

# **One and many mirrors: perspectives on graphic design education**

**Edited by Luke Wood and Brad Haylock**

SPECIMEN

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## **The critical turn: education of a design writer**

### **Teal Triggs**

In the mid-1990s, in the early days of the internet, graphic designers lamented the 'end of print'. However, the first two decades of the twenty-first century have seen an explosion of activity from graphic designers discovering their own agency to publish — often independently and, significantly, in print. A logical parallel development has been a growing interest amongst graphic designers to research and write about their own discipline. Drawing upon her experience as a design writer and educator, Teal Triggs reflects here upon her own influences, upon recent developments in critical writing in design, and upon what a 'critical turn' might mean for graphic design education.

I have been revisiting a few of the key articles and books about art criticism that at one time provided me with insights into the subject's history. My introduction to criticism emerged in the mid-1970s as a student in the Art Department at the University of Texas at Austin. I remember studying the American art critic Clement Greenberg's writings with some interest, but also mulling over the pages of *Artforum* — the then-cutting-edge contemporary American art magazine, which was designed in a distinctive square 10½-inch format. Over the decades, a roll call of notable contributing editors of *Artforum* (such as Philip Leider, John Coplans, James Monte, Max Kozloff, Barbara Rose and Rosalind Krauss) built upon or reacted against Greenberg's formalist art criticism. His perspective and those of his fellow critics (some of whom were practising artists), clearly shaped the discourse of contemporary art.<sup>1</sup> As the founding editor of *Artforum*, Leider, argued: 'what a critic can do is influence *you* as to what to look at — what to take seriously — and what not to take seriously'.<sup>2</sup>

When I reflect on the publications produced in the field of graphic design, a similar relationship between the editors, critics and practitioners emerges, as does a distinct discourse. *Emigre* and *Eye* magazines are pivotal influences. I would not be the first to suggest that the development of criticism as a practice in graphic design still lags behind that of other arts-related disciplines, such as fine art and architecture. In 1983, Massimo Vignelli observed in his keynote address for 'The First Symposium on the History of Graphic Design' that 'We need to produce continuous criticism which will push us forward into the right place, showing us the appropriate directions... Do you think we can go on without criticism? Without criticism we will never have a profession.'<sup>3</sup> Over a decade later, in 1995, the American designer Michael Rock and the British design critic Rick Poynor took a similar stance in relation to criticism as a practice and argued that 'for graphic design criticism to exist in the sense that it does in other disciplines, and with the same variety of perspectives, it will need dedicated writers'.<sup>4</sup>

In the 2000s, a handful of select academic institutions responded to an increased interest in the role of writing and criticism in the design profession by establishing new Master's programmes. The School of Visual Arts in New York, the London College of Communication and the Royal College of Art in London, for example, shaped curricula in order for designers and writers to come together and develop their writing skills and critical thinking about design.<sup>5</sup> In part, these programmes emerged out of debates around graphic authorship, where new voices, some highly politicised, were searching for relevant platforms to instigate critical discourse. Designers such as the Amsterdam-based duo Metahaven pointed to new articulations of graphic design as embracing theoretical and critical perspectives on, for example, notions of branding and identity.<sup>6</sup> Their work followed in the footsteps of designers such as Jan van Toorn, Ken Garland and Richard Hollis, who have successfully taken a critical position on the contexts in which they are operating — whether it is in the format of provocations or through visual essays set to change a viewer's perspective. Along with initiatives such as the 'First Things First Manifesto 2000', a resurgence of the politicisation of design emerged and captured the imagination of graphic design students who were discovering ways to make an impact on the world. It was within this

context that we began to see the articulation of design writing and the roles of criticism and critical practice as serious topics for academic study.

This essay seeks to speculate on what might happen next with design writing, criticism and recent explorations into critical practice. It asks: what is the critical turn in graphic design and where is it located? And, ultimately, what impact might this have on graphic design education? Before we continue, it is worth defining some of the key terms and recognising some of the nuances of how writing and criticism are used in design. Design writing describes a process by which the resulting texts and/or visuals locate 'design' as its primary focus, whether this focus is on objects, issues, etc., as conveyed through an authorial positioning. Whilst a design critic might also be a writer, the assumption is that design writing is a sustained 'distinctive style and voice'<sup>7</sup> that conveys an interpretation, opinion or judgment upon design.<sup>8</sup> In addition, a definition of critical practice argues for the idea of 'improving' something through design, engaging with reflective practice as a way of challenging the designer's process or contexts, resulting in a focus on 'discursive and propositional ends'.<sup>9</sup>

My own experiences as a design educator and writer are inserted into the discussion at various points in this essay to elucidate the ways in which my pedagogical approach has been informed not only by my own practice but also, importantly, by the students, academics and designers I have the privilege to know. By way of examples, this essay identifies three independently produced, academically led journals. Whilst the field has had only a handful of notable mainstream publishing avenues for design writing and criticism, alternative platforms have emerged and will continue to emerge within an academic context. The three publications highlighted in this essay have in some way contributed to a timeline of independently produced and academically led publications that continue to run parallel to mainstream graphic design magazine publishing. Their significance resides in their capacity as experimental platforms for emerging writers and editors to publish and for new kinds of critical perspectives to evolve. The publications I will focus on in this essay are: *Zed: A Journal of Design* (1994–2000, hereafter *Zed*), edited and designed by Katie Salen; *That New Design Smell* (2011–), produced by Michèle Champagne; and *Modes of Criticism* (2015–), edited and designed by Francisco Laranjo. *Zed* sought to promote design in relationship to cultural theory, design artefacts and digital technologies, whilst *That New Design Smell* and *Modes of Criticism* focus on the critique of design, often in relation to social and political contexts. I am also interested in the move away from journalistic accounts *about* graphic design practice, towards introducing distinct editorial and critical inquiries *into* graphic design practice and the environment in which it operates. And, whilst Leider's definition of the role of the critic establishes criticism as a position of influence, it is also necessary to expect that criticism should stimulate 'new forms of practice and expression'.<sup>10</sup>

I selected these publications because they all embody aspects of approaches to design writing and critical practice that have a place in my own pedagogical thinking. *Zed* was, from its inception, a design journal that set out to 'identify and embrace the margins' and to focus on 'the fundamental issues of concern to practitioners, educators, and students as

a group' in the field of visual communication. *Zed* was produced in the 1990s, when designers, academics and students could have 'access to visible forums'. The journal was unique at the time in its intent to bridge both printed and digital formats for experimental writing. *Zed* embraced the broader context of cultural theory and 'critical issues addressing technology'.<sup>11</sup> Nearly two decades later, the subsequent two publications, *That New Design Smell* and *Modes of Criticism*, also emerged out of the academy but signalled a welcome shift from an entirely Anglo-American perspective and indeed they include a critique, in some cases, of that perspective. For example, to their critical understanding, Champagne and Laranjo bring individual educational and cultural perspectives fostered by their experiences as students and designers in the Netherlands and Canada and in the UK and Portugal, respectively. The publications also exhibit other qualities that offer a way of looking to the future — not only for writing but also in how we approach graphic design practice.

