

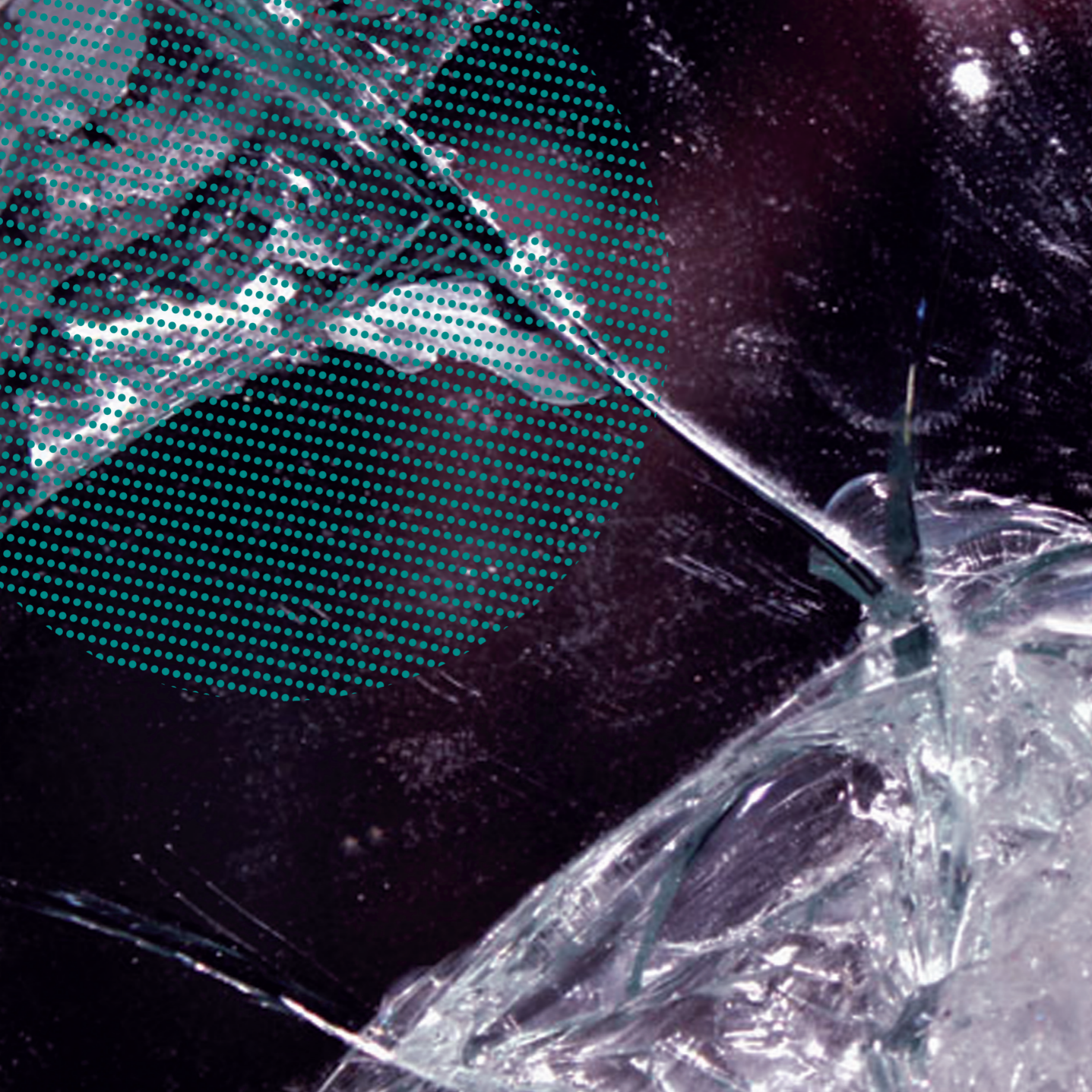


CREATING AN ORIGINAL IN A COPYCAT WORLD

With an abundance of visual material at our disposal, why is it designers feel the need to resort back to visual clichés in order to seize the attention of the desired spectators?

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READY TO RECITE YOUR **A,B,C'S?**



A -

B - BLOG ADDRESS; GEMMADESIGNDISS11.WORDPRESS.COM

C -

D -

E -

F -

G -

H -

I - I MUST BE SEEING THINGS; [\[CHAPTER 2\]](#) - PAGE 7

- IN THE NICK OF TIME; [\[APPENDICE\]](#) - PAGE 19

J -

K -

L -

M -

M - NOTHING VENTURED, NOTHING GAINED; [\[ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS\]](#) -
PAGE 25

O -

P - PICTURE PERFECT; [\[ILLUSTRATION LISTING\]](#) - PAGE 29

Q -

R -

S -

T - TAKE A PICTURE IT'LL LAST LONGER; [\[CHAPTER 1\]](#) - PAGE 31

- THE NAKED TRUTH; [\[BIBLIOGRAPHY\]](#) - - PAGE 41

- THERES NO TIME LIKE THE PRESENT; [\[INTRODUCTION\]](#) - PAGE 47

U -

V - VISION VS MISSION; [\[DEJA VU DESIGN\]](#) - PAGE 53

W - WHEN PUSH COMES TO SHOVE; [\[CONCLUSION\]](#) - PAGE 55

X -

Y - YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN; [\[CHAPTER 3\]](#) - PAGE 61

- YOU THINK ITS ALL BENT OUT OF SHAPE [\[EXPLANATION\]](#) - PAGE 79

Z -



I MUST BE SEEING THINGS?



How many times do you suppose designers get advised, 'When at first you don't succeed, try try again' nevertheless as chapter one suggested, visual communication is set out to pierce the viewer and capture their attention in a momentary glance, however this will not surface to much if the designs themselves are lack lustre and as flat as a pancake.

'A CLICHÉ IS A PHRASE EXPRESSION OR IDEA WHICH HAS BEEN OVERUSED TO THE POINT OF LOSING ITS VALUE'.

[<http://homeworktips.about.com.26/10/2011>]. In their original state, these ideas were exciting and fresh, and with this carried a level of impact in its path.

Over time these clichés tend to become rather flaccid and the excitement of their meaning diminishes. Many followers of design seem to nip and tuck the style into something rejuvenated. Scores of designers use styles as a basis of their creative ideas, this tends to be the fundamental reason for the cliché being excessively weathered and worn-out.

Looking at design in terms of visual communication, clichés are used as a form of shorthand: for the reason that we are all familiar with clichés, which of course we are, or else they would not be clichés, we know exactly what they mean. 'It's an undemanding way of portraying an idea or concept that requires few words and allows you to say something simply and concisely'. [<http://www.computerarts.co.uk.16/09/2011>]. The use of clichés subconsciously merged into our signs and symbols within society can be extremely useful. True to fact, it saves time; nevertheless

it does suggest a certain degree of laziness to depend on such a uniform way of communication. A designer is fully aware of the power of a glance within an image and knowing this, ignites a sense of functionality and immediacy that needs to be transmitted to the desired audience.

Why is there a magnetic field which draws us back to the use of a cliché? In literature maybe, clichés portray a sense of inexperience and can make the text bland and stale; whereas in relation to advert design, the time in which the message reaches the audience is cut.

Although many people are able to dissect an image through its use of colours and symbols, 'subconsciously we're able to uncover messages behind more complex themes constructed within other mediums such as advertising and book design', [www.computerarts.co.uk.16/09/2011]. Could it be that designers underestimate individuals intelligence? We are rarely challenged in terms of uncovering messages within the adverts that cling to our billboards in today's society. Furthermore we have an abundance of substances to create design which should facilitate us to push the boundaries of what we expect, as well challenge our understanding of concepts. Saying that, particular styles and clichés of design have been used timelessly, this begs the question whether the design we see nowadays within advertising loses its impact or whether there's a slump in imagination. When designers launch a new idea or project into the world, it becomes a natural process to hunt for inspiration and 'the use of connections to distinguish what has been formed before as a way to tell your story', [www.sethgodin.typepad.com.25/10/2011].

We are all individuals and the more individuality we can bring in the approach to our work, the more successful the outcome will be and received. In a retrospective thought, we have become entrapped in a culture whereby many do not respect or support creativity. Journalist Jaci Howard for insightful website About.com, highlights an intriguing point regarding the expectations of designers. 'A creative person is keen on defying the rules that once were, surely if anyone were able to recreate clichés, designers can.' [<http://desktoppub.about.com.14/09/2011>].

The job of a contemporary designer is to somehow manipulate these clichés by recasting their traditional meaning. It is those designers of an amateur standard that do not attempt to alternate their significance whereas those designers with clever intentions invest copious amounts of time to reinvent a new twist with new levels of meaning. Heller states how graphic design encompasses vast amounts of image reusing and we should be keen to embrace this aspect of design and create a new way for the people of the targeted culture to view the message and idea, 'Since Graphic Design can incorporate a large part of image recycling, designers should surely strive to source out the most uncommon ways of presenting the concept', [Heller.11].

The studies displayed in this chapter have encouraged me to explore the ways in which designers settle for the use of dated clichés within their visuals. Although they appear to be frowned upon in literature; as they showcase an uninspired flare, designers still use them with full intent knowing that the audience will grasp its concept effortlessly. The visual cliché as explored in the forthcoming chapter; is a way of reinforcing a message through the medium of a visual.

