



Received 23.01.2025 Revised 12.05.2025 Accepted 25.06.2025

UDC 737.3.012

DOI: 10.30857/2617-0272.2025.2.5

Design of a Ukrainian patriotic stamp to identify the state in the context of globalisation

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Abstract. In the period of search for state identification, the visual culture of postage stamps plays an important social and patriotic component in the representation of the state's features and historical events in the context of global geopolitics. The main goal of the study was to determine the synchronicity of social constructs, views, and collective perceptions of Ukrainians with the design of the Ukrainian patriotic stamp. The study used general scientific historiographical and special methods. The analysis of the social game Postcrossing showed that postage stamps and epistolary style are undergoing a substantial transformation and popularity within society and beyond, which contradicts the interpretation of the "archaic nature of postage stamps". It is established that public demand has had a qualitative impact on the dynamic development of stamp issuance in Ukraine. The announcement of competitions to select the optimal and relevant design of a postmark has confirmed the fairly stable positioning of this segment of graphic products as a tool of state-building visual communication. The dynamics of interest and relevance of the postage stamp design are reflected in the implementation of a number of interesting and highly artistic pieces, including the diploma works of students of the Department of Design and Architecture Fundamentals of Lviv Polytechnic National University. The design projects demonstrated that in this type of visual culture, it is important to consider three main components: function, with its specific standards and requirements, theme, and the search for an appropriate and clearly defined figurative and stylistic language. If these segments are accounted for in the design of postage stamps, they will not only serve as a state mark but also contribute to the formation of a holistic identity of Ukraine adapted to the global space

Keywords: postmark; postcrossing; visual culture; global society; design project; identity

INTRODUCTION

The role of the postage stamp as an element of visual communication reflects the processes of state-building and social transformation, which is relevant given

the need to form a national identity, preserve historical memory, and represent cultural codes in the global information space. A more differentiated study of foreign

Suggested Citation:

Radomska, V., Ponkalo, S., & Makar, M. (2025). Design of a Ukrainian patriotic stamp to identify the state in the context of globalisation. *Art and Design*, 8(2), 54-64. doi: 10.30857/2617-0272.2025.2.5.

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publications has shown that the narrow subject of this study is indirectly present, but not overly emphasised. For the most part, quite interesting publications and editions were found that demonstrate the current development, trends, and stylistic and technical aspects of the ongoing development of the postage stamp as an integral part of fine arts and crafts and an object of contemporary design. In his book, R.L. Scott (2025) explored the evolution of postage stamp design in the 21st century, with a focus on innovative approaches and technologies. Stamp magazine reviews (2024) provided the latest news and analysis of stamp issues from around the world, including interviews with designers and reviews of new series. In the book by E. Tran (2025), the materials of the site Australian postal history (n.d.) presented a study on the impact of digital technologies on the design and production of modern postage stamps and their role in the digital society.

H. Nakamura (2025) examined current trends in stamp design, including the use of new materials and interactive elements. The most extensive investigation of the issue of postage stamps as an important identifier of statehood was conducted by H. Hoyo (2010) in a large monographic paper on the philosophical-aesthetic and political-ideological function of postage stamps. In particular, the category of understanding and perception is considered – why and how postage stamps should be viewed. The patriotic content of the Ukrainian postage stamp, with a complex search for the national context, is widely discussed in the collective monograph by O.V. Potylchak *et al.* (2021). The modern challenges of designing patriotic design products during the period of the full-scale war in Ukraine, 2022-2025, are addressed by V. Radomska & S. Ponkalo (2023). M. Makar & V. Savka (2023), using the created social construct, attempted to create a certain social pattern to trace how traditional and modern elements characteristic of pop culture are combined in the graphics and content of a postage stamp.

