# *Difference* a Slow Method

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**คำสำคัญ:** ระเบียบวิธี, โครงงานศิลปะ, Visual/ Material Thinking,
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# *Difference* a Slow Method

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## ABSTRACT

The article, "*Difference* a Slow Method," has been written in response to a workshop delivered by the author to five students of Multidisciplinary Art in the Fine Art Faculty of Chiang Mai University. The article considers a visual/material thinking methodology that is practiced as a teaching aid by the author, and shows how the methodology works in practice through a particular project. On this occasion the methodology is introduced to students with no previous experience of such a process. The article introduces and discusses this methodology through some background theory and the creative efforts of the students themselves. The project in which the students are involved, which is also introduced theoretically and discussed through the students' practice, concerns the post-modern concept of *difference*,

in this instance relating to individual aspects of human identity. Besides this, the theoretical structure of the methodology is discussed in relation to how the students individually explored the project. It is hoped that the workshop's two components, and how they interact, may be of interest to artist professionals and art & design educators and students.

# Introduction

The purpose of the article is to introduce an experimental educational methodology as a basic template for students to process their thinking visually and materially, and explore its suitability in the context of a practical creative project. The educational methodology and the example project are interlinked through reference to theory.

In creative visual practice at both the educational and professional level, it is often useful to approach the activity as a process, but to allow time to search and reflect to obtain more deeply understood and experienced results. The methodology in question therefore unravels slowly, to enable students to be aware of and use time in the processing of their visual/material thinking. Consideration of this question is on the basis of my having taught in a range of circumstances particularly concerning the early years of undergraduate study in both art and design.

The context in which these two related aims have been conducted was an extra-curricular workshop offered to upcoming 3rd year students of Multidisciplinary Art in the Fine Art Faculty of Chiang Mai University, prior to the new academic year 2014/15.

As such, there was no formal assessment and grading involved. The workshop took place between May and June 2014, and had five participating students, referenced in the text by their initials 'H', 'M', 'P', 'N' and 'N1'.

The project concerned an aspect of the postmodern philosophical theory of difference, explained in the section below, The Project: *Difference*, and provided a reason and incentive for students to use the methodology and of considering its effectiveness. In addition, the methodology, against a backdrop of different and more familiar methods of working, has itself been an example of difference in terms of its uniqueness within these students' experience.

The article provides 1., an introduction to some theoretical background relevant to both the methodology and the practical project; 2., a description of the structure of the methodology; 3., an introduction to the project; 4., a discussion of the implementation of the methodology via the project, and 5., some concluding observations.

## Theoretical Background

Implicit in such an educational experiment is the idea of difference from the norm. While difference in the project follows

a particular theory, my own individual interests underpin both the methodology and the project. These concern the question of idea in relation to concept, the phenomenon of the experiential, and that of time.

The terms idea and concept are often interchangeable in everyday usage. While concept may suggest greater breadth and seriousness than idea, the latter can be elevated in meaning to the level of concept, and the term concept used when idea would be better. At a basic level of understanding in art and design, it is useful to distinguish idea from concept as encouragement for students to open out their thinking by playing with ideas at the early stages of any project, before more seriously conceptualizing them.

The perceptual philosopher Alva Noë (2013) defines concepts as "abilities." In a recorded lecture published online (2013), Noë cited the philosopher Wittgenstein in saying that "there's no account of what a concept is apart from what it is to grasp and make use of concepts." Earlier in the lecture Noë had said that "concepts need sensory knowledge and sensory knowledge needs concepts in order to be able to be organized." The question of concept in art and design would therefore seem to be one of chronology; where it comes and is defined in the process of

thinking about, doing and making things. How one acquires the "sensory knowledge" in order for there to be some reason for having concepts, and from which concepts can be developed.

While this is a complex philosophical subject, concept may be considered more of a formulating consequence than a precursor of knowledge. Ideas might therefore be a better term for the relative fragility of what starts to occur to one while searching for knowledge, with concepts later formulating whatever has been discovered.

In contrast, the cultural theorist and philosopher Slavoj Zizek has described ideas in the context of discussion of the 19th century philosopher Schelling as follows:

> Ideas are thus things in a state of indifference, when they are not yet posited as actual - their existence in ideas is timeless, but in the sense of a dream-like phantasmagoria, a spectral pseudo-existence. (2007, p. 52)

This quote's implication of dreaming is not inappropriate in the present context in that creative activity involves the imagination, daydreaming and revelry at any early stage of searching for ideas.

