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SWARTHMORE COLLEGE BULLETIN

color





GETTING LOST IN COLOR

... and finding your way home

by Phillip Stern '84

Q UITE A FEW years back, my wife, Tamar Chansky Stern '84, and I repainted our dining room ... or should I say we tried. For two weeks, we agonized over the color. It would be orange, we agreed, but *which*? Upon seeing the startling hue I had rolled onto the wall, Tamar, typically not prone to losing her grip, was incensed: "Is this a joke? Are you trying to make me crazy?" Behold the power of color.

Rifling through the paint chips, we found a sweeter orange, but I knew this shade would never wake me up in the morning. After hours of debate, we came upon a solution: Use *both* oranges, layering a semi-opaque glaze of the second over the first. *Voilà!* Sumptuously appetizing, suggestive of orange peel and the Italian villa we could only imagine going to in those years of repaying student loan debt. Sometimes, two wrong oranges make a right.

SO HOW DO WE MAKE CHOICES about color? To me, color implies motion, the tendency not to stay put: restlessness and adventure. Put a color chart in front of me and I feel like I've been invited to play a game in which there are no correct answers, only questions: What do we want this room, this design, this painting, this *magazine* to feel like when people experience it? What do we want them to take away? You have a concept—a feeling, maybe some words if you're lucky—but what does that really look like? You get lost in this game, and you find your way out.

This game of color drags many things into it. At Swarthmore, we have the Chromatic Cabinet, an interdisciplinary, informal gathering founded by art professor Logan Grider and physics professor Tristan Smith, which meets three times a year to share perspectives on working with color.

Lured by its mysterious and mischievous name, evocative of Narnia and Dr. Caligari, I attended a meeting and was delighted to find myself in the middle of a discussion about synesthesia in poetry. French professor Jean-Vincent Blanchard led a discussion about Rimbaud's "Voyelles" (translated by Christian Bök) in which all the vowels and their sounds have a color—mostly unappealing:

*A black, E white, I red, U green, O blue: the vowels.
I will tell thee, one day, of thy newborn portents:
A, the black velvet cuirass of flies whose essence
commingles, abuzz, around the cruellest of smells ...*

I was thrilled to be back in class with a group of Swarthmoreans talking about color and poetry, in French and English. What an opportunity to catch a whiff of unsavory poetic hues, feel the shiver of refractory sounds, and as Grider says, "ask the dumb questions."

MAYBE IT DOESN'T SURPRISE YOU that color is happening at good ol' "staunch and gray" Swarthmore, especially if you know the splendid arboreal beauty of campus. Think of glowing vaults of yellow leaves over Crum Creek; white-, tan-, and black-mottled sycamore bark; pink-fleshed magnolia petals on the ground in April, as thick as snow; the dense green that envelops the campus in June. What's really remarkable to me is that here the notion of "colorful" can include the thoughtful, stable, humble, well-behaved hues of gray and brown in stone just as much as all the raucous reds, purples, and yellows in the Arboretum's collection.

And what of garnet? As the College's print designer, I am familiar with much colorful disagreement over the true

nature of our school's color. It has many official incarnations, depending on whether it is ink on paper, pixels on your screen, dye in clothing, or paint on signs. It has changed over time. I say this lack of color consistency—a rejection of exclusion and authority—is a good thing, rooted deeply in the ideas of the women and men who founded this College.

IF YOU ASK ME what are *my* favorite colors, I am tempted to say none. I am a color explorer traveling under no flag ... well, I do have a tendency. My eye keeps going back to blues: the midnight dusk of skies, the indigo swirled with turquoise of tropical seas, a strange flickering gleam you can sometimes see looking closely at snow, the steely blue-gray of the North Atlantic. Periwinkle. Cobalt. Azurite. Prussian.

In her compelling collection of essays *A Field Guide to Getting Lost*, Rebecca Solnit writes of "the blue of distance" and the fascination it held for lost figures, like the mystical, protoconceptual artist Yves Klein, who famously leapt "into the Void" from a second-story window and who patented a certain incarnation of ultramarine blue.

Heavily influenced by *The Lord of the Rings*, *Star Trek*, and *2001* as a kid, I would fall into that blue trance, thinking of going far away and possibly never returning. As if to practice for such a major voyage, I would get lost on solitary walks in the thickets and coves beyond the backyard, but of course come home, packed with material for maps and dreams.

I also took drawing classes with an elderly painter, a group of kids sketching cows and boats in charcoal on Saturday mornings. One rainy day he asked me to do a pastel of a decoy duck he had in his studio, but in an imagined environment. Looking at my finished work, he remarked only on the water, which he described as "a strange, almost electric blue."

That made-up blue was the beginning of my adventure in color.

NOW IT'S BLUENESS ... and redness, yellowness—all the qualities of *all* the colors—that keeps me up at night.

The artists who fascinate me most are those who fearlessly use color to warp, enrich, and tunnel into the primordial monolith of space, like the *Exotic Birds* of Frank Stella, whose restless palette teases out new surfaces that we can virtually walk through. The point of going on such walks and getting lost is always to find a new way back that shows you home in a different light.

There is the sense that many things are possible when it comes to color, and given enough time and understanding, they will all happen. The Stern household epic of many oranges continued, peacefully, with other walls, sporting peach or sunshine or adobe.

EXPLORING COLOR is a relatively safe way to get lost, a friendly terra incognita, the beginning and end of the spectrum clearly fixed, the whole thing constrained by the orderly wave nature of light. The rest is fair game for the discovery of new color pathways, by all of us.

On the following pages, get lost among the many ways Swarthmoreans live with color thrumming in their lives and work ... and find *your* way back—changed forever. **9**

Re₂₂

Or₂₄

Ye₂₅

Pi₂₆

Gr₂₈

Pu₃₀

Bl₃₂

Br₃₄

Bl-Wh₃₆



“The aim of our studies is to prove that color is the most relative means of artistic expression, that we never really perceive what color is physically.”

