

Research In Practice

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Introduction

In this essay, I will be exploring three keywords that I have chosen to look at as part of my research. Each keyword will be analysed by discussing the key aspects of the word within my area of interest. As part of this research, I will also be looking at a range of different artists that I have come across that I feel are related to the keywords. My aim in this essay is to use of different artists and theories that range from different genres and how each designer/artist has made an impact on each of my keyword. My major theme for my essay is showing how each key word has played a massive part in my life and showing what each of them mean to me and why I wanted to explore them further.

Three Key words

The three keywords that I have decided to explore throughout this essay are the following: Travel, Home and Life. I have chosen these words as they mean a lot to me, and I thought I could show this in my essay. Within this essay, I will discuss what each keyword represents, why I chose them and how they impact in my life.

Travel

I chose 'travel' as my first keyword because it is something I am passionate about and have loved doing since I first started travelling as a child. I enjoy about seeing new places, admiring different scenery, finding new adventures and being immersed in difference cultures. As someone who loves to travel, I want to show this experience as a designer by including inspirations from the various places I have visited.

Travel means:

1. Going from one place to another, typically over a distance of some length.
2. To get around: pass from one place to another
3. To journey through or over.

Humans have always travelled to find new sources of food, and new lands to explore. However, travel for pleasure started in the 17th century when young nobles from western and the norther European countries made what was called the Grand Tour: a trip around Europe (usually covering France, Germany, Italy and Greece) with the main purpose of soaking up history, art and culture heritage. This was the origin of the modern concept of tourism (Rodriguez, 2020).

In the 18th Century, this custom of travelling was then widespread among wealthier classes and it spread to other parts of the world. At this time, leisurely travel was reserved for upper classes, but religious pilgrimages that were already popular during the Middle Ages continued this period amongst all classes (Rodriguez, 2020).

The 19th Century saw the creation of the first ever travel agencies. One of the pioneers was Thomas Cook & Sons, which was the first to offer excursions and

holidays for groups, which included transport, accommodation and food tickets, which made costs cheaper. This was the first all-inclusive package offered to travellers set at a fixed price for a predetermined length of time (Cripps, 2019).

From the 1840s, rail travel became a popular way for families to visit seaside resorts in the UK (Holland, 2020). This was known as the 'Golden age' of steam. Porthcawl is an example of a seaside town that had built public railway lines for leisurely travel as well as a miniature railway. Porthcawl Railway was built between 1825 and 1829, Porthcawl Railway connected a new harbour built at porthcawl with iron works. (Bolter, 2015). The trains bought iron and coal to the coast for export to worldwide destinations and on the return trips. Then the Porthcawl Miniature Railway opened in 1935, the year of the 'Silver Jubilee', using two steam-outline petrol locomotives. The locomotive in 1936 (of that year) was 'Coney Queen' (Parfitt, 2014).

Posters were popular way of advertising rail travel. Frank Newbold (1887-1951) was an English Poster Artist. Frank Newbold studied at the local art school in Yorkshire. Newbold is known for his bright colourful travel posters and was one of the leading poster designs of the 1920s. Frank Newbold's work always retained recognisable elements of the landscape or locality. His work combined some of the discoveries of post impressionist's painters with the economic language of poster design (Clayton, 2021).



Figure 1: 1stDibs, Original Vintage GWR Great Western Railway Poster Wales Scenic Countryside View, 1939

The work of Frank Newbold is about the rail travel posters which were from the 1920s. This shows what advertising for rail travel was like in the 1920s. This included showing different iconic and landmarks in places that could be visited by rail. The information was for any of the rail passengers or travellers who were travelling or who wanted to know more about the area. This has been communicated more than once as Frank Newbold also created other posters for world wars. His posters were designed by using bold colours, lithograph images, typography and text. The posters worked as it was one of the biggest hits in the travel in 1920s.

Another poster designer was Gert Sellheim (1901-1970), who was a German-Australian artist. Sellheim was born in Estonia to German parents and studied Architecture at universities in Germany before migrating to Western Australia in 1926. Sellheim designed posters for the Australian National Travel Association. His most renowned design is Qantas airline's distinctive flying kangaroo logo, created in 1947 (Spearritt, 2006).



