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Mash-up Poster Techniques for Movie Poster Design An Analytical and Practical Exploration of Mash-up Techniques

Eman Salah Elden Mohamed

Lecturer, Higher Institute of Applied Arts, 6th October City

Abstract

This study investigates the emerging trend of mash-up techniques in movie poster design, exploring its potential to foster visual creativity and innovation in both educational and professional contexts. Through a two-pronged approach, the research analyzes five student-designed mash-up posters created as part of a graphic design course and presents three original posters designed by the researcher, each merging an Egyptian film with a thematically resonant American counterpart. The analysis focuses on assessing the effectiveness of various mash-up techniques, the clarity of communication, visual hierarchy and impact, originality of concept, critical engagement, and understanding of source material demonstrated in both student and researcher-designed posters. Results reveal a spectrum of creative approaches, highlighting a need to guide students beyond technical proficiency towards a deeper understanding of visual rhetoric, cultural context, and thematic analysis to unlock the full potential of mash-up. The study concludes that mash-up, when approached thoughtfully, can serve as a powerful catalyst for innovative design solutions, critical commentary, and cross-cultural dialogue within the realm of visual communication. Therefore, integrating mash-up techniques within design curricula can empower students to develop sophisticated visual communication skills while fostering critical thinking and cultural awareness.

Keywords: Movie poster design, Mash-up, Visual communication, Graphic design, Intertextuality, Cultural references, Student work analysis, Pedagogy, Creativity, Innovation, Visual rhetoric.

Introduction:

Movie poster design is a creative art and a piece of marketing in itself, where a film is squeezed into one vision. With time, it has evolved accordingly with shifts in artistic styles and technology it has become a critical subject in graphic design.

The technique of mash-up, mixing the design elements of icons from various sources, has been quite popular in movie posters lately. While this technique mostly finds its representation in music and other mediums, the mixing of elements provides an exciting new dimension in the reimagining of cinematic content within

movie posters. By fusing iconic images and design elements, mash-up posters transgress traditional rules and bring out new kinds of meaning.

This research paper looks into mash-up techniques in movie poster design through two research studies: an analytical study of student works and an applied study of professionally designed posters. Grounded in the course "Designing Newspaper, Cinema, and Television Advertisements," in Higher Institute of Applied Arts - 6th of October, in which students have, at length, been instructed on mash-up principles, the investigation into chosen student posters can reveal how novice designers interpret and apply these techniques.

On a parallel note, an applied research case for this study is represented by the preparation of three original posters by the researcher himself in order to exemplify the application of the mash-up method in professional practice. Works from the student and professional sphere will be compared to explicate about the efficacy, the challenges, and the opportunities brought into play through the use of mashup techniques within the realms of the student and professional spheres. The objectives articulate that the results aim to inform the discourse on innovative design practices in today's graphic design.

This paper will first introduce the research problem and its significance, followed by the research objectives and hypotheses. Then, a comprehensive theoretical framework will be presented, laying the groundwork for the analysis of both student and researcher-designed posters. Finally, the results, discussion, and recommendations will be discussed,

highlighting the pedagogical and professional implications of employing mash-up techniques in movie poster design.

Research Problem:

While visually arresting, the efficacy of mash-up techniques in movie poster design remains underexplored in both education and professional practice. This research will analyze student and professional mash-up posters to assess the technique's effectiveness and value in graphic design. To see if such an approach, which relies on borrowed images and textual references, can effectively convey film genre, narrative and cultural nuances in the competitive landscape of film promotion?

Importance of the Research:

This research is crucial for advancing graphic design by exploring the largely unexamined mash-up technique in movie poster design. By challenging conventional practices, it offers new creative possibilities and provides valuable insights for educators. The study also bridges the gap between student experimentation and professional application, influencing both design education and industry standards.

Moreover, this research is directly relevant to the "Designing Newspaper, Cinema, and Television Advertisements" course at the Higher Institute of Applied Arts. By investigating the application of mash-up techniques in movie poster design, this study provides valuable insights into how students interpret and apply these techniques, ultimately contributing to the development of a more effective pedagogy for teaching visual communication in the digital age.

Furthermore, this research aims to contribute to the development of the

"Designing Newspaper, Cinema, and Television Advertisements" course by providing practical insights into the effective integration of mash-up techniques in movie poster design. By understanding the challenges students face in applying these techniques, educators can develop enhanced teaching strategies that focus on thematic analysis of films, understanding the principles of visual rhetoric, and employing visual metaphors and parody in a meaningful way. These insights will equip students with the necessary skills to create more innovative and impactful designs, reflecting a deeper understanding of the relationship between design and effective visual communication.

Research Objectives:

This research aims to:

- Explore the diverse ways in which mash-up techniques are employed in contemporary movie poster design.
- Analyze the effectiveness of student-created mash-up posters in conveying cinematic themes and engaging audiences.
- Evaluate the researcher's own application of mash-up techniques in designing professional-quality movie posters.
- Identify the pedagogical challenges and opportunities presented by teaching mash-up techniques in graphic design programs.
- Discuss the impact of mash-up designs on visual communication, cultural dialogue, and audience interpretation.

Research Hypotheses:

This study investigates the following propositions:

- Mash-up techniques, through strategic use of visual elements, can enhance the visual impact of movie posters.
- Analyzing student-created mash-up posters can provide insights into their understanding and application of these techniques, highlighting areas of strength and potential for improvement.
- The researcher's application of mash-up techniques aims to demonstrate the potential of this approach in creating sophisticated, layered, and conceptually rich movie posters.

