

Blue: Color and Concept

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Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library

121 Wall St., New Haven, CT 06511

Libraries conventionally organize and classify collections according to author, title, and subjects as diverse as children's literature, amateur photography, Harlem Renaissance poetry, and experimental film. This exhibition reveals what can occur if alternative methods for navigating an archive are employed. "Blue: Color and Concept" tracks a single idea across the Beinecke's holdings and over numerous fields in order to reveal a rich network of associations. The result is a unique cultural history of the color blue in nineteenth- and twentieth-century arts and letters.

The exhibition brings together literary and historical artifacts—such as the poet Langston Hughes's blue enamel-decorated cigarette case and a hand-colored nineteenth-century family photograph, writer Edith Wharton's 1915 Paris driver's permit and an American driver's guidebook from the same era—alongside great works in fields as varied as entomology, poetry, human psychology, and American popular music.

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