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Graphic Design Theory : Readings from the Field | By (author) Helen Armstrong. The titles in our best-selling Design Brief series are highly praised by graphic design students, educators, and professionals worldwide as invaluable resources. Each beautifully designed, affordable volume offers a concise overview of a design fundamentalthe hows of design.

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Graphic design theory: readings from the field / edited by Helen Armstrong. p. cm.—(Design briefs) Includes bibliographical references and index. ISBN 978-1-56898-772-9 (alk. paper) 1. Graphic arts. 2. Commercial art. I. Armstrong, Helen, 1971- NC997.G673 2008 741.6—dc22 2008021063

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## *Graphic Design Theory*

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Digital Design Theory: Readings from the Field Compiled and edited by Helen Armstrong (2016); published by Princeton Architectural Press, New York, NY, USA; 152 pages. ISBN: 9781616893088 review by keLLy MurDoch-kitt1 anD Marty MaXweLL Lane2 1 Assistant Professor of Art & Design, Penny W. Stamps School of Art & Design, University of

## *Digital Design Theory: Readings from the Field*

Our Department has an outstanding reputation for its research – the University of Reading is ranked 1st in the UK for research in typography and graphic communication (Times Higher Education Institutions Ranked by Subject, 2014, based on its analysis of REF 2014 – Art and Design: History, practice and theory: B – Typography & Graphic communication).

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INTRODUCTION : #1 Graphic Design Theory Readings From Publish By Jin Yong, Graphic Design Theory Readings From The Field Armstrong appears in the book graphic design theory readings from the field edited by helen armstrong published by princeton architectural pressthe political in design is often looked at in a context of making a

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influential avant-garde ideas of futurism, constructivism, and the Bauhaus; "Building on Success" covers the mid- to late twentieth century and considers the International Style, modernism, and postmodernism; and "Mapping the Future" opens at the end of the last century and includes current discussions on legibility, social responsibility, and new media. Striking color images illustrate each of the movements discussed and demonstrate the ongoing relationship between theory and practice. A brief commentary prefaces each text, providing a cultural and historical framework through which the work can be evaluated. Authors include such influential designers as Herbert Bayer, L'szlo Moholy-Nagy, Karl Gerstner, Katherine McCoy, Michael Rock, Lev Manovich, Ellen Lupton, and Lorraine Wild. Additional features include a timeline, glossary, and bibliography for further reading. A must-have survey for graduate and undergraduate courses in design history, theory, and contemporary issues, *Graphic Design Theory* invites designers and interested readers of all levels to plunge into the world of design discourse.

Digital Design Theory bridges the gap between the discourse of print design and interactive experience by examining the impact of computation on the field of design. As graphic design moves from the creation of closed, static objects to the development of open, interactive frameworks, designers seek to understand their own rapidly shifting profession. Helen Armstrong's carefully curated introduction to groundbreaking primary texts, from the 1960s to the present, provides the background necessary for an understanding of digital design vocabulary and

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thought. Accessible essays from designers and programmers are by influential figures such as Ladislav Sutnar, Bruno Munari, Wim Crouwel, Sol LeWitt, Muriel Cooper, Zuzana Licko, Rudy VanderLans, John Maeda, Paola Antonelli, Luna Maurer, and Keetra Dean Dixon. Their topics range from graphic design's fascination with programmatic design, to early strivings for an authentic digital aesthetic, to the move from object-based design and to experience-based design. Accompanying commentary assesses the relevance of each excerpt to the working and intellectual life of designers.

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Meredith Davis draws on her many years' experience teaching graphic design students to explain complex theories with total clarity, encouraging readers to evaluate existing design work critically, and to use theoretical frameworks to enhance their own studio practice

In an age of globalization and connectivity, the idea of "mainstream culture" has become quaint. Websites, magazines, books, and television have all honed in on ever-diversifying subcultures, hoping to carve out niche audiences that grow savvier and more narrowly sliced by the day. Consequently, the discipline of graphic design has undergone a sea change. Where visual communication was once informed by a designer's creative intuition, the proliferation of specialized audiences now calls for more research-based design processes. Designers who ignore research run the risk of becoming mere tools for communication rather than bold voices. *Design Studies*, a collection of 27 essays from an international cast of top design researchers, sets out to mend this schism between research and practice. The texts presented here make a strong argument for performing rigorous experimentation and analysis. Each author outlines methods in which research has aided their design whether by investigating how senior citizens react to design aesthetics, how hip hop culture can influence design, or how design for

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Third World nations is affected by cultural differences. Contributors also outline inspired ways in which design educators can teach research methods to their students. Finally, Design Studies is rounded out by five annotated bibliographies to further aid designers in their research. This comprehensive reader is the definitive reference for this new direction in graphic design, and an essential resource for both students and practitioners.

If the aim of graphic design is to communicate meaning clearly, there's an irony that the field itself has struggled between two contradictory opposites: rote design resulting from a rigorous, fixed set of rules, and eccentric design that expresses the hand of the artist but fails to communicate with its audience. But what if designers focused on process and critical analysis over visual outcome? Through a carefully selected collection of more than seventy-five seminal texts spanning centuries and bridging the disciplines of art, architecture, design history, philosophy, and cultural theory, *Graphic Design Discourse: Evolving Theories, Ideologies, and Processes of Visual Communication* establishes a new paradigm for graphic design methodologies for the twenty-first century. This illuminating anthology is essential reading for practicing designers, educators, and students trying to understand how to design in a singular, expressive way without forgoing clear and concise visual communication.

This anthology turns a critical eye on advertising, newspapers, commercial

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photography.

Reading *Graphic Design in Cultural Context* explains key ways of understanding and interpreting the graphic designs we see all around us, in advertising, branding, packaging and fashion. It situates these designs in their cultural and social contexts. Drawing examples from a range of design genres, leading design historians Grace Lees-Maffei and Nicolas P. Maffei explain theories of semiotics, postmodernism and globalisation, and consider issues and debates within visual communication theory such as legibility, the relationship of word and image, gender and identity, and the impact of digital forms on design. Their discussion takes in well-known brands like Alessi, Nike, Unilever and Tate, and everyday designed things including slogan t-shirts, car advertising, ebooks, corporate logos, posters and music packaging.

The author seeks to marry abstract ideas with practical application, removing some of the mystique that surrounds philosophy and highlighting its relevance for all of us. It will engage designers in a debate about their profession and in an analysis of their value and worth.

Semiotics concepts from a design perspective, offering the foundation for a coherent theory of graphic design as well as conceptual tools for practicing designers. Graphic design has been an academic discipline since the post-World

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War II era, but it has yet to develop a coherent theoretical foundation. Instead, it proceeds through styles, genres, and imitation, drawing on sources that range from the Bauhaus to deconstructionism. In *FireSigns*, Steven Skaggs offers the foundation for a semiotic theory of graphic design, exploring semiotic concepts from design and studio art perspectives and offering useful conceptual tools for practicing designers. Semiotics is the study of signs and significations; graphic design creates visual signs meant to create a certain effect in the mind (a “FireSign”). Skaggs provides a network of explicit concepts and terminology for a practice that has made implicit use of semiotics without knowing it. He offers an overview of the metaphysics of visual perception and the notion of visual entities, and, drawing on the pragmatic semiotics of the philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce, looks at visual experience as a product of the action of signs. He introduces three conceptual tools for analyzing works of graphic design—semantic profiles, the functional matrix, and the visual gamut—that allow visual “personality types” to emerge and enable a greater understanding of the range of possibilities for visual elements. Finally, he applies these tools to specific analyses of typography.

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