1

Lesson 1: Principles of Gestalt Systems: Theory
Emergence
Reification
Multistability
Invariance

Gestalt Psychology is a theory introduced in the late 1800's by the Austrian philospher **Christian von Ehrenfels** which asserts that in relation to perception, the mind forms a global whole with self-organizing tendencies. The movement of Gestalt Psychology was later founded by **Max Wertheimer, Kurt Koffka** and **Wolfgang Koehler.** Koffka is attributed with quoting the phrase '*The whole is other than the sum of its parts',* Gestalt does not explain why these perceptions exist, only that they do exist.

Following are examples and descriptions of the key princinples of gestalt:

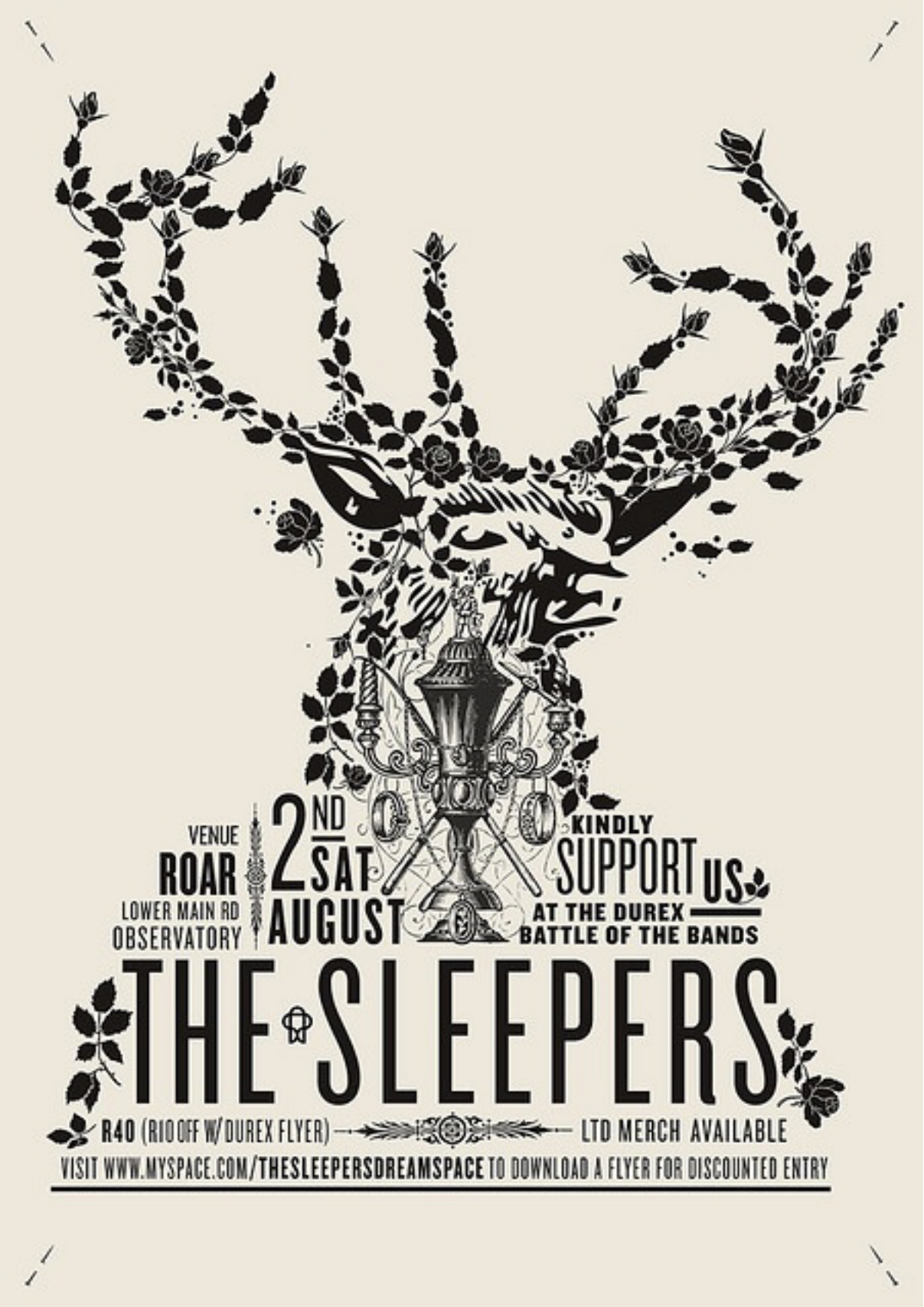
Emergence

As the name suggests, the theory of emergence is a process of complex pattern formation where images emerge from patterns. In the picture below, the dog is not recognized by first analyzing all of the individual shapes contained, rather it is perceived as a whole, all at once.

