

Coversheet

Question 2: Paying close attention to the terms of 'designer design', 'quiet design' and 'the plenitude', critically discuss the work of TWO practitioners within your field and ascertain how their design work adheres to one or all of the terms.

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Graphic Design

Word Count: 2006

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The question I have chosen to answer is question 2 as seen on the coversheet. Before looking at the two practitioners I have chosen, first let's look at the terms "designer design", "quiet design" and "the plenitude".

"Designer design" doesn't have a google definition but the word "design" means "a plan or drawing produced to show the look and function or workings of a building, garment, or other object before it is made" and the word designer means "a person who plans the look or workings of something prior to it being made, by preparing drawings or plans". So, the words "designer design" means a design that was made by a person who has the knowledge to plan things out and prepare drawings and such.

FashionMingle.net (2020)



The term “quiet design” does have a google definition “Silent design is a design activity that isn't called design. It is common for design to be used to solve problems and create new value by a wide variety of individuals who don't think of themselves as designers”. So, this is the opposite of “designer design”.

The final term is “the plenitude”. This has two definitions “an abundance” or “the condition of being full or complete”. The idea of “the plenitude” is that design is basically around us everywhere and all the time and we have become used to it and that it’s an integral part of our society now. Adverts, billboards, posters are just some examples of everyday design.

The first designer I’m going to be looking at is Chip Kidd. Kidd has been actively designing since 1986 when he gained his design degree all the way up to 2018 and presumably still going. I’ll be critically assessing his work and looking at whether it adheres to one, two or all three of the terms above. Before looking at his work, I’ll be putting a bit of background context of his career to help ascertain whether he adheres to one or all the terms. “Throughout his career, Kidd has been a graphic designer, book designer, editor, author, lecturer and musician. According to Graphic Design: American Two, he has been credited with “helping to spawn a revolution in the art of America book packaging in the last ten years. One of the most consistent characteristics of Kidd’s style is the fact that his book covers don’t carry one signature look, as he states: “A signature look is crippling... because the simplest and most effective solutions aren’t dictated by style.” (neenahpaper.com, 2020)

ChipKidd.com (2019)



So, just judging by this quote alone, I already think Kidd is leaning towards designer design and not quiet design. This is because of the way he talks about a “signature look” and how that can be “crippling”. However, this next part of the quote “the simplest and most effective solutions aren’t dictated by style” makes me think he could also be adhering slightly to quiet design.

Looking a bit more at Kidd’s career, he’s been multiple types of designers “Kidd has been a graphic designer, book designer, editor, author, lecturer and musician.” (Wikipedia, 2018). Kidd has had experience in multiple fields of design which pushes him more towards designer design due to him being six types of designer in different and similar creative fields. Another reason I think Kidd adheres more

toward designer design is that each field of design he has worked in has been professional and wasn't just for fun, also, quiet or silent design is by someone who doesn't see themselves as a designer, whereas Kidd has been interviewed as a designer and his name is widely known. Kidd also adheres to the term "the plenitude" as he has a vast and completed amount of work.

Following are a few examples of Kidd's graphic design work:

(Rock Content, 2013)



There are 24 different images, but all are Kidd's own work. As he stated in an earlier quote "a signature look can be crippling" and looking at the images above this quote has more meaning behind it. Each one of Kidd's above work, look completely different stylistically. For example, the top right batman design is very surreal and realistic looking but then the batman design on the middle row looks more sketched or drawn out and more simplified and unrealistic looking. There is absolutely no defining style whatsoever, no staple piece of design or colour that signals that it's his work. Looking at the work above, Kidd seems to like trying multiple different styles, he uses a lot of different colours in the work above. Some of the above designs are simple but some of them are more complex. One of them even has a photo used. He's also used a multitude of different fonts. Looking at his work, Kidd is heavily leaning toward designer design and shying away from quiet design.

(Previews World, 2020)



This is another example of Kidd's work and I have included this in my essay because of the style of this design and its simplicity. This design is incredibly simple, he has gone for a sort of graffiti style the text saying "Spiderman" and the eye part of the logo is also in a graffiti street style. At the pupil of the eye is a spider which is probably to symbolise that Spiderman is part spider. This design seems to adhere to a quiet design style as it is simple compared to some of Kidd's other work. I wanted to include this to cover all bases when looking at Kidd's work to help show he can also adhere towards quiet and silent design and not just designer design and the plenitude. Much like his other work shown earlier, this "Spiderman" art doesn't have any signature look to it, no obvious design choices that are tell-tale signs of Kidd's work.

