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Platform 13
Design Products
Royal College of Art

Work in Progress Show

The experimental nature of the platform and its focus on public engagement has been echoed in its approach to the Work in Progress Show. Instead of presenting work 'in development' students were asked to test aspects of their projects and research live in the show.

In 2014 Matt House had his impersonator *The Other Matt*, a much more confident public speaker, give a talk on his behalf. Greta Hauer introduced an extraterritorial zone, transforming the show into what she termed a 'legal fiction'; a lawyer announced temporary restrictions for visitors, guiding them through contracts, while guards protected the space.

In 2015 Kevin Smeeing was responsible for the design of the space, part of his ongoing investigation into the future of the high street and the potential uses of vacant retail spaces. Kevin developed a display system allowing for the quick transformation of the space so that it could be activated in alternative ways through a programme of activities developed by the platform group. These included; Yuki Uebo's script recycling workshop using Disney princess scripts on the popular dating app Tinder, a performance by Thomas Marriott teaching the 180 degree cinematic rule, whilst reconstructing an arrest wearing body worn video cameras, Namuun Zimmermann's class testing children's cartoons on gender stereotypical views based on the 'Bechdel Test' and Rike Glaser making photo-fit portraits of visitors.

Platform 13
An Overview of a
Teaching Practice

Context

Situated in the landscape of the Design Products MA, Platform 13 has tried to challenge the scope of the programme and conventional design education. This essay aims to create a portrait of the platform's expanded exploration of contemporary design. Considering through examples of platform output what it means to approach design as a social practice and tool to recalibrate established ideologies and aspirations, working directly in the public realm and acting in an outfacing, collaborative manner that relinquishes sole authorship.

What opportunities can free thinking, independent design practitioners uncover through direct exploration of the complexity of design's role in developing political, cultural, economic systems and social structures? From the outset students have been encouraged to use design as a means to understand and engage with social order, to adopt an open investigative approach to questioning cultural products and practices and how they reflect and enforce the perspectives; values, ideas and beliefs that underpin contemporary society.

Look, for example, at the present imperative to self-design. Cultural technologies such as reality television act as civic laboratories that teach us how to monitor, improve and reinvent ourselves as empowered, entrepreneurial citizens, who take responsibility for our own welfare and do not rely on 'big government'. Or, on a more macro scale, look at design's changing role in contemporary market-orientated politics, where we have witnessed a shift from party ideology to a value-based marketing approach. Research techniques are used to identify voters' needs and wants before a party designs their products, whether a policy, message or candidate, to create voter satisfaction.

What are alternative and new methods, tools and processes for design education if we no longer singularly train designers to service neo-liberal modes of production? As a platform group and area of study, we have always tasked students to consider the practice of design, free from the market. Allowing an autonomic position to question and challenge a broad range of cultural products and the patterns of social interaction and behaviours in which they are used, from tangible objects to intangible social, economic and political institutions.

Methodology

The platform has always functioned in a multidisciplinary manner, drawing practices and precedence from other disciplines. Cildo Meireles notion of 'insertions' for example, is a point of reference that we have often related platform activities to. With his *Coca-Cola Project*, 1970, Meireles modified empty Coca-Cola bottles by adding critical political statements or instructions, printed in white letters on a transparent label that becomes increasingly visible when the bottle is refilled for recirculation. Here, Mereles describes his process; *"I was no longer working with metaphorical representations of situations; I was working with the real situation itself."* This encapsulates the platform's approach to critical or speculative design practice. Speculation is employed as an immediate tool for testing situations and exchanges through direct action and intervention. Platform students ask 'what if' questions in response to current political and social life. Greta Hauer's *Inside the Embassy*, 2014, for example, asked what if a diplomatic mission served individuals and not a country, transposing functions of an embassy to a community centre in South London.

One of the earliest platform project briefs was *System Hack,* first launched in 2009 at Billingsgate, the UK's largest inland fish market, a hub of seafood trading since the 16th century, with its own trade by-laws, roles and infrastructure. The students were tasked to identify, deconstruct and intervene within a chosen system, from something as macro and complex as the fish market, to something as micro as domestic meal times the market could provide for. The purpose of the brief being to move students away from singular object thinking into larger systems thinking.

This project also intended to prompt direct engagement in the public realm. Tim Miller tested the usual script of 'can you take my picture please' by giving tourists in Trafalgar Square, London, obscure instructions to take pictures of him with a disposable camera, such as asking them to use up the entire film in one go. Oscar Lhermitte (Fig.1) spent several days wearing different types of high visibility clothing, exploring the opportunities this might afford him, even stopping a bus at his convenience. Jorge Mañes Rubio's (Fig.2) observation that a Tesco car park had striking visual similarities to a tennis court, lead to his creative misreading of the parking system, using a supermarket

receipt to legally own parking space for two hours to set up a tennis match.

Each of these playful interventions led and informed larger projects. Hwang Kim's graduation project *Pizzas for the People*, 2010 (Fig.3) was a response to the paradoxical opening of the first pizza restaurant in North Korea, supported by the then pizza loving leader Kim Jong-il, to feed a minority of wealthy political elite. Hwang contacted a number of Chinese smugglers to distribute DVDs featuring an instructional video of how to make pizza at home. Hwang's project considers the use of media as a citizens tool, in this case used in an attempt to democratise the introduction of this western culture to one of the most politically and culturally isolated countries in the world.

