Narrative Trails in Academic Writing
REJECTING WRITING:
the case against requiring writing in Higher Education art & design

Professor Susan Orr
• We do not need writing assignments to credentialise art and design degrees

• It is an over-simplification to say that all graduates need the same graduate attributes

• Art practice can be academic: it does not need an accompanying traditional essay to explain it or make it academic

• In traditional universities knowledge is in the word. We need to contest this. Knowledge can be the art, the artefact can communicate knowledge
• Research, criticality, reflexivity and understanding can be demonstrated in the artwork

• Growth of practice based PhDs with minimal written requirements offer evidence of this

• Art and design education has created an unhelpful binary of theory and practice (textwork and artwork) – this consigns artwork to being seen as practical - not academic. Dumbing down art

• Art and design written requirements/ conventions borrow from other disciplines. These genres are often not suited to art and design context

Professor Susan Orr
WHY WE NEED WRITING
in art and design education

Dr Margo Blythman
• The status reason
We are part of the wider higher education system and this is not going to change. Institutions are getting larger not smaller under global financial pressures. In the UK at least, most art and design education will stay within general universities. Specialist art and design universities want to keep recognition as universities. The written word is highly valued in the academic world.

• The curriculum reason
Modes of writing that are acceptable are becoming more fluid – blogs; reflective writing; commentaries on artifacts and processes; professional writing such as business plans and grant proposals – we are no longer tied into the traditional essay and dissertation.
• The intellectual ability reason
Art and design students need to have a sound grasp of the history and philosophy of their field. They need to be able to enter the world of theory. This world is largely represented through the written word.

• The student need reason
The world is still dominated by literacy. Students need to be able to present, argue their case, write grant proposals and this is largely done through the word and often the written word.

Dr Margo Blythman
• The we can do it reason

In recent years we have developed all kinds of ways of helping students improve in their use of the written word. Research has shown good pedagogic routes for teaching art and design students to write. There have been significant improvements in how we support dyslexic students.

Dr Margo Blythman
11th ELIA Biennial Conference
Oslo National Academy Of The Arts
Associate Professor &
Head of MA Design

Maziar Raein
Narrative Trails in Academic Writing
Narrative Trails in Academic Writing

Robust is close too...
Me!
Me!

I am a designer…
Me!

I am a designer… who is interested in
Me!

I am a designer… who is interested in ideas
Me!

I am a designer... who is interested in ideas thought
Me!

I am a designer... who is interested in ideas thought writing
Me!

I am a designer… who is interested in ideas thought writing and the way our society functions!
Oslo National Academy Of The Arts

Maziar Raein
Oslo National Academy Of The Arts

Maziar Raein

MARCUS AU RELIUS. MEDITATIONS. A LITTLE FLESH, A LITTLE BREATHE, AND A REASON TO RULE AL - THAT IS MYSELF. PENGUIN BOOKS. GREAT IDEAS.

V&A


TYPOGRAPHY
Writing

Writing Purposefully in Art & Design

Oslo National Academy Of The Arts

Maziar Raein
Writing

Writing Purposefully in Art & Design

The Higher Education Funding Council for England
Fund for the Development of Teaching & Learning (phase 4)
Initially funded for 3 years and extended into 4 years
Writing Purposefully in Art & Design

A consortium of three colleges
Goldsmith’s College, University of London
Royal College of Art
Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design, University of Arts London
Writing

Writing Purposefully in Art & Design

The aim was to work with 18 colleges throughout the UK and identify, elaborate and distribute examples of good practice in purposeful writing.

By the end of the 4 years, we had worked with over 25 colleges and…
Writing Purposefully in Art & Design

Presently it is a self funded project, with close to 100 colleges involved internationally
Writing Purposefully in Art & Design

We looked at the questions such as:

Why do art & design students do not write?
Writing Purposefully in Art & Design

We looked at the questions such as:

Why do art & design students do not write?

We discovered that they were interested in writing – but not in academic writing.
Writing Purposefully in Art & Design

A metaphor we developed was... imagine going to study economics...
A survey of practices that challenged boundaries of art & design

Our findings were that in order to accommodate for the broad range practices there need to be a range of writing models.
Writing Purposefully in Art & Design

There was a split between art & design writing modes

Designers had a broader range of writing styles that reflected methodology, synergy, collaborative and ethical debates

While artists had a strong reflective practice with core historic and developmental grasp
Christopher Frayling (Herbert Read)

- into art and design, research: art history
- through art and design and research: the vehicle of
- for art and design: product & artefact
Meta

Meta design – MA Design Futures

- writing into art and design
- writing through art and design
- writing for art and design
Meta design – MA Design Futures

- nominated reader / user / client
- writing as a researcher / manager / enabler
- writing in order to develop synergies / insights / mapping etc.
Context

Context – Central Saint Martins

- writing design
- contextual integration of reflection and experience
- process as a form of reflection etc.
The effect of lettering in the Japanese comic

Thus, for the intelligible visual media communications of text and graphics, let us then consider the Japanese comics. This media form is a notable example of the intermedial combination of lettering and illustration. In Japan today, for all though the comic is regarded as a medium for kids or some other adults in the west and even other countries, on Japan, it is an established publishing market, which targets all generations for example, at the peak of comic sales in Japan, 1.346 billion comic magazines were sold in a year.

According to Professor Chiharu Yone, Japan’s best selling market has intensified on ideas of selected comics in this culture of exploiting the visual medium to produce works of non-narrative physical performance (Yone, “Text makes a comeback: The power of words”).

The distinctive feature of the comic is its combinations of text and graphics, which creates an
This year online
shopping is expected
to exceed the
populisation of the internet.
It is expected that online
shopping will become
part of the
trend.
MA Design – Oslo National Academy of the Arts

Myself & Dr. Theo Barth

Teaching team
Models of teaching – Models of Practice – developed with my colleague Theo Barth
Rigour

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Prof. John Wood, Goldsmiths College, University of London
Culture of Academic Rigour (1999)
late 14c., from O.Fr. rigor (13c.), from L. rigorem (nom. rigor) "numbness, stiffness, rigor," from rigere "be stiff" (see rigid).
1540s, from L. robustus "strong and hardy," originally "oaken," from robur, robus "hard timber, strength," also "a special kind of oak," named for its reddish heartwood, from L. ruber "red" (cf. robigo "rust"). Robustious (1540s) was a common form in 17c. (cf. "Hamlet" iii.2); it fell from use by mid-18c., but was somewhat revived by mid-19c. antiquarian writers.
R vs R

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Rigour
- Perfection
- Consistency
- Comprehensiveness
- Unsituatedness
- Linearity
- Objectivity
- Explicitness
- Scepticism

Robust
- Developmental
- Fluid
- Particular / Limited
- Space & Time Specific
- Multi-directional
- Partial / Subjective
- Implicit
- Realistic Optimism
Designers ought to be realistic optimists

Designers are interested in how things ‘may be’ …

Designers may aim to change in ‘micro-utopic’ situations
Fin!

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Oslo National Academy of the Arts
MA Design Programme