The Interrelationship of graphic design and fine art

Antoinette Monnier

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The Interrelationship of Graphic Design and Fine Art

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18 June 1995
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I wish to thank my thesis committee – Deborah Beardslee, Tom Lightfoot and Barbara Polowy – for their help and support.

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Thank you Richard for telling me everything was going to work out when I needed to hear it.
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ABSTRACT

The graphic designer is a visual communicator who transmits messages from a client to an audience. The message must be clear and free of the distracting presence of the designer, because a designer’s personal biases and feelings are irrelevant to the client’s message. However, work produced by some contemporary designers has challenged the notion of clear visual communication and problem-solving. It is self-expressive, ambiguous, and open to interpretation, taking on characteristics traditionally associated with fine art rather than graphic design.

While the production and viewing of some graphic design is becoming a more private experience, the reverse is true in fine art. In the art world, individuals and groups are using methods of mass communication and mass production to address non-art audiences. They also have a social agenda which aims at informing and communicating.

Are the boundaries between graphic design and fine art crumbling?
Are we witnessing a redefinition of graphic design?

This thesis was an attempt at answering those questions through the examination of relevant issues, and an investigation of the current state of contemporary graphic design.

Research has shown that graphic design may be experiencing an identity crisis. Until now, the definition of graphic design has been inextricably tied to modernism. Modernism stresses clarity and objectivity. However, the work of David Carson, Rudy Vanderlans, or April Greiman does not fit the modernist mold. The many layers in these works seem almost chaotic, they are not easily understandable nor very legible. Moving away from modernism, this work is representative of postmodernism with its emphasis on complexity, pluralism, and the impossibility of universal meaning. This conflict between modernism and postmodernism is shaping graphic design today, and it may be forcing the redefinition of graphic design.

A survey was developed. Its purpose was to determine aspects which may influence a viewer’s perception of art and design such as context, intent, technology, sponsorship, etc. The survey was distributed to students and faculty in the School of Art and Design and the School for American Crafts. However, the responses could not be neatly categorized: they were as diverse as the individuals answering them. Some of those individuals demonstrated confusion concerning graphic design and fine art. Questions were answered with more questions, and it became clear that no issue could be resolved, only perhaps clarified.
Based on the research and the results of this survey, a book was written and designed for an audience of freshmen students in the School of Art and Design. It attempts to identify and clarify the various points of view regarding the relationship of art and design, and provides a theoretical and historical background to that relationship. The goal was to assist students in a better understanding of each other’s discipline of study, as well as an understanding of where they belong in the greater currents of art and design movements, ideologies, and history.
INTRODUCTION

Initially, the selection of this thesis topic was influenced by a personal interest in artists’ books. Artists’ books often mix fine art with the formats and media commonly used in mass communication and the mass production of graphic design. This interest in artists’ books provided a tentative approach toward a thesis topic. The discovery of an article by Rick Poynor ("Design Without Boundaries." ID, November 1993) made that choice concrete.

According to Rick Poynor, editor of Eye magazine, graphic design work produced in this decade has challenged our notion of that discipline. It is a manifestation of a new form of visual communication in which the distinction between art and design does not exist.1

Graphic design is in a state of flux. Graphic design journals and conferences are replete with discourse centering on ideological differences between two camps: one firmly grounded in modernism with its clear, functional communication; the other influenced by technology and the postmodern theories of semiotics and deconstruction. The latter is denounced by the former as “blips in the history of design and affronts to the sanctity of modernism.”2

Obviously, the discourse is not an easy one, and this conflict creates a climate of confusion and uncertainty for the student of graphic design. An inquiry into the state of contemporary graphic design was important in order to understand its direction in a period of transformation.

This thesis tests the following hypothesis:

*We are presently witnessing the creation of a new form of visual communication which blurs the boundaries between graphic design and fine art.*
There are plenty of resources for information about graphic design, fine art, modernism and postmodernism. However, research dealing specifically with the interrelationship of graphic design and fine art is more limited.

As mentioned previously, the thoughts of Rick Poynor in his article “Design without Boundaries” influenced the formulation of this thesis topic. In it, he advances that the relationship between graphic design and fine art is presently going through a major period of transition. There is division of opinion on what design should or should not be. Design is becoming increasingly experimental and conceptual, and may be a manifestation of a new category of visual communication which merges both graphic design and fine art.

The book Art and Graphics, edited by Willy Rotsler, deals with the correspondence between “free art” and “applied art.” A distinction is drawn between the two. “Free art” is free of any external responsibilities, and is produced for its own sake; “applied art” is in service of a third party for purposes which may be quite foreign from art, such as commerce. His book consists mainly of essays written by 16 designers, illustrators, and artists such as Herbert Bayer, Milton Glaser, and Jacques Garamond, in which they express their views on the topic. The book itself provides a variety of opinions, but the actual contributors lack diversity: all are born between 1900 and 1934, and 15 out of 16 are white males. Furthermore, while it relates to the topic, it does not address issues that arose after its publication such as the significance of computer technology, and the increasing importance of postmodern theories in design.

Avant garde theories relate directly to the interrelationship of graphic design and fine art. The avant garde did not seek to establish a boundary between fine and applied art. Nor did it seek to establish a boundary between art and life. Art was seen as a force that could transform society. The avant garde encompassed a variety of movements such as Dada, Futurism, Constructivism, De Stijl and others. Resources on the avant garde are plentiful. A good introduction was a videotaped lecture by book publisher Arthur Cohen. Viewed in Roger Remington’s Theories and Methods seminar, the videotape provided a good overview of the avant garde movements. Arthur Cohen also edited a portfolio reviewing Dada, Futurism, Constructivism, as well as the work of important avant garde typographers. A History of Graphic Design by Phillip Meggs and Art et Publicité edited by the magazine Beaux Arts give good overviews of the various avant garde movements. More in-depth information about specific movements can be found in Bauhaus by Frank Whitford, Futurism by Caroline Tisdall and Angelo Bozolla. Russian Constructivism is examined in Modern Art and Popular Culture: Readings in High and Low and in “Art, Ads and the Revolution” an ID magazine article by Michael McPherson.
Planning the master's thesis began in the fall quarter of 1994. After submitting the thesis proposal in September 1994, the thesis planning occupied the reminder of that quarter.

Planning began with an analysis of the situation and the formulation of problem and mission statements. Goals, objectives and strategies were set with research methods established to support them. An implementation plan was scheduled. Then, aspects of the thesis such as research, production, dissemination and evaluation were considered. Finally a bibliography was compiled to provide a list of relevant resources for the thesis study.

The thesis planning was monitored by Roger Remington in weekly meetings, and final copies of the thesis planning report were submitted to the thesis committee members - Deborah Beardslee, Barbara Polowy, and Tom Lightfoot. It can be viewed in Appendix 1 of this book.
RESEARCH

Upon completion of the thesis planning stage, work on the study itself began in the winter quarter. The initial emphasis was on researching trends and designers in contemporary graphic design. Since the information needed to be current, articles published within the past few years were the most helpful. Essays written by jurors in the catalogs of design competitions were quite enlightening. For instance, the 1994 book for the American Center for Design 100 Show included writings by Ellen Lupton, Neville Brody, Karrie Jacobs and Jeffery Keedy. In it they expressed their views on the state and future of graphic design. J. Abbott Miller's article "Word Art", published in Eye magazine, was helpful in its discussion of art which incorporates typography and/or mass media strategies. His article discusses the work of Jenny Holzer, Barbara Kruger, On Kawara, Jasper Johns, and others.

1. Discovering Issues

By the first full committee meeting in December 1994, various issues had been discovered concerning the relationship between graphic design and fine art.

- Technology
  Graphic design and fine art can share similar technologies. Electronic media has become particularly important. With the introduction in 1984 of the Macintosh by Apple, the computer has become a tool that is relatively inexpensive and easy to use. Both designers and artists have embraced computer technology as a means for producing their work. The computer, the video camera, the television, the photocopier – all are tools and outlets for designers and artists alike.

- Appropriation
  Graphic design and fine art have similar influences. Both appropriate elements from history and popular culture. Jeff Koons uses and exactly reproduces a Frangelico advertisement on canvas. The designer Charles Anderson borrows commercial art from the 40s and 50s in his promotions for the French Paper Company.

- Social and Political Concerns
  Graphic design and fine art are becoming increasingly socially and politically vocal. The designer Rick Valicenti bought two pages in ID magazine (July/August 1992) to voice his opinion. He tackles AIDS by denouncing the apathetic, the President of the United States, and money. The artist Barbara Kruger criticizes sexual stereotypes in her installations. Both take an activist stance, one in a design magazine, the other in a gallery.
• Ambiguity
Ambiguity is an aspect of many works of fine art. Like fine art, graphic design has also become more ambiguous. The increase in ambiguity is a manifestation of the influence of theories derived from semiotics such as poststructuralism and deconstruction.

