Abstrakt /Ulf Klarén: 'Common basis for colour and light studies':

Most scientific research about colour and light perception is focused on underlying physical or physiological processes. The contribution of physics to description of human experiences is limited to causal relations. Physical theories can with great precision describe, explain and predict physical/ physiological processes, but there is no physical method or physical theory describing the spatio-dynamic and contextual human experience of colour and light. Without a common systematic description of the living experiences of colour and light, teachers are obliged to use a variety of incoherent and competing doctrines and systems. This article argues for a widened interdisciplinary dialogue aiming at a common framework of understanding of colour and light experiences. It discusses the fundamental differences between the knowledge obtained by scientific methods and knowledge based on human perceptual experiential qualities that cannot be reduced or separated from their spatial and cultural context. Knowledge about the human coherent and dynamic experience is needed in professions that work with colour and light as visual expressions in the spatial context, in practices such as art, design and architecture. The article also deals with the need to treat colour and light as a coherent field of knowledge, as they together form our visual understanding of the world; understanding of the interaction between colour and light demands a holistic approach, a qualitative or descriptive research methodology.