

# GRAPHIC DESIGN PRACTICES, TECHNOLOGIES OF REPRODUCTION AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES AFTER THE COLLAPSE OF THE SOVIET UNION IN BELARUS

*Alla Pigalskaya*

EUROPEAN HUMANITIES UNIVERSITY

Tauro g. 12, LT-01114 Vilnius, Lithuania

Alla.pigalskaya@ehu.lt

The article discusses the connection between the visual means used in posters of the late 1980s and early 1990s, created in the period of disintegration of the USSR and the formation of the independent state of Belarus, which coincided with the transition to digital technology in graphic design. Thus, the formal characteristics of type-faces used in the posters are considered in the context of technological, social and institutional reconfiguration.

KEYWORDS: Soviet and post-Soviet design, typeface, lettering, poster, photography, technologies of reproduction, digital technologies.

Through the turmoil of political history it is sometimes difficult to see the historicity of the visual language. This article deals with the period of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the formation of independent states, which, in Belarus, more or less coincided chronologically with the transition to the use of digital technology in the creation and production of graphic products such as posters. The late 1980s and early 1990s saw significant changes both in the political field and the institutional and technological logic of the production of visual materials. These changes will be studied through an analysis of posters produced in this period, specifically focusing on the practices of font production, their use and integration into the layout of images, and the use of photography as an artistic medium

in posters. In the Soviet period, photography was used to create poster layouts, for example, when creating a font for the text of the poster and using screen printing as the reproduction technology. It is noted in the article that the transition to digital technology led to the use of photography but with a completely different logic and different semantic effects. The configuration of political, institutional and technological changes of the period is viewed in relation to the visual language and expressive means found in posters.

Looking through the optic of Michel de Certeau's model for the analysis of everyday life, we can argue that the institutionally organized logic and rules of the

<sup>1</sup> Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.

production, consumption and use of posters and other objects of graphic design in the Soviet Union were complemented by tactics applied by those involved in the practices of their creation. An attempt to reveal the tension that existed in the BSSR in the 1960s and 1970s between the established institutional rules and regulations in the process of creation of visual materials, and the specific tactics involved in their production was made in a previously published article<sup>2</sup>. In short, it should be noted that this period was characterized by a centralized system of ordering, production and distribution of visual materials to mandatory distribution addresses. Regulations and norms prescribed the forms of representation to be used in visual agitprop in relation to the topic represented, such as Party Congresses and Five Year Plans. Nevertheless, even in this highly centralized system, there still remained space for individual initiatives and the avoidance of established norms and regulations.

From 1985, 'perestroika' was launched in the Soviet Union, and in 1991 Belarus, along with the other Soviet republics, became an independent state. In the period of 'perestroika', institutional changes in the production of graphic materials emerged: artists discovered a new realm of freedom and now had the possibility to use the typographic equipment and machines owned by the state to produce projects of their own, such as 'authorial'<sup>3</sup> posters, for international competitions<sup>4</sup>. After

1991, all Soviet institutions broke down: in the words of eyewitnesses of those events, by 1993, in Belarus, Ukraine and Russia the profession of designer, as it had been known hitherto, died. However, it gave way to the formation of a new logic of the production of graphic works<sup>5</sup>. The Artists' Union of Belarus, despite the fact that it continues to exist to this day, did not undergo significant changes except for one thing – in 1991, it ceased to be the main executor of state commissions for visual products. From that moment on, the state and public structures (Gorrekhlama, Foreign Trade, state-owned factories) no longer are the only customer: alongside, there are private companies and organizations that order commissions from advertising agencies and design studios. After gaining independence, however, the state monopoly still extended with regard to certain orders, such as the design and production of banknotes, or postage stamps (postal money). After the collapse of the USSR, BF VNIITE<sup>6</sup> was renamed as the Belarusian Institute of Design, and in 1995, as the National Design Centre of the Republic of Belarus, but it operated only for several years and then ceased to exist, mainly due to the lack of funding<sup>7</sup>. The explanation for this could lie in the fact that in the Soviet times it was BF VIITE who received major orders from state-owned enterprises, but in a market economy (after the collapse of the USSR) designers were hired by either state-owned or private companies on demand. In this reconfigured logic of order distribution and market economy, there was no place for the Design Centre as a quality control and coordinating institution<sup>8</sup>. In the early 1990s, the public organization the Belarusian Union of Designers was founded with a focus on exhibition activities. It also

2 Alla Pigalskaya, „Visual Traces of Individualization Practices in 1960–70s Posters of the BSSR / Vizualiniai individualizavimo si praktikų ženklai XX a. 7–8 dešimtmečio BSSR plakuose“, in: *Acta Academiae Artium Vilnensis* 73, Vilnius, 2014, t. 73: *Sovietmečio kultūros tyrimai: aktualijos ir perspektyvos / Studies of Soviet Culture: Issues and Perspectives*, pp. 123–139.

