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The ephemeral aesthetic of spontaneous design on the streets of São Paulo, Brazil.

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Abstract

There are few opportunities when the poor and prosperous can be spoken about with respect to the same, shared cultural experience. And yet, visual culture, and the design process that contributes to its materialisation in specific contexts, offers an opportunity to recognise a socially inclusive activity that reveals similarity rather than difference. This paper celebrates an ephemeral aesthetic that is appreciated by people at different ends of the economic, political and social spectrum. A mutual appreciation for the medium of collage differs only in terms of the environment within which the recycled object is eventually revealed. This paper explores some of these different contexts, and those who recognise and practise this phenomenon in a South American and European context. The conclusion of this speculative and exploratory study is that there is potential to develop this unique medium as an accessible and inclusive visual language, giving voice to those who often do not have the opportunity or the means to speak and be heard. Collage is recognised as a channel that mediates between social exclusion and inclusion when political and economic means have been exhausted. The resulting ephemeral aesthetic is proven to have visual appeal, satisfying low- and high-order human needs.

Keywords

Bricolage; Ephemeral Aesthetic; Urban Poor; Human Need; Graphic Design.

Depending on your understanding of the term design, there could be something of a contradiction in the combination of the words 'spontaneous' and 'design'. Is design not about organisation and planning? And yet to do something spontaneously, is to act on impulse, of one's own free will, or in an unpremeditated way. However, we know that design means more than organisation and planning, and something that has the appearance of spontaneity can often be a façade for a carefully constructed sequence of actions and intentions.

Some thoughts on the notion of design

John Heskett confirms that the term 'design' has different meanings when he states 'design is to design a design to produce a design' (2002, p. 5), whereby its meaning changes from noun to verb and back again in less than a dozen words. Susan Yelavich humanises the term when she states '*Design is that*

highly specialized realm of human activity that shapes virtually everything in the world' (Albrecht, Lupton, and Skov Holt, 2000, p. 9). In a professional practice context Simon stated that it is the process of 'changing existing situations into preferred ones' (Schön, 1995, p. 46), but Donald Schön is more descriptive in stating what a designer does. 'A designer makes things. Sometimes he makes the final product; more often, he makes a representation – a plan, program, or image – of an artefact to be constructed by others. He works in particular situations, uses particular materials, and employs a distinctive medium and language. Typically, his making process is complex'. (Schön, 1995, pp. 78-79).

For the purpose of this paper, we are interested in the wider definition of what design is. We are concerned here with the products of design, and the different processes and motivations that contribute to the making of 'designs' in a post-consumption context. In particular, it is a process that is perhaps best described as 'designing with graphics' although the outcome is not always associated with what is known as 'graphic design'. In the examples of designing with graphics that follow, the appearance is one of spontaneity, but the design process is both consciously and unconsciously dependent on planning and organisation, as well as a multitude of human traits. The paper aims to link knowing and unknowing practitioners who design with graphic elements through the use of collage, as a medium for survival or self-expression, sometimes both. In doing so, we will demonstrate that collage, as a 'method' of image making, and relating to graphic design in the wider sense, can be considered as a universal and democratic medium that serves many useful, if undesirable, functions beyond the professional context. It therefore has the potential to offer a particular view of the world, uniting the plight of the rich and poor through the appropriation of a recycled visual language, or what has been termed 'bricolage'.

A DIY logic

According to Lévi-Strauss, 'the *bricoleur* is adept at performing a large number of tasks; but, unlike the engineer, he does not subordinate each of them to the availability of raw materials and tools conceived and procured for the purpose of the project. His universe of instruments is closed, and the rules of his game are always to make do with "whatever is at hand"' (Lévi-Strauss, 1966, p.17). Reviewing the importance of Lévi-Strauss, Christopher Johnson states

'*Lévi-Strauss…describes such representation as a 'logic of the concrete' or bricolage, a kind of DIY logic which takes items ready-to-hand in the natural world and processes them into units of opposition, constructing higher-order systems of signification in the same way that a language constructs meaning from different sound utterances*' (Simons, 2002, p. 234).

