



ROCK 'N' ROLL DARK



BRAINY BROWN



COLD CHESTNUT



DITZY BLONDE



GULLIBLE GOLDEN



MOUSEY BROWN

THE HAIR STER

Fiery redheads, clever brunettes, dumb blondes —

WORDS:



KOOKY PEACH



NOTICE-ME MINT



CREEPY COBALT



FIESTY AUBURN



RACY RED



GOOD-TIME GINGER



SERIOUS SILVER



BORING BEIGE



ICE QUEEN GREY

EOTYPE IS DEAD

how we're finally defying hair colour conventions...

AMERLEY OLLENU



MISFIT PURPLE



NOT-A-GINGER STRAWBERRY



GOTHIC BLACK

F

unny, isn't it. We've spent centuries campaigning for the vote, shattering the glass ceiling and fighting for equal pay – yet society still, all too often, disregards our actions or achievements and instead defines us solely by our hair colour. From advertising campaigns to TV shows, a nuanced bias has for decades attached hair colour to personality types. Just think how often blonde is pre-fixed by sexy, nevermind other lazy pairings such as feisty redhead, a boring brunette or a kooky pink. Meanwhile, celebrities are portrayed as having everything from a rebirth to a breakdown based solely on their latest hair shade of choice. Hair colour, it seems, counts for more than we give it credit for – and far more than is both feminist or healthy.

And it's not just a case of reductive tabloid speak. Earlier this month, Silicon Valley CEO Eileen Carey, who runs Glassbreakers (which provides companies with software aimed at attracting a diverse workforce), revealed she dyed her hair after being told by colleagues that the investors she was pitching to would feel more comfortable dealing with a brunette rather than a blonde woman. "I was told for this raise [of funds], it would be to my benefit to dye my hair brown as there was a stronger pattern of recognition of brunette women CEOs," she told the BBC. And when she interviewed other women, she found some were also strategically darkening their hair. But it's not that unusual, says applied colour psychologist Karen Haller. "Unconsciously or, in this case, consciously, impression management is a process in which we attempt to influence perceptions of others by controlling what they see – usually via clothing. In this case, it's been done via hair colour."

Yet despite Carey's experiences other research suggests that there are a disproportionate amount of blonde female US senators, CEOs at Fortune 500 companies and US university presidents, despite only around 2% of the world's population and 5% of Caucasians in the US being natural blondes. "This was paradoxical given the 'dumb blonde' stereotype, and we wanted to explore why this could be the case," says Professor Jennifer Berdahl of the University of British Columbia, one of the

study's authors. They discovered that, "participants imagined blondes to be younger and more attractive but lacking leadership skills – which aligns with the dominant stereotype. Yet when we described a blonde woman with more dominant behaviours to participants, we found that, unlike brunettes, blonde hair seemed to protect the wearer from the social backlash of being a dominant woman in a male-dominated world."

HISTORY OF STEREOTYPES

While frustrating to live with, where these stereotypes come from is fascinating. In ancient Rome, prostitutes were forced to wear blonde wigs or bleach their hair to mark them out from dark-haired

Marilyn Monroe dyed her 'mousy' hair blonde her career skyrocketed, surpassing the success of other brunette starlets of the time like Sophia Loren."

So what of the brunette? She became everything the blonde 'wasn't' – in fact a British study on hair colour and heterosexual attraction found that 62% of men associated brown-haired women with stability and competence. Another survey found that though men found blondes 'sexier' they married brunettes because they were more 'stable'. Offensive, much?

Most of the studies leave out women with black hair who are either viewed as 'mysterious' like Uma Thurman in *Pulp Fiction* or ruthless like Cruella, Maleficent

subject tested four different wigs to see which appealed best to men in social situations. Overall 127 men approached her in the blonde wig, 84 in the brown, 82 in the black but only 29 in the red.

