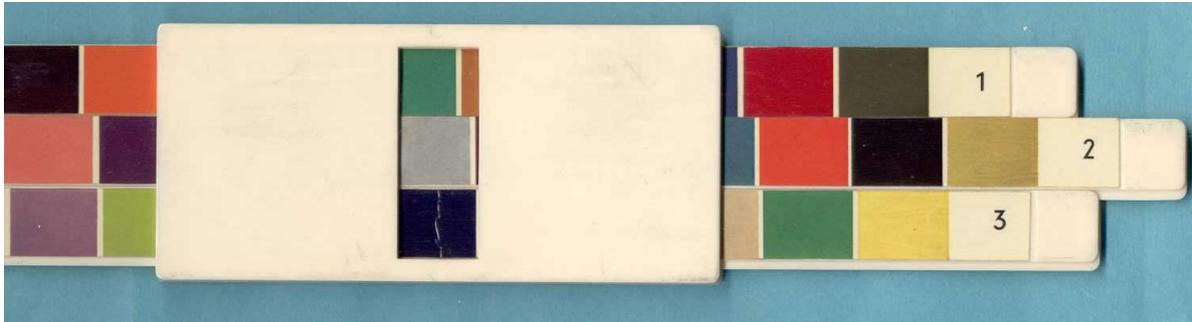


TITLE: SLIDE RULE FOR COLOUR MIXING/SAMPLING/MATCHING?

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How was it used?

Firstly, is it a slide rule? For most purists probably not as it clearly only has bands of colour and no logarithmic scales. But then again it looks like a regular sized linear slide rule, it has a slide and it has a cursor. In fact as it is made up of three interchangeable slides, it could arguably be a rare SSS type of a Poly-Slide Rule [1].

In the theory of colours (grossly oversimplified) there are:

- 3 primary or pigment colours – red, yellow and blue.
- 6 secondary colours – the extra colours formed by mixing the primary colours i.e. green, orange and purple.
- 12 tertiary colours – the extra colours formed by mixing a primary and a secondary colour and the reason for the double-barrelled names e.g. red-orange, blue-green, etc.

To me, there is no obvious correlation of this theory to the bands of colour on each of the slides. So I am left guessing that it is: (i) a kind of mixing guide i.e. the resulting colour when mixing different shades, (ii) a sampler of possible standard product offerings, (iii) a guide for contrasting/complementary colours or (iv) something else? Does anyone have any ideas? The printed lettering on the accompanying box suggests it is of German (language) origin.

Dimensions

- **Stock:** 300 x 47 x 3 mm.
- **Cursor:** double-sided 120 x 55 x 9 mm with no hair-line but with a 45 x 18 mm window.
- **Slides** 3 “tongue and grooved” interchangeable and interlocking slides.

Material

- **Stock and slides:** a “cheap” hard cream plastic without any frame – the “tongue and grooved” nature of the three slides keeps them clamped together. The cursor is made of the same cheap grade plastic.
It is a duplex rule with a double-sided cursor. There is no obvious front or back to the rule but one set of slides carries the annotations “1/2/3” and the other set: “A/B/C”. However, the respective order of the slides and which side of the rule they appear can be easily interchanged. Therefore the theoretical number of slide combinations is $6!/2$ or 360 different combinations.
- **Finishing:** glued onto the 3 slides are 6 paper strips, all with different bands of colour, with a high-gloss finish.
- **Accessories:** a cream “fake leather” covered cardboard box. Printed in black lettering on both sides of the box is the German accreditation: “*WK-Farbschieber*” or colour slide. The style of the box is similar to the covered cardboard boxes sometimes used by Farber-Castell.

Layout and scales

The paper strip on each slide consists of 12 coloured bands – each rectangular band measuring 19 x 15 mm. Three bands line up vertically in the window of the cursor. The “1” and “C” slides have the bands of the strongest colours. In contrast, the “3” and “A” slides have the bands of the palest colours.

Distinguishing features

Besides its striking appearance, the most distinguishing feature is the way the slides are “tongue and grooved” to remove the need for any kind of frame.

Other remarks:

The rule is devoid of any makers’ marks, etc. Despite several helpful leads from members of the German RST collectors group (e.g. “WK-Wohnen” a German based interior design specialist) the origins of the rule and how it was ever used remain a mystery.

References:

1. Bruce O.B. Williams: “*Poly-Slide Rules: 380 Years old and still going strong?*”, Proceedings of the 8th International Meeting of Slide Rule Collectors, Royal Leamington Spa, UK, ISBN 0 9535039 5 X, October 2002