

Creative Practice for Narrative Environments

MA Creative Practice for Narrative Environments pioneers collaborative practice among designers, curators, writers and project managers. The purpose: to develop meaningful narratives for cultural and commercial initiatives.

Students work in multidisciplinary teams to create and develop proposals and solutions for cultural venues, visitor centres, exhibitions, museums, historic sites, entertainment venues, sports events, shopping experiences, branded environments, corporate events, product launches, urban and community environments. They work together to integrate objects, text, sound, images and film into spatial environments. The course is based on the premise that all environments tell stories, that narrative is a fundamental way people make sense of places and stories are implicit in the materials, structures, images, signs, sequences and uses of a space. The 24 projects on show propose novel ways to tell stories as urban and architectural interventions, leisure and consumer experiences, exhibitions and event designs.

MA Creative Practice for Narrative Environments 2004-2006, grew in size and ambition. The students used narrative as a creative tool to generate a wide and exciting range of practical and theoretical projects. The output includes interactive installations at the South Bank, live events, conceptual schemes and conference papers. The work produced demonstrates how different disciplines, from cultural theory to interaction design worked together around the idea of narrative to develop flourishing collaborative partnerships.

Enormous thanks are due to the course affiliates, leading figures from commercial and cultural industries, who gave lectures, attended crits, mentored students, provided placements and sponsored live projects. Special thanks to the course team: Sarah Featherstone, Kevin Flude, Stuart Jones and Arnel Decelle. Student profiles, course projects and a calendar of events can be found on the course website www.narrative-environments.com

Tricia Austin, Course Director



Marc Ayala Adell
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Chances, Choice, Challenge.

The project is the outcome of a research on behavioural psychology and influence techniques. The project methodology was first tested at an art event in April 2006. Thousands of stickers charted visitors' reactions to rules and choices suggested by the setting. The methodology was further developed through a collaboration with the Old Operating Theatre Museum. The project was designed to give the audience the opportunity to actively curate their own exhibition from the museum's collection. The project explores the potential of reinterpreting existing exhibitions by encouraging the audience become active characters of an unexpected situation...

Collaborators: Graphic-active Design: Jonas Fridén / Co-designer in Statistics: Danae Esparza / Content and Evaluation Adviser: Sophie Smith / Media Designer: Leandros Katsouris / Photographer: Yania Cunha / Performer: Maria Campos / Special thanks to: Kevin Flude and the Operating Theatre Staff



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Beauty and the Beast:

Re-telling Social Communications in Shared Spaces
The project explores narrative as inspiration for architectural design. It takes "Beauty and the Beast" as its starting point and transposes the story into architectural language. The changing nature of the protagonists' relationship inspired the development of an interior spatial structure "the movable living unit". The relationship between Beauty and the Beast mirrors tensions common to the lives of people sharing a living space. The units rotate to provide four levels of social interaction: communication, co-existence, co-operation and privacy. The flexible units enable inhabitants to express their feelings and adapt their personal living space to suit their needs within a shared architectural space.

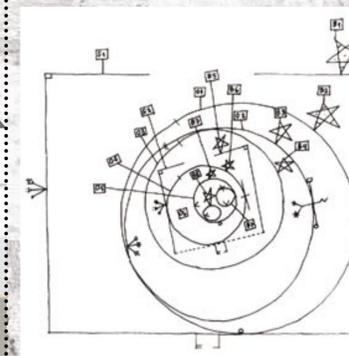
Collaborators: Conceptual Development: Ming-Jung Wu, Arlete Castelo, Zhijie Yao & Jing-Zi Chen / Written Materials: Sophie Smith / Visual Materials: Ching-I Chen & Ming-Jung Wu / Special thanks to: Stefanos Nasopoulos, Lapa Chairattanah, Nikole Dinmitch, & Huang Tu



Vassiliki Holeva, Andres Ros Soto & Stefanos Nasopoulos
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Superposition and Collapse, Everyday Routine as Narrative.