—Josef Albers, artist and author of *Interaction of Color*

Re

D IS PASSIONATE. And love—which often commandeers the color red—was one reason **Ross Ogden '66** joined the American Red Cross as a high school junior. He wanted a way to meet more girls.

“It worked,” he laughs.

But he has stayed there 57 years for *other* heart-related reasons.

“Helping neighbors in need knows no boundaries,” says Ogden, who lends a hand however he can, in one case consoling a young sailor whose wife had just died. For his contributions, he received the Red Cross’s Harriman Award for Distinguished Volunteer Service in 2010, as well as Swarthmore’s inaugural Arabella Carter Award for community service.

The inverse of the Swiss flag, the Red Cross symbol is one of the most recognized globally. Ogden has witnessed the iconic emblem bringing expressions of relief and gratitude.

“I’ve seen this in action,” he says, “from those whose lives were destroyed by hurricanes to U.S. servicemen and women in Kosovo to a cancer patient receiving life-prolonging Red Cross blood and families reunited after 9/11.”

The simple act of helping people when they need it most—showing love—remains Ogden’s most powerful inspiration.

“In the end,” he says, “it’s neighbors, friends, and compassionate individuals who do the most to provide relief.” —KC



DURING THE French Revolution, the presence—or absence—of red and blue on the cockades that adorned hats and jackets led to some gravely important actions.

“And beheadings!” says **Megan Brown**, an assistant professor of history at Swarthmore.

Most famously, news that troops loyal to the royal family had stomped on tricolor cockades while sporting white monarchist ones led working-class Parisians to march by the thousands to Versailles in 1789. (White was associated with the House of Bourbon, while red and blue meant a Paris connection.)

“In the tricolor cockade—and flag—we see the merging of those colors,” says Brown. “This should remind us that, at least in the early days of the Revolution, it was not evident that the king would be entirely excluded from future governance, let alone executed.

“We mark the passage of time not just by major breaks, but also by continuity,” she adds. “Tracking colors, especially as they’re used in symbols or rituals, is one way of seeing how groups of people attempted to harness traditions.” —KC

GARNET STRONG

“Wearing the garnet ‘S’ represents a strong culture,” says Cameron Wiley ’19, the varsity men’s basketball team’s junior point guard from Atlanta.

Being Garnet, for the athletes and scholars at Swarthmore, could reflect the gemstone’s symbolism of strength. The original Swarthmore colors were changed in 1888, when, as the *Phoenix* later related, “at a mass meeting of the students, pearl and maroon were abolished, and after considerable discussion, garnet was unanimously chosen as the succeeding color.”

The Garnet’s Wiley, an honors philosophy major and history minor, was voted the tournament’s Most Outstanding Player in 2017 on a team that won the program’s first Centennial Conference Championship, but his transition to college athletics wasn’t easy: A concussion his freshman year kept him sidelined for several months.

“It was a frustrating period,” he says, “because I wanted to lead our team and see my goals come to fruition.”

He attributes his eventual success to a willingness to ask for—and listen to—advice ... and to be patient. After all, garnets are formed over time and under pressure.

“On our team, we have to hold each other accountable,” says Wiley. “That’s where the period of growth comes.” —KC

“Orange is not just a color to me but a movement to educate the public about the use of Agent Orange, and the legacy of the toxic substance for all who were unknowingly exposed to it.”

—Charles Bailey '67, director emeritus of the Aspen Institute's Agent Orange in Vietnam Program and co-author of *From Enemies to Partners: Vietnam, the U.S. and Agent Orange*



Ye

ELLOW powder the shade of a hard-boiled egg yolk fills a small vial in Swarthmore's most colorful interdisciplinary lab, where art and science intersect. Made by combining potassium chromate and zinc chloride in solution—and then turning it basic—the pigment exudes a bright, cheerful hue when used in a painting.

At least, at first.

“Zinc yellow starts out a lemon color, then turns a greenish-brown over time,” says **Therese Ton '19**, who researched and concocted the pigment as part of fall's Art, Chemistry, and Conservation class, co-taught by chemistry's Ginger Heck and art history's Patricia Reilly. One infamous example of zinc yellow in decline: the pointillist masterpiece *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande*

Jatte by Georges Seurat, whose sunny seaside hill has muddied over the past 130 years.

Certain other properties made zinc yellow a once-popular pigment, Ton notes: “It's known to be anti-corrosive, so it was used as a primer on anything that covered metal—on the wheels of airplanes, in machinery, on cars. You know yellow Ford Mustangs? That's the pigment. And if you mix it with black, you get Army green—the coating they used on military vehicles.”

But zinc yellow, she adds, has a major black mark: “It's an antibacterial and nothing can grow on it, because it's *really* toxic. They didn't realize it at the time, but it's a huge carcinogen—and a large number of factory workers came out with lung cancer.

“So, basically,” Ton says, “as a pigment, as an industry, zinc yellow is just not good.” —ES

+ SEE VIDEO: bulletin.swarthmore.edu



Or

ANGE is a cheery antidote to the typically bland world of residential real estate,” says **Eli Spevak '93**, owner of Orange Splot LLC in Portland, Ore. “It's an artistic statement of freedom.”

Spevak's firm has been building affordable homes with a focus on sustainability for 15 years. He loves warm colors, gravitating toward them to boost his spirits, so he plucked the name for his company from *The Big Orange Splot* by Daniel Pinkwater (note the colorful last name), “an awesome kid's book that shows how a subversive splash of color on an unsuspecting house can inspire and transform a street.”

“Orange has always been about going against conformity,” he says. “I'd much rather have a city block with a mixture of aesthetics. Living in the Pacific Northwest is great, but the weather is often gray and dreary. Orange just makes me smile a little more.” —KC

PSSST ... COLOR IS AN ILLUSION

Perception is a tool that helps us decode what we see, and color is just one means of interpreting that information, according to Frank Durgin, the Elizabeth and Sumner Hayward Professor of Psychology and director of the Swarthmore Visual Perception Lab, where students use a virtual-reality system to study space perception.

