ILLUMINATION THROUGH ILLUSTRATION:

POSITIONING ILLUSTRATION AS PRACTICE-LED RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

This thesis represents a practice-led enquiry into contemporary illustration from a UK perspective. This thesis argues for illustration to be recognised as an inductive practice-led research process, within both education and developing criticism. The methods and methodological discussion to support this are derived from the practical aspect of the enquiry.

The inductive approach outlined through the methods chapter focuses on the benefits of removing the known outcome from projects, and of illustrators maintaining their own practice alongside commissioned work. The discussion of methods proposes that the commissioned strand of illustration adopts research *in* illustration as research *for* illustration. The discussion of performative forms adopted within illustration contributes to the discourse surrounding practice-led research outcomes, in particular Brad Haseman's performative paradigm for creative arts research.

The methodological approach is proposed as a supplementary strand of teaching, which equips illustrators with long-term skills to generate their own projects and employment. These enable illustrators to be flexible and able to adapt to economic and technological changes to industry practice. The thesis examines research processes within illustration which are transferable to different contexts. These include the increase in digital screens and their time-based communications, and the development of three-dimensional objects and environments within the field.

The practical work undertaken employed these processes and generated a contribution to the growing discourse surrounding contemporary illustration in the UK. Illustration suffers from a lack of published analysis and as a result its critical discourse is limited. Therefore this study bases its argument upon themes identified within existing illustration commentary, the work of key practitioners, and my studio practice. The focus of research undertaken is mainly on self-initiated projects, but includes commissions where the outcome is not prescribed from the outset. Conversations with Matthew Richardson, Luise Vormittag, Steve Braund, Andrzej Klimowski and Henrik Drescher provide supplementary primary research.

The outcome is a contribution to the development of a critical framework derived *from practice*, which acknowledges the shortcomings of existing frameworks available. The thesis proposes that the concept of time be adopted as a key characteristic of illustration, the discussion of which references Henri Bergson, comics and artist's books. The utility of time lies in its productive application to both the production and analysis of work. Illustration's unique negotiation of time through spatial manifestations is used to situate the field in relation to key shifts within culture such as Fredric Jameson's postmodernism and Nicolas Bourriaud's altermodernism. The thesis outlines the diversity of temporal achievements within illustration in this regard, and calls for greater recognition of illustration practice and discourse within such discussions of the time we live in.

INTRODUCTION

CATEGORIES WITHIN ILLUSTRATION

This study focuses upon illustration as illumination, to take direction from both Rob Mason and Russell Mills who trace the term back to its Latin root *illustrare* (Mason 2000a, p4; Eno & Mills 1986, p6). This encompasses activities such as considering and illuminating, and also encircling and traversing. None of these are nouns, and this study also addresses the field from the perspective of its methods over its products. This thesis therefore argues for illustration to be recognised as an inductive research process, within both education and developing criticism.

There are many different and overlapping strands of illustration, as reflected in course titles, awards, and annuals promoting the talents of practitioners within a certain strand. Rees (2008, p54) lists these as editorial, publishing, design, and advertising, but other major or emerging specialisms include children's books, reportage, and authorial illustration. Steve Braund describes the latter as populated by "a new and more autonomous illustrator […] one who *is* able to work on their own terms, author their own material, develop their own projects, be enterprising and generate their own employment" (Braund et al, 2012, p8). This last category is the main focus of the study, which addresses the methods used within projects where the known outcome is removed and the illustrator pursues a process of research in order to identify the most appropriate outcome. There is overlap with the other categories (as the practical elements of the project show), and the argument is intended to complement these strands of practice and inform their methods. As a methodological approach it enables illustrators to adapt to and shape changes in the illustration workplace as outlined in the following paragraphs, thereby encouraging the development of skills with a long-term application to complement existing teaching that is industry-oriented and effective only in the short term.

CONTEXT FOR THE STUDY

Illustration suffers from a lack of published analysis and as a result its critical discourse is limited. As Rick Poynor notes, illustration lacks its own equivalent of Philip Meggs' critical *History of Graphic Design*, and very little space in academic publishing is devoted to reflective consideration of the field (Poynor 2010, p30). Whilst I'm grateful for *all* published resources related to illustration available to me over this course of study, there are very few quality books and there's a limit to what each can achieve on their own. For example, Heller & Chwast's *Illustration: A Visual History* lacks critical analysis, and Alan Male's *Illustration: A Theoretical & Contextual Perspective* introduces key terms such as methodology but doesn't explore them. Heller & Arisman's *The Education of an Illustrator* (2000) and *Inside the Business of Illustration* (2004) remain indispensable in terms of offering a range of reflections upon the nature and practise of illustration, but are largely focused on the USA. Rob Mason's *A Digital Dolly* offers a British perspective, but its focus is the last identity crisis illustration had at the end of the 1990s in the face of digital

technology and therefore needs to be supplemented with contemporary criticism reflecting the changed context and industry in which illustrators now work.

In the place of critical discourse illustration has a raft of 'How to…' books, complemented by many source books and surveys. These serve their purpose, but the critical element is limited to an introductory essay in the main. Journal searches reveal a scattering of articles across the academic spectrum, but are mainly confined to the trade press (*Design Week, Creative Review,*). More thoughtful critique comes from *Print Magazine* and *3x3* in the USA, and occasional forays into illustration by *Eye,* the international review of graphic design. The majority of research for this study involved combing back issues of the defunct Association of Illustrators' *The Journal* and contemporary replacement *Varoom!,* the two issues of quality-but-short-lived journal *Line,* and celebrating the arrival of the new peer-reviewed *VaroomLab Journal* and the forthcoming journal from Illustration Research. Discussion and presentations at the three Illustration Research conferences, two VaroomLab symposia and two Mokita events supplement these published offerings. The edited contributions of key practitioners and thinkers to the Falmouth Illustration Forum of the last decade mark a welcome contribution to making these discussions accessible in the form of critical and analytical volume (Braund et al, 2012). Therefore this study is of benefit for consolidating such fragmented sources for future scholars.

At the same time as eagerly-awaited critical discourse is fostered through these developments, illustration is undergoing a second identity crisis, partly derived from technology and partly as the result of another economic recession. The technological changes differ from those of 2000 in that they are related to context rather than tools and skills. Vormittag (2013) maps the shift of traditional print media to digital outlets (specifically social media) and notes that newspaper and book publishing industries are finding their business models in urgent need of revision as consumers don't pay for content in the same way any more, and this is related to the movement of advertising commissions to where the consumers are. The outcome of this is that you can't be sure that something is illustration simply because it looks like it might be. It needs to redefine itself in terms of what its key principles are, in order to develop education, alternative income opportunities, and constructive criticism that encourages its communicative impulse regardless of the form it takes.

RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

This study addresses the changing identity indicated above by addressing the need for a critical framework in illustration and doing so *through* illustration. It is a practice-led investigation that positions illustration as an inductive research process. The key principle of this is removing the known outcome (making an image of a specific thing in a specific way), and emphasising the development of a robust investigative and idea-development process, which is more dependent upon and answerable to the world. It offers a contribution to pedagogy in that regard, arguing both for the growth of diverse skills to ensure there *is* industrial practice (regardless of technological or economic challenges) and for the development of

research undertaken *in* illustration so that it addresses the specificities of practice and is accessible to illustrators.

STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The structure of the study will address these points by using the methods chapter to position illustration as practice-led research by recasting the trajectory of the practical work undertaken in terms of existing and emerging research paradigms and terminology. The methods chapter works in conjunction with the visual timeline of images documenting the research process running along the bottom of each page from the next chapter onwards (larger images are available here: http://s1319.photobucket.com/user/thechopsmaster/slideshow/Images%20in%20sequence. These photographic snapshots document stages within the research process, presented in such a way that the work within the photographs can be evaluated as research process and *not* as a piece of sequential illustration. The latter would have a very different relationship with the main text of the thesis, as discussed therein. The communicative content of the work pictured is not discussed in detail unless it is relevant to how it operates in relation to the themes arising. This study is an investigation of illustration as research, rather than illustration research into a specific topic. This broadens the potential application of the findings. As a consequence, the timeline of images shows the sequence of events and how the issues at the heart of the discussion chapters arose *in response to practical concerns*. This emphasises the unique contribution made by practice, in that it is singular but it is flexible and generative of research paths. This happens in a different order to that forming the structure and links between the discussion chapters, and is included to highlight the accessibility of research practice to other practitioners, and raises the issue of writing as the location of the contribution to knowledge as an objective for future research developments to address. This is specifically relevant to this thesis and its focus on the abilities of visual communication to operate critically and subsequently to make an argument that lies between text and image used in complementary roles. Literature reviews have been allocated to each individual discussion chapter, as appropriate to the necessity of drawing upon diverse sources to address each theme as it arose in turn. The integration of analysis of practical work allows for each chapter to critically engage with its literature review in order to establish how illustration discourse might position itself in relation to the themes emerging.

The ensuing chapters take the methodological approach of this chapter as a starting point, and begin by repositioning 'style' as a methodological concern in order to address the lack of productive discourse surrounding this issue. Here, style is reconceptualised as a generous and positive aspect of illustration, not the limiting professional and conceptual dead end it appears to be in illustration commentary. The chapter then focuses on research *in* art to argue that by adopting inductive research methods the illustrator can maintain openness and generosity towards world *and* viewer. The epistemological and methodological concerns of the illustrator-researcher will be shown to link style and concept within criticism.

Thereafter, by pursuing generosity as a quality of illustration, the impact of the removal of the known outcome upon practise can be examined. To do so I use the concept of the 'gap' to indicate illustration's role as complementary to text, and to make the ensuing ambiguity an audience-oriented feature of communication. By welcoming and manipulating the gap the work becomes sequential and temporal through both practical developments and as it is mirrored in theoretical discussion of the impact of fragmentation on the viewer.

Concerns were raised in theoretical discussion of gaps, with regard to their potential incompatibility with a flourishing industry in light of their application to 'ambient illustration'. These concerns are addressed through the concepts of 'time' and 'space' in the following chapter, presenting gaps in a positive light. Gaps resulting from fragmentation contribute to the complexity of illustration's temporal aspects, and how this is done within practice is explored in relation to artist's books and comics. By relating temporal examples of illustration to Jameson's comments on time as a defining feature of postmodernism, the chapter begins to situate illustration in relation to these broader paradigm shifts. The discussion continues by using the politics of illustration's relationship with the viewer in space to expand upon the shift from postmodern to 'altermodern' using the shared concern with time and audience engagement. Illustration products and practices examined therein strengthen the need for illustration to develop its own discourse in relation to broader shifts in cultural studies, and for it to be considered in these discussions. They result in more elegant solutions to the incorporation of temporal elements, process and social engagement by retaining the product within illustration. Furthermore, the argument comes full circle by suggesting that these performative qualities of illustration products are of use in addressing the frictions mentioned in the methods chapter regarding the ability of practical work to contribute to an argument in the context of academic research.

Therefore, by positioning illustration as research, the process undertaken in the studio has given rise to a collection of relevant ideas that enable me to discuss the complex aspects of illustration, clustered around the unifying concept of time. This discussion has been broadened and disseminated through a series of extended conversations with key practitioners whose practice and critical output relates to the concerns of practice within this study. Further uptake of ideas can be found in the central discussion in abbreviated form of my paper published within VaroomLab's peer-reviewed academic journal in 2012. This generated repeat invitations to lecture and teach on undergraduate and postgraduate courses on both this topic and on the practice-led research demonstrated by the practical element of the study. The journal article has also been incorporated into teaching materials for discussion within the illustration discourse seminars of the MA Authorial Illustration, Falmouth. These are an indication of the study's contribution to the growing discourse surrounding illustration, and its practical application within a higher education and industrial context.

The following discussion will take in the following key terms, as defined here. 'Generosity' is used to reflect the audience-oriented nature of illustration, and is a coupled with 'responsibility' directed outwards towards the world. 'Gaps' refer to gaps in meaning, both semantic and spatial (on the page) and

in terms of the latter can be compared with the gutter in comics. This is where the viewer has to do some work in order to make communication meaningful through their personal contribution. 'Time' arises from 'gaps', in that it is used to described temporal work that operates over time in sequence or series, or has a lifespan that makes time an intrinsic part of how the viewer experiences it. 'Space' refers to the spatial dimensions of work, be they 2d or 3d. The 'constructive' fashion with which this study will explore the issues set out here in the introduction is informed by the constructivist research framework outlined in figure 1 by Gray & Malins (2004) and discussed in the following chapter, and also indicates a desire for this study to contribute to the building of illustration discourse from the practice upwards.

CHAPTER 1: METHODS

This chapter seeks to explore the research methods used within this study by dissecting the activities undertaken in the studio (as represented in the visual timeline running along the bottom of pages) in research terms. As such it operates as a bridge between the practical methods therein and the critical discussion undertaken within the discussion chapters. It examines the processes by which one leads to another with the specific aim of making the methodology explicit. The motivation behind this undertaking is to position illustration practice where the known outcome is removed (and the most appropriate form and concept for the project is adopted) as a form of practice-led research, one that communicates its findings. Whilst doing so I will map research through practice in illustration onto the wider discourse surrounding practice-led research. The aim is not to outline a prescriptive set of methods here, as this would be constricting and not take into account the different requirements of different research projects. Illustration does not have a specific subject matter, and therefore the methods used for investigation will vary from project to project. In this regard I am in agreement with Newbury (2010, p372) and Borgdorff (2010, p46), in that both state their preference for methodological open-mindedness, with Newbury going so far as to label the creative arts researcher "promiscuous" in their methodological borrowing from other disciplines. At this stage in the development of illustration research it is more constructive to make the process accessible in order to show how research into illustration might be grown outwards from practise and draw upon a variety of established research methods. By doing so, research through illustration can be positioned in relation to existing and emerging research paradigms. The outcomes are significant to these other paradigms, in that they are communicative. They may also be of note to those seeking more communicative formats for presenting practice-led doctoral research, and also contribute to the discussion of a broader concept of illustration practice. These processes feed into and run alongside commissioned work in the main, but of wider relevance is my suggestion that they be adopted more enthusiastically within commissioned professional practice.

By starting with scrutiny of practical processes the specificity of the practice-led methodology within this study can be made explicit and communicable. In explaining the requirements of research, Candy & Edmonds state that these processes need to be made clear to those without the tacit understanding of them (other practitioners within a specific field, for example) in order to create sharable research outcomes (Candy & Edmonds 2010, p126). By making the processes within illustration explicit, I aim to

Metaphor. Style // Trial and error. Opportunity (scissors packaging = a mould). Metaphor. Collage // Ideational drawing. Opportunity.

reveal it to be “fundamentally exploratory, involving innovation and risk in ways that are familiar to researchers in the broader community”, a key characteristic of practice that lends itself to research (Candy & Edmonds 2010 p126). By examining my own practice in research terms I hope to support this claim with evidence for those who may be sceptical about the role of practice within research, or the extent to which illustration specifically could operate as research. These may include those who were taught illustration differently (and who may be suspicious of the role of research within practice) through to those in other disciplines with a narrow perception of illustration. The range of methods examined is confined to those used within this study, but take in a range of projects to reflect some of the diversity of activities undertaken by illustrators. These include commissioned, collaborative, self-initiated, and research-oriented projects, primarily using drawing and collage for print, web, moving image and exhibition spaces. The relevance of scrutinising a range of projects lies in its complementary pairing with existing teaching practice that positions illustration as a commission-led industry. When this goes through fallow periods, or changes faster than education can keep pace with, there are other strands of practice to attend to – and a set of skills that enable the illustrator to respond to such changes with enterprising contributions.

The first step in showing these aspects of illustration has been to undertake a review of visual records of the research process and edit these into the visual timeline presented below. The aim of this timeline is to show the research process in its differently organised, frustrating and occasionally unwitting messiness. It can be seen developing in response to the concerns of practice and this is different from the sequential narrative of the developing argument in the chapters that follow. This chapter repositions the process *as research*, and reorganises it into categories relating to the requirements of a research project such as literature review, data collection, analysis, evaluation, and dissemination. By presenting the practical process in this way I hope to make a small nod to Katy MacLeod’s encouraging approach to the complementary roles that practice and writing can play within the submitted documentation of practice-led PhDs. She outlines the holistic approach to writing and practice of ‘type C’ research in MacLeod (2000), wherein the argument lies in the relationship between constituent parts. The constituent parts of this document are the visual timeline of practice, the theoretically-oriented critical discussions within the other chapters, and this chapter on research methods forming a bridge between the other two.

Style: digital & handmade = friction. Sequence // Metaphor. LB influence. 3d // Metaphor. LB influence. 3d

Terminology: practice-led research

The purpose of this methods chapter is to examine how illustration practice operates specifically as practice-led research in art and design. In order to define this we can return to Christopher Frayling's influential 1993 article, which outlines the three categories of research in art and design, namely research for, into and through practice (Frayling 1993, p5). Research *into* art and design involves examining practices in a historical or theoretical sense (research that can be done by other people looking at artistic practices). Research *through* art and design is, for Frayling, a practical, experimental enquiry to develop and define processes (of industrial production, for example) where the results are written up and communicated or exhibited. His final category, research *for* art and design is where the artefact embodies the thinking process and the knowledge contributed is not communicated in the same verbal manner as the previous category. These distinctions form the basis of contemporary discussions of practice-led research, with useful refinements contributed by Borgdorff who reworks Frayling's categories into research on, for, and in the arts. The latter category is "when the research unfolds in and through the acts of creating and performing" and uses the practice as the "methodological vehicle" for the study (Borgdorff 2010, p46). These terms will be adopted hereafter. Borgdorff does not neglect the contribution made by the previous two forms of research, which is particularly relevant to the current requirements for doctoral research to produce a written thesis as per Frayling's research *through,* which articulates the non-linguistic aspect of creative practice that is the focus of research *in* for Borgdorff. As a consequence of this practice-led position, this study needs to take into account the production of illustration to reflect Borgdorff's research *in* art. A variety of critical frameworks already exist for analysing finished work (research *on*) and its relationship to the viewer, and the two need to be balanced.

It is necessary to stand back from the content of the work in order to write a chapter on methodology and draw generalisations in this regard, for as Darren Newbury states "research should not simply be about the application of predefined methods, but should involve the development of methodology itself", (Newbury, 1996 p10). Given the study's focus on illustration as a research process this level of remove persists throughout the discussion of work also, with illustration practise as the object of enquiry.

It is therefore an inquiry into methods of enquiry, and both "*research into"* and *"research through"* practice if we are to use another reinterpretation of Frayling's categories, with both being undertaken to a greater or lesser extent *through* practice (Scrivener 2010, p261). Scrivener's explanation is valuable here

Edwyn Collins, Smithfield Gallery: Timeline. No gaps. Continuity. Sequence. Process. Progress. Style as communicative byproduct.

as his definition of research *through* specifically proposes understanding of art and design itself as the object of enquiry. Therefore the study covers both the reflection-*on*-action and the reflection-*in*-action of Donald Schön's "reflective practitioner" at two different levels (Schön 1983, in Gray & Malins 2004 p22). This is the twofold role that Gray writes of: "the practitioner-researcher does not wear two alternate hats, but one hat which integrates or at least allows difference to co-exist" (Gray 1998, p7). At no point will Scrivener's "*research for"* be discussed, unless the conceptual anchor for the project directs the discussion of research methods. As Scrivener points out, this aspect of arts-based research "is not required to yield new knowledge and understanding … [it] does not satisfy the goal condition of academic and professional research."

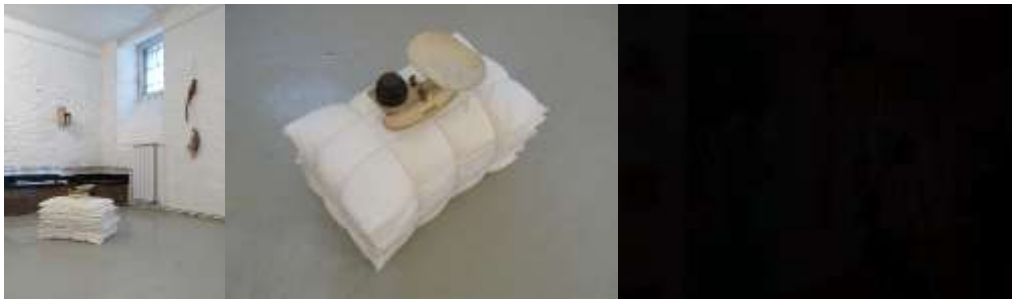
With regard to the most appropriate term available to describe this research *in* practice, Carole Gray's definition of practice-led research is succinct:

> research which is initiated in practice, where questions, problems, challenges are identified and formed by the needs of practice and practitioners; and secondly, that the research strategy is carried out through practice, using predominantly methodologies and specific methods familiar to us as practitioners in the visual arts. (Gray, 1998, p3)

This definition is declared still fit for purpose within recent discussions of how practice-led research is developing such as Haseman's performative paradigm for creative research (Haseman 2007, p147). Firstly, the distinction between practice-based research and practice-led research is of use to this chapter in order to describe the different roles taken by practice within one enquiry. This study has utilised an alternately practice-based and practice-led methodology, to draw on Linda Candy's 2006 distinction between the two where the former results in practical outcomes and the latter's contribution is presented in written form (Candy 2006, pp18-19). Employing both forms within the study mirrors the differing demands of combined research on and research in the arts (as shown in figure 2), and the study's twofold outcome in the form of steps towards a critical framework of use to making and evaluating illustration, and practical methods relating to this.

Illustration research in relation to existing research paradigms

In order to explore what illustration research might be I will explore the practitioner's position as a researcher within broader research paradigms. The two major traditions are summarised briefly by Rudestam & Newton (1992) as quantitative and qualitative research, differentiated by their



Spaces. Objects. Scale. 3d. Gallery // Smell. Communicative material //Design Museum Alan Aldridge. Context. Gallery = new context. Environment. Experience.

epistemological approaches. They define quantitative research as objectivist, in that knowledge must be verified by corresponding to the real world, and research takes the form of hypothesis tested using empirical research methods. This is not what this methods chapter is about, for the process described here overlaps with qualitative research as Rudestam & Newton summarise it. Therefore it is "constructivist", with knowledge being constructed rather than discovered: "the researcher maintains an open curiosity about a phenomenon and the theory emerges from the data; there is no one true reality on which to validate our theories deductively" (Rudestam & Newton 1992, p47). The research approach used here is inductive in this regard, which Collins (2010, 43) explains is usually focused on understanding the context within which the phenomenon of interest sits, and is open to a variety of explanations for it (whereas a deductive approach starts from such an assumption and looks to establish a cause-and-effect relationship). They align inductive research with a small sample size, qualitative data, and a range of methods to interrogate it in order to arrive at a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. [1] This reflects the design of this project, which seeks to explore one practice in depth in order to identify the methods used and a conceptual framework to interrogate it. In that it responds to the data continually emerging, the study can be more flexible in its evolution. This approach acknowledges the role played by practice in directing the course of the research, with methodology being emergent and responsive accordingly, as described by Barrett (2007a, p6).

Gray & Malins (2004), Haseman (2006, 2007) and Bolt (2008) position practice-led research in the arts as a separate paradigm, with its own methodological, epistemological and ontological concerns. However, whilst Haseman is of the opinion that the practitioner-researcher need not rely upon the tools and terminology of research methods borrowed from more established research approaches, it is useful here to point out the links between qualitative traditions and the specificities of learning through practice. It cannot be assumed that illustration research will fall into the performative paradigm, nor should the "methodological pluralism" recommended earlier be curtailed by overly didactic definitions at this early stage in the field's development. Therefore I will employ existing research methods terminology to describe the methods adopted in this study, which will enable me to begin to position research in illustration in relation to existing research paradigms. There may also be different strands of illustration practice aligned with different research approaches. Defining these may help to map parts of the field with greater subtlety – rather than having illustration seen as children's books or advertising. The aim here is to ask questions of illustration to establish how it operates as research, and more broadly to

Photocopier mistake: Parameters for failure // Quiet. Style = characterises. Leonard Baskin & Ted Hughes // Scott McCloud. Structure. Layout. Colour? // Raoul Hausmann. Style: uncompromising. Impolite.

contribute to the definition of the artistic paradigm in order for that to reflect a variety of practices. To do so I'll be drawing upon the following chart from Gray & Malins (2004):

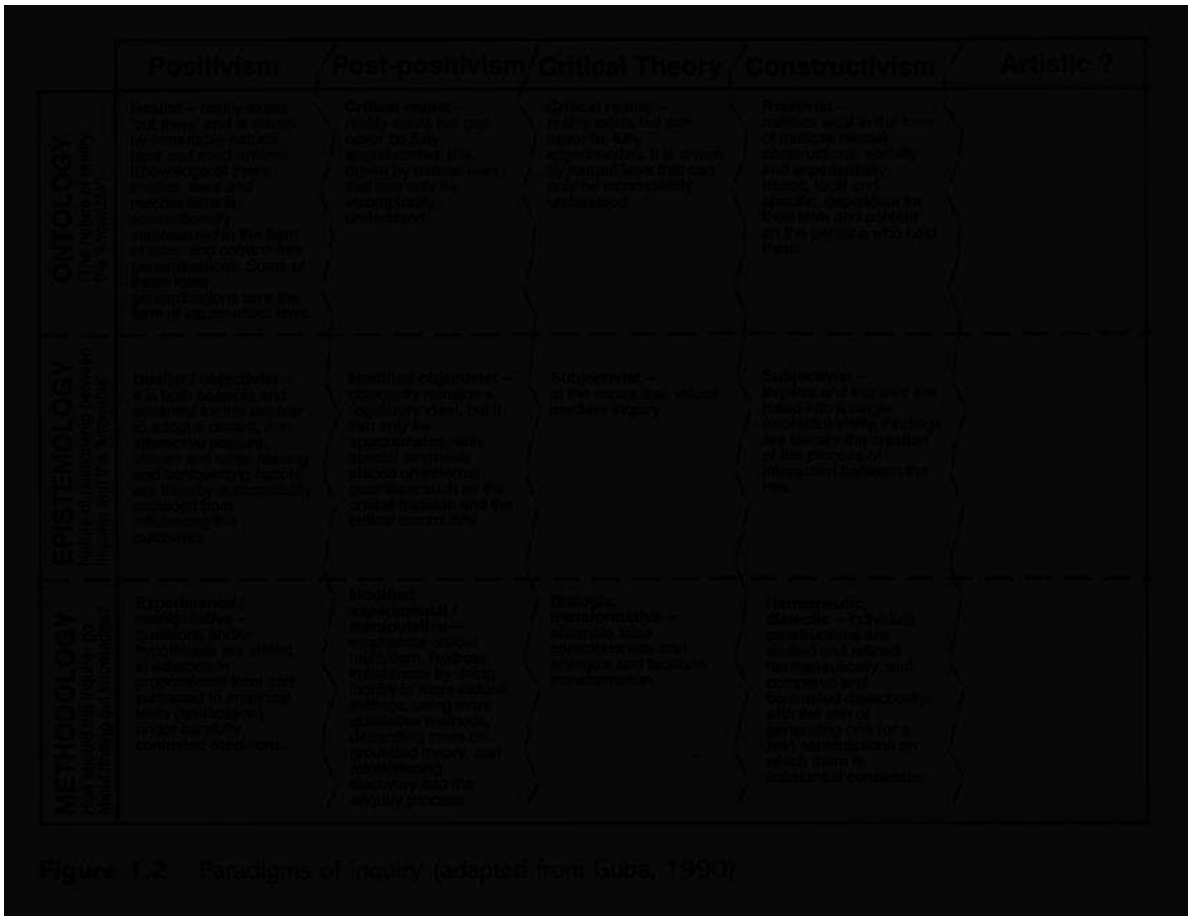


Figure 1 Research paradigms from Gray & Malins (2004, p20)

Illustration research is relatively new and still developing, in the UK conferences and academic journals devoted to peer-reviewed papers have arisen since the start of the study in 2008. Therefore this is an appropriate time to be exploring what illustration research might be and equipping ourselves with the tools to do so. It also means that we don't have a great deal of guidance in the form of appropriate research methodologies, or discussion of ontology and epistemology with regard to illustration. Questions arising from considering this table in relation to illustration research include consideration of the researcher's relationship to the world, how they go about investigating it, and their audience's relationship to the research materials produced. How their work negotiates this reveals underlying

Dynamics. Sequence. Style: handmade shadows = coherent // Metaphor. How to slow down time? // Method = meaningful. Light + shadow. Sequence.

assumptions about these issues. Therefore the endeavour I will be undertaking begins largely with practical methods, in line with Bolt's emphasis on research through practice giving rise to a different mode of thinking and different theoretical insights to the "self-conscious theorization" of ideas applied to practice (Bolt, 2006). In research this could result in applying a paradigmatic lens that we agree with, rather than scrutinising practice to establish what goes on in an artistic paradigm. At any rate these methods do not consciously follow paradigmatic lines, for all of the above reasons. They follow Denzin & Lincoln's description of the methodological 'bricoleur', in that crossing the boundaries of research paradigms with differing worldviews occurs unwittingly (and often unproblematically) in the main as part of the "poetic making-do" borrowed from Michel de Certeau and applied to methodology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p4&6). Such questions ought to be resolved within practice as ethical issues concerning the role of the researcher (which are specific to the topic of enquiry and the illustrator-researcher's situation), rather than be dictated at paradigmatic level and adhered to as strict methodology.

Research traditions and their relationship to writing

Haseman's performative paradigm places the emphasis on the practical outcomes as the appropriate language to convey the knowledge gained within and through practice, and suggests that the words and numbers of qualitative and quantitative traditions will therefore lose some of this knowledge in the translation between modes (Haseman 2007, p148). By retaining the visual timeline and focusing on the processes of practice in the first instance, some of these concerns within the practice may make their way through to the written exegesis in the form of a dissection of research methods. For example, by scrutinising methods the question of ethics in the relationship between illustrator, object of enquiry and viewer emerges.[2] This will be discussed in greater depth in the following chapter.

The relationship between practical knowledge and written language used to express it within the requirements of a PhD is also discussed by MacLeod (2000), Bolt (2007, p31), Smith & Dean (2009, p7), Newbury (2010, p375 & p383-4). Niedderer & Roworth-Stokes (2007, p2 & 12) suggest that research through practice can offer experiential, tacit knowledge that "conventional research" neglects, as the latter is blinkered by its focus on propositional knowledge and the fact that it is limited by language. But it would be too simplistic to adopt their narrow definition of "conventional research" as a call for practice to operate in the same way as the written thesis and replace it as the location of the argument. Instead it

Layers. Retaining mistakes = texture. Line. Visual correspondence. Metaphor // LB tools as metaphor. Maintaining a practice. Complementary text and image //Inductive process = ideational drawing. Searching for a conceptual anchor. 2d/3d switch

would be pertinent for illustration (particularly at this point in the development of practice-led PhDs) to incorporate visual work within the thesis in a manner that offers both the performative approach of Haseman as well as the traditional written thesis which is more widely accessible to those who aren't confident in their visual literacy. This suggestion is informed by Katy MacLeod who, in defining three different approaches to practice-led research, gives the example of a PhD submission that employed practical work and writing in a complementary relationship. She states that: "in type C it [the written text] is instrumental and complementary to the artwork submission but the artwork here *is* the thesis; it provides the theoretical proposition" (MacLeod 2000). In this sense the constituent parts of the submission constitute an argument by contributing their own role. It is specifically the PhD exegesis (in what could be a transition period between qualitative and artistic research paradigms) that stands to benefit from the more open approach to image/text relationships as suggested in MacLeod's example and explored in the discussion chapters. This written thesis, in that regard, could use images within the writing to produce the 'gaps' and temporal tricks that it writes of. Instead it shows (by way of the visual timeline) that the practice can dictate the course of the research and therefore the development of the argument. It is precisely these, what Borgdorff describes as those "pre-reflective artistic actions", that are the territory to be communicated by and through images, as he states they "embody knowledge in a form that is not directly accessible for justification" (Borgdoff 2010, p46).

Writing as the location of the thesis

The current academic requirement is for a written thesis, and this communicates the contribution to knowledge rather than the practice. The relationship between the two modes of conveying the thesis has been debated widely, with the balanced conclusion from Newbury (2010) and Bolt (2007) being that the artistic artefact cannot operate alone in doing so. This is a reasonable position to adopt in relation to this study, in that the findings must communicate clearly to an audience that includes those who view the purpose of illustration differently. The written element makes the role of illustration *as* research apparent to this segment of the audience and beyond. Therefore this document doesn't operate in the way that I'm arguing illustration should, specifically in terms of the relationship between illustration and words within the written thesis. Illustration is persuasive and ought to be entrusted with some of the task of making an argument within a doctoral thesis, and it can also (as seen in the chapters related to time) *do* as well as *tell* in paper-based combinations of words and pictures. In the case of the work discussed, the opportunity

Style: failure // Style: quiet // Style: line + colour // Work through materials. Collage. Ideational collage. Anachronisms.

exists to address Haseman's argument that the visual work produced in practice-led research ought to argue the thesis. The tools to (re)present temporal aspects of illustration installed in three-dimensional space can be found in artist's books and comics with forms and materials that manipulate the reader's experience of time. It is important to recognise that this is not the same as saying that the practical work produced during the research *necessarily* embodies the argument. It is instead suggesting that the skills to do so have been identified and could be put to use in creating a new outcome that negotiates a performative relationship between the work produced and the written text. This thesis recognises the productive relationship between image and text in a practice-led enquiry, but there are moments within the process where Bolt's "self-conscious theorization" occurs, especially at the point of literature review.

THE RESEARCH PROCESS: OVERVIEW

The following diagram shows the journey taken by the research, the 'story' of the project. Decisions made within the project that governed its development have been represented diagrammatically, having distilled them from the practical journey in the visual timeline. These decisions alternate between being informed by the logic of theoretical perspectives and the needs of practice. In this regard it represents the strand of practice-led research termed "type C" research by MacLeod (2000). Whereas Candy (2006, p-18-19) is more uncompromising in her division of research into practice-led and practice-based as reflected in the location of the thesis, MacLeod accurately describes the oscillation between practice and theory within one enquiry, and the trajectory is informed by alternating practical and theoretical concerns. She uses the term "seesawing" to represent this relationship, and notes that it retains its momentum throughout the project:

> Thus, the written text was instrumental to the conception of the art projects but the art projects themselves exacted a radical rethinking of what had been constructed in written form because the process of realising or making artwork altered what had been defined in written form. (MacLeod 2000)

The diagram in figure 2 shows specific examples of where the relationship between theory and practice changed to encompass the variety of permutations discussed above, indicating the balance of practice-led and practice-based phases as defined by Candy (2006) *within* MacLeod's summary of "type C" research.

Style: line + colour + texture // Arts Trail 2009. Space + narrative. Gaps // Playful use of space. Human scale. Sequence + space // 2d/3d switch. Materials.

