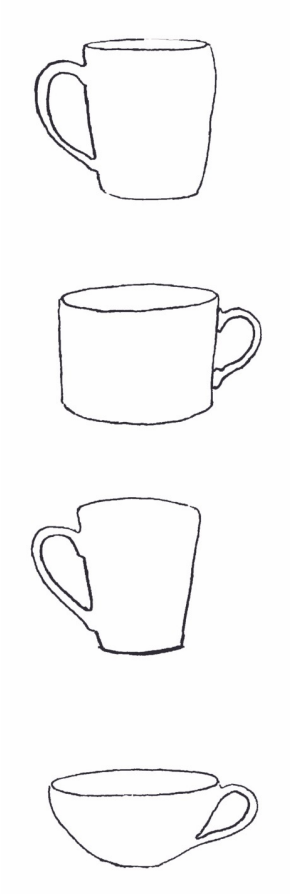
I know what I like

Lovely Mug - Ugly Mug



I find it very difficult to answer questions like what is your favourite... ?

..because actually I would consider myself to be much more open minded . It's like asking what's your favourite film, your favourite book or whatever it is: there isn't an answer to that. My view would be that personal tastes evolve. They move along depending on age, circumstances and everything else.

I suppose objects are a simpler question. Obviously there's a vast range of mugs cups and so forth.... so my favourite cup is this white one. I like the simplicity and I suppose it's also become a habit to always use the same cup. It's the size of it, the simplicity and the fact that it's a plain colour.

I think it's to do with the shape certainly. Because I want a mug that is a reasonable size. So size is important. The straightforwardness of the shape. So the design of it. And in this case the plainness of the colour.

That is my first cup of tea every single morning. It's associated with starting the day and particularly when I sit down with it at this desk where I work.

The one that I am less keen on

I don't dislike it but I am less keen on it. It's got very faint floral impressions on it. Its a nice shape. I like the shape, I just don't like the artwork on the cup.

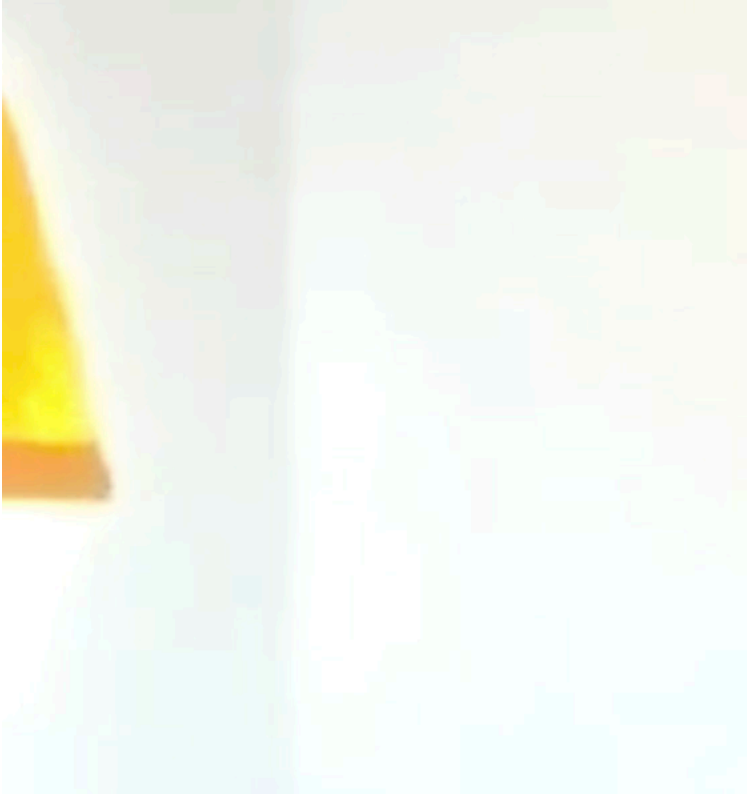
So a floral cup is not something I'd be drawn too. That's just a mild version of that. It's faded, and also it's a they are quite light images anyway.

It was a Christmas present from someone in the family . Its someone in the family I like, so there are no connotations there. But I don't think they are imbued with great artistic taste. I think it's important to hold on to them from your own personal point of view. The person that gave you the gift was probably completely forgotten about it so probably doesn't matter very much to them.

BS 309 Canary

I might have chosen the yellow cup

Because that's also my favourite colour. I haven't done that simply because that was that was one of those cups that N bought at the David Mellor but it's not one I use on a regular basis, so that's why I've kept the white, but the yellow could also be a second choice..



Did you choose that yellow blind?

