

THE CENTER FOR SENSIBILITY: TOWARDS CRITICAL
GRAPHIC DESIGN PRACTICE

Presented to the Graduate Council of
Texas State University-San Marcos
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements

for the Degree
Master of FINE ARTS
by

Amanda Thomas

Texas State University—San Marcos

San Marcos, Texas
May 2013

THE CENTER FOR SENSIBILITY: TOWARDS CRITICAL
GRAPHIC DESIGN PRACTICE

Committee Members Approved:

Maia Wright, Chair

Gina Tarver

Ben Ruggiero

Approved:

J. Michael Willoughby
Dean of the Graduate College

COPYRIGHT

by

Amanda Thomas

2013

FAIR USE AND AUTHOR'S PERMISSION STATEMENT

FAIR USE

This work is protected by the Copyright Laws of the United States (Public Law 94-533, section 107). Consistent with fair use as defined in the Copyright Laws, brief quotations from this material are allowed with proper acknowledgment. Use of this material for financial gain without the author's express written permission is not allowed.

Duplication Permission

As the copyright holder of this work, I, Amanda Thomas, refuse permission to copy in excess of the "Fair Use" exception without my written permission.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my parents, Andy and Carol, who support me with ceaseless encouragement and love. I thank my older brother, Matt, who inspires me with his never ending drive.

I also dedicate this thesis to my grandparents, H.C. and Lillie, for without learning from their gentle nature, I would not have the spirit to engage in a project like this. The experience of this project was, as my Grandpa would say, *Good. Super good.*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Deepest gratitude to my perfect trifecta of a thesis committee—Maia Wright, Gina Tarver, Ben Ruggiero—for their invigorating encouragement and stirring intellect. Many thanks to Chuck Sanders and Cesar Rivera for installing the vinyl typography, and to Trey Terrell who generously donated it. Special thanks to Michael Nibbet for granting the space that my project required. Heartfelt gratitude to Christine Haney for her dedication to this program. Much appreciation to the students whose ideas and inquiries constituted this investigation.

For anyone else I have forgotten (but who is no less appreciated by me), please leave your name in the bracket below—

Your name here.

This manuscript was submitted on April 8, 2013.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	viii
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Critical Practice.....	1
Relational Design.....	5
Immaterial Design.....	6
II. CENTER FOR SENSIBILITY.....	9
Project Overview	9
Design Methodology and Outcomes.....	11
Typography	11
Color	12
Hallway.....	13
Zones.....	14
Zone 1	15
Zone 2	18
Zone 3	22
Feedback	27
Support Materials.....	27
Collateral.....	27
Print and Social Media.....	29
III. RESULTS	32
IV. CONCLUSION	44
REFERENCES	47

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Zone 1: Quotations	16
2. Zone 3: Questions.....	23
3. Zone 1: Postcard Results	33
4. Zone 2: Book Scans.....	33
5. Zone 3: Questions Filled out	38
6. Zone 3: Exchanged Ideas	39
7. Zone 3: Selection of Exchanges (Content).....	40
8. Feedback.....	42

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Digital Mock-up of Half the Typographic Installation.....	12
2. Vinyl Decal with Hours of Operation.....	13
3. Vinyl Decal with Logo	14
4. Installation with View of Zones	14
5. Zone 1 Quotation.....	15
6. Zone 1 Installation.....	17
7. Zone 2 Quotation.....	18
8. Zone 2 Installation.....	19
9. Zone 3 Quotation.....	22
10. Zone 3 Installation.....	24
11. Feedback Area	27
12. CFS Logos.....	28
13. CFS Information Brochure.....	28
14. Brochure within Installation.....	28
15. CFS Posters	29
16. CFS Facebook Page.....	30
17. Social Media Signage.....	31

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I proceeded in this way until I asked myself, Why not? The WHY NOT in the life of an artist is what decides everything; it is destiny. It is the sign that conveys to the inexperienced artist that the archetype of a new state of things is ready, that it has ripened, that it can be brought forth into the world.

—Yves Klein, 1959

This research explores graphic design as a mode of self-propelled investigation and inquiry into critical design practice. It emphasizes a design practice informed by Yves Klein, relational design, and immaterial design. The objective is to actualize a Center for Sensibility, an interactive installation that fosters a cross-disciplinary dialog about the nature of graphic design. The following research defines critical practice and reviews a variety of contemporary design practices that foreground critical methodologies.

CRITICAL PRACTICE

A critical practice within a discipline is the analytical means of self-reflection upon the discipline's processes and methodologies. It falls under the umbrella term of critical theory, a term defined as reflective assessment and critique (Oxford Dictionary, 2013). It explores disciplinary boundaries and provokes issues within them; more importantly, it exposes these issues to productive, critical discourse. Critical discourse moves towards ideological, intellectual questions and is beneficial for two reasons. First, it defines the discourse of the discipline (i.e. skill sets, knowledge, theories, etc.). Second, it paves way for proactive assessment and practices that push the discipline's boundaries by articulating questions and mounting self-reflective critique from within. This nurtures

disciplinary growth by opening avenues for working practitioners, pushing back against disciplinary ideologies, to blend theory into practice. Ramia Mazé asserts that, “Thinking practitioners and practicing theoreticians explore alternative relations between theory and practice” (Mazé, 2006). Architects such as Italy’s anti-designers Superstudio, a part of the radical architecture movement of the 1960s, used their voice as a critique against their own discipline. Superstudio developed a critical practice from within their practice (Mazé, 2006). Criticizing the consumerism of architecture, Adolfo Natalini argued, “If design is merely an inducement to consume . . . we must reject design; if architecture is merely the codifying of bourgeois model . . . then we must reject architecture” (Richter, 2007). Seen as visionary model, Superstudio expanded the premises through which architects practice.

Another salient example of aggressive critical practice is that of Yves Klein (1928–1962). A post-WWII painter, Klein aggressively reimagined what art could be. He questioned every premise of art “in order to overcome the predicament of the art” (Ottman, 2010). Klein sought a form of art-making that “[served] as stand-ins for what Klein sought to embrace: space, void, and freedom” (Vergne, 2010). Rejecting pictorial paintings, he pursued singular color, monochrome paintings. Tossing the paint brush, he used a roller to distance his hand from the canvas. Distancing himself entirely from the process, Klein replaced the roller with live models, whose bodies created the paintings. All of Klein’s methods of painting served to critique the very nature of painting. By refusing to accept what constituted painting, by aggressively redefining it through his own art-making, Klein transformed the discipline. I will revisit other aspects of Klein’s art practice later in this essay, as they relate to my investigation of immateriality.

In another example of critical practice, industrial design, a closer disciplinary neighbor to graphic design, employs critical practice to examine consumerism within product design. The 2007 Belgian exhibition *Designing Critical Practice* (Debatty, 2007) exhibited designers who question their discipline through the products they

make. One of the protagonists of this exhibition, Dunne and Raby design products that critique and reflect on society. Objects like *Evidence Dolls* investigate “how design can be used as a medium for public debate on the social, cultural and ethical impact of emerging technologies” (Dunne & Raby, 2013). Graphic design, as a discipline with its own methods and avenues for critique, can mount self-critical discussions that question the discipline’s boundaries. I am particularly interested in designers who, through open research processes, explore alternative modes of producing design, re-assessing and redefining what is typically referred to as design.

Within graphic design, a critical practice can acknowledge “that the powerful visual and materials means of design can be used to build a unique form of critique” (2006, p. 397). While this statement may appear to seek the freedom the art world has, this is not the case. Rather, by utilizing the inherent power of design—for example, its forms, typography, modes of distribution, or avenues of communication—designers can proactively use design’s own tools for re-evaluation. James Goggin acknowledges that graphic design should be confident as a discipline to fulfill social needs and express independent thought, re-evaluating existing design practices along the way. In the following paragraphs, I review a variety of invigorating methods that engage the discipline in self-critical ways.

By initiating their own projects, designers take a step towards critical practice. Andrew Blauvelt states that “graphic design must be seen as a discipline capable of generating meaning [from] its own resources without reliance on commissions” (2006, p. 10). He argues for an autonomous discipline engaged in critical self-reflection that seeks its own projects, initiates its own inquiries. This implies graphic design that does not depend on a client brief to exist, but emerges from its own context: “Such actions should demonstrate self-awareness and reflexivity, a capacity to” critique graphic design itself (2006, p. 10). Autonomy offers the possibility to work in productive disregard of established notions of what constitute a design practice.

One method of autonomous design includes conducting open-ended research where the goal is not a designed artifact but research, knowledge, or even more productive questions. Zak Kyes argues that “for most people design is only legible in the form of a singular, finished artifact” (2006, p. 341). Designed artifacts, however, limit inquiry and confine the potential for new knowledge. Through speculative briefs or self-initiated research, designers seek questions to explore instead of design objectives to achieve. Eschewing designed artifacts, designers pursue interesting explorations through design.

Using speculative briefs, Daniel van der Velden of Metahaven explores design “as a tool to inquire, to research, to anticipate. Also, design as an instrument to imagine” (Drenttel, 2010). Van der Velden implements research at the foundation of Metahaven’s practice that moves design beyond concerns of beauty and style towards responsibility: “One way [for design] to become more responsible is to start asking questions about this world and how it came about” (Ericson, 2006, p. 253). Through a research-based practice, he argues for new models of design that “not just contribute to the discussion about design... but influence how we talk about the things that design is about” (2006, p. 259).

By researching other creative domains, graphic design can examine and borrow from their contexts. James Goggin states that working outside its normal constraints “enables [designers] to infiltrate and use the system of other disciplines where desired and when relevant” (Kyes, 2009, p. 333). In *Forms of Inquiry: The Architecture of Critical Design*, Kyes explores the intersection of graphic design and architecture to demonstrate how graphic design productively borrows from the conceptual toolbox of architecture (2009, p. 323). The book showcases the productive inquiries that provide not a singular answer, but an array of captivating possibilities within this intersection (2009, p. 323). It reveals the ambiguous position design occupies, one that Stuart Bailey embraces as a beneficial meeting point between design and other disciplines (Bailey, 2012, p. 54). This grey area permits exploration, inquiry, and imagination. The engagement with outside disciplines demonstrates how “surprising and latent potentials” (2012) can be produced at

meaningful intersections of knowledge domains.

