

HANDBOOK

PRACTICE RESEARCH

WILLEM DE KOONING ACADEMY ROTTERDAM

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HANDBOOK *PRACTICE RESEARCH* | WILLEM DE KOONING ACADEMY

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SuikerZoet filmfestival Visitor Survey

We appreciate if you can answer this survey by tearing on the dotted line next to the right answer

I have heard of SuikerZoet via:

.....newspaper/magazine

.....folder

.....previous years

.....internet

.....posters

.....word of mouth

I live in:

Schiedam.....

Vlaardingen.....

Maassluis.....

Rotterdam.....

Delft / Den Haag.....

This year I visit: Elsewhere.....

.....1 film

.....2 films

.....3 films

.....4 films

.....more than 4 films

Visits festival:

1st time.....

2nd or 3rd time.....

4th or 5th time.....

> 6 times.....

My age:

.....< 20 years

.....20 - 40 years

.....40 - 70 years

.....> 70 years

I think it is:

Fantastic.....

Quite good.....

Not great.....

S8 Example of processing the survey

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1. INTRODUCTION

In compiling this handbook we have tried to be as comprehensive as possible, but at the same time concise. This handbook is intended to serve as a reference work and as an aid to studying at home, as well as acting as a complement to the lessons. For this reason we have opted for a short explanation in each section, accompanied by referrals to the relevant supplementary literature and, where appropriate, to more detailed examples to be found in the supplements. This enables students to digest the core information quickly and allows supervisors to find the right information promptly.

Research is becoming increasingly important in higher education in the Netherlands. One of the reasons for this is the introduction of the European Bachelor-Master-PhD system, that departs from the premise that students achieving professional higher education qualifications will be in a position to take a doctoral degree by carrying out practice-based, practically-oriented research. For this reason research skills now belong to the basic core of skills that a student needs should he/she want to carry on to a Master's programme, this being the highest qualification after the Bachelor's programme.

Another reason for this emphasis on research is the desire to ensure that knowledge gained in practice should be recorded and passed on more than it is being at present. In the past a great deal of research has been carried out into art and artists, but historians find it very difficult to gain access to designers' and artists' procedures and practical skills and knowledge. Therefore it is advisable that knowledge about the production of art and design should not only be gained from the point of view of the *reception* side (looking at and studying the products of art and design), but also from the *production* side. As many artists and designers work independently, it is regrettable that time and time again they each have to reinvent the wheel by themselves, while in the meantime their colleagues may have developed usable techniques or gained useful insights relevant to them.

Practice-based research has its problematic facets as well as its advantages. The involvement of the researcher with the research topic makes it impossible for him or her to remain truly objective. For this reason it is all the more important to include the findings and opinions of others in the research project, and to adopt a critical attitude towards one's own prejudices. However, on the advantage side, a researcher with sufficient practical experience has a better understanding of the processes common to expressive professional practice. As a result of this expertise he or she will ask more specific, and often different, sorts of questions. This automatically leads to different final results. For this reason, this form of research is a good complement to the traditional scientific research disciplines. It is absolutely not our intention that as an art student you should carry out research in the same way a scientist would; on the contrary, it is your own vision and practical experience which provide the indispensable knowledge required to complement traditional research, and which can ensure that you can further develop and share your practical experience with others.

To conclude, the skills students acquire by carrying out practical research are relevant as a form of professional training. After all, being able to fully validate your own qualities in speech and writing is important when trying to secure commissions and obtain financing. It also helps students to become more conscious of the framework in which they are functioning; helps them to become familiar with the professional field and the social issues and to see how these work in relation to their own work and interests. This gives them the necessary framework to reflect upon their own motivations and qualities and communicate these to others. Moreover it is desirable that policy-makers gain insight into the proffered skills, scope and boundaries within which creative professional groups operate, so that in the future educational practice and policy continue to lock together in harmony.

In this handbook we shall first focus on the planning of a research project. After this, traditional and visual research techniques will be dealt with. The last chapter examines the way to go about writing a term paper or thesis.

All pieces of text and examples in this handbook (barring the supplement) for which no source has been given have been formulated by the author herself.

2. THE RESEARCH PLAN

2.1 DESIGN

The most tried and tested organization of a research plan (see supplement for an example of a practical research plan) shows many similarities with the most suitable design for a company plan, a project application, a design pitch, an exhibition statement and every other sort of plan or document that you do not only write for yourself, but also for others, for instance, for a lecturer, customer visitor or sponsor. This structure is represented in a logical form of progression that you can easily remember: Background, Approach and Contributions. Try to keep to this sequence when documenting or planning your projects.

Background

Mention:

- background to your choice of subject (why THIS)
- relevance to you, connection with your interests and practice (why ME/US)
- topicality and relevance of your research inside and outside your field of study (why NOW)
=> all the information that leads up to your presentation of the question

Approach

- research question
- method / approach: how are you going to tackle answering the question
- requirements: what do you need for this approach (resources, time, assistance, circumstances etc.)

Contributions

- summary (mention again positive points)
- expected results: what is it going to produce: pitfalls/difficulties and solutions (demonstrate that you are critical, realistic and well informed) and what will be the benefit of it for yourself and others? What will you learn from it? How can you use this knowledge?

2.2 Points to Remember

Contextualization

Place your research within your field of study and your field of interest. Who else is involved with this particular subject? Show you are aware of existing relevant research and sources, social-economic developments, artists, designers etc. as well as mentioning your role within the whole study. And also, while carrying out the research, be clear in your mind about your own possible prejudices and/or limitations.

Boundaries

Be scrupulously realistic in your assessment of the amount of time required, and in your ability to fulfil promises with regards to the results, but make a good pitch and be enthusiastic about your project, after all, you are supposed to be convincing someone else.

Evaluation

Does the background to the research lead logically to the presentation of the question and does the method used result in an answer to your research question? Be realistic: what can you achieve in the allotted amount of time? Leave also in your plan, so written down, some room for supplementary research and alterations, as well as for unforeseen delays.

Phrasing the Question

Try to make the formulation of your question concise, but clear. Ask an 'open' question, that is one for which you can give a longer answer than a simple 'yes' or 'no'. You can often avoid a closed question by beginning your question with 'how', 'what' or 'why'.

Acknowledgement of Sources

In your research plan and in your final thesis or term-paper make a clear distinction between what you yourself have thought up, and what you have read or heard elsewhere. This does not only hold for the written text, but also for any pictures, illustrations or images you have used; remember to acknowledge the maker. If you copy a piece of text from someone else's writing, this is known as a 'quotation' (if you copy it word for word) or 'citation' (if you mention the person who first had the idea). A quotation must be recognizable in the text (see MLA style-sheet in the Supplement) and accompanied by a reference to the source. A citation is often referred to in the running text (see References in the text below). If you fail to do this you will be accused of plagiarism and your work will not be accepted; if plagiarism is proven this can lead to an official report being sent to the Board of Examiners and may even lead to your being suspended from the course. Even if the information is reproduced in your own words, after having read it somewhere else, you must mention the original source of the information in your text. You have not after all thought the idea up yourself, but are basing your argument on what you have heard, seen or read.

Ethics

It may just be that for your research you need to make use of sensitive information, or that you want to interview susceptible groups - like children. Make sure that in your plan you weigh up the risks for the person or people involved and, if required, make sure that the respondents are anonymous by, for instance, giving them a number rather than naming them or, in photographs, concealing their identity. If you do not want to do this, it is important to ask for written permission for the use of the material. In this correspondence you should outline what you intend to use the material for, and ensure you confine yourself to these boundaries.

Supplements:

- S1** **Example of a research plan for practical research**
- S2** **Instructions on acknowledgement using the MLA method**

3. TRADITIONAL RESEARCH TECHNIQUES

3.1 Literature and other sources

Starting up

The clearer you are in defining the subject of your research project the easier it will be to look for specific information. On the other hand, literature research can help you to get a more distinct picture of what appeals to you and what arouses your inquisitiveness. Just looking around you and leafing through books, magazines and journals can also give you some new ideas. And this has the added benefit that regularly reading well-written texts will make you a better writer yourself. Try to make sure that you choose your subject in good time: choosing your research subject should not take too long. Start off as soon as possible by looking on the internet for information, or searching along the shelves of the Academy media centre/ library.

Search strategies

Searching on the internet has a number of advantages. You do not have to leave your desk and you can easily do it in between other assignments. It does however have disadvantages: there is a great deal of superfluous information to be found on the internet, which may divert your attention from your specific search subject, and it is sometimes difficult to concentrate on your original search while being distracted by advertisements, mails and Facebook messages. If you notice that you cannot concentrate on the task at hand, then go to the library, or go somewhere where you can drink a cup of coffee and start off by leafing through a book or some printed articles. A few tips:

- Searching through Google Scholar will provide you with a relatively large number of books and articles and fewer blogs and search results which are less relevant for research purposes.
- Wikipedia can work as a good start portal, but try to use it mainly to find more reliable sources (after all, we never know who is responsible for the content of a Wikipedia page, it could be anybody).
- Via hint > mediatheek > databases (and scrolling down a little), you, as a student of the Hogeschool Rotterdam, have access to online periodicals, from these you can download PDF articles for free (which you would otherwise have to pay for). There are a great number of different browsers and periodicals available to you. A good start is JSTOR, you can search there using headwords (in English).
- When you have found a book or article that fits your requirements, have a good look at the list of source material in it; you will often discover on this list even more interesting books and articles on the same subject.
- One way of searching for visual material on internet is via: Google Image Search, Similar images or ffffound.com. Remember to record properly where the visuals come from (who the owner or maker is). The App 'Goggles' you can use for finding references that belong to photographs.

Looking in the media centre or library has the advantage of there being personnel available who can help you to search for things if you cannot manage to find what you are looking for on your own. The library also provides the peace and quiet to pore over a book or periodical. The disadvantage is that you cannot take the media centre home with you. Save relevant information in your computer, file or notebook, so that you can consult it and find it easily at a later stage. In addition to books and periodicals, the catalogue of the media centre also lists DVD's and even podcasts. In the library catalogue one of the ways of searching is by subject, author and title.

