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THE USE OF GOTHIC STYLE IN GRAPHIC DESIGN

The Gothic style originated in the Middle Ages in Europe and developed from approximately the 12th to the 16th century. Its basis is the construction of large cathedrals and churches. The main features: tall buildings, pointed arches, large windows with stained glass, a lot of light inside. Gothic cathedrals were built not only for worship, but as a symbol of the faith and power of the church. They were supposed to impress people with their size and appearance and create a feeling of sublimity. Architects used new designs at the time so that buildings could be taller and lighter. This allowed for large windows and complex shapes. Over time, Gothic also influenced modern architecture and design.

The main feature of Gothic is the aspiration upwards. Pointed arches, tall columns and spires create the effect of verticality and force you to look upwards. Large stained glass windows let in a lot of light, which paints the interior in different colors. This creates an expressive and unusual atmosphere. The main principles of Gothic are verticality, rhythm of forms and a strong emotional impact. They make buildings visually light and dynamic, even if they are very massive. These ideas are still used today.

The interior of Gothic cathedrals was not gloomy. On the contrary, the architects sought to fill it with light. The main element was large stained glass windows. The sun's rays, passing through colored glass, scattered on the walls and floor in different shades. Because of this, the lighting inside was constantly changing. In the morning it was soft, brighter during the day, and more solemn and contrasting in the evening. For people of that time, who lived in simple dark houses, such spaces seemed unusual and even almost unreal [1].

In Gothic, light had a symbolic meaning and was perceived as a manifestation of the divine. Therefore, the architecture of cathedrals used light, color and scale to create a certain emotional state in a person. Large spaces, the height of the buildings and stained glass windows affected the

feelings of visitors, evoking wonder and respect. This is one of the first examples of how architecture consciously affects human emotions through space and light.

Gothic buildings have a complex and rich appearance, which can be described as a kind of “visual labyrinth” with a large number of details. The facades of the cathedrals are completely filled with carvings, ornaments and sculptures, among which saints, rulers, as well as animals and mythical creatures are depicted. Due to such detailing, the building looks extremely rich and expressive, without empty or simple surfaces. At the same time, all these elements were not accidental or purely decorative. Each sculpture, each ornament and each detail had its place and symbolic meaning. They were part of the overall religious plan, which was to explain biblical plots, convey moral ideas and shape people's ideas about the world and faith.

At a time when most people could not read, Gothic architecture served as a kind of “stone book.” Through sculptures and reliefs, the church conveyed biblical stories to people, explained moral rules, and showed the struggle of good against evil. These images were understandable to contemporaries, since they were used to perceiving information visually, through symbols and images. Thus, the cathedral was not just a building [2].

This visual approach gradually went beyond architecture and influenced the culture of writing. In medieval monasteries, monks copied religious and philosophical texts by hand for years, so books were not only a source of information, but also the result of painstaking artistic work. Books were designed very carefully: the text was written evenly, the pages were decorated with initials, ornaments and decorative elements. Because of this, they took on the appearance of real art objects, where spiritual content and aesthetics were combined. It was in such an environment that a special style of writing was formed, which today is called the Gothic font or texture.

The main feature of Gothic writing is a very dense and compact writing of letters. The characters were located so close to each other that the text looked like a continuous mass without noticeable gaps between words. Because of this, the page was perceived not as a set of individual words, but as a single graphic pattern. The white space between the lines had almost disappeared, and the entire plane of the sheet was filled with rhythmic texture. This way of writing made the text not only a means of reading, but also a visual object. Its structure resembled Gothic architecture with tall columns and complex ornaments, where the density and vertical rhythm of forms played an important role [1].

In modern graphic design, Gothic has not disappeared, but has changed. Today, it is not copied literally, as in medieval cathedrals, but is used as a set of visual techniques. Gothic style has become a tool for creating mood. It is used when it is necessary to convey drama, depth or mysticism in design. Instead of strict historical rules, designers adapt Gothic elements to modern tasks, using characteristic forms and contrasts.

Modern Gothic design is based on contrasts and rhythm. Designers use individual elements of the style, including sharp shapes, dense composition and sharp contrasts of light and shade, to create a sense of power, drama or mysticism. This approach is used in various areas, for example, in brand logos, music album covers or video game interfaces. In its modern form, Gothic is no longer a purely historical style, but functions as a visual tool. It helps to give works of art character, emotional tension and expressiveness, remaining relevant in various design directions - from classical solutions to digital culture.

Gothic design is the opposite of minimalism, because instead of simplifying, it adds a lot of detail and creates visual density. This style combines complex fonts, ornaments and decorative elements, as well as strong contrasts of light and shadow, which add depth to the image. Because of this, the design does not look flat, but multi-layered and saturated, as if it has several levels of perception.

This approach forces the viewer not just to look at the image, but to consider it carefully. Due to the large number of details, the gaze constantly moves across the composition, which creates the effect of immersion in the image. It is thanks to such saturation that the Gothic style evokes stronger emotions than simple forms. It is perceived as dramatic, expressive and somewhat theatrical. In the modern world, where simplicity and quick perception of information prevail, such visual complexity becomes a tool for creating a special atmosphere and deeper meaning, which is difficult to convey through the means of minimalism [3].

The combination of all these elements creates the effect of depth. A flat image begins to look three-dimensional. The design is perceived as having space inside, as if you can “enter” it. This is achieved through the multi-layered placement of details.

Contrast is one of the key features of the Gothic style. In medieval architecture, it was manifested through the combination of dark massive stone and bright light passing through stained glass windows. When the sun's rays penetrated through colored glass, multi-colored light spots appeared on the walls. This made the space more lively and expressive. This combination of light and shadow added drama, depth and volume to the interior, enhancing its emotional perception.

In modern graphic design, the principle of contrast has been preserved, but now it is created using digital tools, rather than stone or glass. Designers often use sharp contrast between dark and light elements. For example, a black background and light text help to quickly highlight the main information. This technique makes the text more readable and at the same time sets the mood for the entire design, influencing its perception.

At the same time, traditional Gothic shapes and fonts in modern design are combined with futuristic effects. They are added neon glow, blur, digital distortions and the “glitch” effect, which looks like an image error, but is used as an artistic technique. This combination of old and new visual elements creates a modern style that looks dynamic, technological and expressive [3].

In film, video games, and branding, the Gothic style is primarily used to create a strong atmosphere. It makes an image not just beautiful, but emotionally rich and memorable. Depending on the design, Gothic elements can convey mysticism, a sense of ancient history, or a tense atmosphere of the future [2].

Thanks to this, the design literally “draws” the viewer into its space and is perceived much deeper than a regular image. A person ceases to be just an observer looking at a screen or poster from the side, and as if finds himself inside the scene. He begins to feel its scale, rhythm, light and shadow and the general atmosphere, as if he is physically present in this environment. It is this interaction with the composition that creates the effect of presence: the gaze moves between the details, fixes the contrasts, transitions of light and shadow, and gradually “reads” the space as alive. As a result, a feeling of immersion arises, when the image ceases to be flat and turns into an emotional experience. Therefore, Gothic techniques are often used in cases where it is necessary to maximize the impact of a visual image and create a feeling of complete immersion in it.

List of sources and literature used

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