

Analysis of Visual Humorous in Fukuda Shigeo's Poster Works

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Abstract: As a master of graphic design, Fukuda Shigeo has made remarkable achievements in design concept and practice. His design works have repeatedly won international awards and been praised as the "Pope of Graphic Design" in the West. He is good at using positive and negative forms, heterogeneous isomorphism, contradictory space and other design techniques to express graphic poster design, in which the iconic design techniques and humorous personal style often leave a deep impression on people. With simple graphic elements to create a new visual experience, the international symbolic language makes the works easy to understand and regardless of national boundaries, at the same time, it also gives a profound and philosophical connotation, "Humorous Fukuda style" can often make people laugh and appreciate the design works.

1. Introduction

1.1. Poster Design.

Poster, also known as show card, is a common form of expression in graphic design. Typical posters include text and graphic elements, but the content of posters can be graphical or text only. The poster design is eye-catching and could deliver information. Posters can be used for many purposes. They are often used by businesses and other groups (political parties, public welfare organizations and educational institutions) trying to deliver information. The modern posters we know can be traced back to the 1940s and 1950s. The development of printing industry has enabled a mass production of posters at low cost. In advance to the development of computer technology, such as film posters, commercial advertisements and so on, were hand-painted by artists. With the maturity of computer technology and printing industry, designers can turn pictures into reality across the screen. And with the continuous progress of technology, designers can present more novel imagination and elements in front of the audience.

1.2. Visual Humor.

As a loanword, humor in Chinese is transliterated from humor in English by Lin Yutang. Humor can be verbal, visual or physical. In addition, non-verbal communication such as music or visual arts can also be humorous. People of different ages and cultures will respond to humor. The transmission of sense of humor can be achieved either through specific cognitive symbols in the picture or through the reception of certain concepts. For complex forms of humor, such as satire, people need to understand their social significance and context, which could attract more mature audiences. In the scope of humor, it includes irrational factors such as exaggeration, contradiction and paradox, which is a kind of psychological pleasure.

The world we see from our eyes is the most direct and perceptual one. In the modern information age, there are many visual elements with a sense of humor. All of these elements abide by the rules of perception but not rationality, namely exaggeration, contradiction, paradox, etc. The visual directness ensures the rapid transmission of its information, and can complete the rapid transformation from direct vision to complete to direct perception, precisely because the direction of

vision. Compared with words, the form of graphics can transmit information more quickly. In many cases, people can get a humorous experience without rational thinking. Poster works with sense of humor in graphic design are visual humorous posters. Designers can make the audience get the elements of humor directly from the visual perception by deliberately dealing with visual elements, so as to quickly generate humorous feelings.

2. Basic Principles of Poster Design

As a kind of activity developed with the development of advertising industry, poster design cannot be separated from the application of computer graphics technology. The main feature is to combine image, text, color, layout, graphics and other elements to achieve a clear publicity purpose, which is the process of creative design activities or graphic arts. In the process of poster design, some basic design principles are often used, including positive and negative forms, heterogeneous isomorphism and contradictory space techniques, which are often used in poster graphic design.

2.1. Positive and Negative Form.

Positive and negative forms can also be referred to as Figure-base relationship or reverse graphics. They are the reverse or complementary relationship between positive and negative forms, so that each form can retain its basic form as well as provide a foil to each other. They can express two or more meanings, which enriches the picture and increases the interest of posters. Positive and negative methods are widely used in poster design, because their complementary graphics deliver to people a strong visual shock, while the poster theme will be rich in connotation with a variety of meanings.

2.2. Heterogeneous Isomorphism.

Heterogeneous isomorphism refers to taking one Figure as the basic frame, then grafting another or more elements to produce a new visual form. A basic form, will original graphics for creative transformation after the designer's creative treatment, to graft another element, and the combination of the two graphics can produce a deeper connotation, thus conforming to the theme of the design work.

2.3. Contradictory Space.

The formation of contradictory space is usually based on the transformation and alternation of viewpoints, which shows a three-dimensional form on two-dimensional plane, and forms a space between two-dimensional and three-dimensional space. With the technique of contradictory space, we can create a wonderful visual space which cannot exist in real three-dimensional space, full of visual impact.

3. Fukuda Shigeo's Unique Humorous Creation

Fukuda Shigeo's works are as humorous and interesting as himself. When he was a teenager, Fukuda Shigeo once was determined to be a cartoonist, but since there was no cartoonist major in design schools at that time, he devoted his humor and talent to the field of design. Fukuda Shigeo's works have a strong visual impact of personal style, which often are composed of simple points, lines and planes, but the whole picture is full of sense of humor and drama, and uses positive and negative, heterogeneous isomorphism and contradictory space design techniques to present a world full of illusion.

