

VISUAL COMMUNICATION

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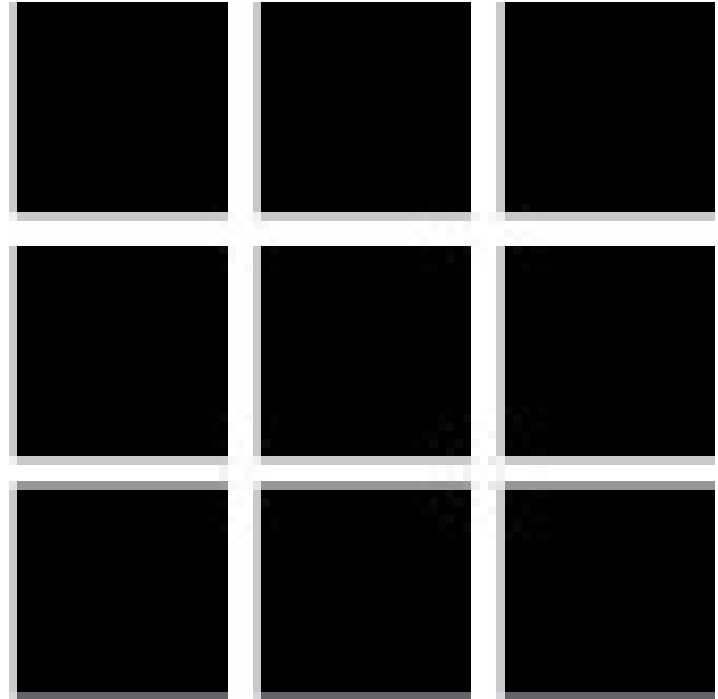
Gestalt Theory

The sum is greater than its parts. We are capable of mentally assembling separate objects into a seemingly logical new whole.

Four ways in which we make these associations:

Proximity

The closer objects are to each other, the more likely they will form a larger whole.



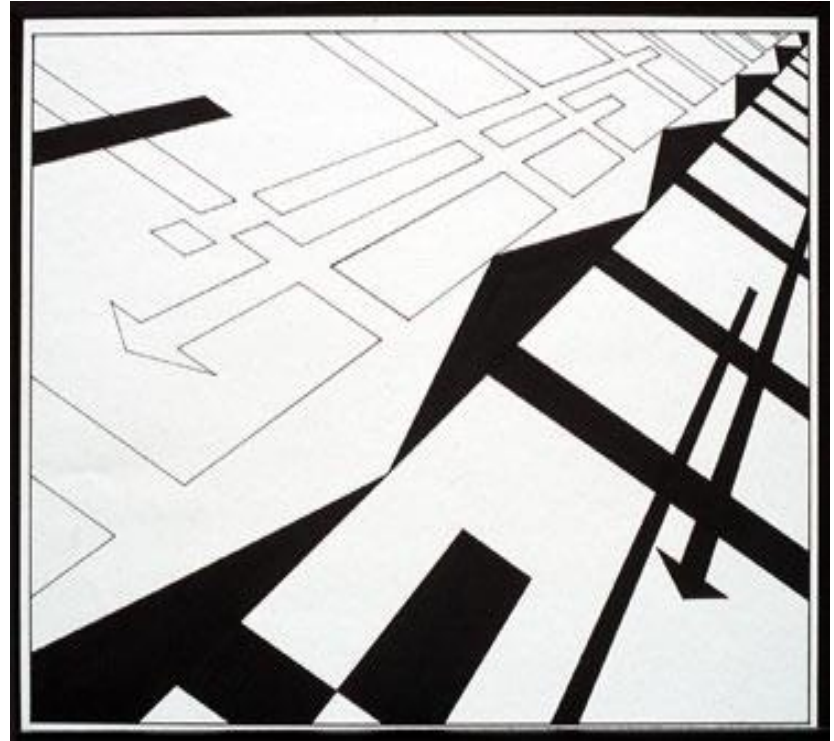
Similarity

The more objects resemble each other, the more they will assemble.



Continuation

Our eyes are inclined to follow lines and curves, so if objects are arranged along paths then we perceive a larger construct and also a sense of movement.



Closure

In the process of trying to identify things we're looking at, our brains will close incomplete shapes and patterns.



Figure/ground relationship

A state of gestalt is achieved when all the elements of your design seem to belong together. For this to happen, then the positive and negative areas of your design also need to work together: This is called the figure/ground relationship.



Semiotics

The science of signs and symbols. Three kinds:

- **Iconic:** It resembles what it signifies.
- **Symbolic:** Its association has to be learned.
- **Indexical:** It suggests a causal or other connection to something else, such as an event.



Constructivism

When we look at anything, we have to piece it together. We do this through a series of rapid eye movements that assemble a blueprint of what we're looking at, while at the same time comparing the results to memory and past associations. So, in effect, we construct images out of many narrowly focused observations.

Ecological Theory

We interpret what we see through spatial properties in the environment: Surface layout, composition, lighting, motion, gradation, shape, size, solidity and scale. Light — the way it reveals the threedimensionality of objects, and scale — the way objects diminish as they recede from us — are the two most important properties that we use to interpret space.



