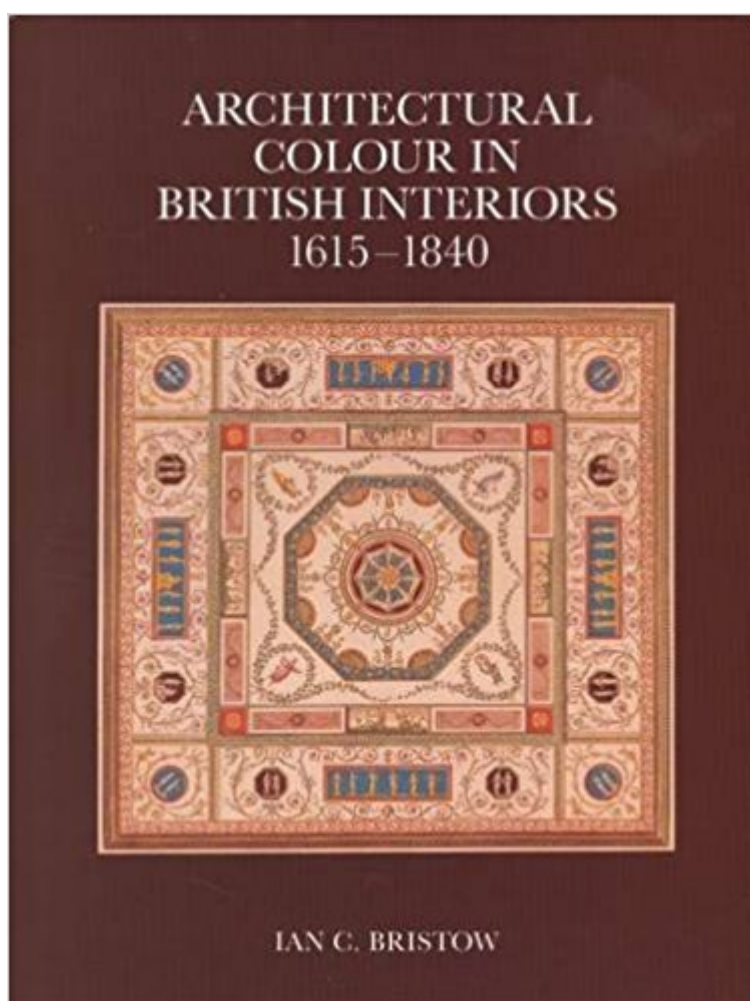


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Architectural Colour In British Interiors, 1615-1840 (The Paul Mellon Centre For Studies In British Art)



Synopsis

Paint is ephemeral: it fades and discolours and is obliterated by succeeding phases of redecoration. Until recently, this has presented a significant obstacle in researching the architectural colours used in British interiors of earlier centuries but, in this study, Ian C. Bristow combines information from documentary sources with data obtained from the technical investigation of significant interiors by important architects of the period. He has thus been able to establish a coherent outline of true historical practice, which he has here presented for the first time. Bristow contrasts the noble interiors of Inigo Jones with more intimate spaces of the period. He then sets the succeeding drabness adopted in many rooms in the second half of the seventeenth century against the era's taste for marbling, graining, and imitation Japan. Moving on to consider the eighteenth century, he shows how the new foundation established by the Palladians came to provide the basis for the lively use of colour by Robert Adam and his contemporaries. Finally he examines how the development of colour theory in the early nineteenth century superseded eighteenth-century ideas and, combined with the Regency taste for the exotic, led to an entirely new outlook, much of which has lasted to the present day. Bristow's book is an essential complement to more conventional architectural studies of form and space and a key text for students of all aspects of the historic interior.

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Customer Reviews

For many years, historical architectural colour has been an elusive topic, since paint fades and

discolours, and most early schemes have been obliterated by succeeding phases of redecoration. In parallel with this, the taste of later generations has also overlaid earlier ideas of colour with a mass of subjective opinion and received wisdom. To remedy matters, this objective study combines information from documentary sources with data obtained from the technical investigation of significant interiors by important architects of the period, and presents for the first time a coherent outline of true historical practice. It is an essential complement to more conventional architectural studies of form and space. In a series of chapters, the noble interiors of Inigo Jones are contrasted with more intimate spaces of the period; and the succeeding drabness adopted in many rooms of the second half of the seventeenth century is set against its taste for marbling, graining, and imitation japan. It is shown how the new foundation established by the Palladians came to provide the basis for the lively use of colour by Robert Adam and his contemporaries; and the study concludes by showing how the development of colour theory in the early nineteenth century superseded eighteenth-century ideas and, combined with the Regency taste for the exotic, led to an entirely new outlook, much of which still forms present-day preconceptions.

Ian C. Bristow is an architect and specialist consultant in the redecoration of historic interiors.

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