

Creating a Color of the Year for All Time and Space

Pantone's 2022 choice looks otherworldly for a reason.



The interactive-art space Artechouse in New York partnered with Pantone in December to introduce Very Peri, the Pantone color of the year for 2022. Artechouse

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The events of the past couple of years have led most of us to spend much more time online. So it makes sense that [Pantone Color Institute](#)'s pick for its 2022 color of the year — an intense purple called Very Peri — is inspired in part by the [metaverse](#).

“This is not a forecast. This is really about what’s happening,” said Laurie Pressman, vice president of Pantone, which markets a color-matching system that allows, say, a designer in Italy conversing with a client in Argentina to speak about exactly the same shade of yellow. Each December, the company singles out what it says it believes will be the next year’s dominant hue, based on developments in fashion, interiors and new technologies. And the latest tech, Ms. Pressman said by telephone, has big implications for the future of color that go beyond mere trends.

Video gaming, for example, is having a notable effect on color, she said, with people more frequently entering into a virtual space, “creating avatars and wanting to dress themselves in that way, or creating collections possibly from a palette that could not necessarily be replicated in the real world.” (There is a limit to the pigments that can be safely produced without toxins and consistently reproduced in the physical realm, she said. Not so online, where the options are endless.)

Appropriately, Very Peri is the first Pantone color of the year that was not plucked from an existing catalog of thousands of hues, but instead was developed from scratch.

The new color promotes looking at the world “through different eyes” and inspiring “unexpected solutions to what we call daring minds,” Leatrice Eiseman, Pantone’s executive director, said in a phone interview.

To demonstrate the potential of digital color, Pantone collaborated with [Polygon1993](#), a Paris-based multidisciplinary artist, to give away nine nonfungible token, or [NFT](#), digital artworks inspired by Very Peri. Microsoft has adopted the hue for laptop, phone, and tablet screens and its Teams backgrounds.

“Could there be a palette that’s only for digital?” Ms. Pressman asked. “I don’t know; we’re exploring a role.”



An Officine Gullo oven and range in Very Peri.



An Athina sofa in Very Peri from the KK by Koket collection.

While some companies are already using Very Peri on furniture and home appliances, the periwinkle tone is having a polarizing effect on interior designers and other style watchers.

[Ghislaïne Viñas](#), a New York-based interior designer known for her bold use of color, flagged the elements of red in the hue as strong and the blue as positive. “It’s that gender-neutral color we all need right now,” she said by email.

In Paris, the designer [India Mahdavi](#), also known for being adventurous with color, described Very Peri in an email as being “the ultimate celestial color, the color of the sky between dusk and dawn.” She suggested using it on a ceiling or a velvet sofa — “a sofa you could sink in, the same way you sink into your sleep.”

But the New York-based interior designer [Brock Forsblom](#) warned by phone that too much of the color could give off a “‘My Little Pony’ alternate universe” vibe, or “Princess Jasmine out for a hot night” attitude. And Georgia Wilkinson, studio coordinator of [Creed Design Associates](#) in Leicester, England, criticized the color’s “brash and cartoonlike quality.” Her emailed verdict: “I certainly couldn’t live with it painted on my wall — and wouldn’t dream of subjecting a client to it.”

The Paris-based trend forecaster Li Edelkoort said by email that “Very Peri seemed like a perilous color during a time frame in need of warm palettes for the home, which included terra cotta, brown and beige.” Ms. Edelkoort, a Dutch-born design educator and activist who founded the consultancy [Trend Union](#) in 1986, scorned what she saw as Pantone’s “pushing a shade of purplish blue down people’s throats with no relation to the way we are living and evolving. Humans want to be embraced by their environments in troubled times, which doesn’t allow for an invented, non-cool blue hue.”

Responding to Ms. Edelkoort’s comments, Ms. Eiseman said that Pantone’s intent was not to compel the appreciation of any hue but “to highlight the relationship between trends in color and what we see taking place across all areas of global design.”

No color can be universally appealing, she said, and she advised those who felt wary of Very Peri to consider making it an exclamation point on a single wall or a piece of furniture. She, however, has a bedroom painted entirely in the shade, she said, including the ceiling.