Critiquing existing modes of production is a proactive way to expand the discipline of graphic design. Designers often work within set frameworks that provide predetermined content from clients. However, many designers collect, curate, and produce their own content to design and distribute. They eschew the traditional service-oriented model of design by consolidating multiple production roles into one practice. W. A. Dwiggins—the designer who coined the term *graphic designer*—is a significant precedent for this. A book designer, typeface designer, author, and illustrator, Dwiggins streamlined these functions into a single practice. By consolidating pre- and post-production roles, designers “expand the categories of activities that might be said to constitute a graphic design practice” (Goggin, 2009, p. 339).

In conclusion, I chose these examples because they viably reimagine the workings of the design discipline. In their engaging and reflective methods, these precedents expose the rhetoric of critical design practice, demonstrating the innate capacity of design for productive reflection. It is the viable reimagination of design—through self-initiated projects, open-research processes, and modes of inquiry—that forms the crux of this project, and of my personal design practice. What follows next are applicable and fertile avenues through which to practice critical design.

Relational Design. Relational design seeks systems or environments to subvert, explore, or challenge. It is a method for creating form—i.e. design—however, it is one that re-examines the designer’s role in the creation of artifacts (Blauvelt, 2006). Blauvelt describes this process as “primarily concerned with design’s effects, extending beyond the realm of the design object. . .one which favors open-ended systems [process based design]” (2006). Relational design constructively appraises the context from which it functions; it directly manifests within a given context. Blauvelt notes relational design “is only complete within the confines of its immediate environment or context” (2006). The context is used as a productive limitation on the design situation that fosters a process-based, open-ended

design methodology. It uses this context to construct a design critique wherein, for the community involved, it is less about directly contributing content as it is being within the context.

Exploring context, Emily Pethink, of Casco Office for Art and Design and Theory, views the context of her gallery as an open framework for collaboration and production. Open-ended formats are the heart of the institution. Pethink states, “We [see everything] we do as part of the activity, be that the graphic design, or the design of the space, seeing the institution as something that could be experimented with as a whole, where all activities feed into one another” (Pethink, 2009). The context is always negotiating itself, in a productive flux. As a socially based format, relational design celebrates group dynamics to promote collective learning and doing. This collective approach benefits from a constant sharing of information and knowledge. Jerry Saltz comments about relational approaches stating, “The Sublime is us... [there is] a certain elementary frisson [being] generated from being around one another” (Currie, p. 361). It is up to the designer to effectively appraise and offer a unique design experience that engages group dynamics. The designer is an enabler of the experience. This reflection echoes Norman Potter’s definition of the designer as operating through and for people (Potter, 2002). For this project, the School of Art and Design provided a viable context for a similar institution based exploration.

Immaterial Design . Designers can also produce intangible, designed experiences as viable forms of design. Nick Currie observes a mode of contemporary practice that injects designed experiences into everyday contexts, “intervening in existing arrangements, framing everyday activities in ways that make us think of them, unexpectedly, as design” (2009, p. 357). In one salient example, graphic designers Europa demonstrated that immaterial experiences can influence a design practice through a workshop they titled Work for Work, which incubated relationships that “naturally contributed to the direction we have taken as [a studio practice]” (Goggin, 2006, p. 45). To emphasize, it is not about any designed object; only the experience one has.

As a process, immaterial design is comprised of non-aesthetic activities (i.e. non-object creating) such as curating, writing, editing, organizing, or planning. These “doing-nothing” activities, Goggin argues, are pivotal components of the design process (2006, p. 45). Immaterial design removes the design process from object making, where fixed designed artifacts offer set interpretations. Rather, immaterial design can productively subvert or reimagine situations that promote learning, sharing, and experimenting.

Returning to Yves Klein, he provides a remarkable precedent for immaterial processes. In his endeavor for the transformation of art, Klein focused on non-object art-making as a viable form of practice that critiqued the painting discipline. There are two particular examples. In his landmark exhibition *The Void*, Klein presented an empty gallery, void of all artifacts, as his work. It is a gesture, Phillippe Vergne notes, that “formulated an environment in which traces of his art, the vestiges of his own hand, would be superfluous” (2010). Another example, Klein’s *Zones of Immaterial Pictorial Sensibility* was a performance and ritual. In exchange for pure gold, Klein sold to a buyer empty space. Effectively, Klein sold an invisible work of art, exchanging the experience of looking at a painting with the experience of nothingness. Klein states, “Painting no longer appeared to me to be functionally related to the gaze” (1959). Turning to experiential activities and non-object making, Klein insisted upon an immaterial practice. He created objects only to sustain this position, declaring them to be only “the ashes of my own art,” (Klein, 1959). It is this side of Klein, his reach for the seemingly impossible task of utilizing nothingness as a legitimate form of creation, that interests me most.

This project uses Yves Klein as the basis for an investigation of immaterial sensibility to investigate potential parallels to a critical design practice. With his critical practice and stirring demonstrations of immateriality, Klein offers productive inquiry. Phillippe Vergne states that “Until we truly understand that the world of ideas can exist beyond material manifestations and traces, we, and art and social institutes, will remain incomplete” (Vergne, 2010). By immaterializing design, I will pursue a self-reflexive

practice to utilize relational design to reimagine the art institution of Texas State University—San Marcos. Vergne continues by stating that, “This misunderstanding might actually expose possibilities, for definitive comprehension often blinds one from truly seeing... [the] power of immaterial sensibility” (Vergne, 2010, p. 64). Under the umbrella of critical design practice, this project investigates the power of immaterial sensibility seeking not a definite outcome but a productive potential. An archetype for critical discourse is presented through Klein’s work, and it offers ripe potential for an investigation into the nature of graphic design.

CHAPTER II

CENTER FOR SENSIBILITY

Designing the Center for Sensibility (CFS), I explored a critical investigation of graphic design inspired by Yves Klein. I pursued new modes of thinking about the discipline through the lens of relational and immaterial design. This project manifested as an interactive installation within the Joann Cole Mitte building (JCM) that cultivated a community dialog to progress the project’s investigation. Reimagining the art institution of Texas State University—San Marcos, I also explored a criticality at the local level.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

As the basis of the project, I utilized Klein’s proposal for a center of sensibility. Klein expresses, “The mission of this center of sensibility is to reawaken the potential of creative imagination as forces of personal responsibility... It is possible to succeed in this through the immaterialization of sensibility” (1959, p. 101). This project sought to reawaken critical, imaginative faculties towards the graphic design discipline. The following premises posit my foundations of critical practice—

1. **Criticality permits productive inquiry.** I pursued criticality on two levels. First, to demonstrate that when design submits its usual processes to outside processes—such as those of relational and immaterial design—it can imagine new ways of working. Second, to demonstrate an accessible way to use design as a tool for constructive inquiry to mount a kind of criticism from within. Above all, to demonstrate that design can function beyond an object; it connect and inspire a community.

2. **Immaterial design.** The CFS sought immaterial design on two levels. First, it engaged a research-based process that collapsed the “doing nothing” facets of design. This yielded productive inquiries into Yves Klein, conceptual art, and relational design. The CFS critiqued the traditionally serviced-based model of design by revolving, instead, around a self-propelled investigation. Second, the CFS pursued immaterial design by creating a designed experience that manifested as a participatory installation. It pursued the creation of a designed experience that, unlike finished designed artifacts, permits participants to draw their own conclusions.
3. **Relational design supports immaterial design.** The CFS used relational design to productively appraise the context of JCM. Utilizing this context to mount a critique offered complementary avenues for the project’s investigation. This practice was made public through an installation within the building, a temporary subversion of a hallway within JCM. This hallway housed a productive workspace wherein participant’s contributed open-ended content.
4. **Reimagining the art institution.** Engaged in flexibility and change, production and exchange, the hallway provided a workspace for collective thinking and doing. I reimagined the art institution as an open-format that directly engaged content with audience, one that incited action and critical reflection. It developed collective thinking that manifested as the content within the installation. Flourishing from group dynamics, my investigation benefited from a constant re-articulation and negotiation of ideas.
5. **The CFS functioned co-dependently within JCM.** The CFS co-existed within the JCM context to demonstrate a different usage of design and to contrast modes of thinking about the discipline. It pursued the beneficial

dissolving of disciplinary boundaries to the benefit of the project and to the community. The installation permitted an active, community space that co-opted others of the same condition, people who question the nature of their discipline.

DESIGN METHODOLOGY AND OUTCOMES

Graphic design makes ideas visible through a visual language of forms. Experimental Jetset confirms that “forms are a way of thinking” (Jetset, 2006, p. 45). Hence, design itself is thought. The design methodologies bridge form-making to my research. I focused on the elements of graphic design—typography and color—that best lend to designing an experience. For my investigation, I reimagined a space within JCM by creating a large-scale typographic installation and zones for interactivity.

Typography. Typography informed the inquiry into immaterial design. As Klein utilized only color, so I utilized typography as the project’s primary aesthetic element. It manifested as a large-scale typographic installation where typography acted in an autonomous role that communicated the message of the project itself. I took inspiration from the conceptual artist like Lawrence Weiner who uses typography and language as central to a critical practice. Weiner states that with a language-based practice, typography affords “The work [to be] a specific object without the encumbrance of a specific form” (2012). In this vein, I used typography as an autonomous element in a typographic installation that related the investigation’s main concepts.

Taking cues from Klein’s oversized monochrome canvases, the installation experimented with scale shifts to investigate type as experience. At 25' x 12', the walls were filled by three quotations, some of them printed 1' in height. The scale shift, as Herb Lubalin would say, “Let type talk” (Shaughnessy, 2012). Commanding the visitor’s attention, the installation actively engaged the community (Figure 1). Encompassing the entire hallway, the typography was meant to be experienced. Dematerialized from its source and removed from the physical page from which it came, the quotations were the voice of the project.

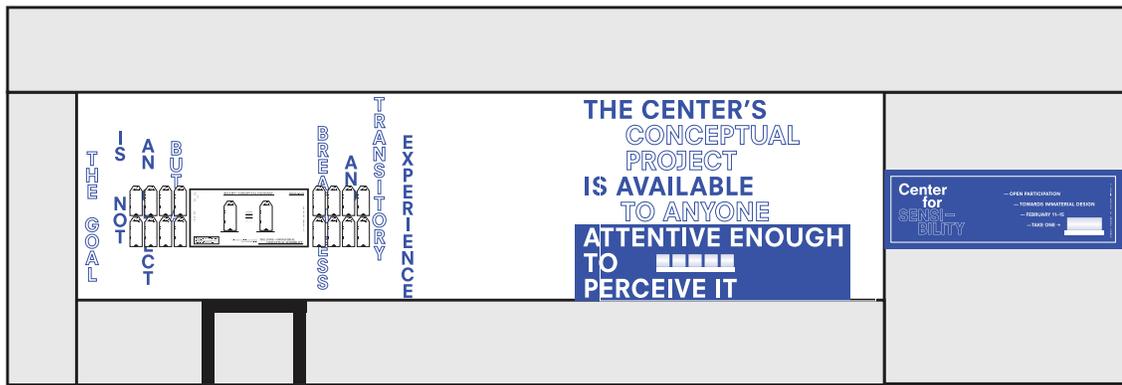


Figure 1. Digital mock-up of half the typographic installation.

