

Question 5: from the series of thinking making research strand lectures, choose a theme, movement or selection of artist or designers that relate to your practice or interests and construct a 2500 word essay Critically assess primary themes, key writers and relevant practitioners.

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The theme of this subject is to look at artists that relate to my practice of architectural arts glass, and using semiotics to look at one piece of artwork that has been created by them and to assess the pieces of glass work. The art work I'm looking at are primary stained-glass window but I am also looking at a sculptural glass piece as this is another interest of mine that can be another good influence on my work.

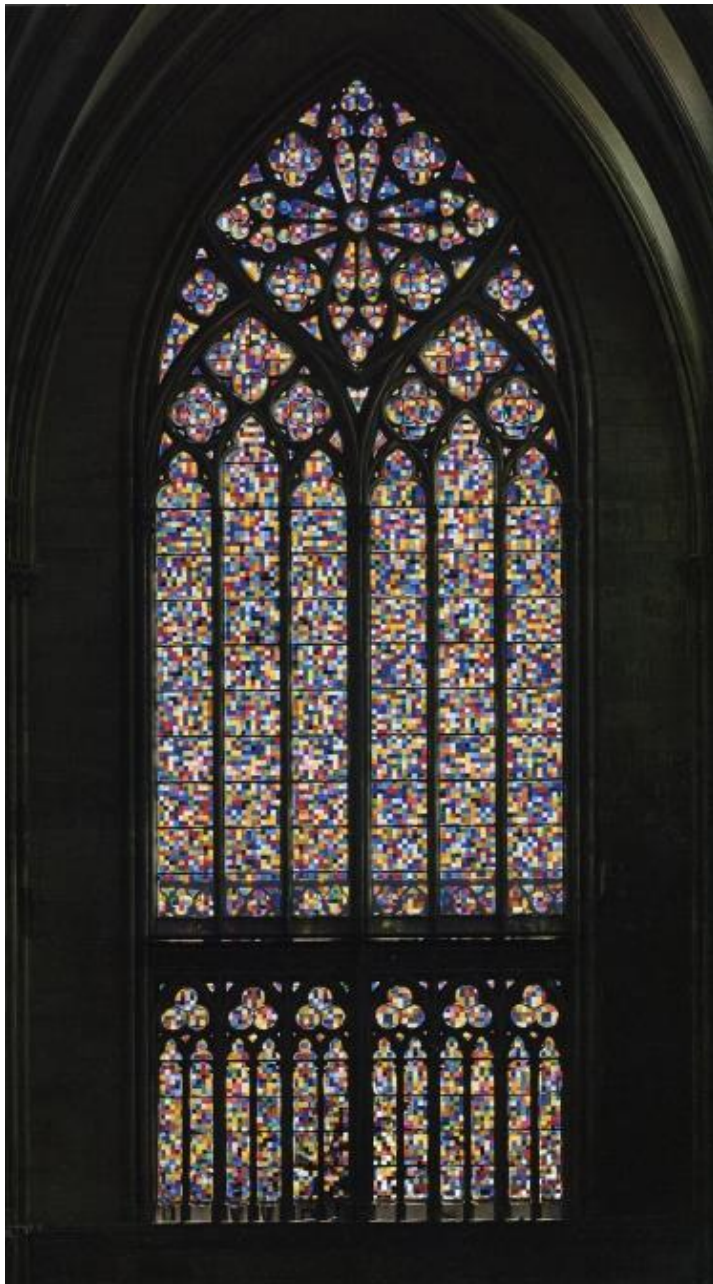


Figure 1 Gerhard Richter, Cologne Cathedral Window

The glass window was one of the most revelational pieces of its time, it has "approximately 11,500 squares of glass in 62 different colours". (Richer, G, 2007 was a useful source of information) and was completed in 2007. It was directly inspired by the design of 4096 colours from 1974. This would have taken years to make and remains an impressive piece. This is made from completely genuine antique glass and mouth blown glass. It is a very technical piece. The original window that was here before was destroyed in world war 2 and was replaced in 1950 by transparent glass was the replacement. It is eye-catching due to the beams of light that shine down upon you is simply magical. It really does showcases just how the effectiveness of a simple design this is something that can be taken into my own practice.