This DIY logic reveals itself time and again as a medium that in developed countries has been elevated to an art form, but in developing countries is a means of survival. In this sense collage is both a conscious and unconscious visual language that is representative of both urban poverty and urban prosperity. As a representation of urban poverty it manifests in the economic, social and culturally deprived neighbourhoods of our built environments, as an environmental response to a problem in the environment. As a representation

of urban prosperity it manifests in the economic, social and culturally privileged neighbourhoods of our built environments, as ornamentation and embellishment, enriching the already very rich. And yet, poverty and prosperity are linked by a shared aesthetic created by the shared human traits of the collector, the image-maker, the homebuilder, and the designer. At its most vivid, the aspect of design that can be identified with this contrast between those who 'have' and those who 'have not', and gives form to what could be interpreted as matters of life and death, is graphic design. Graphic design depicts the contrast in human need at its most basic and sophisticated level.

To synthesize and symbolise

This paper examines the potential that unconscious design, particularly graphic design, has to reveal, represent and contribute to alleviating social and environmental problems in the urban areas of São Paulo in Brazil. What we have known as graphic design is traditionally associated with the commercial and industrial context out of which the subject developed in the early Twentieth Century (Harland, 2007). However, the benefits of this association are rarely acknowledged and yet have significant social and cultural impact. In developed countries, a flourishing industrial and commercial context contributes significantly to economic wellbeing. This brings many health care and educational benefits to the population (Learning to Succeed. Report of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, National Commission on Education (1993), p. 13).

But, some countries have not been so fortunate in harnessing and developing these benefits. One such country is Brazil. Despite being the fifth largest country in the world, in size and population, and the world's fourteenth largest economy, the country has significant social and economic inequalities (Loschiavo dos Santos, 2007). These inequalities result in the 'economic exclusion' of minority communities, often living in urban poverty.

Ironically, graphic design is present in this context of inequality, evident in the vast range of discarded ephemera. Product design is also present and together, as 'ephemera', they synthesize and symbolise a survival strategy for deprived people (Fig. 1). Reconstitution inspires the urban poor to scratch a living by collecting from the streets for recycle, resale, and sometimes, in the creation of a spontaneous design through its re-use as bricolage.

"Spontaneous design is a creative practice of finding working solutions applicable to solve concrete problems, in a context of severe lack of resources" (Loschiavo dos Santos, 2000).

 The practice of such spontaneous design by the urban poor conveys a tremendous sense of creativity and design that transforms ephemera into survival and life protection. Imprinted materials are stretched on the ground, and they become insulation between the body and the cold concrete sidewalk exemplifying a compulsory reuse needed by all types of human life survival and shelter (Fig. 2).

Fig. 1. Bardi, Lina. Tempos de grossura: O design no Impasse. Sao Paulo. Instituto Lina Bo e P.M. Bardi, 1994, page 63. Lubricant tins act as drinking vessels. Provencia Feira de Santana, Bahia.

Fig. 2. Homeless community and the re-use of printed media in São Paulo.

 Maria Cecilia Loschiavo dos Santos, 1997.

The Urban poor in São Paulo

Walking through the neighbourhoods of any major Brazilian city one comes across a range of communities living on the margins and in favelas. It is a distinctly urban phenomenon that demonstrates the survival skills of a huge number of people under the poverty line. Despite their situation and marginality, this population undertakes an impressive contribution to the process of recycle and re-use of the urban solid waste in Brazilian cities, as well as re-thinking design, displacement, nomadic housing strategies, culture and the aesthetics of urban environments. A significant number of this population live on the streets, where they develop their survival repertoire that involves material collection and recycling, what is known as 'catação'. It is a self-created economy that reuses the trash and leftovers of the city. Recyclable material collecting sometimes reaches or surpasses the minimum wage. This phenomenon conveys a significant relationship between poverty and waste, as a parallel and informal economy.

