



ENGLISH GUIDE

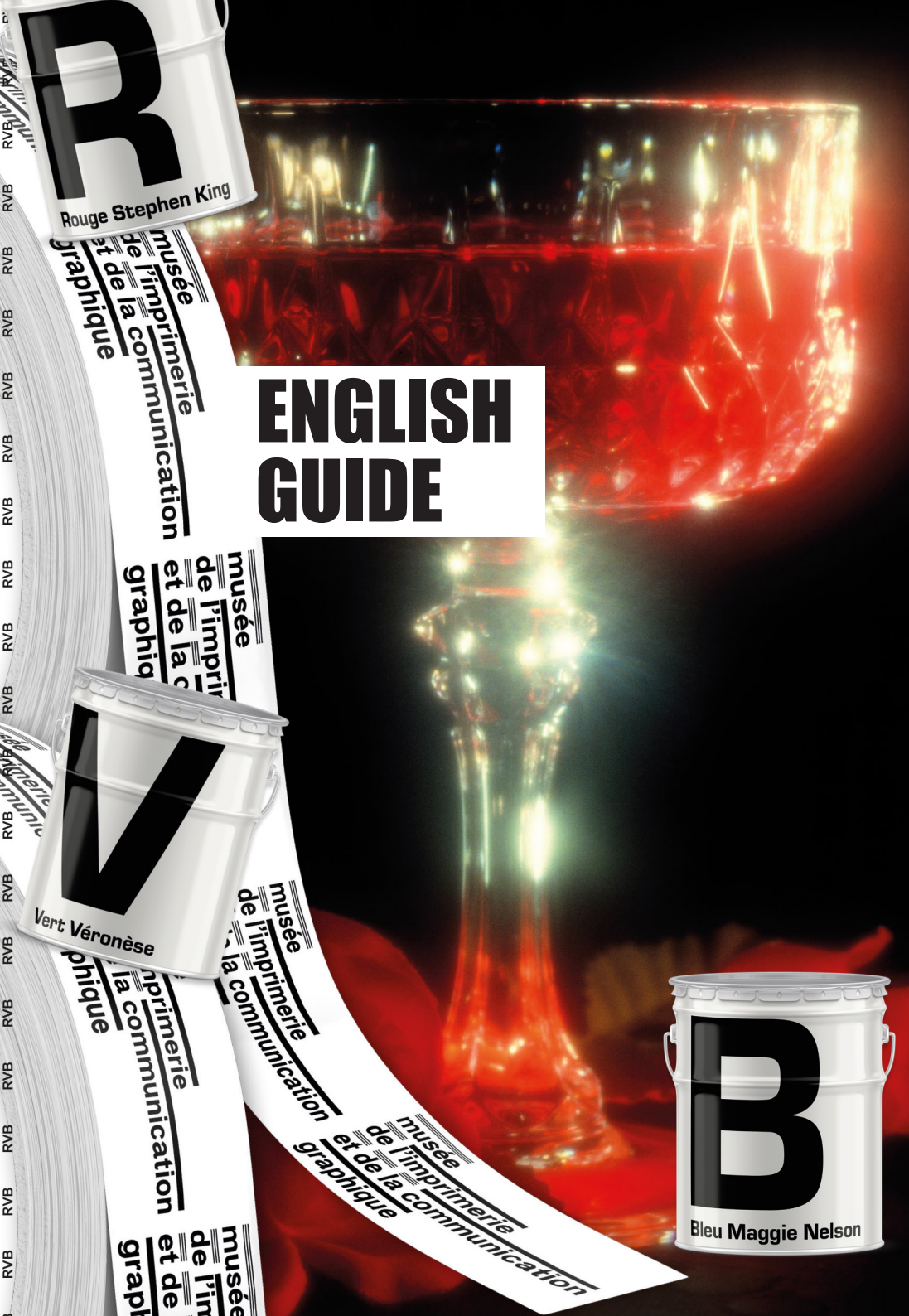
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■ WELCOME

RGB (RVB) stands for Red, Green, Blue - three exhibitions in one, three projects designed like three layers of a single image, independent from each other, which, when superimposed, create surprise and sharpen our perception. How does the eye perceive colour? Additive and subtractive synthesis, halftone, paint, pigments: alongside a reflection on the formation of these colours, their social and political roles, let us explore together the worlds of three artists to give an aesthetic and emotional insight to the whole: Stephen King, Veronese and Maggie Nelson.

Red showcases Stephen King's various passions for writing, detective and fantastic literature, as well as the films adapted from his works. From *The Shining* to *Dead Zone*, his very autobiographical cult books give a glimpse of his childhood fears and joys, much more than we could imagine. They resonate with creations and symbols related to the red colour, such as the rose, Soviet posters or the LEGO logo.

Veronese Green is the name attributed to a specific

shade of colour, which leads to linking the use of green in the paintings of the 16th century Italian master. Paintings by the artist are then presented side by side, printed on a large scale for the occasion, bringing together subjects that traverse the whole complexity of perceptions of green, such as dragons, *Zelda* video game, or the green screen in cinema.

Finally, author and poet Maggie Nelson composed the work *Bluets* (2009) based on the different forms of obsession she developed for the blue colour after a romantic breakup. Her text cut into fragments will be confronted with around fifty "blue" images from our collections, the history of art and popular culture, to pay tribute to this book, a true ode to melancholy and resilience.

■ RGB / CMYK

If our exhibition is called *RGB*, you will only (or almost only) find documents printed in *CMYK* in the rooms. *RGB* stands for Red Green Blue and refers to the process of additive colour synthesis. This concerns "colour-light" since the addition of these three coloured lights gives white light. Our screens and video projectors use this process. *CMYK* stands for Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Black and the process of subtractive colour synthesis which consists of combining at least three "colour-materials" to obtain all the shades. We start from white (the sheet of paper) to go towards black (the printed paper).

