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Proposed question for Independent Inquiry

The three keywords selected to discuss for this dissertation proposal will be Modernism, Abstract and Colour. These themes will help to inform personal design practice within Surface Pattern in the third year and for the final dissertation.

Modernism

Modernism is “a movement towards modifying traditional beliefs in accordance with modern ideas” (Oxford Reference, 2015). Furthermore, the movement of Modernism is directed to fall in between Realism and Postmodernism (James, 2020). Additionally, when modernism arrived at society and culture in the early decades of the twentieth century, it brought new experience and values to modern life. This gave a new point of view on how Modernism created a new meaning to move into a new light of society and culture towards a new movement that is global (Tate, 2017).

Artists used new imagery, materials and techniques to create a series of artwork that reflected on modern societies. “The task of trying to find something new and interesting to do after apparently every possible experiment had already been performed by its predecessor” (Buchanan, 2010).



Figure one: Calyx, furnishing fabric (shown in two colourways), Lucienne Day, 1951, England. Museum no.

Lucienne Day is an artist who reflected modernism through her designs. These were welcomed after the effects of World War two (Casey, 2014, p. 12). After the effect of World War two, people embraced more of a modern approach such as wanting new patterns, colours and new looks to lift their spirits, see figure one, printed textiles produced by Lucienne day (Casey, 2014, p 58, 60.). “A receptive audience was waiting, ready for a breath of fresh air after the visual bleakness of the war years” (Victoria and Albert Museum, 2012).

Her design inspiration came from a wide range of sources such as artists and designers, her visits to other countries and the most current fashion trends. It also helped that she was open to latest ideas and influences (Casey, 2014, p.60).

Lucienne Day's work is a good example of design during the Modernist time and adds a new meaning of how people should view the next era by having someone having designed before. These contemporary designs brought a breath of fresh air to society in uplifting spirits after so much depression after World War two, and other global effects on society and cultures. (Victoria and Albert Museum, 2012)

The design 'calyx' seen in figure one, focuses on the botanical form, which was a traditional source of inspiration that is still being used at current times. The design includes stylised plant motifs to the point of it being almost abstracted which are then linked with a diagonal and vertical thin solid line and dotted lines which are suggesting of flower stalks. Calyx embodies the general social optimism at the time which brought a new growth of spring energy. (Victoria and Albert Museum, 2012)



Figure Two : Causeway (1967) & Figure Three : Herb Antony (1956)

In her design work of Causeway (1967), she demonstrates a great execution of using a colour block contrast. In Day's pattern design work of Herb Antony (1956), the pattern was formed to have plant elements that are transformed into a graceful line-drawn forms. The design has been approached to be thoughtful of the pattern and is to be taken with her influences. The important source of inspiration throughout Day's career was her lust of botanical form. The subject of this theme is that it provides the visual and innovation of her designs. There are current designs that follow the style of Day, see figure four Dandelion Clock, Day's style of work continues to influence many designers with the use of botanical elements, scale and use of artwork to create pattern.

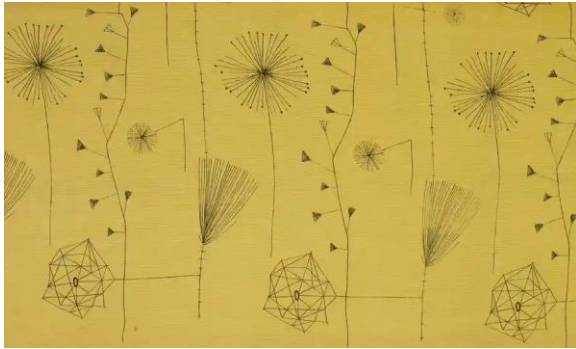


Figure four : Dandelion Clocks (1953)

Day's pattern designs of the Modernist era show how uplifting they were for people to experience a 'sense of new' after bleak times. This is currently relevant to how lives have changed due to the pandemic; designers are being challenged to create innovative designs to bring celebration back into life (Changemakers and wave of innovation) after a depressing experience. It is creating new experiences with their work to create new designs. The designs portrayed the latest trends, colours and patterns. This gives designers to think how well their designs will be created or how they could have an underline meaning to inspire people to carry on when we will emerge from the current situation. This will bring a new meaning to learn on how to problem solve, this will apply to how to create existing designs or future ones that cannot be done in a normal setting. The designers will show other ways on how people can view their work from being at home where it is a safe environment.

When creating a pattern for a variety of surfaces, there are many principal factors to consider. Firstly, the placement of the design, for example on furnishings or fashion. Secondly, the scale and colour of the pattern. Scale is an essential element of the design because the designer must visualise it into an interior or garment such as it being placed onto soft furnishing like future. Day's use of colour in figure demonstrates complementary hues applied to medium sizes motifs in blocks of colour with added linework to create further interest and fun. This experimental approach creates interest with a looseness in art form that brought something new after a depressing time. She continued with the artistic style with the pattern shown in figure three, That depicts botanical line drawings in white on a bolder, black ground.

