

insight<out

design studies research newsletter

In the last issue of this newsletter I examined the history of the Design Studies Department and its unique position as an interdisciplinary programme within the Science Division of the University of Otago, and Richard Buchanan discussed how Design Studies was understood at Carnegie Mellon. Both reflected significant shifts in design theory and practice away from its origins in art schools in the 19th century.

This issue is very much situated in the present and provides an opportunity to reflect on the relationship between research and teaching. In a quantitative sense, it could be said that research output was down this year in comparison to previous years. However, when one considers that we can now look back on the implementation of a major curriculum redesign that entailed three years of planning and implementation, a temporary dip in research is hopefully understandable.


Of perhaps more significance is that such a redesign could not have been undertaken without the application of the latest design research. Curriculum design represents research-informed teaching at its most fundamental level. This framework for learning must not only take account of contemporary practices and understandings of design, but also consider the trajectory of current theoretical discourse. We believe our curriculum does that, and even though it cannot be submitted for PBRF, it meets the university objective of research-informed teaching.

Noel Waite, Editor

volume three 2007

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a 20-minute read 



The culture of design

Noel Waite



The National Grid 1 (2006)
Editors: Luke Wood & Jonty Valentine

The acceptance of former colleague Stuart Medley's poster design for Rotovision's prestigious *Grids, Creative Solutions for Graphic Designers* this year was both well deserved and a refreshing reminder that history can be both productive and creative. The poster, 'Three Designers Speak', was used to promote a typography symposium I convened on the past, present and future of typography in 2005 that was supported by the New Zealand Print Culture research theme and the Designers Institute of New Zealand. The three speakers had all made significant contributions to New Zealand graphic design, and the Anzac spirit of Stuart's collaboration perfectly complemented and communicated the symposium's over-arching theme of the changing role and function of typography.

When one of the speakers, Luke Wood, contacted me from Canterbury University later that year seeking support for a New Zealand graphic design journal, I was equally enthusiastic about the need for a critical forum for graphic design discourse in New Zealand. With Auckland-based co-editor Jonty Valentine, Luke launched *The National Grid* in 2006. The ironic cover design of its 1st issue featured the raw functionalism of a New Zealand hydro-electric dam beneath the international style of Helvetica. The graphic assertion of a nationalised, pre-deregulation electricity service and a typeface that has been described as "the monolithic McDonalds of graphic design" in a recent, surprisingly popular documentary wittily communicated the pro-

vocative spirit of this new journal that seeks to give independent critical attention to indigenous graphic design.

My own contribution to this first issue was an article establishing a case for a history of communication design in New Zealand in light of recent scholarly efforts to establish a global design history ('The Lay of the Case: Putting New Zealand Communication Design on the Map'). My contribution to the 4th issue in 2007 consisted of a paper originally written for 'The Seventies in New Zealand: A Decade of Change' conference at Te Papa in 2004. It concerned the postmodern private press of poet Alan Loney, but was revised to focus more explicitly on the design of his books rather than the social history focus of the initiating conference. However, after discussion with Luke about the necessity for additional reproductions of Loney's book designs, I decided to research the designs again and re-write the article. This involved re-photographing all the books referred to in the article and allowing them, in Donald Schon's terms, to talk back. This type of graphic research ensured that the images did not simply illustrate the text, but actively shaped the narrative and were integral to it. This also involved collaboration with Luke in both his roles as designer and editor. In Stephen Scrivener's terms, my research can primarily be characterized as research into design, but by researching through design in this way, I hope my research has applied value for designers.

It should be noted that by editorial decision, *The National Grid* is not peer reviewed. While the value of international peer review to develop the discipline of design is indisputable, journals like *The National Grid* are vital in encouraging a vibrant New Zealand design culture. This was confirmed for me by an animated email from an ex-student designing in Wellington who had bought and enthusiastically read the 1st issue, but, as I hope this narrative makes clear, a culture of design does not appear on demand—either by business, governments or academics—but requires time, commitment and a community of interest, and may have unexpected results.

abstracts

Mick Abbott

Wild Cartographies: Investigating a phenomenological mapping of wilderness landscapes

in *Negotiating Landscapes: Proceedings of Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture, Penn State August 14-19 2007*, 81-94.

