

# Ben Le - CYSF 2026 Log Book

## Is the World Losing its Colours?

### Introduction

Why are we noticing a change in colours around us today? Walking around parking lots and buildings, just a sea of silver, black, white schemes. There is a trending phenomenon being widely discussed in the media culture recently, all focused on one question, is the world really losing its colours. It is not only have to do with how we perceive colours when we were younger, but also links with how the modern perspective see about colours, from consumerism, to the lessening acknowledgement of arts in the past, leading everyone to move on to a more simplified designs in our world, in which they called “the new standard”.

### Commitments

I will be researching the materials of each website or source of information I found while conducting the research. To avoid plagiarism, I will maintain proper citations of each material I’m about to show below. I have disclosed or limited uses of Generative Artificial Intelligence, and I have written this log book in my own words.

## I: Research

### 1st source: The Culturist - Why is the world losing colour?

#### APA Citation:

Amato, E. (2025, April 2). *Why Is the World Losing Color?* The Culturist. Retrieved

January 8, 2026, from <https://www.theculturist.io/p/why-is-the-world-losing-color>

Notice how colours are disappearing from our worlds? Think again, you glance at modern parking lots, just a madness of white and black cars. You catch a movie at the theatre, just same washed out colour grades on every end. Look up the logo of the world's largest companies. It all boils down to one thing: colour is vanishing from our world. This isn't just simply a hunch. Studies of everything from car paint to consumer objects show that we're in the midst of a vast aesthetic shift. What used to be vibrant has become sterile. What used to pop out and catch our attention now fades into the background. The

colours around us aren't just changing. They're disappearing. According to major auto paint suppliers, more than 80% of new cars are now grayscale. Black, white, gray, & silver dominate the roads. Reds, blues, & greens in auto production are increasingly rare. It's not just cars, it is consumer goods as well. On the surface, there are some straightforward reasons for this. Industrial materials like steel, plastic, and aluminum for example, are produced in neutral shades. Greyscale branding for logos is easier to reproduce.

Philosophically, modernists in the early 20th century helped push Western culture's extreme suspicion of colour. This is a belief that suppressing the sensory, simplifying and modernizing, and that the more universal something is intended to be, the less colour it can afford to show. Examples can be units of design like concrete apartments buildings or the Apple Stores we see at shopping malls, etc. In today's world, we associate colours with childishness or overwhelming palettes, creating "chromophobic worldviews". Baroque arts back in time stands in direct defiance of that perspective. It doesn't disorder the chaotic colours, but instead gives it a harmonized sensation. This is a reminder of how excessive colours don't always bring discomfort to people. We needed colours, an optical science report said that without colours, the world would be duller and cause more depression between humans. This is our reminder to help colours stay and not fade away due to the misconceptions of "colourful childishness". We need to start bringing colours back by raising awareness of how the lack of colourfulness in our daily lives can affect mental health, and without colours, the world will turn sad and everyone will lose their mood to go on. By bringing back colours, we can encourage people to switch to more colourful choices in their lifestyle, if we want to convince the big companies to switch colours, it will be a different story. They are not as easy to convince, so extreme awareness is required to make them do it.

## **2nd source: North Florida Cataract Specialists and Vision Care - Reasons colours may look different as human ages**

**APA Citation:** Wasylow, D. (2025). 5 Reasons Colors May Look Different as You Age - North Florida Cataract and Vision. Northfloridavision.com.

