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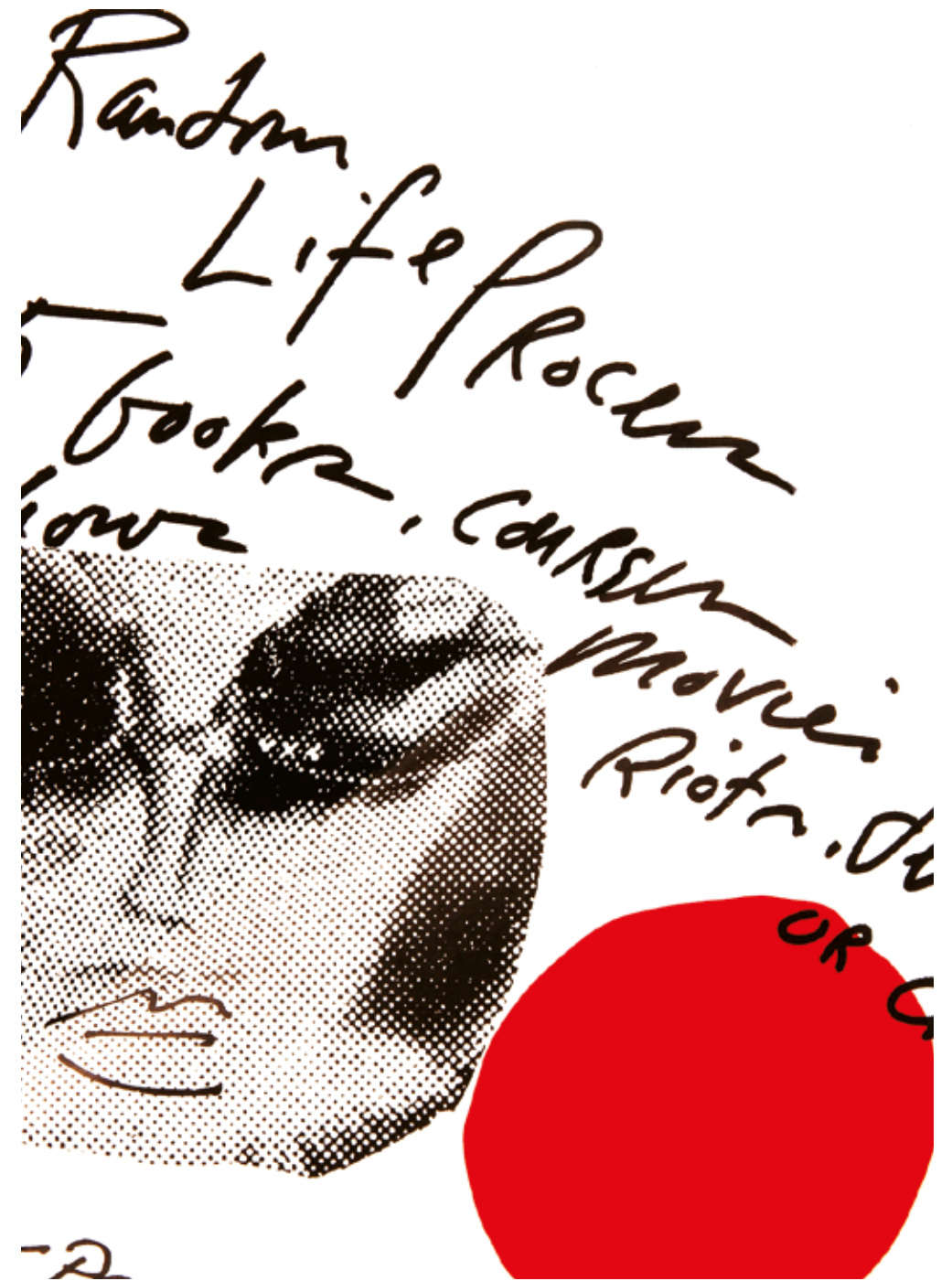
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SEARCH FOR ORIGINS CONSCIOUS  
LOSSES OF INDIVIDUALITY

by Joanna Leah Geldard

“Derived from the latin charta, signifying paper but also (as in “playing card”), the word chart evokes multiple words: play navigation, mapping, contracts, and legal charters... The charts are alternatively described as a paper enclosure, three walls-worth of graffiti, a spatial system that invites ocular drifting (think dérive), a theater for participating in and performing knowledge, a game of three-dimensional press, a landscape or star chart, a timeline that can be read from left to right, a library catalogue, and a visual statement that bridges the gap between the pictorial and the prosaic.”<sup>1</sup>

Lawrence Lipton



**‘Oh Captain, my captain’– the familiar poetic refrain from Walt Whitman (1865) used in the film, *The Dead Poet’s Society*, that drew on an ideological terrain of the teacher leading innovation and stimulating students into a lively culture. It’s a pedagogical sieve!**

It only underscored the authoritarian both as the mythological innovator and heroic poet, and so reinforced the failure of so-called radical pedagogy. Against the backdrop of hierarchical models of art education we have seen the interdisciplinary endeavours of Bauhaus, Black Mountain College and California Institute of Arts. Maurice Stein became Dean of Critical Studies of CalArts and implemented *Blueprint for Counter Education* (1970) as the founding curriculum as an intellectual enquiry for knowledge dissemination in critical studies intended as a mobile and portable learning environment. But, Stein reflects on the problem of radical energy to point out that it can be just as repressive and appear as anti-intellectual fashions. Difficult to utilise, any counter education methods has its own trappings just as traditional teaching methods. Yet in an industry that is increasingly competitive and engaged with its capital concerns, the role of radical pedagogy is an interesting one. Maurice Stein and Larry Miller were concerned with counter –education as a way to facilitate increased collaboration, better visual and verbal material to generate innovative practices. Their counter-education curriculum used the Chart and the diagram to activate Critical Studies Learning environments into a total art environment that stimulated the most innovative artistic, literary and educational processes. The collection included for the Research Field Station 2, examines the progressive use of the diagrammatic from the position of how we might think about the dynamic potential of Critical and Contextual Studies.

*‘the three walls of do it yourself, alternative classroom situated at the crossroads between lived experience and bookish learning: a portable environment that would instantiate a personalised, socially engaged model of education.’<sup>ii</sup>*

It aimed to generate critical engagement and has continued resonance to think about the pedagogical tools for criticality. The potential of diagrams and charts can be explored as innovative illustrative methods in exemplifying and communicating practice developments. But they are also useful in terms of categorising and arranging points of knowledge as a constellation of learning, integration and examining the links and implications of ideas. They chart territories.

*‘Make theory useful’<sup>iii</sup>*

says Gilles Deleuze in conversation with Michel Foucault as they pondered a new relationship between theory and practice, and Paulo Freire advocated for a praxis of theory in action, but how? Within the structures of ‘how’, George Maciunas’ ‘Learning machines’, that appeared during the Fluxus movement where the utilization of objects and games offered games as art and increased engagement in the history and education of ideas.