Research Methodology:

This research will employ a dual methodology combining descriptive analytical and applied approaches.

• Descriptive Analytical Approach:

This will involve a detailed examination of five student-created mash-up posters. The analysis will focus on assessing their visual elements, creativity, and effectiveness in conveying cinematic themes. The aim is to understand how these techniques are interpreted and utilized in an educational context. These posters were selected from a pool of student works based on the following criteria:

1. **Diversity of Mash-up Techniques:** Posters showcasing a range of techniques (e.g., image compositing, substitution, recontextualization).
2. **Clarity of Concept:** Posters demonstrating a clear and understandable fusion of two films.

3. **Technical Execution:** Posters exhibiting a good understanding of design principles (e.g., composition, color, typography).

- **Applied Approach:** This will include the design of three original movie posters by the researcher using mash-up techniques. These posters will be evaluated to determine their professional quality, innovation, and impact. The applied approach seeks to demonstrate the practical application of mash-up methods and their effectiveness in a professional setting.

As this research is based on a qualitative case study, the analysis will be conducted descriptively and analytically, focusing on clarity of communication, visual hierarchy, originality of concept, and thematic coherence between the chosen films, rather than relying on quantitative measurements.

Theoretical Framework:

The Rise of Mash-Up Culture:

Mash-up posters, while originating within pop culture over two decades ago, have gained significant traction with the rise of social media. This accessibility has provided a platform for designers of all levels to showcase their creativity and engage in novel forms of film appreciation.

Defining Mash-Up Posters:

A mash-up poster seamlessly blends elements from two or more distinct films into a single, innovative design. This juxtaposition, often involving contrasting genres or themes, creates an unexpected and engaging visual dialogue for the viewer.

Design Challenges:

Designing successful mash-up posters requires more than simply merging images.

Where various challenges must be overcome, including:

- **Conceptual Synthesis:** Integrating disparate themes and ideas into a cohesive visual narrative.
- **Thematic Understanding:** Demonstrating a nuanced understanding of the source films' themes to ensure a logical and innovative fusion.
- **Mastery of Design Principles:** Applying fundamental graphic design principles—typography, composition, color theory—to achieve a visually compelling and communicative poster.
- **Linguistic Creativity:** Crafting a new title that cleverly merges the names or key phrases associated with the source films.

Typologies of Mash-Up Posters:

Mash-up posters can be categorized into three main types:

- **Cross-Over Posters:** Merge films within the same genre, creating a blend of familiar tropes and visual styles.
- **Parody Posters:** Combine disparate films to achieve a humorous or satirical effect, often subverting expectations and playing on genre conventions.
- **Fan-Art Posters:** Reimagine existing movie posters with a fresh perspective, showcasing a unique artistic interpretation of the source material.

Visual Rhetoric in Mashup Posters:

Visual rhetoric in movie poster mash-ups goes beyond simple semiotic analysis to engage audiences with visual metaphors, irony, parody, and juxtaposition. Like the rhetorical power of images, metaphors can be used for the fusion of two cinematic worlds into completely new narratives,

which make more profound comments. For example, a cross between "Jaws" and "The Social Network" metaphorically links primitive fears to contemporary anxiety, fittingly sui generis for the novelty of using conceptual blending in visual communication. Irony and parody also play important roles herein, as they direct attention to the absurdities and contradictions involved, part and parcel with their sources, through postmodern intertextuality. Juxtaposition is a strategic contrast of cinematic elements that creates a dynamic visual dialogue, one that challenges conventional readings and solicits a more complex viewer engagement (3: p 65).

The Historical Context of Movie Posters:

In understanding the techniques for mashup, a discussion on the history of movie poster design is quite relevant. The earliest posters were illustrative and full of text. The stylization that brought visual appeal to the movies came with the rise of Hollywood in the 1930s. After which, art movements, such as Pop Art and Surrealism, followed, thereby inflicting new attitudes on poster design and allowing the pioneering of new printing techniques and photographic processes (4: p 51). It was only then that the digital revolution created a gateway for new and abundant creatives, threatened, however, to close the chapter on handmade artistry. And so, mashup posters, feed off and twist such established conventions to thereby create the most delectable as well as innovative designs (5: p 9).

Essential Elements of Movie Poster Design

Designing an effective movie poster is a multifaceted process that demands a deep understanding of visual communication and marketing principles. A well-crafted movie poster should not only capture the attention of the target audience but also pique their curiosity and compel them to watch the film. This can be achieved by incorporating several key elements (6: p1):

- **Title:** As the most prominent textual element, the title should be clear, concise, and intriguing. The typography should reflect the genre and tone of the film.
- **Imagery:** Visuals, whether they feature characters, scenes from the film, or symbolic representations, are crucial for conveying the film's atmosphere and genre. They provide a glimpse into the narrative and evoke specific emotions in the viewer.
- **Color Palette:** Colors have a profound psychological impact and can influence a viewer's perception of a film. Choosing a color scheme that aligns with the film's genre and target audience is essential for creating the desired emotional response.
- **Composition:** A well-balanced and visually appealing composition guides the viewer's eye through the poster and highlights key elements. Techniques such as the rule of thirds, leading lines, and negative space can be employed to create a sense of balance and visual hierarchy.
- **Tagline:** A memorable and impactful tagline can encapsulate the essence of the film and provide a lasting

impression on the viewer. It should be short, catchy, and hint at the film's narrative or themes.

