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Design Education: Strategic Design Process and Publication Design on Thai Costume

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Abstract

Graphic Design students learn and practice design theories to articulate their creative ideas through design project management. In doing so they follow design methodology considering current design trends and technology to execute the project which includes; research, strategy, planning and final design. This helps the students to develop design communication and analytical skills for their career in creative and cultural industries. This study focuses on a publication design 'Thaipatra' - a Catalogue on Traditional Thai Costume. This publication is designed using digital technology, has a functional and cultural meaning. The objectives of the study are; to promote Thai costume and traditions; cultural heritage management and standardization of documents; and to customize information system which meet the administrative requirements. This project is to inspire young Thai generation influenced by globalization to look at Thai costume as a national heritage. It is an interdisciplinary approach to promote fashion of a culture through graphic design.

Keywords: *Design education, publication design, graphic design, fashion communication, Thai costume, cultural property, digital design, digital photography*

1. Introduction

Design is a complex activity, which involves needs of the consumer and the goals of the company, and provides design services. Design is a problem solving process with the use of strategic level management it can elevate the objective innovatively. Teacher's role in Design Education is transferring design knowledge to student, which encourages student to create a new design. The research in the field of Art, Design and Communication includes practice-based education. Graphic Design students learn design processes and methodologies in stages and apply them in theoretical studies in the areas such as cultural studies, art, and design history and media studies etc., and finally provide utilitarian and functional design solution to audience. To understand a design process, Graphic Design students introduced to a range of subjects, which deal with the various aspects of design and intended learning outcome planned through curriculum design. To know about research methods, synthesis and analysis of data collected subject taught is 'Information Collection & Analysis'; for Digital tools and Technology- Digital Design Tools Visual Media and Interactive Multimedia Design; and basic graphic design subjects such as Publication Design, Brand Identity Design, Information System Design, etc. Design Management is the course, which help students in understanding the entire design process right from conceptualization to commercialization, which incorporate knowledge about using design processes and thinking, technology, materials and processes, execution of job and business organization, etc. After learning these basic subjects, student take up a Graphic Design Project in which they go through the entire design process to provide complete design solution to the client. Most design students have limited experience of their ethnic groups as well other. There is a need that Graphic Design students must know the design process to communicate cultural information using different tools and technology.

The case study addresses Graphic Design Project on 'Thaipatra' a guide and a reference book for those who want to learn briefly about Thai National Costumes. This bilingual book written in Thai and English dedicated to the beautiful and expressive aspects of various Thai costumes: Thai Ruean Ton, Thai Chit Lada, Thai Amarin, Thai Borom Phiman, Thai Chakkri, Thai Dusit, Thai Chakkraphat and Thai Siwalai. These costumes are unique. However, due to lack of promotion and conservation, young Thai generation has not paid much attention to the same and need assistance in knowing what, when and how to wear their own national attires. This book introduces end user an illustrative and photographic catalogue that enables them to quickly asses the items and services from Thai Students Association in Pune (TSAP). Items selected from this catalogue available at TSAP and borrowed from the person-in-charge of TSAP. This bilingual catalogue describes step-by step the process of the basic Thai style wrapping techniques for anyone who is keen on knowing Thai culture. Though Thai costumes has a very long history to be learned and preserved, this project is exclusively focus upon the Thai attires in Rattanakosin period emphasizing most the dresses in the IX king reign (the current king).

The objectives of the study are; (1) to promote Thai costume and traditions; (2) cultural heritage management and documentation; (3) to customized information system to meet the administrative requirements to standardize documentation of TSAP.

The present paper organized as follows. In the next section, researcher presented review of literature conducted with systematic approach. In the third section, researcher discussed research design. Data collection instruments, procedure, and testing in detailed. In the fourth section, design process for catalogue design. Fifth section displays final visual designs. Sixth section is the outline of researcher's unique contribution of the present study.

2. Review of Literature

Researcher has conducted an exhaustive interdisciplinary systematic literature review suggested by Tranfield et al. (David Tranfield, 2003) through books, journals, and online sources.

Researcher classified literature as:

1. Design Education and Methodologies
2. Thai Costumes and trends and styles

2.1. Design Education and Methodologies

Thoring and Mueller think that design knowledge is different from other academic fields. Designer should always use innovative concepts to create designs for specific audience that fulfill relative and short-term needs of user (Thoring & Mueller, 2014). Art and design education encompasses a number of overlapping disciplines with increasingly blurred boundaries (Kennedy & Welch, 2008).

According to Rosenman and Gero human being is linked to social and technical environments and design connects both the environments. Understanding the concept and function help in unambiguous design processes (M.A Rosenmana, 1998).