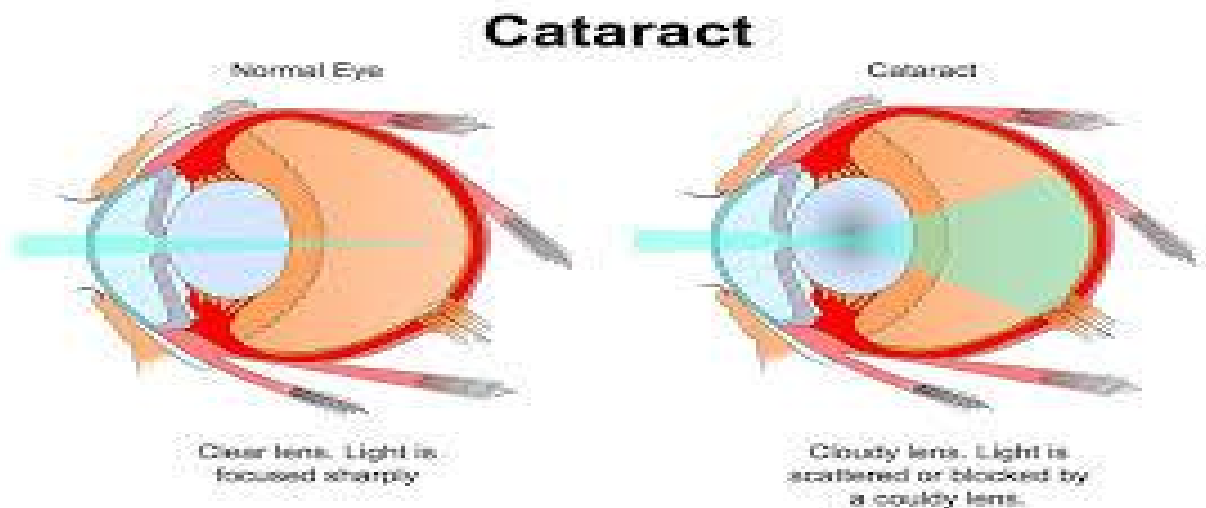
<https://www.northfloridavision.com/blog/post/2025/8/5/5-Reasons-Colors-May-Look-Different-as-You-Age.aspx>

Ever wondered how many talked about colours and hues are perceived differently as humans get older? It's not simply just how kids see new colours more exciting than adults do, whom had already used to different tones. This mostly has to do with a yellowing effect in your eye called cataract. Cataracts could develop as you age, and it grows in your lenses. Elderly people often experience washed out or even altered colours, since cataracts make them harder to distinguish. Cataracts grow by clumping

excessive proteins in your eyes and turn yellow. There are other reasons that colour perception changes besides just cataracts. For example, pupils shrinking smaller, allowing less light in, in which light is a vital part of highlighting colours. With less light, hues also fade. Another one is the loss of cone photoreceptors in the cell, making us sensitive to colour wavelengths. For instance, rods help us perceive shades of white, black and grey, whereas cones help with actual colours like blue, red and green. In fact 45% of people in their 70s are affected by abnormal colour vision changes. A diagram about cataracts for those who's curious:

Image from: What Are Cataracts? |

Cataract Surgery Buffalo | Fichte. (n.d.). Fichte, Endl & Elmer Eyecare



<https://www.fichte.com/ataract-surgery-buffalo/what-are-cataracts/>

Extra Note:

This research solved how the world is more “colourful” when we are young. The question has also formed a belief how children are attracted to colourful stuff more than adults. This theory has questioned how children's shows, toys and playgrounds are “loaded with colours”. Those are also reasons excessive colours are associated with childishness in the modern perspective.

### **3rd source: AdsIntelligence - The Grayening. Is Color Disappearing from the world?**

**APA Citation:** Team, A. B. (2025, February 17). The Grayening. Is Color Disappearing from the World? - AdsIntelligence. AdsIntelligence.

<https://adsintelligence.marketing/2025/02/17/an-in-depth-discussion-on-color-and-design/>

Questions now linger. Is colour disappearing from the world? This seemed too hyperbolic, but it is realistic. Today, this topic went extremely viral, mostly on social media platforms like how it stormed multiple TikTok FYP (For-You-Page). Journalism

