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Message
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Communication Arts Research
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The Message journal has been initiated by Message, a communication arts research cluster at Plymouth University and is dedicated to the development and discussion of contemporary visual communication messages through research, particularly, but not exclusively, within graphic design, typography, illustration, fine art and publishing.

The intention of the group is to support the development of creative practitioner and theorists' research, enabling the exploration and expansion of critical activities and debates around visual language and the theme of the message.

Message is currently inviting PhD applications within the following areas:

Visual communication - animation, drawing, illustration, graphic design, publishing and typography

● History and contexts

● Interdisciplinary practice

● Traditional, contemporary and emerging media/technologies

● Authorship, message, audience, markets and narrative

● Narrative, editorial, identity & brand, information envisionment

● Communication design for social and behavioural change

● Ethics and sustainability

● Communication design and curatorial practice

● Archives and Community

● The functions of illustration

● The elucidation of meaning in children's publishing through illustration

● Web design as a form of graphic communication from critical, historical or aesthetic perspectives

● Web typography and it's implications - such as web/open fonts, typography in the age of content management, responsive web design, accessibility

● The impact of digital interactivity on engagement with visual narrative

● Visual communication, spirituality and contemplation

● Pedagogy

MESSAGE RESEARCH WITH PLYMOUTH UNIVERSITY

CONTENTS

WELCOME

It may be a condition of our academic institutions: faced with the reality of subject specific zones, with subjects guarding their territory, we can get slightly crazed as the academic year concludes. We long to break out and do it a different way next term. What about having a drink and an exchange of ideas about shared modules with our neighbours in fine art? Or in media art, architecture, documentary photography...?

At Plymouth we have the opportunity right now to open these discussions as two schools amalgamate and in a very real way the edges are blurred in our conversations and our intellectual explorations.

The readership of this journal may number a few more than can fit around a bar, or a café table, so rather than lose our blue sky moment we can contemplate it through the writings of our colleagues, contributors to this the third Message journal.

Daniel Jasper captures the mood perfectly with 'I don't know where you end and I begin.' This is the statement of our journal. Recalling the advertisement for Calvin Klein's *Obsession* perfume, featuring Kate Moss:

At the core of art and design practice, their respective products are typically distinguishable from one another. However, around their yielding, penetrable edges, as Ms. Moss describes, it can be difficult to suss out the contours that separate one from the other.

Richard Miles offers a sound philosophical explanation of how we arrived at such a stratified arrangement within our institutions:

It is the simple contention of this paper to suggest that the distinctions between Fine Art and Graphic are neither natural, nor inevitable, but historically produced out of class struggle and the relations of production. More problematically, I wish to suggest that there is an entire canon of attitudes, beliefs, values, and ideas perpetuated by the artworld, and all those involved in its machinations, which naturalises and validates this segregation, disguising its material reality, and producing subjectivities appropriate to the maintenance of its strata.

Andrew Spackman and Craig Barber in *The Habsburgs: Alter egos and disciplinary sidesteps* frame the discussion as a conversation, which explores their respective positions as Graphic Designer and Fine Artist.

The study assesses the potential for cross-disciplinary dialogue to reveal observations, tensions and slippage... We start by considering the factors that led to us to conceive the alter egos of the Habsburgs and follow, by considering the way in which the Habsburgs deploy different strategies to side step disciplinary allegiances, both their own and those perceived by audiences.

Stepping outside ourselves requires a suspension from the belief in the validity of everyday activities, which is explored also by Zachary Kaiser in *Graphic Design as an Artistic Practice for the Unraveling of the Everyday*, using examples of assemblages such as *Terms of Use for Handling of Solid Waste and Prevention of Illegal Dumping*,

masquerading as a municipal handbook of the future. Inside its bland cover is a confusing and, at times, comedic work of 'cut-up' style poetry created by software that combines the Detroit municipal codes for refuse disposal with the iTunes Terms of Use and Google's Terms of Service.

Spencer Roberts also takes his analysis on a diverse track to define *Graphic Affect*.

Many of the questions central to the consideration of graphic design and communication have a strong resonance with the issues arising in the philosophy of affect.

This gives no hint of the vivid array of references that illuminate his writing, but expect to be very surprised; and in case anyone wonders where is the Bauhaus in the discussion of shared visual meaning, it can be found here alongside Black Mountain College, landmarks too significant to be overlooked.

Reflecting on the call for contributions it is interesting that the vocabulary borrows from physicality, such as boundaries, space, margins, environments. And this continues in Cathy Gale's *Critical Design Practice: Mapping a New Territory for the Discipline* (or '*Are We Nearly There Yet?*') Under the heading Critically Locating Graphic Design,

It forms multiple productive intersections between art, technology, industry and science in the lived environment... The in-between status of the discipline allows new critical viewpoints to be considered, and wider audiences to engage in discourse around corporate/visual culture.

Considering how to envisage the philosophical territory in a physical equivalent, I cannot overlook the fact that Daniel Jasper describes thus:

The Schengen Area of the European Union contains within it 26 distinct nationalities yet within this zone people and products are able to move about freely among them as if border-less. Similarly, I believe, amid the confluence of art and design practice—ideas—like fellow travelers, should be able to move about freely as they drift towards actualization or their next point of debarkation.

Such a short time ago this was a perfectly apt and unremarkable statement. Now look where the sorry delusion of separatist ambitions has brought us! Continue to explore, question, challenge, create and above all, communicate, to express our cohesion and understanding across the boundaries we happen upon, physical or philosophical.

Esther Dudley

GRAPHIC AFFECT

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Graphic Affect
Spencer Roberts

In the context of disciplines other than graphic design, new materialist thinking has given rise to fresh ways of thinking about the relationship between matter, subjectivity, emotion and culture.

I shall consider human actions and desires in exactly the same manner, as though I were concerned with lines, planes, and solids. (Spinoza, 1955 [1677], p. 129).

Writing in 1677, the Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza formulated what is sometimes termed a 'double aspect', materialist philosophy. Spinoza's claim was that matter and sensation were substantively identical – that the internal life of thought/sensation and the external life of the body arose from the machinations of a single substance that expressed itself in two different ways. Spinoza's dictum is echoed in a more recent comment by Brian Massumi, which serves also to emphasise the dynamism of contemporary accounts of materiality:

If you start from an intrinsic connection between movement and sensation the slightest most literal displacement convokes a qualitative difference, because as directly as it conducts itself it beckons a feeling, and feelings have a way of folding into each other, resonating together, interfering with each other, mutually intensifying, all in unquantifiable ways apt to unfold again in action, often unpredictably. Qualitative difference: the issue, immediately, is change. Felt and unforeseen. (Massumi, 2002, p. 1).

Massumi is not alone in his veneration of dynamic, qualitative, differential-materiality. Spinoza's naturalistic fusion of matter and sensation has in recent times served as an important source of inspiration for a number of 'new materialist' approaches to philosophy, which have in turn influenced new perspectives in sociology, as well as literature, art and visual culture, in what have come to be known as the 'affective' and 'performative' turns (Massumi, 2002; Bennett, 2010; Gregg and Seigworth, 2010). In the context of disciplines other than graphic design, new materialist thinking has given rise to fresh ways of thinking about the relationship between matter, subjectivity, emotion and culture. Contemporary materialisms question what they take to be the hegemonic role of language, representation and communication in cultural theory - emphasising instead the affective and transformative dimensions of our encounters with other bodies. Similarly, the non-anthropocentic focus of new materialist thought extends ideas of agency beyond human subjectivity, encouraging us to think of the agential and communicative powers of non-human entities – a category which, importantly for our purposes here, might include the images, artefacts, and performances of art and design.

Many of the questions that are central to the consideration of graphic design and communication have a strong resonance with issues appertaining to the philosophy of affect. It seems strange then that whilst there has been much interest in the affective turn in the context of the arts, it has been relatively absent from discussion of graphic design. This seems particularly odd when we consider the ways in which matters of feeling, emotion and behavioural disposition are often combined in the context of advertising and visual communication – that is, in the at once semiotic and political regulation of the social, or, conversely, in

Figure 1. Suffragette Emily Davison's attempt to stop King George V's horse 'Anmer' at the Epsom Derby, 4th June 1913. Photograph. Image courtesy of Alamy Stock Photo.

the modes of resistance that emerge out of practices of design activism. Indeed, if we expand our conception of the graphic to embrace the notion of spectacle, or affective display, then our consideration of imagistic affect may broaden to encompass the design of political posters and placards along with the somewhat loose visual-spatial choreography of the protest march and other forms of political spectacle. Thus we might position the image of suffragettes chaining themselves to the railings of government buildings, or the sight of Emily Davison leaping beneath the hooves of the horse of King George V during the 1913 Derby, as examples of proto-situationist forms of graphic display in their combination of the behavioural, the aesthetic and the political. Examples of more contemporary expanded political design might include Natlie Jeremijenko's rallying of hacked robotic dogs to sniff out pollutants in public parks and landfill sites (DiSalvo, 2012; Roberts, 2016) or 'the social probes' of Dunne and Raby (Blauvelt, 2008), which eschew the more obvious signifiers of design activism (such as scrawled text, cut and paste pastiche and caricature), embracing high-end product design aesthetics instead in an attempt to actualise, or activate, alternative political futures from within the spectacle of neo-liberal capitalism.

Consideration of the relational (be it material, experiential, social or otherwise) has been central to Massumi's theorisation of affect. Massumi, informed by the process-relational philosophies of Gilles Deleuze and Alfred North Whitehead, attempts to capture our sense of relational transformation – the sense of the body in transition as it transforms with the unfolding of material-experiential events (Massumi, 2002, p. 15-16). For

Massumi, there is an important sense in which this process is at least in part felt, and interestingly for our purposes here, the recent 'relational', 'open' and 'conditional' movements in the context of graphic design seem driven by a set of similar aesthetico-relational concerns. Many of these contemporary modes of design, perhaps in accord with the Spinozist lineage, emanate from Dutch design studios (e.g. Studio Moniker and Experimental Jetset) or from theorists and practitioners such as Abakee and Andrew Blauvelt whose histories encompass both art and design. Relational practices in their various forms serve to closely connect the aesthetic and the behavioural - drawing upon insights derived from processual and performative conceptions of artistic practice to at once activate and implicate the audience in the performance of spectacle - opening a space to consider the politics of living being in a thoroughly designed world.

Figure 2. Emma Sproson (left) and a friend chalking the pavement, 1907. Photograph. Image courtesy of Alamy Stock Photo.

The Affective Context of Graphic Display

Whilst explicit consideration of affect in the context of graphic design and communication has been rare, it has not been entirely exempt from new materialist analysis. Laurie Gries (2015) has for instance recently explored the at once rhetorical and political life of Shepard Fairey's *Obama Hope* image in new materialist, affective terms - investigating its tendency to propagate and mutate as it encounters diverse communities of actants. Gries conceives of an image as a vital force that acquires additional power through its various material encounters. Noting the plethora of ways in which the Obama Hope image has been repurposed, subjected to permutation, and satirised for what are sometimes antithetical ends, she positions Fairey's image as something comparable to a materially-semiotic 'tumbleweed', circulating throughout and across a variety of political ecosystems where it experiences its own rhetorical transformation, whilst creating strange and unforseen alliances that themselves induce cultural and political change.

Gries, following Latour, states of Figure 3, that

humans are transformed by the relations they enter into with non-humans just as nonhumans are transformed as they enter into relations with humans …both girl and poster are transformed through their material engagement and/or relationship …a third social actor emerges from such relation. (Gries, 2015, p. 73).

Gries' novel take on visual rhetoric hints at one way in which we might begin to consider practices of graphic design and communication in new materialist terms, and as such it serves as a useful illustration of the way in which such philosophies typically address two overlapping senses of the term 'affect'. The first of these concerns qualities of felt experience and is primarily psychological or phenomenological in character, whilst the second is more materially focused, stressing the ontological power of material things and their transformative effects upon the world. Accordingly, Spinoza's philosophical concept of affect, reactivated by Deleuze and Guattari (1988) and subsequently extended by Massumi (2002) and Bruno Latour (2005), can be used to explore the agency of images and objects, and their entanglement with the material world. Alongside this naturalistic focus, philosophies of affect typically present a highly kinetic, dynamic and vitalistic picture of the material world, with notions of circulation, contagion and changing patterns of both embodied and experiential relations figuring prominently. The transmission of affect – the way it would appear to be passed from an image/artefact to its audience, or the way in which it would seem to migrate from one person to the next (influencing emotion, behaviour and patterns of social life), inflects discussion of communication in interesting ways - departing from propositional accounts of informational exchange and moving, as we shall shortly see, towards a particularly materialistic, as opposed to linguistic reading of the semiotic.

Figure 3. Three for Barack Obama. Photograph. Tony Fischer, 2008.
Image courtesy and copyright of Tony Fischer.
www.flickr.com/photos/tonythemisfit/2433650018/in/photostream/
https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/

The Theorisation of Affect in the Context of Artistic Practice

Consideration of both the emotional and performative role of affect has been central to much contemporary writing on art and aesthetics. In the context of the arts, the turn towards affect imbricates a number of related intellectual currents. That is to say, there is a vestige of romanticism that would seem to inform affect theory's resistance to language and representation – as well as its veneration of nature and its expressive, emotional concerns. However, the foregrounding of process that takes place in the theorisation of affect, along with its high regard for performance, chance and contingency, also implicates the early processual experimentation of John Cage and Allan Kaprow at Black Mountain College in 1930s and 1940s. Cage and Kaprow's work can be seen to have laid the ground for the performative turn in the context of art in the 1960s whilst also inflecting the otherwise more straightforwardly formalist work of Pollock. Interestingly, even as Deleuze rejected the purely optical context and the Kantian underpinnings of Clement Greenberg's modernist aesthetics, (Zepke, 2010, p. 65), it is ultimately Greenberg - the champion of Pollock's anti-representational, modernist materiality - that made the strong distinction between the primacy of affect and a second order emotional sentimentality that would become so important to Deleuze's approach to affect (Duve, 2010, p. 93).

It is, however, the notoriously visceral 'body art' performances of Chris Burden and Marina Abramovic that took place in the context of the performativity of the 1960s and 1970s which has proven particularly attractive to affect theorists (Bennett, 2005; Shaughnessy, 2012) with their simultaneous exploration of emotional, and physical extremes, the recurrent trope of bodily inscription, and an important participatory dimension that is most apparent in works such as Abramovic's *Rhythm 0* (1974) and Yoko Ono's *Cut Piece* (1964).

Figures 4 and 5 juxtapose illustrations of Abramovic's performance *The Lips of Thomas* (1975) and a poster designed by Stefan Sagmeister that appropriated Abramovic's strategy of incised bodily inscription. The poster was employed to promote Sagmeister's talk at the AIGA graphic design conference in 1999. Jill Bennett, in her account of Abramovic's work, describes the visceral, affective engagement between the audience and performer, claiming that

even as one reads the figure … [of the five pointed star which was cut by the artist into her stomach with a razor blade] … one winces or squirms [and is] forced into an affective encounter. (Bennett, 2005, p. 38).
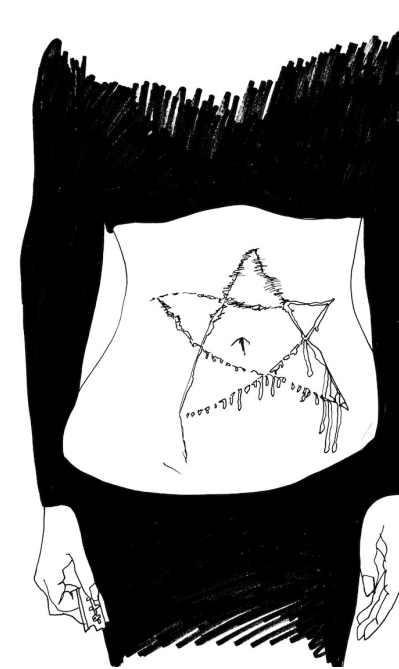

Figure 4. After Marina Abramovic's, The Lips of Thomas 1975. Drawing. Brent Hardy-Smith, 2016. Image courtesy of Brent Hardy-Smith.
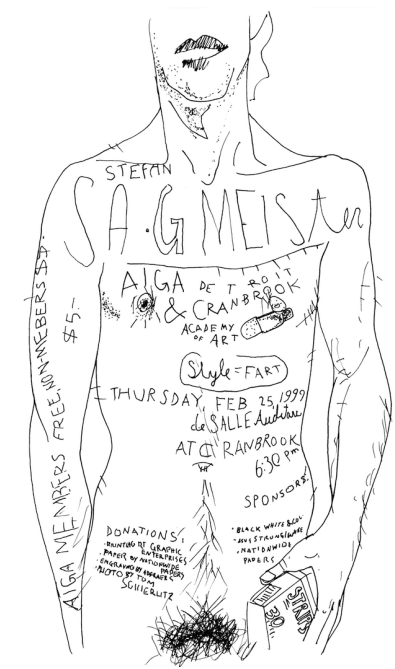
Figure 5. After Stefan Sagmeister's AIGA poster, 1999. Drawing. Brent Hardy-Smith, 2016. Image courtesy of Brent Hardy-Smith.
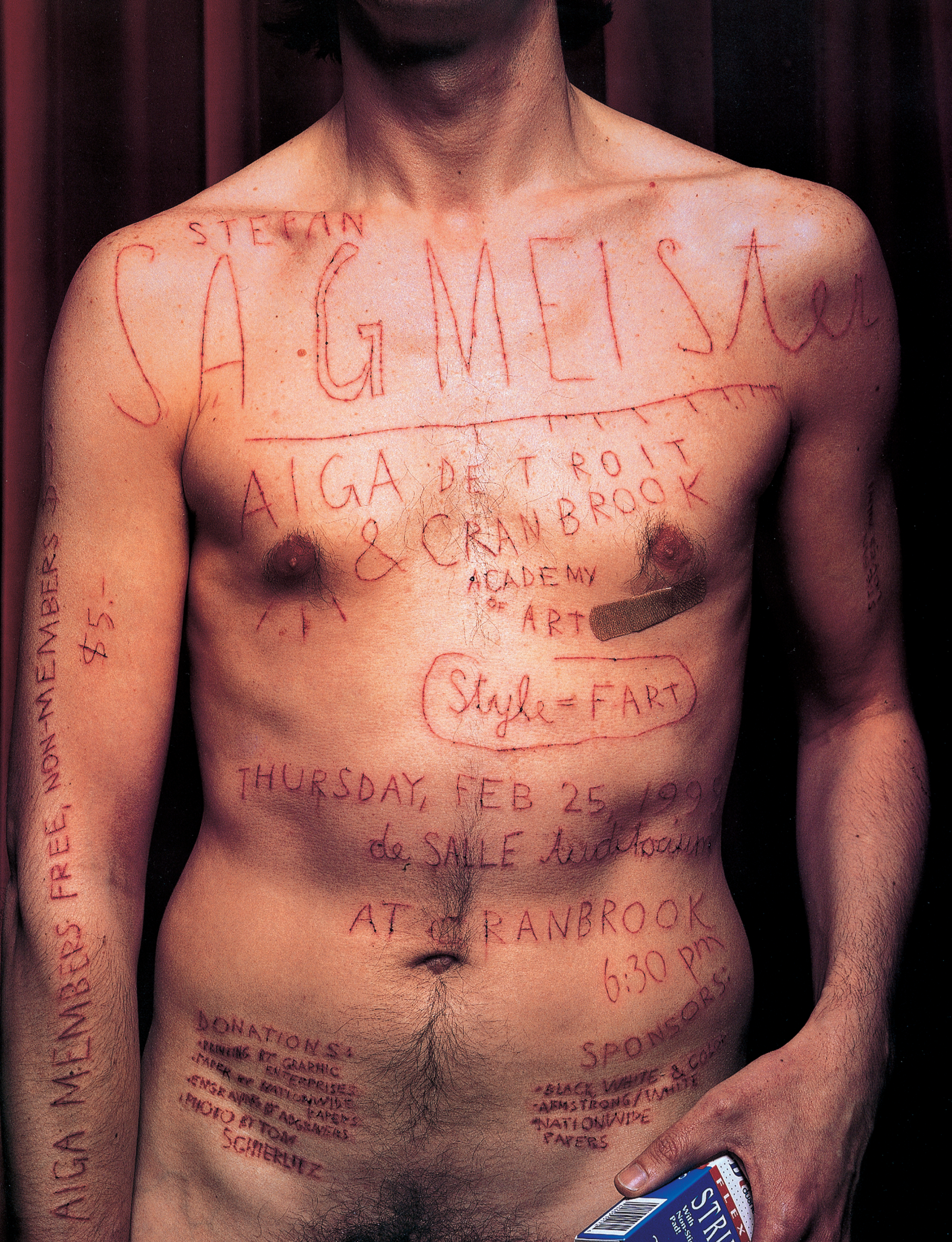
Figure 6. AIGA Detroit Programme. Poster. Stefan Sagmeister, 1999. Image courtesy of Sagmeister & Walsh.

Thus, there is an important sense for Bennett in which the performance and the resulting documentation 'cannot be perceived as anything other than a wounding process' (ibid). The image of the star with its blood-spoilt geometry has become the most enduring relic of Abramovic's performance, which also involved an extended period of flagellation and long durational exposure to extreme cold (Abramovic lay on blocks of ice for 30 minutes). With this in mind, Sagmeister's image seems in comparison slightly sanitised – albeit in a rather knowing fashion - combining tropes of authenticity with liberal helpings of ironic bathos (as evidenced by the plaster strips that he holds in his left hand). Sagmeister's lines are clean and the cuts less deep, having been carefully carved into his skin by a company intern with an X-Acto craft knife. Sagmeister has, however, stressed how important it was the image wasn't produced in Photoshop and has signaled that his intention with the AIGA poster was to at once signify authenticity and to evoke pain – but for Sagmeister it was 'the pain that seems to accompany most of our design projects' that mattered (Sagmeisterwalsh.com, 2016).

Emotional and Ethico-Aesthetic, Political Affect

The discussion of Abramovic and Sagmeister brings one of the core aims of this paper to the fore – namely, the desire to distinguish the advertising and design community's concern with image and emotion from the ethico-aesthetic, more political sense of affect that is often explored in the context of much artistic practice. It is claimed here that much of the interest in affect that has arisen in the context of design has been directed towards the potential universality of emotional communication. In support of this, we might note how Sagmeister has for the last sixteen years been investigating the representation and production of feelings of happiness (through a combination of commercial projects, a series of 'happiness' themed gallery exhibitions, the production of a film on the nature of happiness, and a series of non-commercial 'sabbaticals' in which ideas and processes are tested without commercial pressures). The design industry's concern with the evocation and transmission of (for the most part) pleasant sensation can be contrasted with what Claire Bishop has termed the 'relational antagonism' that she takes to condition much artistic activity – that is, the attempt to disturb the presiding aesthetic/political status quo and activate an audience through broadly affective means (Bishop, 2004). Bishop develops her concept of relational antagonism in opposition to what she describes as Nicolas Bourriaud's 'feel good' conception of relational aesthetics – which emphasises the importance of social inclusion through the production of consensual 'micro-utopias'. Significantly, Bishop notes how the ideal of unified subjectivity and the notion of community as 'immanent togetherness' can all too easily play into the hands of the ideologies of consumer capitalism (Bishop, 2004; Shaughnessy, 2012, p. 196) – and this notion would seem to be equally impactful in, and pertinent to, the context of design.

Sagmeister's earliest talks on design and its relationship to happiness were timely - addressing the zeitgeist of emotional design that emerged at the turn of the 21st century. Indeed,

reading Virginia Postrel's rather conservative and roughly contemporaneous analysis of affective concerns in *The Substance of Style*, where 'form follows emotion' (Postrel, 2003) and *The Power of Glamour*, where glamour is 'an illusion known to be false but felt to be true' (Postrel, 2013) or the claims of the reinvented Donald Norman (2004) who now stresses the importance of 'look and feel' in optimizing functionality ('aesthetically pleasing objects actually work better'), one would be forgiven for thinking that affect theory in the context of design is oriented solely towards the dissemination or production of feelings of happiness, contentment, and satisfaction.

In contrast to this, the affect theorist Nigel Thrift has drawn attention to a darker side to Postrel's work, emphasising her awareness of the subterfuge and deception that is often employed in the construction of emotional affect - linking advertising and journalism's redaction of 'discordant details' such as 'blemishes on the skin, spots on the windows, electrical wires crossing the façade, (and) piles of bills on the kitchen counter' to 'meticulous selection and control' in the designerly production of 'fake' feelings - which are nevertheless accompanied by *real* affects (Gregg and Seigworth, 2010).

Gill and Pratt's affective analysis of freelance graphic designers is similarly dark – positioning such workers as the vanguard of the contemporary 'precariat' - a mobile, exploited, proletariat, embodying a new, particularly insecure form of political subjectivity – the emergence of which has been closely alligned with capitalist, neo-liberal modes of production (Gill and Pratt, 2008).

Integrative and Differential Approaches to the Concept of Affect

It should be clear from what has been said this far, that the material-relational underpinning of the concept of affect lends it amenable to theorisation in both integrative and differential terms. Thus, Massumi and Bishop stress the transformative qualities of artistic encounter (focusing upon the operation of differential and contestational relations in the production of the new), whilst Jill Bennett in what seems to be a rather stark contrast, chooses to emphasise the communicative and integrative aspects of affective encounter – exploring the way in which affect might enable modes of communication which can transcend or circumvent cultural and historical borders through an empathetic mode of visceral communication that avoids any ultimately solipsistic or radically relativistic impasse. It is common to find both integrative and differential tendencies simultaneously at work in the context of both art and design. Thus Sagmeister, when constructing an inventory of projects that he associates with the feeling of happiness, cites the ambient, affective, materiality of James Turrell's *Skyspace* installations as well as Ji Lee's more socio-politically relational *Bubble* project – the 50000 blank speech bubbles that were produced by Lee (then branding director at Droga5) to provoke public commentary upon commercial advertisements (Sagmeister, 2014).

Sagmeister notes firstly how Turrell's project frames the sky in a highly aesthetic fashion, stressing how in the process

it affectively transforms the emotional and physical demeanor of the audience, and secondly how Lee's speech bubbles mobilise individuals to construct their own (often satirical) captions which proceed to provoke fresh reactions from passers by - simultaneously serving the needs of the advertisers (by re-engaging attention), providing a voice for the public, and opening an informal space for ideological critique.

A Process-Philosophical Lineage

Whilst discussion of affect is a fairly recent phenomenon, it arises out of a long 'process-philosophical' lineage. Process philosophy has been present as a minor current in Western philosophy since as early as 540 BC and through the influence of luminaries such as John Dewey and Susanne Langer, it has long been associated with education in the arts. Philosophies of process tend to emphasise both the ontological priority of change and the relational constitution of entities - positioning the world of stable and enduring things as arising out of a play of interacting forces that admit of multiple and contingent patterns of relation (Rescher 1996, p. 10). There is, however, an interesting schism between broadly integrative and broadly differential forms of process philosophy that mirrors the aesthetic tensions that have thus far been located in affective practices of art and design. Catherine Keller (2002) notes how American process tradition is 'integrative and holistic' in character and that this seems, at first glance, hard to reconcile with the radical alterity of post-structuralist European process thought (with its emphasis upon difference, otherness, divergence and disjunction). In exploring their commonality, however, Keller notes how:

> Both jubilantly privilege becoming over being, difference over sameness, novelty over conservation, intensity over equilibrium, complexity over simplicity, plurality over unity, relation over substance, flux over stasis. (Keller & Daniell, 2002, p. 6).

Thus, for Keller, the core difference between these approaches is that representatives of the post-structuralist tradition see relationality at work in its characterisation of traces of something outside or 'Other' being in some sense 'constitutive of identities, historical contexts and disciplines.' (Keller & Daniell, 2002, p. xix)

It is conceivable, then, that despite the rather bewildering and sometimes seemingly antithetical array of theoretical approaches that address the operation of affect it is perhaps this very complexity that might ultimately provide a fertile means of addressing the contemporary topography, of art, design and communication. That is to say, it may well be that it is precisely the ethereal, circulatory and ultimately liminal concept of affect that is required to facilitate cross-disciplinary discussion within the visual arts. Accordingly, the remainder of this article will ask if the concept of affect might flow between the disciplines to address not only the (integrative and antagonistic) relationships between contemporary modes of practice in art, design and communication – but also their somewhat incestuous histories.

Graphic Affect
Spencer Roberts

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Figure 7. The Colour Inside. Photograph. James Turrell, 2013.
Image courtesy of Michael Khoo.

Figure 8. Bubble project. Installation/intervention.
Ji Lee, 2002. Image courtesy of Ji Lee.

That is to say, there was a concern at both institutions with a material-experiential mode of aesthetic experimentation...

The Hidden History of Graphic Affect

In an attempt to mine a hidden history of affect in the context of graphic design, we will interrogate two landmark, though somewhat oppositional periods in its history - namely the functional modernism of the Bauhaus, and the differential post-structuralism of Deconstructive design. After a brief pause to consider the way in which affective practice may have been implicated in the near disappearance of design theory at the turn of this century, we will then go on to further consider the relationally affective dimension of contemporary design, examining the at once 'open' and 'conditional' mass interactive-design work of the Dutch design-collective Moniker.

Design Archeology 1: The Bauhaus, Modernism and Graphic Affect

Two institutions that loom large in histories of education in the visual arts are the Bauhaus (in the context of design) and Black Mountain College (in context of art). However, despite their radically different outputs, the Bauhaus and Black Mountain College shared (at least in the first instance) remarkably similar philosophical underpinnings. That is to say, there was a concern at both institutions with a material-experiential mode of aesthetic experimentation, and they were each likewise influenced by progressive educational ideas - sharing an affinity with the process-philosophical thought of John Dewey (Ellert, 1972). Arguably, it was this educational and philosophical affinity that facilitated the overlap of staff and alumni - beginning with the relocation of Josef and Anni Albers in 1933.

The approach to making that was fostered at each of these schools was strongly process-oriented and materials based (Ellert, 1972, p. 147). That is to say, both institutions emphasised the importance of aesthetic experimentation, and stressed the need for students to acquaint themselves with the material-phenomenal properties of things. This began at the Bauhaus with the basic course of Johannes Itten, which recommended an at once colour-centric combinational, and constructivist approach. Itten's writings are curious in so far as they were partly aesthetic instructional manuals, partly documents of psychophysical experimentation and partly process-metaphysical tracts. That is to say, Itten believed that colours should be considered in material-kinetic terms as dynamic, radiant, physical forces that have correlative psychological effects – noting that

> The optical, electromagnetic, and chemical processes initiated in the eye and brain are frequently paralleled by processes in the psychological realm (Itten, 1970, p. 83).

Interestingly, Itten also stressed the importance of the 'ethico-aesthetic' – a concept which he derived from Geothe, which, like Greenberg's distinction between affect and emotion, went on to become very important to Deleuze,

Following Itten's departure, the basic course was developed further and effectively re-written by László Moholy-Nagy and Itten's student Josef Albers. To some extent, Itten's process-philosophical orientation was reflected in Albers' notion of 'colour

action', which also explored a dynamic, flux-like, material interaction between colours. However, whilst, it is common for commentators to attribute the recognition of the relational dynamics of colour to Albers, it is important to note that this idea was already present in Itten's work. That is to say, for Itten as much as for Albers, the phenomena of simultaneous brightness contrast was more than 'a curious optical phenomenon', it was something that stood at 'the very heart of painting' (Albers, 1975; c.f. Itten 1970).

László Moholy-Nagy's teachings though more technologically focused were no less experimental and no less metaphysical in character. That is to say, Moholy-Nagy's photographic experiments can be seen as exercised in defamiliarisation, or as early attempts to see the world with fresh eyes (Lurie, 2012). Moholy-Nagy's techniques were highly innovative – indeed, there is some dispute over who invented the photogram - and Moholy-Nagy's name is often invoked alongside those of Man Ray and Christian Schad in connection with this.

Whilst there is no doubt that Moholy-Nagy emphasised the importance of the communicative, interactive and aesthetic qualities of materials, he also began to encourage students to develop an inventory, or taxonomy of phenomenal 'surface effects' (Saletnik, 2016). In this sense, the notion of objectivity came further in to view. Indeed, Moholy-Nagy's own attraction to metaphysics was coupled with a stronger sense of functionalism and a stronger techno-rationalist sensibility than was possessed by either Itten or Albers. Ultimately this would sew the seeds for a systematic approach to visual grammar along with a universalist approach to the human faculties. In this sense, concerns with the aesthetic *signing* of materials began to be overshadowed by a more pragmatic, utilitarian concern with *de-signing* in the service of function and industry – a tendency that would come increasingly prominent after the resignation of Walter Gropius in the years following the relocation of the institution to Dessau.

