



Colour and Contour

Sara Moorhouse relates how her love of the arable landscape led to research into the effect of coloured bands on the surface of conical forms.

I named my first stripy bowl *On the Cusp*. The shape being a little uneven and the pink and green bands not quite symmetrical, it looked un-centred and awkward, and had about it a peculiar uncertainty. I created *On the Cusp* during an MA in Ceramics at the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff (UWIC) in 2003, where I indulgently explored coloured banding arrangements across thrown forms of different shapes and sizes. Having been initially struck by the ways in which throwing lines alter the perception of the form, I was reminded of the arable, often linear, landscapes I had observed as a child in Nottinghamshire. Each year I watched fields transform in magnitude and grandeur, sometimes at a daily rate; the dramatic effects of changing colour and ploughed lines, dark quiet fields clouded in mist throughout winter and the low shining brilliance of yellow rape in spring, left with me an overwhelming vision of colour and its intrinsic relationship to space. So, if farmers unwittingly, yet dramatically, altered the perception of landscape space on a massive scale, why couldn't coloured lines applied to a bowl alter the perception of form in the same way?

COLOUR ILLUSION As I suspected, they did, and I entitled other forms from my MA *Arable Landscape*, *Oscillation*, and *Storm*, all of which altered the perception of the 'real' form in different ways by the various arrangements of colour. Certain hues made the rims appear wider, while others appeared to pull the rims inwards. Some forms seemed deeper or shallower than they actually were, while some appeared to hover or vibrate by the juxtaposition of finer lines. When I searched for contextual references in order to understand these phenomena, it became apparent that the field of ceramics, although abundant with published material on glaze technique and application, offered no literature about perceptual effects of colour.

RESEARCH Eighteen months later I embarked on a PhD with the aim of addressing this apparent gap in ceramics literature by investigating just how colours really do affect the three-dimensional form in the development of my practice. Thankfully, I am now