

Task 1: Observational Writing

Semiotics is used to explain a piece of art using language, “the similarities between art and language stem from both of them having a system of signs at their core” (tunali, 1996).

These signs are how everyone perceives the objects, shapes and colours that make up our society and allow it to function.



Figure 1: Superman (Peak, 1978)

Superman the Movie, directed by Richard Donner, was a box office success according to The Numbers (2024), grossing over 300 million dollars worldwide. Bob Peak created this poster to promote the movie during its original release in 1978, but despite this, it interestingly doesn't use any of the characters from the movie.

Superman is a character who first appeared in Action Comics #1, which was published by National Publications (now known as DC Comics) on April 18, 1938. He is known for his red, blue and gold suit as well as his powers of flight and super strength. Despite not showing Superman in the poster, all these defining features are present. The line of colour in the centre of the page seems to symbolise Superman as he flies at intense speeds, making him appear like a blur of colour. This same part of the design could also symbolise a lightning bolt, which would also be reminiscent of his speed and flight but also his super strength.

Another defining trait of Superman is his almost complete immunity to physical injury, which is a form of immortality. According to Li Shifu, "The Human and the Earthly Immortal...possess a body." Therefore, Superman would fall under one of these types. Immortality is often associated with gods or god-like beings, which could make a parallel between Zeus and Superman because of the lightning bolt shape in the poster.

The background of the poster is clouds in the sky, which form the shape of a bird. This bird shape is reminiscent of a phoenix, which is known for its ability to rebirth. This connects to the idea of immortality and Superman's inability to get hurt.

There is a complete contrast between the lightning bolt shape and the rest of the poster as it is mainly composed of dark, cold colours, whereas the lightning bolt is a bright red, blue and gold. This contrast makes the colour draw the viewer's attention and directs the eye towards the centre of the poster, where the movie's title is. The high contrast could symbolise multiple things about Superman; firstly, it could be used to show him being out

of place, as an alien from a different planet or even because of his superpower and, therefore, uniqueness to everyone else, or it could even show how he is a hero and the dark colours represent the evil around him, which he must defeat.

Many signs, such as this poster and others, can be interpreted without even knowing.

When you look at them, you automatically take the information conveyed and translate it into feelings in your mind. When I first viewed this poster, I didn't think the design had much thought, but now I see the details that went into its design perfectly depicting Superman without ever showing him physically.

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Task 2: Manifesto Writing

The Key to Design Manifesto

1. Maintaining political views
2. Continuous Skill Adaption
3. Effective Time Management
4. Conceptualisation
5. Uniqueness
6. Storing Previous Designs
7. Client Satisfaction
8. Experimentation of Media

As a designer, I can create designs with more to them than aesthetics; I can use these designs to communicate messages and emotions through the media I create. Writing a manifesto aims to express a clear direction that can inspire both the author and readers (Hwang, 2024); using this information, I will create values to inspire me to design in the best possible way.

1. Maintaining Political Views

It is essential for me to ground and only make designs that are ethical to me. For example, if I were a vegan who firmly opposed the slaughter and mistreatment of animals, I wouldn't

be comfortable making an advertisement for a new McDonald's burger. Each project I undertake must align with my views; otherwise, I should not be the one to design it, no matter whether I could gain certain things from the project, for example, money. My goal is to keep my public image and morals in line with my beliefs and views, making sure not to go against these views for any reason.

2. Continuous Skill Adaption

In the design world, I must be active or risk being left behind. Recognising that growth is a vital part of my journey, I commit to adapting and expanding my skills. I will embrace new techniques, forms of media, ideas, and technology, which will help elevate my creative expression. Over time, these improvements will keep me relevant in this constantly evolving industry. Other methods I can participate in are workshops and collaborative projects with others. Engaging with others will not only enrich my skills but will also inspire innovative concepts that I can incorporate into my work; I believe that in the collaborative experiences I participate in, I will gain the most skill as I will see how others approach the projects in different ways to how I would.

3. Effective Time Management

Time is limited, which means I must manage it effectively to optimise productivity. I believe that to achieve my goals I must prioritise specific tasks and create clear plans for when and what to do in the time I set myself. I will do this by minimising my distractions and spreading out my workload, which will increase my focus and maximise productivity, ensuring high-quality outcomes for each project. Creative burnout is also an important

thing to consider. Wright defines it as “Creative burnout is a form of occupational stress that occurs when people push themselves too hard, causing them to become physically and mentally exhausted.” (Wright, 2023). If I get creative burnout, it will significantly limit my productivity and can also cause more problems like rushing for deadlines because of the slower productivity. Through my principles, I aim to use my design skills to communicate ideas, create emotion, and send messages that will resonate with people and showcase my skills. My manifesto reflects the leading principles that I bring to the design industry.

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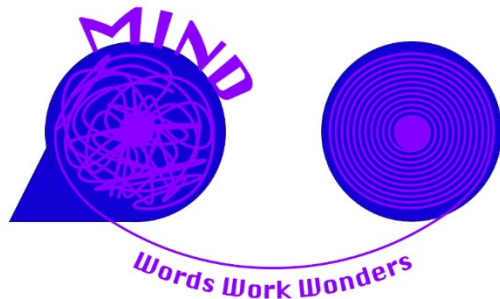
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Task 3: Practice-based writing



I created this work (Pictured below) as part of my final major project in my first year of college. I was tasked with giving the mental health charity Mind a fresh new logo. It was clear to me I needed my design to feel familiar in order to keep recognisability with the already established brand therefore my design aimed to resemble the pre-existing Mind logo (Pictured above) with the aspect of the scribble style design. My design is structured like a smiling face. The left eye is a scribble inside a speech bubble, representing the thoughts of someone struggling with their mental health. As they talk about their thoughts, it threads out of the left eye and becomes the smile as it goes to the right eye and neatly curls into a spiral representing their thoughts being cleared from talking out to someone.



This project went exceptionally well, and I consider it my best work so far. My biggest struggles during it were making the smile flow between either end equally and gradually, creating a spiral shape that worked exactly as I wanted it to, and fitting the text into the

design. I used Adobe Photoshop to make my design, which is the primary cause of these difficulties because it was the wrong software for this task; it should have been done in Adobe Illustrator as this would have given me the tools to create each aspect of the design easier, the other problem with using Photoshop was my lack of knowledge and understanding at the time of its tools and features.

The colour palette was chosen from pre-existing Mind promotional materials so as not to alienate the existing work and to create a bridge between the old and new branding. I also needed to give off a calming and peaceful feeling to make people feel welcomed by the logo. Nissen says, “One of the main pillars in Design Thinking is empathy.” Which I believe is true and by incorporating this it boosts the overall message of the design. The text ‘Mind’ was added to the top of the left ‘eye’ because I thought that putting the word here would help people recognise the hidden meaning that these are someone’s thoughts inside their mind. The other text, ‘words work wonders’, was placed in the centre of the smile for a similar reason as the other word placement; the person with the jumbled thoughts is speaking and therefore ‘work wonders’ to help them understand themselves and feel better and get a better overall mental health.

After reflecting on this work, I can understand that the imperfections in my work aren’t necessarily a problem and that I need to make mistakes in order to learn from them in the future. It is also not just about creating something that looks perfect. As Tyson says, “It’s about designing experiences that resonate on a human level.”

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