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## ARCHITECTURAL APPLICATION ON ALUMINUM

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# COLOR TRENDS AND THE POWDER COATINGS INDUSTRY

PANTONE®  
17-5641 TCX  
Emerald

PANTONE®  
17-5641 TC  
Emerald

*For 2013, Pantone has announced "PANTONE® 17-5641 Emerald" as Color of the Year. RAL 6001 is an exact match to Emerald Green.*

BY MONTAHA HIDEFI

**P**erhaps the most important thing to consider in the powder coating industry is not necessarily the Colors of the Year, but rather the interpretation of these colors. It is important to be aware of the trends and what consumers are expecting to see in the marketplace.

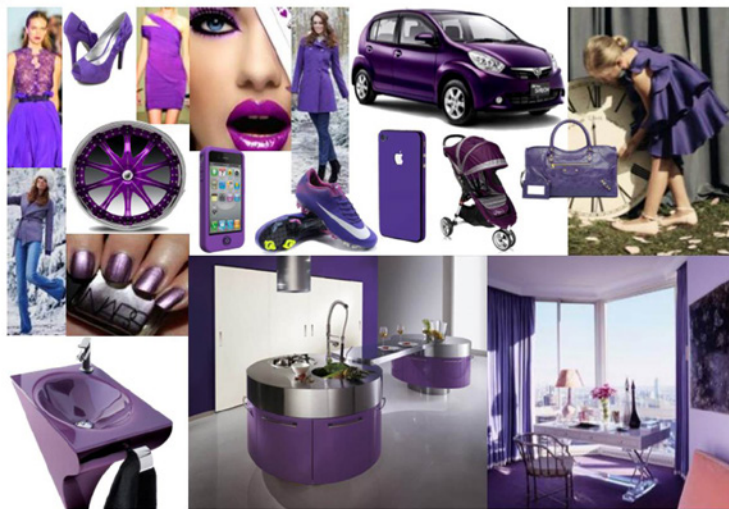
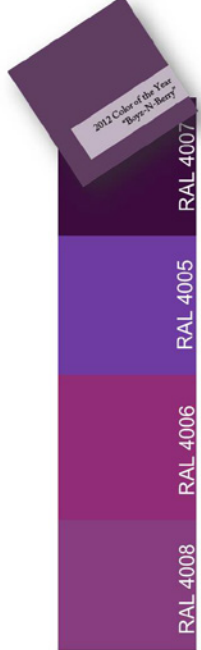
**From fashion to food and all industries** in between, color is behind 80 to 85 percent of the purchasing decision making, according to the Color Marketing Group ([www.colormarketing.org](http://www.colormarketing.org)), a not-for-profit international association whose members, located in more than 20 countries, forecast color directions 19 months or more in advance for manufactured products and services. Its members are color designers involved in the use of color as it applies to the profitable marketing of goods

and services. They provide a forum for the exchange of non-competitive information relating to all phases of color marketing: color trends and combinations, design influences, merchandising and sales, and education and industry contacts.

Every year, members meet at various locations to discuss the current colors trending in the market in various industries and the direction colors will take in the future. The result of these meetings and discussions culminate in an

annual international summit that takes place in the United States. As a result, the association announces an annual World Palette, which predicts the color trends for two years in advance. The exercise also leads to the nomination of the Color of the Year. In 2012, "Boys-n-Berries" was nominated Color of the Year. Boys-n-Berries is a dark purple that manifested in various shades from light to dark and impacted fashion, design, interiors, makeup, bathrooms and vehicles. RAL 4007 is the closest color to Boys-n-Berries in the RAL standard spectrum.

Pantone also has an annual Color of the Year. In 2012, the Pantone Color of the Year was "Tangerine Tango." While Tangerine Tango is a dark orange, almost red, the interpretation by the street



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took it from almost red to light orange. Tangerine Tango had a high impact on fashion and design, interiors, makeup, kitchenware and vehicles. RAL 2002 is the closest color Tangerine Tango in the RAL standard spectrum.

For 2013, the Color Marketing Group has

announced “Re-Blued” as Color of the Year, while Pantone has announced “PANTONE® 17-5641 Emerald” as Color of the Year. RAL 5024 is very close to Re-Blued; however, not a 100 percent match. RAL 6001 is an exact match to Emerald Green.

According to the Color Marketing Group, blue will dominate the color movement for a number of years to come. Several factors are driving the rise of blue, according to the association, including global environmental issues related to water resources; mineral blue pigment mines becoming scarce and therefore affecting the price of these pigments; and the desire for

using and accepting synthetic blues as cost-effective alternative pigments that provide cleaner and less complex blue hues.

As a color, blue is defined as secure, tranquil and peaceful; however, it can also create feelings of sadness and aloofness. Phrases such as “having the blues,” “blue moon,” “blue Monday,” and “blue blood” are used to indicate melancholic states of mind. Blue is a very popular color as it is usually related to the sky and seas.

According to Pantone LLC, Emerald “enhances our sense of well-being by inspiring insight, as well as promoting balance and harmony. The perception of Emerald is sophisticated and luxurious. Since antiquity, this luminous, magnificent hue has been the color of beauty and new life in many cultures and religions.”