Examples of Emergence

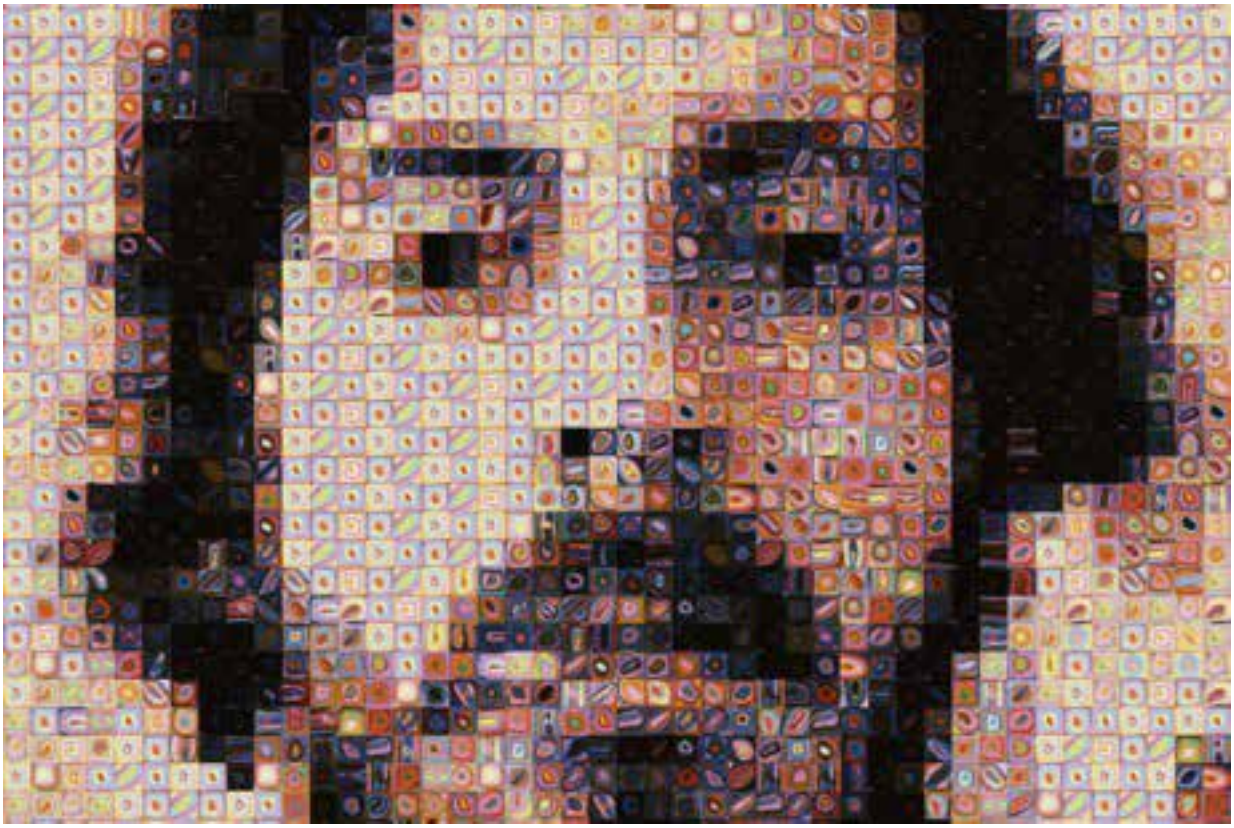
Examples of Emergence

Examples of Emergence

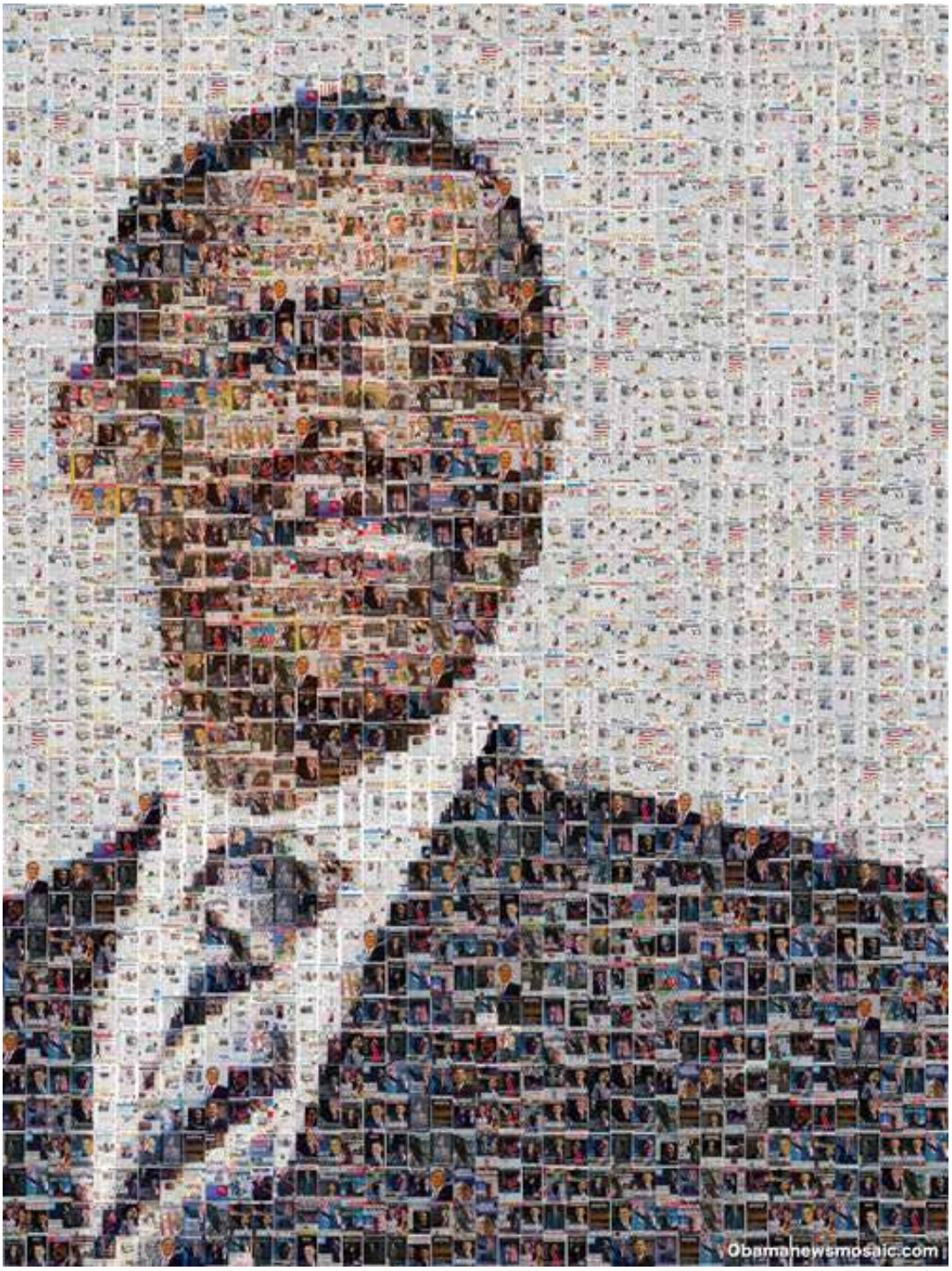


Examples of Emergence

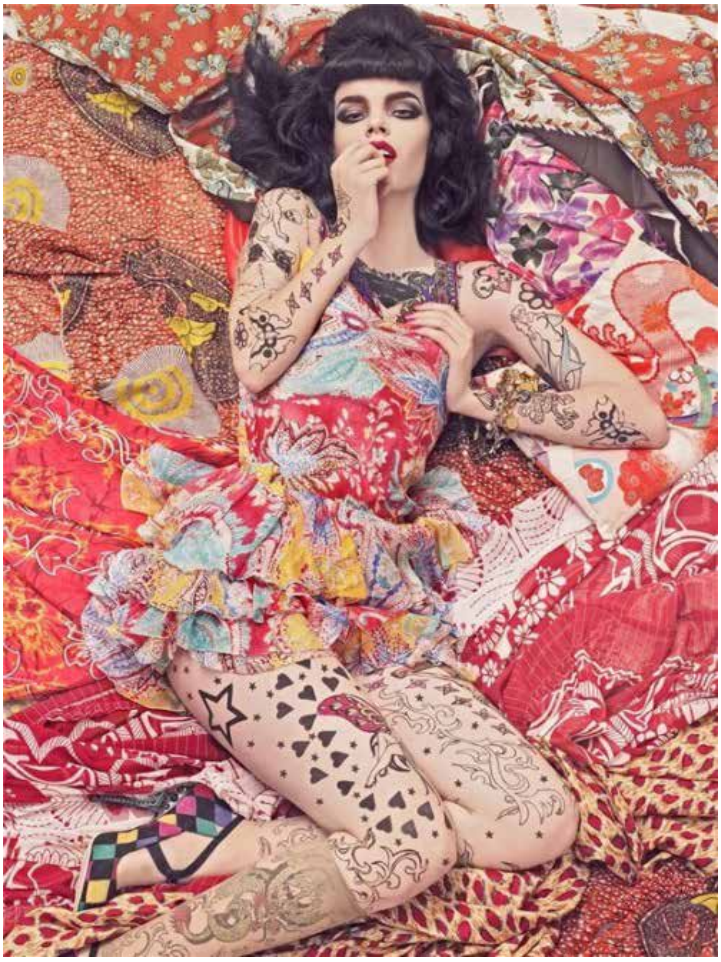
Examples of Emergence



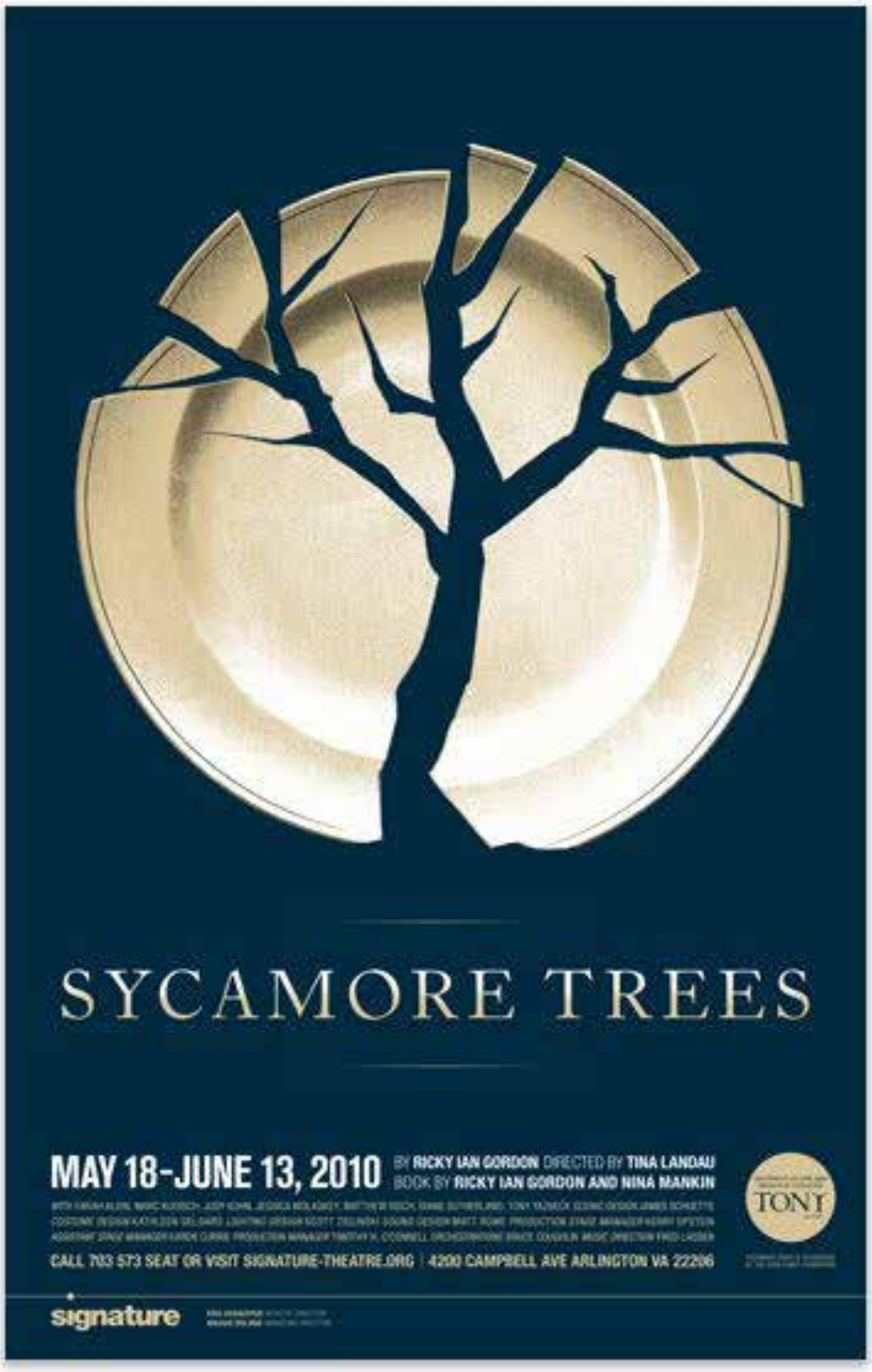
Examples of Emergence



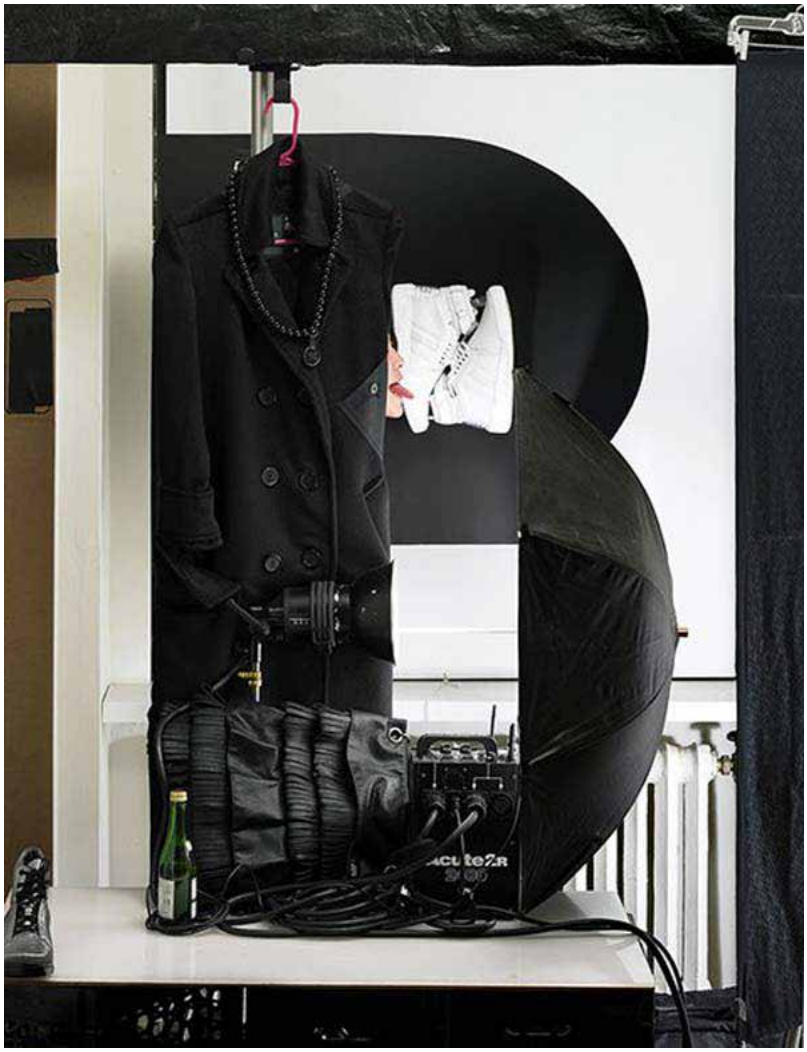
Examples of Emergence



Examples of Emergence

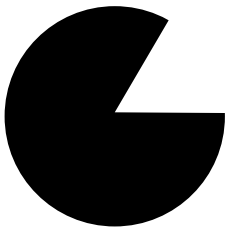


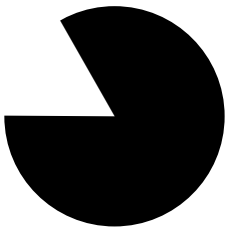
Examples of Emergence



Reification

Reification is the constructive or generative aspect of perception, by which the experienced percept contains more explicit spacial information than the sensory stimulus on which it is based. More simply put, we fill in the gaps to create a unified whole from the parts and implied shapes.

