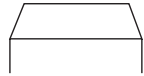


The image of objects

As graphic designers, our job is to convey information through various forms such as text, images, symbols, and animations. The process of creation is a kind of translation, transforming a message from one form to another. Symbols often represent images; for instance, when I see a symbol [↓], the corresponding Chinese name appears in my mind. Is it possible for symbols to become an independent language system that isn't merely a translation of objects? When we represent objects and space with symbols, graphics, and images, at what point does this representation shift from translation to an independent language system?



In my 100 iterations of work, I focused on an advertising poster depicting a family scene [↙]. Throughout this process, my translation object varied:

- (1) the image of poster, where I used different graphics to represent its proportional relationships;
- (2) The family scene, where I maintained the original characters but altered their backgrounds and positions;
- (3) The advertising message: "A family should possess something."

Despite knowing I was engaged in translation work, I often found it challenging to pinpoint exactly what I was translating.



1



2

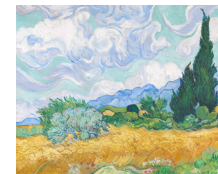


3

This confusion led me to work with the simplest form of information: symbols. Symbols typically translate or simplify something, implying that an object must exist before its symbol. However, my approach involved directly iterating common symbols, observing their changes, and altering their color composition [↓] and line angles [↓]—rather than considering symbols from the objects' perspective. The resulting new symbols were difficult to identify as the original objects. Instead, they established associations between symbols rather than between symbols and objects.

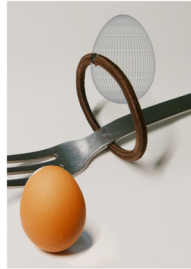


When a new form can't identify the original object, is the translation ineffective? Not all forms translate objects. The practice of focusing on color (as in Impressionism [↙]), without reproducing objects, views painting as an independent system rather than a translation of the physical world. Chinese is a language, English is a language, symbols can be a language (as in Xu Bing's work [↘]), and images of objects can also be a language.



Text explains itself by relying on other words to establish anchors. For example, "water" could mean someone needs water or water is overflowing—it's ambiguous (reminiscent of Wittgenstein's language

games). The same applies to images [↓]. This process resembles passing the parcel: we take information from image A and use it to understand image B.



DOOR

In my view, our daily speaking, writing, and drawing are all forms of translation. When we work, we first choose a medium. For instance, I'm currently using text to describe my work from the past six months—a series of images. Yet, while creating those images, I had specific ideas (words) in mind. Now I must decide whether to translate my work content (the images) or the ideas behind them.

Consider a bathroom icon: Does it represent text ("he," "she," or "they"), an image (a body), or behavior (sitting and standing)? Or is it part of a broader system of icons (water-related spaces versus those associated with fire or wind)?

Language must be self-explanatory; it's a set of rules, and establishing rules requires repetition. Translation is a "loose association" (Ryan Gander, 2002) that connects content across different forms. A form can serve as language or translation; both are valid. My aim is simply to clarify the work's purpose and scope.