ARAŞTIRMA MAKALESİ/RESEARCH ARTICLE

The use of textures as a visual design element in cut-out illustrations

İrem Akbaharer Arslan ⬡

Ph.D. Student, Yıldız Technical University, Art and Design, Turkey, e-mail: irmiarslan@gmail.com

Abstract

As digital media changes and evolves with technology, it has become an indispensable part of human life, offering various opportunities in terms of design and illustration. It is up to the illustrator's creative imagination to use these opportunities to the best of their ability because while opportunities may change, the only constant is creativity. With the use of more and more digital software and tools, visual arts are now appearing in digital media. In this context, the research aimed to consider texture as a design element in digital illustration rather than just using painting tools in the software. The contribution of texture to design as a visual texture through the cut-out technique was examined.

Keywords: Cut-out illustration, Visual Texture, Children's Book Illustration.

Corresponding Author/ Sorumlu Yazar:
İrem Akbaharer Arslan
E-mail: irmiarslan@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

In nature, every existence or object has its rhythm within it. When this rhythm is grasped by the eye through perception, it creates an aesthetic pleasure. When the rhythm and harmony of the textures in nature are combined with imagination, it can lead to creative, original interpretations that can make a difference in design. In this context, if we think of design as the action of combining imagination with reality, the textures of the natural world can be seen as a great visual element that can contribute to the applications of design in all areas. The richness of texture can be used as a visual means of expression in design to generate new ideas and reflect the imagination.

2. VISUAL TEXTURE AS A DESIGN ELEMENT

Since its existence, humans have tried to discover nature. As it has been discovered, nature has been an inspiration source in many fields, including art and design. Texture, which is considered the cover of nature and existence, is one of these sources of inspiration. The illustration is also one of the fields where we can use texture as a design element. The illustration is about communicating a specific contextualized message to an audience (Male, 2007: 10).

In one form or another, illustration has been existence for centuries but has only been recognized as a distinct discipline fairly recently. As a visual language and medium it has, over the years, had many loose and disparate descriptions from painting, engraving, commercial art, cartoons, pictures in books, and drawing. It is often confused with other disciplines, most notably graphic design, and fine art, perhaps there is an occasional overlap (Male, 2007:10).

Design is a thinking process that is mainly focused on the visual side (Bilgin, 1985:39). Thinking requires images, and images contain thoughts. Therefore, visual arts are the home of visual thinking. They make invisible or unreachable or fantastical things visible (Arnheim, 2009:283). The illustration is part of this process. From the paintings on the walls of ancient caves to the present day, one of the areas where illustration is most freely used is children's book publishing, including school-age publications. Children's books with illustrations are an important tool for introducing children to text, allowing them to communicate with visual images and introducing them to reading. For children who have not yet learned to read or are in the process of learning, illustrated books should contain more illustrations and less text. Properly written and designed illustrated children's books can be seen as an important factor in the development of children in their early childhood, preparing them for the future and supporting their education, teaching, and social-artistic activities. Because for school-age children, illustrated books are an important stimulus for their intellectual, emotional, and social development. (Yavuzer, 2011:188) Considering that vision comes before the speech and that children learn to look and recognize before they start talking (Berger, 2003:7), it can be said that illustration is a stronger means of communication than words for school-age children. Because the illustrations in the book provide a visual representation of the text and form the essence of the book, the child communicates with the book according to this essence. Illustrated books can be seen as a means of communication between the child's inner world. Therefore, the narrative of the illustrations, print quality, originality, creativity, and how well they support the text are important factors in children's books.

2.1. Visual Texture

Texture can be considered an important tool as a form of art and design expression. It has been used in art and design in every era, but it can be said that it was consciously used for the first time in the 20th century. When the real texture of materials such as sand or paper is perceived, the texture becomes a part of art and design physically. In the early uses, it was not thought that texture could add a very different aesthetic contribution to forms. Interestingly, it was painters who discovered and used texture, rather than architects who worked with real materials.