Several Ukrainian researchers (Bokareva, 2007; Orekhova, 2020; Potylchak, 2021) analysed the visual and content features, utilitarian aspects of postage stamps, and their importance as one of the forms of state identification. Recently, international authors have paid considerable attention to modern postage stamps, especially those that reflect events in Ukraine and support from the international community. In particular, the publication of I. Krupnyk (2022) covered in detail the issues of stamps of 11 countries, which have created at least 44 types of stamps with a total circulation of 4 million copies since the beginning of the full-scale war. These stamps, dedicated to the Ukrainian theme, have become symbols of solidarity and support. In June 2023, the stamp “Russian Warship, Go...”, issued by Ukrposhta (n.d.), was recognised as the best in the world according to the “World Post & Parcel Awards 2023”. This stamp was written about by such international

media as CNN, The Guardian, The Times, The Washington Post, and Bloomberg, it was an exhibit of the Smithsonian Postal Museum in Washington (Gordychuk, 2022). In addition, the catalogue was published in the USA, dedicated to the issues of Western Ukraine in the period 1918-1919. The author of this catalogue is I. Kuzych (2024), a well-known philatelist with over 450 publications. He collaborated with the editors of the R.L. Scott catalogues to review and expand the entries related to Ukraine. These publications and initiatives reflect the growing international interest in Ukrainian postage stamps and their role in the modern world.

The analysis of the source base of the study allowed strengthening the statement about the relevance and popularity of the postage stamp, which acts as a relay and identifier of Ukrainian culture. Similarly, Ukrainian users react to the design of postage stamps of other countries, assessing the theme, colour palette, graphics, and stylistic features that reflect the differences of one country from another. National messages in stamps form analytical categories.

The visual and content of this graphic product is largely becoming an important identifier and image of state identity, which distinguishes a certain historical and cultural originality against the background of the rapid process of socio-globalisation. The purpose of the study was to substantiate a generative and competitive approach to the design of Ukrainian postage stamps as a form of visual communication, based on progressive methods of transformation and interpretation of authentic meanings and serving as a means of promoting high visual culture.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study focused on the phenomenon of dynamic development and actualisation of stamp design in Ukraine. Therefore, the formation and selection of the methodological framework were based on the use of atypical methods for art history. The task of the study was approached through the paradigms of social constructivism and visual sociology, which emphasised the inherent specific image (design), the importance of graphic identification of a postage stamp, which reflected the state of society, its moods, and worldviews. The methodological basis of the work was the historical and art historical approach and sociological content analysis of visual representations of postage stamps in the Ukrainian production of the early 21st century. The system of general scientific research methods involved the integrated application of art historical analysis, historiographical analysis, and static, comparative analysis of production and current trends in the design of modern patriotic postage stamps in Ukraine.

Two main stages were identified to achieve the goal and objectives of the study. The first stage is the formation of a brief historiographical background on Ukrainian stamp production, the state, features, and prospects

of the design of a modern patriotic stamp. The second stage includes a sociocultural analysis of the positioning of the postage stamp as an identity within society and on the geopolitical map of general globalisation. General scientific methods, including art history, history, and static, provided for the analysis of the design of the postage stamp in scientific sources. This approach involved the examination of historical aspects of the design of the stamp by referring to scientific literature and historical documents. Sociological content analysis of visual images of stamps is a quantitative method used to determine the social construction in the visual elements of postage stamps. It focuses on the analysis of visual content and its impact on society. Sociological analysis of statistical documents – the method involved analysing statistical data related to the production and use of brands, which allowed understanding the social aspects of brand design and consumption. During the study, the authors used historiographical material from scientific publications (Orekhova, 2019), materials, and static data from Internet resources (To the 100th anniversary of the first postage stamps of Ukraine, 2023; Contemporary stamps images, 2025). For analysis, to identify the social construct, a questionnaire was created in Google Forms, and more than 200 respondents of different age groups were interviewed. Histograms were created based on the results of the survey, conclusions and analysis of 20 posts with comments on images of Ukrainian postage stamps and 161 text comments embedded in the perception of the postage stamp design (Makar & Savka, 2023). When reporting on research involving human subjects, the authors state that it was conducted in accordance with The Declaration of Helsinki (2013). In the stage of forming the social construct, the statistics of the social game Postcrossing were analysed, which covers 209 countries with 804,532 users (Postcards connecting the world. Postcrossing, 2023). All data were obtained and tracked from the official Postcrossing website (Postcards connecting the world. Postcrossing, 2023).

