

Terms used in art and design history and theory

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| “esque” | The end part of a word that is added onto artist’s names to turn the artist’s style into something of lasting influence (eg Cézannesque, Gauguinesque) |
| “isms” | The end of a word that turns the term into a movement or an event of social significance/ importance |
| Abstract | An image or form that has not recognisable resemblance to the natural world |
| Aestheticism | The part (or aspect) of design that appeals to an appreciation of beauty as opposed to basic functionalism (eg the stone work on a wall) |
| AIDS | The epidemic HIV virus “Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome” that has attacked most of developing countries and Third World cultures |
| Alternative | Other than and different to the main, accepted |
| Analytical | To take apart (dissect) in order to understand the inner or hidden meaning |
| Anti-establishment | Against the socially accepted institutions with tradition, power and control |
| Antipathy | Dislike, unsympathetic, avoidance |
| Appliance | A product that assists the hand in doing something (usually electrical) |
| Art Deco | A style of design that began with the 1925 Paris exhibition of the decorative arts and then became the style of high capitalist materialism in the 1930s |
| Auspices | Area of control or influences |
| Avant-garde | At the forefront (originally an army term); to be responsible for change, which challenges the past |
| Capitalism | A system of economics that is based upon profit and free enterprise |
| Catalyst | Active cause/reason for an important change |
| Categorisation | The ordering/labelling/naming and putting into compartments/sections |

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| Centrism | An emphasis upon the centre as the point of essential truth in design and art. This 'centre' can be an intellectual or a spatial centre, ie dominant ideology or a focal point |
| Classical ideal | Pure geometric form |
| Collective unconscious | Belief in a similar set of thoughts common to all people at certain levels of waking, dreaming or thinking |
| Common denominator | An element in the design that is the same for all design (eg no decoration or the colour white or the right angle) |
| Communication | To pass information/knowledge (visual, textual, mood – senses) from one person or point to another |
| Communism | A system of economics that is based upon non-profit and complete state control of all industry/production |
| Composition | The overall layout of the page or space of the design/art. The way in which the formal elements (line, shape, colour etc) are organised |
| Concept | The original idea, thought or vision that is the starting point for all art and design |
| Conjured | Manufactured as if by magic manipulation |
| Constructions | A built form, usually 3-D |
| Consumerism | Buying/purchasing material, man-made things |
| Consumption | Buying/purchasing material, man-made things |
| Counter | Opposite, different direction |
| Cyber reality | An existence within the space of the computer and its technology and not of the tangible world |
| Dada | The 'nonsense' name given to the radical European art, design and literature movement, which opposed all 'tradition' and 'establishments' (ie all that was supposed to be 'good' art in the past) |
| Demise | The end or 'death' of a design/art or other movement |
| Democratised | Fair, to ensure equality and eliminate hierarchy |
| Deutsche Werkbund | The German design movement that emphasised the importance of the machine form |
| Development | The process after the concept has been arrived at; working further on the idea and making choices such as format, medium etc |

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| Dialogue | An intellectual interaction (conversation) between two or more different parties in design and art (eg. marketing and design) |
| Diverse | Varieties, different aspects |
| Domain | An area of assumed control (eg the king in his domain) |
| Domestic(ity) | The home and all the tasks associated with the home |
| Dynamic | A design with a feeling of movement |
| Dystopia | Utopia with the disappointment of imperfection, a place where everything can go wrong and little works |
| Elitism | Unfair privileges/preferences to a particular group |
| Emulation | To copy that which is admired in order to be the same |
| Endorsed | Made official or given approval on a large scale |
| Enlightenment | A period in 18 th century history that was responsible for liberating (freedom) ideologies |
| Ethical | Morally, politically and socially correct (eg. right as opposed to wrong) |
| Exclusionist | To deliberately ignore, avoid or 'cut out' certain elements in favour of others (often unfair) |
| Fashion | A trend that is not long lasting but is very influential |
| Feminist | A political and social discourse that works for gender equality, initially to re-dress the suppression of women |
| Fervent optimism | Passionately positive |
| Form follows function | (Louis Sullivan) the shape of the object or design should be linked to the purpose it has in practical life |
| Formal | A focus upon the form (line, shape, colour, texture, medium/material, space etc) as opposed to the meaning or context |
| Formalism | A focus upon the form (line, shape, colour, texture, medium/material, space etc) as opposed to the meaning or context |
| Formulaic | Using a formulae, basing a design upon a set of strict rules and mathematical fractions |
| Freudian | The teachings and opinions of Sigmund Freud, dream therapy and sexual innuendos |
| Frontal representation | An image that is seen from the front only and is usually 2-D, stylised and stylised |

