
AD 502 Contemporary Theory

Design Anthropology

Dr. Elizabeth (Dori) Tunstall

Monday, January 10, 2004, 6-9 PM

Class agenda

- Introductions
 - Lecture: What is anthropology and how does it relate to art and design?
 - Break
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- Overview of class structure
 - Overview of course requirements
 - Creation of letter of self-commitment
 - Q & A

Introductions

- Name
 - Program
 - Personal goals for graduate degree
 - Learning objectives for the course
(at least three)
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About me

- Dr. Elizabeth Tunstall, but called Dori
 - Have Ph.D. in Anthropology from Stanford University
 - Currently, Sr. Experience Planner at Arc Worldwide
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- Goal is to train Anthrodesigners, hybrid anthropologist/designers who have grounded human understanding and exceptional creative expression skills
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- Learning objectives for the course:
 - Provide holistic conceptual framework for understanding art and design
 - Challenge universal design/art assumptions
 - Make co-participants comfortable with writing about art and design

Lecture

→ What is anthropology and how does it relate to art and design?

What is art?

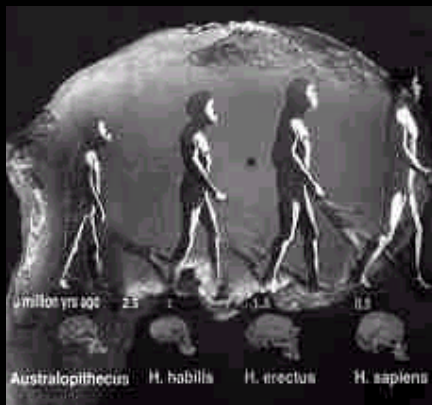
1. requires creative perception both by the artist and by the audience
2. elusive
3. communicates on many levels and is open to many interpretations
4. connotes a sense of ability
5. interplay between the conscious and unconscious part of our being, between what is real and what is an illusion
6. any human creation which contains an idea other than its utilitarian purpose

What is design?

1. When applied to fine and applied arts, engineering, and other such creative efforts, design is both a noun and a verb. The verb is the process of originating and developing a plan for an artistic or functional object, which may require countless hours of thought, modelling, iterative adjustment, and re-design. The noun is either the finalized plan of action, or the result of following that plan of action.

What is Anthropology?

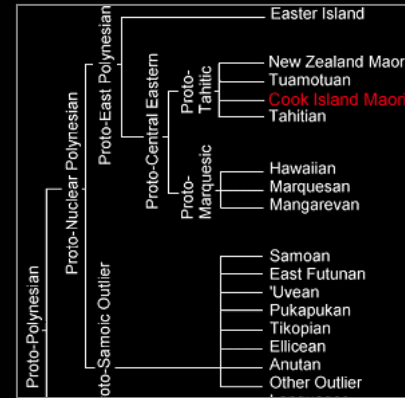
- Greek (*anthropos*, human; *logos* science or discourse)
- The study of humanity
- Four subfields



