# Visual Communication Design glossary

2D/two-dimensional

Visual communication designs that exist on a flat surface, that have height and width, such as presentation drawings, brochures and magazine layouts.

2D/two-dimensional drawing

Manual and digital drawings in 2 dimensions can represent ideas for objects and environments. They are used to show the details of an object and information such as scale and proportions. Two-dimensional drawings can include floor plans, elevations and orthogonal drawings.

3D/three-dimensional

Visual communication designs that have depth as well as height and width, such as models and prototypes.

3D/three-dimensional drawing

Manual and digital drawings in 3 dimensions can represent ideas for objects and environments demonstrating depth, height and width as well as the representation of surfaces and the overall form of the object or space of the environment. Three-dimensional drawings include one-, two- and three-point perspective drawings, isometric and planometric drawings.

3D modelling

Production of a visual or physical representation that describes, simplifies, clarifies or gives an explanation of the workings, structure or relationships within an object, system or idea using computer software or 3D printing.

4D/four-dimensional

Visual communication designs that have depth, height, width and added temporal and spatial dimensions. For example, designs that incorporate images, sound and movement such as screen-based representations of video games, websites or interactive user experiences such as apps or interfaces.

## A

aerial view

Drawing from above (in the air) to show features of a building, landscape or environment (e.g. an image showing an aerial view of a garden plan).

aesthetic

How the visual conventions (design elements and design principles), media and materials of an artwork or visual communication design work together to influence the mood or emotion of the work.

analog

Relates to artworks that are created and manipulated by hand with tangible materials (e.g. paint, paper or markers), as opposed to digital artworks, forms or processes created using digital tools.

annotate

To make notes or make a brief description.

annotated drawings/sketches

In Visual Communication Design, the development of design concepts is demonstrated in drawings or sketches that provide information about the visual languages, conventions, materials, methods and media used in the generation, development and production of the visual communication design.

app

Software originally designed to run on mobile devices and to be targeted in its purpose; an app (abbreviation of application) can now be considerably broader in its purpose.

arts discipline

Specific area of arts practice such as dance, drama, media arts, music, visual arts and visual communication design. Within each discipline, a diverse range of styles, genres and forms are practised.

artist

Artists include visual artists, craftspeople and designers. Artists work individually and collaboratively using diverse visual arts practices to create artworks.

artwork

An artwork is an outcome of an artist’s practice. An artwork may be a completed product or a work in progress. Artworks can be experienced in person and/or digitally, for example by visiting galleries, exhibition spaces or public places, or by accessing artworks in online gallery spaces or in printed media such as arts journals.

audience(s)

Individuals or groups of people who experience artworks in a range of settings and contexts (formal, informal, virtual or interactive) through intellectual, emotional and social engagement. Social and cultural factors, and the context of the creation and viewing of an artwork can all alter the way audiences view, engage, interpret and respond to artworks.

## B

belief

Something that is accepted, considered to be true, or held as an opinion.

## C

characteristics

Distinguishing aspects (including attributes and behaviours) of a visual communication design. Designers consider the characteristics and conventions of the design field when they create visual communication designs.

circular design

Circular design practices consider not only the needs of audiences or users, but also the enduring environmental and social impact of the work. They recognise that design decisions play a key role in minimising waste, pollution and hazardous substances during manufacture or use.

concept

A thought, idea or notion related to a theoretical construct. A concept can be more complex than a general idea. In Visual Communication Design, concepts are the combination and extended development of initial ideas and inspiration.

context

The context of a visual communication can be the location and time in which it is made, presented or viewed. Context can also be the economic, philosophical, historical, social or cultural influences on the practices of the designer, and their communication of ideas, values and beliefs.

The context of a visual communication provides the reference for the communication of ideas and messages to an audience or users. Interpretation of the messages and ideas presented can evolve from the context.

conventions

Traditionally, stylistically or culturally accepted ways of doing things. Conventions are dynamic and ever-changing.

In Visual Communication Design, conventions govern each design field, including drawing and typographic conventions.

convergent thinking

Convergent thinking is analytical, critical, reflective and comparative. It seeks to summarise, categorise and synthesise information in logical and efficient ways in order to clarify, reframe or resolve problems.

copyright

Legal rights in creative work (e.g. text, images, music, computer programs, sound recordings, film). The creator or copyright owner has the right to prevent others copying the work without permission.