Another example that embodies the multidisciplinary ethos of the platform is Samuel Plant Dempsey's *Co-operative cycling*, 2014 (Fig.4), where two people ride a 'Boris Bike' through the streets of London in synchro-nisation. This was part of a series of insertions into city life, based on the influential playwright Bertlolt Brecht's Epic theatre and 'alienation' effect; techniques designed to break the seamless artifice of a play and encourage a 'critical view', such as having actors play multiple characters or speaking directly to the audi-ence. Samuel applied this approach to disrupting the usual flow of the city, to jolt people to question individ-ualistic social behaviour.

Meireles described the premise of his 'insertions' as *"starting from a small, individual thing, you can then reach a very large scale through ramifications and branching out."* This foundation has also helped develop the platform's idea of the impact an independent designer can have on society, or what they can 'spark off' as Meireles put it. This notion of impact is present in Sandra Fruebing's *Individual Pursuit,* 2013 (Fig.5) that saw her transform her life to accomplish a single minded goal; to walk along the Grand Union Canal with one foot on water and one on land. Sandra's design process considers if an individual's actions, when taken beyond the expected can challenge social norms. Furthermore, she addresses the pursuit as a historically male orientated and celebrated achievement, from climbing Everest, to *Man on Wire*, 2008.

To accomplish her goal, Sandra created a system of production that required an engineer to help design her 'boat shoe', a stuntman to help with her fear of falling, a personal trainer to create an exercise routine to build the right muscles and a philosopher to help unravel the broader significance. Collaborating with specialists from different disciplines in this way is fundamental to the scope of the platform, enabling students to create investigative projects that explore design's implication beyond conventional territory of the discipline.

In Dionysia Mylonaki's research experiment *Decoding Marilyn Monroe's Voice*, 2013, she worked with a professional voice coach to emulate Marilyn Monroe's voice, deconstructing it as a synthetic cultural product to reveal engineered aspects such as deliberate breathiness and holding her lips away from her teeth (supposedly Monroe used to put Vaseline on her teeth to aid this). Dionysia went on to develop *Voice Booth*, 2013 (Fig.6) which explored the optimisation of the human voice through digital technology. Medical students from Imperial College practiced breaking the news of a loved one's death, repeatedly delivering the line "I am very sorry to inform you that Mr Brown passed away this morning" whilst watching digital feedback. This form of direct speculation has often been applied to exploring the human impact of technological devel-opments within the platform. In this case, it provides a radical departure from the typical use of art within health care institutions.

Themes

Structured over two years within the programme, the first year of studies was dedicated to an overall theme, used as a framework for a number of short briefs, projects and workshops, situating design practice within broader fields. First year activity aimed not only at introducing a set of tools and methods for working but feeding into a critical discourse for both years of platform groups.

The platform theme for 2013 was 'The Copy is Authentic', embracing the production of the copy as a postmodern condition in itself. In his 1955 essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,* Walter Benjamin writes about the loss of aura (the authenticity of an original) through the mechanical reproduction of art in the industrial age. He describes this loss of aura as a loss of a singular authority within the work of art. If the aura of the original really is dead then we were interested in what has been afforded by this loss of authority. The democratising of reproduc-tion techniques with the rise of the digital revolution has enabled the role of producer and consumer to blur and merge in new models of reproduction. Video technology expanded the ability to make moving images as well as consume them, prompting some devoted fans to make remakes of their favourite studio productions. *Raiders of the Lost Art: The Adaption*, a scene-by-scene remake shot by three Mississippi teenagers over seven years from 1982 was the founda-tion of digital-era Sweding. *Prequel, Sequel, Remake, Swede*, the first project, applied the contemporary reproduction sequel system to the redesign of existing archetypes of products and cultural technologies. This was launched with a one-day workshop with artist

Noam Toran based on students re-imagining folk interpretations and updates of classic cinematic scenes.

Workshops were used to provide a framework for the year's theme and engender project work. The notion of 'conceptual separability', where the artistic aspects of an article can be 'conceptualized as existing independently of their utilitarian function' in relation to copyright law, was introduced at a workshop hosted by artist Kobe Matthys, founder of Agency. Students then had to use this construct as a vehicle for creative production.

In conjunction with this theme, Zhenhan Hao's graduation project *Imitation, Imitation,* 2013 (Fig.7) consists of a series of products co-created by Hao and a number of craftspeople in the villages of Dafen and Jingadezhen in China. Zhenhan's production model which combined imagination, creativity and reproduction, questions the idea of authorship and specifically, the shifting role a designer can take, moving between being the initiator of a project, controlling it from the outside, and a protagonist who is carried along within it.

Set in response to our self-performance society, which demands us to constantly present, display and re-invent ourselves, the 2014 theme was Self-design. We considered what it means to address the self directly as a design question and creative medium. The three projects within the year addressed different spheres of the self in relation to contemporary society: Self Presentation, Self Preservation, and Architecture of the Self. Self-design was also a development of the platform's history of students redesigning themselves as a medium for social engagement. A workshop with Pekko Koskinen, a designer of reality games and member of Reality Research Centre and YKON, Helsinki, offered the first steps to creative self-hood and drew from Koskinen's gaming background to introduce tools to redesign the self; creative filters, lenses and rules that can be introduced to everyday life to 'renew the surrounding reality'. Henry Franks created *The Alternative Gallery Handbook* as a direct response, a guide encouraging visitors to self-curate their experience of a gallery or museum through applying different filters.

Self Preservation also began with a workshop organised by P13 graduates Dionysia Mylonaki and Sandra Fruebing, exploring a journalistic approach to researching 'present dystopias' and how extractive and exploitative institutions produce various dystopian realities, led by the Greek investigative Journalist Yiannis Baboulias. Workshops introduced students to new ways of working and connected with different disciplines and broader fields of enquiry. They also challenged and expanded our approach as tutors, opening up new ways to deliver and develop content.

