

2019

Design Thinking in Developing a Visual Brand Identity: Reimagining Pace University's Art Department Open House Brochure

Alexandra Gallagher

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.pace.edu/honorscollege_theses

 Part of the [Art and Design Commons](#)

Design Thinking in Developing a Visual Brand Identity

Reimagining Pace University's Art Department Open House Brochure

Written By: Alexandra Gallagher

Bachelors of Business Administration in Marketing

Advisor: Brenda McManus, Art Department

May 2019

Advisor Approval Page

DESIGN THINKING IN OPEN HOUSE BROCHURE

Abstract

This paper will use the Design Thinking method to examine the importance of a visual identity within a brand and incorporating this into Pace University's Art Department Open House Brochure. As a studio-based collaboration effort with Graphic Design Professor, Brenda McManus, a contemporary brochure was developed. Although new, branding factors such as familiarity and congruence were taken into account in order for this brochure to be seen as “ownable” to Pace University as a whole. While adhering to the university’s strict brand guidelines, a modern design was conceived to accurately reflect the overall message and values that the art department promises to both current and prospective students.

Table of Contents

TITLE_____	Page 1
ADVISOR APPROVAL_____	Page 2
ABSTRACT_____	Page 3
TABLE OF CONTENTS_____	Page 4
INTRODUCTION_____	Page 5
LITERATURE REVIEW_____	Page 5
METHODOLOGY_____	Page 9
RESULTS_____	Page 14
CONCLUSION_____	Page 15
REFERENCES_____	Page 16

Introduction

A visual brand identity is a crucial visual aspect of branding that businesses create in order to evoke the certain feelings and experiences wanted within the brand. The visual brand identity is a part of branding that communicates the overall message, values, and promises of the brand through anything that is visual. Many companies and businesses establish strict brand guidelines that set a standard of consistency and relevance in the eyes of the consumer. At Pace University, their brand guidelines are seen throughout all University issued marketing materials. This includes, the institution's Art Department Open House brochure. However, this brochure was decently outdated and didn't convey a message of creativity or uphold the values the department wanted to express to prospective students. My graphic design professor challenged me with a collaboration effort to compose a new and engaging brochure, that still stuck to brand guidelines but in a modern way. Through the popular Design Thinking method, this paper will research the importance of a positive visual brand identity and using this to design a visually appealing but congruent, Open House brochure for Pace University's Art Department.

Literature Review

Based on various academic sources, the importance of a brand's visuals is essential to creating a strong relationship between the company and the consumer. This concept as well as that of Design Thinking to properly reimagine a new brand image are observed (Hagtvedt, 2018; Phillips, 2014; Poulin, 2011; Luchs, 2016).

DESIGN THINKING IN OPEN HOUSE BROCHURE

“How Visual Brand Identity Shapes Consumer Response,” by Barbara Phillips, describes a visual brand identity as being comprised of features and qualities that adhere to the unique set of characteristics that a company aims to create and maintain. The visuals a customer is exposed to become associated with the brand and help to identify it. Phillips stresses the importance of a strong visual brand identity (VBI) in terms of a consumer’s familiarity and congruence. The concept of familiarity is explained as the rise in the presence of schemas (a pattern of connections between associated concepts) that are processed by a consumer as “pleasant and mediates evaluative judgements.” Meaning, ads with a strong VBI could be perceived as more familiar and evaluated more positively, than ads where the brand’s visual elements have changed in a more chaotic fashion over time, and have been repeated less often. Congruence is described as when consumers evaluate products more positively than incongruent products. Suggesting that, existing brands with a strong VBI may be perceived better because their ads are recognized as congruent with brand expectations. As most advertising is processed under low-involvement conditions, a strong VBI may lower perceived purchase risk, making it easier to grasp positive associations, and lead to an increased liking when prior brand awareness is positive.