3 'Authorial' posters – this designation has been used for posters, which were released by designers, above all, members of the Belarusian Union of Artists or/and the Belarusian Union of Designers, on their own initiative to participate in international poster competitions.

4 Roundtable discussion with the participation of A. Kulazhenko, V. Tsesler, G. Matsur (Belarus), O. Veklenko (Ukraine) and S. Serov (Russia) was held at EHU on 15 May 2014, audiorecording (2 hrs 40 min.).

5 Roundtable discussion, 15 May 2015.

6 Belarusian Branch of the All-Union Scientific and Research Institute of Technical Aesthetics.

7 Belarussian Design Union site URL: <http://fileserv.unid.by/history.html>.

8 In the early 2000s, design competitions and festivals functioned as mechanisms to maintain the quality of visual products.

published catalogues and magazines, such as PROdesign, a specialized trade publication. This institution represented a broad understanding of design, as reflected in the thematic diversity of its magazine, which covered a wide spectrum of the arts and presented a digest of news about exhibitions and other achievements in the field of the applied arts by those who associated themselves with art and design, as well as advertising. The thematic expansion of the PROdesign magazine is today an invaluable source for mapping the career path of designers in the post-Soviet period.

The institutional reconfiguration in the second half of the 1980s and early 1990s was accompanied by significant changes in design production technology. Computers started to be used for pre-press graphic production, mainly to prepare the layout for offset printing. Digital printing later received a broader usage for short runs (changing notions of circulation numbers of graphic design objects become particularly important in the post-Soviet period, in connection with the appearance of private companies and a service market). Thus, in the early 1990s political and institutional reconfiguration coincided with the transition to digital technology.

#### TEXTUAL DESIGN PRACTICES AND TYPEFACE PRODUCTION FOR POSTERS

Posters issued in the second half of the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s, which were in demand, allow us to map the changes that occurred as a result of the tandem of institutional and technological reconfigurations. It should be noted, first and foremost, that the impression we get of the posters produced in this period is rather fragmented and approximate when compared to those produced in the Soviet times, when there was a centralized system of production, cataloguing and distribution. Posters from the collection of the Belarusian Design Union, the materials for an

exhibition on the 1990s held in Tsekh (IEX) Gallery in October 2013, were used as the basis for this study.

Posters produced in the late 1980s and early 1990s are divided into two groups:

- 1) Authorial (copyright) posters that were produced for international competitions by artists of the Belarusian Artists' Union (BAU) and the Belarusian Design Union (BDU), which were made mostly with equipment used for government orders (posters for official jubilees and memorials)<sup>9</sup>;
- 2) leaflets and posters that were produced by private design studios and freelancers for private companies, such as clubs and concert agencies<sup>10</sup>.

The posters of these two groups are considered in the context of the factors that determine their production or, in other words, viewed as 'strategies', according to the methodology of Michel de Certeau. From this starting point, it becomes possible to identify which of the visual techniques invented by artists and designers are 'tactics'.

After the collapse of the USSR, all the prevailing rules and regulations changed, as did the thematic repertoire of posters. The spread of digital technology also changed the logic of poster production, as the notion of rules and regulations changed in accordance with the patterns and algorithms provided by digital technologies. The range of available fonts was varied

- 9 In the 1980s and 1990s, only posters reproduced with offset printing and sometimes with silk printing were accepted for international competitions; that is why only those artists who had access to offset and silk printing equipment had a possibility to participate in competitions. State publishing houses and the Artistic Manufactory (Kombinat), which is a branch of the Belarusian Artist's Union, had this equipment. Thus, designers had to be affiliated with the Belarusian Artist's Union and/or the Belarusian Designer's Union and to fulfil state orders to be allowed to use the equipment.
- 10 The names of the designers from that time in most cases remain unknown.



1. Gennady Matur, *Zaslaue*, 2000s, Prototype: gouache, 60 × 80 cm, personal archive of the artists, photo by Youri Toreev, 2012

Gennady Matur, *Zaslaue*, 2000, Prototipas: gvašas, 60 × 80 cm, asmeninis menininkų archyvas, Juriiaus Torejevo nuotrauka, 2012

due to the fact that, in the former Soviet Union, it was primarily pirated fonts that were distributed, mainly in Latin scripts. In interviews, artists remarked that they were fascinated by the unlimited possibilities of the transformation of typefaces in graphic applications<sup>11</sup>.