“Color, as Isaac Newton noted, isn't really in the light,” says Durgin. “Our experience is that we seem to simply see color, but it's really much more like a construction of our minds.”

By “our” Durgin means trichromats: humans (and a handful of other primates) who have three types of receptor cones in the retina that are responsible for the perception of three colors.

“They are sensitive to overlapping distributions of long, medium, and short wavelengths of light all within a very narrow band of the electromagnetic spectrum,” he says.

The colors we see can be understood as ratios of activity of

these three cone receptor types. So, when short wavelengths are prevalent, we see blue.

“Although it horrifies a color scientist to label them this way, you could say that the short, medium, and long correspond to blue, green, and red, respectively,” Durgin says. “However, the light itself isn't colored—we just see it that way.”

Then why can we organize colors into a wheel?

“From these three types of sensors, our minds can construct only a three-dimensional representation,” he says. “If our species had evolved to have more or fewer sensor types, our experience would be very different.”

How other animals see color is difficult to know, Durgin says: Most nonhumans have two cones versus three (some have 14!), “and we can't talk to the animals about what surfaces look like to them. We can't even be confident that each of us humans experience 'red' as the same color.” —KC



NKWASHING has **Lori van Dam '86** seeing red.

"I was getting my car serviced," says the CEO of Susan G.

Komen New England, "and they were selling pink keychains and pink air fresheners—and none of the proceeds were going anywhere except into the pockets of people who made them."

It's an unfortunate side effect of a cause being so closely connected to a color—an idea pioneered by Komen founder Nancy Brinker to unify the organization and pay tribute to her late sister, Susan Komen, whose favorite color was pink.

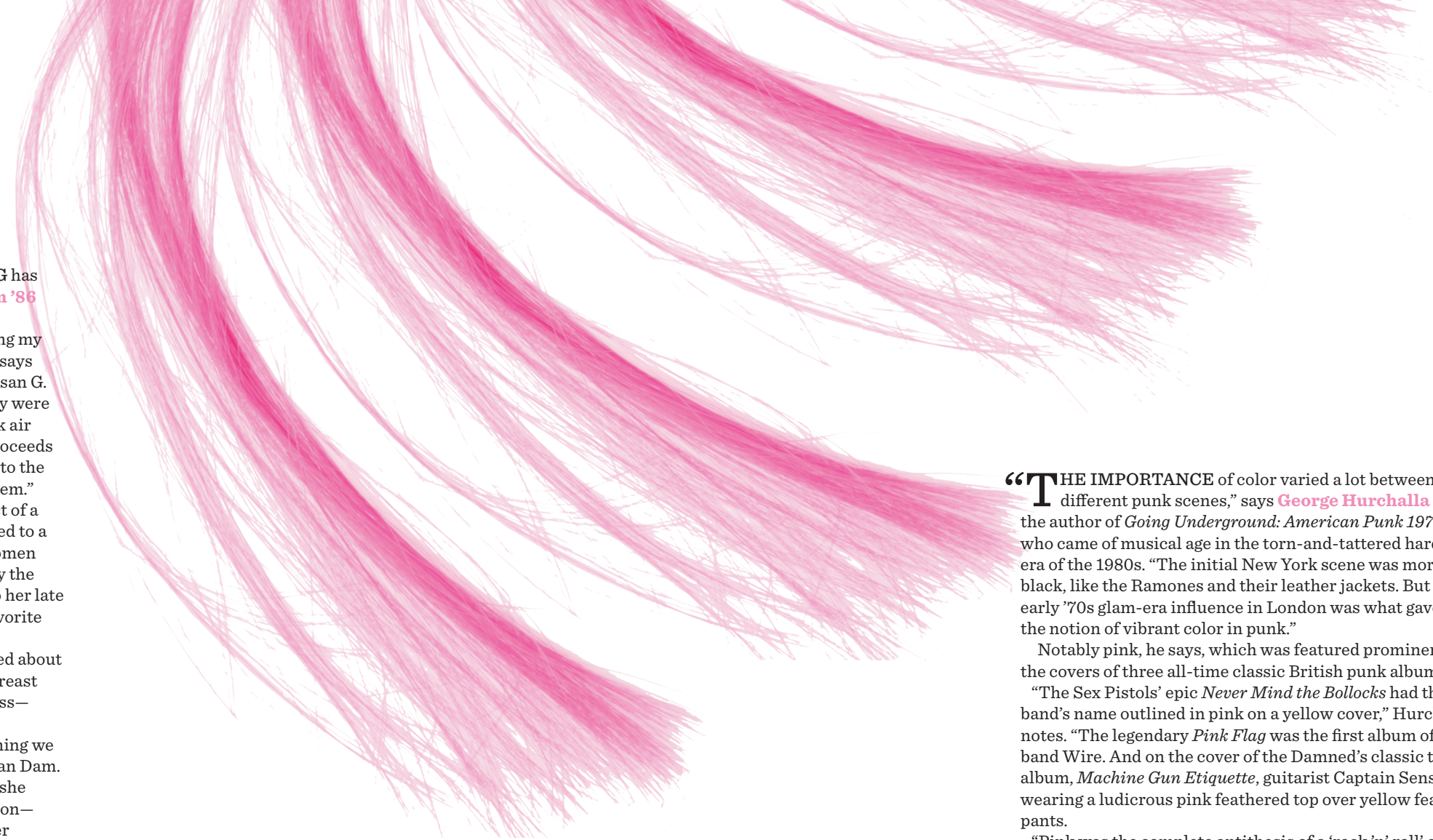
"For a long time, people talked about pink and its association with breast cancer as being about awareness—taking breast cancer out of the shadows and saying it's something we can actually talk about," says van Dam.