The combination of an interdisciplinary base of methods arranged in a certain sequence allowed for an atypical review of the adaptive value and flexible possibilities of graphic design through postage stamps. The postage stamp, as a sign of the post office and a payment element, has gained atypical attention and influence as a visual applied segment of graphic products. It is the demand of the domestic consumer that positions the patriotic stamp as a bright marker of state identification on the world stage. The methodological base of the investigation of the sociological aspect allowed demonstrating and statically confirming that the postage stamp has become an object of social unity, a manifestation of an important patriotic component of citizens and artists, designers, and has repeatedly played the role of a very valuable auction lot of financial assistance to the military actions of the state of Ukraine.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In Ukraine, postmarks first appeared during the era of the establishment of the independent Ukrainian state in 1918. The creators of the designs for these postage miniatures were prominent graphic artists, Heorhiy Narbut and Antin Sereda. During the period of the Ukrainian People's Republic (UPR) and the Hetmanate, approximately 130 state-applied identifiers featuring the Ukrainian coat of arms, five postcards, one postal card, and one money transfer were produced (Gurtova, 2016; Orekhova, 2019; Potylchak *et al.*, 2021). However, for the next 70 years of the 20th century, Ukraine had no postmarks of its own, even though in 1947, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) became a member of the Universal Postal Union (Cherednychenko, 2015; Chyhrynets, 2023). Usually, Soviet postmarks were used, and some of them featured ideologically neutral Ukrainian themes (cities, cultural figures, art). It was only in 1992 that Ukraine began printing its own postmarks as an independent state (Fig. 1).



Figure 1. Samples of Ukrainian postmarks, Heorhiy Narbut, 1918, 1992

Source: First postal standard 1992 (n.d.)

In 1992, in independent Ukraine, the issuance of its own commemorative and thematic postmarks was resumed. A new period began for the national postmark and Ukrainian philately. A plethora of outstanding masters of artistic miniature emerged (Yurij Logvin, Oleksiy Shtanko, Oleksandr Ivakhnenko, Valeryy Yevtushenko, Oleg Snarsky, and others). The first postmarks, after the proclamation of Ukraine's independence, were dedicated to the 500th anniversary of Ukrainian Cossacks and the 100th anniversary of the first settlement of Ukrainians in Canada, with Oleksandr Ivakhnenko as their author (Baranevych, 1995). The Narbutian female portrait on the postmarks from the time of the UPR was again depicted on a widely used series of 8 postmarks in various colours and with different denominations (Fig. 1). The works of Ukrainian miniature

artists on postmarks received international recognition multiple times. Various themes and a wide range of graphic-identifying factors and means were covered in terms of thematic directions (Baranevych, 1995; Radomska & Holovata, 2020). A remarkable contribution to the development of Ukrainian postmark identification, particularly in depicting iconic figures of patriotic-national resistance, Ukrainian cultural and artistic figures, church leaders, ethnic culture, and traditions, belongs to the initiative of the Ukrainian Philatelic and Numismatic Society (UPNS) in Toronto, Canada, led by Vsevolod Sokolyk, a Ukrainian diaspora activist. In thematic context, two main groups are highlighted: the portrait group of prominent figures in the liberation movement and leading dignitaries of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, whose Ukraine-centric activities were antagonistic to the Soviet ideological regime (Chyhrynets, 2023). Currently, there is an evident interest in and revitalisation of postmark design in graphic design, as demonstrated by student design projects. The issues related to postmark design have become the subject of research and graphic developments in bachelor's and master's degree qualification work by Julia Kudlak, a student at the Department of Design and Art. Two series of postmarks were developed: Traditional Breast Decoration for the Zerno women's clothing brand and the Roksolana Shymchuk Ethno-Gallery, and a series called Ukrainian Ethnomotives (Fig. 2)



Figure 2. Yuliia Kudlak, 2016, 2018. Diploma project: Graphic development of a series of postage stamps, supervisor Violetta Radomska

Source: Archive of the department DOA IARD (2016; 2018)

Various methods of interpreting the ornament segment with contemporary graphic techniques have been applied. Graphic techniques like polygonisation

(Low Poly) and playing with colour channels, which are widely popular among designers, have become practical tools in graphic design. This method allows for creating large illusionary effects (Colour channels), colourful gradients, and overall vectorisation of images. Historiographic analysis indicates the need to create a contemporary postmark filled with content, featuring maximum aesthetic authorial graphic visualisation and artistic-technical compositional approaches, as well as an emotional component that would force it to attract attention not only as proof of postage payment but also as an artistic value of small-scale graphic work. In March 2022, less than a month after the start of the full-scale Russian aggression, Ukrposhta announced a competition for the creation of a postmark on the topic of the war on its Facebook page, which has 124,000 followers. Out of 500 submitted variants, Ukrposhta selected 20 sketches that were presented for voting (Fig. 3).



