

Visual language and visual poems

Fill in the blanks with the given words. You can take a look at the definitions of some of the given words back in the glossary.

calligrams-Visual-logo-signifier-sender-objective-Advertising-information-code

_____ communication is a mean of transmitting or expressing _____ through images, There are many kinds of visual comunication, but as in any way of comunication there are ways a _____ and a meaning for it as units of information, as well as there is always a message sent by the _____ to the receiver.

Depending on the Visual _____ these will show up in a form or another. Visual language can be _____ or subjective. Art images use visual languages strictly related to the point of view of the authors so visual language in art is mostly subjective.

_____ images show images that can be understood quickly in order to convince the viewer to buy something. Visual advertising usually shows a headline, an illustration or image, some text and a brand or _____ which are the signature elements. Visual poetry, _____ or surrealists art objects goals are somehow the opposite to advertising, trying to make the viewer think or hesitate at the same time than showing aesthetic images.



Gift. Man Ray. 1958
Source: <http://www.moma.org/>



Fur cup. Meret oppenheim.
Source: <http://theredlist.fr/>



Bril. Marcel Marien.
Source: <http://nirnadler.wordpress.com/>

Chema Madoz is a Spanish Photographer who is specialized in visual poems. Take a look at his pictures in [his website](http://www.chemamadoz.com/)



Perception and observation

Perception is the process to acquire information through the **five senses**. So **Visual perception** is the interpretation or differentiation of visual **stimuli** in the images. The perception of images is different for every person because it also depends on cultural and individual experience aspects. **Observing** plays a key role in perception and consists of looking at the shapes carefully and thoroughly studying their visual qualities and meanings.

AFTER RESTORATION

BEFORE RESTORATION



La Gioconda. Leonardo Da vinci. 1503-1519
Source: <http://commons.wikimedia.org/>

El Prado's Gioconda. Leonardo Da vinci's pupil. 1503-1519
Source: http://cultura.elpais.com/cultura/2012/02/01/actualidad/1328129037_819926.html

Gestalt, perceptual principles and visual effects

The **Gestalt** was a school of psychological thought born in Germany. "Gestalt" in German means "**shape**", which dealt with the study of **visual perception**. Around 1950 it was established what is known as "Gestalt laws" which are a set of fundamental principles of visual perception.

With all this knowledge acquired, some artists played with their audience's perception when observing their artwork. Rene Magritte was a surrealist artist who used some of these principles, mainly the Figure and Ground confrontation, as a main subject of his paintings. "**The seducer**" is a painting made in 1953 that shows a ship on the sea, however the ship is not a regular ship but it is filled up with water as if it was the sea's surface. Beyond the horizon and the sky are appreciated.

"**The Empire of light**" is a Painting in which Magritte depicted a bright daylight sky while the landscape and building is dark as if it was illuminated during the night. The house shows some lights on in the inside rooms as well as in the main entrance, this helps to understand Magritttes' idea of confrontation of light and dark in this artwork.



The empire of lights.
Rene Magritte. 1954
Source: <http://www.wikipaintings.org/>



The seducer. Rene Magritte. 1953
Source: <http://www.wikipaintings.org/>

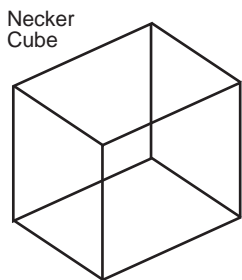
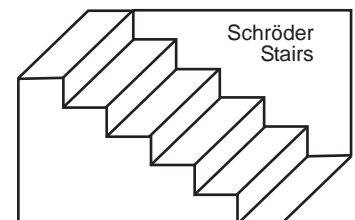
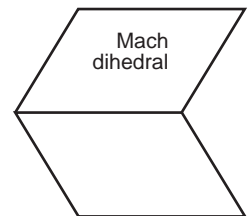
Gestalt Theory of Visual Perception

The Gestalt theorists were the first group of psychologists to systematically study visual perceptual organisation around the 1920's, in Germany. They were Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Ernst Mach, and particularly of Christian von Ehrenfels and the research work of Max Wertheimer, Wolfgang Köhler, Kurt Koffka, and Kurt Lewin.

