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Howcan the context of a site effect the interpretation of text? IntroductionThis research proposal will be undertaken within the artand design sector.

The research proposal will examine the relationship betweentext art and site specificity, exploring how context effects text, withreference to the relationship between communication and community and theshareability of a public language. It will also consider the use of linguafranca (Foster, 1996, p. 182) and systems of linguistics (Saussure, 2013, p19), including the use of shifters within text. The importance of my research proposal is twofold: firstly, to develop my own practice and secondly to add new knowledge to the field. Thisresearch proposal will allow my practice to explore these themes and develop themaccordingly. The research proposal will employ practice-led research (Bolt, 2005).

The practice-led research will explore how the context of the sites usedto exhibit text-based art-work changes the meaning of the text used. I willachieve this by experimentation with several text pieces and sites, exploringurban, rural and digital spaces. By placing text within sites, I will gainfirst-hand knowledge and experiences of the process and the outcomes. Research into theorists and contemporary artists will alsoinform this research and allow it to sit within a historical context. Thisresearch will focus on the use and development of linguistics.

The research willbe considered with reference to the contemporary climate. This is of high importanceas the key text being examined could be considered as outdated My researchproposal will consider the issues of the current climate, with reference to; the fast-paced changing nature of the world, both physical and digital and thegrowing ease to access information Considering how these factors affect theexperience of it and how it overloads our daily lives. This will add newknowledge to the field.  Aimsand Objectives The telos of my research proposal can be broken down into subsections. Firstly, I will explore the shareability of a public language, with referenceto Hegel’s’ social before individual theory (Theron, 2013, p.

2). The importanceof our shared, learnt conventions will be considered. This will beproblematised with the notion of the individual and of interpretation. I will then explore the notion of site specificity as anomadic practice and the importance of mobility within site-specific art. Thiswill allow how the context of a site changes the text to be explored. Grosenick(2002) states that a new context can have a powerful effect on the meaning ofan object, or text, which could lead to the text becoming something new.

Thisis certainly true for Kaye (2013, p. 1) who states that movingsite-specific work allows it to become something new. In turn this also allowsthe dialectical relationship between the site and the text to be explored(Owens, 1998, p. 55) in relation to each other. In exploring different contexts, text and site can be considered in relation to information overload within asite (Goldsmith, 2011).  MethodologyThe methodology used during this research proposal will bea mixed method approach. Practice led research as handability will allow fornew knowledge to be gained (Bolt, 2005), will be key in answering my researchquestion and will allow the research to draw on contemporary issues and sites.

The other main method used will be readings into keytheories and contemporary artists, with use of visual materials (Rose, 2013, p19), to give my research a historical context. The two will inform each other. LiteratureReviewThe key pieces ofliterature reviewed include; Kwon (2002), Eco (1989), Burkeand Cowley (2000) and Kaye (2013). Wittgenstein (2007a), Hegel (1976) andVygotsky (1962) will be looked at with reference to linguistic development.

The shareability of language is explored by Wittgenstein (1962)and is essential to the successful use of any language: Wittgenstein (1978) goeson to state the impossibility of a private language systems. While Vygotskystates that language is one of man’s greatest tools, for human understanding(Vygotsky, 1962, p. 108). The importance of shared systems become just asimportant within text-based art, as they are within linguistics. In followingthese systems, shareability should be ensured, allowing communication to takeplace. Flusser (2002, p.

184) explains the importance of systems incommunications as a process in which the original system is changed by anothersystem in such a way that the result is greater than at the start, showing theimportance of both the author and the reader. While Fludernik (1991) explains this in terms of communication as a code. Barthes (1977, p. 19) also sets out a codes theory, referring to the mysterywithin texts and their multiple meanings, which may relate to individualinterpretations. While the system of language remains unchanged, languages doevolve through time (Miller, 2001, p. 299). Meaning that language continues tobe a contemporary issue that we continue to try and understand.