This study argues that both cultural perceptions of wilderness and management approaches to wilderness are heavily influenced by the agency of topographic cartography. It compares different conceptualizations of wilderness from early and recent cartography of Aotearoa New Zealand's Southern Fiordland. It finds that certain cartographic tropes privilege the construction of the contemporary wilderness idea as unspoilt, remote, contained, threatened and culturally empty at the expense of other qualities including participation and performance.

It then explores alternative cartographic representations of wilderness with a particular emphasis on a phenomenological engagement of landscape. Instead of tracing a route followed onto a uniform spatial scale the reverse is attempted. Intervals of time taken along a route are described according to a fixed scale made up of days and hours rather than miles and yards. Then a topographic representation is subsequently morphed to match these varying rates of travel. The resulting cartographic representation, particularly as subsequent journeys are overlaid, suggests a temporal dimension that is as folded, refolded and contorted as the physically undulating terrain upon which such journeys are made.

Corner (1999a, 156) critiques wild landscapes as 'nothing more than an empty sign, a dead event.' The paper concludes that a richer cartography of such landscapes may open up, through a broader engagement of its eidetic and temporal qualities, wilderness' strategic and creative potential as a landscape able to be formulated, not through picturesque aesthetics, but instead through multiple and iterative practices of engagement.

Tracey Gardner

Designing Māori Futures Hui

Arumoana marae, Rotorua

The initiation of this event had developed out of two strategies, Te Awatoru Growth and Innovation project and Te Aranga Māori Cultural Landscapes strategy. This hui presented an opportunity to create inter-disciplinary collaboration (that includes perspectives from iwi, hapu, whānau) and innovation, through the establishment of a formalised Māori designers network. Tracey Gardner, Karl Wixon and Emma Kitson were nominated to define the objectives of the society.

The network functions as a society which advocates and facilitates design knowledge and capability for members, government agency, iwi/hāpu/whānau, Māori community

and the wider Māori population. The aim is for this entity to become industry recognised and have a similar status to organisations like DINZ and NZIA. Another function of the society is to provide mentorship for Māori students or recent Māori design graduates who are seeking to connect with their iwi/hāpu/whānau. The society also aspires to develop a mentorship programme that provides and builds confidence and skills among students, with the aim to have better skilled, knowledgeable and able designers in the area of Māori design. Essentially the society seeks to provide a collective consciousness that reflects Māori aspiration and development.

Mark McGuire and Rochelle Simmons

Using Multimedia Technology to Teach Literature

in *Technology in the College Classroom: Humanities* Girod, M. and Steed, J. P. p. 71-88. ISBN 13: 978-1-581071

This essay discusses the production of multimedia presentations designed to support the teaching of literature in the classroom. As an example, the authors describe a CD-ROM that they created in response to Michael Ondaatje's *In the Skin of a Lion* (1987). Interactive multimedia technology is particularly well-suited to examining any written text that is informed by a detailed knowledge of the visual, since it is possible to incorporate several kinds of verbal and visual media. This essay suggests some ways of employing narrative strategies sympathetic to those used in literature, by enlisting a variety of verbal and visual methods that derive from and draw upon a range of disciplinary approaches.

Mark McGuire

Virtual Communities and Podcasting

At the 7th International Digital Arts and Culture Conference, Perth. ISBN 1 74067 537 1

This paper examines the podcasting phenomenon within the context of other efforts to utilize the Internet as a space for social communication. Jürgen Habermas has suggested that the 'public sphere,' has been transformed into a 'sphere of culture consumption,' and a similar transformation can be seen in electronic space. Early attempts to construct virtual communities to support open communication have led to private, commercial sites that serve business objectives. In the case of podcasting, amateur, volunteer efforts are overshadowed by professional, corporate content. In the privatized environment of the Internet, efforts to engage in open, public communication will continue to be limited as businesses develop new strategies to ensure that the digital domain supports consumption, rather than social communication.

World Wide Soundscapes

At the Computers in Art and Design Education Conference, Perth. ISBN 1 74067 530 4.

