



print value in the context of identity.

g.baldwin

I should emphasize that all the evidence from resemblance is circumstantial insofar as it indicates intent. Resemblance need not involve deliberate intent, but can call things to mind covertly in a culture that insists on deducible signification. Intelligence obtained by means of perceived resemblance can be put beyond the reach of legislation because it depends on recognition, not definition. Definition has to catch up with recognition."

ROBIN EVANS

I often struggle to make a decision between the ease of a quick read on the web and the effort of selecting & purchasing a physical published journal. This struggle pushes beyond the mere energy behind the motive, to the determination of value. So perhaps this is where I will begin, delineating the inherent ratio of convenience & value across virtual media & print.

We have moved into an age where information is transmitted virtually, faster than comprehensible and the sorting of value becomes deficit. This information adorns itself in aesthetic overtone, or sits subliminally around directories. The content, regardless of how interesting, leaks into our mindset and informs our research.

This mode of expression excels over print media in its immediacy. It is addictive in its availability, yet mildly devastating in its collective nature. The concept and even use of collectivity is fine in small doses, but if taken for granted it becomes controlling & can swell to further shield what is of value.

In parallel, in the physical world we face a similar yet less

intense tendency; the seduction of format. Although seemingly trivial, it is hard to pry oneself from the beauty of embossed custom fonts, finely fitted across 215.67 mm cold press. We deny this upon discussion, but the physicality of print attributes qualities, seldom possible with virtual media. Yet at the same time, these very qualities are what distract us from the true 'value' we seek.

What is missing in these perpetual cycles is the variant of identity. An identity not burdened by excess, nor desperate for recognition, but one of stability balanced by the sum of its parts. By this, I mean to say an identity with intention, where the mission exceeds the reading of a single entity, for greater discussion or conversation.

This form of identity must not attach itself to temporal movements, nor get buried in redundant masses. On an immediate scale, its presence is almost unchanged when paired with commercial publishing and first-edition monographs. But this identity does not merit its mission through comparison, but instead through time. Its consistency and growing series gives rise to both its variance and value.

This mode of identity must not seek to replace or reinvent the immediacy of information on the web, but supplement, reference or support it. It must anchor itself on grounds unconstrained by the interface of the virtual, while maintaining the flexibility of constant readjustment, not possible in typical print media. This identity finds its own context among its intentions. Where its mission of bridging the virtual & the physical attains a culture on the middle ground, no longer confined by the hierarchical media of inflated value.

Graham S. I. Baldwin edits Fulcrum.

happy birthday ma.

j.self

The problem with Facebook is that it nurtures one of writing teachers' greatest foes — the teenage fantasy that writers write only to themselves and to those who are just like them.

PROF. LISA LEBDUSKA

Today my mother turns 55 years old. I'm sure she won't mind me sharing that detail with you. The year she was born, 1956, IBM invented the 'Hard-Drive' – it weighed 1 ton & held 5 megabytes. A little more than a half-century later, & my mother owns a telephone that holds three thousand times more than this. In fact there is greater processing power in her pocket than there was on the whole planet the year of her birth. I shudder to think of what terrible parallel anticipates my own 55th birthday.

She is, and has been for many years, a journalist – and her career developed in a way typical of her time. She began with the sports rags, then moved sideways into Women's Weekly, then up through the foreign section of several national, then international papers, finally to the heady heights of personal finance.

My point is this: she never had a single word circulated, never made a single move, without it being approved by a higher authority. And this is the major difference between publishing in the pre- & post-Internet world: permission.

Writing and publishing may have changed over those five decades, in both format and content – but it still costs money to print real text. Even Fulcrum is only possible because the AA (Brett) & Bedford Press (kindly) permit us to print.

As much as we might want to claim total independence from all sociopolitical & economic hierarchies – the honest truth is that print media will always be expensive and regulated.

Although the cost of certain formats require more permission to print than others – a photocopy can be had for 10p, while a newspaper sheet of the same size now costs 71 pence. The New Ghost Dance Times was printed on newspaper stock because the old GDT was printed on newspaper stock. But the symbolic & actual value changes of the medium over 30 years made the NGDT more reliant on institutional permission, & not less.

By contrast, a blog costs nothing, & it requires no permission. Neither does it require any assistance, collaboration or – most importantly – anyone's opinion or direction. The blogger, the Facebooker, the Tweeter, is free to publish however much on whatever they choose. There is no need whatsoever to ask the old questions: who am I writing for, what & why am I writing? Facebook Freedom is pushing print media in strange directions. The attitude of publishers seems to be that if you're going to print at all it may as well be a unique object in its own right, and not merely a transmitter of information – publications are increasingly bespoke, error-ridden & egomaniacal.

Architecture has developed similarly; we could never (and still can't) execute our ideas for real without permission (from developers, clients, engineers, etc).

However, you can now become famous purely through Dezeen & Archdaily. With the recession in full swing architects have retreated from the world of things, embracing "the teenage fantasy that Architects design only for themselves and for those who are just like them."

We must ask, more now than ever, who are we designing for, what & why are we designing?

Happy birthday Ma.

Jack Self edits Fulcrum...



