Minimalism In Typography And Graphic Design

In the 1960s, New York in the United States emerged as the centre of the international art scene, overtaking the devastated European market after World War II. It began to present works with the characteristics of simple, geometric form but without artistic content. Minimalist such as Donald Judd, Robert Morris, Dan Flavin, and Frank Stella tried in artistic and incorporated minimalism into the mainstream of the art market, have expanded it theoretically also with criticism. Those artists presented the art of minimalism to the public, which exposing the media and materials as it was. Those works existed not as to express the artist's main views and ideologies but as an object in itself (Baker 27).

Frank Stella contended 'My paintings are based on the fact that they are nothing excepting visible on the canvas. In practice, it is an object.' and highlighting the physical nature of minimalism (Sandler 70). One of his works simply listed the lines consecutively, and nothing else expressed on the canvas. Also, it is not an ordinary square-shaped canvas. Frank Stella is significantly simplified the painting's process to display a clear vision of the appearance of the painting. Besides, he specifically described on the painting a new convention called 'Shaped Canvas', complicating and refining the relationship between the surface pattern of canvas and its appearance (Baker 39). He removed the unnecessary part of the canvas so that the striped pattern penetrated the negative space of the canvas, and consequently combined the painting into one object consolidated with the wall.

Karl Andre, a sculptor of the same period, argued: 'Stella realized that why he should do paint the stripe in his artworks because he investigated to express his work only with geometric patterns. Therefore, there is no symbol in his painting. His stripes are the way the brush passes over the canvas and these paths lead only to paintings.' (Gablik 247). Connecting to Andre's argument, It could be considered that Minimalism has the personality of an object with minimal content outsidethe realm of sculpture or painting (Baker 16).

These days, minimal art is closely related to design. The 'Internationalist style' which was spread from Bauhaus, Germany, to Switzerland and the U.S., has this minimalist attribute. Designers recognized that excluding decoration and emphasizing function works as an efficient and rational system. Also actively using typography and architecture made minimalism design become mainstream and emerged the word 'Back to Basic' in the 1990s. The social phenomenon of minimalism, which seeks simplicity and brevity, was interpreted as a contrary phenomenon excessive consumption in the upper-class society. (Academy Edition London 9)

Marcel Duchamp presented a ready-made urinal in the name of 'Fountain' in 1917, which, unlike existing Academy art, did not reproduce a particular object as a form of goal, did not take an appeal to the audience, nor did it have a satirical meaning like pop art (Krauss 94) According to the expression of Ad Reinhardt, minimal art was 'non-target, non-recurrent, non-imaging, non-expressive, and non-subjective.' Richard Wollheim defined this as 'minimal art' by noting the attributes of minimal art. Through this, Minimalism has entered the history of modern art as one of the arts (Baker 83).

Minimalism has been linked to modern design, leading to a trend of 'minimal design.' The

Simple Life, a book that has been talked about all over Europe, spreads the word that the more complex modern society is the more simple approach it needs (Wagner 87). Due to the development of the mass media and the rapid confusion of values, modern society is facing a big turning point. As society becomes more complex and diverse, modern people's desire to escape from reality has increased, As a reaction to that public's interest in minimalism has risen sharply.Jan Tschichold, who is called the specialist of typography in the 20th century, was also within the influence of Bauhaus design. He specifically presented visual features in the book, such as 'the asymmetrical composition of typography, the use of white margins, the ablation of colour use and the use of sans serifs,' and emphasized that 'the typography of the new era should be simple and concise for readability.' (Tschichold 56) Philosophy of Bauhaus with formative elimination and simplicity was applied by Jan Tschichold to the practical realm of typography and had a great influence in the field of visual design.

Modern people are discarding unnecessary things, preferring simplicity, pursuing a simple life. Minimalism is made headlines and presenting a way of life for people. Brands such as Nordic-style IKEA which emphasized practicality and Japanese brands UNIQLO, MUJI have introduced reasonable designs and affordable household items without unnecessary elements, they are gaining enormous popularity in society. These examples show that minimalism has become a movement and trend that has been spotlighted in various fields of complex modern society, serves as a new and fresh stimulus for the uncertain contemporary situation.

