

VISUAL COMMUNICATION

WEEK 7

Designing with Images (Photography and drawings)

Learning Outcomes



At end of this week lesson the students should be able to:

1. Explore the basics of designing with images
2. Learn to transform an image by cropping, resizing, flipping, and rotating it.
3. Develop an awareness of the tools available in image editing software.
4. Practice how Designing with Images work

What is design, designer, an image, and designing?

This lesson will focus on designing with images and especially in Desktop publishing. According to the International Council of Design (2024), **designing** is the activity, the process designers undergo to create the visual, material, spatial and experiential environments in response to a given problem, in a specific context. The design process involves a structured design methodology including phases of research, ideation, iteration, prototyping and implementation. This process considers the production technologies, distribution networks and the eventual economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts of the design outcomes.

Designers are the professionals, people who hold creative, interdisciplinary knowledge bases, skills and experiences, with the shared obligation to recognize a code of ethics and conduct. Designers consider the impact of their designs on individuals, humanity and the well-being of the planet (International Council of Design, 2024).

Designs are the artefacts produced by designing, the ‘objects’, ‘solutions’, ‘collaborations’ ‘systems’ and even ‘concepts’ produced by designing. Sometimes the result is not physically tangible, but is instead experienced in the abstract... While we value the creation of functional and aesthetic objects, we believe that the designs of the future will be about making people rethink their desires, and question their need for more ‘stuff’ (International Council of Design, 2024).

According to Zola (1999-2024), an image is a visual representation of something, while a digital image is a *binary* representation of visual data. These images can take the form of photographs, graphics and individual video frames. For this purpose, an image is a picture that was created or copied and stored in electronic form. An image can also be described in terms of *vector graphics* or

raster graphics. An image stored in raster form is sometimes called a *bitmap*. An *image map* is a file containing information that associates different locations on a specified image with hypertext links.

Defining art and design images

Art images and design images serve distinct purposes and often follow different principles, though there can be overlap between the two.

1. Art Images:

- **Expression:** Art images are primarily created for self-expression, exploring emotions, ideas, and concepts without strict adherence to practical considerations.
- **Subjectivity:** The interpretation of art images can vary widely among viewers, as they often evoke subjective responses and interpretations.
- **Originality:** Art images typically prioritize originality and creativity, encouraging artists to experiment with unconventional techniques and styles.
- **Emotion:** Art images aim to evoke emotional responses from viewers, whether through the use of color, composition, symbolism, or subject matter.
- **Autonomy:** Art images are often created autonomously, driven by the artist's personal vision and artistic sensibilities rather than external requirements or constraints.

2. Design Images:

- **Functionality:** Design images are created with specific purposes and objectives in mind, such as communicating information, solving problems, or eliciting desired actions from the audience.
- **Utility:** Design images are intended to serve practical purposes, such as enhancing readability, guiding navigation, or promoting products and services.
- **Clarity:** Design images prioritize clarity and effectiveness in communication, often employing clear visuals and concise messaging to convey information efficiently.
- **Consistency:** Design images aim for consistency and coherence within a broader design context, adhering to established branding guidelines, visual hierarchy, and design principles.
- **Audience-Centric:** Design images are tailored to the needs and preferences of the target audience, considering factors such as demographics, cultural norms, and user experience.

- **Problem-Solving:** Design images often involve problem-solving processes, addressing specific challenges or requirements posed by the project brief or client brief.

Types of images in art and design

In both art and design, images serve various purposes and can take on many forms. Here are some common types of images seen in both realms:

Art Images:

1. **Paintings:** Created with various painting mediums such as oil, acrylic, watercolor, or mixed media, paintings are highly expressive and often showcase the artist's unique style and vision.
2. **Drawings:** Drawings encompass a wide range of techniques, including pencil, charcoal, ink, pastel, and digital drawing. They can range from detailed and realistic to abstract and conceptual.
3. **Sculptures:** Sculptures are three-dimensional artworks created by shaping or carving materials such as clay, wood, metal, stone, or plastic. They can be representational or abstract and are often displayed in galleries, public spaces, or outdoor environments.
4. **Photography:** Photography involves capturing images with a camera, whether analog or digital. Photographs can document reality, convey emotions, tell stories, or explore artistic concepts through composition, lighting, and subject matter.
5. **Printmaking:** Printmaking techniques such as etching, lithography, screen printing, and woodcut produce multiple copies of an image from a matrix. Each print can have unique characteristics due to variations in the printing process.
6. **Digital Art:** Digital art encompasses various forms of artwork created using digital tools and technologies, including digital painting, illustration, graphic design, 3D modeling, and animation. It allows for versatility, experimentation, and manipulation of imagery through software programs.