Figure 3. Ukrposhta, 2022. Sketches of the competitive selection of postage stamps “Russian ship go to #uy!” **Source:** according to materials of Ukrposhta (2022a), M. Makar & V. Savka (2023)

The numerous implementations of newly created brands testified to the prospects and needs of society in the creation of this segment of graphic products. Postage stamps are an effective element and one of the state-building means of reflecting the authenticity and depth of Ukrainian culture, historical reality, architectural and artistic heritage, prominent figures, and heroes of modern independence. Historiographical analysis confirms the need to create an actual brand, filled with content, with the most aesthetic author's graphic visualisation, artistic and technical compositional approaches, and with an emotional component that would make people pay attention to themselves again, both as a receipt for payment of postage and for the artistic value of a work of applied graphics of small forms.

This is evidenced by a number of factors that are subject to analytical statistics. The experience of public

voting at the stage of the draft development of stamps during the war, the results of the initial statistics, became an important scientific source and tool on the way to the implementation of the design project. Such an example was witnessed by Ukrposhta when it presented design sketches of a number of patriotic stamps for public discussion. In general, during the competition for the best sketch for the postage stamp “Good evening, we are from Ukraine!”, more than 1,500 works

were received. For the final vote, the expert council of “Ukrposhta” selected 5 authors’ works – different in content, style, and mood. As the press service of the competition stated, 834,000 people took part in the voting, more than 340,000 respondents chose the sketch composition with a tractor pulling a destroyed Russian tank, second place was taken by a sketch with Putin, and third with the leader of the Kalush band (Fig. 4) (Gordiychuk, 2022).



Figure 4. Competitive variants of draft proposals for the issue of the stamp “Good evening, we are from Ukraine”, 2022

Source: according to the materials of Ukrposhta (2022a)

Participants in the voting chose the sketch for the first postmark of the liberation war. Voting was conducted by pressing the like button and leaving a comment with the number of the chosen postmark. Ukrposhta immediately determined that all sketches should contain a distinctive and meaningful message (the defence of Zmiinyi Island), although an unusual one for public

communication: Russkiy voyennyy korabl', idi na#uy! (Makar & Savka, 2023). Analysing all the comments, including those that do not directly provide arguments for the choice, two consistent branches were identified: Commentators’ behaviour (Fig. 5a); Formation of the social construct (Fig. 5b). An online survey form was created for more than 200 respondents to create a social construct.

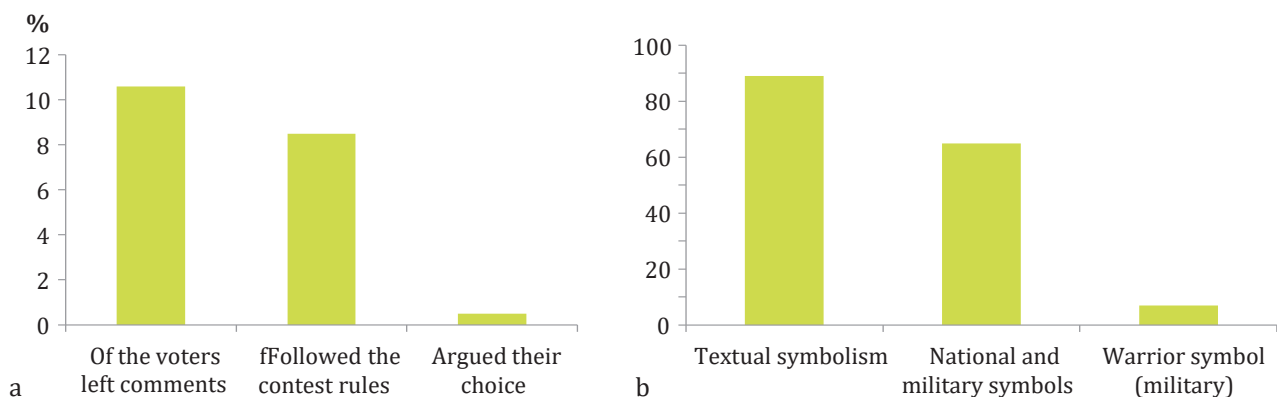


Figure 5. Components of a social construct

Note: a – commentators’ behaviour; b – formation of the social construct

Source: developed by M. Makar

The winning postmark and the argumentation for its choice provided confirmation that Ukrainians

showed respect for the cultural tradition embodied in the coat of arms and the colours of the flag (Fig. 6).



