

Graphic design logically, poetically, and graphically creates a message with a purity of expression that cuts through modern day chaos and sensory overload.

What is graphic design?

What is the purpose of your communication?

Graphic
design



Graphic design is communication that achieves a well-defined purpose by effectively using design elements and principles.

To be an intelligent, effective graphic designer you need to understand the communications problem you are tasked to solve. Therefore you need to be aware of all the issues surrounding the problem before any creative work can begin.

- What is the purpose of your communication? To inform? To call to action? To establish brand identity?
- Who is the audience?
- What do you know about them?
- How do you want the audience respond?
- How will the piece be distributed?
- What is the budget?

elements

The *Elements* of Graphic Design are all around us.



LINE

Straight, curved, wavy or zigzagged. Thin or dotted, thick or embellished, lines are

all around us and used for different purposes. To organize. To direct. To separate. To suggest an emotion or create a rhythm. What a line. Walk the line. The bottom line. Line up.

COLOR

Think about how many things you identify by color, how colors make you feel, or what the red light tells you to do. Color is a subtle and powerful presence in our world and therefore can be used to communicate in powerful and subtle ways.



SHAPES

We learn to identify objects by their shape. We also learn that shapes are suggestive. The shape of a guitar suggests music or the female form, the shape of a circle, suggests the sun, moon, earth, wheels—the cycle of life.



IMAGES

We are visual animals who are constantly trying to make meaning



from what we see and experience. Images can be used to provide depictions of products or to suggest ideas (sex and death), as seen in this poster for AIDS.



SIZE/SCALE

Function, organization, attraction, and comparison are some of the ways size and scale are used as design elements. Think about how you feel looking at a skyscraper as opposed to looking at a baby, or how you feel driving an SUV as opposed to a VW

bug. How you size type and images can attract attention as well as communicate their importance and suggest a specific emotional quality, such as humor.

TEXTURE and PATTERN

Human beings are sensual animals. We enjoy things that have texture, the rough bark of a tree, the soft silkiness of cat fur. We are also pattern makers. We enjoy the repetition of shapes and image—circles used to create a polkadot fabric, stones to create walls, plaids to define family heritage. You can use texture and pattern to help convey meaning as well as add depth and richness to design.



REPETITION

Repeating elements in a design can help organize information, provide emphasis, create textures and patterns or suggest different



emotional qualities. For example, you can use repetition to establish style guides: Colors to organize different topics. Fonts to indicate kinds of information.

SPACE



The distance and area around the elements help establish emphasis, style, readability, organization and focal points.

VALUE

Value is defined by the lightness and darkness of an area. Every element possesses a value relative to all the elements. For example if you want to create strong emotion, high contrast would be effective. If you want to suggest mystery or romance, softer contrast and more muted colors might be called for.



TYPOGRAPHY

Type is a fundamental part of any design. It can be used as text to read and as a visual element where the choice of typeface conveys an emotion or mood. Type, when used well, doesn't need a photograph or illustration to back it up.

