

Michael Ryan

Area of Research Expertise

Visual journalism, typographic 'text works', typographic design, book-arts, graphic design.

Research Profile

A first-class honours graduate of the LCP (now part of the University of the Arts London), Michael later gained his MA there in Typo/Graphic Design (2004).

He cites a lateral sense of conceptual thinking allied to a rigorous working methodology as a key element of his teaching and research work. He uses book-making and text-works to explore themes of media, words and language as a form of 'visual journalism' employing elements of typographic design in this process. Michael publishes under his own imprint, 'Mass Distraction Press', which evolved from his book-making work using media language. The events surrounding the invasion of Iraq (2003) provided the content and vehicle for a series of four books he created as a 'commentary' on the language employed by the media during that conflict.

Michael's design career began with the Banks and Miles consultancy in Blackheath, working on corporate literature and identity schemes for a client list that included the British Council, Post Office, British Telecom, National Postal Museum, Royal Mail and East Midlands Steel. Combined with the creative innovation and typographic emphasis encountered at the LCP, this was a formative influence on Michael's design philosophy. Michael moved from Banks and Miles to Allied International Designers in London, where he worked on retail design accounts including Debenhams, Tesco, Bentalls, Hornes and Allied Breweries. He left AID to work in a bilingual capacity for Murdoch Design Associates on a major project for the Municipal Authority in Paris involving graphics and signage in the Centre Beaubourg redevelopment.

He joined The Surrey Institute in 1991 when he was brought in to write a new Graphics programme for the Faculty of Design. As the Course Leader for eleven years he took it through its transition to degree status in 1994 and built a national profile via successes in the D&AD Awards and the Society of Typographic Designers assessment scheme. Michael relinquished overall leadership in 2002 to concentrate on post-graduate study and further research. Michael currently runs the pathway in Printed Media on the BA Graphic Communication course at the Farnham campus and contributes to all levels, including a long-standing responsibility for the typographic design teaching at level one.