A gothic and modern theme combined together in a perfect harmony, this is a very enriched and produces an amazing waterfall of lights that shine down upon you. This is something that will be enjoyed for years to come. His work had been taken in both celebration and offence as some people wanted the work to be of the same style as the original which was of catholic theme.

Personally, find that is a very interesting take on a cathedral window and can also appreciate that it has a modern flair to it, while similarly believing that if the design was in the same theme meaning a catholic depiction from the bible would have been as impressive perhaps more so as it does show more skill and technique doing a more technical painting but the way he has placed out the squares in spots with complementary colors so that they balance each other and do not overpower and take over the piece does show a lot of skill as well if you

consider the sheer scale of the design. The size of the window also can really impact the design when it is created to scale.

However, taking everything into consideration it is said that "light has traditionally symbolized the descent of the divine into the human world" (Loia, 2019, page 22), this is an impressive window and it is interesting that his own inspiration comes from previous work of his. He does more than just windows in fact he has delved into many different types of art from books to sculptures and many more, his more is primarily abstract which comes across in a strong manner. When looking at his work it seems to just be showcasing lot of squares in different colors however the colors used could be thought to express color theory, and also gives the appearance of a traditional stained-glass window this is done by the size of this piece it looks to give an impactful visual image. I can see the easy blend between modern and traditional glass work. While finding all of my evidence for my points it was difficult to find a lot of information on this window or the processes of creation. I had even looked into the artists website and he doesn't say much on the subject of this piece.

The theme of this subject is to look at artists that relate to my practice, and using semiotics and I think I was able to look at the artwork and give a clear understanding of what I and others are looking at and giving thoughts on what else is hidden within the window and any signs that could be seen easily or those that are more difficult to notice. I will be looking at more artists and their work that also link to my practice which is glass art primary architectural. However, I have interest in all subjects matters that use glass as I find it interesting and is always

something that can influence me in some way be in in my design work or in the way I use my mediums to create 2D or 3D artwork.



Figure 2 Kibitzer 2012 17in. wx16.5in d; cast glass

This glass sculpture is so lifelike, from looking at this sculpture you just see 2 people male and female, but then you start to notice that it is made completely of glass that has been cast formed to get all of this amazing detail. I can see the fold of the fabric and the texture of the hair and even the expressions on the faces of the people.

I can see the calmness and have the feeling of helpfulness is trying to come through the image. The name of this piece is called Kibitzer and this means spectator or one who offers advice or commentary and I believe that this really does show exactly what is happening at this captured moment. The woman is being shown giving the boy who is reading a book advice or even perhaps the other way around. Glass was a really good material to use for this piece and her other work also shows just how well glass can be softened and take the form of any piece and is able to enhance any and all features.

When I look at this piece I first thought perhaps it is depicting a couple, relaxed in the company of one another but the more I look at this piece I can see all those little details, the expressions I see in this is a very relaxed feeling the look on their face shows this shows, the pages of the book he carefully holds tells me it is important to him, the way she holds herself slightly moving closer to him perhaps to see what he is reading or in interest. The way the light comes down and creates a glow that shines through the glass and illuminates the figures and makes every detail come through even more powerfully creating a statement.

All of her work is influenced by how she has "seen people interacting or not interacting" (Artist statement contempglass.org/artist) All inspired by a lingering impression left upon her. It is very inspiring that just seeing something just a onetime opportunity is able to leave such a lasting impression.

The color blue is very prominent here, which is very curious as the color blue has many meanings and represents the

feeling of calmness or serenity and has also been known to be described as peacefulness, secure and often seen as a sign of reliability and stability. I was able to understand the meanings behind the colors and the theory behind the people and the main meaning of this piece by the work that I had to do for first year as there are many similarities between then and now which I believe can be shown all throughout this essay.

“Yellow is always accompanied with light, so it may be said that blue still brings a principle of darkness with it” and “the color has a peculiar and almost indescribable effect on the eye” (Goethe, 1940, page 778- 779) The colour of the glass does match the sculptural seen being shown.

