Research   Design   Production

COOKING CULTURE

History, culture, identity, memory, self expression, authorship, personal voice all in a typographic cookbook

Maryam Hosseinnia, Associate Professor
American University of Kuwait

(images in this poster is taken from student layout design)

[

As a design educator in a multicultural classroom, I am challenged in my daily practice to connect with students despite language barriers and cultural differences. Students are rarely given the opportunity to investigate their history, heritage and culture. Students build curiosity and motivation through story-telling projects. These design exercises give them time to explore their roots, history, culture, identity and memory and to further investigate creative design process, self authorship and to foster a personal voice.

This paper presents the outcomes of a semester-long project in the Level II Typography course at the American University of Kuwait (AUK) in Fall 2013. For the project, students researched and designed a book of family recipes using only type as a medium. The idea of a cookbook was chosen for a variety of reasons. From a design perspective, a cookbook that relies solely on type to convey meaning was meant to be a challenge in itself. It posits the question: How can you use type to engage a reader? It gave students a focused task

in which they could creatively explore typography and layout while considering clarity and emphasis in design. From a personal perspective, the project was meant as an opportunity for students to gain an understanding of their heritage through food culture. As in many cultures, food is a focal point for family and friends and carries a far greater significance than sustenance. It is personal.

Throughout the semester, students presented exercises and projects centered on communication of content by way of self-authorship, language, and typography. This was done in part by engaging students in writing, information design, and through the creation of typographic systems. The goal was for students to develop a personal voice (identifying their roots, identity and history) through critical thinking and the design process. This in turn allowed them to question the rules and practice of how language is set, shaped and understood. As part of their research, they were required to interview family members, relatives, and to further investigate the history of one ingredient in one of

their recipes. Questionnaires as well as peer and teacher critiques were also part of the process. These sessions helped students get more perspective on their projects.

Twenty Junior students participated in the project. The students were Kuwaiti and Arabs. The resulting artwork was a variety of personal and unique recipe designs from different regions within the Arab culture. Grid, hierarchy, placement of text, organization of information, emphasis, scale, and alignment were explored in layout solutions. The outcomes of this project allowed students to fine-tune their typography skills while at the same time exploring their cultural identities.

The Secret recipe ...

Cardamom
It grows in parts of the monsoon forests of the western Ghal in Southern India which is known as a cardamom hill. Indian used cardamom as a flavor and medicine. In the 19th century, it started to spread into the world. Cardamom used for different kind of food, especially eastern food such as tea, milk, Arabic coffee, broth, and meal ...

2
Prep+cook   hours   kilos
Make:

Sub AlGafsha

Story ..

In each family, there is something special that has to be in the dining table in Ramadan. Some of them see that the "Vemto" is the special thing others see that the date is important. For my family, "Sub AlGafsha" is the most important thing that has to be on the dining table. Since childhood I used to see this dessert only in Ramadan and I don't know the secret of that. When I asked my mother about the secret, she told me that she learned that from aunt Safeya (God rest her soul) she said that she used to eat this dessert since childhood it was the best dessert. Then I learned that and now most ...

gag
Bread

Ingredients:

Steps:

The Secret recipe ...

45-60

قصه صب ...

في كل عائلة هناك شيء مميز يجب ان يتواجد على مائدة الطعام في شهر رمضان المبارك، فمنهم من يرى أن "الفيمتو" هو اهم شيء يجب ان يتواجد، بالنسبة لعائلتي ...

بز
الرقاق

المقادير: ٢
٢

الطريقة:

٤٥-٦٠

يكمن السر في ...

ساعة
كيلو