As the discipline of graphic design has evolved, we are slowly coming to understand and appreciate the significance of the practitioner as editor, writer, critic, historian and curator. We might raise questions as to what the design practitioner brings to the shape of design writing and criticism that those who have trained outside the subject do not. In a similar way to *Artforum*, where many of its writers began their careers as practising artists, graphic design criticism, too, has evolved out of the practice of the subject. The practitioner's role as writer and critic is an established tradition in graphic design, from the early writings of Bauhaus members to recent online publishing ventures by contributors to design magazines such as *Design Observer*. The practitioner-critic provides graphic design with another and equally valid critical lens and, I would argue, one that impacts not only written criticism, but the very notion of critical design practice itself. Jessica Helfand, for example, had a clear-cut response to Poyner's *Design Observer* piece, 'Where are the Design Critics?',<sup>12</sup> when she said: 'but one thing I do know, and that is this: to the degree that everyone sees design as their business — and they do — design criticism needs designers as critics'.<sup>13</sup> And, if the example of *Artforum*'s successful entry into commissioning practitioners as critics is anything to go by, there is hope yet for a similar pathway to be forged in graphic design criticism.

### Part I: The critical turn

To begin, we need to define the concept of the 'turn' — a term that suggests a shift from one paradigm to another. This phrase means 'to affect' and is often used to explain new directions in disciplines ranging from tourism studies and critical theory to language and intercultural communication. In design, Bruce Archer described this succinctly in his foreword to Klaus Krippendorff's treatise, *The Semantic Turn: A New Foundation for Design*, where he argued that any paradigm shift requires 'a new generation of proponents, a fertile cultural climate, but also significant technological advances'.<sup>14</sup> Although focusing on the 'semantic turn' in product design, Krippendorff provides a clear indicator as to the ways in which we can 'reconceptualise the world' to encourage new practices. He explains: 'a requirement for introducing changes in a discourse is that the discourse

remains *rearticulable*, that its users can understand, practice and speak about these changes'.<sup>15</sup>

Two years later, the curator and art theorist Irit Rogoff revitalised the phrase 'educational turn', which originated in the mid-1990s, and applied it to curatorial contemporary art practice. She described the turn as a shift from object-orientated display to a practice that focusses on the production of processes. She argued that this turn was represented by the development of new formats and methods, especially those found in 'conversations' — a process that for Rogoff became central to the articulation of knowledge.<sup>16</sup> These conversations took the form of 'public' declamations and were centred on discussions around the theme of education — a process itself considered to be transformative.<sup>17</sup>

Both Krippendorff and Rogoff have something to offer in terms of the ways we might describe the 'critical turn' in graphic design. Graphic designers increasingly find themselves operating within a condition of perpetual change, responding to unstable cultural, political, economic and technological environments. For example: the economic impact of Brexit, the polarising effect of the forty-fifth American Presidency, a generalised sense of the threat of terrorism, and the recent focus on information leaks and cybersecurity. For designers, this climate presents a real need to develop new strategies for addressing such wicked problems and contributing towards positive global and social change. This challenge was not lost on Richard Buchanan in his conference keynote for 'New Views 2: Conversations and Dialogues in Graphic Design' (2008), where he stated his concern: 'I'm worried about graphic design. It's at a critical turning point. The window of opportunity is about to close.'<sup>18</sup>

The complexity of wicked problems has led to designers asking what it means to be critical and to identify and propose effective design responses. It may be argued that the contemporary demands on design practitioners have, to some extent, taught graphic designers to be 'critics' — that is, to adopt a critical design practice that reframes the boundaries of design as an integrated part of the process of making. Thus, it is through critical practice that designers are reflecting, iterating and innovating graphic design solutions. Whilst graphic designers continue to be obsessed with graphic artefacts (such as arguing that print is certainly not dead), designers have also considered the role of the 'critical' in speculative processes (for example, in design fiction, or as in the work of designer and educator Denise Gonzales-Crisp and her term 'designwrights'),<sup>19</sup> and new methods of social design practice (for example, the discipline known as 'transition design'). At the same time, sites for critical practice have also expanded over the last decade to include: exhibitions, such as Zak Kyes's *Forms of Inquiry: The Architecture of Critical Graphic Design* (2007); alternative sites of critical production, such as Dexter Sinister's 'The Serving Library' (2006-); and specific design criticism conferences, such as 'AIGA Blunt: Explicit and Graphic Design Criticism Now' (2013). This is also the context in which *That New Design Smell* and *Modes of Criticism* have been making their intervention and which *Zed* predicated a decade before — a discussion of which follows.

As a sidebar, we might also be able to draw closer parallels with the field of architecture, since graphic designers often look to the theoretical and



historical traditions offered by architectural criticism to locate frameworks for design. Architect and educator Markus Miessen, for example, in an interview for a special issue of *Archis*, 'Ways to be Critical' (2013), described the ways in which architectural criticism has 'changed from verbal or written criticism, to the attempt to actually practice that criticism'.<sup>20</sup> Similar parallels may be drawn in how we are seeing not only a shift from writing to graphic design outcomes, but also a focus on the ways in which critical practice may be fully integrated into the process of design. Educator Tara Winters elaborates upon this in her essay 'The Practitioner-Researcher Contribution to a Developing Criticism for Graphic Design', by arguing that 'critical exchanges from the community of practice and practitioner-produced writing and theory offer an alternative to the model of the outside critic looking in'.<sup>21</sup>

### *Design Writing Criticism: a pedagogical approach*

As part of the Master's of Design Writing Criticism course, which I led from 2008 to 2012 at the London College of Communication, University of the Arts London, I sought to enable exploration of writing *about* design, writing *into* design, and design as writing.<sup>22</sup> The students were primarily from design or architectural backgrounds and were keen to expand their 'point of view', building upon the skills they brought to their studies as designers. The curriculum was written to promote the use of critical reflection as part of the 'making' process in order to establish authorial positioning, and, by doing so, bring different kinds of insights to the process of writing, criticism and design practice. This was achieved through a series of short exercises and longer projects emphasising different elements of the craft and techniques of writing, exploring new methods for design writing research, and applying a critical lens to design and cultural artefacts and processes. The role of historical research and theoretical understanding were also deemed significant to the totality of the process. This process yielded interesting and innovative explorations in both written and practical outcomes.

An example of the approach taken to design writing within the Master's of Design Writing Criticism can be found in a collaborative project that ran with two consecutive student cohorts (2011–2012) and with the programme's core staff and the archivists from the British Telecom (BT) Archives.<sup>23</sup> BT is the world's oldest communications company. Its archives preserve the company's documents, photographs and films that reflect the social, political, cultural and design history of networked, electric and digital communications from 1846 to the present day. The archive became the focal point through which students were encouraged to engage with history in writing about contemporary design practices and to explore design methods and processes that would enhance an understanding of the archive materials. Each of the two project cohorts produced an exhibition and two edited publications. The aim was to explore how to make visible the objects from the collection and the narratives that surrounded them — an objective that BT Archives were keen to pursue because it brought something 'new' to the collections. Each student took an artefact or an idea from the archive and interpreted it within the social, cultural and design history of telecommunications. This included objects such as phone boxes, telegrams, disabled rights promotional material, telegraphy, 'Personality Girl'

advertising,<sup>24</sup> letters from General Post Office (GPO) exhibition designers, and so forth. The narrative genres chosen reflected the diversity of the student-authors: documentary, critical commentary, fiction, essay and academic, among others.

