

Title of Essay - Distorted Realities

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Introduction

My exhibition Distorted realities explore how designers and artists test the way we perceive the world. Through a series of street art, surrealism and optical art. The exhibition explores how easy it can be to be manipulated by artwork that are reinterpreted. The artwork I

have selected demonstrates multiple ways of different perceptions by things such as language, visual illusions and context. By bringing everything together my exhibition argues that reality is not predetermined but shaped around the way we interoperate and visualise.

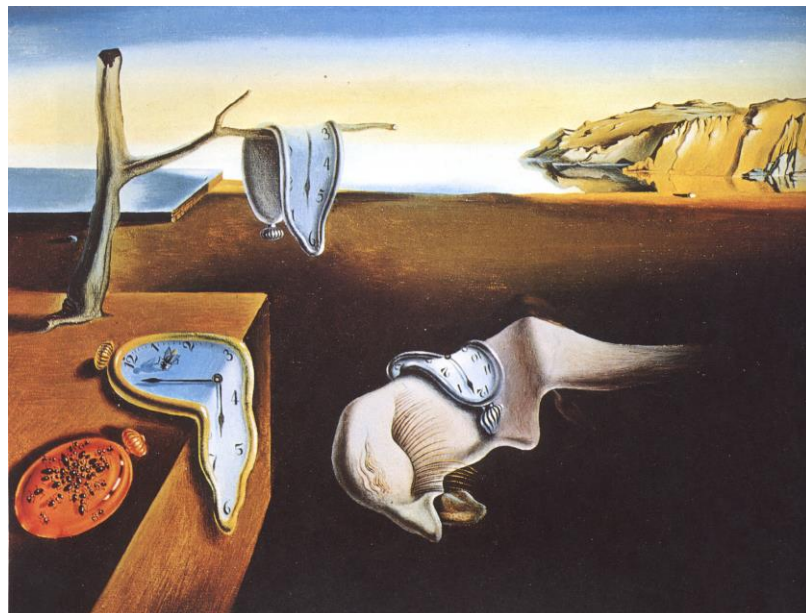


Fig 1, (Dali, 1931, The Persistence of Memory)

This artwork shows the idea of distorted reality by manipulation of time and surreal imagery. The melting clocks provokes the viewer's knowledge of understanding time to be something established instead of presenting it

to look fluid. Dali's utilisation of illusive visuals reflects the influence of the imagination area of the mind, which enables the audience to question what they determine is real or imagined. The empty landscape of this artwork adds to the sense of distortion, creating an uncommon environment that feels disconnected to reality. The lack of life in this artwork contributes to a feeling of isolation which reinforces the surrealness of the work. Because of this the viewer may experience doubt or discomfort as recognisable objects are being presented in ways that are not familiar.

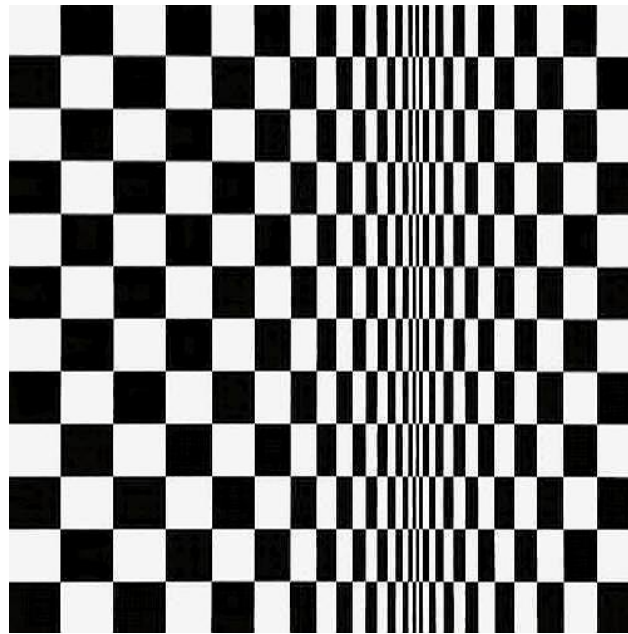


Fig 2, (Riley, 1961, Movement in Squares)



Fig 3, (Riley, 1962, Blaze 1)

The search for distorted reality is clearly shown within Fig 2, whereas Riley uses a grid structure to manipulate the viewer's view. The use of expanding the black and white squares creates a type of tension that looks to warp the surface presented, showing depth of vision although the work is seeming to be entirely flat. This questions the viewers understanding as what is being showcased does not align with reality. In comparison to Fig 2, Fig 3 raises the intensity of distortion through a use of spiral compositions.

The use of repeated lines forms a vortex that visually graduates the viewer, creating a sense of uncertainty. Both images showcase Riley's perception on how to manipulate visually, as Fig 2 expresses a lot more of a linear structure and Fig 3 expressing circular like motion. This shows how optical art can distort reality through the viewer's visual process, strengthening uncertainty of the human thought process.



