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Perception, responsibility and communication all influence designer's personal practice. These can all be thought of as individual aspects but can also be interlinked.

The idea of responsibility is "...the state of being responsible for something or someone" (Waite,2012, p.617) Designers can have many responsibilities whether that be towards the customer, the product itself or their own ethics and morals. The brand Seventy + Mochi has taken this in its stride by trying to challenge a more accessible sustainable denim market for the mainstream consumer.

Perception "a way of understanding or interpreting something." (Waite,2012, p.532) Perception within design can be a language which evokes judgement towards the designs by using aspects such as colour theory, which have many underlying meanings with certain colours helping to evoke certain emotions.

Communication also influences the designer and is “The transmission or exchange of information, knowledge, or ideas, by means of speech, writing, medical or electronic media, etc.…” (Waite,2012, p.139) Communication does not only need to be spoken, in the design world it is often a subconscious practice that links the designer to the consumer through use of symbolism - this can be seen through the theory of semiotics and evidenced in the work of Joseph Kosuth.

When thinking of responsibility in terms of sustainability we understand this to mean making a conscious choice or effort to provide solutions through design which induce as little environmental impact as possible. At the current time “The fashion industry is the second most polluting industry, contributing 8% of all carbon emissions and 20% of all global waterwaste, with an anticipated 50% increase in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.” (Bailey, Basu and Sharma, 2022) The textiles industry has often used practices that are harmful to the environment and this has only increased with the rise and popularity of fast fashion, creating more waste cut offs from fabric and an increase in the use of harmful dyes which can infiltrate our water systems. An example of this is for the average pair of jeans to be produced over 7500 litres of water is required, not only is this water required for the production, but it is then polluted as part of the process synthetic indigo dyes are often used (natural indigo from plants which is better for the environment is too expensive). These synthetic dyes contain strong toxic chemicals which when dumped back into water courses are harmful to aquatic life and local communities. As we have become more educated about how different industries hugely impact our environment, we can see… “Designing fashion and textiles within a context of ecological

responsibility and social justice requires that alongside a long and deep critique invoked by sustainability of the fundaments of our enterprise, we also know about and support best practice systems of production." (Fletcher, 2014, p.52) With the rise of people becoming conscious towards their fast fashion purchases, many brands are making a conscious effort to market towards eco-friendly consumers who still wish to invest in new products with a reduced environmental impact. An example of this is Seventy + Mochi who market themselves towards being sustainably kind to the environment whilst being 'affordable'. "CONSCIOUSLY KIND DENIM. We believe in jeans done the right way; for the planet, for the people who make them and for you." (seventy + mochi, n.d.) They achieve this through using recycled cotton, organic cotton, hemp and eco made elastane and roica. Another brand looking into sustainable denim is Huit Denim. Huit denim focus on only making jeans, which are high quality and built to last. They focus on the values behind repairing rather than replacing. "...quality is about a respect for the planet's valuable resources. How often does a cheaper product have to be replaced? Part of that price is paid by the customer, but the other part is paid by us all." (HIUT DENIM CO., 2023).This is also reflected by Bradley Quinn who believes "With sustainability in mind, designers find ways of enhancing the textiles they create to make them more durable and lengthen their lifespan. The growing movement to produce sustainable textiles is advocating a holistic, cradle- to-grave approach, which takes into account the impact of the textile's entire life cycle. As a result, new production methods are beginning to reduce the industry's carbon footprint, as well as the amount of textile waste that gets dumped in landfills all over the world." (Quinn, 2013, p.110) This highlights that technology can create more responsible solutions which help give consumers the opportunity to have an

environmentally positive choice as often they are blamed for the rise of fast fashion. The consumer is also realising that as well as being responsible for the environment, responsibility comes in terms of the workers. This is something which Huit are passionate about as part of their ethos. Often brands care more for the products than taking responsibility for the people who work for them, with lower wages and poor working conditions. As the industry has developed alongside technology these changes “play a vital role in bringing tangible and sometimes instant environmental benefits and act as an important driving force in getting retailers to take more responsibility for the workers in their supply chains.” (Fletcher, 2014, p.71)



Fig.1, (seventy + mochi, n.d.)



