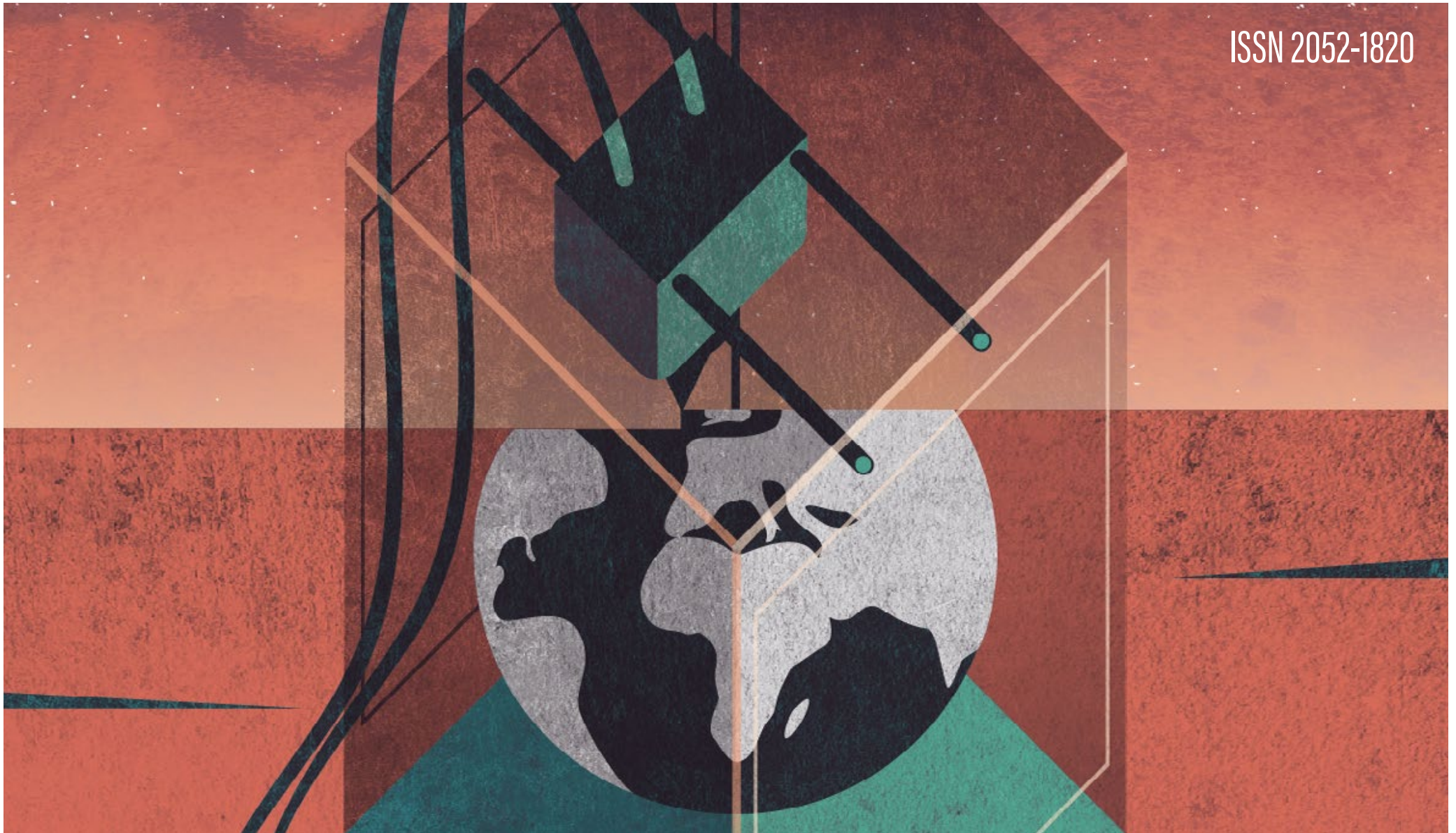


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VaroomLab Journal 4

**Visionaries**



# VaroomLab Editorial

Jo Davies



## Jo Davies

Academic input coordinator for VaroomLab Journal and Editor-in-Chief of *VaroomLab-Journal*. She is Associate Professor in Illustration at Plymouth University, and Programme Leader at the University College Mann. She is co-author of *Becoming A Successful Illustrator*, *Making Great Illustration* and *Understanding Illustration*, all published by Bloomsbury and continues to practice as an illustrator.

How can illustration be defined? Illustration is a noun and a verb. It is a constantly evolving concept evidenced in an ever-expanding range of practices and influenced by a broad context of changing ideologies, forms of production, economic and cultural trends. For many people it is a profession.

To understand the parameters of the definition parallels can be drawn from Penny Sparke's eloquent reflections on the shifting territory occupied by design. She posits in *An introduction to Design and Culture* that its transition in status is borne from a series of global crisis leading to design becoming, "a facilitator for innovation, creation and change across a range of contexts - commercial, social and cultural". This is resonant for illustration.

Specifically its evolution as a heightened cultural force legitimised the emergence of VaroomLab from the Association of Illustrators in 2011. Over the course of the past 5 years of conferences, and 10 years of Varoom publications this project has contributed to a cultural shift by providing an arena for research in an area under-represented in the field of art and design. It has begun to address a lack of clear connection between the creative activity evidenced in real world scenarios and the intellectual life of its counterparts, a gap that meant the subject was hitherto poorly understood, and undervalued.

This research in illustration is situated within models of practice based research described by Donald Schön in *The Reflective Practitioner*:

*How Professionals Think in Action* (1983) who suggests, "when we reject the traditional view of professional knowledge, recognising that practitioners may become reflective researchers in situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and conflict, we have recast the relationship between research and practice."

VaroomLab has provided an intense period of discovery, discourse and dissemination witnessed in the activity of illustrators employing methodologies that have located such reflective practice at the nucleus of their own industry. Participants have been practitioners identifying eclectic questions and diverse issues emerging from their own work, focused within the contexts of interpretation, boundaries, place, and the notion of visionaries.

Those who have joined forces in generating discourse have brought relativism, pragmatism and contextualization firmly to the table of this professional activity. The resultant papers and conferences are a tributary from healthy stream of activity, internationally, that has seen around 150 abstracts considered for inclusion and publication by representative academics from the VaroomLab partners internationally.

Given the relative infancy of the research area Varoomlab partners and contributors have been visionary in these pioneering investigations, concurrently posing and answering an ontological question – What can research in illustration be? This fundamental questioning of assumptions about research has documented methodologies that

have included processes of film, image-making, animation, curation, interview and case studies investigating and analysing complex ideas, philosophies and histories.

Some may criticise and contest that research in illustration is an exercise in academic indulgence, removed from the reality of briefs and working in real world commercial contexts. Certainly the intellectual and academic approaches to the subject that have tested the boundaries of intellectual rigour and the practical relevance to illustration as a profession deserves future consideration. VaroomLab has begun to demonstrate the dynamic relationship between research and practice and the feasibility of this as a professional ambition and the hope is for ongoing activities to

continue to situate research within the professional domain.

VaroomLab has been a creative hub for both academics and practitioners. Given the incumbency on those in education to offer provision that reflects agenda including professionalism, sustainability and employability it is vital that the evolving nature and transient cultural position of illustration continues to be examined. Opportunities for research must be embraced to enhance learning and teaching and strengthen the development and advancement of understanding and knowledge around communication and expression that is evidenced in the curriculum.

Much of the research territory of illustration is uncharted making this an opportune but challenging

time to operate this field. Building a framework for inquiry to interrogate and inform practice, acknowledging the distinct knowledge of the illustrator as maker and the confluence of reflection and doing.

VaroomLab has been visionary in these regards. It seems appropriate to end optimistically with Christopher Frayling, "Once we get used to the idea that we don't need to be scared of 'research' - or in some way protected from it - the debate can really begin." (Research in Art and Design, 1993)

# Contents

## 5 Keynote Speeches

6 Paul Slater

9 Graham Elliott  
Stephanie Black

## 16 Peer Reviewed Papers

17 Myths of the near Future: Ballard, Crusoe and Google  
Matthew Richardson

25 Illustration; Education; Revolution  
Richard Miles

40 Visualising Spaces: The Illustrated Map as a mode of  
communicating Fact, Fiction and Feeling.  
Andy Davies

## 56 Presentations

57 Paradise Lost: Documenting Birmingham's Central  
Library

Gareth Proskourine-Barnett

68 Immaterial Boundary (Film)

Rachel Gannon and Darryl Clifton

73 Illustrator as Detective: Discovery through Drawing

Chloe Regan

85 'The in-betweeners'

Jo Berry

101 Performing in a do-It-yourself nudie suit

Christian Lloyd

106 Off her hostess-trolley: Telling it a different way

Jo Hassall

118 A new breed: How should we champion the  
mavericks and pioneers of the illustration industry?

Alice Moloney

124 Self-Reflexivity and Contemporary Illustrated  
Children's Books

Aidan Winterburn

## 132 Further Information

The background is a dark green color with a subtle pattern of small white dots. Overlaid on this are several geometric shapes: a large, semi-transparent green hexagon in the center, and various lines and shapes in shades of green and black that suggest a technical or digital environment. A prominent feature is a silhouette of a globe, showing the continents of North and South America, positioned behind the text.

# Keynote Speeches

# Paul Slater



Illustrator and artist, Paul Slater, discussed the approach to his surreal and humorous image making and his key interests, showing and telling stories around the narratives and production of his illustration and personal paintings. He has a constant drive to keep producing work: "As soon as I stop doing commissions, I start painting".

He covered his sketchbook artwork, emphasising their difference from commissioned images, "When you're doing finished work, it's nice to then do rough drawings", and talked about the way he paints, saying he rarely works from life ("I love drawing from my head – a fanciful thing"), but works fast: "I've

always considered myself a dope, but I do all my paintings in a day". Slater made a good start to the day, grounding the visionary in the creations of the working illustrator, all with amusing anecdotes and pertinent insights.

[centralillustration.com/illustrators/Paul-Slater](http://centralillustration.com/illustrators/Paul-Slater)



Figure 1: Paul Slater, Washing Machine

Figure 2: Paul Slater, Camp site cavalcade

## Paul Slater



Figure 3: Paul Slater, Postmodern

Figure 4: Paul Slater, Spot the ball boys



# Graham Elliott

written by Stephanie Black



## Interview with Graham Elliott

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After successfully completing pilot training with the RAF, Graham Elliott decided his career lay in art rather than in the air.

He graduated with an Illustration masters, from the Royal College of Art and went on to design some of the first motion graphics for MTV. He illustrated for many publications notably *The New York Times* and *The Sunday Times* magazine. Designing record sleeves for rock band Living Colour, which went platinum, he also directed their *Glamour Boys* music video and produced the stage design for the tour with the Rolling Stones. He has worked as a creative director at Saatchi and Saatchi, directed commercials for Coca-Cola and music videos for Puffy, in Tokyo, as well as projects in twenty plus countries.

Currently, with his New York company Fovea Films, he is directing and producing commercials, music videos and documentaries. He has been teaching motion graphics and music video classes, at the School of Visual Arts, New York, for the last 10 years. His sketchbooks are included in *Sketchbooks of the World's Great Graphic Designers* by Steven Heller.

His feature documentary *New York in Motion* was selected for over a dozen film festivals worldwide. He is working on a new film, *World in Motion*, exploring the influence of cultural background on creative expression. Elliott was keynote speaker at the International Motion Festival, Cyprus in 2012 and 2015.

## Graham Elliott

The following article is a report on an interview conducted with Graham Elliott in response to his keynote speech at the *Varoomlab* symposium in Birmingham. The conversation was semi-structured and wide-ranging, taking in Elliott's current documentary project *World in Motion*, a drinking competition with Japanese printmakers, and formative experiences. Our conversation for this article revealed Elliott to be a generous interviewee with many entertaining anecdotes, some of which will be repeated here.

The conversation begins with a recap of the *Varoomlab* conference and how welcome the discussion of key issues within the field was, amongst academics, students, professional illustrators and everything in between. This is the legacy of the *Varoomlab* conferences; addressing what Roderick Mills identified as the slow development of critical discourse surrounding the subject (Mills, 2014), which will reverberate long after the conference and journal go into hibernation.

### SERIOUS FUN

We move on to discussing the changing academic situation in the UK, in comparison to the US where Elliott recently emerged from 10 years of lecturing. He suspects the pressure brought by fees of stifling his students' ability

to be playful, thus thwarting his ambitions for the course to be fun: "we just let rip, it was about being at art school... when else are you going to do this?!" Whereas the institution favoured a serious approach to the business of studying and repaying its cost. Elliott acknowledges that "you come out with \$150,000 of debt from the school that I was teaching in, and that's a massive thing to have over you. So you gravitate towards having to get a job". But his advice is to work almost counterintuitively: "you've got to show your playfulness and people will give you work, because you're an individual and you're playful and you have talent and you've experimented. If you look like everyone else it's going to be harder." Within the world of advertising where a culture of fear (of speaking up, of being "off-strategy" in the face of shifting goalposts) crushes creativity, resilient playfulness is a serious business attribute.

Such students were vacuumed up by advertising clients for their creative thinking skills. Neil Thomas defines the creative thinker as one who is able to "think 'outside of the box'. Be open to new observations and thoughts, however ridiculous they may seem at first" stating that "approaching the problem from a different angle can encourage new ideas" (Thomas, 2004:9). Elliott emphasises the importance of a solid development process in achieving



Fig 1. Sketchbook covers



Fig 2. Sketchbook NY in Motion

this, stating "I think that the process is such a big part of the final thing. I always like to look behind the scenes". This curiosity towards the creative process informs and inspired the making of his film exploring the motion graphics industry *New York in Motion*, and its successor *World in Motion* (a co-production with Roswitha Rodrigues).

To explore the practicalities of *how* to develop playfulness I propose that learning to make mistakes is valuable, which Elliott summarises much more neatly: "make mistakes, take criticism, and be open to ideas". After all, he says, if you want to simply get something *right* "you can watch a tutorial on Lynda.com, you don't need to go to art school." Instead, Elliott would urge his students to think through practice: "don't be too precious about it. Just go and do it, and while you're doing it things will come out of that. While you're making something, even if it's not the right thing that you're going to be using in the end, you're going to come to another thing". Messing about might therefore be a way of harnessing the logic of practice and materials in the service of Thomas's creativity, and circumventing the creative blockage induced by looming fees and employment anxiety. As Elliott concludes: "the important thing is to keep doing stuff and making stuff, and not agonising over stuff."

### IDEATION, NOTATION, AND ORGANISATION

Elliott identifies the sketchbook or notebook as the vehicle he uses to kickstart the creative process, using brainstorming: "instead of one idea I try to think of ten ideas and distil it down". The sketchbook proved to be a recurrent theme within the making of *New York in Motion*: "I interviewed 52 people and companies for this film, ranging from MTV, Comedy Central, to independent studios and freelancers and it was really interesting to look behind the scenes and see how people were thinking in notebooks". For Elliott, these are live documents; old notebooks are constant companions to dip into in the present. Of revisiting these Elliott says "it's like opening up your brain, walking into this archive of stuff." Notebooks also occupy an organisational role, and Elliott emphasises the visual way in which he thinks on paper to plan the logistics of a project.

"I was in a bar the other night working on one of my sketchbooks and a guy leans over and asks 'are you some kind of magician? Are you doing spells or something?'" The answer wasn't too out of keeping with this suggestion; he was drawing a reminder to pack the appropriate amount of underwear for a forthcoming filming trip to Bangkok. He uses the effective-

## Graham Elliott

ness of iconic representation where lists aren't as effective ("it would take longer to read"). This is alchemy of a sort, conjuring clarity from the complexity of an international shooting schedule.

This approach to organisation has been with Elliott since childhood, when he drew on index cards to catalogue his Action Men and their associated equipment. More recently these have evolved into a bespoke system for plotting shooting itineraries. These are visually dense colour-coded spatial and temporal plans, which are meticulous, articulate, and also enable internationally effective communication: "I can get a tour guide and point at stuff to say 'I'm looking for this'". Following the day's work the cards also serve to bolster morale as they are crossed off and hung on the wall; a slightly less bloody shooting trophy.

### UNDER PRESSURE

Although he has moved away from drawing as an outcome, Elliott states that "it's fundamental within everything I do", and helps him to negotiate the pressures of the motion graphics industry. These include restrictions on time, resources and budgets, which are all pressures identified by Mark Runco as factors that inhibit creativity (Runco 2004:662). However, Elliot's visual thinking methods seem to enable him to

take the sting out of some and reconfigure others as positive factors. For example, in shifting from illustration to film the scale of task, team, budget, risk and responsibility all increase, but the resulting rise in pressures is transformed into a benefit. Assistant directors and producers form a marvellous buffer zone around Elliott, which is impenetrable to clients.

It is his meticulous approach to planning and the production of rigid schedules that allow Elliott to negotiate a path between pressures and play; the more effectively the work can be completed the more time is left at the end for playing. As he says, "once you have a roadmap you can go off on adventures, because you know that certain things have been done and it gives you more freedom". I offer my suspicions that he has developed extraordinary creative coping strategies to survive this level of pressure. In response Elliott recommends pockets of quiet thinking time in the Museum of Modern Art (New York). He recalls heading to the MOMA to wrestle with particularly tricky creative challenges, causing much alarm to his producer in the process. "She'd say: 'we've got all this work to do and you're going to the MOMA?!' She didn't quite understand it, and thought I was just playing hooky by going to the art gallery!"



Fig 3. Sketchbook Animation Ideas

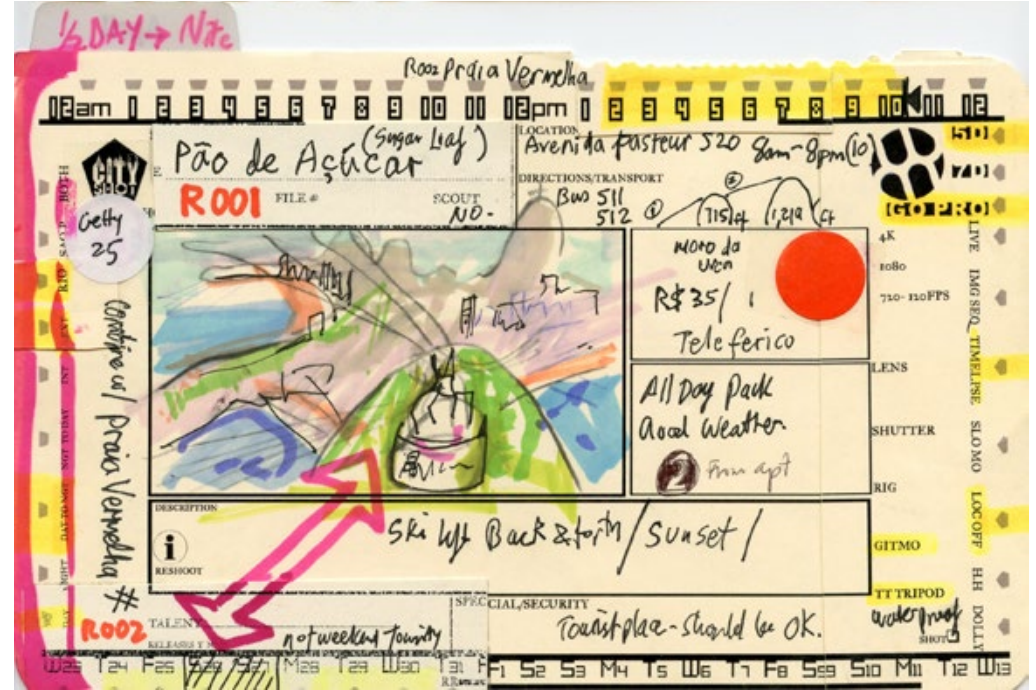
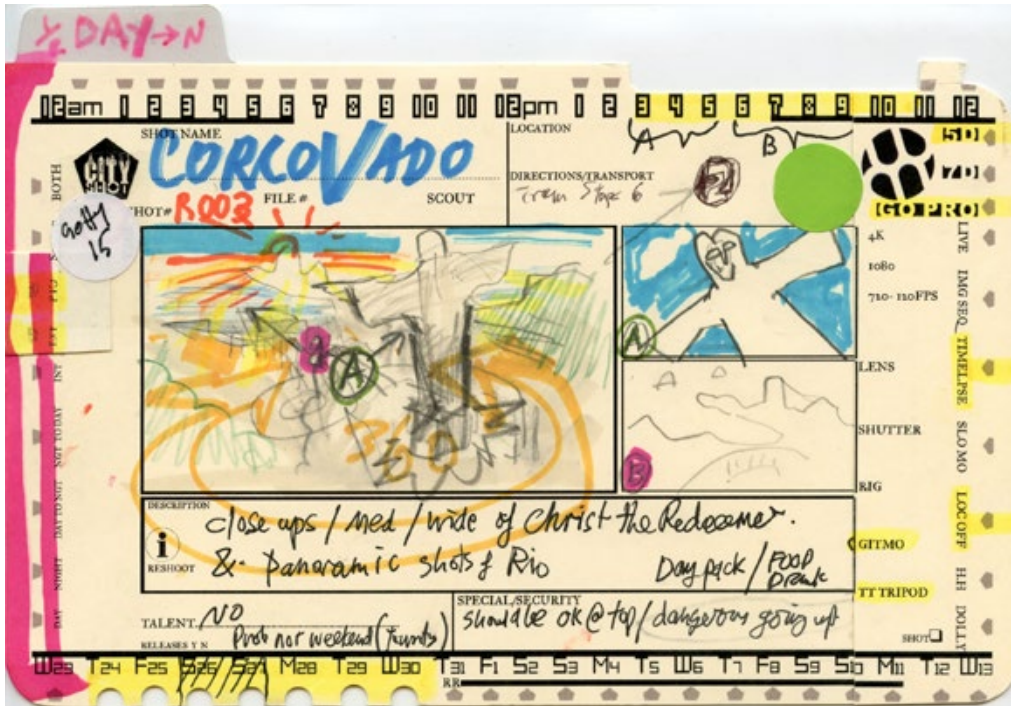


Fig 4. World In Motion Brazil Shooting Card

## Graham Elliott

### MASTERING TIME

Balance also surfaces in our discussion of motion graphics, in particular Elliott's enthusiasm for the digital timeline introduced to him by way of Adobe AfterEffects. This digital revelation allows Elliott to unravel his intense visuals into a more approachable, carefully-paced form of communication. "One of the reasons why I didn't stick with illustration in my career was because I find it hard to do just one image. I put too much into it and mess it up." He notes that his art school classmates would remind him that, in contrast, "Picasso knew when to stop!" Elliott uses the analogy of a changing cast of characters on a stage to describe how he now wheels out the actors one at a time, rather than flashmobbing his project and creating a sensory overload: "because you've got the luxury of time you can put a load of stuff in there and it's not going to get too crowded."

Elliott explains that the timeline enables him to combine all of his creative skills (photography, animation, illustration, graphic design), using a method that isn't all that far removed from collage, or pasting pictures into scrapbooks as a child. The fact that one programme allows Elliott to do all of the editing himself leads us on to an interesting reflection upon the relationship of words to his work. Elliott found that words limited his work to what he could

explain to a film editor, "so now I do stuff and I'm thinking 'I know that if I were in an edit room I would not be able to do this, because it would *sound* so ridiculous". Now the whole process can take place without the words that Elizabeth Price (2006:131) found always more plausible but never as sharp as her practice, so there is no loss between modes. Furthermore, mastering the editing process has fed back into planning and shooting, with Elliott selecting music first and "shooting for the edit".

The hands-on approach to editing allowed by AfterEffects returned Elliott to the initial wonderment at mixing images, time and performance of his art school days. He recalls the particular combination of project, tutor, technology and truffle as contributory factors in fostering his interest in motion graphics. The brief (set by Pam Schenk) was to "bring it back alive", and found Elliott using his new Polaroid home film-making equipment to make a promotional advert for a Viennese truffle. "So I found this Viennese Waltz, and my friend Mark was a woman sipping tea and eating the truffle, and we turned my wardrobe into a cuckoo clock. I had a toucan outfit from a fancy dress party and wore my Gran's wig, and popped my head out in time to the music." There was no possibility of editing the film so the three-minute music video was all shot in-camera, a lengthy process. "We were



Fig 5. Bad Romance: music video still

doing this at three o'clock in the morning and playing this music, and the landlord knocked on the door. I opened the door... My friend was dressed as a woman and I was dressed as a toucan. He just shook his head." The project presentation went well, and the process helped to define Elliott's approach to limitations: "it was about resources; what I had, what was available, and what we could do in the time."

### RESTRICTIONS

We pursue this discussion of restrictions, beginning with the excruciating cost of film at the time of the cuckoo clock incident requiring careful planning. Resources in general are dealt with on a Ready-Steady-Cook basis ("It's like cooking; I don't want to go shopping, so what's in the fridge?"); with Elliott outlining his approach: "knowing the availability of what's

## Graham Elliott

around and what your resources are, knowing your capabilities, and pushing it as far as you can. That's been a mantra for how I work". He considers the surfeit of these things as having the potential to swamp him, and gives the example of his work for Nickelodeon and Kia-Ora to show how two round-the-world adventures *and* high production values could be wrung from a budget by opting for super-8 film and a giant orange ball. As Runco states: "creative insights may sometimes absolutely require resources, but sometimes result from paucity" (Runco 2004:662).

This theme emerges again in relation to a book on illustration published by Edward Booth Clibborn and destined to be printed in Japan. Elliott diverted the copy-setting budget for the book towards air travel and instead handwrote the publication in three languages with the assistance of multilingual interns. The wager was a success by all accounts; the book won a D&AD yellow pencil for its sympathetic use of text to complement illustration, Elliott went to Japan, and Booth Clibborn had someone to oversee the printing process. Further 'negotiations' were undertaken with the printers in the form of a most scurrilously rigged drinking competition resulting in a run of copies with gilt edges at no extra cost. These are the things they don't teach you in art school. On the other hand, art school broadened

Elliott's perspective on the world, introducing him to a much more diverse range of people. His subsequent international career and current project shooting *World in Motion* have given him an insight into the creative methods and aesthetic sensibilities of the global motion graphics community. He speaks of the colour palettes unique to places, informed by their urban environment. It's a co-production with designer and branding expert, Roswitha Rodrigues, self-funded by her studio Magical Monkey, in New York. "Working alongside Rosie has helped me focus on the overall structure of the film and not get too distracted by the sheer mechanics of such an ambitious project. My intuitive approach is also complemented by her branding and strategic background." It could take years to complete, but these findings secure its longevity even if the technology featured becomes outdated.

### STRATEGY AND THE LONG-HAUL

Limitations resurface in Elliott's closing remarks, in that he chose art school and subsequent career moves without the burden of expectations limiting him: "the lack of pressure to do any one thing allowed me to dive in there and try things out". Instead I hear an account of an inspiring mother encouraging him in this regard. A textile-designer by training, she retrained herself several times (through

necessity) before 'portfolio careers' were even invented, and created a nurturing environment with time dedicated to drawing together. Also namechecked is partner-in-crime John England, who influenced Elliott's early career. "He taught me a lot about self-confidence... people feed off that." Although he adds the disclaimer that perhaps, straight out of the Royal College of Art and full of swagger, "we were probably a *bit* asshole-ish".

Elliott emphasises the role played by others in the quest to fulfil your ambitions, "If you have a dream of getting somewhere you need people to help you get there." He goes on to outline the bartering of creative capital underlying his and England's first job in advertising: "people are not just going to give you stuff, for charity, you've got to find a *reason* for them to give you stuff". They had recently been featured by Creative Review, and this would bring press attention to the agency; "there's always a trade-off, it's problem-solving." And in return you help other creatives in the form of swapping skills in a reciprocal fashion. It's important to note that Elliott's examples are based on mutual leverage, and not the hollow promise that "it will be good for your portfolio".

Elliott seems to have mastered long-term planning and transforming different forms of capital to enable him to negotiate successful

outcomes for all parties. We conclude our conversation with a compelling example in which he demonstrates an extraordinary feat of strategic planning for a thirteen-year-old. Elliott recounts his opportunistic years attending the Air Cadets in order to access a scholarship to learn to fly, gaining a pilot's licence before going to art school. Thereafter, his career has been based on asking "how can I make this happen, how can I do this?", which makes for a persuasive *modus operandi*. Or perhaps, as he puts it elsewhere: "Just go and ask!"

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The background is a textured, deep red color. In the center, there is a dark silhouette of a globe showing the continents. Above the globe, there is a dark, rectangular object resembling a power outlet or a component of a circuit board, with several thin, dark lines extending from it. The entire scene is overlaid with a network of thin, light-colored lines that form a grid and connect various points, suggesting a digital or technical theme. The text 'Peer Reviewed Papers' is centered over the globe in a white, bold, sans-serif font.

# Peer Reviewed Papers



# Myths of the near Future: Ballard, Crusoe and Google

## Matthew Richardson



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Matthew Richardson's research and practice exploits found images and framing devices to explore the slippages between fact and fiction, space and time. His work utilises photography, sound, text, assemblage and digital media to investigate how narratives shift in their re-telling and through changes in context.

Matthew originally studied Graphic Design (BA) at Middlesex University, followed by postgraduate study in Illustration at Central St. Martins, and Fine Art (MA) at UWIC, Cardiff. He has created work over widely differing contexts, including commissioned work for *The Guardian*, V&A, WPP, English National Opera, BBC, Penguin and Folio. He has taught and been a guest speaker at

art colleges across the UK and currently teaches part-time at Norwich University of the Arts.

In 2014, Matthew illustrated *In Praise of Folly* by the 15th century humanist, Erasmus, for Folio and presented a paper titled *In Praise of Folly: a Palimpsest of Foolery* at The Itinerant Illustrator hosted by Srishti College of Art and Design, Bangalore, which talked about the process. He completed a project titled *Am I the Island*, an exploration of the narrative space in JG Ballard's novel *Concrete Island*, in 2016 and it was shown at Transition Gallery, London in that year.

## Myths of the near Future: Ballard, Crusoe and Google

This article traces the research and development of an exploratory illustration project that visually adapts J.G. Ballard's 1974 novel, *Concrete Island*. The work aims to function somewhere between book, film, online exploration and gaming experience. I am interested in illustration's intrinsic narrative purpose - its connection to word and story form - and I have been thinking about how the written word (as both script and story) can provide very precise information, while allowing imaginative space for a reader to inhabit. I have been considering how this ambiguous imaginative space can be maintained, as a written story is transposed into a visual one.

J.G. Ballard's fiction seems to remain prophetic of a future, even as we re-read novels written in the 60s, 70s and 80s. Much of his fiction has turned to fact; the forecasting of global warming, urban dereliction and concerns with the psychological effects of media and technology on the individual. How then, might a visionary narrative written 40 years ago, be re-imagined, re-cast and illustrated today? This is a specific narrative and the question, as questions often do, raises further questions:

What does the term 'Ballardian' mean, and how might it be visualised or conceptualised? How do developments in technology affect the individual?

What contemporary visual story form might be appropriate to re-tell a Ballardian narrative?

Patterson (2016) neatly sets out some of the challenges of illustrating and adapting Ballard's fiction:

"Ballard's work defiantly resists adaptation. He is an obsessive and an imagist. He doesn't do plot, he just examines his nightmarish scenarios and mentally collapsing protagonists from every conceivable angle, rather than offering neatly structured climaxes. His dialogue is functional. In conventional outer space sci-fi you can have fun with spaceships, ray-guns and special effects, but Ballard's "inner space" is far harder to capture."

This is an extract from Patterson's review of the recent film made by Ben Wheatley of Ballard's 1973 dystopian novel *High Rise*. Wheatley sets the film in the 1970s (when the book was written) – and so connects Ballard with a specific time period and visual culture. The beginning of my project involved thinking again about 'classic Ballardian' images and tropes - brutalist architecture, underpasses, overpasses, motorways — and trying to see if I could find contemporary alternatives to the physical metaphors of the pre-digital era that Ballard inhabited. I wondered whether the classic (and increasingly nostalgic) visualis-

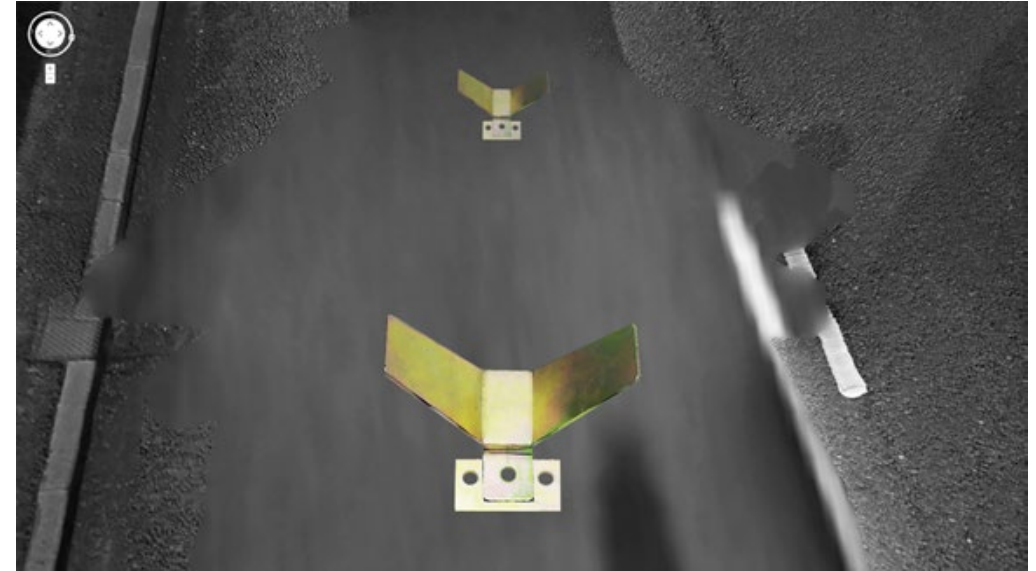


Fig 1. Still from 'Am I The Island' Matthew Richardson, 2015

ation of what 'Ballardian' signifies will always be the only 'Ballardian' form - even as we have moved from an analogue world to a digital one. Ballard's fiction certainly still has contemporary relevance – so perhaps 'Ballardian' as metaphor shifts over time, and the term 'Ballardian' is as much an 'idea' as a 'style'. In thinking about how we use digital technology now and in consideration of Ballard's view of technology as an individually isolating force, my project proposes Google Street View as the contemporary 'Ballardian' metaphor, image and form.

Ballard's *Concrete Island* begins:

"Soon after 3 o'clock on the afternoon of April 22, 1973, a 35-year-old architect named Robert Maitland was driving down the high-speed exit lane of the Westway inter-change in central London. Six hundred yards from the junction with the newly built spur of the M4 motorway (when the Jaguar had already passed the 70 mph speed limit) a blow-out collapsed the front near-side tyre". (Ballard, 1974)

## Myths of the near Future: Ballard, Crusoe and Google

This is the moment before Maitland crashes off the motorway, unseen by other motorists, into no-mans land and hidden from view. I was immediately drawn in by the precise description of person, place, time and speed - and an early impulse was to use Google Street View to locate the site of the crash. In trying to connect this fictional moment with a virtually real space, I wondered what this strange space was, in a crossover somewhere between fiction and reality, past and present. As I re-traced Maitland's journey along the A40 using Street View, I realised that the first person perspective of Street View could be cast as Maitland's, with the computer display screen, already a window between the physical world and an imaginary space, a windscreen - and I was curious to see how this logic and metaphor might play out as a visual narrative device for illustrating *Concrete Island*.

At the time that Ballard wrote *Concrete Island*, he saw the car as the dominant icon and form of modernity. Forty years later, the car has arguably been replaced by the smartphone as prime object (and status) for navigating society - practically and metaphorically. Now, Maitland would as likely be lost due to the absence of a Wi-Fi signal, and congestion or road works would have him crawling along at under 15mph, so if he did crash, he would as likely crash by drifting into the rear of the car in



Fig 2. Still from 'Am I The Island' Matthew Richardson, 2015

front, distracted by conversation on a hands-free mobile device.

*Concrete Island* is rare in Ballard's writing in as much as it uses a pre-existing allegorical form. The form of *Concrete Island* belongs to a sub genre of fiction known as a 'robinsonade'. This is an allegorical story-form that originated with Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719). The original spawned and still spawns so many copies and versions that it defines

its own genre. Well known examples include *The Swiss Family Robinson* (1812), *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896), *Lord of the Flies* (1954) and *Castaway* (2000). The archetypal structure involves an individual — marooned from civilization, surviving by his or her own wits. The plot is often theorized as a myth of colonization (with Crusoe as Capitalist pioneer or exploiter, depending on point of view). The story form includes encounters with 'indigenous' people, with the marooned individual using tools and

technology to build and assert their idea of 'civilization'. A Robinsonade is as an allegory of individual survival against the odds; dystopian in terms of unforgiving nature (exposure to danger, the elements) and utopian in terms of the individual overcoming adversity. The combination of specific, yet limited elements provides for infinite variations that can be re-cast for different narrative purposes within different historic and cultural periods.

Ballard's Robinsonade, *Concrete Island* is one of a quartet of 1970s novels — the others being *The Atrocity Exhibition* (1970), *Crash* (1973) and *High-Rise* (1975) — that spoke about and warned against the increasing alienation and isolation of the individual through the bombardment and seduction of technology and commercialisation of experience. In the narrative, Architect, Robert Maitland is marooned on a traffic island, a triangle of space that is an overlooked, bi-product of the megalithic 1960-70s road building programme. Wire fencing, steep embankments and the relentless flow of traffic repel his attempts to escape. As Maitland's strength diminishes, and as he slips in and out of delirium, he encounters two inhabitants of the island, a young female runaway and, an elderly vagrant. Maitland uses his wits to survive; drinking rainwater, setting fire to his car to attract attention, and manipulating the two inhabitants to help him survive.

