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Collaborator: Traitor?

David Trubridge
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Abstract

The paper looks at various examples of collaboration in search of the essence of collaboration — to find that which gives it its creative potency.

In World War II, and in other times of conflict, a collaborator was a traitor, French who went over to the other side and helped the Nazis were derogatively called collaborators. In this sense, to collaborate is to transgress—a bad thing. Is it the fact that they crossed a line, or that they crossed the wrong line? Why are we now talking about it as a positive?

What is collaboration?

In this talk I am going to work through a number of examples, or case studies if you like, in an attempt to work out exactly what collaboration is, and to find the essence that makes successful collaborations so creatively potent.

1. SOCIAL COLLABORATION

I know someone who used to share house cleaning with a few close friends. Occasionally they would spend a week getting together and each day they would all clean one of their houses. This made the chore a fun communal event, providing a good opportunity to both laugh together and to share their concerns and worries. Here collaboration generates social interaction, community building and person-to-person support.

This used to happen much more in the past, and it still happens today in poorer communities around the world. For example, building a house was far too big an enterprise for one family so they would all come together and, one by one, build the community houses. In this way they all had an ownership of the houses. There was an incentive to get the job done well because it was they who suffered the consequences if it wasn't. And they also made sure that the materials were used sustainably, because if they weren't it was they who would suffer the lack in the future.

In the developed world we no longer do this, and we are poorer as a result. We live increasingly isolated individual lives in our castles and everything has become too specialised. Instead of sharing jobs within the community we buy from providers outside. Sometimes the builder may live nearby but most of the materials are sold by large national and increasingly multinational businesses. We buy phone services, insurance etc from similar massive multinationals. They have little or no stake in, or concern for, our community which is only a vehicle for them to make more profit. In this hand-over we lose power and control, as well as community cohesion. If we learn again to collaborate more we regain ownership and control over our lives, and rebuild our communities. The Christchurch earthquake is a good example of community collaboration coming to the rescue when larger systems have broken down.
In recent years we have seen how multinationals have become so large that they are even more powerful than nations. When we consider that their only guiding doctrine is profit, that it is even enshrined in law, we should be extremely worried. Greed goes where profit leads. For the health of our communities and even more importantly, for the health of the environment, I believe that it is vital that we wrest control back from these companies. The best way we can do this is to stop buying services from afar and collaborate together to provide as much as possible that we need from within our community.

So collaboration is anti-capitalist, anti-profit – or at least it ensures that those who generate profit own it. It is pro-environment, pro-community and it is more likely to be sustainable.

One small example of this: we are moving to a new, custom built workshop/design studio/gallery. Initially I wanted the building to be zero energy – to generate as much energy as it used. One way is to place a bank of solar panels on the roof. But when I started doing some calculations I learnt that the $/kW cost of solar panels is very high. It is more efficient to buy shares in a wind farm, or better still to buy our electricity from Meridian because all theirs is already renewably generated. There is an understandable desire to wear your heart on your sleeve and let everyone know that you are “sustainable” with panels all over the roof, but actually it is better to work within the community networks. Similarly, instead of burning our waste offcuts inefficiently in a small unit of our own to generate heat, we give them to a local company that burns them in a large, highly efficient incinerator to make electricity.

2. DESIGN COLLABORATION

For most of my adult life I have worked alone as a designer-maker, using my craft skills to express my creative ideas. When my business took off I moved to larger premises and started employing others to share the workload. Now I head a core design team of four, with a separate workshop where my designs are made by skilled craftspeople. I do not make anything any more and most of the design process is carried out by the design team.

When I first started thinking about this talk I immediately saw this as a good example of collaboration. Our team is made up of disparate individuals. There is one trained designer who is my lead designer and who has well developed aesthetic sensitivities. One person went through a craft-design school in Canada and brings very grounded practical thinking and skills. There is an artist who is already successful on his own, and who brings a zany, unexpected viewpoint. The last member has learnt her design skills with us and also brings very valuable organising skills. There are two women and two men and several races and nationalities represented. I saw this a commendable collaboration.

I will usually instigate an idea, then we will bounce it around the group. This progresses the idea far faster than was ever possible when I worked alone. Then I used to easily get bogged down and found it hard to extricate myself alone. Often it was my wife Linda, also an artist, who came to the rescue.

But then I started thinking about this a bit more. In lectures over recent years I have talked passionately about my vision of the creative process. As I have said, we suffer from over-specialisation – it may be efficient but it is also deadening. Increasingly we live in a binary culture, the 0 and 1 of the digital world. Art, design and craft have been specialised into their own ghettos. The result is superficial in all camps: art-for-arts sake, etc. I sincerely believe that Art, Design and Craft are not nouns they are verbs, they are processes, and crucially they are all component parts of one creative process in which we all engage.

So if art, design and craft are really all part of one creative process how can we talk of collaboration between them? Surely it can only happen between separate entities? It seems that I have to look further for what collaboration really is.
3. OTHER COLLABORATIONS

Other examples of fruitful collaboration:

1. We have worked with Scion and Biopolymer Network, both scientific research institutes in Rotorua, on the development of a new plastic material for us to use for making lights. This is a composite of PLA (plant derived) plastic and native flax fibre. The project may continue with AUT research lab and CNC injection processes.

2. Frog Design in Britain suggest that designers work in a more collaborative process with their clients.

3. In Perth I have met Geoff Warne, of Donaldson and Warne Architects, who for certain suitable projects will assemble an unlikely design concept team made up of such people as a botanist, a historian, a sculptor and even a musician.

4. I have worked together with my son Sam Trubridge, who is a theatre director and designer, teaching design workshops in France at the Vitra Summer Design School. The basis of our workshops was to shift the focus of design from just being on objects, to the rituals we engage in in daily life. If objects are still needed, there is now a reason to design them, once you have the ritual. “Don't think table, think eating”. Sam brought his theatre workshopping skills to initial group exercises, and his performance design skills to help think about the rituals. This was a very rewarding collaboration between theatre and design and also between the many very varied cultures that make up the classes at the Vitra school.

4. SLEEP/WAKE – A CASE STUDY

One of Sam's finest productions is Sleep/Wake, which is a multi-media performance involving dance, theatre, video and sound. It is a collaboration between art and science, between Sam and Dr. Philippa Gander from the Sleep Research Institute at Massey University where they both work.

Out of their initial discussions about sleep came the idea of a collaboration. Sam wanted to learn about sleep and how it could teach him about performance studies. Sleep is the antithesis of performance – it is the ultimate non-performance. How can you perform sleep?

At first they saw it simplistically: Sam wanted to 'sex up theatre', and Philippa wanted to 'communicate science'.

As a scientist Philippa needed everyone to read things in the same way, but came to appreciate subjectivity more and to see that there is no such thing as objective truth. She realised that she was only performing objectivity and came to understand the slipperiness of language.

Sam learned the science of audience relationships, perception and performance and how to manipulate them as a director. He became more analytical; he had always been captivated by the wonder of science, as a child wanting to study marine biology.

Philippa’s need for clarity was opposed by Sam’s need for ambiguity. Sleep/Wake is full of ambiguity and uncertainty which allows, even requires, the audience to form their own conclusions. In these areas of uncertainty lie the seeds of art.
Science has a code of ethics, which is in effect humanity applied to science. Philippa was horrified at some of the things that Sam did, such as waking up his 'subjects' at night in the middle of an experiment to film them. In science, such intervention is not acceptable. But it taught her to see them as people – that performers are not specimens, that they speak back.

If we don't dream, we can't use our imagination to resolve problems. Dreams encourage creative thinking. While sleeping, a block in the thalamus separates the brain off, so that our bodies don't act out our dreams physically. In the same way, the audience, located in their seats, can't move – in the darkness they suspend disbelief and allow themselves to be affected emotionally by what they see.

Science is a world within itself, but Art is dependent on the viewer - and it holds up a mirror to science. Dali illustrated Einstein's concept of warped time with his sagging clocks. In the same way 'Waiting for Godot' created a suspension of time and also a sense of hopelessness brought on by the nuclear cold war, the result of science splitting the atom.

Sleep/Wake evolved into an ongoing project with both papers at conferences and other performances around the world involving both Sam and Philippa, as well as the Waking Incubator Symposium in Wellington (6 sleep scientists + 6 performing artists) and a book. They received funding from Smash Palace, a government project aimed at bringing art and science together. It took a while for Sam to comprehend the full relevance of the name - two separate, carefully constructed and complete world views coming together, and causing some fundamental rearranging of ideas.

In the course of the collaboration they came to understand the relevance of transgression: when things go too far, such as the sleep scientist who grabbed a box of paints, or the idea of Philippa trying to direct. But ultimately they concluded that “transgression is at the heart of discovery”. This “brave excursion into foreign territory” can also be a “a process of (and catalyst for) acquiring new perspectives or ‘awakenings’”.

The regions where real novelty occurs – where really new things happen that you haven’t seen before – are always regions that are at the edge of chaos. John Polkinghorne “Speaking of Faith” Radio NZ broadcast Quarks and Creation. The spark of life occurs in the friction generated along boundaries and areas of confrontation. Transgressing these boundaries is a risk, but if successful much can be achieved. If a collaboration is too close, there is a danger that it will only reinforce prejudices. These need to be challenged from the other side which has to be sufficiently ‘other’.

So is a collaborator a betrayer or an ally? Philippa was seen as betrayer by other scientists, in the same way that Sam may have been by other artists. But between them they became allies and went where no one had gone before. In doing so they added to the creative capital of humanity. We are all the richer as a result. This is true collaboration.

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Outsiders Collaborating?
How creative relationships at Studio ARTES are opening doors for artists with intellectual disabilities

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Abstract
Outsiders Collaborating reflects on the experience working within a social, communal structure has on an individual who would typically be defined as an ‘Outsider’ artist. This paper examines the creative development of Mathew Calandra, an artist who has emerged from Studio ARTES Northside Inc. How has practicing inside Studio ARTES brought Mathew, a seemingly ‘Outsider’ artist, into the contemporary art mainstream?

Mathew Calandra works at McDonalds two days a week. He has done so for the last ten years. He cleans tables after McDonalds patrons have finished their meals, and takes great pride in his position. When not at McDonalds, Mathew dedicates two days per week to painting and drawing. After years of consistent arts practice, Mathew is developing a profile within Sydney’s contemporary art scene. His curriculum vitae documents an exhibition history that includes both national and international curated exhibitions. Income derived from the sale of artwork in 2010 enabled Mathew to travel to Egypt to celebrate his fortieth birthday. The artist’s sophisticated portfolio of artwork led to his current placement as a guest artist with the prestigious Cicada Press within the College of Fine Arts. At COFA, Mathew works alongside superstar Australian artists the likes of Reg Mombassa, Elisabeth Cummings and Vernon Ah-Kee.

At forty, Mathew can sign his own name. However, his literacy skills extend little further. Mathew is affected by Down syndrome, as such, Mathew has significant intellectual and physical limitations. This paper reflects upon Mathew’s artistic development, and in particular, reflects upon the role community and collaboration have played in Mathew’s artistic practice. How is this seeming outsider establishing a presence for himself within the contemporary art scene, and how has being inside a network of relationships enabled Mathew’s creative career to manifest?

An Outsider?
To anyone familiar with the history of ‘Outsider’, the story of a talented artist with Down syndrome may not seem too unusual. The field of ‘Outsider’ Art in general describes artists who have neither accessed, nor have an awareness or understanding of the dominant cultural art systems. In Western culture the mainstream art system includes tertiary art institutions, such as colleges or universities. The network of contemporary galleries, and the subtle interactions involved in finding representation in these venues, equally forms part of the mainstream Western art culture. An ‘Outsider’ artist would typically create artwork with little to no understanding or interest in these structures. In defining the term ‘Outsider’ author of “Outsider: Spontaneous Alternatives”, Prof. Colin Rhodes (2010, p.70) explains;

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1 Mathew Calandra’s CV can be viewed at www.studioartists.com.au
It has come to embrace the work of artists springing from a fairly broad range of socio-cultural and socio-medical groups, ranging from the stereotypical, institutionalised psychotic to intellectually disabled people, mediums and untutored isolates. Often all that seems to connect the outsiders is their unconnectedness with the dominant art world and significantly, their absolute committedness to something the art world calls ‘a practice’. No amateurs of art these; though often it is not art that they consider themselves to be making.

As an artist with a significant intellectual disability, it seems sensible to position Mathew within the bracket of ‘Outsider’ artist Mathew definitely creates his art outside of any intellectual, academic or historical understanding of Western art practice, an awareness most aspiring artists are indoctrinated with when undertaking any formal art education. Whilst Mathew has exposure to, and draws influence from, a vast library of visual art texts, when asked to discuss art work by significant artists featured within this library, such as Picasso or Arthur Boyd, Mathew’s standard response is “I like it”. Indeed, when asked his opinion on most artwork, including his own, Mathew simply and adamantly replies “It’s very good”.

Mathew enjoys painting and drawing, and he is keen to experience the art work of others. Yet he displays no interest, nor capacity, for intellectualising about art. Mathew draws great satisfaction from seeing his own work in exhibitions. Given half a chance, Mathew presents with pride exhibition catalogues and invitations which feature his artwork to anyone he meets. But, if asked the name, let alone if asked the standing of a particular gallery within the context of Sydney’s contemporary art culture, Mathew would likely stare blankly. Mathew’s intellectual disability clearly positions him differently to other emerging artists operating within Sydney’s contemporary art culture. As such, it would seem logical to term Mathew an ‘Outsider’ artist. However, there are other aspects to Mathew’s practice which do not fit so easily within the bracket of ‘Outsider’ artist. As the term implies, ‘Outsider’ artists have historically worked outside the broader community. ‘Outsider’ artists typically work alone, driven to create by their own self motivation, characteristically creating with little interest in sharing their practice or work with wider society. Prof. Colin Rhodes (2000, p.15) again explains;

individual ‘Outsider’ creators seldom even know of each other, let alone form a cohesive group ... the difference is not merely marked by exclusion from the mainstream of the professional (western) art world, but also by an exclusion from, or marginalisation in relation to, the very culture that supports the market for mainstream art.

However, in stark contrast to a typical ‘Outsider’ artist, Mathew refuses to make art alone or independently. Mathew’s mother reports the artist firmly rejects her encouragements for him to draw at home. Mathew is steadfast in his determination to only create art work at Studio ARTES Northside.

Inside Studio ARTES

Studio ARTES is an independent, not for profit organisation located in the northern Sydney suburb of Hornsby. The organisation offers creative programs for over one hundred adults with disabilities. Mathew has practised painting and drawing within the full time visual arts program for over ten years. He attends twice a week, and it is at Studio ARTES that Mathew and I first met. I have been employed as an arts worker within Studio ARTES since 2006.

Initiated in 2000, Studio ARTES offers visual and performing arts programs for adults with disabilities. In addition, the organisation operates its own gallery where program participants are able to sell their art work and derive an income. Participants of Studio ARTES programs are referred to as ‘members’. Studio ARTES is one of several national and international organisations that encourage the creative expression of adults with disabilities. Located in Melbourne, Arts Project

Further information can be found about Studio ARTES at www.studioartes.com.au
Australia is internationally one of the most established and respected art studios for adults with disabilities\(^3\). Started in the early 1970’s, Arts Project Australia was one of the first such studios to appear. As an emerging industry, language used to explain these studios is still forming. Terminology recently used to describe these creative studios includes Prof. Rhodes phrase “Other Academies” and Accessible Arts suggestion of “Supported Studios\(^4\). For simplicity, I will use the term Supported Studios.

Supported Studios are distinguishable from other creative programs for adults with disabilities in the priority they place on developing art work. Supported Studios approach adults with disabilities principally as potential artists, rather than as individuals requiring therapy or entertainment. Whilst Supported Studio participants may derive recreational or therapeutic benefits from attending the creative programs offered, key to a Supported Studio is the opportunities they offer participants to engage in “art for art’s sake”. In his article “An Other Academy: Creative Workshops for Artists with Intellectual Disabilities”, Prof Rhodes compares a selection of international Supported Studios, including Studio ARTES. In identifying a commonality between their working practices, Rhodes (2008, p.131) says;

\textit{Despite variations of methodology, all share a belief in the aesthetic value of the product, not only as personally relevant to the maker, but also as being of intrinsic artistic merit. ‘Clients’ are regarded as artists first and foremost. The fact that they are differently abled is merely the impetus for providing appropriate support for the nurturing and realisation of artistic ambition, rather than their defining characteristic.}

Rhodes (2008, p.131) goes onto explain the importance of a Supported Studio as a structure that “not only supports but also produces artists.” In “An Other Academy” Rhodes distinguishes many of the high profile artists to have emerged from Supported Studios from typical ‘Outsider’ artists. The history of ‘Outsider’ is proliferated with artists who have created impressive and often monumental bodies of work in solitary, driven by their own determination. In contrast to the typical ‘Outsider’ artist, Rhodes argues that many of the known artists to have emerged from Supported Studios would never have developed their portfolio of work without the encouragement of this broader studio network.

Describing Supported Studios as ‘producing’ artists is not intended to detract from the talent of the individual artists, like Mathew Calandra, who are emerging from Supported Studios. Nor does Rhodes infer that everyone who accesses such a studio will develop into an artist. Indeed, of the one hundred and ten members who weekly access the Studio ARTES program, only a handful of members consistently produce work that would likely catch the eye of curators or collectors. Rather, in ‘An Other Academy’, Rhodes concentrates on one effect and value of Supported Studios. For Rhodes, a key value of a Supported Studio like Studio ARTES is the opportunity it offers adults with intellectual disabilities to explore, and at times discover, their creative capacity. Rhodes asserts that this capacity would likely lie dormant without the resources and encouragement of what Rhode terms ‘Other Academies’.

\textbf{Mathew inside Studio ARTES}

This paper considers the impact working within the communal, social space of Studio ARTES has on Mathew Calandra’s artwork? Has, as Prof. Rhodes would infer, Studio ARTES “produced” the Mathew Calandra ... the Artist?

I cannot say definitively whether Mathew Calandra would have developed the sophisticated portfolio of art work he has today without the support of Studio ARTES. However, I can testify to having

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\(^3\) More information about Arts Project Australia is available at www.artsproject.org.au  
\(^4\) Accessible Arts is a NSW advocacy body for the arts and disability sector. Further information can be found on their website at www.aarts.net.au
witnessed an evolution in the quality of his arts practice over the nearly six years I have worked with Mathew. In addition, I have been privy to the influence working within Studio ARTES has had on the nature of work Mathew has created, influences which include myself and other arts workers, and the impact of Mathew's peer members creating within Studio ARTES.

Studio ARTES visual arts program operates five days per week, with two sessions per day. Approximately ten members participate in each session. Mathew has always worked within the program with a quiet focus. Never one to cause any trouble, or make a fuss, in the years I have worked with Mathew he has always been content to sit and work in accordance with the programs weekly theme. In my initial few years within the art program, Mathew always dutifully produced an artwork appropriate for the Studio ARTES annual exhibition. His work would be exhibited alongside that of Studio ARTES hundred or so other members, and Mathew would seem to enjoy the fanfare of being in the annual show.

However, around 2009 I began to look twice at Mathew's work. Mathew's drawing has always tended toward the naive in style. But, in 2009 he began to produce work that was still naive, but which was also compellingly sophisticated. And he began to produce this work consistently. It was as though Mathew’s work had shifted from being merely naive, to being masterfully naive. Mathew's line work had always had an awkwardness, but in the work which emerged from 2009 the artist seemed able to manipulate this awkwardness to imbue his drawing with a character and life force.

In the manner of Egon Schiele, Mathew’s drawing style began to possess a dynamic, almost tenuous energy. Mathew’s masterfully naive line work has only progressed since then. As evidenced in his work included through this paper, Mathew has a capacity to create compelling, animated imagery.

So, what has been the role of Studio ARTES in the development of this art work? In looking back at the work Mathew has created at Studio ARTES over the last decade, there is a distinct progression in his work. As described above, his drawing style has shifted from simplistic and somewhat clumsy, to a style that still encompasses the raw energy of his early work, but which manages this raw energy with a sense of confidence and style.

Both Mathew and his mother maintain Mathew rarely draws at home. As such, it seems likely that without Studio ARTES Mathew would not have developed an art practice independently. In viewing Mathew’s early work, it is clear the artist was not simply gifted with a spontaneous, innate ability to create compelling imagery. Whilst I do not dispute Mathew has a level of natural ability in drawing, I equally argue that it has been the artists commitment to and consistent weekly practice within the Studio ARTES art program that has enabled his ability to manifest. It seems unlikely Mathew would ever have developed the level of artistic skill demonstrated in his recent portfolio of work if left to create in the manner of many ‘ Outsider’ practitioners, that is, alone in private at home. Instead, it seems that working within the social, supportive network of Studio ARTES has enabled Mathew's talent the time, space and necessary tuition to develop.

Studio ARTISTS

Furthermore, it seems undeniable that working within Studio ARTES has shaped the nature of work Mathew has developed. In creating work at Studio ARTES Mathew does not work in a vacuum. As an artist he is influenced by the social world that surrounds him. The impact of the Studio ARTES community on Mathew artwork became particularly evident when Mathew joined the Studio ARTIST initiative in late 2010.

Mathew is one of several individuals to have evolved from the Studio ARTES art program who display a distinct skill in and commitment to creating art work. In late 2010 I and two other Studio ARTES arts workers, initiated a program within Studio ARTES to cater specifically to the needs of
members like Mathew. Hence, Emma Johnston, Maide Welch and I initiated the Studio ARTISTS collective. Studio ARTISTS consists of five members from Studio ARTES, they being Mathew Calandra, Daniel Kim, Greg Sindel, Robert “Thom” Smith and Lynda Strong. Whilst there are several other members who could equally qualify as Studio ARTISTS, our minimal resources determined our decision to limit the size of the Studio ARTIST initiative.

At its core, the Studio ARTISTS initiative aims to enable these five artists access to diverse creative opportunities, and to broaden the audience exposed to their work. The initiative was publically launched with a residency and exhibition at Callan Park Gallery in March 2011. Never having worked together as a collective before, the five Studio ARTISTS bravely ventured beyond the comfort zone of their Studio ARTES art room. Part of Sydney College of the Arts, the Studio ARTISTS undertook a month long residency within Callan Park Gallery.

Three out of the five Studio ARTISTS are affected by autism. As such, changes in routine are more complicated for these individuals than for most. As arts workers, my co worker Emma Johnston and I were less than certain as to the direction this residency would take. Whilst each Studio ARTIST voluntarily participated, we were entirely uncertain how each individual would react to working in this foreign environment, especially as they were working as part of a newly formed Studio ARTISTS collective. Prior to the Callan Park residency, these five artists had never worked exclusively together as a unit.

The Studio ARTISTS were offered free reign within Callan Park. They were welcome to create as they liked, and were invited to work directly onto the wall if so inclined. Encouraging individual creativity is a key principle of Studio ARTES, yet, in the weekly operating art program the members tend to work in accordance with particular designated themes. The residency at Callan Park offered the five Studio ARTISTS a unique opportunity to create completely without direction. Each of the five were encouraged to initiate their own projects.

To the surprise of Emma and myself, the work which emerged spoke loudly of the interest each Studio ARTIST had in the artistic practice of their peers. With the exception of Greg Sindel, the remaining four Studio ARTISTS drew inspiration from the work of one another. To illustrate this interaction I will focus on the work of Mathew Calandra.