Generally speaking, there is a trend that identifies waste as something with value that has been exhausted. However, the encounter of waste in the domain of art or in the survivalist context of the collectors and homeless people leads to acknowledge that much of what we discard continues to have value. The experiences analysed in this paper provide us with a better understanding of the transformation/redemption of the detritus.

Communicating poverty

This ephemeral aesthetic represents the plight of the urban poor in the cities of Brazil, and across the world. This paper ruminates on the potential of the recycled aesthetic as the rightful visual language of the 'trash excavator' and of the cardboard and recyclable material collector, or 'catador'. It considers the participation of the collectors and the homeless community who create their own ephemeral aesthetic, leaving a mark on the urban landscape as a representation of survival, unconsciously sending a message to the world, through visual communication, with a very different sense of purpose to those who use collage as an art form.

But beyond the functional logic of ephemera and packaging, there is another logic that emerges through this unusual use by the homeless and collectors in São Paulo, and in some of the main globalized metropolises. Materials and packaging, in skilled hands and with the ingeniousness of the homeless and collectors, seeking shelter and self-protection, change to become a new material culture constructed from discards of the consumer society. Defunctionalized and abandoned, the degraded objects are present on the city streets as the refuse of industrialized technological culture, publicly exposing the contradictory relations between technology, society, arbitrary needs, cumulative choices in our time, and urban poverty.

The ceaseless search for material survival strategies bring the homeless and the collector the possibility of exhuming these dead products and materials, assigning other meanings to them, establishing new relations and, above all, building a new materiality. When salvaging these products, based on their own criteria of selectivity, creativity and improvisation, the homeless person reveals his personal preferences and idiosyncrasies, in a context where alternative choices are reduced. These wandering objects attract the look of the homeless person, who, by processes similar to those used in archaeology, begins to scavenge the city in a sort of collecting "urban excavation".

These practices of re-use are very close to the spontaneity of Brazilian everyday life and popular art, constituting the potential for a creative and anonymous project that is yet to be fully documented. Lina Bardi recorded aspects of this heritage in the exhibition "The hand of the Brazilian people" held at MASP – São Paulo Museum of Art – in 1968, but her exhibition did not deal directly with the anonymous art of the homeless, rather it was about Brazilian popular art, emphasizing that the precariousness of resources act as an element that triggers imagination, fantasy and creativity.

In this situation of material reuse, the borders have become fluid. The materials used by the homeless to take shelter – textiles, plastics, bricks, stone, steel, aluminium, wood, paper, once they have been exhumed from their intended use, have several lives. In the list of materials, cardboard is outstanding. That is what the homeless "wrap themselves" in, and by "wrapping" build their habitat: the paper city. This presents us with a different, and perhaps more authentic, interpretation of the term 'collage city', used by Rowe and Koetter (1978) to describe their opposition to 'total planning' and 'total design'

Printed materials are laid on the ground and become insulation between the human body and the cold concrete sidewalks, as an example of compulsory reuse, accompanied by all kinds of difficulties for maintenance and personal

hygiene. Although dead in the consumer circuit, the objects and materials begin a new trajectory at the hands of the homeless (Fig. 3.), who show them publicly in the paper condominiums in the heart of 'scenographic' cities, under the spectacular effects of light, sounds and mirrors which have been engendered by modern architectural technology.

Fig. 3. The use of media. Hand writing at a homeless encampment in São Paulo.

Marco Hovnanian, São Paulo, 2006.

It is important to zoom in on this aesthetical aspect of deprived creativity, since there is stereotypical thinking that insists on revealing only the sombre, ugly underworld – with unpleasant odours and excrement – generating distorted conceptions about these individuals. According to the sociologist José de Souza Martins (2008):

"The political and charitable discourse about street people is poor in content, because it neglects the imaginative competency of poor people. Therefore we face a contradiction that creates an abyss between a poor person who has a rich imagination, and those who say they are helping him, people who are comparatively rich, and are poor in imagination about poverty."

