



RESEARCH SEMINARS 2017-18

All are welcome to join us for TVAD Talks on the College Lane campus. We start at 12.45 pm with a buffet lunch followed by a research presentation and discussion, ending at 2.30 pm. Location: Room AB146. For more information, contact the TVAD Research Group Leader, Professor Grace Lees-Maffei, g.lees-maffei@herts.ac.uk Blog <http://tvad-uh.blogspot.co.uk/>

Weds 11th October 2017 – Sahar Khajeh (University of Hertfordshire) Kinetic Typography as a potential solution to the needs of bilingual typography (Arabic and Latin script)

The aim of the discussion is to demonstrate how Kinetic typography could solve the problem of bilingualism where we need typography that works for two languages (Arabic and Latin scripts) specifically outside of printing environment. Examples include demonstration of bilingual logos on shop signage, presenting of tourist guidelines in airports and road signs or exhibiting the translation of a word where these two different cultures are mixed. Before we can discuss bilingual typography, we need to establish an agreed terminology for discussing similarities and differences between the two different written scripts. Due to lack of a proper Arabic Script's nomenclature system, a system of classification and nomenclature for Arabic letterforms needs to be compatible with terminologies used to describe Latin script. During the current phase of my DDes, course I am examining the terminology in current use with the aim of being better able to compare the two scripts.



Weds 15th November 2017– Dr Thom Cuschieri (University of Hertfordshire)
The Gorey Groan – A Study in Gothic Voices

In Jorge Luis Borges' short story *Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote* (1939), a twentieth-century French writer endeavours to reproduce Cervantes' seventeenth-century masterpiece *Don Quixote* – not by memorising the original, but by so fully inhabiting Cervantes' life and persona that he is able to recreate the work anew, from scratch. Borges' wry reflection on the nature of authorship and the appropriation of style and voice is the inspiration for *The Gorey Groan*, which seeks to explore similar concerns at the heart of illustration.

Through a stratagem similar to that used by Borges' eponymous, fictional Menard, this project seeks to gain insight into the work of two twentieth-century artists intimately connected with the gothic tradition: the American writer, illustrator, and designer Edward Gorey (1925 – 2000) and the English writer and illustrator Mervyn Peake (1911 – 1968). The project involves a meticulous study of Gorey's visual language, style and approach, and will include the production of a series of illustrations "by Gorey" (in the Borgesian sense) of Mervyn Peake's gothic novel *Titus Groan*, as a means of engaging meaningfully with both artists' oeuvres.

Gorey did *not* illustrate *Titus Groan* in his lifetime, and the focus here is not the replication of an existing body of work, but rather the means by which artists create their voice, through conscious borrowing and subconscious influences. There is, of course, a third voice in this project – my own – and, unlike Menard, I aim to scrutinise my role in the shaping of Gorey's authentic "voice" as I seek to experience Peake's text through a particular artistic vision.



Sketch of Titus on horseback (Mervyn Peake)



she flung herself over the parapet

and surreptitiously vanished.

From 'The Object Lesson' (Edward Gorey)

Weds 6th December 2017 - Peter Thomas (Middlesex University) and Prof Grace Lees-Maffei, (University of Hertfordshire)
'The Poster Session as Fusing Theory and Practice in (Art and) Design Education: Exhibiting an Occluded Genre'

This talk presents our research on the pedagogical benefits of poster sessions for teaching contextual studies in design education. The academic poster has been used most extensively in the sciences, but we argue that its particular pertinence in design education is undervalued to date. Design students have visual and design skills which can be applied to the production of a poster, but also their verbal experience of speech acts such as 'crits' (studio evaluations) and speaking to design outputs in a client pitch can be applied in the talk which takes place in poster sessions. Because the production of posters and the poster sessions where they are displayed and discussed draw on skills which students use in the studio, they have the capacity to bridge theory and practice when used in contextual studies for design students, in content, form and process.

Much of the secondary pedagogical literature on posters is fundamentally about 'how-to' design a poster; it is instructional. Our focus here is, rather, on the pedagogical affordances of the poster and poster session. While the how-to material focuses on the production of an outcome, our approach focuses on the poster as process, bridging theory and practice and affording a site for talk. The instructional approach we deem as being principally of benefit to the learners / makers of posters, and the learning benefits we expect to be of interest to teachers, as well as learners to some extent.