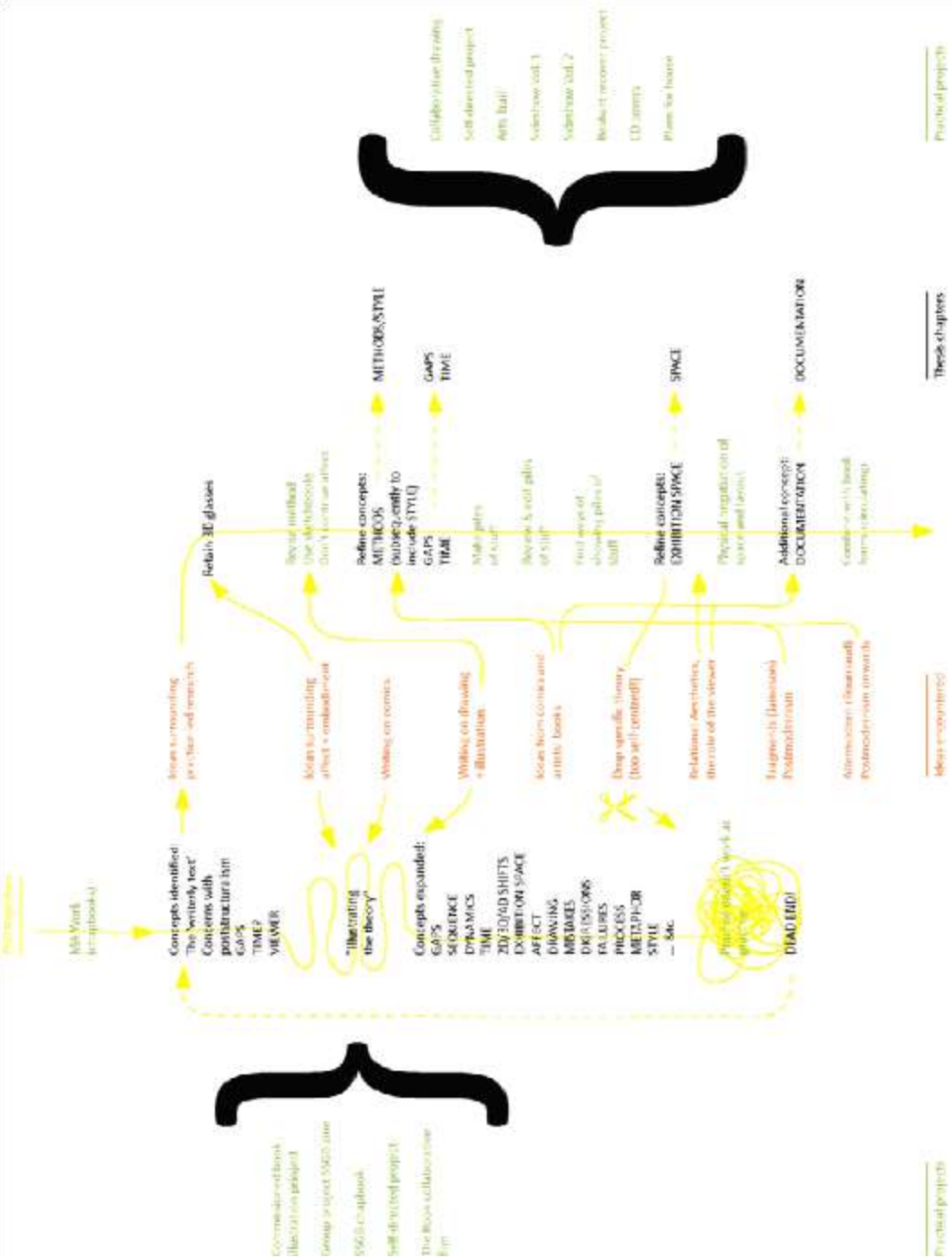
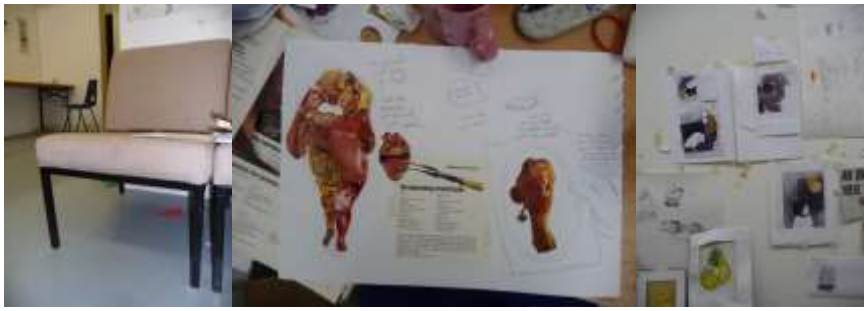


Figure 2 Diagram of the research process



Opportunity. Ideational fart. 3d idea // Materials informing ideas // Style: overprinting layers = line + colour

The yellow line running through the diagram shows the direction of the project's development, taking in practical breakthroughs and concerns (in green) and ideas brought into the project. Moments of reflection and refinement can be seen in black type, with upper case terms being the key concepts emerging. Within each engagement with theory there exists an incident of the iterative cyclic web of practice-led research or research-led practice as diagrammatised by Smith & Dean (2009 p20), therefore the process is more responsive than the simplified unidirectional arrows in figure 2 would suggest. Ideas encountered fed into the first stage of the research, in which the practice was used as a tool to explore them. This resulted in a number of practical failures, but the lessons learned from doing so were carried over into the next stage of the study to inform the reinvention of practical methods. At this stage the contemporary discourse surrounding practice-led research was revisited in order to re-establish the role of practice within the research process. I was feeling the pressure of using the relationships between these concepts to structure and guide the argument within exploratory writing towards the written thesis.[3]

However, the second stage of the research is led by the practice to a greater extent, and by responding to the demands of theory *and* practice in alternate stages, and by thinking through practice, the key concepts were arrived at. These became the eventual categories around which the discussion chapters are organised, but in order to build an argument in the traditional academic sense the links between them have been recast in terms of the logic of the ideas they draw upon.

The methods used to facilitate this trajectory are explored in greater depth in the following sections.

THE RESEARCH PROCESS: LITERATURE REVIEW

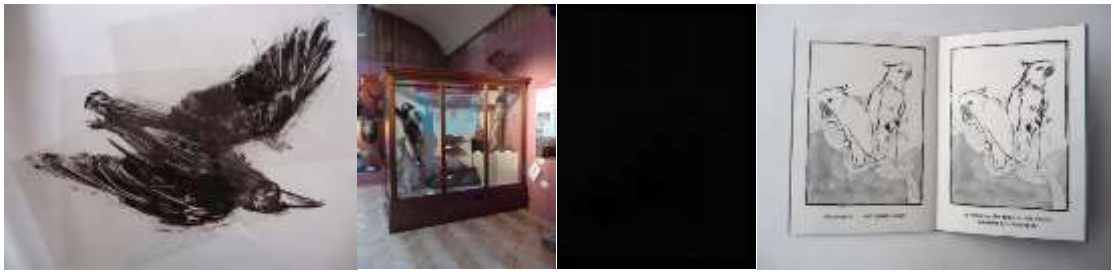
This is an ongoing process, not solely something undertaken at the beginning of this study. As the project moves through the different thematic concerns (such as gaps, time, space), new areas of study are revealed and tackled. Surveying what is already out there and relevant to this study takes place in relation to both written and visual work, and through writing and making. The review process outlined on the following page may be an example of *how* Haseman's "artistic audit" can be conducted through practice (Haseman 2006, p105). He proposes this audit occurs within the scope of a practitioner-researcher's literature review and emphasises the importance of reviewing the field of practice the practitioner-researcher is working within. The audit takes into account the context for the work and the "symbolic content" of it, drawing upon knowledge of the traditions of that form of practice to do so. Whilst Haseman

Idea = 3d. Trial and error. Working through materials.

does not specify *how* the audit be conducted in illustration research the prospect of drawing upon practical (tacit) knowledge to tackle the last point is intriguing, for it broadens the field of relevant work. There is limited variety within work already labelled as illustration, which corresponds with the phenomenon of illustrators labelling their complex and varied practice their "fine art practice". So, to encompass this varied work the audit would need to reference practices from other fields with *methods* that overlap with the practitioner-researcher's, rather than belonging to the same category of searchable key words concerning the work's subject matter, for example.[4]

Therefore the results of a literature review in practice-led research may be visual *and* written, for the sketchbook can critically appraise the relevance of other practices and ideas as thoroughly as a written dissection. The difference lies in what the researcher is asking of the work – their choice and attention to the item being reviewed may be governed by its utility in providing practical advice, as much as they may choose a book chapter for its relevance to a key theme within the study. The variety of these relationships will be outlined here, with the emphasis being on the exploration of sources through practice as this is an aspect of literature review not already covered in depth in the numerous published sources concerning qualitative research.

This exploratory approach, and the fact that it often takes place in the less-public thinking space of the sketchbook is key to viewing these images. They are not finished pieces of work to be evaluated as such, they are records of adventures which sometimes end in disaster. For this reason the visual timeline uses informal photographic records of practical work, rather than presenting them as print-ready artwork on the page, as the latter could be mistaken for illustration (which has a different relationship to the text). At times the review process can be thoroughly uncomfortable, for although Estelle Barrett states that it is easy to lose track of the primacy of practice during the literature review (in that practice shouldn't illustrate theory[5]), I would argue that a small element of this can be productive in order to identify useful lessons within the work being examined (Barrett 2007c, p190).



Rook film: motion. Sequence // Space. Human scale // Style. Variety. Quiet // Style = quiet. Sequence. Stutter.

Practice reviewing practice: for practice

Figure 3 Louise Bourgeois

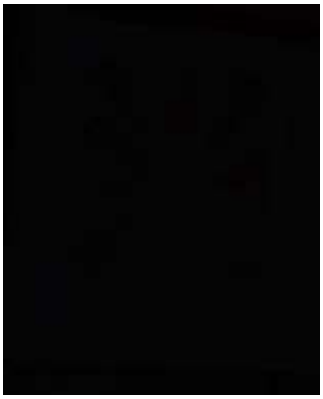


Figure 4 Louise Bourgeois

Figure 5 Stephanie Black Sketchbook #1 pages

An example of where someone else's practice is reviewed through my own can be found in the exploratory drawings made for a book illustration commission. At this stage the visual voice used to tell the story was evolving. One of the practitioners reviewed (Louise Bourgeois) was selected for their opaque, personally symbolic approach to imagery and use of line – both of which would be useful for a metaphorical story to be printed in black and white. This example was already familiar, whereas in the interests of rigour browsing and journal searches using keywords will unearth practitioners outside the known field of reference.

To analyse the methods used within someone else's making process it may be necessary to put your own work into too close a relationship with theirs, and this is where it can look like plagiarism. For example, copying or mimicking parts of their work in order to understand how it is made may be useful initially, as can be seen in figure 5's adoption of repetitive linear patterns and metaphorical objects from figures 3 and 4. The benefits of doing so are that you can draw upon reserves of tacit knowledge and a process of trial and error to unravel the steps taken to produce a specific piece of work. Bolt (2004 & 2006) and Barrett (2007a) and Bolt (2007) offer a concise argument for the importance of recognising and using embodied knowledge within creative arts research, drawing upon Heidegger, Bourdieu and Hockney in particular to make their case for recognition of what Bolt calls "praxical knowledge". Whilst you may never reach the method used by the other practitioner, the methods explored will have challenged and expanded your own. Figure 5 shows the stage at which the methods of another practitioner are being tried on for size, and used in various ways in order to find possible applications within the project at hand. This last stage

Tone of voice failure. Pathos>bathos // Historical events reinterpreted. Characterisation. Emotion // Source material

has not yet happened though, and the trials sit awkwardly within my practice as they are in the process of being evaluated and have not yet been assimilated by losing enough of their original references and gaining enough of mine. Moving on from copying the other practitioner's methods is necessary, and needs to move towards using only select lessons that are of use in tackling the aims of your own project.

Practice reviewing practice: leading into theory

Getting uncomfortably close to the materials being evaluated within a literature review can also be productive in other ways, once the initial squeamishness at the results is overcome. The process can also indicate areas for further study (a particular sliver of theoretical, historical or practical discourse for example) and be used within explorations of these. The chapter concerned with style arose from studio practice as an issue, as a result of evaluating the visual languages used in different projects against each other and against those available within illustration. The latter proved limiting for the content I was dealing with, and visual work outside illustration proved more varied in tone of voice. This coincided with its emergence within reading concerned with aesthetics (although the latter was approached for a different reason), which was complemented by sources from within illustration commentary. The studio work provided the practical tools by which to explore the issue, beginning with tackling Steven Heller's statement that "style is a voice but it is not an intelligence" as a binary opposition of appearance and subject matter in order to pull it apart and examine it (Heller & Arisman 2000, pxix). I approached this by trying to remove the politeness of style that permeates contemporary illustration and swapping it for varied image-making methods influenced by other artists. The aim was to produce materials that did not look like illustration to encourage reflection upon the role of style and how it might be understood differently as a concept of use within communication.

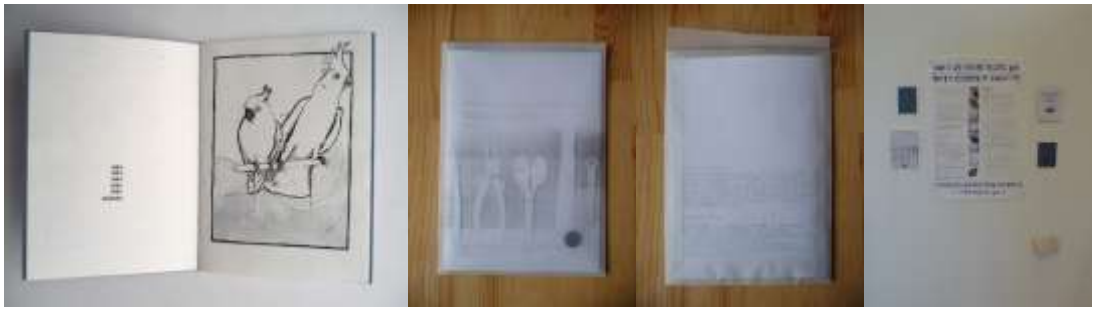
Return to source material for anchor. Creates new gaps. Re-cut sequence to 4 panels for A5 zine. Flexible units.

Figure 6 Stephanie Black Studio walls inc. Raoul Hausmann

Figure 7 Stephanie Black Studio walls inc. Marlene Dumas

Figures 6 and 7 show the studio walls during the review process as outlined in the previous section. Adopted picture-making methods came from Raoul Hausmann and Marlene Dumas images, with the results of adapting these for use within my own project seen surrounding them. Physical proximity such as this enables cross-referencing of methods to take place between the source material and my interpretations/adaptations. This constitutes an evaluative phase, and reveals the criticality of the process in its interrogation and evaluation of methods' transferability. The criteria used to evaluate work produced as part of a 'literature review' in this way will vary from project to project and be different for each practitioner and their relationship to the research paradigms outlined in figure 1. Here the evaluation takes place in relation to the project at hand – this is a feature of illustration's 'aboutness' that solely formalist work might not be concerned with. In other words, do the images do their job in relation to the subject matter? The relationship between my images and the other practitioner's work is not relevant (further to avoiding plagiarism), as they will not be presented together or have any meaningful dialogue outside an examination of methods.

Evaluating the resulting drawings as research process rather than practical outcome may change their status, with some of the work in figure 6 downright catastrophic as illustration but as research it takes risks and is experimental in a way that critically reflects upon the issue of style and associated ideas in circulation in the research at that point. The exercise also reasserts the importance of both the subject matter and the recipient; features that need to be addressed by any ideas that may be brought in to



A6 chapbook version = longer sequence. Slower. Complementary text + image // Problem at the printers solved = added value! // Regroup, refocus. Evaluate critical frameworks. Poster presentation: Impact conference.

critique and make illustration. These need to attend to both the production *and* reception of illustration in order to fully reflect the relationship between illustrator and world *and* viewer and work that makes it communication.

Practice reviewing theory

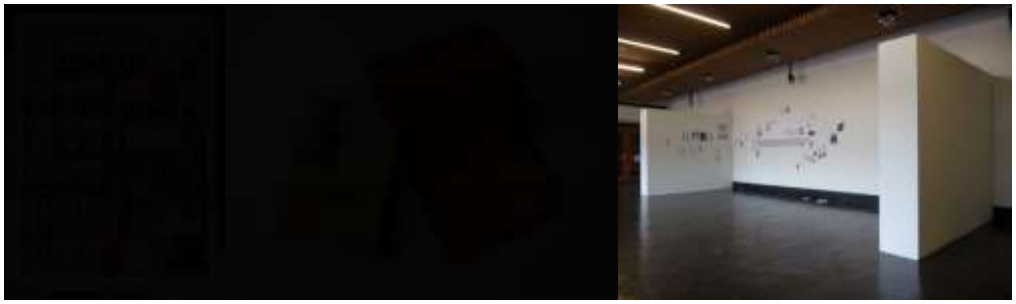
This is the process of using your practice and its specific concerns as the lens through which to look at external ideas. The critical operations within practical process are here put to use reviewing ideas, both directly and indirectly. The latter occurs on the back of envelopes when an idea helps to generate a practical solution to a problem by thinking about something else, which shakes up the problem and allows it to be viewed from a different angle. A direct review of ideas by practice can occur as a result of proximity to the practice but without an obvious practical application being available. For example, such a gap between ideas and practical applications arose in relation to the role of the audience for illustration, whether their increased participation or contribution would facilitate communication. A *very* loosely experimental scenario was devised to explore this, in the form of a task that visitors to my stall at an artist-run art fair could partake of if they wished. This was a minor intervention within a naturalistic setting and doesn't quite merit the term 'hypothesis-testing', but it is one of the tasks within the research process where the parameters and purpose was set prior to commencing. The studio process is more responsive to developments, and reminiscent of the action research cycle where the learning phase involves ongoing reflection, refinement, and further implementation (described more fully by Rudestam & Newton 1992, p49-51).

By extending the review process to comparing the work of *other* people with the materials encountered in these examples, the practitioner-researcher can triangulate their findings to some extent. This enables them to reflect on the relationship between their findings and the wider field.

GENERATING AND ANALYSING DATA

Practice, practitioner, world, audience: research methods

The relationships between the paradigms and approaches outlined previously and illustration practise can be established through reflecting upon how my practical processes deal with the task of investigating the world, producing work and showing this to an audience. The following research methods can be detected in adapted forms within the process:



Spiegelman: Layout + time // Russell Mills: materials + methods // Progression exam 2009. Gaps. Research v. practice?

Fieldwork

The methods discussed here include observation and autoethnography. Drawing trips to museums, musical performances and a residential trip to Dartmoor all constitute fieldwork undertaken as a naturalistic enquiry, but within this study the observer is not at all detached in the way that ethnographic enquiry traditionally would be according to Rudestam & Newton (1992, p42). This may be a reflection of the shift described by Guba & Lincoln (2005, p204-5) from the positivist notion of an objective reality towards a more postmodern understanding of the socially constructed and fluid nature of reality. More recent research methods texts have responded to and overtaken Rudestam & Newton's summary of ethnographic fieldwork in the same way that the emphasis of observational drawing within modernist teaching in art schools has evolved in response to postmodernism.

Participant observation as described by Allison et al (1996, p20) better describes my role as a researcher investigating my activities as a practitioner-researcher, for this encompasses the active role played in practice-led research and acknowledges the impact of attitudes, assumptions and interests that are singular to the individual undertaking the work observed.

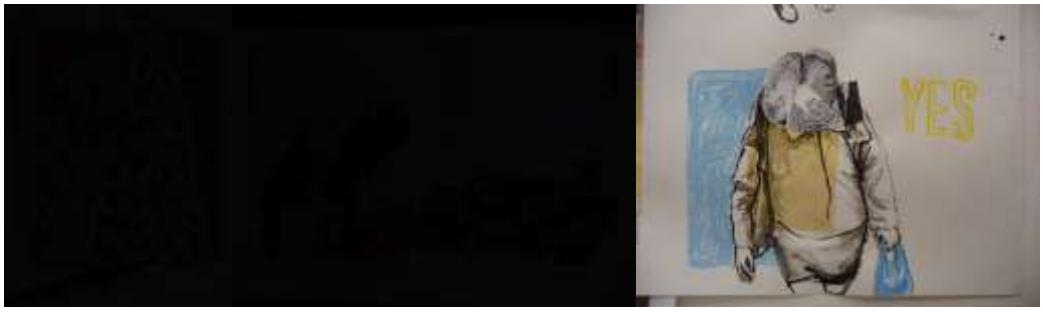
Analytic autoethnography

To address the dual nature of this enquiry that occurs as a result of the study being largely based on one person's practice, borrowing the term 'analytic autoethnography' (Anderson 2006) has enabled reflection upon my meta-level role as a researcher of my own research-through-practice. With reference to Schutz (1962), Anderson outlines the twofold requirement that the autoethnographer attends to both their "practically-oriented first order constructs or interpretations" such as my operating as an illustrator-researcher, "and the more abstract, transcontextual, second-order constructs of social science analysis" represented here by this chapter and its focus on transferable methods, and also by the broader view of critical frameworks derived from concerns within practice as found in the discussion chapters (Anderson 2006, p381). Therefore the contribution to knowledge in this instance, as required by PhD guidelines, would not be forthcoming if the study were to focus on first order constructs alone. That said, Anderson acknowledges the confusion and conflicting demands of participation required of the researcher (given that they must maintain their critical observation of their participation) by referring to Adler & Adler (1987, 70) who describe the nature of fieldwork as "near[ly] schizophrenic in its frenzied multiple focus".

Style = function of embodiment. Failure // Gaps. Editing. Sequence // Noisy process language (Neasden Control Centre). Space.

Whilst illustration should be personal, it should also be informed and aware of its role. Personal doesn't necessarily mean autobiographical. Anderson writes unfavourably of the usefulness of observations drawn from experience without this level of critical reflection and theorisation, using the term 'evocative autoethnography' to describe the practise. He argues for the experience of the researcher to inform, direct and be visible within the research process and documents produced, but not to lapse into solipsism and lack of attention to the broader issues that arise from the research (those tackled above the timeline). A field trip to Dartmoor exemplifies this problem, in that the activity didn't allow for a variety of methods to be employed in investigating the place other than immediate sensory perception, leading to a shallow understanding of the place and work that responded in kind. My observations noted after this experience were mainly focused on how the activity raised awareness of the researcher's experience and response to the task, at the expense of awareness of the world. This requires time and immersion, not skimming across the surface with blinkers on. The activity raised concerns about the appropriateness of practical methods that are directed inwardly (such as evocative autoethnography) to produce illustration that tries to operate outwardly in its attempt to consider both subject matter and audience. Illustration should encompass evocative and emotive work, but directed towards the object of enquiry and not the illustrator.

The emphasis on the experience of the researcher within evocative autoethnography can be pursued further to evaluate the relevance of other research approaches to illustration that share this focus. The phenomenological approach within qualitative research as described by Rudestam & Newton is also rooted in lived experience, but differs from the Dartmoor workshop in that the outcome aimed for is a description as close as possible to the experience (Rudestam & Newton 1992, p38). Where practice-led research interprets existing approaches for application within creative arts practice the method's purpose within that field may be lost, and it be put to use investigating a different relationship between researcher and world. Rudestam & Newton's description of phenomenological methods (such as extended conversations or interviews to investigate human phenomena as they are experienced) suggests the experience isn't solely that of the researcher, it requires participants who have experienced a certain phenomenon. However, when such an approach is translated into artistic research the participants in the study may be replaced by a phenomenon much closer to the researcher which then positions *their* experience the object of study. And with the example of the Dartmoor workshop this can be limited and superficial. The solution might be immersion within the subject over time, such as prolonged projects,



Space. Materials. Scale. Motion // NCC Style: messy. Out of context // Style: messy. Line + colour + collage

thereby making the researcher *part of the phenomenon,* which then closes the gap between their experience and the phenomenon and makes their account of their experience a partial account of the phenomenon.

The practical methods used to adapt these research methods for use within creative arts research include photography, collecting found objects, drawing and making three-dimensional work with found materials. The role of photography varies from project to project. It can be seen operating as documentation to be referred to or reprocessed later (a photograph of carved typography, or an image found during contextual research, for example), or as documentation as final outcome (such as a photograph of a site-specific or temporal piece of work).

Illustration research needs to consider fieldwork in whatever form necessary to ensure that the link between illustrator and world isn't overlooked. It would be detrimental to build a critical framework around work produced to commission under strict time constraints that therefore relied upon existing representations from internet image-searches. There is limited scope for introducing new metaphors into our visual environment and responding to the world as it changes if this practice is encouraged to the exclusion of observational work. The outcomes would become ever more homogenised and hackneyed. Furthermore, it is beneficial for illustration research to reflect upon the nature of 'data' collected through fieldwork and how it is used subsequently, for it reveals the singular approach of each illustrator to ontological and epistemological issues. This may help to define strands of illustration by seeing them as commensurate with different understandings of the nature of the world 'out there'. How illustrators respond to the world through their drawing and image making, and how they present findings is dependent upon their understanding of the world, and their responsibility to it. The issue of responsibility is particularly relevant to a constructivist research paradigm, for it positions the illustrator as an active participant in the construction of our understanding of the world through representations.

Reflective practice

Materials amassed during fieldwork require further sorting and reprocessing in the studio. Practical strategies employed within the studio include Donald Schön's reflective practice and aspects of action research. These were discussed in relation to the literature review, and occur again in later stages of project development but with a different aim. This time the object of enquiry is not other people's work in

Photocopied clothing. References. Continuity. Fragments // Arisman. Style: aggressive // Style: deliberately unpolished

an evaluation of methods, it is the subject matter of the work; the 'aboutness' of the project. This results in different criteria being applied to the work in progress as it develops.

Gray & Malins (2004, p22-3) and Haseman (2007, 152-3) both explore Schön's ideas in relation to practice-led research, with the former quoting Schön to describe the design process as a "reflective conversation with the materials of the situation". This adequately describes the trials, reviews and adjustments seen on the studio walls where images are organized, compared, adjusted and sometimes discarded in the ongoing negotiation of aims, methods and outcomes. The use of wall space to review ongoing projects relates to Haseman's exploration of Schön's 'reflective practice' within practice-led PhDs. It provides the opportunity to make clear underlying assumptions of the practitioner that go largely unquestioned in daily practice (especially if they remain hidden in sketchbooks). For these can become stifling and lead to repetitive work (Schön's term for this is "overlearning"). The key point in relation to practice-led research is the possibility this affords for stepping outside the application of established methods and into unknown territory.[6]

Reflective practice is therefore the bridge between practice and research-through-practice. It encourages the translation of tacit understanding into the explicit and transferable, and in doing so Schön states that reflective practice enables the practitioner to "make new sense of situations of uncertainty or uniqueness which he may allow himself to experience" (Schön 1983, p61 in Haseman 2007, p153)[7]. The ongoing review and adjustment of work in progress is described by Haseman in terms of the enquiry cycle borrowed from action research that facilitates self-reflection and development in its cyclical stages of planning, action, observing, reflecting, replanning, and so on (Haseman, 2007, p142).

Sketchbooks

The sketchbook is the source of most of the images adorning the studio walls, and is also listed by Gray & Malins (2004, p111) as a practical method validated by previously completed PhDs. It is of note here due to the visual nature of the thinking it encourages. It provides a useful tool to encourage stepping into areas of uncertainty or uniqueness, largely because it is semi-private and fosters experimental or unplanned activity that may lead outside the entrenched behaviour noted by Schön. This is the "ideational drawing" that Terry Rosenberg writes of. He describes it as a "thinking space – not a space in which thought is re-presented but rather a space where thinking is presenced". These drawings are the detours in subject matter and method that emerge from flights of fancy within the sketchbook, and also the visual

Exploring conceptual anchors. Multi-modal possibilities // Style: bleak // Style: fraught // Accidental composition. Fragmentation.

exploration of possibilities (for compositions, or three-dimensional works, for example) that occupy a problem-solving role. Rosenberg characterises this approach to drawing as: “where one thinks with and through drawing to make discoveries, find new possibilities that give course to ideas and help fashion their eventual form” (Rosenberg 2008, p109). So this is drawing that is generative of ideas, rather than transcribing existing ones. Worksheets also operate in this manner, and both are interchangeable in that they both keep a record of the thinking and making process. The reflective journal (also on Gray & Malins’ list, 2004 p113) offers a similar informal and exploratory space that facilitates reflection-on-action and a record of the project’s trajectory. Gray & Malins refer to it as “a much more structured and deliberate research method” than the sketchbook, and although this overlooks the variety of exercises that go on in my sketchbooks their description of the journal as a growing archive that will be consulted regularly is appropriate. Considering the earlier discussion of the cycle of reflection and adjustment that my sketchbook work undergoes, their description of the reflective journal could certainly be stretched to accommodate sketchbooks.

Conversations

To expand the discussion of methods and concepts relevant to illustration practices a series of extended conversations with selected practitioners were planned. These were undertaken towards the end of the research project, once themes had been identified within the work and within writing specific to and external to illustration. The aim of these semi-structured interviews was not to identify areas for further study, but to discuss, refine and circulate some of these developing themes. Participants were selected on the basis that their practice overlapped with the concerns of the thesis, such as time-based and/or sequential forms, work that leaves room for the viewer to create interpretations, use of spaces and three-dimensional forms, and interaction with the viewer-as-participant in some form. These discussions were intended to be a collaborative affair, with both parties contributing to the conversation as it developed. A short list of prompts helped to facilitate conversation and to ensure that issues of relevance to the developing thesis weren’t neglected. The conversations were between 1.5 and 3 hours long, and at least 30 minutes of each was spent developing a rapport with the participants in order to convince them that this was intended to be an in-depth discussion that warranted their time. The level on which the conversations developed was different in each case, with all participants being generous with their time, effort and goodwill.

Conceptual anchor self-referential. Allegory // Solidfying speech. 2d/3d switch // Identifying themes. Dumas influence

Objectivity and detachment were neither the aim nor a possibility for the conversations, which is echoed by Fontana & Frey's point that a positivist approach to the research interview is increasingly implausible (2005, p696). Rather, in their description of 'Empathetic Interviewing', they draw upon a range of previous studies to argue that "two (or more) people are involved in this process, and their exchanges lead to the creation of a collaborative effort called *the interview*. The key here is the 'active' nature of this process […] that leads to a contextually bound and mutually created story – the interview." The jointly-constructed outcome (the conversation) then acknowledges the bias that the researcher brings into the situation, and the quotes extracted from the interview recordings then contribute to different sections of the thesis and bolster the whole evenly. In this regard I acted in accordance with Fontana & Frey's suggestion that "the interviewer become(s) an advocate and partner in the study". However, despite comments regarding the co-elaboration of meaning within the conversations, Fontana and Frey remind us: "it is the researcher who ultimately cuts and pastes together the narrative, choosing what will become a part of it and what will be cut." But this is largely a pragmatic choice, in order to meet the requirements of a doctorate and also to exclude anything that might be too informal or damaging in any way to any party.

With regard to the analysis of information collected, Anssi Peräkylä points out that for many researchers analysing written text nothing more sophisticated than a thorough trawl through the material several times will be necessary to identify key themes, with the aim being "to draw a picture of the presuppositions and meanings that constitute the cultural world of which the textual material is a specimen" (Peräkylä 2005, p870). Within this study, such themes include the relationship between 'own' and commissioned work, and the relationship between illustration and theory. The informality of the approach reflects the extended conversations undertaken here, but the loose structuring allowed for a more influential role for the researcher. This moves the experience further away from the naturally occurring scenarios positioned by Peräkylä at one end of the interview spectrum, and leaves it somewhere between that and researcher-instigated data at the other. To interrogate the transcripts I have avoided entering into conversation analysis (Ibid, p875) for this would shift the focus onto the structure rather than the unique contributions made by each participant. They were selected for their differing viewpoints, and to overlook the content entirely in favour of their delivery would render the exercise futile.

Overlapping projects // Exploring conceptual anchors // Representation + presence. Scrapbook facsimile

The discussions also function to establish certain themes as relevant to illustration research – in the sense that the interview itself operates as Estelle Barrett's 'meme'. This is the vehicle by which ideas are circulated and replicated, not the idea itself: "the cultural artefact – the tune, painting, poem, for example – is not the meme itself, but is a vehicle by which the meme, an idea or internal representation is externalised" (Barrett 2007b, p159-160).

Grounded theory

Materials collected through fieldwork and sketchbook exploration need to be analysed as thoroughly as interview data, and grounded theory from qualitative research can be used to explain this process as it occurred in the studio. Charmaz defines grounded theory as both the practice and the product, wherein qualitative data collection and conceptual analysis take place in an iterative cycle and result in theoretical conclusions (Charmaz 2005, p360). Collins summarises this strategy as inductive, with theory arising from the data collected and not assumed prior to the study (Collins, 2010, p41). Gray & Malins (2004, p22) point out that it is helpful to develop theory from within the field, rather than have it as a separate activity that misses some of the specificity of practice. Grounded theory is an approach to analysis that enables this. The relevance to practice-led research is the transferability of the approach, in that Charmaz (ibid, p360) notes that many researchers adopt strategies from grounded theory amongst other methods.

Figure 8 Stephanie Black Dartmoor sketchbook

Figure 9 Stephanie Black Dartmoor sketchbook

Figure 10 Stephanie Black Dear book

An example of how this took place in practice concerns the drawings and materials amassed during the Dartmoor trip. These were not complete on their own as 'raw data' (figures 8 & 9), and needed to be

House as a facsimile of a house. Laminate + veneers. Taste // Robert Weaver. Complementary text + image // Style: line. Observation.

edited and reprocessed in order to present them. This took the form of deriving thematic categories from the drawings and comparing them with existing Dartmoor stories (from contextual research) and developing them in relation to the one most appropriate for the material. They were taken out of context (both in terms of their imagery and their location in my sketchbooks) and given this story as a conceptual anchor, resulting in figure 10. Similarly, the visual timeline shows how the studio work led to the discussion within the central chapters of this thesis. The annotations show the themes emerging, and the untidy order in which they do so. There's a large and acknowledged amount of reinterpretation going on in both cases, more in line with a constructivist research paradigm than with the positivist one that Collins aligns grounded theory with. However, Charmaz identifies two different strands within grounded theory – a positivist approach (which is going back to the idea that theory can be found within the data) and a newer constructivist approach, which acknowledges that all of our decisions in editing and selecting have an impact when we code, categorise and summarise in relation to our data (ibid, p360).

Figure 11 Stephanie Black studio showing 'coding' process

Figure 12 Stephanie Black Using photo storing websites to organise images according themes emerging through 'coding'

This latter approach is more relevant here, especially in relation to other studio projects that do not have a clear conceptual anchor to organise the materials. Figures 11 and 12 show the development of such a project, where the theme and loose narrative was emergent. It was found through coding the data into themes, in that drawings were sifted and edited and reworked on the basis of their narrative content. Subsequent to this, in figure 13 I have arranged them into parallel narrative strands across the wall, which can be read as a story with a beginning and an end. This can be related to Charmaz's (ibid, p361)

3d objects. Gallery. Time. Process // Conceptual anchor: aspiration? // Characterisation. Style. Materials.

description of the iterative cycle of research within grounded theory, which is evident here in the movement between tentative or unrelated ideas and continual review of emerging vignettes (codes) against new tentative or unrelated ideas until stories (categories) can be formed to give a structure to the material. This makes it intelligible to other people, if not predictive as Collins (2010, p41) suggests. In adding text, cropping and reworking I can be seen to be actively shaping the data here, which suggests that I'm more closely aligned with the constructivist idea of grounded theory; theory doesn't just come straight out of the data. Prior knowledge cannot be avoided, as practice-led research begins with tacit knowledge, and existing knowledge informs the selection of images in that certain themes are prioritised over others according to personal interests (such as 1970s cookery books).

COMMUNICATING FINDINGS

Figure 13 Stephanie Black Arts trail 2010

Figure 14 Stephanie Black Sideshow exhibition 2011

The outcome of research needs to be communicated to a wider audience. The question of how this is done is an opportunity to reflect upon illustration's contribution to the discussion of the performative paradigm proposed by Haseman (2006) and the role played by practice in making the argument.

Characterisation. Observation // Book distribution. Display. Scale. Exploring conceptual anchor // Exploring narrative + characterisation.

Practical outcomes

Practical solutions to this have included books such as figure 10 where the idea of gaps between images in sequence/series is explored, and the extension of this approach into space (figures 13 and 14). Here, a simple solution to a practical problem (what on earth to do with a collection of related but divergent images) led to my eventually tying together the different strands of enquiry of this study in the discussion chapters. However, this happens in a different order to the logic governing the sequence of the discussion in writing. The difference between the practice-based argument and the organisation of the discussion of a conceptual framework derived from it can be seen by comparing the diagrammatic representation of the study and visual timeline with the discussion chapters.

The display of practical work has been ongoing throughout the study, in line with the cyclical nature of practice-led research as described by Haseman (2007). The work exhibited is flexible and may be reorganised or reworked each time. This emphasises the point that the research process is inductive, and by using my own practice different permutations can be tried until a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of study is reached. This is true for the emerging concepts within the work, and also the theoretical discussion arising from it. The same flexibility isn't offered by work made by someone else; its qualities in this regard are more fixed. The continued manipulation of practice is useful in reminding the researcher of this, and therefore it would be difficult to adopt a positivist stance in relation to it.

Identifying a suitable language to evaluate findings

If Haseman's performative paradigm were to be adopted and the practical work given some of the role of making the argument, the question arises of a suitable mode of enquiry for evaluating the success of the 'meme' in convincing its audience of the idea it proposes. Haseman's point that transposing research findings between modes of communication loses detail is relevant here (Haseman 2007, p148), in that it also applies to the evaluation of work prior to communicating findings. This requires a sympathetic method of analysis and evaluation in line with the symbolic mode of enquiry and communication.

This issue arose in respect of evaluating the viewer's use of exhibition spaces, and whether the work does what I'm claiming is possible in the discussion chapters. Recording the visitors' use of the space in most instances would have been at odds with the position adopted in the discussion chapters, namely that illustration is a bit more respectful of its audience and doesn't require them to be spied upon or

Studio pals. Influence. Differences + overlaps between disciplines // 3d objects. Ideational making. Fragmentation // Identity. Exploring conceptual anchor. Observation.

contribute personal data. Therefore a mode of enquiry that is similarly productive (in that it can be a contribution to the project) or adopts a visual language rather than solely textual may be more appropriate. Thinking through practice is a different form of knowing, and experiential knowledge of the space may be surplus to signification[8], therefore asking researchers and visitors to convert it into words might be asking them to use the wrong tool for the job. Admittedly this may result in strategies that are extremely silly, but it may make the process less arduous for viewers.

Exhibiting Practice-as-research

Figures 15 & 16 Stephanie Black Progression exam exhibition 2009

The difference between the criteria used to evaluate practice and that used to evaluate research-in-practice needs to be considered when presenting findings. The difference lies in the expectations of the audience; in that if the work is displayed in an environment or manner associated with the display of finished artwork (practice, rather than research practice) the criteria used to evaluate the work will be calibrated towards criteria used for practice. Figures 15 and 16 show an example of this: a visual account of the research process consisting of materials generated within it in relation to each other. This was to be viewed in conjunction with a written report. Practical work undertaken to that point was mainly undertaken in order to understand how the practice operated, and was never intended to be viewed as finished artwork or judged by industry standards. This is not an excuse for work that does not operate adequately in the field it is meant to contribute to. Rather, it is that it is not being evaluated for its success in what it is trying to achieve, which requires the images to be evaluated in relation to each other and not solely for their individual merits. These may not be present in abundance. Rather it is the relationship between elements submitted that constitute the work, as noted by Candy & Edmonds. They emphasise

Observation becomes ideational. Identity // Observation: responsibility? Reconfigure project as documentary? // Observation: point of view.

the importance of informing the viewer of the research context for the artefact(s) on show, stating that "we need to know what to look at. Then we can see whatever it is that is significant" (Candy & Edmonds 2010, p125). Lyons (2006) makes suggestions regarding how to achieve this in her reflections upon the drawbacks of exhibiting research practice. Lyons suggests that work such as this ought not to be judged as art (these are inappropriate criteria and aims by which to measure the outcomes), and therefore it ought not to be exhibited in a way that presents it as art – such as the gallery. In the case of the progression exam display of research materials this holds true. However, her proposed solution was practice-led research journals as an appropriate venue, but the lack of these in illustration (or *any* journals at the time) made this unworkable. Informal solutions such as arts trails, blogs and social media may be of use to some practitioners hoping to establish sympathetic viewing parameters for their work in progress whilst it is embryonic and needs to be presented as a body of work and with text. White space galleries do not set up the appropriate expectations.