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| Functionalism | The part (or aspect) of design that relates to serving a useful and practical purpose in day-to-day living (eg a load-bearing wall) |
| Geometric design | Design based on angles, generally hard edged and sharp |
| Glasnost | The process of reconciliation between the nuclear super powers, Russia and America. |
| Global Warming | The detrimental effect of massive world pollution on the earth's temperature and oxygen |
| Global | Including the whole planet |
| Groupies | Intense fan/follower groups that imitate and enthusiastically support the 'role model' |
| Hierarchy | A separation of levels of status of perceived importance in order to establish a ranking orders |
| Ideology | A belief system often involving principles and morals for living |
| Impenetrable | Not able to get through |
| Inaccessible | Not able to reach or understand |
| Individuality | Not part of a group, separate, unique and alone |
| Industrial | Manufacturing, factories |
| Intangible | Cannot be touched or seen |
| Integrative | To include and incorporate, to share and work together |
| Intellectual property | Original thoughts, ideas, research of one person (and therefore their intellect) legally belong to them |
| International Style | An architectural style that used simple, modular forms without decoration or any particular cultural or national identity |
| Isotype | Pictograms, signs and symbols that do not rely on text and are standardised into an international and official language of signs |
| Jugendstil | The 'young' style in German that was the same as Art Nouveau in France, decorative and organic |

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| Kitsch | A 'cheap and nasty' look/style that is often over decorated with clashing colours and inexpensive material, 'bad taste' |
| Liberation | Freedom from a former state of oppression |
| Linearity | Line focus and quality, in a composition or structure |
| Machine Aesthetic | An appeal or 'beauty' that relates to the functionality and materials of the machine |
| Machine aesthetic | Appreciation of the beauty of the industrial manufacturing form (usually metal, cold, hard) |
| Manipulation | Altering or changing something without being obvious |
| Marginalisation | To set aside as if it is less important |
| Marxist | Ideology of Karl Marx; Socialist economics and equal distribution of wealth, no class distinction |
| Mass production | Manufacturing the same item in very large quantities |
| Materialism | A way of life that is based on 'things' as opposed to 'values' |
| Media | (a) All forms of public communication. (b) Media is also the plural form of 'medium' (eg watercolour and pastel) |
| Minimalism/Minimalist | A concentration upon extremely basic and simple elements in design and art. An elimination of excess and decoration |
| Modernity | The lifestyle of modernism |
| Movements | A stylistic and ideological similarity that is strong enough to have a following and take a name/label |
| Mysticism | Not straightforward reality but a sense of other worldliness, that which is strange and unexplainable |
| Nihilism | Nothingness, negativity and depression |
| Nostalgia | A longing for the past or certain aspects/ styles/ experiences of the past |
| Ornamentation | Addition of details not absolutely functional (decorative) |
| Ostensible | Outward, obvious to the eye, on the surface |
| Paradigm | An established way of thinking and understanding |
| Perpetuate | Make stronger by continuation and conscious repetition |
| Persuasion | (a) An opinion (b) influencing an opinion |
| Persuasive | Deliberate influencing of an opinion or standpoint |