Poststructuralism sees language as a system of signs consisting of words and concepts linked by culture. It is concerned with the connections between those signs and how they shape our cultural expectations. Poststructuralism rejects objectivity by emphasizing the arbitrariness of all signs, and the elusiveness of meaning.³

Deconstruction also emphasizes that meaning is elusive. It refers to the breaking down of a whole into components. Those components provide information about that whole or about the assumptions that one may have regarding it. It requires a viewer who is able and willing to understand meaning at several levels. One level may mean one thing, and another level may mean another thing, perhaps even the opposite.⁴ If the various levels bear different meanings, the resulting message can be ambiguous.

Some designers believe there is no such thing as universal meaning: no message can signify the same thing to everyone, and it is rather dictated by the viewer’s personal and unique experience. Those designers do not strive for objectivity and begin taking liberties with their audiences. They are more willing to be expressive and personal with messages that may not always be clearly understood.

• Subjectivity
Ambiguous messages lead to subjective interpretation. Subjectivity takes place within an individual’s mind. It has always been an integral part of art. Art requires the viewer to project his/her own experience into the work and derive meaning from it. On the other hand, graphic design has traditionally been more objective, shying away from personal prejudice and emotion. It seeks to convey a message for a client to an audience, and must therefore be clear to be understood. However, graphic design with several layers of meaning results in multiple interpretations from the viewing audience. The audience guesses the meaning, a guess inevitably shaped by personal experience. It may be an impression, a feeling or an emotion.
2. Formulating Definitions and Collecting Examples

At this point in the thesis, questions were raised and insight gained, but no real progress had been accomplished in testing the hypothesis. The topic of the interrelationship of graphic design and fine art needed to be separated into more manageable parts. Definitions had to be clarified, and a broader array of visual examples collected.

Books, catalogs and publications from art and design schools and organizations were consulted in order to discover how they defined graphic design and fine art, and what vocabulary they employed. Material from the following sources was reviewed: Rochester Institute of Technology, North Carolina State University, Virginia Commonwealth University, Cranbrook Academy, Rhode Island School of Design, American Institute of Graphic Arts, Graphic Design Education Association, and many others.

A composite definition of graphic design was formulated:

Graphic design brings meaningful form to a message by using type, image, and/or secondary elements in order to inform, persuade, or incite to action an audience in a language recognized and understood by it. It encompasses printed material, as well as environmental design, film, video, and multimedia.

Books on aesthetics and art criticism such as Criticizing Art, Understanding the Contemporary by Terry Barrett, Has Modernism Failed? by Suzi Gablick and A Modern Book of Aesthetics edited by Melvin Rader helped provide a definition of fine art.

Art is the expression of an artist's inner vision, using form, medium and subject matter to convey his/her experience for a viewer to see and interpret.

This view maintains that art creates its own reality, and does not need to serve a larger social purpose. This is opposite to the notion of art as an instrument of change.

As an instrument of change, art should be used to instigate changes within society, with issues that may go beyond pure aesthetics.

The RIT Wallace Library and its special collections were used as a resource for collecting examples of work in graphic design and fine art. To gain insight into both mainstream and experimental design, a variety of magazines were consulted: Print, How, Graphis, ID, Eye, as
well as newer publications like Fuse and Ray Gun. The special collections were also a good source of work by artists Warren Lehrer, Barbara Kruger, Jenny Holzer, Ed Rusha, and others.

3. **Understanding Modernism and Postmodernism**

Postmodernism and the philosophies it represents were instrumental in shaping the current state of art and design. Professors Tom Lightfoot and Robert Morgan suggested this movement may have a strong relationship to this thesis. Further investigation into writings in contemporary graphic design and fine art showed a recurrence of ideas about language, semiotics, deconstruction, structuralism and poststructuralism.

Understanding postmodernism is not possible without a knowledge of modernism. Postmodernism does not merely follow modernism. Rather, it reacts against modernism. Those ideologies live side by side, causing a tension that reverberates in the discourse of art and design. Thus, to understand the work of the 1990s, one must also understand ideas that emerged at the beginning of the century in Europe with the birth of modernism.

- **Modernism**

At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century Europe was undergoing tremendous change. With the Industrial Revolution, economies were shifted from principally agrarian to industrial. The automobile, the airplane, and other inventions were introduced at an accelerated pace. Europe was in a political turmoil with World War I, the Russian Revolution and the introduction of socialism and communism. Still influential today, modernism was not a single theory, but was rather a combination of ideologies and styles reacting to this environment.

Central to modernism was the avant garde, a group of movements composed of the Bauhaus, De Stijil, Futurism, Constructivism, Dada, and others. The avant garde celebrated technology and science and thrived towards innovation. It sought to completely change society in this new age through the integration of life and art. A scientific mode of thinking was favored, as was universal communication.

The modernist aesthetic and philosophy was spread by European designers, artists and architects who re-established their careers in the United States, as well as Americans such as Paul Rand, Lester Beall, and Charles Coiner. Some modernist leaders also spread their ideas through teaching: Laslo Moholy-Nagy established the New Bauhaus in Chicago (now the
Institute of Design), Herbert Bayer taught at the American Advertising Guild in New York, Josef Albers was at Black Mountain College in North Carolina.5

- Modernism and Graphic Design
One of the Avant Garde movements particularly influential to graphic design was the Bauhaus. Founded in Germany in 1919, the Bauhaus advocated the merging of art and industry, and the synthesis of fine and applied art. Most notably it advocated absolute clarity and objectivity, and abandoned the narrative for a more symbolic and universal communication. The designer was a problem-solver, a facilitator whose presence was not to be felt in the work. These views became extremely influential to the development of American graphic design when the rise of fascism forced the dissolution of the Bauhaus, and the emigration of modernist leaders to America.

When those artists and designers emigrated here in the late 1930s, American graphic design was in its infancy. There was no such thing as a graphic designer, but rather a layout person arranging "writers' words and illustrators' pictures upon the page [who would be] slowly replaced by the modern graphic designer, a conceptual problem-solver who engaged in the total design of space, orchestrating words, signs, symbols, and images into a communicative unity."6 This "modern graphic designer" has been and is still the norm in graphic design, but this modernist criteria of clarity and objectivity is being challenged.

- Modernism and Fine Art
With the Industrial Revolution, fine art was questioning its place within society. Art was losing its function of narration because populations had become more literate. Art had been a way to tell stories to those who could not read. For example, stained glass windows and paintings in churches visually narrated religious stories from the Bible. Art was also losing its function of visual record-keeping with the development of photography. Artists were no longer needed to make family portraits when photography could do it quite effectively. The pure aesthetic experience became an end in and of itself. The principle of art for art's sake was upheld. Art did not need to be useful and, in the new technological society, it had a spiritual dimension. Formalism was important, advancing the belief that form was paramount and could be judged objectively regardless of intent and subject matter.
Postmodernism

There is not a single theory of postmodernism, but rather different trends and theoretical directions derived from literary theory, semiotics, linguistics, philosophy, and architecture. Some important trends have been influential in graphic design and fine art such as structuralism, poststructuralism and deconstruction.

Structuralism was derived from the semiotic theories of the linguist Ferdinand de Saussure. He saw language as a system of signs consisting of words and concepts (signifiers and signified) arbitrarily linked by the culture. Signs are interconnected, are part of a structure, and therefore cannot be explained in isolation from each other. Structuralists (Claude Levi-Strauss, Jacques Lacan) were concerned with how those structures work, and the unconscious codes that rule them.7

Poststructuralists (Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Roland Barthes, Jean-François Lyotard) challenged structuralism's search for universal truth and belief in an unchanging human nature. Poststructuralism stressed the arbitrariness of all signs and the elusive nature of meaning, and that language, signs, and images all organize our psyche and everyday life.8

An important concept brought forth by Jacques Derrida is deconstruction. In deconstruction, the various components that form a whole are analyzed (such as a text, and its words, language, and metaphors) in such a way that those components provide information about the whole and the assumptions we hold regarding it, showing how things that seemed clear can actually be ambiguous.9

Postmodernism and Graphic Design

The postmodern principles of deconstruction are important. Assuming that meaning is evasive, alternate readings are provided through the layering of text and image, and the placement or emphasis of certain elements. Many designers are now sending more ambiguous messages, and are testing postmodern theories.

Postmodern architecture has been an influence in graphic design. In the book Learning from Las Vegas, architects Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown reject the clarity and purity of modernism, and embraces complexity, contradiction, and the American vernacular. Departing from the rigor of modernism, postmodern architecture uses ornamentation. It also alludes to the past rather than striving for innovation. It became important to graphic designers who not only borrowed freely from the vernacular, but also from past historical forms.
Postmodernism and Fine Art

Fine art has also been interested in the discourse that takes place between language and image, and how this relationship shapes our consciousness. It is believed that our cultural expectations are shaped by external factors such as language. Art questions cultural codes and explores the social, political, economic, and technological structures that lie at the base of art, culture, and society. It is pluralistic and political, and seeks to be more involved in society at large by using public ways of communication.