Blumenfeld et al. described about project-based learning at it allows student to develop his or her own methods to solve design problem and gives freedom to design final output/artifact, which represent solution to the problem. The major role of teacher is to motivate student and enhance their cognitive skills. Teacher guide students in constructing the task and formulate project in a manageable way, supervise progress, give feedback, and finally evaluate the entire design process (Blumenfeld, Soloway, Marx, Krajcik, Guzdial, & Palincsar, 1191).

Many experts in the field of graphic design formulated the design process based upon principles of design to present client the best quality of work, which meets the objective. Most common steps in graphic design process are; Project Initiation, Research, Concept, and Design. 'Project Initiation' phase sets up basic project parameters. 'Research' phase deals with information collection, visualize and analyze which help in identifying design opportunities. 'Concept' stage deals with scope of project, concept exploration, and positioning business objective. In 'Design' phase, concepts are refined through mock ups and suggestions from clients to produce final visual design. 'Execution' phase ensures accuracy and functionality of the visual design by testing and design get ready for final use (Landa, 2012).

Randa and Baki observed that because of rapid growth in globalization and westernization, bilingual layout designs are becoming popular and it is a need of the reader, which influence the design industry to incorporate English language in layout system (Baki, 2013).

Haslam observed that generally three formats of books design are in use; they are portrait, landscape and square. Sizes of book and varies for every job. Practicality for easy reading, production and aesthetics are the few aspects need to think before finalizing format of the book to express author's ideas in design approach. Haslam stated "The format of the book determines the external proportions of the page; the grid determines the internal divisions of the page; and the layout determines the position of the elements" (Haslam, 2006, pp. 30, 42).

Due to the open-ended nature of most art and design outcomes, the curriculum tends to be fluid (Shreeve, Sims & Trowler, 2010, p.135). Subsequently, teaching and learning practices emphasize the development of a broad set of intellectual skills and competencies, which the Art and Design Subject Benchmark Statement lists as '...intellectual maturity, curiosity, personal innovations, risk-taking, independent enquiry, and effective management and planning skills' (Kennedy et. al, 2008, p. 9).

2.2. Thai Costume Culture

Thai costumes have a long history dating back to 500 BCE. Traditional fine weaving techniques is still in use and cotton and silk are popular material for making clothing. Cotton and silk clothing are in use for domestic and ceremonial functions. Most accepted dress for Thai woman is a tube skirt known as pha sin and for upper torso a blouse is added into traditional costume with wrapped up shawl.(Brief History Of Thai Traditional Dress). Various dynasties influenced clothing pattern of Thailand. Thai traditional costume classified into 3 categories; 1) Buddhist century 11-21 (458 – 1557) - Thai traditional costumes were different by cities and the ruler of each Thai historical periods which can be classified into six distinct periods of history Earlier (Buddhist century 11-21); 2) Early Rattanakosin era (1782 – 1940) - At the beginning of the Rattanakosin period, costume followed the styles of Ayutthaya (the previous Thai historic era). From the reign of King Rama V, western costume styles became more popular, with the influence of the European powers. Men wore shirts called 'Ratch patan', colorful 'Chongkraben' called 'pha mueng', and hats whenever outdoors. Women wore long blouses in the European style and carried a piece of cloth on one shoulder; 3) The King (IX) reign (1946 – present) - The formal Thai national costume of the reign of King Bhumibol Adulyadej (1946-present) was originated from the visit of His Majesty the King to Europe and America in 1960 with the HM Queen Sirikit. HM Queen Sirikit initiated the new traditional costume for formal wear considering the need to changes in traditional national Thai costumes.the Queen conducted a research into historical records of royal dresses and eight official designs were developed and used as the costume in formal ceremony. These eight costumes design for

woman are; Thai Ruean Ton, Thai Chit Lada, Thai Amarin, Thai Borom Phiman, Thai Siwalia, Thai Chakkri, Thai Dusit, and Thai Chakkraphat. Three costumes styles designed for men naming short-sleeve shirt, long sleeve shirt, and long-sleeve shirt with breechcloth (Ministry of Culture website (in Thai). Ministry of Culture). (Culture - Thai, 2015).

3. Research Design

Practice based research method suggested by Gray and Malins followed in this project (Gray & Malins, 2004, pp. 104, 108). In this ethnographic research, costumes and accessories available at TSAP transferred into digital form using photography as a tool. Nikon D3000, Nikon DX AF-S Nikkor 50mm 1:1.8G used for the same. Adobe Illustrator used for digital illustrations and for designing the page layouts of the catalogue Adobe InDesign used.