This was the boys playroom - that I am using as a work room so that blind goes back to that. (But) I think that i'm also influenced by my mother, who was a painter who was very focused on primary colours. Maybe that's the reason for my choice of yellow as a favourite colour. But simply because I see it as something that is bright and cheerful, and positive. I think that reflects the sort of individual that I am.

In terms of colours, the first house I ever had, ..the ground floor rooms were painted yellow on the walls, all the way up to the picture rail. The ceiling and down to the picture rail were all white simply for light reasons. It came about because I remember a long time ago .. we visited girls flat .... and she had a bright yellow room. She had the walls and ceiling all yellow, and I just went wow, I love this.!

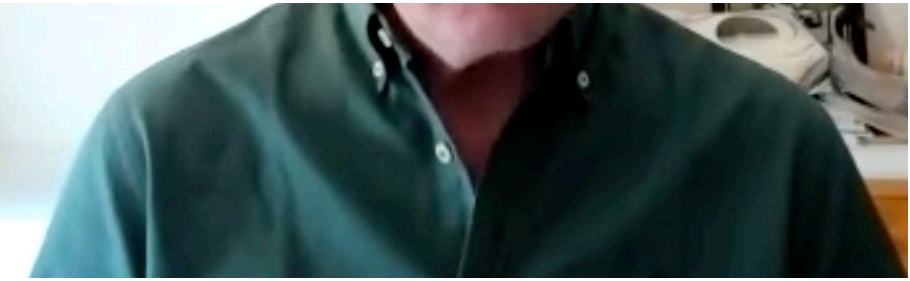
When I decorated this house in Camberwell it had a lower ceiling and so therefore light reflection was much more important. So therefore, the white above the picture rail. So, in other words, when it comes to colour I don't blot out other influences and things like light. I went to a lot of trouble to pick the right yellow.

Do you get visually drawn to certain things?

The David Mellor shop was actually quite a good example. There was quite a lot of things in there that I liked because the design was good and practical, as well as looking good. They had a pleasant aspect to them.

So for instance, we bought six spoons and I really like those because it's the feel of them and how they handle, and how you eat with them as well. I think that sort of implement is something that gives me a lot of pleasure.

The Arts and Crafts movement I find interesting for a lot of different reasons and again that's because it's very focused on sensible, down to earth, practical items. Whether it be clothing or cutlery or crockery or whatever it might be.



Since lockdown

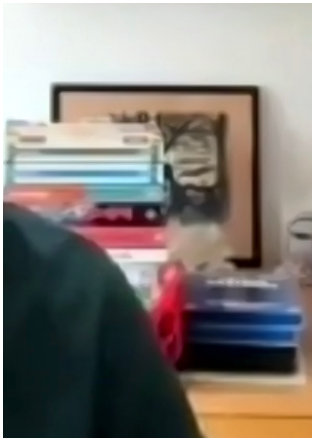
In terms of clothing, my focus has been on the sort of clothing I will then use on a daily basis, working from home.

So actually i'm wearing a green shirt today which funny enough only arrived in the last few days. But it's typical of the sort of ... I mean if you look at a shirt like this, it definitely doesn't conjure up an impression of work.

Is it the simplicity that's your criteria for everyday objects?

Yes I think things like plates : I quite like the simple ones. Though funnily enough, we also have some yellow patterned plates. They're getting close to the end of their useful life because they are now quite cracked, here and there. So they're not going to last much longer, but they've been around for 20 years plus. They're just a classic bit of crockery that I'm very fond off because of the colour.

There are some bowls that we have as well. You could best describe them as conventional shape bowls. They've got a rainbow of colours going around them in very thin hoops. They're lovely and I think there are four left. One is quite badly chipped, but i'm not going to throw them away, because I like them.



What does it feel like to use the things you like?

It's obviously pleasureable, which is why I and most people are motivated to use certain things. Is your question what motivates you or what you receive from them?

To me it is always important, what I am surrounded by .You can see behind me there's the picture on the wall and, the corner of a collection of photographs, which are family photographs which was put together by my brother. And then on the table behind me if you can see it as a pile of books and photos and things like that.: So all of that is important to me.

Particularly paintings and things like that, because I, was brought up in houses (that) .. always had a wonderful collection of pictures and books. That's always been important to me.

Did you want to say any more about any other everyday objects that you have?

We have a kitchen table, which is not necessarily I would say beautiful. But it was something I made probably at least 30 years ago. Interestingly enough, our eldest is somebody who's always liked it , because it's got history.

The history was that it was made from a whole load of pine timber that was used as a workbench in a garage where four of us - used to have as a repair shop for motorbikes. We rented this lock up garage for a couple years, It was just one of those memorable times when we were young and we had motorbikes and were sort of mucking around with them and repairing them, maintaining them. The timber , when we had to leave the garage was made into a table.