The coming to power of national socialism interrupted the fruitful scientific development of Gestalt theory in the German-speaking world; Koffka, Wertheimer, Köhler and Lewin emigrated, or were forced to flee, to the United States where they continued to work, in spite of the dominant theoretical field for that time, of behaviourism.



Ambiguous figure:
Two faces or a vase



Necker
Cube

Gestalt means when parts identified individually have different characteristics to the whole (Gestalt means "organised whole")
e.g. describing a tree - it's parts are trunk, branches, leaves, perhaps blossoms or fruit
But when you look at an entire tree, you are not conscious of the parts, you are aware of the overall object - the tree. Parts are of secondary importance even though they can be clearly seen.

Watch and try this [Visual perception experiment](http://youtu.be/0grANlx7y2E) counting how many times a team passes the ball



So the term Gestalt laws refers to theories of visual perception developed by these German psychologists in the 1920s. trying to describe how people organize the visual elements they see into groups or unified wholes when certain principles are applied.



Optical effects and illusions

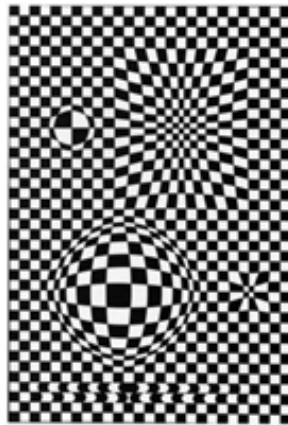
Optical Illusions are images from which we perceive something that is not physically in the image, or distorted elements in shape, size or color. Sometimes a movement is appreciated while actually nothing in the image is moving, those are called Kinetic illusions or kinetic figures.

Some of those illusions are produced by the visual perceptive organs such as our brain or our eyes. Some other times the Gestalt Laws or perceptual principles cause the distortion in our visual impression.

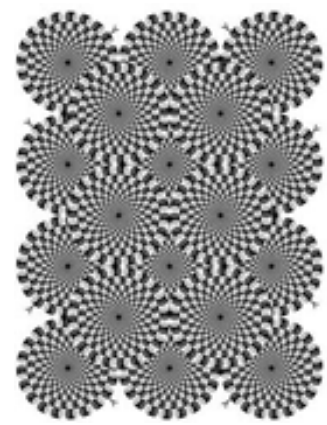
Op art artists liked to play with colours and shapes not creating optical illusions but effects of bending, movement or different chromatic effects that caused some sort of surprise to us.



Arrest. Bridgete Riley. 1965
Source:<http://www.wikipaintings.org/>



Vega. Victor Vasarely. 1957
Source:<http://www.wikipaintings.org/>



Rotsnake
Source:<http://www.ilusionario.es/>

Check out this [webpage](http://www.moillusions.com/) to see some new and current optical illusions

<http://www.moillusions.com/>



Purposes of images

Images usually hold a function, purpose or goal. Depending on the type of image the goal will be one or another. Most images usually hold more than one function, but one of them is normally the main one, lets see some of the main images functions:



Anachronistic psychological laboratory".
J. W. M. Thomassen.1975.
Source: <http://tadamasasawada.blogspot.com.es/>

Descriptive: It explains shapes of objects, events or situations in an objective and accurate way.

Informative: They are images that illustrate news, advertisements or catalogs.

Aesthetics: They try to express an ideal of beauty, they are usually artistic photos or artworks.

Expressive: They are Images that transmit emotions, thoughts or thought-provoking.

Communicative: They are three groups of images:

Brand or logo: a hallmark image whose purpose is to claim, to call or the differentiation and identification of a product or company.

Signs: They are images that express an indication, or prohibition. They are usually pictograms which are clear and simple images with few colors represented as silhouettes.