Postmodernism has caused a re-examination of graphic design and fine art, and what their function and role in society are. In some respects they have taken on each other's characteristics. Some graphic design has taken on the ambiguity, subjectivity, and self-expression of fine art. Fine art is using mass production, mass communication, and is becoming more involved with society at large. The boundaries between graphic design and fine art seem to be shifting, and a reevaluation of our perception of these disciplines is due.
Parallel to the research already mentioned, a survey was developed. It sought answers to certain questions concerning the intent of the artist or designer, the context in which the work is shown, and the importance of ambiguity, technology, and sponsorship in perceiving art and design. The purpose was to determine the extent to which those factors affect how we define graphic design and fine art.

The survey was distributed to students and faculty from the School of Art and Design and the School for American Crafts (See Appendix 2). It was produced in January 1994 and distributed throughout the winter quarter and part of the spring quarter. It originally consisted of 16 visual examples from graphic design and fine art, each accompanied by a brief explanation. That number was later shortened to 9 examples when the survey was deemed too lengthy and time consuming. One needed to decide whether each example was a product of graphic design, fine art, or somewhere in between. Ample space was provided for a written justification of each choice. An effort was made not to specify whether an artist or designer had produced the piece, in order not to influence the responses.

Time and effort was required to fill each survey, and some individuals did not have the patience to conscientiously answer the questions. There were also critics: some found the survey too simplistic, some wanted more context for the examples, while others thought the provided background was not objective enough.

Once the surveys were compiled, answers to the original questions of intent, technology, content, ambiguity and sponsorship were not found, but other issues were raised. It was difficult to sort out so many diverse voices and opinions. While some people showed a depth of reflection and knowledge, many did not seem to have a strong sense of what is involved in graphic design and fine art, even as the discipline they were in school to study.

The survey example Select Your Network was designed by P. Scott Makela in the course of his graduate studies in graphic design. It consists of 9 uneven units layered with the words "Invention Intuition Ideology" at the top and "Medium of Distribution" at the bottom. It seems to "present the viewer with a communication problem to solve," leaving it up to him/her to interpret the message. When confronted with this example, a RIT graphic design student responded that it was graphic design because of its grid-like structure. Although the grid is a common organizational method in graphic design, it does not define graphic design. In this particular case the student's justification relied on the identification of a tool, rather than on the larger issues of communication and problem solving.
Some students had a simplistic version of what was happening in disciplines they were not familiar with. An illustration student states “general beauty is not the primary concern [in graphic design] but rather the stimulation of purchasing behavior,” and a graphic design student defines fine art as “drawing, sculpture, and painting with little or no use of typography.” Graphic design often seek to influence one’s behavior for the sake of commerce, and art does include drawing, sculpture and painting, but those statements demonstrate an ignorance of the many facets of graphic design and fine art, as well as their historical contexts. These responses show a lack of awareness of the many functions of design, and of the range of media utilized in the arts.
Findings from the existing research and the survey responses were synthesized into a book designed for use by freshmen in the School of Art and Design. As mentioned earlier, there were many different opinions about graphic design and fine art. However, some students seemed to lack an awareness of what they actually entailed. This book is intended to be an educational tool that could inform students about the various viewpoints on the relationship between art and design. It also provides an historical and theoretical context to that relationship.

Titled The Interrelationship of Graphic Design and Fine Art, the book is composed of four sections: Introduction, History and Theory, Points of View, and Conclusion. The introduction presents the issue of the interrelationship of graphic design and fine art, defines those two disciplines, and shows their process. The History and Theory section provides information on modernism, postmodernism, and includes a timeline of graphic design and fine art from 1900 to the present. It gives an historical context to the relationship between graphic design and fine art. The Points of Views section informs the reader of the various opinions regarding that relationship. The Conclusion emphasizes the importance of being familiar with both graphic design and fine art, as well as their relationship.

1. Content

- Introduction
  
  The Issue

With modernism, the difference between graphic design and fine art was clear. Graphic design was a public experience involved with commerce and clients, seeking to communicate clear messages to large audiences. Fine art on the other hand was a private experience both for the artists producing the work and the viewer deriving meaning from it. Postmodernism has challenged this separation. Graphic designers are questioning the notion of clarity, simplicity, and objectivity. Some are producing work that is self-expressive and ambiguous. On the other hand, artists are taking on the public sphere, using techniques of mass production and mass communication. Streets becoming their outlets rather than galleries.

  Some definitions

This section defines graphic design and fine art for the reader not familiar with these disciplines. Please refer to page 8 of this documentation for those definitions.
The process
The last part of the introduction is a diagram of the process of art and design. The diagram shows that graphic design and fine art are both creative processes affected by similar elements, such as sponsor, concept, production, distribution, context, audience, etc.

The movements of modernism and postmodernism presented in the introduction are explained in more details in the History and Theory section.

- History and Theory
  Modernism
  Modernism was influential in shaping graphic design and fine art. Graphic design became rational, clear, and objective. Fine art adopted the principle of art for art's sake, and stressed form over intent or subject matter.

  Postmodernism
  Important trends in postmodernism have influenced graphic design and fine art. Some designers have rejected the austerity of modernism by embracing popular culture and past historical forms. In addition, designers explore the principles of deconstruction. They create complex layers of text and images, and question the possibility of universal meaning. Artists also explore the relationship of language to ourselves and society, and how it shapes our biases and expectations. Political and pluralistic, artists denounce those biases through the use of mass communication in order to reach a larger audience.

Timeline
A timeline represents graphic design and fine art from 1900 to the present. Concepts and movements, as well as visual examples that relate to the interrelationship of graphic design and fine art are incorporated into the timeline. The timeline graphically represents the sequence of movements and concepts and allows the viewer to make historical connections.

- Points of View
  Different points of view about the relationship of graphic design and fine art are examined in this section. A diagram graphically represents each of three viewpoints.
Graphic design and fine art are separate and different. Graphic design's primary responsibilities are to its client, its message, and its audience. It is an instrument to inform, to persuade, to sell—in essence to communicate a message for someone else. To be effective, the message must be understood by its audience, and therefore cannot be unclear or ambiguous. The designer, as mediator between client and audience, must first answer their needs.

Unlike graphic design, art is a private experience which touches the viewer on an intimate level. It is subjective and open to interpretation. Art is self-generated rather than generated by a third party, and the artist's intent and concept are most important.

Graphic design and fine art overlap. With the belief that no message is universal, designers deliver more ambiguous messages. Legibility is no longer a priority: the viewer is expected to become more involved. Graphic design is becoming more reflective on its history and theory, prompting designers to engage in more personal research to test ideas. This results in design that is self-referential, and only accessible to those few familiar with the theories behind it. This type of design does not serve a client or an audience, but is rather design for design's sake. Self-generated and highly personal, it moves towards the realm of art.

While some graphic design is becoming more introspective, fine art is moving into the public arena. Challenging the modernist view of art for art's sake, some artists feel that art should not be strictly about aesthetics and personal expression, but should take on social responsibilities. Art ought to provoke the viewer into re-evaluating his/her conception of reality, and incite the individual to action. It becomes involved in the community, moving away from the art world, and addressing non-art audiences.

Graphic design and fine art are similar. Trying to differentiate between graphic design and fine art is not necessary, nor desirable. This view was held by many avant garde movements at the beginning of the century. The distinction between fine and applied art was questioned. Art in any form was an instrument to better society, and the avant garde wanted it to be fully integrated into everyday life. Some contemporary artists and designers are also questioning this distinction between high and low forms of communication. They feel it only answers our need to categorize and systematize, ignoring the vitality of human experience and the impossibility of labeling it.
Conclusion

The debate surrounding the relationship between graphic design and fine art is unlikely to be resolved soon, however the study of that relationship serves a purpose. By becoming more familiar with both graphic design and fine art, students can gain a mutual respect of each other’s disciplines. In the likely event of working together, their mutual understanding will lead to more fruitful and productive collaborations.

Glossary

This section provides definitions to concepts introduced in the book. Many terms are explained in the main running text, but the glossary groups those terms for easy reference.

Selected Bibliography

A list of resources is provided to students. It is a shortened version in which every book and article relevant to the subject is not included. It was selected by keeping in mind an audience of freshmen students. Difficult and dense writings were avoided in favor of works that were successful in clarifying complex issues.

Several levels of information exist in this application. One level is the main running text which explains relevant issues and concepts. Another level is comprised of the visual examples that support the text. In addition, quotes and diagrams reinforce the text and examples. Verbal and visual means are incorporated to help the reader understand complex ideas.

The book addresses an audience of beginning college students. Therefore, an effort is made to keep the language as clear and simple as possible. It is important that students understand the concepts introduced, and verbiage would be an obstacle to that understanding.