Self Presentation asked the students to design an identity for a public encounter and was based on the seminal book by sociologist Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, 1959, considering what his ideas mean in the 21st centuary with communication and interaction through digital platforms. Goffman's dramaturgical examination of social interaction and self-presentation had been central to previous second year projects.

Matt House's, *The Other Matt*, 2014 (Fig.8) tested the application of the author training his very own impersonator to create a cloned version of himself. The process started with potential impersonators being auditioned by his parents. They had to improvise a conversation with Matt's Dad whilst he was doing the ironing. As his parents reviewed the candidates to select the best, or even a better Matt, it prompted reflection on Matt's character and their relationship with Matt. The chosen impersonator then went through a process of training and insertion into different social settings, for example, Matt's girlfriend used the impersonator to play out her desire to own a cat (the real Matt is allergic). Throughout his film, based on self-improvement reality TV shows, different versions of 'Matt' were used to consider the function of an impersonator in relation to self-improvement and reflection on performance of self during interpersonal communication.

Another response to the nature of the designed self was *Interview in Progress,* 2013 (Fig.9) by Tim Miller. He adapted Augusto Boal's forum theatre method to explore the performance of individuals within job interview scenarios. Forum theatre was developed by the radical Brazilian theatre director Augusto Boal as part of *Theatre of the Oppressed,* a theatrical form originally used in pioneering popular education movements that have increasingly become used in business and management training. Miller worked with an established corporate role play company to develop a forum theatre model, whereby a panel of screenwriters, directors and authors, creatively expand and dramatise participant's answers to standard job interview questions.

As with Boal's forum theatre that aimed to empower people to overcome oppression and 'change their world' through a process of reworking a dramatic performance, the design of learning models and critical citizenship education, based on a desire to encourage engagement, action and socio-political liberation and understanding, is another recurring theme for the platform and reflected in both our practices. In 2011 we asked the students to design their own school, considering the broad spectrum of what a school can be, in response to formal education becoming more and more commodified and inaccessible. We wanted students to challenge the system they find themselves within and explore alternatives; to create their own approach to teaching and learning outside of the mainstream and connect with new people and contexts.

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Conclusion

What does it mean to work in this way? What type of practitioner has Platform 13 produced? To draw again from the popular education movement in Brazil and the social concept developed by education theorist Paulo Freire, we hope graduates have a 'critical consciousness'; that they are impelled to gain an in-depth understanding of design's role in sociocultural systems, and through the perception and exposure this affords them, to act through design to challenge oppressive elements and propose alternatives.

Looking back over the development of the platform as it comes to an end, there has never been a set manifesto, or model of delivery. Themes, projects and teaching approaches have developed organically in response to tutor practices and research and student output. The regular workshops and activities that introduced different practices and drew from different disciplines (we have outlined just a sample in this text) have constantly challenged the structure and delivery of content, producing a fluid approach to teaching. The result of this was that throughout the programme of study, individual students developed and tested their own ideologies, methods and working structures. This, their practice we viewed as their most vital product, something they could expand and apply in different contexts after graduation.

Dash Macdonald, Onkar Kular

Essay
References

Fig. 1   **Oscar Lhermitte**
Under Cover (2010)

Under Cover looks at the psychological perception of uniforms, their language and opportunities. For several days, Lhermitte wore different types of high visibility cloth purchased from the internet and conducted experiments to see how far the apparel could lead him. With a touch of humour, these different attempts highlight the underestimated power of self-presentation.

Fig. 2   **Jorge Mañes**
Park, Set & Match (2008)

Park, Set & Match was Jorge's misreading of London's supermarket parking systems, in which he transformed parking spaces into his own tennis tournament. To get into the game, you needed only to buy some water and fruit, using the supermarket receipt as a passport to legally own the parking space for 2 hours. You were then able to set-up your tennis match which was 'televised' by CCTV cameras, a public source recording, allowing players to obtain a copy of their match through the Creative Commons Act.

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Hwang Kim
Pizzas for the People (2010)

Pizzas for the People is an introduction for North Koreans into diverse aspects of western culture. Shot in a style in-between a soap opera and homemade video, the four episodes demonstrate how to make a pizza, pack a suitcase to go abroad, become a trend leader at pop dancing and celebrate Christmas Day. To circumvent censorship and reach a North Korean audience, the film was converted to 500 DVDs smuggled over the North Korean borders from China.

Samuel Plant Dempsey
Informalities (2014)

These resistances are presented as a series of insertions into city life designed to alienate the spectator from the ordinary and move them into a state of active contemplation, as in Bertolt Brecht's Epic theatre, and unlock new informal ways of inhabiting the urban environment. For *Co-operative Cycling*, two people rode a Boris Bike through the streets of London in synchronization.

Fig. 5 **Sandra Fruebing**
The Individual's Pursuit (2013)

The Individual's Pursuit is the creation of a narrative based on a character whose quest is to inhabit an in-between space as an exploration of what is beyond the obvious, to walk along the edge of water and earth, where both elements

meet. Specially designed apparatus and physical training exercises were employed in an attempt to fulfil the dream. This rather odd quest looks at the relationship between individual belief and society as well as the

longing for a creation of a personal space where one is almost attempting to disconnect oneself from reality and therefore add another layer to normality.

