

## ESSENCE

BENEDEK BALÁS  
VISUAL IDENTITY OF HUNGARY  
POTENTIALS OF GRAPHIC DESIGN  
IN THE TRADITIONAL HUNGARIAN SYMBOLISM

Name  
Title of dissertation

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When I applied for DLA Education in 2004 I wanted to find the answer for the following question: would it be possible to consciously use and incorporate the rich shape and symbol system found in Hungarian culture into the modern visual communication of the 21st century.

Hungarian motives can be widely found in today's contemporary design (the most examples are probably found in fashion, clothing design). Besides some smaller works such graphic designs have not been carried out, although we have the possibility to communicate through our own visual mother-tongue.

While carrying out the research tremendous effort was put into the exploration of Hungarian culture, traditions, roots of folklore and the nature of cultural remains from the nation's settlement period. I have gone through the works of those artists and architects who already used such elements and incorporated these valuable cultural motives into their creations. Many examples were found outside of the country where inspired by their own culture the traditional symbols and motives are re-interpreted by the artists.

Hungary's visual identity was chosen for the task. The most important objective was to draw attention by its unique characteristics and further to create strong, positive image in the viewers' mind. Should this work properly then it shall generate such an effect that the positive aspects will be projected onto different fields and themes of Hungary. The motives and symbols chosen for the image are such that have been living with us for a long time, meanwhile carrying multi-level and varied meanings. My ultimate goal was to implement a visual 'world' which has a strong inner structure while creating an expressive image. The inner structure holds the imprint of the centuries' collective unconscious experience (the constant) while expressivity holds the marks of individual artistic (the variable).

The graphic designs created are meant to draw the attention to the tremendous amount of creative possibilities hidden in the motives of those objects found unused in the museums. Incorporation and re-interpretation of the ancient cultural images and motives means the cultivation and preservation of our traditions, ceremonies and further the enrichment of our current cultural life. With this work I was aiming to create a "frame" easily adaptable which clearly shows Hungary's cultural and natural treasures.