



# **Universidad de Guadalajara Centro Universitario de Arte, Arquitectura y Diseño**

## **ANÁLISIS CRÍTICO DEL CARTEL END.LING DE ALEKS PHOENIX**

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In this essay, I will explore in detail the poster for END. LING 2024, an oriental film directed by Chinese filmmaker Kelly Yu, whose premise revolves around the care of the last remaining goldfish on Earth. This visual piece (see Appendix 1)

Appendix 1



Phoenix A. 2024 Poster Inspired by Endling. Instagram [https://www.instagram.com/aleks\\_phoenix?utm\\_source=ig\\_web\\_button\\_share\\_sheet&igsh=ZDNlZDc0MzIxNw==](https://www.instagram.com/aleks_phoenix?utm_source=ig_web_button_share_sheet&igsh=ZDNlZDc0MzIxNw==)



Was created in 2024 by Mexican graphic designer Aleks Phoenix in collaboration with oriental illustrator k.iyinglee, CEO of the fifthatrium company Storytelling through Design & Animation. Throughout the analysis, I will break down different elements of the poster, including the illustration, composition, typography, and graphic resources used by the creators to bring this work to life. In addition, I will review the book Japanese Prints, a compilation of 43 artists' prints and woodcuts from ancient Eastern culture; as well as the book Fundamentals of Design by Scot W. (1951), and the book Visual Design by Maris, C. (1994). Finally, a brief conclusion to the compositional analysis conducted regarding the poster's composition.

The Japanese delighted in the contemplation of nature and the landscape. In addition to depictions of women, these compositions feature paintings of plants and animals, such as dogs, cats, birds, insects, and fish. (See Figure 1).



Figure 1

Prints of the Flowing World

Note: Image taken from Japanese Prints, Taschen (2007).

According to the compilation of Japanese prints published by Taschen (2007), these animals also frequently appeared in ukiyo-e painting, *Prints of the Flowing World*, one of the most internationally recognized facets of Japanese art. Eventually, these were depictions of *bijin-ga* and *yakusha-e*, artistic movements from the Tokugawa era. The poster bears a certain similarity to this type of illustration, which, while not in the same style, also depicts one of these species, referencing this culture.

Delving deeper into the context, koi fish are a symbol of love and friendship. The history of koi fish is very unique and is primarily due to the Eastern world's fascination with their beauty. Such is the importance of these fish that references to them already appear in Chinese and Korean writings from the 4th century. And it's no wonder: according to legend, koi fish that managed to swim upstream and climb waterfalls became dragons. But, far from mythology, the truth is that rice farmers are credited with starting their breeding: they realized that there were more colorful carp that were more vulnerable to predators, and, driven by their beauty, they began breeding them in search of common color patterns. Something that became a hobby, especially in early 20th-century Japan. Seeking this color balance, the nomenclature of these fish reflects their color ranges: common (orange and red), *Ochiba* (with a combination of blue and orange on their scales), *Kumonryu* (with a white face and the rest of the body pigmented in black), or *Tancho* (completely white with a red circle on the head, which is why Japan has adopted it as its official fish). The artist Kuniyoshi created works such as "*Ayus Going Up the River with the Hagi Branch and Catfish*," depicting fish in a composition where perspective creates the illusion of a ray of sunlight penetrating through the water to the bottom of the sea. In the background, choppy waves and the shadows they cast can be seen. The poster analyzed also shows the use of perspective to generate depth through the interaction between the depicted elements, their size, and position.

A closer look at the poster illustration reveals the use of tonal scales to generate a sense of volume and an optical illusion, as if it were water. The light is projected onto the fish as a focal point, adding realism to the composition. In the book "*Visual Design*," Maris, C. (1994), in the chapter on the creation of space through color, the spatial effects on the pictorial plane that can be achieved through the use of color are discussed. In this regard, the author cites Hofmann (1993): "Space and color are inseparable," suggesting that, through color, it is possible to divide space into planes and subtly work shadows, as seen in the poster illustration (see Figure 2).

