There is definitely a huge, quantifiable, easily explainable division between art and design.

You would have to be blind to not see that there is obviously an elementary, tangible, fundamental difference between art and design. The massive and deep chasm that separates their basic essences is so vast and wide, even the most talented and experienced chasm-jumper could not traverse it. The difference between art and design is that art is abstract and has many different interpretations, and design is more literal and to the point. Because of this, art has an automatic advantage over design. Works of art are infinitely explorable, and have more meaning to discuss. There are several other ways to distinguish art from design, but they are not absolute certainties. For example, nudity is not a sure indicator of a work’s artistic status anymore. Many designers have hijacked this strategy by artily adding and using bitmapped, techy fonts with it. If something is easily understood and communicates clearly, it is not art, nor is it even good design. The difference between good design and good art is the amount of garbage used in the project. (See infographic below)

I don’t want to be too literal. I don’t want people to understand my poster right away. If I can get people to stare and analyze it for more than a half an hour, then it means my work is good. If someone jumps to my poster and understands it right away, I will never win any awards, or respect from prominent art critics and journalists. If the professionalism in my field can write articles and books about my art and design, and wax philosophical about its meanings, none of them being even close to what I have intended, then I will be featured in the next issue of Emigre Magazine. Suddenly and inexplicably, all of those professionals’ opinions and interpretations of my work will become what I had intended all along. I just wanted to see how long it would take you to figure it out. What’s that? You changed your mind about the piece? Hell, I just happen to be kidding when I said that what you said was the correct interpretation of the piece. Hey, you want to know the meaning of this new 36-channel fine art video installation I did? Well, what do you think it means? Yes, you’re correct. That is exactly what it means. The three dozen projectors required to execute the installation are symbolic of the 36 emotions of the Afghan people. I’m sure you guessed that the meaning of that nude elderly lady running through the field of clover. I thought people would never guess my intentions to represent her as the weakly physical embodiment of the struggle for vegan rights.

If I have executed my concept and idea clearly and simply, I’m sorry. Maybe I should start thinking about being a little less literal. It is impossible to create a conceptual yet straightforward and interpretable piece of design that has any worth. There has never been an artist or a designer that has created inspiring, exciting, great original works that were not abstract and open to infinite interpretations. Do you think that you can just quickly think through a problem and slap your ideas down on paper, film, or digital media? Do you think that you’re going to be the next great design star if you constantly crank out those mundane one-liners that even a freshman at art school could understand in five seconds? Think about it! Then go take many mind-expanding drugs until you’re learned your lesson. Literacy is the perfect antithesis of good art and design.

The culture at large has been exposed to some visual form or conceptual idea, there is one chance for the idea to be great. If anyone else takes that great idea and tries to interpret it in a different way, it cannot be great, because we have seen it before. The only true great works of art and design are things we have never seen before in any form. Completely original art that was created as a reaction to oppressive social structures, even if it is boring, is far better than exciting design that uses forms we’ve all seen before. If we, as critics, have to decide between a poorly executed, ambiguous, amateurish piece of original art and a well-designed, fully thought-out work of design that bases some of its assumptions on past themes, then the original idea will come out as the superior. We can only give praise and accolades to original ideas.

What is media design? Media design is a term used to describe that which is inerrant, mystical, and cannot be described. Remember Old Testament times how they weren’t allowed to say the name of God is in Hebrew? Are you familiar with the mythology of “The Lord of the Rings,” and how the elves never liked to hear the word “Slurping” spoken? Have you ever seen a Republican when the word “Help” was mentioned? Hell, asking a media designer what he or she does is like asking the word. Do you know what the 36-channel fine art video installation I did? Well, what do you think it means? Yes, you’re correct. That is exactly what it means. The three dozen projectors required to execute the installation are symbolic of the 36 emotions of the Afghan people. I’m sure you guessed that the meaning of that nude elderly lady running through the field of clover. I thought people would never guess my intentions to represent her as the weakly physical embodiment of the struggle for vegan rights.

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Artists are the pioneers and shapers of culture, whereas employees of companies, corporations and everyone who isn’t a designer. The designer is there to help the company owner get his ideas onto paper, with the final approval being given by the company owner’s wife. The company owner always knows best what will serve his company, and besides, he’s paying for the project. If you want to support a family on a designer’s salary, you cannot employ creativity in your job. Do you think that your boss can financially risk paying you to create groundbreaking creative projects? If you want to explore less commercially viable means of creating design, well, you’ll have to work at the ad agency during the day and anti-war posters at night. Late at night, after you get home from work. Having your own design shop is a quixotic dream. Who will pay for your health insurance? Artists never get sick and don’t get financial obligations.