An inspiration from 20th century: Retro

Elvin Evren

Course Coordinator: Alessandro Segalini

IZMIR UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS, FACULTY OF FINE ARTS AND DESIGN
DEPARTMENT OF VISUAL COMMUNICATION DESIGN

SPRING 2010, GD494

INTRODUCTION

“Retro is a non-historical way of knowing the past” (Guffey, 2006). It is the representation of the previous art and design movements, fashion, lifestyles, objects and even ideologies in the present. It is kind of a revival. Nowadays “retro” is a popular style, way of living, wearing, listening. It is a fashion in all disciplines. Everyday we can experience 20th century in our daily life. We listen the covered songs of 1980s; we wear bellbottomed jeans of 1960s and like to use the refrigerators of 1950s.

In my thesis I will focus on the term retro and why it became a popular style in 21st century, analyze how it is used in the field of graphic design, and explain the influence of retro style on masses. In 21st century, most of the young generations are affected by “retro designs”. Although they could not really be adapted to the philosophy behind those movements and ideologies, they like the idea of nostalgia. In the new century with the help of the media, a style can become a fashion in a short time period. Yet more if it stimulates emotions, it affects masses. This is the major reason why it is so popular. So when we listen to a song, see a pattern, or a design that carries nostalgic attributes, it affects us. On the other hand designers, artists and marketers choose the retro styles to take the attraction of the masses. Ultimately if it worked out in the past why does it not work out in the present?

This is also a fact for the field of graphic design. There is an increasing use of retro elements in visual communication. All the 20th century art movements and work of arts that people used to see in the museums and exhibitions are now in movie posters, on the album covers, in advertisements, in our daily lives. Most of the time designers get inspired from the past however is it still copying?

I defend the use of retro elements in any field of design. Every designer is affected by the past and builds on it to develop something new. In that case, a consciousness should be created on the use of term retro. This study case will reveal the influences of the term retro by analyzing it, and searching for its popularity in 21st century.
CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

II. TABLE OF CONTENTS

3. 1. RETRO AS A STYLE

3. 1.1. What is retro

4. 1.2. How retro occurred as a style

6. 1.3. The movements raise retro

8. 2. RETRO IN THE FIELD OF DESIGN

8. 2.1. Retro elements in visual communication

9. 2.2. Retro elements in other design disciplines

11. 3. RETRO IS REGISTERED TO THE PAST

12. 3.1 Manifesto

13. 4. CONCLUSION

14. 5. REFERENCES
RETRO AS A STYLE

WHAT IS RETRO

When you search for the meaning of the word 'retro' on the internet, there are ten links coming up on the first page and they all contain the same explanation: backwards and past. In the ‘Cambridge Dictionary’ there are three similar definitions to ‘retro’; "looking or sounding like something from the past", "looking at or copying the past" and "going backwards". The origin of the word is a Latin prefix1, meaning 'backwards' or 'in the past times'.

In the 21st century, retro is a popular term used by many people in every aspect of life to describe trends. However I would like to ask the same question of Elizabeth E. Guffey from her book ‘Retro: Culture of a Revival’; “The term retro has become the buzzword for describing such trends, but what does it mean?”

Today ‘retro’ is a term generally used to describe culturally outdated styles and fashions being used in the present. It includes all the movements occurred starting from the Industrial Revolution2 to present. However the meaning of retro is more than reference to past. To be more specific, “Although retro is easily dismissed as a backwards glance at the past, the nuances underlying its appeal are often overlooked” (Guffey, 2006). Retro is more than something belonging to the past. It is the different revivals of the past. It can appear as an object, an idea or a value. First of all it can also be counted as timeless and classic. As an example; “‘Retro’ can serve as little more than a trendy synonym for ‘old-fashioned’ or simply ‘old’. Monaco’s Tourism Office, for instance, recently repackaged a standard tour that included visits to the Principality’s wax museum and an exhibition of Napoleonic memorabilia as ‘Retro Day: A History and Tradition Tour’. At its best, this form of ‘retro’ functions much like ‘timeless’ or ‘classic’ as cultural advertising; ‘retro’ products, places or ideas can assume an iconic status, denoting an undefined time gone by” (Guffey, 2006). For an idea, object or a place to become classic it should survive through years, it should be approved and accepted by different cultures and societies and restore its popularity all the time. Even though in the history there are many movements, ideologies, objects, designs developed and built on each other, some of these elements survived and became classics.

