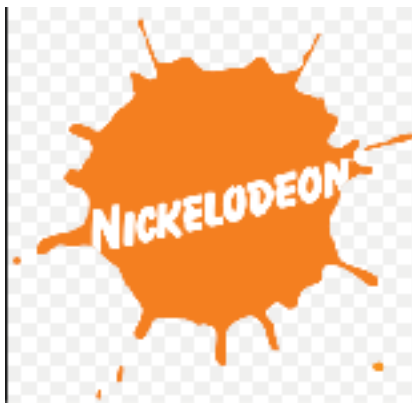George Yazbeck
Read and Respond #1: For January 26, 2015

With regards to logos and brand identity, context to me is defined as relevance and meaning (or an association from such) when viewing what is supposed to be a visual interpretation of an idea. Throughout the article, Bierut has pointed out that logos, when newly introduced, receive somewhat of a bad rap among the community and/or body of establishment that needs a visual to have an audience identify with. The reason? Bierut argues that new logos do not offer the same kind of deep meaning or association that typical, everyday logos exhibit (i.e. the McDonald's logo is one of the most famous ones in the world and anyone who sees it immediately thinks of Big Macs and fries). In other words, a new logo or even a first time logo for a new establishment will need to be put out so that over time, such logo can be identified with what it is representing to a point where the logo can be synonymous with said establishment or idea. That to me is exactly what context is—the quality of a logo encompassing the symbolic definition and even the vision of an establishment.

With that said, a logo needs to always be designed to show a metaphoric personality, in my honest opinion. Just like how a person needs to have a personality to show others what he or she represents (physically, mentally, religiously, spiritually, etc.), I believe that a logo must demonstrate liveliness and color in order for an audience to warmly approach or accept doing business with or paying attention to an establishment/idea. One such example of logos that backs up my opinion is from the famous TV Channel, Nickelodeon. For 25 years, Nickelodeon was well known for its orange splat logo with the name "Nickelodeon" (or "Nick" for short) emblazoned in the center in white text and slanted, if not somewhat italicized and over-kerned font. The splat originates from slime, a gooey and messy substance that was popularized through the channel's various gameshows and award installments. As slime became a symbol of zaniness and fun over the years on these shows and during the time that Nickelodeon Studios in Florida even had slime in the form of a "fountain" and "guzzling machine," the substance was adopted and maintained as Nickelodeon's trademark and brand identity. In this case, the logo perfectly contextualizes Nickelodeon as an energetic, exciting, and over-the-top channel as the slime that represents them means exactly just that for those who frolic with and "unfortunately" get slimed due to good-natured use.

However, in 2009, Nickelodeon introduced a brand new logo that I felt just wasn't right. The new logo did away with the generations-old splat and scaled the representation back to text form, a reimagining of the 1981 logo, but hardly so. My issue with this logo is twofold: on one hand, having a logo just be the channel's name comes off as too plain and very one-note. By not having a graphic accompanying the channel name, let's say, where's the visual that audiences from all over can identify with? At least with the similarly made 1981 logo, there is a graphic—a silver ball (which at the time was a symbol of the company and used in its ads and slogans). The other problem is the color and font—again, it is too plain and even comes off as dull! With no stress of the letters' position or tonal enhancements of color (bright and dark/ alternating hues), what is the context of the new logo other than the uniform orange color reminding audiences what the channel was formerly associated with before? That's my issue with the logo and that should summarize my opinion on why logos need to have context and even more, how branding and rebranding efforts of today destroy this principle (other networks and media companies do the same thing alongside abbreviating names to meaningless "letters" that do not stand for anything anymore such as "MTV," formerly, "Music Television.").

2009-present Logo

1984-2009 Logo

1981-1984 Logo