

Microsymposium

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PR with colourful paintings from colourless crystals

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Documentation in crystallographic science provides not only abstract information and data, but offers a particularly high a potential for aesthetical creations. This potential is evident by in the colourful cover images of some top crystallographic journals as well as the illustrations in the individual scientific articles. Those crystallographers who use polarized microscopic techniques in their daily research know about the fascinating and sometimes surprisingly aesthetic images in microscopic preparations of crystalline materials. The investigation of a vast number of organic compounds with hot stage microscopy over decades in our laboratories resulted in a collection of thousands of microphotographs. Although these images were recorded with the scientific purpose to document the morphology, textures, phase transitions etc. of crystalline phases, there are a many strikingly aesthetic pictures among this collection that would attract the attention of everyone. Therefore, we decided to make this material visible to the public and we started to produce high quality prints for back illuminated wall pictures and lampshades. On our opinion, one can “transform” practically every crystalline substance to appealing “paintings” with some scientific knowledge and preparation skills. This will be demonstrated with pictures produced from the products of an agrochemical company, which now decorate the walls of their building. The positive feedback and interest in the phenomena behind the colourful pictures allowed us to make our scientific work more visible to the public and to convey some understanding for the nature and properties of crystalline materials. The aim of this presentation is to report about past activities, our experience in public relations with crystal images and to inspire colleagues in crystallography to utilize the available potential for such purposes.

Keywords: public relations, polarized light hot stage microscopy, art objects from crystal images