

**Fashion & Textile Design & Fashion
Marketing** Research and Communication Skills

**Visual
research**

Task 3

Choose one commercial image (advert, fashion photograph, album cover... not a work of art) and perform a visual analysis

Think about what this image is portraying, what story it's trying to tell, and how it does this

Focus on issues of the story behind the image, the message it is trying to portray, setting, technique and most importantly content and composition to unravel the meaning of the image

Write 500 words including your analysis and make sure that you structure your writing like a reflective piece of writing (description, analysis/contextualisation, interpretation/conclusion)

Why?

Because...

You are entering the business of selling ideas or product

You need to be hyper-aware of the messages you are reading from imagery around you

You need to be hyper-aware of the messages you are portraying in the images you produce

Images may be used to provide an example or illustration of the subject matter under discussion

They may convey a message, or be used to provoke a range of emotions and responses in the viewer e.g. a celebrity next to product = product endorsement

Image can convey ideas quickly, much quicker than if they were described in text, because of this they form a key weapon for connecting with the reading

caractère

Shooting diary by
Helena Christensen.
London, 2011

www.caractere.it numero verde 800 016 608





**What
does this
image tell us
about fat
face?**



Colefax and Fowler, press image 2012



Cole and Sons, press image 2012

And these interior fabric companies?



Topman autumn/winter 2011/12



GANT autumn/winter 2011/12



BEN SHERMAN
A Heritage of Modernism

Ben Sherman autumn/winter 2011/12

What do these images tell us about high street fashion?



Lee Miller by
David E Scherman
30 April 1945

These sources can offer more context than an internet search!

Consider...

Visual merchandising

Vintage Magazines

Current Magazines

Packaging

Branding

Invites etc

**Lets put
this into
practice**

Puma
Agency: Droga5
Photographer: Scott Pommier

Analyze this
Image using the
following structure on
slides numbered 1 - 5



*AND THEN JAMAICA
CONQUERED ENGLAND*



Structuring your analysis

[intro]

Description

Contextualisation

Interpretation

[conclusion]

Description (denotation)

This stage asks for a clear, concise description of the image you are analysing. You should therefore answer the following questions in your analysis:

Subject : What is in the image, what is it of? Describe in objective detail

Form: How is it composed, arranged, and constructed visually, i.e. what makes up its formal elements? angle, point of view, sharp or out of focus ...

Medium: technical information – size/type of film, camera, technology, cropped or uncropped

Style: What is the stylistic form of this image? Does it conform to a stylistic genre - documentary, reportage...? or a historic era – the Renaissance, Modernism? What subjects does the photographer usually work with? How does this relate to the photograph's or art work's formal

Contextualisation

For this stage you could compare and contrast your chosen image to other work by the same photographer/brand/designer and to other work by other photographers/brands/designers in the same and different media.

How is it the same, how is it different?

If you are analysing an advertisement you might want to consider another advert for the same type of product or how the product has been advertised in the past.

What do you know about the history behind the image?

The context behind the Puma image...

The subject is Usian Bolt, has Celebrity status around the world. In Jamaican he is a national hero

He is known as the fastest man in the world. Won 3 Gold medals during 2012 Olympics

Also known for his signature lightening bolt stance

The flag wrapped around him is the Jamaican flag

His main athletics sponsor is Puma

Image released 17 August as a 30ft statement billboard in central New York. IT created a buzz on social media

The main competitors for Bolt during the Olympics were American

On 6 August, Jamaica celebrated its 50th Independence Day, commemorating freedom from British colonial occupation

English captured Jamaica from the Spanish in 1655. In 1662 there were about 400 slaves on the island

Droga5 [ad agency] known for creating ads that offer something of value. "Creativity with a purpose..." Dave Droga "Everyone talks about living in a stupider society. I think we live in a smarter society. If you don't do work that registers with people, they move on much more quickly."

Scott Pommier [photographer] specializes in fashion and sport [mostly street and motor sport]. Commissioned to work for Converse, Dickies, Vans, Nixon...

Interpretation (connotation)

What does this image *mean*?

What in your view (own words / ideas) is the image expressing and how? How do you “read” the image? What is the mood? Tone? Emotion? Sense of Place? Experience? Historicity?