The Conceptual School and its Influence on Movie Poster Design

While mastery of technical design elements is crucial, the conceptual school of graphic design emphasizes the importance of conveying a strong concept or message through visual elements. This approach goes beyond simply creating aesthetically pleasing designs and focuses on communicating an idea or evoking a specific emotional response from the viewer ^(7: p1).

In the context of movie poster design, the conceptual school encourages designers to move beyond literal representations of the film and delve into the realm of metaphor, symbolism, and visual storytelling. This can be achieved by:

- **Developing a Central Concept:** Identifying a core idea or theme that encapsulates the essence of the film and translating it into a visually compelling representation.
- **Employing Visual Metaphors:** Using imagery and symbolism to create layered meanings and encourage viewers to make connections between different elements.
- **Evoking Emotions:** Choosing colors, typography, and imagery that elicit specific emotional responses from the audience, aligning with the film's overall tone and genre.

By embracing the principles of the conceptual school, designers can elevate movie posters from mere promotional materials to thought-provoking pieces of

visual communication that engage viewers on a deeper level.

Visual Communication Theory:

These posters are strongly underscored with visual communications theory, specifically that concerning visual literacy, putting an emphasis on viewers' abilities to make sense of visual information using learned cultural codes ^(8: p 59). Such posters are informed by audience members' abilities to recognize familiar imagery and relate this information to associations and inferences based on prior knowledge. This also applies to cognitive load theory, as well-executed mashups could reduce the level of cognitive strain by building on schemas already in place within the audience and making such complex visual information much more accessible ^(9: p 138). Furthermore, gestalt principles are helpful in establishing visually meaningful and unified compositions. In this case, they ensure that all different elements in mash-up posters cohere meaningfully to create unified wholes ^(10: p 11, 11: p 4).

Creativity and Innovation in Design:

One of the most brilliant examples of divergent thinking, mashup techniques in movie poster design allow a designer to shift in any creative direction as possible with the purpose of coming up with original solutions. At the same time, by taking different visual elements from various sources, designers combine them into unique and powerful results that break conventional boundaries of design ^(12: p 1). Combinatory creativity—which involves taking existing ideas and remaking them in new ways—further heightens the creative potential of mashups, providing unexpected juxtapositions and recontextualization of

cultural artifacts ^(13: p ٢١٠). This approach lends itself to the basic concept of cultural bricolage, in which designers borrow pre-existing materials to come up with new visual expressions that mix tradition with innovation ^(14: p 53).

Educational Pedagogy in Graphic Design:

Constructivist learning theory supports the pedagogical value of tasks like mashup posters within graphic design education. The theory suggests that knowledge is actively built by students through interaction with their environment, so projects such as this are ideal for fostering creativity and critical thinking ^(15, p 117). Central to experiential learning, as defined by Kolb, is experimentation in class, reflection on the design considerations, and using those results to address the next problem ^(16, p 32). Embedded within student-centered learning, such assignments place each student at the helm of their creative process; exploratory in nature, innovative, and allow for coming into one's own design voice ^(17, p 41).

Analytical Study:

This section delves into a focused analysis of five mash-up movie posters crafted by second-year graphic design students enrolled in the "Designing Newspaper, Cinema, and Television Advertisements"

course. By tasking students with merging visual elements from foreign and Arabic films, this pedagogical exercise served as a springboard for exploring the creative potential of mash-up as a design strategy.

Analytical Study Criteria:

Each student-designed mash-up poster will be analyzed based on the following criteria:

- **Mash-up technique(s) employed:** How are elements from different films visually combined and recontextualized?
- **Clarity of communication:** Does the poster effectively convey the thematic fusion of the source films?
- **Visual hierarchy and impact:** Is there a clear visual hierarchy? Does the design capture attention and create a memorable impression?
- **Originality of concept:** Is the film pairing unexpected? Does the visual execution demonstrate novelty and a unique perspective?
- **Critical engagement:** Does the poster utilize irony, parody, or visual metaphors to create layered meanings or challenge conventions?
- **Understanding of source material:** Does the design reflect a deep understanding of the visual language and themes of the original films?



Figure 1: Mash-up poster "Hazelakoum" (Megamind x No Retreat No Surrender)

Analysis of Student Mash-up Poster: "Hazelakoum" (Megamind x No Retreat No Surrender) (Fig 1):

This analysis focuses on the student-designed mash-up poster "Hazelakoum," which combines elements from the animated superhero comedy "Megamind" (2010) and the Egyptian action comedy "No Retreat No Surrender (Bloody Fist)" (2010).

- **Mash-up technique(s) employed:** The student primarily utilizes image compositing and manipulation. Ahmed Mekky's face is superimposed onto Megamind's body, retaining the character's signature blue skin and costume. The pose is also borrowed directly from "Megamind"'s promotional material. This approach suggests a simple visual equation: Mekky as Megamind.
- **Clarity of communication:** The poster clearly communicates the fusion of the two films through its central image and title. "Hazelakoum," a colloquial Arabic greeting, adds a humorous, localized twist to the superhero theme. However, the thematic connection

beyond "funny blue character" remains somewhat surface-level.

