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VIDEO GAME VISUALS AS A TOOL FOR REPRESENTING CULTURAL IDENTITY IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION

Modern video games are not just products of the entertainment industry but also a form of digital art. In the context of globalization, visual content emerges as an effective tool for conveying cultural identity. The visual language of a game is a complex system of signs (architecture, color palette, and symbolism) that broadcasts a cultural code to the target audience. Designers actively integrate culture, technology, and art, undertaking extensive creative and research work (Pashkevych et al., 2023). It is critically important to preserve the uniqueness of a national product in an environment dominated by generic standards and stereotypes.

Authenticity and the visual semiotics of the local landscape. Taking the game *S.T.A.L.K.E.R.* as an example, we observe the transmission of local authenticity through visual semiotics. The game's virtual space is filled with signs, objects, and items that evoke real historical memory. The use of photogrammetry and the architectural code of Soviet Modernism represents a complex set of tools that allows designers to create products that do not conform to global unification but offer a unique aesthetic (Ackerman et al., 2023).

According to the official concept and visual identity materials of GSC Game World, the key design task was to achieve "hyper-realistic authenticity" (GSC Game World, 2024). The use of technologies such as photogrammetry of real objects from

Pripyat was a conscious choice in favor of an "imperfect" aesthetics. Unlike glossy Western standards, the design is based on the "aesthetics of imperfection" (cracked concrete walls, rusty structures), which can be interpreted as a form of visual resistance to global unification. This approach preserves the landscape's "genetic code," making it recognizable globally through its local specificity (GSC Game World, 2024).

Globalization, unification, and functional design. In contrast to local authenticity, the *Counter-Strike* project demonstrates a strategy of unification. Global games often use simplified visual stereotypes to maintain game balance and clarity. The visual language here is subordinated to functionality: map design, skin systems for weapons and characters, stickers, and decorations become objects of digital mass consumption, which creates a universal "visual Esperanto" for the game and esports environments, erasing local features in favor of global readability (Wikipedia contributors, n.d.).

Digital design as a tool for cultural sovereignty. An important aspect is the designer's role in overcoming and resisting "visual colonization." If *Counter-Strike* demonstrates a model of adaptation to the global market, then *S.T.A.L.K.E.R.* proves that local exclusivity and adherence to cultural traditions can be a successful commercial strategy. The visual language of games allows users not only to observe a culture but also to experience it from within through interaction with design objects (Mymruk, 2025).

Innovation in the digital environment should be grounded in and support cultural traditions to create added value for the product: the game becomes not just code, but a digital manifesto of a nation (Pashkevych et al., 2023).

In conclusion, the research demonstrates that the visual language of video games is a dynamic arena for the interaction between global market standards and local cultural codes. The experience of the Ukrainian game development industry—particularly the *S.T.A.L.K.E.R.* series—demonstrates that visual authenticity is a powerful tool for integrating national art into the global digital context (GSC Game World, 2024; Ackerman et al., 2023). Designers need to master global design tools while enriching

them with unique cultural content, thereby strengthening cultural sovereignty in the digital space (Mymruk, 2025; Pashkevych et al., 2023).

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TRANSFORMATION OF THE VISUAL LANGUAGE OF ANIMATION IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION: FROM LOCAL TRADITIONS TO UNIVERSAL STANDARDS

The contemporary socio-cultural space is characterized by the total visualization of communicative processes. Individuals are daily immersed in a dense information environment shaped by visual language: digital outdoor advertising, interactive web design, interfaces of mobile applications and video games, cinematography, and informational posters. In most of these media products, animation serves as a key tool for attracting attention and conveying meaning. As researcher K. D. Marakhovska aptly notes, "Animation occupies an important place in culture, influencing the development of other screen arts and exerting a powerful impact on the contemporary cultural life of