Other points worth noting

Make sure that you have a good mix of sources for your research. They do not all have to be scientific papers, but you should use one or two. A couple of books, some visual

material and then some supplementary material from, for instance, blogs, newspapers, documentary film etc. Ensure that you have at least five written sources of which the author and publication date are known and where use has been made of source references, therefore showing that the author has carried out thorough research. If there are not enough of these sorts of sources to be found for your specific subject, look further afield. Among others, relevant sources dealing with the development of the particular field discussed in your work may be a good addition. Consult your lecturer in good time if you are uncertain about what constitutes a good addition.

MLA (style sheet) method of acknowledgements

There are different standard models in circulation for acknowledging sources. Particularly between varying scientific disciplines there can be differences in the way in which they record sources. Even within the arts and social sciences there are differing international standards. The Willem de Kooning Academy has opted for the MLA style sheet for the use of its students. Therefore make sure that you learn to use this style sheet as quickly as possible, so that other students and the academic staff can follow your references. Incidentally, the MLA standard laid down in the style sheet (from the American Modern Language Association) is a much used standard, which you will come across more often and which will come in useful after you have left the Rotterdam Art Academy.

Index of Sources

It is important that your term-paper or thesis comprises an index of sources; to be listed in alphabetical order at the end, so that the handbook can consult it. In this alphabetical list each source is indicated with the author's name and surname. If these are unknown, then the name of the publisher or website is listed.

An example:

Abbing, H. *Why are artists poor?- The exceptional economy of the arts*. Amsterdam: University Press, 2002.
Cross, N. *Designerly ways of knowing* Board of International Research in Design (BIRD), Basel/Boston/Berlin: Birkhäuser, 2007.
EURIB Website 'De kracht van Design Thinking' 2009 (geraadpleegd 01/02/2011)
http://www.eurib.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Documenten/PDF/Design/De_kracht_van__design_thinking_.pdf

References in the text

In the text you always indicate where your assertions come from. If you do not do this it means the handbook automatically draws the conclusion that you have thought them up yourself (that this is your own view). If you yourself are the sole source then the research has not been carried out thoroughly. If your text is really from somewhere else and you do not mention the source, you have committed plagiarism and that is punishable. Moreover the Academy has at its disposal plagiarism detection-software which means that texts which have been copied, or cut and pasted, can be detected. So be careful and name your sources accurately otherwise you run the risk of an official report being sent to the Examination Board after which you may be suspended from the course, or may be given a fail mark for your examination.

Generally it will be enough to mention the author between brackets, accompanied by year and page number or numbers. If the author is unknown, you use once again the name of the publisher or website. The point behind this is that the handbook can deduce from an acknowledgement in the text where he/she can find further information about the source, which is to be found in the source index at the back of your document.

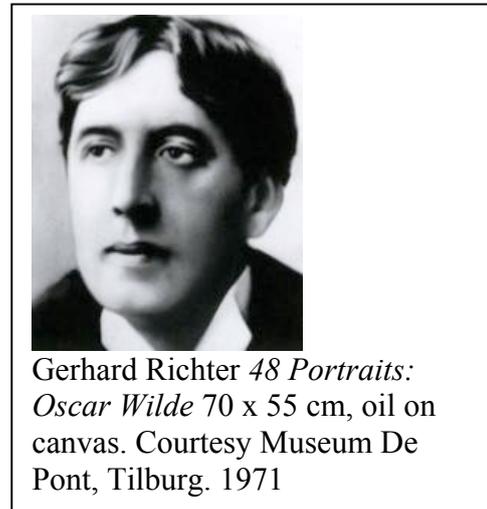
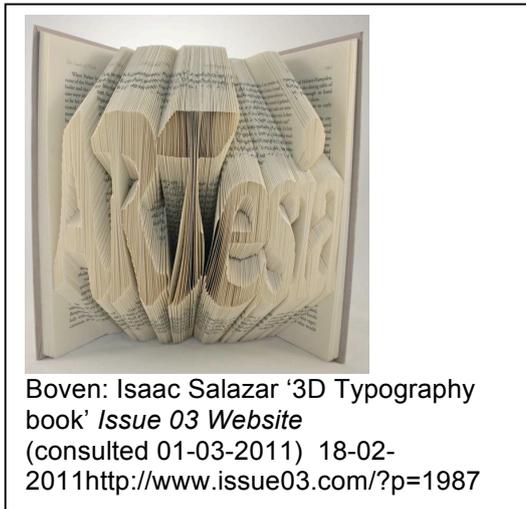
An example of a text fragment with references between brackets:

It appears that after a couple of years of art education design students approach problems in a different way from scientists. This is supposedly due to the fact that designers are used to dealing with questions that allow more than one possible solution and therefore they do not set out to search for the only good solution, but for the most exceptional and appealing solution (Cross: 37). On the website of the 'European Institute for Brand Management', based on a article by Tim Brown in Harvard Business Review, a short summary is given of the specific characteristics of the way designers think (EURIB Website). A 'design thinker' is said to be in command of empathy, integrative thought, optimism and experimentalism.

Illustrations

We would prefer to see illustrations or visuals placed in the text, placed next to where they are referred to or discussed. Accompanying the illustration should be the complete source (as this does not appear in the alphabetical list of sources to be found at the end of text). If it is a work of art, it is a good idea to acknowledge in addition to the artist and title of the work, measurements, technique used, owner and year.

A few examples of illustrations with sources acknowledged underneath them are given below:



Notes

Sometimes you would like to add a note, for instance giving more detailed information or a definition, without this leading to unnecessary breaks in your text. These additions can disturb the flow of the argument you are so carefully building up. This type of information, references or additional information, you can include in a note at the bottom of the page. In WORD you do that through 'merge' > 'footnote', this way you leave a number in the text that corresponds to the number in the note area reserved specially for additional information to be found at the bottom of the page. You will also see that footnotes are sometimes used to acknowledge sources. Naturally you can do this as well in the case of project plans or statements, but in your assignments involving general theory and practical research we would prefer you not to adopt this style.

Supplement:

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- S2 **Instructions on acknowledgements using the MLA method**
 - S3 **Model research paper [in which the MLA style sheet method has been correctly applied]**

3.2 Qualitative research

Methods for qualitative research centre on obtaining detailed, extensive information. The sort of information that you cannot convey in exact figures and percentages and whereby you are not dealing with fixed categories or a restricted number of possible answers. If, for instance, you want to know how many fashion designers would be willing, for an x sum of money, to use extra amounts of ecologically sustainable cotton instead of ordinary cotton, then you can carry out a quantitative piece of research. If, in addition, you want to know why fashion designers choose to use ecologically sustainable cotton and in what situation and under which conditions and what they have experienced in doing so, then this demands a qualitative piece of research carried out, for instance, through interviews. Due to the fact that qualitative research takes a great deal of time, the research population (the number of people who participate in the research project) is usually small. For a paper it may be enough to interview only two or three people, for a thesis about fifteen people. Interviews are not the only form of qualitative research that are used. Another accepted and widespread method is, for instance, participant observation and document analysis. These methods in some ways resemble a number of visual research methods, described in this handbook, with the distinction that here the emphasis lies on studying the practice and/or products of others and not those made by you yourself.

Interviews

Always prepare interviews properly before you start out: what do you want to know, and what questions are you going to ask?

Ensure that the conversations are well documented by, for instance, making sound-recordings. By doing this you can be certain that you have not missed anything. Ask well in advance for permission to make a recording. Ask open questions and not questions that can be answered by a simple 'yes' or 'no'. Make sure your questions are not phrased in such a way that they are steering the respondent to make a certain answer: keep the questions neutral. Do not ask questions like 'don't you also think that...?' If the question is answered too briefly, try to go on asking questions to gain more information on this point. Be careful not to allow the conversation to drift too far off the point, because the conversation should not carry on for too long. Before you start, state how much time the interview will take and keep to it. Always send the interviewee a recording of the interview and make agreements about what you are going to use it for and what it is not to be used for. For instance, it is not polite to interview someone for a school project and then, without further consultation, put the video on Youtube (see Ethics). If the interviewee wishes to remain anonymous, give him or her a number in your research report, for instance 'respondent 1'. Agree on how much information you will state, for instance, about people's age or profession, make records of these agreements and keep to them.

Participant observation

Participant observation is field research, whereby you as a researcher are present in an organization or environment to collect more information on your subject. This can be done through observation, photography, conversations etc. You are present in a particular environment and mingle in with them in their daily routines, but you are not working there yourself. This is not an internship or work placement. You are there to register certain matters and to do so you must maintain a certain distance. Make sound agreements on what the data you have collected will be used for and on the desired levels of privacy of those featured in the data.

Document analysis

For this form of qualitative research you delve into, for instance, museum collections or archives. Take care of making sound agreements on access and use.

3.3 Quantitative research

Quantitative research is suitable for gathering information on people's preferences, or data involving large groups of people. Because quantitative research methods (for instance conducting interviews or a poll) take less time than in-depth interviews, the research population (the number of people that participates in the research project) can be larger. In the case of a short list of questions or indicating a preference between, for instance, four different book covers, you can speak or write to between 25 and 100 people. In scientific research this is done on a far larger scale, usually with the aid of a 'representative random sample survey'. This is a type of research whereby people are approached by picking their names out of the phone book at random, and whereby they do not look at their backgrounds, professions etc. By asking a great number of people (for instance a couple of thousand), the researchers can form a fairly reliable idea of the views of the 'general public'. With the type of research that you will be carrying out during your studies at the Academy, you will often have to select, for instance, on the basis of professional group or age. This does not pose a problem, but you must remember that what holds for your research population is not necessarily true of all Dutch people. That type of sample survey is never representative. Talking to people on the street about their views comes the closest to being representative.