Included, were the characteristics of globalism, network in the unity of art and life, intermedia, experimentation, chance, playfulness expanding to simplicity, implicativeness, exemplativism, specificity and presence in time and music, and for the sake of argument, lets say time and dynamics found in that latter relationship. They established a ‘way of doing things’.<sup>iv</sup>

Critical Studies has given way to various titles inclusive of the term ‘contextual’ ‘in relation to’ broader fields of enquiry. Often, interpreted as a ‘bolt on’ exegesis, justification, framework or as illustrative tool to the process of enquiry, there are ongoing issues Critical Studies and its role within art and design pedagogy. If Deleuze and Freire say it is fuel and acts in ‘relay’ to practice, then it is perhaps necessary to re-examine ‘radical pedagogical tools’ for creating lively cultures in and around Critical Studies in a time of digital platforms and the consumerism of art and arts education. Newer drives to promote the synthesis of practice and theory aim at tackling this difficulty. However, it is sometimes assumed that theory is not necessarily present in the studio and tends to be interpreted as the ‘written component’ assuming essay formats. Yet, we ask students to theorise through drawing, discussion and in crits with the question ‘why’, to enable discussion of positions, methods and processes, to make judgements and interpretations, to comprehend, know and see influential decision making derived from the meaningful engagement with their practice. And, we ask all of this with the understanding that a series of relations are present. For practice subjects, umbrella terms such as ‘practice-based’ are used as a baseline for students to examine and analyse their practice, which can lead to insightful commentary and to discovering new implications. However, ‘practice-led’ research requires greater conversation in looking at the impact of practice on using and interpreting theoretical ideas and the impact of theoretical ideas on challenging or offering insight to practice, and exemplifies Freire’s praxis’.

In short, the essay format whilst ‘useful’ and a common vehicle for disseminating an idea is not always useful. Over the course of teaching critical and contextual studies students are encouraged to structure their ideas according to their research, and the response for many is how? Since Fluxus we’ve had the opportunity to consider ‘*Devices designed to get around, over or under the rigid linear limitations of writing...*’.<sup>v</sup> The ‘how’ has appeared in transcripts, fictional narratives, and text pieces that play with visual structures particularly in the realm of the poetic. Poetic inferences have their own difficulties in relation to provenance and identity, and relevant forms that are part of experience where cultural capital and social environments are harder to identify. How to tackle rigid forms of writing is just as relevant now in the light of media developments and interactions, relevant to practice concerns and practice dissemination, and to developing individual and meaningful inquiry.

I'm interested in the potential of the diagram as 'experimentation in contact with the real'<sup>vii</sup> to explore contextual and theoretical conversations from within practice; that inform a flexible and discursive approach to contextual studies; how diagrams can work as 'connective tissue'. Gilles Deleuze says they 'bridge the gap' to what will become formed or constructed but in the same way dissolves or widens gaps, even atomises existing structures.<sup>viii</sup>

Diagrams traverse and gather momentum as permeation through modules to facilitate thinking through practice, strategies of practices, structures of practice, spaces of practice and so on (I realise this list is limited).

Peter Eisenman summarises Gilles Deleuze's approach to the diagram and one that positions my own understanding. Deleuze describes the concept of the diagram as 'a machinic set of forces' and he reflects that 'Deleuze says that the diagram is a supple set of relationships between forces.' Deleuze's approach is the relational function, not necessarily a visual archive. Those visual or signified expressions are variables of the assemblage.<sup>ix</sup> In this way the books exhibited present the variables and the relational factors that have shifted the notion of the diagram from structured formulations to a process and relational field, as a kind of mapping.

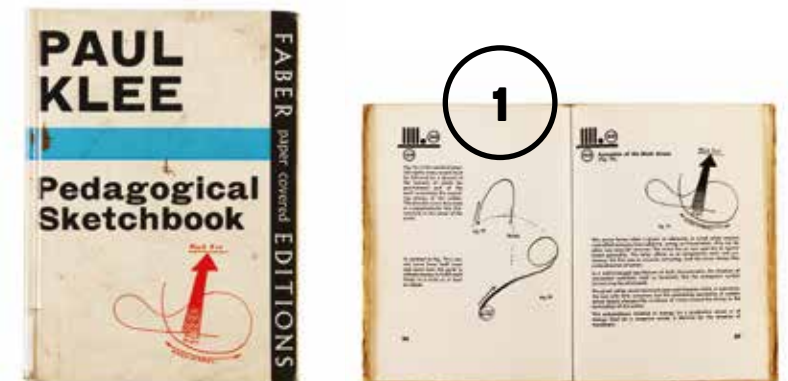
During my own research studies I've explored notions of the diagram as a mapping strategy within my own praxis, which has shifted practical implications of the diagram to drawing diagrams as an interchange between theory and practice to model conceptual trajectories as well as an interdisciplinary drawing practice. However, the implications for mapping ideas have continued to roll into explorations within radical pedagogy.

Here, I've included some books from my own research with 'un peu plus' diagrammatic and poetic writing that lead to the fragmentation of the essay format. The aim is to present methods of 'diagrammatising' as ways to consider diagrammatic tools for learning and writing practice that perform and activate practice.

## **Pedagogical Sketchbook by Paul Klee, Introduction and Translation** by Sibyl Moholy-Nagy (1953)

The pedagogical sketchbook on line looks at spatial properties from the vertical to the horizontal. Klee, finishes with the active arrow that takes the diagram into movement and momentum. Energies and forces are considered as action points as a result of intensified energies. As a precursor to many discussions on the impact of diagrams on spatial discourses it has informed the thinking of Walter Benjamin, Gilles Deleuze and Anthropologist Tim Ingold. For Walter Benjamin, Klee's work particularly Angelus Novus became a functional tool with which to illustrate a concept. For Gilles Deleuze, the action and movement became a way to conceptualise forces and energies at work in space and in art. For Tim Ingold, the active line taken for a walk, influences a re-look at processing and form giving. In other words Klee's pedagogy has helped philosophers, art critics and anthropologists consider line and diagram as active tools for thinking.

How does a diagram influence an approach to writing? Implications go beyond writing diagrammatically, drawing concepts as diagrams and using diagrams as communication tools, even performing diagrams. It challenges us to re-think how we organise our ideas, how to think spatially and how to use different systems of organising the structure of our thinking. In this way there is potential to influence writing and different formats, to make structures purposeful in 'practice-based' and 'practice-led' study.





## Walter Benjamin's Archive, Images, Texts, Signs,

translated by Esther Leslie, first published  
as *Walter Benjamin's Archive: Bilder,  
Texte und Zeichen* by Suhrkamp Verlag (2007)

Benjamin made himself at home amongst scraps of writing, a feature of writing things down immediately and on what was to hand. Dispersed over envelopes, diaries, notebooks and index cards to accommodate the tidal flow of entries, Benjamin used the size of his writing and composition to graphically chart his ideas.

A personal favourite of Benjamin's has become known as the 'lost diagram' and is now described in a short passage of writing, see *A Berlin Chronicle* (1932). Recently Helen Clarke and Sharon Kivland collaborated to request diagrammatic responses to interpret Benjamin's 'Lost Diagram' for their publication *Dream Weavers* (2017), and a second one in July (2017), dedicated to multiple interpretations of the 'Lost Diagram'. Exercising the strategy of multiples, the concept of diagram becomes a way of remembering and organising Benjamin's thinking. It also recognises the artistic potential Benjamin identified in sorting, cataloguing memory and information and how they occupy modern planes. For Benjamin, his 'scrappy paperwork' was a means of pursuing knowledge and 'knows no hierarchy'.<sup>x</sup> In *One Way Street and Other Writings*,<sup>xi</sup> Benjamin challenges the modes of writing and in *The Arcades Project* (1927 – 1940), the writing works towards the flexibility of fragments.