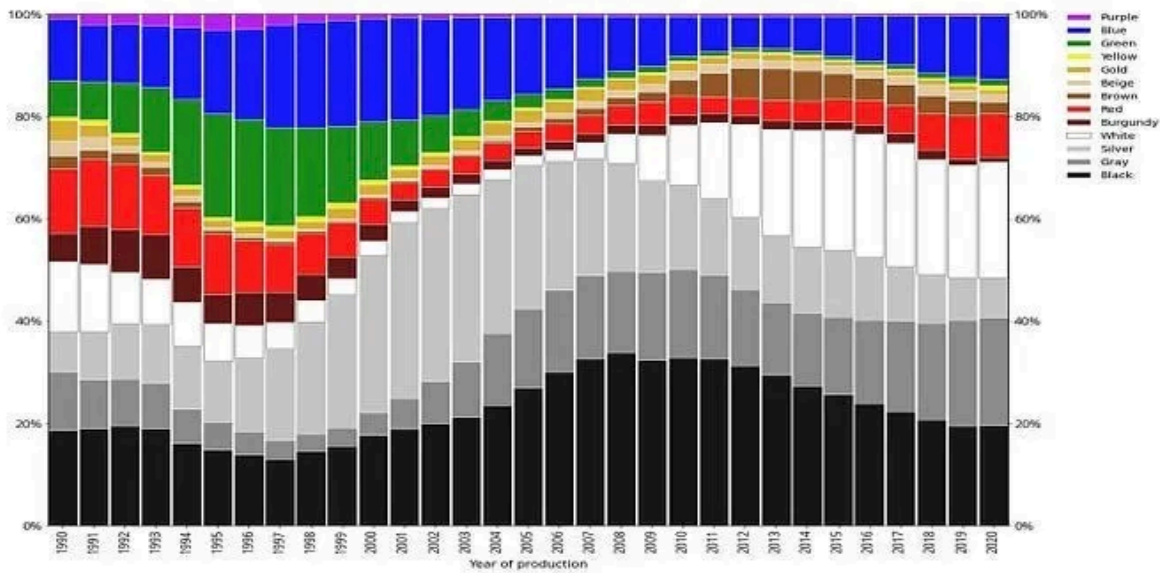
also opened their eyes to the problem and discussed it with people (which in this case, consumers). The context behind the topic made it seem like we are going in a direction that follows a doomed colourless world. A strong example are cars. Consumers nowadays have been noticed by paint manufacturers to prefer more of a grayscale palette. Purchase of black, white, gray, silver and beige cars went from around 60% of the market share in 2004 to roughly 80% in 2023—a 20% increase. Though the new palette may feel monochromatic, the ugly truth reveals that gray is preferred to make reselling and dealerships easier because those common colours can match everyone's preferences. Fast food chains are also big examples of the Grayening of the world. McDonald's in the 2000s had more wacky style to its restaurant with a load of colourful themes, specifically for kids, of course. Now with their modernization, they changed it to a minimalist design so sterile that maximalists called it "dystopian". The core differences in minimalism and maximalism are pretty much obvious, minimalists prefer simplified schemes that look high-end, while maximalists choose to design their homes with a ton of colours in every item. Outside of McDonald's minimalism, it's not alone. Tech companies these days also joined in the minimalist actions, including Apple, although they sometimes did maximalist devices too but not many consumers cared anyway. There are some pros and cons for each of the values: Minimalism vs. Maximalism. Minimalism makes for less effort into designing things, though it is monotonous and lacks emotions. Maximalism is the opposite. More effort, yet more vibrant with personalities. The world is not always devoid of colour as of right now. A lot of maximalists of the current generation are retrying the Y2K aesthetic to shape the world of colour again, or some big companies still being defiant with the minimalist world view, an example being the American airline company Southwest, still having bright red, yellow and indigo branding. Even so, big companies as usual are still heading closer to grayscale than ever. To reshape the hues, it's up to you , and you are the ones that decide or spread awareness of your colourful choices.

