

## **LCC Design School: Archiving Pedagogy**

*Acknowledgment: Thank you Andrew Slatter for many vibrant pedagogical exchanges and for the persistence to uphold them.*

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### **Abstract**

In this article, we will be exploring the impact of London College of Communication (LCC) teaching, research and practice on the legacy of Design School's undergraduate courses using the example of one item: David Bowie's – Low album on the format of 8 track cassette. By unpacking the work with the object as a text, practice and tool, we are questioning what are Art Schools for, especially exploring how our practices of collecting, research and pedagogy shape our organisational aesthetic at LCC. For that purpose, we use London Design Festival's (LDF) contribution of the Low album to the project Room 2084, that gathered objects from staff's personal collections with the intention to enter them to the university's "design archive" at Archives and Special Collections. We will rely on Diana Taylor's (2003) depiction of dynamic between the proposed object and its performative potency, Tim Ingold's deliberations on practice and research (2018) and Walter Benjamin's ruminations on collecting (1931 – 1934 [1969]) to theoretically support the approach to our practice, research, collecting and pedagogy.

### **LCC Design School: Archiving Pedagogy**

We, academics are collectors – of objects, notes and experiences developed in interactions with our students, colleagues and communities of practice. Those artefacts, traces and reflections are a record of engagement with generations of designers, validating the significance of our roles in dissemination of knowledge in this field. The archives we make, therefore shape, stabilise and formalise our relationships within the discipline.

The expertise we hold in Design School at London College of Communication (LCC) came from similar pedagogic approach our tutors had with us, acquiring material evidence as well as intangible proof of progress in learning and teaching – attendance, acknowledgment, upkeep and furthering of institutional traditions, utilising feedback etc. We devise a set of classes and workshops combined with the visits to galleries and studios, logging successful education strategies in order to pass them on to future academics and practitioners, so design scholarship continues and expands.

In this article, we will be exploring the impact of our texts, practices and artefacts on this legacy of Design School pedagogy with the example of one item: David Bowie's – *Low* album on the format of 8 track cassette. This cassette was bought from a music collector un-opened. Therefore, this version is not played, and one does not know whether the tape has not perished, deteriorated or indeed, whether it has the album in question or is a factory error. It could contain a different album from a different artist reproduced by a tired worker pressing the wrong button or pasting incorrect artwork onto the plastic cartridge shell...

Graphic and Media Design (GMD) Course Leader, Craig Burston who bought this object continued its keeping tradition – leaving it unwrapped and so, preserving its potential, maintaining its posterity. We hope to do the same in our students' practice and artwork, embracing erroneous creative processes, fraught design solutions as well as fluctuating political contexts and shifting philosophical underpinnings with which their value is qualified. The essence of any archive is the same as our transition of knowledge to younger generations – it negotiates time between the past it stores and the present it observes through in order to find a way into the future.

The ambivalence in evaluating coursework at different points in time is nowadays difficult to justify at the university where students are charged with high fees. As they perceive to be paying for their custom and attendance, they treat teaching staff like service workers and expect concise and short answers to their questions. They see expertise in precision and speed they are provided with on Internet search engines and their familiar visual forms are vectors, databases and geographical representations. However, with such an unprecedented overview of a world facilitated by technology, confusions arise by complexities because students frequently do not distinguish between worthy and inadequate information, much like computers themselves.

Embracing this simplistic, narrow, operational mode of classroom exchange may satisfy a commercial clientele, but it is eroding education of our students by shying away from the convolutions, diversity and wealth of design we shout about as our organisational heritage. With increasing interest within HE management for the efficient response to students' desires rather than needs, academics are often left professionally compromised and morally strained.

We do not want to impair our students as future design practitioners and thinkers and we want to offer them the best, but recently, a student testified their disappointment for failing to obtain a job at Tate Gallery that revealed the limits within which we work. Considering that

our institution promotes its relationship with Tate, the student expected it to be upheld with the job security they felt likely by association with and 'membership' of our university. This disproportional view comes from the trend in which degrees are seen less as certifications of learning, but more of tickets to specific employments.

We cannot aid the pretence or teach that success is guaranteed. Creating the anticipation of success, rather than comfort with failures contradicts what The Art and Design School has always been about - the preparation for the unpredictable and precarious nature of the creative industries. In the current economic climate, this training is necessary if we are to foster vocational integrity, professional rigour and maintain authority of expertise.

