KORE: NATURAL PIGMENT PAINT

By
Allison Young

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Approved by

______________________________
Advisor: Eunika Rogers

______________________________
Reader: Brooke White

______________________________
Reader: Dr. Nancy Wicker
Table of Contents

Abstract 1
Artist Statement 2-3
Literature Review 4-10
Process 11-21
Influences 22-31
Gallery Exhibition 32-36
List of Illustrations

1. Earth Pigment Paint Set
2. Glass Apothecary Jars with Cork Lid
3. Logo Design
4. Postcard Invitation Design
5. Business Card Design
6. Label Design
7. Sculpture Piece
8. Sculpture Piece
9. Tote
10. Swatch Booklet
11. Gallery Exhibition #1
12. Gallery Exhibition #2
13. Gallery Exhibition #3
14. Gallery Exhibition #4
15. Gallery Exhibition #5
Abstract

With the company I am creating I intend to help artists recognize that sustainable options are available without giving up on quality in regards to paint products. Named Kore, my company focuses on creating reusable, environmentally friendly pigment based paints exclusively for artists. Earth Pigments is a company that makes non-toxic pigments from the earth, but unfortunately has poor product design, which reflects lesser quality paints. I will use Earth Pigments and create a design that reveals the high quality of the paints, and I will use pamphlets to show what these paints produce. The branding process will include designing labels, business cards, a pamphlet, advertisements, and tote bags. The paper is made of 100% industrial waste, glass bottles with cork lids will be used for the packaging, and the shipping container will be made of recyclable or reusable materials to encourage the user to return the bottles for refills. My intention for Kore is to provide the highest quality paints while at the same time leave minimal environmental footprint and even improve the environment when possible.
Artist Statement

Environmental graphic design is becoming a staple to many designers in today’s world. Designers and artists consume vast amounts of packaging materials and supplies, as well as print materials. Throughout my time as an art student, I have begun to realize the amount of waste that we produce as artists, so I want to provide a smarter option to my fellow students and artists. I am creating a company that goes back to natural sources. My company, Kore, supplies natural paints and shows artists and designers how to become sustainable creators and consumers.

Kore is a sustainable company through its use of recyclable and reusable packaging and products that are less harmful for the environment than other popular materials such as plastic. I designed a brand that includes packaging design for natural paints and advertisements such as posters, pamphlets, and a promotional item. The glass containers and the paper used in the packaging are eco-friendly, reusable, and recyclable. I also designed an informative how-to pamphlet for the paint, which is fittingly printed on environmentally friendly paper. My promotional item will be a tote bag, which will further encourage the consumers to promote a sustainable lifestyle.
Even though I am a designer, fine art is a significant part of who I am as an artist. Therefore, I wanted to incorporate these two aspects not just in my thesis but also in my future plans. Through Kore I could experiment with new materials while learning more about the popular and growing field of environmental design.
Sustainable Design: The Process of Designing Backwards

Sustainability is a new standard that is defining our era even in such areas as architectural, technological, and graphic design. The literature review in this thesis will focus on green graphic design. As a designer, I discovered that I have the opportunity to design backwards, by which I simply mean reversing the process. According to Brian Doughtery, before graphic designers begin to design a product, they need to think about packing, warehouse distribution, and the total waste and energy to make the item, or, in other words, the materials come first and the designs come second.

As the creator behind new product packaging and print materials, I can take a leadership position and provide companies with sustainable options. Two things specifically stuck out to me in my research: first, the harmful effects of plastic, and second, the viable options that can be used in production to reduce waste. Plastic can affect the body as well as the environment in many negative ways. Michael SanClements explains that many items in everyday life contain plastic such as to-go coffee cups, iPhones, and most food containers. While sustainable design originally was met with opposition from clients and consumers mostly centered on cost effectiveness and availability, new research and affordable materials have begun to break down those barricades.
SanClements writes: “I recognized a shift had occurred somewhere in the past moving us from a period of traditional materials like glass, metal, ceramic to one in which plastic dominated.” Plastic has its uses, but why are there not extra steps being taken to avoid this toxic material? Designers enjoy immersing themselves in their products and their creative visions. My question when designing products is how can designers see the entire vision if they are not looking past the mere creation of the product? Designers, if they are truly dedicated to their field of work, want to see the full process of their products and not just the visual aspect. How does graphic art play a role in an eco-friendly lifestyle? In this paper, I am going to explore the reasons behind green graphic design and examine the ways to incorporate environmentally friendly design through practical modifications, leadership roles, and innovative theories.