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| Pervasive | All over and difficult to get rid of |
| Post humanism | A time when humans are replaced by technology |
| Practical | Useful, able to be work |
| Privileging | To place above and give preference to (sometimes unfair) |
| Production | The manufacture of the item of art or designs once the artist or designer has made the basic model (often this production stage is done by someone other than the designer) |
| Proletariat | The working class, especially in relation to the Russians after the 1917 Communist Revolution |
| Proliferation | A plentiful supply, the continuation of many |
| Propagation | To spread, distribute, encourage and influence |
| Psyche | Thoughts/feelings/spirit |
| Pulp fiction | Books/stories without any particular literary merit eg that resembles the superficial world of the soap opera (<i>Bold and Beautiful</i>) on TV |
| Pure formalism | To focus on absolutely clean lines and shapes with no decoration |
| Purism | Without fault, blemish or flaw, undiluted. |
| Purist idealism | 'Faultless' beliefs |
| Purist modernity | 'Faultless' modern life style; i.e. modular home of glass and steel, right angles and build in white cupboards, sans serif universal type and electric appliances |
| Purist | Without fault; design based on an ideal form (usually Classical); design without unnecessary decoration |
| Rational | An approach that is based on reason and logic as opposed to emotion and imagination |
| Rationalism | An approach that is based on reason and logic as opposed to emotion and imagination |
| Realism | Design or art that attempts to portray objects and forms objectively as they are in the world |
| Reconstruction | Rebuilding, repairing – once something has been damaged or destroyed |
| Reductionism | A process of taking away from the whole in order to have as little as possible left |

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| Reductive | To take away from the whole in order to have as little as possible left |
| Representation | To portray, depict, show a part of life |
| Retro | Styles that deliberately go back and recapture a look of the past |
| Revolution | A change that turns a situation completely around |
| Rhetoric | Ideas and intellectualisation that is not necessarily attached to any practice |
| Role models | People or styles that are used to set examples to a following |
| Scientific management | A system of working (from F.W. Taylor) that is based on absolute efficiency with NO wasted time or energy |
| Secessionist | Breaking away from a previous style or movement (eg the decorativeness of Art Nouveau) |
| Sobriety | Serious, sober, thought filled art/design |
| Socialism | A system of economics that is based upon shared profit and state control of large business |
| Standardisation | Making products or forms that conform to a particular size or shape (eg A4 paper is a standardised size) |
| Stereotypes | A limited, set visual/textual model/formula of something more varied and complex (eg Barbie doll is a stereotype of the 'beautiful blonde' look) |
| Structuralism | A focus upon the form, a conservative, disciplined approach to the balanced organisation of component parts in design and art |
| Subconscious | Thought level that is not voiced in the waking mind |
| Subculture | A collection of ideas, beliefs and practices (within a dominant culture eg Western) that grow together to form a strong group with a significant and an influential following (eg Harley Davidson enthusiasts) |
| Subversive | Against and undermining the majority, mainstream – often using caricature and ridicule in it's attempt to bring about change |
| Surreal | Unreal, subconscious reality that seems more real than the real but resembles the strangeness of a dream |
| Symbols | Representative signs (usually visual) that signify meaning |

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| Synthesis | The actual making of the design, the drawing or construction, building of it |
| Technique | Way of working and use of medium/material (eg Linear, highly finished, sketchy etc) |
| Techno-Darwinism | The 'evolutionary', 'natural' growth and development of technology |
| Technological | Based on technology and digitalisation as opposed to industry and machines |
| Tendentious | Art or design with a strong political intention |
| Testimony | Proof |
| Type foundries | The site of original collections and selections of lettering types |
| Typographic layout | The design of lettering upon a page |
| Universal language | A form of communication that was simple enough to be understood across cultural and national boundaries |
| Universal typography | Lettering with a simplicity and easy legibility that was accepted by most of the world |
| Universal | Without boundaries or differences, including all |
| Utilitarian | Useful, functional, practical |
| Utility | That which can be used in the directly practical sense |
| Utopia | An ideal existence (or place) where nothing can go wrong and everything works |
| Utopian modernism | An ideal, ultimate design style that had no problems and was completely functional |
| Vehicle | A means or way of getting a point or message from one point to the next |
| Vernacular | Casual, everyday, accessible 'person in the street' designs |
| Void | An empty space, emptiness, vacuum. |
| Voluminous | Full, deep |
| War neurosis | An anxiety related to the violence, disruption and loss of war |
| Weimar | The name of a town in Germany as well as the name given to the Republic of Germany that was declared between the two World Wars |