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INFORMATIVE ORNAMENT: 'THE MACHINE'  
*Enhancing the Communicative Potential of Colour*

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

*Master of Design in Illustration*

at Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand

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## ABSTRACT

<sup>1</sup> *Visual communication (n): communication that relies on vision* (Wordnet, 2006). Both empirical and anecdotal evidence indicates that visual communication<sup>1</sup> design practices implemented by designers with full colour vision often disadvantage, and sometimes endanger, colour-blind people.

<sup>2</sup> *Visual rhetoric: the use of visual techniques, such as the creation of visually 'engaging' characters, as a means of persuading a target audience.* The thesis *The Machine* postulates that colour-blind people – comprising approximately 8% of males and 0.5% of females (Lewis *et al.*, 1990) – are marginalized by such practices. It argues that this group could benefit from a design strategy that enhances the communicative potential and visibility of colour.

The proposed strategy involves embedding pattern into potentially confusing colours such as red and green. The embedded pattern would function for colour-blind people as an additional

clue to the identity of these colours.

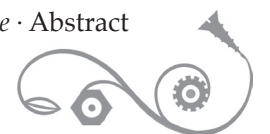
The thesis contends that while colour alone can be confusing for colour-blind people, patterned colour could offer a solution with a wide range of possible applications.

The research aims of *The Machine* include: developing a system of patterned colour; creating a wordless picture book that demonstrates the effectiveness of the system; constructing a narrative around the condition of red-green colour-blindness; and employing visual rhetoric<sup>2</sup> to increase awareness of and sensitivity to colour-blindness among those with full colour vision.

The design of the thesis is supported by research in a number of interrelated areas. These include the history of pattern post-1850,

particularly in Western culture; precedents for patterned colour; and visual rhetoric in story-telling. The research also incorporates an analysis of the defining characteristics of ten late twentieth-century and early twenty-first-century wordless picture books. The thesis is further supported by applied research into patterned colour and visual rhetoric.

*The Machine* aims to benefit colour-blind people, a significant minority group whose visual needs are currently inadequately met. In addition, it proposes broadening the cultural role and significance of pattern. Moreover, by incorporating informative elements usually associated with pedagogic material, it aspires to extend the boundaries of the fantasy picture book genre.





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

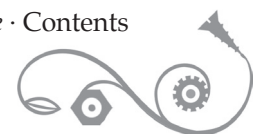
I would like to thank Ms. Caroline Campbell and Ms. Jacqueline Naismith for their generous provision of insightful and constructive advice throughout the project. I also thank Ms. Patricia Thomas for her many valuable recommendations concerning drafts of the essay.

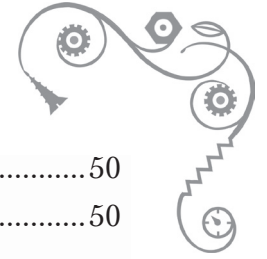




## CONTENTS

Abstract .....	2
Acknowledgements .....	3
Contents.....	4
List of figures.....	6
Introduction .....	10
Background.....	10
Patterned colour.....	15
Summary .....	18
Central proposition .....	18
Research aims.....	18
Methods.....	19
Discussion .....	20
Informative ornament: designing the system.....	20
Design research:	
A brief history of pattern.....	20
Aesthetic precedents for patterned colour.....	23
Other precedents for patterned colour .....	31
Studio research:	
Development of the system. ....	36
Results and discussion.....	45
Summary .....	49





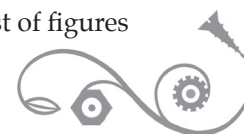
Discussion, continued.....	50
<i>The Machine</i> : creating the picture book.....	50
Design research:	
Requirements of the book .....	50
Defining the genre .....	50
Precedents for <i>The Machine</i> :	
Persuasion by picture: analyses of the characteristics of ten late-twentieth century and early twenty-first century wordless picture books .....	51
Summary of the analyses, with additional information from literature .....	61
Studio research:	
Studio investigation of narrative, characterisation, design elements/layout and genre .....	64
Summary .....	76
<i>Behind the Machine</i> : creating the informative book.....	77
Design research:	
Introduction .....	77
Requirements of the informative book .....	78
Precedents for <i>Behind the Machine</i> .....	78
Studio research:	
Studio investigation of educational techniques .....	81
Conclusions .....	83
Appendices .....	85
Appendix 1: Covering letter and Participant consent form .....	85
Appendix 2: Responses to patterned colour images.....	88
Appendix 3: ‘Colour-blind safe’ visual communication design practices .....	122
Bibliography.....	124