The problem is magnified in this study as the research concerns communication, but here passes as a poor example of this if it isn't presented in relation to the concept at the heart of the research. And if the work failed as communication (to peers who would dismiss it for looking like incompetent illustration) then it would not convince *that* audience of its findings with regard to communication. It wouldn't practise what it preached in that sense, and wouldn't be a contribution to the field. Therefore the practice does need to do what the thesis speaks of in order to reach its audience of primarily non-academic practitioners.

Compromise: practice *and* research

The solution adopted in this case was to try and make work that operated on different levels – both as practice and as research process. The process has subsequently been made visible in the outcomes due to my methods and curation (embracing mistakes, for example), and these methods of image-making produce passable illustration. The style operates as a vehicle (or Trojan horse) for the outcomes of the aspect of my research concerned with time, for example. Which is why trying to be rid of style and making ugly work might be meaningful as a counterpoint to the ubiquitous cheery tone of voice used in illustration, but it thwarts the aims of the research. Or, to use Estelle Barrett's terms, the surface of the work would obscure the ideas it carried in its making – and in this case in its curation too – and it would not operate as a "meme" and facilitate the uptake of these ideas (Barrett 2007b, 159-161). She notes that "the replication mechanisms that have traditionally valorised and validated creative arts practices have

Marcel Dzama. Non-narrative series //Drescher: sketchbook. Gaps. Series //Searle: Concept. Observation: responsibility?

focussed on product rather than process", and this explains the anxiety raised by the process-oriented show in 2009. To explain process the evaluation of failure and consequent revision of the project's trajectory needs to be shown, but criteria associated with professional practice (product) don't accommodate productive failure.

Vehicles for outcomes

Putting the methods into circulation is part of the communication of findings. These were methods that were conducive to producing temporal and 'gappy' work, and therefore having them shown to be feasible within an applied context was necessary for replicating the "meme" within the wider field. This is necessary for arguing for changed industry practice when it comes to commissioning illustrators, and in a research context showing products produced using these methods is helpful in order to validate the study. For as Nina Malterud suggests the methods are proven in the outcome (Malterud 2010, p26), and it is beneficial to consider this within a field of research that is only emerging and likely to convince new contributors by way of the work produced. Whilst academia may still be debating the location of the argument (as explored by MacLeod 2000, Scrivener 2002, Niedderer & Roworth-Stokes 2007, Haseman 2006 and 2007, Smith & Dean 2009, Candy & Edmonds 2010) the field of illustration contains even fewer versed in research issues and is likely to be sceptical as to the usefulness of research-through-practice if the outcomes are below-par according to the criteria of commissioned illustration. In this regard, circulating work produced using these methods also helps to fulfil the academic requirements for research acceptance, for it constitutes peer review and also meets the characteristics of research as described by Biggs & Buchler (2008, in Candy & Edmonds 2010, p124) in that "new knowledge or understanding must be in a form that can be shared". The stamp of approval also comes in the form of conducting extended conversations with key practitioners; their involvement broadens the potential audience for the outcomes as well as conferring academic or industry capital. Putting the ideas into circulation amongst peers took a more traditional academic route – that of conference papers and journal articles accessible primarily to academic peers (such as publication in the peer-reviewed VaroomLab journal), but also available to and rewritten for a broader audience of illustration practitioners (such as the version rewritten for Varoom magazine). Subsequent illustration conferences and events have featured presentations that also use time as a central concept (such as presentations by Catherine Anyango and Catrin Morgan at the Falmouth Illustration Forum 2013, and Rachel Gannon's paper at the VaroomLab symposium in Swansea 2013), showing it to be useful for analysing the complexity of project-based practice.

Searle: stylisation // Arisman: conceptual anchor. Series // Rawle: Sequence. Facsimile scrapbook. Fragments.

CONCLUSION

Through reviewing the practice undertaken during the PhD the contribution to research made by studio and field-based endeavours can be articulated. The overarching benefit of working outwards from an examination of practice to do so has been to show that illustration processes constitute a form of practice-led research. These methods can be applied to investigate a variety of different problems, from the clearly-defined to the emergent. The strength of this approach is that these methods produce outcomes that communicate findings to the viewer.

This exercise has taken in a variety of different relationships between theory and practice, with practice responding by changing its methods. This can lead to a change in practice, identifying a new area of theory to explore, rejecting theoretical ideas, or modifying them. In this sense it is an emergent methodology. Much of the work involves the practice being flexible, and in this regard anxiety and failure are both necessary and productive parts of the process. However, just because practice is flexible does not mean that the practitioner-researcher is "illustrating the theory". Instead, it might be more productive to recognise that this is the unique contribution of practice-led research, in that it cannot be replicated within someone else's practice as the object of inquiry (your own practice could not be swapped for someone else's archive, for example). This is why the inductive approach to theory and its responsive methodological stance is required, for it enables the illustrator-researcher to be nimble and bring in previously unrelated ideas to a developing field. With regard to the commissioned strand of illustration, my proposal is for it to adopt research *in* illustration as research *for* illustration. This would be an interesting challenge to Scrivener's point that this is research with a small 'r' and does not generate knowledge (Scrivener 2010, p261). There is a benefit to practice of rejecting the deductive approach familiar to commissions, for it does not encourage a deeper understanding of illustration's subject matter or an alternative view of it. It recycles what we already think we know and puts it into circulation visually. Concerns of practice such as these are what make this a singular project and one that cannot be replicated as required within other research paradigms. This is why it is appropriate to write in the first person in order to acknowledge the specificity of decisions made and conclusions arrived at. Putting someone else's practice into the equation might not result in the concepts of time and 'gaps' arising.

The relationship between this research and broader research paradigms appears to fluctuate according to the needs of the task at hand. For example where empirical research such as observational drawing is

2d/3d switch. Scale. Space // Fragmented representations (Ebay) // Fragmented drawings of representations. Aspiration. // Exploring conceptual anchor. Digressions.

involved, the methods may be interpreted as positivist for some illustrators (though I argue that here the researcher is not neutral and therefore may be social constructionist and also a little bit phenomenologist), whereas the other methods are more interpretivist, to use paradigms outlined by Collins, 2010, p 38). In this respect it is best described using the term “multi-methods design” proposed by Collins (2010, p53) and referring to a study where a variety of qualitative methods have been employed to answer a research question. Collins highlights the contribution of this cut-and-shut approach to the discussion and development of research, even though methods may be drawn from conflicting paradigms and therefore deemed problematic in combination. The benefit to illustration of adopting a range of positions throughout the research is that it gives the illustrator-researcher a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of interest, and raises the issue of responsibility in relation to it. Furthermore, in research terms Collins argues that research paradigms are socially constructed, and therefore the relationships between paradigms and between paradigm and methodology are constantly being negotiated, and this chapter contributes to that. So for example where Gray & Malins propose artistic research has its own paradigm, mixed-methods or multi-methods designs drawing on both qualitative and/or quantitative methods from competing paradigms may be the most effective solution whilst the paradigm is under construction. It foregrounds the demands of practice whilst the different strands within illustration research are still being excavated and developed.

This approach is also to be found in Haseman’s ‘performative paradigm’ for creative arts, where outcomes enact the argument (Haseman 2006, 2007). Where visual communication offers sophisticated tools for balancing complementary text and image within a holistic communication there are opportunities to use these to address some of the resistance still felt that MacLeod (2000) wrote of in relation to the location of the argument. Within a field where practice *can* communicate, opportunities are opened up for adopting an appropriate format for providing a range of levels on which to approach the argument. This point has been felt acutely in relation to this study, where Haseman’s suggestions have been adapted and proposed as an alternative use for images within the writing of this specific thesis and its concerns. I propose that the outcome needn’t jettison words or numbers in favour of symbolic data (such as images). It is precisely because it is a combination of these that could make it performative in the case of ‘gaps’ or time. Broadening the range of levels on which the outcomes communicate is of relevance to a study (and field) concerned with the viewer/reader, and also to wider concerns with research accessibility and impact. Haseman quotes Gergen & Gergen (2003, p582-583) to outline the benefits clearly: “in moving

Working through materials // 2d time/3d form brain drawn over time solidified. Thinking through materials. Inductive process // Failure! Poor investment of time.

towards performance the investigator avoids the mystifying claims of truth and simultaneously expands the range of communities in which the work can stimulate dialogue" (Haseman 2006 p101). Illustration is fluid in its selection of media for communication, and therefore the overlap in practical methods with other disciplines makes this expanded dialogue commendable.

Having established that the practical processes identified within illustration practice are those of practice-led research, the next task is to put them to use within Borgdorff's research *in* art in order to address key concepts emerging from the research process. The first stage is to examine what happens within the relationship between the work and its audience, and how this is mediated by the voice used by the work to address them. There may be lessons to be learned by research from professional practice in this regard.

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[1] Commonly referred to as 'triangulation' of methods, although Denzin & Lincoln put forward a convincing argument for the crystalline form to replace the triangle as a more appropriate metaphor. Whichever is adopted, they both amount to the researcher developing a strategy "that adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to any inquiry" (Denzin & Lincoln 2005, p5).

[2] This is another area where illustration research may contribute to the wider discussion of ethics in practice-led research, an area identified by Newbury (2010, p384) with his suggestion of photography's contribution to ethical considerations required within and by visual communication being an opening that illustration could enlarge upon.

[3] Elizabeth Price comments on this pressure in her honest acknowledgement that the written component of the practice-led PhD submission is troubled by issues of narrative and logical sequences. In turn, insightful and particular practice is constricted by the demands of elegant draughtsmanship. She summarises this by referring to her writing as "never as sharp as the boulder [the practical element of Price's PhD], but nonetheless, it is always so much more plausible." (Price 2006, p131)

[4] Whilst this broadens the scope of the review it also suffers from a scattershot approach, in that identifying relevant practices to review depends largely on browsing and generally keeping your eyes open.

[5] Barrett's chapter, as with most sources concerned with practice-led research, still uses the term 'illustration' in the sense of picture plates in encyclopaedias.

[6] Newbury (2010, p374) argues that practice-led researchers should move towards integrating the accepted methods of qualitative research with those specific to art and design. This chapter seeks to do so by working outwards from practice to identify the areas of overlap with qualitative research rather than to begin by selecting qualitative methods to apply to the design of the study.

Reprocessing. Opportunity. Ideational intervention // Digressions. Combining strands // Combinations = metaphors

[7] There may be a conflict within this with Haseman's own assertions for the performative paradigm if this isn't conducted sympathetically. For example, recording the stages of drawing using a drawing app or digital video camera would be less likely to fall foul of losing 'data' as it recorded the process than a written diary.

[8] As Simon O'Sullivan writes: "Affects are . . . the stuff that goes on beneath, beyond, even parallel to signification. But what can one say about affects? Indeed, what needs to be said about them? . . . You cannot read affects, you can only experience them" (O'Sullivan, 2001 in Hemmings, 2005).

CHAPTER 2: THE S WORD: REPOSITIONING STYLE AS A METHODOLOGICAL CONCERN

This chapter tackles the surface of illustration, and will approach this in a constructive fashion that enables style to be positioned theoretically, practically and methodologically as an issue of responsibility and generosity. The discussion uses the concerns of the researcher outlined in the previous chapter to appraise both the message and the surface of illustration, thereby ensuring that they are inextricably bound within illustration discourse. Style is one of the provocative words in illustration discourse, with discussion of the issue vehemently rejecting its importance in favour of the message within the image. As a consequence the field has thus far avoided productive discussion of the role played by style, or developed the conceptual tools needed to undertake this.

Having established in the previous chapter that illustration processes constitute practice-led research, I will explore the inductive nature of the research as it is manifest within the illustration work undertaken. The surface of the work will be examined as a function of the relationship between illustrator, work, phenomenon and viewer. These research-oriented concerns will be used as a framework within which to examine how practice negotiates said relationship. This will focus primarily on drawing, as the main research tool in this study.

The discussion will examine existing illustration commentary on the subject of style and situate these in relation to existing theoretical tools available to research *on* art. Most of these are calibrated to analysing the products of culture, rather than the production, as noted by Soar (2006). By turning the focus of the chapter towards research *in* art these frameworks can be critically analysed for their utility within practice. Using the concerns of the researcher *in* art, the issue of style will be repositioned as a question of responsibility and generosity towards subject matter and audience, and also as a critically effective tool in its own right.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE SURROUNDING STYLE

Opinions on style within illustration

Within the illustration workplace, an illustrator's style is likely to be the facet of their practice that they are commissioned for. Yet the term is usually viewed as a hindrance in academic and industry critique,

Exploring conceptual anchor. Combining fragments // Digressions. Confusion // Characterisation. Identifying research themes.

representing all that is frustrating about limiting perceptions of the field and how this is manifest in short-sighted commissions. Steven Heller's comments on style summarise this attitude succinctly:

> Style is a voice, but it is not an intelligence. Illustration is best when the ideas, skills, and styles are seamlessly woven into one entity. Style alone is empty. (Heller & Arisman 2000, pxix)

Which is a strong claim, and one to be understood within the context of the late 1990s when it was written. Heller and Arisman discuss plagiarism, and the problem of art directors hiring illustrators to mimic another's style. Also problematic at the time was the rise of space-filling imagery generated by designers using photoshop or bought from stock agencies, which threatened fees and work opportunities as documented by Mason (2000b) amongst others. He wrote of the proliferation of frustrating commissions asking illustrators to make a pleasant background noise, visually: "The recent tendency has been to demand too little of us, to use us as embellishers rather than as illustrators in the true sense of the word" (Mason, 2000b p74). Mason instead traces the term 'illustration' back to its Latin origin (lustrare: to light up, to consider) to argue that it encompasses a range of activities and "individuality, originality and intelligence" and therefore it isn't the term that is the problem (Mason 2000a, p4). Bowman (2008, p65) also pursues the illumination approach by stating that the purpose of illustration is not style, rather that "good creative work sheds light on something not seen, something not known." He sees the preoccupation with style as a concern traced back to the 1970s, and the responsibility of illustrators' "moral and creative bankruptcy"; their deliberate lack of engagement with the world, and consequent lack of work that questions or challenges. Bowman also points out that style and media aren't being pushed very far at all, practically and critically, despite being the overriding concerns of the field. The problematic aspect of this is that illustration lacks specific expertise and discourse surrounding even this aspect of the field. Sadly, since Bowman's frustrated polemic the issue of style continues to be seen in illustration commentary as a limiting factor. Mills & Goodall find it constraining the development of undergraduate illustrators in their final year, with their grasping for styles (sometimes to mask a lack of skill) without understanding the references or history of such an approach to image-making (Mills & Goodall 2012, p12). What is crucial here is that the adoption of style constricts the visual languages used to communicate, with drawing (in a naïve style) the first choice regardless of its appropriateness to the subject matter or the student.

The effect of this is a limited range of expression directed at viewers and available to illustrators within our visual environment. For example, figures 17-19 represent a brief survey of the range of contemporary

Confusion: modern life // Relationships between characters // 2d/3d switch. Dimensions. Space. Objects.

illustration that provides the context for this enquiry. They reveal it to be cheerful, frequently twee, largely based on digitally mimicking screen printing, brightly coloured and with a broad streak of naivety. The problem here is not with these examples, but the lack of variety in the voices available. There is room for all sorts of illustration, and it wouldn't be constructive to cite specific art-directed instances of what illustrators do in their day job (few other career choices face such scrutiny) and therefore it would be less destructive to refer to Poynor (2009, p6) and his comments concerning the infantilisation of contemporary commissioned illustration and its role in reassuring the audience-as-consumer. The specific problem is that the visual languages used aren't broad enough to communicate more complex or unpleasant ideas to a range of people, or to have a more nuanced relationship with them. Even Central Illustration Agency with their roster of quality illustrators with thoughtful practices doesn't display a broad variety of illustrative approaches on its site. These examples are polite, tidy and clean. There is nothing here to represent anything unpleasant, although their illustrators are more than capable of doing so and such concepts regularly appear in the wider world that illustration engages with.

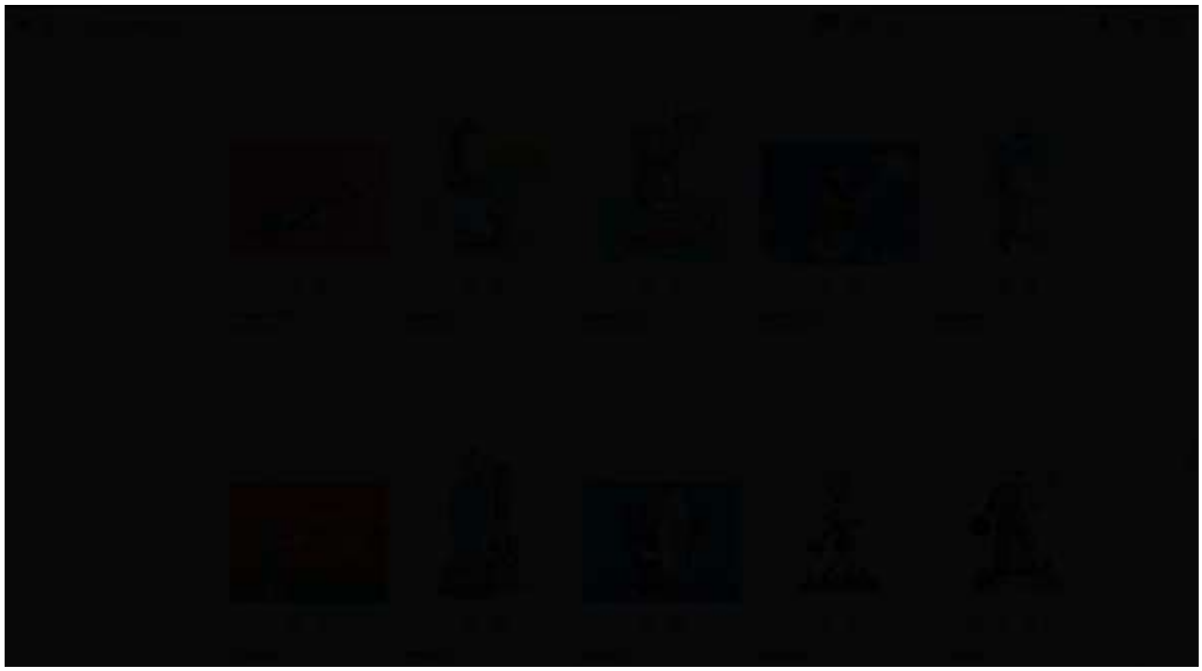

Figure 17 Getty Images stock illustration search results for 'business'

Fragmentation. Reflecting on practice // Identifying themes. Reprocessing materials // Expanding on themes.

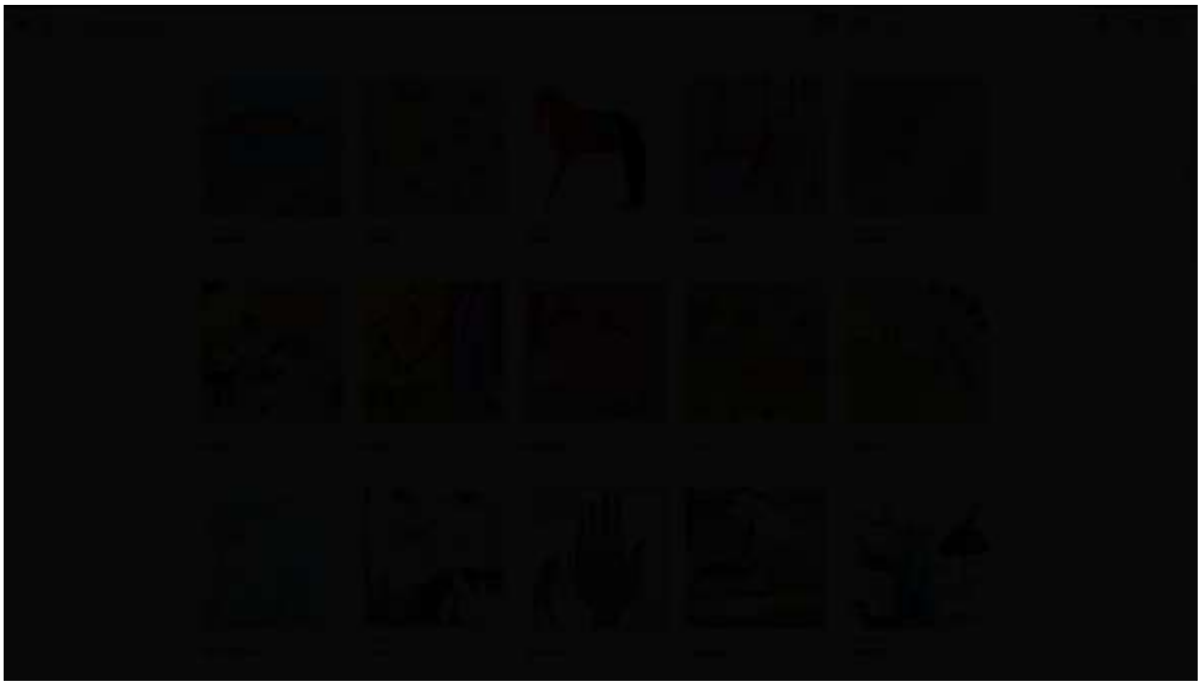

Figure 18 Eastwing illustration agency

Figure 19 Central Illustration Agency

Pursuing colour links across series (orange) // Anachronistic cookery euphemisms // Display mechanisms (L. Freud).

Therefore a review of practitioners working within the field of varied and complex image making in communication has to include practitioners from other areas of culture.

How style's role is maintained

To tackle the issue of typecasting of the illustrator, the machinations underpinning it need to be understood. There are numerous pressures on illustrators, educators and agencies to maintain the position of style as the marker of an illustrator's identity. Bowman is pragmatic about the need for illustrators to pay the rent and continue to work according to these demands, therefore his exhortations are directed at developing supplementary critical activities. Illustration agencies (such as figures 18 and 19) and illustrators' own websites promote style divorced from subject matter, as they need to show that an illustrator is appropriate for a range of potential tasks. Therefore online portfolios frequently show images out of context, with no indication of the work's purpose, scale, or location (other than perhaps the client's name if it confers cultural capital). The result of this is that the images cannot be evaluated for their efficacy in relation to their original purpose; their role has been stripped back to demonstrate a style to potential clients. This is what industry looks like at the moment, and those eager to join it are aware of this. Students are particularly impressionable, and have specific expectations of what *looks like* illustration and strive to meet them[9]. This phenomenon is noted by Mills & Goodall (2012, p12) who suggest that the perception is likely fuelled by the impending weight of pressure to find success within the industry in order to pay back student debts. Undoubtedly, the increasing pressure of the 'employability agenda' within Higher Education also plays a role in perpetuating this status quo. Mills & Goodall also attribute stylistic appropriation to basic admiration, with influence taking the form of a stylistic veneer overlaying the student's work, but troublingly they identify the influential practitioners as the tutors… and the options for breaking out of this cannibalistic cycle of style become narrower. Richardson (2012) spoke of an instance of an art director using his work to mock up a proposal for a client, and using this to brief him: "so I've already been given back my own work". There is clearly an expectation of that medium and style being a reflection of what he does, and what he will produce. Klimowski (2012) notes that financial and professional rewards encourage this "self-censorship". Mason recounts a commissioning experience where one of his interviewees was told "we want you to do something as close as possible to (a previous piece of her work) without infringing your own copyright", showing illustration's cannibalism to be an ongoing concern (Mason 2000a, p11). There may also be a lack of ambition on the part of the illustrator who doesn't search beyond the immediate safety of illustration for inspiration. This leads to a limited

Reprocessing materials. Time-based delivery (post) // Visual metaphor // Visual manifestation of obsession.Traces = time.

creative gene pool in illustration; a point also observed by Foldvari (2009).[10] This is an example of illustration policing its own borders and maintaining a limited pocket in the field of artistic production as Bourdieu (1993, p32) describes it; none of the systems described encourage illustrators to contest the boundaries. Whereas the task being undertaken more recently in Illustration Research and VaroomLab conferences has been to explore the boundary and its permeable points as Bourdieu suggests (Ibid, p42). This has placed illustration into proximity with other fields (design, fine art, social science) and resulted in work that troubles the assumptions that govern what *looks* like illustration.

How do we break out of this?

Developing a broader discussion of style and interrogating ways of discussing the surface of illustration is necessary in order to reclaim it as a product of the illustrator's process, rather than having it define their identity. Braund (2012) recalls an exchange with Elizabeth Blue concerning the visual identity of her developing book *Micanopy Murders*, which confirms that style is related to content more strongly than it is to the illustrator: "she said 'I know that if I just keep working that will emerge on its own'". In order to accomplish a shift in perception of illustration from what it looks like to something we do Mason suggests changing our use of the word 'picture' from noun to verb, in order for illustration to "portray, to describe, to imagine to oneself. To find and make a visual equivalent or interpretation of a given concept or subject" (Mason 2000b, p70). Vormittag (2013) describes John O'Reilly's solution to this problem as developing "illustration thinking" by repositioning illustration as a set of "core values, skills and objectives, rather than in purely pictorial terms". Having positioned illustration as a research process, the tools of the researcher can be used to examine what style reveals about it, and also to reinforce the tenuous link to the world that so concerned Bowman. This topic is a necessary consideration as an epistemological concern. Following this, style is repositioned as a function of methodology. Furthermore, if we consider the researcher's need to address an audience with their findings we can examine the voice (to use Heller's analogy) used to do so and what the tone of delivery can achieve.

Tools for the job: within illustration

In more recent illustration commentary, McCannon (2009), Braund (2011), Clifton (2012), and Vormittag (2013) make valuable steps towards building a discourse that critically reflects upon what illustration looks like, making considered points regarding the relationship between the illustrator, work and viewer. Concepts used to dissect illustration and to address its link to viewers and the wider world include

Collage = funny? // Filling gaps. Badly // Rotate image for double meaning. Ambiguity // Parallel narrative or suprise

empathy, generosity, time, social engagement, and responsibility. McCannon addresses the history of illustration adopting folk styling and reminds us of the link between this and fascism (although she refutes this, positioning folk styling as rethinking ideas of nation), raising the issue of responsibility to the audience for styles adopted. Vormittag acknowledges the role of the elegantly-resolved aesthetics of design as part of the dialogically-engaged, responsible designer's toolkit to effect social change. Braund is concerned with the use of composition to redirect the meaning of images. His paper links the image's formal qualities with its narrative content, keeping discussion of meaning within the frame and bringing in the concept of time. He outlines the ability of the well-constructed image to slow the viewer down by navigating what is within the borders of the image and how they are pictured (including devices such as colour, for example). Clifton's article furthers the discussion of the impact of pictorial specificity, in this case the sentimental style prevalent within illustration and exemplified by Rob Ryan and Laura Carlin. He repositions sentimental style as a mark of empathy between illustrator and audience. It indicates communicative sophistication, both effective and generous in Clifton's analysis. The relationship between illustrator, subject matter and audience is brokered by the illustrator's adoption of an approachable and emotive visual language, one that Clifton sees providing general emotional triggers that are translated into a personal response by the viewer.

A critical approach that is informed by the concerns of the researcher also maintains focus on the relationships between illustrator, subject matter and audience. It does so by addressing style and subject matter in combination, as a feature of how these relationships are negotiated. This is in contrast to existing frameworks available, which neglect surface in favour of concept and vice-versa. A critical framework based on embedded Modernist ideas (and informed by Kant) arises from Clifton's approach to sentimentalism, but it separates style and concept along class lines. Clifton suggests that illustrators employing a sentimental style communicate on an emotional level: "as a phenomenon it allows for the transmission of universally understood feelings and emotions" (Clifton, 2012, p34). Clifton also quotes Bourdieu to argue for the accessibility of employing emotions and surface to beguile the viewer, for they don't need to have any training or prior knowledge to view illustration. By considering Clifton's allegiance to accessibility and emotion his stance appears to be anti-Kantian. The Kantian approach excludes the combination of subject matter and style in analysis. The upper-class aesthete allowed to appraise art does so by distancing themselves from the subject matter within the work (what it is about) to busy themselves with the work's formal achievements (Bourdieu 1984, p34). This is why an alternative framework needs to

Ideational thinking through found objects + collage // 3d display mechanisms/installation // Style: aggressive.

be adopted for a field that is specifically *about* subject matter. Furthermore, within a Kantian framework the discussion of empathy begins to look awfully similar to Kant's "subjective universality", which starts to tinge the discussion with the arrogance of the expert at the expense of Clifton's generous communicative impulse. Discussions of style aren't the preserve of the educated few (and therefore anathema to the very nature of illustration). Clifton, McCannon, Mills & Goodall, and Braund have addressed style with generosity that links work and world. Rather these discussions need to move away from a Kantian aesthetic framework and towards a research framework that addresses the surface and the concepts of illustration together.

Tracing the discussion of style within illustration discourse has provided a starting point for mapping out positions and concepts to use in an analysis of the role of style. The commentaries cited in this section have tackled the use of style to link illustrator and viewer, using the motivations of responsibility, dialogue, generosity, and empathy. In this configuration style becomes part of the solution to a brief, and contributes to the project's effectiveness. From a research angle, these papers begin to move from research *on* illustration towards the production of illustration. Clifton, for example, begins to address how the illustrator's position relates to picture making and this is of greater use to Borgdorff's notion of research *in* art.

Tools for the job: beyond illustration

Having mapped some of the motivations and qualities of illustration emerging through illustration discourse, the wider discussion of these in art and design discourse can be explored, and further tools added to the armoury. Visual communication has long been served by the concepts provided by structuralism to analyse images. Advertising, in particular, has been examined using concepts derived from Saussurean linguistics such as signifier and signified in order to reveal allusions, underlying assumptions and imbalances of power. Notable texts utilising this approach include Roland Barthes' *Rhetoric of the Image* and Judith Williamson's *Decoding Advertisements*. Noble & Bestley (2005) also recommend it as a critical framework for graphic design enquiry. Soar (2006) evaluates its usefulness in greater depth and points out that whilst it has opened up discussion of the reception of the text, the enquiry hasn't been extended to the production of texts. This aspect of cultural studies remains neglected in Soar's view, surprisingly so given the weight of the impact of advertising within cultural studies discourse. Therefore a structuralist approach is indispensable for analysing imagery within illustration (the 'intelligence' to return

Overprinting = tonal progression of sequence // Repetition + change = sequence // Reprocessing materials.

to Heller's point), and also for investigating the complementary role of image and text that encourages illustration to take a more contributory role within a multi-modal text. To address Soar's point, when using the concept of signification the researcher's attention is always drawn away from the image to external concepts and referents. This is the aspect of analysis that Braund (2011) manages to circumvent by finding visual correspondences within the frame rather than decoding images and translating them into words. By looking for signifieds the meaning of the image lies outside the frame, which eventually leads to perpetually deferred meaning in Derrida's poststructuralism. In terms of production, and using illustration as a research process, the link with subject matter becomes severed within a poststructuralist approach, as the emphasis on redistributing power in relation to making meaning leads to focus on the ambiguity of images (which Clifton acknowledged as part of illustration's richness and generosity). However, whilst ambiguity favours play for the reader, it also encourages the illustrator to avoid making decisive claims about the subject matter. And this is the noncommittal approach so problematic to Bowman.

Even if we make a concerted attempt to return to the marks making up illustration, the tools aren't there to deal with the specifics of each image; the 'voice'. Such as how different weights of pencil line characterise the subject matter. These don't signify, they are perceived more immediately without reference to banks of agreed signifieds; they describe the sign. Kress & Van Leeuwen take up this point, acknowledging that the brushstroke has come to signify painting and the hand of the artist (with regard to Lichtenstein's *Big Painting*) but the semiotic framework doesn't give us the concepts or vocabulary to talk about the surface concerns such as brushstrokes (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2006, p215), or of the visual surface of the book (White 2005, p13). This calls for a different set of tools to examine style, one that takes into account the pictorial decisions made by the illustrator and how these relate to the subject matter. Therefore structuralism's utility with regard to research *in* art is limited, and its strength lies in its applicability to research *on* art, to return to Borgdorff's terms.

What is considered to be surplus to signification may offer the tools to address the aspect of pictures (their production and their surface) which signification falls short in tackling. Clifton's inclusion of emotions and feeling in his discussion of how style relates to the audience, which can be pursued into discussion within art criticism of affect and emotion – the body's response to stimulus and its translation through language into emotion (Massumi, 2002; Tyler, 2008). O'Sullivan points out (in Hemmings, 2005) that affects are beneath, beyond, even parallel to signification, and can only be experienced rather than best served by words. Hemmings provides a concise summary of affect as utilised in cultural studies and

2d/3d switch: speech becomes solid // Sequence. Reprocessing materials. // Filling gaps. Adjust tone for sequence.

referred to as the 'affective turn': "affect broadly refers to states of being, rather than to their manifestation or interpretation as emotions" (Hemmings 2005, p551). Here we have a mode of enquiry that is embodied, that positions the researcher as open to their response to the world (rather than controlling it), and can be made practicable as research *in* art by virtue of its basis in the sentient human body – the one that does the drawing. Therefore this approach to research might address Haseman's concerns regarding the translation of information between modes of communication.

Tools for the job: drawing research

The literature surrounding the practise of drawing adopts a similar awareness of the embodied maker, occasionally tackling the communication of subject matter through mark-making. This differs from Kress & Van Leeuwen's marks signifying, for this is an approach that doesn't look for references within the marks. Instead it considers the marks as a trace of the illustrator's response to stimulus, and also the response of the viewer to the results.

Reference to the process of making that Soar noted as lacking in cultural studies can be found in the following selection of texts concerned with the act of drawing from an embodied perspective. Rosand explores Rembrandt's drawing to link the emotions felt by the artist to those felt by the viewer scrutinizing the drawing. He proposes that Rembrandt acted out emotions in his imagination via his pen, with the drawings being a trace of his feelings conveyed directly to us by the speed and force with which marks are made (Rosand 2002, p224-226). Drawing from the imagination, however, limits the illustrator's awareness of the phenomenon of interest to what they already know. This doesn't stretch or oppose their understanding of the world by putting new examples into their imagination. Furthermore, Rosand's eager description of Rembrandt's fraught drawing process neglects to mention that one particular image gives us a contrary depiction of its subject matter. The drawn lines are excitable and vigorous, yet the figure they show is meant to be deep in contemplative prayer. This is an example of drawing that is more about the maker than it is about serving the subject matter appropriately if Rosand's approach to the communication of affect is adopted. We look at the marks to see what the artist was thinking, not how the subject matter is described. It encourages us to take a Romantic view of the artist as generator of meaning, and their insight as more important than adequate scrutiny of the subject matter, or the viewer's reading of it.

Opportunity: toner transfers words // 2d 3d switch // Cards for viewer collaboration // Project overlap.

Affect and communication

Schneckloth also suggests that lines carry some of this charge in the form of an affective resonance surplus to signification. She observes the communicative aspect of handmade marks, using the term "vitality affect" to describe the effect on viewers of her biologically-influenced drawings (Schneckloth 2008, p280). But the mark making, although recognizably tactile charcoal smears, is inseparable from the imagery so it is difficult to claim this victory for the act of drawing.[11] The vigour that some images display compared to others is also noted in illustration commentary, and by Klimowski who proposes that "people intuitively recognize the dynamic sketch or what looks like a discarded drawing, they recognize it for its vitality" (Klimowski 2012). The 'freshness' of the rough is commended by Hardie (2005, p126) and Powers (2008, p28) in comparison to final artwork.[12] However, this is likely due to the tension in the drawing and unrefined picture-making that can disappear from a self-conscious reworking of it. I am suspicious as to whether the "kinaesthetic empathy" Schneckloth describes being felt by viewers is reported by those who aren't familiar with the making of drawing. Bourdieu's distinction between the popular aesthetic and the high aesthetic depends upon this opposition between formal and functional qualities, which suggests the default position for a great number of people is to hold accurate representation rather than the quality of the lines to be the benchmark of success.

Lord (2005, p36) however, notes that expressive line work isn't the sole indicator of emotion or experimentation – this approach suggests that it is being used as an indicator of such things, as visual shorthand adopted by illustrators. It's the line read as signifier of 'art' that Kress & Van Leeuwen wrote of. This is where Rosand's approach becomes problematic if adopted for the analysis of illustration. If the illustrator has to experience emotions in order to draw them, their use is inevitably going to be limited to their experiences. Immersion (as discussed in the previous chapter) may go some way to addressing this, but this approach also promotes the contrivance of energetic line work as Lord suggests. It makes the line a signifier of the artist's emotion (the *Big Painting*, for example) and asks that illustrators hone this ability rather than put their assumptions to one side to explore the phenomenon of interest. However, these concerns are not a call for the return of the detached observer, nor should they temper the inclusion of *any* personal commentary or modifications. As Minichiello (2002) suggests, drawing allows that complexity by incorporating subjective response through imagination, memory and selectivity with reference to objective reality. He concludes that it makes for richer images that communicate more effectively as the viewer becomes "involved in retracing the ideas and the mark making" (Minichiello

Fragmentation. Observation // Exploring CD cover themes.

2002, p8). The illustrator is then focused on the phenomenon and produces a holistic view of it, and in scrutinizing the surface the audience is being guided through the research process.[13] Berger (2008, p70) also recognizes the drawing as a record of the practitioner-researcher's engagement with the phenomenon over time. This opens up the possibility of the process being relevant to the outcome, as it encourages the maker to consider what that says about their engagement.