- **Visual hierarchy and impact:** The visual hierarchy is clear, with Mekky-as-Megamind dominating the poster. This bold approach ensures immediate attention and memorability. The vibrant color scheme, consistent with both original films, further enhances visual impact.
- **Originality of concept:** The film pairing is relatively unexpected. While both films involve comedic takes on superhuman abilities, their cultural contexts and target audiences differ significantly. This unexpectedness sparks curiosity and hints at a potentially humorous clash of styles.
- **Critical engagement:** The poster's critical engagement remains limited. It relies heavily on visual humor derived from the unexpected image of Mekky as Megamind, but doesn't delve into deeper layers of irony or commentary on either film's themes.
- **Understanding of source material:** The student demonstrates a surface-level

understanding of both films' visual language, primarily through replicating Megamind's appearance. However, a deeper exploration of "No Retreat No

Surrender"'s action-comedy elements or the satirical undertones of "Megamind" could have yielded a more nuanced and insightful mash-up.



Figure 2: Mash-up poster "Rango Al Jazeera " (Rango x Al Jazeera 2)

Analysis of Student Mash-Up Poster: "Al-Rango" (Rango x Al Jazeera 2) (Fig 2):

This analysis focuses on the "Al-Rango" mash-up poster, blending elements from the animated Western comedy "Rango" (2011) and the Egyptian thriller "Al Jazeera 2" (2014).

- **Mash-up technique(s) employed:** The primary technique is visual substitution and recontextualization. Rango, retaining his signature appearance, is clothed in traditional Upper Egyptian garb and holds an assault rifle, starkly contrasting his original Wild West setting. This juxtaposition creates an immediate visual incongruity.
- **Clarity of communication:** The communication is surprisingly clear despite the disparate genres. The title "Al-Rango," incorporating the Arabic

definite article, immediately signals an Upper Egyptian reimagining of the original film. Rango's attire and weaponry, while absurd, hint at a comedic take on action-thriller tropes.

- **Visual hierarchy and impact:** The visual hierarchy is effective. Rango's central position, exaggerated features, and unexpected attire immediately draw the eye. This strong focal point, coupled with the vibrant color scheme and bold typography, creates a memorable, albeit slightly unsettling, visual impact.
- **Originality of concept:** This pairing is particularly unexpected. "Rango," a family-friendly animation, contrasts sharply with the serious tone of "Al Jazeera 2," a political thriller. This bold choice demonstrates originality

and a willingness to subvert expectations.

- **Critical engagement:** The poster utilizes visual irony to great effect. Placing Rango, a character known for his clumsiness and bravado, within a setting associated with real-world conflict generates a sense of absurdity that invites reflection on the portrayal of both genres. The juxtaposition prompts

questions about context and cultural interpretation.

- **Understanding of source material:** The poster reveals a good understanding of both films' visual language. While mimicking "Rango"'s character design, it also incorporates elements from "Al Jazeera 2" through the choice of clothing and weaponry. This demonstrates a conscious effort to bridge the two worlds visually.



Figure 3: Mash-up poster "Keda Enfesam (Schizophrenia)" (Glass x Keda Reda)

Analysis of Student Mash-up Poster: "Keda Enfesam (Schizophrenia)" (Glass x Keda Reda) (Fig 3):

This analysis dissects the student-designed "Keda Glass" poster, a mash-up of M. Night Shyamalan's psychological thriller "Glass" (2019) and the Egyptian comedy "Keda Reda" (2007).

- **Mash-up technique(s) employed:** The student primarily uses image fragmentation and layering. The shattered glass motif from "Glass" is superimposed over Ahmed Helmy's face from "Keda Reda," creating a fractured, multi-faceted image. This

technique visually represents a splintered psyche, referencing both films' themes.

- **Clarity of communication:** While visually arresting, the thematic communication is somewhat muddled. The shattered glass imagery connects to both films but lacks a clear narrative link. The title, "Keda Enfesam (Schizophrenia)" simply combines the titles without adding a new layer of meaning.
- **Visual hierarchy and impact:** The poster has a strong visual impact due

to the central image's striking nature. The fractured portrait immediately draws the eye. However, the visual hierarchy feels somewhat flat due to the lack of distinct focal points within the fragmentation.

- **Originality of concept:** The film pairing is moderately unexpected. Pairing a psychological thriller with an outright comedy is unusual, hinting at a potentially humorous take on "Glass"'s dark themes. However, the execution lacks a clear conceptual direction stemming from this pairing.
- **Critical engagement:** The poster's critical engagement is limited. While the fragmented image alludes to themes of

identity and perception found in both films, it doesn't explicitly satirize or comment on them. A more overt use of visual metaphors or contrasting elements could elevate this aspect.

- **Understanding of source material:** The poster demonstrates a surface-level understanding of both films. The designer recognizes the visual motif of "Glass" and the comedic persona of Ahmed Helmy in "Keda Reda." However, there's room for a deeper exploration of visual language, particularly in adapting "Glass"'s darker, more stylized aesthetic.



Figure ٤: Mash-up poster "The Shining Lembi" (The Shining x El Lembi 8 GB)

Analysis of Student Mash-up Poster: "The Shining Lembi" (The Shining x El Lembi 8 GB) (Fig 4)

This analysis examines the student-designed "The Shining Lembi" poster, merging Stanley Kubrick's psychological horror masterpiece "The Shining" (1980) with the Egyptian comedy "El Lembi 8 GB" (2010).

