

Research in Practice

Proposal Essay (Keywords)

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WORD COUNT - 2520

For this essay, I will be using my knowledge of basic essay structure to expand on 3 keywords. This essay will explore what impact these keywords have in the world of graphic design. I will then be using what has been gathered from researching keywords to discuss and create an essay question. Contents of This essay will include connecting my chosen keywords including meaning, LGBT and Impact. I will be exploring artists such as Keith Haring, Gilbert Baker and Andy Warhol. These 3 artists are very prominent in the Lgbt community and produce very famous imagery. I not only explore artists who create art that shows connections to the LGBT community but also shows a massive or small impact on representing the community whilst bringing confidence or inspiration. I will also explore the impact this kind of art has had on the world and what actual change, if any, has been presented to people inside and outside worldwide communities.

Meaning

‘Art is not what you see, but what you make others see.’ (Degus, 1834-1917)

The word ‘meaning’ in art is a very broad topic as everything somebody created has some sort of meaning. It can even have different meanings to each person as experience can vary, given that everyone interoperates art in their own way. Art can be created to have any sort of meaning in any community. People who are passionate about something often create to make a moment in time or to start a conversation about what they believe. Art is an amazing way to show passion and belief, it can inspire others to join in on creating.

Meaning within Art can often go two very different ways, firstly there are pieces produced that have very strong messages and meanings behind them and are very strong and understandable. However, in other situations, it is very popular for art to have hidden meanings, such as things that aren’t clear at first glance. Sometimes hidden meanings, although not as upfront, can be just as impactful as a straightforward clear message. Hidden meanings in art can get you thinking, but it will also be more memorable as it was unexpected to the viewer.



An Accident

Laurence Stephen Lowry (1887-1976)



Global Warming

Banksy (2009)

For Example in Banksy's 'Global Warming' expression. It has a very clear and understandable message in this piece: he is showing people's ignorance towards global warming even though the evidence and truth are right in front of them. He uses both typography and nature itself to get his message across. He uses the type of "I don't believe in global warming" in a stand-out red colour against a blank white wall and also uses this very simple "graffiti" font which can be seen quite also around urban British cities. The use of basic lettering is used to make it stand in with the area but also the powerful statement contrasts with the boring dull lettering also could represent how the topic of global warming is looked over by many and isn't taken seriously. Banksy is known for creating very powerful but simplistic artworks and will often express his opinion on current world problems and uses his artwork to spread the meaning and open people's eyes to the problems of our world and tell people to wake up and pay attention. Banksy also keeps himself anonymous so he can create his piece with an element of surprise. His artworks often show up with no warning and are often accidentally stumbled upon by locals. This adds an extra element of shock factor to his art, appearing overnight to unsuspecting locals and this shock will often open their eyes to not only the art but the problem that has been represented.

Moving on To 'An Accident' produced by Laurence Stephen Lowry. This piece was created in 1880-1970s and at first, glance shows a landscape of some buildings surrounded by people. These buildings can be seen releasing a lot of smoke into the sky so we can surmise that this is depicting factories and can even predict to assume this to be representing The industrial revolution. At first glance, we would assume that this piece, just like Banksy's, represents global warming, Taking us back in time to where it first started. However, unlike Banksy's piece this artwork's 'meaning' is not immediately apparent. We can see in the image the people who are placed in this scene. From really observing these people we can see a large gathering of them on the right-hand side all looking down at something. We can assume from the name of this artwork 'The Accident' That there has been or they are observing some sort of accident. From further research into this artwork, we learn more about this 'accident'. We find out that this piece depicts a suicide, a person has just jumped off a bridge which can be very slightly seen in the bottom right of this painting. And this artwork depicts the reaction and the moments after this. This type of meaning in the artwork is incredibly powerful as there is almost no way you would guess this was the true story of this painting without further research. This opens people's eyes to other art and makes them want to explore a piece more making them want to find hidden meaning and opening their minds to further possibilities.

LGBT

"Art exists where language fails." (Marcos Chin)

The word Lgbt represents a massive community of people all over the world. The people in this community have historically been discriminated against and disrespected just based on who they love or who they identify as. Lgbt behaviour dates back to 9,600 BCE (Before the common era) when archaeologists found rock art in Sicily. Including phallic male figures as well as depicting Homosexual activity. Homosexual activity continued to be recorded from this first instance. However, in 15th Century BCE - 12th Century BCE is the first record instance of homophobia and discrimination against same-sex relations. At this time the 'Code of Assura' was declared in the Assyrian Empire. Along with a few other statements one announced "If a man has secretly started a rumour about his neighbour saying, "He has allowed men to have sex with him," or in a quarrel has told him in the presence of others, "Men have sex with you," and then, "I will bring charges against you myself," but is then unable to substantiate the charge, and cannot prove it, that man is to be caned, be sentenced to a month's hard labour for the king, be cut off, and pay one talent of lead." (Timeline of LGBT history 2023) This communicates that not only homosexuality was being used to spread rumours about people but it was now seen as bad and something to be ashamed of. If a man was suspected of homosexuality and it was found to be true he would be convicted and shamed by the community. He would be convicted to become a eunuch (Get castrated). We now look at modern society and homosexuality in some countries such as Iran is still punishable by death. On the other hand, we have some of the most accepting countries such as the Netherlands which was the first country to legalise same-sex marriage in 2001 with 90% of the population being LGBT supporters. In 2023 the Netherlands was quoted as becoming one of the gayest countries in the world.



