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## FOTOĞRAF TASARIM ÖĞELERİNİN ANLAMSAL DİNAMİKLERİ

### SEMANTIC DYNAMICS OF DESIGN ELEMENTS IN PHOTOGRAPHY

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#### Öz

Fotoğraf ve tasarım arasındaki ilişkiyi ilk başta anlamak zor olsa da bu ilişki gündelik fotoğraf çekimlerinden stüdyo çekimlerine kadar hemen her türlü fotoğraf türünde fotoğrafçının farkında olmadan birbiriyle birlikte kullandığı farklı unsurları içerir. Kısaca görsel veya resimsel bilginin bir amaç ve vizyon dahilinde çerçevede ustaca düzenlenmesi olarak nitelendirilebilecek fotoğrafçılıkta tasarım, bu düzenlemeye bazı görsel veya resimsel öğelerin dahil edilmesini gerektirdiği gibi, bazılarını da bu düzenlemeden hariç tutmayı gerektirir. Bu, izleyicilerin olmasını bekledikleri 'belirleyici' anı veya orada olduğunu sandıkları anı değil, orada ne olduğunu gerçekten görebilmeyi, onu inşa edip çalışmayı gerektirir. Bu çalışmada, fotoğrafçıya bir şeyi yok etme veya yaratma kontrolünü veren vizörün rolü, konuya olan açı ve mesafe ile ilgili kararlar gibi fotografik tasarım bileşenleri ile çizgiler, sınırlar ve kesintiler gibi kritik grafik tasarım bileşenleri ilgili örnekleri ve fotoğraf tasarımındaki anlamları bakımından incelenmiştir. Sonuç olarak, bu analizden ilgili sonuçlar çıkarılmakta ve bunların fotoğraf tasarımındaki rolü ve etkileri çalışmanın sonunda tartışılmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Fotoğrafçılık, Fotoğraf, Tasarım, Grafik Tasarım.

#### Abstract

Although the relationship between photography and design is difficult to understand immediately, it includes elements the photographer uses together with one another without awareness in all kinds of photographs. Design in photography, which can be described as a masterful arrangement of visual information in the frame for a purpose and a vision, necessitates the inclusion of some pictorial elements in this arrangement as well as excluding some others. Some items are highlighted whereas some are trivialized, and different meanings can be attributed to the same photograph. The design in photography is not rigid, but rather flexible. Although it is difficult to define it, the design in photography is different from the composition in that design is a process, and the composition is the result the audience can understand at the end of this process. This requires not the 'decisive' moment the viewers expect or is there but seeing what is there, and work with it. In this study, critical photographic design components such the role of the viewfinder, decisions about the angle and distance from the subject and graphic design components like lines, limits and interruptions as well as their meaning within the design of photography are examined. Finally, relevant conclusions are drawn, and their impacts are discussed.

**Keywords:** Photography, Photograph, Design, Graphic Design.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

Undoubtedly, photography is quite popular in that it can be a hobby or a technique for many people while it can be a business or an area of research for some. In the past, people also argued about whether photography was an art. However, with the advent of Postmodernism, that discussion finally reached a conclusion, which meant that photography indeed established itself as an art on its own. Regarding the technical specifications of a camera or the equipment that a photographer uses, it could be argued that all those do not necessarily prevent a photographer from being called an artist as using a computer would not disqualify an engineer from being an engineer, either. Nonetheless, such tools are just facilities and they certainly do not make an artist. They just make it possible for the person using them to freely create, and, in the photographer's sense, a work of art. In the end, it is not the measurements of light or the calculation of aperture that creates that a work of art but the integral elements of aesthetics and design. In contrast to the prevalent belief, those elements are not limiting but emancipating as they make it possible for individuals to approach photography from various angles.

Even though the relationship between photography and design is difficult to make sense of immediately, it includes elements that the photographer uses in conjunction with one another without awareness in almost all kinds of photographs, from casual photo shoots to studio shots. Design in photography, which, in short, can be described as a masterful arrangement of visual or pictorial information in the frame for a purpose and within a vision, requires the inclusion of some visual or pictorial elements in this arrangement, as well as excluding some others from it. Some items are thus highlighted whereas some are trivialized, and different meanings can be attributed to the same photograph. The design in photography design is not rigid and unchangeable, but rather flexible and fluid. Although it is difficult to express it exactly, the difference of design in photographic sense from composition is that, in general terms, design is a process, and the composition is the result that the audience can understand and read at the end of this process. This requires not the 'decisive' moment that the viewers expect to happen or the moment they assume is there but being able to really see what is there, build and work with it. The main reason for this situation is the determining role of the viewfinder in photographic design, which will be discussed later in the study.