The theory and designation of colours are based on our vision system. The human eye is sensitive to light and its composition in wavelengths, called spectrum. Three types of cones named Blue, Green and Red in reference to their absorption range, allow us to see colours. In this logic, for the

reproductibility of colour images, inventors have been inspired by scientific treaties on light, colour, and vision, and in particular Isaac Newton's *Opticks* (1704). By showing that light breaks down into a spectrum of coloured lights, Newton allowed artists to understand the origin of colours and therefore reproduce them by combining them.

In this exhibition, you will find different printing techniques: xylography and lithography in one or more colours, trichromy and quadrichromy by Jakob Christof Le Blon and Gautier Dagoty, chromolithography by Godfrey Engelmann, as well as screens and colour reproduction instruments developed in the 20th century.

■ VERONESE GREEN

The first room of the exhibition is dedicated to the colour green. There is much to say, much to show, but to put on an exhibition means making choices and sometimes parting with the most precious objects in order to maintain the thread of a thought. In this room, there are paintings by Veronese, seven to be exact. Real paintings? True paintings? That is not the question. They are simply images of a virtuoso of colour and mannerism, never gathered in the same room before, at their original size. Can these images convey feelings, given that they are recent printings, aligned side by side? They speak to us in their own way about green and its use by the Venetian painter, who made it a central dramatic and dramaturgical motif in his work.

All around the bodies painted by Veronese, there are other silhouettes, other images, from our present world or from more ancient times, that question some history of green, starting with the ambivalence of the mythical figure of the dragon, oscillating between wisdom and terror. There are also greens as different as those found in nature, "green screens" in cinema, the dollar, Marie NDiaye's books, or the video game *Zelda*. An avalanche of greens and some explanations to understand how this colour is formed, maintained, defined and reflected in our pupils and graphic visions.

GREEN

It was in Ancient Greece that green found a special place in common vocabulary.

From the 2nd century BC, the word "prasinus" referred to marked, deep shades of green. Some specialists have long believed that the Greek were unable to optically distinguish this colour. In *The Iliad and The Odyssey*, Homer only refers to shades of colour, such as for the sea, which can be "bronze-coloured", "purple" or "wine-coloured".

The Roman world and Latin language found it easier to talk about green, with the word "viridis", which gave rise to our word for green. A green that also resembles "vigor" and is close to the word "virtus" (courage, virtue). Latin adds a prefix to differentiate greens, "perviridis" for dark greens and "subviridis" for light greens.

The difficulty of dyeing clothes and fabrics in a durable way and colouring objects and drawings, also delayed the arrival of green

in city life. Green was seen as eccentric and ephemeral, but also used as a means of social distinction.

Like colours which have an ambivalent history, judged negative or positive through the centuries and cultures, green was first perceived by the West as a "barbaric", vulgar or malevolent colour.

Only Muslim and Egyptian worlds found a beneficial inspiration in it. Egypt associated this colour with Osiris, god of the earth and a funerary figure accompanying the deceased in the after-life, then from the 12th century, green has become the colour of Islam. A religious colour that first existed in opposition to the white and red of the Christian crusades before truly representing Islamic culture through an entirely positive perception, linked to paradise, happiness, sky, and hope.

Christian writings mention green as a "medium" colour, the result of mixing other shades, and suitable for use in ordinary celebrations and festivities.

Green has been more valued and has become a widespread liturgical colour in worship throughout the year.

The meeting between Germanic and Roman cultures then had made green a colour ostentatiously worn by sovereigns, starting with Charlemagne. Germanic and Scandinavian greens, lucky colours of North Sea sailors or "Vikings", obtained through more complex dyeing techniques, have more shades due to the availability in nature of many ingredients (including nettle, fern, and ash leaves).

Two faces of green had confronted each other between the 11th and 16th centuries. One was chivalrous and courteous, where landscape, youth, budding love, were embodied in texts, illuminations, and poetry through the green colour. The love potion was then composed of four plants: verbena, valerian, St. John's Wort, and mugwort. Green also symbolized danger and coloured numerous figures considered demonic, such as dragons, witches, and

snakes.

In Modern Times, echoing the rise of Protestantism, green was relegated to a secondary rank, too garish or offensive to be worn in public.

It wasn't until the very end of the 18th century and the progress in dye chemistry that green regained its prominent place in the production of clothing and furnishings in Europe. A new green dye called "aldéhyde", manufactured in Lyon, made it possible to create a dense and luminous green on silk, which was quickly worn by Empress Eugénie and imitated in many countries.

As for painters such as Renoir or Cézanne around 1830, they could use this colour more easily after the development of an artificial ultramarine green, obtained with soda, sulfur, kaolin, and silica. With the invention of the airtight paint tube, green was easily used, especially by landscape artists painting on location.

The soothing figure of nature thus represented favoured the prominent

place of green in the visual universe of the 19th and 20th centuries. Cities also integrated more greenery into their public spaces starting in the 1900s, giving rise to the vision of a vegetal and hygienic green, which would develop to become the ecological and political emblem that we know today.

VERONESE

Paolo Caliari was born in 1528 in Verona, in Northern Italy. His pseudonym, Paolo Veronese, derives from the name of his hometown. He briefly apprenticed in his father's workshop, who was a sculptor and stonemason (*spezapreda* in Venetian). His immediate attraction to painting led his father to place him, at the age of ten, with his uncle Antonio Badile, a painter from Verona. He trained with local painters such as Giovanni Caroto, but later was influenced by the Mannerist style of Parmigianino, Primaticcio, and Correggio.

In Verona, his reputation and early works earned him several commissions to paint altarpieces for churches in the city. In 1548, he moved to the neighbouring city of Treviso. His works there were noticed and admired, such as the *Temptation of St. Anthony* (1551-52).

