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TYPOGRAPHIC AND CALLIGRAPHIC FORMS IN EXLIBRIS DESIGN
EXLİBRİS TASARIMINDA TİPOGRAFİK VE KALİGRAFİK FORMLAR

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Communication and Typography

From ancient times, searching for knowledge, trying to understand the environment, sharing thoughts & feelings and exchanging information are instinctive behaviours of humankind. Within this progression which can be defined as communication, human being used visual and auditory senses to form meaningful results from outer alerts in his mind. Initially, he took the advantage of symbols and signs in this process. By generation of forms that convert sounds to signs which are named letters, a new way of communication had begun. With the written communication, a whole new era had started, transmission and storage of information to a permanent source for the purposes of recording life has developed in time.

If we defined basic function of writing to transfer the thoughts and knowledge with the help of signs, typography is one step beyond with "making art/design with text" meaning. As a professional definition; "typography is the art & technique of arranging type and modifying letterforms to transmit the information in an understandable form of language, as well as cla-

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iming to have a personality, style, visual language in graphic design" (Uçar, 2004:106). By typography problems in conseptual form could be solved through visual language, content configure and turn into a graphic design product. "Typographic elements are perceived as a visual, heard as an audio and can be interpreted at the same time. Within its versatile structure, typography is a dynamic communication medium" (Becer, 1999:185).

Today's typographic characters formed as a result of a long-time evolution started with handwriting. Calligraphic writing tools such as brush, cane, quill pen directly influenced the form of letters. Later that ancient Greek and Romans constructed the anatomy of letters based on the basic geometric forms that initiated the foundations of today's fonts. So that the calligraphy has played a provenance role in the formation of alphabets and contemporary typography.

Calligraphy could be defined shortly as a "form of ornamental handwriting" found in various cultures in the world whose origins date back to ancient times. But with a contemporary description it is; "the art of giving form to signs and letters in an expressive, harmonious and skillful manner" (Mediavilla 1996). It has played a significant role in the history of many cultures, their languages and typographical approaches. Several different recognized groups of calligraphy in a wide regional diversity with different techniques, tools, lettering types have been using to create artistical styles. Today calligraphy ranges from functional inscriptions and hand lettering to fine art pieces where the expression of the handwritten mark frequently takes precedence over the legibility of the letters. Mostly characters are fluid and spontaneous, improvised at the moment of writing.

Although computerization is widespread, there is a welcome revival of interest among people in calligraphy, which is encouraging creation of new designs. Various graphic implements; posters to packaging, web sites to videos that configured with calligraphic elements draw all the attentions because of its unique expression and visual impact features. One of these implementation areas, exlibris, which is also known as a form of graphic art, was chosen for this study because of its the direct relation with letter, typography and being an effective communication medium.

What is Exlibris?

Exlibris (also known as bookplate) is a small graphic label or print, which is glued to the inside cover of a book with the purpose of identifying its owner. It introduces the owner of the book, glorifies and exalts him and warns the borrower of the book that he/she may bring it back. Along with being a discretion of possession, indication of an ownership, it may be said that it has the function to protect the book from thieves. The latin phrase 'Ex libris...', means from the books of..., and is usually followed by the name of the owner of the book, who can be an individual or an institution (Pektaş 2003, 13). The text and/or the illustrations which the artist uses in exlibris is often related to the interests of the bibliopile or about the theme of the book it is to be pasted into.

Time until 15. century, valuable manuscripts of books were primarily held only by the

Church, princes and sublevel nobles. They used coats of arms painted in books as a sign of private ownership code to protect such books from being stolen and lost . But in the mid-15th century with the invention of the printing press, libraries increased their collections so rapidly that it was no longer practical to paint coat of arms in every single book. Libraries, which had only a few volumes, quickly became much larger, and their owners wanted to identify all the books as being their property. In this sense artistically designed signs of book ownership expressed that owner's pride of possession. The origin of the printed exlibrises can be attributed to these factors (Wolf, 1993:14).

To the researchers early printed exlibrises were used in the third quarter of 15th Century in the South Germany. Hildebrand Brandenburg and Willhelm von Zell were well-known people whom exlibrises made for (Pektaş 2003, 15). In these exlibrises commonly coat of arms of the family engraved on wood and coloured by hand accompanied with a text written by the owner to pray for the owner's soul (Figure 1). One of the earlier exlibris was made for the German Priest Johannes Knabenberg in 1450, who was known with the nickname Igler/ Hedgehog. This exlibris was 19 cm long and depicting hedgehog biting a flower with 'Hanns Igler kisses you' message on the ribbon (Figure 2). This message reminding people if they bring back the book they will awarded with a kiss other wise they will be targeted with the quills of angry hedgehog.



Figure 1. Exlibris for Hildebrand Brandenburg
Artlex Art Dictionary.



Figure 2. Exlibris for Igler/Hedgehog.