Design Images:

1. **Logos and Icons:** Logos are visual symbols or marks representing brands, organizations, or products. Icons are simplified graphical representations used to represent actions, functions, or concepts within user interfaces.
2. **Illustrations:** Illustrations are visual representations created to accompany text or convey specific messages in design projects such as books, magazines, websites, or advertisements. They can be hand-drawn, digitally created, or a combination of both.

3. **Photography for Design:** Photography plays a crucial role in design, whether it's product photography for e-commerce websites, lifestyle photography for advertising campaigns, or editorial photography for magazines and brochures.
4. **Infographics:** Infographics are visual representations of data, information, or processes designed to make complex concepts more understandable and engaging. They often combine text, icons, illustrations, and charts to communicate effectively.
5. **UI/UX Graphics:** User interface (UI) and user experience (UX) design rely heavily on visual elements such as buttons, menus, controls, and navigation bars to create intuitive and engaging digital experiences.
6. **Packaging Graphics:** Packaging design incorporates visual elements such as images, typography, colors, and branding to attract consumers, communicate product features, and differentiate products on store shelves.

Transforming an image by cropping, resizing, flipping, and rotating it

According to Lake and Bean (2008), bitmap graphics are made up of a series of pixels that are so small that your eye sees them as a single object. Changing these pixels creates a modified image. Pixels are edited using paint programs. The paint programs most often used by desktop publishers are Adobe Photoshop, Corel Paint Shop Pro, or Macromedia Fireworks.

Transformations: is the modification of an image using actions such as cropping or flipping.

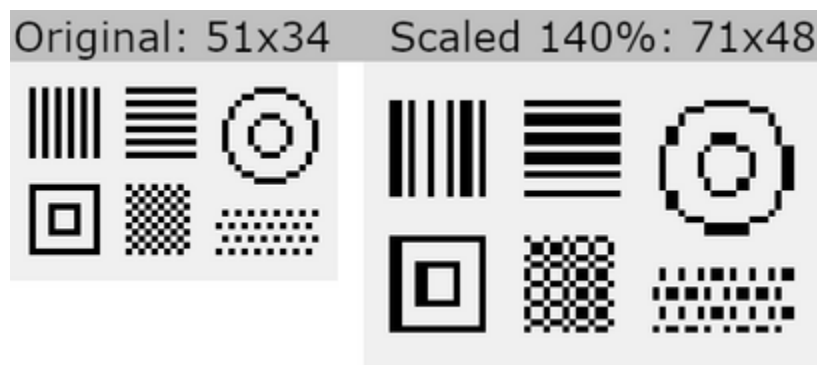
Cropping: is the process of removing part of an image. Cropping is one of the most valuable tools a desktop publisher has. Cropping is not just about removing edges that might have a distracting element. Cropping is also about pulling out a single element that can be used in a way not possible if the entire image is selected (Lake and Bean, 2008).

Resizing: is easy to do. You can resize within a desktop publishing program, but it is better to resize in an image editing program such as Photoshop. By saving within an image management program, you will reduce the file size of your image and, therefore, of the final document. You may need to make minor size adjustments once the image is placed in a document. Resizing is also called scaling since you scale the size up or down (Lake and Bean, 2008).



Cropping video using VideoCutTool.png

Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?search=cropping+images&title=Special:MediaSearch&go=Go&type=image>



An image demonstrating scaling artifacts that arise from nearest neighbor scaling.

Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?search=resizing+image&title=Special:MediaSearch&go=Go&type=image>

Flipping an image vertically or horizontally is an option. Flipping is particularly useful when working with images of people. Generally, it is best if a person's eyes are focused into a page rather than away from it (Lake and Bean, 2008).