At the end of the year-long project, the students summed up the process: 'By going back to original source material, we find "authenticity" and raw stories to tell. We learn that narratives lie in every archive and every object. They can speak to us, and we can listen.'<sup>25</sup> For BT Archives, this was a new kind of archive user and, as a result, the project addressed their interest in widening the archive's reach. Importantly, the project presented fresh, critical insights into the materials housed in the collection. In the context of design writing, this meant that students were introduced to the role of the archive in exploring contemporary authorial positions. The public exhibition that followed provided a secondary forum for students to explore visual and aural ways of communicating these narratives. The often-invisible research process was made visible and the importance of critical reflection in the act of making was considered as a practice in its own right.

The experience also laid the foundations for some of my pedagogical thinking, which I later applied to my teaching at the Royal College of Art (RCA) towards the development of the Book Test Unit (BTU) project. BTU is an experimental forum for student projects under the remit of the RCA's research group 'Book Futures Lab', which I had the privilege to lead. As with the BT Archives collaboration, student cohorts took part in four iterations of BTU projects: 2015/16, 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19.<sup>26</sup> In 2017, for example, the Book Test Unit hosted a collaboration of fifteen design students from the School of Communication's Master's of Research Communication Design pathway and Master's of Visual Communication students, who joined a handful of RCA alumni to explore 'the future of the library and the production of knowledge'. The resulting book, titled '*Oh, Wow, I had no idea I could get that from the library!*', provided documentary evidence of the research collaboration through photographs and short critical essays that interrogated topics such as contemporary publishing and dissemination modes, both analogue and digital, political discourse in social media, public and private spaces, multimodal literacy practices, and the experiential relationship between sound, reading and technology. The central role that writing took in this iteration of the project emerged from the BTU collaborators who were unambiguously engaging with design writing as a creative and critical practice.

In summary, both projects developed the students' specialist research interests but also encouraged the exploration of different critical approaches to design writing and practice. By bringing a design-led perspective to these projects, students were introduced to a range of theoretical as well as practical insights to the work, methods and processes. This resulted in a deeper understanding of such things as manufacturing and printing production processes, the practicalities of communication and messaging for audiences, close readings of images, and so forth. In other words, designers brought a nuanced understanding of their role as 'makers'; when designers apply this to writing, they understand deeply what that process entails.<sup>27</sup>

*The role of the independent publication in graphic design criticism*

Like Massimo Vignelli before him, design writer and curator Andrew Blauvelt called for a unification of the discipline of graphic design. Writing in 2003, Blauvelt remarks: 'an important way out of the conditions of a commensurate pluralism is for graphic design to reclaim a position of critical autonomy'.<sup>28</sup> He goes on to propose that graphic design 'must be seen as a discipline capable of generating meaning on its own terms' and that 'such actions should demonstrate self-awareness and self-reflexivity'.<sup>29</sup> Critical practice, he argues, is key to this process of discipline formation. Whilst graphic design critics such as Rick Poynor and Steven Heller have kept the debate foregrounded within mainstream design publications, a great deal of the more experimental critical writing has been published in alternative, independent publications, often by younger designers.

Throughout the history of graphic design, writing and criticism has found a unique forum within the pages of independent magazines and trade publications produced by professional societies. Examples include: *Das Plakat* (1910–1921), which was produced by the commercial art collector Hans Sachs and the collectors' association Verein der Plakatfreunde (Society of Friends of the Poster);<sup>30</sup> *Emigre* (1984–2005), founded and designed by Rudy VanderLans; *Dot Dot Dot* (2000–2011), founded and designed by Stuart Bertolotti-Bailey and Peter Bil'ak (with David Reinfurt replacing Bil'ak in 2006); and *Eye: The International Review of Graphic Design* (1990–present), led first by founding editor Poynor, later edited by Max Bruinsma (1997–1999) and John L. Walters (1999–present).

Small print runs of self-published magazines or journals produced by students and/or faculty within an academic environment are also part of this historical trajectory. For example, *Typographica* (1949–1967), published by Lund Humphries, was edited by Herbert Spencer who in 1966 joined the Royal College of Art, and *Typos* (circa 1980–1983), published by London College of Printing, was edited by LCP staff member Frederick Lambert.<sup>31</sup> *Typos* was a constant source of inspiration for me when I was teaching on the MA Typo/Graphic Studies at the London College of Communication. Lambert had been adept at successfully connecting students' learning experiences with contemporary professional practice. Then there is, of course, the well-established journal *Visible Language*, which began publishing in 1967 under its original title *The Journal of Typographic Research*. It was founded by Dr Merald Wrolstad and was supported by Rhode Island School of Design and the Illinois Institute of Technology, under the watchful editorship of Sharon Poggenpohl. Mike Zender, who is based at the University of Cincinnati College of Design, Architecture, Art and Planning, took over the editorship in 2013. Poggenpohl and Zender have been influential in fostering design research and interdisciplinary studies. This ongoing interest is reflected in a dedicated special issue of *Visible Language*, published in December 2015, which explores ideas surrounding 'critical making' and the boundaries between design and the digital humanities.<sup>32</sup>

The self-produced design studio publication has been another avenue for design writers. For example, *Open Manifesto* (2004–), produced by designer Kevin Finn in Australia, has been an attempt to 'democratise' design writing and criticism by welcoming contributions from students, academics

and designers. In addition, Armin Vit and Bryony Gomez-Palacio founded *Speak Up* (2002–2009) — an online graphic design blog-magazine whose intent was to ‘spark a good debate’. *Speak Up* had a regular column titled ‘Critique’, where guest writers would critically comment on different aspects of design.<sup>33</sup> In 2007, the blog became a controversial focus for a debate between Poyner and blogger/designer Mark Kingsley, who took opposing views on the merits of the role of editors and the format of blogging. The ensuing debate led to a passionate critique by the two authors on the virtues of ‘amateur’ and ‘professional’ modes of design writing and criticism. Although still inconclusive, the points raised by both writers (and the authors of comments on the exchange) are still noted as part of the emerging discourse in graphic design.<sup>34</sup> Around the same time, *Design Observer* took criticism into a professionalised online environment with founding editors William Drenttel, Jessica Helfand, Michael Bierut and Poyner (2003–present, under the editorship of Helfand and Bierut). *Design Observer* has provided a significant platform for design writing, whilst at the same time exploring a broader remit of visual culture. Poyner, for example, expanded the relationship between the critic and the ‘critical’ reader in his provocative blog posts for the online publication: in a 2012 post titled ‘The Closed Shop of Design Academia’, he wrote of ‘the cloistered quality of academic life’ and criticised academics for not participating in the public discourse on design. The article sparked a substantial number of responses from designers and academics, which appeared in the comment boxes between 13 April and 22 April 2012. The comment boxes formed the basis of a dialogue between Poyner and readers, but also among readers with one another. For a moment, the graphic design community interacted in a passionate and participatory critical intervention.<sup>35</sup>

These publications have often been produced and edited by design professionals, academics, writers or even specialist enthusiasts. Such a range of critical voices is laudable and desired — it evidences how members of a profession are keen to raise the level of discourse. Such variety of criticism has also generated debate as to the purpose and function of writing, as well as the voice through which it is presented: journalism, critical journalism, academic writing, critical writing or critical practice. For example, Gonzales-Crisp coined the term ‘designwrights’ in her essay ‘Discourse This! Designers and Alternative Critical Writing’ to describe the process by which design writers have adopted rhetorical positions of fiction in order to ‘evaluate [and] elucidate practices, cultural forces and artifacts’.<sup>36</sup> She acknowledges the work of historical figures such as William Morris and W. A. Dwiggins, as well as more contemporary examples including Diane Gromala (aka Putch Tu), Bertolotti-Bailey and Bruinsma, amongst others, who have flirted, if not directly engaged, with a more literary and semi-fictionalised positioning. Through this process, the role of speculation is foregrounded, thereby presenting a critical freedom for experimentation and exploration.<sup>37</sup>