Fig. 6 **Dionysia Mylonaki**
Voice Booth (2013)

Voice Booth is an interactive tool that trains users to act in real life, through the evaluation and training of their voice. It can be examined under the prism of our increasingly digitally enhanced social life, exploring the optimisation of the human as a social species through technology. The concept of delivering bad news was employed as an experimental situation where the *Voice Booth* is put to use to 'engineer' the optimum voice for an unfortunate occasion. Medical students from the Imperial College were asked to break the news of a patent's death, reading the line 'I am very sorry to inform you that Mr Brown passed away this Morning'.
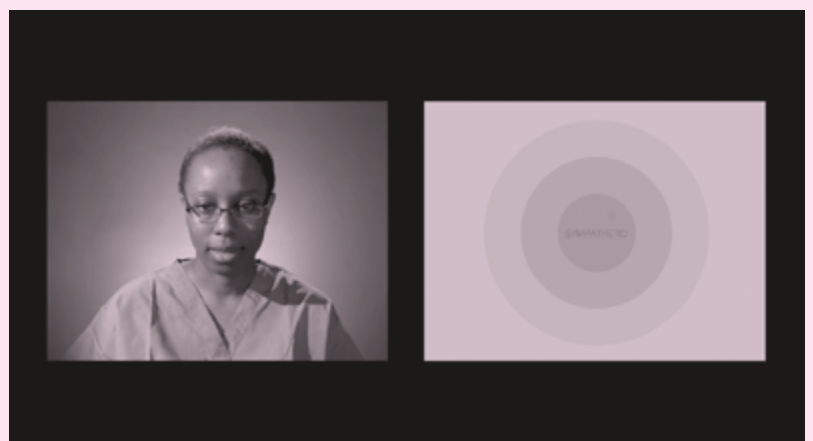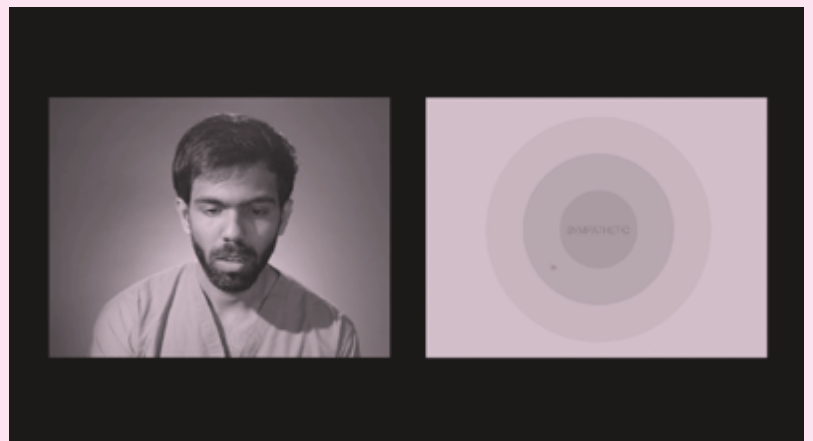
Fig. 7 **Zhenhan Hao**
Imitation, Imitation (2013)

Imitation, Imitation consists of a series of products co-created by Hao and a number of craftspeople in the villages of Dafen and Jingadezhen in China. His work questions the idea of authorship, and specifically the shifting role a designer can take, moving between being the initiator of a project, controlling it from the outside, and a protagonist who is carried along with it. Repositioning himself as a self-styled 'intercultural agent', Hao gave an open brief to a number of artisans skilled in copying original works by others. Hao asked them to explore their own imagination and creativity while reproducing well-known brand icons and other famous designs.

Fig. 8 **Matt House**
The Other Matt (2014)

Matt House's work looks closely at how impersonation operates in a variety of forms within the social sphere. His project examines impersonation as a subject in its own right, aiming to uncover hidden potential and expand the use of the impersonator.

The Other Matt explores the process and implications of the author having his own very impersonator, from the initial hiring and training to the eventual insertion into various social settings. Throughout the film different formats have been used to initiate discussions around the nature of identity, the performance of self during interpersonal communication and the authenticity of reality.

Fig. 9 **Tim Miller**
Interview in Progress (2013)

Interview in Progress explores the dramatisation of individuals within job interview scenarios. Through working with a corporate role play company, a forum-theatre model has been developed whereby individuals are trained in the dramatisation of answers to standard job interview questions, aided by screenwriters and fiction directors. Through heightening the drama inherent in job interview answers, individuals were aided in obtaining employment through a process of self-transformation, commodification and dramatisation.

RUBBER ON CONCRETE

Foley session, still from video

Foley session,
still from video

Adi Zaffran
Rubber on Concrete

The project explores how Foley, the reproduction of sounds
by physical means that are then added to film and video
in post-production, can be used as a therapeutic tool to
trigger the emotional imagery of a traumatic event by
revisiting and stimulating an inner moment.

Within each session, using simple objects as props
and the guidance and expertise of the Foley artist, the
participants produce specific sounds that relate to their
personal traumatic event, which then become the subject
of a memory. The Foley session enables participants to
control the stimuli when the sound occurs, unlike in
real life when people might suddenly hear it when they
least expect it. This provides a platform of retelling a
story and reprocessing it safely, a means of collecting a
testimony and analysing it during the process of
rebuilding a soundscape.

DECONSTRUCTING GENDER STEREOTYPES

Paper collage process, St. Saviour's, London, 2015

Namuun Zimmermann
Deconstructing gender stereotypes

Workshops for children to question their perspective towards gender stereotypical thinking.

