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Programme of Study: Product and Furniture Design

Module: ADAD4018

Ways of Thinking Lecturer's Name: Julia Lockheart

Tasks in the order I received them:

Task 1: Observational Writing = 494 words

Task 2: Manifesto Writing = 513 words

Task 3: Practice-based Writing = 509 words

Task 1: Observational Writing.

Aesthetics and prominent taglines decide whether an advertising campaign will thrive or dwindle. "The way we see things is affected by what we know or what we believe." (Berger, 1972, pg.8). These arbitrary perceptions of life and knowledge we adopt, influence how we view and interpret the world around us. Using reference to reliable sources and theories I will break apart the fundamental principles of an advertisement. Semiotics will allow me to seek different perceptions of seeing through signs, colours, and text.

"In a painting, all its elements is to be seen simultaneously" (Berger, 1972, pg.26) the construction of an image or sign creates a language to the viewer which is called semiotics. "the signifier of meaning" (Barthes, 1977), and their concepts "the signified meaning" (Barthes, 1977). "A sign consists of the Signifier, the material object, and the signified, which is its meaning." (Williamson, J, 2010) This can be shown through the word mug, the signifier is what you hear/ see and the signified is the concept being a ergonomic, fluid container.

"We think only in signs" (Peirce, 1931, 2.302) driven to the desire of meaning. Placing the concept to the sign allows us to explore meanings. "I define a sign as anything which is so determined by something else" (Peirce, 1931, 2.478) This explores how a sign is only a sign by how we place meaning to the object. I will continue my exploration of semiotics through an advertisement. The different theories of semiotics I have discussed will allow for me to seek different perspectives



Fig 1. Walkers Wotsits Giant, Wotsits Advertisement Campaign, 2020



Fig 2. Walkers Wotsits Giant, Wotsits Advertisement Campaign, 2020 (edited)

In January 2020, Walkers released a new variety of Wotsits much larger than its predecessor. This campaign Targeted towards the British public plays with the anecdote "Size Matters". This tagline utilizes arbitrary thoughts that are culturally acquired to draw in an audience, this coincides with Roland Barthes semiotic theory of the Photographic Paradox where there are two halves one being the sign and the other being the symbolic. "Every Image embodies a way of seeing" (Berger, 1972, pg10), the "denotated" and the "connotated". This tagline, a polysemic connotation creates a connection between the product and audience, a sign with two meanings. One being the size of their product and the other, meaning, using the idea of sex to advertise their product. It plays on our primal instincts as humans. In advertising everything is sexualised. A running joke creating sexualised humour for the audience.

The background is torn between two, blue and red, old and new, hot and cold. It's an abrupt addition through the appearance of torn paper removing layers and being introduced to the new. The colour red, creating a connotation of dangerous, bold and new thoughts, represented through their new spicy flavour.

An advert, a false narrative to the viewer until viewed and deconstructed using semiotics and arbitrary thoughts taught to us from birth creating visual language.

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Task 2: Manifesto Writing.

- 1.** Sustainability should be a driving point in today's design and manufacturing industry due to retrogression caused by our predecessor's lack of knowledge and understanding of our environment.
- 2.** By applying nature's influences into design we become more at ease with our surroundings and create new paths for an organic design era.
- 3.** The continuous production of replications brings comfort and a sense of uniformity amongst one another regardless of cultural or ethnic backgrounds.
- 4.** Textures, sounds, heat retention, and colour schemes greatly affect how we perceive favourable design.
- 5.** Chairs present a thousand different sensations through the research and the creativity of designers.
- 6.** The golden ratio and design is futile.
- 7.** By reintroducing sustainable materials into everyday design do we decrease our product's life cycle and spend more on these sustainable products?
- 8.** Technology influences design rather than design influencing technology?

Three areas of exploration

By applying nature's influences into design, we become more at ease with our surroundings and create new paths for an organic design era.



Fig 1. Animalia furniture collection by Fratelli Boffi, 2010- 2020

The continuing expansion and settlement of communities have caused natural environments to be industrialized. “With rapid urbanization and declines in human contact with nature globally, crucial decisions must be made about how to preserve and enhance opportunities for nature experience.” (Bratman 2019) Studies have shown that contact with our environment increases our overall mental health “Results suggest that contact with nature positively affects well-being and satisfaction with life” (Tomasi, Samantha, 2019).

Applying natural designs to products in Urban areas can create “patterns of which those things are part. It has its roots in philosophical behaviourism and the new realism” (David W. Orr, 2004) This allows for the experience of artificial naturalism in daily life to increase the well-being of people in populous areas where our natural environment is constricted, this will create pathways for an organic design era where we can artificially and sustainably introduce environments in products through the designs and materials whilst finding solutions to reintroduce nature into industrialized areas.

The continuous production of replications brings comfort and a sense of uniformity amongst one another regardless of cultural or ethnic backgrounds.