Further problematising the current state of criticism is designer and educator Kenneth Fitzgerald, who, in his piece ‘Fuck All’ (a title that proposes a critique of Michael Rock’s seminal article ‘Fuck Content’) for *Modes of Criticism* 1, addresses the potential conflict of the role of the designer who is also a critic. He writes:

a simple disclaimer must accompany practitioners' writing: *Warning: may contain ulterior or mixed motives*. This is a significant issue in design writing, where practice-related and practice-centric writers predominate.<sup>38</sup>

This is where the three publication examples I have cited — *Zed*, *That New Design Smell* and *Modes of Criticism* — come into their own. I am aware that the claim for special significance may seem premature since only six issues have been published to date for the latter two: one issue of *That New Design Smell* and five issues of *Modes of Criticism*. Yet, the trajectory indicated by these publications evidences what we might hope for in a new generation of graphic designers who place criticism firmly at the heart of an integrated practice of production. The designer-critic is now operating across a broader range of roles as producer (for example, as designer, writer, critic, editor or social media expert), as well as publisher and distributor. Is this what may be described as the critical turn in graphic design? And what insights and understanding are brought to design writing by practitioners that are absent from the writing of their counterparts who are not in design practice? In the next section of this essay, the publications above are discussed in some depth to illustrate ways in which critical writing and critical design have been informed by designers bringing a new kind of 'lens' to an editorial positioning.

### Part II: The critical examples

In Part I of this essay, I discussed how academic institutions have often published experimental editorial design and writing platforms for students and tutors, independently of the mainstream. The proposition of situating a critique within the process of design has the potential to stimulate new kinds of practice — whether through writing or designing. This moves criticism beyond defined conventions of having a role of 'influence' into a practice where reflection and critique are an integral part of the design process. In Part II, my intent is to focus on the three publications as examples that have bridged writing, criticism and practice to bring new approaches to perspectives on graphic design. The editors of all three publications are also designers and are involved in the academy. The first issue of *Zed* hails from the 1990s and was instrumental in bringing the idea of the 'value of debate' in graphic design to stimulate a reconnection between what had been a disparate design community of students, academics and designers. Continuing in a similar tradition, *That New Design Smell* and *Modes of Criticism* reflect a period of production in the 2000s that fostered exploration of graphic design writing/criticism as an academic pursuit.

#### *Zed: A Journal of Design*

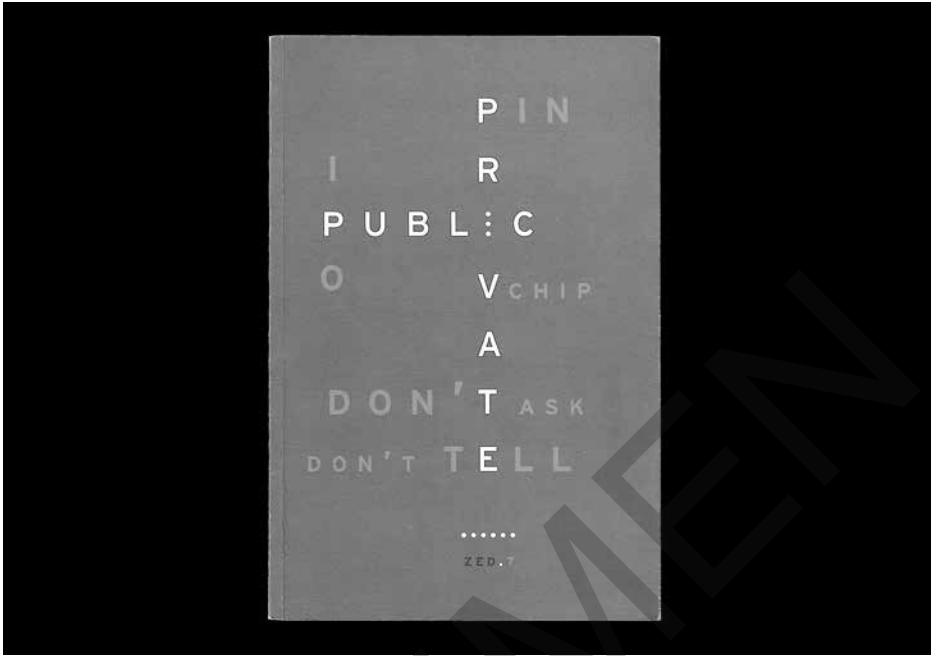
During the 1990s, design criticism and writing was often the domain of experimental platforms, with enough proliferation of work for Poyner to remark 'a substantial body of critical writing has been amassed'.<sup>39</sup> With this, we experienced an increase in the founding of new graphic design publications that helped to foster and shape an emerging critical design discourse. The designer as editor became instrumental in the creation of new experimental forums and innovative editorial positioning for the field.

One publication that informed my approach to design writing and criticism as a contributor was *Zed*. The journal launched in 1994 and ran for seven volumes until 2000 under the Center for Design Studies, Virginia Commonwealth University, where its founding editor, Katie Salen, was an associate professor. The remit of each of the seven themed volumes, according to Salen, was to deal 'with fundamental issues of concern to practitioners, educators, and students as a group, and [to acknowledge] the impact of these issues on society'.<sup>40</sup> *Zed* provided a forum for critical debate in the form of 'questioning' and engaged with broader themes where design was integrated into discussions on politics, objects, semiotics, pedagogy, morality, graduate education and experimentation. The journal was slanted towards writings on design as a broader cultural artefact. *Zed's* designs under Salen's editorship subtly posited alternative ways of reading texts — in some cases through the inclusion of a CD-ROM, or through typographic experimentation and play. For example, the second issue of *Zed* (1995) withdrew the vowel 'i' each time it appeared in the text and re-introduced 'I' to the margins in homage to the experimental works of Georges Perec, a member of the twentieth-century literary group Oulipo, who coined the lipogram to designate texts constructed with the omission of a given letter.

The seventh and final issue of *Zed*, titled 'public + private', was edited by myself and Siân Cook under the aegis of the Women's Design + Research Unit (WD+RU) — a loose-knit collective co-founded in 1997 with Liz McQuiston to raise awareness about women working in visual communication. Our own political intentions as a design collective — with political concerns including gender, women's visibility in the workplace, and so forth — aligned with *Zed's* main aim to be a 'vehicle for divergent viewpoints and new voices'.<sup>41</sup> WD+RU has given and will continue to give voice to women who aren't normally heard. To this end, *Zed* was perfect as a discursive space for making visible contributors' interdisciplinary perspectives in text and image on the theme of 'public + private'. The issue was divided into four main 'zones' or juxtapositions: navigating/mapping, hiding/revealing, ritual/sexualisation and culture/boundaries. Our contributors included: writer and photographer Rosa Ainley, designer Jonathan Barnbrook, artists Angela Forster and Anne Wilson, design writer Kristina Samagyi, filmmaker Maureen McCue, designer Andrew Slatter, photographer Jennifer Small and designer Niall Sweeney. We collaborated with the artist Marysia Lewandowska to include sporadic insertions of photographic images of 'public matter' in the form of newspaper and magazine cuttings collected from the private apartment of the film critic Misia Oleksiewicz in Warsaw. The resulting effect was a mirroring of the 'unexpected encounters' the critic herself had created in the placement of clippings into books, medicine cabinets and show boxes, each 'assimilated into the living space'.<sup>42</sup> The notion of a 'discursive space' has always been central to my own practice as an educator, and accordingly the opportunity to be involved in *Zed* provided a further testing ground for the ways in which design and writing conversations could be catalysts for probing social, political and cultural issues.

