

GRAFIST and MSFAU the centre of graphic design application and research

Elif Kocabiyik Savasta

Department of Industrial Design, Faculty of Fine Arts and Design, İzmir University of Economics, İzmir, Turkey

The Grafist/Istanbul Graphic Design Week is an educational activity organized by the Graphic Design Department at Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University (MSFAU) with the collaboration of the Turkish Society of Graphic Designers (GMK). Having been organized annually since 1997, it celebrated its twentieth anniversary last year between 18 April and 18 May, not only with activities such as seminars, workshops and exhibitions, but also with the opening of MSFAU the Centre of Graphic Design Application and Research.

Ayşegül İzer, the Head of the Graphic Design Department at MSFAU and the Grafist Organizing Committee, sees the 'Department', the 'Grafist' and the 'Centre' as three pillars of values in their constitution: accessing and sharing knowledge; cooperating with each other; interdisciplinary work; and investment of time and effort into the graphic design field.¹

The Grafist events bring in graphic designers and students from all over the world through seminars, workshops and exhibitions, in which interactive sharing of work, evaluating and discussing design take place.² Initiated within a project called 'Icograda Regional Design Education Collaboration Programme' by Sadık Karamustafa, a well-known Turkish graphic designer and lecturer, and David Grossman, an environmental graphic designer and lecturer, the 1st Grafist İstanbul Design Week took place on 4–9 April 1997. Being the first and only example of its kind in Turkey, the primary motive behind this project/event was to facilitate meetings between designers, educators and students from neighbouring countries rather than the West, whose design activities were undoubtedly followed through the years. The aim was to raise the quality of graphic design education, and contribute to the experiences of design students and young professionals in building international relationships. In doing so, the Grafist organization became a model for future Icograda regional design events that are held several times a year across the world.³ Hence, the Grafist can be seen as a platform for the decentralization of graphic design education, and has developed into a respected international event through the years.

Besides organizing workshops, seminars and exhibitions, the Grafist conducted research projects and prepared publications on a different theme each year. Since 2014, a section called 'In Memoriam' is prepared for researching important personalities of Turkish graphic

design history, and since 2001 the Grafist events are documented in a book in Turkish and English.⁴

Within 20 years, a rich archive of graphic design has been compiled through the donations and contributions of Grafist guests and organizers that resulted in the foundation of MSFAU the Centre of Graphic Design Application and Research in 2014.⁵ The regulations of this research and application centre were promulgated in 2013 announcing its purpose as to research, analyse, introduce and archive within the field of graphic design and to found the centre for graphic design information and documentation. Its areas of activity can be summarized under the titles of: (1) archiving the works of Turkish graphic designers and the works accumulated at the Grafist events; (2) building up a digital archive beneficial to every researcher; (3) promoting graphic design through publications; (4) organizing symposiums, panels, workshops, seminars, travelling exhibitions; (5) collaborating with local authorities and non-governmental organizations to expand the field of graphic design research; (6) collaborating with international associations, archives and museums; and (7) becoming a centre for researchers from all around the world. The purpose and the areas of activity of MSFAU the Centre of Graphic Design Application and Research reflect the aims and works embodied within the Grafist events and transform them into an institute.⁶

The opening of MSFAU the Centre of Graphic Design Application and Research was held on 19 April 2016 with the exhibition called 'Archive, 20 Years of Grafist'. In total, 2200 posters and 300 packages from all around the world are exhibited in addition to the autographed books, correspondence, gifts, photographs and videos taken during Grafist activities, seminar



Figure 1. Grafist 20 'Crossing Frontiers ...' Prize Competition for Poster Design. *Image courtesy of the author.*

records, and students' works produced at the workshops. Well-known designers across the world contributed to Grafist events such as Fukuda, Massin, Piippo, Tartakover, Erkmen, Loesch, Momayez, Altıntaş, Jordan, Troxler, Orosz, Madrelle, Boom, Beeke, Fletcher, Arvanitis, Logvin and many others.⁷ Notable examples of hosted designer and student exhibitions include: The Korean Posters; Posters Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of Israel's Founding; Fax Posters Against Nuclear Trials; Contemporary Illustrations of Iran; the commemorative exhibition entitled 'Forget-me-not' for Alan Fletcher, Morteza Momayez and Shigeo Fukuda; posters for the theme of 'İstanbul as felt by ...' discovering the city beyond the ordinary descriptions; posters for the theme of 'Kalimera Mellon' ('Good Morning Future') saluting the Greek graphic designers and students; posters for 'Henryk Tomaszewski Centennial' for memorial; and Japanese Packages and Cigarette Packages of Atif Tuna.⁸ This year the theme of Grafist 20 was 'Crossing Frontiers ...', (see Figure 1) in which Workshops and Prize Competition for Poster Design was organized to commemorate Sadık Karamustafa



