art • media • design
WRITING INTERSECTIONS

Conference Proceedings

Art • Media • Design
Writing Intersections
Conference & Workshop
Nov 18 – 19, 2009

Swinburne University of Technology
Melbourne, Australia

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WRITING PAD

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All abstracts in the proceedings were independently reviewed by two members of the committee. For those that met the conference criteria, authors were then invited to submit either full papers or extended abstracts for further review. Some full papers were judged of acceptable standard and revisions and feedback given by two independent reviewers, which subject to satisfactory changes were then included as DEST F1 full papers. These proceedings contain two sections: presentations (DEST F2/F3) indicated by abstracts, extended abstracts, and full papers; and peer-reviewed full papers (DEST F1).

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INTRODUCTION

1st Art.Media.Design | Writing Intersections Conference

Melbourne, November 18-19, 2009

Preamble to the conference proceedings

During two exciting days on Prahran campus at Swinburne University, approximately fourty five faculty and students from Australia, New Zealand and internationally, met to present work addressing the intersections of writing with the fields of Art, Media and Design. The conference and workshops were the result of months of conversation, preparation and programming involving a team of organizing committee members and reviewers from a range of Victorian institutions, including VCA (Melbourne), Melbourne University, Monash University, Auckland University of Technology, and Swinburne University. We were also fortunate to have two keynote speakers – Professor Sean Cubitt (Melbourne University) and Professor Per Mollerup (Swinburne University) – and Professor Ken Friedman, Dean of the Faculty of Design, delivered a welcome speech touching on his own history as Artist.

As the first conference of its kind in Australia we were naturally trepidatious about the outcome of the conference and were very pleased to celebrate the major intellectual and social success it proved to be. The proceedings in this publication indicate some of the depth and direction of work in this area of text and artefact interaction and auger well for the individual and collective future of the participants. We must acknowledge here the dedicated team of staff at Swinburne, including Catherine Axiaq and Tania Westcott, who helped make the conference all it became. We hope you enjoy the publication and look forward to meeting again in the near future when the conference will have a new institutional sponsor and location.

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On behalf of the Organizing Committee

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CATEGORY F2/F3 AUTHORS

CATEGORY F1 AUTHORS

Balancing user driven pacing and narrative control in interactive animated comics

Andrew Buchanan

Abstract

The techniques and conventions employed in the traditional medium of comics and graphic novels reflect a unique combination of visual, textual and spatial communications which take place on the page. Comics theorists and creators have explored the relationship between spatial arrangement and temporal passage witin a narrative, as well as the effect this arrangement has on the passage of reading time, or acquisition rate of the panels. While being influenced by the genre, design and specific layout in any given example, this form of visual consumption cedes ultimate decisions about the pace of consumption to the reader. This is in contrast with the media of film and animation, in which the timing and pace of delivery of screen elements is controlled entirely by the creator. Digital interactive experiences including games, webcomics, and other screen based narrative encounters display a wide variety of possibilities within this pace control spectrum. The creators of comics provide a fixed and finite set of content data, as do animators, while creators of digital narrative forms may offer ranges of potential content based on user selection and interaction. These differences may affect the ability of the creator to communicate a narrative experience to the reader/audience. Specifically, this paper is concerned with the affect that variations of acquisition rate may have on narrative intent in interactive mediums which deliver visual, textual and spatial content types similar to comics and graphic novels. This paper presents a theoretical system for passive user controlled pacing within a digital narrative experience – specifically an interactive animated comic. The system is based on the concept of discreetly gathering what the author will categorise as 'pace preference indicators' which can then be converted into results which automatically select the format and duration of subsequent narrative segments. During this process, overall narrative and storyline is maintained, limiting the influence of the user to issues of pace, speed, and duration. While storylines are maintained, slight differences in lexical efficiency, delivery and style may be employed in order to provide brevity or elaboration to a segment. In this way, an attempt is made to find a balance between maintaining narrative intent and increasing audience retention by customising the pace of their narrative experience. Stage one of an original production utilising this theory is explored, and issues, limitations and production practicalities are discussed. Scholars and developers in the field of educational technology refer to questions of user-control shifting under the term 'locus of control' and studies show a range of benefits and potential hazards for offering users control over the pace of consumption in digital learning environments. Definitions of interactivity present a basis for conflicting notions of whether passive systems can be effectively used to deliver recognised user control benefits. In closing, the paper conjects that while the new system and case study may contribute to productions considering passive user influence systems, creating broad principles remains challenging, as each production will still require customised coding and design of interactions, just as they require customised design of other content. Evaluation of narrative purity and intent, and whether compromises are justified will necessarily remain the province of individual creators.

The art text as ~~incubator~~ medial ecology

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Abstract

In “From Word to Text” Roland Barthes develops a rather challenging view on the status of the literary text. His final statement “The theory of the Text can coincide only with a practice of writing.” is still relevant today considering the difficulties of writing a dissertation text for a practice-based PhD. This paper will start from my own ongoing experience in writing and propose an art text which allows the writer to express doubt and failure. Taking Barthes’ essay as a starting point, three important works of literature will be explored. The work of Georges Perec, Nicholson Baker and Mark Z. Danielewski will be analysed in order to draw parallels between the literary text and the art text that I will propose. These three writers have succeeded in incorporating a meta-textual level in their work which fundamentally alters our understanding of the text itself.

Keywords
medial ecology, Roland Barthes, research, fiction, writing, art

Preliminary observations

“It is better to live in a state of impermanence than in one of finality.”
(Bachelard, 1994, p. 67)

During the initial phase of my practice-based PhD research the question of how to go about writing a dissertation text was not my main concern. I was more engaged in thinking about the notion of artistic research and the kind of knowledge that it could, or was supposed to, produce. (An interesting account of what artistic research is all about can be found in Borgdorff, 2006.) Probably because the ontological research problem is a tricky and sticky one to solve I didn’t bother to think about writing a text. I had already completed a Master’s thesis in literature and I thought that the dissertation text for my PhD would somehow evolve along the same lines without causing insurmountable problems. The assumption that writing on the one hand and art practice and research on the other hand were two distinct entities was motivated by the “Regulations for the Doctorate in the Arts”, a text issued by the Institute for Practice-based Research in the Arts in Leuven, that talks about

> “the dual requirements of both an artistic or creative component and a reflective textual component […] The term ‘dissertation’ covers the obligation to produce a textual component distinct from but reflecting upon the product, a component that opens the research for discussion and verification by peers.” (Ivok)

But as soon as I started writing (chapter outlines, ideas, reflections, comments on interesting artists and theories …) it became clear that I had been quite wrong in my neglect of the dissertation text. Through the practice of writing I became fully aware of the fact that research, writing and art practice are more intertwined than I had previously assumed.

Doing research, writing a text

Place of research

The distinction between an artistic and reflective component fails to clarify what the place of artistic research is. If artistic research would only consist in reflecting upon the artistic practice, it is debatable whether the work itself would benefit from it. Reflection is required, but is not sufficient to qualify as research since it does not necessarily influence the art practice and lead to new insights. If, on the other hand, the research component would be situated in the artistic practice, the question pops up whether not all artistic practices qualify as being research. (An account of this discussion can be found in Engels, 2008) Research is not something that is done a-posteriori or a-priori to the artistic creation. Research goes beyond the dichotomy between artistic and reflective and is situated somewhere in between. That is why it is so hard to grasp.

Paradigm paralysis

Academic writing and research, however diverse it may be, relies on a very specific set of discursive strategies. Commonly accepted strategies include objectivity, methodological soundness, logic, chronology, relevance of references and closure.

Artistic practice, however, is in some respects quite distanced from this academic research paradigm. Artist rely more on notions of tactics such as subjectivity, serendipity and associative connections. It is tempting to conform to a long and fruitful tradition of academic writing, but that conformity might be paralyzing in the long run. The first proposals I made concerning the structure of my dissertation text were in tune with accepted academic standards. As soon as I started to use this structure as a guideline in my writing, however, it started to impose limitations on the development of my artistic work. The fundamental openness of the work was reduced by trying to categorize it. Moreover, some aspects of the work became highlighted while other, imminent possibilities were neglected. It could be opposed that sound research needs structure and limitations, but in a practice that relies heavily on serendipity those limitations and the discursive strategies of academic writing might become paralysing borders.

Writing

Traditional academic texts present writing as a transparent medium which gives the reader immediate access to the original thoughts of the researcher/writer. In spite of deconstructive and poststructuralist attempts to critically undermine this notion of transparance, the actual writing process (the struggle of looking for the correct word or phrase and of shifting, deleting and adding chapters) is only rarely visible in the final text. This paradoxical strategy of obscuring the writing process in order to achieve a high level of transparency involves that a lot of research material gets lost. The interesting thing is that artistic advancements (and scientific advancements in a broader sense) can exactly be made on the basis of what went wrong in the research process. Serendipity therefore calls for a form of writing that credits the failures and doubts inherent in every research project, not because they have actually led to new insights, but because they might do so in the future.

The art text

The academic world is only slowly adapting itself to the needs of artistic research in which the distinction between the artistic practice, the research project and the textual component is blurred. For a better understanding of the relationship between a work of art and what I would like to call an art text, it is interesting to go back to Roland Barthes' influential essay "From work to text". Barthes characterizes a text as "a methodological field." that "only exists in the movement of a discourse" (Barthes, 1977, p. 157). Texts are fundamentally open to interpretation. They postpone meaning and defy the notion of closure. By saying that "The Text is plural." Barthes does not refer to the fact that several meanings can coexist in one Text, but to a fundamental form of plurality that is "an irreducible (and not merely acceptable) plural" (Barthes, 1977, p. 159). The "vast stereophony" (Barthes, 1977, p. 160) of intertextuality thus created is not something that can be easily interpreted.

> "to try to find the 'sources', the 'influences' of a work is to fall in with the myth of filiation; the citations which go to make up a text are anonymous, untraceable, and yet already read: they are quotations with inverted commas." (Barthes, 1977, p. 160)

Barthes' notion of the text is not limited to literary texts. The art text that I want to propose should function as a textual mirror to the actual work of art. Work of art and art text thus become actors in an intertextual play, based on an ongoing dialogue. Artistic research, then, is situated at the writing intersection between these two actors. It is in fact the process of writing that is at the core of artistic research, for only in writing can the artist transcend the boundaries of his medium to communicate what he is doing to a broader audience.

> "This is also an essential requirement for academic research projects in contrast to other art, architecture, or design projects: a research project must, in some way, open up for discursive encounters. By developing a critical perspective on her or his work, the author/architect behind a project invites others to participate, not in awe, but in critical discussion." (Grillner, 2003, p. 246)

Research fiction

> "(…) fiction is a kind of writing in which you can neither lie, tell the truth nor make a mistake. You cannot lie in fiction, because the reader does not assume that you are intending to be truthful." (Eagleton, 2003, p. 89)

Barthes' description of the text as "a methodological field" presupposes an intricate relationship between research and fiction. A clear account of this relationship can be found in Julian Bleecker's essay "Design Fiction: A short essay on design, science, fact and fiction". Bleecker zooms in on the dialectics of science fiction and future-oriented design, but his account can be broadened to other types of fiction and design or art practices. Indeed, his list of "terms familiar to science fiction" (Bleecker,

2009, p. 17), which consists of indirection, distraction, disruption and displacement, can equally be applied to the kind of art text that I have in mind as to a number of literary examples apart from the science fiction genre. Bleecker explicitly refers to writing as an indispensable part of creative design research.

> "Design fiction is a mix of science fact, design and science fiction. It is a kind of authoring practice that recombines the traditions of writing and story telling with the material crafting of objects." (Bleecker, 2009, p. 7)

Design fiction in Bleecker's view has a double goal: it "creates opportunities for reflections as well as active making" (Bleecker, 2009, p. 8)

The notion of research fiction that I want to propose is partly based on Bleecker's and Barthes' observations, but also on the insight that fiction as a writing practice might be a valuable method for practice-based research. Whereas Bleecker does not focus on the methods proper to science fiction writing (he concentrates on the end result and how that interrelates with design innovations) I want to find out how literary strategies can be used as a means to make abstraction of an artistic oeuvre and to communicate what is happening in it by fundamentally different (literary) means so as to come to new metaphors to understand and create visual art.

The resulting art text is always a meta-text. Barthes points out that the metatextual level should coincide with that of the text itself.

> "(…) the discourse on the Text should itself be nothing other than text, research, textual activity, since the Text is that social space which leaves no language safe, outside, nor any subject of the enunciation in position as judge, master, analyst, confessor, decoder. The theory of the Text can coincide only with a practice of writing." (Barthes, 1977, p. 164)

It might be objected that when works of art are considered as texts, they would not need an art text as a surplus. Following that line of reasoning, the theory of the work of art would coincide with the work of art itself. However, as I have shown above, the dialectic relation between a work of art and a literary textual account of it is one of the differentiating factors for artistic research. The art text is a specifically metatextual means to open up the work of art for discursive encounters by peers (Grillner, 2003, p. 246). This metatextuality might seem like a recipe for illegibility, but it doesn't have to be. It is exactly to avoid overtly idiosyncratic writing that research fiction relies on narrative strategies to make the art text appealing and challenging at the same time.

I will briefly present three literary examples here that have heavily influenced my PhD research. The literary works are linked through the encyclopaedic scope, the formal experimentation with writing as a discursive strategy, the importance of spatial representation and the use of mixed fictionalized accounts.

Mark Z. Danielewski *House of leaves*

House of leaves combines different narratives and narrations into one novel. The combination of the novel's encyclopaedic scope, graphical experimentation, intertextual play and page turning storylines turn it into a source of inspiration for developing research fiction strategies. Danielewski's novel makes clear that every act of writing is an exploration of the medium of writing. Part of the novel consists of a textual attempt to disclose a movie The Navidson Record that appears to exist only in the mind of a blind man as an ultimate attempt to "capture the products of the imagination." (Bachelard, 1994, p. 158) The story of the haunted house that is bigger on the inside as it is on the outside is not only mirrored in the meticulously designed page layout of the novel, but it also serves as a metaphor for a text that always contains so much more than actual words.

Nicholson Baker *The mezzanine*

The mezzanine lacks the ambitious scope that characterizes Danielewski's writing. However, Baker convincingly integrates a fictional meta-textual level in his short novel. The mezzanine depicts a character on an escalator ride in an office building. During the ride the protagonist starts thinking about the tearing of his shoe-laces. His thoughts are continuously interrupted by footnotes added by the protagonist himself, thus blurring the distinction between his status as a character and as a writer/editor of his own story. The novel is an experiment in text editing and the footnotes function as an ideal tool for acts of digression. Through these digressive acts, Baker literally and typographically creates space to highlight what is often taken for granted.

> "(…) The Mezzanine is constantly self-reflexive about its own forms of typographic textuality. Thereby it articulates what is normally taken for granted and not seen and reflects upon this overlooked typographic layer of the reading process." (Pold, 2004, pp. 143-144)

Georges Perec *La vie mode d'emploi*
Perec's novel juxtaposes a number of stories and characters that are only related to each other because of the fact that they live, or have once lived, in the same apartment building in Paris. Some of the characters are clearly linked to each other, while others have little or nothing in common. La vie mode d'emploi is a novel of combining different registers, modes, and writing constraints in an oddly structured polyphonous event. The novel's setting is not unlike that of a studio or laboratory where different distinct works of art become related to each other because of spatial proximity. By mapping the daily routines of the inhabitants and their inner relationships Perec succeeds in rendering an overall picture without neglecting the inherent discrepancies and disruptions.

The architecture of writing

> "The Merzbau could also be seen as an incubator, a safe enclosure for life in a state of preparation (or regression). An incubator provides a protective shell, allowing the organism inside to develop for an autonomous existence. Merzbau provided a micro-climate for the preservation of obscure, pure and premature thoughts, while gradually turning into an organic system in itself." (Zimm, 2003)

It was actually this quote from Malin Zimm that made me want to title this article "The art text as incubator". I was looking for an interesting metaphor to my notion of an art text and the incubator seemed a very interesting one. The incubator would function as the image of a safe enclosure where things, ideas, and concepts have the time to become mature, to develop into a complex interrelated system. The incubator would function as the room and space that an artist needs if he wants to translate or remediate his art practice in a research setting. But the incubator simile has some serious flaws. It represents a closed system, allowing the organism inside to develop regardless of outside conditions and contextual parameters that might otherwise be lethally harmful to it. The art text and by extension the artistic research project as a whole, however, is largely dependent on outside conditions and contextual factors. That dependency might not be an absolute prerequisite for artistic research, but it seems odd to work as an artist in the 21st century without letting the state of the world influence you. Moreover, the goal oriented incubator lacks the disruptive aspects that characterize a lot of artistic research.

> "(…) the generation of the perpetual signifier (…) is realized not according to an organic progress of maturation or a hermeneutic course of deepening investigation, but, rather, according to a serial movement of disconnections, overlappings, variations." (Barthes, 1977, p. 158)

It is exactly this process of disconnections, overlappings and variations that characterizes the iterative process of artistic creation and research. The art text is often difficult to grasp. It can easily change shape. Protagonists that seem highly important in the beginning might suddenly disappear from the scene. Initially marginal aspects might gain a prominent place. The impermanent nature of the art text's layout, however, does not mean that there are no architectural strings attached. As Grillner points out:

> "Critical writing is in effect inherently architectural, or topographical, in this respect. Whether explicitly or not the text establishes, draws, a room, or a landscape, to house objects and critical reflections." (Grillner, 2003, p.239)

The architecture of the art text is like an impermanent housing project, not unlike the labyrinth-like house on Ash Tree Lane that is central in Danielewski's House of leaves. More examples of impermanent housing projects can of course be given. Kurt Schwitter's Merzbau (referred to by Zimm, 2003), Gregor Scheider's Haus ur, and most of the writings of Jorge Luis Borges could equally have served as examples here. As one of Danielewski's characters remarks about the structure of the house:

> "It would be fantastic if based on footage from The Navidson Record someone were able to reconstruct a bauplan for the house. Of course this is an impossibility, no only due to the wall-shifts but also to the film's constant destruction of continuity, frequent jump cuts prohibiting any sort of accurate mapmaking. Consequently, in lieu of a schematic, the film offers instead a schismatic rendering of empty rooms, long hallways, and dead ends, perpetually promising but forever eluding the finality of an immutable layout." (Danielewski, 2000, p. 109)

That is why medial ecology has come to replace the original incubator in my title. Medial ecology is a term coined by Katherine N. Hayles in the preface to *Writing Machines*.

> "The phrase suggests that the relationships between different media are as diverse and complex as those between different organisms coexisting within the same ecotome, including mimicry, deception, cooperation, competition, parasitism, and hyperparasitism." (Hayles, 2002, p. 5)

The *art text* is multilayered per definition, because it aims at translating an artistic practice in a discursive setup that incorporates excerpts from that same practice. The practice of writing and combining different media establishes an ecology in which the work of art is suddenly out of balance because it is no longer the sole instigator of what is happening. The text becomes a shelter for interaction and hitherto unimagined relationships. Obviously it will call for a reading strategy that is based on browsing, as opposed to linear reading, and active engagement on the part of the reader. Reading will become an act of deciphering and reconstruction, of critically engaging with the artist's oeuvre. Artistic research should not aim at providing answers to specific questions; it should serve as a fertile basis for questioning ever more.

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Writing on Film as Art through Ricoeur's Hermeneutics

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Abstract

Writing on the art of film is usually anchored in immediate sensory experience and personal opinion. While philosophers and lawyers have begun to analyze film for its properties as art, there is no generally accepted and theoretically rigorous method for film analysis accessible to a broad range of scholars. The rich tradition of hermeneutics provides such a method. Using Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutical theory to interpret Clint Eastwood's film Unforgiven requires a structure anchored in five key themes. These five themes are 1) explanation and understanding, 2) symbol, 3) metaphor, 4) narrative, and 5) imagination. These five themes permit us to understand how a text – or film – communicates and builds meaning. Each of Ricoeur's five themes offers a specific way to understand the text, in this case, the film. All five themes work together to demonstrate the text or the work as a communicative and artistic whole, a single unit of several interlocked parts. This presentation will examine the five themes to show how they function together, establishing their role in interpretation.

Georg Simmel and an Artefactual Theory of Communication

Eduardo de la Fuente

Abstract

In his short essay 'The Handle', the turn-of-the-last-century sociologist and philosopher of culture, Georg Simmel, proposes that 'every ability, action, and obligation pertaining' to a thing stems from the 'totality of our energy' that this thing is able to draw upon and 'enlist it into their own service'. Anticipating recent themes in material culture studies and actor-network theory, Simmel proposes that that things have their own 'teleology' and that their agency over human actors stems from the fact that 'men and things belong to each other… they are simultaneously inside and outside one another'. The handle is put forward as a 'symbol' of a more general process by which the 'soul is at home in two worlds': a concrete or material world through which 'life flows' and takes on 'self-sufficient' forms; and a 'shared' or 'ideal' world where all things are connected and the 'superpersonal' makes itself felt. Simmel compares the soul to 'an arm which one of the worlds – whether the real or the ideal - stretches out so that it may seize the other and join it to itself'. In the case of the handle, the metaphor of the soul functioning as an arm reaching out to join the 'real' to the 'ideal' or, alternatively, the 'ideal' to the 'real', is not accidental. For Simmel, the handle has to solve several aesthetic problems at once. Unlike the 'hooks and eyes of a picture frame', the handle must be 'justified as shape and constitute a single aesthetic vision' with the object to which it is attached. Simmel adds that the object will be 'grasped by the handle'. In short, the handle is how the 'world approaches the vessel'; and, it is through the handle that the relationship between an aesthetic object and the 'practical environment that surrounds it' is mediated. In this paper, I outline why Simmel describes the aesthetic function of the handle as symbolic and what his understanding of the artefact as symbol suggests for a theory of communication. My suggestion will be that by focusing on the 'grasped object' and the manner in which the soul 'fuses' the 'real' with the 'ideal', Simmel suggests an account of communication capable of theorizing the object in terms of its inner teleology and inherent materiality; rather than the meanings that users (often retrospectively) attribute to objects. The paper proposes that we are what we hold, as much as what we say; and that things/ artefacts hold a central place in communication and aesthetic experience.

Narrative and the artefact

Gabriella Trussardi

Extended abstract

As Webster and Mertova (2007) assert, people make sense of their lives through narratives. Indeed, Klapproth (2004) states that we can only understand our experiences through "narrative conceptualising" (p. 136): by turning the world around us into a story for ourselves and for others.

This makes it no surprise that discussions of designed artefacts constantly refer to narratives. For example, Quinn (2009) describes how "tailoring details or embroidery stitches . . . tell the story of [a] garment" (p. 143), and Mäkelä (2007) states that "artefacts can be seen as revealing their stories" (p. 157). Bal (1997) comments that "asking whether or not an object 'is' narrative is both obvious and futile" just as "watching a film . . . it hardly seems important to ask if what we are seeing is in fact a narrative" (p. 221), which points to a general acceptance that narrative is present in artefacts. Artefacts, then, can be the loci of the narrative conceptualisation with which we make sense of our world. However, there seems to be little discussion about the ways in which the narrativity that infuses an artefact can be described and understood.

Recent texts have discussed narrative in terms of oral storytelling, film, television, painting, the graphic novel, music, poetry, ballet, photography and online gaming. Storytelling through artefacts, however, has not been widely addressed. This may be so because, even if we agree that narrative is present in objects, it seems so hard to articulate how it is present. Although researchers such as Paris (2006) argue that one can read objects as texts (p. 258), an artefact is not a constative text, clearly describing situations and events.

Pattison (2007) suggests that "objects ...spawn stories" (p. 116), and this suggests that the narratives grow from and around the objects, rather than being inherent in them from their conception or creation. This would align with Suchy's (2006) assertion that artefacts are a prompt which lead people to create meaning from their individual past experiences. Artefacts allow people to "look carefully... [so that] reflective thinking and an inner dialogue engage memory to complete patterns" (p. 48). The meaning or narrative found in any artefact therefore comes from within the reader, and not from within the artefact. Paris (2006) supports this, stating "readers construct meanings from ... objects, and those meanings are grounded in the biases of the ...reader... every person's reading of objects can be unique yet personally meaningful" (p. 258).

The word narrator comes from the Greek gnarus, meaning one who knows. A narrator is the one who knows what is going on in the narrative: they reveal, mediate and evaluate the events which make up the story. With artefacts, the reader of each object-text reveals and mediates their own unique stories, based on their own internal subjective experiences. This paper asks if it is therefore each individual reader who is the narrator of an artefact's story, rather than the designer of the artefact? What implications might this have for other narrative concepts such as focalizer, actor or fabula when applied to artefacts? Can an author's intended narrative be communicated to the reader of an artefact? Addressing these questions around the ways in which narrativity in artefacts might be articulated could help designers grapple with how their work speaks to others.

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Learning new moves; becoming a postgraduate design researcher

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Abstract

Postgraduate research requires students to conceptualise and articulate the design research project within the discourse of research. For many students this requires new kinds of writing skills, which include specialist processes of written argumentation and rhetorical movement. Analysis of these syntactic structures demonstrates the process of developing an argument and authoritative position through a series of rhetorical moves. (Kamler & Thomson, 2006; Swales & Feak, 1994). This paper presents a pedagogical approach to developing postgraduate design research projects which applies Swales (1994) model of "creating a research space" and Kamler and Thomson's concept of "linguistic identity work" (2006 ,p57). The utility of this approach is discussed, using examples of honours year visual communication design research projects. The paper outlines how syntactic structures were used in project development seminars, to accelerate the acquisition of the writing skills needed to position the project within a design research niche. It shows that, as a result, more time was available for further focused research and the conceptual development of the design work, enhancing the value of the project.

Extended abstract

The process of shaping the postgraduate research project out of an initial idea is a challenging and often time consuming phase of honours year and postgraduate research in visual communication design. Within the limited time available students can sometimes spend more time on the selection and identification of the project, than on the conceptual formation of the work itself.

This paper identifies some of the issues and challenges that students encounter during this phase, and presents a pedagogical approach to project development that sets out to facilitate this process. This approach applies Swales (1990) "Creating a research space" model and Kamler and Thomson's (2006) concepts of "syntactic borrowing", and "linguistic identity work" to the specific context of postgraduate research in visual communication design. A linguistic framework is utilised to introduce the student to the discursive structures which position design research and the design researcher, in an academic field.

The paper outlines the theoretical basis of this approach, and discusses its utility in the development of student work produced in an honours year visual communications design research programme. It sets out to show how an understanding and grasp of writing as strategic process works conjointly with its visual counterpart to focus and position the research project, and to foster its timely development.

While the undergraduate design student may have gained an understanding of the rhetorical, technical and aesthetic skills of visual argumentation, they will generally be less well versed in the construction and conventions of the written argument. Further, the conceptually based design research project, positioned within a discourse of design research and validated through rhetorical moves, requires writing skills of a different order to that of the essays, critiques and rationales of the undergraduate programme. The rhetorical structures deployed in written arguments and positioning statements are however, a central mechanism through which the significance and contribution of a research project is asserted both within and beyond its specific field of knowledge. Knowing how to use written language to position both the research and the researcher within the scholarly field, is therefore essential to the development of postgraduate design research projects.

While this seems like a straightforward proposition, a number of factors have complicated the relationship between design research practices and the representations of design as academic discourse in recent years. These complications include the comparatively recent and rapidly evolving status of design as academic discipline; the multiple and shifting definitions of research and design research practices within the discipline; and perhaps most importantly in the context of this paper, its inherent inter-disciplinarity.

Visual communication design is a content responsive activity which encompasses multiple practices and modes of visual articulation. It has in recent years, engaged

in various ways with a spectrum of research discourses extending from the applied sciences to the fine arts. Consequently the "field of knowledge production" (Kamler & Thomson, 2006 p46) for visual communications design research has often been difficult to isolate, and multiple discursive constructions of visual communication as a design discipline have prevailed. Further the current focus on interwoven relationships between visual and verbal modes of argumentation and articulation as central site of thesis production, has I suggest, diverted attention from the epistemological and discursive work that written language does in and for the discipline. One (of many) significant functions of writing in the design disciplines is the work it does in constructing the discourse through which the discipline communicates the significance and authority of its research contributions to itself and to others. It is this function that is the focus of this paper.

The "Creating a Research Space" model (Swales and Feak 1990, 1994), Kamler and Thomson's (2006) models, and other approaches which utilize analysis and production of linguistic structures in the positioning of research and the researcher, have been used widely in many areas of postgraduate education. I have found little evidence to date, however, of their use as a pedagogical framework within postgraduate design research. The approach presented in this paper proposes their integration as a central part of the postgraduate design curriculum, situated in an iterative relationship to precedent and literature analysis and design development. They are positioned here as a primary mechanism though which the student is inducted into the discourses of visual communication design research.

This pedagogical approach brings together the analysis of discursive practices and the processes of discursive reproduction. An introduction to the discipline's discursive practices, which Foucault defined as "a body of anonymous historical rules", provides a critical awareness of the knowledge contexts in which research is situated (Foucault, 2002 page 131).

By engaging a learning sequence of analysis and production, to facilitate the acquisition of a specific skill set, this pedagogical approach follows a process of discursive reproduction. In this way analysis provides a performative script through which the identity of postgraduate researcher can be articulated. As Kamler and Thompson point out, the use of a sentence skeleton, "encourages writers to take on the subject position of an experienced, authoritative writer, at least linguistically. It allows them to write themselves into an authoritative stance they may not be able to take by themselves" (Kamler and Thomson 2006 p 57).

Postgraduate education in design is currently in a phase of expansion. While this environment will potentially enable visual communication design research to make a wider impact on the social landscape, it also demands a consolidation of postgraduate pedagogy and research practices. Early command of the discourse, I conclude, facilitates the emergence of a design researcher identity. Pedagogical approaches then, which use critical analysis to address the language of research as discursive construction, become invaluable in this new environment.

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Learner as Designer: theoretical approaches to learning and design

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Abstract

Recently so-called eLearning 2.0 has shifted the image of learning from a mental construction of meaning and knowledge to a creative activity that involves the transformation, design and management of external resources. The focus of research in this area is on the social processes between learners and, their communities of practice in their production of meaning (Wenger 1998). Such processes and activities, including writing, can be seen as 'designerly' particularly where students work at achieving their ends using material and conceptual resources in their surroundings. Embedded in the discourse of the "practice turn" (Reckwitz 2002), design research may help to understand how learning activities are structured through the mediation of artifacts. A framework that takes into account the learner not only as user but also as an everyday designer may also play an important role in the development of new tools for learning processes and outcomes.Such a reframing of learning practices requires a commitment to existing socio-cognitive theories

The cognitivist approach to learning acknowledges the active processing of external resources, which is most obvious in the concept of discovery learning (Bruner & Anglin 1974), and generative processes are understood as supportive for memorization (Wittrock 1974). However, in the cognitive tradition in general creation and modification of external resources are considered as secondary traces of cognition (Winne & Hadwin 1998). Constructivist approaches—a contradictio in adjecto—show some interest in learners' material constructions, preferring to focus on the individuals interactions with external resoucrs as a construction that can be facilitated in learning.. The concept of Distributed Cognition tries to overcome the blind spot when it integrates external resources into cognitive processes (Salomon 1993). Within this view external resources may structure, offload, and distribute cognitive processes. While Distributed Cognition opens an important perspective on the material world, criticism has been articulated on the static notion of the described cognitive processes (Kaptelinin & Nardi 2006). Learning of course is a dynamic activity that changes with every step the learner makes. Here is where Activity Theory as developed by Vygotsky (Wertsch 1985) and Leontiev (1978) enters the stage with its immanent developmental view on activity. Activity is understood as a goal directed act that is mediated by tools (Engeström, 1987). This understanding is often represented by a triangle relating subject-object-tool. With Activity Theory it can be argued that tools are used and designed in the process to accomplish the goal of learning. Activity theory, now a popular framework for interaction design, leads to a consideration of learning activities as designerly.

One area of design research is the successful demystification of the design process (Lawson 2006). Although repeatedly authors (Papanek 1985; Thackara 2006) claim design to be a fundamental human activity, research mainly has contributed to the professionalization of design. The fields of Science and Technology Studies and post-cognitivist Human-Computer interaction both deconstruct the concept of use and the user as a wishful projection in the development process. Ethnographic research has revealed the "mutual shaping of design and use" (Rohracher 2006) which finally also reconfigures the user. The user "finishes the design" (Vicente 1999) to accommodate technology into his everyday life. This everyday design is pervasive and seen as "the most authentic kind of designing" (Moran 2002). Recent ethnographic studies have been undertaken to better understand everyday design, demonstrating design-in-use that exploits the affordances of artifacts and the environment (Brandes, Stich & Wender 2008; Wakkary & Maestri 2008). . Some aspects of everyday practices like task management and personal information management (PIM) which also occur in learning can be conceptualized in this way. The emergence of ephemeral everyday design in learning may be captured as "instrumental genesis". This extension of Activity Theory splits up the tool in artifact and utilization scheme (Béguin & Rabardel 2000). It is only when a utilization scheme is applied on an artifact that tool use, instrumental genesis emerges. Within this framework it is possible to capture the learning process as a process where tools have to be designed to accomplish learning objectives. It is critical for the learner not only to design artifacts but also to find utilization schemes that make sense. As learners are constantly confronted with new challenges it can be argued that instrumental genesis and tool mediated activity have to occur in an ad hoc manner. With this theoretical approach, the importance of design in learning processes could be shown. It calls for further research that empirically grounds the claims.

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Quantum entanglement: Practice-led research and the observer effect

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Abstract

The challenge of producing creative work in an academic environment is one faced by students undertaking higher degrees by artefact and exegesis. The aim of such practice-led research is to produce a creative piece that prompts research about the content and production, yet this process cannot be a pure one if it is conducted within in an environment where every step is recorded and/or open to deeper scrutiny. The effect of observation on results is noted from fields as diverse as psychology and quantum mechanics, and is one that may have an unintended impact within the field of practice-led research. If this influence is inevitable, what does this mean for the creative artefacts produced within the higher education environment and their contribution to the knowledge in their fields?

Visual reflections: teaching designers to be reflective

Kate Sweetapple

Extended abstract

This paper reports on an attempt to explicitly develop reflective practice within design students, initially through writing and then visualisation. The students in this case study are in their final semester of a first year Visual Communication Design course, and the primary focus of the subject is the creation of visual artefacts. Yet, as a first for these students, the practice of designing is being taught alongside the practice of reflective writing. Their final assessment task is a synthesis of these two aspects.

The decision to include a reflective practice component into the first year studio class is the result of the need to explicitly frame the students' experiences as opportunities for learning. The students need both a structure and a space to step back, to make sense of their experiences and to ask the questions: 'what did and did not work and why?' And, more importantly, 'How could I do it differently next time?' Essentially, to learn from their experiences. The importance of developing reflective practitioners is well documented (Schön 1983, Boud et al 1985), as is the role of learning journals to facilitate this process (Moon 2006). What is less well understood is the potential of the visual to support and deepen this process.

First, this paper discusses the problems of teaching reflective writing to undergraduate design students. These include the students' perception of themselves as 'image' not 'word' people, and of their association of writing with theory subjects. The students do not regard writing to be a creative activity, nor a reflective activity. To these visual practitioners, writing has little perceived value. They make for generally anxious and reluctant writers. (Francis 2009)

Part Two of the paper discusses the strategies used to counter this problem. The first strategy is the inclusion of a writing workshop and the introduction of weekly reflective writing tasks, the results of which constitute the students' learning journals. Toward the end of the semester students review their entries and select eight insights (or new understandings) that become the basis for a series of postcards. The students create images (and text) that reflect these learning experiences. The assessable items will be the postcards, but not the learning journals. This is the second strategy: the area they feel most anxious about (reflective writing) remains private, whereas the area they show greatest fluency and comfort (visualisation) becomes public.

But aside from reducing anxiety (and therefore promoting deeper reflection and a more positive learning environment), I will discuss other advantages of presenting insights in a visual form (the postcards). This form provides students with an incentive to review and analyse their reflective writing. And because the postcards are visual the student's automatically perceive them as relevant, unlike, perhaps as reflective essay. The visual is a currency whose value they understand and respect.

Up until this point the role of visual in this reflective practice task is framed as part-security blanket, part-incentive. Yet the significance of the visualisation potentially lies in the type and depth of reflection that it affords. Does the act of translating a written insight into a visual form transform – deepen or change – the reflection? Does the time and space required to create a visual encourage further (wider? deeper?) reflection? What is added through the translation of written insight into visual form? What is lost? Does reflecting on the process of creating these visuals produce a different kind of reflection? Or perhaps, more simply, 'What insights are gained at this visual stage?'

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The design proposal in situated learning

Keith Robertson

Abstract

The design proposal is a standardized writing structure used in design business practice to rationalize, describe and persuade a client that a particular design outcome is the best solution to their brief, as such it is clearly a competitive document and instrumental to best design practice. In this paper I am proposing that with an augmented structure, it can also serve academic outcomes with equal alacrity Since moving to Swinburne University Faculty of Design five years ago, I have been heavily involved in honours and postgraduate teaching and instrumental in establishing research methodologies in Honours and Postgraduate Coursework studies. This opportunity has allowed me to inherit and modify the design proposal and develop it into a versatile vehicle for both academic and/or business oriented applications by selectively modifying its components according to the outcomes and requirements of the client. From the students point of view the design proposal gives continuity of experience with previous studio learning, while providing a structure for the incorporation of more rigorous and research driven components required for academic assessment. This article provides a modified structure for the design proposal as a hybrid form of writing that can serve as a powerful bridge to postgraduate study. At Swinburne it has also proven to be a versatile, subdividable structure that suits group work and collaborative learning.

Design in academia

Relative to fine art and the social sciences, design has a remarkably short history in academia. In Australia it was only really in the 1990's that design joined the rest of the academy in design initiated research and publishing. Prior to the 90's, design was applied in much the same way as the crafts – a practical profession serving primarily industrial needs. In Australia, design qualifications were awarded as certificates and diplomas, but by 1990 diplomas were converted to degrees and slowly design academics started raising their qualifications to match the institutional standards they now found themselves in. Design teaching had occurred almost exclusively based on the master-apprentice model and design was judged primarily by the masters or your peers according to criteria that existed as aesthetic ideals set mostly by either avant-garde and/or industry practice. By coincidence, the other phenomena so important to the recent development of design that also accelerated in the early 90's was computers and digital technology.

Computers have been important both in terms of transforming the generation and production processes of design itself, but also in providing new and increasingly dominant medias of delivery best exemplified by the internet and the constant transformations of mobile telephony. The first great flowering of design related research has occurred in relation to the Human Computer Interface, but now design itself seems to be fragmenting and diversifying into addressing less material oriented problem solving to more conceptual, organizational and even social outcomes. These days design is even touted as a problem solving paradigm that might rival the inductive methods of science. (Friedman, K. 2003)

These changes have occurred over twenty years and in that time change has been at best, uneven. The generation of design graduates now running the major studios and professional organizations tend to express little need for research and even tend to be a little wary of a curriculum outside their experience. So research is getting little drive from industry. If writing on design occurred in the 90's academy it tended to be industry related and in industry magazines. Even though these were popular and influential among design academics and students they were not refereed, nor did they adhere to academic requirements in relation to writing style, citation etc. Also, the sorts of problems addressed by 90's design writing tended to derive from opinion and theory rather than research. In design, it was those user centred problems that have needed and used research in their resolution.

The one form of writing that was commonly produced in the 90's design academy was the proposal. The proposal was produced because it served an essential industry function related to the pitch – when design firms competitively seek to win over clients to their ideas and solutions in relation to a design problem. The proposal may have had another manifestation in relation to government tendering or as submissions to competitions through which particular outcomes are articulated, justified and illustrated.

Writing for the academy

Fast forward to 2009. The design academy has changed considerably in orientation. Internationally, in the United Kingdom, Europe, Australia, New Zealand and parts of

Asia, over the last decade there has developed a common emphasis on research output as the major determining criteria for university funding. (Wilson & Obrien: 2007: 393-4) Defining these criteria is proving difficult, but suffice to say in relation to design in particular it is handicapped on a number of fronts.

- Availability of design staff with higher qualifications and research experience is still limited (in the Australian context at least). This results in design faculties having some of the lowest percentages of PhD's in the university.

- Design courses do not have a research tradition as either a formal or integrated part of their undergraduate curriculum – not in any long-term context anyway.

- General and special interest refereed design journals are currently proliferating (though this field of publications is still slight compared to the well established academic disciplines).

- Courses that train designers are still primarily practical and by other academic comparisons would involve relatively little reading and formal writing as a designated outcome.

- In order to boost research output, many design faculties/courses import non-designers to conduct research and write for them but this rarely touches undergraduate design practice.

It is in this context that I have been teaching and studying for the past 20 years. Armed with a PhD in Sociology on design semiotics (which incorporated a fairly rigorous methods training), I have been one of the earlier designers in Australia to be introducing the need for research and research methodologies at undergraduate, honours and postgraduate levels. Prior to teaching at Swinburne the principle writing forms with which I was familiar were the essay and the thesis. However at Swinburne, there was widespread use of the proposal as a document that was primarily developed as a way of addressing commercial clients. The proposal is a writing form that has long been a part of design practice. It is used both to sell a proposition or idea to a client and as a way of methodically and precisely describing a brief or physical prototype in a way that a client might accurately realize exactly what idea and concept is being sold. In the context of design practice this would almost exclusively define the proposal – except for those occasions when the proposal might have been produced as a tender when bidding for a grant or competition.

There is another type of proposal that is commonly used in most faculties (though of course not yet met by undergraduates) and that is the Research Proposal, a document produced before commencement of further study. (Herrington et al.: 2007) The Research Proposal would normally contain a literature review leading to a research gap, proposed methods to be used in researching the problem and maybe some speculation on its resolution.

The Swinburne Design Proposal

Honours and Coursework Masters courses (in their 2009 – 2010 manifestations) each have two core 'research' subjects where a theory and research subject is married to a studio subject and through both, students produce a practical design outcome derived from (usually) a group exploration of a broad research area (with titles like Social Patterns, New Technology, User Centred Design, Sustainability and Design as a Service). The driving force of these subjects is research and the main written output is in the form of a proposal. (see Figure 1 – Appendix A) The reader will notice that the table is presented in black and grey tones, the black representing the original industry/product oriented proposal in common use at Swinburne in 2005; the grey represents those extra headings I have introduced to accommodate research to the outcomes and design resolution.

As a structure of headings, students have found this a relevant and useful set of parameters around which they can build an argument and develop a solution to a problem. The insertion of methods and findings into the sequence, tends to reinforce the quality of the justification made for particular decision making and leads to stronger and more reasoned outcomes. Usually I would expect students to triangulate research methods because this is a wise research tradition and demonstrates a variety of methods in practice to students with very little prior experience of formal research or even articulating those parts of design practice that are research related. This hybrid design proposal brief, incorporating research into the design development strengthens the design proposition in such a natural way that it has the affect of increasing credabilty and persuasive power of the argument supporting the outcome. Add to this the fact that in design there is often an aspect of the method that becomes part of the outcome's structure or delivery. The idea of research driven design can reinvigorate the whole design process and the proposal format tends to re-enforce the connection between stronger and clearer decision making, rational and imaginative outcomes.

The *situated* proposal

There is an even stronger argument in support of the proposal in relation to design and research. As I stated earlier, the proposal is already THE accepted format in the design industry for the delivery of ideas and innovations. As a presentation form it can seamlessly be applied across what might otherwise be a gulf between industrial practice and research. While the lack of a formal research phase has been seen as an impediment to design quickly developing a research culture, design is in fact fortunate to have an established applied area of practice through which research can be situated. As an academic from both a design and sociological background, I can recognize the benefit and usefulness of applied research in relation to design, whereas sociology mainly uses research to develop theory.

Situated learning was named and described by Lave and Wenger (1991) as the sort of learning that occurs when students are immersed in a community of practice – in their case initiated by their study of apprenticeship learning of trades. This has developed into a movement in education that recognizes this deep and intuitive learning as one of the strongest forms of educational development – appropriate at all levels of learning. As a beneficial educational philosophy, situated learning has the potential to be active at two levels in relation to design:

1. In terms of design practice. Undergraduate design teaching currently trains for operation at many levels of industry practice. This might be reinforced by industrial placement if students have the good fortune to have this on offer by their faculty (as my Honours students do).

2. In terms of research learning and development. The location of research problems in an industrial context through vehicles of expression such as the proposal which are understood and useful at both an industrial AND academic levels means that the proposal as a form can work as a natural facilitator.

Education is always at its most exciting when it is transcending barriers and facilitating better practice. The proposal can have an instrumental role in this process and should not be neglected as an expressive form that belong to other areas of practice or lesser levels of learning.

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Figure 1

The hybrid proposal brief:

1. **Top sheet**
   Design Research Proposal Brief
   Subject number and name
   Project number and name
   Faculty of Design
   Student Name and Student Number
   Lecturers:
   Submission date: / / 2009

2. **Abstract (new page) 300 words**
   Abstract – a 300 word description of your project proposal.
   Abstracts should be in plain English and to the point. Don't be overblown.
   Abstracts are generally constructed in the following order:
   • **Motivation** *Why do we care about the problem and its results – maybe a summary of the major issue and its context. (1 or 2 sentences)*
   • **Problem Statement** *What problem are you trying to solve? What is its scope?*
   • **Methods** *How did you go about researching the problem / finding out more?*
   • **Results** *What is the answer?*
   • **Conclusion** *What are the implications of your answer?*

3. The proposal in detail

Background/Introduction/Literature Review

A few paragraphs placing the work / study in context. Students are encouraged to insert a summary version of their literature review (their previous research task) in this section.

Objectives

These concern your design outcome – a few sentences presenting the purpose of the proposal.

Design Considerations (choose relevant headings only)

Description of issues relating to function / purpose, aesthetics / design elements, context / environment, performance, materials, production / manufacture, human factors / ergonomics / semantics, demographic, competitors, design registration, marketing / packaging / distribution (choose most relevant categories)

Research Methodologies

Choose at least three methods to successfully triangulate your research insights into the development of your design project. Choose from methods you are familiar with such as

Methods (chosen as appropriate to problems and needed information)

- ***Triangulation*** *List the 3 chosen methods, briefly describing why you have chosen each.*
- ***Describe each method*** *Briefly describe the questions asked, participant response, its strengths and weaknesses and key outcomes.*
- ***Key outcomes*** *Describe which outcomes were most pertinent to the development of your project.*

Positioning

Product audience / Design restraints / Product competition / Brand vision / Personality Marketing advantages / Points of differentiation and distinction

Proposed outcomes

Try and make these as concrete as you can. If you are finding it hard to pin-point an outcome at least try and identify the ballpark in which you will be working. You may be able to name a related product or use a metaphor to describe the relationship of your product to a field of interest.

- Without actually drawing up specifications for your designed object try and show the look and feel by comparison and illustration if possible with similar or related products.
- Illustrate how your research findings might effect the shape and form of your final product.

4. Costing

Include a budget of the production process.

5. Timeline

Research and production schedule

Fit your research and production into a schedule within the semester time frame – there is a schedule that might help as part of the unit brief.

6. References

Include all references in the Harvard style.

U can't touch this: An articulation of the haptic in a multimodal novel

Lisa Williams

Abstract

Today I bought a book I can barely afford. East, a glorious art book containing reproductions of paintings by the New Zealand artist Stanley Palmer.

You should be spending this money on text books, the pragmatic voice in my head says, the one shepherding me through my Ph.D. studies.

I know, I answer as I lay the book down gently on the counter.

Oh, we must wrap this carefully, says the bookseller. A simple paper bag will never do.

She cossets it in brown paper, and I am lost; I would purchase a dozen such volumes just for the pleasure of unwrapping them later in the stillness of twilight.

Alone, sitting on the floor at home, I turn the pages that float like sails across my fingertips. The cool paper releases the scent of ink and memory. The book spine creaks, boasting its freshness. I rub my palm over Stanley's landscapes; my skin whispers to his hills and trees. I imagine I write him a letter on stationery the color of the maroon endpapers. Will you autograph it? I ask. With my blue fountain pen, the one that rests cool and heavy in my hand.

Extended abstract

The scent of ink and memory: a bridge from my body's temporal engagement with the physical book to the metaphorical realm of signification. For me, the book is more than a mere content delivery system, it is a sensual experience that reconnects me to the joy of reading. Like Birkerts (1994) I am transported into "a world inside the world, secret and concealable" (p. 35). Understanding why it engenders such responses has spurred my current Ph.D. research.

This research considers how the haptic, as a semiotic mode, contributes to the articulation and interpretation of a semiotic product, in this instance a multimodal novel that I am designing. The haptic, as it applies to this research, involves not only touch but kinaesthesia, proprioception and the vestibular sense as well (Paterson, 2005). The novel consists of a group of artefacts, ostensibly collected during the past thirty years, that include a cassette audiotape, a videotape, handwritten and typed letters, newspapers, photographs and a novella.

In this paper I will discuss experiments I have undertaken to explore how the novel's interpretation is affected by the materiality of the media that contain it. For example, how does the decay of a cassette tape, and its subsequent distortion of the human voice, or traces of the corporeal, such as blood or fingerprints left behind on a handwritten letter, impact on the understanding of a text? More generally, how does the wear and tear of time upon haptic media influence the signification of the novel itself?

Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2001) concept of multimodality informs the framework of these considerations. They assert that the meaning of a semiotic product or event is created within four domains of practice: discourse, design, production and distribution. The production domain, with its emphasis on the actual material resources used, may add meaning through 'provenance' (p. 72) or 'experiential meaning potential' (p. 74). Provenance concerns the importing of a signifier from a discourse originally attached to another time, place, culture or social group, "where this other 'place' is, in one way or another, related to or associated with key values or themes from that discourse" (p. 73). Experiential meaning potential relates to the literal and metaphorical associations we attach to our bodily experience of materials.

In my project, provenance figures in the discourses raised by my use of historical haptic media. The cassette tape itself, for example, may stir nostalgia for a bygone era or signify obsolescence in an age that values rapid, ever-evolving change in digital media. Such readings may therefore sway the reader's interpretation of the novel. By introducing elements of decay and the corporeal I open a pathway for experiential meaning potential. As the reader feels the texture of the handwritten letter, perhaps running her finger over the smear of dried blood, she engages in a bodily experience with the material. She also interacts with it on a metaphorical level, responding to the cultural signifiers present in the corporeal elements.

References

Birkerts, S. (1994). *The Gutenberg elegies.* Boston: Faber and Faber.

Kress, G. & Van Leeuwen, T. (2001). *Multimodal discourse: The modes and media of contemporary communication.* London: Arnold.

Paterson, M. (2005). The forgetting of touch: Re-remembering geometry with eyes and hands. *Angelaki*, 10(3), 115-132.

Here and there: an artist's writing as aesthetic form – some rationales

Mary Ann Francis

ACT ONE

DAY TIME • THE CONFERENCE HALL

The audience is talking amongst itself, and fidgeting. The Speaker strides onto the stage and sets up behind the podium. The audience grows quiet and still.

SPEAKER. Much has been written about art and writing: less about relationships between them.

(The speaker pauses as if for dramatic affect.)

Nevertheless that latter category includes some significant works. For example: WJT Mitchell's *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation;* Martin Jay's *Downcast Eyes;* Roland Barthes' *Image Music Text*, and George Steiner's *Real Presences.*

However, perhaps I should repeat my opening sentence. 'Much has been *written* on the relationships between art and writing' - such that you can hear the way in which the terms' relationship is already mediated by one of its terms – 'writing'. And then, I could repeat the beginning of my third sentence and say: 'perhaps I should *say* that again'– so that you can hear the way in which the mediation of writing and art by writing is something I'm *talking* about – and you're *listening* to – which means that writing, in its extended sense as verbal inscription, has yet another presence in this representation of art and writing.

And although I'm using words, I want to counter that bias by regarding the relationship between art and writing on art's terms. Even though I'll be using words... I want to propose a new way of thinking about art and writing mediated by the *first* term, and I want to look at arguments in favour of this. (Those against it will be the subject of another paper.)

(The speaker looks up, scanning the auditorium for signs of engagement.)

In doing so, I'll start with a version of an idea proposed by art-historian Mieke Bal about 'art-writing' - the term that is increasingly being used to designate writing about art. Bal writes: 'I contend that art-writing must sever the all-too-tight connections between disciplinary dogmas'. And she insists: '[i]nstead of following methodological programs, art-writing [...] ought to put the art first. It is from the artworks of contemporary culture, not from the tradition of the disciplines, that methodological procedure and art-historical content must be derived.'[1]

And – literally, as well as metaphorically – this is a revolutionary proposition, as the terms of art and writing are reversed. I have some diagrams to illuminate this turn:

(An image [Slide 1] appears on the screen. Half turning, and gesturing towards the screen, the speaker says:)

Here is a depiction of art-writing relations 'from the tradition of the disciplines'. And here is a diagram showing art-writing from the place of art:

(Another image [Slide 2] appears on the screen.)

There is something *very odd* about this state of affairs: it turns everything upside-down or back-to-front in ways that require the diagram to be more radically re-written. Indeed, the idea of the

object 'looking' at the subject evokes a Lacanian analysis that may be extraordinarily rich for research on the shifting subject-object relations in art-writing and the question of what art-writers want. But that is beyond this paper's scope. Suffice to say for now that Bal's gesture refers to Lacan's idea that the subject is constituted by the desire of the object. Or as he writes: 'I am a picture'.[2] This is a discourse about authorship and its origin residing *not* with the subject, as conventionally held, but with the object and thus with the gaze, not the eye.

My version of Bal's version of art-writing is like this:

(A third image [Slide 3] appears on the screen to which the speaker gestures, once again their neck twisting awkwardly.)

But perhaps it needs to be re-cast in less Lacanian terms, thus:

(A version of the previous image [Slide 4] now illuminates the screen. Perhaps sensing that the audience is struggling to keep up with the diagrammatic mutations, the speaker attacks the script with a new aplomb:)

And the question that I'm asking is: what is 'art-writing' from the place of the artist?

Elsewhere, I have argued that this writing would be more than writing by an artist. Rather, I contend, it is writing by and *as* an artist. (It may also have to be 'about' art, but this is another issue for future research.) Written from the former place of one of art-writing's objects, examples may be manifold and could include: Rodney Graham's supplements, *Valentine* by Monica Ross and Tom McCarthy's *Navigation Was Always a Difficult Art: General Secretary's Report to the International Necronautical Society*. So the question now is: what is writing *as* an artist?

In 1873 the writer on art, Walter Pater suggested that all art should aspire to the condition of music.[3] As a variation on *his* theme, I would like to propose that an artist's writing should aspire to the condition of well, yes, art. This is writing as an artist. Writing thus regarded is writing as *aesthetic practice*, which takes the very attribute that distinguishes art from its secondary texts as its defining feature. Thus the next question: what do I mean by 'aesthetic'?

In responding to this question, I have found Hegel useful, because his distinction between the sign and the symbol, which is principally elaborated in the *Encyclopaedia*, gives us a theory of art as distinct from other signifying practices. (Almost two centuries later, Paul De Man deploys this distinction to argue for a fundamental fissure between aesthetic and literary discourse...[4]) And here I should note that my reading of Hegel owes much to De Man, and Derrida – largely by virtue of my upside-down intellectual history which makes me more familiar with structuralist and post-structuralist semiotics than philosophical aesthetics.

For Hegel, art is the realm of the symbol, rather than the sign. As De Man notes, art '"belongs unreservedly to the order of the symbol."'[5]

(As the speaker reads the quotes, they 'bracket' them with raised index fingers.)

And he argues that '"[t]he theory of the aesthetic as a historical as well as philosophical notion is predicated, in Hegel, on a theory of art as symbolic"'.[6] And as Hegel's *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics* suggests, some art is more symbolic than others – indeed, for Hegel, art's progress is synonymous with its diminishing symbolic condition.[7] (And the following discussion will indicate why that is so.)

So how does Hegel distinguish the symbol from the sign?

Well, as Derrida reads Hegel via Saussure, symbols involve a 'motivated relation' between the signifier and the signified. (Let's remind ourselves that the 'signifier' refers to the form of the sign – s-i-g-n – and 'signified' refers to its content - 'the idea of "sign"'.)

And let me illuminate the idea of a 'motivated relation', as Derrida cites Saussure in his essay 'Speech and writing according to Hegel':

(This time, it is the speaker's intonation that indicates the shift in authorship.)

'"[...] the symbol is [...] never wholly arbitrary; it is not empty, for there is the rudiment of a natural bond between the signifier and the signified. The symbol of justice, a pair of scales, could not be replaced by just any other symbol, such as tank."'[8] End quote.

In this scheme of things, the signifier is motivated by the signified. The visual signifier for 'justice' is 'motivated' by the idea of justice embodied in the image of a 'pair of scales'. And there is, as Hegel notes, an awkwardness in this motivation; the fact that the image of a pair of scales does not only represent justice. It has other attributes that do other signifying work. But as this is not essential to my argument, I will move on to look at 'the sign'.