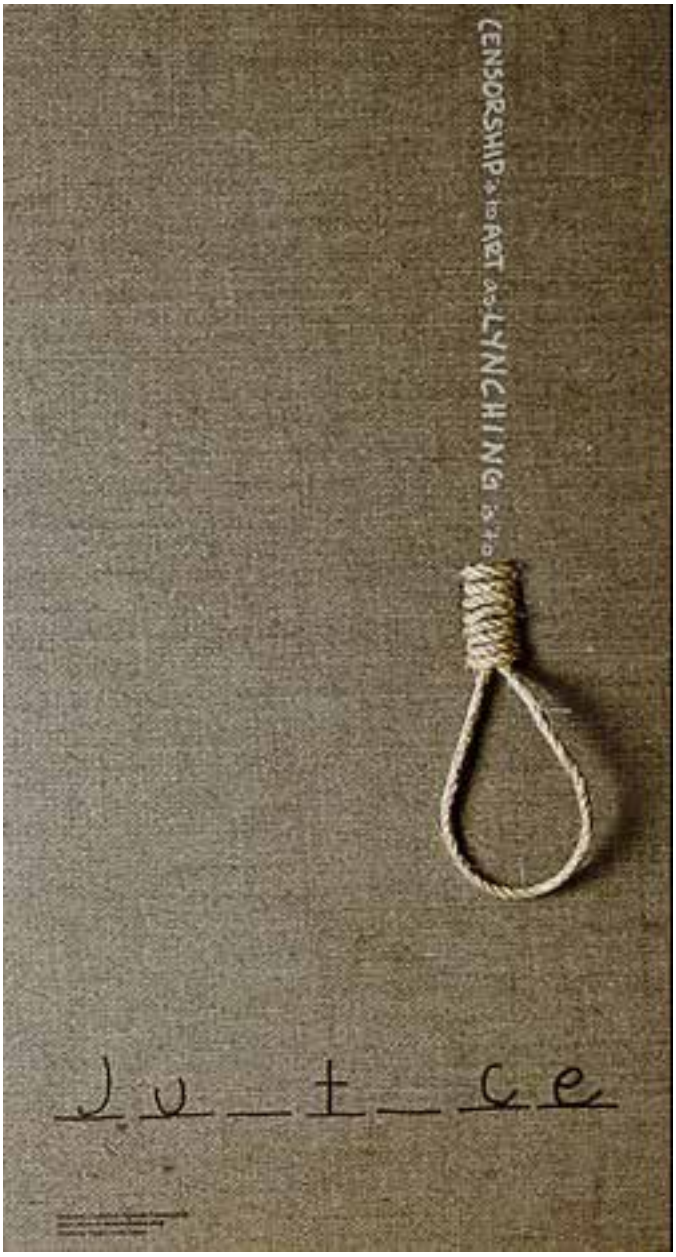




Examples of Reification

Examples of Reification

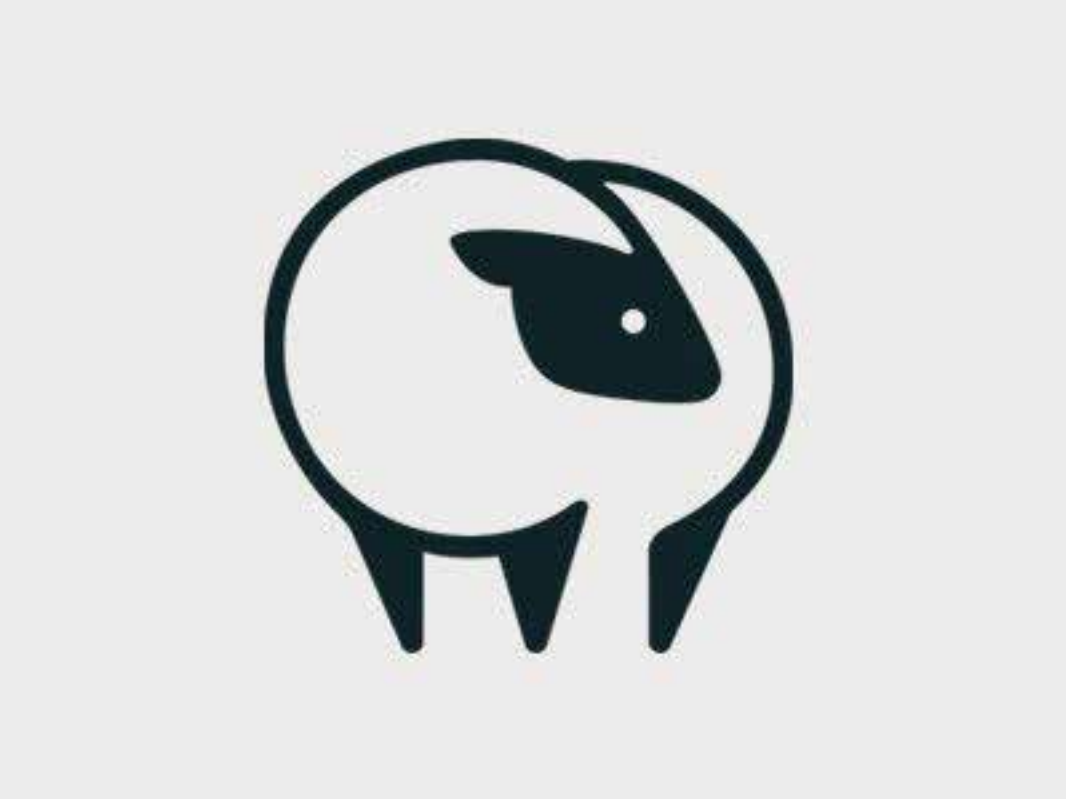
Examples of Reification



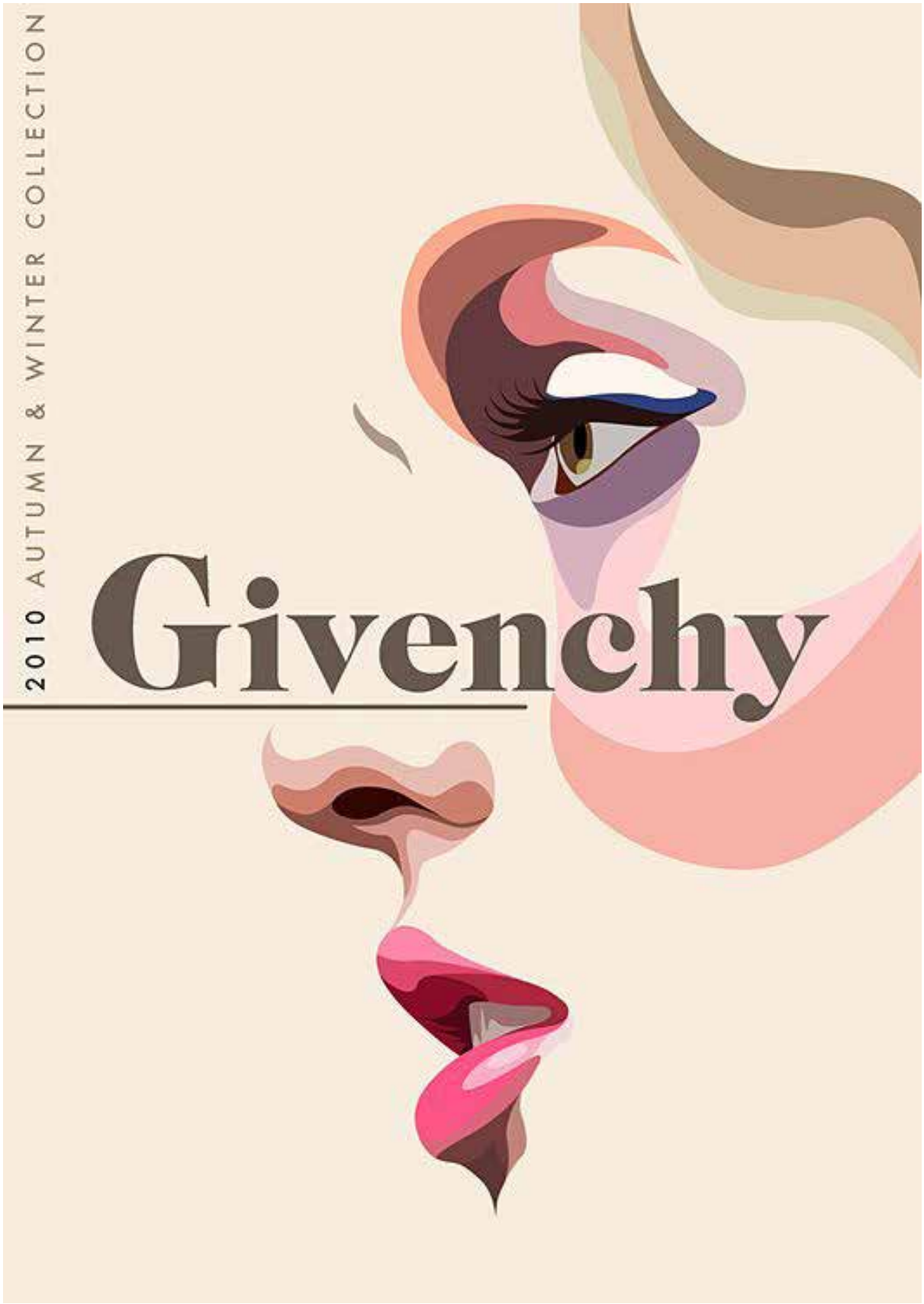
Examples of Reification

Examples of Reification

Examples of Reification

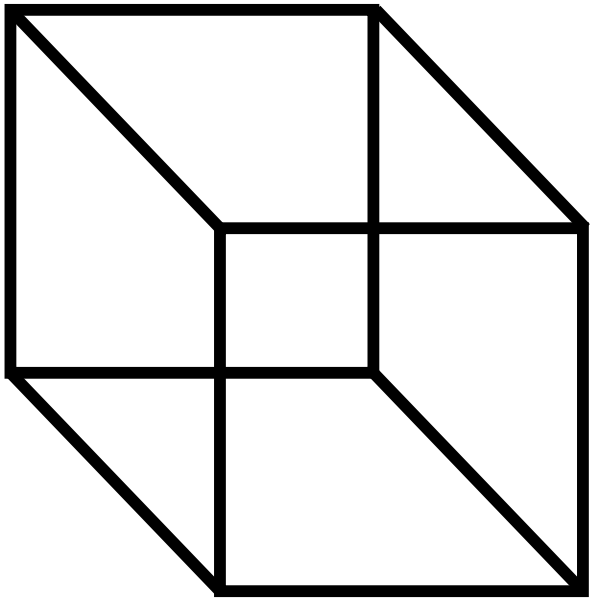


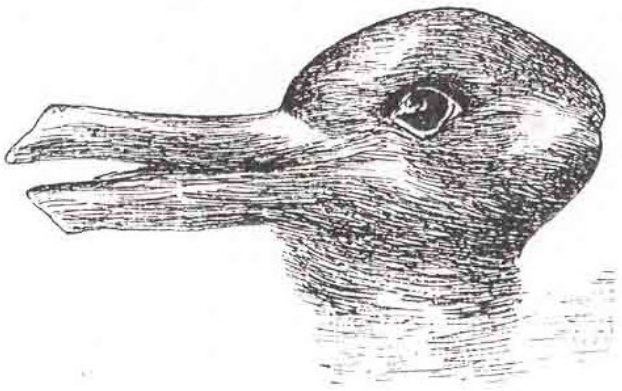
Examples of Reification



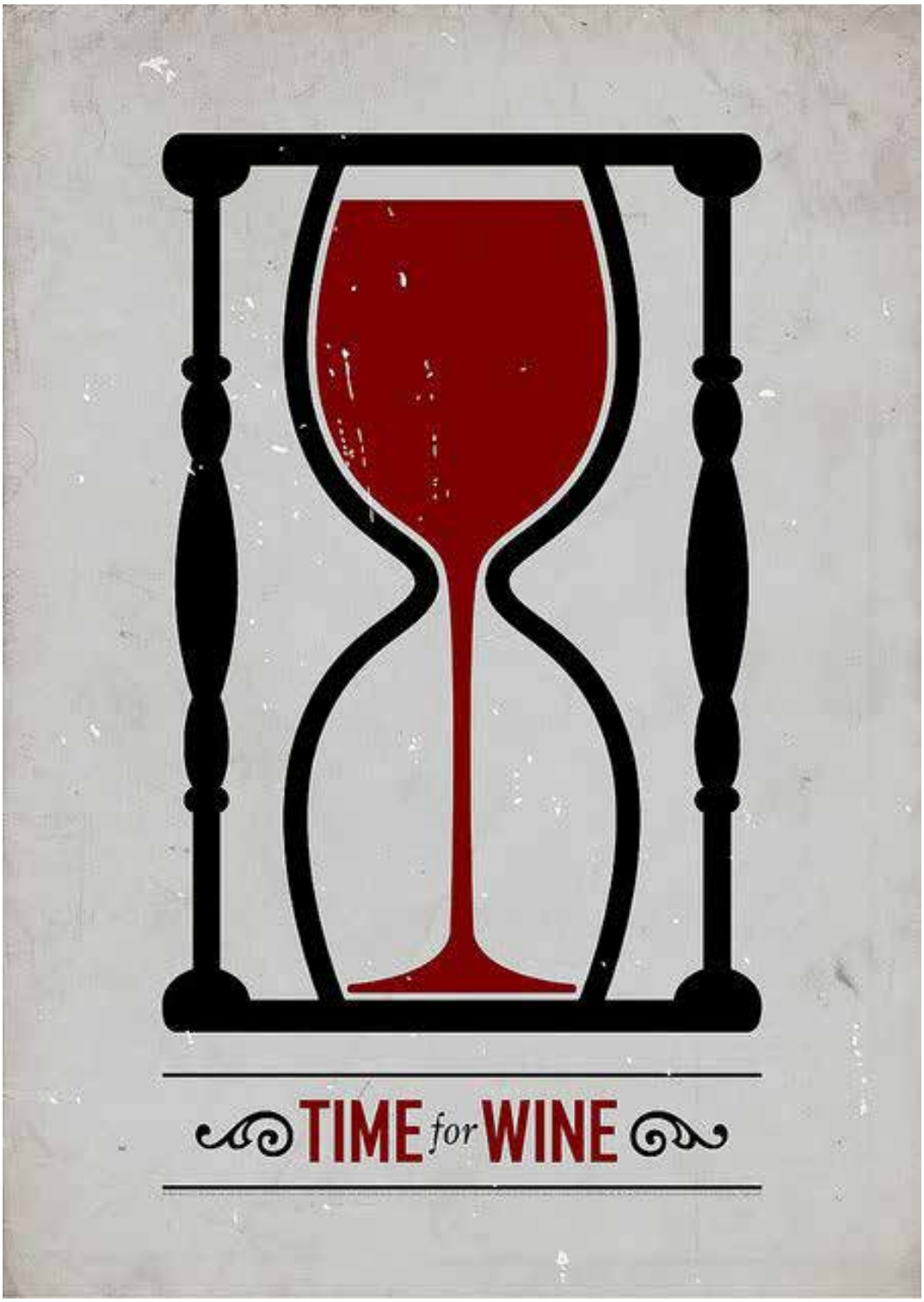
Multistability

Multistability is the tendency of ambiguous perceptual experiences to pop back and forth unstably between two of more alternative interpretations, as seen below in the **Necker Cube** and below in the **Duck Rabbit**. What sets multistability apart from the other principles from a philosophical standpoint is the ability for one image simultaneously to have two meanings, and although we are capable of knowing the two meanings, we are forced to perceive one or the other.