Instead of being classic there are some specific objects produced in 21st century but they carry the ongoing revival of 1950s and 1960s. These objects maybe accepted by several societies who like to carry symbols and memories from that specific time period as well as the modern age. As quoted; “In the USA, ‘retro’ frequently describes American material culture at mid-century, encompassing saddle shoes and tail fins, Eames furniture and suburban ranch houses. Embraced by collectors and nostalgia buffs alike, this form of ‘retro’ can stretch to include the influence of the 1950s and ‘60s on contemporary forms, including the updated BMW Mini and Volkswagen’s new Beetle” (Guffey, 2006) (fig 1.). Nowadays it is easy to see effects of 1950s and 60s on the shop windows, in the traffic, in the advertisements, or on the furniture side by side, mixed with the modern designs of 21st century.

On the other hand retro can also reviva in values and attitudes. At this point retro can be settled as a lifestyle both in positive or negative ways. It is good to have nostalgic items from the past in your life but you should not reject the time you live in. According to Guffey; “‘Retro’ can also describe an

---

1. A prefix is placed at the beginning of a word to modify or change its meaning.
2. The Industrial Revolution was a period from the 18th to the 19th century where major changes in agriculture, manufacturing, mining, and transport had a profound effect on the socioeconomic and cultural conditions. Industrial Revolution marked a major turning point in human history; almost every aspect of daily life was eventually influenced in some way.
outlook on life. It may suggest a predisposition or inherent social conservatism that cleaves to the values and mores of the past, identified in the popular press with such social phenomena as home schooling and an embrace of traditional gender roles. More than a quest for a simpler life, this 'retro' attitude also carries a darker suspicion that recent social, cultural and political developments are profoundly corrosive."

Fig. 1. Volkswagen’s new Beetle.

In addition to all three different revivals, retro has specific types in different disciplines. Retro art, retro gaming, retro cars, retro fashion, retro sport and retro music are some of them. We can see those items in the museums, exhibitions or they can belong to us. At the same time we start to experience past in our daily life. The components of those types can even be original items from the past or objects designed by being effected from the past. In both ways there is a movement implied toward back the past instead of a progress toward the future. Even though it's the revival of the past, it will always belong to the past.

HOW RETRO OCCURED AS A STYLE

In the world every person, every group or culture and even every object or movement, according to the time period they live in, has a different way of living, a different belief, a different political idea, a different fashion, or a different way of expressing themselves. This expression of a person or a group or an object becomes their style. In the history there are many different styles that affected masses and continued for many years. Retro is one of the most popular and common style that affects the masses since 1960s.

As I mentioned before, ‘retro’ means something nostalgic and belongs to past. Actually the origin of the retro style comes from the term ‘retrorocket’ which is a short term for ‘retrograde rocket’. It was a term used by American space program in the 1960s. The rocket generated in a direction opposite to the spacecraft’s orbital motion which that moves backwards. In meaning to backwards we can say that retro is a revival of the history.

In the 1960s, retro style started to occur with the revival of Art Nouveau and Art Deco movements (fig 2.). The effects of the movements that developed sixty years ago started to awake. Also as it is mentioned in the quote mass media and the development of the communication channels had a great influence on retro style becoming so popular; “Beginning with the Art Nouveau and Art Deco revivals, retro's rapid rise in the 1960s must be linked with larger developments in mass media and communications” (Guffey, 2006). Mass media has always been the most successful way to affect masses in the shortest time period. Advertisement, as being one of the most effective communication channels of the mass media, also got affected from the retro.

---

3. Art Nouveau and style of art, architecture and applied art—especially the decorative arts—that peaked in popularity at the turn of the 20th century (1890–1905). The name ‘Art Nouveau’ is French for ‘new art’.