What are the consequences of recognising this aesthetic of the discarded in the urban environment? This phenomenon raises some perspectives related to the cycle of use-abandonment-disposal and the necessity of recycling and re-use in other ways. It has to do with the transformation of the status of the material. Looking at the streets and the makeshift habitats by the homeless allows us the opportunity to understand this aesthetic phenomenon from everyday urban life, going far beyond the classical interpretation of aesthetics. Commenting on the inheritance of the first group of French professors – Lévi-Strauss, Jean Maugüé, Roger Bastide – who taught Aesthetics at the Philosophy Department of the University of Sao Paulo, the philosopher Gilda de Mello e Souza (1919-2005) developed the concept of the 'rich aesthetic' and the 'poor aesthetic' ('estética pobre e estética rica'), which is crucial to the understanding of the ephemeral aesthetic of spontaneous design on the streets of São Paulo.

According to Souza, in opposition to the Aesthetics of Classicism of Jean Maugüé and Lévi-Strauss, the analysis of Roger Bastide focused on another concept of art. (...) His aesthetics is the aesthetics of an anthropologist, the scholar of the phenomenon of religious mysticism.(...) So, it was natural that arriving in a country without a big cultural tradition, he concentrated on this elaboration of the "poor aesthetic". (...) an aesthetic that elevated this phenomenon of daily life from insignificance to consequential, compounding the fabric of our life. Finally, it is an aesthetic that is not concerned with being a work of art – much less so a master pieces – it reveals magical qualities, one of the most valid and elevated forms of knowledge (Souza, 1980, p. 34).

An ephemeral aesthetic

What exactly do we mean by 'an ephemeral aesthetic?' To describe something as 'ephemeral' often means that an object, e.g. printed matter, has little or no value due to the fact that it is intended to have a short-lived existence. And yet, some people find much pleasure and enjoyment in such objects, and these can often acquire a value well beyond the original cost, for example, hand-written letters by individuals who go on to achieve fame. According to Robert Kronenburg

"an accurate definition of the ephemeral is that which lasts for just one day – more

commonly we think of ephemeral experiences as transitory ones, though of

indeterminate length. It is almost automatic to assume that such fleeting experiences

are relatively inconsequential. However, though they may be temporary in duration,

their impact can be lasting: the fleeting memory from childhood may become an

individual's most potent recollection and its power such that it helps focus, or destroy,

an entire life. It is therefore the power of the experience rather than its duration that is

more important in gauging it's meaning and effect" (1998. p.7).

The Ephemera Society, founded in London in 1975, lists on its website a range of items it considers ephemeral: 'leaflets, handbills, tickets, trade cards, programmes and playbills, printed tins and packaging, advertising inserts, posters, newspapers and much more' (www.ephemera-society.org.uk). Maurice Rickards, the society's founder, describes these items as 'the minor transient documents of everyday life'. However, the society is careful to exclude from their definition objects such as uniform buttons, on the basis that these sorts of objects are likely to be lasting. To be specific, the society's members are interested in the ephemera of certain trades or professions, whilst others wish to focus on history from a social or graphic perspective. It is of significance to this paper that such members are described as 'collectors', and that there is a social and graphic perspective that fuels their interest.

An ephemeral aesthetic can therefore be taken to mean something that is perceived to be of value, or of artistic merit, but composed from items that might be described as ephemera, though we do not discount lasting objects. As a collection of objects, such as a set of postcards or postage stamps, the appearance might be consistent in terms of typestyle, colour or use of imagery, due to the design being done by the same individual or group. Alternatively, the relationship between a random set of objects can be reinforced by juxtaposition. This is often described as a 'collage' of elements, and as a method by which images are composed this has been used in European Art since the early Twentieth Century (Fig. 4.).


Fig. 4. Pablo Picasso. Guitar, glass and bottle. 1913.