'KISSING DOESN'T KILL,
GREED AND INDIFFERENCE DO',
- Gran Fury (1989)



Rainbow Flag - Gilbert Baker (1978)

"Kissing doesn't kill. Greed and indifference do" is a piece created by Gran Fury in 1989. This piece represents love and the normalization of same-sex coupling. The image includes 6 figures each paired into 3 couples. We have one heterosexual couple and two homosexual couples one being two men and the other being two women. We can also see a variety of races being represented in both the straight and gay couples. Proving that this piece is making a statement not only about sexuality but also making a statement about racism. The couples in this image can be seen doing one of the most simple acts to show affection to each other which is kissing. Back in the 80s two women or two men kissing would be looked upon with disgust and seen as indecent. Many LGBT couples would be shamed and told they were doing something obscene especially if it was in a public space. This art can be seen being placed upon some sort of public transport. Meaning not only is Fury's message being seen on something people may use every day to get to work or school but it is also being transported all over spreading his message even by only having one piece of art. This art is very famous in the LGBT community and is known to be some of the first gay representation art which started to make a statement and cause some sort of change.

Our next image is definitely one of the most well-known LGBT designs in history and even now still holds a massive story and is used by thousands of people to show they are a part of the LGBT community. Before the rainbow flag was created the symbol used to represent the LGBT community was a pink triangle. This originated from the Nazis using that symbol to identify homosexuals. Gilbert Baker saw the use of the pink triangle as a reminder of a painful past. He knew he needed to create something new for the community and decided that the rainbow would be perfect for his representation. The use of full rainbow was used to represent the togetherness of the

community and all the different types of people including any races, sexualities, genders etc... The original flag created had 8 colours each having meaning. Firstly the Hot pink represented sex, the red was life, the orange was healing, the yellow was for sunlight, the green was for nature, the turquoise represented art, the indigo was harmony and the final violet was for spirit. (*How did the rainbow flag become an LGBT symbol?*) This flag was first showcased In San Fransisco's gay freedom parade in 1978, Where it was loved and seen as the new LGBT representation and has evolved over many years to the flag we still know and love to this day. even though it may have changed slightly it only evolved to include more in the community and forever will be a representation of freedom and pride.

Impact

"Any form of art is a form of power; it has impact, it can affect change – it can not only move us, it makes us move." (Ossie Davis)

Art and graphic design are some of the most potent contributors to impacting change in society. We see not only can it make us question what is seen as art but can also impact our society and the world around us. A work of art can really move a person it can reach something deep down and get them thinking. Powerful art comes in all sorts of forms may it be a painting, exhibition, sculpture, poem etc... Impactful art is usually created with the intention to provoke change, so the message is usually strong and clear. As humans, we have a need to create and have done from the start of human history. We need a way to express our feeling and emotions. We have a need to share our passions. This is why many artists will use art to share their true feelings about a topic hoping to get others to see the way they do and cause an impact with change. Art not only can change our world but also can effectively change art itself. An artist could create a piece which inspires another to create something brand new, something never done before. And can open people's eyes to what art has the possibility of being and proves that art has no limitations and art can be anywhere and anything.



Andy Warhol, Campbell's Soup Cans, (1962)



7,000 Oak Trees by Joseph Beuys

Campbell's Soup Cans is an art piece created by Andy Warhol. We can see a large variety of Campbell's soup cans looking almost identical the only difference being the name of the soup. Warhol created this piece by going to his local grocery store and purchasing each one of the Campbell soup cans available to him. He then took them home and painted each and every one. This piece is part of the 'pop art' movement where the art was inspired by commercial and popular culture. Warhol created this piece to make a statement about consumerism. He wanted to show how society was dominated by mass production and how brands are always in our faces. Not only did Warhol want to make a statement about our world but he also caused a massive impact in the art community. He stated 'These soup cans sit on shelves why not hang them on our walls.' This was seen as humorous and really got people to open their eyes to what art can be. This art was not without criticism, however, dealers and gallery owners often mocked this creation one of the most well-known being an art dealer who stacked soup in his gallery setting two for 33 cents. Which was in large contrast with Warhol who was selling one of his paintings for \$100. This painting now however is very well-known and loved by many and is often discussed as one of the most impactful creations in the art world showing that it really can be anything and can't be defined. (Puchko, 2016)

7,000 Oak Trees was an environmental artwork by Joseph Beuys. This art piece had a different impact on society when compared to Andy Warhol's Campbell soup cans. This impact was to make a physical change. 7000 Oak trees were created in 1982 and 700 oak trees were planted and partnered up with a basalt stone over 5 years in Kassel, Germany. Beuys created this in relation to modern urbanisation, to get the community to open their eyes to the importance of nature in our world. This artwork was extremely controversial the locals called it inconvenient and ugly. However, this didn't stop Beuys and his commitment to his work. Eventually, the locals started to support this project and started to understand the purpose behind it. Beuys had created something which inspired and caused a change in the world inspiring other communities to do the same and bringing nature back into people's lives. (Mehmedod & Mehmedod, *German Environments* 2023)

Synthesis

After researching my chosen keywords we can see that art is a very powerful tool. People who are passionate about something often use art to get across their message, to spread meaning and cause an impact. The question I believe represents my keyword research is How can a large movement cause impact and change in different parts of society? Other questions could explore more into the LGBT movement with examples such as, How did LGBT graphic design cause an impact or How has LGBT artwork changed and how is it differently represented throughout the years? This research could also produce a more open-ended question such as How has art impacted the world throughout the years? or what sort of change does art truly bring to a community? All very intense question which could give a variety of conclusions based on the path explores and would be interesting to explore further.

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