WE ARE SUBJECTED TO HUNDREDS OF ADVERTISEMENTS BUT HOW MANY OF THOSE DO WE REALLY TAKE ON BOARD

We are subjected to hundreds of advertisements, but how many of those do we really take on board?

The 21st century individual leads a fast laned daily routine. Unique advertising campaigns with poignant messages easily grasped whilst being more relatable. In advertising, the notion of impact is key. An individual can walk past an advert in a second, in that second you should be captured by the message injected into the design. Whether it is a provocative image or a fleeting realisation, the risk in using such material to attain the attention of the individual is often one which will pay off. By playing on emotions and senses, individuals are able to conjure up their own visual representation of the advertisement.

Knowing that associations are being made within our cultures, the consequence of a developed language in design is prominent in terms of recording this into visual means.

The work of Martin Jay on whether the use of 'one of the noblest senses', [<http://www.ucpress.edu>, 02/12/2011], we inhabit was in meltdown during the twentieth century. Renowned historian besides a social theorist, Martin Jay illustrates a theory that just by looking at the most universal language we use, we can see how this has been confirmed in the use of visual language and stereotypes; 'Even a rapid glance at the language we commonly use will demonstrate the ubiquity of visual metaphors', [Jay,1]. The way which new areas of language can infiltrate in to visual design puns as well as new phrases within design coined and displayed within language. Jay continues to explain how if we maintain a level of attention to the visual ideologies of design, we will eventually see how this is mirrored in perception and in language. Reading this interpretation of a theory has made me think about how the idea of a cliché has developed.

Opting to look deeper into advertising and the reasoning of how we are able to uncover the meaning from the author in the desired way, selecting an advertising campaign to string my findings together seemed a concrete decision. Vast amounts of adverts are beautifully constructed highlighting their attributes as a brand whilst also illustrating ideas and notions which could be pinpointed as clichés regarding the social standing and behaviour of individuals. To aid me in understanding the

relation between the advertisement you see and the intended message you obtain, I exposed how Judith Williamson uses various perceptions of a viewer to make us realise how the meaning is originally created using the basic fundamentals of knowledge and common sense.

Judith Williamson is a prime example of a writer and critic who resounds the fact that advertising is still an important factor in today's culture. *Decoding Advertisements* divulges into the process in which meanings behind the advertisements are constructed. Advertising is a crucial way consumerism to ignite the need for manufactured goods to act as a creation of classes in our society. Williamson speaks strongly of the connection of the people and the object and how they become interchangeable. She states how the functionality of an advert is not only to sell but to translate a concise message to the people, '... Advertisements have to translate statements from the world of things into a form that means something in terms of people', [Williamson.12]. From this statement, I have to question, how is it determined the level of meaning and the challenge set upon people to uncover the meaning from the advert?

Decades ago it was sensed that individuals were identifiable as the social classification, yet now, living and breathing in a manufactured 21st century, Williamson agreeably states, 'it is products of the process that are used, in the false categories invoked by advertising, to obscure the real structure of society by replacing class with the distinctions made by the consumption of particular goods', [Williamson.13].

Defiantly Williamson indicates that we are sectioned by what we consume. Why are we compelled to devour the products displayed in the adverts or in Harvey Nichols, obliged to go the Seasonal Sale, when the mannequins are evidently painting a stampede nature of the consumers? Differentiation is what separates ad's trying to convey the same idea, [<http://www8.georgetown.edu.14/10/2011>]. Clothing sales are precisely the types of products that need to be advertised because a difference needs to be created. If likely consumers can not tell apart the products in question, how are they expected to select which product to buy? Williamson contends that the way advertisements create difference is through the image. To create a difference in meaning, the image needs to illustrate that difference. Looking back to area of interest; being visuals within an advertising campaign, it isn't enough to know who and what is being sold. Individuals from varying social standings may not be aware of resembling connotations to the brand, the attributes of the brand are essential to be fed through into the advert.

So far, I have made a prominent suggestion that the incentive to utilise clichés within the concept of a visual lies with the designer. Evidently, clichés can be transcended through decades, however, is it really a case of the clichés being manufactured in design or are they rooted within our perceptions. In contrast to Roland Barthes, philosopher, communication theorist Marshall McLuhan enthuses concerning how our very own perceptions are in fact clichés. From Cliché to Archetype conveys two testing ideas from McLuhan divisioned from the main theme of how engaging the world has changed, paying particular attention to the modern world. Having attained an understanding of the term Cliché earlier in the chapter, this left me to uncover the connotation of the expression archetype. McLuhan dissects an archetype as 'a mythical, universal figure or idea that repeats itself throughout history and across cultures' [<http://www.cyberchimp.co.uk,02/12/2011>], I understand this to mean a generic version or a typical individual or thing. McLuhan broadens these two expressions further than their usual literal meanings. For instance, he disputes that our very perceptions are clichés, since they are highlighted by the structures of culture. We tend to see or hear what we expect to see or hear. Using McLuhan's theory as a way of formulating a new approach to a cliché provides a direct association to my outlined suggestions at

TO CREATE IN MEANIN NEEDS TO THAT DIFFI

I have displayed up until now that clichés are formulated as a dated and sour device to use in a visual. The immediate thought of using a stereotypical perception within design is lack lustre and unimaginative, the practicalities that come with them balance out the negativity for the designers.

Being able to attain a memorable reaction from an individual through the use of a cliché which they can clearly relate to, means that their role as a designer in enforcing the concept from drawing board to bill board has been triumphant. If design as it stands works so well, it questions why designers would want to upset the balance of a happy medium to create originality which could pose the thought of being side-lined. I found an interesting excerpt from American marketer and writer Seth Godin. He indicates that merging in with the existent crowd isn't as demoralising as one might think, 'You can't be offbeat in all ways, because then we won't understand you and we'll reject you. Some of the elements you use

should be perfectly aligned with what we're used to', [<http://sethgodin.typepad.com,01/12/2011>]. To understand his point of view, I have reflected on my own way of perception. If the power of my glance is used and struggling to uncover a message within the immediate seconds, I tend to withdraw and move on. This reiterates Godins point in terms of being rejected; people respond to familiarity and very rarely do they react positively to vast degrees of change.

The unveiling of a paradox regarding the opinion of a cliché has reassured me as a designer as I have become a culprit to the use within visual communication. The way in which language is shaping our society and culture, and in reversal how society and culture is shaping our language leads us to assume; without realising it we are programmed with clichés to express our mood and emotions as part of our daily façade. McLuhan's insight to how a cliché can be summoned back as a perception or archetype has triggered another dimension to the argument, as theoretically a cliché is an overused expression or idea, yet the use of this cliché allows us to break away from a certain numbness which the present expression holds over us.

McLuhan expresses how the use of a cliché in design can often act as an awakening tool which offers a realisation of new encounters. He indicates, 'Clichés can sometimes awake us from this dazed state, and provide a breakthrough into a new kind of experience; the continually repeated cliché can draw attention to itself, prompting a sting of perception or shock of recognition, in this sense, a "cliché" can be a breakthrough that actually enhances our understanding', [<http://www.cyberchimp.co.uk>, 23/10/2011]. McLuhan offers a believable argument, in the sense that, we as the assuming audience become uninvitingly presented with this deflated cliché that it sparks a new sense of direction through the use of an originally associated perception.

Both Jay and McLuhan use the term perception as a way of illustrating how opinion can be formed in terms of recognition to prior experiences, further to how the visual clichés we see in designs are reflections of our perceptions. The discovered theories and studies within the two chapters compiled to this point have provided me with various points which I can apply to the campaign example which had been mentioned in the early stages.

IN THE NICK OF TIME -



Back in the early days of the dissertation exploration, it was a visit to The Royal Academy that helped me think more visually.

In terms of primary research, there was a significant piece of primary research which ignited my thinking. An annual exhibition held at The Royal Academy enabled me to cast judgement on artists work in relation to whether they used stereotypical mediums to voice their concept or whether they teased the viewer until they could use their perceptions to uncover the idea or message.

RESOURCE ONE

//Venue: Royal Academy - Summer Exhibition

//Date of Visit: 5th August 2011

// Reason for visit: Annual interest. To gain an understanding of how such a vast number of contemporary artists can stand out from the crowd.

