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THE PLACE OF THE COLLAGE AS A WAY OF EXPRESSION IN GRAPHIC DESIGN

Abstract

Objective: The aim of this article is to examine the place of collage in graphic design along with its transformation in its historical process.

Methods: The research follows a qualitative design in the form of the literature review in which the previous research is examined and presented in a summarized way together with examples.

Results: The collage, which enables the printed paper and other accompanying objects to turn into a design object, has provided the opportunity to create freely for many artists and designers. However, like all the other artistic approaches, the collage has been affected by the mainstream philosophies and school of thoughts. The literature puts forward that Cubism, Fauvism, Futurism, Dadaism, Constructivism, Bauhaus, Pop Art, and Postmodernism especially has had a visible effect on the way artists bring the collage to life. The examples provided in the main text shows the outstanding pieces of art in the history of collage.

Scientific Novelty: The article stands out among the similar ones as it brings detailed information about the emergence of collage as an artistic approach in design in a summarized way with famous examples of influential philosophies.

Practical Significance: The literature review on collage will be a main source for the artists who intends to create collage but has question marks in mind on the way they want to follow. The information provided in this article can also be used in undergraduate graphic design education to open new windows in the minds of prospective designers.

Keywords: Collage, Graphic design, Pop art, Postmodernism.

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Introduction

The collage technique, which has a history of more than a thousand years, has allowed artists to produce their works freely thanks to the use of unlimited materials. This technique, which is frequently used in art movements, has become even more effective in the field of graphic design after the industrial revolution. The effects

of reused visuals in constructing meaning and conveying the constructed message enabled the collage to become even more effective.

Definition of the Collage

Collage, derived from the French word “coller”, means to paste. It is called compositions created by bonding using paint in addition to paper, photographs and many mate-

rials such as paper, fabric, wood, photography etc. [1, p. 28]. Collage is created when different parts come together to form a coherent composition and the material in this composition creates a new concept with other materials used together, apart from its own identity.

The following two points can be taken into consideration in the concept of collage: First, it means 'gluing' in terms of the word, and secondly, 'joining' means bringing together in terms of the action performed in collage works. The gluing made in collage distinguishes it from other types of gluing, that it is not based on ornaments and includes the finishing of the broken ones [2]. In the collage, with all kinds of organic or inorganic ready-made materials, it can be said that the printed, drawn and photographic material (image) was taken from the previously known context of life and pasted on a surface with a new concern for fictionality in a way that would serve a new context [3, p. 5]. Many different materials and techniques can be found in the same work in the collage made by cutting, bending, and pasting many materials found in nature on a surface. The important point here is that the collage work needs a harmony within itself. The collage technique is not limited to newspaper and magazine particles that create light-medium-dark values; collage works can also be done using colored newspapers, magazines, fabrics, mats, and plastics. In the collage technique, different techniques such as pastel and watercolor can be applied on the surface of the painting [4, p. 157].

The Emergence of Collage

Although the collage technique increased in popularity at the beginning of the 20th century, considering that the material of the collage is paper, it can be said that its history dates back to ancient times and goes back to China. The collage, examples of which were seen in the 12th century, was not adopted and attracted much attention at that time. Adalı has this to say on the subject:

The collage is 1000 years old. It is an art made in Japan in the Middle Ages. Symbols expressing an idea were drawn on colored silk papers or precious cardboards glued to thick paper in the tone of parchment so that the poetic pieces would find their full value in graphic writings on the poetic cards prepared for the New Year. While the calligraphers were drawing the contours of the plans with a brush, they would adapt to the fluctuations of the paper pasted from the bottom. Stars cut from gold and silver paper were sprinkled on the surface. Compositions varied according to the texts, straight lines and rectangular shapes blended into the silhouettes of torn

paper. These works and artists in figurative narration are anonymous [5, p. 4].

Collage, which brings together different images and objects, has become a meaningful means of expression with the emergence of modern art. The development of art movements, their merging with different disciplines and the presentation of different perspectives on design have shown that collage is an interacting language.

The formation of big cities after the Industrial Revolution, scientific and technological inventions, developments in graphic printing based on photography and mass production has allowed a new visual vocabulary to take shape and sprout, and radical changes to gain momentum in art and design. The social, economic and political developments of the period also helped the emergence of new design and artistic understandings. In this process, the artists practiced "multidimensional perspective, simultaneous movement, superposition, juxtaposition, plurality of time, fragmentation, division, disintegration, bringing together and saw the collage technique as a means of plastic expression in order to be able to use new visual expression languages such as irrational, illogical, separate and dissimilar realities together" [6].