It is your personal history. For instance, there's a very easy identification on the table top, and that is: you can see where the holes were for the vice that used to be attached to the workbench. There are all sorts of little quirks about the table from that past, If you were to look at it as a piece of furniture with a critical eye you'd see there's an awful lot of faults with it. That's fine . That's part of the character.

Colour

My Likes

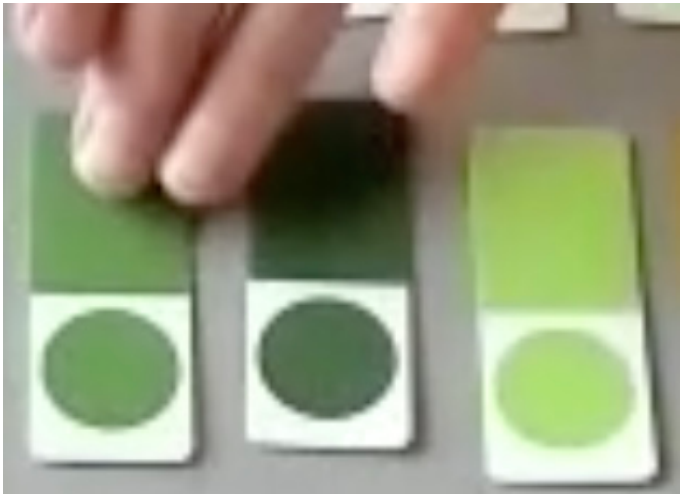
I'm thinking of them as colours, but also that reflects back on why they're relevant to me anyway. What that particular relevance has to me.

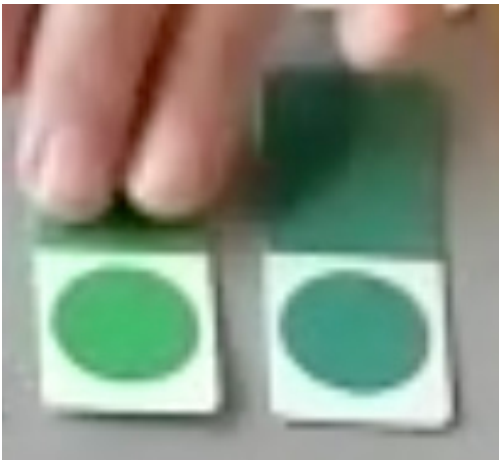
The yellows

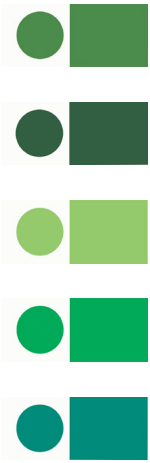
I definitely like, because I always feel that is it's a very positive colour. In very simple terms, it's you know, the ray of sunshine, if you like.

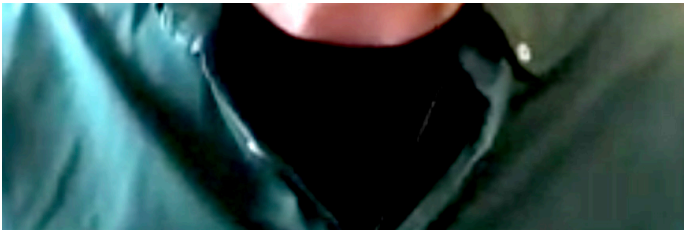
There was a time I had a yelllow shirt, but it was a bit of a one off. The reactions I used to get to it were a bit critical - so I thought I better park that ! In the office (once) I was wearing a yellow shirt. One of the senior directors came over and was criticising me for wearing the shirt. And I said, : "But G (who I worked for) wears a shirt that's just like this ?" He totally errupted - he said: "But he's totally beyond the pail!"

I thought to myself, I think it's probably better not to wear the yellow shirt because I'm not in a position in this company to throw my weight around I'm quite junior still. I wasn't intimidated by it, I was quite perplexed. I was being polite to him and I was not ridiculing him at all, but it was this very strong reaction to the colour.







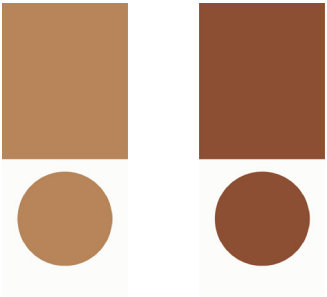


The greens

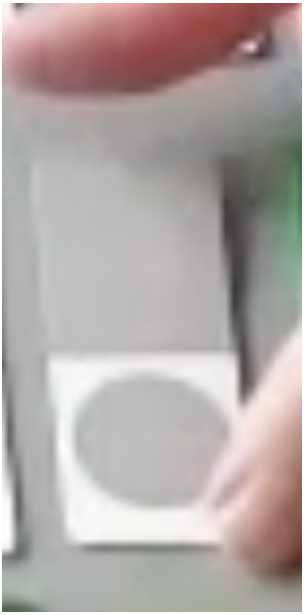
As a group, I tend to pick mainly because it brings to mind wildlife, and walking in the countryside.