Figure 6. Ukrposhta, 2022.

Postmark No. 3 is the winner

Source: developed by the authors according to materials of Ukrposhta (2022a)

Obscene language on a state postmark faced criticism, but the essence of the message and the country's stance were conveyed through the characteristic gesture, which is entirely understandable without words and served as a compromise for participants in the contest who had different views on capturing and immortalising an obscene message. Differences in the formation of certain elements of the social construct indicate that the choice was made by people from different sociocultural backgrounds who still shared a completely unanimous view on the Russian-Ukrainian war. Thus, traditional and modern elements, typical of pop culture, are combined in the graphics and content of the postmark (Makar & Savka, 2023). The historical events and realities of Ukrainians have highlighted the need for patriotic thematic identification in the design of postmarks. The dynamic emergence of new symbols of heroic struggle has been captured and enshrined in a series of developments, representing an important stage in the modernisation of graphic products for the needs of Ukraine's postal service and philatelic enthusiasts. Modern postmarks from 2022 to 2023 serve as instant visual identifiers and retransmitters of relevant events, the achievements and resilience of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, social consciousness, courage, and the historical struggle of the Ukrainian state for independence and democratic values. The production of newly created postmarks in large numbers has demonstrated the prospects and societal needs for this segment of graphic products. Postmarks are an effective element and one of the state-building tools for reflecting the authenticity and depth of Ukrainian culture, historical reality, architectural and artistic heritage, prominent figures, and heroes of modern independence. The relevance and actualisation of issuing postmarks during the full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war in Ukraine have reached unprecedented levels. The terrifying realities, complex geopolitical struggles and victories, the courage and resilience of Ukrainian society, the heroic resistance of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, and the mobilisation of society in the establishment of Ukrainian statehood all become a source of inspiration

and the subject of project ideas for prominent graphic artists and designers who are consciously committed to their creative work. In 2023 a series of postmarks titled Unconquered Heroic Cities from the Ukrainian Liberation War of 2022-2023 became the thematic and visual foundation for the conceptual design of a postmark series for the diploma project of Anna Shyshuta (DS-42), a student at the Department of Applied Design of the Lviv Polytechnic National University. This demonstrates the dynamics and trends in the development of the applied segment in modern Ukrainian graphic design, particularly in the design of postmarks (Fig. 7).



Figure 7. Anna Shyshuta, Graphic design of the Unconquered Heroic Cities series of postage stamps, 2023 (diploma supervisor V. Radomska)
Source: Archive of the department DOA IARD (2023)

The statistics from the social game Postcrossing were analysed, which covers 209 countries with 804,532 users (Countries and territories in Postcrossing, n.d.). This game was created by Portuguese enthusiast Paulo Magalhães in 2005, who enjoyed receiving paper postcards. Over time, the game quickly attracted participants from other countries, where people eagerly checked their physical mailboxes, hoping to receive greetings, possibly from the other side of the world. The adrenaline of surprise and receiving a gift is the emotional foundation that motivates people to share a piece of themselves and eagerly receive something different and diverse. All data were obtained and monitored from the official Postcrossing website, where it was determined that Ukraine ranks 9th in terms of the number of users (Countries and territories in Postcrossing, n.d.), with 25,925 Ukrainians being postcrossers

(Ukraine in Postcrossing, n.d.). Consequently, postcards from Ukraine account for 2.2% of the total worldwide postcards, placing Ukraine among the 15 most active countries in correspondence, including Germany, the USA, Russia, the Netherlands, Finland, China, Taiwan, Belarus, the Czech Republic, Japan, Poland, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, France, and Canada (Statistics: Postcrossing in numbers, n.d.). These analytical conclusions are one of the indicators that Ukrainian postmarks actively visit other countries and create a visual presentation of Ukrainian state. With the help of postmarks, engaging in cultural dialogues and informing the world about Ukrainian resilience and the importance of breaking away from the colonising country is possible. The importance of postmarks is demonstrated by the design of postmarks from foreign countries on the Ukrposhta website, which thus spread messages of support for Ukraine and condemnation of the aggressor country in 2022-2023 (Fig. 8). In particular, as of 2023, more than 15 countries have joined this process: Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Austria, Croatia, Moldova, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Luxembourg, Spain, France, Canada, Slovakia, Portugal, and Italy.



