

Inez Michiels

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Born on September 1, 1960, in Antwerp, Belgium
Lives and works in Oignies-en-Thiérache, Belgium
Independent artist, designer, researcher since 1984

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Inez Michiels is a designer, artist, and design semantics researcher whose work explores how color and shape create meaning. With a background spanning fine arts, multimedia technology, virtual reality, music, communication sciences, and design for emotion, she brings an unusually interdisciplinary lens to visual communication. Over three decades, she has developed influential semantic frameworks—including the Semantic Color Space and the Design Semantics Knowledge Graph, and has presented her research at international conferences such as AIC, ICA, and MinD.

Michiels has taught design semantics at ENSAV La Cambre, MICA, Art'Com, and universities in Singapore, the Netherlands, Pakistan, and Belgium. Her interactive installations and artistic projects have been exhibited widely, and her research has been supported by grants, museum collaborations, and multiple awards. She is founder of CITY OF 8 and co-founder of the Interdisciplinary Color Association ICA-Belgium.

EDUCATION

2010-2014	Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Antwerp, dep. In Situ. Master of Arts.
2013	Delft University of Technology, Netherlands. Advanced studies in design for emotion.
2000	University of Antwerp, Faculty of Communication Sciences. Independent student.
1995-1998	Group-T Leuven Higher Education Technology School. Advanced diploma in multimedia technology and virtual reality.
1990-1992	Royal Flemish Academy of Music in Antwerp. Advanced studies in electronic music.
1987-1990	Merksem District Music Academy. Transition certificate in general music theory.
1979-1983	Berchem Academy of Fine Arts. Transition certificate in free graphic design.
1979-1982	Royal Academy of Fine Arts Antwerp. Bachelor's degrees in Monumental and Graphic Art.
1976-1979	Secondary school art studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in Lier.

PROJECTS AND EXHIBITIONS

2025	Basic images. Creation of narrative maps.
2023-25	Design Semantics knowledge Graph. Creation of an interactive semantic network.
2024	The Lion Story. Art workshop experiment, Gallo-Roman Museum of Tongeren.
2019-2020	Art Matching Test. Creation of an interactive application. Middelheim Museum Antwerp.
2016	Untitled. Performance, Beyond Language, 'Museum Learning Marathon' at MUHKA, Antwerp.
2015	Art and Experience. Solo exhibition at the Mayer van den Bergh Museum, Antwerp, during Science Day.
2014	Experimentation with observation. Performance, MUHKA and Middelheim Museum, Antwerp.
2013	Inside/Outside. Exhibition at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Antwerp. St-Anna. Collaborative project, St. Anna RVT, Antwerp.

PROJECTS AND EXHIBITIONS

- ID sculpture.** Performance and solo exhibition, Kunst in Huis, Leuven.
- 2012 **Shape Space.** Group exhibition 'Hofstraat In Situ', Academy of Fine Arts, Antwerp.
- 2011 **64.** Group exhibition organized by the University of Antwerp and the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Antwerp.
ID sculpture. Group exhibition 'Leuven's Cultural Hour of Glory', an initiative of the city of Leuven, in association with Leuven's cultural sector.
Stairway to Heaven. In situ artwork, Steiner School in Lier.
- 2010 **Changes.** Group exhibition 'Digiart' by Kunst in Huis, at the De Schakel cultural center in Waregem.
- 2008 **The Cycle of the Year.** Computer Animation. Group exhibition 'Art Nocturne' Knocke, 33rd international art and antiques fair in Knocke.
TRANSIT. Interactive Computer animation. Group exhibition, 'True Love' at De Markten Bruxelles.
TRANSIT. Group exhibition at the symposium 'Experience of Technology' organized by VVC Vlaanderen and the DigiArt project of Kunst in Huis.
- 2004 **64 facial expressions.** Publication of a poster.
- 2000 **Emosphere.** An interactive 3D game designed to put the user in a certain mood, using symbols, colors, and music, and to help them understand their psychological state through the choices they make in the virtual space.
- 1999 **ArteKino,** color-dance-music. Electronic music event at the Fnac Forum in Antwerp.
Symbotron. Publication of an experiment highlighting the links between symbols and primary colors. The result is an artistic poster and an interactive application.
- 1996 **KHNUM.** Development of a scenario for an interactive semantic database. A creative logical classification that allows for the coordination of several media (language, image, sound).
- 1994 **Color, Sound, Shape, and Meaning.** Festival "From the Magic Lantern to Multimedia," PHICOM School of Communication Management, Antwerp.

PROJECTS AND EXHIBITIONS

- Color, Sound, Shape, and Meaning.** ITHAKA, “Leuven Shows Its Colors,” organized by the KULeuven Student Cultural Council.
- 1993 **Color, Shape, and Semantics.** Solo exhibition at the Saint-Luc Academy gallery in Brussels.
- 1991 **64 graphic forms and color combinations.** Publication of a silkscreen print.
- 1990 **Synesthetic experience.** Royal Flemish Academy of Music in Antwerp.
- 1984-1992 Permanent illustrator and cartoonist for the Flemish newspapers Het Nieuwsblad and De Standaard.