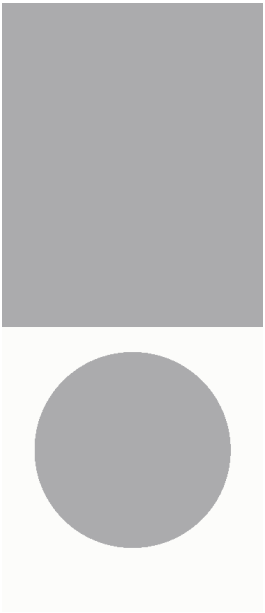
The natural world. .. it's the idea of going out walking in in in the countryside, is lovely as far as i'm concerned. It's enjoying your surroundings, - the vegetation the trees, the grasses the plants and everything.

It's like a natural gravitation.



The two browns - not sure why I like those, I think that's because of earthy connections, possibly?



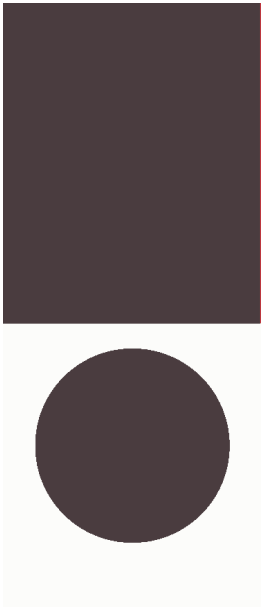


The grey

I suppose that's become a bit of a colour at the moment. I mean we chose grey for the windows that we put in. Actually I think I wasn't sure about grey before but actually seeing them as part of the house, I really liked them.

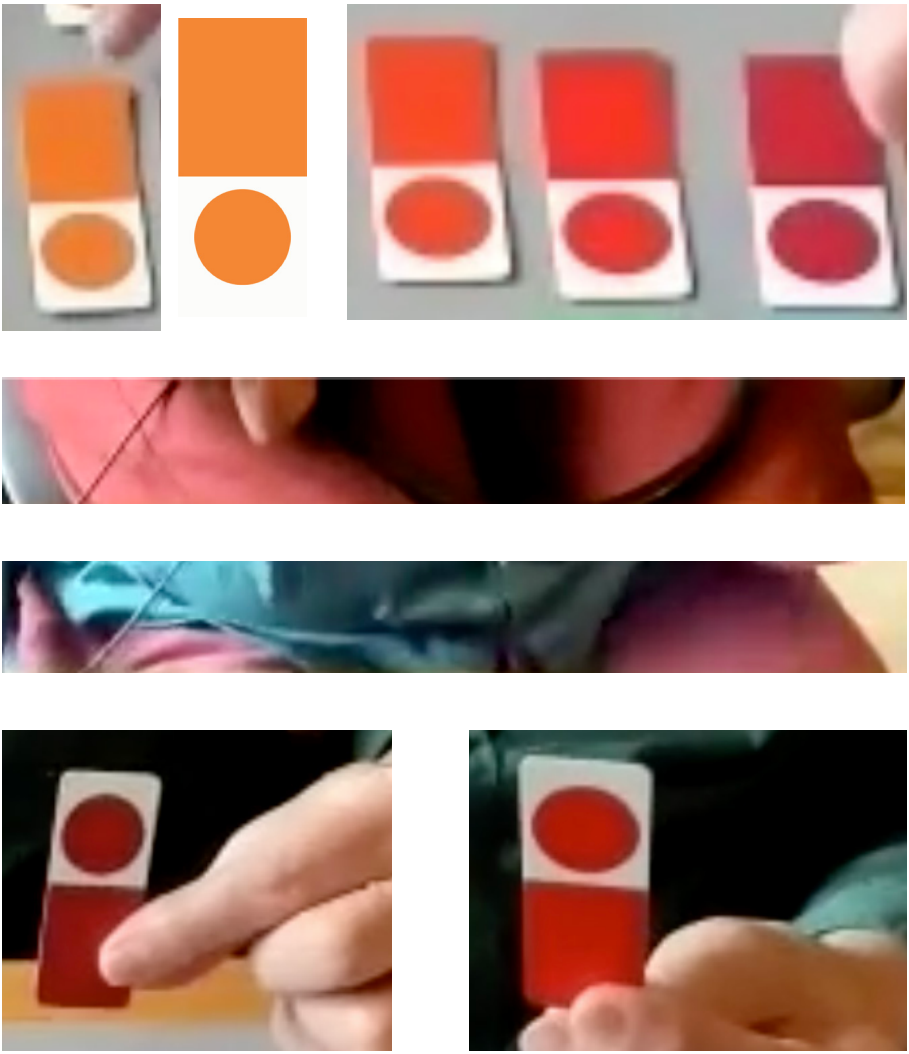
We're decorating bedrooms at the moment. The colour is possibly closest to this sort of light grey - stone colour. That was actually agreed between X and myself. But that's partially influenced by the fact that we're sort of smartening up the house to sell it. So you just have to bear in mind that it's influenced by those sort of factors at the moment

