

LOGO: CREATIVITY, INNOVATION AND VISUAL INTELLIGENCE

Abstract: Built as a true industry, the creation of logos also undergoes changes, not as dramatic as the subtle perception. Our study aims to provide a way to interpret and create logos based on gestalt principles, but also taking into account one of the pressing problems of today's society, namely the concern for the environment. Thus, we created a visual identity based on these principles.

Key words: environment, circular economy, design, Gestalt, visual identity, culture, advertising.

1. INTRODUCTION

It is said that a vast experience is required to create a logo, respectively:

1. Artistic and advertising culture, especially a very good knowledge of the language of forms, colors, printing methods, artistic trends and styles, and also contemporary cultural codes, specific to all types of consumers;
2. Pedagogical knowledge. Expert clients in this field are not often met - otherwise they would not need logo from designer. Therefore, sometimes designers have to explain why it does not matter whether the suggestion is likable or not - it is important if this suggestion is appropriate from the point of view of the initial objective. Before being a decorative object, a logo is a cultural and meaningful object;
3. A fine and correct understanding of the client: his job, his values, his positioning, his ambition, the market, his audience;
4. It takes time, a lot of time, especially in the research and design stage.

Also, we are still in the period when the communities, through their requests for offer, ask for the creation of free sketches or even perfectly executed logos, allowing them to make a comparison with the offers of other respondents (as if a designer's added value resides in the graphic execution of the logo and not in the idea they express); others simply organize contests open to the general public. This is why we consider that rather pedagogical explanations would be needed regarding the competences that are mobilized in the artistic direction of the visual identity. It is not about revelations on the creative process, but just about focusing on one of the sources of inspiration: the psychology of form, also called Gestalt.

In our article we will talk about this theory of visual perception, how it can be proved relevant and effective in creating logos.

2. ABOUT GESTALT

Gestalt psychology is a school of psychology that appeared in Austria in the early twentieth century and is based on the works of Max Wertheimer, Wolfgang Kohler and Kurt Koffka. The German word gestalt, which means "form", is interpreted as "pattern" or "configuration".

Gestalt argues that organisms perceive patterns or configurations as a whole, not just as individual components. In other words, "the whole is more than the sum of its components" [1].

The number of commercial stimuli we face daily is about 15,000, as stated by Arnaud Pêtre, a neuro-marketing researcher at the Catholic University of Louvain. When we talk about stimuli we refer not only to the advertising present in the media, but also to the sponsorships, the placement of products in films, the signs and the firms of the shops, the advertising present on the containers of beverages, the display of the products in shops, the easily identifiable logos on clothes, the radio spots, everything that means a visual or acoustic exposure of a brand (we do not integrate here the sense of smell, of taste or the kinesthetic signatures of the brands, even if they are part of the identity attributes of some).

Well, from all this multitude of stimuli, how many get to "impress" our brain? How many remain in the long-term memory? Relatively few, determined by two fundamental reasons: one quantitative and the second one qualitative.

From a quantitative point of view, some brands capture our senses through an overexposure that crushes all the means of defense of our brain. This is the case of radio commercials, which "kill" us by repeating a name of a brand 10 times in 20 seconds. It is effective, in our judgment. This overexposure covers not only part of the "available time in our brain", but also what we might call "the available space of the human brain", thus reducing the place left vacant for brands that do not have the financial power to buy media exposure.

The second cause is related to the significant poverty of these stimuli. To many people they might seem trivial. Of a suffocating banality, they are stuffed down our throats without a bit of subtlety, without asking for our minimum intelligence, humor or culture. Less "communicating" than informing, they do not intend to clarify or decode, to make sense. That is why they do not penetrate beyond the surface of our brain. As the advertising specialist Phillippe Michel said: "the human spirit is equipped with a lubricant similar to the one present on the wings of the canaries, which prevents them from getting wet; the lubricant present in the human brain prevents it from absorbing the ideas of others before the man himself learns them" [2].

In other words, we retain more easily what we conceive ourselves and remember nothing that is not within reason. When the stimulus does not make sense, it does not contain something that can be understood, it means it is not worth keeping.

3. ASPECTS OF A GRAPHIC DESIGNER'S WORK

To express and to explain: a way of respecting the recipient.

The communicator's responsibility is made clear from the above statement. It is that of designing meaning-bearing creations. It is about taking into account certain requirements.