Figure 8. Postage stamps from all over the world in support of Ukraine, 2023

Source: developed by the authors according to Ukrposhta (n.d.)

Based on sociological studies of the modern dynamics and revival of postage stamps, it is necessary to evaluate and provide arguments for the design features of postmarks, their importance, and artistic and design content. According to the authors, the popularity and large print runs of Ukrainian postage stamps do not always represent a high level of compositional and graphic individuality and a special approach to the creation of more complex and philosophically refined symbols, the culture of graphic or painterly design language. These are obvious factors because the dynamic events and phenomena, as well as the emotional and stressful state with which society and its artistic and design segment have been confronted, do not always enable a deep search for symbolism and individual graphic format.

An important objective factor is the lack of consistent experience in the development of this type of graphic product, which still represents functional design with its requirements and necessary elements. These difficulties are also encountered in student design projects, where a fascination with visual identity often marginalises the overall composition and readability of the finished product, the arrangement of necessary components – typographic elements, denominations, etc. The positioning of a postmark as a printed product is a fundamental aspect to consider. The technique of postmark production did not emerge out of nowhere; it evolved from the ancient printing tradition used for producing banknotes and state papers. Therefore, the graphic language in which the artist creates the original postmark design becomes crucial. During the design phase, the printing technique determines the possibilities for applying a specific graphic approach. When using line drawing, the artist must convey the outline of objects and their plastic form exclusively through a system of lines arranged next to each other or intersecting lines. Tone drawing enables the artist to use different gradations of shading, varying the lighting or darkening of individual areas of the drawing surface to achieve a wide range of shades, from black through all shades of grey to white with smooth transitions between them, resembling a photograph. Most modern postage releases are in colour, but this does not mean that linear or tonal gradation is not considered in the construction of the artistic design. The study by N. Pantus & N. Zolotarchuk (2023) analysed the impact of graphic design on printing processes, emphasising the importance of visual elements such as colour, form, and texture. These insights are highly relevant to the design of Ukrainian postage stamps, where thoughtful colour choices play a key role in shaping national identity and enhancing visual communication. It is precisely through the use of different tonal or linear possibilities of drawing that artistic postage miniatures become more expressive. The artist chose one or another of the mentioned execution techniques, accounting for the specified printing technique, which indirectly affects the style of the image. The author can also combine both techniques in one miniature, allowing for the possibility of combining and using different technical printing methods for the same postmark, capable of conveying both line and tonal drawings. Additionally, there is the option of using relief printing, which allows for creating a raised, embossed, three-dimensional image on paper. However, this technique of colourless printing is relatively rare and is usually used in combination with another printing method for postmark production. There is no doubt that with the development of the printing industry and technological processes, new technical methods, materials, and possibilities emerge, and even old, long-forgotten ones resurface. These require serious creative consideration and mastery by

artists. Combined printing of postmarks using various types of printing techniques has gained popularity both in global philately and in contemporary Ukraine. Therefore, the theoretical and practical experience, monitoring skills, and the application of analytical methods for sociological analysis demonstrated in this paper should be considered and applied in future design projects. In the future, it is important to focus on the analytical and constructive analysis of the artistic and design components of contemporary Ukrainian postmarks. Based on this analysis, vectors and thematic priorities for the design approach to creating high-quality samples of visual identification for postmarks of Independent Ukraine, testifying to the victory and triumph of the European state, should be determined.

