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Design Principles: Attractive Bias Written Report

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Design_Principles_Tim Kovar: Brief_3

MADMT

Date. 14/2/2005

Tutor. Tim Kovar

Research Student. Peter Dee

Brief_3: Attractive Bias / Figure – Ground Relationship

Understanding of the Project Brief:

To choose two objects, one of which supports either the principle of attractiveness bias or the principle of figure – ground relationship and one which does not. Use examples to write a short analysis in relation to the relevant principle.

Deadline

21/2/2005

Handing in essay

Brief_3: Principles of Design: Attractiveness Bias

Attractiveness Bias: A tendency to see attractive people as being more intelligent, competent, moral, and sociable than unattractive people. This is also known as look-ism; the definition on dictionary.com presented as 'discrimination or prejudice against people based on their appearance'.

The claim that 'attractive people are generally perceived more positively than unattractive people' is quite a strong statement and it seems to me, to align itself quite closely to the truth, making me stop and think.

Attractiveness bias is a strand of our whole plethora of ideology and it, itself, is transient. Ideology is formed by the conditions of a society, and in maintaining that ideology, we maintain those conditions.

Attractiveness, something appealing to the senses or mind, is a subjective thing, held 'within the eye of the beholder'. Society shapes, and sells to us, our overall concept and perception of beauty, presenting us with an attractiveness 'norm' at a particular time and place. The question arises then as to what is the common mode of beauty and what is the attractiveness 'norm' of a particular era? And yes, these concepts and perceptions, which are shaped by society, are transient, and as 'perennial as the grass'. This is not to say that we cannot find real beauty in our lives, we all do, but not in terms of commodified cultural indexes as summed up in 'Maybe it's natural, or maybe it's Maybeline'.



Take for example 'The Bathers', painted in 1887 by famous French artist, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, whose Impressionist paintings are probably the most popular, well-known, and frequently reproduced images in the history of art. The presentation, and popularity, of these more 'rounded' female models reflects the attractiveness 'norm' of the day. The presentation of these female models, in terms of what was considered beautiful differs greatly from today's perception of attractiveness, where

the somewhat less 'meatier' figure of Christy Turlington's waist-to-hip ratio of 0.07 is considered the ideal range.

Not to condescend, but to point out that unfortunately we all share some form of attractiveness bias, which to a large extent, goes unnoticed. This is not a good thing and it is something that we should each be very much aware of.