Steps followed in Research Design are:

3.1. Research Strategy

- Study Thai costumes history, classify information and gather information about variety in costume styles of different dynasties, study trends and their wrapping style. Conduct in depth study of Rattanakosin era (1782 – 1940).
- Investigate and collect information about all Thai costumes and accessories available with Thai student's association in Pune (TSAP)
- Content Generation - information about Thai National costumes and costumes developed by Her Majesty the Queen Sirikit. Gather information from Queen Textile museum and internet sources as well as some experts. Translate information available in Thai language to English.
- Competitor Study - In Royal Fashion: The Style of Queen Sirikit of Thailand, Vogue & The Metropolitan Museum of Art Costume Institute: Parties, Exhibitions, People, etc.

3.2. Design Strategy

- Concept Exploration and Development, Layout, Grid, Imagery, Colour, Typography, Binding Technique, Cover Page Design
- Information System Design - Defining code system for products showcased in catalogue
- Photo Shoots planning of costumes
- Image Presentation style studies -
 - a. *Classic/Traditional style* with thick margin with equal margin on 3 sides and a larger margin on one side, lots of white space, center alignment
 - b. *Contemporary/Bold style* with images with thin equal margin, louder, center alignment
 - c. *Dynamic/Energetic/Loud/Bold style* with full bleed images without white space
 - d. Finalization of concept, design development and detailing, prototype design
- Competitors study to know about fashion and historical photography, sizes of books, quality of paper, binding methods, page layout grids, cover jackets, etc.
- Finalizing book format
- Defining image presentation style

4. Design Process of Catalogue Designing

4.1. Mood Board Creation

Two types of mood boards created;

- to know more about photography references based upon keyword such as; Thainess, portrait photography, warm tone, wedding, tradition, and fashion to understand photographic styles, techniques, right angles, use of lenses, lighting, fashion photography, etc.
- to know about various methods and trends in photobook or coffee table books.

Coffee table books studied in details to be aware about their sizes and hard-covered format, use of content and inspiring photographs and illustrations with brief information, use of white space, experience of reader, price and most popular book formats.

4.2. Study of Paper, Paper Sizes, Paper Types, and Various Printing and Binding Techniques

Various types of printing techniques studied in respect to costing, time, and mass production. Paper types explored depending upon their finish e.g. coated, uncoated, gloss, dull, and matt finish. A variety of paper sizes examined to analyze original sheet and the fold before trimming and its effect on the size of a publication. A range of binding styles also studies along with their process and costing.

4.3. Layout Concept Exploration and Development

Three types of concept explored based on their format; portrait (book format), square format, landscape format as shown in Figure 1.

Concept 1 - Portrait Format; Concept 2 - Square Format;

Concept 3 - Landscape Format (Final Selected Format)

1. Thick Margin - It is a Classic/Traditional style. Normally it has equal margin on 3 side and a larger margin on one side with lots of white space and center alignment image (Chosen for the publication design)
2. Thin Equal Margin - It is Contemporary/Bold/Much louder presentation style than the previous one. It has equal margin on all sides and image is placed in the center of page.
3. Full Bleed Image - It is Dynamic/Energetic/Loud/Bold style in which image reaches until the bleed area and there is no white space (Chosen for the publication design).



Figure 4: Image Presentation Styles

4.6. Cultural Design Elements in Publication

Lai Prachamyam, the basic Thai art design inspiringly brought to create a symbol and icon for each section in the book.

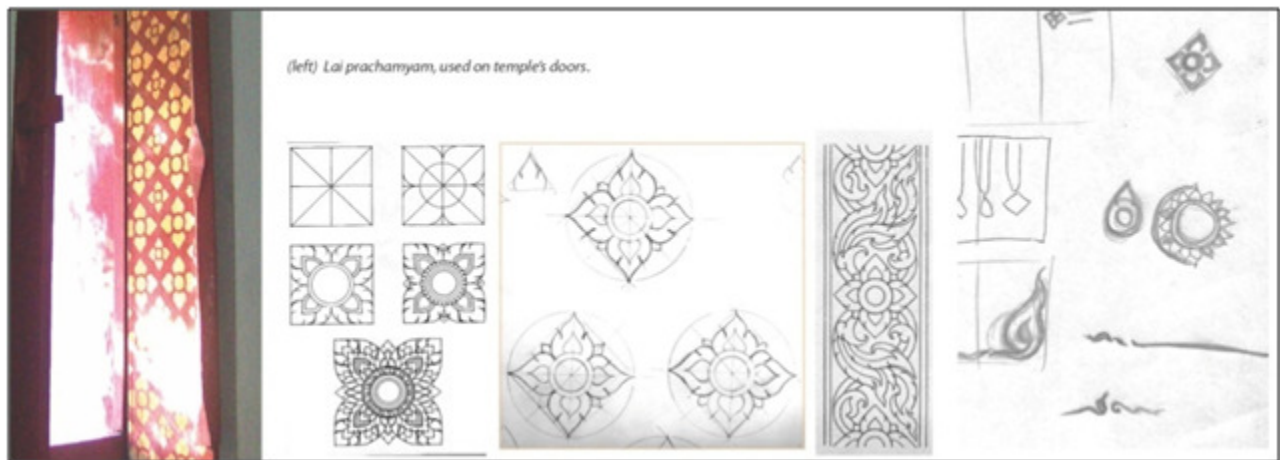


Figure 5: Exploration of basic Thai art as a design element for publication design

