What is Graphic Design?

defined problem + visual solution = graphic design
“To design is much more than simply to assemble, to order, or even to edit; it is to add value and meaning, to illuminate, to simplify, to clarify, to modify, to dignify, to dramatize, to persuade, and perhaps even to amuse.”

- Paul Rand
Paul Rand
Conversations with Paul Rand
Paul Rand
DESIGN – THE SYNTHESIS OF FORM AND CONTENT

- “Without content there’s no form – without form there’s no content”
  - “when form predominates, meaning is blunted – when content predominates, interest lags”
Paul Rand
Language of Art - Aesthetics

- Order
- Variety
- Contrast
- Symmetry
- Tension
- Balance
- Scale
- Texture
- Space
- Shape
- Light
- Shade
- Color
Saul Bass

- Considered one of the most influential individuals in the world of graphic design
- Inspired by the book “Language of Vision” which stressed art should focus on the essentials
- He became an expert in the art of “reductionism”
- His fame allowed him to experiment at many levels from posters for film to full production of films
- The opening film sequence to “The Man with the Golden Arm”, 1955, revolutionize movie posters and opening scenes to movies
Saul Bass
Catch Me if You Can Opening Title Sequence
Saul Bass designed the 6th AT&T Bell System logo, that at one point achieved a 93 percent recognition rate in the United States.

The use of white space to define the shape of human body parts are typical of Saul Bass’s work.
Massimo Vignelli

Vignelli works firmly within the Modernist tradition, and focuses on simplicity through the use of basic geometric forms in all his work.
Alvin Lustig

His abstract designs incorporated a modern design sensibility with a groundbreaking approach to typeface design and the unconventional dust jacket became a hallmark of New Directions publications.
Lester Beall

He utilizes angled elements, iconic arrows, silhouetted photographs and dynamic shapes, all of which captures the essence of his personal style of the late 1930s.
Aleksandr Rodchenko

Rodchenko's work was heavily influenced by Cubism and Futurism.

He utilized a compass and ruler in creating his paintings, with the goal of eliminating expressive brushwork.
Milton Glasser
alexey brodovitch
Brodovitch created a harmonious and meaningful whole using avant-garde photography, typography and illustration.
He founded the creative revolution that spawned modern advertising, as his iconoclastic talent created icons dramatizing the problems, solutions, foibles, and promises of American life.
Bradbury Thompson

the blending of photography, typography and color,

Many of his designs became iconic snapshots of American history and culture,
neville brody
David Carson
legibility
Herb Lubalin

changing from one typeface to another, always “fascinated by the look and sound of words (as he) expanded their message with typographic impact.”
"Design that needed guts from the creator and still carries the ghost of these guts in the final execution."

Stefan Sagmeister
Scher developed a typographic solution based on Art deco and Russian constructivism. Scher created a graphic language that reflected street typography and graffiti-like juxtaposition.
MAJOR FREE FORM SCHOOLS/STYLES

- Art Nouveau
- Art Deco
- Russian Constructivism
- Dada
- Pop Art
- Post Modernism

- **Free Form** – known for having free-flow of text and images in the design
Art Nouveau

- Highly influenced by Japanese art

- Stylized, plantlike vines, and typography mimicked the flowing curves of graphic elements

- A reaction to academic art of the 19th century, it was inspired by natural forms and structures, not only in flowers and plants but also in curved lines.
Art Deco

- The “last of the total styles” – also called art moderne in Europe
- Streamlined shapes and curved sans serif typography
- Critics viewed art deco as antiutilitarian
The style is often characterized by rich colors, bold geometric shapes and lavish ornamentation.

Deco emerged from the Interwar period when rapid industrialization was transforming culture. One of its major attributes is an embrace of technology. This distinguishes Deco from the organic motifs favored by its predecessor Art Nouveau.
Russian Constructivism

- Constructivism was the last and most influential modern art movement to flourish in Russia in the 20th century.

- The seed of Constructivism was a desire to express the experience of modern life - its dynamism, its new and disorienting qualities of space and time.

- But also crucial was the desire to develop a new form of art more appropriate to the democratic and modernizing goals of the Russian Revolution.
Dada

- Dada emerged as a critical examination of social structures
- Writing and graphics were intended to confuse, educate and gain attention
- **Dadaism** was an art movement of the European *avant-garde* in the early 20th century
Dada was born out of negative reaction to the horrors of World War I.

This international movement was begun by a group of artists and poets associated with the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich.

