



Study of Creative Interests in Book Art of the Students of Arts and Graphics Faculty (AGF) of MSPU

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Abstract

The purpose of the present article is to investigate creative interests in book art of the students of Arts and Graphics Faculty of the Moscow State Pedagogical University. To cover the topic with the most detail, the author intends to consider the issue broadly, beginning with analysing the research of philosophers and psychologists related to perception of book in this era and its role in life of the modern society, and to comparison of roles of computer and manual graphics in visual art, in particular, in book illustration. Theoretical means of the study is investigating literature and internet resources indirectly covering the declared topic. Empirical means of the study is examination of academic activities in Arts and Graphics Faculty and recording the data in the form of statistics, pedagogical experiment and creative activity of the author. The results of the study include discovering of the main trends that influence students' interests in book art, making an attempt to identify the reasons of certain facts, provision of quantitative and qualitative properties of the students' preferences on the stages of additional education, doing a diploma project, studying at master and post-graduate programmes. The article conclusion gives the findings of the study, that are: abiding interest of students to studying and creative interpretation of book art; domination of interest to children's literature, poetry, fantastic fiction and Russian classical literature; tendency of covering various aspects of book design (composition, illustrations, fonts art and bookbinding, methods of teaching book art in the system of continuous art education). It is necessary, from the author's viewpoint, to take the mentioned findings into account while developing the content of teaching, formulating curricula and working programs, in the thesis topics.

Keywords: Book graphics; Illustration; Book art; Students' interests

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Introduction

The relevance and novelty of the study

The author's report on the International conference "Global Trends in Development of Education and Academic Research" became the prerequisite to writing the present article. The report covered mainly methodical and highly specialized (art-related) issues [1]. Later, developing the topic, we decided to investigate with more details the relations between modern young people and the book as a phenomenon in the conditions of increasingly active introduction of new information technologies. The first

stage was the investigation of interests of AGF students in book art. First and foremost, the question arose: to what extent is it necessary and relevant for modern young people to study book art? Possibly, the book is dying out, giving way to more progressive and advanced information sources, such as computer, television, or the Internet? On the other hand, possibly, manual graphics has gone out of date and computer soon will firmly establish itself in book art? Is it probably much less actual to study bookbinding and fonts art during professional education of a book artist and a teacher of book graphics? At this, preservation of a traditional codex form of a book that is to be replaced by an e-book reader remains an open question.

Every artist in this or that way dealing with books in their creative work is concerned with these fundamental issues. To the young students being the most forward-looking part of our society, these questions are even more challenging. Philosophers and psychologists are dealing with these issues, a short review of related research will be given below. However, at the current stage we decided to focus on studying the particular situation on Arts and Graphics Faculty of the MSPU.

Even without statistics and surveys, just on the basis of teaching practice and conversations with students, it is possible to conclude that modern young people on AGF, fortunately, have not lost interest to a book and book design, and it is book art that many students consider the field of their future creative work. An important task for us is to analyse the nature, focus and degree of permanency of this interest on the example of selection of topics for diploma works, master theses and post-graduate studies.

Arts and Graphics Faculty of the MSPU in comparison with other art universities where Book Art is taught (V. Surikov Moscow State Academy Art Institute, Moscow State University of Printing Arts) has a specific specialization. That is pedagogical orientation of the education. For specialists that are to take part in the upbringing of the younger generation the educative function of book is essential. That influences the interest of students of pedagogical universities in a particular way. In regard to the above, the relevance of the study is defined to be the necessity to train high-qualified teachers that have professionalism of both a pedagogue and of a book artist. To fully implement that training the data regarding dynamics of interests development of students studying book art is necessary.

The novelty of the study is defined by the absence of highly specialized research devoted to studying the formation of interests of arts and graphics students of pedagogical universities studying book art, which results from yet insufficient development of that highly important area in art teaching.

Literature review

As stated above, the topic of the current study is rather specific and highly specialized. Due to this, it is possible to name the sources that deal with it only indirectly. Most scientific works dealing with the role of book in life of the modern society are devoted to the analysis of text perception. In particular, the article of Soboleva OV [2] and book by Jean-Claude Carrière and Umberto Eco [3] are dedicated to these problems. The issue of language and consequently book perception was considered in the writings of Nalimov VV [4]. Computer image of different areas of human knowledge was studied by Alekseeva IY [5]. The issue of formation of a new type of thinking and cognitive activity related to wide introduction of information technologies was considered by Mikeshina LA [6].