## II: Data

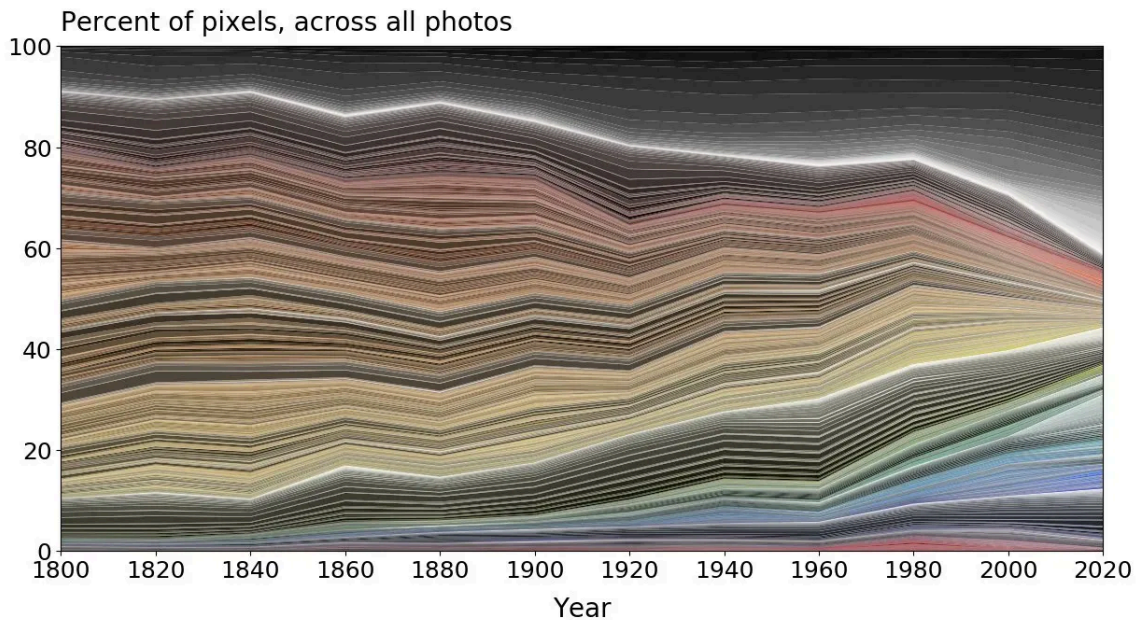
### **Data from 1st source: The Culturist:**

- According to major auto paint suppliers, more than 80% of new cars are now grayscale. Black, white, gray, and silver dominate the roads. Reds, blues, and greens in auto production are increasingly rare.

## CAR COLORS BY YEAR



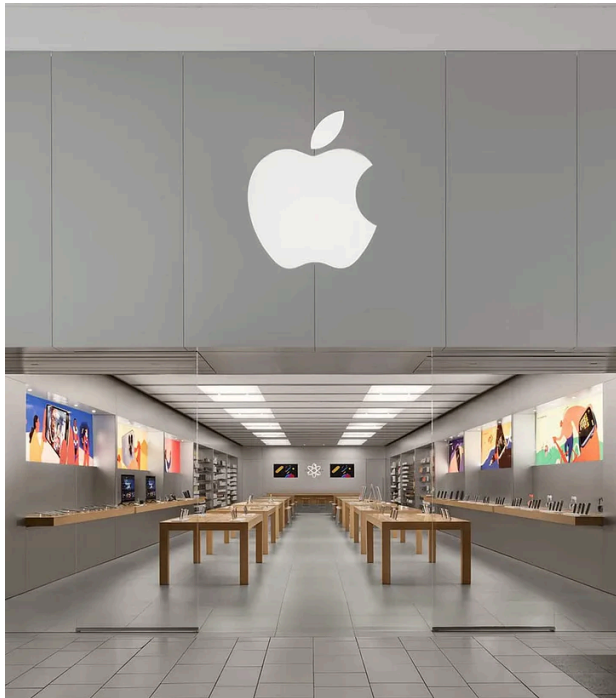
- A study of more than 7000 objects from the UK's Science Museum found that all of these are slowly transforming into more gray tones than bright and saturated like they used to since 1800



- The big difference of filmmaking over many decades. Filmmakers even said it was 'unorthodox' to have such bright colours on Napoleon.



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- Comparing modern Apple Store to a vintage-looking shop, proving older aesthetics have more colours:



## Data from 2nd Source: North Florida Cataract Specialists and Vision Care

- Roughly 45% of people in their 70s are affected by abnormal colour vision changes.

- And 50% of people in their 85+ are affected.