So if it was just me on my own, then it'd be very different. Then I might well select select from the colours (I have chosen as 'likes' here)- yes, definitely.



Black

At one point I had a black car which I loved dearly. It was known as my mafia car. Mainly because it was a rather chunky Saab 900 - do you remember the old Saabs? It was one of those and it was a lovely car.

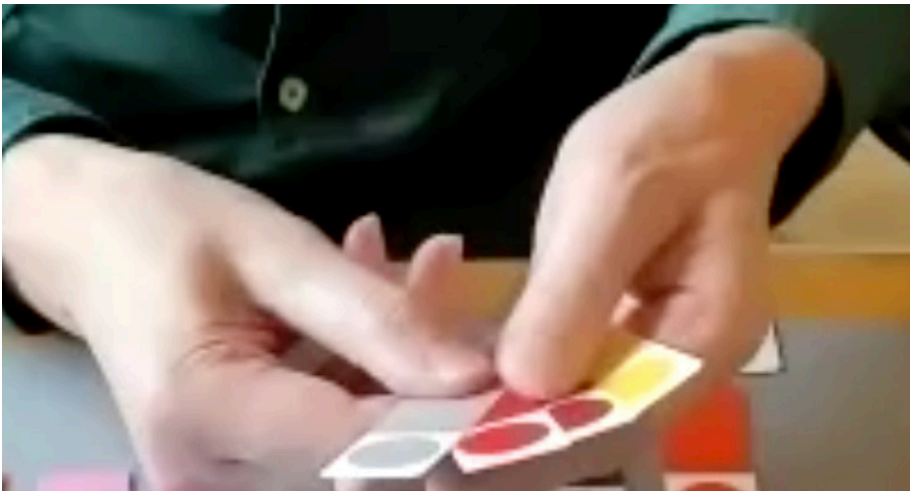


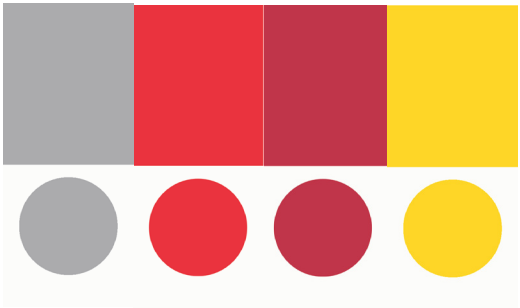
Orange:I see that as a postive colour, the same with the reds

I'm wearing red trousers, and I am frustrated at the moment because I can't find another pair like them. It's the first time I've bought red trousers.

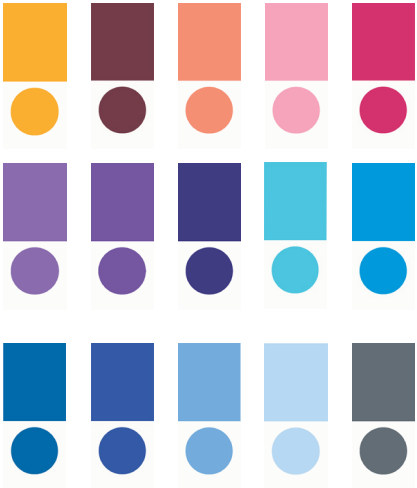
Since lockdown started, the clothes I wear, there are more bright colours amongst them. If I was going into a business meeting, depending on who I was meeting and where, I wouldn't necessarily wear a suit. Nowadays its not uncommon, for presenters in our industry, very rarely will they be wearing a suit, and its very rare for people to being a tie. That city formality has definitely ebbed away.

So I suppose the red that reflects (these trousers) is probably this one.-closest to that (left). It's not a sort of clinical red, which is more what that is (right). So I prefer to the darker red.



