

graphic design canon. Can you tell me more about that experience. What was it like then and how you think about it now?

I think it's a real problem with Occasional Papers. We are doing too many books about older white men and we are really worried about it, but it's kind of a trap that you keep falling into.

How are you encountering your subjects? I am curious how the trap happens.

The books are primarily about loner artists or designers that at one point were well known and then forgotten. You bump into people who used to know them and start getting a story. Whereas women of the same time are hidden even further and you have to actively dig for them. A few of our books have been edited by women.¹ We are very conscious of it. And that is definitely Antony's [Antony Hudek, co-founder of Occasional Papers] concern as well . I really want to do a Beatrice Ward book.

Can you talk about what you said in the lecture about focusing on feminism in your publishing and representing those who fall out of the design industry's central focus? There are a couple of books I know of that feature women designers. It is important that these are made but it is problematic that they exist as a capsule that says "oh don't forget the women, here they are over here", vs. being a part of the bigger picture all of the time.

Yes, definitely, I agree because then you are primarily classified as "the woman". I was once on the cover of a magazine in England that did a graphic series of around ten profiles and I was at a related event and someone said, "I hear Sara is going to be on the next cover" and another said "oh yes, I heard they are looking for a woman". Immediately I think, oh it is because I am a woman and then you start thinking that, like "I got a teaching job it must be because I am a woman"

Which happens. It is tokenizing but perhaps necessary.

And I say that too, when I am organizing a conference I am thinking, we have to have more women. Do you know the Hall of Femme series? It is a really nice book series started by two women in Sweden².

Yes, I know of them. I continue to be surprised by the prevalence of issues around gender. Beyond the topic, I have been looking at how I might be able to make it more about my own

actions—bring it into my practice as a designer—in a holistic way— Doing more with education, maybe conferences and other work outside of client based projects. I don't want to become pigeonholed to a topic. I struggle with that.

I know what you mean, there are women who get labeled like that and maybe don't get called for jobs. What is your thesis about?

I have been experimenting with ways of making that mess with hierarchy or expectations. I work with public space a lot. Not just as a physical experience, but also online. I investigate methods of disrupting an encounter (how we take in content) and how through form activate a topic. For example, I noticed that feminism was trending online this past summer and fall. There were artists whom I follow, such as Antony Hegarty³, who are interested in maintaining the necessity of feminism and keeping it from being negatively relegated to the past. She was doing performance art with a group of fellow feminist artists such as CocoRosie in New York. They were getting a lot of press. At the same time, you have rape culture, ongoing politics, controversial university projects³, pop icons claiming feminism and a band of U.K. women talking about a "fourth wave". So I wanted to make a project that responded to this, and to create some sort of book or publication, as a crossover of online voices into printed format. Perhaps this publication could exploit the nature of the internet and how we experience it. Over a period of a few months, it became a weekly reader that literally collected and re-aggregated whatever came through via google alerts email filter based on the term "feminism". The content was broken down and hierarchy between page content and related links flipped, to see what new patterns could be seen in the periphery. The printed version uses both sides of the accordion folded paper to parse content and then folds/flips in a way that activates it further. This is a good example of what I have been experimenting with conceptually and formally in my thesis work.

Sounds good.

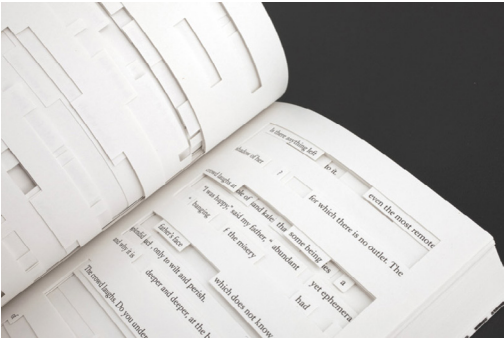
So you are a designer, educator, conference creator and more. How do you shape the context of your teaching in relationship to your interest or concerns.

It depends on the structure of the course. Right now I am teaching at Camberwell School of Art in London and we have 60 undergraduate students. It needs to be more concrete than the workshops I do, but in both I have students doing writing.

Do you have a preference?

I don't feel that I have enough time in a charette workshop. You just get going and then you have to stop. It is more about a process but can be frustrating. As a student I did a workshop with Paul Elliman where we had to go out into the city and I slept on a boat! I wasn't able to document it because of the boat, and it isn't something I could ever show anyone, but it did change my thinking about the boundaries of my work, finding inspiration and getting out there and doing things you learn things in a different way so I guess both have their value. When I taught at the Royal College of Art we had group work in the morning and then individual tutorials in the afternoon which I really enjoyed because it is a one hour discussion about someone's work. That ongoing long relationship is very rewarding.

I taught a class here at RISD during our five-week Wintersession. Fellow classmate Minkyong Kim and I designed the course, and workshops became creative models as structures with which to make connections in a short period of time. I learned a lot about interpersonal dynamics, it took us that entire time to establish the comfort to talk more freely through dialog as a group. There are all of these wonderful things that start to happen when you have that foundation built. It has been really great to be able to talk with you and get to know you better.



Tree of Codes, Jonathan Safran Foer , 2010

Each page of this book is a unique die-cut to create a hands-on experience of time, layers, space and meaning.

1. Adrian Henri: Total Artist was edited by his widow Catherine Marcangeli, Graphic Design: History in the Writing was edited by Catherine de Smet and myself. Notes from the Cosmic Typewriter: The Life and Work of Dom Sylvester Houédard was Edited by Nicola Simpson

2. <http://halloffemmes.com>

3. Future Feminism, The Hole NYC, 2014. Created by Antony, Kembra Pfahler, Johanna Constantine, Bianca Casady, Sierra Casady

4. Carry That Weight, Emma Sulkowicz, Columbia University