



## Aesthetic film: constructive perspective art directors



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### ABSTRACT

The audience has limited information when it comes to interpreting movies, and they can even be swayed by an artistic director's failure to create a scene event space, which affects how visual messages are conveyed. This study analyzes the aesthetics of the film using an art directors practice approach to: measure the extent of the relationship between the perceptions built by the film appreciator and the visual objects he observes through Persistence of Vision, revealing the relevance of object and artistic form to mise-en-scene; and the illusion of depth and semiosis. This study uses qualitative methods and research data processing by triangulation method and content analysis. The study's findings indicate that additional disciplines, such as aesthetic philosophy, semiotics, perspective, visual communication, mise-en-scene, and art director work practices, are needed to analyse cinema aesthetics from an art director's point of view.

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## 1. Introduction

In the process of penetrating the appreciator's imagination and reality, moving images in the film appear periodically on one's eye retina [1] and produce a perception of each scene contained in the film [2]. Whenever a scene transitions, the appreciator will still imagine the previous scenes while receiving information from the new scene [3]. There will be two possible outputs received by the appreciator, understanding the visual form produced in a scene which entirely consists of artistic elements such as setting, property and mood or no understanding at all because the information from the visuals does not reach the audience, then a Distinctive Concept occurs. The distinctive concept of the film is a miscommunication between the audience and the film's work. This occurs because of several things, such as the limited knowledge of an audience in interpreting a film or the inaccuracy of an artistic director in forming a scene event space so that the message to be conveyed through visual form does not occur properly. This becomes a problem in film practice because the artistic director must be required to provide a presentation that is good and technically understandable based on the production design. If the problem arises from the viewer's point of view, it is most likely due to the audience not understanding the proper method of analysis. The problem is the same as narrative analysis, but this method only understands and communicates messages based on the point of view of direct individual experience or the unification of various events, including what is said based on the chronological order, motives and plots, and the causal relationship of an event [4]. This research is the solution to parsing the analytical method in interpreting a scene.

The visual composition is part of the formulation between semiotics and aesthetics through cinematic language's speech, which implicitly provides information. Compared to physiological disciplines, the neural activity generated by visual stimuli is sustained for some time and then stored as visual memory, called Persistence of Vision [5]. These stimuli can be categorized into three types called phenomenological persistence, neural persistence and informational persistence [6]. Phenomenological persistence is an interaction caused by the sense of sight

responded by the brain in correlating a person's social phenomena with the views he experienced through the form of momentary imagination [7]. Neural persistence is an interaction caused by fine or gross motor nerves through connectivity between things felt physically and perceptions that are built by the imaginary brain. Meanwhile, informational persistence is an interaction generated verbally, which is responded to by one's senses in inspiring information that is compared to one's experience or imagination in the form of iconic memory [8]. In processing information imaginary, iconic memory is not always in line with the reality that is built through the stages of the visual system. The process is a perspective that looks at the film from a technical point of view through visual perception [9]. Visual perception is closely related to the reality that is built through an image. The perception is obtained from the depth of the image, the positioning of the object, the position of the colour against the object and the illusion of depth, which then ultimately results in a three-dimensional impression [10]. The film can completely answer the problem of momentum from reality through the similarity of representation of reality with the ability to record the momentum of motion [11]. Each individual analyzes the visuals using a linear perspective. Based on the development of geometric and architectural science, linear perspective as a visual system used in the creation of artworks requires a monocular point of view from a fixed position [12]. The characteristics of linear perspective are divided into one, two and three vanishing point perspectives [13], [14].

The position of perspective in forming visual perception is very common when someone tries to sort out arising information in the form of spatial composition and when creating information boundaries through the position of objects [15]. Which one is the first or second to be seen continuously based on the position of the objects that appear to be an emphasis on information and differentiating functions on the highlighted object? The concept is defined as Visual Hierarchy Theory [16]. Information that arises through the concept of visual hierarchy can be in the form of explicit information in the form of objects. Peirce's concept of sign, sign mechanism, and meaning production is called triangle meaning, which consists of three main elements: sign, object, and interpretant [17]. The information that arises may be in the form of linguistic studies as the basis of the sign system. The process of receiving information through language in the context of an expression is categorized into parole (subjective expression) and language (parole and language rules, not social facts) [18]. Language signs always contain two aspects: the signifier and the signified [19]. A signifier without a signified means nothing and cannot be called a sign.