If universities do not support development of these attributes, but stipulate success that in contemporary culture reads as volume marked by money, awards and status, they are passing on limited experiences, abandoning the investment in a long-term design future and hence, stagnating or worse still, regressing. This is the condition Walter Gropius was trying to change when he formed Bauhaus urging for the collaboration between painters, architects, sculptors in his manifesto in 1919 (1938, p.18). He generated a global movement still recognised with admiration today after 100 years, because at heart it had a democratic cooperative ethos in recognition that we do not make things alone and with one set of skills.

Delivering unidimensional curriculum even if it promises an easy access to the future through jobs and opportunities, risks paralysing the advancement of our students on professional and personal levels. We also cannot ignore the responsibility towards learners' mental health as numbers of student anxieties and other conditions rise in part by the promises made via universities' marketing (Raddi, 2019). The impossibility to bridge the gap between those promotion strategies celebrating the intricacies of design on one hand and demands to provide a particular type of knowledge on the other, leaves students as well as staff confused and disenfranchised so much so that both parties may wonder if they should be at universities at all.

The staff experiences a halt in research time and so, in the opportunity to diversify the field. Investment in teaching and learning and attending to bureaucratic systems of operational management, result in a staff experience where specialist knowledge is demanded yet the educational marketplace wins out. Students are 'sold' a vision of the future made viable through an emersion with emergent technology, but a great number continue to choose to study at LCC precisely because of its analogue history that we continue to witness existing very much in the present and in parallel or in tandem with digital systems we once assumed would replace it.

As Sean Cubitt suggests in his observations of analogue and digital aesthetics:

The proliferation of digital media across professional disciplines, and the increasing embedding of digital media invisibly within architecture, artefacts, and human beings indicates both that the unification of digital aesthetics around any core group of properties is decreasingly likely, and that the specificity of the digital may decline as digital media are more and more embedded in the landscapes of everyday work, transport, housework and education. (2006, p.250)

More concerning still, he concludes that this embedding process may support the view of aesthetics as a leisure activity, which is what academics in Art and Design Schools already experience through the insistence of research funders on collaboration with scientists.

In such paradoxical circumstances, we are questioning what are Art and Design Schools for? Crucially for the argument here, we explore how our practices of collecting, research and pedagogy shape our organisational aesthetic. For that purpose, we used Burston's contribution to the 2017 London Design Festival titled *Uncertainty Playground* (LDF) to explore this further with.

*Room 2084* gathered objects from staff's personal collections with the intention to propose their entry into the University's design archive within the Archives and Special Collections. As an act of critical play, *Room 2084* invited staff to propose objects for inclusion. This enabled us to reflect upon why we collect and merit objects. This would further scholarly discourse with students', enabling them to consider what they wish to learn and explore, test and produce, questioning the very notion of higher education, research and value sets that lead to the desired employability. Below, we will rely on Diana Taylor's (2003) depiction of dynamic between the proposed object and its performative potency, Tim Ingold's deliberations on practice and research (2018) and Walter Benjamin's ruminations on collecting (1931-1943) to theoretically support the approach to our practice, research, collecting and pedagogy.

### Text

In her book *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, Taylor (2003) identifies the rift between the quasi enduring materials like texts, buildings, objects associated with the *archive* and the *repertoire* which is an ephemeral, embodied practice and knowledge like speech, dance or ceremony. She explains that "[W]riting was far more dependent on embodied culture for transmission than the other way around." (Taylor, 2003, p.17) We would argue that is still the case – without us, academics interpreting the archive via our knowledge and experience, students are unable to read the texts, grids or objects.

The linguistic exchange that enables this process, nurtures creativity and urges us to be resourceful with words as well as our materials and skills. It demands that we develop and use specific language, emphasising 'the cultural agency' (Taylor, 2003, p.7) of the LCC. If we are to memorialise, we must write it up and so, get back to the text. However, Design School has a rather contradictory privilege of *making* over writing. Unsettled with omnipresence of image and intention to engage with it through practice from our specialist field, Design School is not in the hurry to devise a glossary for other academics or interested audiences. With its lack, it misses the opportunity to lead, control and own its practice. Championing the ability to articulate it without allocating time, resources and environment for its progress and depiction in text, the School consequently undermines scholarly undertaking of its academics.

In our repositories, writing figures in design books and journals illuminating the spectrum of its qualities from typography to content. It appears in students' coursework from speech bubbles in comics to identity straplines, delivering punchlines or mirroring an image, changing meaning, as well as the shape, size and status of the matter the work has been provided in.