“The Face of the Brand: How Art Directors Understand Visual Brand Identity,” enhances the definition of a visual brand identity by interviewing 15 art directors. They describe the term as the universal look and feel of a brand and its strategy of all its individual visual elements to face the test of time. Their findings concluded that the visual elements of a brand include the brand’s logo, typography, color, and layout. The term “ownable” was defined by the interviewees as the, “visual elements that were both unique and recognizable.” The art directors stressed that the power of visual elements is endless as they evoke desired brand meanings. This

DESIGN THINKING IN OPEN HOUSE BROCHURE

is essential towards evoking a new message compared to the current one the university is promoting with their branding materials. In order to create something original that is recognizable but unique when it comes to these materials, the brochure must be “ownable” to Pace.

Consumer Psychology is an academic journal that contains the article, “Art and the Brand: The role of visual art in enhancing brand extendibility” that argues the notion that visual art enables firms to increase the extendibility of their brands. Successful brands depend on favorable brand image and a high perceived connection between the brand and their extension category. They propose that a presence of art has a positive influence on brand image and enhances perceived fit, due to cognitive flexibility, that results in more favorable brand extension evaluations. Their experiment evaluating a luxury brand versus a store brand demonstrated their conclusion that the presence of visual art favorably influenced consumer’s perceptions of the brand. In order to increase brand perception of the art department, there must also be an increase in the department’s brand identity. By developing a more artistically compelling brochure, we hope to see a positive impact on those who visit during the university’s Open Houses. With a positive brand image, we would hope to see an increased perceived outlook from both prospective students as well as current students involved in the department programs.

The article, “Design Thinking,” describes the benefits of this thought process as a way of solution-focused thinking. The purpose of doing so is to understand the practical and emotional needs of a client through the use of prototypes and physical models to explore possible ways of achieving goals and trying different paths even though they may result in failure. Design thinking is different from other methods as it begins with a specific goal in mind and then

DESIGN THINKING IN OPEN HOUSE BROCHURE

investigates all possible paths that could potentially reach that goal. Design thinking is all about redefining terms, repeating steps, and reexamining initial ideas before achieving the ultimate intention. The five major steps are defined as, “empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test.”

Many designers have found this way of thinking ideal for dealing with problems that have been ill-defined, stressing visual thinking to simplify problems that may not be fully worked out.

Design thinking is always concerned with examining all possible solutions to a problem. By investigating all aspects of the situation, it is possible to arrive at creative solutions that address client needs while allowing a designer the freedom to explore and create. This type of thinking is ideal for such a project where the problem isn't clearly defined from the beginning, and the solution isn't obvious. This model allows to clearly define the mission and ideate a multitude of different solutions to go step-by-step testing how these solutions differ from each other. This simplifies such a daunting task and allows for an open and creative mind space.

The Language of Graphic Design: An Illustrated Handbook for Understanding Fundamental Design Principles, describes the building blocks of design based upon the point, line, and plane. From these elements, designers can create images, icons, textures, patterns, diagrams, animations, and typographic systems. A point marks a position in space, typically described as a pair of x and y coordinates. Graphically, this takes the form of a visible dot. A mass of points becomes a texture, shape, or plane. A line is an infinite series of points, the connection between two points, or the path of a moving point. Lines exist in many weights and are determined by the thickness, texture, and path to create its visual presence. They can be straight or curved, continuous or broken. When a line reaches a certain thickness, it becomes a plane or could multiply to become a texture. A plane is a flat surface extending in height and

DESIGN THINKING IN OPEN HOUSE BROCHURE

width. This can be parallel to the picture surface, or it can skew and recede into space. Most everything designers do will come back to the fundamental qualities and functions of these basic elements. When looking at other objects and structures, their function is seen as similar to the dot, line, or plane. They either anchor attention or give a sense of movement and direction. When creating the brochure and coming up with an overarching design, we began by observing these fundamental principles as a benchmark for expansion.

