ADV 1100

Graphic Design Principles 1

Professor Nicolaou
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ADGA Department
NYCCT/ CUNY
Chair: Professor Biehl
An Analysis of Visual Perception

By Sylvia Jairam

From a psychological perspective, visual perception or how a stimuli is perceived from the eye to brain is a fascinating subject that is analyzed and studied in a scientific way. Designers take a different approach in understanding and studying visual perception that is different than the social scientist. To designers, a visual stimuli is not only something the mind sees and interprets; it is an element that has a special relationship to its background. The most important aspect of visual perception to designers is if an element or more than one element is visually perceived as balanced and harmonious to its surroundings and to each other. Achieving this harmony and balance is a skill that designers are constantly developing and honing.

I attended professor Nicolaou’s graphic design principles I class not knowing what to expect. After the projects were explained and how they will benefit us as future designers, I understood that this class will be an experimental and interactive experience. As a first year design student with a background in psychology, I was very intrigued and curious on how this class will change the way I visually perceive.

The objective of our first project was to draw a perfect black square on a sheet of white Bristol paper. This was not an easy task as everything about this square had to not only “work,” harmony and tension-wise, it had to be perceived as perfect. The margins were measured to the last millimeter and the draftsmanship had to be perfect, with no bleeding edges. This piece and every other project worked on would be considered perfect when the “tension” of the element within the parameters of paper felt just right and the draftsmanship was flawless. The process of presenting and judging our and our peers work are also a part of developing ourselves visually and as professional designers.

As the semester progressed, each project touched on new concepts of visual perception and principles on design such as following the verticality or direction of the page, making an element balanced and harmonious within its parameters and projected tension. These projects were all done with a black marker, pencil, pen and ruler. To study value and color, a new material was introduced; gouache. Using designer’s gouache was a frustrating experience as I was having a very hard time applying the paint correctly. But the desired results will be achieved through persistence, determination and a lot of expensive paint and paper.

Looking back on the semester every experience and project in class taught me how to analyze and perceive an element on a background and judge it for harmony and balance. These experiences also showed me holistically what a true designer is and does. Although each project taught me how to feel tension and judge the details, I also learned how important the traits of patience and persistence are for designers. Determination and both mental and physical stamina are also essential traits to have as revisions are all a part of the design process. Another significant aspect of becoming a designer that was definitely touched upon in class was excellent presentation and speaking skills.

When it comes to being a designer, everything that the client sees and hears influences their decision and thought process, therefore it is important to control these influences by doing everything possible to not be the focal point during a design presentation. In psychology, this would be called controlling for extraneous variables. This class has taught me that designers must control these variables by what they wear and how they speak when presenting their designs. Overall, this class has not only taught and sharpened my skills in analyzing visual stimuli; it has also taught me what it means to be true graphic designer as a whole.
Critique

Jia presents work.

Diana prepares for critique.

Jia notes feedback.
Joniquewah presents

Herbert edits

Project editing
Process

At work
Brian, Louisa & Luis

Sylvia & Joniquewah

Luis

Raphael & Marco

Agatha

Amanda & Danielle
Discussion

Listening

Points
Reference

Brian presents his iPad applications
Credits

Herbert Alvarado
Alvaro Bravo
Tevin Campbell
Rafael Cespedes
Diana Chasijuan
Luisa Diaz
Luis Encarnacion
Mayada Farawlo
Joniquewah Guilbe-Gethers
Brian Hart
Jia He
Sylvia Jairam
Darryl Johnson
Danielle Lacey
Michael Lewis
Mathew Mantilla
Amanda Protain
Agatha Whyte

Design by Sylvia Jairam