

Application Research of Experimental Poster Design

Jiarong Lai^{1*}

¹ School of Fine Arts, South China Normal University, Guangzhou, China

Email Address

1134144833@qq.com (Jiarong Lai)

*Correspondence: 1134144833@qq.com

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Abstract:

This article provides an in-depth analysis and study of experimental posters, exploring the relationship between experimental art and experimental design. It focuses on analyzing the three visual languages in poster design - text, graphics, and color, exploring the differences between traditional and experimental posters, and discussing how innovative thinking and media can be applied to experimental posters. In the text design section, bold breakthroughs, innovative thinking, and media innovation are proposed for experimental poster creation, and multiple designer works are used to comprehensively analyze the visual language and expression forms of experimental posters.

Keywords:

Experimental, Poster Design, Graphic Design

1. Introduction

1.1. Research Background

Poster design, as a crucial component of visual communication design, has a history spanning over a century and continues to possess significant developmental opportunities today. Experimental posters, characterized by their creative design, serve as a prime catalyst for stimulating innovative thinking and unique styles among designers, contributing to the robust growth of poster design. Against the backdrop of new media, the widespread adoption of innovative technologies not only empowers designers in their creative endeavors but also amplifies the popularization effect of poster design.

Experimental posters, with their infusion of novel elements and forms, have entered the public's field of vision, constantly innovating and refreshing themselves. The exploration of the visual language composition behind experimental posters deserves in-depth investigation.

1.2. Current Research Status and Development Trends

The experimental and artistic aspects of poster design represent crucial trends in its development. With the upgrading of various information dissemination technologies,

the widespread popularity of the internet and new media, an enhancement in aesthetic awareness, and the phenomenon of design homogenization, the trend towards experimental poster design has continued to gain momentum. In the context of the increasingly frequent borrowing and exchange of international cultures, both domestically and abroad, numerous authoritative poster exhibitions and competitions have been organized to promote the development of poster culture. Examples include international events such as the Toyama International Poster Triennial in Japan, the Chaumont International Poster Biennial in France, the Warsaw International Poster Biennial in Poland, the Bolivia International Poster Biennial, the Mexico International Poster Biennial, and domestic events like the China International Poster Biennial.

The award-winning works from these exhibitions often include many experimental posters, indicating the global promotion and recognition of experimental poster design. The experimental spirit, innovative consciousness, and avant-garde forms in poster design are highly acclaimed. "Experimental posters" have become a guiding indicator for exploring contemporary visual art in poster design.

There are several publications both domestically and internationally that focus on the subject of "posters". For example, Jin Daiqiang's "Crossing East and West: Jin Daiqiang and Gerd Grötsch's Poster Dialogue" (2008) compares and juxtaposes the posters of these two designers, serving as a bridge in the cultural communication between Eastern and Western poster traditions. Periodicals such as the "APD Asia Pacific Design Yearbook," "Tokyo TDC," "Typography Design in China," and others feature excellent award-winning poster designs, providing guidance and insight into the current trends in modern poster development.

Regarding the future development prospects of experimental graphic design, He Jianping, a graphic designer, professor, and independent publisher who is a member of the International Graphic Designers Alliance (AGI) and has previously taught at the Berlin University of the Arts and the China Academy of Art, stated, "China's advantage lies in its large market capacity, which can accommodate experimental designs. As long as Chinese graphic design is well integrated with philosophy, art theory, and other disciplines, Chinese graphic design can write its own history on the international stage." This suggests that domestic experimental poster development has the capability to compete internationally, continuously breaking through the possibilities of poster design and showcasing a design vision that seeks the future.

1.3. Research Objectives and Significance

At the core of experimentation lies the attempt to address a proposition through novel ways of thinking. This paper aims to explore the unique charm of experimental visual language through the analysis and study of visual language in experimental posters. The objectives include investigating the distinctive appeal of experimental visual language, dissecting experimental design methods and forms, understanding the international forefront of graphic visual development trends, and exploring the boundaries of graphic design.

(1) Theoretical Significance: Poster design has evolved from traditional paper media to contemporary multimedia formats, transitioning from static to dynamic designs with the advent of new technologies. Conducting effective and practical research on innovative applications of poster design in the era of new media is crucial for the self-development of poster design. Investigating innovative forms of

experimental poster design in the age of new media holds profound and extensive potential for development.

(2) **Practical Significance:** Contemporary graphic design continually undergoes reform and innovation alongside the constant evolution of new media technologies. The integration of various forms such as text, images, sound, and video has elevated people's aesthetic perspectives and pursuits. Traditional print media can no longer satisfy the public's desires for information access and aesthetic innovation. This shift places higher demands on graphic designers. The trends of experimentation, interdisciplinarity, and new media are guiding principles for contemporary design, shaping the landscape of design practices.