The viewfinder, which forms the precise boundary between what is captured and what is not captured, also makes the main difference between a picture and a photograph. Unlike a painting that starts with a blank surface and creates the composition at the end, a photograph begins with a filled surface and reduces this filled surface by designing. In other words, the photographer starts with 'everything' and creates 'something' with the conscious choices that he makes through the viewfinder in the process called design. Therefore, the viewfinder is the most important design tool in photography. In this study, critical photographic design components such the role of the viewfinder that give the photographer the control of destroying or creating something, decisions about angle and the distance from the subject and graphic design components like lines, limits and interruptions are examined with their respective examples as well as their meaning within the design of photography. Finally, relevant conclusions are drawn from this analysis, and their impacts are discussed at the end of the study.

## 2. THE CONCEPT OF DESIGN AND DESIGN IN PHOTOGRAPHY

The concept of design is usually and most widely recognized in terms of concrete things such as cars, computers or software, fashion, equipment, workplaces, and cafes. The word 'design' is generally used to mean both functionality and style whereas it is much less frequent to use it in its intentional and purposeful envisioning sense, which is the first meaning in the Cambridge Dictionary, where it is also possible to find many other meanings, too (Cambridge Dictionary, [http1](http://1)). All those definitions point to a mental plan which is followed by purposeful execution and are process-oriented rather than solely referring to quantifiable objects, which means that design is a much greater process and not only the end-result.



The concept of design varies depending on the context and may as well mean an array of other things. Being the formation of an experience, design is also the organized process in addition to the fact that it is also the result, which is what is seen, heard, felt, or understood. However, design is not merely making objects look nicer or prettier. On the contrary, it does not focus solely on aesthetic aspects, and it is not putting more decorative items on an object, either. Design is making people's interaction with their surroundings more instinctive and thorough. As Norman (2002, s.189) states "Good design is actually a lot harder to notice than poor design, in part because good designs fit our needs so well that the design is invisible." In other words, good design is accomplished when people do not even know it is there. This is especially true in the case of industrial design, of which design is a critical component of production processes.

It could be argued that both design and creativity share certain aspects. However, it should also be kept in mind these do not mean the same thing. In the early phases of creativity, there are quite vague and ambiguous ideas, lots of contradictory concepts and intuition. Moreover, there are varying levels of experimentation, repetition and or re-thinking. The early periods of design contain quickly shifting ideas and the formation of a powerful concept or vision, which is then tried out to see whether it works or not. In the subsequent steps of creativity, ideas become more and more specific, with more consistency at play and a greater use of analysis as well as tests that prove stability and feasibility. The final stages of design process consider capability and acceptance by people interacting with the design.

In general, people can be creative in the usual sense of the word and consequently contribute to design processes. However, it is better to remember the differences in ways of thinking can deeply affect that contribution is made most usefully. Dumas (2000, s.9) points out that there are two general categories of modes of thinking, a tendency for facts, figures, history, or an inclination for symbols, imagery, and intuition. People who are strong on the first set are more secure with the facets of explicit measurement, mechanisms, procedures, and requirements whereas those attracted to the latter category have a preference for implied or unstated knowledge in discourse, thoughts, vagueness, emergence or evolution. Nonetheless, to attain a well-balanced design process, both aspects are critical.

In contemporary times, the boundaries separating art from design have become quite blurred, mostly because of a series of applications of both words in several disciplines like industrial design, graphic design, and fashion design, which habitually incorporate objects for craft. In graphic and plastic arts including photography, the difference is often between fine and business-related art, depending on the context of production and exchange. Despite this distinction, Getlein (2008, s.92) notes that some processes employed during designing such as making use of intuition and a sense of 'feeling right' remain similar.