A second important change in poster production was the reconfiguration of professional qualifications. The mastering of digital technologies and the rapid execution of work was, in the 1990s, often more important than the artistic quality of work. The method of using digital technologies was a factor that divided those who continued to make posters from the Soviet era – professional artists and poster designers, usually members of the BDU and the BAU – from those who joined the designer’s profession only in the 1990s. Professional designers and poster artists continued to work in traditional techniques, producing an original poster (prototype) with acrylic or gouache paints, with digitization happening only in the last stage of work (the

poster *Zaslaue* by Gennady Matur<sup>12</sup>, 2000s) [ill. 1]. Sometimes the prototype for the text of a poster was created with a computer and then repainted onto the poster. This is why in posters from the 1980s and 1990s, we do not find the ‘authorial’ details that can be seen in the fonts of posters from the 1960s and 1970s<sup>13</sup>. Artists continued to pursue the tradition of high-quality artistic work and the ideas of proper composition and beauty. Their works are characterized by slow pace and careful development of graphic and typeface details.

In areas where orders were urgent, graduates of technical colleges, who quickly mastered the skills of working with graphic applications and pre-press technologies, were invited to fulfil them. The gap between these two groups was enormous, as young designers were not limited by any restrictions, except for those imposed by digital technology. Hence, evidently, a myth about unlimited possibilities for self-expression was formed. In practice, however, the repertoire of their visual language was quite narrow, limited to changing the proportions of fonts, or the use of photos as a background. Such digital posters and leaflets were ordered by clubs, concert agencies, etc. (Posters from concerts and parties in clubs, photos taken at the exhibition on the 1990s held in Tsekh (ЦЕХ) Gallery in October 2013<sup>14</sup> [ill. 2, 2.1]

In this comparison, it is interesting that digital leaflets were associated with creative freedom, as they were not subject to any regulations or restrictions. Artistic posters, meanwhile, retained continuity with respect to Soviet norms of quality design, since the idea of artistic quality was formed by the milieu of the BDU and the BAU. However, the fulfilling of state orders entailed a very limited repertoire of themes, and this is

<sup>11</sup> G. Matur (roundtable discussion, 15 May 2015), V. Golygenkov (interview).

<sup>12</sup> *Zaslaue* (Belarusian spelling) or *Zaslavl* (Russian spelling) is the name of one of the oldest cities in Belarus, known from the twelfth century; therefore, in the 1990s, the national identity of Belarusians was linked to the city.

<sup>13</sup> Ala Pigalskaya, *op. cit.*, pp. 123–139.

<sup>14</sup> Photos from the exhibition on the 1990s held in Tsekh (ЦЕХ) Gallery in October 2013 were made by Alla Pigalskaya.



2. Posters of concerts and parties in the clubs, photos from the exhibition on the 90s held in “TsekH” (ЦЕХ) Gallery in October 2013, photo by Ala Pihalskaya, 2013

Koncertų ir vakarėlių klubų plakatai, Alos Pihalskajos nuotraukos iš parodos apie 1990-uosius „TsekH“ (ЦЕХ) galerijoje 2013 m. spalio mėn., 2013

why the work of the artists is today perceived as opportunistic (it fitted with the prevailing conjuncture).

The specificity of the 1990s was that the two groups of designers did not overlap, which led to a situation whereby in advertising agencies and design studios work was performed without regard to the established artistic tradition (in some cases, there were even requests to work at a maximum distance from the existing (developed since Soviet times) stylistic canons in art and design). Professional artists, on the other hand, preferred to work with traditional techniques, without the aid of a computer. They therefore could not, and frequently did not want to, compete with

young designers on the labour market, often because they could match them in speed of work. In interviews, the artists emphasized that they did not use a computer, since it entailed a narrowing of the range of visual forms and the graphic language of the designer. The computer was perceived as a pre-press tool that could not have its own language of expression<sup>15</sup>.

15 In the US, April Greiman tried to find a specific visual language for the digital environment, while Alan Bloom used the principle of ANSI graphics – these experiments showed that the expressive possibilities of computer tools were in fact not unlimited, so in Europe and the USA in the 1990s there was a comeback of handwritten fonts and hand-drawn graphics.

The reticence of professional artists with regard to computers could be explained by the fact that in graphic applications the image had no fixed size, but was limited by the number of taps of the pen (stylus), while the parameter of a mouse in the 1990s was very small, or it might not even work at all. In other words, a mouse allowed you to paint with a single force of pressing, while pencil drawing involved a large number of nuances in the drawn line. A similar degree of nuances also occurs when you use a brush or a pen.

Professional artists continued to work in the techniques familiar to them, when all texts were drawn, but we might notice some changes in two emerging trends: the use of handwritten fonts and historical calligraphy, and imitation of typeset fonts.