On the other hand, a signified cannot be conveyed or captured without a signifier [20]. Information received by individuals in constructing a visual idea is influenced by the filmmaker's way of thinking, which is then communicated in the form of a film. The communication process is the application of the principle of visual communication, where all forms of messages are made in various visual forms that may be captured by the appreciator's sense of sight [21]. In visual communication, the role of aesthetics is very important in establishing the similarity of meaning between the sender and the recipient of the message. The key to aesthetics in visual communication lies in the balance between visual objects (lines, shapes, colour values, text and so on), visual object maker (ideology, background, concept), and the recipient as the object's target [22]. Aesthetics in the context of film art are devices that support the beauty of a film, built by Art Directors who process ideas and objects into the real form [23]. The rules underlying the creation of artistic forms can be drawn from the idea of *mise-en-scene*, which produces a sensational effect on the audience, convey a certain idea or message, a means of communication in the film and produce an expressive narrative pattern through the set design [24][25]. The use of colour aims to display an emotional or symbolic meaning or even to describe a character [26]. The modulation in expression and delivery of dialogue helps the audience to understand the character's thoughts in different parts of the film. The use of space in *mise-en-scene* may also affect the way the film is read. Depth of field, distance from one character to another, and size of people, places, and properties are all factors that determine space [27]. This study discusses how to examine the aesthetic form of the film through the perspective of appreciators and creators in constructing the form of beauty through stages of visual perception and meaning so as to create a complex idea of beauty. This study also analyzes the mindset in finding the real aesthetic value of the film through artistic objects. There

found many articles on the web that have explained the theory of aesthetics, communication, perspective, semiotics separately. However, constructing these scientific ideas in an integrated study is important to pioneer new theories in analyzing film aesthetics through artistic objects.

## 2. Method

This study used a qualitative descriptive method with triangulation techniques [28]. For film practitioners, perspective construction is a method of managing ideas based on the interpretation of an object through a sensory approach and actualized in the form of visual analysis to solve a film aesthetic composition problem. The scientific search process must be packaged into a perception construction process by creating interrelated interpretations based on the existing visual hierarchy through scene composition. This is a fundamental theory that will be tested to address the issue of artistic arrangement to satisfy the aesthetic standards present in the event space of the movie, which includes the location, property, costumes, and make-up. The technique for conducting a constructive analysis from the perspective of a film art director is depicted in Figure 1.