4. Art Deco was a popular international art design movement from 1925 until the 1940s, affecting the decorative arts such as architecture, interior design and industrial design, as well as the visual arts such as fashion, painting, the graphic arts and film. At the time, this style was seen as elegant, glamorous, functional and modern.
“Reinforcing such trends in art, design, fashion and music, advertisers and the media have seized upon the power of cultural nostalgia to promote a surprising range of products” (Guffey, 2006). It is something also true for 21st century. Retro style correlates with masses by nostalgia. The vintage clothes that we wear, the covered songs that we listen, the furniture that we use for decoration all create a nostalgic bound between the past and the present. It reconnects you to the past times and makes you feel close to that product and allows you to find out something that belongs to you. As long as we start to give emotional responses to the products of the retro we start to connect them and it becomes a style for us. "Retro is a phenomenon that can be traced across a wide array of media, from television to theatre, architecture to fashion" (Guffey, 2006). Nowadays the meaning of retro is much more wide spread and even it settles in our daily lives.

Kimberly Nicoletti has a quote from Koenig in her article ‘Going retro is back’; “Retro’s always been popular,” Koenig said. “People are always trying to grab a piece of the past – we all feel life was better then.”

A person can choose to listen to a gramophone instead of downloading music from the internet, a teenager can play with his old Tetris® instead of a computer game or you can choose to write a letter instead of an e-mail. So we understand that as long as the technology develops people try to go backwards to remember what they have missed. Dana Cain said that “People remember how much fun they had in the ’80s, ’70 or ’60s – whatever decade they’re nostalgic for,” (Going retro is back). Polaroid® starts to be popular again because they are more fun than digitals, the punk fashion is back because it is more creative and there are “oldies but goldies parties” going on because they have the spirit (fig 3).

So we can say that retro today is all about nostalgia because when you find your old stuff under your bed or if you wear the jacket of your mom and it is fashion than you have a smile on your face. “Retro quotes styles from the past, but applies them in anomalous settings; it regards the past from a bemused distance, its dark humor re-mixing popular mid-century drinks and serving them up as ‘atomic cocktails’” (Guffey, 2006).
On the other side, as I sorted out before, retro has an influence on many disciplines and has many different types. Generally fashion and graphic designers, artists, music companies, cafe and bars and advertisers use retro style. There are punk and hippie designs from '70 and '80s in the shop windows and fashion shows. There are retro concept parties and Pop Art decorated cafes with the face of Marilyn Monroe. Also there are many commercials on TV, posters and flyers designed by using the graphic styles of the 20th century. Most of them are now used as a marketing tool by the mass media to take the attention of the young generations. Even though many people has a chance to compare and contrast the past and the present, see the differences, and be more innovative for the future, young generations do not know what is exactly retro is. At this point retro style gets away from being nostalgic to being something new and something used for taking the attention of the masses. Teenagers find themselves in the magic world of retro without even knowing the meaning of the word.

Even though there are two different ways of revival for the past under the name of retro, I am sure that 21st century is affected by “retrophilia”. According to Guffey; “1970s a fashion-conscious yet highly irreverent version of ‘retro’ crept into English, where its meaning remained fluid and vaguely negative; for many it represented a desire to recycle the past in a somewhat exploitative manner.” Occasionally it feels like people start to take the improper advantage of the past, designers and producers start to recycle instead of inspiring and creating.

THE MOVEMENTS RAISE RETRO

“The stylistic movements often inspired one another, or were founded as a rejection of what had gone before” (Raimes and Bhaskaran, 2007). In the history, every movement is built on each other to develop something new. There is always a need to look at the previous, to get inspired by and to create the original. This is also a fact for “retro”. First of all retro is something that belongs to the past. So it is not even something original. We can call it as the representation of the past in the present in many aspects of life. There are always movements, ideologies, objects, and places that people see, read, understand, get affected and apply to. “The stimuli* that galvanized its development are as varied as the styles themselves; political, aesthetic, commercial and industrial, moral and philosophical foundations – all played a motivating role” (Raimes and Bhaskaran, 2007).

When the term “retro” first occurred in 1960s, it was affected by the Art Nouveau and Art Deco movements that belong to the end of 19th century. However the 21st century retro movement has only been affected by the 20th century art and design movements. Especially, the time period that follows 1950s is when the most common styles that we face today appear. The reason can be the development of technology, change of values and the change of political ideologies in our society and second half of the 20th century is the one preceding century and it reserves many familiar movements, technologies and ideologies.

