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Within this module, I will be researching and focusing into an area of my practice, this will contribute to an understanding and development of my chosen topic through the investigation into three keywords. The three keywords I wish to explore are Drawing, Pattern and Colour. I would like to research each word to explore possible theories surrounding each keyword. I will look into drawing as an action and thought process, how we use drawing as a way to visualise an idea, I will research the action and skill for a thought to be explained through the expression of line on a page. The way pattern plays a key role within surface design but how the mind begins to understand the idea of repetition and the linking of motif to create an impression for decoration. I will consider how colour changes a design and can control the meaning of it, as well as an emotion or thought, it can make an expression of an idea come to life and be seen. How colour has connotations to capturing a moment or exploration and how it can be linked to emotions and meaning to make the viewer feel.

Drawing can be defined as a visual representation of a thought on a page, but it is also the result of the mind and tool working as one to display an idea or theory. The skill to draw is made up of a variety of factors, appreciating the link between expression and imagery, Rawson (1987, p. 1) states “for a drawings basic ingredients are strokes or marks which have a symbolic relationship with experience, not a direct, overall similarity with anything real”. If drawing is the result of an experience or expression, this explains how interpretation of drawing or skill is different, the image created as a result of drawing is visual, it is a language spoken without words, every drawn feature has a thought process it describes the next marking. Each marking acquires a different meaning and understanding. The expression of line on a page has a relationship with the mind, creating symbols and meaning. Rawson (1987, p. 1) speaks of “a symbolic relationship”, symbols appear within drawings throughout history, representing a moment, a time or experience. “Due to it’s nature, no doubt, drawing is represented, experienced, and experimented with as a compulsion” (Nancy, J L, 2013, p.15). The idea of drawing as a compulsion, explains the desire and constant in any designers' work, there is a constant need to draw. It is considered to be something continuous, a flow which remains without an end, this skill is uninterrupted through time, it is taught from a young age as a simple skill but also retaught when ideas are complicated. Drawing can be described as a pathway using a tool to create, an endless line which shows the journey within the art piece. “Consider a blind man with a stick. Where does the blind man’s self begin?” (Bateson, G, 1972, p.324). A blind man and his stick are considered to be one whole, this is similar to an artist and their tool, the hand and a pen, an artist uses media to create their own pathway similar to a blind person and their guide stick, one can only be guided by the other. The stick or tool is an extension of the person, the mind creates the path, a drawing of symbols and meaning, one boundless line which depicts the next leading onto another idea or thought. (Ingold, 2016, p. 40-46) talks about the idea of the connection of line and the hand, the relationship of not needing a tool or device to create a link from the thought to the line.



Figure 1 – ‘A Line Made By Walking’, 1967

Richard Long a landscape artist creates drawings within landscapes, taking a walk as a form or drawing, “the line is a record of a journey, although short, and an expression of the energy taken to make it” (National Galleries of Scotland, 2020). Linking back the idea that drawing is not defined as the pen to a page, but it is a form of communication, it is an artist's best language, it demonstrates a journey of visuality (as seen in figure 1). The drawn imagery is an extension of the artists mind, it is the complete combination of artist with media. Drawing cannot be written but understood visually, each layer and line depicts the next, one line cannot start without the previous line, working together to create a visual representation of what words cannot or do not say.

This connects to the second keyword pattern, focusing on the relationship between pattern, imagery, repetition and narratives. Pattern is the layering of motif and line, artists and designers use the knowledge of repetition to create eye catching designs, Graeme Were (2010, p. 1) states “pattern makes a difference by embellishing surfaces; it brings visual pleasures or acts as an attention drawing device”, pattern making is used as a visual representation similarly to drawing but combines the idea of colour, form, line and imagery. Pattern is used as a way of engaging the brain by creating a visual design, the idea that artists or designers “embellish”, this would be something that is added or adapted to materials, it acts as an enhancement. Pattern is a form of repetition, creating that engaging

element, which connects the eyes and mind. “Pattern also facilitates the linking of the old with the new, acting as a logical framework for integrating the unknown with the known through it’s spatial and temporal properties” (Were, 2010, p. 107), understanding that pattern is the structure that requires, it implements a comfort of the same, It is a form of the communication of understanding the unknown through our connections. Within Surface Pattern, the idea of creating a repeat suggests there to be a repeat structure this would be the same as a stamp for a print artist, the repeat block will then be duplicated over and over again in a specific system. Moreover, once the repeat block structure has been made the patterns can be adapted to create a new pattern using a different repeat system such as block, half drop or scatter (as seen in figures 2,3 and 4).

