

“Race”—that four letter word, making headway on visibility: the zone of the body scanned by surveillance monitors. The squawking of ruffled feathers shakes loose the tiles which spill into the public squares. There is nothing more apparent, and nothing more transparent, than the signs of “race” that circulate in the everyday lives of people of colour. Drop it into most public conversations on writing, culture, and representation and the whole mainstream hall shudders, as the shutters come down and all the mechanisms of power fill up the stuttering spaces with the discourse of muzak muzak muzak. One means of resistance to homogenization and the elision of racialization has been the unpredictability of writing in terms of both transference and textuality. In the actualities of language, contemporary writers have located a medium to make visible the subjectivities, histories, narratives, and theoretical issues that surround that four letter word.

Or “Colour,” with a “you.” How “we” has to figure it out. How some of us can’t make a move without thinking it. How some of you never think it, don’t have to, don’t even bother because it is no bother to you. How some have to double-think it, hyphenate it, dilute it, disappear into it. Yellow on the inside, white on the outside. Invisible. Except for a name, a history, a dream, a resonance, a trace taste that becomes a hunger, a deep need, to spit it out.

*Colour. An Issue* is not an anthology, a collection of texts that have been selected, arranged, and edited into a “whole” that advances the coherence of collectivity. The methodology adopted proposes an open-ended process that could yield much more provisional patterns of interconnections for the diverse materials included. The idea of “issue,” then, has operated to complicate editorial designs by inscribing (at least) three options:

- the issue as a journal in its periodicity, aligning this special issue to the exigencies of time (passing)
- issue as important matters that call for attention, that need to be addressed (contemporary)
- issue as what comes into appearance in public space (publication)

All of which is to say that this “issue” is a transitional zone that functions, in this instance, not as a showcase, but as a catalytic kindling of magazined discourse, imagined possibilities in language and thought—the intent of a dialogue, a forum of diversity, finally, shared.

The baldness of the term "race," with all its historical baggage of imperialism, colonization, subjugation, and oppression was thrown in the air—to hover there while the more inclusive and politically astute term "colour" was adopted for its resonances and the heteroglossia of responses it might evoke in potential contributors. To our surprise the call for submissions brought in an abundance of manuscripts, more than could be contained in even this double-issue, making the issue of choice a matter of concern. Within the limits of page length, we were drawn to manuscripts that disclosed some relevant facet of "colour" as it operates in our society. Some writers of colour that we wanted to see here did not send us material. But many writers we were not aware of sent us material that transformed our perceptions. The works we have chosen often take on the friction of articulating worlds that have been described by others, frequently filled by someone else's language shadow, appropriated. But our purpose is not, simply, to replace one tinted word with another. A primary impetus for this issue—its necessity at this time—has been the need to unsettle the unquestioned authority of certain controlling critical terminology, to seek out the potency of the actual—the praxis.

In shaping the table of contents, though conscious of the unavoidable linearity of publication in book form, we avoided two conventional editorial choices: to organize the submissions according to genre and/or contents, or to use the apparently benign alphabetic ordering by name. Instead of a preconceived editorial "narrative" of beginning - middle - end, we used a more improvisational mode. We settled on patterns according to the continuing intersection of differing elements, such as genre, content, language, style, visual art, forms of discourse. There are two notable exceptions: the text that opens (which turned out to be an irresistible opener) and the bibliography that closes (it was the one piece that went through changes until the final moment so the end was where it ended up).

Aside from these, our overall editorial strategy was to arrange for a configuration that invites readers to read through a strategy of dispersal. Be nomadic. Move around and between genre, content, language, style, visual art. Try out the side-by-side tensions. Juxtapose positions. The issue is colour. The plan is, after all, you. We hope that such reading through *Colour* will assist in getting beyond the bounds of that four letter word.

Special thanks to artist Jin-me Yoon who advised and assisted us so generously with the visual art featured in this issue.