

Speaking in colours

 By [Terry Levin](#)

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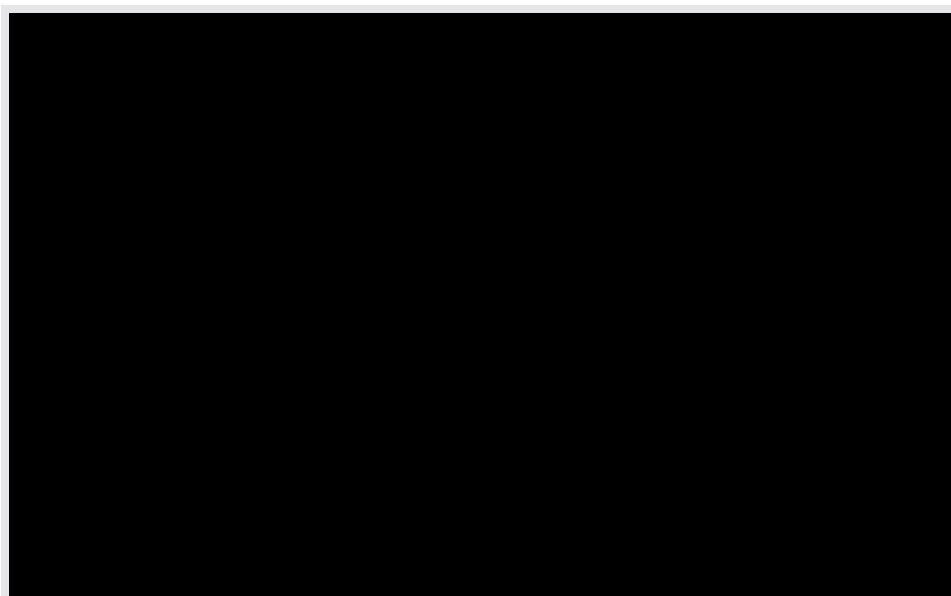
Since man or woman first daubed on cave walls, form and colour have been used to evoke ideas or to create a dialogue between artist and community. Perhaps the value of any graphic design may be determined by how effective it is in influencing a desired outcome, provoking a specific mental or emotional response in the viewer.



[Morag Myerscough](#) on Design Indaba set she built at Artscape, Cape Town South Africa by [Terry Levin](#).

Showing at the opening day of the 23rd Design Indaba, the darkly humorous poster and publishing work of Cuban-born graphic designer [Edel Rodriguez](#) nails the above outcomes. By iconising political figures (mostly Donald Trump), Rodriguez creates a powerful vernacular, which has inspired all manner of public participation.

Rodriguez's unique vision of seeing Trump's signature orange and yellow image in everything from flaming comets, to no dog poop signage, babies, bombs, emojis, the Statue of Liberty, wrecking balls and goop, has succeeded in capturing the public zeitgeist, speaking for the collective, as people across America freely crowd share his images at marches and rallies to protest the presidential stance on immigration, racism, inappropriate outbursts (sh!thole, fake etc), warmongering and other issues.





Rodriguez has also become his own story, receiving coverage on major news channels as well as regular commissions for iconic covers of *Time* and *Der Spiegel* magazines.

The vital virality is achieved by live street painting, sets of stencil posters handed out on the street and cute Impeach the Peach stickers, distributed via the little-used medium of, well, peaches!

A recent, curated exhibition of 100's of Rodriguez's Trump images was held at Wieden Kennedy, Oregon under the title of Agent Orange will soon be turned into a collectable book.

Click [here](#) to see more.

“*“Make happy those who are near and those who are far will come”– Morag Myerscough*”

The same simple principles of form and colour being used to evoke outcomes, especially in public spaces, can be seen in the exuberant work of London-born and bred [Morag Myerscough](#). In her case the desire to create a sense of home and belonging for the displaced, dispossessed or indisposed.

Myerscough's signature, riotous colour and the use of the simplest geometric shapes and materials, act as a leveller embracing and inviting all walks of society to see and to be happy.

She cites Andy Warhol, the Memphis style and an exhibition entitled Hockney Paints the Stage as her key artistic influences and her output could be said to be a fusion of these, with undertones hinting at her family heritage in the circus and a self-confessed obsession with carnivals.



First speaker for Design Indaba Festival 2018 announced

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Installations with this express intention – of creating a sense of belonging – have been commissioned in many places around the world, from Melbourne to Mexico.

As seen in the work of Rodriguez earlier, public participation validates and adds credibility to projects. For example, the go-ahead on the proposal to add colour to wards in the Sheffield Children's Hospital to make them look more like bedrooms, was achieved by showing the colourful models to the children themselves, who gave it the thumbs up.

“ Artist & designer Morag Myerscough collaborated with local children to create the first Art Block commission on Sceaux Gardens estate <https://t.co/sNiAfoDGB4>— South London Gallery (@SLG_artupdates) [January 18, 2018](#) ”

Projects for a pavilion in Austria and a new art block for the South London Gallery among others are approached with the same generosity of participation. For example, workshops held with the teenagers, families or child stakeholders actively invite naming ideas or the creation of artworks using bright, geometric sticker patterns which will be incorporated into the final installations, have the immediate effect of creating the desired sense of ownership and accomplishment by the makers.

Tracking these kinds of purist case studies demonstrates how the basic building blocks of design – form, colour and pattern – can be used to positively affect outcomes on many levels, in education, healthcare, public and private spaces – you just have to ask.

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