MA Communication Design – ARTD6116

Self Evaluation / Reflection Form

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Area/Pathway:	**Design Laboratory**	**Unit Title/Code:**	**ARTD6116**
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The aim of this self-assessment is for you to reflect on your learning experience during this unit.
You should make your points as clearly and simply as possible.

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1. Write a short paragraph highlighting the specific issues and context for your work.
   Include the following:
- *What was your work about?*
- *What relation does media/process/method play in respect to your ideas?*
- *What information (visual or written) have you found which has informed the development of your work – (artists, theory, other)?*

My first project is a book design around an article called *Why We Need to Talk about the Stick Again*. In the initial text analysis, I found that this is a very philosophical text. The author quoted many philosophers' quotes and references throughout the article to prove the ideas of people and society in different eras on "Stick", so I think these philosophers and references are very important parts in the article, because these references can prove the symbol of "Stick". In the article, the author mentioned that "Stick" is seen as a variety of different symbols, so combined with the title of this article, it can be clearly understood that the different forms of "Stick" are another part that needs to be emphasized. The overall text of the article is very obscure, and there are many philosophical issues involved. The overall style is explanatory, and the author does not show a big preference for ideas, but more of an explanation and argumentation of these symbols. This form reminds me of the instruction manual. The function of the instruction manual is to explain the product content and product usage teaching next to the product, and this article is like an instruction manual for the product "Stick", telling you the different symbols of "Stick" and how to use it in each era. Therefore, the display of the content images mainly refers to the image styles that are often seen in manuals. For binding, I chose thin glossy paper like the manual, and used saddle stitching, a common binding method for manuals, to bind it in accordance with my overall concept. In addition, in order to increase the design sense of the book, I added folding pages where the text corresponds. All the contents made into folding pages are different symbols of "Stick", echoing the theme and maintaining unity.
The second project is about psychogeography. Since I am very interested in coffee, I made a map based on 9 different coffee shops in Winchester. I evaluated the pour-over coffee (or Americano) of each shop, collected different coffee beans used by each shop, receipts, and recorded my feelings about the taste of coffee and the atmosphere of the shop when I tasted coffee in the shop, and left different coffee stains for each coffee shop on paper. The final map includes the location of the coffee shop, the flavor of coffee, and the atmosphere of the coffee shop. I also posted the coffee beans I collected next to the map. If interested, the audience can open the bag of coffee beans to feel the taste of coffee. In addition, I conducted a more interesting study on coffee stains. Because the shape and

state of coffee stains can indirectly reflect my mentality when tasting coffee in the store, I invited three of my friends to do a Rorschach inkblot test on the 9 coffee stains to evaluate each shop from a side perspective. I divided the keywords I obtained into "positive (red)", "neutral (yellow)" and "negative (blue)", so as to analyze the feelings brought by each shop from a psychological perspective.

The third project is about the Future Museum and is based on the collections in the Science Museum. In the collections, I found two posters for train companies from the 1930s. One is from the Sothern Railway, called *I'm Taking an Early Holiday Cos I Know Summer Comes Soonest in the South*, which is mainly a poster for seaside holidays in the south of the UK. The other is from the LNER, called *Take me by the Flying Scotsman*, which is mainly about train travel in the northern part of Scotland. The reason why I chose these two posters is that the composition and inspiration of these two posters are the same, or in history, the LNER poster imitated the Southern Railway poster. The interesting point is that although they are two similar posters, the destinations they promote are completely different ends of the UK, which made me interested in the differences between train travel in the north and south. During the research process, I found that the museum also has a collection of more than 120 posters about the stations that will pass through these two lines, so I want to use these posters to complete my project in the style of 1930s train travel. In order not to destroy the characteristics of these posters, I used mental canvas to add 3D perspectives while retaining the flat posters to the greatest extent and created travel videos for the two journeys. And each was supplemented with background music suitable for vacations in the south and travels in the north in the 1930s. In order to make the audience more immersive, I used Touch Designer to create gesture interactions, allowing the audience to control their journey according to their preferences.

2. Evaluate your work and your progress. Include comments on strengths & weaknesses.

Throughout the process, I always carefully considered every design decision and invested a lot of time and effort in the hope of completing each task with high quality. When I was working on the first book design, I made about 5 samples of books of different sizes to ensure that the final product would be what I was most satisfied with. When I was working on the second map, in order to have more reference data within the specified time of the project, I visited 9 coffee shops in a week and drank 9 cups of coffee and spent at least 3 hours in each store to feel the atmosphere. And all the pictures in the map were drawn by myself. And after the project came to a temporary end, I discovered a new form of expression, that is the Rorschach inkblot test, and made a questionnaire based on it to enrich my work. In the third museum project, I learned two new software, Mental Canvas and Touch Designer, to make my design what I wanted in my heart.

Compared with my previous work, I think my current advantage is that I can plan my project logic more clearly and ensure that each step of the design can enrich my own ideas according to the design logic, rather than simply designing for the sake of beauty and formality. Each of my design points has logic and reasons. I think this advantage can help me clarify my design purpose very well, and there will be no deviation from the topic or logical confusion. But the disadvantage that comes with it is that I often spend a long time to conceive projects now. Because once I have an idea and logic, I will follow this route. This leads to that if I think of several different routes in the early stage of conception, how to choose the route and combine the advantages of these routes will bother me for a long time.

3. Which aspects of your work would you like to develop further?

For the first project, I think if I still have time, I might spend more time considering the text layout of the book pages. Now the text layout inside the book is more like a modular layout. When I was analyzing the text, I divided this large article into different levels and designed different layouts for different levels of text when I was typesetting. Although these are things that must be done when editing a book, and I also try to distinguish different levels of text through different layouts, I think I am still in the first stage. Although the overall layout logic I formulated is followed, it lacks some design sense. If I still have time to

improve this work, I should analyze the text more carefully, add designs that match the text content in the layout, so that readers can really feel the power of text in my layout design.

For the second project, I think there is still room for improvement in the layout of the map itself. The early conception and logical sorting of this project really took me a long time. For example, what theme to decide and how to reflect the content of geographical psychology. And drinking coffee and feeling the atmosphere in different cafes is also a very time-consuming thing, which led to me collecting a lot of content in the early stage and not having time to think about it when I was doing the layout in the later stage. And in the later stage of the work, I found a new form of expression. I was very satisfied with this design method, but because it was a new part, it was not combined with the previous map layout. If I have more time to do this work, I will think carefully about the layout of the map and fully combine it with the new part added in the later stage.

The most regrettable thing about the third project is the use of new software. Because I just came into contact with new software, I need to spend a lot of time to learn it, which is not an easy thing, and it is actually difficult to achieve the effect I want in a short time. So in the third project, I can't avoid the situation that I have high expectations but low skills. It can also be said that my ideas are very rich but my skills are not as high as I want. So for this work, I think the most important thing for me to improve is my learning and use of new software, and I hope to be able to produce results that meet my imagination after mastering the new software.

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