

The evolution of the advertisement graphics in Ukraine: the ethnic art path

Становлення рекламної графіки в Україні: етномистецький вектор

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Abstract. The study of the cultural and aesthetic component of advertising is aimed at determining the significant influence of ethno-artistic traditions of Ukraine on the stylistics of advertising graphics. The authors consider the problems of the national form and the reasons for pseudo-nationalization in design and advertising. As a result of the color-graphic and semantic analysis of numerous works of art, it was found that the visual components of advertising graphics are deeply rooted in Ukrainian folk art. At the same time, it was found that the separation of modern urban life from the experience of folk imagery gained over the centuries leads to the loss of ethnic artistic traditions. In the conclusion of the article, the author proves that advertising is subject to positive and negative effects of socio-cultural transformations, which is why the use of visual means in advertising must be conditioned by orientation on the target audience, taking into account the defined aesthetic ideals, national color and ethno-artistic traditions.

Keywords: ethno-artistic traditions, advertising graphics, national form, color, ethnic motifs, visual language of advertising, pseudo-nationalization.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, there were significant changes in the concepts of design and advertising due to the processes of globalization and, at the same time, ethnocultural identification, with hyperconsumption and a simultaneous decline in the general cultural level of society. Today, the approach to developing, producing, and delivering information, especially commercial information, directly to the consumer is gradually becoming the subject of active research. Significant social changes have taken place as the development of technology has led to the emergence of humanistic design ideas. Therefore,

advertising, despite its predominantly commercial function, is recognized as a cultural phenomenon since, in specific periods, the visual language of advertising communications becomes a logical reflection of the socio-cultural state of society. However, for the most part, modern advertising media do not contribute to forming a worldview, the development of thinking, or the aesthetic perception of reality.

The essential point is that advertising should have more than just attractive images: visual elements should reflect the idea, carry a semantic load, carry out cultural and aesthetic identification, and be understandable

to the consumer. The socio-cultural approach allows us to understand advertising graphics as a reflection of the evolutionary processes of its style within certain cultural formations that led to the emergence of mass culture and an extensive advertising industry. According to A. Kostina, the leading feature of the modern socio-cultural space, is the interaction of group, elite, and folk cultures [4].

One of the current areas of scientific research in the design field is the study of the influence of ethno-artistic traditions on modern design culture. The relationship between national and international design activity and advertising communications is a rather complex issue, some general aspects of which have been considered in the works of M. Arzhanov, V. Danylenko, X. Kaftandzhiev, O. Olenina, and E. Romat. Modern researchers E. Antonovych, V. Bitaeв, V. Kosiv, O. Lagutenko, L. Prybega, M. Selivachov, L. Sokoliuk, D. Stepovyk, O. Khmelovskiy, and R. Yatsiv are engaged in the problems of preserving Ukrainian culture.

The genesis of advertising graphics as a form of sociocultural communication is due to several factors, among which the main determinants are [5, p. 871-888]:

- pragmatic, depending on the existing commodity-economic relations, the development of communication channels, and specific commercial tasks;
- cultural, dependent on the socio-cultural realities of certain forms of social systems and national psychological aspects of mental groups;
- aesthetic, depending on ideological platforms and historical processes of society's development that influenced the transformation of social structures, spiritual and material culture, and artistic styles.

In our comprehensive research, we have summarized that advertising graphics has gone through a complex development path, evolving from outstanding support of commercial information to the emergence of new styles (or pseudo-styles) within the mass culture of the second half of the 20th and early 21st centuries. Let us consider this in more detail.

The origin of advertising dates back to the tenth and eleventh centuries when merchants began to offer their goods actively. In contrast to Europe, where

the traditions of Greco-Roman antiquity were actively used, Byzantine traditions prevailed in Russia. Advertising of that period was a folklore type of advertising and included various forms of folk art. Each merchant shouted their goods in style, calling out to customers with singing, sayings, accordion playing, dancing, or clown clothes. Word-of-mouth advertising and spectacular events gradually developed in such a fair hustle and bustle. With the advent of printed advertising in the late fifteenth century, which combined words and images, advertising production became more complex: professionals appeared, and the share of amateur creativity decreased.

