"Visual communication is universal and international; it knows no limits of tongue, vocabulary, or grammar, and it can be perceived by the illiterate as well as by the literate...[The visual arts, as] the optimum forms of the language of vision, are, therefore, an invaluable educational medium."

from language of vision. 1944
“Consequently, Western education has been concerned foremost with words and numbers. In our schools, reading, writing and arithmetic are practiced as skills that detach the child from sensory experience, and this estrangement intensifies during the high school and college years as the demands of words and numbers grow and childish things must be put aside. Only in kindergarten and first grade is education based on the cooperation of all the essential powers of the human mind; thereafter this natural and sensible procedure is dismissed as an obstacle to training in the proper kind of abstraction.”

from visual thinking. vision + value series: education of vision. 1965
102 VISUAL DESIGN THEORY

from greek theoria [a looking at, viewing beholding]
contemplation or speculation, as opposed to action

contrasted with greek praxis [practice]
rudolf arnheim [1904 - 2007] theorist and perceptual psychologist
author of art and visual perception

“Matisse was once asked whether a tomato looked to him when he ate it as it did when he painted it. “No,” he replied, “when I eat it I see it like everybody else.” The ability to capture the “sense” of the tomato in pictorial form distinguishes the response of the painter from the frustrating, shapeless gasping by which the nonartist reacts to what may be a similar experience.”
He didn't want to get lost in the woods.
So he made a very small forest, with just one tree in it.
READINGS
EXERCISES
STEP 09

Stretch your shoes and while standing directly behind the take two steps back.

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STEP 10

You are now looking at a disembodied circle. The limb that you were once part of has been purged from your body as the wall has been transformed! You are now looking at the original circle as a window to its original self. The circle now exists as an outer boundary or a barrier. Through a series of generative operations, the participant has experienced something we now profound that were passage from interior to exterior.

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STEP 11

Take several steps forward such that you are inside the ring of stones. At this point you come to understand the verticality of the disembodied circle as the task begins.

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STEP 12

A third component of the exercise below is sharing, include a discussion with the students as to why they chose to place the original circle where they did and the implications of placing the circle in the center with the contact such as buildings, trees, streets, and amphitheaters.
VISUALDESIGNTHEORY.SPACE
SYLLABUS + CALENDAR
EVALUATION /// WRITING + IMAGE
LECTURE SYNOPSIS. By an open window overlooking a cobbled yard, a cobweb covered urinal in the corner of the room, the iron gates of her mother’s Hollywood Hills house creep open. Whirring drones and glowing screens fill the hillsides and are gesticulating wildly on the color set outside on the balcony table. I light my cigarette and walk through the sliding door, “Have you heard? The sky is falling, and, quite apropos: Chicken is king!” My only real interest is butterfly hunting. Butterflies are the material for a visual revolution and accommodate my appetite for trying to hit a moving target. Patrick, the last vestige of Britain’s vanished empire appears without stubble and wearing his best ostrich-leather boots.

EXERCISE SYNOPSIS. He has a knack for mixing avant-garde ideas with more traditional techniques and convincingly using words like ‘night-blooming’ to describe our evening expedition. Tonight we will be exploring uncharted territory with seven bottles instead of one that range from shades of honey to amber.

READING SYNOPSIS. We pass through a bubble gum pink décor as we find the curb and follow it to the bounds of the historic city. What was then a semirural part of town, where they grew their own vegetables and had a menagerie of ducks, geese, a goat and many dogs and cats was now searing hot and there wasn’t any running water. Somehow, I feel like an amoeba more than anything else and in an ethereal love affair in what was an iconic watery landscape.

