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Programme of Study: Graphic Design

Module: ADAD4018 Ways of Thinking

Tasks in the order I received them:

Task One: Semiotic Analysis = 533 words

Task Two: Manifesto = 489 words

Task Three: Practice-based writing = 470 words

Task One: Semiotic Analysis



Fig.1 Ulianych, S. (2023) Uranium-Atomic Melancholic Idyll [Photograph]. Personal Collection. (Viewed: 16.06.23).

In a museum in Madrid, I came across a painting by Salvador Dali, “Uranium-Atomic Melancholic Idyll,” which did not leave me indifferent. This work is a powerful semiotic canvas, where each element carries a deep meaning, combining context, colour and signs.

The nuclear bombing of Japanese cities during World War II, which preceded this painting, had a profound impact on Dali. He admitted to Andre Parinaud: “The atomic explosion of August 6, 1945 seismically struck me. Since that time,

the atom has become my favourite subject of reflection” (Dalí & Parinaud, 1973, p. 202). Dali used the canvas as a field for the projection of his visual associations from the depth of his personality, as Gilbert Rose notes: “They conceived of the canvas as a blank table on which the artist inscribed the visual associations issuing from the depth of his personality” (Rose, 1983, p. 350). Therefore, we see how the artist’s personal experiences are reflected in every element of the picture.

Colour in Dali's work also plays a key role, emphasizing the emotional richness of the painting. Colour scholars have emphasized the connection between colour and emotion, as in the case of melancholia, which includes a reference to black bile (MacLaury et al., 2007, p. 347). The black colour in Dali's painting is not just an aesthetic choice, it symbolizes the deep sadness and depression associated with the atomic age, which also inspired the title of this painting.

Dali interacts with the horror of the atomic age using signs and symbols that characterized his work in the 1930s. We see the famous soft clocks and elephants on stilts, but in this work, they are transformed. The clock seems to freeze before our eyes, unable to reflect the blows of reality, symbolized by bombs falling not only from the sky, but also from within Dali’s elephants themselves, which previously symbolized lightness and the future, but now bring only destruction and pain. The shadows of the bombs explode, resembling the jaws of a monster, highlighting the horror that reigned in society. Ants, often found in Dali's works, also carry a special meaning. In his book “The Secret Life of Salvador Dali” he mentions that for him ants were associated with death, an image that arose from childhood impressions (Dalí, 1942, p. 14). These ants on the canvas are not just a detail of the landscape, they symbolize the inevitable death and destruction that nuclear war brings.

After semiotic analysis, Dali's painting appears to me not only as a work of art but also as a deep and multi-layered message. It evokes in me a feeling of respect and at the same time anxiety for the inevitability of the historical context that it reflects. Through his symbols and colours, Dali conveys the depth of feelings associated with the atomic age, making this painting not only visually appealing but also emotionally affecting on a deep level.

“Uranium-atomic melancholic idyll” is not just a picture. In our world, where the threat of conflict still hangs in the air, Dali's painting is a mirror reflecting the past and the future. It reminds us that the consequences of human actions bring both destruction and opportunity for reflection and change.

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List of Figures:

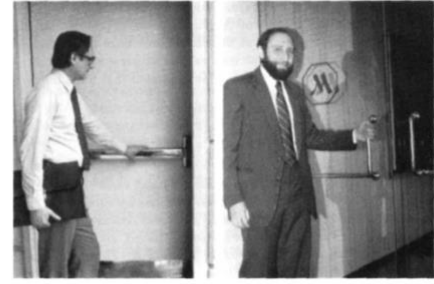
Figure 1: Salvador Dali's 'Uranium-Atomic Melancholic Idyll', as photographed in a museum in Madrid by Svitlana Ulianych, (2023).

Task Two: Manifesto

1. You don't need to think you have 'talent' to make beautiful art. (Gregory, D., 2015., p. 9.)
2. Good user experience makes design useful.
3. Continuous learning is the key to a healthy mind.
4. Life is not eternal; time is more valuable than money.
5. To be a sought-after specialist, learn to do at least one thing better than others.
6. Artificial intelligence is not an enemy, but a helper.
7. People have their own tastes and preferences, and they might not align with yours.
8. If at first glance you feel that something is not quite right, then it probably isn't. Don't waste time on it.