Stereotypes are in many ways important. They allow the expression of social and cultural attitudes. Unfortunately stereotypes are often based on prejudice, placing constraints on people's lives. From birth children are taught which colours, toys, games, activities, cartoons and clothes are for each gender. These patterns or social rules: 'this is for boys and that is for girls,' become accepted, which in turn negatively affects the behaviour of children when they come to make their own decisions or express their own views.

Using creative exercises, social experiments and the format of role-play, Namuun began to deconstruct the social and cultural gender based attitudes which surround children. For a school term she ran weekly workshops at St Saviour's Church of England primary school in Herne Hill, London, testing an education model. Activities included making new mixed gender figures, puppets and masks from collaging male and female children's cartoon characters and toys, to be activated through drama.

This direct engagement has enabled Namuun to design a system for children to self-direct their own theatre performance, including script, props, costumes and set, in which they subvert gender stereotypes in traditional fairy tales.

Children acting out, St Saviours, London, 2015

Drama Exercises, Mini Mega Conference, London, 2015

Child wearing mixed paper collage mask, Eastbourne, 2015

Potentially Suspicious

Rike Glaser
The Material Landscape of Data

If you have nothing to hide, you have nothing to fear? We say to ourselves in collective reassurance. In this crowd we remain anonymous.

The Material Landscape of Data is an investigation in the socio-political implications of the internet and different aspects of our online control society with the focus on decoding our perception of privacy and security. The underlying aim is to explore this landscape as a resource, from a physical as well as a conceptual/theoretical perspective.

The project structure is divided into three major sub-topics:

Potentially Suspicious, Page St, London SW1P 4EN, UK

› *Potentially Suspicious* is questioning the mutation of the idea of the terrorist: defined by the constant existence of threat we are all being monitored, categorised and filtered through programmed algorithms, replacing ethics.

› *Measurable Identity* is addressing aspects of the digitalisation of our physicality. Our human nature is turning into our keys, becoming part of the system of fear, disconnected from our body – rationalised, measurable, detectable and searchable.

› *Pixel Commodity* focuses on the construction of our digital identities and the online self as a standardised tradable product, questioning the distinction between the boundaries of the virtual and the real and exploring the overlap of realities.

Measurable Identity, Iriscope

These sub-topics are connected and positioned in context through a written essay. The text functioning as a method of connecting thoughts, a way of exploring and delivering ideas in order to produce knowledge on such fragile entities as the digital realm. On the one hand the design process itself functions as a source of content for the essay and on the other hand, the text clarifies and reconfigures aspects and decisions within the process.

With love from LHR
4. May 2013;16:06 h

A flight got **cancelled**. A time we bypass on **social media**, being stuck constantly looking at our **watch**. It is exactly these moments were we are not being **critical** about what we post: sharing our location, the **airport** – waiting for a **response**?
    It is hard to be **resistant**. Some posts go viral, like a **plague** of **communication**. **Enriching** our time to forget about the **delay**.

A **warning** and the next moment no **power** left, it feels like an **emergency**, the **smart infrastructure collapses** – the **exposure** to potential **human-to-human communications**.

The search algorithms of the US National Security Agency (NSA) email surveillance program would detect 23 predetermined keywords, 27% of this text is suspicious.

Pixel Commodity, Target Advertisment

Henry Franks
Mind the Universe

How many days of your education were you taught about how your mind works? Recent studies have shown that mindfulness as a method to manage your mental health is currently equally as effective as antidepressants.

Mind The Universe is an interactive session during which children between the ages 11-14, experiment with the physics of everyday happenings in order to understand and experience the psychological benefits of mindfulness. A layered format of education is achieved through engaging activities and interactions, featuring a series of extraordinary objects. These experiences are supported by animations and scripted narration, delivering a graduated flow of complexity which accommodates all ability levels.

Once the conceptual framework for mindfulness has been learnt, children have the capacity to recall and recreate the concepts introduced as thought experiments. This recreation enables them to experience the psychological benefits of *Mind the Universe* outside of the classroom.

The main objects in the session include:

›   The Cosmic Compass – a machine that points in the direction our galaxy is moving through space.

›   One Wave Glasses – glasses with a rotating polarised sheet, which allows you to see the world in only one direction of polarised light.

›   Quad Tonoscope – a cymatic instrument that 4 people sing into and harmonise, enabling them to see the shape of sound.

The Cosmic Compass

Seeing the shape of sound

Visualising meta awareness

One Wave Glasses

Thomas Marriott
The Production of Evidence

In this digital age images have come to play an increasingly dominant role in society, influencing and shaping many, if not all, aspects of our lives. Methods of image production have been democratised, widespread use of smartphones allows anyone to be a photographer, filmmaker or content maker.

As contemporary methods of storytelling and self-evaluation have become increasingly visual, it should come as no surprise that images are playing a more significant role in the legal arena. With the increasing prevalence of image based evidence, subjects such as proof, truth, and justice, have become increasingly problematic, given the inherently subjective nature of images – the emotional logic that surrounds them – and opinions and expectations derived from popular culture.

The rise of Body Worn Video (BWV) is therefore an interesting development in the field of visual justice. The technology, which has seen considerable investment, is said to have the potential to provide an insight into interactions between the police and the public, even preventing abuse before it happens. *The Production of Evidence*, exposes the potential for a piece of evidence to be 'produced' (manufactured or constructed) by police using BWV and in doing so poses potential solutions.

