

READING RESPONSE 5

Paragraphs on Conceptual Art, Sol Lewitt, 1969

In conceptual art, the final artwork or physical representation is less important than the idea behind it. Do you think this is similar in contemporary Graphic Design?

Lewitt says that “By focusing on the idea over the outcome, there is less emphasis on craftsmanship and artistic skill.” In what ways does this relate to methods of production? Is there a divergence here with digital design vs recent trends towards increased craftsmanship?

Is process more important than product, or does that go against the function of graphic design?

Does having a strong concept and idea make the end medium irrelevant? (example: the concept could work as a print piece, motion piece, 3D piece, as long as the theory behind it is solid)

Do you think that ideas, even without physical forms, are works of art? Do you find this true in your own work?

Lewitt mentions that most ideas that are successful are ludicrously simple—Have you heard this at all before in anything we’ve discussed, or anything you’ve discussed elsewhere?

Lewitt talks about Conceptual Art as ‘purposeless’ and ‘emotionally dry,’ focusing more on the mental experience the viewer may have. Is this something you think is important when you’re designing? Do you think that without a purpose, design is empty or is it more successful? Is there a balance?

Lewitt states that to thoroughly explore an idea conceptually, an artist must “limit chance, whimsy and taste from the making process.” What does this description sound similar to? Is conceptual art making merely a mechanical process? What about Graphic Design?

Lewitt mentions that some artists confuse new materials with new ideas. Is this a problem that also occurs in Graphic Design? If yes, how so?

If you have preset plans for a process you remove the necessity of designing each new work in turn. Do you find this valuable for designers as a working method? Why or Why not?

Conceptual Art is good only when the idea is good. Do you think this is the same with design? Is it possible to have ‘good’ design that is ugly?

Thinking about modular units, Lewitt notes that making each basic unit deliberately uninteresting makes them easier to integrate as a whole. Does this ‘kit of parts’ concept help with anything you are thinking about for this project?

What happens when you replace the word ‘artist’ with ‘designer’ in this essay?