In the poster *Zaslau* by Gennady Matzur, serif fonts are painted in tempera on canvas with a very high quality of workmanship (it is possible that computer fonts were taken as a prototype for the stencil for the serif letters). The letter 'a' graphically reproduces a semi-canonical letter, with roughness typical of manuscripts. The poster plays on the contrast between an (imitated) serif typeset font and a semi-canonical (handwritten) letter. It should be noted that drawn serif letters could have been produced with a computer, even if we take into account that the author used an original serif font. The first half of the 1990s was characterized by an acute shortage of Cyrillic computer fonts, so artists and designers still had to seek recourse in drawn fonts<sup>16</sup>.

In the poster '*You were lonely as the moon...*' by *Sergey Paluyan (1890–1910), a hundred years from the birth of the Belarusian writer*<sup>17</sup> by Vladimir Vasyuk

[ill. 3], handwriting is used extensively. There is a large degree of freedom in the strokes or text written with a brush (as is evident in thickness, which can vary significantly in both horizontal and vertical strokes). But this kind of writing required from the artist certain calligraphic skills and an understanding of the laws of composition, in conjunction with a reasonable degree of spontaneity and freedom. In contrast to the 1970s and 1980s, when artists used handwriting to represent the author's voice, in the 1990s it was used to emphasize or individualize the slogan on a poster: in other words, the use of handwriting was motivated by the need to expand the expressive means used in the poster. In the post-Soviet period, calligraphy, mainly writing with a right slant, was used much more often. This type of writing is close to the tradition in which children were taught in primary schools.

In the repertoire of handwritten fonts of the 1990s, careless or sloppy writing, sometimes called 'naïve' writing or scrawl, appeared, in which random effects of a spontaneous gesture were captured. (Poster *Ah, the apple!* by Vladimir Tsesler<sup>18</sup>) [ill. 4] It is possible that these texts were drawn on a computer with a mouse (with its single monotonic pressure and clumsy letters) (poster *Cheese* by Vladimir Tsesler<sup>19</sup>) [ill. 5].

It is symptomatic that neglect for the rules of 'good' typography, manifested in the use of distorted and deformed fonts, appears both among professional artists and beginners, as well as among designers using different mediums (both digital and traditional). 'Naïve' writing, which became widespread in posters by professional artists, and deformed fonts in leaflets and posters by young designers represent a distancing from the Soviet tradition, since such visual elements

16 According to the memoirs of V. Golyzhenkov, the abundance of Latin fonts available on your computer was fascinating. It took a long time to 'play' with fonts, usually Latin, transforming them and so forth. But then, when the artist came back to work where the text required Cyrillic fonts, it was needed again to draw.

17 Poster dedicated to Sergey Paluyan (1890-1910), a Belarusian writer and literary critic.

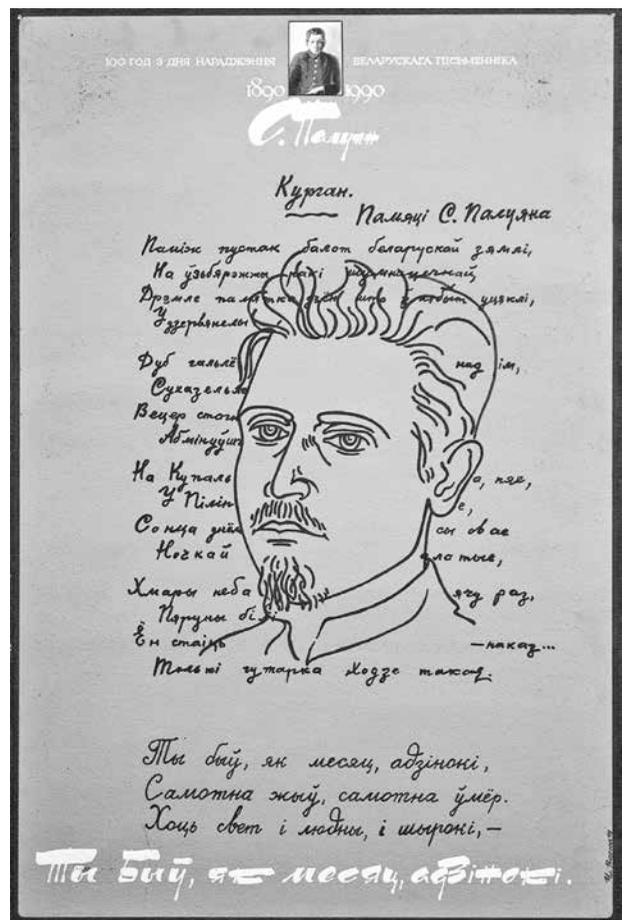
18 Text of the poster refers to 'Apple', a Russian folk song, and the sailor's dance, known for its numerous versions of the text of the Civil War period.