Drawing as a generative tool

Writing on drawing also helps to provide the vocabulary and reference points for the inductive approach of the illustrator-researcher - expanding the "illustration thinking" proposed by O'Reilly. Lord (2005) recounts the production of an illustration, complete with frustrations, surprises and tense muscles. These surprises occur as working through drawing takes detours into unknown territory. Rosenberg (2008) explores the use of drawing as a generative tool, using the term "ideational drawing" to describe the "thinking in action and action as thinking" of this kind of drawing. By focusing on doing rather than transcribing an idea the project takes diversions. Russell Mills uses this quality of the making process to pursue a lateral response to a brief. He refers to this as 'the primacy of process', explaining:

> Essentially I believe that, allied to a conceptual and contextual anchor, a piece of art can be found, discovered, through the actual doing. Being open to chance, to accidents, to happenstance can reveal potential new ways forward. (Mills, 2006)

Thus showing that investing faith in the research process makes illustration generative of new ways of looking at the world and new metaphors.

Therefore we have the tools from drawing research to discuss the production of illustration, and concepts from illustration research concerning the relationship between work and viewer. Research *in* illustration offers the opportunity to put together these bodies of knowledge. Through taking risks with my own practice the following discussion reflects upon its engagement with the tools mentioned previously: signs and emotion. This enabled me to review the concepts' utility within the making of illustration and in relation to research *in* illustration. The aim is to evaluate these ideas with a view to formulating an approach to style that sees it as a function of the research process performed by the illustrator, who is an intrinsic part of the world.

Cake anachronism // Postal delivery mechanism = indicative of disaster // Characterisation. Project overlap.

PRACTICAL ENGAGEMENT WITH STYLE

Matching tone of voice with topic

Selecting a quiet, deliberately analogue and not contemporary style for a short sequential illustration project based on the SS Great Britain was an attempt to match the dynamics of the images with the subject matter. This approach can be found in Catrin Morgan's illustrations for *The Age of Wire and String* by Ben Marcus, and also in Anne Harild's student work around Rilke's *Sonnets to Orpheus*, and Christoph Niemann's *The Potato King* children's book. Morgan adopts an authoritative voice akin to diagrams in order to tell of the world created by Marcus, which is familiar but the rules seem shifted. Therefore Morgan's images shift from reliable to unsettling as they don't make the sense that they promise in their stylistic references. In order to combine voice and message in a similar unified whole I adopted such devices as repetition, fragmentation and the loss of decorative details within the sequence to retell the lengthy voyage to Australia as tedious, fractious and stressful for the protagonists - two wild-caught cockatoos mentioned in the ship's onboard newspaper. The imagery reflected their descent into anxiety through feather-pulling and irritability, with this unravelling mirrored in the behaviour of the human passengers. Peer response to these strategies, however, suggested that the success of conveying on-board tedium was disappointing. It was boring. Therefore the illustrator needs to consider the wager they make with the viewer; if they are going to invest time in the experience offered by your illustration work they need to be convinced to play the game and rewarded for doing so. By failing to satisfy the viewer the communication may fail, which would be problematic in scenarios where the message is more important than the successful combination of form and concept. Calibrating style towards the viewer instead of the subject matter would be more effective in that regard; it engages them with a voice they recognise. This point arose within conversation with Matthew Richardson, where the level at which an illustration is pitched is dependent upon the audience in order to serve the subject matter. For example, a collage aimed at children commissioned by the V&A was simple in its level of detail and language; it didn't pose a riddle of any kind and was generous in considering all of these points. Richardson referred to this piece as "uncomplicated", and yet the result was gleeful in style, and considerate in its approach. This theme arose repeatedly in conversation, in that decisions of style were influenced by a considerate approach to the audience. As Richardson states, "I'm conscious of the audience that will help me drive an idea" and "I am definitely thinking of the kind of audience when I make a piece of work. It *does* make a difference. […] I know that the image has to be this big, it will be seen by these people, they're probably going to be more

Almost final artwork. Reflection on practice of others // Reorganising materials // Gaps. Clusters. Series.

interested in reading the text than looking at the image" which shows him aware of and catering to the specific audience for each job, but with generosity that embraces limitations as a creative challenge to "sharpen ideas" (Richardson 2012). The theme of generosity can be traced in Marshall Arisman's use of this provocative definition: "David Smith, the sculptor, defined commercial art as 'art that meets the mind and needs of other people,' and fine art as 'art that meets the mind and needs of the artist'" (Arisman 2000 p3).

Affective resonance

That the tedium intended was experienced by the viewer of the SS Great Britain work was of note, for it indicates that the illustrator's intention of communicating with the viewer on an emotional level (as Clifton 2012 suggests) isn't entirely misplaced, despite its accuracy being fraught with potholes such as individual interpretation leading somewhere else entirely. We still do it optimistically, embracing this. The traditional style adopted was problematic, however, in typecasting me as someone who makes polite illustration in the manner found limiting in figures 17-19. Addressing this frustration led to my stripping out the politeness from my work to arrive at something that didn't look like illustration, thereby circumventing those limitations. The coarse and imprecise approach to collage and drawing in Raoul Hausmann's *The Art Critic* was adopted to vary the range of voices at my disposal and to explore the veracity of Schneckloth's, Rosand's and Lord's positions on communicative drawing in relation to illustration. The unsettling violence of the editing within Marlene Dumas' *Rejects* was also adopted.

The discrepancy between approaches within and outside commissioned illustration can be seen within Matthew Richardson's practice. Collages produced for his "own work" are allowed the level of freedom (or imprecision) seen in Hausmann's piece. Collages prepared for clients, however, are digitally composed and precise. When alterations are requested by the client the latter remain editable, but it has an effect upon the tone of voice we expect from illustration. Precision and politeness characterise the digital collage, whereas the ability of the hand to combine rotation with horizontal and vertical movement results in more erratic-looking image making that is less tightly controlled by the parameters of the software used to assemble it.

Parallels between own work and that of others // 2d/3d combined on object. Badly.

Figure 20 Stephanie Black Studio failures, deliberately awkward drawings

Figure 21 Stephanie Black Studio failures (detail)

To address these points the following methods were adopted: making deliberately quick drawings, imprecise collage, and trying to draw awkwardly by kneeling and drawing at the very bottom of a wall (seen in figure 21). Evaluation of the results suggested that this was a dead end, given that I was hugely concerned about showing this work to anyone and that is in itself distinctly incompatible with producing communication. It looked like terrible drawing that would not successfully court a viewer, which might mute any communication it hoped to make. Braund emphasises the importance of this to illustration, in that "the work must first attract the reader, creating a desire to engage with it, so that *work* and *reader* meet halfway" (Braund 2011 p438). But by focusing on a formal response to figures 17-19 I had created a method that foiled itself. This may be linked to Bourdieu's points that work concerning itself with formal refinement is alienating, so when it creeps into popular culture (illustration, for example) it is offensive as it references the structures that keep culture inaccessible and is a visible reminder (Bourdieu 1984, p33 & 42). Bourdieu also defines popular taste by the "good-natured incredulity" of the audience willing to "enter into the game" with a cultural artefact, noting that formal experimentation will be tolerated as long as it doesn't get in the way of what the work is about (Ibid, p33). Here the style got in the way of the content because at that stage the content was lacking. It was still being discovered and shaped through an inductive process. Arisman suggests these experiments should be undertaken away from commercial work, in order to preserve quality control. However, this runs contrary to the notion of removing the

3d + drawing work in progress. Failure // Found materials . Opportunity // Repurposing found materials = narrative.

known outcome to keep the process of exploration at the forefront of illustration, with all the benefits discussed in terms of openness to the world and variety within mark-making. Therefore Bourdieu's (Kantian-derived) approach here runs contrary to developing O'Reilly's "illustration thinking" as a process of research.

So whilst Bourdieu's ideas are useful in directing discussion of style towards it being a political act and important for engaging the viewer, the discussion of these experiments using Bourdieu's findings show the latter to be limiting to the development of the discipline. If his conclusions are adopted regarding the importance of form and content to different strata of the audience, the illustrator can try to make widely accessible communication by avoiding formal experimentation in case it obscures the message. But this is the current predicament of illustration today, and is a demeaning attitude towards an audience who may not appreciate their cultural input being diluted on the basis of a snooty class-based assumption. Trying to shun the Kantian aesthetic for its inaccessiblity within the production of illustration is itself problematic, for it reinforces its importance. A more appropriate solution would be to find another way of talking about style that appreciates how important it is for the viewer, such as the familiarity with culture that Bourdieu writes of in *Field of Cultural Production.*

To return to the studio work in order to examine how else its failures may be discussed, the failure on different levels (both narrative and surface qualities) discussed above is key; it didn't perform *any* role well enough, and certainly not outside the context of being a reaction to the homogenisation of figures 17-19. Therefore it did not succeed within any evaluative criteria used to judge it, which Buchler & Lima (2008) discuss in relation to research paradigms. They see the positivist paradigm informing the preference for accuracy in architectural drawings, whereas a constructivist approach finds a drawing that describes the building and its principles more successful. Bolt (2004) takes the latter approach via Heidegger, seeing representationalism as a particularly limiting way of viewing the world in research terms. It becomes "standing resource", for us to master and manipulate, and this perspective on representation is more useful to a discussion of style as a function of research process than Bourdieu's assignment of representation via Kantian aesthetics to the category of "barbarous taste" (Bourdieu, 1984, p44).

Narrative objects or merchandise? // Pick Me Up 2010 // LS Lowry: time in materials. Traces.

Failure, knowledge and responsibility

Figure 22 Stephanie Black failed experiments with marks and layering using the printer

Picking up Bolt's thread concerning representation, the believable depiction of objects in figure 22 can be interrogated more extensively. Lack of realism was a problem for these drawings, in a manner that reveals the illustrator's strategy for investigating the world. The lack of detail within them meant that they didn't create a convincing scenario, and revealed that I had not considered or did not know enough about the environment for the fictional characters in order to make it so. These pockets of ignorance can often be identified by fudged details, or an erroneous mark scribbled out or obscured by erasure and then corrected. This puts my drawings into the same bracket as those of figure 17 in that they make assumptions about the world based on existing knowledge instead of examining its specificity, when obfuscation in the drawings suggests that they would benefit from this latter point. Representationalism from this angle looks more like responsibility to the world, and does not necessarily render it a standing

Arts Trail 2010. Gaps. Series // Blind rook prints: emerge from darkness over time // Small chairs. Scale.

resource. Which positions illustration as rhetoric as Buchanan describes design's persuasive role, outlining design as "a mediating agency of influence between designers and their intended audience" (Buchanan 1989, p91). This represents the shift in focus from the personal angst of the illustrator to the broader forces influencing their drawing decisions. Asking *why* a line has been drawn a certain way and who it is responsible to promotes discussion of power relations and design responsibility. Further suggestion of this approach comes from Phil Sawdon, who explores Nicos Hadjinicolao's assertion that style is "visual ideology"; it is a barometer of values and desires (Sawdon 2005, p74). The question of honesty in acknowledging this arises. Retaining errors and failures within drawings reminds us of the constructed nature of the image, in that these are marks made with agency and bearing the visual ideology Sawdon wrote of. The selection of details in unfinished drawings reveals the attention given them, at the expense of others. Failed representationalism draws attention to this in a way that accuracy of representation or overt stylisation does not. These veil their assumptions by being convincing.

Figure 23 Stephanie Black Failing better

Domestic environment. Direction. Navigation // Shrigley: repurposing // Facsimile // Ware: quiet. Book form + layout.

Failures also mark a departure from one mode of thinking to another, so are valuable indicators of such shifts. Scrivener (2010, p261) writes of the changing appraisal of Constable's work in order to make the point that threshold works fail by all accounts – they don't meet existing standards, and nor do they succeed by the standards of their new paradigm (which in any case haven't been established). Therefore catastrophes in the studio need to be attended to, for although it would be commercial suicide to employ such things it marks a departure into new territory for practice. In this light, 'failed' drawings investigating embodiment and communication were a step towards the aggressive visual language of figure23. They are still thinking-in-action and action-as-thinking, but only in a research sense. Quality control inhibits me from showing them as illustration, but they support Klimowski's claim that "messing about […] where you test and stretch your language" is "vital" (Klimowski 2012). Matthew Richardson speaks of extra-curricular projects that gamble with failure to a greater extent than his commissioned work, and these have given rise to methods and styles that he might transpose into his commissioned work (figures 24 and 25). If Richardson had been failure-averse he wouldn't be making these discoveries that feed into his commissioned work.

L. Carlin: Style + materials comparison // Style + materials: too sticky for an elegant novel // Dartmoor intervention.

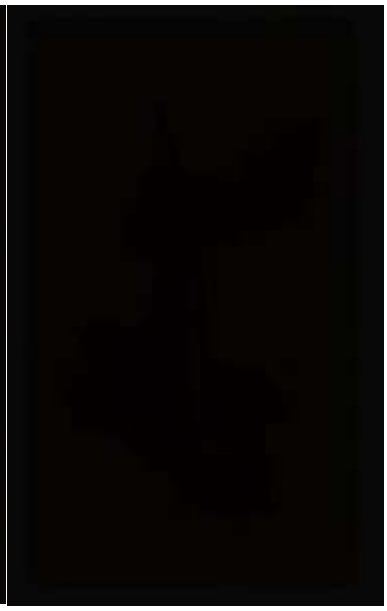

Figure 24 Matthew Richardson/Emily Mitchell: Conduits, Schemes & Spheres. "The work developed and evolved over six months through being passed backwards and forwards, with sometimes minute, and sometimes dramatic changes being made at each stage."

Figure 25 Matthew Richardson/Emily Mitchell: Stages and Arenas. Image developed from residue left from tearing the cover from book boards.

Failure as a bridge to the viewer

Clifton's notion of empathy can also be employed to evaluate failure. In this case, drawing that does not meet commonly-held criteria for judging drawing (such as accuracy of representation) can be useful in demoting the illustrator from the position of expert by showing them to be vulnerable. Adrian Searle remarks upon the benefits of mistakes remaining in 'finished' artwork in response to Marlene Dumas's *The Second Coming* exhibition of 2004:

> The best paintings often have their disastrous moments: only mediocre painting never dares, or edits out its snarl-ups and chaotic passages. There are quite a few accidents in Dumas's work, especially since she works quickly, trying to keep things fresh and immediate, but often getting into the mire and wading her way out again through reworking and overpainting.(Searle, 2004, p13)

Showing a piece of work with the frustrations of thinking-in-action takes bravery and is humbling, helping to shift the emphasis of the illustrator from the more positivist position of expert to that of co-investigator by revealing their methods for discussion. Therefore the privileged position of the 'artist' is put to one side

Dartmoor droppings // Dartmoor intervention: audience. Colleagues // Opportunity. Workshop exercise.

as both viewer and illustrator work together in investigating the subject matter just as Minichiello suggests.

Figure 26 Marlene Dumas One Hundred Models and Endless Rejects (model)

Figure 27 Marlene Dumas One Hundred Models and Endless Rejects (reject)

Failure also creates tension within images, adding to the dynamic of a composition and creating enjoyable fodder for the senses. For example, the 'models' drawings in Marlene Dumas's *One Hundred Models and Endless Rejects* project are technically more accomplished, but not as viscerally captivating as the 'rejects' (figures 26 and 27). In the 'model' to the left, Dumas displays considerable skill in representing shadows to create a portrait by balancing just the right amount of ink on the brush and water not-yet-evaporated. In the 'reject' to the right this balanced has been misjudged (under the bottom-right corner of the mouth, for example), areas overworked (the hairline, top left), and the eyes presumably so botched that they have been replaced entirely. Whilst the 'model' exhibits confident serenity in its execution, the 'reject' exhibits tension between the successful and the unsuccessful areas. This dynamic extends to the tension between 'models' and 'rejects' in the series, giving the whole suite of images a more varied range of marks, tones and textures.

Smuggling ponies into Bellever Forest // Sheep wool droppings // Intervening in reality.

Solution: removing the known outcome

The quandaries surrounding style as responsibility, empathy, and accessibility were resolved by revising my methods. The inductive research approach of the previous chapter was adopted within practice. This was necessary in order to address the practical failure of the progression exam exhibition that raised style as an issue. Practical research methods therefore needed to be based on the process of "illustration thinking" and meet both the demands of picture-making for the audience and client, and the practitioner-researcher's responsibility and openness to the subject matter. They needed to encourage manageable failure in order to create work with the affective desirability of variety in drawing. The problem here lies in producing drawings that encompass the freshness of the rough, the "vitality affect" of Schneckloth, the errors of Dumas, and yet aren't contrived and self-conscious like my experiments in figure 22. The methods were revised by turning the process of professional illustration on its head and removing the known outcome to make the process an inductive one. This way of working departs from commissions where, often, the brief will include direction as to what will be pictured and how, as Matthew Richardson describes: "it feels as if commercially commissioned work is getting more wrestled with and marketers are more involved in the whole process. So you may get a great art director that you work with, who is really excited, and you might have worked with them for a week or so on an idea, and they take it to the next stage and come back saying the marketing people think it's too dark, they want something flowery and summery, and can you do a picture of an elephant?" (Richardson 2012). The lack of authority of the art director that Richardson describes results in the process of them composing a rough made of his earlier work to get clearance from the marketing team prior to commissioning. Therefore "they've already suggested that this is how he's going to solve the problem" and the process is closed to new discoveries. Instead, in the methods employed here visual work relied upon on the exploration process in response to the theme given or chosen, and the process was oriented towards what is not already known. This creates opportunities for thinking-in-action to happen on the page.

By removing the known outcome, the process of exploration is similar to that of grounded theory. The process of generating and reviewing visual materials can be used to identify themes within the images that warrant further investigation as a concept to base research in practice upon. In this sense, practice finds its own direction. Matthew Richardson testifies to this generative aspect of making, by stating that through his use of objects and scanned papers in his work "it might be that I'm hoping the materials produce the idea" (Richardson 2012). Russell Mills also makes a case for the process of making being

3d model to draw from. Observation. Scale // Sketchbook fragments reprocessed = book dummy. Series.

central to this thinking process. In this respect he utilises his relationship with materials to bring into being that which was previously unknown, which is not a representation of the world, in a fashion reminiscent of Bolt's (2004) exploration of the generative role of practice. This process is a reflection of Rosenberg's 'action-as-thinking'.

Figure 28 Stephanie Black Brain drawing becomes character

Figure 29 Stephanie Black Bleeding ink indicates pauses

Figure 30 Stephanie Black Chair idea

The drawings produced whilst observing subject matter in the world (be it objects or representations) are those that retain some of the excitement of the thinking process, the amusing failures, compositional tension, and aren't overwrought in the way that 'final artwork' can be. Although these drawings are mainly observational and Rosenberg's examples drawn from the imagination I would argue that they are still ideational, for whilst they begin with a selected view they then diverge from that starting point in the way Rosenberg describes: "It functions to cause vibrations working across relations of ground and background, form and anti-form, known and un-known, linking objects and spaces in new relationships and configurations to produce idea-mirages […] that ask 'if this were to be – what then?'" such as figure 28's accidental face leading to the addition of a body and hat (Rosenberg 2008, p113). These drawings (figure 29) are ideational precisely because I take my attention away from the paper in order to scrutinise the object in the world. By shifting attention from my output to the world mistakes can happen, such as problems with scale or perspective, for example. Something else in my field of vision might come to prominence, with the drawing responding to this change of focus. Additions made after the fact might also

Style: surface interrupts image. Picture making // Fragment //Observational drawing //Noose closure: form + concept.

open up further possibilities by bringing into being what wasn't there before, such as figure 30's additional text which led to figure 31's idea for a three dimensional piece of work.

Figure 31 Stephanie Black Chair with ox tongue bottom left

If Minichiello's and Berger's comments are considered, the viewer can access the process the illustrator went through and therefore a semblance of the thinking-in-action. They can be guided through these stages through the composition of elements as Braund describes. Therefore the drawing once finished is no longer ideational for the illustrator (as Rosenberg 2008 p123 states), but the content pictured, the visual dynamics of how it is characterised, and the composition of elements can make it a process of thinking-in-action and action-as-thinking for the viewer. But this raises a problem for practice. When the drawings have already been produced (and would lose their specificity through re-drawing) the composition of final artwork is limited by these constraints.

Buried book. Time in marks made. Decay // Laughing curtains. Layers. Space. Found image // Reprocessed materials.

PICTURE-MAKING

Figure 32 Stephanie Black Sketchbook drawing photocopied onto enlarged sketchbook page

Figure 33 Stephanie Black Digital collage of photocopier collage and other pieces

The solution in this project was to take copies of drawings and take scissors to them. In order to address the problem of existing drawings being stuck in the context of my sketchbook I employ collage, paint, the photocopier, and Photoshop to combine elements and add colours that place drawings in a new context (see figures 32 and 33). This stage in the process also allows the prominence of the illustrator to be toned down so as to diminish the emphasis on the illustrator as author of the marks, and the work being viewed in the same way Rosand tackled Rembrandt's drawings. So within my own practice I do not welcome *all* traces of process in the final product, despite arguing for it as a method.

The visibility of the process is something I choose on the basis of its communicative relevance, as well as its aesthetic merits. In Russell Mills' work (figures 36-39) these traces are intrinsic to the concept, whereas the visual distraction of the edges of collaged papers and the sheen of the acrylic paint used to produce figure 34 are irrelevant to the story being told.

Idea for narrative from fragments: hope + time // Materials and process = characterisation. Well-meaning but shoddy // 2d/3d.

Figure 34 Stephanie Black Dartmoor book maquette version 1, 2010

Figure 35 Stephanie Black Dartmoor book maquette version 2, 2010

Reducing the raw materials' interruption of the imagery through photocopying these images has the effect of shifting the figurative aspects of the work to the forefront of my attention. Flattening the traces of the one-off and the artist is, in part, an attempt to discourage solely formal readings of the work. These may render illustration partially mute for (as Bourdieu noted in Kant's praise of disinterest) it pushes concern for the subject matter to one side. The flattened artwork in turn benefits from the retention of some textured traces of the process that led to its formation, which creates a contrast to the flat paper that it will be printed upon. Traces of the artist's hand are translated into descriptions of the subject through this flattening process, shifting the emphasis from illustrator to the topic without denying their involvement. Further contributions to the full graphic image come from making the sketchbooks from re-used paper and printed paper reclaimed with white paint, as these extra colours, images and textures fill out the picture and meet the 'picture-making' expectations discussed earlier. They also introduce unplanned elements to compositions that prompt ideational drawing. By addressing the requirement of 'picture-making' from the beginning, the process can be oriented towards the object of enquiry and its specificity, the enquiry process, and the client and/or eventual viewer of the work.

Picture-making methods

Sent to Leeds exhibition // Grave tat: display mechanism *Dear* book // Time in materials: forlorn neglected words.

Figure 36

Figure 37

Figure 38

Figure 39

Figures: 36-39 Russell Mills *Nine Inch Nails logo*, 1994 (from top) Sheet steel (not used); Under water; Leaves, moss, plaster dust, bronze powders, dead Tup; On fire

Supplementary to the meaning within the imagery, the process by which work achieves its style can be used communicatively also. Coupling surface and imagery together to serve the message is a safety net to ensure that the message isn't obscured by the disinterested art expert's focus on the formal qualities of the work, or the casual punter's enthusiasm for something within the imagery. Russell Mills uses the process of making work in relation to the topic, utilising processes of decay to create imagery concerned with corruption, atrophy (figures 36-39). This principle was adopted for the production of artwork for my

Torquay anachronisms // Reprocessing materials // Overprinting. New context. Flexible units.

Little Lady Sadie book commission, where the story's use of shadow as a metaphor for depression was employed in the making of images on the photocopier plate. By scanning the void above the plate a shadow is produced on the print, and by covering the plate with areas of white paper (such as speech bubbles) the tone is lighter in these areas (figures 40 and 41). This informed the tonal dynamic of the book, which mirrored the story's structure.

Figure 40 Stephanie Black *Little Lady Sadie* book pages 12 & 13

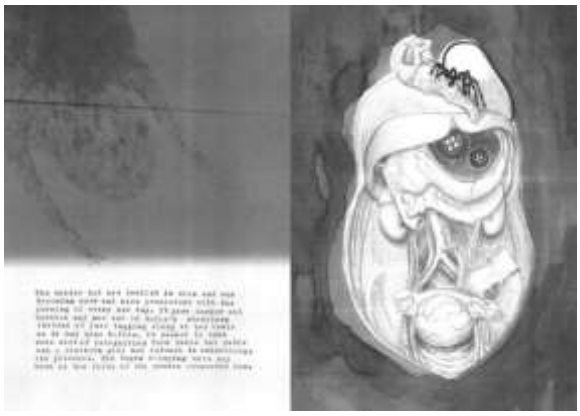

Figure 41 Stephanie Black *Little Lady Sadie* book pages 14 & 15

The process of making from which images gain their specific style was explored further in the *Dear* book. Multiples were produced using inkjet prints that were specifically water-soluble. The pages achieve their chromatographic smudges through burial, for it was relevant to the story as the repeatedly-wronged, buried, exhumed and reburied protagonist that formed the organising principle at its core (figures 42 and 43).

Repurposing fragments // Translation: Cohen/Lorca Little Viennese Waltz // Trying to secure a domestic location.

Figure 42 Stephanie Black *Dear* book exhumed after several weeks

Figure 43 Stephanie Black *Dear* book exhumed after several months

This piece of work proposed the possibility of the viewer's engagement with the work (in this case digging it up to look at it until it disintegrated and could no longer be meddled with) being as relevant to the conceptual anchor as the imagery and production of the book.

Figure 44 Stephanie Black *Buckfast*

Figure 45 Stephanie Black *Dream house*

Figure 46 Stephanie Black *Nostalgia*

Exploring conceptual anchors (still). Local area // Idle digressions // Installation ideas. Correspondences across series.

Style, therefore, can be employed tactically by the illustrator to strengthen their communications. From this angle it starts to become an autonomous issue and a communicative aspect of illustration. Experiments with taking on specific image-making processes and styles have suggested that style may be of use as a critical instrument in its own right. Figures 44-46 support this point as all utilise their making to explore and critique the topics they are concerned with. Aggressively simplistic Photoshop techniques were used to give figure 44 a vulgar edge. This was intended to highlight the portrayal of Buckfast-drinking young people in Scotland as unpalatable, in contrast to the benevolent image of a forgiving Jesus in the stained glass window of Buckfastleigh Abbey (where the monks make said drink). The deliberately obvious and crass use of Photoshop was again part of the critique of the topic at the centre of figure 45; namely that estate agents were using image manipulation services to create perfect houses. By highlighting the digital construction of the image through obvious intervention the image comments upon the practice negatively, for no amount of Photoshopping will make an average drawing exemplary. Figure 46 also uses its status as a hybrid construction (of many sugar-coated signifiers of the nostalgic past) as a comment on the production of contemporary images with the golden veneer of nostalgia. This approach begins to align style with parody as Jameson (1985) describes it, in that it requires a level of understanding and a critical (if not necessary satirical) impulse. Taking this route also helps to avoid the pitfalls of pastiche, which Jameson outlines as the empty, consumption-led counterpart to parody that Poynor (2009) also disapproves of.

Vocal range and identity

Most of the examples thus far have focused on different tonal ranges within the one voice, whereas removing the known outcome also allows for work to adopt the most appropriate form for the theme – whether this is three-dimensional, dialogical performance, intervention, or time-based media for example. This stretches Heller's analogy to incorporate a range of voices within one professional performance, thereby being unpredictable enough to tackle the problem of being typecast. My hope here is that it may help to prevent illustration consuming itself through art direction such as that Mason and Richardson spoke of. Currently, Richardson operates two separate websites for his "own work" and his commissioned illustration (although they do overlap with some pieces appearing on both). The gallery-based three-dimensional work and subtlety of the non-commissioned paper-based work would be to the benefit of both research and products of illustration, drawing as they do on the discourse surrounding spectatorship in fine art, and employing narrative in three-dimensional forms. In Richardson's words they provide more

Exploring character possibilities // Style: characterises nouns? // Digression. Opportunity. Ideational in series.

“space” for the viewer, offering a subtlety unaffordable in communicatively direct editorial work. Richardson suspects the gallery viewer might invest more time in an image than they can spare for a magazine cover that they may only glance at whilst buying cigarettes, but by maintaining different strands of his practice he is able to integrate subtlety and clarity within most of his outputs. Richardson notes that his commissioned work becomes safer and more predictable when he hasn’t enough time to maintain his non-commissioned work, and this shows he has his own strategies for avoiding the problems outlined earlier regarding illustration’s stagnation. He emphasises the importance of this to his identity as a creative practitioner when his commissioned work jumps from political to social to commercial topics within a few weeks, stating the importance of a “creative thread” to return to and help to maintain perspective in order to be able to answer “who are you within all that as a creative practitioner?” The richness of the images on Richardson’s website of “own work” is that these pieces have a different relationship with the viewer in space, adding complexity to the range of communications within our visual environment; as Richardson states “all the senses can be drawn on, not just the visual” (Richardson 2012). This is pertinent to the prevalence of illustrated goods for sale in the enterprising cottage-industry side of illustration discussed by Vormittag (2013) and Zeegen (2012). Whereas Vormittag praises the wherewithal and drive of these practitioners in generating income outside of the limited industry opportunities, Zeegen sees it as contributing to the visual lull that keeps illustration fashionable, commercial and mute. If illustrators were to embrace “illustration thinking” that was open to finding a form suitable to the project, there would be a greater understanding of working through materials (in the manner Richardson describes). “Illustration thinking” is supported by having an ongoing practice linking illustrator and world, as hinted at in John O’Reilly’s coverage of Rich de Courcy’s work. De Courcy’s experience as a skater informs how he perceives space and how he pictures his environment. O’Reilly suggests that this could broaden the perceived expertise of illustrators: “it provokes the question of the kind of knowledge and insight illustrators and image-makers can bring to commercial and professional projects”(O’Reilly 2013b). This particular kind of “illustration thinking” could inform the production of intriguing and communicative objects within the field as a counterpoint to functional objects decorated with a fashionable style.

CONCLUSION

By using research tools and terms within discussion of illustration the issue of style has been made productive to the development of the field. Whilst doing so, some of the analytic tools available for discussing the concept of style have been evaluated for their utility. Structuralism’s concepts and those of

Sideshow: project installed at ex-college as a trial // Gaps. Clusters. Vignettes // Visual correspondences across series.

the “affective turn” were found to be of varying use, in that neither addressed the production of work in a manner that focused on the illustrator’s attention to the world. However, exploring these concepts within illustration commentary enabled key themes and qualities of illustration to be unearthed. Furthermore, both signification and an anti-Kantian aesthetic are of great use in balancing the critic’s attention to both form and content within practical work, as both the “voice” and the “intelligence” of Heller & Arisman (2000) are inextricably linked within illustration. This point is addressed by using the concept of research *in* illustration (discussed in the previous chapter), as this accommodates style as the generosity with which the researcher negotiates form and content as appropriate to their engagement with (and responsibility to) the world.

By investigating these concepts through a direct theoretical intervention within practice, problems arose within the practice/audience relationship. Revising the methods addressed this to some extent, in that by adopting inductive research methods the outcomes attempt to manage all of these responsibilities and qualities of illustration defined within earlier discussion. The key aspect of this revision was the removal of the known outcome from projects, and proposing that O’Reilly’s “illustration thinking” *is* ideational. Beneficial results have been a greater variety within the style of images, more ambitious and varied forms that expand the situations available to the illustrator in which to meet viewers, and a more generous attitude towards the world and audience in its investigatory practise and diminished reliance on hackneyed clichés.

This broad-minded, research-led approach to the outcome of a brief or self-directed project enables the illustrator to adapt to a wider variety of commissioned opportunities (or be entrepreneurial and spot new ones). This is especially valuable now, when the traditional avenues within publishing and advertising are tailing off rapidly and screen-based work has yet to be fully exploited by publishers, as Vormittag outlines (Vormittag 2013). And this helps to keep illustrators more flexible than the fickleness of style dictates. As the outcomes from recent Alt/Shift/UAL events of December 2012 and April 2013 indicate, these practitioners are the ones sought by industry. As Derek Yates summarises, industry is calling for higher education in design “to avoid learning strategies that are too focused on outcome. An emphasis on finish does not enable a full understanding of the discoveries made on the way.” Further to this, an inductive research process view of illustration would fulfil the calls of industry practitioners at these events for “students to ‘take risks, make mistakes – fail’. It seems clear that deep learning and robust employability skills are developed through such experiences” (Yates 2013). The benefits of such an attitude are a

Navigation. Scale. Direction. Gaps. Light. Opacity. Proximity.

reconfigured understanding of style, one that allows for an increase in visual dynamics, a wider range of forms to engage with, and a viewer-oriented outlook. By considering it as a research process, style then becomes an indicator of deeper issues such as power relationships and responsibilities. This approach takes in the production *and* reception of illustration, in a way that is insightful for both makers and scholars. It broadens the visual languages in circulation and also recasts illustration as a world-oriented process that can be applied to a wide range of tasks. And this requires us to present our skills differently, to move away from thumbnails out of context to promote style and towards style as a function of methods. This approach would be one step towards the identification of illustration according to qualities (as Hoogslag 2012 does within editorial illustration) and methods, rather than an inhibiting conformity to any illustrative style.

The following chapter excavates and discusses these qualities, as they arose through practice. The concept of generosity from this discussion of style will be carried across to discuss the effects of revising the methods of production. The inductive research methods adopted will be seen to have major implications for communication, in particular the signifying process discussed within this chapter.

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[9] This includes a raft of assumptions about illustration needing to be a full graphic image of a certain level of polish and finish, where flatness is mandatory. This is the aspect of illustration that I refer to as 'picture-making'. The popularity of image-filtering apps such as Instagram may indicate the demand for and expectation of picture-making amongst the non-specialist public as well.

[10] Foldvari's polemic on the subject warns of the possibility that illustration will implode if it becomes too self-referential and therefore offers the following advice to students: "learn about what's going on around you - anything that takes you outside illustration. […] referencing and studying other contemporary illustrators' work is not only going to damage your own work, but it will only help to homogenise and water down illustration as a whole."

[11] Interestingly, she builds in a method of response that doesn't translate communication across modes.

[12] The stages through which a professional commission develops are described in Zeegen (2005, p36), with the term 'rough' explained as a sketch drawing together the thinking and visual forms developed through the ideas generation stage, in order to present it to the client as a work in progress for discussion.

[13] Whilst it doesn't avoid the problem of reading illustration as a function of the artist, Minichiello's own work (which he based these observations on) is of robust and challenging subject matter that may pose too strong a challenge to the distancing aspired to by Bourdieu's cultured judgement for it to be overlooked.

Obscure/reveal. Navigation //Layout specific to space. Navigation needs more direction, subtle though!

CHAPTER 3: AMBIGUITY: GAPS AND FRAGMENTS

This chapter continues the theme of generosity to explore the manipulation of products arising from the methods chapter in an audience-facing manner. The inductive research process produces an array of materials based on a theme, and these diverge from the original starting point as a result of removing the known outcome. They do not replicate the text as a visual facsimile. These materials then need to be corralled into a meaningful order and form in order to show them to their audience. As they explored the project's theme by setting out on a tangent they run in parallel to the theme, producing a gap between starting point and outcome. Therefore they need to be reprocessed and edited in line with the project's "conceptual anchor" as Mills (2006) describes; the gaps need to be negotiated and made "spannable". By leaving some of these gaps between fragments the communication becomes ambiguous, and this indirect aspect of communication will be explored within this chapter.

The idea of the gap arises in illustration commentary and as a theme within conversations. It is referred to as "space" within the work, "ambiguity", "metaphor", "work" and "poetry", and is closely linked to the issue of style in that the "work" aspect of it necessitates reward and enticement in the form of an appropriate visual language. In order to map out reference points in existing literature concerned with this approach to communication a variety of theoretical positions will be brought into discussion, which will be explored through and in turn evaluated by practice. The manner in which the gap is negotiated in practice allows for research *in* art to complement the aforementioned research *on* art and ensure that the discussion is directed towards the demands of production. The chapter then looks outwards from this point to explore what examples from illustration can offer the wider discussion of gaps and fragments in culture.

REVIEW OF GAPS

Gaps as they arise within illustration commentary

The term 'gaps' arises within graphic designer Tibor Kalman's comments on his method for making communication harder won but grasped more tightly. In this regard, Kalman states: "…sometimes if you make things clear it's not as penetrating as if you leave gaps. The trick is to make sure the gaps are spannable" (Farrelly 1998, p12). In order to achieve this Kalman would present non-analogous images and

Point of view. Space. Scale. Series. Secrets. Hidden details. Potential to miss hidden details.

text during presentations, similar in outcome to selecting from the limited pool of what you already have as a result of an inductive research process.

The concept arises within illustration commentary also; Davies (2007) gives us Andrzej Klimowski's approach to ambiguity: "'the reader is the co-creator of the book,' says Klimowski. 'I've scattered signals throughout for the reader to make their own sense of it and to set their imagination in motion.'" This is meaning that is deliberately unfixed but directed, which the reader is responsible for constructing. It is a communication that involves give-and-take on the behalf of both illustrator and viewer in a way described by Steve Braund as 'porous': "Images are porous in the way that only great writing is. Maybe only someone like T.S. Eliot could write in a way that is porous, in that it can suck in as well as give out" (Braund 2012). This is similar to the ambiguity Clifton (2012) writes of that is a feature of particularly successful illustration that creates an empathetic bond with the viewer. Russell Mills takes a similarly generous approach to the viewer when he writes:

> For me, Tristram Shandy proves that illustration can be used in a more inventive and oblique way whilst remaining faithful to the text it accompanies. It contradicts the norms of illustration, which have generally assumed that the reader is only capable of or interested in recognizing that which s/he already knows; Tristram Shandy, on the other hand, encourages the reader to exercise his/her own options in following his/her own imagination (Eno & Mills 1986, p7)

Thus bringing a more respectful approach to the viewer/reader into direct correlation with the gap between image and text. Livingstone (1991) states that: "he [Mills] thinks a much richer experience is offered through a metaphorical suggestiveness bordering on abstraction." Mills's awareness of the impact on the viewer's experience is mirrored in Catrin Morgan's comments on the production of illustrations to run alongside *The Age of Wire and String*: "The challenge was to add to a text which had been in the world as a complete, discreet thing for some time without undermining or explaining it. I wanted the illustrations to feel as though they belonged without closing the text down, or cramping the reader's imagination" (O'Reilly, 2013a).