Mathew contributed five artworks to the final exhibition, “Studio ARTISTS: Untitled”. Using ink and gouache, Mathew completed portraits of four Studio ARTISTS (including a self portrait). Mathew’s final artwork was in response to a collage work created by fellow Studio ARTIST Robert “Thom” Smith. Robert had selected a photograph from a random sales catalogue of a smiling baby. In the artist’s typical fashion, Robert used a texta pen to adorn the photographed baby with a bright orange moustache. Known as Mo Baby’, Mathew delicately painted a response to Robert’s photocopied image.

Several of the Studio ARTISTS were compelled to create their own personal interpretations of Robert “Thom” Smith’s moustached baby photocopy. “Studio ARTISTS: Untitled” featured various, very individual versions of “Mo Baby”. The repetition of the moustached baby symbology spontaneously united the final exhibition with a consistent theme. Yet, beyond contributing a necessary and surprising sense of cohesion to the final group show, the inspiration each Studio ARTIST independently found within each other’s work also reflected the presence of a powerful dynamic operating between these artists. During the Callan Park residency, the Studio ARTISTS

5 The site www.studioartists.com.au profiles the Studio ARTISTS initiative.
6 Callan Park Gallery was initiated in conjunction with STOARC (Self Taught and ‘Outsider’ Research Centre) at Sydney College of the Arts, Sydney University. Further information can be found at http://sydney.edu.au/sca/research/projects/stoarc.shtml
7 Images and reviews from this exhibition can be viewed at www.studioartists.com.au and www.academies.com
developed a collaborative artistic practice. Working as a collective had a marked impact in the art work each member produced.

Whilst the nature of each Studio ARTIST's individual intellectual disability isolates each of these artists from the mainstream contemporary art culture, these artists do not create in isolation. Mathew is not immune to the arts practice of his peers. Now Mathew's work is coloured by the practice of the network of artists he works beside. The art work Mathew creates is the outcome of both his own developed style and skill base, and the nature of the environment and community he works within. In this way Mathews art practice can be understood as an inherently collaborative activity, as opposed to as an exclusively 'Outsider', isolated pursuit.

Myself and Mathew

Mathew's fellow Studio ARTISTS are not his only creative collaborators. I must also acknowledge my role as a creative collaborator with Mathew. As an arts worker I crucially impact the direction of Mathew's work. Studio ARTES has a “hands off”, low intervention policy in regard to the interaction between arts workers and members art works. However, it would be absolutely ridiculous and pointless for me to deny the imprint Studio ARTES arts workers unwittingly have on the nature of member's artwork.

Mathew is currently involved as a guest artist in Cicada Press at the College of Fine Arts, Sydney. Under the tuition of master printmaker Michael Kempson, Mathew is completing a series of etchings. Before attending COFA, Mathew had no concept of the possibility of printmaking. Having a history in printmaking myself, I was able to recognise how fluidly Mathews linear drawing style would translate into etching. Hence, I suggested Michael and Mathew meet. Now, Mathew's portfolio of work and skill base involves printmaking.

Mathew appears to be flourishing within Cicada Press. The artist eagerly meets me at Hornsby station each week from where we begin our train trip to COFA. Cicada Press director, Michael Kempson, reports Mathew as the first artist he has witnessed to shake with excitement upon entering the print room. Mathew's mother glowed with pride upon informing me how, since joining Cicada Press, Mathew is the happiest he has been since before his father past away, when the artist was age eight. That is the happiest Mathew has been in over thirty years. The network of creative relationships and experiences Mathew is developing through his artistic practice seem to have an undeniable positive effect on the quality of his artwork, and importantly, upon his own well being. However, these experience and their effects are the result of collaborations. Mathew is very unlikely to have sought out a print making studio for himself to work within. His involvement in Cicada Press is the result of a myriad of connections, in particular between Mathew, Michael and myself.

In Conclusion

Mathew's body of artwork, and his emerging career as a professional artist, is the result of a series of collaborations between the artist and Studio ARTES, Studio ARTISTS and now the Cicada Press. These relationships have not only enabled Mathew's creative capacity to manifest, they have in turn coloured Mathew's very sense of himself.

As Mathew's art work has matured, and has opportunities have opened for him to further develop his practice, Mathew’s sense of self has matured in parallel. At the launch of the ‘Studio ARTISTS: Untitled’ exhibition, with a smug smile across his face, Mathew offered me his business card. Of his own initiative Mathew had organised the design and printing of his own business cards, with the profession “Artist” printed below his name.

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6 For further information on Cicada Press please visit http://www.cofa.unsw.edu.au/research/research-units/cicada-press
References


Gabrielle Mordy is currently under examination for a Master of Fine Arts, College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales.
Collaboration or co-labouring – when do partnerships work?
An examination of two projects

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Abstract

Collaboration is increasingly cited as a paradigm for joint projects in art, design and other creative areas. But whilst we readily use the term, what do we really mean by it? Is it a fully equal partnership? Or is it a benign dictatorship, with a ruling partner and orchestrated input from other experts? And does a truly democratic collaboration always produce the best results?

Through examination of two (what were termed) art and design collaborations, one here in Australia, and one in China, this talk will attempt to address those questions.

Collaboration is a word that has a sticky history, one in which it has been seen both as a term of abuse (and indeed a label of threat), and a more recent one where it is seen as the desirable modus operandi for creative projects. This paper is a story about a number of collaborative events in which I have been involved.

I had been somewhat skeptical about whether true and equal collaboration was possible, particularly after my involvement in the East West Collaboration at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa in 2002, which although stimulating and enjoyable, did not see much in the way of artistic collaborations.

A few years earlier I had engaged in a personal collaborative project with Jeroen Bechtold (Netherlands) to examine what was the difference between making and designing. But this was more in the nature of a search for an answer to a question of mine, in which Jeroen provided raw material for the enquiry, and responses to some of my questions. It arose out of discussions in which we agreed to disagree. (DeBoos 1997; Lane, 1997).

And some years before that there was yet another so-called ‘collaboration’ where I worked with a musician and a filmmaker in an effort to ‘get inside’ the act of throwing. This particular project had grown out of an invitation from curator Gillian McCracken to participate in a 1995 exhibition Process and Obsession at The Performance Space in Sydney. I then invited each of the artists (Tony King (musician) and Christine Olsen (filmmaker) to be involved, and explained how I envisaged my installation, but allowed them to determine how they would manage their contributions to it. We all worked pretty independently, but to the same end. It was successful, and had another airing in a 2003 exhibition in Canberra titled Collaborations- Artists and Musicians.

Australia

So although I had been involved in what were generally described as collaborations, it seemed rather that they were personal projects in which I had co-opted others.
In 2006 this was to be reversed. That year I saw – and acquired – a pot made by Kunmanara (Carol) Williams which was mesmerising in its beauty, and evidence of singular talent. It was in an exhibition curated by Geoff Crispin at the National Ceramic Conference in Brisbane, and it showed ceramic work from indigenous art centres with which he had been involved. Seeing the Williams work was a chance event which in the following year led to my school’s – Australian National University’s – involvement in a project designed by Crispin (in response to requests from the artists), in which members of three remote indigenous arts communities would come together in various locations and make work, exchanging experiences and techniques. Our role was initially to facilitate, and then ultimately to be dispensable as the artists became more autonomous in their practices.

We travelled to Ernabella Art Centre in the far north of South Australia along with artists from Hermannsburg and Munupi in the Tiwi Islands, where we assisted when asked, packed kilns and did some of our own work.

After a period of a couple of weeks, the artists came to Canberra, settled into the Ceramics Workshop at ANU for three weeks and had a successful exhibition of all the work at Watson Art Centre in Canberra. This became stage one in a project that has now had its second iteration in 2011 with ANU going to Ernabella for two weeks and then artists from Ernabella and Munupi coming to ANU and Strathnairn Arts in Canberra for three, followed by an exhibition of all the work at Strathnairn Arts. There are now plans afoot for stage three in which two or three artists from Ernabella and perhaps other art centres will come to China to decorate large porcelain forms made in Jingdezhen in an attempt to provide a broader canvas for their stories as well as working in a scale impossible in Australia.

For the project to continue, it is necessary to have all parties wanting it to happen, and willing to do their part in the enabling workload. So far this has happened sufficiently for it to be ongoing, but there have been some obvious changes that are predicated on level of contribution. It has – rather perversely – become much more of a collaboration as this has happened. The parties that were less engaged have dropped out. There has been a strengthening of purpose for those remaining.

China

A second ongoing ‘collaboration’ has been my involvement with a bone china factory (Huaguang Zibo Bone China) in Zibo, Shandong province in China. In 1991, during a China Ceramic Industry conference I was invited to go and actually work in the factory in the next year. I jumped at the chance. I had by this time become very interested in why ‘handmade’ was accorded a value in the studio pottery world that ‘factory made’ was not. This position was one that I also had held for most of my professional life as a studio potter.

Although such examinations have become commonplace now, over ten years ago they were not. Was there really some value in works made by hand that was absent in factory made wares, or was it just a story that we tell over and over again until it becomes the truth? I was looking closely at my own relationship to the objects that I used at home and the values that I accorded them and realized that amongst my most loved ceramics was a set of French industrially made, heavy porcelain mugs. Apart from the story of their acquisition, and their extreme functionality, their appeal lay also in evidence of ‘the hand’ at work in the small trimming and finishing lines inside the foot rings. A person had done this with a turning tool- not a machine. Yet it was only two mugs that had these marks. Were they really ‘different’ from the others that did not?

My project initially in the factory was to see if I could capture the exaggeratedly ‘hand made’ appearance of my studio work in mass produced lines, and to see if a pot that ‘looked handmade’, but was not, had the same value. If that didn’t – how was it different? The factory – and its Head Designer He Yan was eager to have me work there as they felt that we could together develop some new lines for the company. It was a collaboration of sorts, in that the factory facilitated my making, providing mould makers and modellers, casters and glazers to make what I wanted – up to a point.
The process for the first range of works was that I sent photographs of work and hand drawn cross sections and plan drawings to the factory, so the model makers could understand the forms and be ready for the project. Then I went to the factory with a young colleague, Jiang Yanze (who acted as translator as well as did designs for her own teapots) for just over two weeks. During this time plaster models were made by hand for eight objects (teapot, three sizes of mug/cup, lidded wine ewer and small cup, pourer and sugar or sweets container), moulds were made, pieces were cast, fettled and glazed. The fired, finished pieces were pulled from the kiln just two weeks after my arrival. I was very pleased with them, and felt very attached to them, I think because I had been so intimately involved in the process. I was able to watch the meticulous shaping and finishing of the models and to correct misinterpretations from the drawings before it became too late. What had happened though, was that when I drew the objects, I unconsciously formalised the lines, and as the process of modeling and moulding progressed, this formalisation became more pronounced. As the various workers in the factory became involved in the process of realisation, my ‘ownership’ decreased and theirs gained. The final works did speak of handmade, but had none of the dynamic of my thrown work. (Interestingly He Yan made some changes one evening to the teapot plaster model that I was not aware of until after glaze firing. I couldn’t understand why the teapot appeared to have slumped in one place. I asked two of the young modelers, who had a laugh and said something in Mandarin. I asked what they were saying, and Jiang Yanze said one was saying ‘I told him so – I knew she’d notice!’ He Yan had felt sufficiently at ease and ‘in charge’ to make adjustments to my design without discussion. This had become a very democratic collaboration!).

I have been fortunate in having a mentor who has opened doors for me in China. Professor Zhang ShouZhi I had first met in 1996 when he came to Canberra to speak at the National Ceramics Conference. He had been a teacher at the Central Academy of Art and Design (which since has become part of Qinghua University) in Beijing, a position from which he was now retired. I had invited both Professor Zhang and his wife Professor Lu to come as visiting artists to ANU. Lu was a glaze expert, and Prof. Zhang had a longstanding reputation as an important designer in China. He was also instrumental in arranging my first visit to Huaguang Zibo Bone China.

Professor Zhang felt the same way about the loss of movement and fluidity in the teapot and other items, and he suggested that a wheel be brought into the design studio and I actually throw the models in a size large enough to compensate for shrinkage during drying and firing. This was a novel approach for a factory in China – where potters’ wheels are usually not seen. The personnel working in the factory were very interested in the process, and I believe that this gave them insight into what we were trying to achieve. He also suggested that, rather than working with plain white bone china, it would be better to decorate the ware, as the plain white product was seen as ‘hotel ware’ in China, and decoration was seen as special. This was the opposite to the west where we were drowning in ‘a sea of white’, both industrially and studio-produced. When I had started producing plain white tableware, it was a relative rarity in studio ceramics, now exhibition after exhibition was all white.

As I was not a decorator (although I had used stock decals on the bone china wares in a studio investigation called ‘set theory’), Professor Zhang suggested that he be decoration designer and that we make a limited edition coffee set. Thus a collaborative partnership was established. He had previously done a number of limited edition sets which had been very successful, both with Huaguang Zibo Bone China and with Chaozhou Songfa Ceramics in the south of China in Guandong province. I was still being mentored by him through the design process, but he was happy to accept and use methods that I preferred.

This decision to decorate affected the form of the pieces, as decoration and a very fluid throwing style were somewhat at odds with each other both visually and in a practical way with regards to application. So I made composite forms that had some evidence of the throwing process, but with large smooth areas that would take overglaze transfer decoration (decals) easily. The form was quite different to my current work, but had sufficient reference to be recognisable.
Initially we thought that using a traditional Ding ware design, carved into the moulds would provide a subtle decoration of white/white. This was not possible to do and maintain the freshness of the original carving as firstly the plaster moulds were too hard to carve freely, and secondly, any carved decoration became softened by wear on the moulds and sponging during the finishing process. So we resorted to decals based on the same designs, and Zhang ShouZhi sent a number of his sketches of them to me in Australia.

We sent these back and forth – with much discussion about how much/how little decoration we needed. Eventually we both came back to Zibo, and finally resolved the placement after more discussion and work on the actual pieces. We used a relatively primitive (by current design standards) method of printing the designs on sheets of paper, which we then cut up and stuck on the finished pot with sticky tape. We were both comfortable with this method - me because I was dealing with a real 3-D object, Zhang ShouZhi because he was of the generation that still used a pencil to draw designs – both on paper and on prototype pots. We discussed and chose together the colour for the decal design (a very light silvery grey) and also had preliminary discussion about the packaging.

The resulting work was a true collaboration between a Chinese designer and an Australian artist, and was a first of this kind for Chinese industry. It was released as a limited edition set for the Chinese domestic market, beautifully presented in pinewood boxes. We signed certificates of authentication, and the launch was in Zibo at the China National Ceramic Industry conference in 2007 and every set sold.

It was said by some that ‘the whole of China’s ceramic industry was watching’. Whilst this might have been overstating the case, it was certainly true that there was great interest, and the sets all sold – at a price ($4000AU) that was more than double that which my handmade studio equivalent sells for in Australia. I am told that the sets are now selling on the secondary collectors' market for 80,000rm – almost three times their initial price. What this says about the value of handmade versus factory made is interesting – especially as we usually value more that which we pay more for. The work WAS all hand made, although coming from a factory. There were people that I worked with who poured the forms, made the moulds and glazed and decorated the ware. But it was not the hand made aspects that were so attractive in the selling of the set. It sold because it told a story of collaboration between an older and highly respected Chinese designer, and a respected studio potter from Australia. The set was called ‘Harmony’ and was promoted with pictures of the two of us working together.

There is much discussion amongst social and political theorists about 'The new Confucianism' in China. One view holds that the hierarchical nature of Confucian society can actually contribute to economic equality. By engaging in societal rituals (honour and respect) individuals learn to control their urgent desires and are more likely to consider the common good (Bell 2008). The Huaguang Zibo Bone China factory definitely engages in social rituals, and there is great respect accorded my collaborating partner Zhang Shouzhi, myself and He Yan. Parallel with this is the inclusion of the workers and even the driver of the design studio in social events - such as lunches and KTV nights (karaoke with private rooms, disco lighting and 'follow the bouncing ball' video projections). The principals of the company initiate the KTV nights (and pay), and everyone takes turns at singing and encouraging and supporting the talentless ones like myself. (all Chinese seem to be able to sing in tune). This engenders extreme goodwill, and reciprocal loyalty between the management and the workers. When we are back in the studio, the goodwill carries over, and a generalized collaborative atmosphere develops. The company has also instituted annual staff photography and drawing competitions and prizes, and I am now also working on a joint decal design project where I am providing the designer who usually does the Qing – type designs with pictures of Australian native flora, leaving her to develop patterns for possible further work.

As the factory has moved to pressurized slip casting over the years since the first series was made, a smaller development and limited edition studio has been created in which the earlier hand made
methods are replicated. This has been a good development as it has allowed hand making to continue and the opportunity for more intervention in the actual process—something increasingly difficult when mechanization takes over. The collaboration between Zhang Shouzhi and myself continued, and we are next year planning to do another limited edition for the factory. The first was financially very successful for the company, and it has changed their outlook about what road they will go down in production. They have decided that they will continue to develop limited editions that are higher priced as this makes both economic sense and brands the company as creative and forward looking.

More recently (in late 2009), the factory responded to a suggestion of mine to invite seven other artists to participate in a two week making and designing symposium where we were looking at different ways of interfacing with industry. (artists were Carol McNichol (UK), Chris Weaver (NZ), Paul Mathieu (Canada), Vipoo Srivilasa (Aust/Thailand), Takeshi Yasuda (UK), Ilona Romule (Latvia), Jiang Yanze (China), Michelle Lim (my student from Singapore) and myself. The works produced during this period have been exhibited in various venues—initially in Nanjing at the Nanjing Fine Arts Academy alongside the artists' regular studio work and also at Shanghai Expo as part of the company's trade display.

Huaguang now wants to extend the relationship with artists, and is embarking on a program of ‘100 tea pots by 100 artists’ which will form part of the display in a museum that the company is building in Zibo. The relationship has definitely now become a collaboration between myself and the factory. To me, the process of collaboration with an older and respected Chinese designer/educator was a process of letting go of many of my preconceptions about how my work ‘should’ look. It was both a privilege and an education. Zhang ShouZhi’s status was essential to the success of the project.

And so although I still suspect that it is very hard to have a true collaboration in the sense that each person in a project contributes equally—and more importantly has equal voice in its design— I do think that it is possible to have collaborative teamwork where two or more people contribute to the success of a project. Frequently those cited—and visible—as collaborators are not the only team members. Rather like the tip of the iceberg being just one eighth of the formation (and the hidden seven eights being equally important in preventing the capsizing of the formation), a collaborative team is often composed of hidden members. There is often also a temporal element in that different members come into play at different times.

In the Tour de France and other road cycling events, we see a collaborative team effort of this kind where each rider plays a valuable part in setting the stage for the success of the number one rider. Although Zhang Shouzhi’s and my names are on the Harmony set, I do feel that it is a product that belongs to the studio—not just to us.

References

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Janet De Boos is Head of Workshop, Ceramics, Australian National University, Australia.
S.E.A.T – The little stool that could
The development of social innovation in product design

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Abstract

Based on the principles of socially responsible design this paper identifies criteria for converging the traditional ‘market-led’ model of product design practice with that of social innovation. The new model proposed aims to investigate the hypothesis that social initiatives and empowering design solutions can afford positive social change by enabling creativity and the design intent as the visceral agent for change.

In this paper we discuss the evolution of a final year graduating design student’s project and how through collaboration with a range of stakeholders her project entitled S.E.A.T has been launched in the marketplace and is an active agent for social change and development.

Starting with the designers intent we will highlight how the different stakeholders have formed a relationship with the project and identify their roles in the design/manufacture/distribution/use of the product which is mutually beneficial to all involved. The project includes sustainable manufacturing in Vietnam, a national retailer, an educational program within Australian indigenous communities all synthesised and managed by the organisation Hands that Shape Humanity.

In this paper we discuss how S.E.A.T is acting as a driver for a collaborative process with aims that include testing whether social innovation and engagement can lead to positive social change and development for all stakeholders and their respective associations. The fundamental questions underpinning this project are firstly how can product design practice shift from a ‘market-led’ imperative to one of ‘social need’, without a compromise in quality and financial benefits? And secondly if so, how are such socially responsible sustainable practices formed and established as conventional?

S.E.A.T was designed in 2009 by emerging designer, Niki Banados, as her graduating design project within the School of Design Studies, College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, Australia. S.E.A.T is a small stool with a secret compartment, which is accessed by twisting the top. The stool is designed for construction in wood or bamboo and packs flat to fit inside an A3 box. S.E.A.T was Niki’s response to a project brief conceived and developed by Virginia Bruce who is the CEO of ‘The Hands that Shape Humanity’. This social enterprise was founded in South Africa in conjunction with the Desmund Tutu Peace Centre and developed from the responses of 76 international identities in response to the question “If you could leave one message for humanity what would it be?” ‘The Hands that Shape Humanity’ project brief called for students to design an ordinary object with an extraordinary message that could inspire human potential.
It was Niki’s intention to create a ‘sustainable product’ that considered not only the material and manufacturing processes but also how the design engaged people. She achieved sustainability in her design for ‘self assembly’ where the user has to assemble the stool and ‘personalization’ through painting and decorating. The secret compartment also allows precious memories, letters or objects to be stored. In our opinion personal engagement on its own does not make a product sustainable but if the product is perceived as a valuable personal object it is potentially less likely to be thrown away. Niki also proposed that the stool be made in a third world country such as Vietnam, which would assist a small community with income generating opportunities.

Before we discuss in detail the case study of S.E.A.T, it is important to understand the field in which it is situated. We see S.E.A.T as situated in the context of socially responsible design, which has emerged through the ever-increasing discourse concerned with ‘sustainability’. Such discourse reveals that global society\(^9\) is in the midst of a sustainability crisis, where the concept of ‘sustainable design’ remains unresolved. Initially, sustainable design tended to be addressed via pragmatic concerns, such as, a product’s materiality and manufacturing. However, these measures disregard a holistic concern with the interrelated ecological, sociological, economic, political, and psychological problems of our un-sustainable civilisation. Increasingly design research in Western economies is now acknowledging that sustainability must be understood as a multifaceted dilemma, where ‘sustainable’ can no longer be misconstrued as synonymous with ‘green’ (Pilloton, 2009: 15). This effort can be described as an endeavour to re-direct product design practice toward a discipline that positions itself as an active agent in the formation of a sustainable civilisation.

Design theorist Tony Fry defines this new terrain, as re-directive practice (2008); which aims to drive a new trajectory of sustainment, rather than simply making the unsustainable more sustainable through efficiency improvements. Situated within this discipline is the endeavour to re-position product design practice from a ‘market-led’ or ‘consumer-led’ methodology to a socially responsible model. Such a transition demands the reassessment of design values, where a focus upon the creation and constant stimulation of human desires must be abandoned for a discipline that places social impact and designing for human needs as paramount (Whiteley, 1993: 3). Furthermore, this ‘social model’ of product design practice discards excessive production, consumption and waste patterns for an overriding concern in responsibility. Within such a discipline a designer does not merely require talent but must also entail moral and ethical responsibility (Heller & Vienne, 2003: xi). Furthermore, progress within the field of socially responsible design based on re-directive practice has instigated the recognition and value of the relationships between design, philanthropy and altruism.