## Myths of the near Future: Ballard, Crusoe and Google

The location and setting of the narrative premise is hugely significant and is a good place to start to think about the term 'Ballardian'. What and where is this island? This in-between space beside the A40, this space between motorways, arrived at via a car crash – appear to be classic 'Ballardian' elements. A Dictionary definition of 'Ballardian' cites bleak, dystopian man-made landscapes and the psychological effects brought about by developments in technology as key conditions of the term. These 'conditions' are often attached to

specific visual tropes and motifs – motorway flyovers, multi-storey car parks, abandoned modernist buildings, empty swimming pools. Ballard talks about the use of these urban liminal spaces as metaphor - metaphors for the subconscious – what he called 'inner space' (as opposed to Sci-Fi's 'outer space'). So for Ballard, these physical structures and forms and indeterminate spaces represent, feelings and urges that we suppress and are hidden. Ballard describes his purpose in using the 'Robinsonade' as story form: "Marooned (...) on

a traffic island, we can tyrannize ourselves, test our strengths and weaknesses, and perhaps come to terms with aspects of our characters to which we have always closed our eyes." (Ballard, 1974) So this island, as much as a specifically described location (off the A40) is as importantly a metaphor of the individual psyche. Ballardian space then - this visual rendering of "inner space" - isn't only locked to a specific geographic location or visual trope, it is also a less easily visible idea – the landscape of human subconscious and human behaviour. Ballard conflates 'inner' and 'outer' space in 'Concrete Island' and consciously draws attention to the relationship:

"He surveyed the green triangle which had been his home for the past five days. It's dips and hollows, rises and hillocks he knew as intimately as his own body. Moving across it, he seemed to be following a contour line inside his head." (Ballard, 1974, p.131)

If we think about Ballard's notion of 'inner space' today - it is certainly changed by our habituated use and connection to the Internet – where do we 'live' now? and what motivates us? In this context, the 1973 motorway system – a 1974 'Ballardian' metaphor of space is nearer today to the techno-capitalist structure of the Internet. So isn't then, the internet a contender as metaphor for Ballard's 'Inner space'

and by extension, 'Ballardian Space'?

While Google Earth and Google Street View creates and provides 'place' and the navigation of space in a virtual sense, Ballard (working pre-digital), uses (and needs to use) analogue metaphors and analogies to interrogate the conditions and effects of modern life. For example, Ballard described society as one enormous novel. This metaphor represented the media and consumer landscape of the mid-1970s – a metaphor for the convergence of fact and fiction in advertising, film and television. The French theorist, Jean Baudrillard (1994) has used Ballard's fiction to illustrate his idea of 'simulation' - an experience of the world that is neither fiction nor reality, caused by an overload of information through print, TV and electronic media, where individuals are lost in a depthless technological system, detached from empathy - a 'death of affect'. In a digitally networked world, the media and consumer landscape has shifted massively in the last 40 years. Perhaps most significant is how virtual and real spaces have merged and been claimed (and in many cases bought and controlled) by social networks, online communication, information access, shopping and gaming.

Ballard predicted something of this: "Electronic aids, particularly domestic computers, will help

Fig 3. Still from 'Am I The Island' Matthew Richardson, 2015



## Myths of the near Future: Ballard, Crusoe and Google

the inner migration, the opting out of reality. Reality is no longer going to be the stuff out there, but the stuff inside your head. It's going to be commercial and nasty at the same time." (Ballard, 1971) Ballard's metaphor of the 'enormous novel' and Buadrillard's ideas of 'simulation' are the Internet, and perhaps a 'death of affect', is the cause of Maitland's (or a modern day Crusoe's) detached isolation. In thinking about Ballard's descriptions of our relationship to technology, and in thinking about Ballard writing in a different time period, I considered how technology compels us to experience time and 'live' differently in different eras. These aspects are pertinent in thinking about how the text of the narrative might be made visual and what considerations might be significant now.

The landscape of *Concrete Island*, which is first understood as a 'non-space', slowly reveals the ruined sites of past technologies beneath the undergrowth - a derelict printing works, the cellar of a cinema. Technology has always changed how time (and place) is experienced - from sea travel, to railways and roads and air flight to the Internet. The way we adapt to shifting and overlapping media technologies - books, phones, film, radio, television, computers - also effects what it feels (and means) to be human. Ballard famously championed surrealism and his narratives play with and unpick many Freudian ideas and tropes - repression,

psychosexuality, the death drive, the unconscious. Tom Gunning (1998) uses the term 'technological uncanny' to describe the way new technology is first experienced as magical or 'other', before it disappears into habit and routine, and this is how I am considering the experience of Google Street View. Gunning argues that although familiarity of a technology, through everyday use, masks the original sense of magic and surprise, an 'uncanny' aspect (or a kind of magical awe) does not totally disappear, but continues to erupt in unforeseen ways and places. The Freudian term 'uncanny' is a mixture of the familiar and unfamiliar that is experienced as odd - a feeling that causes a double take, a feeling of discomfort in something that was felt to be to be known and understood. So, as an example of this as it applies to technology, we might take for granted phones and voicemail, yet if we heard the voice of someone that had died via voicemail, we might be as unsettled at hearing the voice as the first person in 1875 to hear a disembodied voice coming from a phone receiver.

This idea of the 'technological uncanny'- and the fact that Street View might be subject to 'technological uncanniness', underpins my project and research. It is the 'technological uncanny' I'm suggesting, that can give us a different way to think about 'Ballardian', and importantly, something that is 'Ballardian'

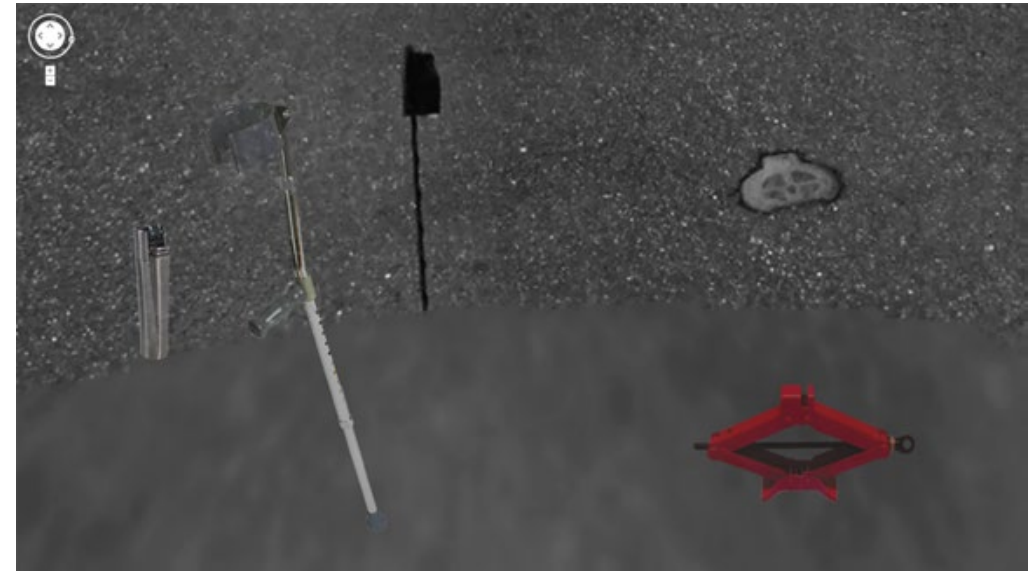


Fig 4. Still from 'Am I The Island' Matthew Richardson, 2015

as concept, untethered to a specific period in time, but connected to ever-changing technological change and development. If we go back to the origins of film, before editing was commonplace and film was still mostly continuous footage, pioneers (as entertainers and entrepreneurs) enhanced the 'lived' and embodied experience of film through what were called 'Phantom Rides'. Phantom Rides were unsettling (and exciting) 'travel' experiences - with movement appearing to come from an invisible force. The viewer was given

an entirely new experience of time-space travel, the effect produced by a combination of the film-making (where by a camera was mounted on the front of a train) and the subsequent projection of the film in a specially designed space. The viewers occupied the position of the camera and travelled through a landscape in a monochrome dream. Even though the rides pre-date Freud by a few decades, the experience can certainly be described as 'uncanny'. A continuum of uncanny and virtual time-space travel might be traced

## Myths of the near Future: Ballard, Crusoe and Google

from here, via theme park rides and gaming to the experience of Street View today.

Significantly for my project however, Street View isn't used and experienced as entertainment, fiction or 'other', but as a utilitarian 'reality' – a reliable, everyday form of travel and navigation. If we examine this familiar space more closely however, 'Street View' as a mirror of reality it is actually quite strange. Street View World is always daytime and the weather is fine. We accept as normal a mode of travel, in which we lurch in 10 metre jumps, from one fixed place to another. We don't walk, we hover just above ground level, our journey soundless, and any people encountered are ghostly, their features and faces blurred.

This fabricated 'reality' we take for granted – and the 'constructedness' of this space – nearer to a kind of fiction is easily overlooked. However, if we look closely the digital fabric is often exposed by visual misconceptions, glitches in coding, and the blurs and shadows of this data-mapped and data-created space. In thinking about Street View as 'Ballardian', it is these glitches that I'm suggesting have the capacity to act as double metaphor. This is landscape as psychological map, with the gaps and ruptures, as hinges between the conscious and unconscious – and simultaneously a landscape of indeterminate and delayed time, with

the mismatched seams acting in the same way to the gutters and frames in a graphic novel. This narrative structure provided the space and form for my adaptation of the novel.

The project needed more obvious shifts from the 'familiarity' of Google Street View, shifts that activated Street View as a 'Ballardian' narrative space and that pushed the familiarity of Street View to something less known and trusted. In my recalibrating, Street View retains its familiar, individualised journey space

– the Google compass signifying a control of orientation and navigation. Then the world turns grey, people disappear, to be replaced by isolated objects, ambiguous in their scale and placement, that float somewhere between the 3-Dimensional space of street view and screen surface. These objects, often tools and weapons, relate sometimes specifically, sometimes obliquely to the plot, their use oscillating between survival & attack and bribe & exchange. The slippage in the reading of these signs (and how they relate to one another and to the

narration), creates space for the reader/viewer to add and make meaning. In thinking about the visual narrative form, I was interested that Ballard talked about his writing in cinematic terms:

"I wanted to suggest a sort of mythological stratum... it's rather like a film, (...) where the action is suddenly overlaid by another image, just briefly, and one's conscious of a different system of time, perhaps a more dream-like atmosphere, something that touches another level of the mind."

(Burns & Sugnet, 1981)

'Ballardian time' has a particular quality – a kind of moving stillness. Ballard's narrative time doesn't really describe past events, or use flash backs, or conversely look towards a distant future. Ballardian time exists in the continuous present, or as Ballard puts it himself, somewhere in "the next five minutes". We are always moving towards a moment, yet there is no narrative anticipation of this moment approaching. My use of 'stilled' scenes, captured from Street View, moving in slow rhythmic dissolves, are a kind of visual equivalence to this. The time-rhythm also relates back to the Street View experience – of fixed view places linked by short, equal movements. Slowly changing frozen moments, focus attention on the present, where we consciously and simultaneously

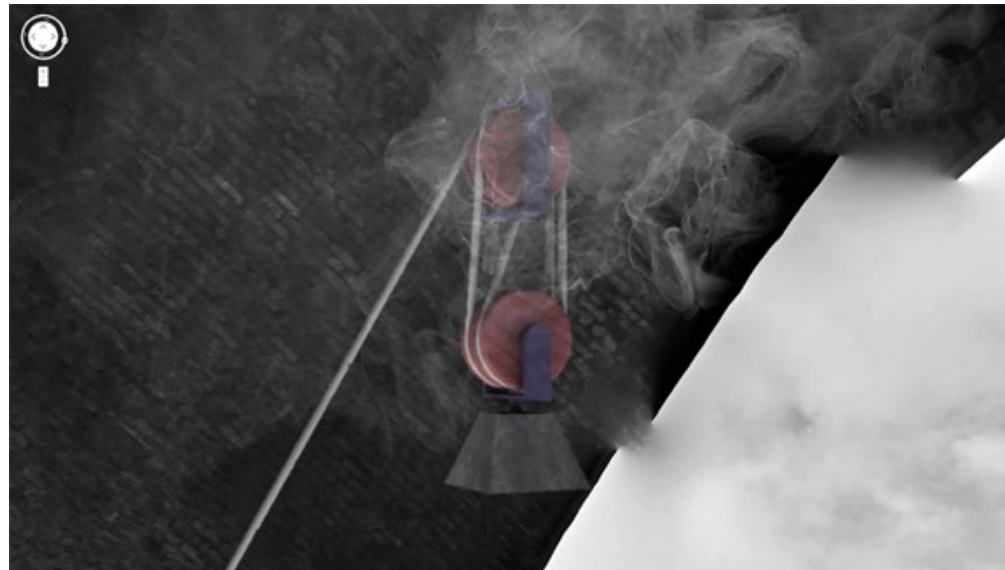


Fig 5. Still from 'Am I The Island' Matthew Richardson, 2015

## Myths of the near Future: Ballard, Crusoe and Google

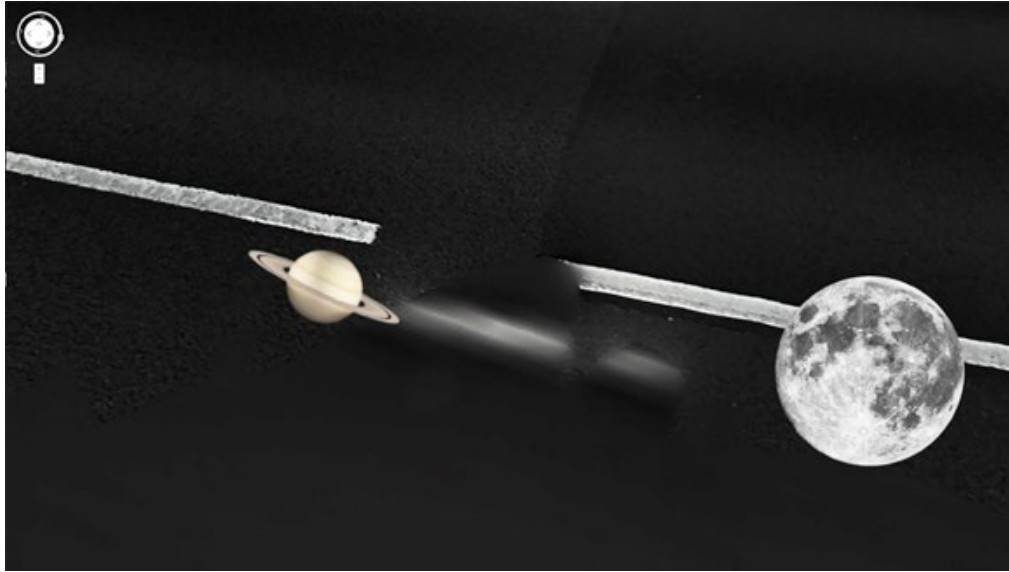


Fig 6. Still from 'Am I The Island' Matthew Richardson, 2015

hold one image (of the past) as we perceive the future. This deliberated 'presentness', is an attempt at a spatial and visual equivalent of Ballard's 'very near future' as well as an illustration of the enervated space-time of the novel.

The perception of time is also extended through narration. Plot and events as they happen are described through Maitland's (often self-critical) inner monologue, together with a detached description of action and motivation. At an early stage of the project, the text of the book was transcribed into a

script for narration. The idea and choice of the narrator's voice developed from trying to find an appropriate method to illustrate Ballard's notion of 'inner space', and isolation caused through technology. The premise of my adaptation is that in 2016, the only voice Maitland hears as he travels in air-conditioned silence, are his inner thoughts, spoken by his Sat Nav. A central question of the novel is Maitland's motivation. Is his self-destruction (and crash) chosen? Does he want to return to civilization? So in using a Satnav as both narrator of action and as Maitland's conscience and

alter ego the narration is able to both question Maitland's motivation and critique it. The narration instructs the reader/viewer/driver (as Maitland) how and why they are feeling and behaving, with uncanny effect caused by the gap between a mechanistic delivery and the emotionally charged description of unfolding events happening in the present tense. So, in my adaptation, a 1973 narrative and metaphor of individual isolation is transposed from the physical gap of a motorway system to the gaps in digital mapping and navigation technology today.

Technology continues to evolve, mutate and shift. Even since beginning this project, the Street View interface has updated. Before long, Street View will be seamless - ruptures sewn up and the fabric ever more 'real'. However, as I have tried to show, although technology alters how we negotiate the world, by its nature, technology is often separated from lived experience, and perceptual gaps - gaps that remind us of being human - will always occur. *Concrete Island* remains worth re-telling and re-visualising. The techno-capitalist structure of the Internet replacing 1970s urban planning as 'Ballardian' metaphor says something different about technology and its affects on the individual. The 'Googlisation' of the planet multiplies continuously, and the sense of delirious isolation that adheres to a Global digital

system that follows and tracks every move, purchase, like, opinion, choice and journey is ever increasingly conditioning what it means to be 'individual'.

There are escapes though. As a Google car reaches a no entry sign and turns around, we can step off onto a foot path and slip away. Google might have colonized much of the planet, but there are still places that a modern day Crusoe can be lost. *Concrete Island* ends with a cautionary reminder about our relationship with technology. Technology seduces, isolates, and motivates us, yet this isolation is addictive. At the very end of *Concrete Island*, Maitland, now sole inhabitant of the island appears to accept the island as his 'home': "A police car moved along the motorway, the co-driver watching the deep grass. Secure in his pavilion, Maitland waited for it to pass. When it had gone, he stood up and gazed confidently across the island." (Ballard, 1974)

*Am I The Island*, a short film made by Matthew Richardson as a part of this project can be viewed online at: <https://vimeo.com/142654869>

## Myths of the near Future: Ballard, Crusoe and Google

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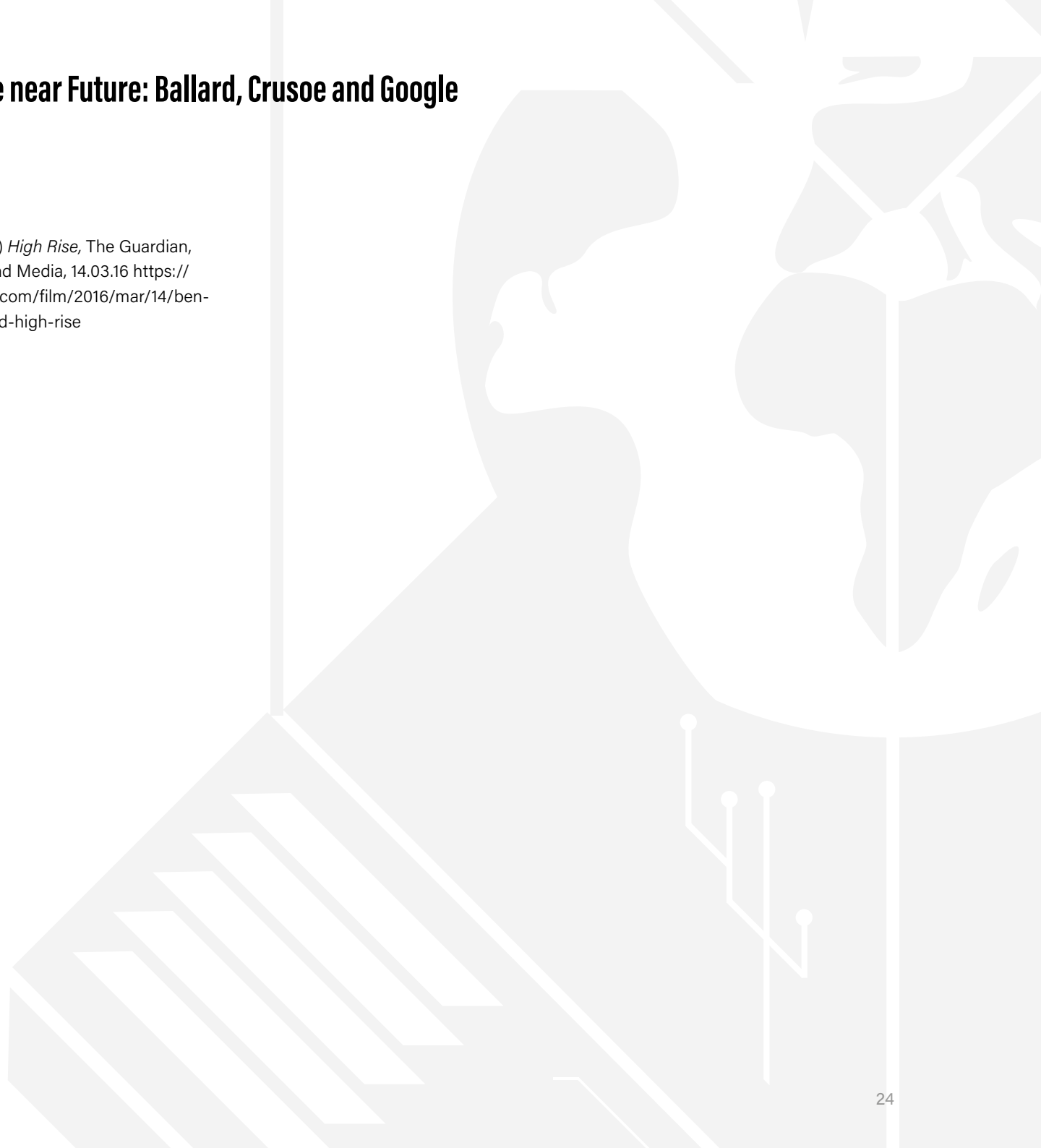
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# Illustration; Education; Revolution

## Richard Hudson-Miles



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## Illustration; Education; Revolution

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

'It is true that we don't know that all men are equal. We are saying that they *might* be. This is our opinion, and we are trying, along with those who think as we do, to verify. But we know that this *might* is the very thing that makes a society of humans possible (Rancière 1991: 73).

### Introduction

This paper draws upon the thought of the philosopher Jacques Rancière to point to a particular 'distribution of the sensible' currently in operation within the field of visual arts practice, institutionally and culturally. For Rancière, the 'distribution of the sensible', refers to implicit conventions, laws, regulations, social structures, behaviours, and modes of consciousness, which separate individuals or social spheres from each other, preventing participation in the creation of a common world (Rancière 2004: 85). It creates certain subjectivities and assigns proper identities, which are distinct from, and often artificially opposed to, one another. My paper seeks to understand how this distribution affects the arts and arts education, particularly in their institutional setting. It also attempts to describe the debilitating effects of this system on the student-subject caught in its web. As such, this paper aims to be far reaching, speculative, and a provocation for further discussion. It does not seek to be an exhaustive history of the art school, in either conservative or radical formation. Instead, by forwarding a case study of one recent radical art school, which is read via Rancière as both social form and dissensual strategy, it aims to suggest how collective creative activity can challenge the 'distribution of the sensible', generating alternative subjec-



**Fig 1:** Kerry Campbell (School of the Damned) (2015) 'Cava'.

tivities which transcend limiting and essential designations such as 'student', 'artist', 'teacher', 'illustrator', 'worker' and so forth (Rancière in Dasgupta 2008: 71; Highmore 2011).

I propose to undertake this analysis in four movements. Firstly, I briefly introduce Rancière's concept of the 'distribution of the

sensible', suggesting ways in which it manifests itself in the culture and discourses of the arts and arts education. Secondly, I take a reading of Rancière's *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (1991) to demonstrate its relevance for contemporary arts education. Thirdly, I turn to my case study of the radical, autonomous, UK art school, *The School of the Damned*, before moving to a speculative conclusion from which I hope, in keeping with the theme of this journal, the reader can begin to envisage a future for arts education that transcends institutional and disciplinary limitations and, indeed, capitalist societal relations themselves.

### The Distribution of the Sensible

Following a raft of translations of his works into English over the last two decades, Jacques Rancière has gained much reverence as the latest '*Philosophe du jour*' of the critical humanities (Bowman and Stamp 2011; xi). He has an exemplary pedigree, having been taught by the French Structural Marxist Louis Althusser, and contributing in the seminars that led to his book *Reading Capital* (1970). His intellectual oeuvre is wide ranging and deliberately unclassifiable, encompassing aesthetic and cultural theory, philosophy, politics, pedagogy, art, the working class, the police, and the histories and intersections of all of the above. For Rancière, this interdisciplinarity, or 'indisciplinarity', is a

## Illustration; Education; Revolution



**Fig 2:** Alfie Strong (School of the Damned) (2015) 'Je M'appelle Mother Fucker'.

deliberate methodological manoeuvre which guards against co-option by a certain division of labour within the humanities (disciplinary specialism, segregation, hierarchy) whilst simultaneously highlighting that same structural division and its implicit power relations. Like many French philosophers, his writing style is idiosyncratic, which is either exasperating or exhilarating depending on your particular taste or academic allegiance. Similarly, like many recent French philosophers, Rancière could be understood as a philosopher trying to reckon with ideological defeat of the May '68 moment and explain the absence of any successful revolutionary project in the 'Age of No Alternatives' to Neo-Liberal hegemony.

Reductively perhaps, one could summarise Rancière's work as an analysis of what happens when one refuses one's designated and proper place in this prevailing social order, and why such a symbolic refusal or dissensus is necessary and vital. The central concept, circumscribing all of the above, and driving much of Rancière's analysis, is *le Partage du Sensible*, which is most commonly translated as the 'distribution of the sensible', though the alternate possible translations of 'sharing', 'division' and 'partition' are useful and relevant. This concept is explicitly interrogated in the later work *The Politics of Aesthetics* (2004), but operates implicitly or explicitly throughout most of Rancière's work.

Though difficult to define with any concision, the 'distribution of the sensible' refers to the separation of socio-cultural space, and lived existence into strict a priori strata, which condition and limit every individual's capacity to think, act, and most importantly speak and be heard. This is the field for political, social and cultural action, or perhaps inaction. This distribution or segregation, negotiated socially, and more importantly lived ideologically, is formalised and made concrete by what Rancière refers to as the *Police*. His deployment of this particular term here needs to be understood in a much broader sense than that of common usage, referring not simply to one specific 'Repressive State Apparatus' (Althusser 1971) but any 'organisational system of coordinates that establishes a distribution of the sensible or a law that divides the community into groups, social positions, and functions' (Rockhill in Rancière 2004: 3). The 'distribution of the sensible' therefore is a self-regulating and complex institutional and ideological field where human agency is alternatively repressed or allowed to flourish under strictly monitored institutional conditions. For Rancière then, questions concerning the logic of this system are ultimately questions concerning democracy itself, which is to be realised, not simply in the recognition of social stratification, but through the revolutionary rejection of that system via a human praxis centred around the logic of equality and the common.

An example of the 'distribution of the sensible' at work could be found in his doctoral thesis, *La Nuit des prolétaires*, published originally in English in 1981, as *Nights of Labor: The Workers Dream in Nineteenth Century France*, later retranslated as simply *Proletarian Nights* (2012 [1981]). This work undertakes a historical analysis of the activities of the forgotten worker-poets and worker-philosophers of C19th French industrial capitalism who 'refused to simply take themselves as workers' (Larson 2013: 1). In this act of refusal these workers not only mount a destabilising challenge to the prevailing social hierarchy but also to its temporal logic. The work-sleep-work-sleep pattern, and the appropriate behaviours expected of workers in each phase, is completely disrupted. This 'distribution of the sensible', where workers are expected to use their free time to recuperate for another hard and productive day on the factory floor, is substituted for a 'redistribution of the possible' where -

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

By using their spare time for creative acts, these worker-poets transform the socially

## Illustration; Education; Revolution

expected 'work (productive) / free time (docile, passive)' pattern into 'work (productive) / free time (active, dynamic). The dynamism of the latter formulation therefore starts to threaten the security of the former. The questions underlying such a redistribution would of course be "Who dictates that a worker can not be a poet?"; "Why would not all workers aspire to transcend the drudgery of daily labour?" Perhaps most importantly, "Why has the art of these workers been forgotten by, or excluded from, history?".

Probably because of their regular focus on the emancipatory potential of artistic praxis, Rancière's works have gained particular popularity in the fields of Fine Art, Art History and Cultural Studies. You will find a copy of one of Rancière's texts in the shop of any contemporary art gallery or biennale worth its salt. The Tate Modern recently hosted Rancière 'in conversation' with author and curator Claire Bishop in one of its auditoriums. This is not to suggest (purely at least) that there is a populist element to Rancière's work but certainly, there is a fully developed publicity machine surrounding his work, perhaps producing accidental socio-cultural effects that jar with the central content of his work. I refer the reader to an amusing essay by McQuillan (2010b), which politely suggests that there is perhaps something fundamen-

tally un-Rancièrian about Rancière's current quasi-celebrity status.

For now, I wish to simply point out that I turn to Rancière's work here not simply for its revolutionary and emancipatory content, its pedagogical relevance, or for its contemporary voguishness, though these are all rele-



**Fig 3:** Phillip Coyne (School of the Damned) (2015) 'Monti Mori, My First SOTD Session Presenting The Similarities Between My Head Won't Stop Talking For 87 Years After It Is Removed And The Corpse Of Bernie Lomax'.

vant factors in my selection. More pressingly, for the purposes of an argument presented within an illustration journal, through Rancière I wish to point to a particular 'distribution of the sensible' concerning visual arts practice, both institutionally, within the university and its apparatus, and societally, evident in what is referred to oxymoronically as the 'Creative

Industries' and indeed culture more broadly. Many readers practicing within this field will recognise this 'distribution' immediately. Writing recently, the illustrator and author Marshall Arisman (2010) has sarcastically, but also with a degree of resignation, described a particular hierarchical logic within the disciplinary subdivision of visual arts within the academy. I refer to his taxonomy verbatim:

1. Fine Arts is pure.
2. Illustration is the beginning of selling out.
3. Graphic Design is commercial art.
4. Advertising is selling... period.' (Arisman, 2010:3).

Arisman suggests that this 'distribution of the sensible' has been evident since the 1960s. I would go further. In the UK, such a system has been evident, and robustly 'policed' by culture and its stewards, at least since the mid C19th emergence of Print Culture (*The Illustrated News*, the *Penny Dreadful* etc.) as the popular other to the traditional Fine Arts, and arguably nascent from the invention of the Gutenberg Press c.1450 (see Miles 2015: 13-14; Edwards and Wood 2012). The institutionalisation of applied art and design education in the UK, from 1837 onwards, certainly played a part in cementing this system in the social consciousness. The Government School of Design, first established in Somerset House, London

## Illustration; Education; Revolution

became the model that was quickly rolled out to the provinces and, as such, represents the birth of the modern art school. From their inception, these schools were quite different institutions, pedagogically and ideologically, from the aristocratic Royal Academy, to which they stood immediately as radical other. Quinn (2012) has written extensively about how the direction of these schools was gestated in the utilitarianism of a British Parliament dominated by a newly empowered bourgeois class. The focus of these early schools on developing design skills applicable to industry stood in stark contrast to the culture and pedagogy of the Royal Academy. They were also integral in producing and reproducing a culture of disciplinary specialisation, necessary for the division of labour in industrial manufacture, which became rehearsed and cemented as a pedagogic art school mode. MacDonald (1970) remains an important source on this matter. However, to suggest that the 'distribution of the sensible', to which Arisman alludes, begins with the formation of the Schools of Design is perhaps too neat an explanation, and indeed reductive. This separation was almost certainly born out of, and reproduced, issues of class that predated the art school in its modern form. It also has something to do with the centrality of properly metaphysical concepts, inherited from the development of aesthetics by the bourgeois classes of England

and Germany in the eighteenth century, in the discourses of art and art education. Concepts such as art, creativity, genius, expression (this list could be continued almost indefinitely) all sit on the privileged side of what Derrida would call a logocentric conceptual system, and have become as closely associated with the fine arts as their binary opposites are unfairly associated with the applied arts. These concepts and their connotations still stubbornly haunt art and design curricula as undeconstructed baggage.

Shiner (2001), Eagleton (1990) and Kristeller (1951; 1952), in different ways, demonstrate that the modern, hierarchical system of art, valorising fine art above all other creative disciplines, is not timeless and quite specifically emerges in the mid eighteenth century. Prior to this time, artistic practice was significantly more ambiguous and interdisciplinary activity common. In actuality, it was the shifting class composition of eighteenth century society that completed the separation between artistic disciplines, rather than anything innate or essential to those disciplines. For example, the development of new bourgeois social and artistic institutions, such as the secular concert, the reading library, literary criticism, and the art museum (Shiner 2001: 88), each employing the discourse of aesthetic theory to celebrate the distinctiveness of their

particular commercial interests, entrenched the disciplinary boundaries between art forms in the pursuit of cultural capital and profit. The emergence of a fully developed bourgeois public sphere, analysed in depth by Habermas (1989), in the new lending libraries, coffee houses, exhibitions, salons, concerts, and periodicals further drove a line between the culture of the aristocracy and the culture of the entrepreneurial middle classes. Dave Beech (2014) has read the formation of the nineteenth century Schools of Design as a bourgeois radical act – no less than an act of class war against the aristocratic stranglehold on culture, and its institutional form in the Royal Academy of Arts. On the issue of the stubborn persistence of metaphysics in art and design discourses, Barnard (2005: 162-78) has written an excellent and very readable chapter, in a book aimed at design students, debunking the conceptualisation of artists as innately more creative, expressive, original, individual, or culturally significant than designers. In contrast, both Wood (2008) and Rifkin (1988) have written acerbically about the absolute pedagogical bankruptcy and repetitiveness of these early art school curricula, which sits uncomfortably next to notions of creativity, individuality, expressiveness, or even the myth of the art school as an emancipatory institution.

My purpose here is not to dwell on the historical determinants, or mythology, of this 'modern system of arts' at any length, though doubtless this paper needs to be written. As I mentioned above, its reflexes will, for better or worse, be hopefully apparent for anyone practicing within the field. For now, hopefully it is enough to suggest that illustrators (or designers, animators etc.) come off worse from the logic of this system than fine artists, who are unfairly and incorrectly celebrated as creatively and intellectually superior, and that this has consequences for art and design education generally. And though I personally believe the reality to be much more complex and layered than Arisman's taxonomy, I would suggest at least that this mythic hierarchy is both widely believed and socially invested in. It is the logic of this system that causes some illustration students to retreat from engaging in theoretical and philosophical forms of practice, which is incorrectly considered the preserve of fine art practice. It is also the logic of this system that allows certain aspects of the fine art world to disguise the shortcomings of quite mediocre work with obfuscatory jargon and pseudo-philosophy. It is the system that produces and reproduces limiting 'house styles' and disciplinary antagonisms. The 'Creative Industries' feed off and reproduce this status quo, and also its expected behaviours and subjectivities. Certain avant-garde galleries, it

appears, would rather go bankrupt than exhibit commercially driven visual communication. Or, some illustrators sneer at the scandalous and incomprehensible extravagancies of Fine Art practices, whilst being secretly jealous of the institutional and cultural support given to them. This 'distribution of the sensible' actively produces disciplinary rivalry and reductive stereotypes - nobody really comes out of it unscathed. As students, educators, or professionals working within this field, if we can at least acknowledge that this system exists, then perhaps we can begin the task of participating in the creation of a common, creative world.

To develop this argument further, I wish to turn to one particular text by Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (1991), from which I hope to reveal something of the stultifying logic of prevailing pedagogical method and, finally, suggest a 're-distribution of the possible' for both arts educators and art students.

### The Ignorant Schoolmaster

*The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (1991) is one of Rancière's most celebrated works, encompassing a detailed critique of the 'distribution of the sensible' proper to the system of education and its surrounding discourses and pedagogies. As such it has a far-reaching influence, not simply for those interested

in education, but also for those interested in how social inequalities are produced and reproduced. The book revolves around a close reading of the texts produced by Joseph Jacotot, an exiled schoolteacher from early C19th post-revolutionary France, taking sanctuary in the Netherlands and making ends meet on with a job on half-pay (Rancière 1991: 1-4). Jacotot found amongst his student cohort a keen desire to learn French from their new master; the problem being that both school-teacher and student were entirely ignorant of one another's native tongues. To move past this pedagogical impasse Jacotot had to rely upon a newly translated Flemish copy of Fénelon's *Télémaque* (1699) - a gargantuan twenty-four volume Greek mythological novel, chronicling Telemachus's attempts to find his father, Odysseus. Jacotot ordered a copy for each of his students, whom he instructed to initially read, recite, and memorise sections before reading alongside the original French, figuring out continuities, patterns, grammatical structure and cadence for themselves. At the culmination of the course Jacotot, preparing himself for the worst, set his students the task of writing a report, in French, about what they had learned. Despite the lack of input from himself, this was far from a pedagogical disaster, and 'he was surprised to discover that the students, left to themselves, managed this difficult step as well as many French

could have done!' (Ratier in Rancière 1991: 2). The results of this pedagogico-philosophical experiment, this accident of circumstance, led Jacotot to the conclusion that the teacher, or 'explicator' to use his specific terminology, as traditionally understood, is far from a necessity in the pedagogical scene. In actuality, the primary function of a teacher-centred 'explication', for Rancière, is to inculcate a growing dependence on that teacher-led 'explication' in the minds of the student. This mode of delivery, though ineffective in many ways, stubbornly persists due to the fact that it is an exercise in the 'explicators' self-validation, *par excellence*. As such, it reproduces teacher-taught relations of dominance and, more importantly, acts as a barrier to students reaching their full potential.

From the epiphany above, Jacotot would draw together the rudiments of what he would call 'Universal Education' (*Enseignement universel*), a method that made him quite famous for a time, before it became lost in history. His method, to summarise, revolved around four principles - all men have equal intelligence (45-50); everyone has the capacity to teach themselves anything; it is possible to teach what you don't know (31); and finally that 'everything is in everything' (41). Through a close reading of the various treatises Jacotot published on *Universal Education*, at times his authorial voice intertwining with that of Jacotot, Rancière draws

five conclusions or *Lessons*. Collectively, these amount to a tremendous shattering of a long unchallenged pedagogical myth and, taken to their furthest conclusions, envision a revolutionary restructuring of the prevailing social order. I will move through these five lessons in turn, though this is difficult due to the way Rancière's argument bleeds between chapters, hopefully underlining points of contemporary relevance for art and design pedagogy as I do.

Firstly, out of the *Intellectual Adventure* (Rancière 1991:1-19) taken by Jacotot, Rancière discovers the insidious function of 'explication', or what we would now call teacher-centred delivery (4-8), I mentioned above. The traditional pedagogical scene involves setting up a master / apprentice dyad, justified by the defence of prior knowledge, which seems to be based in common sense, but actually 'divides intelligence in two' (7) and ultimately the world also. Negative consequences are created on both sides of this apparently common sense assumption, as parties attempt (consciously or not) to play to type. Read in this way, traditional pedagogy cements the ideology that there are superior and inferior intelligences in this world, and therefore the process is less about educational emancipation than 'enforced stultification' (7). As Jacotot had proved, but also what everyone in the world also knows from their intuitive self-learning of their native

## Illustration; Education; Revolution

tongue, anyone can learn anything themselves and, at least institutionally, 'it is the explicator that needs the incapable and not the other way round' (6).