The sign, on the other hand, entails an 'arbitrary relation' between the signifier and the signified. In Derrida's words, there is for Hegel

(The speaker reverts to use of index fingers.)

'a relation of absolute alterity between the signifying body [...] and the ideal representation signified by this body.'[9]

And counter-intuitive though it may be, Hegel contends that the signifier in the symbol is more visible than the signifier in the sign. This is 'counter-intuitive' in the sense that one might expect that the 'natural' relation between the signifier and the signified in the symbol would mean the signifier was less visible – as it is indeed in C S Peirce's version where the symbol is designated by the term 'icon' to denote something that 'looks like the thing it represents' and is the *least visible* of what for him, are 'signs'. But Hegel plays it the other way: the signifier in the symbol is *more* visible precisely because its determination by the referent frustrates the expression of mind. The symbol thwarts ideality.

Hence, art as symbolic discourse is that in which the signified (content) determines the signifier (form) – in contradistinction to its secondary texts (art-history and so forth), which are written from the place of the writing-subject as '[m]ind determining itself', in Derrida's phrase.[10] Moreover, as they *are* determined in this way, they do not register as such: as signifier. Which is to say: we see art's forms, but not the signifiers of art-history, for example.

This theory of art's form as *visible*, and *cued by content* is surprisingly familiar... Certainly, I recognise it as a version of the ideology of art as 'form-content' relations that was dominant in UK art-schools as the attenuated legacy of 60s formalism, and which may represent a Hegelian version of Kantian aesthetics. Written from the place of one of the conventional objects of art-writing (art and the artist) and, logically, positioned to question writing's form, writing as an artist, (understood via Hegel) occupies an odd place in art-writing overall; precisely because of its inverted structure. (And here, for future ease of reference, I would like to introduce the term 'aesthetic writing' as a short-hand for 'writing on art by an artist'.)

(The speaker adopts a 'conversational' tone for these remarks.)

It is not perhaps the best of terms – because of the fact that 'aesthetic' has several applications and within these there are different theoretical definitions of the term. But for now it will have to suffice as the most descriptive of less clumsy options.)

In its associations with the motivated signifier – language determined by the realm of objects (matter) – aesthetic writing is perhaps, uniquely, inferior. At least, for Hegel: aesthetic, as 'symbolic', writing is contaminated by its origin in things, rather than mind and ideas.

And Hegelian idealism still informs the way in which our culture hierarchises the mind-body dualism, which makes my following attempts to rationalise aesthetic writing (with its linguistic origins in the object world *and* on the side of art-history's objects) all the more necessary.

(As if to mark the caesura in the argument, the speaker takes several sips of water from a plastic bottle. After an extended pause, they recommence with what may be a second wind.)

The few arguments there *are* about the value of 'aesthetic writing' have largely been produced within the context of art-pedagogy and demonstrably in connection with a UK-originated initiative, Writing-PAD – the latter term an acronym expanding to give: 'Writing Purposefully in Art & Design'. Founded by Julia Lockheart and John Wood – both academics at Goldsmiths College, London, UK – this is, in its own words 'designed to promote the adoption of models of good practice that encourage inclusive approaches to the purposes and possibilities of writing.'[11] The context supplies the subject of inclusion, or the subject that is *not to be excluded*, as a multi-cultural, multi-lingual, multi-learning-abled student body. 'Inclusive forms of writing' hence attempt to circumnavigate the difficulties that a given mode of writing (often 'academic') might present to certain students. Of itself this does not necessarily result in an 'aesthetic

turn'. And yet there is an argument for this, based on the overall 'exclusion' in the art-school that conventional forms of writing threaten. As John Wood argues in his influential article on 'Academic Rigour', the 'academic essay' that is often demanded in art-schools (and that Wood himself deploys…) might not 'be the best way to help creative practitioners';[12] indeed may alienate students *precisely as they are practitioners,* other differences aside. Hence, it can be argued that if the 'academic essay' reigns, exclusion from the *form* of writing is systemic in the sector. And that any mode of writing that is closer or more sympathetic to creative practice will be more 'inclusive'. From a utilitarian point of view, and extrapolating from Wood's argument, 'aesthetic writing' benefits the greatest number in the art-school: everyone involved in creative practice.

The reasons that it does so require elaboration, obvious though they may seem. And as much as the argument has been made in the context of art-education, it is nevertheless also relevant to other scenarios in which artists may write, and in which the terms may be negotiable, if they are not already sympathetic to an *artist's* writing.

(The speaker takes a swig of water. Their voice is now a little hoarse…)

One reason in support of an artist writing *as an artist* is cued by Harriet Edwards, in a text published by Writing-PAD. 'It seems to be', she writes 'that there is a paradox and a tension between the radical content of the dissertation and the conventions and structure – the mediums though which it communicates.'[13] The implication being that a better fit of form to content would disperse this paradox and tension. While she doesn't make the charge explicit, Edwards' comment hints at a hypocrisy – an unproductive paradox in which the opportunity to practise as one preaches is lost. Or, in Roland Barthes terms, 'the convergence of the phenomenal aspects of language […] with its signifying function as referent' is repressed.[14]

(In the middle of the auditorium, a phone rings. As if roused from sleep, its owner stoops to turn it off. The speaker registers the interruption with a frown, and attempts - in their intonation - to underscore the next sentence as a conclusion to what has just been said, rather than the start of something else.)

In this way, the congruence of form and content becomes an ethical project.

From another point of view, it is also a pragmatic project. 'Bridging the gap' 'between studio-based practice and academic theory that frequently characterises Higher Education in Art & Design' - in Writing-PAD's terms - intensifies some aspects of the understanding process that is art, and writing.[15] (Not that the gap can ever be bridged or erased entirely, because art and writing – as writing on art – will always be different, however minimally.) But as the gap *is* closed, an artist's understanding of art-writing as aesthetic practice benefits from their understanding of their art-practice as aesthetic activity. An artist's writing gains from, say, the artist's understanding of the content-form relationship, and their awareness of the work that form does in mediating mind via matter. And vice versa - for this turn is nothing short of economical in maximizing the ratio of insight to application. Which is to say: a little understanding goes a long way – from art to writing, where refracted, it returns to art. And back again to writing… and so on, until the End of Art – in Hegel's scheme of things.

(In the front row, a man taps his watch demonstratively. The speaker acknowledges the sign and the reads the next paragraph more quickly.)

If writing as an artist enhances the artist's access to writing for reasons I've already proposed, it also expands their domain. This is an argument that has been made for the writing-artist *per se*, independent of *how* they write. With writing-as-an-artist, there is of course, an issue of what the writing-artist, or their practice, *is* –

as an ontological concern – but that debate is outside my concern here with rationalizing that position and its associated effects. Besides its value as territorial aggrandizement, the gesture of artist-becoming writer – or more specifically, artist becoming 'aesthetic writer' – has other *political* advantages.

For one thing, it performs a critique of the social division of labour whereby art and the writing about it are identified with different professions. When Howard Slater writes that Art & Language continues 'the work of collapsing the division of labour between artist and critic via their textual art',[16] aesthetic writing continues their 'continuation' (of the historical avant-garde?) in terms that are subtly, but significantly distinct. ('Textual art' or 'textual aesthetics' may be the reciprocal condition of 'aesthetic text' – the one in the space of art, the other in the space of writing...)

Then again, as the artist writes about art – or *their* art – they start to take charge of readings of their work, beyond what the work itself curates. The way in which this is a political manoeuvre has been recognized by the artist-writer Matt Hale, who has argued that when this took place in 80s London, it was a response to the absence of informed understanding of the art-scene then. Hence another rationale for aesthetic writing is that it enables access to this form of self-representation, when other forms of writing might deny this to the artist.

The issue of reception of the art-work and its politics brings me to one further, and last point on this political theme. Refusing certain orthodoxies of art-writing, writing by an artist can use its access to a different range of registers and writing-forms to speak to new, and more diverse audiences. And if these phrases resonate with 'social inclusion agendas', in e.g. the UK's state-funded arts' sector, they also appear as the corollary to the pedagogic concept of more inclusive authorship; a reciprocity that discourse such as Writing-PAD's has yet to address.

Turning to my final rationale – at least, for now – I would like to consider ideas of 'the pleasure of the text' and the way in which the aestheticisation of writing enhances textual pleasure, exactly as its form is material. As I've argued, form can be seen to be material in Hegel's theory of Art as symbolic discourse (in which the signifier is 'motivated' by an object, or matter, rather than mind). As form *is* material (and visible as such) its role in the pleasure of the text can be seen to be much more than an issue of its immediate sensuousness. As some of you may know, *The Pleasure of the Text* is the title of a text – and strictly, 'text', not book, or 'work' - by Roland Barthes. However, there, Barthes identifies the 'pleasure of the text' with the inferior, un-reflexive act of passive reading. Exceeding this is the 'blissful' act of 'writerly' reading where the textuality demands our active engagement. This happens as the text is visibly material – at the site of the 'edge' between two very different registers of discourse. (This may shift the term of Hegel's foundationalist understanding of the aesthetic and thereby propose that there are several useful ways of thinking about aesthetic writing that are relevant for the artist.) Taking the Marquis de Sade's writing as a paradigm of blissful textuality, Barthes writes:

(A little out of sync with the speaker's words, the screen displays the quote. Wearily, members of the audience lift their gaze to follow the speaker's oration. The speaker, neck crooked once more, strains to read the huge text behind:)

'[...] the pleasure' – and I think he means 'jouissance', here – 'of reading him' – de Sade – 'clearly proceeds from certain breaks (or certain collisions): antipathetic codes (the noble and the trivial, for example) come into contact; pompous and ridiculous neologisms are created; pornographic messages are embodied in sentences so pure they might be used as grammatical models. As textual theory has it: the language is redistributed: Now, *such redistribution is always achieved by cutting*. Two edges are created: an obedient, conformist, plagiarizing edge (the language to be copied in its

canonical state, as it has been established by schooling, good usage, literature, culture), and *another edge*, mobile, blank (ready to assume any contours), which is never anything but the site of its effect: the place where the death of language is glimpsed. These two edges, *the compromise they bring about*, are necessary. Neither culture nor its destruction is erotic; it is the seam between them, the fault, the flaw, which becomes so.'[17]

(The speaker returns to their script:)

Here is the pleasure as in 'jouissance' of the text, because, as Barthes argues: 'what pleasure wants' is 'the site of a loss, the seam, the cut, the deflation, the dissolve which seizes the subject in the midst of bliss.'

On which note, I have a few words by way of conclusion. I hope I have convinced you that whether or not writing is 'here' (which for *me*, is with the artist writing as an artist) or 'there' - with other sorts of art-writer – an artist's writing is always 'here and there', which, in its colloquial English sense means that 'it matters'. And when an artist's writing as an artist matters, matter matters. Much.

(The audience stirs into life with dutiful applause. The speaker leaves the stage. The sound of the refreshments trolley, cups chinking as it is wheeled over the hard floor outside the auditorium, animates the audience further.)

REFERENCES

[1] Mieke Bal *Louise Bourgeois' Spider: the architecture of art-writing* (The University of Chicago Press: 2001) pp. xi – xii.
[2] Jacques Lacan 'What is a Picture?' in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis* (Penguin: 1986) p. 106.
[3] 'All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music.' Walter Pater 'School of Giorgione' in *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* (University of California Press: 1980) p. 106.
[4] See 'The Resistance to Theory' in *The Resistance to Theory* (University of Minnesota Press: 1997) '[…] literariness is not an aesthetic quality' (p. 10).
[5] Paul de Man 'Sign and Symbol in Hegel's *Aesthetics*' (*Critical Inquiry* 8:4 Summer 1982) p. 766.
[6] ibid. p. 763.
[7] George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics* (Penguin: 1993) pp. 82-3.
[8] Jacques Derrida (1971) quoting Saussure in 'Speech and writing according to Hegel' in *G F W Hegel: Critical Assessments* ed. Robert Stern (Routledge: 1993). http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/fr/derrida1.htm - accessed 25.10.09
[9] ibid.
[10] ibid.
[11] www.writing-pad.ac.uk - accessed 14.09.09
[12] John Wood 'The Culture of Academic Rigour: does design research really need it?' http://www.writing-pad.ac.uk/index.php?path=photos/20_Resources/07_Discussion%20Papers/07_The%20Culture%20of%20Academic%20Rigour/ - accessed 26.04.08
[13] Harriet Edwards 'Taking on board continuity and discontinuity in art and design student writing' (Writing-PAD: 2003) http://www.writing-pad.ac.uk/index.php?path=photos/20_Resources/07_Discussion%20Papers/09_Continuity%20and%20discontinuity%20in%20art%20and%20design%20student%20writing/ - accessed 26.04.08
[14] Quoted in Paul de Man, *The Resistance to Theory* (University of Minnesota Press: 1986) p. 9.
[15] Homepage - www.writing-pad.ac.uk - accessed 26.04.08
[16] See Howard Slater 'THE ART OF GOVERNANCE - on The Artist Placement Group 1966-1989' http://www.infopool.org.uk/APG.htm - accessed 26.10.09
[17] Roland Barthes 'From the Pleasure of the Text' in *Barthes: Selected Writings* (Fontana: 1983) pp. 405-6.

APPENDIX

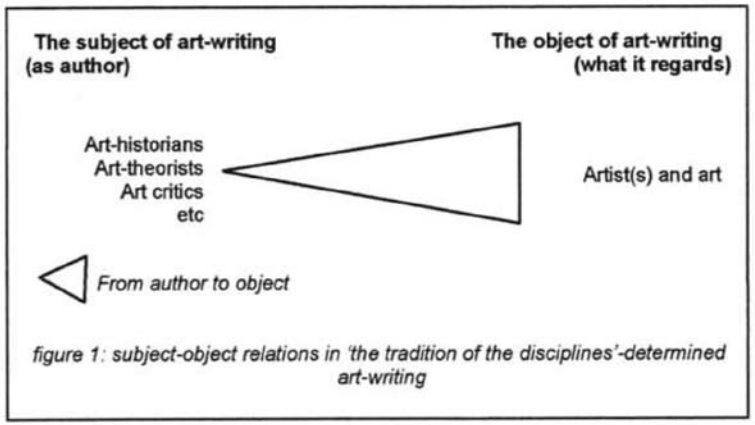

figure 1: subject-object relations in 'the tradition of the disciplines'-determined art-writing

Slide 1.

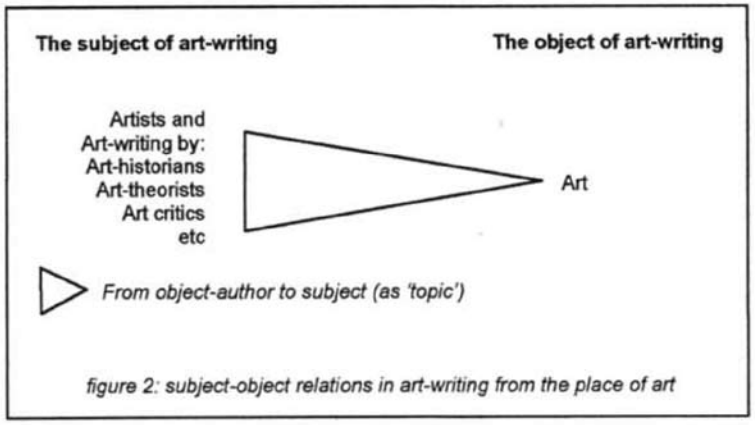

figure 2: subject-object relations in art-writing from the place of art

Slide 2.

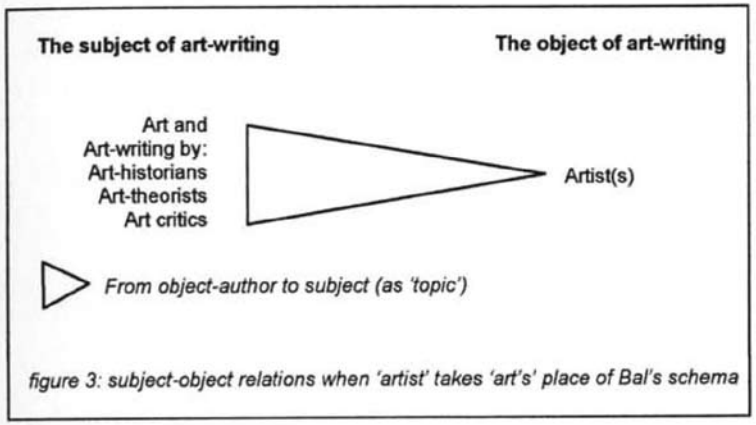

figure 3: subject-object relations when 'artist' takes 'art's' place of Bal's schema

Slide 3.

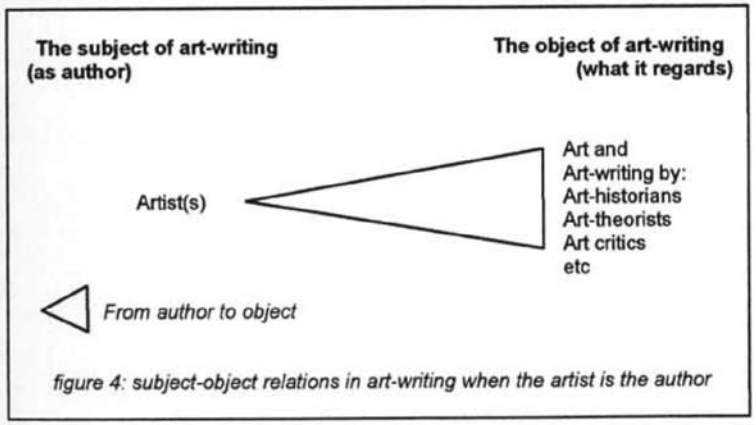

figure 4: subject-object relations in art-writing when the artist is the author

Slide 4.

Writing What Cannot Be Written About: The Poietics of Things

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Abstract

'Writing' is often taken as a model of the creative process. It is widely assumed, not least by writers themselves, that creation in general has features that we readily associate with language, logic or discourse. 'Text', 'textuality', and 'inter-textuality' became popular metaphors in the second half of the twentieth century to explain a large variety of cultural and artistic phenomenon. The present study takes issue with the idea that the creative component of culture is structured on the model of language. It draws on the work of the philosopher Cornelius Castoriadis to suggest instead that human creation is artefact of the imagination—and that acts of imagination in fact look more like object creation and design than speaking or writing. Ironically, this is true of speaking and writing as much as it is of painting or sculpture. The case for the non-discursive and non-linguistic model of creation is illustrated with the example of the work of the contemporary Chinese artist, Feng Yan (b. 1963).

Feng Yan, Black Car, Red Carpet, 130x87.3 cm, 2006

Feng Yan, Car Door, 130x85.7 cm, 2006

Feng Yan, The People's Conference Hall, 163.9x110 cm, 2006

'I insist that words are totally absent from my mind when I really think…'
Jacques Hadamard

Feng Yan, Tire and Red Carpet, 130x87.3cm, 2006

The Chinese artist Feng Yan was born in 1963. He trained as a film director at the Beijing Film Academy. Later on, he worked as a writer in New York City until 2001.[1] Since then, he has lived in Beijing, and has produced an impressive series of minimalist works in the photographic medium—notably 'Order' (2005), 'Power' (2007) and most recently the 'Psychedelic Bamboo' series.[2] Among the images Feng has created are works of great power and resonance. The self-descriptions of these works also reveal a writer capable of great expressive economy and beauty. That is rare combination—to match word and image. Feng's self-interpretation exceeds in explanatory power that of the critics, a number of them very astute, who have written sympathetically about his art.[3]

> *Many people say that my photographic works are like paintings. I think it is due to their painterly composition. I enjoy expressing my unchanged predilection for "design" through the process of photography. From when I was 21, Dang Cheng, my teacher from Xian who had studied design in Japan, imbued me with the*

fundamental concepts of design. I came to recognize the power that could be created through rational arrangement, and I believe it is essential in any design approach. In the "Order" series I display the natural order existing in quotidian things. In my 2007 "Power" series, I concern myself with the symbolic detail of things. "Four Flags" is a minimalist and abstract work.

"Psychedelic Bamboo" are entirely abstract. Most people would mistake the formless, beautiful colours for computer generated graphics. The fact is, they are not, and it does not matter. I took the pictures outside a nightclub where I live. My works have always been born from experience in my everyday life. Certain things in daily life have repeatedly appeared, stagnated, vanished, occurred then solidified in my mind; they become the DNA of my work, morphing eventually into a kind of classic scene—a moment in eternity.

As I travel my road, I would like to take these scenes with me until their secular identities are lost from my eyes (Feng, nd).

The critic Wu Hong makes two important observations about Feng's art. First his art is not photography. 'I would rather place his works under the more neutralized term "picture" or "image"…' (Wu, nd). Photography is a technical medium—not an art medium. To create, as Feng does, art out of a technical medium begs the question of 'what is art?' Images, and their animating presupposition, the imagination, is a good place to look for an answer to this question. Feng creates images, not photographs. The difference is that images—artworks—'stick in the mind'. They are unforgettable—in a way that photographs in the ordinary sense are not. Such images resonant with us—and do so in deep and perhaps unaccountable ways.

Why is this so? One explanation is that such images strip away the inessential, the decorative, and the distracting. Another way of putting this is that, through abstraction, these images come close to exhibiting pure form. Feng does this even though, paradoxically, the common themes of his art are everyday artifices and objects—cars, rooms, arm-chairs. He reveals the transcendental form of these mundane objects. The intensity and focus of his images are riveting. The pictures are startling, not least of all because of their uncanny grasp of the depth of form that lies underneath the surface of everyday things. Feng's images, in this respect, are reminiscent of the paintings of Vermeer.

To do this successfully, to bear witness to the transcendental essence of mundane things, we see that Feng—in a biographical sense—has stripped back his own conception of art in pursuit of something stark and elemental. He began his artistic life as a cinematographer. In that incarnation, Wu Hong notes, 'his pictures would naturally stir people with the impulse for literary narration'. His still images, in contrast, 'block any attempt for literary narration.' This process of abstraction directly resists treating the world on the model of language. The model of language supposes that everything is fashioned after speaking and writing. The consequence of Feng's restoration of the dignity of things, Wu Hong observes, is that

> …the viewer is no longer the above all "narrative subject." In linguistic study, people feel the natural superiority over nature simply because everything is the object for narration by people as the subject. Man's superiority develops from the process of turning this narrative possibility into reality. When Feng Yan breaks this "language" myth with object as the "material" for "discourse" no longer submits to the "linguistic" logic; it has gained a quality of "being itself " that is equal to the subject personality.[4]

Such a claim is not without an element of paradox. The critic writes (powerfully) about rejecting the linguistic model. The artist, a writer himself until recently, relinquishes the baroque embellishments of discourse for a studied minimalist silence.

It is not the case, though, that words are second rate. They are not any more second rate, or first rate, than musical tones, digital pixels, or pigments used by painters—or any other technical medium of creation. Most work, in whatever medium, will not arrest our attention. It will not cause us to pause to think. Most pictures hanging in gallery are passed over with barely a moment's consideration. They do not hold us in awe. And yet some, a minority, do—as a small minority of texts also do. Nevertheless most acts of creation are a failure. If words are a special case, it is only because they have a certain facility for papering over such failures.

Words have one advantage over things—even if this advantage is not an especially admirable one. This is the ease with which words are able to recommend second-rate works of all kinds. If the visual and performing arts for the most part do not comment on works, writers do, and they do so unstintingly. If the intention of the writer is to trawl for the good among the bad, then the industry of criticism for the most part does a poor job of it. Little criticism survives the passage of time, and few critical

judgements manage successfully at the time to identify the birth of classic works. On the other hand, critical defences of failed works are legion. In part this is because many writers and artists have difficulty distinguishing between critical explanations of art works and ideologies of art. Ideologies of art typically eulogize the artwork for its moral function. This function may be critical; it may be affirmative. Either way, ideologies of art serve as a substitute for art. Commentary on the moral force of the artwork, on what the artwork 'stands for' or what it 'symbolizes', subsumes the artwork. Some artworks though resist this. Feng's images are an example of such recalcitrance. Feng's self-interpretation of his art is that '[some] commonplace objects and environment… summon me to use destructive measures to save them from the fate of being instantly symbolized'—so as to 'discover the intact order existing in the object itself.'[5]

Feng is an artist who chooses his words very carefully. In order to erase the ideological element from art—something that is perhaps of special significance for a Chinese artist—he who speaks carefully also necessarily places himself at a distance from words. Feng does not quite follow Wittgenstein—and stop speaking about what cannot be said. Nonetheless, in an equally interesting way, he has stepped back biographically both from cine-narrative and from the writer's art—for the sake of the arresting image. And when he does speak, which he does with economy and eloquence, he speaks in images. The images characteristic of Feng's work, like all artefacts of the imagination, have the griping resonance of things-in-themselves, rather than simply serving as symbols of some ideological—some moral—cause of the day. The power of his art, as the artist himself suggests, lies in its capacity to create order—order out of chaos, order created through rational arrangement, order by design, the work of abstraction and composition. The words to describe this are allusive. Terms like reason, design, arrangement and composition are slippery. We could easily conceive of them in a Cartesian spirit, hardly in sympathy with the artist, as ciphers of logic and method, columns of syllogisms marching implacably in our direction. Equally, and on the contrary, we can think of rational arrangement as the expression of mute, intuitive experience, beyond words. In this case, we conceive of reason and design in the same enigmatic sense as Aldo Rossi's architecture or Theo Angelopoulos' film making. Rossi, Angelopoulos and Feng share a common ineffable sense of art as contemplation. This is art as an intense encounter with the essential form of things.

The imagination is the human faculty where such forms are both conceived and perceived. The imagination has available to it a common stock of form-generating media. These are not media in the sense of tone or stone—i.e. materials that convey meanings. Yet they are not full-fledged socio-aesthetic forms either in the sense that the sonata form or the Greek temple form are. Rather form-generating media lay half-way between the sensuousness of materials and the meaningfulness of explicit forms. Proportion and harmony—or contrast and pairing—are examples of such media. They shape tone and stone into recognizable, transmittable and reproducible forms. But they are not actually forms themselves. And, importantly, neither are they discourses or arguments. Forms command light and shade—the softness and hardness of things—not the premises of commentaries. Words also have light and shade, and in this respect have the capacity to be poietic things. Yet in the poietic mode, words are separable from points of view and moral judgements.

The philosopher Cornelius Castoriadis criticizes the rationalist illusion that equates the genesis of socio-historical or socio-aesthetic forms with communicative reasoning and discursive interaction. Castoriadis is sceptical of claims that reason is capable of positing or revamping the imaginary forms of art and society. The many delirious follies of intellectuals suggest that such scepticism is warranted.[6] From the Jacobins to Pol Pot and Sayyid Qutb, their behaviour over multiple centuries has turned numerous societies into charnel houses. As Castoriadis points out, if it is not self-devouring then reasoning must come to rest itself on non-linguistic suppositions. The basis of any discourse cannot be discursive if semantics is not to terminate in violence. The *telos* of discourse, the homecoming that it evokes in wonderment, is the mute landscape of *theoria*—the sculpted forest of contemplation, which lies beyond words. The apprehension of this realm and its objects is intuitive and figurative. They are the products of nous, not *logos*. The intellectual's vice is to think that *logos* can do the work of *nous* (1987: 350). But discourse—if it is left to itself—is pitiless and destructive. Logical language, disconnected from figurative *nous*, is a violent medium. The way that discursive logic moves, from premise to conclusion, is ruthless and implacable. For sure, as Castoriadis remarks, this is not physical violence, but it is destructive all the same. To stand in the way of the logical torrent is to risk being swept aside. To question the premises, the truth, of torrential discourse is to risk excommunication—and worse. In this manner, rationalist discourse 'inevitably destroys discourse itself' (1987: 350). Once this happens, it is a short step for the violence of discourse to be replaced by the force of arms.

Castoriadis equates self-mutilating reason with communicative or discursive reason—the logician's or rhetorician's reason (1997: 256, 265). Reason in this register means chains of reasons that rest on discursive principles and that are logically organized.

The nature of such reasoning is distinct from the intuitive-figurative nature—the mute enigmatic order—of socio-aesthetic and socio-historical forms. Forms precede words, and words presuppose the existence of mute forms. Once in existence, forms can be represented in and by language. They can be put into words and turned into the premise of an argument or discourse. They become, in this manner, the starting point of a narration or a commentary. Implications and conclusions can be derived from such premises. Yet the problem with this is that, while reasoning is logico-deductive or rhetorically inferential, form creation is not. Form does not exhibit the 'train-like' dynamic of discourse—its implacable running on track through any obstruction.

New forms emerge through images not words.[7] This was one of Castoriadis' most important conclusions. New forms emerge from society's collective aural, visual and haptic-tactile imaging. The work of the imagination does not just represent 'what is absent'. It also posits objects that otherwise would not exist. This occurs, in the first place, through the making—the poietics—of an image of the object. This is an act of figuration: the 'positing of figures and the relations between and to these figures' (1987: 204). The creative or radical imagination, capable of bringing into being the image of something that has not existed before, does so by positing figures or models (1997: 269). Although these models and figures may be represented by words, they are not created by words.

This principle applies as much to works and objects whose materials are primarily linguistic in nature, as it does to any other kind of human creation. As classical rhetoric theorists understood, the good use of language depends on taxis (arrangement). Taxis allows speakers and writers to communicate through figures. Figures of speech are a resonance of figures of thought. They share structural characteristics and a semantic architecture in common. Classical rhetoric stressed that schemas of balance, repetition, word order, presence and omission, and proportion are key aspects of this architecture. Great speakers and writers are masters of such schemas. They build their words using repetitions of alliteration, assonance and anadiplosis. They orchestrate plateaus and climaxes. They balance phrases and clauses, make calculated omissions (ellipsis), and create flexible word orders (parenthesis). Speakers understate and writers exaggerate—they play with the proportions of words and the (dis)proportionate relation of words to things and events. Most interesting of all is the kind of word architecture that creates relations between things that are seemingly unrelated. Metaphor and simile are classic ways of doing this. So is the drawing of comparisons or the arranging words and phrases in opposition. There is also a taxis of stacking that allows for the creation of orders of superior and inferior, higher and lower, genus and species. Words, like tones and stones, also can be turned upside down. When we invert words, we create relations of irony and paradox. Whatever the techniques used, and however they are deployed, the overall power of words depends on the underlying *taxis*.

Taxis provides incipient structure for visible and audible words. Taxis arises in the imagination. Hence Castoriadis' view that linguistic-type axioms, criteria and rules are suspended in acts of imagination (1997: 268). They are suspended by being over-determined by figures, models, and diagrams.[8] Figures, models, and diagrams are the common media of taxis. On both the individual and the collective social level, figuration occurs through the imagination's power of organization. Correspondingly, this power of arrangement operates through figures that take shape via the imagination's mastery of form-generating media like hierarchy, balance, parallelism, repetition, similarity, contrast, proportion and pairing. The formation of an image involves the positing of elements and the bringing of those elements into a relation (1997: 259). Whether the material is tone or stone, words or even the physical matter of the universe, form-generating media play a crucial role in all kinds of creation.

This account of the emergence of forms through non-linguistic organizing media parallels certain conceptions of the pre-Socratics from Greek antiquity. The pre-Socratics recognized that whatever it is that brings contrary pairings into a meaningful relationship permits the generation of order out of chaos.[9] The impetus toward such pairings is a force, *phusis*, built into the universe and mirrored in the human mind. *Phusis* is the force of organization that creates lucid, sustainable, contrary pairings of elements. How does it do this? Already observed in Greek antiquity was the key role that abstract media—like rhythm, balance, equilibrium, proportion, harmony, and symmetry—play in the manufacture of order out of chaos. These form-producing media, when mobilized, function as powers that bring otherwise unconnected elements into a relationship that constitutes meaning. In doing so, these powers create objects, and amongst them social, social-aesthetic and social-historical objects.

Castoriadis distances himself from the pre-Socratic account of creation in one crucial respect, though. Its notion of contrary pairings was a-historical. It set the stage for Plato's assertion that forms are unchanging. Castoriadis, instead, veers close to Plotinus' view of a universe of forms that is caught up in a constant process of morphogenesis. In Castoriadis' view, a universe of structural pairs is a universe of spatial 'difference' rather than one of temporal 'otherness'. Repeatedly, he stresses

that time is a key dimension of the radical imaginary of creation. His social physics is relativistic in Einstein's sense. Time is a crucial medium through which figures of the 'other' emerged. It is an indispensable medium for the 'otherness-alteration' of such figures (1987: 193). Castoriadis is correct—up to a point. That there is a temporal dimension of human creation is true. But, equally so, structural pairs also play a central role in creation. The artist is one who is superb at balancing tension and release, familiarity and surprise, arousal and relaxation (Fuente). Art creates equilibrium between the expected and the unexpected. The artist, in other words, is the one who creates the pivotal relation between the 'black car' and the 'red carpet'.

The history of Greek-Western thought can be divided into two strands. One is pre-Socratic. The other is Socratic. The pre-Socratics judged that what was most fundamental in the world was that which was non-discursive. Socrates in contrast considered that what was most fundamental was speech and argument. One can think of this as the difference between nous and logos. In the dominant strains of philosophical thought since the Renaissance, Socratic discursiveness has generally trumped pre-Socratic muteness. This was so even though the oral spontaneity of Socratic speech has given way to the congealed language of 'the book' as the principal mode of discourse.[10]

There have always been dissenters of course—those who have challenged the presumptive primacy of discourse. Thomas Hobbes was a notable critic. But, especially through the twentieth century, the idea that language is the principal medium for the generation of social relations has become a commonplace in social self-understanding. Many philosophers—ranging from Mead and Pierce to Heidegger and Habermas, Eco and Gadamer, Searle and Derrida—echoed this view. The upshot is the general over-estimation of the objectivating power of discursive language, and at the same time the underestimation of how important the poietics of things, the making of objects, including social objects, is to knowledge (Murphy, 2005). Discursive reason in itself cannot create objects. It cannot do this because by its very nature it cannot posit the non-verbal patterned forms around which social objects coalesce. Reason can explore the implications of objects—or rather the implications of statements we make that represent those objects. But even this has its limits.

Words are not very good at representing objects—let alone at positing them. This is why the early Wittgenstein thought that any hope for logic lay in picture languages—which was a good intuition (Murphy & Roberts: 127-136). Non-figurative languages misrepresent as much as represent social objects. Discourse is often touted as a therapy for this. The propositional statements that we make about objects can be subjected to discursive treatment—ending in falsification or verification. Yet these discourses, while sometimes impressive, are also often inadequate. We can make deductions from, inferences about, and establish analogical relations amongst propositions. But discursive reason rests on the law of non-contradiction. If I accept that law, then I am bound to accept that my statements should not contradict the principles (the major premises, in effect) that I rely on. Creation, on the other hand, rests on 'the law of contradiction', on the power to organize contradictory qualities—light and shade, hot and cold, red and black. This is the mute power of the artist and the collective demiurge of society acting on itself. Such invention occurs through aural rhythms, visual pictures, and plastic-haptic shapes. In acts of individual and collective creation, we see, feel and grasp the shape and form of things. In this lies the poietics of creation.

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Notes

1 'Recent Acquisitons Feng Yan' Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas. http://www.spencerart.ku.edu/recent/fengyan.shtml

2 Jpeg versions of works from the 'Power' and 'Order' series can be viewed at http://www.fengyan.info/photographs.htm

3 For critical reception of Feng's work, see http://www.fengyan.info/reviews.htm

4 Wu Hong, 'The Forest of "Meaning"—Nonsense or Not Nonsense That is Related and Unrelated to Feng Yan's Pictures' http://www.fengyan.info/The_Forest_of_Meaning.htm

5 Wu Hong, 'The Forest of "Meaning"—Nonsense or Not Nonsense That is Related and Unrelated to Feng Yan's Pictures' http://www.fengyan.info/The_Forest_of_Meaning.htm

6 Castoriadis (1991: 10) was unswervingly critical of the endless procession of intellectuals who identified with despotic and murderous regimes. In one very typical passage, he observed the magnetic appeal that even the creepiest kinds of 'revolutionary power' had for intellectuals of his generation. Whenever one of these ugly powers appeared, '[then] begins the golden-age of fellow-travelers, who were able to afford the luxury of an apparently intransigent opposition to a part of reality—reality 'at home'—by paying for it with the glorification of another part of this reality—over there, elsewhere, in Russia, in China, in Cuba, in Algeria, in Vietnam, or, if worst came to worst, in Albania. Rare are those among the great names in the Western intelligentsia who have not, at some moment between 1920 and 1970, made this 'sacrifice of conscience', sometimes (the least often) in the most infantile kind of credulity, other times (most often) with the most paltry sort of trickery. Sartre, stating in a menacing tone: "You cannot discuss what Stalin is doing, since he alone has the information that explains his motives", will remain, no doubt, the most instructive specimen of the intellectual's tendency to look ridiculous.'

7 Cornelius Castoriadis, The Imaginary Institution of Society (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987 [1975]), pp. 321, 329; 'Logic, Imagination, Reflection', World in Fragments (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), p. 258. Castoriadis remarks '…abstract thought itself always has to lean on some figure or image, be it, minimally the image of the words through which it is carried on', 'Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary' in The Castoriadis Reader (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), p. 329. Elsewhere he observes that radical imagination involves 'the incessant emergence of the other in and through the positing (Vor-stellung) of images or figures…' Cornelius Castoriadis, The Imaginary Institution of Society (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987 [1975]), p. 329.

8 The great English mathematician Roger Penrose (1999: 541-550) observes that the most creative thought is non-verbal. At the highest levels of insight, the sense of beauty plays the crucial role in thought. Penrose cites the self-reflections of Albert Einstein ('The words or the language, as they are written or spoken, do not seem to play any role in my mechanism of thought. The psychical elements which seem to serve as elements of thought… are, in my case, of visual and some muscular type.'), the geneticist Francis Galton ('I… waste a vast deal of time in seeking appropriate words and phrases…'), and the mathematician Jacques Hadamard ('I insist that words are totally absent from my mind when I really think…'). Penrose says of himself: 'Almost all my mathematical thinking is done visually and in terms of non-verbal concepts…'

9 That makes a pair out of what otherwise has no relationship or else simply an accidental relationship.

10 This happened when printing made the production and distribution of the book so cheap and easy.

Toward a history of subjectivity: a call for the deconstruction of rigour

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Abstract

The subjective is not naturally a welcome partner in research method. In most disciplines, the subjective is attenuated or marginalized as much as possible. Academic rigour structurally denies the subjective and is, in many ways, antithetical to studio process and speculation. This paper contemplates the thin history of subjectivity and considers how rigour might need to be deconstructed. Even though subjectivity enjoys support among contemporary theorists, the paper reveals how fragile and vulnerable subjectivity is in any institutional discourse. It argues that we still barely know what subjectivity is much less know how to handle it rigorously. It further suggests that if we do not know what subjectivity is, then we do not know the limits of rigour either; because the two stand in reciprocal relations. If we cannot accommodate subjectivity and make it central to our research methods, we also have no artistic or scholarly use for rigour.

Keywords

Subjectivity, research methods, rigour, history of ideas, studio method, creative arts, art criticism

Locating art and design in the context of research puts pressure on the subjective. Most research methodologies are skewed toward the systematic elimination of subjectivity, a process associated with science and scholarship generally. It does not suffice to call upon subjective impressions but we need to support them with data; and, once the data have been assembled and a case can be argued, the subjective impressions are redundant and disposable. In research, the subjective impressions are only as good as the facts that prove them; and on their own, they do not rise above conjecture. My subjectivity could be antithetical to your subjectivity; and, alas, the only mediation imaginable in this clash is an appeal to objectivity. As a construct of great relativity, the subjective is not naturally a welcome partner in research method. In most disciplines, the canonical proofs or tests of plausibility cleave to objective evidence, and the subjective is attenuated or marginalized as much as possible.

Alas, the restrictions of the objective become dysfunctional in the creative arts. The distinguishing feature of the artistic process is its subjectivity: the unique consciousness of the person who speaks or sees or acts. As an inalienable property of perception and narrative, subjectivity is a necessary ingredient of the creative process, and perhaps representation of all kinds. In their *Thousand Plateaux*, Deleuze & Guattari describe how the projection of meaning in western culture requires a white wall; but the screen is always punctured by the black hole of subjectivity. Similarly embedding the concept as crucial and inevitable, Bourriaud (2003: p. 97) says: 'Art is the thing upon and around which subjectivity can reform itself, the way several light spots are brought together to form a beam, and light up a single point.' Confirming this, Monique Roelofs (2003: p. 197) has said that 'Aesthetic experience is preserved and understood as a space for authentic subjectivity.' Throughout contemporary theory, nobody denounces subjectivity.

If subjectivity is central to art, what happens to it when art becomes research and we seek rigour in the process? This paper connects with a larger project in which I have tried to define studio research as a new episteme where it is possible academically to transact our subjectivity. In my recent book *The jealousy of ideas: research methods in the creative arts*, I propose that artists have jealous motivations in forming their contribution to culture; and this personal impulse should not be compromised or negated by an inappropriate demand for rigour. In particular, I suggest that the most interesting aspects of artistic work are those which are imaginatively *sui generis*, which have their own voice and subjective integrity. Consequently, the research agenda to square the work within referenced coordinates, policed by a canon of rigour, is stifling and anti-inspirational. The very word rigour derives from stiffness, numbness and insensibility. Instead, my book identifies supple poetic research methods which agree with the artistic undertaking in all its subjective complexions. These are in many ways antithetical to what is normally considered rigorous method in conventional academic disciplines. The concept of rigour must be deconstructed, but especially in its misguided zeal for *research questions* rigorously pursued.

The concept of subjectivity has barely come into consciousness till recent generations and remains fugitive, powerless and vulnerable. Historically, no sooner did subjectivity emerge than it was suspected. The term may be considered disparagingly, as with Hare (1827, *OED s.v.*) impatiently decrying 'those who cannot get quit of their subjectivity, or write about objects objectively'. An early call for more rigour, then. The term rigour also has a fascinating history, which is for another project; however, the term rigour gains its positive academic tone at the same time as subjectivity grows in the liberal imagination; and the two can be considered reciprocal children of the industrial world, the one haunting the other. For the scientist, subjectivity would be sub-rigorous. The fateful preposition 'sub' haunts the very conception, as if destined to the lower zones of ambiguity and confusion. Even the quintessentially subjectivist philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1885) acknowledges a damnable self-definition or self-referentiality (*verfluchten Ipsissimosität*) in everything subjective, with which you can become utterly fed up (*bis zum Sterben satt gewesen!*). Just the same, he warns against accepting the objective spirit, which entails spiritual destruction of the self and depersonalization (*Entselbstung und Entpersönlichung*) under the title of disinterest (§207).

My challenge in the present paper is to provide an analysis of why subjectivity has proved so evasive and fragile. From this perspective, I hope that the studio researcher will be able to navigate prudently between three options: (i) studio method might rise to the rigour of conventional research by denying its subjectivity, (ii) studio method might defy conventional scholarly rigour in order to preserve its subjectivity and (iii) studio method might find diplomatic rapprochements with conventional research which appear to reconcile the two areas of method, whether genuinely or in bad faith.

Subjectivity was presumably always an element in artistic production but, like creativity itself, only began to be recognized recently by its name. The word is of nineteenth-century coinage, the noun 'subjectivity' appearing first in 1821 (*OED*), following a slow development of the adjective 'subjective' from mechanical origins in the renaissance to the enlightenment. A lot of history, therefore, lacks the word.

The term 'subject matter' is older but involves the opposite elements to subjectivity. The apple or jug in a still life is equally the motif for another artist who treats it differently: the vision is different, but not the apple. Thus 'subject' turns out to be the invariable, absolute and objective element. When we speak of the subject of a painting, alas, it means the common topic, neither the artist nor his or her

receptiveness and individual treatment. The authorial confession—which in another discourse we would characterize through subjectivity—is not reflected in what we call the subject of the picture.

Language was never so perverse as in this contradiction. Grammar gives a strict definition to the word subject. In any sentence, the subject is unequivocally distinguished from the object by a simple structure. The subject is the independent person or thing which exists or acts. The chair holds the door open. In such a sentence, the chair is the subject because it commands the verb. The door is the object because it is acted upon. A sentence must always have a subject though not always an object. You can say, for example: I sit. In sentence construction, there is no need to add an object but you cannot subtract the subject. The subject, always taking the nominative case, is the centre, the point of departure. So if you translate this to art and imagine the act of painting, the subject ought to be the painter who paints, the author who senses and feels and registers, the prior body who sees the object, the apple or jug, and apprehends and depicts. Sadly, however, this dynamic in the act of painting does not transfer to the picture. Of the oil-painting itself, the subject is merely the objects that the painter has depicted.

So when we say instead that the apple or jug is the subject, we witness the first denial of subjectivity, the treachery of language in the artist's studio which robs the artist of his or her position as the instigator and maker. By this deceptive protocol, a person can walk into the studio and describe the subject without ever having to refer to the artist. And the same thing occurs in the writer's studio too: the subject of the poem is not the poet (who possess the receptiveness and is the origin of the response) but the sunset or wind tormenting the window which the poet has evoked. The word (ὑποκειμενον) which was later to become 'subject' in ancient Greece in fact means subject matter, as in Aristotle (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1094b12, 1098a28).

This linguistic inversion accords with a great shyness over subjectivity, which is also a reluctance to recognize the agency of artistic process. If language can own the result of an artwork, it would prefer not to have to grapple with its gestation. This is tragic for us as studio artists seeking to elaborate and advance the gestational, in which subjectivity is of maximum importance. Alas, not only are research methods by and large against us but language itself expropriates our rights. The expression of subjectivity through language is linked to the demonstrative expression of process in art, through style and gesture and voice. If there is no talk or consciousness of process, there was no talk of subjectivity either.

But then if subjectivity is a nineteenth-century conception, what existed before its invention? What is the prehistory of subjectivity, that is, the understanding of subjectivity before it was named? These questions are only partially answered in the major studies in the field, such as Roland Hagenbüchle (1995) and Reto Luzius Fetz et al. (1998).

In ancient Greece for example, the nearest word for subject (‘υποκειμενον) from which the Latin adjective (*subiectus*) was grafted was still used in a verbal sense and has no metaphoric dimension: it means ‘that which lies before us or lies to hand’. Instead, the nearest conceptions to subjectivity relate to what we would call the soul. Each person possesses a cell of individual consciousness, which is more than the operation of thinking (νους) but some integrity of character, feeling and being which I suppose is what we still mean by soul, though we seldom use the word in a professional context. Perhaps because of its mystifying spiritualism, ‘soul’ has receded to the sub-professional. In archaic Greece, the soul (ψυχη) is not well distinguished as a locus of consciousness so much as a force that keeps people alive and without which they die, an *animus*, if you like, which leads to the Latin *anima* in a way that is not coincidental; for these conceptions of life were relatively mechanistic. In Homeric society, greater subjective dynamism was expressed by the seat of emotion (θυμος); but these conceptions are vague and do not have the specificity of soul much less subjectivity, as is revealed in the beautiful analysis by Bruno Snell (1975: pp. 18 ff.). And tellingly, the Homeric seat of emotion (θυμος) loses potency in classical and later antiquity and is more active in the abstract compound, meaning desire (επιθυμια).

It is strange, given the sophistication and sensitivity of Greek art. As Auerbach (1967) found in his monumental study of the representation of reality, immediacy of feeling is more likely to be registered among the ancient Jews than Greeks. The soul in the first book of the *Bible* is more subjectivist and less intellectual. Here, a person’s soul can command a sense of attachment, as with Shechem, whose ‘soul clave unto Dinah’ (*Genesis* 34.3). In Jacob’s language, the term suggests moody negotiation—‘O my soul, come not thou into their secret’ (49.6)—in the same way that he asks his honour not to join their assembly. In spite of such statements of fervor and vehemence, the soul is often a mechanical expression for naming a person, as when souls are counted like head of cattle.

Above all, the soul has institutional handles: it is the part of a person that recommends itself to God and society, by analogy to the flesh that has not been ceremonially mutilated: ‘the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant’ (17.14).

So too with the heart, which is prolifically invoked; and sure, there are examples where depth and passion are felt. But the heart is also instrumental, a receptacle of ingrained determinations. Though often grandiloquent—as with ‘the integrity of my heart’ (*Genesis* 20.5)—the sense of an individual’s habitation within feeling and consciousness is weak throughout the *Old Testament*. Up to a point, it is true of the *New Testament* as well. If Jesus says ‘That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart (‘υποκειμενον)’ (*Matthew* 5.28), this heart is an almost forensic institution, a thing of personal testimonial; and generally, the Christian interest in the affairs of the heart are for the sake of control, either of behaviour or belief: ‘lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt… for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also’ (*Matthew* 6.20–21). The intention is to change desires from the material to the spiritual; and the heart can be read as commitment, routed by divine recommendation toward the pious.

Antiquity transmits these intuitions to the later ages of genius and artistic inspiration; and subjectivity had a very slow and late development. The Biblical understanding of the soul provides the keynote for the renaissance, in which the heart is an engine, as when Vasari in his *Life of Brunelleschi* describes how certain people born diminutive in stature nevertheless have such a formidable soul and immensely awesome heart (*l’animo pieno di tanta grandezza et il cuore di sì smisurata terribilità*). Similarly, those little-endowed in their bodies may have great generosity of soul and sincerity in the heart. Or Perino who had a heart for rivaling or even outstripping the ancients in his work. To have heart means to be emboldened. These are not terms of profound consciousness. Where, you wonder, is subjectivity?

We look to the arts and its literature for signs of such qualities; but while we are struck by the powerful evocative character of renaissance painting and sculpture, when we seek signs of that independence of consciousness that we are describing as subjectivity, it is largely missing. The soul remains instrumental in Vasari. In his Proemio delle vite, he describes drawing as the fundamental element of painting and sculpture, nay the very soul that conceives and nourishes in itself (*anzi l’istessa anima che concepe e nutrisce in se medesima*) all the other parts, by analogy to God’s making of the earth.

With classical aesthetics grafted upon theological traditions, renaissance art theory enjoyed the conceit of the artist as demiurge, hopefully inducing the transfer of divine privilege to the artist. From this epoch, we build a heroic view of the artist, hence the artist as genius. Yet the age of Michelangelo, Raphael and Titian, though bringing forth geniuses as we still classify such figures, used the word genius in an entirely different way, which somewhat approximates subjectivity. Their use of the word *genio*, or Latin *genius*, was impeccably classical and equivalent to the Greek *daimon*, almost an independent being who advises the soul. As in the Roman sculpture of *The Augustus of Prima Porta*, the genius is figured, tellingly, as a little boy who is external to the body and who accompanies the adult. *Genius* in their terms is a quality or adjunct character-giving property of a person. But it is not the person himself or herself. Nobody said: 'that person is a *genius*'. You, as any person, have a genius. Your genius may not be to decorate the Vatican but you still have a *genius*, evidently to do other things, richly explained by Edgar Zilsel (1924).

So potentially, *genio* could be considered as some kind of antecedent to subjectivity. But it is operational, an external prompting force, not a view from within. Artists may be moved by their genius (*mossi dal genio loro*) like the sculptor and architect Benedetto da Maiano, according to Vasari; but this is about motivation, not awareness. It could just be about having a happy nature. Raphael who was clearly an ambitious and angelic painter of exceptional gifts, is valued for his Olympian output above all; and yet among these amazing gifts (*fra le sue doti singulari*) the term genio is reserved for his sweet nature, his ability to bring people of pompous humour together to work harmoniously. This occurred, Vasari says, because the other artists were won over by his courtesy and by his art, 'but even more by the genius (*genio*) of his good nature'.

Genius is not absolute and immutable, as we judge from the description of the painter Pellegrino da Modana, where physiological breakdown causes 'one with a genius of happy complexion to be transformed into melancholy'. And on the other side, in the introductory paragraph to Franciabigio's *Life*, we read that hard work can overcome poverty, turning bitterness into sweetness, to the point that the goodness of heaven is forced to be helpful and kind to his genius (*essergli nel genio favorevole e benigna*). Genius could be a limitation, as when Bandello (1550) writes in Vasari's century that two people do not get on, because the genius of the one does not match that of the other and the blood does not mix (1.2).

Renaissance art has so much fine feeling in terms of the senses, its *sfumato* and grace; but it is seldom introspective. In the age of perspective, nature itself is a conception teetering between the absolute and a quality differentiated relative to the individual. An individual's sensibility cannot be expressed in that epoch. In the whole Renaissance and even baroque, there is nothing like Rousseau's discussion (1755) of animals sharing with humans a certain sensibility (*par la sensibilité dont ils sont doués*) for natural law, which belongs to his argument that it is not necessary to make a person a philosopher before he or she becomes a human.

But then even Rousseau, who clinches so much of the genius of the enlightenment, conceives of sensibility in terms of a corporation of citizens. In his Social Contract, he argues that in order for individuals to act in concert, there has to be a particular ego (*un moi particulier*), a sensibility common to each (*sensibilité commune à ses membres*), a force, an internal will (*une volonté propre*) which guarantees its preservation.

Slowly, such ideas detach themselves from the political and enter the intimate; because this is in itself political, as the famous catch-cry of first-wave feminism declared: the personal is political. So when Montesquieu (1721: §53) says that 'you like my naivety and prefer my liberal air and my sensibility for pleasure (*sensibilité pour les plaisirs*) to the false modesty of my companions', he is making a claim for the power of the private over the conventional. In the first lines of *La religieuse* Diderot describes a person as having 'spirit, gaiety, taste for fine art and above all originality. One has praised his sensibility, his honour and probity'. In another case an eccentric and foolhardy woman is recognized for her incredible sensibility (*sensibilité incroyable*) in her sensual and eroticized grasp of music; and elsewhere, the greatest sensibility can suddenly give onto ferocity (*de la plus grande sensibilité jusqu'à la férocité*). With this preamble, running from the Greek psyche to the sensibility of the enlightenment, Europe is ready to invent subjectivity in the romantic period.

It seems no accident that the word 'subjectivity' takes root in western thinking during an epoch when its expression can be witnessed in demonstrative incarnations through art, poetry and music. In the period from romanticism to modernism, the subjectivity of the artist wins unprecedented prestige, where the artwork, before it is a depiction of the river or the apple, is a record of organic experience, wrought with a confession of its process, the subjective basis of which I have tried to trace elsewhere (Nelson 2007). Subjectivity has not always been recognized and has been slow to emerge from institutional conventions. It is acceptable in expressions of emotion but, like the construction of the ego inside Freud's famous triangle of potent

forces in the psyche, it has no power. In the academy, subjectivity is particularly defenceless. Unless poetic parameters are generously extended, the disavowal of subjectivity persists through inappropriate research methodology in the creative arts, where subjectivity may be mishandled as a consequence.

We have not travelled 3,000 years to reach a minimum understanding of subjectivity only to have it crushed or compromised by obtuse models of research that do not accommodate the poetic and the personal. In spite of various academic templates, we cannot handle subjectivity with rigour because after these millennia we still barely know what subjectivity is much less know how to handle it rigorously. All that we know is that (a) subjectivity is central to artistic process and (b) artists engage a kind of rigour in their work which is also described as criticism. Ironically, however, if we do not know what subjectivity is, then we neither know the limits nor the purpose of the rigour that applies to it; because the two stand in reciprocal relations. If we cannot accommodate subjectivity and make it central to our research methods, we also have no artistic or scholarly use for rigour, and the whole concept of rigour recedes to its etymological origins of stiffness, numbness and insensibility. We have to vouchsafe the growth of subjectivity in the research paradigm of the creative arts; and in embracing the subjective in research methods, we are now inventing a new episteme of cultural significance.

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Drama or transparency? Extending the range of academic writing

Stanislav Roudavski

Abstract

Should academic writing aspire to be transparent or evocative, clear or rich, sure-footed or exploratory? Can techniques and attitudes of “creative writing” that attempt to express or provoke thoughts, emotions or experiences contribute to “academic writing” that strives to inform, explain or argue? Is the very distinction between “academic” and “creative” writing valid in the epistemological context that understands knowing as distributed, polyphonic, negotiatory, dynamic, experiential and unstable? Reflecting on these questions, this paper reviews several contrasting examples of writing. The examples include minimalist and post-modernist academic writing as well as architectural manifestos, advertising materials, fiction and poems. The analysis of these texts questions criteria for rigor and value in academic writing. Reevaluating existing expectations of academic expression can be particularly productive in the fields of art, design and architecture where epistemology and methods of research are under active discussion. This paper speculates that existing rhetorical, narrative and dramatic techniques of “non-academic” textual practice can usefully extend academic reporting and proposes a tentative framework for innovative sharing of research work. In addition, the paper suggests that art and design education can benefit from an extra emphasis on writing taught and learnt in an open-ended, exploratory and critical manner. For example an existing device of a creative-writing workshop is compatible with design- or art-studio teaching and can extend the pedagogical range of studio-based education by helping to integrate textual rhetoric with other-media expression.

