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Approaching Urban Colour Gestalt and Identity: What do Architects, Planners, and Stakeholders Need to Know About Colour?

These questions have driven the author's research over the past decade. This lecture summarises the author's praxis on reintroducing colour into contemporary architecture and architectural education. It explores how developing a deeper understanding of colour theory and its implementation—particularly within the context of architectural practice and education in Norway—has begun to shift the attitudes of students, professionals, and stakeholders toward the use of colour in architectural projects. The lecture will draw on examples from recent colour-focused teaching at NTNU and from professional practice in developing colour guides.

There is a steadily growing demand for knowledge about how to use colour effectively in architectural contexts. The lecture will highlight the application of colour theory to building façade design, discussing, among other topics, the importance of an overall colour *gestalt* for the image and identity of a place; how people perceive, inhabit, and move through urban landscapes; and how to achieve a coherent colour *gestalt* through place-specific strategies.

The lecture will conclude with a reflection on the limitations of current architectural education, which has traditionally prioritised the tectonic—relating to structure, construction, and formal visual aspects—while giving little attention to the visual tectonics of colour. Research suggests that approximately 80% of human perception, learning, cognition, and activity is mediated through vision, with form and colour playing key roles. It will therefore be argued that greater emphasis should be placed on the visual qualities of colour in architecture, whether inherent in materials or applied to surfaces.