

Olivia DiSanto's abstract:

Contemporary research on color theory and visual perception often overlooks the extent to which psychological, linguistic, and cultural factors impact individual color related perceptual experiences. Well established theories confirm that exposure to children's picture books during childhood significantly influences one's psychological development and perceptual experiences throughout adulthood. I explore how our understanding of color and its inclusion in most children's books uniquely impact our lives, understanding that color perception is not a universal phenomena and that picture books are cultural artifacts in their own right. Working with grounded theory and arts-based research methods I conducted an interdisciplinary analysis of color from multiple perspectives including psychological, neurological/neuroaesthetic, anthropological, educational, children's literature, and studio art literature and practices. This research is folded back into my own artistic practice. I painted a series of color swatch inventories inspired by palettes of select children's picture books then a series of gouache illustrations of an original picture book with text that experiments with color relationships. I reflect the impact of this research on my own psychological perceptions and artistic practices. It is hypothesized that greater attention to the impacts of color-word associations on visual perception may increase picture book reader engagement in children and adults alike. Research progress and preliminary conclusions suggest that this hypothesis will be supported.