Regarding the design in photography, it could be stated that it is largely considered a range of tools and techniques to make photographs more 'beautiful', which is not the correct way of thinking. To put it similarly, considering the design in photography in that way is like saying that being an engineer is only solving equations. MacLeay (1981, s. 64) claims that, in photography, and in that sense for every art, design means the planned process of arranging the ingredients in such a way that they realize a purpose in the end. Although this is certainly true, the framework that enables a photograph to function is more intricate than simply organizing the visual content in the picture as a photograph must be understood so that it can function. Photographs are supposed to convey some 'message' to the people looking at them and that message could be an emotion, information or, most of the time, a complex mixture of both, which are all quite hard to put into words. Therefore, in the case of getting across a message to the viewers, design in photography is achieved by an arrangement of the visual content in the frame in such a way that it allows the viewer to comprehend the 'message' in the photographer's mind.

Effective design in photography is accomplished when the person looking at a photograph desires to understand it by following the path the photographer artistically and emotionally created when took the photograph in the first place. With such a design, photographs become an interplay of patterns and textures, light and darkness, lines, and shapes. The design may not always be intended to communicate a certain meaning or message, but thanks to this design, photographs become standalone entities that are able to function on their own as the reflection of the emotions and ideas of the photographers that shot them. Inherent to this assumption, there is the belief that all photographs need design so that they can realize their intended purpose. The question is how to accomplish the effective design, which includes many implicit decisions that the photographers are not always aware of. Camera preference is one such decision as analog or



digital cameras have their own characteristics regarding the perception of perspective or crop size. Papers for printing and film, if used, are another important aspect to consider since they both react to light differently depending on their specifications about contrast, color, or sharpness, especially if the photographers decide to work more experimentally and produce photograms or carry out solarization on them. Camera angles, background, or the location of the photographer in relation to the subject also influence how design will look in the end. The type of lens is another important element of the design in photography as lenses directly impact the perspective, the size of the subjects in the photograph, the distance among them in addition to how much visual content is visible in the frame. By adapting the depth of field cleverly through the aperture, all or some parts of the photograph may be kept clear in focus or blurred so that some unnecessary parts or objects can be made hidden. Similarly, by using the correct speed of the shutter, an object may be frozen or kept in endless action, which is a characteristic unique to photography. Photographers may also manipulate light to regulate the brightness or darkness through shadows so that some elements in the frame are revealed while some others are obscured, each of which has their own artistic meaning in the overall composition. All those choices profoundly impact the design in photography and define what people looking at the photograph can see in the intended frame as well as the relative importance of what they see. Therefore, these are all integral parts of the design in photography.

The tentative list above is not a finite one at all and should only be considered a guide as to forming a structure within the photograph, which brings about the question of how that design needs to be. However, the arrangement of the visual content in a photograph is very tightly connected to photographers' vision and intention in addition to the tools and techniques which are accessible at the time of shooting the photograph. To this end, knowing the principles and elements of design that have been at humans' disposal for centuries helps photographers guide the viewers' understanding of the organization of the visual content shaped by the photographer. Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that relations among the elements of the visual content are more influential than the individual elements because, as Biederman (1987, s. 121) argues, human brain is wired to react to the visual content and the relationships among the elements of that content by identifying and organizing in a responsive way, thus deriving meaning from their interaction, which is the design itself. The concept of organization and coherence are quite important in the design of photography and human brain is naturally programmed to appreciate both. However, although organization, cohesion and coherence are an important aspect of the design in photography, our brains also need stimulation via diversity and conflict for a better and more effective photographic design. Therefore, it becomes clear that good design in a photograph necessitates a clear but invisible organization in addition to a diverse enough imbalance to generate interest in the viewer's mind but not so much that nothing is intelligible at all. Yet, the intention of the photographer when taking the photograph should be a critical question to ask while viewing it as an effective design in photography, conscious and careful at the beginning but more automatic and spontaneous as time goes by, can best be summarized as communication that is organized with a purpose in mind.

### 3. SEMANTIC DYNAMICS OF DESIGN ELEMENTS IN PHOTOGRAPHY

Design in photography plays a vital role in turning photographs into long-lasting visuals that aim to make the appreciation of photography better. However, this may also be an underestimation of how useful they are for the photographers or photography lovers. Rather than being rigid and unchangeable rules and directives, the design elements in photography and their semantic dynamics are rather a fluid, flexible and invisible system that give life to photographs. Some photographers have a natural talent and work with the elements of design seamlessly while some others need to learn and improve them to create impressive photographs.