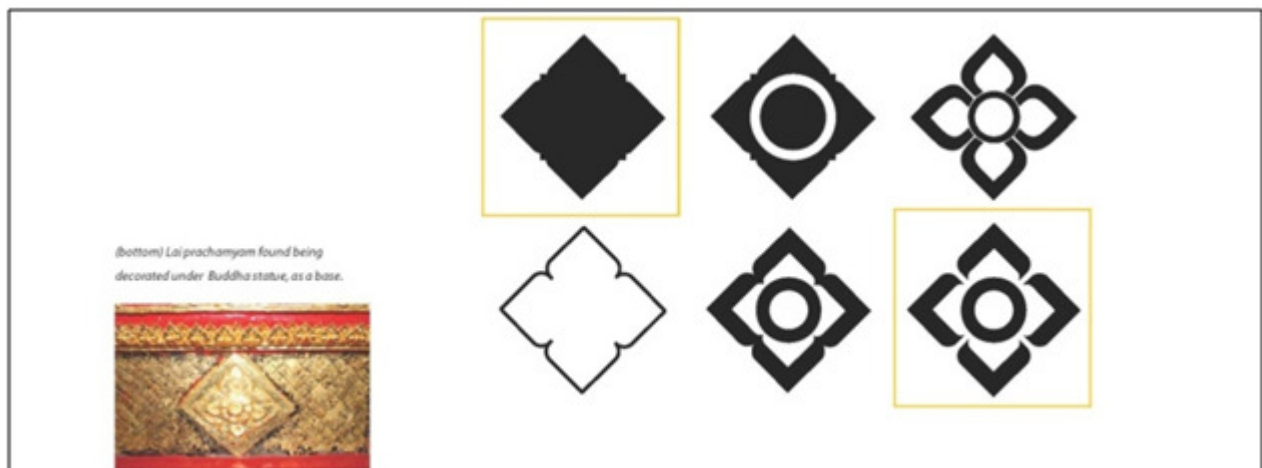


Figure 6: Digital Explorations of Thai Cultural Symbol Lai Prachamyam, decorated motif under Buddha statue

4.7. Various Digital Layout Explorations



Figure 7: Digital Explorations for Separator Page and Application of Cultural motif 'Lai Prachamyarm' in Design



Figure 8: Digital Layout Exploration with Full Bleed Image



Figure 9: Digital Layout Exploration for Spread with Images

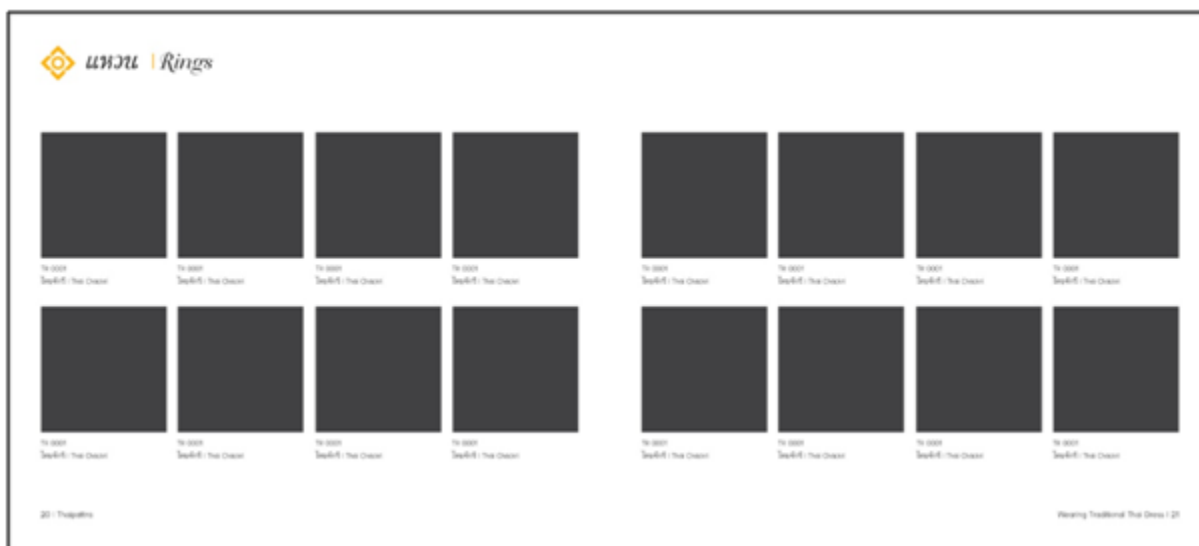


Figure 10: Digital Layout Exploration to display accessories

4.8. Defining Code System for Products Showcased in Catalogue

Costumes and accessories displayed in the catalogue classified in 3 categories and subcategories: -