Through many of the common examples used to talk about brands using simplicity in the modern era, it is hard to deny Apple is the most quoted brand. Apple is well known to accentuate that complex technology should be readily available to everyone (Isaacson 212-213). This presupposes the core concept of simplicity. Steve Jobs, the former head of Apple, was profoundly impressed by the neat and functional design philosophy of Germany's Bauhaus and made the design faithful to the essence and function of the product a key Apple philosophy. He maintained the neatness and simplicity of Apple's product design and said it should remain 'simple' from the way the company operates, from product design to public relations. This idea is shown vividly in Apple's famous slogan was 'One size fits all.' (Isaacson 212-213)

Apple also follows this simplicity within their logo. The early form of Apple's logo was truly complicated but reformed to the shape of an apple in 1977 and was also changed from a colourful rainbow to a simple white, emphasizing simplicity. Furthermore, Apple made a colour system, Snow White, applying it to all its products to form Apple's clean and simple own colours. From all of Apple's products, cases, products, charging adapters, cable colours, and earphones, have all been unified with Snow White, and pure white has become the colour scheme that connects most of the Apple products. As soon as Apple II computers with Snow White design appeared, it was lauded for their amazing design, and at that time, the design of all computers imitated Apple and changed to a similar shape and colour (Isaacson 617).

As another case, MUJI reflects the 'Aesthetics of Removal and Simplicity' from the brand name. MUJI is derived from the Japanese word for 'Mujirushi', which means 'No logo'. This is abbreviated to MUJI in English. MUJI demonstrates the philosophy of 'Emptiness' in advertising strategy (Hara 125). Masaaki Kanai the chairman of MUJI says that it is important to create a design that will satisfy as many people as possible, instead of reducing the individuality of the product. In other words, the philosophy of emptiness obtains 'addition' by 'subtraction' (Hara 130).

Likewise, MUJI’s advertising images are distancing themselves from fashion and do not use many words. The 'horizon' photo advertisements feature large and wide horizons without lengthy adverts. Hara Kenya who is a graphic designer in MUJI mentioned that there is nothing on the horizon, but there is everything. He described it as ‘Emptiness’ and expressed it as MUJI’s communication strategy to make it look empty as though an empty vessel without revealing a clear message (Hara 127-131). MUJI avoids the luxury of space and the importance of spaces on the original material (Hara 117). Sapporo store of MUJI renovated its old factory, and it becomes famous for recycling brick walls from part of its stores. At a branch of MUJI in Tenjin, Japan, mannequins were not deliberately used to convey the feeling of the material. The display highlighting the clothes themselves is also a new method that MUJI has tried In normal advertising communications, advertisers unilaterally send information, but MUJI shows empty messages and passes understanding and judgment on consumers.

Minimal brands are using simple vertical, horizontal lines, margins and white to express reducibility. Apple's Steve Jobs said, 'Simpleness is the ultimate sophistication.', while MUJI also set its brand concept as 'Emptiness'. These Days, contemporary brands are seeking an aspect of reducibility by minimalism and filling concepts and forms with basic elements.

To sum up, minimalism was derived from paintings and sculptures produced by American artists in the late 1960s with minimal forms and expressions. This tendency to minimize the aesthetic sense was named the new terminology called 'minimalism' and has an enormous influence on the design field.

Minimalism is the expression that maximizes the simplicity that modernism pursues. The minimal design emphasizes the 'pure' of the space itself. It is a unique expression, which emphasises simplicity in pursuit of the essence of things, is an approach that will be able to obtain an expressive and meaningful mystery that is static and ordered.

In other words, Minimal design gives a calm impression and stability to modern people in a busy and hectic society. It is an enormous appeal as vital energy that gives modern people the beauty without trimmings and be able to find themselves from simplicity.

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