Symbol: They are images that represent an idea or belief, memories or thoughts.

PERCEPTION AND OBSERVATION

Visual perception: It is the interpretation or differentiation of visual stimuli in the environment. In this process different objective aspects take part, such as colors, shapes, size, relationships, etc; and subjective, related to the experience, culture and circumstances of the recipient or person who interprets the images. The perception of images is different for every person.

Observation: It consists of looking at the shapes carefully and thoroughly studying their visual qualities and meanings. It plays a key role in perception.

Analytical observation: It tries to identify and recognize the shapes and elements of the images.

Functional observation: It is related to the meaning, purpose or action of the elements of an image.

OPTICAL ILLUSIONS

Optical Illusion: It is an image in which we can perceive something that is not real or is not physically in the image, it also shows distorted elements in shape, size or color. Sometimes it comes to ambiguous drawings or images that can be interpreted in opposite or different ways. They can also be images or spaces representing objects that are impossible.

Mach dihedral: It is the depiction of two planes that can be interpreted as arranged in a concave or convex way.

Schröder illusion: consists of presenting a series of objects, figures or faces whose planes can be interpreted as arranged in one way or another. This visual effect is called reversible perspective.

Thiery figure and necker cube: They are figures that are similar to the illusion of Schröder.

Kinetic figures: They are images that produce the sensation of movement

Moiré effect: Consists of two overlapped set of lines that when they move in relation to each other provide the feeling of a different derived movement.

VISUAL COMMUNICATION

Visual Communication: It is a process of production, transmission and reception of information through images.

Context: Set of circumstances in which there is visual communication.

Meaning: it is what the visual message stands for.

Signifier: the set of visual elements that form the image that conveys information.

Visual code: Set of rules and procedures relating the meaning and the significant so that the image conveys the information properly.

Sender: It is person or group that transmits information through images.

Message: The information contained in the image.

Receiver: A person or group that receives or interprets the information contained in the images.

Medium or Channel: It is the entity through which the image is transmitted, it can be television, internet, newspapers, etc.

VISUAL LANGUAGE

Visual language: It is a communication system that uses visual elements to express the messages.

Objective Visual language: It tries to convey information unambiguously and without giving rise to possible interpretations.

Advertising visual language: it provides information that is understood in a quick, easy way to get to sell a product. It further attempts to attract attention through attractive and evocative images.

The main elements of the advertising visual language are:

Headline: It is a sentence, usually on the top of the image, that tries to capture the attention.

Illustration or image: The image is also aiming to attract attention, convey the idea of the advertisement and convince the viewer.

Text: It explains in detail the holder the advertising content through written language.

Signature elements: It tries to close the message, it is usually the product name, brand or company logo.

GESTALT LAWS AND PERCEPTUAL PRINCIPLES

Gestalt: It was a school of phsycological thought born in Germany. "Gestalt" in German means "shape", which dealt with the study of visual perception. Around 1950 it was established what is known as "Gestalt laws" which are a set of fundamental principles of visual perception.

Figure-Ground: Among various shapes, it is perceived more easily the one that stands out for its shape, size, position or color. Figure and Ground (or background) cannot be perceived simultaneously.

Closure: Figures or shapes with an incomplete outline are completed by our perception provided when the directions of the contours are arranged continuously and in a specific direction.

Bright light: A bright light on a figure or body separates it visually from its shadow and background.

Simple configuration: A simple way is perceived more easily than more complex ones around.

Experience in perception: A figure or image is perceived more easily than others if it is part of the experience of the observer.

Proximity: Elements of the image that are closer to each other, are perceived as a figure or as a group.

Similarity: The same or similar elements are perceived as a single figure.

Continuity: The elements that are arranged in the same direction are perceived as one.

Contrast and homogeneity: the principles of the figure and the background can be altered by contrast effects (highlight of figure over ground) and homogeneity (integration of the Figure with the background).