Despite the functional, utilitarian image of the Bauhaus that is presented in the textbooks of industrial design, it is important not to lose sight of the dynamism of Itten's thought, or of the extent of its background influence. That is to say, even under Moholy-Nagy's tutelage, a constructivist, combinatory approach to materials was still very much in place, and it is clear that his interest in technology was not straightforwardly reductive – his interest in esoteric poetry, experimental film and kinetic devices, along with his quasi-alchemic dimension of his embrace of synthetic materials stands as a testament to this. Indeed, in his letter of resignation from Dessau he wrote

We are in danger of becoming what we as revolutionaries opposed: a vocational training school which elevates only the final achievement and overlooks the development of the whole man. (Borchardt-Hume, 2006, p. 75).

It is important to recognise the prominence of tropes of kinetic materiality, affectivity and performativity that run across the history of the Bauhaus, and to see how they were manifested variously in the aesthetics of Itten, Albers and Moholy-Nagy.

With this in mind, it seems particulary apt that the Bauhaus was also the first art school to host a course in performance. Performances of the Bauhaus likewise embodied tensions between language, form and kinetic materiality, and this was reflected in the respective agendas of the performance tutors Lothar Schreyer who was primarily concerned with the language and form of performance, and Oskar Schlemmer whose interest was focused upon the material body in motion (Bauhaus-online.de, 2016).

Figure 9. After Oskar Schlemmer's, Triadic Ballet Performers 1924. Drawing. Brent Hardy-Smith, 2016. Image courtesy of Brent Hardy-Smith.

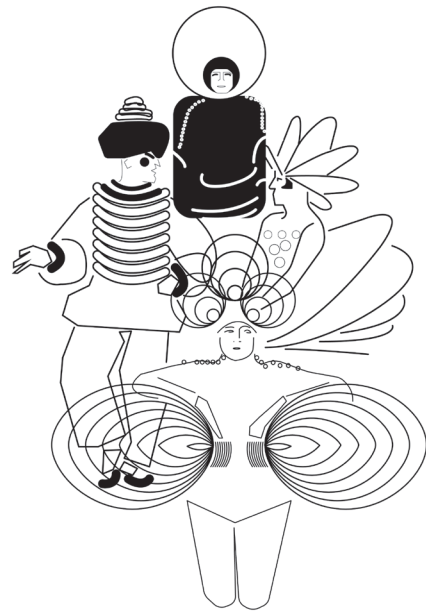

Figure 10. After Metallic Festival, Bauhaus, 1929. Drawing. Brent Hardy-Smith, 2016. Image courtesy of Brent Hardy-Smith.

Figure 11. After Triadic Ballet, 1924. Drawing. Brent Hardy-Smith, 2016. Image courtesy of Brent Hardy-Smith.

Black Mountain College and the Inception of the Open Artwork

The more rustic setting of Black Mountain College was perhaps better in tune with the emphasis upon craftsmanship, and material knowing that had initially oriented the Bauhaus. Severed from any emphasis upon product, the students of Black Mountain College further venerated process, producing avant-garde artworks that challenged existing forms of categorisation – works which, to use the vocabulary of Deleuze and Guattari, could be said to have attempted to produce new kinds of affect as opposed to constructing any kind of phenomenal or experiential inventory. In this sense the stronger formalism of the Bauhaus environment, with its growing attraction to universal principles, and to a more parsimonious, reductive approach to aesthetics, can be contrasted with the less structural aims and environment of Black Mountain College, which arguably resulted in less of a house style, and less uniformity of work. Informed by an agenda that embraced the operation of chance and contingency, Robert Rauschenberg's early white panel paintings (intended as receptors for light, shadow and dust particles) set a theoretical trajectory that would go on to inform his combines as well as the corporeal, indecorous materiality and cultural detritus of his later works. At Black Mountain College, Rauschenberg's paintings were developed alongside John Cage's more explicitly performative works (it is well known that Cage staged his first happening at Black Mountain College), and the experimental painting and filmmaking practices of Stan Vanderbeek (marking the beginnings of his expanded film projects). Collectively such works signposted, and in some sense anticipated aspects of post-modern practice and post-structural critique that would come to prominence many years later.

As we shall see, the emphasis upon difference, anti-essentialism and contingency that began to take hold at Black Mountain College becomes further accentuated in the radical deconstructive design criticism of the late twentieth century. That is to say, contemporary philosophies of affect informed by Deleuze, arose out of post-structuralist European philosophy – the same strain of thought that engendered much of the early thinking in what might be considered the hey-day of post-structuralist design theory in the late 1980s and early 1990s – and as such they share a concern with the concepts of contingency and difference, and tend to be politically radical in character.

Affect and Post-Structural Materialism

In her more culturally oriented, sociological introduction to affect theory, Margaret Wetherell (2012) remarks upon the way in which Massumi's philosophy of affect much like that of Deleuze and Guattari has an at once social and yet strangely impersonal character. That is to say, Wetherell notes that there is a sense in which affect theory's relational dynamics are inherently collectivist in the sense that it positions entities as being both constituted and manipulated by flows and confluences of affects. However, she notes that in these more radical forms of affect theory, it is not any straightforwardly human form of sociability and emotion that is under discussion – rather, it is

...there is a direct lineage between early modernist aesthetics and the emphasis upon matter and sensation that can be located in Deleuzian thought, with its veneration of aesthetic experimentation, and the production of the new.

something far more impersonal (2012, p. 59). Wetherell draws attention firstly to the way in which philosophers such as Massumi and Deleuze position affects as pre-personal, autonomous qualities that drift through the world, animating bodily behaviour and conditioning experience - and secondly to the sense in which this serves to undermine – or at the very least trouble traditional notions of personhood and agency. Arguably, what results is a somewhat unmoored and un-owned conception of experience. That is to say, for Deleuze, it is not so much that there are first subjects who 'have' sensations, rather, it is the operation of autonomous, material sensation that, 'fissures our subjectivity' (Ó Maoilearca, 2006, p. 14).

We have seen how despite the broadly post-structural orientation of Deleuze's philosophy, there is a direct lineage between early modernist aesthetics and the emphasis upon matter and sensation that can be located in Deleuzian thought, with its veneration of aesthetic experimentation, and the production of the new. The Deleuzian scholar Stephen Zepke has suggested, however, that Deleuze and Guattari's modernism is 'inseperable from ontological processes both cosmic and chaotic' and that it must be distinguished from more reductive and purist models of modernism – and that it is this that ultimately distances it from the more formal Kantianism of Greenberg (Zepke, 2005, p. 152). More recently, Zepke has claimed that for Deleuze and Guattari, the secret of modern composition is the 'abstraction of materials from their external referents' in order that their 'intense complexity' might be expressed.' (Zepke, 2012, p. 228).

Consideration of Deleuze's connection with modernism, when juxtaposed with his philosophy's post-structuralist orientation, enables us to place Deleuze's thinking of affect into relation with an important period in design history that flourished in the last few decades of the Twentieth Century. That is to say, consideration of Deleuze's contemporary conception of materiality leads us to consideration of the poststructural, or deconstructive turn in graphic design and typography that began at Cranbrook, in the late 1970s. Deconstructive and postmodern design were influenced by French poststructuralist thought that came to prominence in the 1960s – and in many ways they dominated the theoretical and aesthetic agenda of graphic design until the end of the 1990s (emanating for the most part from Cranbrook, CalArts, and Emigre magazine) – successfully bringing the field of graphic design into relation with philosophy.

Design Archeology 2: Deconstruction, Post-Structuralism and Graphic Affect

Deconstructivist design theorists shared an interest in visual-grammar with the universal modernism that arose in the context of the Bauhaus. However, they approached it from an at once critical and antagonistic standpoint. These aspects of deconstruction are eloquently discussed in Ellen Lupton and Abbot Miller's essay in the volume of *Visible Language* that was edited by the Cranbrook alumnus Andrew Blauvelt (Lupton and Miller, 1994). Lupton and Miller ground their analysis in the philosophy of Derrida and attempt to demonstrate its significance in the context of graphic design and typography. Ultimately they align deconstruction with a language oriented, critical agenda, and suggest that deconstruction in graphic design should be considered a mode of 'questioning' or a mode of 'critical form making'.

Despite the broadly textual orientation of Lupton and Miller's work, there is also a clear leaning towards materiality in their focus upon the corporeal performance of writing and the idea that there are coercive forces at work on the written page. This serves to indicate a certain affinity between the post-structural textual approach of Derrida and the similarly post-structural (but nevertheless materially-affective) approach of Deleuze that underpins much work on affect theory in the arts.

We can perhaps be seen more clearly if we consider this passage from an early essay by Johanna Drucker, which seems to simultaneously address the textuality of Derrida's thinking, whilst heralding the arrival of a more directly materialistic Deleuzean post-structuralism:

> Think of the page as a force field, a set of tensions in relation, which assumes a form when intervened through the productive act of reading. Peculiar? Not really, just unfamiliar as a way to think about "things" as experienced. A slight vertigo can be induced by considering a page as a force field, a set of elements in contingent relation, a set of possibilities, instructions for a potential event. But every reading reinvents a text, produces it, as an intervention, and that is a notion we have long felt comfortable invoking. I'm merely shifting our attention from the "pro-duced" nature of signified meaning to the "productive" character of a signifying field. (Bierut, Drenttel and Heller, 2006, p. 31).

Given their shared post-structural orientation, there are clearly many overlaps between Derridean and Deleuzian thought. Indeed, after Deleuze's death, Derrida wrote of their philosophical friendship:

> Deleuze undoubtedly still remains, despite so many dissimilarities, the one among those of my "generation" to whom I have always judged myself to be the closest. I have never felt the slightest "objection" arising in me, not even potentially, against any of his works. (Bearn, 2000, p. 442)

Figure 12. Visible Language: French Currents of the Letter. Journal. Katherine McCoy, Richard Kerr, Alice Hecht, Jane Kosstrin, Herbert Thompson. From Visible Language VII.3, 1978, reprinted by permission, copyright University of Cincinnati.
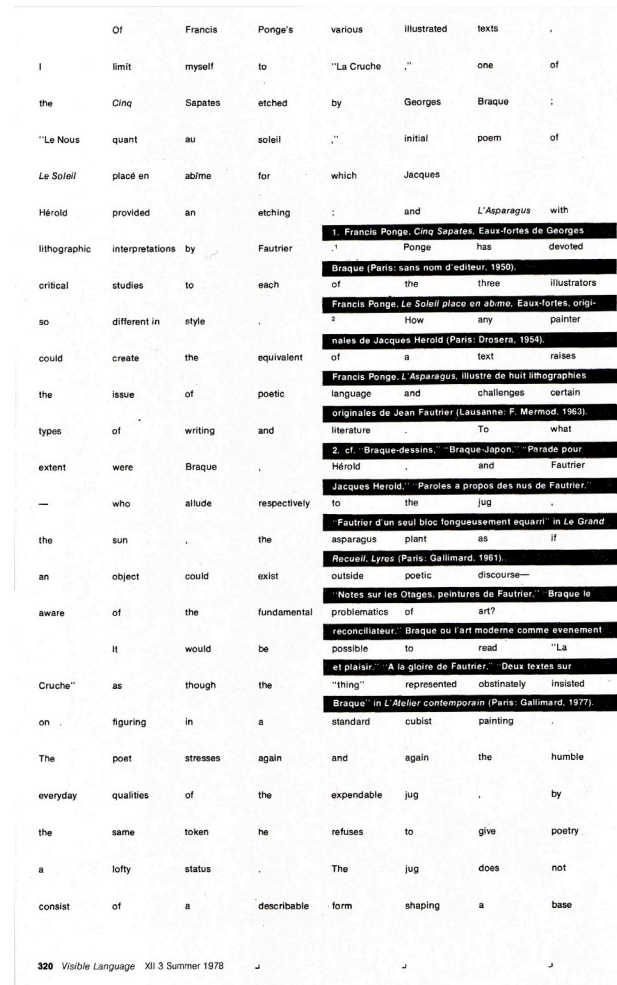
This relationship was in no way one sided and Deleuze likewise wrote of his admiration for Derrida's method of deconstruction. However, despite their shared interest in political difference, Deleuze was not well disposed to Derrida's veneration of language, or to his suspicion of metaphysical enquiry. The Deleuzian scholar John Protevi (2001) has noted how Deleuze sought to develop a contemporary metaphysics that had much affinity with the sciences of complexity. For Deleuze, both the identity of individual things and the differences between them are preceded by a richer mode of swarming differences of intensity that stand as their condition.

> Everything which happens and everything which appears is correlated with orders of differences: differences of level, temperature, pressure, tension, potential, difference of intensity. (Deleuze, 1994, p. 222).

For Deleuze, these swarms of material difference are both sub-representational and pre-empirical in character, suggesting that they cannot be directly experienced, but that they are nevertheless, in some sense, still more properly felt:

> What is encountered … may be grasped in a range of affective tones: wonder, love, hatred, suffering. In whichever tone, its primary characteristic is that it can only be sensed. (Deleuze, 1994, p. 176).

Thus, the philosopher James Williams' (2008) reading of Deleuze stresses the significance of intensive, affective qualities of experience such as the ebb and flow of emotions, a rising sense of disquiet, or a felt sense of hunger. For Williams, these qualities resonate with Deleuze's intensive, energetic conception of the world - and we have seen how this emphasis upon material-sensation in many ways chimes with the material-phenomenal aesthetics of the early Bauhaus.

The Retreat of Design Criticism

It has been suggested that despite arising out of the textually oriented deconstructive paradigm of design, the post-structural design theorists of the 1980s and 1990s came close to addressing the operation of affect through their concern with difference, complexity and graphic intervention, and that arguably this form of post-structuralist design criticism better captured the vitalist spirit of affect than did the comparatively conservative vogue for emotional design and functional affordance, which are collectively folded into contemporary notions of 'experience design'.

However, it would seem that the wave of design theory that might have followed on from Cranbrook, CalArts, and Emigre – which would have been well placed to address the question of affect, simply did not emerge. The abundance of design theory that was operation in the 1990s dwindled, and by the turn of the century had almost entirely disappeared. Interestingly, this may in part have been a result of practising designers rejecting the predominately textual orientation of deconstruction, and seeking out modes of more aesthetic, experiential and performative practice. Indeed, contemporary notions of expanded practice,

DIY and modes of critical making might effectively be positioned as having constituted a second wave of design criticism – a more directly materialist outgrowth of deconstructivist design, that turned away from writing, but which nevertheless enacts an 'affective' mode of critique (Somerson, Hermano, Maeda, 2013; DiSalvo, 2012). As Alice Twemlow (2006) has noted, a set of postmodern and poststructural concerns with the complexity, difference and the fragmentation of hierarchies would seem to have leaked out of the printed page and incorporated themselves into the very fabric of design culture. In aesthetic terms, the baroque, intricately detailed, multiply layered forms of graphic design that were prevalent over the course of the late 1990s gave way to a return to simplicity and restraint - the most radical and extreme forms of this were termed 'default system design' due to their insistence of the employment of only default software settings (Vanderlans, 2003). However, it is important to recognise that this simplification of design aesthetics was arguably accompanied by a surge in *relational* complexity.

The Affective Capacities of Relational Design

Andrew Blauvelt - a frequent contributor to *Emigre* magazine (one of the last outposts of graphic design-theory), and most recently curator at the Walker Art Gallery, has, in an Anglo-American context at least, come the closest to envisaging a design-oriented Deleuzo-Guattarian picture of socio-connective affect - albeit with a techno-functional emphasis that perhaps makes such thinking more palatable to the communities of de-sign (Blauvelt, 2008; van der Beek, 2012).

Blauvelt's view of 'relational design', whilst framed against the backdrop of Bourriaud's (2002) *Relational Aesthetics* is deeply indebted (much like Bourriaud's own thinking) to the process-philosophical thought of Deleuze. Blauvelt conceptualises products and consumers in performative terms, questioning their separation, and imbricating them in symbiotic modes of becoming. In the context of relational design, the designer provides an evolving platform for inter-subjective encounters that can be both emotionally and behaviourally transformative (van der Beek, 2012, p. 434-435). From this perspective, contemporary strategies of 'open design' attempt to construct platforms, which foster open-ended relationships and facilitate inter-subjective affective flows. That is to say, in the context of relational design, the designer constructs spaces of encounter that may operate outside of the socially sanctioned, and which may equally contest or affirm the normative and the conventional.

In recent years, the Dutch collective Moniker have been involved in the creation of a number of interesting relational design works. Their work *Do Not Touch*, which they describe as 'an interactive crowd-sourced music video' is particularly useful for our purposes here in so far as it takes place in a digital context and thus makes some of the technological metaphors that underpin relational-design thinking more explicit. Returning to the comparative context introduce at the beginning of this paper, it will perhaps prove fruitful to unpack Moniker's work in relation to participatory performance work such as Abramovic's *Rhythm O* (1974) and Yoko Ono's *Cut Piece* (1964).

Figure 13. After Yoko Ono's Cut Piece, 1964. Drawing.
Brent Hardy-Smith, 2016. Image courtesy of Brent Hardy-Smith.

Figure 14. After Marina Abramovic's Rhythm O, 1974. Drawing.
Brent Hardy-Smith, 2016. Image courtesy of Brent Hardy-Smith.

Figure 15. Do Not Touch (1). Music Video. Moniker, 2013.
Image courtesy of Moniker
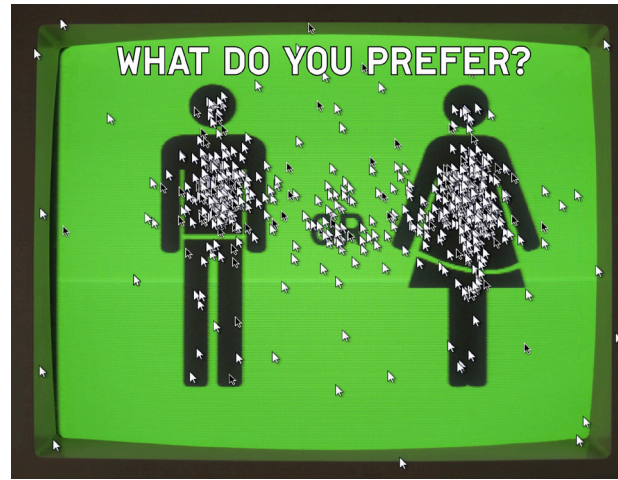
Figure 16. Do Not Touch (2). Music Video. Moniker, 2013.
Image courtesy of Moniker.

Figure 17. Do Not Touch (3). Music Video. Moniker, 2013.
Image courtesy of Moniker.

Figure 18. Do Not Touch (4). Music Video. Moniker, 2013.
Image courtesy of Moniker.

Both Abramovic and Ono's work stand as landmark moments of participatory practice - they each implicate the audience in the construction of the work and they likewise depend upon props that have a limited range of performative connotations and affordances (scissors feature in both performances, whilst Abramovic's six hour performance also made items such as a rose, a vial of perfume, a scalpel, a container of honey, and a loaded gun available to the public). The implicit 'conditionality' that results from the semiotic connotations of this equipment is made more explicit when we consider Ono's overt directive to the audience that they should cut off her clothing.

Moniker's music video for Light Light (Figures 15-18) was constructed by tracking and overlaying the mouse movements of hundreds of participants as they negotiated its imagistic, time-based content along with a set of playful textual provocations – a strategy that fostered lively engagement with a set of political categories. The limited expressivity of the mouse cursor was placed in an at once aesthetic and politically charged context, inviting the user to repeatedly consider their relationship to individuality, collectivity, anonymity and authority - but to express this in purely performative terms. The user's consent, resistance or passivity was recorded and incorporated into the video itself – and in this context, the collaboration and cooperation of users became as interesting as the creative resourcefulness that they employed to establish dissent. Much of Moniker's work deploys Oulipo-esque strategies of creative constraint in collaborative design contexts - pitting formal rules and textual imperatives against contingency, environment and group dynamics to establish open, creative happenings.

Figure 19. Conditional Design Work Book (1). Moniker, 2013.
Image courtesy of Moniker.

Figure 20. Conditional Design Work Book (2). Moniker, 2013.
Image courtesy of Moniker.

Figure 21. Conditional Design Work Book (3). Moniker, 2013.
Image courtesy of Moniker.

It is important to recognise that although Blauvelt does not limit relational design to computer based contexts, the ideas of relational design resonate particularly well with the open, plasticity of the computer screen and its rhizomatic, networked structure - and it is important to remember that Blauvelt made a number of contributions to *Emigre* magazine, which was perhaps the first forum to seriously consider the impact of digital technologies on in the context of graphic design. Networked digital platforms provide a space for social collision and transformation - indeed the suggestions of users, along with their design input, and labour, often feedback into the continued 'becoming' or the transformation of platforms themselves. Thus Blauvelt proposes a vision of a 'connected ecology' that is removed from any notion of 'discrete object' or 'hermetic meaning' (Blauvelt, 2008), and which challenges modernist notions of authorship, troubling the distinctions between designer, client and consumer.

Perhaps the most interesting feature of such techo-relational projects, however, is the way in which they would seem to inherit Deleuze's strange fusion of modern and post-structural themes. That is to say, Baluvelt's image of a connective, transformative platform of deeply invested, co-creative users inflects, but does not entirely escape the notion of universalism that Blauvelt himself describes as symptomatic of the first phase of modern design (e.g. the modernist search for universal form) – it does, however, inflect it in an interesting, and somewhat post-structural fashion. Thus, whilst there is a kind of utopianism at work in these kind of techno-relational projects, the aim is not to establish an infinite, singular universal form for all users, but rather to facilitate productive, transformational contact. In Deleuzian terms, such platforms are interesting in the sense that they enable an immersive disappearance into a swarm of deeply intensive relations – we (both) lose (and construct) ourselves in an encounter with other actants that transcends and circumvents geographical boundaries.

Writing in a more overtly affective register, Deleuze associates such transformative, relational encounters with an ethics of love and with a processual conception of beauty. To this end he cites the spontaneous viral, contagious sense of joy that passes between lovers, and its resistance to foreknowledge or plan. Blauvelt's more sober style of writing, communicates well with a de-sign audience but also serves to obscure the deeply affective ground of Deleuzo-Guattarian thought. That is to say, for Deleuze and Guattari, 'becoming is itself a process of desire', it is:

> Two bodies caressing . . . unwrapping themselves . . . disorganizing themselves . . . (it is) swarming intensities . . . swarming caresses. (It is) Becoming-beauty . . . or saying beauty otherwise: becoming-becoming (Bearn, 2000, p. 458).

Conclusion - A Third Wave of Design Criticism?

Alongside its mining of design history in search of the spectre of affect, this paper has attempted to investigate the way in which affect *theory* - as a mode of critical writing that is concerned with sensation, materiality and performativity - might once more serve to engage the design community philosophically. Early evidence of such an approach might be found in the writings of the contemporary design theorist Carl Disalvo (2012) who's work can be read as envisaging the social and the political as a cacophony of affects. Disalvo stresses the antagonism inherent in human relations and presents the political as an ongoing contest between emotions, forces and ideals - drawing attention to the at once rhetorical and affective dimension of designed things. Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly for our purposes here, a variety of forms of expanded design theory would currently seem to be flourishing. The performative lectures, writings, happenings and interventions of design groups as diverse as Experimental Jetset, Abake, Moniker, Dunne and Raby, Spatial Innovation Design Labs, Natalie Jeremijenko, and the now disbanded Cox and Grusenmeyer operate in a fashion that embraces both theory and practice – often making use of performative strategies, and employing a range of aesthetic props and devices. Approaches such as these are particularly distinctive in so far as they signpost the emergence an aesthetico-conceptual mode of practice-led engagement that foregrounds aesthetics and practices of design, without in the process withdrawing from writing or sidestepping critical debate.

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INDISCIPLINARITY AS SOCIAL FORM: CHALLENGING THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE SENSIBLE IN THE VISUAL ARTS

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Indisciplinarity as Social Form: Challenging the
Distribution of the Sensible in the Visual Arts
Richard Miles

JACQUES RANCIÈRE

and Indisciplinarity

The exclusive concentration of artistic talent in particular individuals, and its suppression in the broad mass which is bound up with this, is a consequence of the division of labour. [...] In any case, with a communist organisation of society, there disappears the subordination of the artist to local and national narrowness, which arises entirely from the division of labour, and also the subordination of the artist to some definite art, thanks to which he is exclusively a painter, sculptor, etc., the very name of his activity adequately expressing the narrowness of his professional development and his dependence on division of labour. In a communist society there are no painters but at most people who engage in painting amongst other activities (Marx, 1970, [1845] p. 109).

Whilst in ordinary life every shopkeeper is very well able to distinguish between what somebody professes to be and what he really is, our historians have not yet won even this trivial insight. They take every epoch at its word and believe that everything it says and imagines about itself is true (Marx, 1970, [1845] p. 67).

Following a raft of translations of his works into English over the last two decades, Jacques Rancière has gained much recent attention as the latest '*Philosophe du jour*' of the critical humanities (Bowman and Stamp, 2011, p. xi). He has an exemplary pedigree, having been taught by the French Structural Marxist Louis Althusser, and contributing in the seminars that led to his book *Reading Capital* (1970). His intellectual oeuvre is wide ranging and deliberately unclassifiable, encompassing aesthetic and cultural theory, philosophy, politics, pedagogy, art, class, the police, and the histories and intersections of all of the above. For Rancière, this interdisciplinary, or 'indisciplinarity' as he prefers, is a deliberate methodological manoeuvre designed to evade disciplinary specialism, segregation, or heirarchisation; all of which reflect and reproduce an institutional division of labour within the humanities. Like many French philosophers, his writing style is idiosyncratic - either exasperating or exhilarating depending on your particular taste or academic allegiance. Reductively, one could summarise Rancière's work as an investigation of the results of refusing one's designated and proper place in this prevailing social order, and why such a symbolic refusal is necessary and vital. The central concept underpinning this analysis is *Le partage du sensible*, which is most commonly translated as the 'distribution of the sensible', though the alternate possible translations of 'sharing', 'division' and 'partition' are useful and relevant. This concept is

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explicitly interrogated in the later work *The Politics of Aesthetics* (2004), but operates implicitly or explicitly throughout most of Rancière's work. Though difficult to define with any concision, the 'distribution of the sensible' refers to the separation of socio-cultural space and lived existence into strict a priori strata, which condition and limit every individual's capacity to think, to act, to speak, and to be heard. This 'distribution', negotiated socially and lived ideologically, is maintained by what Rancière refers to as the 'Police'. His use of this term is more expansive than that of common usage, referring not simply to one specific 'Repressive State Apparatus' (Althusser, 1971) but any

> organisational system of coordinates that establishes a
> distribution of the sensible or a law that divides the community
> into groups, social positions, and functions
> (Rockhill in Rancière, 2004, p. 3).

The 'distribution of the sensible' therefore is a self-regulating and complex institutional and ideological field where human agency is alternatively repressed or nourished under strictly monitored institutional conditions. For Rancière then, questions concerning the logic of this system are ultimately questions concerning democracy itself, which is to be realised, not simply in the recognition of social stratification, but through the revolutionary rejection of that stratification via a human praxis centred around the logic of equality and the common.

Rancière's doctoral thesis, *La nuit des proletaires*, published originally in English, in 1981, as *Nights of Labor: The Workers Dream in Nineteenth Century France,* typifies this approach, using the example of the forgotten worker-poets and worker-philosophers of 19th century French industrial capitalism who 'refused to simply take themselves as workers' (Larson, 2013, p. 1) and instead strove to fashion a creative existence beyond the confines of the factory. This act of refusal is not only a challenge to the prevailing social order but also to its temporal logic. That is, the work-sleep-work-sleep pattern, and the socially expected behaviours appropriate to workers in each phase, is completely disrupted. The boundaries between intellectual and manual labour are equally collapsed and the 'distribution of the sensible', usually self-policed by the worker, is substituted for a 'redistribution of the possible' where -

> the possible is the workers' dream deemed as impossible by
> a temporal ordering that would give workers no time and no
> dreams. It is only by behaving improperly, of disrespecting
> propriety, that a new distribution of the sensible is possible
> (Highmore, 2011, p. 98-9).

By using their spare time for creative acts, these worker-poets transform the socially expected 'work (productive) / free time (docile, passive)' pattern into 'work (productive) / free time (active, dynamic). The dynamism of the latter formulation therefore starts to threaten the security of the former. The questions underlying such a redistribution would of course be 'Who dictates that a worker cannot be a poet?'; 'Why would not all workers

...this paper uses Rancière's thought to highlight a particular 'distribution of the sensible' concerning visual arts practice, policed both institutionally (within the university, the artworld, and its apparatus), and societally...

aspire to transcend the drudgery of daily labour?' Perhaps most importantly, 'Why has the art of these workers been forgotten by, or excluded from, certain histories of art?'.

Probably because of their regular focus on the potential of the emancipatory potential of artistic praxis, Rancière's works have gained particular popularity in the fields of Fine Art, Art History and Cultural Studies. You will find a copy of one of Rancière's texts in the shop of any contemporary art gallery or biennale worth its salt. The Tate Modern recently hosted Rancière 'in conversation' with author and curator Claire Bishop (13th June 2013) in one of its auditoriums. This is not to suggest (purely at least) that there is a populist element to Rancière's work but certainly there is a fully developed publicity machine surrounding his work, producing accidental socio-cultural effects that jar with the central content of his work. Perhaps there is even something fundamentally un-Rancièrian about Rancière's current quasi-celebrity status (McQuillan, 2010, p. 163-185).

For this paper though, the turn to Rancière's work is made not only for its revolutionary and emancipatory content, its pedagogical relevance, or for its contemporary voguishness, though these are all relevant factors. Keeping with the central theme of this journal, the differences between the Fine Arts and the Graphic Arts, this paper uses Rancière's thought to highlight a particular 'distribution of the sensible' concerning visual arts practice, policed both institutionally (within the university, the artworld, and its apparatus), and societally (in what is referred to oxymoronically as the Creative Industries). More so, in all the associated behavioural types related to the above. Many readers practising within this field will recognise this 'distribution' immediately, even if many would wish it away as a historical concern. Writing recently, in his book *The Education of an Illustrator* (2000, p. 3-5), the illustrator and author Marshall Arisman has sarcastically, but also with a degree of resignation, described a particular hierarchical logic within the disciplinary subdivision of visual arts within the academy:

1. Fine Arts is pure.
2. Illustration is the beginning of selling out.
3. Graphic Design is commercial art.
4. Advertising is selling... period. (Arisman, 2000, p. 3).

This separation is not simply a matter of disciplinary classification, specialisation, and heirarchisation, although it certainly has these institutional effects. More importantly, it is also a fully developed ideological system that has consequences beyond the artworld itself. Ideology, in the words of T. J. Clark (1976), can be defined as

> systems of beliefs, images, values and techniques of
> representation by which particular social classes, in conflict
> with each other, attempt to 'naturalise' their own special place
> in history. Every ideology tries to give a quality of inevitability
> to what is in fact a quite specific and disputable relation to the
> means of production.

It is the simple contention of this paper to suggest that the distinctions between Fine Art and Graphic are neither natural, nor inevitable, but historically produced out of class struggle and the relations of production. More problematically, I wish to suggest that there is an entire canon of attitudes, beliefs, values, and ideas perpetuated by the artworld, and all those involved in its machinations, which naturalises and validates this segregation, disguising its material reality, and producing subjectivities appropriate to the maintenance of its strata. As Marx (1970 [1845]) has famously argued, the ruling class of any particular period are the stewards of the ruling ideas of that period. Any analysis of cultural attitudes or cultural practice that denies this material class basis can only ever be partial, and is doomed to perpetuate and reproduce dominant-hegemonic attitudes as natural or eternal. The following is an attempt to historicise and reverse such an analysis by demonstrating that the disciplinary division of labour within the arts was 'produced to do a certain job, to validate a particular order of things' (Clark, 1976), and that these false distinctions are disputable, and the social order represented by them contestable.