If we like to separate the movements and styles that raise retro into groups than we have the early modern, the mid-century modern, the late modern and the post-modern which also includes the present. The most efficient movements and styles in those four can be the late modern and the
post-modern eras that correspond to the same period after ’50s. As I mentioned before, the most possible reason for this is because they share the most similar ideologies, technologies and values. At least I can not think of a fashion show inspired from Victorian age in 21st century.

In the early modern era there are mainly Victorian, Arts and Crafts, Art Nouveau movements. Most of those movements to be finished before 1920s and they have less impression on today’s retro style. Even though, we can still see the effects of Arts and Crafts movement in architecture or furniture design and apply the ornaments of that era in the graphic design or on fabrics. Following to this the modernist era started to appear. In the modernist era the point of view to art and design changed totally and most of the movements developed on an ideology, a philosophy. Also the techniques that were used developed and increased in variety. The artists started to try new techniques to represent themselves. Futurism, Constructivism, Dada, De Stijl, Bauhaus, Photomontage, Art Deco and New Typography are counted as the most important movements of that era (fig 4.).

![Bauhaus design](image1)

Fig. 4. Bauhaus design.

Today in graphic design, we can still experience the techniques and the style used in that era. The page layouts and the designs can still inspire graphic designers. Most of the characteristic features of different eras appear in the present graphic design. Presentation and positioning techniques in 2D and 3D are counted as the basis. At last, the typefaces designed and generated are calling you for inspiration and innovation. Also most of these typefaces are now loaded in our computers and still used by designers (fig 5.).

![Univers Typeface](image2)

Fig. 5. Univers Typeface, by Adrian Frutiger, 1954-57.

The period started between 1950s and ’90s was under the control of Pop Art and Psychedelia. All those mysterious graphic items, almost hard to read typefaces, the colors of the rainbow and the energy blows of the posters belong to that era. Pop Art is the most popular movement of retro design today and the hilarious artist of the time Andy Warhol has a lot of addition to this. Today there are many objects, posters, exhibitions and even movies designed in the name of the artist. In addition, there are Swiss International Style and Punk that influenced the world with their unusual graphic style. Especially punk movement, like Pop Art, is one of the main influences of retro.

---

9. Adrian Frutiger (May 24, 1928) is one of the prominent typeface designers of the twentieth century, he is best known for creating the typefaces Univers and Frutiger.

10. Andy Warhol, was an American painter, printmaker, and filmmaker who was a leading figure in the visual art movement known as Pop Art. After a successful career as a commercial illustrator, Warhol became famous worldwide for his work as a painter, avant-garde filmmaker, record producer, author, and public figure known for his membership in wildly diverse social circles that included bohemian street people, distinguished intellectuals, and Hollywood celebrities.
After all those movements and styles that constitute the world history of art and design, than comes the Post-Modernism\(^{11}\). Even though the artists of that period always developed and created the new they also added pieces and inspirations from the past. At this point, if we compare it with retro, there are similarities. According to one of the descriptions of retro, it is the revival of the past in the present. "Like post-modernism, retro objects, architectures, ideas get affected from the past but developed by innovation. If we consider the fact that 21st century still belong to post-modernism than it becomes more clear why retro is such a popular style” (Chapter 3, Manifesto).

RETRO IN THE FIELD OF DESIGN

RETRO ELEMENTS IN VISUAL COMMUNICATION

In 21st century, like many aspects of life, visual communication design also accommodates retro elements. There are generally two different ways to apply retro style in visual communication design. First one is the advertisements and the promotion campaigns, where the art directors and marketers take the attention of the consumers on to products by promoting them through nostalgia. As Guffey said; “Since in many ways this new form of revivalism defines the modern past in the popular imagination, advertising firms quickly identified retro as a uniquely ‘pitchman’ for a sophisticated audience.” The other way is applying retro elements; symbols, graphics, colors, typefaces, layouts, on graphic design pieces. However the technique of implementation depends on the graphic designer. “The role of the graphic designer is to organize and communicate messages; to announce or publicize a product or idea in the most effective way. By manipulating visual forms in an appropriate style, the designer can signal that a certain message is intended for a specific audience” (Raimes and Bhaskaran, 2007). So mostly the quality of the design work depends on the designer.