Ensure that a piece of qualitative research is designed in such a way that you gain the information you need, not more than you need. It has not got to take too long. If, for instance, you ask people on the street to look at a board with 5 logos portrayed on it, and then ask them which they like best and which least, then you are able to keep it surveyable. If you approach people with a long list of questions the chances are that they will feel like participating. It is well worth asking yourself if a short multiple-choice set of questions might provide you with the data you need. If you not only wanted to know which logos people like best, but also why that is, then you would have to use a different approach, and you might possibly have to extend your research to include a couple of in-depth interviews.

Supplements:

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- S4** Example of plan for interview
 - S5** Example of processing interview
 - S6** Example of processing the survey
 - S7** Example of survey design
 - S8** Example of processing the survey
 - S9** Example of processing the results of a survey

Recommended literature:

-
- Turabian, K.L. et al. *A Manual for writers of research papers, theses and dissertations* 7th Rev. edition, Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2007 (1937)
 - Jensen, K.B. *A handbook of media and communication research : qualitative and quantitative methodologies* London / New York: Routledge, 2003
 - Kawamura, Y. *Doing research in fashion and dress : an introduction to qualitative methods* Berg, 2011
 - Porter, T.M. *Trust in numbers : the pursuit of objectivity in science and public life* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996

4. VISUAL RESEARCH TECHNIQUES

4.1 General remarks

The visual element in the scientific field of action has been restricted for a long time to the use of illustrations or figures to illustrate or make a point clear. There were of course exceptions to this rule. Archaeology, for instance, has a rich tradition of describing objects and attributing to them a certain meaning, and in biology and art history the interpretation of images has played an important part in research. For a long time this role was limited to documenting and categorizing. Visuals were used to a lesser extent as a lead up to research questions, for a new hypothesis and for developing and testing theories. The arrival of practical research and participant research in the social sciences has changed this.

This has led to all sorts of new visual methods being developed and applied, which were used a lot less before now, or which did not exist at all.

For us, as visual-makers, these techniques are particularly advantageous because they offer opportunities to deploy visual experiments in formulating and answering research questions relevant to our professional practice. Moreover as makers of visuals we are automatically 'visual thinkers'. We are already used to thinking in terms of visuals. The use of visuals for critical reflection is then a logical step, which gives us, as makers, the opportunity to critically re-examine the effects of our own or other people's visuals. Many of the exercises we do in the lessons we can also deploy in new practical experiments and in expressing and ordering ideas about our own work.

Recommended literature:

-
- Barrett, B en Bolt, B. (red.) *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry* London / New York: Tauris. 2007
- Caduff, C., Siegenthaler, F. & Wälchli, T. *Art and artistic research = Kunst und künstlerische Forschung* Zürich : Zürcher Hochschule der Künste: Scheidegger & Spiess, 2011
- Gray, C. & Malins, J. *Visualizing Research : A Guide To The Research Process In Art And Design* Farnham / Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2009
- Laurel, B *Design research : methods and perspectives* Cambridge / Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2003
- Law, J. *After Method : mess in social science research* London ; New York : Routledge, 2004
- Margolis, E. En Pauwels (red.), L. *The SAGE Handbook of Visual Research Methods* London e.a.: Sage. 2011
- Mitchell, C. *Doing Visual Research*. LA/London e.a.: Sage. 2011
- Noble, I. & Bestley, R. *Visual research : an introduction to research methodologies in graphic design* Lausanne : Ava Publishing, 2005
- Padadena Art Center *Tweens: technology, personal agency, engagement : a model for design research*, 2e dr. Padadena: Art Center College of Design, 2004
- Robinson, L.B. *Research-inspired design : a step-by-step guide for interior designers* New York : Fairchild Books , 2010
- Schön, D. *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* Basic Books. 1983
- Sennett, R. *The Craftsman* London: Penguin Books. 2008
- Seivewright, S. *Basics fashion design : research and design* Lausanne: AVA, 2007
- Smith, H. & Dean, R. *Practice-led Research, Research-led practice in the Creative Arts* Edinburgh : Edinburgh University Press, 2010
- Spencer, S. *Visual Research Methods in the Social Sciences: Awakening Visions* Oxon: Routledge. 2011
- Sullivan, G. *Art practice as research : inquiry in visual art* (2^e edition) London : Sage, 2010

4.2 Practical forms of reflection

The methods mentioned below can help you to order your ideas initially and help you to develop new ideas or perspectives after having reflected upon the practice and the research.

Mindmapping

We have come across mindmapping as a method of ordering thought and as a way of, for instance, brainstorming or freely associating around a theme. Because the mindmap does not impose a linear form of order, that is, it does not have to steer towards a logical account from introduction to conclusion, it is a handy way of collecting and ordering information.

Recommended literature:

Buzan, T. *The Mind Map Book: How to Use Radiant Thinking to Maximize Your Brain's Untapped Potential* New York: Penguin PLUME 1996 (1993)

Lateral thinking

Edward de Bono has developed a method of looking at a problem from different 'thought types': six thinking hats. Applying a method like this may yield new reflective insights into your work processes and your research theme. It can, for instance, be a help in testing for possible prejudices.

Recommended literature:

Bono, E. *Six Thinking Hats* Penguin Books, 1999

Index / Files / Database / Data visualisation

Keeping research records or a database, ordered according to the main themes or characteristics of your research, can be a help in structuring your thoughts. Make sure the records in your files consist of well-organized elements: visuals and/or headwords, which you can order and reorder in relation to one another, and in doing so can consider them more closely. This can be done in the form of slides, in Powerpoint or photomaps, which you lay on the table and shift around. You can also use post-its on a wall or door. A tip: always add a couple of illustrations of your own work and try to find lines relating to your study subject.

You can also use data visualization, like infographics, dataviz and "many eyes" as a technological version of visual ethnography or mindmapping.

Recommended literature:

Meyer, E.K. *Designing infographics* Indianapolis: Hayden Books, 1997
Krum, R. *Cool Infographics Blog* <http://www.coolinfographics.com>

Visual Ethnography

'for an outsider culture is visible in the behaviour or the actions of its 'participants', both in a material and ideological sense.' (Nijland & Abbink: 16)

A visual ethnography can take different forms. The ethnography part stems from the study of exotic peoples. In carrying out their studies anthropologists soon noticed that documenting researchers' observations in a written form was not adequate if you were aiming at sketching a good picture of the customs practiced by these foreign cultures. For

this reason they took to using drawings, photographs, and later, film. The element that links these techniques to one another, consequently making them relevant for visual research, is the 'zooming out' and 'zooming in' that the researchers employ. Thus they do not only sketch situations, maps and events, but also make more detailed drawings of objects or the contents of inventories. Visual ethnography is suitable for the reproduction of situations; for instance to describe production methods or customs. This allows the researcher to study various details in greater depth.

Recommended literature:

Gansterer, N. *Drawing a Hypothesis: Figures of Thought* Vienna / New York: Springer. 2011
Spencer, S. *Visual Research Methods in the Social Sciences: Awakening Visions* London: Routledge, 2011: 141

Visual essay

For people with a visual bias recounting a story in images is a usable technique. Because you are aiming at a 'storyline' running in a logical sequence, it is also very well suited to communicating ideas to a larger public. Working with visuals provides, in addition to additional clarity, the opportunity to introduce a little mystery into your narrative. Do not overdo it, as the narrative should be clear-cut throughout. A visual account of a design process may give you more insight into your method of working – from ideas to end-product. It may provide you with more scope for your own expressive vocabulary. With a little additional text to accompany the visuals you may be able to give it more structure.

Process journal

A process journal allows a choice between, for instance, a reflective journal or a picture, photograph or newsreel, sound-recording, sketches, screen prints and calendar prints, or a combination of these techniques.

Like other reflective research methods this method serves to generate research data from the material world and from professional practice. You make a study of your own working methods or of someone else's and next use this stock-taking exercise to ask questions on the way in which decisions are taken and, for instance, 'mistakes' are put to use in the creative process. The method you use should be fine-tuned to match the way you work. If, for instance, you are a quick and spontaneous worker, then it is not going to be easy for you during the process to take a photograph every 5 minutes. Having a camera running in the background would be a better solution. If you often take breaks or intermissions then you can take photographs in between breaks. If you are the type of person who makes most decisions while thinking about the project and when compiling materials for the project, and if the design of the work is fairly straightforward after that, then you can try to document that early thought process.

Critical group discussions

Criticism is often discouraged at the brainstorming stage; criticism is said to be counter productive here, because what is important is to allow undisturbed thinking and associating. However, at the stage in which work on the projects is actually being carried out criticism is an essential part of the creative process: critique stimulates new ideas. In art education constructive criticism is very important and can play an essential role in further improving products and in developing new solutions. This does not only apply in a one-to-one guidance setting between lecturer and student, but also between students among themselves. Group conversations full of critique and discussion can be used as a way of evaluating before going on to create the rest. Gathering together a group of 'critics' and taking notes on the discussions that take place, then outlining their influence on finding and choosing ultimate solutions, can also be used as a practical research technique.

4.3 Comparative visual research

Hermeneutics and Phenomenology

Hermeneutics is often used for the interpretation of, in particular, Bible texts, but hermeneutics originally stands for the science of interpretation in general. The term was introduced into ancient Greece by the poet Homer and used by philosophers like Plato. Hermeneutics was employed for the study and interpretation, or translation, of the mythology and messages relating to the gods. Edmund Husserl became interested in applying hermeneutics to interpret phenomena, by means of what he called phenomenology.

Phenomenology works on the principle of our being able to 'read' objects, by first discarding their original context and what we know about them. Thus you consider the objects and their interconnection, as it were, through new eyes and react intuitively towards them. Then you look at them anew and see how you experience them this time, what you think is their essence and what they 'do' with their environment. Edmund Husserl developed this method as a criticism of the way we take our environment for granted. Phenomenology is also a worthwhile method when applied to artistic work, particularly during discussions of progress in small groups. Without divulging or discussing the background, it is a way of looking at work once again in the way in which any random visitor to an exhibition would look at the exhibits. The associations other people see in it can be very instructive.