The original work of I. N. Stor is dedicated to the relationship of meaning and different levels of image construction [7]. The problem of perception of computer graphics and in particular illustrations is handled in the studies by Jon May [8]. The study of V. B. Prokhorenkov is devoted to the specifics of the e-book [9]. Jean-Claude Carrière and Umberto Eco examine the prospects of printed books in the modern world [3]. The statistics of interests

of the younger generation in books is provided by the research of Alison Flood [10]. The familiarization with the literature on the history of the printed book has allowed us to form a holistic picture of the modern condition of the problem. In particular, you can read about the development of the print media in the research by E. B. Kozlova [11]. The work by Yu. Vaserchuk about the disappearing culture of paper is dedicated to the questions of a number of modern trends in the printing industry [12]. We must also name the sources relating to specific issues of book design. In particular, there are publications, which examine the historical structure of the book: the research by E. V. Lebedeva and R. M. Tchernykh [13], as well as Yu. Ya. Gerchuk [14]. The book by O. Korytov is devoted to various aspects of the illustration composition [15]. The questions of typography and layout of the book are reflected in the works by I. Keleinikov [16] and V. Lesnyak [17]. B. Voronetsky and E. Kuznetsov [18] examined the issue of traditional and modern book font as well as N. N. Orekhov did [19]. The study of these publications has allowed us to present a full picture of historical and modern trends in the development of book art, which have largely mediated the dynamics of youth's interests in the book art.

Method

The author's general view of the researched problem was formed during investigation of numerous literature and electronic sources listed in the previous section.

We should name the following theoretical means of our research:

- Classification (grouping diploma and master research depending on their topic);
- Deduction (making specific conclusions regarding formation of interests of AGF students on the basis of general trends in book perception by modern young people);
- Induction (making general conclusions regarding trends in formation of interests of AGF students on the basis of specific facts analysis).

We used theoretical methods for analysing data we had received in our empirical research.

We should name the following empirical means of our research:

- Pedagogical experiment which implied teaching students by authorial programs of Makarova KV [20], including:
 - Implementation of an additional educational programme "Book Art",
 - Teaching an optional discipline "Illustration techniques" for third year AGF students of MSPU,
 - Teaching discipline "Book graphics in the system of continuous art education" for second year AGF students of master programme of MSPU,
 - Supervising diploma works, master theses, post-graduate studies;

Exploration of academic process in AGF (participation in sittings of the State assessment committee; conversations with students, post-graduate students and teachers of AGF of MSPU);

Comparison (statistical and qualitative analysis of diploma works, master theses and post-graduate studies in AGF of MSPU).

Results and Discussion

The results of theoretical study

Having compared the data got from literature and Internet sources and personal living and creative experience, trying to consider the book from the position of an artist, we have made the following conclusions.

1. E-book reader, one of the latest developments, is perceived by the reader in a completely different way than the traditional codex form (two-page opening as a compositional unit of a book is replaced by a single page; the role of central axis of the opening as the compositional axis of the book is lost; compositional task of balancing the book elements against the axis of the opening exists no more); moreover, bookbinding loses its primary role in the case of e-reader, because e-book reading device implies work with a big number of different books.

2. Computer technologies undoubtedly have been deeply integrated into book production. However, despite certain forecasts, they mostly are used only for processing scanned images and layout, making manual graphics the leader in creation of illustrations. On the one hand, this is due to present imperfection of computer as a tool compared to artist's hand. On the other hand, computer graphics seems to be a priori deprived of an ability to create an emotional and sensitive dialog with the viewer which manual works of a talented and experienced master are capable of.

3. Over the past few years *printing technologies have been improved in a considerable way*, therefore coloured illustration have not only become dominating in book design (compared to black and white illustration being more wide spread in the XX century) but has almost become close to painting. In connection to this, there arises a slightly another view at graphic nature of an illustration: it is no more obliged (according to the theory of Favorsky VA) to serve for strengthening the sheet plane but receives "the right" to break this plane.