Since the middle of the seventeenth century, Europe experienced a real boom in the trade of overseas goods: tea, coffee, cocoa, spices, fabrics, etc. Advertisements appeared in newspapers, the first advertising agencies appeared, and competition developed. The first advertising publications only informed about the availability of goods. Later, a variety of storytelling and design techniques spread. While in Western Europe, the development of capitalist relations began in the eighteenth century, and accordingly, there was an active offer of goods and services; in the Russian Empire in general and Ukraine in particular, this process took place with a significant delay, almost at the end of the eighteenth century. The development of advertising as a professional activity was also delayed, occurring only in the early nineteenth century.

After the abolition of serfdom in 1861, rapid industrialization accompanied the rapid development of print advertising. In the late nineteenth century, the advertising poster was officially recognized as a fact of culture. In 1897, under the auspices of the Society for the Encouragement of the Arts, the World Exhibition of the Commercial Poster opened in St. Petersburg. The publication of Russian magazines such as *World of Art*, *Art and the Art Industry*, and *Golden Fleece* began, which, among other things, also addressed the issue of advertising. A little-known fact is a publication in Odesa in 1908 of the first theoretical and practical journal in the Russian Empire, the *Advertiser*.

During this period, the use of photography and typography in advertisements was rapidly spreading.

The need for integrated interaction between different countries led to the organization of several world industrial and trade exhibitions, which became a new advertising genre characteristic of the twentieth century.

Ukrainian-language advertising was more widespread in the western Ukrainian lands, but in some cases, at the request of advertisers, even Russian newspapers and magazines published ads in Ukrainian. For example, the Ukrainian *Word* magazine published the following message in the early twentieth century: "One's own to one's own! Ukrainian citizens! Buy only Ukrainian eye cream "Girl" [1].

The Western European poster art of the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw a real revolution: futurism, cubism, expressionism, and symbolism influenced the formation of the style of advertising graphics. However, Art Nouveau and Constructivism had the most significant influence. In the early twentieth century, poster art primarily developed in the Art Nouveau style, directly influencing the graphic language and artistic expression of advertising. Art Nouveau stylistic forms have long been used in posters, advertising leaflets, package decorations, covers, and magazine illustrations. However, after 1910, Art Nouveau began to acquire more "economical" and restrained features, close to simple geometric shapes, turning into the so-called "constructive modernism." In the 1920s, constructivist tendencies intensified, which became the basis for the flourishing of the functionalist era, which contributed to the formation of the principle of combining beauty, simplicity, and utility in everyday life. The fundamental achievement of the twentieth century was the formation and subsequent dominance of the "international style": minimalism, straight lines, and regular geometric shapes.

In contrast to this process, the style of advertising graphics in Ukraine was primarily determined by book graphics, fine arts, and decorative folk art, especially embroidery, carpet weaving, and artistic painting [5, p. 871-888]. In the decorative and applied arts of Ukraine of the second half of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the emphasis on the decorative nature of things is increasing, and there is

an apparent attempt to make them more picturesque, to create a festive and solemn mood in the architectural environment with their help. At the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Ukrainian national art school went through a rapid path of emergence and development of the avant-garde, having comprehended all those stages of the Western European artistic process that had been successively replacing each other in European countries for almost a century [8].

Specific features of Ukrainian coloristics were mainly determined by the nature of the colors of the natural environment and the use of natural dyes and raw materials. The landscape basis that shaped art and architecture ranged from green-blue to red-brown shades. The palette was based on harmonious contrasting pairs of red and green, yellow and blue, a contrasting harmonious triad of color vision (red-green-blue), and a contrasting harmonious quadruple (red-green-yellow-blue). However, the Slavs' palette was not limited to this; an extraordinary richness of shades marked it: these were red-yellow, hot, fiery, violet (blue), proselytizing, nettle, aspen, sugar, gray, gray-hot, smoky, burgundy, fawn, ruddy, azure, etc.

Bright saturated colors are inherent in many nations' decorative and applied arts. However, the coloristics of Ukrainian folk art differ significantly from other cultures by the increase and superior saturation of the primary chromatic colors (yellow, red, blue, and green) and achromatic colors (white and black). In folk art, color is traditionally associated with form and semantics. Mostly pure, unmixed colors were used here. The combination of black and red, a traditional color combination for Ukraine, which, according to V. Kandinsky, signifies the highest tension of human forces and the tragedy of life, gives the works significant emotional power.