- **Mash-up technique(s) employed:** The student utilizes direct image substitution, placing Mohamed Saad's face onto Jack Nicholson's body from the iconic "Here's Johnny!" scene in "The Shining." This technique relies heavily on the immediate recognition of the original film's imagery.

Clarity of communication: The poster clearly communicates a basic fusion of

the two films. The title, "The Shining Lembi," directly combines both titles, while the central image places Saad in the role of the unhinged protagonist. However, the thematic connection beyond this surface-level substitution remains unclear.

- **Visual hierarchy and impact:** The visual hierarchy is undeniably strong. Saad's exaggerated facial expression, amplified by the close-up composition, instantly captures attention. However, this impact relies solely on the shock value of the image rather than a carefully constructed design hierarchy.
- **Originality of concept:** The pairing of a cult horror film with a slapstick comedy is unexpected. Juxtaposing these wildly different genres could have yielded interesting results, but

the execution lacks conceptual depth to explore this contrast effectively.

- **Critical engagement:** The poster demonstrates little to no critical engagement. It leans heavily on the shock value of placing Saad in a horror context for comedic effect. There's no attempt to utilize irony, parody, or visual metaphors to comment on either genre or create a deeper layer of meaning.
- **Understanding of source material:** While the student recognizes the iconic nature of the chosen "Shining" imagery, there's little evidence of a deeper understanding of either film's visual language or themes. The mash-up relies solely on visual substitution rather than a thoughtful integration of stylistic elements.



Figure ٥: Mash-up poster "Puss in Boots at the American University" (Puss in Boots: The Last Wish x Saidi in the American University)

Analysis of Student Mash-up Poster: "Puss in Boots at the American University" (Puss in Boots: The Last Wish x Saidi in the American University) (Fig 5):

This analysis examines the mash-up poster "Puss in Boots at the American

University," which combines elements from the animated adventure "Puss in Boots: The Last Wish" (2022) and the Egyptian comedy "Saidi in the American University" (1998).

- **Mash-up technique(s) employed:** This poster primarily relies on

costume and setting substitution. Puss in Boots retains his signature look but wears a bright yellow suit, referencing the iconic attire of Mohamed Henedy's character in "Saidi in the American University." The background subtly integrates imagery from both films, hinting at a clash of worlds.

- **Clarity of communication:** The thematic fusion is somewhat ambiguous. While the title clearly indicates a combination of both films, the visual storytelling lacks a clear narrative link. The poster relies heavily on the audience's familiarity with both films to understand the intended mash-up.
- **Visual hierarchy and impact:** The visual hierarchy is effective. Puss in Boots' central position, dynamic pose, and the contrasting colors draw the viewer's eye. However, the overall impact feels somewhat subdued due to the lack of a strong focal point within the background.
- **Originality of concept:** Pairing a recent animated film with a classic Egyptian comedy is an unexpected and intriguing choice. This suggests a willingness to explore cross-cultural connections and humor, holding potential for a unique and humorous narrative.
- **Critical engagement:** Unfortunately, the poster misses the opportunity for critical engagement. The humor relies solely on the visual gag of Puss in Boots wearing a mismatched suit. There's no deeper exploration of

cultural differences, satire, or commentary on either genre.

- **Understanding of source material:** The student demonstrates a basic understanding of both films' visual aesthetics. However, the mash-up feels more like a superficial merging of elements rather than a thoughtful reinterpretation of their respective themes, visual motifs, or narrative structures.

Key Results from the Analytical Study: Navigating the Spectrum of Mash-Up Design:

The analysis of the five student-designed mash-up posters revealed a spectrum of creative approaches and keynote areas that pedagogically intervene in visual communication.

One salient observation centers on the students' grasp of basic mash-up techniques. Reviewing these posters shows competencies in image compositing, substitution, and recontextualization. Students seem to show technical knowledge of how visual elements from very different sources could be fused together to evoke a sense of successful acquisition of fundamental digital design skills.

One recurring challenge was that of translating technical skill into conceptually rich, layered visual narratives. While some—at least "Al-Rango"—did effectively make use of visual irony or unexpected juxtapositions to help animate critical engagement, others relied most strongly on visual humor or simple image substitution, shortchanging their

opportunity for deeper thematic exploration.

The difference is what makes the case for teaching students beyond the mechanics of mash-up, to some of the more rhetorical possibilities it holds. To move beyond superficial visual puns and toward more sophisticated forms of visual communication, one would need to goad students deeper into the source material through analysis of themes, visual motifs, and narrative structures.

Moreover, there was a trend toward giving way to instant visual impact at the cost of subtlety and multi-layered meaning. A strong visual hierarchy and eye-catching imagery are seminal in poster design; however, relying on shock value or instantly recognizable elements can overshadow subtle storytelling and critical commentary.

More precisely, while students did succeed in gaining and demonstrating technical knowledge during the process of designing mash-up posters, the work would need strengthening in terms of appreciation for the underpinnings of visual rhetoric, cultural context, and thematic analysis to elevate it from clever visual exercises to sophisticated and thought-provoking design artifacts. This pedagogical challenge

represents one of refocusing—from technical mastery to conceptual depth—encouraging students to take full advantage of the mash-up as a tool for critical engagement, cultural commentary, and creative visual communication.