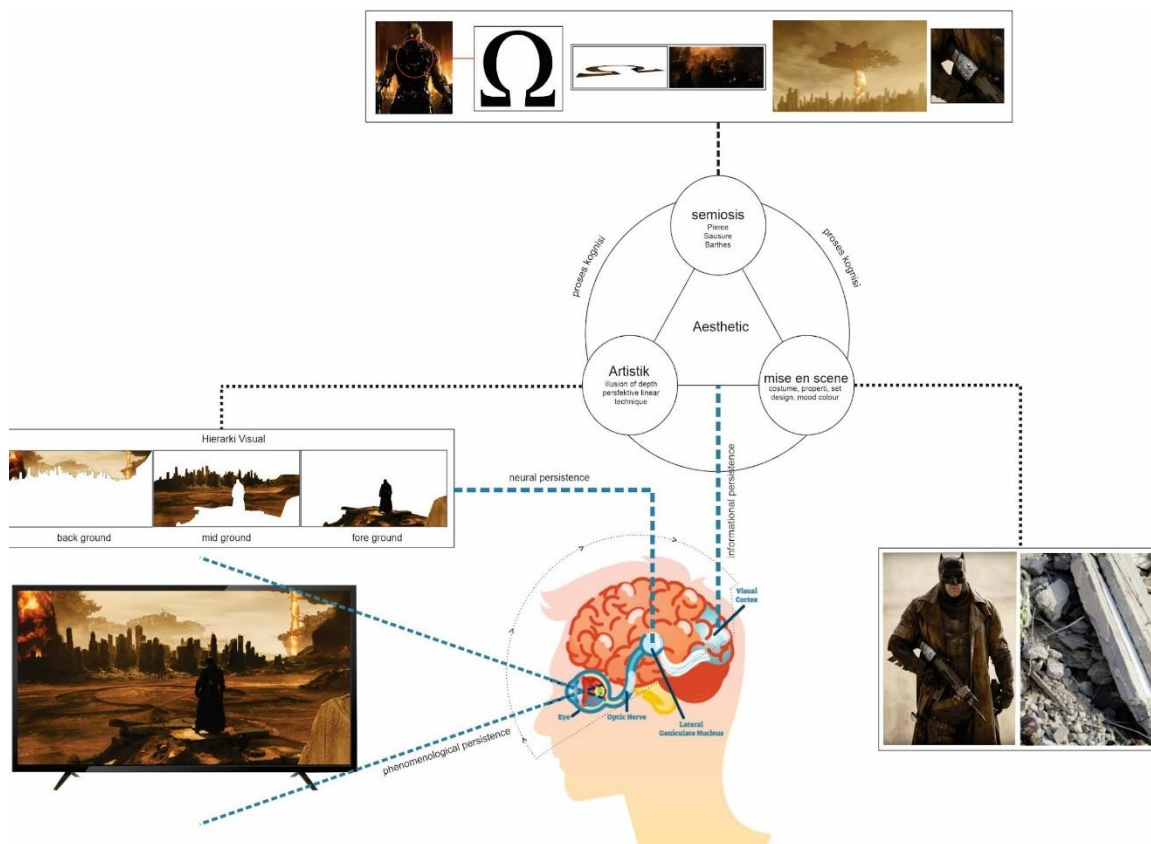


Fig. 1. Analysis Method of Perspective Constructive of Art Directors Film

## 3. Results and Discussion

The object of research used in processing the aesthetic elements of the film through the constructive perspective of the Artistic Stylist is Zack Snyder's *Justice League* film, a film about American superheroes featuring DC Comics characters *Batman*, *Superman*, *Aquaman*, *Wonder Woman*, *Cyborg* and *Flash* distributed by Warner Bros Pictures. The production of this film was carried out by two directors with different results. The first film released by Joss Whedon was less in demand by fans in the form of film presentation and storyline. As a result, a massive movement arose from the audience and DC fans to vent their disappointment through a petition from 180,000 people asking Warner Bros. to release the Snyder Cut version of *Justice League*. Some actors also voiced the same thing. After more than two years, fans' wish to see the Snyder Cut has finally been granted. During an online screening of *Man of Steel* with fans on May 20,

2020, Snyder announced that the Snyder Cut had received the green light from Warner Media for release. The results of the second release received a positive response from the audience and fans since it was better and more complex in terms of visuals and storyline. To test the constructive theory of the Art Directors' perspective, the author took a snapshot of the *Knightmare* scene, which shows the moment when the earth was conquered by *Darkside*, and *Superman* was under its influence; see [Figure 2](#). *Batman* also leads the fight against the new world because of *Darkside's* actions. This scene tells the moment after the heroes died, and *Superman* could no longer be relied on; *Batman* finally recruited *Mera*, *Deathstroke*, *Flash*, and *Cyborg* to be the last stronghold. Moreover, the most interesting is the joining of the *Joker* in the *Batman* team. Zack Snyder himself then presents a scene that brings together two moments from the story of *Batman vs Superman* and *Justice League*. This scene is important because it describes the *Joker* as an *Easter Egg* in the *Batman vs Superman* film.



**Fig. 2.** Knightmare Scene. (Photo: Warner Bros, Justice League-Justice League Snyder Cut, 2021)[29]

### 3.1. Persistence of Vision

The film released by Zack Snyder, which was received positively by fans, is an indication of how The Persistence of vision works. The audience responded to every scene and visual detail that occurred through sensory interactions that were relevant to the audience's expectations. This means that the Persistence of vision in this analysis context is able to interpret and assemble the phenomena that occur in the film to be felt in life or create phenomena from that life. These findings are considered to be able to reveal the reason why an image with the next image seems to be connected and makes the image interesting and rational. The process of cognition is created through perceptions built by the audience, see [Figure 3](#).