By playing with texts, students are renewing the old world, which is the collector's deepest desire (Benjamin, 1969: p.61), taking a cue from us, academics who present them with examples from the past in order to examine its workings, assemblages, readings and create new ones. We inscribe ourselves in both texts and practices of collecting, sharing the intimate possessions with them and so, our own memories to illustrate, make familiar and soften their tasks as shown by Burston's account here:

Listening to music has always played an important part in my life, nearly as long as studying the records themselves. As a boy, I would read mum's and dad's

singles and extended plays. They didn't have many between them, but those that they did have were records by Little Richard, Roy Orbison, The Rolling Stones, The Kinks, Johnny Cash, The Troggs, Little Eva and a rather incongruous scuffed copy of *One Step Beyond* by Prince Buster on Blue Beat Records. The centres of the records were fascinating, some with paper labels, metallic rubbed shoulders with fluorescent slabs of colour, some with ink printed on plastic, but also beautifully functional - song title, the artist, year of release, song writing credits - surrounded by legal jargon I didn't quite understand in almost microscopic typographic scale around the label.

The Blue Beat label, a silver logotype with lettering that appeared to have been cut out quickly with scissors (I didn't know that scalpels were a thing, let alone used by designers or paste up artists), without beautiful curves or rounded elements, just brash, almost irregular capitals printed in silver atop an indigo blue circular background. Decca records, home of The Rolling Stones, had an almost identical silver and blue colour scheme, but their logotype was upright, also uppercase, smoother and rounded. Nowadays I would describe it as corporate. The Kinks singles had a cerise-pink label, with PYE [records] written in black, with these three letters drawn into a circular logo that looked more high-street than rock and roll.

Nearly all of these records were protected by picture sleeves - studio portraits of the artists with typographic descriptions consisting of (solo) artist or group name, lead song title and information on whether it plays at forty-five or thirty-three revolutions per minute. The reverse of the records either had another photograph, often with scant further information but occasionally, there would be a paragraph about the artist.

Sleeve art as press release, which was a pre-cursor to hype and possibly my first exposure to a promise that to listen to the music contained within would lead to ecstasy via auditory osmosis. Those sleeve notes, song titles and artist names also introduced me to typography, graphic design and art direction, where information meets fiction, where language meets image and fantasy replaces reality. Type was set as big as newspaper headlines and in the case of the small number of albums in my parents' collection, some information was as small as writing on a medicine bottle. Did they want you to read it? Recalling the studying these records allows me to contemplate what we ask from our students to consider today: legibility and language as well as meaning and value."

We gather case studies from our lives to show the processes of development which transpire with products and services, dissecting the approaches and techniques for the purpose of learning about them. We build on the past because "[h]e who controls the past, controls the future; and he who controls the present, controls the past." (Orwell, 1949, p.44)

Thought by George Orwell in his novel *1984* whose 1<sup>st</sup> edition itself became a collectors' item, this sentence was positioned as a dictum of the project *Room 2084*. Resonating with premonition of the information age that imbues the idea of freedom from state-controlled media and used for description of surveillance in the book, we are now assessing it from a contemporary moment and in the educational setting. With our students, we are looking at design traditions and digital futures by considering new powers – corporations that not only own media, but also our tools and lines of production, from hardware to software. We ask them to reflect on how they influence their skills and affect their thinking, but also how can we design without Apple or Adobe?

Students have been known to appropriate form and content, rejecting the insistence on scholarly acumen by ignoring copyright, consent, credits and referencing. When creative impulses take over, a tendency is to lose themselves, working in gaps of the norm they are

not yet familiar with. It is sometimes challenging not to celebrate that deviancy as it also troubles the norm and responds to the business drive which generates novelty. How not to suppress these exploratory urges with slowing down and working in a reflective, iterative fashion where half-baked ideas are replaced with systematic thinking and production?

In academic research, one has to devise a clear path through gathered material, contemplating readership in advance. It will be served with alphabet, then terminology, phrasing and finally whole sentences, whilst wooed to align with the author's arguments. It is the command of words and ideas they capture that dominates the course of winning the public over.

The importance of phrasing and the link to Orwell's literary heritage and British history has been crystallised in the most troubling UK political campaign for generations – *Brexit*. The coining of the axiom "*Take back control*" allegedly by then Prime Minister David Cameron's director of communications Dominic Cummings (Helm & Iqbal, 2019) was the call for freedom from the European Union, moulded ironically to erase any vacillatory feelings of belonging to an island nation state, nostalgic for its imagined past and bolstered by unspecified defiance towards Others. Brexit will affect the future of all our students and so they should be aware of the conditions within which words and ideas were united and mobilised for such outcome.