Our scheme explores the structure of everyday domestic routine. We perceive the domestic surroundings as the exquisitely crafted setting of a choreography, the protagonist of which, the person, exists only as an apparition. As any narrative, everyday routine has its own inherent sense of tension and friction. We believe this tension is caused by the fact that routine is always tinted by desire and that relationships and decisions within it are conditioned by fantasy. Our experiments with familiar objects and spaces intend to evoke a play between appearance and substance. Through a series of manipulations we aim to expose the dramatic nature of routine and document its illusive, fragile and strangely balanced structure that places it on the scale of grand narratives.



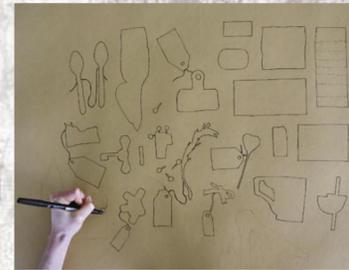
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Exchange Pieces

Contextual Tools for Engaging Participation

Our work examines the role of participation in interactive environments, settings that employ multiple elements as active members of an engagement - audience, makers, client, designers, media and the physical space itself. If these "players" provide the "input", then interaction gives feedback, making relationships reciprocal. While interviewing designers, curators, clients and audience members from London, we conducted a series of experiments exploring how to initiate and sustain interaction based on the model of good conversation. Through this, we have developed an approach that extracts narratives from context, creating successful exchange pieces that provide the right tools for a productive conversation.

Collaborators: Interviewees: Peter Higgins (Land Design Studio), Frith Noble (Kerr/Noble), Claire Cumberland (General Public Agency), Shan Maclellan, Neil Quinlan, Cindy Sullivan (Education Department Royal Festival Hall), Hannah Reiler & Katrina Nilsson (Dona Centre) / Client: RED Team, Design Council / Editor: Sophie Smith / Concept and Development Consultants: Arlete Castelo, Jonas Fridén, Jona Priel & Sophie Smith / Exhibit and Construction Consultant: Stefanos Nasopoulos



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Interactive Storytelling Exhibitions

"we apologise but this exhibit is not working"
Interactive Design and Storytelling are disciplines that hold enormous potential for engagement. My dissertation brings them together in the museum realm. It analyses how exhibition design is undergoing significant changes as museums increasingly aim to offer discovery and learning through new kinds of participatory and memorable experiences. Developments in media and sensor technology have enabled interactives to play a more central role in exhibitions, for example by being embedded directly into tangible objects or the surrounding space, reacting to visitor presence or action. No longer passive spectators, visitors are actively drawn into the narrative, empowered with significant agency to explore the space, trigger events and develop their own interpretation of the story. Exhibitions thus emerge as immersive territories, to be explored in a first-person experience.

Collaborators: Editorial Design and Photography: Tiago Maia & me / Exhibition Concept and Development: Ana Melo, Tiago Maia & me / Exhibition Editor: Sophie Smith / Special thanks to those I interviewed: Tobit Schneider, Lars Åke Everbrand, Janice Mullin, Nick Bell, Paul Denis & Esther Dugdale



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Gifts to the Tidal Thames

In ancient times people gave gifts to the river to thank their river god for food, water and life. This project was inspired by the idea of giving something back to the river Thames and by the diversity of the communities that live along it. In order to emphasise the importance of diversity, both racial diversity and bio-diversity, and to build a mutual respect of both, I developed a 12 month programme of family learning events linked to the Thames for the residents of Hounslow borough. At the end of each year the participating towns have a record of the events in gift boxes on the banks of the Thames and then begin a new cycle of events.