But awareness isn't enough, she adds: Even with pink's saturation—especially during Breast Cancer Awareness Month (which Komen hopes to rebrand as "Breast Cancer Action Month")—44,000 people die of breast cancer annually in the U.S., with one in eight women diagnosed in her lifetime.

Which is why Komen launched "More than Pink," with a goal of halving the nation's breast cancer mortality rate by 2026. On the local level, affiliates are working to increase access to care and reduce disparities in outcomes for women of color.

For many patients and survivors, pink symbolizes hope, community, and support—but it's important for pink to mean more than green.

"You can buy all manner of pink items that don't advance the cause," van Dam says. "The only time pink upsets me is when it's on socks that don't go anywhere." —ES



"Since its cousin red is the color of war, I like to think that pink could become the hue of nonviolent battle, and that learning to embrace it may be a very small first step toward ending the war on women for good."

—Sarah Archer '00, "A Western Cultural History of Pink, from Madame de Pompadour to Pussy Hats"

+ FULL ESSAY: bit.ly/PinkHistory

"THE IMPORTANCE of color varied a lot between different punk scenes," says **George Hurchalla '88**, the author of *Going Underground: American Punk 1979–1989*, who came of musical age in the torn-and-tattered hardcore era of the 1980s. "The initial New York scene was more about black, like the Ramones and their leather jackets. But the early '70s glam-era influence in London was what gave us the notion of vibrant color in punk."

Notably pink, he says, which was featured prominently on the covers of three all-time classic British punk albums.

"The Sex Pistols' epic *Never Mind the Bollocks* had the band's name outlined in pink on a yellow cover," Hurchalla notes. "The legendary *Pink Flag* was the first album of the band Wire. And on the cover of the Damned's classic third album, *Machine Gun Etiquette*, guitarist Captain Sensible is wearing a ludicrous pink feathered top over yellow feathered pants.

"Pink was the complete antithesis of a 'rock 'n' roll' color, which punk was trying to shake up," he adds. "It was vibrant, it was gender-bending, and for all these reasons, it upset people—mainly men—a lot." —ES



COLOR AND CATARACTS

Before I had cataract surgery, I sought out several friends who'd had the procedure done. One or two mentioned that before surgery, their vision had become foggy, as though they were looking through a yellow filter. Afterward, colors just popped.

I thought I was seeing colors just fine—was I in for a surprise! I had the procedure done in both eyes, about a week apart, and was amazed at how color perception in the "new" eye was so much more intense than the remaining "bad" eye. It was easy to compare during that intervening week, and I kept covering one eye and then the other to see the difference, not really believing it. Colors definitely were more brilliant—especially in the dark-pink, magenta, and yellow ranges.

There were some amusing side effects: Soon after the surgeries, I discovered that some outfits I had assembled for their matching colors no longer really matched. And sometimes at stores, when I see pants and tops labeled with the same color, the items look a little off, particularly when the fabric is different.

I have read that people can perceive the same color differently. So, is my new vision the real deal? What is "real"? —JULIE BUNCE ELFVING '65

Gr

EEN FORESTS, emeralds, and limes, OK. But green fire?

Kathryn Riley '10, a visiting assistant professor

at Swarthmore, urges her students to study chemistry through an intellectual kaleidoscope. Unlocking the causes of multicolored fire is one such experiment.

“Different metal ions added to the fire absorb energy as heat and then emit energy as light with unique colors—for example, copper produces a beautiful green flame,” says Riley. “The hottest part is the light-blue interior of a flame, with a temperature around 1,500 degrees Celsius.”

Having embraced the liberal arts here as a student, when Riley returned as a faculty member, she wanted to enable her students to view science through multiple lenses and created an Instagram where she posts fire—and other elements—in all their scorching hues.

“Too often students see chemistry as equations and molecules on a page,” she says, “but science is art—and it’s colorful!” —KC

“Green is the color of energy being captured and transformed,” explains Associate Professor of Biology **Nick Kaplinsky**, a plant molecular geneticist who focuses on plant responses to high temperatures (bit.ly/NKaplinsky).

One peculiar celebrity in his toasty greenhouse is the *Amorphophallus titanum*—common name corpse flower—whose bloom can reach up to 8 feet tall, but takes up to 10 years to get there.

Its leaves look green because cells in the leaves hold chloroplasts, dynamic little “molecular factories” whose job is to trap the sun’s light energy and turn it into sugar. The chlorophyll in the leaves absorbs deep-blue and red light, Kaplinsky says, making the plant appear green.

In a showy last act when it finally blooms, the corpse flower emits the sharp scent of rotting flesh—a trait designed over millennia to attract the flies that pollinate its flowers. —KC



“I ALWAYS did like animals that could change color,” says **Francis Ge '17**, who collected and studied the nocturnal gray tree frog in Assistant Professor of Biology Alex Baugh’s animal communication seminar. The frog’s name is somewhat misleading, Ge says.

“Each frog has a unique mottled pattern on their dorsal side that ranges from nearly completely black, to a light creamy color, passing through really gorgeous shades of green and brown,” she says. “The Latin name *Hyla versicolor* means they change color, and in our experiment, we asked whether they changed color based on ambient temperature, background color, or both.”

They discovered that the arboreal dwellers are darkest on darker backgrounds and at colder

temperatures, which means they sense, process, and appropriately respond to their environments.

So the clever frogs—native to the eastern United States—use color-change to better match their background. But why? Ge learned that “cryptic coloration” could be an adaptation to escape being spotted by visually hunting predators like birds. It could also be a mode to stay warm, capturing more solar energy at lower temperatures.

“Color is something I take in, take note of, gather data about, and remain attentive to just by looking,” says Ge. “At least to the human eye, tree frogs on trees or lichen are extremely well-camouflaged, which is especially important when it’s cold and the frogs can’t escape predators very quickly—or at all.” —KC

“Redwood forests are quite dark and appear to have a muted color palette—different shades of green, and brighter colors in the form of flowers, mushrooms, and birds.”