19 Poster related to the encouragement to smile while taking pictures (widespread with the distribution of household photos, homemade pictures – it was the late Soviet period) and a gold crown on a tooth as a sign of prosperity in the Soviet time.

never and under no circumstances could have appeared in the USSR.

For a long time, professional artists were perceived by younger generations as perpetrators of Soviet traditions. This could be due to the fact that the layout of the text and images in their works had not changed significantly since the Soviet era. The basic meaning is conveyed by the image, while the text appears as a signature or comment clarifying the meaning of the image. Young designers, on the other hand, were eager to make the font the most active element of the composition.

To clarify the meaning of the typefaces used in Belarusian posters in the 1980s and 1990s, it is important to take into account what kind of meaning could be constructed from typefaces used in Western posters. Meanwhile, handwriting in posters was used in three cases: for the personalization of a work – in other words, it offered a possibility to show a ‘trace’ of the author, which at the same time allowed creating complex compositions as an alternative to mechanical typography; to express emotions and feelings; and for economical reasons, as writing a book title on the cover or a slogan on a poster was cheaper with handwriting than with typeface fonts<sup>20</sup>. The heyday of handwritten inscriptions occurred in the 1920s and 1930s, when writing by hand required great precision and craftsmanship. In the 1950s, when modernist aesthetic was more consistent with italics, handwriting symbolized opposition to the ‘system’, the struggle for emancipation, anti-militarism and anti-consumerism. With the advent of computers in the early 1980s, the use of handwriting fell sharply. It became more popular to experiment with transformations and deformations of prefabricated fonts. In the digital age, the most common experimental effects were scrawled writing (*écriture griffonné*, scribbled writing, *écriture à main*



3. Vladimir Vasyuk, “You were lonely as the moon... by Sergey Paluyan (1890–1910) a hundred years from the birth of the Belarusian writer”, issued by Belarus Artists’ Union, printed in the Art Production Factory (“KhudKombinat”), silkscreen, 80 × 60 cm, Belarusian Design Union Archive

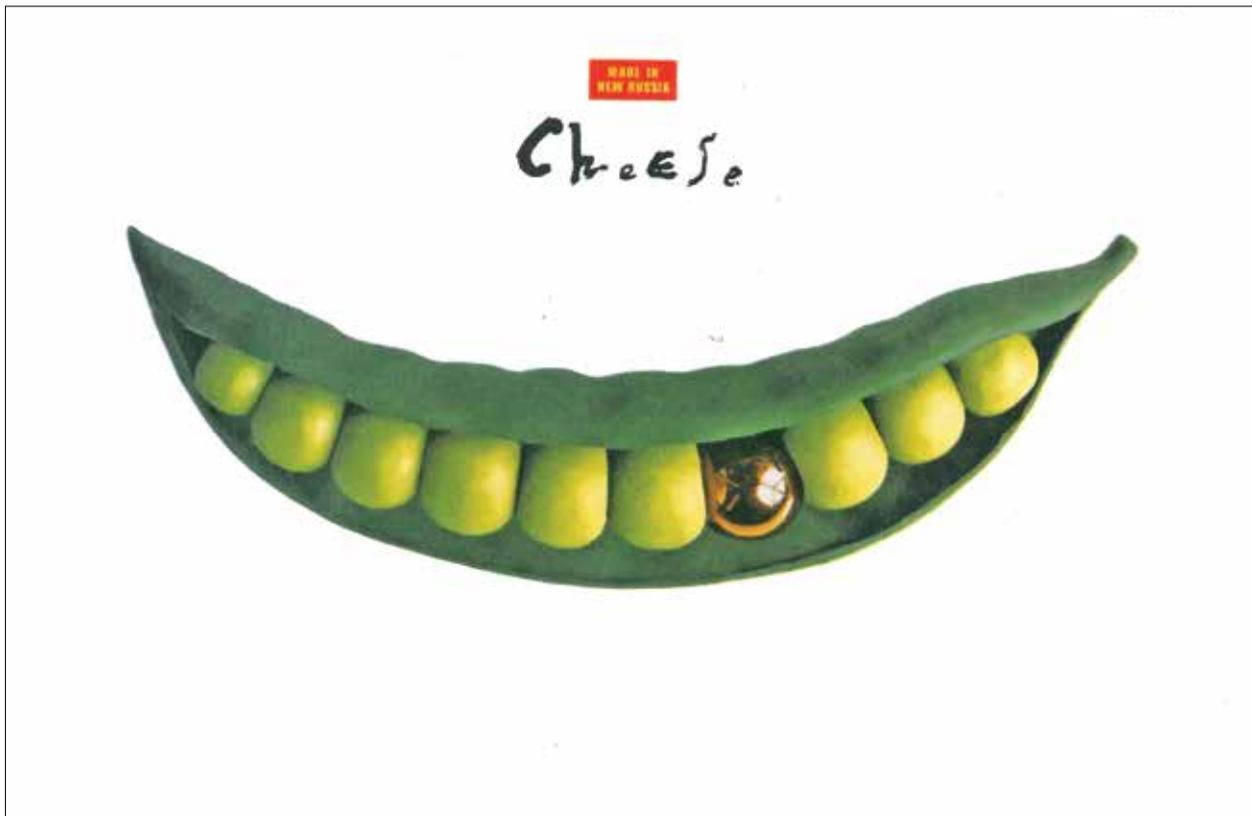
Vladimir Vasyuk, Sergejus Palujano (1890–1910) „Tu buvai vienišas kaip mėnulis...“, Baltarusijos rašytojo šimtųjų gimimo metinių jubiliejus“, išleido Baltarusijos dailininkų sąjunga, atspaudė Dailės kombinatas („KhudKombinat“), šilkografija, 80 × 60 cm, Baltarusijos dizainerių sąjungos archyvas