## Practice

Practice is a term that limits its range if overused. It gets placed in arguments as a virtue above others and blocks further conversations about the areas of interest that often came out of/are integral for/to practice itself – like research, methods, technique, presentation, skill etc. It is understood that practice is a large component in life of Art and Design School, but when it overshadows all aspects of generating knowledge, it becomes thin. Without interpretative context, which amalgamates economic consideration, historical conditioning and theoretical background, practice can be reduced to an experiment difficult to prove its worth beyond the studio.

Once out of it, it becomes situated in the world and its activator, 'the practitioner' changes both – the world and the self - with this experience. Professor of anthropology Timothy Ingold holds this stance in keynote at the conference *Art, Materiality and Representation* (2018). Elevating arts practice above scientific research, as it goes beyond collection and analysis of data and establishment of facts, he advocates for the positioning of the designer at the centre of reworking the world. However, this world-maker must embrace the motion of the target as well as its change. In research, Ingold proclaims: "As you move, so what you seek." (Ingold, 2018)

This shifting firms research as practice of education, because it provides commitment to continuity beyond ourselves, passing on the knowledge to newer generations, offering experience as enlightening process and imaginative opening to the origin, to the truth. (Ingold, 2018). The truth is, of course, never to be found; it is researching or searching again that counts, driven by curiosity, generosity, care for the world and learning.

This is not an 'optimistic' account, a positive story, a useful mantra for marketing tag lines, but it is full of hope and an assurance that our environment can not only be controlled by us, but it is our responsibility. We have a duty to transfer our way of knowing, so further our cultural and embodied practices and in that sense, perform as well as hold the knowledge. This is exemplified by Burston's reflections:

In this record box, including many that were purchased to be played at paying social functions, are my personal treasures, one of which is a David Bowie single, *Diamond Dogs*. It is on the tangerine coloured Radio Corporation of America (RCA) label, his home as a recording artist throughout the 1970s. RCA was another three initial record company with a logotype honed out of well-crafted letters, not from a typical typeface, but modern, typo/graphic newness that sat well with the futuristic music imbedded in the grooves. My primary association with the RCA label is Bowie first, but subsequently with others too.

My copy is an ex-jukebox one with its centre punched out as was the case with all used copies that would crop up in record shops and occasionally corner shops and newsagents. It was well worn when I bought it but played well and still does. I have the song on so many formats I no longer need to play this copy, but I like to know it is still there, should I want to revisit it.

Its b-side *Holy Holy* is a song from an earlier Bowie period, from a time when jukebox records sometimes featured a previous hit on the reverse. Put your money in the jukebox, select the new song, and then select the one you're more familiar with. Newness rewards comfort - comfort rewards the new. When originally released, I was too young to know what jukebox records were and when I bought this single and played the flip for the first time, it was new to me - history presented as new art on a second-hand record and I began to collect vinyl.

Near to the singles case are wooden wine crates full of compact discs. One of these crates contains all of my CD copies of Bowie albums, along with the albums of other related recording artists, collaborators, friends, co-conspirators. Sitting on top of them is the unopened 8 track copy of David Bowie's album *Low*. A transparent cellophane wrapper acts as a protective layer and beneath this, a thin brown card wallet with a punched out rounded rectangular cut out window that reveals the album artwork. The artwork is reduced in size from its original twelve-inch square to less than a quarter of its size, resembling a pocket-size pulp fiction paperback rather than a music album. Bowie's low-profile portrait is visible but the album title is hidden, if it exists on this format at all. The RCA logo sits on top of the brown card - faded, but proud.

Due to the way that tracks were divided for 8 track cartridge players, a long since defunct music playing machine, the tracks here aren't listed as side A and side B, but rather tracks 1, 2, 3 and 4 with each containing approximately a quarter of the album. On the side, it reads CARTOUCHE STEREO 8 TRACK CARTRIDGE. It doesn't say DAVID BOWIE LOW, so one can only presume that this outer brown card sleeve is to be discarded. If you were to regularly buy these cartridges and have sufficient quantities to file them neatly then you could read the artwork on the spines, rotated through ninety degrees reading top to bottom like a book collection."

In Design School, we admire and cherish practice and look to develop it at every opportunity – we are, after all, experts in that field, but we often neglect the chances for expansion of our abilities that will extend, refine and sustain the practice itself – demonstrations of specialisms, academic trainings, collaboration with industry, pedagogic exchanges, career mentorships etc.