Appreciating collage as a medium for expression

The Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary (1983) describes collage as 'a picture made from scraps of paper and other odds and ends pasted out: any work put together from assembled fragments'. More specifically, the Compact Oxford English Dictionary (2003) refers to a 'form of art in which various materials are arranged and stuck to a backing' and 'a combination or collection of various things'. Clearly the term can be applied broadly, and has been adopted by the art world. The term is particularly associated with the Pop Art movement of the 1960s, perhaps the most famous example being Peter Blake's cover design for The Beatles' Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band album cover (1967) (Fig. 5).
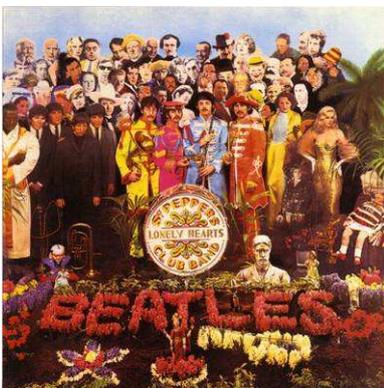
Fig. 5. Peter Blake. Cover design for The Beatles' Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band album (1967).

This contained a mix of life-size images of some well-known people such as Marilyn Monroe; wax works models of the Beatles themselves, as well as themselves as real people; plants and a floral display that portrayed the name of the group in red flowers. In the exhibition catalogue for 'About Collage', an

exhibition curated by Blake at the Tate Gallery, Liverpool, (2000-2001), he talks about collage artists such as those involved in Cubism in the early Twentieth Century, American exponents of the 'technique' such as Jasper Johns, Robert Rauchenberg, and Ellsworth Kelly, as well as British educated artists David Hockney and RB Kitaj. Blake assembled an exhibition that Lewis Biggs, Director of Tate Liverpool, suggested 'reveals the radical and far reaching impact of collage on the development of twentieth century art' and 'also uncovers the human, irrepressible impulse to gather, fuse, and fix' (2000, p. 9). This last remark could be said of the urban poor

However, the visual effect that we identify in part with collage, or montage, emerged in the last two decades of the nineteenth century with through mechanical reproduction and the development of chromolithography in printing, (Meggs, 2006, pp. 155-157). It featured work by highly skilled commercial artists working with illustration and lettering (Fig 6.).
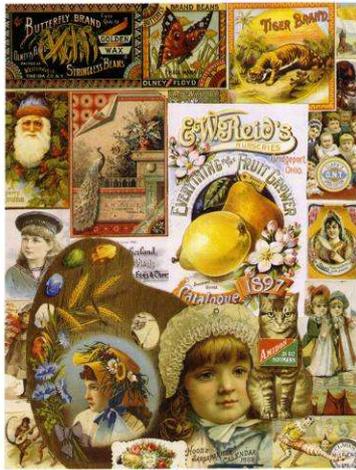

Fig. 6. Printed graphic ephemera by L Prang and Company and others. 1880-early 1900s (Meggs, 2006, p. 156)

This continued until 1912 when Picasso and Braque suggested in their work a tactile approach to collage – more reminiscent of what we identify with today – with the introduction of paper collage elements into their work (Meggs, 2006, p. 249). This included 'words' and 'letterforms' from newspapers to enhance meaning. Very quickly after this the Suprematist Kazimir Malevich developed compositions in oil and collage (Jubert, 2006, p. 165), and in the 1920s, artists such as Kurt Schwitters made entire compositions using found material from the streets combining torn paper, often showing dismembered letterforms (Fig.

Fig. 7. Kurt Schwitters, MZ601, 1923.

Additionally, with the emergence of photography, Hannah Hoch and John Heartfield used recycled photographic material as compositional elements. Perhaps one of the most recognisable of these is Heartfield's anti-Nazi propaganda poster in 1935, featuring the head of Adolph Hitler, with a pot of gold coins in his stomach (Meggs, 2006, pp. 258-260). Many other artists produced collage art around this time: Delaunay, Hausmann and Bauder to name a few. Consequently the unrestricted arrangement of elements in the design of the image plane, has had an impact ever since in the field of graphic design.