Methodology

The purpose of this project was to create a brochure that is both visually unique and compelling, while maintaining familiarity and congruence to still be associated with Pace University branding. To do so, we had to take into account the university's brand guidelines, as these are what makes Pace's marketing materials unified and provide the university with a visual brand identity. As described in, "The Face of the Brand: How Art Directors Understand Visual Brand Identity," brand guidelines include elements such as logo, typography, colors, and layout. These components are vital in connecting all marketing materials to be recognized as "Pace University." Although these are strict guidelines to follow, we did not let this limit our creativity. There are endless options to artistically expand upon these guidelines and present something innovative by taking these instructions and reimagining similar elements to produce something Pace would be willing to associate themselves with. This way, the brochure will be seen as visually congruent and "ownable" with Pace University branding. Furthermore, by constructing something attractive, there would be a positive reaction processed within the mind of the viewer that thus, evaluates the college with that same perceived value. In order to physically achieve

DESIGN THINKING IN OPEN HOUSE BROCHURE

these concepts of familiarity and congruence, the Design Thinking method allows for a step-by-step process to properly achieve an innovative, thought out solution. The collaboration between my professor and I was a unique studio-based approach in combining different artistic views to produce something completely original.

By breaking down our process through the Design Thinking method, the ability to map out our ideas, create, test and achieve the best solution to the problem, became much more easily established. Beginning with the first step of Empathy, we recognized that the current materials of the art department were outdated and didn't accurately reflect the creativity and originality of the students. From my personal perspective as an undergrad, these materials didn't provoke a feeling or inherent need to find out more about the department. From my advisor's perspective as a professor, she knew that we could generate something much more contemporary that displays all the department has to offer and in a much more stimulating manner. Just as Barbara Phillip's, "How Visual Brand Identity Shapes Consumer Response" suggested, we wanted to establish a strong VBI for the Art Department that is familiar to and in congruence with Pace's brand guidelines. However, with their branding being decently outdated and not something that has a particularly strong positive outlook on, this handout would have to be modified to create a positive impact on the student population.

By properly defining the problem, the next step in the Design Thinking model, we were able to fully understand what we wanted to achieve. We did so by realizing that even though all marketing materials produced by the university need to follow specific brand guidelines, we could discover a solution that abides by these, but in an artistic way. Since this is being produced for the Art Department, those wanting to enroll are expecting a creative environment. Visually,

DESIGN THINKING IN OPEN HOUSE BROCHURE

the previous brochure didn't have anything that made the department stand out from the others on campus. Students who are joining the department are artistic and imaginative, and we want to encourage them to bring their individuality to Pace, but, our materials didn't display an environment that they would necessarily thrive in. We also noticed there was minimal artwork shown from the students who are currently in the department. As, "Art and the Brand: The role of visual art in enhancing brand extendibility" stated, a presence of art has a positive influence on brand image that results in more favorable brand extension evaluations. The old materials only displayed three pieces of student work, something we wanted to change and show more of. We wanted to provide a solution that shows those soon to be enrolling here, the potential of their time and money spent during their academic years. From defining the problem, we knew that we had to improve the university's Open House brochure that is given to prospective visiting students.

The next step in the Design Thinking method is Ideation. My professor and I spent our beginning weeks brainstorming different layouts and viewing multiple visual examples of what we would want the brochure to look like. Rutgers University's art department brochure was quite an inspiration, as the size and layout were very well designed, as was their very own department logo. A modern booklet style approach provided an initial interest that drew us in to find out more about what the school has to offer. They were also able to achieve showcasing student artwork while maintaining their university's brand color. This inspired us to play around with numerous sizes outside of the traditional trifold approach, as well as think about what student artwork we could include. For us to reach a starting point in our own brochure, we looked at the very basic elements of design itself: the dot, line, and plane, as described in, "The Language of

DESIGN THINKING IN OPEN HOUSE BROCHURE

Graphic Design: An Illustrated Handbook for Understanding Fundamental Design Principles.”

