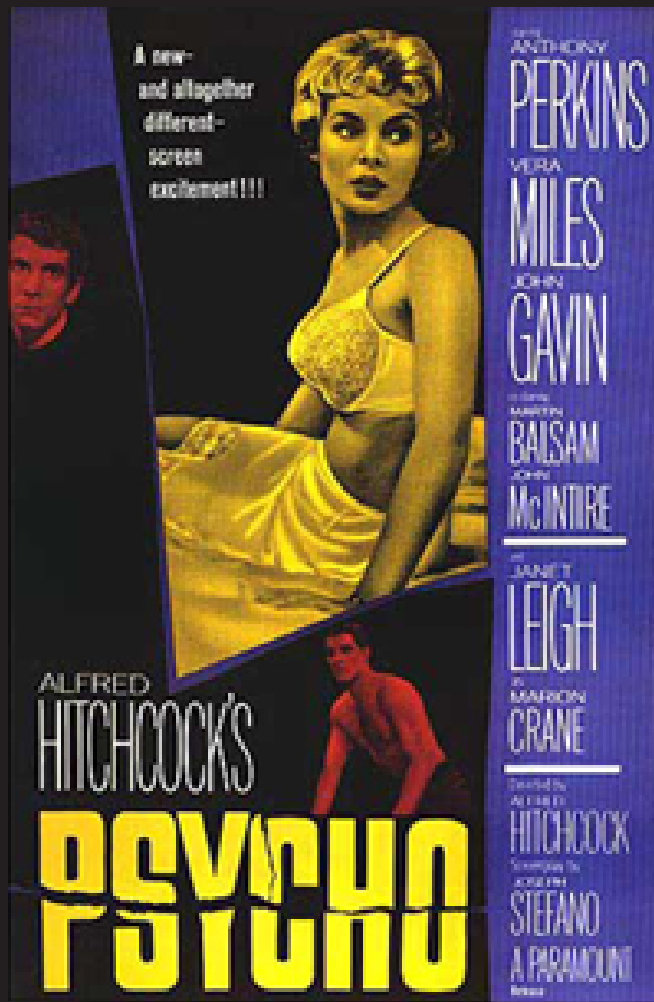


NMS 502  
TEXT & IMAGE



RYAN  
BALSIGER'S  
**RHETORICAL  
DESIGN ANALYSIS**

A new-  
and altogether  
different-  
Rhetorical Design  
Analysis  
excitement!!!



Psycho Movie Poster

INTRODUCTION

## SECTION ONE

# HISTORY OF ARTIFACT

This artifact is the theatrical poster for the 1960 film *PSYCHO*. The film and poster were released by Paramount Studios, and production was completed by Hitchcock's Shamley Productions. Shortly after the film's release, Paramount Studios was bought out by Universal. Universal currently owns the rights to the film and all other artifacts including the poster.

## HITCH

The director of the film Alfred Hitchcock, was known for controlling all aspects of his films, including approving the design elements of the theatrical posters.

The *PSYCHO* poster is an artifact that has been viewed by many people, for many decades. The composition, color, angles, and typography create a final product that creates excitement for not only the viewer of the film, but also the viewer of the poster itself.