Rotating: Photographs that have been shot horizontally rather than vertically need to be rotated before they can be used, which is easy to do and easy to see. This is more important, but less easy to see, when an image has been photographed slightly tilted (Lake and Bean, 2008).



An example of flipping vertically. Image Source: <https://pixabay.com/photos/buntzen-lake-boat-house-4101693/>



An example of flipping horizontally. Image Source: <https://pixabay.com/photos/buntzen-lake-boat-house-4101693/>



Rotate right 90 degrees. Image Source <https://www.pexels.com/photo/woman-wearing-red-top-1933838/> by Mariana Kurnyk

The tools available in image editing software.

Image editing software offers a wide range of tools and features to manipulate and enhance digital images. Here are some common tools available in most image editing software:

1. **Selection Tools:**

- **Marquee Selection:** Allows you to select rectangular or elliptical areas of an image.
- **Lasso Selection:** Enables freehand selection of irregular areas.
- **Magic Wand:** Selects areas based on color similarity or tolerance.
- **Quick Selection:** Automatically selects areas based on contrast and texture.

2. **Drawing and Painting Tools:**

- **Brush Tool:** Allows you to paint or draw freehand strokes with various brush styles and sizes.
- **Pencil Tool:** Similar to the brush tool but creates hard-edged strokes.
- **Eraser Tool:** Removes portions of an image or drawing.
- **Clone Stamp Tool:** Clones pixels from one area of an image to another.
- **Gradient Tool:** Creates gradual transitions between colors.

3. **Transform Tools:**

- **Move Tool:** Moves selected pixels or objects within the image.
- **Scale Tool:** Resizes selected objects or layers.
- **Rotate Tool:** Rotates selected objects or layers.
- **Crop Tool:** Crops the image to a specified size or aspect ratio.
- **Transform Tool:** Allows for more complex transformations like skewing, distorting, and perspective adjustments.

4. **Adjustment Tools:**

- **Brightness/Contrast:** Adjusts the overall brightness and contrast of the image.
- **Levels:** Fine-tunes the tonal range of shadows, midtones, and highlights.
- **Curves:** Provides precise control over tonal adjustments using a curve graph.
- **Hue/Saturation:** Modifies the hue, saturation, and lightness of specific color ranges.

- **Color Balance:** Adjusts the balance of colors in highlights, midtones, and shadows.

5. **Retouching Tools:**

- **Clone Stamp:** Copies pixels from one area to another for removing blemishes or imperfections.
- **Healing Brush:** Blends pixels from the surrounding area to remove imperfections seamlessly.
- **Spot Healing Brush:** Automatically samples nearby pixels to remove small imperfections.
- **Red Eye Tool:** Corrects red-eye caused by camera flash in portraits.

6. **Text Tools:**

- **Text Tool:** Allows you to add and edit text layers with various fonts, sizes, and styles.
- **Type Mask Tool:** Creates a selection in the shape of text for applying effects or adjustments.
- **Vertical Type Tool:** Adds vertical text to an image.

7. **Filters and Effects:**

- **Blur/Sharpen:** Softens or sharpens areas of the image.
- **Noise Reduction:** Reduces digital noise or graininess in photos.
- **Artistic Filters:** Applies artistic effects like oil painting, watercolor, or sketch.
- **Lens Correction:** Corrects distortion, vignetting, and chromatic aberration caused by camera lenses.

8. **Layers and Masks:**

- **Layer Palette:** Manages individual layers within the image.
- **Layer Masks:** Allows for non-destructive editing by hiding or revealing portions of layers.
- **Blending Modes:** Change how layers interact with each other to create different effects.