Collaborators: Concept Development: Ming-Jung Wu, Kelsey Snook & Ying Gao / Workshop Tutors: Laura McAleer & Lucy Cole / Animator: Huang Tu / Script Writer: David Erskine / Special thanks to: Climbers & Creepers, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, Thames Explore Trust & Hounslow Council



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What happens next? Building Suspense in Museum Exhibitions

Suspense keeps us reading, watching, or listening to find out what happens next. In fact, wherever a story is being told, suspense is used as a narrative device to hold the audience's attention. Suspense can raise expectation, create anticipation, maintain interest, arouse curiosity, build tension and produce surprise. This project explored the potential of using suspense in exhibitions. Research into how suspense is generated in film and literature generated principles and models of suspense for exhibitions. These are demonstrated in an exhibition called "Predator or Prey?", which placed the audience in the role of either the predator or prey within different habitat environments.

Collaborators: Concept Development: Leandros Katsouris & Sophie Smith / Exhibition Storyboards: Leandros Katsouris / Exhibition Design: Ming-Jung Wu & Ariel Chen / Book Design: Lee Upton / Special thanks to: Jo Quinlan-Tulloch (Science Museum), Lucy Carruthers (Event Communications), Georgia-Gina Koutsika (NHM) & Peter Higgins (Land Design Studio)



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Spatial Diaries

"Spatial Diaries" interprets the built (urban) environment by revealing its narrative, poetic properties, superimposing the cartographic with multiple subjective layers. Starting with a standard map on a web-site and enabling the user to create and change the visual shape of maps and their content, select, add, amend, distort, print, distribute, contemplate, the project facilitates individual authorship of spatial representations. The engagement with ideas of cognitive mapping, topography as a vessel for memories and stories, visualisation of geographical subjectivity and the ever-changing image of a place, capture and express the intangible dimensions of the lived experience of daily city life.

Collaborators: Concept Development: Jonas Fridén, Daniel Harris, Melissa Mongiat, Sophie Smith, Kelsey Snook & Charlie Ward / Video: Marc Silver / Model: Sono Oberg / Mappers: Tricia Austin, Claudia Austin-Parsons, Natalie Austin-Parsons, Drew Broomhall, Katie Chambers, Katherine Gillieson, Urtika Holzer, Alan Parsons, Karola Pitsch, Clare Qualmann, & Justin Renard / Special thanks to Nick Bell & everybody at Land Design Studio.

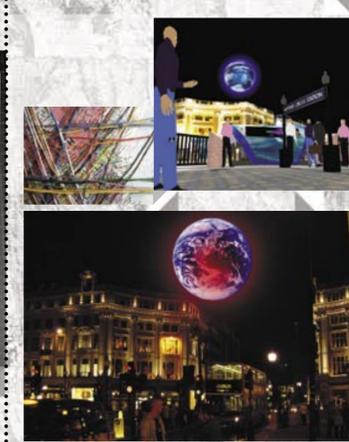


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Sustainable Consumption

Oxford Street Sports Day is a special event geared to London's busiest shopping strip. Sustainable consumption, not gluttony is the message. The installation is targeted at shoppers to raise awareness of the consequences of over-consumption on developing countries and environment. A sphere positioned at the centre of installation which, symbolizes our planet, turns red if it's ignored but remains green if shoppers participate in sports activities, generally carried out by two people around the installation.

Collaborators: Concept & Content Development: Gwyn Jones / Installation Production Consultant: Robert Brook & Steve Moore / Discussions & Interviews: Zhijie Yao, Gwyn, Yuan Zhang, Phil Cramp & Fernando Cabanillas / Inspiration: Basant Verma

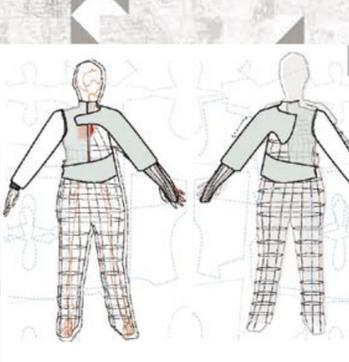


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The EPS Traveller

This project proposes a wayfinding system designed for the independent traveller. EPS (Experience Positioning System) is based on the traveller's personal emotional experiences of time and space. It uses information about past experiences and hopes and fears for the future to suggest a personal route through a city. The jacket incorporates wearable technology that functions as a data capture and management system. The jacket maps out the possible routes and gives an advanced sense of mood in space by either stretching or tensing the fabric against the body.