4. Due to improvement of printing process and book production technologies in general, fundamentally new and rather *sophisticated design solutions* have become possible in book design in recent years. At the same time, this has resulted in emerging of some negative trends. In particular, we are starting to shift from a codex form of a book having established during centuries and for that reason perfect, providing the unity of utilitarian and aesthetical aspects. Design solutions that are contrary to construction of a book itself begin to appear. Due to certain reasons (mainly economic) these novelties have become much more common in professional art education (in particular, at V. Surikov Moscow State Academy Art Institute) than in publishing.

The analysis of diploma works devoted to book art

Having made the above stated conclusions, using the 'general-to-specific' approach, we stated the goal to analyze the topics of diploma works **Table 1** devoted to book art created within the last 5 years by the following parameters:

- Quantitative indicator (change of the number of diploma works by years);
- Priorities of students in literary genres (classics, children's books, fantasy, folklore, etc.) reflected in topics of diploma works;
- Preferences in using particular graphic techniques;
- Non-classical trends of book development reflected in topics of diploma works (priority of computer graphics, e-book reader, priority of coloured illustration, use of non-traditional design solutions, use of methods of contemporary art);
- Continuity of the students' interests in different stages of education (additional education, specialist programme, bachelor programme, master programme, post-graduate programme) (**Table 1**).

After analyzing the table we can make the following conclusions.

1. Students' interests in book graphics are rather permanent (4 topics in 2010, 5 topics in 2011, 4 topics in 2012, 3 topics in 2013, 5 topics in 2014).

2. Students' priorities in literary genres are the following:

Children's literature-6 topics (30%);

Folklore-2 topics (10%);

Russian classical literature-3 topics (15%);

Foreign classical literature-1 topic (5%);

Poetry-4 topics (20%);

Fantastic fiction-4 topics (%);

Other-1 topic (illustrating the calendar) (5%).

3. Students' preferences of the use of graphical techniques are the following:

Unique graphics-17 works;

Print (pictures printed with cliches)2 works;

Computer graphics-1 work;

Other-1 work (collage technique).

4. Modern trends of book development are reflected in diploma works of the Drawing Department rather feebly. It would be more precise to say that the modern trend in the interests of AGF students is the adherence to classical traditions. In particular, there was only one student who used computer graphics in her work (Anna Orlova); an only design solution beyond classical traditions was the work by Alla Suvorova who used collage and modern art techniques; distribution of colour and B&W solutions was roughly equal across the works; not a single thesis covered e-books as their subject matter. We should make a reservation here that due to the limited scope of the article and certain difficulties in collecting data, we only analysed the theses under the Drawing Department (the Design Departments has the "book topics" as well, though they are rarely covered; it is this Department that extensively applies computer graphics and art photography).

5. The table highlights a peculiar positive trend related to the new course in Book Art in the Drawing Department. The course was intended to cover the book as a unity of its various aspects: history, art of fonts, composition of picture, art of bookbinding, and digital technologies in book design.

The students who did not take up this course restricted themselves to making a series of pictures in their theses. Some thesis subject matters even have a wording like "A series of sheets inspired by". However, the students who did take up the course in Book Art analysed topics that cover various aspects of the book and analysed its artistic features as a whole without limiting their work to some graphical sheets. The same can be said about the final creative works as part of additional education, as well as about master's theses.

Below are two examples of most typical theses on Book Art: one final work completed as part of additional education and one master's thesis (Figures 1-4). Each has a certain focus and thus differs from the others. For example, Anastasiya Anisimova's [21] thesis is a synthesis of a handwritten font, hand binding, and watercolour picture. Yelizaveta Shtompel [22] synthesized the art of puppet theatre, art of photography, and hand-made

pictures in ink. Anna Katukhina [23] made a series of pictures by hand and supplemented her creative work with computer graphics. Anna Muratova's [24] master's thesis covers artistic binding and stylistically amalgamating it with a series of linocut pictures (pictures printed with cliches made from engraved linoleum). Each student made electronic versions of their books using InDesign by themselves, pre-processing their pictures on the computer (Figure 1). Graduation Thesis on "Use of Art of Fonts, Watercolour Pictures, and Bookbinding in the Creation of the Image of a Handwritten Book *Icelandic and Norwegian Fairy Tales*" (Director of Diploma K. V. Makarova). Anastasiya Anisimova completed an additional course in Book Art in Academic Year 2011/12. Anastasiya suggested handwritten books as the subject matter of her thesis on her own initiative. The work started with an extensive search for an artistic image of the handwritten book, which was finally developed as an amalgamation of the insular minuscule half-uncial script and a font developed by artist Denis Lotarev. The style of the pictures was greatly influenced by works of John Bauer, Gallen-Kallela, and handwritten books in Celtic style (the Book of Kells, Lindisfarne Gospels), Scandinavian and Celtic ornaments.