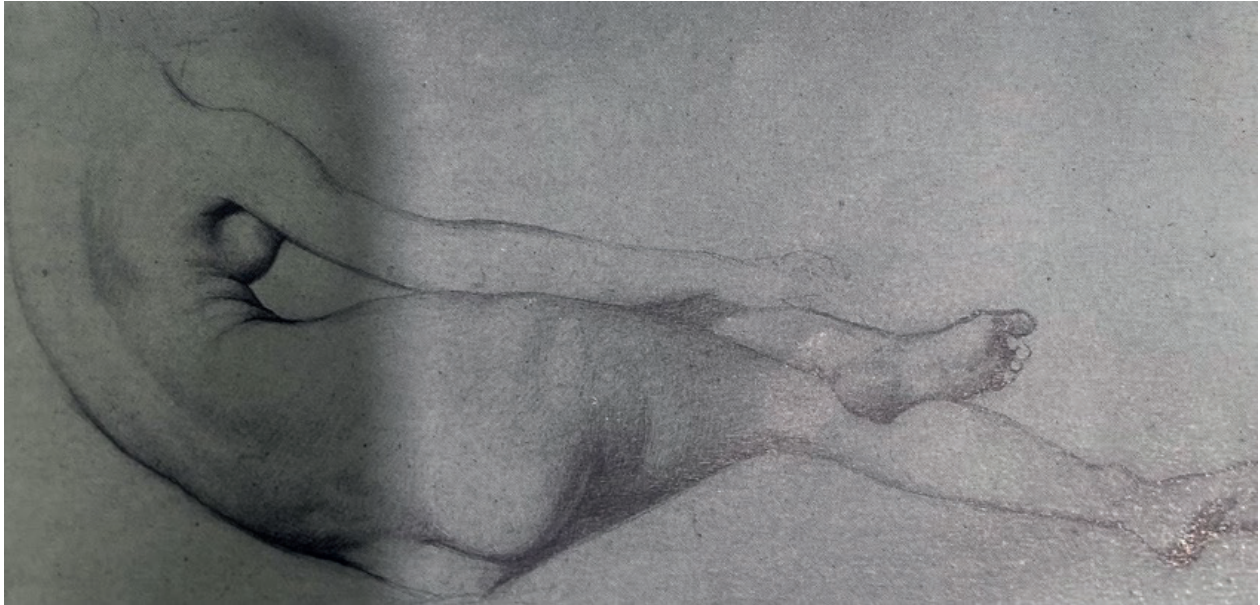


Figure 2

### Shadows

Note: Image taken from Diseño visual Maris, C. (1994)

Speaking further about the poster's composition, we can observe that it is composite, meaning it is made up of different typographic and illustrative elements and, at the same time, hierarchical. The illustration is the main axis, characterized by the neutrality of the gray fish, the asymmetry in their positions, and the irregularity of their shapes, as they represent different species and present size contrasts.

In relation to Scot W.'s book *Fundamentals of Design* (1951), in chapter 2 on contrast, it is stated that, in our tonal experience, there is a division between chromatic and achromatic groups. Everything that has a hue is chromatic, while neutrals, including black and white, are achromatic. In this context, the following concepts are explained:

- Value: the lightness or darkness of tones, that is, the amount of light a surface can reflect. On the tonal scale, white is at the top and black at the bottom, with the other tones, chromatic and achromatic, lying between the two.
- Hue: differentiates colors, such as blue, red, or yellow. When applied to objects, it refers to how their surfaces reflect certain wavelengths and absorb others.
- Intensity: corresponds to saturation and measures the purity of the hue reflected on a surface. A pure red has maximum intensity, while if it contains a neutral (black, white, or gray), its intensity is reduced.

It is mentioned that compositions can be chromatic or achromatic depending on how these elements are used. In this case, the goldfish introduces a chromatic accent that makes it stand out within the illustration, also demonstrating the application of the visual technique of spontaneity. Overall, the image can be described as profuse and complex due to the richness of detail and the diversity of elements that comprise it. Therefore, both laws of color contrast are combined in the composition.

This analysis of the poster allows us to appreciate cultural references, visual resources, and design foundations, the result of the collaboration between Aleks Phoenix and k.iyinglee, which balances the contemporary with the traditional through an illustration reminiscent of the aesthetics of Eastern prints, particularly the ukiyo-e style. The use of color not only provides realism through tonal scales and contrasts, but also structures the visual space, evoking Hofmann's principle that "space and color are inseparable." Likewise, a deep understanding of the design fundamentals proposed by Scot W. is evident, especially regarding tonal, chromatic, and achromatic contrast, and how these are applied to highlight key elements such as the goldfish. The hierarchical and carefully balanced composition, coupled with the conscious use of typography, demonstrates technical and conceptual mastery in the visual construction of the message. Overall, the poster functions not only as a communication piece but also as an aesthetic work that engages with cultural and historical references, enriching its meaning and allowing for multiple levels of interpretation.

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