Dada rejected reason and logic, prizing nonsense, irrationality and intuition.
Dada’s Women

Ruth Hemus
Pop Art

- The style connected with alternative lifestyles – roots in the 60’s
  - Andy Warhol’s possibly the best example
Postmodern

- Initially called neo-dada in the 70’s
- Designers placed typography and other visual elements in angry, rebellious, and random manner
- Influential on New Wave and later Hip-hop styles
Where modernists hoped to unearth universals or the fundamentals of art, postmodernism aims to unseat them, to embrace diversity and contradiction.
MAJOR GRID DESIGN SCHOOLS/STYLES

- Bauhaus
- De Stijl
- The Swiss Style

- **Grid Art** – carefully placed text and images so that they are aligned within the frame of the image
Bauhaus

- Purposely anti-academic – emphasis on useful, clearly defined shapes - industrial
De Stijl

- Grid approach – composed of thick black horizontal and vertical lines – basic shapes – organized and efficient presentations

- The harmony and order was established through a reduction of elements to pure geometric forms and primary colors.
Swiss Style

- Emerged in Switzerland in the 1950s that would become the predominant graphic style in the world by the ‘70s.

- The style was marked by the use of a mathematical grid to provide an overall orderly and unified structure; sans serif typefaces (especially Helvetica, introduced in 1957) in a flush left and ragged right format; and black and white photography in place of drawn illustration.

- The overall impression was simple and rational, tightly structured and serious, clear and objective, and harmonious.
Impact of Four Elements on Graphic Design

**Contrast**
Make elements different to increase understanding.

**Repetition**
Repeat visual elements to create strong unity.

**Alignment**
Place elements deliberately and rationally to improve clarity.

**Proximity**
Place related items together to convey relationships.
Contrast

- Elements that aren’t the same should be very different so they stand out.

- Making them “slightly different” confuses the user into seeing a relation that doesn’t exist.

Contrast is what makes a reader look at the page in the first place. It is the most important visual attraction on the page.

- Avoid elements on the page that are merely similar.

- If elements are not the same, then make them very different.
Contrast

- **Contrast** is making reference to the differences in **color**, **size**, **symbolism**, **time**, **movement**
  - A lot of contrast among elements signifies a busy and youthful design
  - Little contrast among elements usually indicates a no-nonsense and conservative approach

- **Pattern** contrast: intricate pattern vs. no pattern
- **Edge** contrast: hard edge vs. soft edges
- **Value** contrast: dark, middle and light values
- **Intensity** contrast: pure **colors** vs. muted colors
- **Temperature** contrast: cool colors vs. warm colors
- **Texture** contrast: textured vs. smooth
- **Shape** contrast: organic shapes vs. geometric shapes
- **Size** contrast: large shapes vs. small shapes
- Designs using **colors that complement** each other, or have slight contrast are **pleasing** to see and grasp.

- Designs using greatly **contrasting colors** will create **tension** in the viewer.
Thematic Contrast

- Shock images and Shock advertising take advantage of the tension created by images that are not pleasing or are not aligned with what would be considered normal content.

- Barnardo's, a London based charity –
  - using a photo that showed a baby about to inject itself with heroin.
Question
To which design elements has the designer added contrast from the first version to the second?

Think about type, line thickness, dark and light areas, shapes, sizes, proportion, etc.
Contrast & Size

- Size – the size of the graphic elements should vary but be proportional to the overall frame of the design

  - Proportion, or scale, refers to the spatial relationship between design elements and the size of the page or frame
White Space & Contrast

- **White-space** is also very effective in creating contrast in writing and images.
Repetition

- Repeat visual elements of the design throughout the piece. You can repeat color, shape, texture, spatial relationships, line thicknesses, sizes, etc.

- This helps develop the organization and strengthens the unity.

Repeating visual elements of the design throughout the piece.

- Repeat color
- Repeat shapes, textures
- Repeat spatial relationships
- Repeat line thickness, fonts, sizes, graphic concepts
Repetition

Fusce porta suscipit eros


Duis vitae urna


Fusce non ligula


Donec hendrerit magna

- Nulla sed tortor id neque consectetur auctor.
- Nullam laoreet erat eget nibh.
- Sed vitae nisi non enim semper rhoncus.
- Curabitur ac magna eu elit rhoncus ultricies.
- Proin quis metus nec mauris dictum convallis.
- In auctor mauris quis neque.

Vivamus sodales

- Nulla sed tortor id neque consectetur auctor.
- Nullam laoreet erat eget nibh.
- Sed vitae nisi non enim semper rhoncus.
- Curabitur ac magna eu elit rhoncus ultricies.
- Proin quis metus nec mauris dictum convallis.
- In auctor mauris quis neque.

eget | turpis | metus | rutrum | commodo
Repetition

- an example of *bad* repetition:
Repetition

- the same page, with better repetition:
Repetition & Rhythm

- Rhythm is a reference to how the design is supposed to control the movement of your eyes through the visual image.

- **Sequencing**: positioning the images so that the viewer can easily follow along.