Debatably, students should be encouraged in the mode of the experiential as a basis for learning and creative activity. According to Noë (2000, p. 134), "...experience is a mode of direct contact with and exploration of the world." Then, Noë continues: "A phenomenological study of experience is not an exercise in introspection, it is an act of attentiveness to what one does in exploring the world." This may suggest an emphasis on self-reflection in relation to one's activities. The Chilean biologist and cognitive scientist Francisco Varela was interested in Buddhism in relation to his theory of the embodied mind, concerning the experiential relationship between mind and body. According to Varela, in convevsation with Poerksen:

> Buddhism - sustained by qualified techniques of self-examination - trains reflection that may be re-enacted in one's own experience and deals, amongst other things, with the essence of mind, the notion of self, and the concept of a static and localisable identity. (2004, p. 96)

Further in the reference (ibid, p. 97), Varela suggests that he is not interested in making comparisons between Eastern and Western thinking, but, in the context of reference to cognitive scientists, suggests that if they want to further their understanding of their

mind they should do this through "the specific investigation and analysis of their own experiences and to include themselves in their reflection..." A more general point, however, of Varela (ibid, p. 90), for which reason he references Buddhism as a mode of practice and theory of self-awareness, is due to his insistence that subject (in the subjective and individual experiential sense, and object (in terms of objective truth) go together: "...subject and object determine and condition each other, that knower and known arise in mutual dependence." Such inter-reference of Western and Eastern theory is appropriate to the needs of the students themselves, who are learning in this dual context.

The visual thinking methodology to be discussed, and the project given to students through which to practice it, each give emphasis to the experiential, with whatever questions of interpretation that may propose.

The novelist Eva Hoffman (2009, p. 65) cites the phenomenologist Edmund Husserl in the context of time and how it 'flows', given that Western phenomenology concerns the study of the nature of individual human experience in practice, especially in terms of sensation and perception. Hoffman (ibid, p. 80) further suggests that one needs time to process one's experiences, and that if one

tries to think too fast in this respect "the circuits get scrambled and basic mental activity fails." Since, in the context of working with multiple creative disciplines, time-based media is often involved, the work of the philosopher Henri Bergson (1859 - 1941) provides useful insight into the flow of time, and divides time as space, which is quantifiable, from time as pure duration. According to Grosz (2002, p. 114) on the implications, for Bergson, of dividing time: "Duration is not, through its continuity, homogeneous, smooth, or linear; rather, it is a mode of "hesitation," bifurcation, unfolding, or emergence."

If it is advisable in some thinking contexts, therefore, to procrastinate, then this article's proposed visual thinking method will suggest how time allocated to a project can be divided into proportions of mental and physical space for greater reflection on, and growth of, ideas.

# A Visual / Material Thinking Methodology

The framework into which any range of theoretical ideas can be reworked as practice - given that students' learn primarily through practice on creative visual/material programs - is in the possible formulation of a three-staged structure. The structure is prefixed with whatever is the starting point, and concluded by whatever is/are the outcome/s of such a process.

(Starting-point) - Ideas Generation - Development - Conceptualization - (Outcome)

In real terms, of course, creative and critical learning happens organically across time and within many situations and contexts. However, the concern of this methodology is to try to stretch back, through time, students' perceived tendency to immediately conceptualize their thinking. Such a tendency, in effect, short-circuits the benefit that students might obtain from exploring and unraveling their thinking prior to the determination of any concept.

It is useful to stress to students that between starting-point and outcome of any given or self-directed brief is a window of time, a duration that can be articulated and divided as space temporally and physically, in which to work.

In this generic sense, if Ideas generation amounts to visual note making, Development can involve the consideration of diverse materials in relation to such notes, and Concept can gradually also concern the question of format of whatever is to be the visual/material result. In more particular sense, the visual researcher from the University of the Arts, London, Agnieszka Mlicka (2014, p. 7), citing Awan et al (2011), refers to four of nine "methods used by spatial agents" that are comparable to my terms, though more specific to the context of architecture:

"Initiating a project" - "Expanding the brief" - "Making hidden structures visible" - "Sharing knowledge" (2014, p. 5)

In terms of "initiating a project," in the workshop I have done this myself, as indicated below. (At a more mature level of development students may initiate projects themselves.) In terms of "sharing knowledge," this would or could, if implemented in the methodology, shift the emphasis from visual/material outcome to any kind of more abstract, conceptual, or theoretical purpose. Comparison with the Mlicka cited example from architecture, however, does also suggest a generic basis to methodology, and its adaptability to varied art or design situations. Each of the components of my own methodology can, as necessary, be more

precisely stated or subdivided and the time allocated to each of the stages vary, according to particular art or design needs.

