

ELEMENTS OF ART AND DESIGN

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Art is a wide range of human activity that needs broad imagination and artistic capabilities and more so an unusual perspective. Art may be classified into fine art, visual art, plastic art, performance art, applied art and decorative art. Our assignment dictates that we explore a museum, which is defined as a building in which objects of historical, scientific, artistic, or cultural interest are stored and exhibited. As, well as to go throughout the city and examine different retail stores window displays, and find a correlation between both fine art and visual art.

The artwork I chose to write my paper on is from the Metropolitan Museum of Art; and is an oil on canvas painting called “Comical Repast” otherwise known as (Banquet of the Starved ca.1917-18) by the artist James Ensor. An in depth description about this painting is said to reflect two names given during Ensor’s lifetime to depict a critic scene of the German occupying Belgium during world war one. The grouping around the table evokes the Last Supper, but Christ and the Apostles are replaced by ill-behaved, grotesque, and masked figures, which is said to be some of Ensor’s favorite motifs. The depiction of the atrocious meal served in the artwork may symbolize the near famine that the Belgians endured during that time. The finish of the painting has a glossy sheen over the oil process the artist originally used, which is the process of painting with a medium of drying oil as the binder.

The window display I chose was a fine jeweler store located in Manhattan, New York on Madison Avenue, called Jaded Jewels Inc. This unique retailer creates custom made one of a kind jewelry that is made in Italy and usually depicts a representation of jewelry mainly found throughout the Renaissance and Roman times. The front window display shows full faced miniature sized mannequins, and headless neck mannequins in velvet green, orange, blue, and burgundy colors with a variety of necklaces draped across each of them.

Differences

There is an extensive distinction between the metropolitan museum and a retail store. A museum contains almost everything in the world from the art of the ancient ages to the contemporary art of our present while in retail it mostly deals with the specialization in contemporary art of this modernity (Schell, 2014). A window display refers to use of all possible decorative and persuasive features to capture and attract the interest of people walking outside with one goal in mind, which is to get new customer traffic inside the store. The metropolitan museum facilitates greater options for dining, which include high-class restaurant and variety of café's while you may find some new retail stores are starting to introduce having some type of food vendor within it's store; an example would be the sneaker and apparel store KITH. A retail store's display window uses a variety of mannequins, clothing apparel and accessories with decorative art pieces to generate a type of visual advertisement of the new and upcoming merchandise they're providing that season; while a painting is an image artwork created by use of pigment, wet or dry on a surface such as paper or canvas such as ceramic, drawing, painting, sculptures, photography, craft and printmaking design.

A variation of differences exhibited between the painting at the metropolitan museum of art and the retail store window display is broader in focus and features. The oil painting depicts all males whereas the window display depicts the opposite sex showing all females. The table, which the mannequin displays sit upon have no table linens or draping on it whilst the table in the painting has a white toned colored tablecloth draped over it. The Ensor painting has aqua blue tint and shading which helps give the background color more depth throughout, unlike the jewelry display, which has a see through glass behind it. Another noticeable difference that can be found between both the painting and window display is the elaborate facial expressions the

artist drew on each of the figures in the artwork using white shading to show the pale lifeless faces compared to the brown tints red flushed cheeks placed on the aristocrats dining, unlike the stiff and cold appearance the jewelry store mannequins has. Dissimilar of the two art displays is that the fine art painting illustrate the food being consumed by the figures painted, whereas the stores window doesn't.

Similarities

However, there exist some similarities between the museum of art and a retail store. Both the metropolitan and retail store host special events that require additional fee or cost and also give accessory to a special exhibition using general admission. The two institutions form a type of gallery that preserves items where an individual or group can visit to learn, speculate and acquire anything from historical time to the present day. In both cases, the aim is to create a consistent, recognizable brand of the image to ensure that when a guest walks by they can get a clear and concise depiction of what is being showcased to them.

Both the jewelry window display and oil on canvas painting have a similar color story within them both using greens, blues, reds, and oranges in the layout. An indistinguishable resemblance both photos have is the juxtaposition of how each of the figures is placed. Another comparable feature the painting and window display both have is that they both portray a scene of what is happening at that present time; where in the window display you can see customers shopping within the store and in the painting you can see the skeletons of those unfortunate people who were starved and fighting for scraps of food during the famine. Alike both painting and display are well lit with fluorescent lighting helping to highlight the attributes each of them possesses.

Design Elements “tools”

Texture is an element of art tool that outlines the perceived surface quality of a work of art; how an object may feel and resemble when touched (Bell.pg414). Texture is classified into four different categories such as rough, shiny, smooth, and matte. An example, would be the oil on canvas painting at the Metropolitan museum which shows that the texture appears to be rough but also has a shiny smooth gloss coating over the artwork, while in the visual display most of the displayed art figures assume a smooth texture.

A *Line* is an element of art tool, which may be defined as a moving point in space; that guides the eye to a feature or linear element that sets a mood (Bell.pg412). A line may be expressed in two-three dimensions, implied, abstract and descriptive based on the type at work. There are several types of line, which includes vertical, diagonal, horizontal, curved, etc. that have different depiction in the world of art. For example, both photos of the window display and museum painting referenced within the paper are shown to have both vertical and horizontal lines throughout, but the museum painting depicts a few curved and diagonal lines as well.