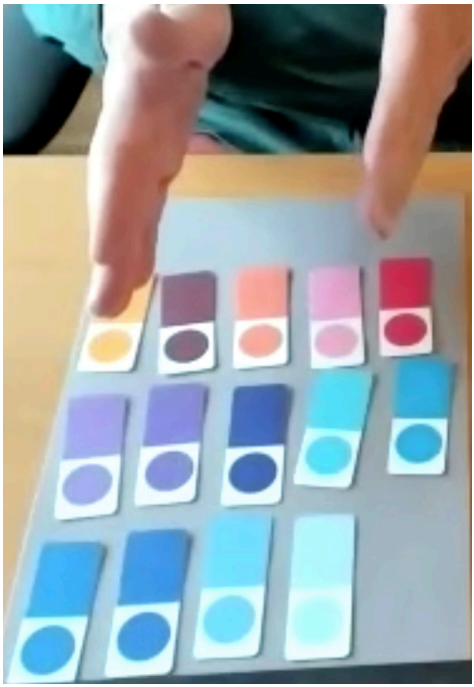


Well, I think, if I was due to to pick out a handful of them. I would probably go for (these)



My Dislikes

Ben Nicholson, 1946 (still life – cerulean), Oil on canvas over board, Pallant House Gallery, Chichester (Kearley Bequest, through Art Fund, 1989) © Angela Verren Taunt. All rights reserved, DACS 2021

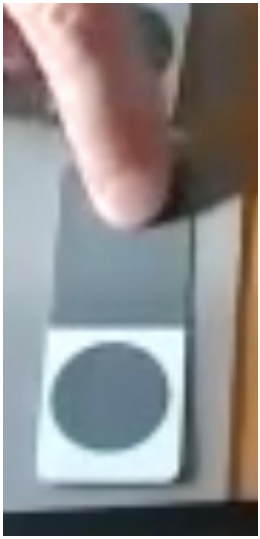


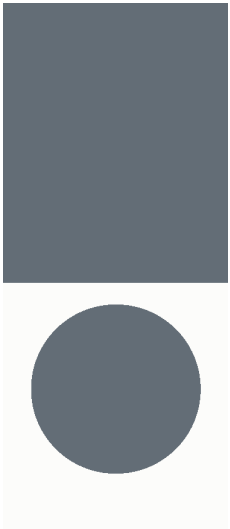
I wouldn't call myself any sort of expert on on art

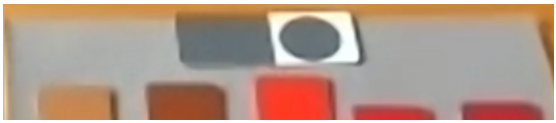
But I'm certainly, definitely, interested, and I like to see connections. So for instance X and I went to see an exhibition of Ben Nicholson's work at Pallant House in Chichester.

For instance, these colours would have certainly been used in a lot of Ben nicholson's work. He would have probably used more these colours than the ones on the left (my 'likes'). But that certainly didn't mean I disliked his work because that's not the case, I actually rather enjoyed it. And the various stages that he went through as well.

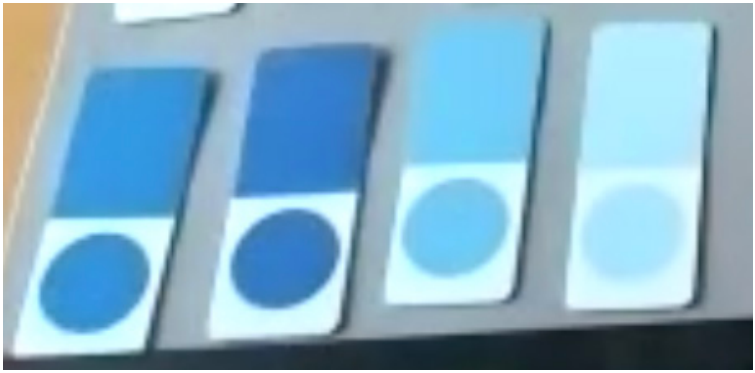
It also had some other works by other artists of the same period and I could see possible influences that my mother had picked up. In some of the work.