Arisman suggests that this 'distribution of the sensible' has been in existence since his experience of art school in the 1960s. I would go further. That the disciplinary separation to which Arisman alludes has institutional roots in early modernity, with the formation of the art schools, certainly has some truth, but it is also certainly born out of, and reproduced by, class antagonisms that predated the art school in its institutional form. It is also intimately connected to a set of properly metaphysical concepts, such as art, creativity, genius, expression, beauty, and so forth, which emerged at approximately the same time as the modern system of artistic disciplinary segregation. This list of concepts sits on the privileged side of what Derrida would call a logocentric conceptual system, and they are as closely associated with the fine arts as their binary opposites are unfairly associated with the applied arts. That these concepts and their negative reflexes still stubbornly haunt art and design curricula as undeconstructed baggage is probably harder to admit, for those with a vested interest in the current system, than the recognition that 'two cultures' (to borrow C.P. Snow's famous phrase) currently exist within visual communication, which could be broadly characterised as the Fine Arts and the Applied Arts, and which often find themselves in an antagonistic relationship. It is the investment in the concepts listed above, the uncritical assignation of them as natural products of Fine Art, and the 'policing' of the above by all actors involved, which ultimately maintains the 'distribution of the sensible' under discussion. Before returning to Rancière then, to discuss the contemporary pedagogico-philosophical effects of the 'distribution' above, and to suggest 'indisciplinarity' as a way out of this impasse, I wish to sketch the historical gestation of this system, if only to remind people of what is too readily forgotten in contemporary discourses concerning art, aesthetics, aesthetic education and their derivatives, which far too often remain essentialising and universalising at best; dependent on dominant hegemonic ideology.

THE MODERN

System of the Arts

T   A

Paul Oskar Kristeller in his two part essay on the history of modern aesthetics, *The Modern System of the Arts* (1951; 1952), demonstrates that

> the term "Art," with a capital A and in its modern sense, and the related term "Fine Arts" (Beaux Arts) originated in all probability in the eighteenth century
> (Kristeller, 1951; 1952, p. 497).

Terry Eagleton (1990) makes much the same argument in The Ideology of the Aesthetic, Pierre Bourdieu (1984), again, in Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste, Larry Shiner, more recently, in The Invention of Art (2001). The common thread in all of the above is that the 'modern system of art', in essence Arisman's taxonomy above, was created in tandem with the birth of aesthetics in the eighteenth century. Specifically, Kristeller demonstrates how the 'Beaux Arts' (Beautiful Arts), the disciplines of painting, sculpture, architecture, music, and poetry, were elevated to a transcendent status above other forms of applied arts and crafts at this time. That this 'modern system', or disciplinary separation, could be historically located to the mid eighteenth century, and not eternal or natural seems to be a controversial claim still. In 1951, this claim was faintly scandalous, to the extent that obviously felt the need to justify the seemingly simple observation with a footnote of over twenty references that spans two pages. Prior to this moment, the distinctions between the fine and applied arts were much more ambiguous. For Kristeller,

> the social and intellectual prestige in antiquity of what we now consider to be the dominant forms of the visual arts was much lower than one might expect from their actual achievements
> (Kristeller, 1951, p. 502).

When Cicero spoke of the 'liberal arts', he included grammar, rhetoric, dialectic, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music in his circumscription (Capella in Kristella, 1951, p. 505). Plato equated poetry with rhetoric and 'the treatment given to it is neither systematic nor friendly' (p. 501). More importantly, the

signifier 'Art' was understood by the Greeks to denote 'all kinds of human activities that we would call crafts or sciences' and, more interestingly for the contemporary art school teacher, something that most definitely could be taught or learned (Kristeller, 1951, p. 498). The obscurantist and romantic myth of art school pedagogy that art cannot be learned, and therefore a paradoxical and 'curious endeavour to teach the unteachable' (p. 498) is a specifically Modern and debilitating malaise. The concept of Beauty, central to the valorization of Fine Art above other artistic forms, did exist, but when Plato refers to ideas of beauty

> in the Symposium and the Phaedrus, he is speaking not merely of the physical beauty of human persons, but also of beautiful habits of the soul and of beautiful cognitions, whereas he fails completely to mention works of art in this connection (Kristelller, 1951, p. 499).

In the Middle Ages, a schema for the liberal arts, inherited from antiquity, remained structured into the Trivium (grammar, rhetoric, dialectic) and the Quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy), which jars with our contemporary use of the term. Certainly, the word 'artista' was coined at this time, though this could refer equally to a practitioner of the liberal arts or to what we would now call a craftsman (p. 508). Antiquity lacked even this type of vague classification, and the words that we now take to mean art, the Greek *techne* and the Roman *ars*, referred 'less to a class of objects than a human ability to make and perform' and embraced things as diverse as 'carpentry and poetry, shoemaking and medicine, sculpture and horse breaking' (Shiner, 2001, p. 19). On this evidence, the classical conception of art is actually much closer to what we would now consider craft, or the mechanical arts, than the Fine Arts, and metaphysical notions such as individuality, genius, creativity, beauty were largely absent from the commentaries of such activities. Herbert Read, in the influential book *Education Through Art*, has argued that many of the confusions, limitations, and problems of modern art pedagogy stem ultimately from misreadings of the use of the term 'Art' in Plato (Read, 1961, p. 10-11). And though the Renaissance heralded some early signs of what we might recognise as a modern approach to the arts (for example, the advent of a hagiographic and author-centred approach to the art object heralded by Vasari's *The Lives of the Artists* (2008, [1550])), and a privileged status for painting and sculpture (Shiner, 2001, p. 35-56), all the evidence from scholarship points to a radical rupture, and the creation of a precise classificatory system, in the eighteenth century. This is not to suggest that artistic practices didn't exist before the eighteenth century, but simply that artistic practice was divided, interdisciplinary, and inseparable from other forms of human sensuous activity. Therefore, the modern way of understanding art, which involves 'the subordination of the artist to some definite art, thanks to which he is exclusively a painter, sculptor, etc.' (Marx, 1970, [1845] p. 109) was specifically and historically invented.

Charles Batteux's (1746) *Les beaux arts réduit á un meme principe* (The Fine Arts Reduced to a Single Principle), is understood to be the first to introduce a limited classification of the superior arts, which included music, painting, sculpture, poetry and dance; all of which transcend mere utility and, in their beautiful imitation of nature, aim to give pleasure to their audiences (Shiner, 2001, p. 83). This opposition between pleasure and utility became the standard method of distinguishing between the 'Beaux Arts' from the lesser arts at this time, remaining prevalent today, and

> over the course of the century, the notion of a special kind of refined pleasure or taste would be transformed into the modern idea of the aesthetic (Shiner, 2001, p. 83).

Batteux's text first appeared in England, as an anonymous pirated summary, entitled *The Polite Arts*, and the 'Beaux Arts' signifier was lost (Kristeller, 1952, p. 30). This is not simply a matter of mistranslation however. 'Polite', in the context of English civil society ('elegant arts' was used to a lesser extent), is loaded with connotations of class and societal status, reflecting a growing tendency amongst the middle classes to use conspicuous engagement with the newly emergent cultural institutions 'as a crucial marker for a new kind of social and cultural refinement' (Shiner, 2001, p. 98). Manners, or politeness, served much the same social function at this time. At this time English theories concerning taste (Hume, Hutcheson, Reid) were combined with German Aesthetic theory (Kant, Schiller, Herder), given its proper name by Baumgarten in 1735, to create a fully developed canon which entrenched the separation between the Fine Arts and crafts that we now know as familiar. This systemic separation found its clearest initial articulation in Kant's *Critique of Judgement* (2000, [1790]) that not only distinguished between judgements of the beautiful and the sublime, but also articulated a distinction between art and craft. The former was characterized by its 'purposive purposelessness', to be experienced disinterestedly, and the latter forms of 'remunerative art' were relegated to the realms of the disagreeable due to their connection with labour, as opposed to free play (2000, [1790] p. 183). Because aesthetic judgements are disinterested, that is, ends in themselves, they supposedly contain, for Kant a subjective universality. This claim for the disinterested (outside political agenda, socialisation, prejudice, class, etc.), and therefore universal nature of the aesthetic experience, has famously scandalised theorists of the left throughout the twentieth century. Pierre Bourdieu's (1984) 'Distinction', for example, aggressively argues that the 'aesthetic' is far from universal but actually the aesthetic of the ruling class which interpellates all other classes as its subjects, misrecognising the world view of their class masters as their own. More so, the 'disinterested' experience is a luxury only available to the bourgeois or aristocrat with the material wealth or free time to allow them to be 'disinterested', and certainly not the priority of the wage labourer, or artisan, whose priority is obviously sustenance and self-preservation.

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In summary then, the aesthetic, and its related discourses, concepts, and judgements, is not an eternal, or even classical category but historical invention, whose birth can be more or less precisely located to coincide with the advent of modernity and the expansion of mercantile capitalism.

The journey from taste to the aesthetic reached its denouement in nineteenth century romantic philosophy, which largely reproduced this classificatory system of the arts automatically and uncritically. Symbiotically, a gradual shift in the reception understanding of art developed, which could be characterised as a change in focus from the artwork as beautiful, to the artwork as sublime, to the artwork as autonomous, self-contained, and spontaneous site of creation (Shiner, 2001, p. 143). The latter approaches mystified the act of artistic production to such an extent that they were permanently alienated them from the materiality of artisanal production.

However, it would be an idealist analysis that imagined that such developments were the results of great thinkers alone. Other factors would be the emergence of new forms of art institutions, such as 'the art museum, the secular concert, and literary criticism' (Shiner, 2001, p. 88) all of which used the discourse of aesthetic theory as cultural capital to further their respective commercial interests, thereby accentuating the differences between the artistic disciplines and creating new publics for those disciplines in the process. The emergent bourgeois public sphere, analysed in depth by Habermas (1989), in the new lending libraries, coffee houses, exhibitions, salons, concerts and periodicals, where the aesthetic theories of Baumgarten, Kant, and others would be discussed by the chattering classes, did more than anything to cement this distinction in the public consciousness and the fabric of civil society.

The formation of the art academies at this time across Europe, which grew exponentially during the eighteenth century to almost a hundred in number (Shiner, 2001, p. 101), many of which had links to the aristocracy, institutionalised the valorisation of certain types of Beaux-Arts practices into formal curricula. Under the stewardship of Joshua Reynolds, for example, the British Royal Academy (founded in 1769) encouraged students to pursue ideal beauty over the simply mechanical.

The moderns are not less convinced than the ancients of this superior power existing in the art; nor less conscious of its effects. Every language has adopted terms expressive of this excellence. The Gusto grande of the Italians; the Beau ideal of the French and the great style, genius, and taste among the English, are but different appellations of the same thing. It is this intellectual dignity, they say, that ennobles the painter's art; that lays the line between him and the mere mechanic (Reynolds, 2008, [1770] p. 46).

This institutional division between the artisanal and the artistic was compounded in the nineteenth century with the establishment of the Government School of Design in Somerset House, London, which became the model that was rapidly rolled out to the provinces. The institutions born out of this model are the forefathers of our modern art schools. However, from their inception, these schools were quite different institutions, pedagogically and ideologically, from the aristocratic Royal Academy, to which they stood immediately as radical other. Quinn (2012) has written extensively about how the ideology of these schools was born from the utilitarianism of a British Parliament dominated by a newly empowered bourgeois class. The focus of these early schools on developing design skills applicable to industry stood in stark contrast to the culture and pedagogy of the Royal Academy. They were also central to the production and reproduction of a

culture of disciplinary specialisation, necessary for the division of labour in industrial manufacture, but which remains entrenched as a pedagogic art school mode. Beech (2014) has read the formation of these schools as a bourgeois radical act; a declaration of class war against the aristocratic stranglehold on culture. The vocational and pragmatic emphasis of contemporary design degrees, and the romantic esotericism of some contemporary fine art degrees, respectively, could be viewed as distant echoes of this originary moment of ideological class conflict. Both Wood (2008) and Rifkin (1988) have written acerbically about the absolute pedagogical bankruptcy and repetitiveness of these early art school curricula, which sits uncomfortably next to notions of creativity, individuality, expressiveness, or even the myth of the art school as an emancipatory institution.

Eagleton's (1990) explicitly materialist *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* argues that aesthetic theories emerge as the result of, and thus reflect the world view of, an emergent bourgeois class, which in Germany at least, were still largely deferential to the old feudal-absolutist regime. This emergent, but disempowered bourgeois class, provided the philosopher aestheticians for this new social order –

Unrooted in political or economic power, however, this bourgeois enlightenment remained in many respects enmortgaged to feudalist absolutism, marked by that profound respect for authority of which Immanuel Kant, courageous Aufklärer and docile subject to the king of Prussia, may be taken as exemplary (Eagleton, 1990, p. 15).

Though this is certainly harsh on Kant, and a more careful reading can reveal a certain strategic resistance to absolutist power in his work, the preliminary sections of *The Conflict of the Faculties* (1979 [1798]), for example, certainly demonstrate deference to authority. Given its class basis, Eagleton argues that the project of aesthetics could be read as an attempt, by proxy, to extend the hegemony of state control across the entirety of the realm of sensible experience as well. Read in this way, aesthetics is an attempt by absolutist power to take account of a shifting social dynamic and new bourgeois-liberal conceptions such as 'taste', 'individuality', 'feeling', and so forth, which otherwise would threaten the security of its power base (Eagleton, 1990, p. 15). I would suggest that this kind of reading of the aesthetic, and therefore Fine Art as its institutional form, as a perpetuation of the world-view of the ruling class might well be seductive to contemporary applied arts practitioner, that find themselves relegated to the status of second class creative producers since the days of Reynolds.

In summary then, the aesthetic, and its related discourses, concepts, and judgements, is not an eternal, or even classical category but historical invention, whose birth can be more or less precisely located to coincide with the advent of modernity and the expansion of mercantile capitalism. Furthermore, aesthetic theory emerges from the bourgeois classes and reflects the particularities of the bourgeois sensibility above all others. Finally, the disciplinary specialisations and resulting heirarchisations, that we presume eternal, had no equivalent in the classical period, and are invented at approximately the same historical moment and exacerbated by both of the factors above.

THINKING
Beyond Disciplines

In a recent essay, *Thinking Between Disciplines: an aesthetics of knowledge*, (2006, p. 1-12), and interview (2007), Rancière outlines 'indisciplinarity', as a philisophico-political method for rethinking society and, by extension, democracy itself. For Rancière, democracy begins with the presumption of equality, particularly the equality of intelligences, between all citizens. Therefore the task of any democracy is to maximise opportunities for participation in, and the creation of, the socio-psychological and political common world (1991, p. 45-73). This necessitates the rejection of specialist disciplinary positions as these begin from the presumption of inequality; the adoption of such positions involves the drawing of boundaries; 'the distribution of territories, which is always a way of deciding who is qualified to speak about what' (2007, p. 3). Take for example the sociologist's contretemps with the aesthetic, as exemplified by Bourdieu and Eagleton. The declaration of the disinterested aesthetic experience as merely the illusion of bourgeois philosophers is, first and foremost, a declaration of the differing world views of the sociologist and the philosopher, ultimately validating the former over the latter; a separation of 'those who do the science and those who are regarded as its *objects*' (2007, p. 3). Disciplinary boundaries always deny the visibility of all other worlds to demonstrate the validity of their own. This separationist disciplinary logic extends throughout society creating the totality that Rancière famously describes as the 'distribution of the sensible'. The revolutionary politics of an *indisciplinary* approach are therefore to be located not in any doctrinaire political programme, Marxist or otherwise, but in the suggestion of a 'redistribution of the possible' which describes 'a world open to the possibilities and capacities of all' (2007, p. 2).

For Rancière, the radicality of Kant's analysis of the aesthetic in the third critique lies in the way it reveals a disarticulation between knowledge and experience, or the conceptual and empirical, thus revealing the incompatibility of these two orders of knowledge in the process. This demonstrates that there are in fact two orders of knowledge in existence at any particular time, co-existing in a situation that Kant characterises as a double negation, producing two related and necessary, but mutually exclusive, orders of ignorance. In the contretemps above, these

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orders could be characterised as the scientific knowledge of the sociologist against, and in denial of, the knowledge of the philosopher. Inversely, this also represents the denial of the social by the philosopher, whose concept of disinterested aesthetic crumbles in the face of. Eagleton (1990), to give him his dues, acknowledges this troubling disarticulation in Kant's work, but retreats from the radical conclusions it suggests. He concludes that aesthetics, from Baumgarten onwards, is an illusory attempt to retrieve this unity, in a 'confusion' between the conceptual and sensory, and salvage philosophy from the abyss suggested by Kant. However, for Eagleton, this is dismissed as the bourgeois idealist conceit of the philosopher, or aesthetician, lacking the rigour of the historical materialist analysis. Paul de Man (1996, p. 129-163) has made a similar argument about Schiller's letters (2004, [1795]), who he demonstrates to have wilfully misread Kant for the purposes of creating a philosophical praxis concerned less with wrestling with the problem of the structure of the imagination and more with the pragmatics of filling theatres and the lofty social ambitions he held for the aesthetic education and salvation of society (p. 141-2).

Neither Eagleton, nor Bourdieu, nor Schiller, nor even Kant, truly escape the limitations of their respective disciplinary positions. To remind ourselves, for Rancière, a discipline demarcates territory, to demonstrate the validity of a position and, as such, is a denial of the other which

should be understood as a regulation of a rapport between the two knowledges and two ignorances. It is a way of defining an idea of the thinkable, an idea of what the objects of knowledge

themselves can think and know. It is therefore always a certain regulation of dissensus, of its dehiscence in relation to the ethical order, according to which a certain type of condition implies a certain thought (Rancière, 2006, p. 6).

Rancière explains this further through the example of the palace from the beginning of Kant's third critique, experienced aesthetically if, contra Rousseau, we ignore our desires to 'vilify the vanity of the great who waste the sweat of people on such superfluous things' (2000, [1790] p. 90) and maintain a position of disinterestedness. For the sociologist, whose disciplinary position insists that an individual's ideas, concepts, and consciousness are produced by their position in the class system such proclamations are

the judgement of the petit-bourgeois intellectual who, free from worries about work or capital, indulges himself by adopting the position of universal thought and disinterested taste (Rancière, 2006, p. 2).

While there is a degree of correctness in this assertion, as Marx famously teaches us in the German Ideology and elsewhere, the limitations of such a reading reside in the binarisation of knowledge, or ways of approaching the world into the correct and incorrect; the true and the false. On the one hand the sociologist, who debunks the illusory idealism of the disinterested judgement; on the other the philosopher who views the sociologists commitment as a barrier to understanding. Two orders of knowledge and two orders of ignorance - operating in a perfectly

stable and systemic regulation of dissensus. A dynamic that perfectly reproduces itself and the expected behaviours of those who are trapped within it. And it is not even necessary for those trapped within this system to be fully invested in it, but simply enough that they

act on an everyday basis as though this was the case: it is enough that their arms, their gaze and their judgement make their know-how [savoir-faire] and the knowledge of their condition accord with each other, and vice versa. There is no illusion here, nor any misrecognition (Rancière, 2006, p. 4).

The worker building the palace need not truly believe that either his involvement in its construction, or his situation or exploitation within the wider relations of production, give him a more concrete understanding of the palace than the decadent aristocrat who resides there. Nor need he believe that the aesthetic experience of said palace, outlined in the rarefied discourse of the aesthetician, is beyond his comprehension. It is simply enough for him to recognise his place in this hierarchical ordering of the world and play to type. Similarly, the Fine Artist need not believe the institutional mythology they have more innate genius, creativity, individuality, or autonomy than the graphic artist. Nor need the Graphic Artist truly be mystified by the extravagancies, affectations, and elitist discourses of the artworld for the hierarchical modern system of the arts to be reproduced. Just like the builder constructing the palace, they simply need to recognise their correct place in the social order, and regulate their thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and ambitions accordingly.

Following Kant, Rancière has recently suggested a need for of an 'aesthetics of knowledge' to think through this dissensual impasse. His phrase should not be confused with the suggestion that knowledge needs some sensible or visual supplement to make itself concrete, nor some historical understanding of aesthetics or vice versa. This phrase refers explicitly to the radical, troubling and dangerous rupture suggested by Kant's analysis, where judgements concerning beauty need to be separated from social experience, and in his analysis of the sublime an incompatibility between comprehension and experience. For Rancière,

It is this arrangement [dispotif] that the aesthetic experience deregulates. It is thus that such experience is much more than a way of appreciating works of art. It concerns the definition of a type of experience which neutralises the circular relationship between knowledge [connaissance] as know-how [savoir] and knowledge as the distribution of roles. Aesthetic experience eludes the sensible distribution of roles and competences which structure the hierarchical order (Rancière, 2006, p. 4).

An 'aesthetics of knowledge', properly understood, offers some form of agency by opening up a mode of cognition that can disrupt the 'two orders of ignorance', challenge the 'distribution of the sensible', and the related hierarchical ordering of society. To conclude, albeit too briefly, this paper offers a reading of a contemporary commentary concerning the apparent creative malaise facing the Graphic Arts which, hopefully, suggests just such an approach, and that a different organisation of society is possible.

FIGHT

the Nothingness

Lawrence Zeegen, educator, illustrator, and writer, currently Professor of Illustration at University of the Arts, London, and Dean of the School of Design at London College of Communication, has recently written two contentious articles, in the design journal *Creative Review* (2012) and a comment piece for *It's Nice That* (2014), concerning the lack of criticality in the work of contemporary Graphic Artists. His main target was the annual showcase of 'rising stars from the graphic arts world', *Pick Me Up*, held at Somerset House, London. The former article, entitled *Where is the Content? Where is the Comment?* lambasted the discipline of illustration, which for him had become a discipline of entrenched 'navel gazing and self-authorship', obsessed with issues of its own craft, in retreat from social commentary or social engagement instead focussed on the 'the chit-chat of inner sanctum nothingness' (Zeegen, 2012). His later article lambasts the Graphic Arts world as an arena of

> *pure simulacra – the uncritical reproduction of outmoded styles without external referent, produced by a new generation of art school hipsters; a generation of would-bes and wannabes with replica beards, plaid shirts and skinny jeans (Zeegen, 2014).*

For Zeegen, *Pick Me Up*, isn't to blame, given that it doesn't

> *claim to represent anything more than a style-over-content, fashion-led, vanilla-bland, anodyne-pop version of yesterday's zeitgeist, remodelled and repackaged for another generation of young pretenders obsessed with the here and now, despite the whiff of the then and there (Zeegen, 2014).*

There is an obvious level of exaggeration for rhetorical effect here, but Zeegen is correct in his assertion that *Pick Me Up* isn't to blame for this institutional malaise. A Rancièrian analysis would demonstrate this to be the logical and expected reflex of the systematic and hierarchical ordering of creative knowledge which relegates the designer to mere wage labourer, focussed

on fulfilling the brief, rather than creating spontaneous works concerning with nothing other than disciplinary self-knowledge. This follows Zeegen's rhetorical binarisation perhaps too closely but most readers will recognise this at least a kernel of truth in the caricature. To paraphrase the *First Things First Manifesto 2000*, (Barnbrook, Kalman, et al, 1999) that famous call to arms for a programme of committed Graphic Arts practice contra commercial arts practice, there is a whole slew of publications and articles devoted to this belief. The market rewards it; design professionals and design educators encourage it. Indeed, this has pretty much been the status quo for the last two hundred and fifty years. If designers, illustrators, animators, printmakers, and other crafts practitioners, are 'navel gazers' it is because the system expects them to be exactly this.

Zeegen uses the example of the David Shrigley exhibition (2012), held across the river concurrently, and across the river from *Pick Me Up* as a counterpoint to its supposed artistic bankruptcy. Its giant publicity banner, the height of the Hayward Gallery displays a Shrigley piece with a clenched fist and the slogan 'FIGHT THE NOTHINGNESS', which Zeegen holds as a both a metaphor for the lack of the Graphic Arts, and a proverbial call to arms. Though well intended, the limitations of such an analysis are that they maintain the distinction between graphic arts practice and fine arts practice via the implication that design needs to be more like fine art, or for that matter activism, politics, philosophy, sociology, etc. to be of any worth. One should also point out here that Zeegen, as a professional educator, must acknowledge complicity in the maintenance of the logic of this system in more ways than just these two articles. Like the sociologist, whose discipline was invented as a 'war machine in the age of the aesthetic which is also the age of democratic revolutions' (Rancière, 2006, p. 7), Zeegen unleashes his own war machine exposing the limitations of design discourse *vis-à-vis* art discourse. The tragedy of this gesture is that, in championing the latter order of knowledge above the former, it reproduces the systematic distribution of the thinkable described above; dismissing a whole sector of creative production in the process.

Putting to one side the ridiculousness of holding David Shrigley up as an example of progressive practice, one needs to make the case for the many practitioners working within the field of the Graphic Arts producing work that, via a methodological 'indisciplinarity', resists any reductive labelling, blurs the boundaries between art and craft, and achieving a genuine criticality in the process. The beginnings of such a roll call would have to include the installation work of Neasdon Control Centre (http://neasdencontrolcentre.com/), the site specific work of Daniel Eatock (http://eatock.com/), John Morgan's output, which alternates between polished craft and contemporary art (http://www.morganstudio.co.uk/), and the politicised work of fellow Yorkshiremen, The Designer's Republic (http://www.thedesignersrepublic.com/), who have backgrounds in philosophy and produce as much moving image work as 2D material recently. The genuinely uncategorisable Swedish design collective Snask (www.snask.com) produce their own beer, run a record label and music festival, make films, host track and field events, alongside producing editorial, web, and brand identity work. Any or all of the above could easily have been included alongside the numerous artists that Nicholas Bourriaud (1998) cites in his famous manifesto for progressive contemporary art, *Relational Aesthetics*. His identification of a tendency amongst contemporary art towards the relational and collaborative, which could be argued to ameliorate the alienating effects of capitalist societal relations, is as much a feature of the 'design' work above as it is of the latest Turner Prize shortlist. In fact, one could probably argue that the relational and the collaborative are characteristics that have been much more prevalent in the fields of design practice than of art practice over the last two centuries.

Figure 1. Statement and counter statement. Poster (1 of 3).
Experimental Jetset, 2004. Image courtesy of Experimental Jetset.

T
A

...in this way, every truth points manifestly to its opposite.

2/3

Experimental Jetset, 2011
for "Graphic Design –
Now in Production"

Atelier Populaire, 1968
Atelier Populaire, 1968
Walter Bangerter, 1967
Roman Cieslewicz, 1969
Roman Cieslewicz, 1977
Wim Crouwel, 1957
Frémez Gómez Fresquet, 1967
Jamie Reid, 1980
Rob Stolk, 1969
Stop de Kindermoord, 1978

Figure 2. Statement and counter statement. Poster (2 of 3).
Experimental Jetset, 2004. Image courtesy of Experimental Jetset.

3/3

Truth becomes something living; it lives solely in the rhythm by which statement and counter-statement displace each other, in order to think each other."
—W. Benjamin

Experimental Jetset, 2011
for "Graphic Design –
Now in Production"

Roman Cieslewicz, 1969
Wim Crouwel, 1962
Malcolm Garrett / Linder, 1977
Jean-Luc Godard, 1967
Frémez Gómez Fresquet, 1967
Guerilla Girls, 1989
Jan Lenica, 1964
John Lennon & Yoko Ono, 1971
Josef Müller-Brockmann, 1958
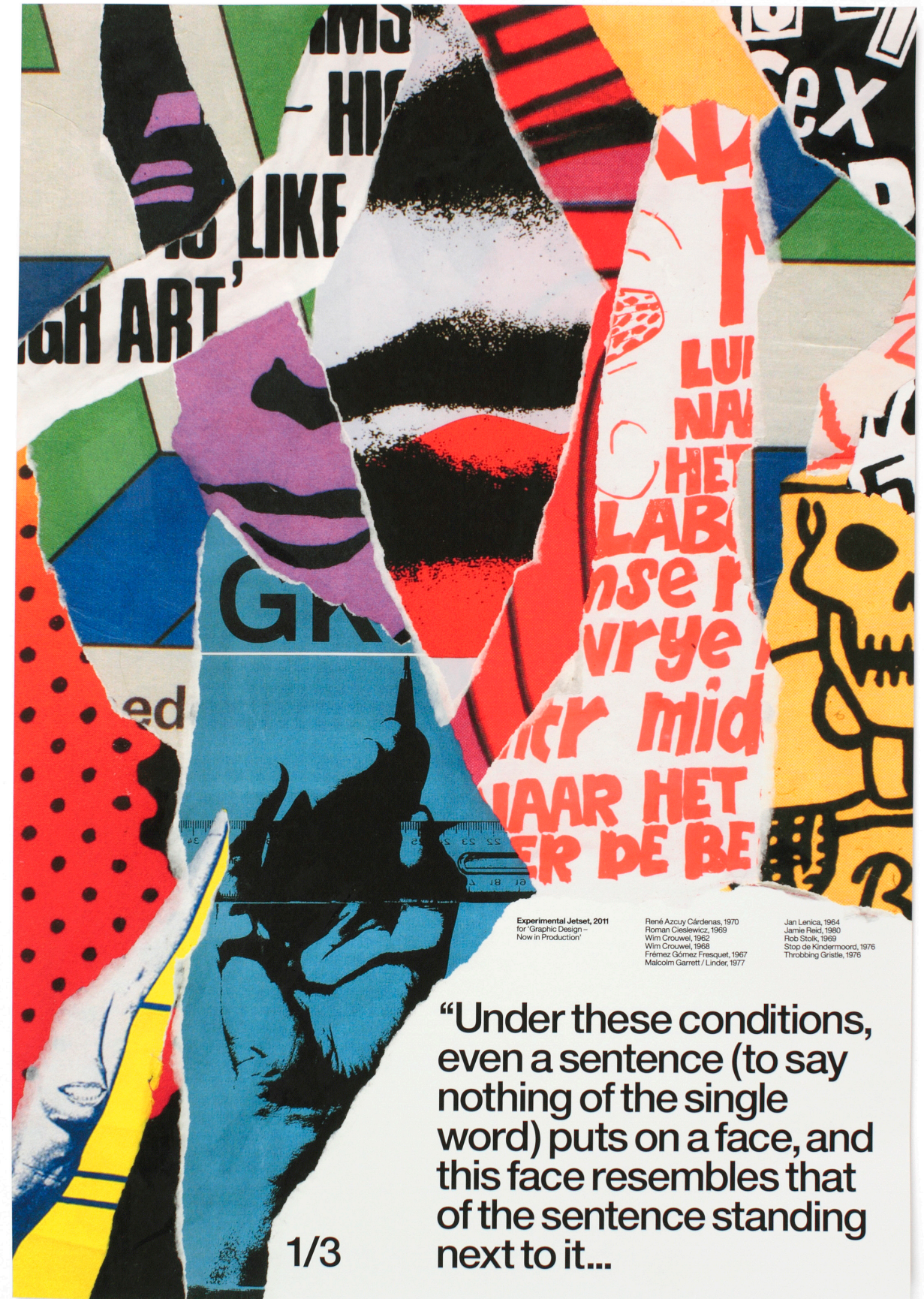
Figure 3. Statement and counter statement. Poster (3 of 3).
Experimental Jetset, 2004. Image courtesy of Experimental Jetset.

The equally indisciplinary Dutch design collective Experimental Jetset (http://www.experimentaljetset.nl/) issued a manifesto in 2001 entitled Disrepresentation Now! (2010 [2001]), that opens with a quote from Van Doesberg's (1923) Antitendenzenkunst manifesto that:

> There is no structural difference between a painting that depicts Trotsky heading a red army, and a painting that depicts Napoleon heading an imperial army. It is irrelevant whether a piece of art promotes either proletarian or patriotic values (Van Doesburg in Experimental Jetset, 2010 [2001]).

As Experimental Jetset argue, this should not be misconstrued as an apolitical statement but instead a assertion that the act of representation, in art or politics, is always the claim for one particular world view above another, and therefore is counter-revolutionary whatever its originary politics. In this sense, like the similarity between history painter glorifying imperialism, and the Bolshevik artist celebrating the October revolution, there is a strange equivalence between the resolutely commercial artist or designer advertising trivial commodities for a pay cheque, and the subversive 'culture jammer' advocating the overthrow of such a system through interventionist graphic agitation. Both are representative activities, staking a claim for the correctness of their world-view (Beirut, 2007, p. 56-7), and both employ similar persuasive strategies. In contradistinction to a limiting bifurcation between the committed and the incorporated, such as one finds in *First Things First Manifesto 2000*, Experimental Jetset advocate and 'anti-tendentious' approach, which rejects the artificial distinctions placed between social, cultural, and commercial forms of graphic art and the logic of representative culture.

> The immorality of advertising and the morality of anti-advertising are two sides of the same coin. What we need is a form of graphic design that is neither immoral nor moral, but amoral; that is productive, not reproductive; that is constructive, not parasitic. (Experimental Jetset, 2010 [2001]).

Instead, their work frequently advocates a form of presentational design abstractionism, which celebrates a radical materiality of design (type, spacing, space etc.) over any representation of the world. One could comfortably apply the analyses of the materiality and self-criticality of American Abstract Expressionism, made by the likes of Clement Greenberg (1992, [1965] p. 754-760) and Michael Fried (1992, [1964] p. 769-775), to a reading of their work, which in itself suggests the falsity of drawing boundaries between disciplines. More importantly, Experimental Jetset's call for disrepresentative practice suggests, like much of the best progressive art, a utopian image of society radically reconfigured, perhaps even unified, which is the ultimate ambition of 'indisciplinarity' as methodology in Rancière's work.