The gap in illustration has undergone various permutations over the course of illustration's history. Holme (2012) traces it back as far as the 17th century when images concerned with alchemy were entrusted with their own share of the message. However, the gap recedes thereafter, to reappear with the abstract concepts that illustrators of the late 1950s- 1960s were commissioned to respond to (Heller 2000, p25). Henrik Drescher positions himself in relation to this kind of work as it continued into the 1970s, and traces

Navigation of space. Physical intervention required: limits audience?

his approach to making images back to the illustrators of the previous generation: “Milton Glaser, Seymour Chwast, Marshall Arisman, Sue Coe, those are my idols! And those guys paved the way for abstract concepts. [...] so I’m just following that generation, who worked in parallel to the storyline.” The phenomenon was not singular to Drescher; he recalls that “when I started doing children’s books I had an editor who said ‘you have a text, don’t illustrate it, do something that enlightens the text.’ And that was a children’s book editor! That was pretty great back then, now you wouldn’t find that.” Which leads to the current situation, and raises the question of why illustrators are called fine artists when they depart from an associated text.

Catrin Morgan does precisely that in her illustrations for *The Age of Wire and String*, and is often defined as a fine artist rather than an illustrator (O’Reilly, 2013a). Morgan comments on illustration’s capacity to work in parallel to the original source material in this way: “It was very important to me that the images created a space around the writing rather than seeming to moor it or explain it” with that space being for the viewer to wander around in (O’Reilly 2013a). Space also arises as a term in discussion with Matthew Richardson, who uses it to describe the ambiguity allowed within book covers, which is more like his non-commissioned work in that regard. Editorial work, in contrast, usually needs to be more accessible by being clear. There is a downside to this, however, as Richardson explains:

> If everything’s too explicable it leads to quite banal work. Or simple graphic depiction. Or signage. I’m interested in signage so I am not disparaging it, but it works totally differently. Iconic signs work differently, for example, an image of a man or a woman on a toilet door works for a particular reason in the same way as the word ‘man’ or ‘woman’ would work on the door. It’s visual communication, so Joe public might understand the meaning in a glance, but there isn’t going to be a much richness in their experience! (Richardson 2012).

Richardson also uses the terms “poetic” and “metaphorical” to describe the richness of works with “space” in them, as does Henrik Drescher. Braund (2012) also makes the link between pictorial ambiguity and poetry: “A picture can have open-ended signification, ok that’s not to say that poetry doesn’t have open-ended signification. Maybe poetry is a way of using written language to image.”

These comments represent a greater shift in the recent unfixing of illustration’s identity, as described by John O’Reilly : “the idea that illustration is simply pictures that visualize a given text seems like a definition belonging to a bygone age (in our crazily-fast-changing times that means 2010)” (O’Reilly, 2013b). Whilst it would appear that way to an insider, testimony from interviewees suggests that this is not happening within commissioned illustration: “Many of my contexts are editorial or advertising or design, where they

Human scale. Time in materials. Smell: gravy.

are consciously wanting to reach an audience of a specific type, in a specific way, so they wouldn't want the sort of 'slippery space' I'm trying to create as it is too open-ended" (Richardson 2012). Drescher (2012) and Vormittag (2012a) also comment on this discrepancy between what they they do as an illustrator and what the rest of the world understands by that. Braund (2012) addresses this point in a different way; instead of rebranding 'gappy' work, he is working towards creating a marketplace for it by using Atlantic Press to show what illustration could be. This chapter constitutes a small contribution to this aim by evaluating gaps and arguing for their importance within illustration, from education through to its products in circulation.

AMBIGUITY AND THE VIEWER

To examine the existing understanding of gaps and their utility I will explore the ideas suggested within illustration commentary and conversations conducted with practitioners, drawing on ideas from related areas of study that extend this discussion. By forming a cluster of ideas around gaps they can be recognised and argued for as one of the qualities of illustration proposed by Hoogslag (2012). Most of these ideas concern the reception of ambiguous work, and therefore to make the discussion relevant to the production of illustration I will complement these with reflections from research *in* art to outline how gaps are manipulated within practice. This gives a more contemporary viewpoint from which to evaluate the ideas encountered, many of which were generated in earlier research in the field of linguistics and may not be suitable for a direct application within contemporary illustration practice and discourse.

Braund identifies signification as being the mechanism at the heart of ambiguous and generous work, and proposes that the image operates in a more autonomous role in response to the idea that it can be a richer, pre-linguistic surfeit to text: "That's a nice way of looking at it, that language can do this, but illustration is this thing that overflows it" (Braund 2012). To investigate the ambiguity arising from the relationship between image and text (as in Kalman's gaps) I will draw upon Roland Barthes' *Rhetoric of the Image* which analyses the complementary roles of text and image in terms of signification (Barthes 1977). Braund's idea that images have open-ended signification is aligned with Barthes' assertion that images are "polysemous", and this idea that meaning is not inherent within the sign is a major part of structuralism as Eagleton describes it (Eagleton 1996, p110-111). Polysemy doesn't mean that any of the practitioners interviewed disregard the need for communication; on the contrary, it offers a two-way negotiation and is potentially more playful. The viewer's role in bringing interpretation to communication lies at the heart of

Different levels of engagement: smell, sight, rummaging, constructing a sequence, movement through space.

the “writerly text” of Barthes (1974), in that Barthes proposes the reader take the role of producer of the work that is a “galaxy of signifiers, not a structure of signifieds” rather than the inert and undervalued receiver of the unassailable “readerly” (classic) text. Here, Barthes proposes that the truly “writerly” text cannot be found, instead it is the act of interpretation and this is opened up by Barthes as follows: “to interpret a text is not to give it a […] meaning, but on the contrary to appreciate what *plural* constitutes it” (Barthes 1974, p5). Therefore any relevance of this idea to the production of illustration has to make do with the “moderately plural (i.e. merely polysemous)” as these texts can involve narrative, grammar and logic and a semblance of a message. These are more welcome to a study concerned with the production of illustration, and can be found abundantly in Umberto Eco’s *The Open Work*. Eco’s approach is based on similarly poststructuralist concepts relevant to the reception of ambiguity in illustration, in that both he and Barthes have shifted from Saussurian structuralism’s focus on decoding the text to a position where meaning is no longer within the text, but instead lies in the reading (Eagleton 1996, p111). Eco’s “open” work has numerous entry points for the reader who contributes their “theoretical, mental collaboration” in order to bring their own interpretation to ambiguous work, and also includes the specific category of “works in motion”, which are those without a fixed form whose structure is also open to interpretation by the performer of the work (Eco 1989, p11-12). Ambiguity for Eco also includes discussion of interference, of surplus information or “white noise” arising from a surfeit of possible meanings, and this is approached as a positive addition to communication: “the richest form of communication – richest because most open – requires a delicate balance permitting the merest order within the maximum disorder” (Ibid, p98).

The theme of interference causing ambiguity is of particular relevance here in that the products of an inductive research process (such as sketchbook pages) include all sorts of extraneous or obliquely-related information, such as doodles, trial versions, and notes to self. These need to be considered in terms of whether they will get in the way of the links that the illustrator seeks to foreground, for as Barthes (1977, p47) reminds us, communication isn’t the totality of what is transmitted, rather it is also what is received. And if what is received is a flood of white noise, the communicative intent may be thwarted. This may be inappropriate to some scenarios, whereas in others it provides an opportunity to crank up the disorder in order to enrich the communication. White (2005) recognises the role of interference in this regard, using the term “noise” to describe the ambiguities of linguistic communication in his introduction of William R. Paulson’s proposal that literature makes a feature of noise, in order to exceed the effective and informational. As White states, “literature declares its status as an intentional source of noise” and goes

Commitment: dark room is unsettling but reveals twist to the loose narrative // Disgust: flies // Visible in retrospect.

on to propose that noise is a necessary feature of the poetical and can encompass the graphic surface that is neglected by Barthes (White 2005, p13). This account links both the structuralist emphasis on the viewer's contribution to meaning with the term "poetic" arising from conversations with practitioners and also (with reference to Eco and Foucault) in Braund (2011, p430). This approach recognises that ambiguity is enjoyable, and (as appropriate to the purpose of the communication) does not need to be spanned too conclusively.

WORDS, PICTURES, AND THE GAP BETWEEN

Having established the value of ambiguity within communication, the following section will examine how it arises within examples, such as Kalman's gaps. In illustration, the presence of a companion text is a common (but not necessarily defining) feature of the work in context. This is the first and unwavering contribution, with illustration being the secondary and flexible addition according to Klimowski (2011, p41): "It is subservient to a pre-existing subject, which is often literary. An illustration accompanies another form". The comparative familiarity of the written word is described as comforting to the viewer who he "takes pity on" by making his multi-modal narrative *Horace Dorlan* equal parts text and image. And as Barthes (1977, p38) states, "all images are polysemous", so there's an element of disorder inherent in images that prompts us to find something secure to cling to within the uncertainty. Braund (2011, p438) remarks upon written text being in this privileged position, stating that: "we often approach the image with a linguistic frame of mind, expecting to decode it". The introduction of ambiguity in this relationship can be understood as the production of new metaphors, and to explain this I draw upon Roland Barthes' definitions of the constituent parts of communication and how they operate.

Barthes outlines the literal and symbolic roles of images, in that the former (what he terms the "non-coded iconic message") has a visible resemblance to what it signifies, whereas the latter represents it symbolically through connotation (the "coded-iconic message"). The literal relationship between figure 55 and the written article providing its context (it was an editorial commission for an article about the trade in drugs between Mexico and the USA) show this aspect of communication in action, in that it is a collection of nouns from the article grouped together visually. This example has been selected only for its suitability to the task of demonstrating the point that there is no gap between image and text in much commissioned illustration.

Reprocessing materials. Flexible units // Editing and reinstalling project in *Sideshow: Second Round.*

Figure 47 Tom Burns 2009

Figure 48 Tom Burns illustration for *The Great Gatsby* 2009

This approach is preferred by cautious art directors with tight deadlines as Braund states:

> When illustration tries to appeal to a wide audience, as is often the demand of commerce, the simplification of visual work *can* equate to making the signs more obvious: 'They'll only spend a few seconds looking at the image'. There is less room for ambiguity. If we are told what is, we lose the sense of play involved in wondering what might be. The viewer is provided with so many obvious signs that there is little flexibility for an alternative interpretation; the poetic function is lost, the reading brief, the experience shallow. (Braund 2011, p428)

This may seem harsh criticism in the context of a specific illustrator's piece of work, however these examples have been selected because of figure 48's sophistication in demonstrating the gap between image and text that figure 47 does not feature. Here the strengths of a project that allowed more depth and ambiguity are clear in comparison. The textures, patterns and oblique link between imagery and novel in figure 48 represent a gap between image and text that figure 47 does not have, and figure 48 is part of a series of images that has its own internal logic as a group of images accompanying an illustrated edition of *The Great Gatsby*. With reference to the previous chapter, the colour palette and textures of dilapidation that constitute the style of the images relate to the themes within the book in a tangential relationship. Keeping this text/image relationship 'gappy' in the extreme can be used as a communicative point in itself, as a visual equivalent to the style of writing. For example, Matthew Richardson comments on a book cover commission where he adopts a deliberately poetic style in his illustration (through a

Alternative version: 3d/2d switch // Smell. Material correspondences across series. Real, not referent.

montage of cryptic references) to mirror the ambiguity in the poetry it contains: “you try to unravel it and make sense of it but by the end you don’t, it’s unfamiliar” (Richardson 2012).

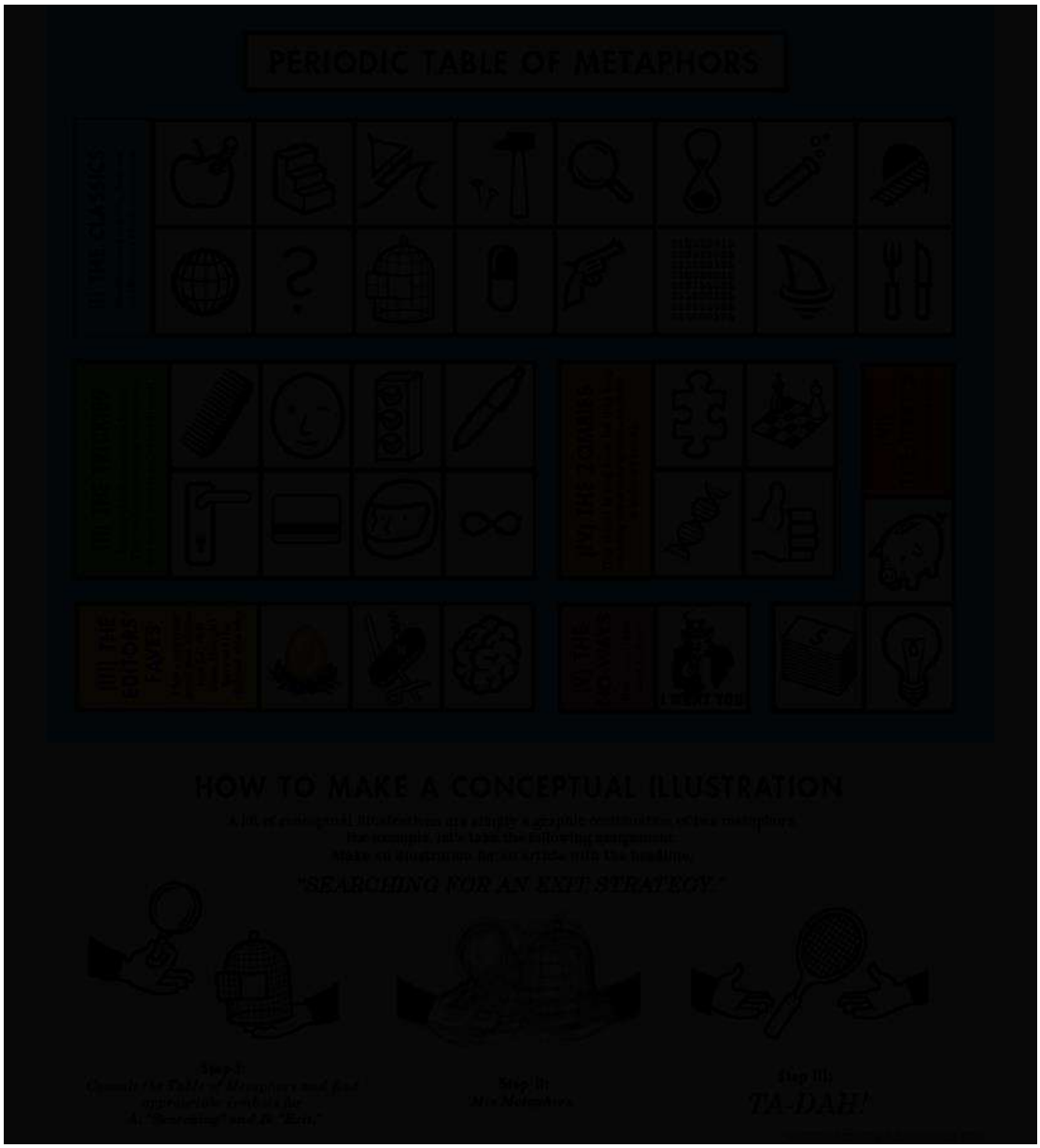


Figure 49 Christoph Niemann

Dynamics: obvious balanced with subtle // Sequence of experience: work revealed upon exit.

Barthes' *Rhetoric of the Image* is also of use in describing illustration that operates on a symbolic level without picturing what is in its companion text, rather it operates obliquely by *connoting* through the use of replacement nouns. Whilst the "connoted message" as used by Barthes relates to what is signified by the image surplus to that which it pictures, it is also useful to begin to understand illustration operating through allusion such as those metaphorical meanings mentioned by Drescher and Richardson. Images that connote rather than denote provide an even greater gap between themselves and their companion text by using substitute nouns to create a metaphor as Aristotle does in the account given by Simms (2003 p63). Images that have been repurposed from research materials, or that have diverged from the starting point operate in this way, in that they are the substitute nouns that symbolically represent the companion text. Having followed the research process of chapter 1, what is denoted in the resulting fragments may not have an iconic reference to the theme. The value in this approach is that the method produces new metaphors, tailor-made for each scenario, that make us look at the world differently. This invigorates the pool of visual metaphors already in circulation, which as Niemann's wry diagram (figure 49) shows, can become hackneyed. Furthermore, it adopts the generous approach of the poststructuralist positions of Barthes and Eco in recognising that the viewer brings their interpretation based on cultural codes to the symbolic image in order to span the gap between it and its companion text. However, this is also where the communication can require bolstering with hints to stop it from dissolving into white noise, and Barthes' explanation of the roles of text are useful in this regard.

Human scale. Mirrors: awkward self-consciousness // Alternative (book) version // One-way only.

USING TEXT TO CONTAIN AND DIRECT AMBIGUITY

Figure 50 Stephanie Black Sketchbook pages

Barthes' terms for text used in the advertising image are also of note with regard to describing gaps. Anchoring text (text which anchors the meaning of the image) is repressive, according to Barthes. But when dealing with ambiguity in images it is also a feature of the illustrator's considerate approach to the audience, as they can use it to point the viewer towards one interpretation over another and therefore try to head off total bewilderment. This doesn't necessarily clamp down on their imagination, in that in figure 50 I attempt to direct the viewer's reading by incorporating text which does not reflect what is pictured. Relay text, on the other hand, is a way of opening up gaps in communication. Barthes defines the term with reference to comics, where it advances the action between frames by filling in the gaps in the visual sequence. Here, text operates in a complementary role to the image, which is the parallel mentioned by Morgan and Drescher. Barthes states that information presented this way is "more costly" due to the effort put in by the viewer, whereas information is "lazier" when both text and image do the same thing. What is gained by using relay text is its temporal ability, in that it can fill in the gaps between images by

Expectations: White space gallery. Objects of contemplation. Too light // Parallel strands. Visual correspondences.

announcing the nature of the transition thereby making it more fluid. It is responsible for linking movement between images in this regard. This also allows the practitioner to pace the delivery of details, as prudent use of text helps to cut out some of the visual sequences that could be overly long, complicated or may simply put the sequence of pages out of kilter (disrupting a double-page spread, perhaps). Despite these abilities Barthes claims that the relay variety of text is rare in the still image, and yet it defines the parallel role of the text in conjunction with the work of those practitioners mentioned at the start of this chapter. Therefore illustration practises would appear to have merit as a contribution to this area of study and updating it to ensure contemporary relevance.

To pursue the structuralist approach to the written word, Ferdinand de Saussure's assertion that meaning is relational can be used to curate fragments into a new form. Putting aside iconic representation momentarily (for when dealing with metaphors this link with the text can't be assumed), returning to the linguistic theory reminds us that the meaning of the word does not lie in the marks on paper. Eagleton states that for Saussure the written word (the signifier, e.g. c-a-t) has an arbitrary but agreed relationship with the thing in the world (the referent, the conceptualisation of which is the signified) (Eagleton 1996, p84). To follow this line of argument, if meaning isn't inherent within an image they become flexible units. Eagleton outlines the precedent for this in poststructuralism's extension of Saussure's principle into relational meaning of words in relation to each other in that they are defined by their context, which is comprised of the words on either side.[14] The visual manifestation of this is clearest in the case of wordless novels (such as those by Klimowski, Frans Masereel and Lynd Ward) where the pictorial units are meaningful in relation to those either side of them. If signification leads outside the frame to look for symbolic meaning within the lexicon of textual possibilities held by the viewer, this aspect of reading images can be utilised purposefully in terms of making the relational aspect to present images as a project. This keeps meaning relational between images, not between image and privileged text. The outcome of this is that the materials resulting from an inductive research process can be reorganised or repurposed according to a conceptual anchor and the images they are shown alongside. Drescher's sketchbook drawings are curated around a theme in a new context in this way:

> The Turbulence book that you have is based on a bunch of notebooks of mine… Based on Hindu creation myths. That was picked by the editor, he said these drawings are like Hindu creation myths, so I read the stories and they really rang true for me. So it wasn't a big problem to base, to shape my drawings around this idea of the creation of the world. (Drescher 2012)

Post out of context: lacks reference // Book forms: alternative version ideas // 2d adaptation of 3d vignette.

Therefore the relationship between Drescher's images in *Turbulence* and the Hindu creation myths lies in their symbolic link to the unifying theme, they don't represent specific characters or scenes from their new conceptual anchor iconically. The work in linking them with each other and with the overarching concept is where the ambiguity and enjoyable "space" within the work lies.

ASSEMBLING AUTONOMOUS FRAGMENTS: GAPS BETWEEN IMAGES

By positing relay text as a linking mechanism, the mass of laterally related materials resulting from research can begin to be viewed as a group, and the question of the type of relationship between images arises. By linking images directly to one another the concepts begin to encompass some of the exciting illustration projects that have untethered themselves from a privileged text and are no longer subservient in the sense that Klimowski wrote of. They operate more autonomously, in parallel to an existing conceptual anchor (such as Paula Rego's departure from the starting point of *Jane Eyre*) or entirely solo as authorial works such as those published by Braund's Atlantic Press. The relationships between images in a body of work take different forms, and within this study they have been manifest within forms such as books, exhibitions, and a short film employed to group material.

Plans to convert materials for house installation // Idea developed further for specific environment // Possibilities.

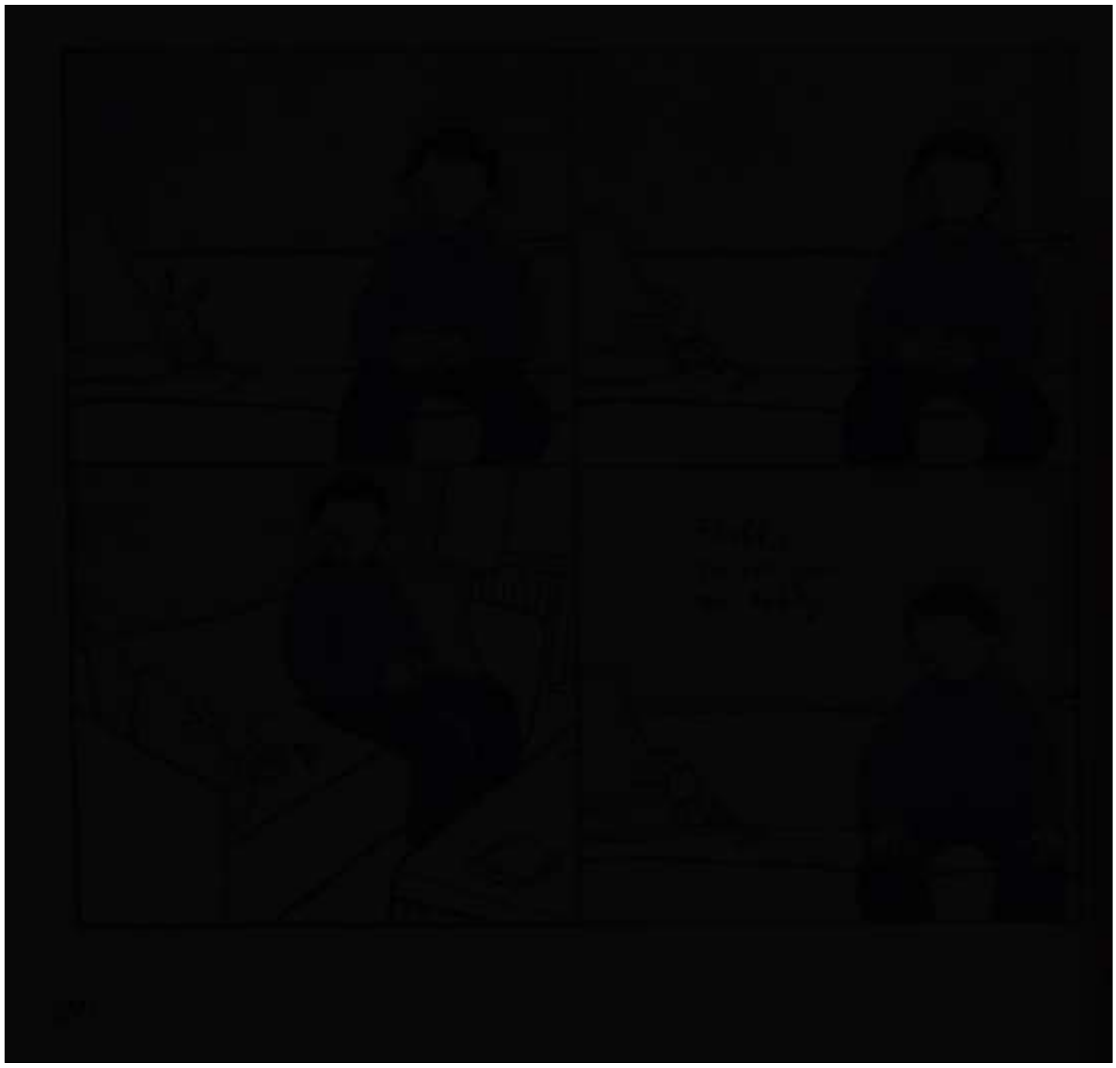


Figure 51 Simone Lia *Fluffy*

The links between images can be addressed more visually than in Barthes' essay, by employing the ideas of Keith Smith who dissects artists' books forensically. Smith offers a thorough explanation of the differences between a series and a sequence, although his use of the terms differs from common usage (for example, Bell & Sinclair 2005, p9) use the term "sequential illustration" for work that fits Smith's use of "series"). A series is defined as "constructed linking movement" such as a linear progression of images in figure 51. A sequence, on the other hand, is "constructed conditional movement" where the relationships between images are those across a group, rather than with the pictures directly preceding and following (Smith 1994, p106-7).

Further exploration of themes following reflection upon *Sideshow* trial installations.

Figure 52 Sara Fanelli Sometimes I Think, Sometimes I Am

This last definition is suited to Sara Fanelli's book (figure 52) where drawings are collated in themed chapters. Although both examples are revealed over time (rather than the whole being immediately perceived), Lia's page presents a different approach in that it attempts to manipulate the reader's perception of time as the fragments are run together in a manner akin to the sequential perception of film cells.[15]

In my ongoing self-directed narrative project images are themed and grouped in a broader sense (as per Fanelli's book), in that it utilises Braund's correspondences across the group of materials such as recurring shapes, colours and materials. It also employs references of a more metaphorical nature that bring meaning in from outside (such as Lambrini bottles in a recycling bin being a signifier). The correspondences don't have to be explained by signification, they can be material. The gravy, grubby old chair, and the handful of dead flies used in the most recent installations are all filthy - aside from what they signify. On the other hand, the book *Little Lady Sadie* was a sequence, and the SSGB chapbook and

Further phase of theme development. Filling gaps.

zine a series that *became* a sequence through visual and textual gap-spanning. The images were reshuffled, given new linked backgrounds, and new text in the form of a cut-up version of the ship's newspaper arranged to approximate the initial theme. These revisions were made in order to encourage 'noise' in the way White (2005) described it, to create greater gaps between image and text. Reworking the images was an attempt to link them sequentially in order to make them more manageable and indicate the presence of gaps as something to span.

Barthes' reference to comics is intriguing, for this is where linking mechanisms are investigated in great depth within a field with a more mature critical discourse than illustration. The gutter (the space between panels) in the comics layout is one such device that represents a literal and metaphorical gap. McCloud (1993) presents a thorough and performative explanation of the structure of comics, from which the following summary arises. The gap is where the action between panels (as indicated by relay text) occurs, and the viewer compares panels in order to see what has changed and what remains the same in order to deduce the nature of the activity occurring within the gutter.[16] The physical gap appears in comics as space, as Klimowski notes in his criticism of the graphic adaptation of *City of Glass*:

> The pages are overcrowded with imagery. Auster's novel is spacious. It speaks of loneliness. Isolation and loss… The tightness of the grid is suitable for scenes requiring fast montage, but the story also needs larger and emptier panels, which would allow the reader to slow down and reflect. (Klimowski, 2005 p36)

Within his own work he uses such techniques, and speaks of "using a double page spread as a pause" (Klimowski 2012) in order to implement the opportunities for reflection encouraged by the slowing down he finds lacking in *City of Glass.* This is related to the temporal pace of a *sequence*, but in a sequence time is dictated through a more narrative sense than that of a *series*. An example of how to negotiate the latter comes from Catrin Morgan's comments on her compositionally rhythmic series: "When I'm working on a book I pin all of the pages to the walls in my flat so that I can get a sense of how the whole thing is working. This is also a helpful way to manage pacing and to see the way in which images speak to each other across the book. Some images moved a couple of times because I realised that they needed to fall in a different place in order to maintain the book's rhythm and of course there were illustrations that I loved that had to go because they did not fit." (O'Reilly 2013a)

Anachronistic cookery book euphemisms.

Figure 53 Stephanie Black Sideshow exhibition 2010

Figure 54 Stephanie Black Sideshow: Second Round exhibition 2010

The Age of Wire and String is a series, and both published and exhibited as such. My ongoing self-directed project is also a series, and by using wall space to show the images (not just to organise the series) it utilises the physical gap of the gutter when it has been exhibited (figures 53 and 54). In this arrangement the distance between images is an important direction to the viewer in terms of making certain gaps too big to span and others being more welcoming by virtue of their proximity. Links across the series have been employed to reinforce the linked nature of the whole collection, giving variety (in the form of non-linear options) in the possible routes through the material. There is a loose narrative linking the materials, but it is largely a sequence that involves a collection of vignettes formed of images in series. There are points in the assembly of this project for exhibition where the gaps in meaning have been too great (as reported by visitors), the ambiguity too overwhelming for any sense of narrative to emerge. These are points that need linking images or relay text inserted into the physical gaps between images. They can be appraised in relation to Eco's 'open work', in that the barely discernible melody within the white noise Eco writes of has dissolved, and the precarious structure is lost. The problem here is that the body of work slips into the territory of the rudderless 'writerly text' and its manifestation in illustration as visual fodder.

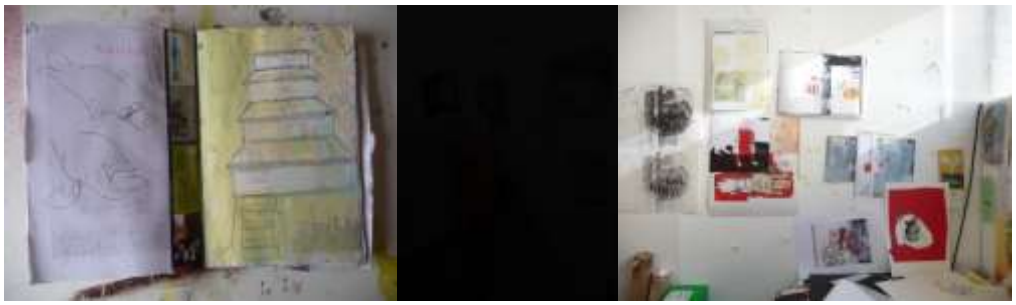
An example of where the physical gap between images has been exploited to link together images in space to form semi-narrative vignettes can be seen in the construction of a group of images surrounding

Found text = complementary text + image = new metaphors // Using light to draw // Plans for domestic installation.

the bed in figures 53 and 54. By photocopying 2 images from a sketchbook on top of one another and enlarged to A2, I had created a physical gap between either part of the tree image directly above the pillow. A pragmatic solution would have been to join them together using masking tape, but the opportunity was there to use the gap to suggest something new. A strip of musical notation (a war march) was inserted and runs through the gap to link the bed and tree images in space. The new piece proposes a tree cleaved in half and the music reinforces the links between images within the cluster without stating explicitly what they are.[17] This example shows that spanning the gaps is a process of ideational making, which may characterise 'illustration thinking' in general. In this sense it is a process of "if this were to be – what then?" as Rosenberg (2008, p113) suggests; reshuffling and altering works in order to propose new potential narratives or highlight newly discovered visual resonances.

READING GAPS: HANDING OVER THE KIT OF PARTS TO THE VIEWER

The previous paragraphs show the extent to which illustrators apply themselves to the task of trying to provide as many directions as possible that make engagement with the work a plausible activity, and yet stop short of spelling out a meaning. The end product is therefore an extensively considered, sincere and carefully executed decision to retain ambiguity; it is a reflection of the theme of generosity arising in previous chapters, rather than laziness or lack of communicative skill. Morgan's description of the work involved in producing an ambiguous series supports this, of specific note being the wish to avoid "mooring" the text as this represents the decision to cultivate viewer-oriented ambiguity rather than something to decode with reference to the author. Eco suggests in relation to Kafka's writing that its lack of mooring to a recognisable key is what makes it inexhaustible and "open". The self-directed project is similar in that it has no definitive correlation to a visual dictionary that would enable the viewer to decipher it successfully, it doesn't require prior knowledge.[18] Rather, the key is within the collection of materials, in that the viewer is given a kit of parts that is extensive enough to see signification as correspondence *within* the materials provided. Furthermore, a fully deciphered piece of work isn't the point of *The Age of Wire and String*, or my ongoing project. Ambiguity and being unsure are viable outcomes of deciphering, as relevant to the research approach. It is also appropriate to the project, in that the signifiers encountered in the research (artefacts left in the house by a previous owner) are interpreted on the basis of assumption and inference, and to assume a position of authority and knowledge in the retelling would be disingenuous. Eco's words on the wider ramifications of Kafka's wilful opacity support my argument for this to be a feasible position to adopt: "an ordered world based on universally



Domestic environment possibilities for parallel sequences // Return to themes within materials found // Overlap.

acknowledged laws is being replaced by a world based on ambiguity, both in the negative sense that directional centers are missing and in a positive sense, because values and dogma are constantly being placed in question." His latter point about work that questions power is useful in arguing for a purpose for ambiguity in illustration, thereby reclaiming it from 'ambient illustration'. It is also entirely in keeping with illustration's purpose being to illuminate and make us consider the world differently.

Using Eco's description of the Open Work as one that is handed over to the performer as a construction kit gets to the heart of the flexibility of the materials produced through an inductive process. These may mean something to the illustrator in terms of the sequence they were produced in (as figures 53 and 54 showed) but they are a flexible kit of parts that can be reorganised. Matthew Richardson's approach is flexible in this regard, in that he wouldn't be averse to redesigning or changing the layout of his own collage to fit a new purpose such as a book cover (Richardson 2012). He sees this flexibility as related to his work as a graphic designer, and it appears to resonate with Eco's description of the maker of "open" work, for "he seems to be unconcerned about the manner of their eventual deployment" and changing the work in such a way sees it in keeping with the "literally 'unfinished'" work that Eco sees composers such as Stockhausen giving to the performer of the work "more or less like the components of a construction kit" (Eco 1989, p4). However, as Morgan's comments and the production of the ongoing self-directed project show, it is anything but a lack of concern and this aspect needs to be repositioned as a feature of the researcher's generosity and responsibility. Richardson's lack of concern is for the fact of the work being repurposed and reworked, rather than for how it is produced or functions. It is this feature that renders Barthes' concept of the 'writerly text' problematic to illustration, despite the radical shift in power that it grants to the reader at the expense of critics and authors in their privileged cultural positions.

PROBLEMS WITH WRITERLY TEXTS: A WARNING FROM HISTORY!

Whilst the majority of sources consulted (in published form and conversations) view ambiguity as a positive aspect of illustration and is generous towards its viewers, a degree of hesitancy comes from Livingstone (1991) and Vormittag (2012a). The former voices his concern that audiences may not be prepared for ambiguity in the work of Russell Mills, whereas Vormittag brings a similarly communication-minded perspective from a different angle. Drawing on her practice and reading within the area of dialogical art (in particular the writing of Grant Kester), Vormittag states:

Sugar paper. Drawing with light. Decay // Exhibition invitation? // Expanding themes.

> I used to think that was really, really important to have ambiguity. Or a level of it… I guess it's about the level of ambiguity. Because one of the things Grant Kester was talking about is how ambiguity has become this big celebrated thing in the art world. And anyone who gets cross with ambiguity or with artworks that don't disclose themselves readily is labelled a philistine. So that people who are from a different social background who are of the disposition to go to galleries are likely to be confronted by something that makes them feel alienated, or locked out. Or dumb for not getting it. I don't think there's a simple solution to that question… you just have to pitch it in a way, at a point that you think is appropriate. (Vormittag 2012a)

So one person's "open" work is another's confusing, exclusive mess. This may be appropriate for work with a very specific and niche audience in order to be effective, but outside of that scenario presenting work knowing that the majority of viewers feel silly for not "getting it" doesn't sit well with the generous and communicative aspects of illustration. The broader impact of overly ambiguous ("writerly") work can be seen in recent illustration history, and is certainly not what is being argued for here. The work of Russell Mills in particular is worthy of scrutiny here, in its broader technological context of the late 1990s and the prevalence of Adobe Photoshop within design studios. Having dropped figuration from his work in favour of the "metaphorical suggestiveness bordering on abstraction" (as Livingstone 1991, p58 puts it), Mills presents the viewer with work that acts as a stimulus to individual interpretation. In this regard, his work sits favourably with Eco's "open work" in that it proposes *some* order, but this is done with a delicate enough touch to allow the maximum number of interpretations (figure 55). But with meaning slipping away in perpetual deferral in an extreme manifestation of the writerly text, Mills' output came to be mimicked for its style.