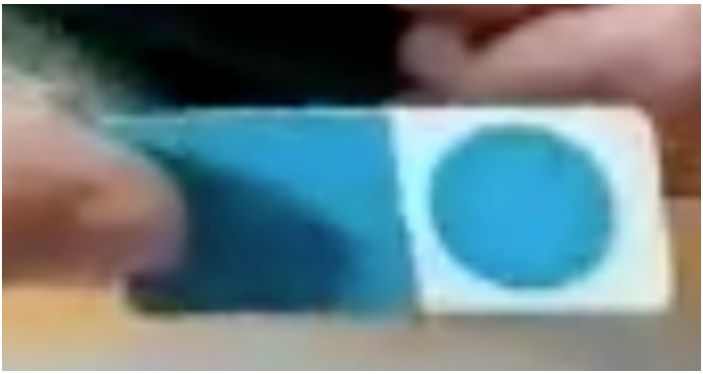


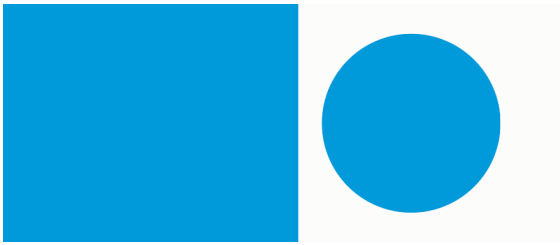




I think funnily enough, this colour here, which is a sort of darker grey. It's like a charcoal grey. So that, for instance, could go across over there (to my 'likes')







I've never been so wild about blues

I'm not sure about them, in the sense that I'm not passionately against them,. Just, that, they wouldn't be the colours I would be choosing.

On the other hand, the light blue that you get in the sort of Caribbean seas, which is probably quite close to this colour, - is definitely a very compelling colour, so that again possibly could possibly go across (to the 'likes'). Out of all the blues, that is.

Purples

It was a party at my parents house and mostly purple. I think the trousers were part of a suit that came from Biba. I remember it was a purple suit. So and purple is probably over - on the 'dislikes' side.

But actually it was a very strong purple. But it was something I wore then, but I wouldn't wear today.

This will definitely be in the 70s, when that photograph was taken.

Did you feel the booklet on colour reflect what you said?

I think it was a good reminder actually - It was a very useful reminder about our conversation last time. It certainly represents what I said at the time, there's no question about that, but I think as as we've touched on before, our views will change all the time. So opinions on colours and so forth willl change. They evolve in the way that our of our lives evolve - because we're constantly adapting to whatever our circumstances might be.

In the same way as when - my living with N, you know, you take on aspects of their personality. We all do that and so we change depending on who we're living with. You can see that in cats and dogs, for instance, I mean, they, they will adapt to whoever they live with.

I've never lived on my own - because even before I got married, - I always had shared a combination in some form or other. I had lodgers in the house I lived in or whatever. So it was never a solitary existence. I think that's the same for most of us.

So I can't really make much comment about, you know, how I would react if I was was a solitary person. - An interesting exercise, possibly.

Personal Space

Working from home

I don't think there is a single favourite place. I enjoy the room I'm sitting in now, but this has been my space really only for the last year or so. since working from home,

The camera usually just sits where it sts - exactly how you see me now, which is how I am on all the zoom calls.- Unlike a lot of people who need to have a sort of a sort of a business like background, so far as I'm concerned you get me, with whatever's there.

For instance, there's a couple of people who commented on the picture behind me - That's always interesting - and it's the sort of people that that I would probably expect them to put that sort of question or raise that sort of subject.

(I've been) moving furniture - and making sure I like where the paintings are and things like that. It's also become a room for storing a lot of paintings as well. There are lots of stacks of pictures in here. It's a good room for keeping pictures because - it doesn't get very cold. You know they are looked after in here.

The scene of the painting (behind me) is taken from a house overlooking the beach at West Wittering. There's a strip of land looking out to sea where there's a line of houses called the Strand. We used to go there as children, for family holidays. That painting was done when we were staying there and, as you can tell from the from the picture it was quite stormy at that time, hence the whiteness in the sea. It must have been in the autumn judging by fact that the trees are bent over and there's no foliage. - It was painted by mother. It's unlike a lot of paintings she did because she came from Jamaica, and so a lot of her landscapes were influenced by what she saw as a child in the West Indes. Which would have been very different to what you see in the UK.

There's another - 4 (paintings) you can't see. ..all by my mother. There are quite a few, quite dark pictures. She went through a period of depression so they're very sort of atmospheric and quite intense pictures. There is a goddess called Astarte. She did a picture of her and there's this naked brown body, kneeling in a cave, and it's very sort of isolated. Quite a sort of gloomy picture. But it's always struck me and I've always rather liked it, despite the sort of the overtones

A bust of my mother done by a lovely old friend of hers who died te-cently, He was a sculptor and I think he taught in one of the colleges somewhere around Putney .

His name was Alan Thornhill. He was well known for doing these busts, and I've always loved it dearly, because it was a very good one of my mother, - and it was also done when she was probably quite youngish. She would have probably been around about 40.

And you have a few personal things on the table behind you ?

