

Research in practice.

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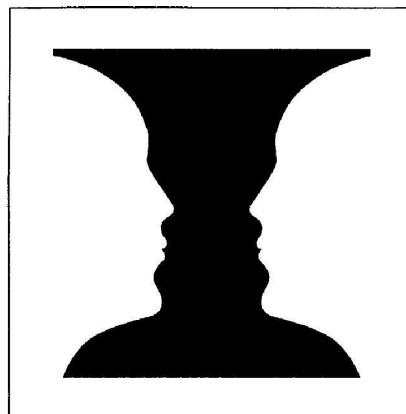
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Understanding the ability to create a visual profile of someone or something helps the brain understand what's going on, this assists us in many situations, from meeting new people to comprehending a piece of art! Without the ability to perceive our lives would be pretty hard to understand. This is why many people & creatives use the ability to perceive in their works of art, it gives the individual more control over what they are seeing. "Art is not what you see, but what you make others see". (Kendall, April 2024). Another topic I felt passionate about is the NHS and how it came to be. In this proposal, I write about the history of the NHS and the stages it went through to get to where it is now. Finally understanding the importance of music, I delve into the question "Why is music so important" and how it's used to benefit our lives. Dr Maggie Haertsch states "If we're able to access our music when we're growing up through the generations why is it that we can't get music when we need it most" (ABC Science, 2016, 05:50). I agree that music should be accessible to all and holds the potential to improve people's mental states as evidenced by my research below. To summarise, my three key works are perception, NHS, and the power of music.

The definition of perception or the ability to perceive according to the Oxford English Dictionary states "To apprehend with the mind; to become aware or conscious of; to realize; to discern, observe. Also (occasionally) intransitive" (Oxford University Press, N/A). This definition goes into more of a sociology standpoint that shows a more in-depth take on the topic, so being able to learn about how the brain takes in all this information is crucial in being able to evoke it. The ability to perceive is another word for your brain being able to process and bring order to the amalgamation of chaotic information around it, these elements according to (CrashCourse, 2014, 00:27).are dependent on expectations, experiences, moods, and sometimes even cultural norms. Your brain heavily relies on information it already retains as well as context, to piece together what exactly you are looking at. A lot of creatives in the graphic design community that utilize visual communication as a way to present their designs sometimes use these elements of preconceived ideas to bring across their point and provoke some meaningful experiences that the audience may have had, in life that connect them more with the design.



An element that I found most interesting when researching this topic was something called "Form Perception" which is an umbrella term for a "figure-ground relationship." (CrashCourse, 2014, 03:50). It is the term given to the process of organization of an individual's visual field that helps us understand and take in the information around us without getting overwhelmed. An interesting use of perception that invokes these fields is The Two-Face, One Vase Illusion created by Danish psychologist Edgar Rubin around 1915.

Because of figure-ground relationships the silhouettes of the vase and the two faces are continuously reversing, which in turn causes your way of perception to shift depending on the stimuli around you that could influence your way of seeing.

Moving more towards an artistic view of perception, I stumbled across this very insightful piece of information from the TEDx TALKS online YouTube channel. It was a TED talk presented by Shahina Jaffer who is an artist, Ted X talks speaker, creative practitioner, researcher, and art engagement consultant. Who specializes in abstract art and observation. She spoke about the idea of a 7-second perception task that involved her live audience and said that in just 7 seconds your perception of another person can build solid first impressions. This is interesting to me as I've never actually understood how or why we assume people's personalities and intentions just by looking at them, instead of getting to know that individual. This interest then sent me down a rabbit hole of a topic known as Ethnography and ethnographic research, which has led to many groundbreaking discoveries. The word Ethnography comes from the Greek word 'Ethnos', which is transcribed to people, nations & cultural groups, and the word 'Graphy' which means to write, and when combined these words translate to, 'writing about a group of people'.

There are many ways that ethnography has conducted its research, you can become immersed in that specific social group for quite a long time and start to visit places that the individuals find most important, and you start to observe and learn from the participant's behavioral traits. You also start to create a trustworthy and reliable connection while asking them questions and becoming more present in conversations and social gatherings. Ultimately you will start to piece together a more in-depth understanding of that group's culture & values while taking into account the context of each situation.

There are two ways in which this study can be carried out. and that's through either, overt ethnography which shares the knowledge of this study with its willing participants and shows its clear intentions, or covert ethnography, which doesn't disclose any information on their motives and has a more sinister approach. Now reflecting on these methods there is a clear difference in what's called "Institutional ethics". According to the Centre for Healthcare Ethics, Duquesne University means "The application of ethics in such institutions as hospitals, professional organizations, and corporations". (SPRINGER LINK, May 2021)

I was also interested in how artists use perception in their work. This brought me to discover an individual by the name of 'Edgar Degas'. Who was a French painter, sculptor, and printmaker who was prominent in the impressionist group. (Kendall, April 2024). The reason I was drawn to research this artist is because of a quote I documented, that stands the test of any medium of art and still holds up to this day. "Art is not what you see, but what you make others see". (CREATIVE THINKING HUB, N/A). This opened my eyes to the perception of others and myself and how we could potentially see the same things differently depending on the context and life experiences, and that research tells us that the mind has the power to decode many different stimuli such as shapes and colours, etc...