- Dresses,
- Cloths, and
- Accessory

Each code given maximum 4 characters followed by 4 digits' code. See Figure 5 for more clarification.
e.g. DGC 0001

(D=Dress G=Region C=Central, DGC = a dress in central region category)

TNRT =	Thai Ruen Ton,	DRCE =	Thai Central Dress
TNRT =	Thai Ruen Ton	DRNO =	Thai Northern Dress
TNCL =	Thai Chitralada	DRNE =	Thai North-eastern Dress
TNAM =	Thai Amarin	DRSO =	Thai Southern Dress
TNBB =	Thai Borom Bhiman	DMEN =	Men's Dress
TNCK =	Thai Chackri	DWMN =	Woman's Dress
TNCP =	Thai Chakraphat	DCOS =	Other costumes
TNDS =	Thai Dusit	CLOT =	Thai Clothing
TNSW =	Thai Siwalai		
JHR =	Hair Accessories	JAK =	Anklets
JNL =	Necklaces		
JSC =	Shoulder Chain		
JBG =	Bracelets, Bangles		
JBL =	Belts		

Table 1

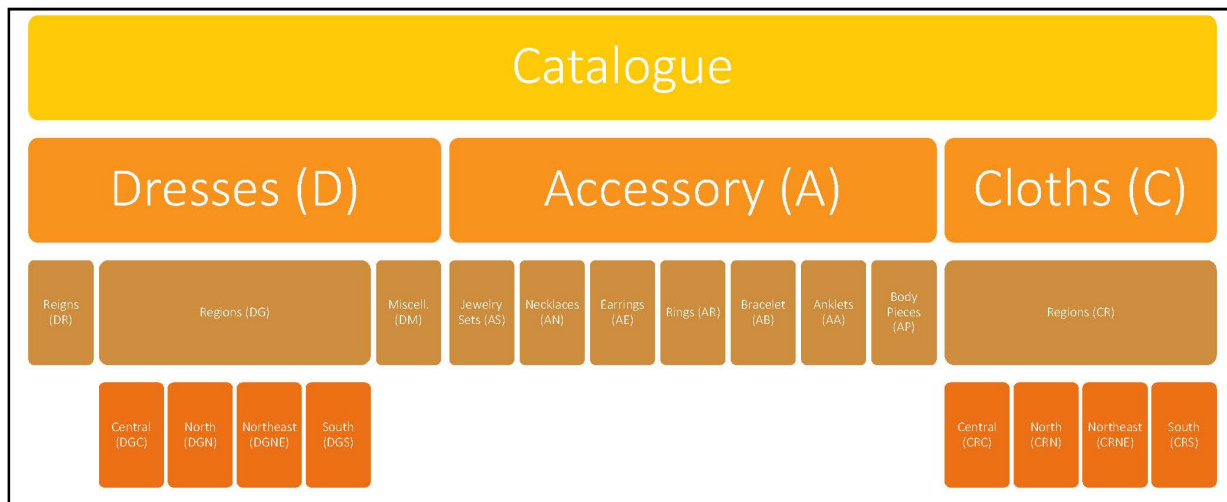


Figure 11: Defining Coding System for three types of products

4.9. Colour Scheme

In most of Thai art; painting, crafting, textiles, are usually imaged in a golden colour, which represents Thailand as a land of rich culture. Rice is the main agricultural product exported the colour of ear rice.



Figure 12: Colour Scheme for the Publication Design

4.10. Planning for Photo Shoot of Costumes and Accessories

Photo shoot divided into 2 categories;

- Studio Shoot (with mannequin used for catalogue) for Costumes and traditional dress - Clothing - Jewelry and accessory, etc.
- Outdoor Shoot (for the main content)

Featured and Exclusive costumes and dresses - Locations selected Pune University and Deccan College.

All images photographed and further edited in Adobe Photoshop/Lightroom software and converted to tiff files in CMYK format before inserting in the book. Images selected depending on layout and its presentation.

