BIBLIOGRAPHY OF REFERENCES

How we experience digital texts?

POSITIONS THROUGH ITERATING

Goldsmith, K. (2011) '*Revenge of the Text'*
Uncreative Writing: Managing Language in the Digital Age. New York: Columbia
University Press. pp. 14–33

Goldsmith's chapter "Revenge of the Text" further deepened my initial iterations on *how we experience digital texts* as the author dissects materiality in language. Goldsmith refers to text as active language that inherently carries content, and communicates through it's shape and layout. In digital contexts texts are more active as they can be clicked on and transposed. By rendering my text through different media I was treating the text as Goldsmith mentioned (2011, p.15) not to be read but to move, manipulate, limit and enlarge it. As a result, my project has been focusing on the fluidity of digitalised language, a characteristic connected to its materiality.

The text challenged my position regarding how softwares contaminate texts with adds, buttons, notifications, etc. All of these features I consider "distracting" become interesting as Goldsmith refers to these as language acting upon language (2011, p.22). Additional words are a result of network ecologies that create new versions of the piece of writing. As a result, active digital contexts generate additive texts where final versions don't exist. Even images composed of "neat rows, programmed by even stricter bonds than any rhetorical form" of language (Goldsmiths, 2011), add new layers of words into texts.

Finally Goldsmith's text allowed me to name and identify the method I explored in half of my iterations: patch writing. As a method it allows me to explore and demonstrate the fluidity of language, as an additive and active subject.

Tenen, D. (2017) '*Literature down to a pixel' Plain Text: The Poetics of Computation.*
Stanford: Stanford University Press. pp. 165-195

Tenen's text 'Literature down to a pixel' challenged my approach as I was keen on critiquing digital mediums, and how they interrupted a traditional conception of reading. Through my latest iterations I tried to show how uncomfortable digital texts are because they become a mesh of information that can feel overwhelming, and is interrupted by additional information such as icons, ads or UX buttons. However, the author made me realise that I couldn't expect to have the same experience as he questioned "What does it mean to perceive seemingly static words through a fundamentally dynamic medium?" (2017, p.165).

The text allowed me to identify that my discomfort when engaging with digital reading comes from what Tenen states as a change in the mode of perception (2017, p.166). Digital perception pushes the body into new and sometimes unfamiliar shapes. However, these allow us to interact with texts in multiple ways, and as so digital vision is meant to deliver us from linearity. Tenan also states that digital mediums don't affect the message but the perception of it. I agree and disagree since digital formats can enhance or limit a message, changing it original meaning.

Boddington, R. (2021) '*Experience a whole new way of reading online with these five websites*', It's Nice That, 07/07. Available at: https://www.itsnicethat.com/articles/double-click-july-2021-readers-digital-070721 (Accessed: 20/04/2023).

Through small interviews Boddington explores how websites are challenging traditional reading experiences to become more engaging and absorbing. It is interesting how the author questions if websites should nod real life mediums, or forge entirely new experiences. Relevant to my process was understanding that reading experiences are a work in progress since the way we read is constantly evolving. As a result, *Making as Thinking* designers use different formats that allow users to have self-reflective experiences. This made me think of using different space alignments, motions graphics and interactions to create a diverse reading experience. On another hand, *Schemas of Uncertainty*, where an example of how to engage with the material quality of language online, as they create interactive motion graphics that evoke the website's research. Nonetheless, the author argues that alluding to print media is functional as a means to guide the user around a site. *Developments.media* designers challenged my perception suggesting that to encourage people to read for longer periods of time, mobile phones are comfortable as the act of scrolling is trilling. However, this can only happen if the screen isn't saturated of content or extraneous aesthetic elements that distract the user. This made me think about continuing my iterations on a mobile format. It makes sense for the project as I engage with digital reading on my phone, and it makes me think of how the body is also involved with the format and action.

Morgenstern, C. and Ramanathan, R (2009) '*In the Land of Punctuation*'. Tara Books.

Ramanathan's book was a good insight into how language has an inherent expressiveness that reflects and dialogues with semantic meanings. This text in particular uses the smallest and purest components of language (punctuation symbols and shapes) thoroughly, and the illustrator demonstrates how to create textual landscapes that evoke and have meaning. In particular, this reference made me reflect how digital tools and mediums can be used to exponentiate the fluidity and material qualities of language. Other relevant factors where the use of colour and size as two elements that also create meaning and different reading levels. For instance, exploring type widths can deliberately shift the attention, hide and expose aspects of a text,

deepening or entangling a reading experience. An interesting decision of breaking components sparked new ideas of how to iterate with this characteristics in digital contexts, something to consider for an interactive iteration/exploration. Overall Ramanathan's illustrations explore interesting relationships between semantic content and the material layout of language, which that can be transpose and intensified with digital experiences.

