

Proposed question for Independent Project
Essay - Mollie Larcombe

Name:

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Environmental Design

Visual Communication

Society Consumerism

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Graphic Design

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Proposed question for Independent Project - *How is Graphic design used to echo a response from society based on Climate, Geographical and Environmental issues towards a future of sustainability?*

Proposed practice-based project- *A Perfect Planet through Graphic design.*

How is Graphic design used to echo a response from society based on Climate, Geographical and Environmental issues towards a future of sustainability?

In this research essay I will propose a practice-based project analysed through research surrounding three key words and three supporting designers that connect to each word. Logically decoding the visual information to arrive at a fully researched conclusion that I will define a question that will form an independent project. Using my three words *Environmental Design*, *Visual Communication* and *Society Consumerism*; I will study how the graphic design implies and replicates these definitions of my chosen words. Within my response in this essay, I will use my own knowledge with external research I will undertake and quote as a reference to what I am writing about. My focus of this research essay will be based around the theme of the planet, sustainability, climate change, extinction, the environment, and conservation of animals. Therefore, my research will be based around these key elements. Responding to these examples of graphic design I have chosen to investigate; I look at how it echoes a reaction from society towards a sustainable future.

Keyword: **Environmental Design**

(Figure 1)



Postcard Set Chester Zoo, Nicky Thompson, 2018/19

Design as a definition is “An organization of or structure of formal elements in a work of art and composition.” (Definition, Dictionary.com, 2021) An example of design is the travel postcards of Chester Zoo primarily promotional based, but echo an informative side to the artwork, designed by Graphic designer and Illustrator Nicky Thompson. These set of prints were designed for the promotion of Chester Zoo and their vital role in accommodated species of endangered animals. The posters/postcards composed with a large striking image designed with a contemporary touch and influenced style design of 1930’s travel posters of that era/time. The vintage style is just one

component that reflected the zoos promotional aspect of trying to get people of the public to travel and support their animals.

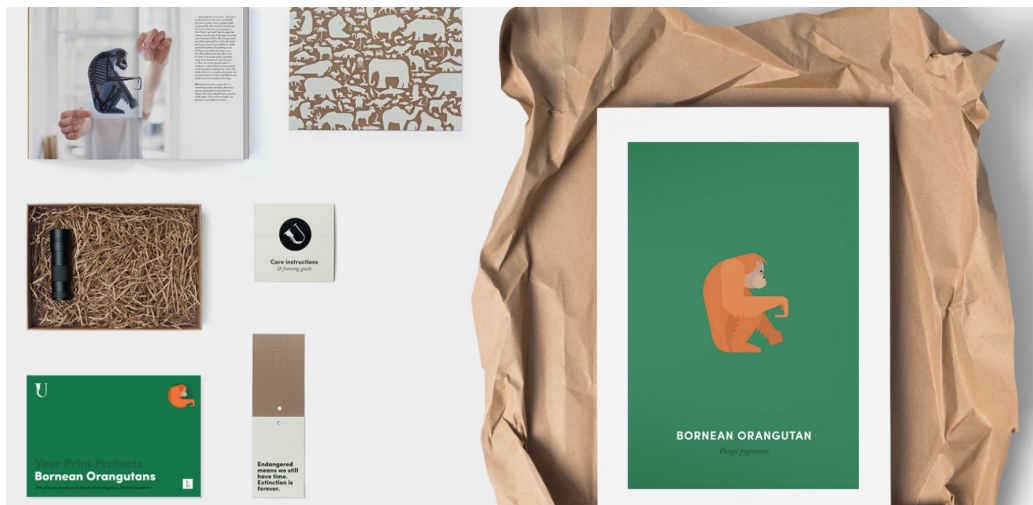
The design uses a simple graphic within a vintage side to the style they have contained. The illustrative style and use of simple composition working with shapes and colour create a voice for the animals; that is able to connect to all ages as a benefit for the audience they are targeting. I think that the 1930's travel style for the postcard is a subtle powerful communication style to get people to think about traveling to the zoo as visits. The designed acts as a hidden metaphor to the zoos desire; indicated the action they want the person receiving this to visit the zoo. But the key part of this design, is the bold impact of the text written in red "Over 27,000 Animals" exaggerating the purpose or intention of the zoo which is to get people to visit these animals and support them.

The posters are a summary of the zoo and a reflection to promote what has been proposed perceiving the posters. The prints show a designed of what Chester Zoo stand for to prevent extinction of these animals highlighted through the various prints. Generating a response how they require our support in control of how it will achieve a future of sustainability for all animal welfare of zoos and the planet that live alongside us.