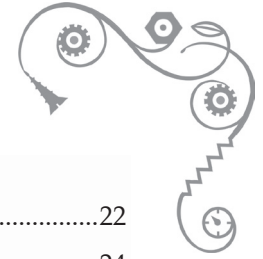




## LIST OF FIGURES

<i>Figure</i> .....	<i>Page</i> .....
1 Cuisenaire rods. Retrieved 17 September, 2008, from <a href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuisenaire_rods">http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuisenaire_rods</a> . Reproduced in accordance with Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License .....	11
2 Colour-blindness simulation palettes. Left, standard web palette; centre, same palette as seen by green-weak viewer; right, as seen by red-weak viewer. Retrieved as copyright-free download 17 December, 2004, from <a href="http://www.btplc.com/inclusion/technology/RandD/colours/PalFiles.htm">http://www.btplc.com/inclusion/technology/RandD/colours/PalFiles.htm</a> . Also retrieved 17 September 2009 from new location, <a href="http://www.btplc.com/inclusion/Gettingonline/Accessible/Adviceforwebdevelopers/palette.htm">http://www.btplc.com/inclusion/Gettingonline/Accessible/Adviceforwebdevelopers/palette.htm</a> . .....	14
3 New Zealand native bush with red track marker, and, right, the same scene after translation through a colour-blindness simulation palette. ....	14
4 Patterned colour. ....	15
5 (left) Ready-to-Read colour wheel, © Ministry of Education, Wellington, New Zealand, and (right) colour-blindness simulation using the same colours. Ready-to-Read colour wheel retrieved 22 September, 2008, from <a href="http://www.tki.org.nz/r/literacy_numeracy/professional/teachers_notes/ready_to_read/rr_level_search_e.php">http://www.tki.org.nz/r/literacy_numeracy/professional/teachers_notes/ready_to_read/rr_level_search_e.php</a> . © Ministry of Education, Wellington, New Zealand. ....	16
6 Mucha, A., poster for Job cigarette papers, 1898. In Meggs, <i>A history of graphic design</i> (p. 194). New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. ....	21
7 Nielsen, K., from <i>The Steward's tale of the Sultan's wife</i> , 1918-22. In Larkin, <i>The unknown paintings of Kay Nielsen</i> (n.p.), New York: Peacock Press/Bantam Books. ....	21
8 Dulac, E., <i>Caricature of Edward Dennison Ross</i> , 1916. In White, <i>Edmund Dulac</i> (p. 87). London: Studio Vista. ....	22
9 Shepard, E. H., illustration for <i>Bevis</i> , 1932. In Knox, <i>The work of E. H. Shepard</i> (p. 251). London: Methuen Children's Books. ....	22