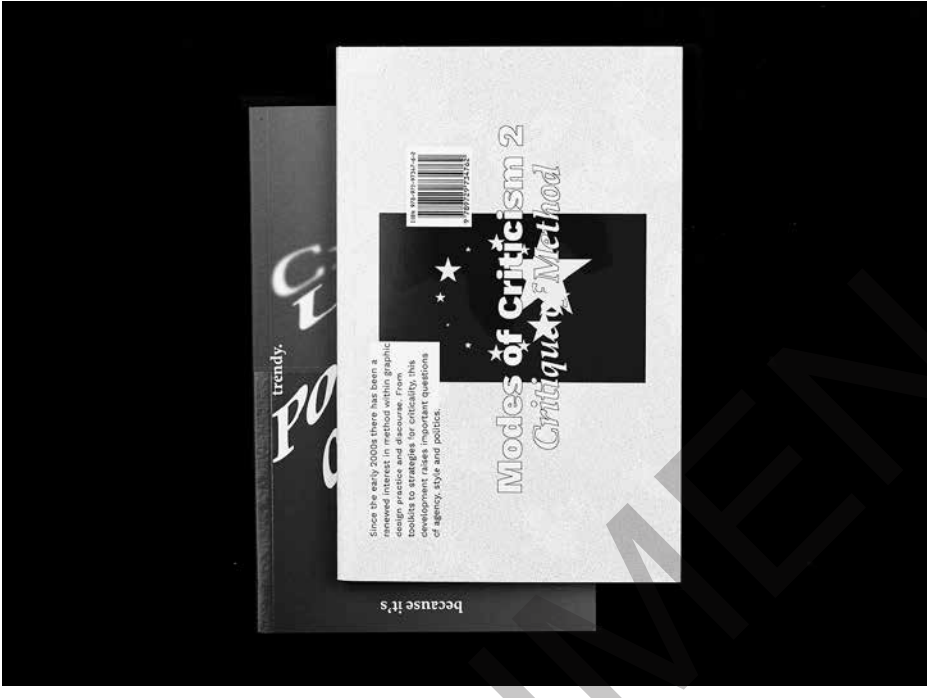
### *That New Design Smell*

*That New Design Smell* was conceived as 'an experiment in smart and fun



Top: *Zed: Public + Private*, issue no. 7 (September 2000). The Center for Design Studies, Communication Arts and Design Department, Virginia Commonwealth University. Guest edited by the Women's Design + Research Unit (WD+RU). Edited and designed by Katie Salen. Cover design by Bethany Johns. Image courtesy of the author.

Bottom: *That New Design Smell*, issue no. 0 (June 2011). Edited by Michèle Champagne. Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Photograph by Jason Mortlock, courtesy of Michèle Champagne.



Top: *Modes of Criticism: Critical, Uncritical, Post-critical*, issue no. 1 (February 2015). Edited and designed by Francisco Laranjo. London, England. Photograph courtesy of Francisco Laranjo.

Bottom: *Modes of Criticism: Critique of Method*, issue no. 2 (May 2016). Porto, Portugal. Edited and designed by Francisco Laranjo. Photograph courtesy of Francisco Laranjo.



conversations on design' and was part of Michèle Champagne's thesis at the Sandberg Instituut, a postgraduate programme of the Gerrit Rietveld Academie, the Netherlands. Only one issue (no. 0) was produced, in an A4 magazine format.<sup>43</sup> The print run of *That New Design Smell* was limited to only fifty copies, but the accompanying website remains online and so its written content is still accessible.

Champagne's editorial intent for *That New Design Smell* was to introduce 'an independent venue for design criticism and dialogue in a post-medium fashion'.<sup>44</sup> *That New Design Smell* is presented as 'documentary-style design criticism'. Articles and images reflect the publication's political leaning in reportage, including, for example, photographs of the Toronto G20 Summit, archive images of decision-makers gathered around political round tables, and observations of the future of city living. At the same time as articles in the magazine question the role of criticism, the design of the print magazine presents 'a visual argument' that Champagne describes as 'design is a disgrace'.<sup>45</sup> This, she argues, is in itself 'critical design', interrogating the rules of what 'good design' should be. The design of the publication is a catalyst for debating questions around design aesthetics or, in this case, a seemingly anti-design aesthetic. Champagne, as if to emphasise this point, includes in the first issue an interview with Daniel van der Velden — co-founder, with Vinca Kruk, of the collective Metahaven and a tutor at the Sandberg Instituut. In her interview with van der Velden, he remarks: 'if you don't address the politics behind the aesthetics, there will be no real change'.<sup>46</sup>

What is distinctive about this publication is the editor's special formula by which content generated from the website is then curated into a printed format. Champagne adopted an open content submission policy, 'where contributors engage with an active online public' to facilitate 'dialogue rather than monologue'.<sup>47</sup> This is not dissimilar to what Rogoff proposes in her definition of the 'turn', where new platforms encourage 'public utterances'.<sup>48</sup>

### *Modes of Criticism*

*Modes of Criticism* is an ongoing research project produced by Francisco Laranjo, which formed part of his submission towards a PhD at the University of the Arts London in 2016.<sup>49</sup> In his thesis, titled 'Design as criticism: Methods for a critical graphic design practice', Laranjo argues that 'in order to develop a critical practice, a designer must approach design as criticism'.<sup>50</sup> His ideas are explored through an applied practice — the production of *Modes of Criticism* — citing as a key influence the work of Dutch critical designer and thinker Jan van Toorn. As practice-led research, Laranjo's intent is laudable in highlighting the potential of new critical methods and processes through which to explore the designer as a reflexive agent of change.

*Modes of Criticism* too has a limited print run — of three hundred copies — whereas the online journal provides an additional forum to expand the selection of writings to reprints or specifically commissioned texts in a timely fashion. Here, the visual takes a predominant role in introducing each text to the reader. Laranjo seemingly found inspiration in the design of the last six issues of *Emigre* (issues 64–69), where VanderLans had intentionally changed the publication's format from a magazine to a reader-friendly

paperback version. This was a radical shift from the earlier issues, in which *Emigre* had displayed highly experimental visual and typographic layouts, to a more traditional, review-style paperback. The first issue of *Modes of Criticism* used only a few images; in some articles, the design is reminiscent of earlier *Emigre*-like typographic page layouts. For example, the essay by Ahmed Ansari, 'Politics & Method', in *Modes of Criticism 2*, exploits this to good effect where the text is split into two columns — one for 'A Method in Politics' and the other for 'A Politics in Method', whilst references are printed vertically in the margins, breaking from a top-to-bottom reading. By the third issue, Laranjo has achieved a greater sense of visual balance between image and text in the publication's layout, reflecting, perhaps, the theme of 'design and democracy' and its author's critical and dialogical positioning.