3.1. Unique Design Concepts.

From the perspective of design concept, visual illusion and logic contradiction are generated by concise graphics throughout Fukuda's design career. Most of his works are based on logic contradiction derived from visual illusion so as to reflect the sense of humor. For example, "Victory in 1945" is the design work from Fukuda Shigeo in the 1970s (Fig. 1). At that time, Fukuda Shigeo

had not yet fully formed the early exploration stage of personal style. The unique and fantastic graphic language had not yet been implemented, and the simple design concept was very strong, but we can see the origin of Fukuda's humor delivered from it.



Fig 1. Poster of Victory in 1945

The posters are all shown in comic style with only black, white and yellow in color, which makes them more dramatic. The picture of a warhead hitting the barrel in the opposite direction reflects the profound connotation that the warmongers will inevitably eat their own evil effects. It also comes with a sense of humor and philosophy to the expression in the form of visual symbols. Originally, these elements should be self-contradictory in practical sense. The projectiles emitted from the muzzle will not be fired back. It is this logical contradiction that embodies humor, since it is such a contradiction that the real elements do not exist and need people's imagination to complete. Well, it also guides the direct vision of the appreciator in the subconscious, into direct perception, so that the illusion of contradiction becomes the perception of reason. Fukuda uses visual symbols that are usually well known: Muzzle and cannonball. Well, logically, cannonball should be fired from the muzzle. When the viewer sees the picture, the visual illusion of receiving these two visual symbols causes a logical contradiction. Since the cannonballs turn to the muzzle, which is not in line with reality, thus creating a logical illusion. So when the viewer realizes this, the viewer's psychology will be affected. It has entered another logic, that is, the logic in posters. The contrast in the process of transformation produces "psychological consumption". The visual directness accelerates the transformation process and produces the sense of humor. The logic in posters is contrary to the reality, so the sense of humor that the audience can feel is very profound.

The Combination of Ideas and Techniques. From the beginning to design a concept gradually to the formation, the exploration of design techniques has become a natural process. Fukuda Shigeo design techniques are not achieved overnight and unchanged. It is his way to the end of his life for continuous pursuit for new forms and progress.

From Fukuda Shigeo's exploration of design techniques, the pictorial expressiveness of his works is also interesting. For example, posters of dachshund, he focused on how to cut the illustration of a dachshund, and then put it in dislocation. A new visual image emerged (Fig. 2).

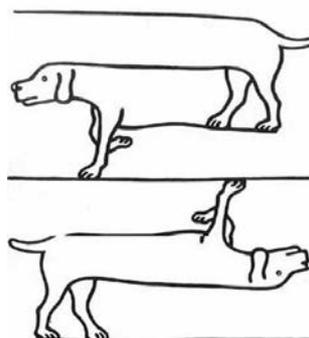


Fig 2. Poster of Dachshund

This is also the expression of Fukuda Shigeo's design concept, which makes use of simple pictures, but can achieve a unique effect. It makes use of illusion to cause people's logical contradictions, thus generating a sense of humor. Design technique is the bones and tendons of its idea into reality. Ideas and techniques complement each other and are indispensable.

According to Fukuda's positive and negative, heterogeneous isomorphism and contradictory space design techniques, his unique visual humorous language can be divided into three categories.

3.2. Graphic Humor.

Fukuda Shigeo's graphic humor is a combination of his superb techniques and his design concept in the relationship between the Figure and the bottom, and the unity of illusion and law. Positive and negative form has been the representative design method of Fukuda Shigeo since its early stage, such as the promotional poster designed for Japanese Keio Department Store in 1975. This work is one of the representative works in Fukuda Shigeo's early stage (Fig. 3).



Fig 3. Promotional Poster Designed for Japanese Keio Department Store

The positive and negative forms are the legs of men and women, and the legs of a man jump up in the picture. With the guidance of realistic logic, the line of sight will extend with the structure of the legs. At this time, it will be found that the legs pictures of women also come out. As for the different relationship between the bottom and the picture, the two forms have different colors, but the layers are distinct. And in accordance with the way of orderly repetition and intersection interval in arrangement, the two forms are contours, interdependent, complementary, concise and interesting, and the effect is full of strong sense of drama and tension of the picture. Fukuda Fukuda brought the positive and negative forms into full play. The leg structure of the human body should be extended to the waist. But when he looked at the bottom of the legs, he found that the logic in the poster did not follow the reality. Instead, women's legs were created from the existing forms. The visual illusion caused by the relationship between these forms was transformed into psychological perception, and the whole picture was added. The repetitive arrangement of the pictures, full of dramatic internal logic, implicitly conforms to its social theme, full of expression and ridicule of reality, which is easy to accept as a freehand brushwork.