Secondly, in Jacotot's experiment, and indeed all methods of *Universal Education*, it is the book, not the 'explicator', which assumes centrality in the learning process, therefore becoming the ultimate leveller. It

'is a *totality*: a center to which one can attach everything one learns; a circle to which one can *understand* each of these new things, find the ways to say it, what one thinks about it, what one makes of it' (20).

'The book' becomes the site of evidence from which the teacher can assess the student's learning but, more importantly, the basis from which the student can counter-interrogate the teacher's supposed expertise. For Jacotot, the choice of central text was entirely arbitrary, 'the book could have been *Télémaque* or any other' (Ross in Rancière 1991: 2). One could select any text, in a similarly arbitrary fashion, to begin one's own version of 'universal teaching' in the contemporary illustration studio (in the university or outside). However, at this point, I wish to forward the suggestion, which I believe is much more exciting, that the artist's sketchbook could play the role of *Télémaque*

in such a scenario, perhaps even exceeding it. The sketchbook is the tool through which the art student, particularly the illustration student, makes sense of the world and their relation to it. As such, it is the site from which student and tutor can exist in common.

Thirdly, the presumption of universal teaching is that it is a process of 'reason between equals' (46), rather than beginning from, or reproducing the myth, that the students start from a position of lack, be this in respect of intelligence, motivation, capabilities or otherwise. We could debate the correctness of this assumption, possibly citing all sorts of empirical evidence from lesson evaluations etc., *ad nauseum*. Inconclusive debates that continue about the relative successes or failings of A.S. Neill's Summerhill School would be a case in point. For Rancière, such debates miss the point. The 'problem isn't proving that all intelligence is equal. It's seeing what can be done under that supposition' (46). All manner of progressive pedagogical innovations proceed from this basic but radical assumption — the acceptance that the student's own path is inherently right and emancipating (no matter how incorrect it may seem); the understanding that mistakes are not just acceptable but lead to innovation; the belief and trust that an 'individual can do anything he wants' (56) if he embraces knowledge of his own power

and 'doesn't lie to himself about it' (57). I ask the reader here to reflect on his or her own experiences of art school, or any equivalent institutional scenario, and draw comparison. I am sure we could all recollect demotivating teacher centred crits; master-teachers patrolling the studios, correcting or admonishing any small mistake of technique or application; being summonsed to an individual audience with said master-teacher, where one would receive explicatory wisdom and instruction in how to correct one's failings; institutional disciplinary letters for failing to engage with the bankruptcy of the above.

Returning to Rancière, the fourth conclusion drawn is that the logic of educational explication is synonymous with a 'society of contempt' (75). This 'contempt', which is ultimately, as Marx would point out, a product of the social division of labour in the capitalist ordering of society, which alienates and atomises individuals into distinct groups or social strata, is 'inequality's passion' (80). In macro-social terms this is reflected in the general contempt for anything that is irrational, divergent, or simply different, held by mainstream society. It is why one race / class / gender / culture sneers at the other. In education specifically, the desperate attempt by the tutor to sculpt, mould, or shape their students, as objects not subjects of the learning process, into the limits of stand-

ardised modular learning outcomes is not in any way benevolent, but an act of contempt for their idiosyncrasies, desires and individuality. On the other side, the disengaged student who uses the faux-modest excuse of ignorance or lack of understanding is, in the final analysis, doing so also from a position of contempt; contempt for both the learning process and the other (in this case fellow students and teachers). The conclusion of this desperately reactionary, but familiar line of thinking, leads to the student accepting inequality, hierarchy, convention and subservience by ultimately arguing for their own ignorance - a socially produced form of self-contempt.

The final lesson drawn by Rancière is that 'universal teaching *will not take*, it will not be established in society. But *it will not perish*, because it is the natural method of the human mind' (105). Ideology is so strong, capitalist societal relations so entrenched, and institutional power so absolute, that such experiments will only ever be marginalised to the periphery of educational method. However, such methods 'must be announced to everyone' (106) - to the poor, on whom all of this weighs most heavily; to republicans, or those interested in a free and democratic society; to the progressive, or visionary, who imagines a society different from the status quo (107-130). With the urgency of Rancière's call in mind, I turn now, finally, to

## Illustration; Education; Revolution



Fig 4: Jake Kent (School of the Damned) (2015) 'Class of '16'.

the specific context of UK Higher Education (HE), and a case study of an art school that attempts, in many ways, to respond to this exact call.

### The School of the Damned

*The School of Damned*, currently based in London, is an independently organised programme of entirely free, Fine Art, postgraduate education coordinated, strategised, and run collectively by its students. It is now taking applications for its fourth academic year. The

school was created in the wake of the recommendations of the Browne Review (2010), which trebled undergraduate tuition fees to £9k per annum and caused the near complete removal of state funding from universities, including a 100% removal of funding from arts and humanities courses. As McQuillan (2010a) has pointed out, this immediately caused the effective privatisation of art schools, which are now solely reliant on student fees for income. The students themselves are expected to finance their education not through state subsidised grants, but through individual student loans, fronted by the state, but repayable against future earnings. This has created a system where student debt on graduation is an average of £44k (Bolton 2015: 14), before any consideration has been given to further postgraduate study. Therefore, *The School of The Damned* exists partly out of necessity; a response to 'the increasingly precarious working-living situation' of aspiring graduate artists and partly as symbolic protest; a 'subversion of the current monetary corruption of the educational system' (theschoolofthedamned.com 2014).

Much recent work has been done on the socio-cultural effects of this refigured HE landscape. Andrew McGettigan (2013), in particular, has done extensive and convincing research revealing this system to be one

dominated by an ideal of education not as a social good, worth supporting by public funds, but as a purely individual benefit, akin to a human capital investment in oneself. For him, the engines of this system are the twin principles of 'commodification' and 'financialisation'. Commodification, in the sense that a degree is now widely considered as a consumer good, solely benefitting the individual, who chooses their product from a supposedly free market of competitor-providers, who compete for market share in increasingly spectacular ways. Financialisation, in the sense that universities are increasingly measured by their ability to maximise future returns on the investment laid down by individual student-consumers, and that governmental decisions on the policy and shape of the Higher Education system are now guided, not by some lofty educational idea, but by the risks associated with managing a long term, multi-billion-dollar loan book (McGettigan 2013: 173-84).

Althusser (1971) famously pointed out that, for self-preservation and self-perpetuation, capitalism needs not only to increase production, but also reproduce the desirable conditions for production. This involves not only constantly reproducing the skills necessary to maintain production, but also inculcating a certain atomised, pliant and docile subjectivity, necessary for an obedient and controllable



## Illustration; Education; Revolution

workforce. This is achieved, famously, through various 'Ideological State Apparatus', the most dominant, for him, in developed Capitalist societies being the school.

More recently, Jeffrey Williams (in *Edu-Factory Collective* 2008: 89-97) has made a similar argument, suggesting that a debt-driven educational system carries with them a hidden curriculum that he labels the 'pedagogy of debt'. This hidden curriculum teaches that HE is a consumer service, not a human right; it refigures the teacher / student relationship as customer / service provider; it fosters instrumentalism, which effects the course choices of students, particularly those from working class backgrounds (especially with regards to arts courses that have no tangible financial dividend). It also teaches that there is no aspect of life anterior to the market, and that it is the individual's duty, and the university's, to augment neoliberal capitalism; it teaches that a person's worth is measured not by character, cultivation or taste, but by financial potential; it limits any risk-taking, independence or opposition, through the burden of an acute sense of the financial consequences of failure (95-6). To reintroduce Rancièrean terminology here, there is a 'distribution of the sensible' in play here - only certain people can access education; only certain disciplines are worth funding or pursuing; there is a hierarchy of

knowledge etc. This is manifestly a product of, and description of, a 'society of contempt' - the states contempt for its citizens who are simply cogs in the machine; the university's contempt for its student-customers who are cash cows for the business; the student's contempt for certain subjects that have no immediate financial reward.

These are indeed convincing, if depressing arguments. However, it is too easy to fall into sociological pessimism following this path. In the case of art schools, which are distinct from universities (if not physically then definitely mythically and ideologically), the charge of 'art schools as I.S.A.' would fundamentally ignore the challenge of art (Beech 2014:55-6). Indeed, this was the major criticism that Rancière levelled at Althusser, his former tutor (2011 [1974]). Even within Althusser's analysis, there was an admission that there are many heroic teachers working within, and against, the logic of this system, and as such are to be regarded as beacons of hope. To return to my case study, *The School of the Damned*, I believe that there is the possibility of intervening into the logic of such a system, and that this particular institution at least suggests that an alternative is possible.

Firstly, it is *autonomous*. By this I mean that it is entirely run and organised by the students



**Fig 5:** Matt Welch (*School of the Damned*) (2015) 'Free Education Banner'.

## Illustration; Education; Revolution

that make up its cohort in any given year. It is not run in collaboration with, or validated by, any other institution, educational or otherwise, and because of that it is entirely and ferociously independent. This autonomy is explicitly a political position, which all students are expected to understand and uphold. There are no fees charged for study, *at any time*, which maximises the possibilities for participation and immediately neutralises the hidden curriculum described above. However, this is not a hobbyist project, as the students are at pains to point out, and aspires to have the same structure, 'rigour and commitment similar to that of an accredited MA' (schoolofthedamned.com 2012). This desire for institutional equivalence, it must be said, is neither revolutionary nor Rancièrian. Neither is the way that those involved still refer to themselves by the hierarchical designations 'tutor' and 'student'. This is, however, a perfectly understandable reflex of the school and university system that has conditioned all of these co-collaborators. Hearteningly, the students don't conform to other socially expected roles as readily (see Fig.1 and Fig.2).

What is revolutionary, and Rancièrian, is the organisational structure of the school, through which students collectively propose and invite suitable tutors, who give their time freely via a system of reciprocity that they call the *Labour*

*Exchange*. Effectively the school operates as a kind of 'gift economy' (Mauss 2002 [1954]; Hyde 2012 [1983]), where the time spent by tutors organising and facilitating the monthly seminar or crit is repaid by the students of the school in kind, under the logic of 'time spent = time repaid'. This social or human repayment takes place through a variety of negotiated activities for the tutors. For example, the student cohort helps to install and invigilate exhibitions, collaborate on projects and, in this case, supply illustrations for academic papers (Fig.1 - 7). More convivially, students have even cooked dinner for visiting lecturers in one instance! The venue for the school is secured via the same logic. Time spent in the School's original home, *The Horse Hospital* gallery in Bloomsbury, was repaid by students installing and supervising exhibitions. To retain use of the current venue, the function room of the somewhat salubrious *Cock Tavern* in Somers Town, Camden, the students put in shifts behind the bar while its largely Irish clientele watch Celtic on the TV. Just like the worker-poets of C19th France, this act redefines that nature of work, transforming it from mere labour into the construction of a common educational project.

As anthropological studies have proved (Mauss 2002 [1954]; Hyde 2012 [1983]), in a gift economy such as this, individualism withers, and the participants are much more bonded,

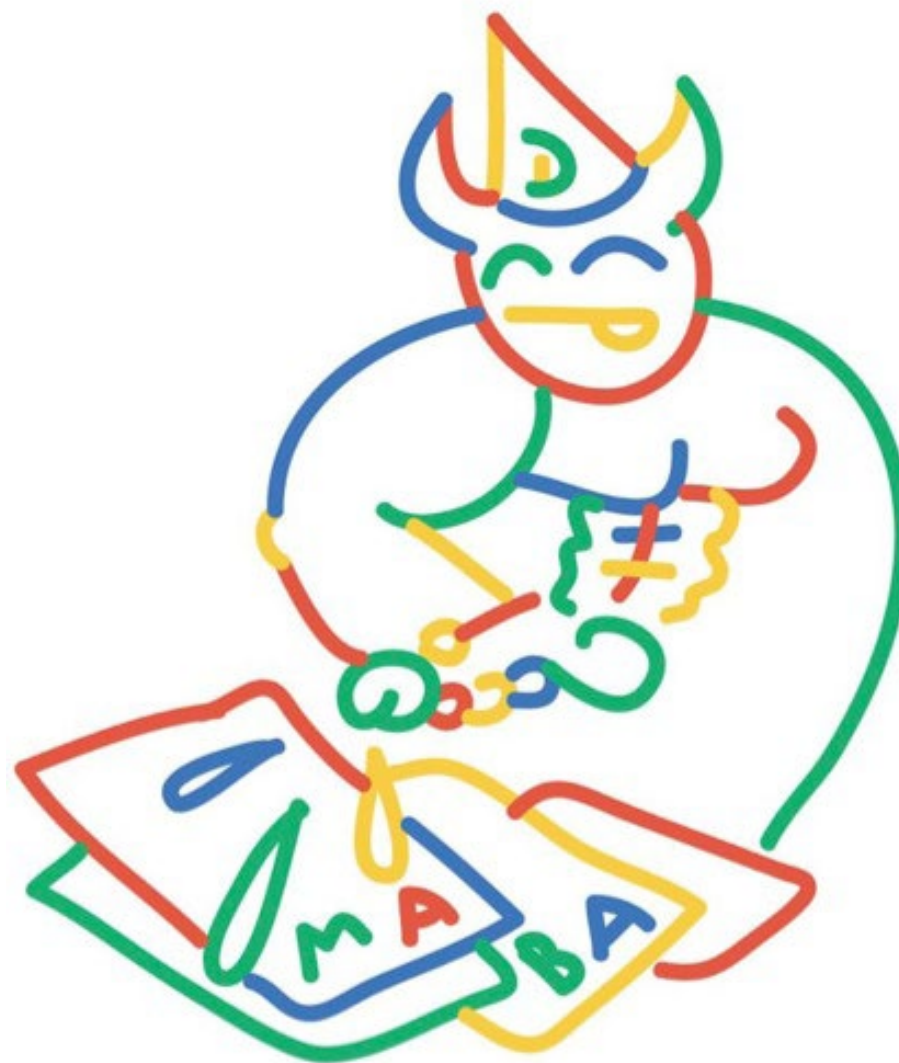


Fig 6: Jack Fisher (School of the Damned) (2015) 'Untitled'.

## Illustration; Education; Revolution



Fig 7: School of the Damned Class of '15.



Fig 8: School of the Damned Class of '16.

on the deepest human and psycho-social level. Gifts require reciprocity, and therefore concrete human relations. The Schools structure is therefore a *social form*, explicitly critical of alienated capitalist societal relations, and suggesting a neutralisation of the 'society of contempt'. Contrary to what one might expect, the lack of remuneration has not hindered the School's visiting lecturer programme in any way. In fact, from their website, one can see immediately that it is buoyant and easily

comparable to other institutions. Perhaps it even exceeds these, given the united and interconnected vision for the future of arts education, and perhaps society itself, shared by all participants.

Most importantly, a specific mechanism, unique to this institution in my understanding, ensures that it can never become programmatic, co-opted or institutionalised. The cohort hands control of the school, its curricula, its

agenda, over to the following cohort on graduation, who take it in whichever direction they want, wherever they want, with whichever tutors they want, towards whatever agenda. The institution is therefore permanently nomadic, spatially and ideologically (discussions are already taking place to expand the school to other cities) and never didactic or dogmatic. It is a 'Temporary Autonomous Zone' (Bey 1991), constantly reinvented and renewed.

### Conclusions: The Ignorant One's Lesson

How is one to make sense of all of this, from the position of an art student or educator? How can we produce the utopian society of equals suggested by Rancière's work? Lawrence Zeegen (2012) recently wrote a controversial article decrying the two divergent paths that the disciplines of Fine Art and Illustration have recently followed. For him, the former is frequently engaged in social critique and socially engaged practice whereas the latter retreats into disciplinary 'navel gazing' and superficial stylistic formalism. Though being somewhat unfair on illustrators this observation contains, without doubt, a kernel of truth. However, it is in itself a hostage to the 'distribution of the sensible' that I have been trying to outline above and, as such, needs to be reframed and pushed much further. I hope that this essay will be the start of that discussion. The vital question that needs addressing is why a disciplinary segregation exists between Illustrators and Fine Artists in the first place. What is preventing visual communicators understanding themselves as a community of equals, engaged in a common project to understand and make sense of society, and their place within it, through visual praxis? *The School of the Damned Illustrators* may not exist as yet, and it may not ever need to exist as a specialist entity. One of the central points of

## Illustration; Education; Revolution

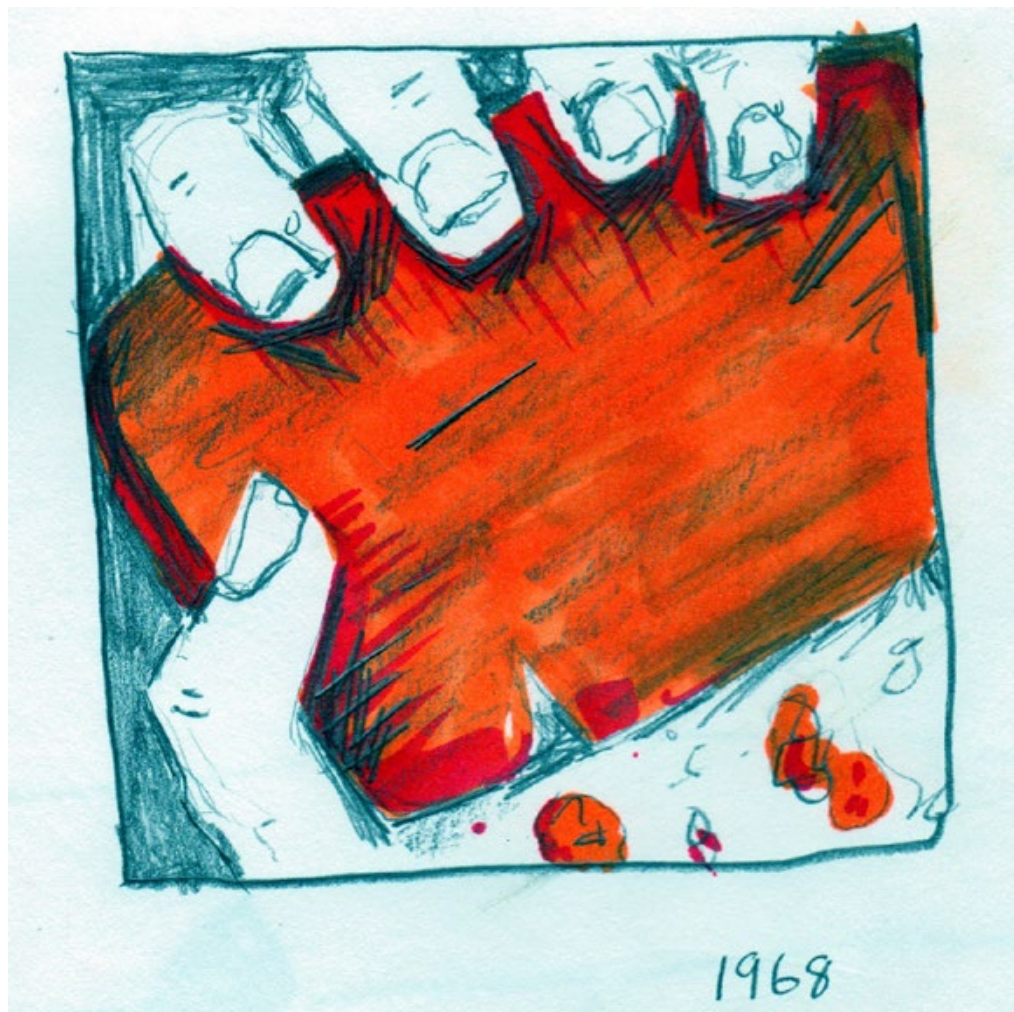


Fig 9: Amber Kaplan (Leeds College of Art) (2015) 1968

this paper is of course that we need to move past limiting disciplinary designations, which I why I use the term 'illustrator' in the title under erasure. What is at least a possibility though, if the price of undergraduate education continues to accelerate at its current trajectory, the most political generation of students in recent memory will surely turn away from the massive financial investment of mainstream education and towards models of self-education — leaving us as the 'Knowing Schoolmasters' without any students.

I have written this essay from the position of someone trained in philosophy and art history, with an interest in education gained from a career working in UK art schools, and acknowledge my lack of practical subject expertise. I don't wish to suggest that Rancière's work is beyond criticism either (see McQuillan (2010b) which questions Rancière's dialectical binarisations; Iles and Roberts (2012) critique the 'Cult of Rancière'). I hope that this paper will be read as a call to arms (I believe Zee-geen's misunderstood paper should be read in the same way) and not as an attempt to cause offence to any student, educator, or specific institution. I certainly don't imagine this to be the final word on the subject, and neither do I pretend that *The School of the Damned* is the only radical model of education worthy of attention. East London's *Open School East*

([www.openschooleast.org](http://www.openschooleast.org)) and Salford's *Islington Mill Art Academy* ([islingtonmillart-academy.blogspot.com](http://islingtonmillart-academy.blogspot.com)) both are exciting examples of free arts education projects. However, both of these rely on a permanent steering committee of professional educator-theorists, which is fundamentally different to *The School of the Damned* model of revolving, student controlled autonomy. In 2012, a group of activists set up the *Radical Design School* (<http://www.radicaldesignschool.net>) in York, though this appears to have failed to gain any momentum beyond its initial eight-week programme. *The Free University of Liverpool* (<https://thefreeuniversityofliverpool.wordpress.com>) offered an interdisciplinary BA in 'Cultural Praxis' but that has closed too. *The Copenhagen Free University* (<http://www.copenhagenfreeuniversity.dk>), run out of a bedsit, was an important artist run, radical educational project until it ceased activities in 2007, but remains influential due to the extensive archive of activities. *Trade School* ([tradeschool.coop](http://tradeschool.coop)), in Amsterdam is another example of a self-organised learning space. Again, this project has now finished. The harsh lesson here concerns the difficulty of maintaining free educational spaces in an increasingly unequal capitalist economy but, importantly, that a desire and need for them exists. Rather than turning away from such projects in resignation or cynicism, those of

## Illustration; Education; Revolution

us working in mainstream Higher Education should be exploring ways to collaborate. These projects have much to teach us about pedagogy. Student-centred education (which everyone, save the most reactionary university lecturers, now practices) is not the same as student-controlled education, but this is not to suggest the two are mutually exclusive.

Joseph Beuys famously once remarked that 'every man is an artist' but, of course, the contemporary reality is such that, increasingly, one is only an artist (and I use the term in its broadest possible sense) if one has the relevant degree from the appropriately prestigious institution. The universities and the art world, not to mention their protectionist apparatus, perpetuate this system. More importantly, so do its student-subjects who equate institutional approval with success and self-validation. As I have outlined above, this validation comes with a hefty price tag and a lifetime of debt. Given the precarity of working life, following graduation, for an arts student, the obvious question, that hardly anyone seems to be asking, is why should we accept such a system at all? I would go even further — why should we accept, participate in, and perpetuate, a 'Creative Industries' system that routinely presents exploitative unpaid labour as the route to success? (Elvin 2014); that makes designers pay for the priv-

ilege of awards that they have won on their own merit? (Amado 2015). *The School of the Damned* model proves that a creative network, based on a shared vision, collectivity, mutual aid, and reciprocity is not just utopian but realisable and sustainable. That it remains segregated solely within the discipline of Fine Art, *at the moment*, is testament to the fact that it remains shackled to the 'distribution of the sensible', that Rancière attacks, and Marx, under the term 'division of labour' before him. However, the recent year includes students from backgrounds as diverse as acting and creative writing which suggests the possibility of expanding the model across every discipline. I reintroduce Rancière's use of the term '*indisciplinarity*' here to suggest that collaboration is both possible and the necessary characteristic of a truly egalitarian democracy. The defence of disciplinary or professionalism specialism is but another way of defending the structural inequality of the system. Instead of a 'Creative Industry', try to imagine a creative community which starts from the assumption that every participant has an equal amount to contribute; where individual creative development is formed, and skills accrued, through dialogue, sharing and reciprocity; where the experienced help the inexperienced under the understanding that they have as much to gain as to give; where impropriety is valued more than conformity;



Fig 10: Thomas O'Connor (Leeds College of Art) (2015) 'Student Debt'

where there is no distinction between fine art, design, illustration; where creative labour is not traded but given as gift; where a pedagogy of debt is replaced by a pedagogy of collectivism and hope. You would be imagining a community that could complement, but if necessary re-

place and supersede, the contemporary Higher Education arts system, and the 'Creative Industries' themselves. You would be imagining Rancière's revolutionary 'society of equals' and a 'redistribution of the possible'.

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# Visualising Spaces: The Illustrated Map as a mode of communicating Fact, Fiction and Feeling.

Andy Davies



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Andy's work has been included in peer-reviewed journals such as *Creative Quarterly*, *3x3* magazine and the Association of Illustrators Images Annuals. He has twice been short-listed for the Serco LTM Prize for Illustration and was shortlisted for the Tapirulan Illustrators Contest in 2014. He has exhibited in Britain and Italy. His research interests include picture books aimed at inclusivity, teaching and learning within the field of art and design and the history and current role of the illustrated map.

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## Visualising Spaces: The Illustrated Map as a mode of communicating fact, fiction and feeling.

### Introduction

An 'illustrated map'. What do you imagine? You are perhaps looking at a large shape of green surrounded by blue or turquoise. The green shape is populated with sporadic text including place names and the occasional image of a building, animal or human. There are maybe references to the country's nature, cuisine and climate. Palm trees or penguins, maybe a happy tourist with a huge suitcase, stepping off a plane. These maps can usually be found in magazines, or in children's atlases; of the latter there have recently been several beautiful produced books (*Maps* by Aleksandra Mizieleńska and Daniel Mizieleński, published by Big Picture Press, 2013 being a fine example). These maps are often designed with a positive and inviting atmosphere. The context of their production determines the design, as these maps (if not situated in a book) often accompany an article within a magazine that is describing the country, often listing the 'things to do' for the would-be traveller.

Maps that have an illustrated element such as a drawn character, playful typography or patterns that have been designed to somehow communicate an aspect of a location are varied in both subject and appearance. Placing them into the categories 'Fact', 'Feeling' and 'Fiction' is a useful device that could be seen as rather rigid separations, whereas in fact

these separations often merge into each other depending on the objective of the map creator.

### Fact

Within his comprehensive book, *Great Maps*, published by DK Books, Jerry Brotton (2014: p.7) describes what most scholars now broadly agree to be the most useful definition of a map, "a graphic representation that presents a spatial understanding of things, concepts, or even events in the human world." Atlases (produced for children) are an inviting format to present the vastness and diversity of our planet, to a younger mind. An illustration is an opportunity to embellish cultural identities (which can often employ stereotypes, for good or bad) and make an informative image. An aerial photographic map does not necessarily describe anything other than the geographic properties of the country, which is where an illustrated map can be very useful to an art director. The arrangement of happy characters and objects dotted around the page involved in personal narratives is a device employed to obtain this positive atmosphere.

This aesthetic possibly owes much to the artwork of artists such as M. Sasek in his *This is...* series of world guides published by Universe Publishing. His visual language often simplified recognizable buildings and figures, and allowed an abstracted arrangement not always



Figure 1. *Shackleton's Journey* by William Grill, commissioned by Flying Eye Books.

constrained by perspective and scale. Salvatore Rubbino's *A Walk in London*, published by Walker, 2012, includes informative map designs that also apply these design ideas. This approach to the abstraction of reality in terms of scale of individual elements and the intentional editing of the image (to focus on the most important buildings and characters) can be traced back to the earliest maps such as the *Mappa Mundi* in Hereford cathedral and back even further (almost 40,000 years ago) when

graphic shapes were first carved into rocks in order for people to understand their place within their environment. (Brotton, 2014: p.7)

Winner of the 2015 Katie Greenaway Award, William Grill, explores the use of the map as a story telling device within his book, *Shackleton's Journey*, published by Flying Eye books (fig. 1). Including a map gives a certain authenticity to this story, as the reader must navigate this vast land just like the expedition. It is

## Visualising Spaces: The Illustrated Map as a mode of communicating fact, fiction and feeling.

perhaps this form of map and usage that we are most familiar. Having a visual representation to refer to helps the reader to empathise with the scale of the undertaking, the dangers encountered and the drama of the landscape. The whole book is fastidious in the level of detail and information, and is presented in an extremely orderly manner, featuring the traditional traits of a usable map, as summarised by Brotton. Grill's use of scale and composition within the more representational page spreads sit alongside the map, giving us the intimate realities on a human level and also a more removed overview of the whole adventure.

Saul Steinberg's iconic cover for *The New Yorker* offers something a little different. The intended naivety of *A New Yorker's View of the World* is reminiscent of early world maps that implied the presence of a far off 'foreign' land, without much knowledge and understanding of the geography or inhabitants. He produced this sarcastic image in 1976, and the simplified appearance of the world outside of Manhattan does perhaps indicate the rather introverted nature of New Yorkers at that time? Here he is being intentionally naïve with the design of the rest of the world, New York, full of details, road names, people, cars, with the rest of the world being reduced to simple featureless shapes.

Steinberg's work is an example of how the map and our understanding of the map can be

twisted, subverted and experimented with to communicate fact and fiction in order to create an observation or feeling about a certain place and its inhabitants.

Italy looks like a boot (apparently) and New York...well, according to Veit Schuetz, looks like another male body part. The *New York Subway Penis Map* (fig. 2) is a poster by the Berlin-based Illustrator created in 2000 for a Cosmic Art Enterprises art show. Borders have defined countries and cities into various shapes, with some having a direct or indirect resemblance to animals and objects. Perhaps it is something within the human mind to find a character within these shapes.

The shape of the country itself is perhaps as memorable and representative of the nation as the flag. This has been used to great satirical effect by Peter Brooks (*The Times* political cartoonist). He uses maps in the same way as the father of the satirical cartoon James Gillray (1756-1815). A fine example of Gillray's use of maps is *The French Invasion or John Bull (George III) bombarding the Bum Boats* (1793). England and Wales take on a human form that is excreting ships towards the French coast.

In his cover for *Spectator Magazine*, Brooks manages to use the map of Britain as a rather odious character for his piece *A Yob Kicking an Old Lady*. Instantly recognizable to the viewer



Figure 2. *New York Subway Penis Map* by Veit Schuetz commissioned by the CAE Gallery New York. Prints available © [www.veitschuetz.com](http://www.veitschuetz.com).

## Visualising Spaces: The Illustrated Map as a mode of communicating fact, fiction and feeling.

(a mainly British readership), it gives a sense of place and makes a depressing statement about the inhabitants. Brooks also cites Fred W Rose (1849-1915) as another key influence in his work. His *Serio-Comic War Map for the year 1877*, skilfully captured the fear across Europe and the sabre-rattling of that era. Russia is depicted as a sinister Octopus with tentacles infiltrating neighbouring territories. In 2008, Graeme MacKay, a cartoonist for the *Hamilton Spectator* in Canada parodied Rose's work to depict Vladimir Putin stretching his tentacles across the map of Europe (fig. 3). "By adapting a cartographic cartoon with a pedigree of over a century, MacKay proved the viability and adaptability of the Cartographic Land Octopus, which continues to stretch its tentacles across the globe to this very day." (Jacobs, 2014)

Providing anthropomorphic qualities to a country, taking the borders to be the limits of its body and giving it a personality seems to be a natural process for an illustrator. The desire to tell stories and devising characters to tell the tale, no matter how short that tale may be, sometimes within a single image. Martin Haake's work is a sensitive arrangement of found and drawn shapes, colours and textures. For a commission illustrating an article about cyber-attacks and their origins within Asia, he was able to take a graphic representation of China and convert it into a rather sinister character (fig. 4). This is an illustrated map, but

the map is part of the image rather than the entire context. The lettering in this image is extremely important, as possibly without it the identification of this unusual shape may not be apparent to all and therefore the impact of this editorial image could be compromised. The scale of the 'China' text also helps convey the geographic and political strength of this character, especially when compared to the tiny 'South Korea', identified with much more slender writing. The relationship between image and text within this image and maps in general is as important in conveying meaning, as it is within a picture book.

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Figure 3. *Russia in 2008* by Graeme MacKay, commissioned by the Hamilton Spectator.

## Visualising Spaces: The Illustrated Map as a mode of communicating fact, fiction and feeling.



Figure 4. *Hack Pack* by Martin Haake, 2001, commissioned by E-Volve.

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### Fiction

Drawing is for some a cathartic act. The process may offer a sort of meditative experience for the artist while the final image and its clarity of communication with the audience may be a secondary consideration. In 2013 images of an incredibly intricate 'map' (fig. 5 and 6) were posted onto social media websites. The artist is alleged to be a Japanese man who is not a professional artist, and the work was produced some thirty years ago and subsequently stored in an attic. It seems that (according to his daughter who discovered the work) that the maze-like map was not produced for display or for the eyes of anyone other than the artist himself. The image (33 x 23 inches) took seven years to complete, a timescale that may be unfathomable to the contemporary illustrator where deadlines can often be hours and days rather than months and years. But this is an illustration of a man's contemplation. When

looking at it, the eye seems to naturally follow the nearest path until it becomes obscured by another path that cuts across or it simply disappears under the numerous branches that almost look like veins or pipes within a gigantic organism. Possibly, he is mapping the human brain, his own brain, a myriad of organic wires that to those of us who are not neuroscientists, seems to be as un-navigable as any far off, unknown land may be.

Comparisons could be made with the work of Adolf Wölfli (1864-1930), the creator of an imaginary autobiography (estimated to be over 8,000 pages long). Within intricate repeating patterns, he created and visualized his imagined world and his personal journey through a multi-dimensional landscape. His mix of text, image, pattern, idiosyncratic use of musical notes and viewpoint result in many images that resemble maps. He allows us to navigate through a representation of his worldview. The resulting artwork is beguiling not only in its visual qualities and craftsmanship but in the complexity and intensity of the world Wölfli created. The term 'visionary' seems to be appropriate here as his work was admired by his contemporaries such as Jean Dubuffet and André Breton. Wölfli's ability to give a two-dimensional form to his perceived world through the forms of maps, collages and drawings, could be attributed to his schizophrenia.

## Visualising Spaces: The Illustrated Map as a mode of communicating fact, fiction and feeling.

The work is comparable to the *Jain Cosmological Map* (c.1822-1830), found in the British library in London. Jainism (which originated in India) divides the 'cosmic space' into separate worlds. The resulting maps are full of esoteric symbols, overlapping pattern, text and wondrous creatures, much like the universe that Wölfli depicts within his work. Perhaps his mental condition enabled him to see and express another world and to travel throughout this land, producing an astounding body of work. But does this type of work adhere to the definition laid out by Brotton? Is this the 'human world'? The more permissive response would be, yes, as the human mind and our perception of the world is of as much importance as the tangible. What Wölfli created, was to him, 'Fact'.

Are all maps intended to help the viewer or is their very complexity intended to confuse, to disorientate and therefore to make the viewer consider the subject matter in a less literal manner? A number of maps such as the thirteenth-century *Psalter World Map*, *Ebstorf Mappa Mundi*, and *Hereford Mappa Mundi*, are filled with images of strange beings, often located in remote and mysterious countries. These 'monsters' may indeed illustrate a vile demon roaming the land or it could be a particular group of violent people, an area that doesn't seem to support life or a complicated mix of all these elements. These maps that ask



Figure 5 & 6. *Untitled* by an anonymous artist.

## Visualising Spaces: The Illustrated Map as a mode of communicating fact, fiction and feeling.

for a degree of imaginative engagement could be a result of the creator's lack of knowledge but their purpose could also be to serve as a warning of the unknown.

Belief and certainty are investigated within Grayson Perry's *Map of Nowhere* (fig. 7) where he is "Parodying the intellectual constructs of religion." (Bell, 2008). He maps the personal and tangible experiences of his life as well as thoughts, social pressure, expectations, work and so on. The whole piece is part homage, part parody of the *Mappa Mundi*; which like many early maps included a great deal of religious imagery. Perry's depiction of the ethereal sunbeam of heavenly light, coming out of his bottom, helps to give this piece the desired sarcasm and there are elements of satire throughout.

Why select this composition, this format, this genre within which to work? The synergy of text and image arranged in the main body of the piece without being restricted by scale and proportion is the graphic language of maps with which we, as observers, are familiar. The black and white diamond patterned ring around circular elements (often a compass) and dashed or wavy lines to denote water, are all signifiers of a map that have been used in countless designs. We therefore know that this artwork is meant to be explored. We trace our finger over the image and discover

what we can about this place that is called, 'Grayson Perry'.

When discussing his 1971 film, *A Walk Through H: The Reincarnation of a Ornithologist*, Peter Greenaway (2011) refers to the map as, "an extraordinary palimpsest to tell you where you have been, where you are at this present moment, and where you could be, and even in subjective tenses, where you might have been, where you could have been." He produced ninety-two paintings of maps that formed the spine of the story where an ornithologist uses these visual clues in a complex journey towards the unknown. The maps themselves are a mix of painting and drawings on a variety of paper scraps, which add texture, multiple visual layers and a sense of the 'artifact', much like the work of Wölfli.

Stephen Walter's *Nova Utopia* (fig. 8) is an exciting example of a map that offers a fictional narrative whilst containing political commentary about the world we live in today. Using Thomas Moore's 1516 book *Utopia* as a guide for this work, Walter has created a large black and white map that has a coded story as complex as any story penned by Tolkien (who was also partial to including maps as a visual guide to his intricate worlds). The story runs over centuries and charts the rise and fall of 'Utopia', the increase in trade and competition between the inhabitants, which ultimately



**Figure 7.** *Map of Nowhere*, 2008 by Grayson Perry. Courtesy the Artist, Paragon Press and Victoria Miro, London © Grayson Perry.

## Visualising Spaces: The Illustrated Map as a mode of communicating fact, fiction and feeling.

results in the segregation of the land after a civil war. This end view of Utopia (renamed 'Nova Utopia' after the revolution) is very much at odds with the idea of the egalitarian society that was the starting point in the story.