This paper examines the podcasting phenomenon as a “bubble” of communication space that has emerged in the electronic domain, allowing individuals to share local, varied, information-rich soundscapes. In *The Tuning of the World* (1977), Schafer describes noise as ‘sounds we have learned to ignore,’ and he proposes the soundwalk as an exercise designed to increase our sensitivity to local sounds and our appreciation of the soundscape. Using examples that include The Soundscape Collection, Modulation, and The Ear Shots Collective podcast, this paper shows how podcasts can serve as electronic soundscapes, providing listeners with an intimate sense of another place through the medium of sound. An individual’s composition of downloads fits Barry Truax’s description of unique, ‘hi-fi soundscapes’ that are ‘richly interpreted by locals who understand their contextual meanings’ (2000). Although podcasting developed out of a desire for individuals to share personal, local sounds, the practice is threatened by what Todd Gitlin describes as ‘the torrent of images and sounds’ from the mass media that ‘overwhelms our lives’ (2001).

Community and Consumption: The Transformation of Social Space Online

in *The Networked Citizen: New Contributions to the Digital Humanities*.

<http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/epc/chwp/CHC2005/>

The widespread use of networked communication technologies has led to the creation of electronic social spaces that challenge traditional ideas about community, citizenship and the public sphere. This paper argues that, following the commercialization of the Internet in the mid-1990s, the networked citizen and the virtual communities in which they interact, have been subverted and redefined by corporate interests in ways that reduce the possibility a public sphere emerging in cyberspace. By comparing the planned communities in Irvine, California with graphically intensive, immersive 3D virtual communities (ActiveWorlds Cybertown, and HabboHotel). this paper examines how ideas of what constitutes “community” have changed as a result of new communications technologies. The paper also reviews early efforts to construct communities online, and highlights how business texts re-conceptualize online social forums as ‘communities of commerce.’ The paper concludes with an examination of how Amazon.com utilizes the language and images associated with community and citizenship to create a site that encourages consumption through focused and controlled interactions.

Wichai Pattanapol

Modelling of surface roughness for flow over a complex vegetated surface

International Conference on Applied Science, Engineering and Technology, Bangkok, Thailand.

Turbulence modelling of large-scale flow over a vegetated surface is complex. Such problems involve large scale computational domains, while the characteristics of flow near the surface are also involved. In modelling large scale flow, surface roughness including vegetation is generally taken into account by mean of roughness parameters in the modified

law of the wall. However, the turbulence structure within the canopy region cannot be captured with this method, another method which applies source/sink terms to model plant drag can be used. These models have been developed and tested intensively but with a simple surface geometry. This paper aims to compare the use of roughness parameter, and additional source/sink terms in modelling the effect of plant drag on wind flow over a complex vegetated surface. The RNG κ - ϵ turbulence model with the non-equilibrium wall function was tested with both cases. In addition, the κ - ω turbulence model, which is claimed to be computationally stable, was also investigated with the source/sink terms. All numerical results were compared to the experimental results obtained at the study site Mason Bay, Stewart Island, New Zealand. In the near-surface region, it is found that the results obtained by using the source/sink term are more accurate than those using roughness parameters. The κ - ω turbulence model with source/sink term is more appropriate as it is more accurate and more computationally stable than the RNG κ - ϵ turbulence model. At higher regions, there is no significant difference amongst the results obtained from all simulations

Noel Waite

Perverting the Press: Alan Loney's Paradoxical Postmodern Private

The National Grid 4 (2007) 83-95. ISSN 1177-2468

This article examines the history of New Zealand poet Alan Loney’s book design. Loney’s adoption of craft principles in the face of an increasingly industrialised printing and publishing industry enabled him to re-assert control of his creative output and those of a number of writers and artists working at the boundaries of their respective fields. He brought this careful craft ethos to bear in his typography, effecting subtleties and shifts in language. His paradoxical postmodern private press proved to be a critical act in extending the discussion of poetics and design, increasing the receptiveness to influence and breaking down divisions between the visual and the verbal.

distinguished guests

Climate Change—an update to August 2007

Tim Flannery

Tuesday August 7, 2007

Tim Flannery is a distinguished academic and author on cultural ecology and climate change. He is author of over 100 peer-reviewed papers, and also the widely-acclaimed books *The Weathermakers* and *The Future Eaters*. He is the 2007 Australian of the Year, has been the visiting Professor of Australian Studies at Harvard, and has recently been appointed a Chair at Macquarie University, Sydney. Sir David Attenborough considers Tim one of the world's great explorers and the writer Redmond O'Hanlon remarked, "He's discovered more new species than Charles Darwin."