Recommended literature:

-
- Busch, A. *The uncommon life of common object: Essays on Design and the Everyday* New York: Metropolis Books. 2004
Humphrey, N. *Seeing Red: A study in consciousness* Cambridge, Mass. & London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. 2006
Pol Droit, R. *How are Things? A Philosophical Experiment* London: Faber. 2005
Turkle, S. (red.) *Evocative Objects: Things we Think With* MIT Press. 2007

Visual analysis / Visual description

This technique you can use to study not only the representation, but also the composition, use of colour, lighting etc. of a visual image. See the supplement for a detailed list of distinguishing characteristics which you should pay attention to in a visual analysis.

Iconography / Iconology

By iconography it is not only the description of the picture that is being referred to, but often the interpretation of the significance of the picture (iconology). Iconography as a method for visual research is chiefly employed if there are many Christian symbols present in the pictures. That may be the case, for instance, with old religious paintings and sculptures, but also in the work of contemporary artists, who consciously make use of the same symbols in a new context.

There are a few good reference books in which the meaning of such symbols can be looked up. The most used handbook is by James Hall.

Recommended literature:

-
- Hall, J. A. *Hall's Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art*, Richard D. Irwin, 1985. 1992

Research into visual analogies

Similarities or relations between objects or portrayals can also lead to more clarity about the properties of pictures and their effects. Moreover, such an approach also shows how

context-dependent images are. As a researcher, when you recognize this, that is if you are doing an experiment with pictures in relation to one another and their environment, you are forced to pause. In this sense, think of the process of mounting the works to be shown at an exhibition.

Douglas Hofstadter introduced a number of 'tabletop experiments' which serve to study and order the relations between different objects and phenomena. For him this is a method of introducing creativity into computer models. For us this is a suitable method for making research, structure and analysis visual. For this reason, in the lessons and as a research method, we regularly use objects, visuals and, for instance, lines of text, cards and labels which we can slide around and structure, and about which we can discuss among ourselves. The basic principle behind this is that pairing up and shifting around different concepts and objects, and studying their relation to one another, may lead to new insights. These insights change as the context and ordering are altered. The results and registration of these types of exercises can then serve in turn as research data. Similar experiments we call, according to Hofstadter, 'fluid analogies'. See also '[Index/Archive/Database](#)'.

Spaces can also be studied in this way. In spatial planning you will also find shifts in terms of the way space is ordered and the context in which it is used. Think, for instance, of a studio space or of a workshop and the activities that take place there. In the case of the performing arts, for instance, the same space can be used as a dance floor or as a stage.

Recommended literature:

-
- Bachelard, G. *The Poetics of Space: The classic look at how we experience intimate places*. Boston: Beacon Press (1958)1969
- Busch, A. *Geography of Home: Writings on Where we Live* Princeton Architectural Press, 1999
- Hofstadter, D.R. *Fluid Concepts and Creative Analogies: Computer Models of the Fundamental Mechanisms of Thought* Basic Books, 1945 (can be consulted in library In 'on hold'shelf)
- Humphrey, N. *Seeing Red: A study in consciousness* Cambridge, Mass. & London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. 2006
- Stafford, B.M. *Visual Analogy: Consciousness as the art of connecting* Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2001
- Yates, F.A. *The Art of Memory* London: Pimlico 2008 (1966)

Research into Visual Rhetoric, Narrative, Immersion and Metaphors

Rhetoric in word or visual image relies on the power of persuasiveness: a rhetorical text is a convincing text, a rhetorical visual image is a convincing visual image. Visual images can tell stories. By combining several visual elements the maker of these visuals is trying to make the whole picture 'legible'. The spectator's eye is guided through the picture for it to convey a story. We also refer to this as a feature of 'narrativity'. Narrative images or series of images usually generate a workable subject for a study into the rhetoric (the persuasiveness) of the image or the images in correlation to one another.

Immersion is a way of describing physical perception when you 'are immersed' in another world. This may be virtual reality but, for instance, an installation may have the same effect. In art history, immersion has traditionally harked back mainly to illusionist images and the leading principles in narrative sequence in, for instance, the theatre, photography and film (FRIS Onderzoeksportaal). Metaphors are often used in texts but also in works of art and communicative statements. They say one thing, but do it by means of referring to something else, thus giving the visual 'story' a new twist.

FRIS Onderzoeksportaal 'De binnenkant van het beeld. Immersie en normativiteit op het snijpunt van theater en film' Onderzoeksproject Universiteit Antwerpen 2010-2012

(geraadpleegd 02/12/2011) [http://www.researchportal.be/project/de-binnenkant-van-het-beeld-immersie-en-narrativiteit-op-het-snijpunt-van-theater-en-film--\(UA_24886\)/](http://www.researchportal.be/project/de-binnenkant-van-het-beeld-immersie-en-narrativiteit-op-het-snijpunt-van-theater-en-film--(UA_24886)/)

Recommended literature:

Prelli, L.J. (ed.) *Rhetorics of Display (Studies in Rhetoric/Communication)* University of South Carolina Press, 2006.
Handa, C. *Visual Rhetoric in a Digital World: A Critical Sourcebook* Bedford, St. Martin's, 2004.

Semiotics

Semiotics addresses the study of signs. These may be either linguistic or visual signs (elements in pictures), how these originate, how they are used and how we 'read' them. The two major founders of semiotics are the linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) and the philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914). Later, semiotics was further developed by scholars like Roland Barthes (1915-1980).

De Saussure's studies of semiotics concentrate mostly on language, so in our lessons it will be more profitable to use Peirce and Barthes as our mainstay. C.S. Peirce makes a distinction between different sorts of signs: indexable (*index*), iconic (*icon*) and symbolic (*symbol*), which can be put to good use in image analysis and comparative image analysis. For more information see the enclosure in the supplement: Summary of Semiotics C.S. Peirce: icon, index en symbol. Peirce also directs his attention to the sign bearer (*representative*), the object to which the sign refers (*object*), and the interpretations of our 'reading' of signs (interpreter).

Roland Barthes uses semiotics in imitation of De Saussure to uncover the hidden myths of modern society and to criticize it. One of the ways he does this was by writing about advertisements and products and their hidden meanings.

Recommended literature:

Port, R. "Icon, Index and Symbol (short version) in *Linguistics L103, Fall, 2000* Indiana University Bloomington lesson material 2000 (consulted 01/11/2011)
<http://www.cs.indiana.edu/~port/teach/103/sign.symbol.short.html>

Supplement:

-
- S10** Examples of Mindmaps
 - S11** Examples of Index / Archive / Database / Data visualisation
 - S12** List of characteristics for the purposes of visual analysis
 - S13** A summary of semiotics by C.S. Peirce: icon, index en symbol

5. WRITING A PAPER OR THESIS

5.1 Critical text or argument

When doing research and formulating theories a student at the Willem de Koning Academy is expected to argue his or her case critically. What do we mean by this in practice? An argumentative (rhetorical) text is a convincing text. This involves taking the handbook along step by step in the 'story of your research'. Usually you start off by explaining what the background and relevance of your project is, and then you begin to try to answer your research question, underpinning your argument with material from literature, visual and research data like, for instance, fragments from interviews or practical experiments. This method also involves giving your own and other people's views and discussing critically which arguments would support your views and which would contradict them. By making use of research results, and examples of your own and other people's practical findings, it will seem plausible to the person reading your work that you have gained more in-depth knowledge and, in thus doing, have arrived at a logical conclusion.

The use of questioning and connecting words like 'thus', 'we see that', 'let us take a look at', 'it might be that', 'possibly' and 'by this' are typical for argumentative texts. A convincing argument is a logical argument: the data compiled leads to a conclusion that the handbook can follow, and to which he or she is inclined to agree, because good reasons have been presented for arriving at this conclusion. We also call this a convincing or rhetorical argument.

A critical text or argument must be 'documented'. That means that a selection of external sources have been used for it, taken from books, articles, podcasts, websites, visual material etc. The sources which support your argumentation most plausibly come from authors who themselves have carried out thorough research and who do not just offer an unsupported opinion. You can recognize such books and articles because they contain references, an index of source material and information on the background of the author. A cultural historian who is attached to a university can be expected to have more in-depth knowledge on a subject and make use of his/her knowledge of relevant research on the subject than a secondary school pupil or an arbitrary exhibition visitor. Therefore try to find a minimum of two sources whose authors know what they are talking about. Other sources, like blogs, should serve as additional information or as illustrations but should not be made part of the main argument.

5.2 Paper requirements

At the Willem de Koning Academy the standard length of a paper is approximately 1500 words (this is approximately three pages of type-written A4 exclusive of illustrations, index of sources, title page and quotations).

A paper must be handed in to your teacher printed out and in digital form on the date indicated by the lecturer setting the work. If you miss the deadline, you will automatically have to hand it in before the deadline date the following term. This is then the final chance, so it will have to be accredited with a pass mark straight away - without rewrites - if you are to carry on to the next level/term. Therefore it is important not to put off writing a term paper for too long and to plan your work schedule carefully. Remember, if you hand it in on time and it is accredited with a fail mark, you still have one more chance to do it again and gain a pass mark.

5.3 Thesis requirements

As mentioned in your final examination regulations, the final thesis must comply to the following requirements:

- The thesis should be 5000 words long. (this amounts to 10 typed pages of A4 size paper exclusive of illustrations, list of source materials, title page and quotations).
- The thesis must be written in your own words not a collection of pieces of text written by other people.
- Three copies of the thesis must be handed in plus a digital version in PDF. These copies will be divided amongst the final examination committee, your thesis supervisor and the media centre.
- A thesis contains:
 - a flyleaf with the title, your name, student number and major study subject and the date
 - a table of contents, chapter divisions and page numbers
 - an introduction (that deals with the topicality of the subject and the background to your having chosen it; a review of methods used; as well as a short description of the chapter divisions)
 - a middle part (chapters with, for instance, literature research, visual research, interviews and/or practical experiments. Each chapter must begin with a short introduction and finish with a conclusion for that part.
 - a final conclusion (critical, with your handling of the results)
 - an index of sources (with at least 10 relevant sources)
 - if so desired, supplements, for instance, processed interviews
- Your final thesis will be assessed by your final thesis supervisor and a second handbook. They determine the mark to be given for it and the design will be assessed later by the examination committee during your final examination presentation. Make sure that your thesis work looks attractive, neat and tidy, and that the text is easily legible. You must hand in two digital copies of the complete text well before the examination so that your supervisor and the second handbook have sufficient time to evaluate it before your examination. You must bring three printed copies with you for use during your presentation, one is for your supervisor, the other two you hand in are to be put in the archive and the library. You are also obliged to hand in a dvd or cd-rom with PDF of the thesis which must be exactly the same as the printed version you hand in.