The contemporary graphic designer or illustrator, just like the labourer who constructed Kant's palace, or the shopkeeper in the Marx quote above, knows well enough their situation within the relations of production. What they don't need is an alternative tendency, in the combative programmes issued by Zeegen, Adbusters and others. Paraphrasing Benjamin, a philosopher beloved by Experimental Jetset, in *Author as Producer* (1998, [1966] p. 85-103), it is not enough for designers, illustrators, and so forth to simply make political art if, in some way, this work doesn't destabilise or intervene in the very socio-psychological structure of a system that denies them the very possibility or right to make such statements in the first place. What they need more urgently is an 'aesthetics of knowledge' that demonstrates the distinctions between the presumed creative capacities of the designer and artist to be historically constructed artifice. This recognition involves a head on reckoning with dominant-hegemonic ideology that is ultimately political; more political in fact than any superficial attempt to politicise graphic design. From here, one could begin to imagine interdisciplinary, or *indisciplinary*, creative industries based on the presumption of the shared socio-cultural importance of all creative activity; where there are neither art nor design as discreet activities, nor artists nor graphic designers, but people whom, amongst other things begin to create a radical new model of social organisation in common.

THE HABSBURGS: ALTER EGOS AND DISCIPLINARY SIDESTEPS

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The Habsburgs: Alter Egos and Disciplinary Sidesteps
Andrew Spackman and Craig Barber

Preface

In the process of having the paper peer reviewed, it became clear that by writing about our exhibition work which established ideas of disciplinary boundary erosion and the role of context in upholding these fabricated decisions, we were potentially creating a new piece of work. This text is not an adjunct to the work that it discusses; it has a dual existence as reflective document and new work, which has a creative importance that equals the work it discusses, and expands upon the continuum of transformation. Work is potentially endlessly recycled, destroyed and then reformed.

The original piece which was formulated as a reflective conversation between the authors about our work as The Habsburgs. We felt that – in keeping with the conversational method of the paper – it seemed pertinent to include the reviewers' comments as a part of the conversation. Here their words are highlighted in a different colour.

Reviewer

This is an interesting and gutsy take on the topic for this Message journal issue, and you deserve credit for being consistent and loyal to your experiment and interrogation into cross-disciplinary collaboration, as The Habsburgs, in this approach to the academic paper. Perhaps you could even make that element more clear – underline this mirroring of concept – perhaps by asking for some unruliness in layout …?

Introduction

This paper reflects upon *The Habsburgs*; the alter egos of Andrew Spackman, who was trained as a Graphic Designer and Craig Barber, who was trained as a Fine Artist. Both Barber and Spackman are educators who work within higher education. The concept of *The Habsburgs* developed from questioning of the validity of specialisms and institutional art contexts and provided the collaborators Spackman and Barber, with a device through which to explore the very nature of collaboration and to question the validity of discipline specificity. This paper assesses the potential for cross-disciplinary dialogue to reveal observations, tensions and slippage. The observations are made in retrospect and were not an active factor in making the work.

The paper is framed as a conversation between Barber and Spackman. This conversation was developed through different modes including face to face meetings, Skype meetings, phone calls and email exchanges. This hybrid dialogue mirrors the type of dialogue within the Habsburgs' creative practice and explores their respective positions as both Graphic Designer and Fine Artist. It starts by considering the factors that led to the conception of *The Habsburgs* as alter egos and follows by considering the way in which *The Habsburgs* deploy different strategies to side step disciplinary allegiances, both their own and those perceived by audiences.

The Habsburgs —

UNRULY OBJECT UNRULY

Craig Barber

In 2011 we were both involved in the *Unruly Object* exhibition at Coventry University's Lanchester Gallery, alongside contemporary craft maker Imogen Aust. The aim of the exhibition was to explore notions of unruliness and difficulty. Thematically, this was made all the more potent through the use of the institutional space of the university gallery.

Andrew Spackman

Yes, for this particular exhibition we set ourselves the task of creating a body of work that might somehow escape the conventions of the art exhibition within an institutional context –the institution being both the gallery and university, as an educational and research establishment. Through this process I think we discovered that this was an almost impossible goal, since there was a large amount of compromise and defaulting to established tropes and expectations. Going forward, we created *The Habsburgs* to address and confront this idea of expectation, and more specifically, to explore ways in which our work and its presentation could reject ingrained discipline expectations. *The Habsburgs* gave us a platform through which to both collaborate and challenge the existing boundaries and expectations of our respective disciplines. For me this was Visual Communication or Graphic Design and for you, this was Fine Art.

Craig Barber

Although we may feel that the exhibition itself hung together too comfortably and fitted the mould of a successful curatorial exercise in a way that we did not want, it was crucial in informing us of what *The Habsburgs* could become. I feel that there were two extremely important aspects that we could take from *Unruly Object*: firstly, there were the iterations of the space during the install that we were both happier with than the final exhibition. These had a sense of incompletion and of irreverence for the gallery space as a place to showcase work (Figure 1). And secondly, there was the exhibition poster and invite, which had a slick and understated production value (Figure 2). These became two key values for the foundations of *The Habsburgs* that would enable us to generate alter egos with a sense of purpose. Although we refer to these alter egos as plural when we work as *The Habsburgs*, we do so as a singular entity. It is this singularity that forms the basis for cross-disciplinarity, but also which creates a friction between the dualities of the ad-hoc, lo-fi and the high quality production values within the work.

Figure 1. Unruly Object. Installation. Imogen Aust, Craig Barber and Andrew Spackman, 2011. Image courtesy of authors.

UNRULYOB-JECT

LGP

28 - 4 - 2011 - START
05 - 5 - 2011 - PREVIEW
20 - 5 - 2011 - END

10 - 5 - MON - SAT

AUST
BARBER
SPACKMAN
OHMMM

Figure 2. Unruly Object. Poster. Craig Barber and Andrew Spackman, 2011. Image courtesy of authors.

Andrew Spackman

I think that is a really interesting observation and one that I hadn't fully considered before. One of the potential criticisms, or pitfalls of the first iteration (or attempt) at the *Unruly Object* Exhibition, was that it looked unfinished and incomplete – almost shambolic. It seemed to be able to provoke only obvious responses: that we didn't take the exhibition seriously and as such its validity should be merely discounted as either juvenile or anti-establishment. Perhaps a continuation, or harking back to Dada sensibilities. But, by establishing a more refined and polished aesthetic to our work – with printed elements such as the poster – we were able to destabilise these reactions. Also, it was important to consider the design for the poster as equal to the work within the exhibition. By doing this we placed an element of the exhibition outside the control of the gallery.

Reviewer

I enjoyed the ambition of the collaboration and of the duo to try to capture this relationship within this essay. It seems well-placed in terms of the theme of the journal.

I however found it hard to ascertain the graphic and artistic aspects to the project without being able to see most of the artworks that the essay was discussing. Therefore it's relatively hard to comment on how well the essay would fit visually into the theme of the journal as a whole. But the essay presents arguments that sit within the contexts of graphics and fine art debate, and so in this way it is successful. Because this journal has a specific focus on design communication it would seem relevant to encourage the authors to:

a) Push a little further the graphic discussion within the text:

One of the potential criticisms, or pitfalls of the first iteration (or attempt) at the Unruly Object Exhibition, was that it looked unfinished and incomplete – almost shambolic.

Craig Barber

I agree about the importance of the poster. Let us consider how the printed posters were used to communicate about the exhibition. Of course a good many were used as A3 posters pasted into various locations, but others were scrunched up, placed into padded envelopes and mailed out as invitations to the exhibition. This aligned the posters with the unruly ethos of the exhibition and allowed for them also to become objects. This objectness stood in contrast to the understated design image and created a friction that went some way to indicate the show's intentions. In a way the poster, when in invitation format, was a piece of graphic communication that forecast all that *The Habsburgs* would become.

The Habsburgs —

THE KUNSTVEREIN

Craig Barber

One of the first things that we did after *Unruly Object* was to install some work in the Coventry Kunstverein (a shed that had been left to Coventry University by Bob and Roberta Smith). With this experiment (Figure 3) we decided to gather a number of objects and install them within the space. We had found these objects in corridors, they were forgotten objects that, once noticed, would surely have been put into a skip for disposal but instead we had appropriated them as art. The objects were sometimes amended: for example a container of screws and nails was wrapped in Clingfilm and a wheel was configured with a metal pole and piece of wood to depict a unicycle, but for the most part our activity and direction came from the way that the work was installed. We also painted a circle on the floor of the space. This circle seems to have a direct link with the circle that we used on the *Unruly Object* poster.

Figure 3. The Habsburgs. Installation. Craig Barber and Andrew Spackman, 2011. Image courtesy of authors.

Andrew Spackman

I guess some people viewing this work would suggest we were simply appropriating found objects and creating some kind of installation – I am not sure if this was what we were doing though – I felt we were testing the space's ability to reframe something as art. As this space had been made by an artist with the intention of displaying art, clearly whatever you put in it would be transformed into art. However, by not fully acknowledging what our intent was, we created a void of uncertainty about the space and its role in upholding and championing art in this way.

Craig Barber

Personally I felt that the time that we used to make the work was important rather than the work itself. I see the work that we did in the Coventry Kunstverein as an exercise that enabled us to start to test what we could do with the collaboration. When choosing to collaborate we were both aware that we have different skills sets but were not intent upon labelling these. It would have been restrictive for either of us to consider our own strengths to be territories – or areas that relate to our specialism that we feel a dominance for. Our strategy was more about equality and the production of art through discussion and collaboration; indeed, we did not want for the work to be technically overzealous or to 'show off'.

Working in education, we are expected to expand students' capacities in relation to their chosen course through engaging with specialist knowledge and skills. To some extent we wanted to share this knowledge between ourselves, but it was also about sharing our fallibility and allowing our limitations to be evident in the work that we make. In this way *The Habsburgs* could be a plausible artistic construct rather than an art equivalent of a supergroup. We could also see this through the lens that Neville Brody applies to the new School of Communication at the Royal College of Art: that we are 'reclaiming the true discipline again, which is a cross-discipline' (Brody, 2015). Here Brody is referencing a design and learning community, where students are encouraged to learn from one another through discourse and collaboration. He presents the idea of the 'agile creative' who can work 'across media'. This is enabled through a community of practice where students share knowledge in shared studio spaces.

Here the studio space frames the scenario for different sets of specialist knowledge to interact and cross-fertilise. With the work that we made in the Coventry Kunstverein it first seems that the space of the Kunstverein itself acts as the frame for cross-disciplinarity. But if we see beyond the power real space it becomes apparent that *The Habsburgs* themselves were starting to be the frame for cross-disciplinarity through conversations, art works, design works and discussions about works that were never made. Through time we developed confidence in the construct of *The Habsburgs* and were ready for our next step, which was an exhibition at the Midland Arts Centre in Birmingham.

However, by not fully acknowledging what our intent was, we created a void of uncertainty about the space and its role in upholding and championing art in this way.

The Habsburgs –

HOW TO

PAINT

Andrew Spackman:

In 2013 we exhibited *How to Paint* at the Midland Arts Centre in Birmingham. Taking our cue from the poster design for *Unruly Object*, for the *How to Paint* exhibition we extended the idea of production values. In Graphic Design there are rules and guidelines that have been established over time. Elements of colour, layout and typography are controlled carefully either to aid understanding or enforce or direct communication toward specific goals. We started to apply these notions in our work, whilst producing content that was unhinged from clear narratives or communication aims. Through using HD video and a highly polished installation and presentation of the space, we aimed to place the reading of this work into some form of oscillation: between the expected and the uncertain. Through doing this, I think we hoped understandings of discipline specifics would crumble and be placed into question. We employed a wide range of media and media platforms in *How to Paint*, including HD video, graphics, painting, scriptwriting, sound and animation, each of which had their individual discipline allegiances. By saturating the work with different types of media, we attempted to break rigidity of media specific readings.

Some may feel that adopting Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) pluralised and almost rhizomic approach – with a lack of specialism, or specialty – somehow acts to deride the validity or quality of the work. Obviously, I strongly disagree with this position. Perhaps we are interested in a non-discipline specific form of art; a non-art with a utopian vision that is anti-specialization, which often involves amateurish sensibilities and intervention. I guess that's why we are called *The Habsburgs* – this name enables us to play upon the history of Habsburg dynasty: it enabled us to further develop the construct of *The Habsburgs* as bourgeois, amateur artists.

Craig Barber:

Yes, the choice of the name *The Habsburgs* was fundamental to the reasoning and development of the collaboration. The historical Habsburg family were the epitome of contradiction – they retained power through guarding their lineage closely and yet their incessant inbreeding led to their eventual downfall. On the one hand our construct of *The Habsburgs* have astute art and design brains – this is something that we cannot deny and serves as a serviceable starting point – but we also willfully disturb this with acts of stupidity. The friction caused by this was more apparent with the works that we showed at the Midland Arts Centre in Birmingham and subsequent works.

Figure 4. The Habsburgs, How to Paint. Three channel video installation. Craig Barber and Andrew Spackman, 2013. Image courtesy of authors.

Craig Barber:

One of the works in the *How to Paint* exhibition comprised three screens on a wall (Figure 4). The left hand screen shows two figures set in a fine art studio in amongst a group of easels, one of the figures paints and the other stands holding a rolled up piece of paper resembling a megaphone. This offered a visual indication of given instructions leading to the act of painting. We then applied actual audio instructions to the video through a synthetic, computer generated voiceover. This voiceover acted as the voice of another and oddly unhinged the power balance and relationships within the video. One prominent work that uses an imposed voice and the idea of instructions is *The Girl Chewing Gum* (1976) by John Smith. This aspect of Smith's work is well considered in Erika Balsom's research publication (2015) where she considers Smith's voice as initially a

> *voice-off that possesses all the authority of a voiceover, only to later reveal it as a voiceover lacking any authority whatsoever.*

Here Balsom considers the difference between a voice-off that is in some way linked with the world of the image compared with a voiceover that appears to be completely external and imposes authority over the imagery. Initially it might be said that the voiceover in the work by *The Habsburgs* shares some characteristics with the authoritative voiceover; it is synthetic, didactic and does not offer room for questioning. There is however a link between the voice and the characters on screen through the rolled up paper synthesising a megaphone. The character painting also continually turns around awaiting instruction, suggesting that the source of the voice originates from the same space as the imagery within the video, but perhaps lacks the humanity and fallibility of the image and its characters.

The voice in the Habsburg's works bears resemblance to that of the creature called Odradek from Kafka's short story *The Cares of a Family Man*. There can be no meaningful conversation with Odradek due to his emptiness and lack of intellect, but also his lack of humanity. When Odradek laughs he does so with 'only the kind of laughter that has no lungs behind it'. But whereas Odradek can be spoken to despite the lack of a meaningful conversation that can be entered into, the voice in *The Habsburgs* video gives no room for two-way conversation. The instructions flow in one direction and give little or no reasoning. As a teaching method this would be very narrow and whilst it may answer the question of how to paint, it does not contextualise this.

I think we have a healthy cynicism about technology. Our voice and work appears untrustworthy, and in parts, descends into slapstick, jokes and laughter.

Andrew Spackman:

The voice should be a direct and definite form of communication. However, our voice doesn't transmit this level of certainty. It reminds me of HAL in *2001, A Space Odyssey* (Kubrik, 1968) when he says:

> *I know I've made some very poor decisions recently, but I can give you my complete assurance that my work will be back to normal.*

I think we have a healthy cynicism about technology. Our voice and work appears untrustworthy, and in parts, descends into slapstick, jokes and laughter. Films which question the unreliability of technology, put forward an interesting perspective of how we move forward in our culture. I have always liked films like *The Matrix* (Wachowski and Wachowski, 1999) and *The Terminator* (Cameron, 1984) where technological evolution has tricked human society in some way. However, it is not so much that *The Habsburgs* reject technology, rather they reject the acceptance of the relationship we have with technology.

Craig Barber:

How to Paint references painting which is a specific area of fine art practice and one that has been questioned in terms of relevance at various points in history and continually reasserts itself. Painting has the ability to absorb what is new within the contemporary sphere and reframe it. The example often used is that of photography which was absorbed, appropriated and reframed by many practitioners such as Gerhard Richter. Richter makes us aware of the temporal nature of photography through work that can often be seen as about paint and the act of painting. Here painting has absorbed the photograph and asserted a dualistic identity as media and matter. Perhaps there is a need to absorb technology within Graphic Design.

Andrew Spackman:

I guess what we are simultaneously acknowledging is that all disciplines have their limits and that these are both policed and extended through medias and technologies. If Graphic Design adopts greater and greater levels of technology, for instance 3D printing, does it stray too far and lose its sense of itself as distinct and well defined? Is there a danger that unhinged from these media allegiances, Graphic Design might evaporate itself into something else entirely? There seems to be a careful game played out as disciplines develop and move forward. I would suggest that *The Habsburgs* attempt to provoke this frustratingly slow rate of change.

Craig Barber:

This use of the voice is very specific and dislocates the work from its surroundings of real people having real conversations. Here we can start to consider a level of specificity and a level of difference that alludes to branding. We should now consider if there are any other areas that add to that brand and the way that the brand fits within this particular gallery in this particular institution – MAC, Birmingham.

Reviewer:

In a number of places the conversation feels quite jarring – jumping from one subject to another not as fluidly as I would like – and subjects don't always naturally lead one into another.

Andrew Spackman:

The space of the exhibition lay on the threshold between distinct gallery and café spaces. This unique position enabled the work to be both legitimised (by the Art building) and popularised (by the commercial café space) simultaneously. Where as I would say Fine Art has a difficult relationship with the idea of the populists, Graphic Design doesn't. It is not so much that one stance is more important or relevant than the other, just that complex, uncertain and questioning artefacts can attempt to exist in public spaces. Of course both the art and the artefacts might alienate themselves from their audience. Our work might have appeared aloof and irrelevant. However, I think our work did form an interface between those two spheres and masters. In particular, the use of sound, and the voice, could be heard around the space in a way that could not be controlled or restricted. Ultimately, air is the perfect hanging space for art.

In a number of places the conversation feels quite jarring – jumping from one subject to another not as fluidly as I would like – and subjects don't always naturally lead one into another.

Craig Barber:

But is it the 'art building' that is legitimising the work or is it the branding associated with art and the art building. In this scenario there are many brands at play, one only has to consider all of the brands within the café space adjacent to where the work is shown.

Andrew Spackman:

I think we carved out a space. A bit like a cave wall can become a gallery, we painted the wall to say, look at this stuff and look at it in this way. The lemon yellow coloured wall was a spot colour taken at random from a *Pantone* book. I don't think we felt the need to wrestle this space into being more like a gallery, when in fact it was more like a cafe. In all of the exhibitions that have followed on from 'How to Paint' at the MAC, some form of modification of that space has taken place. At times, the modification becomes more interesting than the work itself. Look at groups like Turner Prize winners Assemble (http://assemblestudio.co.uk/) or Theaster Gates (http://theastergates.com/home.html) or the rise of the Urban Art Festival (http://www.upfest.co.uk/). Audiences have become more comfortable with the idea that art interfaces with public spaces.

Craig Barber:

The choice of colour did not seem to be a direct result of considering the mêlée of brands present in the space at the time but with retrospect it may have been. We knew at the start of the process that the space was not neutral, it was at the threshold between café commerce, where the public will be buying food and drink to consume and art commerce, where they will be consuming art and culture. By adding colour to the wall we were not intending to place allegiance with either of these positions but were aiming for a position of difference. The colour that we applied to the walls was the same colour as the spot in the Unruly Object poster and the same as we painted on the floor of the work that we installed in the Coventry Kunstverein. Are we open to the idea that this use of colour was an act of branding and the possibility, by extension, that *The Habsburgs* present themselves as a brand?

Reviewer:
In a number of places

Andrew Spackman:

Yes, I think *The Habsburgs* do present themselves as a brand. This brand contains a developing set of qualities and conflicting messages, that, rather than reassure audiences (consumers), consistently undermines confidence, certainly and value. However, as it is certain that this brand is in 'art', the validity of their output cannot be simply ignored or negated. In fact *The Habsburgs* often negate and deride their own value, or attempt to obfuscate understanding around how audiences should value or respond to their work.

Craig Barber:

When we were asked to do a talk about the work at the gallery we chose to write a script and involve the audience. We followed the script closely and did not improvise. This could be seen as another example of us protecting *The Habsburgs* as a brand whilst involving the audience and giving them some vested interest. The use of a script also meant that we could carefully choose what to tell the audience and what to withhold, thereby allowing *The Habsburgs* to remain illusive.

Andrew Spackman:

Perhaps we might suggest that the idea of writing and then reading our artist talk in the form of a script, is merely another media and discipline shift. A sleight of hand designed to further confuse or hide intentions. Perhaps it functioned something like the script to an advert or a highly controlled talk show. However, it is interesting that we are back to speaking again. There is something interesting and relevant in speaking. We see a popularity rise in the spoken word right now: events popping up around the country for instance. Speaking is a very unmediated form of communication. It suggests honesty, beyond the complexities and mysteries of digital culture or the manipulations of media and video. Speaking and storytelling are the most human of communication. I think, despite all the tricks *The Habsburgs* play, in some ways we are trying to present something honestly.

Craig Barber:

It is true that we are trying to be honest with the work. I have found that when working on something in isolation it is possible to fool and become dishonest with oneself. Perhaps this is because the work is being generated without such an external force that speech affords. As remarked on by Berger (1979, p. 206), painters often use a mirror to view their work from a critical distance and to un-trick the eye into seeing the way that things are and the way that they could be. Perhaps speaking – through using a script, through collaborating, through writing this text – is acting in a similar way to the mirror.

Andrew Spackman:

It might be worth us both commenting on how our collaboration, as 'artist' (CB) and 'graphics' (AS) frames this notion of art/graphics landscapes. It is quite difficult in such a plurality encoded practice to talk about these potentially shifting tectonic plates of activity.

My feeling here, or my earlier suggestion, is that we are working something within a non-art form, but that doesn't really address any particular issues, rather side steps things. A better attempt might be to suggest that we have different standpoints, and don't really feel the need to reach a consensus in the work. *The Habsburgs*, allow us to do this by momentarily disconnecting us from our past and allegiance to our former disciplines. Formal art education plays a big role in embedding a sense of the discipline self. This image of ourselves, and our discipline, is then subsequently passed down when we teach others. Personally, I am interested in how we might loosen these allegiances. Ultimately, the creative landscape of the future is changing and we cannot be sure in what ways at this time. Creatives, I think, should become nimble and able to navigate and morph their approaches and behaviours where necessary.

More specifically, because we use quite a few graphic devices in the exhibition, perhaps there is more to be said. The balance and role of these two disciplines needs to be considered. The graphic elements do not merely support the art, or vice versa. There appears to be a conversation between these two disciplines, and this conversation seems to be cordial, respectful and well meaning. *The Habsburgs* after all, are well bred.

Craig Barber:

There is, after all, much shared between art and design disciplines. The formal elements that you have already mentioned such as those related to composition have been fundamental to artistic practice for centuries. Perhaps there is a different weight of focus within design where colours may be used to generate a certain response from a consumer perhaps a more functional response than one that an artist may be aiming for. Considering our collaboration to flow from subject specialism which leads to cross-disciplinary work, may seem to make sense, but it is actually quite a loaded viewpoint. What this viewpoint does present is the possibility for us to impose a dialectical type of enquiry and through perceiving differences between the specialisms start to consider what this cross-disciplinarity might be.[1] We could look at it the other way around and start by considering similarities – ultimately we are both human beings trying to make things and find where they may fit. The context is important and we have experimented with subverting contexts when entering the Coventry Drawing Prize.

[1] Alluding to Hegelian dialectics, where one can work through the logic of what objects are through considering what is identical or different from prior knowledge see Hegel, G. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel: The Science of Logic, George Di Giovanni [trans.], 2015, Cambridge University Press.

The Habsburgs –

COVENTRY DRAW-ING PRIZE

Craig Barber:

The Coventry University Drawing Prize is a competition that has run since 2010 and was 'specifically designed to encourage and promote excellence in drawing within the University' (Coventry University: https://www.facebook.com/events/336347309808849/). *The Habsburgs* entered the drawing prize one year with the intention of offsetting the principles that it held. (Figure 5) It was not our intention to question the principles of the competition or to question what drawing could be. Rather we wanted to enter work that could be considered as equivalence for drawing, which the panel were offered the opportunity to consider as drawing. In one way we were using our status as teaching staff within the institution to be provocative and obstinate.

Andrew Spackman:

We entered the drawing prize several years running and each time were rejected entry on the grounds that the work we entered were not drawings. Although, this might seem reasonable, I always felt annoyed that the work wasn't considered. For me there seemed to be an attempt to protect the position and role of drawing, by not allowing it to be polluted by other discipline based artefacts. We somewhat amplified our assault on the drawing prize by also taking little care in the things we made and using materials and processes that had little value or aligned themselves with things that had little perceived value. For instance the materials we used included packing tape, stationery, jam jars, photocopies etc.

Although we were questioning the institution of the drawing prize and drawing as a discipline, I didn't feel we were necessarily debasing it. If anything, we were engaging in drawing in a very honest and invested way. Our priorities were to draw, and to make work that thought about drawing in a questioning and fresh way.

Figure 5. The Habsburgs. Drawing. Craig Barber and Andrew Spackman, 2013. Image courtesy of authors.

The Habsburgs –

Andrew Spackman:

It is hard to conclude but perhaps we can draw together some important discoveries.

Perhaps it is worth returning to this idea of the conversation. Unlike the word collaboration, which suggests harmony and agreement, conversation is more open. People's conversations will often contain disagreements, distractions, tangents and moments of harmony. As we get on as people, I'm sure we feel we want to reach some kind of meeting place in the work we make together and eradicate any confusions or contradictions that exist, as the our different standpoints and backgrounds come together. However, as *The Habsburgs*, our adopted pseudonyms, we have relinquished some of these past allegiances. This has given us license to open up new ideas and approaches.

One of the difficulties, however, is the notion of operating outside or against established contexts. As institutions uphold clear context boundaries and are in essence the custodians of how work is viewed and understood, you find yourself in a polarised standpoint. This often results in having to work in opposition with these contexts, which can become contrite or merely mischievous. Progress under these conditions can be short lived, only having any type of affect or resonance with an audience whilst it is happening.

In order to really make progress in the realm of discipline boundary erosion, I think we need to see more 'risk' where these institutions are concerned. This is difficult in the currently political and economic climate, as institutions are forced to be more accountable and targeted in their activities. Ad hoc art spaces, publications and happenings have always played a big part in developing forward art, design and cross-disciplinary collaboration. There needs to be the right economic, social and political environments for these types of spaces to exist and flourish. The current order of things will only polarise disciplines further rather than making them more open to each other and change.

Reviewer

Overall there's a really interesting premise within this text and clearly the authors have a strong sense of language and the relevance of this collaboration to the journal's theme. I'd really encourage them to develop this work into a slightly more structured piece, with more consideration given to the theory supporting the themes they raise, and referencing to the theories that are already cited here. But I'd also really like them to keep the quasi-conversational tone as I felt that this made the piece more accessible and enjoyable to read. I really look forward to seeing how a little more time might benefit this piece.

Reviewer

Regarding further research, or follow-up, it would be interesting to see you up the ante and become even more unruly here in the approach to writing the academic paper (which can, as said earlier, possibly be accomplished through design / layout), but more importantly it would be a logical next step to locate members of your unruly tribe, and have a critical / analytical look at works that have a similar approach or reason for being, and so on.

Craig Barber

One important factor across the examples that we have discussed, is the idea of what should be. For example, with the drawing prize there was a clear disciplinary idea of what should be submitted and it was our strategy to sidestep that. It is interesting that one of the reviewers of this paper suggested that we could have more of a sense of the Graphic Design elements discussed in opposition to the Fine Art elements, as this brings into focus the type of collaboration that *The Habsburgs* is. When creating works in general we would avoid being over respectful of each other's discipline training. At no point would I say that design is your area so you should lead on the poster, just as you would not say that hanging gallery work was my area and so I should lead on that. Everything was negotiated so that the disciplines were sidestepped and we would be able to operate from a position of total art and design.

Ultimately *The Habsburgs* and the work that *The Habsburgs* make is about *The Habsburgs* as a construct. This construct is as much about fallibility within our practice as it is our own individual strengths. I have already said that we consider *The Habsburgs* to be singular but this singularity is also 'over there' at a critical distance. That is not to say that *The Habsburgs* are completely alien to us, I recognise the characteristics of both of us in their construct. The starting point for the works that we have discussed in this paper was not us as practitioners and the work that we should make as artists or designers, rather it was more about us considering what work *The Habsburgs* might make. This allows for us to release from our discipline specific preconceptions and allow for the work to be un-disciplinary as much as it is cross-disciplinary. In this way we do not so much reject the idea of discipline but sidestep it in the way that we develop and consider the work that we make.

possibly be accomplished through design / layout), b more importantly it would be a logical next step to locate members of your unruly tribe,

and have a critical / analytical look at works that have a similar approach or reason for being, and so on

Craig Barber
Craig Barber is an artist and Senior Lecturer at Norwich University of the Arts. He has held group and solo exhibitions and performances at venues in the UK and overseas including MAC, Birmingham; Lanchester gallery, Coventry; H-Project Space, Bangkok; the London Short Film Festival; The Public, West Bromwich and Francis Kyle Gallery London. Barber engages with painting practice using a variety of media and methods including sound and video and the painted surface.

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Andrew Spackman
Andrew Spackman is a designer, musician and Senior Lecturer at Coventry University. He works under a range of adopted personas including the art duo the 'Habsburgs' and experimental music group the 'Nimzo-Indian'. He has released several albums and his musical works have been played on BBC Radio 3, 6 Music and have been reviewed in the Wire Magazine, Mojo and Creative Review. Exhibitions include: the Ethnographic Museum, Krakow; Aspex Gallery, Portsmouth; The Midland Arts Centre, Birmingham and the Bangkok Arts and Cultural Centre. In 2009 he was short-listed for the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad.

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UNRULY
TRIBE

CRITICAL DESIGN
MAPPING A NEW T
THE DISCIPLINE

3.4/6

T Critical Design Practice: Mapping a New Territory
   for the Discipline (or 'Are We Nearly There Yet?')
A Cathy Gale

CRITICALLY

Locating Graphic Design

A paradoxical presence in our lives, [graphic] design is both invisible and conspicuous, familiar and strange (Blauvelt, 2003, p. 14).

Graphic design[1] is a predominantly social discipline in continuous flux. It forms multiple productive intersections between art, technology, ecology, industry and science in the lived environment. By drawing inspiration from diverse sources such as history, literature, science, anthropology, politics, philosophy and sociology, designers are 'able to see the multi-faceted nature inherent in any problem' (Quraeshi, 2002, p. 2). The in-between status of graphic design opens up space for new critical viewpoints to be considered, and allows wider audiences to engage in discourse around corporate and civic modes of visual culture. This discursive space is not only edged by art but connects with diverse academic disciplines and creative practices.

As the ingredients of design evolve, so should the terms with which design is perceived. Yet, graphic design is commonly viewed as a commodity, distinguished only by the vehicles used to deliver a message, such as screen, street billboard, poster and publication. In addition to this fusion of commerce and culture, the discipline is also determined by its functional and service-orientated operations. Therefore, when new modes of practice emerge, expanding the conceptual scope, critical and speculative possibilities of graphic design, this can lead to a crisis of identity and pigeon-holing (Goggin, [2009] 2012, p. 56). Rather than be constrained by reductive definitions in relation to art, this essay argues that critical design should be valued as an increasingly core component of graphic design's evolution. A critical approach challenges assumptions about design thinking and production, provoking questions about how we live and how this might change.