Fig 2. Vimle Sofa, IKEA

In recent times where individuality is well established and prompted towards others, similarities can make people feel comforted within new spaces and amongst one another. “studying the psychological effects of architectural and interior design is important due to their immense influence on the emotional and psychological well-being of human” (Ricci N, 2017) This is a primal instinct from our predecessors and the need to feel secure from any threats. The VIMLE sofa from IKEA can be an example of how replications can be placed in many environments regardless of cultural background due to its popularity and design to fit in anywhere.

“Patterns have long been a subject of human curiosity” (Ricci N, 2017) We as humans seek patterns and relations between one another, this makes us feel comforted. Naturally, if we are placed in different environments, we will feel uneasy, by having familiarity in the form of products this uncertainty can decrease.

Does technology influence design or does design influence technology?



Fig 3. Would you go back to a smaller iPhone, Scantlin A, February 16, 2016

Change happens fast, pushed by the wants and needs of the ever-changing target market, designers and engineers alike work towards what the consumer wants.” Just as the Arts and Crafts movement of the late 19th century was a response to rapid industrialization, the current Maker movement is a response to rapid technologizing.” (Lehner, S, June 2018) This movement suggests that technology influences design. I believe both design and technology influence each other, pushing one another to continuous refinement.

The Minimalism Design period 1967-1978 has changed the world and how the need for technology to be compact and fast has been pushed engineers. Designers are faced with the task of housing these technologies within their products whilst still obtaining a minimalist appearance. "Less is more" (Rohe, L, M, 1947) this aesthetic has been continued past the minimalism design period and adopted into everyday life. An example of how technology influences design and vice versa is the Apple iPhone, each generation becoming flatter yet wider to meet the consumer's appetite for slimmer and more minimalistic designs.

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Figure 2. Vimle Sofa, IKEA Accessed [from https://www.ikea.com/gb/en/p/vimle-3-seat-sofa-with-chaise-longue-gunnared-medium-grey-s29284913/](https://www.ikea.com/gb/en/p/vimle-3-seat-sofa-with-chaise-longue-gunnared-medium-grey-s29284913/) [Accessed on 20th December 2020]

Figure 3. Would you go back to a smaller iPhone by Scantlin A, February 16, 2016, Accessed from <https://news.wirefly.com/2016/02/16/would-you-go-back-smaller-screen> [Accessed on 20th December 2020]

Task 3: Practice-based Writing: A deconstruction of Marcel Breuer's
Wassily Chair Model B3 chair.



Fig 1. Wassily chair by Marcel Breuer

One of the most influential designers and architects of the early 20th Century. Marcel Breuer was a designer who created the Wassily chair also known as the Model B3 chair by becoming acquainted and intrigued by his bicycle.

“What is the link between that chair and this bicycle?”(Smyth, K.W. 2012). The chair itself belongs to the modernist design movement (1880 -1940) and was created with a thought of how bicycles were manufactured whilst Breuer was apprenticing at the Bauhaus School. The designer embodies the driving Bauhaus objectives, A focus on simple geometric forms which is represented through his design. “Given its diasporic influence in our lives today, the Bauhaus is so familiar that we think of it as a form of modernism”(Dickerman, L, 1919-1933) this design movement is still being used today.

The design of the product is based on its apparent form, combatting padded, bulky chairs being elegantly made from manipulated chrome steel bars and thick leather slings. “the success of Bruere’s furniture is apparent still today in his abiding influence on mainstream production” (Grey, E, B, 2017) Breuer’s influence has allowed for countless designers to create products based on straight-forward form and functions in mind rather than creating a product based on simple aesthetics. “Historical Hindsight allows for us to describe modernism as an extended revolution that emphasized new technologies, new styles”(Barter, J, A,pg1,2001) I believe that Breuer’s Wassily chair perfectly fits this description by using new technologies, manufacturing methods, and materials not typically used in his time to design a product which would revolutionize the chair designing world.

From what I have researched and gathered regarding the design of the Wassily Chair I am making an educated opinion that this chair, designed using modernist aesthetics and Bauhaus objectives, inspired from a bicycles chrome steel frame and leather seating is a form forwarded product that Allows for its user to feel comfortable when engaged in this product without the need for a bulky frame and over upholstered seating.

“A piece of furniture is not an arbitrary composition: it is a necessary component of our environment.”(Marcel Breuer (from Bibl. no. 15), my standpoint on this statement is that It coincides with my own beliefs. My chosen subject of study being Product and furniture design allows me to understand the designer’s thought-process, outlook, and design style. Beneath I have created a few sketches which I believe could have potentially been sketched up with Breuer’s first renditions of his Wassily chair design.



Figure 2. Quick practical exploration sketches

These quick sketches are how I imagined the first renditions of Breuer's Wassily chair. A frame-like base, representative of a bike with extreme curves in the metal to achieve a fluid cohesive shape, leather padding representing the bicycle seat, and thin leather clad arms of the chair. This practical exploration has allowed me to understand more in-depth and reflect on the reasons why Breuer's chair is designed the way it is. By doing the Practical exploration I have been able to deconstruct the Wassily chair.

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