(Blogspot, 2018)



This is the last piece of work I want to look at from Kidd. This is probably one of his better-known designs. The dinosaur silhouette is shown as a skeleton and not an actual dinosaur, this is to symbolise that the dinosaurs were brought back to life or that they have become unextinct. The colour scheme of the black, red and yellow signal to me that "Jurassic Park" is dangerous the red and yellow is a warning to stay away and the black is the mystery of the park and what is happening there. I wanted to include this design as this "Jurassic Park" design is a blend of designer design and quiet design. The silhouette of the dinosaur and then text in my opinion are quiet design as they can be replicated by somebody who isn't necessarily a designer. But the overall look of the entire logo adheres more towards designer design, it looks very professional and clean.

Overall, Chip Kidd is a very hard designer to pin down to either designer design, quiet design or the plenitude. His work has no overall defining style, some of his work looks extremely professional and obviously adheres to designer design but some of his other work, like the "Spiderman" art looks a lot simpler to his other work and can be seen as quiet or silent design. His work can also adhere to the plenitude as his work covers multiple fields of design from book covers to posters and this adheres to the idea that design is in fact, everywhere and poster above is part of a larger visual landscape therefore we don't see it as unusual. Overall, I would say that Chip Kidd, as a graphic designer adheres to all three of the terms discussed at the start, designer design, quiet design and the plenitude.

The second designer I'm going to be looking at in this essay is Jessica Walsh. I'll be critically assessing her work, and then throughout looking at pieces of her work will eventually decide if her works adhere towards designer design, quiet design and the plenitude. Some background of her career is she earned her "Bachelor of Fine Arts from RISD in 2008" (Wikipedia, 2020) she also worked at "Print magazine, she identifies it as one of the best things to happen in her career as it was how she found and developed her personal style" (Wikipedia, 2020) "Blending handcraft, photography and painting with digital design, Walsh works primarily on branding, typography, website design and art installations. Her signature style has been described as "bold, emotional and provocative"" (Wikipedia, 2020).

So, Walsh has a certain style of "bold, emotional and provocative" (Designlectur.es, 2017). This is the first piece of her work I want to look at:

(Behance, 2020)



This is one piece of design work by Walsh and it is provocative. This is obviously a piece of work about Donald Trump and the elections. The red and white swirl is possibly to show that Trump tries brainwashing people with his lies and how the American people believe him as they voted for him back in 2016. He has red eyes which are possibly to symbolise he is evil. His mouth is also huge which may be to symbolise that he talks a lot but does very little. This design by Walsh, seems to adhere towards designer design, especially knowing that Walsh worked for years to define her own

style. This design is quite complex and evokes emotion in people, something I don't think quiet design could accomplish or would struggle to do. The backdrop behind Trump is also dark and dingy, symbolising a dark or uncertain future for the American people. It's as if this piece of work is trying to show that he has hypnotised the American people into supporting him with his lies and deceit. The middle of the mouth is pitch black which could represent uncertainty, danger or perhaps both.

This is another piece of her work:

