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Tasks in the order I received them:

- Task one: Manifesto - 514 words
- Task two: Semiotic analysis - 537
- Task three: Practice-based writing - 539

Task one: Manifesto

1. **Functionality and ergonomics above all:** In designing an effective and marketable product, functionality and ergonomics must take precedence.
2. **Form follows function:** aesthetics should be interlinked with the function, serving it as a natural extension of the product's purpose.
3. **Unsustainable design, unsustainable future:** Employ sustainable materials and practices. Shun and look down on products that reject the shared responsibility every corporate entity and designer has to refuse designs that move us closer to midnight.
4. **Mock consumerism with mimicry:** Take inspiration from the wasteful, fast-paced, consumerist style of the 80s, but employ these styles with a spiteful twist.
5. **3D CAD is the present and future:** Embrace the developing digital environment, recognise them as the current and future reality of design.
6. **Innovation through iteration:** Generate as many iterations of your design as possible. Refine and develop your designs.
7. **User-centric ideals:** Design products with user preferences and comfort in mind.
8. **Evolve with the times:** Stay informed on emerging technologies in their infancy, developing materials and changing markets.

Deconstruction:

1. **Functionality and ergonomics above all** - This aims to emphasize the core essence of all successful products - to function perfectly and provide a comfortable and satisfying user experience. A product's design should be rooted chiefly in utility, and prioritizing functionality ensures just that. To quote Don Norman, when the design of a product rejects simplicity and makes the functionality confusing "The whole purpose of the design is lost" (Norman, D.A. 2013, p 21). Ergonomics should work alongside functionality, well designed ergonomics bolster a product's ability to serve its function. By bettering the product's interaction with the human body you can ensure comfort and ease of use for the user. By putting these aspects above everything else, a designer can guarantee a product that not only looks good but performs remarkably well, appealing far more to their intended audience.
2. **Unsustainable design, unsustainable future** - The current and past design industry has caused rampant environmental degradation, this principle takes a deliberate and a conscientious stance against an aspect of the industry that is an affront to everything humanity should strive towards. By turning our back on and rejecting unsustainable processes and materials, designers can finally take hold of the responsibility we all bear towards aiding the effort to save the planet, "The epidemic psychosis of our time is the lie of believing we have no ethical obligation to our planetary home" (Roszak, as cited by Papnek, 1995, p 29). This principle seeks not only to reduce our ecological footprint, but also to set a precedent for future generations of designers. It urges us all to challenge

the status quo of the industry, to innovate and deliberately seek eco-friendly solutions and alternatives, to build atop the foundation we have already begun to set for a future where design and sustainability are inseparable concepts.

3. **3D CAD is the present and future** - CAD 3D design has revolutionized not only how products are conceptualized and displayed, but how they are manufactured and produced. The sheer complexity of forms that can be sculpted in a digital space is completely unparalleled in any other format. 3D CAD has completely altered how the industry handles integral steps within the designing process, allowing for high detail prototyping and product visualization, assisted heavily by the creation of 3D printing, which in itself “puts the power of a manufacturing plant on your desk” (Kloski, L.W and Kloski, N. 2016, p 1) and allows for rapid and high accuracy functioning models. It allows immersion for the designer on a scale unachievable through any other medium, performing complex and realistic simulations of forces and tensions in minutes, aiding in the overall understanding of the final product. Designers need to, or should, stay ahead of the curve, and these technologies allow that and more, allowing the designer to predetermine whether their inventions are aesthetically pleasing, satisfying and ergonomic to use, and above all, able to perform its function well with a fraction of the time and money spent. Design evolves perpetually and while other methods have their own benefits, 3D CAD must be employed to succeed in today’s landscape.

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Task two: Semiotic analysis



Fig. 1, Marlboro cigarettes ad, 1972

The centrepiece of this advert is a paradigm of masculinity: a hardened cowboy set against the harsh frontier of the American West. The rugged character calls back to core facets of American heritage. The rugged, yet warm, appeal of the cowboy in this advertisement fits squarely into Roland Barthes' semiotic and symbolic ideas. According to Barthes, "Myth is a type of speech defined by its intention much more than by its literal sense" (Barthes, R, 1957, p 122). This principle can apply to imagery in myth, the cowboy is not a literal man, Barthes insists, but a motive constructed to mean masculinity, a cynical individualism, and to be the embodiment of the untamed West. The cowboy is exactly in-line with the tastes and desires of countless people in the audience who want to be seen as very free, very independent, and hold onto a romanticised sense of nostalgia for the era .

An identity has been crafted very closely around the Marlboro cigarette — combining the symbology behind the cowboy and the mutually agreed cultural understanding of what a cowboy is with the Marlboro product. Adopting the cowboy as their emblem allows Marlboro to outlast

and persist through shifts in societal norms and any negativity aimed at smoking practices, “A product can be copied by a competitor; a brand is unique. A product can be quickly outdated; a successful brand is timeless.” - (Aaker, D, 1991, p 16). As with all products new lines will be released and old ones discontinued, but the immortality of the cowboy symbol grants the campaign and the brand itself a timelessness, safeguarding the brand's fame and notoriety.