Color in artwork serves as a tool to communicate visually building a visual grammar in art. It is an element of art composed of three properties, which include value, intensity, and hue (Bell.pg47). Intensity refers to the quality and purity of the brightness of color or in other terms strength of color; hue is based on the purity of a color without tint or shade added, while value represents the darkness or lightness of color about any artwork. For example, both the open window display and painting has numerous colors throughout ranging from emerald green, different shades of oranges, reds, blues, and greys among others with higher intensity and brightness of each.

Proportion is an element of art tool that refers to the relative size, mass, and scale of the various elements in a design and the relationship between two or more objects, or parts, of a whole (Bell. pg412). It is displayed in three dimensions, height, width, and depth enclosing the measure of the extent of a surface. An example of proportion as depicted within Ensor's artwork shows a variety of all three dimensions used in the painting of the figures heads. The jewelry stores display shows a variation of height and width within the mannequins and headless mannequins.

Direction is an element of art tool that leads the shopper's eye from one place to another. A directional arrow that points to a particular destination within a store, and leads the shopper from one space to another is one example (Bell. pg410). For instance, the Jaded Jewelry store display had an enclosed glass casing behind the window display directing the customers eye from the well lit visual merchandise in front of them to also being able to see inside the store from the outside, which further draws in the shopper.

Size refers to an element of art that is relative to the extent of something, an objects overall dimension or magnitude. When defining size in merchandising, items is usually numbered, typically garments or other article of clothing are divided according to how large they are. In reference to size within the oil on canvas painting the artist used size to portray the figures at the table scene to show which figured was of a higher distinction. Whereas the store's window display depicts a variation of sizes throughout the miniature mannequins and neck bids which creates a visual contrast so that a consumer may be able to view everything displayed all at once.

Shape is an element of art expressed either two-dimensional, flat, or limited to height and width. A shape is a standard or universally recognized spatial form like a circle or a triangle that

helps the viewer identify various objects (Bell.pg61). Everything in art is shaped therefore one is required to figure out how elements are designed to create shape and the way the shape interact. One example of shape within the window display is the rectangular shape the neck forms have, and all the circular necklaces draped across them. Another example of shape is within Ensor's oil painting using various circular shapes to depict each figures head size, and rectangular boxes to create various scenes in the background. Also the shapes the artists uses to contrast the different body masses with the painting gives a better understanding of who were more well off than others at this time period.

Sequence is a tool used in the design elements and is the particular order in which items are presented for viewing. In addition to numerical order, a presentation might also rely on gradation of items from small to large, or large to small to emphasize that a particular item is available in a variety of sizes (Bell.pg63). A way in which both the retail store and artist showcased sequence is that within the window display the visual merchandiser used a sequence technique to have all the jewels flow in a gradation from large items on top, like the necklaces to small items like earrings and rings below. In regards to the museum painting the artist displayed sequence by painting each figure in a gradation of smaller men towards the left side and larger men towards the right showing

Tension is an element of design tool that is an arrangement of elements that causes the viewer to wonder if opposing forces will disturb balance or equilibrium in a display (Bell.pg64). For example, if both the visual merchandiser who set up the jewelry store's window display and the artist who created the painting had removed any element from their artwork it would lose it's aesthetics that would please the viewer's eye; which would hinder not help what the artist is trying to narrate to the public.

Art refers to a broad range of human activities that needs the artistic capability, ability, imagination and unique perspective. Art has various branches of creative activity, such as painting, music, literature, and dance, which is categorized under visual arts; while visual art refers to the creative art conveyed and perceived in the appreciation of sight. Visual arts are part artwork only experienced through viewing while art refers to the artwork that is made skillfully (Gray, & Malins, 2016). However, I have been able to draw a clear difference between art and visual display. Visual display in regards to merchandising can mean everything from the window display a prospective customer first sees that draws them to your store, to the signage that directs them around, and the merchandising displays that catch their eye and ultimately influence them to purchase something (Google define). Whereas, art is the expression or application of human creative skill and imagination, typically in a visual form such as painting or sculpture, producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power (Google define).

In this assignment I gained further knowledge and a clearer understanding of both color and texture as a tool of design elements, as well as a deeper sense of what art and visual display truly is. The texture quality of an object surface being tactile can appeal to the sense of touch evoking either feeling of pleasure or discomfort. Most artists apply the knowledge of texture to arouse emotion and responses from their audience or people who come across their artwork, making surface to a fundamental element in any artwork. Many type of textures are described by use of adjectives such as rough, smooth, bumpy, pebbly, and lumpy among others (Schell, 2014). While referring to a smooth surface texture words such as slick, polished, flat or velvety may be broadly used. When it comes to analyzing color hue, value, and intensity have helped me in comprehending what the color represents or signify in a context of art it has also help me understand how shade and tint in the valuation of colors are created in any art (Yue, 2014). Color

being placed on a art work such as a painting or a visual display in a retail stores window can be very effective to help convey the artists story and sell you their vision

In conclusion, art requires an abundance of imagination, creativity and the ability to express ideas stimulating peoples thought over technical skills possessed by any artist. Any type of art and visual display can help better convey to society that art has kept evolving to suit the needs of its curious audiences as well as preserving the history and cultural diversity of the people.



James Ensor “Comical Repast (Banquet of the Starved)” ca.1917-18 *oil on canvas*.



JADED JEWELRY *est. 1984* store window display located on 1048 Madison Avenue in NYC.

References

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Google Search Engine – Webster Dictionary

Metropolitan Museum of Art located on 1000 Fifth Avenue New York, NY