply saying he'd never been taught them by his parents or in school: I grew up accepting this of him.

I only questioned this in later years when I had my own children. At some stage I became aware that my mother was advising him on his sartorial colour palette. The response he would receive from people when he wore those unusual combinations afforded him another way of using the language of colour. Perhaps dressing by choosing those garment combinations was most likely to provoke comment amongst his peers.

By the age of seven I had made up my mind that I would follow a career in the arts or fashion. I followed a career in art - switching my choice from





Fashion College on the day our degree course selection was to be handed in. At 21 I graduated with a first class honours degree in Fine Art, and have worked as an artist since then. I am now an Associate Lecturer at the University of the Arts London (UAL), most recently at London College of Fashion, but I also lecture across the country in Fine Arts and interactive Art.

Learning about tetrachromacy has led me to speculate as to whether this is what guided me into the career and life choices I have made. It's something that should be celebrated, but can't be as it comes at a cost.

I was first made aware of the condition through my youngest son. The apparent benefit of

tetrachromacy in the mother often bestows a contrasting disability of colourblindness on male offspring, a condition Isaac suffers from. He was very interested in learning more about his condition, and came across a medical research project appealing for colourblind subjects:

'We are particularly looking for males who think they may see colours differently, but have not been able to obtain a definitive diagnosis from an optician.'

The researchers also wanted access to their mothers, to check for tetrachromatic tendencies. We left early one morning for an appointment at the Institute of Neuroscience at Newcastle University. It was here that I learnt that a tetrachromatic mother may benefit by a shift in the genetic code for one

of the colour cones from the male X to the female Y chromosome. Women inherit the extra colour cone, at the expense of their male offspring who suffer a loss.

In the university I was shown a painting by a colourblind artist who had described it as a vibrant summer poppy field. All I could see was a canvas full of dull wet straw-coloured grass. The poppies were a hue or two darker, but still the dull autumnal decaying mustard colour of wet straw.

I was shocked that my son or indeed sons and my father would be seeing the world in such a different way to me. It sparked so many questions about my home life and the art world. Questions on Isaac's development from a child due to his colour

perspective were paramount - the things that I took for granted and normal were no longer relevant. I began to analyse details, such as his preference for those bitter types of sweets with their non-vibrant colours such as the reds and purples I would be instinctively be drawn to. Did he prefer those bitter tastes due to their colour? Were the colour of sprouts and olives more attractive to him as a very young child? Did that influence his drift to vegetarianism, gravitating to a love of these types of food? Was colour attracting him before taste?

It's something I would like to pursue further. Then consider Van Gogh's Sun Flowers: I always thought the colour pigments he used were due primarily to the effect of consuming too much absinthe which apparently makes the eyes see in dull muted hues. I am readdressing that painting now believing that he was most probably colourblind. It has left me wondering if a larger part of the colourblind community would prefer a print of Van Gogh's Sun Flowers hanging in their home to colour explosive synaesthete artists Paul Klee or Kandinsky.

Prior to my discovery of tetrachromacy, my earlier Masters thesis was on synaesthesia - the condition where different senses fuse so that one sensory pathway leads to involuntary experiences in a second sensory pathway. Where, for example, a colour or hue would represent a day of the week or a taste a musical note. I chose this because of my interest in colour, sight and the senses.

Toward the end of 2012 I was invited to lecture at Manchester Metropolitan University at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Research, where we devised a project which would be entered into

# Her Edit

the Manchester Day Parade. The course programme of public events for that year was based on the theme of 'community', celebrating different aspects of local organisation, culture, sport and music. Led by Dr. Annabel Kiernan, the programme wanted to have an interactive, student-lead project which would bring the university out to the communities which surrounded it.

The idea of entering something into the Manchester Day Parade started to take shape. The theme of the parade was 'The Sky's The Limit... A celebration of heroic achievements'. So with the Public Services degree course we set to work on celebrating local Manchester hero John Dalton, the renowned atomic theorist who also studied the condition of colour blindness, writing the first known scientific paper on the subject.

Colourblindness affects approximately 1 in 12 men and 1 in 200 women in the world. In the UK this means that there are around 2.7 million colour-blind people (about 4.5% of the entire population), most of whom are male. Sufferers generally have difficulty distinguishing between red, green, brown, orange, yellow and grey, which appear as varying shades of murky green.

For the parade we made two huge colourblindness test cards sewn together to construct a five by

three metre banner. John Dalton appeared with a url for the passing crowd to tweet what they could see, indicating whether or not they were colourblind - the site gave out more information on where to take the more accurate tests if their result suggested they needed to know more.

In February 2016 I'm setting off on a journey leaving behind the opposite ends of the spectrum to an area of all the colours combined - the saturated white snow and ice scape of the Polar Regions. I embark on an expedition led by Jim McNeil to reach the Northern Pole of Inaccessibility; otherwise known as the Arctic Pole. Defined as the furthest point from land on the Arctic Ocean and therefore its centre, the Northern Pole of Inaccessibility remains the last truly significant place yet to be reached by mankind.