House installation ideas // Extending visual symbolism // Expanding materials.Colour correspondence.

Figure 55 Russell Mills The Downward Spiral. 1994 Cassette album slipcase and insert. 11cm x 7cm folded

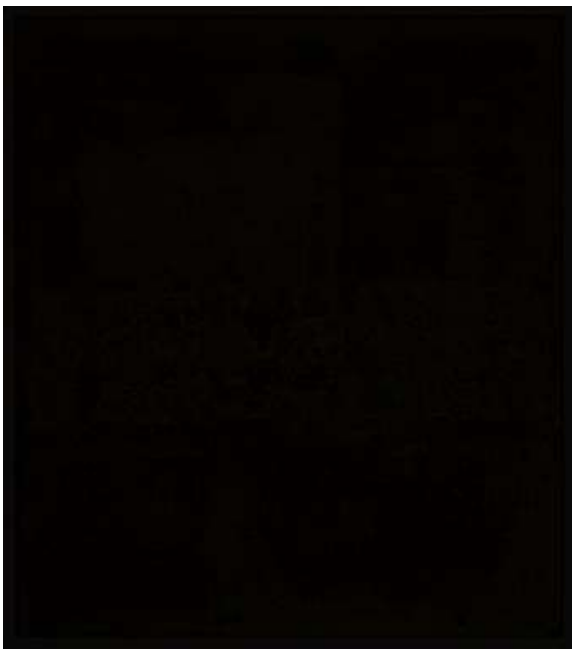


Figure 56 Anonymous wbk084.jpg Dimensions variable. Year unknown. From www.illustrationworks.com (2009)

These derivatives (figure 56) proved highly employable in any context as their absence of signifiers (the specific details that made figure 55 relevant to its application, such as salt, rust, blood, and a dead butterfly) renders them appropriate to any situation or subject matter. In broadening their potential market, their almost total versatility fell prey to Eco's white noise problem: "an excess of equiprobability does not increase the potential for information but completely denies it" (Eco 1989, p98). This was at a point in time when stock illustration profited from and contributed to dwindling fees and opportunities, and the graphic designer was able to produce facsimiles of work such as Mills' using software such as Adobe Photoshop (outlined by Poynor 1999, p59). The combined impact of these factors was that illustration suffered something of an identity crisis in that it was perceived as and therefore became more "voice" than "intelligence" in Heller's words of that time, and notably explored in Mason's *A Digital Dolly?* (Mason, 2000a). This is the position outlined a decade later by Bowman (2008) and Poynor (2009), and again by Zeegen (2012). Therefore the positive approach to ambiguity arising within illustration discourse is served well by Eco's "open work" with its emphasis on flexibility (but not at the expense of accessibility), but the need for balance of form and concept renders Barthes' "writerly text" too nihilistic for the production of illustration. It isn't so much a gap as a futile void where links between illustrator, subject

Ongoing practice // Picture making.

matter and viewer get lost, and is easily co-opted for immediate financial gain at the cost of longevity of the field.

GAPS IN ILLUSTRATION CONTRIBUTING TO CULTURAL DEBATE

So far this chapter has addressed ways of describing the gap by bringing concepts from outside illustration into the discussion to help explore and explain how it is negotiated in the production of work and its relation to the viewer. The ideas from linguistics and cultural studies borrowed to do so have been evaluated in terms of the needs of production, and the discussion has also stepped back to consider the implications of such concepts for the health of the industry. This is relevant to the ideas' utility and also because industry is ailing again and requires supportive suggestions. Having established the favour that gaps are greeted with in illustration commentary and their parallel existence in wider critical discourse, we can examine what happens within the gap and use this to reflect upon how illustration examples can contribute to discussion of broader cultural shifts. To do so I will explore the impact of fragments and gaps as manifest in the work of specific practitioners.

Figure 57 Henrik Drescher Turbulence

Figure 58 Henrik Drescher Turbulence

In order to span the gaps between sketchbook fragments in *Turbulence,* Drescher has employed subtle links across the series, such as the written snippets introducing Hindu mythology that serve to anchor the sketchbook fragments under a unifying theme, lasercut pages acting as chapter breaks, and smoother sequences featuring a man with a boat (figures 57 and 58). These elements give an identifiable structure to the book, and such rhythms within the series are comparable to the mnemonic that Peter Storkerson

Appropriate recording of use of space // Extending themes // Return to subject matter. Opportunity.

(2006) writes of in *Communication Research: Theory, Empirical Studies, and Results*. He argues that such patterns (as found in songs and poems) help us to remember things even if we don't understand them at the time, such as the lateral ruminations of Drescher's sketchbook. Not only that, but if we persevere and *do* draw a narrative interpretation from the collection of images and text we remember the meaning more successfully. Storkerson suggests that "by making a learning task more difficult, learning is slower, but what is learned is better retained" (Storkerson 2006, p177). By making the images and text cryptic Drescher gives us a lot of work to do, but the task is surmountable and made compelling by the visual richness of his visceral images. If Storkerson's findings are accepted the benefit of this approach is that it extends the temporal experience for the viewer by exercising their cognitive functions.

The role the viewer plays in creating the narrative or recognising the rhythms in Storkerson's experiments is useful to note here, as it might work to alleviate some of the concerns raised by Fredric Jameson regarding the fragmentation of time being a feature of postmodernism and its cultural forms (Jameson, 1985). Furthermore, exploring Jameson's ideas in turn allows us to reflect upon how illustration might be a useful cultural form to consider whilst formulating definitions of different epochs, given that different ways of conceptualising and experiencing time have been used to define periods such as modernism, postmodernism, and attempts to characterise the present. In brief, Jameson laments postmodernism's focus on quotations and references that don't go any further than mimicking the surface of past forms – they have none of the wit or understanding of parody, and are therefore limited to pastiche. This transforms history into a resource to be ransacked and consumed, rendering it a selection of unlinked moments. The impact of this is that capitalist thought triumphs by emptying out any troublesome political meaning the work may have and instead making it available for painless consumption without commentary, much like the adoption of propaganda styling within advertising. And yet despite the lack of connection with continuous historical time, Jameson defines the postmodern cultural form as a temporal one. It seems from the examples he discusses that we can only recognise the fragmented form in sequential works where the fragments are gathered together to emphasise their discontinuity.

Public-facing work. Payment in kind for exhibition space // Collaborative drawing: methods. Mistakes. Unknown.

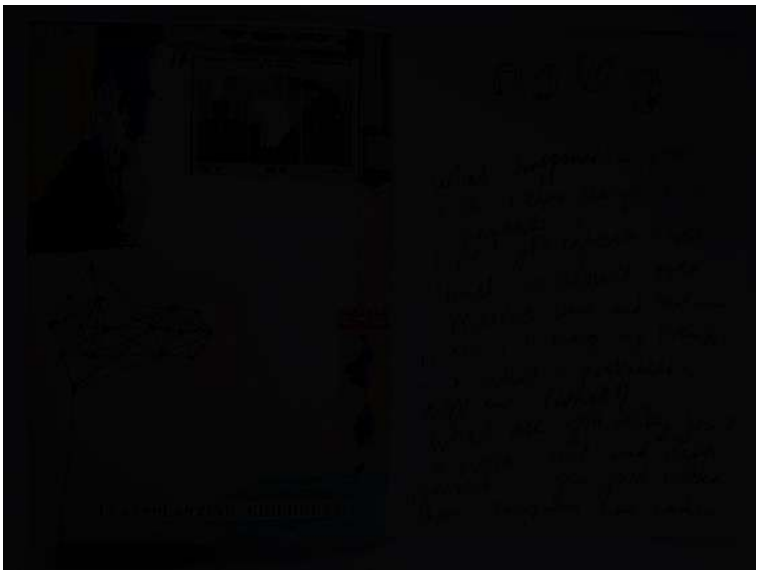


Figure 59 Nick White (2009) Stuff I Found (On My Desk).

Figure 60 Nick White (2009) *Stuff I Found (On My Desk).* As described on his website's shop page: "'Stuff I Found (On My Desk)' is just that, a collection of drawings from sketchbooks, off cuts, bits of collage and text that were found on or around my desk that ended up collated in this here book-zine."

Self-published collections of sketchbook snippets produced by illustrators give us examples of this within contemporary practice, the prevalence of zines at graphic arts fairs being a case in point. Whilst these are commendable for their entrepreneurial spirit, the lack of organising principle (such as an identifiable theme) in some creates products with unspannable gaps, which raises questions as to their impact upon the viewer's experience and upon the industry as Lawrence Zeegen's agitated (and agitational) response to the *Pick Me Up* fair of 2012 acknowledges (Zeegen 2012). I would argue, however, that examples such as Nick White's zine in figures 59 and 60 often have the twofold purpose of being funny (in an offhand manner allowed by the flimsy form) and expanding the field of possible visual languages circulating. The images in figures 59 and 60 are less tidy than much of White's commercial work shown on his website, and the zine allows personal work to circulate (club night flyers and his website being other examples of how else this work might be seen) and to do the job of extending the perception of his methods.

Nick White's zine and Drescher's *Turbulence* can be viewed as an example of the fragmentation of time that Jameson writes of, and how both Drescher and his audience have compiled a collection of fragments is politically important, if we consider the dulling effect of fragmentation upon subversive content (or *any*

Drawing trip. Collaborative drawing // Finding referent for invented signifier! La Rochelle museum of automata.

contextually-relevant content, for that matter), which in turn would diminish the variety of illustration with repercussions for how it relates to its audience. Jameson uses Lacan's understanding of schizophrenia as a disorder of language to explain his characterisation of cultural forms as temporal, and is scrupulous in outlining his use of the term as a purely cultural proposition. Lacan uses a structuralist understanding of language to explain that the schizophrenic's dislocated sentences are broken down into the individual units (signifiers) they are built from, which prohibits the experience of the flow of the sentence, of language as something with a past and future. The effect of this on the schizophrenic, as Jameson summarises, is that the disjointed signifiers become frighteningly material, in that they become literal. This experience might sound familiar to the viewer faced with an overly complex visual sequence (such as figures 53 and 54), whose reading of it is limited to a formal analysis of the illustrations as the gaps are too large to be spanned. Or the collection of unrelated, unexplained works in a zine (such as figures 59 and 60) that can become visual noise when divorced from purpose. But Drescher has used visual methods (structure, order, and visual relationships between images, in figures 57 and 58) combined with text to span the gaps and make the book a more coherent entity, and in light of Storkerson's findings we viewers make an effort to use narrative to formulate a meaningful reading from what is presented. It is a challenge, but we can use narrative to span the gaps, with enough signposts from Drescher. So all might not be lost in the way that Jameson foretold, for even when faced with fragments we are skilled enough to span the gaps and make fluid time from a collection of unitised parts. Furthermore, the use of fragments with spannable gaps allows us as viewers to be flexible and dictate our experience of time. Therefore these examples from illustration can be used to support a case for us not being limited by the capitalist thought of postmodernism, and at the same time illustration discourse made a small step in this direction in rejecting the short-term commercial gain of overly ambiguous ambient illustration in favour of longevity of the industry. This doesn't represent a regressive move towards modernism, with its measured and strictly governed timetables where our time is assigned a value by our employers and thoroughly tangled up with social class. These examples provide respite from that for a brief moment, and at the same time retain some of modernism's positive (albeit possibly misguided) hope for a better future delivered to the masses by art and design, in that the overriding sentiment here is to "meet the minds and needs of other people" as David Smith put it.

Filling gaps // Ongoing practice. Project overlap // Commissioned record cover: translation.

CONCLUSION

In emphasising the importance of an inductive research process in the methods chapter, and the benefits of using materials produced by this process in chapter 2, the outcome is a messy heap of materials, of fragments, of all different dimensions. The process of editing these into an outcome clustered around the project's conceptual anchor produces gaps between this and the illustrator's contribution. If these gaps in meaning are retained, there is a space for the viewer to construct an interpretation based on the kit of parts, as found in Umberto Eco's "open" works. This makes the message ambiguous; a concept which has been identified here as a prominent strand of illustration discourse, both in conversations conducted with practitioners and within published commentary on illustration. The concept of ambiguity includes both fragments produced and the gaps between them, and this chapter has explored both from the position of producer and viewer. In doing so, the idea of ambiguity has been addressed together with the previous chapter's concept of generosity in order to make it both accessible and difficult. It is not a case of adopting a lowest-common-denominator approach to meaning and is more respectful of the viewer than that. In fact, ambiguity is an aspect of illustration that shows it addressing the viewer as something other than a consumer. For example, book cover designs such as Klimowski's position the viewer as an intelligent reader able to develop their own understanding of the image during their reading of the book.

The illustration industry also benefits from arguing for gaps, for in order to produce gaps between images I am promoting the case for project-based illustration which produces the body of work necessary to do so. The commercial benefit of this is indicated by Christoph Niemann's comments on illustration's ability to transcend stock alternatives:

> there is definitely a ton of pretty bland, stock photo driven stuff out there. But there are two things that make me hopeful for our profession: one, with a bit of luck, you can cheat because your chances of of finding a decent image on the web are pretty good. But as soon as you need a second image, because you want to tell a story of some sort, it gets really tricky. That's when you have to generate your own thing and can't rely on what is already out there. (Niemann 2013)

Viewed from this angle, the illustrator's ability to generate a series or sequence of works fills the commercial niche that Niemann speaks of – that which stock images cannot do. By learning their own ways of negotiating an ambiguous, 'gappy' relationship between images and conceptual anchor, illustrators can rescue ambiguity from the futility of the "writerly text" in its manifestation as stock illustration's cheap visual noise, and claim their own territory within the commercial sale of images. Whilst

Inspiration from referent // Ongoing parallel practice // Extending themes: possible relevance.

doing so, the practical methods contribute new metaphors to our visual environment, giving us different ways to conceptualise the world other than the tired clichés turned up by keyword image searches. Self-publishing and independent publishers have been identified by Braund (2012) as a practical mechanism for broadening the field for such work, thus broadening the range of opportunities for illustration regardless of what economic and cultural limits there are on the amount of commissioned work available.

In a more reflective vein, gaps have been discussed in the context of the poetic, and in terms of generous openness. Gaps have been spanned by using Smith's strategies and informed by McCloud's toolkit from comics. They therefore have become temporal, in that in comics, sequential illustration and in Storkerson's muti-modal texts we have seen the viewer making time from fragments. The result of this is that fragments have been rescued from the dulling effect Jameson writes of. By exploring illustration, fragmented postmodern works can again be seen as political. For example, Sue Coe's collection of sketchbook excerpts at the end of her book *Dead Meat* doesn't have its subversive content nullified by being comprised of fragmented visual materials. As Eco noted, ambiguity allows values and dogma to be cast into doubt, and this is also the aim of political illustration works such as Coe's. By adopting a poetic approach to fragments and the gaps between them the illustrator can address the problems Jameson raises regarding time and content, and enrich the experience as Storkerson describes.

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[14] Eagleton notes that this is where the signifier becomes divorced from the signified, and meaning therefore is "never fully present in any one sign alone, but it is rather a kind of constant flickering of presence and absence," (Eagleton 1996, p111)

[15] This analogy doesn't hold for all comics, however. As Thomas Bredehoft notes it is when comics depart from the cinematic idea of time that they discover the unique strengths of the medium (Bredehoft 2006, p873).

[16] A technique used to some extent by Hogarth in his *Harlot's Progress* sequence of prints.

[17] Which is why I have skirted around the issue of this cluster of images' conceptual anchor. There was one whilst making parts of the group, but it is unrecognisable in the outcome and only tangentially related to the overall project. To explain it would be to claim the meaning of this group as an author, rather than creating greater potential for viewers' own meanings by strengthening the links. Which still needs to be done.

[18] Eco notes that medieval allegorical work required prior familiarity with the symbols used.

Ongoing practice: potential euphemisms // Use of exhibition space.

CHAPTER 4: SPACE AND TIME

The underlying purpose of this chapter is to pursue the concept of time that arose through the practice-led methods of the first chapter, and to pursue this through wider cultural debates in order to suggest that a practice-*based* research paradigm for illustration could be entertained. The role of illustration objects as performative of their communications will be considered as a response to Haseman's (2006) performative research paradigm explored in the first chapter. Therefore this chapter is concerned with *how* illustration meets its viewer to inform their experience in a continuation of the contributory role identified in the previous chapter, in contrast to examples from other disciplines that fail to communicate an experience of time effectively.

The strategy employed to do so involves taking practice further into theoretical territory to show how provocative ideas arising from practice-led research can be. Then the chapter will suggest that ideas *enacted by* practice can be provocative also, so that illustration research ought to be considering practical research outcomes as equal and complementary to written ones. Initially, the trajectory taken by this chapter takes the concept of time arising from the viewer's perception of fragments and gaps from the previous chapter and uses it to reflect upon illustration's relationship with the viewer, and also uses it as a lens through which to view the broader implications of illustration's temporal achievements by comparing them to those of other fields. The main focus in this regard is a continuation of how illustration extended Jameson's ideas concerning the fragmentation of time, as this same writing has been used by Nicolas Bourriaud within contemporary fine art to make a case for the time we live in being defined as "Altermodern". Here I will trace an alternative trajectory for illustration, one that is based on practice and the methods explored within the first chapter. In this regard it shows the benefits of those chapters' claims for illustration research to include practice-led methodologies. To do so, the discussion will take in the specific temporal achievements of sequential illustration, and then look outward towards the relevance of these to modern, postmodern and altermodern definitions of time in relation to creative works. By taking practical work as its guide into such theoretical territory, this chapter will show that illustration can be critically engaged in a practice-*based* manner and a valuable contribution to discussion of broader contextual concerns including philosophy, technology, fine art theory and the role of the viewer, and even the definition of the time we live in. The specificity of illustration examples explored in

Procured grave tat // Minotaur exhibition, Old Vic Tunnels. Space. Installation. Experience. Immersion.

this regard shows the field to be of greater importance to wider cross-disciplinary cultural discussions than its current under-scrutinised and under-theorised position allows.

The relevance of this chapter's focus on time and space is the shift in context for illustration. Time is becoming a feature of illustration's context as our visual landscape changes - from static display to moving, time-based displays such as those of smartphones, tablet PCs and digital billboards. These newer platforms bring changing expectations of intervention within the form, which will be addressed in an extension of the previous chapter's reference to Eco's (1989) 'works-in-motion'. This chapter doesn't engage with digital developments directly, rather it is focused on the more tangible work in sequence and series that the practical element of this project was concerned with. Furthermore, this kind of illustration often manipulates time with more grace than some slightly awkward digital examples such as the screens on cashpoint displays and digital posters on bus stops and London's rail and tube stations.[19] It must be acknowledged that the occasions where such displays seemingly move for the sake of being able to do so (where the elements of their design move over time but do not always develop the content over time) may be a teething problem. In contrast, sequential illustration provides complex examples of how time can be made multi-directional within the form of the book. The benefit of examining how illustration achieves its temporal manoeuvring is that methods and principles identified may be transferable to other media such as these digital contexts, and any theory introduced can be rooted within concrete and accessible examples. This chapter will extract relevant lessons from non-digital illustration in order to encourage a deeper understanding of how illustration negotiates time, as a significant characteristic of the field and one that allows us to explore the work's respectful relationship with the viewer by way of Henri Bergson's "duration" and free will.

The issue of time also arises in illustration commentary and conversations conducted, further marking out its relevance to developing illustration discourse. This chapter will begin with a review of such references, such as Sue Coe's suggestion that "art is about slowing down time, not speeding it up". This forms the basis of many discussions of time within illustration writing and also introduces the theme of this chapter: that of manipulating time in the pacing of illustration in groups, series and space (Heller 1999, p21). A review of relevant practices will follow, to establish the practical tools employed to do so. In order to explore the manipulation of time in greater depth, comics discourse that explores how space and time are negotiated on the page will also be utilised, and recent developments where comics artists have extended the principles of comics to incorporate three-dimensional exhibition space and objects have been

Wandering Line exhibition. Work given facsimile context: sketchbook-esque form. 3d objects.

influential here. This extends the discussion into the viewer's experience of illustration in three-dimensional form, including both objects and spaces. Having established the spatial principle as a method by which time is manipulated, the use of three-dimensional space in illustration (with a focus on sequential narrative) will be surveyed with special attention paid to the viewer's experience of time and space therein. How it negotiates the use of the third dimension (in the form of communicative objects and exhibition spaces) is the key factor, and this chapter will argue that illustration can offer performative objects and spaces that do what they propose.

There is a need for this attention to the viewer's engagement with form at a time when the contemporary illustration marketplace adopts three-dimensional merchandise as illustrators develop employment opportunities in response to changes in the traditional commissioned industry, as Zeegen (2012) and Vormittag (2013) note. Conversations with Braund and Drescher support this, in that they and Vormittag note the necessity for illustrators to generate work for themselves. Therefore the variety of forms and contexts relevant to illustration is expanding beyond the traditional, static, two-dimensional printed or on-screen image, and our understanding of how illustration objects do and could operate must reflect this. This chapter therefore addresses the practical concerns arising from earlier chapters' call for removing the known outcome from illustration and encouraging a variety of forms. In doing so I am arguing for illustration to adopt communicative forms as outcomes, not just an approach to objects that sees them as goods by having had illustrations applied to them.

The performative forms investigated here also go some way to offering a solution to the problem of documenting and circulating boundary-stretching works that may involve three-dimensional forms and spaces or dialogical aspects, thus widening expectations of what illustration is and can be in response to the concerns of the chapter on style. Therefore this chapter contributes an argument for illustration practice to be a valuable area of study with its own subtly-different discourse to other overlapping practices (such as dialogical and relational art, in this case); one that contributes appropriate products to circulate its ideas – be they commercial illustration in more varied forms or performative research outcomes where the argument lies within how the practical work operates. In this respect, the practical avenues opened up by the methods chapter can be seen to have led to theoretical contributions that validate this methodology for producing critical illustration practise.

Gap filling

A REVIEW OF TIME IN ILLUSTRATION DISCOURSE AND CONVERSATIONS

The concept of time occurs repeatedly within writing on illustration, with the temporal qualities of work and its context being intertwined. For example, Andrzej Klimowski comments that his working methods are a response to the context in which he lives and within which his work circulates:

> In recent years I have become aware of the quickening pace of fashion and technology. The media world is expanding at breakneck speed and we are drowning in an excess of information, much of which is slight and of no lasting value. My response to this excessive output is to simplify my working methods. (Bell & Sinclair 2005, p140)

Further comment comes from Steve Braund in relation to the choice of a 1920s/1930s ocean liner as the logo for Atlantic Press: "That's harking back to the 20s and 30s, which is […] perhaps also making a statement that there was a time when things were slower and people would take two weeks to get to New York. I suppose it comes across in the article [referring to Braund 2011], that a lot of what I do is probably pushing that message because I think the world is dangerously accelerating beyond the point of return" (Braund 2012). Drescher (2012) also refers to today's world as "fast" and laments the diluting effect that this has on the depth of commissioned illustration, in that self-promotion via the internet has made hiring of *anyone* to do the job easier for art directors. At the same time art directors have become less powerful, and Drescher sees the result of this being a lack of quality control within a visual landscape where the turnover of images is so high and their relevance fleeting.[20]

Braund refers to Sue Coe's comment (in Heller 1999, p21) about "slowing down time" to make the link, as Klimowski does, between illustration methods and time. In Coe's comments the link is a causal one between images and the experience of time. Coe's point is taken up by Rob Mason who continues the idea of illustration offering an alternative temporality to the world it exists within, in order to argue for the visual equivalent of slow food. His solution, as discussed in earlier chapters, is to change our understanding of the word 'picture' from noun to verb. The intended effect of this is to see illustration as the creation of images that refer to external factors (issues in the world, as discussed in earlier chapters) *and* provide the space to consider these factors whilst being unsettled, challenged or provoked by what the image was saying about them (Mason 2000b, p70). The analogy with fast food is a recurring one, with both Drescher (2012) and Braund (2011) utilising it to define the shallower end of the market. The negative angle given to this analogy is evident in Drescher's comments on the long term benefit of such food (work): "that's what you want! But obviously it's not going to sustain you in the long run". Richardson

Gap filling. Picture making.

(2012) notes that the desire for fast images has an impact on the layers of complexity that the illustrator can fit into an image, saying about his commissioned work: “in a lot of illustration it’s sometimes hard to bring in that balance because it has to work so specifically, so quickly”, thereby making the speeding up of both illustration and context mutually dependent.

However, Braund contributes to the discussion of *how* to address this point (as seen in Klimowski’s comments) when he elaborates on Coe’s statement in his paper *Slowing time down: correspondences, ambiguity and attendance.* Here he outlines the ways in which the construction of images can operate to slow the audience down with the aim of offering a richer contemplative experience.

> We live in an accelerated culture, and the planet and its systems, and the population and its systems, *our systems*, are starting to dissolve under the strain. We are hard-wired for meaning, but *fast-meaning* like *fast food* is proving very unhealthy; only the superficial and vacuous arise from it. More complex ideas require their audience to slow down through the act of reading them, to take time to unpack and consider their meaning. (Braund 2011, p428)

Within this passage Braund links the richness and complexity aimed for by Richardson in his non-commissioned work with the slowing down of Coe, and his paper goes on to give examples of images that accomplish Coe’s slowing down time by incorporating layers of meaning. But this is only half of the task, for (as the ambivalence in Drescher’s comments reveals) speeding up the experience of communication isn’t entirely bad on its own, rather it is more a case of allowing variety in the dynamics of the pacing: “I think it’s speed of presentation, I don’t think it’s speed of thought. Things that you see that are fast, they aren’t necessarily shallow. It’s just that you don’t have time to study them. Like my books, you can show them to someone really fast and they’ll go: ‘Yeah! Cool!’ But they’ll miss the point” (Drescher 2012). He also comments favourably on fast internet-specific work emerging as an interesting new avenue for production: “you’ll get stuff that’s really *cool* and really interesting like animation, really fast, but it’s not slow. It’s a whole new direction, which is very interesting.” So rather than seeing speedy pacing as entirely negative for communication it might be more prudent to remember that the number of times you can return to a piece of work are unlimited, therefore multi-layered communications may employ speed in their delivery.[21] In his comments on working for PBS on educational television projects 20 years previously Drescher links slowness of delivery with subtlety of communication: “I used to sit in these meetings with these writers I would think ‘guys can’t you slow down?! Why does it have to be so fast and to the point? Why can’t you be a little more subtle?’” (Drescher 2012). Braund comments on the spread of the expectations Drescher spoke of throughout the illustration industry: “the current demand for ease of

Possibilities in current affairs, historical sources and found source material.

communication may be overemphasizing the desire-for-clarity aspect, undermining the potential of illustration to be so much more" (Braund 2011, p430). Instead, Drescher and Braund's Atlantic Press alike utilise the form of the artist's book which is flexible enough in its form and expectations of it to allow him to manipulate time in the pacing of the work. Therefore these aren't works *about* time, but works that are temporal in their operation. The principles used within practice to do so will be dissected within the following section.

TEMPORAL TOOLKIT: A REVIEW OF TIME IN COMICS, ARTISTS BOOKS AND MY PRACTICE

The lack of requirements placed upon artist's books has enabled them to encompass a range of experimental approaches to the negotiation of time, and provide commentary on this aspect of their production and reception. Likewise, discourse surrounding the production and theoretical analysis of comics is well-developed and overlaps with the concerns of illustration in that it is concerned with the temporal qualities of sequential imagery in (usually) book form.

Figure 61 Frans Masereel Die Sonne (excerpt) 1921

In Frans Masereel's wordless narratives the effect of Smith's (1994) linking and conditional movement can be seen to alter the pacing of the narrative. *Die Sonne* shows that action and reading speed up when the action is produced by linked rather than conditional movement between images. Masereel includes recognisable elements from the previous image in order to securely link the two in time and in relation to one another's location, such as the church spire in figure 61. Masereel speeds up the action by collapsing the distance between the two locations into the margin between one page and another.

Visual correspondences // Project overlap // Current affairs.

Figure 62 Frans Masereel Passion d'un Homme (excerpt) 1918

In contrast, the conditional links between related images in Masereel's *Passion d'un Homme* (figure 62) don't have an indication of the rate at which time passes, ultimately making it of a slower pace. Masereel's reliance on correspondences across the series also slows the act of reading, by encouraging the *visual* reading that Kulman credits with slowing the viewer down: "The wordless story places emphasis on the importance of being able to read a picture [...] you have to spend time making sense of the illustrations and visuals, allowing more participation and reflection" (Kulman 2009, p58). Conditional movement is the principle adopted throughout most of the practical work undertaken for this study, for that reason.

As the previous chapter discussed, the spatial quality of a story told on paper is what allows such flexibility with time, and this aspect is identified by Will Eisner and Scott McCloud (with reference to Einstein) as a unique and highly complex strength of comics (Eisner 1985, p28; McCloud 1993, p101). Both writers explain that the form is particularly adept at playing tricks with time because space and time are the same thing in comics. For example, a large space on the page represents a greater length of time, as McCloud shows in figure 63.

Ongoing practice: current affairs + potential metaphors.

Figure 63 Scott McCloud. A demonstration of the principle that space and time work together in comics

The panels shown represent fragments linked with text and temporally influenced by layout. Figure 63 also supports Klimowski's suggestion that an image showing a vast space can be used as a pause within a sequence. The extent to which sequential imagery can use the comics grid to meddle with time on the two-dimensional page is explored at length by Thomas Bredehoft and Hillary Chute, in relation to Chris Ware's *Jimmy Corrigan* and Art Spiegelman's *In the Shadow of No Towers* respectively (Bredehoft 2006; Chute 2007). Bredehoft explores the contribution of two- and three-dimensional aspects of the book to making a complex four-dimensional (temporal) work that involves circularity, unending endurance, and parallels in time. Chute suggests that the underlying architecture of comics is ideally suited to recombining fragments (different snippets of time) into a temporally complex whole in light of an analysis of Spiegelman's work. Of greatest relevance here is Chris Ware's page, shown as an example of how the grid can accommodate such complexity (figure 64).

Ideational drawing: installation ideas // Ongoing practice. Project overlap // Project overlap = installation idea.

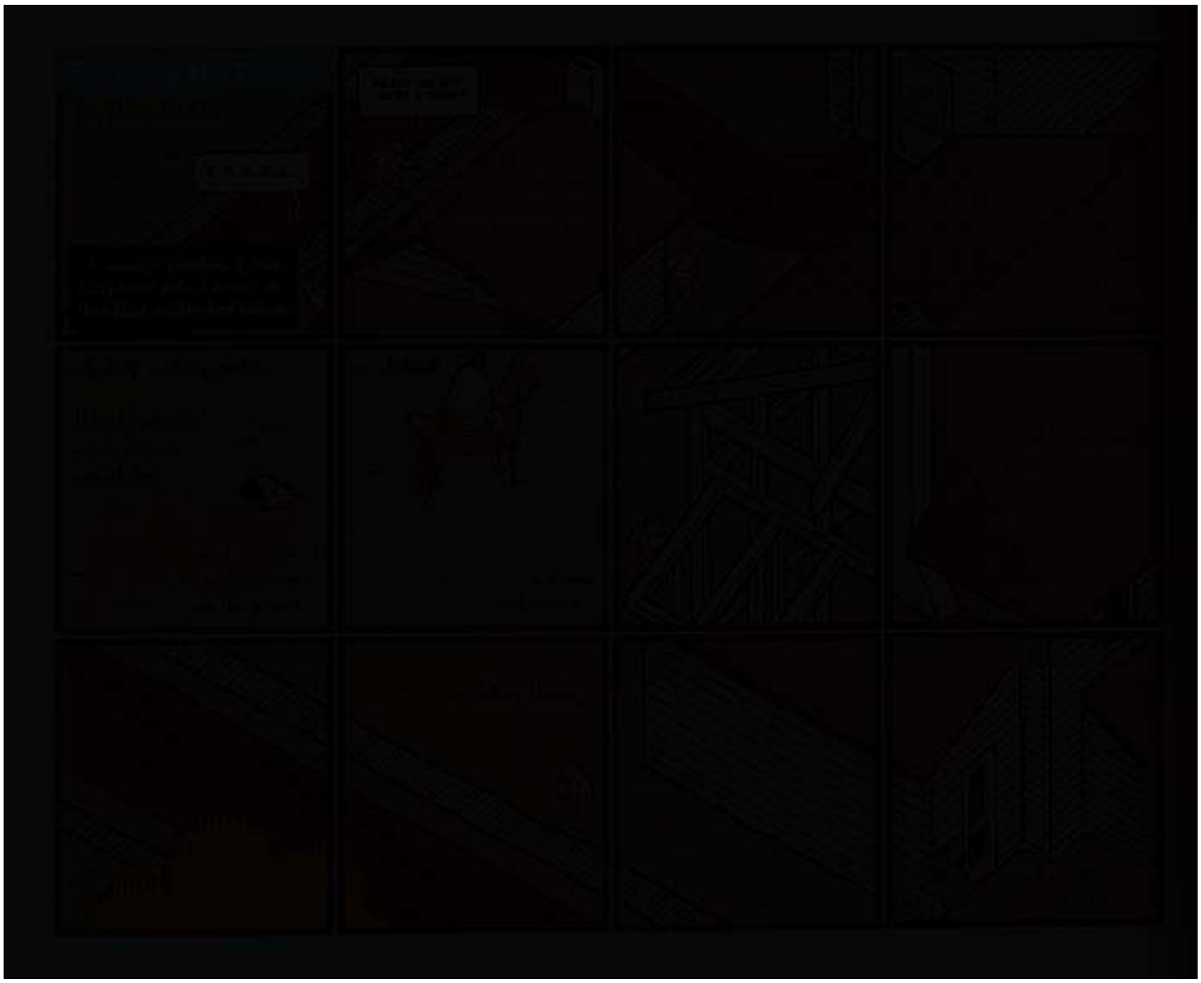

Figure 64 Chris Ware, page from Jimmy Corrigan

Ware's gridded layout can be observed all at once, despite being a sequence that takes place over time and space. This is a characteristic of the grid exploited by Ware for the ability to conflate a single moment in time (the overview) with a sequence of events running through it (Raeburn 2004, p73). In relation to the single image's temporal qualities, McCloud (1993 p94-97) does not see the grid as necessary to make divisions in time. In *Understanding Comics*, McCloud shows the single panel to have a temporal flow within its borders, one that does not adhere to the popular view of images as a frozen moment in time derived from our experience of photography.

However, if attempting to influence the pace at which the viewer grasps the images, it is useful to be able to hold something back. Smith reminds us that a book cannot be perceived in its entirety, which differs

Observation. Style. Ongoing practice.

from the overview shown in figure 64 (Smith 1994, p42). He states that we can only see the book as a whole in retrospect, which can be another useful tool for the presentation of work that tries to build suspense (such as Andrzej Klimowski's *Horace Dorlan*). This point influenced the development of the visual sequences in the *Circulars, &tc* chapbook and *Little Lady Sadie* book (figures 65 and 66). The visual stutter of a repeated image accompanied by different text in the former was intended to be a surprise that unsettled the regular, monotonous rhythm of the sequence so far. Prior to this point there had been slowness in the images, with the wafting pattern billowing through them representing a slow progression of time.[22] This linked movement between images (similar to that of Masereel's *Die Sonne*) was intended to establish a sense of continuity that emphasised the stasis and fragmentation of the characters within the spaces. *Little Lady Sadie* was designed to slow down time in a similar fashion, by having very slight, incremental changes between images. To accomplish this I proposed to use the tonal values of each page to show the slow descent into darkness of the character. The increasing torpor they experienced was to be developed in this way over a greater number of pages, with the text also broken down into single sentences in order to draw out the process of reading. However, the number of pages needed to do so exceeded the budget and an alternative disruptive strategy was required. Reversing the order of the text in figure 66 in order to make the reading experience awkward and disjointed was a more condensed alternative to the slowing down of the initial idea.

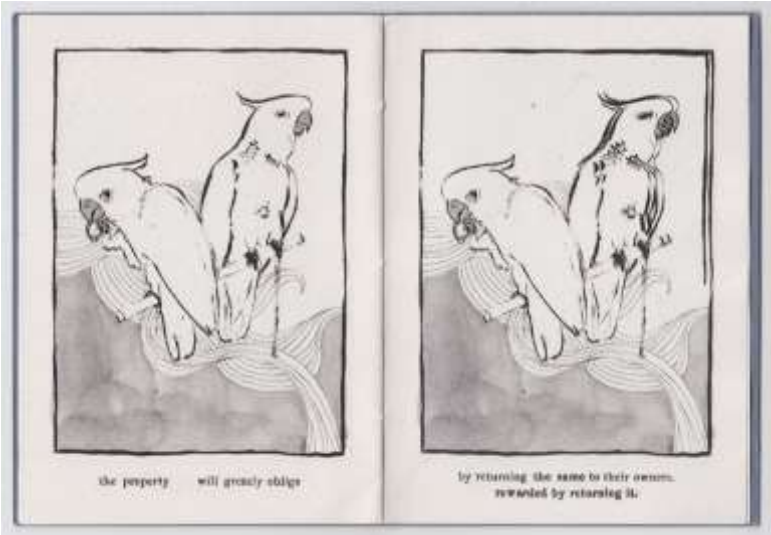

Figure 65 Stephanie Black Circulars, &tc. A6 chapbook based on the SS Great Britain

Figure 66 Stephanie Black Little Lady Sadie book page

Project overlap // Extending themes. Gap filling // Installation ideas.