Burdened by heavy administration, instrumentalising of the changes too frequently instigated by college governance and dealing with large numbers of students, we tend to position these career developments as secondary to *making*, which dominates our work. Aware of the rich set of skills inhabiting *creation*, we are not claiming that it is less valuable than above stated aspects of one's professional engagement; we are rather suggesting that it is only a part of

design process which undergoes a thinking stage, envisioning and selection that often happens outside of the making, in everyday life or times and spaces not allocated for these activities.

The visceral, holistic, rewarding practice develops us. It opens up our thinking or rather directs it by exposing what is possible to achieve with material, technology, approach, but that needs capturing for the purpose of project or field advancement. The records of progress are essential in evaluation of education experience – they show us how something came about. As the captivation and presence of the *Low* album inspires, we must pay attention to the errors, problems and failures even more than to our successes.

Ingold and Taylor see artists close to anthropologists as they recognise that they observe (as ethnographers), but also produce artwork which is, like in all research – the new knowledge. The researcher-artist or artist-researcher maps the work of art and has a perspective on it from inside-out as well as outside-in (Bolt, 2019). Artistic research, known as practice-led research, practice as research (PAR), creative practice research (CPR) gives artists a voice in academy instead of confining them to the object of study by experts in other areas.

### **Artefact**

Collectors are strategists who constantly refine their tactical instinct and haptic experience by pondering over objects in terms of *property* and *possession*. As a pedagogical method in design practice, collecting is rich, integral and inspiring mode of planning and executing advancement. It is an activity that carries a sense of joy, care and potential from our private spheres into a professional environment and cultivates them as the working practice. For every new artefact, we go back to the old, so “things”, stuff, items are vital repository in design teaching.

With the new configuration of the Design School that demanded instrumentalisation of the agile working spaces popular in business environments, our books, artefacts and tools were removed. We were asked to work in open-plan offices with little shelving. We were provided with computers as the only means of preparation, display and recording of class curriculum, delivery and progress. As one would expect, objects and books crept back in to the space...

The argument for this change was about cost and utility of space usage that college management felt could be improved. Finding our offices often empty, they concluded that they are not cost-effective and poured us in to large, single rooms. They seem to have forgotten that when we are not in the offices, we are in classrooms and studios which are already large and full of a variety of interactions, from which we need to rest and reflect in a comfortable, quieter, more secluded setting. That requires diving into a book, thinking over a cuppa or just playing with an object. Immediate communication with our peers might have improved, but at the expense of critical personal contemplation and so, leaving the ethos of Design School questioned.

Learning happens through iteration, so academia preserves itself through repetition. We have studied things and found books, which were passed on, borrowed by tutors and peers or kept in the library. Our students do the same, rummaging the Internet as well as their house possessions. We see the fruits of their collectors' excitement daily, from the way they wear their objects to how they make them. We contribute to this process ourselves, as Burston does with his donation to the archive.

His 8 track of *Low* is a personal experiment, a paradox with provenance. It is an object from a collection of well-played and loved records, compact discs and tapes. We will never know



what is written on its side because he is never going to open it. The temptation is there, but it will remain unwrapped. To tear the protective plastic layer, to unsheathe the brown cardboard sleeve, to remove the cartridge from the sunset yellow *Low* artwork, to put the cartridge in an 8 track machine would be to render it, as an object, redundant. As soon as play is pressed, the tape could disintegrate. Its functionality and its utility are irrelevant, as it is not a means to listen to *Low*; it exists precisely because it will not allow him to do so. To listen to *Low*, he reaches for the various vinyl copies or a digital file, but the alleged original stays sealed. Its stasis within the collection is delightful to him because it is untouched and untested.

In a quest to encourage students to embrace seemingly static observation as an academic practice and consequently see the world as designers first, rather than immediately and always engage with it, this year we provided them with a book "*How to See the World*" (2015) by Nicholas Mirzoeff. Thinking about the images and its reflections in the whole realm of visual culture, Mirzoeff was able to verbalise the visual and support the main principle in our teaching – articulating practice. On surprise of the entire school, Mirzoeff came to see our students' work upon learning on Twitter that we are using his book as a core text on a graphic design course.

The staff were delighted with the visit and the students had a new experience – the signing of their own copies of the book. They were flattered by the conversation with the author, honoured that they are talking to the Professor, ecstatic that they shared him with the students he teaches in New York, but it is the book that will sit on their shelf at home reminding them of that encounter when they leave us and move on.