Figure 2: Artnet, Australia / Surf Club Poster, 1936

The work of Sellheim is about Australian travel. He worked from 1930s to the 1950s. The message of his work was to show the major and most popular landmarks in Australia and promote tourism. They also demonstrate the growing awareness of Australia through icons. It has been communicated before as he also designed and created a logo for Qantas airlines which then led him to create another way of representing Australia. His posters used photo montage, combined with a mix of drawing, hand-lettering and commercial type. The success of the posters and how well known they became showed that it worked.

Nick Cranston was born in South Africa and now lives in the seaside town of Brighton. His work is characterised by his use of punchy clean colours and his graphic shapes. Cranston's work is nostalgic, reminiscent of times when travel was exotic and an adventure into the unknown. He designs for intrepid travellers, retro-fans and dreamers alike. They are also quirky travel posters and punchy typographical prints that make a statement.



Figure 3: Destination Cardiff, Nick Cranston, 1803

The work that Cranston created were travel luggage tags posters that represent each country or a part of a popular landmark. He was trying to reach travellers who were travelling to different parts of the world, intrepid travellers, retro-fans and dreamers alike. The message has been communicated before as he also done a variety of other work which he is known for. His work was created by using punchy clean colours, clean lines and graphic shapes. The luggage tags that he made into a print design have worked and are quite effective in their simple, bold and minimalistic style.

Home

I chose 'home' because I wanted to explore what home means to me. I have been lucky to live by the sea, which is where I call home, but I also have a new home in Swansea since studying at university. Home could be where you feel safe and secure. The idea of home could be something familiar, or an opportunity for the future. My own understanding of the word home is that it can mean anything, and it is quite broad on how you want it to be. It can mean where you live now is your home, moving into a new home and calling that place home or even moving to a different part of the world and calling it your new home.

Home means:

1. The place where one lives permanently especially as a member of a family or household.
2. An institution for people needing professional care or supervision.
3. The social unit formed by a family living together.

Originating in the 16th Century, coloured paper was used to decorate the insides of cupboards and smaller rooms in Merchant's houses rather than the Grand houses of the aristocracy. By the beginning of the 20th Century, it was being used everywhere such as hallways, kitchens, bathrooms and bedrooms as well as reception rooms, and was popular in both the wealthiest and poorest homes.

Many early wallpapers featured stylised floral motifs and simple pictorial scenes copied from contemporary embroideries and other textiles. They were printed in monochrome, in black ink on a small sheets of paper that measured approximately 40cm high by 50cm wide. It was not until the mid- 17th Century that the single sheets were joined together to form long rolls, a development that also encouraged the production of larger repeats and the introduction of block-printing, which continued to be used in the manufacture of more expensive wallpapers until the mid-20th Century (Gamer, 2018).

Jazz and Pop style in the 1920s and 1930s were boom years for the wallpaper industry in Britain. While traditional stylised leaf and flower patterns continued to be widespread, patterns influenced by modern art and popular culture also appeared. The 'Good Design' movement of the 1950s favoured less 'fussy' designs, favouring flat, linear patterns and abstract geometric motifs. These were replaced in the 1960s

with bright colours and pop designs. The first pre-trimmed and pasted wallpaper appeared in 1961 with the popularity of do-it-yourself (DIY) (Albert, 2009).

A well-known wallpaper designer used in homes is William Morris. He was responsible for more than 50 patterns and his influence upon the industry was long-lasting and profound. His work comprises the conflicting styles of the 1850s and 1860s. One of his most popular designs, *Trellis* (1864), was inspired by the rose trellises at Red House. (Victoria & Albert , 1953).



Figure 5: Rawpixel, William Morris's Fruit pattern wallpaper, 1862

The work is a fruit design in a repeated pattern, which was made in 1862. It shows how fruit was illustrated in 1860s. This message has been communicated since William Morris began creating and making the patterns. The work was done by block printed in distemper colours on paper.

As well as art to decorate the home, home objects can become art. Paul Elliman is a British artist and designer based in London. His work follows language through many of its social technological guises. Paul Elliman has worked with Sara Da Bondt and Mark El- Khatib on the graphic identity, using letter-like shapes and symbols gathered from items that can be found in the home. Elliman spoke about how the origins of his work with object letters began in thoughts about the path of his father's migration from Merseyside to Detroit and then Silicon Valley (Astra, 2018).



Figure 7: Paul Elliman, "Bits", 1990s

The work that Paul Elliman has created is about using a variety of different objects from everyday use to make his own unique font from it. There is a story with this, as it shows from the path that Paul Elliman's father migration and how it began from there. It was created using different objects were plastics, cardboard slices, bottle tops, plastic handles, hooks, hinges and drinking straws.