Typeface selections privileged the meaning of the quotations over their design. The typeface should be a no-font font; in other words, the typeface needed to foreground the content. Geoff McFetridge states that, “Really the image is the writing...It’s words as graphics. [It’s not about] how I’m saying it” (2013). This *how* is the typeface decision, where the typeface recedes behind the message. A neutral, warm sans-serif, Neuzeit S was the primary typeface for the project and was used across all design materials, including the typographic installation. A secondary typeface, Versailles LT Std, was sparingly used in print and digital materials. Selected to contrast with Neuzeit, this sharp wedge serif lent a boisterous, Klein-inspired mood. Treatment of the type’s form included both a fill and outlines without fill, where the interior of the letter was empty of color. The typographic installation was produced using vinyl.

Color. Klein’s ultramarine monochrome paintings informed the color of the typographic installation. Color itself was Klein’s route to critical practice. Klaus Ottman states that, “For Klein, color not only plays an autonomous role of its own (rather than a simple complement of form), but is, above all, an instrument of revelation” (2009, p. 56). Parallel to this sentiment, the typography played an autonomous role within the hallway, distilling my investigation to its essence. Reflex Blue, a vivid blue, was used for the vinyl typography and for social media. Keeping with an immaterial, spare aesthetic, black and

white were secondary colors for all print based media.

Hallway. A vacant, underutilized hallway within JCM provided the context to launch my investigation. While a gallery or classroom would contain preconceived notions as to their usage and what belongs within them, this empty hallway was *carte blanche*, free to reimagine for my inquiry. The hallway is situated between a stairwell and doors leading outside the building. A metaphor for the investigation, this in-betweenness echoes James Goggin’s definition of design as a “distinctly in-between discipline” (Kyes, p.333), one that permitted me the agency for total reimagination of the space.

This hallway established the first steps to building relational design. Within this in-between space, my inquiry could be exposed to the JCM community and the variety of disciplines and practitioners within it. It provided a meeting ground for my inquiry to mingle with a community, and, further, to expose and test my ideas about design. As a communal space within an art building, it offered a cross-disciplinary environment conducive for production, engaging group dynamics to foster collective learning and doing.

To make it apparent that the hallway was transformed into an interactive installation, I designed vinyl decals, sized 72' x 18', for the entrance doors (Figure 2) and for the wall directly behind the doors (Figure 3).



Figure 2. Vinyl decal depicting hours of operation.



Figure 3. Vinyl decal with logo.

Zones. I divided the hallway, 25' long, into three distinct zones (Figure 4). These zones explored the installation's effects on participants; they provoked participants' ideas about design. Participants could complete each activity alone or collaborate with others. With minimal instructions, the zones encouraged individual reflection and engagement so that participants could respond according to their beliefs. A communal space where disciplines dissolved, it permitted a socially-based mode of generating content based on collective thinking and doing. This content was displayed within the zone (hung on the wall within two zones) to engender group discourse and celebrate group thinking.

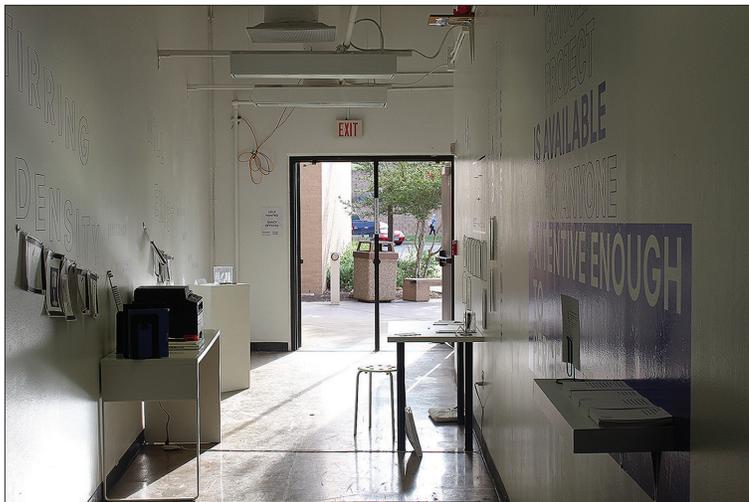


Figure 4. Installation with view of zones.

Zone 1

Zone 1 introduced the project’s investigation into relational and immaterial design. It displayed the quotation “The Center’s Conceptual Project is available to anyone attentive enough to perceive it” (Figure 5). This quotation came from a critical essay about Klein’s work and originally stated, “Klein’s conceptual project rather than his aesthetic objects are available to everyone attentive enough to perceive them” (Vergne, 2010). 7' wide by 8' tall, this was the first quotation a participant would see in the space.

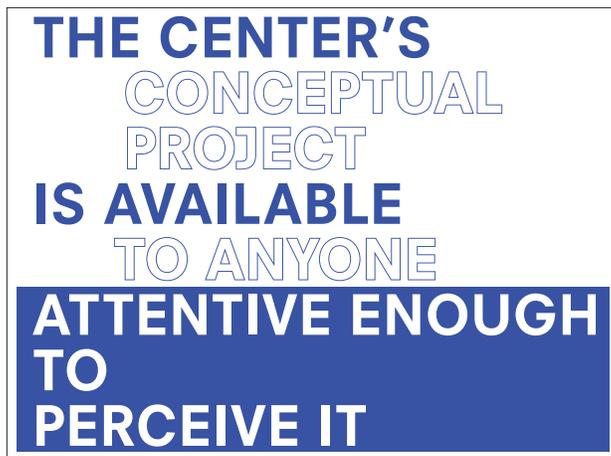


Figure 5. Zone 1 Quotation.

Through a simple activity, Zone 1 investigated the community’s general ideas about design. It featured four stacks of postcards displayed on an 8" floating shelf within quotation 1 (Figures 6a–c). Totalling 200 cards, each stack had 50 copies of each card. Inspired by my readings, I withdrew and altered quotations to reflect my own ideas about graphic design. In each quotation, I replaced the subject of the quote—like art, artist, or book—with the word design (Table 1). Each one defined design differently. Participants were instructed to take the one card that inspired them or reflected their own sentiments. At the end of the week, the quotation with the fewest cards remaining indicated to me the community’s preferred definition of design (Table 3 in Results, Ch. III).

Table 1. Zone 1 Quotations.

Zone 1 Quotations	
1	I say WHY NOT? The why not in the life of a designer decides everything. It is destiny. It conveys to the inexperienced designer that the archetype of a new state of things is ready, that is has ripened. That is can be brought forth into the world.
2	In design, both form and color are ideas, ideology, the infinite totality of readings that can be made from it. As Henri Focillon writes, forms mingle with life.
3	A good design is a good question. Not an answer, not about anyone or anything.
4	Style endows language with authenticity—it gives it an authentic voice, grounds it in life.



a



b



c

Figures 6a–c. Zone 1 installation.

Zone 2

Zone 2 hinted at the immaterial investigation of the project. It displayed the quotation “A stirring density, abstract yet real, will exist in places empty only in appearance” (Figure 7). Selected from Klein’s own writing, the original stated, “A sensuous density that is abstract yet real will exist and will live by and for itself in places that are empty only in appearance” (1959). This quotation defines the investigation to one that would utilize empty space to its benefit. As the largest quotation within the installation, 23’ wide by 8’ tall design filled one entire wall. The layout of the quotation sought to activate the wide, empty wall space.

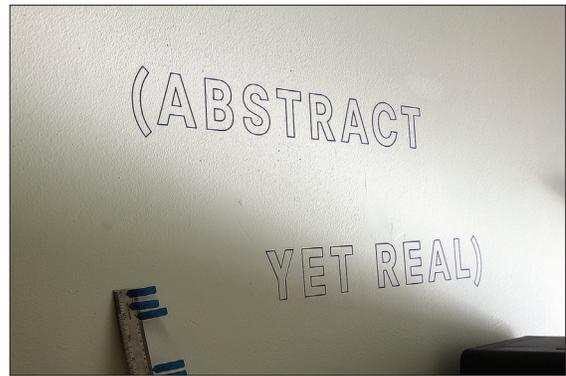


Figure 7. Zone 2 quotation.

Zone 2, placed in the middle of the quotation, encouraged self-authorship and invited open-ended responses (Figures 8a–q). A printer/copier enabled participants to easily participate. Its purpose was to allow my peers to define design in their own terms, just as I had done within Zone 1. Selecting either a book I supplied, or using their own smart phone, participants altered the meaning of any sentence they wanted in a way that offered a new definition to design. The participant placed a blue flag printed with the word “Design” to obscure the word to be replaced and made a copy on the printer. Binder clips and wire permitted participants to display their definition within the installation. Participants contributed 62 scans (see Table 4 in Results, Ch.III).