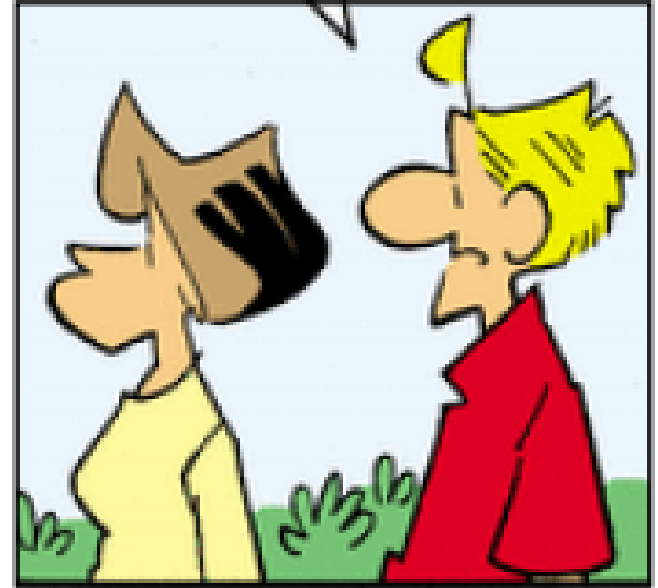
Clifford Ross, Mountain XII

We interpret this scene through light and scale.

Cognitive Theory

Perception is not just the result of visual stimuli, but involves a series of mental processes in which we compare what we see to our catalog of memories and perceptions and use those to interpret and analyze. In other words, we understand what we're looking at most easily by comparing it to what we're familiar with.

We are constantly on the lookout for things with which we're familiar. So we see, for example, faces in inanimate objects simply because some features look vaguely like eyes and a mouth, such as the man in the moon.



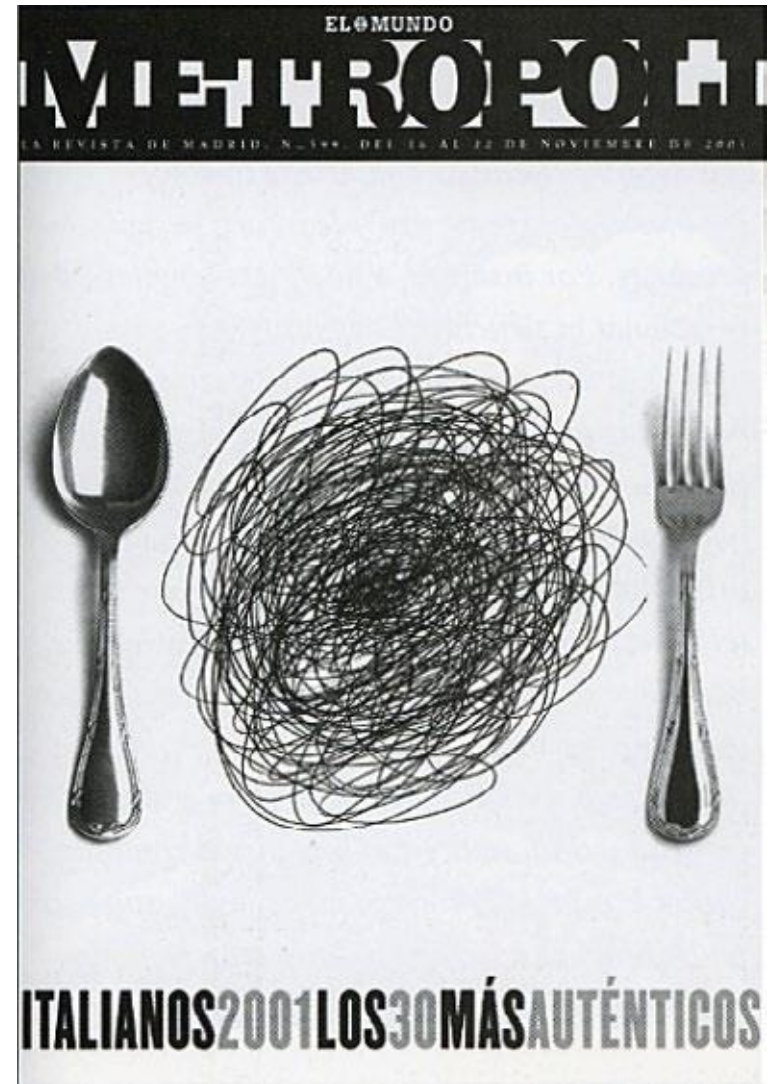
Arlo & Janice by Jimmy Johnson

Comic strip characters might bear little resemblance to real humans, yet we recognize them as such because they fit into our preconceived images of basic human characteristics.

Huxley-Lester Model

Sight and thought are inseparable. We go through cycles of perceiving, focusing on particular things we see, learning from that and committing it to memory and then applying that knowledge to what we perceive. The more knowledge and experience you gain, the easier it is to interpret what you're looking at. So, "the more you know, the more you see."

We apply our experience of a plate of spaghetti to the scribbled lines and make the association in our perception of this magazine cover. Without the spoon and fork however, we probably wouldn't make the connection.



THANK YOU