## SECTION ONE

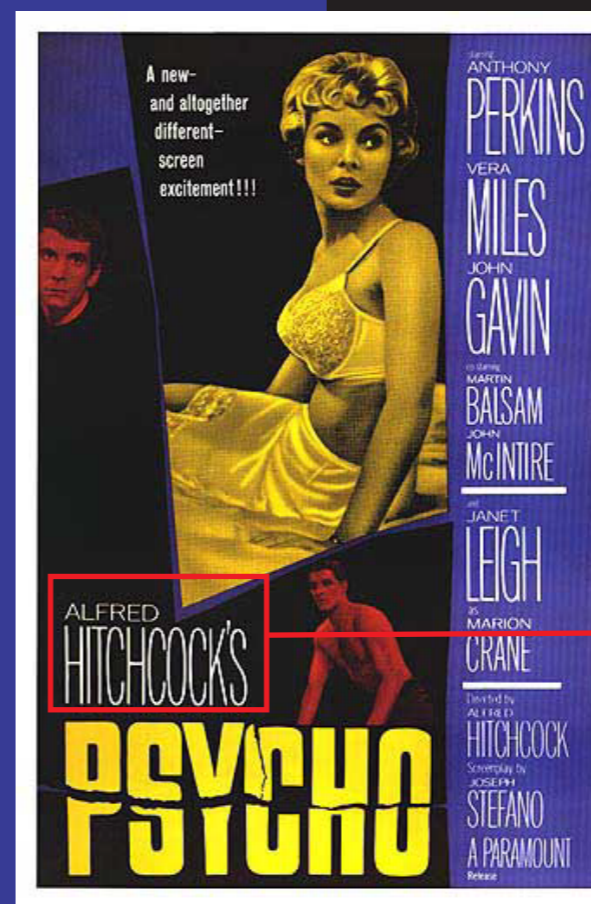
# HISTORY OF ARTIFACT

## DISTRIBUTION OF POSTER

Between 1940 and the 1980's movie posters were distributed and manufactured through the National Screen Service. The NSS would warehouse the posters, distribute, and redistribute various advertisements to major theatres. The major cities would display the posters (usually one to two per theatre) and then send them to smaller cities via greyhound bus. This process lasted for up to a year, depending on the release length of the film. Many times the posters would be returned to the NSS and they would house them in case of a re-release.

During 1960 commercials and posters were the primary marketing techniques used to attract viewers to the movie theatre. The poster had to reflect the genre of the film, and contribute to the overall narrative. The *PSYCHO* movie poster conformed to many conventions of the time, including the use of **Director name recognition**, but the design also embraced a style of storytelling that many posters had not utilized before.

Fig. 1



Many films, both now and in 1960, used the Director's name to market the film. In early films this was more popular than relatively unknown actors/actresses.



Fig. 2

# DESIGN

## SECTION TWO CONVENTIONS OF ARTIFACT

Although it is not specifically apparent in most searches, the supposed author of the PSYCHO poster design is Saul Bass. Bass is credited as being the pictorial consultant, as well as the title designer. He collaborated on quite a few of Hitchcock's films, including North By Northwest, and **Vertigo**.

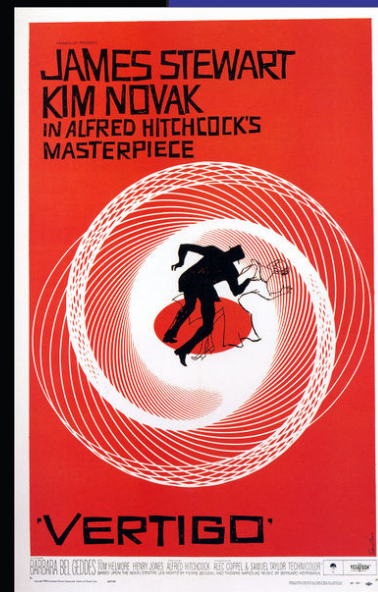
Though not credited in the movie credits for being the designer of the poster much of Bass' work uses a similar style.



May 8, 1920 - April 25, 1996

### AUTHOR OF ARTIFACT

Fig. 1



Bass was a designer, a director, and a title sequence creator. He worked with many famous directors including: Stanley Kubrick, Steven Spielberg, Otto Preminger, and of course Alfred Hitchcock.

#### Other Movie Posters

- \* Vertigo
- \* The Shining
- \* West Side Story
- \* Anatomy of a Murder
- \* Schindler's List

Designed many Logos Including:

