

ART IN THE CONTEXT OF DESIGN

by

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PREFACE

Bruce Mau stated in *An Incomplete Manifesto for Growth*:

When the outcome drives the process we will only ever go to where we've already been. If process drives outcome we may not know where we're going, but we will know we want to be there.

In process, meaning is found. As children we derive fanciful beliefs in the process of understanding the world. As we grow up, boundaries and limitations replace the magic; yet the invitation to “be there” is still open. Objects and spaces can imbibe meaning into multi-layered experiences for user’s to interpret and discover.

Art and design have taken different paths in creating things. Concepts of art can be integrated into design contexts to foster greater meaning for users. Five themes highlight concepts that can instill deeper value in objects and spaces: storytelling, emotion, nature, scale, and evolution. Finally, individual creativity encourages personal meaning to be infused in the process of making.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The most charming realities began as soon as we could scribble visceral graphics on unsuspecting walls. Our tiny imaginations transposed each satiable detail of Poopy and Prissy, the hobos, skipping from train to train across the countryside. Hieroglyphic depictions were extracted from an ongoing saga of mystery and adventure my father either invented or translated from tales of his uncle during the Depression. On particularly eventful nights we would request a report of the night before, hoping for a slip into the psyche of a dog and cat on the lamb. Pure delight is the reaction he elicited from my siblings and I as we illustrated his raspy bark in ninety-six colors on sticky linoleum and ashen-faced dolls, and Poopy and Prissy hopped onto another boxcar with dissenters in chase.

Upon learning that puppies are not adept at train hopping and are often checked in as "cargo", I grew dismayed. "They don't even unlatch their cages and mingle with the other animals trying on frocks and trousers from luggage?"

So the Swiss Family Robinson did not donate their tree house to Disney as a temporary display, and Sherlock Homes is not slinking between opium dens with annoying Watson clinging to his London Fog trench. My weak-minded kindergarten classmates justifiably denounced the credibility of a poor old man who seemed to circumvent Florida's light winters. After watching air currents move umbrellas with ease on a Mary Poppins rerun, I clung to a blue tablecloth

and jumped from the eucalyptus tree, slightly bruising both knees and twisting an ankle.

Often adults marvel at young ones and ask, "What is going through his/her mind?" An author describing T.S. Eliot in his Harvard years has best captured the mindset of a child caught between make-believe and reality (1):

[Eliot] found that if he cast his mind into the flux between different viewpoints, and held them momentarily together, he could sometimes envision a strange 'half-object', a composite of the viewpoints which yet transcend them... Eliot insisted that the half-object appears only to a mind floating free, almost unconscious, from which all accidents of socially-conditioned personality are removed. He also said that the vision is timeless and unlocalized and independent of social consequences: 'we are all led to the conception of an all-inclusive experience outside of which nothing shall fall.'¹



1. The mindset of children caught between make-believe and reality.

Is it possible for an environment to elicit the plausibility of the "all-inclusive experience" Eliot strove for in his poetry? Can objects and spaces retain the floating clarity of an unconditioned, childlike mind over time?

As people "grow up", categories and domains delineate distinctive borders within physical and mental environments. The five plus senses, or receptors to stimuli, are the only constant instruments for interpretation across group boundaries. Sensual feedback in combination with fact and fiction informs opinions and invokes reactions to situations. While most everyone possesses these instruments for perception, same situation interpretations by individuals will vary. Extreme variations are documented in cases of synesthesia.²

Even as sense interpretations fluctuate with time and conditions, the gravitation towards synthesized experiences remains constant. Inclinations towards concepts that override categorical expectations are reinforced in the realm of art, a space where the half-object thrives and sense preconceptions are suspended. Evoking visceral experiences, the arts expose five themes that can be applied to design: storytelling, emotion, nature, scale, and evolution.

Prior to exploring these five themes, aspects of art and design will be examined to better understand the motivation behind their historical directions. Then, in turning the tables, a concept will be introduced which removes the design decision-making from the hands of a select few, to validate the creativity in all of us. A space will be developed to encourage people to float between make-believe and reality and continue creating and thinking with childlike inhibition.

CHAPTER 2

ART IN THE CONTEXT OF DESIGN

A Brief History

While product design desires duplication and fine art advocates singularity, both art and design ideologies were strongly influential in the mid-eighteenth century. During this century, art's emphasis on historical documentation and religious glorification was to be challenged with the emergence of science. The Industrial Revolution in Europe incited a critical argument forcing the populace to take sides; choose science and reason or the unconscious and irrationality. Spurred by the Age of Enlightenment and disillusioned by the frivolity of the Rococo, industry forged ahead with its proof of harnessing the natural world, utilizing the power of steam, coal, iron, and steel. Imagination held its place in art during the short period of Romanticism.

Initially designers were inventors, engineers, and architects brandishing the laws of science to provide objects for all classes. Artists, not easily devalued, began securing new ground in describing beauty and human emotions. However, industry continued to ravage the professions of esteemed artisans, skilled by generations of experience. The Arts and Crafts Movement struggled in vain for a human connection with industry. Gradually, an anonymous maker became the norm.

Art eventually succumbed to industry and was revolutionized by the invention of

the camera in the 1830's. If one invention could be attributed to placing art in the hands of the people, it would be the camera. Since the camera's black and white film far exceeded the painter's brush marks in accuracy, experimentation with color grew in importance, with Impressionists as Monet and post-Impressionists as Van Gogh. Freezing viewpoints and foreshadowing corrections on photographic prints, sculptors as Auguste Rodin and Constantin Brancusi no longer felt obligated to represent reproductions of reality.³ From this point forward concept became a major theme, with artists making statements beyond the visible about sentiments, politics, and "art for art's sake". Meaning beyond the object itself was emphasized and continues to play a role in contemporary art.

In its infancy, industry was inclined to mimic aesthetics of skilled artisans catering to upper class materialism. Machines attempted to duplicate lavish decoration extracted from historical vernaculars. Art Nouveau reproductions eventually led to the need for greater efficiency and the refining of available resources and processes. Honesty of material advocated by the Bauhaus school of thought in the early 1900's was actually occurring in industry decades before. In the 1830's Michael Thonet had produced beautiful chair variations of bentwood forms.⁴ Materials had married manufacturing to propagate clean and simple forms, the avant-garde modern aesthetic.

During the twentieth-century, designers with battle cries of "form follows function" and "less is more" dictated the public's taste for color and stylization in products. Expanding material proclivities of wood, metal, glass, plastic, and composites shaped work and leisure objects in numerous aesthetic variations. Most notably, plastic, a chemical amalgamation, empowered man to dictate

forms not inherent to the tendencies of raw materials.

Plastic spawned over a century of applications and social consequences. Dating back to 1868, celluloid, "a highly improbable fusion of cotton, nitric acid, and camphor," first substituted for ivory in billiard balls.⁵ The durability and dependability of this transformable material later encouraged progressive focus on human factors and ergonomics in molded forms. Meanwhile its chemical makeup raised issues of disposability and environmental reform.

While industry dove headlong into the potential of new materials, the arts somersaulted into innovative means for communication. As most arts reflect societies and cultures, the arts of the Western tradition follows this pattern as well. Initially the Rococo, the first secular art movement since the Byzantine era, mirrored the ornamental opulence of Victorian living. Near the end of this period, the desire for progress in Europe and America incited industrial and political revolutions that swayed the power of artistic expression from the ruling class to the proletariat class. A series of reactions followed, as individuals united to advance acceptable realms for aesthetic perception. Art movements became conversations for change.

Individual artists sought to express concepts never attempted in the past. Neoclassicists contended with Romanticists placing rational logic opposite sublime reason. Then Realists and Impressionists inappropriately depicted the simple beauties of ordinary life; activities as bathing, conversing, laboring, and waiting were expressed in color compositions reflecting the artist's inner thoughts. Shortly following this, contorted figures and exaggerated colors symbolized emotional truths in Post-Impressionism. From here on in, traditional

art techniques were disregarded, to depict subjects with honest integrity.

Each succeeding movement was received with increasing shock and rejection; as soon as acceptance set in, radically new concepts were introduced. The Expressionists surfaced at the end of the twentieth century with Henri Matisse standing in the helm, as the Fauvist "wild beasts" massacred color and Matisse himself painted an obnoxiously red room. No longer fastened to a structural skeleton, paint went haywire with abstract forms which extended to Cubism and Futurism. In this time, Mondrian exhibited his self-proclaimed nonrepresentational style of Neo-Plasticism.

Artists between the wars were absorbing the progression of movements and calibrating completely new forms of expression. Dada creations emerged in which found art sculptures became anti-art statements opposing war and brutality. The bizarre and random associations of our unconscious mind were realized in Surrealism. Simultaneously, the acceptable was found in American artists as Georgia O'Keeffe and Edward Hopper depicting sexuality and loneliness in flowers and buildings, respectively.

After World War II, when concepts seemed to have gone as far as they could go, the Abstract Expressionist Jackson Pollock dripped and splattered emotions on canvas, and Color Field artists suspended moods in hovering regions of amorphous color. The 1950's trend of Op Art, concerned with the physical and psychological effects of optical illusions, was overshadowed by Pop Art's sudden acknowledgement of industrial commercialism. As art and industry exchanged glances, popular taste was recognized.

The defiant influences of modern art movements led into post-modernism, where concept superceded style. Today at the forefront of the creative whirlwind, contemporary artists draw from the past and look toward the future. The need for stylistic definitions has vanished, and the desire for conceptual expression abounds. Art has been the catalyst in realizing that the stylistic means lie in the conceptual end.

