The Symbolic use of sea shells in design

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Abstract
This thesis report details the various stages taken in the process of selecting a suitable topic for my graduate thesis, and moving through the various stages to complete an exhibition and an art book on the topic. The symbolic use of sea shells in design. Sea shells are an important design component in all of the visual arts. My thesis is an investigation into how four types of shells (scallop, nautilus, conch, and cowrie) have been used as signifiers in a variety of applications. My goal was to create a book that could be used by designers as a quick visual and historical reference. It would also serve as an aesthetic object that would give pleasure. All of the found images using sea shells as signifiers were scanned using Adobe Photoshop 3.0.5 and a flat-bed scanner. QuarkXPress was used to combine the scanned pictures with accompanying text. The pages for my book were printed on both sides by UFO Systems, Inc. The art book was bound by Olde Ridge Bookbindery. My thesis exhibition consisted of a sea shell Mandala poster, three pictures of how sea shells are used as decorative elements in different native cultures, and a basket containing a large number of actual sea shells.

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