Photography Specification (Costumes Studio Shoot)

Camera: Canon 7D + 50mm	Setting: M mode, 1/125 s (constant), f/9-11	Light source: Monolight (Softbox)	Other materials: Seamless paper, Tripod, Mannequin, Infrared remote flash trigger Hanger stand, steamer (for clothes)
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Photography Specification (Jewelry Studio Shoot)

Camera: Canon 7D + 100mm	Setting: M mode, 1/100 s – 1/250, f/16-22	Light source: Continuous and light tent	Other materials: C-Stand, paper, Infrared remote flash trigger
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Photography Specification (Outdoor Shoot)

Camera: Nikon D3000 + 50mm f/1.8	Setting: M mode, f/1.8, Shutter speed variant	Light source: Sun light, Natural light	Other materials: none
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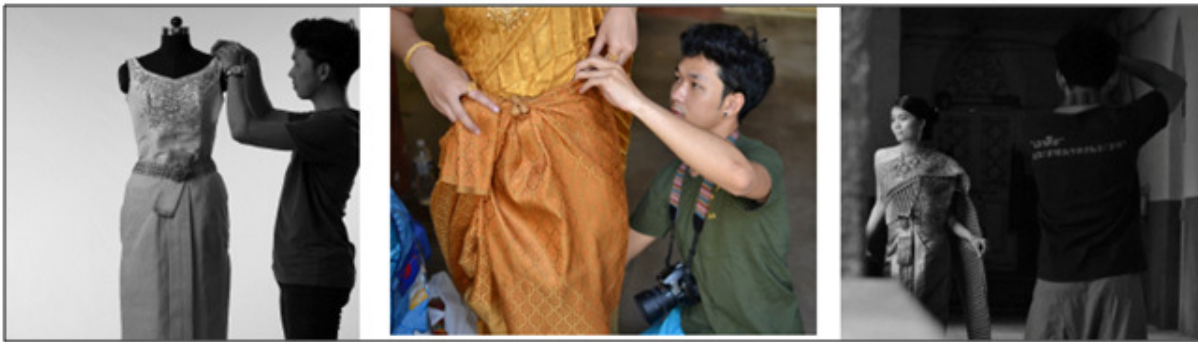


Figure 13: Indoor and Outdoor Photoshoot

4.11. Typography for Publication Design

Various typefaces explored which vary in styles and sizes. Final font selection done on the criterion based upon that the selected font should blend well with Thai and English script. Most of the typefaces considered were Thai typefaces, which have advantage of giving the similar appearances. Beautiful and elegant PSL Chalalai giving essence Thainess finally selected for the book title (Cover Page). Thai character are denser than the English characters which can be appropriate for title because it is intended that Thai to be primary language in the book. Later, Kodchiang UPC was used to deliver title in Thai language, having PSL Chalalai as a sub heading for English.



Figure 14: Typographical Exploration for Pages

4.12. Final Layout Structure of the Publication

In order to keep the consistency throughout the book, following format followed:
 Spread 1: Title/ brief introduction of particular costumes (Thai and English)/ caption for image (if any/ necessary)
 Spread 2: Image caption (Costumes Code/Name of costumes (Thai and English))

