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## ITERATE AND POSITION (CONTINUED)

Δ2: Week 3 & 4

a) Review your first triangulate project. Is there a gap to bridge? A different or opposing viewpoint to explore? A shift in context, medium, or format?

(b) Review your existing writing. Have new insights been generated that could be brought into the written work? Could the second triangulate project explore a structural or formal approach to writing that would start to link it better to the studio practice?

<https://panagiantreasunit2.myblog.arts.ac.uk/2021/10/18/week3/>

The things that surround us differ based on the way we approach them. It is fascinating how the meaning of something changes if we perceive it from a different perspective. This idea changed how I observe things I come across while I am walking outside, challenging me to research more about it and find ways to extend it through my position as a graphic communication designer. Walking is the time when I think and discover things and spots; An urban exploratory journey.

My practice focuses on extracting data/information from photographs captured in my urban surroundings in order to create diagrams, thus stories. Under graphic communication design terms, my enquiry is shaped as:

**Using diagramming as a graphic communication tool/method to generate stories through the analysis of photographs captured in the urban environment.**

**Walking, observing, and analysing.**

My aim is to observe and record things that catch my eye while I am walking. These can be objects, labels, stickers, etc. I do not want to have something specific in my mind, being as open as possible to new perceptions; **Letting the environment around me make the decisions for me.** The *Theory of the Derive* by Guy Debord has a similar approach and purpose. Involving an awareness of psychogeographical effects, the participants are invited to let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the land/environment and what they find while they are walking. They do not have a motif in mind, they are just experiencing the city open to new perceptions; Letting the surroundings absorb them (1958, pp. 62-66). Even if they have been to a specific area thousands of times before, they must never reflect on their past experiences.

What this theory made me realise, is that the environment we live in, the things we see while we are walking to work, for example, can offer us much more if we see them with another pair of eyes. This is how I started observing things around me. The stickers on the wall aim to send a message; A concern. The textures of the trees or the wall also mean something. Even the trash in the middle of the road represents a previous act. The interesting part is that such things, when analysed and put together can be the stimulus of generating new stories. Stories that, in my case, will occur through diagramming. Besides this, unintentionally my own perception and thoughts are recorded in the project as well, as I am the one who decides how and what things I will study. This gives a more personal approach to the research.

**I have always been a collector of moments.**

**I remember myself always capturing things that I notice around me. Things that catch my eye or hide something behind them; A deeper meaning. I guess this is my method of recording things and memories; Coming back another time of the day to think about it more and search for answers.**

**I feel that during my everyday walks here in London, this simple act became something more important. A creative act of walking, described by a series of questions coming up in my mind. Why is this placed here? What message this sticker wants to send? What meaning and purpose this has? I strongly believe that most of the things we come across in our everyday life have a deeper message to send that is worth exploring.**

**This collection becomes now an archive. An archive of concerns, observations, and ideas. Even if the answers I give to myself are not accurate, it is enough for me that I have formed a new story; justifying things in my brain.**

**October 21**

**Arlington Way, 17:24**

The weather is really good. I can feel the sweet breeze dancing in my hair, drawing on my face. I can notice something at the end of the road, but I can barely see it. I keep walking down Goswell road and the streets seem to be really crowded. Horns, tires scratching the asphalt, people shouting. I guess this is London on a busy time on a normal weekday. I can almost feel that this keeps me active. It somehow makes my brain work differently; Never stop thinking. There are times though that I feel lost in the urban and what surrounds me; Wondering about the existence of everything.

I am standing in front of some random letters on the pavement, written using different colours of spray. Wait, probably they are not so random. Looks like a construction team was working here.

I am wondering, what these letters mean and what their locations try to say?

I can see that letter “G” stands for gas, this is written clearly. The other two letters are the “P” and “R”. What do these mean? It could be something similar to gas, or something extremely opposite.

All 10 letters have a horizontal line on top of them as well as an arrow next to the word gas, showing an old plastic pipe attached to the wall. They should somehow represent what is going on under the pavement; How the gas is transmitted.

“P” could stand for power, that would make sense. But I cannot really find a word for the letter “R”. I will use the word radiation.

How could the missing points be connected? This can tell a story. And if the words that represent the letters were not these, the story would be something else.