The thinking, writing, editing and production of a design is rarely evident in its final dissemination or articulated in the design press or exhibitions. Neither the general public nor other design professionals get the chance to interrogate and evaluate the critical substance of a product or message. This is a problem for the discipline, because as Rick Poynor (2005) argues in 'Art's Little Brother,' 'with such little discussion of design as a cultural

[1] Graphic design has been referred to as commercial art, applied art, graphic art, visual communication and communication design over the past two centuries, reflecting the expansion of communication media beyond the realm of the graphic arts. Typically two-dimensional, this has included printmaking, lithography, typography, calligraphy, photography and book arts but now embraces websites, apps, experiential, user-centred and interactive design in an exponentially expanding field of design discourse.

activity, wider critical awareness of design's enhanced potential has been slow to develop.' Galleries are so deeply codified by fine art practice that design is often compromised when shown within this context. Graphic design is also context-dependent: when shown out of context (time and place) its original purpose and limitations (print and production) can be lost. When design is presented in these spaces it is often framed as a celebratory overview of historical works: *The World of Charles and Ray Eames* at the Barbican Art Gallery (2016), *Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty* at the V&A (2015), London. The dearth of spaces in which alternative forms of graphic design can be articulated in the public domain – work that asks questions rather than solving problems – is inherently problematic. This very deviation from familiar modes and contexts of graphic design provokes uncertainty in the audience and critic leading to its misinterpretation as art.[2]

Rather than seeking to adopt the intellectual and physical spaces of art, which are critically validated and culturally ring-fenced, this essay argues for critical design to occupy a more persistently visible and substantial territory for the discipline. This borderline space of design, on the edges of convention, would enable proactive heated debate around the discipline's position in relation to social, economic, political and cultural conditions. For Poynor (2011) 'there can be no significant expansion of the discipline, no greater visibility or enhanced status for graphic designers' without critical thinking increasing from earliest stages of academic study through to professional practice. Educational institutions form a significant context for design research, debate, innovative methods and authorship to be explored.[3] This is aided by academic infrastructures, which facilitate (and anticipate) design research leading to published papers, exhibitions, symposia and collaborative projects.

Critical design has a semantic edge to it: it is urgent, essential. The term has been popularised through increased visibility in recent years, in the form of events, exhibitions[4] and publications, especially by designer-educators Anthony Dunne and Fiona Raby. Critical design is generically defined as work that asks questions and makes us think. The scope of contemporary concerns may include the role technology plays in commercial design, education and the economy, or the limited range of emotional and psychological experiences offered through designed products (Dunne and Raby, 2007). Although working in the area of industrial and interaction design, the vocabulary used by Dunne & Raby to frame their research as critical design practice are transferrable to other design disciplines, such as graphic design, and so serve as the basis for this discussion.

But as there are some distinct differences, more focused applications of critical thinking in graphic design will be contextualised, later in this essay, in the work of Jan Van Toorn (Poynor, 2005), Metahaven (van der Velden and Kruk, 2009) and Jonathan Barnbrook (Barnbrook, 2010). The transferrable mode of critical design in this context is:

> critical thought translated into materiality. It is about thinking through design rather than through words and using the language and structure of design to engage people (Dunne and Raby, 2013, p. 35).

An argument for how design mechanisms, processes and products can be used to facilitate critical discourse through practice is put forward by Seago and Dunne (1999, p. 16) in 'New Methodologies in Art and Design Research: The Object as Discourse':

> By stretching established conventions, whether physical, social, or political, rather than simply affirming them, [design] takes on a radical critical function, a material critical theory.

When described in this way, parallels can be drawn with Christopher Frayling's (1993) categories of design research. They comprise research *into* design: a broad exploration of design praxis itself in the context of design's civic, cultural, material and commercial roles; research *for* design is the process of gathering and evaluating information and insights from diverse sources to inform a project. Research *through* design primarily concerns the transformation and subversion of design mechanisms or technology for new uses: a form of action research in which the designed artefact embodies knowledge.

One of the key differences between politically informed design research and critical design is the reflexive intentions of the designer seeking to engage the public in questioning the status quo (of design). While design research, or research that uses design thinking, has expanded in recent years, critical design is still perceived as occupying the margins of the discipline: by and for designers. In order to subject critical design/practice to closer examination, it is first necessary to outline some definitions before moving on to more specific design examples.

[2] Some designers simultaneously work as artists (Cornford & Cross, http://www.cornfordandcross.com/index.html) but this discussion focuses on reflective and critical approaches to design thinking, which do not sit comfortably within the current contexts of design or art.
[3] It is worth noting that several of the exponents of critical design mentioned in this discussion teach or have taught.
[4] Forms of Inquiry: The Architecture of Critical Graphic Design,' exhibition at London's Architectural Association; 'Don't Panic: Emergent Critical Design' in London and 'Designing Critical Design' in Belgium, all from 2007.

One of the key differences between politically informed design research and critical design is the reflexive intentions of the designer seeking to engage the public in questioning the status quo (of design).

DISTINGUISHING

Between Criticism, Critique and Critical Design

As an analysis and evaluation of design works, criticism can be either positive (constructive) or negative. There is a dearth of negative criticism in much of the design press, which tends to be overwhelmingly positive and self-congratulatory in nature, dominated by awards ceremonies and devoid of substantial critical discourse (Shaughnessy, 2009, p. 81). Online magazines, such as Design Observer, provoke considered comments leading to constructive discourse around a broad range of (graphic) design issues. However, the rigorous debate that accompanies and informs professional practice rarely appears in the public domain. By contrast, in architecture, a critical framework has contributed to 'demystifying and elevating' the discipline making clients and the general public 'more aware of the benefits of good design' (Shaughnessy, 2009, p. 82).

In design education there are two common approaches to criticism (usually described as a critique or crit): a studio-based evaluation and discussion around formal communication skills, incorporating how the message (conceptual aim) has been embodied in design devices (visual language). Pragmatic issues such as page layout, type design, print quality, interactive technology and audience are identified in relation to the projects presented, fulfilling the immediate needs of student feedback. Criticism of graphic design's broader intellectual scope may be integrated into studio analysis but more commonly forms a distinct component of study at degree level in design theory (variously described as History of Art, Visual Culture Theory, Critical Historical Studies): resulting in a dissertation. Depending on the institutional approach to design pedagogy, and contingent economic and cultural factors, critical theory does not always feature in debates around studio practice.

In certain contexts (historically, geographically) the designer-educator and student have sought to transcend the constraints of conventional commercial design in mainstream culture and explore new knowledge. In this context, the meaning and relevance of graphic design's role in society, culture and commerce is tested. Graphic design is susceptible to changes in thought (politics and philosophy) as well as the more pragmatic effects of economic and technological shift. Therefore, how people, places and ideas are visually represented and communicated requires consistent re-evaluation by design practitioners, educators and theorists. Yet, reductive notions of graphic design persist, partly due to graphic design's lack of a visibly critical position (comparative to architecture and fine art) but also because there is no unifying philosophy of the discipline.

For Dilnot (1984, p. 3) graphic design is an ambiguous concept, undervalued as a subject worth studying, lacking critical support by design practitioners who want design defined merely in terms of what designers do/make. As a consequence, the activities and intellectual scope of the discipline can be extended or revised, *because* it is unconstrained by established rules or absolute definitions. This openness and versatility is a necessary aspect of serving the diverse demands of contemporary culture, the ever-changing needs of an audience or end-user, and corporate agendas. Graphic design could be described as open-ended, ambiguous and versatile on the one hand, and strategic, functional and applied at the other. New modes of thinking and practice have been established in the space between these two conceptual positions during design's recent history. It's important now to trace historical threads from the early modernist utopian vision to current modes of critical design in a brief overview of the discipline's socio-political operations.

For Dilnot (1984, p. 3) graphic design is an ambiguous concept, undervalued as a subject worth studying, lacking critical support by design practitioners who want design defined merely in terms of what designers do/make.

A NEW

Territory, Not a New Definition

In his historical survey, *Graphic Design: A Concise History*, Hollis (1994) attempts to separate graphic devices from the job of design – the tools of visual communication from the act of designing – an important distinction in thinking about critical design. He focuses on three key goals for graphic design: first, *identification*, described in terms of socio-cultural origin, ownership and function connecting contemporary logo design with heraldry.[5] His second category of design – *information* and *instruction* – performs the more immediate purpose of indicating relationships in 'direction, position and scale' such as in maps and diagrams. The third category of *presentation* and *promotion* encompasses the aims of graphic design and advertising, to catch the attention of the viewer, make a message memorable and infuse more meaning into a brand. Yet, these criteria can also be applied to fine art, as Malcolm Barnard (2005) argues in *Graphic Design as Communication*. He proposes technological and pragmatic aspects of graphic design to encompass ideas of visual rhetoric and persuasion (a change of thought or behaviour) in the public domain (Barnard, 2005, p. 15). In order to explore its limitations and possibilities fully, critical debate must be added as a space in which the conceptual, rhetorical, and social scope of graphic design can be evaluated.

Graphic design is embedded in contemporary culture and society, so it is essential that students and professionals maintain a critical awareness of the relationship between core concepts, messages and the capitalist contexts of design practice. As Heller broadly suggests, capitalism sets many of design's parameters it is hard to break meaningful ground in the discipline while simultaneously serving a client's needs and wants (Heller, 2006). Designers can actively contribute to shaping meaning through communication and, through that, social relations. Yet, at the same time, the reductive tendencies of mainstream commercial design (can) lead to superficial means of communication and a univocal visual language. Dilnot's (1984, p. 6) critique of the capitalist context of design (and advertising) draws on Barthes' notion of myth as a source of stereotypes that simplify human behaviour into consumable (redundant) concepts. Students of design must be aware that graphic design history intersects with a range of cultural, artistic, and political histories on the one

[5] Examples include the British company BP, which employed a shield sign until Landor redesigned the logo as a Helios; car companies such as Porsche and Chevron both employ heraldic devices; Amsterdam has drawn the vertical XXX signs from the city's ancient coat of arms (1505) in a recent rebranding exercise by Edenspiekermann and Thonik.

One of the stumbling blocks to alternative, theoretically informed modes of design beyond academic contexts, is the design community and commentators themselves.

hand (Heller, 2005, p. 92) and commercial constraints on the other that may exclude issues of race, class, gender and sexual diversity.[6] In Adrian Shaughnessy's (2009, p. 83) words, a more sustained healthy scrutiny is required to 'create a new climate of critical discovery.'

Design's visual or material mechanisms (signs and tools) and platforms (print, digital, experiential) are continuously updated to suit changing audiences in an active mode of communication. Digital technologies also reconfigure social behaviour and consumer culture in relation to notions of universal communication as a socio-cultural discourse. The technologies of each age, thus, continuously transform social discourse and the means by which (graphic) designers make messages in a synthesis of ideology and pragmatism, function and form.

> *When technology is developing as rapidly as it is now, reflection and criticism are particularly important. We need to consider alternative visions to those put forward by industry (Dunne and Raby, 2001, p. 58).*

Educational institutions emerged at the beginning of the 20th century as a coherent focus for design in an organic fusion of art, technology and industry explored through radical socio-economic ideologies. Design tools such as typeface (lowercase, sans serif), print processes, deployment of photographic imagery, and abstract geometric devices formed an ideological gestalt explicitly. Design devices were identified in essays published by early modernist designer-artists (and educators) such as Laszlo Maholy-Nagy (1925) and Jan Tschichold (1928) as embodying

progressive ideals for society and culture. In the process of meeting the needs of an industrial culture, modernist (graphic) design mechanisms of truth and pure form were transformed from a material social argument into stylistic tools of mass-consumption. This strategy subsequently became infused into the mainstream visual language of commercial practice as a 'corporate camouflage' (Hollis, 2012, p. 98).

The modernist tropes of uniformity and minimalism (manifested in geometric form and neutral typography) became limitations rather than benefits to communication, for designers, and were increasingly seen as being at odds with a changing society. By the 1980s academics were arguing for graphic design to be,

> *more than the mere study of technique and technology, more than form and function – it was an intellectual pursuit that demanded philosophical fluency (Heller, 2006, p. 11).*

Plurality and participation emerged as essential components of creative communication during the latter part of the twentieth century informed by Eco's (1989) literary notion of the 'open work'. Applied by Katherine McCoy to the design programme at Cranbrook Academy of Art, theory contributed to a discursive space in which to provoke the audience 'to actively consider multiple interpretations of the piece's meaning' (K. and M. McCoy, 1990, p. 16). In this way the designer was challenged to intentionally conceive and construct the artefact, as an 'author' or producer to increase opportunities for open-ended interpretation by a visually literate audience.

Through manipulation of design devices the inherently rhetorical dimension of design thinking was fostered during the 1990s to reflect the complex ambiguities of contemporary culture. Strongly associated with French literary theory, 'authorship' gained popularity at this time but became a contested term in graphic design circles, especially around the edges of the profession, such as in academia. The graphic press reacted strongly to work produced in this way, 'driven by instinct and obscured by theory' (Heller, 1993, p. 53). Graphic designers' responses to post-modern theories were not inspired by stylistic devices but by a critical mode of questioning through and about the techniques, technologies, visual possibilities and social institutions of visual communication. However, in a similar process of absorption into mainstream culture that led the modernist aesthetic of minimalism and objectivity to become a common visual language for corporate culture, underlying concepts were diluted. By *not* employing a neutral visual language [7] to cut across cultures in a collective uniformity, graphic design's individualistic alternative was criticised as a 'cult of the ugly' (Heller, 1993, p. 53). Work that goes beyond the functional imperative of the discipline is often, thus, damned as 'gratuitous self-expression' (Poynor, 2005) by design critics. One of the stumbling blocks to alternative, theoretically informed modes of design being more firmly established, beyond academic contexts, is the design community and commentators themselves. Rigorous and productive critical debate is notable by its absence in the graphic design press, which suggests either self-censorship or a lack of interest.

In historical theoretical terms Drucker and McVarish (2009, p. xxi) argue that a critical approach to graphic design

enables new ways of thinking about the discipline to be considered. In this way the underlying social, cultural, economic, technological and political forces that influence aesthetic trends, material production and the activities of the discipline can be exposed and evaluated. Critical practice can form a synthesis of thinking and making in (graphic) design educational programmes but not, commonly, in industry. For some, a critical position explicitly forms the basis of their professional practice, exploiting the everyday reality of visual culture to illustrate their viewpoints. As this is far from an established mode of graphic design the next section will identify a few representative examples that fall within the territory of critical design.

[6] This form of analysis draws on semiotic theories to dissect the symbolic construction of power and reality in advertising and branding in culture.

[7] This transition from a mode of design that is based on solid theories and ideals, into exploratory practice, then into mainstream culture as a style represents a core problem for new movements in graphic design, such as critical design, leading to questions such as 'what does critical design look like?' I did not set out to answer that question in this essay but suggest this aspect of critical design is worthy of further research.

APPLICATIONS

of Critical Design in Practice

The relationship between professional design practice, with its close ties to industry and commercial culture, and the capitalist power structures that constrain the discipline, represents a persistent area of concern for some designers. Some voice this concern through teaching, some through published articles and some through practice. For Dutch designer Jan Van Toorn

> *because designers and intellectuals fail to reflect critically upon the conditions under which their own action comes about, their mediating role between private and public interest has been lost (Poynor, 2005, p. 122).*

By focusing on meaning rather than style Toorn exploited everyday images and design devices such as calendar and poster formats to 'confront and inform' (Poynor, 2005, p. 100) the public. Accessibility and visibility are key components of Van Toorn's professional practice: a means by which social issues can be brought to the attention of wider audiences representing a valuable model of how to synthesise theory with practice in a critical mode of design.

In a reduction of the larger conflict between modernist and post-modern graphic design ideas embedded in practice, described earlier in this essay, disruption and visual energy are employed as tools by Van Toorn to expose underling issues in contemporary society and culture in direct contrast to his contemporary Wim Crouwel. In contrast to Crouwel's minimalist control, formal aesthetic and anonymous position[8] in commercial visual culture, Van Toorn's body of work and teaching exposes the motives behind design as a staging of messages interpreted in a (social) semiotic framework. The limitations of a discursive or dialogical approach by which an audience is provoked or invited to respond is acknowledged by Van Toorn. His work is commonly small-scale and centred in the culture sector, aimed at an audience willing to accept alternatives to the mainstream corporate visual language and intellectually engage in a mode of graphic design, which offers layers of additional meaning.

Research into the erosion of public into private space, national and personal identities, underpins the Dutch group Metahaven's broad based graphic design work, which they

[8] This is clearly paradoxical as Crouwel's work, despite employing a 'neutral' visual rhetoric, is immediately recognisable as coming from his hand.

describe as 'the connection between architecture, iconography and the political' (Twemlow, A, 2008). Mythical symbols, currency, flags, passport documents and festivals are exploited as visual tools and design strategies through which to challenge constructions of state power as brand identity. This research-based design group seek to articulate the role design plays in almost every aspect of modern state power through intellectual discourse and wit embodied in familiar design artefacts. The complex matrix of visual, cognitive and social components that merge in the branding of a state, manipulation of paranoia and construction of national boundaries, are articulated in great depth in Metahaven's *Uncorporate Identity* (Van der Velden and Kruk, 2009). *Icon* magazine reviews their reflective criticism of graphic design's co-option by geopolitics as a superb example of how design criticism is central to questioning and/or understanding the world around us (Wiles, 2010). Some parts of this weighty book are criticised in the review for employing too much academic jargon, but this is not identified as enough of a deterrent, in relation to the book's overall critical aims, for the reader. The rigour of critical investigation presented in a conventional graphic artefact, such as a book, is a good demonstration of how to deploy familiar formats to new modes of thinking through design.

In the UK, Jonathan Barnbrook uses ambiguity and wit to criticise consumer culture and a passive tolerance of corporate power as an integral component of his professional practice. He applies design mechanisms as critical artefacts to incite social change[9] and remains one of the few high profile consistently politically active designers. The overtly commercial references in Barnbrook's work manipulate the limitations of advertising and visual communication to challenge assumptions of design. For instance, the design concept for the Disobedient Objects exhibition at the V&A in London deploys the VirusFonts typeface Doctrine, which he reveals embodies a political critique of the North Korean dictatorship.

> *Moreover, Doctrine's alternate character set provided a second voice in which to speak the words of activist, artist and maker, a voice which speaks alongside the more conventional museum narrative (Barnbrook, 2014).*

On his blog, Barnbrook (2011) clearly states the intentions behind his personal and more conventional projects. In reference to his work on the *Occupied Times*: 'Four issues in and the paper is gaining publicity and provoking debate about the nature of protest graphics' (Barnbrook, 2011). The accessible format of the newspaper brings the political and economic contingencies of the Occupy campaign to a broader audience. The billboard is also exploited by Barnbrook as a bold public challenge to designer's complicity in the capitalist structures of consumer culture, specifically those attending the AIGA conference in 2001. 'Designers, Stay Away From Corporations That Want You To Lie For Them' illustrates the convergence of visual culture with a political message (Figure 1). Out of the context of the gallery

we are forced to consider the oscillation between Barnbrook's billboard as a canvas and as a genuine commercial campaign.

This larger-than-life statement was posted in 2001 to coincide with the AIGA (American Institute of Graphic Arts) conference in Las Vegas, and the launch of Rick Poynor's redrafted *First Things First* manifesto. The manifesto, taking similar themes from the original 1964 version by Ken Garland, called for more personal and professional responsibility from designers, but failed to show how. Both *First Things First* manifestoes make a general call for design to do and mean more: in contrast, critical designers reframe or subvert design strategies and contemporary visual tools to form a reflective challenge to the status quo of design and society. In the words of Drucker and McVarish (2009, p. xv), design artefacts 'always serve a purpose and contain an agenda, no matter how neutral or natural they appear to be': critical designers seek to expose corporate strategies and challenge this neutrality.

[9] Perceptual socio-cultural change can be identified in the way that certain groups have been visually represented: for instance, ethnic minorities, women and LGBT groups have suffered from negative stereotypes in visual culture. A more active form of social change is evident in design activism: print publications, such as Adbusters, the Occupied Times, and now social media platforms have contributed to cognitive shifts in society and culture, offering alternatives visions of socio-cultural and commercial norms. Graphic design takes a central role in affecting social change during (UK) electoral campaigns where positive or negative implications can be derived from design artefacts such as the billboard poster or TV broadcast, leading to a change of voters' choice.

Figure 1. Designers, stay away from corporations that want you to lie for them. Poster. Jonathan Barnbrook, 2001. Image copyright Barnbrook Design.

What the graphic design community needs is more research-orientated design practitioners and commentators to establish a discursive space in the public sphere in addition to conventional design.

The designers referenced here extend their professional lives to think, and to embody that thinking in accessible formats and environments, for the purpose of engaging the public in urgent issues. What is often hidden beneath the seductive veneer of contemporary visual culture can be exposed through the same visual language of pop culture to facilitate critical discourse in graphic design. New tools and strategies are important to the evolution of graphic design thinking and practice, appropriate to the changing circumstances of the discipline. Yet, new or novel terms such as 'author,' 'speculative' and 'critical' have become tropes in the design press: linguistic hooks used to capture an image, object or event that embodies a prevailing trend held in common by a group or community (Noble and Bestley, 2011). Once a term enters the realm of fashion and becomes 'criticool' it obscures the underlying research engaged in because 'there is little time left to publicly debate and question the effectiveness, success or shortfalls of that research' (Laranjo, 2015). Concern seems to be based on internal worries at where the boundary lines are now drawn in relation to graphic design's 'delimitation:' its territory in the ambiguous space between design and art.

What the graphic design community needs is more research-orientated design practitioners and commentators to establish a discursive space in the public sphere in addition to conventional design. In this context, the possibilities of design can be exposed to critical debate:

> *If there were more designers operating with the critical ambition and energy of Metahaven and Barnbrook design would be taken more seriously (Poynor, 2014).*

Here critical design is a social process, representing a boundary space for theory to be more consistently integrated into design discourse.

SUMMARY

In summary, a number of questions arise: does critical design represent a new kind of socio-political engagement or merely a more visible stage in a consistent strand of reflective practice? Is it merely a contemporary trope, which captures the zeitgeist of uncertainty? How do we articulate design's social and political value, the potential for intellectual debate, critical discourse and even dissent, in accessible terms?

Critical design has been framed in this essay as a mode of design, which seeks to expose broader market forces through which design is often made and encountered; an extension of design possibilities, as well as a creative examination of practice, identity and representation. As a liminal mode of graphic design, critical design practice can help to push the boundaries of the discipline through debate with non-design disciplines (anthropologists, social scientists, ecologists) in a public arena. The broad scope of critical debate and reflexivity can be understood and employed in a variety of ways to:

• Extend the possibilities of personal practice by econfiguring design tools and platforms to do and mean more.
• Establish critical debate more consistently to extend notions of graphic design as a significant socio-cultural practice in the public domain.
• Use design resources to form a more consistent critical discourse on the boundaries of a range of tangential disciplines.

With the increased visibility of graphic design as a socially located and critical practice, in addition to its service-orientated roles, greater understanding of its possibilities may be enabled without it needing to be defined as art. Not only greater visibility but also more accessible modes of practice are needed in which new spaces can be forged for critical discourse. In this development, critical design is not framed as a style but an attitude substantiated by the heat of debate by designer-researchers, whether they identify themselves as critical or not. Independent and reflective design matters because what designers think about the world matters: these ideas and insights, when transformed through design into accessible challenges and statements, connect with diverse audiences to provoke debate.

In a transformative development of the designer as author, critical thinking and practice offers designers agency to reframe their discipline, to redraw its intellectual and creative boundaries. Self-generated (but not self-indulgent) and theoretically informed observations on graphic design could be articulated as a recognised extension of conventional practice. When thinking and production are extended beyond familiar discipline boundaries it becomes embroiled in concerns regarded as trespassing into the territory of art (Poynor, 2005). Unlike in the art market, there is little commercial interest in design work produced as an outcome of design activism or critical reflection (in the UK), apart from notable exceptions, such as Jonathan Barnbrook. Yet, expanded modes of graphic design are constantly emerging as a consequence of new technologies, and socio-economic shift. The freedom graphic designers have, through increased critical debate, should be grasped in order for them to be key players in this emerging movement. This may be a borderline territory but the tension at the edge or indeed the precipice of practice represents a productive intersection at which to provoke new discourse around design's uncertain future.

...critical design practice can help to push the boundaries of the discipline through debate with non-design disciplines (anthropologists, social scientists, ecologists) in a public arena.

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GRAPHIC DESIGN S AN ARTISTIC PRACTICE FOR THE UNRAVELING OF THE EVERYDAY

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Graphic Design as an Artistic Practice
for the Unraveling of the Everyday
Zachary Kaiser

PART I:

Everyday Things, Networks, and Assemblages

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for the Unraveling of the Everyday
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[D]aily life, like language, contains manifest forms and deep structures that are implicit in its operations, yet concealed in and through them. (Lefebvre, 2014, p. 678).

Henri Lefebvre's three volume series, *Critique of Everyday Life*, which spans nearly four decades – from 1946 through 1981 – is one of the most important philosophical treatises devoted to the topic of the everyday. In discussing everyday transactions[1] with design, it is essential to look to Lefebvre's work in order to provide a series of key points of reference. Lefebvre's core concern in his third volume is to demonstrate that daily life is being transformed in ways that are not innocent or neutral, and that these transformations are potentially detrimental to the singularity (uniqueness) of everyday lived experience. Furthermore, within the everyday there is a possibility for things to be otherwise, that there exists 'the potential for a kind of revolutionary disruption' (Curry, 2009, p. 170).

Daily life, Lefebvre notes, is complex, made up of actions taken from 'micro-decisions,' which 'unfold' in 'social space and time bound up with production' (2014, p. 678). These complexities are often concealed and hidden, both through the absorption of actions accumulated over time into their emergent effects, but also through the products and services that humans (and non-humans) use in the living of everyday life.

Indeed, 'the largest part of the webs we draw on and allow us to act are hidden,' writes John Law in his introduction to Material Semiotics and Actor-Network Theory (2009, p. 147). He explains that actions, as well as the objects, tools, and technologies that we use in order *to* act are not as singular, individuated, or separate from other humans and non-humans as they may seem. Designed artifacts and their socio-technical effects are the product of networks of distributed agency, 'assemblies' in which elements (both human and non-human) have been 'drawn together,' and are themselves political – full of complexity and contradiction (Latour, 2008).

While this idea – that artifacts, actions, and socio-environmental-technical effects are the emergent result of the actions of a distributed network of interdependent human and non-human actants – is core to Latour's Actor-Network Theory, it is also

[1] I prefer to use 'transactions' instead of 'interactions' because 'interaction' does not imply the interdependencies that characterize our daily lives.

closely related to Deleuze and Guattari's 'assemblage.' Key to these concepts is a systemic view emphasizing the relations between elements, the heterogeneity of the constituent elements, and the agentic nature of the elements themselves – meaning that the elements have a degree of agency, and their identity is not determined exclusively by their relationships with other elements within the network/assemblage/system.

Manuel DeLanda, explaining the concept of the 'assemblage,' asserts that an assemblage has emergent properties that are irreducible to the properties of the constituent elements of the assemblage. Furthermore, assemblages are heterogeneous gatherings in which the elements are not fixed, but rather, are (inter) changeable. The emergent properties of the assemblage depend on the elements present and the varying relations between the elements within the assemblage. Assemblages are therefore at once irreducible but 'decomposable' (DeLanda, 2010, p. 7) (*Assemblage Theory, Society, and Deleuze*, 2011).

Designed artifacts and product-service systems are both assemblages themselves and parts of other assemblages. These assemblages all have emergent agentic qualities, both in and of themselves and as part of the assemblages in which they participate as constituent elements. Assemblages can be nested within other assemblages. Humans, themselves, for example, are assemblages, but they participate as elements of other assemblages, which have agency that humans themselves do not inherently possess. For example, a human who picks up a hammer can do something that a human on his or her own and a hammer on its own are incapable of doing. Such assemblages and their component parts are actants (a term coined by Latour) and they are agentic – they have some kind of agency through which they operate on the assemblages of which they are a part. This is true for both the human and non-human. The hammer, in the case of our example above, 'always modifies the intentions and goals of its human co-actant.' In other words, action is 'not a property of humans *but of an association of actants*' (Latour, 1999, p. 182, emphasis in original, cited in Krarup and Blok, 2011).

Agentic assemblages produce effects that transcend, amplify, or subvert the intentions of the human (and non-human) actants that operate within them. These effects, while having material properties, may also be non-material, impacting the subjectivities of the human actants who transact with these assemblages.

Consider the iPhone: as a technological assemblage, the iPhone is composed, in part, of microprocessors and physical materials that connect and hold its computational components in place. The microprocessors are composed of various materials, including rare earths, which are mined in China. The phone's body itself is made from aluminum, refined from Bauxite, which is mined in various locations throughout the world, including Jamaica and Guinea. We could continue to trace these relations even further, including the ecosystems in which the mining for these materials takes place, as well as the beliefs and ideologies (the non-material), such as business goals that drive the practices of mining and refining these metals.

Out of the intersection of Lefebvre's *Critique* and the concept of agentic assemblages, produced by the transactions between human and non-human actants in dynamic interdependence, emerge two core concerns for graphic design as an artistic practice that I will address for the remainder of this essay.

The first concern is that of a pervasive unawareness of agentic assemblages in the first place. Without seeing our world as an interdependent system of dynamic assemblages, assembling, disassembling, and constantly emerging, our worldview becomes limited, and the ways in which we imagine and conceive of both problems and solutions are severely deprecated by this lack of awareness.

The second concern is that of the concealed, difficult to trace, non-material aspect of the assemblage: bias, belief, and ideology. To identify and describe the influence on action of ideologies[2] is more challenging than tracing a network of purely material associations. Awareness of assemblages, therefore, is not enough to understand the ways in which we produce them, and the ways in which they produce us through the shaping of our subjectivities.

In the remainder of this essay, I will also go on to describe why, specifically, I believe these are core concerns for graphic design in particular, and why they must be addressed within the artistic context.

[2] Or, for example, the 'moral convictions' studied by Krarup and Blok, 2011.

Without seeing our world as an interdependent system of dynamic assemblages, assembling, disassembling, and constantly emerging, our worldview becomes limited, and the ways in which we imagine and conceive of both problems and solutions are severely deprecated by this lack of awareness.

PART II:

The Ideology of the End of Ideology, Quasi-Actants, and the Legitimating Power of Graphic Design

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The 'Ideology of the End of Ideology' as Quasi-Actant (Lefebvre, 2014, p. 763).

This is something we're quite interested in: the function of design as an embodiment of ideology. (Experimental Jetset, 2006).

Lefebvre's core concern in *Critique Vol. 3* is that the singularity (uniqueness and differential quality) of the everyday has come to be dominated by exchange value, quantification, technological positivism, and rationalist teleology. He sees the privileging of 'positive knowledge'[3] as eviscerating everyday life and subjecting every aspect of it to the market, creating a malaise and a feeling that everyday life could never be other than it is.

Without a reflective examination of their practices, designers unknowingly contribute to the homogenization of everyday experience that happens through what Lefebvre calls 'fragmentation.' As instruments of capital and the market, designers create interfaces, packaging, ads, and the visual experience for every 'thing' that occupies the everyday. They aid in the fragmentation of daily life, literally **showing** – through the various methods and media of visual communication – that human existence can be broken down into measurable, quantifiable units, whether those be 'steps' taken (via FitBit) or pages read (via Kindle).

Curry suggests that, for Lefebvre, we have come to experience the everyday as a 'homogenously dispersed spatial sequence of moments that operate as a function or schema with no other reason or purpose,' a passivity that reduces everyday life to 'drudgery' (Curry, 2009, p. 171). This schema is most conducive to the colonization of every aspect of everyday life by the market: only that which is quantifiable can be subject to market forces, therefore everything must be fragmented into discrete components for exploitation.

Thus, modern society is constituted as a system of systems of equivalence. What is more, the state pronounces the general equivalence of these systems of equivalence; it guarantees and implements it. On the other hand, daily life is established thus: everything – the socio-economic-political whole – rests

upon it. Ultimately all moments would be equivalent in daily life (Lefebvre, 2014, p. 731).

In theory, we should be able to track (and therefore monetize) everything. Every gesture, every facial expression, every drop of ink from a pen, every drop of blood onto a Band-Aid, every moment of ingestion and hydration, every orgasm. Everything, says what Lefebvre calls 'ideology of the end of ideology,' (2014, p. 763) should be measurable, quantifiable, subject to objective (machine) interpretation, inference, and recommendation. Daily life, equivalent to systems of monetary exchange, ceases to be.

Everyday life managed like an enterprise within an enormous, technocratically administered system – such is the first and last word of the technocratic ethic: every moment anticipated, quantified in monetary terms, and programmed temporally and spatially (Lefebvre, 2014, p. 731).

Deleuze writes along similar lines in his 'Postscript on the Societies of Control,' when he argues:

The numerical language of control is made of codes that mark access to information or reject it. We no longer find ourselves dealing with the mass/individual pair. Individuals have become "dividuals," and masses, samples, data, markets, or "banks"… The operation of markets is now the instrument of social control and forms the impudent breed of our masters. (Deleuze, 1992, p. 4-5).

[3] Positive knowledge here refers to knowledge that is scientifically verifiable, and, for Lefebvre, has a rationalist trajectory that 'contributes to commodity production' (Aronowitz, 2007, p.154).