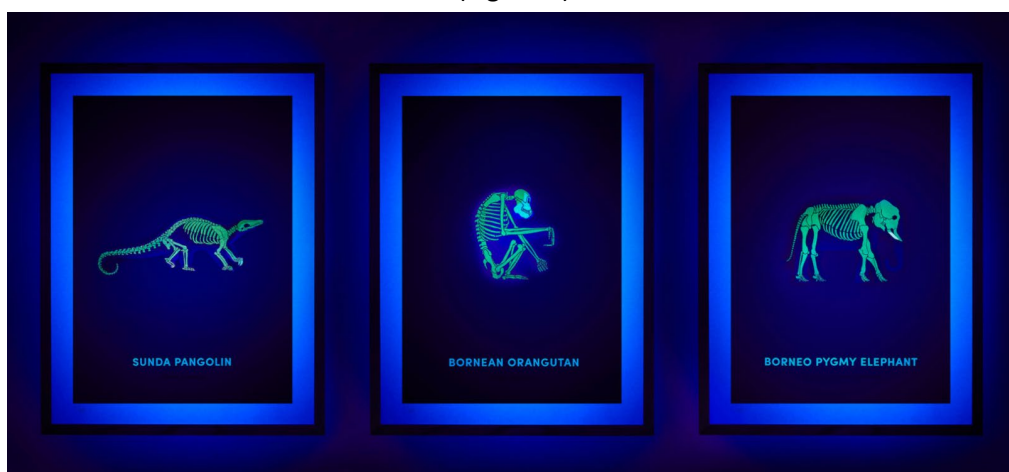
"Under the Skin" is a design company of two brothers, whose work completely strives for Environmental and Conservational design. The work educates an ethos of animal welfare around the world. The example of figure 3 shows effective communication of design as topics of Endangered Animals, extinction, conservation, and biodiversity. "An interactive limited-edition screen print series raising awareness of the world's most endangered and vulnerable animals." (Undertheskin, 2020)

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(Figure 2)



(Figure 3)



Prints that Protect, 2020

Environment defines as “the surrounding things, conditions, or influences, surroundings and all other external factors surrounding and affecting a given organism at any time.” (Definition, Dictionary.com, 2021)

The examples can be processed through different means like text or signs. In terms of design if the information is transmitted through that design document, then the designer is successful. In these prints when the UV light is shown on the print it reveals the animal's skeleton is shown representing the intended communication of destruction as a fear that we interpretative for the planet's future. Sir David Attenborough states “It's surely our responsibility to do everything within our power to create a planet that provides a home not just for us but for all life on Earth.” (Planet Earth 2 Finale, 2016).

Communication is one of the main aims we inhabit through design, as graphic designers a message is instantly perceived through the design we create. The campaigns unfold to make us as humans more aware of our actions and their consequences; that they may have on the natural balance of the planet. Rose Dutton a wildlife photographer and filmmaker has written about the idea of “Currently there are more than 112,400 species on The IUCN Red List to date, with more than 30,000 species threatened with extinction.” (Undertheskin, Rose Dutton, 2020)

Expressing that through the concept of quite simple illustration yet effective in communication. Innovating a visual sign through the screen print's ability to be seen in UV light as an x-ray like vision; deepens the thought and emotion we feel for these endangered species. By the user interacting with the artwork, it allows the message to be much more personal and reach a powerful emotion. Acting as a message that is instantly perceived through the print we read. Evidently, the screen prints use Semiotics, which decrypt a dominant perspective of both ecological and environmental issues. Raising awareness of the world's most endangered creatures. The study of signs and symbols that communicates an idea/action. Constructed with meaning that signifies changes in various contexts because of what we interpretate, the reliance is handed to us as a target audience. “Semiotics is in

principle the discipline studying everything which can be used in order to lie.” (Umberto, 2011, p.7)

Although, the work is created through an opinion it has a positive perspective to help an improved situation of extinction of endangered animals in the world. The underlying message which is conveyed through the x-ray vision Skelton is a metaphor that signifies changes of action and emotions.

Each limited-edition print focuses on communication to protect that animals from extinction. It impacts because of its graphic design. Meaning is underlined and transmitted through the illustration, “Without indulging in self-importance or making inflated claims, it is crucial to remember that graphic design is a social activity- by its very nature it affects lot of people and with this comes responsivity.” (Roberts, L 2006:130). The hopeful response would be that the audience would act upon this and support to protect endangered animals and species from the threat of extinction. This can be supported by purchasing a screen print, which is a simple act, but the engagement has a huge impact. The screen print’s purpose to prevent extinction and educate audiences creates the art of possibility “If we all did the things, we are capable of, we would literally astound ourselves.” (Thomas A.Edison). This quote suggests that if we all acted to support a cause like then we could potentially leave an impact enough to combat or decrease extinction of endangered animals. The message we receive from communication is the act of imparting or interchange of thoughts; this has the influential power to create a change mindset or action that makes design a changemaker these screen-prints are just one of many examples.

