

GR M10 Module 13: What is the Difference Between Art and Design?

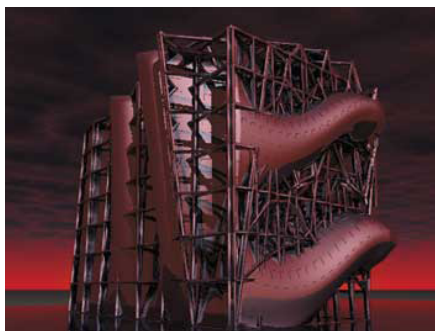


(1)

Roy Lichtenstein, House III, 1997
Painted and fabricated aluminum

“This colorful house looks real from one angle, it looks like it’s moving as you walk by. What you are supposed to do is walk by it on the path, and as you do it looks like it’s spinning slightly on its axis. This is because the part of the house that appears the most close, is actually farther away” (<http://www.vimeo.com/1279354?pg=embed&sec=1279354>)

“Design is first and foremost an intellectual process. Contrary to popular belief, designers are not artists. They employ artistic methods to visualize thinking and process, but, unlike artists, they work to solve a client’s problem, not present their own view of the world. If a design project, however, is to be considered successful – and that would be the true measure of quality – it will not only solve the problem at hand, but also add an aesthetic dimension beyond the pragmatic issues. I consider design not to be a series of “creative” one-offs, but an integrated process, from planning the appropriate communications strategy to designing functional and beautiful objects as well as – for example – implementing electronic stationery on clients’ systems. What clients say and what designers hear are too often very different things. Design is a powerful tool to help clarify the problem. It is only when a common understanding has been established between client and designer that effective results can be achieved. Design quality needs an integrated approach: look more closely than expected, ask many questions, think laterally, get involved in things you shouldn’t, do more than you are supposed to and have fun doing it. Problem solving is one thing, aesthetic pleasure another. Combine the two, make the engineer sketch like an artist and make the artist analyze like an engineer, and you are half-way there.”
(Erik Spiekermann: Design is an intellectual process
<http://spieker.com/en/design-is-an-intellectual-process>)



(2)

Marcos Novak - Paracube - 1997-1998
Liquid Architectures in Cyberspace

“I will revise Le Corbusier: not ‘Architecture is a machine to live in’, but ‘(trans)Architecture is an algorithm to play in’.” (<http://www.kmtspace.com/novak.htm>)

“Designers often struggle with the distinction between design and art. Perhaps one is instrumental and the other is not. Or design is for a client, and art is for oneself. I’m beginning to see the two more as points on a continuum. Early filmmaker and theorist Dziga Vertov wrote that the possibility for film was “making the invisible visible, the unclear clear, the hidden manifest, the disguised overt, the acted non-acted; making falsehood into truth...” I think that this is the goal of both art and design, but that the emphasis is different for each. We could look at art and design along these lines:

art: making the invisible felt

design: making the invisible known

Of course, art and design strive towards each other in varying degrees. A landscape painting reveals a truth in a known as well as a felt manner. And a poster design reveals its topic in both an explicit and felt way. But I think it’s fair to say that the emphasis in art is the felt, and the emphasis in design is the known”.

(Philip van Allen: Design vs. Art?)

<http://people.artcenter.edu/~vanallen/2005/09/design-vs-art.html>

“In a 1974 interview, Milton Glaser noted that whereas a design must convey a given body of information, the “essential function” of art is to “intensify one’s perception of

reality.” Sometimes, he said, these functions coincide, as in a medieval stained glass window, but in modern times they have diverged. Design is utilitarian in a way that art is not. Design is the how of a thing: how to order the parts, how to serve the client’s interests, how to convey the information. Art, on the other hand, is its own end. It isn’t utilitarian. It subordinates ordinary usefulness to its own purposes. It doesn’t concern itself with describing the way illustration does, nor with the desires of the buyer as does fashion, nor the tastes of the public as does style”.

(Michael Brady: Art and Design: What’s the Big Difference?

http://www.unc.edu/~jbrady/Essays/Art_Design.html)

“I do not claim to be an expert on defining what art is and what it is not but I do know that if we look at the differences between art and design we will see a very clear line drawn between the two. An engineer, if given the exact coordinates to place different colored pixels in specific places could render a beautiful web site or ad simply by following instructions, most design projects have a detailed set of instructions and most design is based on current trends and influences. An artist on the other hand could never be given any specific instructions in creating a new chaotic and unique masterpiece because his emotions and soul is dictating the movement of his hands and the impulses for the usage of the medium. No art director is going to yell at an artist for producing something completely unique because that is what makes an artist an artist and not a designer”.

(Craig A Elimeliah: art Vs. design

<http://www.aiga.org/content.cfm/art-vs-design>)

EXERCISE: What is the Difference Between Art and Design?

After reading Brady’s and Elimeliah’s articles at:

http://www.unc.edu/~jbrady/Essays/Art_Design.html

and

<http://www.aiga.org/content.cfm/art-vs-design>

please answer the following questions:

1. Describe one Brady’s argument you agree with and one you disagree with. Please explain both choices.
2. Describe one Elimeliah’s argument you agree with and one you disagree with. Please explain both choices.
3. What do you think about Dyson. He is a designer, who has product that solves problems. (3) His products have also been in many museums such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. What do you think about design that is shown in museums? (from: <http://bokardo.com/archives/design-vs-art-quotes>)
4. Can you give me examples of design that does aspire to touch the soul? I personally can’t think of any piece of design that would equal the soulful, human and emotional response of say, Hendrix’s “Manic Depression” or Howlin’ Wolf’s “Smokestack Lightning” ... (from: <http://bokardo.com/archives/design-vs-art-quotes>)
5. Art is primarily aesthetically inclined with a nod toward the direction of use and



(3)



(4)



(5)

purpose. How about a commissioned painting that is painted for a particular room in a house on a specifically colored wall to achieve a greater feeling of warmth in the room? (from: <http://www.artisthideout.com/design-vs-art/>)

6. Go to:

<http://www.lacma.org/art/exhibition/westslideshow/Site/Franz%20West.html>

and

<http://www.vwork.com/?p=14125>

and examine the sculpture “Worktable in aspic” (4) and “Couch (Liege)” (5), and answer the following questions:

A. If you were a collector of high art, what would you think about a sculpture of a couch?

B. What do you think artist Franz West is telling us about the common, household objects/furniture pieces? For more information about this sculpture, visit:

<http://www.lacma.org/art/ExhibWest.aspx>

<http://www.lacma.org/art/fwestinterview.aspx>

7. What is the difference between Graphic Design and Art?