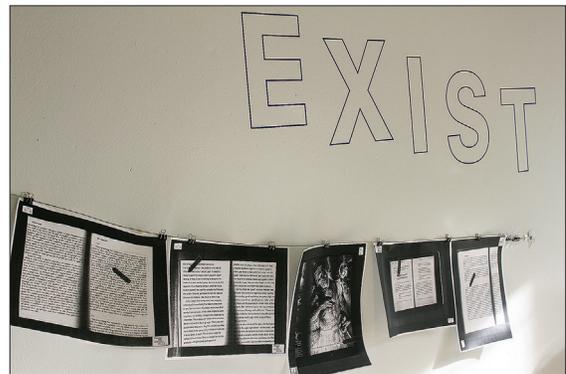
a



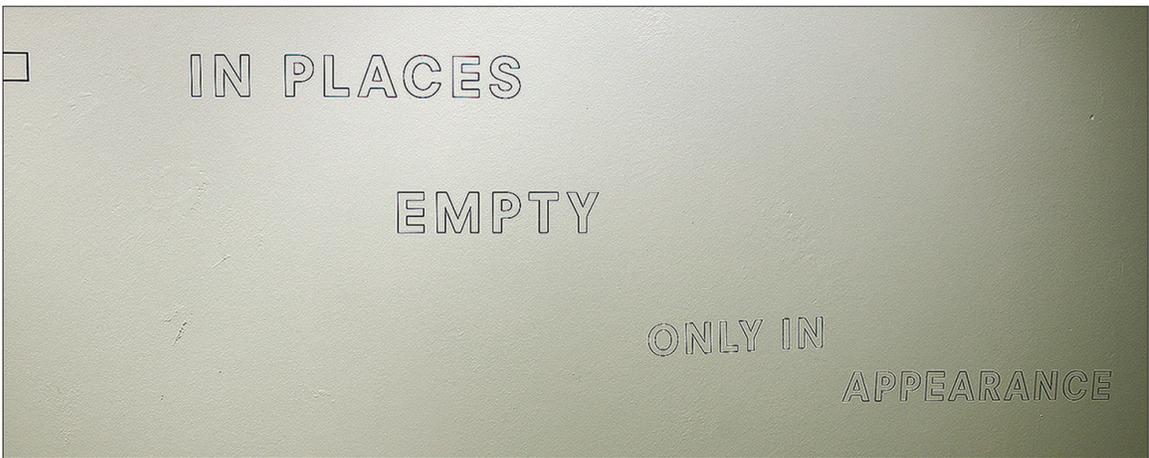
b



c



d



e

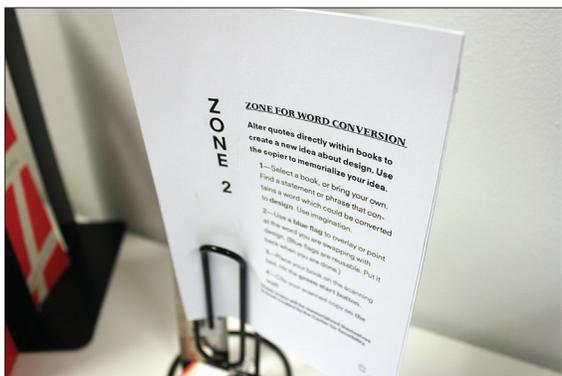
Figures 8a–e. Zone 2 installation.



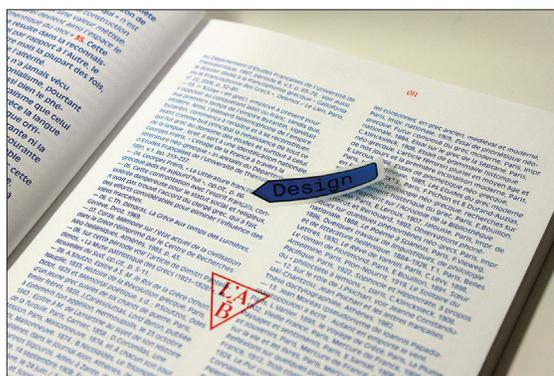
f



g



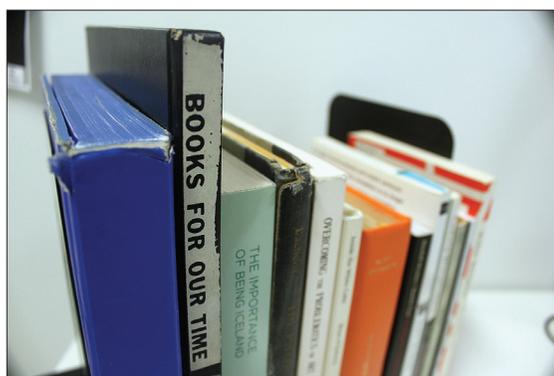
h



i



j



k

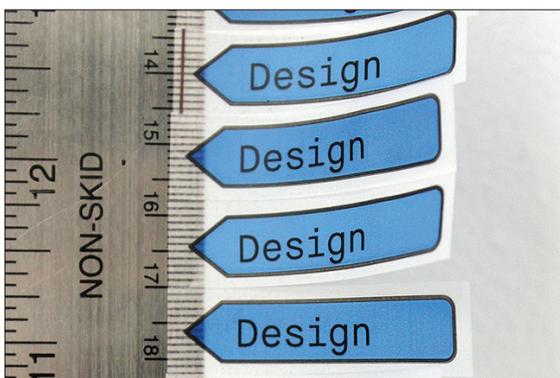
Figures 8f-k. Zone 2 installation.



l



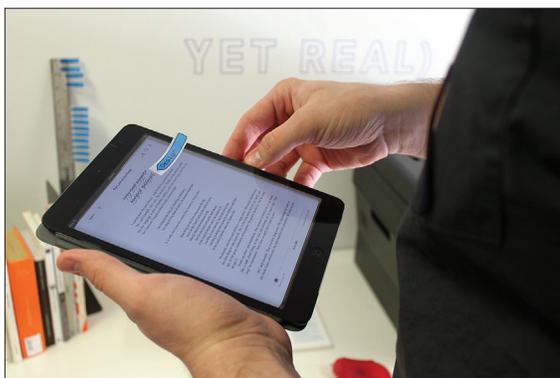
m



n



o



p



q

Figures 8l–q. Zone 2 installation.

Zone 3

Zone 3 directly stated my immaterial design investigation. The quotation read, “The goal is not an object but a breathless and transitory experience” (Figure 9). Selected from the same source as quotation 1, the original stated, “What if Klein envisioned an art-making in which the art lay not in an object, but in a breathless, transitory-experience—something that is always already gone?” (Vergne, 2010). This quotation defines the investigation as engagement with the experience of the hallway. 12' wide by 8' tall, the quotation’s layout was inspired by Klein’s *Leap into the Void* photograph, where Klein altered a photograph as to make himself appear to be floating in space. It utilized vertically stacked type, which appeared as if levitating.

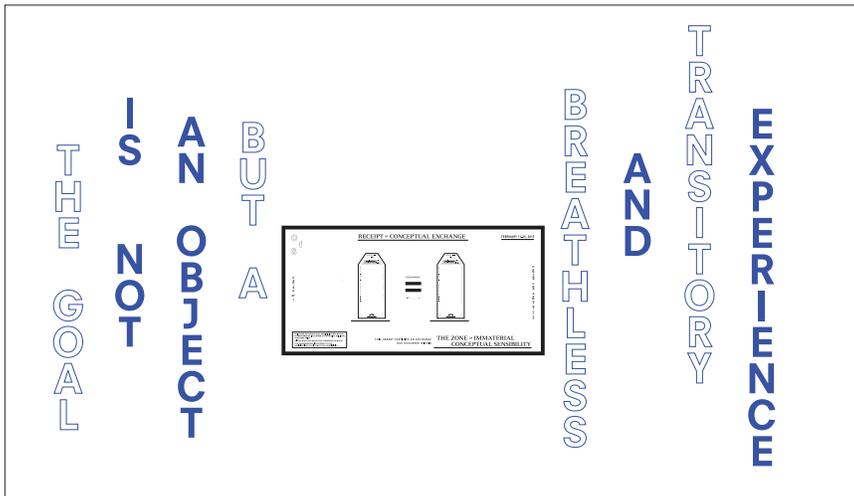


Figure 9. Zone 3 quotation.

Table 2. Zone 3 Questions.

Zone 3 Questions on Idea Cards	
1 What is your creative ideology?	9 Why collaborate?
2 What is truth?	10 A rule you find bogus.
3 Is this design?	11 Why create?
4 Those who refuse design accept to be de- signed.	12 To collaborate or to not collaborate?
5 Is design important? Why/Why not?	13 Why design?
6 What is style?	14 Design: Is it art, just design, or philosophy?
7 What is design?	15 Design: Investigation or Object?
8 What is bad design?	

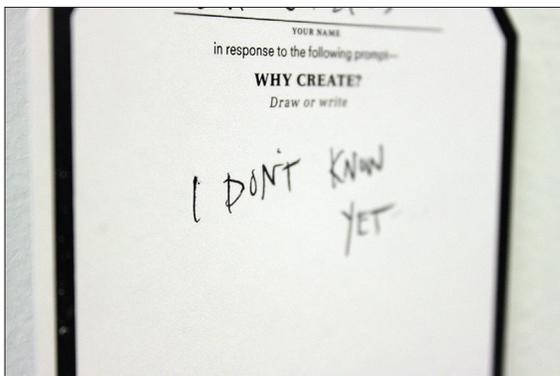
As the final activity, Zone 3 was the most open-ended zone and encouraged participants to trade, exchange, or steal ideas (Figures 10a–m). The purpose of this exchange was to highlight the immaterial nature of ideas, to provoke critical thought in response to the prompts, and to initiate moments of collaboration. Participants selected a blank card that featured one of fifteen questions (Table 2 and Table 5 in Results, Ch. III). Simple, but provocative, these questions pursued critical responses (Table 6 in Results, Ch. III). The purpose of the participant’s response was to chart a range of ideas about graphic design. After filling out the card, participants were required to steal someone else’s card, already filled out with an idea (Table 7 in Results, Ch. III). I photographed the exchange to memorialize the free exchange of ideas. These photos were available on Facebook.



a



b



c



e



d

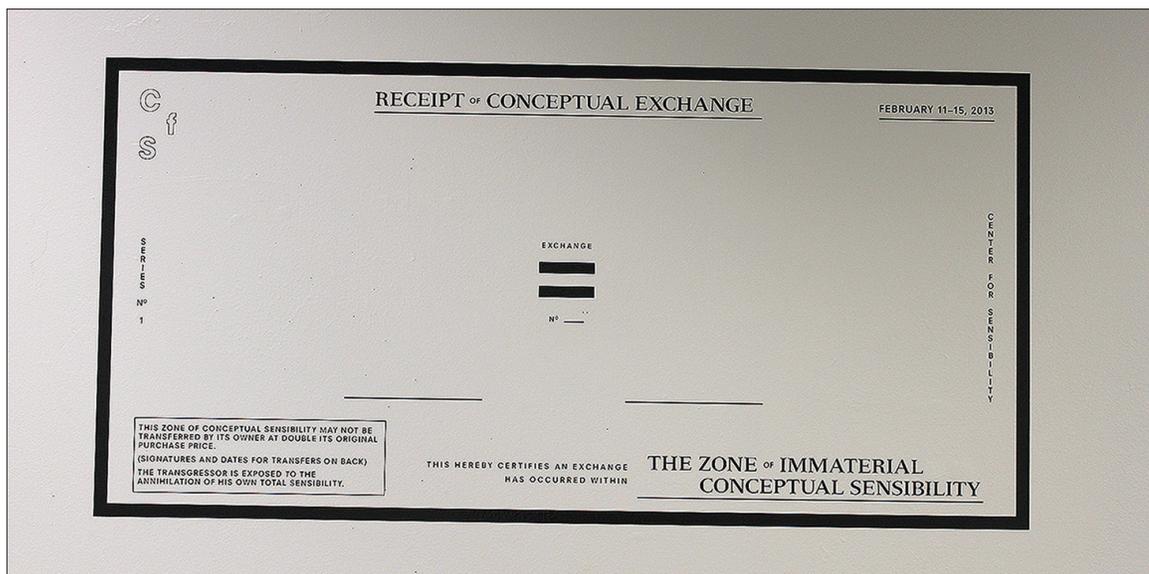
Figures 10a–e. Zone 3 installation.