Mallarmé, S. (1914) *Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard*, 4th edition. Available at: https://artmuseum.princeton.edu/art/exhibitions/1913-modernism/objects/81261 (Accessed: 20/04/2023).

MOMA (2023) *Marcel Broodthaers Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard (A throw of the dice will never abolish chance)* 1969. Available at: https://www.moma.org/collection/works/146983 (Accessed: 20/04/2023).

French poet Stéphane Mallarmé's practice was valuable because it explores an analogue understanding of active texts and their material quality; concepts I encountered in Goldsmith's "Revenge of the Text". In this sense, active texts have both digital and analogue presences. Mallarmé's work allowed me to contextualise and name what I had been calling "text as image". Specifically within graphic design, this practice enhances a controlled authorship on how the text can be read outside of a traditional layout. Premeditated placement of words allows for a dialogue between visual elements such as spaces and even paper with the semantic meaning of the written piece. As a result, it becomes a chance for the designer to contribute, detract or alter the connotation of writings.

As a practice it reassured my instincts on how "contaminants" in digital contexts play a part on how we engage with text. Also, this project also made me question whether I should keep my text in Spanish. Initially my intention wasn't to focus on the text's meaning, expecting that another language will trigger the audience to concentrate on the mesh of symbols and saturated information that attaches to digitalised language. However, reactions from the first stage of iterations created the opposite effect.

MOMA (2023) *Camille Henrot Grosse Fatigue 2013*. Available at: https://www.moma.org/collection/works/175938 (Accessed: 21/04/2023).

French artist Camille Henrot's has an interesting approach towards the saturated nature of online content through her video *Grosse Fatigue (2013).* There is a connection with some of my exploration as the artist alludes to an experiences of density by layering multiple computer windows. Henrot successful uses this resource to create a distressful sequence, as the fast pace in which windows open and close suggests the speed in which we consume information. This project becomes an example of how I can use

video as a digital tool to reflect on the context, while exploring and involve the body with the same apparatus used to engage with digitalised texts.

Another characteristic in this work that I found useful is how Henrot's uses archival material of directing animals and bodies in order to reinforce her message of how digital interactions are overwhelming and gross. At the same time, choosing to display scientific and religious knowledge becomes a critical point that highlights how abundance of information not only consists of spams, advertising and other visual media that is easily associated as "banal.

LINE OF ENQUIRY no.1

Initially interested in how we experience general texts, through a set of iterations I focused my research and studio work on *how we interact with digital text*, specifically a digitalised reading experience through social media platforms and websites. Revising author Kenneth Goldsmith's "Revenge of the Text", I adopted three key concepts: Material quality of language (where digital texts are particularly fluid, additive, and active); Language acting upon language; and Patchwriting (which for this project I have also defined as patch designing). By mapping some practices and research around my position on digital texts and the previous concepts, I defined that my studio work would iterate on a mobile phone format and digital screens as mediums. Overall, using patchwriting as a method to reveal the language that acts upon digital texts, I want to explore how designers can interact with the material quality of language to highlight how saturated the digitalised reading experience has become.

POSITIONS THROUGH CONTEXTUALISING

Revising my line of enquiry on saturated digital reading experiences while interacting with the references has allowed me to trace a position. Online reading's active and additive nature allows for a multiplicity of information to focus on the reader and for them to disentangle and arrange. As such, digitalise reading and navigation puts too much weight on the reader affecting them and the content.

LINE OF ENQUIRY no.4 (latest version)

Interested in how we experience texts, I have focused my research and studio work on *how we experience digital texts*, specifically a digitalised reading experience through social media platforms and websites. Revising author Kenneth Goldsmith's "Revenge of the Text", I adopted three key concepts: Material quality of language (where digital texts are characterised as fluid, additive, and active); Language acting upon language; and Patchwriting (which for this project I have also defined as patch designing). Simultaneity, I have based on Barthe's *Death of Author*, to explore how the digitalise reading experience has focused a multiplicity of information on the reader.

Using patch-writing and reducing the speed of engagement as methods, I want reveal reading levels and the additive nature of online texts to highlight how digitalised reading fosters dislocated experiences. By mapping some practices and research around my position and the previous concepts, I defined that my studio work would iterate in a 9:16 proportion digitally and through publishing as a tool to tangibly explore the density of information.

Aranda, J., Wood, B. And Vidokle, A. (2015) *'Introduction, The Internet Does Not Exist.'* Berlin: Sternberg Press.

This reference allowed me further trace a political position as it argues networks have political structures that affect the circulations of digitalised texts. My initial approach was how a saturated digital reading experience can overshadow political, social and economical issues, since the fast pace and active quality of online reading can distract the reader. However, the reference expands on a previous filtering process. Through language control is materialise: "the condition for anything to enter the network, to become information is that it must first be abstracted into language." As a result, the text made me question who are included and excluded in this language filters, which brought me back to reflect no my original except for this project in Spanish, and how I could include it in the further developing work. In my line of inquiry a way to interact with the material quality of the language would be revealing this language abstracting process that creates saturated experiences that are also exclusive.