In spite of the divergent paths that art and design have taken in establishing and maintaining separate fields, their convergence in society has become ever present. Their connection is a dialogue in the social sciences and continues to resound in retail with issues of customization and personalization. In identifying key attributes of these overlapping areas, a stronger link can be demonstrated between art and design.

Meaningful Experiences

Currently in design, cost efficiencies, speed to market, as well as other manufacturing and production practicalities determine product viability in retail venues. A fast-paced, mass-produced-dependent economy, asks for radically new concepts and finds safety in the maxims of MAYA (Most Advanced Yet Acceptable). Quality has been trimmed and choice is abundant. Today, designers as Calvin Klein, Karem Rashid, and Martha Stewart have personalized products with their names, yet signs of the makers are yet to be seen.

Towards the end of the twentieth century, theoretical applications of user-centered design came to the forefront, with concentration on invisible value. Klaus Krippendorff describes the semantic relevance of "form follows meaning" bringing the user back into the equation. He relates the results of two studies as

"sense-making". In the first study people were asked what they saw when presented with everyday artifacts as furniture, vehicles, tools, and office equipment.

He reported:

Most [responses] are concerned with what the object is, indicated by its name; what it is made for, what it does; how its parts are connected and work together; who typically uses it and in which situations, what others would say about it or about its use; what it is made of and by what processes; who designed it, who made it, who sold it; how its operational principles differ from the usual; relative size, appearance, workmanship, durability, price, how it effects the environment; and how efficient its use is; and so forth. ⁶

In a second study, respondents were presented with personal items. While their descriptions shifted in terms of emotional attachment, the objects continued to have contextual significance. In addition their meanings were connected with intangible factors within the environment, however real or imagined.

[They described objects in terms of] who gave it to them; how it was acquired; of whom it reminds them; in which circumstances it figured prominently; how much care, service, repair, or even affection it consumed; how well it fits with other possessions; how enjoyable its presence is; how it feels; and how close it is to the user's definition of himself/herself. ⁷

Krippendorff notes parallel results in a study performed by an author on cognition. "The list reflects what Ulrich Neisser observed after many experiments of this sort: people do not perceive pure forms, unrelated objects, or things as such but as meanings." ⁸

Yet to take a step back, what can art in its purest state, where nothing really functions, offer design, where features and promises are abundant? The psychiatrist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi conducted interviews to understand the relevance of art as perceived by the owners. He discovered that art per se "played a decidedly insignificant role in their lives."

Rather, people were strongly attached to artifacts which "lacked any discernible aesthetic value, [yet] were charged with meanings that conveyed a sense of integrity and purpose in their lives." In an example of this emotional association, he cites a woman who valued a tacky plastic statuette of the Venus de Milo given to her by a Tubberware regional sales manager as a prize. The Venus replica endorsed her self-image as a successful businessperson.

Csikszentmihalyi attributes the human/ object relationship to a "symbolic ecology" and reiterates that "it was not the design quality of the piece that made it special, but what the person did with it, and what the interaction meant to the person." This relationship brought meaning and enrichment to the individual's life.⁹

The designer Ettore Sottsass purposefully infuses objects with meaning. Spirituality, rituals, and consumerism have imbibed his designs with passion and irony. Created after a trip to India and a near death experience, the Shiva series ceramic plates are decorated in shapes celebrating life and spiritual reawakening. Sottsass relates, "Ceramics are older than the Bible and Jesus Christ, older than all the poems ever been written, older than goats and cats, older than houses, older than metals."¹⁰ In a later project "Planet as Festival", lithographic landscapes depict buildings as a tribute to "conserving memories, provoking smiles, boredom, eroticism or mysticism, etc."¹¹ In each of these instances, the intentions behind the designs must be effectively communicated, bringing meaning to the users, for a true symbolic ecology to exist.

If meaningful interactions are essential to achieve symbolic ecology, is it possible for museums and galleries to provide experiences similar to those

reported by Csikszentmihalyi in domestic settings? Surely owning is not equated with meaning. Shielded with bulletproof glass, laser rays, and velvet ropes, the lovely Mona Lisa peers out at a gawking audience in the Luve. People have crowded into cold rooms in Venice to gaze at Gianbattista Tiepolo's mythological garden scenes. In New York, hundreds jostled to see Workspheres at the Moma displaying offices of the future. Thus, interactions with objects in museum and gallery spaces should garner some meaningful value.

Museums must preserve, condense, and disperse information into palatable, tangible forms. In this vein, their objectives coincide with those of individual artists. To communicate a simple message by linking it with other ideas can be a complicated task. In his 1987 plan, the president of the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago anticipated the museum's future; "The real challenge is how to connect one exhibit with another. You don't just put up a wall and say, 'You're now going from automobile's to DNA.' You need to ask, 'How do you go from automobiles to the next exhibit hall?' "¹² Galleries, explaining superconductivity and human medicine, are intended to unleash the creative possibilities of the scientific imagination. The connection of information is imperative as individuals



2. The Museum of Natural History in New York City.

roam throughout the space asking questions and formulating new ideas.

Where did we come from?
Where are we going? Where
have we been?(2) At The
Museum of Natural History
in New York City, a person

should expect scientific answers to these questions. Cloaked in dim lights, specimens and recreations overwhelm many as they seek to discern how objects relate to each other. In the 1945 *The Catcher in the Rye*, Holden Caulfield remarks on the comforting decadence of the museum displays:

Boy, that museum was full of glass cases... The best thing, though, in that museum was that everything always stayed right where it was. Nobody'd move. You could go there a hundred thousand times, and that Eskimo would still be just finished catching those two fish, the two birds would still be on their way south, the deers would still be drinking out of the water hole, with their pretty antlers and their pretty, skinny legs, and that squaw with the naked bosom would still be weaving that same blanket. Nobody'd be different. The only thing that would be different would be you.¹³

Today, the museum appears as he described it over half a century ago.

Holden's reaction to the space exposes his patient character despite his outwardly rebellious discontent. Actual observations of the museum halls reveal exhibits as backdrops to the audience.(3) While science has a commitment to



3. Exhibits are revealed as backdrops to the audience in The Museum of Natural History, NYC.

the facts, the truth can easily become fiction when sliced out of context. Art and science travel similar paths in describing the Socratic candle shadows on the wall. Art has surpassed the literal to delve into meanings that "evoke" instead of "explain". Science and industry can gain insight from the arts to tell stories in evocative totality.

Further interviews were conducted and spaces visited to uncover the symbolic ecology of art. Observing people in galleries and museums extended to observations in contexts that did not offer material goods or services. Patterns in which people responded to creativity and knowledge revealed a thematic gravitation to storytelling, emotion, nature, scale, and evolution.

At OK Harris, a particularly prominent gallery in Soho, the owner, who was influential in Andy Warhol's career, described the attendance of the opening parties



4. Taking a moment to inhale the scale at OK Harris in Soho, New York City.

as depending on the proximity of the artist's friends and relatives to the show. On a weekday afternoon, a handful of observers were meandering in the gallery. Viewers would enter the capacious space, take a moment to inhale the scale, and then move in for inspection of details.(4) During this time an independent artist approached me with his personal wares, a series of clumsy xeroxed pictograms titled "Box World for Idiots". Reminiscent of various Alessi designer drawings in The Dream Factory, the sketches were heartening and a signature was requested.



5. Quietude of exhibit spaces disguises the true range of emotions in Soho, "here is new york."

When gallery owners were questioned of reactions to the spaces, they recalled laughter and tears as well as quiet contemplation. The quietude of exhibit spaces disguises the true range of emotions experienced by individuals as they step closer to bring back thoughts and feelings.(5) Shapes and images trigger memories and inspire curiosities in introspective dances around the artwork.

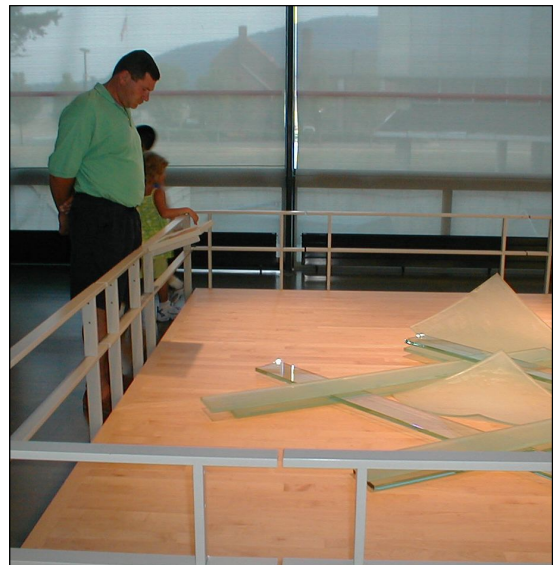
A gallery hosted by Dia and nestled at the top of a creaky staircase, the Soilroom fills a spacious apartment with rich black earth, regularly groomed for mushrooms.(6) Upon entering, serenity, fertility, and an urge to dig replace surprise. Although neither viewing soil or a gallery is a completely uncommon occurrence, the unusual juxtaposition demands a reaction. The curator commented that the space has even evoked obscenities.