Through the process of production in conjunction with specialists in the field of film and television, *The Production of Evidence* examines the role of media within the contemporary legal arena and advocates a new form of visual literacy, in the field of body worn video.

www.theproductionofevidence.co.uk

Kevin Smeeing
Future of the High Street
Re-imagine and challenge the potential uses of vacant spaces on the local high street

As a result of global economic downturn, out of town and online shopping, and rising rents in London, means the face of the high street is changing. Across England the rate of shop vacancies stood at 13.3% at the end of 2014[1]. These vacancies create a downward spiral for the local retail sectors as shop closures reduce footfall. Both sides of the political spectrum recognise this change as important due to its social and economical value, however, too often is financial gain placed above social value.

Where the GLA (Greater London Authority) is promoting culture as important to the high street, as it 'could increase house prices by up to 30 per cent'[2], communities are losing control of their own high street. There is an opportunity to challenge this situation and explore the potential uses of vacant spaces on the local high street. What can replace the social glue that high streets have provided for communities in the past?

Future of the High Street is not another pop-up shop. Based on pure social curiosity, the project explores alternative models of economic development. During 6 weeks residency as part of a regeneration programme in Romford, a space has been created that could have multiple uses and house several local businesses on an hourly basis. The project challenges the notions of time and value, while testing systems of sharing in today's economy. By participating in the project, the local community has been invited to experience the alternatives uses.

1   http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/
    feb/04/
    empty-shop-levels-north-south-england-report
2   https://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/arts-
    culture/promoting-arts-culture/
    culture-on-the-high-street

Fei Yue
Red Collar

Historically subcultures have always recycled references from the past to differentiate and react to the present. Take the 1950's Teddy Boys wearing clothes partly inspired by the Edwardian Dandies. *Red Collar* project speculates on a new Chinese subculture that appropriates iconic symbols of the Cultural Revolution and the Great Leap Forward set in motion by Mao Zedong in the Peoples Republic of China. The intent being to challenge China's current industrial 'potemkin' by referring back to the fantasy and ideology of this traumatic period in the collective life of the Chinese people.

At a fitting with a tailor in Soho, a Chinese migrant worker redesigns the iconic Red Guard uniform. With reference to the symbolic nature of the components that make up this historic garment, and in response to a set of questions about the rapid economic, and social developments in contemporary China, he is asked to select an alternative cut, fabric, pocket and embellishments, to communicate his social ideal.

Red Collar garment workshop with tailor Jacky and immigrant worker Xin

Finished garment in Jacky's studio

RECYCLING SCRIPTS & SPEAKERS' CORNER RING
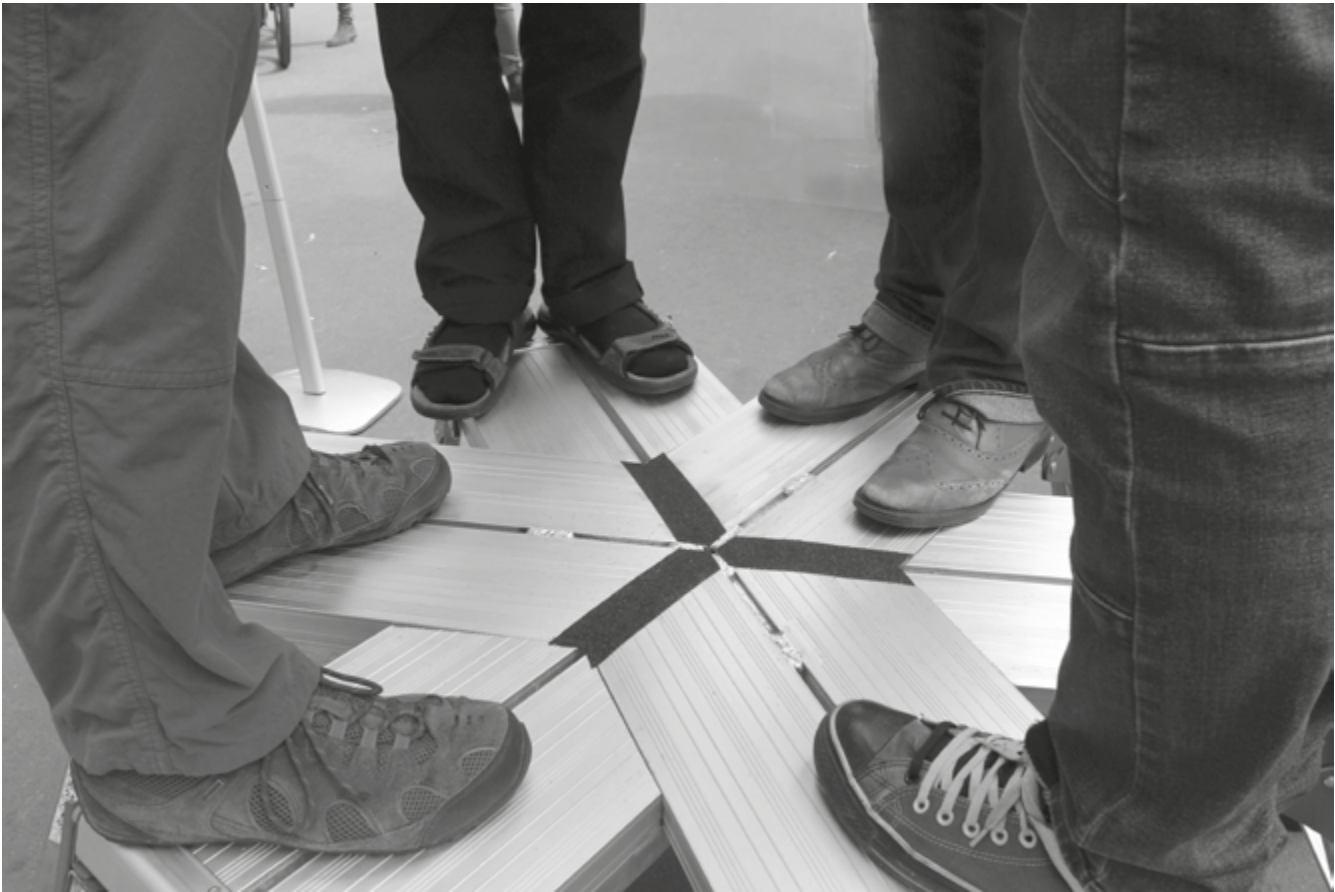
Yuki Uebo
Recycling Scripts – Speakers' Corner Ring

