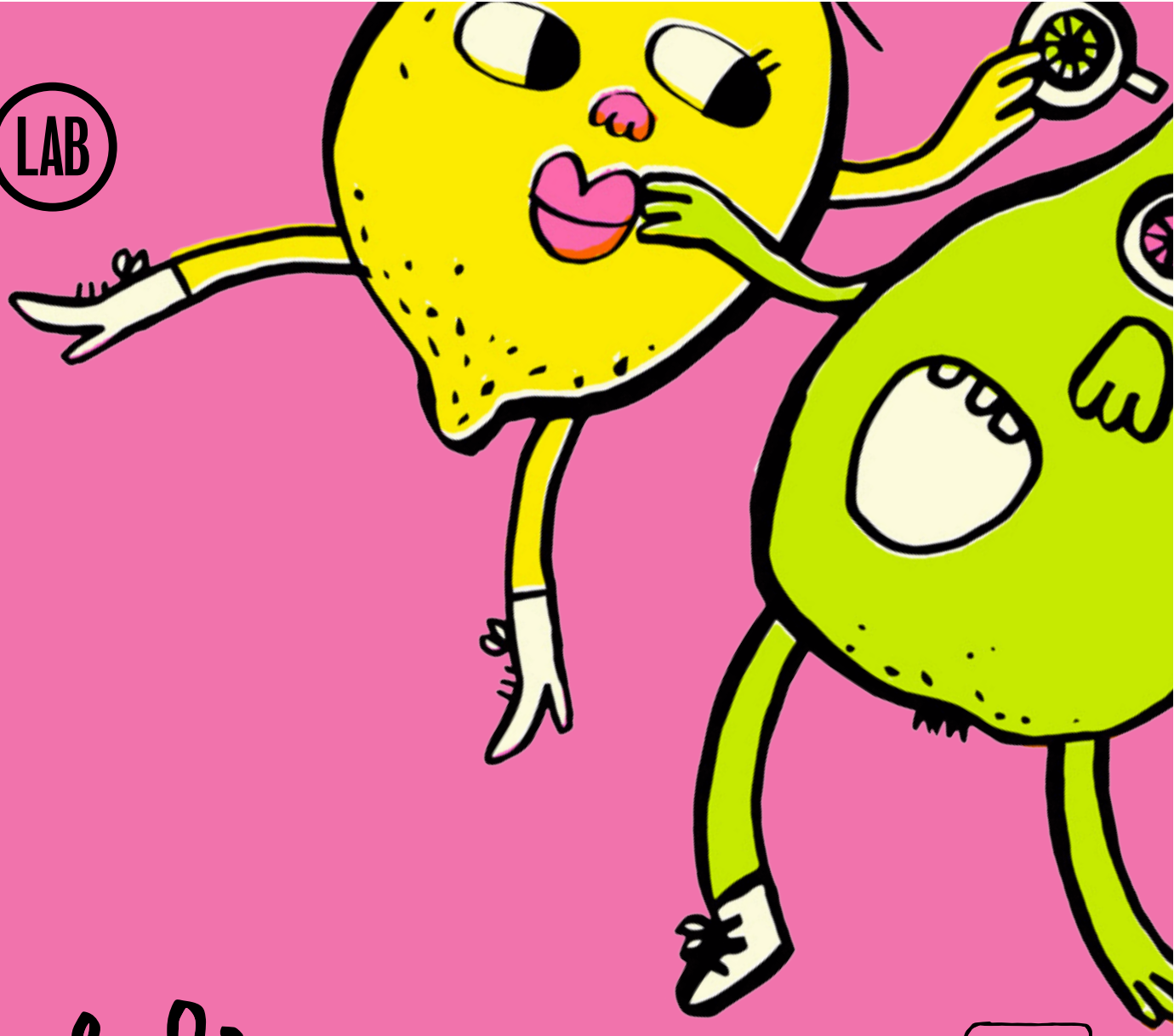
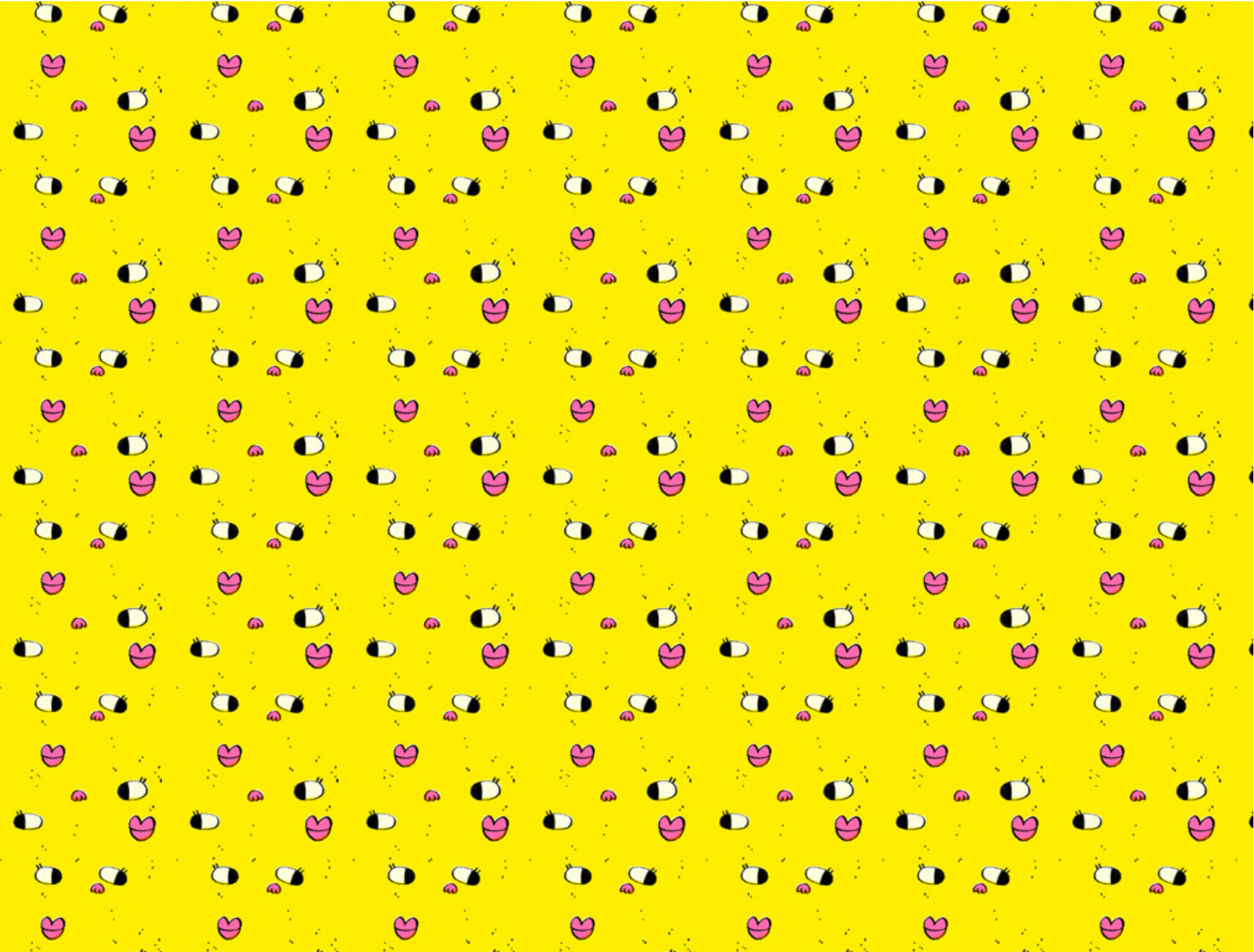
VAROOM! LAB

online journal - issue three



interpretation

ARTS UNIVERSITY BOURNEMOUTH



VAROOM!

Introduction

The theme of Interpretation is pertinent not only to the content of this illustration-focused publication but also to define the research culture that has evolved in the past decade within this subject area.
Since its inception, the VaroomLab illustration research network has both contributed, and responded to, the force within academia that has put research firmly on the agenda in art and design departments of colleges and universities, through their inclusion in the Research Exercise Framework (REF). This process, by which research is graded, and its impact assessed, leads to the allocation of quality-related research funding, providing information that establishes institutional and departmental hierarchy within a given period. The REF has played a part in motivating a shift towards more critical reflection of illustration practice.

Although the Interpretation conference and outputs correlate to this increasingly academia-centric agenda VaroomLab continues to hold as objectives accessibility and reflecting the interests of a broader professional community. *The VaroomLab Journal*, *Varoom* magazine and conferences are means through which research outcomes can be gathered, appraised and disseminated to achieve maximum impact and have on-going significance. By garnering involvement of speakers and authors who are practising illustrators and commissioners, as well as academics and theory and practice-based researchers from within illustration and across disciplines, Interpretation reflects some of the breadth of interpretive approaches to mediated images at this time.

The range of submissions, and content selected, testifies to the validity of various research approaches applied to interpretation of the practice of illustration. Articles make reference to perceptual theories: cognitive and semiotic approaches to decodifying imagery (that seem to have become more visible in the REF era) and also constructivist and Gestalt approaches to interpretation, "what it looks like" that may be more intuitively understood by practitioners who have gone through a practical art school education, that informed them in the dynamics of visual of form. The robust process of peer review by institutions and individuals drawn from the respected areas of academia and practice internationally, leading to scrutiny of the validity of all submissions, ensures the credibility of the research outcomes published through Varoom formats, whatever their theoretical interpretation.

VaroomLab activities make more of the knowledge within illustration visible, contributing to expansion of visual literacy and the consequent assertion of illustrations cultural significance and value. On going debates about the shifting sands of practice, delineated by artist and educator *Marshall Arisman* at the Education Symposium of ICON 8, who reflected on the advent of self-publishing and the internet, are a reminder that illustrators have the opportunity to "take full command of the medium and visually express a personal vision." He concluded specifically that storytelling, in the hands of the contemporary illustrator, can now be judged as an art form. In this context understanding interpretation is pivotal to understanding the power and potential of illustration culturally.

Through this conference and Journal, understanding of how interpretation is manifested through the language of illustration is evident. Its place in the commissioning process is explored, practice based research interrogated and theories are tested and employed to provide new insights into what and how content is communicated. As the selected papers in this publication reveal, illustration not only works to describe textual information in practical applications, but also functions to interpret narrative, express concepts and convey information in unexpected ways: sometimes error and misunderstanding are factors in this interaction. The relationship between intellect and emotion during the interpretive process is complex, and the role of the illustrator's individual identity and ideology in the theory and practice of interpretation, often hidden in the visual artefact, can when revealed, lead to new levels of engagement with an image and heightened impact.

In *The Art of Seeing,* where philosopher Aldous Huxley makes the connection between seeing clearly and thinking: the more you know the more you see, the point is made clearly. Without Interpretation we are visually impaired.

Jo Davies - Editor in Chief and VaroomLab academic inputs co-ordinator.

Associate Professor of Illustration, Plymouth University

Photo by Ronnie Inglis

VAROOM! LAB

interpretation ILLUSTRATION SYMPOSIUM

The Illustration Course Team at the Arts University at Bournemouth hosted the third VaroomLab 'Interpretation Symposium' in September 2014. The event brought together a community of practitioners, diverse illustrators, artists and designers in order to consider and discuss the challenging and creative potential of the act of interpretation.

The Symposium was a lively social two-day event that sought to explore ways in which illustrators, interpret, re-interpret and misinterpret information and narratives within contemporary practice.

Traditionally it has been the role of the illustrator to interpret the 'other' and adhere to the idea of truth in the Modernist sense, thereby offering a creative visual solution that educates, translates and elucidates. The illustration explains something else.

However the illustrator that re-interprets has not been satisfied with that original passive model and demands something new, a re-positioning, re-location or perhaps it is the audience that requires a 're-vision'.

The illustrator as provocateur desires to mis-interpret. As mis-interpretation emerges from not being concerned with the truth or fact but instead a need for a fresh new response that is not restrained or restricted by accuracy and fact. This illustrator is interested in attitude and posture.

The Symposium tested and expanded upon these three inter-connected threads through the delivery of Keynote Speakers, academic papers, presentations and the resulting intriguing and thought-provoking dialogue.

Lisa Richardson - Course Leader, BA Illustration
The Arts University Bournemouth

Photos by Ronnie Inglis

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Keynote Speeches

Marcus Oakley

Sculpture by Marcus Oakley, 2014.

Originally from Norfolk, a coastal county in England's south-east, Marcus Oakley's work is inspired by many things both retrospective and contemporary.

His influences include folky, harmonic and melodic musics of all kinds; the pastoral and folkloric delights of the countryside and the various eccentric beasts and humans that inhabit it; the joys of cycling; the stimulations of tea; the dizzy geometries of architecture and design and overall the wonders of making stuff.

www.marcusoakley.com

Marcus Oakley's informal talk took the audience on a historical journey that considered the labeling of artifacts and images, such as Mosaics and Greek vases, and genres such as folk art, within the context of finding a definition of illustration. He reflected upon whether the process of being paid for the creation of an image makes it an illustration, by default, whatever its format or context.

This personal reflection included a diversity of image-makers from across a spectrum of activity Grahame Sutherland's Shell posters, Grayson Perry's drawings and Saul Steinberg's distinctive illustrations. These were considered as he posed the question "Is it Art?" Taking his enquiry out to some of his illustration contacts within the industry, lead to responses containing a diversity of interpretations of the word "Illustration."

Their reflections provided some interesting points to consider such as the impact of materials in the definition of an art-piece and the impact of context and the conceptual input of the image-maker. He was the first speaker during the conference to focus upon the connection between personally negotiated work and commissioned pieces and this was a recurrent theme throughout both days.

James Jarvis

Sphere portrait by James Jarvis, 2014.

Born in London in 1970 and raised on a diet of Richard Scarry, Hergé, Judge Dredd and Albert Camus, Jarvis studied Illustration at the University of Brighton and the Royal College of Art, graduating in 1995.

As a freelance graphic artist, Jarvis has worked for clients including Coca-Cola, Converse, MTV, Nike, Nokia, Sony and Stüssy, and has had his work featured in publications worldwide.

From 2002 - 2012, Jarvis also ran his own company, Amos, in partnership with Russell Waterman. As well as releasing over 100 character toys, Amos' work also includes graphics, comics, curating a music festival and designing a crazy-golf hole.

Jarvis is currently drawing a daily cartoon strip, Spheric Dialogues. He lives and works in London with his partner and two children.

www.studiojarvis.com

James Jarvis explored the connection between merchandising and mass production, considering the tensions of retaining a personal perspective when working and being successful commercially.

He reflected upon the danger of creating work that can be defined as merchandise rather than as ideas-led communication. After 10 years of creating work for his toy company, Amos, he believed he was no longer learning or growing and decided to go back to the more 'handmade'.

From showing his early pre-digital career drawings of the concrete skateboard park in London's Southbank Centre, in the context of reviewing his body of work, Jarvis concluded that he is now back to observational drawing – 'these are my experiences of being in that place' – and is using the process he used for the early skateboard park drawings, and still finding it potent and vital.

He described the evolution of his Spherical Dialogues, creating minimal characters with a few lines, that he uses to explore philosophical concepts outside of commercial work, using social media sites to self publish and make direct contact with his audience. He demonstrated that this process was empowering, leading to commissions where clients were less likely to intervene. The presentation reminded the audience of the importance of focusing on individually defined content and to break out the comfort zone that can come with success.

Cyriak

Baa by Cyriak Harris, 2011.

Cyriak is a freelance animator based in Brighton. After a dull day job and trying to get work as an animator film- maker, he started making humorous GIFS and uploading them . They gained interest and he worked on bigger projects for music videos. He made one for 'Bonobo' Cirrus track, using copyright free images from a 1960's film about consumerism.

His process is very painstaking and labour intensive. He uses After Effects to make a mask for every moving part. He has noticed a few copycats of his work but think that the secret of his success, is never really knowing what he is doing, being playful and that 'animating is so boring that no-one else wants to do it'.

He has also worked with Bloc Party and created an entirely new video out of old videos of theirs. It was difficult to lip-sync the song to the moving images.

www.cyriak.co.uk

Besides animating complex personal pieces, Cyriak has worked on a wide range of commercial projects from TV advertising to music videos. His talk was entitled, Making It Up I Go Along and he covered what he does, and the journey he's taken to the present day. Cyraik discussed his creative process, breaking down the way he creates his - often looped – animations, saying he didn't have the energy to do all the drawing for an animation by hand, whereas this way is like cutting out and sticking with glue.

"I guess it's important to absorb the best of culture and utilize it for your own creations, but it's also important to build on it, to look at what's out there and see what is missing." He talked about having to research photos and video footage to use as a medium, "and while it is usually a basic hunt for a particular object or scenery, I often get new ideas or inspiration from the stock materials I find."

He covered 'interpreting' music into a visual experience when he makes music videos, and 'interpreting' found video footage into something that subverts its original purpose. "It's all about taking something that exists and turning it into something new, which is the raw essence of what I do. One of the most important things to learn about that is to make sure whatever material you are 'interpreting' is legally available for use, if you are planning to reap any commercial benefits from it."

Peer Reviewed Abstracts

Dr Andrew Howells

Dr Andrew Howells is a Lecturer in Natural History Illustration at the University of Newcastle. With a professional background in animation, graphic design, fine art and Illustration Andrew takes a multidisciplinary approach to his practice-based research. Andrew's research focus is on contemporary illustration practice, conservation and the collaboration between art and science.

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How does cross-disciplinary exchange influence interpretation for the Natural History Illustrator?

Introduction

It is the combination of practice-based tacit knowledge and cross-disciplinary exchange that allows the Natural History Illustrator's visual mind, to construct images that clearly propose, elicit and communicate specific content or narrative. In my doctoral research titled *Elephant: Art and Science*, cross-disciplinary exchanges ultimately influenced my interpretation of both the subject (the Asian Elephant) and the science (Body Condition Scoring) in developing a specific illustrated resource. The forms and influence of cross-disciplinary exchange on my research are the basis for discussion in this paper. This paper describes the context for collaboration between veterinary science researchers and an illustrator within a broader scientific study and provides an account of the influence of cross-disciplinary engagement on interpretation for the Natural History Illustrator in developing a simple tool for visually assessing the body condition of captive Asian Elephants. This paper is not a comprehensive account of the research undertaken as a team, rather it is an account of the forms and role of cross-disciplinary exchanges with in the research context that influenced the illustrator's interpretation of the subject and science in the pursuit of research outcomes. Before exploring the forms and role of cross-disciplinary exchange in the research it is important to define Natural History Illustration (NHI) practice, the purpose of the research, the methods employed in the inquiry process as well as the intended forms and application of research outcomes.

Defining Practice and Research Methodology

As a Natural History Illustrator my role through practice is to translate natural world subjects, themes or events into accurate representational imagery. The role is historically founded, having its roots in the dissemination of knowledge for the sciences. Ultimately, interpretation for the Natural History Illustrator takes place in the studio when contextual research, knowledge gained through fieldwork, cross-disciplinary exchange and critical observations are combined with a technical skill-base to develop illustrations. This practice is not defined by the use of a specific technique, media or materials, rather by a working methodology that requires significant investigation of a subject, theme or event before its depiction. It is the acquisition of specific and required knowledge for the NHI illustrator where cross-disciplinary exchange can significantly influence understanding and therefore interpretation. In this paper cross-disciplinary exchange is being discussed primarily in the context of a working collaboration between an illustrator and veterinary scientists. For the Natural History Illustrator cross-disciplinary exchange is not limited to that of an illustrator and a scientist as it may extend to a variety of experts in their respective fields, for example: animal keepers, rangers, archivist, curators, other illustration practitioners and those whose vocations offer significant insight into a subject and its related field of knowledge.

Although predominantly prescribed in nature, the required outcomes through practice differs between that of pure Scientific Illustration and that of NHI. For this reason it is important to define these two practices and that of practices often associated. The terms; Scientific Illustration and Natural Science Illustration are often mentioned in reference to the type of work resulting from NHI practice. Although I classify my practice under the banner of NHI, it does involve elements of practice associated with both Scientific Illustration and Natural Science Illustration. NHI practitioners, like Scientific Illustrators, focus on accuracy in faithful representations to communicate specific information. However, unlike Scientific Illustration, NHI practice is not solely focused on the sciences, or service in practice.

Several definitions of Scientific Illustration evidence the prescribed approach to practice and the role of the practitioner in acquiring and representing knowledge. In Hodges (2003) publication *The Guild Handbook of Scientific Illustration* these prescribed practice methods, associated media and materials are discussed in relation to specific fields of science, such botany, entomology and medicine. Cross-disciplinary exchange in Scientific Illustration involves the supply of resources, artefacts, specimens and contextual information to be visually represented, in essence, a brief. In addressing this brief the types of possible practice and delivery are often dictated by the publication protocols associated with specific fields of science. Hodges (2003) describes these types of practitioners as

Artists in the service of science. They use specifically informed observational, technical, and aesthetic skills to portray a subject accurately. Accuracy and communication are essential. Communication of shapes, anatomy, details and concepts that cannot be conveyed via words, forms the essence of this type of art. (Hodges 2003, p.xi)

Similarly, Male (2007) in his publication - *Illustration: A Theoretical & Contextual Perspective* offers the following summation 'In a pure sense, scientific illustration communicates subtleties and eliminates the ambiguities of language. It is this that makes it an important and often necessary element in precise communication' (Male 2007, p.105). Precision, accuracy, conventions of publication, the direct application of practice and outcome to the communication of scientific knowledge collectively define this practice.
For the NHI practitioner it is the need to be continually assessing an illustration both technically and factually in its development, where interpretation is not only influenced, but also continually shaped through cross-dis-

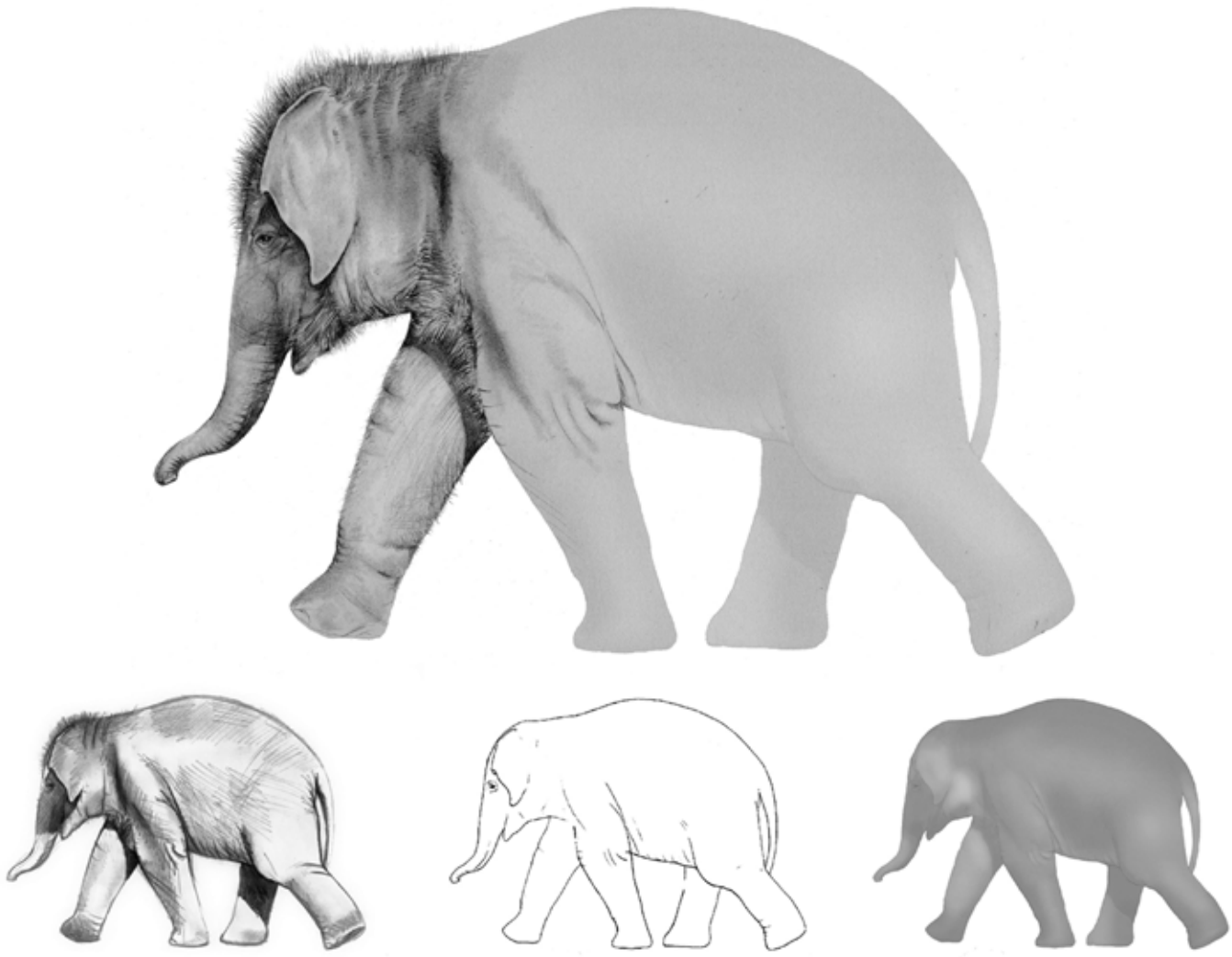

Figure 5: Illustration rendering process, A. Howells (see page 29)

ciplinary exchanges. Marine-science Illustrator Roger Swainston's (2011) description of his practice embodies this role of cross-disciplinary exchange on interpretation. As both a practitioner and scientist he states at the beginning of his book titled *Fishes of Australia, the complete illustrated guide*, that,

Over the years I have had the opportunity to see and handle an enormous variety of fishes; always looking at them with one eye as a scientist, the other as an artist (Swainston 2011, p.1).