2. Form

Dimensions

The book application was designed for use by students. For the sake of convenience, it needed to fit in a student’s notebook or easily be kept in a bookbag. The dimensions of the application were originally dictated by the 8.5 by 11 inch dimension of notebook paper, as well as a standard laserprintable size. However, the 8.5 by 11 size was deemed too common. The final dimensions are 8.5 by 8.5.
• Grid
The next step was devising a grid to organize the information and layout of the pages. Each page is divided into four columns, and each column is divided into 7 units. The 4 columns provided enough flexibility and diversity for the placement of text and images. It was also helpful in signifying the different paragraphs. Each paragraph was not marked by indentations or by additional line space, but rather by beginning at a different column.

• Typography
The main running text was set in Wunderlich (8 point with 12 points leading). Important words were called out in Wunderlich Bold (10 point) and in Wunderlich Medium (24 point). Commentaries accompanying the visual examples were set in Template Gothic (8 points), the quotes in Journal Italic (8 point), and the main titles in Journal Ultra (14 point). This set of typographic variables helped in differentiating between the various levels of information and added some visual interest through contrast and texture.

• Paper
The paper selected was Milkweed 80 lb Text from the Genesis line of the Cross Pointe Paper Corporation. The selection of paper was partly based on the environmental responsibility of the paper company. It was chosen from a line of papers which is not only made from 100% post-consumer waste, but is also acid-free and archival. The color selected was Milkweed, a creamy white paper which would not interfere with the color of the reproductions.

• Production
The book was designed on a Macintosh computer 840AV using the following software: QuarkXpress 3.3, Adobe Illustrator 5.5 and Adobe Photoshop 3.0. All proofs were printed on a 600 dpi black and white printer (HP LaserJet Jet 4MP), and the final color output was done on a Xerox 5775 Color Laser Copier with a resolution of 400 dpi.

For the final output, two pages were printed per 11 by 17 sheet. The sheet was then folded in half. Thus, each page had a double thickness. Once all the pages were folded and trimmed, they were wire-bound in the Media Center of the School of Art and Design.
EVALUATION

As previously stated, The Interrelationship of Graphic Design and Fine Art was designed for freshmen art and design students, thus they were asked to read and evaluate it. An evaluation form was created with brief questions related to first impression, delivery of information, visual examples, vocabulary and content. Additional space was provided for students to express their opinions in their own words. Tom Lightfoot generously agreed to use this evaluation as an assignment for two of his foundation courses. The book was photocopied in black and white, and distributed to several classes. Students had a week to read it, and were expected to evaluate it in class within discussion groups. Thirty-three evaluations were completed and returned. Overall, the reactions were fairly positive.

- First impression
  Students were asked the following question: “You have browsed through this book once, your first impression is...” The intention was to find out if the book seemed interesting enough at first glance to want to read it.
  Two students could not wait to read it.
  Nineteen thought the book looked interesting and deserved further investigation.
  Twelve were not sure but were not too excited.
  The book was successful in engaging the students’ interest with 21 who found it appealing, against 12 who did not.

- Multiple levels of reading
  The book has multiple levels of reading such as the main running text, explanations of examples, diagrams, quotes. They are set in different typefaces and different sizes. The intention of this question was to find out if those levels of reading enhance the book rather than detract from it.
  Thirteen students enjoyed the different levels, finding the book visually stimulating.
  Thirteen thought those levels added some interest.
  Four students were a bit confused by them.
  Three did not even know where to start.
  The students’ responses to the multiple levels of reading were positive with 26 out of 33 students who found them either stimulating or somewhat interesting.
• Visual examples
Visual examples accompany the text of the book, visually reinforcing what is written. This question attempted to find out if these examples were providing the students with help in understanding the main points of the book.
Twelve students found them very helpful in clarifying the points being made.
Fifteen found them somewhat helpful.
Three were indifferent.
Three either did not understand how they related to what was being said.
Overall, the visual examples do provide a helpful reinforcement to the main body of the text, with 27 out of 33 students finding them very helpful or somewhat helpful.

• Vocabulary and language
_The Interrelationship of Graphic Design and Fine Art_ introduces the students to many concepts they may not be familiar with. The language and vocabulary needs to be clear and simple enough for an audience of freshmen students.
Twenty-six students found the language and vocabulary to be appropriate.
Three felt patronized.
Three wished the book were easier to read.
The choice of vocabulary and language was very successful with an overwhelming majority of students (26 out of 33) finding it appropriate to their level of education.

• History and Theory
The book has a section explaining modernism, postmodernism and providing a time line. Its purpose is to allow the reader to understand his/her discipline’s background, and to make historical connections.
Thirteen students found it very helpful, they acquired a sense of where they stood in “the big picture.”
Fourteen found it somewhat helpful.
Three could not see the connection to themselves or their work.
One thought it had nothing to do with him/herself as a designer or artist.
Overall, the response to the History and Theory section was mostly positive with 27 students finding it very or somewhat helpful.
• Understanding and respect

The Interrelationship of Graphic Design and Fine Art hoped to be a step for students towards understanding and respecting a discipline they were not planning to study.

Six students found the book enlightening, giving them a new outlook.

Thirteen thought their attitude had changed in some ways.

Ten did not think the book had made a big difference.

One student felt it had made no difference.

Responses were mixed. Nineteen students felt the book had been illuminating or somewhat changed their attitude, but it made little difference to 11 students.

• Book as introduction

The book is an educational tool introducing students to modernism, postmodernism, and the various viewpoints related to the relationship between art and design.

Twenty-four students found the book an appropriate introduction to those concepts.

Three students were hungry for more depth, finding the book too superficial.

Three thought a bit too much information was given for an introduction.

The response to the book as an introduction to new concepts was positive, with most students finding it quite satisfactory.

• Additional comments

The copies of the book were in black and white, and several students expressed a desire for color. Some other negative feedback was that the book felt too much like a textbook, and that the layout was sometimes confusing. However, negative reactions were not the majority: the overall response to the book was good. Many students found it informative and useful, as well as visually interesting. Several students thought the book was a good reference because it was clear and concise.

Feedback from students was helpful in determining which areas of The Interrelationship of Graphic Design and Fine Art needed to be emphasized or modified. If the book was actually produced and distributed to students, it would be best to print it in color since several students felt it would add some visual interest. While The Interrelationship of Graphic Design and Fine Art is an educational tool, it could perhaps be more sensitive to the reading and viewing habits of an audience 18 to 19 years-old. Research into magazines and books addressing that particular audience might provide additional clues on how to interest students verbally and visually. Thus, fewer students would feel that they are reading a textbook.
Professor Tom Lightfoot felt that it was important to expose students to the concepts presented in *The Interrelationship of Graphic Design and Fine Art*, but not to expect them to understand those concepts. Exposure came first, understanding would perhaps come later with students gaining maturity. However, this book showed that freshmen students seem able to grasp complicated concepts when they are presented simply and clearly. They are capable of understanding greater connections. As one student puts it, “one day we’ll realize that everything is related to everything else.”
CONCLUSION

The original hypothesis for this thesis study stated that we are witnessing a new form of visual communication blurring boundaries of graphic design and fine art. However, rather than the emergence of a new form of visual communication, we may be witnessing a shift in the definition of graphic design. Graphic design has been defined along modernist guidelines, but it is now operating in a context permeated by a conflict between modernism and postmodernism, a context forcing a reevaluation of what graphic design is.

Some designers have challenged the modernist status quo in graphic design, and their work has been readily accepted by certain audiences. For example, the magazine Ray Gun designed by David Carson breaks the rules of legibility and clarity, and it develops a visual code that the reader must learn over time. "If you pick up the magazine one time, you will be lost, but after an issue or two, the reader who catches on feels he's a member of the club," says Carson.\(^1\) The viewing audience is willing to become involved, and accepts a publication that is not ruled by clarity and legibility. Audiences are changing, some have been weaned on the constant movement and aggressive stimulation of television. Chaotic, ambiguous and expressive work may be quite appropriate for a specific audience. This shows that graphic design does not always need to be objective, clear and legible to fulfill its mission. It may be moving away from its original modernist definition.

This thesis study provides a macro view of design and art. It helps to establish connections between movements and concepts of the past one hundred years that are affecting us as designers or artists, and allows the reader to gain a perspective on the conflict between modernism and postmodernism. It is important for both designers and artists to understand this conflict. The climate created by postmodernism encourages diversity and multiculturalism, and questions the validity of universal meaning. This can be challenging and confusing to the designer or artist which has been educated from a modernist point of view. However, by learning what modernism and postmodernism are and how they relate to each other, artists and designers can better understand the climate in which they work, as well as establish their own opinions regarding that climate.