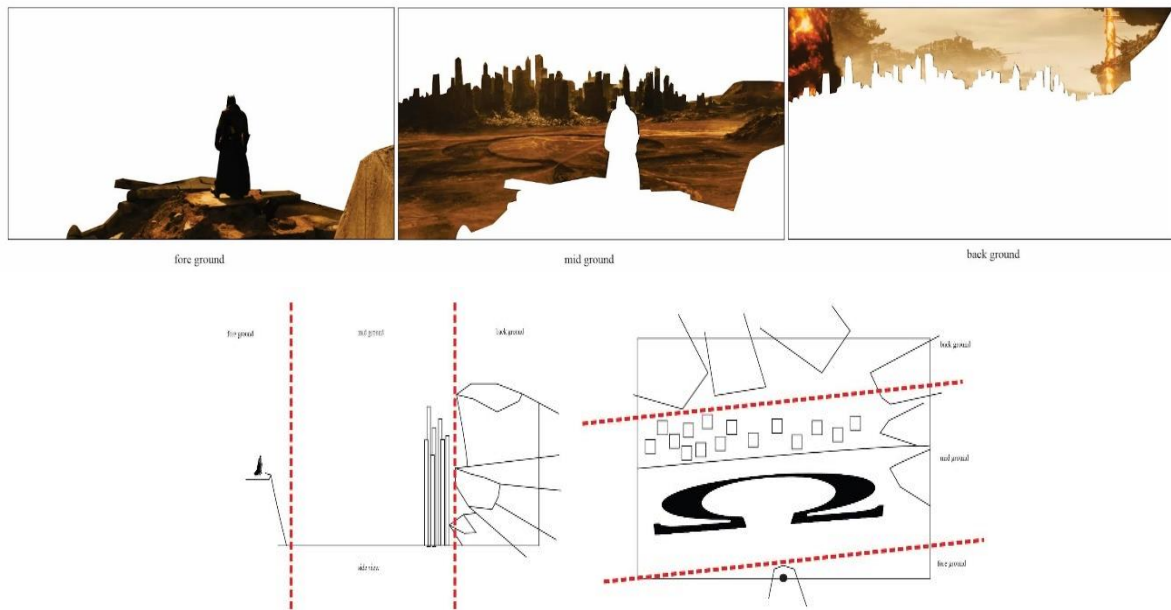


**Fig. 3.** The difference in character design between Steppenwolf and Superman Justice League by Joss Whedon dan Zack Snyder. (Photo: Warner Bros, Justice League-Justice League Snyder Cut, 2021)[29]

### 3.2. Illusion of depth

The depth formed through the scene is seen in the image's composition, which is divided into three structures. The main structure is seen in the main character of *Batman*, who is looking at the earth's condition, which is experiencing an apocalypse due to the *Darkside* character. The audience is led to see the main character as the key to the film's storyline and to be relevant to the built dramatic structure. In the second structure, there is a middle of nowhere that forms

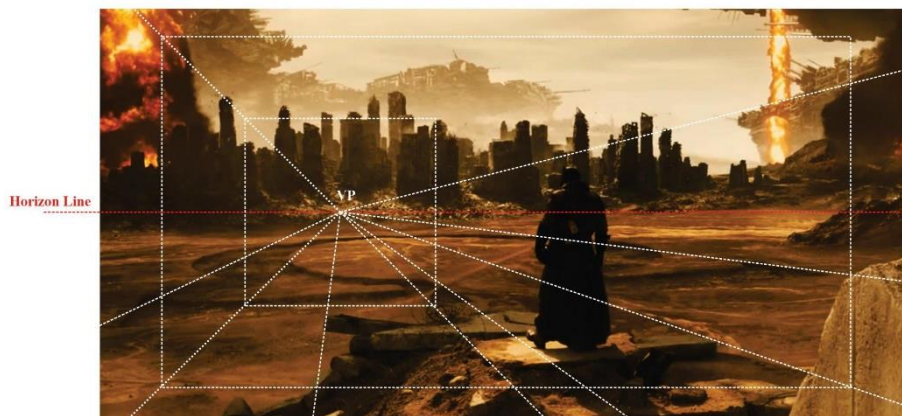
the identity of *Darkside*, which leads to a dramatic perception of the presence of the antagonist. In the third structure are skyscrapers, aircraft debris and explosions caused by *Darkside*. The three structures are an affirmation that the position between setting, property and characters is closely related to each other to dramatize a scene, see [Figure 4](#).