Still, we are meant to embrace, accept and adopt the nomadic culture of "no stuff". Our core business of education and its legacy feel less important than its management's new modes. This profound change and approach to meaningful objects within learning, is without a doubt affecting the way we teach. What is the shop for if there are no goods inside?

Objects must be present and performed for knowledge transmission to occur. We demand them from our students – output, portfolios – and we ought to have them too. We presented and defended our objects value to the LDF audience from the stage and advocated for their inclusion in a future design archive. This act of surrender of our possessions to a design community, especially to its young members is our professional responsibility, however much we believe that only in our careful hands those artefacts will realise their full potential.

For the collector, Benjamin claims:

*...not only books but also copies of books have their fates. And in this sense, the most important fate of a copy is its encounter with him, with his own collection. For a collector's attitude toward his possessions stems from an owner's feeling of responsibility toward his property. The phenomenon of collecting loses its meaning as it loses its personal owner. Ownership is the most intimate relationship one can have to objects. (Benjamin, 1931, p.61)*

An offering of Burston's album is therefore, multi-fold due to its charity, curious format, locked value and position within Bowie's canon as the result of 'the Berlin Years' that only exist in imagination of his fans – a dystopian, fantasy space scarred with the Cold War. We can visit new Berlin, but we can never visit Bowie's Berlin. Format and content of this object are both important, particularly within developing post-Bowie paradigm and the lack of technological revivalism of 8 track cassettes unlike nostalgia for vinyl records.

**Text/Practice/Artefact**

Object is constituted, made into, temporarily stabilised in the process of becoming. (Ingold, 2018) We can state the same for its collector as described by Benjamin: "For what else is this collection but a disorder to which habit has accommodated itself to such an extent it can appear as order?" (1931[1969], p.60) Those habits make a discipline. They are formed of embodied performances - gestures, voices and movement that cannot be repeated or reproduced as our objects, students and us are never the same. In interactions with each and all, we change and so, the presence of all these components is required for successful transmission of knowledge.

We accept, however that this process is as mediated as any archive is and it devises a specific system of representation that makes our school distinctive – from team teaching, switching between theory and practice staff and direct engagement of industry actors in our curriculum. Even though our communication teams would not pick these characteristics as our unique selling point (USP), they are a reason for staff pride and students' choice to study with us.

Developing such an approach, we internalised this constituted pedagogy, memorialising it for generations of design educators willing to evoke it in their classrooms, workshops and studios, embracing them as new signifiers in our collective agency. They, like us, must write about their experiences, preserving mnemonic remnants of their exchanges so the design industry, sector, culture and scholarship take their work into account and our legacy does not disappear. As central to Western epistemology, writing is equated with memory and knowledge (Taylor, 2003), but 'musealizing history' is not without dangers. Taken out of the relational contexts, practices and artefacts can lose their authenticity by being preserved (Huyssen, 2000). This liability must not stop us from continuing, improving, appropriating and thinking about them.

Design pedagogy can only consist of this complementary cycle – one must make as well as write about it. This doubling of actions and efforts marks our slow research practice, but places us on top of academic commune. To take that spot with confidence, we must teach ourselves as well as young designers to record our successes better, articulate them more often and shout them out louder.

In aspiring modern organisations such as our college is, the needs of the professional field often fall behind quantitative rationality. Structured via power relations, our rigid organisational aesthetic is unlike our teaching - divorced from our understandings of design and educational practice and sometimes even forceful about alterations to our sense of identity. If it does not match the new business criteria, one feels pushed to make it become so, regardless of its effect on students and staff pedagogical contract.

As pedagogues, we are confident about that process because our practices, colleagues, materials and students request incessant revisions to acquiring knowledge, but when our governance is asked to open-up, shift the focus or embrace vulnerability, we are facing stellar gatekeepers. If only they knew that the students who praise our school, when reflecting on their time with us, mostly remember our care and passion for design and its communal benefit.

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Craig Burston is a Senior Lecturer in the Design School, London College of Communication, UAL. His ongoing practice based research explores the relationship between iconic representation, memory and communication and has manifested itself through a range of output including audio-visual collaborations, gallery installations, research seminars and comic strips. His commercial clients include Channel 4, Mother and Arts Council of England. Other work continues in partnership with Pre-War Black Ghetto and The Comix Reader. With photographer and digital media artist Richard Tomlinson, Craig is also the co-founder of skip-rat designs, latterly skipratmedia.

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