The subject raised in this study conceptually coincides the most with the main discourses of the fundamental work of H. Hoyo (2010). The author believed that in the future, given the conclusions of the historiographical examination of analogues of postage stamps, preference will be given to postage stamps with more neutral and global themes – supranational, cosmopolitan content. Messages in stamps of this type advertise or refer to topics that are essentially universal or at least supranational, either by their own nature or by the way they are presented in the final version. In this sense, the visual content appeals to ideas of design, values, or development that are considered desirable or useful for people or wider regions, communities. This category includes stamps that named “humanity” literally or through symbols and are revealed with an internal universal character. For this typological characteristic: depictions of maps, globes, in particular, where political borders are erased; messages about human rights; problems of a universal scale, such as pollution or climate change; phenomena that promote certain values and attitudes as desirable and universal (friendship, tolerance, eco-communism); promotion of peace or issues of arms control (Hoyo, 2010). This category includes postage stamps dedicated to organisations or events that promote any aspect of supranational integration (political, humanitarian, cultural, sporting, technical), and messages where the issuing state supports, sponsors, or celebrates such values, events, or institutions. Stamp images that present certain aspects, persons, or things as having universal human value are also considered: for example, when ideals or achievements concern individuals, groups, or institutions, are depicted as “standing for” or benefiting humanity. This also applies to places, objects, environments, traditions or cultural features that are considered to be representative, part of the heritage, or even belonging to all humanity (for example, objects under the protection of UNESCO), but only as long as such a symbol is clearly indicated on the stamp. Surely, such a theme is a promising path of development. However, the authors of this study, operating on the real state of stamp printing

dynamics and data from Ukrainian authors (Bokareva, 2008; Gurtova, 2016; Potylchak, 2021), believe that such idealised themes do not yet lead to an important informative state-building identification of Ukrainian stamps. In the context of the modern reassessment of imperial narratives about history and ethnocultural context, the Ukrainian stamp should be a high-quality retranslator of extremely thoughtful visual material, which needs to be classified and qualitatively supplemented, relying on the reliability and authenticity, appropriate transformation and modern stylisation of the original source.

The development of stamp production in the Ukrainian SSR represented a “Ukrainian stamp”, which literally concerned the asymmetrical political relations between the centre of power and the “given territory” with certain distorted narratives about the cultural, ethnic or ideological superiority of the former. Most of such stamps explain the power hierarchy, demonstrate political symbolism, while the key figures are local representatives of the imperial power (rulers, party members, and cultural figures). Another group presented more subtle images related to symbols, natural features, and official culture (Bekhtir, 2000; Radomska & Holovata, 2020). The main part of the products belonged to the theme, where the visual image of the stamp demonstrates power, asserting its dominance over the territory or even a puppet state. Given these complex historical circumstances, the study expresses the standpoint that the correctly emphasised content of a postage stamp can influence the formation of the social construction of a renewed Ukrainian society in the perception of state positions. The postage stamp will become a relevant subject of modern design – an elegant miniature with a wide range of content and stylistic culture.

In the context of investigating Ukrainian postage stamps, it is important to note that statistical data, monitoring of issuance dynamics and thematic direction, as well as information about awards received at international competitions, are available in open sources (Ukrposhta, 2022b; Ukrposhta, n.d.; Alley of postage stamps, n.d.). However, the availability of only quantitative indicators and surface-level analysis does not provide a complete understanding of the artistic and visual specifics of postage stamps as a design object. Therefore, there is a growing need for systematic scientific research focused on stylistics, visual language, means of graphic expression, and aesthetic trends.

Each year, Ukrposhta, in cooperation with European postal administrations, participates in the issuance of postage stamps under the Europa programme. The 2022 theme of the programme was “Stories and myths”. Continued participation in this initiative is of strategic importance for Ukraine, as it enables the promotion of national culture, art, and creative talent on the international stage (Ukrposhta, 2022b). Ukrainian postage stamps have repeatedly received recognition in the

PostEurop competition. In 2019, the stamps themed “Birds” – “White stork” and “Eastern nightingale”, designed by N. Kohal, were awarded gold in the “Best postage stamp of Europe 2019 – collector’s choice” category. In 2020, the stamp “Postman Fedir Feketa”, themed “Ancient postal routes” and illustrated by I. Medvedovska, received silver in the “Best postage stamp of Europe 2020 – jury’s choice” category. In 2021, the stamp “Cry of the Carpathians” was awarded bronze (Ukrposhta, 2022b). These distinctions confirm the high artistic and cultural value of Ukrainian postage stamps within the European context.