Brackish Water: Teaching design to writers

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Abstract

A hybrid text is a text in which words and images merge to create a reading experience that is neither purely verbal nor purely visual. As part of my doctoral research into hybrid texts, I developed a creative writing workshop called ‘Writing with graphic devices’. The workshop explores ways writers can produce hybrid texts by integrating photographs and ephemera into their writing, through a series of discussions and creative writing exercises. This presentation discusses the development of this workshop and my experience as a designer, teaching writing workshops to writers.

Extended Abstract

A hybrid text is a text in which words and images merge to create a reading experience that is neither purely verbal nor purely visual. Although not new, hybrid texts are increasingly appearing in commercial publishing and academic circles: graphic novels are stocked in most major bookstores; hybrid novels such as Jonathan Safran Foer’s Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close and Dave Egger’s You Shall Know Our Velocity are garnering critical attention; newspapers and magazines are increasingly image heavy; and scholars such as Elizabeth Chaplain, W.J.T. Mitchell and Theo van Leeuwen call for innovative (hybrid) approaches to analysing and critiquing hybrid texts. Despite the increasing prevalence and demand for hybrid texts, many readers and critics find these publications perplexing. They ask: what are images doing in these texts, and how am I supposed to ‘read’ them.

My doctoral thesis examines hybrid texts from a designerly perspective. I argue that Visual Communication Designers – those versed in both the verbal and the visual – possess useful analytical tools and critical perspectives that can illuminate the study

of hybrid texts. Designers have much to offer scholars in other fields and disciplines who are seeking new ways to understand and critique hybrid texts.

With this in mind, I developed a creative writing workshop called ‘Writing with graphic devices’. The workshop explores ways to integrate photographs and ephemera into written texts, through a series of writing exercises. Participants are introduced to hybrid texts, and encouraged to experiment with graphic devices in their own writing practice. The workshop was developed between 2007 and 2009, and held on three separate occasions, attracting writers from diverse backgrounds – from novelists to nurses. This presentation discusses the development of this workshop and my experience as a designer, teaching writing workshops to writers.

The presentation covers four discussions. First the aims of the workshop are to: a) introduce participants to strategies for reading and critiquing hybrid texts; b) guide participants through writing exercises in which they experiment with graphic devices, and reflect on this process; c) discuss ways participant could instruct designers or publishers to deal with their hybrid manuscripts. Second, I describe how the workshop is structured as a series of brief lectures, followed by writing exercises and group critique of these exercises. Third I discuss feedback from participants, collated from reflective writing exercises. Finally I discuss implications for teaching ‘visual writing’ to both writers and designers.

Scribbling space

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Abstract

Conventionally, a design is done through drawings and models which have a parallelism between the ‘something’ and its representation. This correspondence often pushes drawing and model making into the process of invention. Writing, which is characterised by an arbitrary or non-relationship between itself and its referents, appears to be less able to connect in this way. This need not be the case. In 2007, the author made use of writing as a space-imagining tool in an experimental architectural project. In this, three small buildings were designed, using writing – exclusively – at different design stages. The experience of doing so has provided material for considering:

a) the ability of writing to deal easily with complex perceptions and temporal images; b) the almost unlimited writing styles and genres that exist, and the possibilities of inventing new ones; and
c) the advantage of using a resistant or inappropriate medium of representation.

While these issues arise from an architect’s experience, they have clear implications for other creative domains where representation for prediction, for approval and for implementation is practiced.

Keywords
designing, making, writing

When we design, we don’t make the object of our attention: we represent it so that some-one else can make it. The introduction to any design discipline is largely an introduction to representations, to the point where these conventions become habits, natural and almost invisible. Every so often, some of us wonder what these conventions do to our thinking. Such thoughts surfaced at a coffee break I had with two architect

colleagues in May 2003: we wondered, not whether there was a connection between our ideas and their representations, but what these connections were.

I was immediately struck with the idea of pushing this question through a design experiment, not as an analysis after the fact, but as action research using design as the subject. What would happen if the representational convention was admitted into the design process as an equal partner, if not a major stake-holder, along with all the usual criteria such as site, material, structure, use and so on?

The experiment seemed to be simple at the outset. Because I am deeply familiar with drawing, model-making and writing – but not with digital machines – there would be three representational modes used as design inputs. Three small projects were proposed. Here, some complexity crept in. The three projects were to be on the same site, with similar programs – studios for artisans: one for a woodworker, one for a ceramicist, and one for a metalworker. Further complexity crept in when it was decided to take each through three stages of diagram/realisation/development (or what architects normally call concept design, sketch design and design development) and that these stages would be exclusively done in the different modes. Further, the sequence of modes would vary, so that the woodworker's studio would be modelled, then drawn, then written; the ceramicist's would be written, modelled, then drawn; and the metalworker's studio would be drawn, written, then modelled. Each mode or medium would then eventually be used at the three different design stages. Finally, to complicate matters further, I jumped from project to project at the conclusion of stages, thus considering the nine stages as a field of interacting small projects. The collection of stages and designs was eventually named 3 Studios (Selenitsch 2003-04).

The experiment produced three kinds of texts, done for similar kinds of buildings, and done at three different phases of designing, and the following is a commentary on the experience of their production and some speculation on possible extensions of this kind of writing.

The first text to be done attempted to write the ceramicist's studio. There were no preliminary diagrams or drawings, and the architecture was imagined as I wrote. The text is a walkthrough of the imagined building, but based on the idea of a parallel movement of person and materials through the space. It has a U-turn as its main figure, materials going in then out after 'turning' at the kilns. Across the U-turn of the materials, the to and fro of the artist becomes the motif for the roof. The text is a narrative essay:

"ceramic WRITE

This building stretches between the dry and the wet, always somewhere between the two.

In ceramics, the clay is wet at first , then as dry as anything can be when fired. Firing puts liquid into stasis, into one of the most permanent materials that can be made.

The best ceramics are those which show their original liquid state while resisting the action of water.

*

This is a building of concrete, at least up to the underside of the roof, with bitumen amending the floor areas, and steel amending the roof zone.

Walls are placed on cast concrete footings. Some of these footings rise up to one metre above floor level, and show their casting marks. In dry areas, a cement slurry is sometimes splashed onto the walls. Bitumen is a long-standing waterproofing material in building and in this studio is used for floors and dado water-proofing in some of the areas where water is constantly used.

*

Everything comes into the building through one entrance: individual people, small groups, raw materials, cars and delivery vans and trucks. Machinery and bicycles, electricity and telecommunications, water and gas also. Everything comes out of the building through this same place. Entrance = exit. Tired workers, visitors, loaded vans, finished pieces, waste products. Thus, all of these paths do a U-turn and in the case of the ceramics, come out significantly altered. This alteration is there for all things that go in, even if the alteration is below our perceptual threshold such as the instance of a car driving in and out.

There are different depths of entrance into this studio. Visitors such as customers go into the building least; their turning point is at

a counter where goods are bought and wrapped and then taken back out. Machinery of various kinds might be the next degree of penetration into the site, although the extent of machinery is from the throwing wheels to the kiln. The clay might be considered the deepest of the U-turns. At the kiln, the clay goes no further into the site; it emerges from the firing to slowly move back out of the building as an object of some sort. If the firing fails, it goes out as trash.

The ceramicist moves around and through this pattern of U-turns, from machine to material to display to desk, to the kiln and so on. This constant meander is sometimes along the U-turn paths, sometimes across them.

Thus, the architecture is composed of a nested set of four or five U-shaped walls, with the open ends of the U facing the street. They can be thought of as:

the wall of the Kiln
the wall of the wheel
the wall of the desk-top
the wall of the Shop.

Each U-shaped wall is of a different thickness. The most outer (maybe the largest U-wall) is the thinnest, while the innermost (maybe the smallest) is the thickest. Thicker walls have compartments for storage and display built into their thickness. Small rooms such as offices, kitchens, change-rooms and toilets sometimes fill the gaps between the nested U-walls. Except for the outer one, every U-wall is the same height along its length, and enough of the walls are of the same height to support the trusses in a constant horizontal position. The walls are of concrete masonry, with the texture of the two parallel walls each inflecting in the opposite direction to each other. The closed end of the U is in a smooth finish. Each of the U-walls is in a slightly different (concrete) colour. The end of the U is either flat or curved, depending on its location.

The floor of the building is of two materials – bitumen and concrete. Both are evident in discrete areas or pieces. These pieces are individual pours between the walls which are built first. Floors are only placed where necessary for traffic or occupation. Floors are bitumen towards the front of the building and concrete at the back. Areas of ground which are not paved are defined by crescent-shaped mounds of earth, with associated depressions, some of which form ponds. At the front of the site, some of these mounds (and ponds) are of slumped concrete.

The roof consists of a system of five or seven parallel chord trusses running across the nested walls. The trusses zig-zag from wall to wall down the length of the building from front to back to represent the meandering path of the artist. The maximum distance at any point between the trusses is six metres and the minimum is one metre. The outer faces of the trusses are glazed, and the roofs between them are single inclines of varying pitch across the building.

*

A small space, like a pavilion, is placed at each end of the building. At the back end of the building there is the Kiln, which is a small, dark, heavily-insulated room with an extreme internal climate when firing takes place. At the front end of the building there is the Shop. This is where the finished works are stacked and brought to the public's gaze. Both of these spaces are more or less outside the control of the artist and hence outside of the zig-zag system of the roof trusses. The kiln and Shop are opposites which speak of the same thing, like wet and dry.

AS
886 words
4 june 03"
(Selenitsch 2003-04, unpaginated)

At the time, I considered the text to be a success when one of my readers asked whether it was a description of something already pre-existing.

The second text was for the metalworker's studio, which had already been given form through drawing. The drawn scheme has four quarters to it, separating four production zones, so the text describes each of the zones as seen from the four

corners of the site. This text was written as long lines which describe visible effects, with each successive line moving its attention closer to the building. It produced blank verse of the American kind, with breath-driven phrases, not the iambic pentameter of English blank verse. Here is an excerpt, consisting of the second and third parts (after the first part which deals with the setting and landscape elements):

> “Metal WRITE
> (given north at the top of the page)…
> …THE MATERIAL
>
> 1.
> From the NE corner, looking at the STORE:
> the back wall a field of stacked timber pieces, some in the plane
> of the wall, some missing, some projecting at a slight angle as if
> swung out or bumped, all pieces horizontal and coated with clear
> preservative
> the (not visible) side walls clad in horizontal planks, sized to match
> the (visible) back wall, but uniformly laid and stained black
> openings sealed with frameless glass sheets fixed to the exterior of
> the back wall
> elsewhere glazing of stacked frames
> the roof of steel sheet, cut and detailed to look like a large protective
> sheet placed over the building which is a stack of materials.
>
> 2.
> From the NW corner looking at the MACHINE SHOP:
> walls and projecting screens clad in vertical boards and sheets, so
> that horizontal joints are discontinuous
> each cladding piece – board and sheet – being no longer than
> shoulder height in length or shorter than an arm length
> each horizontal joint showing a projecting aluminium flashing with
> varying colours distributed across the walls
> openings framed in coloured anodised aluminium
> the roof also aluminium with coloured gutters and flashing at the
> barges.
>
> 3.
> From the SW corner, looking at the WORKSHOP:
> all walls clad in continuous horizontal lines a hand-span apart
> these lines created by boards, transoms and flashings
> inserts such as view holes, ventilation flaps, lighting panels, projecting
> cupboards and screens of glass and copper
> these inserts distributed horizontally to give the impression of objects
> trapped in a net, or brooches pinned to a chest
> the roof also copper and following the form of the building.
>
> 4.
> From the SE corner looking at the GALLERY:
> the roof and long wall are clad in zinc sheet so that the metal surface
> appears to wrap down the roof and wall to the gutter (or pool)
> the timber structure underneath it being clothed (hidden)
> only just visible at the edges around the front door.
>
> THE DETAIL
> i.
> In the GALLERY, everything is secretly connected with no visible
> joints or fixings expressed, as if the whole carcass was carved out of
> one piece of wood.
>
> ii.
> In the WORKSHOP, all timber junctions are shown as components
> just about to meet, with metal connecting pieces, each like a piece of
> jewellery.
>
> iii.
> In the MACHINE SHOP, all timber pieces are butted together but
> spliced with coloured aluminium plates to show where the timber has
> been sawn/cut and/or reduced into a component.
>
> iv.
> In the STORE, all timber pieces appear to be stacked and held by
> gravity with some pieces strapped together to prevent them falling or
> coming apart.
>
> AS
> 1099 words

5th April 04”
(Selenitsch 2003-04, unpaginated)

The third text, for the woodworker’s studio, came at the design development stage. Here the concept and form of the building had already been largely resolved. Two multiple texts emerged. The first was a set of five groups of aphoristic images, each five words long. These 25 images set a policy for any further detail work. The second was a set of constellations based on a diagrammatic spatial layout of the concept, using single words to form sub-systems of the architecture. The constellations were written using excel sheets, and are similar to the spatial poetry that I write in my literary work. The aphorisms are more conventional and easier to include here:

“wood WRITE

WOODWORKER
quincunx 1

COURT
island where the trees return
a square ring, sometimes cyclic
around the square, sometimes axial
drawing a frame against entropy
four corners, braced with light

RACKS
a bank of horizontal trees
a thick wall of quarantine
a street-front of potential furniture
soft shade, waiting for shape
drying slowly, season after season

MACHINE SHOP
tearing the forest into rectangles
soft walls soaking up sound
bright, precise, diffuse, clean light
the ritual of the millimetre
over everything, a knife-edge roof

WORKSHOP
the bench as a pier
making several things at once
a visible dispersal of parts
contemplating the trial assembly
puzzle of what comes next

GALLERY/SHOP
just imagine it at home
please touch, open and sit
perfect finish is a mirror
astonish us with the obvious
sugar and sun made solid”
(Selenitsch 2003-04, unpaginated)

While the nature of each of these texts was the outcome of the moment, facing the needs of the project to hand, each text points to a different and pertinent issue regarding writing in design.

When my colleague asked whether the ceramicist’s studio text was a description of something that had been fixed beforehand, he must have had something like ekphrasis in mind. No professional architect would ask this of a concept drawing or sketch plan, but because architectural writing is so tied to letters and reports – while ignoring the fictional and fantasy writing floating about us - it seemed an obvious concern. His question implied: how could one just invent, without a given object to describe?

Ekphrasis is narrowly defined as a verbal description of another artwork, generally a visual one such as a painting or a sculpture, in which every attempt is made to write the effects and intensity of the original. Before photography, it was one of the only ways of disseminating artworks in the culture (Mitchell 1994). A wider definition holds that ekphrasis is the use of any artwork to inspire or structure another artwork in a different medium. In all cases, the initiating artwork has to be pre-existing, and preferably made by some-one else (Morphet 2000) . So in the case of my ceramicist’s text, there is no ekphrasis. But there is a hint of it in the other two texts, where the aim of the experiment was to shift the design along through the agency of a new representation. Because of the absolute representational jump between design stages, the discontinuity is similar to that between the partners of an ekphraistic relationship.

The translation that ekphrasis demands points to the fact that in design, writing is subsumed by the design process. During design, all images are provisional, are jetties going out into the unknown. Any image leads to another, finer or deeper realisation, to another jetty. In architecture, these formulations don't necessarily stop when a building is built, and one could even consider a building as a temporary formulation or translation of the architecture into yet another medium. So a text produced during a design process is not an end in itself like a poem, essay or novel, but is a transitional text, a temporary holding pattern. In such a situation you would ask of a text that it helps you to the next phase of design.

The third text, of aphorisms and constellations, points to the issue of materiality. This is an attribute which is obvious, even if just literally so, to physical model-makers who must work with and against matter to make objects, and is somewhat apparent to those who draw with paint, pencil ink and paper. But it appears to be difficult to grasp in writing. This may be because we are drilled to concentrate on ideas and communication, with its misguided – if not totally wrong – value that the best writing is (like any servant) an invisible vehicle.

Writing is one manifestation of language, a property that humans possess (and perhaps other species as well), and which cannot be completely understood as natural or artificial. For individuals, speech is an early form of language; writing with a marking tool seems to be next. Recording, broadcasting and print throw language into an impersonal mass audience, breaking the immediacy of speaker and listener that is a condition of speech and some forms of writing. This variety of ecologies makes the materiality of an inclusive concept of language difficult to pin down; in fact, best approached as a conglomerate of differences, which sometimes appear to have no mutual connection (Rothenberg and Clay, 2000). These differences are also exemplified in the variety of language techniques developed in modern literature (Waldrop 1971).

But in the restricted arena being discussed here – writing in design – there are some limits to the tangible properties. Whether paper or screen, there is a small flat surface of substantial potential on which marks are placed. These can be discrete shapes or gestures, or joined to form small bundles, and even linked in lines across the flat surface. As poets have long known, there is no reason to use all of the flat surface for mark-making, and the page's spatiality can be used as part of the language, as silence or the matrix of a constellation of signs. Different marking tools such as the brush, pen and typewriter can be used. Writing can be both naturally temporal, and naturally spatial, depending on how the flat plane is used.

My first designing text, and my second designing text through its successive viewpoints and jumps in scale, point to an amorphous arena of huge potential in both a positive and negative sense, in what writing can't do, and what it could.

In literature, there are compositional types to exploit. Poetry has the ballad, the epic, the sonnet, aphorisms, the prose poem. Prose has many formats: word numbers define short stories, novellas, novel, and there are categories of voice, and fiction and documentary to play with. But there appear to be no such formats for writing space as design. The situation is different for drawing and model-making. In drawing, for instance, there are diagrams of various kinds, plans/sections and elevations, perspectives for paper-based conventions and morphing and fly-throughs in digital imagery. Many architects like to sketch and paint, but they are not artists by virtue of holding a brush or being able to draw in perspective. The same applies to model-makers, who, although they may make abstract, crafted objects, are not sculptors because they do not engage with sculptural issues. In contrast to the plethora of drawing/designing options, there appear to be few agreed, codified ways of writing design, of exploring spatial forms, of scribbling space. Writers appear to be non-designers: writing space or design is largely, if not almost completely, concerned with writing ABOUT architecture or design (Crysler 2003, Lupton and Miller 1999).

So, unlike drawing and model-making, writing seems to require a preliminary invention: not what to write, but how to give it form. Which brings me to what writing could possibly do. Writing is a tool that can be used to chip away the ossified dominance of the visual in architectural practice. This visuality is now a restriction. Its nature can be easily noted if you examine the old cliché: 'one picture is worth a thousand words'. Imagine a picture of a tree: full profile, in perfect focus, in colour. You can study the image again and again for different kinds of data, perhaps enlarge it, if it is a digital image. But there is no information about the tree's movement, its seasonal changes, growth or history; nor who or what inhabits it, its sounds, its surrounding temperature and humidity, and so on. None of this data is available in a visual image. What the cliché really means is that aspects of the image are simulations of the object represented and can be studied in the same way as the real thing. So shape and colour are there to be perceived, not interpreted. The 'thousand words' define the potential of the image, not the potential of words. Simulation is out of the realm of words as they do not simulate the world they refer to, onomatopoeias notwithstanding.

The difficulty of inventing how to write is highlighted by appeals in architectural theory for a phenomenological approach. This ranges from a consideration of the five senses, of body sensations such as gravity and balance, experiences of the weather, to building lifespan cycles and ritual occupations. None of this theory provides tools for researching, manipulating and composing complex non-visual criteria. Because the invention of complex duration is required, scores come to mind, the most common of which are musical. A musical score locks together many instruments, sometimes many different rhythms, and even other effects. For composers, the score is a designing tool which at some stage is frozen and handed to others as the performing instructions (Cage 1969). But it is visual, and an extension of such scores into spatial composition produces more visual material, more drawing (Halprin 1969).

While this brings in temporal processes which are excluded in conventional spatial drawings, scores still bypasses what writing has to offer, which is a way of locking together external and internal worlds, while doing so in complex durations and scales. In other words (!) writing can easily deal with spatial experiences which have no Euclidian geometry, no specific shape but which are nonetheless real. To give this claim some tangibility, here is a text from one of my current projects. The House of a Nuclear Family is an attempt to convert two barracks buildings into a suburban house, but in doing so, to make explicit the emotional state of the 1950s. This text emerged after a few attempts at drawings began producing very ordinary 'architecture':

> "THE HOUSE OF THE NUCLEAR FAMILY
> In the House of the Nuclear Family, there is a nucleus of a positive and a negative particle, held by a mysterious force. There are at least two electrons orbiting around.
>
> In the House of the Nuclear Family, the future is infinite. One cubic inch of uranium is enough to power a major city for 24 hours.
>
> In the House of the Nuclear Family, high tension wires tie the house to others: words and images have become radio-active.
>
> In the House of the Nuclear Family, small experiments are scattered about, each of them testing the resistance of a concept to amateur technique.

> In the House of the Nuclear Family, there is a bunker. The threat of a distant apocalypse gives it an aura of salvation, even if the after-life is dubious.
>
> In the House of the Nuclear Family, money has melted into numbers. Weekly payments dampen the reaction, and help to avoid sudden eruptions of credit.
>
> In the House of the Nuclear Family, the isotope is a kind of drink; a lurid fizz in bottles, in crates, driven around by trucks.
>
> *
> In the House of the Nuclear Family, the compass needle twitches between the old empire of privilege and the new empire of work.
>
> In the House of the Nuclear Family, the kitchen is a moral instrument against the spectres of Communism, Capitalism, Catholicism and Calvinism.
>
> In the House of the Nuclear Family, structure is black and white so that accents of colour can be tolerated.
>
> In the House of the Nuclear Family, a chain reaction rips through the rooms every time the front door is opened.
>
> In the House of the Nuclear Family, every door leads to an independent state. No visas are required, but you have to knock first.
>
> In the House of the Nuclear Family, someone leaves the house in the morning and returns in the evening.
>
> In the House of the Nuclear Family, secrets are kept in an invisible room.
>
> In the House of the Nuclear Family, the ricochet of loose particles is carefully monitored. The family can easily be split, releasing heat and toxicity.

*

In the House of the Nuclear Family, the children already live the life that their parents dream of.

In the House of the Nuclear Family, every task is done by a metal box, controlled by switches and numbers.

In the House of the Nuclear Family, there is no concern for waste. Perhaps it goes back into the earth; maybe it is consumed by the sun.

In the House of the Nuclear Family, the weekends fill up the space between the house and its surrounding fences.

In the House of the Nuclear Family, inventions reveal problems that were once invisible; new uses are found for obsolete systems.

In the House of the Nuclear Family, the world arrives in packets, with giveaways, competitions and cut-outs with tabs.

In the House of the Nuclear Family, year zero is ground zero. Time and space have only just begun.

*

AS 2 march 09"
(from the designer's job file)

The repetitive structure is (again) borrowed from poetry. Each of the various images can be read as a physical description, as a social relationship, and as individual desires and fears. If read as design ideas, they are provocative: what shape would a moral kitchen be, one which was a bulwark against the Four Cs? The invisible room has a long history: what could a suburban one, in an era of state nuclear secrets, be like? How could the extremes of security and fear be clearly expressed in the bunker, given that it would conventionally be placed underground. Could its door indicate security going in, and fear going out? This text was written at the early stages of design, at the concept diagram stage, when the limits of the project were being established. In fact, the writing has altered the design: having gone back to the drawings after the writing, a different kind of house has begun to emerge. Here, the writing has been enabling, whatever its merits as a stand alone text.

Two final observations

It is a truism in communication that there is a more or most appropriate kind of language or representation depending on the task at hand. If a design has colour as a key idea, then colour must be part of the natural qualities of the representational system. This commonsense idea isn't always applied – think of the hundreds of books on the visual arts which contain black-and-white images of obviously coloured artworks. But there is a black-and-white system that has incredible flexibility: writing. To write colour, you could just use British Standard numbers – if objectivity was an issue. But you could also write the colours in combination, suggest effective (and affective) analogues, bring in questions of perception and effects of time. "Red and Green" might be a prosaic start, which could then be discussed as leaves against a brick wall, or grass or moss on brick pavers, also the shadows, the effects of sun, cloud and rain. The black-and-white of writing would fire up the colour in the imagination, and different writers and readers would see a different colour range. But this is no different to having the actual colours on cards: everyone in a committee sees the colours differently and moreover, sees them with passionate subjectivity. Making this complexity explicit in the design is one advantage of using a representational mode that has no natural analogues or simulation between the sign and its referent. Of course, the 'Red and Green' in all of its aspects could be done visually, but one paragraph would need to be a thousand pictures.

To the absence of analogue or simulatory properties of writing could be added the benefit of a dissonant, or inappropriate design representation. Creativity is intensified, if not entirely caused by the presence of conflict or contradiction. If there is not enough contradiction in a design arena, a designer will bring more in. Often, this is where the specific designer's signature is evident. Bernard Tschumi has compared this self-restriction to erotic bondage (Tschumi 1994, 88-89); others see design not as problem-solving, but as problem-creation. The use of difficult restrictions is common to all of the arts. In writing, the Oulipo group are well known for their advocacy and use of pre-set grammatical and mathematical rules when writing texts (Motte 1986). Oulipo's works have a kind of mannerist bravura to them, but the method of self-imposed 'impossible' restrictions produces outcomes not available to habitual thinking. The 'wrong' medium of representation of space might be such a creative restriction. For architects (other designers) who have been writing since childhood, there is therefore the potential to add contradiction into a design mix by the selection of a given medium, already practiced to proficiency, which could then become a problematic and therefore creative representational system.

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Just Another Piece of Paper: Creative research and writing

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Abstract

Practitioners in fields of art and design often complain of the injustice of having to 'write a book' about their practice in order to satisfy academic definitions of research. What is the point, the argument goes, of producing 'just another piece of paper'? The suggestion that creative work might be 'converted' to research by a suitable accompanying text is justly resisted. This paper approaches the theory/practice binary the other way round. It outlines a research project that attempts to convert the text of a 'conventional' academic PhD thesis into a 'creative' research output. The intention is to expose the boundaries that are constructed when creativity is counted as knowledge and by doing this, to put the notion of creativity into play.

Keywords
Creativity, research, higher education, governmentality, art and design

Introduction

Before explaining this project and its groundwork, I need to write myself into the picture. I am, according to text/artefact distinctions, a strange hybrid of a person. As a sociologist of design, my PhD thesis was about the social impact of the 'new creative age' and how this relates to contemporary ideas of a cultural economy, especially with regard to governmental projects in higher education. I am also a textile artist/designer and educator who has embodied the shifts in cultural economic understandings of creativity during my working life. A key indicator of these shifts has been the current debate about creativity in the university, particularly what constitutes research in the Creative Arts. A strong and successful case has been made for

creative practice to count as a mode of generating new academic knowledge. The goal in my '7 Lamps of Creativity' project is to represent this debate in an entirely new way. 7 Lamps digitally reproduces the text of each of the seven chapters of my thesis as a textile. By converting a conventional poststructuralist ethnographic text on the topic of creativity into the visual and material register of textiles, I aim to 'perform creativity' in a way that might trouble our understandings of creative practice in the university. 'Creativity' becomes both the subject and the object of the work.

7 Lamps engages with creativity from philosophical, sociological and political perspectives. It is about the nature of creativity, how we think we know it when we see it, the spaces of subjectivity it supplies, as well as the cultural and governmental work the notion of creativity is currently doing. To convey the gist of the project, I will first outline its empirical, theoretical, and metaphorical starting points. It is important to note that this is a post-facto ordering that does not imply any hierarchy in the way 7 Lamps was conceived.

Very briefly, my theoretical position (Bill, 2009) is that creativity is a historically singular form of action and experience, formed out of the "encounter between the technologies of domination of others and technologies of the self" (Foucault, 2003, pp 40 - 41). I take creativity as an instance of the process that Foucault problematised as 'governmentality'. I also argue that governmental projects of neoliberal globalisation (or 'neoliberalisation') have rallied groups and individuals around their creativity, mobilising them to make the most of it, so that creativity begins to constitute a moral principle that governs personal and organisational conduct. Further, I contend that creativity can be understood as a performative act, in much the same way that gender has been theorised. Thus I see my 7 Lamps project as a way of 'undoing creativity' (Butler, 2004), or alternatively of 'doing un-creativity'.

Empirically, the project has been inflected by a personal encounter with a 'creativity regime'. This experience began during 2005, when a new funding system for higher education began to be implemented in New Zealand universities. This new strategy marked a departure from the market model to a mixed-model of funding, containing elements of regulation (Tertiary Institution Charters and Profiles) and of competition (the Performance Based Research Fund, or PBRF). It became a "matter of principle" that all academic staff should be research active or have an agreed set of objectives with their line managers to "assist them to build their research capability to acceptable levels" (Long, 2006). But exactly what does constitute research in design and the creative arts (Mottram, 2006; Rust, Mottram, & Till, 2007)? Whatever

it may be, it clearly was not my PhD project, which would not be counted in the new taxonomies of creative research. Lacking any exhibition of garments, drawings, fabric designs, embroideries, illustrations, vehicle designs, performances, DVDs, games, websites, compositions or dances – in fact lacking anything at all 'creative' - I began to feel unsure about the status of 'theory' in a College of Creative Arts. This feeling was reinforced by my exclusion from final year studio teaching, on the grounds that I had not recently done any 'creative' research.

The metaphorical starting point for the project was John Ruskin's Seven Lamps of Architecture, the ethical lights by which Ruskin thought architects ought to operate. He called these lamps 'truth', 'power', 'sacrifice' 'beauty', 'life', 'memory' and 'obedience'. Ruskin's work came to mind because it was significant to the arts and crafts movement in the 19th century, and also to the development of creative art and design disciplines. As a title, 7 Lamps usefully connotes artistic creativity and is at the same time a convenient device for translating a standard 'seven chapter' thesis into textiles. It is ironic, however, that in Ruskin's day our current concept of creativity did not yet exist. The idea of human creativity is much younger in the history of western ideas than is generally recognised, as I shall outline later in this paper.

Governmentality: The Lamp of Truth

The first Lamp of Creativity I made was 'Truth', representing Chapter 5 of my thesis. This chapter, titled Creativity as Governmentality, is about creative subjectification and describes how the identifications that constitute a creative subjectivity are acquired. The representational strategy for the Lamp of 'Truth' involved pinning the 34 pages of a final draft of the chapter in a line along a wall. This was photographed, photoshopped, the text was inserted, and then the file was digitally ink-jet printed with reactive dyes along 5 metres of cotton poplin to create the classic trompe l'oeil effect of pages pinned to a wall. Counter to usual textile practice, the text reads 'warpwise' along the cloth. This chapter is intended to be stretched along a wall, rather than being draped ceiling to floor, as is traditional for decorative textiles.

The text of the Lamp of Truth includes a discussion of two examples of creative identification, one of these being my own experience of a technology of educational governance - the PBRF. This text describes how changes in governmental rationalities of higher education and the technologies associated with them – such as the 'new managerialism' and the performativity of 'qualculative spaces' (Thrift, 2004) – do not simply transform what we, as educators, scholars and researchers do, they change who we are. We are obliged to agree to normalising and training

measures that are designed to empower us, to enhance our freedom to "develop (our) disciplines and talents in new and creative ways", as was requested by Massey University's Vice Chancellor of Research and External Relations (Long, 2006). As governing practices, these technologies produce the

> …sense of constantly being judged in different ways, by different means, according to different criteria, through different agents and agencies…. a flow of changing demands, expectations and indicators that makes one constantly accountable, and constantly recorded. We become ontologically insecure; unsure whether we are doing enough, doing the right thing, doing as much as others, or as well as others, constantly looking to improve, to be better, to be excellent. And yet it is not always clear what is expected (Ball, 2003, p. 220).

The second example of creative identification in the text of the chapter describes how Richard Florida's (2002) theory of the 'creative class' became a rationality of government for a New Zealand city council and how citizens deployed this new way of imagining regional development to draw together a community that identified itself as creative. These two examples serve to illustrate my thesis; that it is through the process of identification with governmental projects, and the discourses they articulate, that new possibilities for creative subjectivity are formed, stabilized and fixed. Of course, the flipside is that individuals, organisations and regions also attribute a lack of power and agency in the world to their lack of creativity. The implications of this are profound, and beyond the scope of this paper.

Currently I have only reproduced Chapter 5 of my thesis, but I intend to use a different 'creative' digital process to translate each of the remaining chapters into a textile. For example, the text of the next chapters I work with will be digitally embroidered and laser cut. But why should I choose to do such a thing? What could be considered 'creative' about this exercise? This is precisely the question the project aims to provoke. Where, exactly, can we draw a line between what is, and is not, creative? This is the borderline that will be explored through each further 'creative' representation of a chapter.

The 'vagueness' of creativity

Along with the theoretical and representational strategies outlined above, 7 Lamps is motivated by the premise that creativity is a philosophically vague concept, used in a variety of senses and rhetorically claimed by policymakers, academics and practitioners for a variety of different purposes. Philosophers call such concepts 'vague' (Williamson, 1996), because although we know what we mean when we use them, they are impervious to logical analysis. Vague concepts cause trouble when we try to quantify them, or when we try to logically apply rules in borderline cases, such as deciding what is or isn't a creative skill, whether something is or isn't a creative industry, or what is or isn't creative research. The standard principles of logic require statements about cases such as these to be true or false, on or off, as with basic mathematics or computing. However, this type of unfuzzy logic does not work for vague concepts like creativity and therefore attempts at defining it can become ridiculously pedantic, as in the philosophical thought experiments known as Sorites paradoxes, which pose questions such as 'how many grains of sand make a heap?'

Politicians who promote creativity are aware of the problems posed by this vagueness, and pointedly avoid arguing about what creativity is or is not, their main concern being to keep the concept afloat. This produces a rhetorical eclecticism, which has been demonstrated by (Banaji, Burn, & Buckingham, 2006), whose review of the literature supporting Creative Partnerships in British education has identified at least nine different meanings of creativity that have been used in the academic, research, policy and practice arenas concerned with its development. Perhaps as a result of this fugitive vagueness, creativity is recognized as being something that is extremely fragile and easily smothered by over-prescriptive policy. Thus effective governmental management is dependent upon people 'self-selecting' as creative.

Notwithstanding the impossibility of measuring such a vague concept, the European Commission has recently announced its intention to quantify creativity at national, regional and individual levels, and to conduct a large-scale survey to measure the individual creative skills of young people (Europa Press Release, 2009). Because 'what gets measured, gets done', one of the purposes of my 7 Lamps project is to help think about what the application of such a 'creativity quotient' might mean. Will a 'CQ' eventually replace the now (almost) redundant IQ in measuring the educational potential of individuals?

History of Creativity

What exactly is it we are encouraging when we encourage creativity? Looking at the history of the concept, we find that 'creativity' as an abstract noun was not recorded in English until 1875 (OED, 2004). Before that, creation had been the prerogative of the Divine, not something available to ordinary humanity. Ideas about artistic creation

gained impetus in the 18th century, as part of the renegotiation of ideals about public and private artistic production. It is difficult from our perspective today to understand how, in the 18th century, the ideal of freedom was associated not with the private individual, but with being a public person. The possession of a landed estate allowed the freedom to consider the public good and interests of the nation. Thus realm of the Public was the arena of artistic freedom and patronage, whereas the notion of the private was associated with privation; private persons were unfree, and through their struggle to merely live, were liable to be motivated by animal needs. Artists were unfree; art was seen as a menial occupation, imitative and servile, and artistic professions were regarded as technical/mechanical pursuits.

As capitalism gradually took hold it offered individuals new ways to accumulate an estate, and so these ideals had to shift. If artists were to survive and be economically viable they had to draw income from new audiences who wanted visual confirmation of their new estates, largely for private viewing. Two different strategies developed in order to accommodate this. One is exemplified by Sir Joshua Reynolds, whose discourses on art were significant in elevating the artist to a position of taste and genius. At the same time, men like Josiah Wedgwood were finding a different way to meet the new audience demands. Wedgwood is recorded to have instructed his friend and partner to avoid taking orders for

> …any particular kind of Vases...at least until we are got into a more methodicall way of making the same sorts over again….It is this sort of time loseing (sic) with Uniques which keeps ingenious Artists who are connected with Great men of taste poor. (Wedgwood 1769, cited in Uglow, 2002 p. 209 n.3).

While Reynolds helped establish the notion of Art, Wedgwood based artistic production on a division of labour, establishing the practice we now call Design.

In this new and more abstract market system, the provenance of artistic production became more and more important and so we see an increasing stress on originality and imagination. Between 1750 and 1770, new ideas about the ‘arts of imagination’ were literally spread through Europe via Diderot’s Encyclopédie, so that by the end of the 18th century, almost all discussions of the arts in Germany, England and Italy were using this new grouping (Shiner, 2001). The modern vision of the creative artist and designer is bound up in these contestations over art as public medium versus art as commodity, mimicry versus genius, mechanical skill versus liberal profession

(cf. Hartley, 2005). However it was not until the “the middle of the 19th century that the term ‘creative’ became firmly associated with an elevated and narrowed view of ‘Art’ [...] ‘High is our calling, friend! Creative Art’”, declaimed Wordsworth (Pope, 2005, p. 39).

Even at this point however, we have not yet arrived at the concept of individual creativity as we know it today. I think this began to be articulated in the 19th century through notions of political economy. John Ruskin, for example, in his ‘Political Economy of Art’ wrote that by allowing workers to vary their designs, their heads and hearts become more interested in what they are doing, so that they become more eager to get their ideas expressed and to ‘energetically’ finish the expression of them. “[T]he moral energy thus brought to bear on the matter quickens, and therefore cheapens, the production in a most important degree”. Ruskin goes on to describe how “owing to this cause alone, capitals of various design could be executed cheaper than capitals of similar design (the amount of hand labour in each being the same) by about 30 per cent” (Ruskin, 1857, pp.31-32).

Karl Marx’s ideas about alienation in capitalism were also vital in establishing the notion that free artistic creation existed on a continuum with economic work. Labour was always a means to meeting material needs, but it was also an end in itself; an activity that realised the self (Sayers, 2003). Encouraging the ‘creative side’ of labour helped workers to advance their condition and ‘heal their wounded spirits’, an idea that was to become mainstream by the early 20th century. Other 19th century contributors to the concept of creativity included Charles Darwin, because of the role he gave to adaptation and diversity in natural selection. Darwin’s ideas influenced his cousin Francis Galton, whose programme of Eugenics seemed to provide evidence that although artistic genius might be exceptional, it was not supernatural (Albert & Runco, 1999, pp. 24-25). Sigmund Freud also developed a Darwinian theory of artistic creation, with the idea that creative acts were a way of making sublimated erotic and ambitious wishes socially acceptable.

From the early 20th century the ‘psy disciplines’ (Rose, 1996) began to consider and represent creativity as a function of human behaviour, of personality, or of cognitive processes. In the 1930s the idea of a creative personality type made its first appearance – and the spheres in which one could be creative also began to multiply, as in the earliest recorded uses of such phrases as ‘creative salesman’ [...], creative education [...] and even courses in creative writing [...] (Pope, 2005, p. 40).

In 1950 J. P. Guilford gave a presidential address titled Creativity to the American Psychological Association, and the concept really took off in the 1960s when serious empirical research into creativity began. Creativeness had finally arrived as a universal birthright for every healthy, self-actualising, human being (Maslow, 1963). The search now began for a psychological variable that could "distinctively be called 'creativity', in contrast to intelligence" (Shulman, 1966, p. 305). 'Divergent-thinking' instruments were devised as part of a psychometric toolkits that measured an individual's ability to problem-solve their way through modern life.

Until the 1970s, the concept of creativity existed mostly within the disciplines of psychology and education, but by the 1980s, with the changes in global capitalism, corporations began to worry about productivity slowdowns and correspondingly emphasised the need for innovative 'design', understood as structured ways of bringing about creative behaviour (Rickards, 1980). Creativity now began to feature in management literature.

At the same time, 'new growth' economists such as Paul Romer began to factor the education and training of human capital into equations for economic development. These new theories about the importance of human capital had been inspired by ideas about 'creative man' in the 1960s (Becker, 1964; Bowman, 1966). These 'new economy' ideas promoted the creativity and innovation of human capital as a source of competitive advantage for organisations, cities and nations. As these ideas spread during the 1990s, over 600 books about creativity were published in English and the concept of creativity reached its maturity with the publication of the two-volume Encyclopedia of Creativity in 1999 (Runco & Pritzker, 1999, p. xv).

A charismatic economics of creativity now began to ramify through agents such as Richard Florida (2002), John Howkins (2001) and Richard Caves (2000), whose work provided validation for ideas such as 'creative industries'. Creative industries were defined by the UK Department for Culture Media and Sport as "those activities which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property" (DCMS, 2001, 5). At the end of the first decade of the 21st century, these Creative Industries, which have been described as nothing more than a national accounting gimmick (Tepper, 2002), are still being mapped and calculated into existence.

Conclusion

In this paper I have argued firstly that the concept of creativity can be understood as an instance of governmentality, an encounter between techniques of power and technologies of the self. It is an historically contingent form of action and experience that emerged in the 18th century as a way of calculating occupations, in order to gauge their relative distance from the routine processes of 'making' exemplified by industrial production. Once creativity could be recognised, in performances that accorded with various social expectations of art or technology, it would seem to have existed in the practitioner all along and to have emerged as a natural act that expressed the self. It would also, eventually, become an object of governmental rationalities that aimed "to realise the creative potential of all citizens and to boost competitiveness in the knowledge economy" (Seltzer & Bentley, 1999, p.10).

Secondly, I have indicated how creativity has been discursively produced through logics of neoliberalisation that were concerned with economic management. The categories of creative research produced for New Zealand's Performance Based Research Fund are an example of this process. Thirdly, I have developed the idea of creativity as a type of 'performative knowledge' (Bell, 2006), an achievement sustained through the production and repetition of many small acts and signs that are made socially and culturally significant through the category of 'art and design'. But if we think of creativity as an achievement, at what point can we regard creativity as being achieved? Where is the borderline between uncreative and creative performances?

The 7 Lamps project appears to be successfully answering this question, by beginning to delineate this borderline. My first Lamp of Creativity, the Lamp of Truth is apparently not 'creative'. It is unlikely to be counted as a creative research output for PBRF purposes (and will not therefore secure me a role as a creative researcher) because it will not be exhibited, certainly not in University art galleries that are required to act as marketing for their creative courses. Unsolicited reactions to the work so far have included comments such as "My first thought was why couldn't you have made it pretty", and "aren't textiles meant to be hung the other way round?" (Names and other identifying features of 'research participants' are confidential in this project, however these comments were made by an authority in art and design disciplines). Another reaction, from an artist well-versed in the practice-based research literature was "[the dean] will like it, she likes text." From a different perspective, a researcher in creative industry communications said she thought the project was brave, because she wouldn't like to allow her PhD thesis to be open to be read by everyone. In these tiny acts of reading creativity, we begin to see how

creativity constitutes a relation of power and a field of knowledge that produces powerful forms of behaviour and experience. Chapter 5, The Lamp of 'Truth' will not be counted as a creative research output for PBRF purposes, because it is unlikely to be exhibited. Although it is about creativity, it will not help secure my identity as a creative researcher. I intend to continue to reproduce the remaining six chapters of my thesis as the Lamps of Power, Sacrifice, Beauty, Life, Memory and Obedience. By the end of the project I hope they will have shed some light on creativity and creative research.

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Celestial Striptease: Exposure in Nineteenth-Century Spirit Photography and Writing

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Abstract

In 1882, Georgiana Houghton, the medium and accomplice of the notorious British spirit photographer Frederick Hudson, published a book in which she described the heavily veiled, “uninvited guests” which had mysteriously appeared in Hudson’s photographs. After a period of some months, she observed that “the likenesses are assuming much more definiteness from the circumstance that the veil is being gradually withdrawn from the features…”. In short, the spirits were beginning to disrobe. While much attention has recently been paid to the appearance of spirits in Victorian photography, the act of exposure, which is implicit in both the writing, and the images produced, has been overlooked. This paper will propose that nineteenth-century spirit photographs and their attendant discourse are best understood as acts of exposure--from the first portraits and accounts of ghostly, veiled figures on photographic glass plates to the full-body exposure of ectoplasm photographs used in the excruciatingly detailed scientific reports of Albert Schrenck-Notzing in 1920.

Keywords
Nineteenth-century photography, spirit photography, spiritualism, striptease, early film, ectoplasm photographs.

Introduction

This paper will propose that nineteenth-century spirit photographs and their attendant discourse are best understood as acts of exposure. I will argue that in both the photographs and contemporary texts recording spiritualist phenomena

a recurring motif and metaphor is provided by the act of disrobing. It has not previously been noticed that this theme appears in a wide and disparate variety of images and texts. A study of the intersections between spiritualist texts and images reveals that "exposure" is a crucial concept in the work of a diverse group of writers, photographers, artists, scientists, mediums and occultists of the mid to late nineteenth century.

In 1882, Georgiana Houghton, the medium and accomplice of the notorious British spirit photographer Frederick Hudson, published a book chronicling four years (1872-1876) of their work producing "spirit" photographs. These photographs were portraits of living people, in which draped "extras" or "uninvited guests" – spirits of the dead – would mysteriously appear on the printed image (Fig. 1). After some months' observation, Houghton noted that, "the likenesses [spirits] are assuming much more definiteness from the circumstance that the veil is being gradually withdrawn from the features… " (Houghton, 1882, p. 37). Fifty years later, in his overview of spirit photography *Photographing the Invisible* (1921), James Coates makes an identical observation about Hudson's photographs: "The veils which obscured the faces of the figures became thinner, so that the features could be discerned, and latterly the veils were dispersed with altogether. There was naturally great excitement." (Coates, 1921, p. 39).

Striptease in nineteenth-century narrative and photography

While much attention has recently been paid to the appearance of spirits in Victorian photography, the act of gradual exposure, or striptease, which is implicit in both spiritualist writing and the images produced, has been largely overlooked. This is unsurprising when one considers the common dismissal of the Victorian era as one of exceptional prudery and sexual repression – a period marked by fig leaves, decently clothed piano legs, and Ruskin's horror at the sight of his wife's pubic hair on their wedding night (Lutyens, 1967, p. 156). It was in this vein that Kenneth Clark dealt with the Victorians in his art historical overview The Nude (1956) with a mere reference to "the great frost of Victorian prudery" (Clark, 1956, p. 162).

More recently, however, this over-simplistic view of Victorian prudery has been challenged by theorists such as Michel Foucault, which has revealed the era to be the site of a more sexually ambiguous and nuanced discourse. It is worth noting that modern notions of striptease and pornography originate in this period. In a striptease, the slow unlayering of a body is presented for consumption of the gaze but is always ultimately just out of reach, sustaining the longing for full exposure (which terminates the strip). The nineteenth-century strip is made up of both scopophilia (the erotic investment of the gaze) and epistemophilia (the erotics of knowledge seeking). As Peter Brooks demonstrates in *Objects of Desire* in *Modern Narrative*, knowledge in nineteenth-century Realist literature is presented as occluded, so that "the discovery of truth becomes a process of unveiling, laying bare, denuding." (Brooks, 1993, p.96). Therefore the act of undressing leads to both revelation and recognition (two of the key objectives of spirit photographs). This tendency intersects with the literature of the period: For example, in Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, it is not the body of Emma Bovary that is of interest to the narrative, but rather, the details of the clothing being removed from her body, and the gestures of removal. In her account of the disrobing spirits, Houghton devotes long passages to descriptions of the draperies, which range "from the most gauze-like transparency to rich satin-like folds…" (Houghton, 1882, p. 38), and becomes quite lost in the delicate embroidery, the fleecy, gossamer, velvet or linen veils which garb her spirits. In many cases, the objective of recognition/ identification, which Coates asserts is "the crux of the whole matter," (Coates, 1921, p. 58; 149) is focussed entirely on the recognition of clothing or accessory.

Striptease and the advent of moving image technologies

Actual nudity was rare in Nineteenth century performance (and spirit photography) – most strip shows followed the format of the *tableau vivant* (flesh and blood imitations of classical statuary), in which performers wore "fleshings", or full body stockings (fig. 2), underneath transparent or translucent costumes, thus "leaving the body exposed even as it was completely encased in fabric." (Glasscock, 2003, p. 17). Nude imagery in the Victorian era needed to be located within the realm of fine art, to divorce the nudity from more salacious purposes. The *tableau vivant*, originally an upper class amusement, quickly became a "mixture of an art appreciation lesson and a form of titillation" (Glasscock, 2003, p. 46). The public performances were largely overlooked by censors due to their high art status, and in actuality there was very little nudity on display. What little there was often occurred in the shadows behind a screen. In order to remain within the law, figures on the stage were required to remain static, just as nudes in the fine art tradition were static, creating an aesthetic and erotic ideal, always available to the gaze of the viewer. Eventually the subject of the debate about these shows – the subject with which the censors became fixated upon, was not the nudity itself, but the idea of nudity in motion.

This obsession with nudity in motion was fed by debates surrounding the

technologies of reproduction. W.A. Coote, Secretary of the National Vigilance Society articulated the problem in the Photographic News in 1891, when he stated that, "the photograph of a picture may be objectionable, though the picture itself may not be." (as cited in Myrone, 2001, p. 32). This would indicate that while the draped – and slowly undressing – nudes of individual spirit photographs were certainly static, the medium itself, and the documented progression of undress, locates the images within this visual cultural context. The manner in which the photographs were presented by Georgiana Houghton as a strip sequence, would suggest that they have more in common with still images on a film strip, or even the risqué *French Windows: Snapshots taken from my armchair*… printed in *La Vie Parisienne* c. 1900 (Fig 3), than they do with the conventions of carte de visite portraiture. The spirit photographs were understood as a sequence of representation, a view which is constantly reinforced by writers such as Houghton and Coates, and which can be placed within the "cluster of narratives of metamorphosis and animation of the period", that Lynda Nead claims is historically consistent with the advent of moving image technology in the nineteenth century. (Nead, 2007, p. 68)

In her book Nead reprints a passage from the journal of Sydney Race, a Nottingham clerk who attended early film screenings (made up of a number of short "scenes") and kept a close record of what he saw. It is worth quoting from his description from Thursday 10th June 1897 in full, as it provides an accurate account of fairly typical "disrobing scenes" in early film, as well as their reception:

But the scene which some of the audience were on the lookout for, though of which, when we entered, we had not the slightest knowledge, was called 'The Model's Bath'. A woman – we could detect a large smile on her face – divested herself of her skirt and other objects of clothing and appeared in her white drawers and chemise and when the picture expired was just dancing a jig. Dose number two: the girl was in a large white night dress which had fallen down from the breast disclosing a well developed 'frontage' and was in search of a 'flea'. After one or two dives she appeared to catch and squeeze it in her fingers and then she flopped it into a bath. Here an attendant came up and pulled off the white thing while the lady displayed a fine pair of calves in black stockings and darkness – in time to hide greater disclosures – opportunely covered the screen. It was a dirty and suggestive exhibition though we really saw no indecency (as cited in Nead, 2007, pp. 188-89).

Apart from offering a close description of the undressing scenes themselves, Race's journal entry is invaluable in offering an indication of their reception. First, in stating that some members of the audience were "on the lookout" for these scenes, he reveals that by 1897 they had become integrated into the film screening programmes and were largely expected by Victorian audiences. Second, while he describes the films as "dirty and suggestive" they are by no means indecent, which indicates a certain moral ambiguity, as does his relief that he was not accompanied by a lady, females not being excluded from the screenings (there is sufficient evidence from reviews of these screenings to ascertain that women did in fact attend them). As Nead rightly points out, these films occupied an ambiguous cultural world, made up of "shady characters and public mischief, in which women should not participate, but do." (Nead, 2007, p. 189)

Given that the world of spiritualism was rife with "shady characters and public mischief", dominated by female mediums, and utilised the related new technologies, spirit photography should arguably be located within the broader context of the disrobing figure in nineteenth-century visual culture. Notably, Houghton's co-discoverer of Hudson, Agnes Guppy-Volckman, was a prominent medium notorious for having been transported psychically, while in a deep trance, from her house to another one three miles away. She appeared half undressed on a table, surrounded by a number of people holding a séance. Visually, this resonates almost too obviously with the conventions of the striptease, as does the well-documented story of spirit Katie King's farewell appearance at a séance on the 21st May 1874, in which she tore strips off her own clothing and gifted a piece to each of the séance participants. Katie King was the mediumistic production of Florence Cook (who would lie in the dark cabinet, often with her hands and feet bound and a cloth over her head). As the first full body spirit materialisation to be scientifically studied and photographed by the prestigious chemist and physicist Sir William Crookes, Katie King represents the peak of spirit photography in nineteenth century Britain (Fig 4), and hovers tentatively somewhere between the static, or photographic, image and the moving image. Accounts of Katie King are effusive in their descriptions of her elegance and beauty. A particularly charming spirit, she would touch and even kiss male séance participants (Gunning, 1995, p.53). Crookes took numerous photographs of Katie King (most of these were destroyed by his family after his death, in a bid to preserve his legacy as a credible scientist), but never felt satisfied which the results, pointing out the limitations of the medium:

Photography is just as inappropriate a medium to depict the perfect beauty of Katie's face as words are powerless to capture the magic of her appearance. All that

photography can do is to give an outline of her facial characteristics; but how can a photograph render the brilliant clarity of her complexion or the constantly changing expressions of her extremely mobile face… (as cited in Krauss, 1994, p. 121)

The photograph, in this instance, inadequately conveys the magic and mobility of Katie King – for this, the moving image is required. The spirit thus precedes the filmic medium. Furthermore, Karen Beckman labels Katie's popularity in the 1870s as anticipating the female star in twentieth century film, in that she was viewed as a paragon of unattainable female beauty (Beckman, 2003, 76).

The nineteenth-century deluge of spiritualist literature was matched only by the body of works written in order to denounce the exact same phenomena. Likewise, for every spirit photograph taken in scientifically "controlled" conditions another was produced to prove it fraudulent. Paradoxically, these apparently opposed texts were fuelled by a similarly epistemophilic impulsion, their ultimate aim that of the exposure of an objective, scientific truth. To that end, most spiritualist literature apes the language of scientists, and most spiritualists themselves were proponents of natural law and empirical evidence. Additionally, in their use of the photograph as evidence, spiritualists adopted many of the scientific conventions established to eliminate subjectivity (such as the taboo on retouching, providing information on the angle of view and details of the photographic process). It is worth noting that not all spiritualist phenomena were debunked, for example William Crooke's studies of Florence Cook, naturalist Alfred Wallace's studies of Agnes Guppy Volckman, or Albert Baron von Schrenck-Notzing's four year study of the ectoplasmic medium, "Eva C."

Scientific striptease: ectoplasm

Ectoplasm photographs clearly demonstrate the relationship between spirit photography and contemporaneous striptease, as well as related performance genres. Ectoplasm (also labelled "teleplasm" by Schrenck Notzing), describes a particularly physiological spiritualist phenomenon, in which the medium produces a moist, membranous substance, commonly through his/her (usually her) bodily orifices. This substance then forms itself into body parts, or even complete images of human forms. The medium does not bring forth a spirit, but rather, produces the primary material (ectoplasm), which the spirit (or arguably the medium herself) can then use to communicate with the living.

The epistemophilic tendency is carried to its logical conclusion in Schrenck-Notzing's scientific reports and photographs of ectoplasm phenomena created by the medium Eva C. and first published in a single volume, *Phenomena of Materialisation*, in 1920. Schrenck-Notzing, a psychologist and sexologist, experimented with Eva C. (or Eva Carrière, born Marthe Beraud) from 21 May 1909 until 3 June 1913 and kept meticulous accounts of all of his investigations. In her twenties during these experiments, Eva C. had begun her mediumship some years before in 1902, and had previously been studied by Charles Richet. During the years of exhaustive investigation with Schrenck-Notzing, Eva C. resided with Juliet Bisson, well-known in Parisian spiritualist circles, and possibly Eva C.'s co-conspirator and lover.

Each séance (or ectoplasmic session) with Eva C. occurred in the evening and would be attended by Madame Bisson, Schrenck-Notzing and an invited audience made up variously of fellow scientists, writers, artists and interested society members. Schrenk-Notzing notes on more than one occasion Eva's wish to satisfy the more prestigious audience members. Both the investigative reports, and the photographs taken of Eva C. during this period closely follow the form of a striptease – Eva's first materialisations in 1909 were vague and cloudlike, with fugitive, half-formed limbs sometimes discernable. During these first investigations she was literally sewn into a knitted body stocking (as was Stanislawa P. who is also documented in *Phenomena of Materialisation*, see Fig 5 and 6). It took two years for Eva C. to create a fully formed face from her ectoplasm (22 November 1911), and by the point that a photograph of a complete ghost was taken (23 February 1913), Eva C. was completely naked. The book documents the development of Eva's powers of materialisation and also her gradual stripping off of layers of clothing. From the outset Schrenk-Notzing insisted on complete access to Eva C.'s body, warning that, "Fear and modesty may control young female mediums to such an extent that they resist investigations of the bare body, and indeed will refuse any experiment rather than allow such misinterpreted interference with their feminine feelings." (Schrenck-Notzing, 1920, p. 24) Each session was initiated with meticulous examinations of Eva's clothing, ears, hair nose, mouth, teeth, armpits, feet, hands, fingernails, and gynaecological examinations, which were exceedingly thorough.