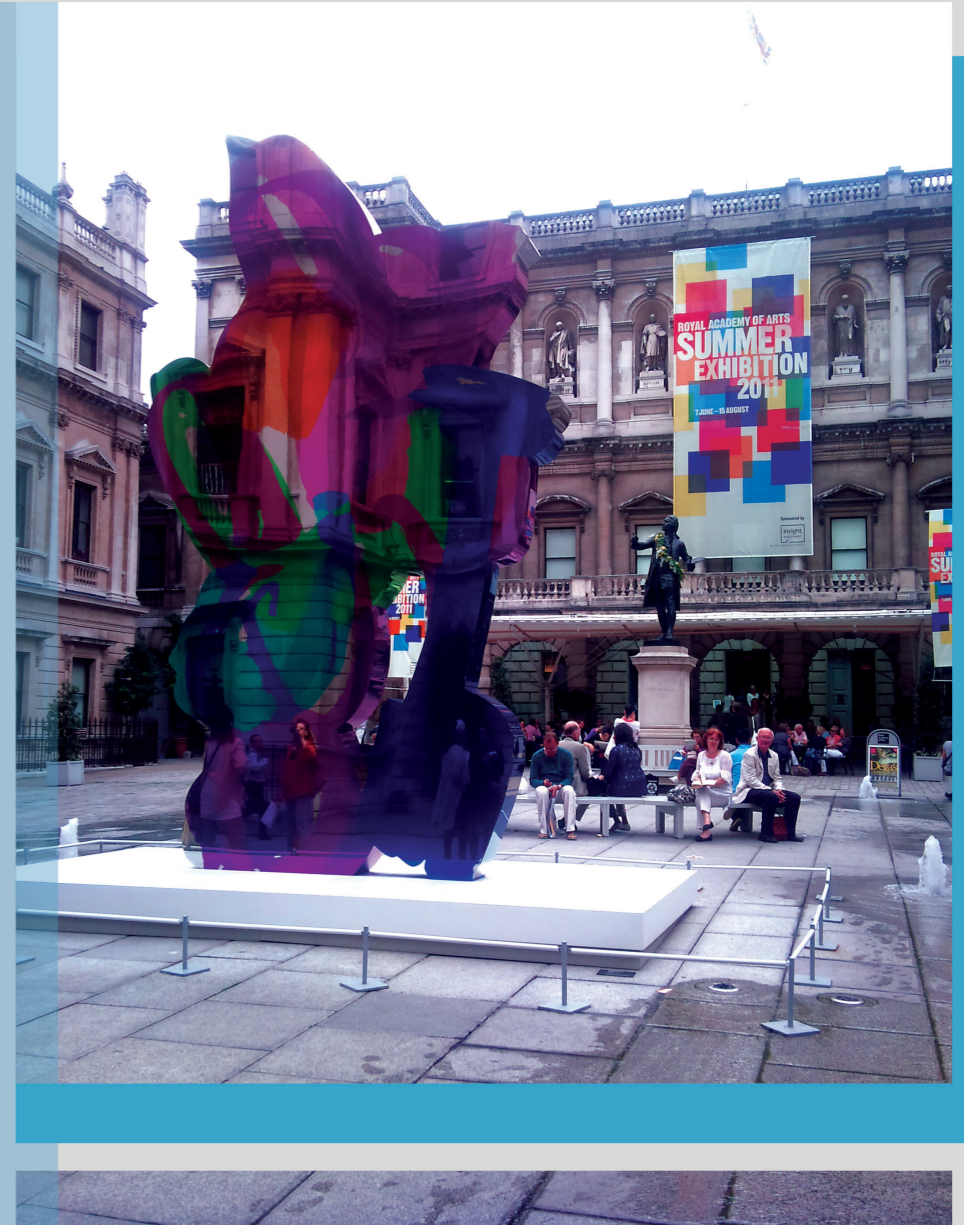
I have recently made the Summer Exhibition held at The Royal Academy an annual event to see the sheer amount of artwork strung to the wall which has been drawn together by established artists, in addition to emerging and the unknown.

I often think the exhibition is a unique way to present work of recent and fresh of all sizes from of varying degrees of artists. When walking through the rooms, I got the sense of the rooms grandeurs somewhat shown off by the Academy; each piece of work was readable and legible and I found that I was placed into a rich visual experience.

I think that the exhibition benefited me in the sense that I was able to see whether artists had become too literal with their work and gave away the essence of the concept too freely in order for their work to be appreciated on the correct understanding. It was interesting to differentiate the established artists in comparison to the unknown and newly emerging characters.

SUMMER LOVIN'

Fig.4; The Royal Academy - Summer Exhibition, Authors own photograph.



For me it became apparent that recognised artists were less forgiving when offering an easy interpretation of the meaning to viewers. While the up and coming artist were keen to get their voice across with a literal sense of the subject matter.

On reflection of the visits to The Royal Academy I'm not sure how this will benefit me in the writing, never the less I feel I was able to judge the individuals work on a critical level in terms of whether the literal meaning is

portrayed in an obvious manner of it requires certain degree of knowledge from the viewer in order to piece the puzzle together.

NOTHING VENTURED NOTHING GAINED.



Taking a moment to acknowledge the individuals that have helped me along the [exploration of my dissertation.](#)

Being encouraged to write a design dissertation has been a significant development in my academic journey. The process of the study has been a pleasant journey of realisation for me. I have proved to myself that as well as having the creativity of practical studio work, I am also capable of writing an expanse of text. The individuals mentioned in the following acknowledgement have undoubtedly encouraged me to push the boundaries in terms of bringing out the core opinions

which I inhabit as a designer which could benefit my studio practice.

Rewinding to June, my design dissertation began as a self-ignited project. Research was broad and in some instances, inconsistent to my topic. It's been with vast support and reassurance from my dissertation tutor [Sara Andersdotter](#), that I have found the motivation and determination to complete my dissertation. Sara has been consistent regarding my feedback

within tutorials to guide me to a more refined view of my subject matter. The constructive feedback was broken down to two areas, those of which were areas which were complimented as well as section of improvement pointers. She enabled me to build up an understanding of theorists and philosophers which directly linked to my theory, as well ultimately making the thought of reading excerpts from these books a positive learning curve rather than a vital



element of the writing process. Throughout the challenging weeks of puzzlement the encouragement from Sara pushed me to explore literature that previously wouldn't have highlighted. On reflection, I don't feel my dissertation would have taken the formatted structure shown without the seminars and workshops that Sara delivered.

Opinions and juxtaposed attitudes has been a key element in forming my own voice, it has been opinions from more than one individual which have guided me to shape my writing in a more comparative manner. As well as the support from Sara, tutor [Mark Ingrham](#) has given animated tutorials which gave me an added dose of motivation and reassurance. Although the benefit of having Sara as my dissertation tutor can be seen in my writing and research

growth, the fresh opinion of a tutor who has not had the inclusion of witnessing the entire progress, injected has kept the spark of writing my text there. Relating my topic back into realistic situations helped keep everything authentic and in the later stages of writing I found this was a good approach to ensure my text did not get too literature focused, as the rationale for choosing this topic was to benefit me in my studio practice.

While [Nickie Hirst](#) has not been directly associated with the design dissertation, there is a sense of belief which has been subliminally there when writing the text. Nickie has been fully aware of my development through university and I know there are certain levels of expectations which are placed next to my names. Exposing such a relatable topic, I am aware this could influence my final major

project will be in relation to my progression through my university years.

These three individuals have all shown support in varying degrees, but have formulated important feedback and belief which has stimulated me to construct a dissertation which has really enabled me to think about my practice and uncover some of the uncertainties I occupy as a designer which up until now haven't surfaced.

By
[Gemma Youngman](#)

Furthermore, these tutors have proved to me that the dissertation part of the degree isn't necessarily judging me as an academic writer but more about discovering who I am as a designer and proving to myself I am capable of bringing several complicated issues of design to the surface. An element of the third year which was once dreaded is now something I can enthuse about.

PICTURE PERFECT.

Are these pictures really worth a thousand words?

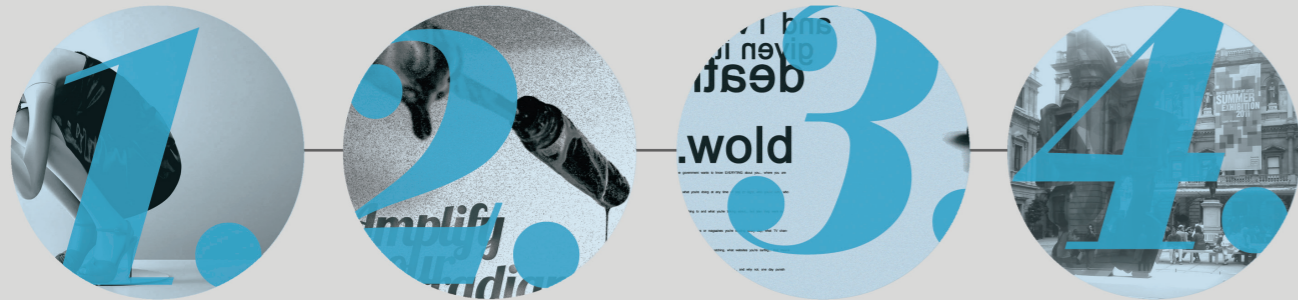


Fig.1; The Harvey Nichols Mannequins – Bracing for Winter, <http://theinspirationroom.com>

Fig.2; Closer advertising campaign -Drenched in Gloss, *Authors own work.*

Fig.3; Right On - Privacy Magazine Spreads, *Authors own work.*

Fig.4; The Royal Academy - Summer Exhibition, *Authors own photograph.*



Accompanying poster; Collection of work from both Foundation and Degree years to date, *Authors own work.*



TAKE A PICTURE IT'LL LAST LONGER!



As designer's we have a broad visual language at our disposal and as past decades have proved we have become a custom to understand many graphic devices which collectively add to this language. This creative process combines elements which collate to communicate ideas. A variety of communication tools are used in order to convey a message from a client to a particular audience.

We experience the world we live in predominantly through the use of our eyes. Our vision can be targeted by the compelling imagery we are subjected to and this enables messages to filtrate throughout sense without even realising. [Visual Communication](#) can be seen by many as a collection of ideas and messages transpired through the means of visuals. The understanding of a visual is determined by subjective perceptions; which adjusts from person to person. A designer's role is to formulate a message which is conveyed within the outcome. The creative process is often moulded around notion of highlighting this point. The viewers can often be a role reversal. They are encouraged to unstitch the seams of the designers work in order to uncover the message to medium of design.