f



g

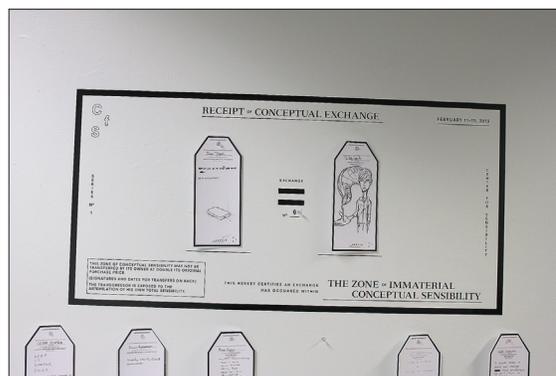


h

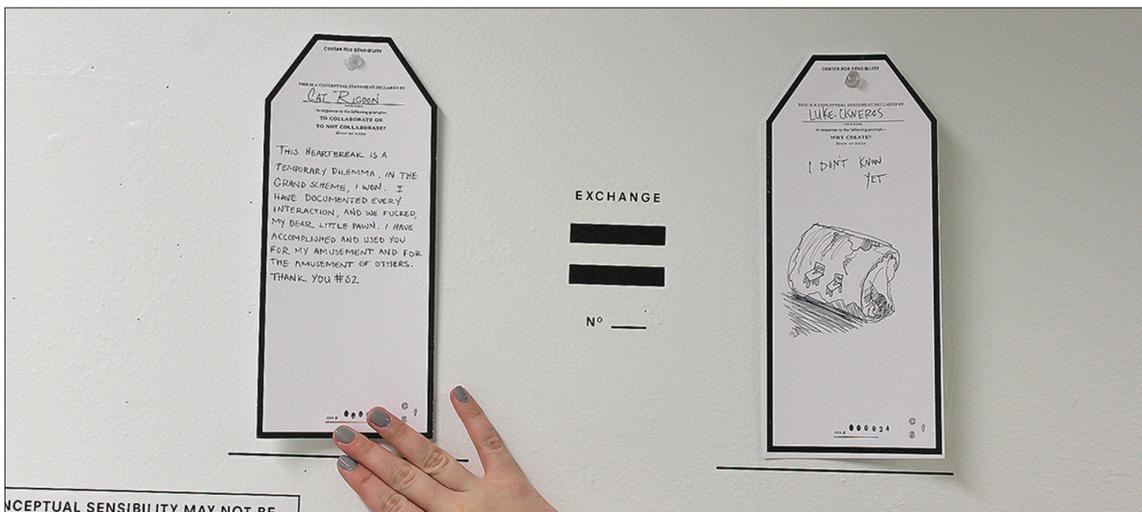
Figures 10f-h. Zone 3 installation.



i



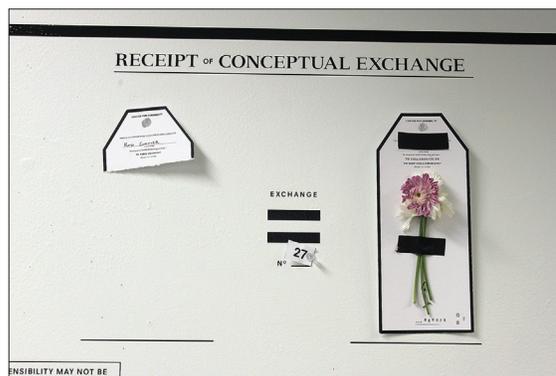
j



k



l



m

Figures 10i–m. Zone 3 installation.

Feedback

A feedback area (Figure 11) was placed at the end of the hall that asked participants to respond to a comment form perforated on a pamphlet available at the hallway entrance.



Figure 11. Feedback area.

Participants responded to two questions: “Define sensibility in your own words” and “Ask a question for the Center to pose.” The latter responses were cycled into prompts for Zone 3. The comments indicated participants’ major and allowed me to see what majors were most frequenting the installation (See Table 8 in Results, Ch. III).

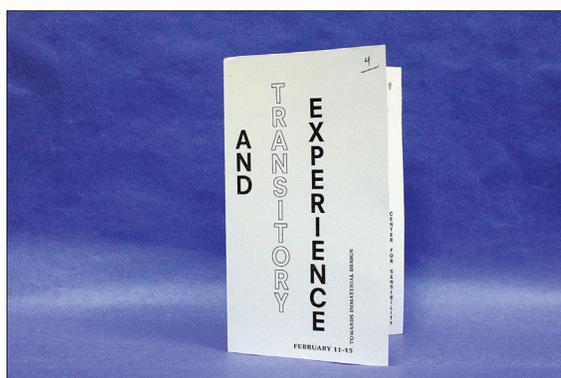
Support materials. Support materials were designed to spread awareness of the CFS project, its intent, and its time frame. This included collateral and print/social media.

Collateral

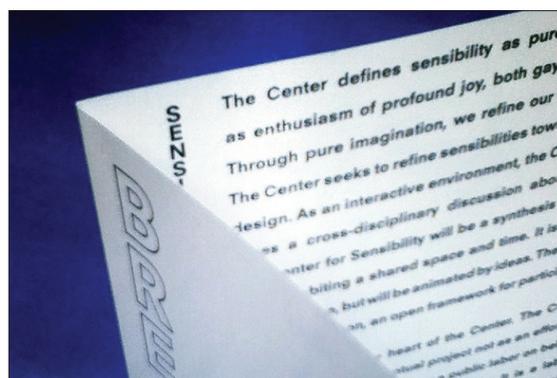
Collateral, or media that assist in communicating a product or service, included branding the CFS with two logos (Figure 12) and an informational brochure (Figures 13a–b and Figure 14).



Figure 12. CFS Logos.



a



b

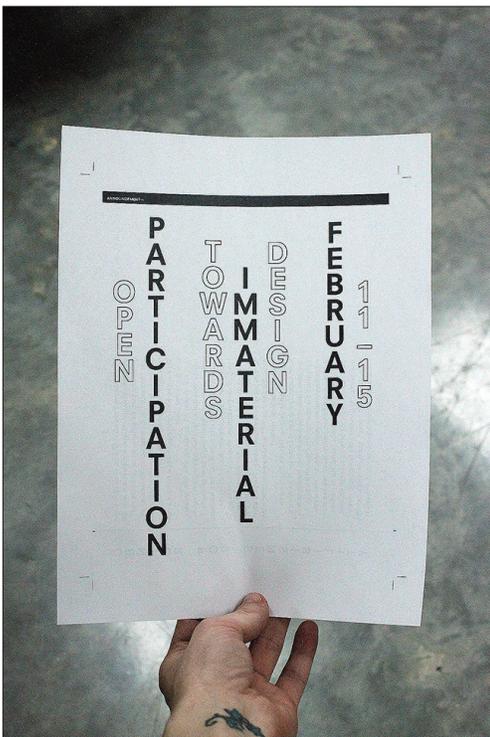
Figure 13a–b. CFS informational brochure.



Figure 14. Brochure within installation.

Print and social media

A tabloid poster (Figures 15a–b) conveyed the major intent of the CFS which was: *open participation, towards immaterial design*. These five words were used like a tag line to summarize the intent of the project. It further indicated the date, location, and Facebook URL. Fifty posters were promoted around JCM. For the second poster, again eschewing much detail, featured the stacked logo and a QR Code that took viewers directly to a mobile version of the CFS Facebook page.



a



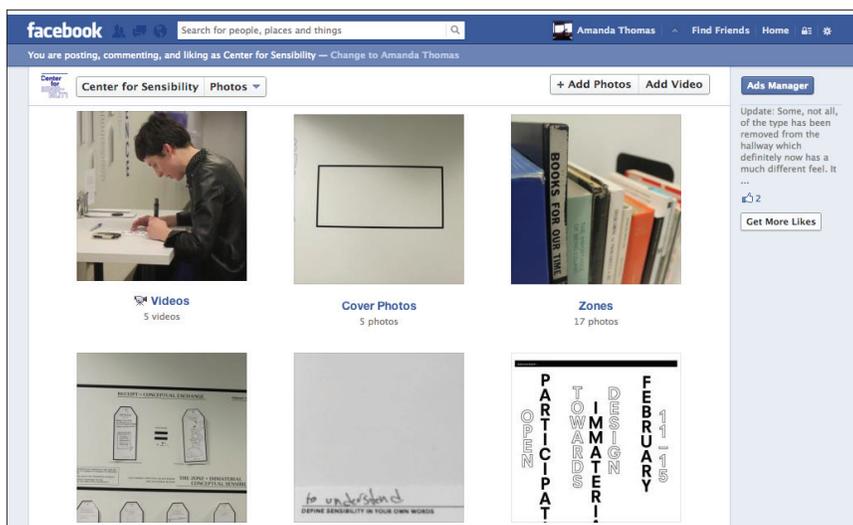
b

Figures 15a–b. CFS Posters.

Social media gave the CFS an online, immaterial life. The CFS Facebook page (Figures 16a–c) showcased photos and videos of the space, links to complementary content, and photographs of participant contributions. For example, those who exchanged ideas in Zone 3 could download the photo of the exchange on the Facebook. Twitter and Instagram also immaterialized the project. I created a *#centerforsensibility* hashtag and geolocation for the CFS on Instagram, allowing users to tag tweets or check-in when they visited the CFS. Signage in the hallway informed participants of the CFS social media (Figure 17).



a



Figures 16a–b. CFS Facebook page.