In 1553, a priest named Bernardo Torlioni offered him the opportunity to

decorate the church of San Sebastiano in Venice. This first Venetian work immediately established him among the most prominent artists in the city. He settled there and received numerous commissions. He notably worked with five other painters to create the decoration of the ceiling of the *Biblioteca Marciana*. Recognized throughout Northern Italy, Veronese became one of the preferred painters of the nobility and high clergy, creating an impressive number of frescoes, paintings, and portraits. One of his most famous paintings measures nearly ten metres wide: *the Wedding at Cana* (1563), which is now located in the Louvre Museum.

Veronese continued his activity until his death in 1588, from pleurisy. After the death of Titian in 1576, he became the leader of Venetian painting and the Mannerist movement, born under the influence of Michelangelo, and more particularly of the late Venetian Renaissance.

Veronese's works are characterised by their monu-

mentality and theatricality. He embodies the opposite of classical painting, an art of excess where chiaroscuro techniques anticipate Caravaggio's dramatisation. In addition to daring religious works, Veronese distinguished himself in the painting of particularly sensual mythological nudes and aristocratic portraits.

His talent as a colourist has continued to inspire other painters and led the writer Théophile Gautier to say in 1858: "Veronese achieves through juxtaposition shades of exquisite freshness which, separated, would have appeared gray and earthy. No one possesses to the same degree this velvety quality, this flower of light".

It was this reputation that supposedly led 19th century colour merchants to give the prestigious name «Veronese green» to one of their pigments, which was invented in the 18th century, about two hundred years after the painter's death.

The shades of green used by Veronese are multi-

ple. Which green is at the origin of the "Veronese green"? The brilliant green illuminated with yellow, like the shimmering silk garments of the beautiful *Lucrezia* (1580-1583), or the tender green of the dress of Deidamia, daughter of Countess Livia da Porto Thiene, whom Veronese portrayed in 1552.

The solution is probably to be found in the green earths of the city of Verona and the basaltic rocks of the region, which give rise to a celadon green that becomes light green when the pieces are ground and reduced to powder to become pigments.

- Veronese, *Judith and the Head of Holofernes*, 1575-1580, Oil on canvas, 100.5 × 111 cm, Museum of Art History in Vienna (inv. GG-34), Austria

It seems likely that Veronese chose to develop a series of paintings depicting famous heroines in the 1570s-1580s. The figure of Judith beheading Holofernes is a recurring motif in painting from the 16th and 17th centuries. During the last part of his life, Veronese used these dramatic figures to accentuate the expressive power of his paintings and employed a palette of increasingly dark colours. The painting shows Judith preparing to give her servant the head of the Assyrian general Holofernes, without looking at him in the eyes. The courage of her act is not portrayed triumphantly, but rather with emotions leaning towards melancholy.

THE END OF GREEN SCREENS IN CINEMA AND TELEVISION?

In 1901, in the short film *The Man with the Rubber Head*, Georges Méliès became the first director to use superimposition on the screen. He first filmed himself alone in the set, then a second time draped in black and in front of a black background to show only his head in the film. By combining the two shots, he obtained a superimposition effect where we see his head alone next to his complete silhouette. This superimposition technique, also called "chroma keying" was the subject of several other attempts, in front of blue backgrounds, such as in Lawrence W. Butler's *The Thief of Bagdad* in 1940, then in front of green backgrounds starting in the 1960s.

The green colour being the furthest from the various human skin tones, it maximizes the bodies and actions of the actors filmed in the foreground. Superimposition allows primarily si-

gnificant budget savings because it becomes possible to incorporate spectacular special effects into the environment of the characters with digital animation software, without having to film them actually. Some iconic scenes in films have thus been created using green screens, such as in 1990s movies *The Matrix* or *Titanic*.

However, two recent inventions will gradually signal the end of the use of green screens in film and television. First, software capable of simply separating foregrounds from backgrounds (or matte painting), making it possible to easily create backgrounds and extend them without having to film them with too large a team because one person is enough. Second, with the same cost-saving effect, the implementation of screens and LED panels forming a 270-degree arc in the studio, as in the series *The Mandalorian* (Disney+, 2019), avoids shooting additional footage with multiple technicians.

THE DRAGON

The dragon is a mythical creature found in almost all civilisations. The imaginary animal, most often depicted in green, is sometimes a symbol of terror and evil, and at other times a sign of favours and blessings. In the East, the dragon is characterised by a beneficial nature and role. The dragon becomes a true totem of the nation in China, the master of the waters, the imperial emblem, but also a symbol of intelligence and happiness. In the West, the scaly animal is generally represented in a malevolent way, whether it takes the form of Ladon, a warlike serpent, the guardian of the Golden Apples in the Garden of Hesperides, or Nidhoggr, a furious Nordic reptile gnawing on the roots of Yggdrasil, the World Tree in Nordic mythology. In the Islamic realm, the dark dragon also exists as an unclean beast that must be fought and chased away. Thus, in the *Book of Kings*, a Persian tale from the year 1000, the brave Isfandiyar

outwits and overcomes a terrible dragon "whose burning breath sets everything on fire". This image of the devouring and destructive beast is one that can be found in the oldest chivalric romances, including the famous "Orlando Furioso" by Ludovico Ariosto, also known as "Ariosto", written during the Renaissance.

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA

In 1985, a duo of designers, Shigeru Miyamoto and Takashi Tezuka, decided to develop two complementary and innovative video games for the company Nintendo. The first became Super Mario Bros at the end of 1985, based on the ability of game characters to jump from one place to another. The second game focused on the exploration of unknown territories and the ability to move in all directions. This work led to the creation of *The Legend of Zelda* in 1986. While the spirit and plot of the two games come from Shigeru Miyamoto's imagination, animation and graphic design are mainly the responsibility of Takashi Tezuka.

