

An Unforeseen Linkage in Fine Arts Education: Photography and Visual Communication Design

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Abstract: The process following the invention of photography is a period when there are discussions as to whether this discipline is a technological development or a form of art. The photography has not lost its quality as a document since its invention; however, the technological developments that progress further with the industrial revolution created some points where the photography intersects with alternative disciplines. One of these concepts is communication and marketing. Thanks to the unexpected effects of the Bauhaus school created in the art of the world, the graphical design, and photography have become an indispensable element of the visual communication design. It is not necessary to avail photography in the content of all graphical design products, however; it is a known fact that the designs that use an effective photography among the numerous graphical object which tries to attract attention in the daily life stand out. The photography does not require graphical design as a form of art and communication; however, there are plenty of implementation fields where graphic design would be plain and short without photography. Therefore, a photography course has continuously been included in the graphical design training especially after 1930. We can say that one of the reasons of this fact is that the photography, which is taken properly within a composition and context, creates a monumental impact on the recipient as a form of communication. We can express some of the following problems that academicians face during the art education; to correct the wrong expectations of a student, transition from master-apprentice relation to mentor-toddler relation, to use accurate-effective fonts, to grasp the secret success of simplicity and space, to teach different thinking methods, and not to hold a camera as if you looked at the world with a naked eye with composition rules. Transferring such elements to a student in an effective manner takes a serious time and to achieve it, the individual interest and research of the student is required not only the effort of the academician. The objective of this study is to make an assessment by analysing the relation between graphic design and photography on student projects, by emphasizing the importance of the concepts such as composition and simplicity during the visual art education.

Keywords: Visual communication, photography, graphic design, composition.

INTRODUCTION

While we are heading to complete the first quarter of the 21st century, the technological developments experienced in all dimensions of the industry and art have influenced the fine arts education accordingly. Creating typographical compositions by manual cuts through craft knife from the Letterset templates just a couple of decade ago, today, students started to create their own font designs in a couple of lessons, it is not long now before, those who try to expose photography on a silver paper in a camera obscura 10 years ago, they learn to structure the RAW format with software today. Furthermore, such software is available now not only on desktop or laptop computers but also portable tablets and it seems that they will operate on the smartphones soon.

We should agree that there is no need to talk about the innovations that are brought with the use of computers for work of art or design product that is 2D

or digital art and digital photography. If "digital graphic design", "digital photography", or "digital art" concepts are referred in an art-scientific article, we must admit that such article refers to historical concept and process. Even though the students or laymen, defined as "simple user", have been using software and hardware effectively for the last decades that are put on the market for digital art production, the invention of such products and their use by the professionals dates back to the first half of the 1970's.

Varying for a graphic designer and those interested in the photography alike, this process paves the way for photography and graphical design to relate with each other at some points. While the writing becomes a part of the photography, and sometimes a photography becomes one of the important elements of a web design. To provide a more comprehensive example, especially starting to be a product of a digital process, the photography has become a form of art that

visual communication designers can easily access and started to show itself in a more extensive manner than ever before under a graphic design discipline.

It is necessary to specify that we can see photography as a tool for communication as a discipline. Having so many theories about its invention, the photography has been used for a plenty of objectives from 1830's to today, when it had emerged with a similar purpose of use, and has taken its place within the visual communication discipline by its feature to be a "document" after "packaging" and "journalism" concept take their place in the human history. There are graphic design and visual communication design products where a photography is not used, needed or ignored for sure. However, what matters is the multidisciplinary approach, that is to say, the sincere contact between the photography and visual communication disciplines.

We can observe such concepts at the higher education institutions that continue their education process. The photography course has always been included in the department of graphical design or visual communication design throughout the history in most of the higher education institutions, which provides fine arts education. The method of the photography course (optional or mandatory) varies from country to country and school to school. However, it is known that it has improved its weight at the curriculum year after year. If you need to clarify with an example from Turkey, Gazi University established its fine arts department in 1936. The department has provided training on photography in a theoretical and applied manner in a graphic course to its students by bringing devices and solutions from Germany, despite all financial problems and impossibilities from 1938 to 1942. Şinasi Barutçu provided the course, who had training in Germany and made observations in Bauhaus School. The course had been suspended due to the World War II, taking place between the years 1941-1945, had implemented in a theoretical manner. Because school could not supply material from Germany due to the war. However, the photography course resumed in a theoretical and applied manner following the end of the war.

Today, we can observe that photography courses maintain their existence in the departments of graphical design or visual communication design. The closeness between these two different disciplines arises from their relation dating back old times. Consequently, there emerged a multidisciplinary approach, which is different from each other but acts in solidarity.

