

Pantone's Newest Color Is an Ode to Menstruation

Back in December, when the world was still relatively “normal” and Covid-19 wasn’t even on the radar, the Pantone Institute of Color predicted that Classic Blue, described as a “timeless and enduring hue, elegant in its simplicity” would be omnipresent at the turn of the decade due to the “desire for a dependable and stable foundation from which to build as we cross the threshold into a new era.”

Clearly, the color standards, consulting and forecasting company wasn’t able to see in its crystal ball that 2020 would be a whirlwind of political drama and pandemic contagion, rendering Classic Blue a tint disconnected from our undependable and unstable reality.

But, in a partnership with Swedish intimate wellbeing brand Intimina, Pantone is launching a bright, cherry-red hue that will be relatable to the more than 800 million people who menstruate daily. “Period,” a custom-made shade of red that is meant to be symbolic of a steady menstrual flow, is intended to normalize and shatter the stigma of the bodily function as part of Intimina’s new campaign, “Seen+Heard.”

The initiative is designed to embolden everyone who gets their monthly bleed (regardless of gender) to feel comfortable and proud of their periods, while also bringing attention to its menstrual care and pelvic floor strengthening products.

“Despite the fact that billions of people experience menstruation, it has historically been treated as something

that shouldn't be seen or talked about publicly. And if we look at popular culture, depictions of periods have ranged from wildly inaccurate and unsympathetic to being the subject of jokes and derision. Enough is enough, it's 2020," said Danela Žagar, global brand manager for Intimina, in a statement.

"Pantone's Period red shade represents exactly what our 'Seen+Heard' campaign is about: making periods visible, encouraging positive conversations and normalizing menstruation in our culture, our society and in our everyday lives," she added.

The hue, which is described by Pantone as "an energizing and dynamic red shade," is not meant to be an accurate visual depiction of menstrual blood. Rather, according to Laurie Pressman, vp of the Pantone Color Institute, the shade is more of a "visual identifier" to help the Swedish wellness brand leverage the power of the color to share its purpose and draw focus to its array of menstrual cups. However, Pressman continued, both the pigment experts and Intimina worked alongside a gynecologist and also consulted scientific research to create a shade that was emblematic of menses.

In addition to encouraging period positivity through the vibrant vermillion hue, Intimina has donated 2,000 euros to ActionAid, an international charity that works with women and girls experiencing violence and living in poverty—and in "period poverty"—as part of the "Seen+Heard" campaign. According to ActionAid UK's director of policy, advocacy and programs Jillian Popkins, many girls miss vital days of school (or drop out altogether) because of the stigma associated with periods and inadequate access to hygienic products.

Pantone and Intimina aren't the only brands that have taken a "period positivity" stance this year. On International Women's Day, advocacy group Period and agency Huge, which created the mobile-activated tampon dispenser HooHa, installed a coin-operated toilet paper dispenser in men's restrooms to highlight the frustration that accompanies needing to pay for a basic sanitary necessity.

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