The Legend of Zelda thus takes up Miyamoto's taste for discovering caves and forests and has given rise to a series of stories and episodes in which the young tinted green hero named Link tries to reach and help Princess Zelda to fight a

malevolent entity nicknamed Ganondorf or Ganon. Nearly nineteen video games related to the world of *Zelda*, borrowed from the heroine of *The Great Gatsby*, have been created between 1986 and 2023 with growing success, regularly reaching several million players. The latest game, titled *Tears of the Kingdom*, is set to be released in May 2023 and has required nearly six years of work from technical and graphic teams.

• Victor Moisan, *Zelda : Le Jardin et le monde*, 2021
Illustrations by Alex Chauvel
Published by Façonnage Editions

Drawing part of its graphic inspiration from the art of Japanese gardens, Nintendo's cult saga has built a sophisticated universe which mythology unfolds in architectures that are as clear as they are complex. The book *Le Jardin et le monde* by Victor Moisan and Alex Chauvel, published in 2021 by Façonnage Editions, offers a new perspective on this universe. Tracing the thread of its creation in the manner of an illustrated treaty on the construction of a world, its cultural resonances, its philosophy and its poetics, the book also recounts how, with its first 3D episode, the saga initiated a whole modern age of open-world, naturalistic and immersive gaming, in which players become walkers at the centre of an inexhaustible persistent garden.

■ RED STEPHEN KING

The red in Stephen King's work has ultimately nothing to do with blood or violence. It comes from childhood, from the emotions of a young boy with a "haunted heart", separated from his parents and seeking through writing to exist at all costs in the world and the eyes of others. It is a call for absolute love hidden within the fantastic plots of the master of horror, a scream and a torrent of words to avoid the silence and absence, too painful to be tamed. "Pieces" of Stephen King are scattered throughout his work, but they are easy to find. You come across them on every page, in the tensions and torments experienced by the characters. They echo all stages of King's development, at once a magical child, a frustrated teenager, a broken adult, and an old man in love. Some of these biographical pieces are shown in exhibitions through extracts and studies of legendary films, to give you the desire to approach this monumental work from

sometimes unsuspected angles. Alongside the melancholic red of a past that remains glued to the present, like a curse, you can also rediscover a passionate red, burning for the love that Stephen King has for books and works that mark the history of horror and fantastic genres. Different evocations of the red colour are finally presented, inevitably eclectic, evoking both the red rose and Soviet posters or the tribulations of the LEGO logo. What kind of red are YOU made of?

RED

The red colour has undergone a long historical journey, transitioning from a beloved primal colour to a more contrasting shade, at times disputed and considered dangerous by those who look upon it.

Red was the first human experimentation with chromatic colours, the first appearance of colour in language. The Latin word *coloratus*, for example, can mean "red" or "colour" depending on the context in which it is used.

In Russian, the terms "red" (*krasnyy*) and "beautiful" (*krasivy*) come from the same etymology. The primacy of red in the early Western civilisations in the habitat and objects, clothing, and adornments that protect and distinguish the bodies that wear them.

After the predominance of red ochre in the pictorial practices of Prehistory, derived from yellow ochre, the Egyptian and then the Phoenician worked with hematite, a red pigment used

both by funerary painters and by doctors to stop bleeding.

Sometimes an ambivalent symbol when it represents fire or blood, beneficial as well as malevolent, red permanently settled into Greek and Roman everyday life, notably with vase painting depicting the myths and cultures of these historical periods. From vases to fabrics, the red colour spread throughout the Roman world, notably through the increase in commercial activities related to dyeing obtained from extracts of madder roots (*rubia*).

Between the 6th and 14th centuries, red became a seductive colour synonymous with beauty and quickly associated with representations of Christ, whose death is signified by a glorious purple and the red of the Holy Blood. Papal power's red derives immediately from Christian red, who passed this symbol of distinction down to the emperor in medieval Europe. Coats of arms and heraldry are also tinged with red, to

signify the idea of power.

Soon the dominance of blue in the 12th and 13th centuries would challenge red, especially for the French monarchy, which came to prefer it to purple.

This slow relegation of red goes hand in hand with the powerful's imitation of the blue worn by the Virgin Mary in images depicting her. The drapery industry, until then focused on red, diversified with blue, and an economic war broke out between the two colours on the European continent, with the North leaning towards blue and the South towards red.

The challenge to the red colour took extreme forms with persistent hatred organised between the 14th and 16th centuries against the red colour (the colour of Judas). Members of professions or social categories deemed demeaning had to wear red marks.

Despite its banishment from the public space by the Protestant religion, red nevertheless retains an influence on the collective

consciousness through literary worlds and common language.

The term "red" is frequently used in both French and German language to signify "very", with "red large" thus able to be translated as "very large". The symbolic power of red then develops significantly in oral literature and children's tales.

The Little Red Riding Hood, whose main version by Perrault dates back to 1697 was inspired by another story titled *The Little Red Dress*, constitutes the main example. The red colour of the little girl's clothing can evoke both the tragic end of the story and the custom for children to wear red clothes on feast days during that time, specifically for Pentecost. Tales often organise their stories around the three colours of white, red, and black.

Last, red leaves a remarkable imprint on the development of political iconography. The red colour of the revolutionary flag and cap thus transforms into the red of social struggles in the 19th

century before representing the Soviet and Communist red in the 20th century.

• Françoise Pétrovitch, *Se coiffer*, 2016, red lithograph, MEL Publisher edition, MICG, inv_5204.

This monumental lithograph, printed from a single stone, is the work of French artist Françoise Pétrovitch. As a painter, ceramicist, draughtswoman and videographer, she transcribes the gestures of painting and drawing into the realm of printed works.