Art Education at the New Era

Art education, as a phrase, is often used broadly to denote formal and informal instruction in visual arts and design within the context of general

education [1]. The overall objective of the art education for a process that starts from pre-school period to high school is to teach an individual to think creatively and observe the aesthetic one and acquire an ability to reach his/her aim through artistic expressions. However, the objective of art education with a vocational purpose in higher education is to acquire an adult to make research in an application relating to the vocation and to think differently as far as she/he can and have the skill to finish the process with a work of art or product for a need-basis.

There is no doubt that Bauhaus school comes to mind when we talk about the "art education", considering the near history as well as dating back to ancient periods. The artistic and pedagogical achievements of the Bauhaus were revolutionary in Germany as well as in Europe as a whole. Its intention to renovate art and architecture was in line with other similar efforts, from which it drew numerous ideas for its own work. Still, the school's historical significance cannot be overestimated [2]. First, it is not wrong to say that Bauhaus School is the foundation of modern art discipline of any description, in which artist, and artists that provide artist education. In artistic aspects, Bauhaus may be considered as a symbol for revolt or riot against the traditional. Because, Bauhaus School is an institution that sheds light on the age with art, design, architecture and industrial design where alternative artistic methods have been taught and implemented against "traditional" and "dictation by force". In a nutshell, Bauhaus has shown the means to be creative beyond the age to the artists of the near history by leaving being creative traditionally behind.

Despite this staggering impact that Bauhaus leave on the modern arts and art education, still today there are freshman fine arts students are seeking through university to extend a tradition that goes back centuries in the arts, where students lived with their teachers or worked as apprentices in an artist's studio to gain their advanced education [3]. However, today many academics try to show the means to develop the artistic potential as much as possible based on the creativity and skills of the student rather than teaching the student how to use what he already knows as in a tactical manner.

Making art works (studio work) is central in art education at all school levels. Whatever the goals pursued by either the teacher or the student, it is vital that the results in one way or another be judged and discussed in order to know if the goals have been met, or what learning has taken place [4]. Art is a painful process for the artist. There are so many rocks to clean on the road during the creation process of a design product or work of art that the artist/designer sometimes may forget what her/his aim way due to such setbacks

and be some point close to the intended place, but wrong one. Therefore, the critical approach and brainstorming during the art education offers an opportunity to acquire a serious experience regarding the problems that may face in the future.

In the modern era, the structure of art education focuses on teaching profession has changed dramatically. Master-apprentice relationship is lost in time, instead of mentor-toddler relations have arisen. Even though all materials used has the same purpose, their structure has changed and continues to change every passing day. Many pieces of equipment have emerged during the creation of art or design product and this gives the way for an artist to allow more time for an intellectual process.

In a class, project must offer sufficient variables and serendipity that students can test their skills and talents and, in the annual analysis, surprise both their teacher and themselves. Second, inform the student: A project must also provide enough unanswered questions that students are learning something new by doing something new. Third, elevate the student: A project can propel students in two opposing directions either through success or failure [5]. From this point on, one of the most important trends of art education as a profession in our age may be showing an individual the means of thinking beyond the age with a multidisciplinary approach.

Photography Class Within Design Education

Graphic design and photography are two different disciplines under the roof of the visual arts. While the roots of the graphical design date back to fantastical figures, created by the primates on the cave walls, the history of photography date back to 1830's with an uncertainty, created by the tens of theories.

What both disciplines have in common is that they are one of the most important factors in communication discipline and require an advanced level of culture, knowledge, and skills. Especially considering the near history, both we can see that graphic design and photography disciplines change the world agenda and that they are the examples in the written and visual history of humankind.

Graphic design and photography are one of the important elements of the curriculum in the education of fine arts that have been applied especially after 1930's. Today, both disciplines have divided into different art majors and continued to exist in the school as a department. In some cases, it is possible to observe that graphic design and photography intersect with each other. To illustrate such contact, the photography and graphic design are started to be applied within a pre-drafted composition, as it is done in every form of art.

We cannot think photography without the concept of composition due to its structure. It aims to provide its implementer to create the most effective story within a well-defined frame and transfer this story to the audience in an aesthetic manner. The same applies to graphic design. A project is planned within a pre-defined frame in the graphic design and such area changes according to the objective of the design.

