From symbolism to identity

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De Nederlandsche Bank NV
Eurosystem

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Four topics

1. Symbol
2. Identity
3. From symbolism to identity
4. Euro: symbolism or identity?
Symbol

- A design element representing an idea, belief, action or entity.

- **Cornucopia**
  - Horn of plenty

- **Caduceus**
  - Staff of Mercury
  - or Hermes (Greek)

- **Seal**
  - Federal Reserve System

- **Flag**
  - European Union
Example of symbolism

Victory statuette, ear of corn, olive branch

France, 1939, 1942
Symbolism in state money

USA, 1862
Legal Tender Act 1862

This note is legal tender for all debts, public and private, and is redeemable in lawful money at the US treasury or at any federal reserve bank

Italy, 1882
Biglietto di Stato

Germany, 1882
Reichskassenschein
Ultimate symbol: head of state

Great Britain, 2007

Thailand, 2011

India, 2011

Morocco, 2012
New symbols

- Copyright symbol (1909)
- Ring of Stars, 1955
- QR-code ECB (2004)
- Feeding direction, 2005
- Wayfinding features Feel-Look-Tilt (2005)
- Wifi (2009)
- Smartphone (2010)
- Currency code India (2010) and Russia (2013)
Identity

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Identity

- The impression a banknote design provides by which it is recognised as a banknote of country or area X.

- Nation brand. Business card of the country.

- Symbols may support identity (symbol of identity is a fingerprint).
Example of identity

Theme, design, colour
Identity description guilder

- Exude some happiness & some humor
- Express the time we live in
- Be dynamic
Identity thoughts

We

• Feel familiar with …
• Want to be associated with …
• Are friends with …
• We are proud of …
• …
Identity by emotions

Pleasant surprise: Unicorn 1996
Unpleasant surprise: Embryo 2005
Melancholy: Maria Callas 2007
Fascination: Singing lady 2009

Robert Oxenaar
Manuel Krebs
Roger Pfund
University of Minnesota
Positioning diagrams

Objects • Historic • Serious • Local orientation • Institutional, • directive ...

New design

A B

Upgrade

... •

• People, life • Future • Happy • Open to others • Neutral, non directive • ...
## Identity by usage-functions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Value recognition</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Recognition of falsification</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Handy (user-friendliness)</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Clear message</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usability score (average 1-4)</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4 = high  
1 = low  
10 = high  
1 = low  

Reference: TNS NIPO, 2013
From symbolism to identity

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## Design periods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design period</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Pre 1850</td>
<td>Early banknotes</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. 1850-1923</td>
<td>Prosperity</td>
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<td>3. 1923-1944</td>
<td>Small portraits</td>
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<td>4. 1944-1972</td>
<td>Great men</td>
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<td>5. 1972-….</td>
<td>Great men and women</td>
</tr>
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<td>6. 1981-….</td>
<td>Non-portraits</td>
</tr>
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Early banknotes (pre 1850)

Symbols
Name, signatures, seals, ornaments

China, 1375

Sweden, 1666

Virginia, 1773

Netherlands, 1814
Prosperity (1850-1923)

Netherlands, 1904

Germany, 1910

Symbols

Allegoric women, heraldry

Russia, 1912

France, 1923
Small portraits (1923-1944)

Netherlands, 1926

Poland, 1934

Symbols
(Modest) leading man, pays to bearer,

Netherlands, 1934

Spain, 1935
Great men (1944 - 1972)

Netherlands 1956

Japan, 1963

France 1963

Israel, 1968

Symbols
Scientist, artists
Great men and women (1972 – to date)

Denmark, 1972

Germany, 1994

Norway, 1999

Republic of Korea, 2009

Symbols
Women, men
From small to friendly portraits

1792 ~ 1930

1930 ~ 1980

1980 - today
Non-portraits (1981 – to date)

Netherlands, 1981

South Africa, 1993

Russia, 1995

Euro, 2002

Towards Identity
Time spirit 2014

Key words identity 2014

Sharing
Openness
Transparency
Emotions
Sustainability
...

Like symbol (2009)
Name giving essential for identity

Example

Different aspects of life

Life

Music, Fluff, Free, Romance, Towers

Tuba, Flower, Bird, Man, Pisa

Tuba note: Jazz, Trumpet, Blue

Identity description

Theme of series

Name of series

Theme of banknotes

Name of banknotes

Name authenticity features

Banknote message
Euro: identity or symbolism?
Early European symbolism

Theme: Building Europa together

1950
E. Spreckmeester

1950
Reyn Dirksen

1956
European symbols

Top-down
European Union

Bottom-up
Dutch public
Euro: name symbolism

European Central Bank

Federal Reserve System
Euro: image symbolism

Public preference (1996)
Identity

Selected design (1996)
Symbolism

Symbols not understood
- Ages and Styles
- Openness to others
- Bridges linking people.
Euro symbolism continued in ES2

Who is that woman?

France
Marianne, 1793

Germany
Germania, 1909

United Kingdom
Britannia, 1930

Eurozone
Europa, 2013
Conclusions

1) A symbol only contributes to identity when understood.

2) Banknote design moves since 1980s away from symbolism to identity.

3) Key words identity 2014: sharing, openness, transparency.
More information on website DNB:


Or at DNB Payment Scholar: https://coll.dnb.nl

(send first an email to cashhelpdesk@dnb.nl)