Françoise Pétrovitch's work questions the world of childhood and adolescence, femininity and intimacy. Here, a young woman is depicted combing her hair with her eyes closed. The artist gives us access to this scene of introspection and, in her own words: "Not representing the figure's gaze allows us to see the whole. When we observe a portrait, we look at the eyes, we seek the soul. If the eyes are averted or hidden, then we see a painting". With this monumental format and painting technique on stone, the artist reinforces the immersive dimension of her work, which can be com-

pared to that of an oil painting of the same format.

While we may be seduced by the softness of the young woman's features and the relative calm of the scene, immersion in this red that is both translucent, thanks to the diluted ink, and boiling and sanguine, can take us towards a universe that is more imbued with harshness. Françoise Pétrovitch proposes a scene that borders on both lightness and violence, playing on this ambiguity between sweetness and tragedy.

STEPHEN KING

Stephen Edwin King was born in Portland, Maine (Northeastern United States) in September 1947. Shortly after his second birthday, his father pretended to "go out to buy a pack of cigarettes" and never returned. Stephen and his brother David were raised alone by their mother, often in precarious financial situations. King discovered horror and mystery literature by reading the stories of H.P. Lovecraft, in which he immediately felt "at home". After about ten moves, his mother returned to Maine to take care of her parents in their last years, and he continued his studies until he joined the state university, where he quickly began writing for the campus newspaper and subsequently obtained his degree in English literature. In 1971, he took an exam to become a high school teacher and became a father. In a relationship with Tabitha Spruce, he had three children.

While teaching, King wrote fantastique inspired

stories in the evening and had a few published in the early 1970s. His first novel, *Carrie*, which was the origin of his success as a novelist, was initially thrown in the trash before his wife encouraged him to submit it to publishers.

Shortly after the book was released in 1973, King's mother died and he fell into alcoholism from which he did not emerge until several years later, exacerbated by heavy cocaine use. However, successes continued to pile up during this troubled period with *Salem* in 1977 and *Shining* in 1979. In the late 1970s, King began a draft of his *Dark Tower* cycle (1982-2012), which blends the atmosphere of the American Wild West with an epic dimension inspired by J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle Earth.

For King, the fantastique is never an end in itself, as for his favorite authors, Richard Matheson or Shirley Jackson. It stems from the characters, their ambitions, fears, desires, weaknesses, and allows them to assert or liberate themselves from

their traumas. At the heart of his interest in the fantastic is the primordial place given to the child, from *Pet Sematary* (1983) to *Dreamcatcher* (2002), through *It* (1988) or *The Institute* (2020). Fragile, sensitive, emotional children with unknown, exceptional powers that threaten them as much as they emancipate them, in a continuous opposition to conservative social patterns, where powerlessness becomes a repeated source of self-questioning and assertion.

Throughout his career, King draws heavily on his own personal and family experiences. On June 19, 1999, the writer was involved in a serious car accident. He spent several weeks in the hospital and a rehabilitation center in Florida. This incident provided him with two novels, *Roadmaster* (2004) and *Duma Key* (2009).

Stephen King's stories have become pillars of American culture, whether in literature or in film, from which he has also gained a very fine historical knowledge. It is an inheritance from which

he continues to build his impressive bibliography, which exceeds 65 works, in all styles, written under his own name or that of his alias, Richard Bachman.

His second child, Joseph King, known to the public as Joe Hill, continues his father's career as a writer, still in the field of fantasy and horror, but also on the comic book side, with the *Locke & Key* series (2008-2021).

• Stephen King, *The Shining*, 1977 (book)

Five-year-old Danny Torrance is a precocious child with the gift of mediumship (the "shining"), which he conceals from his parents. Stephen King uses this motive to weave an intrafamilial plot, where Jack Torrance, a teacher dismissed from university due to his violence and alcoholism, locks himself, his wife Wendy, and their son in the Overlook Hotel to be its caretaker during the winter closure. Jack suffers a psychotic episode, threatening the lives of Wendy and Danny, who try to escape by any means necessary. The death of Jack, a monstrous father, allows Danny to substitute him with a more positive figure, embodied by Dick Halloran, the chef of the Overlook Hotel, who also possesses the gift of the shining.

• Stanley Kubrick, *The Shining*, 1980 (film)

In 1980, Stanley Kubrick adapted Stephen King's bestselling novel with author Diane Johnson for the big screen, with Jack Nicholson and Shelley Duvall in the roles of the Torrance parents. He removed different narrative ingredients, such as Jack's alcoholism or the numerous explicit references placed by King to pay homage to his mentors (Ray Bradbury, Edgar Allan Poe, Shirley Jackson). Kubrick aimed to create the best horror film possible, integrating his own obsessions, such as the intimacy of the couple, the plasticity of the mental space, systemic male violence, and the schizophrenia of society that alienates citizens from birth.

Although Stephen King rather enjoyed Kubrick's film, which highlights the red colour in all its shades, he remained dissatisfied with the filmmaker's treatment of his book and proposed his own adaptation of *The Shining* in a mini-series for ABC (1997).

SELF-PORTRAIT OF THE AUTHOR AS BOOKS

Stephen King readily uses the word "compulsion" to describe his relationship with writing. This need to create horrific stories from his mind and body involves a significant amount of time spent reading and absorbing other stories from various genres. He claims to read an average of about a hundred books per year. When King talks about his favourite books, and if one wants to create a list of books and authors that have influenced him, one must quickly move beyond the horror genre to embrace all forms of literature, as well as television and film fiction. By stopping at a small thirty books for a literary self-portrait, the names of Shirley Jackson, Richard Matheson, and H.P. Lovecraft would appear first. They would be followed by Peter Straub, Ray Bradbury, and Anne Rice. Frederic Brown, Daphne Du Maurier, J.G. Ballard, and William Golding would close the list. Upon closer inspection, based on

King's media statements, he has revealed at least ten lists of his ten favourite books in interviews since the early 1980s, with different book titles each time, giving an idea of the multitude of authors he reveres, from Ursula Le Guin to William Kotzwinkle, and Joyce Carol Oates.