## The Project: *Difference*

The project concerned the postmodern philosophical concept of difference, as discussed in a range of manifestations in literary and cultural studies since the 1970s by Professor of English at Anglia Polytechnic University in Cambridge, Mark Currie, in his book, *Difference* (2004). This concept is firstly used in the project in the context of individual aspects of human identity, although this was as a mere starting-point for students.

According to Currie:

> ...identity is synonymous with both sameness and difference........identity of things, people, places, groups, nations and cultures is constituted by the logics of both sameness and difference.

If I think of my own identity, I do not encounter a straightforward, indivisible singularity, but a plethora of places, times, roles, functions, interests, opinions and physical characteristics. (2004, p. 2 – 3)

Significantly for the basis of both the project and the methodology, Currie's suggestion is that one experiences aspects of both sameness and difference depending on infinite variety of contexts. The inherent restlessness of difference is explored later by Currie in the context of Deleuze and this philosopher's interest in movement. According to the philosophical theorist Elizabeth Grosz (2005, p. 10), in the context of the philosopher Gilles Deleuze's influence of Bergson: "Durational force, the force of temporality is the movement of complication, dispersion or difference that makes any becoming possible and the world a site of endless and unchartable becomings."

Debatably, the constant flow of movement, change and repetition through time could or should be an issue that students explore in most creative educational projects.

## The Methodology as Implemented through the Practical Project

The theoretical introduction of the project to the students most closely related to "Initiating the project." As sample starting material I photographed a large group of workers at a local

**Figure 1:** *Four workers from a large group at a ceramics factory who show examples of sameness and difference within their respective jobs.*

ceramics factory (Figure 1).This was to indicate to students the temporary nature of identity in terms of sameness and difference among manual tasks and body posture within a context of paid work. The photos themselves, as medium, would also be manifest instances. Each photo, while being of the same general subject and format, shows individual differences, and these potentially relate to and help to formulate an idea of human identity that is not static.

A simple mono-printing exercise with the students prior to the start of the project enabled them to see how ideas can be quickly visualized through drawing, and to witness how materials, in this instance black printing ink, can behave relatively independently, so generating chance and accidental effects. Such effects, in themselves, can help generate further ideas. I used the photos of the ceramics workers as the motif for this exercise, and attached to each photo a single arbitrary keyword prompt to which students had to respond (Figure 2).
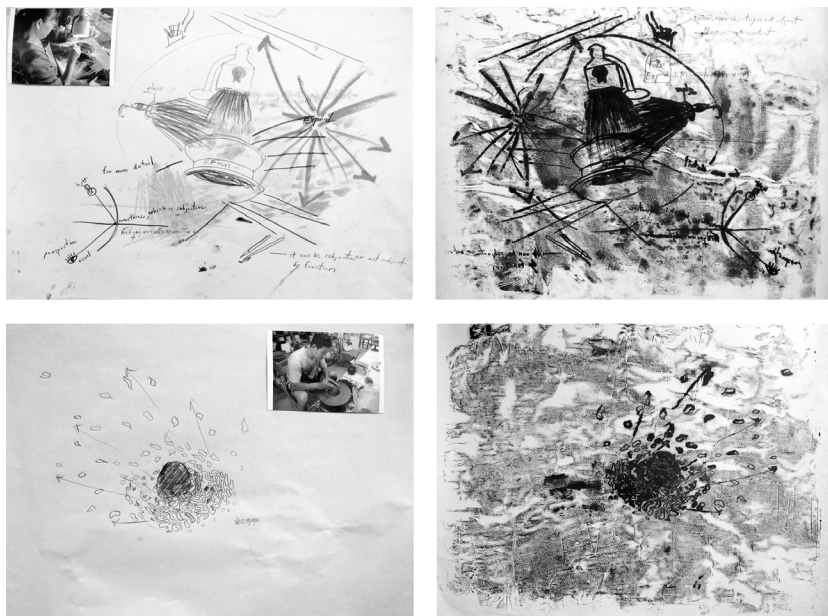
**Figure 2 :** *Examples of 'N"s and 'H''s visuals using keyword prompts, Expand and Disengage respectively, and automatically generated mono-print.*

The resulting drawings embody the reflexive immediacy of thinking in relation to doing, and the mono-prints that the drawings generated have their own autonomous qualities. It was not my intention to encourage students to develop these ideas, but if it had been, what Noë (ibid, p. 134) has referred to as "attentiveness to what one does in exploring the world" would have resulted in the students' more critical consideration of them through reflection and self-reflection.