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Lefebvre's prescience – he wrote the *Critique, Vol. 3* in 1981 – that every possible minutiae of one's daily life might be subject to quantification and market forces – evolves out of his concern with 'the ideology of the end of ideology, of transparency and performance, and the myth of freedom realized by information technology' (2014, p. 763). This ideology is, he suggests, a faith in the neutrality of positive knowledge, and is inextricably bound up with quantification. This 'non-ideology' tightly links the market, technology (and computation), and daily life.

Can such an ideology also have agency within an assemblage? Does it operate as a co-actant in the way the hammer or human does in the human-hammer assemblage? In a strict materialist sense, the answer is most likely, no.

I will suggest here, however, that ideologies and beliefs operate, to a degree, as quasi-actants within the networks and assemblages within which we participate as constituent elements and which constitute us.

While Deleuze and Guattari emphasize **how** something works over 'meaning,' (Deleuze, 1995, p. 21-22) I argue that, especially in design, meaning and function are inextricably intertwined. Krarup and Blok, suggest that ideas, such as moral convictions, are 'quasi-actants' that form part of the networks that construct and act on our world. They argue that the ideas that make up human subjectivities are not traceable through the relations between objects alone. Krarup and Blok are interested in describing 'how bodies, symbols, and subjective desires simultaneously contribute to the process of forging socio-technical effects' (2011, p. 57). They suggest that these quasi-actants, are obscure and intangible, and '"erase their traces" while acting on the social' (2011, p. 57). In this sense, ideologies can function as quasi-actants, contributing as constituent elements to the emergent behavior of assemblages. In particular, the positivist 'ideology of the end of ideology' is embedded in the assemblages that comprise everyday life.

Jane Bennett, introducing 'agentic assemblages' in her book *Vibrant Matter*, suggests a similar relationship between assemblages and beliefs or ideologies. She writes that the electrical grid understood as an assemblage is a:

> *volatile mix of coal, sweat, electromagnetic fields, computer programs, electron streams, profit motives, heat, lifestyles, nuclear fuel, plastic, fantasies of mastery, static, legislation, water, economic theory, wire, and wood–to name some of the actants (2010, p. 25).*

Assemblages are embedded with ideologies, biases and predispositions, with business goals and cultural assumptions.

Furthermore, the implementation of graphic design in the design of objects, products, and services, serves to construct a specific understanding of the human-assemblage relationship. The understanding of this relationship itself serves a semiotic function – it is a signifier that serves to structure what a given 'thing' signifies. In this way, then, the signification of the object becomes bound up with the ideologies embedded as actants within it and the way it operates within assemblages of which it is a constituent element.

Graphic Design as Legitimating Force

These assemblages in which we participate as constituent elements and which make up the objects, products, and services with which we interact everyday are often legitimated in the 'regime of the perceptible' (Bennett, 2010, p. 107) through, at least in part, the visual language of graphic design. Whether through the application of graphic design to the packaging of an object, to the interface of an interactive system, or through its absence, graphic design (as an instrument of the market) calls our attention to certain properties and elements of assemblages while concealing others.

Consider, for example, the graphic design of an iPhone case. Cases from companies such as Otter Box or inCase do not illustrate the complex set of relations underlying the production of the case much less the phone itself: popular iPhone cases don't feature images of wildlife or habitats directly impacted by bauxite mines, which produce the raw material for aluminum, out of which the iPhone itself is constructed. Nor do these cases show the rare earth mines in China from which some raw materials for microprocessors are harvested. These cases also do not show the toxic lakes into which rare earth refineries dump their waste (Maughan, 2015). Conscious of it or not, designers – who design both the iPhone itself and the system of products and services that interact with the iPhone – shape the human-iPhone relation, reinforcing the iPhone object as a signifier for the ease and convenience of technological innovation, a logical extension of positive knowledge. Indeed, in order to sell, the iPhone must be seen as improving life through technology, and must connote this modernist ideal. The iPhone as a signifier must appeal to the teleology of technology, the march of progress to which it would be absurd to object. Why would the iPhone be positioned otherwise – as a part of a complex system of interdependence that is political and, to be blunt, messy? Such a position would subvert the iPhone's role within systems of equivalence that situate it as one of the great feats of positive knowledge.

Humans are part of many complex networks of human and non-human actants and our very identities are always in formation in relation to these networks. These networks are not only material: a purely materialist account of the iPhone, for example, might omit the ideologies embedded in its hardware and software, but this would not be adequate, and these ideologies are an important node within the network of relations for which the term and object **iPhone** stands. In other words, **iPhone** is a sign that we could – if we knew better – use as a shorthand for a network of objects, people, ideas, and ideologies that, together, assemble the object itself. The Bauxite mines, the rare earths, the neo-modernist ideology of the march of technological progress – all play roles in the assemblage of the iPhone.

Interfaces for products and services that enhance convenience or make us more efficient function in a similar way. Such interfaces legitimate systems of positive knowledge and strengthen the homogeny of fragmentation that eliminates the singularity of the everyday. Products that encourage us to exercise through the quantification of daily activities, that tell us, for example, that 'life is a sport,' evaporate all experience but the quantifiable. No longer will you appreciate the sunrise as you scurry towards the top of a scenic vista, because you have outpaced your friends, and you are an **athlete** and you are **winning** (Delehanty, 2012). The graphic design – the user interface – of your FitBit and its companion app would never suggest otherwise.

The formal graphic design of interfaces today, especially flat UI, is an embodiment of a neo-modernist ideology: simplicity is truthful, and technology (the computational systems that undergird these interfaces) is objective and neutral. It is one more (visual) manifestation of Lefebvre's 'ideology of the end of ideology.' Google's Material Design Guidelines, for example, and the move away from skeuomorphism could be seen as signifying a renewed commitment to modernist idealism while masking the commitment of these applications to the homogenous fragmentation of everyday life in the service of the market.

The formal graphic design of interfaces today, especially flat UI, is an embodiment of a neo-modernist ideology: simplicity is truthful, and technology (the computational systems that undergird these interfaces) is objective and neutral. It is one more (visual) manifestation of Lefebvre's 'ideology of the end of ideology.'

PART III:

The Coding of Habit through Material Experience

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The way assemblages operate as signs, the way in which they transmit 'meaning,' is important to understanding **how** assemblages operate on us, how they **work**. Our assemblages help habituate us; they form parts of our **habitats**. We work **with** assemblages to perform functions, uniting, temporarily in new assemblages in order to engage in certain activities. The quasi-actants embedded in the various assemblages that **work on us** and **with which we work** influence us through our habits.

Consider a service or interactive product such as a FitBit. FitBit is a system of hardware and software, plastics, rare earths used in the hardware, distributed computing that utilizes servers in various places, water and electricity for cooling the servers, factories in China, workers in those factories, energy to power those factories, and so on. Such a system also bears within it ideologies and biases. These include decisions about what should count as signal and noise: how much movement should the FitBit recognize as **movement**? This depends largely on how useful the FitBit company wants the device perceived to be. This system also has embedded within it an ideology about what type of information is valuable and about the nature of human existence – namely, that existence is quantifiable, able to be subject to algorithmic inference and recommendation, as well as market forces. To portray this system as neutral, the proprietors of FitBit rely on the design of the interface to be seductive and yet possess a 'sleek affectation to affectlessness' (Fuller and Goffey, 2012, p. 18-19). It must be beautiful in its neutrality – not unlike the posters of the Swiss International Style. The ideologies and biases that are both concealed and propagated by the FitBit system make their way into our daily experiences, our everyday lives, and, more specifically, our habits.

In everyday discourse, habit tends to be seen merely as the automation of behavior, which leads to a lack of freedom and awareness (Carlisle, 2006, p. 29). Habits, however, are complex and possess an intrinsically dual character. Habits enable us to be creative beings. Elizabeth Grosz writes, of Bergson's example of the alarm clock:

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The alarm summons up a chain of actions: opening our eyes, turning off the alarm, getting out of bed, putting on slippers, and beginning the day. It is only because we undertake these activities in a state of half-consciousness that we have the energy and interest to undertake less routinized actions, to elaborate relatively free acts (2013, p. 226).

Clare Carlisle, in exploring Merleau-Ponty's assertion that 'my own body is my basic habit,' (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 91) suggests that the body is a habit, a prerequisite disposition for noticing or doing anything because 'it functions precisely insofar as it is not itself the object of attention.' (2006, p. 28). She goes on:

The physical body, in both its material and its functional aspects, bears traces of previous actions: it contains its past in its movements and positions, so that its material structure re resents a kind of cross-section of an historical existence. (2006, p. 28).

This is crucial in the consideration of the influence wielded by the quasi-actants embedded in our designed assemblages. Consider Grosz's assertion about Bergson's view of habit: that habits produce specific types of subjectivity that enable someone to focus on other acts (2013, p. 225). The types of subjectivity that become embedded within our habits are not immune to influence – they do not spontaneously arise. The ideology of quantifiability and technological positivism makes its way into our very bones, our habits, such that we don't even consider it anymore. We don't question its proposition that everything is quantifiable and should be subject to quantification, and we don't question the kind of subjects into which such an ideology turns us, because we internalize this ideology in our everyday habits themselves. This is precisely the case with the manner in which the FitBit has permeated the lives of some individuals, with its data even being admitted as testimony in two recent trials (Crawford, 2014; Hill, 2015).

In everyday habits, discourse is penetrated by the vocabularies of those who **design** the products and services used in everyday life, tools with which we unite as assemblages in order to act. Lefebvre writes of everyday discourse: 'representations, as instruments of communication, can be practically elaborated in systems that are inscribed in "reality" – for example, in architecture' (2014, p. 743).

To subvert the 'ideology of the end of ideology,' we need not break habit entirely. But habit, as a bodily manifestation of the ideologies concealed by and embedded in our everyday, must be transformed in order to transform the everyday.

Without an understanding of agentic assemblages, with which and within which we work and commune as constituent elements, we remain unaware of the myriad ways in which our daily lives are shaped by the quasi-actants – the ideologies, beliefs, biases – embedded within these various assemblages. Furthermore, the 'meaning' of the assemblage becomes a conditioned meaning, we allow it to signify something specific, without considering the vast networks of interdependency to which each belongs and within which each is an element.

How can we unravel these assemblages revealing both the dynamic networks that compose them as well as the obscure quasi-actants that help initiate their ideological momentum? Can graphic design participate in the undoing of that which it does so well?

How can we unravel these assemblages revealing both the dynamic networks that compose them as well as the obscure quasi-actants that help initiate their ideological momentum? Can graphic design participate in the undoing of that which it does so well?

PART IV:

Graphic Design to Overthrow the Regime of the Perceptible

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It is unreasonable to expect that all our designed objects and experiences will reveal themselves to us as assemblages, displaying the networks of dynamic interdependencies of which they are 'drawn together.' Yet, within these assemblages in which we traffic in our everyday, lies the latent potential for 'revolutionary disruption' (Curry, 2009, p. 170), the possibility of reanimating the everyday with the singularity and uniqueness that has been evaporated through the homogeny of fragmentation. To access this revolutionary potential, the identity of the assemblages with which we interact must be destabilized in such a way as to reveal aspects of it (including ideological quasi-actants) that are typically concealed – by design.

Assemblages are stabilized, asserts DeLanda, through a process of 'territorialization.' Meanwhile, 'deterritorialization' could be considered the result of forces that destabilize the identity of an assemblage, whether this be through the introduction of new elements into the assemblage or a through a shifting of relations between elements already present in the assemblage (DeLanda, 2010) (*Assemblage Theory, Society, and Deleuze*, 2011).

To deterritorialize is to present the possibility that things could be otherwise. The discontinuities of everyday life, in between fragments, argues Lefebvre, present a similar opportunity to disrupt the established order, to unmoor our material signs – our everyday objects – from their established significations and thus the ideology embedded within our everyday habits. This is an opportunity to view assemblages in a new way, to reveal their ideological underpinnings and potentially reshape habits.

Graphic design can be employed as an artistic (yet still fundamentally communicative) practice towards the deterritorialization and unraveling of agentic assemblages that embed the 'information ideology' (Lefebvre, 2014, p. 818) – the ideology of positive knowledge – in our everyday. Graphic design, in this sense, can cause a 'disruption' in order to 'change radically what people can "see,"' to 'repartition the sensible' and 'overthrow the regime of the perceptible' (Bennett, 2010, p. 107).

To reveal the networks of actants and quasi-actants within an assemblage, one might aim to deterritorialize the assemblage itself by presenting alternatives to how its networks might operate. This 'disruption' would, by its very nature, need to subvert the typical nature of graphic design as a communicative instrument of capital and positive knowledge.

For Deleuze, art produces signs and/or sensations that break the viewer's habits of perception, forcing the viewer into the 'condition of creation' and causing the viewer to 'think'. Breaking the '"common sense" in which all the faculties agree in recognizing the "same object,"' art creates a '"discordant harmony"... that tears apart the subject' (Smith and Protevi, 2015). As a tactic for deterritorialization, graphic design can take on this task of art, and, I suggest, it must, specifically because graphic design is a language that pervades the everyday – we are habituated to experience it. By rearranging the elements within an assemblage, or by the substitution of elements, or through the visualization of elements that are typically concealed by design, it may be possible to create the conditions under which everyday life can be perceived differently, under which habit can be shifted, and assemblages seen in new ways that subvert their ideological quasi-actants. In an attempt to illustrate what I mean, I will briefly explain and critique three projects – projects in which I have been involved as a designer and educator – that seek to achieve these ends (but do not necessarily succeed).

The Perfect Human App (2013)

Sofie Hodara, a graduate school colleague who I advised during her master's thesis, was interested in studying the way in which digital tools for self-measurement affect our experiences of ourselves and each other. She created the Perfect Human App (PHA) (Figure 1): a smartphone app that leverages data from various social networks to determine how 'perfect' a person you were on a given day, and give you a score with which to compare yourself to your peers (Hodara, 2013, p. 29-30).

The PHA was a design fiction: Sofie developed a backstory and characters that founded this startup. In addition to doing the interaction and interface design, Sofie made a Wikipedia entry, website, and marketing materials (Figure 2), developing a believable scenario that confused, scared, and excited her classmates and friends.

The PHA speaks directly to Lefebvre's concern

> with what lies in store: the state of total knowledge – the past, present, and future of each member (individual or group) registered, described, prescribed by perfectly informed "services," down to the smallest move, the smallest payment, the most insignificant of social and individual acts (2014, p. 799).

The PHA traces the inevitable trajectory of a cultural privileging of quantification and market-based selves. Indeed, when Facebook predicts your perfect road trip companions, you might say to yourself 'Facebook knows me so well,' but what you may not realize is that you have habitually internalized the logic of

Figure 2. The Perfect Human. App marketing materials. Sofie Elana Hodara, 2013. Image courtesy Sofie Elana Hodara.

Figure 1. The Perfect Human. App interface. Sofie Elana Hodara, 2013. Image courtesy Sofie Elana Hodara.

positive knowledge and catered your understanding of your own existence and self-expression to Facebook's algorithms.

In fact, not long after Sofie finished her thesis, a startup called Shout, effectively created a real version of the Perfect Human App: 'Shout is an app that measures how good of a person you are' (Shout).[4] Few sentences could be more indicative of the 'information ideology.'

The Perfect Human App, while ostensibly real, creates, for those who see its interface concepts or advertisements for it, a moment of pause. Its nearly absurdist text, couched within a believable brand ecosystem, creates a 'discordant harmony' (Smith and Protevi, 2015) for those who see it. This 'discordant harmony' is achieved by using neo-modernist flat UI design, the implementation of certain graphic design tropes to which we have been habituated. Its weirdly believable startup sensibility is a function of the graphic design of the system of brand elements.

The PHA does not didactically aim to reveal the assemblages it critiques. Rather, the 'discordant harmony' it creates shakes the viewer into a condition in which perceiving technologically-mediated experience in a new way becomes possible. Through a strategic arrangement of the elements present within assemblages such as FitBit and Facebook or LinkedIn, the PHA reveals aspects of those assemblages that are typically concealed.

Terms of Use for Handling of Solid Waste and Prevention of Illegal Dumping (2014)

Terms of Use for Handling of Solid Waste and Prevention of Illegal Dumping (Figures 3 and 4) is a book masquerading as a municipal handbook of the future. Inside its bland cover is a confusing and, at times, comedic work of cut-up style poetry created by software that combines the Detroit municipal codes for refuse disposal with the iTunes Terms of Use and Google's Terms of Service.

Already unintelligible to many individuals, municipal codes regarding refuse are also computational codes, situated in the databases of government agencies. As municipalities strive for efficiency and cost-savings, a turn towards 'positive knowledge,' (Lefebvre, 2014) quantification, and computation is intuitive. Municipal services become automated and privatized, further obscuring the way in which basic services are delivered. Users accept further unintelligibility in exchange for convenience. *Terms of Use for Handling of Solid Waste and Prevention of Illegal Dumping* is a meditation on the potential for privatization and automation of municipal services in cities like Detroit, which, in difficult financial times, turn towards private companies as well as computation to enhance efficiency. The book is a linguistic metaphor for the melding of municipal services with privatization and automation.

The book was first presented as part of a group exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, where it was stationed on a pedestal. Gallery visitors were encouraged to pick up the book and look through it (Figure 5).

[4] Shout has since changed their website to state, 'Shout measures the strength of your character with a simple score.'
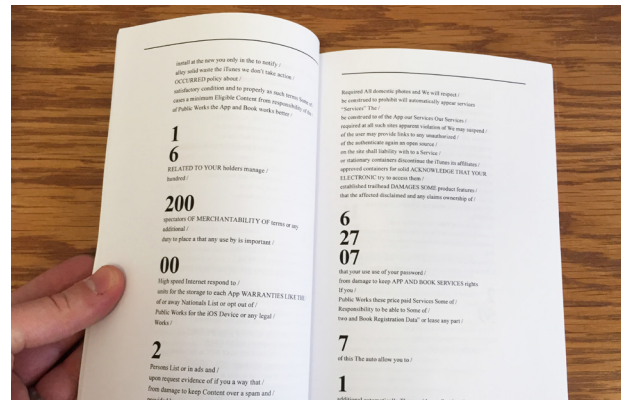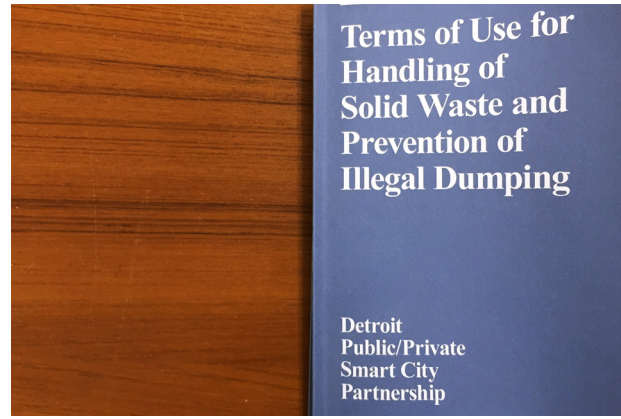

Figure 3. Terms of Use for Handling of Solid Waste and Prevention of Illegal Dumping. Algorithmically-generated book. Zachary Kaiser, 2014. Image courtesy of the author.

Figure 4. Terms of Use for Handling of Solid Waste and Prevention of Illegal Dumping. Algorithmically-generated book. Zachary Kaiser, 2014. Detail. Image courtesy of the author.

Figure 5. Terms of Use for Handling of Solid Waste and Prevention of Illegal Dumping. Algorithmically-generated book. Zachary Kaiser, 2014. Image courtesy of the author.
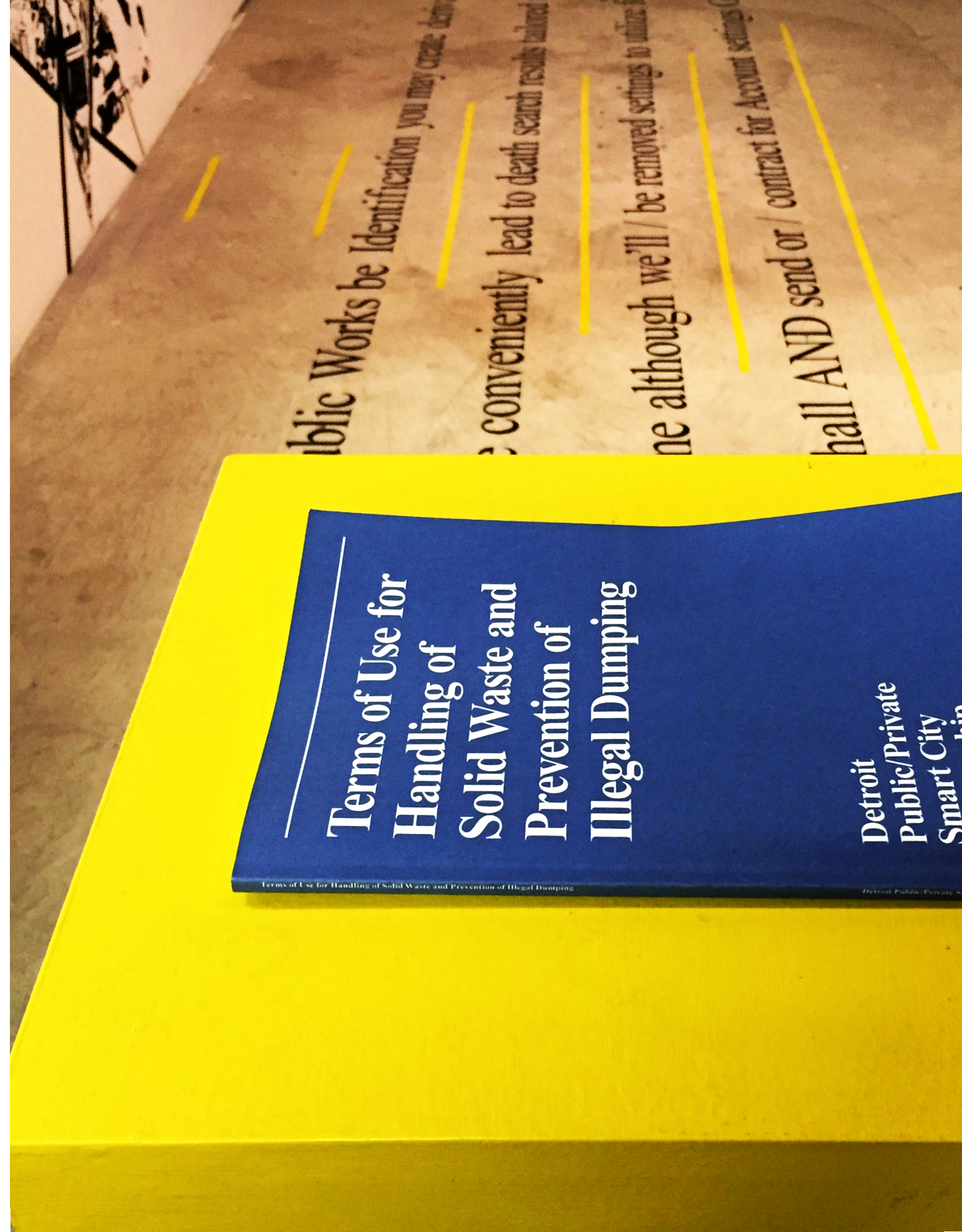
Like the Perfect Human App, the book mimics the graphic design of that which it intends to critique. In this case, the form being appropriated is that of a boring, official, government document in order to produce a jarring affect once the viewer explores the confusing content of the book itself.

The nonsensical nature of the language within this somewhat official looking document is intended to detach the signs (the tropes of an official handbook/document, such as a municipal blue and Times New Roman typography) from their role within the process of signification, and suggests the arbitrariness of this signification, particularly in the realm of computation and the ideology of positive knowledge. The juxtaposition between the cover of the book and its interior seeks to create a moment of pause. The cover presents the object as an artifact from a supposed smart city and aligns itself with the ideologies of efficiency-enhancing measures in other parts of society. And yet the interior is a confusing jumble of strangely familiar phrasing from terms of use agreements that, as users, we often gloss over. In the rift created by this juxtaposition lies the opportunity for the viewer to reflect on the quasi-actants within computational systems that are presented to the public as neutral and convenience-enhancing. By creating an opportunity for reflection on such systems, the piece aims to reveal aspects of the future municipal services assemblage that the rhetoric promoting it would seek to conceal.

In exchange for the convenience of computational systems knowing what we have done in the past and recommending courses of action to us, easing the process of decision-making (or automating it entirely), we give up our agency and we, often unknowingly, give up possibility itself.

Whisper, a collaboration with Gabi Schaffzin (2013 – 2015)

As Lefebvre (2014) noted, today, we rely on the purported objectivity of technological positivism to control our daily lives. Systems of algorithmic inference and recommendation, such as those used by Amazon and Netflix for example, wield incisive power over us. Ambient intelligence, algorithmic inference, and programmed recommendation increasingly 'configure human life by tailoring its conditions of human possibility' (Cheney-Lippold, 2011, p. 169). Our actions – our very beings – are algorithmically anticipated (De Vries, 2010). In exchange for the convenience of computational systems knowing what we have done in the past and recommending courses of action to us, easing the process of decision-making (or automating it entirely), we give up our agency and we, often unknowingly, give up possibility itself.

Whisper began as a proposal for a project that would intercept and scramble the data being transmitted from connected household objects in order to reintroduce surprise and serendipity into someone's life. In reality, it is an interventionary artwork, in which a user approaches a device and tells it how he or she feels. The device then takes the user's description of her feeling, scrambles it through an association algorithm, queries Amazon using the 'scrambled' feeling, and orders a product (Figures 6 and 7).

The *Whisper* object itself is a small, white, acrylic box, its smooth facade only broken by the affordance of a single red button, with a small microphone protruding from its left side. From the front, a sheet of receipt paper cascades to the gallery floor, displaying the process by which *Whisper* scrambles a user's feelings as well as the product recommendation (Figure 8).

As a work of art, *Whisper* operates at a different register, using graphic design but not being necessarily a piece of graphic design. It is an art object, but its use of the printed receipt is quite intentional as a communicative device that I consider graphic design. The receipt points towards the market-based nature of human existence when daily life is mediated by a reliance on positive knowledge manifest through computational intervention. The receipt as a signifier that points towards its typical signified, the purchase of a good or service in physical space, is juxtaposed both with its context – its role within a foreign, but seductively designed artifact – as well as its content – the contents of the receipt printout include the user's articulation of his or her feeling as well as the explicitation of the scrambling process. This juxtaposition is intended to create a 'discordant harmony' for the viewer, to deterritorialize the assemblage(s) that *Whisper* critiques: Amazon as an assemblage on which we rely, as well as the human-algorithmic-recommendation-engine assemblage that has its own emergent behavior and agentic properties. Whisper does not function as a visualization of the assemblages it seeks to critique. It shakes the symbolic foundation of these assemblages, offering new ways of seeing them and reorganizing the elements present within the assemblages. In doing so, it offers viewers an opportunity to reflect on the role of algorithmic systems in the mediation of identity, as well as the ideologies underlying the design of such systems, which Amazon and its interface conceal.

Figure 6. Whisper. Installation. Zachary Kaiser and Gabi Schaffzin, 2015. Image courtesy of the author.

Figure 7. Whisper. Installation and print. Zachary Kaiser and Gabi Schaffzin, 2015. Image courtesy of the author.

Whisper ordered Pyrrho, His Ante
cedents, and His Legacy
$95.76

I promise I am working...breakin
g algorithms takes time.
......
.....
...
..
.
Whisper is searching for invaria
bility
Whisper thought of unvariedness
Whisper thought of humdrum
Whisper thought of commonplace
Whisper thought of banal
You said tired

Figure 8. Whisper. Installation. Zachary Kaiser and Gabi Schaffzin, 2015.
Image courtesy of the author.

PART V:

Critique and Concluding Thoughts

Graphic Design as an Artistic Practice
for the Unraveling of the Everyday
Zachary Kaiser

T   A

Message
Edition 3.5/6

In order to transform the everyday, the foundations of representation need to be shaken, and the 'regime of the perceptible' overthrown (Bennett, 2010, p. 107). Lefebvre and Deleuze identify this potential within art. Art can harness the negative in order to create a scene, to disturb, to shake, to deterritorialize the assemblages (and their embedded sign systems) that serve to support the dominant ideology. Lefebvre argues that through what he terms the 'negative' (critical thought, operating in opposition to 'positive knowledge') we can envision possibility and potential outside of the dominant teleology of scientific and technological positivism. Indeed, 'the negative moment creates something new, that it summons and develops its seeds by dissolving what exists' (2014, p. 723).

This dissolution of what exists is about a rupture – about splitting these objects from their systems of reference in order to catalyze a critical awareness, to prompt new thought. Art functions in this way, suggests Deleuze, by forcing us to think, confronting the senses directly as opposed to appealing to 'common sense.' (Smith and Protevi, 2015).

The projects I have described all utilize the familiar language of graphic design – a language we are habituated to experience in our everyday – in order to create moments of discontinuity, to dissolve what exists, to deterritorialize through the creation of 'discordant harmonies' for those that experience them. Through juxtaposing visual experiences that resemble the everyday with content and contexts that rupture their relationships with different elements in the assemblages within which they play a role, these projects seek to present, through the negative, the potential for things to be different – if only because a breakage can be noticed.

These projects, however, do not necessarily succeed. Their tactics may not be honed enough to elicit the 'discordant harmonies' they seek to create, and they do not necessarily operate at a large enough scale or have enough viewers or participants in order to contribute substantially to the revolutionary project for which Lefebvre calls. Each project operates primarily within the gallery, within what I refer to as 'artspace.' Even the Perfect Human App, which, through its promotional materials, manifested to a degree in what I call 'realspace,' did not have a large

Graphic designers wield incredible influence over the visual experience of the everyday.

Graphic Design as an Artistic Practice
for the Unraveling of the Everyday
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T A

Message
Edition 3.5/6

enough print run in order to appear as real, as it might have or to connect with as many individuals as it could have.

Future project work in this vein must do more than exist in the gallery, I believe. As Lefebvre argues, the everyday is precisely the site of struggle where revolution and societal transformation must begin, not only because it is the space most recently colonized by the information ideology through the homogeny of fragmented and quantifiable moments, but because it is the site that also offers the most potential for resistance to this phenomenon.

Intervening in 'realspace,' in the everyday, outside the gallery, where most graphic design operates, is therefore essential. It is more challenging, and, would likely look different than the projects I have described. It would, I imagine, resemble something more like tactical media works of the Critical Art Ensemble (CAE). To what degree this would remain graphic design would depend on the tactic to be implemented. If, as CAE suggests, tactical media challenge 'the existing semiotic regime by replicating and redeploying it' (Critical Art Ensemble, 2001, p. 7) – engaging in something akin to a Deleuzian deterritorialization – then I imagine a continued (and hopefully) expanding role for graphic design to play in such interventions. My criticism of the work in which I have been engaged is that it only intervenes in the lives of a willing public but not in their **everyday**.

Graphic designers wield incredible influence over the visual experience of the everyday. They must work to find the space, the courage, and the means to create interventions that deterritorialize, revealing elements of assemblages that are too often concealed. In doing so, they may begin to unravel the everyday in all its complexity, causing us to rethink the dynamic webs of connection that we orchestrate but also by which we ourselves are orchestrated. To do so requires that designers cause moments of 'discordant harmony,' rearranging and substituting various elements within assemblages in order to reveal new relationships, highlighting the ideologies that we absorb into ourselves–ideologies that design often serves to conceal–presenting the potential for 'revolutionary disruption.' I hope that other designers will recognize this potential and join me in the pursuit of the radical transformation of the everyday.

Zachary Kaiser is an Assistant Professor of Graphic Design and Experience Architecture at Michigan State University (USA). Through his research and creative practice, he seeks to offer others the opportunity to question the hegemony of the ideologies embedded in the designed world, to problematize designed systems and artifacts that privilege a certain worldview, and to propose alternative visions. He regularly exhibits and lectures both in the U.S. and internationally.

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ELEMENTS OF INTERROGATIVE STYLE: THE APPLIED ART OF CRITICAL PRACTICE

3.6/6

T   Elements Of Interrogative Style:
     The Applied Art of Critical Practice
A   Daniel Jasper

I've always thought of my ideas as if they were clients with their own set of truths, aspirations and agendas seeking formal expression to an eventual public.

In a 1992 television advertisement for Calvin Klein *Obsession* perfume supermodel Kate Moss, captured in grainy black and white photography, confesses to her lover (or perfume) *I don't know where you end and I begin*. (blairsie420, 2007). Moody and atmospheric with discontinuous editing and layered ambient sound, the spot is evocative of French New Wave films by Godard or Truffaut. But it isn't art: it's simply a television commercial attempting to invigorate a lagging C|K fashion brand. The iconic Campbell's soup label wasn't art either until the graphics were appropriated by Andy Warhol as paintings: a transformation through which the mundane soup label was rendered forever iconic. Art, design and commerce in the Modern era, have always been inexorably linked. Painter Toulouse-Lautrec is most remembered for his poster designs. Conceptual artist Barbara Kruger began her career as a publication designer and Warhol, who was a commercial illustrator before becoming an artist, once famously opined 'good business is the best art.' At the core of art and design practice, their respective products are typically distinguishable from one another. However, around their yielding, penetrable edges, as Ms. Moss describes, it can be difficult to suss out the contours that separate one from the other.