Interest in such an approach to design has led to several, valuable theoretical contributions. The late architect-designer, Victor Papanek, is often distinguished as the discipline’s pioneer, who argued through his seminal book of 1972, Design for the Real World, that ‘designers have become a dangerous breed’ (p. ix). Although Papanek’s assertions are almost 40 years old, they unfortunately remain relevant today, where the call for a practice that involves designing for people’s needs rather than their wants persistently rings true (p. 219). Professor Nigel Whiteley continues such thinking within his book, entitled Design For Society, 1993. Whiteley argues that it is morally unacceptable to maintain ‘consumer-led’ design practice, due to its advocacy of materialism and rejection of altruistic values (p. 3). Furthermore, the proposition is made that if knowledge, of a product’s environmental, social and political implications was available, consumers would begin to demand socially responsible products (p. 170). This concept is focused upon restructuring consumer culture towards a level of ‘consciousness’ where choices can be made to support products and services that are contributing to a level of sustainability which reflects more than economic profits. However, professional product design practice in many respects is still in need of making such a paradigm shift.

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\(^9\) The description applies focus to the consumer-oriented characteristics of current society and consequently, phrases, such as, ‘our society’ and ‘contemporary society’ relate to this observation. However, it is acknowledged that not everyone encompassed under these terms exemplify such characteristics.
Professor Victor Margolin recognises this omission within his influential book, *The Politics of the Artificial*, 2002. Margolin declares that ‘design must now disengage itself from consumer culture ... and find a terrain where it can begin to rethink its role in the world’ (p. 99). Furthermore, Margolin acknowledges that there exists a vast gap between rhetoric and action, through asserting that ‘the world’s design needs are evident, but the plan for reinventing the design profession is not’ (p. 102). Although this need is identified, the text seems to fall short of providing a full-bodied prescription for a new vision of design practice. Nevertheless, such a discussion is initiated within the article entitled *A “Social Model” of Design: Issues of Practice and Research*, 2002, by Victor Margolin and Sylvia Margolin. This paper is a valuable addition to the discourse through its effort to present a “social model” of product design practice and a research agenda to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach. Margolin 2002, suggests that product design and social design are not mutually exclusive but rather should be seen as points on a continuum and that the differences between them are defined by the priorities of the commission. Further Margolin proposes that a social model of design requires a level of collaboration across the range of stakeholders in order to create an opportunity of mutual benefit.

Authors Steven Heller and Veronique Vienne make their contribution through aligning citizenship with design in their book, entitled *Citizen designer: Perspectives on design responsibility*, 2003. The book presents the concept of a ‘citizen designer’, who must contain a ‘moral standard’ and ‘be professionally, culturally, and socially responsible for the impact his or her design has on citizenry’ (p. x). Such design thinking relates to the concept that all actions have reactions. Therefore, the text recognises the designer’s responsibility to acknowledge the real consequences of their designs as a key element of socially responsible design. David Stairs, executive director of *Designers Without Borders*, engages in this moral aspect of socially responsible design through his article, entitled *Altruism as Design Methodology*, 2005. Stairs argues that ‘market-led design’ has encouraged individualism, rather than philanthropy and that it is time to reconcile design practice with more altruistic values. In this manner, design is encouraged to address problem solving from a social perspective in order to become an agent of social development (p. 10).

Emily Pilloton, executive director of *Project H Design*, is another eminent author within the discourse of socially responsible design. She argues the case for user-centered, humanitarian design within her book, entitled *Design Revolution: 100 Products That Empower People*, 2009. Based on her analysis of recent design debate Pilloton is optimistic in declaring that design can change the world through a revolution that puts social impact and human needs first (p. 11). Furthermore, the discussion is extended to relate ‘design for social impact’ to both social entrepreneurship and design thinking. Social entrepreneurship expands the financial ‘bottom line’ to a ‘triple bottom line: people, planet and profit’ (p. 17). Such a model considers how a product’s design, manufacturing and distribution can be both financially and socially beneficial. Pilloton then goes on to describe design thinking as ‘the use of design sensibilities in business strategies and innovation models’ (p. 21). This concept is seen as mutually beneficial to both businesses and designers, who can achieve their goals of social impact through their collaboration.

Extreme change demands extreme change. Accordingly, although perhaps sluggishly, design is changing as a result of current widespread concerns regarding current environmental and social degradation. The above analysis of current progress within the field of socially responsible design verifies this statement. Nevertheless, the question remains as to how can product design practice shift from a ‘market-led’ imperative to one of ‘social need’, without a compromise in quality and financial benefits? Furthermore, how are such socially responsible sustainable practices formed and established? Discourse concerned with the identification of this need progressively inflates the growing field, however, as Pilloton states ‘it’s time to stop talking and start walking’ (2009: 28). What

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10 Social entrepreneurship is ‘the application of entrepreneurial business practices and principles to organise, create, and manage a venture that both incites social change and makes a profit for some or all stakeholders’ (Pilloton, 2009:16).
is now needed is research focused on the development and evaluation of socially responsible products to test their effectiveness in actual situations (Margolin & Margolin, 2002: 28). Such research appears fundamentally concerned with the investigation of the widespread, multiple consequences brought about by a singular product, commonly referred to as ‘the butterfly effect’.

Tony Fry (2008) has pitched consumption against sustainable practice where the notion of human desire should be abandoned so that we can address designing for human needs. We believe, like Margolin & Margolin (2002) and Pilloton (2010), that a sustainable design practice is not “a them or us scenario” but rather a convergence of interests and benefits for all the different stakeholders. For many of us in the developed world we are becoming more conscious of our choices and desires and are looking for ways to make a difference in the way we consume. We are only able to do this because we have evolved beyond the base level of human needs and can be selective in our choices. We believe that if you remove the imperative in ‘market-led’ design practice and replace it with ‘choice’ and ‘intent’ you are empowering consumers with knowledge about the real value of a product and the impact their choices can have in the world.

S.E.A.T Case Study

In our case study we will outline how S.E.A.T has evolved as a socially sustainable product by positioning the designers intention in the “drivers seat” which has led to a number of positive actions for the stakeholders and the community at large.

Virginia Bruce and her organization ‘The Hands that Shape Humanity’ investigate new ways to inspire human potential. She is particularly interested in design as a platform for social change. Her background is in product development, branding and marketing and she has extensive experience with the traditional approaches to developing products to meet consumer needs. However as the CEO for The Hands that Shape Humanity her approach to consumer needs and product development has evolved and is outlined in her consumer product manifesto. Virginia’s proposition is that if you meet the desire and needs of all stakeholders, from design to altruism to profit, then the motivation for collaboration to create a positive social outcome becomes more heightened. By engaging people and businesses throughout the life span of a product, from a

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11 The ‘Butterfly Effect’ is the popular name for Edward Lorenz’s concept of sensitivity which emphasizes that extremely small differences can lead to major consequences that are perceived as random changes.

12 OUR CONSUMER PRODUCT MANIFESTO

| 01 PASSION | 02 CREATIVITY | 03 INTEGRITY | 04 CONNECTION |
| Purpose, Inspiration | Possibility & Evolution | Social, Ethical & Environmental | Local & Global |
| We choose to work with brands and individuals who are passionate and inspired and bring purpose to what they do. | Infinite possibilities exist within each and every one of us. Creativity is the use of imagination to form original ideas. | We care about the social, ethical and environmental origins of our products. In particular the energy and intent with which they are made. | We are all connected. We value community both local and global. We understand cause and effect and exchange. |
| Every hand can and must participate in the shaping of humanity. Our hope is to inspire, facilitate, engage and assist as many people as we can to do this in a way that pays it forward towards a positive social outcome. | Evolution is the way we grow and apply these ideas. Nothing is constant. Everything is changing. Anything is possible. We know the human spirit will always find a way – that is the essence of creativity. | When someone loves what they do, that is the energy they place into their work. We seek to add value to our world without depleting it, but just as important we seek to add value to humanity. | We believe in the butterfly effect, one small act can create great impact. This is the platform we look to provide for like minded individuals and companies. Our continuum is self – other – society – humanity – beyond. Always full circle. |
design, educational, business and altruistic position Virginia and her organizations manifesto helps guide the development of a product with authentic value. If people are able to see how the product is benefiting a community, and themselves, then it is proposed that they will be more likely to want to engage with it. The proposition from Hands follows the intent of a product from self, to other, to society, to humanity and beyond, and thus infusing into the DNA of a product a level of sustainability not yet demonstrated. Virginia is working from the premise that sustainability is not merely an aspect that is ‘nice to have’ but is instead becoming a fundamental shift and convention within our society.

The Stakeholders
Margolin’s model for social design relies on a range of stakeholders collaborating together, believing in a common goal or intent but also having their individual needs met. This is a critical point if the project/product is to be successful and have a sense of longevity and thus sustainment. Therefore the process is one of transparency where each of the collaborators agrees to be involved because they believe in the designer’s intention. Connected to this, the collaborators can see how they can make a contribution and how that contribution can benefit their own position and also pay it forward to the other stakeholders (fig.1.).

Virginia’s main aim with the Hands that Shape Humanity project brief for the final year design students was to orchestrate an opportunity within a real world context for a young designer’s intention for positive social change to be realized, using an integrated framework to the ‘consumer-led’ model. Students were asked to consider the impact their design would have from the consequences of material choices, where it was manufactured and what contribution their design could make to its intended audience.

Niki’s response to the project brief considered how and where S.E.A.T could be made but also her intention was for people to share stories and keep personal objects and letters within the hidden compartment thus making the design an object to be treasured. Virginia saw great potential in Niki’s final year project in particular the level of personal engagement and sustainability that responded to the Hands consumer product manifesto. Thus Virginia mentored Niki in refining the design and developed a number of relationships, that went beyond the designer, that would enable S.E.A.T to reach a range of audiences with the intention of bringing about a level of social change. The product design lent itself to be used as a children’s reading seat, an object that if assembled in multiples created a ‘pop-up reading circle’, and through the process of assembly created a series of other ‘learnings’ for children. This process of collaboration is ongoing, with the S.E.A.T Project being launched to primary schools throughout Australia in June 2012, and as such will require further analysis and reflection to ascertain the actual impact and level of social change over time.
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<tr>
<td>Designer</td>
<td>Product design</td>
<td>Experience, opportunity,</td>
<td>Recognition, design royalty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hands That Shape Humanity</td>
<td>Mentor/Inspiration, project management</td>
<td>Product and project</td>
<td>Proven business model, revenue, brand awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALNF (Australian Literacy and Numeracy foundation)</td>
<td>Charity partner</td>
<td>Address literacy issues in Aust. Indigenous children</td>
<td>Fundraising &amp; social awareness positive social change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The r.e.a.l store (retailer)</td>
<td>Distribution to end-users via retail outlets</td>
<td>Corporate social responsibility program in sustainability</td>
<td>Public Relations, content, revenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturer</td>
<td>Manufacture of SEAT</td>
<td>Work for their factory, business opportunity</td>
<td>Income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End Users (children, educators, parents)</td>
<td>Purchase the product and use it.</td>
<td>Education tool, gift, activity</td>
<td>education in team building, sustainability, social values, art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Participation in the butterfly effect</td>
<td>Opportunity to participate, education of issues</td>
<td>Feeling of contribution. Positive social change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing partner / School Aid</td>
<td>Marketing to educators in primary schools</td>
<td>Demonstration of their corporate ethos. Kids helping kids.</td>
<td>Awareness to School Aid, income, credibility through association</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 1

School of Design Studies, COFA (Educator)
The School of Design Studies utilizes the Hands that Shape Humanity project brief for their final year design students as it offers a real world project and the possibility of student works actually being manufactured. There is a mutual opportunity and benefit for the University being able to offer a project brief whose intentions are to bring about social change and engage in making the world a better place.

The Designer (Creator)
As a stakeholder in the project Niki gets both a royalty and public recognition for designing S.E.A.T. She has been responsible for all further design adjustments required to meet manufacturing standards for the retail market, and has been actively involved in the marketing and promotion of S.E.A.T.
The Hands that Shape Humanity (HTSH) (Architect/Facilitator)
HTSH offer the student designer an opportunity to be mentored and assisted in the development of projects that can manifest social change. HTSH works to facilitate this opportunity and in turn develops their profile and brand as an organization leading the consumer led market towards social design and change.

The Manufacturer (Community engagement – Vietnam)
S.E.A.T is currently being manufactured in Vietnam by a small village 4 hours south of Hanoi, which specialize in Bamboo products. Bamboo is a very sustainable material and the processes used in the production of the sheet material have a low impact on the environment as there is no waste or byproducts. The factory generates its own energy through burning the bamboo sawdust. After Virginia visited this community she saw an opportunity to engage them in the manufacture of the stool. Machinery and mentoring were given to this community in order to help them produce the product. By working with craftspeople in this small village and providing them with revenue it allows for a level of financial sustainment for the community and can help indirectly by giving their children the opportunity to go to school. The factory also employs women on a flexible basis so that they can look after their families and the seasonal agricultural commitments they have given that they are still 70% agricultural dependent.

The Australian Numeracy and Literacy Foundation (Community engagement – An Australian perspective)
Connections were made with The Australian Numeracy and Literacy Foundation (ALNF) who do award winning work in Indigenous Literacy. In Australia we still have 4 out of 5 children in Indigenous communities who are illiterate. ALNF endorsed the SEAT project as they saw it as a catalyst for community engagement. SEAT facilitates engagement in particular among indigenous youth by creating pop up reading circles. In order to facilitate this process a children’s book was created that outlined how S.E.A.T was made and produced with the intention of informing young children about the concept of sustainability and that their actions and choices have far reaching consequences. At its core the Foundation looks to educate children on the value of who they are.

A pilot program has been set up where S.E.A.T. has gone out into a range of schools of various demographic backgrounds and in each case was perceived by the students and staff to be a worthwhile exercise. Funding is currently being sourced in order to follow up with further research to ascertain from staff the ongoing impact SEAT has within the classroom.

The Retailer
Another major stakeholder in S.E.A.T is the Australian national retailer Officeworks. They saw the opportunity to associate their brand with a product that was altruistic in the way it was assisting others through educational/community engagement. It enabled them to communicate with customers the fact that by purchasing S.E.A.T the buyer was assisting a community in Vietnam, and supporting the ANLF program for Indigenous youth literacy skills while also giving their own child a product to engage with.

The Marketing Partner
School Aid has joined forces with S.E.A.T to assist with getting the project’s awareness into the education sector, schools, government, philanthropic sector. School Aid is a national schools-based philanthropy network empowering kids to help kids in crisis. School Aid’s purpose is to promote a world where Australian children live the values of care and compassion and so develop a lifelong sense of moral and social responsibility.

ALNF have a reputation for doing award winning literacy programs in the area of indigenous literacy and presently run a program called ‘Hand up who cares’ which is about informing the general public about the plight of indigenous literacy skills where 4 out of 5 indigenous kids in rural and remote Australia are unable to read to Australian education standards.
Conclusion

The roll out of S.E.A.T is still in the very early stages and further research will be required over a longer period of time to test the impact S.E.A.T has on the range of stakeholders. However at this time we believe that the level of integration across design, education, and community enables this ordinary product to engage and potentially improve people’s lives through the ‘butterfly effect’. This model of socially responsible design is much more complex than that of ‘market-led’ design and in many ways reflects the level of interconnectedness of our society.

By positioning S.E.A.T. within a framework of sustainable design, and educational community engagement, Virginia and the Hands that Shape Humanity organization are developing a model for design and designers to be engaged in social need, where human needs no longer are juxtaposed against ‘the sale of goods’ but rather work together as a continuum for social change and development (Margolin 2002).

There now seems an urgent mandate to ‘design for good’, rather than simply practice ‘good design’ (Chochinov, 2009). Product design should no longer merely concern itself with just industry, economics and private affluence but rather integrate a focus on design, ethics and social responsibility.

Society has always been in a constant state of change, however the speed of the change that we are experiencing given the advancements in technology and communication is reminiscent of the industrial revolution. A drastic rejection of current norms is required. Such change, however, seems yet to be made, where current discourse formations within Western societies seem dislodged from a particular attitude. To borrow from theorist Terry Smith there is a need to stand ‘at once within and against the times’ (Smith, 2008: 8). Design today is not merely about function or aesthetics but about changing the world. Unfortunately, this mandate is often misunderstood as involving a decline in quality, aesthetics, and financial benefit. Conversely, S.E.A.T aims to present and evaluate a practice which is both socially and financially beneficial to its numerous associated stakeholders, without a compromise in quality or design.

References


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Remodelling design as co-creation in the era of globalisation

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Abstract

Criticisms of design frequently focus on its central role in the proliferation of consumer culture in the context of globalisation. This paper considers an experimental design that intervenes in these conceptions of design. By evoking the historical design ethos of co-creating, advocated by Global Tools in Italy in the 1970s, I contend that the furniture series Digestion (1998-2000) by French designer Matali Crasset provides a provocative and significant model of collaboration that reworks the interdependencies between developed and developing countries in a globalised economy. Drawing on art theorist Hal Foster’s account of how unresolved issues of history haunt contemporary practices in visual art, I show how this experimental design reveals a number of unresolved tensions in design pertinent to today’s ecological and financial crises. I argue that Digestion celebrates how the co-creation of mass produced products manufactured in developing countries can reconfigure collaboration between designers and consumers in an international arena.

Design Accounts of Globalisation

Globalisation is often optimistically discussed in design discourse as an opportunity for increased flexibility, enhanced quality, and renewed creativity in design. Design theorist Guy Julier (2008) contextualises globalisation within the liberalisation of economic trade during the 1980s and 1990s. He defines globalisation as a combination of accelerated production, the digitisation of information, strategic creativity, and the redistribution of manufacturing centres around the world. He draws on Scott Lash and John Urry’s 1987 account of ‘disorganised capitalism’, where the shift in influence from institutional regulation to multinational corporations, combined with the flexibility of digital technology, is seen as blurring differences between culture and commerce and aestheticised everyday life. Aestheticising everyday life means moulding, shaping, and penetrating every corner of daily experience. The combination of these forces has resulted in a closer allegiance of branding and design with consumerism under the aegis of economic globalisation. Julier (2006) suggests that mutuality best characterises the relationship between the economies of capitalism and the human subjects who work and live within its orbit. I contend that while Julier champions globalisation as advantageous to design, his concept of mutuality leaves little room for reconceptualising the relationship between consumer and designer in ways that acknowledge the environmental impact of the overproduction of commodities.

Critical views of globalisation consider the wider socio-political ramifications of organising society according to the dictates of multinational corporations. These perspectives emphasise that the flow of capital and western cultural values across national boundaries constitutes a form of cultural imperialism imposed upon developing countries. Assessments vary as to whether globalisation produces cultural homogeneity or heterogeneity, yet many who focus on the social effects of globalisation agree that while wealth has increased overall it is increasingly concentrated in the hands of a minority elite (Woodham 1997, Appadurai 1996). Designer and design theorist Gui Bonsiepe (1999, 2006) has long discussed the effects of globalisation in relation to design and
international economic development. He advocates design and industrialisation as a driver for economic independence in undeveloped and developing countries.

I have identified three significant differences between Bonsiepe and Julier. First, Bonsiepe attributes responsibility for the economic dependency and environmental decline of some countries to the vested interests of globalised multinational corporations, whereas Julier celebrates such corporations’ contributions to design innovation. Bonsiepe’s analysis of globalisation and consumerism identifies the disparities of wealth and cultural power that have occurred in developing countries and are also increasingly evident within Western countries. Because of capitalism’s ethos of overproduction, Bonsiepe argues that design in globalised capitalism produces increased environmental degradation and sees pollution as an unimportant by-product.

A second difference is that Bonsiepe focuses on the imbrication of design in the framing of consumerism as the primary form of people’s self-expression. He refutes current associations of design with luxury fashion goods and objects to the “trivialisation” evident in design’s conflation with marketing and branding within globalisation (Bonsiepe cited in Fathers 2003, p. 55). For Bonsiepe (2006, p.29), “freedom” is more than “the right to choose between a hundred varieties of cellular phones”, and the key question regarding globalisation is whether design facilitates self-determining societies or societies dependent on and dominated by external forces.

Finally, in contrast to Julier’s celebration of the multilateral flow of information and goods within global capitalism, Bonsiepe (1999) argues that the dominance of developing countries results in the replacement of socio-cultural and economic development policies by programs of privatisation. These programs become wholly absorbed in servicing external debt imposed by organisations such as the International Monetary Fund. Rather than capital flowing from developed to developing countries, Bonsiepe asserts that it is developing countries that are “transferring value” to developed economies (Bonsiepe cited in Fathers 2003, p. 53). In other words, the mutuality that Julier describes exists solely in the rhetoric of developed countries, whose interests reside in downplaying the exploitative facets of globalisation.

Spectrality

In contrast to Julier and Bonsiepe, in Design and Crime (2002) art theorist Hal Foster describes design as a totalising system that encroaches on all aspects of public and private life. Within this framework, Foster connects the celebrated hybridity of art and design in a globalised economy to Art Nouveau’s intermixture of art value and use value, contending that each mingles the values of art and design, subject and object, and leads to commodity fetishism. Against this conception of design and within the context of globalisation, Foster identifies a repetition of historical models in recent artworks that have the potential to resist the current status quo of hybridity. Rather than seeing historical repetition as a calculated strategy to win institutional attention, Foster describes artworks that are shadowed by artistic antecedents as “spectral”, in that they suggest regret for what has been lost (2002, p. 130). Such artworks, he contends seem to recall “lost moments” in social and art history (p. 138) and he suggests they function as a “possible portal between an unfinished past and a re-opened future” (2004, p. 15). Foster asserts that artworks that evoke historical antecedents bring different temporalities into the contemporary frame and disconnect from the present by insisting that the present be viewed historically. In other words, the spectrality of historical references in contemporary art invoke ways of thinking and acting that counter the present socio-cultural dominance of global capital.

I contend that in the current phase of globalisation Foster’s observation of spectrality in recent art practices is applicable to experimental designs that recall or invoke historical developments in design to address the social, economic and environmental effects of globalisation. My argument is that a close analysis of the connection between contemporary experimental designs and historical models of design practice exposes an overlooked critical strategy in contemporary experimental design. Adapting spectrality to design may be antithetical to Foster’s strident critique of a
contemporary world awash with design in *Design and Crime*, yet it reframes how experimental designs question the apparent historical amnesia of celebrations of the eternally new in globalisation, and also reframes how design renegotiates unresolved tensions from its past.

**Global Tools**

Global Tools (1973-1975) was a collective comprised of Italian radical design groups Superstudio and Archizoom and leading designers and commentators such as Andrea Branzi and Franco Raggi. The collective emerged in 1973, immediately after the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) suspended trade of oil exports to the United States, Western Europe and Japan. At a time when widespread inflation, changing social values, and violent political turmoil were rampant, reduced confidence in public governance in Italy was further compounded by energy rationing. Exacerbated by the OAPEC embargo, social and environmental degradation were targeted by activists who advocated conservation rather than economic growth and resistance to the increasing influence of American-style consumerism. In fact, the oil crisis can be seen as a turning point in the growing public awareness of global interdependencies. It brought attention to the absence of global guidelines and policies for energy production and trade, and the need for international cooperation in responding to a crisis of limited supply (Turner 1974).

