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CLICHÉ ON BOOK COVERS

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Annotation. *The reasons for the appearance of clichés on book covers are considered, as well as the influence of buyers and readers on this. The use of typical techniques on the cover of each genre has been analyzed, such as: the presence of a certain color scheme, stock images and the same images of the main characters.*

Keywords: BOOK COVERS, CLICHÉ, GENRES, TRENDES IN BOOK DESIGN.

The purpose of the work is to consider the features in the design of the covers of book publications; from a design and marketing point of view, identify the reasons for using clichés for different genres and suggest possible solutions to this problem.

Book covers are one of the most controversial areas of design. On the one hand, they can be truly beautiful and original, on the other, boring and similar to each other. This is to make the books sell better, we are simply attached to certain clichés that force us to obey the laws of business over and over again, not creative impulses.

Any typography expert will tell you that don't underestimate the importance of a cover. Here is one of the illustrative stories in the creative career of Stephen King.

One day he received a letter - a review of his book: "I would send you your shitty book back, but I like the illustration on the cover."

It is difficult to disagree with this statement. With the variety of literature offer that we see today, the cover is an important tool for promoting your book. The appearance of the publication can both interest the reader and scare away. This applies not only to paper publications: on electronic resources, design directly affects the number of views and downloads. The reason is simple - visualization sets the expectation of the book. If the cover is not made of high quality, then the reader will perceive the work in absentia as a cheap edition, and will prefer not to waste time and money.

British booksellers found that shoppers spend 8 seconds looking at the front cover and 15 seconds looking at the back. There is no second chance to make a first impression. Covers are almost indistinguishable from product packaging. Books are increasingly becoming a product that requires original, bright, high-quality and memorable packaging.

The sea of book covers surrounding us in the store is incomprehensible only at first glance. The unspoken laws of book design have long been established.

Surprising or not, there are cover clichés. Look at me writes: "The clichés in book covers are primarily due to business. Many people decide which book to buy right in the store: therefore, the cover should immediately show in what genre the book is and often - what gender the main character is. For example, if on your cover there is a silhouette of a

man in the snow or fog, everyone understands that this is some kind of detective story or an action-packed spy story."

But what if customers are also to blame for monotonous covers? The answer is simple, we are used to certain "stereotypes" in the "pictures" on the covers. The subconscious is still looking for certain images that it "wants" to see in this or that genre. In this situation, it is not clear who is more to blame for this state of affairs. Most likely, publishers and buyers are equally to blame, who periodically prove to marketers that book covers sell books. That is, it confirms our statement that the cover is a sales tool, not a field for design creativity.

If you think that your lovingly spelled heroes should show off on the cover of your work, you are mistaken. The reader has not yet opened your book, he does not know what it is about and has not had time to become attached to the characters. The purpose of the cover is not to tell your book in one picture, but to attract the reader.

And this is really so, the consumer reacts to familiar and understandable things. The man on the cover of a woman's novel must be more than just some male. He should be exactly what the overwhelming majority of women imagine a hero-lover (or, more precisely, how popular culture presents him, which rooted the corresponding image in the minds of the majority): a sensual macho with an ideal body, a blue-eyed blond or a passionate southerner. But the crime boss is our bald mordovorot with a gold chain as thick as a finger and thieves' tattoos all over his body. So what if in real life everything may not be so, most imagine them that way.

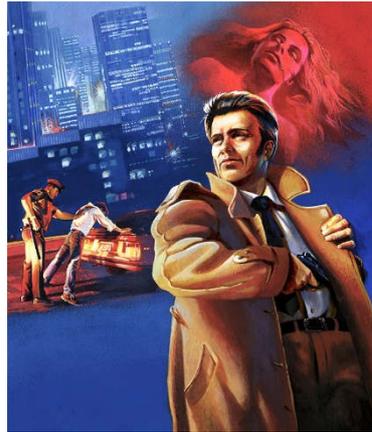
Of course, if this does not go against the characters described in the book itself. But, as a rule, the characters of the works also obey certain cliches in order to be understandable and close to the reader. It is not at all necessary that the cover be one hundred percent correlated with the plot of the book, it is much more important that it is associative, leaves the reader with a correct first impression, prompts him to open the book and find out what is in it.

Some of these clichés include:

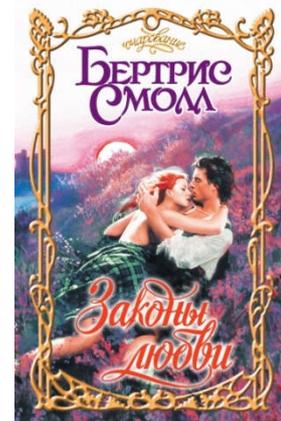
- lyrics, romance (pic. 1): paintings of classical painting, landscapes in gentle pastel colors, the sky, a pretty female face with an expression of spirituality or sadness, flowers;
- detective story (pic. 2): a gloomy palette, sharp contrasting silhouettes, rain, streets along which a man in a dark cloak runs, bullets, blood stains;
- female love stories (pic. 3): passionate couples, contrasting colors with a predominance of red, textures of silk, satin, the presence of such symbols as red wine, red roses, red apple, red dress;
- novels about successful people (pic. 4): a strict palette, laconicism, people in business suits, expensive cars, mansions;
- mysticism (pic. 5): blue-violet scale, witch attributes, silhouettes of trees and old mansions, people in robes with hoods, space, forest;
- fantasy (pic. 6): warriors, magicians, edged weapons, medieval castles, dragons;
- sci-fi (pic. 7): space, robots, spaceships, scientists.