We used these principles to come up with a multitude of different marks and potential concepts stemming from these fundamental elements. These marks represented icons and logos that we used as an initial exercise to get us thinking about the creative direction we wanted to follow through with. From here, we would expand these marks into a greater system that would turn into a theme, or schema, that we could see potentially representing the Art Department and the new Open House brochure. The collaboration between my professor and I was critical at this stage. What was truly unique about this studio-based approach was the fact that it was a team effort. One person’s ideas would spark those of the other’s that would otherwise, never be formulated. These snowballed into multiple ideas that we would continue to expand upon for weeks and allowed us to prototype many possible versions to come up with the best solution.

Once we established our creative direction, we moved on to the Prototyping phase of Design Thinking. As previously stated, the biggest challenge was to abide by the university branding guidelines. This was truly a test of our design abilities to take these parameters and design something unique that simultaneously represents Pace. We drafted up a collection of brochure possibilities using the copy from the original pamphlet. We then concluded that the best brochure for print would be a saddle stitched booklet, to not only give the material a satisfying physical weight, but create something with a more modern and inviting feel. Since the purpose of this assignment was to create something that would compel future students enroll here, we needed to generate a feeling that when a student looked at the brochure, they automatically would feel the creativity and possibilities that can come from attending our university. After establishing our designated size, it became much simpler to draft out new ideas based on our

DESIGN THINKING IN OPEN HOUSE BROCHURE

system that we derived from the logo exercise of the Ideation phase. We ideally wanted to showcase our location and facilities, so, Professor McManus took original photographs of the art department floors in 41 Park Row to provide photographic elements of the environment students would find themselves in. We also knew we needed to showcase student artwork, to show off what our students have accomplished and display what prospective student's future peers have been able to create here. We found these on the student artwork archive located in the art department. Using these photos, past student artwork, the university's guidelines, the department copy and our new aesthetic, we were able to produce a draft of the brochure, to which we continuously evolved and expanded upon. It took many versions and multiple corrections every week in order to develop this brochure into what it is today. Each week when we shared our individual progress, it allowed for mutual inspiration that wouldn't have been discovered if it was a one-person project. Both of our styles blended together and can be found within the pages of the completed brochure.

To approve this brochure for the printer, the next phase of the Design Thinking method was to test out our design. We would do so by presenting our materials to some of the Art Department chairs and receiving their feedback on what needed to be revised and reviewed before printing hard copies. This involved a short presentation on the ideas and inspiration behind the design as well our process and the current product we had at the time. After deliberation and the necessary improvements were made, the brochure was approved. Soon after, it was sent to the printer and stapled and is now currently being circulating during Open Houses to prospective students.

Results

{Brochure attached}



NYC



ART

PAGE



study in the city
that *never* sleeps



*The Department of Art
at Pace University will
immerse you in the
artistic energy that is
unique to New York City
in the classroom, in the
studio, and in the city
at large.*

Left: Chris Walther.

Benefit from Pace's unequalled commitment to academics and professional preparation and launch your career upon graduation.

- + **Develop your artistic vision** in our newly expanded art and design studio spaces; new photo darkroom facility; enhanced video, photography, and sculpture studios; and new digital media classrooms and computer labs.
- + **Benefit from one of the largest internship placement programs** of any university in the New York metropolitan area.

- + **Experience other cultures** with international study abroad at Pace-affiliated universities and department-sponsored excursions.
- + **Get the support you need** from small classes and accessible professors.

INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIP

Pace has partnered with New York City's renowned **School of the International Center of Photography (ICP)**. Pace students can enroll in innovative three-credit courses in photography at ICP that compliment the curriculum in photography offered on Pace's New York City Campus.



DEGREE PROGRAMS

BA in Art

Combine a solid background in art and design with another major in the liberal arts, computer science, or business. You may be surprised to know just how well art complements any of these areas and can provide you with a broader spectrum of internship and career possibilities.

Learn more at www.pace.edu/artba

BA in Art History

Develop your expertise in the history and development of Western, Latin American, African, and Asian art through in-classroom learning, regular visits to New York City's museums and galleries, and practical experiences through internships. Once you graduate, begin your career in a museum or gallery, or continue your studies with an advanced degree program.