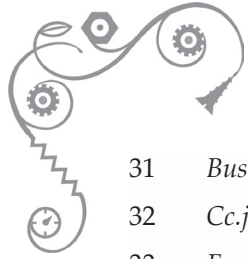




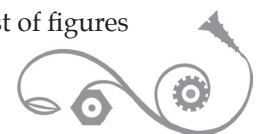
10	Shepard, E. H., illustration for <i>Winnie-The-Pooh</i> , 1926. In Knox, <i>The work of E. H. Shepard</i> (p. 122). London: Methuen Children's Books.....	22
11	Eisen, K., <i>Courtesan in festive robes</i> , c. 1830. In Wichmann, <i>Japonisme</i> (p. 175). London: Thames & Hudson. ....	24
12	Kunisada, U., <i>Japanese woman in check kimono</i> , c. 1845/6. In Wichmann, <i>Japonisme</i> (p. 217). London: Thames & Hudson. ....	25
13	Kunisada, U., <i>The actor Onoe Kikujiro</i> , 1855. In Wichmann, <i>Japonisme</i> (p. 216). London: Thames & Hudson. ....	25
14	Cassatt, M., <i>The letter</i> , c. 1891. In Wichmann, <i>Japonisme</i> (p. 217). London: Thames & Hudson. ....	26
15	Bonnard, P., <i>Women and dog</i> , 1891. In Zutter (Ed.), <i>Pierre Bonnard: Observing nature</i> (p. 134). Canberra: National Gallery of Australia.....	27
16	Nielsen, K., <i>The gust of wind</i> , 1913. In Wichmann, <i>Japonisme</i> (p. 212). London: Thames & Hudson. ....	27
17	Mackenzie, T., from <i>Aladdin</i> , 1929. In Whalley, <i>A history of children's book illustration</i> (p. 160). London: Victoria & Albert Museum .....	28
18	Angus, J., <i>Locusts and honey</i> installation, 2009. Retrieved 14 May, 2009, from <a href="http://www.jenniferangus.com/Exhibitions/2008_exhibits/2008.htm">http://www.jenniferangus.com/Exhibitions/2008_exhibits/2008.htm</a> . Used with permission of the artist.....	29
19	Angus, J., <i>Subjective Nature</i> installation, 2009. Retrieved 14 May, 2009, from <a href="http://www.jenniferangus.com/Exhibitions/2008_exhibits/2008.htm">http://www.jenniferangus.com/Exhibitions/2008_exhibits/2008.htm</a> . Used with permission of the artist.....	29
20	Bantjes, M., G8 Summit poster, 2008. Retrieved 15 November, 2008, from <a href="http://www.bantjes.com/index.php?id=248">http://www.bantjes.com/index.php?id=248</a> .....	30
21	Ishihara, S., in <i>The series of plates designed as a test for colour-blindness</i> , Plate 2 (n.p). In Ishihara, <i>The series of plates designed as a test for colour-blindness</i> . Tokyo: Kanehara Shuppan Co., Ltd.....	31
22	Studio work with selective visibility.....	36
23	Studio work with selective visibility.....	37
24	Studio work with selective visibility.....	37
25	Ishihara's Plate 2 with and without patterned colour, and colour-blind equivalents (as for a red-weak viewer). Adapted from Ishihara, <i>The series of plates designed as a test for colour-blindness</i> . Tokyo: Kanehara Shuppan Co., Ltd.....	38
26	Patterned colour applied to a simple graph.....	39
27	Patterned colour applied to illustrations. ....	40
28	Later form of the pattern for red. ....	40
29	<i>Aa.jpg</i> . Adapted from Ishihara, <i>The series of plates designed as a test for colour-blindness</i> . Tokyo: Kanehara Shuppan Co., Ltd .....	41
30	<i>Boy 1.jpg</i> , <i>Boy 2.jpg</i> and <i>Boy 3.jpg</i> .....	41