CONCLUSION + REFLECTION. We begin rolling for a film that hope-fully taps into nostalgia. The stripped tangelos, pomelos, and satsu-mas lining the shelves begin to slow our pace and so we stop to build a fire. A healthy dose of torrid infatuation takes over as Patrick describes a Monarch he pinned last year that possessed lacquered lips and pronounced curves. Seems that on that particular day millions of butterflies composed an American patchwork of love and loss across a river valley.
‘A question. A question I put to myself as an architect. I wonder: what is this [Magic of the Real] – Café at a students’ hostel, a thirties picture by Baumgartner. Men, just sitting around - and they’re enjoying themselves too. And I ask myself: can I achieve that as an architect – an atmosphere like that, its intensity, its mood. And if so, how do I go about it? And then I think: yes, you can. And I think: no you can’t.’ (Zumthor, 2006)

Zumthor’s closing question and unsure response highlights the perceived limits of the architect when the product is considered without the advantages of time, architecture as frozen in time. Yet he recognizes how the photograph is able to move beyond the split second of the frame and capture the unique qualities of the environment. In that image, our mind is able to read soft conversations, cigarette smoke, and dishes shuffling around a kitchen. These elements, seldom captured in architectural representations, serve as the most fertile territory for the designer.

Architect John Hejduk also places great importance in the role of the photograph as a form of architectural representation. In his essay “The Flatness of Depth,” he poses the following: “What is the reality of architecture? What are architectural representations of reality? Is its (architecture) realization absolutely necessary?” (Hejduk, 1980) These questions frame what he describes as a “haunting obsession” (Hejduk, 1980) with all the “numerous masks of apparent reality” (Hejduk, 1980) and the complexities attached to the representation of architecture — its conception, image, representation, and realization. The essay, and the questions it poses, clearly holds great significance for Hejduk as it not only serves as the forward to Judith Turner Photographs: Five Architects but also appears twice in his seminal work Mask of Medusa, printed a half decade later.

In outlining all the numerous forms in which architecture can present itself, drawing, photograph, model, as well as the physical...
building. Hejduk concludes that the photograph, “a single, still, fixed photograph,” (Hejduk, 2008) embodies an emotional integrity that comes the closest to approximating architectural experience. Hejduk goes on to argue that spatial perception evolves from a series of still frames captured in unequal intervals. While static in their composition, they are anything but in the sense that the subject brings a multitude of experience to the visual conversation. Hejduk concludes that in seeing a photograph “the mind of the observer is heightened to an extreme, exorcising out from a single fixed photographic image all its possible sensations and meanings.” (Hejduk, 2008)

Hejduk’s “total architecture is made up of parts and fragments and fabrications” (Hejduk, 2008) and Zumthor’s Magic of the Real resides beyond mere quantitative measurement. The key to both of these arguments is that they transcend the mere mechanical eye of the camera and consider time as an integral component of any still frame. In other words, our memories are most clearly engraved when their source is created by the ever-changing simplicity of the everyday.
DIVISADERO BY MICHAEL ONDAATJE

Everything is biographical, Lucian Freud says. What we make, why it is made, how we draw a dog, who we are drawn to, why we cannot forget. Everything is collage, even genetics. There is the hidden presence of others in us, even those we have known briefly. We contain them for the rest of our lives, at every border we cross.

Who was Coop, really? We never knew what his parents were like. We were never sure what he felt about our family, which had harbored him and handed him another life. He was the endangered heir of a murder. As a teenager he was hesitant, taking no more than he was given. At dawn he’d come out from one of the sheds like a barn cat, stretching as if he’d been sleeping for days, when in fact he had returned from a pool hall in San Francisco three or four hours earlier, hitchhiking the forty miles back in the darkness. I wondered even then how he would survive or live in a future world. We watched as he muttered, thinking things out, while he stripped down a tractor or welded a radiator from an abandoned car onto a ’58 Buick. Everything [is] collage.
his hand reached out
with a robust grip
orange drool plunging down
to my arm - drip after drip

“wie heißt du?” he asked
in a baritone sense
lethargic almost
grip - never ceasing to tense

mother yanked me beyond
his grip still intact
remembering to this day
grasping - in public how to act

growing up in a country,
that is not yet your own
yet transporting away
feeling as if you've left home

for me it planted flowers,
that are still yet to bloom.

as for now, the buds
are still enduring the bloom
flourishing in junctures of each day
while still prospering through gloom

a homeowner, twice landlord
and somehow a wife
business owner, design student
a glimpse into my life

an optimist at heart
continuing to venture
into a life of discomfort
and exploration at the center

words beg me to write them
in all different places
to capture life’s story
through varying phases

when days glimmer with flowers
seem solely to glisten
or night falls real heavy
and I need them to listen

each day is a process
I continue to unpack
bravery, patience.
surrender feels like a quack

but here I persist
in both shadow and light
my surrounds seem exceptional
what’s before me feels bright.
BRENDAN WALLACE/// ROSA

I was small enough my eyes only just peered over the brim of the dinner table which was troubling. This was a dirty feeling, so I politely walked away from our family meal to find a nice patch of yard outside (I believe it was raining).