Literature Review

Practical modifications are the steps available to lead a more sustainable lifestyle, Changes in lifestyle and thought-processing are the first moves needed for an eco-friendly future. The adjustments to graphic design are important and necessary for restoring the environment and creating less waste. Practical modifications can range from using less toxic adhesives and inks to choosing the paper that is used in the printing process.

Using sustainable paper and ink are obvious yet effective solutions for green design. In order to see more progress towards this sustainable type of design, creators must put forth the time and energy. Graphic artists need to put this energy
into “designing backwards” whereby they research, understand, and are able to communicate this eco-friendly lifestyle at the beginning of the design process rather than the end. Doughtery goes straight to the point: “Where do I want this product to end up?” Creators have to start at the end of the product’s lifestyle.

Designer’s have to consider packing and transportation in addition to how much energy and waste are being created. After they have figured out the transportation, packing, and supplies that are necessary, then the design process starts. The practical modifications require creative thinkers to be “active upstream in crafting strategies and messages,” according to Doughtery. Yes, there are going to be some aspects that a designer cannot control, such as whether or not the consumer takes the time to recycle the product. However, it is a designer’s job to consider the containment, storage, display, shelf-appeal, end-use and disposal.

Doughtery suggests that when making large print projects one should consider using everything except vinyl and plastic. Other options are printing on canvas, or cutting out aluminum or wood. When thinking about paper options, consider using alternative printing fibers such as bamboo, hemp, or agricultural residue. Trees take a longer time to grow and replenish than the other available options, and they reduce topsoil loss. SanClements reminds us that there is also concern about how toxic plastic is for individuals and the environment. SanClements points out the scale of plastic waste that is currently happening when he writes, “today we are producing nearly three hundred million metric tons of plastic globally each year, which about 10 percent is recycled!” For those who cannot seem to escape plastic, though, using post-consumer recycled plastic, also known as PCR, is a
good option. Doughtery reports that companies such as Aveda have been using PCR, and reports that it has not affected the company's costs or quality.

Packaging design is impressive nowadays, and though companies have created cheap, efficient, eye-catching, and theft-proof packaging, the designer's job does not seem to have been quite right. Scott Boylston reports that as a result of this efficiency-based design process, the world has suffered through natural resource depletion, inefficient energy consumption, and toxic by-products. It does not seem to add up that if people are doing their jobs so well, there would be this much harm done environmentally as a by-product.

Designers are experiencing resistance to green design because of a lack of knowledge, funds, and drive, but designers are the cause of this resistance that is greatly affecting the earth. Whether a junior designer, the creative director, or a freelance designer, creative thinkers need to expand their field of expertise and accept the responsibility of what their designs create and how they affect the world. An easy method designers could adopt is simply to increase the dialogue between themselves and the client. While discussing design, move beyond just the visual aspects and into the opportunities that future designs can have on the ecological and human systems. Employers might think that this blurs profession lines between designers and developers, but designers are only broadening their education and making themselves a more positive attribute.

A leader in the field needs to make information about sustainability available to the rest of the designers. Incorporating knowledge of sustainable options into
each and every project will make coworkers and clients more aware of the available options and possibly help them to make changes to their lifestyles.

Boylston writes, “the present era of disposable convenience, which has lasted less than half a century, is quickly approaching its end by necessity.” Innovative theories and practices are changing the graphic design field. These theories and practices have the potential to forever influence the packaging industry. Designing sustainable packaging introduces the idea of a company considering the “triple bottom line,” accounting for “the social, the environmental, and the economic considerations of operating a business.” Ann Thorpe discusses the field of sustainable design and writes, “it has moved from largely technical concerns about efficient resource consumption and minimizing waste in our existing industrial systems to a more recent focus on the very social issue of lifestyle change.” As such creative people, this challenge should be invigorating. After all, designers are well known for being the best problem solvers.

A good place to start is to consider whether the product even needs a package. A new idea that is radically changing the process of design is considering a second life for the packaging. One way to create this second life is by teaming up with another company that can use waste in a productive way. For example, a company that cannot get around the use of plastics can then give their recycled plastics to a company that can use the PCR’s to create new products. The act of taking the extra step to understand where your waste goes is an essential part of designing backwards.
Sustainability will define the next shift in the graphic design field. The next generation of designers is concerned with the future and the potential environmental issues because they are going to be a part of that occasion. Therefore, they are called to make themselves knowledgeable about sustainable change. Individuals cannot keep living in this sustainable society.
List of References


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Process

Painting is one of my greatest passions. While a large part of me wanted to design a whole line of art supplies, a paint company was the most appealing to me and seemed the most realistically achievable.