Photography does not require graphic design as an artistic discipline. Because photography is an unwritten, a complete visual communication tool by itself. Humankind requires photography in every phase of his life, especially in artistic structure, from sports to politics, advertising industry to archives that store our memories. However, photography is one of the basic materials that graphic design uses to fulfil its vision. We cannot think of a car banner without a photography, excluding the rare examples. In a nutshell, if there was no photography, there were no Pirelli calendar, which is at the top of the world's agenda every year, is a graphical design product, Time could not choose a Person of the Year and Marty McLee could not look at his watch when he was getting out of his car. These products are created by graphic designer minutely and they are phenomenal in their fields.

It is possible to provide different perspectives to the graphic design students through photography education and we can bring up designers that know how to wield the power of expression of photography. It is expected that the designers that present their graphic design products of which area of use widens with the advancing technology to the users have a wide range of culture and knowledge when they are compared with their predecessors. Being the basic element of both moving images and interactive environment designs, the photography is the leading discipline among these fields. Today, the users communicate through visuals, especially through social media platforms. The individuals watch more and read less and prefer to use visual expressions rather than text to communicate. We need to teach students the composition and communication principles, who study design through photography education in a period where visual expression has gained so much importance. Thus, they gain information about the perceptual processes and delivery of the message to the user through photography that they produce. The graphic design product should have different qualifications such as usability and applicability along with the universal values and principles that have been applied to art and design for centuries.

Considering the perceptual processes of the users is another important matter for the designs created. The designer, who could apply design principles through photography can convey its message

in a faster and effective manner. For example, the integrity principle refers to the fact that all elements within the design act in harmony with each other and asserts that whole of the composition is more important than the sub-groups or single parts that it contains [6]. Even though there is a big difference between applying such principle in photography and applying to the magazine cover design which includes a photography, the basic aim is to provide a consistent and understandable image to audience and convey the message intended through such image.

A Creep Up to Sense of Audience: Composition

Just as everything in nature is within a systematic plan, and continues to do so in an orderly manner, all disciplines of the plastic arts start to exist within a systematic plan. Artists define it as "composition" and it is less likely that not pre-defined work of art or design product has a composition.

Composition may be pattern or it may be structure, but in either case it is also always expression. It is in fact primarily expression, since the organization of a picture so largely determines its effect [7]. To achieve such impact on the audience is a considerably difficult process for artist or designer. It takes quite some time to gain experience on how to create effective compositions. But the starting point on the road to the right composition is golden ratio.

Golden ratio has been used for centuries in any type of the art and architecture and is a mathematical ratio, assumed to provide the most aesthetic image and representing the ratio of the part on the whole. Being relatively easy to apply in a theoretical sense, the golden ratio is extremely difficult to apply in a practical sense. Human eye places the objects that it focuses on the middle of the individual composition through triggering of the natal tendency. However, the artistic composition usually refuses such monotony, a viewer with a visual literacy gets disturbed by the image.

Even though there are hundreds of examples, dozens of evidence and numerous critics for application of the golden ratio in art or design process, it may take some time for students of fine arts to perceive and apply golden ratio as a reflex. In Figure-1, we observe a sample from a Graphic Design Education-III course. We demanded from students to make a mechanical drawing that does not contain typography through pen tool in a digital environment as a project for the course. The student learns the golden ratio through its historical process along with masterpieces that go down in the history of art. The student has successfully completed his project of "Mechanical Illustration" but made a mistake that should not be done by preferring to place its illustration right in the middle of the frame rather than in golden ratio within a horizontal rectangle area.



Fig-1: A student project, wherein the composition is ineffectively used.

In an alternative example, we observe a student project that endeavours to use composition more effectively.



Fig-2: A student project, wherein the composition is effectively used.

The student has a deep space by putting his portrait on the junction point at the top left corner and uses the composition in an effective fashion in the composition, wherein it is assessed within a horizontal quadrangle frame.

A Silent Tout Against Hubbub: Simplicity

Especially for people living in large metropolitan, the life is full of complexities. Daily life puts so much pressure on people that it serves well for psychologists. It is a well-known fact that psychologists do not work in rural areas that often. Such examples present an evidence for negative effects of complicated life on the psychology of people. Why do not we place more importance on the use of such complicated form in the work of art and design products after we know that such form, deprived of simplicity has so much effect on the human psychology? It is possible to say that minimalism movement had created by some artists in New York City in the early 1960's due to such complexity and chaos.

It is one of the strangest facts in recent art history that important foundations for the appearance of Minimal Art were developed and implemented in the field not of sculpture but of painting. After all, it was Minimal Art, which, after Russian Constructivism and the Bauhaus of the twenties, once again seriously challenged the supremacy of painting within modern art [8]. As it is well known, painting art especially from Renaissance to the modern era is full of examples that contain aesthetic but complicated structures.