Fig.2,(Hiut Denim Co., 2015)

Perception comes in many forms varying for each individual and their own personal experiences and knowledge. Perception is how an individual understands and feels, and this perception is based on what we assume we know. The two main types of sensory perception in textiles are tactile and visual perception. Tactile perception is how each person individually interprets toward the fabrics, such as the softness, the weight and the drape. Visual perceptions can be through texture, pattern and the use of colour. A keyway that perception is experienced through art (textiles) is through colour theory and how colours can evoke behaviours and feelings. It is often recognised as its own universal language as these feelings from colour are not impeded by a language barrier. Psychology can be applied to understand how people perceive things differently. “The first perception of colors, properly so called, is thus a change in the structure of consciousness, the institution of a new dimension of experience, and the deployment of an a priori.” (Merleau-Ponty,2012, p32) We develop our perception of colour changes through our personal experiences, however everyone still has a basic colour understanding ,in them from young as society teaches us how we ‘should’ perceive certain colours. “...the experience of the color confirms and clarifies the correlations established by inductive psychology. Green is commonly taken to be a “peaceful” color.” (Merleau-Ponty,2012, p218). Other examples of this are how certain colours and tones can bring on varied emotional responses depending on the individual perceiving the colour. Black (sometimes argued as a shade rather than a colour) is often depicted as evil as this links back to religious and historical practices where black has been represented as figures such as the Grim Reaper, Satan and the plague doctor mask (Fig.3). All these examples have strong links to death which evokes an intense

depressive emotion. An example of colour theory is the textiles design company Wallace Sewell, who are best known for designing the woven fabric for the London Tube seats. Their knowledge and use of colour is renowned as they used their understanding to create designs that were not only visually pleasing but recognised they also had to be practical so used colours that would hide dirt. In their work they look closely how the woven fabrics could evoke emotions and enhance sensory response. (Fig.4) The use of the colours red and blue not only mask dirt but also translate back to Transport for London key branding. “Colours also exert a profound psychological impact on human emotions and behaviour. The field of colour psychology explores how different hues can evoke certain feelings or mental states. For instance, red is often linked to excitement, energy, and urgency, while blue tends to be associated with calmness, stability, and trust. These associations are used strategically in marketing, design, and even daily life to influence moods and actions. (Fox, 202, p.8) Colours such as blue are known to be calming and have been used to reduce the crime rate. This is because they have intrinsic links to nature associating with aspects such as the sky and water, helping to therefore evoke feelings of peace and tranquility, and is physically proven to have the effect of lowering blood pressure and reducing anxiety. As well as colours reflecting nature it is known that … “Colours have always held cultural and historical significance,serving as powerful tools of communication and expression. From the earliest cave paintings to the digital screens of today, colours have been intrinsically linked to the human experience. Each hue has its own unique symbolism and meaning, reflective of the society and era in which it is used.” (Fox, 202, p.7) The typical connotations behind red in the Western society are anger or

passion, both very strong emotions which reflect the intensity of the colour, however in Chinese culture red is seen as luck, happiness and prosperity.



Fig.3,(Blakemore, 2020)



Fig.4, (Wallace & Sewell, n.d.)

We all communicate in different ways whether that be through verbal or visual languages. This can be through the power of speech or through our body language but can also be in the form of pictures or text. One of the ways we can communicate is through symbols, this is referred to as semiotics. Semiotics is "...the study of signs and symbols." (Waite,2012, p.658) In art and design this is used for people to help understand what they are viewing without having written text. When considering the communication through sign we understand that this communication can be both intentional and unintentional to the interpreter. The study of semiotics helps artists convey messages within their