Exlibris, experienced its finest time in the 16th and 17th centuries, but lost its importance during the 18th and19th centuries. From different countires well-known artists such as Albrecht Durer (1471-1528), Lucas Cranach (1472-1553), Evard Munch (1863-1944), Kaethe Kolwitz (1867-1945), Emil Nolde (1867-1956), Paul Klee (1879-1940), Pablo Picasso (1881-1973), Oscar Kokoscka (1888-1980) had made exlibrises for the important state men and scientists and their relatives (Figure) in these times. The nineteenth century is perhaps the dullest period in the history of exlibris, at least through its five middle decades. In general, with the exception of Britain, the use of exlibris became less frequent, also affected by the economic conditions prevailing at the time (Junod 1995). After this period in the nineteenth century, a new revival in exlibris art become and collecting of exlibris became fashionable so

that artists started to design for the large wide range of people.

Today, contemporary exlibrises are often made by artists more for exchange between collectors than for marking the ownership of books. Apart from late nineteenth century people started to collect exlibris, as a field of applied graphic arts of historical, artistic, sociological and bibliophile interest so that designing exlibris become a minor branch of graphic design. In these days with popularity of international exlibris competitions and exhibitions, there is an incrising number of graphic designers whom interested in exlibris.

Typography and Calligraphy in Exlibris Design

All graphic techniques which allow a high quality of multiple production have been used by artists over the centuries for exlibrises. In addition to traditional techniques like; woodcut, silkscreen, today's artists and designers prefer to use computer technology moreover (Figure 3). Whether traditional or digital techniques used for design & production, there are common principles to design an exlibris. Mainly the word "exlibris" have to be used with a living person's/institution name whom exlibris made for and it is noneligible that exlibris sizes are larger than 13 x 13 cm. When an exlibris produced by an original graphic technique, an edition of 50 - 100 are have to be printed, signed and numbered by the artist.



Figure 3. Artist: Mitsuko Tsuihiji



Artist: Gennady Pugachevsky

Exlibris is a graphic art formed with typographical and visual elements together in a small area. But typography has a great importance and stands out within two different functions. Firstly, living person's/institution name have to associated with exlibris word in typographical arrangement. So that typography is a complementary to design carefully due to the presence in the image format, as well as the readability and rhythm of the composition.

Secondly, exlibris can be designed with just typographic and calligraphic elements instead of images and illustrations. In this case; typography takes the leading role, become the main design element in exlibris's structure and have to determined carefully. In both cases, choosing the best typeface related with composition and characteristic of exlibris, right size,

color and the location for the inscription in the composition, aesthetic integrity are the main problems of the designer (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Artist: Katje Vermier.



Artist: Tuba Sivri

In typographic and calligraphic exlibrises, there is no visual forms that help to built up the composition, designer should have to use the power of the letters. It should attract and evoke the viewer's sense of pleasure as well as the readability. And aesthetic, well-qualified, unique designes can be formed just with the letters that have well structured, suprised forms with dynamic curls. (Figure 5).



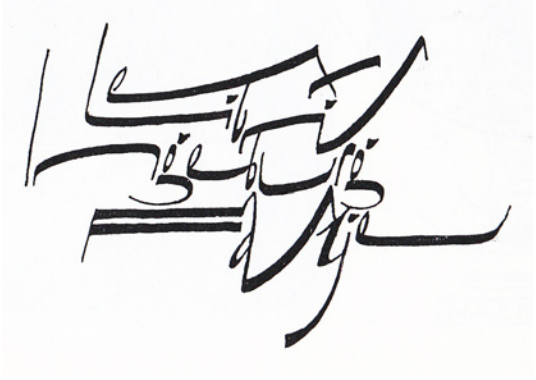


Figure 5. Artist: Hans-Joachim Burgert

Letters are references to the real life that reflect the personality which we can perceieve

in our handwriting (Baeyens 2002). In this sense calligraphy is concerned with creating unique identity in exlibris design. Whether using the facilities of computer technology or linear values of handmade calligraphy, each exlibris will be disaffiliated from the others with the transformation of letters to a visual format. Black stains and white gaps which composed the balance and harmony together in the letter forms will enhance the visual quality as well as to visual perception. (Figure 6).





Figure 6. Artist: Özden Pektaş Turgut. Artist: Salih Denli.

Calligraphy in exlibris design is a substantial part of the composition as much as being an encrypted series of culture, ideas and emotions. There should be a considered relation between the culture and typographic arrengement. Designer has to organize all calligraphic forms in the mean of cultural diversity with experienced handwritings and educated eyes to form rhythmic, harmonious compositions (Figure 7).







Figure 7. Artist: Franz Lehrer. Artist: Yoshida Masaki. Artist: Ercan Tuna.

Exlibris as a graphic design product, carry aesthetic values and also an important me-

dium, give rise to wide international communication between designers and collectors. Art is between hands of human, brings it into the books, it lets the others to feel its charming warmness. And also as an object of collection, a wonderful way of acquiring, with time and patience and without being a millionaire, a small-format art museum which reflect the artist's skills and the collector's taste.