THE RED ROSE

Everything is ambivalent in the world of symbols, and particularly in that of colours. Each of them doubles itself into two opposing identities. Over the time, the two faces sometimes tend to merge.

The red rose clearly carries this contradiction, which is expressed somewhere between joy and danger. One immediately thinks of love and invokes the romantic imagination, a means of declaring one's love to the person who dazzles one's. But beneath its leaves, it hides deadly thorns, on which heroes and heroines of tales prick themselves, from *Alice in Wonderland* to *The Little Prince*.

Throughout history, the red colour has oscillated between being an expression of wealth and that of prohibition. According to one of the many stories that link red and roses, this flower, the favourite of the goddess Aphrodite, would have been created from the blood of Adonis, her human

lover. He was killed by Ares, the god of war, who was also in love with Aphrodite. Mad with jealousy, Ares would have sent a wild boar to get rid of his rival. Injured, Adonis began to bleed. A tear from Aphrodite mingled with this blood, giving birth to the rose.

■ BLUE MAGGIE NELSON

What does Maggie Nelson's blue look like? Surely it's a mixture of Egyptian blue, which accompanies you from one world to another, and electric blue, which illuminates and paralyses at the same time.

The author explored the blue colour in her book *Bluets*, published in 2009 by Wave Books, and translated into French in 2019 by Éditions du Sous-Sol. It's a confessional book that follows the course of her inner adventure, made up of desires and expectations, but also a book of detachment that slowly distances oneself from the loved one in order to better turn away when the time comes.

In the exhibition, some fragments of the book are isolated to be displayed alongside other images, artistic or media-related, simple landscapes, or objects from the museum's collections. Exhibiting a book is part of our mission. We show many of them, using

them to illustrate eras, destinies, artists, or techniques. But we had not yet gone all the way with the logic: an exhibition devoted to a single book, which would come to unfold in space without betraying the spirit of the one who wrote it.

In addition to this blue part, the place of waves is highlighted to tell how blue has evolved over time. What does the blue colour make us perceive and feel, this colour which knows how to be so atmospheric and calming, or on the contrary, plunge us into an ice bath, in the heart of a raging storm, or under an unexpected and restorative downpour?

BLUE

The first Ancient dyes associated with blue were used by Celtic and Germanic cultures, who used woad (guastum), a plant whose colouring principle (indigo) is found in its leaves. Indigo is also found in the indigo plant, a shrub from warmer regions that is widely sold in markets in the Near East, Africa, and Asia, but remains an expensive product mainly used for high-quality fabrics.

The Bible mentions several gems and precious stones, including two that are sometimes confused in texts: sapphire and lapis lazuli. Lapis lazuli comes from the Orient (Siberia, China, Tibet, Iran) and provides the blue pigment that painters can use. As its price is high, it is mainly used to cover small surfaces and is often replaced by azurite.

Blue was generally inconspicuous in ancient cultures and the Middle Ages until the 12th century, when it was discovered as one of the most praised colours, both aesthetically and symboli-

cally, like red in the previous millennium.

Blue first represented the mourning colour worn by the Virgin Mary after the death of her son. The shades of blue became brighter as illuminators and glassmakers drew inspiration from new conceptions of light inherited from builders and the latest theological concepts surrounding the cult of Mary.

In Europe, coats of arms were increasingly coloured with shades of azure. Azure and blue quickly became symbols of the French royalty, inspiring the entire chromatic palette in Europe in the 13th and 14th centuries.

Commercial activities related to blue began to emerge in the economic landscape from 1230 onwards, based on woad, whose crushed leaves had to dry to form a paste called pastel, which played a crucial role in dyeing fabrics. This "blue gold" that made cities like Toulouse or Erfurt rich in the 15th century was soon challenged by the more efficient indigo from the Antilles and the New World.

Another competition came from the black colour, which dyers finally had learned to dye in several shades from the 14th century onwards. Numerous laws thus came to regulate the wearing of colours in Europe, partly to limit the often sumptuous expenses for the purchase of accessories and clothing, but also to morally and socially anchor the separation of classes and sexes based on the colours worn in public space.

Merchants, who were required to wear black clothing, inspired princes and foreign kings, making black a remarkable colour throughout Europe and during the entire 15th century.

Blue soon joined black as part of morally noble colours, praised by the Protestant Reformation from the 16th century onwards.

The invention of three or four colour engraving by Jakob Christof Le Blond in 1717 gradually popularised printing, using the three primary colours (Red, Yellow, Blue), which would later become the CMYK for-

mat (Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, Black).

In the 18th century, blue became one of the favorite colours of European populations. It started with the creation of the Prussian blue in Berlin, an artificial pigment that allowed for new shades of the colour while democratising its use, which had been very limited until then. Blue was worn daily, along with black and gray, at court and in the city. Light blue was worn by peasants, then by the bourgeoisie and aristocrats. The Romantic literary movement later celebrated the blue colour, the colour of the sky and melancholy, which became the blues at the end of the 19th century, a contraction of the English expression "Blue devils", which can be translated as "dark thoughts". The success of Goethe's first novel, *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774), whose hero wore a blue jacket, further fueled enthusiasm for this colour in Europe.

The predominant place of blue in clothing continued throughout the

19th century, from the honorary role of this colour in military and political dress to the use of denim as workwear from 1870, then as casual wear from the 1930s.

Blue remains the most beloved colour in the West today, both consensual and mysterious, synonymous with both turmoil and tranquility, coldness and sadness, neutrality and abandonment, like the sea and the waves that are most commonly associated with it.

