Interpretive Images

What intangible meanings does the image convey?

Do the images stimulate emotional and intellectual connections?

Does the composition enhance or amplify those meanings?

The following questions have no right or wrong answer. They are the basic elements to consider when choosing, creating, or adjusting images for use in interpretive media. Handled poorly, these considerations may diminish the effectiveness of an image. Handled well, they can "speak a thousand words."

Frame	Is the image vertical, horizontal, square or other cropping?
Balance	Is there tension created by asymetrical shapes or are the elements in the image visually equal?
Rule of Thirds / The Golden Mean	Does the focal point fall within the points of intersection of the rule of thirds, or the Golden Mean (1: 1.618 ratio)?
Texture	Does the lighting reveal surface texture?
Form	Is the image lit from an oblique angle to reveal form and texture? Is it lit from behind to create a silhouette?
Line	Are the dominent lines in the image vertical, horizontal, or diagonal?
Color	Are there warm or cool colors, or both? What is the value (lightness or darkness) of the color? Is the color saturated or muted? Is it monochromatic, analagous (colors next to eachother on the color wheel), or complementary (opposite on the color wheel)?
Depth of Field	Is the whole image in focus or is thereis particular plane of focus within the field of view.
Rhythm	Is there a repetition of form, shape, or color?
Contrast	Are there strong highlights and shadows or two complementary colors?
Figure / Ground	What is the relationship between the figure or subject and the background. Is there a connection between them?
Shape	Do you see specific shapes in the use of positive and negative space?
Unity	Do all the elements contribute to an aesthetic whole?
Simplicity / Complexity	Is there a sense of chaos and busyness or is the image simple or clear?

Interpretive Text and Typography

What intangible meanings does the text convey?

Is the text appropriate for the intended media?

Does the typographic treatment enhance hierarchy, focus, meaning and legibility?

Typeface   Typefaces (e.g. Baskerville, Times, Frutiger) are designed to convey meanings. Is the choice of the typeface appropriate for the content, authority of the agency, and integrity of the message?

Type Style   Does the typographic style (e.g. bold, roman, italic) appropriately and visually reveal clues about the content and meaning of the text?

Legibility   Numerous considerations affect legibility. They include point size and line length, word and letter spacing, contrast with background color or image, and distance from the viewer.

Alignment   Are the text and images aligned to enhance logical flow and clear connections between elements?

Hierarchy   Does the reader have clear visual typographic clues about the order or hierarchy of the content, ideas, and meanings?

Repetition   Are similar ideas represented in similar typographic styles? Within the hierarchy, are elements of equal importance shown with equal typographic treatments?

Color   Is color used to enhance or highlight meanings conveyed by the text?

Quantity   Is the amount of text appropriate for the audience? e.g. How long does a visitor spend with a given media product, and is the text appropriate to the visitor experience.

Principles of Interpretive Design

What are the meanings in the images, text? Is there a big idea?

Do the meanings of the text and images complement and enhance each other?

Does the composition stimulate emotional and intellectual connections?

The following questions and principles are the basic design elements to consider when creating or evaluating interpretive media. Handled well, these principles can enhance the interpretive effectiveness of a media product.

Hierarchy
Are the elements logically organized or visually grouped according to similar meanings?

Color
Colors have meaning. Does the use of color enhance the meaning of the composition?

Images
Does the cropping, placement, size and composition of the graphics should enhance the text other elements in the media? Are the images compelling? Do they stimulate emotional and intellectual connections?

Typography
Is the typographic treatment of the text legible, clear, and developed according to the hierarchy and focus of the content?

White Space
Does the use of white space create visual focus on the primary interpretive elements?

Alignment
Are the elements visually aligned to enhance legibility, focus, and heirarchy?

Proximity
Are related elements shown in close, logical, and consistent proximity?

Contrast
Does the contrast between elements in terms of size, color, shape, enhance the significant meanings?

Repetition
Are interpretive elements repeated to create patterns of recognition?

Simplicity and Clarity
Do the elements work together to create a clear point of focus that visually conveys the meanings?

Quantity
Is number and complexity of the images, and the quantity of text appropriate for the interpretive medium and the audience? Is it appropriate for the visitor experience?