The work of John Berger and English art critic on ideologies with visuals within *Ways of Seeing* was useful to my preliminary thinking in relation to how we are able to perceive a piece of design. Within the first passage lies a bold statement from Berger, he states, 'The way we see things is affected by what we know or what we believe', [Berger,8]. I heavily agree with the statement at the forefront of his book. Without

an opinion regarding an area of concern, how are we able to cast a judgement and vision through to the constructed message of intent? In order to cast an opinion on a visual, we must have a secondary visual which is analysed to form a rationalised judgment. This view is encouraged by John Berger who suggests, 'We never look at just one thing; we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves.' [Berger,9] I can understand that to mean not only do we observe and remember previous elements to cast an extended opinion; we use our own social and cultural understanding to encourage the depiction of the visual to uncover the message.

A visual language opens up our eyes to an expanse of ideas. The primary tool in which visualises ideas is through the skill and technique of writing and relating this to a new digital age – typography. Concentrating on the contemporary design age, typography is the visual appearance of the spoken word, and words are what we communicate with. It is neither an overstatement nor understatement when I say that type is a fundamental element of visual communication.

Italian humanist and Venetian Renaissance printer and publisher Aldus Manutius makes a rash statement indicating that typography is

the most significant element (when used) within in a composition. He declares, 'Combined with imagery, typography where it is present is simply the single most important element which draws the other subject matter together', [http://citrinitas.com/history_of_viscom.21/09/2011]. I highly disagree with his bold statement. The entire notion of visible signs leads many people to communicate through the use of imagery. Although not totally disregarding typography as a crucial element to communication, generations have come accustomed to many compelling images being used to transcribe [a thousand words](#).

Fine art may be immaculately produced through freedom; Graphic Design is not. Fine art is a collection of many art forms and adapts to the form that the art takes, while Graphic Design is in some ways prescribed, communicating within guidelines. It is also about the relationship between art and design and culture and design. Steve Heller an American art director and critic who specialises in graphic design specifies how the relationship between the fine artists and practical individuals has softened the mould of the graphic designer as the designers outlook gives the impression of a compilation of the inventiveness once displayed. 'It is about the connection between the fine artists and applied

artists and how their collective innovative ideas have influenced Graphic Design and how the industry took shape', [Heller&Ilic.13]. The past decades of design have influenced the not only the aesthetics of design but the form, control, content on the look, feel, function of graphic communication and how Graphic Design has been shaped.

One element of design which has the effect of emphasising emotion and reaction is photography within advertising. Using a visual within the intended design can often implement a greater control to inform and educate the viewer in addition to persuasion. When making reference to a photograph, what is it that magnetises our glance for that split second? Exposing a sentimental and vulnerable portrait of Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida* provided an interesting reflection of photography through the discourse of his personal heartache. Roland Barthes is known for his extensive theories and studies exploring semiotics and social theory; further to his immediate interests, a creative curiosity became interlaced with photography. Barthes provides new expressions to talk about photography, and provides meaning to differentiate them. The photographer becomes the *Operator*, the subject of the photograph is the *Spectrum*, and the viewer of a photograph is the *Spectator*. Barthes voices the significance of his points as a Spectator as it is made clear he is not a photographer. It is the technicalities of Barthes viewpoints as a spectator that creates a compelling argument.

Barthes is proposing an idea that when a photograph tries too hard to be political, it falls short. Although when the image captures a sense of subtlety, it has a tendency to request a reaction, therefore reaching its purpose in a much less drastic but much more lasting approach. "Hence the photograph whose meaning (I am not saying its effect, but its meaning) is too impressive is quickly deflated; we consume it aesthetically, not politically." [Barthes,36]. The example he ties this bold statement to, is one of his mother who has passed, this photograph develops into the root of his argument. Mirroring this observation to my subject, adopting Barthes way of technical

thinking; when introduced to an original piece of compelling imagery for the first time, do we initially hunt for the aesthetically pleasing elements while the intention is merely shadowed? Focusing on the imagery used within advertising, photography can primary element which is judged for the aesthetics which we (society can find a common association with). Establishing himself as a spectator, '...rediscover in the photographs of Spectator whom I was and whom I now wanted to investigate', [Barthes,16] is a way of inviting the reader to converse on a matching level.

The coined phrase of Punctum allows the Spectator to be *pierced* by an element of the photo/ desired medium. It is the distinction between the Punctum and the Studium; the Studium being 'the element that creates interest in a photographic image', [http://georgepowell.wordpress.com, 02/12/2011] which has formulated another intriguing point of view. Barthes views the Punctum as small areas where emotional qualities lie. According to Barthes) these small areas strike a chord in the viewer and these accidental attractions make the difference between a good quality photograph and a well-crafted image. He dissects his personal Punctum in relation to the example present in *Camera Lucida*, 'This particular Punctum arouses great sympathy in me, almost a kind of tenderness'. [Barthes,43]. In contrast, the Studium suggests both the photographer's ability and the viewer's curiosity to the image depending on their triggered recognitions regarding their childhood, pastimes, or general interest in a particular subject. In relation to the practice of graphic design; paying particular awareness to advertising visuals, designers strive for the viewer and proposed consumer to be pierced by that one Punctum which over shadows the entirety of the stadium.

WHAT IS A RECEIVED PUNCTUM TO ONE INDIVIDUAL IS A BLASÉ STUDIUM TO ANOTHER.

This resonates the critiques raised earlier in the chapter through the voice of John Berger.

Both Barthes and Berger have clarified that the viewer has more of a significant role in uncovering the message from the image than is initially apparent. The Punctum is triggered by recognition of a past experience which is relived in the view of a newly presented visual. Having no recollection of an experience which binds you to the visual allows you to only connect on a Studium level, being enticed by the entirety of an image rather than being compelled by a single element. The similarity of thinking among these two individuals in terms of commencing to an conclusion that indicates we as the viewer use resemblance as a forefront to our perceptions in order to uncover the message. They say a picture is worth a thousand words but the work done by a designer can evidently carry out half the work; the other is left to the viewer.

Discovering a softened side to Roland Barthes through the reading of his personal heartache

has enabled me to construct an argument that; the sole responsibility does not entirely lie with the designer to enforce the message to a degree where it becomes too literal. The way photography has been highlighted within the later stages of his work and personal life, has evidently been a basis fuelled by his semiotic theory, similarly focusing specifically on photography.

Semiotics is termed as the study of signs and how these contribute to society and cultural ideas; the messages within semiotics are formed in two ways. Denotation, can be summarised as the literal meaning and reference of a sign. Connotation, suggests the meanings that are implied by the sign; 'Hitler denotes an historical individual. Meanwhile, Hitler connotes, evil, genocide, racism, etc', [<http://www.colorado.edu>, 01/12/2011].

Relating this back to the element of photography, the medium as itself without an accompanying text is purely denotative. Although a photograph itself frequently presents many implied messages, the text around the photo also contributes to its connotation. Barthes describes the text as "parasitic"; on the image. In other words, the text borrows as well as takes advantage of the objectivity of the image, while at the same time filling the image with concealed connotations. To sum up the balance of image and type when interlaced with both denotations and connotations; words are not just replacing messages within a photograph but also accumulating new meanings. Visuals are able to tease the viewer; there is no definitive meaning especially where the viewer's intuitive perceptions are concerned; however typography is a way of encouraging the viewer to follow the rhythm of the crafted lettering to the message.

The way in which the denotation and connotation are formulated can often be reinforced with a graphical device known as a visual hierarchy. This is a vital element of design which allows the viewer to create an order for the eye to perceive. Aspects of the design baring most contrast to the stadium will be differentiated immediately. Contrast is an important element in design in order for perceptions to be combined.

Dissecting the theories and beliefs behind both Barthes and Berger has led me to a much deeper level of understanding regarding semiotics and how this plays a significant part in ordering our perceptions. Perceptions ignite a connection between us; being the viewer and the desired visual. Subliminal resemblances to previous encounters from ones social and cultural standings, in addition to childhood memories aid these perceptions to formulate and create a relation in which we can uncover a message.

The studies displayed in this chapter have encouraged me to explore the ways in which designers settle for the use of dated clichés within their visuals. Although they appear to be frowned upon in literature; as they showcase an uninspired flare, designers still use them with full intent knowing that the audience will grasp its concept effortlessly. The visual cliché as explored in the forth coming chapter; is a way of reinforcing a message through the medium of a visual.

In some instances, they can transpire as undermining the viewer's anticipation, as the freedom to cast their own perception is snatched away. 'Clichés are there to be challenged and used', [<http://www.fulltable.com>, 17/11/2011], although are the designers prepared to challenge the audiences?