The gas passes through the pipe, transmitting energy and power to something (probably to the house), creating a form of waves that represent an act of radiation. However the number each letter is written can represent something as well.

“Nevermind, this reminds me of one’s need for food in order to gain power/energy and be able to live.”  
“Our radiance is our power.”

Data and information are most of the time not clearly seen in an image. However, they are there, hidden or connected to it. Consequently, the image is used as the base, the starting point from which new information and spaces can occur through the diagrams I will later create. A background to build on the rest of my research. This is also why the diagramming method I am developing is not the traditional way of data representation. It is characterized by an illustrative approach in combination with information analysis and narration. A mixture of images, diagrams/illustrations, and text.

Worth mentioning is that some photographs cannot be translated into data, they all have context though. This is where the use of a diagram introduces a technical component (a series of parameters). I came across such parameters through my practice and experiments that are worth questioning. My area of research focuses more on qualitative data (quality) and not so much on quantity and numbers. This means that the research involves collecting and analysing non-numerical data, such as images, to understand concepts or experiences. The most common way to analyse something visual is to first translate it into text (Gibbs, 2018). This will help in gaining information or creating new information about something noticed in the street.

However, the question that arises here is what kind of image or information can be diagrammable (able to be diagrammed or represented by a diagram). Here comes the use of the text that acts as a bridge and connects the photograph's content with the diagram's visual elements. As an impact, some diagrams can be characterized by their function and some others by their meaning, which introduces another challenge; Finding a way of how these two can be combined. The urban findings (photographs) and diagrams that subsequently form a story (narrative approach) are what contextualize my project, including both function and meaning.

Richard Long (1945) is a practitioner of land art, deriving inspiration from personal experiences and life in nature. He creates works that trace his physical movement through space; simple creative acts of walking, focusing on place, locality, time, distance, and measurement (Artnet, 2021). Even if his work is mainly sculpture-based, his way of thinking and working articulates for me that art can be made out of everything, even from things found in nature. Following lines in the environment, connecting what you see to form a piece of information, and building new spaces through nature are a few of the ideas that come to my mind. The act of building 'spaces' reminds me also of Ricardo Basbaum's work, with a different approach and method. As previously mentioned, Ricardo builds discursive and non-discursive spaces through his diagrams, creating dialogues and stories (Basbaum, 2016).

Data analysis and visualisation can be really interesting, but chaotic sometimes as there are many different approaches and methods that one can follow. Even if the subject or the design is complicated, the information has to be clear in order for the viewer to read and understand it. David McCandless' *Types of Information Visualization* chart, represents some of the possible methods that can be used in order to analyse a piece of information or a topic (McCandless, 2012). Nevertheless, in my case, the starting point is not a list of data/information. It is an outdoor photograph that has to be first 'decoded' (e.g. translated into text) before continuing with the design of a diagram. This can visually use and follow elements based on the image or can be something extremely different. Based on that, detailed notes along with the photograph can help with the content analysis of it, as well as, offer additional information that may help with the generation of a new story.

Concerning the book as the format I am using while working on my studio practice, this embraces the storytelling feature of my work. Having a layout, and one page following the other creates a sequence both in the story that occurs through the photographs and diagrams but also in the whole project in general. I treat this book as a method of research; A medium that will help me explore my enquiry. Apart from this, the black and white colours I am using is another restriction I have set, limiting my choices of analysing data. Moreover, the use of a specific range of elements to create the diagrams (shapes, lines, text) forms a sequence and a connection between them even if they are formed based on different photographs that have been studied.

Evidence of sequence in the research can be easily observed in Walid Raad's project *Let's be honest, the weather helped*. The artist followed a really interesting way of recording the location and number of bullets he found on walls, cars, and trees in Beirut in the late 1970s, after the war (The Atlas Group, 1998). Capturing every site of his findings, and keeping detailed notes, he used dots to cover the holes in the photographs based on the bullet's diameter and manufacturer (size and colour of the dot). Here, the same shape of the hole (circle) is used both for the investigation and recording of the bullets (dots), helping in 'covering' all those holes after the war; An act of humanity. His method of analysing data using photographs offers a method of diagramming that helps in recording and counting; Coming up with results that can be used for further research of a certain topic.

**Reference List**

Artnet (2021) *Richard Long*. Available at: <http://www.artnet.com/artists/richard-long/> (Accessed: 15 October 2021).

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