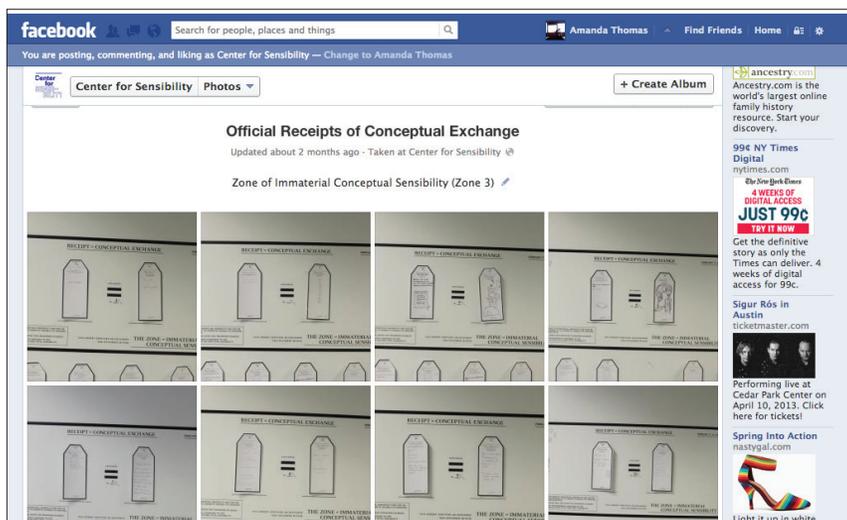


Figure 16c. CFS Facebook page.



Figure 17. Social media signage.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

From February 11–15 and February 18, the CFS operated for at least eight hours each day usually between 8am and 8pm. This optimized time for user participation and engagement. The highest foot traffic came directly before or after classes when students, usually no more than five at a time, trickled in and participated individually. Most would complete at least Zone 1, and some would complete all three zones (however, some were caught off guard by the installation or made no indication to participate). In addition, four separate classes visited the CFS and completed the zones as collaborative, small groups.

Three distinct zones for user participation, along with two areas for general feedback, enabled participation within the installation. The tables below summarize participants' contributions at each zone. Table 3 describes the postcards in Zone 1 and how many were taken. Of the 200 postcards printed only forty-two remained. Table 4 describes the content of the sixty-two different book scans in Zone 2. Table 5 describes the fifteen different questions used for the idea cards in Zone 3 and indicates how many of each question were filled out. The most popular questions were #6 'What is Style?,' filled out seventeen times, and #11 'Why Create?,' filled out eleven times. Table 6 indicates the exchanged ideas. Fifty exchanges were documented with over 84 individual responses. Table 7 describes all fifty exchanges. Table 8 recounts participants' feedback and their major.

Table 3*Zone 1: Postcard Results*

Card Number	Content	Number Taken
1	I say WHY NOT? The why not in the life of a designer is what decides everything. It is destiny. It is the sign that conveys to the inexperienced designer that the archetype of a new state of things is ready, that it has ripened—that it can be brought forth into the world.	40
2	A good design is a good question—Not an answer, not about anything or anyone.	48
3	In design both form and color are ideas, ideology, the infinite totality of readings that can be made from it. As Henri Focillon writes, forms mingle with life.	30
4	Style endows language and design with authenticity—it gives them an authentic voice, grounds them in life.	36
Total Taken		152/200

Table 4—Continued*Zone 2—Book Scans*

Scan Number	Content of Scan	Source	The word replaced with design
1	I slip Anny's letter into my design: it has given me all it could; I can't go back to the woman who took it in her hands, folded it, and put it in its envelope.	Jean-Paul Sartre, <i>Nausea</i>	wallet
2	Premium laser design cartridge	{ <i>packaging for ink toner</i> }	toner
3	American woman are good mothers, but they make poor designers.	Unknown Author, Margaret Mead quoted in <i>Quotes for Our Time</i>	{ <i>illegible</i> }
4	And he in turn makes it the design of those who are listening to his tale.	Walter Benjamin, The Storyteller in <i>Illuminations</i>	experience
5	All design is a 'critique of language' (though not in Mauthner's sense).	Ludwig Wittgenstein, <i>Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus</i>	philosophy
6	I'm just naturally respectful of design in tight-fitting sweaters.	Unknown Author, Jack Paar quoted in <i>Quotes for Our Time</i>	pretty girls
7	{ <i>illegible</i> }	Walter Benjamin, Artwork in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction in <i>Illuminations</i> { <i>found on the participant's smart phone</i> }	{ <i>illegible</i> }
8	As for myself, I wish to be happy; I don't even wish for more, I am so already, so long as design shall live as an artist in the domain of art, for sure.	Yves Klein, <i>The Writings of Yves Klein</i>	I

Table 4—Continued*Zone 2—Book Scans*

Scan Number	Content of Scan	Source	The word replaced with design
9	But it is perhaps the idea that design feeds itself like a living creative . . .	Gaston Bachelard, <i>Psychoanalysis of Fire</i>	fire
10	The man who damns money has obtained it dishonorably; the man who respects it has earned design.	Unknown Author, Ayn Rand quoted in <i>Quotes for Our Time</i>	it
11	For most companies, the problem with radical design is the “radical” part.	Marty Neumeier, <i>Zag</i>	differentiation
12	Any understanding of social and cultural change is impossible without a knowledge of the way media work as design.	Marshall McLuhan, <i>The Medium is the Massage</i>	environments
13	Because something is design, But you don’t know what it is, Do you, Mister Jones?	Marshall McLuhan, Bob Dylan quoted in <i>The Medium is the Massage</i>	happening
14	As a Design Thinketh	James Allen, <i>As a Man Thinketh</i>	Man
15	Though the consensus is the design event was the primary cause of dinosaurs extinction . . .	{unknown article on participant’s smart phone}	{illegible}
16	So you’ve got design, a trueline, and a tagline.	Marty Neumeier, <i>Zag</i>	a spine
17	This is the lesson which designs the attempt to evoke this image . . . And yet even design this statement is imprecise and far too crude.	Walter Benjamin, The Image of Proust in <i>Illuminations</i>	defies; even
18	Design for Klein is a “living being” and embodies the Johannine “World of Light.” Asked by Bernadette Allain if he considers design a design being or presence, he answers: Yes, just as color cannot exist without design, light cannot exist without color. We can say that color is the World of Design.	Klaus Ottoman, <i>Yves Klein by Himself</i>	Color; living; color; Light
19	Past is past, and if one designs what one meant to do and never did, is not to have thought to do enough?	Author, <i>The Important of Being Iceland</i>	remembers
20	Blood and Design in the Orient	Essad Bey, <i>Blood and Oil in the Orient</i>	Oil
21	You might take the card, slip it into your wallet with your other cards, then play the design against each other.	Marty Neumeier, <i>Zag</i>	stores
22	My intent with ZAG is to zoom in on design to reveal the system within the system.	Marty Neumeier, <i>Zag</i>	differentiation
23	All media design us over completely.	Marshall McLuhan, <i>The Medium is the Massage</i>	work

Table 4—Continued

Zone 2—Book Scans

Scan Number	Content of Scan	Source	The word replaced with design
24	Thus, to respect Klein's desire to design and immaterial sensibility, the only viable retrospective of the artist's work would be conceived as follows . . .	Yves Klein exhibition catalog, <i>With the Void, Full Powers</i>	enter space
25	There are children playing in the street who could solve some of my top problems in design, because they have modes of sensory perception that I lost long ago.	Marshall McLuhan, J. Robert Oppenheimer quoted in <i>The Medium is the Massage</i>	physics
26	. . . as we begin, so shall we design.	{unknown}	go
27	{design pointing to the entire paragraph} The poet, the artist, the sleuth—whoever sharpens our perception tends to be antisocial; rarely "well-adjusted," he cannot go along with currents and trends.	Marshall McLuhan, <i>The Medium is the Massage</i>	{nothing replaced}
28	Claes Oldenburg, Design Courtesy National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa	Brian O'Doherty, <i>Inside the White Cube</i>	{illegible}
29	{design pointing to the entire paragraph} Do you really think I would yes I would and I do love all you with all me. Do you really think I could, yes I could yes I would love all you with all me. Do you really think I should yes I should love all you with all me yes I should yes I could yes I would. Do you really think I do love all you with all me yes I do love all you with all me And bless my baby.	Gertrude Stein, poem {found on the participant's smart phone}	{nothing replaced}
30	With his writings and public talks, as with his design, Klein intended to promote his vision of a future of absolute artistic and social freedom . . .	Yves Klein exhibition catalog, <i>With the Void, Full Powers</i>	art
31	Gundam Design—Unit 1	Unknown {participant's own book}	Prototype
32	The Design Adventure	Yves Klein exhibition catalog, <i>With the Void, Full Powers</i>	Monochrome
33	. . . design that, like their environment, were subject to {illegible} these Expressionist/Dada conceits were buried . . .	Unknown {participant's own book}	value
34	Art is as unimportant as banking, unless it comes from a spirit in free play—then it really is design.	Unknown Author, Lawrence Durrell quoted in <i>Quotes for Our Time</i>	banking
35	One should not, however, see in this thesis a desire to limit poetic liberty, to impose a logic, or a reality (which is the same thing) on the poet's design.	Gaston Bachelard, <i>Psychoanalysis of Fire</i>	creation

Table 4—Continued*Zone 2—Book Scans*

Scan Number	Content of Scan	Source	The word replaced with design
36	Design is expanding the borders of our eating habits as well.	Marty Neumeier, <i>Zag</i>	Travel
37	The government solution to a problem is usually as bad as the design.	Unknown Author, Milton Friedman quoted in <i>Quotes for Our Time</i>	problem
38	The experience of arriving at a design event you've only read about—once you've select from an online calendar of them.	Author, <i>The Important of Being Iceland</i>	activist
39	But a psychoanalysis of objective knowledge must go beyond this. It must recognize that design is the first cause of the phenomenon.	Gaston Bachelard, <i>Psychoanalysis of Fire</i>	fire
40	The designs are precise and could be briefly interpreted—"I am a dog, a sneezer, a pamphlet."	Brian O'Doherty, <i>Inside the White Cube</i>	gestures
41	Now is the time to destroy those who destroy design.	Unknown {participant's own book}	{illegible}
42	You sat with a large piece of wood blocking your face, emphasizing your pants, which emphasized your design.	{participant's own writing, scanned on their smartphone}	crotch
43	For the sake of pure design he breaks through decayed barriers of his own language.	Walter Benjamin, The Task of the Translator in <i>Illuminations</i>	language
44	I'm just naturally respectful of design in tight-fitting sweaters.	Unknown Author, Jack Paar quoted in <i>Quotes for Our Time</i>	pretty girls
45	The design of the designer's personality on the book is acceptable in the same degree as is the personality itself.	Author, <i>Books of Our Time</i>	stamp
46	With the design of the confining rectangle, the integration of the photographic material in the title spread is complete.	Author, <i>Books of Our Time</i>	elimination
47	I remember pitching a tent in the design; I remember burning sticks and thinking this is how I would live forever.	{participant's own writing}	woods
48	Duchamp is fond of design.	Brian O'Doherty, <i>Inside the White Cube</i>	{illegible}
49	A group of children are design ball in front of the church.	George Perec, <i>An Attempt at Exhausting a Place in Paris</i>	playing
50	Everyone carries around his own design.	Unknown Author, Richard Pryor quoted in <i>Quotes for Our Time</i>	monsters
51	The husband designs his train of thought.	Jean-Paul Sartre, <i>Nausea</i>	continues