THE NAKED TRUTH-

books

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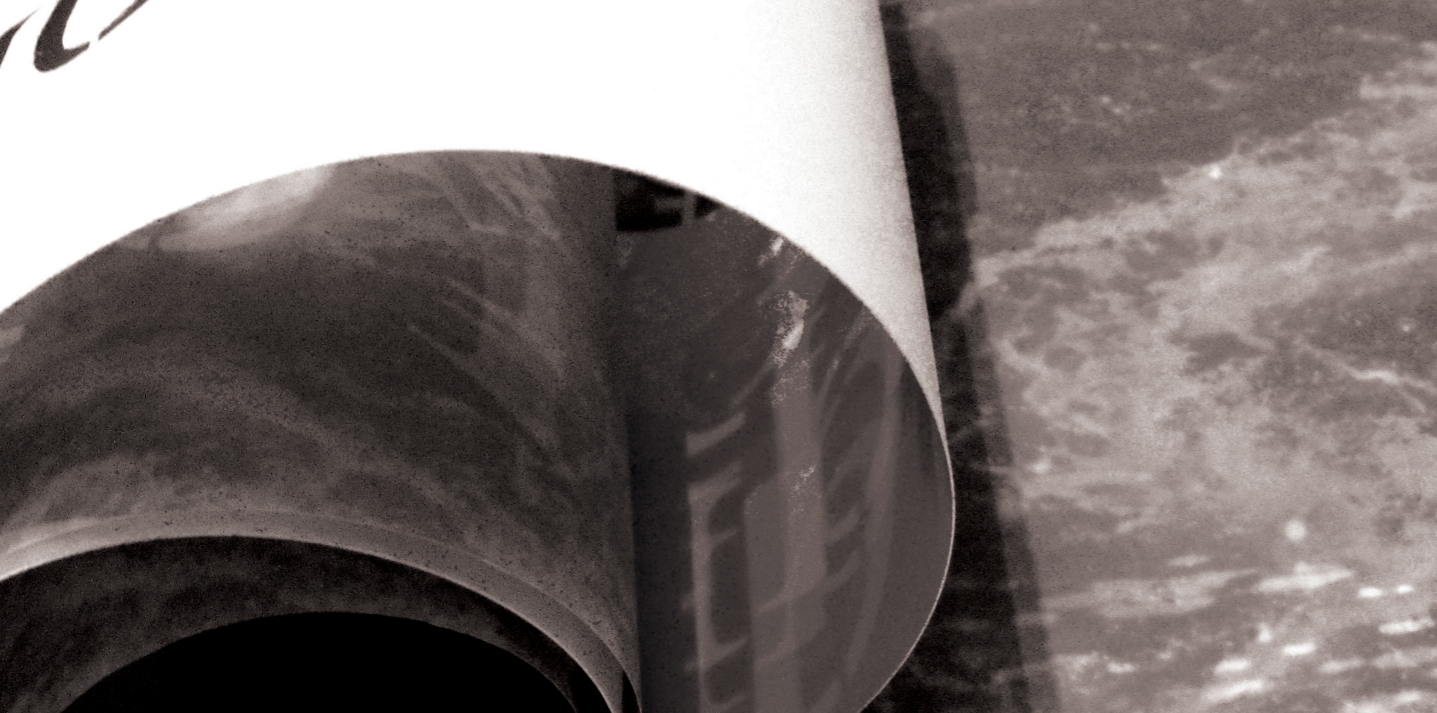
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//All's well that ends well...



THERE'S NO TIME LIKE THE PRESENT



Anywhere the eye can see, it'll likely be a subliminal message from a cleverly poised piece of visual design. In today's society we are confronted with hundreds if not thousands of creative devices which signifies us being able to retain the visual information, more so than if it was presented in a verbal format. *Something is happening.*

As individuals, we are steadily becoming a visually provoked generation. For many, understanding the world is being accomplished not through the means of words but by the medium of imagery. With a vast compilation of visual aids, an issue arises as to why designers settle for the complacent option of resorting to a cliché to reach many time pressed passers-by.

My dissertation has divulged into how designers often rely on clichés to get these messages across to the correct target audience. With how far visual communication has come and is still developing, I've been intrigued within my studies to uncover whether there is profound reasoning that allows designers to create anticipated design matched with stereotypical themes. Closely looking at clichés and visual language as both separate entities and combined as one. How do these elements impact the balance of image based and type based design?

I have developed in to an individual who responds to visual language and design. I feel compelled to make those righteous first impressions which become the telling sign as to how well the concept has been opened to the

Propelling myself in to the graphic design industry, a key element of my practice is to communicate an idea efficiently enough to convey the correct message. At first the preliminary reason for writing the dissertation was to identify how much I evidently knew regarding my subject linked with the lengthy exploration. Although upon reflection, having a theory which links so well to my practice can only highlight my flaws as well as strengths as a designer. Dissecting work on a deeper level with the use of semioticians will uncover why choices are made in design to show specific elements and how these ultimately make a connection with the desired audience. Not only have I explored a topic which directly associates to my practice but I have chosen an issue of which I am a culprit of! Whilst the research period of my dissertation commenced I found myself questioning my own, in terms of originality and whether the message had been overshadowed by design.

Through the means of the dissertation, I will be able to learn a lot through the depiction of my own studio work, as well as selected advertising campaign. Reflection on my studio work has proved that as a designer I inhabit the abilities to create something innovative, but the process of this dissertation has rightly questioned whether that innovative spark is only glowing due to someone else's original

Primary methods of research kick started my exploration months; it were these days which triggered a level of thinking that defined my leading question. A healthy proportion of my research has been constructed from literature from libraries as well as journals. Search engines have been a useful tool as speed is matched with key terminology provided me with specific sites which had a direct link.

Entwined with my researched findings and personal opinions comes the views and excerpts from highlighted theorists and philosophers. Roland Barthes has let down his guards and shown his vulnerable side as he discusses his personal heartache of his mother's loss through the use of his favoured medium. A poignant observation lifted from his text which has proved an underlying question through my writing is that of, *why are individuals moved by one photograph and not by another?*

Challenges from these theorists and philosophers have motivated to me re-evaluate the meaning and purpose of visual communication and how powerful the power of a momentary look is in terms of conveying an idea.

In order to enforce a sense of flow and consistency, the structure of my dissertation is key for the reading quality. The introduction of significant points at an early stage not only reassures but puts the viewer in the picture without leaving unanswered questions. For me the decision regarding structure within my study seemed to come as a logical choice. Launching with visual communication bound with complicated views from theorists and philosophers seemed to lead on nicely to how clichés are used in the visual communication discussed in the first fragment. Contained in the third section, bringing both elements together, as well as taking a closer look at how type and image can work alongside each other as well as individual articles. Approaching this chapter as a practical study, the consideration of my own work alongside industry standard campaigns is a basis to implementing the theories researched and discussed. Having chosen to read the work of the mentioned theorists and philosophers, their theory is often clouded by complicated language which in turn makes it challenging to dissect. Dealing heavily with the terminology concerned with the study of signs, (semiotics) phrases such as the sign, signifier and signified have to be used and interpreted in the correct context which has taken some investigation. The reflections of photography on a personal level regarding Roland Barthes shape Camera Lucida.

The complexity of the issues portrayed within the pages reveals testing vocabulary. It becomes apparent early on in the discourse that Barthes had supplied new terms to talk about photography as well as providing meanings to differentiate them throughout the text. Terms such as the *Operator* and *Spectator* are used frequently to embed an understanding in relation to his curious and at times moving language.

Ultimately, the incentive, as discussed in the preliminary stages of introduction, is for me to be stimulated in order to construct a dissertation which in fact enables me to think about my practice and uncover some of the reservations I occupy as a designer which up until now haven't surfaced. As the dissertation progresses, the compilation of theories and issues discussed is glued together with the example of my own studio work and this is a significant realisation that I am too a culprit of the copycat culture among other designers. The difficulty lies with a paradox which forms from varying opinions and along with my own judgment should calculate to an illustrate account of where visual design stands in society at present as well as where it mounting to.