This thesis focused more heavily on graphic design than fine art, thus further research in the area of fine art could be beneficial in making this thesis more relevant to artists. The inquiry could also be extended in many areas. One area could be an exploration of how the dialogue of between modernism and postmodernism in design and art may be a reflection of a society switching from an essentially white anglo-saxon male point of view towards multiculturalism and pluralism. Another issue is how television may be an influence on contemporary graphic
designers as well as the audiences viewing their work. Yet another is the influence of computer technology on the creation of a new aesthetic sensibility.

The interrelationship of graphic design and fine art is a broad topic which deserves further investigation. It is hoped that this particular study provides a starting point for the student of graphic design in shedding new light on his/her profession.
**Activist Art**  
Art that takes an active role in society by denouncing our social and political shortcomings, and advocating for change.

**Aesthetics**  
Theory of beautiful objects and experiences.

**Ambiguity**  
Open to multiple interpretations.

**Appropriate**  
Suitable for a specific mission, place or audience.

**Appropriation**  
Using all or parts of someone else's work. It can go from masterpieces of past artists and designers to common images from popular culture such as comics or advertising.

**Art as Expression**  
Expression of an artist's inner vision, using form, medium, and subject matter to convey his or her experience for a viewer to investigate and interpret.

**Art as Instrument**  
Art which instigates changes within society with issues that may be larger than aesthetics.

**Art for Art’s Sake**  
View that art is an end in and of itself, and does not need to be useful.

**Avant Garde**  
Movements from the earlier part of the 20th century such as Futurism, Dada, Constructivism, and De Stijl, which challenged art and society, and their relation to each other. The avant garde strived for innovation and the fusion of art and life.

**Bauhaus**  
German design school (1919-1933) advocating the merging of art and industry, and the synthesis of fine and applied art. It advocated absolute clarity, objectivity, and universal communication, and was particularly influential on American graphic design when its leaders migrated to America.
Deconstruction  It refers to the breaking down of a whole into components. Those components provide information about that whole or about the assumptions that one may have regarding it. It requires a viewer able and willing to understand meaning at several levels, one level meaning one thing, and another level meaning another, perhaps even the opposite.13

Formalism  View that artwork should be evaluated objectively, based on its form only rather than context or subject matter.

Graphic Design  The bringing of meaningful form to a message by using type, image, and/or secondary elements in order to inform, persuade, or incite to action an audience in a language recognized and understood by it. It encompasses printed material, as well as environmental design, film, video, and multimedia.

High and Low  Distinction drawn between high and low art, high and low culture. High being the fine arts and low being forms of mass culture such as newspapers, advertisements, comic books, graffiti, etc.

Layering  Trend seen in postmodern graphic design. There is a visual layering in which words and images are superimposed as well as a layering of meaning in which a variety of interpretations can be extracted from a single piece.

Legibility  Ease and speed with which printed material can be read.

Mass Media  Means of communication which reach a large audience such as magazines, newspapers, television, electronic sign displays, etc.

Mass Production  Means of producing an object in large quantities. It can be done through print, photocopy, photography, silkscreen, etc.

Objectivity  Unaffected by emotion, biases or personal prejudices.
**Poststructuralism** Philosophy with similar roots as structuralism, but rejecting its objectivity by emphasizing the arbitrariness of all signs, and the elusiveness of meaning.

**Semiotics** Study of systems of signs and symbols. It is composed of three areas: semantics, the study of what signs and symbols mean; syntactics, the study of how they are organized into a structural whole, and pragmatics, the study of how they relate to the user.14

**Structuralism** Philosophy derived from semiotics. Language is seen as a system of signs consisting of words and concepts arbitrarily linked by the culture. Signs are interconnected, and cannot be explained in isolation from each other. Structuralism studies the structure of signs and the unconscious codes that rule them.

**Subjectivity** Particular to a given individual. Taking place within one person’s mind and leading to individual interpretation.

**Vernacular** Refers to a “natural, unschooled sensibility free from stylistic self-censorship.”15 Examples of vernacular styles are crude hand signage, commercial art from the past, supermarket tabloids, etc.
   *ID*, November 1993, p50-55

   *Eye*, vol2 no8 1993, p5


   *Print*, November/December 1990, p84

   *Print*, November/December 1989, p73

6. Ibid. p68


8. Ibid, p111

9. Ibid, p112


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APPENDIX 1

Thesis Planning
November 8 1994

Antoinette Monnier
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The Interrelationship between Graphic Design and Fine Art: Towards a New Definition
Situation Analysis

Graphic design produced in the past decade has at times challenged our notion of what it is or should be, as it seems to cross over to fine art. Is this type of design indulging in pure self expression? Is its meaning too obscure to be qualified as a successful piece of visual communication? Is it art or is it graphic design? Is it neither? According to Rick Poynor, it is a new form of visual communication in which the distinction between art and design does not exist. To others it is the work of a few designers working on the fringe, and will remain so. It is important to clarify those issues, and decide if we are dealing with yet another avant-garde movement or if indeed we are witnessing a redefinition of graphic design.

Problem Statement

To determine if graphic design and fine art are merging into one new form of visual communication or if graphic design with a strong fine art overtone is a manifestation of the Avant Garde.
Research Methods

In order to organize the gathered information, a set of polarities will be established, creating continuums along which case studies in graphic design and fine art will be located.

**Designer/Artist**
- Self Effaced • Self Aware
- Responsibility to Others • Responsibility to Self

**Message**
- Mass Communication • Self Expression
- Client Originated • Self Originated
- Clear Meaning • Open to Interpretation
- Concordant • Controversial
- Traditional • Highly Experimental
- Systematic • Intuitive
- Detached • Emotional
- Mass Produced • One of a kind

**Audience**
- Group • Individual
- Popular • Elite

In addition, these following models will provide a basis for the analysis of graphic design and fine art:
**Mission Statement**

This thesis is an inquiry into the shape of contemporary graphic design. It will inform designers about its possible new definitions, and it will help them understand its direction in a period of transformation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Goals</strong></th>
<th><strong>Objectives</strong></th>
<th><strong>Strategies</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• To define the relationship between graphic design and fine art</td>
<td>• To show the direction contemporary graphic design has taken in order to provide a context to the viewer</td>
<td>• Interview designers</td>
</tr>
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<td>• Collect writings and visual examples from design publications</td>
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<tr>
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<td>• To show the direction contemporary fine art has taken also in order to provide a context to the viewer</td>
<td>• Interview fine artists</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• To demonstrate how graphic design and fine art can be similar</td>
<td>• Gather writings and visual examples from art publications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To research and analyze the relationship between graphic design and fine art in the past</td>
<td>• To establish the previous existence of the debate about the limits of design and art</td>
<td>• Identify similarities from collected examples and writings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• To research the history of the relationship between design and art</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To research and analyze the relationship between graphic design and fine art today</td>
<td>• To gather critical writings on the subject</td>
<td>• Collect writings on the subject in design as well as other disciplines</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• To provide an overview of visual examples in design and fine art in order to understand the scope of the relationship between these fields</td>
<td>• Read philosophies of various art and Avant garde movement</td>
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<td>• Collect examples of work from the Avant Garde (Futurism, DeStijl, Bauhaus, Constructivism...)</td>
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<td>• Collect writings merging design and art</td>
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<td>• Collect examples from design publications</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Sort out and organize examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals</td>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td>Strategies</td>
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<tr>
<td>To examine the research</td>
<td>• To understand the significance of the relationship between design and art and discover possible patterns in that relationship</td>
<td>• Organize collected information and derive conclusions from it</td>
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<td>• To draw conclusions about the future of graphic design</td>
<td>• Reflect on gathered research and infer from it and personal speculation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesis</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| To develop possible concepts for thesis application | • To explore a wide varieties of ideas from which the best ones can be selected | • Create a mind map or other brainstorming device  
|                        | • To generate many different visual solutions                               | • Select concepts to develop  
|                        |                                                                            | • Gather material to support design (images, words, quotes, etc...)  
|                        |                                                                            | • Produce thumbnails and rough sketches |
| Ideation               |                                                                            |                                                                            |
| To select the most effective design solutions | • To refine solutions with the strongest semantic/syntactic/pragmatic relationships | • Make formal decisions (system, format, colors, type, etc...) that support the concept most effectively  
|                        | • To get feedback from thesis committee and peers in order to reinforce the chosen direction and maintain high standards | • Produce tight comps  
|                        |                                                                            | • Meet with committee members  
|                        |                                                                            | • Show work in progress to peers and other designers |
| Evaluation             |                                                                            |                                                                            |
| To design the thesis application (poster series) | • To refine the final choices most worthy of being implemented | • Make last adjustments  
|                        | • To produce the design application                                           | • Ensure the series is unified  
|                        |                                                                            | • Contact and secure any service bureaus and any other professionals of assistance to production |
| Implementation         |                                                                            |                                                                            |
| To devise methods of evaluation | • To determine the effectiveness of the design solutions in order to learn and apply toward future experience and design problems | • Write questionnaire  
|                        |                                                                            | • Interview other designers  
|                        |                                                                            | • Compile opinions |
| Retrospective Evaluation|                                                                            |                                                                            |
Implementation Plan

NOVEMBER 28 TO FEBRUARY 5

Problem Identification, Research and Analysis, Synthesis

Before Christmas break (3 weeks) attend to anything that may require extra time such as: Interviews, Interlibrary loans, letter writing, phone calls, etc...