Country

The physical environment that a particular Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples’ group has a relationship with. Referring to this territory as ‘Country’, rather than land, indicates a reciprocal and deep relationship and one where Country both owns and is owned by the People. The concept of Country includes lands, waters and sky.

critical and creative thinking

Critical and creative thinking involves the application of skills, behaviours and dispositions such as reasoning, logic, imagination and innovation. This capability can be consciously developed through the application of metacognitive skills.

cultural appropriation

The unacknowledged and/or inappropriate adoption of the customs, practices or ideas of a cultural group or individual.

cultural influences

Artists, artistic practice and artworks can be influenced by culture. Cultural influences can be represented in an artwork through symbols. The values, beliefs and practices of an artist can be influenced by their culture.

cultural knowledge

Knowledge held by a person with cultural authority.

cultural practices

Demonstration of the traditions of a culture, such as through the processes, art forms and symbolism in artworks and visual communication designs.

culture

A body of beliefs, attitudes, language(s), skills, knowledge, laws, customs and tools by which communities structure and organise their lives and interactions.

## D

design elements

In Visual Communication Design, the design elements include point, line, shape, form, tone, texture, colour and type.

designed solutions

The objects, services or environments that have been created for a specific purpose or intention as a result of design thinking and the visual communication design process.

designer

Designers work individually and collaboratively using design practices to create visual communication designs and solutions across diverse fields of practice and in different cultures, contexts, times and places. In Visual Communication Design, designers use the visual communication design process, design thinking, methods, media, materials and visual language in their work.

design principles

The design principles are the conventions used to arrange and organise the design elements. Design principles include figure–ground, balance, contrast, cropping, hierarchy, scale, proportion and pattern (repetition and alternation).

design thinking

An approach that helps people to empathise and understand needs, opportunities and problems; generate, iterate and represent innovative, user-centred ideas; and analyse and evaluate those ideas. Divergent and convergent thinking are characteristics of design thinking.

digital media

Digital media are the applications used to create visual communication designs. Digital media examples include software, hardware, apps and online platforms used to create and display artworks. Screen-based works, concept art, animations and 2D, 3D and 4D presentations can be created with digital media.

digital tools

Digital hardware, software, platforms and resources used to develop and communicate learning, ideas and information.

divergent thinking

Divergent thinking is open-minded, curious and imaginative. It suspends judgement, focusing instead on the multiple ways a problem might be solved in unusual, creative or unexpected ways.

documentation drawings

Documentation drawings refer to the detailed visual representations that are created to document the technical specifications of a design. These drawings typically include orthogonal drawings, architectural plans, elevations and sections, packaging nets and technical flats, perspective drawings and paraline drawings. They are used to communicate precise measurements, materials and construction details.

## E

environments

Environments are designed for indoor, outdoor and virtual spaces. Environments can include residential and commercial buildings, interiors, performance and exhibition spaces, parks, streetscapes, gardens and the environments for films and video games.

exhibition

A formal or informal display of visual arts work and/or visual arts practice for audiences, including sharing work with peers, a curated exhibition in a formal space and/or on online platforms.

exploded view

An image of an object with individual parts shown separately but arranged to show the relationship and position of the parts for assembly.

## F

fields of design practice

The scope of design practice including the design of physical objects and environments, improvement of experiences and interactions in larger systems and environments. Design fields include messages, objects, environments and interactive experiences.

format

The plan or style of a visual communication design. The format is the physical or virtual representation of concepts, messages and information.

## G

‘good design’

The concept of ‘good design’ comes from cultural understandings, and personal experiences including social, cultural and historical factors that influence behaviours, values and attitudes. Examples of good design include Dieter Rams’ Ten principles for good design.

## H

human-centred design

Practices that focus on resolving design problems that impact the lives of people, communities and societies. Designers apply research methods that delve into the habits, experiences and mindsets of individuals and groups.

Human-centred research methods include interviews, surveys, focus groups, competitor analysis and audience or user research.

hybrid art forms/artworks

An art form where 2 or more art forms are combined into one artwork or the artist creates artworks using a combination of forms. Examples of hybrid art forms include print and screen productions, and immersive gaming experiences. With the combination of art forms, a new art form is made or the art forms used are modified.

*See also:* multi-arts/multimedia

## I

idea

A thought, notion or impression. Visual communication design communicates ideas to specific audiences.

Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP)

The rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to own and control their cultural heritage. It refers to all aspects of cultural heritage, including the tangible (e.g. cultural objects) and intangible (e.g. knowledge).

interactive experiences

Interactive experiences are designed for both the physical world and online, ensuring the objectives of users are met when engaging with a product, system or service. The design of interactive experiences considers the aesthetic qualities and usability of customer touchpoints, wayfinding systems and interfaces encountered in physical spaces or on digital devices including apps, online platforms and social networking services. These can include the display, layout and relationship of icons, symbols, images and type, as well as additional elements such as sound and animation.

interdisciplinary

The creation and production of artworks using more than one arts discipline. Across the Arts curriculum, students can make artworks using the knowledge of the practices of various arts disciplines, for example the creation of performance works using the knowledge and skills of music, drama and visual arts.

*See also:* transdisciplinary

## M

maquette

A scaled model of an object or structure made from materials such as clay, paper, cardboard or plastic. Maquettes can be created using digital modelling software in virtual environments.

materials

Visual communication designs are made using a wide range of materials. These may include paper, card, screen, textile, metal, plastic or glass.

media

The manual and digital applications used to visually communicate ideas and information.

* Manual media can include pencil, ink, markers, paint and analog film.
* Digital media can include software, apps and online platforms used for graphic, game or interaction design, web development, concept art, illustration, 3D modelling and rendering, photo editing and animation.

methods

Manual or digital processes used to generate, develop, refine and resolve design ideas, concepts and solutions. Methods can include drawing, collage, printing, photography, model-making and prototyping.

messages

Messages are communicated to audiences using visual language. Messages can include brand strategy, wayfinding, advertising and social media campaigns, visual merchandising, publications, signage, illustrations, printed collateral, products and packaging.

model

A visual or physical representation that describes, simplifies, clarifies or gives an explanation of the workings, structure or relationships within an object, system or idea. Models can be constructed using physical materials such as paper, cardboard and plastic, while virtual or visual models can be created using 3D modelling software or 3D printing.

multi-arts/multimedia

A combination of different art forms in one artwork; a work or practice that expands beyond one art form.

In contemporary art practice, multimedia artworks are made from a combination of electronic media such as video, film, audio and computer hardware and software.

Multimedia practices include the development, creation and production of content for digital products and services, providing electronic access to information services and broadcasting radio and television programs on the internet.

*See also:* hybrid art forms/artworks

## O

objects

Objects are designed to improve the quality of life for people, communities and societies, while also upgrading or improving existing designs. Objects can include products and packaging, furniture, fittings and homewares, transport, appliances, tools and machinery, costumes, toys, devices, industrial products, furniture, jewellery, textiles and fashion.

orthogonal drawing

A scaled multi-view drawing of a 3D object to show each view separately, in a series of 2D drawings.

## P

perspective drawing

A drawing that represents the way objects appear to be smaller and closer together, the further away they are. Perspective drawings show 3 different spatial viewpoints.

physical space

An environment to exhibit, present or display artworks. Physical spaces can include galleries, environments where physical artworks and visual communication designs, including traditional works (e.g. posters, models, presentation boards and prints) and sound-based, moving-image and screen-based presentations, are presented.

pictorial and aerial views

Drawings or maps showing objects from different angles. Pictorial views are 3D on a 2D surface, and aerial views are drawings from a height or a wide angle.

Place

‘Place’ is significant for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

For Torres Strait Islander Peoples, ‘Place’ is a space mapped out that Torres Strait Islander individuals or groups occupy and regard as their own and that has varying degrees of spirituality. It includes lands, waters and sky.

For Aboriginal Peoples, ‘Place’ refers to the special places that exist within Country, the purposes of which vary significantly. They can include places of ceremony and initiation, birth and the provision of healing and health care; places of learning; and places for Sorry Business. These places vary greatly over the various landscapes and seascapes across the continent. There are some parts of Country that have landmarks that directly relate to the ancestor spirits and the creation of existence. These are especially important as culturally significant places and need to be cared for. There are also other places on Country that are important for ceremony, as mentioned above, which are also considered especially important for Aboriginal communities.

practices

An integral process of conceptualising, developing, making and presenting visual communication designs. The thinking and working processes of a designer.

presentation drawings

Presentation drawings refer to visual representations created by designers to communicate and showcase their design concepts to clients, stakeholders or other audiences. These drawings can be manually or digitally created, and can take the form of rendered impressions of buildings, environments or objects, illustrations, documentation drawings or storyboards.

protocols

Rules, practices and customs of a group. Respectful ways of interacting with and experiencing the arts, including protocols for protecting Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) rights.

processes

The methods and steps used to develop, make and present visual communication designs using methods, media, materials and technologies.

prototyping

A range of techniques used to fabricate a scale model of an object or environment. Construction of the scale model can be done using digital or manual tools.