# Ideas Generation

I chose as the practical starting point for the project – "Initiating a project" – a trip with cameras to Chiang Mai's Wararot Market for food and domestic hardware products, the idea being to find varieties of individual differences in role among a community of workers and users that are united within a common theme. We looked at people, their jobs, roles, performance, posture, strangeness, etc., and their objects and environment. Students were instructed to take, and have processed as snapshot prints, at least forty photos each.

During the first studio-working day students attached all photos taken at the market to the studio walls at random, began to cluster them into groups determined by sameness, and then reorganized the photos on the walls to find increasingly specific small sets (Figure 3).



**Figure 3:** *Students organizing and re-organizing the project's 200+ starting photos.*

Each of many resulting sets, based on sameness-in-difference, was named, for example 'Hide watching'; 'Trace of presence'; '9'. It was up to the students to decide on such names, with the proviso that each set could be continually re-chosen and re-named, encouraging as much movement and change in the process as possible (Figure 4).
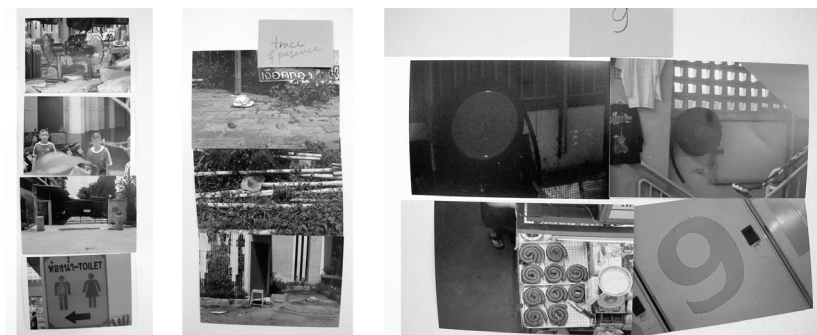


**Figure 4:** *Students organizing and re-organizing the project's 200+ starting photos.*

After three reductive steps, students then extracted their own set by looking more carefully at possible combinations on their worktable as their individual starting-point for the project.

A basic point was that visual work is often done through interaction and cooperation with materials. In effect, to a limited extent, materials exert their own individual behavior. Ideas are generated in sympathetic interaction with such behavior. Writing

in the context of painting, the British painter Catherine Ferguson cites the theory of autopoiesis as developed by the Chilean biologists Humberto Maturana and Varela, on the way in which living organisms create new environments out of their adaptation to existing ones:

> ...the living system is defined in terms of a dynamic unity or network of relations which the authors call its organization and which produces components of the system." (2010, p. 3)

Ferguson (ibid, p. 4) applies this idea to the field of art, insofar as art is also a medium that is adaptive to the environment.