levée), aimed at obtaining chance graphic effects, and aggressive enough to attract attention<sup>21</sup>.

Using naïve or scrawled letters could be inscribed into the paradigm of institutional opposition to the

20 Steven Heller et Mirko Ilic, *Écrit à la main. La lettre manuscrite à l'ère numérique*, Thames & Hudson, 2005, p. 11.

21 *Ibid.*, pp. 8–9.



4. Vladimir Tsesler, Sergei Voichenko, „Chees“, 90s,  
 offset printing, 80 × 60 cm, Belarusian Design Union Archive  
 Vladimir Tsesler, Sergei Voichenko, „Chees“, XX a. 10 deš.,  
 ofsetinė spauda, 80 × 60 cm, Baltarusijos dizainerių sąjungos  
 archyvas

established rules and order in Europe and the former Soviet Union alike. Even with the degree of freedom provided by computers and graphic editing software, digital technology was still considered as a tool that imposed a certain type of uniformity and standardization pre-defined by the algorithm of the application, as opposed to the spontaneous effects that appeared in naïve or scrawled writing and drawing. If, in the Soviet context, standardization was achieved by ideological mechanisms (regulations, control of the thematic and figurative repertoire), the digital environment was seen, at least by young designers, as a way to overcome uniformity and standardization.

#### DESIGN PRACTICES OF THE PICTORIAL PART OF POSTER PRODUCTION

In the pictorial part of a poster, meanwhile, drawing and stylistic effects made by the author tend to give way to photography. Artists used the mimeticity of photography to represent artist-made objects that never existed in real life. [ill. 4, 5] In Soviet times photography was used primarily to produce typefaces and slogans for posters (and thus, only as an intermediate stage). In the 1990s, photography was used as a dominant medium in poster production leading to a genre termed by designers as photographic or staged



5. Vladimir Tsesler, Sergei Voichenko, *Ah, the apple!*, 90s, offset printing, 80 × 60 cm, Belarusian Design Union Archive

Vladimir Tsesler, Sergei Voichenko, *Ak, obuolys!*, XX a. 10 deš., ofsetinė spauda, 80 × 60 cm, Baltarusijos dizainerių sąjungos archyvas

posters<sup>22</sup>. Artists produced unusual objects that were photographed in order to communicate a particular meaning about social and cultural life.

Firstly, a photographic image in a poster reproduced a real image and thus constituted a radically different visual form, which was distant from the Soviet visual heritage. Secondly, a photographic image was perceived as an image with reduced manipulative properties, as it was rarely used in visual propaganda. Similar conclusions were reached by representatives of the Swiss School of Design in the 1950s. Decades of active propaganda carried out in Europe through

visual media impelled Swiss designers, after the Second World War, to create an aesthetic system that would be devoid of the manipulative properties of graphic design that was used in propaganda products during the twentieth-century wars. A grid system, universal typeface and reportage photography were considered as a medium with reduced manipulative potential<sup>23</sup>.

The use of photography in the post-Soviet poster could be understood as an attempt to achieve greater 'truthfulness'. Artists expended a huge amount of energy in seeking to transform reality, and creating

22 Exhibition of staged posters in the BDU. At the exhibition, objects and things photographed for posters were presented.