Many of the reports offered by Schrenck-Notzing at the beginning of the investigations read like scenes from a striptease, documenting his longing to touch the ectoplasmic material and attempts to do so, which are always thwarted or delayed by Eva C.:

> Bringing my face to within 6 inches of her, I saw that a flocculent

> whitish grey mass floated from her mouth and hung down over her left shoulder, behind, down to her knees, in the form of a consistent substance. The structure might have been a yard long and some 6 inches wide, and resembled a large muslin veil of the finest texture. A draught would set it in motion. Eva remained about half a minute in this position. I expressed a wish to touch the fabric. But she said, perhaps out of nervousness: "Not yet, Later." (Schrenck-Notzing, 1920, p. 53)

This diversion of attention onto the details of fabric is consistent with striptease in Victorian narrative and the descriptions offered in contemporaneous writings on other types of spirit photography. Similarly, descriptions of Eva C.'s original costume, the black knitted stocking and vest, are over-long, and when he later begins experimenting with Stanislawa P., she appears in a body stocking exactly like those used in the tableau vivant, only coloured black instead of white. By the end of the investigations, Eva C. has managed to produce a full body materialisation of a man (Fig. 7) with clarity and solidity (if only in two dimensions) and by this stage she is either naked, or is described tearing off her stockings and demanding gynaecological examinations. By this point she also has a total of 7 to 9 cameras trained on her, both in and outside of the dark cabinet.

Schrenck-Notzing is at pains in his text to align himself with the scientists and humbug-hunters, to "take the facts out of the region of the marvellous, and of spiritistic faith, into the region of natural law." (Schrenck-Notzing, 1920, p. 282). While ostensibly his aim is to expose the scientific truths of unexplained phenomena, there can be no doubt when one reads this case study, that it is also the female body, which is being relentlessly exposed in both the text and the photograph.

Tom Gunning has described the appearance of ectoplasm in spirit photographs as giving "an oddly physiological turn" to the spiritual séance (Gunning, 1995, p. 56) Karen Beckman compares Eva C. to Katie King, claiming that while Katie was the embodiment of male desire and femininity, Eva C. evoked "fascination and disgust" (Beckman, 2003, p. 79) Both of these analyses respond to what can only be described as the disturbing nature of the imagery – Eva C. is pictured in paroxysms of pain (records of the séances describe Eva C. breathing heavily, grunting and bleating in a kind of "mediumistic labour", with ectoplasm spewing from her every orifice (Fig. 8). With the full exposure of Eva C.'s body, the epistemophilic compulsion – the erotically charged quest for knowledge – is fully satisfied with the nakedness of the medium and full visual documentation of the phenomenon: the striptease comes to an end. It is significant that it is at this point at which Schrenck-Notzing discontinues his investigations with Eva C. even though he has apparently not discovered a natural or scientific explanation for the phenomena.

Conclusion

Schrenck-Notzing's photographs are historically consistent with the previously discussed discourses surrounding the advent of moving image technology during the period. There is a pronounced disjunction apparent between the text and the images presented – while the ectoplasm is described by Schrenck-Notzing as mobile, transitory and moist, in the photographs "we see nothing but a woman gagged with cheesecloth." (Beckman, 2003, p. 83). Ectoplasm is all about movement, and yet the photographs do not move. Only in his work with Stanislawa P. did Schrenck-Notzing attempt to produce film, and yet the stills from this film are presented non-sequentially (Fig. 9). As William Crookes had discovered in earlier investigations of the spirit Katie King, the photograph is a limited and ultimately inadequate medium for documenting these phenomena. Schrenck-Notzing repeatedly expresses his awareness that the static nature of the photographs are not representative of what he has witnessed and recorded in the séances, and may even work against the acceptance of his investigation as credible. However, even after expressing these filmic yearnings, it is just at the moment when film becomes readily available that he discontinued his investigations with the naked and seemingly willing Eva C. The phenomena were now realised to exceed text and image, where previously the two mediums had seemed to mutually interact and intersect.

What Houghton first witnessed as a "gradual withdrawal" of veiling on her spirits, in ectoplasm photographs becomes a violent tearing; and this full exposure ultimately marks an endpoint – as Roland Barthes would have it, the moment of full nudity signals the termination of the strip (Barthes, 1957, p. 84). Therefore, while these images belong firmly within visual cultural discourses surrounding representations of sexual display and the advent of moving image technologies in the nineteenth century, they ultimately also signal its end and the arrival of the twentieth century. There is only one year separating Schrenck-Notzing's publication and the first historical overview of spirit photography written by James Coates, in 1921. By World War II, spirits and ectoplasm had disappeared, relegated to the photographic hauntings of a century past.

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'Design as' analogies in the literature on design; an attempt to reconcile them with 'real' talk in design education.

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Abstract

Design pedagogy at tertiary institutions presents students with the task of decoding discourse in many different forms. These include written texts, some of which many students find unrelated to the 'real' talk about producing and evaluating designs. Such 'real' talk is found in the design critique, or crit. I attempt to find a way to point to existing connections hitherto not explored between the two forms of discourse. This paper will present three examples of 'design as' analogies, namely design as bricolage (Louridas, 1999); design as moral problem solving (Dorst and Royakkers 2006) and designing as disclosure (Newton, 2004). The authors' explanations of these analogies are held up against the spoken texts of the crits, and I show how their theories are enacted. Some pedagogical implications of the findings are suggested, with activities that could help students bridge the gap between the metadiscourse of the literature and the discourse of the studio.

Keywords

design critique, discourse, analogy, design as, design education

Introduction

Design pedagogy at tertiary institutions presents students with the task of decoding discourse in many different forms. These forms range from a selection of theoretical discursive written texts to the oral discourse of their educators spoken during studio

exercises and feedback crits. It is my experience that many students perceive these two discourses as coming from two different planets, the more abstract theoretical texts being in no way related to the 'real' talk about producing designs. However, learning a designerly way of thinking involves among other things making connections between the discourse of the studio/studio assessment and the learned knowledge of textually grounded information. For Ardington (2008) 'learned knowledge' of theory and 'tacit knowledge' of studio provide tensions that need to be addressed in design education.

As part of a larger study on the use of metaphor in the design critique, I examined the relationship between a sample of the discourse of some design educators in the final crit context in Visual communication and Architecture, and a random selection of theoretical approaches to design that attempt to define the process and role of design by way of an extended analogy. The crit was chosen as a discourse genre because it is a place where the functions of language are oriented towards goals that include the speakers displaying their identities as designers and educators (see Melles 2008). In a context of an evaluation the design educators need to show how they structure their reasoning in relation to design outcomes, and draw on their expertise, practice and reflection in so doing. Their understandings are likely to have been shaped to some extent by the existing body of academic debates about design, its evolution and definitions. My goal in this analysis was an exploratory one, and makes no strong claims other than to substantiate some of the intricate links between language, cognition and perception.

Extended analogies in the literature

An analogy is a type of metaphor that is not creating a new concept through a blending process, but is explicitly expressed through words such as 'like' or 'as', and the comparison needs to be explained or demonstrated. In the attempt to expand the idea of what design is, and how its ideologies are formed, there is a tension, and recourse to analogies is an attempt to unpack that tension.

Within the field of design theory, metaphorical thinking around the question 'what is design?' occupies a particularly interesting space. This is because metaphors allow design theorists to see one thing as another, as a scenario to be envisaged, both privileging and concealing. The relationship of roles relevant to the design situation is described in metaphorical terms by Nelson and Stolterman (2003) who, in The Design Way, describe relationships such as the designer-facilitator, or the service design relationship, which they describe as 'a partnership which is a conspiracy (a breathing together)'. Their claim is that every designer is a leader 'because every design process is about leading the world into a new reality' (p. 298). In their chapter The Evil of Design, they discuss the relationships among the attributes of design, which include, for example: 'design is knowing and naïveté; design is flux and permanence; design is collaboration and solitude; design is timeless and temporal' (p. 257). An 'ensouled design' (p. 282) is an important metaphor they discuss, because, 'When we encounter ensouled designs, we are energised' (p. 286).

This paper presents a discussion of three examples of 'design as' analogies, namely design as bricolage (Louidas, 1999); design as moral problem solving (Dorst and Royakkers 2006) and designing as disclosure (Newton 2004). The authors' explanations of these analogies are held up against the spoken texts of the crits, and I show how they are enacted in the discourse of the educators.

Design as bricolage

For Louridas, 'Bricolage creates structures, in the form of its artefacts, by means of contingent events. To arrive at a definition, bricolage is the creation of structure out of events' (p. 520). Louridas describes the bricoleur as wanting to 'create a structure out of his means and the results of his actions. He tinkers with the materials, takes stock of the results of his tinkering, and then tinkers again.

> 'One element's possibilities interacts [sic] with all other elements' possibilities, with the overall organisation of the artefact he makes … so that each choice will involve a complete reorganisation of the structure … and the result is often at a remove from his initial intentions.' (Louridas, p. 520)

This attitude, with its acceptance of ambiguity and openness to combining the materials at hand, defines the bricoleur as much as the creator of metaphor. Two major concepts associated with the bricoleur are, firstly, he 'redefines the means that he already has' (p. 3) and, secondly, the designer as bricoleur is unselfconscious.

There are many instances in my recorded data where a design educator's words support the concept of redefining or reorganizing using materials at hand. Instances of this occur mostly in a summing-up of what has gone before in the crit or as advice/coaching. What follows is an example. The educator's words are in italics:

– The thing about design is that it is about refinement and, as you're doing here you're doing it very well, it's establishing a system and then moving elements around within that system to get the optimum sort of combination. And that's what it's really all about; it's not like arriving there in one go.

Self-conscious design is design conceived as, and practised as, a distinct activity. It is professionalised and institutionalised design (p. 522). In self-conscious design, tradition no longer

> 'filters occasion, execution, and purpose contingencies.…The designer is free to resolve them and use them in appropriate ways. In fact, he is not only free to resolve them, he is also responsible to resolve them and use them in appropriate ways. Some innocence is lost.'(p. 526)

'Selfconscious design is, then, a kind of metaphorical bricolage' (Louridas p. 530). A manifestation of self-consciousness is praised by one design educator:

> – Now that opening spread … is great. What I'm really pleased about with it is the fact that you've actually got the whole thing in dual language. Because that's actually something really quite complex and you've managed to sort out the fact that it's very easy to find the language by putting them in two colours and always going left to right. It's incredibly easy to follow that through.

Similarly, words of advice/coaching can identify how bricolage can be enacted, for example:

> – once you've established the masthead as a sort of symbol, then you can destroy it or take it apart a bit. Because this is the first issue, you've got to set this in people's mindset that they understand what they're looking at.

In the crits, advice given to students sometimes implies a kind of tinkering, as several examples indicate:

> – but if you're going to, graffiti is a hard one to deal with because you need very good examples of it. You'd almost need somebody who is graffiti or a tag artist to go and actually do this for you. / The other thing you can think about with your masthead is that you can apply other finishes to it. So you've designed it typographically and then you've applied this finish to it … it doesn't mean you have to stick with this finish.

Design as moral problem solving

The analogy of moral problems with design problems was introduced by Whitbeck (1998a). Dorst and Royakkers (2006) set out a concise list of the features shared by designing and ethical problems. Three items in this list are explored for entailments: there is an inexhaustible number of different solutions; the process involves finding as well as solving problems; and design solutions are often holistic responses.

The first of the features – that there is an inexhaustible number of different solutions – is one that is commonly expressed in the advice/coaching phases of the crits. It is characterised by the use of modals, and is close to the design as play metaphor:

> – If that happens, try tracing it off in pen, then throw it into levels, push your contrast up in your levels and you'll find that it will probably work. / And it's here … these pullouts, that's the kind of stuff that would have worked really well on the Contents page. / If anything, I might have taken this strong black and white image and used that and then opened up the white space across here and played with that. Or even have taken it that way. It would just follow on a lot better than that.

The second feature – the process involves finding as well as solving problems – is less explicitly entailed here, but rather suggested by the design educators:

> – Now your masthead is actually a really interesting little masthead. I suspect it's a masthead that's quite driven by fashion and potentially might date a little quicker than some other mastheads. / But it's a good idea to test these things out a lot on lots of different people and see if they can understand it and then go back and change it as you want to do.

The third feature – that design solutions are often holistic responses – is tied up with the larger purposes and overall reaction to the magazine design:

> – What were you trying to achieve in terms of the positioning of this magazine? / I thought you could have played around with these a little bit more, made them a lot bigger, made them more of a feature – the images more of a feature … to help the reader understand what the article's about. I think that that is what this is missing … is that we get a taste of what the article is about but we can't really read what the article is about from the images and from the placement of images. / On the last page, if you were to compare these two pages and you half close your eyes and you look at them, they look very different, don't they? So what's the difference between them? So which one is more appealing for you? So in future, in your design work, think about it that way … like half close your eyes and look at it and think 'How do my eyes feel more comfortable?' and then, if you half close your eyes, you stop looking at the words and the text and you actually start to look at the shapes and the space on the page a lot more easily. OK?

Finally, there is an example of text where the analogy with moral ethics is encapsulated:

> – Again, design is very much about exclusive to rather than inclusive to about knowing why it is you're choosing not to do these things. I think this would have been quite a successful design but it would have given you quite a different aesthetic in different fields – and you know that. So that's important that you demonstrate that in your process as well. So it's not at all wasted in any way. It's quite a crucial part of the whole process and it's something that we expect to see.

These comments show how the analogy with ethics is evidenced in the discourse, particularly the close link between ethics and values, since designers draw on value systems when they make design decisions.

Designing as disclosure

Newton (2003) claims that the conception of designing as disclosure draws directly from Derrida and hence to the work of Baudrillard, Barthes, McLuhan and deconstruction more generally. 'In hermeneutic philosophy, disclosure tends to be posited in counter-point to discovery' (p. 103). The mode of articulation we choose to ascribe to designing as disclosure begins with an act of signification.

> 'An act of signification is … an active process of projection undertaken by a person or group of people (the user), who affords some distinguishing (to that person/group) relationship between a referent (the thing being considered) and a description (the sign).' (Newton, 2003, p. 96)

For Newton, as for Eco (1984), metaphor is one linguistic form of signification, and any act of signification is implicated in our understanding and experience, or disclosure, of the world. The text, whether it be a visual representation or written, has to be considered as a choice between all relationships that might be made, how they are considered, and from what perspective. From a postmodernist perspective, visual representation has to be 'read', and 'considered with impulsion, through a process of signification, as a metaphor structure through particular connections' (p. 100). Following Schön, who describes design as a conversation, design representation then becomes the manifest expression of a single episode within the larger, ongoing design conversation. Each design episode is seen to be metaphorical in nature, at the same time, 'both highlighting and hiding particular entailments'. The entailments are 'realised as a set of connections (relationships and concerns)' (p.105). Newton postulates that, '[t]his puts an entirely different spin on design pedagogy: a move away (though certainly not entirely away) from data, methods and systems, towards experience.

According to the proposition of design as disclosure, there is no single reading of a text, but visual representation is read and inscribed with possibility. The design process (reflective conversation) proceeds as an iterative process of articulation and re-articulation of signification and experimentation. As with language, there is a meaning potential in the text of designing. Newton, who sees each episode of designing as being metaphorical in nature, expresses designing as 'read [ing] a situation/problematic, and to read effectively demands an active challenging of how things are being understood, an active openness to new possibilities, and an active revision of understanding' (Newton, 2004 p.104). Disclosure involves hypothesis, and exploration, and in the crit text hypothetical statements are used in under the umbrella of advice/coaching:

– And if you think 'Well, if Murcott was faced with my site, what would he do'? not 'What did he do on that site?'/ You would have been better served if you had actually continued to hand-draw and leave it feeling a bit more unfinished and unresolved.

The discourse of the critique can be described from Newton's perspective as articulating a process of signification and experimentation. It provides an active openness, and communicates future possibilities, together with the DE's own impulsions:

– So therefore I think you'd be better off thinking more loosely than so completely. A little bit of ambiguity at this point is good.

In the following section of text from an architecture crit, several elements of Newton's explanation are shown to be enacted in the discourse of the educator:

Crit text:	Relation to disclosure theory:
I'd still like to see more play with these guys,	
disclosure; of relationships	
maybe one flips up or …	
disclosure; hypothesis, exploration	
because when you say that they step down the site,	
disclosure; signification	
I don't believe you when the back one's lower	
disclosure; the act of	
signification is broadly speaking an act of reading the world.	
so if it were an idea about that, that one needs to be up.	
disclosure; hypothesis, exploration of implications	

Textual entailments of the design as disclosure analogy reference the constantly shifting nature of design, and the need for an understanding that a design concept does not exist already as an entity to be captured from 'outside'.

Conclusion: some pedagogical implications

The connection that I make between the design as analogies in the literature and the language used in the crits signifies that a configuration of ideas from different quarters of the same discipline can be substantiated. In other words, that such analogical approaches are part of the knowledge that the speakers draw upon, albeit unconsciously. This finding could be developed pedagogically into a tool that can bridge the gap perceived by some students between 'coal face' of the crit and the more abstract discourse of the literature.

In other words, a follow-up to this study would be to develop explicit language activities that can connect the more exploratory experimental discourse of the studio to some of the conceptual frames and images found commonly in design studies literature. Such activities would demonstrate how attitudes may appear linguistically at the micro level throughout the crit and build up at the macro level to constitute evidence of principles or higher order concepts. A similar educational purpose has been articulated by the Writing PAD project (n.d.) which explores the discourse community of art, and aims to fuse the tenuous connection that students perceive between theoretical enquiry, written assessments and the creative processes of the studio.

As an example, students would be given a written or spoken record of crit comments, and then be asked to describe how such comments could reflect the speakers' way of seeing the process of design; what identify which particular words show this. As an example what follows is a section of a crit text:

– The interesting thing about this one is you're trying to use the "c" as a substitution. I think you're really trying to do too many things here and gone a little bit … trying to do everything all at once. Fair enough! That's probably where you're at. I don't mean you, every … not necessarily knowing which it is the really best idea and really the only way of doing that is to sort of test one and find out which one gets the top ten. Because sometimes you can't make a decision, it's going to be difficult to make a decision when it could all work in some way or other. But a nice use of figuring in terms of this chopping off the top, probably trying to make the sea and the princess all the same maybe just might be a little too much. But it does work, so good on you!

In asking students to respond to the language of this piece of text, I would develop a bank of questions that could include the following two exercises:

> Select a sentence or two from this text; what does it say about finding design solutions? Are they part of other design problems? So what is the educator saying about the student's freedom to design?
>
> From your answers to these questions, write a statement about how the educator views the designing process.
>
> Can you connect the educator's view to any of the following statements:
>
> design is like evolution
> design is like play
> design is like management
> design is like experimental practice
> design is like solving problems

A second example of discourse is taken from an Architecture crit:

> – And equally it seems a little bit like the way you've treated the facades is a little bit applied; you've taken a few qualities of the rock formations and then put them on different sides. Whereas the real poetry in this guy is in it sculptural quality; it's a beautiful three-dimensional rock-like house. So then the language of it shouldn't be stuck on to the outside. It should be part of the same logic that makes you generate this weird three-fingered rock think in Hunter's Hill. Do you know what I mean? But your experiment and how you deal with it are totally leading in the right direction. So if you were to continue this, then I'm sure it would all come together as convincingly as this part has.

Select a sentence or two from this text; what does it say about finding design solutions? Are they part of other design problems? So what is the educator saying about the student's freedom to design?

From your answers to these questions, write a statement about how the educator views the designing process.

Can you connect the educator's view to any of the following statements:

> design is like a conversation
> design is like understanding possibilities
> design is experimenting
> design is like a ritual

Such conceptual language exercises as these would open discussions and reveal to students the implications of the language choices that their educators make, and situate them in the wider context of design and architecture.

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As a language and literacy lecturer at the University of Technology Sydney, Barbara Lasserre he has had a longstanding interest in the fusion of discourse analysis and design education. Her research has centered on cognitive metaphor, particularly in the spoken and written discourse of design.
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Communication in Dress

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Abstract

The paper examines the idea of communication in dress and in what ways we use clothes as a form of non verbal communication. It looks into whether clothes can be considered as a literal language and how effective the garment is as a tool of communication. Since clothing styles are constantly changing they are a perfect medium to reflect the mood and social norms of the time and an indicator of how these norms are being conformed to and pushed in new directions. I explored each decade I have lived through in my adult life from a personal perspective of the clothes that I wore and by examining the fashion trends of the decade. The sixties clothes reflected the challenges to conformity; the seventies saw women wearing the trousers: the power dressing of the eighties reflected the enterprise culture of that time and the easy relaxed looks of the nineties seemed to be a reaction to manipulating clothes for success. I looked into the sense of individual style and the therapeutic effect of clothes and wondered at men's lesser inclination to adopt changes to their clothes. The paper looks at the implications of the findings to the education of fashion.

Keywords
fashion-communication, dress-communication, language-dress, clothing-communication, fashion-decades

Introduction

> "Dressing can be an aesthetic act and all aesthetic acts are acts of speaking." (Barnhard, 2007, p.109)

This paper is concerned with psychological and behavioral perspectives of communication in dress. I will look into the internal and external factors that influence our choice of clothing. The focus of the inquiry is how we use dress as a non verbal form of communication.

The topic is relevant to me because I work in the fashion area as a teacher. A psychological and behavioral understanding of the consumer's choice is helpful when attempting to forecast and predict trends in fashion cycles. This aspect of dress is not considered in the fashion courses at the institution where I teach. However, an understanding of it will better inform students who will go on to work in many diverse areas of fashion.

I explored this topic from an autobiographical perspective by looking at each decade I have lived through of my adult life and examining the different clothing styles of each decade and comparing these to my own journey through dress. By examining what was worn at different stages I attempted to clarify in what ways clothing was used as a form of communication. I also examined literature that has been written on dress as a form of communication and a language of signifiers of internal motives and expressions.

Literature review

Clothing as language

Barthes (2006) saw dress as a complete phenomenon which has a history, an economy, an ethnology and a technology. He was one of the first to attempt to interpret dress as a language and a form of communication and something more than a physical object. He was influenced by the thinking of Trubetsky, who was the first to study the linguistic nature of clothing when he looked at the degree of dirtiness or wear in people's clothing and the difference, however small, between married and unmarried women's clothing. Barthes applied Sassures' concept of semiology, the language of signs in society, to the language of dress. To examine the human language in dress he carried out research on the written descriptions of garments in fashion magazines. He saw these descriptions as a pure object to analyse as "fashion is what it says it is" (2006, p.23)

Barnhard (2007) argues against Barthes' notion of considering dress as a literal language and highlights the difficulties of making rules about such a fickle subject as fashion. He agrees that communication is a huge part of fashion and that fashion is about communicating something new which is socially approved of and aesthetic. He points out there are no clearly agreed upon interpretations when it comes to what dress communicates. Can one say, he asks, "I didn't understand his outfit" or "I didn't

understand what she meant by that dress." He concedes "that outfit sent out all the wrong messages" could be said when referring to an inappropriately casual style of dress at a formal occasion. (2007, p.188) He suggests that if dress were to be seen as a language it would exist at different levels of expression. A farm labourer, for example would have only a few sentences available where as a fashion editor would have a much larger 'vocabulary' of several hundred word at her disposal.

Language exists if meaning is conveyed; Barthes did not conclusively identify dress as a language. His research could not come up with any clear rules of interpretation. His choice of examining the written descriptions of garments in fashion magazines, the most simplistic of expressions of fashion, overlooked the complexity of the subject. In the end he acknowledged the difficulty of applying scientific meanings to such a changeable subject. The rules of dress, the 'grammar' so to speak, are laid down by the media, culture, groups and families only to shift and change and be adapted and broken by different styles and shapes. The present day holds few rules for conformity in dress; an example is ripped and worn clothing which holds today holds a different meaning today than at any other time.(Damhorst, Miller and Michelman, 2001)

Figure 1 illustrates the humour of interpreting dress as a literal language.

Figure 1: Drawing by R. Chast. The New Yorker Collection 1988 (Barnard 2007, p.150

Communication is about sending messages. The medium of the communication in dress is therefore the garments. How efficient are garments at conveying the message? Barnhard unpacks this by looking at the three components to communication in dress, the wearer's intentions, the efficiency of the transmission and the effect on the receiver. He asks is the garment conveying the message of the designer or of the wearer. He suggests that since we can say to someone "it is so you" about a mass produced dress worn at that moment by hundreds of other women (Barnhard, 2002, p.190), that a garment is open to any number of different interpretations. The effect on the receiver would be in social interaction and would affect the behavior or emotional response of another.

Barnhard looks at the connotations and denotations of a person's dress, that the clothes say more about the person than just a description of what the person is wearing. He carried out an interesting experiment in this area. (Barnhard, 2002, p.190) He showed his fashion students a picture of a woman wearing a white dress sitting on a white couch and asked them questions about her. He found a remarkable consensus of connotations about her. He was told she drove a BMW series 3 or a Volkswagen Golf, she worked in media, had plain carpets and striped floor boards in her apartment and had a boyfriend called Richard. Although different groups did not come up with exactly the same details he found a general agreement as to the connotational reading of the image. The same types of thoughts were shared by different groups. The denotation of the image was a woman sitting on a white couch wearing a white dress, but the meaning drawn from the image went far beyond the description.

Political communication

> Choice of clothing embodies the hegemonic ideals of and therefore values of a particular period (Crane, 2000, p.236)

Crane (2000) looks at clothing as a form of political expression. She suggests that in any period dress is a discourse between those that accept conformity and those that are pushing social rules in other directions. She suggests that since clothes are not a clearly interpreted form of communication they are an easy form through which to make a controversial statement. And since changes in clothing are easily manipulated and can be denied as carrying any meaning, they are often a precursor to a social change and can become a form of non verbal resistance. She gives the example of women's dress changes at the end of the nineteenth century where women were beginning the struggle for a more equal identity. Some women adopted the "alternative dress" and

wore ties, tailored jackets and hats that imitated men's fashions. This was a precursor to the open struggle for women's rights which followed. She notes that the suffragettes always took care to be well dressed in feminine looking clothes so as to be respected and never derided on account of their appearance.

Figure 2: Middle-class woman in "alternative" dress, England 1893 (Crane 2000, p.106)

An individual's dress is always moving within the confines of either reflecting the values of the culture or disrupting and transforming them. (Calefato, 2004) Dress communicates most efficiently when it is communicating a mood. Its role in political and social comment is most compelling; socially as a means of showing the best face to the world and an expression of respect to self and others and politically as a form of non verbal resistance expressing alternative values in a safe way.

Findings: detailing the styles of four decades

And my fashion 'autobiography'
1960

The sixties was a time when many social norms and institutions were being questioned and challenged by young people. The clothing of the time reflected this and the discourse was between; the clothing trade which was producing styles for those with conservative tastes and young London designers who were rebelling against it. Women for the first time were not wearing restrictive underwear, rejecting the girdles and pointy shaped bras of the fifties. They were freeing themselves from the restrictions imposed by the idea of a particular female figure. The wearing of mini skirts and see through tops could be seen as a way of women thumbing their noses at males who perceived the female body as a sexual object. Wearing such pieces expressed an easy relaxed attitude to the body and sexuality, and young women were confident wearing them as others of their generation were wearing the same thing.

The youth culture was about dressing differently to make a statement. Colourful and ethnic clothes were worn as a badge to align oneself with the alternative youth movement. I remember wearing an ankle length purple print caftan; it being such a simple form of dress signified for me freedom. The youth were expressing dissatisfaction with the material culture and an interest in foreign cultures and other values.

Figure3: Twiggy in 1967 (Buxbaum, 1999, p.93)

1970

So over time the norms were shifting and the marginal or subculture influences moved into the mainstream. The hippie styles of the sixties became the seventies chic. The ideas were adopted from street fashion and then because of a change in social attitudes, they become accepted as the mainstream fashion. Some of the changes were brought about because of the feminist movement, who were working towards establishing a new status of independence and equal rights for women. An example of a change women's rights brought about in clothing was in 1972 when New York police women were for the first time allowed to wear trousers. A woman "wearing the trousers" was an apt symbolic image of the changes going on at the time. Jeans became popular for all groups of people; the hard wearing and unpretentious associations of jeans were not lost on people in the seventies adopting them as a fashion. Women's trouser suits were popular which suited the independent feel of women in the seventies. The movie 'Annie Hall', in which Diane Keaton wore an androgynous style of clothing, that is, baggy pants with a waistcoat and tie, suited the trend and influenced women's fashions.

The hippies of the sixties were trying to make a go of the alternative lifestyle and took to making their own clothes and wearing second hand clothing. I remember only wearing natural fibres and thought make-up denoted superficiality and so wore none. The clothes clearly communicated the group's financial circumstances but were seen as a statement about the lack of regard for keeping up appearances and expressing status in dress.

Figure 4: Giorgio Armani advertisement Autumn/Winter 1984/85 (Buxbaum, 1999, p.125)

1980

The enterprise culture of the eighties was reflected in the power dressing of the time. A new cone shaped silhouette emerged; built up shoulders symbolized masculinity and strength and that women meant business. It carried a meaning for women of being in control and managing things. Films like 'Wall Street', in which Michael Douglas plays a city business trader dressed in expensive suits, bow tie and braces and declaring "lunch is for wimps" influenced city fashions for men and highlighted the notion of manipulating dress for success. There was an interest in self help manuals which introduced rules for successful dressing. The concept of wardrobe engineering (Molloy, 1980) was introduced, advising one to take a critical look at one's wardrobe and pare it back by throwing out anything that was not being worn and restricting the colour palette so that everything would mix and match. People were instructed to build their wardrobes around key pieces which were usually investment pieces.

These rules for dress were about projecting a professional image. Investing in classic pieces and developing a sophisticated working uniform communicated proficiency and inspired confidence. I used smartness of dress as a survival technique going into a new environment; fitting into a new country and back into mainstream work after being at home with children.

Figure 5: Ralph Lauren advertisement 1995 (Crane 2000, p.103)

1990
In this decade women were comfortable with financial independence and a more equal role in society. They expressed this new status by adopting a more comfortable casual style of clothing. The fashions of Ralph Lauren epitomised women's ease with their new status. His models were seen casually wearing ties, tailored jackets and pants, applying men's tailoring to women but in a relaxed way. At this time there was a fear of being overdressed. "Dressing down" and wearing more casual outfits demonstrated less need to express social class and status through clothing. Many institutions; for example hospitals, dropped the requirements for staff to wear uniforms and employees could wear casual clothes to work. Fashion proposed rather than dictated at this time and was more about reflecting the taste of the consumer; there were a variety of looks in fashion at the same time.

The relaxed attitudes allowed for a greater diversity and acceptance of dress. There was less pressure to express status and position through ones clothing. I started teaching in a fashion department at this time and felt I needed to find inspiration for creative and interesting dress. I developed the scheme of dressing for each day by being inspired by different colours of the rainbow or by using different characters to inspire my choice. I developed a fun conversation with my dress which added interest to how I looked and was a source of enjoyment and play.

Reflective discussion

Political communication in dress

Women's dress and fashion is so mercurial it is the perfect medium to communicate the moods, trends and changes happening in other aspects of life. The styles convey the mood of the time. Looking over these four decades where women's rights were going through a huge readjustment, the different dress of the decades is seen to describe this movement perfectly. The extremely controversial and provocative styles of the sixties expressed the struggles of women for equality and made way for the statement, "pant wearing" seventies. The empowering hard silhouetted eighties gave way to a more relaxed owning of equality in the nineties.

I wonder if the popularity of today's style gurus and make over shows with their message of how women deserve to treat themselves as feminine and make the most of their best features, is a demonstration that women have lost some of their femininity and need to reclaim it. It may also be as a reaction to the dressing down that went on in the nineties.

The meanings of the fashions arose out of the interaction between the events, the individuals and the prevailing mood of the time. When women began wearing trousers for professional duties, it was about them taking up the right to wear the most practical garment for the job as well as an expression of the inequality between male and female rights. Often changes in the clothing predate the social change. (Crane, 2000) When I wore alternative clothes in the late sixties I felt part of a movement that was heralding change. Fashion statements are one of the ways in which individual agency and cultural structures relate, and through which new ideas are constructed and expressed.

The outer dialogue
Clothing is an interface between the private identity and the public exterior. I observe that I have adjusted my style of dress to the different stages of life and different communities that I have been involved with. My style of dress in the sixties and seventies aligned me to the changing mood of the youth and rejection of conventional attitudes. As a mother of young children I would often wear hats and dress in brightly coloured clothes, setting an example to the children about sun protection and being influenced by the colourful children's clothing. Different work places have different dress cultures. Clothing is an effective visual way of demonstrating connection to a group. It reflects one's changing identity and the changing circumstances of one's life. Style of dress is a good way of expressing how much you wish to fit into the social group or differentiate from it.

Unique style in dress is rare; even the most stylish are conforming to their own group's ideals. Most people do not want to look so different as to be stared at. People create their style within the social norms. The most surprising finding for me was how I appear to have fitted in with the fashions of each decade, even though I perceived myself as following my own individual sense of style. In the sixties when I was expressing an alternative style of dress reacting against mainstream conventional fashions, so were huge numbers of my age group. Even though my choice of dress had economic limitations in the seventies, I was fitting in with a more simple life trend. In the eighties my focus was to present a professional image and the fashions of the time, with their empowering shapes in business suits and directive to manipulating one's wardrobes for effect, aligned with my needs. And in the nineties when women were being more comfortable with the rights and equality they had gained, I too had relaxed into a comfortable workable professional style. It seems it is harder to be out of fashion than to be in it.

The inner dialogue

> A women's dress is a permanent revelation of her inner most thoughts, language and a symbol" (Balzac, Une fille D'Eve 1839 in Crane, 2000, p.99)

Davies (in Barnhard, 2007) suggests that dress is closer to music in communication and more about conveying a mood, as music does, than a language attempting to convey a specific message. If dress is about communicating moods and is not worn to be interpreted, it is then more about affecting the way we feel in ourselves.

A Buddhist nun has told me that the robes come from the Buddha and are a representation of his teachings. The robes placed a responsibility on her to represent everything that they signified when people see her in them. Rather than a pressure, she looked at this as a freedom of having an impersonalized identity to the world. What the robes represent goes far beyond the concept of an individual identity.

It is generally accepted that how we dress affects how we are treated. But two researchers found an interesting effect on their feelings about themselves. In her paper "You Become What You Wear" Kathleen Carlin and a friend (in Damhorst, Miller and Michelman, 2001) tell a story of how they dressed as "bag ladies" for a day to investigate how their appearance would affect people's attitudes towards them. Predictably they were treated as shabbily as their dress and had proved what they already knew, that people judge by appearances. However their most interesting finding was by the end of the day they were beginning to accept and internalise the biased judgments of others. When at the end of the day one of them suggested going into a particularly smart store they both agreed they couldn't possibly go in there. They were acting in accordance with how they were being treated and believing they were as they looked.

Clothing, being on the borderline between the inner identity and the public persona, is in a perfect position for a role in two way communication between the inner and outer worlds. It can have a positive effect on ones sense of well being. Dressing with a sense of fun in mind, not taking it too seriously and engaging in a role play imparted an innovative aesthetic to my dress and boosted self esteem. I think clothes do have a superficial therapeutic effect on an individual. The therapeutic effect of clothes is an area for more research. This privilege of play with dress is very much the product of a prosperous, post modern society. (Crane, 2000)

Throughout the decades under discussion men generally have escaped the pressure of keeping up with fashion with only the merest nod to the recent trends. How have men managed to escape the pressure? Barthes (2006) suggests men have tended towards dandyism, that is how the clothes are worn, the manner of wearing a standard outfit as opposed to women who diversify the uniformity of costume depending on the occasion. Why men adopt such little change to their dress is an interesting subject for more research.

Conclusion

As Barnhard suggests, in terms of communication fashion designers have a vast vocabulary available to them while the public have only a few sentences. As an educator, the findings show that in my role I can encourage students to express their larger vocabulary of ideas through their designs which will inform and stimulate the general public. The designs must resonate with the age they are living through. If they can communicate the mood of the times, then their designs are more likely to be adopted and become fashionable.

The findings are relevant in the broader education of fashion as they show young designers can have the confidence to express what is happening around them. They can interpret and make social comment through their designs. Reflecting on past decades has illustrated how social and political happenings and psychological attitudes have informed the fashions. It has shown that fashion is more about communicating moods and less about individual expression, but that styles of dress are a good way of expressing how much an individual chooses to fit into the social group or differentiate from it. Fashion statements are one of the ways in which individual agency and cultural structures relate and through which new ideas are constructed and expressed.

Fashion designs need to resonate with what is going on around that is why the latest range always looks more exciting than last season's clothes. I believe the findings show young designers can communicate the age they are going through with originality and interpret the trends happening in the society at the time. This is a very relevant finding to incorporate into a fashion qualification where the focus of the education is to produce outstanding designers who will express their age and the ages to come.

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Problems of the Definition of (Graphic) Design in Contemporary Visual Culture

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Abstract

After about a century of development, graphic design still lacks social recognition as a profession. Incomprehension and miscommunication between designers and clients occur more often than in other fields. This state of affairs is partly due to certain types of praxis within graphic design that incorporate the (dis)advantage of the relatively young age of this discipline so as to produce objects situated in the borders between graphic design and other disciplines. This phenomenon is increasingly evident in major international exhibitions, projects and publications about graphic design. As a young discipline, the advantage of its dynamic social role within the visual culture stands in contrast to the deficiency of a self-referential theoretical corpus that is historically consolidated and legitimized. Based on the current situation as a starting point, this paper will discuss possible ways(s) of re-evaluating disciplinary definitions of (graphic) design and its structural elements.

Keywords
Design definition, Designistic field, Social commitment, Designer-as-creator, Design-fact, Institutional designistic context, Designistic practice: functions and norms

Introduction

The *designistic* field and its structural elements

One of the first problems when attempting to legitimize the field is the need for terms/concepts that are based on the profession's intrinsic values. Here, I am referring to the simple act of 'naming' general phenomena and practices. There is the need,

for example, of an adjective for describing the values, norms and functions that are related to design phenomena. In the same familiar way that we refer to the 'artistic' or 'architectonic' fields, there is an urgency to use the term *designistic*, although its phonetics seems unfriendly and almost unspeakable. Given that words acquire familiarity by their use, as well as the consequent comprehension of their meaning, the acceptance of the term *designistic* in our vocabulary, and its approval in society's consciousness for the times to come, might be a matter of timing.

Historically, the term *designistic* has been used when comparing the theories of creationism versus evolution. It is possible that their use in this context has led to their lack of usage in any other field. 'Intelligent Design' challenges the theory of evolution by alleging that 'living organisms look designed because they really were designed' [(1)]. Such arguments oppose Darwin's theories which argue that natural selection and random mutation influence which structures survive in living systems. The author of such *designistic* acts is not clearly mentioned, which leaves the door open to link Intelligent Design to creationism and to envisage God as the Designer.

This later relationship, i.e., God = Designer, has come to the fore perhaps because of a similar reference from the 13th century to 'God as Designer' in Thomas Aquinas's Fifth Way:

> "We see that things which lack knowledge, such as natural bodies, act for an end, and this is evident from their acting always, or nearly always, in the same way, so as to obtain the best result. Hence it is plain that they achieve their end, not fortuitously, but designedly. Now whatever lacks knowledge cannot move towards an end, unless it be directed by some being endowed with knowledge and intelligence; as the arrow is directed by the archer. Therefore some intelligent being exists by whom all natural things are directed to their end; and this being we call God" (Aquinas, Summa Theologica, Article 3, Question 2 [emphasis added]). [(2)]

Despite the fact that the previous debates focused on the origin of humanity, there are ontological questions and consequent speculative answers that could be relevant for our study. The previously mentioned *designistic* attitude highlights the essential characteristic of design as a seminal creative act, and as an exceptional and foundational act with a clear and purposely functional end for 'survival'. There is also an emphasis on the assumption of strategic elements with premeditated ends, which is somehow imbued in *designistic* acts nowadays.

This leads us to discern a few elements that will be treated as main components when discussing the *designistic* field: 1. social commitment; 2. the designer-as-creator; 3. the design-fact; and 4. the institutional *designistic* context that legitimizes what design practice is and might appear to be in the times to come.

1. Social commitment refers here to the satisfaction of certain needs that are demanded from a designer by a community as a whole. We should clarify that this concept does not refer only to the linear process of the fulfillment of a given assignment, although this is a central aspect. Social commitment also entails taking on the assumption that the client-designer relationship is a battlefield, for the sake of offering an effective communication and socio-aesthetic education when addressing a specific audience. Thus, far from being the readily-understood accomplishment of a client's aspiration, social commitment longs for *designistic* autonomy. While fulfilling a prescribed need (which might be summarized in a given assignment/contract), a socially committed designer will always give back aesthetic and *designistic* education. Constructive gestures for receiving edifying social recognition for this young profession include educating society by persuading it of the importance of certain proposals, and dismantling pre-established conceptions of functionalism and archaic ready-made aesthetic formulas based on what 'used to work'.

2. The notion of a designer-as-creator is related to the *designistic* role of the originator. It lays on a foundational act (the design-fact). It stresses a voice. It denotes the quality of being the 'father' of a very specific design-fact. By doing so, it stresses the idea of novelty. It seeks an analysis and understanding of the linguistic processes that governs a communicating instance. One of the current shifts of paradigm in the design field is the displacement of the role of the 'designer as producer' or 'problem-solver' with the role of the 'designer as the creator' of legible and functional systems, which may be ontologically novel. The designer-as-creator expands on the designer's role as a problem-solver insofar as there is an emphasis on the inaugural and foundational systems or methodologies that challenge pre-established notions of what design is. As a successor of the later role, the designer-as-creator role inaugurates new ways of seeing and representing 'the world'. By doing so, it does not aid communication with conventional and existing mediums and parameters, but instead, it makes new ways of communications possible.

The term “creation” has had different meanings across history that should be taken into consideration. From the universal creationists’ theological positions — similar to those of the designistics — that considered a sort of creatio ex-nihilo, inasmuch as God creates a new soul for each new born human being; to the more controlled meaning of artistic creation inasmuch as the “production of a fictional existence” (Tatarkiewicz, 1991, p. 253), all the meanings conceptualize the birth of a new ‘entity’. This last connotation was mainly based on an interpretation of literature and dates from the 19th Century, the moment at which the term ‘creation’ began to be related to the artistic field. Yet, in our specific context, the idea of the designer-as-creator is directed towards any human operation that implies a cognitive slant. In doing so, it becomes simultaneously a sign of individual positioning or/and a *designistic* statement. This leads us to the design-fact definition in the following paragraph.

3. The design-fact notion shifts focus from the finished object to the process of creation itself. It emphasizes the conceptual process that takes place, rather than the finished object (without underestimating it). Some argue that this emphasis on concept development might as well be called ‘conceptual design’ because of its similarities to artistic conceptualism and its analytic movement. Nevertheless, we must stress that we are not suggesting a disregard of the aesthetic and expressive nature of a design-fact. It is merely that the creative aspect of (graphic) design will always imply a questioning or reformulation of the linguistic resources granted by such a discipline.

In this respect, the design-fact notion inspires the search for self-consciousness about the use of the expressive means that are at stake in the act of designing. Design as fact, as we could easily say, re-examines the very medium being used to convey a message as a sort of carrier of all possible unreleased meanings and, consequently, induces a permanent inquiry of what graphic design is. If we attempt conclusive words, a design-fact, as we see it, involves an agonic process [3], for the sake of a redefinition and reformulation of the very nature of the design discipline.

In his essay ‘When Form has Become Attitude and Beyond’, Thierry de Duve pointed to the medium as a ‘structure’ which is constantly being challenged and questioned. In line with de Duve, we could say: ‘That a [designer] works in the medium of [for example, book design] means that [s]he questions [book design] for what it has to say about itself and hasn’t said yet. His definition of [book design] might be: what no [book or editorial designer] has done yet.’ And we would like to add, what no designer has communicated yet. (T. de Duve, 2005, p. 23) [4]

Therefore, this reformulation of ‘design as fact’, involves a de-constructive attitude. It becomes a proposition that, in the attempt to challenge what design is, it installs an object or a ‘fact’ to be considered as a re-definition of Design.

4. Regarding the institutional *designistic* context, two main concepts will be guiding this approach: the core concept of cultural ‘field’ and ‘habitus’ as defined by French theorist Pierre Bourdieu, and the institutional theory of art developed by the North Americans theorists George Dickie and Arthur Danto.

For Bourdieu, artistic value does not emerge as a consequence of structural elements of the works of art, but as a result of a system of relationships that occur within a cultural given field. According to Pierre Bourdieu (1995) ‘A field is composed by a set of historic and objective relationships between positions anchored in certain forms of power (or capital), whereas habitus (habits) alludes to a set of historical relationships ‘deposited’ in the individual bodies under the form of mental and corporal schemes of perception, appreciation and action’ (Bourdieu, P., Wacquant, L. J. D., 1995, p. 23).

Danto’s theories of the institutional status of art follow Dickie’s reflections, and argue that the concept of art is inalienable from the institutions that represent it and which guarantee its discourse: academies, museums, cultural policies, history, critics and theory. Applied to the *designistic* context, we can assert that the specificity and therefore the concept of design does not reside solely in *designistic* objects per se, but in the discourses, and definitively in the acts that guarantee its consecration (2002, Smith P., Wilde C.). We can appreciate the same tendency of appraisal and overall judgment, although we are reluctant to say that a design fact owes its existence solely to the institutional context. Instead, we acknowledge its importance and the battle for legitimization that constantly takes place within a *designistic* field.

Some approaches to Designistic Practice, its Functions and Norms

Jan Mukarowski wrote: ‘The norm is the criterion by means of which aesthetic value is judged and granted.’ (J. Mukarowski, 1984, p. 164). In this section, we intend to explore how *designistic* functions are assembled to establish the *designistic* norms that act as the criteria for conferring design value to certain practices in determined époques. In addition, we will also examine the norms that transgress the legitimized and historically accepted norms in order to advance and consolidate new *designistic* practices.

Designistic practice is determined by social demands. It is a truism that it exists for its utilitarian benefit. Therefore, the problem of its function acquires a singular and important dimension. The practical-utilitarian function, the attribute of design that is inextricably related to the social praxis, is perhaps the most evident function *designistic* practice bears upon. We can say that one of the parameters for conferring *designistic* value on certain practices in the *designistic* field is the ability of certain design facts to express functionality through their form, or the manner in which functionality is embedded in their form.

From the former, we can derive a series of functions that usually compete with the practical-utilitarian function, which will be further examined by taking into account the structural elements described in the previous section. These functions are: the communicative (promotional and informational, among others), educative and aesthetic functions. Although other functions exist which can be considered, we will concentrate on these three, as they are deemed crucial for: 1) discovering the fundamental principles of a design, i.e. the problem of its definition, and 2) the enforcement or alteration of *designistic* norms, especially those that constitute a medullar stone for conferring value to *designistic* practices and for determining how *designistic* history is written and constituted.

Judged by the *designistic* tradition, the practical-utilitarian function distinguishes *designistic* from artistic practices. This differentiation is a norm that needs to be fulfilled. This practical-utilitarian function generally comprises the informative, educational and promotional functions, which are almost always ephemeral. These functions dictate, as well as provide, not just the content but also the context in which a proposal is developed and finally consumed. What happens when the context for the design-fact is no longer there? Can a design-fact be appreciated when it is alienated from the context for which it was destined? Phrased differently, if *designistic* norms determine by default that a design object has to have a practical and immediate function to be considered as such, can the *designistic* object survive when this norm is violated? Perhaps an answer can be found in 'Graphic Design in the White Cube', a curatorial project developed by Peter Bilak for the 22nd International Biennale of Graphic Design in Brno in 2006 (Figure 1). The proposed concept was to assign to 19 designers the task of creating a poster for an exhibition called The White Cube whose exhibits were the posters themselves. Thus, the public would confront the same poster in two different scenarios: the street, its natural context, and the gallery, where the posters would prioritize their aesthetic, instead of their promotional, function. This curatorial proposal portrayed the 'white aura' of the gallery as the ambience where concepts and images are 'purified' from their practical commitment. In the White Cube, there was a connivance of both the functional (promotional, informational) and aesthetic functions, which tend to overlap each other, depending on the scenario in which the poster was appreciated. Hence, it is a commentary on the conditions under which the value of graphic design changes when its context changes, emphasizing the social commitment of this design fact. This exhibition concept intended to 'propose a possible format for design exhibitions' (P. Bilak, 2006) which was coherent with the aim of this designer-as-author for questioning the *designistic* discipline.

Figure 1. Left: Graphic Design in the White Cube, general view, 2006. Right: Graphic Design in the White Cube, Round Studio poster, 2006

Figure 2. Left: Hansje van Halem, Mark, municipal art acquisitions, graphic design section 2003–2004 catalogue.

Another example of the violation of pre-established norms is the catalogue "Mark", designed by Hansje van Halem for the 2003–2004 municipal art and design acquisitions of the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam (Figure 2). Since exhibitions are ephemeral phenomena, catalogues are traditionally created as collections of pages that serve as a memorabilia of a particular exhibition. In this design fact, van Halem was considering the number of pages the catalogue should have, as the museum received 84 objects that were being considered for acquisition. However, only 64 objects were eventually purchased. These 64 objects were shown in the catalogue fully (as intact pages), while the other objects that were not acquired were not shown. Thus, they were literally "out of the page", left with no possible representation, and the 'holes' in the pages stood as reminders of their absence. In this way, the margins of the pages with the 'holes' are transformed into frames that highlight the works that were accepted. It is a clever reference to the legitimizing instance of the museum, and alludes to the 'objectification' of a piece of design when it enters the realm of an institution. The whole work becomes an analysis, and a statement on how institutions confer value on *designistic* facts.

Both of the examples mentioned above are clear references of the transformation that takes place when a design fact undergoes essential changes that are visibly appreciated and outspoken through the medium it expresses through.

Conclusion

Problems of the Definition of (Graphic) Design attempts to trace a 'cognitive map' of *designistic* practices and the *designistic* field. It starts by acknowledging the scarcity of tools for naming and addressing design phenomena, which is perhaps a consequence of the discipline's youth. We also discuss the structural elements that define the *designistic* field, by using specific examples that we expanded on throughout this paper. We are conscious of the limitations that every definition attempt implies and, therefore, believe in the need for this study to continue by analyzing additional examples of design-facts.

The essay also points out design facts that appear relevant for defining design as a discipline, and for constituting the history of design. It does so by considering the way these practices break *designistic* norms and by combining or overlapping functions that substantively affect the definition of the behavior of *designistic* practices.

Last but not least, we can conclude that almost all design facts, perhaps as a result of the ephemeral quality of their proposals, involve a performative act. In this way, they are linked to the pristine *designistic* ideology of a premeditated strategy, which consists of the construction of an action for achieving very specific objectives that are to be accomplished in a short or medium time period. This emphasizes the active role of an audience in constructing *designistic* meaning.

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1. Discovery Institute (2005, December 10). Not by chance: From bacterial propulsion systems to human DNA, evidence of intelligent design is everywhere. In National Post of Canada. Retrieved September 2, 2009, from http://www.canada.com/nationalpost/news/issuesideas/story.html?id=8f7f51f2-a196-4677-9399-46f4f17b5b61
2. Einar Himma, Kenneth (2009, April 12). Design Arguments for the Existence of God. In Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Retrieved September 3, 2009, from http://www.iep.utm.edu/design/¬
3. This term shall mainly be understood in its pristine sense. The Agon was for the Greeks an event of extreme discursive importance, because through dialogue and confrontational speeches —its supreme forms of expression— the Agon has as a fundamental feature to invigorate human spirit.
4. de Duve, T. (2005) When Form has Become Attitude and Beyond. In Z. Kocur, S. Leung (Eds.), Theory in Contemporary Art Since 1985 (p. 23) Oxford, U.K: Blackwell Publishing. The quote referred reads as follow:
   'That an artist works in the medium of painting means that he questions painting for what it has to say about itself and hasn't said yet. His definition of painting might be: what no painter has done yet.'

The cave and the retrospective construction of design

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Abstract

Historical narratives begin at a particular point in space and time, but the openings of design histories are inconsistent in this respect. While industrial design histories tend to begin with European industrialization in the 18th or early 19th centuries, interior design and graphic design histories each claim the Paleolithic caves in Southern France and Spain as their mythical birthplace: Altamira, Lascaux and/or Chauvet are used as a conventional starting point in standard textbook narratives. This paper analyses such conventional narratives that have retrospectively constructed the Paleolithic cave as a creative or designed artefact. While we know nothing about the creators of the mythical cave, our writing and re-writing constructs and re-constructs the cave in order to reinforce existing discourses about design and its origins.

Keywords
Design History, Graphic Design, Interior Design, Lascaux, Narrative, Origins.

Historical narratives conventionally begin at a specific geographical and temporal location. For design history, there are several possible locations at which to begin, but where and when we locate design's primal scene reveals a great deal about how we understand contemporary design. One convenient and common starting point is the European industrial revolution in the late 18th century, a beginning which is often used in histories of industrial design or, more generally, in histories of modern design. However, certain disciplines and histories have traced a longer historical narrative that establishes a continuity between contemporary design and design at the dawn of history – a linear progression that, as graphic designer Paul Rand termed it, stretches in a continuum "From Lascaux to Brooklyn" (Rand, 1996). The mythical birthplace of

human creativity, although rarely expanded upon by designers or design historians, is not generic but both temporally and geographically specific. The Upper Paleolithic caves of Southern France and Spain, particularly Altamira, Lascaux and Chauvet, are a conventional starting point in standard textbook histories of design.

Although the cave usually only appears fleetingly at the beginning of design histories, its reiteration across disciplines suggests the importance attached to establishing the longest possible continuity. Such a continuity serves as a legitimation for relatively new disciplines such as graphic and interior design, and their origins in the cave ground them in a prehistoric legacy: a presence at the very birth of civilization. A brief analysis of the cave in four standard design histories – two interior design and two graphic design – will reveal both the positioning and pretensions of contemporary design practice in these disciplines. But to understand how the cave functions in relation to design, it is necessary to first understand the Paleolithic cave as a mythological space that was written into existence at a particular time and place.

The Cave, A Modern History

Beyond simply a geological formation, the cave is first and foremost a site of overdetermination. Browsing across cultural histories, the Paleolithic caves of Europe have long functioned as a kind of multidisciplinary womb: the birthplace of art, graphic communication, interior design, multimedia design, information design, cinema, the gallery and the museum. Beyond a womb, the symbolic associations of the cave are similarly varied – the cave is metaphorically a tomb, the unconscious or memory. In Plato's Republic, a text considered foundational to Western philosophy, the metaphor of the cave is used to engage with an epistemological problem. For Plato, the cave is a space in which humans are deceived by shadows thrown up on the wall, mediated appearances which distract them from the "reality" outside the cave (Plato, 1986: 316-325). This idea of the cave as a space of mediated appearances was extended by Jean Baudrillard, whose discussion of the simulacrum notes that visitors to Lascaux today cannot experience the "real" cave, but a simulation of the Paleolithic original. "It is possible," Baudrillard writes, "that the very memory of the original caves will fade in the mind of future generations, but from now on there is no longer any difference: the duplication is sufficient to render both artificial." (Baudrillard, 1983: 18) Both Baudrillard's inaccessible original and Plato's elusive origin will inform our understanding of the cave's historical role in the analysis that follows.

Despite its multiple births and semiotic overdetermination, the cave, at least as it appears in design history, is thankfully quite specific. During the 20th century, the Upper Paleolithic caves of southern France and Spain were claimed by various creative disciplines as an originary temporal and geographical location. While the Upper Paleolithic period was roughly 45 000 to 10 000 years ago, our understanding of the cave as a significant point of origin is, in fact, much more recent. There was no interest in the cave as the birthplace of culture prior to the modern period, and even then interest was slow in developing. Altamira, in Spain, the first of the well-known Paleolithic caves in Europe, was rediscovered in 1879. Its status was immediately controversial, and it was initially dismissed as a fraud by many leading prehistorians, as the images it contained were deemed to be too sophisticated to have been produced by stone age humans.