Circling back to Shahina Jaffer's TED TALK, she presented us with examples of her work and how we could use our imagination to perceive and observe her abstract style brush strokes. She challenged herself to produce pieces of art that not even she knew the meaning of, which leaves the perception of the artwork up to the audience to decide and makes it more personal and simultaneously open-ended and up for interpretation.

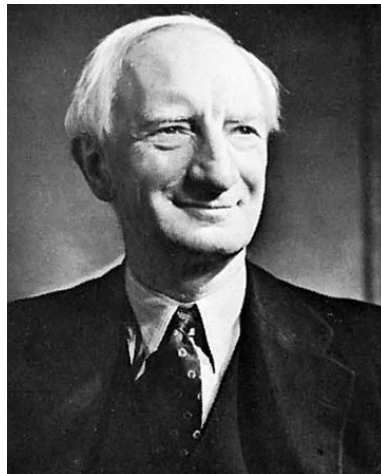


"Shadows in the Dark" was Created by Shahina Jaffer.

(Shahina Jaffer, 2019)

Diving straight into the history of the NHS and why it was established? Before the idea of the NHS, people relied heavily on a service known as national insurance. Which was exclusively targeted towards working people just following World War 2, who were financially stable enough to be able to provide tax to the government. After the tragedy of World War 2, although the fighting had stopped many people across Britain were still recovering. Because of this impact, the government were forced to get involved and provide something for their displaced country, this included assisting the wounded soldiers who fought bravely and honouring those who had lost their lives. During this time the war had sparked some new and impressive advancements in the medical field of drugs, they had introduced the use of penicillin which proved to be very beneficial to the people of Britain.

These events inspired the public to want to be able to change the way that healthcare was conducted. This brings me to an individual by the name of 'William Henry Beveridge'. According to Britannic.com, he was "an economist who helped shape Britain's post-World War II welfare state policies and institutions through his Social Insurance and Allied Services (1942), also known as the Beveridge report" (Britannica Money, April 2024) .He was tasked with planning a national health service that catered to all people.



Lord Beveridge, photograph by Yousuf Karsh.

(Britannica Money, April 2024)

Beveridge then went on to produce three ideologies that the national health service could provide. Firstly "Cradle to grave" which was the idea that the NHS would care for these individuals until they passed, providing them with lifelong health care. Secondly, "All pay all benefits" This meant that all who resided within Britain would pay a steady stream of taxes that would be deduced from their wages to keep the NHS running and caring for their patients with the best medical equipment they could have. Finally, third, "Services would be free at any point of delivery" This provided people with a free and sustainable way to receive high-quality healthcare seemingly for free, this is an amazing progression from where we were in the early 1900s, and how people had to scrape and save just to survive. As well as these three ideas, there would be specific professionals and areas designated to each ailment throughout the hospital grounds, so that the people would be receiving the best care that suited them. These features included midwives, specialists, training, easily accessible hospitals, experienced doctors, and new-age cutting-edge drugs.

I found this amazing quote from history, that kind of sums up the difference between before and after the start of the NHS. "If it was the fourth of July, it was one and sixpence, but if it was born of the fifth, it wasn't anything. That one and sixpence after the way bought a loaf of bread to feed the rest of the family and a tub of margarine, that's the reality of what we take for granted now". (NHS England, 2018, 00:31). From Ethel Armstrong, this shines a light on how people were living and struggling at that time and how much the NHS truly provided a safe and healthy environment.



Image of the NHS Revolution in the 1950s

(The Guardian, 2018)

Taking a closer look at the creative journey that took place to produce the consistent and well-known NHS identity we see today; I learned about the history and how it came to be.

In the early years, there was no such thing as a systematic brand or logo that covered this entire idea. And instead, was just known as the 'New Health Service' Some people didn't even acknowledge the name, mainly because it was so new and unheard of. People were surprised that this heavily sought-after care was now suddenly free and easily accessible, as I stated previously this was a quick response to the huge aftereffects of World War two.

The non-established brand identity has been evident since around 1988 according to 'People History NHS' Originally, they were using the Red Cross to represent, but they ran into some controversy supposedly involving the Labour party. And so rebranded to the identity we all know today as the National Health Service or abbreviated to the NHS, and so around the 1990s most if not all the NHS and surrounding branches changed their brand to become in line with the one you see today.



(Thesefootballtimes.co, March 2020)

A topic that I as well as a large amount of people enjoy is music, according to the UK Government “in 2021 in the UK there were 39 million monthly active users of music streaming services and there were over 138 billion streams”. (GOV.UK, July 2022). As music plays such an important and everlasting role in many of our lives, I wanted to understand why we gravitate towards it and hold so much importance towards it.