For more information see the examination regulations for your major study subject in the current Willem de Kooning Prospectus

S1 Example of a research plan for practice research

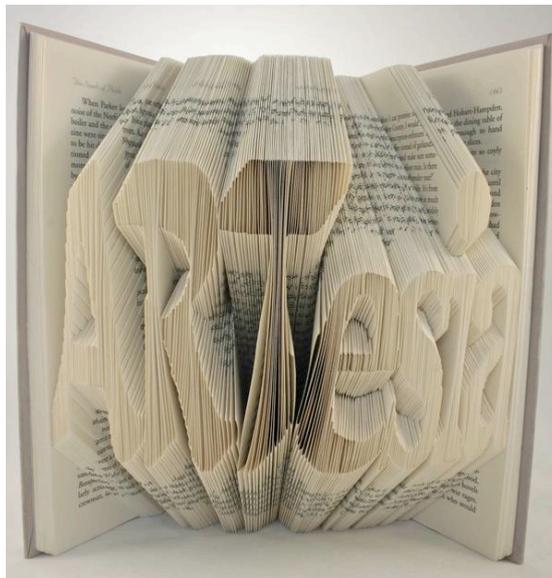
Research plan:

The virtual and physical wastepaperbasket - risk and failure in graphic design



'Art came into being with the lie. Whatever else can be said about its function or point, as far as its basic meaning is concerned the word 'art' denotes everything which deviates from nature or reality. For this reason art is related to our freedom as a human being in relation to nature and reality, which is what distinguishes us from an animal. And precisely because we have the freedom to choose our own goals failure appears on the horizon. An animal can be unsuccessful but only a human being can fail.' (Sels: 1)

Background



Above: Isaac Salazar '3D Typography book' Issue 03 Website
(consulted 01/03/2011) 18-02-2011 <http://www.issue03.com/?p=1987>

Context

Recently I have fallen under the spell of what is called '3D typography' or 'spatial typography': graphic design that deploys spatial pictures. A word shaped in wood, for instance, that is set alight and the burning of the word photographed and used as a word picture for something like a poster. Effects are achieved that, in my view, still cannot be designed so easily on the computer, or in any case, not with the same result. As a student of graphic design I really only work behind a computer. Up to now at the Academy there has been ample opportunity for me to experiment during my optional study courses where I could have done, for instance, printing techniques, but I have not actually done so. These courses seemed less relevant and mainly connected to traditional design techniques in 2D in particular, whereas I would like to be able to experiment more with spatial materials. I may also be a little wary of the risks attached. I have the suspicion that those

types of experiments are more likely to fail and that it actually gives you a different feeling when you throw things into a 'real' wastepaperbasket instead of a virtual one on the computer. I remember only too well how I always felt when my drawings failed. At the same time I am very much drawn to experimenting with materials, and I would really like to have a shot at 3D typography which offers a great deal of scope. I also find the expressive side of it extremely interesting. I want to use this piece of research to help win myself over this reluctance.

Current affairs

It no longer possible to imagine the discipline of graphic design without the computer. It has been responsible for increasing the speed at which graphic design problems can be solved (Meggs: VII). Nevertheless, it has only been in the last fifteen years or so that developments in the computer and graphic software have made it possible for graphic processes to be run from the design to the execution stage entirely by means of the computer (Verhoeven: 11). Therefore there are not very many classes of young graphic designers at all who have left the Academy after having used the computer as their main tool throughout. For this reason the possible 'anxiety' that accompanies the leaving of this 'comfort zone', and the contrast between the virtual and the physical wastepaperbasket is a topical theme for the current generation of young designers.

Wording the research question

The main question I am asking during my piece of research is:

What is the difference for a graphic designer between the physical wastepaperbasket and the virtual wastepaperbasket?

Sub-questions are:

- Is there a difference in the type of 'risk'?
- If so, are these differences based on training?
- Are these possible differences dependent upon age?
- What role does failure play in experiments on the computer and in physical experiments?

Approach

Methods

Interviews

I am keen to do some research into how my contemporaries experience the difference between virtual and physical wastepaperbaskets, and besides this, I want to go back a generation to see if there are differences. To this end I am going to interview two graphic designers who were trained when the computer was generally accepted and used, and two graphic designers who were trained before that period. I am going to ask them questions about risks and failures in their design processes and the role the computer plays in this, and about their training. I am also going to ask if I may be allowed to look into their wastepaperbaskets, perhaps this may provide material for a good comparative (visual) study.

Practical experiment

I also want to undertake a practical experiment using myself as the subject to find out what, to my mind, is different in a physical experiment when compared to an experiment on the computer. For this purpose I am going to carry out two practical assignments both on the computer and physically. Between times, while designing on the computer, I am going to do screendumps every 5 minutes, and during the physical design take a photograph every 10 minutes. I am going to use this material as data for my research report.

Literature

In addition I am going to do a literature search on the function of failure and risk-taking in designs, or for the benefit of creativity in general. I have already found a number of suitable sources (see outline below) and I shall continue to search even further.

Amabile, T. M. 'How to Kill Creativity' in *Harvard Business Review* Sep/oct 2008.
Gardner, H. *Art, Mind and Brain: A Cognitive Approach to Creativity* New York: Perseus, 1982.
Hamilton, E.A. *Graphic Design for the Computer age: Visual communication for all media* New York: van Nostrand Reinhold, 1970.
Henderson, K. *On line and on paper: Visual Representations, Visual Culture and Computer Graphics in Design Engineering* Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1999.
Meggs, P.B. *Meggs' history of graphic design* 5^e ed. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 1998.
Myers, B.A. 'Why are Human-Computer Interfaces Difficult to Design and Implement' in *DTIC Online*. Carnegie-Mellon University Pittsburg. 1993 (consulted 02/01/2011)
<http://oai.dtic.mil/oai/oai?verb=getRecord&metadataPrefix=html&identifier=ADA26884>

Required materials

In order to carry out this study properly I need:

- Contact with and permission to interview 4 suitable designers
- Computer and camera
- Space to carry out physical experiments. Meantime I have been to the ceramics and clay workshop and have been given permission to work on my assignment there.
- Permission from the lecturers who give the practical assignments for me to carry out parts of the assignment elsewhere, if need be.
- Media centre and internet to carry out literature searches
- Sufficient time (about 40 hours) to carry out the research project, to document it and to write it out.

Work schedule

Preparation, making appointments: up to end week 2

Interviews: week 3 to end of week 8

Practical assignments: week 3 to end of week 8

Literature study: to end of week 8 and supplementary in weeks 9 and 10

Writing research paper: weeks 9 and 10

Contributions

Knowledge

When this piece of research is finished I hope to have accrued more knowledge about the function of failed attempts in the creative process and about the differences in influence on design practice between a virtual and physical wastepaper basket. I am curious about how other designers think about this and whether it will provide new insights on how the present generation of designers deal with experiments and failed attempts. In my search for sources I have not found a comparable piece of research that is geared towards the possible contrast between the virtual and the physical wastepaperbasket in design practice. This makes it all the more difficult to undertake this study, but it is extremely relevant.

Skills

The research is in a practical sense a push in the right direction for me, so that at last I will take the plunge and do physical experiments with 3D typography. In doing so I hope to gain new skills and have new experiences that can support my graphic design on the computer and partially, or completely, replace it.

Boundaries

Naturally in this study and in the given amount of time I can only deal with my own and four other designers' daily practice. Nevertheless I am departing from the premise that the combination of interviews from 4 graphic designers from 2 generations, in combination with a literature study and a carefully executed practical experiment, will provide sufficient material to at least gain new insights. These insights might possibly induce further resea

Sources list:

Meggs, P.B. *Meggs' history of graphic design* 5^e ed. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 1998.

Sels, N. 'De finesses van het falen: een Lacaniaanse kijk op de mislukking in de mythe', op *Website Ghent University Academic Bibliography*, (geraadpleegd 02-01-2011)
<http://biblio.ugent.be/input/download?func=downloadFile&fileId=930743>, 2008

Verhoeven, M.A.D. 'De (on-)zichtbare hand van de computer: Over de invloed van het gebruik van de computer als grafisch ontwerp gereedschap voor Nederlandse ontwerpers in de tweede helft van de jaren tachtig van de twintigste eeuw' *Masterscriptie Comparative Arts & Media Studies Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam*, 2010.

S2 Instructions on acknowledgements using the MLA method

1) In the main text

For the first mention in the text it is best to use the **first name** then **last name** of the author, musician, artist or designer you are referring to, followed by (**page number(s)**) in brackets, (page number(s) should only be mentioned if you are not referring to the entire book, piece, or work) if applicable, **background to make it clear why you are mentioning the author**. For instance;

Bio-semiotics Wendy Wheeler (66-7) observes little difference between the social behaviour of fishes and birds if it comes down to visual recognition

Later in the text you only need to mention the **last name**, then **year** (only if there is more than one book or texts by this author in your bibliography) and **page number(s)** in brackets For instance:

This is (Wheeler: 80) equally true for the social behaviour of cats.

If the name of the author is unknown, the **name of the publisher** replaces it, for a newspaper also the **date of publication** in brackets

(Volkskrant, 2 April 2008: 8)

For Quotations (restrict these to where you really need them and keep them brief) you usually use the same font as in the rest of the text, but 1 point smaller and slightly shifted to the right, for instance:

This does not always satisfy standard ideas on beauty.