—Alison Campbell '87, of California’s Muir Woods National Monument

MAKE ROOM FOR COLOR

A dazzling collection of pigments will line one wall, and hundreds of barcoded pigment cards will be available for checkout in the latest addition to McCabe Library.

Named for a matchbox couple, the new color-themed Frank '68 and Vera '70 Brown Study Room will also offer mobile physics demonstrations, including how to simulate a sunset, say assistant professors Logan Grider (art) and Tristan Smith (physics).

As co-founders of Swarthmore’s Chromatic Cabinet—a faculty/staff discussion group exploring color from every possible interdisciplinary angle—Grider and Smith turned a serendipitous conversation with the Browns last spring into a shared vision for this space, a newly designed seminar study room on McCabe’s second floor.

The room has a sentimental history: When Frank and Vera first started dating 50 years ago, they spent many studious hours there, until one day, Frank suddenly interrupted the silence to ask Vera to marry him.

“After I said ‘yes,’ we went right back to studying,” laughs Vera.

A lifetime later, the Browns wanted to ensure the room where their journey started—the Chromatic Cabinet’s current headquarters—will always inspire Swarthmore students to make memories as beautifully colored as their own.

“Swarthmore is a very special place,” they say. “It will always be in our hearts as the beginning of us.” —KC

Pu

RPLE, historically a color of royalty and nobility, took on a different meaning in the military, thanks to an act by Gen. George

Washington during the Revolutionary War.

“There’s a wonderful line in his order creating the original Badge of Military Merit: “The road to glory in a patriot army and a free country is thus open to all,” says **Sean Barney ’98**, recipient of the modern-day version of the honor, the Purple Heart. “Washington chose this color of aristocracy for an award that was the first of its kind—expressly for enlisted men and noncommissioned officers.

“By saying this was something that anyone could earn in this Army, it sent a broader message about what they were fighting for in the Revolution.”

And that egalitarian message lives on through today’s Purple Heart.

“This is the only medal that—whatever your rank, whatever race, whatever gender, documented or undocumented—if you bleed in service of your country, you receive it,” Barney says. “Nobody can decide that they’re not going to favor you with it.”

To Barney—a Marine Corps veteran of the Iraq War who was seriously wounded by a sniper in 2006 (bit.ly/BarneyEssay)—the Purple Heart symbolizes a willingness to sacrifice for fellow citizens, a virtue still meaningful in his current role as a Delaware public defender.

“There are many lawyers in our office who could do better for themselves financially in another area of practice,” he says, “but they’re committed to ensuring for all people that the rights we have in the Constitution—the rights the Founders fought for—are respected in the courts.” —ES



“Complex and contemplative, Ultra Violet suggests the mysteries of the cosmos, the intrigue of what lies ahead, and the discoveries beyond where we are now.”

—Pantone Color Institute, on its 2018 Color of the Year

“WHY YES, THERE IS a purple tree on campus!” reads a Swarthmore College Facebook post from 2015, soon after the dead weeping hemlock near Sharples was painted to honor its beauty and fragility.

But it won’t be there much longer: The tree will be removed this spring for safety reasons (as seen above, it’s beginning to fall apart) and to make way for a living replacement.

“I was keen to paint the dead hemlock,” says **Josh Coceano** of the

Scott Arboretum. “It had a great form, was in a prominent place on campus, and was a plant species that was dying in the wild.

“We are so quick to discard things as they age, die, deteriorate,” he adds. “This is especially true in gardens: Get rid of anything that looks less than perfect.”

The weeping hemlock became the third tree on campus to receive a colorful afterlife, following a Chinese maackia painted blue in 2006 and a

bur oak painted red in 2010.

“This time, orange and purple were the two colors up for debate,” says Coceano, with Royal Purple becoming the winning hue. As a compromise—and for contrast—a couple hundred orange tulips were planted underneath.

“Purple has long been a symbol of cooperation and bipartisanship,” Coceano says. “Honestly, it’s my favorite color in the garden. It engages and blends at the same time.” —ES

A SONG FOR YOUR EYES

“Color is central to all our projects in telling stories, representing experiences, and transforming places,” says Caitlin Butler ’06, chief strategy officer for Mural Arts Philadelphia.

As the nation’s largest public art program, Mural Arts is built on the idea that art ignites change. For 30 years, the program has connected artists and communities working to create art that transforms public spaces and individual lives.

“We sometimes describe our murals as Philadelphia’s autobiography,” says Butler. “Artists and residents co-create projects that highlight people, places, traditions, and ideas that are important to our communities.”

Established as part of the Philadelphia Anti-Graffiti Network, Mural Arts is led by artist Jane Golden H’98. A mural painter herself, Golden connects with graffiti writers to redirect their energies into constructive public art projects.

“For an artist, color is a tool,” says Butler. “It communicates emotions and energy, and it can help shape the message. If an artist uses colors one wouldn’t expect, it could be a challenge to viewers to question their assumptions, or look at things differently.”

With up to 100 public projects each year, Mural Arts also offers programs and learning opportunities for thousands of Philadelphia youths and adults.

“Many of our murals feature lush landscapes full of vibrant foliage and vivid botanicals—images desired by people lacking easy access to nature,” says Butler.

The Mural Arts outdoor gallery is now part of the civic landscape and a local source of pride, earning Philadelphia international recognition as the “City of Murals.”

“Color is an important part of what our artists are sharing, be it a memory, a symbol of their identity, or a place that they love,” says staff artist James Burns. “Like a musician working with notes, a painter uses a range of colors to create a song for your eyes.” —KC

BI

UE IS MUSICAL. As an instructor at Swarthmore, **Andrew Hauze '04** has twice performed George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* on piano along with the wind ensemble.