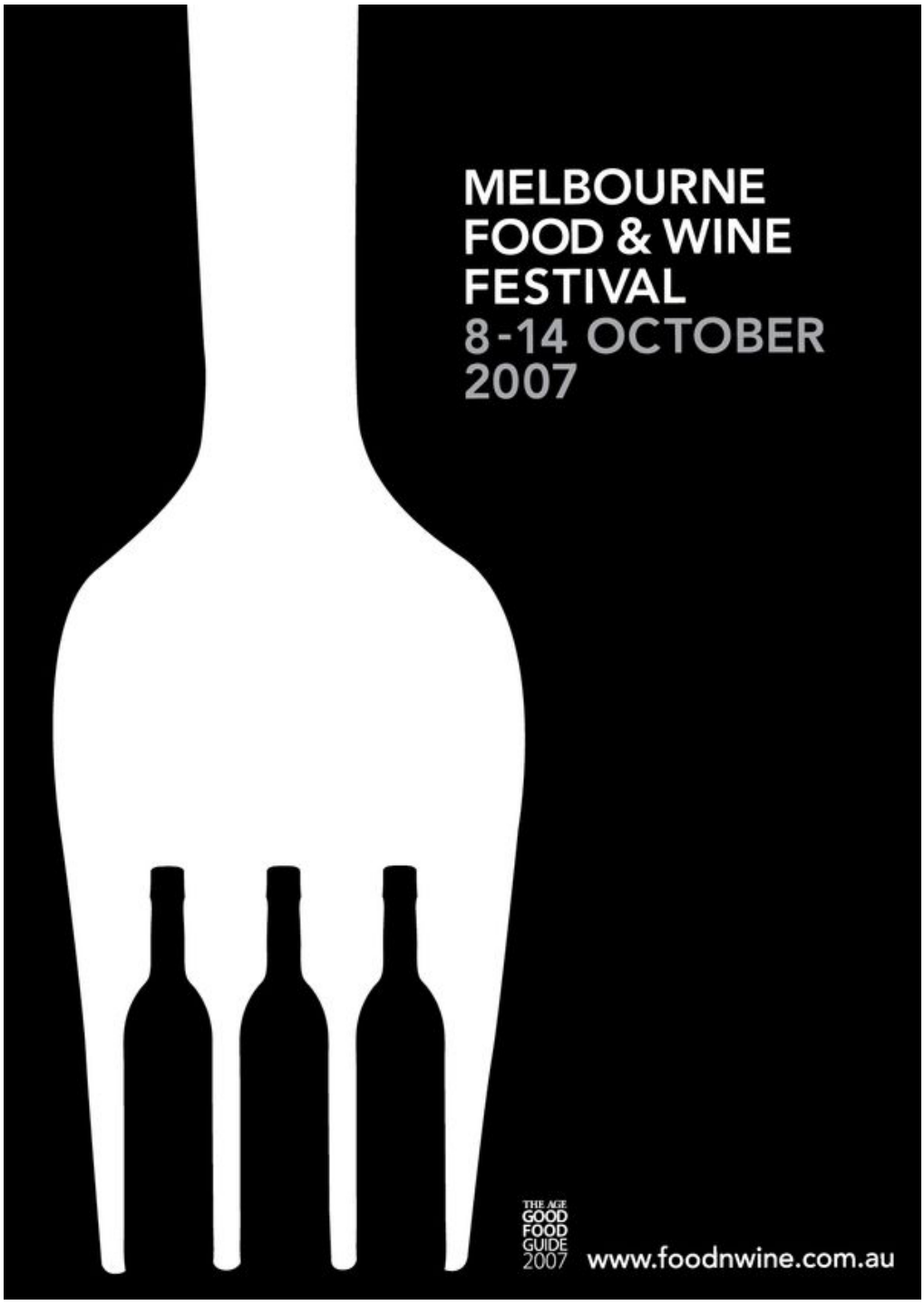




Examples of Multistability

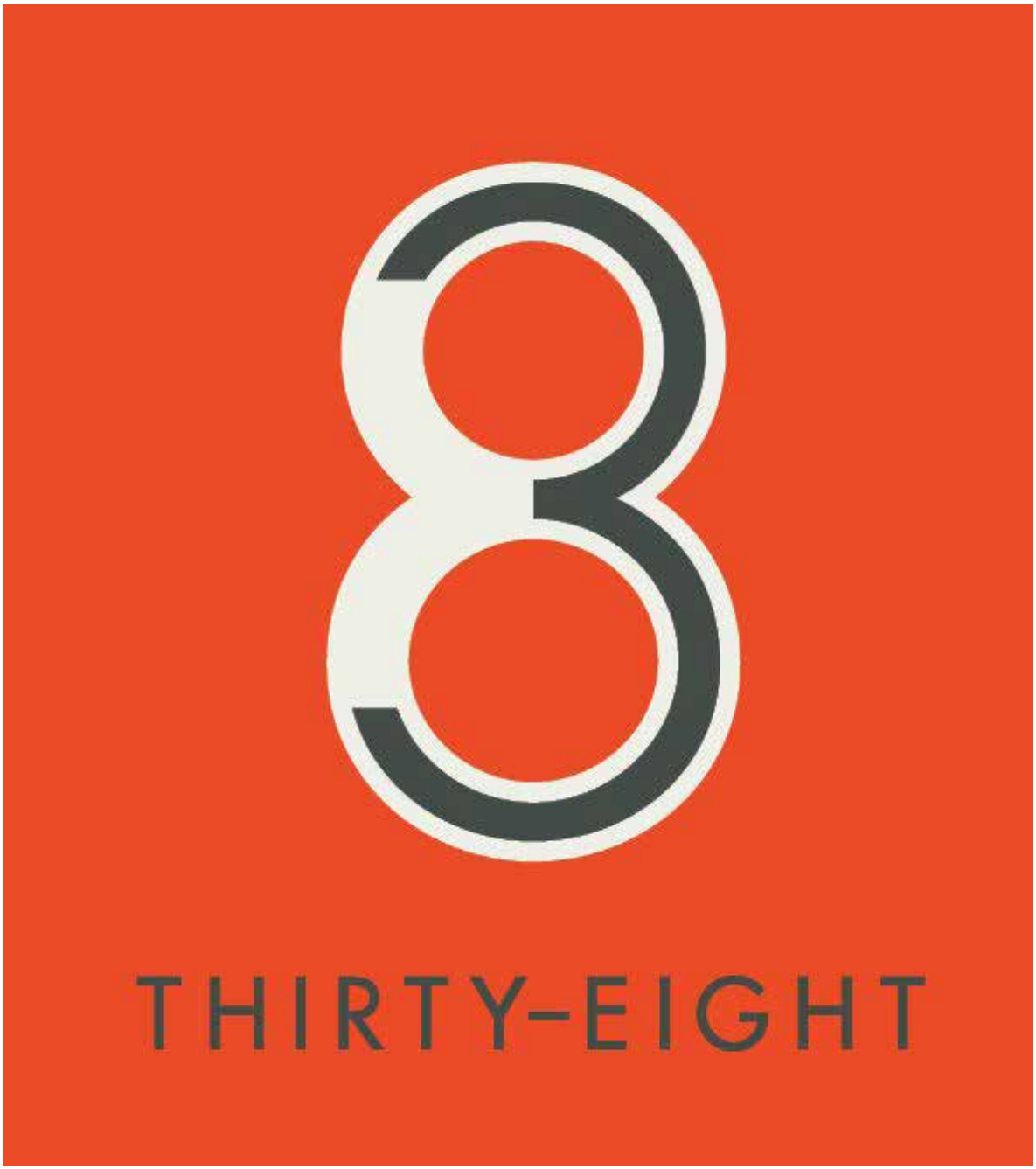


Examples of Multistability



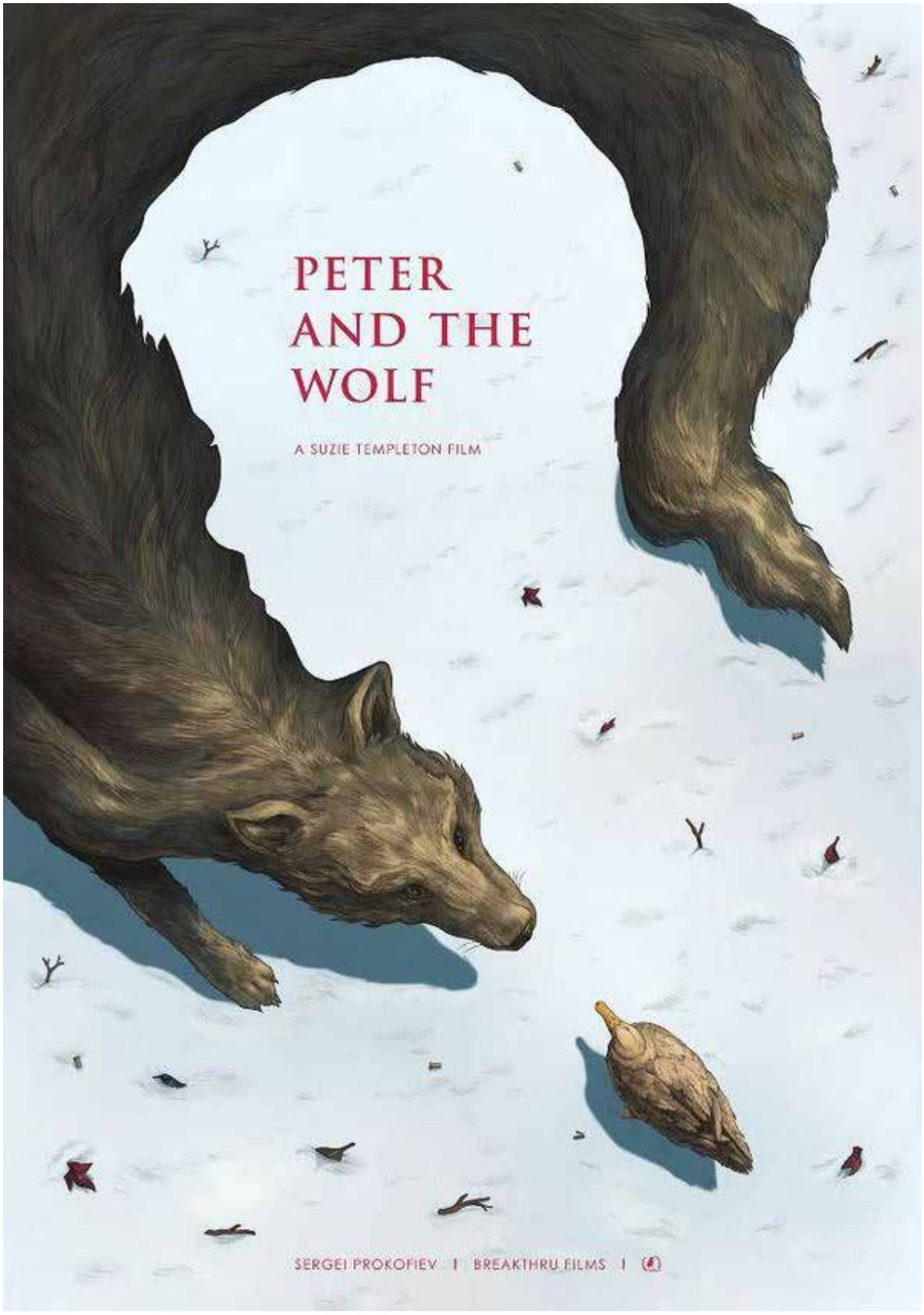
Examples of Multistability

Examples of Multistability



Examples of Multistability

Examples of Multistability



Examples of Multistability

Examples of Multistability

Examples of Multistability