As a conclusion the aim of this study is introducing and/or making awareness of a well-known form of graphic art to wide range of people and showing new implementation styles. Especially it is observed that the fluid and spontaneous structure of typographic and calligraphic exlibrises are getting interests from numerous artists&collectors in international congresses and organizations. So even on a smaller surface it is perceptible that well organized and attractive typography can take the place of visuality. In this sense, examples showed that combining the warmth of calligraphy with cold side of the computer technology would enabled new graphical implementations and encouraged to discover new styles in graphic design.

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Özet

Eslibris Tasarımında Tipografik ve Kaligrafik Formlar

"Bookplate" olarak da bilinen Exlibris, kitap sahibini tanıtmak amacıyla kitapların iç kapağına yapıştırılan üzerinde farklı konularda resimlemelerin yer aldığı küçük boyutlu grafik çalışmalardır. Kitabın kartviziti ya da tapusudur. Exlibris Latince bir sözcük olarak ...'nın kitabı, ...'nın kitaplığına ait anlamına gelir ve devamında kitap sahibinin veya kuruluşun adı kullanılmaktadır. Küçük boyutlu sanatsal bir çalışma olarak exlibris, kütüphanede veya kitapların mülkiyetini belirtmek, sahiplik göstergesi amacıyla 500 yıldan fazla süredir tasarlanmaktadır. 19. yüzyıldan itibaren tarihsel, sanatsal, sosyolojik ve kütüphanecilik konularına olan ilginin artmasıyla, exlibris bir grafik sanatı ürünü olarak değerlendirilerek koleksiyonerliği yapılmaya başlanmıştır. Exlibris üretiminde geçmişten günümüze yüksek görüntü kalitesi elde edilebilecek ağaç baskı, gravür, se-

rigrafi, taş baskı gibi tüm geleneksel baskı teknikleri kullanılırken günümüzde bu tekniklerin yanı sıra bilgisayar teknolojisi de sanatçılar tarafından tercih edilmektedir. Tipografi ve görsel sanat ögelerinin birlikteliğinden var olan exlibris tasarımında kitap, erotik, müzik, botanik, mitoloji.. gibi çok sayıda farklı tema tercih edilmekte ve günümüzde özellikle koleksiyonerler tarafından exlibrisler estetik bütünlük, teknik yetkinlik ve resim - yazı ilişkisi açısından sınıflandırılmaktadır. Çok uzun bir geçmişe sahip bu sanat dalı, yapıldığı döneme ait kültürel, tarihsel özellikleri günümüze taşıması nedeniyle de ilgi çekmekte, sanatçılar ve koleksiyoncular arasında önemli bir değiş tokuş objesi olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Ayrıca sahip olduğu küçük boyutu ile sanat eserinin kişinin elleri arasına taşınarak onun büyüleyici sıcaklığını hissedilmesine olanak sağlamaktadır. Exlibris tasarımında kullanılan resimsel ögelerin yanı sıra yazının gücü ve tipografik düzenlemelerin etkisi, bir iletişim aracı olarak da değerini artırmaktadır. Tipografik ve kaligrafik temalı çalışmalar, koleksiyonerler arasında özellikle dikkate değer bulunmakta ve sanatçının özgün değerlerini, sanatsal izleri yansıtması ve kültürlerarası iletimdeki rolü sebebiyle öne çıkmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: kaligrafi, exlibris, grafik tasarım, kültür, baskı sanatı.

Abstract

TYPOGRAPHIC AND CALLIGRAPHIC FORMS IN EXLIBRIS DESIGN

Exlibris also known as bookplate is a small graphic label or print, which is glued to the inside cover of a book with the purpose of identifying its owner. The Latin phrase ‘Ex libris...’, means; ‘from the books of...’, and is usually followed by the name of the owner of the book, who can be an individual or an institution. As small printed graphic arts, exlibrises mark the ownership of the volumes of the library in a decorative and elegant way and produced by well-known artists for more than five hundred years. Apart from late nineteenth century people started collecting exlibris, as a field of applied graphic arts of historical, artistic, sociological and bibliophile interest so that exlibris became an orginal graphic art work. In time, all graphic techniques which allow a high quality multiple production of an image used by the artists to produce exlibrises. As much as traditional techniques include woodcut, linocut, engraving, etching, aquatint, silkscreen or lithography, also computer technology can be used by today’s artists. Exlibris as a combination of typography and visual art, can be designed in different subjects like books, erotic, music, botany, music, mytology and especially exlibrises are classified in terms of aesthetic integrity, technical competence and relationship between text-image by collectors in today.This long time historical art form has an importantance of having the cultural, historical features of that period to present day and being an exchange object between artists and collectors. Besides its small size allows fascinating feeling warmth of an artwork, inside one’s hands. As well as the pictorial elements used in design, also typographical arrangements and the power of letters increase the value of exlibris as a communication tool. On the other hand typographic and calligraphic themed exlibrises have a serious notability between collectors because of carrying expressive codes of artist’s own and having a role in cultural transmission.

Keywords: *calligraphy, exlibris, graphic design, culture, printed art.*