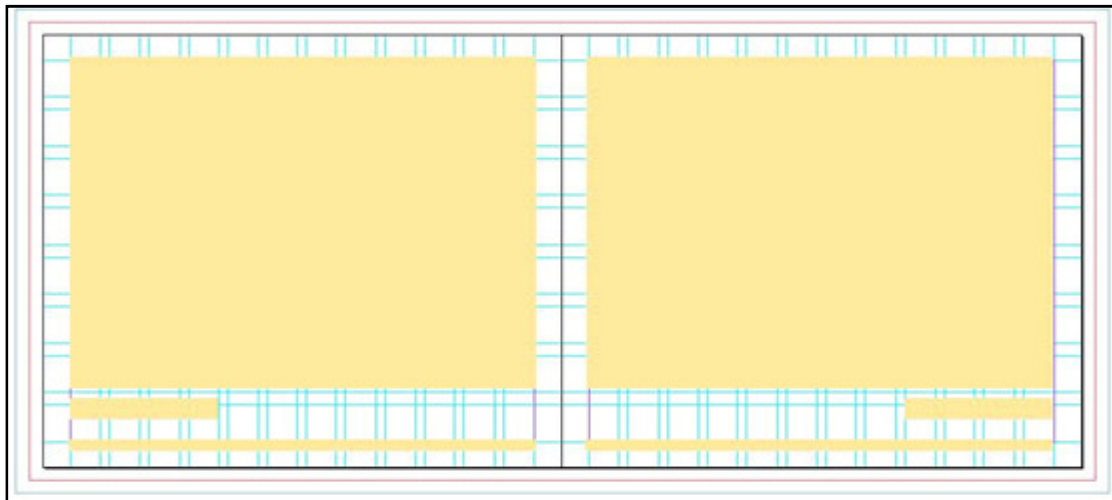


Figure 15: Grid System - Rows and Columns

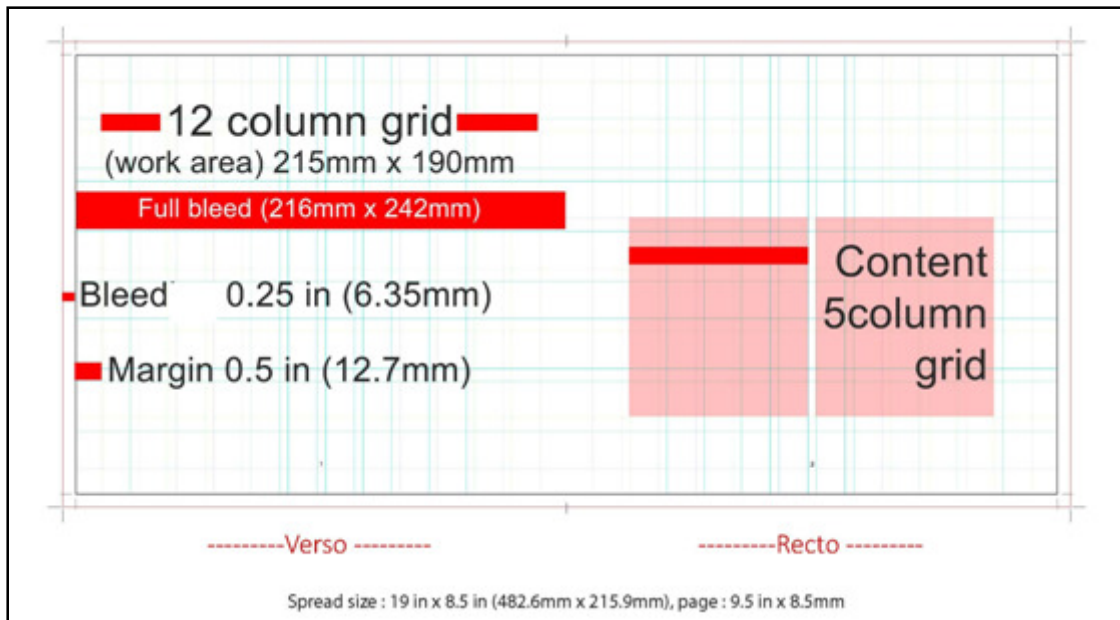


Figure 16: Grid System in Detail

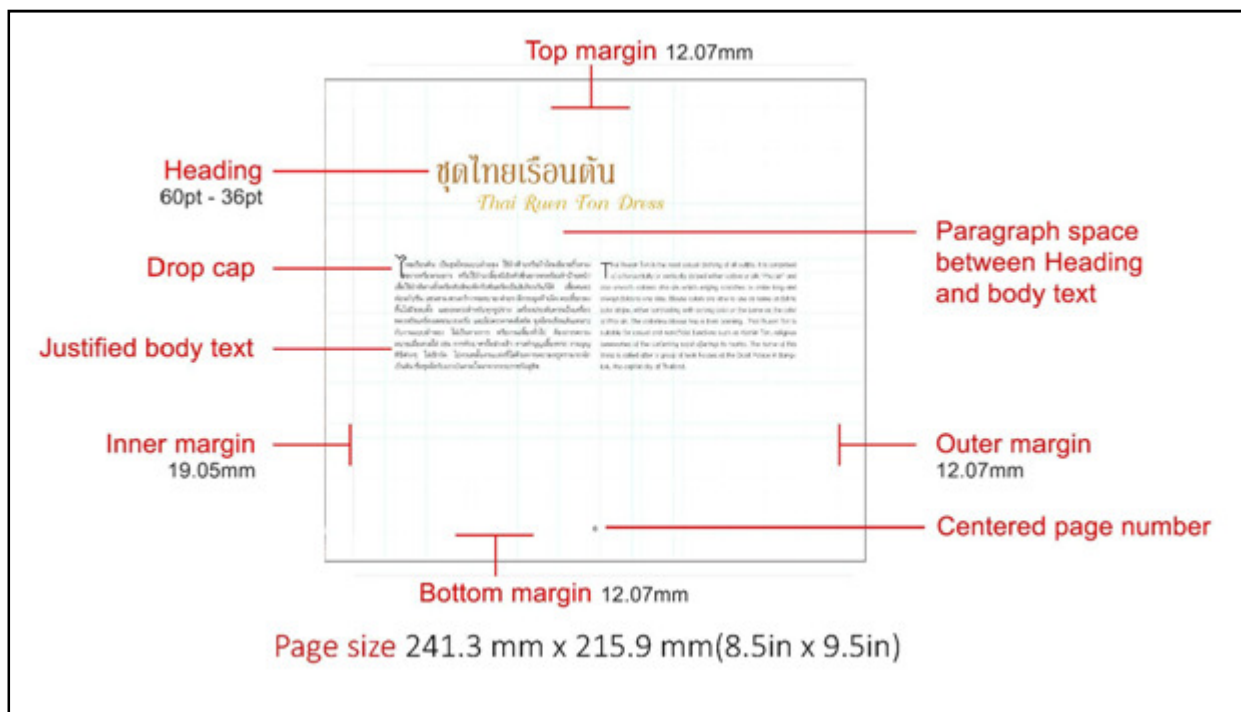


Figure 17: Grid System of Page Layout



Figure 18: Spread 1 - Left page with Full bleed image; Right page with Title, 2-column-article (occupied 4 column grid each), folio no.