To pay attention both to the explanation of meaning (through words) and to its expression (through shapes and colors). The first addresses our understanding, and the second speaks to our senses and culture. If there is a dissonance between the two (for example, when we address a compliment in an aggressive tone, or when the colors, shapes and printing of a visual identity do not express the desired position), we will retain the latter.

To trust the intelligence, humor and culture of the public to whom a client addresses his visual identity, refusing to infantilize them. It is one of the 10 commitments of a designer's work ethic. In their creations and proposals they try not only to "push" the brand towards the consumer, but rather to create cultural links with him so that he goes towards the brand presented by them. This work often obliges them to find "connectors" that produce a culturally universal - not always aware - click of the target audience. More than a sign of manipulation (advertising speech, as well as political speech, does not make a masked advance, its objective is clear and assumed) is, first and foremost, a form of respect and tact. A designer should not force a message. They take care to suggest it, to leave a margin of adjustment to the audience, so that they have the pleasure of discovering it, decode it, to explain it. To surprise, to excite, to make a smile appear, to resonate - in conclusion, to produce meaning - these are not signs of manipulation but the significance of attention and consideration towards the public.

The mechanism is all the more effective as it relies on the functioning mechanisms of the brain.

This is not only more respectful, but also more effective. It relies on the learning and perception mechanisms of the brain. In "The Natural Laws of the Child" [3], Céline Alvarez explains why it is not a whim for a child's desire to do something himself, but a manifestation of his intelligence, which must be exercised: "Thus, when we forbid a child of 3-5 years to close the buttons all by himself and he protests vehemently, not only is he resisting our stupidity, but the whole human intelligence that quarrels with us, because he feels stopped in his development. "The same as a child needs to do something by himself to learn, and this apprenticeship brings him joy, an adult needs to understand a concept, an image in order to remember,

and this fact delights him". Definitely, people love to exercise their brains. Testing yourself and showing your intelligence is indispensable for self-esteem. It is the reason why it is efficient, in communication, to ask, in one way or another, the recipient's participation, offering him a margin of learning, of contribution, a space of meaning to be cleared.

A theory organized by Gestalt in the 1920s.

Our brain extends what is just suggested and perceives a cube, even when it is not drawn (Figure 1).

In the field of visual perception, this approach was structured in the 1920s, in Germany, by the Gestalt theory, also called the psychology of form. The gestalt teaches us that in order to make a form visible it is not necessary to draw it explicitly. Suffice it to suggest, the rest is the brain. Its basic postulate is the following: in the face of the complexity of the environment, the brain will try to shape, give a meaningful structure to what it perceives, with the aim to simplify and organize. For this, it will structure the information so that what has meaning for us detaches from the background to adhere to a global structure.

Take writing as an example. Below it is noted that the letters from the inside have been mixed, except for the first and last letter. However, our brain identifies the meaning by recreating the words themselves, because it tends to regard them as a whole and not as a mere juxtaposition of letters.

I connat bleevie my eeyz that I can raed what is wiretn hree.

To suggest and to request visual intelligence.

This theory has multiple applications in the fields of graphic design, page layout, design, web design, architecture, ergonomics. Speaking of visual identity, gestalt gives as an example of how to provide a logo with a formal meaning, which will require the visual and logical intelligence of the recipient. A logo created according to the laws of gestalt becomes pleasant to look at, or rather to be decoded, because it requires the participation of the brain of the beholder. It creates a kind of intellectual complicity with its recipient, who feels the satisfaction of having participated in the creation / transmission of the meaning of the message. His understanding of the background and the form somehow elevates him to the rank of an actor. As stated above, we are more easily aware of what we conceive by ourselves. If the purpose of a brand is to be noticed and then retained, then a logo built on gestalt principles will contribute more than any other to its notoriety and memorization.

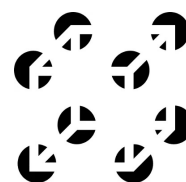


Figure 1 Gestalt cube

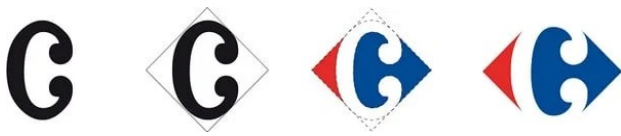


Figure 2 Carrefour logo

Applying gestalt principles to visual identity

1962, Carrefour. Here is a well-known example of applying Gestalt principles: the Carrefour logo (Figure 2). Despite a not so recent graphic design, this logo is as modern as possible. Why? Because it offers two levels of reading, one literal, where two arrows are seen: one red to the right, one blue to the left; the other abstract: a void "C" framed in a diamond-like square.