CONCLUSIONS

The dynamic implementation of newly created postmarks confirmed the prospects and societal needs in this segment of graphic production. Postmarks constitute an effective element and one of the nation-building means to reflect the authenticity and depth of Ukrainian culture, historical reality, architectural and artistic heritage, prominent figures, and heroes of modern independence. On the path to solving the task of forming an objective state of development for Ukrainian postmark printing, an analysis of the social construct embedded in the design and visual culture of postmarks during Russia’s full-scale aggression against Ukraine became fundamental.

In the process of interpreting the importance of the design of Ukrainian patriotic postmarks in global society, the dynamics of design projects’ development, their static component, and the mechanism of competitive selection were analysed. The practical implementation of work on postage miniatures by design students from the Department of Design and Fundamentals of Architecture at the Lviv Polytechnic National University was also examined.

In the context of the development of all components of state identification, postage stamps are a necessary element. This created a permanent precedent for further scientific research into the development of Ukrainian stamp issuance and the prospects for creating postage stamps of Ukraine that are increasingly more relevant in design and aesthetic content context.

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In terms of prospects, the postage stamp may occupy a fairly substantial segment in the variety of fine art products of applied graphics in the design of higher educational institutions with specialised departments in the B2 Design speciality. The historiographical analysis demonstrated the need to create an up-to-date postage stamp, a smart digital postage stamp filled with meaning, with the most aesthetic author’s graphic visualisation and artistic and technical compositional approaches, as well as an emotional component that would ‘force’ attention not only as proof of postage, but also as an artistic value of a small-format work of applied graphics.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study, which presented postage stamp design in the context of a sociostatic component, is the result of interdisciplinary scientific observation. The authors are grateful to the specialists of the Department of Sociology and Social Work of the Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences of Lviv Polytechnic National University in the person of Associate Professor Viktor Savka, under whose guidance student Maria Makar carried out the social construct of modern stamp printing in Ukraine. Such quantitative analysis demonstrated a rapid demand for these products, which fundamentally actualises the applied function of postage stamp design for student projects.

The Department of Design and Fundamentals of Architecture of Lviv Polytechnic University expresses its gratitude to the Director General of Ukrposhta Ihor Smilyanskyi, who accepted for consideration the proposal of the diploma project of the series of stamps Unbreakable Heroic Cities (Anna Shishuta, bachelor of the DOA Department of the Institute of Architecture and Design of the National University Lviv Polytechnic, 2023).

FUNDING

None.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

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Дизайн української патріотичної поштової марки як ідентифікація держави у світовій глобалізації

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Анотація. У період пошуку державної ідентифікації візуальна культура поштових марок відіграє важливу соціально-патріотичну складову репрезентації особливостей держави та історичних подій у контексті глобальної геополітики. Основна мета дослідження – визначити синхронність соціальних конструктів, поглядів, колективних уявлень українців із дизайном української патріотичної марки. У дослідженні використовуються загальнонаукові історіографічні та спеціальні методи. Аналіз соціальної гри Postcrossing показав, що поштові марки та епістолярний стиль зазнають значної трансформації та популярності в суспільстві та за його межами, що суперечить трактуванню «архаїчності поштових марок». Встановлено, що суспільний попит якісно вплинув на динамічний розвиток випуску марок в Україні. Оголошення конкурсів на вибір оптимального та актуального дизайну поштової марки підтвердило досить стійке позиціонування цього сегменту графічної продукції як інструменту державотворчої візуальної комунікації. Динаміка інтересу та актуальності дизайну поштової марки відображена у виконанні низки високохудожніх робіт, зокрема дипломних робіт студентів кафедри дизайну та основ архітектури НУ «Львівська політехніка». Дизайн-проекти продемонстрували, що в цьому типі візуальної культури важливо враховувати три основні компоненти: функцію з її специфічними стандартами та вимогами, тему та пошук відповідної і чітко визначеної образної, стилістичної мови. За умови врахування цих сегментів у проектуванні поштових марок, вони виконуватимуть не лише функцію державного знака, а й сприятимуть формуванню цілісної айдентичності України, адаптованої до глобального простору

Ключові слова: поштовий знак; посткросинг; візуальна культура; глобальне суспільство; дизайн-проект; ідентичність