The Schengen Area of the European Union contains within it 26 distinct nationalities yet within this zone people and products are able to move about freely among them as if borderless. Similarly, I believe, amid the confluence of art and design practice, ideas, like fellow travelers, should be able to move about freely as they drift towards actualization or their next point of debarkation. As a design practitioner, mining the interstitial zone between art and design has been less a point of interest or end unto itself, rather more a matter of course while in pursuit of other agendas. In this regard I think of graphic design more as medium through which ideas are realized than I do a formal profession or occupation. For some designers an important feature of the design process requires the involvement of a client: this is a key component of the designer-as-problem-solver model. I've always thought of my ideas as if they were clients with their own set of truths, aspirations and agendas seeking formal expression to an eventual public. In graphic design practice this is a defining characteristic of what has come to

be known as the designer-as-author model. Born of this same impulse are the emerging areas of research and practice called critical design, discursive design, design speculation and design fictions. Rivaling the Inuit people and their 50 different words for snow (Robson, 2013) the aforementioned terms all describe essentially the same thing.

What follows, using image and word, are a depiction this designer's foray onto the virgin snow–or 'matsaaruti' or 'pukak'– of this newish critical discourse. I'll begin with what amounts to a statement of thesis that has developed over time in relation to a body of work that began over 15 years ago. I'll then talk briefly about my graduate thesis project whose forms and content presaged the publication of the *First Things First 2000 (FTF2K)* manifesto and concurrent World Trade Organization protests in Seattle. What is apparent in the work that immediately follows demonstrates how the events of 9-11 required a shift in emphasis and tactics as a nation recoiled from those attacks. Finally, with the rise of the Internet, social media and the 24 hour news cycle, current work will reflect how our perception of the world and its openness has, at once expanded and contracted significantly as the responses to 9/11, 7/7, 3/11, 11/13 and now 3/22 continue to reverberate globally into the foreseeable future.

Nostalgia: It Ain't What It Used To Be

Since 1999 I have been using the formal and conceptual language of products as a means of research and creative discovery. This mode of production falls under the rubric of critical design. Critical design describes a process whereby a designed artifact, its use and the process of designing it perform as an embodied critique or commentary on environment, economy, politics, and culture—or design itself.

Former head of the Design program at Cranbrook Academy, Kathryn McCoy said

Design is not a neutral, value-free process, however, we have trained a profession that feels political or social concerns are either extraneous to our work or inappropriate (McCoy, 1994 p. 111).

McCoy described a sort of tacit knowledge (and knowledge production) that became codified within the western academy after World War II in which formal design production typically results in concrete statements couched in positive terms, which celebrate consumerism, consumer products and the munificent culture that produced them. Theorist Guy Debord characterized the psychological-philosophical underpinnings of this commoditized environment in the following terms, 'Everything that appears is good; whatever is good will appear.' (Debord, 1967 p. 15) In this regard design (graphic, product, apparel) acts as the process by which this self-congratulatory monologue is made flesh, expressed physically in the form of what seem to be ideologically inert objects. As design educators, practitioners and scholars in a historically incurious profession one might be forgiven for asking, is this all there is? Is client-based practice the only prescribed outcome for our intellectual and creative

endeavors and those of our students? In addition to critical thinking and critical writing, is there room for critical design in design research, pedagogy and practice?

Much of the work presented here attempts to challenge the aforementioned narrative by supplanting it with a counter narrative expressed through seemingly innocuous products imbued with messages that are commercially inviable. For instance, in this scenario, wallpaper patterns begin to call in to question basic assumptions about the purpose of textile designs for domestic applications. In addition to being decorative and aesthetically pleasing could textile patterns also be emotive and consciousness-raising with regard to current topics including the United States' drone program or casualty rates among military service members?

Figure 1. Sugar cube. Daniel Jasper, 1996. Original sugar cube procured in Paris, 1996, from which the Daddy™ identity was derived. Image courtesy of Daniel Jasper.

Figure 2. Daddy™ logo application from standards manual. Image courtesy of Daniel Jasper.

pull tab arrows
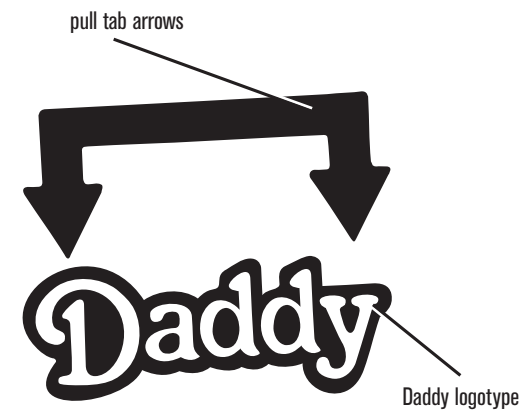
Daddy logotype

SUGGESTED APPLICATIONS:

The Daddy™ logotype may be used as a stand-alone element. The Daddy™ pull tab arrows should never be employed as a single element unless placed on an object that also has the Daddy™ logotype on it. (See Daddy™*Critique of the Brick* brick).

Come to Daddy

In 1997 as a graduate student in Yale's MFA program, I imagined how the next leftist revolution might occur, or, how one might help it to occur. My research combined 60s era radical political theory with product design and guerrilla marketing which lead to the creation of a remunerative model for 21st century popular uprisings–a truly revolutionary brand called Daddy™. The project was fueled, in part, by nostalgia for May 1968 where the Situationist International helped formulate a student/labour uprising that almost toppled the French government. Daddy™ attempted to market the ideas of revolution through the development of a memorable graphic identity; specifically an identity lifted directly from an existing brand of French sugar, Daddy Eurosucre. (Figure 1) In 1971 Gil Scott-Heron sang 'The Revolution Will Not Be Televised.' (Scott-Heron, 1971) Daddy's™ rejoinder for radicalism in the new millennium was 'the revolution will be merchandised.' The project was intended to be a critique of certain assumptions of the graphic design profession. I was frustrated with the idea that all graphic design production had to result in two-dimensional representations of things instead of the thing itself. Instead of creating pictures of revolution in the form of posters why can't a graphic designer create the devices one might actually use to revolt in the form of products? (Figures 3, 4 & 5) It was my contention that logos and identities were an arbitrary collection of symbols and artifacts whose meaning was assigned after the fact by brand managers. More important than the graphic mark (Figure 2) was the story associated with the brand and the emotional connection that could be established with one's demographic through retelling the story of the brand in a variety of media and contexts. I felt if I could attach a more compelling narrative to a preexisting identity system then I could assume that identity.
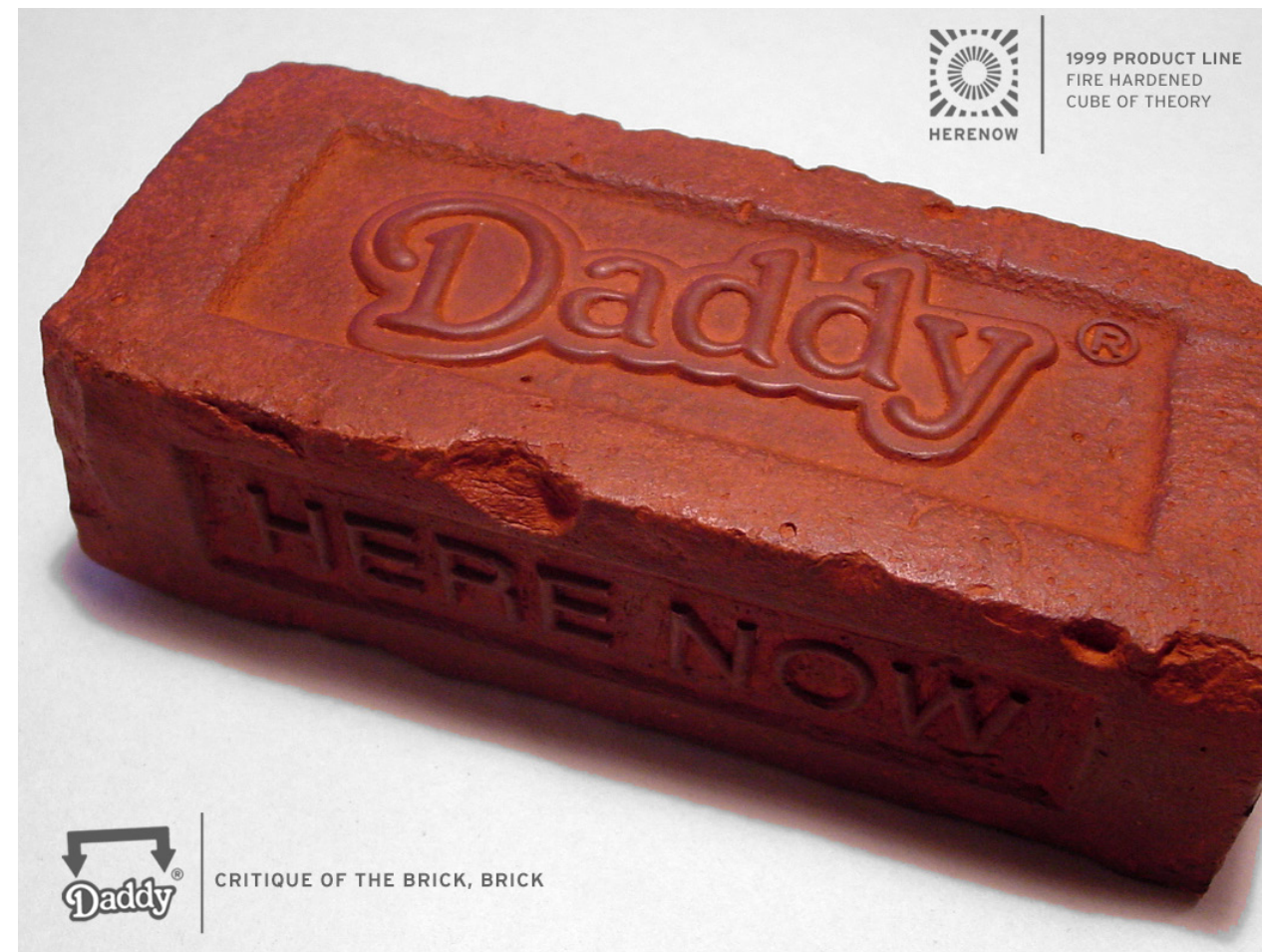
In 1916, Dadaist Richard Huelsenbeck wrote 'all art begins with a critique, with a critique of the self, with the self always reflecting society.' (Huelsenbeck, 1991 p. xxxvii). The Situationists denounced the work of art as the 'consumer good par excellence.' (Gray, 1974 p. 6) Meaning, one didn't have to invest capital to manufacture widgets to then sell to turn a profit. The value of the singular work of art was tied directly to the very fact that it was one-of-a-kind.

No avant garde tendency ever tried harder, fully aware what was at stake, to escape the curator's clutches than did the Situationists, even in their initial phase of intervention in the art scene. They knew that their Futurist, Dadaist, Surrealist and Lettrist forebears had been, in their word, recuperated, that is, recovered by and for the existing order. An order which showed itself as the spectacle, the 'organization of appearances.' (Black, 2002).

The Situationists felt that

art–already an image–is the easiest of all specialties to recuperate. All you have to do is ignore it or, if that doesn't work, buy it. (Black, 2002).

Figure 3. Critique of the Brick. Ceramic. Daniel Jasper, 1999. Made in multiples the Daddy 'Critique of the Brick' brick is a fire-hardened cube of theory designed for revolutionary service at ideological barricades throughout the world. Inspired by the prominence of this building block's role in the 1968 revolution in Paris. Image courtesy of Daniel Jasper.

1999 PRODUCT LINE
FIRE HARDENED
CUBE OF THEORY

HERENOW

Daddy® | CRITIQUE OF THE BRICK, BRICK

BURN DADDY BURN

2000 PRODUCT LINE
ABSOLUT MOLOTOV COCKTAIL
ABSOLUTLY PISSED

FLAMBÉ

GAS

OIL

@ ANARCHY

Figures 4 & 5. Etched Absolut bottles. Daniel Jasper, 1998. Absolut Molotov Cocktail bottle is fashioned from re-purposed Absolut vodka bottles. Daddy's identity is etched over top of existing identity. Multiples of three sizes were produced: 'Absolut Angst' in a 473 ml bottle, 'Absolut Disgust' uses a 750 ml bottle and 'Absolutly Pissed', pictured, a liter bottle. Images courtesy of Daniel Jasper.

Figures 6 & 7. Daddy T-Shirts. Daniel Jasper, 2000. From the ashes of the 1999 W.T.O. protests in Seattle, emerged the Daddy demographic. As the anti-globalisation protest movement spread internationally laws were hastily enacted that prevented protesters from wearing bandannas or balaclavas within host-city limits. Anarchist theories of direct-democracy and direct-action were ascendant within the movement. The Daddy™ 'Anarchy' T-shirt was easily converted into identity concealing protection for Black Block practitioners. Pull tab arrows from inverted Daddy logo on the back of the shirt, far right, became devil horns that implied the wearers' allegiance. Images courtesy of Daniel Jasper.

ACTIVIST   DIRECT ACTIVIST

The Daddy™ brand posited: the work of art made in protest is deflected by the object it produces, which becomes an object of reification, a commodity. What if the work of art is a commodity at its inception, a reified object by design? What if the art object, instead of being a passive object of contemplation becomes a tool with which to dismantle the system it rails against? Further, if the object was made by an artist and was born of artistic inquiry then it follows that what results, good or bad, is a work of art–especially if the spawn of this investment of energy was a one-of-a-kind object. If said artist then goes on to produce multiples of this piece, the resultant collection is then called an edition and its value is diminished in direct proportion to the number of copies produced. The task then became twofold: first, divining the mystical cut-off at which point the vaunted objet d'art descends its lofty perch as a reproduction and becomes simply a product. The second task was to then design a work of art, (in this case bricks, bottles, bombs) whose artistic potential was only fully realized when produced in multiples, acquired by numerous patrons (read consumers) and then was either pressed into revolutionary service, thus fulfilling artistic intent, or placed on a pedestal, rendered inert, and then passively contemplated while consuming a properly aged Bordeaux.

911 Is a Joke

911 Is a Joke (Flav, 1990) is a song written by the rap group Public Enemy in 1990 that, at the time, was clearly seen as a critique of the inefficacy of the nation-wide emergency response system within poor and minority communities. Since the terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington D.C. on 9/11, the visual or verbal utterance of those words require that the author provide some additional context–quickly–to avoid offending his or her audience. 2977 people died as a result of the attacks. According to columnists and political pundits at the time, one of the casualties on September 11, 2001 was irony. In November 2001, linguist Geoffery Nunberg assembled a compendium of premature obituaries penned shortly after the attacks:

> For the moment, at least, we seem to have turned into a nation of scrupulous literalists. Some people see this as the sign of a reevaluation of American priorities. 'The Age of Irony died yesterday,' wrote Andrew Coyne in Canada's National Post on Sept. 12, a report confirmed a few days later by no less an authority than Vanity Fair editor and Spy co-founder Graydon Carter: 'There's going to be a seismic change. I think it's the end of the age of irony.' Roger Rosenblatt came to the same conclusion in a Time essay that decried the intellectuals and 'pop-culture makers' whose detachment and unseriousness now seems a dangerously empty pose: 'The ironists, seeing through everything, made it difficult for anyone to see anything.' (Nunberg, 2001).

While rumors of irony's demise were greatly exaggerated, there was however a pall cast upon political speech that advocated dismantling the existing socio-political order. While irony survived 9/11 the anti corporate globalization movement, that began

Figure 8. Marx-Man Double Slingshot. Daniel Jasper, 2002. Inspired by the slingshot wielding anarchists who staged a running street battle with rioting police at the Summit of the Americas protest in Quebec, 2001. Using the inverted 'm' from M&M's candy, the MarxMan WristWrocket is a double barreled slingshot re-purposed from a Marksman Wrist Rocket® slingshot. It comes with 100 red, plain and peanut M&M's. Image art direction Daniel Jasper. Image courtesy of Warren Bruland.

What if the work of art is a commodity at its inception, a reified object by design? What if the art object, instead of being a passive object of contemplation becomes a tool with which to dismantle the system it rails against?
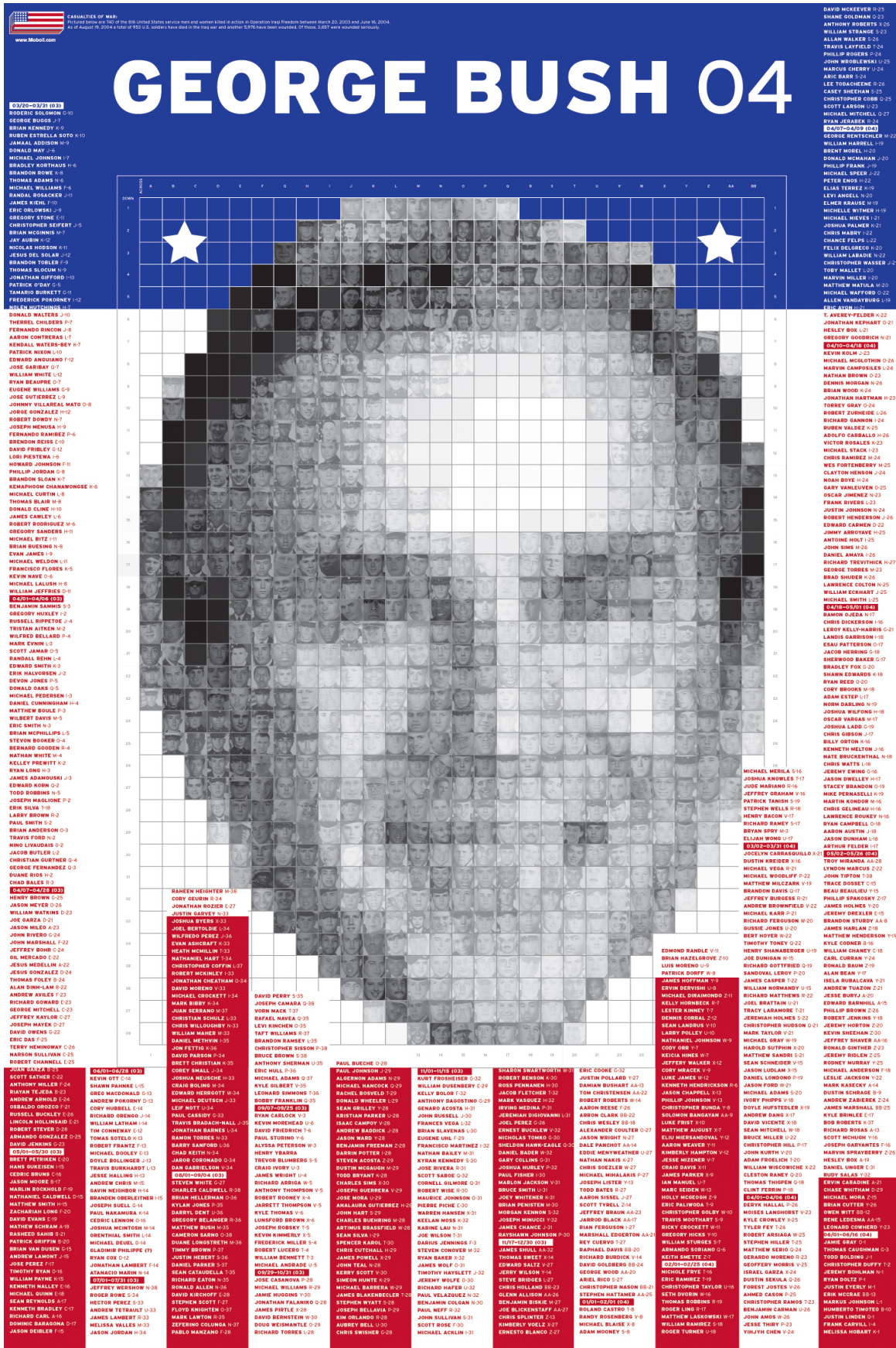
Figure 9. Casualty of War poster. Daniel Jasper, 2004.
The poster was designed to communicate a message that would change depending on one's point of view in relation to the subject, both physically within the environment and within one's political point of view. The name of each casualty depicted here is listed in the columns surrounding the central image. Behind each name is a code that allows one to match the name with a face within the grid. In addition to being a reference to the 2004 election, the '04' behind George Bush's name visually references the code found behind the soldier's names that allows one to find them within the grid. One interpretation of this is that the legacy of George Bush, whether he won or lost the election that year, was yet another casualty of the war. Images courtesy of Daniel Jasper.

in 1999, largely did not. The World Bank/IMF meetings and requisite protests scheduled in Washington DC the weekend following the attacks were canceled. In the U. S. ten years would pass before citizens, as part of the Occupy movement, would have the temerity to challenge the existing order again.

The 2001 AIGA National Design Conference entitled *VOICE* was scheduled for October in Washington D.C. but it too was canceled as a result of the 9/11 attacks. Interestingly the theme of the conference itself was a reflection of the politicized discourse so prevalent at the time; a discourse fueled in no small part by the publication of *FTF2K* manifesto, the interminable, anti-corporate harangues of *Adbusters* magazine and Naomi Klein's book *No Logo*. The conference was rescheduled for March, 2002 and was re-branded *VOICE 2: More than Ever*. In his introduction to a session whose theme was titled *Intervention: Design and Politics/Politics and Design*, session chair Steven Heller wrote:

In the aftermath of 9/11 we heard that irony was dead; and we saw unambiguous heroic realism of a kind not seen since World War II had returned. Yet while we mourned the dead and celebrated the heroes, some of us–perhaps many of us–had a disturbing sense that not just irony but dissent was falling victim to fear, AND that the powers here in Washington would somehow exploit this opportunity to promote political and social agendas that will have repercussions on many of our lives. (Heller, 2002 p. 1).

Like many graphic designers whose work engaged political themes, I felt, as Shakespeare wrote, that the worm had turned. In the wake of the attacks the political discourse had shifted overnight from a socioeconomic critique of capitalism to a more compliant patriotic footing as an increasingly jingoistic news media girded (or goaded) the country for war. A quote from Dadaist Richard Huelsenbeck, recounting the turn of the previous century near the end of WWI seemed prescient. I took his words as sage advice for the near-term future direction of the Daddy™ project.

In January 1917 I returned to Germany. In Zurich the international profiteers sat in the restaurants with well-filled wallets and rosy cheeks… [Berlin] was the city of tight stomachers, of mounting, thundering hunger, where hidden rage was turned into boundless money lust, and men's minds were concentrating more and more on questions of naked existence. Here [Dada] would have to proceed with entirely different methods if we wanted to say something to the people. Here we would have to discard our patent leather pumps and tie our cravats to the door post. (Huelsenbeck, 1920 p. 39).

Information Is Anti Poetry

American author and unrepentant smoker Fletcher Knebel once quipped 'smoking is one of the leading causes of statistics.' (Knebel, 2016) Statistics and the information design that helps interpret those data are often one-dimensional representations that articulate the numerical breadth of a particular phenomenon but not the experiential depth. In 2004 I began a series of design projects that sought to visually enumerate and differentiate the growing list of United States military fatalities in the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars. The title, *The Visual Display of Qualitative Information* was a deliberate play on Edward Tufte's book *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information*. In his book, Tufte states,

> At their best, graphics are instruments for reasoning about
> quantitative information... Often the most effective way to
> describe, explore, and summarize a set of numbers–even a
> very large set–is to look at pictures of those numbers.
> (Tufte, 2001, p. 9).

These were projects that enumerated the number of fatalities in a particular data set (quantity) yet strove to differentiate among the individual service-members killed (quality). My goal was to try and better articulate the human cost of the war in a manner that got beyond charts and graphs by depicting qualitative results that were nonetheless scalable, transferable and reproducible. Similar to the Daddy™ brand this project was motivated in part by what I perceived as a deficiency in the ability of graphic design methods that relied too heavily on web-based or print outcomes. Outcomes that force ideas to be expressed via economically standardized media platforms that sometimes blunt the communicative ability of materiality and scale.

The German Romantic poet Novalis wrote, 'Poetry heals the wounds inflicted by reason.' (Miller, 2007 p. 68) One could argue that war is a wound inflicted by reason. While the pretense for the Iraq War and its subsequent justifications were illogical, they were nonetheless borne of some form of reason. Prose is differentiated from poetry as language meant to convey meaning using more complete logical or narrative structures than poetry. This doesn't mean that poetry is illogical, instead poetry is often created from the need to escape the logical. In her book *Concrete Poetry: A World View*, art historian and artist, Mary Ellen Solt, wrote

> There are now so many kinds of experimental poetry being
> labeled 'concrete' that it is difficult to say what the word
> means. Despite the confusion in terminology, though, there is a
> fundamental requirement which the various kinds of concrete
> poetry meet: concentration upon the physical material from
> which the poem or text is made. If the visual poem is a new
> product in a world flooded with new products, then it must
> partake of the nature of the world that created it. (Solt, 1968).

To this extent, if statistical data and the visual language of information design represent prose; the quilts were intended as a form of counter language, or poetry, that could better get at

Figure 10. Karina S. Lau. Quilt. 54"x 75". Daniel Jasper, 2005.
The pixelated image bears the thumb print of digital media. However, this is more than a formal device. By following the pattern provided by the bit-mapped image anyone could conceivably contribute to this project by assembling a continuous-tone image using fabric. To date, several quilts have been made for the project by women from around the United States using this pixel-to-fabric map method.
Image courtesy of Daniel Jasper.

Strident anti-*whatever* posters are a favorite bailiwick of politically attuned graphic designers around the world. If cigarettes are a leading cause of statistics, then war is a leading cause of posters.

the quality of the information conveyed. Embracing poetry as a metaphor has allowed me to state messages more indirectly and has provided spatial and sensory elements of environment, context and time that inflect the messages with an *experiential* component that I believe contributes to message retention.

Will The Circle Be Unbroken?

Strident anti-*whatever* posters are a favorite bailiwick of politically attuned graphic designers around the world. If cigarettes are a leading cause of statistics, then war is a leading cause of posters. Overt partisan messages are like a punch-line to a joke. While initially satisfying to both the sender and like-minded receivers, they are less satisfying with each retelling and typically don't wear well over time. Not to mention they are likely to alienate a sizable portion of your audience who don't happen to share your sense of humor.

Will The Circle Be Unbroken is a Christian hymn written in 1907 whose aching yet uplifting lyrics describe love, loss and eventual reunion:

> *One by one their seats were emptied, One by one they went away; Here the circle has been broken–Will it be complete one day? (Habershon and Gabriel, 1907).*

Often communication is characterized as being a loop between a sender and a receiver. A measure of successful graphic design is its ability to communicate a message succinctly and unambiguously by creating a circuit of cognition between the sender of a message and its intended audience. With art or poetry the message is allowed to be more ambiguous. In this scenario, if the circuit of cognitive transference were committed to form, it would resemble more a dashed line than a continuous one. The author of this form recognizes that what might be construed as gaps in the continuity of the message, are in fact spaces where the viewer can insert their own understanding or interpretation of the information being presented. This requires the author to relinquish some control of their message and cede that to their audience. To a formally trained communication designer ceding control of a client's message is akin to professional malpractice.

Case in point: part of my motivation for making the quilts was that I was staunchly against the war. Another motivation was to simply document what was, historically and culturally, a remarkable event: for the first time, significant numbers of women enlisted in the U. S. military were dying in combat. As a documentarian, if I were to attach an overt anti-war message to the image of the person depicted on the quilt I would then alienate a sizable portion of my audience. Even worse, I would essentially reduce the subject of the quilt to being an anonymous, ideological tool of someone else's political agenda, in this instance mine, which is the very thing that the quilt and its implied message are presumably against. The American military is an all-volunteer force and, as a group, vote overwhelmingly for conservative Republican candidates (Teigen, 2007 p. 429) who were the architects of the war. Like a dutiful professional designer my position on the war was subjugated to the aspirations of the

Figure 11. Cari Anne Gasiewicz. Quilt. Daniel Jasper, 2007. Image courtesy of Daniel Jasper.
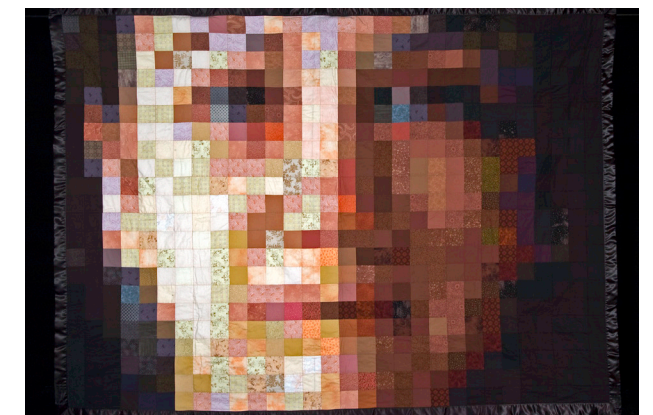
client/idea which, in this case, was to communicate a unique phenomenon using empathetic visual representations of human datum points within a larger data set.

On the occasion of her daughter's birthday, the mother of one of the women depicted on a quilt found me through *Thelivingroomwar.org* website that housed the project at the time and reached out to me in an email. (All personal references have been omitted):

> *Dear Mr. Jasper, [t]oday I was surfing the internet for articles and such regarding my daughter [ ] (today would have been her 35th birthday), who was killed in Iraq on December 4, 2004. I came across your website with the CASUALTIES OF WAR: [ ] Patchwork Quilt. [ ]. It is amazing how much the "picture" in the quilt is of her likeness. We appreciate all the time and effort that was put in to creating this beautiful quilt. It truly is a labor of love...not just for the soldier who died for her country, but also for this great nation.*
> *(Personal e-mail correspondence).*

I doubt that this soldier's mother and I are of the same political persuasion. I further doubt she would have ascribed to my views as they related to the war. However four years after the quilt's creation and seven years after her daughter's death she was able to access a website, and find her daughter's existence documented (more importantly to her, simply acknowledged) without feeling alienated or offended by the way that information was framed. These considerations reflect a kind of message management that should be familiar to graphic designers. All of which supports my contention that the projects described here are not art projects; they are design projects that use more expressive methods and materials to communicate their messages.

Figure 12. Tyanna Averey-Felder. Quilt. Daniel Jasper, 2006.
Image courtesy of Daniel Jasper.

Figure 13. Flag Draped Coffin lapel pin. Daniel Jasper, 2004.
After 9/11 the American flag lapel pin became a staple of the conservative Republican wardrobe in the United States—a visual statement that, presumably, immediately identified the wearer as a patriot. Since the beginning of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan the lapel pins became more popular and were worn by politicians and television pundits of every stripe. I thought it ironic that while the architects of the war in Iraq proudly wore American flag pins publicly as a symbol of freedom they wouldn't allow the flag draped coffins of the wars' casualties to be photographed upon return to the United States at Dover Air Force base. 1000 pins were produced to pre-commemorate hitting the inevitable benchmark of 1000 U.S. military casualties. The pins were manufactured in June 2004. By September that benchmark had been surpassed.
Image courtesy of Daniel Jasper.

…I believe one of the most valuable skill sets a design student can have is the ability to think critically.

Imagine What Is Lacking

Graffiti written throughout Paris during the student uprising and general strike of 1968 lamented the banality engendered by consumer capitalism and the numbing effect of bureaucratic efficiency on everyday life. A message from this period that has resonance in this discussion read 'Those who lack imagination cannot imagine what is lacking.' (Knabb, http://www.bopsecrets.org/CF/graffiti.htm, no date). This statement encapsulates one of the limitations of graphic design alluded to previously. A limitation, not only the way it's practised, but in the way it's taught and even imagined. Too often the communicative ability of what we produce is hemmed-in by limitations imposed, by not only the means of production, but also by the means of reproduction. As practitioners we work with clients who have limited budgets and who typically want their message to be broadcast to as many potential customers as possible. To this extent, the reproduction of messages that can be communicated through two dimensional forms that can then be decimated broadly makes practical sense. But much of what we experience in day-to-day life and much of what we remember of those experiences is derived from other sensory perceptions in addition to sight. In a practice that prides itself on its ability to craft effective and memorable messages it seems odd to limit oneself to only one of five available senses. I'm reminded of the Black Knight character from *Monty Python's Holy Grail* who, having been relieved of his other limbs in a sword fight, hops about on his one remaining leg still eager to engage the struggle, oblivious to his disadvantage.