Colour

The second keyword is colour. Colour is defined as:

The property possessed by an object of producing different sensations on the eye as a result of the way it reflects or emits light: the lights flickered and changed colour. (Oxford Reference, 2015)

The meaning of colour is seen to be viewed in diverse ways, such as to have an emotional link.

Colours play an important role for customers in making decisions on what they like and dislike. They evoke various emotional feelings such as excitement, energy, and calmness (Ou, 2004 , p. 232).

Colour and Culture- Festival of the Holi

There is also a different way of how colour is represented through a festival, called the Festival of the Holi, or known as the festival of colours. The Holi is a Hindu festival, which celebrates spring, love and new life. It involves a two-day, Hindu celebration that originates in India. On the first day people gather around a bonfire and celebrate over good triumphing evil. On the second day it is more fun where everyone can join in the activities. This involves spattering of perfumed, coloured, powder called gulal that is then pelted at everyone with water pistols and balloons. The gulal powder comes in many colours and signifies different meanings. The colour meanings are red for love, blue for Krishna, yellow for turmeric, which is a spice that is used a lot in Indian food, and green for spring. Together, all of these create a glorious rainbow display in public with people outdoors, such as at a park, figures five and six refers (BBC Bitesize, 2019) . This festival creates excitement, the free spattering adds joy and happiness to a religious event that is celebrated annually during the month of March (LeicesterHoli, 2019). Colour is the key theme to this celebratory event.



Figure five : The festival marks the coming of spring.



Figure six : A man throws coloured liquid on to a woman in Mathura.

Colour and mood

Colour creates moods, such as the feelings towards a design. Day's artworks demonstrate fun designs and were created as a form of celebration after the war for the Festival of Britain. She applied blocks of colour in a palette that shows three colour tones. If the designs were to have more, they would look too complicated for people to view the design. Her use of bright colour with pattern brought an uplifting feel to interiors and a sense of utopia at the time.

Colour impacts mood. A way of showing this is through a painting or a design to communicate an emotion, mood or atmosphere, as discussed earlier in Day's work. Colour can be perceived differently in different countries, for example red can be linked to passion and love, it also be viewed as the colour power and anger and can change mood (Kendra Cherry, 2019). Also, red means lucky in

China. In South Africa, red is seen as the colour of death and mourning, whereas it is the colour black (dark) in the UK (BBC Bitesize, 2021).

Tricia Guild, founder of the famous Designers Guild Interiors high street chain, is also a designer that creates colourful, bold uplifting designs for furnishing fabrics and wallpaper. Throughout the decade, she has continued with her 'signature' use of colour in a way that is unique to her brand. She too, has strived to bring a sense of celebration with her use of colour to her work. In her book, *Painted Country*, she states that "Colour is the easiest and least costly, way to transform a room" (Guild, 1994 p.19). The book is full of colourful images of the interior of her Tuscan Farmhouse that she has drawn inspiration from the surrounding countryside.



Figure seven: dining room & Figure eight : Living room

In Guild's more recent work, whether it is pattern designing or designing a room, she demonstrates harmony with the backdrop of a neutral palette and placement of more bold and vivid colours and designs on furniture to attract interest. If having bold and vivid colours in the design without any neutral tones, there would not be a balance to calm the application to create a feel of sophistication, refer to figure six. The combination of cool hues on the table setting with the pop of pinks and red flowers bring a feeling of warmth and cheerfulness to this neutral backdrop demonstrating how colour is the easiest way to transform a space. (Livingetc, 2020)



Figure nine: Surimono wallpaper in Amethyst, Designers Guild

When Guild's transform a space she uses a guide to transform the room or a design. The ways how she avoids making colour mistakes. Guild's design aspect is to never forget a neutral colour palette since it is the very colour that will provide a harmonious feeling to space and the design. In figure seven, eight and nine, space and pattern designs are not featured with just one colour. The motive of having more than one colour is to have the hues to insight moods. (Ebert, 2020)

Abstract

The final keyword is Abstract, which is defined as "relating to or denoting art that does not attempt to represent external reality, but rather seeks to achieve its effect using shapes, colours, and textures" (Oxford Reference, 2015).

However, there is much more of a complex relation of abstract. After surrealism, many painters did not abstract from nature. Moving onwards it created new forms to present the creative process as a natural activity. The element of the abstract movement is showing itself, embracing different techniques in different types of paint, other surfaces and being expressive within oneself (Oxford Reference, 2021).

In the creative process, Abstraction is rooted in the unconscious, hence this is expressed through the acts of "impulse being allowed to develop naturally rather than through conscious control" (Crowther and Wünsche, 2016, p. 2). In contrast to the natural origin of inspiration, marked work to declare artistic creation as something bodily "marked by all the associations of finitude, suffering, and yearning for transcendence that accrue to the embodied condition" (Crowther and Wünsche, 2016, p. 2-3). This is the continuation of work in a highly gestural appearance such as Jackson Pollock's artwork seen in figure ten .

See figure ten of pollock's gestural artwork.



Figure ten : Jackson Pollock, Number 23, 1948

Pollock's work contains more of a spontaneous appearance to his paintings. Similar to other abstract artists, he has maintained the balance of chaos and control within his paintings (Tate, 2021).

