

# Design means \_\_\_\_\_

“advertising ‘elements’ showcasing more than 80 brands. I was ‘looking’ at adverts for 29 minutes but couldn't recall a single brand without prompting”

Shopper's eye view of ads that pass us by

Owen Gibson, media correspondent, Saturday November 19, 2005

In a 90 minute commute to work, Owen Wilson (of the Guardian Newspaper) saw 250 adverts from more than 100 brands in 70 different formats. The number of those he could recall without prompting was 1. Escaping this for those that can afford to seek it is becoming harder, advertising and information is everywhere. Space is an expensive commodity, global-growth, for the rich and powerful has become a powerful reality.

Communication is a vehicle with which information is delivered, which is why the message can sometimes be misleading, confusing, misleading, unclear and distorted. Whether it is spoken, written or signalled, the medium really is the message. Graphic Design is the medium most commonly used to communicate this and many other forms of information, and it is an ever-expanding industry of possibilities but with that comes other challenges and competition.

It is now time for us as designers (and you as under-graduates) to start questioning, reviewing and redefining our/your role and the responsibility that could/should accompany it. Stand up, stand out and really start thinking. Could/should our creative abilities be used to also bring about more space, meaning, substance, clarity, emotion or even nostalgia to a message? Or were the likes of Ken Garland ('First Things First' Manifesto, 1964) and more recently Rick Poyner merely shouting in the wind. Is our role and responsibility limited to aesthetics? Is it simply about selling, for example, dog food?

Whatever your beliefs about the role of design, and responsibility of the designer, 'Design means \_\_\_\_\_™' is an opportunity for you to partake in this debate. It is a chance to produce a message that you want to communicate, to educate, inspire, expose, eradicate or perhaps just share.

The task

- Choose a word or phrase to reflect your message of what design could "mean", to fill in the blank.
- Work individually – this is about you and you and your message.
- Do not disclose your subject to any of your fellow students - the ability to surprise, shock or capture an audience is achieved by the originality of the delivery.
- Use whatever medium you wish (image, typography, space, colour, motion, sound, interaction, etc) to convey your definition of the subject – there are no restrictions (apart from time).
- Consider your choice of medium that will best express the emotion or a mood for your message.