For future assignments evaluate the images you use in any essays and reports and consider the following points:

From what perspective are you viewing this image? Formal Stylistic? Feminist? Biographical? Technical? Psychoanalytical?

Why is this photograph relevant to your argument?

How does it illustrate your argument?

Does it move your argument forward?

Interpretation _ in greater detail

Image makers often purposefully incorporate symbolic content within an image so that it communicates in a way that is not always obvious

This may be through the use of symbolism, metaphors, similes or typograms

Subconsciously we all attach meanings to the images we see

- * We must be aware of the possibility of unwanted misinterpretation of our own images

Semiotics & common terms: The study of signs

Denotive: to signify something by a visible sign, for example a car is a denotive sign for a four wheeled vehicle

Cognitive: refers to something that we have perceived, learned and reasoned e.g. a house may denotes a home, but but home has connotations of family & security

Typogram: The deliberate use of typography to express an idea visually

Typogram

half

large

small

Synecdoche: [Statue of Liberty] when a part is used to represent a whole

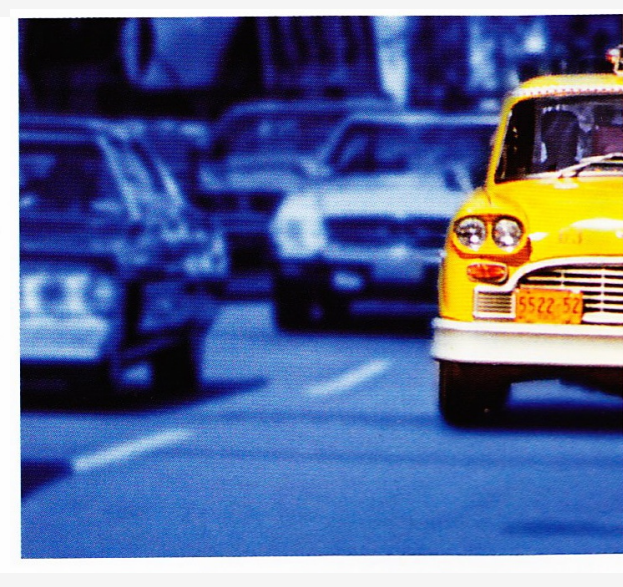
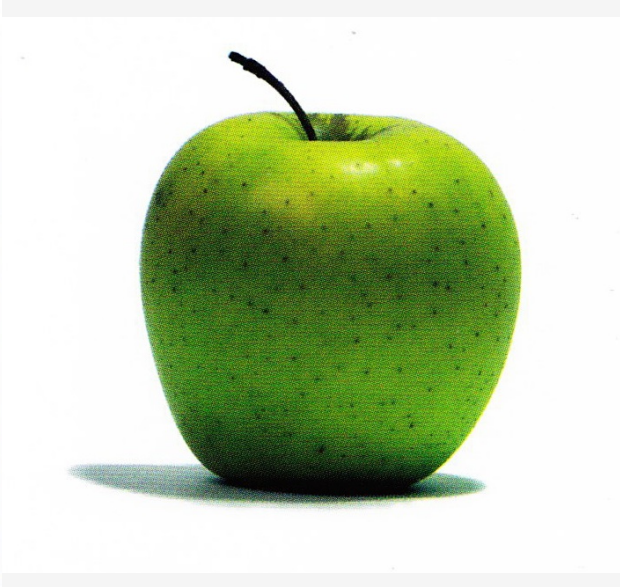
Metaphor: [Big apple] used to transfer meaning from one image to another

Metonym: [Yellow cab] a symbolic image that is used to make reference to something with a more literal meaning

Synecdoche

Metaphor

Metonym



Simile: The comparison of one thing with another thing of a different kind e.g using an image of a plant may suggest a product includes natural ingredients

Analogy: usually based on popular verbal analogies e.g. to rush around like a headless chicken

Paradigm: a set of assumptions and common values that the viewer will readily recognise and accept e.g. a company may claim to be environmentally friendly and so present its product in green containers with images of the rainforest or sea