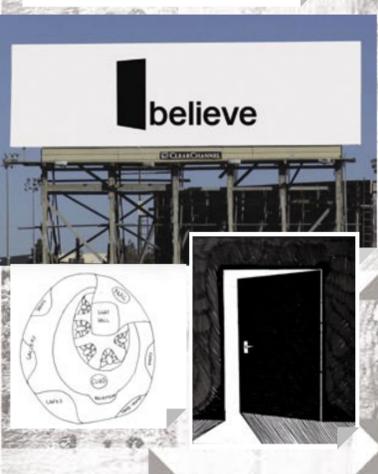
Collaborators: Concept Development: Ying Gao, Yangzi Chen (Ariel), & Zhijie Yao / Graphic Design & Illustration: Wen Wang & Despina Hadjiouka / Fashion Designer: Emi Sekiguchi, Ching-Ming Peng



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I believe: A Brand Fiction
Brands and religions tend to mimic each other's behaviour, they use the same promotional techniques to reach out to new believers: while brand evangelists build communities of worshippers, pastors/preachers run their churches like businesses. I believe is an invitation to imagine what would be the next step of that dynamic: a brand whose purpose is to answer your need of belief. Creating a fake brand and promoting it is a way to create a fictional space within the branded environment and question the reality of advertising narratives, in the end, it's an opportunity to question what you believe in.

Collaborators: Graphics: David Tanguy



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Hypetrace
Hypetrace is a digital signage network intervention at the South Bank Centre, London. It offers a unique visual and informative experience to the visiting public. Digital display screens are dispersed throughout the cultural centre – the foyers of the venues and in key outdoor points. The movement of the people present in the area is traced and represented live on the screens. The direct representation of the position of people at any time highlights areas of concentration and interest. The visual outcome, complete with appropriate text, provides information about the day's activities including official events and ad hoc street happenings.

Collaborators: Concept Development: Ioannis Skavas & Myrto Biriraki / Advice and Discussion: Jeremy Wood, Jonas Fridén & Stefanos Naspoulos / Copy Editing: David Erskine / Special thanks to: Daniel Harris



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Mobile Frames: Investigating the Networked Viewfinder
Historically, mass media image making was estranged from image consumption. Fine art photography and cinema created passive audiences or consumers, static in their location and geographically removed from the mediated subject. An industry elite controlled production at a spatial and temporal distance from their audience. Digital photography has enabled anyone who has a mobile camera phone to share images "here and now". Through the computerised and networked mobile viewfinder, individuals' perspectives and traditional mediated landscapes can come crashing together, blurring the edges between nodes of production, consumption, collaboration and time, in a fusion of art, culture and technology.

Collaborators: Dennis Luemkemann, Java 12ME Development www.blogplanet.net / With thanks to Adam Child for programming support & George Grinstead for technology provision



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The Narrative Spa
Power, bricks, industry, river views and lofty heights – how can these distinctive characteristics be cohesively incorporated into a spa? The concept for the Narrative Spa within the Battersea Power Station provides a unique urban spa experience that connects you to the interior world and the elements. The narrative unfolds through the interior and exterior spatial design, the treatments and activities. Visitors will find a relaxed and nurturing place that promotes well-being. It is not built upon artifice, but instead responds to the immediate surroundings. It fosters repeat visits and ongoing relationships in a calm, provocative and beautiful environment.