During the summer of 2014 I interned for a company called Nisolo, in Nashville, Tennessee. Nisolo is a social enterprise that made me aware of the importance of the materials used when making products. It was during this internship that I became aware that the materials used and the process employed to create a product that communicates the core values of a company. In the design process I have the opportunity to make sustainable and more ethical decisions about future products. Nisolo made small but effective decisions, such as not using plastic and focusing on a mostly web based marketing strategy to save paper. They were overly paranoid about recycling in the store, which did not even have any direct impact on their final product. They even converted me to a mostly glass lifestyle. I came back to school with a different mindset towards materials.

I started to think about the process of “designing backwards” that Brian Doughtery explains. I thought about the end of this product’s life and ways that I could change the outcome to not be wasteful. Therefore, I decided a few things right away, such as to use glass containers that are reusable and promotional items that encouraged
reuse. I decided to make an environmentally friendly paint company and found pigment paints that are non-toxic and earth friendly. Earth Pigments is a company that provides quality sustainable paint but lacks quality branding, which drives away artists—who are visual people—from using their product.
I want my designs to communicate that this company provides a higher quality and more ethically sound product than other non-sustainable paint companies. I ordered the paints and immediately started to work on a logo that would communicate the effectiveness of the paint. I painted with the pigments for a while to get used to how they worked so that I could communicate the quality of the paints best in my logo. I enjoyed using the paints in the same way that one would use watercolors. For that reason, I used a paint droplet in the “O” of Kore to represent what the paints actually look like when being used.
I chose Halis as my typeface to use throughout this project because it is a clean sans serif font. I wanted it to appear clean and minimalistic because those types of designs are the most attractive and attention grabbing to me. I took the middle of the paint drop out to help the viewer better understand the letter that it is meant to represent. After I designed my logo, I went on to make business cards, postcards, labels, promotional items, tote bags, and a swatch booklet for the company.
KORE
NATURAL PIGMENT PAINT

BFA THESIS EXHIBITION BY:
ALLISON YOUNG

MARCH 22-MARCH 26, 2014
RECEPTION MARCH 26 | 4-6PM

ARTYOUNG@CO-OLEMISS.EDU
ARTYOUNG@MDMSS.EDU | 662-915-7989

Postcard Design (Back and Front)
I ordered both my business card and my postcards to be printed from a company called Cards of Wood. I discovered this company online while doing research for companies that participate in sustainable design. Cards of Wood is an online company that prints on veneer sheets of FSC certified wood that is all biodegradable. The production process requires very minimal energy and produces minimal waste. These micro-veneer wooden sheets do not contain the water and do
not require any chemicals. In fact, it takes less wood to make these cards than it does to make a regular paper business card.

Another step in my process was designing the labels for my bottles. The bottles are glass apothecary bottles with cork lids. I wanted the viewers to be able to see enough of the pigment so they could have a better understanding of them; therefore, I made small two-inch by two-inch labels. The front label features the logo, the name of the pigment color, and the amount of pigment in each bottle; the back label features the promotional slogan and a small section of marketing information. I chose to make them square because I did not want to overuse the circle.

Promotional items are also a part of my thesis. I decided to design a tote bag that the customers would receive upon purchase of the bottles. The tote bag is...
100% canvas and the logo is printed on the front. I chose a tote bag to further emphasize to the customer the idea of sustainable decisions, specifically to reuse the tote for other occasions. Another promotional item is the circular card, which I made with the same design, although I changed the background to a watercolor of the pigments. The promotional cards can be used to slip into a bag when the pigments are purchased or handed out like a flyer.
Sculpture Piece (Right)
I also wanted to include fine art into my design thesis. For that reason, I made two sculpture pieces that are going to hang in my exhibit. The sculptures are made of 100% industrial waste paper from the company, Porridge Papers. I cut down the sheets into rectangular shapes and painted them with the paints. The sculptures are in the form of a paper chandelier. I made these hanging figures so that the viewer would have a fun way of seeing the pigments actually being used. The sculptures essentially act like large swatches of the paint.

The sculpture pieces inspired me to design a swatch book for Kore. The swatch book, which is an accordion fold, features photographs of the pigments in
their raw form and listed according to color. The swatch book allows customers to see all of the pigment paint options at once.

Swatch Book Design (Cover and Inside)
Influences

Abbott Miller was born in Indiana, and studied at Cooper Union School of Art in New York, New York. Miller is now a graphic designer and a published author. In 1989, Miller founded the multidisciplinary studio, Design/ Writing/ Research. Miller has also written and published books, which include: Design/ Writing/ Research: Writing on Graphic Design, The Process of Elimination, The Bauhaus and Design Theory, and Swarm.