November 28       Winter Quarter Starts
December 8th      First Committee Meeting: Orientation
December 17       Christmas Break Starts
December 25       Christmas Day
January 2         Christmas Break Ends
January 5         Second Committee Meeting
February 2        Third Committee Meeting

FEBRUARY 6 TO APRIL 3

Ideation, Evaluation, Implementation

February 6 to February 19       Generation of concepts, thumbnails, rough sketches
February 20 to March 19         Selection of designs, Refinement
March 14 (thirteenth week)      Fourth Committee Meeting: Presentation of work in progress
March 20 to April 2             Final Refinement and production, writing of questionnaires for evaluation
February 27-March 2             Spring Break
March 6                         Spring Quarter Starts
April 3                         Thesis Show, questionnaires accompany the work

APRIL 3 TO MAY 15

Retrospective Evaluation

May 12               Last Daytime Class
May 15               Last Committee Meeting: Signing of the thesis book
May 20               Commencement
Pragmatic Considerations

The principal source for research will be the RIT Library and its Graphic Design Archive. Additional libraries will be considered through interlibrary loans, as well as design resources in the Boston area. The main expense will be in the production of the posters through a service bureau. At the moment, it is not possible to fully anticipate the budget. Several Syquest cartridges will be needed at 65 dollars each. It is likely that countless photocopies will be made, but the dollar amount cannot be determined at the moment. A Macintosh computer (Quadra 840AV) will be used for the compilation of the information and the final design solutions.

Dissemination

The thesis and its application will be disseminated first through the thesis show, which will allow an audience to view and evaluate it. Then it will be available at the Wallace Library Archives for anyone to consult.

Evaluation

Evaluation will be made throughout the process and at the thesis show both informally, and formally by means of a questionnaire available during the show. Evaluation will allow improvement throughout the experience, and the ability to learn from it once the final application is finished.
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Glossary of Terms

Aesthetics
Branch of philosophy that provides a theory of the beautiful and the fine arts.

Theories and descriptions of the psychological response to beauty and artistic experience.¹

Art
Quality, production or expression, according to aesthetic principles of what is beautiful, appealing, or more than ordinary significance.

Avant Garde
Anything genuinely innovative and pioneering, seeking to extend the boundaries of art and people's sensibilities, by sometimes subverting or opposing the ruling ideas and conventions of the day.

Movements from the earlier part of the 20th century such as Futurism, Dada, Constructivism, De Stijl which encompassed not just art, but many other aspects of society, and whose philosophies redefined the distinction between fine and applied art, introducing new approaches to the relationship between language and literature.

Deconstruction
Theory referring to the breaking down of something (an idea or value) in order to understand its components in such a way that those components will provide information about that thing or any convictions and assumptions that one may have regarding it. It requires a viewer able and willing to understand meaning at several levels, one level meaning one thing and another level meaning another, perhaps even opposite, pointing out the elusiveness of meaning.²

Graphic Design
Creative process combining type and image to produce a meaningful message in order to communicate to a given audience.

Fine Art
Disciplines primarily subject to aesthetic criteria or judgments of beauty and meaningfulness, such as painting, sculpture, literature, drama, architecture...

Pragmatic
Aspect of graphic design concerned with the practical aspect of graphic design, such as production, distribution, specification, visibility, etc...

Semantic
Aspect of graphic design concerned with what messages mean, how they communicate, and how they are perceived

Semiotics
Study of the ways in which systems of signs function and evolve, relate to meaning, serve and transform their user, can be improved to fulfill new needs and meet new challenges.³

Syntactic
Aspect of graphic design concerned with the formal qualities of graphic design, such as unity, contrast, composition, texture, shape, etc...

Visual Communication
Type of message making which relies primarily on imagery rather than language to communicate to its audience.

² Byrne, Chuck & Witte, Martha. "A Brave New World: Understanding Deconstruction". Print, Nov/Dec 1989
³ Toronto Semiotic Circle
APPENDIX 2

Survey Sample
This survey is part of my thesis research on the interrelationship between graphic design and fine art.

I would greatly appreciate your time and cooperation in completing it. If necessary, please return to my graduate mail folder. Thank you very much, Antoinette Monnier.

Check one: Faculty | Student

Write in: Year Level (If Student)

Department or Major

Following are a series of examples. Indicate whether they belong to graphic design, to fine art or somewhere in between. Most importantly please explain why you made that choice.

An individual designs an AIDS awareness piece. The message: “Demand the president act as if AIDS should die. Fuck apathy. If money talks why won’t it listen.” He then proceeds to purchase a double page spread in a prominent design magazine to feature his work. No client was involved, the work was completely self-generated.

A photograph of an AIDS victim occupies a full page in a fashion magazine. The disturbing image is meant to increase the viewer’s social awareness. It is not accompanied by any type except for the logo of the company who purchased the space in the magazine.

A group of women wearing gorilla masks to protect their identity paste posters on the walls of Soho incriminating the art establishment for its lack of support of women.
An individual participating in a group show generates a poster for that show, a work he considers pivotal. In a conceptual art gesture, he calls a poster company chosen from the Yellow Pages, dictates the information over the phone, and lets the company handle all the design and production.

Posters are put up throughout Manhattan. They consist of alphabetically ordered statements that are sometimes incompatible with each other, such as "Everyone's work is equally important. People who don't work with their hands are parasites. Labor is a life destroying activity." The viewer is forced to sort out his or her own opinion.

An individual runs across a series of romance puzzles. He proceeds to shift sections of one puzzle for another, thus questioning the "literary and illustrative language of the pictures." The result is entered in a graphic design competition and selected for exhibition.

A poster titled Select Your Network consists of 9 uneven units layered with the words Invention Intuition Ideology at the top and Medium of Distribution at the bottom. It seems to "present the viewer with a communication problem to solve", leaving it up to him or her to interpret the message.

An individual commissions a graphic design firm to make him a logo. The logo is then reproduced and installed in a gallery as part of an exhibition.

The book French Fries is a "visual interpretation of a play" in which each actor is represented by a specific typeface. In this particular scene, an argument breaks out between characters resulting in a raucous page spread.
A surfer magazine is redesigned. The contents page has a look of typographic "anarchy" in which letterforms are overlapped, smashed and upside down. Page numbers are nonexistent. It is a "code that, when deciphered by the readers, allows them to become part of the process."

An art publication commissions an artist to design the cover to its 30th anniversary issue. The result, reflective of the artist's idea of history, is composed of red dowel sticks arranged on linen to form a receding "Etc, Etc".

A billboard is displayed in Chicago. The words "We don't need another hero" run across the image of two children. Along the bottom of the billboard, it reads "A Foster and Keiser Public Message.

A cover is designed for an innovative magazine. Several years later, it is part of a large exhibit on the history of graphic design curated by a major art museum.

An individual creates a typeface consisting of abstracted letterforms. He later designs a poster for the font company selling it. It features a composition with the new font and a layering of type forms.

In Times Square, New York, an electronic sign displays a series of messages such as "Fathers use too much force" and "Torture is barbaric". It is a sign commonly used for commercial messages and is seen by thousands daily.
This survey is part of my thesis research on the interrelationship between graphic design and fine art.

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Thank you very much, Antoinette Monnier.

Check one: Faculty □ Student □

Write in: Year Level (if Student) □

Department or Major ILLUSTRATION

Following are a series of examples. Indicate whether they belong to graphic design, to fine art or somewhere in between. Most importantly please explain why you made that choice.

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A group of women wearing gorilla masks to protect their identity paste posters on the walls of Soho incriminating the art establishment for its lack of support of women.
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Check one: Faculty o Student o

Write in: Year Level (If Student) 4

Department or Major Illustration o

Following are a series of examples. Indicate whether they belong to graphic design, to fine art or somewhere in between. Most importantly please explain why you made that choice.

An individual designs an AIDS awareness piece. The message: "Demand the president act as if aids should die. Fuck apathy. If money talks why won't it listen?" He then proceeds to purchase a double page spread in a prominent design magazine to feature his work. No client was involved, the work was completely self-generated.

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A group of women wearing gorilla masks to protect their identity paste posters on the walls of Soho incriminating the art establishment for its lack of support of women.

Why? The images look like "graphic design" but seems expressionistic.
This survey is part of my thesis research on the interrelationship between graphic design and fine art.