Table 4—Continued

Zone 2—Book Scans

Scan Number	Content of Scan	Source	The word replaced with design
52	The possibility of all imagery, of all our pictorial modes of expression, is contained in the logic of design.	Ludwig Wittgenstein, <i>Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus</i>	depiction
53	A design toward practical interests is characteristic of many born storytellers.	Walter Benjamin, <i>The Storyteller in Illuminations</i>	orientation
54	<i>{design pointing to the entire paragraph}</i> There is nothing that commends a story to memory more effectively than that chaste compactness which precludes psychological analysis. And the more natural the process by which the storyteller forgoes psychological shading, the greater becomes the story's claim to a place in the memory of the listener, the more completely is it integrated into his own experience, the greater will be his inclination to repeat it to someone else someday, sooner or later.	Walter Benjamin, <i>The Storyteller in Illuminations</i>	<i>{nothing replaced}</i>
55	[Tactile Design]	Yves Klein exhibition catalog, <i>With the Void, Full Powers</i>	Sculpture
56	I am only a public design who has understood his time.	Unknown Author, Pablo Picasso quoted in <i>Quotes for Our Time</i>	entertainer
57	Laser Design	<i>{packaging for ink toner}</i>	Toner
58	<i>{design pointing to an entire paragraph of unintelligible elfish}</i>	J.R.R. Tolkien, <i>The Lord of the Rings</i> <i>{found on participant's tablet}</i>	<i>{unknown}</i>
59	<i>{design pointing to a large capital H}</i>	<i>{participant's own book about sign painting}</i>	<i>{nothing replaced}</i>
60	The sort of design, for example, which could never happen, an adventure. It would have to be beautiful and hard as steel and make people ashamed of their existence.	Jean-Paul Sartre, <i>Nausea</i>	story
61	To fear design is to fear life, and those who fear life are already three parts dead.	Unknown Author, Bertrand Russell quoted in <i>Quotes for Our Time</i>	love
62	The object is to give the design greater life and power by carving its surface; whatever I carve I compare it with an uncarved print and ask myself, "Which has more beauty, more strength, more depth, more magnitude, more movement, and more tranquility?"	Klaus Ottoman, Shiko Munakata quoted in <i>Yves Klein by Himself</i>	print

Table 5*Zone 3: Questions Filled Out*

Question	Number Filled Out
1 What is your creative ideology?	4
2 What is truth?	10
3 Is this design?	1
4 Those who refuse design accept to be designed.	1
5 Is design important? Why/Why not?	1
6 What is style?	17
7 What is design?	12
8 What is bad design?	2
9 Why collaborate?	3
10 A rule you find bogus.	3
11 Why create?	11
12 To collaborate or to not collaborate?	5
13 Why design?	6
14 Design: Is it art, just design, or philosophy?	3
15 Design: Investigation or Object?	2
Total Cards Filled Out 81	

Table 6*Zone 3: Exchanged Ideas*

Exchange	Idea Proposed	Idea Replaced	Exchange	Idea Proposed	Idea Replaced
1	16	2	26	45	30
2	28	16	27	54	20
3	30	11	28	65	7
4	38	18	29	60	65
5	4	25	30	31	90
6	14	19	31	79	45
7	23	15	32	102	79
8	21	8	33	x	36
9	34	13	34	59	102
10	24	32	35	103	61
11	26	34	36	88	106
12	20	14	37	101	83
13	31	21	38	104	80
14	33	35	39	119	104
15	37	38	40	116	53
16	30	28	41	112	88
17	49	22	42	108	105
18	42	30	43	109	116
19	48	9	44	95	69
20	52	39	45	118	121
21	50	37	46	98	118
22	32	53	47	107	51
23	41	46	48	93	87
24	51	48	49	114	110
25	43	26	50	120	93

Table 7*Zone 3: Selection of Exchanges (Content)*

Idea #	Question #	Description of idea
1	1	{scribbles, completely incoherent}
2	6	{handwritten in crisp, angular letters} Style becomes one's DNA. It follows one with the way they style their morning breakfast to the way one arranges their nightstand after the night's reading. {space} [DO NOT STEAL THIS, BITCHES!] {space} Don't let stealing be your style.
4	6	{handwritten sideways, design is in bubble letters and the rest is normal handwriting} Design is about simplicity and omission.
8	6	{handwritten in blue pen, centered on the card with a bullet between lines} Style & content. Style vs. Content. Style emerges from content. Style embodies content. Can style itself be content? Can you ever separate content completely from style?
11	1	{handwritten in lowercase, curved letters} Unmake
13	1	{handwritten in pen, one word per line until the second sentence} Keep it simple silly. Don't over think it. Your job is to solve the problem, not make more of them.
15	11	{handwritten in pen, each line is bulleted} Why not? Send a message. Give a voice. Share the love. Bring peace. Make war or love. BUT MOST OF ALL: put your ideas into the world.
16	6	{drawing of cartoon character} Meet the old boss, Same as the old boss...
17	6	{drawing of a question mark with a sombrero hat and a heeled woman's shoe}
18	1	{handwritten in pen} It's all about sex and death.
19	1	{an illustration in pen of a closed book with a cigarette book marker} Stick with pictures.
21	6	{handwritten in pen, great spacing between lines} What is 'content'? Style is MEANING.
23	11	{handwritten in pen, fills the entire card} To give someone else a glimpse of the beauty that I see. To let others see a different perspective and also to allow what is inside me to be shared with the world.
25	11	{handwritten in Sharpie, beginning at the top} Because the other occupations on my list as a second grader seem too far-fetched. {drawing of a list with various occupations listed} What I want to be when I grow up: 1. U.S. Women's soccer player 2. SNL Character {circled} 3. Artist who owns a dog
27	-	<i>{handwritten starting at the top} To inspire others to create and change their environment. We don't have to be stuck!</i>
30	12	{handwritten, beginning at the top} To quote or not to quote?
33	7	{handwritten in pen, wide lettering, with one word per line} Creation, Imagination, Expression, Sanity {drawing of a shooting star}
34	12	{handwritten in pen, beginning at the top} You must learn typography before you can practice it well. Practice does make perfect after all.
38	7	{handwritten in vertical letters} EVERYTHING

Table 7–Continued*Zone 3: Selection of Exchanges (Content)*

Idea #	Question #	Description of idea
39	6	{the participant dictated over the phone the idea, plus that I should write with an extra bold sharpie with my left hand beginning each letterform from its right side} Flip in flip out on a well waxed curve
42	7	{handwritten, beginning at the top, in blue Sharpie} Design is a necessity in life, Design is structure + style. We create design an design is found in our wonderful nature. Even we are made up of design. {drawing of a small face}
43	6	{handwritten, beginning at the top, in pen} Something that speaks to the soul and influences creativity. Something you can't stop looking at.
47	6	{drawing of a boom box, drawing of a walkman, drawing of a compact disc, drawing of an iPod} NAH
57	5	{two thin gashes made into the card}
59	6	{written in blue Sharpie, beginning at top} Created by an individual to reflect themselves. Occasionally used by others who have none.
77	2	{written in all caps, begining 2-inches from the top, one word perline} INNER TRUTH
95	4	{written in pen, 2-inches from top} "We are now in the realm of visual philosophy" —B.P.
99	4	{written in black Sharpie, large letters} The ignorant are easily controlled.
100	4	{written in blue Sharpie} Some people prefer to be part of the norm, finding comfort in following the crowd.
102	9	{thin, scraggly letters written in pen} To open doors of creativity and possibility that a single mind cannot achieve alone.
103	6	{drawing of a human male face with a beard and a baseball cap worn backwards with an arrow pointing to it} STYLE
105	3	{written in thin, small letters starting at top} Is what design? This card? This space? The work itself? The pen I am using? Everything stands on the line between art and design. It's up to the viewer to push it to either side of that line.
107	3	{holes punched out all over the card, 8 different fold lines, blue Sharpie in the remaining white space}
113	7	{written in black Sharpie, one word per line} My heart {drawing of a heart}
114	13	{written in small uppercase letters, beginning at top} TO LEND PURPOSE TO EVERYDAY OBJECTS WHICH WOULD BE OVERLOOKED AND UNDER ENJOYED.
118	7	{written in medium letters, messy} The way you interpret the world or things. Put your own spin into items. Don't worry about rules or the "norm". Do what your heart desires!
119	2	{written in pen, much space between lines} Unknowingly making kown the unknown unknowns {drawing of a flashlight at bottom of card, shining towards writing}
120	6	{written in blue Sharpie, large letters} Yes, we have no MAYBE bananas {drawing of an apple with an asterisk at the bottom}

Table 8*Feedback*

Feedback #	Definition of Sensibility	Question to propose to the Center	Participant's Major
1	Having an idea of who you are	Do you have to be an "artist" to design, or vice versa?	ComDes
2	Making sense of one's culture and assimilating to that.	What would Yves Klein have to say about the important of space (architectural)?	Art history
3	Application of the faculties of perception	What will the universal symbol for a person who is both male and female look like?	Drawing
4	Solving a puzzle one piece at a time	How many ticks does it take to get to the center of design?	ComDes
5	A little voice that must be heard	When is design born?	Philosophy
6	Situationally applied logic	A display using shadows, motion, and light.	ComDes
7	Purity	How does design feel?	ComDes
8	A thought process involving an apt idea for the question at hand	When does straying from the "crowd" make you part of it?	ComDes
9	To understand	Find new color / find new meaning / find new #life	ComDes
10	An understanding and comfort with the concept of "enough"	—	ComDes
11	A simple idea	Where do you think about design?	ComDes
12	Thinking before so that you don't have to think after	What do we think this will accomplish?	ComDes
13	Intuition	When do/should we ignore sensibility?	ComDes
14	Pragmatism and love	—	ComDes
15	Ignorance.	How to make ignorance work?	Sculpture
16	Observing the world.	How can you create a new design?	Photography