Life

I wanted to include 'life' as a keyword because I have gone through many stages of life and have many more to come. There have been aspects of my life that I have enjoyed and want to experience again. There have also been times where I have struggles and experienced loss. These are all valuable life experiences, and I want to explore this through artists that focus on life as a whole.

Life means:

1. the condition that distinguishes animals and plants from inorganic matter, including the capacity for growth, reproduction, functional activity, and continual change preceding death:
2. the existence of an individual human being or animal:
3. the period between the birth and death of a living thing, especially a human being:

However, this is the scientific requirement for life. For most being, life is about more than just existing. Philosopher Friedrich Schlegel (1772 – 1829) considered religion and civilisation as important part of life (Schlegel, [1848] 2008).

For some, life can be measured by success. This can have difference meanings for everyone. For instance, for some, success can mean wealth, fame, having a good career or high achievement in business or academia. For others, success is having meaningful relationships and enjoyable experiences. Travel can be an important part of life for some.

Artists often depict aspects of life through their work. An example of this is Frida Kahlo, as many of her works represent aspects of her life, such as her inability to have children or her relationship with Diego Rivera reference

Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera had a tumultuous relationship, marked by multiple affairs on both sides. Self-portrait with Cropped Hair (1940), Kahlo is depicted in a man's suit, holding a pair of scissors, with her fallen hair around the chair in which she sits. This represents the times she would cut the hair Rivera loved when he had affairs. The 1937 painting Memory, the heart, shown Frida Kahlo's pain over her husbands; affair with her younger sister Christina. A large broken heart at her feet shown the intensity of Kahlo's anguish (Frida Kahlo, 2018).

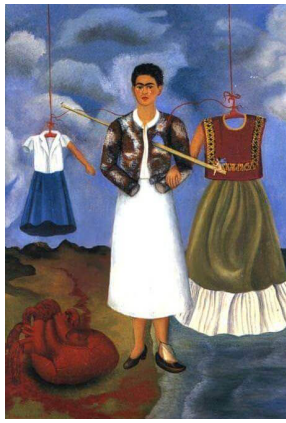


Figure 8: Frida Kahlo, *Memory, the Heartm* 1937

Frida Khalo is a Mexican Artist, who is remembered for herself portraits, pain, passion and bold vibrant colours. Frida Khalo first self-portrait was Self-Portrait in a velvet dress in 1926. It was painted in the style of 19th Century Mexican portrait painters. Self Portrait – Time Flies (1929) portrait of a women in white (1930) and Self-portrait dedicated to Leon Trotsky (1937) all bear this background (Barat, 2016).

Being at one with nature can be an important part of life as nature itself is life. Artist Andrew Cooper depicts a celebration of nature in their work. Cooper is a Contemporary artist who creates and works in Evansville Indiana. He creates aesthetic nature and flower art where he is known for his style of vibrant and bright coloured work. He is also known for his signature “Wildflower” that can be seen on murals around the country. Taking his drawings from the studio where he designed and created them to larger scale murals, his work can be found inside and outside of the gallery setting. Cooper also mentioned that “I paint and draw my own colourful world of nature into which I welcome you!” (Cooper cited in Lansonneur, 2020).



Figure 9: Andrew Cooper, *“Energy”* 2017

Family Unity is a painting by Kevin McDowell in 2012. He premiered his artwork in the form of buttons and wearable art sportswear. He realised that there was a market for his work with its style of vivid colours and animated expressions. The type of materials that were used within his work were, Mixed Media, Painting, Coloured Pencils, Collage and Chalk. This painting uses a variety of shapes and colours to portray a family. Although different colours are used to make everyone stand out, the bodies of the family members are leaning towards each other, showing them to be one family unit. (PicassoMio, 2012).



Figure 9: Kevin McDowell, *Family Unity*, 2012

Synthesis

The three keywords were separate words that I felt represent me in some way, but this research has shown that they are linked. Travel is linked to home, as home can be wherever I feel happy in the world. Travel is also linked to life as it is an aspect of my life that is important to me. Home and life are also another way that is linked to each other as home is where your life began as that is where you grew up. Analysis of the research areas you have defined around each keyword and artist/design work selected. Home and life are linked with 'family'.

For my research question, I want to incorporate all keywords. The keywords were chosen were about me, so I want a question that explores how I can express myself and show aspects of me within graphic design.

My proposed question is:

My life: How can graphic design be used as a tool to show multiple aspects of identity and interests?

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