Ursula Marx draws attention to Benjamin's diagrammatic creations and their link between object and writing. In a preface to Chapter three of *Benjamin's Archive* (2007), 'From smallest detail to smallest details', Marx notes that Benjamin's arcade, 'a world in miniature' is expressed through small and condensed writing. An ambition to condense one hundred lines onto an ordinary sheet of notepaper so that 'The sheet of paper' should appeal to the eye as a textual image,<sup>xii</sup> demonstrates the intention of meaning within composition, structure and content. Gregory Bateson says 'The meaning of your communication is the response you get'<sup>xiii</sup> and Benjamin's use of the Arcade as a small and commodified world communicated through his textual notes and layouts, demonstrates the text as object. It also seems to signal how our own responses to the modern world have developed through technology in dense spaces of 'deliberateness and exactness',<sup>xiv</sup> and Jean Selz adds, 'to make something that can be 'unassuming, tiny and playful.'<sup>xv</sup>

Benjamin identified that depth of thought, logical reasoning, precise historic and scientific detail would inhabit and coexist with poetic counterparts –

*'a plane where poetry is no longer simply a form of literary thought, but reveals itself as an expression of truth that illuminates the most intimate correspondences between man and the world.'*<sup>xvi</sup>

Overall, *Walter Benjamin's Archive* is revealing to consider the strategies and intentions that have radicalised art writing and how we might re-address their usefulness use in the frame of theoretical and practical inquiry — as depth of thought — in a poetic plane — that is a textual object.

## Maciunas' Learning Machines, From Art History to a Chronology of Fluxus

by Astrit Schmidt-Burkhardt (2003)

*'Maciunas bestows on the dates of the years the same kind of 'physiognomy' that Walter Benjamin had seen as a general requirement for all historiography in his Arcades Project.'*<sup>xvii</sup>

The knowledge in object formations becomes a map over time and space to depict knowledge and model comprehension. 'Mapping knowledge was Maciunas' *raison d'être*', says Astrit Schmidt-Burkhardt, who charts the territories and intentions of George Maciunas' diagrams. Maciunas provided a substantial variety of examples of *'the art of networked thought'* in his charts and diagrams, some collaged, some expanding foldouts. Trained as an architect and designer his ways of managing knowledge centred Fluxus as the point on which to reject traditional systems of art in art, life, habits and knowledge. His broad education and 'ever expanding field of knowledge' led him to diagrammatise shifting from 2D to grander schemas in 3D and 4D to incorporate 'Aural, Optic, Olfactory, Epithelial and Tactile Art forms,'<sup>xviii</sup> cross reference and find overlapping associations that demonstrate a criticality of linear narratives in information.

Schmidt-Burkhardt describes it as a 'folded space' and 'landscapes of strata' that use vertical, horizontal and diagonal relationships. A pragmatic use of the diagram, Maciunas used them to determine lineages, chart diversions and run offs from art movements to make associations such as 'Happenings' alongside 'Baroque Ballets performed in Versailles'. Re-examining points according to associations and characteristics history led to new activities and multiplied. A familiar tool in finding new areas of research, it seems just as relevant now to how subjects might be introduced or isolated within a linear construct, whereas cross-sectional viewing might reveal critical points of interaction with history and knowledge.

*The Curriculum Plan*, on pages 32-33 of Maciunas' *Learning Machines*, show interdepartmental seminars and alternative groupings that have influenced what we see as some of the learning environments activities today. However, in order for contextual studies to work effectively within practice it may be worth considering how alternative groupings both within seminars and without, in other words beyond prescriptive time frames might operate. Whilst we have many activities that are integrated I'm interested in what other ways can be used to energise this area through unexpected groupings and cross course learning groups and student reading clusters, amongst other possibilities. Craig Saper discusses Fluxus as a laboratory and notes that it offers a research methodology as 'networked ideas', as Maciunas had said the goal was social rather than aesthetic, and even offers a pedagogical function.<sup>xx</sup>

The 'socio-poetic' interaction of this relationship is described through Ken Friedman's – 'The distance from this sentence to your eye is my sculpture.' This goes beyond critical appreciation to suggest a social network built on playing through our interacting among people, activities and objects. Fluxus functions as more than a way to organise information – it organises social networks, networks of people learning and provokes how we use such a model as a pedagogical tool.

Though index cards, games the relevance of codes, systems and schemes set up a construction for a pedagogical function. Saper describes the Fluxus approach as 'a generalised systems theory' that experiments with the structure of influence and socio-poetic links.<sup>xxi</sup> Event scores and index instructions pose possibilities to develop networked reading, writing, sharing and crits as part of the learning environment. It is not necessary to simply imitate, although this could be a starting point, but it might be useful to consider such activities and what they might be in contemporary forms. However, Fluxus possibly offers its biggest potential as a function in the process of thinking.

A Fluxus event or interactive game is interactionally disorganised and manifested itself in obliterated words, collage, displacement and shuffling the order of things to open up a discursive space and challenge assumptions. In short, an architectural writing that shudders and shakes frames of reference through reflexive examination. Saper suggests that the flexography of this practice implies a *'flexible writing practice.'*<sup>xxii</sup> Saper's interpretation and phrasing removes the appearance of the writing experiments and diagrammatic associated with Fluxus to provide a fresh way of viewing the potential of interactive games, or like Dick Higgin's title essay 'Intermedia' suggests, to provoke a flexible writing process as a pedagogical tool for the process and output of art and design writing.



## Blueprint for Counter Education

by Larry Miller and Maurice Stein (1970),  
Inventory Press (2016)

'A defining and neglected work of radical pedagogy, published in 1970 and integrated into the Critical Studies curriculum at CalArts,'<sup>xxiv</sup> recently republished with a book containing the conversations with the Blueprint authors in the original cover design by Marshall Henrich's. Inspired by Bauhaus and Black Mountain College it was an attempt to integrate domains for a multidisciplinary approach.<sup>xxv</sup>

Containing a Shooting Script and three larger two-color charts, it is a blueprint to be:

*'constructively acted upon by the student in the widest and most creative sense of the word act: "Since the project is planned as a highly participative series of art-life-politics games, we urge the reader-player to immediately take the initiative."'*<sup>xxvi</sup>

Integrated into the Critical Studies curriculum at the California Institute of the Arts under author Maurice Stein, it still presents the notion of working in the present to build shapes of ideas that resonate and are relevant for contemporary issues. More than that it presents a non-hierarchical idea that it is a community of scholars that make decisions for 'now'.



Including blackboard diagrams notecards, rough sketches, careful charts, actual blueprints and mylar transcriptions to wall decorations, the variety of tools in shaping flexible constructs of learning that require active engagement over passive.<sup>xxvii</sup> 'The Funnel chart' shows two funnels one for Herbert Marcuse and the other for Marshall McLuhan to demonstrate how the theme of the audio-tactile environment might be processed through different thought funnels. These strategies were ways of cutting across domains and student responses to the CalArts Blueprint approach offered surprising responses to include audio and music related charts and influences, something that had been overlooked by the first set of charts.