It is over two hundred miles further than the Geographic North Pole and one of four recognised north poles. I have been selected for the position of Artist In Residence for what will be - if we attain it - a world first record. Once again colour is guiding me on this journey to the ultimate white canvas.

Read more about Tracey's work on her [website](#) or follow her on twitter @TraceyTM



'This is a small research graffiti I did looking at natural pigments that won't harm or leave foot print for one of my projects on the expedition- painting directly onto the snow. This is an ancient chinese weather warning symbol used by the peasant farmers.'

# Her Edit

The dichotomy between 'art' and 'craft' has existed since the rise of the artist in the 18th century. Defined by their singularity, originality and their genius, artists were the thinkers, the philosophers, the creative rebels while the 'artisans' were the craftsmen.

Many creative practices have been reclaimed in the 20th and 21st centuries by artists using traditional methods of making which becomes elevated by the 'artist's hand'. Amongst Tracy Emin's appliquéd blankets and graffiti knitting there is one discipline which has endured in Britain for over 1,200 years.

The art of making stained glass windows is first identified in the medieval period when artists used coloured sheets of glass, cut to shape and arranged to form a picture or pattern, secured by strips of lead calm soldered at the joints.

While perhaps a seemingly modest discipline we might associate with our local parish church, these images constructed of translucent glass have decorated some of the grandest and most important buildings in our history from cathedrals, churches, monastic buildings and manor houses.

The techniques and science of glassmaking have developed over the years, but the basic principles and methods associated with stained glass have

hardly changed. Traditionally the jewel-like colours of the glass have been created by adding metallic oxides to the molten sand and potash glass mix. Adding gold would produce a ruby red, manganese a rich purple, and adding copper or iron would produce green.

Details such as facial features, are often augmented by applying pigment to the glass, the most common being a combination of powdered white glass and iron oxide.

From the beginning of the 14th century, artists applied a silver compound to white glass and when fired the parts painted with the 'stain' were permanently stained yellow-orange. This is where the term 'stained glass' comes from and the technique led to more complex and sophisticated designs. Later in the early-Renaissance period, iron or copper oxide was applied to white glass to give a red tinge to lips and cheeks.

The market for stained glass rapidly declined after the Reformation and many traditional techniques for making coloured glass were lost and replaced by painting on glass with coloured enamel pigments.

This became very popular during the 17th and 18th centuries with glass painters such as the husband

## Jasmine Allen

Dr Jasmine Allen is the curator of the [Stained Glass Museum](#) in Ely Cathedral, Cambridge, the only museum dedicated to the art of stained glass.

Here she shares her passion for an art form with a fascinating history.

TEXT  
Dr Jasmine Allen

# Her Edit

and wife team James and Eglinton Margaret Pearson creating large-scale enamel paintings imitating the popular oil paintings of the day.

The Gothic Revival was one of the most influential styles of the 19th century and harked back not only to the forms and patterns of the Middle Ages, but to romantic concepts of chivalry and romance. Exponents such as Pugin, Ruskin and William Burges produced the highly decorative and ornamental art and architecture of the Palace of Westminster or St Pancras Station.

Stained glass was now fashionable and practitioners returned to medieval principles and techniques. Factory-like studios were established to meet demand and the new variety of coloured glasses added hot pinks and deep turquoise tones to the stained glass palette.

Pioneers of the Arts and Crafts movement such as William Morris championed the value of artists being involved in every stage of a window's production, elevating 'craft' as being a worthy occupation of the artist. This essence of democratisation extended to gender with women artists such as Mary Lowndes, Wilhelmina Geddes and Margaret Chilton securing significant commissions and reputations.