Wordplay and pictograms indicate different people, locations and geographic features, a 'key' is embedded into a border of the map and is reminiscent of the cartouches utilised within the work of map pioneers Willem and Joan Bleau (1571-1638 and 1596-1673). Much like the place names of villages, towns and cities around our world, the names shown on *Nova Utopia* give a clue to their inhabitants and subsequent history. 'Stannah Bay' is *Nova Utopia's* Eastbourne. 'Prora' is the name of one of the coastal towns, and it shares its name with an unfinished Nazi project on the Baltic coast. This was to be the place where the Aryan race would spend its holidays. 'Ray Mears Tours', and 'Giftshops' are clearly defined in one area as examples of the commercialization of the island. Walter states, "Nova Utopia sits somewhere between the wonderful, the beautiful, the entertaining, the rich, the sublime, and the ridiculous." (Brotton, 2014: p.241)

This artwork challenges the viewer's level of visual literacy, cultural and historical knowledge and the experience of reading this map is something that takes time, patience and probably several visits, much like a novel.



Figure 8. *Nova Utopia* by Stephen Walter, © Stephen Walter.

## Visualising Spaces: The Illustrated Map as a mode of communicating fact, fiction and feeling.

Phrenology—an idea developed by Franz Joseph Gall in the early 19th century. By mapping the different parts of the brain, an assumption of the mental characteristics of a subject could be made. The side profile of a human head with a dotted line indicating the different areas/personal qualities is a visually intelligent idea in terms of trying to explain the inner workings of the brain. This approach, albeit flawed, was an attempt at depicting fact. However, this rather contrived idea of assigning personality traits based purely of physical form does result in some unsavoury examples of map-making from this era. *The Open Country of a Woman's Heart* by D. W. Kellogg (c.1833-1843) (fig. 9) is an incredibly misogynistic explanation of a woman's way of thinking. The image of a heart is divided into different lands, each assigned with a euphemistic name. The 'Sea of Wealth' enters the heart through 'Jewellery Inlet', where you make landing in an area called 'Love of Dress', before heading over to 'Sentimentality and 'Coquetry'. The more appealing land of 'Good Sense' and the 'Region of Platonic Affection' are unfortunately rather small tracts of the island in comparison, which would indicate they don't really dominate this world.

### Feeling

The phrenological map has entered our visual vocabulary and has been used by many illus-

trators to great effect in their efforts to give a visual appearance to feelings and emotions. Column Five's portrait of *Kanye West*, commissioned by *Myspace* (fig. 10) is a caricature that satirises this flamboyant celebrity without resorting to the usual facial distortion, seen in many other caricatures. It instead displays his thoughts and emotions that he so often verbalises in public and on social media.

Jeff Fisher, also makes use of the phrenological map within his illustration *Known Unknowns* produced for *Time Magazine* (fig. 11). The complexities of memory are presented to us in an intricate arrangement of segmented locations that seem similar to the roads and lanes on a busy and slightly confusing city map.

Why draw a map? Slovenian Illustrator Radovan Jenko's map of Ljubljana, Slovenia (a place he has lived all his life), is an amalgamation of photography, pre-existing maps, scribbled comments, patterns and imagined characters that inhabit, *his* Ljubljana (fig. 12). Exposure at different times to different experiences, to different people, to different stories results in our personal response to the specific area we inhabit. Jenko's map is one of 31 European cities featured in *Graphic Europe*, published by Cicada. It is as informative as any *Lonely Planet* or *Rough Guide* travellers' guide book (some of the maps give a rough geographical guide, some do not) but they also offer the personal

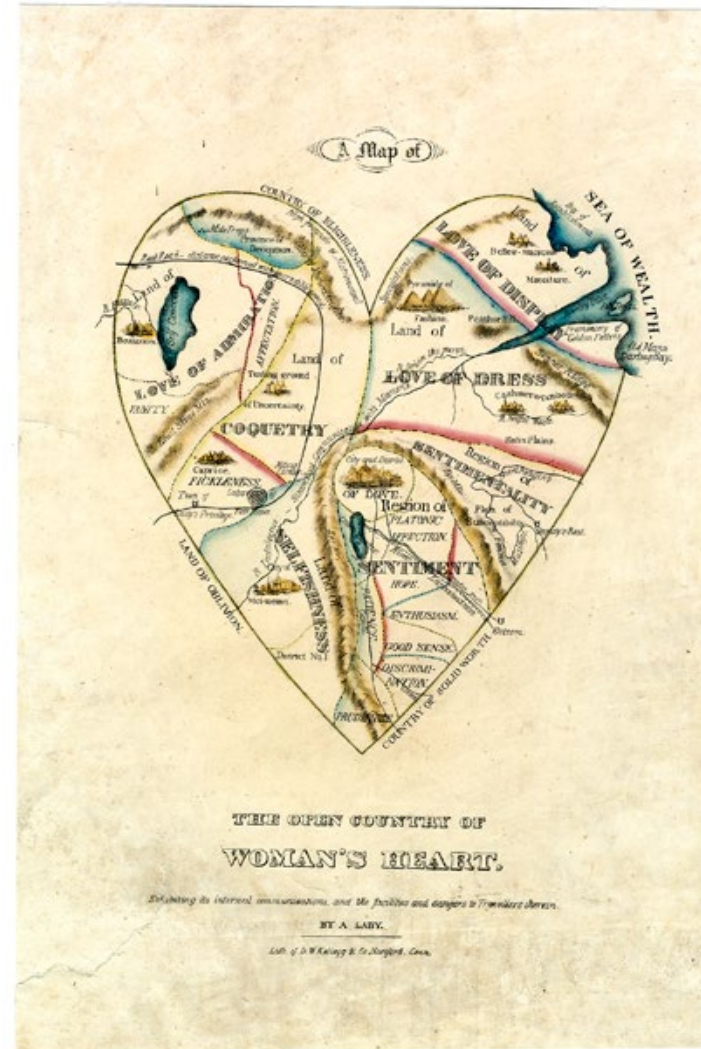


Figure 9. *The Open Country of a Woman's Heart* by D. W. Kellogg (c.1833-1843). Courtesy, American Antiquarian Society.





## Visualising Spaces: The Illustrated Map as a mode of communicating fact, fiction and feeling.



**Figure 12.**  
Ljubljana by  
Radovan Jenko,  
commissioned by  
Cicada.

reflection of the illustrators who know the city, its features and stories. The Editor of *Graphic Europe*, Ziggy Hanoar (2009: p. 5) describes the ethos of the book as to "...Provide a more informal, intimate insight into the cities. Kind of like a friend showing you how their city makes them feel."

We are sentient creatures and this emotional response is surely as important as street names and buildings, in terms of how we understand a city?

Maps can also have more of egalitarian agenda. *The Homeless Map of London*, (fig. 13) is one of many map projects by artist 'Lovely Jojo' (real name Jojo Oldham). The map uses image and text, often using a greater amount of the latter to communicate stories and comments from the people that live there. Cities such as these are a spider's web of interconnecting stories that have direct or (often) indirect influence on the development of that particular place. "Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody." (Jacobs, 1961: p238) By cataloguing how people have travelled to the city and how they have ended up without a home, educates the viewer and seeks a compassionate response from them. Understanding the reality of sleeping-rough and not being included within society and how that feels, is the aim of this work.

Steve Simpson's Dublin map produced for Jameson Whiskey (fig. 14) is a personal geographical map, displaying feelings and comments about the city, obtained from Dubliners themselves. These personal descriptions are used instead of the usual street names to form a heart-shaped Dublin. As a result the vibe and atmosphere of the city is communicated alongside tangible Dublin landmarks, such as O'Connell Bridge and Trinity College.

Dublin is famed for its night life and for having numerous pubs, James Joyce's character Leopold Bloom suggested in *Ulysses* that, "a good puzzle would be to cross Dublin without passing a pub." (Kallwejt, 2015) This quip from Joyce formed a brief given to Illustrator and Designer Jan Kallwejt by *Huskies* design agency. Together they created an interactive map (fig. 15) for the tee-total weekend trying to avoid the ubiquitous stag and hen parties. Kallwejt has been commissioned by many other clients (such as *Honda*) for his busy, somewhat diagrammatic map designs packed with icons and pictograms that are often repeated throughout the piece adding to the complexity.

His maps seem to capture the noisy, chaotic, and variety of a particular location. A skull here, a smiling face there, lightning bolts, an Elvis impersonator, palm trees, eyes, and ambiguous dancing characters certainly pose a few questions in the viewer's mind when looking

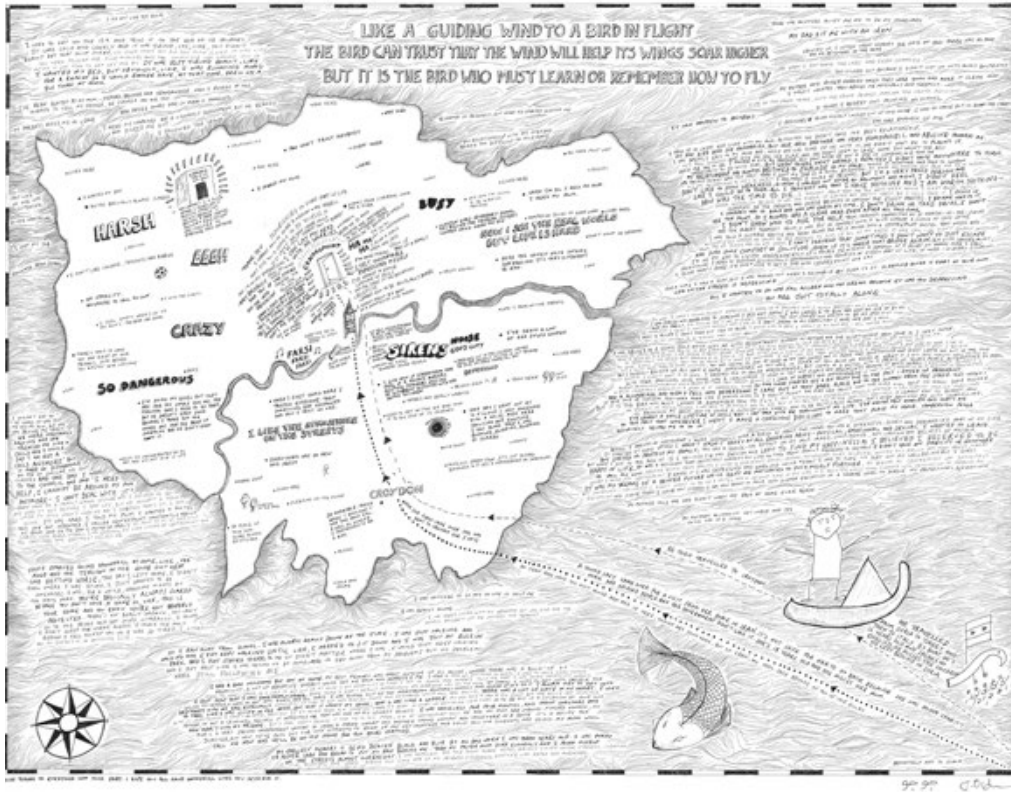


Figure 13. Homeless Map of London by Jojo Oldham.

Figure 14. Dublin Map by Steve Simpson, commissioned by Jameson Whiskey.



# Visualising Spaces: The Illustrated Map as a mode of communicating fact, fiction and feeling.



Figure 15. *How to Cross Dublin without Passing a Pub* by Jan Kallwejt, commissioned by Huskies design agency.

Figure 16. *Monarchs and Queens (butterflies and queer public spaces)* by Mona Caron and Rebecca Solnit.

## Visualising Spaces: The Illustrated Map as a mode of communicating fact, fiction and feeling.

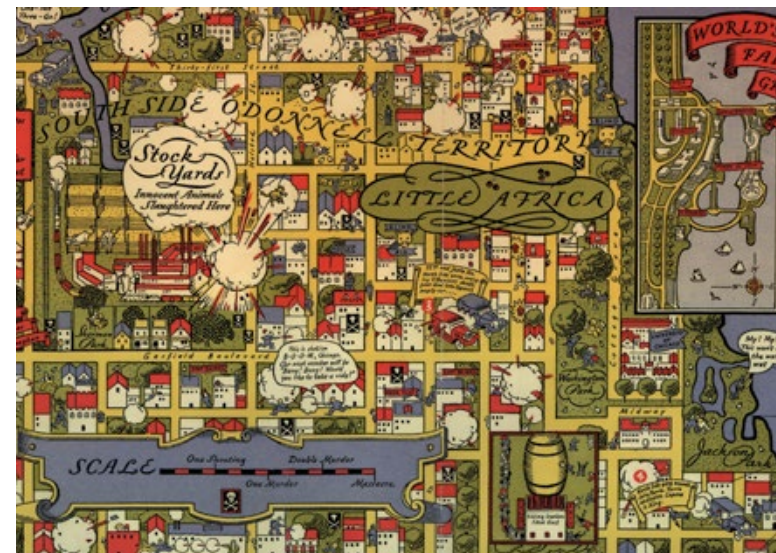
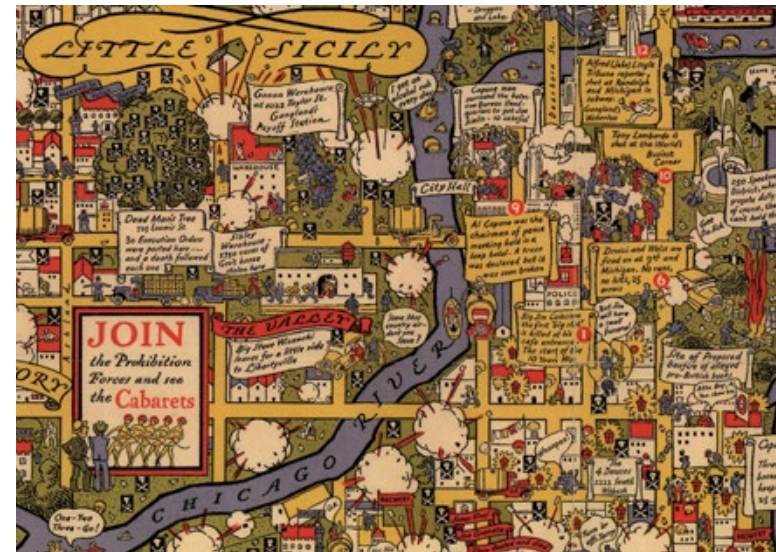
at his map of Los Angeles. Showing the less picturesque aspects of a location can be done with a smile. There is a similar theme within Rebecca Solnit's *Infinite City: A San Francisco Atlas*, published by UC Press, 2010. This diverse collection of maps depicts different aspects of the city, from *Monarchs and Queens (butterflies and queer public spaces)*, (fig. 16) illustrated by Mona Caron, to *Poison/Palate* (a map of toxic mines and factories). Solnit states, "It's like that old expression: A poem about something ugly can still be beautiful. A map about murder or urban redevelopment can still be beautiful." (Battilana, 2010)

Comparisons can be made between Kallwejt's and Caron's work with a *Map of Chicago's Gangland* (published by Bruce-Roberts, 1931) (fig. 17 and 18). The cheery colour palette, intricate design, neat speech bubbles and humorous little characters in fedora hats sit at odds with the content, which slowly reveals itself. Produced to, "...inculcate the most important principles of piety and virtue in young persons, and graphically portray the evils and sin of large cities." (University of Illinois, 2015), it aimed to counteract the public's interest in characters such as celebrity criminal Al Capone. Gun battles, explosions, murder, illegal drinking and arrests are among some of the scenarios that populate this map. It almost has a documentary feel to it, lifting the veil to show the real and less desirable side to this city.

"More people use more maps than at any other time in human history, but we have not lost sight of their beauty, romance or inherent usefulness." (Garfield, 2013: p. 443)

The map is often a single design containing a multitude of selected imagery that describes different stories, ideas and information about that certain place. It can be intentionally simplistic; communicating the facts that are required by the intended viewer; the creator edits the reality and removes arbitrary elements. This is a highly visual way of communicating a sense of place. Other emotions can be stimulated through the complexity and ambiguity of the map. Mapmakers can manipulate their viewer, placing them in the map and making them feel the sense of confusion of being lost or found. It seems counter-intuitive that a map, a device many of us use as a way to give a sense of two dimensional order to a multi-dimensional world, can intentionally get us lost, but as Peter Greenaway (2011) states, "That's part of the game because, in a sense, you have to interpret a map and its full meaning is not always available because maps are about codes."

The book, *Where You Are*, published by Visual Editions, 2013 is a project that's intention is to explore the idea of getting lost. Sixteen artists share their maps covering subjects such as places they have *almost* been to, a landscape



Figures 17 & 18  
*Map of Chicago's Gangland*  
published by Bruce-Roberts,  
1931 Courtesy The Newberry  
Library, Chicago

## Visualising Spaces: The Illustrated Map as a mode of communicating fact, fiction and feeling.

made up of literary features and the day-to-day changing topography of the items placed on their work desk. The resulting maps are intentionally confusing, and sometimes visually removed from the very thing they are mapping. It is up to the viewer to decode them.

As an illustrator it is the compositional design attributes of a map that intrigues me; the ambiguous shape that offers something different to react to rather than the usual rectangle or square of the paper. The opportunity to draw architecture, flora and fauna that are different and varied, the chance to draw myths and legends and depict them alongside these factual elements as if they co-exist in the make-up of the city, the country. The past and the stories of the place, are in fact as important as to what can be seen on the streets today.

Within maps, feelings and opinions (both positive and negative) can be expressed, to inspire, to attract, to warn, to protest and to educate. "Now that it is possible to travel right round the globe, the real challenge lies in staying at home and discovering the world from there." (Schalansky, 2012: p.9) The work of travel writer Bill Bryson could be referred to as 'armchair tourism', a description applicable to those of us who delight in discovering the world through text (from writers like Bryson) and through image, rather than just personal experience. There is something truly exhilarating about

travel adventures (such as Shackleton's) from the comfort of your own environment, and the illustrated map is one visual form within which this can be achieved.

Fact, feeling and fiction can coexist within the format of a map and the resulting imagery can be both entertaining and provocative. The map can also be used and subverted within other formats such as the satirical image. A map is a device that helps define groups of people and their respective cultures within a tangible graphic shape. It helps communicate ideas and views about a particular group and location and therefore enables a visual dialogue between the commentator, illustrator and viewer. A map can be employed to communicate the simplest and the most profound messages. It is not purely a decorative image that has to sit alongside text, it can communicate facts, a sense of place and understanding of geographical properties, in its own right. It can be used as a format for communicating stories, myths, legends and complex narrative structures, and it can transfer a sense of emotion to the viewer-how the illustrator felt/feels when in the place they are drawing. Maybe it is the map itself, the artwork being created, that is the place being 'mapped'. The reader is, in turn, creating their own mind-map of the location through the process of interaction and it is this interaction between creator, created and observer that makes the map such an intriguing form for illustrators to investigate.

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### Films

*A Walk Through H: The Reincarnation of an Ornithologist*, 1971 [Film] Directed by Peter Greenaway, UK: The British Film Institute

The background is a rich, textured red. In the center, a dark silhouette of a globe is shown, with the continents of North and South America visible. Above the globe, there is a dark, rectangular shape resembling a power outlet or a component of a circuit board, with several thin lines extending from it. The entire scene is overlaid with a network of thin, light-colored lines that create a sense of depth and connectivity. The word "Presentations" is centered in a clean, white, sans-serif font.

# Presentations



# Paradise Lost: Documenting Birmingham's Central Library

Gareth Proskourine-Barnett



## Contact Information

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Gareth Proskourine-Barnett's practice explores a sense of place, documenting landscapes and environments (online & offline) altered by human intervention. Since graduating from Central Saint Martins (MA Communication Design) in 2011 he has developed and exhibited work internationally including projects for Somerset House in London, The Moscow International Young Artist Biennale, Chulalongkorn University Museum in Bangkok and Srishti School of Art and Design in Bangalore.

Gareth's research is currently being developed through a PhD at the Royal College of Art in the school of Historical and Critical Studies where he is investigating exam-

ples of Brutalist architecture on the internet. Alongside his personal practice Gareth works as an Associate Lecturer at Birmingham City University and Worcester University where he teaches Illustration and Visual Communication.

## Paradise Lost: Documenting Birmingham's Central Library

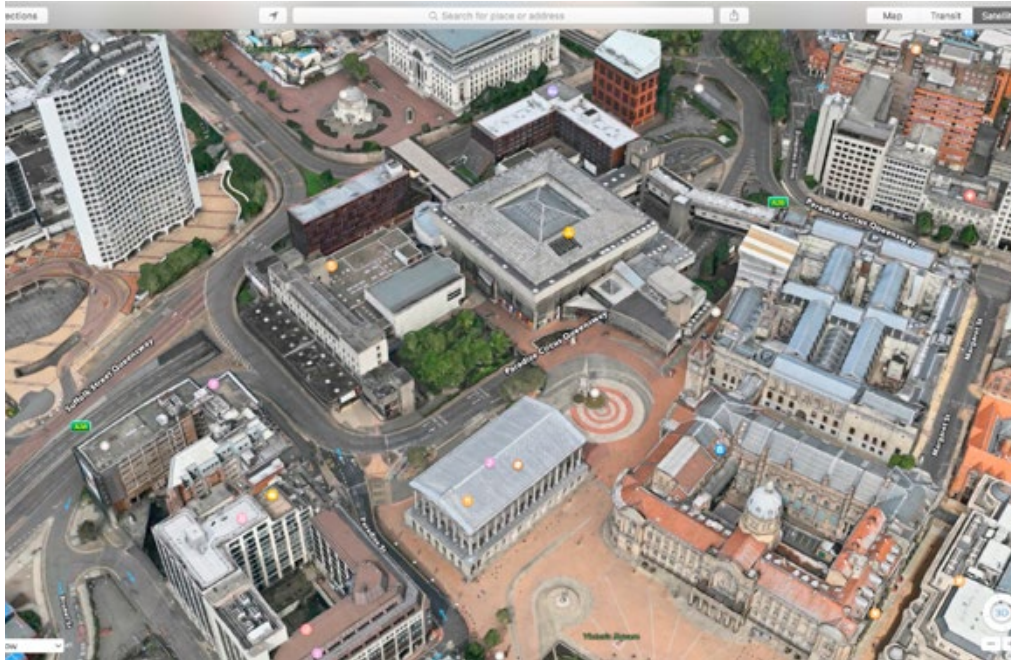


Figure 1: Birmingham Central Library in Google Maps 3-D, 2016

**When a building is demolished where does it go? Does its occupation of cyberspace point towards a territory in which the reportage illustrator can practice and does drawing still have any currency in this space?**

“Facing the fine town hall and art gallery this was built, it’s the central library. But how can you tell? It looks like a place where books are incinerated not kept. Because of such lack of vision Birmingham city centre became a monstrous concrete maze that only cars could find their way though. People didn’t stand a chance. Cars were placed above people and people were placed one above the other on concrete shelves. Look at the Bullring, it has no charm no human scale no character except arrogance. Its a planned accident. Most of it is coming down thank goodness. So here is a second chance to put things right, but are we going to take it.” (Prince Charles slams 80’s architecture in archive film, 2013.)

Perhaps Prince Charles had recently watched the 1966 British science fiction film *Fahrenheit 451* directed by François Truffaut and based on Ray Bradbury’s 1953 novel of the same name when he described Birmingham’s Central Library as “a place where books are incinerated, not kept”. (Prince Charles slams 80’s architecture in archive film, 2013) The film takes place in a dystopian future where the government fears an independent-thinking public. Books

have been outlawed and it is the duty of fire-fighters to burn all literature. The people of this future society get their information from wall-length television screens whilst being drugged into compliancy. The modernist architecture of the Alton Housing Estate in Roehampton, South London, designed by the London County Council Architects (LCC), provides a backdrop for Truffaut’s oppressive future society. The Alton Estate is a combination of subtle mixed-density Scandinavian inspired housing in Alton East and the slab-block high-rises in Alton West that referenced Le Corbusier’s *Unité d’Habitation* in Marseille. Alton West in particular is an early example of what British architectural critic Reyner Banham would term New Brutalism. Despite falling out of favour in the 1980s there has been a recent resurgence in the appreciation of post-war buildings such as those at Alton West whose five Le Corbusier inspired floating towers are now grade II listed.

So Brutalism is popular again. The *Brutalist Appreciation Society* on Facebook now has more than 23,000 members and provides an active space in which to engage with what founder and administrator Mark John Lightness refers to as a “much maligned architectural style.”

# Paradise Lost: Documenting Birmingham's Central Library



Figure 2: Alton Housing Estate in Roehampton, South London, designed by the London County Council Architects (LCC), Google Street View

(Lightness, 2015) He describes Brutalism as "...architecture in the raw, with an emphasis on materials, textures and construction, producing highly expressive forms...Scale was important and the style is characterised by massive concrete shapes colliding abruptly, while service ducts and ventilation towers are overtly displayed.

What to look for in a Brutalist building:

1. Rough unfinished surfaces
2. Unusual shapes
3. Heavy-looking materials
4. Massive forms
5. Small windows in relation to the other parts" (Lightness, 2015)

The *Brutalist Appreciation Society* isn't an anomaly. The Internet is full of love for Brutalism from blogs such as *Fuck Yeah Brutalism*

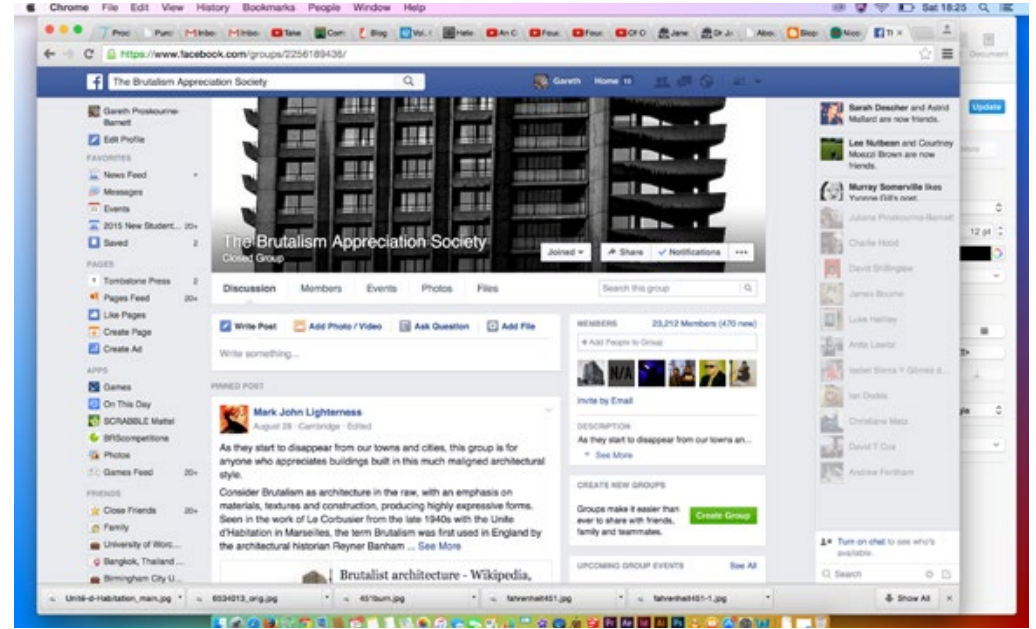


Figure 3: Screen Grab 31-10-2015, 2015

to online magazines such as *Dezeen* which have had a Brutalism season. Even the National Trust has got on board having recently started offering guided tours of sites such as the Queen Elizabeth Hall on the Southbank and the Park Hill estate in Sheffield. So why is Brutalism so popular now? Have we finally learnt to love these raw concrete un-ornamented surfaces or do the socialist principles imbued in the fabric of these once vilified

buildings now resonate in a way that they previously haven't. The increasing globalisation and financialization of society means that new utopian visions of a socially progressive future are needed now more than ever. Perhaps this appreciation of Brutalism is a case of nostalgia — a nostalgia for a different vision of the future than the one that we find ourselves in.

A number of books on Brutalism and even

## Paradise Lost: Documenting Birmingham's Central Library

a BBC4 2-part television series by Jonathan Meades have helped to ignite the debate around Brutalism once more. In *Militant Modernism* by Owen Hatherley the author interestingly puts forward a defence of Modernism against its own defenders. Hatherley attempts to reclaim brutalism not only from those that want to tear it down but more importantly from those that want to gentrify it. Hatherley sees Brutalism as an essential part of the Leftist political programme. For him these buildings symbolise a radical counter-culture and an opportunity to escape neoliberal capitalism. In *Militant Modernism* he writes:

“Erase the traces. Destroy, in order to create. Build a new world on the ruins of the old. This, it is often thought, is the Modernist imperative, but what of it if the new society never emerged? We have been cheated out of the future, yet the future's ruins lie about us, hidden or ostentatiously rotting. So what would it mean, then, to look for the future's remnants? To uncover clues about those who wanted, as Walter Benjamin put it, to “live without traces”? Can we, should we, try and excavate utopia?” (Hatherley, 2008)

Balfour Tower, designed by Ernő Goldfinger, has recently been awarded a listed status after years of petitions but this isn't enough to protect the building from private property devel-

opers. Social tenants have been relocated, so refurbishment can begin and the building can be sold off as luxury flats. The privatisation of social housing removes the memory of an alternative. These buildings serve as monuments to another time and another way of thinking about housing, a way of thinking about housing as a human right not a financial asset. It is this sort of gentrification that Hatherley seeks to defend Brutalism from.

The Central Library in Birmingham was completed in 1974 and designed by the architect John Madin. Madin's library was part of a historic period when Birmingham was undergoing a previous age of renewal. It embraced an urban ideology of a brave new world, one dominated by the car. At the time it resonated with the city's legacy of progress, innovation and construction — Birmingham's motto is *Forward*. The Central Library is considered an impressive example of Brutalist architecture and a centre point for this age of renewal forming part of a post-war utopian redesign of the civic centre that was to remain only semi completed due to imposed budget cuts. Madin's brutalist ziggurat and its surrounding structures will soon be demolished in preparation for a new commercial development, expected to transform the city centre towards a pedestrian focused public realm. The library is 41 years



**Figure 4:** Architect John Madin with a model of Central Library, Birmingham Post, <http://www.birminghampost.co.uk/news/local-news/brutal-end-vision-john-madin-8685822>

## Paradise Lost: Documenting Birmingham's Central Library

old. It is not an old building, it is not in a state of disrepair and yet it is being demolished. In an unprecedented move the Secretary of State turned down the opportunity to grant the building a listed status despite the advice of English Heritage in 2009. The new development is due to cost in the region of £450 million and will provide Birmingham with a mix of commercial, civic, retail, leisure and hotel space. Is this what Birmingham really needs? Are more shops the answer? Madin's library was not without faults and there is a danger of overly romanticising the building but its destruction points towards a rather depressing way of imagining the future of our cities — as non-spaces constructed around the flow of global capital. The physical and ideological destruction of buildings such as Madin's Library continue to erase the notion of an alternative to neoliberalism from the collective memory - to quote Mark Fisher referencing Fredric Jameson - "it's easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism." (Fisher, 2009)

Madin's Library divides opinion. Obviously Prince Charles is not a fan. The chair of Birmingham's Civic Society Freddie Gick once said:

"This monumental, brutalist incinerator has no place in the centre of our city, flanked

by the glorious 19th century architecture and sculpture of our other civic buildings. Visitors to the city walking through Victoria Square and into Chamberlain Square from New Street are confronted with this import from post-revolution Russia and forced to go through a tacky assortment of fast food outlets en route to meetings or concerts in the ICC and Symphony Hall." (Browne, 2015)

Guardian critic, Jonathan Glancey wrote that:

"this was not a cheap building: concrete slabs were faced in Hopton Wood stone; ceilings were coffered in much the same way as the great libraries of Ancient Rome would have been; furniture was custom-designed by the architects." (Glancey, 2003)

And Matthew Goer of Associated Architects said:

"Madin's Central Library was conceived as the centrepiece of what would become an ambitious civic centre – including an exhibition space, lecture halls, drama centre and athletics institute, as well as a major transport hub. Due primarily to funding cuts, this vision was never fully realised." (Browne, 2015)

As the buildings physical destruction begins the buildings occupation of cyberspace takes



Fig 5: The Game (still), BBC TV series, 2015

## Paradise Lost: Documenting Birmingham's Central Library



Figure 6: Birmingham Central Library, Google Street View, 2015

on a greater significance - it has a virtual afterlife, immortalised in pixels. The ghost of Brutalism wandering the wireless network and haunting us. Perhaps this virtual incarnation reveals another history? Perhaps it provides a new space in which to engage with our constructed environment and another way of experiencing place? In amongst the digital debris and echoes of the past Prince Charles can be heard. He is saying that this is our chance to put things right, but are we going to take it...

The Central Library re-appeared during the BBC mini series *The Game*, a cold-war espionage thriller involving an internal mole within MI5 and a Soviet plan to overthrow the UK government. It was well received enough for a second series to be commissioned but what was particularly interesting about the show was its use of Brutalist architecture. Madin's Library was uprooted and transplanted into the heart of London where it served as the MI5 headquarters. *The Game* is about the Cold War but this building is not the typical embodiment of dystopia, the libraries exterior becomes a protective fortress. Internally, the beautifully ribbed concrete walls provide spaces for secret interactions that are not sinister or brooding with violence. *The Game* manages to humanise Brutalist architecture. Brutalist architecture has appeared in film before, The Gateshead multi-story carpark in *Get Carter* famously pro-

vided the setting for Michael Caine's character Jack Carter to throw Cliff Brumby to his death and in *A Clockwork Orange* Stanley Kubrick used the Thamesmead estate as well as the Lecture Centre at Brunel University to provide the dystopian backdrop to Anthony Burgess' novel about free will and control. Get Carter couldn't save the Gateshead Carpark and *The Game* will not be able to save the Birmingham library, but it does allow the building to live on in an alternative or parallel universe. By committing the building to film it enters an other space — a space where it is free to acquire a new history.

So Brutalist architecture is no longer limited to physical spaces. It now appears in our screens as .mov, mp4 and avi files, available to download on various peer to peer networks or to be accessed via sites such as YouTube. Brutalism has moved into and beyond the screen, as it becomes digitised it becomes unstable, its permanence becomes vulnerable and it is susceptible to piracy. In Hito Steyerl's essay *In Defense of the Poor Image* (2009) she discusses the movement of images through computer networks, the loss of information that occurs and the potential within this to create new meanings. Steyerl argues that the more an image is copied the more distorted it becomes and as such the further it moves from its original position. It moves into a space

## Paradise Lost: Documenting Birmingham's Central Library

free from past associations. It is free to acquire new meanings. In relation to the *Poor Image* Steyerl says that "one could of course argue that this is not the real thing, but then—please, anybody—show me this real thing." (Steyerl, 2009) The *real* Brutalism or the portrait painting of Brutalism by the media is one of a failed social experiment that brought about a social degradation — it is one of sink estates and violent crime. Is this the *real* version? When images of Brutalist architecture are transported into digital territories they can be stripped of their historical baggage — just like a reptile that sheds its skin, the building loses layers of data as it is compressed and re-opened time and time again. Within these digital territories Brutalism is free to fulfil its utopian potential. It is free to fulfil its journey into a romantic ruin. It is free to discard its own *real* histories and start again.

The Internet provides an alternative platform in which to occupy Brutalist architecture. Here we enter a different sort of space - a meta-physical space that doesn't subscribe to the same limitations of time and space that govern the world we physically occupy - perhaps this is where the *real* Brutalism resides. In an article entitled *Of Other Spaces* and published by the French journal *Architecture/Mouvement/Continuite* in October 1984 (although based on a lecture given in 1967) the French philos-

opher Michel Foucault put forward his notion of *heterotopia* and it can help to make sense of these digital spaces. 'Heterotopias' are spaces and places that can exist in both physical and mental states, they are spaces of otherness that act as portals or voids, they are modes of transportation. Foucault's heterotopia stems from critical thinking surrounding notions of utopia and dystopia. Heterotopia combines the prefix *hetero* meaning 'other, another or different' with the Greek *utopia* which translates as 'non-place' — so in its simplest terms a heterotopia is 'another-place'. It is a concept of human geography that deals with the way we interact with our constructed environments and our relationship to space and place. Foucault uses the term heterotopia to describe spaces that have layers of meaning imbedded within them or spaces that relationships to other places and that function outside of the normal conditions of control by the state or governing body. These are spaces with more to them than immediately meets the eye. He called for a society with many heterotopias as a means to escape from authoritarianism and repression.

A phone call is a classic example of a heterotopia. The phone call roots you in a geographical location whilst you enter into a communication channel with another party rooted in a different geographic location. This creates an other

space, the space between the geographical points, a mental space in which you reside. Within this mental space you use your imagination to construct images. These images are subjects of this other space. Foucault outlined 6 key principles of heterotopia and it is worth spending a little time thinking about how they might apply to images of Brutalism in cyberspace;

- Firstly, a 'crisis heterotopia' is a space such as a honeymoon suite in a hotel. It is a space where a significant action takes place behind closed doors such as the consummating of the marriage. This doesn't apply to us here as the spaces are available to access by anyone with a Wi-Fi connection.
- Secondly, 'heterotopias of deviation' are institutions where we place individuals whose behaviour is outside the norm, a good example would be a prison. These are generally physical examples of space that function as an other. If we take Brutalist architecture as the 'individual' then we can see how this principle might apply to us - the buildings socialist ideology and utopian ambitions sit outside of what we now perceive as the norm, the norm being neoliberalism. The intention and ambition of these Brutalist buildings is out of place in today's political and economic climate.
- Thirdly, a heterotopia can be a single real place that juxtaposes several other spaces, an example would be a garden that uses plants from a specific region or place in another part of the world. Again this does not apply to us here.
- Fourthly, 'heterotopias of time' are spaces such as museums that hold objects from all times and styles in a single place. They exist both in time but also outside of time as they are built to preserve and protect their artefacts from the destructive nature of time. When we enter into Google Street view we suspend time, we are looking at images taken at a particular point in time that have been meshed together to form a complete picture. The time we are witnessing is not the time we are in. Time is further distorted in this space as it has no relation to distance - the time it takes to walk around a site physically is very different to the time it takes virtually.
- Fifthly, 'Heterotopias of ritual or purification' are spaces such as a sauna or Turkish bath. Whilst initially these spaces might not seem to be particularly relevant upon closer investigation they reveal themselves as a ritual of sorts. A series of specific steps allow us to access the internet - we turn the computer on; we enter a password; we access the network. We must go through these steps in

## Paradise Lost: Documenting Birmingham's Central Library

order to enter the space, our journey into the space becomes a ritual.