Stein and Miller reflect that their research showed the charts were mostly suitable for younger generations such as those in their 20s as they were familiar and responsive to routing the formats whereas older generations found them more of an imposition. It is interesting that similar observations can be found when discussing students responsiveness to different online formats and platforms, which is why reflecting on the reprint edition in 2016 in that context.



So why reprint the publication in 2016, and what potential does it offer now? It seems that whilst radical, it is not a radical movement but has a radical potential energy that whilst difficult to maintain problematizes current pedagogy again. The spatial potential of the actual reading space is centralised as an imperative part of the process of diagrammatising and chart use. Stein says that the looking of back and forth between texts and charts, between charts, finely attunes attention. Comparative and reflective processes maximize participation as a way of getting-in to the learning and thinking environment. What holds attention now is the relational environment of digital media on online platforms. With this in mind, the *Blueprint for Counter Education* is now available online at JeffreySchnapp.com.<sup>xxviii</sup> All the charts are uploaded and clicking on them reveals hotspot hyper links to chart essays. Whilst the charts are the same from the publication, it poses a new challenge to think how this models a learning environment. It follows the process as in 'following your nose' through links in browsing online, and as an immediate learning environment – it means going 'back and forth'. If we are to provide and facilitate responsiveness and self initiated learning it is perhaps worth considering how learners create their own set of tools, methods, diagrams, links and 'back and forth' methods on the back of being introduced to myriad forms of charting through the pedagogic process. And, it is to the young learners that this problematising would perhaps reap the most innovative and responsive ways of charting, as they are adept and familiar with the reading and processing from the 'back and forth' structures of the digital dissemination of information and routing.



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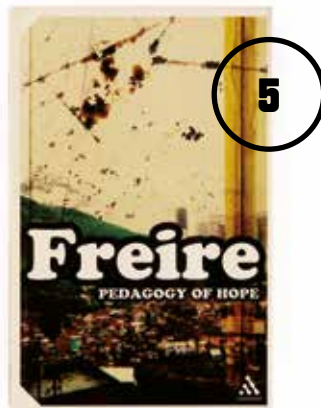


## Pedagogy of Hope

by Paulo Freire  
first published (1994), (2006)

*'Never does an event, a fact, a deed, a gesture of rage or love, a poem, a painting, a song, a book, have only one reason behind it...they have been touched in manifold whys.'* <sup>xxxix</sup>

Freire, interested in understanding the process in which things come about in a product, examines the processes of experiences that enable us to connect ideas, recognise facts, fuse pieces of knowledge and 'solder moments'. <sup>xxxix</sup> In this attitude Freire offers a progressive pedagogy that is in the careful reading of the world expressed in discourse, syntax, semantics and desires. <sup>xxxix</sup> In reflecting on his earlier work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire considers where his pedagogical radicalisation began, in the realisation that we need to understand the fabrics in which people live, and in which our students live. It is worth asking how understanding the lived environment may offer ways to examine how we teach and facilitate. <sup>xxxix</sup> How many of us are at close quarters to severe impairment and disability, to impoverished conditions, to families racked with debt and trying to get an education in order to retain the hope of social mobility. How close to those students that have to work many hours to supplement their education, and how close to the widening technological gap between students experience and access? Freire asks us to consider the position, we as teachers come from, and examine whether we are speaking 'to' or 'with' people. If we do not, we fail to appreciate how experience impacts on learning processes, and possible learning lenses. In other words, what 'affects' does the learning material and environment have? There are, Freire points out, concrete and limiting conditions that exile with a silence that follows. How then, do we create a lively arena of cultural debate that means those that find the learning environment challenging, can develop their language rather than that of the authoritarian? Freire points in the direction of intersections of culture and knowledge 'in which the pedagogy of the oppressed could take root'. <sup>xxxix</sup> In responses that intervene and juxtapose the traditional speech of the classroom, Freire calls for engagement with students' actual experience, to respect it rather than underestimate it or reject it.



In radical education we tend to gather to the cultural left and assume the left as a position that challenges, intervenes hierarchies, and creates 'class knowledge'. Freire's greatest criticism is that these are sometimes posited as clichés of ideological discourse. Rather it is necessary to look to the qualities of these ideas to get them dirty with pragmatism. The limitations of what is pragmatic contrasted with what is pragmatically required to generate, is off the gap between discussing challenges and difficulties. Such ideologies can smooth-over so that conflict is subjugated. In a recent conference in Stockholm I witnessed this precise problem where one speaker discussed the problems of a group of Muslim women struggling with the arrival of Trump. Quite reasonably she discussed those issues with her students but then added the use of populist psychology to offer a 'safe-space'. In doing so the judgement closed out the discussion, to make a smoothed over arena in the assumption that all would agree that there was no space for those bearing dissatisfaction or anger from those considered ignorant – it was clear that those opinions would not be heard or tolerated. What is this in University, that we cannot accept struggle and argument? So here is a problem, what then of those whose experience is counter to left ideals, what and how do we negotiate those experiences we may couch as fanatical, ignorant or angry? Do we dare offer the means to investigate their position, find a language that expresses their experience in a meaningful way – in what way are those struggles part of the existence of classes to strive? Freire points out that these discussions themselves are often lost in rhetoric to be just, to express aspects of marginalisation rather than actual marginalisation.

*'There are historical moments at which the survival of the social whole imposes on the classes a need to understand one another – which does not mean, let us repeat, experiencing a new historical time devoid of social classes and their conflicts. A new historical time, yes, but a time in which the social classes continue to exist and to fight for their respective interests.'* <sup>xxxix</sup>

Freire is reassuring, asserting that conflict is necessary. How do we engage with it, and how do we make points of contention if it defers to authoritarian moulds. I think as facilitators we can potentially lose and fail in an enthusiastic rhetoric of socialistic dreaming that favours some difficulties over others. We can't afford to have fashionable marginals. Freire states we need to leap into, rather than just knowing 'about it', a kind of curious process of 'being in', 'stepping back' and reflecting about it with 'what we know about it'. From this, autonomy and negotiation can enable individuals to fashion 'a way' rather than 'the way', to negotiate their own distortions as 'other ways and whys' between awareness and the world for more transformations of reality. So why do I include this here, because in Freire's inquiry he has called into question the spatial organisation of social parameters and their lived experiences in education, and that seems very relevant for how we consider the position of Critical Studies within Art and Design Education 'now'.

See *The Texts of Paulo Freire*, Paul V. Taylor (London: Open University Press, 1993) (6).