Learn more at www.pace.edu/arhistory

BFA in Art

You have shown your artistic talent already – now take it further and develop your creative and professional path in art and design in one of the following concentrations:

Digital Arts & Graphic Design

Sculpture & 3D Design

Film & Video Production

Painting & Drawing

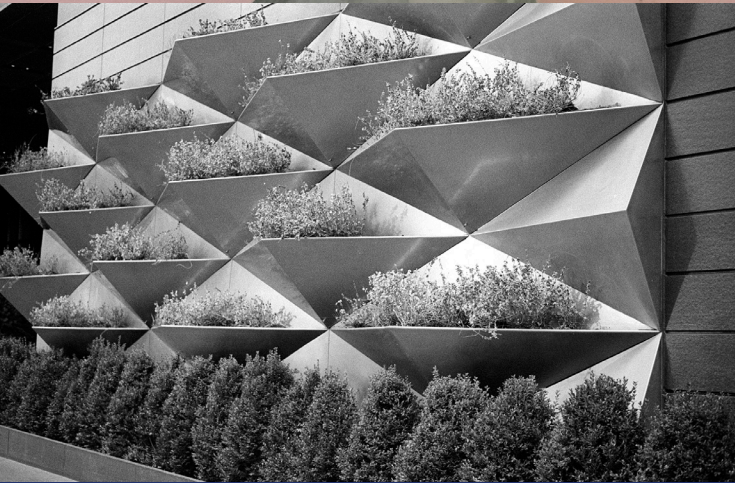
Photography: Digital & Traditional

The BFA in Art requires a portfolio submission.

Learn more at www.pace.edu/artbfa

Top left: Kyra Cassisi

Bottom left: Catherine Byrnes



Art

This 18 credit focus of study is designed to expose students to studies in both studio art and art history with an integrated, mixed media approach.

Art History

To complete a minor in Art History, students take six Art History courses: the year-long introductory survey of Art History from ancient to contemporary art, plus four intermediate or advanced-level courses that provide students with more in-depth knowledge in a variety of fields. Students develop connoisseurship skills, knowledge of artists' techniques and materials, and learn to make meaningful firsthand observations about works of art and architecture. Students will become familiar with the cultural resources of New York City and the city's significance for the fields of modern and contemporary art. Students may also carry out an internship in a museum, art gallery, or auction house to complete the requirements of the Art History minor.

Environmental Art & Social Practice Art

Are you interested in making artwork for the greater good of society and the environment? Your creative work can have an impact on the world and its ecological and socio-political systems. Art can change society and develop communities to envision a future that is sustainable, creative, positive and engaged in our complex global culture.

Digital & Time-Based Art

Digital and Time-Based Art focuses on studio art made with a computer or other digital means and/or spanning time, including topics like Video, Mobile Media, Performance Art, Animation, and 3D Games and Worlds.

Graphic Design

The Graphic Design Minor offers students an educational experience that focuses on a strong foundation for professional practices in visual communication that include design for corporate identity, publication, and package and web design. Students not only gain exposure to various technical skills and design methods, but they are also exposed to complex theories and processes for problem solving within the field. The goal of the minor in graphic design is to develop a strong foundation in graphic design theory and practice, to possess the knowledge necessary to become innovative and responsible problem solvers. Students also may take advantage of special internship opportunities in the New York/New Jersey metropolitan area.

Photography

The Photography Minor at Pace University introduced and fostered creativity to a broad range of image using. We encourage activating new audiences and ideas through documentary photography, commercial approaches, and personal storytelling. The students will acquire analog and digital skills and gain more in-depth knowledge in specific areas of interest.

BA Art Requirements - 18 Credits

BFA Art Requirements - 18 Credits





ART FACULTY

Our faculty have distinguished records as practicing artists and scholars, having taught at Yale, Columbia, NYU, Parsons, Rhode Island School of Design, Cooper Union, Pratt, and the School of Visual Arts. The studio faculty participated in more than 40 professional art exhibitions over the past year, including six solo exhibitions in Manhattan's Chelsea district.