creations as visual signs can be universally recognised and understood. “At its most formulaic, semiotics consists of the signifier and the signified, and together they create a sign; the signifier being the image, and the signified is the information received by the viewer in communication.” (Thipphawong, 2021) Although semiotics forms a language of signs due to everyone’s individual experiences it can be interpreted differently meaning there is still room for everyone to perceive the communication differently. Joseph Kosuth shows this with his piece ‘One and Three Chairs’(Fig.5). This demonstrates semiotics in this piece through having three aspects, the signifier; which is the dictionary definition of the chair, the signified; which is the photograph of the chair and the sign; this is the literal chair. All three of these show what we understand to be a chair in different forms and how we can, through using semiotics, understand the connection between each of these and how without each other we would still be able to understand one. “In semiotics, a sign is traditionally defined as something which ‘stands for’ (or represents) something else. It can take any form – a word, an image, a sound, an odour, a flavour, an action, an event, an object, or whatever. Anything has the potential to be interpretable, but nothing has an intrinsic meaning;” (Chandler, 2022, p.16) designers use a variety of semiotics in their work; these can include signs and symbols which help communicate meaning. This is often seen in traditional patterns such as Slovakian culture where textiles can be embroidered with symbols such as pomegranates to help portray fertility (Fig.6). Many of these symbols had deep meanings and as well as being embroidered were painted onto houses to protect from evil spirits. These have now become traditional patterns which can be worn in daily life. Motifs in pattern design are also used to portray a symbolic language as they are often a stand-alone symbol which can be used within a pattern.

Some more mainstream motifs, such as the Nike logo, have developed over time to become synonymous with the brand, so when looked at are recognised instantly, however it also has a deeper meaning as it comes from Greek mythology to represent the wing of the Greek Goddess Nike. Semiotics in art is shown in many ways, and one sign can have more than one meaning. An apple can be scholarly, wholesome yet “apple has been used historically as the symbol for forbidden fruit and the catalyst for the fall of humankind based on the biblical story of Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden.” (Thipphawong, 2021). Another example of this is doves as they literally mean a type of bird, yet they can also symbolise peace, hope and new beginnings.



Fig.5 (Wordpress.com, 2025)



Fig.6 (for, 2017)

From looking at responsibility, perception and communication each one has interlinking aspects. With the perception of colour theory and communication in the form of semiotics showing links through how symbols can have different meanings or evoke different responses through the change in colour. As like symbols each colour represents a

different meaning. These colours meanings often transcend spoken language, with many having similar meanings throughout different countries while also at the same time holding many varying connotations. Communication can also be linked to how responsibility and being sustainably conscious can have a positive impact on our environment, with the use of clothing (especially in areas such as runway and high fashion) being used to make statements. Figure 7 shows how the rapper Stormzy wearing a stab proof vest to perform at Glastonbury 2019 conveys the message to help bring awareness to the rise in knife crime. The use of the colour black also sets the atmosphere for the message that was being communicated. Responsibility in textiles and communication can also be linked by the materials used by designers, creating designs/ products using more environmentally friendly materials helping communicate to the customer not only the designer's values but also how there are other sustainable options to be considered when buying products. All three of these words also have links through phenomenology, as all are affected by personal experiences and how they can change people's perception of semiotics and or sustainably due to past experiences. While all three words do have overlapping aspects, they do also each have their own separate principles that designers can follow to help create steps towards a more sustainably conscious design world. However, the designer still has to consider whether creating a more sustainably conscious design can affect the integrity of their designs and process while also being responsible for looking at whether all aspects of the product creation were ethical and sustainable. This leads to the question. **'How can designers become more sustainably responsible in their practices without affecting the integrity of their designs?**



Fig.7(Tawbox.com, 2025)

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List of Figures:

Figure 1: seventy + mochi. (2025). *Care For Your Jeans*. [online] Available at: https://seventymochi.com/pages/care-for-your-jeans [Accessed 22 Apr. 2025].

Figure 2: Hiut Denim Co. (2015). *Landfill Dropout - Indigo*. [online] Available at: https://hiutdenim.co.uk/products/landfill-dropout [Accessed 22 Apr. 2025].

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