

# DISSOLUTIONS.

Inspired by the performance *The Quality of Being in Colour* by Niels Weijer and commissioned by the artist.

For his work *The Quality of Being in Colour*, choreographer Niels Weijer conducted research into the perception of colour. I based this text on his initial references, an interview with the artists (Niels Weijer & Michael Tuttle) and my own wanderings into the realms of colour, utopias, environment and the void.

This text employs an experimental format of narrative collage inspired by the work of poet Karthika Nair, writer Hu Fang's *Dear Navigator* and artist Pedro Matias's thesis *\*\*\*A(in)Us\*\*\**. The text interweaves the voices of the following authors: Niels Weijer, Michael Tuttle, Marc Augé, Donna Haraway, Josef Albers, James Gleick, Maggie Nelson, Paul B. Preciado, Michela Filzi, Pedro Matias, Jane Bennett, Slavoj Žižek, and features lyrics from songs performed by Crystal Waters and James Blake.

The words in [blue](#) are direct extracts from texts, thoughts or song lyrics by these authors. For more context, see the *Sources* section at the end.

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Berlin, November 2020

“Thank you for calling the *Solve It Now* hotline. You are number five in the queue. Please record your thoughts while we process your request. An operator will be with you shortly.”

[Song plays] *I left my job my boss my car and my home / I'm leaving for a destination I still don't know*

*Crystal Waters*

I don't quite know how I got here. I seem to have arrived, in this *non-place*, with little recollection of where my journey started. I set out confident that I could move from A to B in a straight line. But now, after taking wrong turn after wrong turn after dead end, I feel somewhat disorientated and out of balance.

*Marc Augé*

I'm in an all-white room. The upholstery, carpets and furniture are gone, with no corners or edges in sight. I'm squinting slightly. Everything around me is bright and blank. And still. The only thing moving is my body.

“Thank you for calling the *Solve It Now* hotline. You are number four in the queue. Please record your thoughts while we process your request. An operator will be with you shortly.”

[Song plays] *somewhere nobody must have duties at all / and if you like this you can follow me so let's go*

*Crystal Waters*

Now and then, a subtle emission of light plays against the walls, diffusing and covering the space in a wash of colour. Turquoise. Fuchsia. Tangerine. The shades are ever-shifting, and it's hard to locate their source. Every time I pinpoint a spot of intensity, where countless beams and shadows cross, it *moves*. I have made it my little game to follow these points, each time etching them onto the back of my eyelids. Sometimes, I close my *eyes* and open them again, just to check whether they're still there. But then what had been orange before turns into a pale blue just a split-second later and I can no longer tell whether the shifts in colour are happening on the inside or on the outside. Am I being *deceived*? So far, there are no answers, as I can't seem to find anything to hold on to. There is no fixity in here, everything seems *relative*, anchor-less.

*Niels Weijer*

*Maggie Nelson*

*Josef Albers*

“Thank you for calling the *Solve It Now* hotline. You are number three in the queue. Please record your thoughts while we process your request. An operator will be with you shortly.”

[Song plays] *follow me / to a place where belong and leave our troubles at home*

*Crystal Waters*

I heard somewhere that you can study colour perception with *candles and pencils, mirrors and coloured glass, moonlight and sunlight, crystals, liquids and colour wheels*. If I had these things, I'd be sure to use them, but there is nothing here. The only *instrument* I have is my body.

*James Gleick*

*Maggie Nelson*

I hold my hands up to the light and watch as my fingers split a deep purple into lighter and darker shades. As I move my fingers one by one, I follow the thin strips of shadow that cut through the light, casting alternating parts of my palm into darkness. A cracked *horizon* appears on my skin and I begin to wonder... Perhaps my fingers are not in fact pulling their shadows along behind them like obedient twins, but rather they slip and slide in a lucid mess of independent actors leading their own lives, slack-lining into a

*Marc Augé*

spectacular, [tentacular](#) choreography.

*Donna Haraway*

“Thank you for calling the *Solve It Now* hotline. You are number two in the queue. Please record your thoughts while we process your request. An operator will be with you shortly.”

[Song plays] [come with me / we can go to a paradise of love and joy a destination unknown](#)

*Crystal Waters*

My chest is fluttering, sharp pangs of emotion, all over the place. My skin flattens against the beams of light and my pores widen - it's as though my [epidermis](#) (that trusted blanket that once separated me from the world) has become enlarged, magnified, swallowed up by these growing holes. It's like my tissues are peeling away, shedding dead cells, live cells, becoming thinner and thinner, almost translucent, and the light is pouring into me, filling my every orifice with colour. The hairs on my skin vibrate with the sound - a slow pulse rising and falling, [transforming the elements but not my state](#), lulling me into a new limbo, a suspended vertigo. I am caught between charging and unravelling, reaching and collapsing, accelerating and decelerating... The colours well up into soft tears that silently leak out from beneath my eyelids and run down my motionless cheeks. I don't flinch. Instead I catch them with my tongue and taste them, consume them, bring them back [inside](#) me, closing the circle, backtracking through the rollercoaster loop. I feel ecstatic, [elastic](#), erratic. I feel dizzy with this vibrancy, this spiralling, this [vortical process](#). Is this entry, this eruption, this breach - [critical intimacy](#)?