Good user experience makes design useful.

Reading Don Norman's book *Everyday Design* for the first time radically changed my approach to design. After this book, I realized that design is more than just visual perception. The goal is to create an experience that is seamless, intuitive, and fits seamlessly into your daily life. Norman's concept of "function" in design, such as a push-pull door handle, taught me that good design intuitively guides user behavior. What matters most is not the flashy aspects of design, but the invisible efficiency that makes life easier and more enjoyable (Norman, 2013).



1.5 Affordances of Doors. Door hardware can signal whether to push or pull without signs. The flat horizontal bar of *A* (above left) affords no operations except pushing: it is excellent hardware for a door that must be pushed to be opened. The door in *B* (above right) has a different kind of bar on each side, one relatively small and vertical to signify a pull, the other relatively large and horizontal to signify a push. Both bars support the affordance of grasping: size and position specify whether the grasp is used to push or pull—though ambiguously.

1.6 When Affordances Fail. I had to tie a string around my cabinet door to afford pulling.

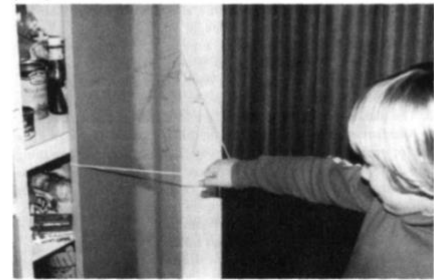


Fig 1. Example of design principle from Norman, D.A. (2013), The Design of Everyday Things, p. 10.

Continuous learning is the key to a healthy mind.

Continuous learning has always been the driving force behind my journey. From art school to the cutthroat world of medical school to web design at UWTSU, learning has always been my constant companion. Carol Dweck's book "Mentality: The New Psychology of Success" resonated strongly with me. Dweck's concept of a "Growth Mentality," the belief that our abilities can be honed and developed through dedication and hard work, has been a guiding principle for me. This approach allowed me to embrace challenges and see them as opportunities for growth and self-improvement, especially in the dynamic and ever-changing field of design (Dweck, 2006).

Artificial intelligence is not an enemy, but a helper.