**The Texts of Paulo Freire,**  
by Paul V. Taylor (London:  
Open University Press, 1993)



**Teaching to Transgress**  
by bell hooks (1994)

Excitement and lively culture drove bell hooks to explore how intellectual inquiry can be an exciting and joyous learning process. <sup>xxxv</sup> Asking teaching practitioners to bear witness to education and enable transgressions for the facilitation of students across diverse backgrounds, hooks takes Paulo Freire’s engaged pedagogy to heart in order to discuss education as a practice of freedom. Ideas alone are not enough to provide an exciting learning process, states hooks, and for her ‘theorizing and making sense’ <sup>xxxvi</sup> lead to liberating ways to challenge and re-think. Many, through diverse multicultural backgrounds face the challenge of biases in education and ideas that are considered neutral. Insufficient practices means students can remain passive as biases and neutralities render the differences of individual inquiries and language, at a value of ‘less than’. There is no blueprint for differences, no chart, only engaged pedagogy that acknowledges everyone’s presence as valuable. In doing so, hooks asserts alternative pedagogies can be realised but this might mean that the teacher has to examine their own life, practices and habits in a ‘will to become’ and to ‘re-think ways of knowing.’ Creating meaningful knowledge means challenging our own biases to make space for new specific languages and new inquiries to emerge. And, hook’s refers to how we write and speak, how we perform teaching. Hooks interweaves a personal reflection in her inquiry to reflect how childhood education and previous established practices, silence.

*‘when our lived experience of theorizing is fundamentally linked to processes of self recovery, of collective liberation, no gap exists between theory and practice.’ <sup>xxxvii</sup>*



Similarly to Freire, hooks is concerned with those that fall between boundaries, but focuses her attention on the multiple differences of gender and race. Her challenge – are we engaged in tokenism, for tokenism does not facilitate or provide a sufficient catalyst. Issues of culture, race and the latest raft of ‘bolt-ons’ such as ‘sustainability’, are often taught in sections, isolated from the rest of the curriculum rather than woven in as ongoing inquiries that permeate all aspects of learning. Hooks reminds us to avoid such tokenism and challenge norms to explore the realities of cultural diversity. While theory led, hooks into multiple ways and liberatory learning experience, she is clear that theory does not have the ability to simply resolve or clear the path through ideas, rather it only ‘fulfills this function when we ask that it do so and direct our theorizing towards this end.’ <sup>xxxviii</sup> The relevance rests on the function of theorizing. The diagram acts as a function of relations, usually based on representations of thoughts to clarify and be quantifiable. They are used to construct and orientate in order to bring about a practical bearing on the conduct of life, however, Deleuze’s concept of the function of the diagram is as an agent of creation and subversion that is not based on existing processes but in process to transform, subvert – to be a catalyst for new ones. In a similar way theorizing for bell hooks works as function. It seems that theorizing is a dynamic and fluctuating process occurring between thought structures, ideas in the written and visual terrain, a relational map and as a stage between. The potential of the diagram as a functional tool could be used within contextual studies to engage in the ‘betweens’, the ‘overlaps’ and the ‘multiples’ to find routes of inquiry that express the diversity and particular uniqueness of the language or approach of each student present.

## Diagrammatic Writing, Onomatopée 97, Cabinet Project by Johanna Drucker (2013)

Drucker uses the visual and spatial features as active elements in poetic production. <sup>xii</sup> From *A-Z* (1977) and *History of the/my Wor(l)d* (1989) Drucker questions a book as object, text and discourse in their assumptions about what form performs. <sup>xiii</sup> Formatting substance, Drucker reflects on writing as a performance on page, screen, book, surface and substrate. <sup>xiiii</sup> The challenge, to figure out an identity amidst the noise of writing and presentation of ideas, and one that faces our students.

The ‘stochastic’, for Drucker is an event space capturing poetic and aesthetic issues in a visual epistemology. Importantly, this criticises our use of formal properties in the written components of practice based and practice-led degrees. Drucker is useful too in considering how:

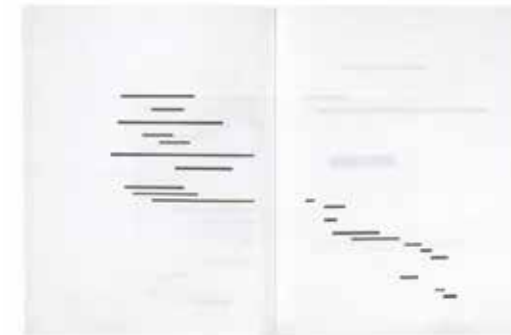
*‘the book is not a static object but a dynamic space, not a fixed and final expression but an organized arrangement of elements whose spatial relations encode semantic value.’ <sup>xliv</sup>*

Using Stéphane Mallarmé’s *Un Coup de Dés ( A Throw of the Dice)* (1897), Drucker draws attention to the work as bending and crossing structures.



**Figure 1.** Stéphane Mallarmé, Extract from *Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard*, ('A roll of the Dice will never abolish chance'), 1897.

Marcel Bloodthaers went on to complete a graphic version in 1969, which conceptualised writing practices and questioned the cultural identity of poetry and its potential aesthetic production for writing in the arts. Poetry enters writing as a potential bending process in written forms and aesthetic activity. Drucker points out that it offers a matrix of possibility in the ‘mix of sound-language-graphic possibilities’. <sup>xlv</sup>



**Figure 2.** Marcel Bloodthaers, *'A roll of the Dice'*, 1969.

Diagrams do not depend upon representational and concrete visions of the ideogram. Rather, they are kinetic, mobilised fields of articulated relations – conditions of poetic form between language, temporary figuration and the poet. In *Stochastic Poetics*, Drucker examines ‘how does poetic language register against the larger field of language practice?’ <sup>xlvi</sup> Drucker’s research covers the imaging of the diagram as a place for juxtaposition and collage as compositional approaches, to reject merely illustrative and descriptive forms, and to create discursive writing. Far from random she emphasises that we learn from Mallarmé the use of chance to produce probabilistic meanings, structures and compositions to create a tension of meaning in dynamic play. Not static, not illustrative, the diagram, much as Gilles Deleuze asserts, is a dynamic space of relations that create conversation, and critically challenge assumed pictures of our world. <sup>xlvii</sup> As an event space, Drucker poses her book diagrammatic writing as part of many attempts to intercept noise, and the diagrammatic, the potential tool for doing so.



In this slither of a book Drucker condenses the interplay of 'ragged right, breathes differently than justified texts'.<sup>xlviii</sup> She uses the space as a substance of vectors and forces to bring writing into proximity. Using multiples, multiplesmultiplesmultiples, lines as \gestures/ and the drama of layout, ideas, concepts are framed, embedded and entangled.

Small text boxes disrupt and add layers of interpretation that are not explained in the usual logical diverted, and in the relational system as 'always emergent inexhaustible, variable Using margins as asides, the impact of these elements alter the habits of the reading eye and create a superimposed layer of image reading in relation to the text. sequence. Attention is graphic form questions of diagrammatic writing and conditional – and specific.'<sup>xlix</sup>

In a digital age we are encouraging students in art and design to use contextual studies as a dynamic tool throughout their writing and presentation of ideas. This means using structures and communication systems on how to best disseminate their work.



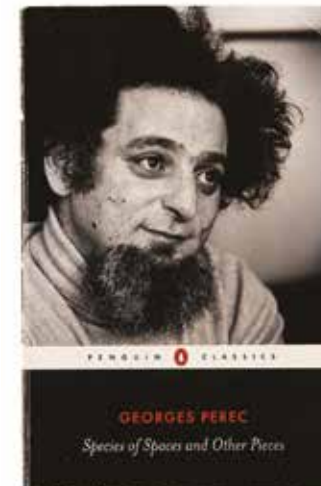
In Design Products we've witnessed mini animations embedded as hyperlinks in essays, interview transcripts. On an Interdisciplinary course, one student discussed the subject of the semiotic 'I' and the ego with diagrammatic text including text figures. In one institution I've had an entire piece submitted that was conducted through a live email conversation in a gallery, which was transposed and edited as part of their contextual studies portfolio. 'Portfolio' offers a way to consider the charting of critical ideas amidst the noise. The diagrammatic is in our spatial organisation of communication, and therefore, poses a dynamic possibility for considering how we encourage students to communicate ideas, develop discursive criticisms, interject, and set a rhythm of interceptions in our conversations over art and design.

