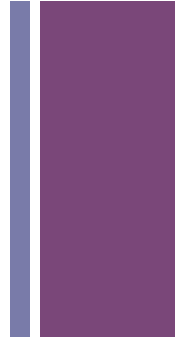


# Graphic Signals

An Introduction to Semiotics

# + What is Semiotics?



- The study of signs!
- The word *sign* is used to describe anything that carries **meaning** – whether it's a **word**, a **symbol/image**, or a **sound**.
- Along with a *sign*, there is a **signifier** and **signified**

# + Signifier & Signified

- A **signifier** is the physical sign itself
- The **signified** is the meaning carried by the sign.
  - Soooooo.....if the **sign** is the word “**APPLE**”, and the **signifier** is this kind of apple:



- then the **signified** would be Apple Computers
- (and the **interpreter** is the person who perceives the **sign**.)



# + A little history...

- Signs go far back into history:

- Pictographs



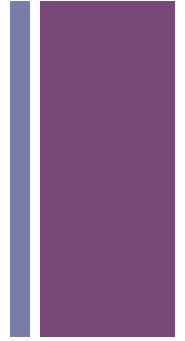
- Ideograms

靈氣

- Petroglyphs

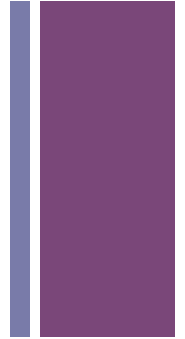


# + Visual Literacy



- Visual Literacy – a person’s skill in comprehending and using visual forms. This must always be taken into account!
- While **Information** is the knowledge about facts and events, **Communication** is the transfer of information between people.
- As designers, you will always transfer information – your job is to communicate. Always remember your audience!

# + Your Audience



- Individuals have their own personal reality... A man, woman, and child will all notice different things when walking down the street.
- Different types of people respond to different approaches
  - Economic
  - Ethnic
  - Religious
  - Social group
  - Age group

# + Four Categories of Signs

- Icon



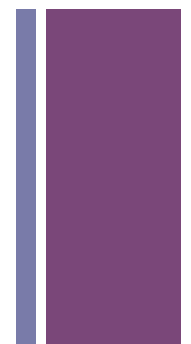
- Index



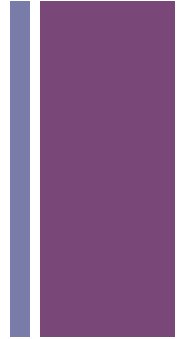
- Symbol

**Bird**

- Metasymbol



# + Denotation and Connotation



- **Denotation** – Direct meaning of word/sign/image
- **Connotation** – The second level meaning conveyed or suggested in addition to denotation.
- *Example:* May 10<sup>th</sup> vs. July 4<sup>th</sup>
- The most important thing to remember is signs are **polysemic**, meaning they are open to many interpretations.

*(i.e. May 10<sup>th</sup> might just be your birthday, while you may be from outside the USA, meaning July 4<sup>th</sup> has little significance!)*



# + Images and Reality

- Images oftentimes represent different types of realities:

- Substitute reality

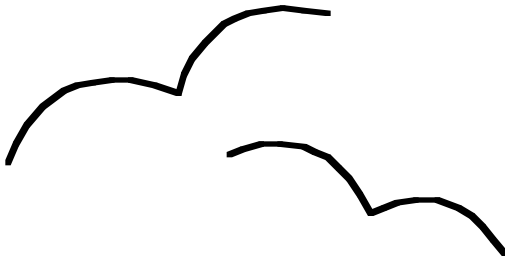


- Artificial reality



# + Types of Images

## ■ Notation



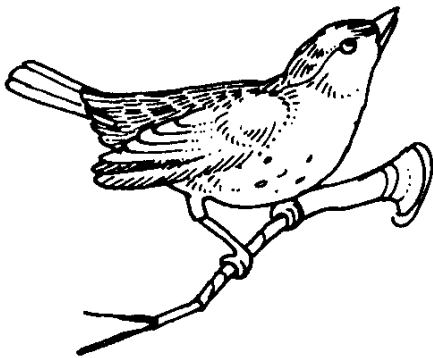
## ■ Pictograph



## ■ Silhouette



## ■ Contour Drawing



## ■ Line on Tone



## ■ Representation