Although this recycling of graphic ephemera means a matter of life and death for some on the streets of São Paulo, artists and designers in developed countries have preoccupied themselves with a recycled aesthetic in their work. This 'torn paper aesthetic' has been subsequently explored by French artists Jacques Villeglé (Fig. 8.) and Raymond Hains, and subsequently in a graphic design context through the work of Dan Fern (Fig. 9.), as well as Alan Fletcher, who continually returned to the medium of collage. Fletcher used many found images in his creations (Fig. 10.), and believed 'there can be poetry in rubbish' (Myerson, Poyner and Gibbs, 1996, pp. 110-111)

el to Mathieu, 1965.
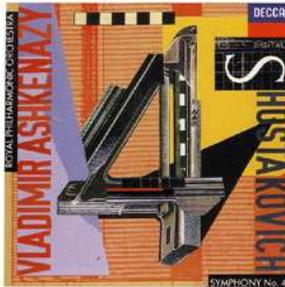
Fig. 9. Dan Fern, From Shostakovich Symphonies, circa 1990.

Fig. 10. Alan Fletcher, Detail from Commercial flowers in a field of rubbish, in 'Beware wet paint', 1996.

Collage as a representation of human need: functionality and creativity

When we talk about collage as visual language that is representative of both urban poverty and urban prosperity, what do we mean? Poverty and prosperity exist at opposite ends of the spectrum when it comes to human need. To 'prosper' means to succeed (often financially) or flourish, and perhaps to have all of your needs met. Whereas 'poverty' is to be without money, to experience scarcity, and be in-need. Collage is tangible and representative of human need, and we are able to judge the degree of poverty and prosperity through a value system that is derived from our own respective cultural experience. It is representative in that in different contexts the meanings associated with the juxtaposition of ephemera is audience specific and dependent on cultural understanding. It is tangible in the sense that it is part of material culture that has qualities beyond the purely visual, and is multi-sensorial. But what do we know about human need and how might the context within which collage is used relate to this?

In his book *Urban Design: the American Experience,* Jon Lang refers to a number of models that attempt to generalize and categorize human needs (1996, pp. 151-167). These models, by Leighton (1959), Cantril (1965), Steele (1973) Cross (1977) and Maslow (1987), consider aspects of human concern, sentiment and motivation, and fall into two distinct sets: basic and cognitive needs. Leighton suggests that on a basic level we strive for 'physical security', 'sexual satisfaction', 'orientation in society', 'securing of love' and 'recognition'. Similarly, Cantril identifies 'survival', 'security', 'order', 'identity', and a 'capacity for choice and freedom'. Steel also lists 'shelter and security', as well as 'social contact', 'symbolic identification', 'growth' and 'pleasure' (the last two being both basic and cognitive needs). Gross talks about 'belonging' and 'participation', 'affection', 'status', 'respect', 'power' and 'self-fulfilment', with 'creativity' and 'beauty' considered cognitive needs. Building on this, Maslow refers to 'survival', 'safety and security', 'belonging', 'esteem' and 'self-actualisation' as well as a second set of 'cognitive' and 'aesthetic' needs. These are essentially a mix of low- and high-order needs, depicted in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and illustrated in the form of a pyramid. Attempting to relate this model to design, Lidwell, Holden and Butler (Fig. 11.) (2003, pp. 106-107) have reinterpreted Maslow's terminology in order to make the model accessible to design activity.

Fig. 11. Left: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Right: Design's Hierarchy of Needs (Lidwell, Holden and Butler, 2003)