## Species of Spaces and Other Pieces

first published 1974, George Perrec (1997)

That familiar little 'Encyclopédie' – 'pieces of spaces', which interestingly was contracted by a friend of Perrec's in architecture, demonstrates the architectural influence on writing spaces in urban and domestic settings. George Bachelard wrote earlier in the *Poetics of Space* (1958), a breakdown of interiors in relation to the experience of sensing and space, which has since informed the interpretations such as corners and furniture such as cupboards and drawers. Doris Salcedo, famous for filling wardrobes with concrete amongst aux various makes furniture architectural and discursively visually poetic. The links between architecture and spacing poetically, have helped in forming our ideas on how to re-think space. Increasingly, we have used architectural spacing as a way to develop writing practice demonstrated by writers such as Jane Rendell. Perhaps, any radicalisation for writing within the context of practice should be less about the execution of essays but about developing a complimentary writing practice that can include essays but other formats conducive to exploring inquiry and contexts that leak from practice.

Perrec has been mimicked in his spatial writing features to develop architectural compositions in contemporary written practice, but how might we think about his comment 'Our field of vision reveals a limited space, something vaguely circular, which ends very quickly to left and right and doesn't extend very far up or down....we have to twist our bodies to see properly what is behind us',<sup>1</sup> when our envelopes for viewing and examining spaces range from go-pros, to macro to tunnel cameras, underwater apparatus, aerial views and so on. What impact do they have on the range of what we see on one space and multiple spaces at once, and how can this inform the spatial organisation of writing?



## Education for Socially Engaged Art, A Materials and Techniques Handbook by Pablo Helguerra (2011)

Helguerra's useful handbook narrows its focus on how effective socially engaged art is when it can so easily be reduced to 'do gooder' practices. Examining the complex relations in social art practice he reflects on the methods for teaching frameworks. However, the book's implication goes further to think about performance as pedagogical strategy for relational and critical processes in a variety of teaching situations. It seems just as relevant now to how we encourage engagement in dealing with contemporary issues and debate in relation to art and design practices.

Charles Garoian establishes collaborative art forms as a democratic process where different kinds of experience and knowledge contribute as counter points.<sup>ii</sup> Pablo Huegerra says that history and theory won't do – engagement is required and is a kind of performance.

*'One is better served by gathering knowledge from a combination of the disciplines – pedagogy, theater, ethnography, anthropology and communication, among others – from which artists construct their vocabularies in different combinations depending on their interests and needs.'*<sup>iii</sup>

Conjunctions of format and contact mean art and design projects need shifting formats that oscillate between formal debate and free-form.<sup>iiii</sup> But, like social art there are dangers in the pedagogical situation of paternal teaching that reflects a lack of interest rather than mutual interest in the participation, resulting in inserting ideas into provided structures. Just as the artist might impose their vision on a community, teaching runs the same risks. I prefer Helguerra's use of delicate negotiation to sensitive or negotiated exchange, as it communicates the fragile balance of exchange processes that keeps both parties (teacher and student) vulnerable and engaged to pursue interests together through mutual respect and sincere interest. However Helguerra expresses the concerns that engineered formulas are deployed, even within radical collaborative pedagogies, which lead to the very authoritarian or teacher as sender models that discursive practices seek to reject. To be sure, the problem is that they are susceptible to academic rules.<sup>liv</sup>

*'Once we set aside these all too common pitfalls in SEA's embrace of education, we encounter myriad art projects that engage with pedagogy in a deep and creative way, proposing potentially exciting directions.'*<sup>lv</sup>

So in what way do multi-layered structures continue to keep dialogue open rather than revert to consolidated structures for specific ends? 'Understanding social processes doesn't oblige us to operate in any particular capacity,'<sup>lvi</sup> we can raise awareness and function with greater clarity. Garoian notes that multiple strategies diversify pedagogy to accumulate different learning styles that include both improvisation and interpretation. 'Shifting strategies' are necessary for learners to form their cultural perspectives. Helguerra's experiences show how social engagement operates by attaching itself to subjects and problems that normally belong to other disciplines to allow ambiguity, and an action that operates in-between, by 'snatching' subjects into the fields of art and design making, for new insights to show-up.<sup>lvii</sup>



In the creation of dialogue in art projects just as in teaching spaces avoiding 'any-conversation-whatever' as part of open formats and Helguerra is helpful in attuning dialogue structures of subject, format and speech acts in the form of a diagram.

Helguerra diagrammatises types of dialogue for open formats – dialogue structure is required, structure of subject, format of speech acts.<sup>lviii</sup> As experienced and performed learning, Helguerra utilises the diagram beyond vector and representation to performed teaching diagrams. Shifting beyond pointing to awareness in order to raise it, like breaking open an orange, Helguerra embodies the process of teaching as a performing teacher.

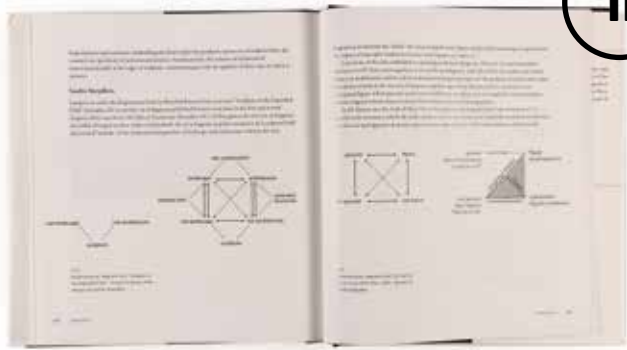
*"On the Future of Art"*, a performance Lecture by Pablo Helguerra, he uses the spatial organisation of theatre and a number of performers to perform speech acts of dialogue shifting across and around the room. Performance functions from socially engaged art which blur distinctions between artwork and experience to blend authorship, collectivity and experience in the lecture theatre. Just as socially engaged art making is not an accurate representation, neither are the performances intended to be, but the structure complicates the reading of a situation, to the extent that they act as a set of problems, rolling like die into the audience.

Using Rosalind Krauss's phrase Helguerra considers pedagogy in 'the expanded field' to underline how the art project can be the means to liberate strategies as tools for understanding. Krauss is careful in all her writings to underscore the role of function and here Helguerra interprets the art project not just as a literal art-project but as a functional set of strategies that can operate in the lecture theatre, the seminar and so on. In 2012, I delivered and overview and introduction to some of the thought informing the myriad output of spatial practices. Each student was given an A4 piece of a paper as they entered. Encouraged to first perceive the paper as document, tradition, political, in short a 'white-paper' we then used the various strategies of Deleuze's 'fold', envelope, and Jacque Lacan's compressed paper as fragmented text, to think about space. Whilst knowledge based leads, they were encouraged to interpret. Strategic to the dialogic process it was a way of developing curiosity and mnemonic devices to take on board some of the concepts that lead to interpretations and discussions in seminars. The theatre became a performed space between teacher and students as a mutual leaning space.