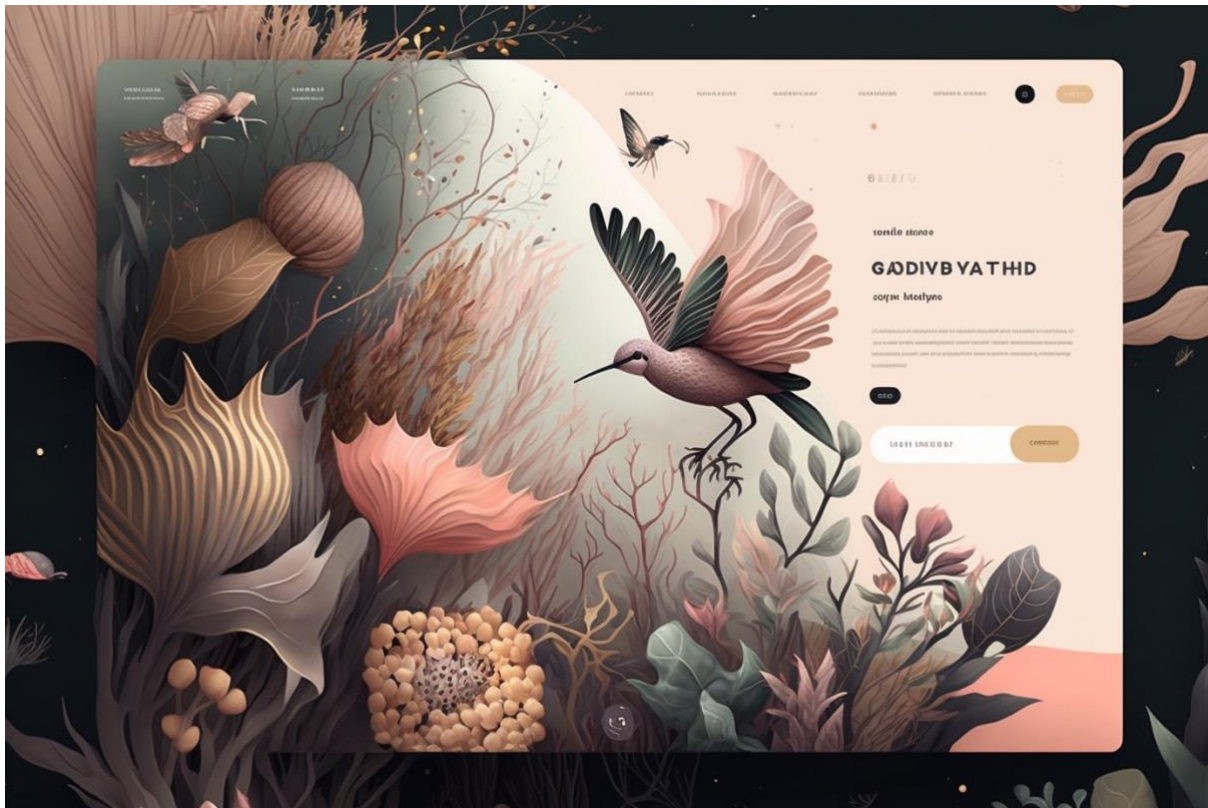


*Fig 2. AI-generated hero page of website, Burak Ciftci,
Published in Bootcamp*

There has been both excitement and skepticism about the emergence of AI in design. But people often focus on curling up on the couch, listening to the news and complaining. Instead of fearing change, we must embrace the new opportunities it brings. New resources rich in information make it easier to learn new skills. Designers have noticed that many everyday tasks have become easier and faster with the introduction of artificial intelligence. Anyone can find reasons to be lazy, but you need to learn to use these opportunities. Understanding how these tools can increase our creativity and efficiency is not just about adopting future technologies. AI in UI/UX design has changed the rules of the game, allowing us to automate repetitive tasks, personalize user

experiences based on individual behaviour, and implement innovative ideas. AI enhances human creativity, not replaces it. My goal is to find the perfect balance between AI creativity and the human touch in design (UiHub, 2023).

To sum it up, my three manifestos as a designer are to explore the importance of intuitive design, the power of continuous learning, the evolving role of artificial intelligence in design, and how they interact with each other to form great user experiences. My goal is to combine technology and human creativity to create designs that are not only functional and effective but also emotionally appealing and inclusive. I want to become a designer who not only keeps up with technological advances but also points the way to a future where design is not just about aesthetics. My mission is to create experiences that enrich people's lives and make the world a better place.

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List of Figures:

Figure 1: Example of design principle from Norman, D.A. (2013), *The Design of Everyday Things*, p. 10.

Figure 2: *Fig 2*. AI-generated hero page of website, Burak Ciftci, Published in

Bootcamp, available at: <https://bootcamp.uxdesign.cc/ai-and-ui-design-a-match-made-in-digital-heaven-f48bc2a7f83e>