The Marlboro Man's stoic demeanour and expressions, weathered features, and strong physique convey a sense of toughness and demonstrate traditional masculinity — an often-seen caricature steeped in deep-seated conventions of authentic manhood. This visual cues us to an archetype that ties courage and stamina to puffing on a Marlboro — a very deliberate nod to the persisting metaphor the cowboy symbol upholds.

The setting itself — the cowboy casually propped against a worn timber fence, covered in horse tack and equipment — is very stereotypical and crafts familiarity with natural, rural life, almost suggesting a simpler, better way of living. This scene suggests a bond with nature, inferring wholesomeness in this way of living, coaxing viewers into embracing relaxation with post-labour smoking as part of the natural order.

Finally, the advert draws your eye to the text: "Come where the flavour is. Come to Marlboro Country." This motto draws us into a completely fictional, free-range expanse, going beyond selling cigarettes but a lifestyle, creating brand loyalty and identity by positioning Marlboro as a destination rather than just a product. It also makes smoking seem more like a natural product with a "flavour.", attempting to further add to the allure and emphasise it as more pleasurable. Following Bedbury's assertion that "consumers don't truly believe there's a huge difference between products" and the necessity for brands to "establish emotional ties" (Bedbury as cited in Klein, 2000, p 40), the sloganeering transcends any typical product marketing — it aims to link a target audience with a brand and lifestyle alike, building emotional connections through iconic symbolism and the aspirational allure of the Marlboro Country narrative.

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Figures:

- *Fig. 1, Marlboro cigarettes ad, 1972* - www.ebluejay.com. (n.d.). eBlueJay: Marlboro Cigarettes, 70's print ad. Color Illustration (cowboy) original 1972 Magazine Art. [online] Available at: <https://www.ebluejay.com/ads/item/6427483> [Accessed 25 Nov. 2023].

Task Three: Practice-based Writing



Fig.1, Classic Atari ST, 1986

The Atari ST, made in the mid-1980s, was a personal computer series developed by the Atari Corporation. It emerged rather surprisingly from a console company as a prominent player in the home computing market, with a more futuristic, slim, and curved design that was out of character compared to Atari's distinctly angular and previously robust-looking designs. Its significance, according to Atari magazine, lies in its utilization of the at the time, cutting-edge "Motorola 68000 microprocessor" and "MIDI music chip" to generate its advanced graphics and multimedia capabilities (Reese, 1989, p 1).

For Atari, this was their first ever leap into the pc market. The company had only released game consoles like the Atari 8-bit family and the Atari XE series. The Atari ST however, distinguished itself with the previously mentioned music chip. Using recordings of musical notes, timings and pitch information to generate tunes from its own sound library, users could create their own high-quality synthesized music. This gained much popularity among musicians and software programmers. Alongside word processing and spreadsheets, Atari added the capability into the ST to play and design games, and run once-famous titles such as *Dungeon Master*, *Wizball* and *Prince of Persia*, a revolutionary addition of their already famously established console hardware.

Despite the Atari ST's unique features it saw rough competition from rivals like the Commodore Amiga and Apple Macintosh. Recorded Sales data between 1985 - 1994 (*Amigalove*, 2016), show that the ST, with approximately 2.1 million units sold globally, staggered behind the Amiga (3.98 million) and the Macintosh (16.1 million). Despite this, the ST and many of Atari's consoles

are seen today as classic and iconic products, with the design of the ST especially being seen as the epitome of nostalgic design from the mid/late 80's. Its broad multifunctionality and consideration for synthesized music was highly advanced for the era, and ironically is a quality that is seen in all computers today, but sadly "good ideas that appear too early will fail" (Norman, 2013, p 269).

The Atari ST's aesthetic, signified with a blend of minimalism and bold branding, calls back to a time where computers weren't just tools but design statements. The sleek, light gray body accompanying the rainbow Atari logo, and design forms that could be described as not "organic but architectural", a division of "separate volumes and planes" (Dormer, 1998, p 80). The chunky keyboard layout and heavy monitor, though outdated functionally, add to a certain visually inspiring charm.

Personally, I think the Atari ST stands as a testament to the enduring influence of design choices made in the early days of personal computers. As someone who owns an original ST and as a designer I admire the boldness of its construction and in the same vein, the design of similar personal computers of the era. I feel that very few computers now strive to leave such a landmark in design as do the original ST, Amiga and Macintosh. While these designs are unsustainable now due to the wastefulness of their assembly and material usage, the effect they had on shaping modern computer design is undeniable, and I adore the commitment to the aesthetic appeal in tandem with the functionality ethos that the ST demonstrates.

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- *Fig. 1, Classic Atari ST* - (2016). The Atari ST. [online] Nostalgia Nerd. Available at: <https://www.nostalgianerd.com/the-atari-st/> [Accessed 5 Jan. 2024].