The notion of a public language can be understood insimilar terms to Hegel’s social before individual theory (Theron, 2013, p. 2), looking at how we learn shared systems of behaviours within a society. This hasa clear relation to Vygotsky’s social learning theory (Langford, 2005, p. 137). Both outline that our own language is mediated by the languages of others, which is central to our need to communicate. Murrill (2015) states that tocommunicate successfully, we need to hold a collective understanding, of standardisedconventions, this is similar to Wittgenstein’s writings on public language andshows that the understanding of this phenomenon has stood the test of time(Kripke, 1984, p. vii). Showing the importance of systems within language andhow this gives language meaning, by developing from social interaction(Vygotsky, 1962, p.

xxxvii). Language determines how we perceive the worldaround us (Burke and Cowley, 2000, p. 13) and effects how we relate to the worldto ourselves. Contemporary artist Martin Creed, states the importance ofsystems within our chaotic world (Rose, 2016). However, Eco (1979, p.

15)believes that these systems are still flexible as meaning depends on itsrelation to other words within the system and how linguistics are looked atfrom the view point of the present day (Saussure, 2013, p. xxi). This is due to themutability of language and how our interpretation of it changes. Burke andCowley (2000, p. 278) relate this to social forces related to language, cultureand values and attitudes of a place and time. Figure 1 Holzer, J. (2007) I See You.

Projection Jakobson(1957, p. 349) explores one of these systems, the use of shifters and indexicalwords within linguistics and how they can only be understood when used within acontext (Peirce, 1931-58). The use of shifters allows for direct communicationto take place between the text and the reader. Eco (1979, p. 12, 208) sets theseout as conversational texts this includes the use of written questions. Fludernik(1991) states that shifting is synonymous with conversations and turn taking. Lacan(1949, p. 32) takes a different stance and relates shifters to the issue withthe nature of the self, with the reader able to identify themselves within thetext.

Saussure (Culler, 1985) also commented on relational identity, focusingon the second person pronouns and how they can be interpreted in multiple ways; as individuals or as many.  Contemporaryartist Jenny Holzer makes use of personal pronouns as a means of directcommunication between herself and their audience, in works such as, I See You (2007) (fig. 1). The multipleinterpretations of how ‘ you’ may be read, could affect the authors intentionsfor the work. Interpretation problematises systems of language, thesuccess of language is based upon its ability for us to make sense of the signsin which it is made up (Peirce, 1931-58), the use of interpretation means thatwe may not all be making the same sense of the signs. Eco (1989, p. 21) statesthat there can only be a limited number of interpretations of anyone thing. However, other theorists, such as Rorty (Brusseau, 2005, p.

85) opposed this, stating that the number ofinterpretations can be infinite. For Wittgenstein (2007a) interpretationbecomes an issue with the use of text. He believes that the openness of thetext leads to the author losing control over the meaning of the text. The issueof interpretation become further problematised here, with Eco’s andWittgenstein’s definition of openness opposing each other. For Eco, theopenness of the work refers to work which is not yet complete, work that is inmovement and define texts open to several interpretation as closed texts (1979, p. 106). For Barthes (1977, p. 79) the terminology is set out in simpler terms, with open texts being able to be read in multiple ways and closed texts onlyhaving one clear meaning.

Other issues with interpretation stem from signifiers andsignified, with each having the ability to hold multiple readings. Thesignified may change when the context changes. Site-specificity becomesimportant, as the signifier is located within it, but changed by it, as itsmeaning is not self-contained, but instead determined by the interpretation onit as to read the sign, the audience must first find locate the signifier(Kaye, 2013, p. 3). Carter (2004) believes that the author’s work is inherentlyreflexive, with writing as a singular voice (Nancy, 1991, p. 64) and which is a silentexpression of an individual’s thoughts and becomes inseparable from innerspeech (Vygotsky, 1988, p. 274-279). This also relates to Vygotsky’s theory ofcognitive development (1978, p.