Global Tools explored design alternatives to the capitalist values of profit and competition. According to Branzi (1984, p. 83 and 1973, p. 4) their objective was to provide “a gymnastics of recovery” that would “restore balance in human creativity”. Raggi corroborates these descriptions, defining the collective as a school of “expanded anti-paternalistic education” that sought to break free of institutionalised relationships that merely reproduced the existing social hierarchy (Raggi, nd, 210) Influenced by Riccardo Dalisi’s research in product customisation by non-designers, Global Tools challenged the established practices and institutions of design at the time by conceptualising design as co-creation and attributing creativity to non-designers and consumers. Global Tools’ emphasis on consumer creativity sought to disrupt the growing trend in Italy towards domination by countries rich in natural resources such as oil. In the collective’s view, creatively addressing how to live within economic constraint and re-purposing existing products was preferable to excessive consumerism modelled on American capitalism. To promote this idea, Global Tools proposed experimental design workshops on The Body, Construction, Communication, and Survival, yet only the workshop on The Body was conducted. Nonetheless, in this one workshop Global Tools emphasised the value of interdependence and cooperation and positioned co-creation and re-purposing as guiding principles for design practice.

**Digestion**

I interpret the suite of furniture titled *Digestion* (1998-2000) by French designer Matali Crasset (born 1965) as a re-engagement of the idea of consumers as co-creators of design. Establishing her design studio in 1998, re-purposing existing products is the principle that distinguishes Crasset’s commercial and experimental designs. Crasset introduced the re-purposing of everyday products in her *Digestion* design prototypes and has exhibited such designs in several solo retrospectives. For example, an igloo constructed from plastic buckets was exhibited at the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum and an artificial forest of clothes hangers decorated with plastic gloves was exhibited at the Stedeljik.

*Digestion No. 1 Pouf* is a rectangular pouf made from a checked, woven polypropylene bag filled with foam. Crasset organises the pouf in several arrangements, demonstrating its facility for customisation, for instance, as couches, armchairs and coffee tables. The variously arranged poufs all have handles and are portable, reflecting the product’s origins as the ubiquitous laundry bag available in thrift shops around the world. Originally designed for The Ethno Techno Bar at the ‘Who’s Next’ exhibition in 1998, the pouf was also included in Crasset’s design for the Moroccan Bar at the ‘The Disorienting Objects of Morocco’ exhibition at the Museum of Decorative Arts in Paris in 1999. Produced for a time by high-end Italian manufacturer Edra, *Digestion No. 1* was
exhibited at the Milan Design Fair in 2000 and purchased by the Fonds National D’Art Contemporain and the Victoria and Albert Museum. Crasset subsequently extended the *Digestion* series to four other furniture designs that are also based on cheap plastic household wares manufactured in developing countries such as China and available at supermarkets and generic $2 shops. More recently Crasset made the pouf, re-titled Hi-Pouff, available to a wider market at lower cost in plain-coloured covers. While I have explored the *Digestion* series at length elsewhere (Moline, forthcoming), in this paper I shall focus on *Digestion No. 1* to demonstrate my thesis.

As a direct pun, the term *digestion* acknowledges that as there are enough products circulating in the market, design should be digested, appropriated and re-designed by consumers. The title encapsulates her view that assimilation of design should be the focus of contemporary design practice rather than the expansion of consumerism and the endless proliferation of new products. The possibilities of re-purposing cheap plastic goods, as shown in *Digestion No. 1*, shifts the expectation that design must be expensive and branded by big-name designers in developing economies such as the United States or Europe. To disrupt the media promotion of designers as celebrities, Crasset emphasises consumer interventions, which she sees as the unconscious design carried out when non-designers resourcefully reassign a product’s functions to suit their immediate everyday needs. *Digestion* makes visible a strategy already at play in the everyday re-purposing of designed objects by consumers.

I have identified that a number of the ideas and values developed in the Global Tools experiment are recalled in Crasset’s re-purposed design. Like Global Tools, Crasset rejects the principles of excessive consumerism central to globalisation as characterised by design commentators such as Julier and Bonsiepe. Her mobile arrangements that recycle existing products demonstrate that design must be redefined as operating within limits rather than feeding the excess and waste culture of globalisation in which it is imbricated. Furthermore, the readily available products with which *Digestion* is constructed demonstrate Crasset’s aspiration to “provide a basis which people may adopt” and the model of co-creation in which she evaluates her designs according to how much “life” consumers “bring to the objects” (Crasset cited in Morgaine 2002, p. 74). In other words, she sees design as an everyday activity in which consumers participate, rather than solely the domain of specialists. I interpret Crasset’s spectral recalling of Global Tools as a refiguring of design as co-creation rather than a celebration of the designer’s virtuosity in anticipating, determining or accelerating consumer desires.

*Digestion* No. 1 succinctly demonstrates the ethos of co-creation and re-purposing. The arrangements of the modular unit into various pieces of furniture emphasise versatility, drawing attention to the changing patterns of consumerism made necessary by environmental change. In other words, the range of uses Crasset explores with the laundry sack demonstrate how resourcefulness may be seen as desirable rather than a restriction imposed by poverty. Symbolically turning the most disposable item—a polypropylene bag—into a seat opens up the potential of re-purposing. Crasset repeats this concept in each element of the *Digestion* series to demonstrate the wide range of opportunities available if resourceful recycling of products is given new value in consumerism.

I propose that in *Digestion* Crasset adapts the Global Tools ethos to the late 1990s, specifically the implications of the Kyoto Agreement ratified in March 1998. This agreement specified targets for the reduction of pollution in each country and provided three market-driven mechanisms for achieving these targets: Emissions Trading; Clean Development; and Joint Implementation. When considered in this historical context, *Digestion* can be interpreted as demonstrating potential for a dialogue between developing and developed countries that addresses the practicalities of global trading. It does this by showing how consumers can co-create by re-purposing products manufactured in developing countries, adapting them to their own needs. In so doing, *Digestion* models a DIY design adaptation of the new protocols for global trade.
Crasset makes visible new possibilities for more equitable global interdependencies that evoke the agenda of Global Tools. Rather than reiterate a one-way trade where polluting industries are relocated to developing countries with less stringent pollution legislation, Digestion suggests how consumers can engage in a reciprocal arrangement with designers and manufacturing companies by re-purposing existing products to co-create furniture using products manufactured elsewhere. In this redefinition of design as co-creation and re-purposing between producer and consumer Crasset addresses the uneven distribution of wealth under the aegis of globalisation as noted by Bonsiepe, rather than merely adding to the proliferation of more stuff described by Julier.

Conclusion

I have argued that through the spectral recalling of a lost moment in design history—when Global Tools proposed the principles of co-creation and re-purposing as strategies to counteract the waste culture of capitalism—the contemporary significance of Crasset’s design may be more fully understood. Furthermore, when Digestion is interpreted as drawing attention to the urgent need for ongoing co-creation and re-purposing in design in the context of globalisation she not only emphasises that resources are limited, but also how a co-design approach can engage and adjust consumer behaviour on a global scale. By superimposing the principles of a lost design model into the commercial arena, Crasset responds to overproduction and consumer practices that contribute to global warming. As Foster suggests, the spectral is “not a will to totalise so much as a will to relate—to probe a misplaced past, to collate its different signs” and as I suggest, to discover viable but overlooked aspects of historical design models that address problems arising from contemporary globalisation (2004, p.21). By arguing that Crasset makes visible how consumers can engage in a reciprocal arrangement with designers and manufacturing companies to re-purpose existing products and co-create new design, I have demonstrated that spectrality can be applied in the analysis of experimental designs that are engaged in rethinking global issues in which design is negatively imbricated.

References


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designing, juggling, balancing and performing:
the Circus Oz Living Archive Collaboration

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Abstract
Increasingly within the realm of research and creative practice, collaboration, as an entity and a methodology, is being positioned as a necessity in the search for innovation. Underpinning this is the belief and expectation that the diversity and multiple perspectives that are integral to a collaboration will enable innovation and the discovery of something ‘new’ or of greater relevance in application. Enacting interdisciplinary collaborations that integrate both academic and external organisations is a complex undertaking. Designing a research program and methods for shared understanding is essential if the benefits of the collaboration is to be realised. This essay reflects on one of the strategies being utilised by the Circus Oz Living Archive project team as we work towards the collaborative realisation of the project outcome.

Increasingly within the realm of research and creative practice, collaboration, as an entity and a methodology, is being positioned as a necessity in the search for innovation. Underpinning this is the belief and expectation that the diversity and multiple perspectives that are integral to a collaboration will enable innovation and the discovery of something ‘new’ or of greater relevance in application. For those of us engaged in academic research, a collaboration may take various forms. It may be a collaboration across different disciplines or between different project partners such as the academy, industry and/or community. In any form of collaboration there are many different potential issues that will influence the process and outcomes of the collaboration, as there are equally many different contexts for innovation and contribution from a project outcomes.

Over the past five years I have been engaged in numerous research collaborations. Typically these have been interdisciplinary; few have been within the frame of only one discipline domain, and none have involved researchers from within the same field of practice or expertise. On a few occasions design explorations have been the central project focus, at others design has been just one disciplinary contributor as the project team has sought to explore or resolve an identified problem or proposition. My engagement in these projects has resulted in my understanding that collaboration is a much more complicated entity than many give it credit for being. Understanding and engaging with the socio-historic politics, and the pre or misconceptions, or assumptions that are present when disciplines and practitioners embark on such an undertaking is essential in the design of a collaborative project. It is also essential in the ongoing management of a research project including the communication between team members.
The Circus Oz Living Archive project (Living Archive) is an example of such a project, and one that I am currently involved in. Funded within the Australian Research Council Linkage Program, this project is a collaboration between a circus, a performing arts museum, an arts funding organisation and two universities. The listed Chief and Partner Investigators are from 12 or more different disciplinary domains. This project is a rich mix where science, the arts, design, performance and cultural studies, regularly meet as the project team endeavours to envisage, design and eventually realize a digital living archive. What has become apparent over the past 12-months is that even in a collaboration that has intense good will and acceptance with regard to the interdisciplinary nature of the collaboration, tensions of difference still exist. Addressing and most often embracing this tension of difference, and using it as a creative opportunity rather than a destructive one, has been our method to the challenges to date. In this essay I will reflect on the experience of collaboration amidst such disciplinary and contextual difference in practice; including some of the joys and challenges, and the subsequent strategies and the learning that continue to evolve in conjunction with the project discoveries. My intention is that through my reflections on this one project, to consider what it might mean for our broader understanding of design collaboration in practice.

The Project

The catalyst for the Living Archive project was two fold. Firstly there was Circus Oz's ambition to transform and make more accessible their existing video archive that documents thirty-three years of the circus's performance history; and secondly there was a desire to rethink existing paradigms of contemporary performance particularly in relation to time, authorship and place, and how this can be transformed through technology. Based on these ambitions the proposition emerged that it would be possible through the design of a new way of engaging with an archive, to realise new conceptions and experiences of circus performance. These project ambitions raise many questions and challenges, and they have been used to frame the project objectives and the design of the team and various types of expertise that are required to realise it.

This is a grand and complex ambition for a research project and one that has potential for confusion and confrontation as the members and representatives of the various organisation and disciplinary domains work together. Conscious of this the team has adopted an open and diverse approach to the project methodology and methods. The aim being to recognise the various conceptions of research and rigour or relevance to each of the knowledge fields and traditions, whilst also communicating the research progress in ways that are relevant to the various research partners from Circus Oz, the Australia Council, the Performing Arts Museum in Melbourne, Australia, and the Australian Research Council who funded the project. In an attempt to build bridges across points of difference and assist the team to be transparent and respectful, social media and other associated digital collaboration and communication devices are being used to make all information open to the team and where appropriate, to the public.

Addressing the needs and expectations of the various researchers within a project as complex as the Living Archive is becoming an increasingly common phenomenon within design research projects. As the field of design research transforms from being utilising a predominantly individual creative practice approach to design research, to embracing the complexity of applied interdisciplinary design investigations integrating the academy and industry and community. It could be argued that in this way, design research is transforming and beginning to model the practices of design in commercial practice, but this would be a simplistic interpretation of this transformation and what it will mean for the academy and external contexts over time. The disciplinary intersections of research projects such as this, challenge us to design new ways of undertaking research, and for design researchers, the development of a clearer understanding of what design is, how it is practiced, and its contribution to society and industry.
Defining Disciplinarity

As the focus of this discussion is on the dynamics of interdisciplinary collaboration in practice, it is essential to clarify what I mean when I use the terms discipline and interdisciplinary.

Across the literature there are numerous definitions of what a discipline is and what role disciplinary frameworks play in enabling our knowledge of the world. Underpinning much of the discussion is the understanding that a discipline is the manifestation of a community’s shared interest in a topic or field of interest and there is agreement that particular often ‘proven’ methods are the most appropriate way to investigate it.

As McDonell (2000) argues, a discipline is a ‘knowledge culture (that) comes with, indeed is constituted in, a form of language, a custom of practice, an economy of means, a structure of power, a rule of justice, an archive of narratives of identity and tradition’ (in Somerville & Rapport 2000, p. 27). In this way a discipline is realised through language and practices, has its own methods of reward, of power and justice, and an identity, which are typically grounded in tradition. A discipline is the realisation of a dynamic tension between certainty and transformation. In one breath a discipline is perceived as solid and is focused on deepening its roots of knowing, on the other side it is dynamic and in action, driven by its methods and the search for new discoveries. Certainty and the unknown working side by side, being measured and validated according to the boundaries of the field, and it is these boundaries that eventually become the canons and the norms of the knowledge domain.

Integral to a discipline is the ability to communicate objectively ‘in such a way that anybody in possession of certain tools can understand it, anywhere and at any time. That is because within a discipline receiving is confirmed’ (Finkelthorpe 2001, p. 4-5). It is the consistency of methods and the building of the canon, that enables members of a discipline community to understand and create a shared meaning grounded in common values, methods, validation required in meaning making. It is in this way that disciplines consolidate and subsequently the challenges of mixed disciplinary collaborations can become manifest. Ranges of terms are used to describe the mixing of disciplines in projects. These include inter, cross, multi or trans disciplinary.

The following are definitions grounded in the work of Richard Meeth (1978), and are based on a survey of definitions of the literature that reveal subtle differences across different interpretations.

Crossdisciplinary: viewing or observing one discipline from the perspective of another. Eg. The politics of literature or art history – a field of its own and cross-disciplinary.

Multidisciplinary: several disciplines focussed on one issue – the juxtaposing disciplines each offer a different perspective on a common theme. This is done with the intention to integrate or inter-relate ideas.

Interdisciplinary: like multidisciplinary the focus is on integration, but to a deeper level. Relating part to part, part to whole, whole to part.

Transdisciplinary: beyond the disciplines – where inter and multidisciplinarity start with the disciplines, transdisciplinarity starts with the problem and seeks out the disciplines needed to address the issues.

In the Living Archive project we have adopted ‘interdisciplinary’ as the term to describe the disciplinary mix and the ambition that through investigating the boundaries between these as a means to realising the project outcomes.
Undertaking an interdisciplinary collaboration does by its very nature, challenge the certainties of any one of the participating disciplines. The boundaries between different domains such as performance studies and computer science become challenged when you collaboratively seek to create something new. With this, it becomes essential that those participating in a project understand the differences as well as similarities, and develop methods and a language for enabling communication and the evolution of the research project.

**Context and Expertise**

As argued by Pestre (2003) disciplines are socio-political constructions that serve two purposes. Firstly they are committed to area of inquiry and ensuring the highest possible quality outcomes and secondly, they are committed to ensuring their own survival and position within the academy. Disciplines are fundamentally academic constructs that have minimal relevance outside of the academy. Educational institutions are structured on disciplines, but education in application such as in organisations or the community, disciplinary knowledge is transformed to become a profession, product or section within a larger entity.

According to Winch (2010) there are two dimensions to our classification of expertise:
1. subject expert – extremely knowledgeable of an academic subject (discipline)
2. practical activity – modes of mastery of an occupation, profession or activity

This classification of expertise and types of knowledge has interesting connotations for design and practice. For it assumes a distinct separation between knowledge of a subject and knowledge of a subject in practice, for the researchers coming from the fields of design and the creative and performing arts involved in this project, there is a certain amount of slippage between classifications one and two.

The *Living Archive* project is not only an interdisciplinary collaboration but it is also a collaboration between the academy, three arts organisations and a range of practitioners. In this way the project is not only engaging with different domains of knowledge, but also differing contexts for knowledge production, application and validation.

Fiona Doloughan (2002) has attempted to make sense of the intentions of research and the relationship between that intention and its application. She argues that ‘ultimately at the core of the academic enterprise, is a search for knowledge within a reflective and systematic framework’ (p.39) and to communicate the outcomes of the process of enquiry. Raising questions such as: *But what is communication and what form does it take? How does that relate to the field of inquiry, the methods and the intention?* In asking these questions Doloughan is arguing for the need for a comprehensive understanding of the diverse forms that research communication can take. That communication needs to be appropriate to the context of the field, the research audience and be aligned with ‘the multi-modal nature of communication in the modern world’ (p. 60). These are important issues when undertaking research projects and the more complex the project and its context and stakeholders, the more attention that needs to be applied to communication plans that will enable effective communication of the research intention and application of the outcomes. For example; *Is the research being undertaken as an academic investigation into some nature of knowing and action? Or is it being done to address an identified area of need or a problem?* The *Living Archive* project, is endeavouring to address both of these contexts for research application and contribution in theory and practice.

**The Spiegelvent**

Engaging the Circus Oz community is essential to the success of the *Living Archive*. Central to the initial project design were a series of seminars which were to function as both opportunities to collect data, gain feedback and gather more content for the *Living Archive* as it evolves. In this way the intention of the events was understood, as was the timing and the desired participants, but it
was not until the project team began to design the first event, that we truly understood the opportunity that such an event could be. Across the disciplines of the project team there are established methods for gathering human orientated data, and differing interpretations for what would constitute useful outcomes. For example, for the designers there was a desire to embrace a human centred approach that was participatory; for performance studies it was an opportunity to obtain clarity on details from the community about archival documentation; whereas for Circus Oz it was an important opportunity to engage with the company diaspora. As the team met and discussed the various possibilities it was essential that we designed an event that would meet the various needs of the researchers and organisations.

The event was scheduled to take place in Circus Oz’s Spiegeltent. As we contemplated the environment and the objective to engage the community in ambition and proposition for a new kind of archive (one that included them and one that they could continue to use for their own specific needs) we realised that it was the implicit contrasts in the project that would be the most effective metaphor and creative framework for designing a participatory communication and engagement strategy. With this, the researchers went to and endeavoured in a small way, to perform in the circus.

Many of the elements of the project can be understood through a framework of a continuum. In particular we were interested in the possibilities between:

Form: Analogue – Digital
Person: Circus Performer – Researcher or Scientist
Time: Past – Present – Future

Through a framework of performance the community were invited to an event in the Speigletent where the Living Archive would be introduced to them. This event took place in May 2011 with 50 members of the broader Circus Oz community attending. A party or celebratory theme with catering and opportunity for friends to catch up was the theme. The research team adopted a persona of the research scientist clad in white coats we were easily identifiable within the Circus Oz fraternity (image 1). Using film and digital representations, we introduced them to project, to the ambition by the team and Circus Oz, to the team, and through a large format screening to elements of the archive. In conjunction with one of the more senior company members, a game was played with the audience based on one of his performances. This involved a ‘supposed’ random selection of videos accessed through a spinning barrel (a prop from one of the Circus acts), where the number of the ball equated to a video file in the archive and a piece of footage was shown. Many had never seen the video footage in the archive, and through this activity that which had been a series of individual memories, came alive.
In the second part of the evening people were able to watch videos on laptops that had been placed around the room. The researchers in their white coats roamed, listened, watched and had conversations with community members. Informally and observationally we began to understand the currency of the content of the video, and the possibilities of what the ‘living’ might ultimately mean for the project.

This was the first such event in the project. It marked phase one in how we would engage with the community at the heart of the project. This community included both the Circus Oz community, as well as the Living Archive research community. The relative neutrality of the theatricality of the event with our costumes and games, helped to provide a common ground through which we could position our respective methodologies and methods for undertaking research. We discovered and developed a shared language for what was taking place, and understood our respective contributions. For the industry partners it was a surprise, they had expected something far more ‘academic’ and were relieved to discover our dexterity as researchers. Team building across the project was one of the significant outcomes of the Spiegelvent.

Conclusion
The undertaking of interdisciplinary design collaborations is a rich area of design research in practice. The Living Archive project is an example of the rich possibilities of discovery and innovation that can occur through such an undertaking, and it is a project that acknowledges and embraces the challenges that come with this new territory of investigation. Underpinning our strategy for collaboration is a recognition of the power and diversity of language, actions and tradition. Designing in project protocols and communication opportunities to explore and embrace difference whilst also working towards a shared outcome is an important aspect of what is undertaken by the research team; and it is something that is in constant state of evolution; embracing the research context, its methods and modalities has been an important aspect of this. In particularly the concepts of performance and the carnivalesque; and although some in the team are more versed and experienced in these, they are the neutral points around and through which we can coalesce in the design and ultimate making of the Living Archive.

References


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Co-creation as a model for autonomous, participatory experiences

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Abstract
Communication design locates itself at the nexus of the craft of graphic design and the agency of communication within the contemporary public sphere. As such it is subject to the forces that shape modes of communication such as the new forms of social arrangement that are emerging out of social and participatory media.

This paper looks specifically at the practice of co-creation, which is a form of collaboration that extends to include the reader/viewer as well as the designer. Co-creation shares some features of the ‘prosumer’ (producer/consumer) in that co-creators often participate in the creation and consumption of media.

The modern usage of the term co-creation emerges out of the Open Source movement in computer programming. Co-creators act in concert, yet independently of each other, based on an agreement to respect the intention of the initiator. That is, full access is granted to the initial intellectual property in return for enhanced intellectual property being made available to the community under Creative Commons agreements. Co-creation is informed by practices such as co-design and participatory design.

I argue that co-creation is a model for large scale, participatory communication design. Co-creation is based on independent op-in/opt-out actions. The practice does not rely on participants being members of a community or subscribing to a shared belief in order to take part. This sets us apart from conventional community media and design; social media communities; and other localized social arrangements. It is an ideal model for distributed interactions between makers and publics that share the ethos of autonomous and non-contingent involvement. I discuss this new situation in relation to the mainstream and professional design context.

Introduction
In a recent research project into a social and participatory media community, one of the people I interviewed commented that younger users are forging the characteristics of effective collaboration. As someone with a long-term engagement with collective and collaborative activities, I am intrigued by the notion that new collaborative practices are emerging. The comment led me think about what we know of collaborative practices and what we could imagine will develop.

I use this paper to consider how these emergent practices will impact on professional communication design as it comes into contact with the type of changes that have occurred recently in media more generally. To understand the changes I focus on co-creation, one form of collaborative practice. Co-creation is a concept that is prevalent in media, business, cultural and enterprise literature and discourse, yet it is rarely examined for how it works and what it offers to large-scale activities. It is my intention to explore its characteristics, the practices it affords and how we are learning to co-create as an alternative to conventional consumerism.
Social and participatory media

To look at co-creation more closely I turn to what we know as ‘social media’. Social media is based on sharing information, contacts, opinions, creative works and ideas. In its current form as an online space it is relatively new, however much of what underpins social media has existed in many forms and periods. Community media, for example, has a similar grassroots participatory perspective as the social media ‘commons’. Or the propaganda posters from Mai 68, Paris movement, designed by the student/worker Atelier group shares a DIY ethos akin to many blogs and online political activities, such as citizen journalism.

