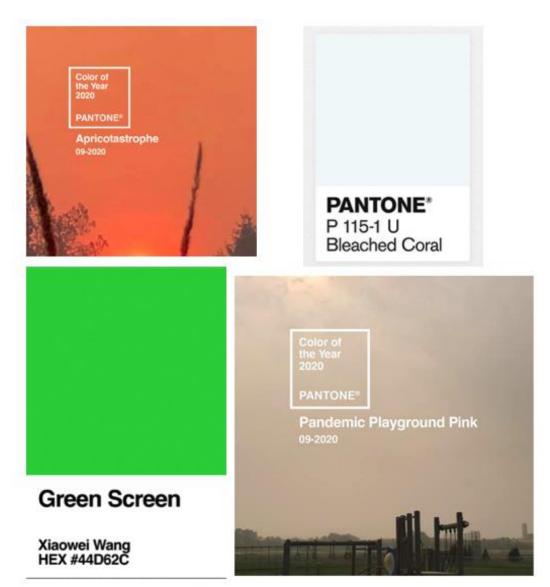**Midterm Project: "PANTONE's 2023 Color of the Year is Really…"**
DUE 10/12 by 11:59 pm (submit as a single PDF)

Description:

Parody (n.): A work or performance that imitates another work or performance with ridicule or irony.

This assignment asks you to combine creativity and humor with critical insight and social commentary. I'm asking you to imagine an alternative reality in which PANTONE's _real_ Color of the Year for 2023 is _not_ Viva Magenta 18-1750, but a color of your own design* that responds directly to the global or national events of the past calendar year. Your color should invoke the conversations about color, culture, and/or race that we have been having throughout the semester. You might choose to make a statement about the pandemic, climate change, systemic racism, or even something less heavy like the frustrations of online dating or why Marvel never seems to stop making movies. But whatever color you choose, it should explicitly offer some kind of cultural critique or commentary on what it means to be alive in the year 2023.

Assignments will be graded according to 3 criteria:

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- Creativity
- Design + Execution
- Cultural Critique

This assignment consists of 3 distinct components, all of which must be completed to receive credit. Please combine all 3 components into a single PDF before uploading to Canvas.

1. **Design component.** After watching a tutorial designed specifically for this assignment by Rob Pettigrew of the Shapiro Design Lab, design your own PANTONE swatch using Photoshop.* When naming your color, puns and wordplay are encouraged. The accompanying string of numbers and letters you choose for your swatch shouldn't be random, but tie into the premise of your parody. No prior experience with Photoshop is expected. Rob and I will provide you with a template that allows you to change the text and background of a Pantone Swatch so that no fancy skills are required. However, if you're a Photoshop whiz and you'd like to create your own template from scratch, I encourage you to do so!

2. **Mock press release (150-250 words).** Write an accompanying **mock press release** in the style of PANTONE's Style Forecasting Division (find previous press releases by going here and scrolling to the bottom of the page). Pay close attention to style and formatting: the more closely your parody imitates a Color of the Year announcement the better.

3. **Project narrative/ reflection (250-500 words, or 1-1.5 pages double-spaced).** After completing parts 1 and 2 of the project, reflect back on your process. How did you go about choosing your color? What readings, media objects, and lectures were most useful to you? Outside of the course, what inspired you? Ultimately, what did you get out of this assignment?
   After addressing these broad questions, go through each part of the assignment. Did you have prior experience with Photoshop before this assignment? What was your experience using the software (think about our discussions about what is or isn't unique to digital color)? For the press release, what specific linguistic or rhetorical tropes did you observe in Pantone's press releases when designing your parody? Which part of the assignment did you enjoy more, the visual or the verbal one?

   This reflection can be written in an in-person, informal style. You don't need to answer all of these questions— these are just some ideas to get your started.

Questions to consider throughout your process:
- What issues (cultural, socio-political, ecological, economic, technological, etc.) do PANTONE's Color of the Year Press releases sweep under the rug? What visual and rhetorical strategies does the company rely on in order to present color as an emotionally positive and universal experience?

Here are some sources of inspiration to get you started:

- United Colors of the Apocalypse

- jack + hui, PANTONE Bleached Coral

- Color of the Pandemic

- PainTones-color of the year

You should feel free to expand on—or deviate from—these themes. The most important thing is that I see your original thought at work.

* *If you like, you may choose to do a pairing of* **two colors** *rather than a single color (as with Pantone's 2016 and 2020 colors of the year).* **If you choose to do this, they must be part of the same "palette"** *(i.e., they don't need to all be reds or blues, but they must be grouped together in some logical way). Your press release will also need to describe both colors, as well as the ways they relate to each other both aesthetically and conceptually.*