

TEXT AND IMAGE

Nora HALIMI

Department of Graphic Design, Faculty of Arts
**Corresponding Author: email: nora.halimi@unite.edu.mk*

Abstract

The influence of graphic design on our daily lives is undeniable.

It starts when we open our eyes in the morning and continues until they close at night. The designs (patterns) we come across every day have something in common.

What are we referring to in this case?

One of the basic building blocks of graphic design is the combination of text and image. So, what is the relationship between texts and images? Does an image have the simple function of illustrating the text? Does text control the use of images? Or is there some form of dialogue between them? Regardless of the problems that arise, the relationship between text and image is a crucial element of graphic design. They have a long history of contact and exchange. The idea is to continue the interaction, despite the tensions that text and image have in art history practice.

In general, the meaning of the design should not arise from text or images alone, but from the interaction of text and image. So, the question is how to "marry" the text with the image in our designs.

The most straightforward relationship between them is when the text and the image match each other, which means that the image illustrates the word/text because it resembles the subject/object.

The opposite happens when image and text conflict with each other.

When the relationship between them is not direct, the viewer must play an active role in creating the message's meaning.

Keywords: graphic design, typography, text, image, visual literacy

1. Introduction

If the invention of the typewriter created a mandate for universal verbal literacy, surely the invention of the camera and all its ever-evolving collateral forms makes universal visual literacy a long overdue education necessity.

Visual language is a product of a highly complex form of human intelligence for which little is known about.

Art's meaning, form, and function and its visual components of expression and communication have changed significantly in the age of technology.

Having the ability to read and write means you have learned the essential components of written language: letters, words, pronunciation, grammar, and syntax. The possibilities of expression through just a few elements and principles in reading and writing are truly infinite.

After mastering literacy, everyone can produce endless creative solutions to verbal communication problems and develop a personal style.

The boundaries for visual literacy/reading should be similar. The objective is to establish a fundamental system for learning, recognizing, creating, and comprehending visual messages that can be understood by everyone, not just those trained in these fields like designers, artists, craftsmen, and aesthetes.

Ultimately, the overall concern of visual literacy lies in the general form, the cumulative impact derived from the combination of specific elements, the manipulation of basic units through formal compositional techniques, and their relationships to the intended meaning.

2. Visual communication / Historical relations between text and image

The symbiotic relationship between text and image can be traced back to the earliest forms of writing. In terms of development, it is evident that the system of visual signs preceded spoken language. The multidimensional process began with the inscription of signs (and later letters) on various material surfaces. This process has evolved continuously and will continue to do so, as it involves not only the symbiosis between text and image, but also the mutual influence and interweaving of different sign systems, where the textual transforms into the visual and vice versa.

This relationship reached a new stage with the emergence of calligraphy, where besides its conventional function in written language, an artistic function was added, belonging to the realm of visual arts. The appearance of the text became equally significant as its content.

Numerous linguists and semioticians have formulated their own theories and analytical methods to explore the broad connection between verbal and visual signs. Many theories exist, some suggesting that the verbal sign emerged first, while others argue for the precedence of visual signs. Amidst this historical backdrop and array of theories, my particular interest lies in examining the relationship between text and image within the realm of graphic design.

3. Graphic design

3.1. Relationships between text and image: Living in the visual century, in the age where information circulates and spreads quickly, also in a mainly non-verbal way (primarily through photography and film), the understanding of

Visual communication is essential.

Developing a visual sense is like learning a language with its own alphabet, lexicon, and syntax. It is like saying “I can speak, but I can’t read.”

Graphic design is the process of visual communication where information, messages, and ideas are conveyed through text/typography and images.

3.2. Image-based design: In the case of designs built on the concept of image, designers use images to explore the ideas that the client wants to communicate.

Images can be potent tools of communication; they carry not only information but also convey spiritual states and emotions. People react to images instinctively, depending on their personality, the associations they may evoke, and prior experiences.

Images can be drawn, painted, photographed, or digitally generated. In image-based design, the image carries the weight of conveying the message; the word is of lesser importance. This type of design is used when the designer thinks that the image (photo, painting, etc.) is worth a thousand words.

3.3 Type-based design: Typography performs many functions of communication. It can attract attention to a poster, identify different products, entice reading books, etc. In some instances, designers rely more on words to convey a message, but they use words differently than writers because the appearance of words is as important as the meaning.

At first glance of a book page, the organization of the page seems quite simple. However, if you are given the task of redesigning the page, questions arise: Would you have changed the font of the letters or their size? You would have split the text into columns, right? What about the margins or the space between paragraphs and lines? Would you have begun the text with a decorative letter? How would you have dealt with the page number?

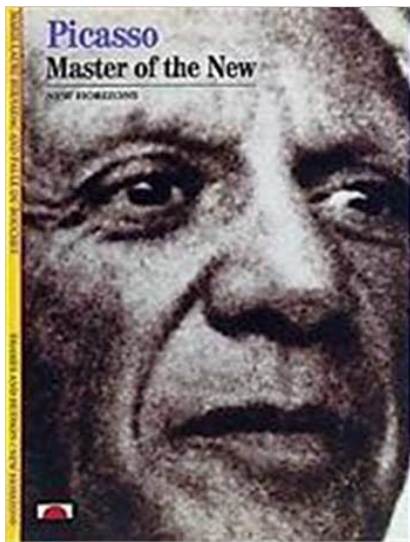
How would you have used options like Bold, Italic or Underline? What other changes can you make, and how might these changes affect how the reader will react to the content?