Individual faculty members have exhibited their work at the *Whitney Museum*, *Museum of Modern Art (MoMA)*/PS1, and the *Getty Museum*. The faculty have received major public art commissions, and numerous state, national, and international awards for their works, including: the *National Endowment for the Arts*, *New York Foundation for the Arts*, *Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation*, and the *Pollock-Krasner Foundation*. Their work is included in public collections including *MoMA*, *Whitney Museum*, and the *MacArthur Foundation*.

Learn more about applying to Pace University and our scholarships and financial aid at: www.pace.edu/apply

Our Faculty

Inbal Abergil

Charlotte Becket

Janetta Benton

Jane Dickson

Lisa Farber

Barbara Friedman

Linda Gottesfeld

Linda Herritt

Eve Andrée Laramée

Jillian McDonald

Brenda McManus

William Pappenheimer

Roger Sayre

Derek Stroup

Left: Farhan Ferdos

STUDENT CLUBS



AIGA Pace Student Group The AIGA, American Institute of Graphic Art, is the national organization for graphic design. Working in collaboration with the faculty advisor, the goal of the student group is to get students involved in the local design community, create a community of their own and help them build leadership skills that will be valuable as they move into the professional world.

Art MeetUps Art, community, and conversation all come together at our monthly art department Art MeetUps. Students bring work to share, we have some food together and talk about what everyone is doing. The MeetUps are a great way to meet other people in the department who share a passion for making things and it is a great space outside of class to get feedback and inspiration.

Blend 41 a student run art magazine at Pace. It started as an online publication and had grown into a website (blend41.wordpress.com) an instagram feed ([blendno41](https://www.instagram.com/blendno41)) and print edition that is published every spring. So far, the magazine has focused on photography, but the content shifts every year depending on the interests of the students involved.

Collage Club, the Pace Art and Art History Club, is a student-run organization that brings together students interested in art and organizes several events each semester. The Club plans trips to see major museum exhibitions, art gallery shows, and auction house events. Students lead walking tours of contemporary art gallery districts in New York City. For the end of the semester, students often take a study break and plan a pizza and art film night.

Photo Club is a student-run organization that brings together students interested in photography and organizes several events each semester. We welcome all interested persons regardless of skill level.

Top left: Katie Craig, Top right: Jordon Himmel

Bottom left: Nalin Springer, Bottom right: Holly Brennan



*This booklet was designed as part of the Art Department
Internship and the collaboration of Allie Gallagher (Pace '19)
and Assistant Professor Brenda McManus.*



Conclusion

As a marketing major with a minor in graphic design, this collaboration effort has been an incredible learning experience. With the chance to work with a professor who is a professional graphic designer, I was able to work in a way that I will find myself in, in the working world. This project taught me several important lessons that will carry me through my future careers, such as; branding, collaboration, communication, trial and error, working with a deadline, print media, design thinking, creative problem solving, and much more. In addition, this offers a great portfolio piece as and provides me with hands-on experience that I can take beyond my college career.

References

Consumer Response. *Psychology & Marketing*, 31(3), 225–236.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.20689>

Hagtvedt, H., Patrick, V. (2018). *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, Art and the brand: the role of visual art in enhancing brand extendibility. Retrieved from

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1057740808000661>

Luchs, M., Swan, S., & Griffin, A. (2016). *Design thinking : new product development essentials from the PDMA*. Hoboken, New Jersey : Wiley, 2016. Retrieved from

<http://rlib.pace.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=cat01787a&AN=PUC.b2941299&site=eds-live&scope=site>

Phillips, B. J., McQuarrie, E. F., & Griffin, W. G. (2014). How Visual Brand Identity Shapes

Phillips, B. J., McQuarrie, E. F., & Griffin, W. G. (2014). The Face of the Brand: How Art Directors Understand Visual Brand Identity. *Journal of Advertising*, 43(4), 318–332.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.2013.867824>

Poulin, Richard. (2011). *The Language of Graphic Design: An Illustrated Handbook for Understanding Fundamental Design Principles*. 1-115.