‘As “non-reconciled reconciliation” of the heterogeneous cubism and montage testify to the impossibility of modern humankind to “cope with” its experiences.’
(Van de Veire: 234)

Therefore it seems to be that the power of a picture also arises from these sorts of internal frictions.

A quotation stands between single inverted commas. If there is a quotation within a quotation, like above, then double quotation marks are used.

(N.B. The use of single quotation marks within single quotation marks is the British English norm so do not let this mislead you as you are using the MLA norm)

Footnotes you generally use for further definition, explanation or cross-reference.

2) With tables and figures

Use a **number**, that runs in consecutive order for each new illustration, table or figure, then **name author / maker, initials, title or name of this visual, year** and if nec. **Page no.(s)**.

Figure 1: Lanham, R.A. *The segmentation of attention* 2006. 3.

If you have made the figure or table yourself, leave out the name and page number.

3) In the list of references at the back

Book: **Last name, initial(s) Title Book in italics, Place published: Publisher (year)**

Lanham, R.A. *The Economics of Attention: Style and Substance in the Age of information*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 2006

If there is a difference between the year of the first edition and the imprint you have consulted, you **first mention the year of publication that you used, followed by the original publication year in brackets**, for instance:

Kant, I. *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft*. Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1956 (1787)

Article, piece of music, newspaper cutting: **Last name, initial (s) 'Title of Article' in Name of publication/cd/newspaper in italics. Edition/number/year of publication and page no.(s). (Place published: Publisher only if it is not a public, but a limited internal publication, for instance issued by a university or other organization)**

Kraft, U. 'Releasing Creativity' in *Scientific American Mind*. Vol. 16, No. 1, 2005. 16-22

For works of art or design pieces mention next to the **maker, initials Title or name of the design in italics also if applicable size and technique and the owner/authorized representative Courtesy Museum de Pont, Tilburg) year**

If you yourself are the maker, leave the name of the maker out

Richter, G. *48 Portraits: Oscar Wilde* 70 x 55 cm, oil on canvas. Courtesy Museum De Pont, Tilburg. 1971

Internet publication: **Last name of author (if known) initials "Title Article" in Name website. Publication year, date of visit to the site, url.**

Butler, J. (2004) "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory" 2004, 4 December 2008, <http://Mariabuszek.com/kcai/PoMoSeminar/Readings/BtlrPerfActs.pdf>

If there is more than one author:

With authors: Butler, J., and Hill, H. etc.

With more than 2 authors: Butler, J. et al.

If the writer is an editor who has compiled work from other writers, you indicate this in the following way: **Butler, J. (red.)**

S3 Model research paper

How Do we Define Creativity?

There seem to be a lot of different ideas about what creativity actually is. In this research paper I would like to make an inventory of these ideas, discuss how they relate to each other and find out whether, as an art academy student myself, I can recognize any of them in my direct circle of acquaintances.

From my search three concepts of the creative individual have emerged. To my mind these concepts can be termed: the 'creative genius', the 'creative nutcase' and the 'creative entrepreneur'. I shall begin with a short description of each type in order to be able to discuss afterwards in more detail how they relate to each other, and to what extent they are recognizable and relevant.

The Creative Genius

Special gifts are often ascribed to creative people, particularly to artists. That is to say that a special talent is demanded in order to be creative, or at least, to be more creative than other people. This notion can be found, for instance, in an article by Pinchas Noy from 1972. He states that artistic talent is a gift based on at least two factors: an impulse and the motivation to create something new and a special talent to be able to accomplish it. The creative person in such concepts is someone led by a sort of 'consuming passion', a special power and inspiration given to them in the form of a talent which makes them special. Spurred on by that 'consuming passion', they are capable of creating something special.

The Creative Nutcase

There is also the idea that people who excel in creativity lag behind, or are dysfunctional, on other fronts. This does not only hold for the archetype of the eccentric artist, but goes so far that it makes a link between creativity and mental illness. We encounter this, for instance, in a study by Ulrich Kraft, published in the journal *Scientific American Mind* in 2005. One of the phenomena described in this article is how a certain form of autism helps a person to be creative; people suffering from mental illness seem to be able to concentrate extremely well on a couple of things and are able to 'block out' everything else around them. This ability is considered to be advantageous for creative spirits, because they are then not unduly hindered by their surroundings and the practicalities of everyday life (Kraft: 18).

The Creative Entrepreneur

In addition to these two 'archetypes' ideas exist about the way in which creativity arises and prospers, ideas which do not assume inborn talent and specific psychological traits, on the contrary, they are based on training and routine. Design scholar Nigel Cross, for instance, has been able to demonstrate by means of experiments that designers and budding/scientists have already learnt to think in different ways after 2 years of higher education. This resulted, in the case of the designers, in more 'creative' solutions arising from their working methods. Unlike the budding scientists, they have learnt not to go on a quest for the 'only correct' solution, but to entertain several possible solutions, as a result of which these are more individual or of a more unusual nature. Cross also relates the solutions to one another by using methods and practice developed by designers. These contribute to the way in which the

following questions are approached. It is therefore not only a question of learned creativity but, above all else, creativity which is in constant progression from one project to the next. Creativity originates here from doing, learning and working.

The first two profiles appear to be slightly similar. Geniuses usually make an impression of being at deviance with the norm, of being a bit 'crazy': just think about the stories told about van Gogh. This does not only hold for artists but also for composers like Beethoven and for scientists. A good example of the latter can be seen in the film *A beautiful mind*, in which the principal role is played by a brilliant mathematician, a Nobel Prize winner, who also suffers from an antisocial, autistic disorder.

Still, if I take a look around me at the art academy and consider my lecturers, who are also often practicing artists, I do not get the idea that I am surrounded by 'highly-gifted nutcases'. Artists and designers who are now very successful do not give me the impression that they are people who cannot make contact with others, even though they do sometimes seem to have brilliant ideas in their own field of work.

The third idea about creativity seems to be at odds with the first two characterizations, because it does not depart from the premise of a given talent, personality or ability, but from learnt behaviour that gradually develops through hard work. I am inclined to think that the description of the 'creative entrepreneur' might be the most realistic, but that would mean that everyone would be equally capable of becoming creative through some form of training. Is that really the case, does talent and personality play a role after all; or does the most creative person have elements of all three?

Really I recognize something in all three 'types' described. The 'creative genius' mainly appears to be still in existence when you are applying to be admitted to an art academy. Or at least that seems to be the case. Your work is looked at to see if you have the talent to be creative, to make special works of art. However, I could be wrong. After my interview I heard that the entrance committee pays far more attention to motivation than to talent. As far as the second 'type' is concerned I mainly recognize the ability to be able to focus exclusively on something, a bit fanatically, which makes you blind to other things. That is, by the way, a quality described by Kraft in his description of the 'outsider genius'. Nevertheless, in my view you will only be successful if you are also prepared to work hard and to overcome setbacks. For me, a good example of a person who had creative talent as well as being a creative nutcase and a creative worker was Steve Jobs, the founder of Apple. He was an extremely intelligent man, who had a talent for thinking up new adaptations, an eye for design, and the perseverance to build up a successful business. Still, he too had a difficult start and ended up at university (which he never completed) more or less by accident in a calligraphy class, which he said himself inspired him to imbue Apple products with a constant level of smooth good-looks. He was also known in his work for having a bit of an obsessive compulsive nature. The training and processes that emerge from his CV show that in addition he was a creative entrepreneur who did not give up easily.

If you are to excel, in my view, you need a good starting position as a springboard. The knowledge that you command certain talents and skills which you can put to good use. Besides this you have to be steadfast enough and 'obsessed' to get down to work and convince other people as well. Thus by working hard and taking risks you learn how to be better in your field and you can eclipse everyone else. My conclusion is therefore that the three types of creativity complement one another and are not

mutually exclusive. Each of these three may make you successful but the real power lies in a combination of all three.

Index of sources:

Cross, N. *Designerly ways of knowing* BIRD Berlin: Birkhäuser Verlag, 2007

Jobs, S. 'You've Got to Find What You Love' Speech at graduation ceremony Stanford University, 12 June 2005 12/08/2011 Available via; <http://rejuv-nationstation.com/files/SteveJobsAddress.pdf>

Howard, R. 'A Beautiful Mind' Film, 2011

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Noy, P. 'About Art and Artistic Talent' in *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 53:243-249, 1972

S4 Example of plan for interview

Example 1: qualitative research by means of lightly structured open interviews

Research question:

To what extent does the shop concept of the Nokia store function as a showroom and/or sales point in the consumer's perception, that is to say where does the main emphasis fall between the two?

Global research questions for the interviews:

In the conversations I intend to ask as many open questions as possible. If a respondent goes into greater detail on a subject, I shall give him or her the opportunity to do so, but I shall try to keep them from going too far off course by adding occasional remarks myself.

<u>Dimension</u>	<u>Label</u>	<u>Example of Description</u>
Thinking of a visit	Frequency visit	approx. 3 times a year
	Reason visit	overview, relaxation, advice
Considering buying	Presence	I wouldn't buy s'thing there just like that
	Buying stimulus	lay-out, design, skill, ambiance, price
Shop qualities	Shopping climate	inviting, spacious, clean
	Shop image	modern, hip, old-fashioned
	Shop surroundings	colour, architecture, space
	Supply of products	varied, surprising, up-to-date

(based on Baarda, D.B. & Goede, M.P.M. de *Basisboek Methoden en Technieken* 2001:176)

Questions which may be brought up are, for instance:

What did you think of the interior of the Nokia store?

Do you think it's a pleasant shop to be in, and why is that/ why isn't that?

If you need a new telephone where do you look for one?

Does the interior of the Nokia conform to the image you have of the brand, if it does why?/ if it doesn't why not?

Where do you think that image comes from?

Would you walk in from time to time without any reason, if you would, how often approx.? /if not, why not?