- \*Quaker Oats
- \*United Airlines
- \*United Way
- \*AT&T globe



Fig. 2

## SECTION TWO CONVENTIONS OF ARTIFACT

## OTHER FILM POSTERS FROM 1960

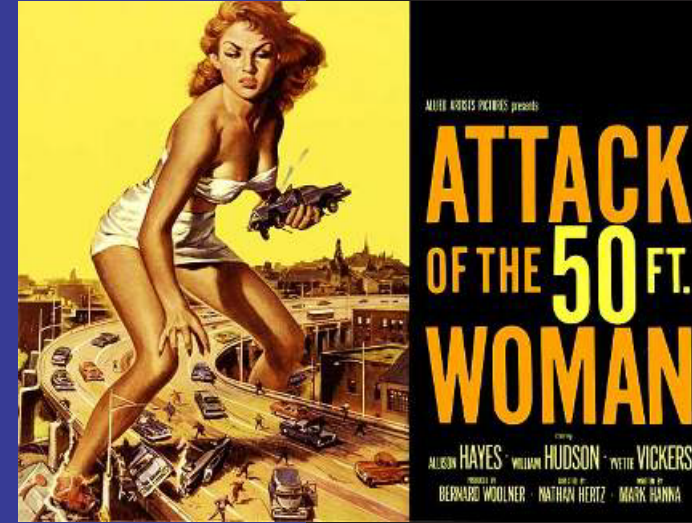


Fig. 3

One convention that the PSYCHO poster embraced was the use of sexuality and the appeal of a female image on the poster. Another similarity is the use of bright active colors, like yellow, to attract people walking by or reading the images from far away.

Another convention that most posters in 1960 adhered to was the use of plain typography. Text with straight lines and few curves was used very frequently.

## COMPARISON OF ARTIFACT



Fig. 4

## PSYCHO POSTER

- \* Director Name Recognition
- \*Dark Dominant Hue
- \*Image of Female
- \*Plain Typography
- \*Color Palette

# COLOR

## SECTION THREE

### COLOR OF ARTIFACT

Color is a very important part of the Psycho poster. Even though the film is in black and white, the poster grabs the viewers attention by using vivid colors. There are four main colors that make up the poster, not including the white text, they are: **black, yellow, red, and purple.** In addition to the presence of these colors there are many different shades of these core colors that create contrast and highlight specific portions of the poster.

## SECTION THREE

### COLOR OF ARTIFACT

Yellow and red are active warm colors, while purple is a passive cool color. This duality gives the entire composition good contrast.

The color wheel demonstrates how these colors play off each other. Yellow and Purple are slightly complimentary. Red and purple are close on the wheel, therefore they would be considered analogous



Fig. 2

THE COLOR WHEEL

The Red line indicates complimentary  
The Yellow arc indicates analogous

## THE SHADES OF THE ARTIFACT

This artifact uses darker hues of the main colors, this is caused by adding black to the original colors. This use of lower value colors contributes to the eerie and mysterious feel of the poster. The dark shades contribute to the shadows on the characters and stimulate a sense of fear.

Fig. 3

THE SHADE AND TINT COLOR WHEEL

Many of the colors used in the poster fall on the outside of this wheel. The outside of the wheel indicates a shade of a color, as opposed to the inside which represents tints of colors.



Fig. 1



Cross-section of colors

## The Main Four Colors OF THE ARTIFACT

Yellow and Red are primary colors, purple is a secondary color consisting of blue and red. This triad relationship between colors makes the purple dominant while the yellow is sub-dominant, and the red is used as an accent because it takes up the least amount of space.

# TYPOGRAPHY

The typography of this artifact is done in a very plain and simple font, however the manipulation of this font is where the true beauty of the design is present. The sans-serif font is manipulated through tracking and kerning, making the letters appear seperated by more or less space between eachother. This technique creates an uneasy or clostraphobic feeling for the viewer.

The other text present in the artifact is simplified even more, however the vertical scaling has been maniputated to make the letters looked stretched. This technique also creates a looming feeling, and makes the text seem omorinous.

## THE SLASH

The main title is special because it has a rip through it. This directly correlates to the genre of film. After the film was released many similar films have called themselves "Slasher films", a name given to films similar to PSYCHO.

The film also deals with characters being split internally, so the text is an example of the internal struggle of some of the characters.