His work features paint being splattered, flung, smeared, and dripped onto the surface that he was working on (MoMa, 2006). The use of colour and chaos has similarities to the process used to celebrate the Festival of the Holi.



Figure eleven : Sonia Delaney Electric Prisms 1913

Sonia Delaunay is a designer that is known for the use of vibrant colourful geometric patterns within her work. The passion she has got for sewing abstraction into everyday life became how she got into her signature branding. The geometric designs comes in waves of blocks, circles, triangles, strips that are in primary colours. She has experimented with her painting work by using diverse types of techniques such as using etching, oil and gouache on not fabric surfaces (Jamie, 2015). For her work to be on different surface and placed onto fabric is the design being produce in the use of screen

print. This could be by using a manufacture or using a process that are being used in layers of stencils that the colour is brushed through the stencil to build up a final image, this is process take time and it is very labour concentrated (Jamie, 2015).



Figure twelve: Plane Curve Fabric: Charcoal, Grey, Navy

Tamsin Gambell is a trained printed textiles designer that experiments with both fashion and interior print design. Her processes are traditional, working with large scale screens on 6 metres of cloth on long print tables to create a bold repeating graphic print. For the application of colour, she mixes the colour herself, this makes her designs unique. The printed fabric reflects that they are hand-made, which is nature of her work, as each length has slightly different placement of pattern, colour and finish. This is the key element of her work, which is celebrated with the use of printing on textured and irregular base fabrics such as linen (Tamasyn Gambell, 2021).

Figure twelve shows a geometric repeat that is scaled on a horizontally repeat that concentrates on 3 tonal colours, where the block colours are placed to have a different direction in showing abstract design through placing block colour tones together, such as adding into a collage, which is not messy and thought out more as where the design could be placed (Tamasyn Gambell, 2021).

Researching into the three key words has inspired me to research further into creating designs that will bring a sense of celebration into lives of people after the global pandemic. Wes Anderson's use of colour will be investigated further for colour inspiration, as his films are shown in tonal hues adding a 'pop' of colour to maintain visual interest. The Festival of the Holi and the spattering of paint as seen in Pollock's pieces add a sense of fun and excitement and will be investigated further. Day's use of artwork is cheerful within her designs. However, Delaunay and Gambell's methods of abstraction may add further interest in creating a portfolio of 'new' uplifting designs.

Questions: An investigation into Design Utopia

A Celebration of Pattern & Colour

Figure list

Figure 2 : Day, L. (2015). *Lucienne Day. Causeway. 1967*. [online] The Museum of Modern Art. Available at: <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/196747> [Accessed 24 Apr. 2021].

Figure 9 : Ebert, J. (2020). *Tricia Guild's interior design tips – dos and don'ts from the Designers Guild guru*. [online] homesandgardens.com. Available at: <https://www.homesandgardens.com/news/tricia-guilds-interior-design-tips> [Accessed 18 May 2021].

Figure 7 & 8 : Livingetc (2020). *Tricia Guild's Home Is a Riot of Cool Colour*. [online] Livingetc. Available at: <https://www.livingetc.com/features/tricia-guilds-home> [Accessed 18 May 2021].

Figure 5 & 6 : Ruck, J. (2021). Holi: a festival of colours – in pictures. *The Guardian*. [online] 25 Mar. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/gallery/2021/mar/25/holi-a-festival-of-colours-in-pictures> [Accessed 29 Apr. 2021].

Figure 12 : Tamasyn Gambell. (2021). *Plane Curve Fabric: Charcoal, Grey, Navy - Tamasyn Gambell - a Responsive Shopify Theme*. [online] Available at: <https://www.tamasyngambell.com/collections/fabric-by-the-meter/products/plane-curve-charcoal-grey-navy> [Accessed 7 May 2021].

Figure 11 : Tate (2014). *The EY Exhibition: Sonia Delaunay – Exhibition at Tate Modern | Tate*. [online] Tate. Available at: <https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/sonia-delaunay> [Accessed 19 May 2021].

Figure 10 : Tate (2021). *"Number 23", Jackson Pollock, 1948 | Tate*. [online] Tate. Available at: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/pollock-number-23-t00384> [Accessed 1 May 2021].

Figure 4 : The Guardian. (2017). *Flotillas, fabrics and dandelion clocks: how designer Lucienne Day brought Britain hope*. [online] Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2017/apr/07/flotillas-fabrics-and-dandelion-clocks-how-designer-lucienne-day-brought-britain-hope> [Accessed 18 May 2021].

Figure 3: Victoria (2021). *Herb Antony | Lucienne Day | V&A Explore The Collections*. [online] Victoria and Albert Museum: Explore the Collections. Available at: <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O269428/herb-antony-furnishing-fabric-lucienne-day/> [Accessed 24 Apr. 2021].

Figure 1 : Victoria and Albert Museum. (2012). *V&A · Lucienne Day – an introduction*. [online] Available at: <https://www.vam.ac.uk/articles/lucienne-day-an-introduction> [Accessed 20 Apr. 2021].

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