To conclude: is there anything you would like to add, and were the questions clear?

Example 2: Qualitative research by means of an open in-depth interview

Research aim:

To find out how informative and useful the identity-strategic advisory report is for the client and which points could be improved upon

Questions:

How clear is the report for you?

How comprehensive is the report in your view?

To what extent has the consultant been able to get a good idea of the organization?

Has the report yielded new information, and if it has, what is it?

To what extent do you agree with the recommendations given?

Do you think that after this report you now have a clearer idea of the aims of your enterprise, and if you do, how can this be seen?

Do you think that after this report you can give your staff members a clearer idea of your aims, and if you can, how can this be seen?

To what extent do you consider it possible that the report will influence your policy decisions about stressing the distinctive features in your profile?

Do you have any further remarks to make about the report?

S5 Example of processing interview

Example 1 Data processing as a result of interviews

Thinking of a visit

Frequency visit

- R1: about once a year
- R2: about once every 2 months
- R3: at the most once a year
- R4: probably never again
- R5: about twice a year
- R6: about once a year

Reasons for visit (in the order in which they were named)

- R1: way of using new technologies, familiarization (design) possibly new telephone
- R2: supermarket opposite, fan of Nokia and Finland, new products, possibly new telephone
- R3: bought the last (and probably will buy the next) telephone, maybe repairs if nec.
- R4: 'you've already asked me that' > only on request
- R5: shopping (window shopping), technical advice or repairs
- R6: new technologies, curiosity, only looking

Buying stimulus

Presence of (in the order mentioned)

- R1: yes, provided that there are well-priced subscription terms (otherwise direct through provider or internet)
- R2: yes, but will probably order a new telephone direct from the provider
- R3: yes, coupled with a one year subscription (influenced by the status of current subscription)
- R4: no, Nokia telephone is not to my liking
- R5: yes, trying to restrain my consumer activity
- R6: no, current telephone not to my liking, think most Nokias are too plasticky and not user-friendly

Etc....

Example 2 Data processing as a result of interviews

Detailed results of the recorded interviews have been enclosed as a supplement, in the main text a number of quotations have been extracted from this, or results referred to.

Respondent 1

How clear is the report for you?

It is well constructed, that is easy to follow, and reflects a clear vision and it is certainly not boring.

How complete is the report in your view?

Clear and well concentrated on the aim of the assignment. It did not diverge too much by taking on board marginal questions.

To what extent has the consultant been able to achieve a good idea of the organization?

The consultant has managed in a very short space of time to get a good idea of the organization, its products and services.

Has the report yielded new information, and if so, what is it?

It is good to allow a third person who is independent to give you their unprejudiced view. Through this we do not only receive confirmation of certain of our own views, but it also throws new light on certain things. It makes us sit up and think about them once again.

To what extent can you agree with the recommendations given?

As far as the design of our new brochure is concerned, and in terms of slogans, we can profit from having been given good alternatives. Also our accessibility on the internet site will be scrutinized.

What do you think would be a reasonable investment for this kind of intervention?

No more than 1200 euros.

..... etc....

S6 Example of processing results of interview

Example 1:

The results of this study show once again that a brand image is made up of so many factors that the value of separate influences is difficult to assess. The question of to what extent does the perceived-symbolism and the shop-design created in the Nokia store influence the value of the brand in general cannot be answered in an offhand way. Still, from this study mention can be made of the extent to which the shop concept is a successful step for Nokia, and the role which such a concept could potentially play.

It appears that in the case of existing Nokia product-users (like those selected for this study), the experience of using the product is of great influence in terms of people's interest in other demonstrations and products from the company. In two cases bad experiences were the reason for people no longer being interested in the brand, thus they were not interested in the shop.

The shop-design of the Nokia store has the appearance of a brand that is somewhat 'mass-produced' and 'ordinary' and (according to half the respondents) in need of a boost. Justifiably, respondents remarked that the product itself would have to move up with it... etc.....

Example 2:

Strangely enough, the need for external strategic advice is inversely proportional to the demand for it: if a manager is acquainted with the importance of strategy-consciousness and identity-consciousness to ensure the company has a good profile, then the likelihood that he or she will seek professional help in realizing this is the greatest. One of the consequences of this is that it does not mean that the greatest need for investment in this area is also to be found among firms with the greatest readiness to invest in it.

From the respondents replies it would appear that this investment lies around the 1500 euros mark, by preference. If the intervention developed is strictly adhered to and the consultant only makes 2 location visits and places all the documentation demanded from the list directly into the hands of the client then it can be done for that amount of money. The organizations visited were for the most part positive about the results. Respondent 1, for instance, reacted in the following way to my inquiry about the usefulness of the advice:

It is good to allow an independent third party to give their unprejudiced view. Through this we not only get confirmation of certain of our views, but it also throws new light on certain matters. It makes us sit up and think.

This supports my conviction that even for smaller firms external strategic advice is well feasible. Thus the field of study known as Design Management does not need to restrict itself to large organizations.

More competition research would seem to me to be desirable. What, for instance, does an intervention (free of charge) at Syntens yield or an intervention with a graphic designer and what does this approach yield in terms of added value?

Etc...

S7 Example of survey design

SuikerZoet filmfestival Visitor Survey	
We appreciate if you can answer this survey by tearing on the dotted line next to the right answer	
I have heard of SuikerZoet via:	
..... newspaper/magazine	
..... folder	I live in:
..... previous years	Schiedam.....
..... internet	Vlaardingen.....
..... posters	Maassluis.....
..... word of mouth	Rotterdam.....
	Delft / Den Haag.....
This year I visit:	Elsewhere.....
..... 1 film	
..... 2 films	Visits festival:
..... 3 films	1st time.....
..... 4 films	2nd or 3rd time.....
..... more than 4 films	4th or 5th time.....
	> 6 times.....
My age:	
..... < 20 years	I think it is:
..... 20 - 40 years	Fantastic.....
..... 40 - 70 years	Quite good.....
..... > 70 years	Not great.....

S8 Example of processing the survey

SUIKERZOET FILMFESTIVAL VISITOR SURVEY (238 respondents)

I know the festival through

Newspaper / Magazine	24
Flyers	69
Previous editions	110
Internet	18
Posters	7
Word of mouth	60

I live in

Schiedam	150
Vlaardingen	25
Maassluis	2
Rotterdam	32
Delft/Den Haag	7
Elsewhere	15

This year I visit

1 film	49
2 films	63
3 films	41
4 films	34
> 4 films	48

Visits festival

1st time	80
2nd or 3rd time	96
4rd or 5th time	42
6th or 7th time	10

My age

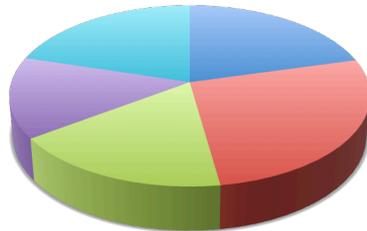
< 20 years	10
20 - 40 years	69
40 - 70 years	152
vanaf 70 years	1

I think the festival is

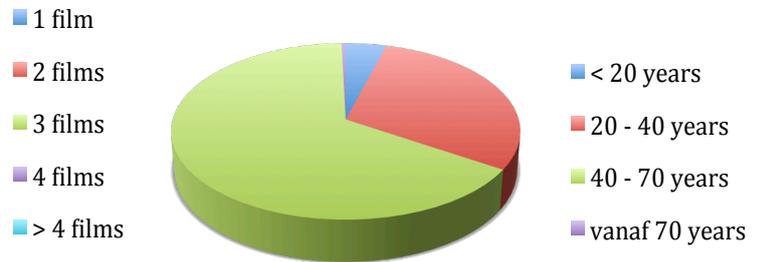
Fantastic	190
Quite good	35
Not great	1

S9 Example of processing results of the survey

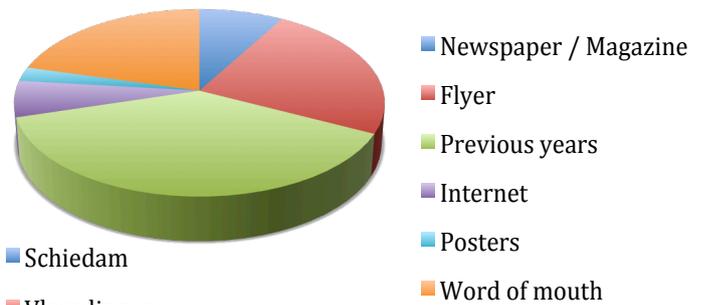
This year I visit:



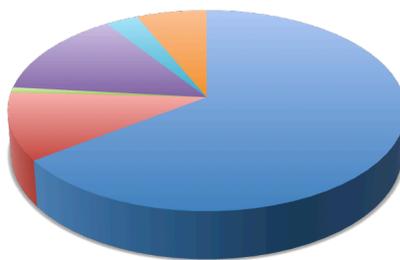
My age is:



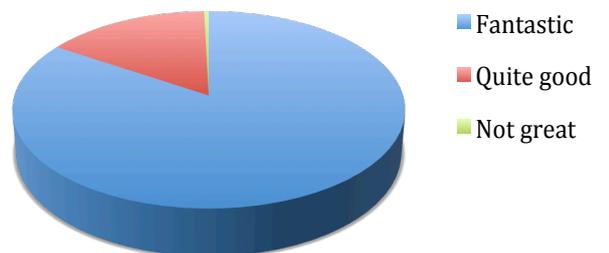
I know the festival via:



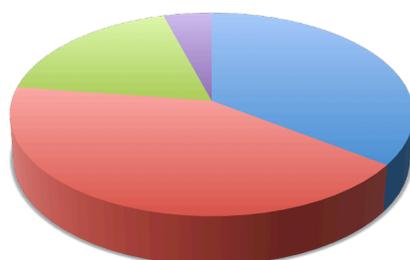
I live in:



I think the Festival is;