3.3. Creative Humor.

Fukuda Shigeo's creative humor is to use heterogeneous isomorphic techniques to replace or directly graft another graphic element with one graphic element, so that all kinds of unrelated elements can be combined. And the rich creativity and the support of modelling ability show a unique humorous interest. Beethoven's Ninth Symphony Series are such a work (Fig. 4).

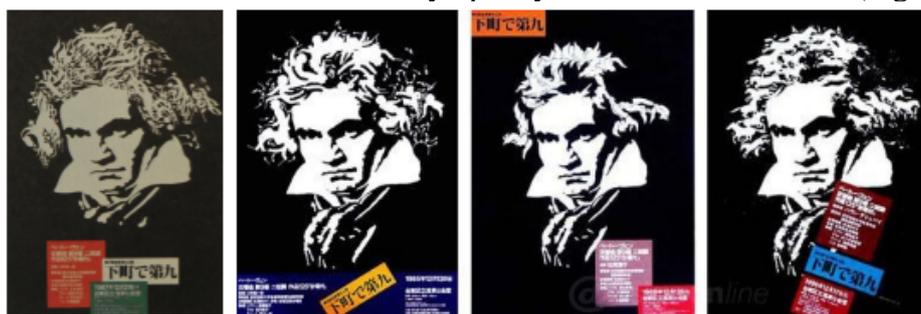


Fig 4. Beethoven's Ninth Symphony Series (Part of works)

Taking Beethoven's traditional images as the basic framework, Fukuda Shigeo combines totally two different graphics, which makes up the hair part of the note image, and finds the connection of its internal meaning from the deep level. It transcends the representation of real material, and skillfully highlights the theme of the design. The musical notes, birds and horses in the series are the embodiment from Fukuda's strong imagination, that is, Beethoven's music connotation, in which the intuitive image is the representative of notes, horses, birds, etc. These symbolic graphics obtains the most intuitive means to graft these symbols, so Beethoven appears with strange hair. Fukuda once again transformed visual illusion by means of heterogeneous isomorphism. Heterogeneity is the difference of matter itself. The collection of meanings represented by each other, and isomorphism are the connection of internal meanings between things. Thus, the isomorphism of meaning makes people accept the impossible existence. Visual illusion is also transformed into psychological perception, relaxed and humorous at the same time. People feel vivid and profound, which is very clever combination of the theme of the design.

3.4. Spatial Humor.

Spatial humor is Fukuda's method to make use of contradictory space to create a contradictory world in multi-dimensional space in two-dimensional plane. Contradictions exist in paradox and imagination, which is interesting. Fukuda Shigeo sublimated the traditional graphics after space arrangement, which creates a "Fukuda Space" and combines vision and humor. The posters in Fukuda Shigeo Poster Exhibition show this space (Fig. 5).



Fig 5. Fukuda Shigeo Poster Exhibition

The picture of plane presents a three-dimensional visual environment. All the characters are sitting in different directions. At the same time, composed of yellow and black lines, the space can be said to be totally contrary to reality. This method breaks the conventions, but also have impacts on people's realistic logic with visual illusion. The dislocation logic that juxtaposes in different angles or logical relations is not only graphics. On the other hand, it is also ideological. Composed of many logical relations, the picture can make people think deeply and forget to return. At the same time, it also has an inherent sense of logic and aesthetics in the picture. For example, the poster of Fukuda Shigeo Poster Exhibition, each part of the image can be set up in three-dimensional space alone, but it produces a sense of ridicule visual impact when it is juxtaposed in the picture. There is a deeper connotation and logic in the picture in the process of initiating continuous thinking, which is impressive, so as to achieve an interesting effect.

3.5. Contrast of Works from Similar Design Techniques.

Kan Tai-keung, a master of design in China, is also a representative figure in the use of heterogeneous isomorphism. Like Fukuda Shigeo, his works have a strong personal style and visual impact. Heterogeneous isomorphic design techniques are widely used in various graphic designs by Fukuda Shigeo and Kan Tai-keung, the master of design in China. But each person's design concept and picture performance are different with that of each other, and there will be considerable

differences in the use of similar design techniques.

In 1999, Kan Tai-keung created a poster to celebrate Macao's Return to China. In the poster "Macao's Return in 1999", he used heterogeneous isomorphism to show the harmony of the spiritual connotation and cultural height of his works (Fig. 6).