See *Retracing the Expanded Field, Encounters between Art and Architecture*, edited by Spyros Papapetros and Julian Rose (2014) (11).



11



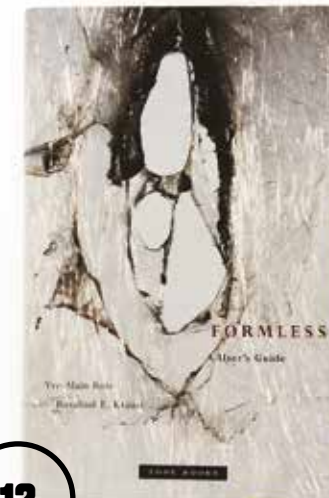
**Retracing the Expanded Field,  
Encounters between Art and Architecture**  
edited by Spyros Papapetros  
and Julian Rose (2014)

There are several responses to Rosalind Krauss's *Sculpture in the Expanded Field* including those form students that keep the conversation unfolding in several directions.

**Formless" A User's Guide**  
by Yves Alain-Bois and Rosalind Krauss (1997)

George Bataille's original dictionary definition of formlessness in the surrealist journal *Documents* 1929-30, emphasised how meaning is brought about through tasks, and the task of formless is a term by which 'to bring things down in the world.'<sup>ix</sup> Rosalind Krauss and Yve-Alain Bois re-introduced the term, in an exhibition on the *informe*, at the Pompidou Centre in 1996. *Formless: A User's Guide* (1996), the catalogue of the exhibition, paid homage to Bataille's use of the dictionary format and provided a series of essays on the functions and tasks of formlessness.

Divided into four sections, the *Formless Guide* is organised as a series of alphabetically ordered essays, with tasks and connections between artists, under broader conceptual schemas of 'Base Materialism', 'Horizontality', 'Pulse' and 'Entropy'. The entire guide is not in a linear format and is an act of sabotage and declasser arrangement.



12





**'The Original Scene of Writing'**  
 by Peter Eisenman, in Mark Garcia ed.  
 Diagrams of Architecture (2010)

The diagram as an original scene of writing!

Whether the diagram is some kind of explanatory abstraction, cartoon, formula, machine, abstract and concrete, Eisenman asserts it is a potential site for the emergence of difference. A place to suspend ruling oppositions and a way to transform contexts, the diagram is part of a social project of inquiry. Useful in understanding the nature of a thing, diagrams can be used to facilitate and open up autonomy. In this way, he insists they are potential spaces of writing, writing an intermediate condition, a dynamic process of thinking that reveals patterns, sequences, and identifies stabilities in practice.

<sup>ix</sup> Opening the gaps between the diagram and form, Eisenman says that the diagram is a representation of a thing that is not itself.

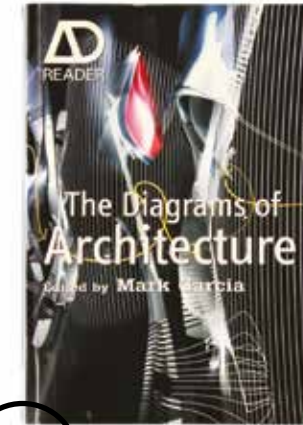
*'At the same time, a diagram is neither a structure nor an abstraction of structure...it explains relationships in an architectural object.'* <sup>ix</sup>

The implications of the diagrams as multiple instances mean they can uncover latent structures of organisation. For Eisenman, the diagram offers a way of making qualities, ideas and relationships more visible.

*'The diagram understood as a strata of supposed traces offers the possibility of opening up the visible to the articulable, to what is within the visible.'* <sup>ix</sup>

The diagram as an original scene of writing offers multiple ways of writing, drawing, and scoring relationships and structures between ideas, in order to bring both visual and articulable clarity.

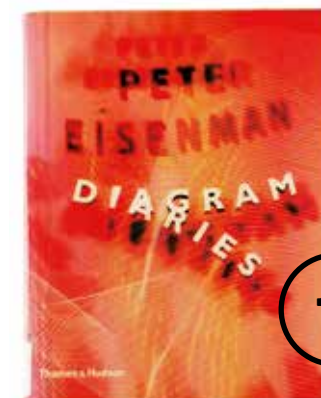
See also *Diagram Diaries* by Peter Eisenman (1999) **(14)**



**13**



**Diagram Diaries**  
 by Peter Eisenman (1999)



**14**

## Deleuze and the Diagram

by Jakub Zdebik (2012)

Provides tracks the threads of Deleuze's thought on the mode and use of the diagram.

*'The line (linear model) is a privileged figure in Deleuze's thought, from theoretical foundations to aesthetic positions. Supple, malleable, open to all torsions of will and of chance, it is opposed to the punctual model or the form proceeding... of constituted and closed entities.'*<sup>lxiii</sup>



## Figures in Air, Essays towards a Philosophy of Audio

by Micah Silver (2014)

*'Audio's particular opportunity affords an uncomfortably intimate encounter with representation, as our subjective acoustic memory, our sense of place, our personal memories, our ways of thinking, feeling, and being, the social rules provoked by the audio...we can embrace all of these forces as audio's subjective grace.'*<sup>lxiv</sup>

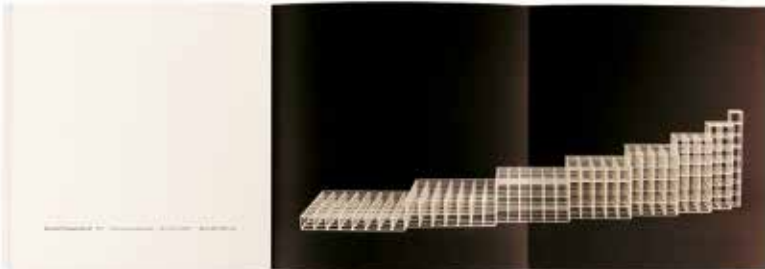
This poses the architecture of sound, and is useful in considering how pedagogical practices might harness the media of audio in a schema, a construction of ideas. Audio books, podcasts to narrations over drawing can offer a way to submit ideas that are structurally and methodologically authentic to students learning processes. With the range of media platforms audio annotations, journals and presentation films, performed fragments or interviews can offer a research dissemination of 'thinking in practice'.

## Horizontal Progressions, Sol Lewitt by Pace (2014)

The progressions demonstrate a simple way of thinking through drawing and making. As an essentialised example it offers a way to examine structure and method of workings that are spatial and diagrammatic as spatial, successional, progressional and serial. Its structure provides a way of utilising the method of the diagrammatic as a serial and development processing of ideas.