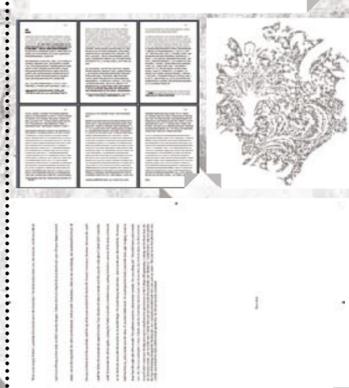
Collaborators: Sponsorship: Mike Swinney (Battersea Power Station) / Interior Concepts: Universaldesignstudio, Fiona Milne (Battersea Power Station), Lisa Gayle Welch (Battersea Power Station) / Mentor: Ralph Aardil (The Brand Experience Consultancy)



Collyn E. Ahart
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Housed – Creative Locations of Self-Definition
Identity is housed. This project explores the implications of how, where, and when individuals locate their understanding of "self" at different times during their lives. By weaving together critical theory and semi-fictional short stories, this project aims to bring what might otherwise be a critical project into the realm of the creative, engaging with memories of the self in a/d/of space through "fusion, rather than fragmentation" (Annette Kuhn, 168). It demonstrates how self-space psychologies are embedded within narratives employed to contain and control them. By opening up these narratives and subjecting them to creative engagement as well as critical deconstruction, connections between different individual's stories become apparent and the narrative mechanisms of control move from being personal to a public, shared experience.

Collaborators: Typography & Graphic Design: Gigi Ho / Concept Development: Vassiliki Holeva & Alex Spyropoulos / Copy Editing: Justin Renard / Special thanks to those I interviewed: Maggie Stanway, Sarah Cary, James Alexander, Christophe Egret, David West, Jonny Antstead, Amanda Harris & Sarah Featherstone



Zhijie Yao
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Choreography For A Chair: Design Exhibitions as a Theatre
The project proposes to bridge the divide between commercial and didactic design exhibitions. How do you communicate to commercial clients, design students, academics and design practitioners in the same space? It is proposed to not only show artefacts but also convey their meaning through live performance, using actors and dancers play out themes, interacting with displays. The goal is firstly, to enrich the clients' understanding of the products by bringing their conceptual and cultural context to life; secondly, to bring designers and academics into closer contact with clients and enhance their understanding of commercial imperatives; thirdly to carve out an innovative role for design management in novel design exhibitions.

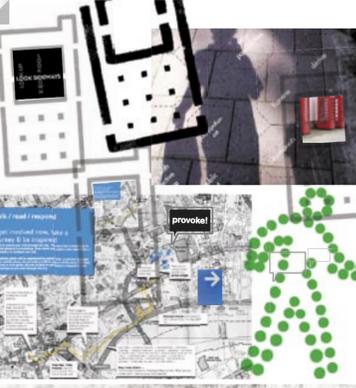
Collaborators: Exhibitor: Charlie Davidson / Spatial Design: Ming-jung Wu & Ying Gao / Graphic Design: Yuan Zhuang / Performances: Lifeng Wang, Shihuang Xu & Keisha Grant / Choreography: Juanjuan Sun & GDA (Greenwich Dance Agency)



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Look Up, Look Down, Look Sideways
Look Sideways aims to liberate the potential of portable technologies to connect documented experiences or histories to physical spaces – creating a layered experience that is a combination of both the mediated and real. Increasingly, new technologies such as mobile phones, public screens or personal audio devices are capable of producing new narrative spaces and capturing experiences that would otherwise remain unexplored. This project demonstrates how it is possible to create an interactive journey around the city, guided by prompts and provocations sent to mobile phones. You are challenged to generate your own documents and responses to these events as part of these spontaneous communities and altered geographies.