23 Ph. Megg, A. Purvis, *Megg's History of Graphic Design*, Wiley, 5th edition, 2011, pp. 364–365.

the weirdest and most wonderful objects, in order to reveal the specific features of the post-Soviet social and cultural situation. In Tsesler's poster *Ah, Apple!* a keyboard was mounted in an accordion, and for the poster *Cheese*, a golden pea was made and then placed in an actual pod. To see the scale of this tendency, it is important to mention an exhibition held by the Belarusian Designer's Union in 2013, 'A Posteriori: From Object to Poster, or a Photo Without "Shop"<sup>24</sup>, which contained posters and objects that served as a model for the poster<sup>25</sup>.

Photography was considered as a means of recording and documenting objects created by the artist. During this period, photography was used as a neutral medium in the same way as reportage photography, without any of the experiments or manipulations characteristic of avant-garde photography. Thus, in comparison with the Soviet times, artists changed the medium, but did not change their approach to creative practices. The intention to transform reality by visual means remained at the core of artistic practice even in the post-Soviet era.

However, in the 1990s, the transformation of reality by means of art changed the scale: from being a public policy (with the dominant trend of Socialist Realism, as characterized by Boris Groys<sup>26</sup>), it became a device invented and employed by the artists themselves. The artistic way of object manipulation can be seen as the continuation of the relationship to reality characteristic of Socialist Realism. At the same time, the techniques used were not identical to those used during the Soviet era. By creating bizarre objects, the designers made a figurative statement (metaphor, allegory)

that sought to involve the viewer in the decryption of a visual image. In the Soviet times, posters reproduced clichés associated with the themes of five-year plans, the party's congresses and all kinds of anniversaries. Yet, clichés were often used as the Aesopian language, and the enlightened audience were 'asked' to decipher images and texts. Thus, manipulation of objects can be viewed as a disavowal of Soviet tactics of visual communication. In this respect, the pictorial part of the poster turned out to be more conservative and to suffer from greater inertia than the writing in posters.

As the distance from the Soviet era has increased, artistic practices have become increasingly perceived in terms of the artistic effects that they reproduce. This was due to the fact that after the collapse of the Soviet Union, European private collectors showed great interest in artists from post-Soviet countries. Artists came to be in demand both for their own individual style and their approach to dealing with form. Many artists involved in the production of agitation posters switched to graphic design, or to painting or ceramics, or, in many cases, to teaching. This made it possible to include artistic practice in a different context that was not perceived as a means of transforming reality and bringing artworks closer to propaganda, but as a means to produce individual statements. This was the reason why artists continued to use traditional techniques, as they saw digital technology as having a high degree of image manipulation and a low degree of individualization, and thus arousing in them suspicion and even rejection. Therefore, transformed details gave way to the idea of a spontaneous gesture and improvisation that became a widely used feature of artistic and design posters in the 2000s.

The article reviews the practices of text and image production for posters in the period when changes in reproduction technologies, institutional environment for the creation, production and consumption of posters, transformations related to the collapse of the USSR and the formation of the independent state of Belarus

24 'Shop' refers to the photo editor Adobe Photoshop, strongly associated with image manipulations.

25 A. Paplayskaya, "Belarusian Designers Put the Installation and Photo Without 'Shop'" in: Naviny.by, [http://naviny.by/rubrics/culture/2013/03/28/ic\\_articles\\_117\\_181268](http://naviny.by/rubrics/culture/2013/03/28/ic_articles_117_181268).

26 Б. Гройс, „Борьба против музея или демонстрация искусства в тоталитарном пространстве“, in: Арт-Азбука, ред. М. Фрая, <http://azbuka.gif.ru/critics/grois-borba-s-muzeyami>.

took place. This period is characterized by changes in design practices. Institutional reconfiguration of the production and consumption of posters in the 1980 and 1990s led to the promotion of an individual approach and style in poster design: the opportunity to participate in international competitions allowed designers to distance themselves from the political situation (they were forced to drift from the play with recognizable cliché images and fonts to original statements and handwriting), and opened the possibility to use offset and silk-screen equipment for reproduction. The freedom to create original works made possible a phenomenon like 'authorial' poster that helped distinguish posters made in accordance with the political and economic situation from posters made on the initiative of the designer.

The transition to digital technology has allowed expanding the market of poster production. In the article, it is shown that in Belarus the reception of 'authorial' poster was ambiguous; it was seen by the younger generation as an approach that preserves the legacy of the Soviet tradition. Therefore, young designers enthusiastically master digital tools that allow them to distance themselves from the style they consider to be Soviet. One of the important conclusions of the study is the different perception of digital technology by professional designers and the younger generation of designers. If, for the latter, digital technology gave the freedom of expression, for professional designers, digital technologies were associated with restrictions and inconsistent with the author's style and individual expression. The popularity of the posters, which required the creation of objects and plenty of manual labor, among professional artists shows how the older generation distanced themselves from the opportunities offered by digital technologies. The use of modified objects that the audience perceived as allegoric or metaphoric can be interpreted as a continuation of the Soviet tradition of using the Aesopian language or avoiding direct, literal utterances characteristic of a poster.