There is another fact to pay attention to is: not to mix the two terms, inspiring and copying, with each other. As Henry Peach Robinson said; ‘After some time passed in studying – and even imitating – the works of others, I would recommend the student to endeavor to be original, and to remember that originality should not be undiscovered plagiarism\(^{12}\).’ The designer needs to make allusions from the past but not to implement the past as it is. The fact that ‘retro is registered to the past’ should never be forgotten.

In the past five years the usage of retro elements both in graphic design and advertising increased. While some of these works are implementing the past work of arts into 21st century, some of them include inspiration from 20th century art and design movements. For example, the last album cover of ‘Madonna’ implements the work of ‘Andy Warhol’s Marilyn’ (fig a.).

---

11. Postmodernism is a tendency in contemporary culture characterized by the rejection of objective truth and global cultural narrative. Postmodernism has influenced many cultural fields, including literary criticism, sociology, linguistics, architecture, visual arts, and music. The term “Postmodernism” comes from its rejection of the “Modern” scientific mentality of objectivity and progress associated with the Enlightenment.

12. Plagiarism, as defined in the 1995 Random House Compact Unabridged Dictionary, is the “use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one’s own original work”.

Fig. 6. Madonna, ‘Celebration’ album cover, 2009.
The only difference is that, there is the face of Madonna instead of Marilyn. Also the album cover of 'Franz Ferdinand' that is released few years ago implements the 'Russian Constructivist poster Red Wedge'. Even it has different colors and not the exact geometrical shapes, the same question comes to everyone's mind. Is it inspiration or copying?

On the other side, the movie poster of 'Austin Powers' has an original design inspired from the elements of 'Pop Art' movement (fig 7.). The sun flares, bright colors and the typeface decisions are the retro elements in the poster. Sometimes two or more different movements can be applied to the works. The movie poster of 'Soul Kitchen' both includes elements from 'Pop Art' and 'Photomontage'.

![Fig. 7. Austin Powers movie poster.](image)

Other than these examples, in the advertising, the use of retro elements does not have a rule or a certain application form. If it is not a special brand related to a specific movement or belonging to a specific timeline than what is important is the visual and the emotional attraction of the advertisement. In the article 'Going retro is back' by Kimberly Nicoletti they had a conversation about a big business that uses retro designs in its promotion campaign. What consumers said is "It's nice. It feels like home. It doesn't look so big business – it looks more down home." This is the important issue for advertising, to attract your consumer and to create a bond between the product and the consumer. For example in the advertisement of an apple beer company, they choose to apply the illustrations and typefaces from 1950s and '60s. The energy of the ads reflects the energy of the drink and also company imposition the drink to a nostalgic level to reach its audience.

If we, generally, say that the aim of visual communication is to send a message to a certain audience and to take their attention than there is no point in discussing the ways it is done. However if there is going to be a use of 'retro style' in any kind of graphic design than there should be a respect to the past design movements while implementing them. 20th century art and design movements consist of a wide area. What is important is to know what you want to design, and why you want to design and how you design it.

**RETRO ELEMENTS IN OTHER DESIGN DISCIPLINES**

In the introduction of the book 'Retro Graphics' there is a quote by Francis Bacon; "Images also help me find and realize ideas. I look at hundreds of very different, contrasting images and I pinch details from them, rather like people who eat from other people's plates." With a total agreement to the words of Bacon, this is a fact also for "retro". Except all definitions of retro, it is being inspired from the past. It is grabbing many pieces from different art and design movements that belong to the past and rearrange them in your design.

---

13. Red Wedge was a collective of British popular musicians who attempted to engage young people with politics in general. The group was launched on 21 November 1985, at a reception at the Palace of Westminster hosted by Labour MP Robin Cook. It took its name from a 1919 poster by Russian constructivist artist El Lissitzky, Beat the Whites with the Red Wedge.

14. Advertising is a non-personal form of communication intended to persuade an audience to purchase or take some action upon products, ideas, or services. It includes the name of a product or service and how that product or service could benefit the consumer, to persuade a target market to purchase or to consume that particular brand.
The viewer in many disciplines of art and design can experience the use of retro elements in daily life. It is so obvious now that there is a settled and accepted “retro style” in 21st century’s art and design. From graphic design to architecture, from movies to music videos, and even from marketing to mass media we face retro items. Even sometimes it may really become hard to understand whether it is an original piece from ‘80s or a product of last year.