Posters are, in some senses, what Swales calls an 'occluded genre', in that they are often used to support the development of a higher stakes text, and in these cases are to an extent comparatively hidden. Our students have found the process of research and making a poster, talking about it and talking to other students about their posters in dedicated poster sessions to be very useful in developing ideas, and learning to express their ideas, about contextual studies topics as part of the preparation for an essay. We base our talk on primary pedagogical research we have conducted with undergraduate design students in two North London universities and with postgraduate students of design cultures in a Dutch university, and a review of the relevant secondary literature across a number of academic disciplines.



Weds 7th February 2018 – Dr Sorcha O’Brien (Kingston University)

Electric Irish Homes: Rural Electrification, Domestic Products and Irish Women in the 1950s and 1960s

Dr O’Brien will discuss her [Arts and Humanities Research Council](#)-funded project which runs from 2016 to 2019. It looks at the effects of rural electrification on rural Irish housewives and homes during the 1950s and 1960s, focusing on the importation, promotion, cultural context and significance of domestic electrical products and their meaning to a generation of rural housewives. Although electric products for cooking or cleaning were seen as modernising and liberating technologies in other countries, this project will use archival research, object analysis and oral history to consider to what extent these meanings held for Irish women, particularly against the background of Irish establishment attitudes to the role of married women as domestic housewives. As the rural electrification project of the Electricity Supply Board (ESB) was rolled out across the State, the majority of domestic electrical products such as irons, fridges or vacuum cleaners were largely imported from Britain, Europe and the United States, and the project will look at the specifics of product ranges available in Ireland, and consider the implications of ‘modern’ influences from outside the state, particularly before the Scandinavian Report on Irish Design (1962) kick-started the native design industry in the late 1960s and 1970s. Outputs include a monograph, journal articles, and an exhibition in the National Museum of Ireland Country Life, accompanied by a series of creative workshops. The project has also been supported by a Design History Society Research Travel Grant, 2015 and the Fundació Història del Disseny 2nd Alfaro Hofmann Collection Research Grant for the Study of Domestic Appliances: The Vacuum Cleaner, 2015. Read more about it on the project website: <https://electricirishhomes.org>

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**Electric
Irish
Homes**

Electric Irish Homes: Rural Electrification,
Domestic Products and Irish Women in
the 1950s and 1960s



Weds 14th March 2018 – Dr Claire Jamieson (University of Hertfordshire)
The deindustrialising city as site, symbol and material for design

This talk will explore a milieu of 1980s British design across architecture and product design that can be characterised by a preoccupation with material salvage, DIY processes of making, an antipathy to mass-modernism, and a post-industrial urban aesthetic. Building on my monograph about the radical architectural group NATØ, this work expands the scope of my investigations into related design disciplines in order to more fully interrogate a period preoccupation that I argue emerged from the distinct urban condition of deindustrialising London. Through an examination of the work of designers including Ron Arad, Tom Dixon and his Creative Salvage group, Danny Lane, Daniel Weil, as well as Nigel Coates and NATØ, and some more tentative links to fashion and graphic design, I will identify a postmodern attitude to design as bricolage and a form of street vernacular.

The decline of London's urban fabric during the 1970s and 1980s was dramatic and traumatic – with vast swathes of the city lying derelict as the it prepared to be reshaped in a new post-industrial era. I will show how the unfamiliar material conditions and destabilising spatial relationships produced by deindustrialisation spurred a new form of creative imagination. London's ruinous landscape suggested, and indeed provided, the physical materials for this new language, but also evoked an attitude that was translated into ad-hoc, primitive objects that resisted mainstream design culture. Furthermore, empty and derelict buildings provided the space for these works, which were often constructed using industrial techniques, to be made. For the Creative Salvage group, music culture formed an important part of this making process – with huge parties held in abandoned buildings illuminated by the welding iron and the angle grinder. My work brings research on the nature of post-industrial urban landscapes from urban studies into the realm of design history in order to better understand the influence of urban decline on a generation of designers.

With a line of influence that can clearly be traced back to the DIY practices of punk, the improvised and often purposefully 'anti-design' nature of these works blurs the boundary between professional and amateur. NATØ described an 'apprentice' character – an impoverished maker who could scavenge, construct, sell, swap, repair and fix their environment. Further, untrained designer-makers such as Tom Dixon, who produced hand-wrought one-off objects, put forward a model of practice that falls between art, design, and craft. My talk will expose these complex relations which problematize the role of the professional architect or designer who works in this mode.



'One Off', Ron Arad's studio/shop (1982) 'Albionize Your Living Room' from NATØ, (1984)