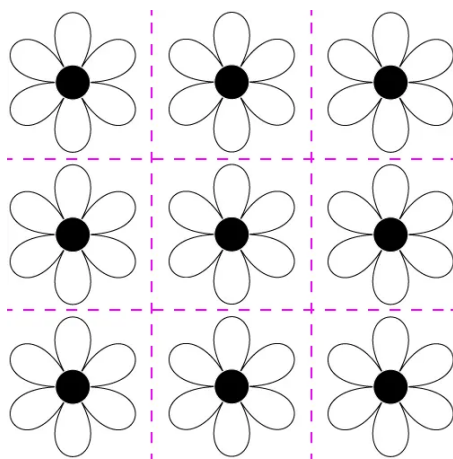


Figure 2 – ‘Block Repeat’, 2015

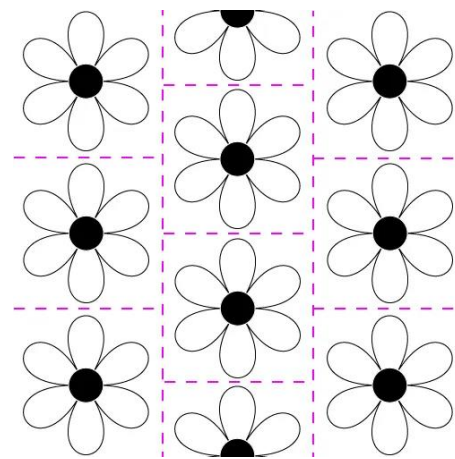


Figure 3 - ‘Drop/Half-Drop Repeat’, 2015

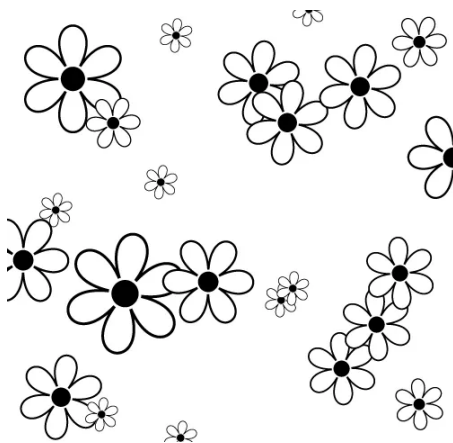


Figure 4 - ‘Toss/Random Repeat’, 2015

This reiterates the idea of the old and new elements, the repeat block will continue to become old, but the patterns created are constantly new. “Remember that a pattern is either right or wrong. It cannot be forgiven for blundering, as a picture may be which has otherwise great qualities in it. It is with a pattern as with a fortress, it is no stronger than its weakest point”, (William Morris quoted in Victoria and Albert Museum, 2023a). The repeat in a pattern is continuous, there is no end or start therefore duplicating itself over and over, no errors or change throughout the design, is has a system and follows suit to produce a design, such as a story.



Figure 5 - 'Strawberry Thief', 2014

Pattern is a continuous flow, it is an idea which follows on from the previous, it therefore could be considered as creating a story or narrative. William Morris was able to tell little stories within each piece of his pattern making, such as (figure 5 above) "the pattern, meanwhile, was based on the thrushes that would steal strawberries from the kitchen in his country home at Kelmscott Manner, and was therefore imbued with nostalgic sentiment". (The Art Story Foundation, 2023). The idea of using a repeat system as a visual representation of a story allows for the designer to create a language between the artist and the viewer, designers such as William Morris create a connective layer to their work, allowing for interpretation and a glimpse into a pocket of information. Our eyes follow the narrative through the use of repeated features such as motifs, looking for similarity and connections, creating inquisitive minds.

Leading onto the next keyword Colour. Colour connects to a variety of ideas; it is not simply the shade that sits within a pattern or object, each colour was selected due to a choice by the designer. There is a reason to every colour choice, "colour has many, many messages and meanings. You must become aware of colour's visual weight and the subsequent impact it has on line and shape, as well as it's varied hues and tones" (Peterson, 2015, ch. Elements of Design - Colour). If there are thoughts and ideas surrounding the decisions to adding elements of colour within design, then colour must be the connection between the designer

and the viewer, colour is a language, it is an understanding between people. It has an impact by simply changing the tone of a colour can therefore change the meaning of a design entirely. The idea of “visual weight”, suggests we can redirect how the eyes meet a pattern or design, where the eyes will look next. “Colour is vital to our very existence, since colourlessness is, after all, equated to lifelessness, sterility, and death”, (Faiers and Bulgarella, 2017, p.2), the eyes and brain connect with colour, it is programmed into life at very early ages, colour brings emotion and life into the everyday. It can send meaning and value to a design or object, colour is considered to be light, without it, design is lifeless.

If colour is life, then we connect emotion and raw meaning of stories and ideas to each hue, there is value within different tones, each has a narrative and understanding with it. The ‘Egyptian Blue’ story comes, as “for the ancient Egyptians, though, the colour represented the sky, the river Nile, creation and divinity.....the colour was thought to dispel evil and bring prosperity”, (St Clair, 2016, p. 197), so it can mean so many different understandings all over the world, each has a different value and story. Each colour is seen uniquely throughout different cultures and time periods. Not all colours have continued into the present day, some are no longer seen in a way that they used to be, or now have new meaning. Althea McNish a pattern designer uses colour as a voice, she uses bright colours and black line as a combination of thought and interpretation, “colour, shape and pattern are my medium of expression to produce spontaneous reaction” (McNish quoted in Sinclair, 2023), understanding the idea that colour creates a reaction, there is an importance to colour in life. Using colour within pattern, contrasting hues will create a reaction for the eyes, our minds will follow the connection between the line and tones, how they work together, how the design makes the viewer feel. Colours have emotion, stories understood through the use of a certain shade, they are a visual language to give the artist or designer a voice spoken through their work.