Suggesting that the screen prints could reflect a response through society based on the communication of environmental impact, the control of preventing extinction and how it will achieve a future for all animal welfare of zoos and the planet.

Keyword: **Visual Communication**

Visual Communication can be defined as “the act of imparting or interchange of thoughts, opinions, or information.” (Dictionary.com, 2020) As such the work of WWF photographs this to portray a very serious issue of the climate crisis effecting the Amazon rainforest.



(Figure 5/6)

Marizilda Cruppe / WWF-UK. Forest Michael Dantas /WWF-Br



(Figure 7/8)

Marizilda Cruppe / WWF-UK. Forest Michael Dantas /WWF-Br

Artwork featuring the Uru-Eu-Wau Indigenous People, designed by the British designer Nick Gentry who has help visually communicate the Amazon rainforest and the Indigenous people, how their experience of the destruction of their home. The artwork is created to emulate what is happening to the rainforest now and how there is a need of emergency to protect and decrease the level of destruction quickly.

According to WWF "Figures showed the level of destruction in the Brazilian Amazon rainforest had surged to a 12-year high just the end of last year." (WWF, Protectors of Amazon, 2020) I think that the artwork resembles the emotive and powerful response that is needed from the photographic designs.

An act of visual communication is present in these artworks it tells a story of a personal experiences that the people have seen and lived being the rainforest that is their home. Expression that is communicated in the photographs that is blended with the levels of destruction of the rainforest, causing a reaction and that is the purpose to protect and want prevent deforestation of the rainforest. As we see from figure 5 the still life photograph captures a peacefulness to the life of the rainforest; however, in contrast to figure 6 we see a glimpse of destruction in action and how it impacts and controls the rainforest through flames, smoke and destruction. In addition, in figure 7 and 8 all that can be communicated in the mass of deforestation, a change in the still peaceful health of the natural environment of the forest. Each of the portraits represent a stage in levels of the climate crisis and that is communicates through the changes in the still moments, a worst impact and effect to wildlife and environment from 1-4. Visually - where there are less natural green forests there is more of an impactful hold by climate change and deforestation. The portraits are very hard-hitting and replicate in the eyes of what is being told to the audiences; a state of emergency and cause of action to help prevent future loss of the rainforest before it's too late.

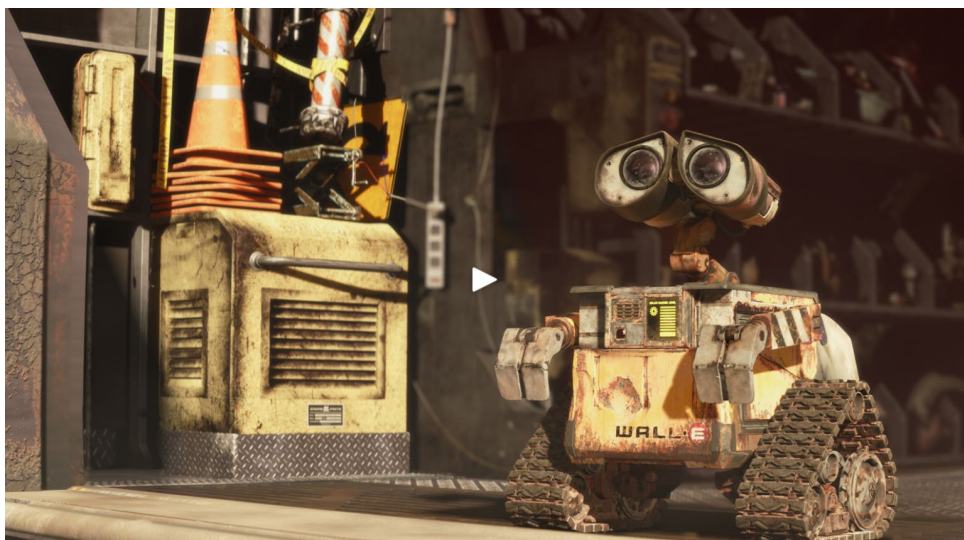
In my opinion, the photographic designs have an element of visually communication with intended purpose of environment defence; however, to create change it does not tell the audience how to prevent destruction of the rainforest. How could the audience know how to support or help combat the climate crisis? Environmental design needs to signify something but is also needed to communicate to the audience how to take responsibility or reflect from perceiving this information.

Keyword: **Society Consumerism**

Consumerism can be defined as “the fact or practice of an increasing consumption of goods” (Definition, Dictionary.com, 2021) and how society processes this action.

An example of ‘Society Consumerism’ within design that is deemed to create an idea of the future and itself, the film “WALL-E” (Pixar, 2008).