Lidwell, *et al* state 'the hierarchy of needs principle specifies that a design must serve the low-level needs (e.g., it must function), before the higher-level needs, such as creativity, can begin to be addressed. Good designs follow the hierarchy of needs principle…' (p. 106). They go on to demonstrate this using the example of a video recorder that must be functional, reliable, usable, proficient, and creative, (in the
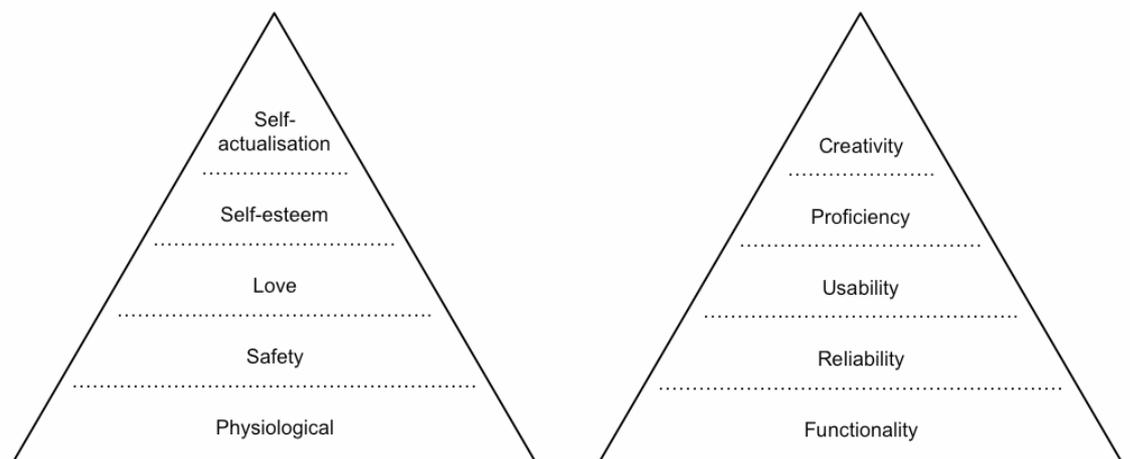
sense that assuming all other needs have been met by the design, it is possible to use the video recorder in ways that go beyond the intended common use. This example relates to product design). But how does it relate to the topic of this paper?

Graphic design has a function, or number of functions, and these have been outlined by Hollis as to identify, inform and instruct, present and promote (2001, p. 10). But more recently, Barnard has suggested these to be 'information', 'persuasion', 'decoration', 'magic', 'metalinguistic', and 'phatic' functions (2005, p. 14-18). There is not enough space to explore these in any detail here, but if we take Barnard's use of terminology, we can see that these functions generally fit into the hierarchy of needs principle at different levels. 'Information' for example is probably best aligned with the lower end of the hierarchy, though undoubtedly, there are examples of information design that might be considered of a very high order. In contrast, 'decoration' is probably less about function and more a 'creative' act aimed at reinforcing and extending self-esteem. But similarly that is not to say it does not also perform a function, if of a lesser importance.

Collage as a means of satisfying low- and high-order needs

If we compare two applications of collage, we see how poverty and prosperity is represented, and how graphic design acts are employed, consciously and unconsciously, to satisfy low- and high- order human needs. On one hand the technique is employed as a structural element that is part of shelter (Fig. 12.) that house 'homeless' people on the streets. This example makes use of a mixture of typographic, photographic, illustrative, and diagrammatic ephemera that although having a random appearance utilises 'graphic' elements that appear to be carefully positioned, revealing as much content as possible. Familiar icons that have mass appeal, such as Disney's Mickey Mouse, can emerge from the collection, which has the appearance of ephemeral wallpaper with an ephemeral aesthetic, but is imbued with the occupant's own sense of meaning. It is both functional and 'creative', though probably satisfying a need to protect oneself from external elements, rather than as an innovative design solution. Primarily it fulfils a physiological and functional need.

