

THE VISUAL CALLS OF TODAY: VOICES OF PEACE

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Visual communication always implies cooperation between the author and the viewer, the synchronization of shared emotions and the practice of interaction, from which common understanding and common reality are born. The active development of digital mediums brought visual images closer to the audience, making the visual world even more intimate for users who more and more actively examine and react to images.

Since the start of the full-fledged war in Ukraine, visual messages informed, supported, and mobilized different target audiences through documentary and illustrative language. The war moved into the information space and transformed into content for different platforms with common messages. Visual messages, posters, infographics, statistics, illustrations, merchandise and stickers have become effective design solutions during informational warfare. Important and contemporary, motivational and declarative messages inform a wide audience in Ukraine and abroad.

People fight propaganda, fake information, psychological pressure and other means of informational assault in the digital dimension. The authors of projects «StopFake», «Voxcheck», «Без брехні», «По той бік новин», «Брехунець» (Район.in.ua) actively debunk untruthful information and fabricated narratives.

Apart from informational combat, digital calls have become an economical and cultural frontline, a central place for coordinating actions and emotional support. In particular, an Instagram page by the name of «@na_den_blyzhche» [4] has recently appeared, where illustrations with suggestions of activities we could partake in after the war are published, for example, freely roaming the streets of our hometowns, which we will definitely rebuild, or returning to ordinary life when our sleep is not disturbed by the sound of alarms. Such resource helps to keep an optimistic outlook and improves people's overall mood.

Visual language is a certain «point of intersection» of countless foundations with the help of which a revelation of the emotional state and mood of the viewer happens. [2, p. 20]. In the communicative society, design is able to alter the world around using visual images - metaphors, codes, patterns, colours and so on. Design products have already become a viable means of conveying ideas, information, meanings, experiences, and virtues back when the coronavirus outbreak happened. Creative industries generate ideas and realize them in materials that Ukraine is in dire need of. The project «Never Again Gallery» [5] calls out to the historical memory of western countries with a plead to support Ukraine. Artists and illustrators have adapted and reimagined 20 posters of World War 2 to ask the countries of the free world to help Ukraine. With the help of multimedia technology, they have connected the past and the present in emotional banners to tell about the war.

Throughout the last years, design has seen significant changes, which transformed it from a method of aesthetic construction into a powerful technique of visual communication. Designers create not only information about commodities (designer products) but also relevant messages (communicative projects), broadcasting the virtues of people and brands and becoming active communicators. Informational work plays an important role in establishing the global perception of events in Ukraine and the positioning of the nation. Creative agency «Banda» in cooperation with the Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine has created a platform «brave.ua» [6], the main mission of the project is to tell about brave people, businesses and ideas. Using visual codes and messages communicators establish the base for a large-scale local and international advertising campaign about national bravery and creating the image of our country.

Through the use of creative decisions, authors encourage the audience to joint action, actualizing the subconscious feelings of a viewer, and translating them into understandable and perceivable language. Even though two projects called «Postcards from Ukraine» share the same name, they are different in visual potential - documentary and illustrative. The artist Toma Safarova has created a project containing her interpretation of the cities and villages of Ukraine, demonstrating their state before the Russian invasion [7], and at the same time, an eponymous project was designed to capture and tell about the destruction of cultural heritage by occupants via the authentic language of photography [8]. Visual code is a kind of basic narrative that the viewers understand by connecting all the elements in a composition.

Talented creators comprehend the events, and informational leads and propose apt images for interpreting reality. Visual communication is a method of creating «individual identities and collective affiliation; a path to happiness, balance, peach and home» – as pointed out by Alexis L. Boylan while discussing an optimist's perception [1, p. 11]. This means breaking the boundary of all things obvious, in order to understand the hidden signals left by the communicators by employing a combination of different elements - fonts, images, forms, colours, and texture.

Designers Olia Kuzovkina and Serhii Serbin have created a series of posters that say «Diakuii» in sixteen languages [9]. Thus, Ukrainians have acquired an ability to thank the people for considerable help, the organizers of the resource suggest printing the posters and putting them out on the streets of cities all around the world and posting them on social networks. Such communication entails feedback through feelings and common experiences.

Visual projects combine subjective and objective in the author's vision, and everything that catches attention becomes popular, regardless of style. Mascots that represent comradeship, the brand, and the team clarify visual communication. A series of drawings depicting various frontlines of Ukrainian resistance appeared on the internet. The author who goes by the name Alisa Uzhasnaya publishes a series of illustrations in comic book style portraying cats («Cyber cats», «Volunteer cats», «Armed Forces cats», for support of Mariupol, etc.) that protect and rescue Ukraine with their actions. [10]. Those illustrations «talk» with the digital viewer in his own language, creating the feeling of intimacy, while the most popular ones become a viable branding asset.

The virtual blogger Astra Starr [11] talks about the reality of war in «Astra War Diaries», in her posts the influencer tells about explosions, evacuation, volunteering, hiding in the shelter and other true stories of the war. Astra donates to the «Повернісь ЖИВИМ» charity fund for every repost. The main aim of the project is to raise awareness about the war in Ukraine using innovative methods and to tell about it to generation Z.

Social networks have become the chronicles of wartime, and in some cases, they are the most reliable source of information. Designer declarations have taken their place in the feed together with private messages and news. Documentation in social networks has fewer chances of lasting, as it is ephemeral by nature, but in return, it creates a direct experience of the situation that is happening here and now for the user.

Being able to listen to the outside world and capture and convey content has become the norm in today's world. Digital communication is widespread and individual at the same time, it affects a person's perception of reality and discovers new visual worlds. The change of formats and an active transition towards the social networks are the new reality of war, which has also changed the hierarchy of resources. First the social networks, and then websites. «In the case of warfare, social media use might even be construed as a form of guerrilla tactics» [3]. The Internet's gradual infiltration of all spheres of life has introduced a new way of observing and telling, and also formed a culture of an audience that is inclined towards imagery.

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