Today's visual culture has never been so saturated with pictures and photographs since the invention of the photography in 1839. Thanks to the advanced capabilities and widespread availability of digital technology as well as the dizzying speed of mass communication tools, everyone can now experience photography in one form or another. However, there is still the need for original and masterful photographs



with a strong intention, which are totally different from the ones shot quickly and without much consideration for photographic design

### 3.1 The Role of the Viewfinder

In its fundamental sense, the design in photography is the masterly and intentional organization of the visual content in a frame. Therefore, photographers either choose to incorporate or eliminate some or all that content into the photograph by changing their positions, distances or angles when looking through the viewfinder. As design, which is more process-oriented with lots of decision-making as explained above, and composition, which is the result of all those processes and decisions, are like the two sides of a coin, the viewfinder plays a critical role in creating photographs that can be 'read' and interpreted by the viewer. However, there is not a guaranteed technique to use the viewfinder in a certain way to take photographs with a strong design and clear intention. Instead, there is the question of seeing what is 'there' rather than waiting for a scene to come in our way.

The viewfinder draws a line between what is captured and what is not. As Price and Wells (2015, s. 20) rightly argue, "photographic images are selective, and may be significantly changed from that originally seen through the viewfinder" since photography starts with 'everything' and, by using the viewfinder and leaving some of the visual data outside its limits through conscious or unconscious decision, creates 'something' via reduction. Painting, on the other hand, starts with 'something' on a blank canvass and arrives at 'everything' by addition of more and more visual content on the canvass. This 'reduction', however, should not be taken as a derogative sense because it is fundamentally what constitutes the core of in all kinds of photography.

Even though the viewfinder power to impact our relationships with what we see in photographs is usually taken for granted, it is the greatest tool of design in photography. While looking through the viewfinder, the creativity that it can provide via height, angle and distance to the subject is usually overlooked in favor of the subject itself and the location of shooting. However, as Sontag (2005, s. 26) quite elaborately puts it "In a world ruled by photographic images, all borders ("framing") seem arbitrary. Anything can be separated, can be made discontinuous, from anything else: all that is necessary is to frame the subject differently. Conversely, anything can be made adjacent to anything else." Therefore, the viewfinder is probably the single most important component of the design in photography because it is where people really step into the process of designing, i.e., into the array of decisions mentioned above. The example below clearly shows the power of the viewfinder in action.



**Picture 1.** Jeremy Webb, "Snow Wave", 1998, Digital Photograph, 51 cm x 41 cm, PicassoMio.



The photographer's meticulously planned and intentional use of the viewfinder in the photograph above engages the viewers by having them follow the snow line from right to left and complete the wave at the top. The photographer could have easily moved a little left and captured the entire wave-like shape formed by the snow line. However, by carefully analyzing the options and being aware of the role of the viewfinder in design in photography to communicate his vision, instead, the photographer displayed a preference to engage the viewers by getting them to complete the wave in their minds by not including all the snow line and the resulting wave-like shape, which clearly shows the 'reduction' characteristic mentioned earlier as well as the power of the viewfinder in designing effective photographs. Undoubtedly, photographs need to have borders, and this fact cannot be denied. However, it is the necessity of an effective photographic design that these borders are used creatively to take brave and fascinating photographs or to provide unusual and fresh perspectives on familiar themes or objects rather than being limited by them passively.

The role of the viewfinder has another critical dimension in the design in photography, which stems from the decision-making for the arrangement of the visual content during the design process. Photographs can never reveal the whole truth due to 'reduction' characteristic of the photography even though they are widely accepted by the human mind as the representation of the truth. Sontag (2005, s. 11) believes that "photographs, which fiddle with the scale of the world, themselves get reduced, blown up, cropped, retouched, doctored, tricked out." In other words, although there are almost countless layers of meanings or points of view regarding a subject, it is the photographers who determine and organize what to choose and shoot in a certain scene through their viewfinders. Such a power naturally puts critical responsibility on the photographers, who look through the viewfinder to form their designs, to approach in an objective manner potentially controversial subjects or incidents or to get the most artistic value out of what is in front the viewfinder.