So in the centre - that is an an old friend of mine, - he used to to do amateur motorbike racing. That's a very important picture.

There are books and things like that, which I bought recently.

And the collection of family photos.

Working and reading

The view

That window has probably one of the best views in the house, because it looks straight on to the garden. N works in the room next door thats a lovely room too - that has a lovely view onto the garden as well. So Both are really good rooms to work in

You are looking on to quite an expanse of grass, but you also see the Downs in the distance. So you dont really see any buidings - for the most part it's a green outlook.

When i first came here - I said - forget the house for a moment, but just look at where you are, look at that view!

For me, it was it was critical to be out in the countryside and to be in a small village like, this. This is exactly where I want to be, despite all the practical difficulties of social life and so forth these days because I don't drive.

I would always want to make sure that- there's greenery around, you. Views of countryside.

My favourite chair which is in my bedroom. It is used to be prominent in Daphne's studio. (including the cushions) It was featured in some of her paintings. Daphne was my mother.

Daphne Dennison by William Roberts

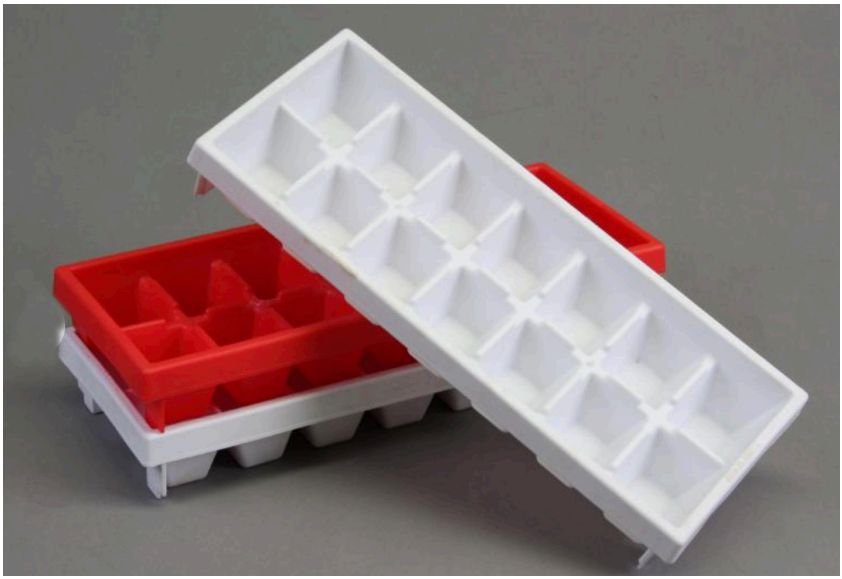
Lady with Gardenia by Uzo Egonu

There are some really good paintings in the collections that we have got here. They're not necessarily valuable, but, you know, they're the ones that I wouldn't wish to lose hold of. There was a modest collection of pictures that (my parents) put together and to me it's really important to keep those.

Daphne bought several paintings by Uzo Egonu who was a Nigerian painter and a good friend. Both my brother and I have enjoyed his work.

The Lovers - by Daphne Dennison

The Lovers painting is a favourite and was mildly controversial when it was painted and publicly exhibited in the late 1960s.



Everyday objects

I have 2 blue ice trays, so you couldn't be more utilitarian than that. But these 2 blue ice trays, I've probably owned for 40 years. They are wonderful. They are really, really good pieces of kit because you twist them and the ice just comes out - softer than silicon. The way they were made is very clever, because, - after 40 years, they're still going.

I looked them up recently. They were called Magnam Products . They are represented in a museum of design - and I thought - that figures. The ice trays are a really good example to me of things that have always been important to me. They were important to my mother. She was like that my father less so. He enjoyed good things, but he was not creatively driven I suppose. I've always maintained this sort of philosophy of always acquiring good quality items, and particularly practical things. To me, the reason that - I've always cherished them is because they are so good.

They are actually a really good design. I have not idea what they cost - they wouldnt have cost a lot

We have a beautiful new front door!

Made by a local joinery. I am enjoying this every day so far!

(Reminds me of) the guy - on the motorbike, - He and I have been close friends since we were about 18.-20 - He runs a joinery business. I used to work there, at one point. He's produced some wonderful work over the years and he loves what he does. What he really enjoys is joinery. He's got a great talent for producing some beautiful work. He's gone very up market with a lot of what he does.

In the same way, the guys that came to do the front door are in, are similar. I look at that door and I just think that. That is a serious door that is

The inner door actually, as far as I can work out was probably the original front door and someone added a porch. I said to the guy -could you copy what the inner door because I said that's very much the arts and crafts. I enjoy nothing more to see good craftsmanship like that.