Through a process of recycling and re-contextualising scripts, Yuki's work aims to challenge their ideology, composition, and effect. This originated from recycling Tiger Wood's infamous public apology in a confession which Yuki delivered to a catholic priest. Yuki then recorded and reused his response to answer questions on Yahoo Answers, to critique the prevalent recycling of 'the same old rhetoric'.

'Recycling Scripts' started with a similar intervention; Yuki picked up the princesses' script from Disney animation films and used them in my communication with men on the dating app Tinder; testing the typical genderisation of the Disney princess story in the context of presentation of self and interaction in the online world. Yuki has created an app which enables the user to perform identities on social network sites, cut and pasted directly from female characters; (both real and imagined) that trade on established gender roles, from the 'empowered' post-feminist politician Hilary Clinton to Marilyn Monroe, 'the ultimate sex symbol for men'.

Speakers' Corner Ring challenged the conventional unilateral type of communication in Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park, where speakers stand on a ladder, either preaching or shouting what they want to say without listening to others. Yuki introduced a more horizontal form of exchange, similar to an online comment thread by linking several ladders so multiple speakers stand in a close circle and discuss a current news story. The aim of the project is to restore the original function of Speakers' Corner; a place for discussing and exchanging ideas in public.
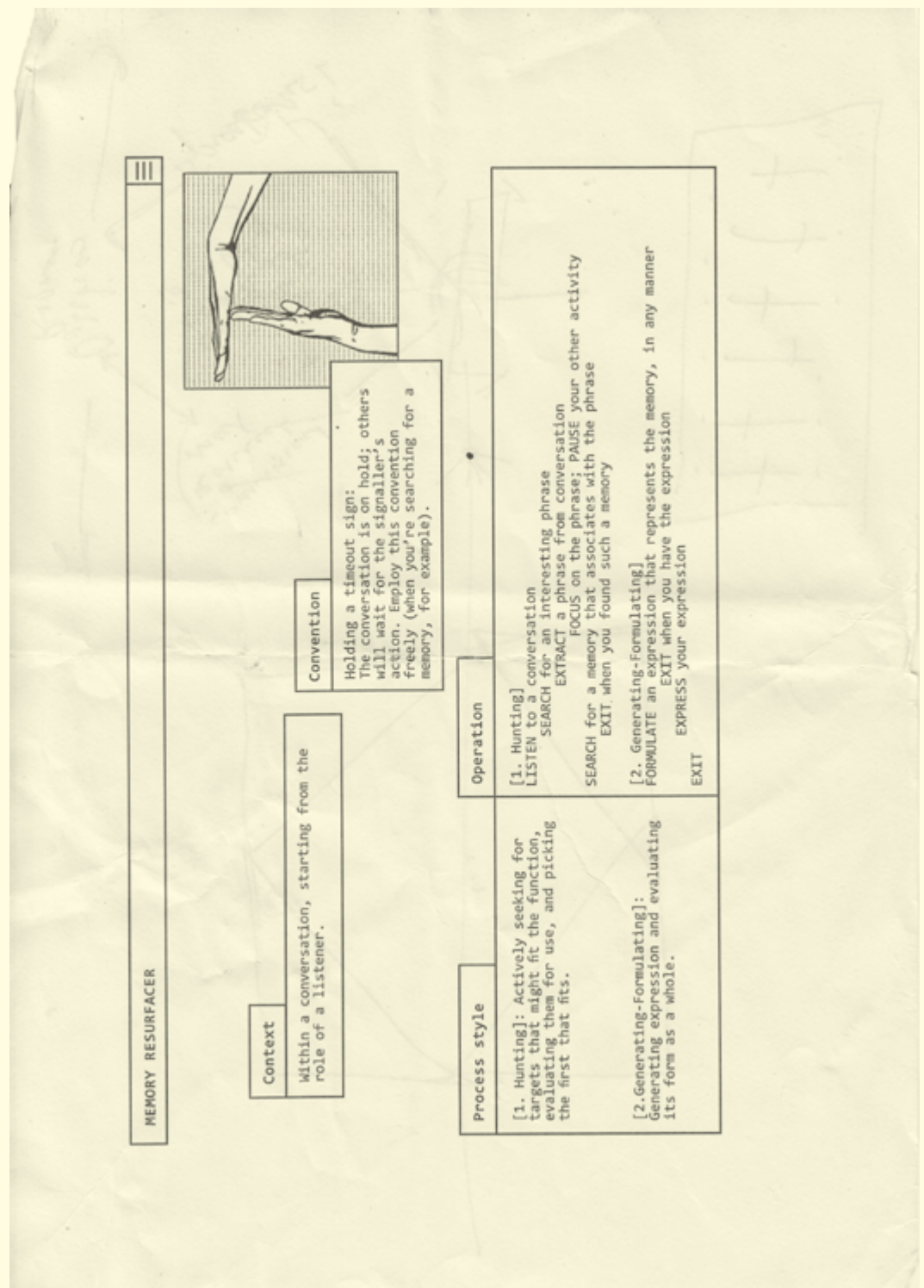

Recycling Scripts

Platform Trip 2015: Helsinki

Following a workshop on self-design in 2014 by Pekko Koskinen, a designer of reality games and member of Reality Research Centre; a performing arts collective based in Helsinki who describe their work as using performative means to 'question and renew the surrounding reality, Koskinen invited Platform 13 to Reality Research Centre's headquarters for a day workshop. We tested some of his new 'cultural coding' models; codes for human behaviour, which use the rich development of coding and translate it for human purposes, for example, 'Prefix Operations Code' where you add a prefix to something and play with the new concept it creates.

