VISUAL METHODOLOGY IN GRAPHIC DESIGN: REPORT OF A DIDACTIC EXPERIENCE IN TEACHING-LEARNING

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1 INTRODUCTION

The present study aims as its main objective to demonstrate how it is possible to teach composition and visual harmony in graphic pieces through theoretical studies on Gestalt and syntax of visual language. Departing from this premise on, the research question aims to illustrate how such studied theories are important for application in imagery compositions. Among the theorists studied on composition and visual organization are Gomes Filho (2009); Lupton and Phillips (2008); Dondis (1997); Heller (2013); Leborg (2015) and Bergström (2009).

Every visual composition is structured by joining different basic elements. According to Dondis (1997), these elements are point, line, shape, direction, tone, colour, texture, dimension, scale and motion. Lupton and Phillips (2008) also expose that "the point, the line and the plane make up the foundations of design. From these elements, designers create images, icons, textures, patterns, diagrams, animations and typographic systems" (LUPTON; FHILLLIPS, 2008, p. 13).

2 The elements of visual language

2.1 Point

For Dondis (1997), in visual communication the point is considered the simplest and irreducibly minimal unit. The point is created by making a mark or graphic sign on any surface.

2.2 Line

According to Leborg (2015) there are two reasons why a shape can be perceived as a line. The first concerns its width being extremely narrow and the second evidences that its length is quite evident. The line materializes as the points approach, making their individual identification impossible.

2.3 Shape

Dondis (1997) states that there are "three basic shapes: the square, the circle and the equilateral triangle" (DONDIS, 1997, p. 58). The combination of these three basic forms also makes possible an extraordinary composition of new forms.

2.4 Direction

The gaze direction or the paths to be followed in a visual environment are suggested from the three basic forms. For Dondis (1997), these shapes create three significant visual directions: "the square, the horizontal and the vertical; the triangle, the diagonal; the circle, the curve. Each of the visual directions has a strong associative meaning and is a valuable tool for creating visual messages" (DONDIS, 1997, p. 59-60).

2.5 Tone

According to Arnheim (2011), visual perception is directly connected to light. For him, the "examination of light should have preceded all others because without light the eyes cannot observe either shape, colour, space or motion" (ARNHEIM, 2011, p. 293). The light-ness or darkness of a representation is related to tone. In this sense, tone refers to the tonal overlaps or gradations of an image object.

2.6 Colour

For Millman (2012), colour affects everything. The author believes that, according to the place where they live, individuals carry perceptions and prejudices about colour in each situation. In different parts of the world and in different cultures, colours have different mea-nings, as perceptions about them are subjective. In this aspect, some colours have universal appeal, while others do not. "In the western world we may consider a certain colour suitable, but it can have a considerable negative impact in other parts of the world" (MILLMAN, 2012, p. 14).

2.7 Texture

According to Leborg (2015), as a structure, texture can be seen and/or felt. Texture is a visual element that also instigates and awakens the sense of touch. It is possible to per-ceive the texture both by sight and by touch, or even using both senses together. For Dondis (1997), the texture may not have tactile qualities, but only optical ones, as in the pattern of a fabric print. According to the formal configuration of the visual weft, the texture can convey rough, smooth, soft surfaces sensations and enable other tactile simulations.

2.8 Dimension

For Leborg (2015), "we, like everything surrounding us, have height, width, and dep-th – or three dimensions." (LEBORG, 2015, p. 14). Something important to emphasize is that the dimension is not real when represented in a two-dimensional space. According to

Dondis (1997), the illusion of dimension can be simulated using the technique of perspective and its angulations.

2.9 Motion

According to Dondis (1997), the staticity of a photo, drawing or print can be solved through techniques of construction of motion in a still image. One of the most used features is the number of visual rest points that can imply motion according to the designer's intention.

For Leborg (2015), "the motion within a visual composition is just a representation of movement" (LEBORG, 2015, p. 48).

3 CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this work was centred on the study of the basic elements of visual communication. It was found that, through these studies, it is possible to describe how to organize and later create graphic pieces with visual harmony. In creative economy courses, such as graphic design courses, the relationship between theory and practice is essential.

The themes presented here were exposed in the classroom of a group in the first term of the Graphic Design course at UFG. This investigation brought as a contribution to the field of graphic design the demonstration of how a theory about visual syntax can be organized and exposed in the classroom in such a way that it is possible to apply it in the creative practice of students.

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