Yet there is also something about contemporary social media that is different to these other participatory activities. It is a genuinely mass based movement. Over one period of 120 seconds, while writing this article, 1,442,127 items were shared on Facebook, 106,482 tweets were made, 2,777,776 videos were watched on YouTube (Hayes 2011). Of course the bulk of these activities are low-level interactions, with little cultural or political impact. Nevertheless, the way that social media has infiltrated the everyday life of such large numbers of people—and not just in the West—is cause for paying attention to what is occurring, and the scale it achieves.

The introduction of new media facilities and practices, such as social and participatory media are partly the consequence of what Web 2.0 affords. Web 2.0 aggregates available technologies into a ‘user’ oriented environment, with streamlined facilities to upload digital files; compile information and online interactions into workable connections; and provide realtime online publication. Social media is the term coined to describe personal interactions via Internet or mobile technology (O’Reilly 2005). The term derives from early online media iterations such as MySpace and Facebook, which were based on the notion of ‘friendship’ as the primary social network. As such the term only represents a small part of actual social life, omitting other ways in which people connect and organise into social, work and interest communities. Nevertheless the term implies the fundamental ethos of informal connectedness and ease of access to (online) networks that pervades what is known as social media.

Participatory media, as it occurs online, refers to the way people engage in and contribute to the production of media via social networking websites. Participants may upload a piece of media they have produced; comment on another’s work; work on, or initiate a collaborative project; and/or engage in associated activities such as discussions, activating the community and management of the site. Online participants can also vote for others’ works to create a process for the media to ‘rise to the top’. These participatory activities are supported by a range of social media sites, from those that host citizen journalism (IndyMedia); to expert amateur sites (Vimeo); through to popular video display sites such as YouTube, among many others. Media theorist Henry Jenkins characterises participatory media as having:

1. relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement,
2. strong support for creating and sharing creations with others,
3. some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices,
4. members who believe that their contributions matter, and
5. members who feel some degree of social connection with one another (at the least, they care what other people think about what they have created) (Jenkins 2009: 5).

It is within the normalising practices of social and participatory media that I look for the signs of the new collaborative practices that I allude to in the introduction. The short history of social media means that the way it works is still relatively transparent compared to the opaque nature of highly corporatised and established broadcasting media such as television. Social media has a mechanical structure, with digital functions designed to emulate human behaviours and allow them to occur online. Features such as ‘liking’, ‘commenting’ and ‘retweeting’ are made possible using algorithms and link pathways. In a sense, what we could imagine as the ‘wiring map’ of social...
media also works to highlight the human interactions that they emulate. In other words, we can ‘see’ these interactions as clearly as we could see the relationships between the nodes and connections on a wiring map. This is not unlike Information Theory, authored by Claude E Shannon at the US Bell Laboratories in 1948. Shannon developed a mathematical description of how information travels over telephone wires. The theory reduces communication to a set of information-parcels, segmented at the sender’s end of the telephone wires, which then re-form as meaningful messages at the receiver’s end.

We can go further by applying user experience and interaction research to see through to the motivations of the people who engage with social media, trace their behaviours, visualise the connections they form; and watch as new relationships emerge. Alfred Hitchcock’s Rear Window comes to mind as a cinematic way to envisage this type of human behaviour out in the open, situated in a structure (the apartments) with windows onto various scenes of human behaviour. I’ll take caution not to fall into the trap of making the same uncertain assumptions that are clearly evident in the Rear Window example. Though I think some degree of speculation is necessary to conceive new collaborative practices such as co-creation, as a way to see dimensions that could otherwise be missed in a simple analysis.

**Co-creation**

I focus on co-creation as a collaborative practice in this paper. The modern usage of co-creator stems from the Open Source movement where a node of people initiate a project—such as open source computer program code—then open it up for others to work on. An agreement was established at the outset that any development would be common property rather than locked up under corporate or individual ownership. The co-creator could use the enhanced software, but not commercialise it for private gain. Creative Commons licensing emerged to underpin the agreement, literally to enable sharing intellectual property between all parties. David Bollier, in his book **Viral Spiral** describes how the open source movement and creative commons emerged as challenges to conventional propriety practices. He states:

> The commoners needed to build a new set of tools to actualize freedom on the Internet, and to develop a new language, a new epistemology, a new vision, for describing the value proposition of sharing and collaboration” (Bollier 2008: 95).

More recently the term co-creator has been used to describe a range of interactions between people who in some way contribute to the making of media or creating social knowledge. This can be as simple as giving feedback or editing a wiki post. At the other end of the levels-of-participation spectrum it can be initiating a project or making a significant contribution to an activity.

The contemporary co-creator engages in a collaborative activity based on his or her own volition, opting in and out by choice. He or she is an autonomous actor; conscious of his or her own motivations; bringing expertise to the project and determining the way in which to contribute. A co-creator will negotiate his or her own outcomes, or deliberately agree to work within those that are offered. Importantly, the relationship is not predicated on the co-creator being part of a pre-established community or other collective entity. This alters the relationship between the co-creator and other partners in the co-creative activity. For a start it removes the need to establish a shared belief or ambition that is a normal requisite of forming a community of interest. This distinguishes the co-creator relationship to that of the collective (with its implicit orientation towards a common conviction).
It is this that enables the co-creative relationship support participation on a large scale. The co-creator can work collaboratively with people that he or she does not know and is often likely not to meet. The relationship can be one where people work independently of each other, each self-managing his or her contribution, within a framework provided by the social media space. This frees the co-creator from a range of limitations—such as needing to be co-located, having to share a common ethos with others in the activity, or having to commit more than desired—thus making it possible to work in assemblies larger than otherwise possible.

That is not to say that connections and communities do not form, simply that the motivation to work together lies elsewhere. What are these motivations and what practices do they drive? Co-creative engagement appears to be progressive, where people experience low-level participation via the new social media, and then extend their reach by becoming more involved. Becoming involved in a friendship network becomes a learning phase, allowing a person to work out the type of conversation that is being held online; the disparate ‘personalities’ of communities represented by each social networking space (Facebook, YouTube, Vimeo, for example); and the public nature of social media. This could be seen as a elementary motivation to ‘find out what it is all about’, which can lead to further involvement.

More active co-creation, such as sharing expertise to create social knowledge, or contributing media towards a collaborative creative output (mixing one person’s sound composition with another’s video, for example), appears to have other motivations. In some cases the participant wants to build his or her professional and creative identity and reputation. Otherwise it can be driven by a creative impetus to produce a collaborative work or content curation.

These types of participation lead to practices that challenge the conventional relationships in media and design production. Most notably the relationship between producer and consumer is changed from the broadcast model to one where meaning and the experience of media and design is socially constructed.

**Ramifications for communication design**

A designer is able to adapt to the co-creative space using the collaborative nature of the design process itself. At the heart of the design process are the conversations and inquiries that are structured to lead towards a design solution. In the first instance the notion of setting the problem involves the commissioning agent, the designer and other stakeholders in a collaborative activity, and which pays attention to the audience in various ways. Here, for example a set of what Henrik

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**Fig.** The autonomous co-creative relationship, represented by a two-way interaction via a negotiated agreement.
Gedenryd calls ‘inquiring materials’ (Gedenryd 1998) are used. The include mood boards, which are designed to ask questions of the client in regards to the style and feel of the proposed design solution; or sketches and design roughs that start to visualise the look of the concept; or workshops that use visual materials to glean the local knowledge within the stakeholder community. The iterative cycle of design also lends itself to drawing in new influences and voices into the process. In other words, the design process is conducive to optimizing multiple and diverse participants. This is a valuable base to start from when introducing the co-creator to the practice of design. The co-creator can be bought into the design conversation in a number of ways. It may be they are involved in generating an idea; or critiquing a concept; or contributing his or her knowledge to the activity of constructing social knowledge. A tweet from branding company incognito sum makes the salient point: “design is not about making things, it's about making decisions” (incognito sum 2011 8.14am 12/12/2011), which points to design being a knowledge activity as well as a manufacturing occupation. That is, the conversation in and around design can be opened up to co-creators from outside the design field in a way that adds value to the outcome.

With the active inclusion of co-creators into the design process comes a change in the set of relationships around design practice. In their paper, The Labour of User Co-Creators: Emergent Social Network Markets? John Banks and Sal Humphries argue:

that user-led co-creation practice works as something of a dynamic wrecker of industrial era modes of production and associated business practices. User co-creation may not simply be a source of cheap content or unpaid and exploited labour. It may be more a dynamic mechanism for coordination and change – an “innovation agency that engineers transformations of business and consumer practices towards open innovation networks (Banks and Humphries 2011)

They contend that the: “emerging relations are messy, uneven, multiple and contested. They are not easily or seamlessly incorporated by existing business or employment practices” (Ibid). Thus the existing practices are required to change to make room for this activity. The shift in how future design practice is reconfigured to accommodate the co-creator is yet to play out. However I argue that it is beneficial to the communication designer rather than a surrender of the designer’s role. The designer is not required to ‘amatuerise’ their role to reach down to the co-creator. Instead the co-creator is likely to be design-aware and more than capable of engaging at a literate level. The new conversation that emerges out of the co-creative relationship is likely to evolve over time to the benefit of the designer as well as his or her practice and more broadly to design literacy.

References


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From Papunya to Pakistan
Connecting with Asia through the research projects of Cicada Press, COFA UNSW

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Abstract

Early in 2004, Cicada Press was established at the College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales (COFA UNSW) in Sydney as one strategy devised to re-invigorate student experience in conventional printmaking practice. This was achieved by aligning instruction in its technical routines with the research culture of an academic institution by using the creative capital found in collaborative partnerships. This paper reports upon the development and challenges that have shaped the activities of Cicada Press with specific reference to the enriching experience developed from the interaction between the artists invited to produce work and the students who participate in the course that supports this program. Cicada Press’ pursuit of diverse cultural engagements in the Asia Pacific region will be discussed; featuring workshops, exchange exhibitions and print collaborations in countries as diverse as China, New Zealand, Thailand and Pakistan. One featured example is the ongoing relationship between COFA UNSW and the Indigenous community of Papunya, in the Northern Territory. It was here, in 1971, where the teacher Geoffrey Bardon encouraged a group of senior lawmen to inscribe their ancient culture in permanent images based on their own visual traditions. Despite its international fame as the home of Western Desert Art this community was without an art centre for many years. It was with the support of friends of the community like Dr. Vivien Johnson who, in 2006, organised several workshops and fundraising activities for a new art centre. With Cicada Press’s ongoing printmaking collaborations and the COFA trained graduates that assist in the management of the centre, a continuing exhibition program reminds the world of this talented community’s distinguished place in Australian art history.

In the print workshops of academic institutions the limits dictated by space and expensive plant equipment require a communal approach to matrix and image production. Unlike direct autographic processes like painting and drawing, printmaking has complex technical routines that demand a more deliberate pace. A positive consequence of this episodic way of working is that printmaking lends itself to a collaborative approach. During my student day’s printmaking instruction focussed on a singular and at times pedantic approach, while today at COFA our courses attempt to cater for a range of different artistic temperaments and methodologies. It is important to find a balance between the camaraderie we build in shared working routines while still nurturing an environment that demands an individual approach to creative decision-making. The research group that I direct at COFA - Cicada Press, uses a custom printing model that takes the collaborative approach a step further by inviting artists with little or no experience in printmaking to develop research projects with the active engagement and expertise of staff and the developing skills of students.

Firstly today I’d like to address how Cicada Press functions by outlining some project outcomes and then finish with a brief overview of our involvement in a range of collaborations with artists and institutions within the Asia-Pacific region. However the body of this presentation will focus on an ongoing project with a community of Indigenous artists and in so doing, tell the story of Papunya in...
Central Australia, highlighting its fluctuating but preeminent place in the history of the Western Desert Art movement.

In 2004 after taking up an appointment as Head of Printmaking at COFA UNSW it was made clear to me by the Dean that Printmaking was at the crossroads and in need of new direction. As an academic my virtues do not lie comfortably with critical or theoretical inclinations, rather, when confronted with a problem my preference is to seek a practical answers. My solution to this problem was the establishment of an educationally focused custom-printing workshop - Cicada Press. Over the last 6 years artists of national repute, often with little or no experience in printmaking practice, have been invited to enter into a collaborative working relationship. This relationship is mutually beneficial and results in a body of work using primarily auto-graphic print technologies.

The creative act of making a print and the imaginative deliberations behind a work of art, are as elemental as a cloud – heavy with activity, impulse and inclination and it is in the midst of this cloud that I locate the artist. Occupying a marginally different space is the custom printer whose task it is to assist in making sense of one’s vision and to place it securely in the world. There is no firm line. If the inspiration is a cloud then the act of making must be in the realm of the solid and tangible. As the custom printer I need to understand these fundamental structures of ‘bricks and vapour’ and it’s my role to know just how to adjust the recipe – the ratio of bricks to vapour – from project to project.

Cicada Press as a workshop model, while developed with a degree of intuition, is positioned under the theoretical umbrella of the Brazilian educational theorist Paulo Freire who emphasised dialogue, community, informal processes and the importance of lived experience in learning.

‘Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.’

(Freire, 1998, p.35)

In the six years since the inception of Cicada Press, nearly 950 editions have been created in projects with 85 artists, primarily from Australia, and recently involving collaborations with International artists. These projects have resulted in exhibitions with institutions in countries within the Asia-Pacific region including Thailand, New Zealand, China and Pakistan as well as the Middle East in the United Arab Emirates.

The intent of Cicada Press’s supporting courses, are different from most programs offered in art schools where the focus is normally on the outcomes of the individual participant. Importantly our students experience a working relationship with artists who have varying conceptual and aesthetic interests. The differing procedural strategies employed in this collaborative relationship between artist and printer is of crucial instructional benefit. What better way for a student to deal with the challenge of understanding their own creative process than to participate in the conceptualising, the choices and struggles and the crafting to completion of work by artists they respect. As sometimes happens, more can be learnt from the insight that emerges when working with artists that you might not necessarily understand or appreciate, and with personal connection, one hopes, comes respect and understanding. The work Cicada Press has done with tribal Indigenous artists is one such example.

In Australian parlance, the settlement of Papunya - situated on the northern tip of the majestic West MacDonnell Ranges in the Western Desert region of the Northern Territory – is considered a ‘remote’ community. It is home to people who have developed a way of life that is intrinsically linked with this location and its environment. The region accommodates at least 5 language groups - the Anmatyerre, Arrente, Luritja, Pintupi and Warlpiri who have lived in relative coexistence for at least 40 thousand years. The University of Melbourne’s, Professor Paul Carter describes Aboriginal
knowledge of country as a concept of a place in which separate Western concepts of politics and sociology, history and geography, ritual and religion all form a metaphysical identity that is both singular and collective. (Carter, 2004, p.xiv)

However, respect of Indigenous Australians and their culture hasn’t been widespread since European settlement, even early into the 20th century, tragic clashes in the Papunya region occurred. In the 50s the Australian government built a bore for water and rudimentary housing in Papunya to provide room for the increasing number of people who were compelled to leave their traditional life. By the early 70s the community had grown to more than a thousand and as a consequence, tensions emerged between tribal groups who, contrary to their custom, were forced together. These circumstances were exacerbated by poor living conditions leading to disease, violence and premature death. By 1970 roughly half the population at Papunya was under 16 years of age. (Johnson, 2000, p.190)

It was into this troubled environment that a teacher by the name of Geoffrey Bardon, an art education graduate from the institution that was to become COFA UNSW, took up an appointment at the local Papunya School in 1971. Perceived as being different from other non-indigenous residents, he was sympathetic to and sought friendship with these tribal aborigines. Ultimately though, in the space of 18 months in Papunya, this engagement was to take such an exacting toll on his health that he was never to fully recover. Despite this, Bardon became the catalyst for a painting movement known as Western Desert Art that opened an understanding, appreciation and respect for the culture of these first Australians and to forever cement a distinguished place for Papunya in the annals of Australian art. (Johnson, 2008, p.2)

For it was the painting of a mural on a wall of the Papunya School that was to change the course of history. Bardon sought to re-educate ‘an out of control younger generation’ via art (Johnson, 2000, p.190) by asking the children to paint their stories and as a consequence learnt that specific elders of the community had custodial responsibility for particular ‘Dreaming’ totems. The mural depicting the Honey Ant Dreaming refers to the site of a great gathering of ancestors where the massive petrified body of the revered Honey Ant lays nestled in three hills to the east of their community. This Dreaming story is important to all language groups as it links mythological travelling routes and neighbouring country. (Johnson, 2010, p.2) The gathering of tribes in Papunya mirrored this dreaming story, and despite previously mentioned antipathies, it was also an unprecedented setting for the exchange of ritual knowledge. It was this knowledge that Geoffrey Bardon was able to assist in directing into artistic expression. He insisted that artists paint these Dreamings using traditional motifs. Consequently, the action of creating the mural was for these men, the first time that they had seen themselves in their own image, writ large on the face of a European building. It heralded a shift in their thinking from the production of ephemeral images as a communal ceremonial activity, using sand painting and body decoration. One outcome of these cultural productions was that it created unforeseen and dangerous problems in protocol and indigenous law and as an endnote the mural was later whitewashed, an act of gross cultural violation, and an indication of the indifference and hostility that Bardon faced with some white authorities.

After the company Papunya Tula Arts was formed in 1972 there came a gradual acknowledgement that these acrylic paintings by Aboriginal Australians be defined as contemporary art. Today Papunya Tula Arts is a phenomenal cultural and financial success and as a result of their example, it is now taken for granted that most Indigenous communities will have a commercially vibrant art centre.

In the 90s the Papunya Tula operations bypassed Papunya when the painting sheds were built on Pintubi land in a new community called Kintore 300km to the west. Those living in Papunya - including the last of the original painters, their widows and descendants - did not have a place to paint and store their work. Not only did they have no art making facilities - unlike almost every other Indigenous community in Australia – they also had no organisation committed to promoting the now
sporadic offerings being produced. As a consequence Papunya went into a perilous downward spiral.

Friends of the community, like the scholar Dr. Vivien Johnson, sought to redress this sad irony for the founders of Western Desert art. In 2006, several painting and print workshops were organised for fundraising. After the triumph of the inaugural *New Beginnings* exhibition at COFA UNSW’s Ivan Dougherty Gallery in 2007, sufficient funds allowed the community to open a new centre called Papunya Tjupi Arts. Currently managed by two COFA graduates, there is an ongoing series of COFA workshops and educational opportunities of mutual benefit. Today, Papunya Tjupi serves over 140 artists, empowering Papunya residents to share knowledge and foster self-determination through arts practice, community activities and meaningful employment. In the words of one of Papunya’s Warlpiri elders, the nationally famous artist Michael Nelson Jagamara, the goal for the communities cherished art centre is twofold: ’So that our children will know their stories but also so that our children will have an occupation for the future’. (Johnson, 2010, p.2)

The prints that are a practical outcome of this activity with Papunya Tjupi Arts are included in exhibition projects, and referenced in the associated seminars and workshops developed with comparable institutions, particularly in Asia/Pacific region. While the prints produced by artists at Cicada Press form the core of many of these exhibition exchanges, often undergraduate and postgraduate students will also be participants in these collaborations. This offers an invaluable opportunity to develop new experience and broaden their cultural awareness, particularly for those who travel to participate with scheduled events.

An early project was an initiative of Kitikong Tilokwattanotai, a Masters graduate from COFA UNSW in 2004. This large exhibition, held at the Chiangmai University Art Museum in 2005 and reciprocated at COFA space in Sydney the following year, featured work by staff and students of both institutions. In January 2011 another exhibition project, this time with The Faculty of Art and Architecture of Rajamangala University of Technology also included a seminar and workshop. One gratifying outcome from Kitikong’s experience at Cicada Press was his own custom-printing workshop in Chiangmai called CAP. We share ideas, expertise and moral support in his work with many internationally recognised Thai artists, including Kamin Lertchaiprasert and Kade Javanalikikorn and seek to develop exchange projects with the indigenous Hmong tribes-people of the country’s mountainous north and artists from Papunya. Another project with a collection of Chiangmai artists along with international friends from Australia, Japan and the USA resulted in *Confluence of 9* held at the National Gallery of Thailand, Bangkok in 2008.

Projects with our near neighbors in New Zealand have included residencies at Cicada Press by expat Kiwis including: Euan Macleod; Chris O’Doherty aka Reg Mombassa; Alison Clouston and Locust Jones. In 2008 Jenny Neligan, Director of Bowen Galleries in Wellington, asked me to contribute to and print for a project titled ‘Crossing the Tasman’ - a portfolio edition of prints by 14 artists, all of whom located themselves between Australia and New Zealand – which was unveiled at the Melbourne Art Fair of the same year. One artist, Gregory O’Brien - a prolific draughtsman, poet and curator from Wellington, made an etching inspired by a poem he wrote in 1982 called *Basement kitchen, Circular Quay, Sydney*. I learnt of his toil in the kitchens of the legendary jazz club together with his brother Brendan and the now noted Australian artist Noel McKenna (an artist who works with Cicada Press). In this infinitely small world, while they were occupied in the Basement kitchen, my wife-to-be Nicky Crayson, was making a career for herself as a 16 year old prodigiously accomplished chanteuse out in the nightclub-proper.

After seeing the ‘Crossing the Tasman’ prints the doyen of New Zealand art dealers, Peter McLeavey approached O’Brien with a fundraising proposal for the Maxwell Fernie Trust—an organization devoted to polyphony and organ music at St Mary of the Angels, in Wellington. The diptych, ‘For Maxwell Fernie I & II’, produced in an exchange of plates and proofs via air mail, was the entire content of an exhibition at Peter McLeavey Gallery in March 2009 - walls graced by arguably New Zealand’s greatest painter, Colin McCahon. Our printmaking collaboration has
continued and in June 2009, Cicada Press released an edition of ‘A poem by Charles Brasch’, commissioned for the literary journal Landfall in Dunedin and in March 2010, 27 prints from Cicada Press were exhibited at Bowen Galleries.

‘In the studio, Michael Kempson’s various functions include that of impresario, enthusiast and proponent of ‘intelligent design’. His great skill is to run a workshop where artists can be true to themselves, yet where they can also be shunted forwards or sideways—where they can respond to a medium they may or may not know well. Interactions between artists, academic staff and students are integral to the educational and research nature of Cicada Press. My experience is that such interactions consolidate the thinking rather than serve as a distraction—ultimately, it is a process of learning for all concerned.

Links between Cicada and New Zealand artists will, I have no doubt, consolidate in the future. Projects such as ‘Crossing the Tasman’, ‘For Maxwell Fernie’ and the Bowen Galleries exhibition have raised Cicada Press’s profile on this side of the ditch. Artists of the calibre of Elizabeth Thomson and Niuean-born John Pule are eager to come to Sydney and participate.’ (O’Brien, 2010, p.38)

The business section of Sydney’s broadsheet newspaper is rife with articles that feature news of the partnership developing between Australia and China. Reports offer insights into the cultural complexities of this economic powerhouse, with an underlying message stressing the importance of developing personal relationships. In my associations with China I have found this to be true.

