

Graphic Design: Traditional language or a method of visual education?

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Abstract: *Graphic design is a part of our daily lives. We need it to understand and discover the world around us, in a simple and beautiful way, similar to the way we, as civilized beings, normally interact. Thus we need to learn and act as responsible and cohesive elements of our society, which through the use of graphic design can, and must, build strong and honest connections.*

Key words: *Communication - Message - Responsibility – Educate*

1. What is graphic design

Graphic design is a method of visual communication and problem solving through the use of space and image. The field of its activity is called communication design and visual communication, but sometimes the term "graphic design" is used interchangeably with them due to overlapping competences involved. Graphic designers use different methods to create and combine words, symbols and images in order to illustrate ideas and messages. A graphic designer can use a combination of text, images and layout techniques to produce a final result. Graphic design often refers to both the process (designing) by which the communication is created, and the products (the designs) which are generated by the process.

Common usage of graphic design includes identity design (logos and branding), publications (magazines, newspapers and books), print ads, posters, billboards, website graphics and packaging. For example, a product package might include a logo or other artwork, organized text and pure design elements such as images, shapes and colors that unify the piece. Composition is one of the most important features of graphic design, especially when using pre-existing materials or various elements.

Most people have only a vague idea of what a graphic designer actually does. Does he create logos for companies or does he retouches images in Photoshop? Does he create layouts for magazines? Many designers do these things, but in fact these three activities are only some fragments of a great whole of their trade.



Good art sends a different message to everyone
 Good design sends the same message to everyone
 the difference between art & design

Graphic design is all around us.

If you have a message or a product you want people to notice or if you try to communicate a concept in a visual way, then you will need to use graphic design. Since morning, from serving breakfast until evening when waiting for the bus on the way home, you will find all around, the work of the graphic designer, be it in the form of your favourite coffee, butter or bread packaging, or in the form of street posters, billboards or traffic signs.



The graphic designer and the message

In order to illustrate the client's message, the graphic designer must define a strategy and be aware of other existing social strategies. When it comes to illustrating the message in graphic design, codes of expression apply. These codes derive from the local, national or international culture, all of them producing specific emotions and meanings.

The graphic designer's identity is ambivalent, being both an artist and technician, hence takes shape his ability to find a way through "the dark forest of signs" (Ch. Baudelaire - Les Fleures du Mal).

The social role of the graphic designer

The social responsibility of the graphic designer is based on the desire to take part in creating a better world. He is responsible for how people perceive and enjoy the world around them. It is therefore necessary and indispensable for every graphic designer, a work ethic as close to people's real needs.

The graphic designer is both a transmitter of messages and an esthetician, and through these two roles he is capable of creating a language that is easy to understand by the consumer and at the same time beautiful. So, his main social role is to create languages which will be useful in the real world. He must ease the way in which people interact with the world around them.

Today, the production of visual communication consists primarily of advertising. Visual advertising production is very sophisticated and articulated in a very close manner with mass-media networks.

There are enough differences between advertising and graphic design, but one thing is certain, advertising needs and uses graphic design. One of the differences between graphic design and advertising is the way the message is transmitted to the consumer. And more than that graphic design can function, and functions without advertising, and that's because advertising is just a branch of design.

Returning to graphic design, it must be mentioned that another important social role for the practitioner of graphic design is to always offer its clients quality design. In other words he can and must educate his clients, which often demand and seek solutions that are not favoring themselves because of their faulty understanding of this method of communication, called graphic design. Clients often have a limited visual vocabulary they can use, and also an incoherent one, and this just makes their approach on a certain project faulty from the start, that is if they are to rely solely on their limited visual vocabulary.



Each client wants his message to be illustrative of his own values and visions, but when that message is build upon that limited vocabulary the end result will also be limited.

Thus their message will only reach a certain group of consumers, which is needles to say, the opposite of his initial intention.



Another social role of the graphic designer is to create beautiful things. The need for beauty is a need as equally important as other human needs. The graphic designer can and should, create aesthetic solutions, whether they are book covers, logos, posters, magazines and newspapers, shirts, greeting cards, business cards etc.

We all react and consume things that are beautiful, we choose some products that are more beautiful than others, even if at times they tend to be less qualitative than others, or we actually do not need them. Beauty is a need of all humans, and the graphic designer is an important element of our society that

can provide that need. Nevertheless, this aspect of his profession must always be correlated with a responsible work ethic.

3. So, what is graphic design?

As for the question from the beginning of our speech, it must be said that graphic design is both a language and a traditional method of visual education, or at least a bit of both, and that's because in our days graphic design has proven its necessity as a language and also the power it has to transform us as a society as individuals. And the history books dedicated to graphic design can easily provide any kind of argument toward this logic.

I think it is pretty hard to imagine the world without graphic design or furthermore to imagine our world full of ugly graphic design. Ofcourse „ugly graphic design" is an incongruous syntagm, but very important to remember is that graphic design as a language, and like every language, tends over time to refine itself and become more pleasant and easy to use.

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