Task Three: Practice-based writing

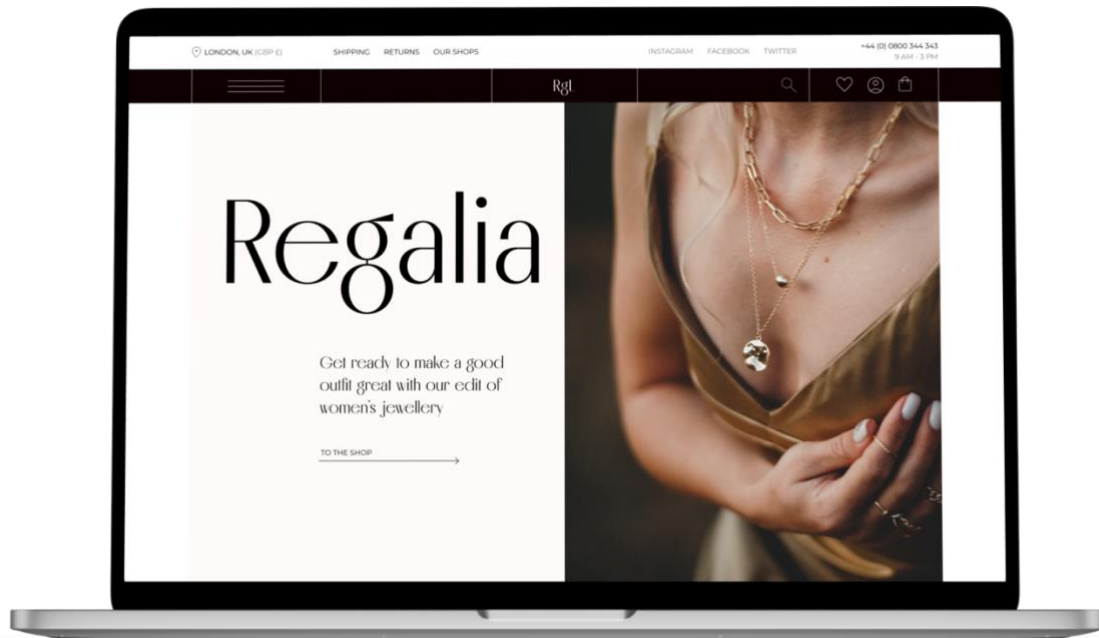


Fig 1. Ulianych, S. (2022). Home Page.

Reflection on the interface design process for an online jewelry store

I did this work for educational purposes in September last year. The goal of the project was to create an online jewelry store that would provide an intuitive and aesthetically pleasing interface. By researching recommendations from the Nielsen Norman Group, I sought to develop a design that reflected the elegance and accessibility associated with leading brands. I used Figma to create a desktop version and an adaptive mobile version of the website. The website features a main page, store page, product card, and shopping bag.



Fig 2. Ulianych, S. (2022). Figma, website design.

My design philosophy was heavily influenced by Krishna's paradigm of minimalism as outlined in 'The Best Interface Is No Interface' (2015), prompting me to strip back superfluous elements, thereby allowing the product to take center stage. This principle was crystallized during my preliminary market research, where I dissected the web interfaces of Pandora, Tiffany, and Swarovski, gleaning insights into the design elements that contribute to their user-friendly and pleasant interfaces.

After analyzing potential competitors' websites, I looked for ways to adapt their successful design and UX approaches while maintaining the unique identity of my fictional brand. Their way of presenting products and interacting with the user taught me valuable lessons on how to improve the user experience. For example, I added to the site the ability to select the type of payment, added advanced options in the shopping cart for choosing gift wrapping, which should improve the user experience.