, Brazil. Lucia Mindlin Loeb. São Paulo,

3.). The design, like much of the graphics that han in name represented by typography), nor tself is a transparent liquid with a water-like le designers have chosen to use a form of vists in the early twentieth century, the implication clearly being that Vodka is a drink associated with Eastern European countries, and we might associate this visual artistic style with this part of the world. However, the product does not change, whether the label is applied or not, and equally the presence of the image is not essential, though it may be desirable by some. It has aesthetic appeal of its own, irrespective of any idea of function. On this basis, it attempts to satisfy higher-order needs, but arguably has little aspiration to satisfy functional and physiological need, beyond a need for identification. The collage is by the British illustrator Dan Fern, and the label design is by the London based design consultants, Lewis Moberly, in 1988. In terms of its scale, although covering a small surface area, the appearance is bright, colourful, simplistic, and draws on a revival of interest in the medium of collage in the late 1980s, described by Rick Poyner as a 'vogue' (Fern, 1990, p. 6). Moreover, the label design has been highly acclaimed by the graphic design community in the United Kingdom as part of a gold award winning range of 'own-label' drinks, designed for the UK supermarket chain ASDA.

Fig. 13. Design ... vis Moberly, featuring illustration detail by Dan Fern, 1988.

With regard to the visual style of the illustration, Fern acknowledges the influence in his work of European art in the early twentieth century, especially Kurt Schwitters (Fern, 1990, p. 14), and the Russian Constructivists. Schwitters made art from 'waste material' that included objects, often sculptural in form, and printed ephemera that might be found on the street. These are usually contained within a defined image space, and Schwitters created these images during a thirty-year period until the late 1940s. During this period we see the emergence of a 'torn aesthetic' that developed as a 'unique fusion of Expressionism, Dadaism and Constructivism' (exhibition catalogue for 'Schwitters', Tate Gallery, London,1985, p. 21).

Many other examples of work by illustrators, using ephemera in two and three dimensions, can be located. For example Jon Hamilton, and Barbara Bellingham, working in the UK in the 1990s, built three dimensional collages that assembled many disparate elements, collaged together as if found at random. Discussion with Hamilton reveals how much care, attention and planning is involved creating these artworks (Fig. 14.).
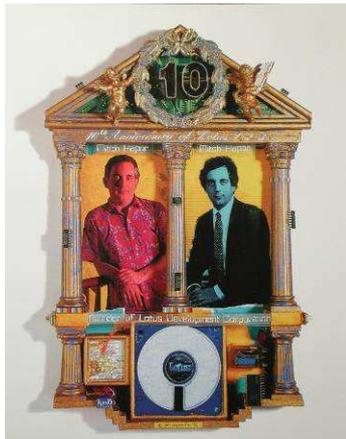
... tion celebrating 10 years of Lotus Software, circa 1990s.

In this paper we have attempted to draw a link between the poor and the prosperous urban dweller, through the medium of collage, as a means of survival, and self-expression. In doing so we have tried to illustrate the plight of the urban poor, who suffer from social exclusion. Exclusion, and inclusion, in this context is a social phenomenon, and according to Madanipour, Cars and Allen, this is manifested in three critical dimensions: the 'economic, political and cultural arenas' (LeGates and Stout, 1998, 2003, p 181-188). The urban poor we speak of here are denied access to economic and political stability, but in the cultural arena, where they can share a set of symbols and meanings, the 'trash collector' can build an individual and collective identity, one that is ironically shared with their more affluent counterparts. Despite economic and political exclusion, culture offers a lifeline to the less fortunate, in that '…visual

culture, aesthetics of social behaviour has become an essential part of social life' (LeGates and Stout, 1998, 2003, p 184).

In a seminal manifesto published in 1965, 'Aesthetics of Hunger', the Brazilian filmmaker Glauber Rocha wrote about the main aspect of Latin America condition: "Economic and political conditioning has led us to philosophical weakness and impotence…It is for this reason that the hunger of Latin America is not simply an alarming symptom: it is the essence of our society". The waste disposal of the haves and its redemption by the have-nots evoke this essence of 'latino' culture, and conveys an alternative aesthetic, which transforms its negative sense thus creating this ephemeral and bricolage aesthetic.

Finally, this paper has also attempted to demonstrate that the act of design, or what could be referred to as graphic design, and the resulting ephemeral aesthetic, is a shared human activity employed by rich and poor, both of whom demonstrate a desire to change 'an existing situation into a preferred one'. Recognising this might go someway to changing a socially exclusive situation into a more inclusive society.

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