

Distinction and differentiation perception through communication the definition o...

[Design](#)



Design in any context can be looked upon in a number of different ways. It is seen as a form of communication through visuals. It is dependant on the here and now and the knowledge behind the viewer at any given point. There can be a multitude of meanings to any design coherent with the elements and principles explored and executed within the work.

Within the readings from Stroud, Bourdieu, and Johnson, an insight is provided into the art of design and aspects are brought together to convey the concept; Stroud for the wavering of opinion and experience from a subjective sense, Bourdieu further cements this theory of difference through taste and Johnson reiterates the variance between opinions of the same notion. To further demonstrate the variance which occurs when exploring the definition of design, two artists' works, Charles Nuttall and Tom Roberts depiction of The Opening of the Commonwealth Parliament are looked upon for insight.

If the particular definition of dialogue; an exchange of ideas or opinions, is looked at and applied to the notion of design, the communication factor within design can be realised. Design is a communication between the maker or artist and the viewer. One is entitled to ones own opinions based on the way the design is portrayed to a particular viewer. This is why in many instances within the design world there are a multitude of answers and expressiveness applied to any one design. To differentiate connotation of what may be deciphered from a design; the elements and principles are brought into play to convey a sense of understanding.

Firstly the elements and principles need to be laid out. The elements consist of; line, the graphic unifier; shape, the perceivable area; space, the illusion of depth; value, the relative light and darkness; colour, the colour theory; and texture, the surface quality - actual or simulated. The principles of design are inclusive of; balance, equalising the visual weight of elements; rhythm, variety and repetition; unity, the feeling of harmony between elements; proportion, the relative size within the work; movement, the path of the viewers eye; and emphasis, the focal point.

When bringing both the elements and principles together designs can be realised in a physical sense, and meaning may be derived from the works due to the presence of these aspects. Within the readings looked upon the concept of design is explored. Stroud makes a very clear point of difference within his reading by identifying concise ways in which an identical situation may be relayed in two completely different means. He gives an example of two commuters travelling the same journey, and deciphers the radically different thoughts behind the way in which each commuter views their journey.

This theory can be interpreted and applied to design practice. Solidifying the many different aspects the concept of design has. We look to the reading by Pierre Bourdieu; within 'The aesthetic Sense as the Sense of Distinction', we come to the realisation that with each different person there may be a different meaning. As Bourdieu relays it, "tastes are the practical affirmation of an inevitable difference." To put these two views of difference in opinion

into context, the most tangible means is to look upon design within an artwork.

It is necessary to decipher how an occurrence of an event can be relayed in more than one context due to the artists' wavering view of the concept of design. In this instance the chosen source is the event of The Opening of the Australian Commonwealth Parliament. The event took place in 1901, and two artists were commissioned to interpret the event in their own way. The result; Charles Nuttall's 'The Opening Commonwealth Parliament' (Appendix One), and Tom Roberts' 'The Big Picture' (Appendix Two).

Charles Nuttall's depiction of the first parliament sought to communicate the grand scale of the event therefore projecting the frame of the artwork in a way that the viewer senses a very open, large environment with masses of people. Nuttall does this by using the principle of repetition within his work through the numerous amounts of seemingly identical figures within the frame. The artist's strategic use of this principle along with space and proportion allows the viewer to be drawn around the entire image creating harmony and unison. The rich use of colour and adornment within the artwork by Tom Roberts exudes the royalty of the event.

An enlightening mood is established due to the coherence between light and dark tones. The rhythm of the piece is quite consistent and is created through the numerous figures in the frame. This aspect along with the illusion of depth and proportion allows the viewers eye to be drawn around the work from the masses of people in the right of the foreground heading into the background where the sun rays project your view to the stage

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realising the importance of the occasion and the focal point of the image, thus unifying the piece as a whole.

The recollection of the same event by the two different artists' demonstrates the variance between each individuals thought processes of design. The fact the artists' have chosen to depict the scene from two different viewpoints indicates the differentiation of their view in relation to the concept of design. Although the angle of each artwork is different, they have both chosen the moment when the sun burst through the clouds and cast beams of light onto the ceremony within their depictions to create a moment of importance in Australian history.

The one event triggers a different thought process and design method for each artist conveying their individual and visible expression of a concept. " Charles Nuttall's painting aims for clarity, while Tom Roberts' painting is more evocative and impressionistic. " (Museum Victoria) This statement by Museum Victoria further cements what Bourdieu refers to as the inevitable difference; how each particular artist has chosen to understand and represent reality within their artworks by putting to use the elements and principles of design.

The necessity to look as far back as recalled is to make aware; the different connotations to the depiction of design stem much further back than in a modern context. Yet although these works are dated back to the early 1900s, this further alerts the fact that the variance in the term design has stemmed back through history and has shaped the way design is looked upon within a modern context. Furthermore, the reading Metaphor and

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Design (Johnson, N 1992) identifies the countless interpretations of the concept of design.

The reading recognises the numerous ways in which scholars and artists alike over the years have come to a different conclusion of the meaning, or rather definition of design. “ To assume, that the character of this concept has been fixed and agreed upon is to ignore the fact that the vocabulary, definition, and values of design vary with time and place. ” (Johnson) Within the reading by Johnson, cementing the notion that design has a multitude of interpretations, examples are foregrounded of how many different scholars and artists have a different elucidation when referring to the concept of design.

The way in which Johnson comprehends this is by going on to say, “ design, like any human concept, is a mutable product of socially constructed thought and ought to be treated as such. ” The concept of design fulfils many different aesthetics; depending on the viewer, their beliefs and knowledge, depending on the design, and the elements and principles which have been drawn upon to create it. To a certain degree, amongst the play of the elements and principles of design, it is up to the artist to convey what they wish, and in the hands of the observer as to what is taken away from the design.

Stroud, Bourdieu, and Johnson differentiate the theory of design in the way in which they choose to view the subject. Nuttall and Roberts show their variance between interpretations of design through their individual depictions of an identical event. In light of this, the definition of design will

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be forever evolving, as has happened for centuries before and will go on for centuries beyond our time. Design is a term which can be expressed in many different forms and it is the way in which you choose to decipher the design to determine the outcome.

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