Visual texture is the texture that is present in the appearance of an object or environment. Visual texture is created by the combination of ele-

ments such as lines, tones, colors, and shapes. For example, the visual texture of a wall may vary based on the cracks and indentations on its surface. Visual texture plays an important role in artistic and design expressions. Especially in children's book illustrations, visual texture can be an element that attracts a child's attention and encourages them to explore.
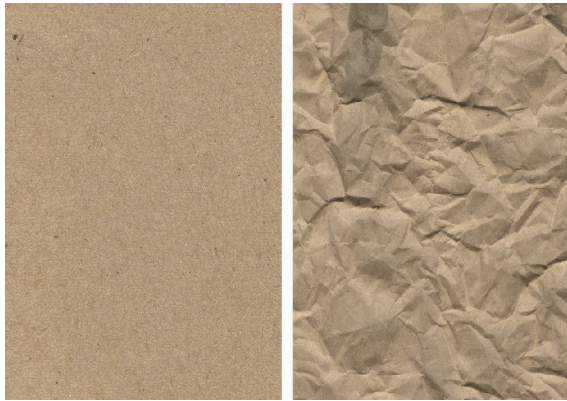

Image 1. The first image (on the left) of the scanned Kraft paper (brown paper) with the image scanner, and the transformation into a different form with external intervention (the image on the right)

Image 2. A new texture has been obtained by applying red acrylic paint to crumpled kraft paper.

In image 2, as seen, the texture obtained from brown paper has been changed by external intervention. It is also possible to obtain different textures from the textures themselves. This can be used to create diversity and creativity in design. For example, changes can be made to the texture using different colors and tones, giving the texture a new visual expression. In image 2, a different texture is obtained by adding some paint to this texture.

2.2. Cut-out Technic

Digital technology has opened up a range of working methods that are defining a new visual aesthetic. The illustration is also affected by these developments and the digital age has opened so many new doors for illustration (Zeegen, 2020:76).

The computer has been transformative for the discipline of illustration; no one tool or process has had as much influence on the working methods employed by the illustrator since the birth of print. If it is the pencil that wields the power, then it is the computer that harnesses that power and enables the illustrator to transform the pencil mark into a seemingly never-ending array of new marks. The rebirth and revival of interest in the craft of illustration can be attributed directly to the role that the computer has played. (Zeegen, 2020:73)

The computer has opened illustration up to a full range of digital possibilities and placed it on a level with other disciplines. The technical power now found within the reach of all illustrators has ensured that new and radical ways and means of creating, disseminating, and storing images have been common practice during the past decade. Illustrators, with the aid of digital processes, are returning to the roots of the practice. (Zeegen, 2020:73)

The method of "cut-out" refers to the process of digitally cutting and extracting visual images or textures and arranging them within specified page boundaries in design software. These textures can be used as a visual representation of emotions, thoughts, and ideas. Cut-out technic is different from collage in that it involves the scanning and digital manipulation of textures using design software tools. Cut-out allows for the creative combination of various textures to create unexpected and unique images and results. The Cut-out method is a method of cutting and extracting scanned textures in digital media using design software tools and organizing the textures. In other words, textures can be used instead of paint palettes. Using this method, many textures can be brought together to create the desired shape and image. By placing textures cre-

atively together, unexpected, different images and surprising results may occur. On the other hand, a scanner is important in illustration with the cut-out method. Scanning the initial sketches and transferring them to digital media and obtaining digital images of textures can be done through a scanner. In digital media, the textures of various and independent materials can be brought together to create design images within the framework of design principles and design arrangements can be made. A scanner is a type of camera that can capture images of two and three-dimensional objects in nature. Scanners, on the other hand, can transfer exactly two-dimensional images on paper and other different surfaces to the computer screen. Scanners are very economical tools used to copy images, sketches on paper, paintings, etc. to digital media. Scanners convert images by reading or scanning them into small pixels that the computer can perceive. The higher the scanning resolution of these tools, the more qualitative the image transferred to the screen will be. The image scanning measure of scanners is dpi. The abbreviation is dot per inch (number of dots per square inch). The scanning quality of the scanner that a designer can use should not be lower than 1200x1200 dpi. The scanner scans the image or document with a light source and a sensor, and the scanned image is saved in digital form. The scanned image can be edited, modified, and printed on a computer. Scanners are an important tool in digital media where images are manipulated, combined, and processed.