6. An apartment regularly groomed for mushrooms in Soho, Dia Arts Center.

The Corning Museum of Glass in upstate New York revealed how to engage people in the process of making, from beginning to end. Glass blowers demonstrated live techniques, while exhibits described unique discoveries that yielded better ways of making glass products, opening new markets for production. Areas of the museum were dedicated to artistic explorations and historical relics from various cultures throughout the world. Finally, a gift shop

displayed glinting silicon specimens created by local artisans and catering to a wide range of affordability. People of all ages were truly enthralled as they moved up, down, and through the winding space. Their appreciation was evident in lingering comments and inquisitive examinations. The properties of glass were even utilized in the museum's architecture, as natural light peering through windows scattered colorful reflections on a myriad of surfaces. The museum offered a wonderfully seamless experience.(7)



7. A wonderfully seamless experience at Corning Museum, upstate New York.

The laboratories of studios and workshops play out combinations that could hardly be reproduced on the factory floor. However, reactions elicited by these experiments displayed in museums, galleries, and other contexts can be reproduced. People desire meaning on many levels. If a product can provide more than the visible, value added will exceed the physicality of additional features.

Unified Objectives

The human psychological need to surpass the goods and services economy is outlined in a book published by the Harvard Business School. In it, the authors describe a commoditization of goods and services causing users to seek compelling experiences that engage their senses and leave memorable impressions. Their solutions integrated thematic actors who would memorize lines and stage common-day interactions in extravagant performances. While not fully comprehending the imposed cost structure of this type of experience, they did recognize a need for cohesive meaningful engagements. Experiences would expand into transformations, the peak of the pyramid, in which knowledge becomes wisdom.

Transformations would insure each individual's achievements of aspirations and goals. Customization of the "transformation" would prevent it from becoming a commodity. Emblems would initiate conversations and form communities of people who identify with others having similar transformations:

Rings, crosses, flags, trophies, pennants, medals, badges, medallions, insignias, and other such emblems all tangibly signify that their bearers have transformed themselves in some way: from single to married, from team to champion, from civilian to soldier, from soldier to hero, and so forth.¹⁴

The transformation itself could inspire a wide range of emotions, spanning from

anger and confusion to gratitude and elation. Ultimately, for a successful transformation, the need for synergy of concept is essential and is designed in reverse succession:

Transformation elicitors must determine exactly the right set of life-transforming experiences required to guide aspirants in achieving their goals (commemorated with goods as emblems). Experience staggers must depict what services engage the guest and then stage them in such a way as to create a memorable event (preserved with goods as memorabilia). Service providers, in turn, must devise the proper configuration of goods (such as tables and condiment dispensers in a fast-food restaurant, or hangers, plastic bags, and cleaning equipment in a dry cleaner) that enable them to deliver the set of intangible activities desired by the client. Goods manufacturers, of course, must develop resources for the appropriate commodities used as raw materials for the tangible products they make for users. And commodity traders must discover where those materials lie and exact them for the markets they serve.¹⁵

Art advocates a similar consistency of meaning between its inception and reception. Frank Gehry, an artist of monumental sculptures as the museum in Bilbao, utilizes this progression of unity by first creating his organic architectural forms and then purchasing titanium sheaths at advantageous market lows. Fantastic ideas have been realized when the concept is unified and the process is flexible.

With a unified ideal at the forefront, users can be offered multi-layered experiences, enabling more profound connections. This ideal becomes a visual language through which the meanings are spoken. Artists throughout history have refined dynamic visual language instrumental to communication.

In the last century, artists as Andrew Wyeth and Alberto Giacometti have spent lifetimes developing and refining puns, metaphors, and allegories. Inventing dry brush techniques in tempera, Andrew Wyeth conveyed atmospheric death and

the strength of the human spirit. Playing with plaster, stone, metal, and wood, Giacometti drew frenetic sketches to demonstrate personal relationships through spacial and material tensions. In each of these instances, mood extended beyond the physicality of the medium, allowing for levels of interpretation.

These effective qualities of visual language in art are applied successfully to brand imaging. However, frequently conception of the product and its promotion are separate processes as witnessed in a multitude of car commercials. The firm Tolleson Design, located in San Francisco, understands the need for gestalt in the design process similar to the vision of a singular artist.

The Tolleson Design team defines core issues of design solutions from inception of client projects. Diagramming with overlapping scribbles, circles, and swirls, they depict objectives in terms of process information maps. These communication maps collage product philosophies with people interactions, as products travel to the hands of users. Creating a message that communicates successfully takes orchestration between groups of people partaking in the design process. In working with North Face, Tolleson explains the importance of collaboration:

During the course of our 4-year relationship with The North Face, we have worked with product development, marketing, extreme athletes, dealers and retailers and many others to focus and revitalize the brand. Through a series of recurrent cycles, we touched every product developed by The North Face, from conception to testing to marketing. Given the make-up of the decision-making team, the sheer number of players, and the array of items produced by The North Face, we had to be consistent in maintaining the brand message.¹⁶

A unified vision between diverse groups of people throughout the design process brings cohesive meaning to the products.

Stylization no longer takes precedence over integrative meaning. Systems of communication unify elements to deliver consistent packets of information. Information architects advocate information levels using graphs and text to convey tangible knowledge. Levels over time become inculcated into our perceptual meanings, cultivating new forms of visual language.

Integration of new mediums of communication enables consumers to acquire greater depth of products. An example of this is REI in which the retail store is combined with print catalogues and virtual web kiosks to anticipate the full range of customer needs. While the store provides a climbing wall, the website provides "customized, full-color, high-resolution, topographic HorizonMaps of almost any wilderness destination on Earth."¹⁷ Retailers have become multi-media storytellers and wizards of music and imagery.

Described as "loss leaders" by Kate Spade in terms of profit making, bricks and mortar establishments fashion object meaning at the point of purchase and nurture the user experience in artistic ways. The Swatch Timeship, on 57th Street in Manhattan, fuses art with design to create a wonderland of fabricated relationships. A Pentagram Design team led by Daniel Weil fortified the brand image of the plastic-timekeepers as cult objects.¹⁸

The Timeship transforms Weil's motto "Like a Swatch watch, the store is 'machinery with personality' " into a collector's candy shop. The concept of collecting and preserving extends from the halls of museums and galleries and is one that the design team sought to project in the retail experience. While the Collector's Wall displays rows of classic watches no longer for sale, upstairs the Swatch Gallery exhibits watches designed by Keith Haring, Annie Liebowitz,

Yoko Ono and other famous artists. Projecting the store's image into the new millennium, transparent pneumatic tubes dispense watches from stock rooms to sales counters converting the store itself into a gigantic Swatch watch.¹⁹

Moss located in Soho is also prominently recognized for pilfering the gallery image by encasing products in glass away from the acquisitive grasp of shoppers. Small descriptions label products, resembling museum tags next to tomb relics of Egyptian pharaohs. The "look but don't touch" conceit is one of the more snobbish retail practices to be derived from the world of art. However splendid receiving permission to hold objects in glass cases is, art has a plenitude of more generous pleasures to reveal and deliver.

The Cows on Parade along Michigan Avenue in Chicago during summer 2000 exemplifies one such harmony of art and retail spaces. Retail stores sponsored artists to transform molded cows in parodies of their brands. The variations of



8. Cow welcomes visitors to the Children's Museum in Portland, Oregon.

cows sparked laughter and commentary throughout the season as visitors and natives photographed themselves next to the bovines. Auctioned off, the cows pervaded other parts of the nation as this one captured in front of the Children's Museum in Portland, Oregon.(8)

By unifying the objectives of an experience, a diverse group of innovators can develop multi-layered delectations as the idea of a single artist. These experiences would encourage extending product life and increasing resale value. Presently more than ever, product creation requires integration to create deeper meaning for the user.

Individual Expression

Until recently, manufacturing and production was in the hands of an elite few. Even after the invention of Guttenburg's printing press over five hundred years ago, it took the invention of Xerox machines and personal computers to finally empower individuals to create and duplicate their own ideas. Today sound and video recording devices enable garage bands and family ensembles to produce and distribute their vocal and instrumental talents to a select few.

The inclination for individuals to specify tastes and preferences is becoming more and more apparent. Customization has demonstrated this and personalization has reinforced it. Exactly how far will the product allow for self-expression? Terrance Conran tells the story of Lego:

Lego which means 'play well' in Danish, was founded in the 1930's by Ole Kirk Christiansen, a carpenter. Up until the end of the Second World War, the firm produced a range of robust, handcrafted wooden toys. It was Christiansen's son, Godfred, who came up with the idea for a 'system of play' based on simple interconnecting bricks. Since, then, of course, the product line has expanded and diversified, with the introduction of

wheels, motors, lights and figures. Like Meccano, Lego is now more often sold in the form of kits to make a specific model rather than in open-ended component sets, yet another example of the potential for creativity and individuality being stifled. The success of this essentially simple system owes much to its roots in the craft tradition, yet I sometimes wonder if we are raising a generation that can expertly follow the pack and copy the latest 'look', but has no experience of thinking creatively.²⁰

Creativity sets no limits to possibilities. It encourages making choices to an unknowable end. Most everyone has a desire to create, to leave an impression of themselves on their surroundings, to build a castle in the sand.

Remarkable imagination has pervaded elementary school art classes for quite some time. Kindergartens are filled with artists. For decades children have constructed paperweights and holiday wreathes uniquely demonstrating personalities. The John Michael Kohler Arts Center auctioned off over 300 neckties designed by children in which no two were alike. The exhibit paid homage to the freedom of expression and the "tying" together of numerous communities.

Creative childhood activities follow us into adulthood in the form of hobbies. Our innocent desires to collect bugs and stickers translate into collecting one-of-a-kind object assortments with funny smells and scratches. Rummaging through flea markets, garage sales, thrift stores, antique shows, and estate sales, each person gathers treasures that sometimes possess beauty only in the eye of the beholder. Ranging from kitchen rolling pins to agrarian tractor plows, collections elevate appreciation of often non-functional industrial products to a form of artistic expression. Each collector creates assemblages reflecting personality and perceptions.