Simultaneously, the reference points out that because of this process, the internet shifts from depth to surface information, a place of confusion. It outlines that the behaviour of the reader becomes sporadical and asymmetrical. As a result, it also prompt me to think about how some of my iteration can explore ways of navigating this dislocated and contradictory spaces.

Barthes, R. (1967) '*Death of the Author*'. 1977. London: Fontana Press. pp. 143–148

My approach towards Barthes' text has tensions since I partially agree with his argument. For instance, it allowed me to build upon the filtering and controlling nature of digitalises language, as Barthes argues that writing destroys the identity of whom is writing. On another, the text alines with ideas I had been exploring. Digital texts are performative as words are released into a multidimensional network where they interact with other writings. As a result, texts can be written simultaneously, where the writer imitates as his only power is to mix writing. To this, Barthes proposes to suppress the author in interest of the writing, and restore an active place for the reader. However, I partially agree with his argument because he puts too much weight on the reader. Barthes, argues that as the one who understands multiplicity, it is in the reader where multiplicity focuses, who holds it together and can disentangled information. As mentioned in "*The Internet Does Not Exist*" this creates a dislocated experience for the reader, and as result an overwhelming interaction that I have been intending to highlight. Barthes also references Mallarmé's work, and understands it as an act of substituting in favour of language that speaks and acts. I think this idea can be pushed forwards as an

opportunity to explore creative authorship in the layout of texts, and its material quality, two resources to create diverse curated interactions for the reader.

Lovink, G. (2013) "*After the Social Media Hype: Dealing with Information Overload*", E-flux Journal, "Language and Internet" released in May 2013. Available at: https://www.e-flux.com/journal/45/60109/after-the-social-media-hype-dealing-with-information-overload/ (Accessed: 28/04/2023).

Lovink's article was a helpful reference because it outline some of the impacts of digital texts. Specially, the author explores how the active nature of digitalise reading affects both the content and those constantly participating with it. Some arguments align with some of my exploration during the 100-page iterations, where I identified texts as fluid and thus transformational. This ability to migrate quickly from one servicer and format to another affects a coherent and logical traffic flow. Lovink states that as a result, information feels unfinished; harder to properly follow and digest. Within the context of my project, Lovink' arguments become interesting because they can be transposed from social media to an overall digital encounter where extra design elements and hyperlinks become additional layers of complexity that surround the text and as such, the reader has to untangle. Through my process I have been exploring these non-textual elements as components that coexist with digital writing, unconsciously begin read and thus affecting a transparent reading. Not only did the article align with my process so far, and explain some of the reasons for an overwhelming feeling over the reader, the author finished prompting into thinking of ways to create mental distance form these saturated scenes. The first one: to "venture into slow communication", which pushed me to continue exploring this route. The second is to think about new ways of collective reading that could appease the experience, this was an alternative that I had not considered and wish to explore in the iterative process.

Horne, Alex. (2013) Design week: A Book for Two. Available at: https://www.designweek.co.uk/issues/december-2013/a-book-for-two/ (Accessed: 03/05/2023).

Through the project *A Book for Two* designer Soofiya Chaudry questions reading as a solitary experience. The layout, binding and content of this book was designed so it can't be read alone. Chaudry considered this approach to book design as a response to an online experience that has increasingly become shareable, asking: 'Why doesn't print and typography reflect the way we read and consume today?'. I selected this project because it encourage my publishing iterations. Some of the ways the project does this is by splitting the book into two parallel sections. As a result each side has different section of the text, triggering participation to take turn reading paragraphs. At the same time the project explores adding certain prompts along the design to guide these interactions. I also brought this project forward because in light of Lovink's invitation to look into collective interactions as ways of taking distance from overwhelming online experiences, I thought this was an outcome of such. As a result, my latest interaction split into two takes inspiration from this reference, this time not to

collectively read but to display how easily dislocated associations can be made when reading online.

MOMA (2023) *Mieko Shiomi < event for the midday > (in the sunlight) 1963*. Available at: https://www.moma.org/collection/works/127548 (Accessed: 12/05/2023).

Mieko Shiomi is a a Japanese artist and composer who contributed to the *Fluxus* Art Movement. Fluxus promoted a living art perspective while democratising creativity by inviting collaborations between artists and audience. As such, the production of Fluxus artworks where based in everyday, inexpensive and common experiences fully grasped by people. The movement hosted interactions called "events" in which audiences would react to written instructions, "scores" that referenced musical compositions. Shiomi's *< event for the midday > (in the sunlight),* is an action poem that makes part of the score events. Within the context of the project I connected with Mieko's piece because it has both conceptual and material connections to my practice so far.

