

ADOBE CREATIVE SUITE



Design software has taken the formal principles explored by earlier generations and turned them into menus and tools.

Bauhaus

International Style

New Wave

Social Responsibility & Media Critique

Present

“Software writers were systematically organizing image-making into menus of properties, parameters, filters and so-on, converting Bauhaus theory of visual language into comprehensive text.”

—Ellen Lupton, *Learning to Love Software*

In effect, software leads to the same underlying visual principle—a kind of universality to everything we produce.

Modernism: Universality of both form and meaning

Postmodernism: Impossible for author to control meaning and impossible to establish central meaning in a text/design. Rejection of universal meaning

Present (Post Postmodernism or second modernism): Universal tools for making and describing design but no common basis for interpretation of meaning (no universality of meaning)

Lev Manovich



In his essay, *After Effects, the Velvet Revolution*, Manovich analyzes a “new hybrid visual language of moving images” which now dominates our visual culture.

WHAT IS THIS NEW HYBRID VISUAL LANGUAGE?

1) Hybrid media: professionals could now—within the same project “easily integrate multiple media sources... multiple layers of video, scanned still images, animation, graphics and typography.”

HYBRID MEDIA EXAMPLES

- a music video may use live action while also employing typography and a variety of transitions done with computer graphics
- a music video may imbed the singer within the animated painterly space
- A short film may mix typography, stylized 3D graphics, moving design elements, and video

WHAT IS THIS NEW HYBRID VISUAL LANGUAGE?

1) professionals can now—within the same project “easily integrate multiple media sources... multiple layers of video, scanned still images, animation, graphics and typography.”

2) A work produced in the new common software environment can use all techniques which were previously unique to these different media, or any subset of techniques.”

HYBRID MEDIA EXAMPLES

- computer generated fields of particles are blended with live action footage to give it enhanced look
- a virtual camera is made to move around the virtual space filled with 2D drawings
- flat typography is animated as though it is made from a liquid like material
- apply vector art tools to a photographic image (like flat fields of color)

The result is a hybrid, complex a new visual language based on “remixability.”

“the result of this process of remixability are new aesthetics and new media species which cannot be reduced to the sum of media that went into them.”

Manovich believes that this is **“a new fundamental stage in the history of media”** in which designers using software produce only **“hybrids.”**

Digital compositing using **layers and transparency** is one of the key software developments in this new hybrid visual language

Consider the analogy of multi-track audio recording and how it changed the sound of popular music in the 1960's onwards.

It changed the sound not the content of the songs, just like digital compositing changed the look not content of design.

Today it is the spread of software that has the greatest effect of making graphic design 'universal.' and establishing some kind of commonality. This spread of software resulted in great innovation, as well as a more open exchange of ideas. It opens the line of communications because we are all starting to speak the same language.

—Ellen Lupton, *Univers Strikes Back*