What to include in as well as what to omit from the design of a photograph through the viewfinder has ethical and artistic repercussions since both inclusions and omissions add to or detract from the photograph in the ultimate design. As the design in photography greatly reflects the photographer's intention and plans, an essential guideline in making decisions on the organization seen through the viewfinder should be putting only the main theme and all the other supporting details deemed critical to communicate the photographer's vision. In event of unnecessary details or distracting themes being added to the design through the viewfinder, it is quite likely that there will be numerous unintentional interpretations or layers of meaning, which will result in the viewer missing the main idea of the photograph and the role of the viewfinder in that design being obscured.

### **3.2 Decisions about Angle and Distance from the Subject**

The design of a photograph and its power to communicate the photographer's mission as well as intention varies greatly with even the smallest changes in the angle of shooting or distance from the subject. While the viewfinder enables the photographer to approach even the duller subjects with a huge degree of creativity and innovation, its angle, or the distance in relation to the subject can dramatically alter the final design and its message. Taking a photograph from below might glorify the subject as in the picture 2 whereas shooting from above the subject belittles it in terms of importance and size, thus giving it a more fragile and flattened aspect as depicted in the picture 3.



**Picture 2.** Vladimir Marti, “Magdalena Jasek”, 2018, Digital Photograph, 10 cm x 6 cm, Fashion Gone Rouge.



**Picture 3.** Russel John, “Those Eyes”, 2014, Digital Photograph, 10 cm x 6 cm, Flickr.

Decisions regarding the angle or distance have the power to shift the balance and layers of meaning. Therefore, they should not eliminate the visual content that will help to communicate the message of the design. Approaching the subject for a more personal touch or stepping away from it so that more and potentially distracting details could come into the frame bears distinct repercussions for the design of the photograph. However, the most important principle in deciding at what angle or distance to take the photograph at a given time should be the intention to create a strong and eye-catching design and composition as in the picture 4 below, whose design exemplifies an extraordinary and well thought point of view, rather than merely embellishing the subject so that it will look more ‘artistic’.



**Picture 4.** Franco Fontana, "Zurich", 1981, Digital Photograph, 50 cm x 33 cm, Artnet.

Rather than taking the photograph directly from across the two people whose shadows are cast on the street, the photographer radically changed his vantage point to shoot the scene from above them and this brave decision clearly made the design of the photograph more planned and the final composition more dynamic. This clearly shows that decision to use bold and unusual angles during the design process in photography should only be based on a plan to add new and well-thought layers of meaning to the subject instead of an effort to 'disguise' a problematic framing or lack of planning. Because the design in photography is basically a complex mixture of continuous search and selection, all the content seen through the viewfinder as well as the environment that surrounds photographers outside the viewfinder need to be examined to clarify the emotions and ideas about the scene before pressing the shutter. An analytical stance like this is not exclusive for photography; however, it certainly deserves consideration and application in the decisions regarding the photographic design.

The distance to the subject of the photograph also deeply affects both the design of a photograph and the layers of meaning related to that design because different amounts of distance, explored as part of the search-and-select process referred to above, mean different points of view, which all contribute differently to the photograph. As MacLeay (1981, s. 60) points out, the distance impacts the size of objects in the frame and the conjunction of lines in the manner the viewer expects to perceive. In return, the perception of distance is usually determined by two equally important factors: the actual distance to the subject and the characteristics of the lens used to take the photograph. Tele lenses make it easy for photographers to zoom in on the subject without ever getting near it; however, they distort the spatial relationship among the objects seen through the viewfinder by 'flattening' the frame. Prime lenses, on the other hand, keep that spatial relationship relatively intact as seen through the viewfinder but make photographers move to get physically closer to their subjects. Therefore, the choice of the lens directly influences the perspective formed, the layers of meaning created, and the interpretations drawn from the final design of the photograph. Alexander Rodchenko's famous photograph from 1920 below is a clear indication of this phenomenon.



**Picture 5.** Alexander Rodchenko, "Pioneer Trumpeter", Analogue Photograph, 29,2 cm x 24,5 cm, The Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts.