In the nineteenth century, in the context of the intensive development of capitalist relations, the art industry in Ukraine focused mainly on artistic crafts and folk art, on established, traditional, most perfect forms, ornamental motifs, and color combinations that had developed over the centuries. The Art

Nouveau style spread to the Ukrainian lands with a considerable delay [2].

Since 1888, a factory of building and artistic ceramics has been operating in Lviv, a distinctive feature of its products was the focus on local folk art and the retention of traditional forms, ornaments, and colors (brown, yellow, and green). Still, at the same time, the decorative sound of the whole work was sharply exacerbated. The coloring was enriched with shades of tones previously considered unconventional — purple, blue, and gold; ethnic motifs were combined with patterns typical of Art Nouveau. In painting and various types of decorative art (small plastic, jewelry, art glass, textile panels), exquisite color combinations were used, primarily delicate, soft yellow, light green, blue, purple, and brownish-terracotta colors that formed a faded “faded” range. Modernism also influenced the art of book design. It often involved an intricate combination of floral and geometric elements, interpretations of Japanese woodblock prints, or Hutsul art.

In the context of the rapid development of capitalism, commercial posters were actively developing, advertising industrial goods, food, cigarettes, and drinks. An exciting example of Ukrainian Art Nouveau is the wine list, which organically combines national motifs and stylistic techniques of Art Nouveau.

The fascination with the aesthetic values and symbolism of folk art during this period became the basis for creating the signs of a new Ukrainian graphic art, which was the most dynamic type of creativity and most fully reflected all the changes in artistic trends [6; 8; 9, p. 162-222]. For example, V. Krychevskyi found a peculiar graphic solution for a book cover using folk ornamentation. H. Narbut worked fruitfully in black-and-white book graphics and poster art; an organic combination of font type, color, and ornamentation in the Old Slavonic style characterizes his works.

The ideological forces of Russian communist domination waged a crushing struggle against folk culture. During this period, all types and genres of creativity suffered incalculable losses: Easter egg painting, pottery, weaving, decorative drawing, and embroidery almost lost their ideological, symbolic,

and pictorial basis. Despite this, folk culture was and still is an ethnic environment, a basis of spirituality based on world excellence. During the Soviet era, fantastic advertising posters were created using ethnic motifs, but few have survived. Because of the planned economy and an ideologized attitude to the essence of advertising to deceive customers and impose excessive needs on them, Soviet advertising was virtually unfunded and of a low professional level.

The color-graphic and semantic analysis of numerous artworks reveals that the visual components of advertising graphics are deeply rooted in Ukrainian folk art. Still, the separation of modern urbanized life from the experience of folk art gained over the centuries leads to the loss of ethno-artistic traditions. If in the design of the early twentieth century, many developments in the so-called “folk style” were determined by the active use of ornamental motifs, today innovative design ideas should be combined with traditional features of the Ukrainian mentality: increased emotionality of perception of the environment; love for the native nature; lyricism; admiration for the language, folklore, and vivid rituals; desire for internal and external harmony; careful attitude to everyday life; attention to the elements of folk art; and the ability to self-irony. The fundamental qualities inherent in the national consciousness are primarily focused on the emotional and imaginative sphere of human experience [3, p. 9-14].

Research of the target audience in terms of mentality has significant predictive power in advertising because it is a well-established factor and applies to the general population. Every country has its cultural laws and customs, and disregard for them can lead to the collapse of a company’s entire marketing and advertising strategy.

Unfortunately, in design developments, one can mostly see the mechanistic borrowing of peasant art motifs and their superimposition on non-national objects. This applies to printed messages, outdoor advertising, packaging design, books, and periodicals. There are also negative examples in the design of interiors for various purposes, which has led

to the formation and consolidation of the negative phenomenon of “pseudo-nationalization.”

A modern Ukrainian design product must have some archaic material culture while maintaining touch with the dynamic environment. If we compare Ukrainian advertising focused on eternal human values (love, family, home, friends, mutual assistance, and compassion) with advertising from other countries, in America, it is more straightforward and unimaginative; in Germany, it is as technical and informative as possible; in France, it is elegant and aesthetically sophisticated; in Japan, it is philosophical, sometimes unexpected, metaphorical. In addition, Japan successfully combines the latest technologies, constant modernization of production, and everyday life with an attentive attitude to traditions and the cultivation of national symbols and ideals. The national flavor is also present in advertising of Scandinavian and Mediterranean countries.