Simplicity brings equilibrium to an artwork. The eyes that are disturbed by the simplicity are the eyes that have not received fine arts education and yet to learn looking aesthetic. However, simplicity has become an aesthetic element, frequently used in the usual composition of the artworks and design products, especially after 1960's. A good designer seeks for a way to avoid complexity rather than using lesser elements to reach ideal simplicity. Simplicity should be considered as a technique to make sense of space. The main objective should be to escape the chaos not provide serenity. In short, today, an individual, who is interested in all forms of art or design should ask himself/herself the following questions at all times "Does the word simplicity have any place in my life?".

As you know, logo design is one of the main applications of graphic design. Some of the most powerful recognizable logos in the world are pictures of simplicity. The elegant appearance of these marks belies the fact that most logos require thousands of hours of brainstorming, sketching, rendering, rejecting and approving before they are launched [9]. However, simplicity is one of the structural elements of the photography. In Figure 2- we observe a black and white freshman homework for Basic Photography Course in Visual Communication Design department. Lines are often invisible connections made by the eye to different points in the picture. They often define shapes such as squares or triangles [10]. The student manages to balance his object, placed at the bottom left of the frame with a flat line.



Fig-3: A Freshman artwork in Basic Photography class.

Simplify should be the photographer's mantra. Most amateur photographers worry about what to put in their pictures. This circumstance is same for graphic designers as well. Whereas the professional looks for what they can take out in order to strengthen the image and refine the image [11]. As mentioned above, an attitude to fill the space is a natal, instinctive attitude for the humankind. Organizing the instinct within the student takes so much time during the visual art education.

Unexpected Conflict: Photography and Typography

Writing, that is, the use of graphic signs for the systematic description of spoken language, is a major achievement in the history of mankind [12]. The proven history of humankind starts with writing. Everything before the invention of the writing was just assertions that are based on serious shreds of evidence, nothing more. However, the writing has always been a living organism and has evolved since its invention. Today, it is not wrong to say that it continues to evolve.

As we know it today, the story of type begins in the mid-fifteenth century. Many of the people and designs drew inspiration or used letter forms from earlier sources. The capital letters carved on the Trajan Column in Rome in AD 114, or the lower case letters, the Carolingian minuscules, developed in the reign of the Emperor Charlemagne at the start of the ninth century, are the two salient examples [13].

Writing has a specific place in visual communication. Writing is the most important elements of design in design products that aims to market a product or social problem, especially. Because the writing is the main element that conveys the message that designer wants to provide. In a world where viewers are over-stimulated by graphic images and messages, a poster utilizing simple typography will stand out and convey its information most efficiently. Depending on the characteristics of a selected font, typography has the ability to convey emotional and expressive qualities [14]. Today fonts have different visual and psychological impact on viewers. Therefore, the text that will be used in graphic image designed for a specific purpose should be selected by the designer properly and minutely.

While the forms of graphic design, like all design, change with the winds of visual culture and technology, the specific function of graphic design remains constant: to communicate messages visually [15]. There are so many graphic images that try to attract the perception of the individual within a daily life, especially in metropolitan cities that the most effective motto or robust font in which that motto uses and well-applied typography could not achieve that.

Human perception is lost within the populous images and the graphic product could not achieve its purpose. At this very point, there is a life jacket that every designer knows that it works well, yet hesitant to use or not to dare to use it for his insufficient budget; the photography.

The space of the art of photography in visual communication design is undisputable. Not only an art form but also an element of technology and culture, the photography has become a popular element for communication designers, especially recently. Some reasons for that are that the photography has been digitalized in the last 20 years, manufacturers started to produce cameras for basic users and cameras get cheaper day by day. It was hard to see two decades ago that designers take their own photography. Because photography discipline uses film cameras with conventional methods and one needs to expose the negative films by washing them in the camera obscura and it was required a technical experience at high standards to make out beforehand how expensive photography cameras produce results. This paved the way for visual communication designers to depend on the photography artist.

As it is known, the new typography, started with Gutenberg emphasized objective communication and was concerned with machine production. The camera was a vital tool for image making. Much of the photography used in conjunction with the new typography was straightforward and neutral [16]. Graphic designers know very well that photography artists (especially advertising photography artists) are just smart and skilled communicators as graphic designers. They know very well which roads to take and make difference and raise awareness for a project that aims to convey a product or social problem intended for the recipient. From this point on, does a graphical designer need a photograph artist? The answer to this question varies on the knowledge or budget of the designer, however; there is a fact that an image with a robust photography among other graphic images has the potential to attract attention of the recipient among others.