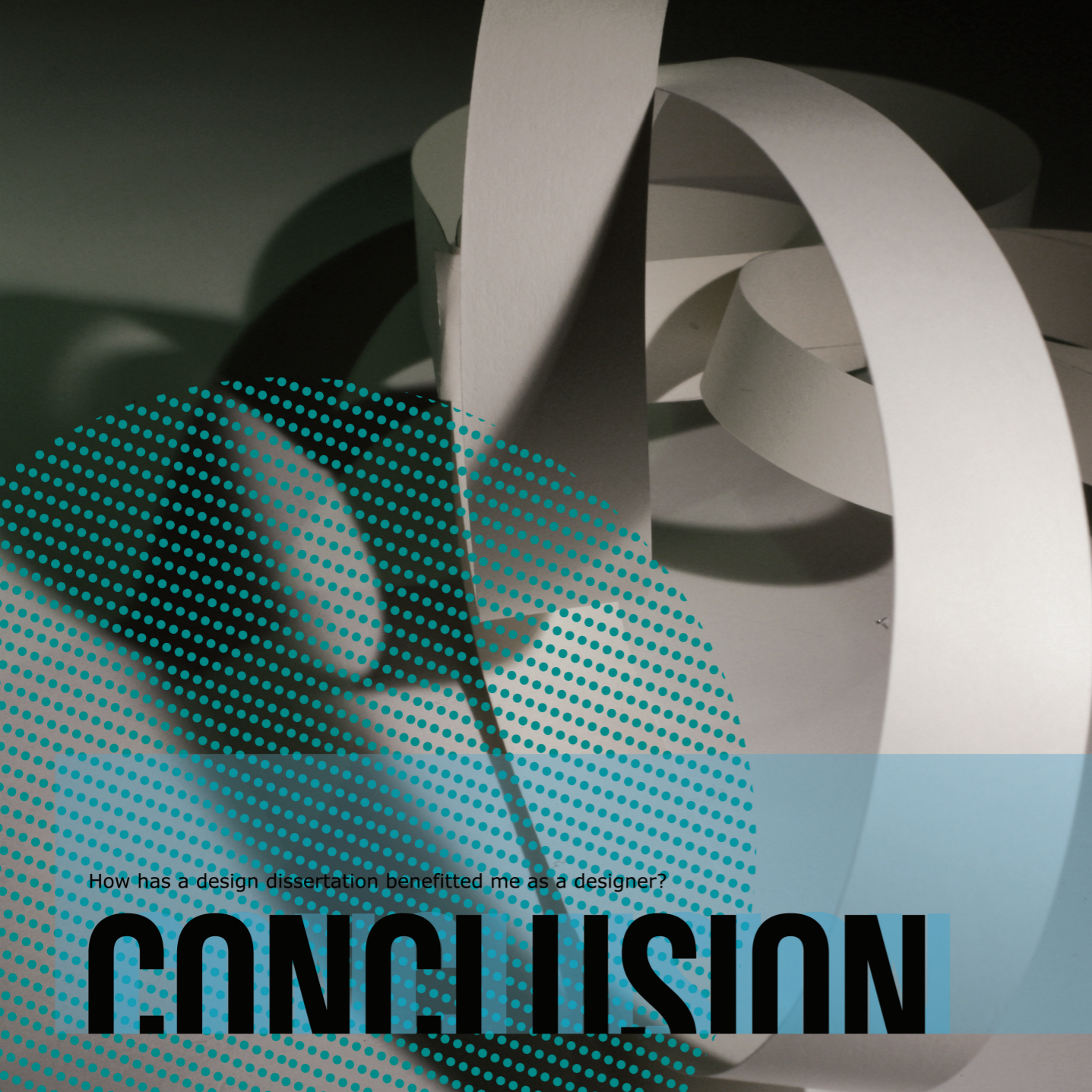
//As graphic designers, we thrive to seek inspiration,
but does innovation for vision become a mission?

VISION MISSION

VISION VS MISSION

//Do you ever get a sense of déjà vu with design? Well, your'e not alone. All too often designers are guilty of relying on clichés in their work. This exploration will divulge why it's so tough to be original.

We have such an great quantity of visual language at our disposal and this standard of language becomes extraordinarily rich. As viewers in addition to design, we have become incredibly visually cultured.



WHEN PUSH COMES TO SHOVE-



For me as a designer, the design dissertation wasn't about finding a definitive answer regarding my leading question; it became more of a journey entailing how something frowned upon in literature and in areas of design could have a paradox effect and ultimately benefits both parties of design; the designer and the viewer.

How has a design dissertation benefitted me as a designer?

CONCLUSION

Making reference to my initial enquiry of can an original be created in a copycat world, what conclusion have I arrived at? Is there such thing as a bad cliché in design or are the viewer's perceptions heightened when faced with an element of a design which has a piercing effect. Having immersed myself in this particular question, I have challenged my literary capabilities by reading books which inhabited complicated terminology and theories; which took uncovering in order to generate a more relatable understanding. With Roland Barthes and Marshall McLuhan immersing the fore runners of my studies, presented two valid theories within relation to how a visual is to be perceived and received. These two individuals have a similar understanding of how we as the viewer are able to connect with the design. Both theorists come to an understanding that, our perception is based by what we have previously encountered. It is this experience which enables us to cast an opinion with the presented image. The notion of a first impression can intensify the recognition of this experience, formulating a deepened reaction.

Within the primary stages of the design dissertation, I was fixated on the fact that all design and visual clichés were stale and graphic design had become to extent a recycling machine. I took the approach of relating this to my practice. We as designers strive for originality and the chance to be placed on a podium to stand out from the crowd. Within graphic design, I have since discovered that there are many confinements placed on designer to ensure clarity within design is first and foremost. The statement previously analysed by Seth Godin is a reflection of many advertising companies. The risk of being rejected acts as incentive to use elements of design that we as a society and culture have accepted and become accustomed to. Although I still proceed to think that designers use visuals which many individuals share a level of recollection to, it lays with the initiative of the viewer so free the designer's message and allow the punctum to work if the role of the designer is done so correctly.

My understanding of how semiology and theories can work has been developed through the use of application regarding my own work and that of a campaign of a sort after brand. As a spectator of art, we expect to be pierced and captured by the intensity of the first impression imminently shaped, as mentioned in chapter one concerning the technicalities of Barthes moving literature, what is a received Punctum to one individual is a blasé Studium to another. In my opinion this is what graphic design reinforces. Graphic design holds a sense of subliminal power, not every piece of design is set out to compel and provoke thought, subtleties of persuasion and education in addition to informing are all equally transcribed using the device of a visionary hierarchy.

Choosing such a refined topic within my study has not only enabled me to explore theories and text which prior to this challenge I had not come across, but it has aided me to create a new sense of thinking. I was in a fixed state when I brought my views to the fore front of my dissertation and the deconstruction of complex terminology motivated me to construct a compelling argument which could advance my analytical skills as a designer.



**YOU CAN
SAY THAT
AGAIN!**



A designer's role is to create a first impression successfully. The desired impression is constructed through an abundance design processes which will optimistically have the accurate effect on the intended audience. Designers are aware of the impression which is needed to match the intensity of the visual and within the first momentary look; all must be revealed in a dynamic way. Design can carry many alternatives; image based, typography lead or a balance of image and typography can all deliver the same level of message but the response to one may be of a superior intensity.

As discussed in the previous sections, I have uncovered theories from Barthes concerning how the viewer must feel pierced by an image to feel an association, in contrast to McLuhan who argues that it is our own perceptions that, further to these two studies I have exposed how Judith Williamson suggests we as viewers are manipulated by the advertising industry. To bring these elements into a personal reality being my practice, I have chosen to use an advertising campaign selected from a department store which prides themselves for having award winning concepts for their advertising strategies, in addition to examples of my own studio based work.

PULL THE WOOL OVER YOUR EYES-

In certain situations people may find it easier to use imagery to show emotion rather than pinpoint the correct phrase. Graphic design occupies many sub-divisions. One of which, being Advertising is used to deliver bold messages to targeted audiences. The skill to formulate a concept which has the ability to strike the viewer is one which is hard to master. I have chosen to dissect the medium of advertising due to the area of design being the single most significant element in

today's society. I strived to find an advertising print campaign with captured both typography and compelling imagery, the form of print design reflected my personal interests throughout the broad expanse of design.

Alluring consumers in luxury and exclusivity, Harvey Nicholls transcribes these values into their advertising. I chose a campaign which promotes one of Harvey Nicholls sought after sales in a typical punchy, Harvey Nichols way, combining glamorous fashion with a Harvey Nichols twist, using iconic imagery and a sense of humour.

Harvey Nichols adverts are beautifully constructed highlighting their collections whilst also illustrating ideas and notions which could be pinpointed as clichés regarding the social standing and behaviour of individuals.



Fig. 1: The Harvey Nichols Mannequins – Bracing for Winter, <http://theinspirationroom.com>

BRACING FOR WINTER

Using a powerful and original advertising campaign collaborated within the creativity minded individuals of DDB for the delights of Harvey Nichols ignited my thought trail of how the concept and imagery of the advert is often clichéd. The campaign was launched in time for the 2007 Christmas Sale. 'The initial message transcended to the viewer is that of the emotion and sensitivity from the mannequin', [<http://www.adpunch.org.24/10/2011>]. The promotion featuring very worried mannequins, crouching, standing, lying and kneeling. The mannequins are depicted fearful from the sales rush, due to the fashionista's firing themselves up for a hectic sale frenzy.

Having no facial expression, we are unable to cast a judgement on the emotion portrayed through expressions relating to their body language. Exaggerating braces from the mannequins form and control the composition. Clearly distressed and dazed at the behaviour by crazed shoppers during the sale force a protector style stance. The clothes in which dress the mannequins are the gems that line the rails in the sale halls; no wonder the mannequins fear for their window life, they (the plastic people) have the privilege of wearing these clothes, where the real desire is in the eyes of the shopper, going to extreme lengths to get their hands on these garments which have featured on catwalks and fashion

spreads. Looking at the composition of each of the anguished mannequins in the adverts, I think you get a good judge of situation in terms of how determined and wild the shoppers seem just to obtain a piece of desired clothing at a fraction of the price. As a viewer of the advert we do not need to see the other party otherwise involved in the hypothetical situation as the concept already hands us several elements in which allows us to cast our own representation of what they'd be acting

In these deconstruction studies, it is up to the viewer to use common sense in order to track why certain elements have been used, in some circumstances elements are taken out of their original context and juxtaposed in order to create an unsettled but revitalised ambience. I think the shooting of the advert plays a part in style of the campaign, with the viewer's eyes centralised to the mannequin and its clothes carefully draped over the moulded curves, the minimalistic nature of the composition allows the viewer to pay attention to their personal representation of the concept.