The combination of the two levels of reading reveals the importance of the form. If the problem of representing an intersection is posed, we will immediately think of a square and the signal arrows (revealed by "C"). In conclusion, a double force tour, with that "C" placed in the center, equally revealing the forms of its lexical field.

Another well-known logo that works very well: FedEx (Figure 3). The approximation between the letters (the space that separates them) allows the "Ex" particle to form an arrow that runs from left to right and serves the purpose of the mark - fast delivery from one point to another.

Also, the UNIT logo (Figure 4), created by Tibor Pap in 2013 is an application of the gestalt school. Playing with our perception, the distance between letters makes reading easier for the eyes, our brain doing the rest of the work, associating the full with the void: unity.

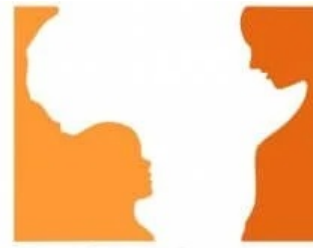
The logo of this (Figure 5) humanitarian organization represents the map of Africa at first reading, then the figure of a little boy in front of an adult is distinguished on the left.



Figure 3 FedEx logo



Figure 4 Unit logo



Hope for African Children Initiative

Figure 5 Humanitarian organization logo

A good logo is like good wine.

Such association reveals our epicureanism, determining us to draw a parallel between a good logo and a good wine (for Epicurus, only "natural and necessary" wishes must be fulfilled). Thus, we have the following considerations:

1. It is not as if the final customer would not be able to express in words exactly why he appreciates ... that this logo is not good;
2. It is stylishly aging and also quite slowly. A good logo expresses the fundamentals of the organization, its values, its projects. There is no need for a rejuvenation operation every two or three years!
3. Appreciating these logos is a sensory ... and cultural experience. Like a good wine, whose aromas resonate with our senses of smell and taste, a good logo demands and enriches our visual culture.

A good logo is not useless

Risking to slam an already open door, it should be remembered the immense work of research, thinking and creation, that involves creating a meaningful logo ... which is neither useless nor free. The visual identity of an organization and especially its logo is an essential element for the communication between the organization and its audience:

1. It has the obligation to express its position and values, but also to facilitate the identification of the organization and the adhesion of its public to the project of this organization;
2. If the bases of the organization (the famous "brand platform") have been sufficiently modeled, then the logo and, more generally, the graphic map of the organization can "face" the competition through a strong and specific visual identity.

An approach reflected in recent works on assumed communication

Without a doubt, gestalt does not represent alpha and omega in graphic creation. There are multiple ways to give meaning and belonging to a logo and a visual identity, without forcibly trying to create visual games that rely on the mechanisms of perception in our brain (see, for example, the reflection and principles that led to the restoration of identity the brand of Pressoirs de

Provence). However, we must recognize the strength and modernism of this theory founded a century ago. Suggesting a margin of applicability, a space for decoding and clearing, it transforms the viewer into the actor of a communication. It is added to some extent to the principles of assumed communication, applicable in the communication and awareness campaigns for long-term development.

Assumed communication starts from the quantified idea that information is not sufficient to produce behavioral changes. For example, studies have shown that the likelihood of being a smoker at 17 is not lower in students who have gone through 65 awareness sessions between the ages of 8 and 17 (thus being very knowledgeable about misfortunes produced by smoking), than in students who did not attend these sessions (Peterson, Kealey, Mann & Sarason, 2000). Based on social and behavioral psychology, assumed communication is expected in particular to retain a recipient through less expensive prior acts, to the detriment of some more expensive ones.

In other words, it means to turn him into an actor, not a mere receiver of information. If participating means getting involved (physically, intellectually, emotionally), then allowing participation means facilitating the process of accountability. Gestalt is for visual communication what behavioral sciences are for assumed communication.

Decryption of two Gestalt inspired logos.

WalkMe

Designed for Resilient Innovation (Montpellier) WalkMe is an innovative device that helps people with Parkinson's disease walk. It is based on acoustic rhythmic stimulation (ARS) and WalkMe identifies the signs announcing "stopping" (blockage of steps), thanks to a box that is carried at the level of the hip. It will then output regular beeps in an audio headset, which helps the user's brain to synchronize their movements and move on to the next step. As impaired walking is one of the most disabling symptoms of Parkinson's disease, the WalkMe user finds a relatively fluid walk without the help of invasive procedures or drugs.