Thus the desire to express individuality through artistic means has been with us

through childhood and can be applied in adult contexts. Collecting and creating has become a precious extension of value preserved by the art world. These tendencies have always been present and can be utilized in commercial environments. As new mediums are integrated into the retail experience, individual creativity can be incorporated to strengthen the brand image.

One solution to fostering individuality is customization. Today more and more customers are customizing products to their liking. Color choices are the main option given to buyers. Adidas and Nike allow athletes to select colors for their designs online through websites. Timbuktu sets up kiosks at trade fairs where buyers choose their colors and come back in two hours for their bags.

Volkswagon entices clients to match interior and exterior colors of cars to their specifications. As a variation to color, Levi's encourages customers to design jeans to fit the shape of their curvaceous bodies.

The personalization of objects is another step towards individual expression. Graffiti artists continue to scratch personal graphics in public spaces. People are dressing cell phones with trinkets and miniature photographs, as signs of loved ones. Tattoos, the ultimate decorative choice in permanent adornment of our bodies, remind us of moments that individuals have uniquely experienced. The fiction writer Margaret Atwood acknowledges this behavior through the main character's thoughts in her recent book *The Blind Assassin*.

We wish to assert our existence, like dogs peeing on fire hydrants. We put on display our framed photographs, our parchment diplomas, our silver-plated cups; we monogram our linen, we carve our names on trees, we scrawl them on bathroom walls. It's all the same impulse.²¹

The aesthetic transformation of functional objects into personalized objects is an enduring phenomenon. The individual need for self-expression cannot be

denied in our quest for innovation. More personalized products would acquire greater meaning throughout the object's lifetime. Whereas recycling is a positive alternative to waste, more meaningful design can eliminate unnecessary disposal.

Art has always been intimate with the maker. In the past, artisans were hired to craft objects for clients who had unique object specifications and became familiar with the object makers. While users cannot be informed of all aspects of production, a process can be created which enables a more intimate connection between individuals and the objects they interact with.(9) Art concepts which can be integrated into design contexts have been categorized into five themes.



9. Observing a portrait of oneself, creating a more intimate connection between individuals and the objects they interact with.

CHAPTER 3

FIVE THEMES OF ART IN THE CONTEXT OF DESIGN

Storytelling

Following us from childhood to convey a broad range of information, stories operate as structures for objects to take form. Art distinguishes the tacit manner in which stories are told to deliver multiple levels of meaning. The audience moves through visual compositions to be encapsulated in non-linear imagery.



10. Jennifer Bartlett tells a story of inter-relationships between 2, 3, and 4-dimensional spaces.

The works of Jennifer Bartlett portray multi-layered concepts told as stories. Her sight-specific artwork created for the Volvo building in Sweden purports inter-relationships of two, three, and four-dimensional spaces.⁽¹⁰⁾ Static waterscape paintings transfix a single moment and contrast with the changing view of the archipelagoes below. Table and chair sculpture groupings outside the building beckon the viewer to fill them and join the company of the sea. The visible cabin and upturned boats welcome the visitor with unattainable diversions. Strategic placement of these recreational objects indulges imaginations with idyllic summer vacations.

Bartlett's most wonderful stories are expressed in eddies of paint as objects swirl in flurries of movement. In *Spiral: An Ordinary Evening in New Haven Connecticut* a fire rages across a canvas in which moths and fish spiral to the center. Two hexagonal tables and two cones in the midst of the inferno of the painting are sculpturally replicated in the same overturned positions, outside the canvas's animated space. The relevance of the sculpture is influenced by its contextual placement in the painting; their physical presence signifies a temporary survival in the precious chain of life. The environment celebrates the vitality of existence.

Aware of the allegorical evocation of art, Nancy and Edward Kienholz constructed tableaus in which objects symbolized broader themes. In *The Beanery*, a walk-in tableau of a West Hollywood bar-and-grill dive, character's heads are clock faces set at ten past ten, demanding an honest reaction to "killing time." Sounds of chatter and clinking glasses can be heard as the observer squeezes into a tawdry, claustrophobic bar, with not a seat to spare. Social atrophy and degeneration are embraced as the flaws of humanity.²²

The Kienholz's understanding of the semantic connotations of objects enabled them to communicate in innovative and provocative ways.

The Kienholz's realized the value of a good story. In the 1960's, Concept Tableaux were sold as a three-step process. Buyers could first purchase a proposal, which consisted of an engraved plaque and a tableau description signed by the artist. If further interested, clients could then commission the artist for a drawing of the tableau. Finally if their finances allowed, they could contract the tableau to be completed by the artist. A proposal for The Cement Store reads:

This tableau will be made from an existing grocery store in a town any where in the United States with a population under 5,000. The building must be made of either cinder blocks, cement blocks, adobe bricks or form poured concrete. The building, businesses and inventory must be purchased and left intact. The windows will be replaced by clear plexi glass or bullet proof glass to withstand internal pressures and resist malicious breaking. The doorway will be board formed in such a way to allow the door to swing both ways. A section of roof will be removed and the interior of the store will be filled with concrete completely covering all merchandise, cash register, records, etc. The roof section will then be replaced and repaired. The board forms at doorway will be removed, the hardened concrete making it impossible to enter the building. The store will be left with little or no explanation other than it is now some sort of an art object and no longer subject to improved property taxes.

PRICE:	Part One	\$15,000
	Part Two	\$1,000
	Part Three	Cost plus artist's wages ²³

The Kienholz's recognized the power of the story to be as worthy as its realization. They charged thousands of dollars for concepts that would never be made. Designed objects can establish this same value prior to fabrication. Storytelling can be imbedded in the design process to bring priceless meanings to insightful users.

The Alessi design family has discovered the essence of storytelling in whimsical

household objects. In their metaproject initiated in 1991, "objects became ludic tools, telling little tales, giving captivating twists to everyday uses, suggesting a mediation with playfulness... they become a bridge to the fantastical." ²⁴ Within the structure of the story, emotions could then be found to inspire the user's passions and curiosities.

Emotion

Emotion evokes raw and complex reactions. Implicit combinations of emotion stimulate nostalgic memories and future hopes. Art elicits emotions to pluck the heartstrings of the right brain, surpassing left hemisphere logic. Emotion hides under the framework of subjects in juxtapositions of color, contrast, and texture. Artists connect audiences with inherent perceptions to transport content into feelings.

Emotions can be found in subtle, suggestive textures. The landscape painter Joseph M. W. Turner, who emerged at the end of Romanticism to hearken the modern era, created an emotive atmosphere in his work unlike any other. He embellished on chiaroscuro effects of Rembrandt and other Old Masters to suggest steam, fog, and mist rising off bodies of water. In his most evocative watercolors and oil paintings, the haze blurs the clear forms and light reflects off the heavy air creating melodic disorientation. The uncertainty of forms invites viewers to fill the clouds with their own impressions, stirring affective imaginations with fear and exhilaration.

Figure painters have understood that the handling of texture and color suggests the mood of their sitters. Lucian Freud, Alice Neel, and Phillip Pearlstein have each treated their subjects with different brush marks and color palettes to

describe their inner thoughts. Freud layered fleshy blue-grays on soft peaches to designate brooding intensity in his nudes, while Pearlstein bathed his smooth figures in a range of warm oranges to designate cool indifference. Alice Neel used lines and color patches to bring attention to areas of the body that displayed her subjects' dispositions; in the blush of the cheeks, furrow on the forehead, and bulge in the belly, she rendered their true convictions.

Sculptors are also cognizant of the emotional evocation of forms. In 1949 Isamu Noguchi wrote:

By sculpture we mean those spatial and plastic relationships which define a moment of personal existence and illuminate the environment of our aspirations. An analogy of this definition is found in the temple sculpture of the past. There the forms - communal, emotional, and mystic in character - fulfill their purpose.²⁵

In his studio he had cored a large block of orange and black basalt in which he told visitors to "put your head in it. Then you will know what the inside of a stone feels like." ²⁶ Emphasizing imperfections, his carved rocks and stones speak of emptiness, introspection, resonance, and revelation through their distinctive characters. The language of his forms reveals the numerous ways in which one can experience empathy. Corrosion, wedging, and polishing allude to tactile rawness of genuine feelings.

Philips Design has recognized that emotion gives products a "cherishable" quality. In their book "Vision of the Future", they maintain that highly cherishable concepts will be treasured and kept longer for their personal, symbolic, and sentimental value.²⁷ Designed in the form of jelly dogs and globular fish, Emotional Communicators might communicate through "sounds, visual signs, animated graphics, fragrance, colours, or by tactile means... to give reassur-

ance, recall a memory, or reinforce a bond." In addition they state, "Such simple devices, with a limited but highly personal and non-rational function, form a welcome contrast to the many multifunctional, highly rational communication devices that will also be on the market."²⁸

Nature

Nature teaches sensitivity and flexibility and how to create in more logical ways, without strength and force and immense exchanges of enthalpy. Both the arts and sciences have sought lessons in nature.

The biologist Ernst Haeckel, who advocated Darwin's theory at the turn of the nineteenth century, painstakingly illustrated microscopic organisms and accentuated their symmetrical structures. While notably contentious to fellow scientists, he recognized structural patterns in nature as art forms and styled them in the ornamental articulation of Art Nouveau. His detailed depictions far exceeded pictorial classification of organisms then or since. Refuting Kant's belief "that knowledge is in fact acquired through pure reason, independent of all experience,"²⁹ Haeckel expounded that human knowledge is to be found in both experiences and perceptions.