The student 'M''s photo-set reference was a collage of several layers of space and direction, in which he was interested in relation to the passage of time. As indicative visual/material example of Ideas generation, 'M' worked with drawing and mono-printing on paper, and presented these with natural back-lighting or included reflective foil. It may be argued, however, that this combination of materials and installation already looks too far ahead to the Development stage of the process (Figure 5).
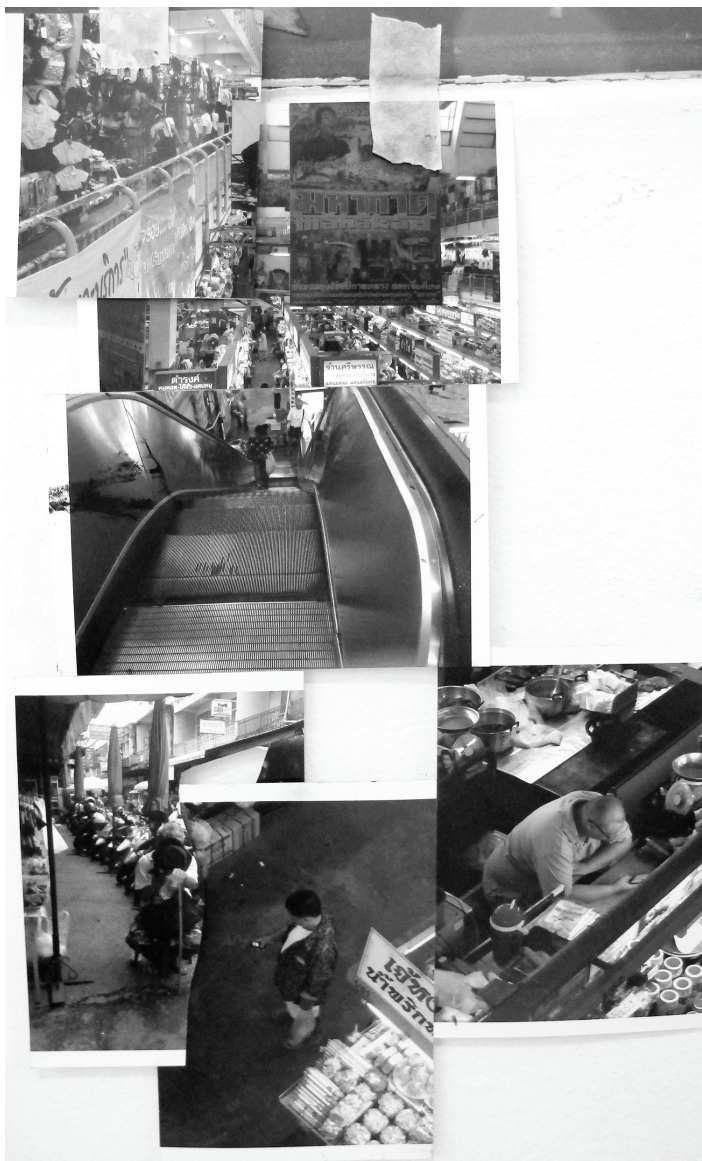
**Figure 5:** *'M''s photo-collage concerning several layers of space and direction.*

**Figure 6:** *'M''s workspace and two visuals presented against natural back-lighting.*

'M''s interpretation of his collage was that several human figures were assembled at the same point in time in different positions in space but in the same environment, the market. A more formal reading of the photos, in which the figures participated, also suggests duration of time as movement through the space. This relates to theory of Bergson (2001, p. 86 - 87), via the example of the sound of a tolling bell, that time is marked by intervals of space – as both a physical phenomenon and a form of time – rather than time as "pure duration."

The student 'P' generated ideas through collages of surplus photos (Figure 7).



**Figure 7:** *'P''s photo-collages*

While 'P''s visuals are reminiscent of surrealist photomontage, it was important in the context of the methodology that he took these to be starting points rather than finished pieces. In the spirit (Zizek, 2007, p 52) of ideas as "not yet posited as actual," 'P' should have allowed such a medium to generate as many ideas as possible.

By the end of the first week each of the five students had visuals in various forms, mainly combinations of drawing, mono-printing and photography, and were instructed to return to the market to gather information according to more specific needs suggested by their current ideas.

## Development

The photo sets and initial thinking should now have represented many ideas as potential to each of the students. Questions could now be asked such as:

*What is this about?*
*Where can this take me?*
*How can I do it?*
*How can materials and mediums help?*

This is the stage in the methodology where students can utilize their existing skills in relation to materials and mediums, and/or develop new ones on a need-to-know basis. The stage corresponds roughly with "making hidden structures visible." In the context of this approach to project delivery, students should now be more naturally driven by their individual interests, and working with more tangible and particular materials and mediums.

Initially, as seen in 'P''s re-worked visual (Figure 8), students started writing on their work.



**Figure 8:** *A starting visual by 'P' re-worked with text inserts.*

Text is, of course, a main means of conveying and clarifying one's thoughts. 'N' used text to express the following on one of his visuals:

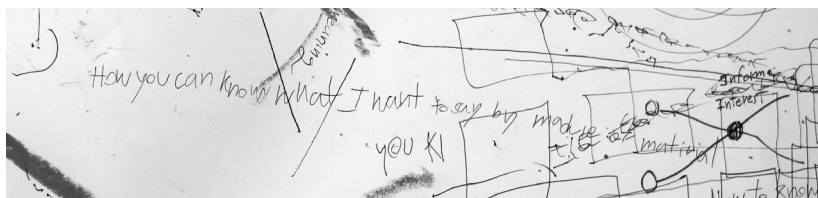*"How can you know what I want to say by made of material?" (Figure 9)*



**Figure 9:** *A detail of a drawing by 'N', showing a hand-written question*

I found this use of hand-written text to have creative potential in relation to the project; an example in itself of what the student was critiquing. However, this is an incisive question, and does also imply the difficulty of convincing students to be reflexively immersed in their work and trust that what results is a form, albeit ambiguously, of communication.