2.3. Designing illustrations with textures digitally

Children's books are one of the most popular fields in which illustration is used, particularly in the publishing industry. The illustration is an important tool for communicating with children and stimulating their creativity, as it helps to activate their emotions and thoughts, and encourages them to explore and think creatively. Picture books are especially important for children in the preschool age group, as they help them to communicate through visual images and introduce them to text. For children who have not yet learned to read and write, or are in the process of learning, picture books should contain less text and more illustrations(Akbaharer Arslan, 2012:8). Children's picture books whether fiction or non-fiction feed us attitudes and information and help to develop visual senses and intellect. The creative possibilities of illustration are limitless. Away from a contextual need for literal truth, it becomes unfettered by reality and one's imagination is free to create images and conjure up atmospheres (Male, 2007: 10).

Using various textures found in nature in the illustrations of children's books can make them more original and creative, not just containing elements such as color, paint, and lines, but also using textural characteristics. This can certainly contribute to the shaping and development of children's senses, creativity, and aesthetic pleasures. This method can be described as the action of cutting and extracting visual images, and textures digitally and arranging them within the defined page limits. Textures can be thought of as a visual form to reflect emotions, thoughts, and dreams.

In the digital space, the textures of various and independent materials can be brought together to create design images and can be related to each other within the framework of design principles, creating visual designs.

Image 3. A page from the book "A Tutta La Birra" written and illustrated by Christian Voltz, 2010.

In image 3, the page from the book A Tutta La Birra written and illustrated by Christian Voltz can be shown as an example of a design using the cut-out method. A variety of materials are used, such as wire, rusted tin, fabric, and hand-made textured paper. The materials are designed in such a way as to create a visual relationship between the shapes. The materials have been described in a way that creates new images from their known states, or in other words, they are described to create new images based on their general structure. The use of rusted tin can be considered an original form for a character-creating illustrator. For the character's skirt, a geometric pattern textured fabric is chosen. Thick wire is used for the figure's leg shape, and its use creates volume in the page layout. Dark textured paper is used for the ground. On the other hand, the image of the shoes is created by cutting and removing the red leather texture, which is thought to be selected to create contrast. The perception of a walking movement is created with the three superimposed images of the left shoe and the letters around the shoe.

The use of an endless variety of textures in illustrated children's books as a visual language of expression is a very rich element in terms of the sensitivity it is thought to add to visual and tactile perception. The harmonious combination of textures inspired by nature can enhance the power of images. The application of textures using the cut-out method adds formal dynamism to visual arrangements and it is thought that it will concretize the child's concept and image world (Akbaharer Arslan, 2012:99).

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, using textures as a visual expression form in digital media, rather than just using painting tools in design-based software, can make a difference while still keeping traditional methods alive.

The texture is an important element that contributes to a child's sensory development. Children use sensory experiences to feel the world, so the use of visual textures in book designs can not only add richness to the illustrations and avoid monotony but also stimulate the reader's curiosity and allow them to communicate with it.

Visual texture in a children's book helps to develop a child's visual perception and encourages them to think. Texture aims to attract the child's attention and make learning easier by engaging their interest. Visual texture also helps to make the text more understandable and enjoyable in a children's book. It also enhances a child's visual memory and prolongs their attention span. The use of texture in a children's book also promotes a child's creativity and imagination.

Children's picture books have been described as "holding the key to worlds locked inside the imagination, as well as depicting worlds that exist but cannot be seen." (Male, 2007: 10). Based on this, it can be said that illustration is a more powerful communication tool for a preschool-aged child than words.

In this way, different methods can be tried in this field, which provides such a strong visual communication with different textures, and contribution can be made to the diversity in this field by putting different, innovative, and original works. If the texture is used creatively, it can bring a new approach to illustration as well. The use of the cut-out method in design with texture can bring richness and movement to the project.

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