MAGGIE NELSON

Maggie Nelson is an American author and poet, born in 1973, who teaches literature at the University of Southern California, where she lives. She has written two books based on her personal history, which deal with the murder of her aunt in 1969: *Jane: A Murder* (2005) and *The Red Parts: Autobiography of a Trial* (2007). Inspired by the poet Sylvia Plath, to whom she dedicated a thesis, as well as the works of Roland Barthes, Paul Ceylan, and Hélène Cixous, she is particularly interested in hybrid and fragmented texts, as well as in nuances to be added to language to better get rid of it.

Maggie Nelson, originally from San Francisco, received her aesthetic education in New York City's East Village in the 1990s, following in the footsteps of Patti Smith or queer writer and performer Eileen Myles. A professional dancer at the time, she then embarked on literary studies in 1998 that led her to write her first poe-

try collection in 2001, *Shiner*.

Accustomed to documentary writing, from which two of her most recent essays originate, *The Art of Cruelty* (2011) and *On Freedom* (2021), she has achieved public and critical success thanks to two other publications, in 2009 and 2015. *Bluets*, first (2009), in which she describes her temporary and consuming obsession with the blue colour, following a breakup. And *The Argonauts*, in 2015, which chronicles her family life and her relationship with her non-binary partner, Harry Dodge.

She is considered today as one of the most unique voices in American literature, developing a unique and fluid way of approaching writing and thought, with a desire to move away from fiction, from «stories» that «trap» to dig her own furrow of resistance and freedom.

• *Bluets*, 2009

With *Bluets*, Maggie Nelson publishes a journal of the quest for blue, divided into 240 chronological fragments, which give an intimidating view of the author's intimacy as well as her way of linking her past to writing in order to better keep a real record of it. In the book, the blue colour is used as a subterfuge first, a substitute substance for desired and dreamed love, before becoming an addiction, an obsessive search, in order to relate everything linked to this changing tone.

SELF-PORTRAIT AS
BOOKS

Maggie Nelson's literary universe encompasses three main areas: contemporary poetry, politically-tinged non-fiction, and classic literature from the 19th and first half of the 20th century. Her favorite authors include poets Annie Dillard, Lorine Niedecker, David Wojnarowicz, and Paul Celan; writers Henry James, Virginia Woolf, Joan Didion, and James Baldwin; and thinkers Judith Butler, Susan Sontag, and Gilles Deleuze. An atlas of noteworthy books for Maggie Nelson is displayed in exhibition rooms, representing the different components of her literary palette. Some works have only been published in English or are difficult to locate in French translation.

THE WAVES

The waves can sometimes be destructive, representing the raging sea and the powerful movement of turbulent water, but can also symbolize a calm sea, a soothing ebb and flow rhythm. In Greek mythology, the waves are personified by Benthesisikyme, daughter of Poseidon, god of the seas, while in North mythology they are embodied by the daughters of Ægir, a giant of the seas. The blue colour takes on different meanings depending on whether we imagine the waves that took the Titanic in 1912, and those that bathe Berthe Morizot's seascapes. Turner's blue-black storms resonate with the very light blue of Hokusai's high waves. Films set in or under the sea also play with this complexity, whether in Tom Moore's animated feature film *Song of the Sea* (2014), set in Ireland, or in Luc Besson's *The Big Blue*, released in 1988. Each time, the deep blue and transparency of the water alternate to give the waves their fluid, unpre-

dictable character. Finally, how can we depict waves without evoking the tragic disappearances of refugees and the daily rescues that take place in the Mediterranean Sea? To remember this, the image of the paper boat-shaped war memorial, created in Malta by architects Rune Jacobson and David Drago in 2008, is highlighted to symbolise the disappearance at sea of 310 children who came from Australia between 1950 and 1965 looking for a better life.

■ RVB/RGB, A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE CITIES OF LYON AND LEIPZIG

To celebrate their relationship and complementarity in Europe, the Printing museums in Lyon and Leipzig have decided to embark on a joint partnership around the Red, Green and Blue colours. 2023 is a special year for both museums, as January 23 marked the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Élysée Treaty promoting Franco-German understanding. *RVB* exhibition then showcases a selection of works printed with the graphic workshops of the city and region of Leipzig to compose a local and contemporary graphic panorama, representative of today's colour printing.

This selection of engravings, lithographs, screen prints, books, and posters will come in particular from the workshops of the Leipzig Academy of Fine Arts, the Stein_Werk, carpe plumbum, Grafikwerkstatt Werk II, Ate-

lier für zeitgenössische Radierung, Riso Club Leipzig, Künstlerhaus Hohenossig, and Hochdruckpartner galleries and workshops.

Leipzig Museum will also present this same selection of printed works in an *RGB* exhibition at the end of 2023.

Leipzig Printing Museum is located in the Plagwitz district, Southwest of the city. Its collections showcase numerous ancient machines that are in working order and allow the public to print pages and letters to better understand these fundamental skills.

As a strong defender of the material and immaterial heritage of printing, the Leipzig Museum is part of the same network of international museums as the Lyon Museum, the AEPM (Association of European Printing Museums), and the IAPM (International Association of Printing Museums), which bring together nearly a hundred places, museums, galleries and graphic workshops around the world.

To extend this binational partnership and to promote reflection on colour and its emotions between France and Germany, the exhibition is the trigger for an original artistic and cultural exchange between a class of the primary school of the Cité scolaire internationale of Lyon and a French class of the Franco-German primary school Pablo Neruda in the City of Leipzig: a "work in progress" project to be found in our galleries!