32) and Hegel’s view on there being no thoughtwithout language (Sokolov, 1972). In doing sothe author is creating immortality for the text (Foucault, 1980, p. 117). However, the intention of the author maybe lostamongst the audience’s interpretations. Barthes(1977, p.

142) outlines this with death of the author. Foucault (1980, p. 120) alsobelieves that there is inherently a link between writing and death, statingthat the act of writing from the author is voluntary obliteration of theirselves.

However, this may not be as much as an issue as Wittgenstein believes, as he states that interpretation becomes an issue with the use of text. However, Beardsley (1954) suggests that the author’s intention should becomeless important than the audiences’ interpretations of it, Barthes (1977) wouldrelate this to the birth of the reader. Eco (1979, p. 55) agreed with this, statingthat the audience brings closure to the work. Contemporary artist Martin Creedembraces this within his work, believing that the audience make up fiftypercent of his work (Fondazione Nicola Trussard, 2006). Regardless of thisFoucault (1980, p.

115) states that text points outwardly to the reader, meaningits use is fitting for use in works trying to communicate with the reader. Ecodescribes this a work in movement and states it is essential for contemporaryart work (1989, p. 86). My research will add to this body of research, byconsidering use of language and our understanding of it in the present.

Researchwill consider how systems may have changed, with the introduction of theinternet and social media allowing us access to more than one social context. Wittgenstein(2007b) states that the limits of language are the limits of the world. However, has the increase of information overload widened the limits of ourworld? Urban landscapes are complex sites which are full of excess information(Wodiczko, 2013, p. 33). However, Vygotsky (1978, p. 90) states that we can uselanguage to organise the world into categories. Mertens (2000) believes that there is a link betweeninterpretation and our built-in desire to try and make sense of things aroundus.

Contemporaryartist Lawrence Weiner agrees with this and states that this is why audiencesrespond to art-works (McLean-Ferris, 2012). In trying to make meaning out ofthe situation, the audience will perceive both the signifier and the signified(Husserl, 2012), which allows them to build their own interpretations of thework. There is a possibility that the use of an economy of wordscould go some way to combat the issue of interpretation. Contemporary artistTracy Emin agrees with this, believing it would lead to easier access to theworks (2007). Rex (Burke and Cowley, 2000, p. 483) states that the use ofwritten language requires a much higher level of explicitly to be understoodthan spoken language. Burke and Cowley (2000, p. 483) disagree with this, stating that written language is the original language, as it is more authoritativethan the spoken word and holds more truth, as it is able to be far more eloquentin its delivery, than spoken language.

Saussure (2013, p. 28) agrees that thespoken and written language are separate, but related. However, he views thewritten language as a secondary language, dependent on a sign system. For Eco(1979, p. 246), however it is the former and he states that the process ofcommunicating with written text, leads to the text being interpreteddifferently from the intentions of the author. This is particularly importantto Eco, as he strives for a model reader, who will read the text exactly as theauthor intended.

This can be difficult with the intertextuality of all writing. Texts cannot be completely independent of other texts, they are always within acontext which affects how they are read (Kristeva, 1977, p. 64-91). Hawkes (1992, p. 136) states that written forms of language emitmessages about their nature through the visual means of typography.

Rose (2013, p. 189) believes that once the text becomes visual it is known more as an imageand becomes part of visual culture. When Language becomes a visual sign, itcommunicates with the site it is located in, as it is posing a physical existence within the site. Writtentexts are inherently dialogical and must be understood in terms of how theywill be responded to by the reader (Wetherell et al, 2001, p. 70). The use of handwriting within text has also been examined.

Eminstates that the use of handwriting can further the openness of the text (2007), a thought similar to Eco’s (1989, p. 102). He comments that the use ofhandwriting adds to the quality and nature of it as a sign. Lyons (1977, p18, 107) takes this further and relates the use of handwriting to the author as anindividual as the handwriting of one person, can never be the handwriting ofanother. Research into site-specificity is also key to this researchproposal as the site in which the work sits is directly related to the issue ofinterpretation. Making the link between text and context, each site has its ownlocalised context which can change the text.