"I suspect the title had special resonance for Gershwin, a brilliant amateur painter, whose work so abounds in 'blue notes'—in which certain notes of the Western scales are lowered for expressive effect—and the influence of African-American musical styles," Hauze says. "It's great fun to unpack its many musical influences and to encourage the students to dig in, trying to bring out the vernacular nuances of this many-layered work."

While people have talked about "having the blues" or "the blue devils" for centuries, the blues as a musical form emerged in the U.S. after the Civil War.

"The expressive power of the blues now pervades so much of our culture, from the great torchbearers of the original style—such as Muddy Waters and B.B. King—to the rock and pop performers deeply influenced by the blues recordings they encountered early in their lives—such as the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, and Eric Clapton," says Hauze. "Musicians around the world now speak of blue notes, though this way of referencing the subtle inflections of blues musicians often oversimplifies a very nuanced practice." —KC

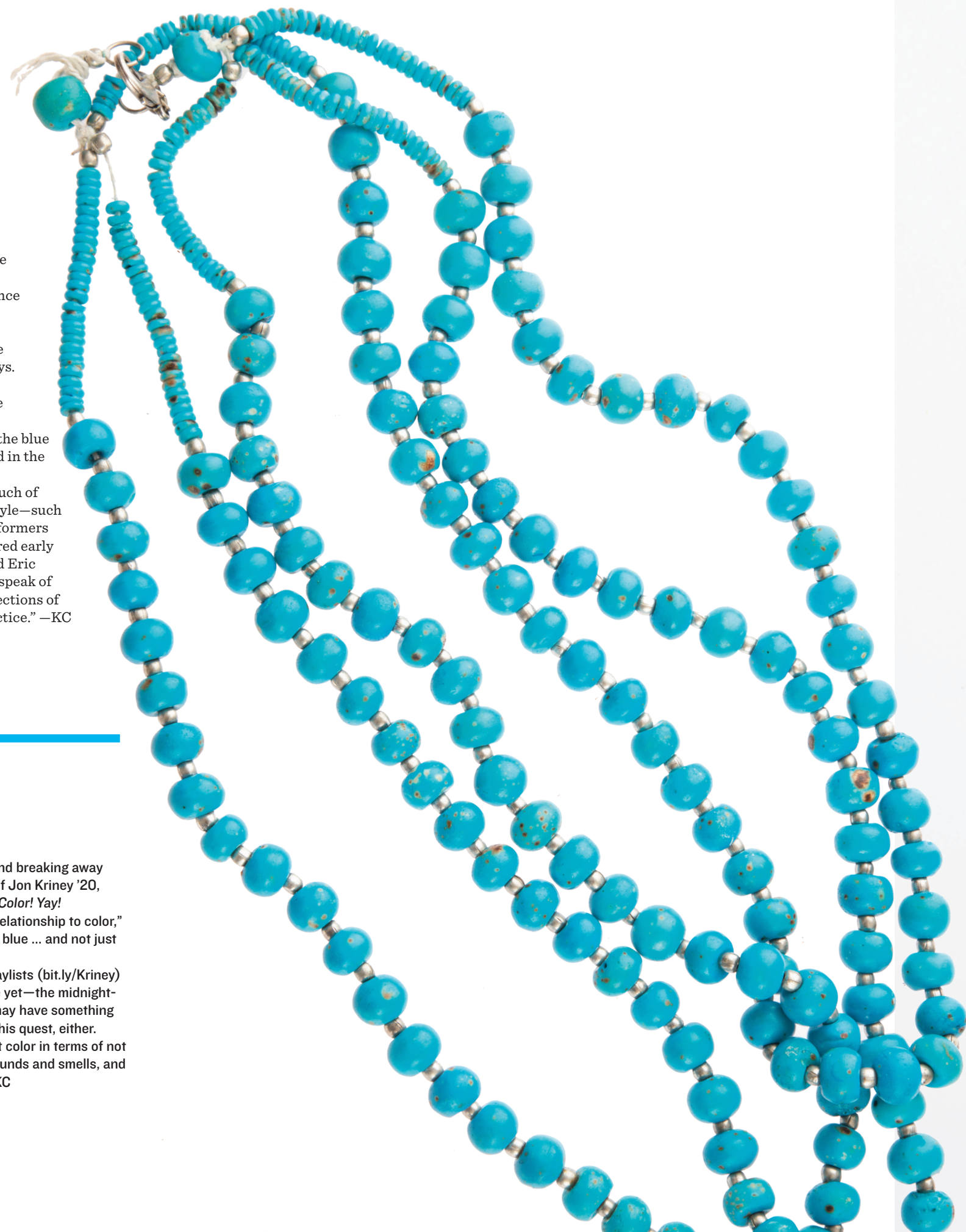
SOUND! COLOR! YAY!

Listening to music through the color lens—and breaking away from cultural symbolism—opened the mind of Jon Kriney '20, who created the campus radio show *Sound! Color! Yay!*

"I found a much more complex emotional relationship to color," says Kriney, who discovered his favorite was blue ... and not just because of Joni Mitchell.

Although his crusade to curate colorful playlists (bit.ly/Kriney) hasn't quite connected with a large audience yet—the midnight-to-2 a.m. shift for the WSRN 91.5 FM show may have something to do with it, he laughs—it hasn't dampened his quest, either.

"Doing this show has made me think about color in terms of not just how it looks," says Kriney, "but how it sounds and smells, and the emotions that are associated with it." —KC



"I'VE NEVER SEEN so many different shades of blue as I have looking out over the Grand Bahama Bank," says **Kathleen Moran Hanes '94**. Scuba diving daily, she explored hidden pockets of the watery field site while researching the impact of green turtles and other creatures foraging in seagrass beds.

And so, her first children's book, *Seagrass Dreams*, surfaced.

A vibrant and beautiful introduction to counting, the picture book explores life within these important nursery grounds for conch, lobster, shrimp, and crabs. Hanes's favorite is the perfectly named bucktooth parrotfish, which wields its oversized teeth (really its mouth) to shred seagrass blades and scrape off pink or white algae.