For David Lewis-Williams, the new conceptual framework of evolution, popularised by Charles Darwin's Origin of the Species (1859), provided the catalyst for a new understanding of the significance of Paleolithic caves (Lewis-Williams, 2002). With evolution, European intellectuals could place both the images in the cave, and the cave's inhabitation by Homo Sapiens, in a historical context as the beginning of an extended cultural trajectory that progressed to the present. The meaning of the painted images on rock surfaces, as well as other signs of the cave's occupation, was still open to interpretation. The portable art of the Upper Paleolithic peoples – carved bones and inscribed stones, for example – was understood within a 19th century aesthetic framework steeped in the Romantic tradition. Early Homo Sapiens, like stone age precursors of Oscar Wilde, had supposedly decorated both their tools and these subterranean spaces due to their (recently developed) innate aesthetic sensibility.

The first turning point in the modern history of the cave occurred in 1902 when leading French prehistorian Emile Cartailhac, who had previously denied that the images in Altamira were prehistoric art, recanted in a now infamous article which acknowledged the images as the art of stone age humans (see Lewis-Williams, 2002: 32). In the following decades, with the aid of insights from developing disciplines such as anthropology and sociology, the "art for art's sake" understanding of cave paintings was gradually rejected in favour of more complex ideas regarding primitive cultures. The images in Europe's Paleolithic caves were thus understood to be magical or spiritual, possibly totemic markings related to hunting rituals. Such theories about the meaning and function of the cave paintings abounded until the discovery of Lascaux, a spectacular new cave in southern France, in 1940. Although

its images are over 15 000 years old, in its textual reconstruction, Lascaux is a distinctly modern cave and worth dwelling in for a moment, as it came to occupy a central place in the postwar cultural imagination.

After World War Two, the shifting interpretations of cave art entered into a new cultural framework. Both Western civilization, and by extension art, now extended beyond the realm of the European Renaissance and selected Greek and Roman examples, to embrace non-Western objects, and pre-Classical examples, including prehistoric cave painting. Lascaux became an important touchstone for the revitalization of French, and more broadly European culture in the postwar era. Its caves contained not only the oldest collection of Paleolithic cave paintings yet discovered in Europe, but a huge quantity of paintings (over 2000 figures) that were appreciated for their high level of technical skill. In the post-war reconstruction of France, Lascaux played a role in the rehabilitation of French culture and its national past by Charles de Gaulle, as the oldest known art was now "French". The influential cultural critic André Malraux reconciled modernism and tradition in an encyclopedic understanding of global culture, with Lascaux at the origin (Malraux 1974: 626). For Malraux, art was trans-cultural, a result of a shared impulse of creativity across space and time: Lascaux's paintings could be thus understood as timeless, universal masterpieces equivalent to Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel or Picasso's Guernica.

In its rebirth, Lascaux was intimately entwined with modernism, not only with the interest in "the primitive" by modernist practitioners (from Picasso to Jean Dubuffet), but in its institutionalization as the origin of European culture. For Douglas Smith, in postwar France, "it becomes possible to install Lascaux as the point of origin of the cultural heritage which culminates in Modernism. The dark cave of Lascaux becomes the complementary negative image of the modern movement's bright white cube, as each respectively marks the beginning and the end of the Modernist project." (Smith, 2004: 221). This continuity was made concrete in a 1953 exhibition, "40 000 ans d'art moderne", at the Paris Musée Municipal d'Art Moderne. In addition to Malraux, Georges Bataille, another prominent French cultural critic, devoted a monograph and numerous articles to Lascaux during the 1950s, associating the cave with not only the birthplace of art, but the cradle of creativity itself (Bataille 1955, 2009). Ancient Athens, the mythical city that had so long stood at the beginning of European narratives of civilization, was thus deposed by Lascaux.

In postwar art histories, Lascaux provided a convenient starting point for an art history which could sweep over 40 000 years of human cultural continuum which culminated in the modernist abstraction of the 1950s. One of the standard textbooks to popularise this historical narrative was H. W. Janson's A History of Art: A Survey of the Visual Arts from the Dawn of History to the Present Day (London: Thames and Hudson, 1962), a text that remains in print (and, though updated in several editions since 1962, its narrative framework remains intact). Janson began his history with Altamira and Lascaux, and he understood the paintings on the cave walls in terms of their timeless artistic expression, although he also acknowledged their possible magical or ritual functions. Tellingly, the next section of Janson's first chapter followed these prehistoric beginnings with examples of more recent "primitive art", including wooden carvings from New Guinea, Easter Island statues, African masks and a contemporary Navaho sand painting. Here, the cave was still understood in a context with other "primitive" cultural products which provided the foundations for a progressive evolution towards the more sophisticated cultures that followed.

The Cave, Birthplace of Visual Communication

While Europe's Paleolithic caves remained the undisputed birthplace of art for many decades, design disciplines eventually began to move in. Philip Megg's pioneering A History of Graphic Design, first published in 1983 (and now in its Fourth Edition), laid an alternative claim for the cave. For Meggs, the primal scene at Lascaux "was not the beginning of art as we know it. Rather, it was the dawning of visual communications, because these early pictures were made for survival and were created for utilitarian and ritualistic purposes." (Meggs, 1983: 4) By emphasising the cave paintings' functional rather than aesthetic purposes, Meggs identified these prehistoric images as graphic design rather than art. Through textual reconstruction, the cave was thus transformed from the birthplace of art to that of design.

Despite this differentiation, Meggs drew upon the established narrative framework of art historians such as Janson, beginning his narrative with the culture of the Upper Paleolithic Homo Sapiens. These early humans developed both speech and proto-writing, the latter a "visual counterpoint of speech" (Meggs, 1983: 3). As the beginnings of graphic design, Meggs understood the cave images in terms of this proto-writing rather than as simply the results of creative expression, as the images were "an elementary way to record and transmit information." (Meggs, 1983: 4) Although graphic design could now distinguish itself from art, Meggs also noted that the cave paintings were "pictographs", graphic symbols which were the beginnings of both art and writing. Although the references are brief and the argument vague, it is clear that before he or she developed art or writing, Megg's imaginary Homo

Sapien was a graphic designer, a stone age Paul Rand communicating information via graphic marks on a cave wall.

A more recent survey, Johanna Drucker and Emily Mcvarish's Graphic Design History: A Critical Guide, also situates the birthplace of graphic design in the Paleolithic caves of France and Spain. Drucker and Mcvarish write: "Stone Age artists established the basic conventions essential to graphic design as early as 35 000 years ago." (Drucker and Mcvarish, 2009: 3) They proceed to discuss both Altamira and Lascaux as key examples. As in Megg's account, stone age graphic design is understood by Drucker and Mcvarish as informative mark-making, but pushing further, they also identify the marks as an expression of abstract thoughts. Beyond simply transmitting information, for Drucker and Mcvarish, "The realization that prehistoric graphic signs embody values and express beliefs places them on a continuum that includes contemporary visual design." (Drucker and Mcvarish, 2009: 6) The cave's graphic images are thus more than simply aesthetic representations or visual communications, they are more complex expressions of a "world-view" (Drucker and Mcvarish, 2009: 7).

While other options are possible for where and when to situate the origins of graphic design – Stephen Eskilson's Graphic Design: A New History, for example, begins with Gutenberg's printing press in 15th century Germany (see Eskilson, 2007) – the Paleolithic caves of Europe remain a significant starting point. The two examples, by Meggs and Drucker and Mcvarish, can be seen as mapping territory for a relatively new discipline, a discipline which has recently changed its image from a skills-based profession to one attired with the significance of an research-based practice. In this way, a long progressive continuum lends profundity to a formerly technical profession. Both narratives situate Paleolithic cave paintings as foundational creative artefacts, emphasizing design's origins in a creative practice associated with autonomous expression rather than in a profession rooted in client-based directives. Importantly, these histories also reveal that in the last two decades or so, graphic design has attained enough cultural confidence to rock art right out of the cradle of civilization.

The Cave, Birthplace of Interior Design

More recently than graphic designers, the cave has been reconstructed by interior designers, who have rocked the cradle of civilization once again. John Pile's pioneering text, A History of Interior Design, first published in 2000 (London : Laurence King, 2000, though now in its third edition), followed the narrative framework established by historians such as Janson and Meggs. For interior design, the caves were "the first shelters" in an evolution of design styles from prehistory to the present, and Pile notes the caves at Altamira, Lascaux and Chauvet as the earliest examples. He argues that a fundamental difference between humans and other species is our "acceptance of inside space as the most usual environment for living everyday life." (Pile, 2000: 13) Thus the illustrations of Paleolithic caves provide a starting point for a cultural history of inhabited spaces, although these are also acknowledged by Pile to have been inhabited by primitive peoples: "The term 'primitive', as used here, does not signify simple, crude, or inferior, but refers to peoples, cultures, or civilizations untouched by the modern technological world as it has developed during the few thousands of years for which we have detailed history." (Pile, 2000: 13) Beyond this, Pile offers little information about "the first shelters", but the illustration of the Paleolithic caves at the beginning of his narrative establishes a foundation of these caves as three-dimensional, inhabited spaces rather than just neutral subterranean spaces comprising walls for stone age art or graphic communication.

In a more recent survey, Interior Design and Decoration, Stanley Abercrombie and Sherrill Whiton follow the same narrative pattern, beginning at Altamira and Lascaux, but focusing on the more recently discovered Chauvet caves. Although they acknowledge the various meanings the paintings may have had to prehistoric Homo Sapiens, they justify the inclusion of the caves as interior design thus: "Most of these paintings cannot be considered domestic décor, although cave dwellers must have done something to improve their living quarters." (Abercrombie and Whiton, 2008: 3) Abercrombie and Whiton refer to the images on the cave walls as works of art, but link the caves more specifically to interior spaces, developing a lineage with medieval cathedrals. "Interestingly," they write, "the impulse behind the cave paintings and the impulse behind the stained-glass windows of Chartes Cathedral are not entirely different. Both make their appeal to the supernatural rather than the natural world. Their subjects are realistic, but their intended function is to lift our thoughts to a higher reality or to improve our fortunes." (Abercrombie and Whiton, 2008: 4) The sacred space of the cave is depicted as a precedent for the medieval Christian church – like Pile, they position the cave as a three dimensional space mediated by prehistoric creative impulses, but add a spiritual dimension.

While for both art and graphic design histories, the cave is constructed as a neutral container for exhibiting paintings or graphic marks, for interior design history, visual significance is combined with what Abercrombie and Whiton term "the nesting

instinct" to create a designed interior space. Following this, Abercrombie and Whiton also note in passing that the cave is a space where interior design can begin without architecture. Given interior design's conventional reliance on architectural history, this is a significant point (though one that the authors fail to capitalize on given their conventional historical narrative). Architectural narratives do not start with the Paleolithic caves of Europe as architecture's primal scene, presumably because caves are considered natural geological formations rather than (architectural) structures constructed by humans.

As with graphic design, for interior design, the establishment of a long history which begins at the birthplace of civilization lends legitimacy to a relatively new, formerly technical discipline. As with graphic design, there are other possible origins for interior design, the most common derive from architectural histories that commence with early human buildings which contain interior spaces (such as the ancient Egyptian pyramids, for example). And on this point, it is worth noting that Meggs', Pile's and Drucker and Mcvarish's books are all titled "A History" rather than "The History", suggesting one among several possible histories rather than the definitive account. However, in all four accounts, the artefact has been retrospectively constructed within the contemporary frameworks of each discipline while its original producers, meanings and context remain ultimately inaccessible.

One Cave or Many?

As the birthplace of human civilization, the Paleolithic caves of Southern France and Spain were supposedly a cauldron of creativity that may have been the origins of art, graphic design, or interior design. Whether aesthetic expression, visual communication or nesting instinct, the primal scene of the cave remains, at least by some accounts, the scene of a timeless and universal creative impulse. Despite the claims of universality, the caves themselves are geographically particular, and it is no coincidence that the cradle of civilization remains in Europe. The existing cultural framework we have for understanding the history of design is fundamentally Eurocentric, and its origins in the cave are worth contesting on this point.

A diffusionist account of European progress is still fundamental to our understanding of art and design in the 21st century. In this account, culture, including design, progresses from these European caves outwards to the rest of the world. The birthplace of culture remains in Europe and possession of the original (Altamira, Lascaux, Chauvet) and its continuing discourse remains an important industry (see Clottes, 2003, as an example of this continuing claim for the origins of creativity). Current prehistoric research situates the beginnings of conscious mark-making on walls both further back in time, in the Lower Paleolithic Period, and in alternative geographic locations (Africa, India and Australia are contemporary contenders for earlier examples). However, despite the rhetoric of timelessness and innate human creativity, it seems unlikely in the near future that the Auditorium Cave in Madhya Pradesh, for example, will displace Lascaux as the origins of any design disciplines. Some caves are still more equal than others.

More importantly, what is particular about the Paleolithic caves of Europe is that their original producers and inhabitants are long gone. Like Plato's prisoners in Baudrillard's simulated cave, we are so far removed from the origins of Lascaux's primal scene that we can project almost anything onto the surfaces its the cave. Whereby they were formerly regarded with complete indifference, in the 20th century, the Paleolithic caves of Europe came to be understood as art: a significant transformation in status. Importantly, these spaces serve us moderns today as the foundation for art, graphic design or interior design, even though the people who created them probably had no concepts comparable to these contemporary disciplines. In our eagerness to locate the timeless essence of contemporary creative acts in such distant precedents, we have also stripped the cave of whatever meaning, context, or original power such spaces had for prehistoric Homo Sapiens.

While it seems naïve of us moderns to think of the Paleolithic caves of Europe as the originary foundation for contemporary art, graphic design or interior design, there may be merit in reconstructing the cave once again. By situating the origins in northern Australia (the Kimberley, Cape York and the Arnhem Land escarpment), for example, we might approach the cave once again, but incorporating understanding derived from a living culture rather than simply based on archeological data. What is significant about Aboriginal cave painting is its survival from prehistoric to historic times, a continuing cultural practice that originated in the Paleolithic era. In conclusion, the complex cosmology of the Aboriginal cave could be a more productive space in which to begin reconstructing the Paleolithic cave in relation to contemporary practice.

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Poetry, Sound and the Designing of “Phantom Objectivity”

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Abstract

Gertrude Stein recognised what Benjamin called the now most unfashionable “universal equality of things” at the level of the word. For Stein, the literary work was based on surface relations rather than psychological depth or subjection to a transcendental signified. Similarly, it is this surface relation which informs the audio-tactile model of the poem as performance piece. This paper explores the paradoxical nexus between surface relations and psychological depth with reference to a collaborative project between a poet and a sound artist curated by a visual artist at a series of venues from August 2008 to June 2009. As a model of interactions of aesthetic modes, the project uncovered a discursive struggle that highlighted the dominance of the scopic field over the aural field. This paper seeks to explain the reasons for this “phantom objectivity”.

Keywords
Performance poetry, poetics, psychoanalysis, collaboration, voice, gaze.

Introduction

Ears Have Walls: process, resistance, sounding

In May 2008 I was approached by a visual artist planning to curate an event for a one-year touring exhibition whose opening was to be at Federation Square for the inauguration of The Melbourne Writers Festival (September 22). The project focused on the theme of drought and involved cross-cultural and interdisciplinary collaborations between artists. I agreed to write a sequence of poems and to seek a collaborator.

As I wrote the poem, it became clear to me that my collaborator needed to be a

sound artist, and not a visual artist, as I had anticipated. Indeed, as I wrote one of Catherine Clover's recordings of a cicada I had recently heard kept worming its way into my inner ear. I rang Catherine and we discussed our possible collaboration. The conjunction of images and themes was too good to be true, for I had become increasingly conscious of the fact that what I'd been writing was a particular kind of elegy, namely an elegy "in which it is neither possible nor desirable for the elegist's desire to be deflected, renounced or spent" (Kennedy, 2009, p. 581). The particular cicada Catherine had used for her field recording was the greengrocer [cyclochila australasiae], a cicada known to be singing at the end of the hot season, and also at the end of its adult life. This is quite apparent in the audible struggle that the cicada is having while trying to sing its last few songs of life, its last calls for a mate. Moreover, for the Chinese the cicada is symbolic of the afterlife - rebirth and immortality.

For me the drought was first and foremost an event of the body, and more particularly a body struggling in space and time. The process of writing was predicated upon presuppositions, intuition and control--presuppositions are unavoidable since the theme of drought has particular resonances in the Australian context and since we inhabit that historical form of life called "modernity", or "post modernity". In other words though I was addressing a specifically localised premise, I was also aware that there are enduring paradigms which began four millennia ago in that these form the presuppositions and values of late capitalist multinational corporate globalised culture. Intuition. This was and always is because there is a certain continuity to life and work. There is a context, for I exist as an "other" within Australian culture. When I write I look for challenges within this context and I try to meet these challenges with the tools at hand. The context is physical, linguistic, emotional, cultural and spiritual. The tools are the senses, language(s), memory, space, sound, colour, time. Thus "Thirst" began with an image experienced in the mouth of the speaker struggling to speak her struggle: "tongue a pebble". The image itself comes from a childhood game I used to play under fiercely hot Spanish skies and from a story by Albert Camus. Rhythm took over. In a sense the whole poem enacts a process of translation from images to words enhanced by the pulse of the cicada singing. Catherine's sound scape consists of her recording of my reading of the poem lined with the cicada's song.

The work achieved the status of "autonomous artefact" I had sought in an attempt to promote a poetics of defamiliarisation and ambivalence centred on sound rather than meaning while opposing the ontology of the art object as a silent, timeless, autonomous thing. The collaborative work reflected, complicated, and

enhanced this rejection of a purely textual object divorced from time and process. Here was delivered a kind of elegiac summation of a decade of poetic concerns: desire, working across languages, the pathos and solipsistic doubt about human communication, memory, and dislocation. In short, because "Thirst" addressed the theme of drought from physical, emotional, linguistic, spiritual and global perspectives, the medium needed to serve the concept we wanted manifest and the ethical concerns raised by the drought.

The curator of the exhibition, however, displayed increasing unease as September crept closer. She was unsure that the galleries that would host our exhibit would supply the Hi Fi equipment we required and she was concerned about the "manning" of the exhibit. She also kept asking for an artist's book to accompany the poem. Suffice it to say, on September 22, I read "Thirst" at Federation Square and Catherine gave a talk about the making of her sound scape. It was also broadcast between events at the BMW Edge. The technician who was manning our sonorous exhibit so capably expressed his amusement at the reactions of surprise he witnessed on the part of patrons. Unfortunately, he fell ill on the third day of the festival. Thus "Thirst" was quenched. When in November I was invited to showcase our collaborative work at the Northern Notes Festival the curator provided her own CD player. Regrettably, it only worked in mono, not stereo. Finally, when last June I turned up to the Post-Office Gallery for the opening of the exhibition in Ballarat, the sound equipment was adorned with a mounted poster of the cover to our "Thirst" CD. As guests filled the space the sound was gradually turned down. Then off.

This prompted a set of related questions. Why such unease on the curator's part due to the absence of visual cues? What was the reason for her bungled action at Darebin? Why this urge to punctuate the last event of the touring exhibition with a visual stamp? Why such uneasiness, disquiet, anxiety on the part of some Melbourne Festival patrons? Why this resistance to the aural drive, this privileging of the scopic drive? Why this phantom objectivity and objectification? Why this thwarting of artistic freedom and desire? What had indeed been my desire when I decided to highlight the discrepancy between the aural and scopic drives in the form of an "autonomous" sound scape? Had I perhaps wanted to release a mechanism of affective and perceptual participation in the listener by rendering ordinary words strange?

Seeing Words: poetry, language, image in the age of software

The relation of poetry and lived experience derives from their subjection to language, hence desire. The relation of language and desire derives from their virtuality. When

desire inhabits and activates the symbolic system of language, sovereign states of meaning come into existence, each with a scintillating harbour, green garden, a citizenry, and a tyrant. Virtuality has always been with us in the form of myth and fiction, for writing offers both representative experiences and words as experience. The real includes the virtual. Under the modern, post-modern or hyper-modern aegis, reality is shifting and multiple in perspective. Yet poetry by its nature is intimacy at a distance. Walter Benjamin writes of art: "The presence of the original is the prerequisite to the concept of authenticity…. The whole sphere of authenticity is outside technical—and of course, not only technical—reproducibility" (Benjamin, 1969, p. 220). Thus when art meets with mechanical reproduction, which began with Gutenberg, or Antiquity's scribes (as you will), the "aura" of the work of art "withers". Benjamin sees the work of art as inhabiting a "shell", from which it might be pried open, thus destroying its aura. As things lose their aura, all objects are equal. I must confess that as a poet I am in horror of this perceived loss of aura, which seems to prize the contingent as arbitrary. Worse, I can see where it leads me to the simulacra. Why is this? John Ashbery has a way of answering the question: "… I cannot escape the picture / Of my small self in that bank of flowers: / My head among the blazing phlox / Seemed a pale gigantic fungus (Ashbery, 1970, p. 28). In Ashbery as in most avant-garde poetry, traditional values such as lyricism often lie in hiding, to be unveiled by further reading or changes in literary fashion, for as Charles Simic puts it, "poems… depend so much on whatever contemporary notion of the "poetic" was fashionable at the time… (Simic, 2006, pp. 106-07). These conceptual beliefs and paradoxes originally informed the philosophy and form of "Thirst", the poem, with its "exploded", almost affectless, prologue meant to draw attention to the phonemic and sensual properties of language across tongues.

Gertrude Stein once said: "After all, to me one human being is as important as another human being, and you might say that the landscape has the same values, a blade of grass has the same value as a tree. Because of the realism of the people who did realism before was a realism of trying to make people real. I was not interested in making the people real but in the essence or, as a painter would call it, value" (Haas, 1976, p. 16). Stein recognised what Benjamin calls now most unfashionably "the universal equality of things" at the level of the word. As the material fact of language, words are given to artistic use. Of her method, she said: "I began to play with words then. I was a little obsessed by words of equal value…. You had to recognize words had lost their value in the Nineteenth Century, they had lost much of their variety, and I felt I could not go on, that I had to recapture the value of the individual word, what it meant and act within it" (Haas, 1976, p. 17). This re-

creation of the word Stein intimates, further explains, and indeed, advocates, was a radical move creating a new real(ism) based on the material fact of word (their weight and volume and proximity to each other) rather than rhetorical unities. For Stein, then, the writerly work is based on surface relation rather than psychological depth or subjection to a transcendental signifier. And it is this which informs the audile-tactile model of the poem as performance piece. From here onwards true collaboration begins.

We live in an age of software, not hardware, process rather than product. Channel surfing and web crawling are process metaphors that also describe our current concept of the mind in action. In collaboration, the medium is the product, so let us see where this leads us with regard to the questions raised by our process, encountered resistance, and questions, for as one critic puts it in a debate about Modernism and theory:

> "ways of rendering' aren't just about figural devices; they are also about the vehicles of communication themselves, in all their practical, social forms. In the arts, the impact of technologies is particularly vivid: cinema and photography in particular, had a decisive role." (Highmore, 2009, p. 82).

Was this the lesson I had learned from collaborating with a sound artist and a curator? That though you may be looking for one thing, you might end up finding another?

"Nothing follows nothing except change", writes McLuhan in a seminal work titled Understanding Media. "So the greatest of all reversals occurred with electricity, that ended sequence by making things instant. With instant speed the causes of things began to emerge to awareness again, as they had not done with

things in sequence and in concatenation accordingly" (McLuhan, 1962, p. 12). Even as a post-modern citizen my identity is threatened with dissolution because I also belong to the old lineal reality while Catherine Clover is clearly a post-modern citizen of a new virtual culture for whom change, multiplicity, and simultaneity are facts of life and lived experience of art-forms. Though it may be true that "with the end of lineal specialisms and fixed points of view, compartmentalized knowledge became as unacceptable as it had always been irrelevant (McLuhan, 1962, p. 253), the massive invasion of electronic media also means a shift from local loyalties such as one's

own community, region, and nation to consumer loyalties: I buy, therefore I am: I buy Gucci or Nike, therefore I transcend. When even your gran wears Armani and says "just do it" with libidinous glee, the rule of desire is totalised, yet emptied out.

It is exactly the ruthlessness of commodity rule that makes a theme such as drought so dramatic and challenging, for we may be reminded how protected from necessity we are by the comforts of culture and late capitalism. Despite the exigencies of the market (Davis, 2007; 2008), new reality means a new poetry. Since consciousness is strongly influenced by the communication models of electronic media, it would be reasonable to examine poetry for its connection with new technologies. However, this pseudo scientific relation between poetry and new media is not what prompted artistic collaboration in the first place. The relation was less conceptual than intimate, by which I mean driven by an intuitive and retroactive response to Catherine Clover's work on my part.

The introduction of electronic media in all its diverse aspects has brought a return to acoustic space and the privileging of the spoken word (Gordon, 1997) as is evidenced in the popularity of performance poetry. It has also sparked a sustained interest in processural methods of composition such as the language poetry project, for instance. However the spoken word is far from reproducing the potential of electronic technology, nor is the computer the extension of the nervous system. In performance as in experimentation the computer might offer the possibility of extending consciousness without verbalisation, i.e., enhancing the "dream-work" inherent in composition.

Nearly half a century ago, Mc Luhan identified the audile-tactile model of performance poetry in writers as diverse as Gerard Manley Hopkins, James Joyce (especially Finnegans Wake), and Gertrude Stein. "It is strange," he writes in his seminal work Understanding Media, "that modern readers have been so slow to recognize that the prose of Gertrude Stein with its lack of punctuation and other visual aids, is a carefully devised strategy to get the passive visual reader into participant, oral action" (McLuhan 1964, p. 83). With writers like Gertrude stein, and the language poets, therefore we see literariness joined with the performance of oral culture. Much language poetry is not written for the page but ironically to be spoken, despite the Robert Grenier pronouncement, "I hate speech," so often cited as a founding moment for the San Francisco language poets. In his essay "Voice in extremis," language poet Steve McCaffery joins the wordless Dada sound poems of Hugo Ball to "cross-cultural glossolalia" and to the "Jewish automatic speech known as maggidism" (Bernstein, 1998, p. 164). Roland Barthes writes of the vocal performance in terms of "pulsional incidents, the language lined with flesh, a text where we can hear the grain of the throat, the patina of consonants, the voluptuousness of vowels, a whole carnal stereophony" (Barthes, 1975 [1973], pp. 66-67). Because of this unifying and characterising of speech, even the most polysemic texts take shape when given voice.

Hearing things: sound, voice, drive

For all the seductive appeal of the above surface approach to the audile-tactile model of performance poetry, more profound issues arise from the sheer question of voice. Barthes' focus on the "pulsional incidents" inherent in vocal performance is congruent with the more general "definitive discontinuity of the text" that he promotes in *The Pleasure of the Text* whereby writing becomes "writing aloud" or vocal writing", a form of writing that is opposed to linguistic closure and to the cultural and political subordinations for which it stands (Barthes, 1975 [1973], p. 66). Thus it could be argued that what we call "voice" is a distributive, rather than univocal, dimension of the signifying chain according to which the subject of the signifier is assigned a place in the Symbolic. This claim, just as the impetus of Barthes's theory is, of course, predicated upon the experience of the unconscious.

For Lacan, the subject experiences the unconscious as "the discourse of the Other", (Lacan, 1977, p. 193) and it is this alterity that is also to be found, I would argue, in the polyvalent play of images in poetic discourse. Lacan outlines this in his schema L, where he has traced the interaction between the "wall of language" of the Imaginary, and the modes of communication between the subject and the discourse of the other. Dylan Evans explains the point of schema L as demonstrating that

> "the Symbolic relation (between the other and the subject) is always blocked to a certain extent, by the imaginary axis (between the ego and the specular image). Because it has to pass through the imaginary 'wall of language', the discourse of the other reaches the subject in an interrupted and inverted form." (Evans, 1996, p. 169)

Hence the imaginary identification between self and image forms a barrier to any real communication between self and other. Any messages which disrupt the specular dyad are filtered out of the communicative pathway, or if not, they are so distorted as to give rise to aggressive responses.

Far from seeing language as transparent in terms of subjectivity, Lacan inverts the Saussurean diagrammatic representation of the concept [signified]/sound pattern [signifier] relationship, putting the signifier on top, with the signified under the bar, S/s. He argues that signifiers are combined in a signifying chain; meaning does not arise in the individual signifier, but in the connection between signifiers. Saussure had admitted that there can occur a shift or sliding in the relationship between signifier and signified. Lacan argues that not only are the two realms never united, but that there is an incessant sliding of the signified under the signifier. In order to emphasise this separateness, Lacan introduced a cut into the Saussurean sign, with a new emphasis on the bar as a formula of separateness.

In a complex series of theorisations, to which this conspectus can do scant justice, Lacan sees the self as an interlocking and dynamic constellation, differentiating between the ego and the subject, the subject of speech and the subject of being, with the former being a fictive creation of the imaginary order, brought into being by the misrecognition of the self in the Mirror Stage, while the latter is part of the symbolic order (Lacan, 1977 [1949], p. 128). He sees both of these facets of the self operating within three orders: the Imaginary order of the mirror stage, the Symbolic order of language and law, and the Real order of drives, the somatic and instincts. These three orders are interconnected, and operate at an intersubjective level, providing different perspectives on events in the life of the self: „it is in relation to the same actions, the same behaviour, that we can distinguish precisely the functions of the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real" (Lacan, 1988 [1953-54], p.113). The Real at stake here is very different from Stein's real. It is indeed that which is beyond symbolisation, and therefore beyond words.

In *Seminar XI* Lacan refers to a famous episode from Sartre's Being and Nothingness (1956 [1943]) to illustrate the split between the look and the gaze. The episode is articulated in two steps. First, "I am

looking through a keyhole." Second, "I hear the sound of footsteps in the hallway, I am being looked at". Thus whereas he is there, "looking through the keyhole," he is "a pure spectator subject, absorbed by the spectacle, unaware of himself." He is not "conscious of himself in a positional mode," as he puts it, and strictly speaking, "in this 'looking through the keyhole,' I am nothing." He attempts to describe for us a moment of the subject's fading, or aphanisis, as Lacan calls it.

The second step, bound up with the sound, makes the gaze emerge as such. We

can clearly see why the footsteps are necessary. Sartre wants to capture the subject before he recognizes the one who is about to see him. It is prior to seeing the person's face that he formulates his, "I'm being looked at". The gaze is anonymous. Behind this anonymity there is, no doubt, the gaze of the Other. And Sartre describes the downfall of the subject, previously eclipsed in his action, who now becomes an object. Though Lacan goes on to talk about shame, I only mention this episode so as to give a resonance, to Jacques Alain-Miller's extrapolation on the concept of the voice as split between ear and voice. Millers writes: "the voice as object a does not in the least belong to the sonorous register—just like the gaze as object a, in Seminar XI, is very well illustrated by the noise that surprises the voyeur in the analysis that Lacan borrowed from Sartre" (Miller, 2007, p. 139).

So what is the voice that we hear when it is not sounding? It is the voice of the Other. However, this Other is not the Other of language and the law. It is the voice of the primary Other, namely the m' Other. And the grain of this voice is the *thingness of das Ding*. We are in uncanny territory—that which arouses anxiety because it "goes back to what was once well known and had long been familiar" (Freud, 2003 [1919], p. 124). It is that which in turn veils our "obscure object of desire", namely the maternal, incestuous, and therefore forbidden, one. The uncanny, in fact, represents our terror at the possibility of non-being and non-signification.

By way of conclusion: the object and its phantoms

At a time when there had been so much talk of the domination of the image, when discussions of intermediality tended to be linked to film and visuality rather than sound I attempted to promote instead a poetics of defamiliarisation and ambivalence centred on the audio-tactile dimension of poetry. In the light

of collaboration and audience response, this approach turned out to foreground a poetics of non-identity and perverse validation of sound and material medium against meaning whereby the intended self-reference, indeterminacy and autonomy of the work was meant to dispute the postmodern fallacy that "anything goes." Autonomy, however proved to be a cage of meaning, a prison house of sound where the object cause of desire was calling for ownership by the law of (visual) language, the "phantom objectivity" of the scopic field. This may explain the anxiety experienced by the curator and some patrons. They instinctively recoiled from the spectre of das Ding at the heart of the "real" while yearning for the reassuring symbolic support of the scopic field.

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Content, structure and orientations of the practice-led exegesis

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Abstract
The emergent field of practice-led research is a unique research paradigm that situates creative practice as both a driver and outcome of the research process. The exegesis that accompanies the creative practice in higher research degrees remains open to experimentation and discussion around what content should be included, how it should be structured, and its orientations. This paper contributes to this discussion by reporting on a content analysis of a large, local sample of exegeses. We have observed a broad pattern in contents and structure within this sample. Besides the introduction and conclusion, it has three main parts: situating concepts (conceptual definitions and theories), practical contexts (precedents in related practices), and new creations (the creative process, the artifacts produced and their value as research). This model appears to combine earlier approaches to the exegesis, which oscillated between academic objectivity in providing a context for the practice and personal reflection or commentary upon the creative practice. We argue that this hybrid or connective model assumes both orientations and so allows the researcher to effectively frame the practice as a research contribution to a wider field while doing justice to its invested poetics.

Keywords
Practice-led research, exegesis, art, design, media, thesis

Introduction
Since the mid 1990s, postgraduate research candidates in art, design and media disciplines have pursued a model of 'practice-led' research, submitting creative works along with an accompanying written document or 'exegesis'. Because it situates creative practice as both an outcome and driver of the research process, practice-led research is a unique research paradigm, and the exegesis is, necessarily, a new form of academic writing. Across many faculties in many countries, there has been much experimentation around what content to include and how to structure it. Various exegetical models have been proposed in the literature (see, for example, Scrivener, 2000; Milech & Schilo, 2004; Barrett & Bolt, 2007; Biggs & Büchler, 2009). Some authors have differentiated the emerging genre of the exegesis from the dissertations of other academic fields (indeed, this is part of the scope of the *TEXT* journal in Australia and the *Writing PAD* project in the UK). However, as Grieg (2009) has noted in his recent review of the literature, the function and form (and even the name) of the exegesis remains the subject of debate. Nonetheless, some writers have begun to identify the emergence of some similarities through the comparison of small sample groups of exemplars (for example, Melles (2007) has compared three design exegeses).

In this paper we will extend this discussion on the contents and structure of the exegeses by reporting on an empirical study of a large, local sample of exegeses. Through a detailed content analysis, we observed the consistent inclusion of particular types of contents and the adoption of a largely in-common structure. In this paper we will detail these findings and discuss the model of exegesis that appears to have emerged. We will then discuss how it maps on to other models described in the literature and will speculate upon why it might have arisen by considering the value it offers to the researchers.

The study
A detailed analysis of a large, local collection of over sixty completed exegeses was conducted by co-author Jaaniste in 2006. The aim of the study was to investigate what types of topics and information has been covered, and how the content has been ordered structurally. The sample was comprised of exegeses produced by practice-led researchers in the Creative Industries Faculty at Queensland University of Technology between 2002 and 2006. It includes Masters and PhD exegeses of varying lengths (between 5,000 and 60,000 words). Disciplinary bases span visual arts, communication design, animation, fashion, drama, dance, music, film and television, creative writing and journalism.

Methodology and methods
The methodology employed in the study was a form of content analysis, an

established research tool used in the social sciences and humanities for the analysis of written and visual texts. A useful, concise definition of content analysis is provided by Holsti (1969), who describes it as, "[a] technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages" (p. 14). Content analysis involves the quantitative or qualitative identification of patterns within a communication, or across related sets of communication, through the observation of recurrent words, themes or content sets and categories (Stemler, 2001). The purposes and uses of content analysis have been summarized by Holsti (1969), who argues that it allows researchers to make inferences about the antecedents, characteristics and effects of a form of communication. All of these understandings are of interest to us in relation to the exegesis, and will be considered in relation to the findings of this study.

Methods used in the study include the compilation of a complete list of content-types (twenty-five in all). This was followed by the systematic charting of each exegesis into a matrix, with the occurrence of each content-type recorded and cross-referenced by page number. The content order and overall structure was then modeled and compared across the entire sample.

A pattern in content and structure

Out of this arrangement of the data, an observable pattern emerged, which evidences the consistent inclusion of particular types of content, as well a largely in-common adoption of a structure that can be characterised as containing three main sections, book-ended by an introduction and conclusion. These sections are summarized through the terms used below and are typically arranged in the following order:

Introduction
First main section: SITUATING CONCEPTS
Second main section: PRACTICAL CONTEXTS
Third main section: RESEARCHER'S CREATIONS
Conclusion

Each of these sections contains a set of content, each of which performs particular functions, as follows.

The *introduction* announces and frames the research project. It articulates the research topic and provides a synopsis of the project as a whole (including both the exegesis and creative works, and how they relate to one another). It outlines the overarching methodology and methods used (which may include strategies of making, presenting, documenting, reflecting, reading and conceptualising). Some researchers also begin the introduction with a short explanation of the personal or social background of the research, or its impetus.

The *situating concepts* section frames the research through an explanation of the key concept/s that situate the research and practice. As the 'theoretical' or 'conceptual' part of the exegesis, this section includes the definition of key terms and explication of key ideas and issues that relate the project to the field, and an explanation of how they have been understood within the literature. It also establishes a theoretical framework for understanding the practice. Some researchers focus on one central concept and theoretical perspective while others work through a cluster of themes. The more hybrid and inter-disciplinary the project, the more likely it is that the researcher draws on multiple concepts and, in the larger doctoral projects, discussions tend to be more complex and nuanced.

The *practical contexts* section situates the practice in relation to its broader field of practice. This section might also be referred to as a 'contextual review' or 'repertoire review'. It examines the key precedents in the field of practice, and positions them in relation to the broader cultural world in which they operate. It thus establishes the ground for understanding the relationships and distinctions between these precedents and the researcher's practice. Some researchers map out a long history of associated practice, stretching back decades or even centuries, while others focus on recent exemplars, depending on the fluidity of the field. Some researchers focus on a few practitioners or exemplars and provide in-depth discussion, while others discuss the field broadly, drawing on many examples.

The *researcher's creations* section describes the creative practice, the research process, and the creative works at the heart of the project. This may include how the research unfolded in practice, including the process of discovery and methods of development, iteration and review. It may include a discussion on the creative artifacts that have been realised within the research project and a description of them. And it might also include an analysis or discussion on the reception of the creative practice in exhibition, performance, or implementation. Some include the process or form of the documentation or archival process. Importantly, this section links back to the practical contexts and orientating concepts section, and so helps to illustrate how the creative practice extends, or makes a contribution to, its field(s).

The *concluding section* summarizes the key issues arising from the research, in terms of what was discovered, achieved, established and argued. It can also point to possible pathways, practices and concepts that have opened up as a result of the research, and potential directions for future research.

In the majority of cases, these sections are not discrete, but operate together to form an integrated whole. Through the assistance of thematic frameworks and through-lines, sections refer back and forth to connect the creative practice to its broader field. Ultimately, this enables the argument that it advances that field.

Correlation with the pattern

The content clustering and structure that is described above is evident, in principle, in approximately 85% of the exegeses analysed, while approximately 50% of the exegeses followed the pattern almost exactly. This is a significant correlation. However, it is important to note that variation exists within the model—in relation to the relative size and emphasis given to each section, the names used for each section, and the way sections are mapped across chapters (for example, in some instances the situating concepts and practical contexts appear under one chapter title, while a third part on the researcher's own practice might occupy several subsequent chapters, each with different themes). Variation also exists outside the model—some exegeses covered the sections in a slightly different order, and a small number did not cover all of the sections; either leaving out a discussion on the researcher's own creative practice or a discussion on established precedents and concepts in field.

Discussion

In this paper, we have so far presented the findings of an empirical study that has identified a widely adopted three-part exegetical pattern adopted by postgraduate researchers in our faculty. We have presented these findings in the hope that they may be useful to students and supervisors by providing insights into how others have responded to the problem of the content and form of the exegesis. While the model that we have observed relates to aspects of various exegetical schemas that have been proffered by methodologists (Scrivener 2000; Gray & Malins 2004; Barrett & Bolt 2007; Biggs & Büchler 2009), we would emphasis at the outset of our discussion that it is presented here as a description of what we have found. It should not be considered a prescription and neither should it be interpreted as a 'recipe', either for the conduct of research or the process of writing an exegesis. The final ordering of an exegesis may not have any correlation to the areas of investigation, progression of ideas, and outcomes that were realized *during the journey* of the research project. It is through an ongoing dialogue between the practice, concepts, precedents, and topic that the project unfolds in practice-led research.

Of particular interest to us is that consistencies seen in these findings arose despite the largely independent research journeys of the candidates. While small subsets of students have shared supervisors, the sample is large and ranges across numerous, diverse disciplines, so the commonalities cannot be attributed to in-common supervision. Furthermore, while postgraduate guidelines in our faculty have stressed the importance of connecting the exegesis with the creative work, neither a detailed set of contents nor an exegetical structure is specified. And, while the criteria for assessment of Honours degrees in our faculty was aligned with the content types we describe in 2006, it does not dictate structure, and any flow-on effect to the Masters and PhDs cohorts would have occurred after the sample period. Therefore it would appear that many students and/or their supervisors have arrived at this model independently.

Antecedents

To understand the emergence of the exegetical model we have described, we must first consider its antecedents. This includes the thesis models that are long established in other academic disciplines, as well as models that have been identified in the literature since the emergence of practice-led research.

Traditional thesis model

The most commonly cited model in the research methodology literature (e.g. Thomas 2009; Birley & Moreland 1998) is what might be described as the seven-chapter model of the empirical sciences. Its contents occur in the order of: introduction; literature review; methodology; data collection; data analysis; findings and conclusion. This structural trajectory is not appropriate for a practice-led research project because it does not reflect the way that such research unfolds in practice (where creative work is both the impetus for, and the outcome of, the research process). And, while some sections of this model might be of use if modified (for example the literature review might be recast to include precedents in practice for example), other sections such as 'data collection' and 'data analysis' would not. They would require the practice-led researcher to frame the practice as generating (or existing as) a form of "data" that can be objectively interpreted by

them. And the researcher's internal and contingent relationship with their emergent practice would be awkwardly recast so that they assume the role of an external and "disinterested" observer and analyst of their own practice.

Context and commentary models

Two antecedent models of the practice-led exegeses have been identified by Milech & Schilo (2004). The first can be described as the context model. In it, the exegesis performs the role of a contextualising text. In this model, the researcher chooses a topic of discussion from one or more of the wider contexts of the creative practice, such as theoretical and philosophical frameworks, an historical or critical analysis of related practitioners and precedents, or the professional and industrial conditions of the practice. We have also observed a form of the context model that provides a discussion on the subject matter or theme of a narrative-based creative work (such as a film, documentary, play or novel). In its extreme form, the context model provides a parallel text that does not discuss the researcher's creative practice at all, but the field around (outside) it. The problem, of course, when the researcher's creations are absented, is that an ambiguity emerges and they may appear to be tangential to, or even irrelevant to the thesis, which could effectively stand-alone.

The second exegetical approach identified by Milech & Schilo (2004) takes the opposite approach. It can be described as the commentary model. It performs the role of what Milech and Schilo describe as an "explanatory annotation" and focuses on the creative process, the creative works, and/or their reception by audience/participants. Milech and Schilo suggest that describing the project in the language and terms of research methodology is also a form of the commentary model, but we argue that it might also be called a 'compliance model' because it overtly aligns the exegesis with university research guidelines and protocols. The commentary model is a reflexive, personal and subjective account by the researcher, who speaks as an insider who draws on what they uniquely know and have experienced in relation to their creative works and processes. In its extreme form, the commentary model does not connect the research project and creative practice to the wider fields that precede or surround it. Because the commentary model is internally oriented and introspective, this model might create the impression that the practice is of peculiar interest to, and therefore of value only to, the researcher. More importantly, if the exegesis does not refer to what other practitioners in the field have previously achieved, it does not establish a case for any advances made by the research. It therefore severely weakens any claims to an original contribution to knowledge through the creative practice.

The problem raised by these two dichotomous models is the problem of orientation, by which we mean the position, posture or perspective that the researcher assumes in writing about their project. While one looks out, the other looks in. This problem is implicit in various writings on the paradigmatic differences between established research traditions and the emerging paradigm of practice-led (Gray et al. 2005; Press 1995 and more recently Sullivan 2005; Haseman 2006; Kjorup 2006; Barrett & Bolt 2007; Biggs & Büchler 2009; Büchler et al. 2009, amongst others). It is important because, when it comes to writing the exegesis, the practice-led researcher must inevitably consider this issue of orientation and whether their exegesis should focus on aspects within one's practice or aspects around and beyond it. The contextual model orientates the researcher to look out at what sits beyond the practice, while the commentary model assumes the perspective of an internal, intimate relationship with the practice.

The content analysis of our faculty's submitted exegeses identified several examples that took one or other of these approaches. And it should be noted that in the wider field, choosing one of these models might conform to local university practice-led guidelines (as noted by Milech and Schilo, 2004).

Both the context and commentary models have strengths. And, from a pragmatic and expedient perspective, choosing one or the other of these models allows the researcher to assume a single orientation and hence a consistent subject position, style and voice in the writing. For instance, a researcher who adopts a context model could speak consistently in the voice of a historian, critic or philosopher, while a researcher who adopts a commentary model could adopt the first person modes of a diarist, or reflective practitioner. However, both models leave the exegesis with a deficit that limits its capacity. In the contextual model there is an absence of discussion on the practice and the processes of the research, and in the commentary model the research and the practice is not framed within or associated with the wider field.

A connective model

The exegetical model that has arisen in our faculty combines the context and commentary models within its three-part structure. It has a double orientation that looks out beyond the practice in its sections containing discussions on situating concepts and practical contexts, and provides an internal perspective in the section on researcher's creations. Combining these differently orientated perspectives is not a straightforward or simple process. It inevitably involves reconciling the traditionally

external, objective and disinterested situation of the observer with the internal, invested position of the maker. This requires a synthesis that we recognize would be complex and genuinely difficult to produce as a form of writing, for it combines a hybrid of genres and styles, and necessitates a poly-vocality.

Nonetheless, while such complexities are surely encountered along the way, this model appears to have been pursued by the majority of candidates. Clearly then, it offers a substantial benefit. We would argue that, through its integration of the context and commentary models, this new model not only offsets the problems and deficits that arise when either is used alone, it provides the opportunity to situate the creative practice as research.

To understand why, lets consider the functional and formal definitions that govern higher research degrees and academic research in general. The functional definition is concerned with the purpose of higher research, namely that research should produce a significant and original contribution to knowledge. In high level research guidelines this is expressed variously as "the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way" (DEST 2007, p. 3), "to contribute to [or gain] knowledge and understanding" (TEC 2005, p. 20; RAE 2005, p. 34), and "to increase the stock of knowledge" (OECD 2002, p. 30). The formal definition, in the service of the functional definition, relates to the key elements that a research project generally requires in order to produce new knowledge, namely that it should describe a specific topic; use appropriate methods; differentiate the project within a broader field; and be communicated in an enduring, archival and professional format. These formalities can be found in higher research degree guidelines in general, as well as in the research funding guidelines of the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC 2009: 66).

The content areas we have observed in the exegeses in our faculty correlate with the substance of the formal definition. The introduction clarifies the topic and provides the methodology and methods, which are followed up with a discussion on their application in the later 'creations' section. The 'concepts' section further clarifies the topic by defining terms and concepts. Importantly, it establishes a relationship with the existing field of research by drawing an association with its theoretical frameworks. The relationship of the research to existing fields of research is further established in the 'practical contexts' by positioning the practice in a trajectory that includes precedents to it. The 'creation' sections details the primary research outcomes and findings of the creative practice, and documents

the creative practice in an archival form. Thus, the content areas that we have identified in our content analysis are tied, at a pragmatic level, to the formal requirements of higher research.

When integrated by a through-line that connects them into a coherent explication, these sections substantiate the creative practice and the research project as a whole as a contribution to new knowledge. It situates the creative practice within a wider field of concepts (first section) and practices (second section) then differentiates it from this established field by showing how the methods and processes of production have led to creative outcomes that advance the field in some way (third section), on the trajectory to future directions for the research (conclusion). That is, it relays the contribution of the practice to advances in the field and establishes its contribution. While this model positions the practice as a form of dedicated research however, it is also mindful of the practice in itself. It allows the practice-led researcher to retain a relationship with, and do justice to, the internal poetics of the practice. Because of its double orientation, which connects the context and commentary models but, more specifically, because it overtly links the creative practice and its processes with its broader contexts, we call it the *connective model* of the exegesis.

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Active Tense: 'writing' through design practice

Julieanna Preston
Dr. Ing. Aukje Thomassen

Abstract

"Active tense" stems from a collaborative research project "designing, writing", which aims to disseminate current knowledge and best practice on the relationships between designing and writing and their mutual interest in speculation, expression and research. This paper builds on preliminary findings to the various ways that design practices and design processes contextualize and explicate an intellectual proposition, i.e. how design contributes to advancing knowledge. While most discussions around this topic adopt one of two distinct positions-- that where authority is given to written text and that where design work has the ability 'to be read'-- our investigation looks at various media of design articulation directly linked to design as a system of inquiry , such as comics, storyboards, diaries, diagrams and choreographic notation. Each of these identify an ability to 'write' through design. These media expand design research as non-linear, theoretical and yet practical tools.

Keywords
design writing, design media, design articulation, systems of inquiry

Introduction

While our paper recognizes the large and significant developments occurring globally on this topic of design research and its relation to textual discourse, it repositions that which has been articulated as 'design writing' to 'designing, writing'. This slight change shifts the emphasis from design as a form of writing or writing about design to designing as an active process of inquiry and hence, acquiring knowledge. Any tensions between design and text are dissipated by the elaboration of a cluster of notational media shown to be productive articulators operating explicitly within design's own domain. This paper draws on terminology defined in specific ways by expert researchers in the field. "Knowledge articulators" refer to the means by which information is shared through media. (Weggeman, 1997) "Media" is a term we borrow from Marshall McLuhan (1964) with reference to media's concretization of a creative process and its power to communicate in concert with any techniques of representation. In this case "creative process" is defined by Cziksentmihalyi (1997) who defends it as a process that can enable change in a symbolic context, such as design, and this approach opens up understanding of the participatory aspects of design (and the designer) to an acceptance of the receiving field (field of application of design). This view of creative process is considered in relation to Friedman's view of "design process" as goal-oriented process to solve problems, meet needs, improve situations, or create something new or useful. Finally, and most germane to our paper's subject, Cross highlights "design writing" as a conversation and that design research can help to construct a way of conversing about design. (Cross, 1999 p.8) In these terms, design writing is needed to support conversations within the discipline and across disciplines; it is the paradoxical task of creating an interdisciplinary discipline. (Cross, 1999 p. 8)

Knowledge

In writing about design articulation, there is a need to clarify the differences between knowledge, information and 'raw' data. This paper makes the distinction in which data are merely figures, information is meaningful data, and knowledge can be understood as information which is part of a meaningful social context like a social group, a specific knowledge system or a culture. (Weggeman, 2000) Following this definition, knowledge cannot exist outside an individual or a group. As a consequence of this approach, knowledge itself cannot be stored or transferred between individuals. The only way knowledge can be exchanged is when knowledge is articulated into meaningful information. Articulation can be interpreted broader than just the codification of meaning into texts. Codification of meaning can occur by means of oral (speech, sounds, music), visual (body-movement, graphics) or even tactile codification. Information in digital form can be stored and manipulated as data.

In this regard, this paper will look at different types of media that can support the exchange of knowledge and facilitate the storage of information. Moreover this paper considers writing through design as a means to articulate tacit knowledge, knowledge that people can act upon, but cannot readily express in words. (Polanyi, 1964) The model below illustrates how this research understands knowledge creation and exchange and how this study has been organized around the distinctions between knowledge, information and data.

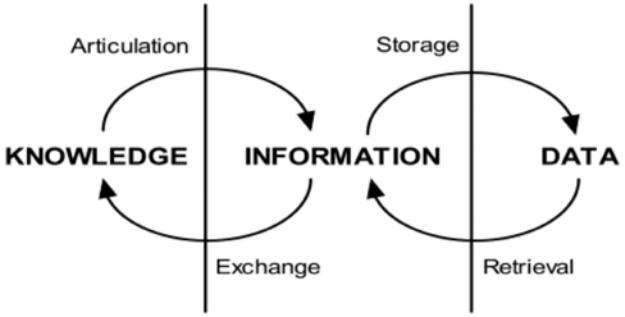

Figure 1: Knowledge creation diagram. (Thomassen 2003).

Then how do we articulate and analyze knowledge creation, and which inquiry system do we use in order to articulate and validate the knowledge created through inquiry? This paper augments the philosophical research of Churchman. In his research, he elaborates on the foundations of inquiring systems, hence the system for rigorous research. He proposes design as a means of inquiring and therefore systematically creating and exchanging knowledge through the validating system of inquiry. The rigor of the creative design process is in knowing the method of identifying the creative act. Cziksentmihalyi (1997) argues that creativity is a process that can enable change in a symbolic context, such as design, and this approach opens up understanding of the participatory aspects of design (and the designer) to an acceptance of the receiving field, in this case, the field of design. (Thomassen and Bradford, 2009) Even though we cannot set up the creative design process beforehand as a fully clinical experiment, we can, through reflection, analyze it.

This paper will look into different media that facilitate the enabling of the knowledge creation process and that supports other discourse then the traditional textual discourse. This paper will focus on creation and reflection and will place less emphasis on the legitimacy of design as validated scientific research outputs. Therefore, the paper agrees with understanding that design knowledge has three sources; 1) people; designing is a natural attribute of humans, 2) processes; of tactics and strategies of designing leading to methodology and 3) products; knowledge resides in products themselves. (Cross, 1999) This paper will not attempt to overtake the textual discourse, it will merely provide an overview of other heavily used media.

Five exemplar media

The five media have been prioritized on their level of operability during the act of design. In their ability to approach design as a process of synthesis, they place emphasis on notation during construction of the design process rather than as a reflection or analytical tool. Each media is shown to support and enable a range of outcomes and inquiry at various steps within the design process; they are thinking tools used while designing with a context.

Context is a heavily used term and in the context of this paper, it is being used to denote all factors that influence the experience of a design. (Visser, 2005) Dourish (2004) states that a context is a relational property. Its features include dynamic development and growth, each differing from the other.

Comics

Comics enable an intimate relationship between the process, the creator and the reader. Whether it is an individual process or a collective journey, many designs occur in isolation, and remain internal to the specific team of designers. Textual discourse has enabled explication of the particular process, however, the textual forces the process in a manner that causes the designer to drift away from the design process. “All medium communication are a by-product of our sad ability to communicate directly from mind-to-mind.” (McCloud, 1993, 194) Comics convert the personal experience (mind) to hand to paper to eye to mind. Understanding the experience (or the author) is what comics aim to establish.

While there is a wealth of comic books at hand to illustrate this section, the authors of this paper will focus on the work of McCloud’s (1993) use of comics as the medium to discuss the essence of comic books. McCloud discusses six founding design principles that can be seen as six different sequential design steps, which are:

1. The idea/purpose can be perceived as the first impulses of the work’s content. When starting off with this foundation, the designer sets out in a linear and sequential pathway that works towards a goal.
2. The form will complement the idea of a notion of what it will be; will the idea be materialized in a song, a book, a sculpture, amongst others?
3. The idiom provides the designer with a genre that can embody different styles of art and aesthetics but also different styles of gestures. The manga idiom differs from the western approach.

4. The structure outlines how to compose the narrative, how to arrange the narrative, what to include and what to leave out are just basic concepts of structuring the narrative.
5. The craft gives the design refinement through skills, applying practical knowledge, and triggering inventions that leads to problem solving.
6. The surface can be compared to both the last steps in a generative and evaluative phase of designing.

This sequence can be followed in different ways, depending on various factors that influence the start of creating outputs. The six different steps show value to the field of design. McCloud's steps are transferrable to a field wider than comic books. (Fig. 2)

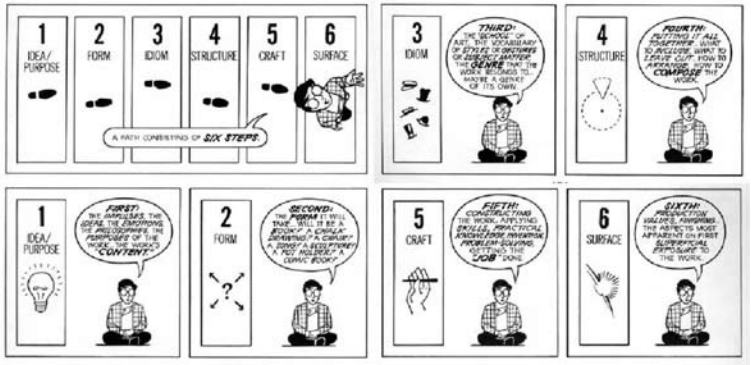

Figure 2: Six steps of comics. (McCluhan, Understanding Comics, 1993, 170-171).

Interestingly, McCloud also discusses the relation words and images have within comic books.

