


# Chapter 3


## Minimalism in Design: A Gestalt Perspective on Simplicity and Closure

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### ABSTRACT

*Minimalist design strengthens communication by reducing cognitive load and directing attention to essential elements. The simplicity (Prägnanz) and closure principles of Gestalt psychology explain the effect of minimalist design; the brain prefers regular, symmetrical structures and perceives holistic forms by completing missing elements. When examining movie posters between 1990 and 2020 and the works of minimalist designers such as Saul Bass, Paul Rand, Josef Müller-Brockmann, Massimo Vignelli, Wim Crouwel, it is seen how negative space, limited color palettes, and geometric compositions are used. These posters clarify messages with bold typography, symbols, and high-contrast arrangements instead of complex images. Minimalist design strengthens focus by eliminating unnecessary details and increases the mental engagement of the viewer. Gestalt principles increase*

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*comprehension and memorability by supporting the viewer's tendency to complete missing information. As a result, minimalism is a powerful tool that provides clarity and impact in visual communication.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Minimalism in design operates on the principle that simplicity enhances communication by reducing cognitive overload and directing attention to essential elements. Gestalt psychology, particularly the principles of simplicity (Prägnanz) and closure provides a theoretical foundation for understanding why minimalist design is effective. The principle of simplicity suggests that the human brain prefers organised, symmetrical, and concise visual structures, making minimalist designs easier to process and remember. The closure principle explains how the mind fills in missing elements to perceive a complete form, allowing designers to create engaging visuals that rely on audience interpretation. These psychological mechanisms play a crucial role in how viewers process minimalist design and extract meaning from it. To analyse how minimalist design aligns with Gestalt principles and enhances visual communication, this study examines a collection of cultural posters (film, theatre, music) created during a specific period alongside works by five designers renowned for their minimalist approach. The selected posters are assessed in terms of their utilisation of negative space, limited colour palettes, geometric composition, and implied forms. By concentrating on designs that eliminate unnecessary details, this study explores how minimalism strengthens the transmission of core messages while leveraging cognitive processing advantages. Examples from posters designed 1990's provide insights into how minimalism has evolved in cultural and artistic promotion. These posters often substitute complex imagery with bold typography, symbolic forms, and high-contrast layouts, illustrating how simplicity aids immediate recognition and engagement. The works of five influential minimalist designers—such as Saul Bass, Paul Rand, Josef Müller-Brockmann, Massimo Vignelli, and Wim Crouwel—further demonstrate how minimalism, informed by Gestalt psychology, enhances clarity and impact. Their designs balance space and visual weight, encouraging the viewer's mind to actively complete implied forms actively, making the composition more memorable. The analysis of these posters reveals that minimalist design enhances focus and comprehension by eliminating distractions and directing attention towards the most critical information. The Gestalt principle of simplicity is evident in how designers utilise clean lines, structured layouts, and fewer elements to create instantly recognisable compositions. The closure principle plays a crucial role in engagement, as many minimalist posters rely on the viewer's cognitive ability to fill in missing details. This is particularly effective in

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