

Applying Graphic Design Principles  
to the Creation of Print Media  
in a Theatre Production.

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*Proverbs 3:6 Listen for God's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; he's the one who will keep you on track.*

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## Abstract

This thesis explores an understanding of my role, as a teacher and in this study a graphic designer in order to design print materials for a theatre production, “Tales of a Tartan Mandarin: The Story of Quong Tart”. In July 2004 the staged production of “Tales of a Tartan Mandarin – The Story of Quong Tart” was produced by the Centre for Research and Education in the Arts in conjunction with the Quong Tart Centenary Commemoration Committee and presented by the University of Technology, Sydney at the Guthrie Theatre at UTS.

In order to investigate the above, a qualitative case-study was undertaken, which utilized the theory of reflective practice, specifically reflection in and on action (Schön, 1983). Theories of reflective practice have provided insight into the development of my thinking throughout the study, and also provide many opportunities to question and explore my own practice.

The focus of this study was on Graphic design principles used in print media, in particular for a theatrical production. Through the review of the current literature the research identifies the key ‘principles’ and ‘guidelines’ to follow in producing print materials. The study involves reflection on my own design work, in the form of a case study. This reflection has been facilitated through my personal reflective journal, conversations and observations with participants and. The significance and value of this research is achieved by an understanding of graphic design principles, and to implementation of these for print media in an educational theatre production. This case study was completed in two sections. Firstly, a review and analysis of five theatrical

programs assessing and analyzing their use of design principles. Secondly, the review and analysis of the 'Tales of a tartan Mandarin: The Story of Quong Tart' programme designed by myself, and the use of design principles in this programme.

The findings of the study include an understanding of key graphic design principles used in order to design and produce effective print media for a theatrical production. The main findings suggest that with an understanding of design principles, print media can be sharp, eye catching, perceived effectively and therefore an asset to a theatrical production. This study acknowledges the possibilities of graphic design in print materials and suggests the possibility of future research in this area.

Possibilities for possible research in this topic area would include:

- The comparing and contrasting of theatrical programs from different historical periods looking at graphics and the emphases placed on the programme.
- The analysis of theatrical programs from different points of view such as the audience, producer or designer.
- The analysis of messages conveyed through programs. For example; the way that programs have been used as a promotional tool containing advertisements and similar.

*I found I could say things with color and shapes that I couldn't say any other way –  
things I had no words for. ~Georgia O'Keeffe (2001) [www.thequotegarden.com](http://www.thequotegarden.com))*

*Reflection is an instinct as important as hunger or creativity. It's the instinct that allows  
us to transfer matters from the physical realm to the psychological. Without this ability  
there is little prospect of repair or inner movement. Modjeska, 2000, p.7*