My first contact with printmaking in China was in Sydney in 1993 when I met Su Xinping, who attended a survey exhibition of his elegantly drawn lithographs of provincial figures from his homeland in Inner Mongolia. Through an interpreter we struck up a friendship and spoke of the potential for a show of prints to further cultural exchange between our two countries. In 2008, 15 years after that first meeting Su Xinping was now Head of Printmaking at the Central Academy of Fine Art (CAFA), Beijing. Together with Teng Cheng Hua, we curated the exhibition SILK & SAND: Chinese and Australian Prints, an exchange of work by staff, students and artists associated with each school. On the return leg of the exhibition, together with some of the participating Australian artists including one COFA student, we enjoyed lavish banquets - affirming a thoroughly deserved reputation for overwhelmingly generous hospitality.

In October 2010, with 10 other artists from academic institutions around the world, I was invited to Xi’an, famous for Qin Shi Huang’s terracotta army, as a participant in the 2nd International Printmaking Workshop. An initiative of Professor Yang Feng, Head of Printmaking at the Xi’an Academy of Fine Art (XAFA), it was a practical exchange of ideas and techniques with staff and students from one of China’s top eight Art Academies. It culminated with an immense exhibition, filling two entire levels of a 5-storey complex, the larger of XAFA’s two dedicated art museums.

The exhibition Personal Space: Contemporary Chinese and Australian Prints opened at Manly Art Gallery and Museum in April 2011, being my most ambitious curatorial and touring project to date. The contribution by 25 highly respected practitioners from each nation demonstrated the quality and breadth of printed art that has emerged over recent years. The Australian selection represented many of our major artists, like Fiona Hall, Elisabeth Cummings and Raymond Arnold including some who produced their work at Cicada Press. Giving a thorough overview of printmaking in China was a much more difficult proposition. As a consequence, centres of printmaking excellence were selected in distinctly different regions: three were from the range of major art schools, specifically in Beijing (CAFA), Xi’an in the west (XAFA) and Shenyang in the northeast (Luxun Academy of Fine Art). The fourth was from the Guanlan Original Print Base in the southern city of Shenzhen. Hosts of the Guanlan International Print Biennial, they also maintain extensive print research and production
facilities, offering residencies for Chinese and foreign artists in an exotic and dynamic creative environment. The resulting selection from all four institutions was made in consultation with leading artists, curators and academics from those regions and includes some of the most important artists working in China today. Xu Bing, selected by Art in America as one of the 15 most notable international artists and awarded a Doctor of Humane Letters by Columbia University in 2010, is one prominent example.

What is most inspiring about China is the scale of printmaking instruction in the major academies and the ongoing development of the facilities housing an unfathomable array of plant equipment and technology. At XAFA alone they have over 100 students graduating annually from the printmaking course and during the workshop I attended, not only was a 22-storey building for new teaching studios and workshops being erected, also two 30-storey towers for staff accommodation/studios had just been completed. In a country like Australia where we work very hard to encourage people into a print studio, I was amused to find that the Guanlan Print Base is the only print workshop whose activities are a booming tourist attraction, with guards doing their best to keep spectators out.

To be confronted by vast studio spaces, crammed with state of the art equipment with students immersed in their practice, offers the tantalising impression that all is right in the world of printmaking. While I have nothing but respect for the political and organisational skills of those able to garner such institutional support, it is for many, a remote scenario. The challenges facing print educators are all too common: limited capital and consumable budgets; competing demands upon working space; the extensive range of mediums and technologies available to students; disinterest and even cases of managerial neglect. However facilities alone do not make an art school. Countering a desire for a utopian working environment is the remarkable array of quality prints being produced by workshops with the barest of components. I have been fortunate to see many of these in the Asia-Pacific region and I have an equally high regard for the quality of the instruction and relevance of the academic programs developed by teachers that support the production of these positive outcomes, seemingly against the odds.

The ‘Buzzwords’ project was developed with the Pakistani artist and curator Abdullah Syed at Cicada Press in 2008/09. In his etchings, Syed cleverly uses the visual metaphors of apiaries that highlight the West’s limited understanding of Islamic culture. His sharply witty prints do not lack a degree of robust confrontation, for they highlight the contradictions of the political barriers, social protocols and economic challenges confronting Muslim and Judeo-Christian communities; and this without ever losing sight of the human values that we share. Abdullah then introduced me to another Pakistani artist and curator Roohi Ahmed, whose visit to Sydney coincided with a presentation delivered at an International Drawing Research Institute - COFA UNSW conference, and as a consequence she was invited to engage with the students at Cicada Press. Together they form a formidable curatorial team.

In 2010 I visited the coastal city of Karachi for a retrospective of my work, Seen/Unseen – Michael Kempson/A Survey of Prints, at V.M. Art Gallery. Abdullah and Roohi, a lecturer at the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture (IVSAA), organised with the Head of Printmaking the late Ussman Ghauri an 8-day printmaking workshop at IVSAA with 12 local artists. The aim was to create a box print portfolio, the proceeds of which went towards an upgrade of the printmaking department’s resources.

‘In present-day forums the voice of subversion is becoming increasingly vociferous, with academics and writers speaking animatedly of the imperative need for a global village and a world with fewer boundaries. But these ideas are nothing more than utopic and miasmatic euphemisms, because beneath the veneer of ‘comfort words’, the world is more divisive than it has ever been. As artists and writers we would like to believe that we are above the fray of petty wranglings or political and social
discriminations, but that is not so. The east-west divide is as strong as ever, as is the deep-seated and ingrained belief that western ideology is the dominant force in the pursuance of cultural development. Recognizing these parameters, any un-condescending attempt to breach boundaries and bridge the divide must be acknowledged as an authentic yen for the most valid kind of pedagogical and professional progress. In this respect Michael Kempson's visit to Karachi, Pakistan in April 2010 was a milestone of sorts, because it proved to be an intense and passionate exchange of ideas, techniques and methodologies on the common platform of printmaking.' (Risvi, 2011, p.9)

Furthermore, Roohi and Abdullah decided that one exhibition would not suffice, so a few days after my opening a show titled, Aboriginal Dreams – Paintings, Etchings, Linocuts – Indigenous Art from Papunya Tjupi, opened at the IVSAA Gallery to a huge public response with at least 4 television crews promoting the event. To quote Abdullah Syed in his curatorial essay:

‘The exhibition is a rare opportunity to study Aboriginal Art and its parallels to Pakistani indigenous and contemporary art, in formal, historical and conceptual terms. Links to Aboriginal art patterns can be made in Pakistani textiles as well as other distinctive indigenous forms, such as Truck Art.’ (Syed, 2010, p.3)

In the explosion of colour and design festooned on buses and long haul trucks by individual Pakistani drivers, I recognised a correlation with an innate assertion of cultural identity found in the art from Papunya. Most who see Western Desert Art don't understand the meaning of the pulsing rhythms inherent to the prints and paintings, but the direct or elemental connection made with viewers is real and powerful none the less. In an auditory sense, like the meditative rhythms of cicadas, the prints we produce in collaboration with the invited artists at Cicada Press, seek to make a similar impression and resonate to establish genuine connection with those with which we engage.

References

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The design collaborator as the other: investigating the intersubjective in communication design practice

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Abstract

My doctoral research investigated the intersubjective aspects of communication design practice through a focus on the other, and the roles that the other takes in practice. It did so in order to better understand the practice of communication design as practiced on a day-to-day basis.

Communication design, as a practice, and a field, extends out of graphic design. This extension is due to a change in priorities; from privileging the graphic and artefactual aspects of practice, to prioritising consideration for the broader agency of design within a specific context.

This research was accomplished through a practice-led methodology. Communication design projects formed the methods of, and the foundation for, the investigation. Seven individual research projects were designed and carried out. Each project incorporated different participants of communication design practice; new and existing clients, student designers and established practicing designers. This allowed the research to investigate its concerns from a range of roles and viewpoints, incorporating different perspectives into its observations and understandings.

The research extends the work of Donald Schön and his investigation into The Reflective Practitioner (1983). It achieved this through a consideration for the roles of the other in professional practice. In order to reflect upon and articulate the results of this shift in focus to the other extensive reference has been made to the thinking of the twentieth century philosophers Martin Heidegger (2008 [1927-1964]) and Emmanuel Levinas (1990 [1963]).

The research concluded that the other takes a critical role within the practice of communication of providing ‘provocative disjunction’. This provocative disjunction, as understood by this research, directly contributes to the generative shifts which communication design enables for all the participants involved in the design action; artefacts, clients and designers.

The observations and understandings produced during this practice-led research enabled extensive insights into the practice of communication design, which contribute significantly to the broader communication design discourse in professional practice, education and research.

This paper presents a project from the author’s practice-led PhD in order to discuss ‘the design collaborator as other’. Seen in this light it is the design collaborator who provides the source of ‘disjunctive provocation’ and consequently has the potential to enable both epistemological and ontological change.

Introduction

The design research project that I discuss in this paper was based around a relatively day-to-day visual identity project. My client in this case was starting a new practice as a Lacanian
psychoanalyst and asked me to design a business card, a website and some other applications. I realised that this visual identity project would provide me with the opportunity to complete a design research project and participate in my investigation of the concerns of my doctoral research.

Many of the observations I made during this project reflect those made by Donald Schön in his book *The Reflective Practitioner*:

Both client and professional bring to their encounter a body of understanding which they can only very partially communicate to one another and much of which they cannot describe to themselves. (1983, p. 296).

Schön makes the point that the start of a design process—a process that aims to lead to a fuller grasp of meaning—begins with a tenuous grasp of that meaning. While Schön does not explicitly discuss the collaborative aspects of design work with a client, the aim of my research was to better understand those collaborative, and intersubjective, aspects of communication design practice.

**Practice-led research**

I used a practice-led methodology to explore the intersubjective aspects of communication design practice. ‘Practice-led research’ uses the researcher’s own work as a practitioner as the method for the research. As ‘practice-led’ this research was conducted ‘through’ the practise of design, rather than ‘for the purposes of design’ or ‘about design’. Practice-led research has allowed me to research into the potentially abstract concept of *the other* and still remain grounded in, and relevant to, practice.

Practice-led research is, necessarily, subjective and situation-specific. The researcher is understood to be a significant actor in the situation being researched and therefore, unlike traditional scientific research, the research does not aim to produce objective, independently verifiable research results. However, practice-led research does allow insights into practice that might otherwise not be possible to obtain through traditional research. Additionally, it allows practitioner/researchers, like myself, to use their practitioner expertise as the key method for research and therefore as a means to participate in, and contribute to, scholarly design research.

‘Reflective practice’ is a method of research and practice, that enables the subjective understandings of the practitioner/researcher to be reflected upon, analysed, synthesised and communicated. During this project I kept a detailed reflective journal, recording my observations, impressions and emotions while working through each stage. Towards the end of the project I interviewed my client about her experience of the design process. In this paper I base my critical reflections on the contents of my reflective journal and the transcription of the interview.

**The role of the artefact**

It is important to point out that the concerns of this research do not lie with communication design artefacts themselves but with the practice of communication design. Although this research is practice-led the artefacts designed during this research project do not embody all the design research knowledge that has been produced. Instead these design artefacts *materialise* and * instantiate* propositional design knowledge. They enable the investigation, but are not be seen as the outcome of the research; they are the means rather than the ends.
I can visualise the intersubjective space formed between my client and myself in this way:

As a communication design activity, this can further be visualised in the following way:

My client and myself in an intersubjective—collaborative—relationship, with and through artefacts.

Over time, during the design activity, these artefacts, as ‘propositional artefacts’, allow my client and I to, collaboratively, develop her visual identity.

**A critical relationship**

During our first meeting I asked my client whether she would agree to me incorporating her project as part of my research. Even though she did agree it was difficult asking the question, I felt that I was transgressing unwritten rules of our relationship. My difficulty asking the question helped to reveal the delicate nature of the relationship my client and I were attempting to form in that first meeting.

Why was our working relationship delicate? I would argue that it was because I was charged with helping to create my client’s future practice’s identity. There are clear risks that come with revealing and defining a nascent ‘identity’. Reflective practice—and extensive reflective journaling—allowed me to become aware of the critical nature of the relationship between my client and I.
Design anxiety

When I interviewed my client she talked about the anxiety she felt embarking on this project:

For me it’s been an anxious making thing to do ... How can you reduce Lacanian analysis to five pages on a web wall?

She also commented that we were designing artefacts for which she had no precedent:

On the one hand I’ve thought [commissioning design work] is a way to start a practice ... on the other hand ... it has to look like that place that hasn’t been made before is being made properly... [emphasis added]

Communication design’s ability to generate a ‘place that hasn’t been made before’ necessarily incorporates the anxieties of working without established precedents; through design we imagine and materialise that which does not yet exist. Designing my client’s visual identity required us to define and ‘concretise’ her future practice. My client’s comments demonstrate the real risks taken when one materialises one’s personal aims for the first time.

Propositional provocational artefacts

My client was a Lacanian analyst, following Jacques Lacan’s (2006 [1966]) psychoanalytic understandings in her practice. Early in the design process we made the decision that her identity would include a logomark based on one of Lacan’s diagrams:

Which one of Lacan’s diagrams we chose to reference and what form that reference took formed the large part of the work of our identity design process. Initially the ‘knot’ design was chosen:

However, after a number of different iterations a version of the ‘lozenge’ device became the preference.
I produced mocked-up business cards to use as ‘propositional artefacts’ during the collaborative design process. Importantly these mockups could be handled, enabling their ‘use’ as a physical artefact to be trialed, and the propositional identity they made manifest, assessed.

**Heuristic collaboration**

Later my client stated:

> [it’s] interesting that what we ended up with was something that I didn’t expect us to come up with, and I don’t think you expected either …

I agreed with my client, our final visual identity was not what either one of us initially imagined or proposed. Instead, we discovered that final outcome through the ‘collaborative’ process of design. This is an heuristic process; the discoveries are made together *through* the activity of design. Rather than the common perception that I, as designer, would come to know my client and apply my knowledge of her to help me design a visual identity, this research indicated a different process. In this process my client and I accessed *new knowledge*—knowledge about her and her new *identity*—through a collaborative process of design. It is this collaborative process of new knowledge generation—my research suggests—that requires the generative action (and provocative dysjunction) of the other.

**Project Reflection: More than an instrumentalist activity**

The aim of this research was to better understand the intersubjective aspects of design practice. These aspects of practice are often left unexamined (or implicit) within the current dominant discourse. Although Jorge Frascara’s rather instrumentalist definition of communication design as ‘broadcasting specific messages to specific sectors of the public’ (Frascara 2004, p. 2) describes some of the aspects of the work my client and I accomplished together, it does not include the collaborative intersubjective aspects of design practice that I wished to better understand.

When my client’s and my own subjective appraisals of the world come together and interact an intersubjective interaction occurs. It is important to note that this is as much a space of mutual misunderstanding and misapprehension as it is one of mutual understanding: I am not my client. I do not inhabit the world as she does. I can never be her; I can never fully understand her, nor fully empathise with her. For me she is the other, as I am the other to her.

When my client and I develop Frascara’s ‘specific message’, through a series of propositional artefacts, we undertake a collaborative process of ‘new knowledge generation’ through those propositional artefacts. This ‘knowing through making’ is a process of making knowing *through* design; the propositional artefacts enable communication, both *between* my client and I, and *within*
our own selves. Each artefactual iteration—or new design—embodies a new propositional provocation and stimulates intersubjective communication and negotiation.

**Disjunctive communication: a practice with, and through, the other**

Although one of the perceived aims of communication design is that of clear communication, I saw through this research that miscommunication and misinterpretation also played important parts. I describe these aspects as ‘disjunctive communication’ and suggest that disjunctive communication, as much as clear communication, is an important and active aspect of collaborative communication design action, generatively problematising the design act.

Hans-Georg Gadamer, a German philosopher well known for his work in the area of philosophical hermeneutics, provides insight into the other and communication:

*To allow the Other to be valid against oneself ... allows one to go beyond one’s own possibilities, precisely in a dialogical, communicative, hermeneutic process* (Gadamer 2000, p. 285).

It is this aspect that Gadamer refers to as ‘going beyond one’s own possibilities’ that is initiated by the collaborative intersubjective act of communication design with the other, and the generative disjunction that this entails.

Mikhail Bakhtin, the Russian linguist, also refers to this ability for the other to reveal aspects of ourselves that without the other remain hidden:

*In order to understand, it is immensely important for the person who understands to be located outside the object of his or her creative understanding—in time, in space, in culture. For one cannot even really see one’s own exterior and comprehend it as a whole, and no mirrors or photographs can help; our real exterior can be seen and understood only by other people, because they are located outside us in space, and because they are others* (1986 [1979], p. 6).

As this suggests, making with the other is of a different order—in its capacity for generating new knowledge—to making without the other. This is due to the intersubjective aspects that are encountered in a collaborative process of making with the other.

Thus collaboration with the other allows for insights and new knowledge that are not available without the other. This suggests a different understanding to the more commonly perceived nature of collaboration—rather than a seamless and harmonious ‘working together’ towards a shared goal, this research suggests an action of collaboration that is, while still generative and still together, reliant on an activating presence of otherness to enable its generative capacity.

**Communication design through communication with the other**

Design is taken by Schön to refer to the act of a designer working, as an independent agent, in ‘conversation with the materials of a situation’ (Schön 1983, p. 78), using their designerly abilities, listening to the ‘back-talk’ from their designed artefacts to iteratively refine their design outcomes.

This research project suggests a different understanding; that of design as an act of designing through an intersubjective relationship with the other, in the process of collaborating with the other, activated by miscommunication as much as by communication. The attempt at intersubjective communication with the other brings about the disjunctive nature of the process, thus enabling the design activity to be generative for its participants. This goes beyond Schön’s ‘conversation with the materials of the situation’ to become a conversation, a dialogue, with another subject.
Design artefacts instantiate hermeneutic/heuristic steps

Design artefacts have the capacity to change what is known. My client indicated this transformational quality:

*It always surprises me when something happens to text and it becomes a different thing, you know, an object, that has a way of ... carry[ing] me into situations which help me to ‘make a practice’.*

My client’s, and my own, responses to my mocked-up artefacts, and the iterative process whereby we then responded to each other’s responses, acts to reveal commonalities in the intersubjective space between us. Thus those propositional design artefacts provide artefactual instances of communication within the intersubjective space. The mock-ups are physical manifestations of the hermeneutic activity of intersubjective communication. When viewed, and handled by my client, they provide visualisations of my interpretation of how she has communicated her new business, and herself, to me.

This, I suggest, is perhaps the most important action of communication design with *the other*; the ability to provide a client with access to knowledge that they would not otherwise have, and concomitantly, the client’s ability to shift the designer’s knowledge. The means through which this knowledge is accessed is the give and take of responses to artefactual nodes in the intersubjective space. Rather than a linear series of monologic statements our responses to the propositional artefact become an inter-connected inter-weaving of understandings, impressions and intimations. To quote from Bakhtin again (reflecting here on an encounter between two different cultures rather than two different individuals):

*Such a dialogic encounter ... does not result in merging or mixing. Each retains its own unity and open totality, but they are mutually enriched.*

*Bakhtin 1986 [1979], p. 7.*

My client and I are not ‘merged’ or ‘mixed’ in the design process; we maintain our individuality but are, to use Bakhtin’s term, ‘mutually enriched’. Our working relationship with design artefacts could be described as a dialogic collaborative negotiation of difference.

Another text which has helped my interpretation of my research projects is Martin Heidegger’s well known essay *The Question Concerning Technology*—originally delivered as a lecture in 1954—in which he examines a silver chalice (*Heidegger 2008 [1954]*). Heidegger problematises the conventional view of technology as purely instrumentalist and demonstrates instead that in techn-e there is a revealing:

*Thus what is decisive in techn-e does not lie at all lie in making and manipulating, nor in the using of means, but rather in the revealing mentioned before. It is as revealing, and not as manufacturing, that techn-e is a bringing-forth ... Technology is a mode of revealing. Technology comes to presence in the realm where revealing and unconcealment take place, where al-etheia, truth, happens* (*Heidegger 2008 [1954], p. 319*).

Beyond a materialisation of concept there is an aspect in the making of work, in the *techne*, which reveals that which was not known or available to knowledge previously. Communication designers have Heidegger’s ‘bringing-forth’ capacity. Communication design is a way of knowing and a ‘way of revealing’ what Heidegger terms as *alitheuein* or truth. Thus communication design goes beyond the capacity for the *instrumental* to the capacity for bringing-forth truth. My work with my client developing her visual identity exhibits the quality Heidegger calls ‘being-uncovering’ (entdeckend-
sein) (Heidegger 2008 [1926], p. 261). I suggest that my client and I collaboratively materialised new knowledge, enabled changes of being and uncovered new truth.

Emmanuel Levinas' understanding however, is that Heidegger’s work continues ‘affirming a tradition in which the same dominates the other’ (Levinas 1987 [1957], p. 53) thus ‘subordinating the relations between beings to the structures of being’ [my emphasis] (Levinas 1998 [1951], p. 5). In contrast Levinas posits that it is through the other that we are given access to the self—and the ability to bring new aspects of our self into the world. In Levinas' words 'it becomes possible to sustain a pluralism which is not reduced to a totality' (Levinas 1990 [1963], p. 295). Thus we can start to perceive communication design, as an activity undertaken with, and through, the other, provides the ability to transcend the 'what is' of the present and move into the future.

**Conclusion**

The design work I produced for my client was not final. Rather it was a process, with the final artefact being a moment in that ongoing process.

This project provided, as research, a series of observations about communication design and the other. The observations suggested a range of provisional understandings:

1. That communication design is more than an instrumentalist activity (this only describes part of practice. The critical nature of the relationships and the ability for design to reveal new knowledge reveals a more complex and holistic view of practice).

2. Communication design is enabled through communication (and becomes activated through the designer and client’s attempts at intersubjective collaborative communication).

3. Communication design artefacts enable intersubjective communication (between the individual subjects involved in the collaborative design activity).

4. Communication design artefacts instantiate hermeneutic steps (artefacts produced are physical instantiations of the interpretation of the other).

5. Communication is enabled through communication design (creating connections across the intersubjective space).

6. Communication design is a generative practice with, and through, the other. (through access to the other, communication design has the capacity to create new knowledge and new ways of being; it is both epistemologically, and ontologically, generative. My client's 'practice which did not exist previously' is brought into existence collaboratively).

These provisional understandings indicate a role for communication design beyond that of the production of artefacts that communicate. In further projects of this research I have investigated these understandings within different contexts in communication design; with other designers, with students and with larger, more established client groups.

As a reflective practitioner I use my own practice as research method to provide access to insights that otherwise might remain inaccessible to design research. The research I have described today is an instance of practice brought within the academy. This is practice-led research, revealing new knowledge about, and insights into, the practice of collaborative communication design and, with this new knowledge, new directions for research in communication design.
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News from the frontline: collaborative relationships between design and conventional and emerging fields
Individual development leading to collaborative projects

Prue Venables
JamFactory Contemporary Craft and Design, Australia

The building of collaborative thinking
My sense of the word collaboration has always been that it refers to the building of understanding, connections, and of thinking and working together as equals.

In exploring now, the meaning of collaboration to me, I realise that, for much of my life, experientially I have been gradually, continuously and unconsciously gathering a perception and ownership of something very practical, positive, and enriching that now enables me to welcome opportunities for collaboration as they appear.