Picture 1



Picture 2



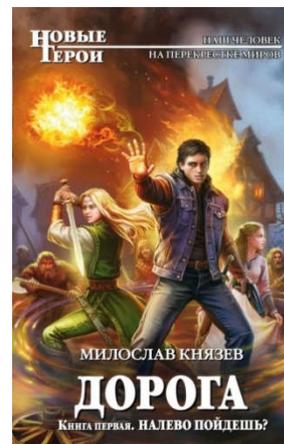
Picture 3



Picture 4



Picture 5



Picture 6

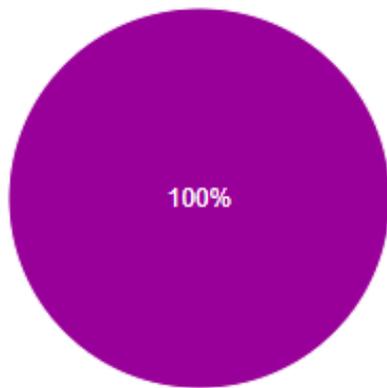


Picture 7

Not only books of the same genre, but also editions included in the same series, or books by one author, are designed in a uniform and recognizable manner. The prevailing design clichés form reading habits, sometimes very strong. And it is important not to frighten the reader. Let's give an example. Several years ago, the «Azбука» publishing house decided to change the design of the books of the famous detective author. At the same time, sales fell sharply as readers got used to the previous design. The publishers had to return to it.

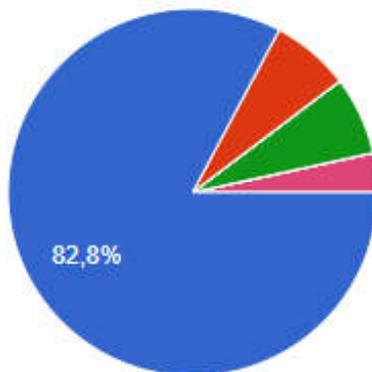
To demonstrate the above clichés, it was decided to conduct a sociological study in the form of a test survey. The purpose of this study was to clarify the associative links between the genre of the publication and the picture on the book cover. The respondents were offered options in which there were images of book covers without specifying the author and title, as well as options for genres.

The results were quite expected; some questions were 100% answered, while others somehow exceeded the majority. In pic. 8, 9, you can see the reactions to the cover of the female novel (pic. 3) and fantasy (pic. 6). As you can see from the diagrams, the answers are not unanimous, but the majority of votes were given to the correct option.



- Фэнтези
- Мистика
- Детектив
- Фантастика
- Женский роман
- Детская литература
- Ужасы
- Не могу определиться

Picture 8



- Фэнтези
- Мистика
- Детектив
- Фантастика
- Женский роман
- Детская литература
- Ужасы
- Не могу определиться

Picture 9

Publishers have identified the following common trends in book design that always attract customers:

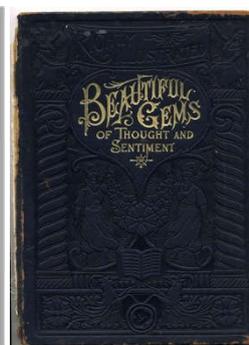
- making a recognizable face of a TV presenter, politician or actor on the cover;
- rejection of the illustrative cover, when some abstract illustrations are used that do not correspond to the reader's idea of the genre;
- preference for the text design of the cover, just the title and author's name or an interesting game with fonts.



Picture 9



Picture 10



Picture 11

This was confirmed by the survey.

However, publishers understand that blindly following fashion is also dangerous. It takes a lot of work to stand out among the gray mass of identical covers. The tone and color scheme help the buyer understand at a glance what world the book will take him to. You need to pay attention to contrast, brightness, fonts that are used in successful publications.

The cover may comply with the laws of the genre and design rules, but not attract the target audience. Therefore, we need to focus on the bestsellers, adopt the techniques used on their covers. For example, teenage literary hits may use symbols on the covers rather than images of people.

You need to understand that according to statistics, more than half of the visitors to bookstores do not want to buy books with banal covers. Stock photos that can be seen in outdoor advertisements or on milk cartons are hardly a good choice for a book cover. Also, do not exploit hackneyed images - for example, the hero of a woman's novel with a shirt wide open. This study shows that in order to avoid common mistakes and create your own unique product, it is necessary to periodically research the publishing market and focus on the best samples.

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