"Bucktooth parrotfish contain many of the colors of the rainbow and absolutely shimmer when the sunlight strikes them," says Hanes. "Each of the organisms seems to have its own colorful personality, whether it is a yellow stingray playfully burrowing into the sand to hide or a silvery barracuda menacingly surveying the scene."

Gentle gray dugongs (a relative of manatees) have a great appeal, too.

"They snuffle along the ocean floor and remind me of cows grazing in a pasture," Hanes says.

All of this dizzying color is set against the backdrop of hardworking seagrass blades that slow down water currents and provide shelter.

"This creates a calm, protected place for juvenile organisms to hide and feed as they grow," she says. "I'm interested in all of the organisms that make those colorful meadows their home." —KC





BrOWN ISN'T the only color **Wendell Willard** '70 sees when he looks at wood.

"I don't like to stain wood or artificially color it," says Willard, who for 37 years has co-owned Harvard Custom Woodworking in Massachusetts, crafting cabinets, built-ins, and freestanding furniture from native hardwoods. "I prefer to finish with clear coating or oil—then you see all the true shades."

For example, maple, to Willard's eye, is more blond than brown. White oak is a warm tan. And cherry starts off a pinkish red, but darkens and intensifies with age.

"Black walnut may be the closest to what others think of as brown," he notes, "but I see a whole range of colors, from light amber to cocoa to chocolate to purple."

The beauty, Willard says, is in seeing something seemingly ordinary as anything but: "You have all these glorious colors coming through." —ES

"The deep, rich color of chocolate reminds me of being happy on a cool evening by a warm fire."

— Liz Stern, who has baked at least 70,000 cookies at Sharples since March 2016



THERE'S MAGIC IN MIXING

Start with a little red, yellow, and blue, and what can you make? Orange, green, and purple, of course—but also turquoise and crimson and lime and marigold ...

"When my publisher asked me to write about color, my only guidance was that it also include tertiary colors," says Arielle North Olson '53, whose *What Can You Do With Red, Yellow and Blue?* is her sixth children's book. "I could go in any direction I wanted, so I decided just to make it fun."

Initially inspired by the hues of an old oil-paint box, Olson loved the opportunity to explore color in creative ways.

"I am fascinated with the brain condition synesthesia, which adds color to sights, sounds, and smells," she says. "I would love to see India's Festival of Colors [Holi], when powdered paints and colored waters are thrown on happy celebrants. And wouldn't it be fun to eat enough brine shrimp and algae and carrots to see if we could become as colorful as flamingos?"

Her newest publication, *Where Shall We Go, Big Black Crow?*, expands on her vibrant outlook. Co-written with her daughter and illustrated by her granddaughter, the board book uses color and lift-the-flap fun to guide readers on a search for the bird's dinner.

"Colors play such a vital role in attracting children to books," Olson says. "Our words might never be read if the illustrations don't lure readers inside." —ES

With the scope of ecocriticism continually expanding, **Susan Signe Morrison** '81 proposes a broadening of the "green studies" color palette.

"What about 'brown studies'?" says Morrison, an English professor at Texas State University. "There are aspects of life beyond trees."

Including some subjects routinely reserved for the restroom.

"We now basically have one attitude toward excrement: It's bad," says Morrison, who wrote *Excrement in the Late Middle Ages* after recognizing a recurring theme in literature of that era. "But in the Middle Ages, there was a huge spectrum of attitudes—from very bad, where shit would be a metaphor for sin; to good, where it's a code for resurrection."

Morrison wants to combat the stereotype that medieval people

revealed in waste: Legal cases from that period pointed to sewage concerns, she says. Dung heaps, valued as fertilizer, turned up in wills. Sure, iconic writers like Dante and Chaucer sometimes focused on feces (enough for Morrison to coin the term "fecopoetics") but, if anything, people then had a much more well-rounded take on what we leave behind.

"Traditionally, people wanted to repurpose things—including excrement," says Morrison, who followed up her fecal-focused book with research on waste in general. "We, of course, have become this society where we just throw things away. We set ourselves up as, 'We're cool. We're not like those medievals,' when in fact, we're just as dirty, if not worse—especially toward the planet." —ES

BI

ACK-AND-WHITE in photography frees your mind from having to process all the colors,” says **Ron Tarver**, a visiting assistant professor of studio art at Swarthmore who cut his teeth as a newspaper photojournalist and earned a

2012 Pulitzer as part of a *Philadelphia Inquirer* team. “You actually see the image—the composition, the message. A truly beautiful black-and-white photograph, in my perspective, is a lot more difficult to make than a color one.”

Which is why Tarver introduces students to photography through a foundational course in black-and-white film. For each assignment, students are given just two rolls of 24 exposures, forcing them to slow down and consider each frame—a challenging task for a digital generation. By learning the importance of light and shadows, they become stronger photographers, period.

“When you shoot in black and white, you see in black and white,” Tarver says. “With my fine-art photography, people would sometimes ask, ‘What did that look like in color?’ And you know, I didn’t even see it in color—my brain had stripped it all away.” —ES

Wh

ITE MORE OR LESS symbolizes a blank slate in karate, and black represents knowledge,” says **Max Chomet '12**, a high school biology teacher and longtime student of Seido karate who leads adult beginner classes in New York on weekends.

“It’s important to acknowledge, though, that when you earn your black belt, this does not denote that you’ve learned everything.”

On the contrary, it marks the start of more advanced training. And to achieve it, students must first return to their roots.

“When in promotion for your black belt, you put your white belt back on,” he says. “This symbolizes ‘beginner’s mind.’ For about a month, you are functionally a white belt again and take all beginner’s classes, in addition to the testing you undergo.

“Going back to white is important—it’s an exercise in humility and reminds the *karateka* to work on the fundamentals.”

