

DESN 110 – GRAPHIC DESIGN I

Gestalt

Gestalt, a definition:

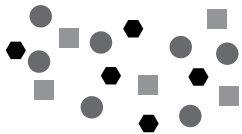
a structure, configuration, or pattern of physical, biological, or psychological phenomena so integrated as to constitute a functional unit with properties not derivable by summation of its parts.

In other words – the whole is more than just the sum of the parts.

In design – a well-designed concept that communicates more than its content

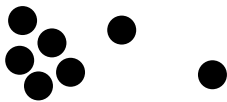
The Gestalt school of psychology was founded in Germany in 1912. These psychologists set out to identify and understand what governs our visual perception of the world around us. They found that there common ways that humans perceive visual understanding. Their discoveries have had a profound effect on graphic design. There are five basic principles of Gestalt that we, as designers, need to understand and incorporate into our designs to make them more interesting and to communicate more effectively.

Similarity –



- We tend to group things that look similar – similar by size, shape, color, value, texture, angle, spatial relationship, etc.
- Dissimilar elements attract attention because they look like they do not belong to the group. (focal point and eye-direction)

Proximity –



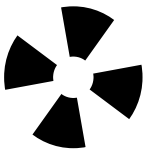
- The closer that elements are, the more we will see them as a group.
- Shapes grouped together in a particular manner can be seen as a new shape.
- An element that is isolated from a group will attract attention and look like it does not belong to the group. (focal point and eye-direction)

Continuation –



- The viewer's eye will tend to follow a line. This line may carry the eye into different elements in the design.
- The line does not have to be complete for continuation to occur.
- Shapes placed in the proper configuration can create a visual line that the eye will follow.

Closure –



- Familiar shapes will tend to be seen as complete, rather than incomplete.
- The viewer's mind will complete the incomplete shape.
- The most simple and obvious solution will be perceived as the correct response.

Figure/ground –



- How the mind separates an object from a background.
- What is around an object is just as important as the object itself in this perception. New shapes are created out of the background.
- Refer to Chapter 3 for laws governing the relationships between figure and ground.

These principles are commonly used in symbol and logo design, but can be applied to every form of design project to help communication and add visual interest.

Remember:

- What is left out of a design can aid in the communication just as much as what is included in the design.
- Form follows function.
- Design creates communication and understanding.