Cubism and Collage

Cubist artists created collages using playing cards, metal and glass pieces on the painting surface. Efforts were made to enrich the picture with collage and to link it with real life. The fact that collage has become one of the most important art techniques of the 20th century is related to the prevalence of mass culture printed materials such as newspapers, posters and postcards in this age. In their early works, Picasso and Braque also used newspaper clippings and advertising images that gave clues about the political and cultural developments of the times they lived in, and gave clues that their interest was not purely formal concerns [7, p. 48].

Pablo Picasso and Braque, considered one of the founders of the cubism movement, started to produce collages by sticking printed or colored paper pieces on the canvas in the early 1900s. Each piece of paper that was cut in the desired shape or that gave information about the object it was pointing to, represented a specific object. They also started to use different materials than paper, such as bamboo, to indicate different objects [8, p. 106]. In his work "Still-Life with Chair Caning" (Figure 1. https://zhrblc.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/max500_pi36.jpg), in which a real rope is used as a frame, he draws attention with different objects such as

a patterned oilcloth in one third of the painting, where he places cubist objects such as newspapers, pipes and glasses. In Picasso's "Bottle, Glass, Violin" (Figure 2. <https://www.pablocicasso.org/still-life-with-chair-caning.jsp>), a part of the violin was drawn in pencil on a piece of newspaper and a piece of paper that was the surface of the painting. The other half is glued as a wood-imitation form. A glass was also drawn on another piece of newspaper that marked the lines of the violin. The bottle on the left was cut from a newspaper. The word "Journal" also consists of newspaper.



Figure 1. Still-life with chair caning, 1912



Figure 2. "Bottle, glass, violin", 1912

Braque, like Picasso, started to use his unique collage technique, which he constructed by pasting cut papers on a pictorial plane, called 'papier colle' since 1912. His "Fruit Dish and Glass" (Figure 3) is a very innovative take on the classic still life theme of a fruit plate. Fruit dish and glass incorporates paper, wallpaper and charcoal lines to create a symbolic effect. The grapes, which he depicted with a naturalist understanding, gave the painting a reality that contradicts other elements.



Figure 3. Fruit Dish and Glass, Braque, 1912.
(<https://www.georgesbraque.net/fruit-dish-and-glass>)

Fauvism and Collage

Fauvism is the first avant-garde movement of the 20th century and the shortest period that reached its peak between 1905 and 1907 [9, p. 370]. The common feature in the works of Fauvist artists is the extremely simple, pure, direct and strong use of colors. Henri-Émile-Benoît Matisse, one of the pioneers of the Fauvism movement, has revealed the most distinctive works with the colors that cover large surfaces in the form of blocks, geometric and also stylized forms that he uses in his paintings. These colors, stains and forms used by Henri Matisse brought him together with paper works towards the end of his artistic life, and he produced a series of works using the cut-paste technique with the use of bright and contrasting colors in his works (Figure 4–5).



Figure 4. The Snail, Henri Matisse, 1953



Figure 5. Memory of Oceania, Henri Matisse, 1953

Futurism and Collage

Futurism was established as a revolutionary movement to reconsider the thoughts and forms of all arts in the face of the new realities of science and industrial society [10, p. 107] (Bektaş, 1992, p. 107). Seeing popular media and new technological inventions as communication tools to disseminate their ideas, Futurists eagerly used the new materials and techniques offered by the industry, with the thought of bringing a new aesthetic understanding of modern life at the expense of the old cultural forms. They saw collage as an excellent method in their work to bring the concepts such as the spirit of the age; defined noise, energy, movement, and dynamism to life [11, p. 10–11]. They rejected traditional grammar and punctuation and used non-linguistic tools to imitate the pace and dynamism of contemporary life (Figure 6). These poems, which exist at the intersection of art and literature, are read visually and verbally, vertically and horizontally, iconographically and analytically.



Figure 6. A Tumultuous Assembly. Numerical Sensibility published in *Les mots en liberté futuristes*, Filippo Marinetti, 1919. (<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/345679>)

Dadaism and Collage

Dadaism started as a reaction and protest movement against the intimidation and cruelty of World War I. With the war, Dadaists changed their perspectives against many aesthetic and ideological concepts, saw the concept of art as a way of rebellion and produced works that changed the general viewpoint of the people. In their works, they achieved different results by adding everyday items to their works with an extraordinary attitude, far from the traditional, criticizing the bourgeois class. The collage and photomontage technique influenced various branches of plastic arts and caused new orientations, as well as brought a completely different visual expression style to graphic design [12].

The Dada movement has achieved to form a new composition by gluing all kinds of plastic items, printed, drawn or photographic materials on a surface in an order. Thus, they created a work of art by using various materials that were not artistic in themselves to create a new composition. Kurt Schwitters, who is in the Dadaism movement, has important collage works. Schwitters repurposed discarded printed materials such as used envelopes, empty cigarette packs, seals and tickets, and included these parts of daily life in his compositions (Figure 7) [12].