Similarly, cross-disciplinary exchange in my research occurred continually throughout the research and contributed to both the acquisition of knowledge and the subsequent interpretation of that knowledge. Unlike scientific illustration the focus of exchange was not on pre-prescribed service-based outcomes but on contribution through practice to the development of research outcomes.

In an academic research context, NHI practice outlined above would be classified as *Practice-Based* research (Candy 2006). Embodied in this classification is the role of generating new artefacts through practice in eliciting and contributing new knowledge (Candy, 2006). Although not the primary focus, my need to develop practice process in achieving research outcomes revealed new *Practice-Led* knowledge as well. The tags of *Practice-Based* and *Practice-Led* research as defined by Candy (2006) can be applied to numerous forms of creative practice. It is important therefore to further define a working methodology relating to specific practices for their contribution to be understood and acknowledged. For this reason, although focused on distinguishing NHI practice from that of other forms of related illustration practices, the descriptions offered here provide a basis for understanding the reasons for the NHI practitioner to employ key elements of methodology in their research enquiry.

This methodology encompasses two primary phases:

1. Transdisciplinary fieldwork: The primary function of this phase of enquiry is broad and adaptive in the acquisition, recording and analysis of knowledge (Llewellyn, 2008, p.258 - 259). Like the sciences this enquiry is focused on seeing and understanding.
2. Studio-based enquiry: This phase of the research is focused on the visual interpretation of knowledge acquired through fieldwork in context of the research objectives. Understanding gained through transdisciplinary fieldwork informs technical and conceptual approaches to the development of innovative illustrative outcomes.

These two phases of inquiry at times operate simultaneously in informing the continued direction of the practice-based research, and in shaping outcomes. This approach distinguishes NHI research methods from those of the sciences and aligns them more with *'designerly'* (Cross 1982, p.223) ways of thinking. This approach to thinking and problem solving is focused on solutions rather than the problem and according to Cross (1982) is where *'designers problem-solve by synthesis'* (1982, p223).

When discussing practice-based research in the book *Visualising Research; A guide to the research process in art and design.* The authors explores in a chapter titled *Crossing the terrain; vehicles for exploration the concept of 'practice'* (Gray, Malins 2004). Practice is described as having many interpretations. The author offers three:

- Practice as individual creative activity, perhaps the most obvious interpretation – 'making' in its broadest sense;
- Practice as facilitation and dissemination – activities related to visual arts/design/craft/new media, for example education, administration, and activities such as curating, commissioning, critical writing, and so on;
- Practice as collaborative activity, involving other practitioners, participants and professionals from other disciplines, and/or external bodies, for example industry, commerce, voluntary sectors, and so on. This approach could involve making, facilitating, disseminating, as well as negotiating, fundraising, and so on (Gray, Malins 2004, p.103 - 104).

By these definitions my practice-based research encompasses all three. Practice in relation to my research involved an individual creative practitioner engaging collaboratively with scientists to produce a body of illustrative works that would be used to facilitate the education of those charged with assessing body condition in captive Asian Elephants.

Cross-disciplinary exchanges in this type of research enquiry can only offer one aspect of the information required to make representational imagery that elicits specific information. Cross-disciplinary exchange is one aspect of trans-disciplinary fieldwork (Llewellyn, 2008) for the NHI researcher. Observational fieldwork is where the experiential knowledge influences studio-practice, specifically composition development and mark making in the illustration process. The role of observational fieldwork is key to interpretation in NHI. The experience of being in the physical presence of a subject, theme or environment and becoming aware of the wider sensory experience associated with that subject or environment is hard to quantify in the recording of the experience and how it is translated through practice. This wider sensory experience is a factor in the interpretation, not

just for the practitioner, but also for the viewer of the resulting images who can associate the familiar when recognising a subject in representational imagery.

This is best described by bird artist William Cooper (2011) in his book *Capturing the essence: Techniques for bird artist* where he refers to capturing the 'jizz' (2011, p.2) of a subject in the development of his works. He defines *jizz* as

The term used to describe the characteristic and often instant impression given by a plant or animal. Even when colour or pattern cannot be distinguished, a bird can sometimes be identified by the way it sits, moves or behaves – its *jizz*. (Cooper 2011, p.2)

Coopers capacity to capture the *jizz* of subjects in his work is best described by David Attenborough in his documentary titled *Portrait Painter to the Birds* (1992) and echoed in the forward he wrote for Penny Olsen's (2014) biography of Copper's life and work when he stated in reference to experiencing Cooper's works for the first time

These in front of me now, however, were plainly drawn by someone who had seen the living birds. Not only that, but the birds were shown, not in somewhat arbitrary settings, but perched among vegetation that was ecologically and botanically accurate. (Olson, 2014, p.viii)

This sentiment of the practice is echoed by Male (2007) is his description of NHI practitioners. He states 'In addition to the standard portrayal of the animal's physical form, the illustrator can convey a sense of the vitality and essence of the animal, much as might be experienced in the field' (Male 2007,p.108).

The ability to capture the *jizz* of a subject in an illustration as well as communicate specific content or narrative in resulting works is reliant on the NHI practitioner having a significant technical skill-base. The application of practice-based tacit knowledge (Rust 2004) in studio-based enquiry is where NHI practitioners can re-contextualise knowledge gained through cross-disciplinary exchange to propose new knowledge through practice. In stating this it is important to define practice-based tacit knowledge for the NHI practitioner. In context of the described methodological approach to research, practice-based tacit knowledge for the NHI practitioner is twofold:

1. Tacit knowledge (Rust 2004, p.79) of a technical skill-base. Knowledge depth will vary significantly between NHI practitioners, but by the nature of practice this knowledge should encompass fundamental skills in drawing, composition, understanding of tonal form and the capacity to construct and produce an accurate representation of visual content and narrative.
2. Tacit knowledge of experience - that of experiencing a subject, theme or event in the field.

Both are required in capturing and depicting the jizz of a subject, theme or event and in constructing and proposing new representations to visually communicate knowledge. The construction of a visual representation of knowledge, an artefact, is where a research approach outside that of the sciences is required for that knowledge to transcend its traditional bounds and be expressed in a form more widely accessible and understood. In essence, cross-disciplinary exchanges combined with a practitioner's tacit experience through fieldwork and practice forms the basis for generating an artefact that enables knowledge of a subject of research to be expressed explicitly. (Rust et al 2000)(Rust 2007,p.73). In this capacity an illustrator/artist making such a contribution through their practice is sometimes considered an expert in the field. This does not make the creative practitioner a scientist but demonstrates the rigor in this form of practice-based research. The work of William Cooper is an exemplar of this notion of the illustrator/artist being regarded as an expert in a field of scientific knowledge. Copper's life long contribution to ornithology through his artwork and collaborations with ornithologist such as Joe Forshaw was acknowledged with the gold medal of the Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia in 1992. 'This award is given intermittently to an artist whose artistic endeavors and life's work have contributed to man's better understanding and appreciation of living things' (Olson, 2014, p.158).

The purpose of the research

My doctoral research explored the Asian Elephant *(Elephas maximus)* as the subject for illustration and artwork. The title of my research was *Elephant: Art and Science* and this title encapsulated the structure of the study, first to explore the Elephant as subject for artwork/illustration and secondly to show the application of a resulting body of work to scientific research.

My research was not a scientific study, rather it was centred on the development of a body of an illustrative resource based on scientific methodology. My focus was on the development of illustrations suitable for application as visual reference in the Body Condition Scoring (BCS) of captive Asian Elephants. BCS formed one aspect of a multi-institutional study titled *Understanding the interaction between nutrition, activity and reproduction in captive Asian Elephants* (FWZ, 2009). My contribution to this research was through collaboration with Fort Worth Zoo veterinary science researcher Dr Roy McClements. The outcomes from this broader research initiative were ultimately focused on Elephant conservation.

Asian elephants are officially endangered. A greater understanding of how they breed, and the factors effecting successful breeding requires immediate attention to ensure species survival. According to the IUCN Red list the Asian Elephant's conservation status was last evaluated in 2008. The IUCN justification for this endangered listing is stated as:

Listed as Endangered (EN) because of a population size reduction inferred to be at least 50% over the last three generations, based on a reduction in its area of occupancy and the quality of its habitat. Although there are few accurate data on historical population size, from what is known about trends in habitat loss/degradation and other threats including poaching, an overall population decline of at least 50% over the last three generations (estimated to be 60–75 years, based on a generation time estimated to be 20–25 years) seems realistic. (Choudhury et al, 2010)

Elephants have a 22-month gestation period and only 50% of pregnancies result in the live birth of a calf. For this reason alone there is immediacy in the need to better understand Elephant health and its relationship to successful breeding to ensure the survival of the species (Sheddon, 2008).

Although the interpretation of the literal into accurate illustrated representational imagery may seem straight forward, or even be perceived as redundant in the age of digital imaging technology, this type of interpretation cannot be made solely by a piece of imaging technology that operates within the confines of a pre-programed scope of visual interpretations and therefore outcomes. Image capture does not equate to interpretation. Interpretation involves the conscious decisions made from a knowledge and practice base where original and unique imagery can be developed to isolate, construct and communicate specific content or narrative. It is the accessibility to the understanding of complex scientific knowledge through imagery where NHI practitioner/researchers continue to hold significant value in communicating science.

My Research and the influence of cross-disciplinary exchange on interpretation

Cross-disciplinary exchanges in my research were both remote and ***in situ***. It was the discussions around the broader research project, the science behind their approach to assessing body condition, and the capacity to observe keepers and researchers working with Elephants that provided both explicit and experiential knowledge.

Body Condition Scoring (BCS) is the process of visually assessing a number of regions of an animal's body and assigning a score or index value based on that assessment. BCS is effectively identifying an individual animal's body condition in relation to the body conditions of its species broader population. The index range, or the scope of body condition scores is determined by the methodology developed by researchers of that particular species and varies depending on the method or system they employ while making, collating and documenting that assessment data. BCS is a subjective visual analysis, a score is assigned to an animal based on an individual's or a group's interpretation of available information and reference.

There are considerable BCS resources developed for commercially viable livestock, such as cattle and horses yet there are very few BCS resources developed for wild and captive populations of exotic or domestic species. These developed resources, some illustrative and some photographic, were useful in understanding how BCS reference has been described before, but there were no documented accounts of the practice-base employed in their development. This is one area in which my research offers new knowledge relating to practice, with application to the development of future BCS reference for any species.

For my own understanding, and to describe BCS in terms that simplify and reflect the content for illustrations, I defined BCS as; observing the relationship between the skin and skeleton. This understanding became the focus of an illustration seen in ***Figure 1***. This illustration was developed and used to reference the observations I was making and needed to reflect in the final illustrations. The illustration gave context to the visibility of bony structures as body condition declined.

The level of fat and muscle condition of an individual animal determines the relationship between skin and skeleton. This simplified definition isolated two specific focuses for observation in my fieldwork and research: first, the visible surface form of the elephant, and the second it's underlying structure, the skeleton. The skeleton was the consistent frame that the varying levels of muscle and fat rested upon. Illustrations were developed for both of these visual elements in representing each body condition accurately. Understanding the anatomy of Asian Elephants was crucial to depicting their jizz and became a focus of my fieldwork. It was imperative when developing imagery to be used by Elephant keepers and carers that the imagery gave the instant impression of the animal they encountered on a daily basis and knew intimately.

Based on Henneke's (1983) seminal study of BCS in mares, the Texas-based research group had developed a working structure for their BCS assessment of

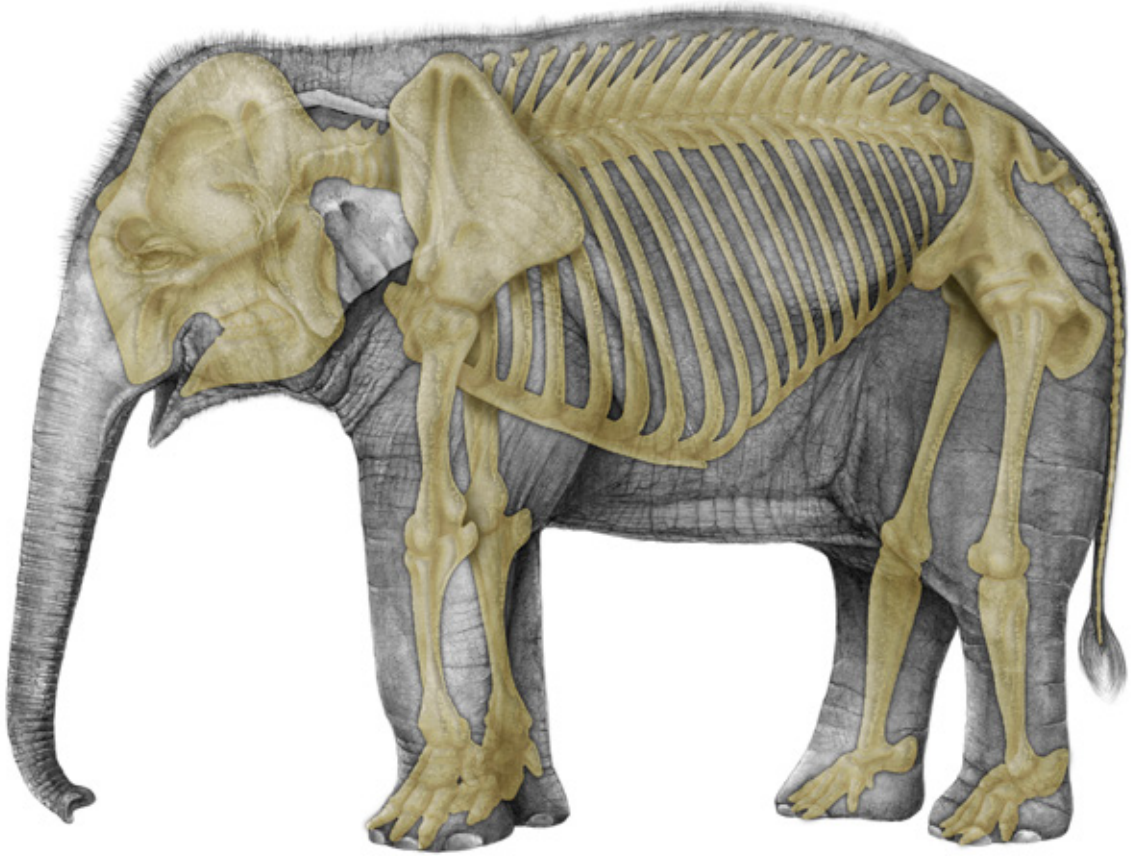

Figure 1: Reference of the relationship between the skin and skeleton, A. Howells

captive Asian Elephants. This model defined a range of nine indexed body conditions ranging from emaciated to obese. The research group aimed to develop and provide visual reference and text descriptions of the physical condition associated with nine indexed body condition scores for captive Asian Elephants. It was decided that visual reference and text-based descriptions were to be supplied for multiple views of the Elephant with a focus on specific anatomical regions in each.

In my preliminary discussions with the researchers I questioned several of their plans for developing and using specific forms of visual resources for instructing assessors to make a visual BCS assessment. These questions were based on my understanding of constructed images, not based on scientific knowledge. I identified several areas in which illustrated reference material could more effectively communicate the subtle visible differences in physical form more effectively than photographic reference. Through my practice I sought to reduce and where possible eliminate some of these variability's, and offered a range of possible visual resource solutions in addition to those they had proposed.

The following is a list of the variables and anomalies I associated with the use of BCS photographic reference. These anomalies related to discrepancies between individual animals in reference sets as well as technical considerations around image capture. The following are the main variables in the photographic reference material:

- A different individual animal demonstrating each body condition in the set of nine.
- A difference in the time of day or light in which a subject was photographed.
- A difference in the technical proficiency of the photog-

rapher and their equipment. This
included compositional skills and the over and under exposure of photographs.
• A difference in the position of a photographer in relation to their subject. This included a difference in elevation of the photographer (above, in-line or below the subject) and
the angle of the photographer to the subject (to the left, right or centred).
• A difference in the position or stance of a subject in individual reference.
• A difference in contextual environmental information in reference compositions, such as foliage or other animals.

The images in ***Figure 2*** demonstrate these variables in photographic reference. There are significant visible differences in the images, apart from a difference in physical form, that impede the capacity to effectively observe only subtle surface form variances. The difference in visible surface form is the basis for identifying and assigning a body condition score.

The list of discrepancies provided a platform to develop imagery that would address them. In planning for this I proposed a set of illustration requirements. These requirements were developed in context of the need to address anomalies and embody the specific knowledge the research group had outlined in their descriptions for each of the nine body conditions. The following is a list of the illustration requirements that were developed primarily as a means of planning, resourcing and evaluating my works.

• Illustrations should be developed based on the supplied descriptions and examples of the nine body conditions defined by the researchers.
• Illustrations should demonstrate those nine conditions

Figure 2: Comparative photographic reference, A Howells

from the six specified angled views.
• Illustrations should be flexible in their development process to allow for editing as they were being produced, and flexibility in their application as an image type suitable for numerous forms of exhibition and publication. Therefore they need to be easily scalable and reproducible while maintaining integrity as reference.
• Illustrations should depict a single generic specimen demonstrating all nine-body conditions for all the required angled views.

The illustration style should be easily applied in the development of a significant number of illustrations. This was crucial in achieving consistency in reference sets. I focused on two main areas when addressing the need for consistency and visual continuity:

1. The Subject - Consistency in scale, the use of tonal range, position/stance of the subject and the physical characteristics of the subject, such as hair, eyes and skin surface quality.

2. The Process - Consistency in the use of methods and materials in the production of all illustrations in the complete reference set.

Describing a monotone Elephant immediately reduced the variability associated with individual Elephant's environments and some physical attributes such as pigmentation in areas of dappled skin. This would also enable the development of a process focused only on tone and profile shape to describe changing form.

By this stage of my research there were three main research activities operating simultaneously in shaping outcomes.

1. Observational fieldwork – This activity was undertaken at zoos housing captive Asian Elephants and museums that held articulated Asian Elephant skeletons in their collection

2. Studio-based enquiry – This activity was focused on capturing the Jizz of the subject in the artworks, developing a process for illustrating a consistent body of work and experimentation with technique, media and materials, including digital and traditional processes.

3. Cross-disciplinary exchange - There were four main exchanges during my research that had significant influence on my interpretation of the subject and science.
• Observing keepers and researchers conducting Body Condition Score assessment on a resident herd (FWZ).
• Accessing the research group's comprehensive photographic database of Asian Elephant body conditions.
• The discussions resulting from my presentations of preliminary and developing illustrations to keepers and researchers.
• Observing other forms of data collection within the broader research.
The influence of these cross-disciplinary exchanges on my research is best understood in the context of fulfilling the illustration requirements. To discuss these influences on my practice I have categorised them into three main points.

1. The influence of cross-disciplinary exchange on the development of a generic specimen

Accessing the research group's comprehensive photographic database of Asian Elephant body conditions and then having the opportunity to ask questions relating to common and uncommon physical forms was instrumental in developing a drawn specimen to use as the basis for a developed reference set. Having experts point to specific details of reference images clarified and informed my understanding of an optimal stance for the subject and the eye-line in compositions. Stance would influence weight distribution and therefore the evidence of actual fat and muscle condition between the skin and skeleton. Viewing such a volume of different Elephants provided a basis for averaging their physical characteristics such as hair coverage and the surface quality of skin.

2. The influence of cross-disciplinary exchange on developing a process for insuring consistency in imagery

One of the most significant influences on my practice was in the development of a drawing process that facilitated the fulfulment of the illustration requirements while simultaneously being editable to accommodate ongoing cross-disciplinary input. The principles of traditonal two-dimensional animation provided a basis for this process. Animation ensured consistency through image registration in sequential imagery and in the development and application of style conventions. These conventions governed the use of a tonal range, surface quality texture and physical characteristics such as the ear, eye, trunk and tail positions and details. Additionally, although first explored as a way to control visual continuity between reference images in their development, animation processes became a means by which multiple forms of reference could be developed from a single stage of practice. ***Figure 3*** evidences the development of BCS reference illustrations using animation principles with the skeleton providing a central registration point for the changing profile of the elephant. ***Figure 4*** demonstrates the consistency in imagery resulting from the developed illustration process.