In the field of design it is so important to take the attention of the viewer. An object or a design piece should be innovative, clever and attractive and it has to affect the emotions. As mentioned before, retro, in definition, is something belonging to past, something nostalgic. It makes the viewer give emotional responses by creating a bound between the past and the present. So this is what retro designs do, create an emotional response on people and make them love it and want it.

In the last few years, ‘retro style’ has an appreciable impression and influence on fashion, industrial design, interior architecture, and visual communication design. In fashion, there is an intense popularity of ‘vintage’. Very simply it means wear your mom’s, even your grandmother’s jacket. The fashion of the ’70s and ’80s is back. There are blazer jackets, skinny jeans, rent tights, shorts and very high wedge shoes on every shop window. Girls in the streets are like ’80s but with cell phones and computers. This is an example how retro influences today’s design. On the other there are classic pieces, like a ‘black Chanel suit’, which are also retro but in another way. They are timeless and can accommodate to any time period.

In the 21st century everything has a design and so everything has a retro design. Even Volkswagen’s new Beetle and BMW Mini are designed by being influenced from the 1960s. The effects of retro on interior architecture and industrial design are similar and most of the time used together. Instead of the objects that we use, the lifestyles and the concepts of 21st century also affected from retro. People, now, like to dance with the music of ’70s, ’80s and ’90s. There are café and clubs that are decorated in the style of past times. Old furniture and symbolic objects are used in the interior design of the places. There are retro furniture collections that are designed by inspiring from past movements. Also there are refrigerators, ovens and even lavatories designed under the influences of the lifestyle of the 20th century. Addition to these, there is a retro-futurism style where you can easily see the influence of futurism on the objects and architecture of 21st century. Retro-futurism has two different types. “The first is a total vision of the future as seen through the eyes of the past, often a utopian society characterized by high technology... The second type of setting are altered but recognizable versions of the past in which the exaggerated technological innovations...” (Wikipedia, Retro-futurism). The examples of retro-futurism in architecture have appeared in post-modernism (fig s.).

---

15. The term vintage is used to describe clothing, either used or new from dead stock, which was manufactured in a non-contemporary era.

16. Chanel S.A., commonly known as “Chanel”, is a Parisian fashion house founded by the late couturier Gabrielle “Coco” Chanel, recognized as one of the most established in haute couture, specializing in luxury goods.

---

Fig. 8. Shanghai Plan Nine, Retro-Futurism in architecture.
On the other side there is such an important influence of Pop Art in industrial design and graphic design. There are ornamental chairs and sofas with the face of Marilyn Monroe17 (fig 9.). You can see many art pieces of Andy Warhol on the chair you sit or on the table you dine except the museums and exhibitions. Also there are many accessories filled with the works of Warhol, from bags to hats, notebooks to wallets, and even napkins.

![Marilyn Monroe chair](image)

**Fig. 9. Marilyn Monroe chair.**

The effects of retro style on 21st century are not limited with the field of design. Simply if you ever watch MTV, you can check out many futuristic, constructivist or punk music videos. The marketers choose to promote some new items in retro style because it creates an emotional response on the consumers through nostalgia. Also there are many cartoons and animations designed by getting influenced from constructivist movement. Apart from these there are revivals of the old musicals, movies and plays. Masses enjoy the retro style, remembering the way of living in the past and sometimes getting away from all the technology and rush. “If you put the stuff around you, it helps bring you back to that emotional state” (Going on retro is back).

### RETRO IS REGISTERED TO THE PAST

The title of the third chapter, ‘Retro is registered to the past’ is actually the name of my gradation project. The concept of the project is to create awareness of retro usage in the field of graphic in the 21st century. The aim of the project is to let young generations never forget that retro is registered to the past.

As mentioned before, there is a very important difference between inspiring and copying while applying retro elements in design and in every aspect of the life. A design piece should be original and innovative. However we can be inspired from the past art and design movements of the 20th century. The important point is to never plagiarize and not to forget that every art piece belongs to a specific time period in the history and registered by its artist. Even this is a very important point the aim in my project is not to warn people about the plagiarism.