Figure 7. Opened by Customs, Kurt Schwitters, 1937. (<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/schwitters-opened-by-customs-t00214>)

Constructivism and Collage

Constructivism is an art movement seen as an innovative approach in Russia in the first half of the 20th century. The word “construction was seen as a form of shaping the destroyed society after the First World War,

at the same time constructivist art was evaluated as a part of industrialization and technological development in the modernization process. Constructivist artists who care about scientific rather than artistic principles and aim for collective production shaped according to social needs instead of the personal style of the creative individual [7, p. 107]. The objects they prefer in the collage technique in Constructivism, as in Dadaism, are newspaper clippings, everyday objects such as photographs, magazines and books. Constructivists, who see collage as an effective method for social change, provide information about the materials they use in their designs and the perspective of the artist (Figure 8).

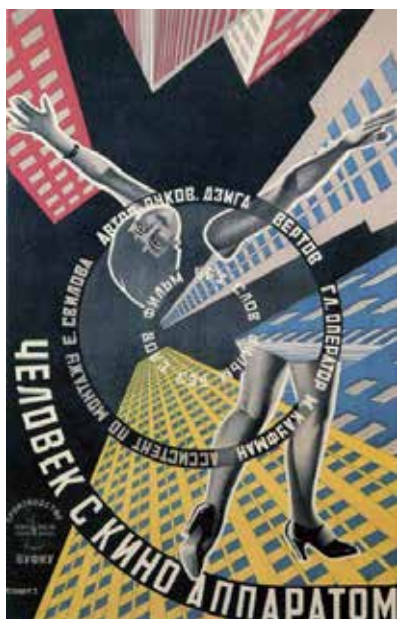


Figure 8. Georgii and Vladimir Augustovich Stenberg, film poster for *The Man with the Movie Camera*, 1929. Meggs & Purvis, 2016, p. 815

Bauhaus and Collage

Bauhaus, which was established at the beginning of the 20th century to raise the quality of design in Germany, aimed to support design in order to increase the functional and aesthetic quality of mass production and especially cheap consumption products, by combining art and craft industry [10, p. 69]. The invention of photography and the developments in technology caused movement in art and directed artists to new discoveries and experimental studies. Photographers tried different combinations in photo printing and worked on different techniques by combining one negative square with several negative squares and projecting them onto plates. This process, as a result of the industrial revolution, has led to the inclusion of photomontage, another approach to

20th century art movements, the technique of depicting the image of reality with photography, into modern art.

László Moholy-Nagy's experiments on the photographic image, photographic image-photogram, photoplastics, and most importantly, typography, predicted the roles that technology would play in both aesthetic and graphic design application areas [13, p. 32]. The work titled "Pneumatics" (Figure 9) is an example of Moholy-Nagy's "Typophotos" technique that combines typography and photographic collage: writing is transformed into a component of visual communication rather than used solely for its semantic content (<https://www.theartstory.org/artist/moholy-nagy-laszlo/>).



Figure 9. *Pneumatic*, László Moholy-Nagy, 1924. (<https://www.wikiart.org/en/laszlo-moholy-nagy/pneumatik-1924>)

Collage in Modern American Graphic Design

World War II caused a great destruction in Europe and many artists and scientists migrated from Europe to America, which was not damaged by the war, and moved the center of art from Europe to America. Pop Art that emerged in this period actively existed from the mid-1950s to the 1960s. Pop Art artists have included elements of popular culture in their works in order to alleviate the depressingness of the war, embrace the popular consumer culture and make the war a mockery. They made objects and images of consumer culture such as newspapers, magazines, cartoons, television advertisements, ready meals, packaging and Hollywood movies the material of art.

Paul Rand was one of the first designers to adapt modernism to American graphic design. Having a good

grasp of collage and montage techniques, Rand fused concepts, images, textures and objects into a whole in his works [10, p. 140]. Rand intensified the use of found objects, cut paper, and typography in his collage works (Figure 10).



Figure 10. Collage design of dancer for front cover of "Direction" magazine, Paul Rand, 1939. (<https://www.paulrand.design/work/Direction-Magazine.html#images-42>)

Pop Art and Collage

It is an art movement that is activated by the works of artists who react to abstract expressionism in the USA and England. Some other factors that define the cultural and social context in which it emerges are the increasing consumption, the atmosphere of global turmoil as a result of the Second World War, the economic prosperity and liberation movements created by the post-war period, especially in America, as well as the thinkers of a new generation that these situations emerged. These new generation artists thought that the art they had studied and saw in museums was very disconnected from their own lives. As a result of this context, artists focused on every day and easily accessible materials and thematic resources for inspiration.

