

# Framing – graphics in the context of designing visual message

keywords: framing, gap, word, letter, language, interpretation, encoding, decoding

The quote of Mikhail Bakhtin used as the motto describes in a simple way what is the main thesis of our theoretical considerations here: “Of all words uttered in everyday life, no less than half belong to someone else”. Even a simple repeating of someone else’s words entails personal accent; this individual trace in the utterance is of major significance and is a feature of specific communication, of “new” understanding – a new word – even though the wording has not significantly changed.

The main source of inspiration for my doctoral dissertation is the concept of framing as a phenomenon which affects the society, public life, culture and art on a daily basis. The study of framing is interdisciplinary, it is justified in all social sciences as well as in the area of research concerning graphics as part of visual arts. Framing is the way of constructing the message, which is interpreted by the audience. By adding certain elements, the picture acquires completely different features and creates new meanings, a new way of looking at our reality. By putting graphic commentary to a certain wall or space, we create new interpretation of the whole surrounding environment. Framing occurs at two levels, the level of production or the encoding of an image and at the level of reception or decoding of an image<sup>1</sup>. During encoding, the producer of the image frames the subject in a certain way and creates his own narrative. At the level of reception, the audience will look for these frames in order to interpret the image. When trying to find the meaning of an image, viewers may often look for heuristic or cognitive shortcuts that help to understand an image. Some examples of heuristics would be things like stereotypes or other generalizations. However the viewers’ reception is also based on their own knowledge and experiences. A viewer may see a visual item and interpret it differently than the image creator intended.

**The practical part of my doctoral dissertation is a graphic installation.** Using graphics as a technique of multiplying information I am striving to show a certain **gap** – “irregularity, mismatch, disproportion, different cognitive and emotional experience, which being a kind of subjectivization, constantly introduces anti-patterns of cultural patterns, creates a new space as opposed to the one to which we are accustomed”<sup>2</sup>. The awareness of this gap and the possibility to fill it through interpreting messages are the core of my artistic activity. We should work on received interpretations in order to create an anti-frame that is consistent with our beliefs and values.

**The purpose of the created space** (graphic installation) is to provide the audience with experiences which engage imagination and creativity and allow for personal interpretations. Graphics (visual communication) is not only a fragment of an image superimposed in the space, it is a spatial organism which, with time, changes it not only physically but also imaginatively. Due to changing cultural factors the recipient makes a selection – the work’s values change depending on the context.

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1 The Encoding/decoding model of communication was first developed by cultural studies scholar Stuart Hall in 1973. He discusses this model of communication in his essay ‘Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse’, Hall’s essay offers a theoretical approach of how media messages are produced, disseminated, and interpreted. His model claims that television and other media audiences are presented with messages that are decoded, or interpreted in different ways depending on an individual’s cultural background, economic standing, and personal experiences ([https://www.kcesmjcollege.in/ICT/English/Kodowanie% 20Decoding% 20final% 20notes.pdf](https://www.kcesmjcollege.in/ICT/English/Kodowanie%20Decoding%20final%20notes.pdf)).

2 Kurak Maciej (2019), “The 38th Edition of Maria Dokowicz Competition, Poznań”: University of the Arts Poznań and Authors.