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BA Course Title- Product and Furniture Design

Module- Ways of thinking

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Task 1- Manifesto Writing (561)

Task 2- Observational Writing (604)

Task 3- Practice Based Writing (708)

Task 1- Manifesto

- Design is boring
- Design should be felt
- Design with mass production is ugly
- Design should push boundaries
- Design should be innovative
- Design shouldn't over-optimize
- Design should be treasured
- Design shouldn't drown in imitation

- Design is boring

Design is boring. Design has lost its depth. Design has conformed to a world full of minimalism and innovation is fading. A stool has now become a circle with legs, a sofa is now a fluffy box, a table is a wooden square. It is time to bring back exciting creations that are full of life. "Designers should focus on function first, form second. The descriptive interpretation means that beauty arises from purity of function." (Lidwell et al., 2015). Aesthetics is important to the composition of a product, but the functionality is also important. Having elements of design where it can be interacted with in a

unique way adds to the experience of the product and can show that aesthetics and functionality can work hand in hand to make a coherent, interesting product. Alongside this, we should pull inspiration from diversity in product designing. The uniformity of basic shapes with basic fixtures has little distinctiveness. Diversity in design is important to foster creativity and inclusivity that can be pulled from the real world and represent those of diverse cultures, identities, and lifestyles. People don't want products that just look good and have basic functions, they want products that can intrigue them.

- Design should be felt

Humans are design consumers. Feeling design means to transcend practicality and instead impact the experiences and connections. This then facilitates deeper bonds between humans and the product. Being surprised or challenged by a design makes the user feel something towards it. We should design with the intention to not only solve a problem but add to the experience. "Usable designs are not necessarily enjoyable to use." (Norman, 2003, pg.8). A simple design with little character lacks the novelty or emotional resonance which make products engaging. Mundane tasks could be made fun by having thoughtfully designed products, like a simple coffee mug can be designed special and uplift the user. Fun design is important to creating bonds with their users which should be the goal of designers. Design can also connect people to their personal identity or culture. Using traditional aesthetics, using native materials and historical design can evoke pride and uplift. I will make design human again. Design should reflect the world and diversity, not flatten it.

- Design should be innovative

There's no denying that the simple designs are consumed very easily. Starting with a quick, cheap, and easy manufacturing process to being sold by the thousands, there's no doubt that minimalism sells well. But, why does it have to be minimalistic? Why can't we have intricate products that sell to be treasured? We can combine these two dynamics to produce thoughtful products to be sold on a larger scale "Divergent thinking is the route, not the obstacle, to innovation." (Brown, 2009, pg.59). Embracing imperfections, playing with unconventional scopes and exploring new

breadths of design is what is needed to bring back what we once had, thoughtful design full of character and personality.

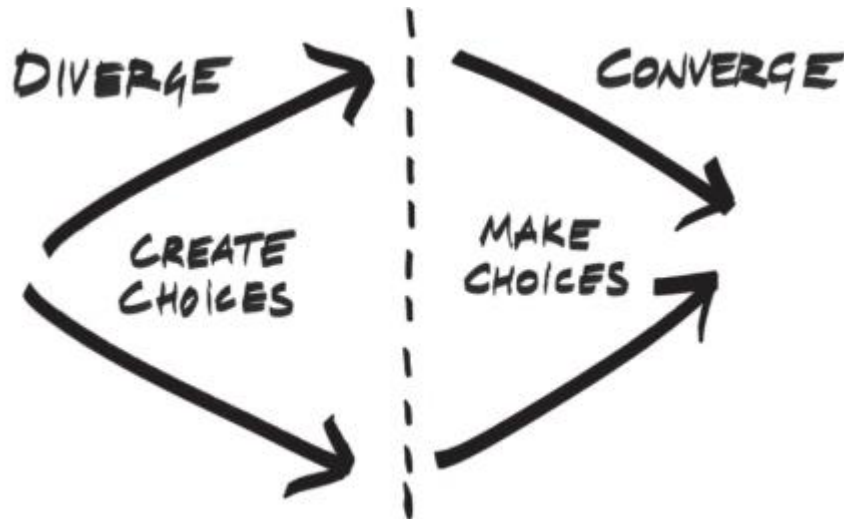


Fig.1 Brown, 2009, pg.58

There is a process within designing and innovation which designers within companies tend to miss. Instead of coming up with unique solutions, the design will be plagiarised from another design. There is a major focus on trends and aesthetics which takes away the much-needed innovation. I will commit to experimentation, taking inspiration from historical designs to create innovative and unique future products with functionality and purpose.