Discourse analysis is one of a number of methods that have been used to study photographs. These methods can be divided into two broad categories, depending on how photography is conceived. On the one hand, photography can be conceived as an art form, like painting and drawing. As an art form, photography's goal is to express the artist's personal vision. On the other hand, photography can be conceived as a communication medium. In this case, photography's goal is to describe or construct a particular version of reality [17].

Graphic designers know very well which font to use on a pre-defined surface in line with customer expectations. However, photography artist knows very well that the most beautiful and technically superb photography is useless in visual research if it does not conform to the needs of systematized observation [18]. In general, however, they do not have any idea how to apply typography. This situation sometimes gives rise to the formation of a distant conflict between photographers and designers. For many years, graphic designers and photographers have this strange situation in which, in fact, is a very easy obstacle to overcome with a multidisciplinary approach. First, a photography placed on an aesthetic composition will facilitate the work of the designer. Every individual, who has taken visual arts education, should know very well that the compositions of the photography required for graphic design generally need to involve;

1-Asymmetrical balance and the rule of thirds,

2-Tight cropping. Extreme tight crops and close-ups are particularly interesting, as they force us to look at the subject in a new way,

3-Natural lines to create movement [19]. In this way, the obstacles to drawing the attention of the audience on the material communication would be reduced to a minimum and meet the customer's expectations. This indicates that providing visual literacy competence to the student is an important issue to be considered during the visual arts education for vocational purposes. This is a challenging and difficult process for academicians. It takes so much time for students to learn to work by continuously focusing on the necessities such as composition, typography, colour and functionality on the photography that she/he takes.



Fig-4: A sophomore project process.

The student is requested to movie poster with defined criteria and restrictions for a project in Digital Media Design course. Preferring to use photographic arrangement, the student spends time and effort by using optimum creativity for post-production. The student chooses a derelict house as a scene in a movie that he defines as "Broken Ladder". Carrying out

numerous shoot alternatives to achieve the most effective image possible, the student shows a right approach for that. We can clearly observe an effort to create aesthetic composition such as simplicity, golden ratio, asymmetrical balance in his photographs and it seems that everything is fine until this point.

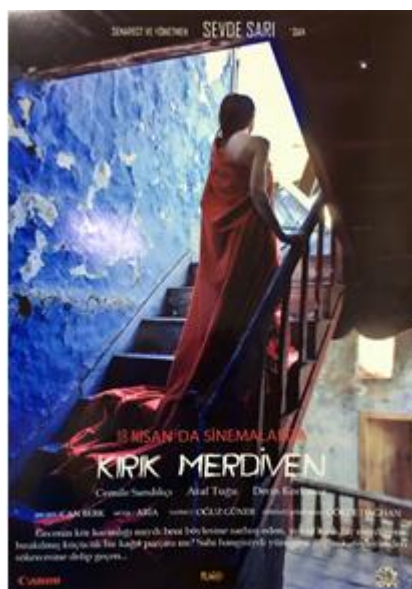


Fig-5: A sophomore project process.

The student determines the font for the banner in the following phase of the project. Even though we assume that the photography is at an acceptable level for sophomore, it is difficult to say that typographic

arrangement is suitable for the banner. The academicians face with a plenty of student projects in project process likewise, and this provides insights on

how hard it is to use photography discipline with an interdisciplinary approach in graphic design education.

CONCLUSIONS

Art and design is a whole of principles of which existence have not been clearly defined. We require high skill or so much experience to acquire the attitude and behaviour intended for implementation. At first glance, graphic design and photography may be considered as art and design forms that are relatively different from each other. Especially after the impact of the Bauhaus school on modern arts, photography, and graphic get closer to each other. Even though both disciplines have different structures and purposes, what they have in common is that they are a part of the visual communication. In this context, fine arts students may get into some dilemmas throughout the process. How to add typography into the visual communication tool, wherein a photography will be used is the leading problem. We always need to consider typography during post-production to eliminate this problem.

The composition is the building block of the photography as well as other art forms. However, we require an experience to have the right composition and this is one of the most challenging processes faced by the academicians. After this point, the photographer must consider other dimensions that affect the photography such as visual images, light, time and audience expectation. The software phase is the last one and it involves colour adjustments, photomontage, frame settings and typographic arrangements.

The photography is a frequently preferred element for graphic design discipline. However, designers must assess it carefully how to acquire an aesthetic image and how to use on the communication tool for marketing purposes.

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