Reality Research Centre:
http://www.todellisuus.fi/en/home/

MEMORY RESURFACER

Context
Within a conversation, starting from the role of a listener.

Convention
Holding a timeout sign:
The conversation is on hold; others will wait for the signaller's action. Employ this convention freely (when you're searching for a memory, for example).

Operation

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[1. Hunting]
LISTEN to a conversation
SEARCH for an interesting phrase
EXTRACT a phrase from conversation
FOCUS on the phrase; PAUSE your other activity
SEARCH for a memory that associates with the phrase
EXIT when you found such a memory

[2. Generating-Formulating]
FORMULATE an expression that represents the memory, in any manner
EXIT when you have the expression
EXPRESS your expression

EXIT
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Process style

[1. Hunting]: Actively seeking for targets that might fit the function, evaluating them for use, and picking the first that fits.

[2.Generating-Formulating]:
Generating expression and evaluating its form as a whole.

P28 Additional Platform Projects

Markus Kayser
Solar Sinter (2011)

In a world increasingly concerned with questions of energy production and raw material shortages, Solar Sinter explored the potential of desert manufacturing, where energy and material occur in abundance.

In this experiment sunlight and sand were used as raw energy and material to produce glass objects using a 3D printing process, that combines natural energy and material with high-tech production technology.

Solar-sintering aimed to raise questions about the future of manufacturing and triggers dreams of the full utilisation of the production potential of the world's most efficient energy resource – the sun. Whilst not providing definitive answers, this project aimed to provide a point of departure for new thinking around this proposed technology.

Ben Newland
Nomadic sound system (2010)

A family of objects formed of wireless, battery powered, portable speakers, *Nomadic sound system* explored new ways for sound to interact with people and space. The project borrowed from the typology of the marching band with each instrument being responsible for one part of the audible frequency spectrum. Adding the capability of human controlled movement to the components of a sound system, opened up a new set of possibilities for the performance of electronic music, by enabling the use of location narratives and choreography in a human surround sound system.

David Hood
London Pedestrian Transport
System (2010)

London Pedestrian Transport System attempted to reclaim public space by proposing a walking bus system through the city of London. Borrowing from the language and history of the iconic red London bus, the walking bus was supported by a series of connectable red umbrellas, available from the conductor leading the walk. The walking bus was initially used to host community meetings that allowed groups to discuss a range of topical urban issues. Whilst at the same time the project created a semi-functional space to host walking meetings, it also suggested a form of polite and poetic activism.

Jenhui Liao
Self Portrait Machine (2009)

An authorship tool that found its way to be predominantly situated within the environment of the museum, The *Self Portrait Machine* was a drawing device that would begin by taking a picture of a person's face then draw it with the help of the model. The wrists of the model were connected to the machine and their hands would be guided to draw the lines that would eventually form the portrait. Whilst subjects were sitting for their portraits, they could either choose to collaborate with the machine to achieve the best result or to take more authorship and subvert the portrait being created. Once the portraits were finished the machine would sign the artwork under the name of Gepetto, the name taken from the woodcarver who created Pinocchio.

Maximillian Gubbins
Radio Device 1.1 (2011)

Broadcasting on the frequency 87.5-108.0 MHz is subject to EU laws and licensing, resulting in the dissemination of information monopolized by corporations, government bodies and those that can afford a radio license.

Radio Device 1.1 was a tool for roadside broadcasts that overrides vehicle radio systems and standard radios, to transmit politically sensitive audio content. Designed in the form of a directional antenna with multiple low power transmitters the radio device broadcast content over the twenty most popular stations in the UK, whilst simultaneously bypassing EU licensing laws. This allowed for a range of possibilities such as roadside demonstrations broadcasting and targeted community radio.

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Acknowledgements

This publication documents some of the activities and student projects of Platform 13. The platform first began its tenure within the Design Products programme in 2008 under tutors Onkar Kular and Sebastien Noel. With the first graduating class compromising of a modest three students, over the years the platform has slowly developed a culture and following that has challenged the core activities and emphasis of the Design Products programme and subject at large. Deliberately situating itself towards the edge of the discipline, the platform has encouraged the view of design as an inherently social activity. From the outset students have worked directly in the public realm, exploring diverse contexts and issues through projects that consider the impact of design within new technologies, political and economic systems, culture and society.

The platform has taken a multidisciplinary approach to the broader subject of design by working with experts and professionals in a variety of disciplines and in return, produced work within a range of media. These have included filming documentaries, printing publications, making props, staging workshops and performances to create new forms of participatory engagement.

As the platform's activities come to a close, the publication is not only an opportunity to showcase some of the work of the graduates but also a chance to say thank you to everybody that has supported the platform and its teaching over the last eight years.

Onkar Kular and Dash Macdonald