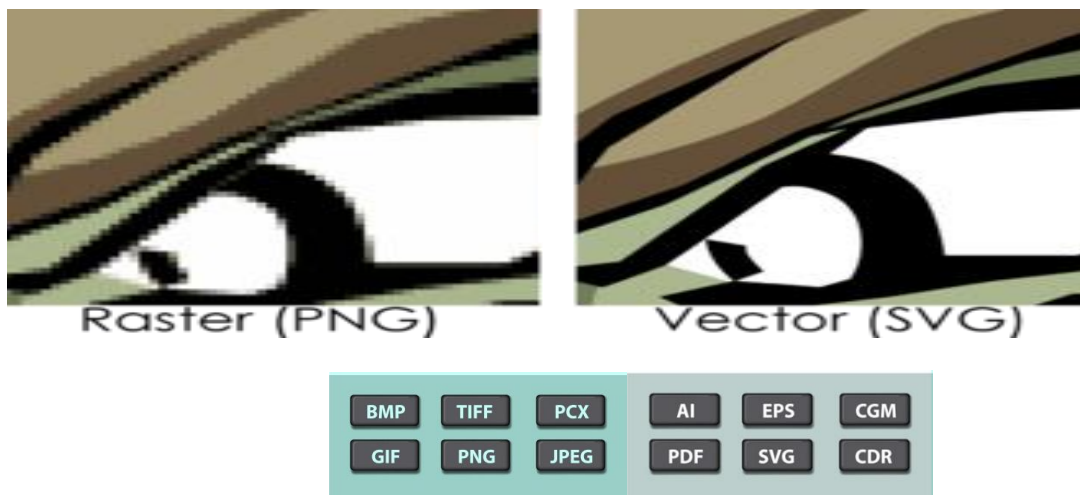
These are just some of the many tools available in image editing software, providing users with the flexibility and control to edit and manipulate digital images to their desired specifications.

Practice how Designing with Images work

According to Brockenbush (2023), Graphic design elements such as color, typography, and images create visual interest and attract the reader's attention. A well-designed cover or page layout can significantly affect whether a reader picks up a publication. Graphic design can also create a visual hierarchy that guides the reader's eye through the content, making it easier to read and understand. These are just a few examples of how images are used in design across various mediums. Each design project may require different types of images depending on its purpose, audience, and context.

According to the Gold Rabbit limited (2022), there are many websites available that offer a wide range of stock images. Sites like Adobestock and Shutterstock offer access to high quality stock images by subscription. There are also free stock image websites available, for example Pixabay. Caution is advised when using free stock images. Free stock images tend to be generic and are often widely used, which can limit their impact on the viewer. We are all familiar with the popular saying "a picture is worth a thousand words." It hints at the unique power that images possess as communication tools. Complex ideas can be conveyed powerfully by a single carefully selected image and can be communicated more effectively than a purely text-based description (Gold Rabbit, 2022).

When you are designing on a large scale, it's important that your images appear crisp and clean. You should use vector images and avoid using raster images. Raster images are composed of tiny pixels and are resolution dependent. In practice, this means that raster images will lose resolution and become blurred if the image size is adjusted. A vector is an image file-type that is composed of lines rather than pixels, so this means it can be scaled up or down to any size and it will never look blurry or low quality (Gold Rabbit, 2022).



Sources:

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?search=raster+and+vector+image&title=Special:MediaSearch&go=Go&type=image>. <https://goldrabbit.co.uk/the-importance-of-images-in-graphic-design/>

Designing with images involves using visual elements to enhance the aesthetics, communication, and overall effectiveness of a design. The following is a breakdown of how it works:

1. **Understanding the Purpose:** Before incorporating images into a design, it's crucial to understand the purpose of the project. Whether it's a website, poster, brochure, or any other medium, knowing the target audience and the message you want to convey will guide your image choices.
2. **Selecting Relevant Images:** Choose images that are relevant to the content and message of your design. Consider the tone, theme, and context of the project. For example, if you're designing a website for a travel agency, using high-quality images of exotic destinations can help evoke the desired emotions and attract potential customers.
3. **Quality and Resolution:** High-quality images are essential for a professional-looking design. Low-resolution images can appear pixelated or blurry when enlarged, diminishing the overall quality of your design. Use images with sufficient resolution for the intended size and format of your project.
4. **Composition and Layout:** Pay attention to the composition and layout of your design. Images should complement the text and other design elements, rather than overpowering them. Experiment with different arrangements and placements to find the most visually appealing layout.
5. **Balance and Contrast:** Achieving a balance between images and other design elements is important for visual harmony. Use contrast to draw attention to key elements or create visual interest. For example, pairing a bold image with minimalist text can create a striking visual contrast.
6. **Consistency:** Maintain consistency in the style, color scheme, and tone of your images to ensure a cohesive design. Consistent imagery helps reinforce branding and creates a unified look and feel across different parts of your project.
7. **Accessibility:** Consider accessibility when using images in your design. Provide alternative text descriptions for images to make your content more accessible to users with visual impairments. Additionally, ensure that images are optimized for fast loading times, especially on digital platforms.
8. **Copyright and Licensing:** Respect copyright laws and licensing agreements when using images in your design. Avoid using copyrighted images without permission, and consider using stock photos or hiring a photographer if needed. Make sure to credit the source of the image if required by the licensing terms.