Applied Study: Designing Mash-Up Posters

This section presents the researcher's own creative exploration of mash-up movie poster design. Three original posters, each fusing elements from two distinct films, will showcase the technique's potential for visual storytelling and conceptual depth.

The selected pairings— "The Yacoubian Inception" (The Yacoubian Building x Inception), "Jackson Rhapsody" (Sheikh Jackson x Bohemian Rhapsody), and "Die Hard and Kebab" (Terrorism and Kebab x Die Hard)—offer a diverse range of thematic and stylistic contrasts. The design process will emphasize visual metaphors, genre blending, and thoughtful typography to create posters that are both visually compelling and conceptually rich.

By documenting and analyzing the creative process, this applied study aims to deepen our understanding of mash-up as a powerful tool for visual communication, cultural commentary, and innovative design.

Analytical Framework for Researcher-Designed Posters:



Figure 6: Mash-up Poster: "The Yacoubian Inception"

Analysis of Researcher-Designed Mash-up Poster: "The Yacoubian Inception" (Fig 6):

This analysis examines the researcher-designed mash-up poster "The Yacoubian Inception," which combines visual and thematic elements from the Egyptian drama "The Yacoubian Building" (2006) and the American science fiction thriller "Inception" (2010).

- **Mash-up technique(s) employed:** The poster employs a combination of image compositing and architectural distortion. The iconic Yacoubian Building is centrally positioned, but its structure is warped and dreamlike, reminiscent of "Inception's" gravity-defying cityscapes. Characters from both films are integrated into the building's facade, further blurring the lines between reality and the subconscious.
- **Clarity of communication:** The poster effectively conveys a thematic fusion of both films. The distorted architecture visually represents the shared themes of fragmented realities

and distorted perceptions. The title, "The Yacoubian Inception," clearly signals this blending of worlds, suggesting a mind-bending exploration of the building's secrets and its inhabitants' inner lives.

- **Visual hierarchy and impact:** The poster boasts a strong visual hierarchy. The warped Yacoubian Building dominates the composition, drawing the viewer's eye. The placement of characters—with prominent figures like Zaki Bey (Adel Emam) from "The Yacoubian Building" and Dom Cobb (Leonardo DiCaprio) from "Inception"—guides the viewer's gaze through the layered dreamscape. The poster's impact is memorable, evoking a sense of disorientation and intrigue.
- **Originality of concept:** While the films share themes of layered realities and societal complexities, the pairing is relatively unexpected. The visual execution, particularly the architectural distortion, showcases a novel approach to mash-up that goes beyond simple character replacement.

- **Critical engagement:** The poster engages in a subtle yet effective form of visual metaphor. The warped building represents the psychological labyrinth explored in both films, suggesting that the Yacoubian Building itself embodies the subconscious dreamscapes of its residents. This visual commentary elevates the mash-up beyond a mere combination of elements.
- **Understanding of source material:** The poster demonstrates a deep

understanding of both films' visual language and themes. The warped architecture references "Inception's" signature imagery, while the inclusion of specific characters from "The Yacoubian Building" acknowledges the film's focus on individual stories within a complex social structure. The poster successfully captures the essence of both films while creating a new, unified narrative.



Figure 7: Mash-up Poster: "Sheikh Jackson Rhapsody"

Analysis of Researcher-Designed Mash-up Poster: "Sheikh Jackson Rhapsody" (Fig 7):

This analysis focuses on the researcher-designed "Sheikh Jackson Rhapsody" poster, which blends visual and thematic elements from the Egyptian drama "Sheikh Jackson" (2017) and the American biographical musical "Bohemian Rhapsody" (2018).

- **Mash-up technique(s) employed:** The poster primarily utilizes pose and costume juxtaposition. Sheikh Jackson, clad in his traditional thobe, adopts Freddie Mercury's iconic stage stance, microphone in hand,

conveying a striking visual clash between religious devotion and rockstar performance. This central image immediately captures attention and sparks curiosity about the film's premise.

- **Clarity of communication:** The poster effectively communicates the core thematic fusion of both films: the impact of Western pop culture on personal identity and cultural values. Sheikh Jackson's unexpected pose, combined with the title "Sheikh Jackson Rhapsody," clearly signals a clash between seemingly opposing worlds.

- **Visual hierarchy and impact:** The visual hierarchy is strong. Sheikh Jackson dominates the composition, his dynamic pose and stark white attire contrasting sharply with the dark background. The poster's impact is both memorable and provocative, immediately drawing the viewer's eye to the central figure and prompting questions about the narrative.
- **Originality of concept:** The film pairing is unexpected and thought-provoking. While both films explore themes of identity and personal expression, their cultural contexts and genres are vastly different. This unexpectedness generates interest and suggests a deeper exploration of the intersection between religious faith and the allure of Western music icons.
- **Critical engagement:** The poster's strength lies in its use of visual irony.

The juxtaposition of Sheikh Jackson's traditional attire with Freddie Mercury's iconic rockstar pose creates a powerful visual metaphor for the internal conflict explored in the film. This unexpected imagery prompts reflection on cultural clashes, societal expectations, and the complexities of personal identity.

- **Understanding of source material:** The poster demonstrates a nuanced understanding of both films' visual language. While Sheikh Jackson's attire references his religious background, his pose directly echoes Freddie Mercury's signature stage presence, signifying the film's exploration of how Western pop culture influences personal identity. The title "Sheikh Jackson Rhapsody," seamlessly blends both film titles, further emphasizing this interplay.