(1993, 153) He defines seven different types of combinations:

- Word specific combinations; words dominate the panel and pictures are used to support the word. They illustrate the text and therefore create an extra layer,
- Picture specific combinations; in this combination, words are used to illustrate the visual meaning. In most cases the words provides a sound bite to the image.

- Duo specific combinations; pictures and words are delivering the same message. Their combination provides an additional explanation two both entities.
- Additive combinations; both words and pictures can be supportive of each other in a panel, they either amplify and/or elaborate their meaning and vice versa.
- Parallel combinations; words and pictures are both used in the panel but they independently follow a different course without intersecting each other.
- Montage combinations; words are treated as integral part of the picture.
- Interdependent combinations; both words and pictures need each other to convey an idea. This is the most common one. However, the balance between picture and word may not always be in equilibrium- they may remain interdependent of each other.

These combinations can be helpful for a designer as tools to understand the different aspects of the design as such. It also provides a tool for the articulation of the design itself. Comics provide an opportunity to tell stories (of design) while framing an idea and the development of using words and pictures into a sequence that enables time and space to happen within one frame. Comics and, in particular, the different steps and combinations of the content of the panels, have the possibility to support the articulation of writing through design. It is a tool to help construct the process instead of evaluating the process, an attribute that is considered to be an integral part of design framed within a specific context.

Storyboards

Storyboards are a tool that supports different disciplines within design such as film, animation, interaction design and game design. Storyboards illustrate a sequence of narratives within a design process, a series of experiences, or a string of events framing a design output. Storyboards also provide an extra layer to their meaning; they serve as a tool for negotiation and agreement between different stakeholders in a design process. Varying in their appearance and meaning, two main types of storyboard are presented; 1) story boards, which support the flow sequence of a design and has the potential of being a collective tool (Fig. 3) and 2) mood boards, which support the single visual statement. (Fig. 4)

Figure 3: Storyboard exercise. (University of Tasmania student, Richard Burnham, 2009).

Figure 4: Mood board student project Game Design. (Utrecht School of the Arts, 2007).

In addition to the potential usage of storyboards by designers themselves, storyboards are often used to support co-creative design. According to Visser (2005 et al) mapping, drawing and story boarding engage users in the design process to fully understand the dynamics of the context and the interactions within it. Storyboarding enables a visual construction of reality through imaging and mapping their sequence and extends to areas such as futurism and collective memories.

Diaries

Ethnography and in particular, auto-ethnography, use the diary as a means for understanding a specific discipline or culture. (Reed-Danahay, 1997) They connect the personal to the cultural and thereby placing the self in a social context. Such media usually adopt a first-person voice and include dialogue around emotions and self-consciousness as relational and institutional stories affected by history, social structure and culture.

Dairies offer two distinct but related benefits to writing through design practice. Diaries provide a designer a vehicle to carry out self-reflective modes of inquiry and analysis as well as include subjective, associative, automatic dialogue with the process. They are also a medium that binds design creation and design intention. Generally regarded as private explorations of everyday life, including emotional and psychological ponderings, diaries are considered a conversation unfettered by editing and socially constructed boundaries of appropriateness. Journals, sketchbooks and workbooks, all variations on the diary, figure prominently in art and design studies as the repository of emerging ideas and forms, often blending the diary with the scrapbook. Such pages reinforce the influence of one's hand and handwriting as a form of visual expression and capture a space of time, usually chronological, but importantly, the space of design reflexivity.

Reed-Danahay (1997) outlines that auto-ethnography is constructed on three interlocking views; 1) graphy (eg. research), 2) ethnos (i.e. culture) and 3) auto (i.e. self). He argues that a design process revolves around these three elements. Because of its ability to articulate the stages within the design process more fully, auto-ethnography has the capacity to advance design as a process and as a form of research input. Tierney (1998:66) writes, "Auto-ethnography confronts dominant forms of representation and power in an attempt to reclaim, through self-reflective response, representational spaces that have marginalized those of us at the borders."

Figure 5: Example of journal writing. (Bradford PhD project, 2009).

Found to be suitable for practice-led research, the diary is effective in eliciting specific elements of a design activity comparable to verbal expression. (Pedgley, 2007) Design as a process involves connecting the subjective to the social cultural objective. The process of arriving at the end-design might be formatted in an auto-ethnographic approach as it will enable elaboration and openness of the trajectory. Auto-ethnography enables the 'writer' to articulate the personal journey through text and visuals; it is an attempt to bring the reader into 'his' inner world. (Holt, 2001) However, in order for dairying to be considered as a means for articulation of design, rigor needs to be applied to the reflection process. Such rigor can be established through coding of data, for example, categorizing the result according to how it relates to previous experiences. It is important to acknowledge that auto-ethnography, and in particular, keeping a diary, does not necessarily require following qualitative guidelines that lead to verifiable research outputs. Rather it looks at constructing reality and then evaluating that reality.

Diagrams

The existing literature around this category suggests that there are profound differences between how various design disciplines apply diagrams and what purpose they serve. Evidence of this variety can be found in the significant work of the Writing PAD project and their internet site MADD (Matters around Art and Design Dissertation) based in the UK. (Edwards, 2004) Kokotovich (2008) draws from the comparison that Restrepo and Christiaans (2003) make between concept-mapping as an open and generative problem-seeking activity and mind-mapping as a typically linear and hierarchical problem-solving process. Understood as two-dimensional maps, diagrams are known for their ability to order complex scenarios with an abstract and graphic clarity capable of bearing the essential nature of the subject at hand. Their power lies in their ability to draw out relationships between and amongst concrete entities and abstract notions, a characteristic that often reveals the "emergence of contradictions, paradoxes and gaps in information." (Kokotovich, 59) According to David Wang (2007), diagramming serves as an analytical tool capable of bridging research nomenclature across disciplines. "Far from taking anything away from the design process, the use of the diagramming tool strengthens design itself as a form of inquiry. In short, the diagramming tool not only integrates design with research, it also promotes a more systematic interdisciplinary understanding of the design process." (Wang, 33) While Wang advocates the use of diagrams as a vehicle to prevent researching designer from getting lost, Kokotovich champions context-mapping as a non-hierarchical cartographic form of diagramming that seeks questions rather than leaping too quickly to a form-driven response. Context-mapping highlights a greater probability for true innovation as it registers a deeper ill-structured design inquiry. (Kokotovich, 59)

Like most design media, the formal structure of one's diagramming practice influences the findings. Yin et al. (2005) point to five different key concept-mapping structures: (1) Linear issues and ideas that are sequentially linked together; (2) Circular issues and ideas that are sequentially linked together with the ends joined; (3) Hub or Spoke issues and ideas that derive from a centre concept; (4) Trees or linear chain of issues and ideas that have branches attached; and (5) Network or Net, a complex set of interconnected issues and ideas. The network structure is seen as non-hierarchical and considered the most complex (54). Despite the chosen diagramming structure, diagrams grapple with 'big picture' ideas and phenomena at the same time that they engage minute details. (Kokotovich, 67)

The two figures below illustrate dominate types of diagrams used in design practices. Figure 6 approaches diagramming as a set of formalized relations whose order has been established hierarchically, i.e. the diagram represents a process of inquiry that has already occurred. While Figure 7 appears to record an ensuing conversation (with one's self or amongst a group of design stakeholders), it demarcates a certain degree of complexity amongst a field of factors. In this case, the diagram reflects a network

structure of a second degree as it embraces time and captures the idiosyncratic and unedited nature of “thinking about thinking.” (Negroponte, 1975, 4) While we may be unable to ‘read’ the diagram exactly, it divulges a field of concern, a context, that speaks strongly of symmetry, sequence from one zone to another as well as top to bottom and a condensation of data interfaces. In this case intelligence is defined “as a property that is ascribed by an external observer to a conversation between participants if, and only if, their dialogue manifests understanding.” (7-8)

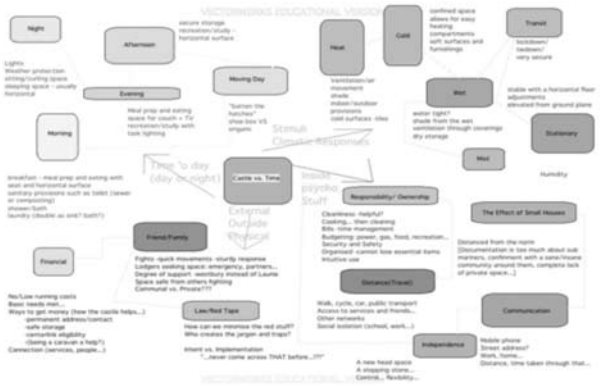

Figure 6: Mind-mapping diagram charting a building design exercise. (Richard Burnham 2009).

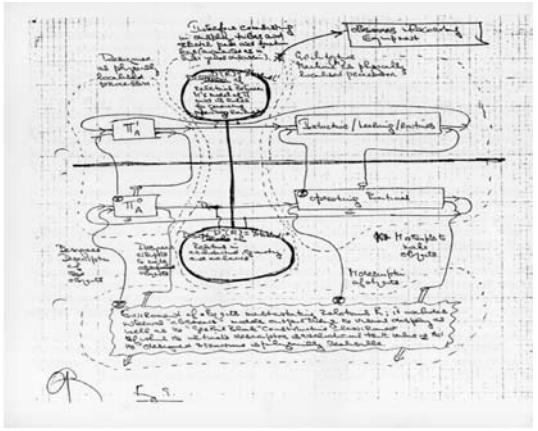

Figure 7: A diagram featured in Negroponte (1971, 28) extracted from essay by Gordon Pask.

Diagrams provide a means for analysing and discovering aspects of design complexity. Stappers reminds us that “design problems are too complex and multifaceted to be captured in a single, complete, theory...Experiences always depend on the person and situation involved. A map to these experiences, and sufficient leads towards its interpretation, often proves more valuable than a seemingly complete theory that operates only within a narrow perspective.” (Stappers et al., ID-Studiolab)

Choreographic notation

As a form of scripting, choreographic notation is language that communicates spatial orientation in a fourth dimension of time. Within the discipline of dance, choreographic notation evolved as a practical teaching tool used to record and document body movement and posture. “The requirements of an efficient tool were first and foremost simplicity, a fine degree of accuracy, and a capacity to cope with any possible problem. It must be economical in paper space, rapid in reading and writing, and easy to learn.” (Benesh, 1956, 5) Traditional choreographic notation methods reveal a representational alignment and supplementation to musical notation. In the Benesh Method, the body is viewed orthogonally, divided into four equal horizontal zones and described as a stave. (Benesh, p.10) (Fig 8) Movement is recorded in short quick measures plotted against musical scales. The Eskol-Wachmann system conceptualises the body in a three-dimensional coordinate system and codifies sequential locations in a matrix format. (Fig 9)

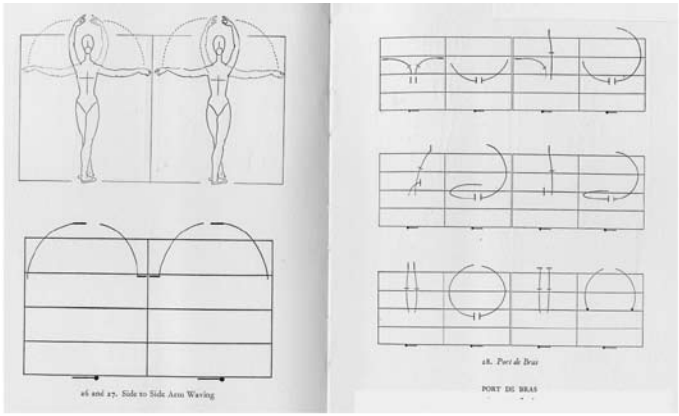

Figure 8: Illustration of the body stave. (Benesh, 1956, 26-27).

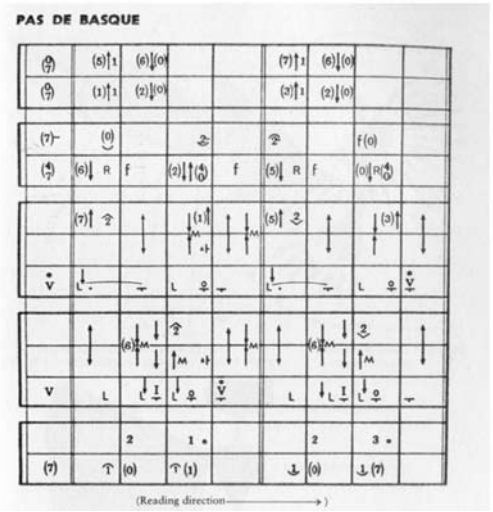

Figure 9: Illustration of Eskol-Wachmann notation. (Guest, 1984, 109).

Contemporary discourse on choreography joins body movement and computer software technology in an attempt to resolve the multivalent nature of movement and the seemingly impossible task of describing a fluid body state. According to Brightman (2004), “The complexity of movement is very difficult to render in symbols, such as those used in music notation. Dance has no ‘literature’ to be studied, except for the pallid, incomplete renditions provided by films and videos, or the scores that exist in Labanotation and in other invented languages, such as Sutton Movement Shorthand or Benesh.” (p.393) Critiquing these early forms of notation for the manner in which the shape of motion (existing as duration) is driven by shape as movement (parametric and graphic representation), Brightman’s analysis (2004, p. 393) of the potential in a dance: computer technology merger are resoundingly similar to the attributes of knowledge information, i.e. the act/actions of research:

1) Replication: To record existing dance movements in complete detail, in order to be able to reconstruct later a convincing model of the original. (Record and repeatable)

2) Multi-Media Performance: The purpose here is to intersect, influence or alter dance movements with the aid of computer technology to form a new artistic entity. (Innovation)

3) Generation: The purpose here is to create new movement ideas, or new movement configurations, for later performance. (Advance or aesthetic refinement)

Fig 10: An example of the choreo-computer hybrid. (http://festivalenter.wordpress.com/category/performance-dox/).

In this new vision of choreographic scripting media there is a focus on action, what Jescke calls “body activity.” (1999, p.4) (Fig. 10) When action is the centre of attention, and not body movement as image or postures, but understood as “natural language” (Brightman, p.394), Jescke claims that traces of non-literary performative knowledge can be realized through such notation systems in their resemblance to theories, descriptions and iconographic sources. Their ability to transfer concepts is employed as they divulge evidence of appearance, an attribute that shifts choreographic notation’s relation to writing from writing as documentation, as memory, and/or discourse to “an act of choreo-graphing, to the structural relation between knowing, writing, and inventing body movement in space.” (Jenscke, p.4) This dramatic shift reveals a greater potential for these new

forms of notation to be employed in other fields of design where spatial issues of temporal inhabitation are paramount.

Conclusion

This paper emerges out of the preliminary findings of a research project and introduces examples of five media types for the potential they offer for design articulation of knowledge and their ability to 'write' through design research. And we acknowledge that, to qualify as research, there must be reflection by the practitioner on the work, and communication of some re-usable results from that reflection. (Cross, 1999 p. 9) Our discussion of this issue lies outside of the debate around whether or not design research outputs are different from the textual discourse. The five types of media come from different established fields in which an agreement exists on how to read the outputs. We can therefore consider these as possible type of outputs for knowledge of the design process, its products and the people. Future research will start investigating different existing lenses in the field of design that can be used to perceive and contextualise the knowledge derived from the media.

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Open Space Technology: co-creation, research and writing

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Abstract

This paper begins with a discussion of Open Space Technology (Owen, 1997) a model of collaborative, research-informed writing mostly used in higher education conference settings. The discussion reveals aspects of this approach which enhance co-creation and peer to peer facilitation as well as high quality research-informed writing. Significant features of the OST model are assessed to understand relevance for educators and practitioners in art, design and media as an anti-hierarchical approach to research-informed writing. The paper goes on to analyse the experience of a group of art and design educators brought together for a conference using OST to co-create an edited collection of research-informed writing about the student experience in art and design education. This analysis draws on evaluation reports of the event and the subsequent publication of the book of the conference (Drew, 2008). The paper concludes with suggestions for further development in art, design and media HE contexts.

Keywords
Open Space Technology, collaborative writing, co-creation, research-informed writing, peer facilitation, participation.

Introduction

Open Space Technology (OST) is essentially a methodology or 'tool', which can be adapted to a range of contexts, for example, meetings, conferences, staff development events. It encourages participants to engage actively and take responsibility for the process, hence drawing comparisons with 'student-centred' and 'deep' approaches to learning (MacDonald, 2007). Feedback and reflection from

participants generally references the importance and quality of 'personal learning' as an outcome. OST can be used to address complex and wide ranging issues and achieve meaningful outcomes. It can be particularly successful where the people involved and ideas are diverse, and traditional facilitator-led approaches may be less productive. The focus, assimilating individuals' expert knowledge and experiences creates a greater understanding of issues and realistic practical solutions.

Experiences of Open Space Technology: Cambridge Conference 2003

It all started with a letter 'out of the blue' from someone at Cambridge University in late 2002. I had been invited to a week long conference to discuss issues of engagement in academic development in HE, because of my experience as an academic developer and my role (in 2002), leading the Subject Centre for Art, Design and Communication at the University of Brighton. The form of address and the topic interested me; I had to promise to book out a whole week in September of 2003 and to stay committed to the idea despite the advance notice. They contacted me regularly after I'd made my expression of interest and was sent a pack of 'trigger papers' to read before the event. This made the theme and process seem even more exciting. The week was great, one of those 'you had to be there' events, stimulating company, fantastic organisation, serious and distracting debate and all in the beautiful surrounds of Cambridge in September. The group I worked with during the week collaborated after the conference to present our paper to two conferences (Breslow et al, 2004a and 2004b) concerned with the Scholarship of Teaching, one in San Diego and one in London. When the book of the Cambridge Conference 2003 was published there was yet more evidence that this approach had been very fruitful for a group of 50+ academics from across the globe.

Designing an OST 'Cambridge Conference'

In the early autumn each year the Group for Learning in Art and Design (GLAD) get together for a whole day residential discussion session known as the GLAD Awayday. I was hosting the GLAD Awayday in September 2005 at Chelsea College of Art and Design where I was then the Dean of Academic Development. We had invited Professor Paul Ramsden, the then recently appointed Chief Executive of the Higher Education Academy to join us for our discussions. We discussed the National Student Survey (NSS; based on the same design as the Australian CEQ) with passion and energy (see for example Drew and Last, 2006), we considered the issues in art and design education which seemed to indicate that the student experience, particularly of assessment and assessment feedback were particularly worrying. I introduced the idea that we might use the Cambridge Conference approach to take a 'think-tank' tactic to this and other issues related to the student experience. When Paul seemed inspired by the idea, enough to offer funding jointly with the Subject Centre (ADM-HEA) and GLAD colleagues enthused, we realised we had a different type of conference to plan.

The concept of the Cambridge Conference

I hadn't realised till I attended that conference in 2003 that the idea of a presentation-free conference is not new. A well established conference in Medical Education has been running for more than twenty years (Wakeford, 1985) and has remained momentum by identifying new themes whilst retaining the 'think-tank', presentation-free format. The significant features of this model are:

1. Choose a topic of high importance.

2. Invite a small, preferably research orientated, group of people knowledgeable about this topic from around the world.

3. Add a group of `users' or policy shapers.

4. Supplement them with good facilitation and working conditions.

5. Add a sprinkling of what might be described as `new researchers' or `young blood' in the field, to keep more esoteric delegates' feet on the ground.

6. Set the delegates some specific goals. These usually include reviewing the `state of the art' of a particular area (in medical education), commenting on what research might collectively say about these issues, generating further questions for investigation and encouraging the delegates to publish their findings (Hays, et al, 2000, p. 783)

OST demands you structure participation

The conference planning group agreed the principles for the invitation process, we knew we wanted to invite a range of academics, senior managers and researchers, with similar passions about the student experience and additionally either an ability

to write, work as part of a team or complete projects was deemed essential. The invitation was clearly targeted and we had a clear aim.

The aim of the GLAD'07 Conference is to produce a collection of papers which will drive forward the debate on how higher education can prepare art and design students for the challenges of the future. The key resource which will ensure the conference's success are the collective experience and ideas of all the invited delegates, drawn from the art and design higher education arena.

Like the 2003 conference, it was decided that some pre-reading in the form of trigger papers was a good way to prepare participants for some of the themes and issues before arriving at the conference. The planning committee also decided that some papers, already published in journals and reports should accompany these trigger papers in order to fully expose participants to the contemporaneous range of views in papers and articles which not all may have had the opportunity to read. The aim of this pack therefore, is to support those participants, by providing additional stimuli for debate, and research materials to inform the discussions. The articles were not intended to form a comprehensive collection, nor to limit debate to the issues addressed within them. They merely represent a selection of policy statements, research papers and personal opinions, produced within the last two years, which the conference organisers believed to address some of the key issues which are likely to significantly influence the future direction of art and design higher education, both in the UK and internationally.

The structure of the Conference

We followed the plan of the Cambridge Conference 2003 and tweaked this to suit our needs, for example by introducing a keynote address at the beginning of the week to stimulate debate and response. We gathered participants to Cambridge for the Sunday afternoon and got to know each other through introductory exercises, a hands-on icebreaker and the taking of photographs for a delegate handbook. We reiterated that the need to take time to think, talk and reflect was paramount including the discussion of ideas in depth and that we were not necessarily looking for consensus in those discussions. The main non-negotiable was the conference outcome, the production of an edited book, the draft chapters of which would be ready to take away on the Friday afternoon.

The plan of the week therefore was to begin with the key speaker with time for discussion and questions. This was followed by the identification of themes in brainstorming groups. An in depth discussion of themes and ideas was then narrowed down by the paired group critiquing of themes and ideas. Final chapter groups were then confirmed. Discussions continue through the remainder of the week to include a plan of chapter structure and outcomes, the beginning of draft papers followed again by paired group critiquing. By the end of the week chapter contacts had been assigned in each of the seven chapter groups, each of these contacts were given a brief for pulling together the chapter both during and after the conference and being responsible for coordinating peer review and editing drafts of the chapter until the final publication stage. Clearly these contacts are crucial people and they should take credit and pride in the professionalism with which they have carried out their task as they have performed a central role in this collaborative production.

Editing

Editing a book with 50 authors does present some logistical challenges. I was confident that the chapter contacts and all the authors were equal to the task in hand and would take seriously the very strict deadlines we lay ahead of ourselves to make the production and editing jobs achievable. Following the conference, draft chapters were completed and submitted for peer review to reviewers from other chapter groups already agreed at the conference. Once peer review comments had been received the chapter contacts had to consult on any changes or clarifications to the text with the whole chapter group. When these revisions were made I reviewed each text and made comments and changes, particularly to structure or layout of the chapter and also to references, attributions and writing clarity. Further copy editing of each chapter was carried out by the conference organising team who sent me numerous queries about the meaning of words or terminology often specific to the art and design higher education context. Editing guidance was gratefully received at GLAD meetings and from chapter contacts in order to agree principles for the edit and also the structure of the book. The book of GLAD 2007, published in 2008 (Drew, 2008) has been well received in the sector and, more importantly, has given confidence to many inexperienced researchers and writers to collaborate for action, learning and writing.

Evaluation of the experience of OST for collaborative writing

Often the most important learning we experience is in reflection, made even more powerful by sharing that experience with others. We learnt a lot about the conference

process, about working with each other and particularly how our experiences may help others, either in contemplating using OST as a conference model or in considering social aspects of informal learning.

Habitués of academic conferences often cite the principal benefit to be the gaps in –between the parallel paper sessions or keynote speakers. As we had designed the conference to have only one keynote as a catalyst for discussion we wondered if participants would agree with our plan to maximise the gaps in-between by having absolutely no 'content'. We knew that our theme and art and design sector focus would bring many participants to the conference who already knew each other well through working relationships. However many participants did make new and fruitful collaborations during the work on their chapters, many from different UK, regional and other international perspectives. Not only did the participants warm to this theme but they have gone on to extol the virtues of the model in many ways, by developing further collaborations with each other, by giving presentations at other conferences and being invited to speak at events and conferences. Some of the groups presented ongoing work at the 4th Centre for Learning and Teaching in Art and Design Conference in New York in April 2008 and the conference steering group revisited the theme for implementation discussions for the GLAD '08 Conference 2008 at Nottingham Trent University.

Does the OST model work?

Similarly to the Cambridge Conference 2003, we concluded that this model could be used by other practitioners (not just in an educational context) with another theme. For the model to prove a success we have also observed that a number of key variables need to be maintained. Some of these follow:

Planning Committee. The committee contributed to the planning and facilitation of the conference, each member leading on different aspects and during the conference facilitation sessions either in pairs or individually. The group contributed to the identification of the overall theme, the themes of the conference and the subsequent review of the draft chapters. Together, they represented a range of experience, both of the sector and of the theme of the conference itself which was complementary to the collaborative nature of the planning exercise. Each of them brought a high level of professionalism to the conference, both in planning and in execution but also in following up on actions to resolve the production of this book. The size of the group (four academics) allowed the entire group to participate and to share workload.

Commitment to attend meetings of the group was vital, so a lot of advance planning of meeting schedules was required. An even smaller group could be risky if one person fails to attend, and a larger group may not actually progress tasks efficiently and also becomes more difficult to coordinate and manage.

Plan of the week. As discussed earlier, it had been our intention to maximise process and discussion and to minimise presentations laden with content. With the exception of process and introductory sessions plus the opportunity for a scene setting keynote at the beginning of the week, the remainder of the week should be presentation-free. This ensures that the intention to maximise discussion leading to debate and writing is delivered. For the GLAD '07 Conference the week was structured around specific deadlines in order to meet the objectives of the week i.e. completed draft chapters by the Friday.

Ethos and guidelines for working. A conference which is presentation-free must have some ground rules to avoid transgression becoming the norm and a descent into complete anarchy. We talked about the process and overarching ethos of the conference right at the beginning, and we talked specifically about how things would be managed. There were a number of non-negotiable rules, for example the objective of the week was to work towards collectively writing a book, individuals could move between groups, debate and non-consensus was to be positively encouraged and participation in cross group critiquing was essential. All other aspects of the week were however negotiable including where groups met, size of group, themes to be debated (within the context of the overall conference theme), how and who did the writing, note-taking and reporting.

Invitation to participate. This is a key factor; it allows the planning team to identify people who are experts in their field as well as those who represent particular points of view, specialist perspectives and insights. The fact that most participants were registered months before the event meant that commitment to the event was really high and contributed to the strong 'buy-in' to the conference concept. With these precursors good participation was also ensured. Having a mix of participants from across the nations of the UK as well as international enabled discussions to be broad and for the most part with an international dimension. Of the 50 participants, at least 10% were from overseas and came from a range of types of universities (Israel, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, USA). Many different career stages and types were represented, researchers, academics, academic developers and senior staff (e.g. PVC's and Deans). This mix was important as was the ability of the invited

participants to act as team players with a proven ability to take part in high level debate, write and also finish projects.

Professional conference support. The conference support team focused on all contact to participants which contributed to a strong sense of professionalism and identity of the event. They provided full administrative support which ensured the smooth running of the conference.

Some reflections and evaluation

Earlier in this paper I have described the outline and the intended plan of the week, and I will describe here the outcomes with extracts from a feedback session held at the end of the week and a synthesis of participant views revealed the following contributing factors to the success of the event. Some examples of these are:

The Creative Space. Many participants remarked on the value of having a significant period away from the 'day job', which provided the opportunity to think creatively, generate new ideas and 'bottom out' key challenges facing their discipline.

> *'Time to reflect at length on important issues I am concerned about, but don't usually have time to work on'.*

> *'It has been an excellent week and I have had a rare opportunity to work with colleagues (both old friends and new acquaintances) to discuss, negotiate meanings, affirm, contradict and in the end find a shared place around issues that genuinely interest and engage us all'*

The Working Process. The format for the conference received incredibly positive feedback, the few comments to the contrary referred to minor changes to the process in the future. The 'free and open ethos', as well as the non-hierarchical, collegial nature of the event created an inclusive environment where all participants felt able to contribute to the process and this was recognised. This participant appreciated

> *'Having my viewpoints respected and incorporated into work in progress'*

> *The process was described variously as powerful, invigorating, rewarding, energising and motivating.*

> *'It has been fantastic, motivating and creative, a great learning experience. I am still not sure I am in the right subject group, but felt I have made a contribution. I just hope all that has been generated actually contributes to a real change'*

Collaboration and Teamwork. The most frequently remarked upon feature was the opportunity for collaborative activity and teamwork. This came out as the most rewarding aspect for participants. For some it was the opportunity to work with a variety of experienced professionals across the sector, from which they felt they learnt a lot. One participant commented on the 'insight into how professionals work productively under pressure' …well, we did want those chapters drafting. For others it was confirmatory and helped to re-affirm ideas and views.

> *'I have more confidence in my own observations and understanding of HE in Art and Design'*

There were other references to the 'group energy' and 'rewarding, productive energising collaboration', which contributed to the sense of real and meaningful work. Some drew comparisons on how this differed from the surface approach they were often required to take and the level of multi-tasking that made up much of their daily routine.

The process of generating material for the book chapter was commented upon. One participant referred to 'the wonderful process of collaborative writing', one the 'collective process of co-authoring'. Others appreciated the benefit of process and tangible outcomes.

> *'Confirms the methodology through teamwork, this has worked effectively, generating focussed discussion and effective outcomes'*

In many cases, the feedback reflected the extent to which participants felt they had developed, recognising their own personal learning as a result. Many thought it had been a unique opportunity and felt empowered.

The 'rule of two feet' was one of the non-negotiable rules, that is the ability for participants to move groups. We believed this would remove the tension sometimes established in conference groups where a topic, politeness or indeed the group dynamic, do not serve the participant well. In the end, only one participant actually

changed groups, to the satisfaction of all concerned, and was fully able to participate in the discussions of both the groups.

Contesting and transgression was also something we encouraged, but strictly speaking we wanted to encourage this in the context of debate and not in the process or of the aspects of the structure of 'open space technology'. Challenges were put in the early stages to the planning committee to move away from group discussions to more plenary-wide debate. The planning committee were committed to the principle of smaller group discussions to enable all voices to be heard around themes of their choice and for no one voice, opinion or paradigm to dominate the process of debate. Although the points raised were well argued we spent a little time rehearsing the principles of the process of the conference that all had 'bought into' and very soon those issues seemed a distant memory, in fact some remarked how it had been important for the challenges to be raised and debated so openly yet dealt with promptly and without bad feeling.

Conclusion

It has been interesting to reflect on this process, and I believe this approach could be used again in another context or with different themes if the opportunity arose. My reflection has led to my thinking that this process could be used with student groups seeking to build confidence in research-informed writing or with colleagues when addressing collaborative writing tasks, for example vision and strategy documents. Bearing these future directions in mind, what can we learn which could be transferable to a new situation?

Making sure that plenary or feedback sessions are not all the same in process and format reduces the risk of these being perceived as 'set pieces'. In removing the ritual of reporting back sessions in plenary this avoids overload and running over time, and enables reporting to become a peer to peer and group to group imperative, much more can be gained through smaller focused critiquing sessions and through informal social exchange.

I have learnt that this process is paramount, as adopted by all conference participants at GLAD 07. I believe the quality of the debate, the openness of the event and the scholarly rigour of each of the chapters in the book of the conference bear this out (Drew, 2008)

OST guidelines say that 'whoever comes is the right people' and I really like that principle. But of course I am aware that it is absolutely vital to invite the right people to attend and participate and those people are they who can contribute to learning, research and writing, together.

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Professor Linda Drew is Dean of the Graduate School at Camberwell, Chelsea, Wimbledon: University of the Arts London. The CCW Graduate School brings together all three college's postgraduate and research provision, and from 2010 there will no longer be a structural divide between taught and research postgraduate courses. Research will truly inform teaching, and teaching will inform research. There will be enhanced possibilities for networking, and all students and staff will have the best chance to engage in work that is truly collaborative.

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Questions that Matter: making art, design and media, and the grammar of an open future

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Abstract

This paper concerns research questions, and their place within research carried out through the production of creative works such as artefacts, performances, designs, media objects and so on—often called practice-led, practice-based or creative practice as research. Are research questions relevant for practice-led research? If so, what sorts of questions are germane to creative practitioners? In thinking through this issue, I have come to conclude that even if questions are not expressly stated in a research project, questions are at the heart of all research. What's more, different research traditions use different sorts of questions based on particular grammatical constructions and, crucially, practice-led research is based on a radically different grammar to other traditions: the grammar of an open future that matters.

Keywords
research questions, practice-led research, creative practice, grammar, making, methodology

> "Are our questions of a different nature from those in other disciplines?" (Question posed in the Review of Practice-led Research in Art, Design & Architecture in the UK, AHRC 2007, p. 7)

Do research questions matter for those conducting practice-led research in the arts, design and media domains—for those research projects centred on, and emerging out of, the making of performances, artefacts, events, texts and rich-media

configurations and the like? I think they do. In this essay I explain why, and provide some examples from postgraduate research projects.

Research questions

Research always involves questions. More to the point, I will argue that research is always driven by questions:– research questions.

This might seem a controversial point to those disciplines that do not use overt questions to frame their research. Furthermore, official definitions of research and associated reporting/administrative mechanisms hardly refer to questions at all (DEST 2007; TEC 2005; RAE 2005; OECD 2002; cf the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) initiative and grant guidelines of the Australian Research Council). The one prominent source that refers directly to questions only posits this as an option amongst others, in that a research project "must define a series of research questions, issues or problems" (AHRC 2009, p. 66, emphasis added). Even the book auspiciously titled Research Questions has its penultimate chapter dedicated to "other approaches" to research that are not predicated on questions (Andrews 2003, pp. 71-78).

From all this, we might conclude that research questions might be useful, but not always needed. So whether or not research questions are relevant to practice-led research, let alone different to other academic disciplines and research traditions, is nothing to be concerned about. If this is the case, then the question posed at the London town meeting of the Review of Practice-led Research in Art, Design & Architecture—*Are our questions of a different nature from those in other disciplines?*—is a rather trivial question, and methodologists like Biggs (2003) and Friedman (2004) should cease asserting the need for practice-led researchers to articulate questions as part of their approach.

However, prompted by contact with many practice-led researchers as a peer and research methods pedagogue, I have come to a different point of view: research intrinsically involves questions, and practice-led research operates with its own particular type of research question that possesses its own unique type of grammar. In what follows I will define the key terms quite carefully, in a way that may seem somewhat idiosyncratic, to express how research and questions align all in accordance with official definitions of research (cited below) and linguistic grammar (Huddleston & Pullum 2002, especially 'Kinds of Questions' pp. 865-917). I will only be drawing on English-language sources and grammars, and how this might relate to the research and logics found in other languages is beyond the scope of this paper.

First things first. I propose that:

> Research is the *attainment of a new knowing.*

In the official definitions of research, this attainment is described as the original contribution to knowledge and knowing: "the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way" (DEST 2007, p. 3), "to contribute to [or gain] knowledge and understanding (TEC 2005, p. 20; RAE 2005, p. 34), "to increase the stock of knowledge" (OECD 2002, p. 30). There is of course humble, everyday research where the new knowing is nothing ground-breaking, but there is also expert, high-level research that contributes new knowing for the world at large which is the ambition of academic and research professions.

Next, I proposed that:

> Questions are *that which incite the attainment of a new knowing.*

That is to say, we ask questions when we want to know something we don't already know, unless of course you are asking a rhetorical question. Questions prompt answers [technically speaking: this is the 'illocutionary force' of the question, it is what a question does]. Of course, there can be humble, everyday questions, as well as ambitious and special questions.

Typically, questions are spoken or written using a *question-syntax* [technically: an interrogative clause-type]. That is to say, questions are formed by a special ordering and use of words (compare 'It is raining' to 'Is it raining?). However, it is important to note that questions can even be formed without using question-syntax. For instance, try using an inquisitive upward inflection whilst saying 'It is raining…' (the French do this a lot). The difference between a question and its corresponding question-syntax presents an important distinction that needs to be clearly made. For this essay, I will talk of the *question-impulse* when referring to the underlying illocutionary force of a question, which may or may not get framed using question-syntax. In fact, a question-impulse might not even be espoused at all and instead remains hidden or obtuse, but that is not to say it does not exist at all. Which means this: if anything, overt or not, with one particular syntax or another, incites the attaining of a new knowing, then there is the question-impulse.

Some qualifications are also needed concerning answers: answers are *the provision of a new knowing* in response to a question-impulse. We do not need to talk about iron-clad absolutes or tidied up resolutions, but answers are a question-response that satisfies, or performs some sort of relevant reply to, the question-impulse. In the answering, furthering question-impulses may also be formed. Just as questions do not necessarily need to take the form of words, so too answers do not necessarily need to be given in words. To the question 'it is raining?' one might say 'yes', or point to the rain, or indeed grab you by the hand and lead you outside to experience the rain. Answers might be spoken or written, but they can be demonstrated and enacted as well.

A simple equation is now possible:

> If research is the attaining of a new knowing, and question-impulses are that which incites the attaining of a new knowing, then research and question-impulses are intrinsically linked. That is to say, question-impulses incite research and research is stimulated by question-impulses; whenever there is research there is at least one question-impulse being addressed, if not a cluster of research questions.

Note that I am talking about question-impulses here. Even if a particular research project, or indeed a whole research tradition, does not use the question-syntax does not diminish the fact that a question-impulse (or several) would be underwriting their research. The humanities disciplines that do not tend to talk about research questions would no doubt be interested in attaining new knowledge and understandings about certain parts of the world (AAH 1998), and such an interest has to come from, or be triggered by, some impetus (whether precise or ambiguous) and herein lies the question-impulse. To be clear, I am suggesting that there is a deeper logic at play here, where all research is geared around "question-impulses" [the illocutionary *force* of seeking a new knowing] that may or may not get expressed in "question-syntax" [the particular interrogative clause].

All this has crucial significance for practice-led research. If research and question-impulses go hand-in-hand, this means that practice-led research must itself possess research questions. If no such questions can be exemplified, then the practice-led approach is simply not research, no matter how sincerely one may wish for this to be the case. So determining the existence and characteristics of the question-impulse(s) of creative practice is an important task in determining the validity of this new, still-emerging approach to research. A closer examination of the overall characteristics of research questions and characteristics of established research traditions will lay the groundwork for this endeavour. If there exist different research methodologies and approaches, which lead to different sorts of knowledge and knowing, then it would stand to reason that there are different types of research questions as well that incite different knowings. These differences, I propose, are evident in the very syntax and grammar of the questions at hand.

The grammar of research questions

A certain key feature is common to all long-term, in-depth research projects, whether they be carried out within academic or other contexts. Such projects rarely work towards answering a yes/no question [technically, a 'polar' question] unless of course the research also provides some nuanced reasoning and explanation on top of a simple yes or no. Instead, research questions are generally framed around 'open questions' because this opens up the possibility of a range and depth of answers. The syntax of open questions is based around the 'wh-pronouns' that point to different dimensions of the world: who (persons), what (non-personal entities), where (locations), when (temporalities), why (reasons) and how (usually processes). So research questions, from whatever tradition or domain, are going to be based around open, wh-based, questions.

There is more to the grammar of questions, however. Modalities can be invoked via grammatical moods—was/is/did/does (indicating actuality), might/may (indicating possibility), could/can (indicating ability) and should/shall (indicating ought-ness). Furthermore, grammatical constructions can point to particular tenses—past, concrete present, eternal present and future. So we have a myriad of combinations available to us. For instance, we can pose questions about the process of something in the past: "How was the constitution formed?" Or questions about the reasons or causes for something in the eternal present: "Why does it rain?" Or questions about persons and their future activities: "Who will eat this?" Or questions about locations in the concrete present: "Where is she going right now?" Research questions, thus, can possess many grammatical configurations and possible contents. Armed with such insights, we can examine particularities of the main types of traditional research.

Let's begin with the mode of empirical research. Whether exploring the physical universe or the social world, whether using quantitative or qualitative data gathering and analysis, empirical research examines some part of the existing world, seeking to

better describe and interpret states of being and/or their interrelations. Understanding the effects of a particular enzyme on sheep digestion, for instance, or charting the way one particular sub-culture communicates in online virtual spaces. Whichever way, what exists in the world exists either in the present, or else it exists in the past to which we have access through various traces and evidence. Thus, the research questions proper to empirical research would be open questions concerning actual existence and causality, set in the present or past tense—*what was…, how did…, why is…, what is…?*

Now, let's consider the mode of conceptual research, whether in the algebraic realm of theoretical physics, mathematics and analytical logic, or in the textual realm found more in continental philosophy. Conceptual research deals with new ideas and concepts, reasoned and argued. This is not empirical research of what exists out there, but is ideational, working on what makes sense of our existence. As such conceptual questions are often posed in the infinite or universal present—*how does…, why does…, what is…?* There is one special case of the future tense I can think of: the emphatic mood "should" relating to ethics, morality and ideological platforms, concerned with what 'should' happen in a particular domain space (become safer, become more democratic, or whatever) that results in proposals and recommendations—*why should…, what should…?* The emphatic mood could also condition questions of the past, regarding what should have happened in certain circumstances.

Of course, many research traditions mix empirical and conceptual strategies, such as those coming out of the disciplines of history, practical ethics, media and art theory, economics, and theoretically-inflected social science, just to name a few—and it is often in these domains that the complex question of 'why' turns up, usually a multi-layered issue that requires multiple sub-questions. But across these cases, we have research questions proper to empirical and conceptual research as open questions of existence and relations in present or past tense, and in a few cases, we have moral questions of ought-ness directed towards the past through to the future.

A different grammar for research through art, design and media production

Is there a particular sort of research question germane to this new paradigm? Practice-led research in art, design and media production has been argued by many to be a (new, emerging) paradigm of research that differs, sometimes radically, from the traditional approaches taken by the sciences and humanities (such as Gray et al 1995; Press 1995 and more recently Haseman 2006; Biggs & Büchler 2009; Büchler et al 2009). If so, then practice-led research should possess its own paradigmatically unique research questions. If such questions exist, then I think these must be of the sort for which creative practice and its resultant outputs form the answer, or a significant part of the answer. The question-impulse for creative practice would be demonstrated in creative practice and its outputs, not just described in words; any research question that could be answered wholly and most viably through scholarly writing alone would make any associated creative practice simply a bystander. Those at the School of Art at RMIT also appear to assume this basic first principle: "The artist-researchers… answer their research questions through the making of artwork" (Duxbury & Greirson 2007, p. 10).

What could be the question-impulse that gets answered and demonstrated in creative practice? Over the last few years I have noticed a particular grammar and logic to the questions and wanderings of the large pool of practice-led research candidates at my faculty—numbering over one hundred at any one time from honours, masters and doctoral programs covering many disciplines including arts (visual arts, dance, drama, music), design (communication design, fashion, animation) and media and communications (creative writing, film and television and journalism). In my discussions with them, as peer, research methods pedagogue and supervisor, the question of research questions and their projects' driving focus turns up a lot. My thinking has also been informed by my content analysis of all the submitted practice-led exegesis from my faculty between 2002 and 2006 (also informing the work of Hamilton & Jaaaniste 2009a, 2009b). Whether or not the candidates voice their project's impulse in a question-syntax, a common underlying questioning impulse seems present in most, if not all, cases, which assumes one of two versions:

- *How could I possibly… deal with THIS issue… in the context of THAT cultural mode?*

or sometimes

- *What form could possibly arise… when dealing with THIS issue… within the context of THIS cultural mode…?*

One version concerns processes ("how could I possibly…") and the other outputs ("what form could possibly arise…") but these are merely two sides of the same question-impulse concerning things yet-to-be-determined. Note also too that "I" might be replaced by "we" in a collaborative or consultative scenario.

To exemplify this question-impulse of creative practice, some examples are in order. These are taken from completed MA and PhD projects in performing arts, visual culture, script writing, fashion, music and software coding. For each project, I will present my own constructed version of what I think the question-impulse really is, followed by excerpts quoting directly from that project's written report (referred to as an 'exegesis' at my university). This is an overtly interpretive act on my part, and I do so taking in consideration the entire project as reported in the exegesis and exemplified in the creative work (each exegesis is available online, so you can check for yourself the appropriateness of my interpretations):

- *How could I complicate the bodily representation of pleasure/appeal and disgust/grotesque, through using my own 'non-preferred' body (including damaged eyes) within my artworks?*

  "This thesis investigates, through a body of interdisciplinary artwork, the representation of the grotesque body. It examines how it might be possible to manipulate the iconography of attraction and repulsion in contemporary art with the aim of con fusing the binary opposition of what signifies pleasure and disgust. Each of the three artworks function to draw the audience into a powerful and affective relationship with representations that are simultaneously appealing and revolting… focus[ing] on my body as a site for the development of new knowledge about the representation of the non-preferred body." (Cross 2006, p. 2)

- *How could I write nuanced, complex Asian characters into Australia feature film scripts?*

  "This study investigates the challenges facing screenwriters in Australia who set out to represent the Japanese on screen… The exegesis explores how certain screenwriting conventions have constrained recent screen images of the Japanese within the bounds of the cliched and stereotypical, and argues for a greater resistance to these conventions in the future. The two screenplays experiment with new ways of representing the Japanese in mainstream Australian film and aim to expand the repertoire of Asian images in the national film culture." (Taylor 2006, p. vi)

- *How could I make formal white shirts for men that remain quintessentially modern menswear whilst drawing on feminine decoration?*

  "This practice-led research creates innovative menswear designs for formal white dress shirts, within boundaries of contemporary mainstream wearability… The aim of this research is to apply design innovation with a Neo-Dandy aesthetic to the modern men's white dress shirt, by incorporating characteristics associated with womenswear, whilst remaining quintessentially a contemporary mainstream menswear garment." (Brough 2008, p. 2 & 12)

- *How could I compose interesting, sensitive cross-cultural music that successfully fuses my background in both Western and African music?*

  "My background is in *Western* jazz and popular music but my compositions are also influenced by my strong interest in traditional and contemporary *African* musical styles and techniques. The purpose of the exegesis is to reconcile my experience of this *African* influence and construct a set of frameworks to analyse and understand the processes involved in cross-cultural composition… As a *Western* composer I wish to seek ways to approach African musics that are sensitive to this history and to the complex issues of identity that are involved." (Chapman 2007, p. 1)

Notice that these researchers talk of making something possible through their research—how it might be possible to manipulate certain materials for certain ends (Cross), to expand the repertoire of a particular creative field by resisting conventions of production (Taylor), to create innovation designs along certain socio-aesthetic lines (Brough), and to seek ways to approach particular domains of practice with sensitivity (Chapman)—which conjures up material processes and forms.

Is this phenomena only restricted to examples from my faculty? I think not, based on my intuition as a creative practitioner and from discussions with practice-led researchers from around Australia, but only a wide-ranging content analysis of completed projects and/or interviews with practice-led researchers could verify the broad applicability of what I am arguing. In the meantime, as one single example, I wish to briefly consider an essay from a practice-led researcher who completed their

PhD at another university. Donna Brien, a creative writer, based her doctoral project around a book-length biography of a late-nineteenth century woman called Mary Dean involved in a notorious court case in which her husband was convicted of her attempted murder. Brien has recounted the journey of her research in a journal article, and comments on a rather perplexing biographical issue that arose:

> "For, despite [Mary Dean's] undeniable centrality in events and the significant legal and historical record her case generated, only brief traces of information about Mary Dean remained in the historical record—and, moreover, many of these were unreliable. How, then, to write her biography? This challenge became my research question." (Brien 2006, p. 54)

In other words, Brien was asking:

- *How could I write the biography of Mary Dean given the scant unreliable traces of her life set against the gravity of her court case?*

Crucially the question-impulse of creative practice, as I have just outlined it, positions the practice and its creative works as an important part of the answer. To the question of "how could I…" or "what form could arise…" we see one possibility demonstrated and instantiated in the particular material configurations of the creative work. No doubt Brien's creative work, the book on Mary Dean, is one possible, meaningful answer to her biographical conundrum. In responding to his own question-impulse Cross presented three contemporary body-based artworks, for Taylor it was two scripts using Asian characters in Australian settings, for Brough a series of ornate menswear dress shirts, and for Chapman performances and recordings of Afro-Jazz music. Thus, each creative work functions as a considered response to the question-impulse of at the heart of each creative practice. Of course, one can also use analytical words to articulate how the creative practice answered the question, but this would be to compliment the demonstrative nature of the material component rather than replace it.

It should be clear at this point that a different grammar is underwriting practice-led researchers. This grammar, unlike traditional research, grasps at an open future of possible action and thus focuses on the core research contribution of creative production: materialising new realities. It is invested in what could happen and how this could happen, rather than what should happen and what, how, when, where and why something has already happened. Whilst creative practice has an empirical

existence and deals in concepts too, it is primarily concerned with bringing new material realities into being. Scrivener and Chapman (2004) touch on this idea, when they state that

> "by making, one can discover whether something is possible… the creative process is one of establishing the conditions for the realisation of what has not been seen before, not one of thinking the thing out in advance."

For these authors the artwork, or any creative artefact I would argue, is "an existence proof that something is possible." Sullivan (2006) is pithier still: "creative inquiry… opens up possibility." In other words, the question-impulse of creative practice cares about future possibilities-made-actual, materialised and demonstrated in the pursuit and outcomes of creative practice. And this has little to do with the grammars of other research traditions from the sciences and humanities that are based on empirical and/or conceptual research models.

Associated questions

This question-impulse of creative practice could be thought of as a design question, or a making question, rather that a theoretical, descriptive, historical or analytical question. However, a myriad of sub-questions flow out of and into the main question-impulse, which do call on theory, description and analysis:

- *How have other practitioners approached this, or similar, impulse? And how have I extended or played with these precedents?*

- *What concepts can help articulate the particularities of my endeavor? That is, how do I begin to explain what sorts of things are going on?*

- *What did I do in response to the overall question-impulse? What form did it take, and what resulted in terms of responses and concepts?*

On their own, these sub-questions are could be answerable via humanities scholarship in the arts, design and media, without the need for creative practice as research. But within a practice-led research project, these sub-questions are driven by, and act in service of, the central research question that concerns the material coming-into-being of new art, design and media.

Conclusion: im/proper questions

In this essay I have come to the conclusion that the question-impulse of "how could I…" / "what form could…" is the proper sort of question for research through creative practice across the arts, design and media domains. Yet these questions can so often feel improper. They are improper from the perspective of other academic research traditions, whose manners are groomed on other grammars. Such questions might even seem improper to us creative practitioners, conditioned as we are to sound confident about what our practice is about rather than express any curiosity (and thus uncertainty) about what is it becoming and the impetus for such shifts and evolutions. True research requires us to begin by not being very sure of the terrain, yet professional and pedagogical contexts can so often call for the presentation of an assured demeanor.

For some practitioners, questions of an open future might sit better with them if they are not called questions, especially since the task of overt questioning has been so wrapped up in other research traditions. If so, there are alternatives. Instead of question try quest, instead of research try search, instead of findings try foundings (what is made and founded) and instead of answers try avenues (shifting onto a different trajectory). These terms can also help mark out the question-impulse, and question-response, of creative practice, articulating the evolutions and new knowing to come out of the research journey.

Whichever way such probes, quests and searches are initiated, voiced and worked out, the question-impulse of creative practice will in fact remain forever improper. New, exploratory creative practice always re-materialises, melts and transfigures our current categories and modes of living—pushing out from the question of how we could do things differently, better, richer, deeper, and the question of what form this could take. The future is not out there already; it is made, created, designed, remediated, written, plastered, sung out. Creative practice plays with and teases out the unknown and the yet-to-be categorised, yet-to-be-understood, the not yet tried and tested. It recasts our current props. Impropriety in practice, made apparent. The question-impulses that incite such improper practices are questions that matter. They matter to practitioners because they are our core question-impulse, to make, to demonstrate, to materialise the new. And they are questions that in themselves matter, because they inevitably provoke a new forms and matter in the world, new things that matter.

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Writing and Other Intersections in the Performance of Remembering and Imagining.

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Abstract

The intersections of art and writing or design and writing are currently key pathways to research recognition for artists in the academy today. At best, these intersections can be productive and the justification for writing as part of a creative practice thesis comes from a wide range of perspectives. Some hold the view that traditional academic writing is necessary to provide logical argument and explanation which designs and objects themselves cannot provide. While a thorough report format is perfectly appropriate for some design research projects, many artists and designers are not concerned with facts. They more often than not produce designs and artefacts that are examples of possibility, typically using working approaches that involve synthesis through material interventions. Their intellectual and cultural contributions are evocative rather than truthful. There is now growing support for the use of non-academic or creative genres in exegesis writing including rhetorical or narrative forms, dramatic or provocative styles and fictional interpretation. Despite growing acceptance of a variety of writing styles, the making/writing model alone is restrictive, providing an inadequate means of representing the scope of postgraduate creative research or the significance of the results. Without the recognition of other forms of intersecting activity linked to performance and implementation, the exegetical text can only furnish a partial view of the research. This paper sets out to locate key assumptions and core issues in the contemporary search for methodological significance of research practices in studio arts and design. The objective is to raise questions that could drive a broad ranging practical study of characteristics and disciplinary divergence to be found when researchers begin to identify their emerging methodology within a performative paradigm.

Keywords

Multiple literacy, documentation, material thinking, practice-led research, methodology.

Introduction

The intersections of art and writing or design and writing are currently key pathways to research recognition for artists in the academy today. At best, these intersections can be productive. The justification for writing as part of a creative practice thesis comes from a wide range of perspectives and the making/writing model is currently the key pathway to research recognition for artists in the academy today. What is the nature of this intersection of art and writing or design and writing? And what assumptions are being made in the quest to tame artistic and design wildness with the notion of research? The first assumption I propose is that the notion of intersection (in the title of the paper and in the title of the conference) is indicative of multiple activity, multiple paths and in the particular context of research degrees, multiple literacies.

Let us look at some of the ways in which writing can interpret creative research work. At various stages, writing can be useful as a scoping exercise to limit or focus a project. At the beginning, writing is essential in framing a research proposal, applying for grants and scholarships and establishing a web presence. Before the work has begun, there are only words. Later, as the work develops, writing is a valuable way of framing or contextualising the proposed or contingent direction of the work. It can be helpful in organising the logic of the practice, recording ideas that might otherwise be lost and considering material or ethical concerns. The writing process is particularly valuable when integrated with other methods for keeping track of experiences afforded by the evolving work and sensations produced by the work. But the written word is not always the best form of interpretation and can, on occasion be a blunt instrument. Conversation, photography, video, diagrams, story-boards and charts are all appropriate multimodal ways of interpreting and documenting the emerging artwork or design.

To interpret is to possess and control meaning. It is a powerful activity in the studio that can steer work in a particular direction, expose a new horizon or close off certain directions. In studio art and design projects, intersecting moments occur not only for writing but also, and more importantly, for dialogue, personal repositioning after divergent activity, scoping of emerging problems, inventing useful questions, recognition of progress, documentation, reflection/critique, planning future action, setting up new experimental conditions, evaluating progress and editing or organizational activities. The common function at all of these intersections with creative work or the production of artefacts is a level of interpretation or of making

meaning and writing is only one of the methods of drawing out the meaning in objects, artworks and other material artefacts.

Distance

Providing intellectual distance or detachment is one of the more valuable aspects of writing as part of a practice. Not all writing and discourse in practice-led research is intended to have a direct effect on the practice. Some intersecting engagement with a different mode of thinking may be a necessary ploy to subvert derivative behavior or prevent habitual working patterns from becoming inflexible. Or it may be more interesting in a practice to use writing as an indirect route toward the research goal as a way of gathering unexpected or more challenging critical perspectives on the work. These strategies can work as a critical counterpoint and also as a way of getting into a more peripheral position from which the core of the project can be viewed in a different way, from a critical standpoint.

Grillner (2003) advocates for the development of a critical perspective on creative practice-led work in order to approach any discourse about it with distance. Whatever emotional or intuitive agency exists in and drives a creative work, a transparent research orientation will require intersections of unbiased, confident reflection. She suggests that researchers need to find ways of developing critical counterpoints to their own work. “You have to find the means of getting out of the universe of your own project. Developing a sensitivity and control over language helps to jump between positions, to take on the role of the critic.” She contends that discursive encounter is the essential difference between artistic practice and research practice. “By developing a critical perspective on her or his work, the author/architect behind a project invites others to participate, not in awe, but in critical discussion. (Grillner, 2003, p 246).” While writing does require moments of vital critical distance in creative work, there are other ways of encouraging detachment and making the most of an intentionally externalised point of view. Here I am referring to active documentation (de Freitas, 2002, 2007) as another important intersecting activity in practice-led creative research.