Hailed as a symbol of modernist understanding of art and design that swept the Western world through the 1930s, this photograph has quite a brave and striking design, which had profound impact on the practice of photography that followed later. Rodchencko's intimate closeness to the subject, which can be described as literally 'right under his nose' due to his choice of a prime lens, demonstrates the special relationship that he established in with the concept of Modernism as result of both the choice of lens and distance to the subject. Curves of both the trumpet and the head of the trumpeter perfectly match each other and the dark part above the trumpeter's head diagonally cuts the frame into two equally spaced dark and light areas, all of which are indicators of the modernist expectations of perfection and precise execution in the works of art. The expressive face and determinism on the trumpeter's face easily perceived at such closeness also complete this scene because Rodchencko adjusted the distance to his subject and the angle of taking the photograph to transmit his vision, which was to leave anything and everything that may distract from this vision to communicate the idea of Modernism in his photograph's final design.

### 3.3. Lines, Limits, and Interruptions

Lines are probably the most important tool not only in visual arts but also in photography, too. Defining shapes and drawing limits, lines can be concrete and visible or abstract and invisible in guiding the viewer's eyes from point to another in the photograph. The use of lines has a direct impact on the effectiveness and quality of the design of a photograph as they are basically what gives the world in a photograph its three-dimensional characteristic. Artistically speaking, lines have always been the primary means of representation in plastic and visual arts because they are the main constituents of shapes and forms as well as the guiding force that gives movement to the design if used properly.

Horizontal lines, the most well-known of which is the horizon itself, possess a sense of stability, continuity, and calmness. The rectangular shape of a photograph with its upper and lower edges are in conformity with these emotions and, as Gordon and Jürgens (2009, s. 34) argue, may be the greatest psychological reason why people are attracted to horizontal photographs more than the vertical ones. Vertical lines like trees, towers, or skyscrapers, on the other hand, add power, sharpness, and firmness to photographs to the design. Apart from these two types of lines, there are also diagonal lines employed for the design in photography, which break the sense of calmness or sharpness of the horizontal and vertical lines by providing a sense of movement, action, and dynamism as if the scene in the photograph was three-dimensional in time and space. Curves and curved lines are softer in emotion and are more feminine, pointing to sophisticated or



elegant subjects, which help to ease the rigid and sometimes inflexible atmosphere brought about by the horizontal, vertical, and diagonal lines. Finally, lines of all kinds, including but not limited to the ones mentioned above, also unite, going through one another in perspective. When placed at such intersection points during the making of the design of a photograph, objects draw much more attention from viewers. As part of the design, intersecting lines tend to communicate the sense of distance, dimension and height if used effectively in the composition.

A solid design is what lies beneath a successfully composed photograph in which all the visual content is effectively organized. Apart from their respective layers of meanings as explained above, lines play a vital role in this organization, which is to catch the viewer's eyes and guide them along a flow of movement. This is particularly important to balance, or to overcome, if possible, the stationary design of photographs, which are basically two-dimensional. Being one of the elements that guide the viewers' eyes along a predetermined route or to a certain object within the design of a photograph, lines enable the viewers to embark on their own journey of meaning creation. In this sense, according to MacLeay (1981, s. 67), it is possible to define two types of lines, which are real and optical. While real lines are physically visible in the photograph as concrete components of the design, optical lines are not tangible, and they are only perceivable through the movement of the eyes that connect two different objects. Compositions that are formed using either of these lines as a guiding force are always more successful in attracting the viewers' attention as well as receiving their appreciation.



**Picture 6.** Henri Cartier-Bresson, "The Var Department", Analogue Photograph, 19.6 × 29.1 cm, MoMA.



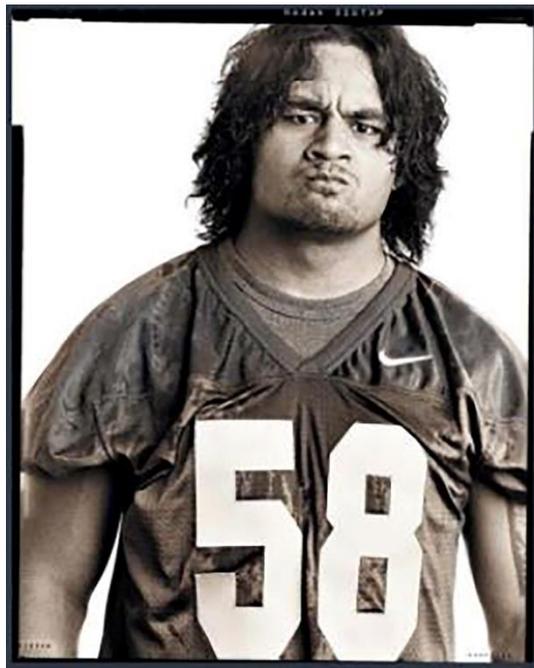
**Picture 7.** Henri Cartier-Bresson, "The Europeans", Analogue Photograph, 19.6 × 29.1 cm, Magnum Photos.

