Museum Promotional Project

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BUF 2203 – Visual Merchandising

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A picture containing text, indoor, window, furniture

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**Henry VIII, Ca 1540, Workshop of Hans Holbein the Younger (metmuseum.org)**

**Polo Ralph Lauren Store Window, 867 Madison Ave (2022) (Pictured Right)**

Art is one of those attributes that are part of our everyday lives and finding the nuances between art and fashion that just go hand in hand seamlessly. Luckily, I live off 5th and Madison so I’m constantly in the presence of fashion like people who are big on stylish clothes, the advertisements that are posted on mass transit, and the luxurious storefront windows that are heavily detailed on Madison Avenue. I chose my favorite store in New York City which is the Ralph Lauren flagship store; they own two blocks across each other one is for women/ children and the location across the street is solely for menswear. Every season I look forward to seeing their storefronts because they come up with these super creative visually appealing store windows that are breathtaking. So, I was excited to do this project because I’m constantly observing what people are wearing and you can simply tell what’s next in a season by just witnessing the store windows as you pass by because they’re a good telltale of what people are planning to buy for the upcoming season or what’s current.

Once I took my pictures from the store window at Ralph Lauren, I made my way to the Met Museum to take pictures of the art. I stumbled upon a new exhibit that was at the museum and it was called “The Tudors: Art and Majesty in Renaissance England” that is where I got the picture with the man called “Henry VIII, workshop of Hans Holbein the Younger” and I took notice of how both have similarities and differences using the design elements/principles of design. Firstly, I was astonished by the colors and how much they played with the reds, browns, beiges, greys, and golds, and how both pictures complement each other in a way that gives the spectator a feeling of luxury; the placement of where the colors are and how intense the colors are pronounced with the artist who painted Henry VIII and Ralph Lauren’s version of using clothing to showcase these colors. The texture is present by how it appears that it might be touched because in the polo photo the curtain has flower embroidery, the blue sweater has patterns, the red sweater draped around the grey suit, the wool tweeded pillow, and the blanket is held by the pillow on the chair which has texture because it can be made from wool. Also, the painting appears to have some texture present whereas the attire that Henry has is the coat red with gold linear patterns around the shoulders, the curtain has a texture to it where it has embroidery too, and the carpet has a texture with flower patterns, which shows in the polo window photo. The grey suits that are shown have layers and the pants have vertical creases to show how crisp and clean they are without the customer touching the pants physically.

Proportion is the relationship between the apparent size, mass, scale, or optical weight of two or more objects (Bell & Ternus, 2017). This is present in both images; the polo window display has two mannequins and a statue in the middle which shows that both sides have proportion because it is balanced. Also, proportion exists in the art piece because Henry VIII is stationed in the middle of the frame which shows that what’s behind him is balanced between the left side of his shoulder and his right shoulder. Optical weight is shown In both images where in the painting the gold curtain appears to be a thick heavy curtain and the polo window display has a statue that seems to be heavy because usually those statues are made out of stone from the Greek/ roman era. Repetition is present in the polo image because the frames that are in the top left corner, the top left center, and the two frames that are all rectangular show repetition. Repetition is shown in the painting by the jewelry that Henry is wearing the diamond, the red rectangular shapes coming down his arms, the jewels on his chest, he’s got rings which are two on his left hand, and as well as his right hand. The rhythm is like repetition which exists in both images whereas in the painting the rhythm is shown through Henry’s chest with the jewels and the pattern that matches his shoes and his dress. Also, the window display shows how the two mannequins have rhythm since they’re both grey they show rhythm because even though they have a different color layer they still have the foundation of grey and the eye travels along the paths of the repeated items.

Emphasis is a special attention or emphasis positioned on an item to be highlighted in the presentation. This is achieved by contrast, color, lighting, placement, repetition and so on. (Bell & Ternus, 2017). Emphasis is present in both of these subjects because in the painting the artist chose to use a cool grey to have as the foundation which lightens the person In the painting; he was clever in doing this because he was able to show off the details within the painting by using lighting in front of so much dark. Also, the window display shows emphasis because the visual merchandiser used lighting such as two lamps and the overhead lights towards the two mannequins because that’s what the store is trying to sell to the customer. Harmony is when the art elements create visible unity; both images show harmony in their own similar ways (Bell & Turnus, 2017). For example, the window storefront shows how the visual merchandiser was able to carefully pick and choose which compliments what to each other which allows it to cohesively come together as one it Is pleasing to the viewer. Whereas, in the painting, the artist too was able to pick and choose what colors would complement the subject so that the person doesn’t look drowned out and it to not be overwhelming but just right. Unity is what the visual merchandiser for the storefront and the painter for the painting was able to achieve unity where the elements of the presentation combine to make a balanced, harmonious, complete whole of the masterpieces.