Advertising is a manifestation of semantic concepts, so it can be considered a global trend of advertising graphics to shift influence functions from its verbal part to the visual one. The visual series no longer performs an illustrative and decorative function but is formed as an aggregate visual and verbal construct, the language of which is determined by the visual arts. Advertising assimilates and uses cultural experience and is “embedded” in the history of culture. The study of the characteristics of artistic styles significantly impacts the understanding of historical processes in art and, accordingly, the development patterns of advertising graphics. Like style, fashion performs a communicative function, i.e., it is a means of communication and information, a means of personal expression, a symbol of prestige, and a social sign. However, often thoughtless, blind imitation of fashion leads to a lack of taste, a sharp deterioration in the quality of both products and advertising products, to eclecticism and kitsch. Contemporary advertising shapes style for a particular lifestyle, social behavior, consumption principles, and moral norms. Today, ideals, values, cultural models, and characters from different eras and cultures are mixed in imitations, borrowings, and reproductions.

In today’s environment, the focus of production on regional consumer groups and a significant change in sales policy have also led to a radical change in the tasks and character of advertising: social, psychological, cultural, and aesthetic factors have come to the fore and become more critical. In developing design activity in Ukraine, two ideological platforms have emerged: industrialized Eastern Ukraine tends to have an international style. At the same time, Western Ukraine is based on national style, rethinking ethnic traditions and their use in modern design and advertising. This feature is essential to Ukrainian cultural tectonics and reflects the differences in mentality, socio-cultural practices, value priorities, and consumption patterns. Contemporary global culture is urbanized and standardized, and the global economy is predominantly oriented toward large cities. However, this does not mean urban culture is entirely unified and utterly devoid of national manifestations.

As an alternative to globalization processes with their desire to standardize and assimilate cultural characteristics, the processes of nation self-identification have become more relevant in design. If verbal language is one of the primary forms of manifestation of the national, then visual language is also capable of having a national form.

Since advertising design is a relatively new field of creative activity, it is natural to use already-developed symbols and visual techniques. In this regard, there is a tendency to “modernize” the existing artistic and figurative means, to interpret them in a new context, and to use the “game” characteristic of postmodernism with the cultural layers of nations. To a certain extent, this is an organic environment for developing the national form in design and advertising, where ethno design (neo-folk) is becoming one of the leading trends. Among the reasons for this trend’s emergence are the need to identify goods and services in the market and the realization of a person as an heir to national traditions. Given that Ukraine has a rich cultural heritage, it can be argued that the Ukrainian nation has a solid basis for the further development of ethnic design.

Thus, the interrelationships of global and regional products are formed in the globalized communication space. New interaction problems arise between the modern and the traditional, the mass and the individual. Regarding the national, O. Khmelovskiy writes that an organic relationship occurs when national peculiarities are not noticed or emphasized. This is possible only when the artist-designer and the consumer genuinely feel the specifics of their native art [10].

Therefore, studying advertising graphics in a broader context, paying particular attention to the cultural and aesthetic problems of advertising, we conclude that advertising is subject to positive and negative influences of socio-cultural transformations, which is why the use of visuals in advertising should be determined by the focus on the target audience, taking into account certain aesthetic ideals, national coloring, and ethnic-artistic traditions.

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Валерій Бітаєв, Світлана Прищенко. Становлення рекламної графіки в Україні: етномистецький вектор

Анотація. Дослідження культурно-естетичної компоненти реклами має на меті визначення вагомого впливу етномистецьких традицій України на стилістику рекламної графіки. Автори розглядають проблеми національної форми та причини псевдонаціоналізації у дизайні та рекламі. В результаті кольоро-графічного і семантичного аналізу численних творів мистецтва виявлено, що візуальні складові рекламної графіки глибоко вкорінені в українському народному мистецтві. Разом з тим, виявлено, що відрив сучасного урбанізованого життя від здобутого протягом століть досвіду народного образотворення призводить до втрати етномистецьких традицій. У висновку статті автор доводить, що реклама зазнає позитивних і негативних впливів соціокультурних трансформацій, через що використання візуальних засобів у рекламі повинно обумовлюватися орієнтацією на цільову аудиторію, з урахуванням визначених естетичних ідеалів, національного забарвлення та етномистецьких традицій.

Ключові слова: етномистецькі традиції, рекламна графіка, національна форма, колір, етномотиви, візуальна мова реклами, псевдонаціоналізація.