Figure 8: Mash-Up Poster: "Die Hard for Kebab"

Analysis of Researcher-Designed Mash-Up Poster: "Die Hard for Kebab" (Fig 8):

This analysis delves into the "Die Hard for Kebab" mash-up poster, which combines elements from the American

action classic "Die Hard" (1988) with the Egyptian dark comedy "The Terrorism and the Kebab" (1992).

- **Mash-up technique(s) employed:** The poster utilizes visual substitution and comedic recontextualization.

John McClane's iconic undershirt-clad, gun-wielding pose is replicated, but instead of a firearm, he brandishes skewers of kebab. The burning Nakatomi Plaza backdrop is replaced with The Mogamma "government building", referencing the setting of "The Terrorism and the Kebab." This creates an immediate visual gag, playing on the contrast between high-stakes action and mundane, everyday struggles.

- **Clarity of communication:** The poster successfully communicates a comedic fusion of the two films. The title, "Die Hard for Kebab," playfully blends both titles and hints at the protagonist's absurdly trivial objective. The imagery, featuring McClane's determined expression juxtaposed with the kebab skewers, reinforces this humorous take on the action hero trope.
- **Visual hierarchy and impact:** The visual hierarchy is straightforward, with McClane dominating the composition. His central position, exaggerated pose, and unexpected weaponry instantly draw the viewer's eye. The poster's impact is undeniably memorable, leveraging humor and visual absurdity to create a lasting impression.
- **Originality of concept:** The film pairing is surprisingly effective. Pairing a quintessential American action film with a satirical Egyptian comedy is unexpected, highlighting the universality of bureaucratic frustration and the potential for heroism in everyday life.

- **Critical engagement:** The poster employs visual parody to great effect. By substituting McClane's gun with kebab skewers, the poster satirizes the over-the-top violence of action films and playfully suggests that even seemingly mundane struggles can demand a "Die Hard" level of commitment.
- **Understanding of source material:** The poster demonstrates a deep understanding of both films. It references iconic imagery from "Die Hard" while incorporating the satirical tone and societal commentary present in "The Terrorism and the Kebab." The choice of The Mogamma as the backdrop acknowledges the Egyptian film's focus on the struggles of ordinary citizens.

Key Results:

Analyzing both the student and researcher-designed mash-up posters yielded valuable insights into the creative potential and pedagogical implications of this design approach. Several key results emerged from this comparative analysis:

- **Technical Proficiency vs. Conceptual Depth:** While students generally exhibited strong technical skills in image manipulation and compositing, their work often lacked conceptual depth and critical engagement. In contrast, the researcher-designed posters, while employing similar techniques, demonstrated a more deliberate effort to weave together thematic threads,

utilize visual metaphors, and engage in nuanced cultural commentary.

- **The Power of Unexpected Juxtapositions:** Both student and researcher-designed posters highlighted the effectiveness of unexpected film pairings in sparking viewer interest and generating creative interpretations. The most successful mash-ups embraced contrasting genres, cultural contexts, and thematic elements to create humorous, thought-provoking, and visually compelling designs.
- **Navigating the Spectrum of Mash-Up:** The analysis revealed a spectrum of mash-up approaches, ranging from simple image substitution to complex visual metaphors and genre subversion. While basic techniques can be effective in communicating a basic concept, more sophisticated approaches, like those employed in "The Yacoubian Inception" and "Die Hard for Kebab," demonstrate the potential for deeper engagement with the source material and more nuanced visual storytelling.
- **The Role of Visual Irony and Parody:** The most engaging mash-up posters utilized visual irony and parody to create layered meanings and challenge conventional interpretations. By playfully subverting genre tropes, cultural stereotypes, or audience expectations, these designs prompted critical reflection and sparked humorous dialogues between the source films.
- **Pedagogical Implications:** The comparative analysis underscores the importance of guiding students beyond

technical mastery towards a deeper understanding of visual rhetoric, thematic analysis, and cultural context. Providing opportunities for students to engage with diverse film genres, explore unconventional pairings, and experiment with various mash-up techniques can foster more creative and conceptually rich design outcomes.

Discussion:

This research, through its dual focus on student and researcher-designed mash-up posters, has illuminated the complexities of this design approach, revealing its capacity to both spark creative ingenuity and present significant pedagogical challenges.

The analysis of student work revealed a consistent tension between technical proficiency and conceptual depth. While students readily grasped the mechanics of image manipulation and visual fusion, translating these skills into meaningful narratives proved more elusive. This observation suggests that mash-up, despite its seemingly playful nature, demands a sophisticated understanding of visual rhetoric, cultural context, and the art of nuanced storytelling.

Conversely, the researcher-designed posters demonstrated a conscious effort to move beyond superficial visual puns towards a more layered and conceptually rich approach. By carefully selecting film pairings, employing visual metaphors, and embracing the potential for irony and parody, these designs exemplified the power of mash-up to engage in critical commentary, challenge genre conventions, and spark cross-cultural dialogues.

This divergence in outcomes underscores a crucial pedagogical implication: mash-up cannot be treated merely as a technical exercise. To truly harness its creative potential, students must be guided to move beyond the mechanics of image manipulation and delve into the deeper layers of visual communication. This requires fostering a critical eye for thematic analysis, an appreciation for cultural nuances, and an understanding of how visual elements can be strategically deployed to create meaning, evoke emotions, and challenge audience expectations.