As an editor, Laranjo has carefully curated *Modes of Criticism*, inviting a select group of contributors including some familiar practitioners and academics who have written about criticism throughout their careers, such as Anne Bush, Kenneth Fitzgerald, Noel Waite, Els Kuijpers and Jan van Toorn, as well as new voices, such as Ahmed Ansari and Matthew Kiem, both PhD students, at Carnegie Mellon University and Western Sydney University respectively. At the same time, Laranjo introduces writers from areas related to graphic design to evidence the increased blurring of disciplinary boundaries, such as Cameron Tonkinwise, a theorist who taught previously at Carnegie Mellon University, and who is a strong advocate of the emerging field of transition design.

The debates that Laranjo highlights resonate with earlier writings, such as those by Poynor and Fitzgerald, on the role of criticism. For example, designer and educator Bush observes in her piece for *Modes of Criticism 2* that critics have seemingly avoided tackling criticism head-on in their writing. She remarks: 'vacillating between a desire for stable foundations as well as a need to address change — graphic design critics have tended to both embrace and resist authority through a range of manoeuvres which foreground personality, sidestep history, or prioritize description over analysis'.<sup>51</sup>

Speculative design and design fiction are also contemporary themes addressed in the publication, the early exploration of which Laranjo attributes to Anthony Dunne and Fiona Raby, among others. Yet it is only recently that graphic design has begun to adopt some of the techniques and strategies offered by these narrative design methods. Waite reflects on his practice as exemplified through his own teaching in showing to his students 'the value and relevance of history and its methods'.<sup>52</sup> He draws from Tony Fry's book *Design Futuring*,<sup>53</sup> citing the role 'critical fictions' might play in 'enabling the contemplation of what would otherwise not be considered'.<sup>54</sup> An equally valid approach is proposed by James Langdon, designer and creator of the project A School for Design Fiction. Langdon elucidates his use of the term 'design fictions' and explores in his teaching 'how artefacts speak to us, sometimes in ways that can be shaped by design, but also in ways that a designer cannot control'.<sup>55</sup> His reference to historical design fiction, as Laranjo points out, is an alternative to the legacy of science fiction on which Dunne and Raby relied.

The third issue of *Modes of Criticism* reflects a maturity in the publication's approach to critical writing, interweaving established and

emerging voices in graphic design. The theme of 'design and democracy' suggests a broader critical view of the field, including discussions of the socio-political and technological contexts in which designers operate and of neoliberal models of education in art schools. Here we see a nod to the rise of norm-critical design. The role of critique in design (whether theoretically or through practice) takes on a greater sense of urgency in the problematisation of design moving forward, revealing many design practices as steeped in historical hegemonic discourse. For example, the article titled 'Design Activism: A Conversation by the Decolonising Design Group' reflects the diversity of perspectives on the politics of design (e.g., political design, design activism, etc.) and 'how design expresses its agency beyond and often against the terms of Design'.<sup>56</sup> The fourth issue of *Modes of Criticism* extends the critical impetus of the third, but with a specific focus upon radical pedagogy.<sup>57</sup>

Such debates are essential. Even as initial published outcomes, *Modes of Criticism* and *That New Design Smell* propose new dialogic platforms for broader discussions around design criticism and critical practice, made more evident by the cross-fertilisation of ideas between the two publications. In 2012, Laranjo interviewed Champagne about *That New Design Smell* and her approach to 'critical thinking and designing' for its source website. Through this exchange, Champagne proposes that for her there are three types of 'critical': critical thinking, design criticism, and critical design. And, all three positions, she argues, are incorporated into *That New Design Smell*. She explains that the publication 'was trying to present a piece of "critical design" (in terms of its visual argument) all the while engaging "critical thinking" and publishing "design criticism"'.<sup>58</sup> Equally, Champagne proposed that a 'visual argument' was at play through her design choices for the magazine — 'Arial, justified titles and pixelated images'.<sup>59</sup> The questioning of what might be seen to be breaking the rules of 'good design' in turn leads us to ask: does engagement with the critical necessitate an 'ugly' aesthetic?

Such questioning is not necessarily new in graphic design. One precedent, for example, emerged out of a series of student-led experimental publications called *Output* (1990–1991), where emphasis was placed on an 'integration of its content with its visual structure'. Initiated by design educator Joani Spadaro, who hailed from the Herron School of Art at Indiana University, the project's intent was to create a platform for students to work outside the commercial context that normally defines the outcome of their studio projects. The collaboration encouraged critical reflection on the state of graphic design practice and the opportunity to reflect those through the publication.<sup>60</sup> *Output* also found a place amongst students at Cranbrook, The University of Texas, and in the creation of an international issue between North Carolina State University and Ravensbourne College of Art and Design in London. In this later collaboration, with which I was involved, students came together via fax machines and video conference calls to foster an understanding of their positions in relationship to cultural, social and political contexts in the UK and the US. *Output* was a publication in which students could calibrate its final form with the intentions of its content.<sup>61</sup>

Each version of the publication drew upon a range of production techniques, such as overprinting, letterpress, video and fax machine

technology, which reflected the students' critique of their postmodern condition. The resulting aesthetic led Heller to castigate them for representing 'the cult of the ugly'. He described in *Eye* magazine in 1993 a 'critical ugliness' that he accused of being 'self-indulgent' and which 'could be considered a prime example of ugliness in the service of fashionable experimentation'.<sup>62</sup> Such musings on an 'aesthetic critique' have now entered the canon of graphic design history. At the beginning of the new millennium, a paradigm shift was underway. Debates centred on the post-critical as proposed by Blauvelt and others, who called for 'graphic design to reclaim a position of critical autonomy' and a position of 'self-reflexivity'.<sup>63</sup> The emphasis shifted from the production of graphic expression and, by the mid-2000s, to that of critical agitation.

There is no doubt that the academy provides a 'safe' space for critical dialogues to be shared and interrogated, arguably untouched by Fitzgerald's concern for 'ulterior motives'. Yet, despite the danger of producing work that is only discussed within the academy, *Modes of Criticism* and *That New Design Smell*, as student-led publications, have made attempts to bring their critiques into the wider design community. Both editors have been regular guest speakers and presenters at AIGA conferences (for example, Champagne was a keynote at the AIGA's 'Blunt: Explicit and Graphic Design Criticism Now' in 2013, and Laranjo was a guest at the 'Undesign Symposium' at the University of Applied Arts Vienna in 2016). Their publications are distributed internationally, in print and online. The editors are also active on social media, which is used as another type of critical space, thereby greatly increasing their visibility and potential discursive impact on the wider graphic design community. This reach aligns with Krippendorff's criteria of the *rearticulable*, which extends the 'conversation' (as proposed by Rogoff) to generate an ongoing dialogue.

My proposal here is that, despite it still being early days for *Modes of Criticism* and *That New Design Smell* (and even if they don't publish any further than these first issues), their significance resides in the curation of writings focused on criticism and critical practice. Much in the same way that *Zed* had done in the 1990s, these publications provide useful evidence of a 'critical turn' in graphic design, further shadowing the writings of 1970s artists who provided the impetus for critical arts practices. The 'turn' reads like the creation of a new paradigm.