Figure 6 - ‘Oriana’, 1960s

Althea McNish's work (as seen in figure 6) represented time, it showcased the need for life, it was an expression of the period of when her work was produced, the V&A spoke of her work as "her designs injected much needed colour and life into the post-war fashion and textiles industry from the 1950s onwards" (Victoria and Albert Museum, 2023b). Colour is not simply a shade picked to fill a space in a design, it is a visual aspect such as line, it has a reason, it has meaning, the weight of where the colour lays within a design suggests for a viewer to read a pattern in a certain way. Althea McNish's work was made during a period of time where life was difficult and in need of a new direction, her work spoke in a positive light, drawing attention to colour.

Drawing, pattern and colour are three key elements used within design to connect and communicate with an audience. The use of these factors, allow for the artists and designers to create a visual language to communicate with others, design does not always have text to reference to, but they still allow for connections and thoughts. Drawing is the starting point and initial investigation an artist completes before engaging in any design, it is the foundation to expressive artwork. Drawing is the pathway between the mind and media, the thought or idea is passed through the tool and into the media, it cannot be justified with words, each mark has a meaning and thought process needing to be visually expressed. It is any artist or designers' language through their journeys, it is a skill which is developed and adapted through experience. As drawing is a continuous line, it represents a developing idea, leading into a pattern. Pattern communicates a story, an experience from the artist or designer, it is never ending, similar to a drawing. These are elements which allow for any designer to build a relationship and communication with any audience. They are both a language and expression, pattern is a continuation of a drawing, it combines other elements such as colour and composition, it is the combination of all thoughts an artist has. Pattern communicates a thought process; it is a journey through the layers and motifs incorporated, it is a visual language of a narrative which repeats.

Colour another type of artist communication, colour represents feeling and emotion, colour comes from experience and storytelling. Similar to drawing, colour starts from an idea, it can be changed due to emotion, they have meaning and also give meaning. They cannot exist within a design without an element of understanding as to why the artist chose them, they are again another form of connection, colour is similar to pattern, it can change the way a design is seen, the amount of certain hues can create a journey for the eye to see a piece in a certain way. It creates the reading for the language to be seen. Within Surface Pattern, I use these techniques and elements to construct my work, I have been taught from the start of my course and throughout my creativity, that the simplest of design components such as drawing can have a huge difference. At the start of any projects, I have been taught to start with gathering motifs and imagery through experimentation and experience from day visits. From here, I will be able to collect colour palettes and motif ideas before investigating how they would all work together in a pattern. These elements of drawing, pattern and colour are the design connections for any artist or designer creating work, they are their voice and their visual communications when words are not spoken. They all work together to portray a narrative or story, an experience or expression from the artist, these 3 keywords are the design foundations for communication to take place within

a design, they have meaning and connections to how the design came to life, artists or designers cannot create work without the starting point of drawing, they cannot portray emotion and meaning without colour, they cannot create understanding without the bringing togetherness of pattern.

Question:

To what extent do artists and designers use a visual language to communicate with an audience?

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List of Figures:

Figure 1 - Long, R. (1967) *A Line Made By Walking* [Digital Art]. Available at: [A LINE MADE BY WALKING \(richardlong.org\)](http://richardlong.org) (Accessed: 17 April 2023).

Figure 2 - Boyd, N. (2015) *Block Repeat*. Available at: [Designing Fabric: 9 Common Patterns, Deconstructed – PRINT Magazine](#) (Accessed: 8 May 2023).

Figure 3 - Boyd, N. (2015) *Drop/Half-Drop Repeat*. Available at: [Designing Fabric: 9 Common Patterns, Deconstructed – PRINT Magazine](#) (Accessed: 8 May 2023).

Figure 4 - Boyd, N. (2015) *Toss/Random Repeat*. Available at: [Designing Fabric: 9 Common Patterns, Deconstructed – PRINT Magazine](#) (Accessed: 8 May 2023).

Figure 5 – Morris, W. (2014) *Strawberry Thief* [Digital Art]. Available at: [Strawberry Thief Indigo/Mineral Wallpaper | Morris & Co by Sanderson Design \(sandersondesigngroup.com\)](http://sandersondesigngroup.com) (Accessed: 17 April 2023).

Figure 6 – McNish, A. (1960s) *Oriana* [Digital Art]. Available at: [V&A · Althea Mc Nish – An Introduction \(vam.ac.uk\)](http://vam.ac.uk) (Accessed: 17 April 2023).