■ ALIX BOILLOT

From May 3 to October 8, 2023, the SUBS, a living space for artistic experiences in Lyon, offers you a chromatic and aquatic experience: *Blue*. Artist Alix Boillot takes on the challenge of transforming the esplanade of the SUBS by imagining a monochromatic and multi-dimensional work: a central basin with a scenic agora, fountain sculptures at the four corners of the terrace, rainwater collectors, cool oases, a suspended garden, and flags that naturally announce the colour... blue!

At the musée de l'Imprimerie et de la Communication graphique, the artist set up in the courtyard as an extension of her installation at the SUBS. Claiming author Maggie Nelson as one of her references, her work naturally accompanies the words of *Bluets* in exhibition spaces with her blue pencil drawings.

Alix Boillot designs sculptures, installations, scenographies, performances, and

editions. Her work has been presented at the Ménagerie de Verre (Paris), SUBS (Lyon), Fondation Ricard (Paris), Saint Ignace Church on the occasion of Nuit Blanche (Paris), Plastique Danse Flore (Versailles), CND (Pantin), CNDC (Angers), Festival d'Automne (Paris), and the Avignon Festival. She will be a resident of the Villa Médicis in 2023-2024.

■ SARA DE GOUY

Sara de Gouy is a space designer, State-qualified architect, and visual artist. She established her studio in Lyon in 2009 after studying Applied Arts in Space Design at La Martinière Diderot and then at the National School of Architecture in Lyon.

Among the many facets of her work, the relationship between colour, space, and light is a common denominator in her various projects of different scales and complexities. The designer uses colour to alter perceptions of the worked space. Sara de Gouy always works in a contextual manner, and co-designing with users is part of her process. To do this, she leads participatory workshops with the inhabitants of the sites where she works. Colours and what they evoke for each individual are among the topics of exchange with users. Colour is indeed a pedagogical tool, a universal means of communication, and a vector of imagination. Colour alters our sensory re-

lationship to space. It is also concretely used, associated with light, as a tool for functional organization of space, as a spatiotemporal marker, or it can contribute to well-being.

Her dedicated itinerary retraces the genesis, conception, and realisation of three projects: *Archisculptures*, a custom-made sculpture play area for the Toas Amrouche - Le Cordouan school group in Saint-Denis (93); the ephemeral light installation "Chromatik Therapy" for the Solstis - Lumière d'Artistes light festival, at Place des Barricades in Brussels, Belgium; and "Entre-temps", a permanent digital and light artwork for Le Silo performance hall in Marseille (13).

■ AUDIENCES

To further explore the themes of this exhibition in a fun and creative way, visits and workshops are offered from April to September for adults, children, and families. From typography workshops to pop-up or magic paper workshops, there is something for all ages and tastes!

Want more? Museums Night, Music Festival, screenings, and artist meetings are just some of the events that will punctuate and animate the exhibition: follow the program on the website, our newsletter, or via social media!

CHILDREN AT «WORK»!

Deidamia, the little girl from the painting by Veronese, has come out of her frame: comic book author Bastien Castres has brought her to life to lead children on their visit to the exhibition.

Follow her through our spaces to explore colours from a different perspective!

The musée de l'Imprimerie et de la Communication graphique continues its objectives of strengthening social ties, emancipation, inclusion, and access to culture for all. Because children are full actors in their city, the museum works throughout the year with school groups.

The CM1/CM2 class from Condé School in the 2nd arrondissement of Lyon was involved in the conception of the *RVB* exhibition. The pupils were able to discover the behind-the-scenes of an exhibition and participate in its elaboration by reflecting on their perception of colours. They chose to focus on four topics present in the exhibition: garden green,

natural green, blue sea, and the "colours" of playing cards. The pupils thus custom-made the games in the French booklet, created, designed, and made by the children, for children... and grown-ups!

■ The RGB exhibition was organised under the supervision of Joseph Belle-tante, director of the musée de l'Imprimerie et de la Communication graphique

With the museum team:

- General Secretariat: Kate Janier, Stéphane Poncet, Marjolaine Bertholat, Émilie Béné, Stéphane Colombon, Mélanie Seillet, Laëtitia Thyssen

- Exhibitions/Collections: Hélène-Sybille Beltran assisted by Mylène Legros, Juliette Mermet, Fernande Nicaise, with the support of Camille Leveaux

- Installation: Patrice Le-comte, Virginie André, Lucas Ferret, Leny Gimazane, Jean-Rémi Massin, Bernard Rocamora, David Thévenet

- Communication:

Sarah Lowicki

- Documentation / Webmaster:

Pierre-Antoine Lebel

- Public Development: Céline Carducci,

Philippe Weiss

- Typography workshop: Fernande Nicaise,

Sabrina Saunière

- Mediation: Françoise Alex, Camille Boileau, Bastien Castres, Romain Gabaud, Véronique Giry, Charline Grimaldi, Rozenn Le Gall, Joséphine Malherbe

- Reservations: Pauline Royer

- Reception/bookstore: Apolline Mullier, with Virginie André, Anna Barioz, Rachel Decloitre, Guillaume Deschamps, Jean-Rémi Massin, Hubert Passot, Éric Roubaudi

- Cleaning: Joyce Owusu

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Lenders and partners:

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RVB
Rouge Stephen King
Vert Véronèse
Bleu Maggie Nelson

Exhibition from April 7
to September 3, 2023
Open Wednesday to Sunday
from 10:30 am to 6 pm.

To go further and explore the themes of this exhibition in a fun and creative way, visits and workshops will be scheduled from April to September, for adults, children and families. From the typography workshop to the engraving workshop, there is something for all ages and all tastes!
Visit our website to consult the program and book your activity.

Do you want more? Find more content, a playlist to listen to in the exhibition, games for children to download and print, links to our social networks and our newsletter:
www.imprimerie.lyon.fr

Musée de l'Imprimerie et de la
Communication graphique
13, rue de la Poulallerie, Lyon
(Cordeliers metro)
T. 04 78 37 65 98