**Fig. 4.** Visual Hierarchy Analysis/Illusion of Depth

### 3.3. Artistic Vision

This visual notion of the film explores an artistic point of view and explains the relationship between visual features and appropriate aesthetic variables in the domain of filmmaking. The study of aesthetic elements and how their combination contributes to constructing the meaning conveyed by the creator. In this scene, the creator tries to emphasize that the artistic perspective can be presented in the composition of the shooting in the event space and the choice of camera point of view that can affect the film's dramatic structure, see [Figure 5](#). The selection of visual composition with a one-point perspective approach with a wide visual range confirms that the context depicted represents what the character sees; we, as viewers, are led to understand the story's purpose and the plot of the scene.



**Fig. 5.** Artistic Vision/ Linear Perspective Analysis

### 3.4. Mise-en-scene

In this section, five visual features represent the film's content and become the most informative and distinctive visual features, including Color Variance; this scene is given a touch

of hot colour that emphasizes the chaos that occurred. The hot and dark colours in this scene use a low-key (51000K) light quality that makes the shadows of the characters look sharp. The character of daylight with high light intensity is used in outdoor scenes. The yellow colour is created from 28000K colour temperature. Red is the highest colour arrangement in the colour spectrum according to nanometer size. To create the red colour used, 8000K colour temperature. The lighting key in the scene explores digital elements more with visual effects from each asset. The costume concept worked on in the scene is in line with the film's plot, which represents the future *Knighmare* which is in line with the geographical shape and weather that appears after the destruction of the earth, see [Figure 6](#).



Fig. 6. Mise en Scene Analysis [29]

### 3.5. Semiosis

Table 1 shows the result of the semiotic analysis of settings, properties, colour composition, objects or visual information that directly or indirectly appears in the film.

Table 1. Semiotic Analysis by Author

Saussure			
Signifier		Signified	
		The evidence of the <i>Darkside</i> invasion to the earth to ruin any civilization is illustrated in the form of spaceship footsteps	
Pierce			
	Ikon	Index	Symbol
	Visualization of Ohm pattern seen on the dried desert	The destroyed city and buildings, as well as a sunk spaceship and explosion	Ohm's pattern as an identity of antagonised character of the <i>dark side</i> is seen in his chest

### Barthes



Denotative	Connotative
The dialogue between <i>batman</i> and <i>joker</i> to defeat the <i>dark side</i> in the <i>Nightmare</i> scene and the card sent from <i>joker</i>	The ceasefire is done collectively to defeat the <i>dark side</i> of the space enemy

### 3.6. Aesthetic Film

Aesthetics in this film are formed from artistic objects consisting of settings, properties, costumes and colours. The aesthetic consequences of this film can be seen in the problem of the ontology of scenes in the images produced by questioning the position between the characters and the reality built through the scene. The uniqueness of the scene results from the power of cinematic realism and the creativity of the Art Directors who empower symbols to strengthen the storyline, including in the form of costumes and the creation of visual effects. This was reinforced by the public response that was very enthusiastic in appreciating the scenes in the film (*Batman V Superman: Dawn of Justice*).

### 3.7. Cognitive Process

The construction of the Art Director's perspective in this study occurs when the appreciator analyzes how the perceptions built from this film have caused the audience's appreciation of the film so that they can interpret the film's content well through the scenes of the film's artistic order. Overall processes such as sensation, perception, experience, and memory are the most important in the cognitive thought process. Snyder Cut has led many fans to support Warner Bros to develop a Snyder Cut sequel. DC fans are also making millions on social media again using the hashtag #RestoreTheSnyderVerse, hoping that Warner Bros will bring back director Zack Snyder's plans for a Justice League trilogy.

## 4. Conclusion

This research is a prototype for analyzing a film. The science related to this pattern of analysis is closely related to the visual, neural and human thinking systems. Methodologically this pattern of analysis is often carried out by film connoisseurs, appreciators and film creators to examine the extent to which the difference between the truth created and the reality built based on certain desires or goals, such as the goal of the script perfection, the scene success or the success of fulfilling the desires of the film appreciator. Practically, the aesthetic analysis method of the film with a constructive approach to the Art Directors' perspective requires other sciences such as aesthetic philosophy, semiotics, perspective, visual communication, mise-en-scene and the work practice of the Art Directors itself so that the objectives of implementation in the context of analysis or practice can be achieved. This pattern of analysis is used to find the values contained in a film, as well as implications for the sustainability of the artistic stylist's scholarship in the aspect of analysis or artistic work practice in the eyes of practitioners, academics or film fans.

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