- Repetition rarely occurs on its own and so it imbues a sense of order onto the design.
  - And because of this, repetition attracts attention and prompts viewers to investigate further.
JAMES STEWART
KIM NOVAK
IN ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S
MASTERPIECE

"VERTIGO"

THE SCREEN ACHIEVES ONE OF THE GREAT ENTERTAINMENTS IN THE HISTORY OF MOTION PICTURES

"WEST SIDE STORY"

NATALIE WOOD

RICHARD BEYMER RUS TAMBLYN
RITA MORENO GEORGE CHAKIRIS

WEST SIDE STORY
Alignment

- Nothing should be placed on the page arbitrarily.
- Every element should have some visual connection with another element on the page.
Alignment

No alignment

Left alignment
More alignments

Right alignment

Centered alignment
Alignment

- an example of *bad* alignment:

  - this is not a straight line ...
Alignment

- the same web page, with better alignment:
Alignment & Balance

- **Placements** of elements

- **Weight**: an image is considered balanced if the objects within are "equalized" between the horizontal and vertical axis of each item

- Weight can be influenced by the **size, shape or color intensity** of the objects

- A balanced, symmetrical design is appropriate for formal presentations

- **Asymmetrical** designs are less formal and are used when you want to create tension with the image
SYMMETRY
Symmetry & Asymmetry
Proximity & Unity

- The idea of proximity comes from placing design elements that have the same shape or style closer to each other.

- In the same way, elements or items that are not related should not be placed in close proximity.

- Grouping elements closer makes it easier for the eye to find matching information easier and faster.
- Proximity is used to group the links on the navigation bar. Similarly the image, title, and price of each bottle are grouped together.
Proximity

- Elements that are related should be grouped together,

- whereas separate design elements should have enough space in between to communicate they are different.
Proximity

- an example of bad proximity:

  • which heading applies to the items in gray – "Services" or "Resource Centre"?
    ➔ not clear from the spacing
Proximity

- the same web page, with better proximity:

- note the extra spacing on the menu
- it is now immediately clear which items the menu headings apply to
Proximity

- **bad proximity**: the subheading and the article have a huge space between them
  - they don't look like they're related
Proximity

- the same web page, with better proximity

Joint surgery saves health system money

Replacing hips and knees to treat severe arthritis not only relieves pain, it saves the health system money, a new study says

André Picard
From Wednesday’s Globe and Mail Last updated on Thursday, Jun. 25, 2009
05:00AM EDT

Performing hip and knee replacements to treat severe arthritis saves the health system money in addition to relieving the pain of most sufferers, new Canadian research shows.
Unity makes reference to the fact that elements within a design should be unified in content, color, and movement to avoid tension in the reader.
Proximity & Unity

- **Simplicity**: a design with few elements can be read and interpreted easier and quicker than a complex design with multiple elements.
Grid Systems

- Scaling smaller images to larger works
- To break down the observed world into smaller, more manageable sections
- To help achieve organization
- Grids are useful for defining key alignments and intersecting points within a composition
Grid Systems

- **Grid systems** bring visual structure and balance to site design.

- Used properly, they can enhance the user experience by creating predictable patterns for users to follow.

- Grids are structure imposed on chaos.
Arithmetic Grids

- Subdividing grids identifies dominant and subordinate intersecting points to use for the placement of elements
Combining grid systems can suggest scale changes, movement, and emphasis.
A grid provides system or format for organizing elements in a composition.

It can be a simple division, like the “invisible line” that serves as a means of aligning visuals in this poster.
Web Design 101: Gridding Your Website
Balance of Form & Content

- Users are pleased by the design but drawn to the content

- The colorful graphics grow around the blocks of content, leading the eye back to the information without interfering with the pages’ readability or organization.
Contrast

- The concept is simple: the greater the difference between a graphic element and its surroundings, the more that element will stand out.
Balance – Symmetry/Asymmetry

- *Symmetrical Balance*

- symmetry—called horizontal symmetry can be applied to web site layouts by centering content or balancing it between columns.
Asymmetrical Balance

Asymmetrical balance, or informal balance, is a little more abstract, and generally more visually interesting, than symmetrical balance.

Rather than having mirror images on either side of the layout, asymmetrical balance involves objects of differing size, shape, tone, or placement.
Rhythm & Repetition

- Any time you bring a set of like items together, they form a group.

- In the same way, repetition of colors, shapes, textures, or similar objects helps to tie a web page design together so that it feels like a cohesive unit.
Vareity & Uniformity

- Users recognize each page as belonging to the site

- Even if there’s a dramatic difference between the layout of the homepage and the rest of the site, a cohesive theme or style should exist across all the pages of a site to help hold the design together.
Format

- Format is used in two ways:
  - The surface area that contains the design composition
  - The general format that is determined by the venue or kind of design
Orientation

- The point of view determined by the designer, and it is the way the viewer is meant to relate visually to a design or an image

- Humans generally perceive the world standing or sitting perpendicular to the ground

- A person’s (natural) field of vision is an oval shape with the width roughly double the height
Theme & Motif

- **Theme:** Visual theme determines the elements to use and ways to use them in relation to a subject/topic
  - Presented as the premise of a story, symbolic association, or the use of a visual metaphor

- **Motif:** Concept(s) related to a theme
  - Often culturally related
    - Example – Arabesque, seasonal, urban, etc.
Eye Movement in Web Design

- The eye tends to gravitate to areas of most complexity first.

- In pictures of people, the eye is always attracted to the face and particularly the eyes.