

Annotated bibliography

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A. Reading list

1. Halberstam (2020) explores the concept of failure as a method of resistance against social norms and authority in his book “The Queer Art of Failure”. Through this writing, I have gained a new understanding of the concept of failure. Halberstam uses his identity as a queer person to illustrate the significance of failure for both individuals and society. He teaches us that by embracing and accepting failure, we can break free from traditional standards of success and challenge ingrained patterns of thought, thereby creating new aesthetics and social values. The concept of “failure aesthetics” developed by Halberstam impressed me deeply, offering me a fresh perspective and mode of thought. This mode of thought is also reflected in my Positions through Iterating project, in which I advanced my thinking and creativity through more than 100 iterative experiments. I gained not only relevant design outputs but also the insights and reflections that underpinned these 100 iterations. I became more proficient in the media used and learned from the experience of multiple failures. Therefore, I treasure the learning time and experience from this phase. Furthermore, Halberstam emphasises the importance of resisting norms and authority, and how failure and resistance can challenge existing social structures and authorities, and create new possibilities and solutions. Therefore, learning to accept failure as a driving force that propels us forward is essential not only for the study of graphic communication design, but also for our personal and professional lives.

2. Having read Susan Sontag’s (2009) “On Style” and drawing from my professional background as a graphic communication designer, I have gained a deeper understanding of the role and importance of style in art and literature. In her work, Sontag argues that style is not merely a superficial decoration or personal expression, but a crucial factor in shaping the meaning and impact of a work of art. She explores the different levels of style, from surface texture and decoration to internal structure and symbolic meaning, and demonstrates how they interact and contribute to the overall effect. Sontag’s analysis is particularly notable for her emphasis on the social and historical context of style. She contends that style is not a static or universal phenomenon, but a dynamic and contingent one that reflects the values, norms, and conflicts of a particular time and place. As a graphic communication designer with a close relationship to visual style, I find these

insights highly relevant to my own practice. In my view, style is not just a matter of personal taste or fashion, but a strategic choice that involves moral, political, and cultural considerations. Style reflects how we perceive and experience the world around us. In the “Positions through iterating” project, I am attempting to create a 3D illustration style that is different from my previous work, while still retaining my personal characteristics and aesthetics. The current work requires a lot of thought, as refining a new style is not something that can be accomplished overnight, but requires countless iterative experiments. Overall, I believe that mastering and controlling style is very essential in the field of graphic communication design. During the learning period, we need to both perceive and form our own visual language style while learning and accepting different styles. In the work period, these experiences and abilities will enable us to create suitable and unique visual experiences or brand recognition for clients and target audiences.

B. Beyond the reading list

1. After reading “Rapid Changes in Flowering Time in British Plants” (2002), I have gained a significant knowledge base regarding the flowering times of British plants. For my Positions through Iterating project, I have chosen to explore the topic of springtime in London and discover interesting natural elements to use for creative purposes. The reason for selecting this theme is due to the unusually cold spring weather this year in 2023, accompanied by a significant amount of rainfall, which has consistently caused feelings of melancholy. Even at the end of April, it still feels like autumn or winter, which has deeply concerned me about climate issues. Through analyzing British temperature and rainfall patterns from the 1960s to the late 1990s, the article indicates that with global warming, British plants have advanced their flowering times by approximately 11 days, which also affects the entire ecosystem, including other populations of insects and birds that interact with plants. Since I began studying abroad in United Kingdom, I have been deeply fascinated by London’s natural landscapes, where vegetation and animals thrive and the vast sky is adorned by clouds, allowing small animals to roam freely in parks and the subway system. However, we cannot ignore the pressing environmental issues. With the increasingly changing climate and rainfall patterns, many plants’ flowering times and the habitats of biological communities are undergoing significant changes, which adversely affect the reproduction and survival of both fauna and flora.
2. Spring has always been a subject that artists are passionate about depicting, and it is an endless source of creative inspiration. David Hockney’s early paintings capture

the charming moments of Woldgate in spring, as if they conceal an entire season of spring. I really enjoy and appreciate this British artist's work. In my free time, I love to visit various exhibitions in London for observation and learning. Recently, I watched David Hockney's innovative immersive art exhibition at the Lightroom near CSM, and it was the best exhibition I've ever seen, without exaggeration! From his exploration of traditional painting materials to new media, one can see that this artist has been expanding the boundaries of painting media. As an audience, we can feel and understand his way of looking at the world. I remember that the film also played clips of his creations. He enjoyed immersing himself in nature, used a Polaroid camera to create collages to record the passage of time, used an iPad to describe the pastoral scenery of spring, and depicted the vast and magnificent Grand Canyon through painting. It really allowed me, as an audience, to wander in his wonderful world of creation and helped us to reconsider the relationship between humans and nature. From David Hockney's works and artistic practice, I have gained valuable learning insights. Although my project has explored spring, what are my thoughts, and how can I discover and convey a different aspect of it? Although my current work is not bad, I always feel that the theme of exploration should be more interesting and profound. I should have the same keen insight into the surrounding environment as Hockney, and think and explore with more passion and curiosity.

C. Design practices/projects

1. Nick Barclay's "Love" series of 3D poster works served as the initial inspiration for my project. Barclay's adept handling of the relationship between graphics and text, as well as the striking visual impact of his creations using Adobe Illustrator 3D, stimulated my exploratory interest. While I personally am not particularly skilled in the realm of digital media and rarely take the initiative to engage with 3D modeling software, I discovered through Barclay's work that Adobe Illustrator has become a medium capable of producing visually impactful pieces, with relatively simple and understandable operation, which piqued my curiosity. Although I had already done some research on this medium during the Methods of Iterating project in Unit 1, I was dissatisfied with the result because of inadequate thinking and overly complex designs. Therefore, in order to become more proficient in and effectively utilize this medium, I embarked on a new exploration in this project. Taking inspiration from the springtime in London, I designed some simple and orderly icons featuring flowers as the primary elements, and employed Illustrator 3D for playful creations. I was delighted to see the three-dimensional, beautiful, and colorful flowers that caught my eye. Through a large number of iterative experiments using Adobe

Illustrator 3D, I believe that while this medium may not be able to create complex and realistic three-dimensional graphics like professional modeling software, it has greatly aided and inspired me, broadening my creative thinking.

2. I really admire Yui Takada, a Japan-based graphic designer and artist known for his active thinking and representative of the new ugly style, with a highly distinctive personal touch in his works. I was drawn to his lively and adorable 3D animation posters in his works for PicnicArtFestival2021, which perfectly captured the theme of picnic with a humorous and playful approach, inspiring me with a lot of ideas for my own projects. After looking through his previous works, I found that his earlier design style was highly disciplined and minimalistic, in line with the traditional Japanese graphic design style. However, Yui Takada believed that this kind of design lacked humanity and began to prefer designs that were less constrained and more natural and original. Gradually, his design style changed significantly and he became well known for his “ugly” designs. Yui Takada believes that design is not only about pursuing visual aesthetics, but also about pursuing individuality and self-expression, and that the best way is to follow your own rhythm. His free and brave thinking has touched me deeply, just like someone who has experienced a lot of life but still maintains his or her original intention, his works also have a naive and innocent side. In addition, I need to learn from Yui Takada. Through his social media accounts, I saw his daily practice and commitment to creating something new every day. Although I have explored a lot in my projects, such as “Method of iterating” and “Positions through iterating”, I have yet to achieve the goal of daily practice, even if it is just a little bit. I believe that this can accumulate and become a valuable creative experiment and inspiration, and I hope I can achieve this goal.

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