### Postscript

I have been asked to reflect on the education of a design writer, partly because I have been involved in the field for such an extended period, but also because of my experiences in the development of writing as a critical practice within the context of graphic design education. Yet I am in the position of being inside the academy, where my perspective on design writing and criticism has been informed in part by academic convention. It is axiomatic in the academy that the learning environment necessitates an engagement between students, colleagues and the wider profession. This is a position of privilege: the new perspectives, contexts and intentions foregrounded by such engagements often yield opportunities for innovative practices. New ways of considering the 'how' and 'why' are being played out

**'live' in the postgraduate classroom. I continue to be inspired by students and alumni who are taking cues from their learning experiences and developing these into new kinds of critical design practice.**

- 1 Amy Newman, *Challenging Art: Artforum 1962–1974* (New York: Soho Press Inc., 2000), 2.
- 2 Newman, *Challenging Art*, 128.
- 3 Massimo Vignelli, 'Keynote Address', in *The First Symposium on the History of Graphic Design: Coming of Age*, edited by Barbara Hodik and R. Roger Remington (Rochester: Rochester Institute of Technology, 1983), 9.
- 4 Michael Rock and Rick Poynor, 'What is this thing called graphic design criticism?', *Eye*, vol. 4, no. 16, Spring 1995, 58.
- 5 The School of Visual Arts (2008–present) has refocused, with a newly titled Master's course in Design Research, Writing and Criticism positioning research at the heart of its offer, whereas the Royal College of Art's Master's of Critical Writing in Art and Design (2010–present) maintains a focus on the creative practice of writing and criticism with 'their own techniques, ethics and technologies'. As the first of its kind in Europe to focus on design, writing and critical thinking, London College of Communication's Master's of Design Writing Criticism ran from 2008 to 2012. When the College re-evaluated its offering, the course had graduated four cohorts of students, many of whom are now working as design writers or educators, or continuing their studies in criticism at PhD level. See also: David Crowley, 'Head of Programme Welcome', Royal College of Art website, [www.rca.ac.uk/schools/school-of-humanities/cwad/head-of-programme/](http://www.rca.ac.uk/schools/school-of-humanities/cwad/head-of-programme/), accessed 22 October 2015.
- 6 Rick Poynor, 'Borderline: Profile: Metahaven', *Eye*, vol. 71, no. 9, Spring 2009, 25.
- 7 Rick Poynor, 'The Death of the Critic', *Icon* 033, March 2006, [www.iconeye.com/404/item/2527-the-death-of-the-critic-%7C-icon-033-%7C-march-2006](http://www.iconeye.com/404/item/2527-the-death-of-the-critic-%7C-icon-033-%7C-march-2006), accessed 9 September 2017.
- 8 Grace Lees-Maffei offers another definition in the introduction to her edited volume *Writing Design: Words and Objects*: 'although writing on design often analyses design *after the fact*, or after the processes of briefing, conception, design and manufacture have occurred, design criticism and design reform discourses critique what exists with the aim of improving what will follow'. See: Grace Lees-Maffei, 'Introduction: Writing Design', in *Writing Design: Words and Objects*, edited by Grace Lees-Maffei (London: Berg, 2012), 4.
- 9 Matt Malpass, *Critical Design in Context: History, Theory and Practices* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 18.
- 10 Maurice Berger, 'Introduction: The Crisis of Criticism', in *The Crisis of Criticism*, edited by Maurice Berger (New York: The New Press, 1998), 11.
- 11 Katie Salen, 'Introduction', *Zed 1: The Politics of Design*, 1994, 11–12.
- 12 Rick Poynor, 'Where Are the Design Critics?', *Design Observer*, 25 September 2005, accessed 2 August 2016.
- 13 Jessica Helfand, 'Comments' for 'Where Are the Design Critics?', Rick Poynor, *Design Observer*, 25 September 2005, <http://designobserver.com/feature/where-are-the-design-critics/3767>, accessed 2 August 2016.
- 14 Bruce Archer, quoted in Klaus Krippendorff, *The Semantic Turn: A New Foundation for Design* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2006), xiii.
- 15 Krippendorff, *The Semantic Turn*, 12.
- 16 Irit Rogoff, 'Turning', *e-flux Journal*, #00, November 2008, [www.e-flux.com/journal/turning/](http://www.e-flux.com/journal/turning/), accessed 2 August 2016.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Richard Buchanan, quoted in Rick Poynor, 'It's the End of Graphic Design as We Know It', *Eye*, vol. 18, no. 69, 2008, 76–77.
- 19 Denise Gonzales-Crisp, 'Discourse This! Designers and Alternative Critical Writing', *Design and Culture: The Journal of the Design Studies Forum* 1, no. 1 (2009): 105–120.
- 20 Markus Miessen, quoted in Brendan Cormier and Arjen Oosterman, 'From Written Word to Practiced Word: Marcus Miessen', *Archis*, Special Issue: 'Ways to be Critical', no. 36, 2013, 100.
- 21 Tara Winters, 'The Practitioner-Researcher Contribution to a Developing Criticism for Graphic Design', *Iridescent: Icograda Journal of Design Research* 2, no. 2 (2013), [www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/19235003.2012.11428506](http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/19235003.2012.11428506), accessed 22 October 2016.
- 22 Teal Triggs, 'Writing Design Criticism into History', *Design and Culture: The Journal of the Design Studies Forum* 5, no. 1 (2012): 33–38.
- 23 A full listing of students and staff involved in the project is provided in the second project publication: *Telling Tales: Revealing Histories in BT Archives* (London: London College of Communication, 2012). I continue to work periodically with David Hay, Head of Heritage, to promote the value of the archive collection for designers.
- 24 'Personality Girl' was the name given to actresses who represented the ideal consumers in BT promotional materials and advertising campaigns selling phones as fashion statements.
- 25 Teal Triggs, Brigitte Lardinois and Anna Gerber, *Seeing Voices: Inside BT Archives, Field Study 13* (London: London College of Communication, 2011), 3.