By following these principles, you can effectively incorporate images into your designs to enhance visual appeal, communicate messages more effectively, and create memorable experiences for your audience.

Further Reading



Suggested materials to be read by the Learner

Ethics in Image creation

With the growth of digital image usage have come frequent scandals about news photographs that have been “doctored” or changed. Sometimes these changes are designed to fool the public. Other times the photographs are changed to improve the image of the person in the photo. For example, an actress might have wrinkles removed or her body slimmed in places. Changing photographs to intentionally mislead an audience is completely unethical. No desktop publisher or photographer should be willing to participate in such an action. (Lake and Bean, 2008).

The predicament you face comes when images are changed for other purposes. Few people would object to red eye being removed from an image. Even removing a slight blemish from a face is excusable. From that point on, you will have to make your own judgments. Is it acceptable to change the color of a car in order to make it more attractive for an ad? What are the ethics of removing a person from a group image because they haven’t given permission to use the image while the others have? What about extracting a person’s image from one location and placing them in another background? Designers face all these questions and many more every day. (Lake and Bean, 2008).

According to Lester (2021), Some art directors know that shock advertising can make a company a media standout for the moment and give a fresh, edgier look to a traditional company. Sisley, a clothing brand owned by Benetton, showed young women with dark rings around their eyes “snorting” the white straps of a slinky dress from straws for its Junkie campaign, misspelled by its Chinese advertising company as “Fashioin”. Humorous commercials can also get a company’s product noticed. The Swedish vodka company Absolut, known for its advertising campaign in which it commissions artists to produce posters that incorporate the shape of the bottle in clever ways, asked comedian Zack Galifianakis to produce a series of web-only commercials with the comedy duo Tim Heidecker and Eric Wareheim that were as bizarre as they were funny, the advertisement became a popular YouTube download.

(Weblink: <http://bit.ly/2DpYDUT>)

Sisley created an obvious connection to addiction in its advertisement.

Linking sexual activity with products is a long-established tactic for advertisers. If you stacked two particular Pepsi cans produced in 1990 you could see the word “SEX,” although a spokesperson said it was just a coincidence.

(Weblink: <http://bit.ly/2E0dWoO>)

Probably few consumers linked sex with a sugar drink, but when Pepsi cans were stacked, some did.

Summary



While art and design images serve different purposes and follow distinct principles, they can both be powerful forms of visual communication and creativity. Additionally, there can be instances where art and design intersect, such as in graphic design, where artistic elements are used to convey messages and achieve specific design goals. These are just a few examples of the types of images found in both art and design. Each type serves specific purposes and contributes to the overall visual language and communication of the artwork or design project.

Illustrations and drawings play a vital role in graphic design, offering a creative and versatile means of visual expression. Whether used to communicate ideas, reinforce brand identity, evoke emotions, or enhance visual appeal, illustrations enrich the design process and contribute to creating memorable and impactful designs.

photography plays a multifaceted and essential role in graphic design, serving as a powerful tool for visual communication, brand identity, emotional storytelling, and aesthetic appeal. By harnessing the creative potential of photography, graphic designers can create compelling and impactful designs that resonate with audiences and leave a lasting impression. The many tools available in image editing software, providing users with the flexibility and control to edit and manipulate digital images to their desired specifications.

Question



Hands-On Exercise I

Look at ads, magazines, brochures, logos, and other printed projects and try to find different image application of visual communication as possible including use of tools, vector, raster, ethics, and others. Create you're a raster and vector image composition using various types of design principles.

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