The element of size is when proportion, ratio, mass, or scale are used that could alter the apparent size of a product on display. For example. The fact that in the window display there was a sense of proportion because what you see on the left side of the window there is something that is complimenting on the right side too. What’s apparent in the painting of Henry VIII is how his size is almost taking up the whole frame; the artist did this on purpose because it shows that he was important in what he did and that he was wealthy. So, the artist wanted to emphasize his size as him appearing bold and big in size to depict his stature by showing off his clothing and the detail that he had on. Another element that these two images share is Balance which in the window display it shows the equality of optical weight and relative importance that creates a unified presentation because they both are framed; the polo window display mimicked a painting like it was painted by someone just like the painting from the museum. So, I found that to be clever that the visual merchandiser decided to imitate art with life. The balance that is present in the painting from the museum is how Henry VIII was shown to be balanced in optical weight and that it isn’t being under/overwhelmed with the amount of detail and being able to still achieve balance within the painting by it all coming together harmoniously. Informal balance is something that the two images have similarities in because in both images the items are positioned in an asymmetrical way it seems that everything would show to be balanced.

When it comes to formal balance there are some differences; in the window display, the formal balance is that the two items which are, in this case, the two mannequins are equidistant from the center point which happens to be the statue. Formal balance isn’t an element that is present in the painting because there aren’t items of equal size or optical weight that are equidistant from one another which would provide symmetry. Another element that is different in both images is that in the window display there’s a surprise one that would be a traffic-stopping effect in the window display for Ralph Lauren the statue would be out of the ordinary you usually don’t see statues on windows very often without it being found in a museum. On the other hand, the painting doesn’t have a surprising element in terms of something in the portrait that is out of the ordinary it is a classic in terms of what the artist was depicting. The sequence must do when a particular order is established in terms of viewing; these two images have differences because they both don’t have a gradation of items from too large, they are both just one size just like the painting which is showing just one size. Tension is when an arrangement of elements causes the viewer to wonder whether opposing forces would disturb the balance in a display. For example, tension is only present in the window display with the blanket tucked under the pillow on the leather seat; this would have the viewer question whether the blanket would slip down. On the other hand, the painting doesn’t show an example of tension because everything in the painting has a home like his sword isn’t going to fall from his hand because he has a string holding it on his clothes.

The shape is a standard recognized spatial form like a circle or a triangle that helps the viewer identify various objects. The window display shows the rectangle being prominent where even the pillow has a rectangle shape, the frames are rectangular, the bookshelf shape is rectangular as well as the 4 books that are horizontal to keep that rectangle shape consistent throughout. The painting doesn’t show elements of shape because it doesn’t have a consistent shape it is a self-painted portrait made by a painter. The contrast between the beige walls is countered by the dark browns, reds, and greys to showcase this cohesive window that just makes sense, which in turn the painting doesn’t have contrast because the darks are just dark. The visual direction for both the storefront window and the painting is that the visual direction for this window is up and down because the painter achieved the viewer to look back at Henry VIII and pay attention to his attire and how detailed it is. For example, the window display has this direction of left and right kind of feel to it because as you’re going left and right it is leading the shopper from one place to another without even moving their body but just their eyes. The line is an important element because this is responsible for leading the eye to a feature or element that sets a mood. For example, the visual display showcased this statue that when you look at it isn’t hard for the viewer not to see it since the statue is in alignment with the two mannequins that crate this horizontal kind of line that comes across and it sets the mood of luxury because the type of statue it is since we relate to it as luxury. Lastly, the painting doesn’t have much of a line element going on since this portrait doesn’t have a guide that sets a mood that is either calming or stable.

Having done this project and analyzing how art has different layers of what it entails between two subjects the painting that I chose from the museum and the storefront window display at polo ralph Lauren was interesting because it allowed me to think outside of the box. Furthermore, I was able to put into practice and observe how actual visual merchandiser may get their inspiration from not just the clothing itself but more importantly what is around them. Using the design element tools and rules was challenging in some areas like trying to figure out the informal balance and what the formal balance may be by comparing them. The easiest part was figuring out which storefront to use because I already had in mind which one to choose. Thanks to this experience gave me field experience rather than just learning it from the textbook and allowed me to put on my visual merchandising cap for this project.



Henry VIII, ca 1540 Workshop of Hans Holbein the Younger (1497/98-1543) Pic 1

Text, letter

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Information on the Painting of Henry VIII

Pic 2



Polo Ralph Lauren Zoomed in

Pic 3



Polo Ralph Lauren Zoomed out

Pic 4