

Edward Alston  
Professor Lange  
Communication Design Theory  
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### The Design Behind the PlayStation 5

June 11th, 2020, Sony finally unveiled the design for the new PlayStation 5, Sony's latest innovation for the next generation of console gaming. The PlayStation 5's design is unique and unlike that of its predecessors. It's unveiling resulted in a split opinion on the design. Previous PlayStation designs were designed to blend into the background of consumer's homes, with a mostly rectangular design and all-black. The PlayStation 5 however, seems like something from the future. The PlayStation 5 seems to take design inspiration from Industrial design, particularly Neo-Futurism. It's a sleek yet bold design, with two white plates contrasting and covering the glossy black main body of the system.

One of the main goals with designing the PlayStation 5 was for it to be faster (system-wise), and to be quieter, than the PlayStation 4, when cooling. The PlayStation 4 had a history of being very loud when the fan was running. Sony's goal to reduce noise is shown throughout the PlayStation 5's design, the system has vents lining the edges of the main body, slightly hidden under the two white panels. The vents also extend to the back of the system.

Another factor about the PlayStation 5's design is the difference between the Standard version and the Digital version. Both keep the same Neo-Futurism aesthetic theme, but the Digital version is slimmer due to the lack of a disc drive. Sony is aware and realizes that in our current time, more and more people are moving to purely digital platforms. In an interview with CNET, Sony's Playstation CEO, Jim Ryan, states that "We're just acknowledging here that as time passes our community is becoming more digitally orientated. In the first quarter of this year [2020], two-thirds of new games purchased were digitally downloaded. People increasingly, as

they are with their music and their video, they prefer digital and we want to recognize that.” I feel this relates to Walter Gropius’s philosophy about what design is/should be; that design should have a function that art and industrial design should be united as one. As stated in “The Theory and Organization of the Bauhaus” by Gropius, “the old dualistic world-concept which envisaged the ego in opposition to the universe is rapidly losing ground. In its place is rising the idea of a universal unity in which all opposing forces exist in a state of absolute balance. This dawning recognition of the essential oneness of all things and their appearances endows creative effort with a fundamental inner meaning.” (Gropius 1) The PlayStation 5’s design also follows his belief that artists and art should not be separated from the rest of the world, as apparently shown with the placement of the vents on the system. Furthermore, it has been shown that the PlayStation 5’s side panels are easily removable for consumers to easily maintain a good condition of the system. Removing the system’s side panels exposes dust catchers, allowing for easy vacuuming to prevent dust build-up and thus prevent performance issues for the system. The fan may also be taken out for consumers to clean. “Form follows function” - This shows how much thought Sony’s designers put into the design of the system from a consumer’s standpoint, something that could not have been done had they been disconnected from their audience and the world around them. These ideas and ways of thinking served as the base for Bauhaus.

Despite the PlayStation 5 being designed for functionality, it was also designed to look different and interesting, this is where art/design meets functionality. A lot of the functionality of the system smoothly blends into the design. Like mentioned before, the vents are tucked away into the inner sides of the white panels, just fairly visible. The face of the system also appears

very light in terms of functional components. There are only two USB ports, and one or two buttons, and a disc drive, depending on the version of the system.

I mentioned that the PlayStation 5 has a Neo-Futuristic design to it because it draws from futurism. Jim Ryan mentions that they wanted a “future-facing” design for the system. To design something that looks like tomorrow. I believe in a way it relates to Filippo Marinetti’s “The Futurist Manifesto”. The Manifesto is a glorification of war however, it can be also be interpreted as a glorification of war on old ideas and designs, in favor of newer looking designs. Like previously mentioned, Sony’s previous PlayStation designs mostly followed the rule of being mostly black and somewhat geometric and rectangular. The PlayStation 5 completely abandons that route, with more rounded and abstract lines and forms. Sony took a bold risk with the design of the PlayStation 5 and as the first line of the Manifesto of Futurism reads, “we want to sing the love of danger, the habit of energy and rashness” (Marinetti 2) - futurism is about taking those risks.

There are a lot of different ideas that go into design that are important to consider. Like as shown throughout this writing, these ideas can be based on the different historical beliefs founded and developed by other famous artists and designers.



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