In 2016, Resilient Innovation wanted to develop and implement the communication strategy, in order to accelerate the development of its product. Very quickly, after the corporate visual identity of the company was created (whose creative principle is not based on gestalt), the logo for WalkMe was created. The objective: a logo which, through its form and without the aid of a base:

1. Expresses innovation, technology, audacity, but also the simple activity of walking;
2. Is easy to understand, while demanding the visual intelligence of the viewer (Figure 6).

The policy used is a Gotham, a contemporary, urban policy originally used in New York. It was chosen because of its intrinsic qualities of modernity and readability, and especially because since 2008 it has been associated in the collective unconscious with Barack



Figure 6 WalkMe logo

Obama's HOPE campaign, a poster created by Shepard Fairey. For people with Parkinson's disease, convinced that they could no longer walk, the subliminal message seemed perfect for WalkMe's promises.

The logo is built on the principle of easy-to-read letters (the approximation, the space between the letters respectively, is negative), but the legibility is possible due to an "empty and full" game that reveals the potential games of the power lines and masses. Thus, the dynamics of the zigzag between W and A are more clearly distinguished, resumed further by the letter M. Gestalt influence is found in the replacement of A by the shape of the legs that go and look like the letter A. In the background, starting from the letter W, one of the last letters of the alphabet (with its peaks and abysses), reaching letter A, which expresses walking, is a way of expressing resilience, returning to a normal life, rich in possibilities, as users of the WalkMe feel.

Also, the letter M is treated negatively, for two reasons:

1. In the background: M from Me is an echo of the negative treatment of the letter A, because M and A go together: M expresses the adjustment to walking, expressed by A;
2. By form: M balances the composition in terms of mass and stabilizes the lines of force of W and K. It gives assistance, in all sense of the term, to the letter e that follows.

Art with minimal impact on the environment

In the European Union alone, over 2.5 billion waste tons are produced annually. That is why the updating of the legislation on waste management is being discussed with great attention and speed, looking for a way to move to a more sustainable model, called the circular economy. This is a model of production and consumption, with the purpose of sharing, reusing, consuming, renewing and recycling existing materials and products as much as possible. You have to give up the old linear model, see-buy-use-throw type, which also involves the programming of reliability, so that the life of the products has become drastically limited in time, forcing the consumer to buy a new one faster. At the same time, the demand for raw materials has increased exponentially, only that the reserves of raw materials have decreased - the bag you always take something from without putting anything in place will become empty at one point.

The ones listed above are just a few of the reasons for using a circular economy, which could have benefits such as: reducing pressure on the environment, improving security of supply of raw materials, increasing competitiveness, stimulating innovation, stimulating economic growth, creating jobs.

Also, consumers will benefit from innovative products, with a longer lifespan, which also leads to long-term financial resources savings.

Even if the industry as a whole is the first target of this new economic model, art can be included in this area, by promoting a broad strategy, which will consider a new approach to all aspects of conception, actual physical realization, location and the use of any artistic form. Without hindering the process of artistic creation, the materials made available to artists, their demands and their presentation to the public can cause a much changed impact on the environment.

4. RESULTS

Taking into consideration what's been said above, we want to create an organization that would support this vision of the minimal impact on the translated environment and in art, an organization bearing the name C. Earth (in which "C" represents the word "circular").

The research and conception part of the visual identity required the agreement of clear requirements:

1. To express clearly and legibly the influence of a sustainability practice through the design of the logo, regardless of its size or the material / position / surface on which it is located;
2. To inform the viewer that the actions of the organization envisage minimizing the environmental impact;
3. Comply with European Union rules and requirements regarding the color palette;
4. The logo design should facilitate the viewer's understanding that it is an organization that promotes artistic activities that reuses materials to obtain objects or products;
5. While it may be possible to establish the image of the organization, it can be identified by those who visualize the logo and understand the values, what they represent, to what is their attention focused;
6. To give the viewer satisfaction in evaluating and understanding the concept of sustainability through art from the logo design.

In figure 7 we have four variants of the logo, of which we chose the first one as the final one.

The letter "C" ("circular") in the foreground is enriched by the sense that it is the representation of the leaf, with all its three components: tongue, petiole and sheath, each having a decisive role in its life and of the plant on which it exists. Unique and fragile, the leaf is nevertheless a source of strength of the vegetable kingdom and through the multitude, the green carpet that highlights the vegetation is an infinite multiplication of it. With a small limit of life, it is the one where the photosynthesis laboratory is located and after death it continues to nourish the soil - reference to recycling.



a



b



c



d

Figure 7 Variants of the proposed logo

From the word "earth" we capitalized the part of ART, to highlight the main object on which our project is focused.