Tim presented the Patricia Coleman Lecture and ran a research workshop for researchers and postgraduates. He argued that information design's primary concern should be to create a better understanding between people, but this is complicated by the competing goals, behaviours, perceptions and experience of the actors involved. Achieving clarity of communication means designers must have regard to context, globalised visual languages that accommodate diversity, strategy and ethical responsibility.



Constructing Japan

Tom Heneghan

Thursday, October 4, 2007

Tom Heneghan was a Professor at Kogakuin University in Tokyo until 2001, when he was appointed Chair Professor of Architecture at the University of Sydney, Australia. He is currently completing a large area of suburban housing in Beijing, China. Since 1976, he has won 27 architectural awards in Europe and Japan. His architectural works have been published and exhibited internationally, with projects included in the Japanese pavilion at the 1996 Milan Triennale, and in the 'Totalscape' exhibition of Japanese architecture at the Netherlands Architecture Institute, Rotterdam, in 2000. His works have been of all types and scales, from museums to bridges to a conceptual masterplanning proposal for Japan's future new capital city.

His lecture was given on World Architecture Day, with support from the NZIA, and documents his 12-year period of practice in Japan where he founded 'The Architecture Factory.' After completing his Kumamoto buildings Heneghan was awarded the 'Gakkai Shoh' – the most prestigious award of the Architectural Institute of Japan.



completed theses

Mark Fahey

'Assessment of the suitability of CFD for product design by analysing complex flows around a domestic oven'

PhD, Design Studies, 2007

Competitive global markets are increasing the commercial pressure on manufacturing companies to develop better products in less time. To meet these demands, the appliance manufacturer, Fisher & Paykel, has considered the use of computer simulation of fluid flows to assist in product design. This technology, known as Computational Fluid Dynamics (CFD), has the potential to provide rewarding insight into the behaviour of designs involving fluids. However, the investment in CFD is not without risk. This thesis investigates the use of CFD in oven design expressly to evaluate the numerical accuracy and suitability of CFD in the context of oven product development.

CFD was applied to four cases related to oven design, along with detailed experimental investigations, and resulted in a number of relevant findings. In a study of an impinging jet, the SST turbulence model was found to produce better results than the κ - ϵ turbulence model. Measurements indicated that the flow was unsteady, but CFD struggled to reproduce this behaviour. The synergy between experimental and numerical techniques was highlighted in the simulation of a two-pane oven door, and resulted in temperatures on outer surface of the door predicted by CFD to within 2% of measured values. In the third study, a CFD simulation of a tangential fan failed to deliver acceptable steady-state results, however a transient simulation showed promise. The final case examined the flows through the door and cooling circuit of the Titan oven. Velocities predicted by CFD compared well against measurements in some regions, such as the potential core of the jet at the outlet vent, but other regions, such as entrained air, were poor. Temperatures were predicted to within an average of 2% of measured values.

limited by the abilities of the user. Incompatibilities between CFD and the product development process can reduce the potential value of CFD but the effects can be minimised by appropriate management action. The benefits of CFD are therefore found to be sufficient to merit its use in the product development process, provided its integration into the organisation is managed effectively and the tool is used with discernment. Recommendations for achieving this are provided.

Alice Lake-Hammond

'Interpretive Design: An exploration of exhibition design through theory and reflective practice'
MCApSc, Design Studies, 2007

This thesis examines the emergence of a recognised exhibition design profession in the latter half of the twentieth century. Specifically, it charts the evolution of the role of the exhibition designer – from technical servant to active participant in the exhibition process – through a combined research approach of theory and reflective practice. This approach affords insight into exhibition design, which would be unobtainable through one method alone. It also acknowledges the continued contribution that practitioners make to the fields of museology and design, demonstrating the value of reflective practice research to both Museum and Design Studies programmes.