Fig 6. Poster of "Macao's Return in 1999"

In the picture, the petals of a lotus flower fall and cause ripple. The flag of Macao Special Administrative Region is the image of the lotus flower. The falling leaves return to their homeland. In addition to the petals photographed in reality, the ripples from the falling petals are represented by the patterns in the form of ink and wash. Moreover, the red characters in the middle are inserted in the picture in a vertical arrangement, which are combined with the central figure to form a Chinese character as a whole. Although the material level of graphics is differentiated, differentiated images can form well-known visual symbols, but the internal logic is in line with practical significance. All graphics are subject to the same meaning, so that people can communicate spiritually.

It can be seen that the heterogeneous isomorphism used in Kan Tai-keung's works is isomorphism through the difference between material and visual levels with the harmony between internal logic. The design concept is the harmony and unity of form and connotation. Fukuda Shigeo's concepts are different from Kan Tai-keung's cultural connotation and harmony. Fukuda Shigeo's works attach more attention to the contradiction between illusion and logic of graphics, which enables the viewer to transform the illusion and contradiction of logic into a sense of humor. At the same time, the simple and dramatic expression of the picture deepens the reception of this feeling.

4. Appreciation to Fukuda Shigeo's Visual Humor Works

4.1. UCC Cafe.

In 1984, Fukuda Shigeo designed the poster "UCC Cafe" for UCC Cafe. It made full use of the positive and negative design techniques to create humorous graphics, full of ingenious visual symbols and inner meanings, which makes people feel the charm of the graphical humor in a smile (Fig. 7).



Fig 7. UCC Cafe poster

In graphic design, the spiral visual orientation is like the whirlpool when stirring a cup of coffee,

but besides every part of the whirlpool is a hand holding the coffee cup. The vivid and interesting graphics are full of humanistic interest. Radioactive repetition is carried out in the arrangement of figures. Ordered elements give people a sense of stability of internal logic, but the reverse is also true. Visual illusion combines positive and negative hypotheses into one, and even develops a dynamic visual effect that covers the theme of the cafe.

4.2. F series Posters.

The F series posters on Fukuda Shigeo Works Exhibition take their initials as the best display of Fukuda Shigeo's creative humor (Fig. 8). Each of the works in this series uses heterogeneous isomorphism.



Fig 8. F Series Poster of F by Fukuda Shigeo (Part of works)

All "F" poster series are directly based on the whole "F" to graft and replace other elements, in which you can see the combination of various graphics and letters, and all highlight the designer's imagination and brilliant design techniques.

4.3. Poster of Matsuya Department Store in Japan.

The Poster of Matsushita Department Store in Japan (Fig. 9), designed by Fukuda Shigeo in 1999, is one of the many wonderful pictures depicted by him in the design language of spatial humor.



Fig 9. Poster of Matsuya Department Store in Japan

The images of the two characters have different perspectives, but both of them exist in the same picture. One is to look up, the other is to look down. This impossible space causes visual and psychological illusions. Visually, the most intuitive feeling is the direction and arrangement of space. Each perspective and level has its own internal logic. However, it puts these logic together and uses two-dimensional plane to represent every aspect of three-dimensional space, while each aspect appears in a two-dimensional space at the same time, which produces a huge logical contradiction, thus making the picture a kind of fantastic and true scene.

5. Conclusion

The works from Fukuda Shigeo always have a playful sense of humor, relaxed and interesting, which is complementary to his ideas and techniques.

Ideally, it is easy to understand and disseminate with simple and concise international and humanized graphic elements, which abandons all unnecessary visual elements to make the theme concise and clear. And the visual illusion caused by graphics has full visual attraction, which is impressive.

In terms of technique, graphic humor, creative humor and spatial humor are the manifestations of their humorous language. The change of graphics, the richness of forms and the paradox of space enable a rise to illusions, thus increasing the dramatic nature and triggering contradictions and inherent laws of the works. The works are not only full of humor caused by illusion, but also full of philosophical thoughts and social and humanistic relations.

Fukuda Shigeo's influence is also evident. His design works have won international awards for many times, and his works can be found in every current graphic textbook. His design concepts and achievements provide valuable learning resources and unlimited creative inspiration for the later explorers of graphic design. From a practical perspective, his design method is worth learning and discussing. From a professional point of view, his design concept and pursuit of design are also worthy of praise and learning.

Visual humor has always been not limited to graphic design, just as Fukuda did not fully express his illusion in graphic design. His pursuit of visual expression is beneficial to society to touch people's hearts, as his enlightenment to later generations in the design circle will enable the new generation to make design works better constantly. It is his precious heritage that he inspired and changed.

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