The typography is styled in a fixed width uppercase typeface. Using a monochromatic palette gives the viewer an illusion of a classy aura. Matched with a bold colour featured on the mannequin, advert starts to take on an elegant trait, and evokes strong emotion. Using basic colour theory knowledge to understand the how the choice of colour can often relate to the brands attributes as well as intentions of the advertisements. 'Grey clothing can often signify placement in the corporate world, while carrying some of the strength and mystery that the colour black acquires', [<http://www.answerbag.com.28/10/2011>]. Styling the type in a subdued monochromatic tint

gives and illusion of sophistication, which mirrors Harvey Nichols brand attributes. The use of the fixed width type choice allows the audience read the type at any given distance; this enables the advert to be printed in a various sizes and formats. Although only three key factors have been shown over four lines to the viewer, including; the date, the department store hosting the sale, and the type of event due to cause the stir, the attention isn't detracted from the posture of the mannequin. The typography is set in the same area of the format to show an element consistency which ultimately helps the viewer relate to the perception of hustling crowds. The delicacy of the structured piece of type establishes the viewer's own representation of what the event is and which brand is associated to this event. The typography discreet as it is, is needed to inform the viewer of the finer details, but other than this they are able to gain a concrete understanding of the seasonal sale without the typography encroaching on the imagery boundary.

The exquisitely dressed mannequins sheltering from the bustling crowds still capture a delicate and sophisticated essence. The product held within the advert and the human world suddenly become connected and gives a sense of what reality becomes when the Sale emerges. Ultimately the sign, being the

being the dressed mannequin stands for signifier, being the consumer obtaining the prized gem garment on show.

Less is More is likely to have been on the drawing board at DDB London, as the message intended is conveyed in an orderly way. Two elements, even if not working in unison give a united message when digested. When broken down, the advert actually screams trend-setters. Harvey Nichols allures the glam, the trendy and the rich. The brand prides itself on being up to the minute, as well as pure and simple and I think these are the elements that individuals can relate to through their campaigns.

Although the typography is important in terms of enabling the viewer to know 'Where, What and When' this sought after event is occurring, the eye does go to the mannequin initially. The perfectly poised details of how they lay or crouch and how the light enhances the tint of the shoes and dresses all subconsciously improve our impression of the department store. The sophistication and elegance portrayed in the advertising campaign illustrated above screams out to those after the must have fashion garments many could only dream of wearing. The serenity of the outcome of the advert is balanced in contrast of the concept of an unruly and jam packed period at

at the sales. In case this is a reason to put many off from enduring the busy times of the season sales, mannequins are almost staged to give you a way of saying *this is what you could be walking away with, crowds shouldn't get in the way of style* and this illusion of simplicity and purity of Harvey Nichols would strike a chord with their desired audiences.

I opened this division of my dissertation by suggesting that many individuals use the commodity of imagery to pinpoint that required sentiment rather than missed opportunities in searching for the accurate expression. Linking this statement back to my example of the Harvey Nichols Campaign, the viewer can find a common link between the mannequin and a retail outlet, as familiarity and recognition of the sign plays a part in understanding the concept and ideas behind the initial layer of the advertisement.

Referring back to Judith Williamsons who I introduced in the first section, the campaign featured above seems to replicate one of her main arguments relatively well. To begin, Williamson remarks that the first task of an advertisement is generate difference. If you consider items that serve essentially the same function: perfume, designer clothes, etc, these are in particular the types of items that need to be advertised because distinction needs to be created. If possible consumers cannot make a distinction between products, how are they to

choose which item to buy? Williamson argues that the way advertisements create difference is through the image. To form a difference in meaning, the image needs to demonstrate that difference. Highlighting the Harvey Nicholls print adverts once more, I see statement which Williamson makes is accurate in terms of the originality of image used. Instead of using an image which lists the vast amount of items side-lined for the sale the designers opted for a minimalistic shot focusing on not only the craftsmanship of the fashion but the desperation of the shoppers to attain *that* piece. This differentiation of the image we expect to see is what pierces us, the sense of mood which escapes from the mannequin transcribes the idea that something spectacular must be occurring if the mannequins are stretched enough to shield and protect their garments. How is it that we are still able to obtain these messages from a still photograph? As mentioned in chapter one, Roland Barthes reiterates the notion that a photo is a motionless image. Barthes expresses, 'When we define the Photograph as a motionless image, this does not mean only that the figures it represents do not move; it means that they do not (i) emerge, (ii) do not leave ;they are anaesthetised and fastened down, like butterflies.'" [Barthes, 32] I feel that Barthes theories can be adapted with other mediums in addition to personal photographs.

**THEY ARE
ANESTHETISED
AND FASTENED
DOWN, LIKE
BUTTERFLIES**

It is evident that we do not see how the mannequins are poised; pre sale, similarly we do not see how the events of the sale have resulted, however with the impact of the visual allows the viewer to piece together a sequential motion as to the events which have led to this still.

Along with Barthes views, Marshall McLuhan's argument mentioned within chapter two is reinforced for me with the use of the featured example. When initially observed, it is our own perception which formulates the signified within the signifier. As the viewer, we are able to identify with the quality evoked from not only the clothing worn by the mannequins but the setup of the composition and the balance of the image and typography led design.

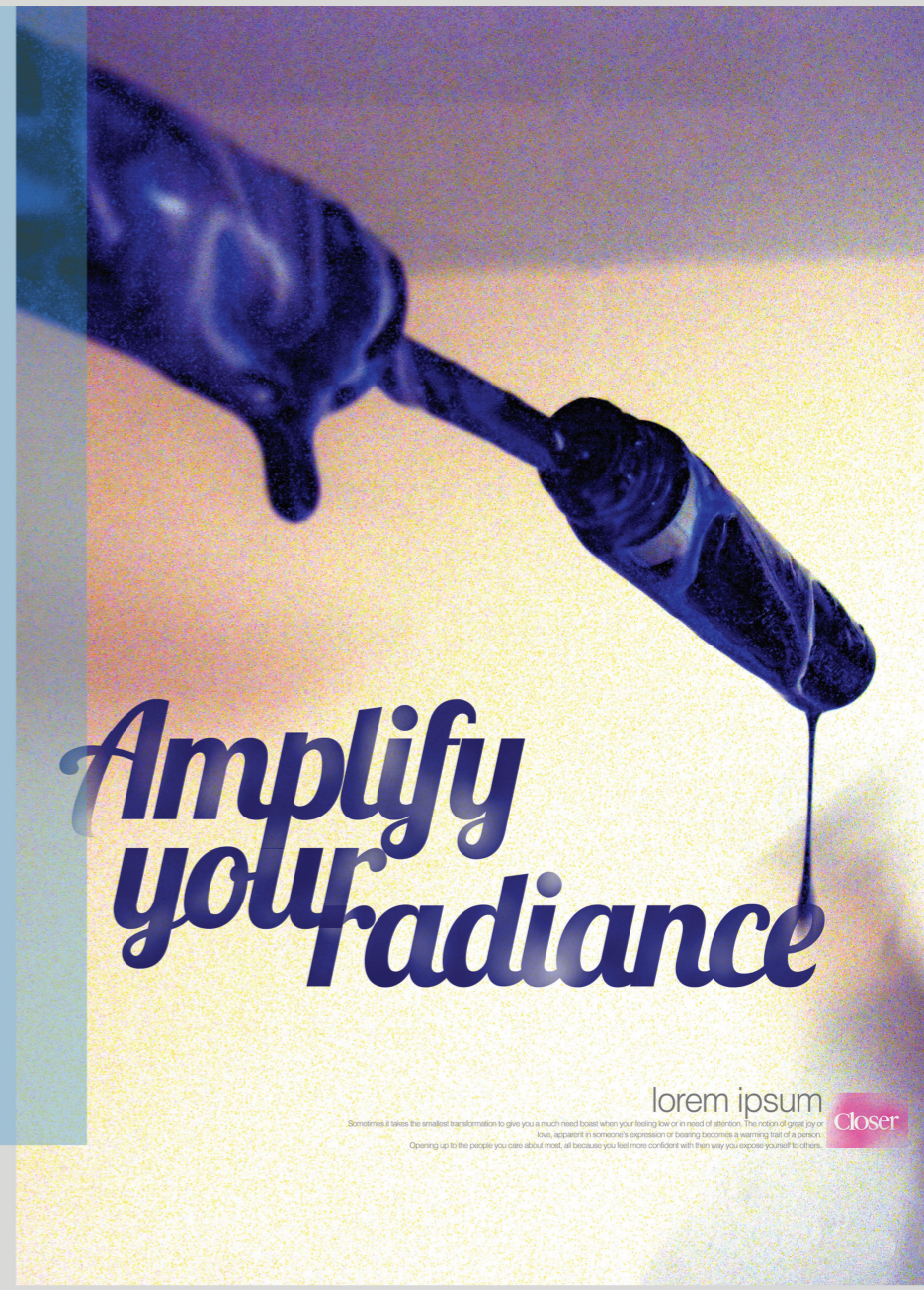
On reflection on the Harvey Nicholls advert, I feel that unless you know what the department store inhabits, the typical viewer would be blissfully unaware of how much these fashion garments are regarded by others. An

interesting point which Williamson voices through the second passage of her book which illustrates my statement just made. She expresses, 'We differentiate ourselves from other people by what we buy' [Williamson, 46]. The differentiation comes not only from the signified but the identity of the individual. The alluring sense of sophistication is an element which can capture or in the words of Barthes pierce them, and enter the brand.

As this design dissertation is ultimately set out to benefit me within my future practice in terms of my creative thinking process; I have selected two examples of my work to apply the theories discussed prior to this chapter in order to see whether they have the same result as when they are applied to industry standard campaigns.