A result of the study of design practices that prevailed during the 1980s and 1990s can be characterized as non-synchronized reconfiguration of artistic practices, reproduction technologies and communicative strategies.

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# GRAFINIO DIZAINO PRAKTIKOS, REPRODUKAVIMO TECHNOLOGIJOS IR KOMUNIKACIJOS STRATEGIJOS BALTARUSIJOJE PO SOVIETŲ SĄJUNGOS GRIŪTIES

*Alla Pigalskaya*

## SANTRAUKA

REIKŠMINIAI ŽODŽIAI: sovietinis ir posovietinis dizainas, šriftas, raidės, plakatas, fotografija, reprodukavimo technologijos, skaitmeninės technologijos.

Straipsnyje kalbama apie Sovietų Sąjungos griūtis ir nepriklausomų valstybių susikūrimo laikotarpį, kuris Baltarusijoje chronologiškai beveik sutapo su perėjimu prie skaitmeninių technologijų naudojimo kuriant ir gaminant grafikos meno produktus – plakatus. XX a. 9 deš. pabaigoje ir 10 deš. pradžioje įvyko svarbūs pokyčiai tiek politiniame lauke, tiek vizualinių medžiagų gamybos institucinėje ir technologinėje logikoje. Straipsnyje šie pokyčiai yra nagrinėjami analizuojant minėtuosiu laikotarpiu išleistus plakatus ir skiriant ypatingą dėmesį šriftų gamybos rūšims, jų taikymo ir komponavimo į vaizdinį maketą būdams bei fotografijos kaip meninės medijos naudojimui plakuose. Politinių, institucinių ir technologinių pokyčių pasiskirstymas aptariamuosiu laikotarpiu yra apžvelgiamas per santykį su plakatų vizualine kalba ir išraiškos priemonėmis.

Plakatų gamybos ir vartojimo institucinė rekonfiguracija 9 ir 10 dešimtmetyje skatino skleisti individualų stilių ir požiūrį į plakatų dizainą: proga dalyvauti tarptautiniuose konkursuose leido dizaineriams atsiriboti nuo politinės situacijos (dizaineriai buvo priversti pereiti nuo žaidimo su atpažįstamomis vaizdų klišėmis ir šriftais prie originalių pareiškimų, ranka rašytų raidžių) ir suteikė galimybę naudoti ofseto ir šilkografijos įrangą plakatų spaudai. Sugebėjimas kurti originalius kūrinius leido atsirasti tokiam reiškiniui kaip „autorinis“ plakatas, susidarė galimybė atskirti plakatus, pagamintus prisitaikant prie politinės ir ekonominės situacijos, nuo dizainerio iniciatyva sukurtų darbų.

Perėjimas prie skaitmeninės technologijos leido išplėsti plakatų gamybos rinką. Straipsnio autorė atskleidžia, kad

Baltarusijoje jaunoji karta nevienareikšmiškai žiūrėjo į „autorinius“ plakatus, kaip atspindinčius sovietinės tradicijos paveldą. Būtent todėl jaunieji dizaineriai entuziastingai įvaldė skaitmenines priemones, leidusias jiems atsiriboti nuo stiliaus, kurį jie patys laikė sovietiniu. Viena iš svarbių šio tyrimo išvadų – tai, kad profesionalūs dizaineriai ir jaunesnės kartos dizaineriai skirtingai suvokia skaitmenines technologijas. Jei pastariesiems šios technologijos suteikė išraiškos laisvę, profesionaliems dizaineriams jos siejosi su apribojimais ir atrodė nesuderinamos su autoriniu stiliumi ir individualia raiška. Plakatų, kuriuose naudojami specialiai sukurti objektai ir kurie reikalauja daug rankų darbo, populiarumas tarp profesionalių menininkų rodo, kad vyresnioji karta nepanoro pasinaudoti skaitmeninių technologijų siūlomais privalumais. Modifikuotų objektų, kuriuos žiūrovai suvokia kaip alegoriją ar metaforą, naudojimas gali būti suprantamas kaip sovietinės Ezopo kalbos tradicijos tęsa arba siekis išvengti plakatui būdingų tiesioginių, tiesmukų teiginių.

Apibendrinant, dviejų paskutinių XX a. dešimtmečių laikotarpiu vyravusias dizaino praktikas galima apibūdinti kaip nevienalaikę meninių praktikų, reprodukavimo technologijų ir komunikacijos strategijų rekonfiguraciją.