1.4. Research Methods

(1) **Literature Analysis:** Utilizing the three major Chinese databases (CNKI, VPCS, Wanfang) as sources, literature analysis involves the examination and organization of relevant journals, academic papers, and works to identify theoretical foundations.

(2) **Comparative Study:** By reviewing theoretical and practical design cases from both past and present, domestically and internationally, this method aims to identify commonalities and areas for inspiration. The goal is to deduce design forms and methods.

2. Experimental Art and Experimental Posters

Experimental poster design is closely intertwined with the development of experimental art since the 20th century. Various art movements such as Fauvism, Dadaism, Futurism, Cubism, and Expressionism have a high spirit of experimental exploration, providing significant inspiration for experimental design.

The notion of “experimental” artistic endeavors extends beyond fine arts to include experimental literature, experimental film, experimental theater, and more. The post-World War II emergence of new artistic mediums gave rise to movements like Pop Art, Land Art, Performance Art, Video Art, and Installation Art. With the advent and development of modern technology, interactive art, new media art, and technological media art have flourished on the artistic stage.

“Experimental” art and design should embody three key points: bold interdisciplinary collaboration, breaking down the boundaries between art and other disciplines for mutual inspiration and integration; innovative thinking, refreshing conceptual perspectives and thematic expressions, seeking appropriate language, forms, techniques, and mediums; and media innovation, exploring new technologies, materials, media, and visual pathways to construct channels from traditional known domains to unknown territories.

3. Experimental Graphic Design

3.1. Experimental Typography

Text, graphics, and color constitute the three essential elements of visual communication design. Nowadays, there is increasing attention on the role of font creativity in posters.

In the broad concept of text design, in addition to typography, there are three main categories: type design, glyph design, and typographic experiment. Type design

involves creating fonts for body text and headings, emphasizing a unified appearance across a larger body of text. Glyph design includes brand fonts and artistic characters, corresponding to the concept of “creative characters,” often with more graphic attributes. Typographic experiment encompasses font experimentation and character exploration, exploring innovation in tools, mediums, techniques, structures, and recognizability. These categories have their own logical methods and creative characteristics, and while they are not mutually exclusive or contradictory, they can be interchangeable. The difficulty increases as one moves forward in the categories, requiring more emphasis on commonality, rationality, and craftsmanship. Toward the end, there is a greater emphasis on individuality, sensibility, and an artistic temperament.

Mr. Jin Daiqiang’s series of posters with the theme of “Chinese Characters” represent a cross-disciplinary design that incorporates the unique medium of “ink painting” and technology. The textual elements are transformed into graphical representations, utilizing the distinctive texture characteristics of ink. Through the secondary creation involving both painting and physical objects such as the “Four Treasures of the Study,” achieving a diversification of artistic mediums.

Modern experimental fonts leverage new media and a variety of materials and tools for experimental creation. They break away from the constraints of easily readable text fonts and move towards conceptualization, artistic expression, and diversified font directions. This approach transcends traditional fixed forms, exploring the creativity and boundaries of font design, and in experimental creations, sparks more novel possibilities.

Furthermore, in addition to the foundation of text creation, layout and typesetting play an extremely crucial role in achieving a visually effective result for experimental fonts in the overall poster design. By combining, deconstructing, reconstructing, layering, or altering the original form of font typesetting, experimental fonts can be presented in a graphic spatial structure, achieving a graphical effect for the font.

3.2. Experimental Graphics

The term “graphic” refers to illustrations and visual symbols that have evolved into informative visual symbols. Graphics, as a visual language, are crucial for conveying information and facilitating emotional communication. In poster design, the role of graphic creativity is primarily evident in accurately conveying the poster’s design theme. Using the visual imagery of graphics enhances communication effectiveness and strengthens the visual impact of the poster.

The originality, diversity, and personalization of graphics are particularly important in providing viewers with a richer visual experience and enhancing their attraction.

Regarding the expressive forms of graphic design, they can be summarized into the following categories: a. Polyform Recombination involves creatively combining multiple elements with common characteristics in a way that transcends reality. b. Heteromorphic Recombination reconstructs two or more image materials. c. Symbiotic Graphics involve sharing some parts or outlines between shapes, mutually borrowing and relying on each other to integrate multiple graphics into an inseparable whole in an exceptionally close manner. d. Element Replacement integrates by replacing part of the basic characteristics of a form with other material. e. Heterogeneous Shadow Replacement portrays objective objects undergoing abnormal

shadow changes under the influence of light, presenting corresponding objects different from the originals. [18]

3.3. Experimental Colors

A poster designed by San Chong Ye Long for the fourth “Open Repository” exhibition. The poster fully utilizes the synesthetic effect of colors. The irregular combination of pink with black and white creates a small yet beautiful, large and rugged cross-boundary fusion, reflecting the theme of the exhibition: large-scale artworks can also bring exquisite and enjoyable multi-sensory inspiration.