Pantone predicts that Emerald’s “classic elegance” will further promote its growth in fashion as well as interiors. Emerald will “create a luxurious feel in an entryway, powder room, dining room or study, and will bring life to a living room as an accent.”

As a color, green is the color of growth and renewal. It is associated with status and prosperity and conveys regeneration and rebirth.

Green is a very flexible color and can be used in many settings. Besides interior spaces, it is ideal for architectural applications, landscapes and streetscapes’ furniture and equipment. It denotes a natural extension to the green natural scenery.

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This might sound confusing to some as they wonder what trend to follow and what color to decide upon.

Gone are the days when color trends were driven by, and applicable mainly to, the fashion industry. In our current reality, where social media is steering a great share of our daily life, color trends are crossing industries in a fast pace. What used to be a fashion-specific practice has become a socially explicit need. Consumers at the home, the office, the factory and even the White House are demanding goods that match their taste and lifestyle. Color has turned into an intricate part of the product design and function.

### Defining Color Trends

By definition, color trends are said to be short-lived. However, it is paramount to differentiate between trends and fads and also understand that color trends go through a life cycle. Not all trends are changing four times a year as



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in the fashion industry.

As reported in "Colour Design: Theories and Applications" (published in the UK by Woodhead Publishing, Edited by J Best, Color Management Consultant,

ISBN 1 84569 972 6), I highlight that depending on the industry, colors display a trend life cycle. The rhythm of the color trend curve will vary between industries and segments of industries. In the fashion industry, there is typically four fashion cycles per year which imply four color trends per 12 months; the rhythm is fast, the color life cycle is too short. Since consumer electronics have become fashion-related accessories, they are moving nearly in the same tempo than fashion. Cell phones and other consumer electronics are shifting skin color and shapes more than three times a year nowadays. At the other end of the spectrum, in the building industry, the color trend rhythm is slow; people do not change the color of their home or office façades every twelve months. Eventually, the exterior of a building is remodeled every 15 to 20 years and probably in much longer time than that, so the life cycle of the color is long. All other

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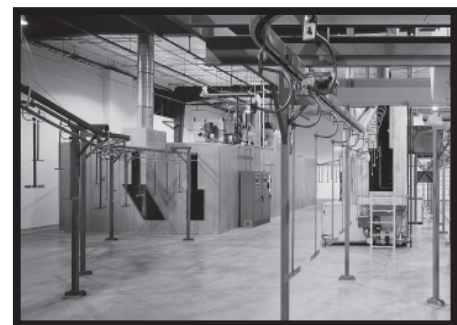
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industries can be positioned in between these two extremities of the spectrum.

A trend is a general orientation in which things will move. Trends have a long life cycle, they follow a curve. At the beginning of a trend there will be early adopters, the innovators. Then the majority of people will adopt the new product and there will be a peak in demand and sales. Eventually, other trends will appear and the curve of the first trend will start declining, but will grow again with more people adopting the product. A fad, on the other hand, being an interest followed with exaggeration, has a short life cycle. A fad will have a peak when the number of people adopting it starts to increase rapidly. However, the fad will disappear with the same speed that it appeared.

### Following a Color Trend with Powder

As a protective and aesthetic material, powder coatings are typically used on objects expected to last for a long time, which might

explain why almost 75 percent of colors sold within the powder coating industry are neutrals (white, black, beige, gray and silver). While designers are playing a role to influence the color choice when creating new designs and creations, this usually creates a dilemma to the decision making; should a new product follow the color trend or should it be played safe and be coated with a neutral color?

Many specifiers and decision makers have understood that in some industries neutrals are not

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selling any longer and the introduction of color is paramount to selling a product. This is seen in the kitchen appliance industry, telecommunications, IT and some other industries believed to produce and sell short-lived products. The bulk of the industries using powder coating, including architects and architectural specifiers are in general opting for silver and neutrals.

It is true that if the trend is for bright colors, architects will not specify bright powder coatings for a building façade. However, it is important to know about the color trends as they can be used as an accent, a trim or even as inside furniture.

There are also limitations when color matching powder coatings to liquid coating or textiles. This is due to the availability of pigments and the properties expected from the powder coating. Custom coaters expect a 100 percent match to certain colors; however, often times this is impossible to achieve.

Perhaps the most important thing to consider in the powder coating industry is not necessarily the Color of the Year, but rather the interpretation of the Color of the Year by each designer, each industry and each individual. It is important to be aware of the trends and what consumers are expecting to see in the market place. It is also important to take a bold stand and introduce new products coated with colors that match other objects consumers are purchasing for their interiors, their outdoors and the landscape surrounding them.

By observation, it is noticeable that colors are crossing various industries at the same time. So if consumers are buying this year vehicles in Emerald Green, they will be expecting to find accessories for their smart phones and their living rooms in the same color. Consumers are demanding to have their favorite colors available everywhere.



Montaha Hidefi is a marketing & business development manager and color trends consultant & advisor for North America at TIGER Drylac Canada Inc. She can be reached via email at: [montaha.hidefi@tiger-coatings.com](mailto:montaha.hidefi@tiger-coatings.com).