Coherency and "das Gesamtkunstwerk"
Coherency, consistency, cohesion...

- *That things “work” in the same way*
- *That one can draw conclusions on not yet seen or tried things on the basis of what one already knows about the system*
- *That there is an underlying idea/notion/logic that unites different aspects of the design*
- *Common in all types of design*
Coherency in interaction design

Common "usability" theme
Coherency in interaction design

Bruce "Tog" Tognazzini: Levels of consistency:

– **Interpretation of user behavior**, e.g., shortcut keys maintain their meanings.
– **Invisible structures**. (e.g. right clicking)
– **Small visible structures** (e.g. icons, scroll arrows) "look" of a single application or service—splash screens, design elements.
– **A suite of products**.
– **In-house consistency**.
– **Platform-consistency**.

http://www.asktog.com/basics/firstPrinciples.html
But... coherent according to what???

- Ease of use?
- Other ideals
- Ideas
The strive for harmony, unity, symmetry is an old means of achieving coherency...

- **Pythagoreans (Pythagoras ca 582-500 BC): Beauty is built into the Universe**
  - Simple symmetry and harmony, geometric shapes

- **Augustine (5th century)**
  - "Modus, species et ordo" (latin, measure, form and order)

- **Thomas of Aquino (1225 –1274, philosopher)**
  - The beautiful object should not only be proportional, but also serve a purpose.

- **Scholastics**
  - Beauty is consonantia (accord, harmony) and claritas (clearness, light)
Math- and proportion-based coherency

Da Vinci’s painting is based on the ancient Roman architect Vitruvius’ description of the human proportions.
Math- and proportion-based coherency

Map of body in pentagram, suggestion relationship between the human body and the golden ratio. Heinrich Agrippa.
Coherency via proportions

Math- and proportion-based coherency

Map of body measures, this one designed by Le Corbusier (first half of 20th century), but many similar maps have been drawn throughout history.
Coherency via proportions

Math- and proportion-based coherency

- Functionalism
- De Stijl
- Ulm

Sus Lundgren fall 2010
It is certainly true that at Ulm there was a fixation on geometry as a visual language. The emphasis on rationality favored mathematical thinking in design. [...] By excluding from our teaching, from the very beginning, not only art, but taste and fashion, we freed ourselves to some extent from the emotive and irrational characteristics of these fields of activity.”

– Herbert Lindinger in ”Ulm Design: The Morality of Objects”, 1991, pp. 78 and 79
Leon Battista Alberti (1404 –1472)

– *Della Pittura* 1436
– *Arti del designo* was an exact science
– Still, art needed *historia*

“The great work of the painter is the 'historia'; parts of the 'historia' are the bodies, part of the body is the member, and part of the member is a surface. [...] Everything the people in the painting do among themselves, or, perform in relation to the spectators, must fit together to represent and explain the 'historia.'"
IxD: Dunne and Raby

– Technological Dreams series: No. 1, Robots:

“ These objects are meant to spark a discussion about how we'd like our robots to relate to us: subservient, intimate, dependent, equal? ”
“In ascribing a certain character to an artifact we make a very simple, but powerful description that frequently will be accurate enough to help us to manage the task of handling the artifact and to appreciate the consequences of our interaction with it.”


The Iron Horse, Paro the Robot seal
Coherency via personality

Reeves & Nass, The Media Equation

– **the theory that interactions with computers, television etc are identical to real social relationships and to the navigation of real physical spaces.**

– **Submissive/Dominant people prefer computers with same personality; even more if it adapts its personality to them**
Coherency via slogans

Form follows (ever) function
  – *Louis Sullivan*

Less is more
  – *Ludwig Mies van der Rohe*

Ornament ist Verbrechen! (Decoration is a crime)
  – *Adolf Loos*

There are no rules
  – *Memphis design group*
It is the pervading law of all things organic and inorganic,
Of all things physical and metaphysical,
Of all things human and all things super-human,
Of all true manifestations of the head,
Of the heart, of the soul,
That the life is recognizable in its expression,
That form ever follows function.
This is the law.