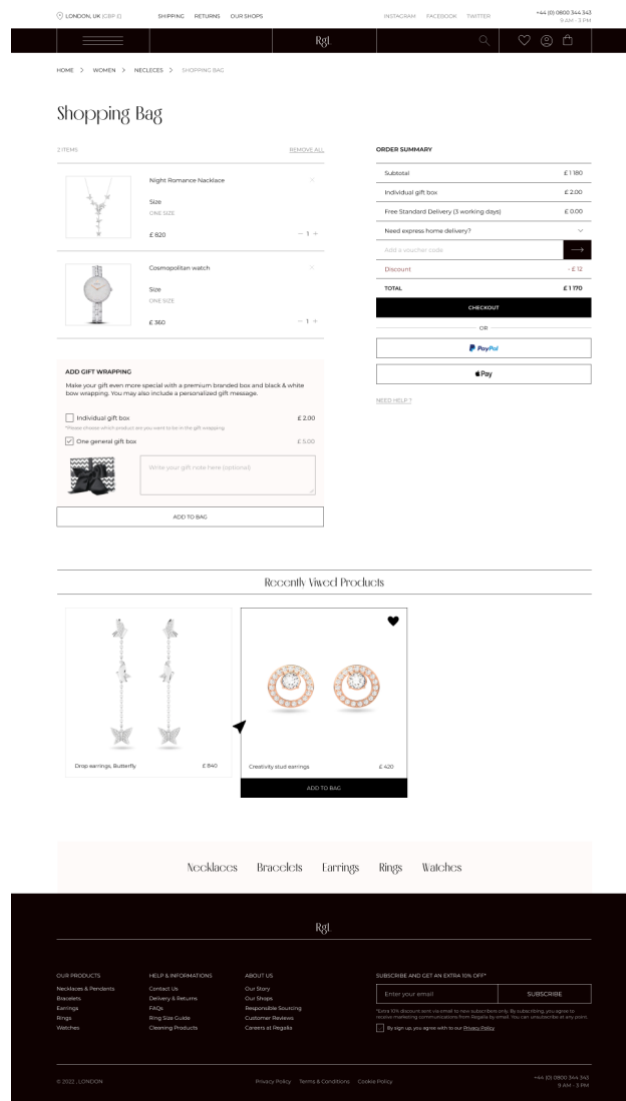


Fig 3. Ulianych, S. (2022). *Shopping Bag*.

Moving directly into the design, I applied principles from “White Space is Not Your Enemy” by Hagen and Golombiski (2010) to provide visual breath and highlight the sophistication of the products. This was especially important given that I wanted my designs to reflect the high quality and style associated with my reference brands. I chose a monochromatic palette to complement the products without stealing the spotlight.

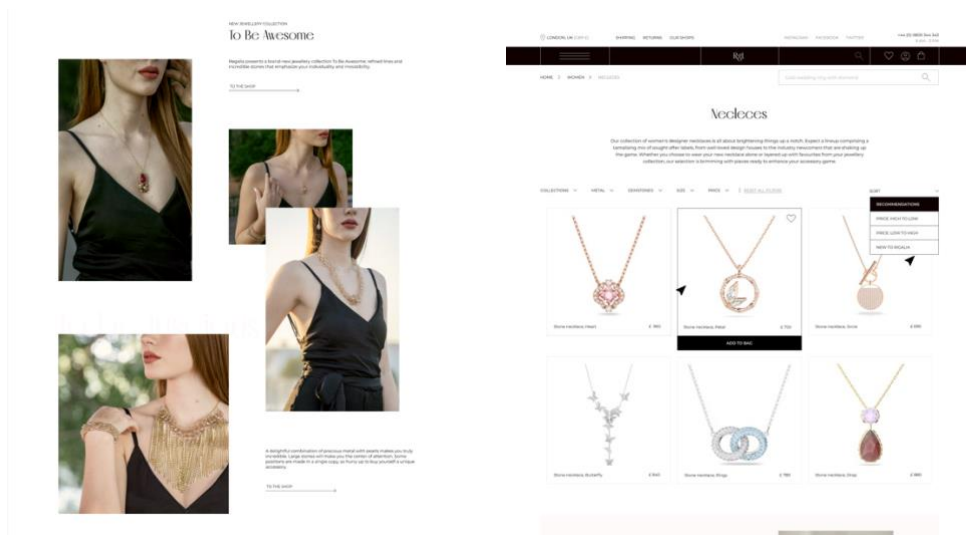


Fig 4, Fig 5. Ulianych, S. (2022). *Landing page, Shopping list.*

Upon reflection, the endeavor towards simplicity and elegance was a reminder of the perpetual balancing act between form and function. While Nielsen Norman Group resources were instrumental in achieving a harmonious blend of attractiveness and usability, I acknowledge the areas where my design could evolve. For instance, the homepage could more dynamically showcase new arrivals and promotions. Interactive elements like a virtual assistant or quizzes could potentially escalate engagement and time spent on the site. Furthermore, to carve out a distinctive brand identity, I contemplate harnessing the power of grid systems as illustrated by Müller-Brockman (1981), which could bring structural clarity and focus to the content. A typographic refresh, perhaps inspired by the principles of Kimberly Elam, could also endow the interface with a unique voice and character. (Elam, 2007)

In retrospect, the project was a tapestry of triumphs and teachable moments. Reflecting on one's work is an indispensable practice for personal and professional growth within the design discipline.

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List of Figures

- Figure 1: Ulianych, S. (2022). *Home Page*.
- Figure 2: Ulianych, S. (2022). *Figma, website design*.
- Figure 3: Ulianych, S. (2022). *Shopping Bag*.
- Figure 4: Ulianych, S. (2022). *Landing Page*.
- Figure 5: Ulianych, S. (2022). *Shopping List*.