The process for rendering reference illustrations was developed through studio-based enquiry and incorporated both traditional and digital techniques. Due to the nature

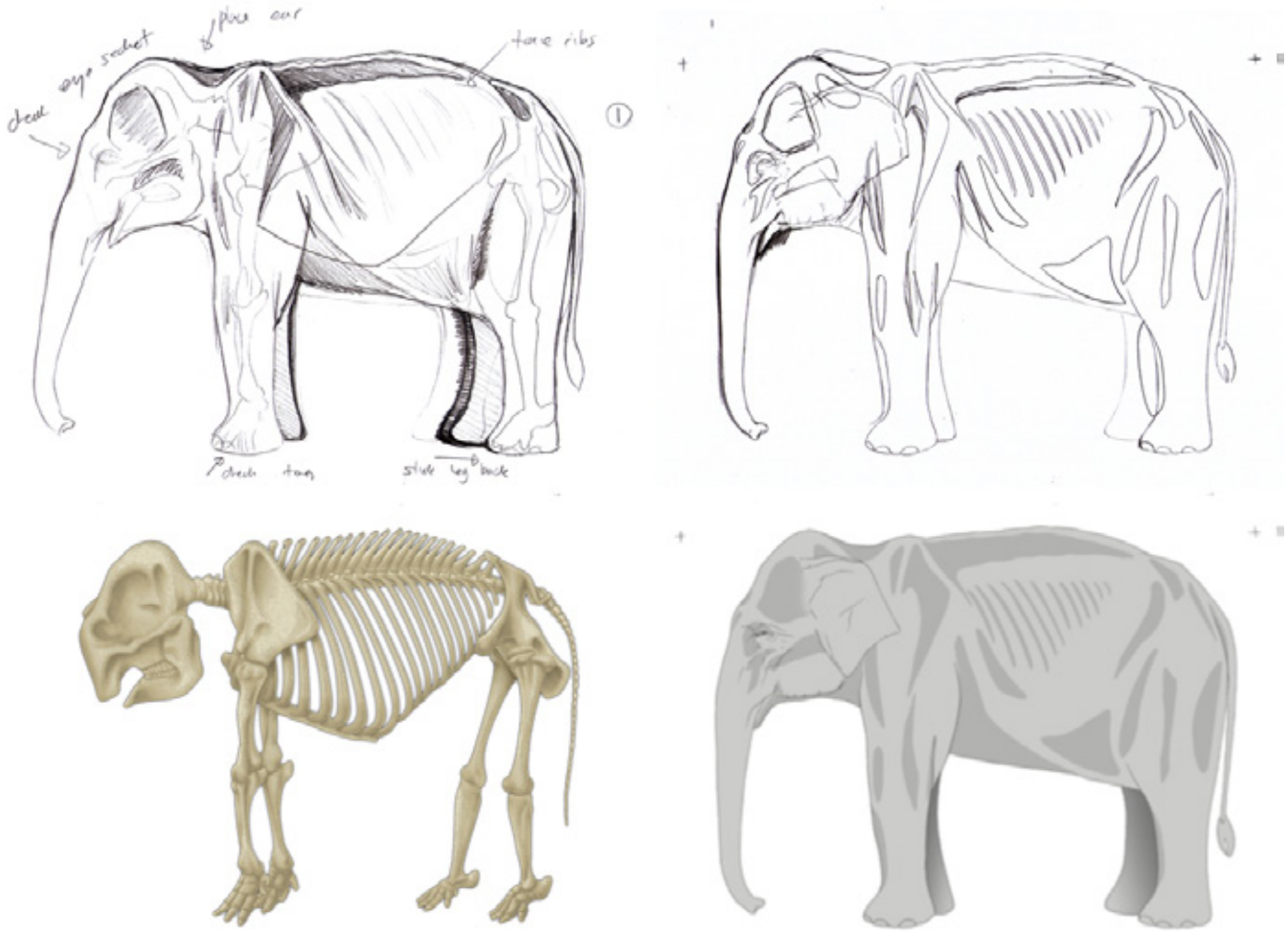

Figure 3: Development drawings for BCS reference set, A. Howells

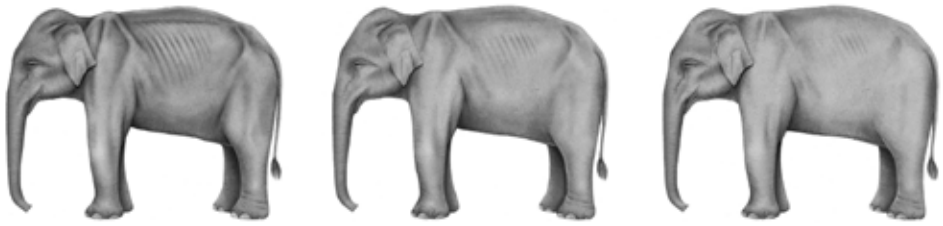

Figure 4: BCS reference illustrations, A. Howells

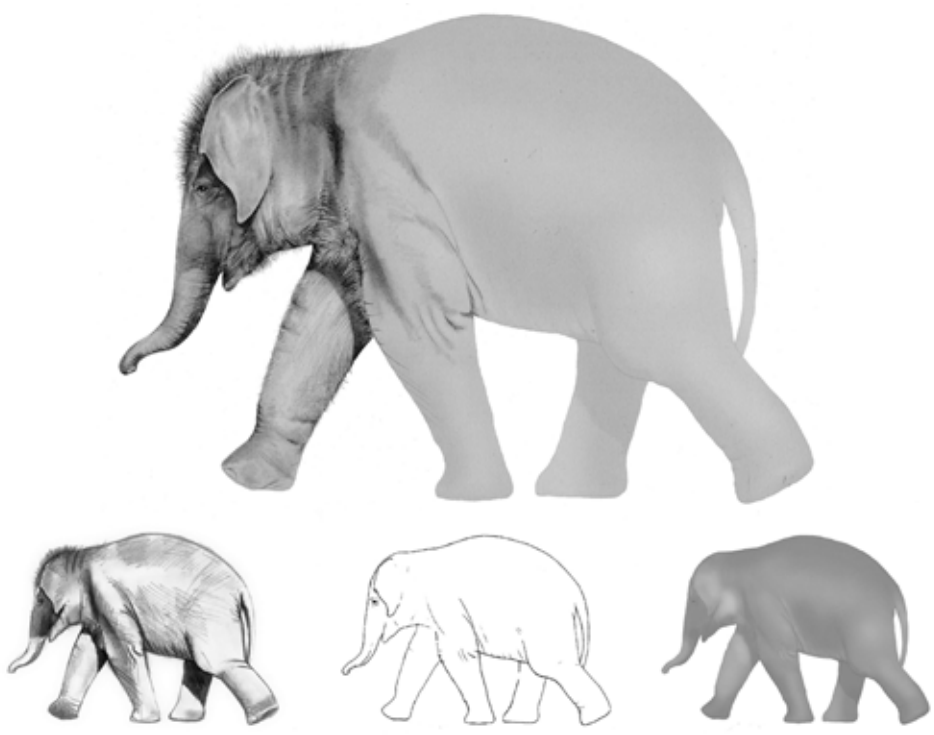

Figure 5: Illustration rendering process, A. Howells

of the project there were several stages of development and cross-disciplinary exchange in the development of each illustration. Once a generic specimen was established and the nine illustrations were sketched the style conventions were then applied when rendering. The use of graphics software allowed me to control many of the anomalies associated with the development of a sequential body of illustrations. ***Figures 5*** and ***6*** provide an understanding of this process. In ***Figure 5*** the same illustration is seen in three of its developmental phases, reading from left to right the original sketch is developed into a clean line illustration before having its tonal form rendered in Adobe Photoshop. The rendered form then has its surface detail described traditionally. In ***Figure 6*** the final Illustration is then re-contextualised as part of an entire sequence.

As part of my transdiscplinary fieldwork I researched excisting bodies of artwork depicting elephants to better understand techniques previously utilised to depict them. This information, coupled with the technical challenges involved in the BCS illustration requirements, led to specific studio-based enquiry focused on the use of media and materials. The artworks I discovered through my literature and practical review fell into two main catagories: first, the Elephant as decorative elements in cultural designs, and second as the subject of nostaligic wildlife art. Although not directly related to the development of BCS reference illustrations the following artwork examples in ***Figures 7*** and ***8*** demonstrate some of the works I developed in response to this research. The two examples of artwork differ significantly in style and technique but both encompose elements of traditional and digital practice in their development. The experience of making these works influenced my understanding of the effects created when a range of a materials, mark making tools and techniques were combined in a digital environment. This understanding

Figure 6: Pathi Harn walking sequence (A. Howells).

Figure 7: Elephant portraits, A. Howells

Figure 8: The Elephant as subject for decorative patterns, A. Howells

ultimately contributed to the final illustration process applied in the development of BCS reference illustrations.

3. The influence of cross-disciplinary exchange on the development of outcome forms and their application

Cross-disciplinary exchange influenced my practice approach and the resulting practice approach provided a platform to view the range of nine body conditions as static, moving and interactive reference. ***Figure 9*** demonstrates to entire set of illustrated references, comprising nine indexed body condition scores from six different angles. Each set depicted a single specimen demonstrating the range of possible body conditions and had an accompanying skeletal reference. Due to the use of image registration in the illustration process each of the six sets could then be viewed in a screen-based environment and toggled between within the framework of their text based descriptions. Additionally, skeletal reference could be accessed via a roll-over when viewing an individual illustration to give context to the evidence of visible surface depressions. As an accompanying reference, each set could be viewed as a morphing animation. Effectively the resource illuminated the science of body condition scoring and the illustration process provided a platform to develop and communicate it in a variety of forms and formats.

Conclusion

Although focused on prescribed outcomes, the designerly approach taken to problem solving, the contribution of both collaborative parties in developing the scope of possible outcomes offered and realised effectively defined this research. The innovative and adaptive practices of NHI researchers offer the sciences and other collaborators significant contribution in both active

research inquiry and the dissemination of knowledge.

The cross-disciplinary exchanges in my doctoral research were ongoing and instrumental in developing and delivering outcomes. In this context cross-disciplinary exchange is not about commentary on the practitioner's use of materials, technique or other factors specific to illustration practice, but is based on information exchange and the evidence of clear and accurate information being represented and communicated through an objective artefact. The level and forms of cross-disciplinary exchange will vary from project to project but will generally occur throughout as they inform, shape and endorse the outcomes.

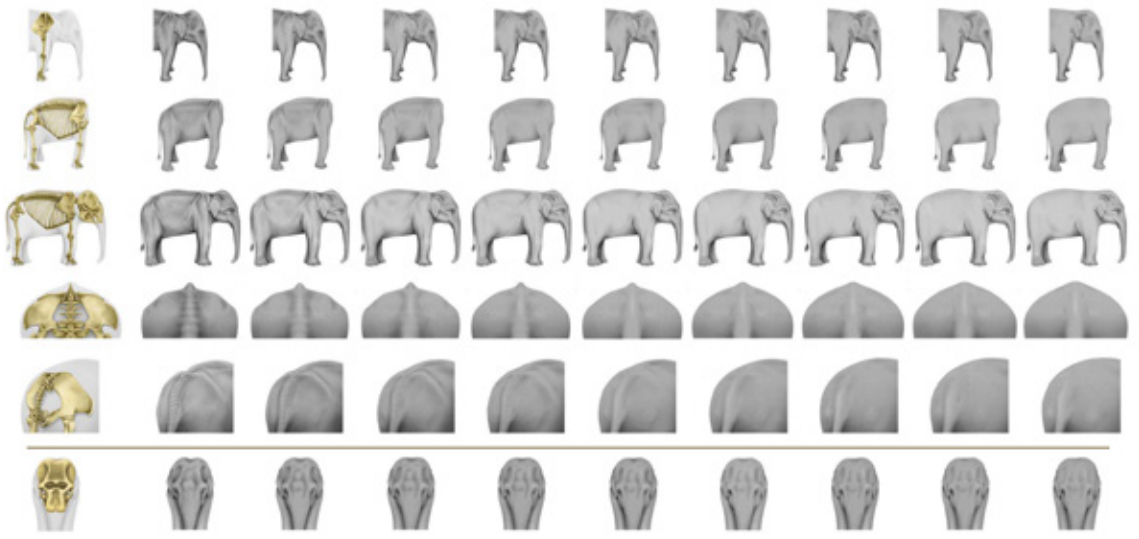

Figure 9: Illustrated BCS reference set, A. Howells

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Girls Go First?

Negotiating Gender Representation in Contemporary Illustration

Political Business

An illustrator's creative liberty is restrained: Though hired for their unique view of the world and idiosyncratic style, on one hand their work is shaped by their clients' stipulations and on the other hand by the visual codes and conventions that communication requires. Within these constraints, however, the creative interpretation of the client's brief is a central part of the illustrator's work. Based on their understanding of the brief and according to their own view of the world illustrators make autonomous decisions about what to show in an image and how to show it. Through these more or less conscious decisions the illustrators' opinions become part of the visual representation they create and remain an integral part unless challenged by the client. What do the characters look like? What do they do? Is the woman as tall as the man? Is she a little shorter—or taller? These may seem like unimportant visual details, but they influence content and raise larger issues of representation.

Illustration is sometimes dismissed as making pretty pictures and many illustrators are unconcerned with the role and relevance of their work within a larger social context. But creating visual representations for mass media is a political business. With Stuart Hall (1997), one of the founding fathers of the British cultural studies, and the American scholar Richard Dyer (1993) I think of representation not as merely reflecting a pre-existing reality but as a signifying practice that constitutes realities by "mak(ing) things mean" (Hall, 1997, p.10). Creating visual representations then is politically charged work, because images play a part in the construction and negotiation of what the American film theorist Kaja Silverman calls the "dominant fiction" and describes as "what passes for reality in a given society" (1996, p.178). Understanding reality as socially constructed within a field of conflicting interests implies that it is not given and static but dynamic and changeable.

"To represent", as the Austrian cultural theorist Johanna Schaffer puts it, means "to make present something absent" (2008, p.78). Since representations stand in place of an actual (or imaginary) person, thing, idea, or another representation, and use conventional forms to do so, they are necessarily selective and to some extend incomplete and inadequate. Representation always involves a foreshortening of complexity and this might seem discouraging. But Richard Dyer reminds us in *The Matter Of Images: Essays On Representation* that if the inevitability of using culturally available codes and conventions to communicate seems "like a limitation on saying, it is also what makes saying possible at all" (1993, p.2). And despite the fact that images are based on a familiar repertoire of image elements, Umberto Eco suggests in his influential book *The Open Work* that the meaning of images can never be definitely determined and "closed" (Eco, 1989). Meaning rather originates in-between the image, its context and the reader. And people's reading of images depends as much on what they are looking at as on what they have seen before.

Visual representations produce meaning by bestowing emphasis, importance and 'realness'. By showing one thing rather than another and by representing everything in a specific way, they align with certain interests and ideas rather than with others. This particular understanding of representation is not concerned with an accurate or undistorted view of the world, but with the reality-producing effects of visual representation. It does not ask "is this image a realistic depiction of the world?" but rather "what kind of reality does this image suggest?" and "whose perspective does it represent?" Illustrators know from their everyday work that each representation is an interpretation from a specific point of view, and this means that the decisions they make about what to show and how are of great importance.

In this essay I consider the political implications of illustration as a reality-producing signifying practice. With a focus on the representation of gender, I compare examples of early sketches and final illustrations by three contemporary German illustrators to examine how illustrators and their clients negotiate which version of reality is being represented in an illustration. Still, the examples are in no way representative: Stephanie Wunderlich, Henning Tietz and Till Laßmann are Hamburg-based colleagues who were interested in the subject when I asked them about it. Of course, this small sample of before-and-after versions of commissioned illustrations cannot serve as empirical evidence to make an argument about gender representation in German illustration or illustration in general. Instead, it is an occasion to consider how different worldviews are being negotiated between the illustrator's initial interpretation of a brief and the adjustments their client asks for.

Realities from Scratch

Illustrators make images that communicate a given message or mood in the context of a larger work. When they visually interpret a briefing or a text they bear in mind the expectations of both their client and an often large and diverse target audience. Their understanding of the audience's expectations is usually mediated by their client, for example an art director or editor, and skewed by the client's need to engage the target group and ultimately to sell their product.

If visual representations do not just reflect the world but interpret it, then the type of reality represented in an illustration is the result of a negotiation between the illustrator's worldview and that of the client. Instances of this negotiation can be observed when it comes to how men and women are depicted. But while the client might ask for ***some*** changes to the characters' appear-

Henning Tietz, *Radiowerkstatt,* final version, still image 6 from an animation for SF myschool, edited by Barbara Krieger, 2012

ance and actions, like a different hairstyle or clothes, other, sometimes marginal aspects go unquestioned from the first sketch to the final draft. So even though illustrators create images according to their clients' demands, they do have some freedom to highlight particular aspects rather than others and influence the meaning of an illustration through their minor design decisions.

Most illustrations are not photographic but drawn, painted, collaged, digitally composed, or built in three dimensions and then photographed. In this kind of hand-made image, representation functions differently than in photography and film because everything in the image needs to be created—more or less—from scratch. When composing their images, illustrators represent some sort of reality, even if imaginary or surreal, and make a large number of decisions about what this reality looks like and what is included in it, what is made visible and what is omitted. Since illustrators need to choose the appropriate elements to make the depicted scene convincing, many use reference photos or do onsite sketches from life. But it is up to them to alter, leave out details, highlight, emphasize, dramatize and focus.

Though illustrators work within commercial constraints and need to base their images on visual elements their audience knows to decipher, the individual iterations of familiar motifs are as manifold as the number of artists creating them. It is a central part of an illustrators' job to make use of the latitude she has in interpreting the briefing while still conveying the commissioned content. From these instances of interpretation and variation derives the agency of the illustrator - the ability to consciously decide which version of the world to represent.

Utopia Negotiated

The kind of changes clients request to the representation of gender in the illustrations they commission support the understanding that illustrations—like any representation—do not simply show facets of a world existing independent of its representations but rather bring this world into existence. The revisions in my three examples were geared at showing a version of reality that can be thought of as utopic, one in which gender equality has been achieved and out-dated gender roles have been overcome. Obviously, this reality has not yet been attained. But if the meanings produced by images did not have an impact on social realities, there would be no point in asking for edits that show certain gender roles rather than others. At a time when gender-mainstreaming as a strategy to achieve gender equality has become official government policy in Germany (BMFSFJ, 2014) and is instituted by law, one could think that clients who want to present themselves as up-to-date can hardly afford not to represent gender equality in the images they use.

But unless gender is specifically part of the commissioned subject, the characters' gender and the visual representation of it are often not discussed up front as part of the briefing. Instead, they become an issue only once the client sees the idea sketches or even when the illustrations have already been completed. This was the case in the example by Stephanie Wunderlich. In 2008, Stephanie was commissioned to create an illustration for an article about the chore of cooking over holidays for the Christmas edition of the weekly magazine supplement of a large German daily paper. From her sketches the editor chose one with a family busy with Christmas preparations and Stephanie created the illustration from cut paper—a woman stirring food on a stove in the front, children setting the table in the middle ground and at the back a man on a ladder decorating a Christmas tree with the help of an older woman (***Figure 1***). Even though the editor had seen and agreed to the sketch, when Stephanie sent in the illustration, the woman at the stove was deemed too stereotypical and Stephanie was asked to edit the image so that the man would do the cooking rather than the woman (***Figure 2***). In the revised version Stephanie showed the man somewhat ironically, wearing a bow tie, a white chef's hat and a chain of lights around his shoulders. He casually holds a glass of wine and with an exaggerated gesture adds a pinch of herbs to the pot. In comparison, the woman in the first version is shown more serious, with no particular signs of leisurely cooking or out-of-the-ordinary culinary expertise.

The characters' change of gender was intended to avoid representing all-too traditional gender roles, but one could argue that the second version of the illustration shows just another gendered stereotype—that of the male hobby chef who devotes himself to cuisine (rather than ordinary cooking, as the pinch-of-herbs-gesture suggests) when his precious time allows. Stephanie pointed out to me that she did not really know why she made the ironic additions in the second version, but even without them the example can be understood as a demonstration of the fact that a mere reversal of the characters' gender in an image does not necessarily help to avoid stereotypical gender roles.

Like the illustration by Stephanie Wunderlich, my second example addresses antiquated gender roles and shows the limited success of simply reversing them. It is also an instance in which an illustrator successfully argued against some of the client's adjustments. The images (***Figures 3*** to ***8***) are stills from a digital animation Henning Tietz created for a program on Swiss public TV. The main characters are a girl and a boy, both wearing

jeans, sneakers and t-shirts in different shades of blue. The boy is taller than the girl, she wears a ponytail while his hair is short, his eyebrows are wider and less arched than hers, and her t-shirt has a lower neckline than his.

At the beginning of the clip, the two children run across the cover of a notebook (***Figure 3***). At its edge the boy takes the lead and starts to pull open the pages, but he does not manage to do it until the girl comes to help him (***Figure 4***). In another scene the figures surf on a wave, with the boy standing at the front of the surfboard and the girl behind him (***Figure 7***). The editor of the TV-program who commissioned this animation, however, was not happy with the rather traditional gender roles epitomized by the boy playing the more active part and the girl, supposedly clever but more cautious, running behind him. She asked Henning to change the characters' positions so that the girl leads the action. In the revised version the girl runs ahead (***Figure 5)***, makes the first attempts at pulling open the notebook (***Figure 6***), and stands at the front of the surfboard ***(Figure 8***). Since the board tilts slightly upwards, the girl now looks almost as tall as the boy.

Again, it is open to debate whether the changes to the roles and positions of the two figures were for the better or not. And as in the example by Stephanie Wunderlich the reversal of the roles does not avoid representing gendered roles but rather references a different set of stereotypes. For example, in the first still image it looks as if the boy chases or stalks the girl—at least until the detail of their laughing mouths catches the eye. In the second still, when the boy comes to help the girl open the notebook he jumps up her back in a strange way. And what kind of message does it send, if the girl does not succeed at a physical effort—until the boy helps her? To be fair, these impressions might be due to the fact that the images are animation stills, images taken 'in mid-air' from a course of action.

Figure 1: Stephanie Wunderlich, *Untitled* (Christmas cooking), first version, for *Süddeutsche Zeitung Magazin*, 2008
Figure 2: Stephanie Wunderlich, *Untitled* (Christmas cooking), final illustration, for *Süddeutsche Zeitung Magazin,* 2008

Figure 3: Henning Tietz, *Radiowerkstatt*, first version, still image 1 from an animation for SF myschool, edited by Barbara Krieger, 2012

Henning told me that when he planned the film, he conceptualised the boy as a rough adventurer and the girl as ingenious and smart. He said he specifically made an effort to take gender equality into account by having both the boy and the girl do "cool things" and allotting each the same amount of "screen time." When the editor pointed out to him that he made the boy be in charge in all scenes, he mainly felt "caught" because despite his well-meaning efforts he had not noticed. Though Henning agreed with the changes the editor requested, in one instance he talked back. In the scene in question the two kids go on a tour through Switzerland in a red convertible. The boy drives and the girl is in the passenger seat (***Figure 9***). For this scene too, the editor asked to have the girl be at the wheel, but Henning insisted that it was a reference to Rock-Hudson-and-Doris-Day-movies and the boy chauffeuring the girl a gentlemanly gesture. The scene stayed as it was.

Henning and Stephanie accepted the alterations their clients demanded and incorporated them in revised versions of their images. But at the same time both obstinately found ways of retaining aspects of their own point of view - Stephanie by ironizing the reversed gender roles and Henning by linking the scene to a romantically charged historic genre of movies in which the gender roles were still traditional. In effect, both Henning and Stephanie used their leverage to counter their clients' endeavours, which could be called politically correct, emancipatory or even utopian. But maybe they only balanced out those efforts and prevented the images from becoming too brightened a version of "the dominant fiction" and thus hard-to-believe. This shows that illustrators do have some agency in the negotiation of what their images show, because even if clients challenge some elements of their designs, others pass unquestioned - as we will see in the next example.

Figure 4: Henning Tietz, *Radiowerkstatt*, first verstion, still image 2. All images from an animation for SF myschool, edited by Barbara Krieger, 2012
Figure 5: Henning Tietz, *Radiowerkstatt*, first version, still image 3

The illustration by Till Laßmann is an example for all the points addressed so far. Till was asked to represent an idealized rendering of a company's employee gender ratio but the issue was only addressed once the client saw the first sketch. And while it was important to the client that the image showed an equal number of female and male employees, the representation of ethnic aspects of identity in some of the figures did not stir up any discussion.

In 2012, a German credit insurance company commissioned Till to illustrate their internal processes. The illustration was going to be used at a company event to review the previous year and set goals for the year to come. It would be made available in the firm's intranet as an interactive graphic about the organizational structure. The building in the foreground at the bottom left represents the company's headquarters, the eight windows are marked with abbreviations for the firm's divisions and each window frames the head of a figure. Above the building, a blue "value creation circle" occupies the centre of the image. It is made up of five section arrows, each of them hosting two figures who engage in different aspects of the company's daily business. The insurance's employees are marked with blue jackets.

