

IN SEARCH OF MEXICAN GRAPHIC DESIGN IDENTITY
BY CARLOS MANUEL GONZÁLEZ MANJARREZ

cgonzalez@cgdesign.com.mx

www.cgdesign.com.mx

To Mexico

Abstract

In the actual investigation is pretended to identify the necessary elements for conceptualizing a national identity. Distinguishing the symbols that mankind had used in it's history for marking his identity.

When the human being recognized his identity, he is motivated for forces that impulse him to order his citizen history with his most important institutions and to be proud of his nation. Resulting in this case, the Mexican symbolic identity. Valuated from his social actors in their social interaction process.

Having illustrated with images, a qualitative and quantitative methodology was developed for data recollection, based on 16 interviews in depth and 44 surveys with graphic designers and non designers for getting to know the actual recognized elements of graphic mexican identity.

Mexican symbolic contents where recognized, and will be possible to make a proposition of possible elements in the handling of actual symbols or enrich their actual meanings for all interested in creating mexican graphic design identity.

Key words:

1. Identity
2. Symbols of identity
3. Mexican Identity symbols
4. Mexican Graphic design
5. Mexico

INTRODUCTION

After having the opportunity to represent Mexico in an international design contest: Nagoya Design Do! 2002 whose subject was the power of fragility, held in Japan. I obtained a silver prize in the category of visual design between 1767 designers of 62 countries. When representing Mexico and speaking with other winning designers from the rest of the world, I realized that they did not identified an style in graphic design.

When I returned to Mexico I had an interview with a mexican newspaper, in it's cultural section: "I am worried because in design schools they don't encourage to design with Mexican identity and from Vicente Rojo and Miguel Prieto, no other figures in Mexico had international projection. What we must do is to recognize as a cultural mixture and not to fall in the classic use of prehispanic lines, because we have many situations surrounding us that we can represent. This is reflected so much in mexican architecture, as in graphic design.

The matter is that mexican designers need to risk so that people accept them. In order to make a national design, it would have to study thorough our past and fuse it with elements that surround us, thus to be able to create design of the future. Unfortunately, which is awarded in national contests is what has foreign influence and obviously many designers stops proposing an own style because he thinks that it is not going to be appreciated by jurys".(1)

Recently in Mexico took place the IV Latin American Encounter of Education of Design, organized by the divisions of Sciences and Arts for Design (CyAD) by design campus of Azcapotzalco and Xochimilco. (25 - 27 January of 2006). (2)

Discusion was focussed on the necessity to identify the distinguishing characteristics of Design in Latin America region. Assistants discussed the following points:

1.The attack of "monoculture", defined by doctor C. Vilchis, director of plastic arts of National University,like: "the same taste, such as trousers, same tattoo and forgotten use of spanish language".

2.Predominance of advertising and commercial concepts in graphic Design in Latin America is in a identity process search, from cultural particularities of each nation, but limited by few theory knowledge about this discipline.

3.Graphic design at the present time is supported by digital technology from last two decades, generating great influence in morphologic, chromatic, typography and photographic aspects, with a result of an hybrid and confused intentionality, denoting conceptual poverty.

4.The idea of identity with the one of knowledge, is due to establish in new semantic fields from interdisciplinary fields, with the purpose of sustaining design praxis.

5.It should establish an alternative design, generated from world-wide leaders, characterized by consumerist orientation. According to a conceptual notion that replaces the sense of immediate as fast food by slow design to distinguish this profession of the region. Including not only technical and analytical skills, but Latin American sensitivity and cultural values.

6.One of the consequences of incompatibility between theory and practice of design it has been because United Nations for Education for Science and Culture considers the discipline of design like an appendix of architecture, meaning less support for investigation and scholarships.

Felix Beltran, a Cuban world recognized teacher and graphic designer, reaffirmed what I said previously: "it is necessary to reaffirm Latin American roots, without quitting to the influences from outside. We don't have to close or start a revolution that erase our past, because nothing of the anything is created and one is a historical consequence of previous stages, being able to be influenced from them, we can accept them or contradict them, but to extend them it is the alternative."

For understanding our identity in graphic design I propose in these thesis. Firstly understanding dimensions of identity from its concepts, distinctions and qualities, later to apply them to a nation.

By second instance I propose to analyze identity symbols that have marked mankind throughout their history until arriving to identity marks that today may identify us.

Having discovered them, symbols of identity will be able to identify Mexicans through their history used for being proud and unified like social subjects (Mexicans). Valued by themselves and recognized by others.

Finally, I will compare if past symbols of Mexican identity throughout their history are the same today with data recollection in surveys and interviews with national and international designers and non designers.

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