In the past ten years of the 21st century there is an increasing popularity of ‘retro style’. However most of the young generations do not know that those elements, symbols, objects belong to past. In addition some of them think that they are the new fashion objects, graphic styles, sounds, concepts of the new century. The reason for this is because they did not live in any era of the 20th century. They don’t know that what they call fashion is the old clothes of their mom’s, what they call ‘covered song’ is the music of their dad’s teenage times, ‘Converse’18 is an old basketball shoe brand and the Madonna’s album cover is actually created in 1960 by Andy Warhol. So I want

---

17. Marilyn Monroe was an American actress, singer, and model. In the years and decades following her death, Monroe has often been cited as a pop and cultural icon.

18. Converse is an American shoe company that has been making shoes since the early 20th century.
to give a little more information about the retro style to young generations and let them know that all these retro items are registered to past, belong to past.

At this point, first I wrote a ‘manifesto’\textsuperscript{19} to express my ideas about use of retro elements in the field of design and to discuss young generations reactions on this renascent style. As part of the project, I designed a book, as an archive, which is composed from the 21st century graphic design pieces that applied in retro style. Other than the book there is an exhibition and an interactive web page where people also can discuss their ideas about retro style. This is more of an educational project for generations and a protective project for the 20th century art and design movements.

**MANIFESTO**

All along the 20th century different art and design movements were built and established by artists and designers. Every new movement is affected by the past, and built on it to develop something new. Today we can separate those movements by their features and create a timeline. We are used to seeing those examples in museums, exhibitions, and symposiums all around the world.

Today, art and design events have increased and society can visit them easily. Also we can find information and visuals about most of these movements in the books and on the web. In addition, there is the rising popularity of retro style. So, we only do not search, read and visualize past, but also experience it. According to that I believe we have to look critically today’s art and design pieces, and people should learn more about the history of visual arts. Besides this, many people have no idea about the artists they hear, terms they use or works they see.

Everyday we come across or use elements of retro in all disciplines of design. Especially young generations talk about the term retro even in their everyday life. However most of them don’t know what constitutes retro style. One of the most common design disciplines that accommodate the elements of retro is visual communication design. It is usual to see examples of retro elements in advertisements, album covers, movie posters, event logos, music videos, animations and many more.

It’s not easy to create something new without referencing from the past so if people can analyze both the art works of today and the past than it is going to be easier to determine what is retro. Although old generations are luckier to compare the difference between now and the past, younger generations can assume retro is a new style. Instead of only displaying the original retro items of art and design, there should be an archive to display how we use the elements of retro today. This archive\textsuperscript{20} can be created in many ways such as a book, as an exhibition or an interactive web page. It can be a good reference to present how past and present interlock.

Although retro is a revival it should be analyzed and used conscious. It comprises from the combination of the present and the past. Also, from a different point of view, retro style holds on the effects of Post Modernist era. Like post-modernism, retro objects, architectures, ideas get affected from the past but developed by innovation. If we consider the fact that 21st century still belong to post-modernism than it becomes more clear why retro is such a popular style.

\textsuperscript{19} In art, manifesto is a public declaration or exposition in print of the theories and directions of a movement.

\textsuperscript{20} An archive is a collection of historical records, as well as the place they are located. Archives contain primary source documents that have accumulated over the course of an individual or organization’s lifetime.
CONCLUSION

In my case study ‘An inspiration from 20th century: retro’ I analyze the term retro, how it became a style, the movements inspired, and why it is so popular. As a conclusion I can say that instead of all the glamour and the attraction of 20th century, people emotionally create a bond to the past by the retro style. The name of this emotional feeling is nostalgia.

People take a ride in their past by retro elements, objects, ideas. Sometimes a jacket, sometimes a music, and sometimes a recipe can become an element of retro. However young generations do not know much about the movements of 20th century. So sometimes they can think that those elements belong to 21st century and they are new. For that matter, a project generated, ‘Retro is registered to the past’, to explain, as much as I can, what constitutes retro in the field of graphic design.

There is one thing always true that people must know their past to be original and innovative in the future. A person do not need to like the past, but need to know the history because than the inspiration comes. As an addition, the history comes only when you call it and in the way you call it.
REFERENCES