- Finally, a heterotopia has one of two functions in relation to the remaining spaces. It is either a space of compensation where its role is to create a physical space that is 'other' or it is a space of illusion where its function is to expose the real space. Cyberspace creates the illusion that exposes the real space. The computer screen becomes a void; it becomes a portal. The screen is a real or physical object but it transports you into another space and opens up an alternative way of experiencing place.

So, how might we interact and experience Brutalist architecture within cyberspace? Google Street View provides a starting point; we enter into the map, we occupy, we walk, we drift, we become the cyber-flaneur or the cyber-psychogeographer. It provides a territory in which to explore and document. The walk becomes the means from which to interrogate the ideology imbued in the fabric of the architecture, exploring the transitory and contradictory nature of our cities, of our world, of our time. Psychogeography is a practice that first originated in the 1950's and is closely associated with the Situationist International. Guy Debord (1955) outlined it as "the study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical

environment, consciously organised or not, on the emotions and behaviour of individuals." He called for playful and inventive ways of navigating the urban environment in order to closely examine the architecture around us. He called for a revolutionary new approach to architecture, one that was less functional and more open to exploration. As our cities becomes increasingly impenetrable perhaps it is within the virtual landscape that Debord's sense of play can be fully realised. The internet provides a ready-made aesthetic to visually articulate the distortion of time and history already taking place in our physical world, it describes a world where ruins have become utopias and where archaeology and futurism merge.

As part of a recent project in collaboration with Birmingham City University I have been archiving the virtual traces of Brutalist sites such as Madin's Central Library, using portals such as Google Street View as a space in which to walk, to explore and to document. It is only as I navigate my way through these digital incarnations of Brutalism that I begin to comprehend the unstable nature their existence. They are not static, stable or permanent but instead they are constantly changing and the only thing that is permanent is a constant state of flux. These digital images of Brutalism highlight the importance of movement within our constructed environment — in fact



Figure 7: Fractured Perspectives, Google Street View, 2015



## Paradise Lost: Documenting Birmingham's Central Library

movement lies at the heart of architecture. In order to interact with a building, we need to walk through it. It is only by traveling through the site that we experience the site. Far from being concrete they are intact anything but. In Google Street View as we use the cursor to progress in a given direction or to shift our point of perspective, as we do the building's structure collapses and then reforms. For a split second it is a void. It fragments and as the image mutates information is lost and new meanings begin to take shape. A new history is possible. The buildings seams are pulled apart, its edges dissolve and it moves. It is a moving building - just like the architecture collective Archigram proposed back in 1964. Archigram's walking building was a giant reptilian structure that would freely roam the world, moving to wherever it was needed whilst being able to connect to other walking buildings when required in order to form larger cities. Perhaps that is what is happening in Google Street View. Perhaps Birmingham's Central Library could grow some legs, hoist itself up to standing and walk to London where it would decide to become the home of MI5. Stranger things have happened.

In the middle of the nineties John Perry Barlow published *A Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace* in which he puts forward an idea of the Internet as a libertarian space, free from

government control. It is a utopian manifesto - in it he says

"We are creating a world that all may enter without privilege or prejudice accorded by race, economic power, military force, or station of birth. We are creating a world where anyone, anywhere may express his or her beliefs, no matter how singular, without fear of being coerced into silence or conformity. Your legal concepts of property, expression, identity, movement, and context do not apply to us. They are all based on matter, and there is no matter here." (Barlow, 1996)

Hito Steyerl's essay *Too Much World: Is The Internet Dead?* (2013) could be read as a response to John Perry Barlow's manifesto. In light of the NSA revelations and with digital space becoming increasingly privatised it is a good question - is the idea of the Internet dead? Is the idea of John Perry Barlow's libertarian, matter-less world still relevant? Is the Internet just another space in which to consume? Has it become an exaggerated shopping mall? Hito Steyerl's argument is not that we have moved online but that the Internet has moved offline. We are in a *Post-Internet* age. It is often thought that we have become immersed in the Internet, that we actively step into it, but Steyerl suggests that this is not entirely accurate and that the Internet has



**Link to Film:** *Paradise Lost*, HD Video, 2015, <https://vimeo.com/153618149>

## Paradise Lost: Documenting Birmingham's Central Library

moved beyond our screens; it has infiltrated all aspects of our existence. It provides the infrastructure for the world we live in - we cannot escape it - it is everywhere! Steyerl (2013) writes that "The all-out internet condition is not an interface but an environment." She describes a condition "partly created by humans but also only partly controlled by them". Images leave the confines of the screen and change the world - they rewrite political systems, wipe millions off stock markets, they shape the way humans interact and the way relationships are formed. Online images materialise and then dematerialise, again and again and again. Steyerl uses her essay to call for a global revolution, it is a call to arms reminiscent of *A Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace*. By importing our online behaviour into the offline world we can construct a new world - a world "without privilege or prejudice". (Barlow, 1996)

Reportage and documentary illustration practices have long concentrated on the exploration of physical environments using traditional approaches to drawing, it is an approach characterised by the wandering line that maps out its surroundings. It is an informal sketch; it is a scribble performed in the moment out on location. It is a response to a moment in time and an attempt to capture some sort of truth. Only there is no truth. Truth implies stability and

there is none of that - there is only movement. Our experiences slip between online and offline modes, images ooze out from the screen and infiltrate what John Perry Barlow (1996) described as "the world of flesh". Online or offline? It doesn't really matter anymore. They are the same, both unstable and both susceptible to piracy. In this *Post-Internet* world, the digital or virtual landscapes provide another territory in which to engage with a documentary practice, they reveal another layer to the spaces that we inhabit and different way of understanding a sense of place. But what does this mean for reportage illustration? How can the discipline respond to this new landscape, this other space? Do the traditional tools of the illustrator, the pencil and sketchbook, have any currency in this world? How can they convey the complexities and multi-layered dimensions of our constructed environments? We need to find new ways in which to engage with the process of drawing; we need a new set of tools to visually articulate the way we understand and experience place. By reclaiming the utopian potential of digital technologies we can conjure alternative futures from the debris and find new ways of addressing the present and a sense of place through drawing.

The drawing is a copy; the drawing is a distortion; the drawing is a manipulation; the drawing is a remix; the drawing is reframed;

the drawing is pirated; the drawing is corrupted; the drawing is rebuilt; the drawing lives on.

The digital debris of Birmingham's Central Library reveals an alternative history for the condemned, marginalised and neglected examples of Brutalist architecture that haunt our cities. Explorations of the virtual manifestations of the Central Library reveal and intertwine collective history with fantasy. They provide the opportunity to challenge the way histories and narratives are constructed, recorded and retold by exploring the different ways digital technologies can distort our understanding of time and history and by presenting fictional narratives as verifiable truths and vice versa. Google vice president Vint Cerf has recently warned of the possibility of a "forgotten century" (Sample, 2015) with email and photos at risk of being lost forever. Key historical documents could disappear, lost to the ravages of technological advancement. One only has to think of the fates of the floppy disk or Betamax to get an idea of what might happen. Before we know it we might find ourselves in a version of the Woody Allen film *Sleeper* - where Bela Lugosi becomes the mayor of New York, Charles De Gaulle is a famous French chef and where no-one knows what wind-up chattering teeth were used for. It would appear that history is up for grabs but are we going to take it?

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# Immaterial Boundary (Film)

## Rachel Gannon

Rachel Gannon is an illustrator and educator who graduated from Royal College of Art in 2007. Her practice is rooted in drawing as reportage, the reflective sketch and the role of the sketch within contemporary illustrative practice. Rachel works from her London Studio on a variety of commissioned and self-initiated projects including editorial, publishing, curating, community projects and installations. She has work on permanent display at the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Royal London Hospital. She is part of reportage illustration research group, Reportager. In 2015 she was awarded the Reportager Award with her work on *Frontiers*, documenting those areas of the UK that we could classify as contemporary frontiers; particularly the docks of the

South East coast. *Frontiers* pays specific attention to the docks at Tilbury and Dover both of which have been documented heavily in the news. This project aims to cast a poetic eye over the structures that exist in these spaces - How are these borders constructed, signposted, policed, managed and maintained? She is represented by Eye Candy Illustration Agency with clients such as The Guardian, The Natural History Museum, The Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts, The Big Draw, Tate Modern, Vital Arts and Condé Nast.

## Darryl Clifton

Darryl Clifton studied Visual Communication at Kent Institute of Art and Design and Illustration at the Royal College of Art. He has broad experience working in education at home and abroad and spent five years developing the education profile at cutting edge moving image events/production company onedotzero, working with high profile Institutions like the V&A Museum and Hayward Gallery. In 2010 he re-launched Camberwell Press a design and held the role of Director until September 2014. In 2011 Clifton co-founded Mokita, a curated event platform for critical debate around the subject of Illustration regularly hosting events at Somerset House. Clifton is currently Design Programme Director and Course Leader BA (Hons) Illustration at Camberwell College of Arts,

CCW, UAL. He holds positions on the editorial boards of the Journal of Illustration and Varoom and is a board director of the Association of Illustrators (AOI).

## Immaterial Boundary (Film)



Figure 1, 2, 3: *Immaterial Boundary* [film stills], 2015

The impetus for the production of this short 'talking heads' film came from the provocative nudge/poke to talk about the visionary in Illustration. Our interest in exploring the visionary (this is a jointly authored package of film and text), lay in the manifestation of creative attributes that correlated with a synthesized idea of what it (the visionary) is

and what it could be. We therefore assumed a conflated definition of the term visionary, one where the future facing 'leader' meets the imaginative 'seer'.

Our aim was to investigate visionary-ness in some of the new and emerging forms Illustration takes. We adopted a general

focus on nascent visual language and style that, in our opinion, extends the boundaries of the discipline, as well as notions of thing-ness, materiality and immateriality. We deliberately selected practitioners whose work occupies a territory on the periphery of the mainstream. We hope that the title of the film reflects some of the disciplinary stretch

## Immaterial Boundary (Film)



Figure 4: *Immaterial Boundary* [film still], 2015

and permeability described by the practices featured.

The film is divided into four sections derived from the themes that emerged through conversation with the practitioners. They were: Material, Style, Boundaries and Craft. In a recently published article in *Varoom* we have attempted to 'poetically' capture the essence of these themes as described by the practitioners. The more oblique 'extractions' in that text are supported by additional commentary

in the footnotes by way of expansion and contextualization.

The following summarily describes some of the thoughts and proposals that our interviewees shared:

On Material, Materials, Materiality our respondents talked about the significance of pointlessness, it being a kind of trope, a component in the modern Illustration/Visual Communication lexicon. On how materiality is constituted through the power of preferences, that the overall 'yield' of likes, hits and retweets ascribed to the virtual image combines to propose new 'substance'. And of the interplay of works in and out of the social realm, and that realm as a testing ground, a means of developing neo-material symbology.

On Style the conversation turned to frameworks and languages, as mutually evolving components of a visual lingua franca. Of the importance of surface and the electronic refractive index as an echo or tautology. Our interviewees described the inevitability of fashion and its relation to style – being a sort of revisionism, amplified, short-lived, vital and inevitable.

On Boundaries we discussed Marshall McLuhan's description of the effects of 'information rubbing up against information' and how Illustration only truly becomes active when it is the hands of the user. Of the permeability of roles and the application of discipline. And of Illustrative process supplanting product, the birth of the verb and the death of the noun and the authorless Illustration.

## Immaterial Boundary (Film)



Figure 5 & 6: *Immaterial Boundary* [film stills], 2015

And on Craft existing in the space between image, type and ornament; as a celebration of the vulgar and distasteful. Of corrupted collaborations and purgation and on being an Illustrator, Engineer, Manufacturer. The craft of negotiation; with oneself and with others, of the significance of interfaces and the nuanced attempts to 'get to zero' with process and making. And finally back to

authorship, Illustrative auteurship and the impossibility of an end point.

We are very grateful to Pablo Jones Soler, Anna Lomax, Peter Nencini and Jack Sachs for participating in the filming of *Immaterial Boundary*.

## Immaterial Boundary (Film)



Figure 7: *Immaterial Boundary* [film still], 2015

**Link to Film** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f4ukvjhpAqQ>



# Illustrator as Detective: Discovery through Drawing

Chloe Regan



Since graduating from the Royal College of Art, Chloe has been a Senior Lecturer for the Arts University Bournemouth. She also works as a Visiting Lecturer in Illustration, Drawing and Graphic Design at several other universities and institutions, including the London College of Fashion. She is currently the Foundation Art and Design Course Leader at the Bristol School of Art, Wise Campus, South Gloucestershire and Stroud College.

Chloe applies her drawing and reportage illustration to a range of commercial and academic projects. Her drawings, commissioned by the

Museum of East Asian Art, Bath, are being exhibited from 2015 — 2017, and investigate the theme of drawing as visual thinking. She is a member of the Reportager research group at the University of the West of England, Bristol.

Chloe also works collaboratively with INK Illustration, which was co-founded with two other Royal College of Art graduates. Clients of INK include: Topshop, Free Word Centre, the Victoria & Albert Museum and the Natural History Museum.

## Contact Information

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## Illustrator as Detective: Discovery through Drawing

I am an illustrator currently producing an innovative drawing project with the Museum of East Asian Art, Bath, that interrogates concepts of illustration and illustrator as visionary. I proposed, developed and will produce and curate the project (2015–17).

The majority of the museum's collection consists of small-scale objects and miniatures, showcasing centuries of traditional craftsmanship and artistry. The museum holds a collection of ceramics, jades, bronzes and other artefacts from China, Japan, Korea and Southeast Asia. It is the only museum in the UK solely dedicated to arts and cultures of East and Southeast Asia.

In producing this project, I act as a visionary, through exploring drawing as a tool for *looking beyond the obvious*, to truly study and discover an object within a museum collection.

*'For me, drawing is an enquiry, a way of finding out- the first thing that I discover is that I do not know. Only experience reassures me that this encounter with my own ignorance- with the unknown- is my chosen and particular task, and provided I can make the required effort the rewards may reach the unimaginable.'* Bridget Riley

Drawing is applied as a process for *looking beyond the obvious* and innovating new ways of looking at museum objects. Significantly, as a visionary I will explore the idea of *innovation, revolution and discovery*; as I act as detective and interpret objects through the process of drawing. I will create all drawings on site, examining the rare artefacts from multiple perspectives, in order to make loose, investigative and accessible illustrations. I will also make large-scale drawings, whilst making notes and closely examining the objects.

The project explores ideas of *future thinking in educational and professional developments*, as the drawings will act as functional and democratic means to communicate my personal response to objects, and in turn challenge personal and studied responses from the public. *Future thinking in educational and professional developments* is also explored through the showcase of work, as drawings will be displayed in cabinets in direct juxtaposition with corresponding objects, and exhibited between different galleries.

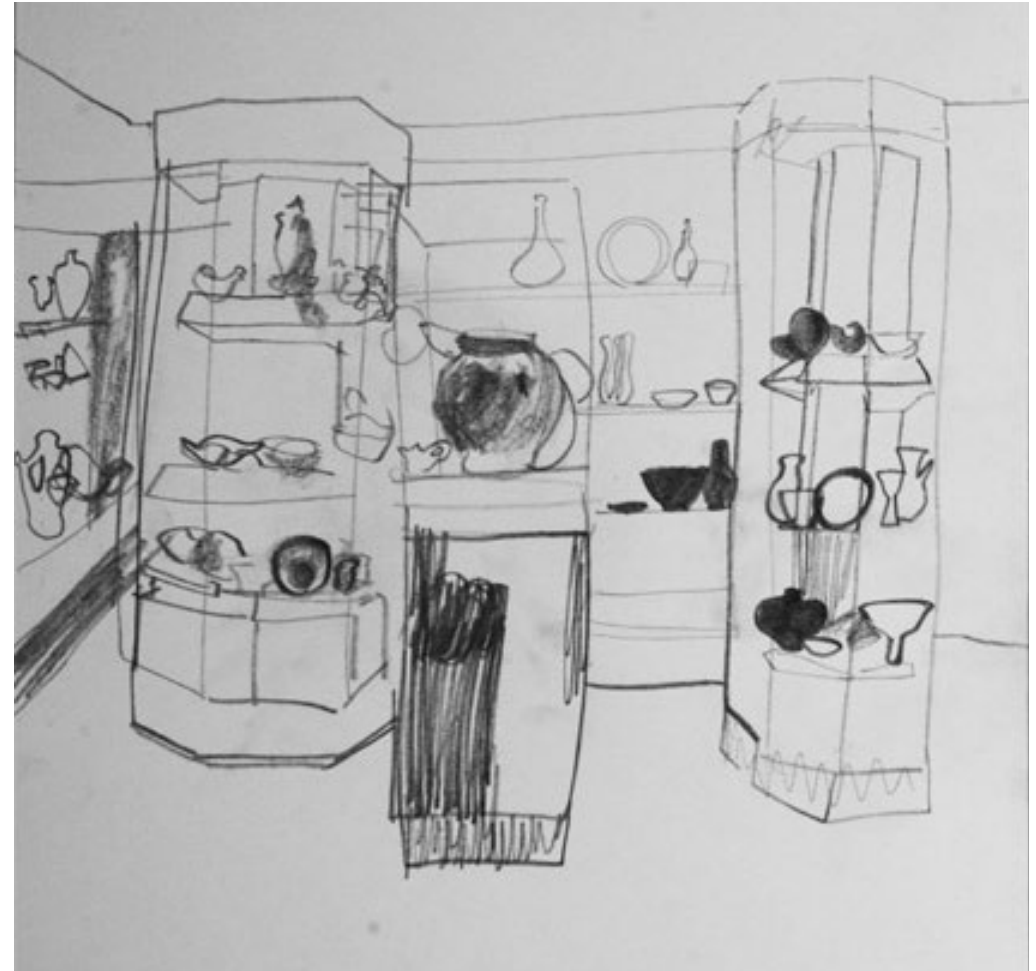


Figure 1: 'The Museum,' Chloe Regan, Pencil, Museum of East Asian Art, Bath, 2015.

Keywords

Visual Thinking, Looking, Discovery, Communication, Educational/ Professional Developments

## Illustrator as Detective: Discovery through Drawing

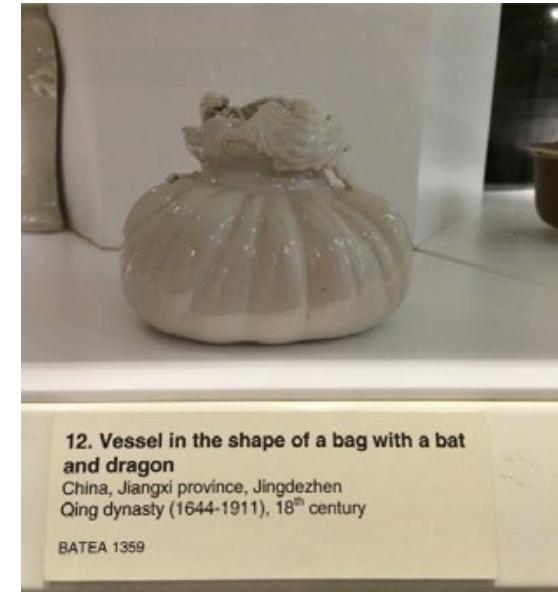
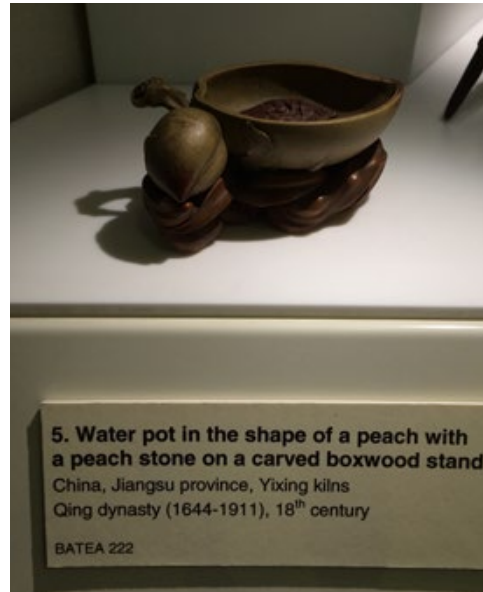
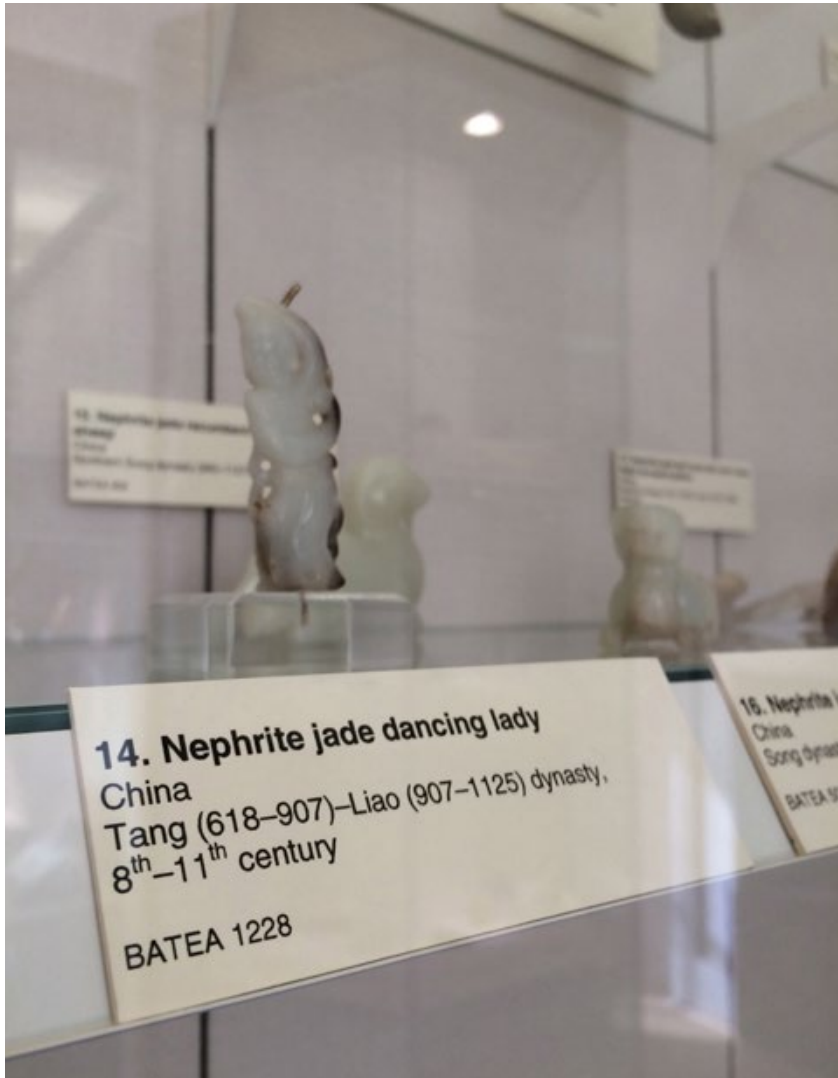


Figure 2: (far left) 'Nephrite Jade Dancing Lady,' Museum of East Asian Art, Bath, 8th-11th Century.

Figure 3: (top centre) 'Water Pot,' Museum of East Asian Art, Bath, 18th Century.

Figure 4: (top right) 'Vessel,' Museum of East Asian Art, Bath, 18th Century.

Figure 5: (bottom left) 'Tortoise,' Museum of East Asian Art, Bath,

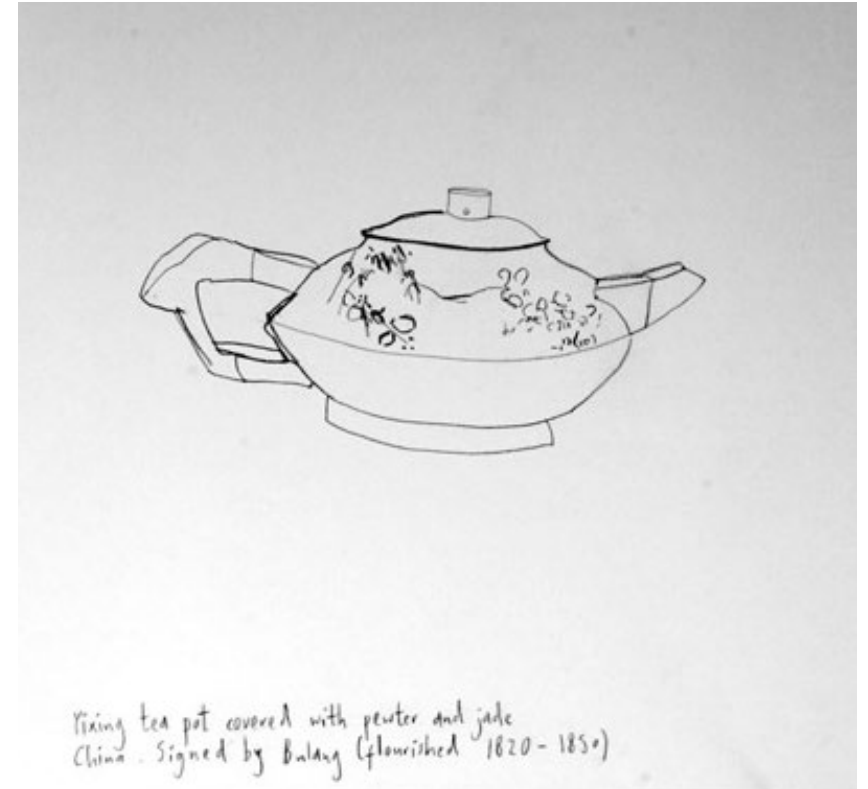
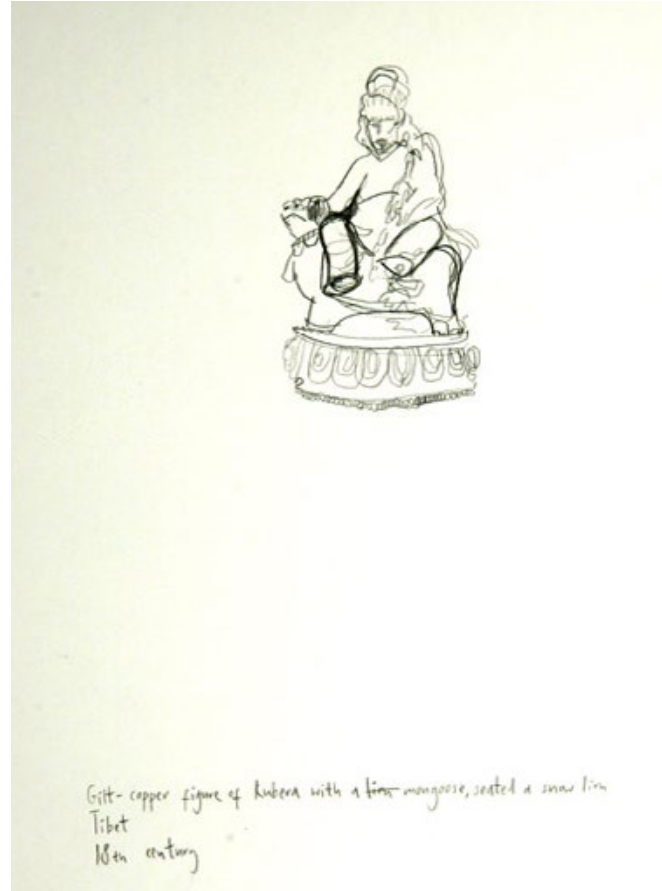
## Illustrator as Detective: Discovery through Drawing

*'While still in the army,  
Twombly recalls,  
he often drew at night,  
with lights out, perfecting  
a kind of meandering and  
imprecise graphology...'*

*'Fearing slickness, he drew  
as if with his left hand.  
To avoid striking the  
surface straight-on,  
he drew in oblique and  
contorted angles,  
punitively disciplining his linear seductive-  
ness.'*

Cy Twombly

Roscio, N. (2014) *The Essential Cy Twombly*.  
Distributed Art Publishers: London



**Figure 6: (left)** 'Gilt Copper Figure of Rubena,' Chloe Regan, Pencil, Museum of East Asian Art, Bath, 18th Century.

**Figure 7: (right)** 'Yixing Tea Pot,' Chloe Regan, Pencil, Museum of East Asian Art, Bath, 1820-1850.

## Illustrator as Detective: Discovery through Drawing

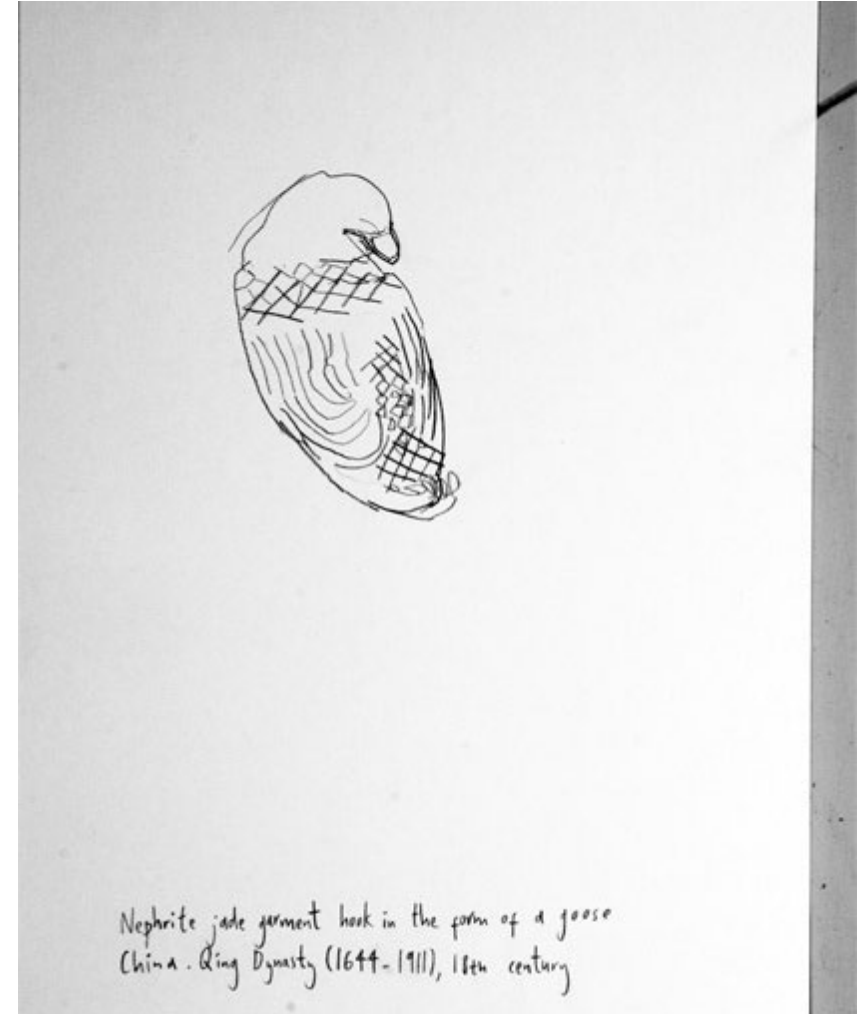
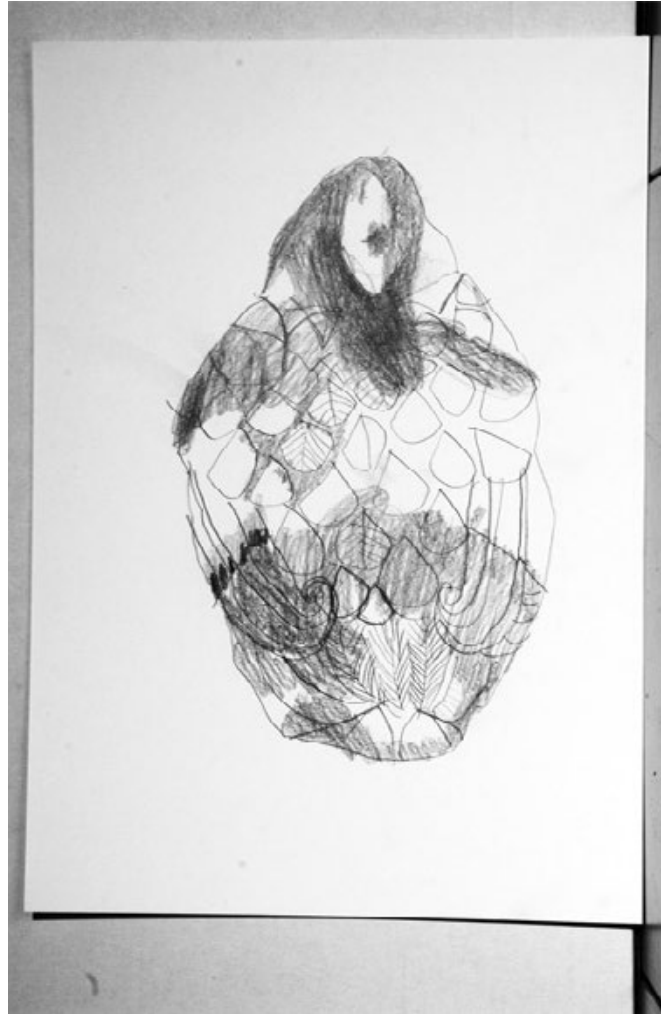
*'For me, drawing is an enquiry, a way of finding out- the first thing that I discover is that I do not know. Only experience reassures me that this encounter with my own ignorance- with the unknown- is my chosen and particular task, and provided I can make the required effort the rewards may reach the unimaginable.'*

Bridget Riley

Bracewell, M. (2009) *Flashback Bridget Riley*. Hayward Gallery Publishing: London

**Figure 8: (left)** 'Nephrite Jade Garment Hook,' Chloe Regan, Pencil, Museum of East Asian Art, Bath, 18th Century.

**Figure 9: (far left)** 'Yixing Tea Pot,' Chloe Regan, Pencil, Museum of East Asian Art, Bath, 1820-1850.



## Illustrator as Detective: Discovery through Drawing



**Figure 10: (top)** 'Nephrite Jade Garment Hook,' Chloe Regan, Pencil, Museum of East Asian Art, Bath, 18th Century.

**Figure 11: (bottom)** 'Animal,' Museum of East Asian Art, Bath.



**Figure 12:** 'Alabaster Buddha,' Chloe Regan, Coloured Pencil, Museum of East Asian Art, Bath, 19th Century.



**Figure 13:** 'Gilt Bronze Dhamata,' Chloe Regan, Coloured Pencil, Museum of East Asian Art, Bath, 17th-18th Century.

## Illustrator as Detective: Discovery through Drawing



*'What you call an open and fragile line is important when you want to keep something open,*

*keep it porous,*

*so that what develops comes through and lives in terms of your intention.'*

Joseph Beuys

Petherbridge, D. (2010) *Primacy of Drawing*.  
Yale Books: London.

**Figure 14: (far left)** 'Gilt Bronze Dhamata,' Chloe Regan, Coloured Pencil, Museum of East Asian Art, Bath, 17th-18th Century.

**Figure 15: (left)** 'Brown lead glazed figure of a Bird,' Chloe Regan, Black Marker Pen, Museum of East Asian Art, Bath, 25-220.

## Illustrator as Detective: Discovery through Drawing



Figure 16: 'Green lead glazed Oil Lamp,' Chloe Regan, Black Marker Pen, Museum of East Asian Art, Bath, 25-220.



Figure 17: 'Detail,' Chloe Regan, Black Marker Pen, Museum of East Asian Art, Bath,



## Illustrator as Detective: Discovery through Drawing



**Figure 18: (far left)** 'Green lead glazed Oil Lamp,' Chloe Regan, Black Marker Pen, Museum of East Asian Art, Bath, 25-220.



**Figure 19: (left)** 'Green lead glazed Oil Lamp,' Chloe Regan, Black Marker Pen, Museum of East Asian Art, Bath, 25-220.



**Figure 20: (above)** 'Set of Eight Immortals,' Chloe Regan, Black Marker Pen, Museum of East Asian Art, Bath, 1930.

## Illustrator as Detective: Discovery through Drawing

*"It was showing me how I think – how I construct narratives."*

Eric Fischl's *'Glassine Drawings'*

Belcove, J. (2014) 'Eric Fischl Interview' Financial Times Visual Arts Online

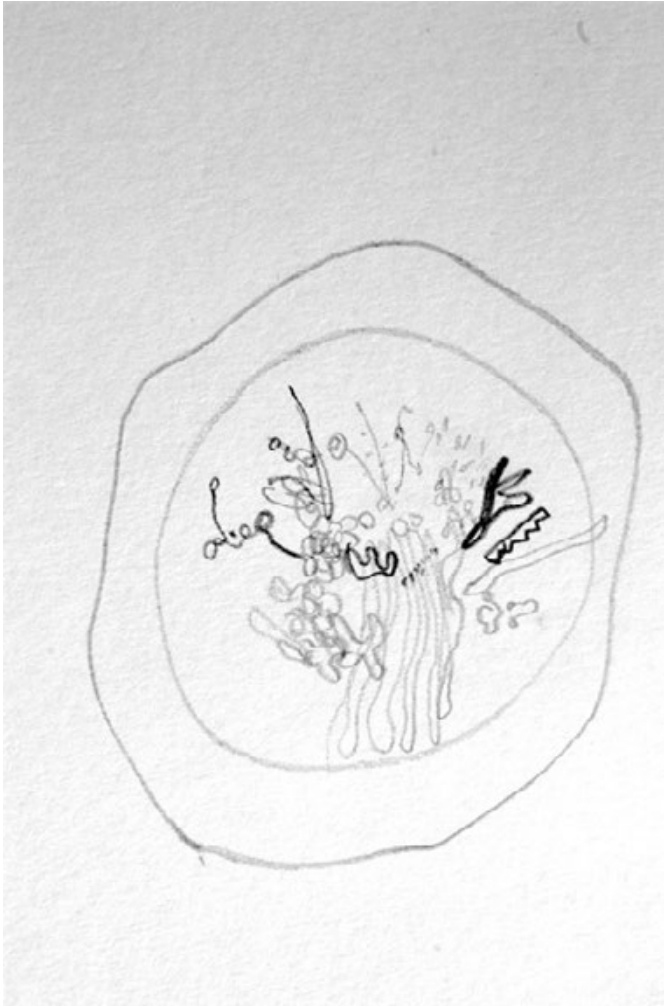


**Figure 21:** 'Dish with brown rim and design of Dianthus flowers,' Chloe Regan, Blue Pen, Museum of East Asian Art, Bath, 1614-1868.