MY CHANGE YOU SHINE

Fig.2; Closer advertising campaign: Drenched in Gloss, Authors own work. The design shown here is part of my very own advertising campaign for Closer Magazine.



The aim was to make regular women, in this instance, the readers; feel like a celebrity. My concept for the designs was voiced as, *Drenched in Gloss*; this could enable the reader to douse themselves in the same gloss which would elude them to appear as their idols.

The self-shot imagery distanced itself from the already existing pretentious models gleaming with their immaculate hair and makeup and steered towards the vision of objects which could as the print adverts state, *Amplify your radiance*. As previously mentioned within the dissertation, the use of clarity while communication is concerned is a priority among many. The idea of visual hierarchy within design is vital to implement #comprehension and reinforcement to the message. The impact of the gloss tube obstructs the attention of the viewer and then subtly guides them down the channel of the drip to the strap line. The use of the same colouring matched in both the gloss tube and typography illustrates a sense of infusion of the gloss to emphasise the radiance. Using the theories discovered from McLuhan within chapter two, I can begin to identify how the varying degrees of design are matched with the challenge of how hard the audience has to

work in order to uncover the message. He insists that a cliché is used to awaken our senses and allows us to see further. His strong belief of a cliché is something I agree with to a certain extent. If the message is literal and delivered to the viewer imminently, his theory of the cliché being a *perceptual exploration* works well. In the given example, the audience is asked to use their initiative to work out how the gloss tube can work to *Amplify their radiance*. This begs the question, should an unassuming audience have to work out a concept or simply indulge in its reaction?

The example used to illustrate my findings, struggles to enforce a concise message in addition to the use of an original visual which individuals would find hard to form resemblance to. In many advertising campaigns, designers choose to use a visual cliché to reinforce an expression or thought precisely. As previously mentioned with chapter one, the aesthetic nature of an image can be heightened instead of the desired intention and message. I think this example fits with his theory that as a spectator, in some instances you can be engulfed by the visual rather than influenced by recognition. As mentioned in chapter two, Martin Jay strongly believed that the development of language within a society became reflected in the visualisations you see. Although this worked with the Harvey Nicholls Mannequin advertising campaign, this theory does not fit the form of my self constructed campaign. The use of the original concept and visuals isolates the viewer and in some respects creates a barrier between their perceptions and the intended message. The elements within the design do not align with the perceptions of what the viewer is currently used to. The denotation of the gloss tube has been moved and forced to be presented within a new composition in order to form a new meaning. The idea of the gloss tube being used to allure consumers to buy in to youthfulness and shine is something that is too tricky to

attain within that all important first glances. There is a certain degree of ambiguity when the target audience is unable to react to a design for the reason of the punctum not being present to captivate a reaction. The intensity of the first impression is lost.

and VT bus
stij nevip
bæth

.wold

The government wants to know EVERYTHING about you... where you are

and what you're doing at any time of day or night, who you're with, who

you're talking to and what you're talking about... but also they want to

know what books or magazines you're reading every day, what TV chan-

nels and movies you're watching, what websites you're surfing... that means

they want to know what you're thinking... and why not, one day punish

you if you don't think the "right" way.



Fig.3; Right On, Privacy - Magazine Spreads, Authors own work. The second example shown is taken from a publication created as part of a group project.

RIGHT ON CHIEF

The magazine dealt with issues concerning Privacy as well as various social issues. To engage with the desired audience, I attained an understanding of the perceptions and associated imagery which could respectively present my theme. The representation of the key suggests an unlocking motion is required to display the intended message. In contrast to the previous image, the use of a poignant image to create sense of breach of security as well as ambiguity surrounding the legibility of type.

The punctum of visual comes from the disconcerting effect the typography has on the viewer. This suggests a sense of unsettlement and curiosity to the need to uncover the message, although this in turn is the indication which creates the sense of privacy among our society. Maybe previous encounters of harassment and security breaches is the element which pierces the viewer and enforces the notion of a clichéd visual which in turn is created as a perception. The studium of the image echoes a sense of balance between the the two elements, it gives the indication that concealed information, personal to us as an

unassuming member of society, can be unlocked and broadcasted for all to see. It has been interesting to dissect the way in which a strong visual image which bares a significant resemblance to a viewer can alter the received perception. The theory of Barthes suggesting that photography is merely art when spectated fails to fit with this example; due to reason that this piece of design can in fact as a recognition aid which leads to a conveyance of understanding.

The practicality of this chapter has enabled me to enforce the theories discovered previously; yet on a more personal level. My understanding has strengthened as a benefit of associating the studies to my own studio work. I still have a divided opinion on the use of visual clichés; they can be applied in such a way that they can be used as a reminiscence tool regarding an encounter. I have developed my thinking to inhabit an advanced sense of analytical thinking in terms of individuals perceptions and expectations.

YOU THINK IT'S ALL BENT OUT OF SHAPE?

I THOUGHT IT WAS GOOD TO BREAK YOUR EXPECTATIONS -

*easy as
a,b,c*

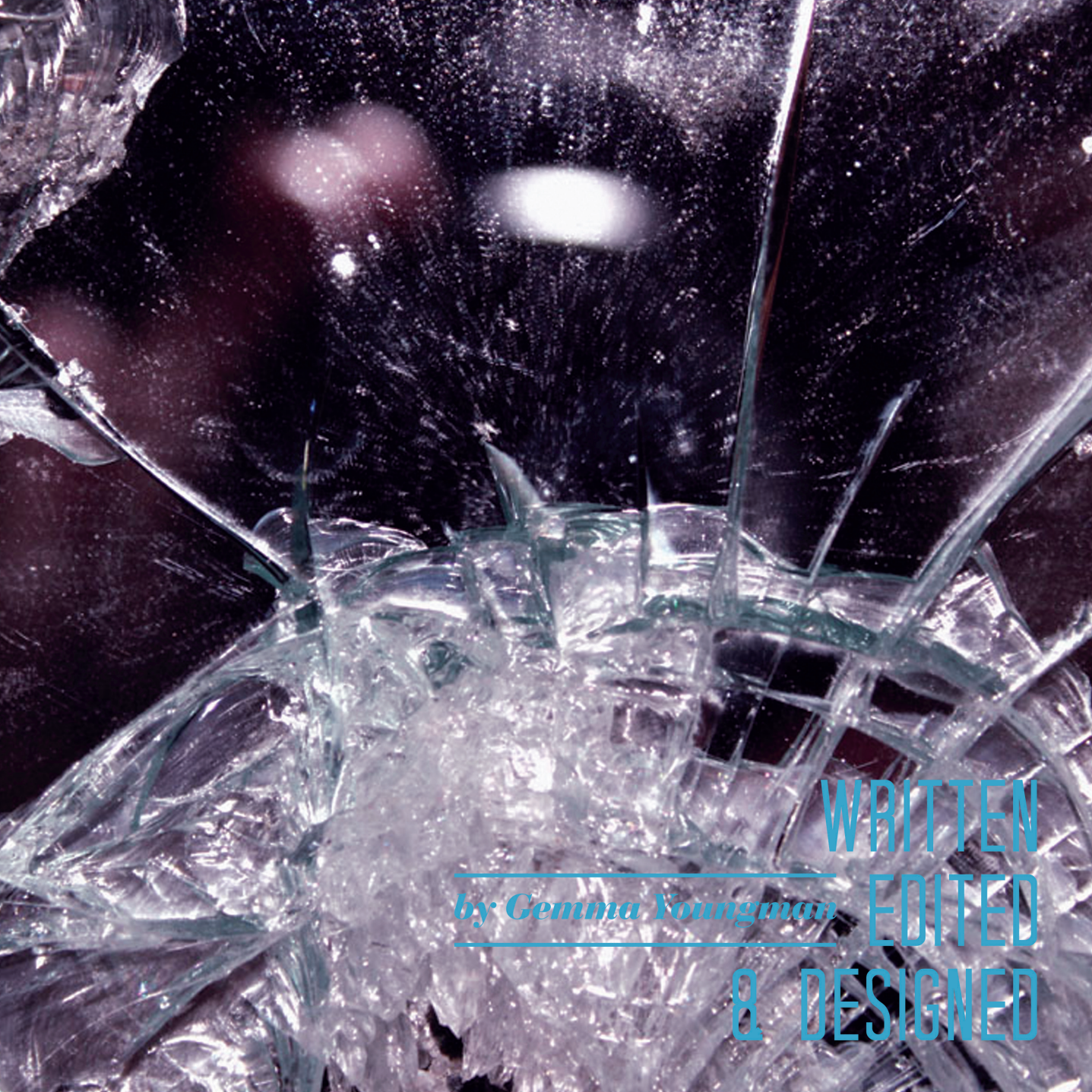
If I've got you asking why the sections of the book are arranged in alphabetical order, then I'd like to think I've succeeded in the structure of the dissertation. The form of this book illustrates the content '*the idea of clichés*'. Taking the idea of the alphabet, we can dissect this as a cliché, it has become so persuasive that we have come accustom to it shaping the way we think. Although I may be upsetting your fixated expectations of a book, all I'm doing is using a much loved cliché, *right?*

IT'S NOT
OVER TILL
IT'S OVER
WELL IT IS

*So there we go, a hell of a lesson
learnt which I can proudly carry
through my practise.*

~~NOW~~
NOW

this is just the beginning



by Gemma Youngman

WRITTEN
EDITED
& DESIGNED