Fig. 1

MAIN TTILE  
OF ARTIFACT

## SECTION FOUR

FONT  
OF ARTIFACT

## SECTION FOUR

FONT  
OF ARTIFACT

MAIN TTILE  
TEXT

BODY  
TEXT

# HELVETICA NEUE CONDENSED BLACK

# HELVETICA NEUE ULTRALIGHT

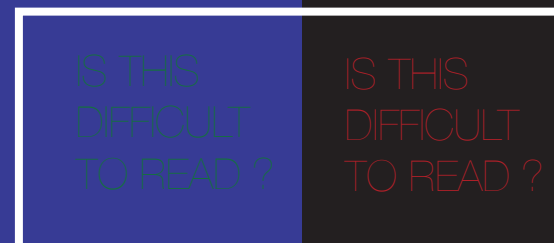
Helvetica Neue scaled  
Vertical Increase of 150%  
Used for Names on poster



Besides the main title the rest of the text is in white. This color is used to create a contrast with the dark colors. The purple and black backgrounds make using another dark hue difficult. Therefore the use of white on the text creates a nice contrast that makes the names pop.

Plus if you were to use a color like red on a black background then you would create visual noise, which makes it difficult to read the text.

## VISUAL NOISE



HOW ABOUT THIS?  
That's what I thought!

\* I do not know the exact font name, however Helvetica Neue is the closest I could find in my research.

# LAYOUT

## SECTION FIVE COMPOSITION OF ARTIFACT

Compositon is very important when it comes to combining many different parts of an artifact together. The PSYCHO poster creates uneasiness and fear through the layout of its different sections.

Fig. 1



No characters eye line is in the same direction. This has the viewer looking all over the page in a panic. A clever way of spreading terror.

The female (Janet Leigh) is the largest-the main character, but she is split between two red male figures. The tear in the page hieghtens the dynamic between the characters.

### COINCIDENCE I THINK NOT

The one place that many of the points direct attention to is the directors name and the main title. Even the large tear in the poster creates an arrow pointing toward Hitchcocks name.

### LINES OF SIGHT

### DYNAMIC OF TEAR

## SECTION FIVE COMPOSITION OF ARTIFACT

# BALANCE

The composition feels balanced because there is a heavy image with an active color on the top of the page and the bottom of the page. There are secondary figures with a similar color on either side of the page. Even though there is a block of color aligned right, there is still a small block in the same color on the opposite side. Additionally the black area is balanced by the white text. All of these examples show that the artifact is visually balanced and able to attract attention as desired.

## VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF ARTIFACT

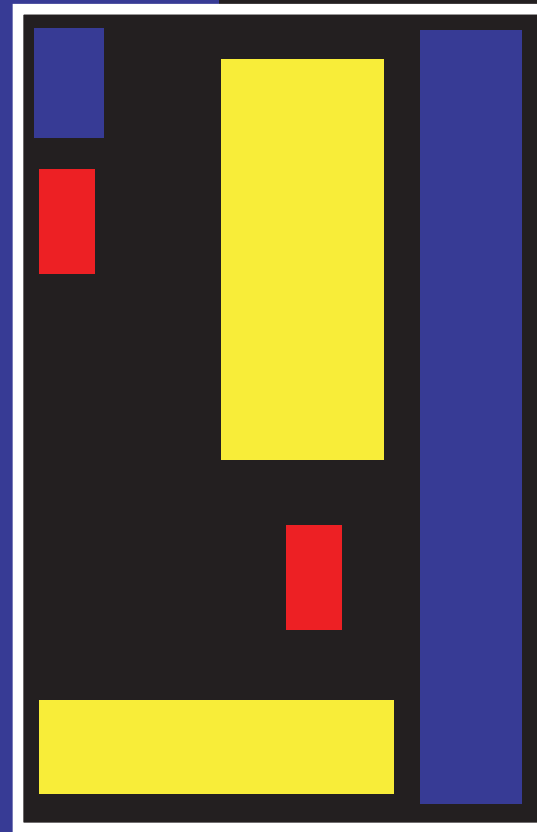


Fig. 2

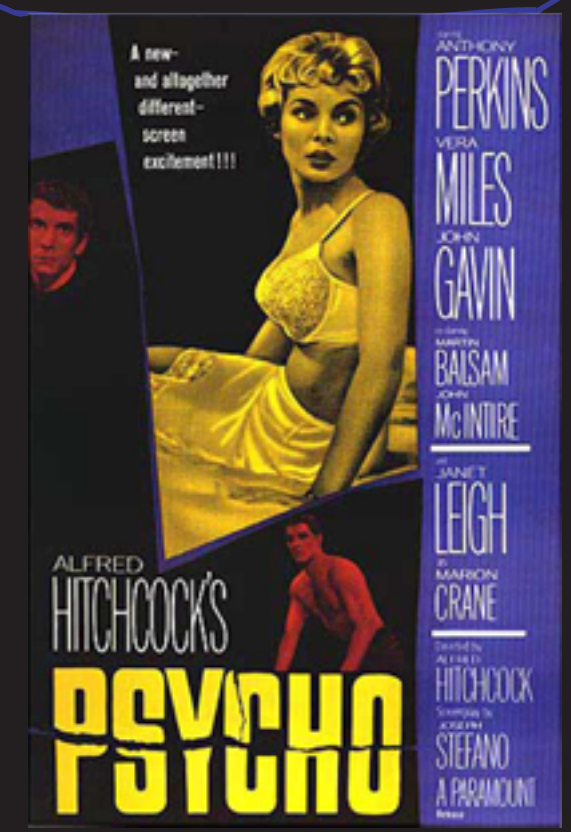


Fig. 3

# AUDIENCE

## SECTION SIX

### AUDIENCE OF ARTIFACT

*The audience for this artifact has changed through the years. Obviously in 1960 during the release of the film, the audience was geared toward moviegoers and potential fans of Hitchcock.*

*This demographic would have been comprised of primarily adults due to the nature of the film. Throughout the years, through re-releasing, VCR's, and now DVD's the poster has been seen by many interested groups.*

Fig. 1



## FOR THE PEOPLE

*Posters would adorn marquees and be present at the entrance of the theatre so that it could reach the most people.*

## SECTION SIX

### AUDIENCE OF ARTIFACT

## WHERE TO FIND ARTIFACT

*More recently the Artifact has ended up on numerous poster websites, like MoviePosters.com. Along with recent releases, audiences of online shoppers can browse assortments of vintage posters. This new market has done very well for the PSYCHO poster it is one of the top 25 purchased posters of all time.*

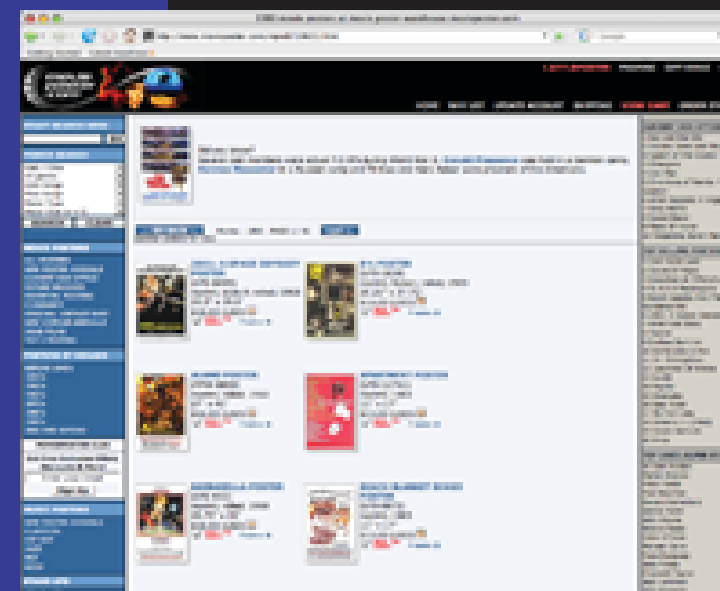


Fig. 2

*Another audience that is sometimes overlooked is poster collectors who have seen an emergence with sites like Ebay.com, that allows them to search, purchase and sell authentic, vintage movie posters.*



Fig. 3

# THE END

