

## **ANALYSIS OF WHAT MAKES A GENIUS BOOK COVER**

**Dina COLESNICENCO**

*Technical University of Moldova, Faculty of Printing and Textiles,  
Department of Printing and Design, DTP-191*

**Summary.** *This article is an analysis of what key-points are to be taken into account when creating a book cover, hence making it attractive to the public. Also, it is about the correlation of these points and how they complete each other.*

**Keywords:** *Immediacy, message, composition, simplicity, material.*

### **Introduction**

Being a student at the Department of Design and Printing, one of my big passions is visiting bookstores and wandering through them for hours, sometimes even without buying anything. One of the reasons for this is my desire of acquiring some new books for my collection, but another is because I am madly in love with book covers. After deciding what theme I would use for this presentation, I realized there's this habit I have of buying a title just for the sake of having a pretty cover in the room, and being a kid I wouldn't even care what the content was about. That says a lot about the necessity of addressing this topic. Consequently, I would like to carefully analyse what really makes a book cover genius, and how it has an immense effect on its sales.

### **Theoretical aspects**

A book cover is a protective covering used to bind together the pages of a book. It is sometimes referred to as a book jacket or dust jacket. The two main types of book covers known are paperback - flexible cover, and hardcover ones (as the name suggests).

### **The study**

#### **IMMEDIACY**

The first point I am going to speak about refers to the ability a book must have to attract possible buyers as fast as possible. You could say all this business focuses on immediacy, as it immediately tells the potential of the books' sales. Some publishing houses pay extra-money to acquire this ability, by having some bookstores place their titles in places where buyers are most likely to pass by, or by putting advertising banners at the entrance (good marketing technique for freshly printed titles). Some explain immediacy comes from how the cover looks like. In short, fresh, plain, and big letters are what attracts most attention when glancing at a bookshelf, and that is more than enough to think that you must buy it. Other details about composition and such are going to be discussed in other parts of the presentation.

#### **CLEAR MESSAGE**

Well, the title speaks for itself, but a book cover shouldn't beat around the bush. It must be clear what that book is and who wrote it, other words are to be omitted. A clear message is necessary even when speaking about the design itself. Although abstract covers are very popular nowadays, sometimes they may confuse the reader of what the content is about, hence making the design a useless obstacle. Even so, specialists say that illustrating a cover that mirrors the title too

much is no better than an over-detailed one. From that we get that sending a clear message from just the front of a book is quite difficult, and is a big challenge for beginner artists who focus only on uniqueness.

### **COMPOSITION**

To start with, composition rules are something a simple reader wouldn't even care about when acquiring a work: The jacket must look good and that is all. That is why bad book covers are noticed even by design amateurs, because they are just a big clump of useless details. Firstly, professionals in this domain study the importance of the focal point or the place which attracts most attention. The easiest way to form a focal point is to have a big detail on the image, and it is mostly done with the use of letters. Another rule is the use of colors in the background and understanding how they contrast with the letters in front. Some publishers do not risk in creating compositions, thus creating collections that look the same. That is not necessarily a bad technique, because if that publisher prints for a longer time, it easily recognized by the public. If I were to explain, that is another way of creating immediacy. On the other side, best-paid designers do not hesitate in experimenting with ideas, because any way, their work looks amazing.

### **SIMPLICITY**

Being true to the title, there is little to say about this point. We can't say that covers consisting of only a background color and text is a bad one, since it is more intriguing to the reader. Over-detailed illustrations give the idea of being desperate and indecisive, and should be avoided by creators. Again, simplicity can be a strategy to avoid composition mistakes, but it never fails to attract people into wondering what that book could be about (a fun way to explore mystery novels).

### **MATERIAL**

This detail focuses more on the audience that collects books and is more likely to pay a bit more for favorite titles. A lot of people prefer paperback books because of their price being twice as little as for the hardcover ones. But for durability, the second one is a lot better. Book-maniacs (as some like to call them), are also keen on buying hardcover books because they offer a matte color, making the image clearer to the eye. Even if most people focus on the price, some publishers still preserve habits from the past and publish books with jackets made out of cloth. Most titles that get such treatment are new editions of popular old books. Covers made out of cloth, or even those decorated with special details, give out a more premium feel, making it not only a reading material, but also a pretty accessory.

### **THE GENIUS**

In conclusion I am going to state that a genius book cover is mix between the points mentioned earlier, because they do not go well without each other. When creating a jacket for a book, the creator has to put himself in the shoes of a possible buyer, thinking what would go best for something he would give money for. There are a look of brilliant creations that are unnoticed because of the lack of good cover design, and that's where the writer's potential goes in vain. Differing from the past, we, students at the design faculty, have to deal a lot with such problems, because daily there appear hundreds of editions done by professionals. Of course, I myself wouldn't buy an unattractive book when there are lots to choose from in the bookstore.

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