17



## Site-Writing: The Architecture of Art Criticism by Jane Rendell (2010)

Jane Rendell suggests that writing is the site of building, design and thinking. Drawing attention to the architectural concepts of writing as spatial and material, she observes that design appears in written texts as well as drawing. Rendell says thinking takes place as a spatial construction and poses altering dynamics for thinking about writing and criticism as a situated practice. Spatial terms and configurations appear in Rendell's *'An Embellishment: Purdah'* as a site-writing between a window and a book, in response to a changing site. This work demonstrates the shifting strategies that might be used to think how experience of a site or a work might be encountered. Narratives alter our habits and cultures, yet the spaces between context and experience also present how we might be situated and positioned by a work. 'Since 'mapping', 'locating', 'situating', 'positioning' and 'boundaries' frequently appear as spatialised ways to situate our knowledge' <sup>ixv</sup> in constructing subjects and political positions of identity and difference in our writing, it is interesting to think about Rendell's position:

*'My own impulse to 'write' rather than 'write about' architecture, aims to shift the relation between the critic and her object of study from one of mastery – the object under critique – or writing about an object – to one of equivalence and analogy – writing as the object.'* <sup>ixvi</sup>



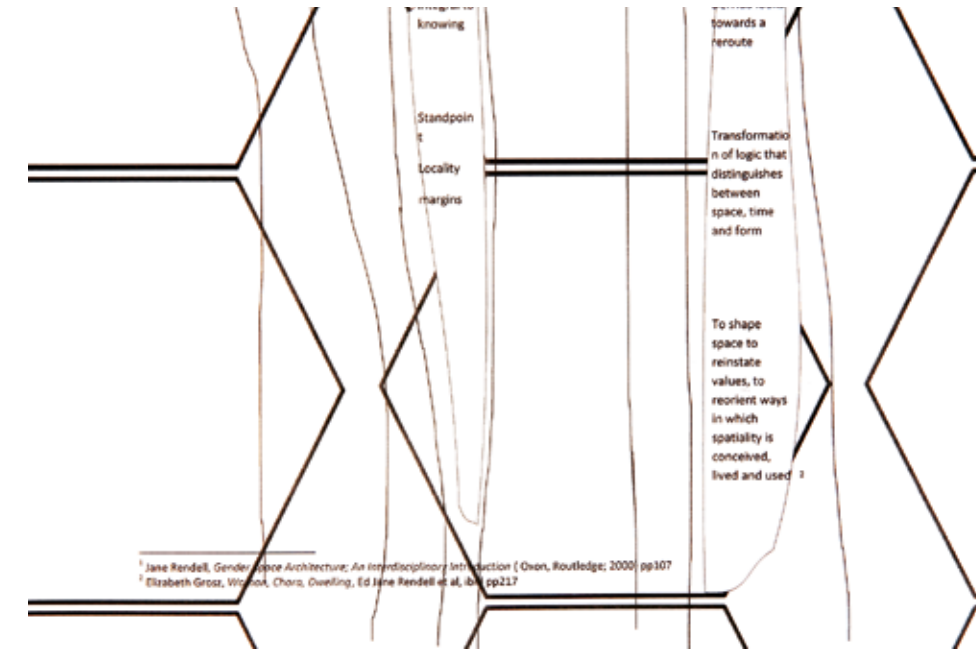
**Crate of Knowledge**  
by Joanna Leah Geldard

**Report on Knowledge**  
by Sharon Kivland, (2014)

In 2014, I participated in Sharon Kivland's library intervention project with Leeds College of Art. Kivland the master, and we were to be her slaves; selecting, studying and using library time to collect ideas related to body, psyche, space and produce a report in any format. Working with the fragmented body, space and memory, a rather broad condition, I found a place of theorising and writing the body in schemas, categories and organisational strategies that were diagrammatic. Printed onto metre square tracing paper these were folded according to Elizabeth Diller's *Dissident Housework* series, in the ironing of the white patriarchal shirt. I knew that unpacking this 'crate of knowledge' would be difficult and almost impossible to fold back into place. I also chose to install and interrupt the library with plumbobs on diagrammatised boards that sat on the floor, to which were attached helium balloons. Under the balloons were stitched upside down balloons that worked down into long text threads secured to the plumb bobs. One of the things that struck me whilst reflecting back on the awkwardly folded report and the text format in stitch and boards, was the relationship between the physical strategy and the experiential knowledge of the text. I'd theorized my way towards structures that were not part of the library format, structure or system. They were floating diagrams, folded diagrams and stitched diagrams that were quietly resistant to the biases of which we organise and stratify knowledge. bell hooks reminds us that when considering feminist and multicultural practices, they challenge us to think about models of learning and to exercise freedom in education. Published by information as material.<sup>lxvii</sup>



19



## Conclusion

This collection of books aimed to span ideas on the diagram, its pedagogical potential as a learning tool that crosses the boundaries of what is writing, and what is drawing between the relationships of theory and practice. More importantly it seems to offer a strategy that is transferable and can wander through studio and theoretical based discussion as an enmeshed and synthesising activity. The grouping also aimed to shape the concepts associated with the tools and strategies of the diagram for writing, to push around the notion of what a flexible writing practice might be.

Freire, Helguerra and hooks, all isolate the sinkholes of relational and engaged activity and pose ways to work at the delicate negotiation of teaching as an engaged activity. Whilst they do not necessarily directly tackle diagrammatising, they have focused on functional spatial organisation in a diagrammatic way to challenge our assumptions on pedagogy. They take the diagram out of the limits of a 'thing thingy' into performed and functional actions of spatial organisation.

I think that Freire, hooks and *The Blueprint for Counter Education* have something important in common in that their intentions were to find an education that worked for those less than enthusiastic about their educational experience as with Stein and Miller. '*Counter Education*' was about stimulating and activating those overlooked, and who were not seeing the potential liveliness of a learning culture, something that is important in thinking about attitudes towards engagement from both staff and learners. More than that, they are all concerned with spatial margins of difference in class and race that affect the experience of the learning environment. What is a teaching history as heirloom if it does not challenge its own biases and models? They request a rethink on tokenism, to reflect on our own biases in order to find relevant methods for teaching.

In all the examples there are small demonstrations of flexible learning processes that make the diagrammatic strategy a challenge on what we might think as flexible. From learning processes in multidimensional charts, to a simple image diagram, to flexible learning environments that might make the lecture a spatial performance, to learning groups based on research interest at undergraduate level to flexible writing practiced outcomes, means engaging pragmatically to 'lived' theorising. Paul Cronin reminds us, 'by tailoring the academic studies to the attitudes and framework of the artist (I refer to both art and design practitioners here), the course can take on a special and pertinent meaning for the student.'<sup>lxviii</sup> So what does Contextual and Critical Studies need to do? Cronin said 'Critical Studies was to be the glue that bound together all artistic disciplines of CalArts, the circuit board connecting the Institutes underlying currents.'<sup>lxix</sup> These choreographers of diagrammatic processes and practices work at making Critical Studies the active current and sticky glue, the circuit board, as they consider mapping as porous, dynamic, relational and catalytic.

**“Derived from the latin charta, signifying paper but also (as in “playing card”), the word chart evokes multiple words: play navigation, mapping, contracts, and legal charters...The charts are alternatively described as a paper enclosure, three walls-worth of graffiti, a spatial system that invites ocular drifting (think dérive), a theater for participating in and performing knowledge, a game of three-dimensional press, a landscape or star chart, a timeline that can be read from left to right, a library catalogue, and a visual statement that bridges the gap between the pictorial and the prosaic.”<sup>i</sup>**

Lawrence Lipton

## End notes

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