**Figure 22:** 'Dish with brown rim and design of Dianthus flowers,' Chloe Regan, Pencil on Drafting Film and Blue Pen on Paper, Museum of East Asian Art, Bath.

## Illustrator as Detective: Discovery through Drawing



**Figure 23: (left)** 'Saucer with design of auspicious plants and flowers growing around a rock,' Chloe Regan, Pencil, Museum of East Asian Art, Bath.



**Figure 24: (above)** 'Gilt-bronze figure of a Buddhist attendant,' Chloe Regan, Pencil, Museum of East Asian Art, Bath, 618-907.

# 'The in-betweener'

## Jo Berry



### Contact Information

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Originally from Lancashire, Jo has studied Natural History Illustration, Illustration, Graphic Design and Printmaking. Exhibiting regularly and widely throughout the Country & Internationally her work is highly regarded, with pieces in the Victoria & Albert Museum (V&A), Arts Council England (ACE) East Midland Collections and Zeiss, Munich. Her residencies include the Florence Trust Studios, London, the Natural History Museum, London and Lakeside Arts Centre, Nottingham University. Her public art commissions include Millfield Sculpture Commission, Derbyshire Moorlands, Sheffield Galleries and Museums Trust, New Shetland Museum & Archives and Blackpool Illuminations.

In 2005 she completed work at Loughborough University as an Advanced Research Fellow where she developed her interest in digital drawing and technology and created light drawings using laser cutting, computer software, material exploration and light. Since then, she has continued to develop and explore her understanding of all these processes in the design and production of artwork, light work and animation for exhibition, commission and for public art commissions.

Over the last six years Jo has developed and contributed to a number of Art and Science Collaborations funded by Arts Council England and the Wellcome Trust. Including Brain

Container 2014, 2015; Hijacking Natural Systems 2011 and Bridging the Gaps 2012, an ESPRC funded project at Loughborough University. Her research interests are multi-disciplinary, involving an interest in drawing, design, light, digital and industrial technologies and collaboration. In her latest project she collaborates with scientists who use advanced imaging.

## 'The in-betweener'

### Still and static digital representations made from scientific images

I am an *'in-betweener'* it defines my practice which spans art, design and illustration.

I am fascinated by how scientists use imaging as an important visual tool, as part of their scientific investigations. I am not a trained scientist, so the opportunity to gain first-hand experience of working with scientists who use advanced imaging, offers a rich source of inspiration, to inform my visual art practice and feed my research interests.

As technologies become more sophisticated, ways of viewing and seeing samples (static and live) are continually being developed. This opens up new opportunities to see and experience internal structures from our bodies and from nature, so that we can gain knowledge of how these systems work. The super-machines scientists use to image samples are not normally accessible to non-scientific specialists yet imaging technologies present a rich under-explored area for artistic exploration. Advanced imaging techniques to be investigated will include microscopy and medical imaging.

I am currently studying for a part-time PhD at Birmingham City University in the School

of Visual Communication, where I work as a 0.5 lecturer in Illustration. Organisations such as the Wellcome Trust, an independent charitable foundation (Accessed at <http://www.wellcome.ac.uk>) show how art and science collaborations can engage and inform the public about science. They support "the creation of new artistic work that critically engages artists and audiences with biomedical science (Accessed: 19 January 2016). The Wellcome Trust states that "artists have a distinct approach to understanding and communicating ideas that can illuminate and challenge perceptions within society." They credit the arts as having an invaluable role to play in engaging the public with biomedical science, maintaining that this exchange "generates powerful, personal and visceral art and inspires interdisciplinary research and practice that brings benefits to artists and scientists alike." Today scientists acknowledge that it is increasingly important to inform the general public about the work they do. This project aims to add to this knowledge from working directly with Scientists in their laboratories, by responding to this experience and communicating it in a new imaginative way.

Two major case studies and three supplementary case studies have been selected. They offer unique opportunities to collabo-

rate with scientific specialists who use cutting-edge imaging techniques. The artwork created will be inspired by, and sourced from working directly with these scientists in their laboratories and observing how and why they conduct the research they do.

For the scientists to fully engage in the creative design process and extract key information, co-creation design thinking strategies will be adopted (Sanders, Stappers 2007:5). The information gathered will be used to help communicate scientific research more effectively. A multi-modal design approach will be used to create new digital two and three-dimensional artwork and moving image outputs. Scientific imaging and scientific software will be combined with digital drawing to create distinctive graphic interpretations. The work created will be informed by direct observation of scientific processes, collection of images, data and information.

The research aims to use art as a vehicle to create a 'space' for new engagement and interaction with science. Detailed below are the case-studies. Explaining scientific processes and how these will facilitate artistic interpretations is complex. The next section describes observations of research to date.

### Major Case Study 1: Experiencing internal structures using microscopy to create artwork based on different imaging technologies from primary source material and observations in the imaging laboratory.

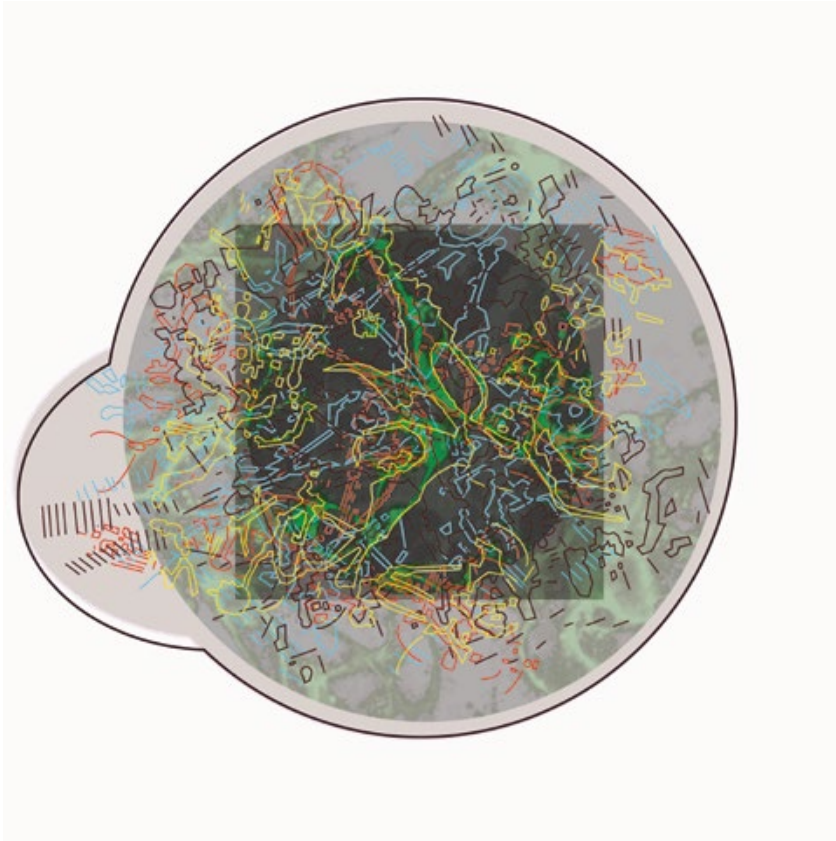
A collaboration with the University of Nottingham, School of Life Sciences and the Centre for Cellular Imaging at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden.

In 2012, I worked on a project called Hijacking Natural Systems funded by Arts Council England and the Wellcome Trust for an exhibition in Derby City at the Derby Royal NHS Trust and Derby Museum and Art Gallery. This work was then shown in numerous venues in the UK and at Zeiss Head-office in Munich, Germany. For this project I worked with the Cell Signalling Group at the University of Nottingham investigating the hunger hormone ghrelin. (ghrelin resides in our gut and sends signals to our brain to alert us of hunger).

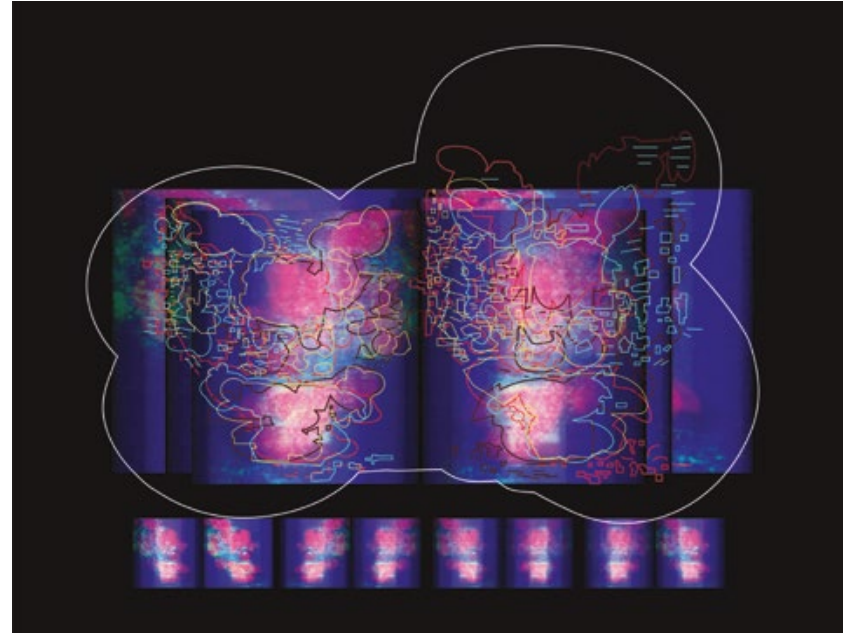
#### Accessed at:

[http://shura.shu.ac.uk/5218/Drawn in light: Jo Berry's 'Hijacking Natural Systems'](http://shura.shu.ac.uk/5218/Drawn_in_light:Jo_Berry's_'Hijacking_Natural_Systems')  
<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/life-sciences/news/archive/archive.aspx>  
<http://www.joberry.co.uk>

## 'The in-between'



**Figure 1:** HEK293ghrelin 100nM 15 min time series 5secs amalgamate.



**Figure 2:** Ghrelin+-tet+transferrin-20-minsartworkforprint2

(Fig 1) An example of a design drawing based on an imaging experiment devised by Dr. Nicholas Holliday. HEK293 is a cell line used in the assay (experiment). In this assay a 100 nanomolar (a scientific measurement of concentration) of the hunger hormone ghrelin was added to the live cells and imaged under the microscope to see the fluorescent receptors (SNAP labelling) removed from the cell membrane over a 15minute time-series.

(Fig 2) The image is based on an assay to test how successfully the fluorescent receptors (SNAP labelling) could be removed from the cell membrane over a 20minute time-series. The drawing is made from stills of a stereo-image movie made using Axio-Vision software. A four-layered design drawing was created and used as a template for the laser-cut image housed in a light-box and lit with LEDs.

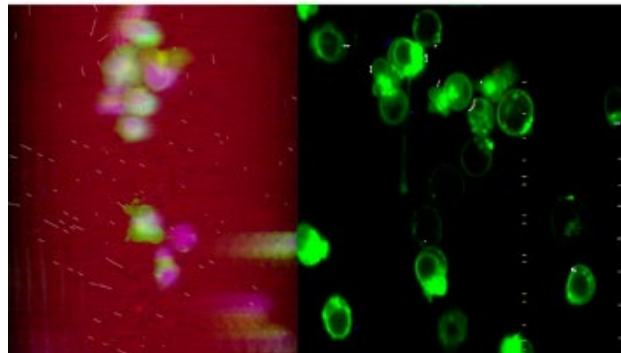
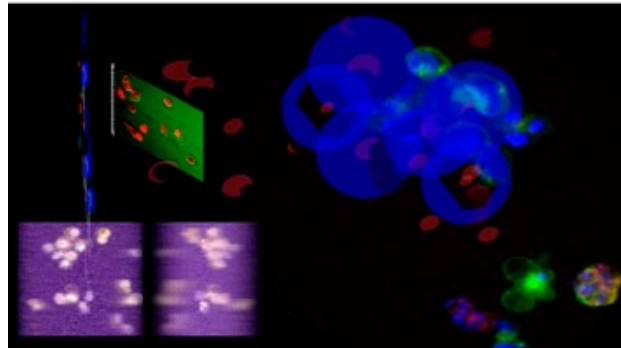
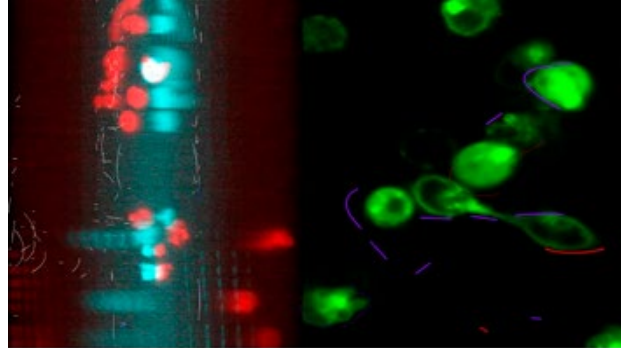
# 'The in-between'



Figure 3: (above) Working in the laboratory preparing cells to be imaged on the plate reader. Photography @Andrew Robinson

Figure 4: (right) Stills from animation test pieces

Figure 5: (far right) Light-boxes in the studio. Photography @Andrew Robinson





## 'The in-between'

This research laboratory is important because it is a teaching laboratory that gives scientists space, time and resources to gain knowledge without direct commercial pressure. It is a forward-thinking work environment where new technologies are embraced alongside scientific rigour.

These scientists are trying to understand how cell systems work right down to a molecular level and are now able to look at how individual molecules move and interact in an individual cell. A wide-range of microscopes are used to conduct these experiments and it is necessary for the scientists' to have a technical understanding of the different imaging machines capabilities.

The School of Life Sciences Imaging (SLIM) encompasses 3 units, all under one consistent structure; the Advanced Microscopy Unit (AMU), Cell Signalling Imaging (CSI) and Super Resolution Microscopy (SRM). This department houses some of the most sophisticated imaging technology available providing cutting-edge imaging facilities to researchers across the University and external collaborators.

The Cell Signalling research group are happy to facilitate this new collaboration. During the last three months I have been going into the

laboratories experiencing first-hand how these scientists operate, how they collaborate, how they come up with concepts and how they use this information to analyse their findings.

The scientists I am working with are eager to find new ways of creating a dialogue with different audiences. This collaboration aims to assist this process. The aim is to work with this research group over a prolonged period of time and use this information to create a visual and written dialogue about this experience.

This written and visual narrative will initially take the form of a blog and will include both mine and the participating scientists thoughts and experiences. It will be updated monthly.

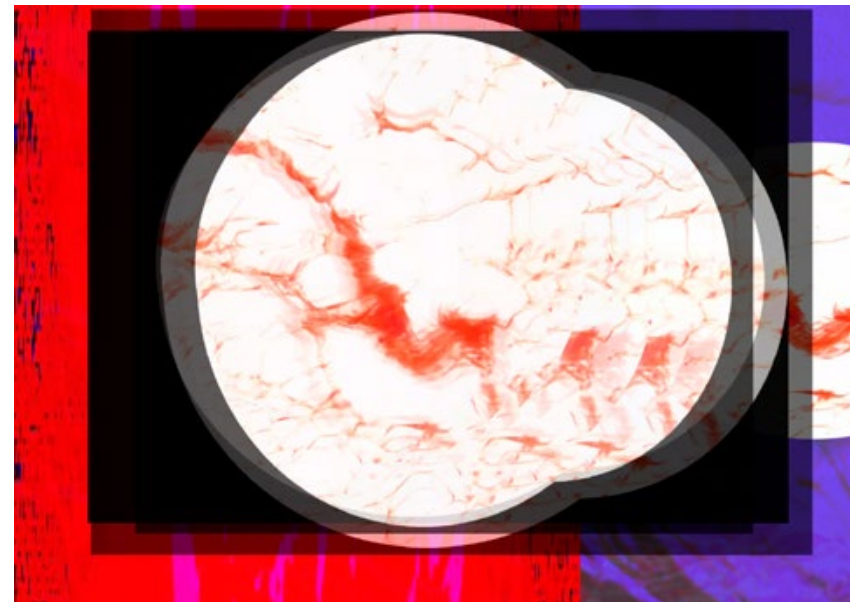
Accessed at:

<http://www.myjoanneberryartblog.tumblr.com/>  
Linked to <http://www.joberry.co.uk> and <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/life-sciences/news/>

Described below are some of the imaging techniques I have experienced during this initial research period. The scientists I have observed are looking at systems that relate to the heart, circulation and blood cells.

1. I first worked in the Histology Department looking at Static samples on a Leica DM 4000 B laboratory microscope using and ex-

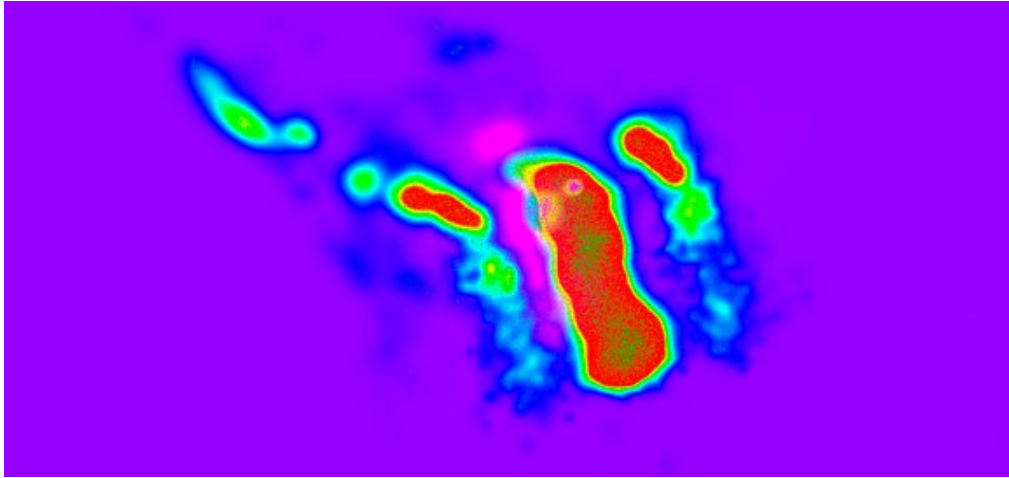
perimenting with Q-Capture Pro software. It was important to look at samples on a simple microscope system to learn to focus and find out how it worked.



**Figure 6:** Cardiac muscle

2. I then gained knowledge of the Super-resolution microscope, which has recently been set-up. Super-resolution microscopy is a form of light microscopy that captures images at a higher resolution than the diffraction limit of light. Super-resolution microscopy is an extremely interesting imaging process. One Super-resolution technique breaks the

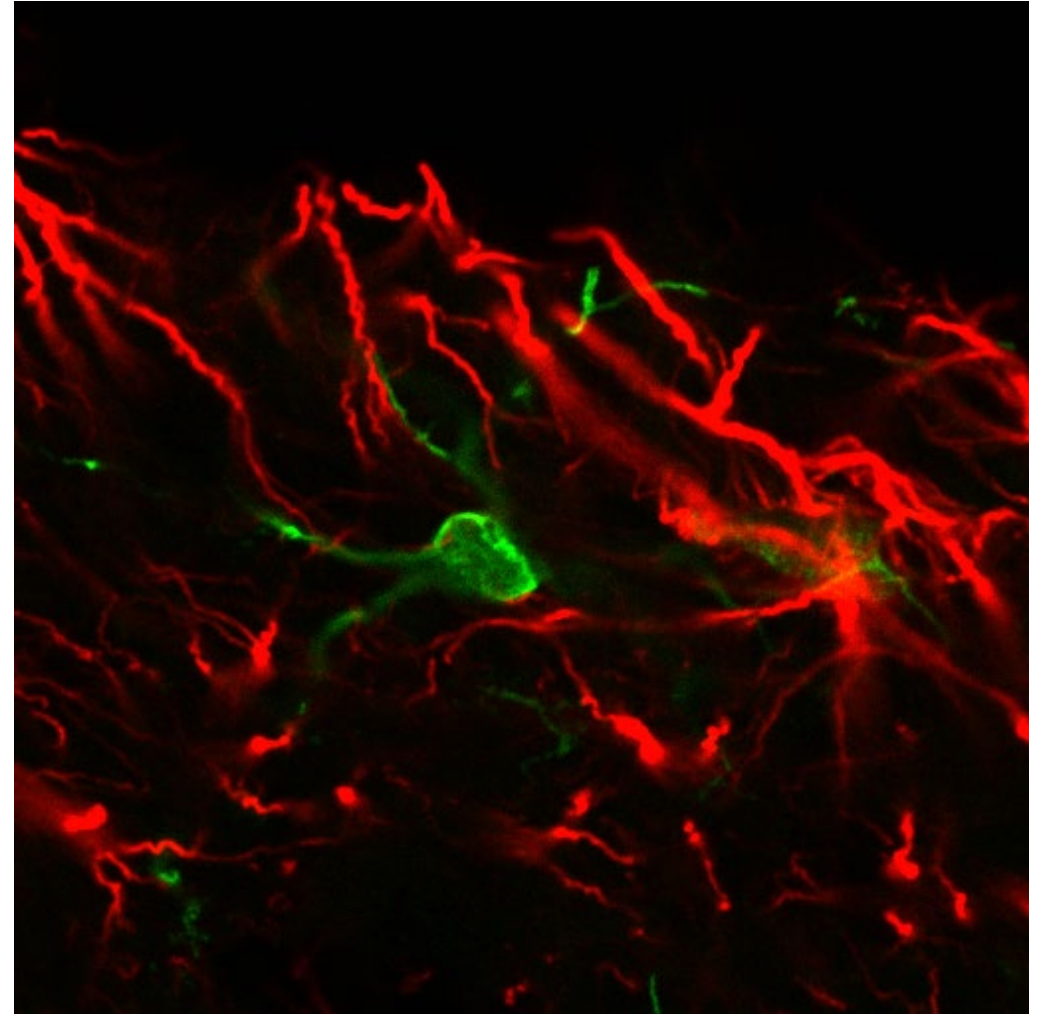
## 'The in-between'



**Figure 7:** SpinalChord63xW\_7 seq STORM\_PALM\_MaxZoom.  
Image courtesy of Dr Robert Markus

diffraction of light limit by using mathematics to calculate the distances between individually blinking dyes attached to proteins to increase the resolution. This process needs the computing to be strong and fast enough to image a single molecule flashing. The position of each flash of light is recorded as a pixel on a CCD camera (Accessed at [http://www.specinst.com/What\\_Is\\_A\\_CCD.html](http://www.specinst.com/What_Is_A_CCD.html)). A map is created of their locations from which an image is derived. For standard confocal microscopy, it is the intensity of the

light (i.e. number of photons) that is recorded as a pixel. For Super resolution microscopy, it is the number of individually located spots (blinks). These are translated into individual pixels with the high sensitivity to grey scale built into the file, it is captured as a grey-scale image. As part of this process everything is imaged, analysed and viewed via the computer screen. Looking at these beautiful coloured images it is difficult to comprehend that it is made from optical technology and mathematical strategies.



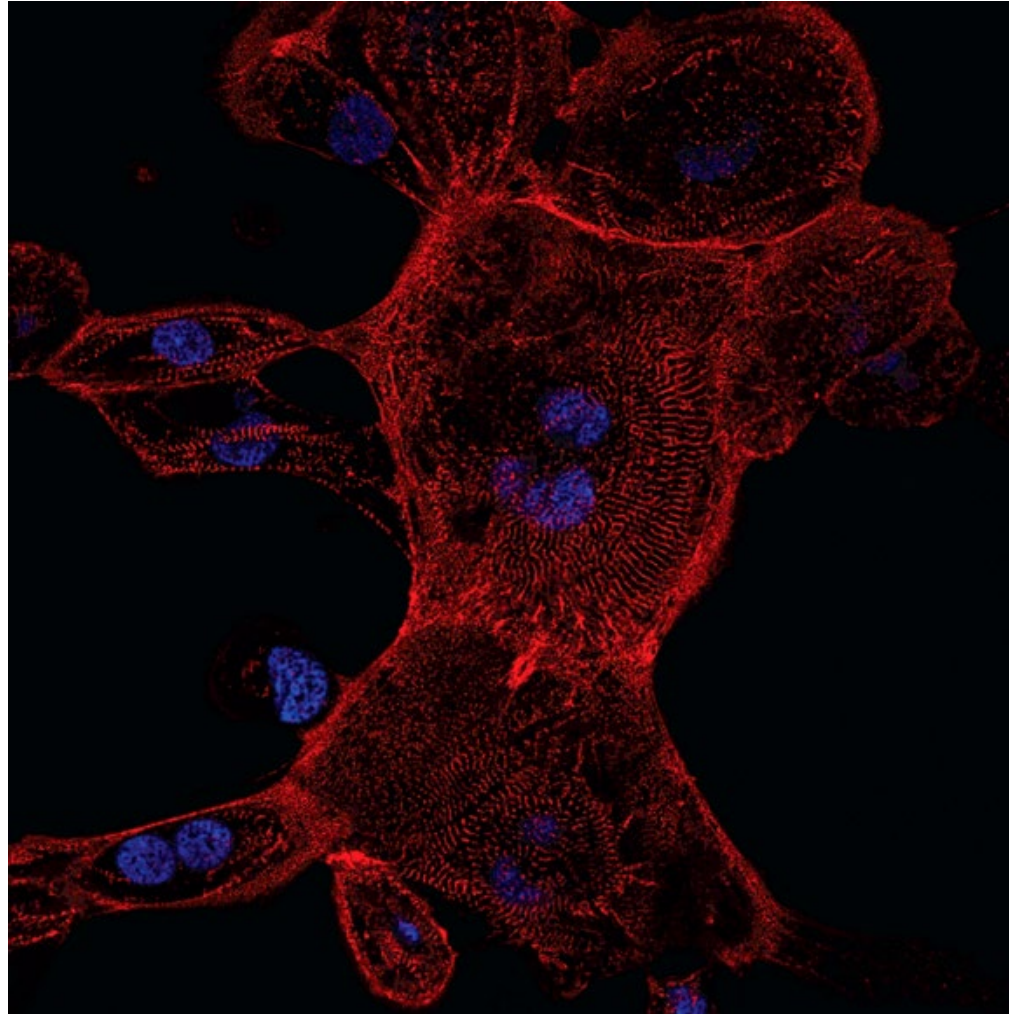
**Figure 8:** Confocal SpinalChord2ch SeqFrame mode\_z08.tif.  
Image courtesy of Dr Robert Markus

## 'The in-between'

3. I observed how a Post Doctoral Research Scientist conducted an imaging experiment on the Confocal Microscope using Fluorescence Microscopy as part of her research investigation. The scientist imaged cells on an 8 multiwell plate. The multiwell plate is manufactured of polystyrene, polypropylene, cyclo-olefin or a combination of plastic with a glass bottom to achieve excellent optical quality. The plate has multi depressions or 'wells' which are used as small test tubes. The raised well rims lower the risk of cross contamination. (Available at: <http://www.museion.ku.dk/2010/11/the-history-of-microplate-technology/>)

The scientist selects five healthy cells in each well and images them. The computer marks the position of each cell so that the scientist can accurately capture an image of the same cell, after the drug has been added to see if the membrane receptor which they are interested in has internalised and analyses the results.

**Figure 9:** Fixed human stem cell derived cardiomyocytes  
blue = nuclear stain  
red = alpha-actinin (antibody marker for cardiomyocytes)  
Images courtesy of Dr Joelle Golding



4. I observed a PhD student conduct an experiment using Fluorescence Correlation Spectroscopy (FCS) which uses a standard confocal microscope set-up, but in which the laser is not scanned across the sample, and in which a single photon counter is attached. The microscope light is focused in a very small area called a detection volume that is fixed in space. A fluorescent ligand is added to the well and the speed of diffusion of the fluorescent ligand is measured and analysed. Other experiments I observed in the laboratory are listed below:

- Bioluminescence Resonance Energy Transfer (BRET)
- BiFC which detects when proteins in cells dimerise
- Pressure myography
- Immunocytochemistry
- Ion Optix microscopy which is designed to study cardiomyocytes.

## 'The in-between'

### **Major Case Study 2: Experiencing internal structures from nature and creating images and analysis as a three-dimensional sketch. The drawings created will be used to inform the design and production of a series of drawings and three dimensional printed prototype models based on the visual theme of internal structure.**

A collaboration with Dr Alex Ball, Head of Imaging and Analysis, Natural History Museum (NHM), London.

In November 2015, I spent three days working at the Natural History Museums Core Research Laboratories Imaging and Analysis Centre. Dr Alex Ball assisted in selecting samples and showed me how to use the electron microscopes to acquire images. The specimens were chosen because they contain a lot of structural information and are highly detailed.

Unfortunately, most people don't experience the wealth and variety of specimens and technologies available at the Natural History Museum. This is an opportunity to create new interest and communicate this to new audiences through creating a dialogue about this collaboration and the representations being produced.

Two different electron microscopes were used, firstly the Zeiss Ultra Plus SEM and secondly, the LEO 1455 VP SEM.

SEM stands for scanning electron microscope. Electron microscopes use a beam of accelerated electrons to produce strikingly detailed images at up to a 100,000 times magnification of the sample. Electron microscopes are used to investigate the fine structure of biological and inorganic material rendering the invisible, visible. This makes SEM one of the most useful instruments in research today.

Below are short extracts from notes about technical details that I found interesting while being shown how the electron microscope worked and how the image is processed:

#### **1. How the specimens are prepared for imaging:**

- Samples undergo complex preparation to help them withstand the environment inside the microscope. The preparation process fixes (kills) the tissue and can also cause changes in the sample's appearance.
- Specimens are coated with a thin layer of metal (usually gold or gold-palladium). The metal coating makes samples electrically conductive. They are attached onto a small metal stub approximately the size of a two-pound coin.

- The specimens are fragile so tweezers are used to handle the stubs and gloves are used to handle microscope components, to prevent contamination.
- A stable sample is required to create a good image

#### **2. How the Electrons are captured in the Microscope:**

- An electron gun produces a beam of electrons inside the microscope. This is focussed into a very small spot and scanned over the sample.
- The electron beam interacts with the sample. Outer electrons get energized, some escape and the detector collects the electrons and displays the signal as a pixel on the display screen. (If the detector "sees" a lot of electrons the pixel displayed is bright, if few electrons are detected, then the pixel is dark.) As a result, the image is built up, pixel by pixel, line by line.

#### **3. What happens to Specimens inside the Microscope:**

- Forceps are used to load the samples onto a metal plate which is placed into an air-locked chamber.
- Inside the chamber specimens are moved, rotated and tilted by the stage mechanism.
- An air suspension system is used to isolate the microscope from vibration.

#### **4. Imaging:**

- The image is focused using a large keyboard with dials and a joy-stick.
- Best practice when focusing is to move from focus, to out of focus and back into focus and work at a slow scan rate using slow adjustments.
- Maximum resolution is required to acquire the best possible image.
- Contrast is regulated by each pixel and its grey-scale value.

New imaging and processing techniques are being used and developed by the NHM researchers. One of these processes is called Photogrammetry. It involves creating a large series of images of a specimen. Images are taken from the side, top and bottom over a 360 degree rotation to build-up a wealth of visual information to create a three-dimensional digital representation, which can then be outputted as a three dimensional print.

# 'The in-betweener'

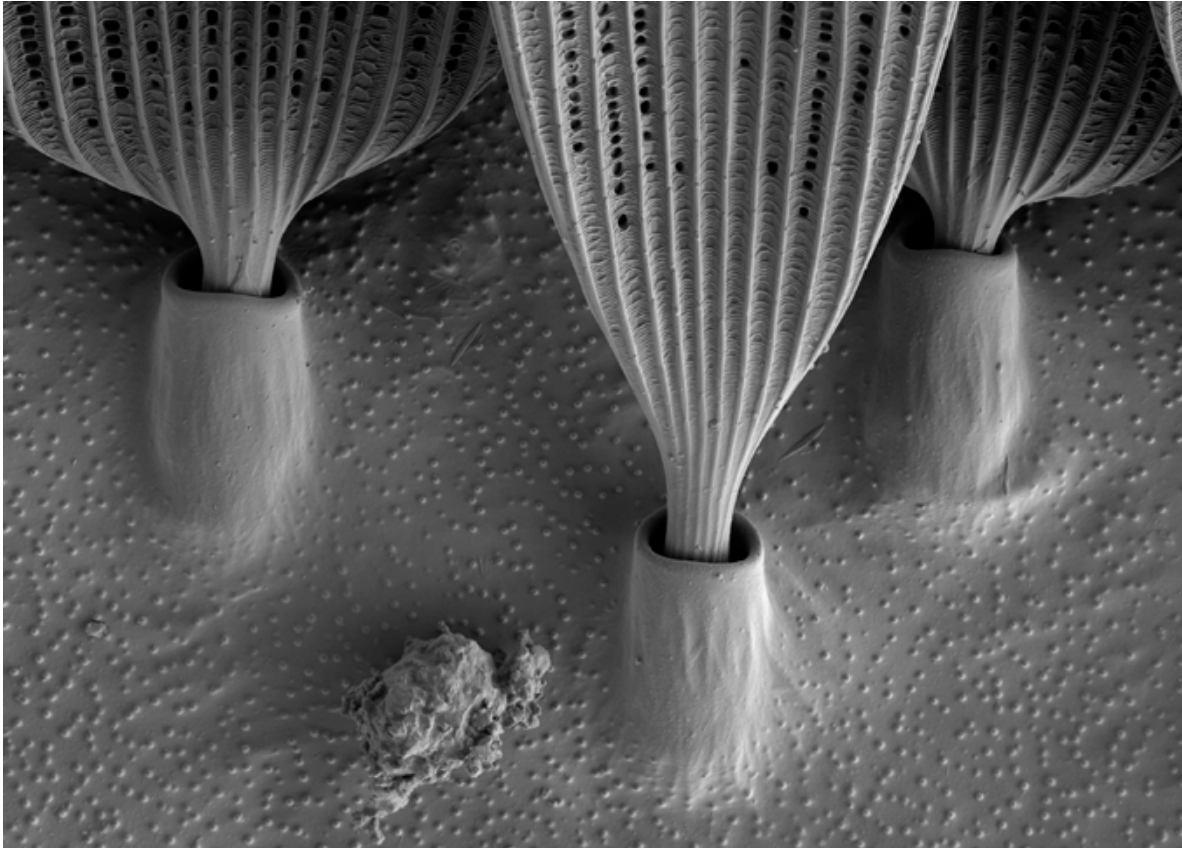
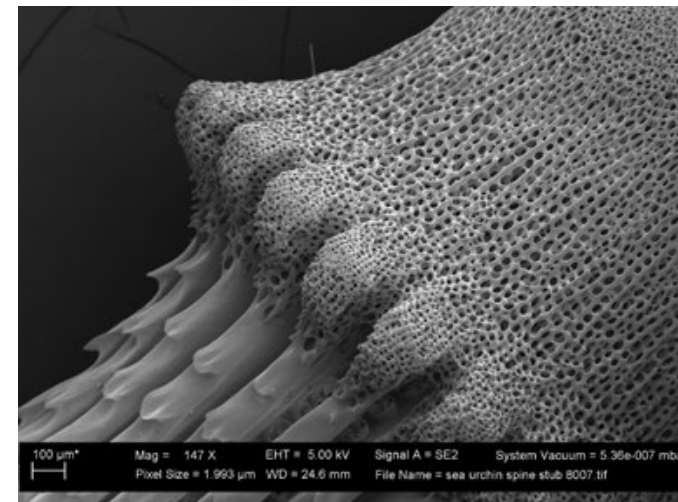
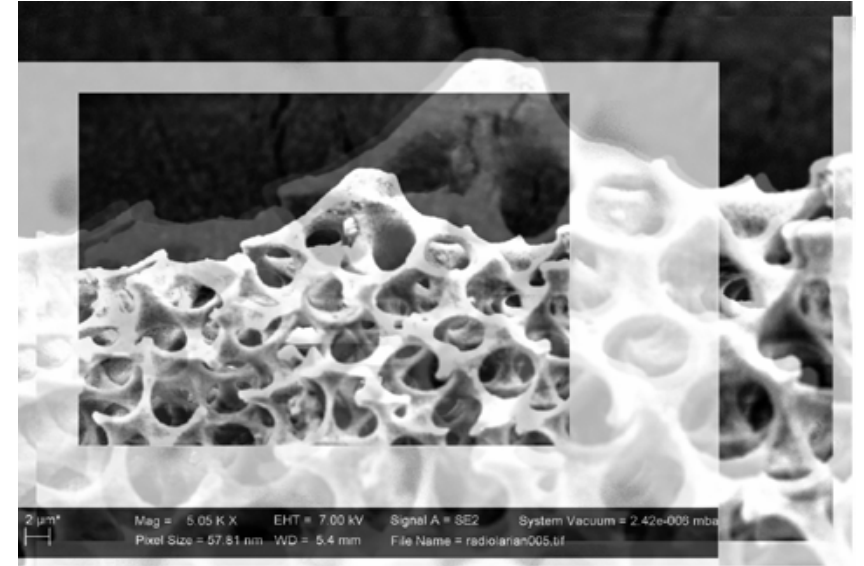


Figure 10: (above) Heliconius doris002 (butterfly wing)

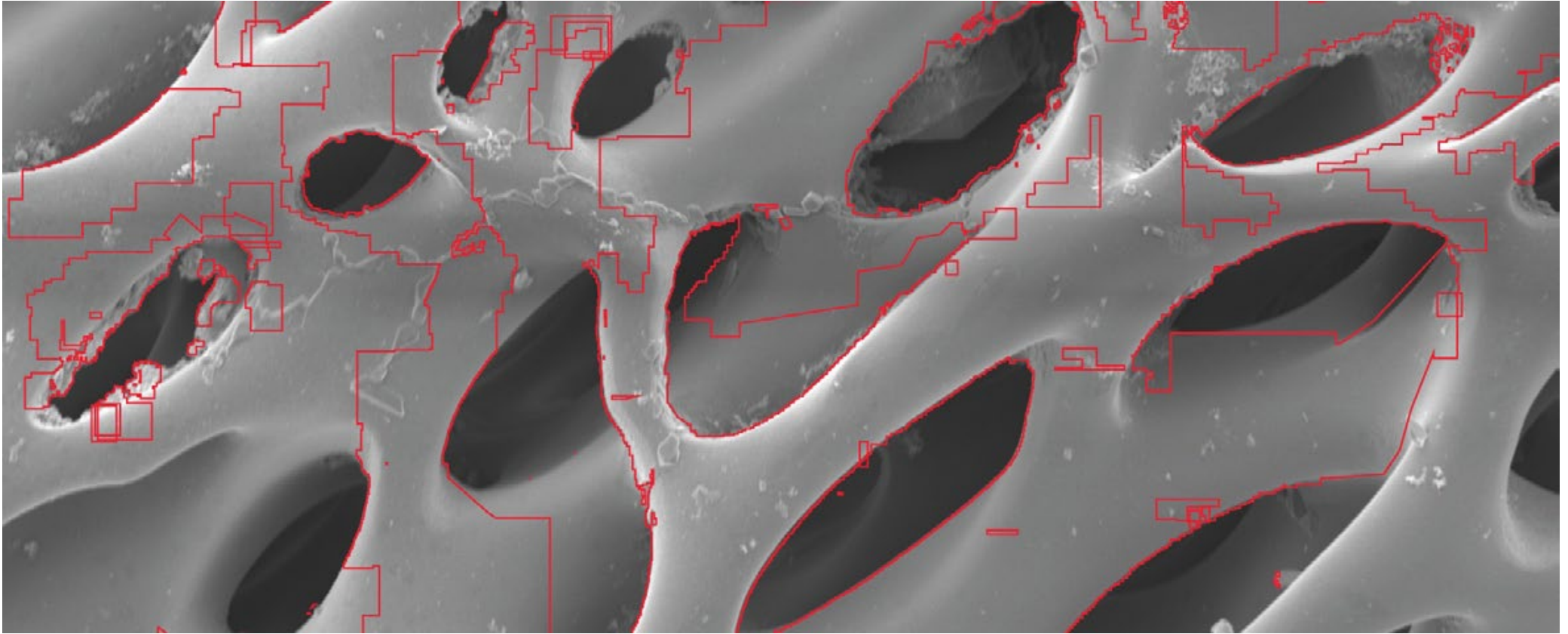
Figure 11: (top left) Radiolarian 005crop (The Radiolaria produce intricate mineral skeletons, typically with a central capsule dividing the cell into the inner and outer portions of endoplasm and ectoplasm.)