In another instance, 'N' extended the function of his visuals by evoking their meaning through visual relationships of otherwise separate elements across the page (Figure 10).

**Figure 10:** *A representative starting visual by 'N'.*

The key to how these visuals relate to one another is in the fact that in the photo, second from the right at the top, a fragment of a human limb is visible when the rest of the person has been obscured by surrounding activities.

Development is therefore both a title for this more analytical stage of the methodology and a generic term for what has, naturally, to occur (Figure 11).

**Figure 11:** *'H', top-left, starts to sew through her mono-printed visual onto canvas, 'M', top-right, makes and overlaps line drawings on tracing paper from photo set, and 'P' starts to re-work enlarged scans of photo sets with color.*

While 'M' had represented a further move towards trying to bring time as duration, and physical space, into the same formal domain, 'N' had done something similar in the process of exploring other interests through the medium of text (Figure 12).
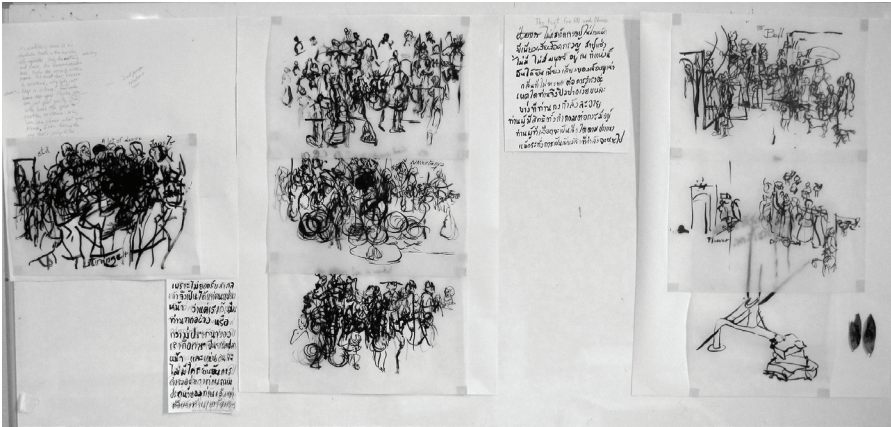
**Figure 12:** *'N''s original text in Thai, and a hand-written translation.*

'N', as he addresses the stall-holders' circumstances, has intuitively articulated difference through contrast of himself with them:

> "No humans remain here. Only the voice of rotten pork. The smell of honest existence."

Then he rebukes himself:

> "Why you just keep in silence? Maybe you just feel guilty. You who have the right to question existence."

In this monologue, visible in full above (Figure 12), 'N' seems to touch on a key issue of difference as broaching questions of social

understanding. However, in a form of self-questioning suggested as useful to cognitive scientists by Varela ,in conversation with Poerksen (2004, p. 97), 'N' also reflects on, and then moves on his own tendency to judge. In so far as such critique is a form a movement, this also relates to the transitory nature of identity as suggested by Currie (ibid. p, 2 – 3). Within this short insight and the text as a medium, 'N' encapsulates his feelings of difference in his identity.

This example is as close as any of the students had come so far to realizing difference in the terms available to them through the project and experientially within themselves.  The structure here revealed is an instance of self-identification with the theme of the project through the medium of text.

The students were now more or less considering three issues, each of them characterized by its own implicit sense of difference. 'N' was concerned with self-identification, 'P' with the same question to a lesser extent through humor, 'M' with questions of time and space, and 'N1' with the beginning of integration of both of these through time-based media, although this student had not so far produced any indicative visuals. 'H' had incorporated her existing interest in sewing into her visual exploration. 'M''s

workspace, typically for this stage of the methodology, now included additional drawing, photo references to surfaces and textures in the external environment, and written critical observations (Figure 13).



**Figure 13:** *'M''s workspace showing more visuals and written observations.*

## Concept

Relatively beginning students of art and design may tend to assume that a concept is all that is necessary to start a project, before they have sufficiently learnt how to obtain strong relevant ideas through their own experience. The implication that one needs experience in order to appreciate what a concept is may relate to Noë's definition (ibid, 2013) of concepts as "abilities."

The question is how one learns to recognize the key moments and changes and the gradual maturing of ideas, through any duration of time involved in visual/material processing of one's thinking. The following examples are of two of the students' works that, if they had had more experience, might have been examples of the Concept stage of the methodology as opposed to what are in this case their outcomes. These would then have been in the character of rough-cuts, to use the analogy of film. The lack of sufficient exploration in these students' responses may be considered due to their young age, inexperience, and the fact that this methodology was new to them.