This means the audience must be researched, and the message must be conveyed must be evaluated to make adequate decisions regarding the design.

3.3. Image and type-based design: Designers often combine images (photography, illustration, painting, drawing, etc.) with text/typography, striking the right balance between them. Until the design concept is chosen, the designers collaborate with the client, researchers, and specialists from different fields to understand the nature of the audience to which the product is dedicated.

Once the design concept is decided, designers work with illustrators, photographers, publishers, etc., to create the final product.

3.3.1 The image illustrates the word/text because it resembles the subject/object: The most straightforward relationship between text and image is when they match each other, meaning that the image illustrates the word/text because it resembles the subject/object.



For example, in the book *Picasso, Master of New*, a photo of the artist Picasso himself is placed on the book's cover, which means that the image illustrates the word/text because it resembles or is the same as the subject/object.

3.3.2. The opposite happens when the image and meaning of the text conflict with each other: Rene Magritte's famous quote best illustrates this contradiction: "This is not a pipe."



Such contradictions are rare in design because, usually, the matching of text and image has proven to be an effective technique.

3.3.3 *When the relationship between them is not direct, the viewer must play a more active role in creating the message's meaning:* When the image does not illustrate the word, the word does not provide information about the image; then the viewer must try to discover the idea or message themselves, that is, be an active participant in creating the message.

In such cases, one should remember the basic idea of Gestalt psychology – the overall context influences the meaning of the individual parts, i.e., the whole is more important than the sum of its parts.

This principle is fundamental in almost all visual arts and graphic design.

Gestalt psychology is based on the tendency of the human brain to separate figures from the background, on the principle of similarity, to unite objects that share the same characteristics such as shape, color, texture, and tone, on the principle of proximity, closure, continuity, symmetry, and order.

In general, design meaning should not arise from text alone or from images alone but from the interaction of text and image. So, the question is how do we "marry" text with image in our designs?

Composition

The placement and arrangement of text in relation to the image can make or break the design. If, for example, the text is too small, the background is too busy, and it affects the readability of the text, the design will not be effective and visually appealing.

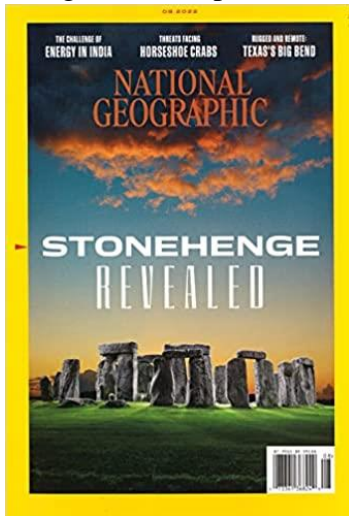
But text is only part of the equation.

The image is just as important as the design in general, so two moments should be considered:

1. *The composition of the image and 2. the overall composition created by the text/image combination.*

Image composition

If, for example, we receive a photo that we took ourselves or a photo from another source, it should be thought that the photo has a clean space for placing the text.



For example, the cover of this magazine is built from the image of a vertical landscape that has the space of the sky in the upper part. Wide open sky and water photos are ideal backdrops for unobstructed text placement.

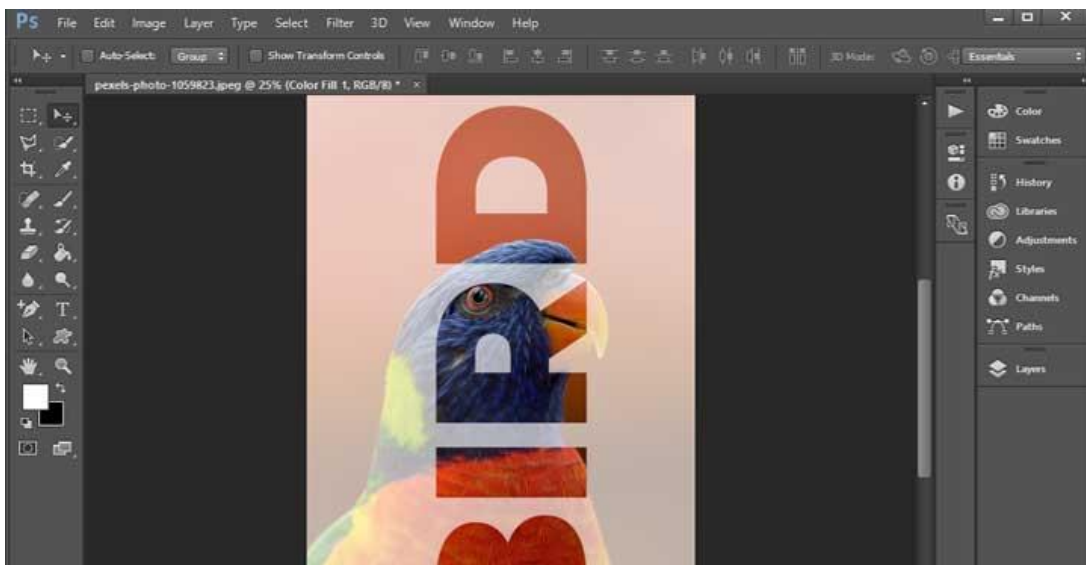
The overall composition created by the text/image combination

Design is the whole/sum of its parts. You can have an attractive photo and a textual message shot, but if these two elements do not create symbiosis, the result will not be the desired one and will not excite the audience.