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Check one: Faculty Student

Write in: Year Level (if Student)

Department or Major Illustration

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Thank you very much, Antoinette Monnier.

Check one:  
Faculty   Student   V

Write in:  
Year Level (If Student)  
Department or Major  

Following are a series of examples. Indicate whether they belong to graphic design, to fine art or somewhere in between. Most importantly please explain why you made that choice.

An individual designs an AIDS awareness piece. The message: "Demand the president act as if AIDS should die. Fuck apathy. If money talks why won't it listen." He then proceeds to purchase a double page spread in a prominent design magazine to feature his work. No client was involved, the work was completely self-generated.

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A group of women wearing gorilla masks to protect their identity paste posters on the walls of Soho incriminating the art establishment for its lack of support of women.

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...
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I would greatly appreciate your time and cooperation in completing it. If necessary, please return to my graduate mail folder. Thank you very much, Antoinette Monnier.

Check one: Faculty [ ] Student [ ]

Write in: Year Level (if Student) 2nd yr. grad
Department or Major [ ] Painting, Fine Arts

Following are a series of examples. Indicate whether they belong to graphic design, to fine art or somewhere in between. Most importantly please explain why you made that choice.

An individual designs an AIDS awareness piece. The message: "Demand the president act as if AIDS should die. Fuck apathy. If money talks why won't it listen." He then proceeds to purchase a double page spread in a prominent design magazine to feature his work. No client was involved, the work was completely self-generated.

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A photograph of an AIDS victim occupies a full page in a fashion magazine. The disturbing image is meant to increase the viewer's social awareness. It is not accompanied by any type except for the logo of the company who purchased the space in the magazine.

A group of women wearing gorilla masks to protect their identity paste posters on the walls of Soho incriminating the art establishment for its lack of support of women.
A surfer magazine is redesigned. The contents page has a look of typographic “anarchy” in which letterforms are overlapped, smashed and upside down. Page numbers are nonexistent. It is a “code that, when deciphered by the readers, allows them to become part of the process.”

It is very problematic to interpret and reduce anything to two dimensions. Life is not elegant. It is not a model. This survey is part of my thesis research on the interrelationship between graphic design and fine art.

I would greatly appreciate your time and cooperation in completing it. If necessary, please return to my graduate mail folder. Thank you very much, Antoinette Monnier.

Check one: Faculty  Student X  

Write in: Year Level (If Student)  Jr.  

Department or Major Painting  

Following are a series of examples. Indicate whether they belong to graphic design, to fine art or somewhere in between. Most importantly please explain why you made that choice.

An individual designs an AIDS awareness piece. The message: “Demand the president act as if AIDS should die. Fuck apathy. If money talks why won’t it listen.” He then proceeds to purchase a double page spread in a prominent design magazine to feature his work. No client was involved, the work was completely self-generated.

A photographer of an AIDS victim occupies a full page in a fashion magazine. The disturbing image is meant to increase the viewer’s social awareness. It is not accompanied by any type except for the logo of the company who purchased the space in the magazine.

A group of women wearing gorilla masks to protect their identity paste posters on the walls of Soho incriminating the art establishment for its lack of support of women.

A fancy message doesn’t change the fact that it is still only a message.
This survey is part of my thesis research on the interrelationship between graphic design and fine art.

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Check one: Faculty Student

Write in: Year Level (If Student) 4

Department or Major Painting

Following are a series of examples. Indicate whether they belong to graphic design, to fine art or somewhere in between. Most importantly please explain why you made that choice.

An individual designs an AIDS awareness piece. The message: “Demand the president act as if aids shouldn't. Fuck apathy. If money talks why won’t it listen.” He then proceeds to purchase a double page spread in a prominent design magazine to feature his work. No client was involved, the work was completely self-generated.

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A photograph of an AIDS victim occupies a full page in a fashion magazine. The disturbing image is meant to increase the viewer’s social awareness. It is not accompanied by any type except for the logo of the company who purchased the space in the magazine.

A group of women wearing gorilla masks to protect their identity paste posters on the walls of Soho incriminating the art establishment for its lack of support of women.
Please complete and return to my graduate mail folder (Building 7A), or mail to:

Antoinette Monnier
d/ Professor Deborah Beardslee
Graphic Design
School of Art and Design
73 Lomb Memorial Drive
Rochester NY 14623-5603

This survey is part of my thesis research on the interrelationship between graphic design and fine art.

I would greatly appreciate your time and cooperation in completing it. If necessary, please return to my graduate mail folder.

Thank you very much, Antoinette Monnier.

Check one: Faculty Student X

Write in: Year Level (If Student) 2
Department or Major PAINTING

Following are a series of examples. Indicate whether they belong to graphic design, to fine art or somewhere in between.

Most importantly please explain why you made that choice.

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A group of women wearing gorilla masks to protect their identity paste posters on the walls of Soho incriminating the art establishment for its lack of support of women.

Why? What is the symbol of a gorilla in this case? How is this "attack" similar or different from other gorilla girl attacks? Is it possible that if you look beyond the blatant feminist act you may find a more profound commentary within a commentary? Then again, maybe not. Either way, the action warrants more than a cursory examination. However, for the reasons mentioned above, the effect of the impact could very well be on the issue.
survey is part of my thesis research on the interrelationship between graphic design and fine art. I would greatly appreciate your time and cooperation in completing it. If necessary, please return to my graduate mail folder. Thank you very much, Antoinette Monnier.

If one: Faculty Student
in: Year Level (if student) 3
Department or Major: Graphic Design

These are a series of examples. Indicate whether they belong to graphic design, fine art or somewhere in between. Importantly please explain why you made that choice.

Individual designs an AIDS awareness piece. The message: "Demand the act as if it should die. Fuck apathy. If money talks why won't it listen." He proceeds to purchase a double page spread in a prominent design magazine to display his work. No client was involved, the work was completely self-generated.

A surfer magazine is redesigned. The contents page has a look of typographic "anarchy" in which letterforms are overlapped, smashed and upside down. Page numbers are nonexistent. It is a "code that, when deciphered by the readers, allows them to become part of the process."

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This survey is part of my thesis research on the interrelationship between graphic design and fine art.

I would greatly appreciate your time and cooperation in completing it. If necessary, please return to my graduate mail folder. Thank you very much, Antoinette Monnier.

Check one: Faculty __ | Student __

Write in: Year Level (if student) __

Department or Major JADC

Following are a series of examples. Indicate whether they belong to graphic design, to fine art or somewhere in between. Most importantly please explain why you made that choice.

An individual designs an AIDS awareness piece. The message: “Demand the president act as if aids should die. Fuck apathy. If money talks why won’t it listen.” He then proceeds to purchase a double page spread in a prominent design magazine to feature his work. No client was involved, the work was completely self-generated.

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An art publication commissions an artist to design the cover to its 30th anniversary issue. The result, reflective of the artist’s idea of history, is composed of red dowel sticks arranged on linen to form a receding “Etc, Etc.”

A billboard is displayed in Chicago. The words “We don’t need another hero” run across the image of two children. Along the bottom of the billboard, it reads “A Foster and Keiser Public Message.”

A cover is designed for an innovative magazine. Several years later, it is part of a large exhibit on the history of graphic design curated by a major art museum.

An individual creates a typeface consisting of abstracted letterforms. He later designs a poster for the font company selling it. It features a composition with the new font and a layering of type forms.

In Times Square, New York, an electronic sign displays a series of messages such as “Fathers use too much force” and “Torture is barbaric.” It is a sign commonly used for commercial messages and is seen by thousands daily.

Why? Although it’s unclear at first there is a message that most will get. There is order to it.

Why? Did the picture + text start together? If not it’s GD if it is FA. Not sure about this one too.

Why? Typical GD - basic design concepts - thought out.
This survey is part of my thesis research on the interrelationship between graphic design and fine art.

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Thank you very much, Antoinette Monnier.

Check one: Faculty | Student
Write in: Year Level (if Student) GRAD
Department or Major PRINTMAKING

Following are a series of examples. Indicate whether they belong to graphic design, to fine art or somewhere in between.

Most importantly please explain why you made that choice.

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An individual famous for his manipulation of the mass media and the art world develops a series of self-promotion ads which depict him in a variety of situations, and are intended to appear in a range of art magazines. The copy includes his name and the galleries representing him.

A photograph of an AIDS victim occupies a full page in a fashion magazine. The disturbing image is meant to increase the viewer’s social awareness. It is not accompanied by any type except for the logo of the company who purchased the space in the magazine.

A group of women wearing gorilla masks to protect their identity paste posters on the walls of SoHo incriminating the art establishment for its lack of support of women.

Why? Because the piece is full of promotion and not mere “cerebral stimulation.” I feel this piece is much more a graphic design image.

Why? Because this piece is going for shock value and it incorporates its own identity—no matter how minimal. They are essentially trying to convey their own awareness. It is to generate support for their product.