THE FUTURE OF COLOUR

The years of social conditioning have led us to a space where hair colour has been defined for and by the male gaze – from Hollywood casting directors to business leaders, categorising women's existence into tick-boxes of shades and matching personality types that just don't exist in this simple dichotomous way. It's an example of the patriarchy insidiously seeping into our everyday lives. As with Carey's example, we know the male-dominated tech industry is rife with well-publicised sexism. But for someone of her stature to follow these man-made 'rules' by dying her hair to get ahead opens a new set of quandaries – namely – are women being complicit in perpetuating the stereotypes of hair colour and trying to manipulate them to our advantage? Berdahl thinks so: "At an individual level what we can do is to stop perpetrating these ideas that just don't lift up the sisterhood."

However, the tide is actively turning on these attitudes, and rather than a mass feminist outrage, it's partly the result of the advancements in hair colouring techniques which allow you to change your hair so many times you defy definition. 'Bond' treatments like Olaplex work from inside the hair strand to repair damaged locks where the structure has broken down. It's essentially allowed us to change hair colour more easily and frequently than ever before – especially if that colour change is dramatic. It's what's enabled celebrities to dramatically change hues one week to the next – notably Katy Perry, Beyoncé and Rihanna (who all also wear wigs, and extensions – nobody's hair can take six colour changes in a week)

Using hair colour as a style accessory (like a new handbag or this season's red boot) has filtered down to the high street. Now we've got the technology, the inspiration and the freedom to be whatever colour we choose, with societal diktats ignored entirely. And it's made things easier and more accessible for all hair types, including afro, mixed and Asian hair, which traditional colouring methods haven't been kind to.

COLOUR CHAMELEON

Katy Perry's amazing hair tone transformations



2011 Her natural brown turns a bold rosy hue.



2012 A mix of blue and purple for her high pony.



2013 Katy channels her inner goth.



2015 Grown out lilac makes Katy art-school cool.



2015 Later that year she goes classic auburn.



2017 Katy opts for a crop in traditional blonde.

noblewomen. However, it had the opposite effect and blonde became more desirable, creating the link between blonde hair and sexuality. "What ingrained this

and countless other gothic Disney villains. Women of colour have historically been ignored by this categorisation (save a cursory 'exotic' tag). Yet it is redheads, who

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stereotype in modern times was classic cinema," says Carol Dyhouse, author of *Hearthrobs: A History Of Women And Desire*. "The idea of the blonde bombshell – a mixture of sexual prowess and innocence – leapt into prominence in the Thirties – think Jean Harlow's platinum locks. And there's no denying that once

make up less than two per cent of the world's population that historically have suffered the most. Just being born a redhead was enough to warrant death during the time of the Spanish inquisition though now they're most associated with being 'fiery'. In a study by the Université de Bretagne-Sud, in France, a female



Technologically, we've moved way past the four dye colours that were available in the Fifties (red, black, brown and blonde) which limited what we *could* be. That's why the 'vivid colour' (think emerald green and sunshine yellow) sector is growing exponentially, explains colourist and owner of London's Not Another Salon, Sophia Hilton, whose bright yellow hair has become a trademark, but also "an extension of her personality and a tool for self-expression." They're one of the salons giving rise to Instagram's myriad rainbow hair colour trends. "We are much more in control of our colour now," says Hilton. "There are the 'look twice' shades which might look like

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What's more true than ever is that attitudes are shifting – and if we no longer define ourselves by hair colour, then nobody else can define us that way either. And that's pivotal. Future generations will look back on hair colour stereotypes and ask, why did we let that happen? At least now we can confidently see it's finally coming to an end.



What shade do you feel like being today? Find your natural hair colour on the left, then discover your options for a radical change from an instant wash out hit, a slight tint, a medium colour shift and a total overhaul...