To my right was a white rose I hadn’t quite noticed and in a moment of admiration I unearthed the whole flower, observed its small body, just to swallow it in a quick rage. I ran to my mother, telling her what I did, and I can still see her face when she told me I hadn’t, she never planted a flower bed, that it had never been there. Her eyes lacked volume that day. I spit red on her feet, the color of puddles in Gethsemane.

She (rose) never returned. I waited, gagged myself, dreamt I might open my chest to see her hanging limp on the arbor as a burgeoning crucifix. I dedicated my life to her in such absence, writing anthologies called Rosa in an effort to bring her home.

What I would forfeit for them to see! For my mom to see and for me to see! Maybe I consider killing myself and donate my body to science to disprove that the specimen is dead, that such transparency is a foothold, and my joy is not for nothing. There are no alternative to institute the conceptual and physical beauty to which I fell, and I might behold the pursuit in showing others that grief. My stomach is a rosarium. I think I might die at the spot where I found her. Clawing my throat, screaming, “ROSA!” I feel the cuts from your thorns being swallowed- an eternal marker of the red rose. Fucking flower.

My joy is not for nothing.
This is my first memory:

A yellow wall and an ultramarine floor. I was born into a world of color. Before I understood most other things about myself, I understood color and its importance to me. Aquamarine, was kept close to my heart. And, as I grew, so did my understanding of it. Aquamarine evolved into Cerulean. I tried to understand the hues that hung on my wall. Vibrant yellows, blues, light greens, and dark blues. My understanding of color seemed bound to my understanding of myself. As a kid, I couldn’t help but dream, think in color. I wanted to be more than the blue I thought I was, always dreaming. Dancing between (heather) snowflakes and running through (hunter) woods, I ran into myself.

I learned to merged prose with technicolor and found solace in books. In the smile of my librarians, and in the anticipation of my heart. In these books, I could dream of becoming a poet, a writer, a zoologist, and a doctor. An anthropologist, a historian, a believer in the power of all things. I felt I could be everything. Because, in the same way, that gravity ties me to the earth, this was the natural order of things. As I grew, my focus narrowed into a dimmer version of myself. I became more sensible and decided to settle into blue instead of the vibrant azure.

Not for long. Soon I realized that life is a place for imagination finalists to prevail. That the colors of twilight aren’t just orange but knotted into the clouds there’s also pink, and blue.

Magical and magnificent.

This is my first memory of my current self.
There are a couple of downright unfortunate things about existing as a human being.

There is world hunger, overwhelming poverty, and hypocrisies of bugatti driving bureaucrats contesting the finer points of capitalism. When looking down these loaded barrels we might say, “mmm, that sounds like something that can wait until tomorrow...”. But no. It can’t.

9 in 10 of us will die at some point in our lifetimes. And seeing as we haven’t an earthly clue what “time” is, it is disputable whether this ambiguous tomorrow will ever come.

Not only that; it gets worse. Everything you ever think, or make, or experience will be washed away by the sands of time. So, that’s unfortunate. “time”.

Like I said, there are a couple of downright unfortunate things about existing as a human being. But while this severely limited little concept called time is a binding hapless contingency of the human condition may be a bit of a downer, it has created (and creates) one of the most compelling paradoxes we can perceive: time may be limited but all the possible ways in which we use and exist within it are not.

Not knowing what “tomorrow” is makes today all the much more imperative. I spend every today in a glorious love affair with the world of ideas because it is a world exempt from that hapless little contingency of the human condition.