In his initial pencilled sketch (***Figure 10***), Till drew only male figures in the circle at the centre. And of the eight people in the headquarters only three were women, recognizable by their hairstyles. When Till presented the sketch, his client asked him to draw half of the employees as women, in particular those in the building and in the large circle in the middle. Till incorporated these requests in his second sketch (***Figure 11)*** and based on this he drew the final drawing in bold black brush strokes (***Figure 12***), leaving out some of the detail. After the edits, the headquarters have a second row of

Figure 6: Henning Tietz, *Radiowerkstatt,* final version, still image 4. All images from an animation for SF myschool, edited by Barbara Krieger, 2012

Figure 7: Henning Tietz, *Radiowerkstatt*, final version, still image 5
Figure 8: Henning Tietz, *Radiowerkstatt*, final version, still image 6

Figure 9: Henning Tietz, *Radiowerkstatt*, final version, still image 7 from animation for SF myschool, edited by Barbara Krieger, 2012

windows, and both rows consist of twelve window frames. In the top row six frames show female heads, six male; in the second row only silhouettes are visible and their gender is more difficult to determine but they could be distinguished based on the suggested hairstyles as well. At the centre, the circle now hosts three female and two male employees. The clients they interact with, however, remain the same—they are all male. The gender of the insurance agent on the other side of the river, right above the value creation circle did not change, and neither did that of the three tiny figures standing next to a blue-dressed employee at the bottom right of the drawing (***Figures.13,14,15***).

Even though their gender did not change these figures are interesting in the context of this essay. They exemplify a problem related to that of gender representation - the representation of ethnic or racialised difference. Their briefcases identify the three figures as business contacts of the firm, and the unsurprising graphic short hand for "Arab," "African," and "Chinese" further pins them down as international business contacts. From the first sketch to the final drawing, the white thawb and turban worn by the first figure (while everyone else wears "western" clothes), the grey shade on the face on the second figure (while all the other faces are without any shading), and the horizontal lines for the eyes on the third (rather than dots like the eyes of all the other figures) remained the same - apparently they were not things the client took issue with.

Effectively, the illustrator's visual interpretation of the client's "international business contacts" is not just a graphic detail, but it is a decision on the level of content because it says "this is what Arabs, Chinese people and Africans look like, this is how you can tell." This decision passed unchallenged by the client, possibly because it represents a shared perspective. It could

also more generally be understood as an example of how illustration communicates based on recognizable visual elements, with little tolerance for ambiguity. With this setting it is a challenge to come up with signifiers to distinguish figures as "international business men" while avoiding to equate difference with physical markers like eyes and skin colour. This is especially true when the figures are drawn only a centimetre tall. But why not, for example, draw them standing on outlines of their respective countries, or next to flags of their nations? Finally, the fact that the representation of the international businessmen was not put into question by Till's client suggests that the importance of visual representation for achieving gender equality has been established in Germany (or at least the importance of subscribing to that goal), but non-essentialist representations of cultural and ethnic difference are not yet on the agenda.

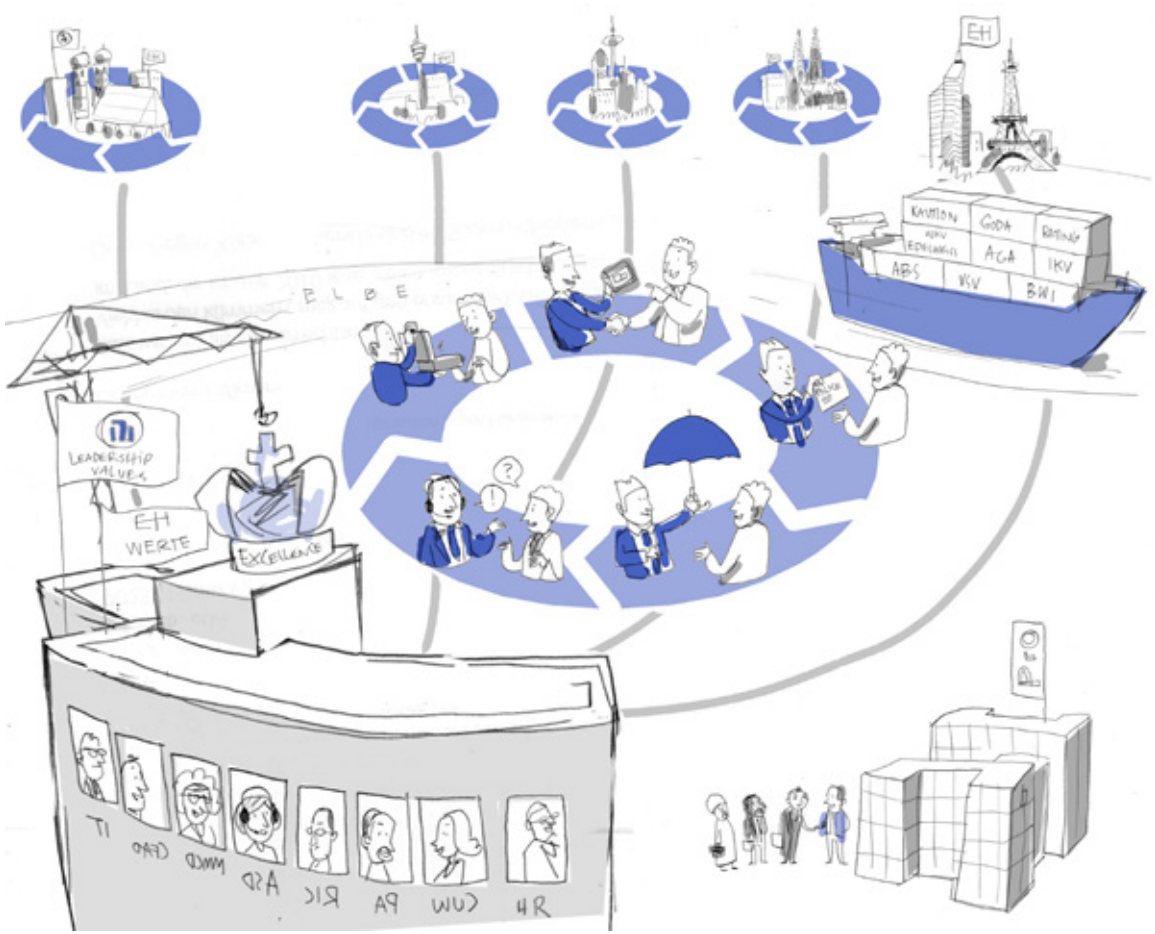

Figure10: Till Lassmann, *Untitled (Added Value Circle), initial sketch, for Euler Hermes, 2012*

Anticipatory Obedience?

Illustration is a shared effort. In the process of making commissioned illustrations, the ideas, perspectives and opinions of at least two people need to be reconciled. This reconciliation can happen by way of negotiation between the illustrator and the client or ultimately by imposition through the client. When I started thinking about this subject, I assumed that illustrators were idealistically resisting their clients' conservative world view and trying to create progressive representations of men and women, images that help to overcome gender injustice and improve the world. But no. Contrary to what I expected, when I asked colleagues for examples I found more cases of clients asking for representations of less conventional gender roles, than changes made to 'straighten out' too unconventional representations.

The three examples discussed in this essay could

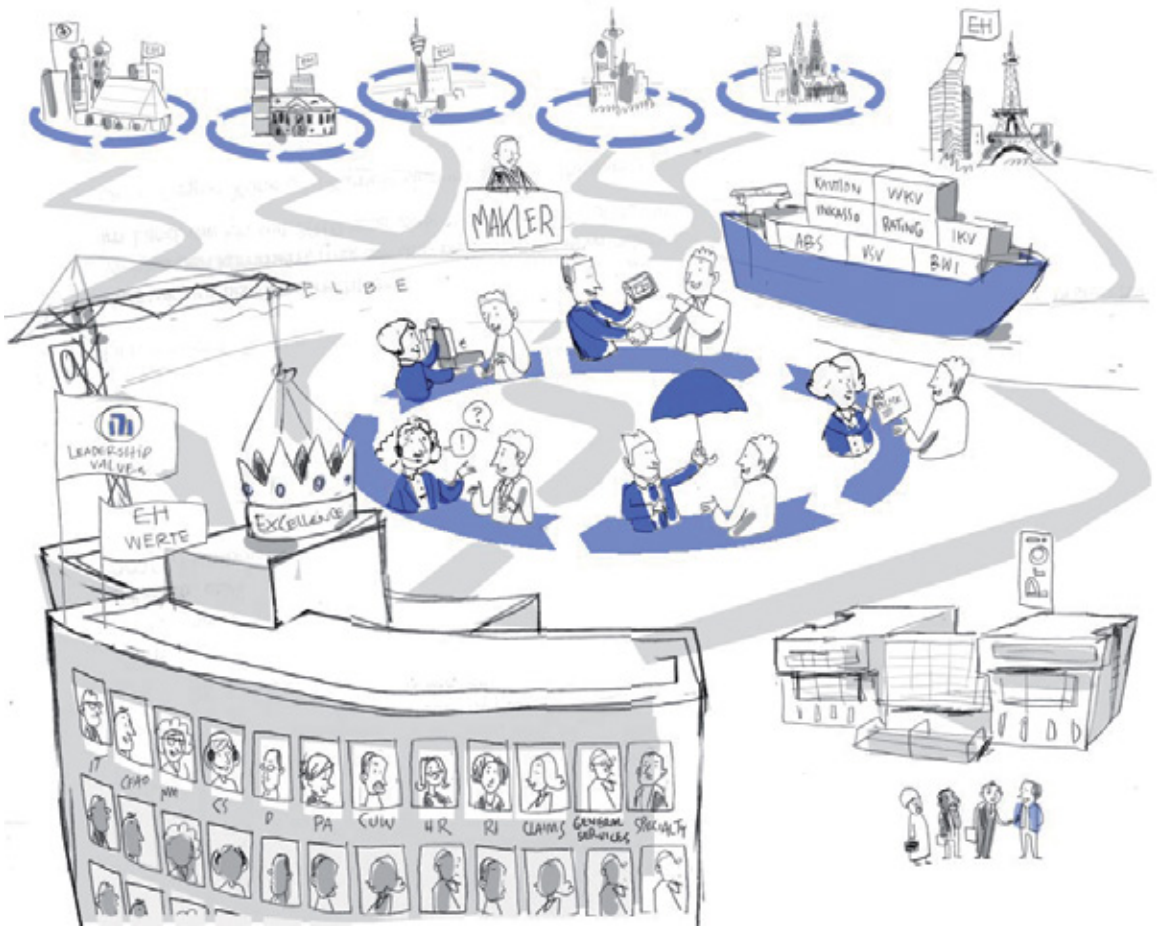

Figure 11: Till Lassmann, *Untitled* (Added Value Circle), revised sketch, for Euler Hermes, 2012

give the impression that illustrators create images of men and women not spending too much time thinking about the symbolic and political dimensions of gender representation. In all three cases it was the clients who intervened and with their changes aimed at showing a reality that features a level of gender equality and flexible gender roles that have not been attained just yet. Of course, it is possible that clients are just concerned with projecting a progressive image of themselves with the images they commission and use in their communication. And it is also possible that illustrators in a kind of I-think-they-think pre-emptive obedience attempt to anticipate the expectations of their clients and tend towards more traditional representations of gender to streamline their workflow and avoid discussions and time-consuming revisions caused by representations that deviate too much from what is deemed typical.

Casual conversations with illustrators, art directors and editors highlight the complex process of making commissioned illustrations. The question how gender is negotiated in this process will merit future research, interviews with a larger number of illustrators and the inclusion of the point of view of the clients—their education and both professional and personal agendas and those of the media they work for.

Nevertheless, even my few examples suggest that illustrators do have some agency to shape the overall impression and content of their images—despite the constraints of the field and the required readiness to compromise. Some of the decisions they make about what they show in an image are renegotiated, but with or without discussion other aspects pass unedited and remain in the image. Certainly, the illustrator's liberty to focus on some aspects in their images rather than on others is limited. But asking themselves "what kind of reality does this image suggest?" and "whose perspec-

tive does it represent?" helps illustrators to use their leverage wisely and make more conscious decisions about the version of reality they bring into existence.

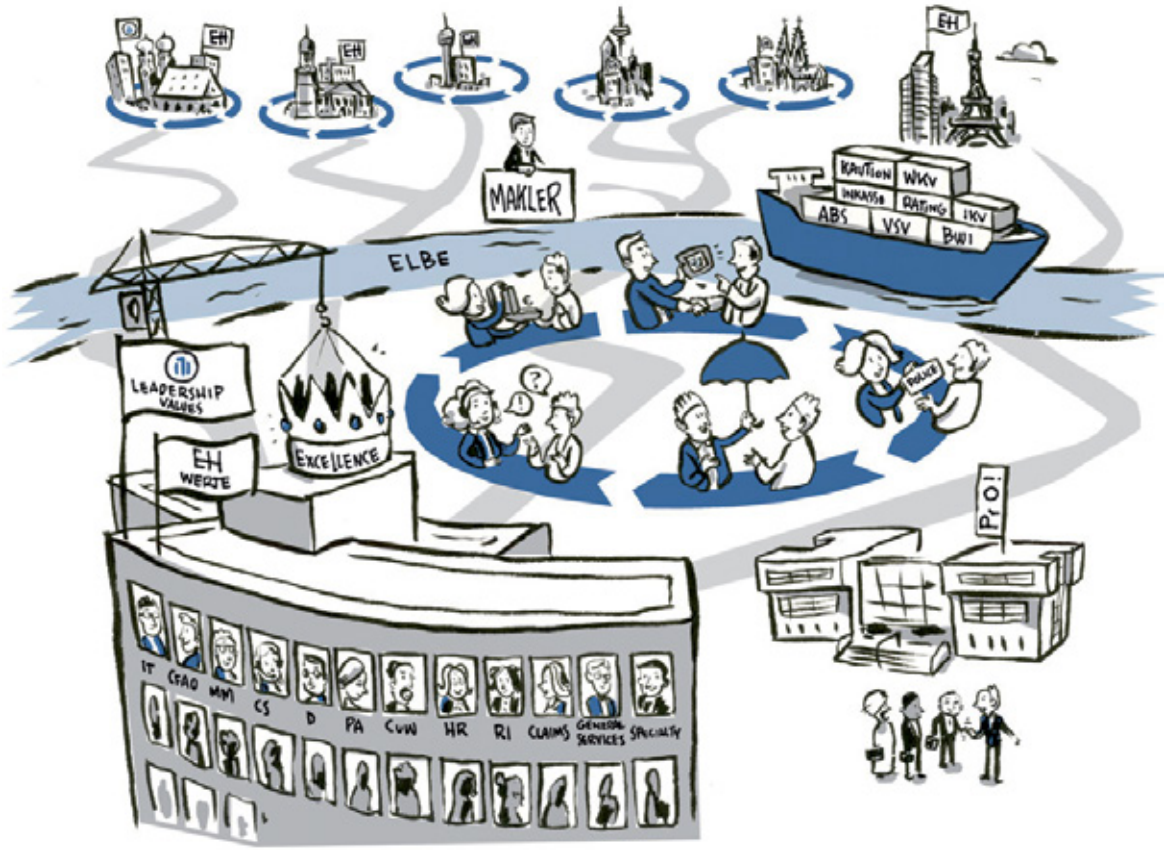

Figure 12: Till Lassmann, *Untitled* (Added Value Circle), final illustration, for Euler Hermes, 2012

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Thomas Barwick

Illustrator Thomas Barwick is a lecturer, teaching on the BA (hons) Illustration course at Plymouth University, a role he began in 2009. Tom's images have appeared in a range of illustration contexts, from editorial through to fashion illustration for a global spread of clients with work regularly appearing in anthologies and textbooks on illustration.

Throughout his career he has always sought out new modes of image making, most notably with the fresh vector work he made for clients like Wallpaper* and GQ. More recent work explored drawing away from this tight restrained aesthetic, embracing traditional media, ink, charcoal, chalk. Recent research looks at both these areas, examining how the digital processes he is using today impact upon the way he approaches traditional drawing, by examining the idea of error as a liberating force in digital and traditional image making.

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She's Lost Control

"The more you rely on good tools, the more boring your sculpture will be." Renoir

Yesterday, working on this paper, an angle poise lamp, with its heavy base, toppled and fell onto my laptop destroying a third of the screen, a mass of scrambled pixels bleeding off in a crosshatch of horizontal and vertical lines. I took a screen-grab image of the whole screen; the irony hadn't escaped me as I sat writing about glitches and error, my laptop bleeding out before my eyes. Opening the image on another computer I couldn't see the distorted damaged screen, just the screen saver image. I was being dumb, it was the screen I had damaged not the image the image remained untouched, existing somewhere intangible, and it's that intangibility, materiality, that this paper will broadly explore.

The interface between image-maker and software is an established relationship. Illustrators complete images, or create them from scratch, with a sense of control and mastery. This paper will explore digital processes that release control from the image-maker, by reconnecting digital practice with traditional processes that adopt a similar approach to materials and tools by holding 'contrasting temporal and formal elements in dialogue'. (Menkman, 2009) They lose control and embrace error.

There has been real engagement with the materiality of software throughout the past two decades, separated into three camps, glitch art (Figure 1) and glitch design and the found glitch. The aspect of my practice I want to use, to examine error and the materiality of software, is most closely related to digital work, associated with the word 'Glitch', and with glitch design. It's a word that has become associated with digital practice that either creates a software error to alter the image through altering the code, or locates unintentional errors with systems at the point of failure: communications, software, media technologies – systemic materials at the moment they collapse into granularity and difference. 'They do not work in (binary) opposition to what is inside the flows (the normal use of the computer) but practice on the border of these flows. Sometimes, they use the computers inherent maxims as a façade, to trick the audience into a flow of certain expectation that the artwork subsequently rapidly breaks out of. As a result the spectator is forced to acknowledge that the use of the computer is based on a genealogy of conventions, while in reality the computer is a machine to be bent or used in many different ways.' (Menkman, R. 2009) The errors, or glitches make us aware of the materiality of the software, pulling us out of any virtual sense of reality and making us aware of the image's material yet artificial form.

Similarly, painters and sculptors in the 20th century began to believe in an inherent 'truth to materials' and made work that attempted to reveal the plastic nature of oil paint on the canvas, or the hard granular qualities of carved stone, 'matter must continue it's natural life when modified by the hand of the sculptor.' (Brancusi, C. 1890) working in ways that reveal the nature of the material being used. Josef Albers and Anni Albers, who were seminal thinkers at the Bauhaus in Berlin, explaining the impact this had on them as artists and teachers, they were convinced that the understanding of the material lay at the heart of an artist's process, 'before everything is the material.' (Albers, J. 1930's) and a kind of objectifying happens when you have to concentrate on the demands of the materials and the technique'. Central to this critique is the sense that western art, prior to this understanding, was flawed. In this paper I have taken that primary fascination with a perceived error in understanding the true qualities of the material and used it to look for material qualities that I can identify in digital

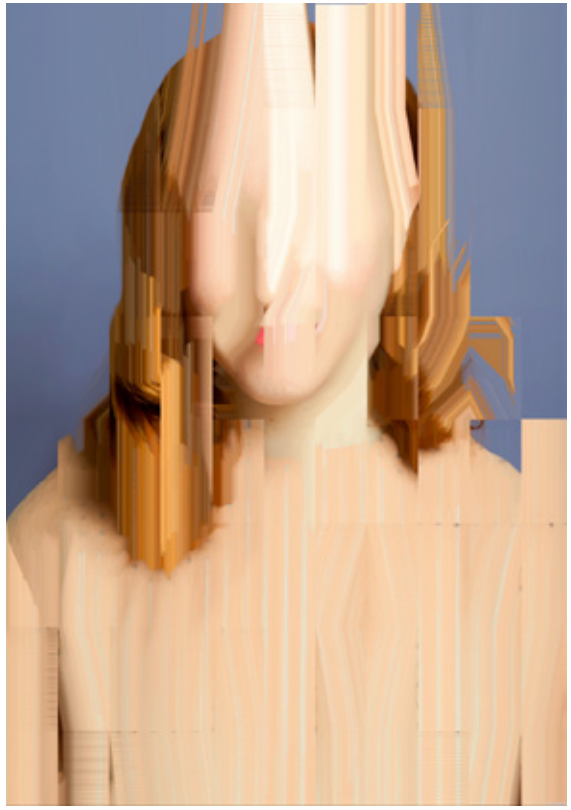

Figure 1: Dora's Flame by D.Szauder, 2013

images that use, chance and unpredictability, using the materials' innate qualities as part of their process.

In traditional illustration practice, error or non-digital 'glitching' is present in the relationship between three elements: the artist, the tools employed and the materials used. The artist knows that they will achieve surprising, illuminating results when they work with inaccuracy, and are open to chance. 'You have to think of it as a journey where a mistake is an opportunity to do something else. I'll turn it into something else, I may have been trying to draw something really specific, but it doesn't really matter.' (Steadman, R. 2013) It's an opportunist practice and for it to work the artist needs to become less subjective in order to allow those elements that Steadman explains, are not really elements you know you are looking for to appear. 'You've got to play tricks, trick yourself, trip yourself up.' (Pollock, I, date). Albers was misquoted as saying that the artist must be totally free of the subjective. She corrected this. 'No,' she said, 'from the too subjective, you can't avoid being subjective. (Albers, A. 1968) Acknowledging the sense that the artist is always 'there' to some extent in their process. This type of practice may feel esoteric and left of centre but as soon as we consider the way that tools and materials are used by contemporary illustrators it becomes clear that at a motor skill level, many mainstream illustrators use tools and materials to force error and to create unpredictability as a part of their image making. They include, David Shrigley, Rob Ryan, David Downton, Rob Newman, Emma Dibben, Ralph Steadman and Ian Pollock. Here, in practices of this type, tools and materials are chosen for their ability to amplify the type of 'glitch' the artist is after intuitively, at a dexterous level. Materials like cut paper, hard board and watercolour, invite chance especially when combined with unreliable tools, scissors, leaky pens, scalpels, etc. It's a complex set of actions, one following the other, a chain reaction of responses. Chance plays a large part in the process, and the judgments made are like the judgments of the gambler at the roulette table, there is a strategy, but it's strategy based on the acceptance of chance and unpredictability. A process of rapid interpretation of events through marks on the page as they unfold through the image making process.

Agnes Martin makes a useful connection I want to draw your attention to, when she links the process of 'switching off' during image-making to discipline, to a purer form, a more automatic interpretation, of the inspiration that she feels is visited upon her. 'Going without resistance or notions is called discipline. Going on when hope or desire have been left behind is discipline. Going on in an impersonal way, without personal consideration, is called a discipline. Not thinking, planning, scheming is a discipline.' (Martin, A. 1960's) She's identifying the concentrated effort involved in not thinking while making art; as a process she sees it as a rigid activity, requiring self discipline to accomplish passive modes of thought, open to chance, error and loss of control. What the artist is fighting against are elements of process that a computer does not have to repress, 'and is not shaped, like an artist by our values, interests and purposes, as active agents.' (Pasek, A. 2013) and this reveals useful information about the materiality of software.

Software has no values, interests or purposes, it is not an active agent, it's an important distinction, identifying the software in a far more primitive light, than I had first considered. It's the lack of these human drives that Agnes Martin identifies and says must be defeated through strict discipline, that if applied to a software suggest that it's inabilities, its lack of real intelligence that exists beyond pure logic is a strength. Much contemporary thinking about computers and code has anointed them with incredible power. Writers tell of how they are 'plastic and metal corpses with voodoo powers, strangely animate and (self) commanding.' (Bogost, I. 2012) The computer as autonomous miracle worker is a familiar perception, so it was surprising to find these primitive traits that Martin identifies, in their apposite form, within the mathematics of a computer's graphics software, and to think that if it did have voodoo powers they are powers of exemption, giving the software strength because it is as valueless, disinterested and purposeless as a lump of clay, a pot of ink or a bath of etching acid. Looking at software in this way we are starting to perceive the software more clearly as a material, by a process of elimination. Establishing what it can't do creates a better focus on its capabilities as a material.

There are overt examples of artists attempting to replicate machines, throughout the 20th century. Cy Twombly making automatic drawings in the dark, or A. R. Penk mimicking the action of a dot matrix printer working in horizontal lines with dabs of black ink of differing sizes, maintaining a strict rhythm. Some Illustrators use techniques that are similarly overt, defining their work through error. Oliver Jeffers has created a series of paintings that are made traditionally, realistic portraits painted in oil, set in gold frames, that he completes by dipping them partly, or fully, into a bath of enamel paint to obscure the painting beneath. (Figure 2) Jeffers' work is figurative but the communication is conceptual. 'I just want to make people think. I want to make them think about what's there and what's not there, what's lost and what can be found. ' (Jeffers, O. 2014). He is taking the error of obscuring half, or even all of, an image and using this in a similar way to the way that glitch images find, or create, errors in images to reveal a material truth that offers a different sense of reality to traditional digital depictions.