Posters designed by Jin Daiqiang for the city images of Daegu and Shanghai, use large and small colored dots and ink dots to portray the urban brilliance. They also use color graphics to compose the iconic buildings of Shanghai, the Oriental Pearl Tower, and the Chinese character “city”). These two posters vividly express the theme of a “colorful city” by coordinating color proportions, arranging and distributing colored dots in a regular pattern, and utilizing the combination of medium and color to design a unique visual effect based on the “point composition.”

4. Experimental Poster Design

4.1. Differences Between Experimental Posters and Traditional Posters

Posters are categorized into four types: commercial posters, cultural posters, public service posters, and movie posters. While commercial posters are solely focused on conveying business information and generating profits, other types of posters can undergo experimental creative processes, exploring various artistic languages. Experimental posters are a crucial direction in visual communication design, distinguished from commercial posters by their exploratory, unknown, and innovative nature. They serve as artistic mediums for conveying information to the public through both paper and electronic media.

Under the conditions of designers’ individual needs, increased public aesthetic standards, changes in new media environments, and advancements in technological conditions, the traditional form of posters is destined to move towards a more experimental and creative path. From traditional paper mediums to three-dimensional material posters, dynamic posters, and various printing forms such as gold stamping, silver stamping, laminating, film coating, embossing, etc., from traditionally being posted on building walls to display methods without space limitations, and from single-directional communication posters to interactive or even virtual contextual communication forms, the vitality and possibilities of experimental posters are continuously evolving and developing.

4.2. Innovative Thinking and Media

(1) Innovative Thinking

Innovative thinking involves breaking free from conventional thinking, combining convergent and divergent thinking, and using rich imagination and creative thinking. Design itself, as a form of innovation, requires designers to employ innovative thinking to combine various materials, media, and tools to achieve the output of their ideas and creativity. Innovation, as a necessary condition for the development of the times, is conducive to better information expression and emotional transmission in poster design, resulting in unique visual creativity.

(2) Artistic Media

In poster design, the use of artistic media and comprehensive materials is a form of “sensory” design. The use of such materials can organically combine with experimental art, adding realism and impact to the creation and providing multi-dimensional sensory experiences with rich possibilities in form.

The “Heavenly Cinema” exhibition poster created by He Jianping uses foam glue as a creative medium and has won awards in the 2021 German-speaking area’s 100 Best Posters, the New York TDC Awards, the German Red Dot Awards, and the 27th Warsaw International Poster Biennale.

(3) New Media Context

The emergence of new media art has a relatively short history, spanning around 30 years in China. The artistic expressions brought about by new forms of digital media exhibit experimental and conceptual qualities. The practice of new media art in China today showcases bold exploration of visual language and continuous breakthroughs of established boundaries, reflecting conceptual aspects through innovation, interdisciplinary approaches, and experimentation in both media and thinking.

In the book “Is Graphic Design Dead?” LUST discusses the current form of posters, stating, “The poster medium can never lead our ideas; all ‘products’ are generated in response to the evolutionary needs of the ‘virus’.” The combined force of digital technology innovation, the expansion of communication media, and advances in printing technology is enough to ignite a revolution in the art and design community.

“Sweet Datapoint”, created by The Rodina, a multidisciplinary design studio in the Netherlands that conducts spontaneous design experiments, integrating various dimensions such as graphic, three-dimensional, and dynamic. Their work spans from artistic performances, game experience design to interactive design, and they even studied and established “performance design” in 2015.

In the poster, the Stanley font is contrasted with the Comic Sans font, showcasing an elegant and rigorous versus humorous and witty contrast. Through the font comparison, it indirectly reflects the human struggle with topics related to sexuality. The design includes a large number of rendered “frog eggs”, a climax in the sky, and distorted heads, highlighting The Rodina’s rebellious attitude towards society. Dynamic design using programming software achieves experimental interactive graphic design.

5. Conclusions

Poster design, as a crucial component of graphic design, plays an essential role, and experimental design represents an imaginative and creative direction within the context of contemporary society. This paper, through an exploration of experimental posters, aims to uncover modern aesthetic perspectives and provide a novel visual experience. Considering the individual needs of designers, the heightened awareness of mass aesthetics, shifts in the new media environment, and advancements in technological conditions, it is believed that the path of experimental design will continue to evolve. Anticipating that designers, both domestically and internationally, will employ diverse design thinking and methods to create more outstanding works, this paper looks forward to the emergence of innovative, experimental, and non-utilitarian posters in the public eye. Together, this collaborative effort is expected to contribute to the development of experimental poster culture.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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