## R

refine

To bring together concepts in a visual communication design particularly through the use of technical skill, technical conventions and processes using methods, materials and media. Refinement occurs in the ‘develop’ and ‘deliver’ aspects of the visual communication design process.

region/regional

An area of the world sharing common characteristics, for example a geographical region such as the Mallee region in Victoria or a regional intergovernmental organisation such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

rendered

A drawing technique that shows the form of objects using texture, colour, light, shade and tone.

resolve

A final step in the creation or production of a visual communication design where the designer considers how to finalise the presentation and communication of concepts to the target audience, considering the conventions of the design field and the methods, media and materials used in the production of the visual communication design.

Resolution occurs in the ‘develop’ and ‘deliver’ phases of the visual communication design process.

## S

style

The distinctive characteristics of an art form, artwork or arts practice that allow them to be grouped into related categories, by culture, time, place or other contexts.

## T

technical drawing conventions

‘Rules’ for the presentation of technical drawings such as the layout of the drawing, dimensions, symbols and scales.

Technical drawing is a term generally used to describe representations of 3D objects, constructions or environments produced using specialised equipment or instruments. Technical drawings can be produced both manually and using digital applications. Students might also use ‘technical’ drawing equipment, processes or software to produce the drawings.

techniques

The knowledge and skills used in making an artwork in a specific art form using tools, technologies, media and materials.

technologies

In Visual Communication Design, digital (e.g. hardware and software) and analog (e.g. pencils, paper, markers and ink) technologies are used by designers to produce visual communication designs. Technologies are also used to present visual communication designs including screens, projections and audio technologies.

Traditional Owners

The people recognised as having an unbroken connection to a particular Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Country or Place. They are often important knowledge keepers and responsible for caring for Country or Place and the people who live there.

transdisciplinary

The creation and production of artworks using more than one arts discipline. Across the Arts curriculum students can make artworks using the knowledge of the practices of various arts disciplines, for example the creation of a website with interactive elements using the knowledge and skills of visual communication design, media and visual arts.

Transdisciplinary artworks differ from interdisciplinary art forms and artworks as, similarly to multi-art forms and artworks, the use of transdisciplinary practices can evolve new art forms and practices.

*See also:* interdisciplinary; multi-arts/multimedia

typographic conventions

‘Rules’ for the presentation of type such as the layout of type, tracking, kerning, spacing and formatting. Typography refers to the processes of working with the element of type.

## V

values

Ideas and beliefs specific to individuals and groups.

viewpoints

Viewpoints are an inquiry tool to consider ideas, concepts, practices and processes used to create artworks. Viewpoints allow students to investigate visual communication designs and practices from multiple perspectives.

virtual

Representation on a screen or ephemeral environment in contrast to physical existence. Virtual works are often sound-based, moving-image and time-based works.

Virtual settings and exhibitions of artworks are the presentation or display of works online or on a screen creating a similar experience for the user or audience as if they were experiencing the work in a physical space. Virtual spaces/settings/exhibitions include sequenced presentations of artworks, websites, virtual galleries, video works and projections.

visual communication design practices

Using design thinking and the visual communication design process, designers discover, define, develop and deliver design solutions. The use of drawings to visually represent relationships, ideas and appearances, and the production of models and prototypes for the purposes of testing and presentation are integral to visual communication design practice.

visual communication design process

The visual communication design process is the process used to create visual communication designs. The process is iterative and passes through and revisits 4 distinct phases.

* Discover: Researching and gathering insights into the problem at hand to understand the needs and experiences of audiences and stakeholders.
* Define: Using convergent thinking strategies to make sense of research data by synthesising and clarifying the problem at hand. The designer identifies a client and their communication needs, and details the purpose, context, audience and users as well as a list of constraints.
* Develop: Using divergent thinking strategies to seek and analyse inspiration from a wider range of sources, generating imaginative ideas aligned with the communication need. The designer uses methods, media, materials, design elements and design principles to create, recreate and explore the potential of design ideas.
* Deliver: Using convergent thinking strategies to reflect critically on their ideas. The designer uses design criteria and feedback to select potential solutions and concepts to evaluate and refine further. They choose appropriate formats to communicate and present finished design solutions.

visual language

Visual language is a system of communication where ideas and information are conveyed to audiences through visual means. The design elements and principles are integral to the creation of visual language and its purpose.