



**The new world of progressive colour – Richard Bracewell, Marketing & Technical Director of James Cropper**

“We live in a world which is defined by change; standing still, especially for the design community has long been a thing of the past. But how does this play out when it comes to colour trends, and what shapes, defines and drives them in this new world?”

“At James Cropper, we work with brands, creatives and designers from all disciplines, at the coal face of the process and so it felt right to take some time to talk to 500 UK designers about what they think the answers to these questions are, most broadly, what presents the biggest influence when it comes to colour.

“In their experience, there’s been a landslide of change in just a decade, with the vast majority agreeing that the biggest driver of colour for design in 2019 has moved from fashion to social media. And change doesn’t stop there; 80% of designers predict that technology will become the biggest influence on colour by 2030.

“The rapid pace of change isn’t a shock to me; we’re an industry which excels at innovation, and with that comes a need for speed, agility and the ability to adapt. What I do find surprising is the impact that seemingly unconnected things have on brand identity and packaging specifically. The top five influences designers cite as impacting the colour choices made for brand identity and packaging are personalisation, Brexit and the Trump era, the unboxing trend, sustainability and the gender debate.

“Take sustainability for example; who could have imagined how much prominence recycling of coffee cups and the plastic crisis would gain in the national consciousness, but for 73% of UK designers, this is also having an impact on the briefs they receive, the materials they specify and the colour choices they make every day.

“Or politics; we’re living in a particularly charged time here in the UK but even politics abroad has never felt so close to home. For UK designers, their work is being shaped by this.

“So, what’s clear is that colour palettes are more progressive, political and environmental than ever. What’s incredibly refreshing is the industry’s role in connecting to consumers on an even deeper level.



Eighty per cent of designers say consumer desire for individuality and personalisation is having a significant impact on the colour choices that brands make, from monogramming at the point of purchase to offering customers multiple colour and design options on gift packaging becoming more prevalent than ever.

“At James Cropper, we’ve had designers in pursuit of a completely unique approach come to us with jewellery, wedding dresses, leaves and even a skirting board for us to colour match. Luckily, with some 200,000 colours stored electronically allowing us to create almost any colour, this is not a problem, but it demonstrates the increasingly broad role of the designer in the modern context, and the trends shaping their work.

“At the same time, almost half (45%) of designers feel the digital world has introduced more flexibility with colour. As digital technology allows colours to be easily changed, designers are working with brands to experiment with colour to tailor experiences for markets or sectors (43%).

“The Industry has so far successfully shifted on its axis to stay ahead of the game, whether it be through design, bespoke colour creation, sustainable materials, manufacturing processes or simply holding a mirror up to the rest of the world. To keep momentum, it’s essential we continue to invest and innovate, while acknowledging the role designers play in navigating this complicated landscape and driving trends forward.”

*Further findings and insights from James Cropper will be available as part of the paper-maker’s [PROGRESSIVE PALETTES REPORT](#) which will be free and released in full at the Luxe Pack Monaco event in October 2019, as well as being available to pre-order [here](#) now.*