The renowned French photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson's photographs above clearly demonstrate the well-planned use of real and optical lines for an effective and striking design in photography. In the picture 6, it is possible to observe the physical lines that enter the photograph from the left and right sides at almost equally placed points in the form of handrails of the stairs, which are themselves another real line going from the front to the back. All these lines lead the viewers' eyes together and converge on the cyclist riding from right to left down the street, where the edge of the pavement also forms another real line that accompanies the cyclist's movement in the eyes of the viewers. The diagonal lines formed by the walls at the top of the photograph,



which have a natural contrast with the curved lines, also help the viewers focus their attention on the cyclist by joining the other real lines mentioned, which are all curved and thus more naturally guide the movement of the eyes on the photograph. In the picture 7, on the other hand, no such concrete and physically visible lines are present. However, the viewers' eyes still move from the entry point at the top left, which is the usual point of entry to a photograph, and move diagonally from there to the bottom right, following the optical line formed by the arms of the women, and then back to the top left, this time, moving along another optical line made up of by the heads of the same women. Although all this movement brought about by the optical lines is rhythmically punctuated by the heads and hands of the women in the photograph, it carries the viewers' eyes from one subject to the next thanks to the solid design realized by the conscious use of lines as a guiding force.

Photographs which have a solid design thanks to the efficient and creative use of lines as exemplified above not only enable the viewers to wander in their own imagination but also implicitly impose a certain perspective and experience on them thanks to those lines. Sontag (2005, s. 11) elegantly defines this phenomenon by saying "To photograph is to appropriate the thing photographed. It means putting oneself into a certain relation to the world that feels like knowledge – and, therefore, like power." That 'power' results from the photographer's desire to make the viewers fully understand the message communicated through their design of the photograph, in which lines can be as much a limiting factor for the viewers' eyes, and, for that matter, their mind, as they are a guiding force. No matter real or optical, lines almost always lead the viewers' attention to outside the photograph, where their focus might wander away from the intended design. When this is the case, lines also help photographers design their photographs in such a way that the viewers' focus is limited to amplify the planned effect of the design, as shown in the photograph below.



**Picture 8.** Peter Read Miller, "Ray Maualuga", Analogue Photograph, 10.16 × 12.7 cm, Miller (2013).

Although an incongruous object on a line or alternating dark-light areas in the scene can sometimes be an alternative limitation, the most important limiting line in the design of photographs is the edges of a photograph as all photographs have them without any exception. They are what draws the line between photographs and the real world. Despite being a controversial topic regarding the issue of design in photography, edges are always important limiting lines that set a solid design apart from a weak one. In the photo above, the edges act as limiting lines to increase the effect of the design, where the subject is intentionally placed in the middle of the photograph to emphasize, even to exaggerate, his huge mass, which overflows those edges and leaves nothing else to distract the viewer. The photographer made a clear decision to use the edges as limiting lines intentionally in the photograph above and this decision results in a certain level of power for the photographer, which is used to define the viewers' relation with the photograph as designed. With such power to limit the viewers' perception, photographs become both fascinating reflections of the truth on a paper



and its chosen parts, thus referring to the whole subject. Therefore, limiting lines like the edges of a photograph have always been a significant factor for the photographers to consider in design process.

In addition to the edges of the photograph that can be used as limiting lines (Roberts, 1998, s. 12), the concept of interruption is also applicable as a design element in photography because the interruption of a certain pattern composed of repeated motifs or shapes leads the viewer to the photograph's center of interest as it disrupts the continuity and consistency of a perfect and stable rhythm. Interruption is like a stone thrown into a calm pond of water, where it creates reverberating waves that breaks its stillness. This is especially important since any element in the design of the photograph that rejects to conform to the rest of it is not a mistake or something that must be avoided. It is an opportunity, or a 'divergence', for photographers whose aim is to make the viewer spend more time on the photograph and question the context of that interruption to better comprehend the photographer's underlying motives to use it in the design in the way it is used, thus creating potentially numerous interpretations of the same photograph different viewers.