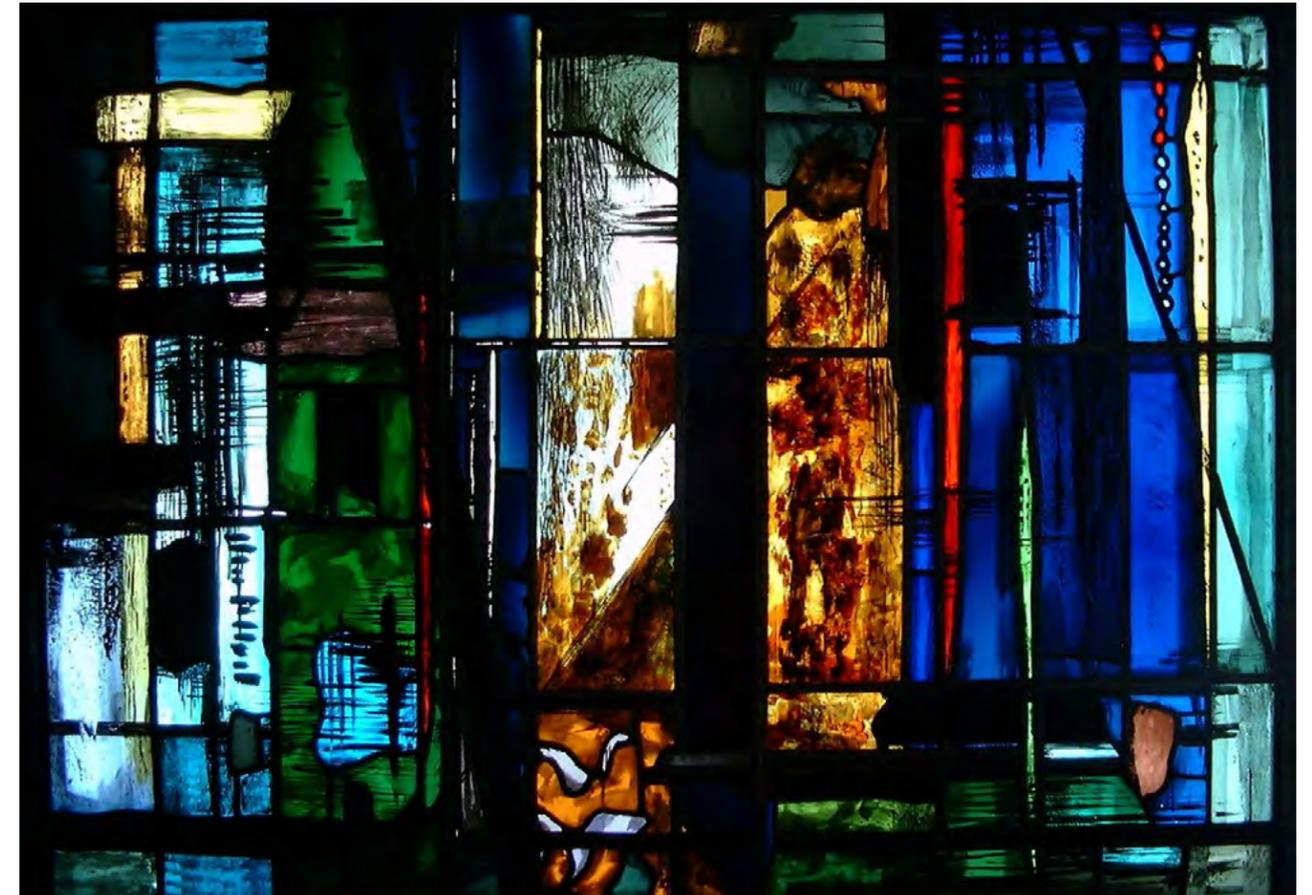
Mary Lowndes was one of the co-founders of the Glass House collective in Fulham, 'a purpose-built

stained-glass studio and workshop' for arts and crafts artists and played an active role in the fight for women's suffrage. Chilton attended the Royal College of Art and went on to teach at Glasgow School of Art before setting up a studio with Marjorie Boyce Kemp in Edinburgh where they produced many Arts and Crafts windows.

While subject to the vagaries of fashion, art trends and philosophical movements, the art of stained glass has endured and been an attractive medium for artists as a unique fusion of light and colour. In the second half of the twentieth century artists such as John Piper, Patrick Reyntiens, Lawrence Lee, Geoffrey Clarke and Keith New took advantage of colour symbolism to create large abstract windows.

Artists have embraced the innovative techniques and materials available in the twentieth century producing dalle de verre (translating literally as 'slab of glass'). This process sets thick and uneven coloured slabs of glass in resin or cement, enabling large expanses of coloured glass to fill an entire wall.

In more recent years, glass fusing, dichroic glass and new techniques such as sandblasting and water jet-cutting have broadened the possibilities of the medium. The beautiful ways in which coloured glass interacts with light continues to engage artists, renewing and refreshing the practice for contemporary times.



IMAGE

ABOVE: Experimental Panel (c.1956-59). Designed by John Piper (1903-92) and made by Patrick Reyntiens (b.1925). © John Piper Estate.

On loan to The Stained Glass Museum



## IMAGES

LEFT: Detail of The Annunciation to the Virgin (c.1340) From the church of St John the Baptist, Hadzor, Worcestershire  
© The Stained Glass Museum  
RIGHT: Detail from a Scene from the legend of St James (c.1500-50)  
From France © The Stained Glass Museum

# Her Agenda

## The Colour Run

The happiest 5k run on the planet. Turn up at the start wearing white and be plastered in colour at the finish.

For all ages and abilities and an opportunity to raise money for charity. Events coming up in September and October.

<http://www.thecolorrun.co.uk/About-Us>

## Eye for Colour

A hands on exhibition about how colour shapes our world.

Until 1 November at Tullie House Museum & Art Gallery  
Castle Street, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA3 8TP

## No Colour Bar: Black British Art in Action

A series of talks, workshops and gallery tours the first Thursday of each month through to January 2016.

Visit [the website](#) for details.

## Tate Britain commission

Artist Christina Mackie unveils a new installation inspired by her interest in pigments and colour.

Until October - more details [here](#)

## Colour blind

Find out more about colour blindness and take [the test](#)

## The Creative Glass Guild

Run courses on creating stained glass. Visit [the website for details](#)

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FOR THE INDEPENDENTLY MINDED WOMAN

Issue Fourteen  
out November 2015

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