In a study of the studio practices of novice researchers, de Freitas (2007) showed how the developmental transition from professional practice to research practice could be seen in some revealing responses to the interview questions. The results of that study provide evidence that the practice of active documentation as a method in art and design research appears to improve learning and to assist in the construction of meaning for the working artist/designer. Nuances of meaning, as they are imagined, experienced and embedded in the materiality of a creative work are not only difficult to articulate, but difficult for the artist/designer to hold on to conceptually, difficult to remember. Active documentation helps to secure these fugitive moments of clarity. The response data in that study revealed individuals’ growing awareness of the personal learning that was taking place, which in turn led to growing confidence in decision-making. Their comments showed growing awareness of a sort of dialogue taking place as they reflected on their work in its various developmental phases (de Freitas, 2007, p 10).

> • *The act of taking a photo requires attention to creating a ‘good’ photo – changes of context and location, isolation of the object into more abstract settings etc all contribute to my changing perception of the artefact.*
>
> • *The periodic suspension of work in order to document and reflect led me to challenge the hierarchy of the painting over the sketches.*
>
> • *During documentation, I took time to get good product images and it enabled me to see the artefacts in a different light – to ‘abstract’ the object was a second round of creativity – enabling me to observe underlying elements. It gave me pleasure to recognize certain features – it was a good experience.*
>
> • *Reflecting/documenting can change the very nature or form of your work – E.g. the documentation of my static model became an animation piece in its own right (model for teaching the history of typography).*

Practice-led research projects are typically driven from the start by a formal academic proposal, key questions and even an anticipation of outcomes. Funded projects require the same front end loading when projects need to be represented in detail and justified in order to secure competitive funding. There is always a real danger of stifling the experimental potential of creative work when the wildness and disorder of a creative vision has been written out of the scenario under these circumstances. Preliminary approval of proposals, institutional progress reports and supervisory anxiety may all contribute to the unnecessary ‘smoothing’ of the research potential. Under these circumstances, it is understandable that well-known qualitative and other methods are so often employed, sometimes arbitrarily. Furthermore, since qualitative methods rely on written outcomes as a key mode of representation, the

use of writing as method is often unavoidably locked in. In some instances, writing can misrepresent the artistic practice or contribute to a less effective form of research communication.

There is further danger in the adoption of inappropriate methodological approaches. It is possible for a researcher to be lulled into maintaining a known or familiar perspective in situations where the methodological conventions of an adapted research approach are constricting the creative process. Kenneth Burke (1966) developed the term 'trained incapacity' in relation to the potential limitations of training and controlled thinking of any kind. The term refers to a situation where professionals will maintain a given perspective even when it may be unproductive or damaging, a situation in which an individual is unable to re-imagine or invent things, culture and life in general. Methodology in artistic practice-led research should never function in this way. On the contrary, methodological approach is more desirable when it assists in getting the creative or material culture unstuck.

The logic of approaching synthesis through material interventions, unrelated to writing, is a typical methodological orientation that is still less well understood than the logic of a written exegesis. Important questions arise. How is this material thinking done? What is to be gained from a better understanding of visual, performative and material approaches of designers and artists? These are questions that we cannot answer at present. My second assumption, is that the artistic and design professions do have much to gain from new investigations into the materiality and performativity of studio practice-led research methods.

Experiencing the view

Haseman (2006) identified a number of changing strategies and methods that artists and designers have been adopting, particularly in the last decade. He notes the inadequacy of the current repertoire of methodological tools as a factor in the changes we see taking place and points out that new methods are influenced by the experiential nature of the phenomenon under investigation. Artistic forms of research led by performance and installation, interactive gaming, web based service provision, exhibitions and films, to name a few, do not thrive on old methodological strategies. Haseman maintains that the old methodological repertoire will not accommodate completely the surplus of emotional and cognitive operations and outputs thrown up by the practitioner (2006, p.7). In proposing a new concept, the performative paradigm, he takes his cue from J.L. Austin's (1962) theory of performativity in relation to performative speech acts, which are statements that realize an action and effect through their very expression. Haseman puts forward his manifesto for performative research recognising its value in practice-led research and suggests that it will become recognised and valued as one of the three major research paradigms alongside quantitative and qualitative orientations. The test of a new paradigm according to Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p.25) is the recognisable "bundle of skills, assumptions and practices" that are collectively understood and applied. If performative research is indeed the practice-led paradigm that will allow a range of artistic and design research activity to thrive better than it might otherwise, then the work we need to do now is to define those skills, assumptions and practices and to study their application and effect in the studio. Can we design a broad ranging practical study to identify common characteristics and distinguish disciplinary divergence in the methodology of an emerging performative paradigm?

Although widely used in institutional definitions of research, the term "new knowledge" is a limiting way of referring to the outcomes of research and creative activities. Creative activity and research in every disciplinary field is most valued when it advances the field. At times these advances can be called new knowledge; at other times they are better described as changed intellectual or emotional perspectives and visions; sometimes they are new or improved ways of practicing and at other times they are material artefacts. The best research improves the performance, awareness and sensitivity of its practitioners. The best research contributes in a material way to the community beyond its discipline.

Elkins (2009) raises the question of how we can possibly contest and change the matter of inadequate representation of our research work when a text based submission remains the default model acceptable to university libraries and academic repositories (James Elkins, 2009). From my experience supervising postgraduate students, I have come to appreciate that at best, the intersection of periods of writing and practical work can be productive. For novice researchers in particular, the justification for writing as part of a creative practice thesis comes from a wide range of perspectives. Some academic practitioners in art and design fields hold the view that traditional academic writing is essential to provide coherent argumentation, evidence and explanation which designs and objects themselves cannot provide. Some disagree on the grounds that most artistic and design work is not scientific although there may be scientific contexts contained within the research. This case for argumentation and coherent evidence has a scientific provenance. It is framed by the use of words such as: methodical;

specific; questioning; definitive results; answers; experimental process; systematic; standard protocols; proof; organization; planning; evaluation; rigor; opinion and interpretation. A few of these words can comfortably be applied to art and design, but most are incompatible with inventive, artistic or poetic work.

The writer Jorge Luis Borges (1964) imagined a non-linear concept of time in "The Garden of Forking Paths". His fictional metaphor of multiple continuations and alternatives represents the future as an open potentiality, contingent but chaotic and perfectly unpredictable to us even if we have all the current knowledge in the world. His fiction offers an experience of seductive illusions and equally elusive truths. I believe this is characteristic of the very best art. Annie Dillard also understood this inherent complication when she described the way order and invention coincide in the human mind as if the mind itself were an art object. "Ordering and invention coincide: we call their collaboration knowledge." This is an excellent notion that easily includes the knowledge that artists and designers bring to light. When she states that all interpretations "miss their mark or invent it, make it up" she explains the unscientific configuration of creative processes (Dillard, 1982, p. 148). Seen in this light, it is doubtful that rigorous argumentation, validity, empirical evidence and reasoned explanation are the best standards for practice-led creative research. But they are indeed established in our institutional documents, our research training, dissertation-writing guides and in our examination guidelines.

Examples of how these standards are embedded in our thinking and management of the research process can be found in many sources such as this case in point. Let us look at the examiner's briefing pack for a Masters practice-led degree, which describes the written component of a full thesis in the following way.

The exegesis

> Where a thesis is substantially comprised of practice-based (i.e. practical) work, the submission is accompanied by an exegesis. The purpose of the exegesis is to elucidate key aspects of the thesis project and set it in its relevant critical contexts. The exegesis should discuss the aims and structure of the project; the underpinning areas of concept, relevant contexts including art/design and other critical contexts, the focus of the project, the methodology and development of the project."

This description emphasizes the requirement for the candidate to make clear all matters relating to the research design, project structure, methodological approach and orderly, rigorous development of the work. It does not appear to sanction imaginative or fictional texts, narrative reflections, visual explanations, interpretative thoughts and documentation of the often unpredictable, wild, playful, serendipitous, random or chaotic aspects of material practices.

In the same examiner's pack, further guidelines are provided in a table of criteria to guide the thesis/dissertation grading process. In section one, the criteria are: "Define a research problem, formulate a research question or issues, design and justify an appropriate methodology or approach which addresses the question or research issues." Evidence of an A grade performance is described in the extract below, taken from the briefing pack.

Examiner's comment on:	Grade Range A	B	C
1 Define a research problem, formulate a research question or issues, design and justify an appropriate methodology or approach which addresses the question or research issues.	Sound knowledge of the subject area. Competence in clearly articulating a research question or issue. In-depth analysis of the question or issue, is informed by the rationale underlying the study and based on appropriate evidence and creative processes. Clearly articulated and sound rationale for the methodologies adopted (through, for example, explicit validation processes and/or critique of other available approaches).		

The criteria in the following grid are provided to examiners to guide the thesis/dissertation grading process:

Examiner's comment on:	Grade Range A	B	C
2 Demonstrate application of research methodology and methods developing critical analysis and complete a scholarly body of work	Mastery of the research process. Demonstrates significant capacity to present at a scholarly level. Thesis is highly organised and integrated. The intent of the researcher is explicit and expressed with clarity and insight. An in-depth articulation of the communication frameworks used.		

In section four the criterion is: “Demonstrate application of research methodology and methods developing critical analysis and complete a scholarly body of work.” And the evidence of an A grade performance is described in the extract below.

While none of these criteria and expectations is inconsistent with excellence and advancement in artistic and design work, they demarcate practice-led research in a particular way. The issue is not about what is valued in these guidelines, but what is not brought into view. Artists and designers are not typically concerned with facts at all. They more often than not produce work that involves synthesis through material interventions and their intellectual and cultural contributions are evocative rather than truthful. Individually and collectively, artists and designers recognise that there is a core of knowledge value located in their evocative ideas and the expression of material desire. Clearly we can go much further towards differentiating between the expansive focus that is appropriate for art and design practice and the rigor that applies to scientific endeavor. A review of all the institutional contexts and tools that constrict practice-led research through generic descriptive alignments, institutional research definitions and restrictive examination requirements must be seen as a part of the work to be done to bring together the most appropriate methodological orientations for art and design research.

Remembering and imagining

The third assumption I make is that artistic creation is not valued for having tested a hypothesis based on empirical evidence or for having established proof of anything. If the value of research degrees is in the support of knowledge, innovation and advancement of a particular field, then practice-led research in the creative arts must be focused toward the material and experiential realities of expression and communication, invention and design, persuasion, perception and paradigms of aesthetic order. A useful summary of what practice-led research should be came out of the Speculation and Innovation Conference in Brisbane, 2005.

> “ . . . the benefit of research in the creative arts and industries is significant for the following reasons: it enables new ways of experiencing and understanding our relationship to the world we live in; it enables us to model abstract concepts and ideas which can be transferable to other forms of research; it proposes new ways of constructing systems and communication processes; it enables alternative models of logic that are non mathematical to be implemented and explained; it fundamentally embodies knowledge through its own representation.”

Maintaining a healthy, unfettered creative practice within the managed constraints of an approved research project design can be difficult. It is not surprising that practice-led researchers are still searching for optimal methodological paradigms that also fit institutional research definitions. Discovery, in this context, is ultimately unpredictable. When surprising coherence or beauty emerges, artists and designers with research intentions can find it necessary to work backwards towards explanations and analysis expected of a research approach. In the realm of material artefacts, which exist as examples of possibility caught between mental processes of remembering and imagining, it can be an unpredictable, paradoxical passage through the experimental and critical phases of work. The continuing dilemma on the research agenda is threefold. First, it is imperative to find the most productive methodological package for specific work. Secondly, the language of these systems and methods must be honed collectively in order to define a paradigm. Thirdly, it is important to remain within sight of the broader academic/research community where this innovation and progress may have a wider impact. Writing as an intersecting part of the creative practice is a component in any methodological package. However, despite growing acceptance of a variety of writing styles, there is still something missing. Without other forms of intersecting activity, the making/writing model alone is restrictive. It provides an inadequate means of representing the scope of practice-led research or the significance of experiential outcomes and material artefacts. Other modes of engagement and inquiry, active documentation being one example, may be equally powerful research tools that artists and designers use habitually. These are the methods that will come to light and be transferable when they have been identified, articulated and collectively honed within the artistic research community.

New questions beyond the assumptions

Speaking about his rejection of a student’s videocassette submission in place of a written paper, Derrida (1996) explained that he was unable to accept the submission because while it was presented in place of discourse, it did not “adequately replace it”. Derrida was expecting something that contained the same demonstrative and theoretical power that is possible in a written argument. For Derrida, the use of audiovisual and visual documentation as argument is stronger in combination with or accompanied by a discourse that can articulate, differentiate and refine in a manner that only written arguments are able to do. For practice-led research in art and design,

written arguments do offer demonstrative and theoretical power where it is needed, but that type information may not always be the most important in relation to the research outcome. It may be more desirable for the writing to be a first-hand, thorough, even quite intimate overture to the artistic work or designed artefact, which opens rather than restricts alternative interpretation. Multiple forms in textual argumentation and/or response should be developed appropriately to accommodate the wide range of practice-led research orientations and outcomes. However, as has been shown, there is a real risk in some forms of written text of closing down the cultural or intellectual reading of artistic works in particular and discouraging both contemplation and emotive appreciation. Moreover, a reliance on writing as the sole form of intersecting analysis in artistic and design practice is risky. Active documentation is an intersecting method in practice-led research that opens the creative work to scrutiny through visual and written modes. It is a multi-modal discursive research tool that brings the relationship of all parts, material, intellectual and philosophical into view while capturing the importance of small shifts as they occur. It is a method grounded in material practices, which does not elevate the written discourse above the material thinking, but is supportive of the core enterprise: the design, the artefact; the experience; the performance; the event. There are undoubtedly other multi-modal orientations that need to be identified and understood.

The three assumptions raised in this paper may point in a helpful direction for further investigative work. The first assumption recognized multiple modes of creative activity and research capability as a basis for maintaining strength and diversity in creative practices and building the research community. The second assumption acknowledged the importance of naming and articulating appropriate material thinking orientations and the third cautions against reliance on any methodological approaches that are bounded by the scientific paradigm of verification when artistic and design research is more concerned with the artistic performance of remembering and reshaping memory or with imagining new spatial/material order. Material interventions such as models, drawings and sketches, prototypes, presentations and performances are excellent provocations in collaborative or discursive processes and as evidence of creative innovation or development material conditions beyond the known. Integration of text/sound and image in a rapidly changing information age requires that we learn how to use these combinations effectively in our research and documentation. We must review existing formats for their effectiveness and work towards building quality, depth and significance through more extensive/practiced use of visualization models. The consideration of a dissertation that is more visual than written will require new skills with both written/spoken language and with visualisation formats in order to be more effective in our use of these forms and in our ability to evaluate the quality of artistic and design research artefacts. We will need to learn how to be precise and demonstrative in the combined use of new written and visual forms.

It is unlikely that an artist/designer as researcher will add an original model of writing to the extensive variety already known and used. A new mode of writing is not the goal of artistic or design research practice. However, points of encounter occur spontaneously, bringing together in a challenging intellectual space the emerging visual, material artefact and the verbal or written speculations associated with the work. These moments when one form glances off another can turn up quietly and unexpectedly. Stark moments of clarity may appear and disappear without a trace before they can be assessed. Managing these encounters is where the research part of an artistic practice really comes into focus. Like active documentation, there are other valuable hybrid methods typically applied in design and artistic research that have yet to be fully described and compared. This is work that needs to be done.

Contributor Details

De Freitas has a background in painting and installation practice and has worked collaboratively with composers and writers. Exhibited works include multi-sensory installations with a philosophical locus in the dynamics of identity/belonging and the construction of place. Academic research is concerned with the development of appropriate methodological orientations for art and design researchers. Current interests include: the language of research reporting; the developmental relationships between text, image and artefact; documentation and reflection practices in research and ‘material thinking’ approaches. She is Editor in Chief of the journal Studies in Material Thinking.

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How the changing modal composition of classroom textbooks is mediating new perceptions of what it means to know and learn

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Abstract

The printed word mediates our perception of the world. As a result of ongoing technological changes in the affordances and constraints of print technology our understanding of what it means to know, and what it means to come to know are changing. The textbook is a central tool for mediating meaning in the classroom. Technological advances in print technology mean that most classroom textbooks are using a wider range of communicative modes to engage the attention of the reader and mediate meaning. The resulting increasingly complex and altered interplay between the semiotic modes of text, layout, image, and colour is shaping the unconscious sense making processes of learners. This paper uses a multimodal framework to: analyse the changing modal composition and materiality occurring in classroom textbooks; explain the changing sense making strategies that learners are unconsciously using to interpret these increasingly modally complex texts; and show how changes in print technology are challenging traditional assumptions about knowledge.

Keywords
textbook, implicit mediation, attention, multimodality, modal intensity, modal density, modal complexity, modal materiality

Introduction

This paper is a diachronic comparison of two sample chapters from two pedagogical

texts: Dwyer, J. (1993) *The business communication handbook* (3rd Edition), Prentice Hall, Sydney, Australia and De Vito, J. (2007) *The interpersonal communication book* (11th Edition), Pearson, Boston, USA. Both texts have been used for teaching Interpersonal Communication at AUT University at some point during the past sixteen years. The particular topic that both chapters cover is listening. The authors do not formally address this topic anywhere else in either text. The specific points discussed are representative of the changes that are occurring within each of the selected textbooks, and also reflect the changes occurring in most contemporary print based textbooks. This paper examines, through an analysis of the changing dialectics in their material modes of representation, the epistemological truth claims embedded in each text and suggests how these truth claims are changing as a result of changes in print technology.

One of the key concepts underpinning this paper is that of mediation. Our relationship with the tools we use is a complex, unconscious process of constructing meaning, as the purpose that we attach to our tools is interwoven with how we use them, the technologies that have shaped them and the socio/historical trajectories that have converged at the point of application of the tools. In other words, the way we interact with our world is mediated by the tools we use, and the tools we use in turn shape how we live in and perceive the world (Wertsch, 1998). Vygotsky (1962) empirically established that words (communicable units) are our most powerful meditating tools because language is constantly appropriating and reappropriating our "cultural/ ideal/material heritage" (1962, p.7) to allow people to interact with each other and the constantly changing demands of the physical world. Textbooks have been the primary pedagogical mediational means and knowledge communicating tool for learning since the 19th century. Like all mediating tools, they embed patterns of perception and behaviour which shape our beliefs, how we live in the world and, in this case, our pedagogical practices.

Western pedagogy and its associated tool -the textbook, contain embedded social, ideological, pedagogical and epistemological discourses. We intuitively utilise a multiplicity of sensory information when interpreting these discourses. Multimodal methodology provides a framework to qualitatively categorise this sensory information into sets of communicative modes. Each mode has unique rules and regularities attached to them (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001). According to Norris (2004) this modal communication can be constructed with either modal intensity and/or modal complexity. Modal complexity means the overall number of modes contributing to the composition of any text (or interaction); while modal intensity means the weight that each mode carries within the communicative act. Another useful idea that can be taken from Norris's (2004) framework is that of materiality, whereby different modes have different degrees of materiality. The level of materiality of any given mode mediates the degree of evanescence or durability of the text (in this case) that utilises that mode. The materiality of individual modes is shaped by the material and physical time cycles within which discourses operate, and the discourse cycles (Scollon & Wong Scollon, 2004) in turn are shaped by the materiality of the mode. Print has traditionally had enduring materiality. One of the reasons for this is that the discourse cycles surrounding the production of printed texts have involved large time scales and numerous layers of intervention as the text is shaped by the author, editor, publisher, printer, distributor, teacher and reader.

The medium of print has profoundly shaped Western epistemological beliefs. According to Poster (1994), the 18th century Enlightenment is an intellectual tradition grounded in and shaped by print culture. He claims that the great theories of the modernist society, which emphasised action and institutions over language and communication, were a product of the communication mode of the time: print culture. Poster states: "The Enlightenment theory of the autonomous rational individual derived much substance and reinforcement from the practice of reading the printed page" (1994, p. 377). According to Poster, the "spatial materiality, linear display of sentences, stability of word on page, systematic spacing of black letters on white background..." (377-378) all promoted the idea of the critical individual operating in isolation, making rational, thoughtful decisions.

The textbook has been the primary pedagogical knowledge communication tool within the Western education system since the Enlightenment. In that time, the technology utilised to produce books has changed significantly and consequently the textbook, as a tool to mediate knowledge and learning, has undergone a number of changes in structure and application. A combination of smaller physical dimensions, lower production costs and reduced selling prices led to greater accessibility and consequent reduction in the status of books: books went from being precious treasures to disposable commodities. This had a significant impact on the intellectual development of the Western world as, by the end of the 18th century, most of the urban population and more than a third of the rural population of England were able to read (Fischer, 2003). The improved access to books was a major contributing factor to the Age of Enlightenment where superstition and religion, as a way of making sense of the world, was replaced by 'commonsense' and science (Poster, 1994). Other technologies impacted on books and their role in social and intellectual

development. For example, as lighting improved, reading moved from being a communal, oral activity, frequently performed outdoors to an individual reflective activity carried out privately in libraries and bedrooms (Fischer, 2003).

A comparison of the modal composition of the two sample texts shows marked differences. The 1993 (Dwyer) text is much more modally intense (Norris, 2004), using fewer modes used to capture the attention of the reader. The pages are stark and austere. The only colour is black text on white paper (there is one small section of grey shading on the front page) and there is a considerable white space separating the text. With one minor exception there is only one font used in the entire text - Times New Roman, which reflects the factual content and academic neutrality of the text. The second font is very informal (designed to give the appearance of handwriting) and is used only in the one standout box, where readers are directed to conduct a self test to assess their listening skills. The use of this very casual font for the self test indicates a clear demarcation between 'real' knowledge and 'soft' (personal) knowledge. The chunks of text are visually consistent- an average of nine lines long. Almost every chunk of text is labeled with a distinct, bolded sub-heading. There is a carefully graduated arrangement of font sizes and bullet points which give a clear indication of the status of headings, and subheadings. This modal intensity (Norris) privileges the idea that knowledge is contained, neutral and objective, and that a focus on the central facts is an efficient route to understanding.

The 2007 (DeVito) chapter incorporates 'stories' or personal experiences about listening. These are expressed primarily through images, and several are generally based on fictional events derived from film and theatre. Some of the images are accompanied by explanatory text, some are not. For example, the opening page of the chapter is dominated by a large picture from the film Cellular (2004). The accompanying text (set in a coloured text box below the image) contextualises this image by explaining that it is from a film about a woman desperately trying to locate someone who will listen to her and help find her missing son. The emotional anguish that is clearly visible on the woman's face encourages us to empathise with the woman's position. On the third page of the chapter there is an image of a dog and a man. The man's face is very close to the dog's ear, and he appears to be whispering to the dog which appears to be listening intently. No other explanation is given but there is an implicit reference to stories about close human connection with animals. These images mediate the message that there is an inherent truth-value (Ellis and Bochner, 2007) in stories and experience. In other words, changes in modal composition are implicitly mediating the idea that insight and empathy, not just facts, contribute to understanding The shift to modal complexity evident in the comparison of these two texts is prising open the traditional boundaries between what was considered to be valid knowledge and what was not. This move to incorporate a wider range of content, particularly stories and personal experience, is a clear move away from the refined fact-based knowledge that dominated Western epistemology and pedagogy and mediating a subconscious endorsement that personal stories and theoretical knowledge can sit comfortably alongside each other.

Seminal learning theorists, for example von Glasersfeld (1995) and Vygotsky (1962) believe, and most teachers intellectually agree, that learning is a process of actively constructing what we know about the world, based on our previous experiences of the world. Most also agree that the only intellectual concepts available to the learner are his or her own pre-established structures, therefore shared meaning cannot be assumed because the sender's constructed concepts may not find a 'fit' with the receiver's pre-established cognitive structures (Vygotsky, 1962). But the medium of print and its product, the textbook, undermines these constructivist beliefs about learning. For example, the modal intensity and modal materiality (Norris, 2004) of the 1993 (Dwyer) text implicitly mediates a message that positions the reader as a passive recipient of knowledge. The modal composition shows a highly structured layout. The facts are clearly ordered and arranged, and there is a pre-developed and highly directed reading path which dictates the flow of meaning. Vertical knowledge categories are clearly established. For example there are three clearly defined sections to the chapter. They are listening skills, barriers to listening, and effective listening. Within each of these sections there are clear subsets. At the end of the chapter there is a self test which asks the reader to recall facts from the chapter. This highly structured representation of knowledge endorses a positivist view of the world and mediates a number of implicit messages about knowledge: it can be broken down into small, measurable, incremental chunks; it can be acquired as a result of transmission of preformed concepts from the expert to the novice; and the path to expertise has been pre-established by the expert and novices following this predetermined path will arrive at expertise.

Not only does the increased modal complexity (Norris, 2004) in the 2007 (DeVito) text mediate the idea that learners can choose their own paths towards understanding, but it also mediates the idea that the learner can be trusted to do so. While the 2007 (DeVito) example intersperses images, quotes, quizzes and stories using complex typography such as sections of text, numerous overlapping frames, images and stand-out boxes, the connection between them is not explicit. The text includes

almost 30 frames, but the frames are indistinct (fine) and they regularly overlap in a somewhat haphazard fashion. These rather chaotically arranged elements do not direct a single flow of attention. For example, there are only three lexico-grammatical references such as pointers, connectors and explainers which specifically establish the connection between the various elements. This has the effect of mediating less explicit messages; of fragmenting and loosening the flow of meaning; and of stimulating exploratory interest in the problems posed rather than finding simplistic explanations and 'the right answer'. Readers are required to navigate their own pathways rather than have connections spelt out to them. Sense-making is increasingly seen as a personal process of steering through a range of alternative options rather than a didactic process of being directed towards a pre-established truth. This subtly mediates a number of implicit messages: confidence in the readers' right and ability to cope with tension between different perspectives and even embrace dilemmas, greater acceptance that learning involves readers constructing their own meanings and trust that the readers are competent to make their own choices.

According to Norris (2004), the materiality of a mode is the extent to which that mode is capable of changing or mutating over time: its capacity for transformation. The modes of image and text have traditionally had "highly visible and extensively enduring materiality" (Norris, p. 9). This is changing as the technology associated with print production changes, and the producers of texts are increasingly able to exert greater control over the production process, giving them, and their readers, the technological potential to manipulate texts. Increasingly the distance between those participating in the chain of print communication is reducing and this is altering the perceived stability and durability of printed texts. Poster describes this change in modal materiality as the "increasing volatility of written language, its instability and uncertain authorship" (1994, p 386). When Poster wrote this he was referring particularly to the move from the medium of print to the medium of digital texts, but this distinction is increasingly artificial because now almost all printed texts, at some point in their production cycle, are shaped by digital technology. This change in the materiality of print is subtly changing our epistemological perceptions of the status of printed knowledge, reducing the authority of the printed word and exposing its subjective nature.

The technology and associated economics of the medium of print are influencing the materiality of printed texts. Traditionally textbooks were written for durability. This was economically motivated because each print run was so expensive that the producers of the text had to maximise the number of sales from each run to ensure sufficient return on their investment. In order to maximise the longevity of its relevance, the 1993 (Dwyer) textbook explicitly aims to appear chronologically neutral by stripping the text of almost all references that locate it with a particular timeframe. For example, there are no references to contemporary media, social issues or other current research ideas in the text. The only clue that locates this text within a particular timeframe is the bibliography at the very end of the chapter, clearly separated from the body of the text.

Even within the conventional textbook industry, very small print runs and 'just–in–time' production techniques mean the economic motivation behind extending the time between print runs has considerably reduced. With the advent of e-book and print-on-demand technologies the publisher can keep a book in print for as long as there is any demand – no matter how limited. In the 2007 (DeVito) text there is a gradual but clear loosening of the demands of durability, and the text makes claims of freshness of content through several references to recent films, contemporary social issues and contemporary personalities. For example, the text refers to Oprah Winfrey, to political tensions between China, Japan and Korea, and to the film Cellular - notably with the date of the film (2004) prominently displayed on the front page of the chapter. Throughout the text, frequent references are made to other theorists' research and ideas, with the associated dates of this research clearly displayed. This is opening up a new discourse: that of texts being more relevant, and having greater practical application if they are temporally anchored to the present.

Another indication of the increasing material instability of the medium of print that can be observed in the 2007 (DeVito) text by the frequent references to online adjuncts to knowledge: for example, each page contains a footer prompting the reader to go to www.ablongman.com/devito. This has the effect of positioning the textbook as a portal or gateway through which more knowledge can be accessed. As tools of reference, textbooks traditionally frequently dictated what was legitimately included in a subject curriculum, and therefore what was excluded. The 1993 (Dwyer) chapter firmly brackets the topic of listening: the chapter implicitly claims to be an authoritative, contained summary of the most useful points. By contrast, the reduced modal materiality of print (particularly the incorporation of online knowledge) of the 2007 (DeVito) text means that the boundaries between what is included and what is excluded are becoming increasingly blurred. The text is more open-ended, and there is recognition of the idea that there are relevant contributions to the subject outside the confines of the chapter, and the reader is actively encouraged to pursue this external knowledge.

The changing materiality of the two textbooks is also expressed through the marked difference in the weight and feel of the stock on which they are printed. The 1993 (Dwyer) stock is heavier and has a much more substantial feel. This gives the impression of durability and stability: the knowledge contained in this book will have relevance for some time. The paper that the 2007 (DeVito) text printed on is glossier and lighter. (It is interesting to note that the very recently released 2009 edition of the DeVito text is printed on even lighter paper). Clearly this is a response to cost constraints but the implicit message is that the lifespan of the knowledge expressed in the 2007 (DeVito) text is limited: the book and its ideational content are disposable.

Changed perceptions of the durability of print are central to Poster's (1994) claims that changes to the materiality of the print medium will significantly impact on our beliefs about the credibility of texts and the authority of the authors of the texts. Poster says that traditionally "print culture, by the materiality of the words on the page as compared with the evanescence of the word in oral culture, promoted the authority of the author as an intellectual and a theorist" (p. 379). Poster believes that the long established perception of the concreteness of the medium of print has been central to mediating the transition of content from "cultural works into monuments and authors into authorities" (1994, p. 385).

In the 1993 (Dwyer) text the author is not at all visible. Ellis and Bochner (1996, p. 15) call this "camouflaging the 'I'. Poster (1994) claims that this tradition of authorial effacement was, in part, a result of the extended production cycle of the medium of print. The complexity of the print production process meant that texts were reshaped over many stages of technological intervention as they journeyed through lengthy production cycles. In this process the author lost connection, control and involvement with the original text. Over time the material density of the medium of print positioned the author as existing outside the knowledge, unbiased, ideologically neutral. The 1993 (Dwyer) text implicitly minimises the presence of the author and supports authorial detachment.

The 2007 (DeVito) text makes the presence of the author much more evident, therefore there is greater recognition that the knowledge included in the chapter is mediated by the author of the text. For example, although Joseph DeVito still refers to himself in the third person, he frequently explicitly references himself within the text as just one theorist among many and, unlike the 1993 (Dwyer) text, the 2007 (DeVito) text contains constant references to other theorists to support the points being made. This subtly mediates the idea that the knowledge being presented by the text is not an unassailable representation of the world, nor is it the exclusive creation of the author, rather it is a product of agreement between people.

Conclusion

In this paper I have examined how, as the affordances and constraints of print technology are changing, our beliefs about what it means to know and learn are also subtly changing. The regime of the medium of print is losing its 300-year grip on our epistemological and pedagogical assumptions. We are moving with frenetic speed towards electronically mediated communication, which in turn will have its own, as yet unrealized, set of affordances and constraints. This radically different medium will have a profound impact on what it means to know and learn in the future. A multimodal approach will provide useful tools for investigation of the next logical research question: what implicit discourses about what it means to know and learn would a textbook that is shaped by digital technology mediate?

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The Visual Writing of Memory

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Abstract

Designing and shaping of mediumistic distributions change the cultural memory. In the course of its interpretive and shaping way of operating, Visual Communication constantly makes an addition (Setzung) in the culture programme (Zierold, 2006; Schmidt, 2003). Communication designers not just design visual interpretations in the context of cultural prerequisite connections (Voraussetzung); they also continually develop new perspectives of cultural conditions. Thereupon, designers are partly responsible for a process, that can be named cultural metabolism, which means the active change of the cultural memory. Up to now being forced to decide between the exegesis of design-developed artefacts and the reflection of the process of designing, design research is more and more challenged to grasp designing processes in their cultural dependencies. Referring back to cultural prerequisite connections, the design-creating process links the appearance of cultural artefacts and "writes" the memory of the culture. With their work, communication designers not just transport the knowledge of culture and society. Following their designing ethics intrinsically, they change the cultural prerequisite connections and, by means of ever new sets, act as agents of culture.

Here, they can do what they want. Here, it is possible to be crazy, to play around with ideas, to sketch and to build – one could think. However, the workshops of creative productions – the laboratories of the designers – do not just work with colours and shapes anymore because design is (at first) invisible (Burckhardt, 1995). Designers draft solutions for "problems" which refers to goals set in advance by customers. They develop or improve applications and artefacts in all areas of life and deal with services as well as products or visualizations of different facts. That is how designers not just promote design competence, but also consider professionalized creativity and design ability as their first priority. To get a little more in touch with the work of creative laboratories and their dependence on knowledge, we firstly consider the process of designing:

Against old prejudices, designers are not massively limited in their scope for action right from the start. They are supposed to develop innovative drafts out of a context of numerous, often contradictory premisses. Formal-aesthetic design tasks increasingly recede into the background. These design-typical, solution-oriented, and innovation-creating approaches can also be successfully run removed from the concrete designing of visual artefeacts, which is demonstrated by the Californian design- and advisory company *Ideo*.

Using the term *design thinking*, Ideo isolates the design ethos and creation mechanism from formal-aesthetic applications. Being an expert on creative laboratories, Ideo constitutes competence teams from various disciplines of expertise. Only a few are educated in design; however, all participants are trained in Design Thinking. What does Design Thinking mean?

According to Ideo's CEO Tim Brown, to approach the needs and wishes of the implied target, it is necessary to share an attitude or a thinking which is primarily determined by *empathy*. By putting their focus on the human being and considering its world from various perspectives of different user groups, designers develop solutions which correspond to the needs of the users and therefore are attractive considered per se (Brown, 2008). Designers are not just characterized by the ability to empathize, but also by their immense powers of observation. They observe, to say it with the words of Brown (2008), "the world down to the smallest detail. They recognize things which others miss and use these discoveries to create something innovative" (p. 62).

Tim Brown does not believe in the myth of the creative genius. To him, the solution-oriented thinking of the designer is learnable. At the same time, besides the ability to empathize and the powers of observation, Brown names further characteristics which are essential for Design Thinking and which cannot necessarily be learned ad hoc:

Integrative thinking is what Brown calls the quality to consider all significant aspects of a problem – no matter how contradictory they might be – and to integrate them into own reflections and solutions (Brown, 2008). To be able to constantly develop new solutions, even under difficult circumstances, one other job-specific characteristic is necessary: *optimism*. According to Brown, designers assume on

principle that there is always something to improve or that there can be at least one solution which is better than the predecessing approaches. Hence, they are searching tirelessly for new and creative solutions. Moreover, it is known and comprehensible that innovations develop out of *enjoyment of experimenting*. The thinking of the designer examines creatively the treated facts of matter because great innovation is rarely produced from gradual adjustment, which is what Brown refers to. To Brown (2008), “The myth of the lonely, creative genius” was “removed by the reality of the excited, interdisciplinary team worker” (p. 62). Brown considered Design Thinking in the tradition of Edison, who, in his own definition of the genius, referred to “transpiration” instead of “inspiration” and who did not get tired of constantly pointing out the special status of team work in his laboratories. Next to empathy as sensitive powers of observation, Design Thinking also includes *integrative thinking, optimism, enjoyment of experimenting,* and the *ability to work in a team* (Brown, 2008).

For nature and social scientist Michael Polanyi, empathy is the key to understanding and to increasing knowledge and skills provided by other people. The ability to empathize being an access to the knowledge of the people is a thought that Polanyi picks up from the philosophers Wilhelm Dilthey and Theodor Lipps. Polanyi (1985) starts from the assumption that “we know more than we know to say” (p. 14). This knowledge and the resultant skills, which cannot be put into words, is what Polanyi calls implicit knowledge – knowledge, that cannot be described explicitly. For Polanyi, this includes intellectual as well as practical knowledge; the *knowing that* as well as the *knowing how* (Polanyi, 1985).

On the one hand, empathy means an access to the implicit knowledge of other people and, therefore, the way to understand the implied target. On the other hand, the ability to empathize makes way for creating the own key knowledge because implicit knowledge is knowledge which is not stored on data carriers; it can only be received by observation and empathizing (Meier, 2001).

The ability to empathize and implicit knowledge therefore sharpen the powers of observation. “design thinkers” learn to get the perspectives of others by empathizing. However, empathy and integral thinking have a drawback: They increase the complexity. With their help, facts of the matter and the way of looking at a problem can be examined further, but the density of information, that needs to be processed, increases proportionally. The discovery performance of the designer increases the number of parameters, which are supposed to be integrated in the drafts and

solutions consistently. Facts and problems become more complex and the way to the optimum solution gets more difficult, especially if aspects, not intended to be neglected, are diametrically opposed to each other.

According to Tim Brown, *integrative thinking* is needed to integrate all kinds of aspects into the development process (Brown, 2008). A method of complexity reduction, however, is not named by Brown.

In the 1960s, the increasing complexity of design problems encouraged architect Christopher Alexander to reflect upon the design process methodologically. The amount of information, which a designer needs to develop adequate solution patterns, is, according to Alexander, not bearable for a single person anymore. Alexander considers the information accumulation as well as the use of the amount of information as such a high level of complexity that they cannot be dealt with intuitively anymore. Furthermore, the given design problems change faster than traditionally trained methods can react to (Bürdek, 1991).

The method of complexity reduction developed by Alexander can be called *structuring of the context*. The solution (e.g. the form) develops, according to Alexander, out of the context. To understand this, it is necessary to firstly fan out its single parts. The collected amounts of information are structured and divided hierarchically; the design problem is dismantled. The dissection and definition of the context provide the designer with orientation and form the prerequisite connection for elaborated solution approaches (Bürdek, 1991).

Nowadays, Alexander is considered to be one of the founding fathers of design methodology which is determined to reflect upon the methods of the design process. This field of expertise has the goal to create a method canon which can be considered supporting for design practitioners and which can be used to choose a proper approach according to the current requirement instead of hoping to postulate the observance of an optimized and binding design method.

Almost at the same time as Alexander, design theoreticians Tomás Maldonado and Gui Bonsiepe, both teaching at the School of Design in Ulm, developed different systematical design methodologies taking science into account. For the School of Design Ulm, the differentiation towards tradition of artistically and intuitively operating art schools was not just supposed to be achieved with the scientification of the design process; it also served as a means to legitimize design as a founded

discipline. With justified and methodologically proved solutions, designers could face the demands of economy argumentatively strengthened (Bürdek, 1991).

The model of system researcher Horst Rittel turned into a classic of design methodology. He divides the design process into six phases: (1) definition of the task, (2) information accumulation, (3) information analysis, (4) design phase, (5) evaluation and selection of solution approaches as well as (6) test and implement phase. This quite broad model of Rittel became the basis of numerous similar approaches (cf. the work method of Hans Gugelot in Bürdek 1991, p. 159; Schneider 2005, p. 285), created to divide the process of designing into separate work steps.

The conception to not just focus on one approach methodologically has not been natural in the first years of discussion about the methodology of design. A change of paradigms from an orthodox towards an – according to Paul Feyerabend – anarchistic (nowadays more of a casuistic) design methodology did not happen before the 1970s. Moreover, the methodological direction changed in the 1970s. While the used design methods mostly had a *deductive* character, which means that they were working their way from a generally defined problem setting towards a particular solution, design processes became more and more *inductive*, which means that they were assuming a determined target group or attributes defined by the single user (Bürdek, 1991).

While the division of design processes into single design phases serves orientation, course models do not just protect from obstacles and problems occuring in the designing process. The eminent problem of complexity of information amounts can be faced by structure and hierarchy of information materials – thanks to Alexander's method of complexity reduction.

The complexity of quantity is extended by a qualitative, job-immanent difficulty: The complexity of technology. Media philosopher Norbert Bolz (2000) defines design as "the hermeneutics of technology" (p. 25) and forms in their task "the unity of difference between form and function" (p. 25). To Bolz (probably sharing opinion with Brown on that matter), designers have primarily to deal "not with artistic forms, but with forms of life" (p. 25).

To understand technical, organized things (devices), the designer has to study their use at first. How is he supposed to act as an agent of unity of the difference between technology and form without being equipped with technical knowledge in the first place?

How is he supposed to interact between the complexity of technology and the familiarity the user is demanding without any technical knowledge? How is he supposed to meet the needs of the target audience (user-friendliness) as well as the interests of the client (rentability) as an "attorney of the user" (Heufler, 1987, p. 5) without knowledge about the technically feasible and the economy of production? How is the designer supposed to be able to connect form and content in an elaborate way if he does not have the area expertise, necessary to evaluate the device of design and its content properly?

However, the designer usually compensates the missing technical knowledge with a simple trick. The help of the designer is the Black Boxing. He accepts that he cannot understand a problem in all of its complexity (Cross, 2008). The designer does not know what happens inside the machine, but he can put his focus entirely on its use, philosophy about its significance for the individual life style or culture, and think about new user-friendly applications. The same way sociologists exclude the psych of the individual to study society, the designer uses the Black Boxing to focus his mental resources on matters that cannot be loaded on the engineer as well.

The exclusion of information to create priorities and to reduce complexity was named as an approach to bridge difficulties in the process of designing. Designers, however, have to overcome another obstacle beyond the amount of information and the technical complexity:

Is it not the achievement of the designer to observe matters in a way that old-fashioned, natural, and slightly perceived events are shown in the light of dignity of improvement? For great innovations, it is necessary to see structures which do not exist yet; to be able to create connections that are not known yet. Those are achievements that range way beyond a high level of empathy and powers of observation. How is it possible to observe and anticipate non-existing matters?

Before a problem can be examined, it has to be perceived or guessed first. Even Plato discussed this contradiction in the Menon. The search for a problem solution is always a contradiction because if one knows what to search for, there is no problem for Plato. If one does not know what to search for, one cannot expect to find something (Polanyi, 1985).

For design theoretician Jörg Petruschat (2005), no particular talent is required to bring out something new and improbable. To him, "being creative" means " to give up the awareness of acquired problem solutions, to open up for pre-conscious phases of mental processes, to make stagnating causalities flow, and to enable associations of new formal arrangements." (p. 110). The design has, according to Petruschat, a "double nature, [...] [i]t is always a throw, a cut down of the popular to meet new opportunities as well as design, which means a back-bounding of the new to the well-known forms of culture" (p. 110).

What Petruschat calls the "pre-conscious phases of mental processes" (p. 110) can also be considered an equivalent to what Michael Polanyi describes as implicit knowledge: Human beings know about important facts of matter without being able to articulate them (Polanyi 1985). While science tries to exclude the implicit knowledge systematically to describe facts denotatively, designers use implicit knowledge to achieve new discoveries and connections intuitively. Their way to search for solutions can also be considered analogically, which is, according to Polanyi, behind every scientific thirst for knowledge because research is, in the words of Polanyi (1985), about "(1) recognizing a problem properly, (2) following this problem and being lead by one's sense of direction while trying to get closer to the solution, and (3) anticipating the still uncertain implications of the finally achieved discovery in the right way." (p. 30).

According to British design researcher Nigel Cross (2008), designers work solution-oriented in the sense of trying to "understand the problem with the help of solution approaches" (p. 87). The work of designers is firstly based on "problems" they cannot – on the basis of missing expertise on areas alien to their own – judge adequately. The designing device can be understood as the design problem. Design problems usually are insufficiently defined problems provided by the customer (Cross, 2008). The fact of the matter is often only vaguely described by the client and challenges the designer to not just develop the "How", but also the "What" of the communication to be designed. Besides structuring the context or the Black Boxing, another design-typical solution strategy emerges, which Cross calls "design solutions" (p. 86).

The designer does not just try to get closer to the problem by designing solution approaches; he also balances his interpretation of the problem with own solutions. Designers tend to continually re-evaluate the fact, which is the basis of their work, to free their minds for further solution approaches. "The problem and its solution develop hand in hand" (p. 87), says Cross, referring to design theoretician Donald Schön who calls this conduct *problem setting* (Schön, 2009). Alternately, the designer defines the focus of his work and its context. He picks up certain characteristics of the problem to examine them further (*naming*) and develops solution approaches, selects among them, and/or chooses the refinement of an existing approach (*framing*) (Schön, 2009). To say it with the words of Schön: "To formulate a problem which is supposed to be solved, the designer has to limit a problematic design situation: He has to choose certain things and relations he wants to examine and within this situation, he has to create a coherence which determines the further progress." (as cited in Cross, 2008, p. 87). Designers rarely just develop solutions for an inviolable problem; they work on the definition of the problem they are dealing with at the same time.

This process has consequences. Designing and shaping of products and communication change the cultural memory (Zierold, 2006). In the course of its interpretive and shaping way of operating, creative laboratories constantly make an addition (Setzung) in the culture programme (Schmidt, 2000). According to Cross, in their laboratories, designers not just design solutions and interpretations in the context of cultural prerequisite connections; they also continually develop new perspectives of cultural conditions.

With the terms *addition and prerequisite connections,* media philosopher Siegfried J. Schmidt describes the connection between cultural distinctions which refer to predecessing, already established distinctions and enable new distinctions in the form of knowledge. "Whatever we do, we do it in the form of an addition" (p. 27), says Schmidt (2003). The decisions made in the process of designing basically serve the goal of a change (solution). The products of the designing process, the artefacts of design, are – no matter in which form – determined for use and reception. Creative laboratories produce and distribute changes. In the regular production of additions supposed to be perceived by the public, creative laboratories produce latently new prerequisite connections as cultural knowledge.

To conclude, up to now being forced to decide between the exegesis of design-developed artefacts and the consideration of the process of designing, design research is more and more challenged to grasp its processes in their cultural dependencies. Referring back to cultural prerequisite connections, the design-creating process of creative laboratories links the appearance of cultural phenomenons with the memory of the culture. Being part of the media dispositive, designers not just administer the knowledge of society. Following their designing

ethics intrinsically, they change the cultural prerequisite connections and, by means of ever new sets, act as agents of culture.

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Rolfe Bart studied Design/Visual Communication at the Duesseldorf University of Applied Science, the University of Wuppertal, the University of the Arts Berlin, and the London College of Communication. As a student of Siegfried Maser and Bazon Brock he elaborated his studies within the fields of Design Theory and Aesthetics.

Apart from his course in Visual Communication, he studied Media Science which was taught by Friedrich Kittler (Berlin Humboldt University) and Norbert Bolz (Berlin Technical University). During his time in Duesseldorf, he worked as Friedrich Wagner's assistant in the field of Foundations of Design. Currently, Rolfe Bart is a research assistant of the Institute for Iconicity (ifi) at the University of Rostock.

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On Being A Designer

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Abstract

Can design writing contribute to our understanding of the practice of designing? Are there examples of writing that grant us access to insights, perspectives, or interpretations that inform design activity? Are there modes of writing that might be suited to the designer as writer? In this paper I draw on the Heideggerian insight that words cannot capture our experience of the world. Words can direct our attention towards particular types of experience, but the reader is always necessary to any completion of an understanding of that experience. I explore parallels between the aspirations that Heidegger had for the involvement of the reader in the completion of phenomenological description and the mode of writing adopted by the designer Martin Venezky in the monograph 'It is Beautiful…Then Gone.' I argue that Venezky uses writing to evoke a sense of his own way of being in the world, to direct our attention towards particular ways of 'comporting' himself in the world. I consider the value of this mode of writing as a way into an understanding of Venezky's design activity.

Keywords
Interpretive phenomenology, formal indication, hermeneutic circle, Heidegger, Martin Venezky, design

Introduction

The 2005 monograph 'It Is Beautiful…Then Gone' (Venezky, 2005) is a rich account of the practice of publication designer Martin Venezky. Much of the text is written by Venezky himself, with additional contributions from a curator/writer, and two editors/ collaborators.

The structure of the monograph is interesting. It opens with an essay by the designer

– ‘Design and Melancholy.’ The essay tells us much about how the designer finds himself in the world. He is in transition. He is packing up a house that he has lived in for a number of years. The configuration of objects and collages within his house are important to him. He is in a constant struggle to rectify the conventional, evenly spaced order that his house cleaner likes to impose on the objects that he brings into his house. As Venezky fleshes out his account of how it is that he finds himself dealing with the world at this particular point in his life, we are given access to detailed descriptions of ways in which the designer is relating to the world, and we develop a sense of the larger significance of these relationships for this designer.

The opening essay is only tangentially related to design and yet it is through this essay that Venezky manages to illuminate so many of the projects presented later in the text. In this paper I explore Venezky’s approach to description by drawing on the Heideggerian strategy of ‘formal indication’ (Heidegger, 2009; Streeter, 1997). ‘Formal indication’ is an approach to writing that Heidegger adopted in an attempt to engage the reader in the ‘completion’ of phenomenological descriptions. I explore the relevance of this form of writing to the cultivation of an understanding of design activity. I close the paper with comments on the potential relevance of this form of writing within an academic context.

Formal indication and comportment

Central to the phenomenology of Heidegger is the claim that all understanding is grounded in the background holistic awareness that arises from our ongoing dealings with the world (Dreyfus, 1991). Whereas most traditional philosophical accounts, including Husserlian phenomenology, commence with the assumption that thought is the basis of our understanding of the world. Heidegger shows, through careful phenomenological description, that understanding always exceeds thought, and that any act of bringing to the fore of aspects of our background understanding is necessarily a diminishing of our concrete experience of the world.

Heidegger’s interpretative phenomenology is an approach to research that aims to bring us back to concrete experience, to reawaken our engagement with the fullness of that experience. Streeter (1997) draws attention to the strategy of ‘formal indication,’ a ‘method’ (Streeter, 1997, p.414) that lies at the heart of Heidegger’s phenomenology, but which has, until recently, been obscured by inconsistent translation of the term into English.

Formal indication proceeds from an acknowledgement of the limitations of words. Words cannot capture experience. The most we can hope for is that words might be employed so as to indicate a direction, a way into engaging in a refreshing connection with concrete lived experience.

The formal – words, descriptions – must be understood as empty, as incomplete. The formal cannot replace concrete experience, it can only direct our attention towards those concrete experiences in their full materiality. Formal indication has an ‘approach character,’ (Streeter, 1997, p.419) it sets up a direction that can only be completed by the reader as they activate their own experiences of the concrete phenomena indicated via the assertions of the formal indication.

What is the nature of this completion? What is it to engage with concrete experience? The aim of formal indication is comportment (Streeter, 1997, p.420). Comportment refers to ways in which we find ourselves situated in relation to the world. Heidegger draws on two senses of comportment: ‘to behave,’ and ‘to stand in relation to…to have a relation’ (Heidegger, 2009, p.40).

As we focus attention on different aspects of the way in which we find ourselves coupled with the world we might be more or less aware of the physicality of our relationship with the world, the way in which we are physically pressing into possibilities in the world and the way in which the world presses back on us. We might be more or less aware of the ways in which the world is showing up for us, and the way in which that which shows up for us relates to our concerns. Finally, there is the inherent temporality of comportment evident in the experience of being more or less aware of temporal aspects of our involvements in the world. We might be more or less aware of the way in which past experience comes into play in our actions or our reading of the present, we might be more or less aware of the way in which our projections of some future possibility are playing into our present activities.

It is important to note that we are, for the most part, not explicitly aware of most aspects of our comportments. We are always already comported, always already involved in the world in some way. Comportments operate at the level of background awareness. What explicit moments of awareness of our comportments reveal is the richness and complexity of our sense of our physical and temporal relations in the world.

In his exposition of one of the most basic senses that we have of our relations in

the world Heidegger draws on the metaphors of 'holding onto' and 'being held by' something (Heidegger, 2009, p.40). The physical and reciprocal nature of this sense of our relations with the world is developed in the work of Merleau-Ponty (2002) and Todes (2001). Consider, for example, the taken for granted nature of our coupling with the world evidenced by the background awareness that allows us to register both the sense of the path pressing back on us as we walk, and the bodily adjustments that we must make to remain upright, move forward, get to the bus on time and so forth. The reciprocal nature of our coupling with the world, where we both press into possibilities and the world presses back on us in particular ways, is a direct challenge to the radical separation of subject and object that is a fundamental assumption of metaphysics and of much 'common sense' thinking. In Being and Time, Heidegger describes the way in which our conceptual understanding of the world emerges from the physicality of this aspect of comportment. Between 'fore-having' (holding onto/ being held by) and 'fore-grasping' (fore-conception) Heidegger introduces a third aspect of comportment – 'fore-sight' (Heidegger, 1962, p. 151). This third aspect draws on the metaphor of sight, it relates to gestalt concept of figure and ground. Given specific interests and concerns, specific past experiences of the world, specific perceptual conditions and specific perceptual capabilities, particular objects and aspects of objects are drawn out from the ground, they show up for us. Fore-sight 'cuts' into fore-having such that it interprets in a particular way. Fore-sight leaves behind something of the breadth and complexity of our physical coupling with the world as it allows the world to show up for us in this derivative, and yet still pre-conceptual, mode. A fourth aspect of comportment draws out the temporal nature of our relationship to the world, we are always already thrown into the world, we have the potential to draw on the full complement of our past experience of the world in our understanding of the present. Further, we are always projecting into the world, pressing forward with possibilities. It is only in the light of this projection into future possibilities that anything in the world shows up for us.

As we come to appreciate the physicality and temporality of any 'comportment to…' the world, the necessity of the embodied situated reader in the completion of any process initiated through formal indication becomes apparent. The strategy of formal indication is a response to the insight that words can be employed to direct the reader such that he or she is in the 'right frame of mind' (Streeter, 1997, p.421) to retrieve a sense of the fundamental experiences that are our comportments to the world – fundamental experiences that must be the ground of any genuine understanding of the world; fundamental experiences for which words, in themselves, are no substitute.

Martin venezky: a designer's comportment

> 'The planned spectacle is fine, but I prefer the unofficial stuff that slops into the frame. That's where the veneer rubs off and happenings can happen. I like the shadowy world of before, the impending excitement of things on the verge, and the discarded world of after, where the cue cards are stored, the carpets vacuumed, the power cords bunched into knots. The suggestion of human ceremony is worth more to me than the ritual itself. It is as if the event is simple a pause between the greater worlds of unpacking and repacking. Here people sweat, practice, concentrate, arrange, plan, argue. Here, outside of the spectacle, the edges melt together.' (Venezky, 2005, p.9)

The excerpt above is from Martin Venezky's essay *Design and Melancholy,* an essay that opens his 2005 monograph *It Is Beautiful…Then Gone.* The excerpt draws attention to the way in which Venezky finds himself in the world – it is a description of what he notices, what happens, what he experiences, what he values. In this short excerpt we are given access to a specific way of being in the world.

What is venezky doing that affords us this access?

First, he evokes a sense of how this particular comportment differs from more conventional ways of experiencing the world. Venezky describes the way in which he directs his attention away from the 'planned spectacle,' away from the 'ritual itself.' He describes an alternative orientation, a focus on the 'before' and 'after,' the 'unofficial stuff' outside the main frame, the 'happenings' under the surface 'veneer.' By introducing his own distinctive comportment as a specific kind of turning away, he give us a visceral sense of the moves involved in working ourselves into this particular mode of attending to the world.

Second, he provides examples of the objects and activities that show up when we reorient ourselves in this way: 'cue cards,' 'vacuumed carpets,' 'power cords bunched into knots,' 'unpacking and repacking,' people sweating, practicing, concentrating, arranging, planning, and arguing. These are familiar objects, familiar activities, typically consigned to the background. As we look at the world through Venezky's eyes these objects and activities take on significance in relation to the 'main event'. They come to suggest an activity that has past or is yet to come. The constellations of objects and activities that surround the spectacle can be seen as potent symbols of the spectacle itself.

The entire essay might be seen as a series of observations designed to give us some access to various ways in which the designer finds himself comported to the world. Venezky finds himself 'dislodging' his possessions from their 'habitat.' These object have become an extension of self, the inner logic of the conversations that the object have with each other and with the space that they inhabit are part of a 'rhythmic peace…built, bit by bit, over the years' – the push and pull between self and world is played out as the real world, the disruption of the physical space is reflected in an attendant dismantling of that 'rhythmic peace.' By pulling up roots and taking control,Venezky acts on his desire to resist 'decay.'

The sense of the situatedness of the designer in relation in relation to past, present and future, is palpable. Venezsky discusses his relationship to one particular painting – Rembrandt's *The Mill*. It is a painting that he is drawn to because his uncle was drawn to it, it is a painting that was a focal point of the eight-year old Venezky's visit to *Gallery 58 of the National Gallery* in Washington. Venezky's contemporary relationship with the painting is quite literally coloured by past encounters. The painting has been restored in the period between that initial childhood visits and the present. Layers of yellow varnish have been stripped back to reveal 'a beautiful blue-tinged sky.' The painting is 'younger' now. The painting of the present is modified by the painting of the past. The freshness, the youthfulness of the painting rubs up against Venezsky's sense of his own trajectory in time, his movement towards an end. The contemporary experience of the painting speaks to Venezky of an anticipated future, already in motion, his own experience of decay and decline.