*Paul B. Preciado*

*Michael Tuttle*

*Michela Filzi*

*Jane Bennett*

“Thank you for calling the *Solve It Now* hotline. You are number one in the queue. Please record your thoughts while we process your request. An operator will be with you shortly.”

[Song plays] [destination unknown / follow me / and let's go](#)

*Pedro Matias*

*Crystal Waters*

I feel a sharp thrust of pain in my gut. I am reminded where I am. For a moment I doubt whether what just happened actually happened. Is this another [inner-story](#) that I have authored as truth? Is my truth ultimately the truth? I need to speak to someone about this. When I get through on the hotline, I can -

*Slavoj Žižek*

“We are sorry. The *Solve It Now* hotline is unable to place your call right now. Please state your request after the tone and we will get back to you with an automated solution.”

Seriously?! An automated solution? Fine. “Hi there. I am in an all-white room, where the upholstery, carpets and furniture are gone, with no corners or edges in sight. Just now, I felt my whole body was buzzing with all the possible frequencies colliding. But now I feel drained, blank, depleted. It's like in that James Blake song, when he sings [one day I woke and couldn't find the colour in anything...](#)”

*James Blake*

“Searching database for [one day I woke and couldn't find the colour in anything](#)”

“No, wait! It's more complicated than that. My body is glitching. My mind is a blur. I feel like I've lost all sense of direction. All I can do now is [listen for](#)

the sounds you're making”

“We are sorry. [One day I woke and couldn't find the colour in anything](#) could not be found. Please call us again on the *Solve It Now* hotline. Our office hours are Monday to Friday 9 a.m. until 4 p.m., Saturday and Sunday 10 a.m. until 3 p.m....”

## SOURCES

- Alex Gaudino.  
ft. Crystal Waters  
Marc Augé.* Destination Calabria. Hit Single, 2007  
The **non-place** is the opposite of Utopia: it exists, and it does not contain any organic society.
- Niels Weijer.* The concept was always to **move** around the light source. My interest was to make a choreography with light objects.
- Maggie Nelson.* The confusion about what color is, where it is, or whether it is persists despite thousands of years of prodding at the phenomenon. And literally prodding: in his zeal, in the “dark chamber” of his room at Trinity College, Newton at times took to sticking iron rods or sticks in his **eyes** to produce then analyse his perceptions of color. Children whose vision has been damaged have been known to smash their fingers into their eyes to recreate color sensations that have been lost to them (*That’s the spirit!*)
- Josef Albers.* In order to use color effectively it is important to recognise that color **deceives** continually.  
In visual perception a color is almost never seen as it really is - as it physically is. This fact makes color the most **relative** medium in art. It is “the interchange of light and shadow,” Goethe concluded, that causes color. He went on to explore the way people perceive shadows cast by different sources of coloured light. He used **candles and pencils, mirrors and coloured glass, moonlight and sunlight, crystals, liquids and color wheels** in a thorough range of experiments.
- James Gleick* 105. There are no **instruments** for measuring color; there are no “color thermometers.” How could there be, as “color knowledge” always remains contingent upon an individual perceiver?  
The first frontier was the **horizon**.
- Maggie Nelson.* The **tentacular** are not disembodied figures; they are cnidarians, spiders, finery beings like humans and raccoons, squid, jellyfish, neural extravaganzas, fibrous entities, flagellated beings, myofibril braids, matted and felted microbial and fungal tangles, probing creepers, swelling roots, reaching and climbing tendrilled ones.
- Marc Augé.  
Donna Haraway.* The new frontier is your **epidermis**. The new Lampedusa is your skin. There weren’t big **transformations**. Mmm. **The state** didn’t change drastically but **the elements** did.
- Paul B. Preciado.  
Michael Tuttle.* The **inside** of me wants to be touched by the outside of me and vice versa.
- Michela Filzi.* A lot of the sound had this **elastic** quality to it, of things moving towards each other, becoming one, and then separating and becoming some different thing. This tension of attraction and repulsion.
- Michael Tuttle.* It is one **vortical process**, though it can be parsed theoretically into stages: first a “fall” or conative impulse of matter energy, then an aleatory swerve that produces crash encounters between protean bits, then a stage of confused turbulence, then a congealment or crystallisation of matter into bodies, then a decay, decline and dissemination of form. And finally: a new fall, a fresh swerve, a different configuration of turbulent forces, another set of formations, a different rate and sequence of decay and decline. The vortical logic holds across different scales of size, time and complexity, and the sequence of stages repeats, but each time with slight differences:...
- Jane Bennett.* It’s a **critical intimacy**, not critical distance. So you actually speak from the inside. That’s deconstruction.
- Pedro Matias.* The stories we tell ourselves to make sense of what we are doing
- Slavoj Žižek.*

*James Blake.*

(our [inner-story](#)) is fundamentally a lie.  
The Colour In Anything. From The Colour In Anything, 2016