

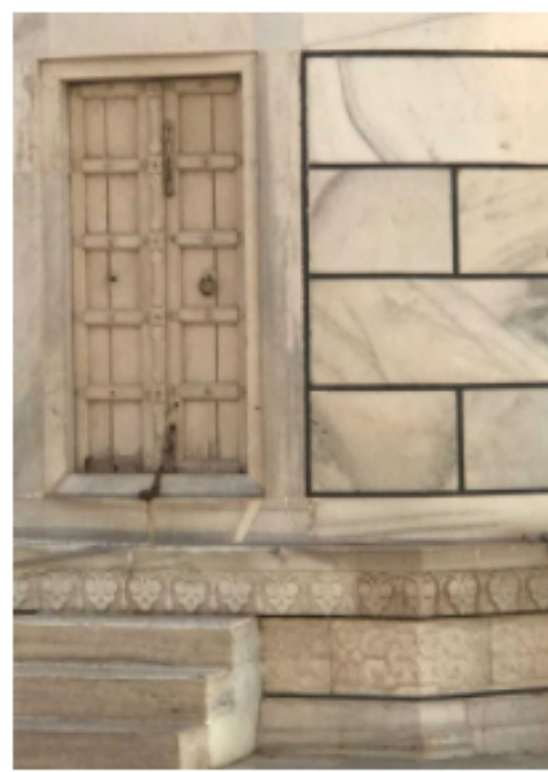
February 22, 2017, 7:01 AM

## february inspiration...whiter shades of pale

**WHITE** - It is both the simplest of colors and the most complex. To the untrained eye, it seems an absence of color, but those who have studied its variations know differently.

White alone can seem boring and banal, or it can look just plain glorious. It represents the vast unknown but at the same time it also defines nature's abundant riches- snow, ice, clouds. It has the power to nourish (milk), heal (crystals), and inspire great written words. In China it is the color of mourning, in the USA it is the delight of both children and adults alike, because who doesn't relish a Snow Day? What would life be like without the color white?

Artists and designers know that within the category of white, there are a myriad of colors, some so subtle, it takes a trained eye to see them. Some whites are cool - silver, white wash, chalk, the color of foam that rides the top of breaking waves. Other whites are warm- pale ivory, the color of butter and cream, the inside of a shell. Within the categories of warm and cool, there are variations of every hue in the rainbow. Add a drop of pure green to a warm white and the color of celadon porcelain might appear. But add a drop of pure green to a cool white with a grey undertone, and it just might turn into the color of a foggy spring morning. To me, white is God's paint box.



Last February, I made a trip to India. For someone who works with color every day, I expected India's colors to be a life changing experience, and it was. But when I think of India's colors now, what I remember most, is the interior ceiling of the Taj Mahal. The surface of the ceiling, carved from one color marble was faceted like a diamond. Each facet caught the light differently and created every tint of white in the rainbow. It looked like a kaleidoscope of ice, shattering tints of many colors across the room.

We spent two days in Agra, where the Taj Mahal stands above the Yamuna River. On the first day, we arrived before sunset and watched as the setting sun cast warm, light against its white marble façade. We watched as day passed into night thru sunset, then twilight, and finally to dusk. That white monument, that mausoleum, that temple of love turned into every tone and tint in the rainbow. One color slipping into the next until the sun dropped and night shadows swallowed the light.

The next morning we awoke early, well before the call to prayer. We arrived at the gates outside the gardens just as the sun began rising slowly behind the large central dome. The morning rays looked noticeably different from the previous late afternoon light. Soft, misty and diffused, it bathed the white marble surfaces in pinks, pale peach, blues and lavenders. The sharp contrasts of the prior afternoon, like ghosts passing unnoticed, were gone. Other shades of pale had taken their place, creating a new and totally different spectrum of color- the elusive color white.

**"It was the whiteness of the whale that above all things appalled me. Whiteness is not so much a color as the visible absence of color; and at the same time the concrete of all colors; is it for these reasons that there is such a dumb blankness, full of meaning, in a wide landscape of snow?"**

**-Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, "The Whiteness of the Whale"**

*Peace and Clarity,*

**President**

**Debra Blair Design**  
[dblair@blairdesignnyc.com](mailto:dblair@blairdesignnyc.com)  
917-717-5020