Our human knowledge is undoubtedly limited: certain limits are inherent in our knowledge of truth owing to the innate organization of our brain and our sensory organs. Kant was indeed correct in his critical theory of cognition in that we are only ever able to perceive the appearance of things, not their innermost, unknown nature, which he describes as the "object in itself." He is nonetheless mistaken and misleads our conception of nature when he thus questions the reality of the outside world and maintains that it only exists in our imaginations! - in other words, that "life is but a dream."³⁰

Relying on his observations, Haeckel developed an acute awareness of nature and its structural intricacies. To Haeckel, the outside appearance was no less

real than the innermost nature of an object. While his lithographic prints appear beautifully stylized, Haeckel considered each organism's natural form intertwined with its entire being.

In the following centuries since Haeckel, nature went on to influence art and industry in very different ways. While industry utilized nature's resources and duplicated its practical applications, the arts delved into its spiritual mysteries and traced its sinuous forms. Jean Arp, an organic-form sculptor associated with Dada or anti-art, believed art and nature to be one and the same. He explained an artist's symbiotic relationship with nature in which happiness is petrified to stone:

Anyone who tries to shoot down a cloud with arrows will soon exhaust his quiver. Many sculptors are like those foolish hunters.

Here is what one should do: charm the cloud with the tune of a violin played on a drum, or with the tune of a drum played on a violin.

Then before long the cloud will come down and take its ease on earth, until, full of happiness, it turns to stone.

Thus in the twinkling of an eye the sculptor realizes his most beautiful works.³¹

Saying that nature and making are separate was a contradiction for Arp and other artists whose sensitivity to nature is reflected in their work.

For art to be truly like nature, its beauty is not copied. It is understood. The brilliant colorist Vincent Van Gogh demonstrated his humble understanding of nature through vibrant brush strokes. He once stated:

If we study Japanese art, we see a man who is undoubtedly wise, philosophic and intelligent, who spends his time doing what? In studying the distance between the earth and the moon? No. In studying Bismarck's policy? No. He studies a single blade of grass.³²

Flowering almond branches are grasped by ocean blue skies, and working people are protected by brilliant red and orange grounds. On the canvas every

mark was accounted for as foreground and background fit into a whole, similar to the minute nuances interwoven into nature's grand schemes.

Sharing a similar appreciation for the Japanese philosophy of harmony within nature, the architect Frank Lloyd Wright understood built forms as extensions of geometric duplication found in nature. He designed Kentuck Knob "like a polliwog" replicating the hexagons of the floor plan in the central kitchen and furniture designs.³³ He believed architecture to be an extension of the landscape.

The duplication of natural forms advocated by Frank Lloyd Wright on a macroscopic level has grown in importance with scientists since Haeckel on a microscopic level. Biomimics are attempting to construct objects from the ground up by duplicating molecular forms. Genes made up of proteins made up of amino acid sequences would self-assemble in commercial quantities to



11. Nature's truths remain open to the patient observer in Soho, Tony Shafrazi gallery.

create objects. This process would emulate nature's manufacturing and would eliminate the need for the imprecise "heat, beat and treat" approach now utilized in factory plants worldwide.³⁴

Once again art lures in the passersby on lunch break with colorful sheets dancing off mirror-lined walls and lofting in a gentle breeze. Art has bottled nature's pleasures in careful, delectable joys, and science has patiently exposed nature's harmonies in its illusive path of creation. Yet nature's truths remain open to the patient observer who can appreciate her elegant secrets and to the designer who can invent with empathy for the environment.(11)

Scale

An awareness of human scale is evident in Leonardo da Vinci's sketchbooks during the Renaissance and Henry Dreyfuss's diagrams in the Industrial Age. While scale is how we measure in relation to ourselves, it is also how we perceive in our mind's eye. The sculptor Henry Moore explained:

There is a right physical size for every idea. A carving might be several times over life size and yet be petty and small in feeling - and a small carving only a few inches in height can give the feeling of huge size and monumental grandeur, because the vision behind it is big.³⁵

Scale gives precedence to objects and events, not because they are that large but because our minds deem them immensely significant.

In the 1950's Ray and Charles Eames filmed a toy train traveling from one station to another in Tocatta for Toy Trains. Half a century later, their grandson noted that it "demonstrates a spectacular understanding of scale: the toys are of many different sizes, but the illusion is that they are all of the same magnitude."³⁶ Altering our perception of actual object sizes, the media displays



12. Exactly how big is "larger than life"? Bonneville Dam turbine in Oregon.

lab rats next to space shuttles next to the planet earth, all appearing the same size. Our worldly knowledge of these objects places them in general proportional relationships to one another in our minds. However, meaning can transform a hand-sized object into mountain-sized importance.

Exactly how big is "larger than life"? (12) Aware of the semantic significance of objects, the sculptor Claes Oldenburg plays with utilitarian connotations by placing objects in new environmental contexts. His discovery of scale's relevance is recalled:

One day I combined landscapes and objects, only I didn't change the scale. I had a drawing of a vacuum cleaner and another of Manhattan - and I just super-imposed them. The result was automatically a "giant vacuum cleaner" because the city held its scale - and it didn't become a miniature city.³⁷

Of course, Surrealists had these obscure associations far before Oldenburg. What makes Oldenburg different by insisting a gigantic toilet float be suspended in the Thames to rise and fall with the tide or wanting a droopy typewriter eraser erected on 57th Street in New York City to reference a tornado, a mushroom, a waterfall, and an octopus? He has confirmed that altering an object's scale will not change its original meaning. A teddy bear the size of Central Park is still quite harmless.

The meaning of an object has tremendous potential for impression on first contact. The object's importance is scaled in relationship to other objects of various sizes. Thus, magnificent beauty can reside in bugs and rings.

Evolution

Change is the most resilient attribute. Change requires faith in outcome, whether that is a liquidity of movement or the potential for something to happen. It inspires play and alludes to changing meanings beneath its surfaces.

The fiction writer Italo Calvino described the perceptual evolution of a mullusk as it attempted to see and be seen. In the story, a singular mollusk's vibrations communicated its love for another mollusk. As time passed, his vibrations did not reassure him that his affections were returned and desperation took the form of a calcareous shell. This distinctive form was an absent-minded expression of his true thoughts.

And in this self-expression I put all the thoughts I had about her, I released the anger she made me feel, my amorous way of thinking about her, my determination to exist for her, the desire for me to be me, and for her to be her, and the love for myself that I put in my love for her - all the things that could be said only in that conch shell wound into a spiral.³⁸

With the passing of five hundred million years, the mullusk still cannot see its own organic form very well. In reflection, the mullusk points out that evolution has given humans a lackadaisical sense of vision.

While we were bent over, doing the hardest part of the job, that is creating something to be seen, they were quietly taking on the easiest part: adapting their lazy, embryonic receptive organs to what there was to receive; our images.³⁹

Taking credit for the initial need for sight which has resulted in eyes that can only see apparent images, the mollusk relates his own perceptual image extends beyond the visible "rhythmic system of volumes and stripes and hard matter". In the ultimate duplication of the spiral form, the mullusk mulls over the eyes that see him, while his clearest image remains unseen.

And at the bottom of each of those eyes I lived, or rather another me I lived, one of the images of me, and it encountered the image of her, the most faithful image of her, in that beyond which opens, past the semiliquid sphere of the irises, in the darkness of the pupils, the mirrored hall of the retinas, in our true element which extends without shores, without boundaries.⁴⁰

The evolution of the mollusk highlights the depth of perception that can be recognized by far more complex creatures. What is visible can be a changing expression of the invisible. For an object to be an empty shell with no connections is a tree without a sapling and a bottomless lake without a spring. In time, emotions and situations change; the meaning of an object can become an extension of its true meaning.

How nature operates is never static. The artist James Turrell accentuates subtle color shifts of natural light at dusk in a P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center gallery. He captures quiet change. Pressing into a square room near dusk, the audience is coerced into looking upward in wonder as the sky morphs in the roofless enclosure. Turrell heightens the observer's sensitivity of a specific element by

placing it in an unexpected environment.

Evolution is our natural tendency for growth and curiosity. Fostering intellectual growth, play is one such activity that encourages change. Artists as Paul Klee and Pablo Picasso have exposed new ways of seeing in the process of playing with paint. Alexander Calder experimented with kinetic sculptures that have rarely been equaled in the dynamic movement of their abstract forms. Frank Lloyd Wright, Buckminster Fuller, and Wassily Kandinsky were educated by playing with Froebel blocks to create unlimited three-dimensional forms.⁴¹ The scientist Alexander Fleming discovered the mold *Penicillium* in one of his many microbe paintings, which when first presented to Queen Mary in the form of a moldy Union Jack, she queried, "What good is it?"⁴² Somewhere within the random evolution of play, innovations and discoveries are waiting to be found.

These five ingredients mix with unified and layered meaningful environments to instill greatest value. The following are two spaces which guided the formulation of the five themes of art in the context of design.

CHAPTER 4

TWO SPACES

Project One

The concept is a space that would simulate the experience of running through the sprinklers. Tile could be purchased in many configurations.