	INSTANT	TINT	MEDIUM	DRAMATIC
WHITE BLONDE	 <p>Pixie Lott Bright Hair Chalks Collection in 2975C, £4.99</p>	 <p>Lee Stafford Bleach Blondes Kiss of Colour in Playful Pink, £5.99</p>	 <p>Superdrug Colour Vibrance Permanent in 11.11 Silver, £4.49</p>	 <p>Garnier Olia in 6.66 Vivid Garnet, £6.99</p>
BLONDE	 <p>Superdrug Pick & Mix Instant Colour Spray in Grey, £3.99</p>	 <p>Redken Blonde Idol Custom- Tone Gold Conditioner, £18.50</p>	 <p>Garnier Nutrisse Crème in 7N Nude Dark Blonde, £5.79</p>	 <p>Bleach London in The Big Pink Super Cool Colour, £6</p>
LIGHT BROWN	 <p>Pixie Lott Paint Hair Pens Collection, £5.99</p>	 <p>John Frieda Brilliant Brunette Visibly Deeper, £9.99</p>	 <p>Clairol Color Crave Semi- Permanent Colour in Orchid, £7.99</p>	 <p>L'Oréal Paris Infinia Préférence in 11.21 Ultra Light, £7.99</p>
BROWN	 <p>Kevin Murphy Color Bug in White 5G, £14</p>	 <p>Infuse My Colour in Cobalt Wash, £13.95</p>	 <p>Clairol Color Crave Semi- Permanent in Emerald, £7.99</p>	 <p>Superdrug Colour Vibrance in 11.0 Pure Platinum, £4.49</p>
RED	 <p>L'Oréal Colorista Spray in Turquoise, £6.99</p>	 <p>Rita Hazan True Color Ultimate Shine Gloss in Red Gloss, £21</p>	 <p>Clairol Nice'n Easy in 4.5RB Natural Reddish Brown, £5.99</p>	 <p>Bleach London Black Dye, Permanent Hair Dye, £8</p>
BLACK	 <p>Pimps & Pinups High Voltage Hair Pop Paint, £7.99</p>	 <p>Colour Freedom Metallic Black, £7.99</p>	 <p>L'Oréal Paris Intense Ombre Préféréncé in 104 Ombré, £7.99</p>	 <p>Bleach London Total Bleach Salon Standard Bleach, £8</p>

STOCKISTS: BLEACH LONDON (BLEACHLONDON.CO.UK), CLAIRE'S (CLAIRES.COM), CLAIROL (SUPERDRUG.COM), COLOUR FREEDOM (SUPERDRUG.COM), GARNIER (BOOTS.COM), INFUSE MY COLOUR (BOOTS.COM), JOHN FRIEDA (SUPERDRUG.COM), KAYE QUINN (KENNETH COLE STORE.COM), LEE STRAUSS (LEEKNATHANSTORE.COM), OLIALEX (OLIALEX.CO.UK), PHIPPS & PINUPS (ASOS.COM), PIXIE (SUPERDRUG.COM), REBECCA LOVETT (REBECCALOVETT.COM), SUPERHEROES (SUPERHEROES.CO.UK), TONY AND PAUL (TONYANDPAUL.CO.UK), VIVIANE (VIVIANE.CO.UK).
TESTING: ALEXA (ALEXACOLORS.COM), BECKY (BECKYBROWN.COM), JESSICA (JESSICABROWN.COM), JOJO (JOJOBRUN.COM), JULIA (JULIABROWN.COM), LUCY (LUCYBROWN.COM), NINA (NINABROWN.COM), RUTH (RUTHBROWN.COM), STEVE (STEVEBROWN.COM), SYLVIA (SYLVIAHARRISON.COM), TARA (TARAHARRISON.COM), TERRY (TERRYBROWN.COM), TRACY (TRACYBROWN.COM), YVES (YVESBROWN.COM).
TESTING RESULTS: THE COLOR AND CONDITION OF YOUR HAIR. STYLIST RECOMMENDS A TEST BATCH AND STRAND TEST TO BE CONDUCTED PRIOR TO FULL APPLICATION.