In June 1999, Miller joined the New York office of Pentagram, the world’s leading independent design consultant firm, with offices in London, Berlin, New York, San Francisco, and Austin. Pentagram is run and owned by 19 partners, including Abbott Miller. These partners are professionals who are all influential in their individual creative fields. They design everything from architecture, interiors, products, posters, digital installations, websites, exhibitions, books, and publications. Pentagram believes that memorable design cannot happen without enthusiasm, intellect, and personal commitment, which are revealed in their incredible portfolio.

Miller’s work as a designer consists of exhibitions, environmental graphics, published books, and digital media. One of Abbott’s most well-known projects includes the exhibition and book, “Design for a Living World,” which focuses on
sustainable design for The Nature Conservancy. This exhibition was shown widely from the Cooper-Hewitt to the Field Museum in Chicago. His lists of clients have included The Museum of Modern Art, The Guggenheim Museum, Vitra, Princeton University and Architecture magazine. He is also a member of the Society of Environmental Graphic Designers.

"Ink" Collection, "Drip" Wall covering by Abbott Miller

Miller’s designs inspire the minimalistic design approach that I take for my thesis. I have admired Miller’s work for nearly three years and he constantly inspires me. The photograph above features his wallpaper designs. Even though it shows organic letters, he brings in a large amount of white space so that the piece is not too busy. I tried to incorporate that aspect of white space in my designs. I took
from his Guggenheim book cover a sense of type hierarchy and the use of color balance. He also used the colors to further emphasize the type hierarchy.

Another Pentagram designer that has influenced my thesis is Paula Scher. Scher was an art director, and her diverse way of designing typography became well known in the 1970’s. Scher developed many brands during her time as a designer such as Tiffany & Co and Target, both of which feature simple yet memorable branding, which is what makes the brands, and Scher, so successful. Scher designed many urban landscapes with dimensional designs.
Paula Scher inspired my thesis through her fun yet exceptionally simple designs. Scher also uses a spot color, which is a main color paired with black, in her design work. One of her more recent works is branding the new fast food burger company, Shake Shack. She makes their branding different than other fast foods through the fun and clean designs such as sticking to a green spot color through the branding process. Her simple designs make you believe Shake Shack is cleaner and more posh than different burger joints.

Shake Shack Branding by Paula Scher
Of course, well-known graphic designers have influenced my work; however, other forms of art have shaped my thesis as well. Since my company is a paint company I started to research current painters and I discovered Britt Bass. Bass is a painter from Athens, Georgia who received her BFA from The University of Georgia and went on to become a full-time painter.
Bass’s paintings are full of color and shape. You could look at them all day and find different areas to fall in love with. She paints in geometrical shapes and then combines those shapes with organic forms. Bass made me realize that the texture of the paints is very important. For instance, she achieves a different texture in her use of the paints, whether it is acrylic, oil, or watercolor. I realized that for artists it is important to know the texture of the paint they are purchasing; therefore, the bottles are glass and you can see the pigments. However, I also painted with them and incorporated that aspect into my designs so artists could see a final result.
I have also sought inspiration from current environmentally friendly companies. I wanted to learn about their process and the products they are producing. I was amazed by the innovative solutions that designers have created, such as the company Aveda whose products are plant-based and whose designers go to extreme lengths to protect the earth. It were the first beauty company to combine PCR and bioplastics in a tube. They also partner with nonprofit organizations to further encourage a sustainable lifestyle.

One product of Aveda’s that stood out to me was their new refillable lip color case. The container, which is made of flax fiber, can be refilled and reused up to twelve times. They have many other similarly inventive and eco-friendly products. It encouraged me to choose materials that could create a second life
for my packaging.

Aveda Refillable Lipstick Container

Stonyfield Farms is also thinking of a second life for its containers. They use many plastic containers everyday in their yogurt company. In order to not be wasteful, they have teamed up with another company, Preserve, who creates something out of Stonyfield’s waste. The recycled yogurt tubs are sent to Preserve, and they make toothbrushes out of the yogurt containers.
Another example of sustainable design is the packaging for Lemnis Lighting. They have created a second life for their bulb packaging by designing a box that turns into a lampshade. They were intentional with their designs and sought out a better solution for their waste. Lemnis Lighting inspired me to look for other material options beyond just paper.

My influences range from fine artists to companies acting out the sustainable lifestyle through their products. They have increased my knowledge on topics such as a second life for a product, texture in materials, and layout design. These great creators and companies have inspired me to push my thesis to the next level: to be innovative with my materials and functional with my design.
List of References


Gallery Exhibition

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