Bibliography-

Fig.1 Brown, T. (2009) *Change by design*. New York: HARPER COLLINS.

Brown, T. (2009) *Change by design*. New York: HARPER COLLINS.

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Task 2- Observational Writing

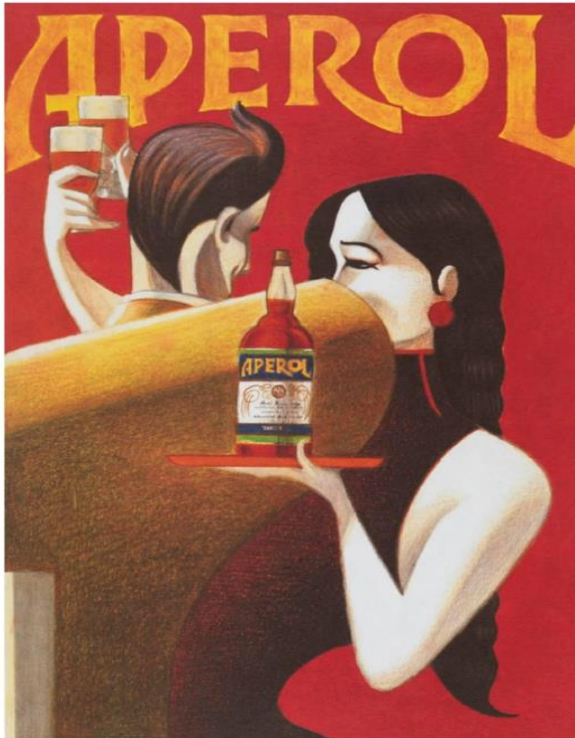


Fig. 1, Aperol Poster, Art Print, Pimlico Prints

Semiotics is our interpretation of signs and symbols in imagery. It explores how meaning is created and communicated and the process in which signs are used to convey ideas, thoughts and concepts. The key elements with semiotics is the signifier, the form in which the sign takes, and the signified, the meaning that the signifier represents. “The process of semiosis involves a triadic relationship between a sign or representamen (a first), an object (a second) and an interpretant (a third)” (Everaert-Desmedt, 2019, pg.242).

Aperol is a type of alcoholic beverage called an aperitif. This is mainly consumed to stimulate appetite before a meal. In this poster, the bottle of Aperol stands centre stage to communicate the reason for the poster, to sell the product.

On a denotative level, there are two individuals pulled up against each other and enjoying the drink. This poster is made in a stylised vintage illustration, possibly a connection to the Aperol's creation in 1919. The man is depicted with strong broad shoulders being served the drink by the woman with a seductive posture. The bottle of Aperol is central, and the word "APEROL" prominently displayed at the top. The colours used are warm, dominated by orange and red with some complimentary shades. The connotations of this suggests multiple aspects. Colours are important in conveying an overall vibe and interaction to the subject. The use of these colours symbolise warmth and sociability, illustrating a lively atmosphere which is a common association of Aperol and its culture. The artistic style is unique and vintage conveying a sense of sophistication both classic and fashionable. The body language is a main contributor to the connotations of this image, suggesting intimacy, enjoyment and sociability.

The iconic sign shown in this poster is the Aperol bottle, acting as a symbol of leisure and culture. As this is the focus of the poster, everything surrounding it represents the lifestyle of Aperol, relaxation, socialising and enjoyment. This poster also conveys certain cultural or ideological messages, starting with the most obvious being Aperol being the choice for a sophisticated and modern consumer. Throughout this imagery, Aperol is conveyed as a warm and inviting drink, giving the expectation of sociability and closeness. As this poster is illustrated in a vintage manner, there are gender roles displayed in this. The woman is positioned holding the bottle and the glass, offering them to the man as he stands there, entranced. This subtly reinforces traditional gender roles, as the woman presents and the man receives. "Men act and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at." (Berger, 1972, pg. 47). Aperitivo is a traditional Italian custom where drinks are had to stimulate hunger before an evening meal. This imagery romanticises this custom through the social atmosphere, elegant setting, and the inviting colours. This captures the essence of Aperitivo perfectly, communication that Aperol itself will be the reason for that experience.