I found that music has the power to shape cultures and societies all throughout the world. Mainly because it is known to unite people and bring people closer, as well as influence people's moods, and perceptions and most importantly in some cases inspire change. According to DW Documentary, music has always played an important role in our lives and some people believe that we as humans are born with a sense of rhythm. From the research I've conducted, I've discovered that many of us, associate genres or even a specific song with moments in our lives that we want to remember, or even the emotion we were feeling at the time.

And in this modern age, many professionals have conducted their own research on music and have integrated it into some forms of modern medicine. While researching medical journals on this topic I came across an article by the name of “Mozart, music, and medicine”. With the main subject is the ability to enhance memory and movement through music. It goes on to share something known as the Mozart effect, which “implies the enhancement of reasoning skills in solving spatial problems in normal subjects after listening to Mozart's piano sonata K 448”. (National Library of Medicine, July 2014). This raises the idea that music and medicine somehow intertwine and could be the solution to many cognitive and neurological issues.

I found this amazing example of how music can have an overwhelmingly positive effect on the brain, it's by ABC Science and shows people who have been diagnosed with long-term neurological illnesses such as dementia, individuals who have suffered head & brain injuries and people with Parkinson's. They conducted a medical practice, where they created a tailor-made playlist for a specific patient containing songs from their childhood and life experiences in hopes that they would start to reminisce and remember themselves living that previous life. Once the headphones were placed on their head, they would almost immediately start to react, whether that be dancing, humming, tapping or even singing along. It's an amazing reaction to witness and see in someone who hadn't been able to move. ABC Science states that one of the people introducing this solution is the director of the Art Health Institute Dr Maggie Haertsch, she says, “I think music is a human right, music predates language” and “If we're able to access our music when we're growing up through the generations why is it that we can't get music when we need it most”. (ABC Science, 2016, 05:50).



Image of Dr Maggie Haertsch

(Linked in, N/A)

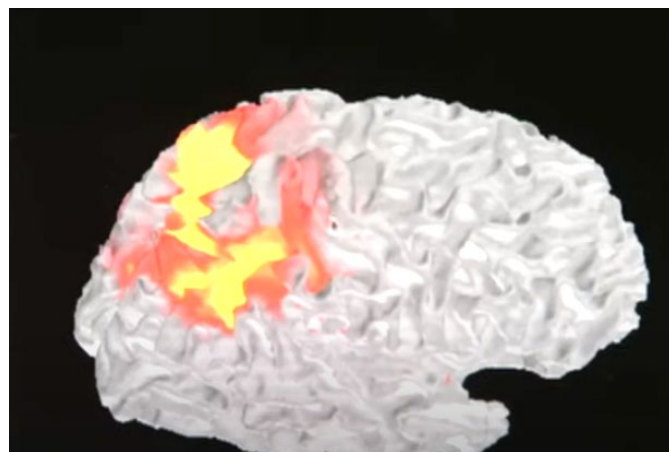
Held in a facility known as “the music sound and performance lab”. A test was held on a subject where they were exposed to two different forms of music, the first was more peaceful, emotional and memory-provoking, and the second was upbeat and joyful. This test was known as ‘real-time brain response to favourite music in a magnetic angiography machine’. These tests were carried out by Professor Mark Williams & Professor Bill Thompson

These were the results.



(ABC Science, 2016, 09:59).

This was captured from test one, with the softer more peaceful music. The professionals commented that the brain was more involved in emotional areas and more focused on an emotional and memory-based response.



(ABC Science, 2016, 10:35).

Whereas this was the result of test two.

It was noted that test two was very different from test one and that the motor areas of the brain were more awake meaning that the subject was more inclined to physically respond like dancing or tapping along to a beat. This helps to explain how our brains are trained to react to music.

After analysis each key element and delving into the meaning of each topic I feel although I've been able to achieve a good understanding of these areas. Like how Shahina Jaffer's uses the art of perception to leave her abstract art's understanding up to the audiences to decipher. Giving it greater personal value and meaning. And with the NHS area, I got to learn from people's real-life experiences and understand how they used to live. For instance, Ethel Armstrong's life anecdote on how the national health service changed her life. And finally, the power of music and how we utilise it, from my experience, I always believed that music was special and had elements that weren't always on the surface. Being able to research that topic I've unveiled a whole new interest and viewpoint on music and how it can better the people in need. All these key areas are quite different in their original states but after research and understanding I believe that their potential for a link to be made between these areas.

Forming a link to bring all these areas together, I started by analysing the research I proclaimed and created a list of areas that could overlap. Perception & Music – Both areas revolve around the brain and how we process information, not necessarily with one specific sense. Perception & NHS – presenting the public with the history of the NHS in a way where it can be perceived in a positive setting. All areas have a sense of health, and trying to understand why our brains do a certain thing this could link to perception, music, and the NHS.

Some possible areas of study could be Abstract art, representation of music in a visual sense, NHS media and views from the public, a collective abstract piece made by its audience.

A starting point for a question could be something such as, how is music visually represented? How do we present to positive effects of music? Can individual perceptions create a united piece of art?

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