5. Final Pages of Publication Design



Figure 19: Final Book Jacket Design, Printed on 170 GSM Art Paper



Figure 20: Cover Page with Inside Pages



Figure 21: Final Prototype - Inside Pages



Figure 22: Visual Instructions for - How to dress Thai Costume Chongkraben



Figure 23: Digitally Illustrated Instructions for Dressing in Colours



Figure 24: Outdoor Photography - Formal Thai National Costume



Figure 25: Indoor Photography - Thai Dresses



Figure 26: Indoor Photography – Accessories



Figure 27: Index Entry Page (Navigation System)

Finally, design testing done by uploading the catalogue on website issuu.com, a digital publishing platform. This platform provides reading experience to no. of readers across the globe. Reader can easily open and read the file (issuu.com, 2015).

6. Discussion and Conclusion

This practice based design project is an informative product catalogue to displays cultural property in the custody of Thai Students Association in Pune (TSAP) such as Thai national costumes, accessories and jewellery. This catalogue will provide very much convenience and ease in finding the costume and accessories required by a member of TSAP as well as maintaining inventory records for office bearers who are custodians of this cultural property at TSAP. This publication design project surely encourages young Thai generation staying in Pune, in not only preserving and reviving reminiscence of cultural heritage of Thai costumes but at the same time, create new design as their own.

This academic project brings a new approach to represents graphic design student's understanding and interpretation of 'Design Project Management' in cultural context. Project managed by following three key areas. These key areas of design process are design strategy, design planning and design execution.

In design strategy, areas focused are research, objective, client, target audience and experience design. Competitor study helped as a guideline to move forward with concept development.

While planning the design, various concepts explored, selected one developed and finalized. Landscape book format selected for final design because this is the most flexible format allowing more space and layout exploration with hard box case for extra protection. Two types image presentation style finalized to use in layout, one is Classic/Traditional style and other Dynamic/Energetic/Loud/Bold with full bleed images. Considering type of the book and photography styles, printing paper size finalized 14" x 20" with case binding technique. Size of one spread i.e. recto and verso occupies 8.5" x 19" paper size. Since publication design project considered as to encourage young Thai generation staying in Pune, in preserving and reviving reminiscence of cultural heritage of Thailand, Lai Prachamyarm, the basic Thai art design inspiringly brought to create a symbol and icon for each section in the book.

At design execution level final visual layouts created digitally. Photo shoots scheduled, done and edited photographs digitally using Adobe Photoshop software.

Publication divided into two basic categories, page architecture and content. Page architecture defined using grid, margin, variety in layouts according to the sections, various typographic styles for the text, etc. This brought consistency in the layout. Content fragmented in various sections according to the categories of the cultural property. Captions added to each photograph along with their item code to make them meaningful. Consistency in colour gave cohesive look for the publication. Page layouts done using Adobe In Design software.

Presentation style and overall design of the catalogue kept simple, informative, modern, trendy, visually appealing yet traditional and ethnic. Illustrations and imagery support provide self-assurance to the young Thai generation to wear these ethnic national costumes confidently. Considering westernized, globalized young audience studying abroad, English used as a second language along with Thai language in this publication design, thus it is a bilingual publication. Cultural symbols thoughtfully used to promote heritage. Customized informative system standardized by codifying cultural property. These codes help in administrating in issue and return of the cultural property.

Several fundamental principles of design used in this publication such as; effective use of space using grid structure, visual hierarchy in typography, emphasis in photography, simplicity and balance in layout design, drop cap as an entry point, content page, page no. and index entry as a navigation system, proximity in textual information, use of colour to create contrast which attracts reader's attention, appropriate use of white space especially in the 'Thai Dresses', 'Men's Dresses' section, etc. Current approach towards catalogue design is user centric, functional and utilitarian.

This project is an opportunity for a graphic design student to create and express innovative ideas beyond traditional and conventionally considered design. In this project creativity is seen parallel within academia and industry. Digital media and tools heavily influence Graphic Design Education and its application in 21st Century. To encourage graphic design students to work upon such interdisciplinary projects, introduction of research methods in curriculum is very essential with rigorous practice. While students undergoing training is basic graphic design subjects such as publication design, introduction of digital tools for layout design is the appropriate time to get quality output.

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