(Figure 9)



(Figure 10)



(WALL-E, 2008)

In the very first minutes of this animation, figure 10 communicates to us what maybe the future could look like for society from how we live our lives. We notice from figure 11/12; that there are indications of the role of the robots (Wall-e). Which is to take care of the waste problem that has covered the Earth because of human actions and consumption; issuing a reality of reasonability as a key observation watching the film. I think that this is the key point of the design to be interpreted as a sign to import change upon society based on the sustainability in the planet. Acting on this observation would be its purpose as a design.

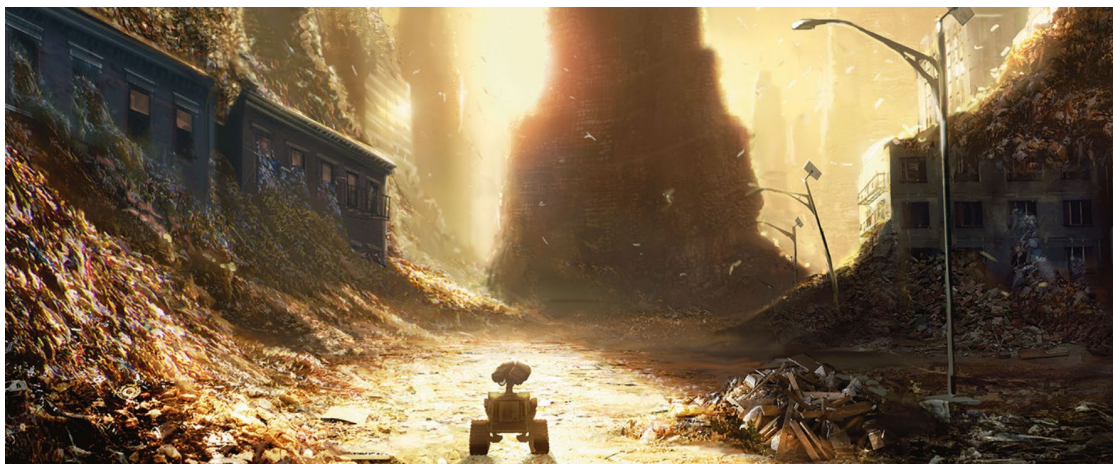
From the observation we notice it quickly becomes a mission of emergency to rescue and safe the planet with nature. The observation that one small act can have a large influence to change mindsets about idea like, climate change, global warming, pollution, environmental issues ect. The

story line is there to be acted upon by what we are perceiving through a visual sign or design. In this case would be the films metaphor to realise our consumerism within society which in turn save the planets future. The focus of the film to influence young minds or the next generation “A new course for humanity” (Pixar, 2008), for the present society and future that will inherit the Earth.

“Mindful Consumption is premised on a consumer mindset of caring for self, for community and for nature, that translates behaviourally into tempering the self-defeating excesses associated with acquisitive, repetitive and aspirational consumption.” (Seth, Sethia and Srinivas, 2011)

This quote suggest that we need to be mindful as consumers and what waste pollution we create, something that can be controlled. We need to be the ones who control our pollution problem and not the opposite where it’s taken over and the pollution controls us which is an example of a reality through the film makers composing this film. Overall, we observe a metaphor that communicates an idea; constructed with meaning that signifies changes in the contexts being what we interpretate of the planet’s future.

(Figure 12)



(WALL-E Earth, 2008)

In my opinion, the film makers have drawn an emotive observation as a guiding response from society based on fear of a worst-case environmental impact. The new generation who will be in

control of the planet future and how the reliance is given to us as target audience to take responsibility. The idea that people will be more mindful of their carbon footprint and consume only what we need, much like WWF have launched a “planet-friendly product range” design with the environment in mind; using organic cotton and to avoid any waste, they print to order for the user. (WWF, 2021)

Conclusion

From contextualising my essay it has concluded a question that I will research and write about next year. In my essay I have explored the ideas of three key words: Environmental Design, Visual Communication and Society Consumerism and their vary definitions. In addition, choosing three key designers and analytically interpreting the designs from a graphic design and visual method. The first being a set of illustrated vintage postcard designer Chester Zoo, the company and their design work “Under the Skin” screen prints and their purpose to communicate a message. WWF deforestation artwork featuring the Amazon rainforest; finally, studying the film “WALL-E” and what they try to emulate to the audience. Through comparing the ideas drawn from each source a recurring theme appeared, the concept that graphic design creates an impact that can empower change. The influence of design and how it communicates to create a response from society to work towards a more sustainable future of ideas such as: the Planet, Sustainability, Pollution, Climate Change, Conservation, Environment and how that all collates to the future for humanity to act now and question. Design can gain an emotive observation as a response from society, how the reliance is given to us, we are in control of the planet.

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This proposed researched question and proposed practice-based project will form the starting point and focus for your module INDEPENDENT PROJECT – The BIG IDEA, in Year Three.

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