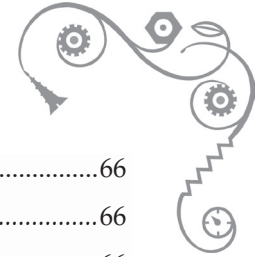






31	<i>Bush scene 1.jpg</i> and <i>Bush scene 2.jpg</i> . .....	42
32	<i>Cc.jpg</i> . Adapted from Ishihara, <i>The series of plates designed as a test for colour-blindness</i> . Tokyo: Kanehara Shuppan Co., Ltd.....	42
33	<i>Fruits 1.jpg</i> and <i>Fruits 2.jpg</i> . .....	42
34	<i>Gg.jpg</i> . In Ishihara, <i>The series of plates designed as a test for colour-blindness</i> . Tokyo: Kanehara Shuppan Co., Ltd.....	42
35	<i>Graph 1.jpg</i> and <i>Graph 2.jpg</i> . .....	43
36	<i>Hh.jpg</i> , <i>Jj.jpg</i> and <i>Ll.jpg</i> . Adapted from Ishihara, <i>The series of plates designed as a test for colour-blindness</i> . Tokyo: Kanehara Shuppan Co., Ltd.....	43
37	<i>LM wheel.jpg</i> . © Ministry of Education, Wellington, New Zealand. Retrieved 22 September, 2008, from <a href="http://www.tki.org.nz/r/literacy_numeracy/professional/teachers_notes/ready_to_read/rr_level_search_e.php">http://www.tki.org.nz/r/literacy_numeracy/professional/teachers_notes/ready_to_read/rr_level_search_e.php</a> . .....	43
38	<i>Nn.jpg</i> . In Ishihara, <i>The series of plates designed as a test for colour-blindness</i> . Tokyo: Kanehara Shuppan Co., Ltd .....	43
39	<i>Pp.jpg</i> and <i>Ss.jpg</i> . Adapted from Ishihara, <i>The series of plates designed as a test for colour-blindness</i> . Tokyo: Kanehara Shuppan Co., Ltd.....	43
40	<i>Reading rods.jpg</i> . Retrieved 16 June, 2009, from <a href="http://www.etacuisenaire.com/readingrods/readingrods.jsp">http://www.etacuisenaire.com/readingrods/readingrods.jsp</a> Reproduced in accordance with specified copyright requirements, as follows. Copyright Information: Permission to use, copy, and distribute documents delivered from this World Wide Web server and related graphics is hereby granted, provided that both the above copyright notice and this permission notice appears in all copies. ....	44
41	<i>Resistors.jpg</i> . Created by Peter Halasz. Retrieved 19 May, 2009, from <a href="http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Preferred_values_05_Pengo.svg">http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Preferred_values_05_Pengo.svg</a> .....	44
42	<i>Traffic light 1.jpg</i> and <i>Traffic light 2.jpg</i> . .....	44
43	<i>Uu.jpg</i> . Adapted from Ishihara, <i>The series of plates designed as a test for colour-blindness</i> . Tokyo: Kanehara Shuppan Co., Ltd .....	44
44	<i>Vv.jpg</i> (left) and <i>Xx.jpg</i> (right). Adapted from Ishihara, <i>The series of plates designed as a test for colour-blindness</i> . Tokyo: Kanehara Shuppan Co., Ltd.....	44
45	<i>Colour wheels.jpg</i> .....	47
46	<i>Sheet B.jpg</i> .....	48
47	Workbook writing about narrative. ....	64
48	Workbook writing about narrative. ....	65
49	Use of character conventions in <i>The Machine</i> . ....	65
50	Initial drawings had some animal-like features. ....	66





51	Early drawings lacked a fully hand-made appearance. ....	66
52	The toy is drawn to look as if constructed from natural materials. ....	66
53	The toy exhibits pliability and responds to gravity. ....	66
54	The toy is especially floppy before it gains consciousness. ....	67
55	The machine. ....	67
56	Castors and a vacuum-cleaner hose were early additions to the machine. ....	68
57	Early drawings for the machine. ....	68
58	Early drawings for the machine. ....	68
59	The toy is initially fearful. ....	68
60	The toy and flower are affectionate. ....	69
61	The machine incorporates precise components. ....	69
62	William Talbot, title page for <i>The Pencil of Nature</i> , 1844. In Meggs, <i>A history of graphic design</i> (p. 145). New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. ....	69
63	Victorian ornament. In Klimsch, <i>Florid Victorian Ornament</i> (n.p.). New York: Dover Publications Inc. ....	70
64	Ophthalmology references were tried and rejected. ....	70
65	More ophthalmology references. ....	71
66	Comic book conventions were adopted to show the passage of time. ....	71
67	Close-up views elucidate important moments, and design elements can increase the sense of drama. ....	72
68	Studio work with line. Top: EE pencil; middle: 2B pencil; bottom: biro pen. The right side in each case shows the broken-line equivalent. ....	72
69	Use of space to suggest isolation and vulnerability. ....	73
70	The pattern for red has diagonal elements that signify prohibition and danger. ....	73
71	Photoshop-manipulated drawings for patterns. ....	74
72	Photoshop-manipulated drawings for patterns. ....	74
73	Studio work with silk-screening. ....	74
74	Workbook notes about fantasy. ....	75
75	Sample page from patterned-colour booklet.....	88