On writing the text and drawing the pictures, Anastasia elaborated

Table 1 A list of diploma works created at the Drawing Department of AGF of MSPU in 2010-2014 and devoted to book art.

Student name	Topic of diploma work	Year of defence
specialist programme		
Denis Usatyuk	Search of artistic image in a series of illustrations to "Snow Queen" by H.C. Andersen	2010
Yulia Litvinova	A serious of illustrations to poems by A.N. Vertinsky	2010
Anna Shumarina	A serious of illustrations to tales by Lewis Carroll	2010
Alexandra Serova	Peculiarities of illustrating a children's ABC book in the Church Slavonic style	2010
Anna Blinova	Expressive possibilities of a mixed technique (water colores, color pencil) in illustrations to the book "Pino the Pig"	2011
Anatoliy Medvedev	A serious of illustrations to the novel "Roadside Picnic" by the Strugatsky brothers	2011
Mariya Koroleva	A serious of graphic works illustrating "The Chronicles of Narnia" by C.S. Lewis	2011
Tatiana Kurgina	A serious of illustrations to the story "Viy" by N.V. Gogol	2011
Darya Onatskaya	Illustrating the calendar in lubok style as a factor developing the sense of composition	2011
Olga Netsvetaeva	Development of creative abilities by doing illustrations to the "Fairy Tales of the World"	2012
Sophia Terenkova	Possibilities of graphical technique "ink and nib" in creating a series of graphical works illustrating "Theatre" by Somerset Maugham	2012
Alla Suvorova	Compositional and depictive possibilities of the collage technique at the example of a series of works illustrating "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" by L. Carroll	2012
Natalya Baryshnikova	Compositional and depictive possibilities of creating a series of graphical works illustrating poems and songs by Alexander Vertinsky	2012
Kirill Akhmetov	Peculiarities of artistic solution of graphical composition in creating a series of illustrations to poems by Ch. Bukowski	2013
Artem Kazmin	Expressive possibilities of graphical composition in creating a series of illustrations to poems by Ch. Bukowski	2013
A.I. Mironova	ABC book with animalistic illustrations	2013
Anna Baksheeva	Using the specifics of unique graphics in book illustrating (at the example of creation of a series of illustrations to the novel "Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea" by Jules Verne).	2014
Anna Orlova	Using modern graphical digital technologies for creating an artistic image in book illustrating.	2014
Elizaveta Shtompel	Creation of a series of illustrations to the story "The Overcoat" by N.V. Gogol with the use of elements of puppet theatre and artistic photography	2014
bachelor programme		
Anastasia Anisimova	Using fonts, water color illustration and bookbinding in the creation of the image of a handwritten book "Icelandic and Norwegian Fairy Tales"	2014
Anastasia Kuzmenkova	Creation of an artistic image in a series of illustrations to the story "White Nights" by F.M. Dostoevsky	2014



Figure 1 Anastasiya Anisimova (2014)



Figure 2 Yelizaveta Shtompel (2014).



Figure 3 Anna Katukhina (2012).