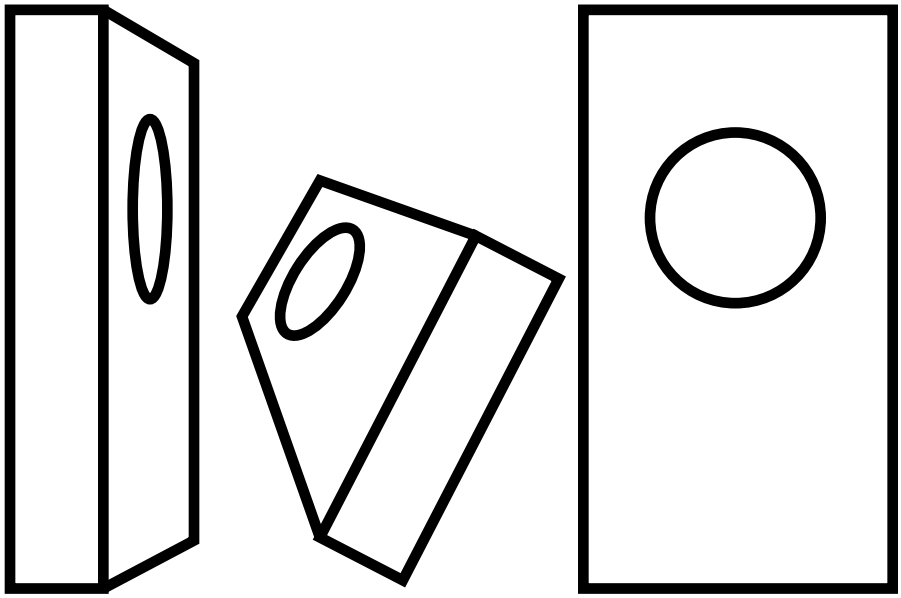
Examples of Multistability

Examples of Multistability

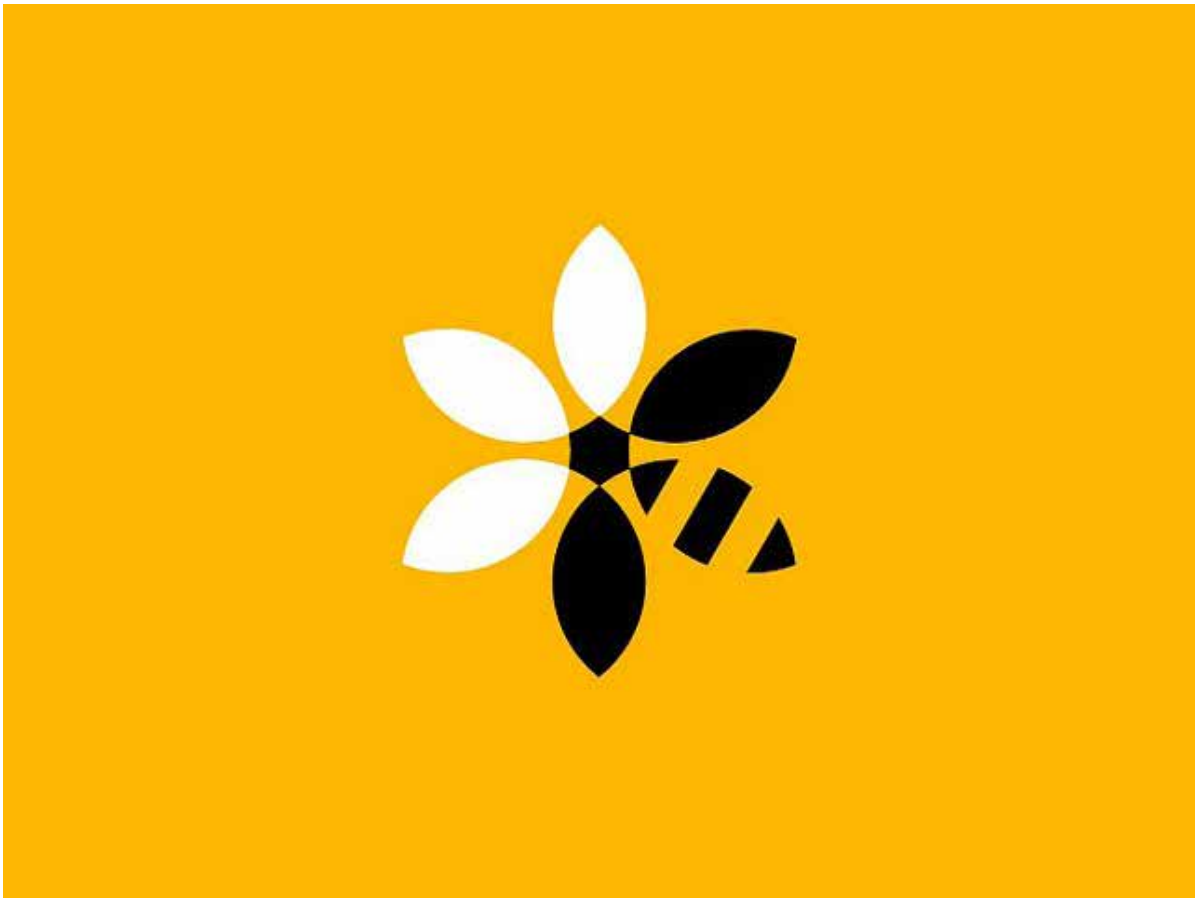
Lesson 1: Principles of Gestalt Systems: Theory

Invariance

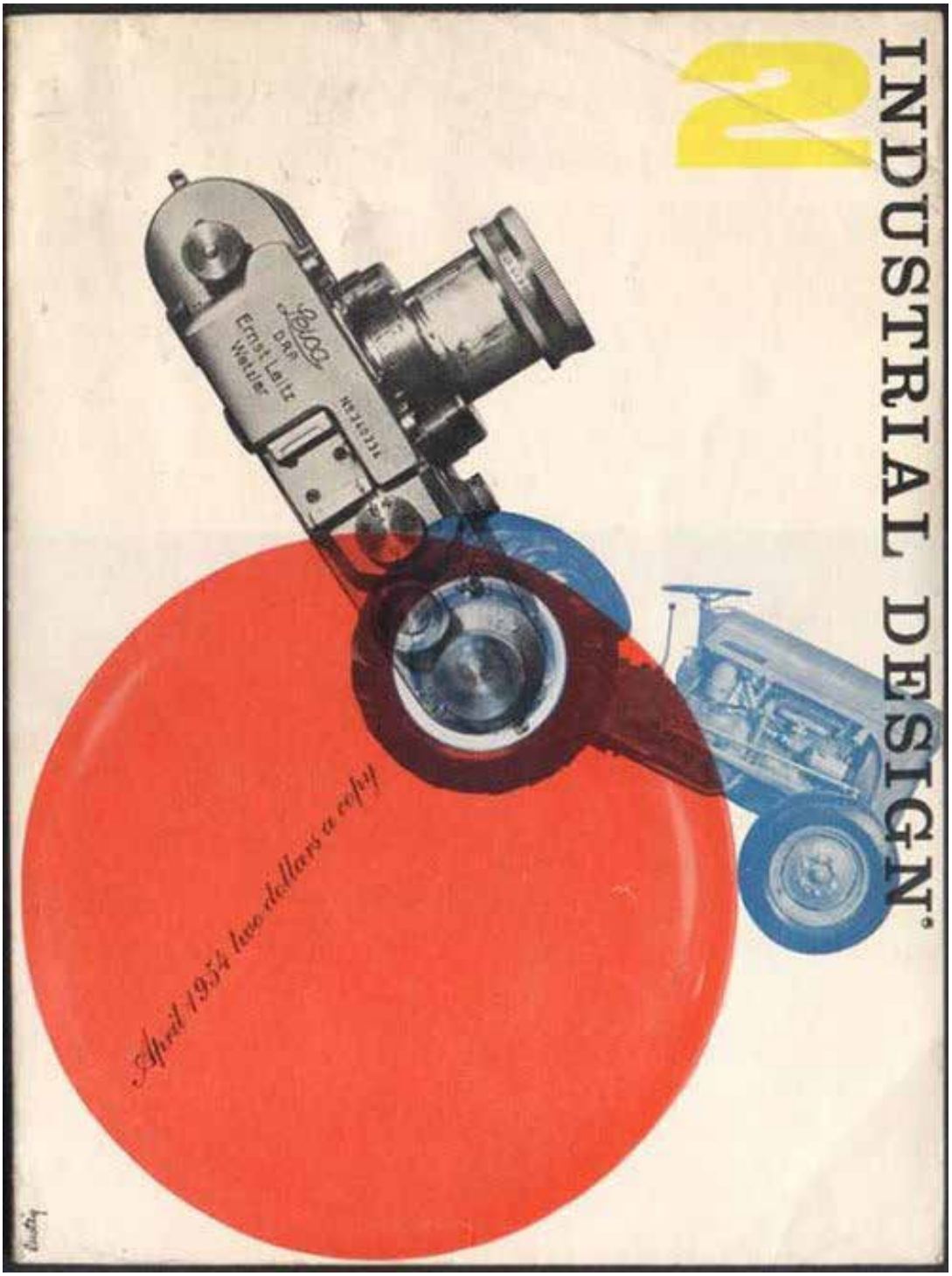
Invariance is the prinicple of perception which allows us to recognize forms when viewing from a different perspective. It allows us to recognize people when they are turned, as opposed to a straight on view. Shapes then become recognizable independent of rotation, deformity or scale.



Examples of Invariance



Examples of Invariance



Examples of Invariance

Examples of Invariance

Examples of Invariance

Examples of Invariance

Examples of Invariance

Examples of Invariance

Examples of Invariance