What we are seeing is the artist making a conscious cognitive decision to combine two contrasting materials, and techniques, to raise our awareness of both. It also gives us another insight into the material, primitive, qualities of software. If we replace the bath of enamel paint with a software fill, the fill is a process that affects all, or selected, parts of an image. Ruthlessly, just like the enamel paint, it has no sense of right or wrong it just submits to the material process, situating the artist's authorship when it is almost at breaking point. Once the canvas has been lowered or the fill used, the artist has lost control leaving the work open to automatic interpretation by the process and the materials. This positioning is an important measure of the type of traditional practices that will yield useful research that can be applied to the type of digital practice I am interested in. Those that create that point at which control is lost and automatic interpretation takes over. This is not a phenomenon that's just limited to the visual arts and the research can readily be extended into other fields in this sense.

I'll use two examples from the world of sport and music to extend our understanding of how error through loss of control occurs in a variety of creative pursuits, in the way they are artificially constructed. The majority of sports take advantage of the possibility of error and chance to increase the pleasure of playing and spectating. Football is a good example. The aim of the game has been created artificially and in that process risk and unpredictability have been built into the game to add excitement. 'Games hinge on a single moment of hazard of the ball hitting the post and going in or going out. We all know those things. You don't have a chance to control these hazardous moments.' (Hodgeson, R. 2014) Playing with your feet, the size of the pitch, the amount of activity on the field means inevitably there is a battle between control and acceptance of error, like the illustrator the footballer accepts this lack of control.

When an illustrator works in this intuitive way, decoding as they go, there is no script to follow; the story of an image like the story of a football match, is written in real time. They have to be every player on the pitch jumping from move to move aware of chance and error as factors in the process.

Jazz music is framed in a different way, temporally, but it's a similar creative space to a sheet of drawing paper, or a football pitch. It's a space where artificial rules have been put in place as well, where there is an agreement in place to deviate, repeat, meander and generally improvise - the audience taking pleasure in the unpredictability of the performance. The most accurate way to understand music is to read the score and internally process the music A, F#, C, C#, B etc. but it's immensely more enjoyable to hear the music, because you understand it in a different way as a feeling, as your brain automatically interprets it, accepting that it will be an imperfect replica of the musical score, an interpretation that brings a new truth to the material. Musicians often refer to music as 'material'. The art of a DJ, scratching, is perfect example of how glitching exposes a material's actual nature, a musical glitch misusing the record decks, forcing them to reinterpret the music on the disc, ripping open the material nature of the music, exposing its nature by dragging a needle through vinyl grooves. This uncovering process, relates to what I have been doing with error and glitch in my own practice, which I will explain in the next section. As an example of how I think I can drive my research by observing approaches to materials, in this case scratching, and use them to reveal something new born out of the manipulation of what's already there. Thinking about scratching fed the way I am working with error by simply identifying that sense of something new being hidden and that it might be revealed by changing rules, looking for different workflows that use the same tools but in

Figure 2: Jeffers, O. 'Dip Portrait', 2012

less conventional ways that will reveal the materiality of the image, in the same way as the DJ interferes with convention.

The impetus for this paper came about through work done in my own practice, so I will now shift the paper's focus from theory to practice and use that work to get closer still to an understanding of the materiality of software, embedding that into a far broader range of traditional materials, as a material process, that mimics materials like molten bronze, acid, paint in its various oil and water based medias. I need to briefly describe the processes, materials and tools I have been using to make the drawings and then how I treat the software as a material when I alter them digitally, then demonstrate how I have connected the two.

The drawings are created in graphite, a combination of graphite powder for the ground, used in an improvised way, and 9b pencils or charcoal pencils by Caran d'Ache used to bring out the detail. It's the type of process I described earlier, one that many illustrators use today in a variety of contexts, it's open to chance and error; the focus is on action research. I work with reference, improvising at a micro level, while maintaining a sense of the whole image and its likeness. Attempting to do the things that Agnes Martin speaks about, shutting things down, getting into a little dance between myself and the materials that results in an image. I scan the drawing then select large areas to fill, using a 'smart' fill called Content-Aware Fill. In coding speak the algorithm that the fill executes is called a ' patch-matching algorithm.' (Barnes, C. et al. 2009).

Adobe created a new fill as part of Photoshop. From CS4 onwards they called the new feature Content-Aware Fill. I've been altering drawings with it since 2010. It's not designed to do this. That's where error is at play in an overarching way throughout the whole of the digital side of the process. Content-Aware Fill is designed to remove unwanted parts in photos- an old tin can that's spoiling a beach shot, or a stranger's bald head poking out from behind father and daughter; it's a clever cosmetic patch up software made for fixing things. It only gets dumb when you give it dumb instructions and jump outside of the Adobe design team's conception of how it should be used. You wouldn't remove the sun from a sunset, you wouldn't select your pet dog's head and have it disappear, but if you do give the software this type of odd unexpected selection, it will give you back a similarly odd unpredictable result, a result that has similarities to an illustrator's intuitive error - and - chance based approach in the real world. There has been work made using it with typography and photography that illustrates exactly what its doing very well, because we already have a strong sense of what type should look like. (Figures 3 & 4). Looking at the results I made that connection, then through action research observed other characteristics that separate software as a material from real world materials. (Figures 5 and 6)

I found that if I did this with the drawings I had been doing, it amped up the effect of chance and error even more. Starting with an image that was already created through chance and error in that complex, consciously unconscious way I have described, then adding an extra layer of processing and alteration, I pushed the images into places that I would not of taken them in working by hand, 'that are irresistible, notionless, impersonal, inconsiderate, thoughtless, clueless'. (Martin, Agnes, 1960's, Letter).

There are aspects of what the software is doing that are remarkable, qualities that cannot easily be replicated in traditional drawing. (Figure 5)

The ability to undo and redo the process, while being also able to select different areas of the image for processing, is different to the majority of real world processes, which once committed to cannot be 'undipped'. There is a safety net, and the risk experienced when dashing down a line with a reed pen, or whacking away with a six-inch brush, is removed. I'm not sure if this is a positive or a negative difference but rewinding and redoing the process is something that it lends itself well to, and I use a lot. Undoing isn't anything new, but what's different is when you are undoing a whole series of thousands of calculations, undoing a process, rather than the undoing of a series of steps. At an almost microscopic level, undetectable to the eye, the software compares pixels from inside the selected area of the image and from outside and then swaps them around, there is no equivalent for this in real world materials, it would be like being able to take tiny sections of oil paint and move them seamlessly to a new position, so here we have something as a material that feels new, while not losing that sense of error or chance illustrators value. Its difficult to calculate all the new pathways that a drawing can take when converted into this material and processed, but if you did calculate how many different areas of an image could be selected, their scale and the order in which you selected them, I am confident in saying that it is a lot, as each wave of processing creates a new multiverse.

"A computer can't ever be wrong." Says artist and academic, Dean Owens. (Owens, D. 2014) This feels true, and so long as we are talking about the confines of the software, within its set of rules, he is right, it can't be wrong. But this is a graphic problem that is always solvable. We are simply moving elements about and making sure they all add up again at the end. The 'error' we are looking for, anything in the image that feels wrong, in the same way that an illustrator looks for lucky

Figure 3: Anon. Contentawaretypography.tumblr.com, accessed May 2014

mistakes when working traditionally, is an illusion. The error is our own mistaken perception of what the material we have made the image with is. It's not a sheet of drawing paper, it's now a grid of pixels. And so like in glitch imaging, we see the material nature of the digital image staring us in the face though our perception of an error. There is a lot of deception involved in the process, and the trick is that we told the computer it was alright when it wasn't. We told it we wanted to scramble a drawing, and that that was alright, but it wasn't really alright at all, it was going to mess that image right up, really change it. But that was alright, because the computer didn't know what a drawing was. All it is working with are pixelated blocks of colour, and 'patch-matching' them together in a new pattern. Is that authorship? It is, but to get an idea of what kind of author, we have to try and look at this from the software's perspective.

To do this let's think about what would happen from the perspectives of England Manager, Roy Hodgson and Jazz Saxophonist, John Coltrane, if they were given the same skills as the software. Hodgson could select any part of the pitch and relocate anything on that pitch anywhere he wanted, instantaneously and repeatedly, Coltrane could take the whole of his performance, select a part and re-order it, taking notes from any part of the session and putting them elsewhere, while also sampling notes from other sections outside of his selection, reordering them with a set of rules that will make them tonally harmonious, in the same way that Content-Aware Fill is coded to look for tones that won't leave a line and will blend in. This feels like a super-smart England Manager, and the computer software feels super-powered. But a computer doesn't know how to interpret a football match, it doesn't know what Jazz is, it certainly has no clue what a decent drawing looks like. Blindfold Roy Hodgson, get him blind drunk and spin him around three times and you're getting closer to the software's level of actual understanding, but I am afraid it's more primitive than that. Wasted out of his mind, Hodgson still understands what a football is, what grass is, if it's raining. The software can detect these things but it can't understand them. A digital camera can detect faces, but it can't really; it's an illusion. It doesn't know what a face is. Every shred of face-ness has had to be re-interpreted as mathematical code that equivocates to a face-finding process based on measuring rectangular shapes, but there is still no real understanding of what a face is. (Viola, P. Jones, M. 2001)

And yet for all this stated simplicity the software is never fully understood by me. I have little, or no, understanding of what is tangibly happening when I use Content-Aware Fill: the maths, the algorithms are far beyond me. With traditional materials, I don't sweat it, that I don't know what the chemistry of cobalt blue is, so I am choosing to view software in the same way. It's just another element that I have some, but not total, understanding of. It's an interesting aspect of the relationship to the materiality of software, this incomprehension of each other: each author unaware of the others' methods.

This research began with the idea that automatic interpretation was going to be something confined to digital image making, but when I looked at its material nature I was able to extend that idea and situate digital within a bigger framework of material use, through history, by artists by focusing on processes that effectively 'lock out' the author for a period and have a chemical metamorphic component. Print-making and bronze casting make good examples, in etching a drawing is made on a copper plate then burnt into with acid, and in bronze casting molten metal is poured into a cast, both processes that lock the author out of the picture tempo-

Figure 4: Anon, Contentawaretypography.tumblr.com, accessed May 2014

Figure 5: Barwick, T. Portrait of Sanza Stark

Figure 6: Barwick, T. Portrait of Sanza Stark

rarily. It's similar to the way Content-Aware Fill works in a mass across the surface of the image without the artist intervening, as mathematical, rather then chemical, elemental rules are applied. Digital work created in this way can be incorporated into a far larger picture of arts practice, where the nature of the material, and the way it is asked to process an image remotely, is a component part of the authorship of the piece. The scope of this paper does not allow for close analysis of how artists work in this way at a practice level, and so further research will take an ethnographic approach, to get closer to understanding individual artists' relationships with their material processes and then apply that back to digital image making that uses automatic interpretation.

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Joel Lardner

Paul Roberts

Joel Lardner

Joel Lardner is an Illustrator and graphic artist based in the UK. His constantly evolving practice has spilled onto newspapers, book jackets, fashion advertising, T-shirts, and even snowboards. Recent authorial projects have included collaborations with photographer Dan Tobin Smith (The Krystal World) and an investigation of storytelling via the tradition of illustrated picture books (The Queen of Spades). Ornament and pattern feed Lardner's enthusiasm drawing and graphic art. This provides a way of understanding the themes of beauty and decay that permeate his work. He is currently exploring new opportunities and directions for illustration in his role as Senior Lecturer at The Arts University at Bournemouth.

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Paul Roberts

Paul is a Senior Lecturer in Illustration at The Arts University at Bournemouth. Paul has a range of interests, including the relationship of digital forms of image making and animation to the practice of illustration, networks and the social fields surrounding illustration cultures, and the emergence of craft as a defining feature of contemporary visual culture. He is currently researching evolving digital contexts for illustration and their impact on its practice and reception. Paul has written a range of articles for the media and culture journal *AfterImage*, and in 2012 co-authored *The Digital Art Technique Manual* with Joel Lardner.

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Glitch, Craft, and Illustration

1 – Introduction

The term 'glitch' frequently refers to a malfunction in hardware or software causing a machine to temporarily malfunction. In recent years, the art world has seen the emergence of a new 'glitch' aesthetic. Despite an ongoing interest in glitch and noise within the arts and broader media sphere, this new aesthetic emerging within the 21st Century seems to offer a new take on glitches operating at the human-machine interface. The visual style of contemporary glitch takes many forms but frequently exhibits the use of still or moving images that are in some way deformed or disjointed – fractured, fragmented and pixelated images, displaying colour discrepancies and a range of artefacts that form a break with the expected visual form. In animation and moving image, visual errors may be further enhanced or augmented by jumps or repeats of visual sequences, or the disintegration of sound and visual integrity. However the glitch aesthetic is not restricted to simple visual aberrations, and frequently included under the glitch art umbrella are examples of pixelated images reminiscent of 8bit computer game graphics, emulations of MS Paint style graphics, or 3D graphics exhibiting strange geometries and eye-watering colour combinations. The current glitch aesthetic is rooted in digital computer devices and their output, rather than within more analogue technologies.

Illustrative practices have perhaps been slow to catch on to this aesthetic, however at the boundaries of the discipline, where illustration overlaps with graphic design, street art, moving image, the fine arts, and the plastic arts, we can identify an increasing interest with this visual form. This paper seeks to examine the glitch phenomena, firstly by exploring a critical framework within which to understand and analyse this emerging form, and contextualise glitch practices in relation to wider concerns, such as the notion of the New Aesthetic as coined by James Bridle (2011), but more importantly in relation to the re-emergence of craft as a key concern and motivational force within contemporary artistic practices and theorisations. More specifically it seeks to consider how glitch can be put to use as a lens through which we can examine illustration as a set of processes and practices that have perhaps lost their ability to incorporate the unexpected. Before doing so however, it is useful to come up with a more refined understanding and workable categorization of glitch.

2 - Menkman's Glitch Moment(um)

Menkman's *The Glitch Moment(um)* (2011) provides a glossary and explanation for cultural artefacts identified under the glitch umbrella. Menkman approaches the categorisation of glitch as a tripartite set of artefacts and practices. In the first instance is the 'pure glitch'; the result of a procedural break in the flow of a working process, and a purely accidental or unintended event. These occurrences are often inherently unwelcomed moments that foster disillusionment, but also illuminate our relationship with technology by revealing the code, or noise, with which content is conveyed. The glitch draws our attention to the qualities of the medium and it's materiality. This genuine error may be appropriated and utilized by the artist as an unstable digital artefact (Ibid. pp.35-6) or rejected as an unwanted aberration.

In the second instance the glitch is instigated through direct artistic intervention, either in the form of physical rewiring or other tampering with the hardware, or through software manipulation such as databending (editing the files upon which digital imagery or other media are based), or datamoshing (enhancing and accentuating encoding artefacts such as those seen in JPEG files). This 'post-procedural glitch art' (Ibid. p.36) overcomes the passive appropriation characterised by the former, and is the key focus for Menkman's thesis. Within the instigated glitch the artist employs critical judgement in the identification and interpretation of the ideal glitch moment, with the inherent risk that further intervention may be catastrophic. As she argues, "The perfect glitch exists, momentarily, at the shocking tipping point between (potential) failure and a movement towards the creation of a new understanding." (Ibid. p.44) The potential exists here for the glitch - once incorporated into culture - to act not only as an aesthetic object, but also to act as a critical tool, a means of challenging the flow and interpretation of 'normal' operation and leading us to consider and question the medium and (potentially) its message

Lastly, the glitch-like post-procedural processes above are taken to their logical conclusion through processes of aesthetic and critical cultural absorption (or rejection) with the possibility of becoming Avant garde, 'cool' (Ibid. p.44), and finally commodified. Within this last category we find digital filters or apps that purposely employ the aesthetic of glitch, yet lack the inherent critical dialogue that is established between the glitch and the medium in which it is born.

Menkman insists that flow cannot be understood without disruption, a point echoed in the observations of Virilio who argues that the error, glitch, or accident, are always already inherent within the object or process from the start. In Virilio's thesis (2007, p.10) the invention of the car predicts and inevitably leads to the car crash. Ironically, despite the frequently disruptive nature of the glitch or accident, contemporary culture tends to fetishize these unintended consequences, most famously articulated by

J G Ballard. In his book *Crash* (2008), Ballard examines the eroticisation of the car crash and the unification of the broken human and automotive form in both the accident and the inevitable sexualisation of these acts. Like Menkman, in Ballard's tale we can see distinct forms of accident emerging: Firstly the unintended crash that is the initial object of fetishisation, events that are tracked down by our protagonists monitoring police radio channels like contemporary glitch hunters monitoring tech forums. Secondly, and more importantly in the final instance, we see the choreography of the ideal crash, meticulously composed and stylized to achieve the ultimate moment of pure collision between body and machine.

Ford (2005) suggests that "[a]part from its function of redefining the elements of space and time in terms of our most potent consumer durable, the car crash may be perceived unconsciously as a fertilising rather than a destructive event", and both Ballard and Menkman see the accident as a potentially generative occurrence in whichever form it takes. For Menkman, the key moment or momentum within the glitch occurs at the moment of recognition and capture, where the glitch is identified as worthy of extraction rather than a reboot or file deletion. As Menkman suggests however, the fertilising potential of the glitch is wholly dependent upon both the artist recognising the potential of the moment, and the further acceptance by the audience of the value or critical potential of this aesthetic and / or it's message.

The sense of awe that both Menkman and Verillio allude to when the flow is broken finds a parallel in the static, melancholic subject matter of the Sublime, which articulates our sense of wonder when presented with the vast and infinite possibilities of the physical world. This contemplative point of stasis is echoed in the works of

Figure 1: Videos After Video Game by Miltos Manetas, 1996.

Figure 2: Unplanned Magic by Kate Gibb, 2011.

Miltos Manetas (***Figure 1***), whose machinima, or 'game art', *Videos After Video Game* (1996-2006), draws our attention away from the preordained narrative thrust of a game in order to observe the materiality of the format and a realisation of the existential nature of a 'second life'. In Manetas's works the familiar kinetic/frantic relationship with games technology is absent and we are left to ponder the possibilities and infinite scenarios on offer. Similarly, Kurt J. Mac has spent three years seeking to explore the 'far lands' of the computer game *Minecraft,* recording and posting his progress on YouTube (Far Lands Or Bust!, 2014). His Odyssey-like quest aims to take him to the boundaries of the Minecraft game terrain where the software begins to break down as it reaches its limits, and visual glitches as well as game crashes become common features at the edge of the digital world. These examples perhaps reflect the emergence and interest in the new frontiers that have replaced the unknown geographies of the earth and space of earlier centuries, and reflect a need to examine or playfully test out new territories having exhausted the creative possibilities of the tangible world.

3 - Accident as creative strategy

The accident, and the chaos it brings about, has long been a catalyst for cultural artefacts of various forms. However, the creative utilisation of error identified as noise, feedback or grain dictates a degree of virtuosity by the author. A comparison can be made here with that of the traditional skilled artisan who is aware of the uncertain behaviour of the material in hand.

Noise is present in many illustrators practice and relates directly to this desire for spontaneity and a willingness to capture the serendipitous creative act. Two practioners

who employ such material are Kustaa Saksi and Kate Gibb (***Figure 2***). Saksi's recent tapestries are embedded with components that conjure a discordant, almost kinetic effect. Similar optical motifs are recognised throughout Gibb's work, in particular the *Unplanned Magic* series that seem to refer to the accidental, unpredictable nature of mechanical printmaking processes.

In specialist academic settings developmental material such as sketchbooks and experimental inquiry into material and technique are heralded, providing insights into process and revealing the artists undiluted expression. As Nunes suggest:

Error, as errant heading, suggests ways in which failure, glitch, and miscommunication provide creative openings and lines of flight that allow for a reconceptualization of what can (or cannot) be realized within existing social and cultural practices. (Nunes, 2011, pp3-4)

It is precisely within the spaces of exploration and experimentation - in which unforeseen juxtapositions coalesce or the failure of material integrity emerges - that new potentials of expression and meaning begin to form.

This self-conscious act, to enable or instigate an accident, elevates the status of the crude or improvised form. Such a perverse attitude to creative practice is exaggerated by the modern frenzied media landscape illustrated by fashion brand Richards NYC (figs, 3, 4, 5.). The brand has been acclaimed for its fresh and innovative application of illustrated, digitally printed garments. The current fall/winter line pursues an interest in fragmentation and random association. Notable imagery includes colour spectrums and vivid prism-like effects that refer

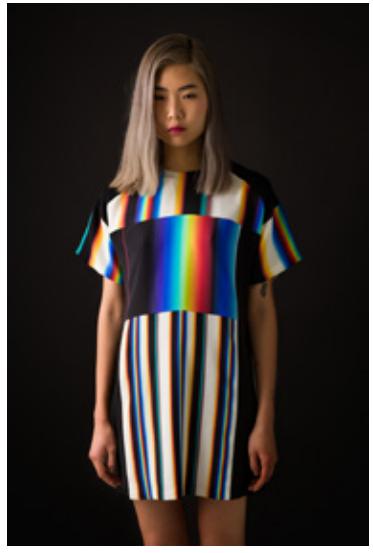

Figure 3, 4, 5: Richards NYC Fall/Winter collection 2014.

Figure 6. Baa by Cyriak Harris, 2011.

to defective optical mechanisms such as flatbed scanners, which combined with generic repeat patterns, clip art and pop-up windows remind us of the often-arbitrary means by which images are shared and reassigned in contemporary society, reiterating the pollution of meaning as described by Virilio (2005).

4 - Glitch and Illustration

It is the emotive quality of the glitch, rather than the obvious stylistic definition (pixels), that is providing new platforms for innovative practice within the graphic arts. Manetas's findings are echoed in many artists showcased in contemporary periodicals and online resources such as *worldwide.imgltd.org*. This blog identifies creative practitioners who draw inspiration from our technologically mediated lives, such as those in-between moments when saving a computer file, the transitions between multiple interfaces or windows, or the absent-minded surfing of the digital environment. It elevates the status of these transitory moments and their associated visual component, and in so doing describes and satirises the enthusiastic acceptance of our digital landscape. This satirical glitch attitude is most prominent within the animated works of Cyriak Harris (***Figure 6***). Harris's 'sketches' disrupt and play with our expectations of the mediated visual landscape of modern popular culture. His grotesque, yet fascinating, films question our notions of taste and alert us to the normalisation of contemporary media channels and their content. The crude, abrasive and relentless aesthetic confronts us with the sublime terror of the relentless proliferation of the banal within popular culture.

Whilst artists such as Cyriak and Manetas's continue to explore the possibilities offered by glitch to confront and

examine 21st century culture, identifying illustrators that employ these approaches within contemporary practice is difficult. Frequently the illustrative glitch is limited to a filter-like visual treatment of a portrait, or at best the re-interpretation of the digital glitch within analogue spaces. Unlike in Ballard's tale, Illustrators seemingly don't have time to time to slow down and observe the crash. The illustrator has little opportunity or use for the pure glitch form suggested by Menkman, or the instigated and unpredictable error she proffers. The dictates of professional practice, the pressures of time, and the expectations of clients frequently force the illustrator away from the indulgence of exploring and using the error in a meaningful way. Instead the illustrator is more likely to adopt Menckman's glitch-like imagery, the controlled, or stylised glitch as part of their process. Such a contrived approach however leads to what Menkman describes as the gentrification of the form, in that the accelerated acceptance of glitch artefacts within the mainstream dilutes the original subversive allure. Cultural appropriation of what is deemed to be cool is a seemingly inevitable aspect of contemporary mass consumption, however this absorption also creates a demand for continual innovation or re-formation of cultural products, styles, or ideas – a desire for new glitches, new modes of behavior, and new approaches to breaking and re-forming. As culture and technology evolves, so does the latent accident (***a la*** Virilio) contained within, continually providing new opportunities for innovation. Exploitation of these accidents relies upon an inquisitive and experimental approach to the unexpected, and an awareness of when the break in flow constitutes an opportunity rather than hurdle.