**Picture 9.** Steven Huzsar, "Interruption", Digital Photograph 20.4 cm x 13.3 cm, Fineartamerica.

The photograph above demonstrates the strong impact of the interruption in the design of photographs. In the picture 9, the light part in the dark portion and the dark part in the light area are both interruptions in the movement of the eye across surface of the photograph as much as they are complementary to each other for the balance of the design. This is a great example for the function of interruption as it directly attracts the attention of the viewers by breaking the rhythm and thus makes them wander about the deeper meaning of the scene intended by that specific design. The sense of incompatibility in the photograph above, however, is quite a useful stimulus for the viewers for the purpose of the deconstructive readings of the photographs. In other words, as Alperin (2017, s. 73) argues, interruptions, forming points of interest in the design of the photographs, encourage viewers to notice something hidden within the photograph. They challenge the viewers' perception within the photograph via employing an optical tension, which lead to the perspective shifts to symbolize both singular and plural assessments of the same photographic design.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Photography has the power to take people outside the moment that they are in at a specific point in time. It is also a multifaceted means of mass communication that makes use of the strength of the concept of design and symbolic meanings of design elements. Although it is the subject of the photograph that will determine how the ideas in a photographer's mind are communicated photographically or how effective that communication with the viewers is, the design of a photograph should always make the creativity and vision of a photographer clear.

Some photographs succeed because they have an easily understood and simple design including a single viewpoint, a minimal background, or a single dominant color, all of which make it impossible to interpret them otherwise. Advertising, editorial, fashion or journalism photography are all based on such an approach since 'simple' is obvious and what is obvious attracts attention as it is indirect. 'Complex' photographs, on the other hand, are built on a wider array of design choices and elements. Multiple viewpoints, patterns and competing



forms even conflicting colors are among the design tools that add such photographs several layers of meaning, making them tough to grasp at first sight. These photographs are not usually present in contexts where indirectness is the key to transmit the vision of the design. Nevertheless, during all the decision-making process of designing in either kind of photographs, the elements of design in photography discussed in this study provide an informed roadmap for the creative photographers, who need to be aware of original approaches that utilize both simple and complex design processes.

The final design could be one which encourages viewers to arrive at subjective interpretations using their memories or one that appeals to everyone universally regardless of the previous experience. It should not be forgotten that almost all photographs are based on bias as taking or viewing a photograph comprises subjective interpretation. Although it is falsely taken for granted that the camera records 'objective' reality instead of interpreting it, "photographs are as much an interpretation of the world as paintings and drawings are" (Sontag, 2005, s. 4). Every time a camera is pointed to a certain subject in a certain manner and when the shutter is pressed at a certain moment, photographers are influenced by their own interpretation of what is worth photographing. The visual content they choose and how they organize it, that is their design, results from what they think or feel about that scene. Looking at photograph with utter impartiality is nearly impossible for humans, either, as viewers' experiences, feelings and beliefs influence what they see. Those viewing the photograph naturally incorporate their own understandings, or misunderstandings, which makes the effect of any photograph an impulsive blend of the reactions of photographers and viewers alike. Therefore, every photographic design is semantically unique to a specific subject at a specific moment and place with a specific vision, which is unfortunately a phenomenon that is usually overlooked by both photographers and viewers.

Unsurprisingly, this situation means that there is no right, wrong or best design as any design can provoke numerous interpretations, all of which are equally legitimate and can be communicated photographically. However, a subject does not magically disclose its meaning in the design process by itself. Although there are several paths and techniques to follow, some of which are discussed in this study, design in photography, in the end, is all about photographers' choices, decisions and conscious efforts to use their own ideas as well as feelings to bring the best out of the subject. Approaching photography with such an awareness about design helps photographers and does not necessarily limit them to only handful of 'acceptable' choices. On the contrary, it opens a new array of possibilities, which empower both the photographers and the photographs. The design of a photograph reaches the viewers' eyes and communicates with their minds much earlier than its meaning or message. Therefore, a strong design with an effective and purposeful organization will give the viewers a reason to linger on the photograph and try to grasp the photograph's message as well as the photographers' visions. This, of course, necessitates on the part of the photographers a habit of focusing their own emotions and reactions, always questioning themselves what they feel about the subject and how they could communicate that evaluation in their design, a process which becomes unconscious, efficient, and automatic with experience.

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