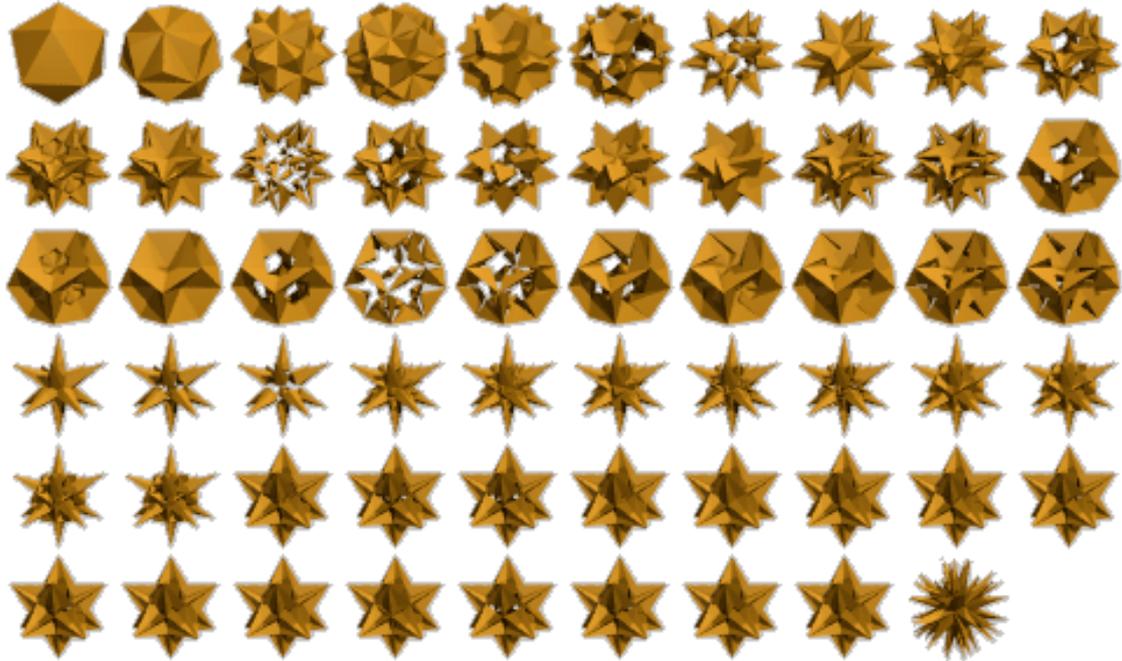


I visit this festival for the:



S11 Examples of an Index / Archive / Database / Data visualisation

INDEX



Source of visual above:

Mäder, R. "Visual index of all 59 stellated Icosahedra" op *Mathconsult Website* (consulted 02/04/2012) <http://www.mathconsult.ch/showroom/icosahedra/list-graph.html>

(VISUAL) ARCHIVE



source visual above:

Diagonal Thoughts Website 26/05/08 (consulted 01/04/2012)
<http://www.diagonalthoughts.com/?p=192>

S12 List of characteristics for the purposes of visual analysis

Size

What is the size of the visual and what is the influence of that size on its impact?

Technique / execution

Which techniques are being used?

Composition

How are the visual elements placed in relation to each other, are there full and/or empty spaces, is the picture symmetrically or asymmetrically set up, do the objects show a direction of view etc.?

Cutting off

How is the visual cut-off done and why do you think it has been done this way?

Focus

Where is your gaze drawn to in the visual?

Lighting

What is the lighting within the visual like (strength and direction)?

Use of Colour

Which colours are used and with what result?

Use of shape

What shapes are used and with what result?

Texture

Which texture/textures are used?

Contrasts

How is use made of contrasts in colour, shape or theme?

Abstraction level

How true to reality is the visual?

Time characteristics

What are the visible characteristics of the period from which the visual dates?

Expression

Describe the feeling that this visual communicates, use the characteristics mentioned earlier in this description

Meaning

Describe the meaning this visual communicates in your own view, use the earlier mentioned characteristics and expression in this description

Context/Presentation

How is the visual presented to you, what is the setting or occasion in which it is to be seen and what are the influences of these on interpreting it and experiencing it?

S13 A summary of semiotics by C.S. Peirce: icon, index, symbol

SUMMARY OF VISUAL ANALYSIS AFTER C.S. PEIRCE

Charles Sanders Peirce, *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, Volume I, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960 (1903) : 79.

For your index of sources you can use this text as a reference, acknowledgement: Bosch, J.T. 'Summary of Visual Analysis after Pierce' from course material, 2012.

Charles Saunders Peirce was a philosopher/mathematician of the late 19th century. According to Peirce there are 3 sorts of signs: Icon, Index and Symbol. Signs are visual stimuli to which meanings can be ascribed. Every image can be interpreted as a bearer of signs and as such as a bearer of meanings. The differences lie in how the meaning is ascribed in relation to the sign.

Icon

The Icon, (iconicity) is the most easily recognizable sign: it portrays something that looks like what it wants to say. Thus a photograph of an elephant is recognized as; precisely, a photograph of an elephant.

Index

An Index, (indexicality) refers to something: it is a sort of trail that leads to a meaning; that brings to mind something else. For instance, footsteps in the sand show that a human being has walked there. In notes of music there is a system of sounds. The use of the colours red, white and blue indicate the Netherlands because they are the colours of the Dutch flag. Image makers who do not literally want to represent (by means of iconicity), but who also do not want to rely too much upon recognition by means of conventions (symbols) use the index as a way of evoking associations. For instance, by the use of certain colour combinations or patterns which we associate with a specific country (like the Scots tartans or the red, white and green of the Italian flag), by making word pictures which, for instance, make you think of notes in music etc. If a certain sector makes frequent use of these sorts of indexical references, then from these references visual conventions (symbols) can finally arise (see 'symbol'). Metaphors are usually indexical signs, that sometimes deteriorate into symbols if they are much used.

Symbol

A symbol is a convention. Several people are in agreement that the sign used stands for something specific (just think, for instance, of the cross in religion). Symbols are often shared by a cultural group. The group may be national, religious or, for instance, more specifically grouped, like 'sport fishers' or 'house music-lovers'. When developing an image from signs for this group a designer can choose to use such symbolic signs in order to communicate something directly to the audience. Imagine for instance conventions in imagery used designing posters for different musical genres.

As you will notice from your image analyses, there are several blurred areas between these categories. On a poster, advertising classical piano music, a piano is depicted. This is an iconic image, representing a piano, simultaneously it is indexical because the piano is

used to refer to something else; to bring to mind 'pianomusic'. A poster does not convey sound, so the image of the piano is in this case also a reference to it's sound. If, for instance, a music score is depicted, the same happens. It is also possible for an indexical sign to have symbolic properties, like the music score or for instance the usage of gothic typefaces and skulls in graphic design for Goth music. Within a specific cultural group, such signs are conventional and therefore symbolic. It is important that you discuss any doubts or observations you may have in your analysis, as specifically such dualistic notions can signify important qualities in imagery. Why do you recogn a sign is used and what does it aim to have the viewer read into it?

S14 Example of a critical line of argument and analysis

Introduction

Hypothesis (question or supposition)

Introduction partial argument

Explanation and examples

Conclusion partial argument

General conclusion (summing up the different parts of the argument including recommendations)

FATHER'S CHEST AND PARENTING/ FEEDING

Early 1993 saw the arrival of billboards everywhere in the Netherlands covered from top to toe with a larger than life, slightly hairy male chests. Somewhere in that hairy décor of sparsely covered furrows and slopes a baby was to be found, with its tiny mouth puckered in expectation and its eyes focused on a nipple. The scene was accompanied by the slogan: parenting is father's work too. The poster was produced by the Utrecht Emancipation Office as part of a campaign started by the government a couple of years earlier to highlight, and cut across, stereotype images of manliness and womanliness. Nevertheless, what the placard mainly demonstrated, probably quite unintentionally, is that clichés are merely endorsed if the implications of motherhood aren't first well-thought-through before attempting to broach new styles of parenthood.

The unintentional effect brought about by the poster's image is caused mainly by its extremely inept blend of word and image. The text suggests that parenting is a sex-neutral activity, a task that can be carried out by women and men alike. However, we are in no need of enlightenment on that matter, we already knew. Many a father, if available, has a decisive say in matters concerning the preparation of children and adolescents for their futures as conscientious and productive members of society. And, haven't our educational institutions of old been dominated by male teachers, headmasters and rectors? One might even be persuaded, within the boundaries of a denominational patriarchal context, that parenting in the sense of edification and education is an outstanding example of a man's occupation. Still, the depiction of the man's chest with accompanying baby suggests that the poster-makers were not so interested in this part of parenthood.

The poster-makers intended to make it clear that fathers too have a part to play, not so much in the education of their children, but in their care. This is confirmed by other posters produced for the same campaign which depict a nice-looking man with a laundry basket, a nice-looking man behind a cooker, and a nice-looking man with a child on the back of his bike cycling to the nursery, and so forth. From these pictures it must become clear that fathers actually can shoulder some of the care without forfeiting their manliness.

The makers of the poster in question, however, have made a great mistake by suggesting that the 'Madonna with child' cliché might also have a male counterpart. Within the framework of the campaign, when a father's chest is portrayed instead of a mother's breast, caring for a baby is immediately linked to breastfeeding. And, with breastfeeding, the anatomical differences between the sexes come into play, a difference that isn't so easily divisible or transferable. One of the views launched by feminists is that these anatomical-natural attachments between mother and child can actually be seen as entirely separate from the social arrangements involved in caring for a child. In contrast, the poster emphasizes implicitly, and unintentionally, that mother Nature has truth on her side, and that in point of fact, as carers for their children, men are unsuitable.

By transforming, without reflection, the myth of motherhood into a form of fatherhood not rooted in time and space, all they have done is to show the absurd consequences of this substitution. Instead of promoting new roles for the sexes, the poster articulates the impossibility of men and women's struggle for equality - because a man is not a woman. Even so, providing care is not biologically determined and the introduction of a feeding-bottle into the picture might have done wonders.

Rosemarie Buikema