An investigation of museological literature, focusing on past and present exhibition design practice and practitioners, provided a context for both my previous exhibition design experiences and my role as exhibition designer on the Savage Crescent exhibition for Te Manawa Museum. Here, I collaborated with an external curator and the Museum staff to design an exhibition communicating the social and design history of the Savage Crescent community in Palmerston North (2005-06). This design research combination of reflective practice and existing metatheories, has allowed me to draw conclusions on the exhibition designer's responsibilities. Working in collaboration with other museum professionals, the exhibition designer explores the fundamental exhibition constituents of space, content and audience in combination with the interpretive design considerations of concept, con-

6 insight<out It is found that limited accuracy does not necessarily prevent CFD from delivering engineering value to the product development process. The engineering value delivered by CFD is instead more likely to be

text and narrative, to develop more audience-centred and interpretive exhibition experiences. The designer bridges the gap between the expert knowledge of the curator and the exhibition audience, forming a communicative link between the exhibition information and its audience and enhancing the visitor's interpretive learning experience.

This thesis explicitly acknowledges the design process as a site of research and has been designed to make my findings accessible to both theorists and practitioners interested in the field of exhibition design. So they in turn can be interpreted and reflected upon, in support of the continually evolving discipline of design.

Paul Le Comte

'Towards a new media enabled weather environment: design considerations for a user driven online weather service'
MCApSc, 2006

Evidence suggests that current media is not meeting the weather information needs of users. Although accessing greater amounts and types of weather information, via increasingly diverse and technologically advanced devices, the needs of individual users are not being met. This thesis provides the historical, theoretical and technological framework for the development of a weather information service that will better meet the needs of users. Through the development of a prototype Web service, the needs of users began to emerge. This enabled the evaluation of future technologies to establish which of these might assist in the development of a ubiquitous weather information environment, which would mark a shift in information communication paradigms. This thesis argues the case for a contextually aware, asymmetrical information environment, that may better meet users needs. This thesis concludes with three future scenarios of a ubiquitous weather environment, which are informed by the history, theory and the case study discussed in the thesis.

Monika Mazurek-Finch

'Exploration of the relationship between packaging graphic design and fine art'
MCApSc, 2007

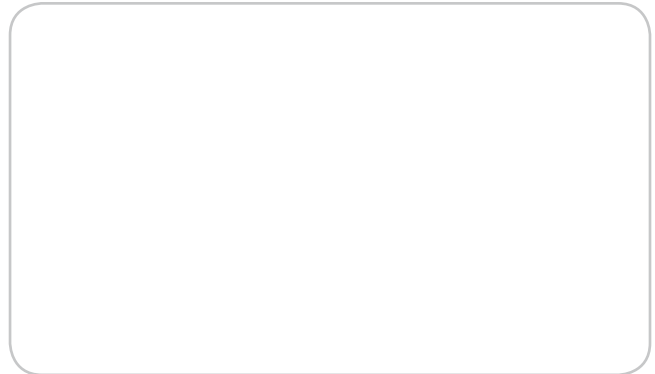
This research project uses three research methods to test perceptions and understandings about the relationship between Packaging, Graphic Design and Fine Arts. A literature review, packaging review and survey involving professionals of Packaging Graphic Design and Fine Art industries and the recipients of packaging images and art pieces were conducted. All parts of the research indicated that the relationship between Packaging Graphic Design and Fine Art is complex and multidimensional, however they also indicated that the perceptions of this relationship vary.

The literature and packaging review provided substantial evidence of this relationship whilst the survey results indicated that regardless of the professional knowledge or involvement in Packaging Graphic Design and Fine Art most people perceive packaging images as the consumers. The survey also revealed that Packaging Graphic Design and Fine Art professionals highly value the independence of their disciplines.

The research shows that there is a scope for further study, particularly into the perceptions' of Packaging Graphic Design and Fine Art professionals with regards to PGD images and the independence of their professions.

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