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Kitasenju Pictogram

The design I am focusing on for this paper that applies to one of the design theories we have covered so far in class would be the Kitasenju Pictogram, created by Masaaki Hiromura in



2004. Masaaki Hiromura is a graphics designer known for making designs that incorporate symbols and images to words or writings, many of these designs even attempts to blend symbol and text into one new entity of its own. He's also worked on other famous pictogram related works, like the redesign of the Olympic Pictogram for the 2020 Summer Olympic. The Kitasenju Pictogram is a series of Japanese

typography that utilizes images and symbols to further convey and simplify certain kanji's in the Japanese language.

The theory in which this design correlates to would be the importance of signs and symbols in a design. This theory itself talks about the impact that signs and symbols have in

graphic design as a whole, and how the both are essential to one another and when used together, can bring the most out of a design.

In the text “Course in general linguistics” it states, “The linguistic sign unites, not a thing and a name, but a concept and a sound-image. The latter is not the material sound, a purely physical thing, but the psychological imprint of the sound, the impression that it makes on our senses.” This means that signs and illustrations that accompany a text or literature can help stimulate a person's mind and give them visual cues to help distinguish what a certain text or word means.

During an interview with Masaaki Hiromura himself, he stated that he wanted to blend illustration with letters which in turn can stimulate the viewer’s “left and right” brain to grab their attention,”we looked at the meanings each kanji letter has. making a part of the letter an illustration that gets the right and left brain working at the same time, and it increases one’s attention.” He also stated “I always think about ‘how information is conveyed’ rather than ‘how to convey information’ the most important thing to achieve is not expression but to find out essence. I want to continue thinking about the relationship between information and people.” Which is why most of his design works center around the visual aspects of typography.

The Kitasenju Pictogram is more of a direct response to the design theory of the significance of sign and symbols in design because Masaaki Hiromura believed that typography and illustration or sign are necessary and goes hand in hand when it comes to conveying the message and grabbing the attention of its viewers. Hiromura focused on making the words recognizable to both Japanese and non-Japanese speakers. Hiromura designed the type by looking at the meanings of each kanji letter and he made these changes with the mindset of “The

most important thing to achieve is not expression but to find out essence. I want to continue thinking about the relationship between information and people.”

Sources

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