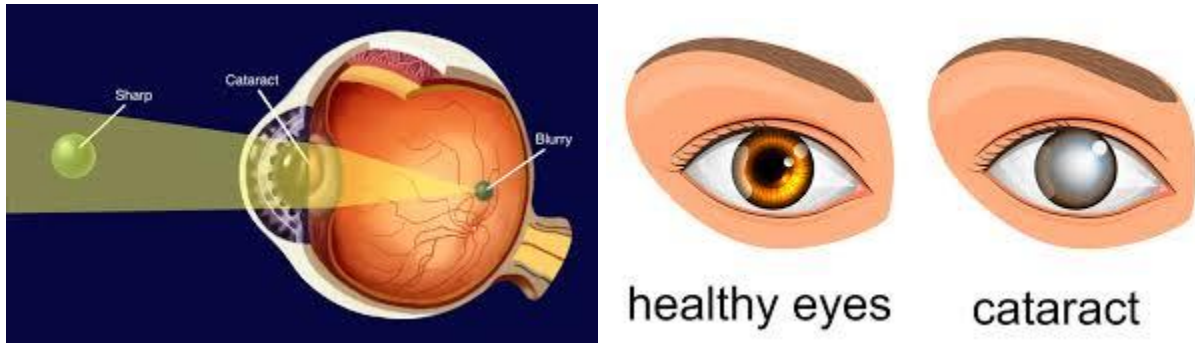


Image 1: *Facts about cataracts*. (2012, December 14). Clinical Advisor. <https://www.clinicaladvisor.com/slideshow/slides/facts-about-cataracts/>

Image 2: *Cataracts - Eye Conditions*. (2024, July 4). Exeter Eye. <https://www.exetereye.co.uk/eye-conditions/cataracts/>

### Data from 3rd source: AdsIntelligence

- The purchase of grayscale (black, white, gray, and silver) cars went from around 60% of the market share in 2004 to 80% in 2023—a 20% increase
- Though most iPhone from Apple being grayscale, iPhone 5c is their first attempt in making phones with more diversely colourful spectrum, they did it again with the iPhone XR, and then did it again every generation of phone subsequently, but the thing is most people still rather buy generic and simple grayscale phones



- Style 1: Monochromatic



- Style 2: Variety of tones:

Image 1: *Review: iPhone 15 Pro & Pro Max*. (2023, October 5). Six Colors.

<https://sixcolors.com/post/2023/10/review-iphone-15-pro-pro-max/>

Image 2: Rogerson, J. (2024, July 21). *iPhone 16 colors: every shade for every model*.

TechRadar; TechRadar. <https://www.techradar.com/phones/iphone/iphone-16-colors>

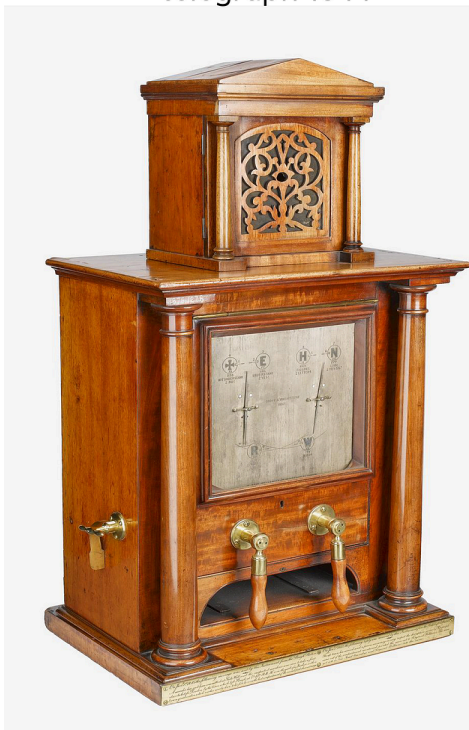
## 4th source (for data only): UX Magazine: Why is The World Losing Color?

APA Citation: Hsiao, E. (2024, May 14). *Why is The World Losing Color?* UX Magazine.

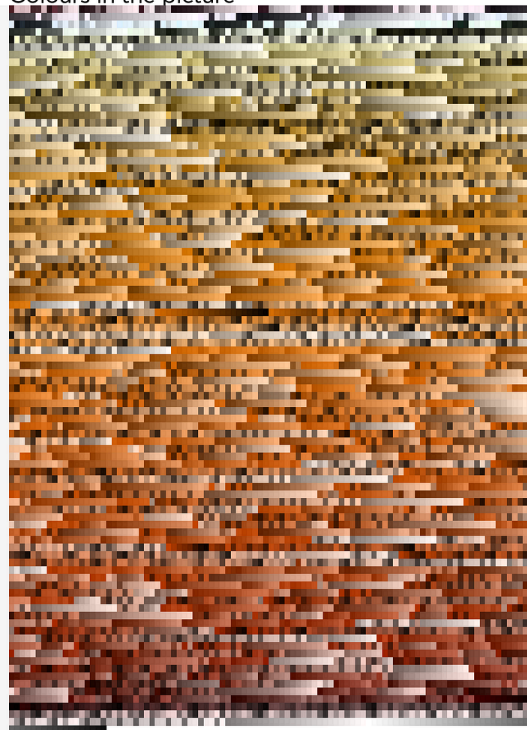
<https://uxmag.com/articles/why-is-the-world-losing-color>