Phrases from childhood experiences of running through sprinklers conjure anticipation and excitement to be evoked in the space:



13. The sprinkler experience.

Anticipation of getting wet
Movement of sprinkler
Spread of water
Grass sticking to legs
Slipping on grass
Avoiding obstacles- garden citrus trees
CH-CH-CH sound
Bugs
Running and jumping in pool (base)
Rainbow
Shouts of friends
Screams of surprise, delight
Smell of clippings, dirt
Jumping thru arc of water and
squeeling
Closing eyes to avoid droplets
Catching breath, barely
Circling house
The hot pavement of driveway



14. Water spreading rainbow screams.

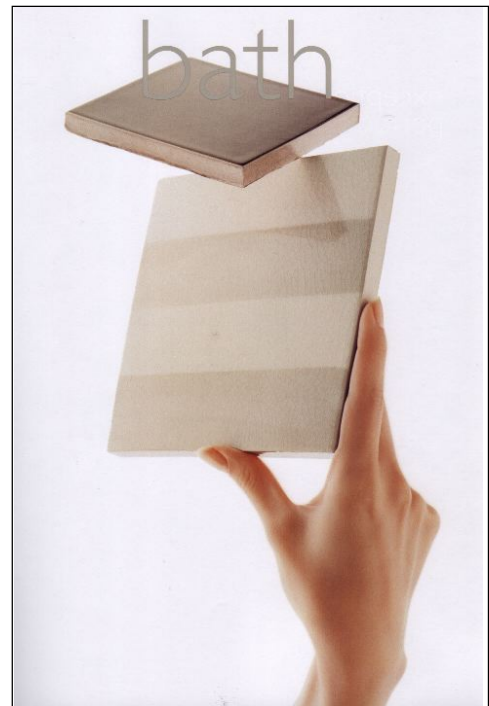
The grapefruit trees
The cerrinam cherry tree/ bush
odor
Sweet and sour, acrid
Pine needles stinging feet
Sap, sticking
Smell of sap
Dodging thru from different
angles
Bumping into playmates
Stop and go, go, go
Readjusting swimming suites, trunks
Giggling, laughing water affected clothing
Messy spiked hair
Chlorine and iron
The ch-ch-ch slow and then fast
(returning to position)
Trying to figure out how all the
sprinklers coordinated
Smiling
Skidding into plastic blue pool
Layer of grass in the pool as other kids
come crashing in
Squirting w/ the hose, being squirt by
the hose
Green of hose - not like grass and could stretch only
so far
Shrill cries of playmates blinded by water/sprinkler
The animals and fish hidden under the grass layer of the pool
The red stalked flower that I hated next to the sprinklers, lily
The paper tree - eucalyptus
Ants, biting
Slapping ants
Pain, stinging
Looking for ant source
Filling and slinging water balloons

Balloon reserves stored in front of shirt
Running w/ balloons, dropping, screaming
Tag, hide and seek
Getting cut by rim of pool
Stepping on pine cones, hurting, not caring
Grass burns
Snakes and palm fronds

Presently, fountains, pools and bathrooms are lined with earthen tiles to contain liquids in beautiful spaces.(15) Tile showrooms as Waterworks (16) and Ann Sacks display trends for clean minimalism and water themed illustrations to enhance these environments. However, would it be possible for tile to reflect the thrills of playing with water or the fun of watching water formations spray through the air at the point of purchase to bring more meaning to tile selections?

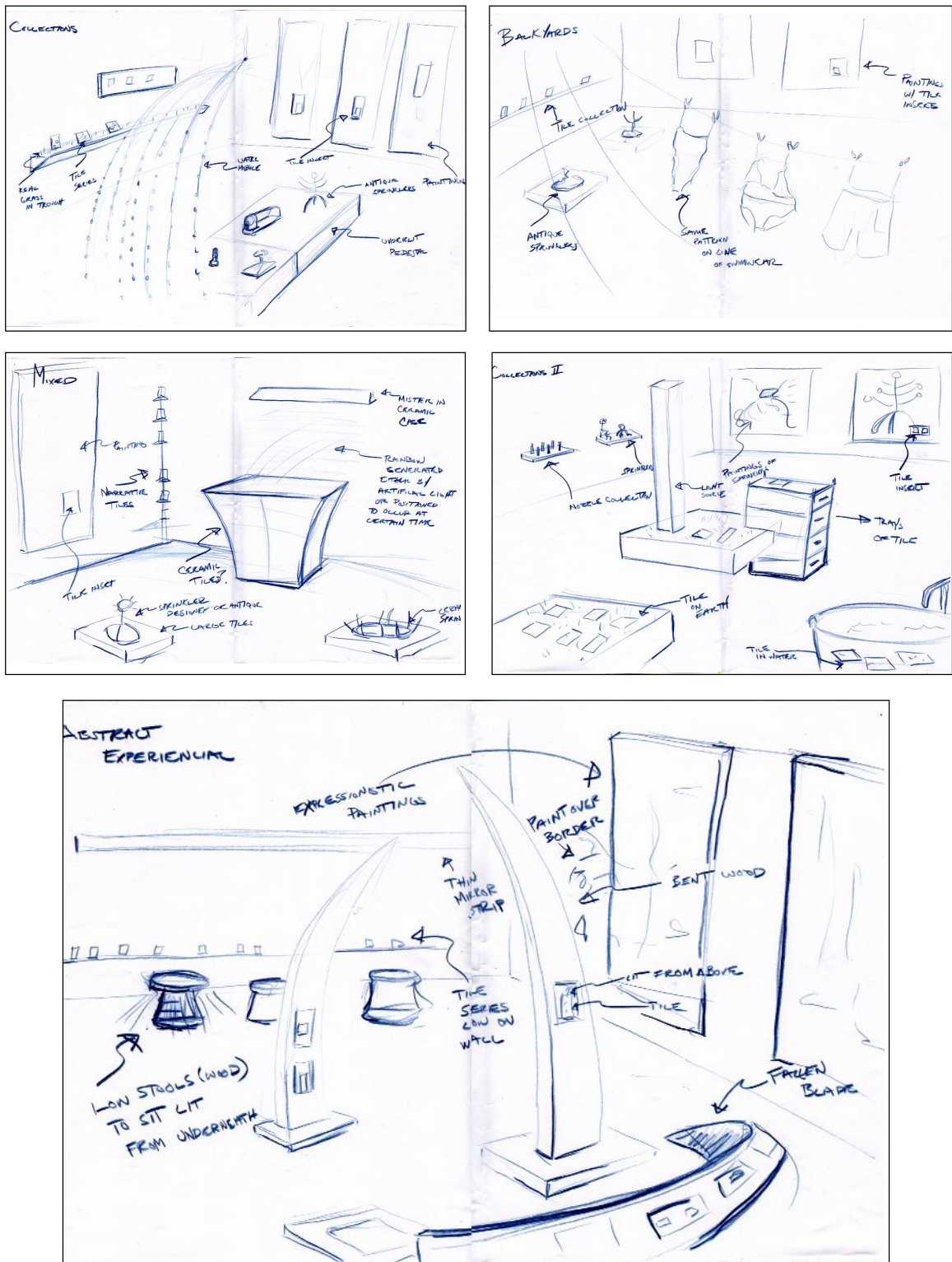


15. Lap pool is lined with tile in Florida.



16. Waterworks advertisement.

Initial ideas integrated tile and sprinklers into museum and gallery displays.(17)



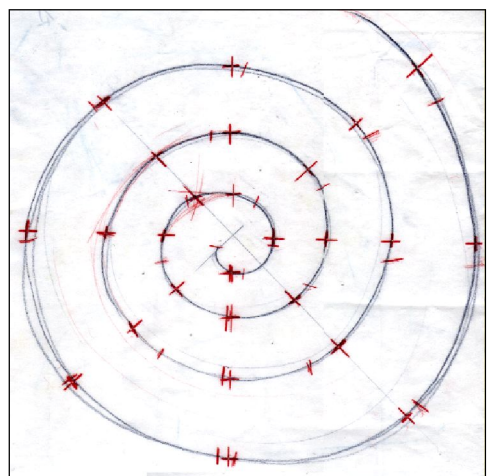
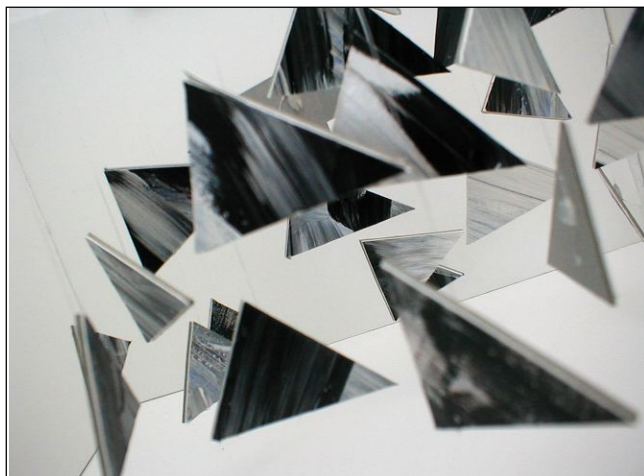
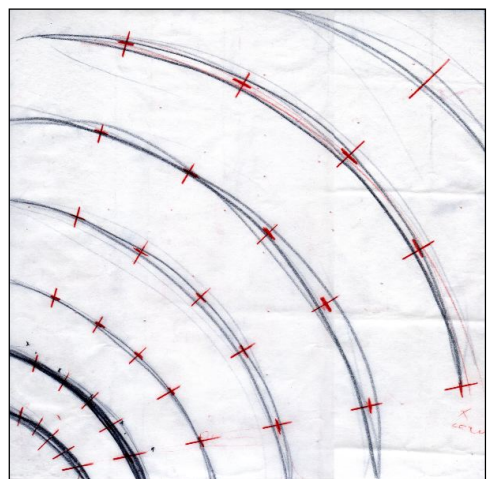
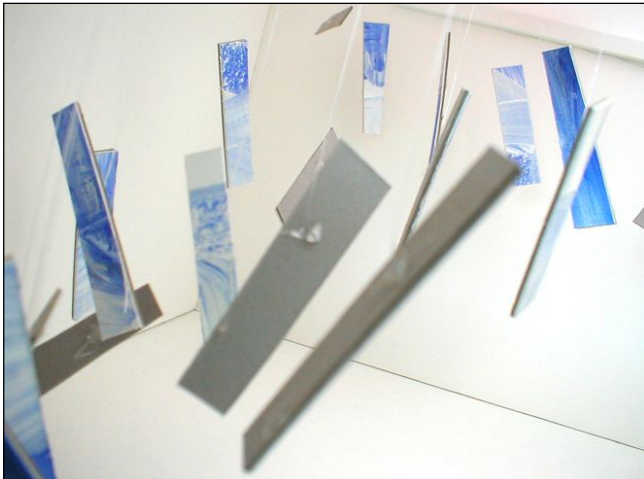
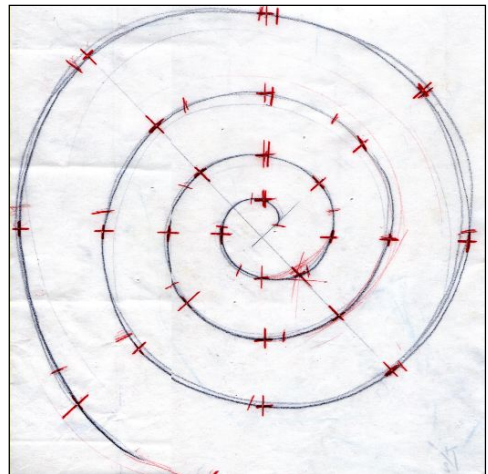
17. Initial sketches for water tile concept with "running through the sprinklers" theme.