What we have in this opening essay is beautifully constructed description of various aspects of the way in which the designer finds himself relating to the world. Why does the monograph open with this essay? If, as I am claiming here, these descriptions afford us access to aspects of the designer's comportments to the world, what, if anything, is the relevance of these descriptions to the practice of design?

On comportments and designing

Venezky's studio Appetite Engineers was engaged to design a wide range of print collateral for the 2001 Sundance Film Festival project. The approach adopted by the studio reflects Venezky's interest in the peripheral, in the objects and activities that revolve around the main event. In the early stages of the festival promotion Venezky's team focused on the players behind the scenes, the 'hands' involved in putting the festival together, the infrastructure and equipment required to screen the film. As the festival progressed the relevant print material featured representations of the props and activities that coalesced around the screening of the films – stages, curtains, members of the audience, seated, clapping or engaged in conversation (Venezky, 2005, p.87).

In the context of the monograph, the description of the *Sundance Film Festival* project is sparse. In fact the written descriptions of all the projects in the publication are fairly minimal. And yet the reader is able to make connections between the comportments described in the opening essay and the individual projects. We can see where Venezky's design approach has come from. The design activity shows up as a natural extension of those comportments.

Consider again the *Sundance Film Festival* work. It is not an obvious move to focus on the peripheral equipment, actors and events of the festival. Venezky is clearly bringing his own preoccupations to bear in determining the visual content of the communication materials. The reader who delves straight into the images and annotations relating to the project would no doubt be struck by the distinctiveness of the *Appetite Engineers* group's response to the demands of that project. On the other hand, I would argue that the reader who works their way though the monograph, who approaches the project description after a prior engagement with the Venezky essay, would be somewhat at home with the moves that the designers have made. The access to the project that Venezky affords the reader through the introductory essay, an essay which makes very little direct reference to specific acts of designing, is in many ways more generous than a rigorous, step by step account of the specifics of a given project. Venezky offers the reader an account of his practice that does not simply launch into an account of an act of designing, but which instead provides an intermediate point of connection – the essay. Through the evocation of physical and temporal experiences, experiences that the reader might be able to recognise and respond to, Venezky guides the reader through a process of projecting themselves into comportments that resonate with the ways in which Venezky finds himself in the everyday world of noticing, living, remembering, comparing, of experiencing loss and anticipation. The attentive reader should be able to draw on their own rich experiences of the everyday so as to project themselves into the everyday situations that Venezky describes – to 'complete' an understanding of comportments that Venezky is directing our attention towards. By the time that the reader comes to the images and to the discussion of this specific design project they are in a position to themselves recognise the way in which particular aspects of the project resonate with particular ways of orienting oneself to the everyday. Distinctive moves in the

practice of design might be seen to arise from distinctive ways of positioning oneself in relation to the everyday.

Design writing and research

Venezky is not alone in recognising the need to connect with a more or less shared background awareness of the world in order to cultivate an understanding of the distinctive perspectives that shape design practice. In the area of visual communication design, for example, this is a common feature of most public presentations by expert designers. Presentation by Paula Scher and David Carson, made available on the internet based forum TED (Carson, n.d.; Scher, n.d.) are prime examples of this practice. Presentations given by expert designers, where they describe what it is that they experience and notice in the world, the ways in which this experiencing and noticing relates to their ongoing concerns in the world, and the ways in which this experiencing, noticing and caring plays out in relation to individual design projects, have a long history in the dissemination of design expertise.

In his later work, Heidegger developed compelling arguments for the recognition of works of art as a potential site for the experience of 'truth' (Gadamer, 1989; Heidegger, 1993). Many institutions and research bodies now recognise creative works as either research or research equivalent activity. It is generally the case that there is an expectation that these works be accompanied by some form of writing. There is considerable debate as to the role of this writing, and the form of that this writing should take. Perhaps the Heideggerian strategy of formal indication could furnish the designer-writer-researcher with an approach to writing that is an appropriate complement to the creative work, the artefact. Here the creative work could be conceived as a site for the experience of truth; the exegesis, as a document designed to cultivate a receptivity to, and a shared understanding of, an experience of that truth.

Alternatively, we might turn our attention away from the experience of 'truth' and focus instead on the ethical dimensions of particular orientations. In this case, the activation of connections with a more or less shared background awareness of the world could inform an exploration of the structure of care (concern) embedded in the comportments that inform design activity.

The various trajectories that lead out of Heidegger's early work should prove fertile ground for further exploration of the potential of the strategy of formal indication within academic design discourse.

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Gender and discipline: design publication practices

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Abstract

Design writing began to appear in scholarly journals over thirty years ago, coinciding in Australia with the transition of design into universities. Concurrently, a significant increase of women in the field actuated feminist-informed 'women and design' writing, raising important questions about gendered practices. Yet these ideas are not taken up in broader literatures, while publication and citation rates demonstrate the dominance of men in discipline-building 'practices' (Green 2009). This paper argues that the problematically gendered interactions between women, design and scholarly writing are reproduced through the operation of certain scholarly practices. The argument is supported through an empirical audit and analysis of the publication histories of two key journals, conducted in conjunction with a feminist reading of the Australian ERA Indicator Descriptors (ARC, 2008) of research output. I suggest this reading has the potential to productively disrupt and reconceptualise the gendered relations between women, men and design scholarship.

Keywords

women, design, scholarship, publication, practice, discipline, gender

Introduction

In this paper, I argue that disciplinary-formation and field-building practices in design are gendered, and gendered in a multiplicity in ways. While this position is not new or even surprising, my intention is to map the gendered distribution of publication in two scholarly journals, to analyse and tease apart the multiple layers of how such journals come to be gendered spaces and to reflect on how the field is being constituted and how women and men are being constituted in the field. The aim is to demonstrate a need for further study to make sense of why women and men, but most particularly women, are positioning themselves, and how this positioning is being practiced in relation to decision-making about publication and career-building.

To support my argument, I first outline the theoretical framings; second, explicate the contemporary conditions under which research in universities is measured, funded and published; third, analyse the results of an empirical audit of two scholarly journals; and finally, reflect on the implications for women, men and design scholarship. I suggest that rather than an 'ain't it awful' diatribe, what might be produced is a reconsideration of gendered practices and, following Threadgold, "an ethical rewriting which defines a distance between what is and what ought to be" (1997, p. 29). Next, I outline Green's (2009) theorisations of 'practice' and Threadgold's (1997) interpretation of Foucauldian 'commentary' as conceptual framings for the analysis later in the paper.

On 'practice' and 'commentary'

I wish to trouble the concept of 'practice' as commonly understood in professional practices such as design, whereby attention is drawn to the noun before 'practice'. Hence in discussions about 'design practice', the focus is on the relations between design and knowledge, rather than on practice and knowledge (Green, 2009). As Green argues, what is discussed here is what is being practiced, the knowledge of how we practice, or (citing Kemmis, 2005), "how we think in the course of doing a practice" (p. 40). Yet the relations between practice and knowledge remain under-theorised. Green proposes a concept of the world as practice, whereby the professional world is theorised as a form of practicing the social. In this paper, attention is directed to design scholarship as practice, and as *professional* practice.

Professional practices, according to Green, consist of *speech* and *bodies* in orchestrated interactions, co-producing the social world. Here, the world is inherently dialogical; practice is "always-already social"; and professional practice is complex, characteristically fuzzy, indeterminate, dynamic, and a form of invention as well as routinalized behaviours (p. 43). Individuals are "carriers of practice" and agency is located in the practice (as a nexus of doings and sayings), rather than in the individual (p. 47). This means that what people say and do is constituted in and by practice, and thus subjectivities, or the 'speaking positions' available to individuals, are also constituted in and by practice. Green argues that practices

happen *"in excess of"* and prior to the subject, subjectivity and agency (p. 48), which means that design scholarship (as practice) exists before people can 'be' (positioned as) design scholars.

Practice comprises action and activity, as a "temporally unfolding and spatially dispersed nexus of doings and sayings" (citing Schatzki, 1996, p. 47), and, practice is "polythetic", meaning that it is capable of managing complexity, and a multiplicity of confusions and contradictions (citing Robbins, 1991, p. 46). In describing the world as practice, a consideration of the relations between practice and representation is required. Green asks, "in what sense might we speak of *knowing practice*—of the knowingness in practice, as well as the activity of knowing itself, regarding practice?" (p. 49). What characterises it? How can it best be described and understood, and what does it *look* like? (p. 49).

In this inquiry into and representation of the nexus of sayings and doings comprising design scholarship, I explore the 'speaking positions' available to women and men, while capturing, rather than seeking to resolve, the complexity and contradiction in these practices. The analysis in this paper is structured by Green's features of practice, as: occurring in space and time; guided by tacit understanding; and purposeful and strategic (p. 46). To underpin the analysis, I draw on Threadgold's (1997) theoretical framing of Foucauldian 'commentary'.

For Threadgold, Foucault proposes a change in the order of discourse and ways of seeing, from a Marxist hierarchical order in which individuals are constrained from above and below, to a spatial organisation of various forms of cellular grids (nodal networks). Here, space is transformed into a technology (practice) of discipline controlled by a political technology (practice) of the body. Discourses and bodies "circulate" in space, and regulated by discipline, which is an apparatus for the control of populations (p. 26).

From this viewpoint, scholarly journals become bounded spaces of power and knowledge, constituted and organised by practices that produce speaking subjects, and also the field. In such spaces the "microphysics of power" function by "naming and classifying, distributing and positioning, belong[ing] to no individual but locat[ing] everyone" (p. 27). Bodies and speech become disciplined by practice, controlled by "the structured regularities of discourse [that] are related to the subject through desire…in the form of the power of knowing, and the will to know" (p. 24).

As bounded spaces of power and knowledge, journals are regulated by certain embedded textual practices, Foucault's 'commentary'. Threadgold interprets 'commentary' as the "ceaseless recitation of the same…which performs the relationship between primary and secondary texts (including the relationship between 'data' and 'theory' or 'observation/interpretation')" (1997, p. 23). The practices of positioning oneself within one of these journals produces the self, and also the field within a particular kind of space. In these journals, and particularly those that are highly ranked, positioning occurs through the activities of authoring and authentication. This involves 'commentary' and peer-review, in which "ceaseless recitation of the same" is played out, regulating and managing the bounded spaces of scholarly journals in ways that make it possible and also desirable to enter. Threadgold explains:

> Authorship and its various historical and authenticating forms also works to control chance, as do the disciplines themselves, despite the fact that Foucault argues that disciplines are set up in opposition to the principles of commentary and authorship. Discipline is unauthored, anonymous. It is not owned by those it disciplines, and it remains a discipline only as long as it can continue to produce – 'ad infinitum – fresh propositions' (Foucault 1970/1971: 223) (Threadgold, 1997, p. 23).

It is precisely how these practices operate to control chance, and to discipline bodies and discipline speech, on which I focus in my analysis. I do not claim that women are consciously excluded from disciplinary spaces, but instead that this might occur unconsciously, and as gender is a pre-conscious space (the default order is normatively masculine), it is often not visible. With the aim of making gender visible in the bounded space of two scholarly design journals, the question is, how do these regulatory practices constitute subjectivities, and also constitute the field? As background to this exploration, I explicate the contemporary 'space' of research funding and publication in universities.

On publication: peer review and citation practices

Writing about design began to appear internationally in scholarly art and architecture journals more than three decades ago, coinciding with a significant increase of women in design practice and education (McQuiston, 1988). As founding publications for an emergent professional practice discipline, these early articles are notable for

the absence of women authors, and the paucity of issues relevant to women. Here, I do not discount the "women and design" (Attfield, 2003, p. 77) literatures that problematise the relations between design and women, however, beyond the small network of feminist design writers, this work is not generally cited in broader design literatures. Since then, design writing has proliferated, as have scholarly design journals, yet women's representation in these journals and subsequent citation networks remains problematically disproportional to their representation in practice and in academic positions in universities.

In the current audit climate in universities of 'publish or perish', government funding for research is determined by research output. In Australia, as is the case internationally, output is measured through a state-regulated citation analysis system that maps and calculates the distribution, quality and impact of a range of publication categories and competitive research grants. While books and book chapters are ranked highest in these systems, peer-reviewed articles for scholarly journals and papers published in refereed conference proceedings are currently rated at the same level, although in Australia this is expected to change (ARC, 2008, p. 5). In a value-for-effort ratio, this makes writing for journals attractive to scholars concerned with profile-building.

Journals are also competitively ranked according to 'authoritative status', the highest level being A*, described as "one of the best sources of references in the field or subfield" (p. 14), in which "most of the work is important…and where researchers boast about getting accepted" (p. 21). Until recently in Australia, journals representing newer fields of scholarship such as design attracted a lower ranking than the more established disciplines of art and architecture (Friedman, Barron, Ferlazzo, Ivanka, Melles, & Yuille, 2008). This doubly disadvantages design scholars by having to submit work to non-design journals, and with referees positioned in disciplines with historically difficult relations with design.

At the institutional level, academic levels and 'esteem' in universities are quantified, indicators of which include "editorial roles at A* and A ranked journals, contribution to a prestigious work of reference" (p. 3). Interestingly, "editorial role includes the roles of editor, associate editor, and/or member of an editorial board" (p. 13), while a prestigious work of reference "is one of the best in its field or subfield [which] would be characterised by a refereeing process and high scholarly standards, equivalent to an A*/A ranked journal" (p. 14). Such indicators constitute an obvious gender bias as men hold the majority of senior academic positions in universities (Tessens, 2008) and editorial positions in A* journals, as my audit will attest.

In audit systems such as these, new writers, and writers in new professional practice disciplines such as graphic design, compete for space in scholarly journals in more established disciplines that privilege traditional (non-design and masculine) knowledges. These practices function as barriers to the dissemination of newer knowledges and marginalised voices, such as those of women. A feminist reading of these processes of discipline-formation suggests that women are doubly disadvantaged, first by their omission from the makings and concerns of the field as represented in literatures and second, by the relational networks of power that operate in peer-review and citation practices. These practices re-produce the gendered conditions under which design is written.

While journalistic writing is important to new disciplines, in this paper I focus on scholarly writing, and while books attract the highest research output ranking, I focus on peer-review and citation practices of scholarly journals as this most productively highlights the gendered social organisation of power and knowledge. Similarly, while I identify as a graphic designer, the discussion is relevant to other design fields.

To reiterate, my central argument is that the interaction between women and scholarly design writing as practice remains problematically gendered. Further, I argue that an exploration of the embedded technologies that operate in design scholarship as practice, has the potential to productively disrupt and reconstitute the gendered relations of power between women, men, writing and design scholarship. Next, I map and analyse the gendered distribution of publication in two journals, in conjunction with a feminist reading of the ERA Indicator Descriptors (ARC, 2008). By feminist reading, I mean to make visible (in order to disrupt) design scholarship as gendered practice.

On gender distribution in publication: an audit

I have argued that the disciplinary knowledge and theory-making processes of the scholarly journal genre are problematically gendered. In other words, I argue that the conditions under which women write are different to those of men in a multiplicity of ways. To support this argument, there is a need to take account of and make explicit what is written and published, where it is published and by whom, and more importantly, who and what is missing from this account.

To establish an empirical basis for the argument and building on a map of the

gendered distribution of power and prestige in design published elsewhere (Bower, Clerke, & Lee, 2009), I conducted a survey of two scholarly design journals, *Design Studies* and *Design Issues*. These journals were selected because of their rating as A* journals, and ranking at first and second positions in an international survey (Friedman et al., 2008) conducted to inform the Australian Government's *Excellence in Research for Australia* (ERA) trial. Here, I acknowledge, but do not engage in, the body of work in biometrics and citation analysis, such as Tight's (2008) map of the citation practices and development of "tribes" in adult education.

The audit of the publication histories of these two journals was conducted by counting editorials and articles comprising more than three pages, and organising them by gender into categories of single and joint author. Where I could not identify gender, I omitted those articles and authors (11% of articles, 14% of authors), and where authors wrote more than one article in the same issue, they were counted as separate authors.

Design Studies is published in the United Kingdom (1979–2009), *Design Issues* is published in the United States (1984–2009), and both are available online. The audit accounted for 1,796 authors and 1,315 articles, of which 793 articles were written by single authors and 522 articles were written collaboratively in groups of two or more (1,003 authors).

The results were strikingly similar for each journal (see Table 1). While this snapshot of gender distribution in publication supports my argument, the following analysis explores the complexity and contradictions that these statistics elide. Specifically, I discuss the implications for women and for design scholarship through the framework of Foucault's "microphysics of power" (cited in Threadgold, 1997, p. 27) that operates within scholarly publication technologies (practices) to *discipline* bodies and speech. In scholarly journals, discipline is maintained in practice by subjecting individuals to, and directing them in, 'commentary', and in turn, these individuals act as "carriers of practice" (Green 2009, p. 47), maintaining discipline through peer-review and citation.

	Design Studies	M	F	Design Issues	M	F
Publication history	Single author	84%	16%	Single author	77%	23%
	Joint author	81%	19%	Joint author	68%	32%
1979–1989	Single author	89%	11%			
	Joint author	90%	10%			
1984–1994	Single author	85%	15%	Single author	85%	15%
	Joint author	88%	12%	Joint author	75%	25%
1999–2009	Single author	74%	26%	Single author	74%	26%
	Joint author	77%	23%	Joint author	61%	39%

Table 1: Audit of gender distribution in publication, 'M' = men, 'F' = women.

Next, I tease apart the complexity of these journals as gendered spaces. Structured by Green's features of practice, first, I examine the gender distribution of publications in each journal at different historical periods [time and space]; second, the gender distribution of authorship and editorialship [tacit understanding (of how practice works)]; and thirdly, explore the implications of Foucault's 'commentary' around citation and 'esteem' as defined in the ERA Indicator Descriptors (ARC, 2008) [purposeful and strategic].

Time and space.

The table presents an empirical account of the gender distribution of publication in the two journals. As expected, distribution is overwhelmingly and consistently gendered in both journals, in the first ten years of publication for each journal, in the last ten years, and across the publication histories of both journals. While this inequity supports my argument, the broader implications will become evident in the following discussion.

In terms of authorship, statistically, men are far more likely than women to be published in these journals (82% in *Design Studies* and 75% in *Design Issues*). Men are also much more likely to be published as single authors than women (84% in *Design Studies* and 77% in *Design Issues*). Papers co-authored by men are published more often than those of women (81% in *Design Studies* and 68% in *Design Issues*), and generally involve more authors per paper than those co-authored by women. The implications at the institutional level are that in a joint author publication, for each author located in a different university, each university is awarded the same credit, equal in value to a single author paper. This means that statistically, co-authored papers written by individuals located in different universities attract higher status and

more research funding for each institution, while increasing the measurable research output, profile and esteem of each academic. In turn, this favourably positions them for promotion to higher academic positions, potential appointment to editorial positions, increased esteem, and so on.

Interestingly, the ratio of single author to joint author publication in *Design Issues* is 70:30, while it is the inverse for *Design Studies*, at 68:32. This suggests that co-authored papers are more likely to be published in *Design Studies*, while single-authored papers are more likely to be published in *Design Issues*.

Publication by women authors has increased overall from 10% in *Design Studies*' first ten years (1979–1989), to around 30% in each journal in the last ten years (1999–2009). This suggests that women are now more likely to be published in these journals than previously, yet the level of representation does not reflect the increasing proportion of women in academic positions in design . As academic level is an indicator of 'authoritative status' in citation analysis systems such as the ERA, these statistics highlight an inherent gender bias as women remain under-represented at senior academic levels in design, as in universities more generally (Tessens, 2008).

In terms of editorials, *Design Studies* has published 58 editorials in 143 issues, of which 53 were authored by men, and five by women (1993, 2006, twice in 2008, 2009). In 2008, and for the first time, two editorials were published in one issue, authored by a man and a woman. This appears to represent a seismic change in the gendered editorial practices of this journal, although a look at current editorial positions suggests otherwise. *Design Issues* has published 64 editorials in 73 issues, most of which were jointly authored by four or five of its male editors. Across its publication history, only three guest editors are women (2003, 2005).

Tacit understanding (of how practice works).

A scan of the editorial boards and committees of each journal tells an interesting story about the conditions under which design is written. Across both journals, women's representation on editorial boards, editorial committees and advisory committees totals only nine of 61 positions (13%). *Design Studies* has one male Editor-in-chief, two male and one woman Associate Editors, and of the 26 members of the International Editorial Board, only five are women. *Design Issues* has a four member, all male editorial panel, and of its current Editorial Board and Advisory Board membership, only four of the 34 members are women.

These figures suggest that highly regarded, influential (most often cited) men occupy editorial positions, and thus influence the focus, content and authorship of every issue of these highly ranked journals. Further, editorial positions on A* and A ranked journals attract higher ratings in the ERA, which increases esteem, influence, citation, and so on.

Participation in bounded, gendered journal spaces requires tacit understanding of how practice works through complex rule-governed, but contradictory technologies. Submission procedures regulate authors' compliance with article format and structure, word count, referencing style and deadlines, while peer review and citation processes police and regulate entry to, and circulation through, these spaces. Yet these practices are entirely predicated on the judgment and continuing influence of highly placed individuals, most of whom are men. As speaking subjects, many of these men are also likely to have been involved in establishing the space, and continue to shape the space.

Writing authored by men consistently dominates both journals, making men's writing far more likely than women's to be cited in subsequent articles. As cited authors, men are more likely to become editors and senior academics, making them more likely to engage in peer-review and decision-making processes about who and what to publish, and where and when, but more importantly, who and what not to publish. This is how Foucault's 'commentary' operates (as practice).

Purposeful and strategic.

Research funding under the ERA is partly determined by a volume and activity analysis that measures the profile of researchers in universities by academic level and headcount. Higher levels attract more funding and esteem (and so on), and this impacts on individuals' capacities for strategic interaction in the field in multiple ways, such as choices available, decision-making, career, promotion, remuneration, capacity to attract funding, prestige, authority, invitations to editorial boards (and so on). This is how the "ceaseless recitation of the same" (Threadgold, 1997, p. 23) plays out in practice.

Conclusion: where to from here?

In this paper, I have presented two arguments. First, that design scholarship in the genre of journal writing is a gendered disciplinary practice, which I supported with

empirical evidence. Second, that certain embedded processes, such as peer-review and citation, maintain and reproduce design scholarship as gendered practice, particularly in the bounded space of scholarly journals. Next I ask, what kind of inquiry or theorisation might be required in order to proceed from here?

While I acknowledge that my analysis of the empirical audit in this paper is subject to limitations, I suggest it also opens space for further empirical research to build a more complex interpretation of the map presented in this paper. For example, my doctoral research is underway, looking at women's experiences in design scholarship to understand their histories, decision-making and the choices available to them. Although this is not the work of this paper, I hope the thesis stimulates further discussion as an ethical way forward.

Contributor Details

Teena has worked as a graphic designer since 1987, focusing on community cultural development and design for social change in the community and government sectors, and she continues to work in private design consultancy for the small business and corporate sectors. She has participated in solo and group art exhibitions since 1988, and her work is represented in Australian and international private collections. Teena has lectured in design at three Sydney metropolitan universities and continues to lecture in graphic design at the Tin Sheds at the University of Sydney. She is currently a doctoral intern at the University of Technology, Sydney, where she lectures in adult education. Teena's doctoral research investigates the experiences of women design academics, and she has published in the areas of design practice, design education, doctoral education, feminist qualitative research writing and cultural studies.

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Notes

1. Australia is currently restructuring its scholarly journal rankings policy – see Australian Research Council, 2008, *ERA Indicator Descriptors, Commonwealth of Australia* (http://www.arc.gov.au/era/indicators.htm)
2. For example, the Equity and Diversity Unit at UTS reported women's representation in academic positions in the Faculty of Design Architecture and Building in 2008 at around 37%, lower than the UTS average of 40%, less than the 50% government benchmark, however, women comprise 50% of academics in Visual Communication.

Writing a Media Art History

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Abstract
If we are to write a media art history we need to write about media on its own terms, as a form that situates itself at the intersection of the history of art, science and technology, and which, as a result, may enable us to re-examine some of the more traditional framework of art history. In this paper I firstly examines the complex ground of a media art history via a case study of Luc Courchesne's The Visitor: Living By Numbers (2001). I then examine the possible histories of media art and conclude with several examples that situate the form at the intersection of the history of art and the history of technology. The argument is that we need to acknowledge the place of interactive media art in art history, and the place of digitally mediated transactions in our cultural history, allowing us to assess the status of interactive art along with other forms of contemporary art.

Keywords
interactive art, new media, art and technology, Luc Courchesne, process aesthetics.

Introduction
Two books have recently been published, both named *Media Art History,* one edited by Peter Weibel and the other edited by Oliver Grau. It seems that, although these books approach media art through differing frameworks, both grapple with the same overarching question: how can media art and interaction be thought about and written about through an art history paradigm? There is of course a strong history of interaction in art, seen quite clearly in Kinetic Art and perhaps earlier in some manifestations of Dada. Although interactive media art has its origins in these well-known forms, it has become significantly bifurcated from this type of aesthetic. Interactive media art is not so much about turning on machines or moving mechanical parts, it is now about an ongoing process or negotiation between a digital system – or a network of digital systems – and a user – or many users. This type of artwork is an interactive system, commonly involving the design and development of unique pieces of technology. As such, if we are to write a media art history, we need to write about it as a form that situates itself at the intersection of the history of art, media, science and technology. In order to understand the aesthetics of interaction and to write a history of media art it is not enough to think about atechnical aesthetic objects, we also need to focus our attention on the aesthetic and cultural role of the artwork's technology, and the participant's interaction with this, taking what could be termed a 'techno-aesthetic' approach to interaction.

Discussion
Luc Courchesne's interactive work The Visitor: Living by Numbers, a work now almost ten years old and most probably no longer able to be considered 'new' media, highlights the problems faced when writing a media art history. In this work a participant steps inside a metal structure, her head encompassed by a circular half dome, inside which is projected a 360-degree video image, taking up her entire field of vision. The interior of the dome displays a video projection of the Japanese countryside that the participant is able to navigate via a voice detection system.

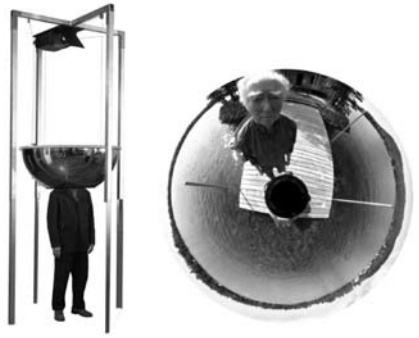

Figure 1: Luc Courchesne, The Visitor: Living by Numbers, 2001. (Reproduced with the kind permission of the artist)

Is this work to be thought of as a moment in art history or a moment in the history of digital media technologies, or the history of experimental cinema? The work seems to sit outside many of the traditions of art, such as concepts of spectatorship, the

agency of the artist, the artwork and the audience and the use-value associated with the artistic artifact. Firstly, the work is for an individual. The projection of the image can only ever be experienced inside the dome by one person, and only ever be navigated by one person. Secondly, the work changes for each user, never realised as one enduring aesthetic object. Thirdly, the work required several technical inventions, such as the inverted cupola and the software required for 360-degree image projection. In this sense the artwork is perhaps treated as a test bed for research into information visualisation, rather than with concepts of creativity. And finally, the work cannot be thought of as an object or entity to be contemplated by the viewer. It must rather be experienced. There is not so much an observance of a given object, but rather an observation with changing processes (Williams, 2008, p. 82).

The first two of these problems, the work's existence for one individual and the instability of its existence, seems to exemplify the line in the sand between traditional art and interactive art. Of course there is now an established tradition of ephemeral art, the artistic interventions known as Land Art and Performance Art are readily apparent examples of this. However, these aesthetic manifestations exist at one point in time, for a collective of viewers, and then are memorialised through documentary photographs and art journals. The difference with interactive art is that it exists for one individual at one instant in time, and then exists in a different form for another. For instance, in *The Visitor* participants can navigate the landscape in a variety of ways, physically, not just subjectively, experiencing the work differently to the last user.

A recent exhibition at ZKM Centre for Art and Media in Karlsruhe, one of Europe's premier new media venues, relayed this aesthetic approach. Entitled *You_ser: Century of the Consumer* this exhibition traced the historical lineage of participatory and personalised art. For instance, the exhibition, showed works by artists such as F. E. Walther and Joseph Beuys alongside a large array of interactive digital art from the form's history. In this exhibition the ZKM presented both a history of interactive media art but also provided points of cross over between the history of experimental media and more traditional works from art history. The ZKM in a sense presented a media-archaeology in a similar way to the theorist Errki Huhtamo (2007). Perhaps this is a method by which to write a media history, as a sequence of events, originating from points in art history, the history of communication and the history of technology, not necessarily connected into a historical narrative, but nevertheless contributing to a way of understanding this type of art.

Art and technology: a techno-aesthetic

Returning to Courchesne's work, the other difference between this work and our traditional ideas about what art is and what art does is exemplified by the requirement for significant technological developments to be undertaken in order to realise the work. Courchesne has developed what he calls the 'Panoscope 360' a piece of infrastructure that allows the projection of a 360-degree image using a single projector (Courchesne, 2006). In order to realise this work, as is the case with so much contemporary new media, Courchesne must not only deal with aesthetic problems but must also enter the field of computer science and engineering. He must invent technologies, not merely aesthetic concepts. It is acknowledged the any consideration of the aesthetics of new media needs to take into account the aesthetics of the machine (Mackenzie, 2006). As such, we as art theorists need to investigate not only the aesthetics of the work but also possess the technical knowledge to understand the functioning of the machine and its software. The difference here between media art and traditional art forms is that Courchesne, along with many other new media artists, does not merely enact a cross disciplinary practice in which he takes developments in one field and applies them to his own practice. Rather the artist *offers* developments to both fields, he designs an artwork that offers both an advance in aesthetics and an advance in the field of information visualisation. We can perhaps trace this tendency back to the early photography of Nicephore Niepce and Louis Daguerre, through to the early films of the Lumiere brothers, which heralded advances both in aesthetics and technology.

This is perhaps best seen in a more recent example: Dennis Del Favero, Jeffrey Shaw, Peter Weibel, Neil Brown and Matt McGinity's *T_Visionarium* (2007). This work utilises a purpose built 360-degree stereoscopic projection environment and a large database of over twenty thousand video clips to allow a user to navigate and recombine television data (McGinity et al, 2007). In aesthetic terms, the artwork is about the mediation of the world, the segmentation of narrative coherence and the temporal confusion produced by multiple media events taking place simultaneously (Bennett, 2008, p. 39). However, the work has also yielded extensive commercial applications as the technological and aesthetic developments that it represents have lead to a large-scale commercialisation with the NSW mining industry as a training simulator (Turner, 2008, p. 46-49). This is an example of a form of new media that not only adopts the advances of other fields in its composition, but actually invents new concepts and technologies for application across the arts, sciences and industry.

Figure 2: Dennis Del Favero, Jeffrey Shaw, Peter Weibel, Neil Brown and Matt McGinity, T_Visionarium, 2007. (Reproduced with the kind permission of the artists)

Although Courchesne's work, along with *T_Visionarium*, has elements that sit outside the way we usually deal with aesthetic objects, we can understand it by tapping into various drifts of art history. For example, the immersive environment provided by *T_Visionarium's* panoramic screen and *The Visitors* panoramic projection in its inverted cupola, can be seen much earlier in Robert Baker's Panoramas from the late 18th century (Grau). As well as this, the investigation of optical effects in both works might be thought of as linked to the experiments of Pointillism or Op Art and the mechanistic aesthetics of the artworks' infrastructure directed by earlier manifestations of Kinetic Sculpture. This approach to understanding interactive media art such as Courchesne's work and *T_Visionarium* would be in line with Huhtamo's and the ZKM's media-archaelogy, a practice in which we uncover the links between historical moments that may not traditionally be thought of as connected.

An art history of interactivity

Theorists such as Peter Weibel, Oliver Grau and Errki Huhatamo have already made significant advances in situating new media within the paradigm of art history. A consequence of this has been a re-reading of traditional works in light of concepts of interactivity. Weibel (2007) has previously pointed out that a history of interaction must necessarily take into account the history of Op Art. Works such as Bridget Riley's *Movement in Squares* (1961) or *Breathe* (1966) require the viewer to shift their gaze around the canvas in order to activate the trembling effects of the paintings (Weibel, 2007, p. 25). In Op Art the artist no longer strives to represent movement or to represent light. Rather they deal with *real* movement and *real* light. As such, the artwork relies on the actual presence and movement of the viewer, in particular, the movement of her gaze in order to actualise the artwork. As such, the artwork, similarly to interactive new media, is not an object that is to be thought of as a means of *representation*, but rather as activated perceptual *experience* (Weibel, 2007, p. 25).

We can also trace the history of interaction to the movement known as 'Kinetic Art', emerging around the same time as Op Art. Here the viewer is required to press buttons that turn on machines. For instance in much of Jean Tinguely's kinetic sculptures, a user is required to turn a handle or press a button, to set a machine into a clunky, noisy and sometimes self-destructive frenzy. For instance, in his early series *Meta_Mechaniques* (1954-1955), works that are driven by cogwheel mechanisms and various compositions of rollers and motors can be set in motion by turning a handle. In *Meta-Matics* (1959) the viewer starts a machine that generates abstract drawings, and in his later large-scale work *The Grosse Meta Maxi-Maxi Utopia* (1987), the viewer steps on a button, setting the machine into a movement that teeters on the brink of malfunction. Here the artwork requires the audience to set it in motion, to start the process. Although in these examples of Kinetic Art and Op Art we see similarities with the current manifestations of interactive art and participatory culture, there is one important difference. In these works the viewer merely initiates a pre-scripted process, the viewer merely turn the machine on, or activates the optical illusion, she does not interfere with the process once it has begun. The artwork remains an object, although in this case it is an object that moves, that can be experienced by the collective audience. Interactive media art although drawing on the history of these forms, cannot be reduced to such a description, as it is an entity that is always in *process*. It is this property of interactive media art that perhaps poses the major problematic for writing a media art history into the history of visual art.

A process aesthetics for interactive media art

For interactive art to be situated within an art history we need to invent new approaches to deal with the aesthetics of the interactive event. When writing about or thinking about interactive media, as I have already pointed out, we cannot refer to an aesthetic object, rather we can only ever think of our experience within an aesthetic event, a system of relationships that exists at one moment in time: this would be a process philosophy for aesthetics, rather than an aesthetic philosophy that focuses on reception (Shaviro, 2009).

The dilemma faced when thinking and writing about process aesthetics is that the entire subject/object distinction that the tradition of Western aesthetic philosophy is based completely disintegrates (Whitehead, 1967, p. 175). Following A.N. Whitehead, the father of modern process thought, it is process that is important, not 'things' apprehended by the conscious human mind. In fact, for Whitehead, process, the way in which things are performed, constitutes what the 'thing' is and our thoughts on that 'thing' (Whitehead, 1978, p. 78-79). Bringing this to bear on digital media we see that occasions that are generated by the human, the software, the interface and the flux of code all go together to constitute the artwork. The artwork is here a process, constituted by a relationship formed between the user and the machine. It could be argued that this is true in any form of art reception – the viewer always forms a relationship with the work, and this is how conceptual meaning emerges. But there is a difference. The negotiation in terms of the latter is entirely conceptual whereas in the former the relationship is embodied, as the viewer's actions visibly affect the work, and, one could argue, visa-versa, as the machine's output causes the viewer to behave in a certain way. It is not that I want to completely disregard cognition or psychology in relation to the way audiences' deal with interactive artworks, but rather to acknowledge that the performative action of interaction comes before our consciousness of the aesthetic event (Massumi, 2002, p. 29).

The ideas that are central to a process aesthetics are focused on the way the interaction is performed or embodied as a relationships that is formed between a user and an artwork. This is similar to Jack Burnham's systems aesthetics of the 1960s, taken up in performance art, installation art and experimental cinema. Following Burnham (1968), artists in the experimental cinema and performance paradigms of the 1960s began experimenting with art that was becoming open and transactional. Burnham, informed by the theory of systems perspectives, proposes an aesthetics in which everything reacts on everything else. As he points out, this systems orientated approach is less about things and instead focuses on events, or *things becoming*, much like Stan Brakhage's experimental film *Mothlight*, in which he sprinkles dead moths, grass and seeds directly onto film stock. The artwork here is less about the final film and more about the compositional processes that set the condition for the film to come into being.

The difference between Burnham's systems theory, the artistic experiments of the 1960s and contemporary interactive digital art is that the relationships here are not compositional, they are rather developed in the participant's encounter with the artwork. For instance, for Brakhage the relationships and activities that gave rise to the final object were the focus. In terms of interactive media, although the artistic process is still important, the activities and relationships formed between the user and the machine, as a means to *perform* the artwork, are central to any understanding of the experience of the work. Here there is not a compositional process that gives form to an object, there is rather a digital system developed by an artist that has within it potential for a diverse number of interactive processes.

It is as Roy Ascot (1998) states, digital art can only be thought of as transformative. Transformative in itself as an object that may change throughout time, transformative to art world conventions as it reconfigures our conceptions of the art object, audience and artist, and transformative to the audience, as it alters the way in which we think about our day to day lives and our social, technological and aesthetic relationships. For instance, we can see these redefinitions and transformations embodied in two interactive works: Dennis Del Favero's *Pentimento* (2002) and Janet Cardiff's audio walk *Her Long Black Hair* (2004). In Del Favero's work the traumatic events that surround a murder in the Blue Mountains are retold as an interactive narrative. The participant enters a room in which images are projected onto the walls. These images are triggered from a database via a motion detection system that senses the participant's movements. In this way, blocks of narrative are uncontrollably triggered by the participant, which combine to form a multi-linear narrative told from shifting perspectives. It is not enough to merely consider the cinematic content to understand this work, we must also consider the manner in which this content becomes actuated. The content itself is traumatic, with slowly moving ghost-like figures, naked against a dark and ambiguous environment, re-living a narrative of incest and murder. The viewer becomes hooked or coupled to this content as they are responsible for generating the images from the machine's database. Here the challenge of the work is not to determine how the story should progress, and try to work out what movements cause what images to be triggered. Interaction with *Pentimento* is not that simple, with images seemingly randomly triggered. Instead the work is about the relationship between the viewing space of the installation and the on-screen space of the actors; a relationship that is facilitated on the invisible level of software. The user embodies interaction here as her physical movements, sensed by the motion detection system, become the interface to the machine. This is how the work is *performed*, and it is through this performance that the content is made all the more personal and affective. It is as though the user, by her movements in the present, is causing the machine to remember various images, triggering them as though they were traumatic memories.

Figure 3: Dennis Del Favero, Pentimento, 2002. (Reproduced with the kind permission of the artist)

Likewise, in Cardiff's audio walks, interactive aesthetics are a combination of the content of the work and the situations in which this content is actuated. In the audio walk *Her Long Black Hair* participants are given headphones and a set of photographs and sent on a walk around Central Park. Interaction occurs here not in the sense of a user affecting the output of a machine, but rather as a participant that works with digital technology to unfold a particular experience or event. Using binaural recording techniques that render a 360-degree sound space that mirrors the sounds of the real world, *Her Long Black Hair* leads participants around pathways, developing a narrative through narrated observations that links the present day Central Park to historical and fictitious events. For instance, putting on the headphones we firstly hear footsteps, these are the footsteps of the narrator, and we are told to try and match our footsteps to hers, getting into a rhythm with the work. Later after telling us to turn left along the street the voice-over tells us that we see peanut sellers, which are not physically present, and we hear the ambient sound of dogs barking, getting closer to us, which again, are not physically present, but we have the sense that they once were. As such, Cardiff's work allows us to experience the world as augmented with, and differentiated by, media. The aesthetics of Del Favero's, Cardiff's and also Courchesne's works are realised by more than the artistic content designed by the artist; a major part of these works involves the process of interaction with the technology. The artworks are not merely constituted by their content, but are aesthetically performed by the actions of a user and the operations that occur on the level of software.

Conclusion

The interactive media art investigated here is no longer concerned with the historical drive for artists to *represent* something of reality through artistic content. Rather, these works are involved in a process of creating a specific type of reality through various technological interventions. In order to write a media art history we as art theorists must account not only for the aesthetic properties of the artwork but also its technological qualities, requiring the art theorist to work at the margins between a philosophy of art and a philosophy of technology. This paper has shown this firstly through proposing a techno-aesthetic theory, which not only takes into account the content of the digital artwork but also the technology and the interactive relationship established with a participant that actuates this content. Overall, if we can start to think of aesthetics as a process, as something that is performed through technology, then we start to understand interactive art as no longer about artistic representations or aesthetic objects, but rather about the artist's provision of a condition for experience to unfold.

Contributor Details

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A Design Approach to Thesis Writing: finding the style, structure and context in design

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Abstract

This paper explores one example of a design approach to writing in a PhD context, which comes from my thesis on Design-led Methodology for Sustainability Research. My PhD work has centred on using a design approach to research hence is both appropriate and necessary to take the traditional thesis model and translate it into a designerly form. In this paper I discuss how I have reflected on the practice of design and the nature of design writing to find an appropriate approach to writing my thesis. The motivation for finding a design approach was to aid my conceptualisation of the work which would make sense to the reader and would best articulate the research. This design influence starts with the context of the thesis and extends to the structure and style of writing employed. These considerations include; contextualising the thesis within a designerly 'what next?' question, using the design process as the structure of the thesis and the use of first person to highlight the central place of the design researcher in the research project. The aim of this paper is to articulate how I have formed an intersection between the practice of design, design research and the written communication of this research in thesis form. By discussing my approach hopefully this paper will encourage others to find their own approach to design writing.

Introduction

For three or more years I have entered into the tumultuous journey of the PhD and now I have reached what I remember many calling the worst part – the write up. The thesis is not a temporal account of this journey, it is a reconstruction to explain the contribution to knowledge that has been made through these years of work. Design as a creative discipline is still in the process of exploring the nature of research

within our field and when at the point of 'write up' the question arises of how to best communicate the work – is a traditional thesis style appropriate; does it make sense to me as design researcher, to the reader and to the work produced? In my research work I have used a design approach to the study of developing a design-led methodology, hence it seems appropriate that writing this design-led thesis should also be written in a designerly way. When looking over many university information websites for PhD students the general requirement given for the thesis is to explain the project in terms of; what was explored, why it was of significance, what is already known, what are the gaps or limitations in existing knowledge to be addressed, how it was done, what was found and what are the implications and possible future directions[1]. In a traditional thesis this explanation is explored through headings like; introduction, literature review, aims, theory, method, results, discussion, conclusion. With a bit of creative interpretation these headings can easily be transformed into ones which better reflect a design approach. The purpose is for this design-led thesis to safely cover all conventional thesis requirements while explaining the thesis in the most appropriate way for the approach taken.

Design research takes many forms; research about, through and for design (Frayling, 1993). I will focus on the form of 'research through design'. Design practice in its raw form is not in itself research (Findelli, 2008), instead I consider a form which takes design and remolds it into research. This paper will look at how this remolded design as research can be expressed through structure, style and content of the written thesis. This paper's intention is to contribute to a conversation on designerly writing forms by suggesting one such way of writing a thesis for others to consider and discuss.

A Design-led PhD Project

Before proposing how I chose to write my thesis let me first explain the design approach I took for my PhD project. My primary interest lay in the nature of design research, I was excited by the emerging work being done to explore what research meant to the creative field of design. Some of the most innovative research work was being conducted within, what could be called, sustainable design research. Within the wider research community sustainability is emerging as a key research area, providing an opportunity for design to overlap with more traditional research disciplines. In particular I saw the sustainable design research arena as an opportunity for design to explore a place in the social research community by contributing to sustainability research outcomes from a social perspective. The aim was to develop a design-led methodology that would provide social research with a designerly approach to sustainability. This project took on an Escher like hand drawing the hand quality. As a designer I used my practice to conduct a design-led research project to design a research methodology. Naturally this process included not only my skills, knowledge and practice as a designer but also a reflection on what other theorists have written on design thinking and doing as well as conversations with other designers, creative practitioners and other disciplines in order to help formulate my conception of the nature and characteristics of design processes and practices. The eventuating thesis outlines one particular approach to design research. The approach takes design's abilities to establish proposals of 'what next?', 'what could be?', 'what should be?' or 'what ought to be?' and applies it to social research issues of sustainability – where sustainability can be seen as 'a long-term social goal' (Steve Dovers in Grafton, Robin, & Watson, 2005, p. 76), a kind of change for the better. Through my research I propose that a design-led research methodology can provide propositions for sustainable futures. The task of my thesis is to explain the development of this design-led methodology based on a sound sustainable design concept, constructed out of verifiable background research and developed into a design outcome that can be presented in an accessible way. The contribution to knowledge is a 'new' approach to research constructed out of existing parts (from design, research and sustainability) and put together in an innovative way to provide an alternate approach to sustainability in social research.

Design-led Thesis Writing

A design-led approach to research calls for a design-led approach to the writing, in this case the thesis. In communicating this PhD project, described above, I decided there were some key qualities from this design approach that need to be reflected in the style, context and structure of the thesis.

I chose the style of writing to reflect the personal, playful and conversational nature of the practice of design. This writing style aims to draw the reader into a personal conversation where ideas are explored in a playful manner. Like in a conversation the personal context of the author is established and expressed in the direction and development of the work. This designerly writing style has been set by journals; such as Design Issues and Design Studies, and conferences; such as those run by the European Academy of Design and the Design Research Society. Although there are many different approaches represented in these forums the main style reflects the characteristics of the design discipline. It is a personal and intimate style reflecting

the central importance of the designer's personality and identity in the design process. French feminist philosopher Luce Irigaray's (2002) book, To Speak is Never Neutral, concurs with the design sentiment that the design researcher's identity should includes both who they are in the realm of the everyday and their identity when theorising or conceptualizing, not as two distinct parts but as an integrated whole. This unity allows for the personal identity to characterise the research journey. Adopting this style highlights the absorption and engagement of the designer in the work. For example, where science seeks repetition to verify the same result for design repetition by a different designer must create a different result by virtue of individual qualities and characteristics. The personality of the designer is reflected in design writing to help highlight the individual context of the author which permeates through the work giving it direction and characterising its innovations. Although there are some theorists who would prefer more traditional styles of research writing which could be considered more objective, generalised rather than personalised, which avoid the first person, by in large most design theorists encourage a designerly approach which reflects the personality and innovations of our field.

Most traditional theses could be considered as fitting into the context of either descriptive or explanatory research (de Vaus, 2003, p. 1), of inductive or deductive. The context for a design-led approach to writing a thesis does not lie within an inductive or deductive process but within a design process which according to Cross uses abductive reasoning (1990, pp. 131-132), this means it follows the 'logic of discovery' (Honderich, 1995, p. 1). Rather than starting with a hypothesis which is tested, as in the sciences, design (at least in the form I am concentrating on here) does not start with a hypothesis, instead ends with a proposition; a rigorously constructed 'fictional possibility' (Wood, 2008), a 'design proposal' (Cross, 1990). Within this abductive context knowledge is built not only out of reliable evidence alone but includes perceptions, opinions, mythologies, anecdotes, theory and documented phenomena. Perhaps this does not establish 'truth' claims in a traditional sense, rather comprises the gamete of information to be explored in establishing a design proposal. These knowledge systems and the way design applies them could be considered as 'un-rational' – meaning other than rational – not using traditional systems of logic. The traditional system of knowledge is thought of as following in the direction of the 'simple to the complex… from the indefinite to the definite…from the particular to the general… from the concrete to the abstract… from the empirical to the rational' (Herbert Spencer in Sullivan, 2005, p. 13). This sequential model may now be considered as the legitimate way of approaching

knowledge, however it was not always so, as this sequence was only constructed in the 19th century (Sullivan, 2005, p. 13). Although this sequential model may be firmly imbedded within traditional research approaches, for design the sequence is more appropriately read backwards (if a sequence is actually appropriate at all); from the complex to the simple, from the definite to the indefinite, from the general to the particular, from the abstract to the concrete and perhaps instead of rational or empirical – from the un-rational to the fictional. I am not attempting to make the claim that design is unique in applying this approach. Instead I only intend, by way of explanation, to distinguish the design context from what is generally considered as traditional approaches to a research thesis.

A traditional PhD thesis structure follows something like: introduction, literature review, aim, theory, method, results, discussion, and conclusion. This may be familiar to the sciences however those within design do not usually refer to design processes in this way. Design is more easily considered through the process of: brief, concept, concept development, design outcome, presentation. Perhaps there are some similarities between the traditional and the designerly headings. I propose an analogous structure between the traditional and the designerly; where the traditional style can be transposed into a designerly naming structure. I propose the use of the designerly headings (brief, concept, concept development, design outcome, presentation) with three additions; a preface and introduction to start and a conclusion to end. The traditional introduction is broken up and expanded into the preface, introduction and brief. The traditional literature review chapter then becomes the designerly background research chapter. The theory chapter is transformed into the designerly concept chapter. The method chapter becomes concept development. Results and discussion are re-formed into design outcome and presentation. Then the conclusion is added at the end to consolidate the contribution to knowledge.

1. Preface
2. Introduction
3. Brief
4. Background Research
5. Concept
6. Concept Development
7. Design Outcome
8. Presentation
9. Conclusion

In the design-led research I conducted for my PhD project something 'new' is created and the thesis structure needs to explain the construction of this design proposition, which in my thesis is a design-led methodology. I chose the above structure to best communicate this design-led approach.

Starting with a preface allows for the establishment of the personal exploration and approach for the thesis. This is where the personal context of the author can be initiated. This section is a chance to outline the 'behind the scenes' context for the thesis; how the author became interested in the topic, significant events in the thesis journey, defining the approach chosen for the communication of the thesis and so on. It is a chance to introduce the reader to the voice in the thesis and to outline how this identity influences the work. Some design thesis like to add this information into the introduction. Like Bowen's recent thesis (2009) where the study is initiated with a chapter called 'setting the scene' which includes an introduction as well as preliminary work and personal context. I chose to precede the introduction with this preliminary information to clarify the personal context and approach before introducing the project, allowing the reader to formulate a contextual framework in which to interpret the explanation of the work. For my thesis preface I chose to add the personal context of how I found my way to the research topic, an overview of my thesis journey and influential characteristics of the time and place from which I write. I also added an explanation of the design approach I chose to write the thesis and details of the theoretical decisions I made about what to include and what to leave out.

With the preface establishing the personal context and approach to the thesis, the introduction chapter concentrates on outlining the research thesis like a traditional thesis would. The introduction is a clear and simple explanation of the project, it 'is the shortest but the most important chapter in your thesis…. to introduce readers to the thesis' (Evans & Gruba, 2005, p. 58). The introduction can be considered as a complex generalization of the thesis as a whole and needs to set up the area of investigation, identify what is being looked for and how the thesis will proceed. It should include a 'problem statement', 'aim and scope' and 'overview of the Study' (Evans & Gruba, 2005). As Evan and Gruba advised, I kept my introduction simple. I introduced what I was looking at; the area of interest or problem statement. I outlined why my study was significant; the arena of research my work is situated in and how my project contributes to this research arena. Finally I gave a synopsis of the following chapters to outline how the thesis will proceed; each part and how they all fit together.

The introduction is followed by the brief chapter which sets up the specifications for the project. Where the introduction identified the problem statement, scope, aims and overview of the thesis study the brief more specifically sets up the specifications for the project including the scope, aims, objectives and epistemological context for the project. In the temporal progression of a project the brief evolves over time from the start of the PhD as progress is made to the conclusion of the project. However, in the written thesis the brief is not expressed as the original starting point of the PhD study but as a reconstructed brief to outline the specifications for the design proposal. This brief chapter outlines for the reader what criteria are used for constructing the proposition. The brief initiates the investigation and gives direction and focus to the background research chapter that follows. My brief primarily needed to initiate the investigation and establish the framework for how I conducted the background research. However it also needed to establish the criteria for the project as a whole including the specifications that lead to the outcome of a design-led methodology for sustainability research. I decided to isolate the three core concepts that initiated my work – design, research and sustainability – and paint a word picture of the many different ways of conceptualizing these ideas through exploring a combination of perspectives, opinions, observations and referenced ideas. From this array of meaning I identified the focus of my study and outlined the criteria emerging from these areas of design research, sustainable design and social research. From these criteria I established the aims, objectives and epistemological context for the project.

The background research can be thought of as like the traditional literature review. This chapter takes the specifications from the previous brief chapter and outlines the study conducted into a wide variety of existing knowledge which can be extrapolated out from the brief. This chapter gives an overview of the relevant knowledge in the field, like a traditional literature review, as well as touching on the scope of related knowledge. The chapter highlights which aspects were focused on and how the disparate ideas collected have been sythesised. This section both expands the brief and gives the context and direction for the next 'concept' section. My background research covered the existing theoretical perspectives on design practice, design research and sustainable design. I started by setting up the historical context for creative modes of thinking and ended by synthesising the information into key perspectives for the project.

The concept can be thought of like theory building. This section takes the synthesis of background research and transforms it into a core idea which will drive the project. It is not a description of existing theory but a compilation of existing research into

a newly constructed or reconstructed perspective. It sets up the central principles and models from which the project develops. For my project the concept was distilled out of the key theoretical perspectives outlined in the previous chapter; systems approach to design, participatory approaches, enabling design and so on. My concept was defined as enabling design from within the system of the everyday and from this core idea a series of 'sketch models' where developed to guide the conceptualization of the project.

The concept development section can be thought of as like the traditional methods chapter. This section explains what and how the project was done. This chapter takes the concept defined in the previous chapter and works it up into a design proposal to be outlined in the next 'design outcome' section. For my thesis this chapter explained the methodological idea I constructed from the concept and how I further developed this methodological idea through field work in Tumut.

The next two sections, design outcome and presentation, are like a reconstruction of the results and discussion chapter. The design outcome explains the design proposal which emerged from the previous concept development phase. It defines and explains it and considers similarities and differences with what already exists. It outlines the potential, the limitations and what still needs to be done. In contrast, the next chapter is a simplification of this design outcome chapter. The presentation chapter gives a complex generalization of the design proposal and sets out guidelines for its use. In my thesis the design outcome chapter sets out the proposition for a design-led methodology and explains how it meets the criteria set out in the brief chapter and how it works with the aid of comparisons to other methodologies. My presentation chapter sets out an accessible 'how to' guideline, which suggests how the methodology may be used for future projects in design or other social research projects.

The conclusion, like a traditional conclusion, summarises the findings and outlines how they have contributed to knowledge in the field. The conclusion also includes an overview of the implications of the study, what still needs to be done and future directions for the research. For my thesis conclusion I highlight the contribution to knowledge in terms of a different approach to sustainability research which fulfills the criteria set out in the brief section. I contextualize my findings in terms of sustainability highlighting the need for developing creative capacity throughout our intellectual and local communities. I propose that the design-led methodology developed has the potential to enable these communities to collaboratively design sustainable futures. I go on to identify the implication of such a design-led methodology for design and social research in general. I suggest future work that needs to be done to verify the methodological proposal and establish it as an operational research methodology. I also postulate the potential of such a methodology and the future directions it could take.

Conclusion

In Kiley and Mullins (2002) research paper into the examination of the PhD thesis they outline examiners sentiments for a 'particularly good thesis' as:

- *'an artistic endeavour where the student is designing the work and there is elegance of design, of the synthesis, and executions' (Sc/Male/22);*
- *Creativity;*
- *Design – where it all fits together;*
- *Elegant;*
- *A well-sculptured piece of work*
  (Mullins & Kiley, 2002, p. 379)

These 'artistic metaphors' (Mullins & Kiley, 2002, p. 379) suggest a creative practice with which the designer is familiar. A design thesis needs to use the creative skills of our field to construct a thesis in a way that best reflects the designerly approach taken. I have proposed an approach to writing taken from the style, context and structure inherent in the practice of design: a style which is personal and conversational; a context that follows the logic of discovery, resulting in a design proposal; and a structure that starts with a preface, a traditional introduction and adds a brief, moves on to background research, concept, concept development and ends with a design outcome, presentation and traditional conclusion. I now open this structure up to my fellow researchers to further discuss potential approaches for writing and communicating design research.

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Notes

1 This information comes from looking at a number of PhD information websites from different universities such as UNSW's Physics PhD information site written by Joe Wolfe in 1996 http://www.phys.unsw.edu.au/~jw/thesis.html#outline, the UQ student services information on PhDs http://www.uq.edu.au/student-services/phdwriting/phfaq05.html, Monash University's learning support for higher degree research students http://www.monash.edu.au/lls/hdr/write/5.4.2.html, as well as information I have obtained from my own local universities of ANU and UC.

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