In his work "Just what was it that made yesterday's homes so different, so appealing?" (Figure 11), Richard Hamilton presents a portrait of the everyday life of the Western world. It has been accepted as the main work of Pop Art. The artist used objects targeting mass culture such as television, newspapers and posters in the work targeting popular culture elements. The artist expressed social changes and what popular culture brought with

the collage technique. The house that Hamilton presents in his collage is the transmission of an extremely artificial but extremely materialistic world that fully reflects his age. In the collage, there are references to the new technologies such as television, vacuum cleaner, cassette player that became indispensables of daily life and the habits of the people of the time like cinema and comics. In addition to the commodified female body, the male body also took its place on the stage [11, p. 76-77]. Collage works in Pop Art played an important role in creating the visual language of designers.



Figure 11. Just what was it that made yesterday's homes so different, so appealing?, Richard Hamilton, 1956

Postmodernism and Collage

In the 1970s, an important trend began in architectural design, which gradually encompassed all branches of art and seemed to oppose the tradition-rejecting attitude of the modern movement. While the narrative style is sometimes extremely personal, the message is usually placed between the layers of visual expression, as in the collage technique, and in this case, contextual comments and thoughts that explain the subject separately are required [10, p. 230].

Turning his attention in a new direction, Weingart became interested in offset printing and film systems. He used the printer's camera to manipulate the images and explored the unique properties of the film image. Weingart started to move away from pure typographic design and adopted collage as a visual communication tool. A new technique of sandwiching or layering images and typography photographed as film positives has allowed him to superimpose complex visual information, juxtapose textures and unify typography. Weingart's design

process consists of a large number of positive films and maskings superimposed, arranged, re-photographed and submitted to the press as a single negative (Figure 12–13 (www.moma.org/collection/works/)-11 [14, p. 1170].



Figure 12. Didacta/Eurodidac" poster, Wolfgang Weingart, 1980



Figure 13. Exhibition poster, 1979

Evolving simultaneously with technological developments, collage has created a need for new definitions with different techniques and materials. Until the last quarter of the century, cut and paste processes, which were carried out with traditional methods, gained a completely different dimension by being transferred from the artists' workshops to computer screens [15, p. 209]. John Stezaker has had an impressive place in his collages. In his works, the artist wanted to convey the object to the

audience without disturbing its physical existence. He aimed to make the collage understandable (Figure 14. http://www.artnet.com/artists/john-stezaker/bridge-ii-dojGBgj_uTKNNXLYWAbrdg2).



Figure 14. Bridge II, John Stezaker, 2007

Ivan Chermayeff, who grasped the main ideas of modern art in Europe and made important contributions to American graphic design, continued to use the small spoils he obtained from the garbage piles left on the sidewalks and accumulated in the gutters on the streets in his collage works [10, p. 167]. Chermayeff collects and preserves what she finds and incorporates the found materials into her collages by putting them through a kind of brewing, fermentation process (Figure 15 (www.peramuzesi.org.tr/Repo/StaticContent/images/geismar_0024.jpg) –16 (www.peramuzesi.org.tr/Repo/StaticContent/images/geismar_0071.jpg)). It abstracts materials from their original context and transforms them into figurative forms with a great character and representational originality. Collages are both abstract and figurative, materialistic, objective and subjective at the same time [16, p. 13].



Figure 15. Red Bed, 1998

Chermayeff also included her works in typographic collage, bringing texture, color and letters of different characters together.



Figure 16. Granota Lady, 2003

In the future, collage has become a more effective technique with its unique expression in the field of graphic design and has become much more diverse with the unlimited uses offered by computer technology. In the hybrid portrait series designed by Zeren Badar (Figure 17–18), he explores the relationships between how we live and how we look in the future by mixing the internal device parts of various technological devices (such as iPhone, digital camera, remote control), cables, hardware and photographs found in magazines, and drawing attention to the fact that technology changes people. The fact that technological tools and parts replace human characteristics reveals this danger in the future and opened up for discussion what the future promises to mankind [17].



Figure 17. Cellphone Head



Figure 18. Beautiful Bridge

Conclusion

Collage, which has become one of the important techniques with the Cubism movement, has been used in Dadaism, Constructivism, Futurism, Pop Art and many art movements after 1960. In the art environment where interdisciplinary approaches are widely used, the collage technique is used by many artists alone or in combination with other disciplines.

As an attitude that connects with the historical, makes ready-made images active in the construction of meaning, and communicates with the dynamics arising from cultural memory in perception and meaning-making, collage can be considered as an effective method in making sense and perception of the image [18]. Fragmentation of the object and reassembling and shaping it with a different expression style, creating a harmonious composition of unrelated forms, and collage works in which different letter/word forms are used together have become a unique and expressive communication method for graphic design. Reproduction has evolved into different dimensions by transforming the collage technique with the mass of materials brought by the consumption culture. Today, collage, which develops itself with the developing technologies, finds its place in different areas of graphic design.

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