Collaborators: Video Walks: Don Harris / Writers: Francesca Gavin & Megan Horvath / Motion Graphics: John Moulton



Sophie Smith
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Dissecting Propaganda – An Exhibition
Examining a contemporaneous political poster, Dissecting Propaganda revisits the May 30th Incident (Shanghai, 1925). Three narratives from its striking imagery are brought to life: activists, women protesters and British settlers, each in a separate room. Next, a passageway, along which are presented the events of May 30th, dramatically reveals the poster. Through an interactive display of various analyses and sources, visitors can explore different historical debates. Finally, they are invited to record their own conclusions. "Propaganda!" shows how a number of narratives can be invoked by one historical document. Reflecting this, each room has been created by a different designer – provoking contrasting experiences.

Collaborators: Spatial Designer: Lapas Chairattananah / Room Designers: "Women in Protest": Philip Cooper, "Nation building": Kelsey Snook, "Shanghai 1925": Fadi Raki (concept) Philip Cooper (visuals) "Poster corridor": Lapas Chairattananah, "Debate and opinion space": Arlete Castelo / Web Design Advice: Charlie Ward / Interactive design advice and book design: Arlete Castelo / Show Graphics: Melissa Mongiat / Spatial advice for show: Lucy Carruthers / Copy Editor: Stephen Smith / Poster reproduced with the kind permission of the Archives du Quai d'Orsay, Paris (the French Foreign Office Archive)



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Collaborative Storytelling and Way-finding in the Editorial and Spatial Environment
Exhibition Catalogue and way-finding system comprising communication platforms that enable people to contribute content and shape the results for themselves.

And:

Participation Interaction	Workshops Mapping	Visitors Students	A caricature machine Clamps Paper bags
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Collaborators: MACPNE students 2004–2006 / Concept Development and Active Participation: Kelsey Snook, Jana Pichl, Marc Ayala, Vassiliki Holeva, Leandros Katsouris, Sophie Smith & Stefanos Naspoulos



Philip Cooper
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A Shrine For What, Why? What is the Point.
"A Shrine For What?" is an experiment applying existentialism to the design process. The piece has no given meaning but that is not to say in has no meaning. We tend to equate design with intentionality and a defined purpose forgetting how objects are repurposed and take on new functions and meanings over time. Instead of questioning why I created this piece, I want you to ask how you can determine the object's meaning and function. These interpretations will create nonsense myths about the thing which in turn will generate new meaning. There is no given right or wrong. This is our absurd task.

Collaborators: Everyone who interprets my piece / The 100 people who answered my initial email created the list of relics / Collyn Ahart, Arlete Castelo, Vassiliki Holeva, Melissa Mongiat, Stefanos Naspoulos, Sophie Smith, Kelsey Snook & Charlie Ward created the initial myths that made up the meaning for the icons / Collyn Ahart was my main collaborator, she helped with my research, concept generation and editing / Technical Advice: Charlie Ward / Tom Danvers created the website with my art direction



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Fitting Stories: Reflective Brand Experience in a Changing Room.
The project proposes a new brand communication system for an ethical, cutting-edge fashion brand Mae Fah Luang. As you enter the fitting room images of hill tribe communities in northern Thailand show you the brand's ambition and philosophy. A display of unfinished garments inside the fitting room reveals the production process and something of the story behind the items' creation. The fitting rooms are also interactive. They form a cluster of linked cubicles and the choices and actions of each customer affect the images and displays in other cubicles and the exterior envelope. Customers' actions orchestrate the brand identity, opening the door for a lasting relationship with the MFL brand.

Collaborators: Concept and Content Development: Sophie Smith & Marc Ayala / Written Materials: Sophie Smith / Brand and Marketing Direction: Sivaporn Chomswan, COO & Doi Tung Development Project / Project Coordinator: Jarupachai Achavasmith, Fabric Director, Doi Tung Development Project / Graphic and Visualization: Selina Kwok / Multimedia and Film Editing: Chaitipont Lerboonchayakul / Storyboard and Animation Design: Chaitipont Lerboonchayakul / Exhibition Advice: Stefanos Naspoulos / Special thanks to: Sarah Featherstone (Featherstone Associates), Jamie Anley (Jam Design), Melissa Mongiat & Arlete Castelo