– Louis H. Sullivan in “The tall office building artistically considered” (1896)
IxD: Coherency as “expression logic”

“Aesthetics, as we understand it, is concerned with how material builds expressive things, that is, it is a logic of expressionals. It follows that good design from an aesthetical point of view basically is a logical question, not primarily a question of psychology, ethnography, sociology, etc.”

– L. Hallnäs and J. Redström in ”From use to presence: on the expressions and aesthetics of everyday computational things”, 2002, pp. 115-116

This is close to the notion of...
**The notion of gestalt**

**Gestalt**: a (larger) sum of the parts; how an artifact presents itself

“an arrangement of parts which appears and functions as a whole that is more than the sum of its parts.”

“...the aesthetics of design can be seen as the effect of product gestalt on human sensations”

– Rune Monö, *Design for Product Understanding*” 1997, pp. 33 and 27 respectively.

Krippendorff: **Semantics** (designing products to make users attribute certain *meanings* to them)
Hipstamatic: a coherent design

Camera-app for iPhone mimicking old crappy cameras from the 1970ies. How?
Mimicking film quality/decay

Sus Lundgren fall 2010
1) Mimicking effect of lenses
Mimicking effect of chosen film
Mimicks lense change
Mimicking inexact aim
Mimicking waiting...
Slowness in seeing the pic...
Mimicking "film roll" 24 slots
Consistent interaction

Swipe to change lens
  – (to some extent mimicking that doing this is a physical interaction rather than a choice in a list)

Swipe through film roll

Flick/pan to change film
  – (to some extent mimicking that doing this is a physical interaction rather than a choice in a list)
I can "get used" to the lenses and the film, learning when they work best or which effect they give.

(I knew this pic would be better with hipsta than with my regular iPhone camera)
Westerberg… writes about Form is function

– Calls it character…
– Coherency in all aspects of a design.

A concept related to gestalt, character, expression logic and all that, and especially suited for multidisciplinary disciplines/items is…

Das Gesamtkunstwerk!
Das Gesamtkunstwerk: “total artwork” or “integrated artwork”

– Introduced by Wagner: opera.
– Fascinated artists ever since – especially architects

To make every aspect of an object – the form, the details etc. – to accord, creating a conjoined whole.

– Many Gesamtkunstwerk-houses
– Bauhaus school
Victor Horta:
Haus Tassel
1893-1895
Brussels
Friedensreich Regentag Dunkelbunt Hundertwasser: Waldspirale, Darmstadt, Germany,
Das Gesamtkunstwerk as house

Bauhaus final year: build a house (incl interior)

Haus Sommerfeld, Berlin

Sus Lundgren fall 2010
Peter Behrens (1868-1940): Graphic designer, designer, self-taught architect

- Designed his own house as Gesamtkunstwerk in 1901

AEG 1907 – 1914: Groundbreaking!

- Started with graphic design (ads, stationary, invitations, catalogues...)
- exhibitions...
- interior decorations, buildings
- products (e.g. fans, water boilers, measuring instruments)

= Profiling all aspects of the company
Behrens at the AEG
Behrens at the AEG
Behrens at the AEG
Behrens at the AEG
Behrens’ general ideal was to let the visual form of the manufactured product stand for itself

- No longer cultural, literal, mythological connotations

The result was novel industrial design

- Used simple basic shapes
- Standard components and measures
- Rhythm by repeating shapes and patterns
- Sparse use of ornaments
“LG Chocolate sold over one million units in only eight weeks following its introduction. This phone offers (from a 2006 point of view) a unique interactive narrative which can be called a real Gesamtkunstwerk – directly engaging the three senses of sight, hearing and touch, and evoking the fourth sense of taste through the phone's name and color.”

– Lev Manovich in ”Interaction as an aesthetic event” (2006)
Are interactive artifacts per definition something that should be Gesamtkunstwerke?

What are the disciplines or "materials" involved?