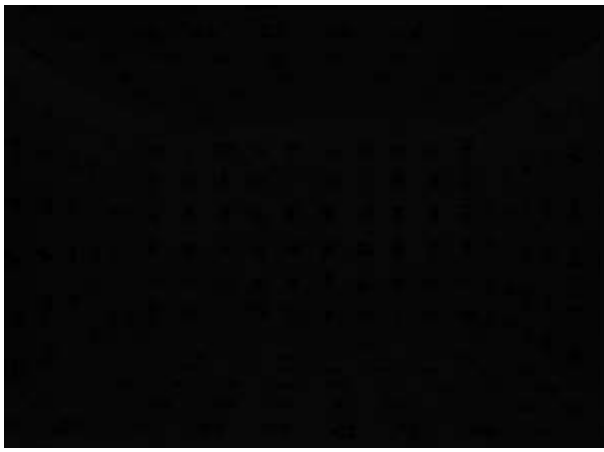

Figure 67 Stanislaw Drozdz Untitled (In-between) Foksal Gallery, 1977

Figure 68 Ron Mueck Ghost 1998, shown exhibited at the RSA 2006

The wider field of artist's books provides further examples of vehicles for ideas that adopt a form given to conceptually reinforcing the idea.[23] Writing on artist's books, Joanna Hoffman gives examples of books whose use determines their meaning, stating "the very process of reading is implicit for the understanding of the whole object" (Hoffman 2001, p2). Hoffman extends this principle to the three-dimensional space of concrete poet Stanislaw Drozdz's *Untitled (in-between)* of 1977. Here, the jumbled letters of the word 'between' paper the gallery, whilst the viewer within it constitutes the "in-between" of the title (figure 67). It relies upon the viewer's physical presence negotiating the space of the work. The viewer's scale in relation to the work is commented upon by Braund with regard to Edward Gorey's books: "they were designed for a child's small hands. And that's an important part of the way we read them" (Braund 2012). The viewer's scale in relation to the space they encounter the work can also be utilised communicatively, exemplified by Ron Mueck's *Ghost* (figure 68). The overwhelming clumsiness of the giant, self-conscious teenager here brings an emotional aspect to communication that ventures into three dimensional space. The principles that have arisen from this review of practical work moved from the two-dimensional space of the page to include both the physical form of the work and the viewer within the space of the work, and we have seen both two and three dimensions bring a performative aspect to the communications made by these examples.

Project overlap: CD cover. Observation // Project overlap. Ongoing practice. Ideational collage.

A REVIEW OF NARRATIVE OBJECTS AND SPACE IN EXHIBITIONS

The works surveyed in this review take the spatial aspect of time identified in the previous section and use it to construct experiential communicative objects and spaces. In this regard, comics artists are familiar with using space to represent and influence time, and in the following examples the principle has been extended to three-dimensional spaces used for exhibiting work. *Cult Fiction,* an exhibition developed by the Hayward Gallery and touring through 2007 and 2008, focused on the relationship between fine art and comics and included objects by David Shrigley, Richard Slee and Liz Craft. These could be described as ideational in that they are solidified propositions that make the implausible slightly more real, and by doing so ask "if this were to be –what then?" (Rosenberg 2008, p113). *Hypercomics: The shape of comics to come* exhibition of 2010 used a narrative principle to group images and objects, thereby extending gaps and fragments on the page into three-dimensional space. This example used both the Pump House Gallery (London) as a narrative space, and also stretched into the park surrounding the venue to extend the fictional work of the exhibition into the world outside. Of particular note is Dave McKean's ambiguous and "open" narrative (*The Rut*) that embraces the spatial possibilities of the location and the installation to tell a story that could be interpreted in several different ways. A notably sophisticated aspect of this piece is that McKean exploits the position of the viewer in the space to reveal and obscure various details.

Narrative is the principle identified by Storkerson (2006) that participants in his experiment used to make sense of fragments. This is also the approach adopted by a number of illustrators who have developed narrative environments for the viewer to experience. Other practitioners in this flourishing area include Le Gun's installation representing the final dinner party held by a group of deceased surrealist artists in *La Catastrophe in Paris* (2011) and other installed works in Berlin, Brussels and London. Container (also operating previously as ContainerPLUS) have created immersive narrative environments as self-initiated projects and commissions in different cities and venues from 2006 onwards, most notably in the form of their *Haunted House* installations and events. More recent narrative exhibitions of illustration include *Memory Palace* at the V&A (2013), *Minotaur* in the Old Vic Tunnels (2012) which included a labyrinth installation by Stanley Donwood[24], and Graham Rawle's *Hi-Life* supermarket installation as part of Expo 2000 in Hanover. The Design Museum has also utilised aspects of the immersive environment in their curation of exhibitions such as *Alan Aldridge: The man with kaleidoscope eyes* (2008) and *Jonathan Barnbrook: Friendly fire* (2007) in order to give a new context to images that are displayed outside their original context.

Project overlap: Diary of a Nobody ideas // Form + concept + context // Travel version for Norway. Flexible units.

The examples surveyed thus far establish the possibilities within sequential illustration for influencing the reader's experience of time. The main tool for enacting this is the arrangement of fragments on the two-dimensional space of the page and exhibition space, and the nature of the links between images. By making a time-based piece of work from fragments these examples challenge existing theoretical ideas involving time, specifically those which use the fragmentation and spatialisation of time to make broader claims for our individual and social well-being and the nature of the time we live through.

TIME AND FREE WILL: KLIMOWSKI, BERGSON AND HUGHES

This section builds upon these narratives comprised of fragments to extend the previous chapter's exploration of theoretical ideas that began with Storkerson (2006) and Jameson (1985). The temporal qualities of sequential illustration that arose can be used to explore existing ideas surrounding the nature of our experience of time, and beyond that to its manifestation in art and how that defines the modern, postmodern and 'altermodern' eras. In order to do so I shall be using Andrzej Klimowski's book *Horace Dorlan* (2007) and *Walking the Dog* by David Hughes (2009) to show that recent illustration practice has a great deal to offer debate surrounding the role of time from the individual's experience to major shifts within the culture they inhabit.

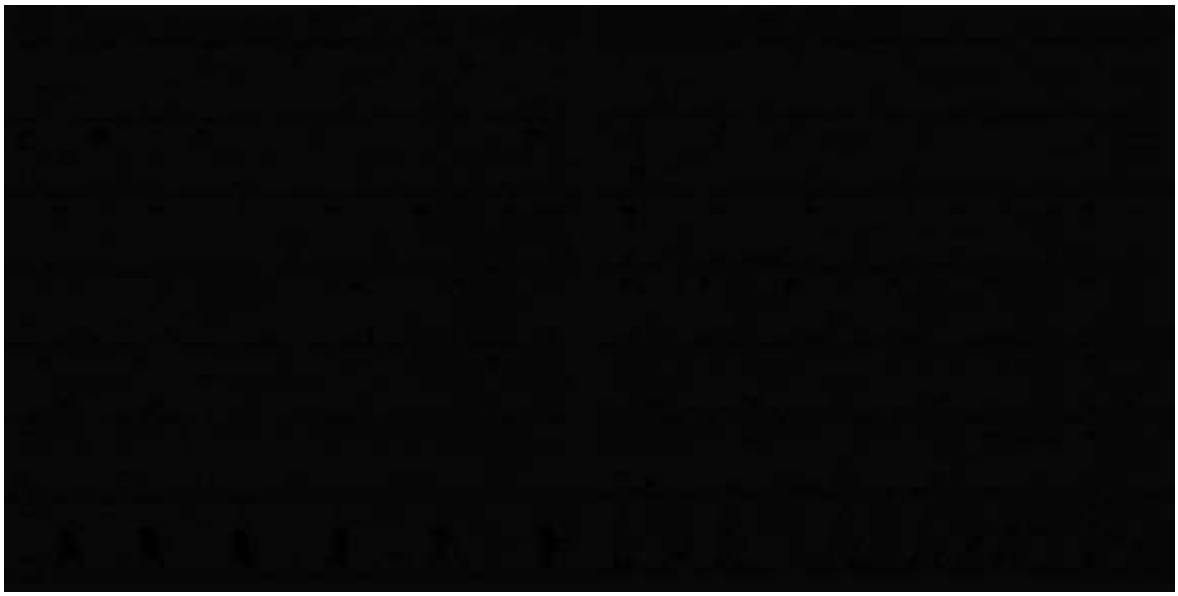

Figure 69 David Hughes Walking the Dog book pages

Extending themes.

These two books both spring a surprise on the reader in that they each produce an experience of looped time. Hughes stratifies time by presenting simultaneous events separately and simultaneously, as uniquely navigable until sequences converge and they become constituent parts of the looped whole (figure 69). At which point the reader finds himself or herself at the end of the sequence they have followed and also at the end of another sequence, which invites them to return to the top of the page and pursue that sequence in turn. Hughes also merges past and present times by employing an unsettling memory of events documented elsewhere in the book to accompany the events pictured.

Figure 70 Andrzej Klimowski Horace Dorlan book pages

Horace Dorlan (figure 70) alternates text and image in lengthier passages and produces a sense of déjà vu by repeating an early written passage later on in a visual sequence. Both sequences end in the central character suffering an accident on the stairs, with the visual account culminating in his crashing out of the rigid boundaries of the linocut images and falling out of the picture in parallel to the events that occurred in writing near the start of the book. This is especially powerful when the full bleed of the final image in this sequence is considered, for McCloud describes images that exceed the edges of the page as exhibiting

References // Kit of parts // Flexible units.

"timelessness" (McCloud 1993, p102). So whilst the falling action pictured might be best represented by a sliver of a panel as a quick slip on the stairs, the device used operates to put the character into slow motion as he exits both the drawn passage and the book. Although the events shown in this sequence are familiar, the reader hasn't *seen* it before and this introduces an element of doubt as the pages are retraced to ascertain exactly what has happened – and why it is happening in duplicate. By doing so, it raises questions of linearity and parallels in time, whilst eroding any preconceptions the viewer may have held about the veracity or otherwise of text or image, and (in relation to the story) art, or science.

Both Hughes and Klimowski have produced sequential narratives that use the structure of the story on the page and the respective abilities of images and text to run time in different directions and parallels within each book. They accomplish this within the two-dimensional pages of a traditional book format, and this spatial aspect of the page is what allows sequential narratives such as comics to manipulate time so extensively. Dividing time into units such as pages and panels as Klimowski and Hughes do complicates early 20th century French philosopher Henri Bergson's assertion in *Time and Free Will* (published 1910) that our popular understanding of time confuses time with space, and this quantitative approach to thought (through the strictures of language) prohibits us from experiencing time as it really is: duration (Bergson 2001, p128). Duration is instead an inexplicable concept that can only be grasped through thought experiments, for language isn't capable of appreciating the diverse nature of duration (with its past, present and future intermingling). Words such as simultaneity and succession will give a good indication of what duration is, but remain inappropriate as Bergson finds them irredeemably quantitative and spatial in that the terms require us to divide time into sequential units if we try to understand duration this way. And yet both Hughes and Klimowski have successfully woven together past, present and future by presenting time in units such as pages and panels. Yes, Klimowski's division of time into separate panels mirrors the photographic sense of time quantified as discrete units (rather than the temporal flow within an image as McCloud explains and Hughes shows) but the sequencing of these in relation to the written chapters and the other visual passages is akin to duration, if we're to pursue the thought experiment route. The transition between images has been smoothed in the same way as Masereel's linking movement, by balancing the number of elements changing and staying the same between each page. During this progression of the story through fragments, the intertwined stories slip in and out of one another in a manner that reflects the uninterrupted qualitative change of duration more than quantitative simultaneity. Therefore the division of time into units that concerned Bergson doesn't

Picture making.

seem to be an insurmountable barrier to the fluidity of time, and enables us to imagine it as more complex than the single direction he emphasised. The issue of how we experience time was more than a theoretical question for Bergson, as it impacts upon our personal and psychological development. Bergson argued that real time needs to be reconciled with common sense (spatial) time to avoid the trap of our choices being pre-determined; not involving our conscious decisions in response to the world. And this "automatism" is a useful concept to hold up to the digital platforms that offer an opportunity for time-based illustration and "works-in-motion".

Figure 71 Advert using a camera and facial recognition software to display a gender-specific message on behalf of the charity Plan UK

Whilst the smoother transitions between images might offer the fluidity of duration by showing us what happens between the images (where the action resides in comics), digital poster sites such as those provided by CBS Outdoor and Clear Channel do not (widely) encourage the choices borne of free will in the same way as these two books. Hughes and Klimowski offer a lesson in communication that we as viewers navigate, which touch screen navigation may be better able to replicate. The use of gesture recognition and touch screens within digital poster sites offers us the possibility of combining fluidity with choice, but at this stage they characterise the viewer as a consumer, which the reader of these two books isn't limited to. As the technology develops, the availability of choice is complicated by the precise categorisation of the audience enabled by incorporating facial recognition software within digital poster

Anachronistic popular culture references. Picture making // Extending themes. Working through materials // Time + decay in objects.

sites. These can assess us on the basis of features outside of our control to offer us gender-specific messages, raising the question of whether choice in response to stimulus (that constitutes free will) is limited if we're being offered increasingly narrow options to choose from (figure 71). The book's technological limitations in this regard could be seen as more respectful; the book does not have the capacity to monetise our free will in the same way that web-based content can, and books don't observe our behaviour.[25]

TIME AND CULTURAL SHIFTS: ILLUSTRATION AS A POCKET OF PRIVATE CONTEMPLATIVE SPACE

This section uses illustration's practical achievements to look outwards at broader theoretical concerns. The context in which the previous examples exist is highly relevant for instance, for where we encounter such temporal forms of culture has been used by Nicolas Bourriaud to theorise artistic practice. For example, in *Relational Aesthetics* he locates the social achievement of the relational works discussed within their specifically urban time to be lived through (Bourriaud 2002, p15-16). This is of particular relevance for its opposition to what Bourriaud sees as the outdated idea of the private contemplative space, but the book forms discussed will be seen to complicate this argument by offering a more complex and generous experience of time than Bourriaud's examples. Furthermore, Bourriaud (2009) embarks upon a more ambitious venture to define the period after postmodernism using time. In doing so he positions his argument against Jameson's temporal description of postmodernism, and therefore puts illustration's temporal achievements into a direct relationship with the discussion of how we define the culture we live in, by way of its ability to link Jameson's fragments to form fluid time and get history back. The tricks played by the images discussed in the first half of this chapter can now be used to respond to Bourriaud's argument, and show that by extending Jameson's ideas in a different direction, chapter one's illustration-as-research can challenge Bourriaud's conclusions.

In *Altermodern*, Bourriaud uses time to define an alternative to modernism following postmodernism on the basis of selected contemporary examples from visual art chosen for the Tate Triennial of 2009. He situates the altermodern in contrast to the manifestations of time within the preceding cultural period, using two terms of specific interest here for their concern with time: "heterochrony" and "temporal viatorisation". Heterochrony describes the multiple temporalities existing within one artwork, whereas temporal viatorisation refers to the transporting of signs from their historical and geographical context to the present.

100 Greatest Novels recovered (Doedemee project) // Diary of a Nobody // Alternative Pooter // Rewrite brief to match book: layered print for unravelling during humdrum daily life (instead of poster that announces themes loudly + concisely).

In keeping with Jameson's suggestion that the development from modernism to postmodernism involved a refocusing of emphasis upon already present characteristics, Bourriaud rewrites the experience of time for altermodernism. He exchanges the "looped" time of postmodernism for the "temporal viatorisation" described above (Bourriaud, 2009). As a consequence, Bourriaud welcomes the return of history in *Altermodern*, following its demise within postmodernism in favour of the "perpetual present" (Jameson 1985, p125). Rather than pursue the linear trajectory of modernism, altermodernism is concerned with the free movement of artists across temporal and geographical boundaries in search of signs to be borrowed – thus entitling them to the term "semionaut". In a discussion that brings the issue of style to bear on the concept of time, Bourriaud refers us to the use of archival research and black and white photography by artists represented in the triennial to make a case for the movement of signs between the historic and the present. History was therefore returned to us in the form of a continent that can be traversed according to Bourriaud, although how it differs from pastiche's borrowed signs is elusive (Bourriaud, 2009).

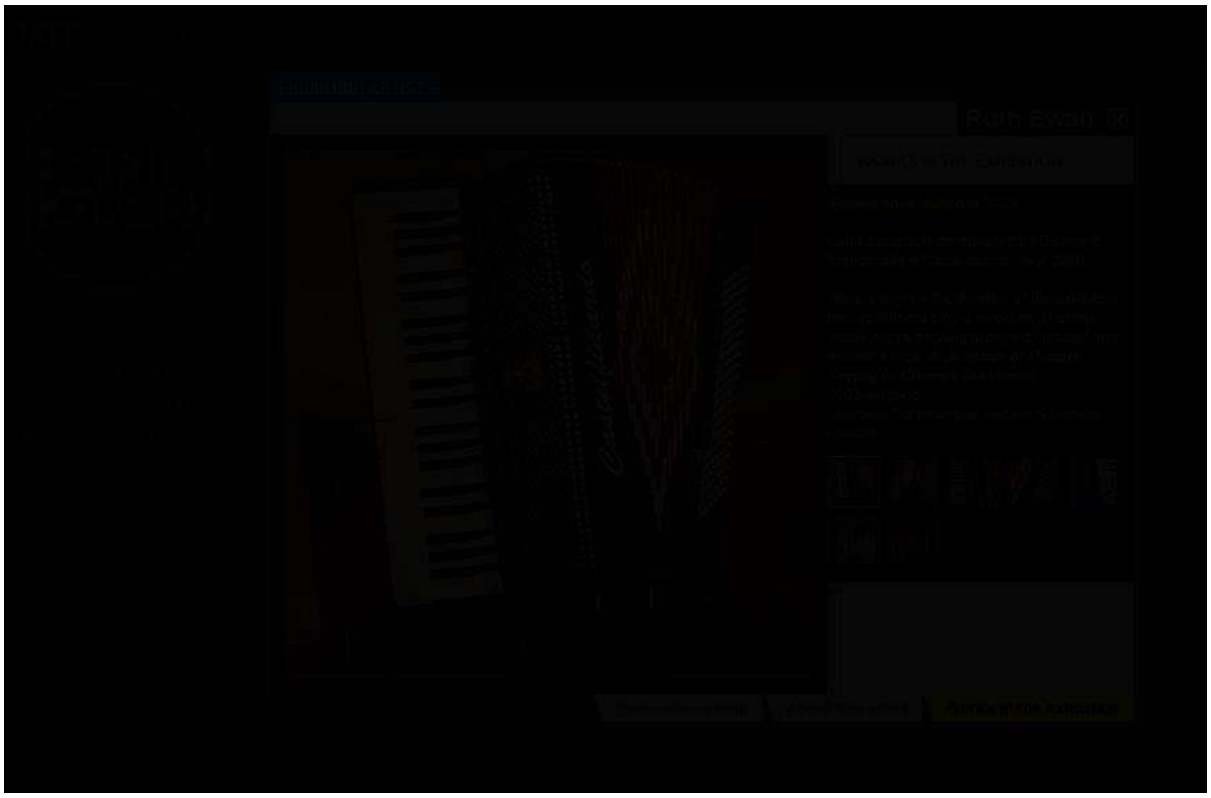

Figure 72 Ruth Ewan Squeezebox Jukebox from the Tate online exhibition catalogue for Altermodern

Referent, not signifier. Documentation = signifier // Drawing trips.Style: gleefully wonky // Observation: comment?

Borrowing signs and moving them from their historical context into the present appears to be common to both postmodernism and altermodernism in the conversation between Bourriaud and Jameson. However, Bourriaud claims that they are different, and the discrepancy lies in the critical process of the former involving “the detailed explanation of signs by their origins” (which reinforces their position) whereas the altermodern artist sets them free from their cultural territory. Which may be an astute distinction, but it doesn’t compare like with like. Viatorisation might be the *method* of the selected artists, but Bourriaud doesn’t stretch to proposing a different critical process for those in his position encountering the work. And this is likely to result in a similar attempt to decode work in the absence of a new critical approach appropriate to the slender difference between pastiche and viatorisation of signs that Bourriaud marks out. At any rate, the viewer is still fixed in time; they do not participate in the time travel or geographical roaming of the altermodern sign. And if they haven’t travelled with it what are they meant to do with the references? Do these collapse into pastiche by accident as a result of the viatorisation not being apparent? It is difficult to see how the transportation of signs from a specific cultural and historical point into the galleries of Tate Britain in 2009 suggests that such movement was more important than them being artefacts, and therefore that an alternative critical process is available. This, therefore, is theory tacked on to practice, rather than practice-led or practice-based research that sees theory arising from the work discussed.

The result is that these objects don’t work in the way Bourriaud claims, unlike the illustration examples surveyed that operate temporally. As I have argued, the examples Bourriaud discusses in *Altermodern* do not make the journey accessible to the viewer. Bourriaud suggests that we see the form of the selected examples as the process, and in doing so recognise that the methods used are more important than the outcomes: “the line is more important than the points along its length”. He suggests that such forms “deliver narratives, the narratives of their very own production, but also their distribution and the mental journey that encompasses them.” And yet it is this aspect of the work discussed within *Altermodern* that is the most problematic; it rarely achieves this communicative aspect through the work, which does not represent heterochrony in this way. This in itself is a vote for the process-led approach of chapter two, where thinking-in-action is made visible and can be present in the final outcome as part of its meaning. Bourriaud states that one method of getting process work to audiences is “through the presentation of artefacts” and so is in agreement thus far, but he uses the example of Ruth Ewan’s *Squeezebox Jukebox* (figure 72) to argue the point. This piece doesn’t convey the narrative, or mental journey as Bourriaud

Anachronism vs. cultural nostalgia. Style: cultural position // Style: glamorous nostalgia. Instagram etc. // Extending theme.

claims, and by holding his ideas up to examples of practice cracks within the feasibility of his ideas appear. Figure 72 is comprised of accordions in a room set out as museum pieces, and the formal resolution of the project doesn't have a clearly accessible concept. As a result the holistic meaning of the grouped signs is lost in the same way that Jameson describes the fragmentation of language in the schizophrenic's experience that defined postmodernism (Jameson 1985 p119-120). The isolated signifiers are frighteningly present and material, in this case the effect is exacerbated by their looming scale. In the example of the accordion, the artefact becomes a signifier at the start of Barthes' "galaxy of signifiers" which could lead anywhere, or in this case nowhere. Therefore altermodernism doesn't mark a break from postmodernism in this regard, for the signifier is still separated from the signified. But we have seen this overcome in illustration examples (such as *Turbulence*) utilising Braund's visual correspondences and Smith's conditional movement. Furthermore, Hughes and Klimowski's books perform more complex tricks with time than the examples Bourriaud writes of in terms of heterochrony. They also do this in a different context to the mainly gallery-bound works in *Altermodern*. They put the temporal experience in the hands of the viewer by way of their book form, and in doing so create pockets of different temporality in a private contemplative space. This is not at odds with the ongoing time to be lived through of duration and Bourriaud's *Relational Aesthetics,* it is a generous intervention within it.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ILLUSTRATION RESEARCH: PERFORMATIVE PRODUCTS

The previous section's conversation with Bourriaud's ideas concerning how time is manifest within artworks brought to the fore illustration's abilities as performative communication. This is relevant to illustration-as-research-process, in that its communicative purpose would be curtailed were objects solely to commemorate the research process rather than enact its contributions. In order to respond, I will discuss counter-arguments to Bourriaud's examples in the form of artists' books and the use of space as a narrative experience by illustrators and comics artists to argue that objects *can* be performative communications. As indicated previously, these practises are adept at finding an appropriate vehicle for an idea that reinforces the concept. The following illustration examples extend the performative aspect of Hughes' and Klimowski's books in that their form is flexible. It is dependent upon the viewer's engagement with it to become communicative, and in this respect they are Eco's "works in motion" which go on to do what Bourriaud claimed for the *Altermodern* works. In this regard they deliver the narrative of their production, distribution *and* the concepts (also narrative) underpinning them. Their common feature is that they are all present-tense communication, rather than the past-tense artefact of *Squeezebox Jukebox*.

Observation. Responsibility // Style: betrays not knowing // Style: supports concept.

Furthermore, they embrace the sensory immediacy of material signifiers to make communications comprised of fragmented parts cohesive, unlike that seen in figure 72.

The fact that the viewer's actions are an intrinsic part of the communication brings illustration into contact with contemporary discourse surrounding process-based art as they share a similar present-tense relationship to the viewer as a result of their "formation" being partly the viewer's doing.[26] Specific areas of interest are dialogical art and *Relational Aesthetics,* relevant for their emphasis on process-based experience that involves the viewer in constructing its form. Illustration can draw upon these discussions for advice (given that illustration has very little established commentary surrounding its use of three dimensions), to contribute contrary examples, and to promote removing the known outcome as chapters one and two suggested. By doing so, "illustration thinking" can adopt the most appropriate form as an outcome, and the objects produced by illustrators can be temporally richer and more communicative for the viewer.

LESSONS FROM FINE ART: CONFUSION AND EXPECTATIONS

The discussion will now consider examples (and theoretical discussion thereof) that incorporate the contributory intervention of the viewer identified in relation to Eco's "works-in-motion", and increasingly expected of cultural experiences and beyond. The intention here is to position illustration's use of viewerly participation within contemporary debate surrounding spectatorship and to use this to argue for an outcome to the process-led methods of the first chapter that embraces three-dimensional space and is object-based, despite this being a particularly unfashionable at this juncture as we will see. The combination of temporal and spatial qualities in examples of "works-in-motion" from Luise Vormittag and Helene Pertl will be used to counter the problems arising from a similar flexibility of form within fine art. This comparison will be drawn in order to make a case for communicative three-dimensional "works-in-motion" (such as Vormittag's and Pertl's) being a plausible vehicle for the dissemination of contributions to knowledge within Haseman's performative paradigm, as adopted by illustration research.

Overlapping practices concerned with the formation of work by the viewer (as in *Relational Aesthetics* and to a lesser degree *Altermodern*'s temporally viatorised signs) can be found in process-based work within fine art. Process-based work is where the process of making is evident in the end product (such as those discussed within chapter two), or replaces it entirely. According to Grant Kester, we will be seeing a lot

Picture making. Observation: accuracy/comment?

more of it as we experience a paradigm shift in art where the emphasis of the work is on its making, rather than a resulting product:

> …there is a shift towards participatory, process-based experience, and away from what I'd describe as a 'textual' mode of production in which the artist fashions an object or event that is subsequently presented to the viewer for decoding. (Stott & Kester 2006, p45)

A participatory approach to process with an emphasis on the viewer's involvement in the process of production akin to Kester's can be found in the introduction to Bishop (2006b). Bishop (2004) also links Kester's processual shift to developments outside the concerns of the art world, in this case experiential marketing strategy representing the "experience economy" which substitutes process for product.[27] Therefore the trajectory taken by the practical project has brought the discussion of illustration alongside broader cultural, political and technological shifts. These represent changing perceptions of what to expect from cultural artefacts and how to engage with them, introduced in the discussion of digital interfaces equipped with touch screens, accelerometers and facial recognition software.

These expectations of involvement and engagement with cultural artefacts lead to confusion if the work the viewer is greeted with doesn't find an appropriate form. By working in the manner outlined by Kester and deliberately avoiding the production of objects and their problematic implications (as described by Hal Foster in his essay *Chat Rooms*, 2004), the artist can make work that could be missed by the viewer. This could leave them just as bewildered as the object-representing-process seen in Bourriaud's examples representing altermodernism, with Foster commenting that "occasionally the effects are more chaotic than communicative" (Foster 2004, p192). Whereas by embracing objects (such as the book form) to circulate their work, the illustrators discussed in the previous chapter have created a "participatory, process-based experience". The productive role of these old media objects might go some way to addressing the problems arising from the uneasy relationship between process and object in work featured in *Relational Aesthetics* (Bourriaud, 2002), most notably in the exchange between Claire Bishop and Liam Gillick within the journal *October*. Of relevance here was Bishop's account of a rather disappointing and confusing experience when visiting a time-based processual piece of work (Rirkrit Tiravanija's soup kitchen *Untitled: Free*) when there was no activity taking place (Bishop, 2004; Gillick, 2006). Here the work becomes a trace of the artist again, which earlier chapters argued was problematic.

Picture making: courting a viewer // Reprocessing work. Thinking through materials. Not relying on words.

The relevant aspect of this was the mistaking of objects (leftover rubbish from the soup kitchen) for the social relations that constituted the work. The removal of the object here proved even more problematic than the object-as-relic in *Altermodern*. If there is an object (such as *Squeezebox Jukebox*) at least there's a chance of the viewer bringing some signifieds to it and forming some meaningful relation with it. Bourdieu claims that an everyday code is put to use here, in the absence of anything more sophisticated having been learned (Bourdieu 1993, p216-7). That everyday code, in this case, knows what to do with 'stuff'. Arguably, illustration ought not to require anything more than an everyday code to decipher it. In contrast to Tiravanija's piece none of the illustration examples discussed so far allow the viewer to miss the work in such a way, and it is precisely because they have presented the viewer with an object (a generous and desirable one at that) that the work can perform its processes directly in front of the viewer, or itself be performed by the viewer and therefore offer a temporal experience. It is not solely a record of something happening elsewhere at another time.

EMBRACING THE OBJECT

With regard to communicating ideas to an audience through visual work, the discussion of Kester, Bourriaud and Bishop represents a summary of pitfalls that may face the illustrator opting to make three-dimensional work as a result of removing the known outcome to a brief as earlier chapters recommended. The concern raised in the previous section for the accessibility of the communication made by the work immediately present in front of the viewer (as performative experience rather than relic produced by activity occurring elsewhere) was explored within the practical strand of this project in its exploration of what objects and spaces can bring that opens up the possible entry points into a project. Decoding signs and meeting process-based work both left viewers with work that was (in different ways) elsewhere. Chapter two discussed what the work can bring that is surplus to signification and immediately sensible through discussion of drawing style. Later practical work extended this into the materials and spatial layout of three-dimensional temporal work to reflect upon that which the sensible qualities of work can bring to communication beyond the traditional two-dimensional printed or on-screen image following the changing demands of the illustration industry, digital platforms, and the methods chapter's insistence that this be expanded upon.

Intervening within real life. Loughborough Travelodge. Damien Hirst // Illustration thinking + photoshop

Figure 73 Stephanie Black The Unsung Telephone 2012

The Unsung Telephone uses lessons from comics to reallocate dimensions in sequential illustration using a combination of 2d and 3d (figure 73). In this piece of work speech bubbles become solid, time spent looking at a telephone (waiting for it to ring) is recorded spatially through drawing, and that which usually floats (speech bubbles) swaps places with that which is usually bound by gravity (the telephone). Within this vignette, temporal utterances (a quality of speech noted by Jameson, 1985) that are traditionally translated into the two-dimensional representation of the speech bubble here gain a third and fourth dimension. They are sewn from big pants and vests and gather dust through neglect. The use of found objects and repurposed knickers was a rejoinder to the problem identified in the chapter on style (by way of Barthes 1977); that making work using a structuralist approach to signs leads to searching for meaning outside the work. The material qualities of signs that remain unexamined in this approach (with reference to Kress & Van Leeuwen 2006, p215) were made a feature of communication here, and Braund's correspondences have been stretched to accommodate conditional movement in material form.[28] In doing so, the referent was returned without also rolling the signified into communication. By doing so I hoped to develop the experiential qualities of the work without compromising the gaps.

HATCH drawing project: Drawing Lab, RWA Drawn exhibition 2013 // Post Office mail art bureau.

Figure 74 Stephanie Black Sideshow & Sideshow: second round exhibition photos

At this point illustration can begin to draw upon discourse surrounding sculpture in order to deepen its understanding of the visitor in space, such as the phenomenological critical perspective taken by Amelia Jones in relation to minimalist sculpture (Jones 1999).[29] This understanding can also enrich communications within the digital environments outlined previously as the context for illustration. In this regard, work produced elaborated upon the intrinsic presence of Drozdz's viewer by incorporating the sensible aspects of scale and material that were a feature of Mueck's *Ghost*. The scale of the figure at the centre of this emerging narrative was deliberately diminutive, in that it would always be looked down upon by the viewer in a literal-turned-metaphorical sense. It was constructed from an old feather pillow, which is repellent at the same time as being familiar and comfortable. Similarly, the viewer's scale and navigation of space informed the making and placing of hidden hints (figure 74 middle, which asks that they get close up to a filthy chair and puddle of gravy); small chairs opposite mirrors to induce awkwardness and uncomfortable complicity whilst reading revealing personal documents (figure 74 right); and a combination of darkness, white noise and curtains obstructing movement and sensory input in a cupboard-based final vignette, all within the two *Sideshow* stagings of the project. These obstructions deliver extra suggestions as to the nature of the story being told. By allowing themselves to be slowed down and engaging with these aspects of the work (which, unlike Ware's page, cannot be seen in the overview of the space) the viewer is rewarded with supplementary images, ideas and experiential understanding that are designed to complement each other.

Mail art bureau. Offering drawing outside the gallery walls + opening hours // Drawing research conversations.Visitor engagement.

OBJECTS, IMMERSION, DIALOGUE

Luise Vormittag of Container continues this theme of exploring the experiential aspects of communication, describing Container's series of *Haunted House* narrative environments (figure 75) as follows: "us building the *Haunted House* was when we started thinking about communicating with people on a different level, rather than just through pictures, it became about the visitor's interior experience, their experience of the space" (Vormittag 2012a). The narrative experience offered is a more direct relationship with the work than that offered by Bourriaud's artefacts representing the artist's experience. The lived time of the viewer and their actions within the work are central to the *Evil Twins: Haunted House* installation (with Simon Husslein), and gives the work its sequence and duration. Here, visitors were invited to enter a labyrinthine construction containing various illustrated interludes through a portal under a desk. Vormittag describes it as "a narrative environment where visitors were physically and psychologically immersed", and used bewildering changes of scale and darkness to achieve this (Vormittag, 2012b). They covered the space entirely with their narrative concept, thereby circumventing some of the bewilderment arising from the expectations associated with spaces (such as the hands-off contemplation of objects in galleries demonstrated by Bishop).[30] This approach is in keeping with Kester's comments, in that the audience is offered a temporal and spatial experience rather than objects to decode. Vormittag comments on the unusual scale and complexity of the space impacting upon the nature of the conversations she had with visitors in the space. In this example, as in the 'gap', a bit of bewilderment is productive.[31] Vormittag suggests that the disorientation experienced may have served to shift the visitors outside of social norms, in that conversations between strangers became more direct and unusual. She ruminates on the cause of this, suggesting "there were no rules about how to *be* in that environment", concluding that these encounters "take place outside of the general systems and how you would encounter people. So you create a kind of environment where you can ask questions and have conversations that would otherwise not take place" (Vormittag 2012a). By shifting the viewer into an uneasy territory somewhere between the known and the unknown, the experience could be read as a three-dimensional equivalent of ideational drawing's potential (in its "if this were to be – what then?" formulation of Rosenberg 2008, p113). This is valuable in that it momentarily encourages the visitor to experience the world differently, in line with the purpose of illustration.

Suggested theme: mountains. Camouflage. Ptarmigan // Generosity? // Unpolished execution = informal. Chance.

Figure 75 Container *Haunted House* installation photos

The experiential aspect of this work was central to the project's play on fiction becoming real, and grew in importance as Container realised they had facilitated dialogue amongst the disconcerted visitors. They developed this aspect of the work by building events into the exhibition that encouraged such exchanges, such as tea parties and a confessional activity. Container have pursued this interest since, with their current project in conjunction with Vital Arts hinging upon dialogue and collaboration, thus bringing the social relationships so important to Bourriaud into the making of the work, which (crucially) finds a communicative role for the object.[32] In this respect work from illustration offers a convincing example of Foster's suggestion that the object be embraced. Foster proposes that concrete forms might be art's best contribution to the issues of "discursivity and sociability" surrounding the less product-oriented process works of which he and Bourriaud (2002) both write. For Foster, the product is instead imagined as an opportunity to "bring together the aesthetic, the cognitive, and the critical … for the purposes of reflection and resistance" (Foster 2004, p192,194). In this regard, the products produced by Container kick-start and represent the process of dialogue with the viewer rather than being an inaccessible heap of leftovers from it.

ACCESSIBILITY AND DOCUMENTATION OF INSTALLED WORK

However, whilst it addresses the viewer in the present, the immersive environment is limited to those who are confident enough to engage with it even if it does not require any specific cultural codes to decipher. Vormittag elaborates upon this point, stating: "you do have people who are of a specific social background that are probably open to those sorts of experiences. It's a self-selecting audience, absolutely" (Vormittag 2012a). She also acknowledges that is it difficult to document and circulate spatial and temporal projects, and this is a particular problem for Haseman's practice-based, performative research

Suggested themes: Spots + stripes // Spring // Drawing conversation by email to Karen Mead in Hong Kong.

paradigm where the argument lies in the practice. Through documentation, such work can fall into the same trap as that of commissioned work in exhibitions in that the documentation doesn't allow it to be fully evaluated in terms of its purpose. Rick Poynor notes that in promoting style the endless streams of dislocated images populating blog and tumblr sites of what's "cool" don't encourage reflection or analysis (Poynor 2012). Websites such as *Colossal* remedy this to some extent by featuring a film of the work in use, testimony from users, a descriptive text, and photographs. However, as Nanette Hoogslag pointed out: "the web is an impatient place" and such sites focus on the spectacular that grabs our attention – not slowness and subtlety (Hoogslag 2012b). This needs to be considered when evaluating the suitability of media for documentation and circulation of temporal, dialogical and spatial work. Problems with documentation serve to limit the extent to which threshold works such as this can stretch the boundaries of the field. Viable solutions used by Container include commissioning a film that presents an account of the use of a piece of work (*How to get to Outer Space*), shown on their website alongside the animated component of the work.