- Here is a colour design of a telegraph from 1844:

telegraph 1844



Colours in the picture



- And here is a colour design of a mobile phone from 2008:

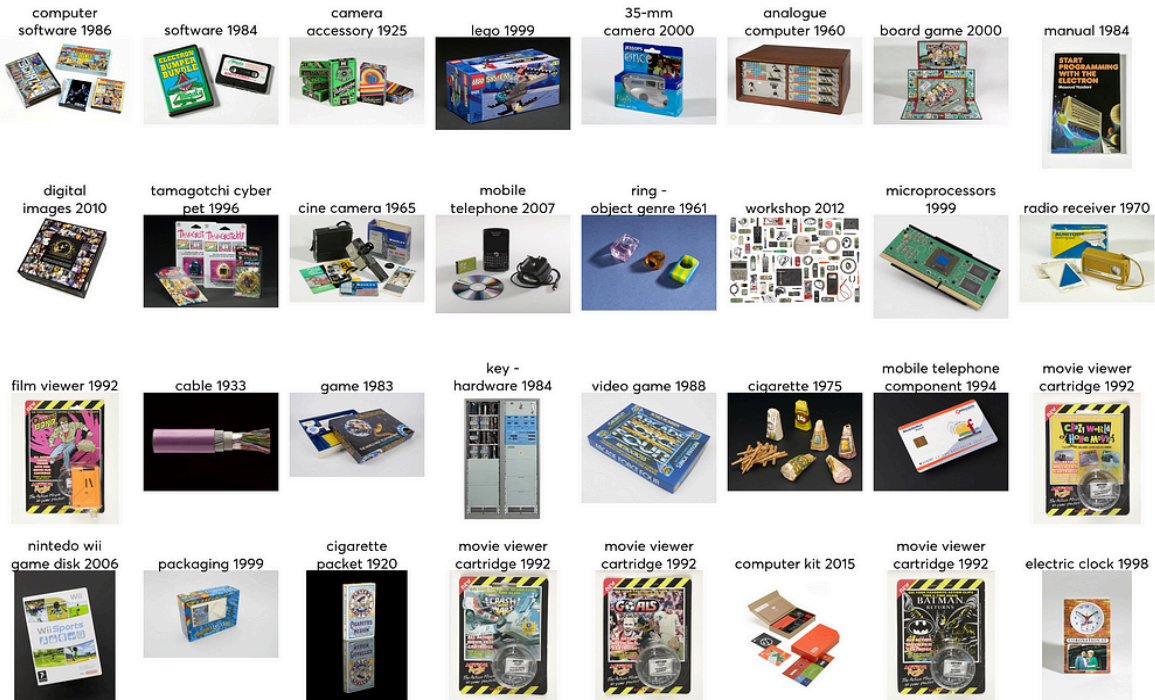
mobile telephone 2008



Colours in the picture



- The Item & colour research from the UK Science Museum - Note: Colour/Shades are extremely crucial parts of designing/manufacturing consumer goods.



- A trending photo comparing McDonald's design from the 2000s vs. 2020s (this photo exploded on social media recently)



### III: Conclusion

Yes, the colours are fading away. We went through some research about the mass aesthetic change in our society, and how our perception not just biologically, but to the items around us as well. We needed the colours to stay, because they are psychologically proven to enhance mental wellbeing through the uniqueness of the tones. Going into the future, black & white are more preferred. And even though we can't decide someone's lifestyle to be minimalist or maximalist, it's up to you to make everyone aware of the fading situation. Because you can't make someone do it, then only your decisions matter most.

**End**