Physical or biological



Archaeology

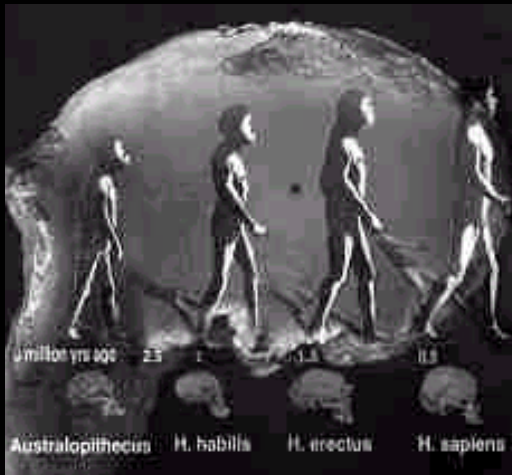


Linguistics



Socio-cultural

Physical Anthropology



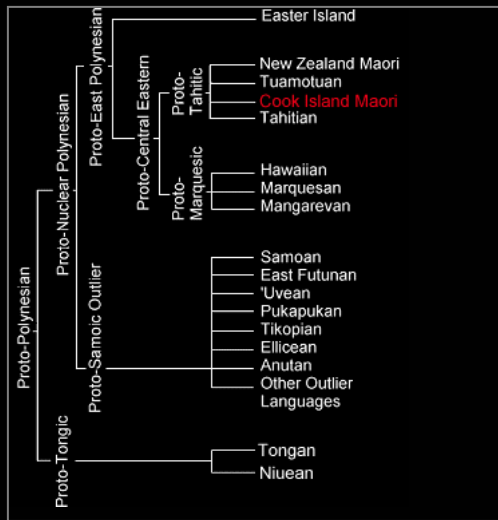
- The study of human biology often from a comparative perspective
 - Between the human species and higher primates (chimpanzees and gorillas)
 - Between modern humans and our ancestors (*Australopithecus africanus*, *Homo erectus*)
 - The anatomical comparison among the human “races” which is now being superseded by human genetics
 - Fields represented in biological or physical anthropology: genetics, demography, forensic science, and paleo-medicine
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Archaeology



- The study of human material remains through fossils and artifacts in order to reconstruct the habitat and structures of pre-historic societies.
- It can also include the reconstruction of social life among recent peoples.

Linguistics



→ The study of the historical and contemporary diversity of human languages and their social underpinnings.

→ It is subfield of the wider discipline of linguistics.

Socio-cultural



- The comparative study of learned patterns of human thought and behavior
- The largest and most widely known sub-discipline in the US.
- Known for the research methodology of ethnography

How does art approach anthropology?



Many peoples believe that the head is the center of spiritual energy. With their shimmering colors and symbolic attributes, feathers are an ideal medium for representing this aura. A headdress such as this one of parrot and macaw feathers would radiate like a halo once fastened to the head of its wearer. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Theodore W. Van Zelst. Karajá; Brazil. D 32 inches.

→ “Early studies of the art of small-scale, tribal communities focused on establishing the cultural provenance of the objects in order to establish typographical taxonomies, and serve the needs of Western museum curators who directed the objects into the primitive art or the ethnographic sections for the museum.”

How does design approach anthropology?



→ The re-emergence of ethnography in design has four factors:

1. “Ethnography links designers to users...”
2. Ethnography helps clients succeed in a competitive market...
3. Ethnography supports growth in industrial design...
4. Ethnography enhances a designers creativity.”

Beyond Ethnography

- The reduction of anthropology to a set of research methodologies (ethnography) and solitary goal (innovation) ignores the fact that theory and methodology in anthropology are one and that it can inform more than innovation.
- “It is impossible to engage in ethnography without some idea of what is important and what is not.”

What is theory?

→ Theory has four elements:

1. Questions
2. Assumptions
3. Methods
4. Evidence

→ Anthropological theory has two distinctive characteristics:

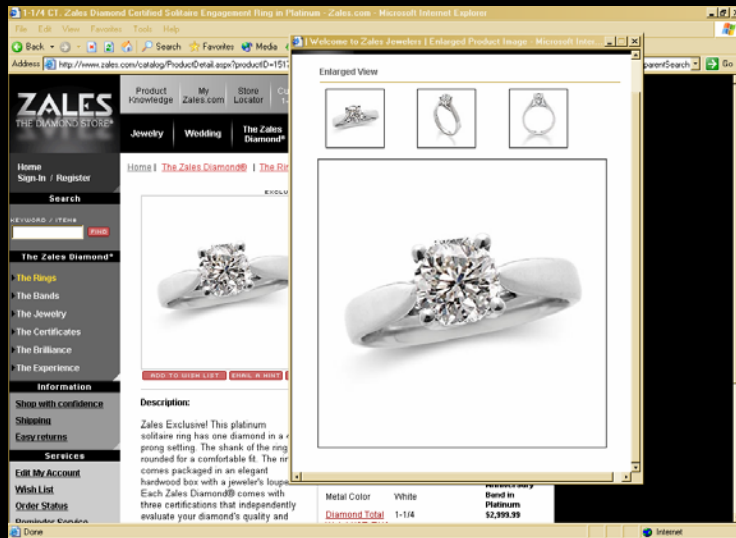
1. Holism, or observing society as a whole
2. Comparison, or examining each society in relations to one another

What does this mean for art and design?

- Creative conceptualization is the working out of theory.
 - The class will use the four elements of theory, as shaped by anthropological approaches, to inform and iterate on their art and design concepts:
 1. Questions
 2. Assumptions
 3. Methods
 4. Evidence
-

An example: Zales Personal Style Application

1. Questions
2. Assumptions
3. Methods
4. Evidence



*What is the meaning of jewelry as a conveyer of personal style?
In what ways do consumers classify different types and styles of jewelry?
How is the jewelry shopping process different among our target segments?*

An example: Zales Personal Style Application



1. Questions
 2. **Assumptions**
 3. Methods
 4. Evidence
-

Each woman has her own style.