'M', for example, worked from earlier drawings to make a 1.20 minute drawn animation video called *Movement of Confusion,* of several figures positioned on different floors of the market at the same time (Figure 14).



**Figure 14:** *'M' rendering stop-motion photos of an animated drawing, Movement of Confusion, 1.20mins.*

The medium of stop-motion and its subsequent animation as movement continues to bear relation to Bergson's theory of time. 'M' had already understood, through his interpretation of his starting set of photos, that he could apprehend several different positions in space at the same time. However, by animating these positions he could use superimposition, indicative of simultaneity as explored in his earlier overlapped drawings (Figure 11), within an actual duration of time. This duration was set by the time-length of the animated drawing.

Such an interest in time had perhaps been encouraged by one among several incidental discussions and coincidental insights during the project. In this instance I had mentioned to the students Bergson's idea, as discussed by Grosz (2002, p. 124), that the past at first coexists as the present before it recedes into and as the past. I also introduced the paintings of Francis Bacon in this respect, via Deleuze (2004, p. 41), who states that Bacon was concerned with "movement " "in-place," " a spam.... the action of invisible forces on the body..."

'N' finalized his work by inscribing a clay human figure that he had made with his own creatively written text in Thai language (Figure 15).

**Figure 15:** *Three views of 'N''s inscribed clay figure.*

The text is titled, and, in the student's own English translation, short sections read as follows:

**"The man who knocks on the door and yells his own name"**

> "I was just something moving by time, just a man who knocks on the door and yells his own name...."

> (Five further lines)

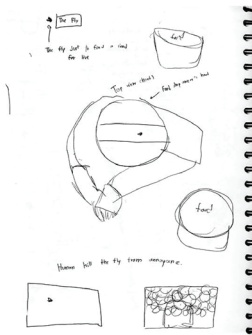> "My friends, what do you see in front of you? Clay? Text? Yourself?...."

> (Two further lines)

"You can't stop reading it and it is addictive because you apply human interpretation."

(Two further lines)

The text moves in and out of 'N''s reference of himself, and, particularly through the implication of absurdity in the title - a man knocking on a door to beckon himself - seems to speak about human experience caught in time. The idea of the reader of the text being addicted to the reading inscribed in the clay and, as it were, suspended in the moment, may allude also to the student doing the work, and he does also suggest that the idea is transmuted through the medium itself. The student mentioned to me that he liked the temporary nature of this medium; that it would dry and crumble away. However, this might also imply the limited lifespan of the project itself; that in a short while it would be over and done.

The student 'N1' is motivated by digital media and reluctant to process his thinking using analogue practices. His idea was to animate the movement of a fly from object to object, as noticed in the market (Figure 16).

This process have a humour in a bald man. And first times to use program " After Effect ". This program can got a new way for create somethings but I don't have a interested things in this process.

**Figure 16:** *An early visual note of an idea of 'N1', showing some initial experimentation with After Effects.*

Only when nearing the end of the project did 'N1' produce a short movie on a theme that attempted some critique of humans' tendency to produce food waste, from a fly's point of view (Figure 17).
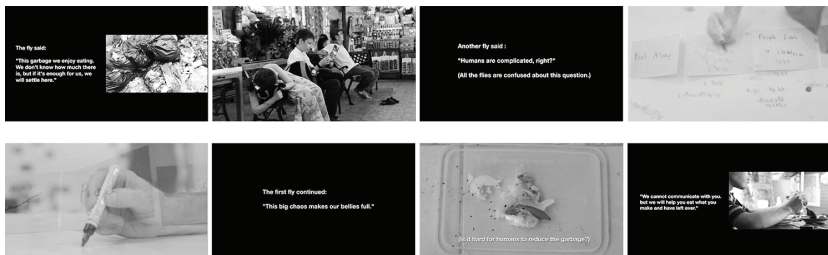


**Figure 17:** *Screen-shots from 'N1''s movie, Message from the Fly, 2mins.*

Time was fast-forwarded in some sections of the two minutes' footage, particularly where I was filmed working with the students, which suggested seeing and movement as if from the fly's perspective. While 'N1' was acknowledging time as an interest in the project, his use of fast-forward seems too contrived. This is an example where greater reflection via visual exploration might have produced a better result. Referring back to Awan et al's terminology, if the purpose of this stage of the project had been "sharing knowledge," then such an observation on 'N1''s work might have been a pertinent question for a group debate. This would have positioned the work more as visual/material research, taking the emphasis off artwork/outcome.