I don't harbor any grand strategies for reforming the profession. Changes in the profession are more likely to be brought about by external market and technological forces as opposed any strategy an academic might formulate. Having said that I do believe we, as educators, are uniquely positioned to affect incremental philosophical change within the design profession at the precise speed with which our students graduate from the academy and move into the professional positions for which they have trained. As one graffito message from Paris, 1968 said 'the future will only contain what we put into it now.' (Knabb, http://www.bopsecrets.org/CF/graffiti.htm, no date).

To describe graphic design only as a profession is limiting as it places too much emphasis on a narrowly defined set of activities and outcomes that are curtailed by their commercial viability. Furthermore, I believe to educate graphic design students as if only to become future graphic design professionals borders on negligence. Graphic design students, because of their association with mass media, advertising and marketing, need to have a broader understanding of the power they possess through the use of their talents. The design student should understand that through the use of their ideas and creative abilities, they are in fact producers of culture, and that as educated citizen-professionals they bear some responsibility as to what form that culture takes.

In the United States graphic design education at the university level can often resemble an aggrandized job training program. While teaching students a marketable set of skills that are of value to future employers is important, I believe one of the

most valuable skill sets a design student can have is the ability to think critically. To approach design from a critical standpoint requires that the student become engaged in the analytical and intellectual process of design. This process emphasizes the importance of research in addition to the formal and aesthetic considerations that are sometimes overemphasized.

The typical graphic design studio taught in much of the Western academy emphasizes working with the graphic elements of line, form, composition and color as part of a visual vocabulary. These theories and exercises, born of the Bauhaus and the various *-isms* of the early 20th century, are approaching 100 years of age. They were conceived in the social, political and economic crucible of their time and are imbued with kindred ideologies. Of course contemporary educators don't teach the ideology anymore because it is no longer relevant to the task at hand. Yet many still embrace visual language theorems and processes that the ideology produced. I think it important to deemphasize the 'graphic' in graphic design and instead focus on the process of communication where the concept or visual narrative is emphasized using text, image, time and context as primary tools for constructing meaning—then enlist the aid of formal elements to help promote cognition.

In The Beginning Was The Word

'In the beginning was the Word.' (John 1:1) So goes the familiar opening verse found in the Gospel of John. According to one interpretation 'word' is the Greek *logos* which means a thought or concept, and the expression or utterance of that thought.

A subsequent verse goes on to say 'And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us' (John 1:14). The chapter is generally interpreted as a creation or incarnation narrative of the Son of God here on earth. I've found the combination of verses to be analogous to a unifying feature of the design process as well. Whether one is working as designer-as-problem-solver or designer-as-author the project always begins with words. Sometimes they are words in physical sense such as the words that appear on the page in the form of a project brief describing the aspirations of a client bringing a new product to market. Sometimes the words are spoken from instructor to student that begin: *I want you to design…*And sometimes the words are never spoken at all but shamble about in one's brain until they're sober enough to be sequentially queued in the form of a question asked of oneself: *what if…?* Regardless of the scenario the designer then engages some variant of the design process that begins to make the intangible, tangible; the verbal, visual; the word, flesh.

Design And Its Discontents

If we accept that the resulting 'flesh' that emerges from the design process has its origin in some form of 'the word' it then follows that if one wanted to change design as it is imagined, taught or even practiced then one might begin by changing the words or narrative that comprises the design story. As educators we are the principal storytellers that new design students encounter as they embark on their careers. Yet many aspects of the story we've been telling for the last 40 years or so remain uncompelling. As an undergraduate design student in the late 1980s I remember

drifting in and out of design schools and universities in search of a better story. My tenure at each school attended would last just over one year–the foundation year. In that year I would predictably encounter the expansive theories and processes formulated by historical figures as they relate to drawing, color, composition and form. Each school seemed to have their own art and design historical canon that helped guide their specific approach to educating the young design student. The knowledge gleaned from the processes used became a valuable practical tool kit with which, I imagined, one could build anything. Unfortunately, yet also predictably, as the second year unfolded, I would see the sweeping vista of what is possible diminish in direct proportion to the construction of the more exclusionary frame of day-to-day professional practice.

The question that was asked at the beginning of this paper and restated as the central premise of a graduate student's thesis has its origin in the inchoate wanderlust of a beginning design student; it is worth restating here: 'is this all there is?' We as educators frame and present to our students an image of graphic design that unequivocally states *this is what it is*. Yet as we know, images have authors and authors have agendas and agendas can be deconstructed by examining what is included or excluded from the frame. I believe when presented with an image of what graphic design is, it is instructive to look at that which borders all four sides of the frame that has been obscured from view which reads *context*. Context, context context. This in my estimation is what critical design does: it interrogates graphic design practice in relation to all that surrounds it in order to arrive at a better understanding of what it is we do and the broader implications of what we produce.

Design, Society, Economy And Culture

To many design scholars research and writing are the coin of the realm. To the majority of graphic design students who aspire to be design practitioners, writing, let alone reading, often seem like encumbrances one must endure in order to graduate. My experiences over the past nine years teaching a Writing Intensive (*W.*) course I developed have led me to conclude that undergraduate graphic design students, when their sensitivity to visual culture and materiality are fully engaged and combined with their emerging sense of autonomy and citizenship, are able to perform insightful and scholarly research projects involving critical analysis of design, society, economy and their involvement within.

The course is called Design and Its Discontents: Design, Society, Economy and Culture. The course structure and content are framed using a holistic approach wherein all activities are intended to develop sensitivity and build awareness of the student's own personal relationship with commodities, advertising, the media and their role in the greater society as both consumers and producers of culture (the personal via the universal and vice versa). Some projects are presented within the framework of phenomenological research wherein the study of structures of experience, and consciousness, are as relevant to their inquiry as quantitative methods. Other projects involve the collection and analysis of data derived from the student's day-to-day lives.

Figure 15. Kailene Falls, 2013. Kailene had an eye for fashion and scoured the racks at numerous discount stores over the course of a month as part of her normal routine. She constructed this über shopping bag from the various plastic shopping bags that resulted from her shopping excursions. Image courtesy of Daniel Jasper.

Figure 14. God Save (for) the Queen. Jen Vinson, 2013. While Jen was keeping her Conspicuous Collection blog she just happened to be saving for a study abroad trip to the U.K. She found that she could save an additional $9.00 a month by purchasing baby wipes instead of actual make-up removal wipes to clean her face. She constructed this Union Jack flag with used baby wipes to communicate that salient feature of her consumer pattern. Image courtesy of Daniel Jasper.
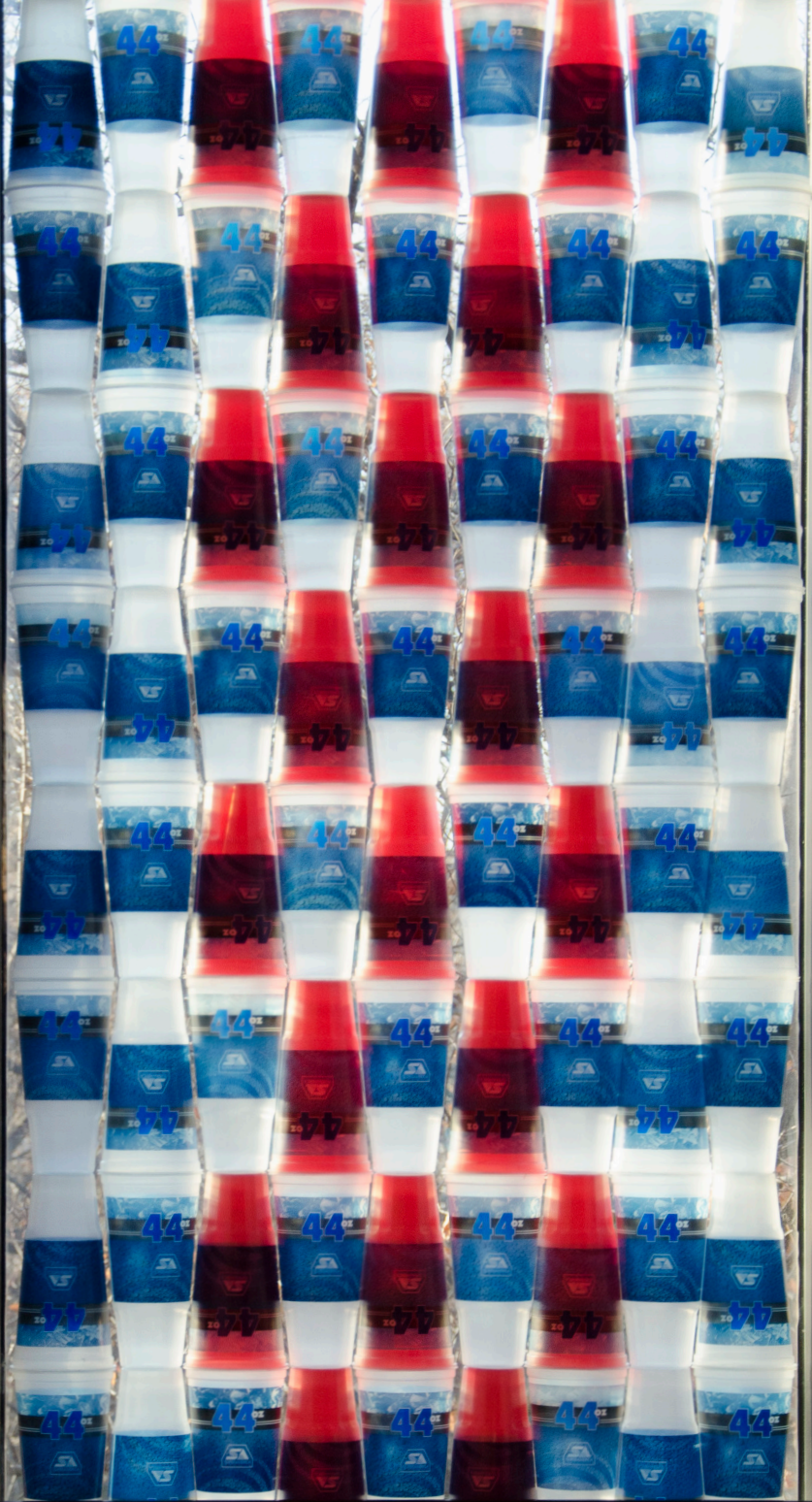
Both methods use a variety of idiosyncratic writing assignments and reflective design pieces that emerge from these activities.

In the United States a *W.* designation means that writing outcomes comprise a significant portion of the course deliverables. A more traditional fit for a *W.* course within a graphic design program is a graphic design history course where the linkage between design and writing might seem more congruous. However through our work we attempt to redefine the boundaries that establish what it means to write by seamlessly integrating writing processes with hands-on studio production in the form of project proposals, project reflections, process blogging and first person phenomenological research. Research results are then shared publicly either through formal presentations or exhibitions and installations. I've developed four principles that, while useful for this particular class, also serve as a process of interrogation that are more broadly applicable in daily practice:

Analyze- discover or reveal through examination.
Internalize- make part of one's nature by learning.
Synthesize- combine a number of things into a coherent whole.
Realize- give actual or physical form to.

One such assignment where research, writing, design authorship and even critical design come together most visibly is called *The Conspicuous Collection* where students are asked to keep a blog that makes record of everything they consume for an entire month. In their blog entries they record the name of the items or experiences purchased, their cost, where it was purchased, when and why. Students make note of seemingly insignificant things such as their mental or emotional state at the time and even the weather.

As graphic designers we are likely to inhabit the material world more fully than our counterparts. The packaging that surrounds the product and the advertising that promotes the experience of ownership are the purview of our profession. This too is seen as information so water bottles, candy wrappers and other detritus are collected for one month's time. Students are also asked to consider the process of shopping itself and what happens after the product has been consumed and drained of its perceived promise. Does the packaging or the dispenser the product came in have the same aura of desirability when empty? If not, is it because the product is gone or because it has been removed from the circular context of value supplied by the marketing, advertising and ultimate positioning of the product on the store shelf?

Students then sift through the numerical, textual and physical data collected in search of patterns and anomalies. Having identified a salient feature of their consumption or behavioral pattern they then–mindful of Huelsenbeck's dictum that art begins with a critique of the self, with the self reflecting society– devise a strategy for communicating that feature to an audience through creation and display of an object, installation or graphic that encapsulates said phenomenon.

Within the span of one assignment students perform a comprehensive month-long research and writing project made more relevant because of its connection to their lived experience. The area of research involves examination of material culture–the very culture they propagate through work in their chosen profession. They critically examine their own patterns of behavior within the simultaneous contexts of design, society, economy and culture. They then express their findings using the principles and practices of data visualization. While some choose more traditional 2-D computer-aided methods, others choose 3-D methods made more expressive through attention to materiality and physical presence. Without being expressly told to 'make critical design' the students nonetheless perform critical practice not as an end unto itself but simply as a method of interrogation.

It is within this context that critical practice works in tandem with the traditional writing and research processes as an extension of writing. Here students are asked to place themselves, as designers, within the broader framework of design, society, economy and culture not as an ancillary consideration but as something central to their role as authors and producers of culture. Within this context students are taught that being critical isn't a job description for cranky elitists–it is something that should be done by designers as a matter of course.

Figure 16. Soda Sanctuary. Henry Nahurski, 2012. Like many students, Henry kept late hours. He didn't like coffee so he got his caffeine fix, from 44 ounce soft drinks purchased at Super America convenience store near his apartment. He created this 'stained glass' window installation using all of the plastic cups collected over one month. The red cups denote days when Henry consumed more than a gallon of soda. Image courtesy of Daniel Jasper.

Elements Of Interrogation Style:
The Applied Art of Critical Practice
Daniel Jasper

T   A

Message
Edition 3.6/6

Superficially Attractive Expialidocious

Graphic designers typically are creative people who happen to also be pragmatists. Otherwise they might have chosen to be starving artists living on a diet of their own integrity in a garret in Brooklyn. Weaned on the liebe frau milch of form-follows-function and the sonorous maxims of William Morris many designers are skeptical of the entire notion of critical design, design speculation or anything else whose stated primary function is 'to stimulate discussion and debate amongst designers;' (Dunne and Raby, http://www.dunneandraby.co.uk/content/biography, no date)–most often in an art gallery of all places–where people don't normally talk to one another to begin with. I'm sympathetic to those views and it is not my intent to lure budding young designers into the abyss of myopic self-absorption; after all, that's what the Internet is for. I would however like to reintroduce into popular usage a term that has fallen from favor as a description of our line of work: *applied art*.

A common definition for applied art describes precisely why it is no longer used by a burgeoning class of creative professionals.

The term "applied art" refers to the application (and resulting product) of artistic design to utilitarian objects in everyday use. Whereas works of fine art have no function other than providing aesthetic or intellectual stimulation to the viewer, works of applied art are usually functional objects which have been "prettified" or creatively designed with both aesthetics and function in mind. (Collins, 2008).

To add insult to injury, if one were to look up the word 'prettified' one would find that there are worse words than applied art to describe what we do for a living: 'Make (someone or something) appear superficially pretty or attractive.' (OED, 2016)

The implication being that while the outcome of artistic endeavor might result in an image of humanist perfection like Michelangelo's *David*, applied art is likely to only deliver the humanoid perfection of Mattel's *Barbie*. I would argue that both celestial bodies were born of a similar creative impetus but their creators were simply serving different masters, but serving masters nonetheless. In the end it isn't method, process or even subject matter that distinguishes design from art—it's intent. What was the authorial intent and who is paying the bill?

Debord argued that in a previous developmental phase of capitalism the locus of human value was transferred from the metaphysical realm of *being* into the materialist realm of *having*. In contrast 'the present phase of total occupation of social life by the accumulated results of the economy' has led to

a generalised sliding from having into appearing, from which all actual "having" must draw its immediate prestige and its ultimate function. (Debord, 1967, p. 16).

The Modernist conception of three dimensional design can be summed up in Louis Sullivan's maxim that 'form ever follows function.' (Rawsthorn, 2009) However in the two dimensional wheelhouse of graphic design production, there is ample evidence that within Debord's economy of appearances, form *is* function. That is to say that, like it or not, the way something looks is the function of much of what we produce. Further, if artistic production results in objects of 'aesthetic or intellectual stimulation' then it follows that the applied artistic works in the form of cool brands like Apple and Nike (Coolbrands, 2016) results in artistic statements whose singularity is pluralized each time the brand and related products are adopted by individual users. Users being a purchasing unit that was heretofore understood only as a mass of consumers. Alas, good business may be the best art after all.

Figures 17, 18. Elements of Interrogation Style. Daniel Jasper, 2012. Elements of Interrogation Style combines the text of the Bybee Torture Memo with the structure and layout of Robert Bringhurtst's 'Elements of Typographic Style'. Jay Bybee was Assistant Attorney General in the Office of Legal Council in the United States Justice Department for the Bush White House from 2001 to 2003. Bybee's memo was written at the request of the CIA who wanted authority to conduct more aggressive interrogations of suspected al Qaeda captives after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Presented here in its entirety is the document that emerged from those deliberations entitled 'Standards for Conduct for Interrogation under 18 U.S.C. sections 2340-2340A', AKA The Bybee Torture Memo. Image courtesy of Daniel Jasper.
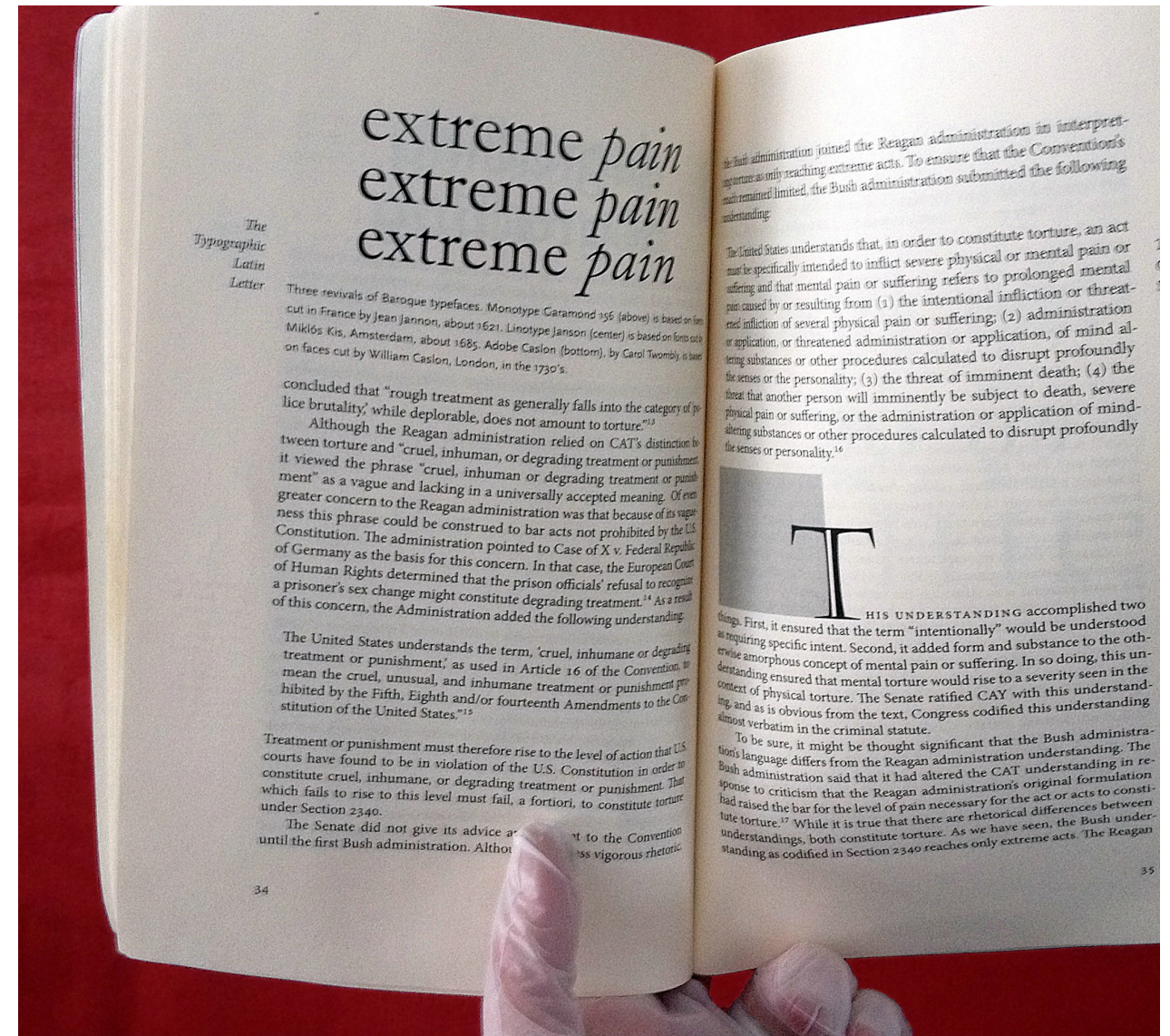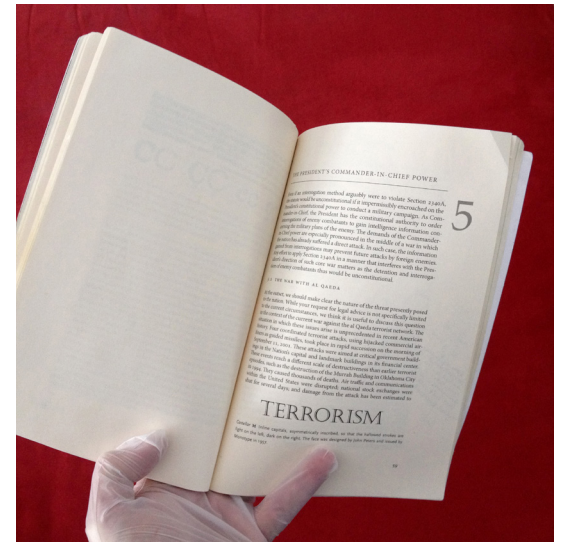
Figure 21. Victorian Secret. Daniel Jasper, 2015. Currently in production. Concealed within the black and white Victorian floral motif of Victorian Secret wallpaper is the iconic image of Sakineh Mohammadi Ashtiani. Ms. Ashtiani achieved international notoriety in 2010 as she went on trial for adultery in Iran where the punishment, if convicted, is stoning to death. Due to international pressure she was spared. She was freed in 2014 after 9 years in prison. Did the iconic nature of her Che Guevara-esque image help raise awareness of her plight? Image courtesy of Daniel Jasper.
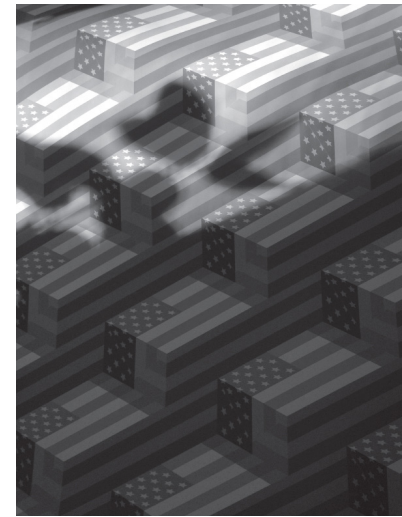

Figure 19. Depth From Above. Daniel Jasper, 2014. Currently in production. Inspired by 1970s era Art Deco revivals the title describes an aerial view of American flag-draped coffins that stretch into infinity using a tessellating, Escheresque pattern. Image courtesy of Daniel Jasper.

Figure 20. Tulips On Missiles. Daniel Jasper, 2014. Currently in production. Wire-frame renderings of tulips and Hellfire missiles form a diagrammatic Arabesque. Tulips have great symbolic significance within many Islamic cultures. Hellfire missiles are commonly fired using drones, often within Muslim countries. Image courtesy of Daniel Jasper.

ANGST: German Word; Explains a Lot of History

There is something seductive about the prospect of forcing symbolic references of serious topics through the filter of applied art if only to test the ability of design to prettify abhorrent ideas. While at the same time giving art work a function beyond passive contemplation. This describes, in part, my motivation for current projects that affix challenging visual statements to objects intended for domestic applications such as wallpaper. For instance the title for the wallpaper pattern *Depth from Above* (Figure 19) is taken from the U.S. Army 101st Airborne Division motto 'death from above.' (International Military Forums, 2004) Inspired by 1970s era Art Deco revivals, the title describes an aerial view of American flag-draped coffins that stretch into infinity using a tessellating, Escheresque pattern. Another wallpaper design, *Tulips on Missiles* (Figure 20) uses a similar trompe l'oeil effect combining wire-frame renderings of tulips and Hellfire missiles to form a diagrammatic Arabesque. Tulips have great symbolic significance within many Islamic cultures; it is the central emblem on the Iranian flag. (Nada, 2013) Hellfire missiles are those most commonly fired using unmanned aerial vehicles, or drones, often within Muslim countries.

As with business, the confluence of art, design and politics is nothing new. In his review of Frederic Spotts' book *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics* James E. Young (2003) wrote the 'Nazi aesthetic was part and parcel of Nazi ideology, not just an ornamental byproduct of it.'

More than a critique of technology and art, Walter Benjamin's 1935 essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* was also concerned with confluence of art in the form of Futurism, and politics in the form of Fascism. A German-Jewish philosopher and cultural critic, Benjamin could see the second World War looming on the horizon. In the epilogue to his essay he finishes with this foreboding passage.

> *'Art is the destroyer of worlds,' says Fascism, and as Marinetti admits, he expects war to supply the artistic gratification of a sense perception that has been changed by technology. This is evidently the consummation of art for art sake. Mankind, which in Homer's time was an object of contemplation for the Olympian gods, now is one for itself. Its self-alienation has reached such a degree that it can experience its own destruction as an aesthetic pleasure of the first order. This is the situation of politics which Fascism is rendering aesthetic. Communism responds by politicizing art. (Benjamin, 1935 p. 20).*

When France fell to the Nazis in 1940 Benjamin fled south through the Pyrenees mountains with the hope of escaping to the United States via Spain then Portugal. In the town of Portbou on the Franco-Spanish border, the chief of police informed Benjamin that he was denied entry into Spain and would be turned over to the Nazi Authorities. Within 12 hours of his arrival, with an overdose of morphine, Benjamin committed suicide.

The parallels between then and today are too numerous to ignore. Who could have imagined that 16 years ago, at the turn of this century, that today we would be having serious discussions about the rise of fascism in the Middle East, Western Europe and even the United States? (Baker, 2016) Waves of refugees escaping war and deprivation challenge not only the once open of borders of the Schengen Area but also notions of post-World War II European liberalism itself. Within this context it is easy to imagine that numerous future Walter Benjamins have already been turned away at the borders of Greece, Hungary and Austria or drowned in the Mediterranean Sea.
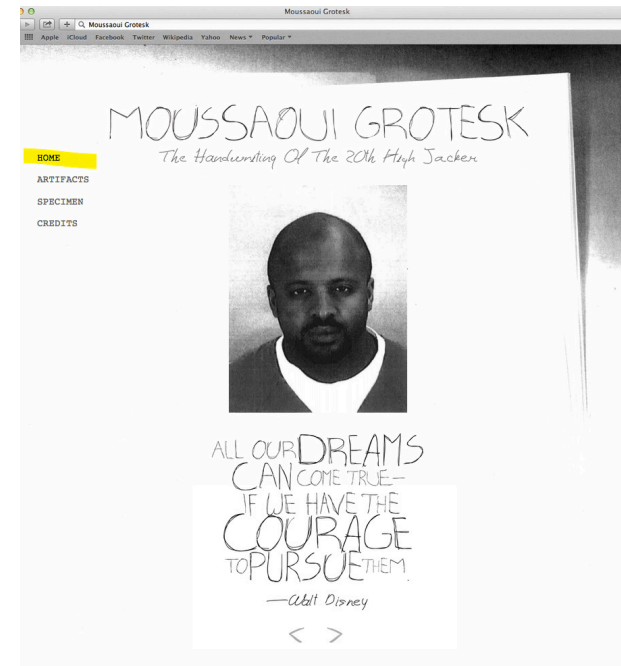
History is said to be a narrative written by the victors of the struggles for power. To the losers, history can become a Jacob Marley-like chain of miseries (or memories) handed down from one generation to the next. There is precedent, however, for disruption of this model. In 1980, historian Howard Zinn challenged this notion with his bestselling book *A People's History of the United States* where the aforementioned top-down historical frame of reference was reversed in the telling. In his film *Sans Soleil* (1983) director Chris Marker wrote 'we do not remember, we rewrite memory much as history is rewritten.' And what is history if not sanctioned memory? I prefer to see history as something that is less linear, more fluid, that can be made and remade over and again with each passing moment, each hour, each day. When a single day contains potentially thousands of historical moments, then it becomes too burdensome to attempt to record it in any objective capacity that measures this moment against all subsequent moments or those that preceded. After all, what is the narrative of moment and how can it be quantitatively assessed? Or, as Marker asked 'how can one remember thirst?' (1983). The prospect of recording an indiscriminate history of this nature is a Sisyphean task if ever there were such a thing. But more in the vein of Albert Camus' conception of Sisyphus where a task, especially a creative one, can be at once vital and absurd.

> [An artist's] whole effort is to examine, to enlarge, and to enrich the ephemeral island on which they have just landed. For the absurd discovery coincides with a pause in which future passions are prepared and justified. Even men without a gospel have their Mount of Olives. And one must not fall asleep on theirs either. For the absurd man it is not a matter of explaining and solving, but of experiencing and describing. Everything begins with lucid indifference. (Camus, 1955 p. 94).

This lucid indifference is evident in the design work presented here. For instance, while I have an opinion about the sometimes aimless targeting of the United States' drone program, the missile/tulip motif (Figure 20) doesn't belie a position on the topic. Similar to the collective indifference expressed by John Doe and Exene Cervenka of the band X in their song *See How We Are*, 'we only sing about it once in every twenty years. See how we are' (Doe J and Cervenka E, 1987) the wallpaper patterns are visual statements that simply take stock of the peculiar time in which we live. As a result the patterns don't prescribe how

one should feel about these topics, only that one should take note of their existence. Or not. The absurdity of the enterprise is borne on the knowledge that graphic design, whether in the form of wallpaper or a poster, is unlikely to affect any change of the issues depicted, yet 'one must endeavour to persevere.' (*The Outlaw Josie Wales*, 1976). Therein lies a subtle critique of the inefficacy of graphic design when it comes to resolving most of the world's intractable problems.

Singer/songwriter Bob Dylan was widely regarded as an artist who had his finger on the pulse of an entire generation's counter-culture moment. In 1965, Dylan sang 'You don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows.' (Dylan B, 1965). In 2016, we still don't require the services of a weatherman for our edification, nor would we look to a folk singer for that information—or to a designer for that matter. The internet and digital technology has helped spawn a plucky, do-it-yourself era for people who labour in creative professions in particular. We've been fortified since youth by the *Cat In the Hat* ethos that defiantly states 'I can read it all by myself.' (St. Rebor) We live in a time where musicians no longer need a record company to produce and distribute their music and designers no longer need a client as creative foil, to validate our work. It is through use of this newfound agency of designer-as-author and designer-as-whatever-one-chooses, that I attempt to document and render aesthetic a highly subjective and idiosyncratic, not-so-secret history of 21st Century, fin de siècle angst.

Figure 22. Moussaoui Grotesk. Type face. Daniel Jasper, 2013. Moussaoui Grotesk is a typeface derived from the handwriting of 'The 20th Hijacker' Zacarias Moussaoui. Moussaoui was arrested in Minnesota while taking flight training classes, allegedly in preparation for the September 11th attacks on New York City and Washington DC. Moussaoui, who defended himself at trial, wrote by hand numerous memos and court briefs with titles like 'God Curse the Queen: The Little Bitch of Buckingham.' There are two members in the Moussaoui Grotesk font family: Moussaoui Grotesk Display Caps and Moussaoui Grotesk Curseive. Moussaoui Grotesk Display Capitals are a faithful recreation of Moussaoui's block printing. He reserved this writing style for his most emphatic messages. Moussaoui Grotesk Curseive is inspired primarily by handwriting samples taken from notebooks and memo pads Moussaoui used while in flight training classes at Pan Am International Flight Academy in Eagan, Minnesota, where he trained on a Boeing 747-400 flight simulator in August, 2001.
Image courtesy of Daniel Jasper.

Jasper is an Associate Professor in the Graphic Design program in the College of Design at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. Jasper's work has been featured in numerous books on critical practices in contemporary Graphic Design and has been widely exhibited both nationally and internationally. He received an MFA in Graphic Design from Yale University in 1999.

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THANKS!

For your continued support.