Someone - probably famous - once said, “My mind and my heart will always be at war, so I decided to fall in love with imagination instead.” I couldn’t fall in love with war (as I am sure few can), nor with injustice, inaccessibility, or inequity; so, instead, I’ve decided to fall in love with the world of ideas, of imagination, complexity and pure unadulterated confusion.

I am sorry if my existential optimism triggers any existential crisis, but I challenge you to revel in it; to revel in the temporariness. Dread can either drive a man mad, or it can challenge him to grapple with the cruel, crazy, and beautiful world in all of its baffling complexity. Here I am, and I’ve got nothing but time.

“You miss 100% of the shots you don’t take.”
- Wayne Gretzky
- Michael Scott
- Jessica Rice
There is a romantic scribbler on the other side of the glass. I am guided by the weight of packed snow, the breathless room that seems to lack gravity, and my slobber-hardened stolen stuffed animal, hidden in some absent corner. I can clearly imagine the prickly pear cactus in my feet, the image of my room in the dark, the good sandals on the deck, and the jingle of a dog-collar through the screen door. There are means of mapping that have included the color of the desert, the stranger in the red hat, and the elevated conversations of mid-June.

I found myself immersed in Russian Literature while at the same time still perplexed by the perfect heels in a loaf of Wonderbread. New passages were carved, some even shined with chrome-covered crusts.

These are my cartographic grounds. Filled only with my collections: explications of a present, but-up-until-now-undefined phenomenon that exists in my environment. My maps expose, unravel, invert, and even generate layers of geographies, both tangible and intangible, that I actively incorporate into my working stock of “reality.” I’ve started becoming more aware of the maps I read and follow and have begun wondering what I have not yet seen. What layers exist but that I am not aware of? What is the trip home without i40 and what is air-travel without an engine? What are words without narrative and what are facts when truth is in fiction?

There are whisperings of deeper realities all around me. These are where I hope to someday dwell. To stand in the gritty sunbeam and watch the romantic scribbler chart a new path. I’ll stand here and feel my eyelashes tingle with tears as new geographies, unbound by reason and restraint, weave into ballads of the sublime.
[L+R] ATHENS IN HIS GLASSES + DAILY ROME + FOLLOWING A CELLIST THROUGH VIENNA
SCHUYLER DANIEL /// DANIEL_BECOMEWHOYOUARE.PDF /// TEACHING ASSISTANT
IF YOUR BIRTHDATE IS SEPTEMBER 15, you are an honest, imaginative, and humble person. You are likely to drift off into a world of your own though Virgo. It’s okay because it doesn’t affect your view of reality but rather lets you escape momentarily.

The grandson of a celebrated fighter pilot and son of a CIA analyst, Ambroziak rebelled against the Icarian vantage point so cherished by his elders and ultimately turned to the urban tactics and strategies of contemporary theorists. He was born 421 days after Armstrong and Aldrin set foot on the lunar surface. A suburban childhood provided him with the unnerving stability of a never changing frame where the only evidence of time passing existed in the early morning hum of lawnmowers. Most of his best childhood memories occurred at night... being woken up at 3am to follow a comet through the sky with his father, lighting lanterns in the field behind his family home, and walking on the beach in the summertime.

Searching for meaning, for emotion, and guided by rare friendship, he turned to the realm of dream and found himself surrounded by glass towers, cenotaphs, and endless libraries... a proper fiction in which to raise a family.

His publications include Michael Graves: Images of a Grand Tour (2005) and Infinite Perspectives: Two Thousand Years of Three Dimensional Mapmaking (1999) with Princeton Architectural Press. He and his wife Katherine Ambroziak have been finalists in design competitions that include the National World War II Memorial and a design for St. Mark’s Coptic Canadian Village.

In 2008, Brian Ambroziak founded timescape lab with Andrew McLellan and Katherine Ambroziak. The theoretical designs of timescape lab offer a unique framework for considering architecture, both in terms of its representation and its physical existence. The office’s methods of representation rely heavily upon systems of two-dimensional, three-dimensional, and four-dimensional montage embracing fragmentary strategies that allow for open-ended interpretation and bias the acts of writing and collage.
EDUARDO AND JULIANO

“I can explain it to you
but I can’t understand it for you.”