Was the artist thinking about these meanings behind the colours or did she simply think about how they complement each other instead of turning one of the colors muddy which is something that happens in glass when colors clash together, normally this would be seen more in a stained-glass window as there are more than two colors in the same piece. Perhaps like the name chosen for this piece which is kbitzer and it really is meant to represent one who looks and offers advice or comment be it wanted or not. Which is a curious thing to sculpt but you can understand the name when you link the meaning to the actual depiction of the glass sculpture. However, the fact that the name is in another language is also curious because you have another layer of curiosity if you do not know or understand the language being used or the word, this also allows you to try and image what could be the meaning and if what you think is happening in the sculpture and adapting a

new name to the piece to try and an understanding of it using your view own point and what you have discovered about this glass piece.

I think that I have been able to correctly identify the possible hidden meanings behind this piece as well as any signs that could be seen from looking at this piece, I have asked questions and have looked into little details to understand more about this art piece using semiotics. I will continue to look into more glass art work and demonstrate an understanding of the piece and the development, the signs and the meanings of the glass work. I have found that doing this has helped me when I am creating my art work as this lets me think about how others will see the piece and what I am trying to tell the viewer through the piece I have created.



Figure 3 Kehinde Wiley Arms of Nicolas Ruterius, Bishop of Arras 2014

The first impression that you would get from looking at this stained-glass window is a lasting one, you can clearly see that it has been created using traditional techniques and methods, you can see the lines of glass painting and the richness of the silver stain and the architectural feeling you get from a stained-glass window, the only thing that is not done in the traditional way would be the main focus point which would be the man. This piece "blurs the line between traditional and contemporary modes of representation and the critical portrayal of masculinity and physicality as it pertains to the view of black and brown young men". (africanah.org was very useful on this subject) Which is a real movement in the world right now and is a very powerful statement to be portraying and

would go along with the Black Lives Matters movement that has struck a chord with everyone and is a serious matter and this shows so much good and is very much an impactful piece.

This painting of the man is a very modest in a way but also strong, which is the style of the artists but it is very much an influenced piece by the very style of the person he is painting, Wiley says his stained-glass work "is not about nationhood, it's not about race. It's about being powerful in the world, glowing literally... letting us see a state of grace for those people who rarely get to be seen that way." (kehindewiley.com/about/) This is an incredibly commanding piece, you can see the strength, the man looks strong in the sense of being depicted as a man of high standing, and even his stance is one you would see of a priest or a bishop and it works really well.

The artist was able to showcase the same grace and elegance that a religious stained-glass window would have. The light on the window is shining down upon the painting highlights the man's face and bone structure it adds an angelic glow to him. The calligraphy is traditional as are the pillars and archway but it does not overpower the smooth and lightly textured painting of the man.

The lead lines in this entire piece blend into the design, they were placed very strategically as to become part of the design and have not hindered the overall piece but have actually worked in the artist's favour as you can see about how the lead has outlined the man and has also become a part of his clothing which really do blend in, you can also see that the lead lines have been hidden or placed in a way that will enhance the entire piece.

The colors are all very vibrant and stand out, but even the bright bold emerald green background does not overpower the man but works with him in harmony. I think that this piece and all of the stained glass work is done to show harmony and to create a bond between different views and show that they are just as powerful and influential as the next. Which is why I believe the work was done very deliberately with that in mind to show that everyone has a strength within them and it is not just the more typical view people have when a person is depicted in a stained-glass window which is usually someone of the church or from the bible. This shows a person who stands for what they believe in and have done something that should be credited as well as be able to be held just as high as you would another who has helped or represented the community in a positive way to help bring change and a new way of thinking to the future. Over all these stained-glass pieces are very "contempered subjects set against ornate and extravagant backgrounds traditionally reserved for religious contemplations" (Africanah. Org was useful looking into this piece) and shows great skill not only in design but overall presentation both in the final look but being shown to the public.

To conclude overall, the entirety of this essay has been to understand all of the signs that are both easy to see and those you have to take the time to understand, be it understanding the use of colours, line work, hidden signs, and even the theory behind the work and the time and effort that goes into making all of these pieces. Semiotics is many things; you must look at the main meaning behind what you are looking at and then connect an idea or a feeling which can be raised by that piece or a detail within the art work. Looking at everything in and taking in every detail and analysing that to have a deeper consideration. This is something I think can be applied to everything in day to day life as there are multiple meanings that can be seen all around us and we just have to find them.

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