Clear verbal communication, the use of an auxiliary text, has, in our opinion, a major impact - "better us. better future".

The use of the two points, one after "C" and the other in the auxiliary text is a deliberate spacing, with the purpose not to fragment, but to emphasize the two different components of our logo.

5. FUTURE RESEARCH

The first requirement, after the creation of the logo, is to introduce it not only to our client, but also to the general public, with the aim to study its effect and to be able to further develop our concept.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Considering all problems discussed so far, the question is whether gestalt is ecological or not. For at least two reasons the answer is yes.

First, it helps us to connect (or reconnect) to ourselves, as beings capable of creating and perceiving meaning, as common ground. By the importance given to significance and to suggestion, the gestalt helps us to adjust to the environment, to join it, to visually explore the daily life on a road where we travel with pleasure, as sensible beings, a road through which we can develop our skills of perception, surprise and understanding, maybe even empathy, our eyes wide open. We have a responsibility towards environment, our actions impact the world and we should try to keep it clean, to avoid waste, to make, if possible, a lighter tread and, last but not least, to share our findings with other people.

Moreover, the change should affect not only the industries, but also the customers' behavior.

Secondly, another idea surges and stays tall – it is the one that implies suggesting and avoiding instead of plainly stating. You play with the positive / negative space, thus suppressing the matter. In this way, ink and energy savings can be made. Gestalt joins from this point of view the precepts of “eco-branding” and “eco-conception” of visual identity.

What is “eco-branding”? It is quite a new term, not so much in use, not so widely known. It can be labeled as a market instrument, connecting industries and consumers in an effort to find solutions to contribute to environmental protection. Simply put, it is a marketing approach. When taking into consideration how a product is made, we have now a new feature to consider, the environmental impact. Lately, there are some phrases quite often heard, like “environment friendly”, “eco-friendly”, “recyclable”, “low energy”, even “recycled”. They speak volumes about the direction marketing takes.

The French designer Sylvain Boyer started in 2013 a campaign called “eco-branding”, which aims mainly to avoid logos, thus limiting the consumption of printed ink. It means redesigning the logos and using less ink. There are famous logos being printed all the time, on quite different materials, so even a small change like using less ink could have a huge impact.

“We used the tools of the offset printing industry, which allow us to calculate very precisely the rate of printed surface. Then it is only mathematics”, he said. Abandoning the ink filling of funds from the Coca-Cola and McDonald logos it would save between 13 and 30% ink - a situation that would be similar for other famous logos (Figure 8).

Part of future research will also consider this aspect, preserving a visual identity of impact, but not on the environment.

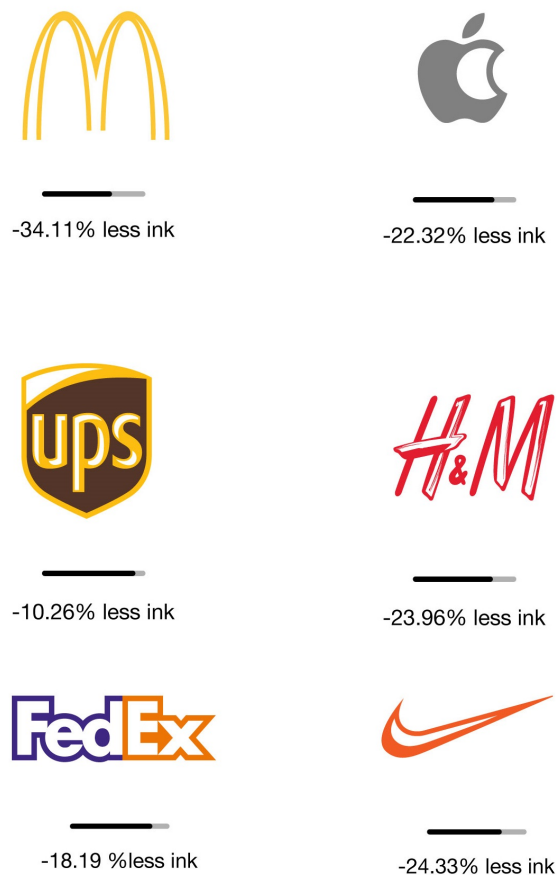


Figure 8 Redesigned logos using less ink

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