Illustrators are criticised for appropriation of stylistic conceits and a willing eagerness to follow trends rather than lead them. By adopting glitch as an attitude rather than a lazy vernacular, illustration can begin to transcend this criticism. It is only via the Illustrators inquisitive creative process and engagement with technologies that accidents occur and new forms emerge.

5 - The glitch/craft relationship

With the rise of glitch at a specific moment in time - specifically one in which craft is undergoing a resurgence, and technology increasingly moves towards non-tactile interfaces – it seems important to understand how some features of glitch reflect wider visual culture and the critical environment in which it emerges.

A simple explanation for the rise in the Glitch aesthetic would be to suggest that it is a logical continuation of the 20th Century's artistic traditions such as of the cut-up and dismembered visual language of the Dadaists or the auto-destructive art of Metzger, however this may be somewhat of a simplification. Whilst we may see elements of these concerns and histories embedded within contemporary glitch work, [g]litch art, like Pop art, is an amorphous term - a canopy who's tenants slip under and out of. These terms can be expanded to include much more than might immediately come to mind. This is because at their core they're simply a loose link to a key concept: the interest in the "mistake", the interest in "popular culture". (Briz, n.d.)

As Briz points out, it is not necessarily useful to consider glitch art as a movement, or even a set of practices defined by a single (or multiple) manifestoes, political, or social aims; glitch artists come from a variety of traditions, backgrounds, and positions, with an equally broad range of concerns, goals, and visual aesthetics, including those mentioned above. Indeed Briz's article goes on to liken Glitch to many of the major art movements of the 20th Century.

Importantly, at the same time that glitch has erupted into cultural consciousness, a parallel, and seemingly oppositional resurgence of craft has taken place across the arts, and within the illustration field in particular. This has been characterized in particular with an interest in traditional materials (stitch, knit), printmaking (screen printing, etching, woodcut, and letterpress), and the construction of 3D and 2D imagery utilizing papercraft or woodworking in a variety of forms. Despite the existence of a number of digital processes and tools that can either replicate, or at the very least make many of these processes less arduous, in many cases there is frequently a purist approach to manual working exhibited by artists working within these areas.

Craft and the machine have seemingly long been at odds, and the 'Digital vs. Analogue' or 'Machine vs. Human' debate is a well trodden, if banal, path for the student of illustration, with a longer history within the wider academic field (William Morris, Walter Benjamin, and Marshall McLuhan come readily to mind). Whilst it is possible to think of these as diametrically opposed practices, we suggest that it is better to think of these two contemporary phenomena as a symptom of the same social and cultural conditions – a fascination, and at the same time critical questioning, of the all-pervasive technological gloss that pervades popular and commercial culture; and a need to re-connect with materiality and a sense of authenticity and individuality. We may note a nostalgic aspect to both areas of practice that perhaps suggest a last-ditch attempt to re-connect with the past before these neo-aesthetics are finally put to rest by an altogether new technologically charged vision; yet we

Figure 7. BUZZARD by Gero Doll, 2014.

may also suggest that these practices signal the emergence of a fresh critical engagement between the visual arts and the glossy techno-cultural commercial field that is the primary site of the intangible hyper-reality symbolic of modern culture.

Yet there is a seemingly inherent contradiction in suggesting that the digital environment in which glitch is born offers a challenge to, or critique of, the hyper-real equal to the craft movements' outright rejection of it. We most often think of the digital as a texture-less, immaterial space in which our interaction is limited to the feel of plastic or metal and the glow of the screen - and the glitch inhabits this same space. Moreover many of the images of the glitch aesthetic promote an a-temporal and groundless environment in which characters and objects float in a distinctly digital universe, separated from the anchors of reality (see for example the work of Gero Doll (Figure 7), which borrows from David O'Reilly's character prototypes, and characterizes such tendencies).

However this way of thinking largely overlooks the materiality or meta-materiality that constitutes the digital space. Whilst it is useful to note how Bridle's New Aesthetic is concerned with the "[e]ruptions of the digital into the physical world" (Sterling, 2012) - in which blocky camouflage mimics the pixelation of night scopes and the broadcast imagery of military drones – the less obvious aspect of materiality engaged with by the glitch aesthetic is that of the texture of the constituent parts of the digital environment. As Berry points out in The Philosophy of Software (2011, pp.32-33), to think of and talk about computer code we have to be aware of the range of constituent parts and assemblages that constitute the materiality of these seemingly intangible objects. These range from the hardware, physical, and energy infrastructure

that contains and enables the code and software to run, the networks of association between various interacting or reliant pieces of code and software the (often human) processes involved in bringing this code into being, and the historic location of this instance of code in relation to previous manifestations of code writing, making, and its legacy within devices. Furthermore, as Parikka suggests:

[W]e have to come up with elaborated ways to understand how perception, action, politics, meanings (and, well, non-meanings) are embedded not only in human and animal bodies, but also in much more ephemeral, but as real, things even non-solid things. Such real but weird materialities that do not necessarily bend to human eyes and ears are not only touchable objects, but also modulations of electrical, magnetic, and light energies, in which also power is nowadays embedded.

(Parikka, 2012, p.96)

We should also include here as part of this materiality the externalities of digital materiality - the detritus and waste that is often the unintended byproduct of the digital revolution such as the toxic heaps of redundant technology in China.

Code can be acted upon, altered, purposed or re-purposed in a number of ways through software manipulation, malfunctions, or physical intervention in a similar way that metal can be bent or shaped, tempered or melted; yet retains within it limitations and characteristics that may define the extent to which its materiality can be purposely altered or used. Moreover, as Ant Scott suggests (Moradi et al., 2009, p.21), the glitch aesthetic itself is a manifestation of the "way current processors are engineered, how data is organized to be processed efficiently and because visual output devices are mostly raster-line based."

Digital visual images are constituted from DNA-like source code, which is expressed and manipulated through imaging software, and corrupted through data hacking or databending. These files themselves are the result of the encoding and interpretation of bits and strings, computer expressions of electrical interactions within physical objects, and displayed to us through the brick-like pixel that has been steadily hidden but not fully eradicated by Retina displays. Glitch / digital artists such as Jodi speak of getting behind or inside the computer (Baumgaertel, 1997) suggesting a physical, or at least metaphysical, space beyond the mouse/ keyboard / touch interface. Instigated glitches require an engagement with and understanding of these material aspects of digital technology in order to generate visual outputs. For both the audience and maker, glitch eruptions such as visual artefacts force us to consider the hidden skeleton, musculature, and sinew beneath the digital skin of contemporary computer graphics by making their processes, or misfiring, apparent.

The contemporary craft resurgence within illustration urges an understanding, utilization and even foregrounding of the material qualities and grain of source materials. For example the elaborate woodcraft of A.J.Fosik's ornamental trophies, the clumsy informality of Yoshitomo Nara's (***Figure 8***) emotive and sentimental painted works and the minimal print aesthetic of Anthony Burrill's zeitgeist pronouncements all bring the grain or physical presence of their material to the fore. Similarly, glitch artists seek out and incorporate the digital grain and material qualities of the source-code's expression like they would a knot in wood, laying it bare. However it is not just the encoding glitch that reminds us of this materiality. David Lewand-

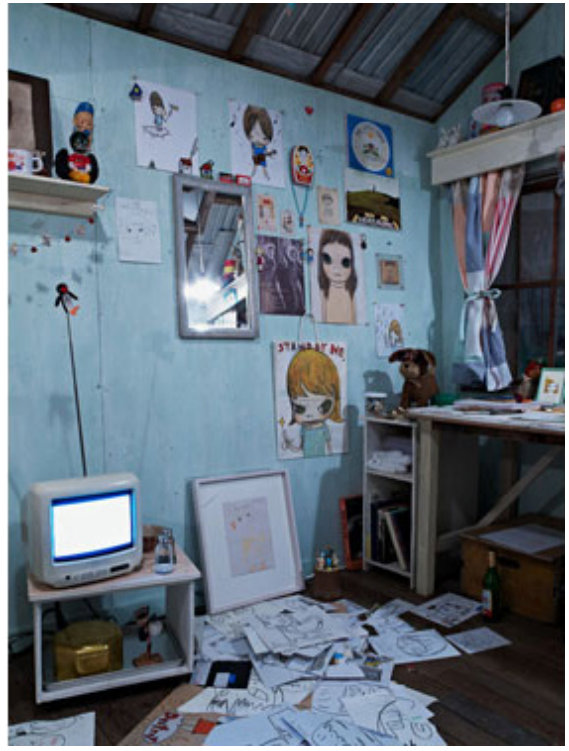

Figure 8. My Drawing room by Yoshitomo Nara, 2009.

Figure 9. Going to the Store by David Lewandowski, 2011.

owski's digital animation *Going to the Store* (2011), and it's companion *Late for Meeting* (2013) (***Figure 9***) demonstrates perfectly what happens when a user instigated glitch operating within specific software environments (in this case errors that occur when linking a skeleton to a mannequin-like body, and subsequent application of poorly designed walk cycles, within 3D software such as Cinema 4D) is purposefully utilized for comedic effect. This work plays upon and draws attention to the plethora of computer-augmented films that now dominate our cultural environment, juxtaposing these slick productions with a similarly polished animation; however one in which an inherently flawed (anatomically challenged?) mannequin-like protagonist becomes the focus of the narrative, utilising the error as a tool for disrupting our preconceptions and drawing attention to the digital interventions common in our visual world. This works also contains a knowing reference to the experiences of digital artists first attempting to create often-simple movements within 3D environments.

Sennett's writings on digital work in *The Craftsman* (2008) and McCullough's essay on the 'Digital Hand' (1997) present us with compelling reasons to consider digital work as forms of craft despite centuries of opposition to the machine within the craft movement. Yet the remaining contradiction in the argument for the glitch as craft-like may be found in the juxtaposition of contemporary crafts and digital programming as constructive forms, where the work of glitch primarily involves breaking or dissembling rather than skilled making. Furthermore, craft is often seen as an activity with specific goals and aims; a predetermined outcome that seemingly eludes the glitch makers' random visual interruption. Indeed, from the outside there appears little skill or dedication in glitch working.

However, as a creative strategy, the use of waste materials or digital detritus (bad digital photos, web images) by glitch artists to create new visuals could be said to share much with the up-cycling trend within the craft movement. And whilst there may often be a limited identifiable goal to the production of glitch imagery beyond satisfying creative curiosity or passing the time, we may argue that it is frequently this inquisitive nature, to ask 'what if?' that spurs creative practice. And as argued previously, glitch work requires more than the rudimentary ability to operate within a digital environment, requiring a learnt understanding of the limits and potential of digital systems in order to successfully explore and create within these environments. This is not to say that glitches are difficult to create per se, but that there is a need to learn, test, and play in order to effectively achieve desired results, rather than the instigation of purely random interventions. In the first instance these frequently require a rudimentary understanding of the basis of computer files and software environments, how they treat data in its raw form, and how it is in itself treated by different tools.

Indeed, the rapid onset of digital technology has left many behind, and whilst the modern illustrator or digital artist may be highly skilled at using Photoshop, it is likely that few understand the mechanics behind the image that they are constructing or the computer environment in which it operates. The closed or restricted environments of tablet devices are further speeding this tendency of restricting our interaction with technology to one of surface engagement rather than deep understanding, despite many of their beneficial features. Furthermore, these environments increasingly demonstrate a binary state of being – they are either working or they are not. The loss of mechanisms (Mouse, Keyboard, Zip Drive, CD tray) and their replacement with touch sensitive interfaces paradoxically creates a distance between the user and the machinery, and the removal of our ability to tinker and play with our interactive tools. The tendency is no longer to fix or modify, but upgrade or destroy.

As many commentators have indicated elsewhere, there is an urgent need for digital literacy in contemporary society, and in particular an understanding of the tools that shape our productive and creative lives, and a need to question and analyse their role and existence. Seemingly the contemporary craft movement demonstrates similar goals through different means. Through revealing the materiality behind the glossy façade of the digital world, we are forced to consider its presence.

However, as Menkman indicates, the craft of glitching is in more than the ability to instigate the glitch or its simple presence, but in the tacit knowledge that indicates how far the source material can be pushed before it breaks completely, and at which point the glitch has critical or creative value. The art of glitching requires selection and editing to transform the output into something of critical or aesthetic worth in the wider field. It is at this point that the importance of creating a distinction between different levels of glitch becomes important. Without the element of chance offered by the unstable and unpredictable glitch, all that is left is the commodified and controlled glitch-like aesthetic presented as a Photoshop filter or trending App. Whilst this may offer up a level of aesthetic control and usability to the artist in need of a quick glitch fix, it removes the element of chance that is provided by the unpredictable nature of the pure or instigated glitch, forcing the artist to tread generic paths rather than seek out new ones. Indeed for David Pye, the dividing line between craftsmanship and workmanship is the degree of certainty in the process and outcome, with the former representing the always uncertain work of the artisan maker; the latter the regulated output of factory production. Operating within craftsmanship is the 'workmanship of risk', containing the distinct possibility of failure, but also the potential for the unexpected and outstanding. Meanwhile, Pye concludes, the "workmanship of certainty has not yet found out, except in certain restricted fields, how to produce diversity and exploit it." (Pye, 1968, p.345)

6 - Glitch politics

Glitch doesn't simply operate only within aesthetic channels, and the glitch attitude often contains a political dimension, in that by disrupting the flow of expectation or meaning, the motivations and symbolism of the medium and it's authors are revealed or restated. We can see such effects in the reconfigured, fractured Disney characters found on Nigerian textiles, as documented by Doris (2006), illuminating the rapid, and often, dark impacts of the processes of globalisation. Until relatively recently, waste printed textiles from around the globe were imported into Nigeria and reassembled in order to satisfy a local demand for cheap clothing. The printed material consisted of layered and jumbled iconography, mixing images of popular culture such as Disney characters, with random patterns to create a haphazard assemblage. The nausea inducing kinetic qualities of the distorted repeat patterns defy conventional understanding of craftwork as a sentimental or passive act and offer us an unsettling glitch-like experience in which the channel noise, or feedback, erupts into the physical world (a la Bridle). The chaotic and over layered qualities of the material bringing to mind the abstract paintings of Gerhard Richter, or the 'Waste' series by Peter Saville (fig. 10). Interpreted from an external detached position, the representation of the resulting garments and textiles can be considered a political comment on globalisation and the dominance of (Western) popular culture, however in the first instance these images are instigated out of the brutality of necessity.

Figure 10. *Waste Painting #1* (1998) by Peter Saville, Howard Wakefield, Paul Hetherington. Collection Emmanuel de Buretel.

Whilst this kind of found glitch (pure glitch) offers up the possibility of unexpected disruption through its appropriation and re-presentation, the instigated glitch demonstrates a purposeful non-conformism in rejecting or repurposing visual materials tools. The glitch attitude - rather than the glitch aesthetic - questions social order and codes of behavior through the very act of non-conformism, and may, in turn, inform and dictate broader cultural morés and developments. These interventions however frequently and inherently demonstrate incomplete control over the new direction the emerging aesthetic or interpretation may take. Whilst we may concede that selection and choice plays a significant role in deciding which glitch artefacts become part of the wider cultural sphere - as does the skill with which the artist utilizes the tools of disruption - the outcome of glitchwork is never 100% guaranteed and contains within it the possibility of radical change or break from the established or traditional.

Like the Arts and Craft movement, and potentially the contemporary craft turn, we can see glitch as a "system of revolt" (Morris, 1888. p.147) that faces up to and challenges the determinism within the contemporary field of aesthetic production. Whilst Morris was concerned with the dehumanizing potential of the industrial revolution and the resulting standardization and devaluing of objects and their makers, contemporary glitching can be seen as a last stand against the restrictive environs of computer image construction and the technology giants who package and control them – in glitch the tools are turned against themselves and exploited in order to break the objects they helped create. Glitch is a refusal to use the tools in the way that they were intended to be used. Sound editing applications become image-generators, and the ubiquitous text editor that comes with all modern computers becomes a creative audio-visual tool. This is not a rejection wholesale of the digital, instead a call to arms that urges us to re-examine and redefine our cyborg relationship.

Conclusion

This paper set out to examine glitch and its relationship to visual practices and the resurgence of craft within contemporary culture. The paper suggest that glitch shares many characteristics with the contemporary and historic turn to craft, and in some ways can be seen as an extension of the motivations of craft working within the digital environment, and a critical re-appraisal of our increasingly cyborg-like relationship to modern technology.

Using Menkman's framework, it identified the qualities of different modes of glitchwork, and considered how these were being applied across a range of practices. It considered a range of diverse practices that evidence an engagement with glitch as both an aesthetic and creative strategy. Whilst we believe that there is some value in the glitch aesthetic, a critical view suggests that all too soon it will likely succumb to the forms of cultural appropriation and software integration that have resulted in Instagram like post-production filters. Instead, it is the latter potential of glitch to be a generative and unpredictable creative tool, or a critical tool that reveals the underlying mechanisms of visual production that we argue has the most relevance to inform and enhance the field of illustration in the future. However, through this process we have identified a lack of obvious engagement with accidental forms of digital creation within illustration compared to other areas of the visual arts. This was brought about we argue by the demands of industry practices and a lack of digital literacy emerging from an increasingly closed technological environment. We would suggest that illus-

tration in general has not made equivalent advances in relation to an understanding and craftsmanship of digital tools as it has towards the re-engagement with the significantly more prominent analogue tools that define the craft aesthetic, and thus the potential for innovation that is offered within the more traditional sphere.

We suggest therefore that illustration, in order to remain a relevant force within the creative arts, needs to pursue a more integrated and enlightened engagement with modern technology. Illustrators need to take more control over the digital machines that they rely upon in their daily creative endeavors so that they can become instigators and experimenters rather than followers. We are not therefore advocating a mass turn to glitch within the field. We are however advocating the adoption of a glitch attitude that may allow illustrators to occasionally break the flow of their work, and allow the accidental to become a creative force. In doing so, the work of illustrators may also help to break the flow of what is deemed normal for its audience and lead them to similarly become aware of the hyper-technological media environment and its mechanisms – an environment that increasingly mediates both the digital glitch and the analogue craft alike.

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Presentations

Andrew Kulman

Andrew Kulman is a graduate of the Royal College of Art and has been practicing as a Graphic Artist since 1987. He has produced children's books, editorial illustrations and design commissions as well as establishing a career in education. Since 1997 he has worked at Birmingham City University where he has held posts in Visual Communication, Theoretical studies and Fine Art. He has held the position of Professor of Graphic Art since 2006. His current research is centered on trans disciplinary teaching and he has given papers at various conferences in both the UK and Europe.

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Errordite [sic]: seeing is not believing

This is not a Pipe, Noah Kulman (aged 15), after Magritte, Digital Rendering

Intentional error on the part of the artist/author has long been a mechanism to deceive us into believing the impossible. It's a device brought forward from the illusionists of 19th Century Europe and we the audience can aid the whole experience by our credulity, all rational thought suspended for a period of time. Just pausing to think about the Penrose Tribar or the Necker's Cube, wholly implausible objects, no beginnings, no end, it brings home the level to which we are happily complicit in being tricked. The Necker cube was first developed in 1934 and has been well known since, largely through the working drawings of MC Escher. Escher introduced impossible landscapes and designed forms through his mastery of line and tone, much of his work appearing as woodcuts or lithographs for public purchase.

The fine art of deliberate deceit, intentional errors, illusionistic games have long been instrumental in twisting our perception. Philip K Dick, the science fiction writer suggested that we all experience and inhabit different versions of reality. What we feel is real and tangible is not necessarily what the person next to us is experiencing, therefore we can ask, what is real?

When we study the Penrose Tribar, a triangle composed of three bars connected with right angles, often having a perspective effect added to it, we assume it is an impossible physical achievement, but we still believe what were seeing. Ceci n'est pas une Pipe is a painting by the Flemish surrealist Rene Magritte. What we are presented with is a formal painting of a pipe floating on the canvas and supported by handwritten text which announces 'this is not a pipe', we look again, there is what can only be described as an instrument for smoking tobacco, a pipe. This is a visual paradox, an object is depicted but the label questions its existence.

The irrationality is testament to Surrealist thinking but there's something else happening as well. The reference to the pipe not being a pipe infers that the image of the pipe is not a pipe, it's an image. The painting is not a pipe, its oil based material on a canvas support. In linguistic terms 'This' is not a pipe, it's a four letter word. Magritte's painting has appeared in numerous variations both by the artist himself but also by others who have corrupted the initial concept. In looking for ways of illustrating the image and at the same time avoiding reproduction right fees I asked my son to produce a digital rendition, again extending the deception one stage further, an iteration of something that is not what it purports to be. It's interesting to note that the actual title of the painting is La Trahison des Images, the treason of imagery. It refers to the perception of the mind over the conscious experience. In another painting by Magritte, Decalcomania, 1966, we see a man and his silhouette. The silhouette represents an absence of material, a hole. Here Magritte is letting thought reign free, untethered by associations. The viewer is at once presented by contradiction, ambiguity and illusion. It's interesting the way the bizarre is treated as an impersonal matter of fact, almost unquestioned. Naïve Realism or Representative Realism suggest that our conscious experience is not the real world but of an internal representation of the world. A good example is when a stick is submerged in liquid, to the eye it appears bent. We might say the stick is actually bent, but it only appears bent when the light reflected from the stick arrives at the eye in a less than straight pattern.

George Hardie is a master of visual versatility. He is a Designer / Illustrator/ Maker. Born in 1944, he was part of a generation that grew up through the infancy of Pop Culture. It may not surprise many that he is probably best known for his Hypnosis album artwork, these cover

George Hardie, *The Art of Change*, cover of *Varoom*, Issue 16, 2011

images in themselves borrow heavily from Magritte and his fellow Flemish painter, Paul Delvaux. Not withstanding Hardie's considerable output over the last 45 years since he left the RCA, I'm choosing to look at a relatively recent commission. In 2011 Varoom, the magazine published by the Association of Illustrators underwent a change of format and who better to depict change than George Hardie? Hardie chose to create a cover artwork that utilized deliberate errors and visual trickery. When at his most mesmerizing he creates problems and then goes onto resolve them often within the same image. By incorporating his own collections he lends the work a personal narrative. The work he produced for Varoom 16 is 'classic' Hardie, starting with a table motif and utilizing isometric projections, he follows an irrational and yet seemingly rational narrative, which evolves and propels the eye forwards. We begin to try and solve the multitudinous variations of the table motifs. It's at once, mischievous, playful, complex, deceptive and bafflingly clever. On one hand being a designer George Hardie is a rational image maker, his intention is to communicate ideas but he still manages to turn the viewer's perception on its head. In the Art of Change, Hardie deliberately transforms and moves elements of the individual tables, features are changed, erased, replaced, colours transform and composition shifts. We are forced into entering an invention completely governed by Hardie's trickery but ordered by rules. It has been recounted somewhere that he navigates his designs by a complex of rules, rules of function that might come from a client, rules of reproduction by what's possible on the press, rules imposed by the audience and context. Finally the rules governed by a deadline. George Hardie offers us a world as a complex of interconnected shapes, forms, objects and rules.

The matter of seeing and believing is down to our own imagination. We choose to allow our rational side to suspend belief; artists can supply us with new guidelines and offer us alternative passage. I have chosen just two examples in this short paper, however there is a whole universe albeit an alternative universe where nothing is quite what it seems.