At Primary school, music entered my life, initially through recorder classes, then later via piano lessons. I still recall my teacher, Mr Savage – tall and lanky, with his ruddy battle scarred complexion reflective of his own puberty and growth. I know now that, at home, he was but one lesson ahead of his noisy recorder class, learning alongside and yet still a leader, able to tame that cacophony of sound. There was honesty to his teaching, an acceptance of error, an enormous ability to encourage and a great openness to exploration. It was as if we all investigated together, discovering how to read those scattered black dots hanging enticingly on the page, then delving into the blending and mixing of sound and rhythm as we happily performed together in groups. Later, as a secondary student, I studied the flute and experienced the wonder of orchestral playing. Once more, my experience was coloured by inspirational teaching as the exploration of colour, rhythm, tone and emotion was ignited and encouraged in tandem with a search to listen, to wait, to merge, to understand and then to combine. A sense of very positive collaboration was beginning for me.

Tertiary studies in Zoology immersed me in a work environment where the search for strong investigative questioning and the sharing of information and discovery was paramount. The two major streams within the department – ecology and physiology (otherwise known as the ‘froggies’ and the ‘twitchies’) eyed each other with slightly amused suspicion but within each section lay great clarity of exploration, academic excellence, trust and respect. For two years after graduation, I worked across both of these areas and experienced remarkable and exciting learning. All members of the Zoology department were expected to speak about the details of their work, their methodology and thinking. Here in these talks, I absorbed and gathered another level of understanding and a sense of looking and exploring across diverse areas for similarities and undercurrents of approach. We were encouraged to read widely and to think laterally about all aspects of science. This was remarkable, open and collaborative learning at its best. Listening was again at the heart of this process.

Ceramics came later, stumbled upon almost by accident while searching for something unknown but hopefully more satisfying and challenging than my laboratory job. I knew immediately and with immense excitement, that making objects with clay was to be my future.

My training at the Harrow School of Art in London projected me into an intense and demanding environment. We concentrated on the making of high quality, inventive functional objects. Learning
was focused and structured, committed and energetic; accompanied by thoroughly researched study of contemporary and historical references.

Expectations were high. This was both familiar and attractive to me. I was used to such a way of working as both science and music require this high level of dedication and accomplishment. Here for me also occurred an exciting union of hand, eye and mind as described so wonderfully by Finnish architect Juhani Pallasmaa in his book ‘The Eyes of the Skin’... ‘several realms of sensory experience now interacted and fused into each other’.

Surprisingly to me then, the integration of materials other than clay into our work was discouraged, even forbidden, but I see now that this would have been a distraction from the main aim – that of in-depth learning in a singular and complex field.

Once more, the development of an inventive, open, questioning, experimental approach resulting in the gradual evolution of ideas was seen as essential for creative and expressive thinking. The recognition of such links across ceramics, science and music was, for me, very exciting. Emerging quietly within me was something so positive and optimistic, expectant even. I believe that these experiences have formed the building blocks of my work and the foundations of my current interest in collaborative projects.

Over the past decade, a series of exciting opportunities have arisen for me to step by step venture outside of my solo practice as a maker. Some of these I will now describe.

1. Design and development in Japan of tableware designs for hotel use and to be made from recycled porcelain.

In response to Japanese government initiatives advocating environmental conservation and recycling, in 1997, the Gifu Prefectural Ceramics Research Institute (Tajimi City) initiated the Green Life 21 Project. This exercise involved local companies and research institutes, working together voluntarily to promote the more sustainable use of natural resources and a reduction in discarded fired ceramic waste. Used and broken ceramics were collected and crushed then carefully reformulated with a proportion of fresh materials into usable recycled clay bodies. New product designs were to focus on ease of use, longevity, and functionality. Forms were to incorporate thickened edges for strength and durability, while still maintaining lightness plus comfort at the mouth during use. Altogether, an exciting new approach to the making of ceramics.

Based at the Oribe design Centre in Gifu city, Gifu Prefecture, one of the largest ceramic producing regions in Japan, my brief was to design pieces for ‘cross over dining’ ie western style eating in Japan. I thought that I understood what this meant and, on hearing my brief, I immediately began to envisage possible solutions. I had previously visited Japan, eaten and enjoyed Japanese food and had already made western style dinner ware – surely I already had the knowledge to do this.

However, this was not so. As the Oribe Design Centre staff further introduced me to the project, moment by moment, my assumptions quickly unravelled. I realised that here I was at the threshold of a new and exciting voyage of discovery. Cultural expectations and differences came suddenly and strongly into focus. A previously produced Japanese dinner set that had been exported to Canada, and then immediately returned with knife scratches in the soft glaze, alerted me to contrasting surface and cultural requirements. The light caressing stroke of chopsticks permits soft and low temperature glaze coverings, while the aggression of knives, forks and metal spoons carries much more robust requirements. The dainty and elegant display of individual tiny portions in Japan made my image of large white plates at home, loaded with mountains of mixed foods seem almost obscene in comparison.

An opportunity to experience ‘crossover dining’ where Western and Japanese foods and presentation had merged, was particularly helpful. Tiny, appetising morsels sat like jewels atop a large white porcelain plate, each separated by space, taste and colour and delicately coaxed upwards with fine wooden chopsticks. Pasta was presented on a small dish, twirled into a tight volcano topped with a ruffled toupe of thinly shredded seaweed. The flavour was gorgeous, intense
and delicious, and a metal knife and spoon were the tools this time. Dessert followed with miniature slices of cake, pickled apple, a dot of cream and accompanied by a soft lacquered wooden spoon. Cups and glasses were hand made and very delicate … perhaps too delicate for this restaurant role as they showed signs of chipping and wear.

Here is was essential for me to listen and observe very carefully and openly if I was to be able to fully collaborate within this different culture and achieve an acceptable result. The Oribe Design Centre was an extraordinary organization, devised to support and revitalize local Gifu industries through the introduction of new designs. The generosity and forward thinking that underlay its international designer residency program were truly fantastic. Assigned to me were mentors who patiently interpreted, explained, demonstrated, supported and informed me. I was advised and assisted through all stages of the project cycle, from the design and making of my samples, complex glaze development, and then through to possible methods of manufacture, distribution and sales. Language skills and understanding were so impressive, and in each of many detailed discussions, the depth of visual perception was astounding. Proportion, surface quality, handle size, rim thickness, weight, volume - every detail was minutely examined, challenged and considered. Numerous times, I felt transported back to my student past, where tutorials required justification and attention to every detail and my awareness was ever stretched and awakened. Most impressive of all was the delicacy with which each of my hand made and unfired prototypes were handled, turned, examined and reviewed. At first I gulped and expected disaster as so many hands touched and critiqued my thin, dry bowls and cups with their ever so fragile edges and handles. This feeling quickly passed as I realized that here there was no danger, as all of these hands embodied great respect, delicacy and an intuitive sensitivity, a touch born of fine dishes, chopsticks and dainty morsels.

After four weeks of intense discussions, and the making and revising of prototypes, 13 designs were complete – 4 plates, 4 bowls, 2 cups, 2 saucers, a small spoon - and a contract signed for their production under the title ‘Oliva – Dinnerware for simple elegance, fine food and good company’.

This project has now led directly to further collaborations and cultural connections between Australia and Japan. The visits by Hasegawa-san to Sydney are a good indication of these positive new links.

2. Collaborative projects with Melbourne based designer Simon Lloyd

Regular casual discussions between Simon and myself have, over time, led to the imagining, drawing and discarding of many and various plans.

The first actual completed product was a porcelain hand mirror contained in a felt carrying case and recently purchased by the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas. This was followed by a porcelain rosary supported within a red felt display. In each situation, two separate objects sit together, relating and belonging together but not yet fully combined as one – similar also to an earlier piece of my own.

A more integrated project with a single ‘object’ outcome was a tile design for Melbourne architect John Wardle. Large terracotta tiles were developed to line the walls and ceiling of the foyer of a multistory building in the Melbourne CBD. The tiles were designed to clip onto a highly sophisticated Italian metal wall hanging system. Development involved careful discussions between a team of architects, Simon Lloyd and myself, plus a ceramics manufacturer. At all stages of development, we were faced with new and interesting problems and issues. Machinery had to be adapted and enlarged extrusion plates made. Ceramic firing supports had to be integrated into the manufacturing process to prevent slumping in the kiln. Firing space and time requirements had to be planned in order for production estimates to be calculated. This project was developed up to the point of production but was then unfortunately abandoned by the client. Disappointingly, possible
difficulties associated with the dusting and cleaning of the tile panels was the reason cited. We are currently returning again to the planning of the production of these tiles.

These ventures, plus the discussions and learning associated with them, have led to a new level of experimentation in my own solo work. Each situation has opened up my awareness and presented me with fresh issues and possibilities. I am now continuing to work on a group of pieces that involve the firing (at 1400 Degrees Centigrade) of fully glazed objects that remain free floating and mobile inside each other. Slumping and sticking are major obstacles at these temperatures and solving these problems has been difficult. These objects are fired using supports made from highly refined industrial alumina materials discovered during developmental work with Simon Lloyd. Here, a material designed for complex and precision industrial, medical and scientific purposes has been transposed to provide a solution to my own tentative and exploratory questions. A second group of pieces, also resulting from these experiences, will incorporate metal lids and attachments plus textile components.

3. ‘Collector’ series developed with SA furniture designer Khai Liew

Here, Julie Blyfield, Kirsten Coelho, Gwyn Hanssen Pigott, Bruce Nuske, Jessical Loughlin and myself all worked independently with Khai Lieu to produce a series of pieces for SALA 2010 in Adelaide. These lieces are all currently on display in the Design Museum in London. The ‘Prue’ cupboard has four pierced porcelain ‘sieves’ integrated into its doors. Initially the sieves were held in the doors by a ring located behind – a visible and removable attachment. The final version involved the making of a double walled door – the sieves held enclosed and entirely integrated – no longer placed together but seamlessly combined.

4. Proposed development of a silver, porcelain and wood object in collaboration with Julie Blyfield and Khai Liew

This project will explore the combination of silver, wooden and porcelain components into a floating table centrepiece. We will be working with a concept that makes reference to natural twig formations that remained behind after the receding of waters from the flooded creek beds in the Flinders Ranges. We will be working on the matching of movements, surface textures and coloration across the three materials.

5. Indigenous projects

A recent visit to two isolated Indigenous communities has resulted in discussions regarding the future development of ceramic forms for decoration by the artists there. This is a complex situation and requires sensitivity towards the formal and material qualities of objects that would be suitable for this work. Previously, western style dinner plates have been produced as blanks but relationships between these and their painted surfaces seem thin. This is a new and challenging situation for me and will take time to consider and develop appropriately.

Finally:

In stepping towards collaboration, I have found that talking, listening, writing, drawing and planning form an essential starting point on every occasion. The development of an understanding of the nature and possibilities of other materials and an empathy with the processes, skills and expertise of the other practitioners involved is also vital. In situations where different cultures meet, this listening and consideration leads invariably to both the discovery of similarities as well as the investigation of divergence, and thereby to new and more perceptive connections across previous obstacles of difference. These are wonderful and positive links. There are pitfalls and hurdles involved with collaborative work. A high level of listening, respect, equality, plus excellent communication is mandatory. A determination to work collectively with clarity and precision is also important to me. Aside from the making of the work itself, I have had to
learn to imagine and predict many new issues each time that I have entered into a project. Aside from important design questions, these include more practical things such as the development of contracts, discussions regarding ownership, costs, marketing and the usual exhibition issues of photography, publicity and gallery commissions. Much time commitment is involved in research, ideas development, making – all stages of these projects – and the appropriate valuation of this can be tricky. Arrangements must be clear from the beginning.

Overall, my experiences have been extremely positive and rewarding. The collaborative learning that has occurred has stimulated many new threads in my work and a desire to continue in this way whenever possible and appropriate.

My current part time position as Creative Director of the Ceramics Studio at the Jam Factory in Adelaide is timely also. There, I am surrounded by great expertise, experience, opportunities for new learning and working with other materials. Some combined projects have occurred previously but there is a strong expectation that in the future, new and stronger collaborations will develop. What could be better??

Prue Venables is Creative Director Ceramics, JamFactory Contemporary Craft and Design; FRSA; IAC elected member; MA Fine Art; Harrow Diploma of Studio Pottery, UK; BSC (Hons) Zoology; former President, Craft Victoria; former Studio head, RMIT Ceramics.
Briggs Family Tea Service for Broached Commissions
Cultural Collision in the Early Years of Tasmanian Colonisation

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Abstract

In this paper I will discuss the development of the Briggs Family Tea Service, a work launched by Australian manufacturer and gallery Broached Commissions in October 2011.

Broached Commissions is a unique company, in that it uses events in history as the beginning of a design collaboration. The collaboration is focused on research, and the design outcomes are directed entirely by each designer involved in the commissions. The Briggs Family Tea Service was one of six pieces created by the Broached Commissions, in its inaugural commission on the topic of Australia’s colonial period.

The development of the Briggs Family Tea Service was collaborative from start to finish, beginning with research directed by creative director Lou Weis, project curator John McPhee, staff of the Nura Gill Indigenous research center at the University of New South Wales and members of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community. This body of research saw the investigation of families of mixed Aboriginal and English heritage, born out of Australia’s Colonial Period. For me these families are emblematic of the cultural collision that was taking place during this turbulent period in Australia’s history. Eventually I chose to focus on the Briggs family, a family from northeast Tasmania whose evolution was defined by the meeting of free settler George Briggs and local Aboriginal woman Woretermoeteyenner.

From here the collaborative research continued in the further investigation of materials and forms that could be used to represent the Briggs family and the cultural heritage of its members. Time was spent in Tasmania with descendants of the Eastern Straightsmen (of whom George Briggs was a member), exploring Indigenous and non-Indigenous artifacts used during this period, their materiality and functionality.

Eventually the Briggs Family Tea Service concluded through key collaborations with Rod Bamford (Ceramic), Oliver Smith (Copper and Brass) and Vicki West (Bull Kelp). The skills and material knowledge of these individuals allowed for the development of formal and functional elements that accurately express my views on the cultural and historical identity of the Briggs family. The result is six biographical objects that function as a family, as the Briggs Family once did in North East Tasmania.

As founding members of the Broached Commissions we began to discuss the inaugural commission in late 2008. Lou Weis (Creative Director), Adam Goodrum (Founding Designer) and I began a loose discussion about the possibility of developing a limited edition design exhibition in Australia, something that had not been done during this most recent global explosion of interest in limited edition design. Very quickly the team grew to include Vincent Aiello (Founding Partner) and Charles Wilson (Founding Designer) and the collaborative development process began.
As creative director, Lou Weis spent some time developing the beginnings of a creative directors statement that would frame the first commission and give Broached (then known as ‘Knotted’) a direction. It was after this document was issued that the first meeting was held and our thoughts were combined in shaping the direction for this first commission. John McPhee (Curator) was introduced to the team at this first meeting, and it was very clear that John would have a strong historical influence on the development of this first collection.

Lou’s initial draft of the creative director’s statement had focused around exploring periods in Australia’s history through limited edition design pieces, proposing that we focus on the colonial period (1788 - 1851; the point where the industrial revolution arrived in Australia) for the first commission. During this first meeting John delivered a lecture to the group on this period in Australia’s applied arts, taking us through the way in which British crafts were imported from the United Kingdom, as well as the way in which making do had forced the new settlers to develop their own forms of craft, allowing them to survive in this forbidding place. This information inspired some spirited conversation on the possible directions that our individual design processes might take.

I wanted to take a post-colonial view of the time – to look closely at the indigenous experience of European arrival. I was determined that this important event in Australian design history should not go by without the communication of an Indigenous perspective on the events of the colonial period. In addition, I was determined to continue my work exploring human relationships through designed objects. The obvious combination seemed to be the study of a relationship that saw the coming together of an Indigenous and non-indigenous person during this period.

I spoke with John McPhee about this idea, along with Juanita Sherwood at Nura Gili and both suggested that I look into ‘the sealers’ of Tasmania. This soon became a collaborative research task as John and Juanita found information for me and directed me toward texts and films that might contain information on these people.

After a period of extended research on ‘the sealer’ of northeast Tasmania, I found a family that I was most interested in focusing on. George Briggs and his partner/wife Woretermoeteyenner of the Pairrebeenne people were said to have parented the first child of mixed English and Aboriginal descent in the colony. This child was the first embodiment of the cultural collision that was occurring all over Australia during this period. As such, this family became an emblem of the good and bad that these relationships had to offer during a time of great upheaval.

I began to notice discrepancies between the records kept on this family (and others). All authors agreed that the sealers were a group of mercenary men who lived on the islands to the northeast of Tasmania, pairing up and having families with local Aboriginal women. The accounts of George Augustus Robinson suggested that these pairings were torturous relationships, whereby men stole Aboriginal women and forced them to reside with them as slaves. Alternatively the accounts of John Boultbee suggested that these relationships, while not ideal in many ways, were often loving and consensual.

At this point it was necessary to explore a deeper collaborative research process in order to find the truth (or so I thought). I spent one week in Tasmania, meeting with the descendants of ‘the sealers’, or as I learnt on this trip ‘The Eastern Straightsmen’ (as they called themselves). Before leaving I spoke with Julie Gough on the telephone and during my time in Tasmania I met with Greg Lehmann, Vicki West, Lola Greeno, Gloria Andrews and Patsy Cameron. The more I discussed this topic, the more I would realize that there is no consensus on the history of the Eastern Straightsmen within the Tasmanian Aboriginal community.

Greg Lehmann was reluctant to voice any certain opinions on the nature of these men and women (his ancestors) and their relationships. Greg had read all of the same books as me and therefore was in many ways as uncertain about the truth of the matter as anyone. Julie Gough on the other hand has come to resent George Briggs (as one of her ancestors) for the way in which he seems to
have abandoned Woretermoeteyenner and their children. Patsy Cameron is possibly the most widely read on the Eastern Straightsmen, having recently completed a PHD that covered this among other topics relating to the Aboriginal history of Tasmania. From our conversations, Patsy is reluctant to pass judgment on the Eastern Straightsmen and the relationships that they maintained with her Tasmanian Aboriginal ancestors. She agrees that some of these relationships may well have been quite brutal, as many relationships were (indigenous and non-indigenous) during this period of history, but Patsy asserts that many of these relationships were consensual and loving. She went so far as to say that she does not believe George Briggs to have been a bad man, and that his relationship with Woretermoeteyenner was probably one of the better examples of relationships between the Eastern Straightsmen and the Pairrebeenne women.

After this long process of collaborative research, I developed the following statement to frame the project that I would design:

The early years of the colony were fraught with complicated exchanges between Indigenous Australians and the new settlers. In some cases friendships were forged, but in most, conflicts resulted from a collision of two cultures that were so very different in so many ways.

As a key penal colony and later a rich pastoral area, Van Diemen’s Land was greatly affected in the early years of settlement. Early on, Governor Arthur, afraid of the impending conflict between Aboriginal Tasmanians and the settling pastoralists, enlisted George Augustus Robinson to capture as many of the local Aboriginal people as he could. In this early stage of Tasmania’s settled history, this initiative along with pastoral conflicts and the inevitable spread of disease saw the population of Tasmanian Aboriginal people reduced from around 5000 to approximately 300. The majority of these 300 people were then taken to Flinders Island, a Christian mission designed to keep these people away from their traditional land and out of the way of pastoral progress.

Some Tasmanian Aboriginal women managed to escape the mission on Flinders Island by joining a band of free settler, reformed and escaped convict seamen who had set up makeshift settlements on the Islands around Cape Barren Island, to the northeast of what is now called Cape Portland at the north-east tip of Tasmania. These men called themselves the Eastern Straightsmen and lived hard on these open and unforgiving islands in the Bass Strait, relying heavily on the Aboriginal women for their knowledge of local terrain and the ease with which they managed to find food in an area that seemed barren.

Out of these very difficult times, relationships were forged between these weathered men and knowledgeable Aboriginal women, and some of the first children of mixed Aboriginal and English race were born in the colony. One of the first of these families was the Briggs Family.

George Briggs came to Australia of his own free will as a 15 year-old boy, arriving in Port Jackson aboard the Harrington in 1805. Briggs was one of the original Eastern Straightsmen, living rough and exposed to the elements on Clarke Island. George learnt to speak the language of the local Pairrebeenne people, trading tea, flour and sugar for kangaroo, wallaby and seal skins. Through their frequent exchanges and proximity it is thought that Briggs and the leader of the Pairrebeenne - Mannalargenna - became friends, and eventually Briggs was partnered with his daughter...
Woretermoeteyenner. It is difficult to know how this partnership was formed, but some suggest that Woretermoeteyenner was traded for dogs, flour, seal carcasses, mutton birds and sugar, some of the most valuable commodities of the day.

Woretermoeteyenner was the daughter of the feared and respected Mannalargenn, worrier and leader of the Pairrebeenne people. By 1810 Woretermoeteyenner was living on Clarke Island with Briggs, bearing 5 children to him within the ten years that followed. Woretermoeteyenner lived an extraordinary life, leaving Van Diemen's Land in 1825 aboard a sealing expedition bound for the Southern Indian Ocean and Amsterdam. Due to low provision, she and some other Aboriginal women were dropped on the island of Rodrigues. The women survived here for seven months before taking passage to Mauritius where Mauritian officials finally arranged for their return to Australia in 1827. Woretermoeteyenner was the only one to make it back alive and is said to have returned to Van Diemen's Land speaking French.

Dolly Dalrymple Mountgarret Briggs was the first daughter of George Briggs and Woretermoeteyenner and is said to be the first child of mixed Aboriginal and English descent born in the colony. Before the age of two, Dolly was given to Dr Jacob Mountgarret and his wife Bridget in Launceston, where Dolly was raised and taught to read, write and sew. Dolly always maintained contact with her mother, eventually having Woretermoeteyenner move from the Mission at Flinders Island to her home in Dunorlan.

The second child of Briggs and Woretermoeteyenner, Eliza Briggs, was born on Furneaux Island in 1817, but like her sister was moved to Launceston, to live with William Jones and his wife. Eliza was well looked after by the Jones family until the age of 14 when she left the family. Eliza was eventually admitted to a benevolent hospital, where she died at age 21.

Mary Briggs, like her sisters, lived in Launceston, but unfortunately Mary was given to a family who did not care for her as they should have. By 13 Mary was homeless, staying for short periods with different families. Mary was arrested for vagrancy, imprisoned and died at age 21.

John Briggs was the youngest of the family, born in 1820 on Preservation Island and cared for by an Eastern Straightsman named James Munro after his mother was taken to the mission at Flinders Island. John maintained contact with his mother until he was ten years old, but lost contact after that age. John eventually married an Aboriginal girl named Louisa and moved to Victoria with her in the 1850s.

From this body of research I designed the Briggs Family Tea Service, a family of objects that would stand to represent a family of people who once lived in Tasmania. This family is an emblem of the broader Indigenous and non-indigenous relationships that were forming all over Australia during this period of Australia’s early history.

In the Briggs Family Tea Service, George Briggs is represented by a porcelain tea pot, adopting a form that merges the elegant lid and spout of Worcester or Bow Porcelain with a gnarly, organic body and handle, borrowing their form from the roots that Briggs was forced to eat in times of hardship and the kelp that was so widely used by the Aboriginal people of the region. These forms portray the environment that Briggs struggled to survive in and the hard man that he became as a result of this coarse existence.
Woretermoeteyenner's evolution sees her represented through the merging of an elegant Pairrebeenne kelp water carrier with a courtly handle and lid derived from the work of French and British Porcelain houses of this period. The grace of this combination represents Woretermoeteyenner as an important member of local royalty, a woman that did all that she could to maintain her family line.