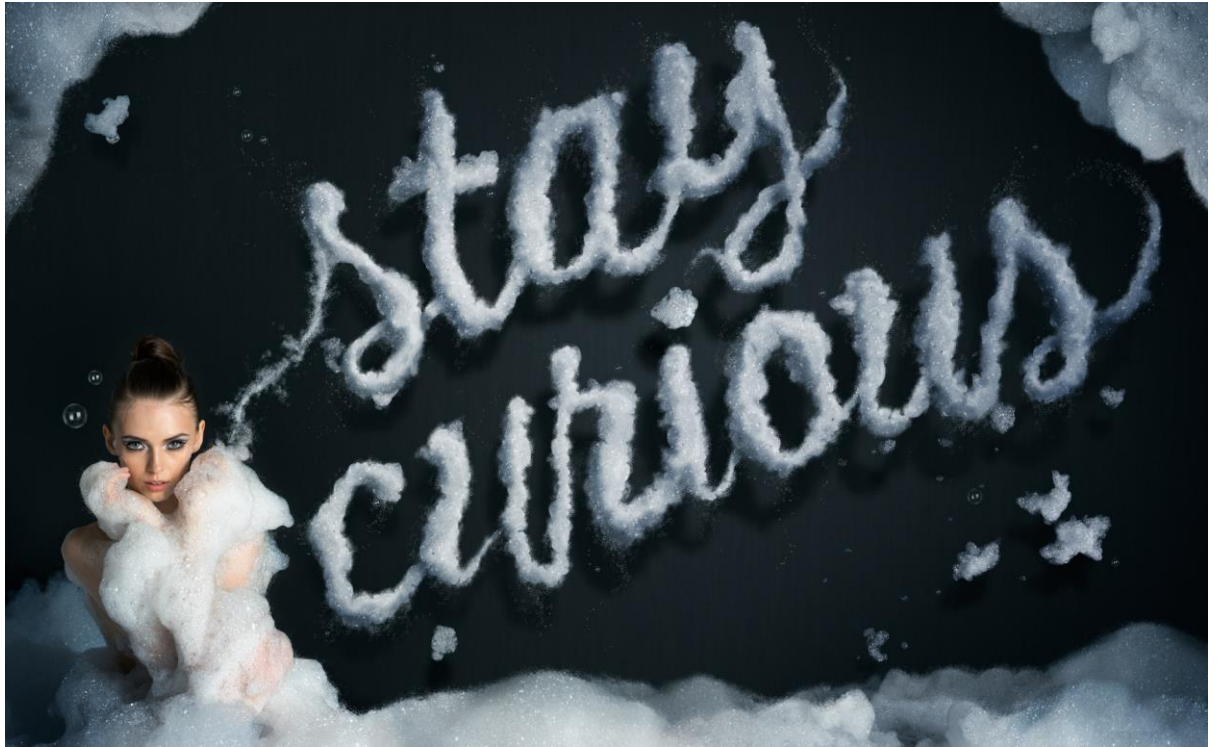
(It's Nice That, 2013)



This piece of work by Walsh is very different to the first but is still a very provocative message. It's simply a hand that looks to be hand drawn, with the words 'Let go' written inside. The design style is a lot less bold as is her usual style but the words 'Let go' are still very provocative. The background colour is a warm orange which makes you feel cosy and welcome, or even safe. Stylistically this piece of Walsh's work adheres more towards quiet design. It's very simplistic and probably didn't take a long time to create, but it's a very powerful design. So far Walsh has been between designer design and quiet design. This piece of her work, although finished, doesn't seem to adhere to the plenitude, as it has an unfinished look to it due to the sketched look to the hand and the text as well.

This is another piece of Walsh's work:

(WordPress.Com, 2016)



This is the final piece of Walsh's work I'm going to look at. This design says 'Stay Curious' written in bubbles or clouds it looks like, with a woman at the bottom covered in bubbles. The background appears to be a night sky or some dark velvet material. The woman is looking directly at the viewer, in an almost seductive manner. She is obviously naked and the only thing preventing her body from being exposed is the bubbles covering her. The words coming from her bubbles, 'Stay Curious' are directed at the viewer to stay interested in the woman, to imagine her possibly without the bubbles. This piece of design is most likely directed at men but could also be directed at women as well. The black background if it is a night sky could possibly be to make the viewer feel in wonder even more, if it is a dark velvet material such as bed sheets, it could possibly be to forward that idea of seductiveness and imagination of this very pretty woman. This piece of work by Walsh seems to adhere more towards designer design as the photography of the woman is very professional, the design is very clean and professional looking and doesn't seem like something that someone who doesn't think of themselves as a designer could do.

Overall, Walsh has a blend of both designer design and quiet design, much like Kidd did but ultimately her work does adhere more toward designer design. This is because her work is extremely professional, very well done, she has her own defining style unlike Kidd, she seems to try hard to provoke emotion in people.

In conclusion, Chip Kidd was a blend of designer design and quiet design as he had no defining style at all. Jessica Walsh did have a blend of designer design and quiet design, but ultimately, she did lean more towards designer design. Kidd adhered towards all three of the terms due to his many different pieces of work, Walsh adhered more towards designer design but not so much toward quiet design and the plenitude.

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