Fig 4, (Holzer, 1982, Protect Me From What I Want)



Fig 5, (Holzer, 2007, Blue Purple Tilt)

Jenny Holzer work of art dives into how language can be perceived as a powerful tool. In Fig 4 Holzer showcases a statement through LED display within a public environment. The text differentiates from the environment allowing the viewers' attention to be captured. The phrase also sounding quite personal can inspire the viewer to reflect on things such as power and authority. The decision making on presenting this piece in the public can allow a wider audience to reach this work sort of

making this feel unavoidable, whereas Fig 5 explores more text mixed in with installations. Although both pieces of work dives into the use of LED's I would vouch that the presentation of both pieces may vary in terms of interaction and context. I believe the repetition of numerous phrases produces a more inviting like experience, as it's encouraging the viewer to be engaged with the phrases one by one. Unlike Fig 4 which displays a singular message, Fig 5 explores the use of the word collection with its collection of phrases and collection of installations which I believe allows for a deeper observation. The comparison of both Fig 4 and 5 showcase how Holzer utilises the environment and text to affect our perception. While both pieces have text being its primary visual, the difference between their context and setting allows the audience to change the way they interoperate the messages in between. This goes back to my idea of distorted realities as Holzer showcases that by changing things like such as text allows for the viewers perception to alter, indicating that reality is not predetermined but subjective.



Fig 6, (Banksy, 2002, Girl with Balloon)

Banksy's Girl with Balloon project explores a deep meaning of distorted reality through its way of using public space to open multiple different interoperations. The girl reaching out towards the red balloon look to seem simple, but to a viewer it can have multiple meanings such as associating with feeling of hope, this allows the viewer to form their own understanding of this art. I believe the simpleness of this art piece is very effective as its placed in a city, making this very easy for an audience to be engaged. The contrast between the balloon and the figure allows for the balloon to stick out as the main element focus as it draws immediate attention. The red against the black and white figure potentially suggests emotions such as love which gives the art piece feel more meaningful as its purpose seems

subjective and open for interpretation. This contrast summarizes the image allowing for the potential message to be understood easily by a large audience. The balloon drifting away can imply a sense of something being or feeling out of reach. This links back to my idea of distorted realities, as different viewers may understand the scenery in this art piece in their own way depending on things like experience, further exploring how reality isn't fixed but can be change through different perceptions.



Fig 7, (Krugger, 1987, I shop therefore I am)

Kruger's 'I shop therefore I am' dives into distorted realities through a lens of bold text and imagery to rival a viewer's understanding. The phrase being the centre piece of attention captures attention instantly. The use of red, white and black creates a strong contrast that has a feel of uncomfortableness. The image of the hand may interpret control, showing how society can lay with the way we think of things. The text being placed over this allows for the message to hold more dominance, showing how powerful messages can be. This links to distorted realities the art piece which portrays a complex understanding challenges a viewer to question if their understanding is from their own thoughts and perspective, or by outside forces such as the society.



Fig 8, (Magritte, 1929, The Treachery of Images)

Magritte's 'The Treachery of Images' dives into distorted realities with the relationship between image and text. The painting showcases a pipe with the phrase in French, "this is not a pipe" underneath said pipe which is already a misdirection to a viewer. The image showcases a pipe and the text denies this, making a viewer question what the art piece really is. This explores distortion in a sense, as there's a realisation that the image isn't even the real object itself it's only a representation. Magritte does a fantastic job in allowing the viewer to realise what we see in an image may sometimes just be an idea of an imagination. This links to distorted realities as it showcases how easily our imaginations can be manipulated and how real life messages can be completely misunderstood.

To conclude, the artists/designers throughout my essay explore how distorted realities can be created through various ways. Salvador Dali and Bridget Riley implement techniques such as ridiculous imagery and illusion to leave an influence on how a viewer understands an image. On the other hand, Jenny Holzer and Barbara Kruger focuses on the experimentation

of language and text to allow a viewer to form a perception, showing our text and image can challenge what we may believe to consider to be true. This is also very similar to Banksy and Rene Magritte as they both present simple and recognisable images at a first glance but present them in ways that can lead to a deeper analysis. Even though these artists/designers use various methods to present their art pieces they all share a outcome that demonstrates reality is not always reliable but can be altered by having context and visuals to further a viewer's engagement and implication. This shows how a viewer's understanding plays a big role in decoding meaning, as people can understand what is being presented to them in multiple ways. Overall, this exhibition explores that what we see and visualise is not always a direct indication as these visuals can be manipulated and showcased in a completely different manner. This backs up the idea of reality feeling rather subjective and how perception can be perceived through the lenses of a visual and outside factor.

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