Event for the Midday documents and at the same time values simplicity, in this recording the artist breaks down automatic actions (blinking) and at the same time forces the audience to read them, immersing us in a slow down experience. In a similar sense, through some of my digital and published iterations I have been breaking down the density of body, textual, as well as graphical elements that the digitalise reading experience involve. An interesting reading from this project has been how its been tagged as "embrace of absurdity". Just as Shiomi writes "shut your eyes - open your eyes", having full spreads with only the words "click" and "enter" have been sub-methods to emphasis how this unconscious auctions add additional layers of complexity to the reader when interacting digitally.

Even though Shiomi's projects have a strong "instruction" component they are not intended to produce single outcomes. This feeds back into my practice as an analogue example that reflects the nature of digital interactions. Because of online's active and fluid material quality, it is possible to create multiple reading result and paths out of the same set of digital elements. Reflecting on one of the last iterations developed, by deconstructing the components of a website the reader is prompted to re-imagine and create how that experience looks like. In this sense, different possibilities arise connecting back to how digitalise reading experience encourages non-linearity and multiplicity. Lastly, it allowed me to identify how it is possible to create interaction outside of digital tools and mediums, an idea that Owen expands upon *Design in the Age of Digital Reproduction* (1994) and with which I have disagreed with.

In a more stylistic/material connection Shiomi's work is also purely textual. However, the artist uses other type elements (dashes, underscores, parenthesis) to create feeling, suspend, succession. These are elements I can also use for iterations as a way to record time, space and add dimension to the experience. This could be an alternative to

relive the deconstructing a website experience from feeling flatten, and creating again too much pursuer on the reader to re construct a visual universe.

Owen, W. (1994) "*Design in the Age of Digital Reproduction*", Eye Magazine, No. 14, Vol. 4 Available at: https://www.eyemagazine.com/feature/article/design-in-the-age-of-digital-reproduction (Accessed: 28/04/2023).

I have chosen to respond to this references through my studio practice because the text has allowed me build relationships between concepts explore in the other references and my previous work. So far the references have outlined the nature of digitalised texts and the reader's digital experience mostly separately. However, Owen deepens on how specific characteristics of hypertexts promote dislocated navigation, where the fluidity of digital language simultaneously becomes disconnecting. At the same time, the author reflects on some of the methods that I have been exploring and prompted me into considering publications as another step of iterating. As such, I have identified three key points that can be explore further through practical work.

Owen questions what defines interactivity, and how the act of browsing is not passive. Specially digital navigation enables its readers to "create and compose free of material and physical constraints". In this context, Barthes' *death of the author* is intensively plausible as hypertexts presuppose an active participant that builds on the written text. Owen states that this behaviour sits opposite to "print's unidirectional page turning", a position which I disagree with since Owen implies that publishing isn't interactive. I disagree with because, as Barthes stated, it is in the reader where the responsibility to disentangle information and the multiplicity focuses. As such, texts aren't active *per se*, they becomes active when it's been interacted with. Therefore, it's not exclusive to digital language and non-linear hypertext. This was important for my practice because it allows me to build upon my last project when I had to consider different forms of alluding interactivity between the piece and the audience.

Hypertext's non-sequential and active navigation allows texts to become equally accessible with no fixed order of reading. When the reader takes multiple decisions formerly made by the author it producing new associations sometimes contradictory, causing a shift in the content that Aranda, Wood, Vidokle (2015) defined as "a place of confusion from depth to surface". With no narrative centre, linearity or conclusion, the use of typography and hierarchy as vehicles that guide the reader disintegrates: "text divisions are replaced by evenly empowered and equally ephemeral window-sized blocks of text and graphics" (Owen, 1994). This process becomes another instance in which digital language not only filters content into the network but also neutralises it. The author calls for new designing processes that accommodate to the nature of the medium and note the transitions between difference texts and resource. It is here where I believe that the concept of material quality of language explored by Mallarmé and Goldsmith can be transposed. Not only does the material quality of language reenforces the semantic meaning of a text and their fluid digital nature, but it can be used as a tool

to slow down the experience and guide the reader. Further more, by treating the material quality of language I can highlight how by equalising all types of content, engines generate a saturated reading experience of dislocated information.

The last point I wish to respond to is when the author states:

> " Reading from a screen is a qualitatively and quantitatively different process from reading from a page: the screen shows only a tiny portion of the text, unlike the book or magazine which exposes the full spread."

By exploring this idea in my studio work it would allow me to continue to trace the volume of information that the reader is being exposed to when engaging with the hyper textual nature of digitalise language. Specially, publishing and physical materiality become resources to tangibly familiarise the audience with density.