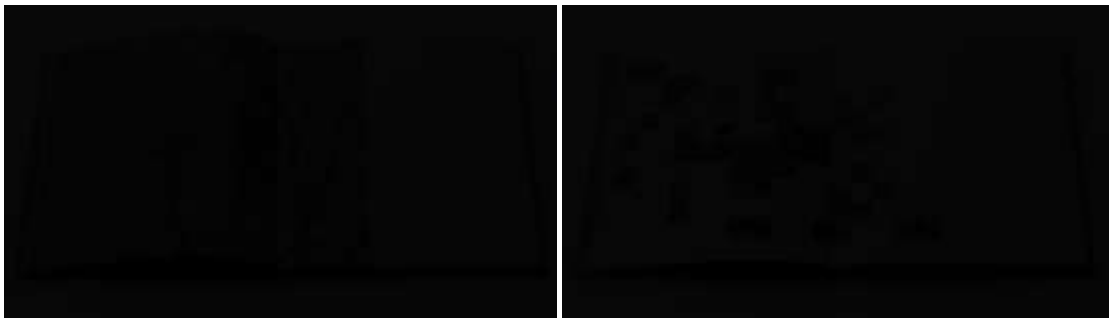

Figure 76 Joe Magee *Humming Paradise* (exhibition catalogue spreads documenting Phishing decomposition)

It is a parallel piece of work, and the opportunity to make the documentation into a new piece of work is seized fully by Joe Magee in his time-lapse film and exhibition catalogue (figure 76) showing the development (or rather "decomposition") of a wall-based image in the 2009 exhibition *Humming Paradise* as visitors bought and removed sections of it (Magee, 2009). Magee offers us different yet parallel pieces of work that adequately reflect the exhibited work's temporal qualities by using an appropriate medium, and allow the remote viewer a way into a geographically- and temporally-specific piece of work. However, the "formation" part of the gallery-based work is not offered to the remote viewer.

Scissors-Paper-Stone email exchange of drawings. Collaboration. Chance // Wire flies. Materials = inappropriate tone of voice

PRODUCTIVE PRODUCTS: A SOLUTION FROM ILLUSTRATION

Helene Pertl's book The Case (2011) marries form and content in a symbiotic relationship to go one step further and offer the viewer of a circulating object the contributory role available within the dialogical or relational exhibition space. By choosing an unstable binding to sew its three printed sections together Pertl has produced a form that has a lifespan to mirror its contents (figures 77 and 78). It is a quietly violent book, a catastrophe made poetic by presenting it as a collection of fragmented, hallucinatory texts and carefully observed drawings of banana skins, which are sprawled and contorted in wildly uncomfortable positions. In contrast to Hughes' and Klimowski's books, the fragments don't add up to a coherent whole. The written passages flicker between past and present tense, but don't flow smoothly from one to the other. They seem to be confused and conflated, which is reflected in the relationship between text and image. These paired elements remain in parallel but are never fully articulated into a single message, and here the staccato sequence of carefully observed details echoes Jameson's heightened sensations as a result of the breakdown of the whole.

Figure 77 Helene Pertl *The Case* (2011) book pages

Accidental drawing on desk // Roca gallery, London. Showroom/bathroom. Representation/reality?!

Figure 78 Helene Pertl *The Case* (2011) book disintegrating

The result of all of this is that the book takes on the character of the indecipherable trauma within, which is ably demonstrated at the same time through the disintegration of the form used to present it. In this example, then, fragmentation has a purpose and is present. The reader is complicit in the destruction by handling the book, creating an overlap between their and the book's lived time.

Artefacts produced as a result of an emphasis on the process of formation aren't always successful in using the form in a manner that enables the viewer to contribute to meaning through their engagement with it, whereas Pertl's and Container's work uses a form that requires negotiation by the viewer as a constituent part of the content. This allows the viewer to devise their own meaning from the relationships between signs, and both *The Case* and *Haunted House* involve the embodied viewer travelling through time and space to encounter signs. It appears that Pertl's book and Container's installation offer more of a temporal experience to the viewer than the works discussed by Bourriaud, as it is the viewer moving through space and time to compile signs rather than the artist. Here, the viewer is able to undertake the

Glenside Hospital Museum. Well-meaning but shoddy. Referent (people) = signifier (mannequin)? Artefacts in situ. Archaeology instead of contemplation? Real/exhibition overlap.

journey that constitutes the work for Bourriaud, they aren't limited to a snapshot of a point along its length.

CONCLUSION

The examples of sequential illustration and comics discussed within this chapter show that by curating fragments into a product, illustrators can influence the viewer's experience of time. The implications of this are immense in relation to the methods chapter's focus on an inductive practice-based research process that generates fragments, for they show that in certain circumstances (in this case where the research topic is time) it may be possible for outcomes to do what they speak of. And that it might differ from a written thesis by performing more complex heterochronic feats. This provides an example of how illustration research could contribute to further exploration of Brad Haseman's performative paradigm for creative arts research.

Of wider relevance is the provision of examples from illustration that could have complicated Bourriaud's formulation of altermodern time; if altermodernism can be characterised by multiple temporalities (as Bourriaud suggests) it comes later than the examples from illustration that offer an experience of this to the viewer. Whilst altermodernism may not have caught on entirely, it is telling that illustration wasn't factored into the deliberations. But we won't be in a position to contribute to the discussion of how our understanding of time defines this period without adequate scrutiny of such work within illustration and raising awareness of these examples amongst a wider audience. Scrutinising and articulating the methods and principles used equips illustrators for pushing the perceived boundaries of illustration *and* creating provocative pieces of work that extend the debate surrounding the time we live in. It keeps the field nimble and able to respond to the shifts in context outlined at the outset; if illustration *is* a time based activity, then we can argue for illustration's place within this landscape with certainty.

By removing the known outcome and pursuing ideational "illustration thinking" into three dimensions, the practice has encountered and taken on a complex approach to time, with the benefit for the audience being experiential, co-constructed communication. A greater understanding of how illustration negotiates time and space isn't solely the realm of the self-initiated project, for as Richardson (2012) and Vormittag (2012a) show these are transferable methods. There are overlapping concerns for the practitioner making self-initiated work and commissions, with the lessons from one context proving informative to the other.

Padded cell = room environments of staged narrative vignettes // Incongruity // Real but shifted, askew.

Illustrators also need to articulate their understanding of how illustration operates in order to contribute to broader cultural discussions. Illustration has a great deal to offer in this regard, by virtue of its close relationship with the audience. As a mirror of the society that it speaks to and on behalf of, illustration is arguably a valuable practice to consider alongside more respected disciplines. And if you're of the persuasion that mass communication doesn't just reflect but shapes our lives (and illustration is part of that) it puts even more power in the hands of illustrators and gives us more reason to examine their work. To enable this we need to circulate a variety of illustration practises. More appropriate ways of representing temporally complex, three-dimensionally installed and dialogical aspects of illustration are necessary in order for their purpose and efficacy to be evaluated alongside the visual qualities of the work. We risk a superficial reading - Jameson's easily-consumed, non-threatening pastiche - if the context that contributes to its depth is omitted. Any political tendencies the work may have are thus diminished, which has implications for the numerous self-directed projects that extend the field. If illustrations are to be shown out of context in order to promote a project to a wider audience one option is to pursue the lessons of the temporal accomplishments of books. Pertl's *The Case* shows that books can encompass the temporal and experiential properties of spaces, showing potential for using both forms to create parallel works for different audiences. This could facilitate the adoption of a performative paradigm in illustration research. There is also a need to explore the strengths of screen-based work for their unique abilities and shortcomings, bearing in mind that their association with speed noted by Drescher and Hoogslag could be the perfect opportunity for slowness or undo it immediately. Augmented reality represents just one digital avenue to explore that is suited to communicating some of the experiential and dialogical aspects of work such as Container's. Whilst doing so we need to identify and bear in mind the central principles of illustration so that we are aware of and can tackle questions that arise regarding the accessibility of technology. This chapter has established a precedent in illustration of negotiating time and space within communications, and these examples show that illustrators have useful cross-disciplinary skills that can help to expand digital and other avenues of employment in a changing marketplace.

Digressions // Fragmented points of view // Illustration thinking. Opportunity.

[19]Investment in digital OOH hasn't been rolled out to the less densely-populated parts of the UK with such enthusiasm.

[20] Richardson (2012) and Mason (2000a) both echo this point regarding the diminishing power of the art director.

[21] Klimowski (2012) also notes that returning to books is part of the reading process.

[22] This was initially conceptualised as the constant positive presence of the captain (identified within contextual research), who then threw himself overboard.

[23] Bodman (2005) provides a range of books engaging with the concept of time in their structure, and others operating in a performative manner to do what they speak of. Smith (1994) is also a rich source of examples in this regard.

[24] Donwood's work operates in the same way as illustration as a research project described within this thesis, even if he may not use the term himself. Further minotaur/labyrinth-inspired installations from Donwood include *Red Maze* at Schunk gallery in Heerlen, which begins outside the gallery in the form of a red line to be followed through the city.

[25] At the time of writing the issue of privacy and security on the internet was of topical relevance in relation to Edward Snowden's release of documents revealing the monitoring activities of the NSA and GCHQ in the UK.

[26] Bourriaud proposes the term 'formation' be used as a more appropriate alternative to 'form' for relational works (Bourriaud 2002, p21).

[27] Further examples representing this wider participatory shift are based on the reallocation of responsibility for the generation of valuable content to the consumer. These encompass such diverse examples as the development of web 2.0 and sites such as Facebook, crowdsourcing of content and innovative ideas (Howe 2006), and the avoidance of social and financial responsibility within the Conservative Party's 'Big Society' idea, whereby collaboration through volunteering is proposed as the answer to the social and financial ills of the present time. On the surface, the active participation of a non-specialist audience that lies at the core of the 'Big Society' is a continuation of the previous (Labour) government's approach to arts funding (noted in Bishop, 2006a), but for the ideological difference in the latter's inclusive agenda and the pairing of this with financial support.

Plans for space. Informed by reality // Alternative version: paper peeling // Peeling paper: revealing layers. History.

[28] Matthew Richardson also displays sensitivity to non-linguistic aspects of the work when discussing visual resonance between materials in his exhibition *Half Belief* (Richardson 2012). He comments that when making this piece he was concerned with how objects symbolise and how they could come to mean something through their interrelationships. This can be read as a system of relational meaning similar to structuralism but accommodating material qualities.

[29] Jones' use of Bourdieu in her rejection of the Modernist Kantian approach to art criticism further reinforces the shortfalls of a Kantian-informed critical framework for the analysis of illustration. It denies the appreciation of form and concept relationships within recent development in narrative form and space, yet these are the qualities that make such work notable as an experiential and 'gappy' form of multi-modal communication.

[30] This is an aspect of the *Sideshow* trials that became painfully clear by comparing the spaces. The white cube gallery foisted expectations of contemplation onto its objects, whereas the disused college carried associations of use. My resolution to this is to adopt an appropriate location rather than obscuring an inappropriate one.

[31] To clarify: this bewildering immersive environment operates more effectively than an environment that bewildered through its *lack*, such as Tiravanija's piece.

[32] An analysis of the work for Vital Arts in relation to Kester and Bourriaud can be found in Vormittag (2013), and notes the intrinsic role of the object within Container's dialogue with participants.

CONCLUSION

The nature of the contribution to knowledge made by this thesis is pedagogical, and also constitutes a contribution to the discourse surrounding practice-led-research from an under-represented field. The former lies in the suggestion that teaching incorporates long-term research skills that enable illustrators to be flexible and able to adapt to economic and technological changes to industry practice. To do so, teaching should attend to discussing and establishing the central qualities of illustration, complementing the attention paid to developing industry-ready skills such as a specific style. This study has made steps towards this by characterising illustration as responsible, generous, spatial and temporal, and excavating processes that define it as an inductive research process. Such claims are made on the basis of identifying themes within existing illustration commentary and the work of key practitioners. By doing so the discourse surrounding practice-led research has been brought into contact with that of illustration. This positions the argument as a contribution to both camps, in that illustration examples lend support for the feasibility of Haseman's performative paradigm (Haseman 2006), and in return offers a path for illustrators pursuing research.

REVIEW OF CHAPTERS

The methods chapter casts the practical processes undertaken within the studio-based aspect of the study as research. The discourse surrounding practice-led research is employed in order to identify illustration as a practice that lends itself to research by being "fundamentally exploratory, involving innovation and risk in ways that are familiar to researchers in the broader community" (Candy & Edmonds 2010, p126). The studio research process (documented in the visual timeline of photographs running along the bottom of this document) led to the themes explored within the discussion chapters and the contribution to the critical analysis of illustration therein. This shows how illustration can operate as practice-*based* research within Gray & Malins' still-developing artistic research paradigm, and is also of use to the even younger field of illustration research. Ideas used to argue this include Schön's reflective practice, which is linked here to Rosenberg's "ideational drawing" to describe the generative aspect of illustration research. The emergent methodology within these processes is celebrated here for keeping illustrators flexible in response to the changes in their industry and illustration's context (set out in the introduction), and for bringing new ideas into the still-developing area of illustration research. The chapter uses discussion of epistemological and methodological concerns of different paradigms (positivist and constructivist) in order

Drawing sign language poetry // Style as a result of finding appropriate language // Translation: words/action/2d

to establish the relationships between illustrator, world and viewer, as negotiated by illustration methods. The discussion rejects postivism and embraces some aspects of constructivism, but acknowledges that this will differ from illustrator to illustrator and may be the defining aspect of different strands of illustration (such as reportage, and children's books). In moving towards a more clearly defined paradigm for artistic research, the chapter engages with Haseman's "performative paradigm", suggesting that Illustration can contribute to this by way of performative examples that do as they tell. In return, the concept of performative outcomes is used to reflect upon the contradictions inherent within presenting a written argument for performative multi-modal communication.

The following chapter uses the epistemological and methodological concerns of the researcher to interrogate the issue of style in illustration. Discussion surrounding style is overwhelmingly negative in the field, and this chapter interrogates the act of drawing in order to reposition style as a reflection of the researcher's generous and responsible attitude towards the world and the audience of the work within it. John O'Reilly's concept of "illustration thinking" is employed to represent these "core values, skills and objectives", with style being the traces left by them (Vormittag 2013). The accessibility of illustration (its link to the viewer by way of beguiling surface) is discussed with relation to structuralist concepts, expectations based on possessing the appropriate cultural codes (with reference to Bourdieu and his use of Kantian aesthetics), and a more phenomenological approach to criticism that acknowledges the embodied illustrator and viewer. These existing frameworks available to the discussion of the surface of illustration focus largely on its reception, whereas (as noted by Soar 2006) the production of work is neglected. This chapter evaluates these frameworks in terms of the needs of production, and concludes that by using the concerns of the researcher to discuss style we can attend to both production and reception of illustration. This strategy also ensures that the surface and the concept within illustration are securely linked, reuniting the "voice" and "intelligence" of Heller & Arisman (2000). By using research concerns to examine style, this chapter also finds a productive role for failure, as a threshold work that indicates what is unknown. These pockets of ignorance reveal future pathways to explore both in conceptual and practical terms. The practical outcome of this chapter is my revision of practical methods in order to accommodate both the ideational processes and the demand of picture making. This latter point allows illustration to fulfil its professional role, and also to court the viewer by rewarding them with an elegant visual solution. The strategy adopted in practice placed greater emphasis on the inductive aspect of illustration, in that by removing the known outcome style and concept could be arrived at in

Bent coathanger-esque drawings // Abandoning representationalism for continuous line to record movement // Reflection on activity // Reflection informs subsequent visual commentary.Picture making.

tandem. Focusing on methods in this way encourages the use of methods in a communicative fashion, with style then becoming a critical tool in its own right. The chapter also calls for illustrators to maintain their own ideational practice alongside other forms of work and for this to be recognised within education, thus meeting industry calls for such skills in Yates (2013).

Chapter 3 focuses on the result of pursuing the methods outlined in the previous chapter. The research process generates materials (such as the numerous sketchbooks filled during this study), and these fragments need to be reprocessed into a form that can meet an audience. In order not to compromise all of the principles outlined in the previous chapter, strategies for repurposing and linking *existing* drawings are explored with reference to structuralist concepts concerning the roles of written text. Poststructuralist concepts such as “writerly texts” and “open works” are then employed to argue for the positive value of ambiguity retained by such portmanteau collections of images, although the potential translation of such terms into the phenomenon of stock illustration is acknowledged. Eco’s point that ambiguity allows values and dogma to be cast into doubt is cited in counterpoint, extending the argument for generosity and responsibility to be qualities of illustration. The ambiguous works championed here are acknowledged as more difficult communications to grasp, but with reference to Storkerson (2006) they are better held. The temporal aspect of these collections of fragments is introduced by way of Storkerson’s multimodal texts persisting in the memory in the form of narrative, and this is used to situate illustration as a fluid temporal alternative to the fragmented time used by Jameson (1985) to define the postmodern cultural form.

The final discussion chapter continues to examine the issue of time within illustration, with its unique angle being its adoption of a beneficial spatial dimension to manipulate time, which is in contrast to philosophical and theoretical writing on the subject. The strategies used within practice that support this claim are outlined, with reference to comics, artist’s books and exhibition spaces that offer complex temporal experiences to the viewer. The experience of time is then considered from the wider cultural viewpoint introduced through the previous chapter’s focus on postmodern time. Here, illustration is shown to be a valuable contributing practice to the discussion of the current era as defined temporally and spatially as “altermodern” by Bourriaud (2009). Throughout this discussion, the quality of generosity is maintained in order to situate illustration examples as accessible to the viewer. Viewed in contrast to Bourriaud’s “altermodern” and “relational” objects and environments, the examples of illustration discussed present more temporally, experientially and dialogically complex alternatives. They do so by attending to the third dimension of illustration, embracing the private contemplative space shunned by

Observation. Style: overly earnest. Well-meaning // Ideational intervention // Ongoing practice // Remixed: picture-making

Bourriaud. This discussion suggests that illustrators use their methods to create objects and environments that use the spatial aspect of work temporally and communicatively. Furthermore, the circulating forms discussed (such as Pertl's book) exemplify the possibilities for documenting installed work in a parallel artefact that enables a wider audience to experience such pieces that challenge the boundaries of illustration. A case is also made for these performative products to be explored further as vehicles for research outcomes within the context of Haseman's performative paradigm for research.

RELEVANCE

By approaching illustration as the research process set out in the methods chapter, the practical element of the study generated time as a key concept within the production and the critical analysis of illustration. The methods employed within practice were sufficiently flexible to encompass self-initiated work, commissioned and collaborative projects, and encourage the maintenance of a creative practice that complements traditional income streams. These are precarious and subject to change, and therefore the possession of transferable research-based skills is of long-term benefit to the illustrator seeking to adapt. By arguing for qualities to be the unifying characteristics of illustration rather than stylistic concerns, this study promotes an expanded understanding of illustration based on "illustration thinking". Therefore the diverse outcomes of practice concerned with communication, generosity, investigation, time and space can be recognised as illustration - whatever form they adopt. As stated by Morgan (2011) and confirmed within conversations with Drescher, Vormittag, and Braund, illustration is identifiable as a unique field with a particular discourse. As Braund suggests, it doesn't need the external (and financial) stamp of approval that commissions bring. Illustration does need to look beyond its own back garden as Zeegen states, in order to generate its own projects and opportunities beyond the "young man's game" of much commissioned illustration (as described by Vormittag 2012). The entrepreneurial drive responsible for numerous items of merchandise could be harnessed to create longer-term projects and communicative forms, alongside the socially-engaged practice that Vormittag (2013) champions. Given this drive is compatible with traditional employment within illustration, commissioners could in turn be convinced by such work to place their faith in illustration thinking and be less prescriptive with regard to outcomes. A research-based approach to illustration encourages this, and also leads illustrators to consider the appropriate documentation and dissemination of project outcomes in order to raise expectations of the field's capabilities.

Testing the methods & style chapters. Inductive process: idea generation // Reprocess for application // Final artwork

RESEARCH OUTCOMES

Presenting the aspect of the thesis concerned with time at a VaroomLab illustration symposium (*Boundaries,* Plymouth), publishing an abbreviated version for a wider audience in Varoom!, and subsequently publishing the full paper in the (peer-reviewed) VaroomLab journal disseminated the contribution made by this thesis to the development of a critical framework for illustration research. This validates the practice-led research methods that produced this contribution, and these have informed subsequent studio teaching undertaken at LUSAD (Loughborough). The concept of time has been further utilised within conference papers by peers, demonstrating its contemporary relevance and utility. Its incorporation as a teaching material within Falmouth's MA Authorial Illustration 'illustration discourse' sessions adds further weight to this claim.

FURTHER RESEARCH

A number of opportunities for further research arise from this study, both in the practical resolution of performative documentation of temporal and spatial works, and with regard to the implications the study holds for the field.

Within an educational context the breadth of materials and discourse from other disciplines that overlap the concerns of illustration show that proximity to other disciplines is productive. This could stretch from fine art to the humanities and social sciences on the basis of this study's trajectory alone, and collaborative inter-disciplinary research projects would enable this aspect of practice to be explored. Developing an awareness of the methods and discourse of each other's field serves to extend the conceptual models that underpin a discipline's discourse, and aids researchers and practitioners to redefine these in novel and productive ways.

With regard to identifying and promoting the variety of practises within the field of illustration, the research concepts explored can be employed to recognise the different epistemological and methodological concerns of different strands of illustration. This can help to establish clusters of discussion around these points, not to divide the strands but to appreciate the diversity within the field and the points of proximity to other disciplines. Such an expanded definition and understanding facilitates the goal of illustration fulfilling its potential, which Braund (2011) suggests is still to be done.

Imagined Postcards project devised for Hatch group: text and image relationships, producing gaps. Postcard description from Robin Schaeverbeke, postcard made in response, original postcard described by Robin (cyclist Eddy Merckx "the Cannibal")

In practical terms, removing the known outcome results not only in the adoption of the most appropriate vehicle for the project, but also extends the discourse surrounding these choices. By putting work into the public arena that encompass the ideas within the thesis, the opportunity is created to discuss the implications of such work – for the workplace, for the development of the field, and for the theoretical ramifications of the work. An intense period of studio practise will ensue… and this in turn will lead to further research questions.

Attention to these avenues of enquiry will contribute further to the developing discourse surrounding illustration research, and to increased recognition of the diversity of practises represented within the field. Not only does this benefit illustrators by extending their opportunities, but our visual environment is enriched with new stories, metaphors, languages and presentational forms.

Process work repurposed and revised for exhibition: 'Shelters' // Showing drawing as a process of investigation at the RWA (*The Power of the Sea* Hatch residency) // Methods for picture-making (accretion) that represent the layers of subject matter: house redecoration. Metaphor.

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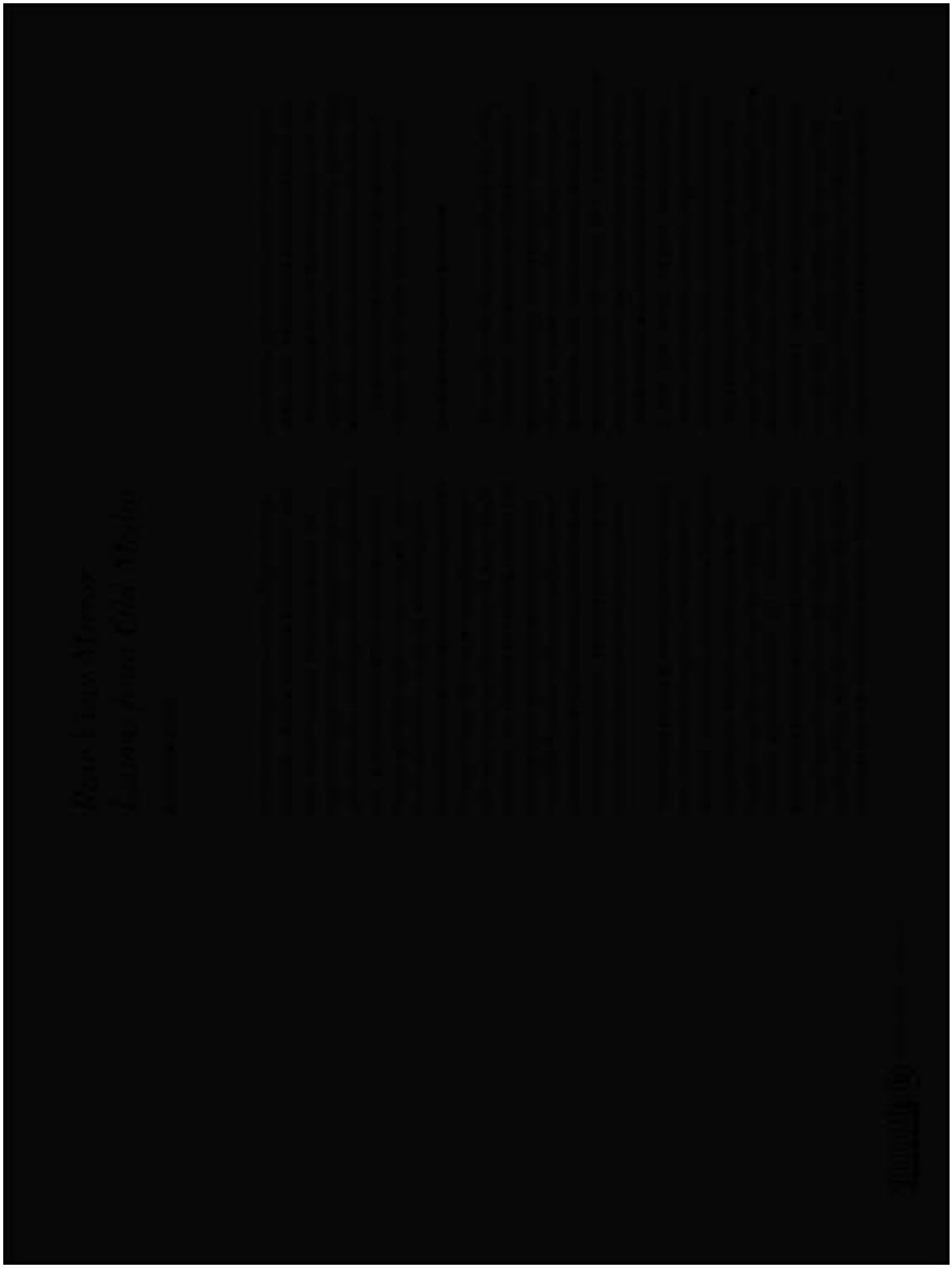

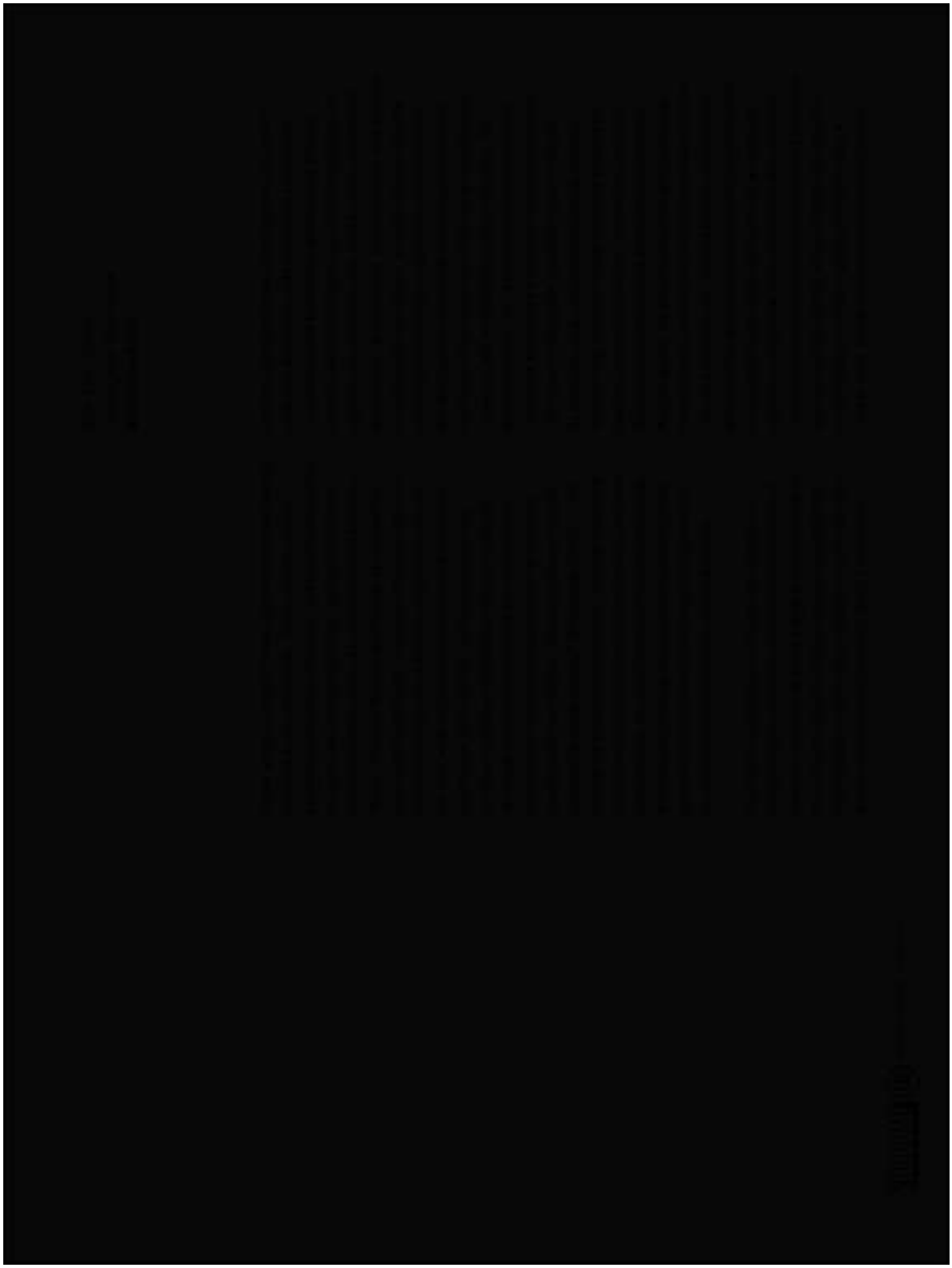

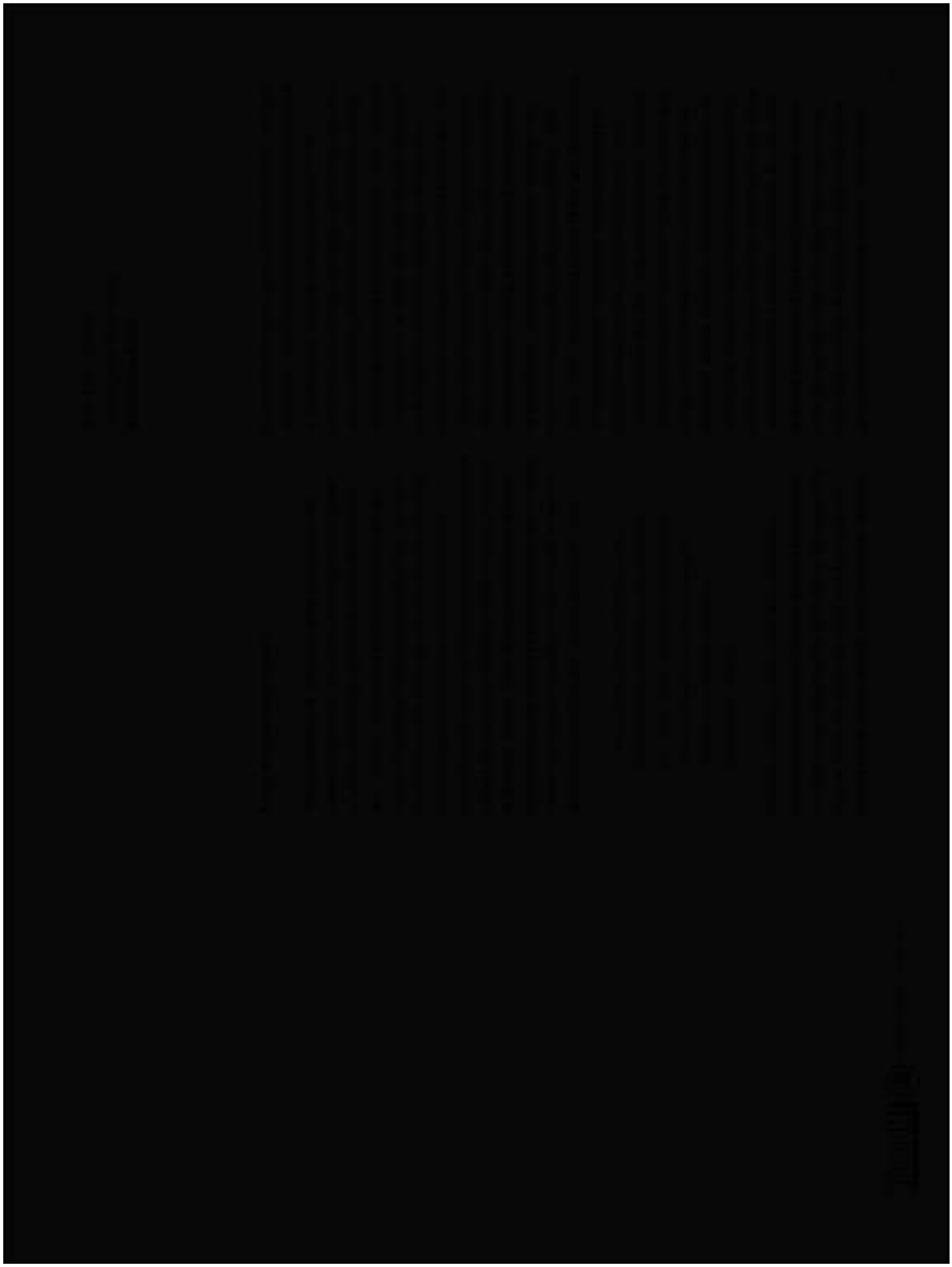

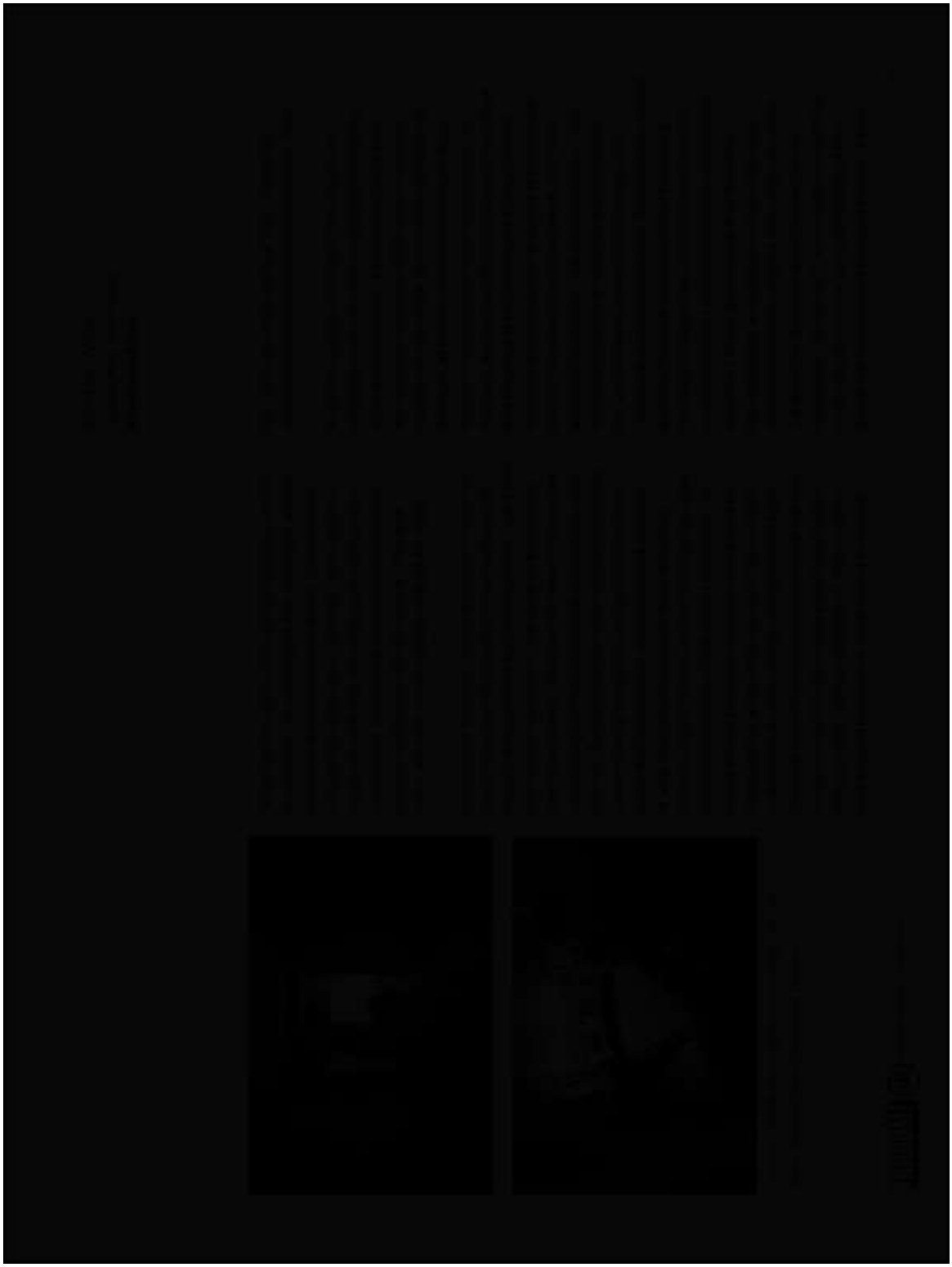

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