Figure 12: (bottom left) Sea urchin spine stub 8007



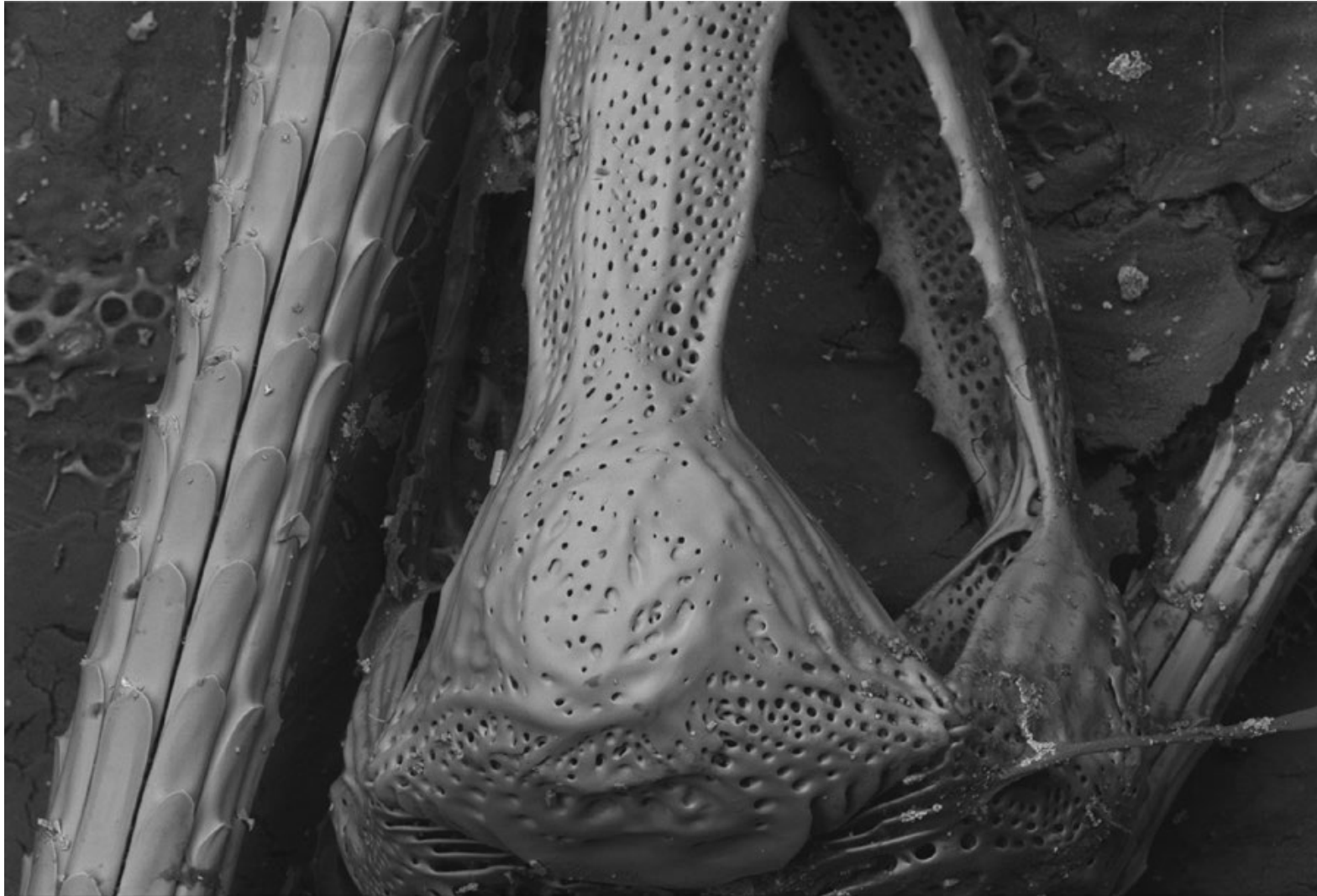
Images taken on the Zeiss Ultra Plus SEM

## 'The in-betweener'



**Figure 13:** Sea urchin close-up 11thnov2015v2 a design drawing (in production)  
Image taken on the Zeiss Ultra Plus SEM

# 'The in-betweener'



**Figure 14:** Maim-section-008  
Image taken using the Zeiss LEO 1455 VP  
SEM Microscope

100 $\mu$ m	Mag = 232 X	EHT = 20.00 kV	Signal A = BSD	Chamber = 20 Pa
	WD = 19 mm	Spot Size = 550	File Name = maim section008.tif	

## 'The in-between'

**The three supplementary case studies are detailed below:**

**Flower Bed to Bedside to Drug Discovery by experiencing internal structures from our body and from nature. The visual theme for this project will be transformation.**

A Collaboration with the School of Chemistry, University of Birmingham, Botanists at Winterbourne Botanic Gardens and Cancer Sciences, Birmingham Medical School. Coordinator: Dr. John S. Fossey, Royal Society Industry Fellow, Senior Lecturer in Synthetic Chemistry, International representative for Chemistry.

This project offers new insight into how scientific disciplines can jointly investigate a compound found in the plant Feverfew that is effective against Chronic Lymphatic Leukaemia (CCL). The outcome is expected to be a library of compounds with their different chemical properties determined to aid cancer research scientists. The research is important because it is a project which will visually track and investigate the medical process of transformation from a natural product to a more effective compound to treat CCL.

**A DNA Mapping Project by experiencing internal structures from our body. The visual theme will be mapping.**

A collaboration with Dr. Robert Neely, School of Chemistry, University of Birmingham. A project which will develop new ways to image single DNA molecules and the information that they encode.

This project will use a range of image technologies including:

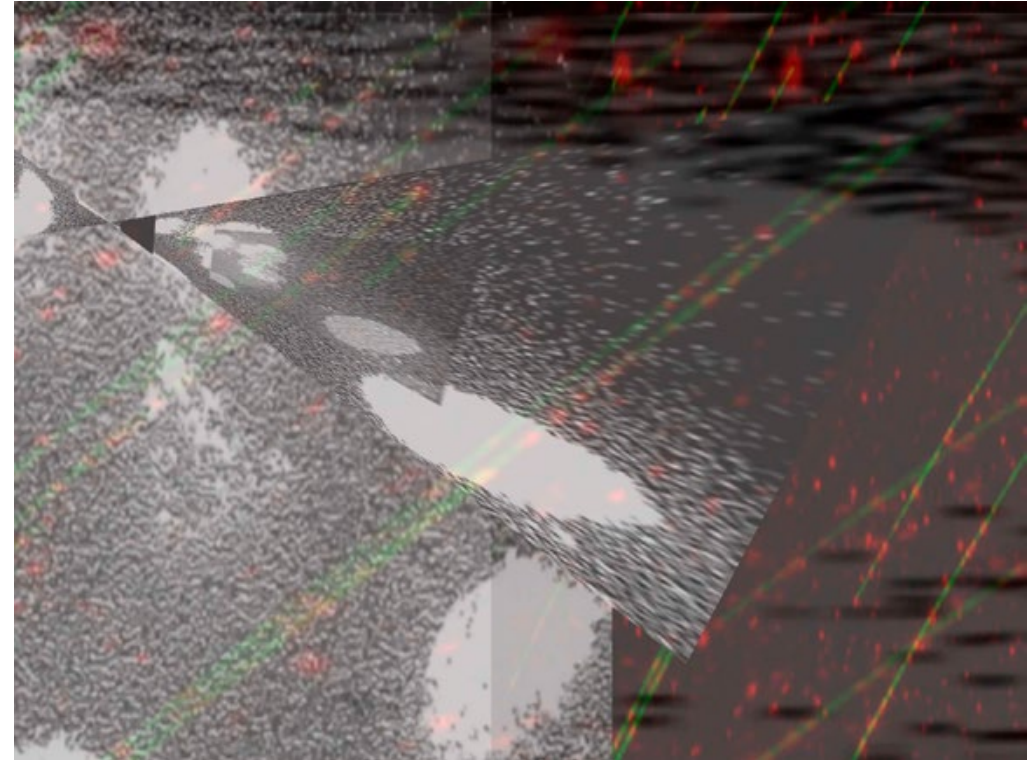
A: optical detection of DNA in nanochannels or nanopores

B: single-molecule detection

C: super-resolution microscopy

D: DNA barcoding  
With newly developed tools

E: microfluidic devices for cell sorting and automated DNA extraction.



**Figure 15: DNA2.**



## 'The in-between'

**Tools for psychoses by experiencing internal structures from our body using medical imaging. The visual theme is Pixilation.**

A collaboration with Dr Sarina Iwabuchi, Department of Translational Neuroimaging for Mental Health, the Institute of Mental Health, Nottingham University

In 2014, I produced *Brain container* a project funded by Arts Council England, Arts for Health and Blackpool Arts Service where I worked with the Department of Translational Neuroimaging Department.

This project will offer new insight into the use of machine learning methods on neuroimaging results, exploring how researchers can discriminate psychosis patients from healthy controls, based on anatomical and functional neural patterns. Medical imaging is an essential tool used in this specialism to view and analyse results. Through this opportunity new imaging technologies and software will be investigated.

*Brain Container* shown in 2014, 2015 includes sound, rotation and light. PhD composition student, Angela Slater, from Nottingham University, produced the sound and it was lit and rotated by Lightworks' Blackpool Illumina-

tions. An interpretation panel and an illustrated poem explained the research underpinning the piece.

### Accessed at:

<http://www.joberry.co.uk/index.php/news/>

[http://www.joberry.co.uk/index.php/current/project/brain\\_illumination\\_workshops\\_in\\_nottingham\\_at\\_the\\_lakeside\\_art\\_centre\\_unive/](http://www.joberry.co.uk/index.php/current/project/brain_illumination_workshops_in_nottingham_at_the_lakeside_art_centre_unive/)  
[http://www.joberry.co.uk/index.php/current/project/Art\\_Brain\\_Mapping\\_Workshop\\_held\\_at\\_Blackpool\\_Central\\_Library/](http://www.joberry.co.uk/index.php/current/project/Art_Brain_Mapping_Workshop_held_at_Blackpool_Central_Library/)

[http://www.joberry.co.uk/index.php/current/project/interpretation\\_material\\_and\\_digital\\_drawings\\_for\\_brain\\_container/](http://www.joberry.co.uk/index.php/current/project/interpretation_material_and_digital_drawings_for_brain_container/)

[http://www.joberry.co.uk/index.php/moving\\_image/mediaplayer/jo\\_berrys\\_brain\\_container\\_vignette\\_3/](http://www.joberry.co.uk/index.php/moving_image/mediaplayer/jo_berrys_brain_container_vignette_3/)

This research project is situated within contemporary art and visual communication drawn upon by knowledge of the discipline as a practitioner, participant, audience member, educator and academic informed by historical and contemporary visual art centred around science, new technology, digital drawing applications and design.

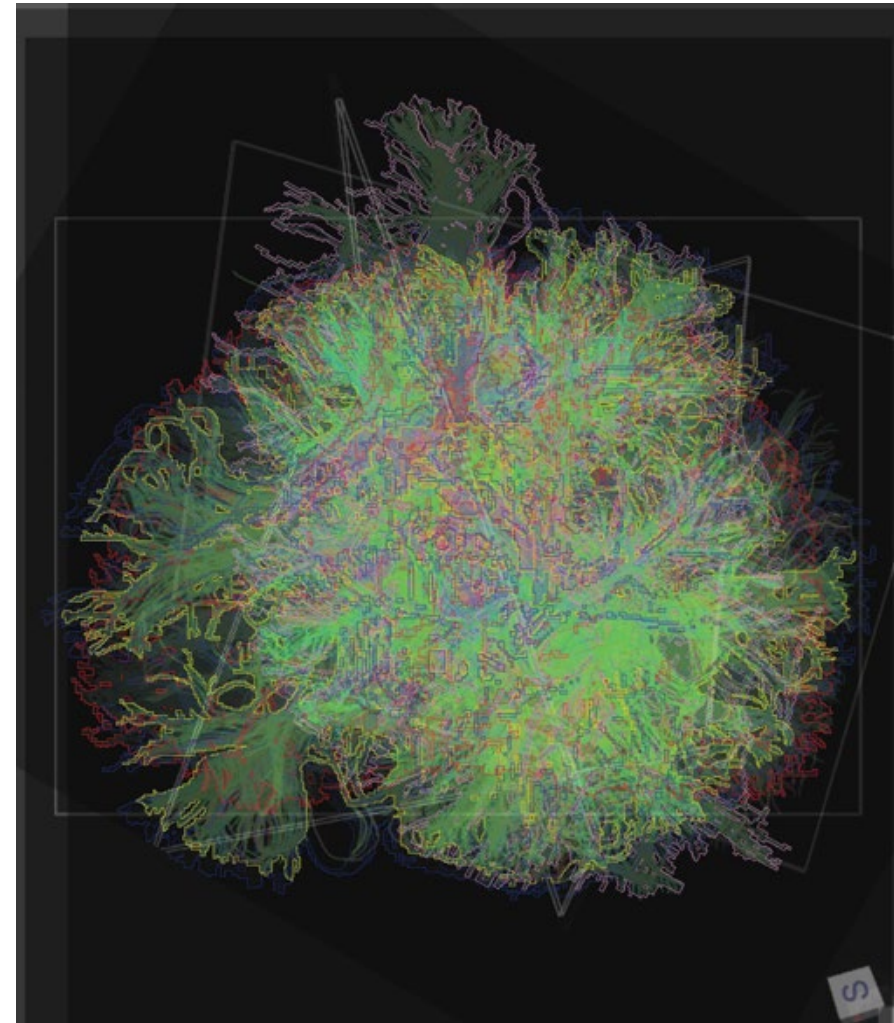
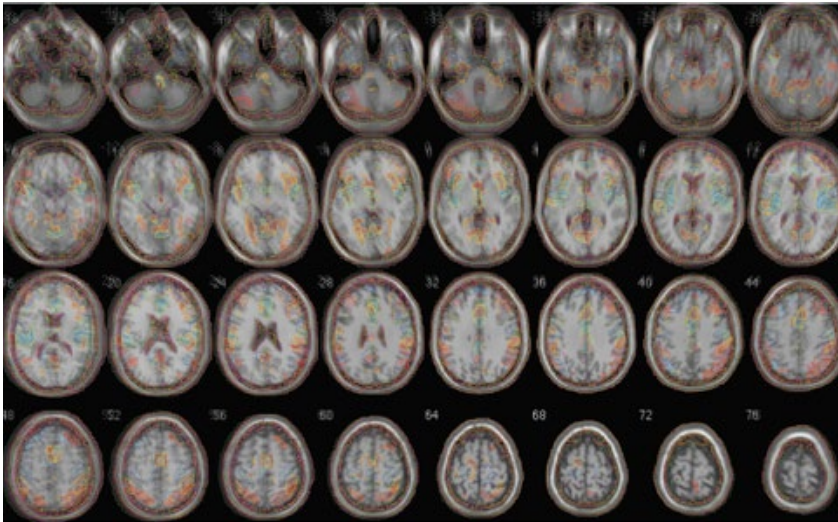
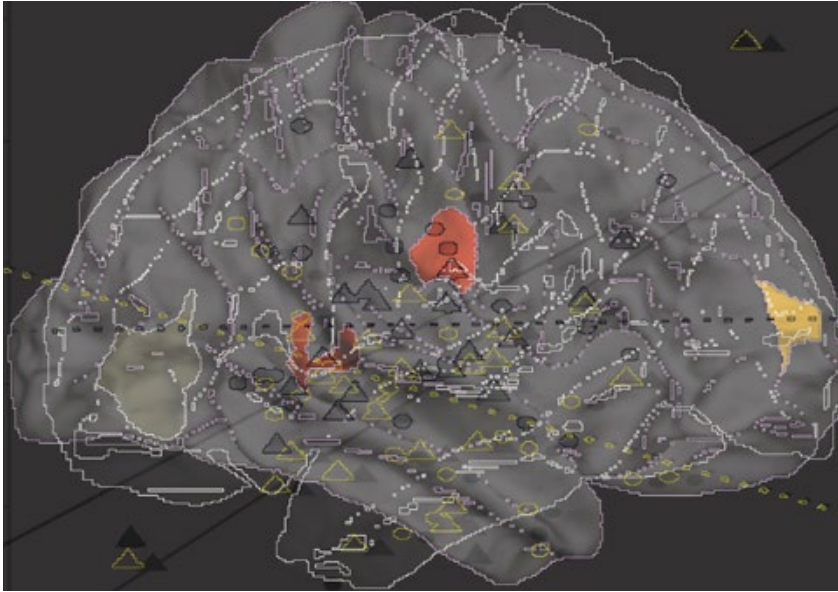


Figure 16: brain-scans-from-lena-29thv2altered5thjuly-013

# 'The in-between'



**Figure 17: (top left)** adhd--frontothalamic-figures-2print

**Figure 18: (bottom left)** letspixelateFigures1and3viwith-more-layersprint copy

**Figure 19, 20: (top & botom right)** Brain Container (details), Blackpool Illuminations, 2014. Photography @ Alan Fletcher a shot in the dark

## 'The in-betweener'



Figure 21, 22: Brain Container, Blackpool Illuminations, 2014. Photography @ Alan Fletcher a shot in the dark

As Priya Shetty (2004) states: "art and science seek to explain the world in different ways, tension when they interact causes creative energy to flow" leading to significant developments.

I trained as an illustrator and I have always been interested in observing, collecting and reporting on what I see. This research project is in its early stages, yet it has already generated imaginative discussions and lots of material through the exploration of internal structures from inside our bodies and from nature. The material I have gathered includes:

1. Film footage taken on a small hand held camera.
2. A collection of digital images and data from working directly with scientists on a range of microscopes. For example, from working at the Natural History Museum I have taken a section from the *Sea urchin spine* and am working laboriously and carefully on top of the image to trace by hand each detail. I will use this as a starting point for a series of complex multi layered digital design drawings.
3. Digital test outputs (moving and static) from using different microscopic software, which includes: Zen Blue, Zen Lite, Q-Capture Pro, Image J. In the cell signalling com-

puter laboratory I am exploring the imaging data software to create still and moving image work.

4. Descriptive notes and details of observed experiments in the laboratory and on the microscope.

The visual themes and elements to be explored will include sequential pattern, colour, movement, mapping, structure and pixilation. The visual models undertaken will be speculative, suggestive and responsive to test out these ideas. This project offers a credible way of visually representing science in an original manner.

The research process is not only helping me to gain a better understanding of what research scientists do it is facilitating collaboration. These collaborations are important as they generate a collective thinking approach which makes it easier to apply co-creation design thinking strategies in the formation of new digital artwork which critically engages audiences with science.

Opportunities for the exchange of information will be showcased and critically explored in the production of pilot-studies and a large-scale exhibition. A dialogue with different audiences will be facilitated through exhibition, social

## 'The in-between'

media and the web. The written text will provide a narrative, which documents this collaborative process in action.

Links will be established nationally and internationally with a network of art and science organisations, funders, practitioners, academics and the media.

Contextualising the key areas of knowledge, foundational theories and critically reviewing the discourse for national and international networks can be accessed at:

- <http://www.BCU.ac.uk/> Art and Design
- [http://www.University of Nottingham Life Sciences/](http://www.UniversityofNottinghamLifeSciences.com/) Research Cell & Developmental Biology
- <http://www.joberry.co.uk>

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# Performing in a do-it-yourself nudie suit

## Christian Lloyd



Christian Lloyd is programme leader for BA (Hons) Illustration at The Open College of the Arts. He maintains a diverse art and design practice that includes a collaborative arts project called Bristow & Lloyd that explores how we socially construct our everyday world, and a solo variety act that explores improvised craft skills and escapology. Common across his visual and live art practices is an interest in creating playful and provocative situations that invite participation and prompt conversations.

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Portrait (above) by Glyn Wade

## Performing in a do-it-yourself nudie suit

My Pecha Kucha presentation at the Visionaries symposium charted the re-interpretation of the rhinestone cowboy suit by the performance group The Bongoleeros. It aimed to connect the visual culture of hand-decorated jackets from cowboys, bikers to punks and to explore the crossovers between illustration music, and performance.

Rex Allen along with fellow singing cowboys Gene Autry and Roy Rogers presented a clean cut vision of American history through 1950's popular culture. Featuring in numerous Hollywood western films and television series they portrayed gun-slinging heroes saving their frontier communities from the bad guys, in the form of Native Americans, Mexicans or occasionally phantom stallions. Their costumes, along with the historical accuracy of these films, were exaggerated to the point of caricature. Spin-off comic books, film posters, and record covers saw them sporting decorative shirts, jackets and trousers along with their obligatory cowboy hats. Established as the rhinestone cowboy look, this became the default country and western attire. These outfits were embroidered, tasselled and brightly coloured and featured: floral designs, such as desert cacti, flowers and pine forests, cowboy motifs including boots, horses, rodeos, horse shoes, cattle, bull horns, branding marks, wagons, faithful dogs and guns, or portrayals

of Native American people and visual symbols. Initially created by the artists themselves, these flamboyant outfits were developed by American tailors in the late 1940s, such as Nathan Turk, Ukrainian born Nudie and Bobbie Cohn who created bespoke 'Nudie' suits for Elvis Presley, Roy Rogers, Gene Autry and later Elton John, or the Polish tailor Rodeo Ben. The lineage of some of these tailors might suggest a visual connection to the folk and textile cultures of Eastern Europe. Equally, the history of the cowboy draws on Spanish, Mexican and Hawaiian cultures before it was absorbed by North America.



**Figure 1:** (left) [Image, CC2.0 licence] caption: Nudie Suit. Photo by Romana Klee

**Figure 2:** (bottom left) [Image, CC2.0 licence] caption: Roy Rogers and Dale Evans at the 61st Academy Awards, 1989. Photo by Alan Light.

**Figure 3:** (bottom right) [Image, CC2.0 licence] caption: Punk leather jackets, Worn to be Wild exhibition at EMP Museum, 2013. Photo by Lisa Jeans



## Performing in a do-it-yourself nudie suit



**Figure 4:** [Image] caption: The Bongoleeros Les Urbaines Festival, Lausanne, Switzerland, 2014. Photo by Greg Clement

The punk leather jacket, decorated with studs and featuring a range of band names, often hand rendered in black and white, can trace many visual qualities to biker leather jackets from the late 1940s onwards. These in turn can be traced to American WWII pilots who hand decorated their bomber jackets. After the war, some of these pilots formed their own groups

orientated around motor bikes rather than planes. All these jackets share a sense of both personal and collective identity – of belonging to a clan and expressing your identity within that group through your choice of motifs and decoration. Skulls feature heavily across bomber, biker and punk jackets and chime with the sense of threat outwardly being projected

by these groups. The marginal identities of these groups have parallels with the narrative of the cowboy as maverick outsider. However, the reality of the cowboy as poor, and more likely African-American or Hispanic than white, was largely glossed over. The motifs of the Rhinestone cowboy are generally less outlaw and more Oklahoma, but wearing a hand decorated suit still retained some power to transgress the norm, through clan belonging or simply by showing off.

The Bongoleeros were formed in Leeds in 1999 and have played across the UK and Europe. Cited as a 'Dadaist Rockabilly band', their 'less avant-garde, more 'ava go' approach to performances plays with frictions between comedy and physical threat, excitement and risk, and aims to uplift through forms of transgression. The band have developed a series of costumed personas and constructed narratives, often based around the fictional market town of Pitchley, West Yorkshire. They reduce the essential musical elements and gestures of rock and roll to their most basic elements, which are performed energetically using primitive and often inappropriate equipment. The performance of glam rock star Alvin Stardust's *My Coo Ca Choo* explored the relationship between séance, ritual and the notion of cover versions by attempting to summon Alvin from the spirit world with a black magic glove to

perform the song. Working in and around small venues and festivals, they involve the audience whether they like it or not, and often shift the action onto the street, as in their recent marching band processions in Leeds, Bradford and Lausanne.



**Figure 5:** [Image] caption: Bongoleeros jacket, 2015.

## Performing in a do-it-yourself nudie suit

Initially in response to a Hank Williams themed performance called *Tonkin Honkin Hank*, The Bongoleeros developed a number of hand-painted suits. These differed from the classic Rhinestone cowboy suits in that they were charity shop purchases, painted in household paints and crudely rendered. However, they did make reference through their interpretation of cacti, guitars and the spectral figure of Hank Williams, whose presence the performance was aiming to conjure. A recurring bucket motif made reference to his lament 'my bucket's got a hole in it, I can't buy no beer'.

Since then, the suits have gone through a series of re-paintings with other items purchased and decorated. These continue to reflect a do-it-yourself aesthetic, referencing punk and rockabilly forms of decoration and illustration through the use of studs and chains, typography and illustration. Following the tradition of using a leather jacket as a collection of band names, a recent suit depicts musical and film portraits of Wanda Jackson, Tura Satana, Ray Pollard, Dock Boggs, Hasil Adkins, Johnny Kidd, Leadbelly and Poison Ivy, as Bongoleero influences. Skull motifs continue to be used as an overt reference to bomber, biker and punk jackets and as a semiotic way to create friction between the potency of the symbol and the ludicrousness of the materials.



Figure 6: [Image] caption: The Bongoleeros, 2014. Photo by Claire Wade



## Performing in a do-it-yourself nudie suit

Connecting to the visual culture of biker jackets, the suits make reference to a sense of belonging, in this case with the fictional Pitchley Town. Recurring performances play with the malevolent presence of the mythical Pitchley Beast, which stands as a totem for dangerous and unknown forces. This myth has been illustrated on several suits, most recently depicting the intervention of Jerry Lee Lewis, Little Richard and their magic blue suede shoes to fight off the beast. While the inclusion of horse brasses on both suits and instruments act as signifiers of the Merry Olde England aesthetics of 1970's country pubs, suggesting a completely different kind of country music.

As a teenager, my first illustration commissions were painting band names and record covers on punk leather jackets. Working on The Bongoleeros' costumes has taken me full circle, and in the process of exploring the relationship between hand decorated suits and music, has revealed a much richer tradition.

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# Off her hostess-trolley: Telling it a different way

Jo Hassall



Jo Hassall teaches Graphic Arts and Design at Leeds Beckett University where she is a research student and co-founder of F= [fequals.co.uk](http://fequals.co.uk), an interdisciplinary research group examining the significance of feminism in creative practices, using spectacle as an invitation for collective action, as a provocative space for transformation across generations and histories.

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## Off her hostess-trolley: Telling it a different way

The following images and text were presented for *Off Her Hostess Trolley: Telling it a Different Way*; a Pecha Kucha presentation at the *Va-roomlab Visionaries* Symposium in November 2015.

### 1 - Hostess narrator and trolley prop

*I am your hostess. This is my picture prop, the hostess-trolley. Already loaded with meaning; respectability, aspiration, domestic comedy all belong here. I can move, it has wheels. I am a mobile narrator of stories. Actor without the acting.*

### 2 - Undercover

*In pictures and words I expose a record of a rummage or critical excavation. My method is visible - confession and speculation at once. I make sense from doing - visualizing, embodying. I have a lot invested in the still image.*



Figure 1: Hostess narrator and trolley prop



Figure 2: Undercover

## Off her hostess-trolley: Telling it a different way



### 3 - Abstraction

*I'm an illustrator of uncertainty; I have made myself that way. Obscured illumination is my thing. I removed myself from illustrating in a more certain public way to give myself permission to revel in uncertainty. An uncommissioned play-out.*



### 4 - Drawing over print

*Working it out, learning on the hoof. You may have gathered that I go right 'round the houses in the telling of this tale. Taking stock and reflecting on the significant moments in your own making-history is always useful. Identifying the strands that matter can never be overlooked.*

Figure 3: (left) Abstraction  
Figure 4: (right) Drawing over print

## Off her hostess-trolley: Telling it a different way

### 5 - Bits and bobs

*I return to women in fragments. There are lots of them about. It's the collage that is my mainstay, my approach in layers. It enables me to unstick, to flex and change. Change can be a challenge I think. Décollage means unsticking - which is handy.*

### 6 - Trolleys for sale

*Some things demand to be dusted down and re-told a different way. Meanings can become too fixed and brittle. Stereotypes and visual cliché is friend and foe of the picture maker. Liza Goddard was married to Alvin Stardust. She had a well-stocked trolley and was the perfect hostess back then. She isn't any more.*



Figure 5: Bits and bobs



Figure 6: Trolleys for sale

## Off her hostess-trolley: Telling it a different way

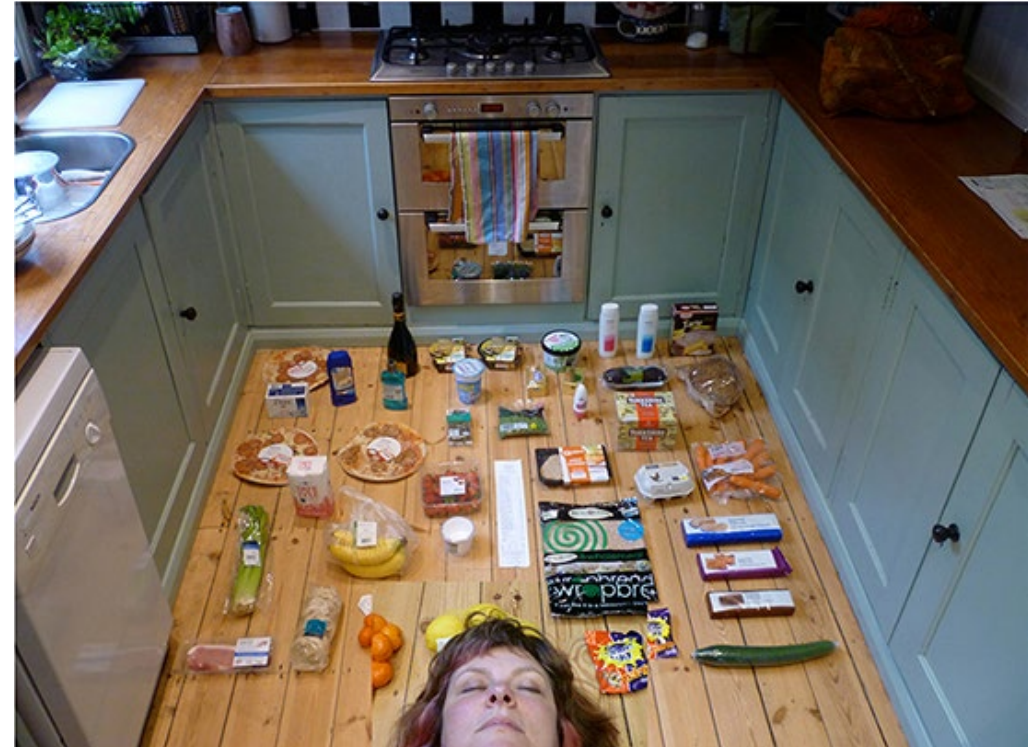


Figure 7: (left) Beverley and Mrs. Overall. Figure 8: (right) Self portrait in the kitchen

### 7 - Beverley and Mrs. Overall

*Images fix behaviours too; perpetual clichés that attach themselves to the actors and props. The absurdist tinkers with this well-trodden meaning - upends, subverts and punctures hierarchies. Mrs. Overall becomes a kind of subversive caricature of a caricature.*

### 8 - Self portrait in the kitchen

*When I became a mother my creative development became suspended, probably for ten years. One day I realised that the ideal space for unfettered creativity wasn't going to appear. I lay down on my kitchen floor and recognised that this could be it. Already I am enlarged, see how big my head is?*

## Off her hostess-trolley: Telling it a different way



Figure 9: Kitchen sinks

### 9 - Kitchen sinks

*My kitchen sink became a thing of beauty instead of drudgery a place for high drama. My kitchen cupboards - stuffed full of potential. The everyday elevated. New possibility was revealed. (Da da da - the hands that do dishes can be soft as your skin, with mild green fairy liquid). Sing this bit.*

### 10 - Boden catalogue

*The Boden clothes catalogue that drops though my door offers up another construct of how to be. I take a brush to this, blot out the bits I don't want, dismantle and disrupt the easy flow of this material so that new stories might unfold. A kind of scab-picking exercise.*



Figure 10: Boden catalogue

## Off her hostess-trolley: Telling it a different way



**Figure 11:** (above) Trolley with the dolls house furniture

**Figure 12:** (right) Trolley up the hill with Ingrid

### 11 - Trolley with the dolls house furniture

*I'm back to the trolley - I was off it for a while. It's a risky thing to turn your back on an audience, to overlook what's on your trolley, to forget what they might want to consume. At the same time, being too aware of your audience can be crippling. The trolley helps to re-frame.*

### 12 - Trolley up the hill with Ingrid

*I push the trolley up a big hill and liberate it from its familiar context. My daughter helps me here, the trolley becomes a learning prop, enables a different exchange to take place between Mother and teenage daughter. She brings a toy dustpan and brush to sweep the rocks whilst we're there.*





## Off her hostess-trolley: Telling it a different way

### 13 - Marcel Breuer's chuff twists

Marcel Breuer designed this tasteful tea trolley in 1928. He believed in function and beautiful form. Once a week his housemaid would collect chuff twists off his bathroom floor - small twists of stained toilet paper created by vigorous arse wiping.

I've arranged some on Marcel's trolley (this is not to scale).

### 14 - Trolley, student and me

*A student helps me with my photo shoot. She has quite nice blue nails. We talk about her work as she assists me. The trolley prop forms a bridge from her world to mine. Hierarchy is removed, Discussion feels more authentic here.*

*We talk about Meret Oppenheim's furry cup.*



Figure 13: Marcel Breuer's chuff twists



Figure 14: Trolley, student and me

## Off her hostess-trolley: Telling it a different way

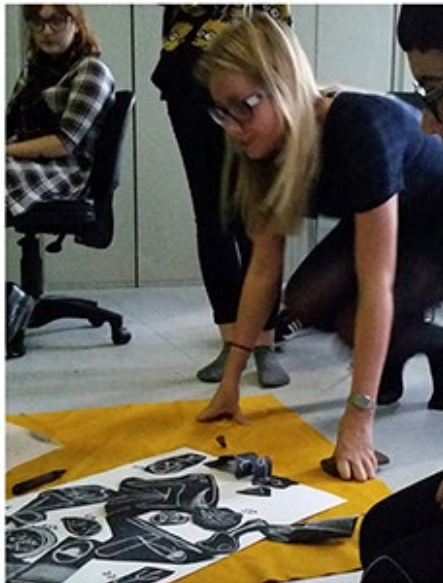
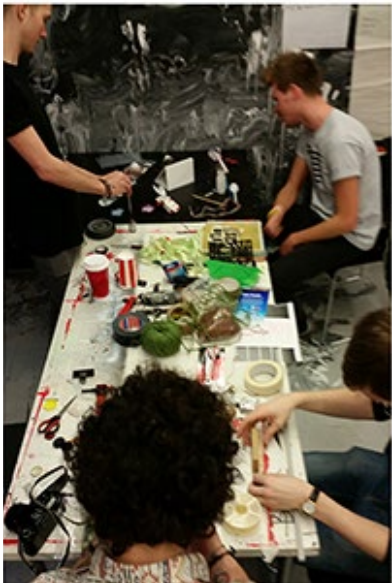


Figure 15: (left) Student assemblage  
Figure 16: (right) International Women's day

### 15 - Student assemblage

*Assemblage and collage offers up a chance for loose parts learning, a place to share, rearrange, re-imagine without fear. It's non-precious material. The students reconfigure my material too. New things are revealed to me through this process. I am learner too.*

### 16 - International Women's Day

*In annual celebration of International Women's Day, we take to the streets of Leeds with students and the wider public. We become visible beyond the comfort and structures of the institution. We take the module out to test our means of communication, to engage, to learn in another way.*

## Off her hostess-trolley: Telling it a different way



Figure 17: (left) Spectacle: returning to meaning. Figure 18: (above) Laughing activism



### 17 - Spectacle: returning to meaning

*Scaled up props offer spectacle and help to facilitate space for playful engagement across diverse participants. Symbols are reclaimed and their meaning re-visited anew. Embodied experience becomes essential in understanding ourselves within the world.*

### 18 - Laughing activism

*I visit my friend, Jacky Fleming, a political cartoonist. She tells me her ideas for the book she's producing called 'The Trouble with Women'. We make a cake for the trolley; only its ingredients aren't edible. It becomes a witch's cake. We dress up and laugh at what crones we'd conjured up. Laughing is the ultimate act.*

## Off her hostess-trolley: Telling it a different way



Figure 19: (left) Back-to-black pictures

### 19 - Back-to-black pictures

*I'm off my trolley once more. In the summer I made these staged photographs, transforming or mobilising material found in my house into other worlds with other potential.*

They may speak for themselves, I don't know yet.