Figure 4 Anna Muratova (2015).

on the bookbinding making three versions, fully by hand, using antique lacing techniques guided by a fine art restorer from the Manuscripts Department of the State Tretyakov Gallery: one-piece unembossed binding dominated by the illustrative image; one-piece binding in bold relief and a composite binding with hollow relief, both based on a typographic composition (Figure 2). Graduation Thesis on «Creation of a Series of Illustrations of Gogol's *The Overcoat* Using Elements of Puppet Theatre and Art of Photography» (Director of Diploma, Makarova KV). Yelizaveta suggested an unusual idea to merge different arts on her own initiative. The subject matter was first rejected by a number of academicians but was finally approved, though

reluctantly. They argued that the work would be governed by two departments at the same time: the Picture Department and the Arts and Crafts Department. The subject matter and the work progress reflected Yelizaveta's wide circle of interests: she likes making puppets (which is part of the Arts and Crafts course) and the Art of Photography, she also likes teaching Visual Arts, and Book Art – the courses that she took up under additional education programme (Figure 3). Pictures to Wilhelm Hauff's *Caliph Stork*. Final creative work as part of the Book Art course under additional education programme (Academic Advisor: K. V. Makarova). Pictures of Nikolay Klyuev's *Book of Poems* (practical part of Master's Thesis on «Artistic Binding as Part of Book

Composition»). Academic Advisor: K. V. Makarova. In this case, the subject matter of the thesis was suggested by the advisor as Anna combined her training in Moscow State Pedagogical University with her position as a fine art restorer for the State Tretyakov Gallery, and has unique skills in artistic binding. The illustration technique was chosen given Anna's interest to printed graphics, particularly, linocut, and her good command of the technique. While choosing the book to illustrate, Anna was deciding between poems of Sergey Yesenin and Nikolay Klyuev. Finally, she preferred the latter. Klyuev's poetry is close to Anna's mindset and, furthermore, unlike Yesenin's poems, it has not been as extensively illustrated by numerous artists, and Anna was interested in elaborating on poorly covered subjects. The illustrations reflect Mid-Russian landscape that has been the subject of her plein-air activities many times (to some extent, the subject matter echoed with her graduation thesis as a specialist). Anna tested two techniques: dry-point (a simplified version of

etching on acrylic glass) and linocut. Dry-point proved to be too detailed and, apart from that, hindered tonal integrity. Integrity, laconism, and expression of images were finally achieved in linocut. While developing her creative concept of artistic binding, fully hand-made, Anna intended to achieve stylistic coherence between the binding design and the pictures, at the same time, giving the binding a certain "signalling accent" as "the face of the book", using the bold relief technique.

The analysis of students' interests in the field of books at different stages of education

The next point under analysis is succession of students' interests in the field of books at different stages of education (additional education, Specialist programme, Bachelor's degree, Master's degree, postgraduate education).

Our statistical data are scarce, as the Master's degree programme

Table 2 Trends in Students' Interests at different stages: additional education-Bachelor's Programme-Master's Degree-postgraduate education.

Student's name and surname	Additional course in Book Art	Thesis	Master's Programme	Postgraduate Programme
Anna Katukhina	took up an additional course in Book Art in 2010/2011	Subject matter of thesis: Light in Landscape Painting Director of Diploma N. A. Kirsanov Thesis defence year: 2012 (Specialist degree)	Research subject: Border Composition in Book Structure Academic Advisor: K. V. Makarova Thesis defence year: 2014	Research subject: Border Composition as a Ways of Developing Artistic and Visual Thinking in the System of Continuous Fine Art Education Academic Advisor: K. V. Makarova expected year of defence: 2015
Anna Muratova	took up an additional course in Book Art in 2011/2012	Subject matter of thesis: A Series of Landscapes in Dry-Point about Russian North Director of Diploma R. Ch. Bartsits Thesis defence year: 2013 (Specialist degree)	Research subject: Artistic Binding as Part of Book Composition Academic Advisor: K. V. Makarova Thesis defence year: 2014	is not planning to apply for postgraduate education
Anastasiya Anisimova	took up an additional course in Book Art in 2012/2013	Subject matter of thesis: Use of Art of Fonts, Watercolour Illustration and Binding in Creating the Image of Handwritten Book of Icelandic and Norwegian Fairy Tales Director of Diploma K. V. Makarova Thesis defence year: 2014 (Bachelor's Programme)	Research subject: Book's Compositional Structure Academic Advisor: K. V. Makarova expected year of defence: 2015	is planning to apply for postgraduate education and continue her studies in Book Art
Anastasiya Kuzmenkova	took up an additional course in Book Art in 2012/2013	Subject matter of thesis: Creation of an Artistic Image in a Series of Illustrations to Dostoyevsky's White Nights Director of Diploma K. V. Makarova Thesis defence year: 2014 (Bachelor's Programme)	Research subject: Shape/Background Relationship in Black-and-White Pictures Academic Advisor: K. V. Makarova expected year of defence: 2015	is planning to apply for postgraduate education and continue her studies in Book Art