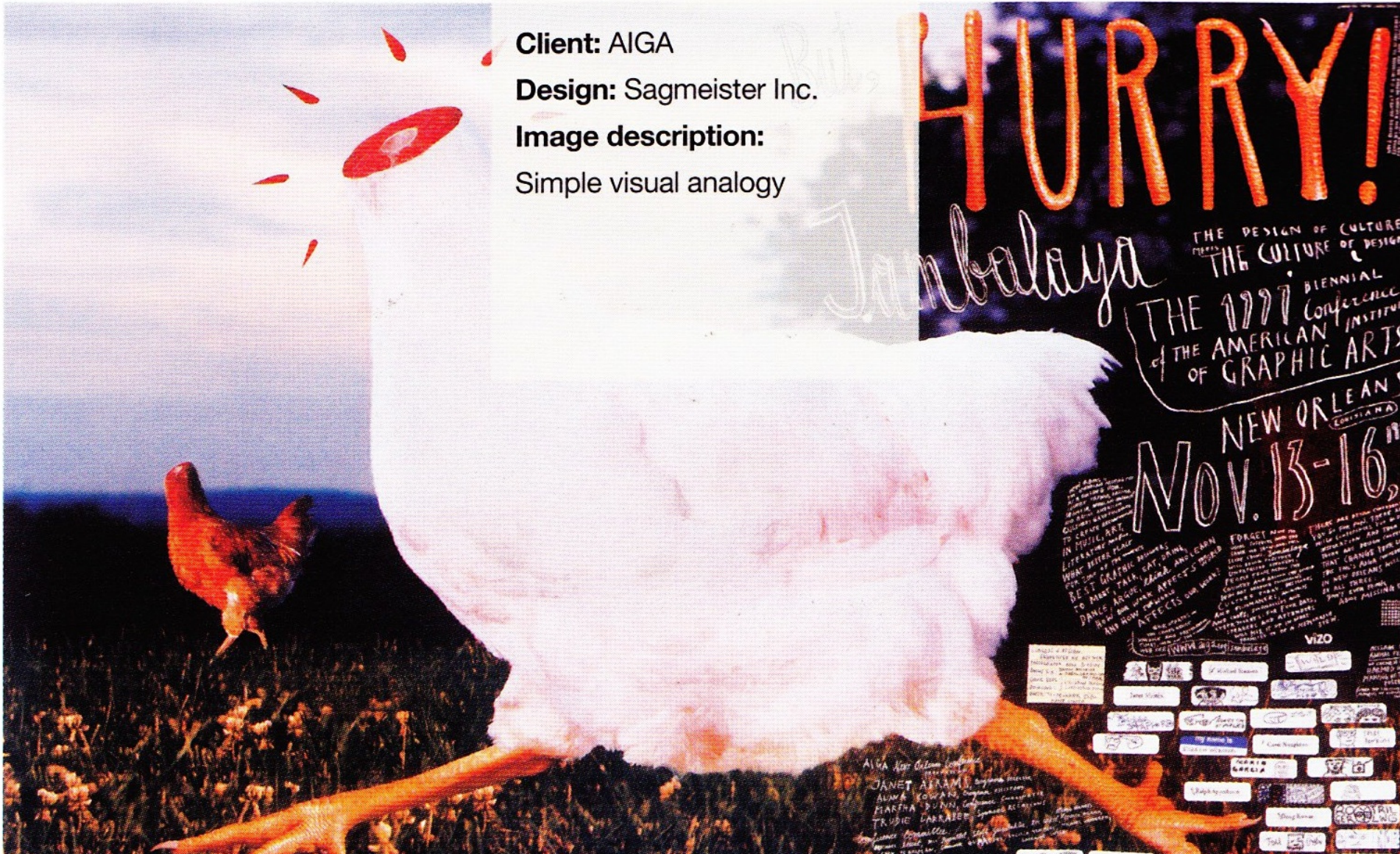
Analogy

Client: AIGA

Design: Sagmeister Inc.

Image description:

Simple visual analogy



Reading List

Barrett, T (2000) *Criticising Photographs: An Introduction to Understanding Images*, London: Mayfield Publishing

Barthes, R. (1972). *Mythologies*. London: Cape.

Hall, S. (Ed) (1997). “The Work of Representation”, *Representation: Cultural Representation & Signifying Practices*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press. Pp.13-74.

Rose, G (2001) *Visual Methodologies*, London: Sage Publications

Williamson, J. (1978). *Decoding Advertisements: Ideology and Meaning in Advertising*. London: Marion Boyars