- 26 The Book Test Unit is part of the curriculum delivery for the Royal College of Art's MRes Communication Design pathway and is intended to foster collaboration between Master's students and industry partners.
- 27 This is not to diminish the non-designer writer. Design historian and writer Alice Twemlow remarks in an interview with Steven Heller for *The Atlantic*: 'But a writer who really loves design will immerse themselves in the design process and learn to approximate this natural familiarity with the various facets of form-making.' See: Steven Heller, 'Writing is Design, Too', *The Atlantic*, 26 July 2012, [www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2012/07/writing-is-design-too/260342](http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2012/07/writing-is-design-too/260342), accessed 10 September 2017.
- 28 Andrew Blauvelt, 'Towards Critical Autonomy or Can Graphic Design Save Itself?', *Emigre 64: Rant* (Sacramento and New York: Emigre and Princeton Architectural Press, 2003), 41.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 Steven Heller, 'Graphic Design Magazines: Das Plakat', first published in *U&Ic*, vol. 25, no. 4, Spring 1999, and reprinted in *Typotheque*, [www.typosheque.com/articles/graphic\\_design\\_magazines\\_das\\_plakat%20](http://www.typosheque.com/articles/graphic_design_magazines_das_plakat%20), accessed 22 October 2016.
- 31 *Typos* was intended to be produced three times per year, edited by Frederick Lambert and produced by design and printing students and staff at The London College of Printing. Only six issues were published, although an advertisement for a subscription to issues 7, 8, 9 appears in one later issue to suggest an ongoing commitment for the project from the College. A previous iteration of *Typos* was published by The London School of Printing and Graphic Arts in the 1960s, edited by G. R. Garland with Tom Eckersley as art director.
- 32 Jessica Barness (Kent State University) and Amy Papaelias (State University of New York at New Paltz) were guest editors of the themed issue: 'Critical Making: Design and the Digital Humanities', *Visible Language* 49, no. 3 (December 2015).
- 33 Armin Vit, 'An Interview with Armin Vit: December 2003', *Emigre 66: Nudging Graphic Design* (Sacramento and New York: Emigre and Princeton Architectural Press, 2004), 7.
- 34 This is a point not lost on design writer Alice Twemlow, who dedicates a chapter to the debate and the role *Speak Up* has played in design criticism in her book *Sifting the Trash*. See: Alice Twemlow, *Sifting the Trash: A History of Design Criticism* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2017), 250.
- 35 See: Rick Poynor, 'The Closed Shop of Design Academia', *Design Observer*, 13 April 2012, <http://designobserver.com/feature/the-closed-shop-of-design-academia/33658>, accessed 4 September 2017; and Matt Soar, 'Rick Poynor on Design Academics: Having His Cake and Eating It Too', personal blog, 13 April 2012, [www.mattsoar.com/2012/04/19/rick-poynor/](http://www.mattsoar.com/2012/04/19/rick-poynor/), accessed 10 September 2017. Radio, on the other hand, provided popular platforms for graphic design. For example, Adrian Shaughnessy presented the programme 'Graphic Design on the Radio' (2007–2011) for London's Resonance radio station, in an hour of interviews and music from graphic design's luminaries. In the US, Debbie Millman's podcast *Design Matters* (2005–present) equally showcased 'luminaries of contemporary thought' from a broad range of cultural practices. And, more recently, Jarrett Fuller's podcast *Scratching the Surface* (2016–present) with notable designers and educators addresses the intersection of criticism and practice.
- 36 Gonzales-Crisp, 'Discourse This!', 106.
- 37 James Langdon, on the other hand, argues that his definition of design fiction is 'not primarily about the impossible, or the futuristic, but about the multiplicity of possibilities in any ordinary decision making process'. Here there is an emphasis on the 'imaginary'. James Langdon, in James Langdon and Francisco Laranjo, 'A School for Design Fiction: Interview', *Modes of Criticism 1: The Post Critical*, 2015, 80.
- 38 Kenneth Fitzgerald, 'Fuck All', *Modes of Criticism 1: The Post Critical*, 2015, 88.
- 39 Rock and Poynor, 'What is this thing...?', 56.
- 40 *Zed*'s format reflected contemporary debates on technology and publishing by including in the printed version of the journal a CD-ROM, components that Salen proposed 'were designed to be read as a single conversation'. Katie Salen, 'Editor's Note', *Zed 1: The Politics of Design*, 1994, 6.
- 41 Katie Salen, 'Introduction', *Zed 1: The Politics of Design*, 1994, 11.
- 42 Maryisa Lewandowska, 'Intellectual Property', in *Zed 7: Public and Private*, edited by Teal Triggs and Siân Cook, 2000, 18–19.
- 43 *That New Design Smell* issue 0 was edited by Michèle Champagne, with web concept and design by Lennart Bruger and contributions from Daniel van der Velden, Gert Dumbar, Cedric Flazinski, Anja Groten, Femke Herregraven and Jason Mortlock.
- 44 Michèle Champagne, 'About', *That New Design Smell* website, 2011, <http://thatnewdesignsmell.net/all-about-page/>, accessed 7 August 2016.
- 45 Modes of Criticism, 'Interview: That New Design Smell | Modes of Criticism', *Modes of Criticism* website, 26 October 2012, <http://modesofcriticism.org/that-new-design-smell/>.

- 46 'The Politics of Aesthetics: What does it mean to design? Interview with Daniel van der Velden/Metahaven', *That New Design Smell*, issue0,2010,<http://thatnewdesignsmell.net/daniel-van-der-velden-explains-himself/>, accessed 14 April 2019.
- 47 Ibid.
- 48 Irit Rogoff, 'Turning'.
- 49 Here, I declare my interests as Director of Studies for Laranjo's PhD, titled 'Design as Criticism: Methods for a Critical Graphic Design Practice' (2016), awarded by the London College of Communication, University of the Arts London.
- 50 Francisco Laranjo, 'Design as Criticism: Methods for a Critical Graphic Design Practice' (PhD diss., London College of Communication, University of the Arts London, 2016), 5.
- 51 Anne Bush, 'Double Vision: Graphic Design Criticism and the Question of Authority', *Modes of Criticism 2: Critique of Method*, 2016, 15.
- 52 Noel Waite, 'Learning Design Histories for Design Futures: Speculative Histories and Reflective Practice', *Modes of Criticism 2: Critique of Method*, 2016, 52.
- 53 Tony Fry, *Design Futuring: Sustainability, Ethics and New Practice* (London: Berg Publishers, 2008).
- 54 Tony Fry, cited in Waite, 'Learning Design Histories', 52.
- 55 Langdon and Laranjo, 'A School for Design Fiction', 79.
- 56 Matt Kiem, quoted in 'Design Activism: A Conversation by The Decolonising Group', *Modes of Criticism 3: Design and Democracy*, 2017, 62.
- 57 *Modes of Criticism 4: Radical Pedagogy*, edited by Francisco Laranjo (Eindhoven: Onomatopée, 2019).
- 58 *Modes of Criticism*, 'Interview'.
- 59 Ibid.
- 60 Joani Spadaro, 'Letter to the Editor: Output Explained', *Eye*, vol. 3, no. 10, Autumn 1993, 3.
- 61 Teal Triggs, 'Letter to the Editor: Need to Experiment', *Eye*, vol. 3, no. 10, Autumn 1993, 4.
- 62 Steven Heller, 'Cult of the Ugly', *Eye*, vol. 3, no. 9, 1993, 52–59.
- 63 Blauvelt, 'Towards Critical Autonomy', 41.

***One and many mirrors:  
perspectives on graphic design education***

**Edited by Luke Wood and Brad Haylock**

**With contributions by Paul Bailey, Stuart Bertolotti-Bailey, Sheila Levrant de Bretteville, Richard Buchanan, Vincent Chan, Tony Credland, Europa, Katie Evans, Matthew Galloway, Rob Giampietro, Corin Gisel, Ricardo Gonçalves, Lisa Grocott, Brad Haylock, Constanze Hein, Richard Hollis, Na Kim, James Langdon, Lu Liang, Ellen Lupton, Gabriela Matuszyk, Fraser Muggeridge, Paul Mylecharane, Nina Paim, Megan Patty, Radim Peško, Joe Potts, Bryony Quinn, Carlos Romo-Melgar, Naomi Strinati, Jon Sueda, Lucille Tenazas, Teal Triggs, Michael Twyman, Jonty Valentine, Laurene Vaughan, Noel Waite, Luke Wood, Jia Xiao, Bonne Zabolotney and Roxy Zeiher**

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The cover image by Rida Abbasi, one of a series of three printed variations, is a contemporary take on an elementary composition exercise of the type commonly associated with Johannes Itten's Basic Course at the Bauhaus, here executed algorithmically using Processing. Generative processes that take a human input to create a variety of outputs are becoming increasingly enmeshed in graphic design practice. Using systems that require the designer to relinquish control, they can reveal genuinely novel, surprising and self-renewing outcomes and compositions.