of Visual Arts in the System of Continuous Fine Art Education in MSPU's Drawing Department was only launched in 2013. The table below (**Table 2**) shows that some of the above students selected the topics related to the Book Art for further education as well (Master's Degree, postgraduate education). There are two students who worked on book issues during the Master's programme but selected topics unrelated to book graphics for their theses. Some of the students followed the same line related to the Book Art at all education stages (**Table 2**). The analysis of the contents of thesis works and Master's researches shows that bachelors, masters and postgraduates of the Art and Graphic Department display higher interest in theoretical aspects of book composition (border composition of book structure, shape/background relationship in black-and-white pictures, etc.), and methods of teaching book art in the system of continuous fine art education (with specially remarkable research by Yelizaveta Shtompel who developed an excellent programme on teaching Book Art in secondary schools and successfully implemented it at the level of additional education).

Conclusion

Our target was to study the interests of MSPU Arts and Graphics Faculties students related to the book art.

On analysing internet and literature sources related to book perception and use of contemporary digital technologies in book art, we came to the following conclusions:

- The e-book is rapidly becoming part of human life and offers a radically different dimensional composition when compared to the codex;
- Digital technologies being rapidly implemented in book design mainly deal with layout and picture processing stages falling behind manual graphics;
- With improved printing technologies, colour has become an integral part of picture making it closer to painting and gained the right for breaking through the sheet surface;
- Designers are offering more and more solutions that contradict the structure of the book as a unity of functional and aesthetic aspects.
- Further, using empiric methods of research and on analysing the immediate situation existing in MSPU Art and Graphics Department, we came to the following conclusions:
- Book art has been a matter of interest for MSPU Art and Graphics students over the recent years;
- The most popular subject matters of students' theses are children's and science fiction;
- The majority of the theses are in unique manual graphic techniques;
- The vast majority of the students stick to classical realist traditions in book illustration;

- The most successful results of thesis work belong to the students who took up a course in Book Art in advance and learnt to see the book as an integrated indivisible entity;
- A significant part of thesis writers of the Picture Department continue with the book art on later stages (Master's Degree, postgraduate programme);
- Along with the creative aspect, Art and Graphics Department students are getting more interested in the theoretical and methodical aspects of book art.

The data obtained during the study, from our point of view, should be considered by teachers and managers of art-graphic faculties of pedagogical universities in developing the content of teaching, formulating curricula and working programs, in the thesis topics. In particular, it is advantageous to maintain the increased interest of students to theoretical and methodological problems associated with the art of the book; to encourage the interest in illustrating Russian classical and children's literature, as well as foreign classical books and folklore more actively. It is also necessary to support trends related to coverage of the book in all its aspects (font, cover illustration) by graduates, masters and PhD students. In addition, it is important to consider modern trends in the development of the art of the book, to introduce the themes associated with a comparison of aesthetic and utilitarian function of the electronic book and the code, the interaction of computer and handmade graphics.

This research is not final or complete. We are planning further and deeper analysis of contemporary youth's perception of book and hand-made graphics as a whole, and views on teaching book art in Art and Graphics Departments. In particular, for a more in-depth study of the views of youth on the prospects of book art in the contemporary society, and also on the problem of the relation between computer technology and handmade graphics in book design, it is necessary to conduct a broad survey and use questionnaires. It is advisable to cover not only AGF students at Moscow State Pedagogical University, but also students of other educational and artistic institutions. In addition, it is appropriate to involve the students studying the technology of book production, as well as future philologists and writers. Only the comparison and generalization of views of representatives of various professions related to the book, can give an objective result. Returning to the specifics of the creative interests of the students of AGF in the field of illustration and book design, it is necessary to use such method of research as pedagogical experiment more widely. A varied selection of creative tasks, covering all the stylistic richness of contemporary book art: from classics to conceptualism, proper pedagogical guidance of students' search activities, a broad introduction to experiential learning of modern educational technologies (problematic, project, online training) will help us to identify existing trends and regularities of students' interests formation more fully and to channel them in a constructive direction.

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