Figure 2. MSFAU the Centre of Graphic Design Application and Research. *Image courtesy of the author.*

for his seventieth birthday and fiftieth year in the profession, and a T-shirt Design Project was organized to speak up for the refugees themselves when they come across the interrogator while crossing the border.⁹

The archive at the MSFAU the Centre of Graphic Design Application and Research is rich in size and diversity reflecting the 20 years of Grafist events. The centre is preparing a digital archive within the categories of thematic, canonical, periodic, memorial, student posters for researchers from all around the world,¹⁰ and is ready to welcome individuals and groups via reservation at their place: Matara Sokak, No: 17, Cihangir, İstanbul (see Figure 2).

Notes

1. İzer, Ayşegül. "Foreword." In *Grafist 20: 20th İstanbul Graphic Design Week*, edited by Başak Ürkmez, 8-13. İstanbul: Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University Publications, 2016.
2. See "Grafist" http://www.grafist.org/index_en.html (accessed 4/07/2016).
3. See "Fifteen years with Grafist" by Sadık Karamustafa <http://www.ico-d.org/connect/features/post/382.php> (accessed 4/07/2016).
4. "Archive: Grafist's 20 Years." In *Grafist 20: 20th İstanbul Graphic Design Week*, edited by Başak Ürkmez, 224-311. İstanbul: Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University Publications, 2016.
5. "Archive: Grafist's 20 Years." In *Grafist 20: 20th İstanbul Graphic Design Week*, edited by Başak Ürkmez, 224-311. İstanbul: Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University Publications, 2016.
6. See "Yönetmelik [Regulations]" <http://grafistarsiv.com/yonetmelik/> (accessed 4/07/2016).
7. "Archive: Grafist's 20 Years." In *Grafist 20: 20th İstanbul Graphic Design Week*, edited by Başak Ürkmez, 224-311. İstanbul: Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University Publications, 2016.
8. "Archive: Grafist's 20 Years." In *Grafist 20: 20th İstanbul Graphic Design Week*, edited by Başak Ürkmez, 224-311. İstanbul: Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University Publications, 2016.
9. "Crossing Frontiers..." In *Grafist 20: 20th İstanbul Graphic Design Week*, edited by Başak Ürkmez, 418-453. İstanbul: Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University Publications, 2016.
10. See "Grafik Tasarım Uygulama ve Araştırma Merkezi [The Centre of Graphic Design Application and Research]" <http://grafistarsiv.com/> (accessed 4/07/2016).

Acknowledgement

Sinan Niyazioğlu, Head of MSFAU the Centre of Graphic Design Application and Research; and Lecturer at Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, the Graphic Design Department.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes on contributor

Elif Kocabıyık Savasta is Lecturer and Coordinator of Design Research and Graduation Thesis courses in the Department of Industrial Design at Izmir University of Economics. She works with anonymous/ everyday objects, with a specific interest in packages from an evolutionary perspective in design. She has a PhD in Industrial Product Design from İstanbul Technical University and MSc in Industrial Product Design from Izmir Institute of Technology.

FULL DETAILS OF THE EVENT UNDER REVIEW:

GRAFIST 20: 20th İstanbul Graphic Design Week 18 April–18 May 2016

Organization of Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University (MSFAU), Faculty of Fine Arts, Graphic Design Department with the collaboration of the Turkish Society of Graphic Designers (GMK)

Address: Meclis-i Mubusan Caddesi, Fındıklı 34427, İstanbul, Turkey

Website: http://www.grafist.org/index_en.html

Telephone: +90 212 2521600 / 4265 - 4266

Opening of Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University (MSFAU) the Centre of Graphic Design Application and Research 19 April 2016

Address: Matara Sokak, No: 17, Cihangir, Beyoğlu 34433, İstanbul, Turkey