The Modern Arabic Book: Design as Agent of Cultural Progress
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Stellingen

The message and its physical manifestation have an inseparable and symbiotic relationship. This fact is often overlooked in the Arab world where the focus on content at the expense of form has stagnated innovation and cultural progress.

Modernization of Arabic book design implies a break with a conservative tradition of calligraphy and book production. It has become synonymous with 'westernization'. Though the more advanced Western book design practices can function as sources of inspiration for Arab designers, true progress can only be built upon the foundations of Arab visual heritage.

Cultural exchange through book design has been enriching for the printed Arabic book in the past. Arab book designers today should remain open to outside influences that help them improve their working methods and evolve modern design conventions.

The book is an essential tool for cultural development in the Arab world; the proliferation of books and book design is a democratic and socially driven practice that helps spread visual literacy beyond the art-savvy elite.

Arabic book design today remains in need of professionalism, valorization, and recognition as an independent design specialization.

In the Arab world, commissioning a book designer is considered a luxury reserved for special editions and expensive art books. This practice should change; design is essentially a tool for shaping our every day lives and environment and should not be restricted to the creation of exclusive objects.

Arabic book typography should explore new design possibilities that respond to the needs of complex (multilingual) information structures. It should test the limits of legibility and embrace contemporary (typo)graphic design aesthetics.

Arabic typographic evolution progresses in small incremental steps: modern Arabic fonts remain calligraphic in their proportions and limited in their range and variety of styles.

Modern Arabic book design today needs Arabic font families that consist of a wider range of variations in proportions, weights, and special features.

The Arabic calligraphic heritage provides a wealth of still unexplored inspiring models for modern Arabic and non-Arabic typeface design.

Digital readers dream of electric trees.