Why? Because the piece was generated out of political motivation and it is for a particular organization not to be decorative—bald to be honest. Yet it still conveys a specific provocative and shocking message—regardless of its obscurity. One has to think about the reality of how good ideas are developed. Therefore it is part of graphic design.

Why? Go Gorilla Girls!
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In Times Square, New York, an electronic sign displays a series of messages such as "Fathers use too much force" and "Torture is barbaric." It is a sign commonly used for commercial messages and is seen by thousands daily.
I believe that the more open for individual interpretation a piece is, the more it can be classified as fine art. Whereas, the primary role of graphic design is to communicate a message in the most aesthetically pleasing way possible while also "laying out" the intended image. The viewer is left with an unforgettable message.

This survey is part of my thesis research on the interrelationship between graphic design and fine art.

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Check one: Faculty Student

Write in: Year Level (If Student) 6 7 8

Department or Major Graphic Design

Following are a series of examples. Indicate whether they belong to graphic design, to fine art or somewhere in between. Most importantly please explain why you made that choice.

An individual designs an AIDS awareness piece. The message: "Demand the president act as if AIDS should die. Fuck apathy. If money talks, why won't it listen." He then proceeds to purchase a double page spread in a prominent design magazine to feature his work. No client was involved, the work was completely self-generated.

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In Between fine Art, Graphic Design

Why? The main intent here is to inform, so it's more graphic design.

A billboard is displayed in Chicago. The words “We don't need another hero” run across the image of two children. Along the bottom of the billboard, it reads “A Foster and Keiser Public Message.”

In Between fine Art, Graphic Design

Why? It's more of a fine art piece because of the materials and more importantly, the composition. It would be more graphic design oriented if the artists idea of history is evident to viewers, on the cover.

A cover is designed for an innovative magazine. Several years later, it is part of a large exhibit on the history of graphic design curated by a major art museum.

In Between fine Art

Why? Graphic design because it has its strong implication. I'm assuming the billboard's viewers are familiar with Foster and Keiser. I'm not—who are they?

An individual creates a typeface consisting of abstracted letterforms. He later designs a poster for the font company selling it. It features a composition with the new font and a layering of type forms.

In Between fine Art

Why? Graphic design because it's attempting to influence people with the messages. It's not open to individual interpretation. The format (electronic sign) location makes it difficult for me to accept this as a piece.

In Times Square, New York, an electronic sign displays a series of messages such as “Fathers use too much force” and “Torture is barbaric.” It is a sign commonly used for commercial messages and is seen by thousands daily.

In Between fine Art

Why? Graphic design because it has its strong implication. I'm assuming the billboard's viewers are familiar with Foster and Keiser. I'm not—who are they?

In Between fine Art

Why? Graphic design because it's attempting to influence people with the messages. It's not open to individual interpretation. The format (electronic sign) location makes it difficult for me to accept this as a piece.
This survey is part of my thesis research on the interrelationship between graphic design and fine art.

I would greatly appreciate your time and cooperation in completing it. If necessary, please return to my graduate mail folder. Thank you very much, Antoinette Monnier.

Check one:

- Faculty
- Student

Write in:

- Year Level (If Student) 3
- Department or Major (GRAPHIC DESIGN)

Following are a series of examples. Indicate whether they belong to graphic design, to fine art or somewhere in between. Most importantly please explain why you made that choice.

An individual designs an AIDS awareness piece. The message: “Demand the president act as if aids should die. Fuck apathy. If money talks why won’t it listen.” He then proceeds to purchase a double page spread in a prominent design magazine to feature his work. No client was involved, the work was completely self-generated.

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An individual creates a typeface consisting of abstracted letterforms. He later designs a poster for the font company selling it. It features a composition with the new font and a layering of type forms.

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This survey is part of my thesis research on the interrelationship between graphic design and fine art.

I would greatly appreciate your time and cooperation in completing it. If necessary, please return to my graduate mail folder. Thank you very much, Antoinette Monnier.

Check one: | Faculty | Student ✓
Write in: | Year Level (if Student) 1st year | Department or Major Graphic Design

Following are a series of examples. Indicate whether they belong to graphic design, fine art or somewhere in between. Most importantly please explain why you made that choice.

An individual designs an AIDS awareness piece. The message: “Demand the president act as if aids should die. Fuck apathy. If money talks why won’t it listen.” He then proceeds to purchase a double page spread in a prominent design magazine to feature his work. No client was involved, the work was completely self-generated.

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A group of women wearing gorilla masks to protect their identity paste posters on the walls of Soho incriminating the art establishment for its lack of support of women.

Why? Using figures/faces to design

Why? Engaging a sense of image

Why? Using designed posters to protect their artistic freedoms.
A surfer magazine is redesigned. The contents page has a look of typographic "anarchy" in which letterforms are overlapped, smashed and upside down. Page numbers are nonexistent. It is a "code that, when deciphered by the readers, allows them to become part of the process."

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Check one: Faculty ☑ Student

Write in: Year Level (If Student) 5

Department or Major Painting

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A group of women wearing gorilla masks to protect their identity paste posters on the walls of Soho incriminating the art establishment for its lack of support of women.
A surfer magazine is redesigned. The contents page has a look of typographic "anarchy" in which letterforms are overlapped, smashed and upside down. Page numbers are nonexistent. It is a "code that, when deciphered by the readers, allows them to become part of the process."

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A billboard is displayed in Chicago. The words "We don't need another hero" run across the image of two children. Along the bottom of the billboard, it reads "A Foster and Keiser Public Message."

An individual creates a typeface consisting of abstracted letterforms. He later designs a poster for the font company selling it. It features a composition with the new font and a layering of type forms.

In Times Square, New York, an electronic sign displays a series of messages such as "Fathers use too much force" and "Torture is barbaric". It is a sign commonly used for commercial messages and is seen by thousands daily.
This survey is part of my thesis research on the interrelationship between graphic design and fine art.

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Check one: Faculty | Student

Write in: Year Level (If Student) 2

Department or Major Illustration

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Check one: Faculty  Student  

Write in: Year Level (if Student) 3  

Department or Major  Graphic Design

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Check one: Faculty  Student

Write in: Year Level (if Student)  Junior

Department or Major  Graphic Design

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Check one: Faculty  Student

Write in: Year Level (if student)  13

Department or Major  JADC

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A group of women wearing gorilla masks to protect their identity paste posters on the walls of Soho incriminating the art establishment for its lack of support of women.

Why? It still seems to be a form of advertising even without type.

Why? The gorilla women seem much more concerned with communicating their ideas than producing good design.

An individual famous for his manipulation of the mass media and the art world develops a series of self-promotion ads which depict him in a variety of situations, and are intended to appear in a range of art magazines. The copy includes his name and the galleries representing him.

Why? It seems the artist is more concerned with his own ideas, rather than why he’s using graphic design for his own needs.

Why? Being paired with a design magazine makes it graphic design, although it does have aspects of self-expression.
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Check one: Faculty  Student

Write in: Year Level (If Student)

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In Times Square, New York, an electronic sign displays a series of messages such as 'Fathers use too much force' and 'Torture is barbaric.' It is a sign commonly used for commercial messages and is seen by thousands daily.

In graphic design, there is a blend between fine art and commercial elements.

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Check one:  Faculty   Student

Write in: Year Level (If Student) Junior

Department or Major Graphic Design

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Write in:  Year Level (if Student)  4

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A group of women wearing gorilla masks to protect their identity paste posters on the walls of Soho incriminating the art establishment for its lack of support of women.

An artist known for spreading out and being bold in design. Graphic design takes basic elements to create and push the meaning. This speed is acceptable as well, as graphic design is about but has a much more fine art twist to it.
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APPENDIX 3

Book Application
APPENDIX 4

Evaluation
The Interrelationship of Graphic Design and Fine Art

Evaluation

Please circle the most appropriate response for each question

You have browsed through this book once, your first impression is:
1. You can't wait to read it
2. It looks interesting, and may deserve further investigation
3. You're not sure, but you are not too excited
4. It bores you
5. Other__________________________

This book has several layers of reading: quotes, explanations of examples, words larger or bolder, diagrams
1. It's visually stimulating, and you like being able to pull out information here and there
2. It's OK, it does add some interest
3. It's a bit confusing
4. It's a jumble, you don't know where to start
5. Other__________________________

Visual examples accompany the text. How do you feel about them?
1. You find them very helpful, they really clarify things
2. They somewhat help you understand the points being made
3. You could take 'em or leave 'em
4. They're confusing you, they don't seem to relate to what's being said
5. Other__________________________

What do you think of the vocabulary and language?
1. You feel talked down to. This is college, not high school
2. You think it is appropriate to your educational level
3. It's tough. You wish it were easier to read
4. It's way above your head
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It is easy to read. However, the ideas need to become more in-depth...

It seems to only scratch the surface...

This bothers me...
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