Further explorations bring the exhilaration of running through the sprinklers closer to the user's experience of picking out dynamic patterns of tile for the bath environment. The patterns which cause reactive patterns of hesitating, observing, and running would form similar patterns in the guest's movements through the retail space. These are three floor plans.(18)



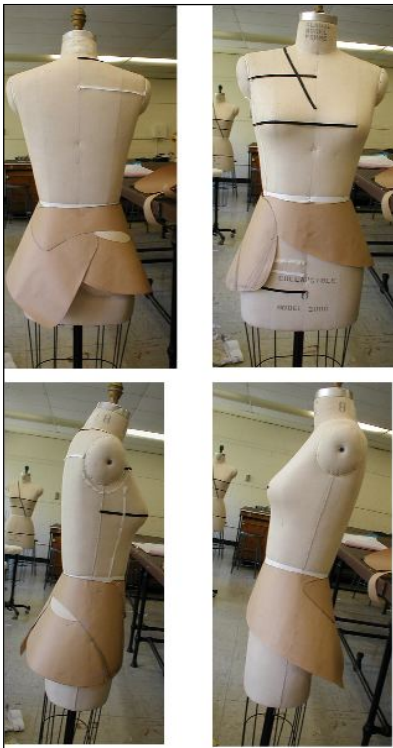
18. Floor plans for water tile concept with "running through the sprinklers" theme.

These sprinkler formations could become mobile water patterns of droplets in route to a destination.(19) Lighting would cast glinting reflections and shadows from the suspended tile to the surrounding space. This would inspire dynamic configurations to be installed in the users' personal environments.



19. Sprinkler formations form mobile water patterns of droplets in route to a destination.

Tiles patterns could also be incorporated into the costumes of sales representatives. Pouches containing information and tile samples would reflect the dynamic movement of water and be texturized with tile designs reminiscent of Moroccan bathes or other water environments.(20)



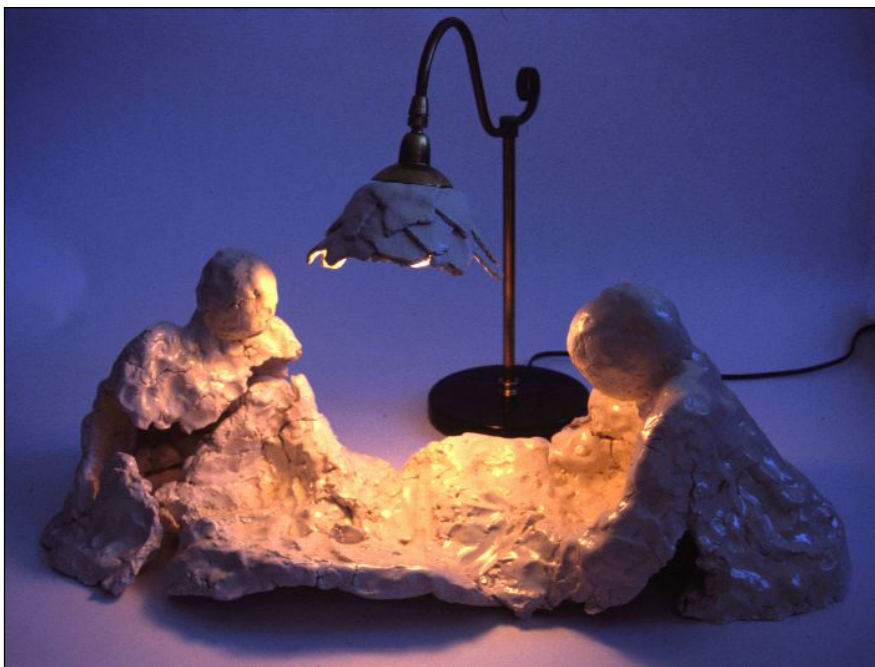
20. Pouches containing tile samples would reflect the dynamic movement of water.

When clay is baked, cracks and ridges portray a subtle natural beauty found in grand landscapes.(21)



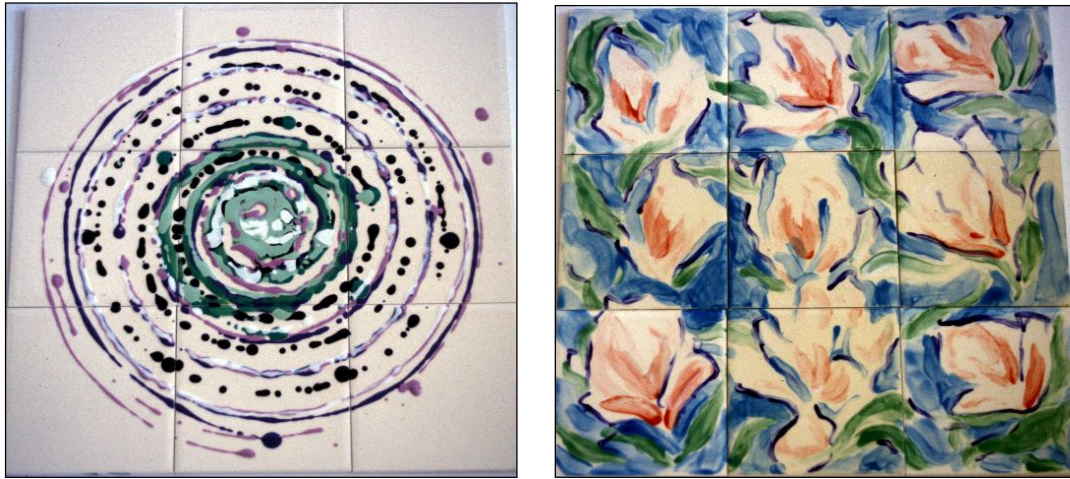
21. Earthen landscape formations in Badlands, South Dakota.

The nature of baked earth can form an intimate relationship with the user, as it cracks, pools glazes, and disperses light in unique and delightful ways.(22)



22. The nature of baked earth can form intimate relationships.

Ultimately, individuals would be actively involved in designing their own tiles.(23)



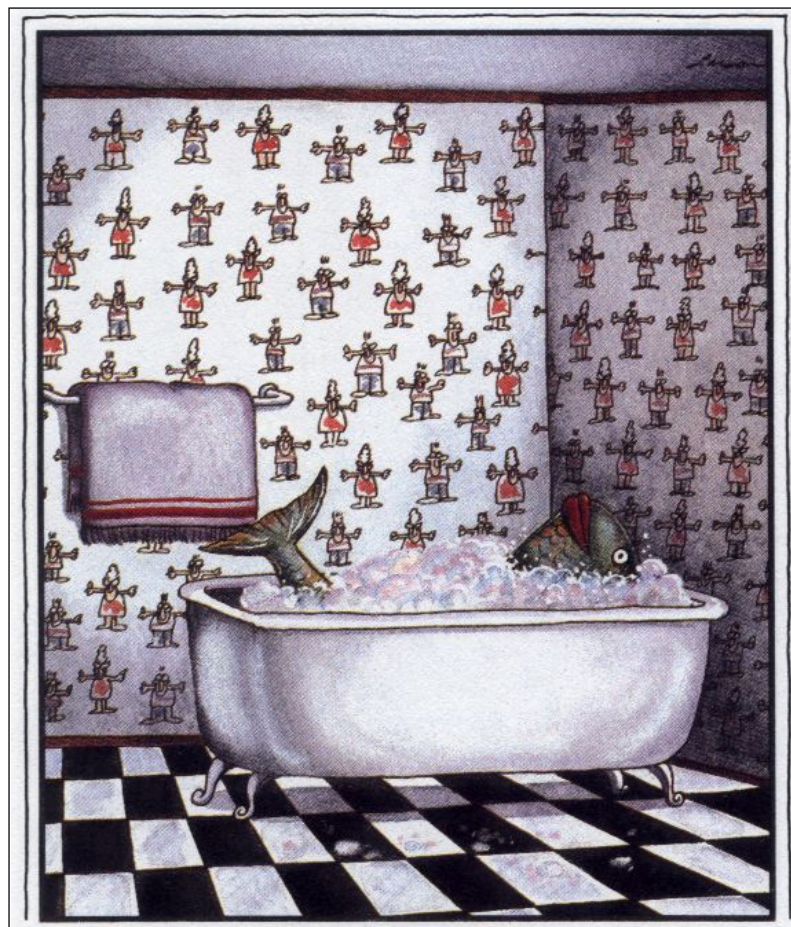
23. Two nine piece tile formations demonstrate painting techniques on pre-bisqued tile.