Table 8—Continued*Feedback*

Feedback #	Definition of Sensibility	Question to propose to the Center	Participant's Major
17	Negotiation.	Where is the human?	ComDes
18	Smart.	—	Photography
19	Ease of understanding and the ability to comprehend the message	Is this design?	ComDes
20	To yearn to know truths—even contradictory ones.	What is truth?	ComDes
21	Opinions informed by tastes, experiences, and environments.	What is bad design?	ComDes
22	The ability to recognize what isn't recognizable.	What existence is truly empty?	Advertising
23	Pragmatism, a pragmatic approach that takes context into account.	Can a design be successful independent of context?	ComDes
24	An individual way of presenting what you think is important.	Is it possible to live and speak while meaning two things?	Painting
25	Sensibility is a responsible and didactic intake and assessment of events/reality/consequence	Are you ready to accept the consequence of your idea?	ComDes
26	Functional ideas.	Why did you decide to be creative instead of any other occupation?	ComDes
27	A Jane Austen demeanor, in which females accept their actions and emotions	Why do you even write?	Painting
28	The ability to think quickly on your feet.	A rule you find bogus.	ComDes
29	Stepping on toes in a way people don't mind.	What isn't design?	ComDes
30	Smart thinking. Reasonable	Why not	ComDes
31	Sensibility is a vision/life without regrets.	What is the intended outcome for this project?	ComDes
31	Senseless!	Is design art? Is art design? Do you design art?	ComDes

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Reiterating Daniel van der Velden, design can “be a tool to inquire, to anticipate. A tool to imagine” (2010). Autonomously, design can posit productive questions that self-reflexively engage with design’s methods or modes of production. Inquiry can be a way of testing design, of exposing it to new ways of working within other creative domains. To me this demonstrates the wonderful malleability of design’s practice that indicates not so much a gray area or an ambiguous position, as my research noted, but, instead, an inherent quality of design. Perhaps design itself, and its practice, is relational. Design, as a practice I explored within this project, productively accommodates new situations: by critiquing its own context and boundaries, by thriving from open-ended processes, and by inviting other disciplines and people into the design process. Design nimbly reacts to design problems or situations. This is, perhaps, why design so productively lends itself to van der Velden’s notion of inquiry, anticipation, and reimagination.

Yves Klein’s practice provided productive parallels to my investigation. It informed a theoretical approach and incited its critical approach. Klein’s color-only approach inspired the project’s language based approach, one that I used to both clarify the project and provoke wonder. These methods are a launching point for future investigations, echoing Phillippe Vergne’s sentiments that a misunderstanding of immaterial sensibility might provide possibilities (2010). In regards to immaterial design as experience, I utilized it as a way to share ideas and construct a dialog about graphic design. It permitted a way to share knowledge and experiences within a communal space, one that temporarily, yet productively, dissolved the disciplinary boundaries of JCM. Immaterial and relational

design go hand in hand: immaterial design eschews objective interpretation in favor of an experience that engenders subjective wonder. Like interpretations of Klein's paintings, immaterial design experiences are open-ended, inciting subjective interpretation. Immaterial design encourages thought, and provokes participants to be thoughtful. What better byproduct for design to encourage?

The contributions from the interactive installation visibly demonstrated the effects of immaterial and relational design. With over 200 unique contributions, the JCM community actively engaged with my investigation. And, judging by the wide variety of responses, the activities permitted open-ended and subjective interpretation. I was pleased to see many engaging, even poetic definitions of design. Further, it was a pleasure to see participants engaging with the contributions left by others, echoing Jerry Saltz when he stated that, "The sublime is us ... people get a bigger Sublime jolt from [being] together" (Currie, 2006). The interactivity shows that through collective learning and open-ended frameworks, productive dialogs can occur. It validates both immaterial and relational design as meaningful ways to generate form and content.

This project was the perfect inquiry into both the wider design discipline and my own personal practice. It manifested Ramia Mazé's notions of a "thinking practitioner and practicing theoretician that explores alternative relations between theory and practice" (2006). From this project, I discovered a method of using design to engage with others in a meaningful dialog that both shares knowledge and engages thought. My previous attempts at engagement were one-sided where I created a situation to talk *at* others. Through relational design, this project was founded on two-way communication: I designed a way to talk *with* others. As Norman Potter said, the role of the designer is to "operate through and for other people" (2002). Perhaps it is my advertising background, or maybe an appreciation of participatory art, that leads me to use design as a vehicle to directly engage with others. It is an active idea of design, using design as a verb, not as a static noun. James Goggin acknowledges this distinction in the title of his design studio

Practise, the verb, versus *practice*, the noun (2011). By making this distinction, I hope to manifest a design methodology that can adapt to situations, activate dialogs, ask new questions. In other words: relational design.

For future research, I will design a newspaper and a website to bundle the creative contributions from the interactive installation. The intent of these projects is to give back the contributions participants gave to me: to showcase the gamut of their imaginative and stirring responses. By continuing the investigation, I hope to continue the project's dialog, provoking ideas and questioning the nature of graphic design. Further, I also believe the Center for Sensibility to be a viable framework that could easily transition to another context. I do not think it has to be limited to the context of JCM or Texas State alone. Taking the CFS elsewhere, I would intend to pursue critical dialog about graphic design and continue the investigation of Yves Klein. Perhaps the CFS could take as its concern other disciplines outside of graphic design. Thus, above all: to continue the practice of productive and creative inquiry within a critical practice.

REFERENCES

- Bailey, S. (2011). Practice from everyday life: Defining graphic design's expansive scope by its quotidian activities in *Graphic design: Now in production* (pp.54–57). Minneapolis: Walker Art Center.
- Blauvelt, A. (2003). Towards critical autonomy, or, can graphic design save itself? In *Looking closer 5: Critical writings on graphic design* (pp. 8-11). New York: Allworth Press.
- Cabianca, D. (2012). Graphic design is dead, long live graphic design. Retrieved January 12, 2013 from <http://observatory.designobserver.com/feature/graphic-design-is-dead-long-live-graphic-design/32378/>
- Critical theory [Def. 1]. (n.d.). Oxford Dictionary Online. In Oxford Dictionary. Retrieved April 4, 2013, from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/citation>
- Currie, N. (2009). Nick currie: flashbacks of inquiry in *The reader—Iaspis forum on design and critical practice* (pp. 353–378). Berlin: Sternberg Press.
- Debatty, R. (2007). Designing critical design. Retrieved April 2, 2013, from <http://we-make-money-not-art.com/archives/2007/03/designing-criti.php#.UV92WKt34fJ>
- Drenttel, W. (2010). A conversation with Daniel van der Velden of Metahaven. Retrieved January 10, 2013, from <http://observatory.designobserver.com/feature/a-conversation-with-daniel-van-der-velden-of-metahaven/23688/>

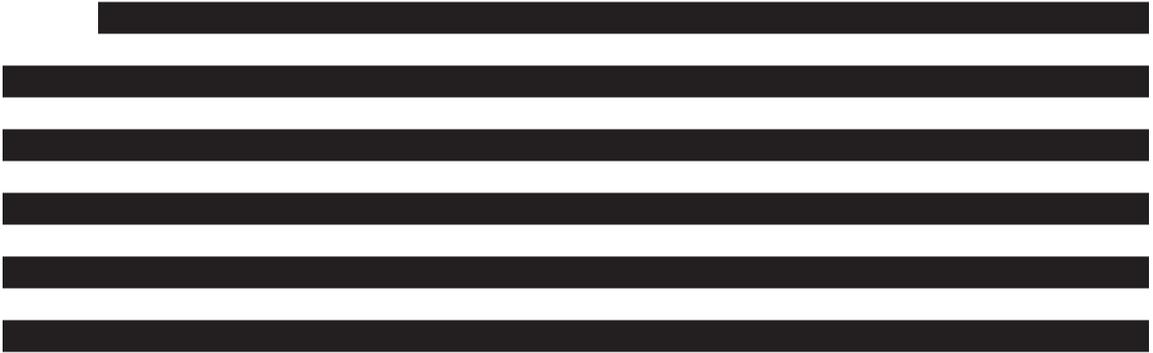
- Dunne, A., Raby, F. (2005). Evidence dolls. Retrieved April 4, 2013, from <http://www.dunneandraby.co.uk/content/projects/69/0>
- Ericson, M. (2009). Metahaven: on design and research in *the reader—Iaspis forum on design and critical practice* (pp.239–264). Berlin: Sternberg Press.
- Goggin, J. (2009). Practise and europa in *The reader—Iaspis forum on design and critical practice* (pp. 13–64). Berlin: Sternberg Press.
- Goggin, J. (2011). James goggin, insights 2011 design lecture series. Retrieved March 15, 2013, from <http://www.walkerart.org/channel/2011/james-goggin-museum-of-contemporary-art-chica>
- Klein, Y. (1959). Overcoming the problematics of art: The writings of Yves Klein. Putnam: Spring Publications.
- Kyes, Z. (2009). Zak kyes and mark owens in forms of agency in *The reader—Iaspis forum on design and critical practice* (pp. 315–352). Berlin: Sternberg Press.
- McFetridge, G. (2013). Geoff mcfetridge: insights 2013 design lecture. Retrieved March, 2013 from <http://www.walkerart.org/channel/2013/geoff-mcfetridge-champion-studio-los-angeles>
- Ottmann, K. (2010). Yves Klein by himself. Paris: Éditions Dilecta.
- Pethick, E. (2009). Emily pethick on the institution as a site for artistic collaboration and production in *The reader—Iaspis forum on design and critical practice* (pp. 295–314). Berlin: Sternberg Press.
- Potter, N. (2002). What is a designer: things, places, messages. London: Hyphen Press.
- Richter, M. (2007). Superstudio biography. Retrieved April 7, 2013, from <http://www.megastructure-reloaded.org/superstudio/>

Shaughnessy, A. (2012). *Herb Lubalin: American graphic designer 1918–1981*. London: Unit Editions.

Vergne, P. (2010). Earth, wind, and fire or to overcome the paradox of Yves Klein, the molecular child who wrote to Fidel Castro on his way to Disneyland. In *With the void, full powers* (pp. 44-64). Minneapolis: Walker Art Center.

Weiner, L. (2012). Conversations with Lawrence Weiner in *Bright!* (pp. 50–55). Cologne: DAAB Media GMBH.

VITA



Permanent email address:

parachoute@gmail.com

This thesis was typeset by Amanda Thomas.