(Squeak grunt)



Figure 20: (right) Unknowing and trusting the process

### 20 - Unknowing and trusting the process

*My excursions 'round the houses count, those actions feed back into the pictorial and vice versa. The collaborations, the teaching and learning, the mothering, the witch's cake. It all counts here.*

These visuals are made up of my own artworks, documented performed actions, participatory events and found images.

I have picked-up and expanded the scope of the themes presented in here for the purposes of this journal.

Within this sequence of image and text I tell the story of looking, finding, changing and re-presenting – a critical enquiry made visible. This forms the basis of my practice-based research, looking at the potential of an expanded illustration practice that activates a learning event.

The visual provides the site for a story to unfold, a point of departure. In isolation they are incomplete for these purposes; it asks to be told. I start with a hostess-trolley.

The trolley is a visual cliché, familiar to us and peddled as a convenient motif, an icon that helps to form behaviours, of women and men past and present. It's stuck in a way, a social imposition like many others - it impels me to dust it down, reclaim the prop and tell a different story. The prop helps to set the scene, create the space for action, for something to happen next.

This prop, comedic and absurd; the absurd acts as a critical tool and accessible means of opening up engagement with an audience. Its absurdity places it in the realm of disruption, irreverence, in protest of dominant structures. It is a symbolic device and an invitation for other scenarios to be imagined.

I become the narrator-hostess. I transform myself visually. The mask of the narrator-host-

## Off her hostess-trolley: Telling it a different way

ess provides a persona, of speaking through another, making the performance explicit. The narrator-hostess becomes a facilitator of possibility. Failure is suspended through this guise. Fear is removed from this scene.

The black backdrop, stage curtain, is removed from the everyday and suspended in theatrical space, apart from the rules of convention. This becomes a site of potential, a place that might permit a different kind of story to emerge.

The visuals I show here are parts of an enquiry, as a means of finding out. Documents that record the spaces of uncertainty within my own learning. By revealing this, I open up the field of its potential to become more. I permit myself to declare my unknowingness in order to become.

I had had a fairly lucrative commercial illustration practice for almost twenty years before I ended it. I had a growing unease with how all parts of my life joined up, I was no longer a carefree jobbing illustrator working to commission. I had children to care for - the domestic sphere of my life had been amplified so that I became less spatially mobile. I wished to reframe my practice in a way that reflected and valued these circumstances, so that my experience of this could nourish and enrich my public creative life rather than be at odds with it. My role within teaching needed to be

reconsidered with this in mind too. Rather than these parts being in constant conflict and perpetual tension, I felt the need to draw them together, to enable a different approach to life/work and public/private to develop. I was compelled to critically reflect on the social and cultural impact on myself as mother, teacher, creative practitioner too so that broader themes could be considered beyond autobiographical concerns and within the framework of a critical feminist art practice.

In his book, *Art, Equality and Learning: Pedagogies Against the State*, Dennis Atkinson expands on Judith Butlers theories of ethics and the process of becoming undone as a catalyst for meaningful learning space to be created. Atkinson refers to this 'willingness to become undone in relation to others' as a notion that 'crystallises for me something about the nature of a genuine pedagogical relation' that the vacating of the position of the "I" does not amount to taking up the position of the other but instead 'suggests that we interrogate that 'which forms us', the scene of recognition, in relation to others as to change the order of the space of engagement, the scene of address, to produce a more equitable distribution of the relations in this space. Put in other terms, this ethical risk-taking, this encounter with the unknown, involves an interrogation of the logic of place that keeps people (learners, teachers)

in their place, a disturbance of this formatting of the space.'

Here Atkinson refers to the relationship between learner/teacher – the willingness of the teacher to become undone, unknowing in the presence of the learner so as to elevate the potentiality of the space of learning.

By furnishing this potential learning space with the representation of the hostess and the trolley I am consciously positioning the notional role of the housewife beyond the private confines of the home and into a public pedagogic place. The role of the visual encounter is to invite response. In the context of Atkinson's assertions, the visual prop becomes a facilitator for undoneness. The visual prop acts as a facilitator for the hostess to invite encounter for an event to take place. In my example this invitation is through the act of illustrating which is not concluded, the story isn't defined, but suggests a scenario for the story to be disrupted and changed through interaction between learners.

The case studies with participants that I include in this work demonstrate something of the potential of the changed scenario or potential of an active play-out with the representation. Here, actions are performed. We laugh, comment, critique, agitate, reflect,

collect, discuss, reveal, assemble, arrange, make.

The initial imperative of this work is born out of a compulsion for picture making and the desire to speculate, to imagine other worlds; I may well be an illustrator after all. However, within this context, the pictorial is purposely released into a space that accommodates a learning encounter as a trigger for new stories to emerge. Stories that do not start and end with me; that have potential for life to be breathed into them beyond the boundaries of my own comprehension.

Ultimately, this is a picture-based provocation, in resistance to those narratives that are fixed and concluded. Instead these prompts call upon us as learners to act together so that we cease to consider ourselves as passive consumers and actors (of existing stories) but as autonomous thinkers who are cable of criticality and can shape meaning and re-write the stories for ourselves.

To be continued...

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# A new breed: How should we champion the mavericks and pioneers of the illustration industry?

## Alice Moloney



Alice Moloney is a London-based Creative at INT Works, the sister agency of It's Nice That, where she combines drawing with research, art direction and strategy. Alongside this, she is a freelance illustrator for clients such as The Guardian and the Sunday Times Magazine.

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## A new breed: How should we champion the mavericks and pioneers of the illustration industry?

There is a new breed of illustrator emerging. A breed driven by ideas, problem solving, and working collaboratively. Who use drawing as a tool rather than as a way of visualising someone else's ideas or words. Who are shaping the future of what has previously been considered a fairly traditional, and at times restrictive, industry.

It is the perfect time for such a breed to emerge because right now brands and organisations are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of telling their stories in new ways to connect to audiences. As a result, there is a real need for creatives who approach storytelling differently, and I think these people are illustrators. Illustrators who want to be employed for the way they think as well as the way they make images.

I have personally found that the skills I have honed as an illustrator (such as narrative, drawing, problem solving, research, and communicating abstract or complex themes into concise images) have been transferable into the wider design industry. As a Creative at a well known London design agency, I am constantly using these skills. Every day I construct narratives and visually communicate to audiences and clients - but what I produce isn't ever just an image. Instead I uncover insights through research, develop creative directions, construct brand

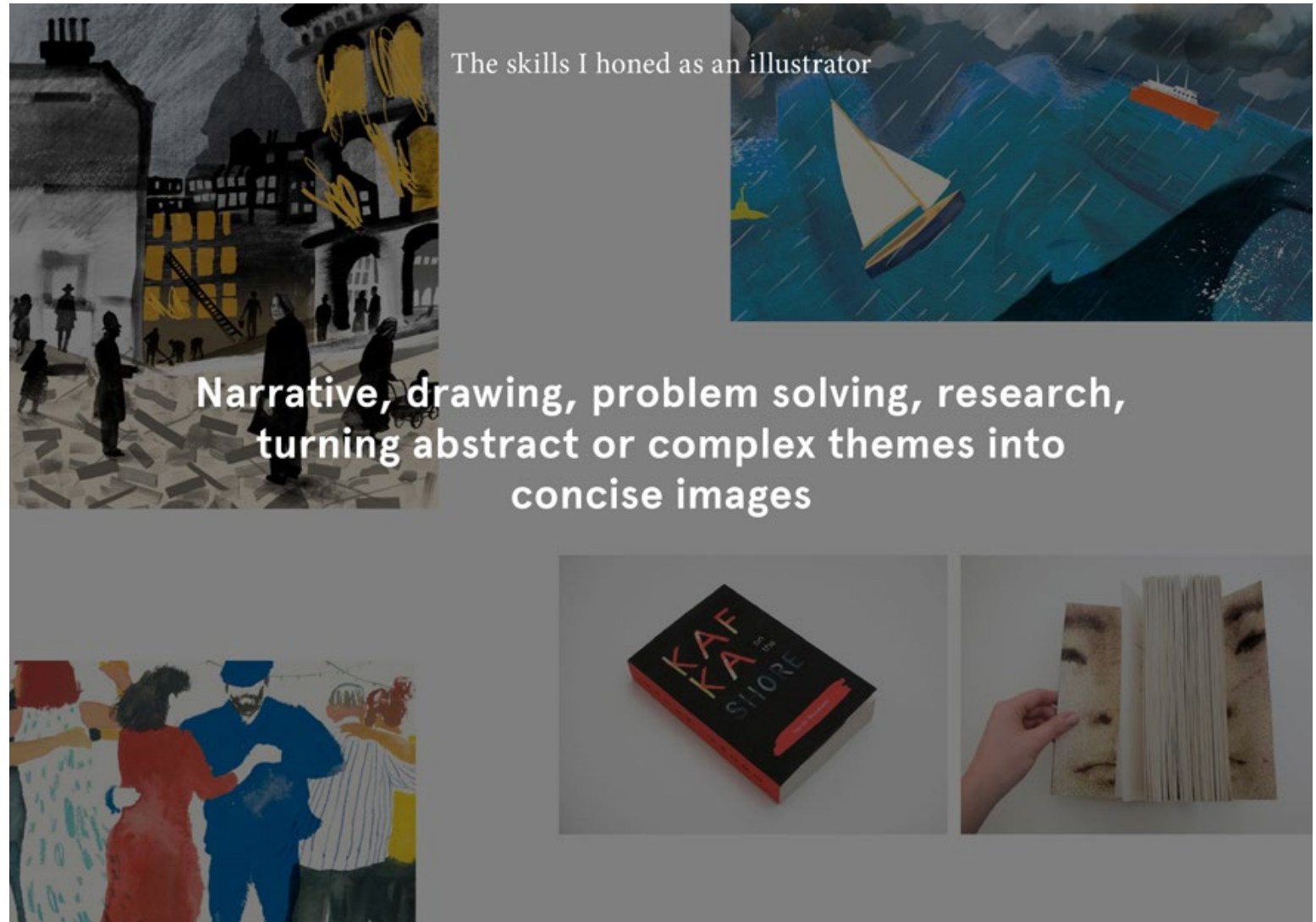


Fig 1:

stories, and build content strategies, all with the mind of an illustrator.

Over the years, there are two key people who have motivated me to use my illustration skills in new ways; Alan Fletcher and Leanne Shapton. I would consider both of them masters of using drawing as a way of thinking, to the point where they sit on that exciting border between being a designer or illustrator. Alan Fletcher, for his ability to communicate so much with visually so little. Leanne Shapton, for the way she pushes our perceptions of what storytelling and image-making can achieve. More recently, I am looking to people like Rachel Lillie as an example of this 'new breed'. The *Impossibility of the Journey*, a publication that Rachel made during her residency at the House of Illustration, explores the idea of drawing as a process rather than an outcome. What I love about Rachel's work is that you can clearly see how she is problem-solving through her images, which are like sophisticated roughs rather than final artwork.

To make the most of this opportunity for the 'new breed' of illustrators, I think we just have to start with awareness. Help brands to understand how they can commission illustrators for their ideas as well as their image-making. Help illustrators to communicate to brands how they can offer research and design thinking all with

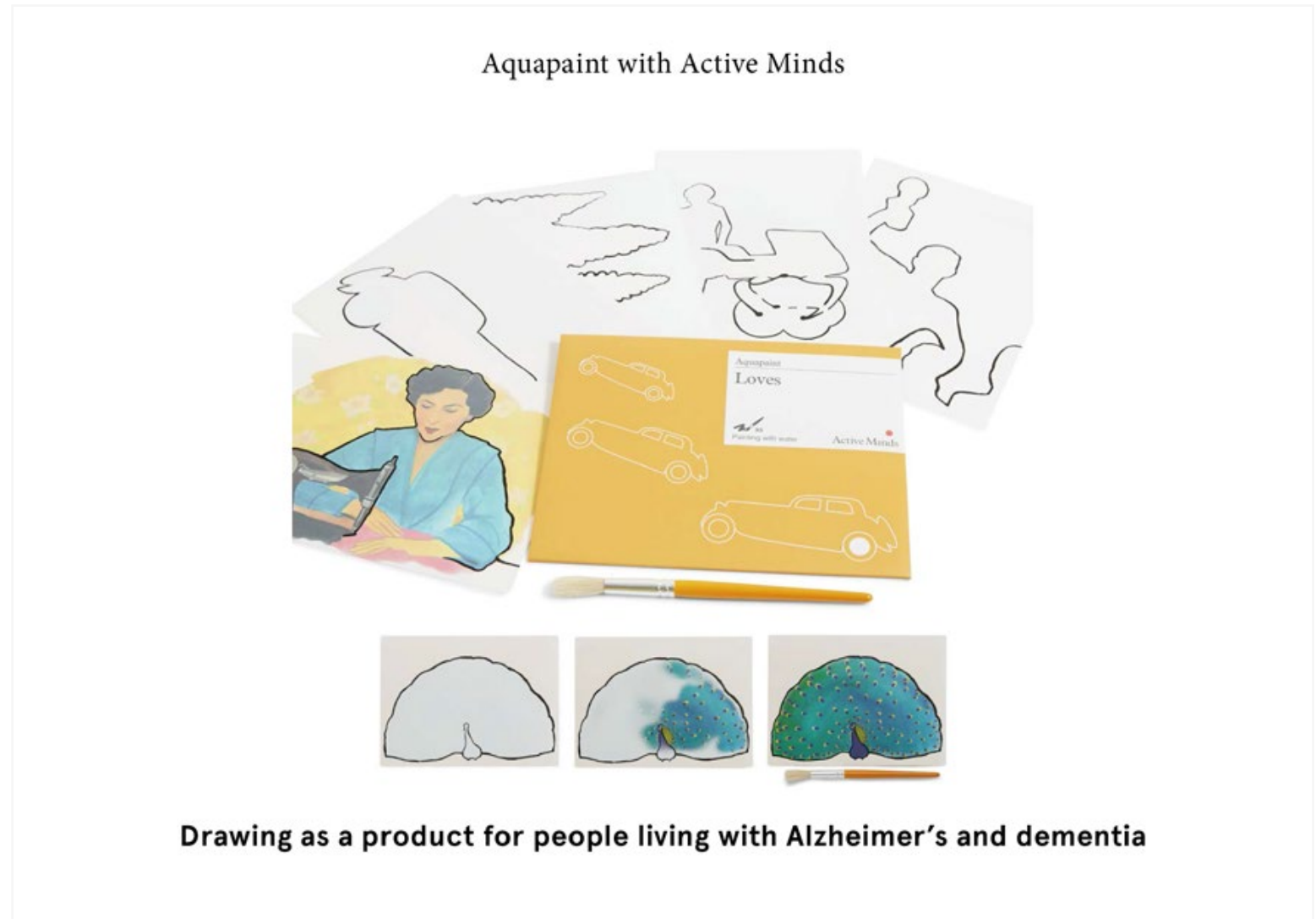


Fig 2:



## A new breed: How should we champion the mavericks and pioneers of the illustration industry?

the rare skill of bringing stories to life through drawing.

We were taught to develop a “visual language” not a “style” on my illustration degree at Kingston University; we were encouraged to focus on what we want to say with our work, not just on how it would look. We honed a process that would allow us to transform an idea, a body of text, a song or a story into images that communicate. A process that involves hours of observation and finding the elements that will populate the image. Hours of connecting nuanced dots and of constant re-working. We are trained to be expert communicators who see the world through a lens of intense detail.

### Olympic Park with RAA



### Illustrating concepts for the legacy of the Olympic Park

Fig 3:

## A new breed: How should we champion the mavericks and pioneers of the illustration industry?

What if illustrators were employed for this usually unseen process and way of thinking, not just for their images? The time has definitely come for the illustration industry to show everyone what it's really capable of. Now more than ever 'grey area' creatives, i.e. people who sit in between disciplines, are being sought after. A designer can now do strategy, research and even dabble in a bit of illustration, all under one comfortable title. Why shouldn't we do the same? Illustrators, let's not get left behind.



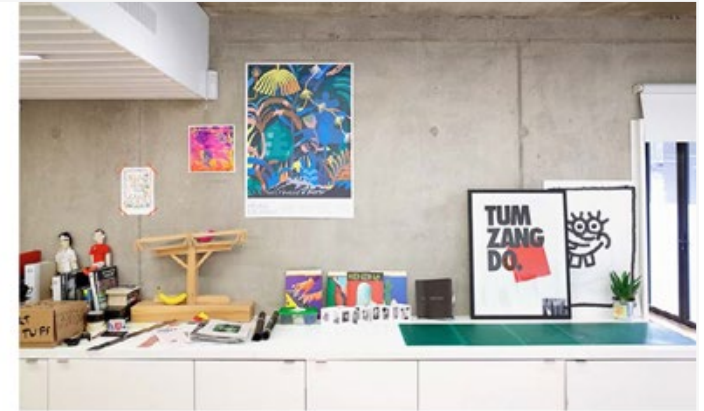
Fig 4:

# A new breed: How should we champion the mavericks and pioneers of the illustration industry?

Let's reveal what's usually left in the sketch-books and in the plan chests and celebrate illustration beyond the end image.



Now



## Creative at INT Works

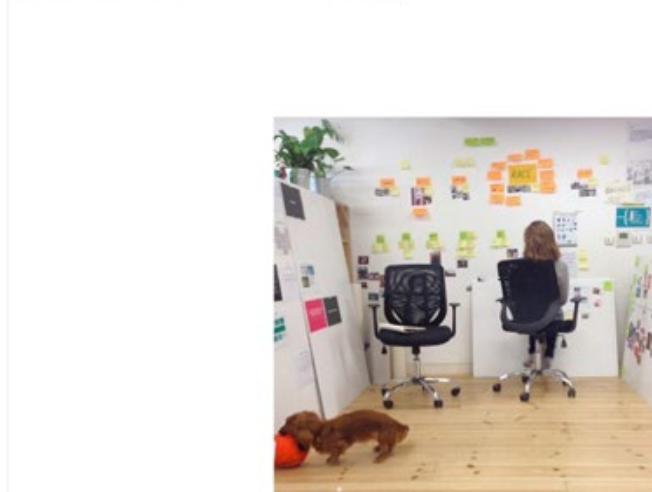


Fig 5:

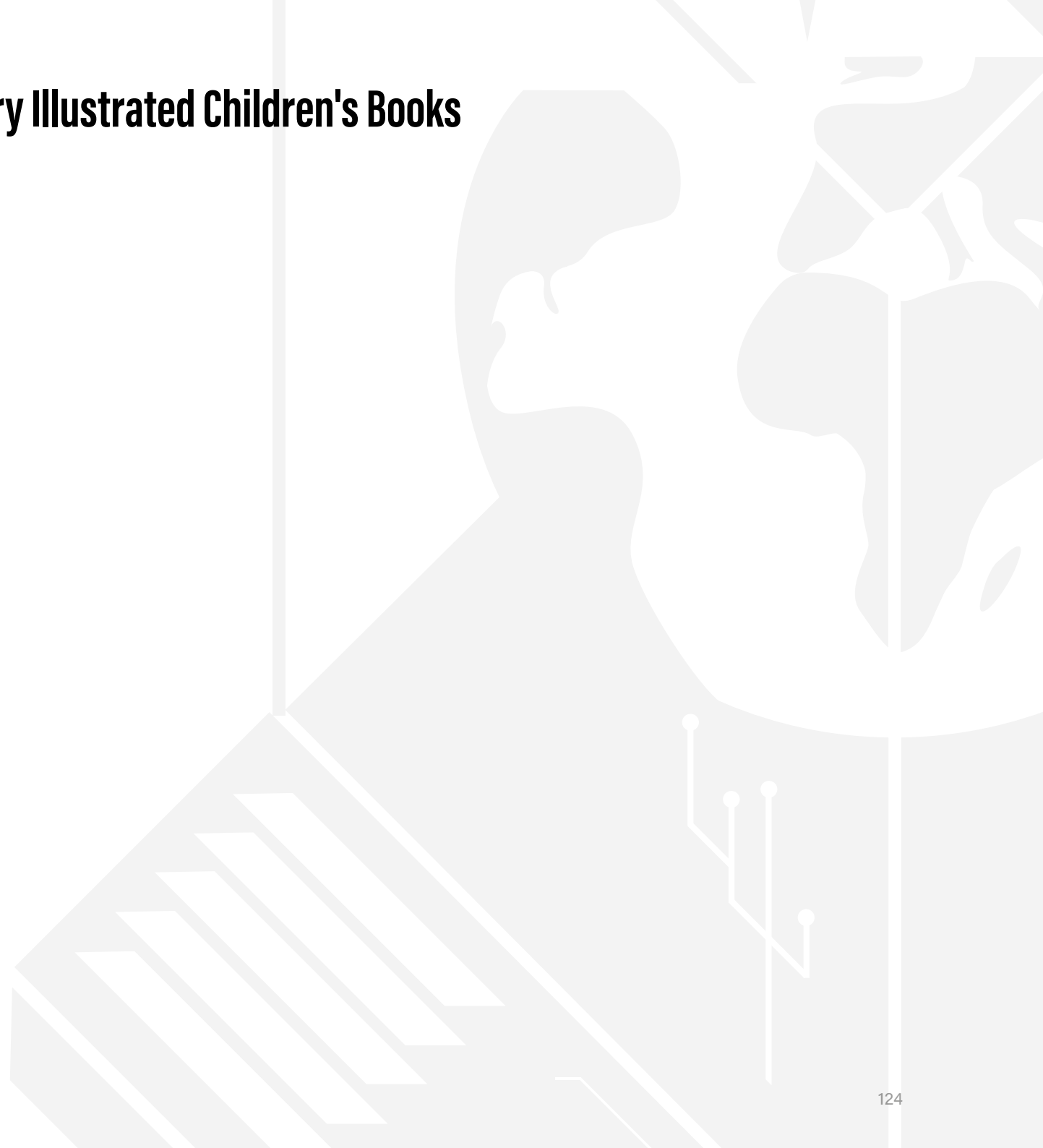
# Self-Reflexivity and Contemporary Illustrated Children's Books

Aidan Winterburn

Aidan Winterburn is Senior Lecturer at Leeds Beckett University teaching on BA [Hons] Graphic Arts and Design. He wrote *Street Talk: the Rise and Fall of the Poster* with Malcolm Frost and Angharad Lewis and essays in *Public Address System* [both Images Publishing] as well as *Grafik* magazine.

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## Self-Reflexivity and Contemporary Illustrated Children's Books

My three-year-old daughter is 'suffused, like a cloud'<sup>(1)</sup> with the picture books she has gathered around her.

She is stood at a crossroads between this kind of 'optical suffusion', between visceral visual pleasure, the aesthetic experience of 'significant form' and her newly found powers of pattern recognition, attachment to verisimilitude and involvement in imaginary characters known as narrative.

I'm intrigued by my daughter's understanding of the book – at three she is unable to read but has a palpable, almost visceral curiosity and growing attachment to the combination of words and pictures presented in her panoply of picturebooks. She seems vitally aware of the tacit and secret code to be unlocked in these forms. She asks constantly about the pictograms and informational graphics she sees in her environment [early on she was attempting to decipher the pictogram of the dog shitting on park bins]. Her picturebooks seem to mirror this sense of a pre- or early graphic literacy that exists before and beyond speech but which also perhaps acts as training programme for true literacy. She is fascinated by the abstraction of animations on TV like CBeebies' *DipDap* right at the moment when she is also starting to furiously attempt to understand the cause and effect flow of narrative

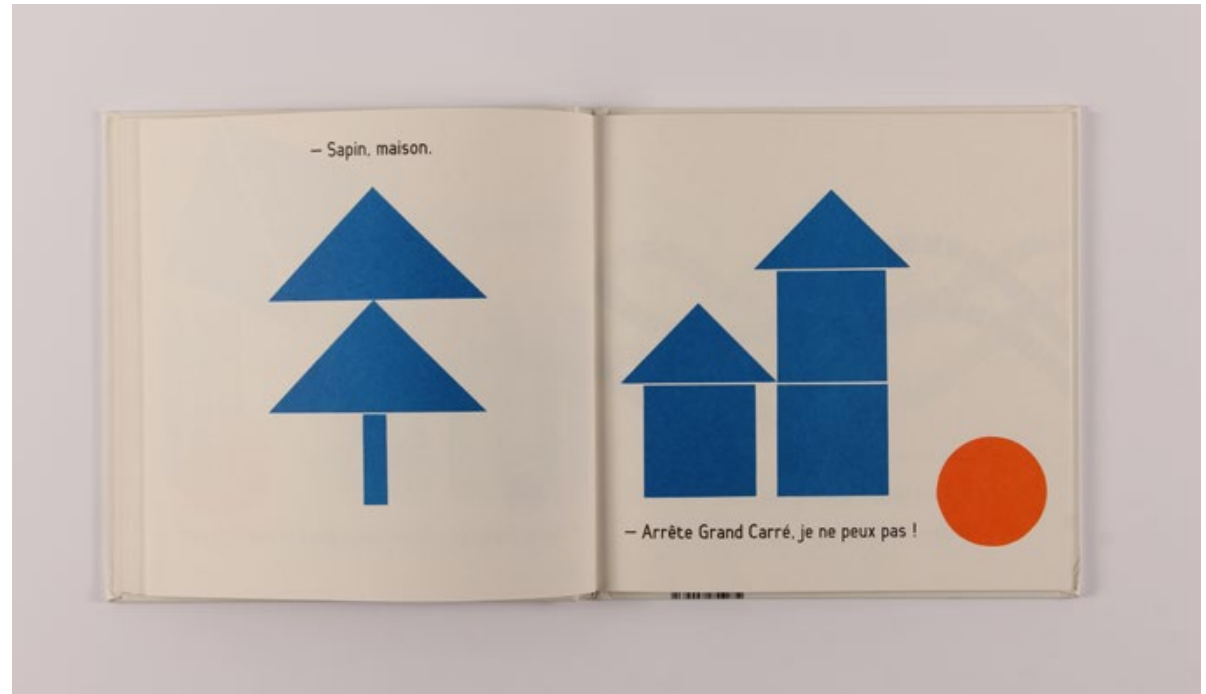
as a form of conventional pattern-recognition. She is gaining a newly found fascination with stories, with the causal connective tissue of character-based narrative. Her powers of endless repetition allow her to become involved with seeing the world through other fictional characters. She seems to shuttle effortlessly between abstraction and its joyful, playful articulation of process and a form of representational and narrative coherence. When painting and drawing, she sees little distinction between the act of scribbling for the sake of physical enjoyment and the act of figuration so that when I ask what something might represent, she is equally adept at rolling her eyes and saying 'it's a squiggle' or 'this is me and my best friend'. She is involved and absorbed in the very materiality of the picturebook she holds in her hands – it is no neutral container of information that asks her to translate the literate sign back into mental images or concepts, there is a directness, a lack of analogic translation. The book in her hands just *is*.

A few years ago in Nantes in the art gallery shop, I found a selection of children's picture books I had not encountered before. These were seemingly modest and cheap, saddle stitched with card covers and, I found, published by a local imprint called Editions MeMo. I bought Severin Millet's *Les Reves de Milo*, Flavia Ruotolo's *Zoo*, Noemi Schipfer's



Fig 1: Zoo by Flavia Ruotolo

## Self-Reflexivity and Contemporary Illustrated Children's Books



**Fig 2:** (left) *Le Garçon* by Noemi Schipfer | **Fig 3:** (above) *Mercredi* by Anne Bertrier

*Le Garçon* and Anne Bertrier's *Mercredi* for an imaginary child [my daughter was not yet born] as I was struck by their formal risk-taking and invention.

They all played quite self-consciously with the form of the children's book, not through some clever *mise-en-abyme* postmodernist self-referentiality but in a way that asked the

child to perhaps question the very act of seeing, reducing the world to simple geometrical building blocks in *Zoo* and *Mercredi* or the Op Art-influenced enigmatic imagery of *Le Garçon*. These reminded me of early modernist experiments in children's books, particularly those of the early Russian Constructivists, most notably El Lissitzky's *About Two Squares* and made me reflect on early modernism's in-

## Self-Reflexivity and Contemporary Illustrated Children's Books

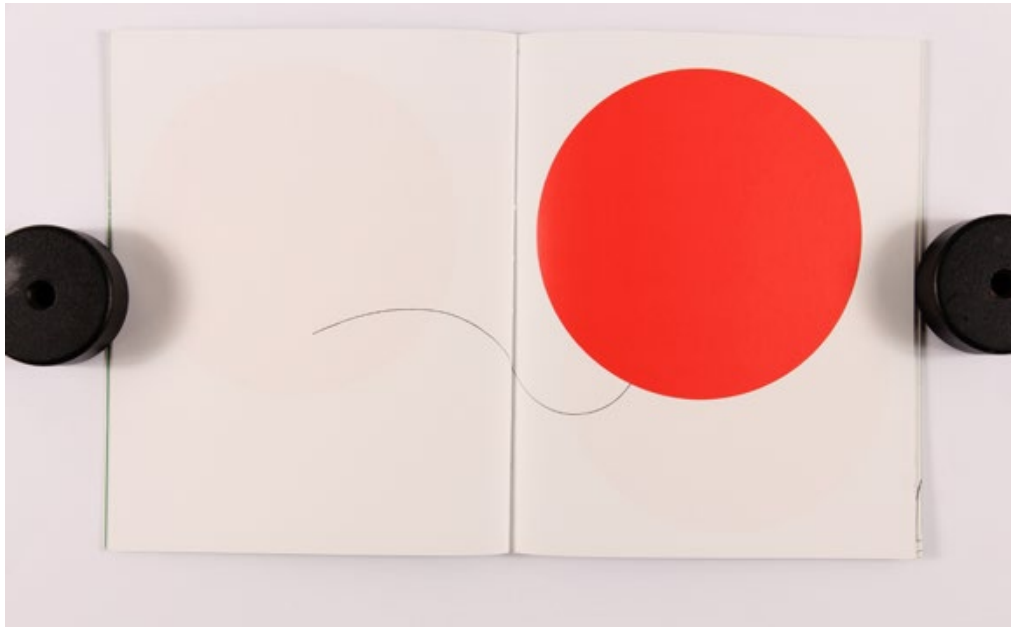


Fig 4: the Red Balloon by Iela Mari

terest in the education and visual development of children. From Froebel's little 'Gifts' and Maria Montessori's teaching materials that encouraged children to play freely with geometric shapes in attempt to be able to modify their own worlds to the Bauhaus' preoccupation with childish play in the work and teachings of Itten and Paul Klee, modernism saw in the child's eye a metonymy for a new hopeful view of the world, formed/constructed/ engineered

from simple constituent geometric pieces. Marcel Breuer called the child 'a manager of voids and spaces, priest of geometry'. These forms were expanded on in the children's books of such as Paul Rand, Bruno Munari [*Circle Square Triangle*] and Iela Mari [*the Red Balloon*] in particular in the postwar period and animated films like *The Dot and The Line* directed by Chuck Jones, itself based on the book by Norton Juster.



Fig 5: the Dot and Line by Norton Juster

## Self-Reflexivity and Contemporary Illustrated Children's Books



Fig 6: *The Best Book in the World* by Rilla Alexander

In two recent children's picturebooks, *Sans Titre* by Hervé Tullet and Rilla Alexander's *The Best Book in the World*, published by Flying Eye books, children are asked to self-consciously confront the notion of the book as a form.

Both books are self-reflexive, using Brechtian devices to at once distance and engage the viewer/ reader in a relationship with the form

of the book. Marta Ignerska's *Die Ton Angeber* is a beautiful German/Polish book about the make-up of the orchestra that mixes pure high-vis geometric colour fields with line drawings that look like they've been roughed up through a photocopier in such a way as to make the images swim and boil, forcing a kind of retinal animation to occur.



## Self-Reflexivity and Contemporary Illustrated Children's Books



Fig 7: (left) *die Ton Angeber* by Marta Ignerska

Fig 8: (above) *Coming and Going* by Isabel Minhos Martins and Bernardo Carvalho

Isabel Minhos Martins' and Bernard Carvalho's *Coming and Going* [republished in English recently by the Tate] makes explicit use of archaic Letrafilm semi-opaque coloured sheets as cutouts to tell a poetic and important story contrasting our involvement with the planet with the animal world's.

Indeed, Portuguese picturebook imprint Planet Tangerina with books like *I've Never Seen A Bike* and *Ducks Never Let Go* by Isabel Minhos Martins & Madalena Matoso and *Um Dia Na Praia* by Bernardo Carvalho with 'its flat toneless colours and sophisticated handling of space' (2) displays an abiding interest in pair-

## Self-Reflexivity and Contemporary Illustrated Children's Books

ing ambitious formal graphic concerns with sophisticated interplay between word and image. Similarly, Tullet's *The Game in the Dark* uses fluorescent inks and broad gestural patterns in such a way as to self-consciously foreground the act of seeing, particularly interesting in the context of a book you can read with the lights out [or as many children do, under the bed covers].

In these books there is a level of abstraction and articulation of process that seems to encourage the child reader/ viewer to construct their own visual world, one that is animated by extreme visual effects or by the sophisticated use of gestalt to make the book seem to genuinely come alive. They seem to encourage a form of absorption that Walter Benjamin observed in his essay *A Child's View of Colour*. Written in 1915, at the moment that Picasso had turned towards a kind of 'synthetic cubism' using *papiers collés*, Benjamin writes that the child possesses 'the highest artistic development of the sense of sight; it is sight at its purest'. As Eric Tribunella observes in *Benjamin, Children's Literature, and the Child's Gaze*; 'For Benjamin, children's ability to see the world differently from adults allows them access to a unique form of imaginative play in their perception and manipulation of the world.' In this way he believes 'they do not so much imitate the works of adults' but instead

'bring together, in the artifact produced in play, materials of widely different kinds in a new, intuitive relationship.' In his later essay *A Glimpse into the World of Children's Books*, Benjamin describes a child gazing and entering into the imaginative space of the book rather than 'taking the book as fixing or meeting the objects of the external world'. Here we see Benjamin equating the child with the notion of the collage artist, mixing and matching, a bricoleur. Indeed, in his essay *Old Forgotten Children's Books*, Benjamin writes that 'children are particularly fond of haunting any site where things are being visibly worked on' bringing together notions of the child as aimlessly fascinated, visually curious *flâneurs*, seeing the book as a form of unfinished or unresolved interactive playground.

These self-reflexive devices and tropes are nothing new – they have often been used with in what might be seen as predominantly children's forms, from the self-conscious alienation effect of animations like *Duck Amuck* by Chuck Jones to Ed Emberley's *Go Away Big Green Monster* through to Nick Sharratt's *Charlie Cook's Favourite Books* – children are encouraged, often in a spirit of the carnivalesque and vaudeville, to consider and challenge the authority of the form. Pop-up and interactive books like Marion Bataille's *ABC 3D* and *Alphabet* by Květa Pacovská, have for many

years encouraged this sense of interactivity and playfulness but I feel that in these new children's books, there is perhaps something more radical at heart. For Brecht this alienation effect was seen as revolutionary – as unmasking the machinery of cultural/ artistic production. And perhaps this is even more important at a time when much cultural production [for children particularly] has slipped online, onto screens, into pixels as both seamless media productions that are difficult to conceive as being made by anyone and as interactive entertainments. How do these books compete with these?

Most successful picturebooks, as Martin Salibury (2012) writes in *Children's Picturebooks*, 'create a dynamic relationship between words and pictures [where they] can appear to flirt with and contradict each other.' Alan Ahlberg, writer of many picturebooks, compares this with music, talking of 'interweaving' text and image so that the viewer/reader 'can come out of the words and into the pictures and you get this nice kind of antiphonal fugue effect.' Margaret Meek (1988), from a more educational perspective in *How Texts Teach What Learners Learn*, talks about both words and pictures' ability to 'interanimate one another' so that 'a text may amplify, distort, and even reverse the meanings of the pictures it accompanies.'<sup>3</sup> Meek says that picturebooks routinely 'interro-

gate the static qualities of the picturebook' and therefore demand a 'multi-constructed reading stance (that may) help to create a plasticity of mind that is honed on other textual forms'. So we see here that these books are perhaps a response *to* and a preparation *for* the world of these more complex, multimodal forms of film and Internet.

I think it is also interesting that many of the examples I have noted here are from France, Italy and Portugal, where I feel this interweaving between text and image is embraced as part of a graphic lineage or tradition that has little to do with British class-bound notions of real 'literacy' – words stacked up in lines, tiny ant soldiers going off to fight the culture wars – increasingly expounded by the likes of Gove and Morgan in the National Curriculum.

My three-year-old daughter is already more versed in this slippery hieroglyphic language, a form of literacy she will be forced to gradually put to bed as the word, now conjoined with the image, starts its slow and inexorable journey away from the image. Perhaps instead of me reading her these picturebooks, she should be reading them as bedside stories to me?

## Self-Reflexivity and Contemporary Illustrated Children's Books

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An abstract graphic design with a monochromatic red color palette. The background is a textured, mottled red. In the center, there is a dark silhouette of a globe showing the continents. Above the globe, there is a dark, rectangular shape resembling a power outlet or a component of a circuit board, with several thin lines extending from it. The entire composition is overlaid with a network of thin, light-colored lines that form a grid and connect various points, suggesting a digital or technological theme. The text 'Further Information' is centered over the globe in a clean, white, sans-serif font.

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