As Chomet enters his 18th year of karate practice, he remains inspired by the Zen phrase “ren ma.”

“The characters in Japanese literally mean ‘keep polishing,’” he says. “The concept is that there is no such thing as perfect—it’s not about getting to a destination. Practice is an active process.” —ES



ODE TO JOY

Energy, diversity, optimism, change—how could one symbol embody so many themes?

That was the challenge in designing a logo for President Valerie Smith’s inauguration in 2015. Along with a committee of faculty and staff, College designer Phil Stern '84 set out to create an emblem that captured the campus’s excitement over her arrival.

“The whole community was electrified,” Stern says. “For the design and colors of the emblem, it felt like an opportunity to rethink our staid image—to take our seriousness and transform it into something beautiful and expansive.”

“President Smith asked us to imagine a symbol that would inspire joy and forward motion,” says Nancy Nicely, secretary of the College and vice president for communications, who led the inaugural committee. “Phil’s design did just that, and so much more.”

His sketch on the back of an airline beverage napkin became the basis of the logo, which has since been adopted for the *Changing Lives, Changing the World* campaign (lifechanging.swarthmore.edu).

“The emblem suggests positive momentum,” says studio art professor and committee member Syd Carpenter, “with the circular format indicating an inclusive strength shared by all.”

And the colors, she notes, are of a celebratory nature: Yellow, green, black, and bright red make up the major tones, along with Swarthmore’s garnet, which the committee decided should be just one note in a symphony of colors. A warm gray—symbolic of the campus’s stone buildings—forms the foundation upon which they all dance.

“To me, the central disc is like the College—all these people from different backgrounds living with one another,” Stern says. “And in the outer ring, they’re all going out their separate ways into the world.

“I’m really happy to see the emblem thriving,” he adds. “It’s special, and it feels vital. It’s Swarthmore.” —ES



“When I play the piano, I do not ‘see’ black-and-white keys but

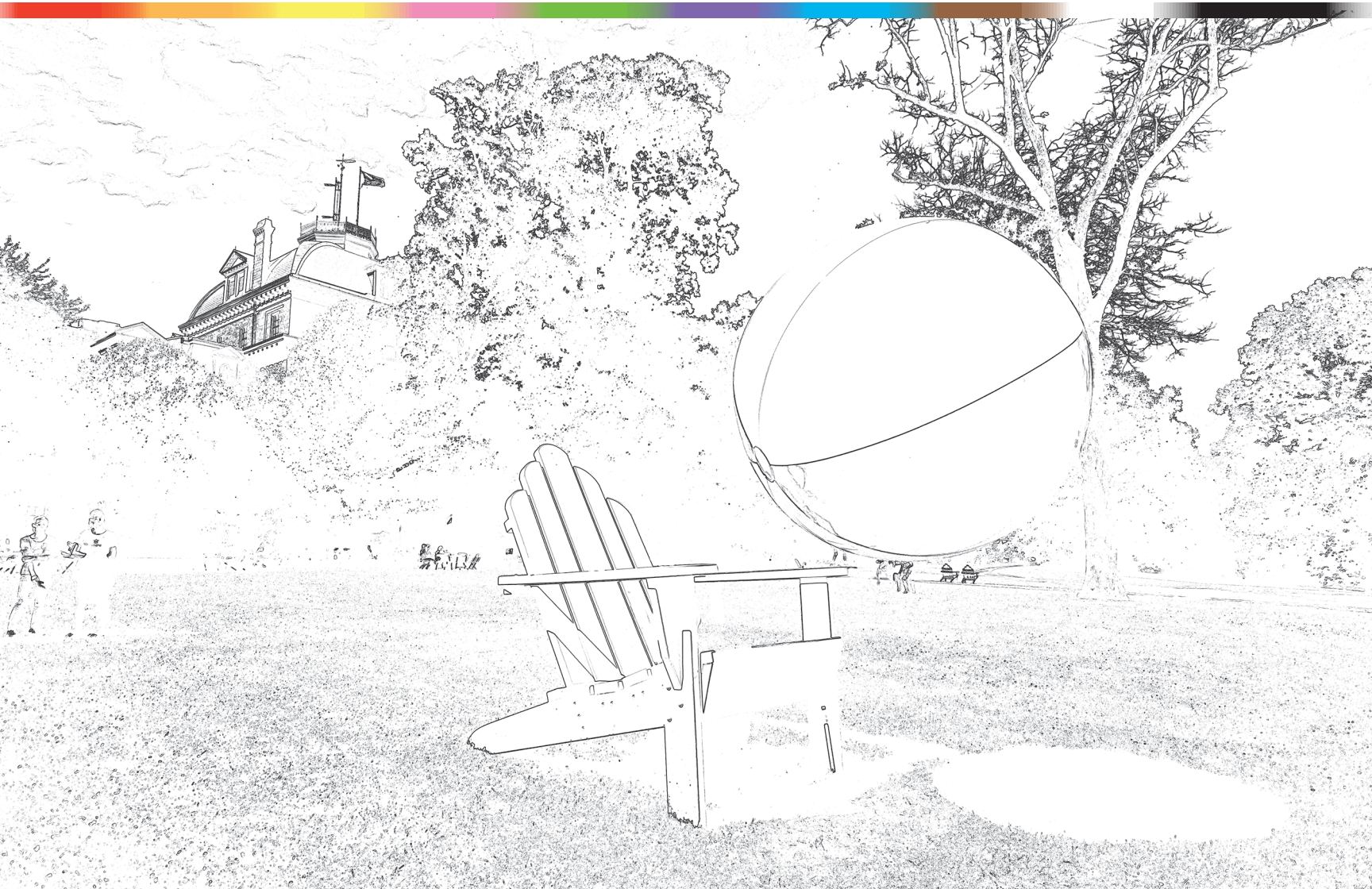
instead hear colors swirling around me.”

—Annette DiMedio '75, pianist and University of the Arts music professor



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