Zales provides the perfect designs to fit her individual taste.

Men can also use application to choose best surprise gift for the woman in his life.

System would include 4 or 5 style groups – Romantic Feminine, Simple Chic, Classic, Contemporary.

An example: Zales Personal Style Application



1. Questions
2. Assumptions
- 3. Methods**
4. Evidence

In-context Interviews including:

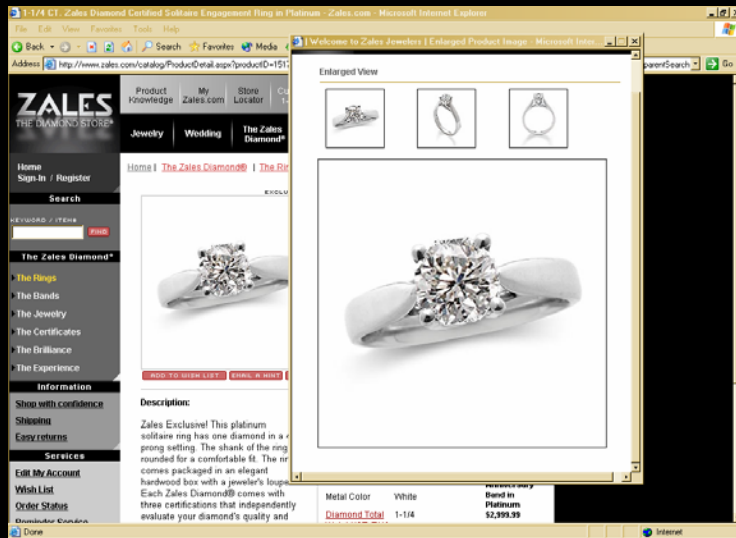
- *Jewelry acquisition and purchase narratives*
- *Card sorting of style categories*
- *Web tours in jewelry sites*
- *Tour of home for overall style preferences*

An example: Zales Personal Style Application

1. Questions
2. Assumptions
3. Methods
4. **Evidence**



An example: Zales Personal Style Application



1. Questions
2. Assumptions
3. Methods
4. Evidence

New theory:

- *“Style” plays role in the jewelry shopping process.*
- *People interpret “style” in multiple dimensions.*
- *“Style” does map to specific jewelry traits.*
- *In established marriages, husbands will intentionally override their wife’s “style”.*
- *Newer couples are less confident of each other’s “style”.*

Questions about lecture

- Introductions
 - Lecture: What is anthropology and how does it relate to art and design?
 - Break
-
- Overview of class structure
 - Overview of course requirements
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Class Structure

→ Lecture	30 min
→ Q&A	20 min
→ Break	20 min
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→ Run through of all 2 page concept entries	15 min
→ Lead student concept presentation	20 min
→ Class discussion with student facilitation	45 min
→ Break	10 min
→ Self-evaluations	20 min

Course
Requirements

55%

Obtainment of course goals

- 15% Weekly concept journal entries
- 10% Class discussion facilitation
- 10% Mid-term essay
- 10% Final essay
- 10% Final exam

45%

Personal development fulfillment

- 25% Fulfillment of letter of commitment to self
- 20% Self-evaluations:
 - concept journal (5%),
 - class discussion facilitation (5%),
 - mid-term essay (5%),
 - final essay (5%)

**Course
Point system**

Concept journal entry <i>(10 pts for 13 entries + 20 bonus pts for exceptional work)</i>	= 150 pts
Class discussion facilitation <i>(divided by number of times presenting)</i>	= 100 pts
Mid-term essay	= 100 pts
Final essay	= 100 pts
Final exam	= 100 pts
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Letter of commitment and fulfillment	= 250 pts
Self evaluation of concept journal entries <i>(3 pts per entry + 11 bonus pts)</i>	= 50 pts
Self evaluation of class facilitation <i>(divided by number of times presenting)</i>	= 50 pts
Self evaluation of mid term essay	= 50 pts
Self evaluation of final essay	= 50 pts
Grand total of possible points	= 1000 pts

Letter of self-commitment

- 250 pts or 1/4th of grade
- Letter addressed to yourself in April
- The letter needs to describe not just the learning goals of objectives for the class but what kind of person you want to be at the completion of the class

“I want of be more confident in my design ideas and be able to articulate the why of my design decisions in the face of severe critique.”

Questions about anything

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