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

- 2024-2025 **Core Images in Mythology.** Research.
- 2023-2026 Regular online publication of articles for Design semantic stories
- 2009-2025 **Semantic Knowledge Graph.** Research and development.
- 2021 **Design Semantics database.** Towards an analytical and logical approach to meaningful design. Proceedings of the 14th Congress of the International Color Association (AIC), Milan, Italy. Conference paper.
- 2019 **Who am I today?** MinD International Conference, Designing with and for people with dementia: Well-being, empowerment, and happiness. Conference paper.
- 2018 **The Semantic Color Space.** IAC Mid-Term Meeting: Color and Landscapes. Conference paper.
Indications for a valid color test for measuring personality, visual needs, and preferences for custom design applications. Interim meeting of the International Color Association (ICA): Colors and Human Comfort. Conference paper.
Design semantic pathways. Symposium of the Interdisciplinary Color Association of Belgium (ICA-Belgium). Conference paper.
- 2013-2016 Researcher at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp.
- 2013 **Emotional reactions to art objects: a bio-informational approach.** Supervisors: Professor Karolien Poels, UA,

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

- and Professor Kris van't Hof, KASKA.
Dissertation/Thesis.
The space of form. Construction of a space in which all imaginable forms can be classified. In collaboration with the Royal Academy of Fine Arts Antwerp.
- 2011 **Color, shape, and symbolism in visual communication in the healthcare sector.** Article in the Dutch magazine Tekstblad.
- 2010 **The design of happiness.** Article in Design & Emotion, online magazine.
Coup de Couleur. Goedele magazine. Contribution to the article.
- 2009 **The unwrapped gift.** Article in the magazine 1.2.COLOR published by the Dutch Association for Color Studies.
- 2006 **Constructions of Symbols, 596 universal symbols.** Book published by ACCO, Leuven.
- 2006-2008 **ArteKino v2.** Further research into the links between body movements and emotions. The research that began with 8 colors, gestures, movements, and sounds has now been extended to 64.
- 2004 -2003 **64 Facial Expressions.** Research into the links between facial expressions and emotions.
- 1999 **ArteKino v1.** Study of the link between colors, sounds, and body movements.
- 1991 **Synesthetic Experiment.** Application of semantics to graphic and musical forms. Book, audio recording, and poster published by Genetic Coding, Antwerp.
- 1990-1991 **The meaning of graphic forms and their connection to color combinations.** Research.
- 1990 **The most striking elements in abstract art.** Comparison of these results with the forms used in advertising.
The link between sounds and graphic forms. Research. Construction of a synesthetic table.

CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS, AND COURSES

- 2024 **The Lion Story.** Art workshop experiment, Gallo-Roman Museum of Tongeren.
- 2022-2025 **Color 3: Color and Design semantics.** Graduate course. ENSAV La Cambre, Brussels.

CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS, AND COURSES

- 2021 **Design Semantics database. Towards an analytical and logical approach to meaningful design.** Presentation, 14th Congress of the International Color Association (AIC), Milan, Italy.
- 2019 **Who am I today?** Presentation, MinD International Conference, Designing with and for people with dementia: Well-being, empowerment, and happiness. Dresden, Germany.
The Semantic Color Space. Presentation, Mid-term meeting of the ICA: Color and Landscapes. Buenos Aires, Argentina.
Signifix. Guest lecture at the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) graphic design department, Baltimore, USA.
- 2018 **Indications for a valid color test to measure personality, visual needs, and preferences for tailored design applications.** Interim meeting of the International Color Association (AIC): Colors and Human Comfort. Lisbon, Portugal.
Design semantic pathways. Presentation. Symposium of the Interdisciplinary Color Association Belgium. La Cambre, Brussels.
- 2016 **64.** Presentation of a domino color game and playful design tool in one. Symposium of the Interdisciplinary Color Association Belgium. Ghent University.
- 2014 **The Design of Happiness.** Lecture. Science Day, Felixpakhuis, Antwerp.
Emotional Reactions to Art Objects. Lecture. IFMA, Kunst in Huis, Leuven.
The Design of Happiness. Guest lecture, Windesheim University, Zwolle, Netherlands.
- 2011 **The Design of Happiness.** Lecture, Freelance Factory, Amsterdam, Netherlands.
Semantics of Design. Graduate course, Art'Com, Higher School of Design, Casablanca, Morocco.
- 2010 **The Adventures of Tintin, a Classic Myth.** Lecture, Freelance Factory, Pakhuis De Zwijger, Amsterdam, Netherlands.
Hospital Design. Guest lecture. LASALLE, Academy of Art and Design, Singapore.
Hospital Design. Guest lecture. NUS, University of Design and Environment, Department of Architecture, Singapore.

CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS, AND COURSES

- Design and Semantics, lecture series - case 3: The language of erotic imagery.** DESIGNCENTER DE WINKELHAAK, Antwerp.
- 2009 **Design and Semantics, lecture series - case 2: The design of happiness.** DESIGNCENTER DE WINKELHAAK, Antwerp.
- Hospital Design.** Lecture at the Colour & Communication NCS Elscolab seminar, Antwerp.
- Design and Semantics, lecture series - case 1: Hospital Design.** DESIGNCENTER DE WINKELHAAK, Antwerp.
- History of Color Psychology and Color, Form and Material in Hospital Architecture,** lectures at the Colour & Communication seminar, NCS at Elscolab, Antwerp.
- 2008 **Imagery of banks and financial institutions.** Guest lectures:
- > Art'Com, Higher School of Design, Casablanca, Morocco;
 - > CESA, Higher School of Marketing, Casablanca, Morocco;
 - > Faculty of Humanities, Lessius Higher School, Antwerp;
 - > Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Faculty of Graphic Design, Antwerp;
 - > Symposium on Color and Cultures, Dutch Society for the Study of Color (NVvK), Nijmegen, Netherlands;
 - > Saatchi & Saatchi Brussels;
 - > Duval Guillaume Dialog, Antwerp;
 - > These Days, Antwerp.
- User Interaction and Design Semantics.** Lecture, Media Center for Usability Research; Faculty of Social Sciences, K.U. Leuven.
- 2007 **Symbols Constructions.** Book presentation. De Groene Waterman bookshop, Antwerp.
- The Imagery Of Banks And Financial Institutions.** Guest lecture, Equator Academy of Art, Media and Design Technology, Penang, Malaysia.
- The Imagery Of Banks And Financial Institutions.** Lecture, Synovate Censydiam, Antwerp.
- 2006 **The age of symbols.** Lecture at the annual book fair, Antwerp.

CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS, AND COURSES

- 2005 **The meaning of graphic forms, colors, and symbols.**
Guest lecture, National University of the Arts, Lahore,
Pakistan.
- 1998 **The science of colors.** Course, DSM-specialty compounds,
Genk.
- 1997 **Color, form, and meaning.** Lecture, Saint-Luc Academy of
Fine Arts, Antwerp.
Design Semantics in advertising. Lecture, Hasselt
Provincial Academy of Limburg, Faculty of Graphic
Design and Advertising.
Color, Sound, Form, And Meaning. Lecture, PHICOM School
of Communication Management, Antwerp.
Color, Sound, Form, And Meaning. Lecture, Saint-Luc
Academy of Fine Arts, Antwerp.
- 1996 **Color, Sound, Form, And Meaning.** Lecture, PHICOM School
of Communication Management, Antwerp.
Color, Sound, Form, And Meaning. Lecture, Saint-Luc
Academy of Fine Arts, Antwerp.
- 1994 **Color, Sound, Form, And Meaning.** Lecture, "From Magic
Lantern to Multimedia" Festival, PHICOM School of
Communication Management, Antwerp.
- 1993 **Color, form, and meaning.** Lecture, Saint-Luc Academy of
Fine Arts, Brussels.
- 1992 **Design Semantics in Advertising.** Lecture at the
Association of Graphic Designers at the Anton Spinoy
Cultural Center in Mechelen.

AWARDS AND GRANTS

- 2022 **The Semantic Colour Space.** Shortlisted for the Henry
van de Velde Prize, design research.
- 2014 **ID-Sculpture** was selected from among 500 scientific
projects from Flanders and Brussels for Science Day at
Technopolis, Mechelen.
- 2013 A BOF research budget was awarded by the University of
Antwerp, Faculty of Communication Sciences, and the
Antwerp Academy of Fine Arts, Faculty of Liberal Arts.
- 2010 **Collection of interactive works.** Winner of the
DIGIKUNST competition organized by Kunst in Huis

AWARDS AND GRANTS

- 2001 Award for excellence in the development of a game and multimedia technology project Emosphere at the 'Milia 2001' trade fair in Cannes, France.
- 1997 Award for outstanding software at the 'Computer and multimedia in school and at home' fair in Ghent, in association with the Department of Education, educational networks, university working groups, associations, and companies.

AFFILIATIONS

Member of the European Human Behaviour and Evolution Association, Cambridge, United Kingdom.

Co-founder and board member of the Interdisciplinary Color Association ICA-Belgium.

Founder of CITY OF 8, the research association for design semantics.

Member of the International Scientific Committee of the AIC, International Color Association.

Member of the AIC Study Group on Environmental Color Design (SGECD).

Member of the AIC Study Group on Color Language (SGLC).

LINKS

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Design Semantic Stories cityof8.substack.com

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