Roberts (2012) states the importantpart that social and cultural contexts play in artworks and highlights theimportance of these going beyond just the art world. Vygotsky (1987) also addressesthe issue of socio-culture of locations and how intellectually adaptationchange from culture to culture. He goes on to set out that this is due to theuse within each culture being determined by individual sets of beliefs andlinguistic tools, in which we come to know the world around us. However, the reader will onlyunderstand the language if they are from inside the same social fact (Burke andCowley, 2000, p.

23) and thus the site of the audiencing (Rose, 2013, p. 282)becomes imperative, as each has their own specific circumstances, relating totheir understanding and interpretation. Birnbaum (2009, p. 235) agrees with thisthought and states the importance of social exchange being at the centre oflanguage. Figure 2 Serra, R. (1981) Tilted Arc. Steel. 365.

7 x 3657. 6 x 30. 45 cm. Destroyed.               Historically, site-specificityhas evolved within art practice. My research proposal will focus on sit-specificityas a nomadic practice (Kwon, 2002, p.

11, 31.), thus opposing viewpoint ofcontemporary artist Richard Serra, who professed that movement of site-specificart destroys it (Mundy, 2012), when arguing to save his Tilted Arc (fig. 2). However, in considering site-specificity asnomadic practice, different sites and contexts can be considered, in referenceto how it effects the text, something that would not be possible with a staticresponse.

Hapgood (1990), does highlight the importance of the circumstancesbeing right, for the work to be moved from one site to another. This is animportant consideration highlighted by Creed’s site-specific piece Everything Is Going to Be Alright (2008). The text chosen for the site of The Clapton Building, was said to have come outof his being in the site. However, the text piece was later repositionedinto a new context. That of a residential building in Christchurch (ChristchurchArt Gallery, 2015).

The contextof the two places was similar, which may have made the circumstances acceptablefor the piece to become nomadic, as the location of the site is central to theinterpretation of the work. Burke and Cowley (2000, p. 13) suggest, thatlanguage determines how we perceive the world around us, the use of languagewithin site specific will not only effect how text is perceived but also howthe site is perceived. Figure 3 Creed, M. (2015) Everything is Going to Be Alright. Neon.

146. 8 x 4600 cm.                Site specific work as that which appears to havemerged physically into its location, for a limited duration (Owens, 1998, p. 56)The systems of the language used need to fit the locationas the site and the text have a dialectical relationship (Owens, 1998, p. 55)and the site becomes the frame for the text.

This happened in both instances ofsite specificity. For Weiner, his work is not created for a specific site, butstill the text resonates with the site, simply by being within the site(McLean-Farris, 2012). Reflating to locational identify and social demographic(Nancy, 1991, p. 28-31), showing how both space and language are interconnected.    Figure 4 Weiner, L. (2012) Outside Project.

DisseminationThe dissemination of myresearch will largely be by means of public outcomes. This may entail bothplacing the work within institutional sites, such as gallery spaces, as well aspublic sites. There is a particular importance to the work having multiplepublic outcomes, which are twofold and related to the need for an audience, inorder to fully consider their interpretation of the work and the relationshipbetween text and context. In the first instance, within the literature reviewit became clear that the audiences’ interpretation of the work is very muchpart of the work. From this it can be deduced that the work needs to besituated in such a way which allows for an audience. Secondly, it will be the changing of thecontext which allows the meaning of the text to evolve.

Therefore, not only isthe public space important, but the move-ability between spaces is alsoimperative. This will lead to multiple public outcomes, Research will also be disseminated with the use of a blog. The blog will document research of theorists and contemporary artists, as wellas my own practice based research, including work in progress and resolvedpieces. This will document new knowledge development.