The colours used makes every element coherent. The dominant red evokes passion, warmth and indulgence, enhancing the intimate and social scene. Orange is a key branding colour for Aperol, symbolising vibrancy and energy. This follows a complimentary colour system which harmonises throughout, with subtle hints of blue, white and green accents to balance

In summary, this poster is created to portray Aperol intertwined with Italian elegance and social rituals. It communicates with a timeless design, suggesting that Aperol is not only a drink but a symbol of lifestyle and connection.

Fig. 1, Aperol Poster, Art Print, Pimlico Prints

Berger, J. (1972) *Ways of Seeing*. London, Penguin

Task 3- Practice-based writing

Keyword: Form



Fig 1, Isamu Noguchi's Akari Light Sculptures (1951)

Isamu Noguchi's Akari Light Sculptures is an iconic home staple that uses the traditional Gifu methods of construction which is affixing washi paper over a frame of bamboo strip ribs. This is a successful showing of form, material and function intertwining with Japanese culture and tradition. Akari means 'light', associating with both glow and weightlessness. Noguchi was travelling to Hiroshima in 1951 and stopped in Gifu to experience a festival along the Nagara river which was illuminated by brilliant paper lanterns. Unfortunately, at this time paper lanterns were diluted by widespread cheap production and Noguchi was appealed to by the mayor of Gifu to revitalise the lantern industry. Through designing, Noguchi emphasised traditional aspects that other designers took for granted which is the collapsible construction of these lamps. Because of his beautiful connection of culture and modern design, his Akari Lamps were well received globally. "I wanted other means of communication - to find a way of sculpture that was humanly meaningful without being realistic, at once abstract and socially relevant." (Noguchi & Fuller, 2015, pg.21) Isamu Noguchi reflects his philosophies as a sculptor and designer by highlighting his ambition to produce art that goes beyond conventional limits of realism and abstraction, and to resonate with people on a personal level.

Form has many definitions: to make something into a particular shape, to make or be something and the shape or appearance of something. Form can also be subjected to the creative expression of a piece, its harmony or juxtaposition with itself. Clive Bell is an English art critic who is well known for his concept of 'Significant Form' which certain compositions of lines and colours would create 'aesthetic emotion'. Bell states, "To appreciate a work of art we need bring with us nothing but a sense of form and colour and a knowledge of three-dimensional space" (Bell, 1914, pg.27) meaning that art can be appreciated by everyone without requiring specialised knowledge and that art can be appreciated purely for its visual qualities. In a design context, form refers to the body and expression of a piece, and how it will be perceived by the viewer.

Isamu Noguchi's Akari Light have a harmonious blend of simple organic and geometric shapes making it timeless and adaptable. The body of the lamps look lightweight, brightening up a room and being able to blend in. Adding to this, the washi paper used draws a soft and diffused light whilst its thin quality stretches over the wireframe accentuating the contours of

each form. They are also made from bamboo frames which emphasises the ways in which form can enhance function without sacrificing elegance. Noguchi specifically designed these lamps to have a dynamic interaction within its space, with its lightness and slim legs to give the impression of a floating form, playing along with the weightlessness of the piece. Noguchi's views on the harmonious coexistence of nature, design and art are embodied in the forms.

Noguchi has appreciated human centred design. Kenya Hara, author of 'Designing Design' says that re-design is "a means by which to correct and renew our feelings about the essence of design, hidden within the fascinating environment of an object that is so overly familiar to us that we can no longer see it" (Hara, 2011, pg.22). Household products are commonly looked over to the point where there can be no relationship between the user and its product. This is something Noguchi wanted to combat. The inviting atmosphere that the light produces is calming and can connect to the user emotionally.

From a product design standpoint, functionality is important, and Noguchi delivers this in many ways with a soft and diffused light, lightweight materials which are easily transported and collapsible design. Throughout design development, Noguchi has produced a wide range of shapes and sizes. These traditional materials of bamboo and washi paper are also sustainable which resonates with eco-conscious design.

The Akari Light Sculptures bridge art and product design offering traditional Japanese cultures to have an emotional bond with the users. They have a poetic balance of aesthetics, practicality and cultural heritage. These lamps are more than their functionality: they are sculptures of light.

Bibliography

Fig 1, Isamu Noguchi's Akari Light Sculptures (1951)

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Noguchi, I. and Fuller, R.B. (2015) *Isamu Noguchi: A sculptor's world*. Göttingen: Steidl.