Furthermore, the study highlights the inherent tension within mash-up between visual impact and conceptual subtlety. While a strong visual hierarchy and eye-catching imagery are essential for capturing attention, an over-reliance on shock value or readily recognizable elements can overshadow opportunities for deeper engagement and multi-layered storytelling.

This tension necessitates a careful balancing act. Effective mash-up posters, as demonstrated by both the researcher-designed examples and the most successful student work, manage to captivate viewers with striking visuals while also prompting them to decipher visual metaphors, unravel ironic juxtapositions, and ultimately engage in a more active and critical dialogue with the design.

In essence, this research positions mash-up as a fertile ground for both creative exploration and pedagogical intervention. It is a design approach that, when approached thoughtfully and strategically,

can empower students and designers alike to transcend the limitations of traditional visual communication, spark new ways of seeing the world, and contribute to a richer, more dynamic visual culture.

The results of this research highlight the significant role that mash-up techniques can play in enhancing the learning outcomes of the "Designing Newspaper, Cinema, and Television Advertisements" course. By guiding students to utilize these techniques in a way that goes beyond technical proficiency and focuses on the thematic analysis of the chosen films, their visual communication and critical thinking skills can be significantly developed. This can be achieved by incorporating analytical exercises focused on extracting key themes and emotions from films, and studying examples of successful movie posters that effectively utilize mash-up techniques. These strategies will contribute to fostering students' ability to create more profound and artistic designs, reflecting a deeper understanding of the relationship between design and cultural context.

Results:

- Students often displayed strong technical skills but lacked conceptual depth in their mash-up posters. This indicates the need to emphasize visual rhetoric, cultural context, and thematic analysis alongside technical proficiency.
- Unexpected film pairings often resulted in more engaging and creative mash-ups, suggesting that students should be encouraged to explore unconventional combinations of films.

- The analysis revealed a range of mash-up approaches, from simple image substitution to complex visual metaphors. Encouraging experimentation with diverse techniques can foster more nuanced visual storytelling.
- The most engaging mash-up posters used irony and parody effectively, demonstrating the importance of encouraging a playful and critical approach to design.
- Integrating visual rhetoric, cultural context analysis, and film theory into curricula can help students unlock the full potential of mash-up as a tool for critical engagement and creative visual communication.

Recommendations:

- **Curriculum Enhancement:** Integrate visual rhetoric, film analysis, and cultural studies into graphic design curricula.
- **Cross-Cultural Design Challenges:** Task students with mash-ups of films from contrasting genres, cultures, or thematic contexts.
- **Conceptual Emphasis:** Guide students to move beyond technical proficiency and prioritize the development of layered narratives through visual metaphors, irony, and symbolism.
- **Iterative Feedback:** Provide structured critique sessions and opportunities for revision throughout the design process.
- **Multimodal Exploration:** Encourage experimentation with motion graphics,

animation, and interactive design in mash-up projects.

- **Conceptual Innovation:** Explore unexpected film pairings to challenge conventions and generate novel visual interpretations.
- **Visual Storytelling Mastery:** Prioritize narrative coherence through the strategic use of visual metaphors, symbolism, and typography.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Conduct thorough research and engage in culturally informed decision-making when merging elements from diverse cinematic traditions.
- **Collaborative Feedback:** Seek critique from peers, mentors, and target audiences to refine and enhance design outcomes.
- **Continuous Inspiration:** Engage actively with a diverse range of films, visual art, and design communities to fuel creative exploration.

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تقنيات الماش أب بوستر لتصميم ملصقات الأفلام استكشاف تحليلي وتطبيقي لتقنيات المزج

ملخص البحث

تستكشف هذه الدراسة الاتجاه الناشئ لاستخدام تقنيات المزج (Mash-up) في تصميم ملصقات الأفلام، وتبحث في إمكاناتها لتعزيز الإبداع البصري والابتكار في كل من السياقات التعليمية والمهنية. من خلال نهج ذي شقين، يحلل البحث خمسة ملصقات تم تصميمها بواسطة طلاب في إطار دورة تصميم الجرافيك، ويقدم ثلاثة ملصقات أصلية صممها الباحث، حيث يدمج كل منها فيلمًا مصريًا مع نظيره الأمريكي ذي الصدى المواضيعي. يركز التحليل على تقييم فعالية تقنيات المزج المختلفة، ووضوح التواصل، والتسلسل الهرمي البصري والتأثير، وأصالة المفهوم، والمشاركة النقدية، وفهم المادة المصدرية كما يتضح في كل من ملصقات الطلاب والملصقات التي صممها الباحث. تكشف النتائج عن مجموعة من الأساليب الإبداعية، مما يسלט الضوء على الحاجة إلى توجيه الطلاب إلى ما هو أبعد من الكفاءة الفنية نحو فهم أعمق للبلاغة البصرية والسياق الثقافي والتحليل المواضيعي لإطلاق العنان للإمكانات الكاملة لتقنية المزج. تخلص الدراسة إلى أن تقنية المزج، عند استخدامها بشكل مدروس، يمكن أن تكون بمثابة محفز قوي لحلول التصميم المبتكرة، والتعليق النقدي، والحوار بين الثقافات في مجال الاتصال البصري.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

تصميم ملصقات الأفلام، تقنية المزج (Mash-up)، الاتصال البصري، الإبداع، البلاغة البصرية.