Gary Embury

Gary Embury is a senior lecturer at the University of the West of England, and an illustrator with over 20 years experience. Clients include *The Guardian, The Daily Telegraph, Radio Times*, Aardman Animations, BBC, *New Scientist, The Sunday Times Review*, and many other advertising, editorial and publishing clients. He was Awarded Gold, in *Images 30, The Best of British Contemporary Illustration* 2006 and took part in a discussion on Radio 4's *Front Row* programme hosted by Kirsty Lang on the future of illustration in the digital age.

Currently involved in documentary illustration, and reportage projects, he co-delivers the reportage drawing programme at The Topolski Studio in London. He is editor in chief of *Reportager.org* an online journal showcasing and initiating projects in the area of drawn reportage. The website is an editorial space for reportage projects and a virtual space and forum for the dissemination of projects and good practice in the area of reportage drawing. He has been recently engaged in several projects including Live drawing at Rich Mix Bethnal Green and Chaired *Witness* the Falmouth University Reportage and documentary Drawing Symposium.

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Figure 1: *Topolski's Chronicle*

Figure 2: *Topolski's Chronicle*, Singapore

The Topolski Chronicle Residency programme and Reportage Drawing

The Topolski Chronicle Residency is a three-month Reportage and documentary drawing programme hosted by the Feliks Topolski studio in London. The programme is run by Andrea Marie and co-delivered by Gary Embury. The studio overlooks the London eye in the one of the arches of Hungerford Bridge at Waterloo and houses the archive of one of the most prolific reportage artists and chroniclers of the 20th century. Six young reportage artists spend three months working towards the production of an illustrated printed broadsheet chronicling the 21st century, just as Feliks Topolski did of the 20th century.

Feliks Topolski has been sadly neglected in the public memory, but was one of the most prolific and well-known illustrator-artist and chroniclers of his day. Topolski hand printed and distributed internationally a bi-monthly chronicle of his reportage drawing on brown butcher's paper, distributing his work to a wide international audience (***Figure 1***).

Topolski arrived in London from Poland in 1935 to record King George V's Silver Jubilee. He settled in London and from 1940 was the official war artist joining the arctic convoy to Russia. Topolski reported on most war fronts in the second half of the twentieth century, and over a forty year period, had drawn many of the most significant political events and figures of the second half of the twentieth century including, Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. He also produced portraits of well-known writers and politicians including portraits of Mick Jagger, Andy Warhol and Bob Dylan. Topolski also designed and painted a six hundred foot mural called Memoir of the century depicting key social, political and cultural moments of the century which he had witnessed first hand (***Figure 2***).

Chronicle Residency Programme

The pilot Chronicle Residency Programme took place in the autumn of 2013 based at the Topolski Studio. Six artists, not in employment education or training, were selected by interview to spend three months reportage drawing in and around London. The residents worked with professional artists culminating in a broadsheet designed and printed on the studios own printing press. Master class artists Rachel Gannon, Julia Midgely, Anne Howeson, Chloe Regan, and Lucinda Rogers, also worked with the students documenting locations as diverse as the Races, The Fracking protests, Remembrance day, Royal Courts of justice, The Olympic Park, Dance rehearsals, Heygate housing estate, The Royal Academy, Oxford Circus and other iconic sites, activities and venues (***Figures 3*** and ***4***).

The programme culminated in three exhibitions, The Vibe Gallery, The Bargehouse in London and the University of the West of England F block gallery Bristol. The residents also designed and ran workshops with members of the public in reportage drawing. Following the success of the first residency a second programme is ran, culminating in a printed chronicle and an exhibition at the Topolski studio in early October 2014.

The programme has so far recruited students who are graduates from Illustration and Fine Art degrees. The original intention, was to work with 'NEETS' (young people not in employment education or training) with no formal art education, but has developed more into a postgraduate reportage drawing programme. The intention for the future is to run a parallel residency working with young people with little or no art training. This will be a very different residency but should be a rewarding

Figure 3: Printing at the studio

Figure 4: The Residents Chronicle

Figure 6: Residents drawing in China Town with their feet

and challenging experience.

There has generally been a growing interest in drawing in higher education. A number of drawing organisations and publications have emerged as a new appreciation of drawing and reportage as an art form develops. The residents generally come to the programme with a fairly well developed "style" or visual language. This is often partly as a result of a self-imposed pressure to have a commercial or individualistic way of working for the culmination of their studies at HE.
Reportage drawing by its very nature helps artists to realise a more naturalistic visual language (***Figure 5).*** Many students in Higher Education desperately try to contrive a visual language which very quickly becomes a conceit or mannerism often derivative of others work. Many students in attempting to develop a style forget the importance of content and apply their work to hypothetical briefs, which may have already been illustrated. This can lead to a kind of derivative self-referential cannibalistic way of working. Andrew Selby in Drawing – The Purpose comments,

'I see students who are desperate to find a style. I see style as something that goes in and out of fashion. It's fickle.'
(Selby 2008)

The Chronicle Residency seeks to facilitate the individual artists' visual language by concentrating on journalistic on the spot reportorial drawing, challenging what documentary drawing can or could be. Drawing on the spot often under time, or environmental constraints, working with real content, encourages the artists to draw in a much more individualistic and often idiosyncratic manner. There aren't any pre-conceived expectations of what or how to negotiate a location or in what manner to visualise the subject. A traditional or overly observational analytical or academic manner of working isn't stressed (***Figure 6).***

Reportage drawing

'On the spot' sketching has received much attention particularly through Gabriel Campanario and the 'Urban Sketchers' movement. Many artists draw everyday scenes in cafés, people on the subway, architecture and cityscapes. They publish their work online through blogs and social media. This communal, global participatory activity probably wouldn't have happened without the development of social networks and online

Figure 5: Matt Booker, Brixton Market, London

Figure 7: Harry Morgan, Bristol City Council Night Time Inquiry

Figure 8: Residency Programme Drawing Peloton, Trafalger Square, London

Figure 9: Alex Nicholson reportage drawing, fracking protests

activity. The drawing of everyday scenes and situations of the 'urban sketchers' is a very different discipline to the more proactive activity of drawn reportage, which aligns itself more closely to photojournalism. Drawn Reportage is visual journalism with a pencil or pen; the observational drawing of an event, activity or location; bearing witness to an event and evidencing it through drawing. A reportorial documentary bias is something which distinguishes the Topolski residency from a purely observational drawing course.

Recent involvement with Bristol City Council involving University of the West of England reportage students drawing in council meetings has highlighted the advantages of having artists on the spot live drawing during inquiry days (***Figure 7)***. The artists' presence changed the way in which the working groups developed ideas. Some were scribed or visualised giving rise to new ideas conversations and hybrid concepts, other artists recorded the event producing a historical document of the proceedings. The artists are not journalists but often can bring a new dimension or view to a subject.

'Working outside the pressures of journalism, artists can propose ideas, urging the viewer to think deeply about what war is, about its immediate impact subject and its impact……. Artists navigate this broad ranging subject matter as observers, activists or philosophers.'
(IWM North Catalyst exhibition catalogue introduction)

'On the spot' reportorial drawing can be used to give a unique perspective on current events. How artists interpret this material through different methodologies and visual languages is something the Residency programme encourages. Visual language is important but also new ways of working in responding to events. Reportage artists need to take advantage of the opportunities digital media can offer by considering new directions in

Figure 10: Alex Nicholson reportage drawing, fracking protests

Figure 11: Gary Embury, Oxford Circus, London

the way work is produced, recorded and distributed. Inspiration can be taken from the way in which photo-journalists and documentary filmmakers are using the 'Meta Image' and creating multi-platform projects such as 'idocs' to tell their stories and reach new audiences.

The residency programme offers a diverse range of locations by master class artists, exercises and other alternative ways of drawing to loosen up and challenge a safety-net way of working. For instance, Peloton Drawing, where artists' crocodile walk in a line through a location using the artist in front to support the sketch-book, and peeling off the front to join the rear as in a cycle peloton. This creates a performative element to the drawing and creates it's own momentum and narra-tive, often attracting a large crowd of bemused spec-tators. Taking control and drawing with another artist's hand gives an insight into how others select, edit and negotiate the huge amount of visual information in front of them. Issues of personal space, relinquishing control and new insights gained are important aspects of these exercises in order to open up new ways of working, pushing the boundaries of what reportage drawing can be.

It's interesting to watch reportage artists at work on the same location (***Figure 8***). Some artists try to remain objective and true to the scene in front of them, others use their drawings to reconstruct a scene at a later date in a more interpretive manner. Some work from a combination of drawing and photography or re-interpret the scenario for greater dramatic effect. Others choose to be spontaneous refusing to post rationalise or mediate their work, editing on the fly, making decisions, additions, alterations or exclusions.

A former reportage resident, Alex Nicholson, records conversations with the people he draws by using a form

of notation then reconstructs this after the drawing is complete (***Figures 9*** and ***10***). Often, subjects open up more readily to someone spending time drawing them and engage in a conversational two-way dialogue often revealing quite interesting hidden narratives. Issues of confidentiality, and ethics are something the artist journalist needs to consider and be aware of. Questions are raised such as what are our responsibilities as producers and consumers of this material?

The residents made drawings at Oxford Circus just before Xmas. We were confronted by a moving wall of noise and people swirling around the circus and disappearing down the plughole of the underground. Alistair Oldham producer and director of the documentary film 'Drawing on Topolski' observed,

'As hordes of Christmas shoppers crushed by, it was impossible for any of the illustrators to draw exactly what they were seeing, even if they had wanted to, because the scene in front them was literally changing by the second. My camera could obviously catch all of this in time in motion, whereas a reportage artist can only capture the semblance or impression of that time to then be represented on to a two dimensional image. I would edit my footage later, whereas they are necessarily employing a subliminal editing process in every mark and line that they commit to paper, putting things down, leaving things out, as the reality before them unfolds at such a frenetic pace that they cannot possibly hope to truthfully record : although of course, in many ways they can capture it more truthfully, and more expressively, through the more organic mediation of their own consciousness and perception.'
(Oldham 2014)

Drawing can be quite spontaneous, there is an element of time, so it's not just capturing the decisive moment - in effect you could argue it's the indecisive moment which may in many ways describe more accurately the practice of reportage drawing, which often captures minutes or hours rather than seconds, capturing a number of instances, a number of activities or episodes in one drawing. They are almost like multiple drawings, or multiple frames overlaid. In effect they are like an animation, you get more of a sense of time-based media with the drawing rather than a single frozen moment in time (***Figure 11)***.

'A drawing extends time, representing many moments and decisions, incorporating thoughts and conversation. This gives drawing its deep connection to memory'. (Minichiello M. 2009)

Following the production of the film, Alistair Oldham believes that reportage drawing and documentary film making share similar processes when it comes to editing and narrative compression, he comments,

'like a drawing, the edit has necessarily involved selecting, cutting down, repositioning, erasing and emphasising particular words, scenes, and events, not necessarily in order to represent exactly what happened, but rather to re-present what you think the audience might actually need to see'.
(Oldham 2014)

We receive so much of our information via the media and the internet - can reportage drawing compete? (***Figure 12)*** Are we adding anything to the mix or debate, and are there examples where drawn reportage can change people's attitudes and effect change or are we just passive onlookers. The Topolski Residency Programme continues to promote and challenge what reportage drawing can be. In the age of the digitally mediated image I believe reportage artists can still con-

Figure 12: A group drawing of the Houses of Parliament,London

tribute to our perceptions of social, political issues, war and conflict. Perhaps media coverage can liberate artists from the pressure of producing an official record of an event by freeing them to respond in a more personal and subjective way, therefore possibly uncovering and reflecting wider social and political viewpoints.

Having worked closely with the Topolski Studio residents, I believe reportage drawing is a valuable interpreter of contemporary events and offers a unique perspective that is different to the dramatic spectacles of photojournalism.

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Mireille Fauchon

Mireille Fauchon is illustrator and educator, her work is often inspired by local and personal stories and plays on the blurring between historical 'truth' and fictions and the ensuing muddle of such misconceptions and mis-understandings. In 2011 Mireille illustrated a new edition of Anthony Hope's *The Prisoner of Zenda* published by Four Corner Books as part of their Familiars Series. Richard Embray of Four Corner Books presented alongside Mireille Fauchon at the Interpretation symposium.

Four Corners Books is based in London, publishing art history books and artist's books, including the Familiars series, where contemporary artists are asked to produce an illustrated edition of a classic novel. fourcornersbooks.co.uk

Fauchon has a B.A Graphic Design, Camberwell College of Art, 2005, and an M.A Communication Art & Design, Royal College of Art, 2008.

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The Prisoner of Zenda:
Re-Imagining an imagined Europe

Figure 1, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, published by Four Corners Book, 2007

Figure 2. *The Familiars Series*, published by Four Corners Books

'A real king's life is perhaps a hard one;
but a pretend king's life is, I warrant, much harder.'

I was first introduced to Four Corners Books as a student. We were discussing approaches to illustrating literature and someone had brought in the Four Corners Books edition of Oscar Wilde's The Picture of Dorian Gray, the first of their Familiars series. The format was large and square-ish, saddle–stitched, no spine, soft covered and floppy. Most strikingly the cover did not anywhere feature the name of the novel or the author. The only suggestion to the contents was the brazenly large title 'A young man of extraordinary personal beauty'.

Inside the novel was reproduced in narrow columns much like a magazine, with pulled out headers, and throughout there were advertisements for Gitanes cigarettes featuring beautiful, lusty looking young men. I was enthralled to discover a publisher so brave in their approach to working with such a well-known and beloved text.

I later learned the idea for the Familiars began as a way for providing a frame-work for artists to work with – a familiar text which could be openly interpreted depending on the points of interest of the artist. This was not limited to producing imagery; design, layout, format and material are also very much a part of this process. Each book in the Familiars series is entirely individual. I remember vividly the excitement, knowing there was a place for a more experimental, conceptual approach to design and illustration.

A year or so after I graduated Four Corners Books announced a call for submissions inviting proposal ideas for a new Familiars edition. The Prisoner of Zenda was a book more from my father's childhood than my own. I had read the book as a child helplessly drawn to dashing heroes, high action swordfights, romantic castles and cunning baddies. Re-reading the novel as an adult I was less struck by the romp and recognised many subtleties missed as a young reader. The novel takes place in a fictional central European country, while the plot is vivid and fast paced the setting remains vague and dependent of stereotype of what I imagine are conceptions of middle Europe at the time the novel was originally published in the late 19th century; dark, mysterious and very 'foreign'.

I later learned 'Ruritania'; the invented country, had entered into legal and academic language to be used as a placeholder name when one was required when discussing hypothetical situations.

Themes of mistaken identity and doubling run throughout the novel. The central narrative revolves around British aristocrat, Rudolf Rassendyll, who becomes embroiled in the future of the Ruritanian monarchy, as he happens to be the exact doppelganger of the soon to be crowned King. When the prince is kidnapped, our British protagonist, a distant cousin holidaying in the region, steps into his place to assume the royal role while the rightful heir is recovered. Much tomfoolery, melodrama and romance follow.

Ideas surrounding the blurring of distinctions particularly between historical fact and fiction and the ensuing muddles are common threads throughout my work, so when the opportunity to propose an idea for a new Familiar The Prisoner of Zenda seemed an apt choice.

I quickly had an idea; wouldn't it be interesting to push further these concepts of misinterpretation, confusion and mistaken identity? I wrote to Four Corners explain-

ing I would like to produce a book that served to create an identity for the fictional Ruritania. The imagery within the novel would feature as representative illustrations, but be presented as a catalogue of 'made to look real' emblems and symbols of national heritage. I proposed that the artefacts could be more recognised indicators of cultural identity such as maps, heraldry, photographs, but we could also consider bric-a-brac, curio and trinkets which could be a way of alluding to some of the narrative themes. The story reads in the first person, recounted from Rassendyll's perspective; an outsider, a tourist observing the peoples and customs of a foreign land. If the design of the book was also considered to allude to a non fiction text, perhaps an early travel journal of sorts, an unsuspecting reader, someone unfamiliar with the story might possibly be seduced into believing Ruritania to be real.

I submitted the proposal and thought about it no more, until to my surprise a month later I received a friendly email informing me I was on the short list and would I be able to elaborate on my idea, perhaps provide a few images to give some indication of what the images would look like. I forwarded on an aerial photograph of a castle, the castle of Zenda, a pony-tailed flourished sallet helmet - an example of traditional Ruritanian militaria, a greetings postcard of a landscape, a postage stamp and a scribbled note featuring the royal letter head. I was invited to the Four Corners office to meet Elinor Janz and Richard Embray and was happily told they would like to make the book.

From the very start of the project the process of making The Prisoner of Zenda was entirely collaborative. Initially we met to discuss what emblems or artefacts we might like to feature, and put a lose framework in place. Independently I spent my time immersed in imagery I felt captured the cultural identity of Ruritania and the

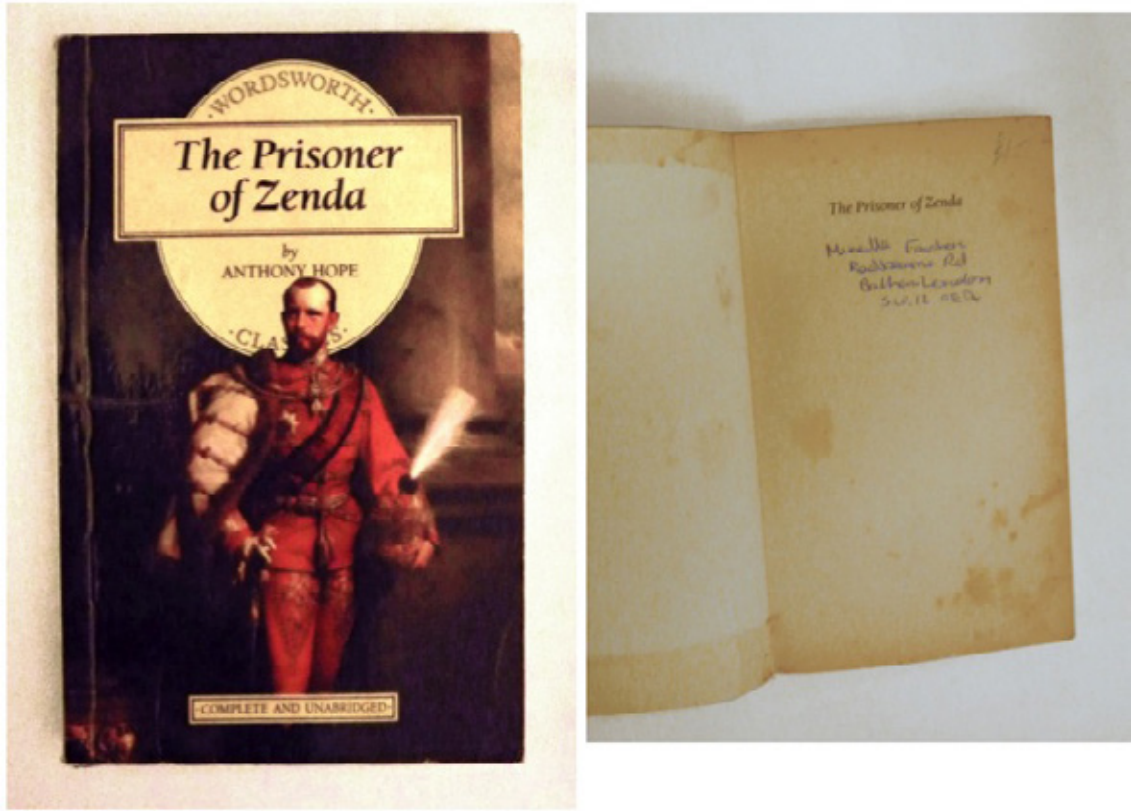

Figure 3. *The Prisoner of Zenda*, publish by Wordsworth Editions Ltd., 1993

Figure 4. The Castle of Zenda

sensibilities of its people. I browsed junk shops and car boot sales collecting dozens of old photographs and postcards of generic European landscapes and anonymous portraits of people I might be able to cast as my protagonists. My studio was filled with reference books; maps, heraldry, architecture, botanical drawings, wildlife, flags, furniture, interiors, costume, armour – essentially I was trying to create a visual identity of a lost nation. I also collected printed ephemera; typefaces, decorative boarders, pattern; anything I felt captured a sense of Ruritanian-ness. I would work independently working usually on a range of ideas and then send over quick snap shots to Elinor and Richard to get their thoughts. Often I would be working on a piece, say a pair of embroidered epaulettes, and another idea would reveal itself. Every few months I would visit the Four Corners and lay out my wares and we would again together re-assess the direction.

While it was never the intention for the images to visually translate the narrative as directly described in the writing, I did want to address some of the core narrative threads; characters, settings and events. For example, the character Princess Flavia is popular and much loved by the Ruritanian people which reminded me very much of the public affection for Princess Diana. Considering this, I created a newspaper clipping featuring the princesses; perhaps lovingly snipped from a tabloid by an adoring fan.

One of the biggest challenges when physically creating the work was deciding in very practical terms the logistics of process. Integral to the concept is that the images appear as though they may be authentic 'real' artefacts. Deciding methods of production to achieve this was far more difficult than generating ideas. The ambition of the project was recognised and as a small publisher Four Corners were able to be flexible with the

Figure 5. Proposed Ruritanian artefacts

Figure 6. Typographic references

scheduling of the project. Subsequently I had enough time to test all my ideas, many of them not fully realised, but allowing the certainty of having had the opportunity to try.

A distinctive feature of the Familiars series is the unique design and format of each volume, a further extension of ideas being explored. Working together with series designer John Morgan, we discussed ideas for the look and feel of the book, all the while considering the central themes; doubling, authenticity and how best to capture the humour and ridiculousness of the narrative. We brought together ideas, and I presented references materials, books and printed ephemera I had been collecting for inspiration, most notably an old observer guide which provided the initial inspiration for the eventual small scale. The attention to detail within the finished design of The Prisoner of Zenda is absolute, the choice of papers, typefaces, the delicate and deliberate treatment of text and image bring the project to full term. Special mention must also be made of the signature display typeface 'Rudy', designed by John Morgan and Adrien Vasquez especially for the edition.

While I had been a graduate for some years when working on The Prisoner of Zenda, I have always felt the initial proposal had the bold ambition of many student projects, but like much student work the ideas would not have been fully realised without collaboration; in this case between an illustrator, a daring publisher and a team of designers and print specialists who all shared the same vision and most importantly the same sense of humour.

Figure 7, The People's Princess

Figure 8. Trade Symbols

Figure 9. Spreads from *the Prisoner of Zenda*, published by Four Corner Books, 2011

Paul Burgess

Paul Burgess is Course Leader, BA Illustration for Screen Arts (previously Course Leader for BA(Hons)/ MDes Illustration) at the University of Brighton.
Paul Burgess is a freelance illustrator, designer, photographer, collage artist and writer. He lives and works in St Leonards-On-Sea, and has exhibited his work in numerous solo and group exhibitions in both the UK and abroad.
Since graduating from Camberwell School of Art in 1984 and the Royal College of Art in 1986, Paul Burgess has worked as a freelance illustrator for over 25 years.

His clients include: *The Guardian*, Penguin Books, Jonathan Cape, Island Records, Jarvis Cocker and Pulp, Ecover, *American Health, The Observer*, Wolff Olins, Greenpeace, Harper Collins, *New Scientist, The Independent, Sunday Times,* TBWA, Sex Pistols, Rough Trade Records, Big Dada Recordings, Vintage Books, MTV, and other editorial, design and advertising clients.

He is interested in collage, music graphics, amateur and folk art, self-publishing, found ephemera, and making things by hand.

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Make Room For Error

Figure1: Martin O'Neill in his studio. St Leonards-On-Sea, 2014. Photograph Paul Burgess

This paper seeks to demonstrate the use of error and mistakes as strategies for the creative process within illustration and graphic design related to editorial, moving image and the music industry.

From the personal interpretation of the initial brief, then allowing experimentation, subversion, and sometimes, complete disregard for rough visuals, the preference for the beauty of error and the excitement of the gratuitous mistake takes over.