Dolly is represented as a hybrid of her parents, a milk jug that takes on the characteristics of both parents. Dolly's contact with her mother and strong Pairrebeenne heritage is represented through her organically formed wallaby skin body, while her need to adopt elements of her British ancestry is shown through the refined nature of her cast porcelain spout.

The three youngest children are given the form of teacups, constructed with a fusion of ceramic, kelp and wallaby skin. Their physical characteristics are shaped by their childhood experiences as they endeavor to find a safe existence, caught between two cultures in a newly forming colony.

Once these pieces were designed, the collaborative process continued as we sought out makers that could achieve an unprecedented merging of disparate material, including porcelain, bull kelp, brass, copper and wallaby pelt.

Perhaps the most interesting of all collaborations in the development of this project was my collaboration with Vicki West. Vicki is a descendant of the Eastern Straightsmen, and a contemporary artist who works with bull kelp from the northeast of Tasmania. I spent one week with Vicki in her home just outside of Launceston, making all of the kelp components for the Briggs Family Tea Service.

I arrived at Vicki's house very prepared. Vicki had given me some kelp during my visit the previous year, allowing me to experiment with the material and devise mechanisms for achieving the desired outcomes. I had spent the best part of a year perfecting a particular kelp moulding technique, and while Vicki had not used this technique before, it was an effective system for both of us. Some of the forms to be moulding were modeled very closely on traditional Pairrebeenne water carrying vessels, while others were new forms. This meant that there were some forms that Vicki was experienced with making and others that were new to us both.

Vicki and I worked together, collecting, washing, cutting and forming the kelp. Time restraints meant that it was important for me to be very clear of the processes for forming each component. There were unexpected problems, as there always are, and it was in these moments that Vicki's experience with the material was invaluable. We worked side by side, using the systems that I had developed until something did not work in the way that I had intended. In these instances Vicki and I would work through the problem together until a solution was found.

After the forming process the kelp was left to dry for the rest of the week, hanging over Vicki's wood-fire place. By the end of the week I was able to begin removing some of the forms from their moulds to start the trimming and finishing processes. Many of the forms were not ready to be taken to this next stage during my time with Vicki, so it was necessary for me to take much of the work back to my studio to be completed.

Rod Bamford and Janine Brody from Cone 9 Studios were an obvious choice for the porcelain components. Rod, Janine and I worked together in their studio near Woy Woy, north of Sydney. We discussed at length the best way to construct these objects to ensure a seamless connection between the ceramic components and the non-ceramic components that were to be added prior to firing.

Once a plan of attack had been formulated we began forming the plaster models that would be used to slip-caste the final ceramic forms. Rod turned all of the symmetrical models with great ease, leaving me to carve all of the lumpy, organic forms by hand. What took Rod a few minutes would
take me half a day, but eventually the models were complete and ready for casting. From here Janine and Rod took over, casting and firing these objects with an amazing level of precision.

Working with Rod was less of a collaborative process. Working with porcelain requires vast amounts of experience and knowledge, not something that one can pick up in a few days. As such, Rod asked me to sculpt all of the forms that were open to interpretation, allowing me to control the development of these shapes as we worked. The forms that were clear from the technical drawings were largely modeled by Rod, with moments of referral where a detail was unclear, or in need of change. After the model making stage, the ceramic process was left to Rod and Janine. They were responsible for the pouring, cleaning up, firing and glazing of the ceramic components.

The brass and copper components were constructed through collaboration with renowned silver smith, Oliver Smith. When I first apprroached Oliver about the project, I asked him if he would teach me the skills that an early 19th Century black smith might have possessed, working in the first years of the colony. While Oliver taught me many of these skills, enabling me to planish a bowl, forge a base and cut many components, there were some skills that Oliver could not teach me in such a short period of time. As such Oliver took over when it came to the silver soldering of components and the precise positioning of a lid sleeve. The resulting vessel is something that could well have been forged by a black smith during the time of George Briggs and Woretermoeteyenner.

During this process Oliver and I operated in the workshop together, Oliver would teach me a skill through demonstration and then he would hand over the task to me. He would always monitor me for a period to ensure that my technique was correct, but then the task was left for me to complete. In instances where complex processes were necessary, Oliver would take over the making. When problems arose we worked through them together, marrying his knowledge of the material with my vision for the final outcome.

The making of this complex series of objects finally came down to three collaborations with skilled makers and the ability of these makers to develop precise components that would marry seamlessly. Without the skills of these makers the creation of the components that make up the Briggs Family Tea Service would not have been possible. More importantly this project required the combination of a group of three materials that are not easily combined. Only through a hands-on collaborative process were we able to address the issues created by these materials, solving problems as we went and evolving the design as it was needed. If this process were left to the designer or maker alone, either the function or vision would have suffered, but through the constant conversation that a collaborative approach allows, we were able ensure that the final outcome is strong in both areas.

The Briggs Family Tea Service was finally assembled in October 2011 and exhibited as part of the inaugural Broached Commissions exhibition – Broached Colonial Commissions.

We are currently commencing research on the next Broached Commissions range, and although I cannot discuss the specific direction of this next commission, it is daunting to consider finding a new research topic that will offer as much rich conceptual information as the tales of the Eastern Straightsmen, and in particular the Briggs Family from northeast Van Diemens Land.

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Ceramic Tableware Recycling by Green Life 21 Project
Efforts for sustainable manufacturing in a traditional local production area

Yoshikazu Hasegawa
Director, GreenLife 21, Japan

Abstract

The Mino ware production area, located almost at the very center of Japan, is an area that produces traditional ceramic ware and a place where small-sized companies that specialize in the mass production of everyday tableware are concentrated. While the need to find solutions to environmental issues, such as waste issues and global warming, has become more pressing, in order for the Mino ware that has been developed under the mass-consumption economy to continue production, there is a need to create a sustainable production area, for example, one that uses source materials efficiently and reduces the damage to the natural environment, among other activities. For this reason, companies in the production area, testing and research laboratories and other institutions have organized the Green Life 21 Project to address the recycling of used ceramic ware.

This activity started with organizing the series of company cooperative organizations (crushing, clay preparation, pottery manufacturing, wholesaling, etc.) that are necessary for ceramic ware recycling in the production area. Cooperating with engineers and designers in order to develop recycling technology for ceramic ware and designs for ecological tableware, we started to commercialize our products under the name of “Re-shokki.” The most important part of the process was to establish cooperation with users to have them return their used tableware to the manufacturers so that they can use it as raw materials. We proactively established recycling networks by contacting users in various areas. Today, many local governments and citizens’ groups all over the country have participated in the collection activity. We are also cooperating with administrative agencies that support the project activities and with distribution companies that aim to develop an ecological market. Through this collaboration with wide range of entries, we have obtained remarkable results in meeting industrial demands, such as school food services, and the demand from homes with heightened ecological awareness. We have been able to create an ecological market in these areas.

It is also true that ceramic ware recycling is an activity that can establish communication between people in the community through the collection and the separation of used tableware. In a modern society, a social bond has become weaker. Improving community empowerment through closer relationships between people has now become one of the most important themes for ceramic ware recycling.

1. Introduction

The international movement toward creating a sustainable society has become an inevitable issue. Even a local production area that small- and medium-sized companies concentrate cannot avoid it if they wish to continue business activities. Under these circumstances, the ceramic industry in Japan has started to address eco-friendly manufacturing and ceramic ware recycling. The Mino ware production area, a pioneer in these activities, is one of the largest areas of ceramic ware mass-
production in Japan. It produces approximately 60% of the entire production volume in Japan and the area has a history of expanding production businesses in a mass-consumption economy. Given this background, the Mino ware production area is highly aware that global environmental issues, including waste measures, are a significant challenge when maintaining and developing the production area.

The global environmental issue in terms of ceramic ware is to reduce the environmental burden from the overall product life-cycle: from raw material procurement, manufacturing, logistics, usage to disposal. We now face three problems. The first is the sustainable use of exhaustible resources, such as clay, silica stones, and feldspar. There are concerns over shortages in raw materials due to mine closures and the exhaustion of quality materials. Reusing used tableware is one countermeasure. Second, there is the issue of reducing energy consumption and CO2 emission during firing in the ceramic manufacturing process. The firing process includes many steps, such as bisque firing, glaze firing and overglaze firing and its energy consumption, as converted into amounts of CO2 emission, accounts for approximately 70% of the overall manufacturing process. As the oil price becomes higher, more reduction of firing energy is needed. Third, there is the use of metal oxides for coloring and painting tableware (Miyachi & Hasegawa 2009, p.31). It is obvious that we are required not only to comply with the Food Sanitation Act concerning the elution of lead and cadmium, but also to procure raw materials in a way that has less impact on the global environment.

In order to respond to these global environmental issues, the Gifu Prefectural Ceramics Research Institute, to which the author belongs, took the initiative to organize the Green Life 21 Project (hereinafter referred to as “GL21”) with the voluntary participation of approximately 30 Mino ware companies. Together, we began to address these issues through ceramic ware recycling.

2. Ceramic Ware Recycling Technology

In order to recycle ceramic ware, it is necessary to start with establishing the recycling technology that makes it possible. Engineers from public research organizations are the main actors involved in this issue. The amount of used tableware that is discarded in Japan in one year is estimated to exceed approximately 100,000 tons and if industrial waste (fired products) in the production area is added, it amounts to about 140000 tons. Most of it is disposed in landfills. Ceramics have the characteristics of being nonflammable, insoluble and indefectible, so material recycling is considered to be appropriate for the recycling of used tableware. Since the materials used for tableware are of good quality when compared with building materials or tiles, it is important to have a concept of circulation from tableware to tableware.

The used tableware that is collected is reproduced after undergoing the processes needed to change it into raw materials as shown in Figure 1. Mino ware has set the standard for the ratio of combination of recycled materials at 20% because a higher combination ratio causes the low-thermal expansion of the green body and it ruins the compatibility of the green body and the glaze and decreases product strength. This standard also allows the use of existing manufacturing facilities and technologies, enables all manufacturers to enter into the recycling system and facilitates the expansion of recycling activities. The 20% of recycled materials combination may be an initial step in the ceramic ware recycling. Studies of the plasticity of recycled green body and the glaze that conforms to the green body (low-thermal expansion glaze) will be essential to reaching a high combination ratio. Further collaboration with engineers is required.
The physicality, safety and environmental burden of recycled tableware with a 20% combination ratio are described in the following section (Hasegawa et al. 2000).

Table 1 The properties of recycled and conventional tableware

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Recycled tableware</th>
<th>Conventional tableware</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water absorption %</td>
<td>0.14 - 0.21</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Density g/cm³</td>
<td>2.30 - 2.33</td>
<td>ca.2.30 - 2.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bending strength MPa</td>
<td>84.5 - 95.0</td>
<td>ca.60.0 - 100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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2-1. Physicality and Safety

The physicality of recycled tableware is evaluated by measurements of water absorption ratio, specific gravity and bending strength (Table 1). In the results, water absorption ratio was a little higher than existing porcelain tableware, but specific gravity and bending strength were almost equivalent. It can be used without causing any problem in people’s lives. Safety was evaluated by means of a quenching experiment with a temperature difference by 150 degrees Celsius and a lead and cadmium elusion test using green body without glaze, into which 50% of crushed tableware with overglaze decoration was combined. Where crushed tableware that had been painted and decorated was combined at 50%. In the results of both the quenching experiment and elusion test, there were no anomalies and there was no problem with safety when used as tableware.

Fig. 1 The raw material process for recycling tableware

2-2. Quantitative Research on the Environmental Burden

The environmental burden was evaluated by converting energy consumption into CO₂ emission volume. The LCA method was used for the clay preparation and tableware manufacturing processes of recycled tableware and existing porcelain tableware each. The results are shown in Table 2. CO₂ emission volumes per 1 ton of each product in both processes are almost the same. Consequently, we found that it was possible to recycle tableware without increasing the environmental burden.
Table 2  CO₂ emission of recycled and conventional tableware in processes [kgC/t]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Recycled tableware</th>
<th>Conventional tableware</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recovery</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crushing</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19.3*1</td>
<td>19.7*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tableware manufacturing</td>
<td>427.4</td>
<td>427.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total CO₂ emission</td>
<td>446.7</td>
<td>447.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*1 (2.4+4.3+19.9)×20%+(0.5+8.3+10.9)×80%=19.3
*2 (0.5+8.3+10.9)×100%=19.7

2-3. Reinforced Porcelain Tableware Recycling

In addition to the aforementioned recycling of general porcelain tableware, there is the recycling of the reinforced porcelain tableware that is used in school food services. The recycling method is technically the same as general porcelain tableware. However, reinforced tableware is manufactured by incorporating approximately 30% of more expensive aluminum in order to increase product strength. In the recycling of reinforced porcelain tableware, used reinforced porcelain tableware is collected to use the aluminum that it contains in order to reduce the volume of aluminum consumption. The advantage is to offset purchase costs, transport costs and crushing costs by collecting used reinforced porcelain tableware as a valuable resource to avoid the cost of using new aluminum. It can also reduce the CO₂ emission volume by approximately 3% by reducing the amount of high LAC aluminum consumption (in the case of combining recycled materials at 20%) (Takahashi 2009, p.37).

3. System for Manufacturing Recycled Tableware – Re-shokki

In order to put these recycling technologies to practical use, it is necessary for the suppliers to establish a system for manufacturing recycled tableware. Since the tableware manufacturing processes are remarkably divided into small processes for each company in the Mino ware production area, it is difficult for a single manufacturer to complete the entire recycling process. Therefore, companies engaged in different business categories - such as the collection and transport of used tableware, crushing, clay preparation, pottery manufacturing, and wholesaling - must cooperate and organize a system to create a recycling loop. Moreover, in order to create a closed loop “from tableware to tableware,” measures must be taken for surplus tableware that cannot be recycled. Cooperation is also required with companies involved in building materials, which use the surplus tableware effectively. The GL21 has created this type of cooperative system between suppliers and functions as a system for manufacturing recycled tableware. The GL21 has also promoted cooperation with multiple governmental agencies and university researchers and has obtained support for recycling technology, environmental designs and marketing. “Re-shokki” is the name given to the tableware manufactured under the system for manufacturing recycled tableware shown in Figure 2 (GL21 System).
4. Tableware Recycling Networks

To establish a social system for tableware recycling, it is essential that manufacturers establish recycling technology and a manufacturing system and that they organize recycling networks with tableware users. Tableware recycling is a type of manufacturing that can only be carried out when users return their used tableware so that it can be used as a resource. It could be said that recycling is an activity that functions only when manufacturers and users share a mutual understanding and concern over the same issues in their communication. The life-cycle of recycled tableware is shown in Figure 3. It depicts how objects are returned to manufacturers by users via the collection stage. This reverse flow of tableware cannot be seen in conventional tableware and indicates the establishment of a new relationship between users and manufacturers. In other words, tableware recycling practices user-participation-type manufacturing; it is an activity that creates not only the recycling of objects, but also a flow of information and communication. To recycle ceramic ware that is deeply rooted in daily life in Japan affects citizens and groups in different areas of consumption and encourages environmental activities triggered by tableware recycling. The development of these civic activities creates a flow where citizens and groups communicate about new and future environmental issues with manufacturers and raise the need to find solutions to those issues. In a sense, the manufacturers’ tableware recycling technology helps develop a
ecological lifestyle in areas of consumption by introducing Re-shokki and the increase in this ecological lifestyle will promote environmental management in production areas. This relationship between manufacturers and users is shown in Figure 4.

Some examples of networking activities between manufacturers and users are outlined below:
(1) Shokki Recycle Zenkoku Network no Kai (Nationwide Tableware Recycling Network)
This network is a private organization, based on a specified nonprofit corporation based in Tokyo, and consists of NPOs, citizens' groups, individuals, governments and manufacturers around the country. This network aims to promote recycling activities through the initiative of citizens; it has a system for promoting education about a recyclable society through tableware recycling, as well as strong support from users for the manufacturers’ GL21 Project. In the past, the network conducted joint research on the possibilities of tableware recycling as a social business. In this joint research, the consumption and usage of recycled products were undertaken based on the concept of “joyful and friendly recycling,” such as providing a pottery-making experience using recycled pottery clay, holding a concert with self-produced percussion instruments, and providing gardening activities (bonsai plants) using Re-shokki, among other activities (Ejiri 2009, p.45) See Figure 5 and 6.
In this network, the collected wares that can be used again are sold as used goods (MOTTAINAI EVENT) and only the leftover tableware is used for recycling. This activity places a priority on reuse, which has a smaller environmental impact than recycling, and similar activities by civic groups around the country have become increasingly significant.

(2) Cooperation with Local Governments
16 local governments in Japan have started to collect used tableware as general waste. The collection system varies, such as when the local government itself collects used wares, or when it entrusts collection to citizens or NPOs. In each case, however, the aim is to reduce nonflammable waste and landfill costs and to provide education on a recyclable society to its citizens. The activity is not limited solely to this collection activity, but there are also many cases where recycled products that are recovered by collection, such as Re-shokki, etc., are procured within the area where used tableware was collected. The results of a survey on citizen awareness of tableware recycling are shown in Figure 7 for your reference (Hasegawa et al. 2007). In 2007, Meijo University, the author and other staff members conducted a questionnaire (sample number: 595) with citizens of Tajimi City where the Mino ware production area is situated. As you can see from this figure, many citizens are supportive of the collection and recycling of used tableware. In fact, the Tajimi City government started collection in 2010 based on the results of this survey.

5. Recycled Tableware and Eco-Design
When developing recycled tableware, it is important to consider the environmental impact throughout the tableware life-cycle as well as resource recycling. The GL21 takes the reduction of the environmental burden into consideration as much as possible during the stages of clay preparation, pottery manufacturing, logistics, use and recycling at the stage of product planning and reflects these considerations in its designs. This eco-design is performed in cooperation with housing equipment manufacturers, design sectors of universities and designers in Japan and overseas. While the need for eco-friendly manufacturing is increasing and international regulations are becoming stricter, eco design that takes resource saving, energy saving and safety into consideration has become a vital issue even for traditional production areas. The environmental considerations of Re-shokki and Saisei-001, which are the leading designs presented as a solution to the aforementioned issue, are stated in the following section (Figure 8).

First, during the manufacturing stage, not only the use of recycled materials is taken into consideration, but adopting a simple shape that improves productivity, reducing the use of metal oxides, which are considered to be harmful, and simplifying the manufacturing process by omitting the painting process are included as well. At the stage of usage, items were selected that can adapt to various Japanese dining styles as well as frequent use and they were examined in terms of aesthetic design in addition to easy washing and easy storage, in consideration of extending product life. In the recycling stage, composition using different materials in products was avoided.
from the perspective of easy recycling; the procurement of safe and harmless raw materials was taken into account; and the stacking shape was reflected in the design in order to improve road efficiency for transport. The GL21 set environmental considerations as its design guidelines, and these are expressed in the following key words: pure, elegant, simple and brilliant. Re-shokki/Oliva designed by Prue Venables are shown in Figure 9.

6. Creating an Eco-Market for Ceramic Ware

Recycled tableware has built its sales by means of collaboration between a wide range of actors, including manufacturers and users, and it has created an eco-market for ceramic tableware. The following causes are behind these results: increasing consumer interest in eco products based on the increase in society’s environmental awareness; widening activities related to corporate social responsibility; and the purchase and procurement of eco products based on the increased number of companies registered in Environmental Management Systems. Above all, it is the introduction of the eco goods certification system for ceramic tableware that has contributed the most to creating the eco market. This system is known as Type I Ecolabelling, which is called an Eco Mark in Japan, examined and certified by the Japan Environment Association. This Eco Mark Certification was established in 2004 for ceramic tableware. The Japan Environment Association introduced this system with the support of local governments where the GL21 exists in order to establish ceramic tableware recycling in society. At the same time, the Act on Promoting Green Purchasing came into effect in 2005, which requires public institutions, etc., to work proactively to procure eco goods. The reinforced porcelain tableware for school food services that is procured by local governments also became subject to green purchasing, so the companies participating in GL21 developed Eco Mark certified products and sold them proactively. Today, recycled reinforced porcelain tableware has become a major part of the procurement of porcelain tableware for school food services.

As for other markets, markets targeting consumers and businesses with a sizeable interest in the environment and health are dominant. One market involves cooperation with a company selling organic vegetables using a membership home-delivery system. The collection of tableware and the selling of Re-shokki is set as one. This company is the biggest business partner of the GL21 for developing in-home demand, disseminating tableware recycling activities to approximately 100,000 household members and taking a role in transmitting user feedback and opinions to manufacturers. Another is the business use of Re-shokki in cafes and restaurants where meals using organic vegetables and crops are served. These places communicate customer reactions to manufacturers and use Re-shokki as a tool for environmental communication.
7. Future Development
Ceramic ware recycling activities began in 1997. To create a more sustainable ceramics industry and to promote manufacturing that improves environmental value, answers must be found for the following issues.

7.1 Commercialization of High Combination Recycled Tableware
The combination ratio of recycled materials in recycled tableware was 20%; however, today, it is possible to produce recycled green body with a 50% combination ratio that can be used for manufacturing with the existing mass production technology. When compared with 20% combination ratio green body (hereinafter referred to as 20% body), the recycled material combination ratio is 2.5 times more than 20% body, the firing temperature is approximately 200 degrees Celsius lower than for 20% body, and greenhouse gas emission from firing process can be reduced by a maximum of 33%. Therefore, the physicality of the 50% combination green body shows excellent environment efficiency (Tateishi et al. 2010). The bending strength is 1.5 times (120MPa) greater than 20% body. It is possible to improve product performance. In the future, our aim is not only to conduct recycling, but also to commercialize ceramic tableware that can be adopted by a lower carbon society.

7.2 Commercialization of Used Tableware
In the section on the Network, we mentioned the significance of users promoting reuse before recycling the collected used tableware. This movement relates to the unique Japanese spirit of “Mottainai,” which means to cherish objects. The movement indicates that consumers require objects that are reusable even if they are used items. The author and other members conducted a survey and obtained the result that if disposable porcelain containers that are used for desserts, and other items were changed into types that are returnable five times, it would reduce greenhouse gas emissions during the entire product life-cycle to one-fifth of previous emissions because returning the container requires no energy (Hasegawa et al. 2008). The results suggest that the environmental impact would be smaller if the tableware had high usability and a long-life in usage. The spread of reuse activities among users will develop into repair and cleaning services using firing technology among manufacturers. It indicates a new direction in sustainable business for production areas.

8. Conclusion
Recycling activities for ceramic ware are also activities that involve many people through waste collection and separation and that cultivate communication among members of the community. A recent exhibition with the title “The Attraction of Tableware Recycling” was organized mainly by citizens for an environment fair in Nagano Prefecture, Japan. The exhibition explained the attraction as the pleasure of engaging in activities that practice the spirit of “Mottainai” that is rooted in Japanese life and culture, and the development of communication among members of the community. In the past, in Japan, the traditional lifestyle saw people support each other in their daily lives through community festivals and seasonal events. In our modern world of weakened social ties, establishing relationships where people can come face to face with each other has now become a social issue. During the recovery from the great earthquake that struck Eastern Japan, human ties were once again recognized as a great basis for regenerating the area. Cultivating ties between people in the community through tableware recycling activities and improving community capabilities by means of these ties are also important roles of that tableware recycling in order to create a sustainable society.

References

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