While it is quite simple to glaze and paint pre-baked tiles of various shapes, they could also explore patterns as they twist and swirl through space.(24)



24. Organic patterns twist and swirl through space.

For guests, the space would evoke nostalgic stories of backyard water games. The associative feelings of this event would inform their tile choices to best fit the activities of the environment. The natural tendencies of tile cracking and glazes pooling would be encouraged and related to the evocative mosaics of the Byzantine era. Shapes of tile would reflect water droplets in larger patterns of dynamic movement. The desire to touch the clay and become involved in the making would encourage individual curiosity and provide a more personable, memorable experience. After all, the context of a space is best understood by the user who is most in tune with his/her inspiration.(25)



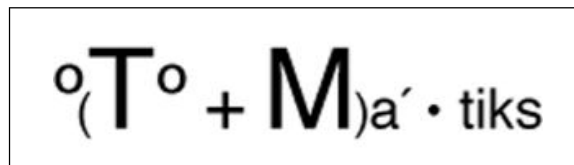
25. Gary Larson cartoon. The user is most in tune with his/her inspiration.

Project Two

Ultimately, an experience would uniquely fit the profile of an individual and incorporate that person into a family of people to strengthen his/her understanding.

The five themes of art in the context of design would facilitate this connection.

The connective transformation could be described with the analogy of a theoretical space. The space will be called "otomatiks". This word in itself is significant in that it is a derivation of several words combined to form a new definition.(26)



26. Logo emphasizes original meanings.

Webster's definition of *automatism* in philosophy is a "theory that one's thinking does not control but only accompanies his actions." In surrealism it is "free expression of the unconscious mind without control by the conscious."

Automatism is derived from *automatic* or *automatos* which means self-thinking plus "-ism".⁴³ Thus, a person can move toward this state in action and experience a lucid clarity of thought uninhibited by the conscious mind.

Next, the word totem, derived from the American Indian word *ototema* (Cree) or *ototeman* (Ojibway),⁴⁴ can best be outlined in origin by Sigmund Freud:

Nominalistic - "needs for tribes to differentiate from each other by means of names."

Sociological - "every primitive tribe originally lived on a particular plant or animal species and perhaps also traded with this food and exchanged it with other tribes. It then was inevitable that a tribe should become known to other tribes by the name of the animal which played such a weighty role with it. At the same time this tribe would develop a special familiarity with this animal, and a kind of interest for it which, however, was based upon the psychic motive of man's most elementary and pressing need, namely hunger."

Psychological - "belief in an 'outward soul'. The totem was meant to represent a safe place of refuge where the soul is deposited in order to avoid the dangers which threaten it. After primitive man had housed his soul in his totem he himself became invulnerable and he naturally took care himself not to harm the bearer of his soul. But as he did not know which individual of the species in question was the bearer of his soul he was concerned in sparing the whole species."

American ethnologists - "the totem is originally the guardian spirit of an ancestor who has acquired it through a dream and handed it on to his descendants."⁴⁵

Thus, the totem symbolizes a family which extends blood relationships. The groupings are for the enrichment and protection of a diverse community.

Furthermore, *oto*, extracted from the first half of the derivative word for totem, is a palindrome, a word which reads the same backward or forward. The palindrome can be visually equated with the Janus face. In Roman mythology Janus was guardian of portals and patron of beginnings and endings. Ironically, Janus-faced means "two-faced or deceiving." Apparently it is easier to deceive when the causes and effects are known. However we will not use this connotation, but instead use the original application in which it symbolizes a doorway.⁴⁶

Thus, both totem and automatism are linked to ways of knowing beyond the perception of our five sensory perceptors. In totemism there is a spiritual linkage and in automatism there is an unconscious mind or action connection. When *otetema* and *automatic*, the derivations for totem and automatism, are synthesized together they form a new word, "otomatiks". We will define this word as "knowing beyond the ability of our physical senses." While some call this a sixth sense or instinct, we will give it more solid grounding.

At this point a person will enter the *otomatiks* space. A muse will gently pull the guest aside and softly mark his/her face with a charcoal strip emphasizing the

profile. This will be repeated for all men, women, and children who enter in groups or as individuals.

Throughout the experience music and food will be provided by nine muses in contemporary garbs similar to those portrayed on ancient Greek vessels.(27)



27. Muses' garbs contemporary to those on ancient Greek vessels and sculpture.

They will symbolize the nine mythical muses: philosophy, love, science, history, dance, tragedy, comedy, music, and religion. Their presence will be invisible except when conversation slows; then the appropriate muse will appear and offer an inspirational poem, joke, song etc. to her guests.

The guests will wander through a labyrinth similar to layers of a tree in a natural progression to the center. Here, a lathed stool will be waiting for each person. The wood will fit each guest's personality: walnut for the soft temperament with streaks of stubbornness, purpleheart for resolute loyalty, oak for determination and warmth. Guests will intermingle and sit on stools to socialize and share ideas.**(28)** Others will stack the wooden stools in groupings to form totems, or families of thoughts that form to generate new ideas. They will see the profiles of their faces in the negative space, the space that does not exist except for



28. After having their profiles traced, guests will intermingle and share ideas.

the wooden forms. In time, thoughts will be created and will disappear in this small nucleus of space. Revelations between the guests will reveal a part of themselves, similar to the self-reflective quality of the faces.

The original muses were memory's daughters. As such, the impressions of this experience will be passed to the memories of their guests to remember that true inspiration is a collection of thoughts, actions, and perspectives.

Each of us has our muses that we seek for answers. Perhaps the answers are not in what we see, but what is "waiting to be seen" in the invisible space of objects and environments. In this way *otomatiks* represents "knowing beyond the ability our physical senses."**(29)**



29. The answers are not in what we see, but what is "waiting to be seen" in the invisible space of objects and environments.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

In T.S. Eliot's poem "The Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock", Prufrock is leading up to an "overwhelming question." As he hesitates, he states:

There will be time, there will be time
To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet;
There will be time to murder and create,
And time for all the works and days of hands
That lift and drop a question on your plate;
Time for you and time for me,
And time for a hundred indecisions,
And for a hundred visions and revisions,
Before the taking of a toast and tea.⁴⁷

In the end Prufrock retracts the "overwhelming question" which, in essence, can never be asked because it would end the process of deliberating and pondering. In the same sense, artists find their work a process of creative experimentation that tells stories, evokes emotions, reveals nature, enhances scales, and evolves with play.

Art in the context of design enables meaning to be contributed by individuals who will value the products in which they are a part of the process. Young children are unabashed in the process of creating, why should the all-inclusive experience disappear when we grow up? The individual and the organization with unified objectives can collaborate to create more passionate, personal, and meaningful designs now and for centuries to come.

The Paleolithic cave paintings of 15,000 years ago have reinforced human's interactions with the environment. They recorded processes of survival and the metaphysical needs for life. During this period, sticks and stones were selected based on form and function to best implement activities depicted on shelter walls. Art was as essential as performing the task itself. Presently, the inherent existence of art is also revealed in tribal cultures in which ceremonial masks and sculptures are as necessary as the act of breathing. Art does not have a unique category.

Academia has established areas of study that have enabled specialized learning, as the initial schools of industrial design were started in the Wiener Werkbund in the early 1900's. Throughout the ages, art schools have also been founded to purport philosophies within cultures. Museums and galleries have isolated and capitalized on these ideologies. However, the intangible affects of the arts are integrated into our daily rituals and will continue to most inform our thoughts and feelings, in spite of our academic backgrounds.

In this way, an understanding for the historical predispositions of both art and design exposes a common denominator. The desire to create, to express oneself as an individual or collective philosophy has always been present within society. By unifying the objectives of meaning within the creation process, greater value can be attributed to objects. Meaning is found in the intangible forms of stories, emotions, nature, scales, and evolution. Our physical senses are merely the means to a meaningful end.

Thus, design can look to the arts to trust the playful, nonobjective interaction with the user in which the object communicates multiple levels of contextual

meaning. At the point of purchase it makes a first memorable impression and continues to evolve with use. Objects created with this awareness will be least disposable and most desired. They will advocate environmental consciousness from inception, to connect with our changing perceptions.

Mass production is still a baby. We feed machines day and night in order to insure its growth. However, when we realize that industry will continue to grow no matter what we feed it, our urgency to produce is replaced by a desire to communicate. These communicative objects will nurture the process of making and edify humankind. We can only imagine what it will look like 15,000 years from now to the person who finds a leaf-blower wrapped around an orange peeler and deciphers the writing on the wall.

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