2. *In the opposite case, the results can be impressive*

Therefore, one should think about composition in broader terms and not just in the composition with an image and readable text placed on it. The marriage of these two elements can result in countless attractive variations, thanks to the designer's creative mind and some suggestions that can be followed.

For example, the layout can directly relate the subject of the text to the image by cropping the photos into a specific and distinct shape or by letting the image "see" through or through the letterforms.



Setting a focal point

An essential element of a good composition is establishing a central/focal point - some kind of visual element that stands out and serves as a starting point for the viewer to navigate a particular design. In the context of a presentation that includes only images and text, it should be either text or an image. So, decide which element is most important and help it stand out through color, size, position, or other characteristics.

Balance

Another characteristic of a good composition is balance.

The design could be more balanced when one part visually weighs more than the others.

Understanding balance in graphic design requires basic knowledge of "visual weight" and "visual direction" in a composition. Visual weight is the perceived "weight" of an individual element in design.

For example, a large black box on a screen would carry more weight than a soft blue line.

On the other hand, visual direction is the direction in which the visual focus shifts.

Weight can help determine the direction the eye takes as it moves within a composition.

By playing with concepts such as visual direction and visual weight, different types of balance can be explored for the respective composition.

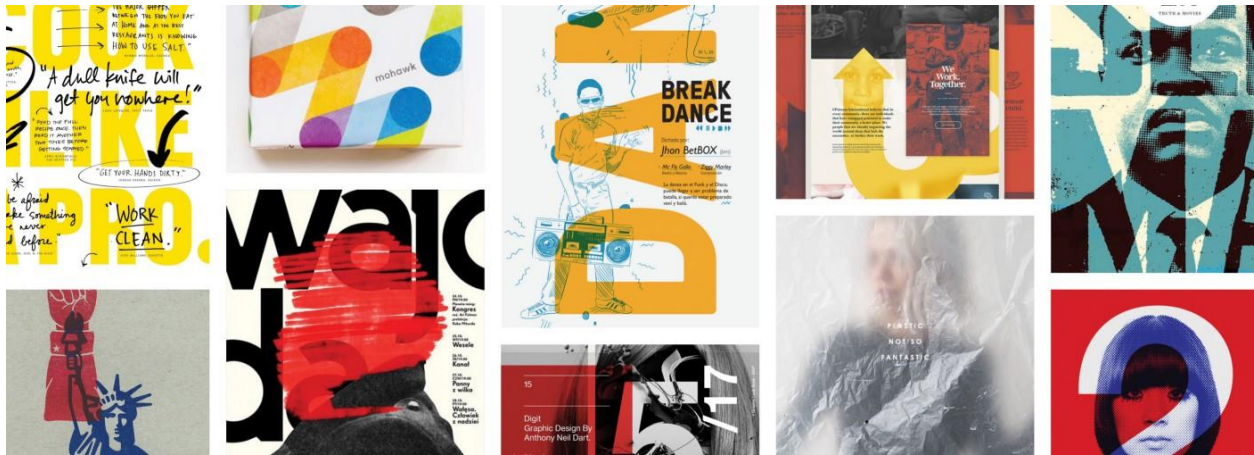
4. Image selection

In design projects, images play a much more significant role than just producing a beautiful background; they can create the context, tone, and emotion of the design.

Moreover, when these qualities match or support the text, communication with the audience is much more transparent.

So, unless the idea is to create visual contradiction deliberately, it is better if the image complements the meaning of the text and vice versa.

Examples of compositions with text and image interaction



Creating the background for the text

Creating space for placing text is an essential step in the design process.

There are two main ways to create this space:

1. Choosing images with empty space and
2. Editing them using different effects

A standard solution is to place a transparent or solid shape where the text will be placed.

Other effects include placing a layer of transparent color, adding light or darkening the image, enhancing visibility through color and contrast, etc.

6. Conclusion

We express and receive visual messages on three levels: representationally - what we see and know from the environment and experience; abstractly - the kinesthetic quality of a visual event reduced to elementary visual components, emphasizing the most direct, emotional, and even primitive means of creating the message; symbolically - the vast world of coded systems of symbols, which man has arbitrarily created, and to which he has given a meaning.

Visual input is of great importance for communication.

Part of the present and most of the future will be a generation conditioned by photography, film, and television.

For this generation, the camera and visual computer will be aids to intellectual development.

One means of communication does not negate the other.

Textual and visual information has been and can only be an extension of the uniquely human capacity to transmit ideas and messages.

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