The paper will explore the question: What does error bring to the interpretation of the commission. Can misunderstanding between the art director and illustrator prove to be a positive trait? Can the mistake bring the Midas touch?

As part of my research for this paper, I interviewed the illustrators Michelle Thompson, Martin O'Neill and Mark Prendergast, graphic designers Chris Bigg and Martin Andersen, and also musician, and owner of independent record label Mordant Music, Ian Hicks.

An open conversation between these creative practitioners forms the basis of my findings.

'Creativity is allowing yourself to make mistakes. Art is knowing which ones to keep.'
Scott Adams – Author

Failure, mistakes, mishaps, errors, etc. are something that the modern illustrator, designer, artist or musician usually seeks to avoid and eliminate in his/her practice. Generally, most people look at error, mistakes, failure and the like, as a negative trait and strive to avoid them. It is important to learn from one's own mistakes as well as other's, and to identity sources of error. We can be aware of emerging mistakes, and possible failure, in order to eliminate such sources and to make success more likely in the future.
Failure does not stand for much it seems these days; people may find their own mistakes embarrassing, painful and difficult to embrace. It is true that some people may enjoy looking at other people's failure for some reason or another, maybe to sneer at. Of course failure can be amusing, surprising and fascinating to study. Just look at the success of the *Jackass* MTV TV show and *Epic Fail* websites. Failure is there to be laughed at. The use of error and the mistake within an art and design context is different. It can lead to unexpected success, experimentation and elevate a mundane outcome to something more extraordinary and original. As Jacques Derrida states in his book, *Painting and the Truth,* 'it is in freedom that an artist expresses himself: a freedom of making mistakes'.

Collage artist and illustrator, Martin O'Neill has found that by embracing random mistakes and allowing error to feature over and over again in his work, he can make sure his work is fresh, surprising and this enables him to move his practice forward in new directions.

'Making a successful collage is largely one big mistake, albeit a controlled one. You have to of course afford yourself with the elements of error in the first place, and put yourself in the setting for random events to occur, i.e. a desk full of paper shapes, components to mess with and some free time. Then you're off on a journey of hopefully interesting errors.

Making and breaking connections, worthwhile mistakes can only come with experiments though, and I guess you are more prone to making real mistakes when doing things by hand. You need time to fool around and then let things sit, come back later, and reassess. I like to blunder into a solution when I have the time.

A beautiful blunder is a magnificent thing. It's what is best about creativity. When it happens it's like fuel in the tank, it opens doors, leads you off somewhere new and keeps you searching for more.

There is a kind of an art to good mistakes though. I have however found over they years that I've started to repeat my more successful mistakes, which I think is a mistake. When it becomes a process you loose something. So it then becomes tricky to stop making the same nice mistakes and try and make new naïve or ugly ones. You've got to really think about forgetting your comfortable mistake process and start setting yourself up for more unusual events to occur. Putting your coffee too close to your work, swap around the ink cartridge chip and see what happens. Combine component parts from unrelated projects. Reprint a finished bit of work and cut it up again. Make yourself explore unfamiliar methods.' (Figure 1)

Martin talks about one project for *The Guardian* newspaper where he was commissioned to make over a hundred illustrations in five weeks for *The Guardian* and *Observer*'s seven part guide *How To Write*. Art direction was by Gavin Brammall.

'I didn't have time to make 10 collages for 10 different briefs. So I made 15 quick generic collages in and around the general subject matter and physically put them next to individual briefs / copy. I tried to 'fit' illustrations to copy, rather than make illustrations for copy. Accidentally making connections between images and text. The results were great, unusual metaphors that I wouldn't or couldn't have dreamt up in the first place. This is a handy mechanism to have, but not always that fruitful. However, 'Boy climbing cloud' was one of these images that I produced in this manner, and has now become one of my most successful and enduring images. Looking back though, it was a huge mistake. (Figure 2)

I usually have a lot of bits and bobs laid out on a desk for a project, little piles of bits, messy scraps ready to use. The cut out image of the boy just fell or was nudged onto a picture of a cloud I had lying on the desk. I turned around and there he was, climbing up a cloud upside down. The image didn't need anything else. A happy mistake.' (Figure 3)

So what is the difference between an 'error' and a 'mistake'?

An 'error' is a deviation from accuracy or correctness. A 'mistake' is an error caused by a fault: the fault being misjudgement, carelessness, or forgetfulness.
We all like to experiment, I hear you say. So is there a clear distinction between a mistake and an experiment? Well yes, mistakes are things you do even though you know they should not happen. Experiments are tests designed to develop your experience and knowledge. The big difference is that you learn from experiments. Mistakes can be fascinating: they carry a one-of-a-kind result, recognisable and without equal, because they rely on the fact that mistakes cannot be reproduced exactly again in the future. Mistakes are always made in a short period of time.

Errors have this special feature to be absolutely extraordinary, and for that particular reason, they are invaluable and meaningful to illustrators, designers, artists and musicians.

An error in an artwork creates a feeling that something is going to happen; it is a door opening to something we do not control. And the looking forward to these mistakes gives us an excitement, that is difficult to reproduce. This moment where the unknown becomes in

Figure 2: Martin O'Neill, *A Boy climbing a cloud*

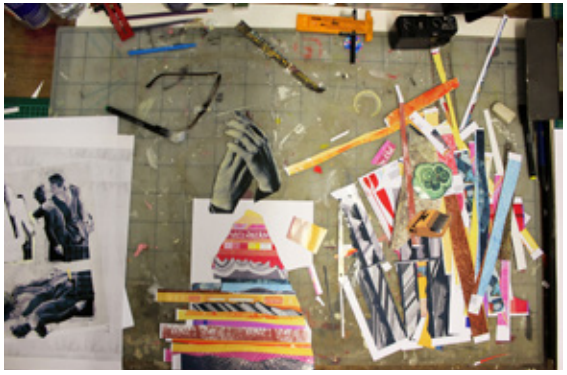


Figure 3: Martin O'Neill's studio desk, St Leonards-On-Sea, 2014. Photograph: Paul Burgess

Figure 4: Baron Mordant

our reach is very special, and we should embrace it. Ian Hicks of Mordant music, works as an experimental sound artist, and also readily embraces error in his work:

'Pure error is happenstance and only becomes a palpable creative tool if you encourage and then coerce it - then it's no longer pure error…it can't be quantified as a basis for creativity, unless as an artist you maybe sit your whole life and wait until it occurs - even then you'd be invoking it too readily…lots of artists embrace error and set up subsequent systems of chance/randomisation in the wake of one…I posit that all artists work with error, knowingly or unknowingly, from Sunday watercolourists to extreme music makers - there's error embedded in Escher's seemingly flawless work somewhere in the creative chain though the net result masks it very well…provenance of materials & personal histories all play a part however obscure'. (Figure 4)

So what does error bring to the interpretation of the commission? Ian Hicks recalls a recent commission for the BFI:

'While working on new scores for the BFI, I utilised many glitches, wobbles and slurs from old VHS tapes - the source error was probably due to worn tape heads, degraded tape or error in transfer… either way this helped to create some interesting rhythmic elements & a nuanced sound palette…once or twice I recorded the wrong programme from VHS to DVD but ended up using its raw materials instead…also, while working on the computer I have occasionally placed a piece of audio on the wrong FX channel in error which has yielded some superb results. I also use this system intentionally sometimes, no longer in error - the error becomes a new tool…serendipity plays its part initially…there is also undoubtedly error secreted somewhere in the whole processing chain from the human/physical provenance e.g. I might be using a synth that back in the

70s had been wired incorrectly, albeit subtly…the error is therefore already embedded unbeknownst to both myself and the commissioner…I might also have been incorrectly connecting kit cv/gate/MIDI etc. without realising it for years, so an error has again been unwittingly inserted into the chain - unknown error… chance and error are interesting too where you set up the possibility. I prefer real unadulterated error - tripping up and falling on the synth or breaking something and having to then improvise. I've found myself more prone to error by not reading equipment instruction manuals…true error can set something very pure/fluid in motion.' (Figure 5)

Misunderstandings between the art commissioner and the musician/designer/illustrator/artist can prove to be a positive trait only if the commissioner is open to it and the net result settles within the threshold of the original remit.

It is the net result that counts and even if it veers off significantly it might take the original brief somewhere unexpected, possibly enhancing it beyond original expectation, completely misinterpreting the brief is unlikely to satisfy the commissioner but could be fruitful in itself for something else.

Martin Andersen sees himself as being lucky to work in a varied field of creativity. From stop-frame animation, and live action to graphic design and photography. Depending on the project and client, he always tries to allow for some visual experimentation in his work.

'I generally believe that errors, mistake and the uncontrollable can bring a new rich dimension to my visual language.'

The most recent experimental projects have been art directing and designing the music packaging for Second

Figure 5: MM058 eMMplekz - IZOD DAYS VINYL LP / http://www.mordantmusic.com/

Figure 6: Oliver Cherer, Sir Ollife Leigh & Other Ghosts, (Second Language Music)
Art direction, design and photography: Martin Andersen at Andersen M Studio
Identity Design: Line Lunnemann Andersen at Andersen M Studio

Figure 7: Robin Saville, *Public Flowers* (Second Language Music). Art direction, design and photography: Martin Andersen at Andersen M Studio

Figure 8: Created for the exhibition If You Could Collaborate, London, January 2010. Designed using drawings and statements from the children living at Leka Gape, a South African care home for women and children.

Language records. (Figure 6)

'I recently created a series of photographs for the album *Oliver Cherer: Sir Ollife Leigh & Other Ghosts*. The brief was to depict a surreal dreamlike state in Croham Forest (near Croydon). I decided to shoot everything as double exposures on medium format film to create something accidental and of a beautiful tactile quality. Once I had processed all the images, I decided to manipulate the negatives with Ferricyanide. This process bleaches the film, a non-reversible manipulation and there is hardly any way of controlling how it will appear. I liked this risk and the danger of losing my favourite shots.

Another recent project where I used an accidental approach was the music packaging design for *Robin Saville – Public Flowers.* (Figure 7)

Here I photographed flowers from an old book. I again shot these double exposures and in this way created new exciting shapes and colour combinations. I prefer using this technique using film rather than creating the double exposures digitally where you have full control of the composition and opacity. There is something special about picking up your prints from the lab and not knowing what to expect from the shoot, but this obviously also requires having very trusting clients, who allows you to play and experiment.

Two years ago we created a fantastic project with a group of children from Lekagape, a South African care home for women and children to produce a set of limited edition A2 screen printed posters which was sold and with all the proceedings going to the care home. (Figure 8)

We had sent a box full of pens, markers, paper and cameras to the children to use to communicate their

thoughts and depict their lives. They then sent the creations back to us and we set up a screen printing press where we then printed a total of seven posters. Each poster was printed in up to seven layers of different colours. Our concept was not to leave any of the children out no matter of the quality of their drawings and by overprinting all the drawings they created something new and unique. We left in all the mistakes and because of the overprinting, had no idea how each print would turn out.'

So can a misunderstanding between the art commissioner and the illustrator/artist/musician/designer prove to be a positive trait, and lead to much better work?

Some observations by Chris Bigg, graphic designer, art director and typographer best known for his work at v23 in collaboration with Vaughan Oliver, for 4AD and many other record labels.

'Imperfection has always intrigued me, I think it really sums up my approach to my work and attitude to life.'

Chris Bigg will often use found typography, photographic elements, montage and textures found on the studio floor, working together in a rich melting pot of trial and error.

'I am generally the art director, so I am the one that takes the mistake to the client and suggest that this option is better than the original direction or brief. Now there ways of introducing these new directions, its often subtle but can be a serious radical reworking, so that is the skill of the art director, I often say at times it can be more social worker than designer, what I mean is you find ways to introduce new directions without freaking out the client, this is where we started and this is where we can possible go, and lead to stronger, better work!'

Figure 9: Mouse on Mars, *Rost Pocs (the EP Collection) Too Pure*. Design: Chris Bigg

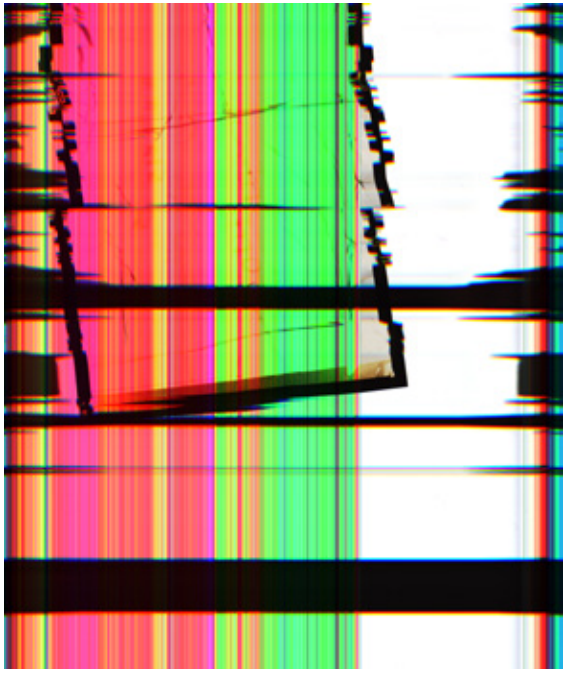


Figure 10: Chris Bigg, Broken Scanner Image

(Figure 9)

Mouse on Mars: 'I chose this project as I feel it contains a varied amount of mistakes and improvised out comes, the brief was quite open, they supplied me with the found postcard of the woman, they liked it in its pure state, but there music has a electronica/cut up feel I felt it was missing this element. Just by chance the week before my scanner had broken while scanning some images of trees, these were fantastic and I new I would find a home for them in the future, so I archived them away in my 'pure accident draw'! (Figure 10)

The broken almost bar code lines and broken felt right so I introduced them onto the 'women'. I was working on the typography but it all felt rather flat and did not reflect the energy in their sound. Next to my 'pure accident draw' is a 'found typography draw' I had always liked the cut up type on the slip of cardboard that I had found on the warehouse floor at the 4AD offices many years previously. I set about recreating this using a photocopier and knife.

I would like to add, that almost every project I have completed involves elements of the accidental, if not directly, but in attitude and problem solving, what I have learnt over the years is to embrace this approach.'
Michelle Thompson is an illustrator and collage artist, and feels this is a double-edged sword. She discusses misunderstandings between the art commissioner and the illustrator. (Figure 11)

At the time I would probably say 'no', misunderstandings between the art director and illustrator do not often prove to be a positive. Honestly though, it can work, especially with new clients. If there is a silence after the first set of roughs, then I worry that I've completely misunderstood what they were after. After my initial panic I get on with it, my job is to answer the brief. I can try and push it my way but at the end of the day the client has to be happy. It works the other way round too. I am constantly trying to put my own personal, collage work into illustration commissions. If I'm lucky the client is happy with this alternative approach. I keep unsuccessful stages and work them into other jobs, mistakes are never wasted.

With manic deadlines I often find myself whipping up a rough within hours. I love this way of working as I have to proceed quickly, mistakes happen. I used to finalise my roughs too much, so clients never got to see this work in progress.
I've been surprised by clients feedback from what I would consider to be very 'rough' roughs! I'm now embracing this process, it not only loosens' up my work, it can sometimes help get the job done a lot quicker too, with surprisingly different results.
'Rider' was produced for the Secret 7 project, which I have now done for three years. This piece could be described as a happy accident! The joy of not having an art director asking me to change anything.' (Figure 12)

Using only collage, images often create themselves. Artworks have simply been created because two pieces came out of the box together and I thought they work well together. I guess I'm always looking for the happy accident.'

Mark Prendergast is an illustrator and visual artist whose work is all about experimental process, error and pushing the limits of technology.

'I work a lot with the errors that are inherent in analog media. My working process usually involves sitting down with something in front of me, and not quite knowing what the outcome will be. I like to play and

Figure 11: Michelle Thompson, *Tough*, Globe & Mail

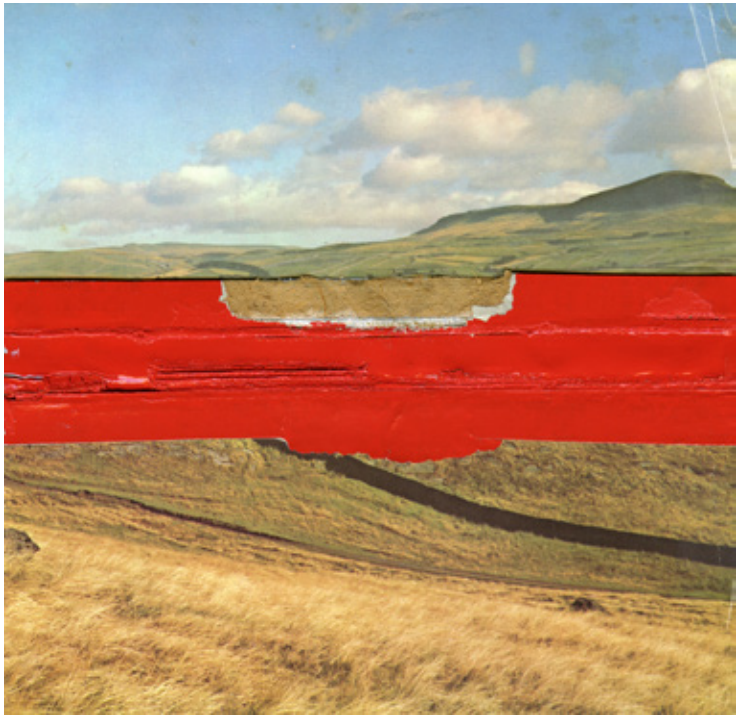


Figure 12: Michelle Thompson, *Secret 7 Rider*

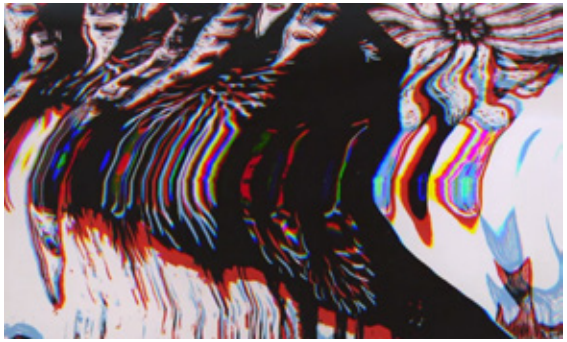


Figure 13: Mark Prendergast, Experimental scanning
Figure 14: Mark Prendergast, studio desk

experiment in the early stages of a project and treat every mistake or unplanned tangent as a possible new direction. I find I get far more ideas using a process that produces errors. Often this creates multiple possible directions, which can be overwhelming and counterproductive if the error-searching goes on for too long or is not done in a somewhat methodical way. I try to search for systems that create imagery, and if the system has a part that is chaotic in some way, then that is even better! (Figure 13)

Mark will often place his laptop on a scanner, drip liquids in front of the camera lens and create amateur turntables on which to film his artifacts and imagery.

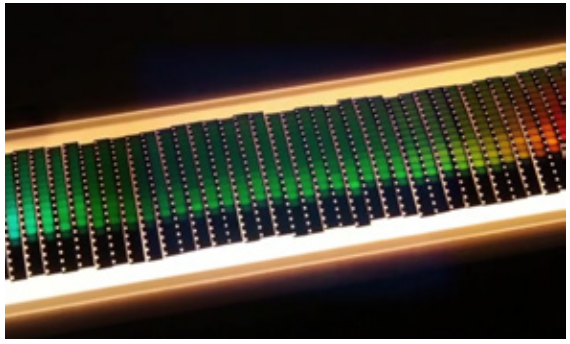
Generally I try to avoid things that are too polished and clean. Or rather, I really like when the subject matter or process is really unpredictable and is somehow showcased in a very clean and clear way. I try to overcome the chaotic and idiosyncratic nature of analog media, or use it to my advantage. (Figure 14)

A project I did called 'Not in that order, necessarily' was all about exploiting the errors that occur through using super8 film. It involved various explorations into the unpredictable frame rate of the camera I was shooting with. Tacita Dean talks of the film medium as having "Material resistance" which the artist must work with, or against. (Figures 15 and 16)

I am in the process of making a film at the moment involving very close up stop motion animation of cheap bouncy balls. Due to time restraints I had to find a very makeshift rig involving four sowing needles and a block of cork that would allow me to photograph each ball in many different positions in order to animate them. The rig works but is by no means ideal, and it makes the balls move in a way that I would not have thought of.

Time restraints often force decision making, and often for the good. I find that these slightly obtuse methods of problem solving all feed into the final piece and there is a quality given to the work that would be lost had I made it on the computer or used a rig from a shop.'

Mark Prendergast recently returned from a year long internship at HORT in Berlin, and it was precisely his love or error and experimentation that got him noticed by HORT in the first place. (Figure 17)



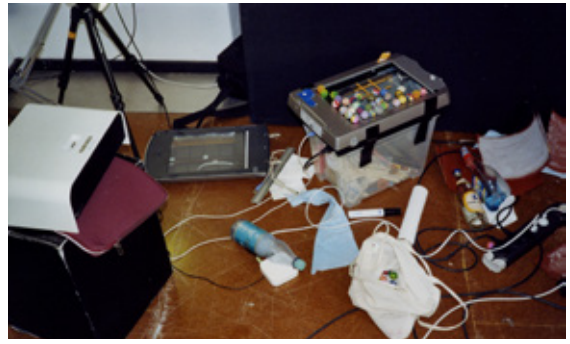


Figure 15: Mark Prendergast, still from *Not in that order, necessarily*
Figure 16: Mark Prendergast, Experimental scanning
Figure 17: Mark Prendergast, Experimental scanning

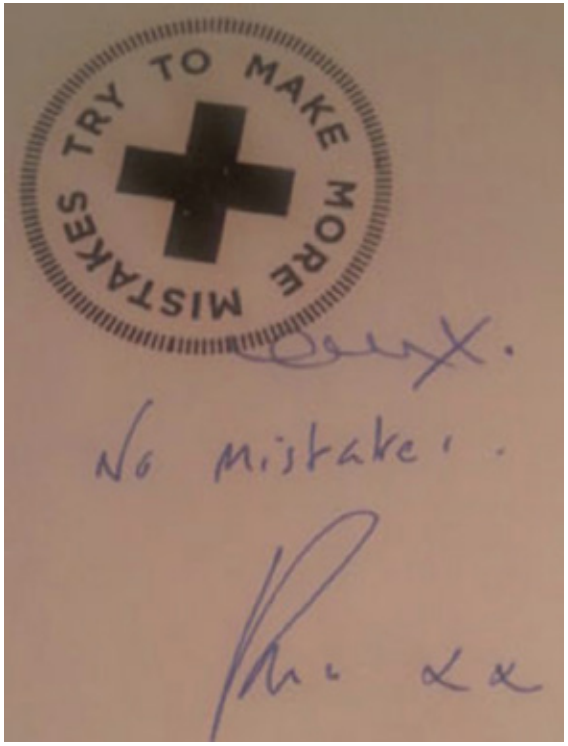


Figure 18: Ian Noble, 'Try To Make More Mistakes' rubber stamp

Conclusions

Mistakes and the creative practice go hand in hand. The mistakes and errors made by illustrators and creatives today will be noticed, discussed and in some cases, sneered at, but tomorrow they will be called milestones of art and design.
In this all too perfect world, where everything is documented, discussed, boasted about and blogged, we should give a cheer for those creative people who take risks, embrace mistakes and are not afraid of failure occasionally.
There are so many random and complex factors at work during the artwork process, that you could argue that error is a constant, perhaps unconscious, and fundamental in the bedrock of all creativity.

'Art school had taught me it was far better to be a flamboyant failure than any kind of benign success'
Malcolm McLaren

A final quote from educator Ian Noble:

'Try To Make More Mistakes'

One former student recalls that, when asking Noble to autograph a copy of his book Visual Research, he produced a rubber stamp reading 'Try to make more mistakes'. (Figure 18)

Websites

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Martin Andersen andersenm.com

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Michelle Thompson michelle-thompson.com

Mark Prendergast markprendergast.co.uk

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