At one point the fly in 'N1''s movie states:

"This big chaos make our bellies full."

It is debatable whether the movie clip is merely about the question of garbage, or whether garbage has a metaphorical meaning in relation to the student's questions concerning the methodology. A negative implication may be suggested of the project itself by the student's inclusion in the movie clip of an unreterenced quote from Confucius:

"Life is really simple, but we insist on making it complicated."

However, there is also both humor and irony in the work. 'N1' includes footage of himself eating in the final frames, implicating him in the questions posed in the movie by the fly.

In several manifestations, the introduction to the students of what I understood of the Bergson point regarding the coexistence of past with present (Grosz, ibid, p. 124) was decisive in the project. Students seemed to work with the idea of movement, and then the moment of being caught and fixed in and by the work, in a suspension of temporality.

### Conclusion

The article has concerned the introduction of a visual/material thinking methodology in the context of a recently taught creative project, and includes a discussion of the exploration of the project within the methodology and as an example of how the latter works in practice. The success of this and its visual/material results are of course relative to the teaching and learning situation. The results' have therefore been determined by the project's being extra-curricular work in the semester break, and differences in cultural interpretation meant that students were

working very speculatively. The latter, in addition to the newness of the methodology, required students to think much more for themselves. These were students who had to some extent already formed ways of working within the program.

A key limitation at this level and context of teaching and learning is in the difficulty students have in debating their work and interests. I have alluded to this above when discussing 'N1''s work in relation to the Concept stage of the methodology. However, "sharing knowledge" might also be suggested via the practical outcomes of visual/material thinking. In the section The Project: *Difference* I have in a sense done this myself, by describing what I deduce from the visual work through what I largely intuitively sensed of the students. What is still missing, but is a purpose of the methodology to improve over time, is the students' ability to interpret visually themselves, and relay back to their peers and teachers through combinations of visual/material practice and spoken language.

A measure of the potential of this is in the students' implied critique of the methodology within their individual work. The use of metaphor as a mode of interpretation, namely of garbage in 'N1''s work and the temporary nature of script on drying clay

in 'N''s work, is an example of critical reflection in visual poetic form. While such metaphors have emerged largely reflexively at this stage, students may eventually learn how to reflect on them, and in this sense implicit, albeit ambiguous, communication becomes a form of "sharing knowledge."

Another question, discussed above, concerns the relation of theory to practice. The introduction of theory suggests that a level of intellect be brought to the project, while practice requires a reflexive approach to materials and media to see what they will do for one, in relation to the brief in general and one's individual evolving interests. After such practice, the relative autonomy of the medium of mono-printing exercise being an example, one looks at and more objectively reflects on the results. The extent to which the five students were prepared to open out their thinking varied, with 'N1' even preferring to wait until towards the end of the project. However, it is debatable, in this student's case, how much the intervening weeks would have been important as a gestation period for his idea.

At one stage 'N' asked me what preceded the starting-point of the project. This question suggests a more complex understanding of the process that the methodology attempts to format. The same could equally be asked of what would follow the methodology's

conclusion. The point of the project, however, which should have breathed life into the methodology and answered both questions in practice, was to encourage students to experience and enjoy being in the middle - Development - of a creative process and to constructively use time. Such experience implies continuity and continuation. It might reasonably be assumed that students, especially of the middle years of a program, would already be bringing their interests to projects, and these, plus whatever new interests they had now acquired, would accompany them in their creative journey.

From the point of view of the methodology as a process and a structure through which to realize creative work, the movement between ideas generation, development and concept should result in a strengthening and consolidation of ideas. Students' explorations could also, in their turn, suggest other ideas that for the time being exist in the project as potential only. A follow-on project might concern Difference as Movement. This project would then address and structure the question of continuity, as questioned by 'N'.

The idea at the start of the project had been to transfer the possibility of difference as identity among people in a transitory sense based on work, roles and situations, to the same

phenomenon within the medium itself, in this instance the photo sets. Suggestions of movement that existed within the photos' differences, chosen on the basis of points of sameness within how they differed from other photos and photo sets, were then explored by proceeding from what was suggested within the photo medium to other media, materials and working methods.

If the question of movement is applied to human identity, or, fundamentally, to being itself, Grosz (ibid, p. 9) links the idea of "continuity" as a characteristic of "being" to "the very condition of art, which nonetheless, while harnessing or expressing this continuity, cannot unambiguously communicate it."

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