

How will also inform this research and allow

[Art & Culture](#), [Artists](#)



How can the context of a site effect the interpretation of text? Introduction This research proposal will be undertaken within the art and design sector.

The research proposal will examine the relationship between text art and site specificity, exploring how context effects text, with reference to the relationship between communication and community and the shareability of a public language. It will also consider the use of lingua franca (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. This research proposal will allow my practice to explore these themes and develop them accordingly. The research proposal will employ practice-led research (Bolt, 2005).

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

The research will be considered with reference to the contemporary climate. This is of high importance as the key text being examined could be considered as outdated. My research proposal will consider the issues of the

current climate, with reference to; the fast-paced changing nature of the world, both physical and digital and the growing ease to access information. Considering how these factors affect the experience of it and how it overloads our daily lives. This will add new knowledge to the field. Aims and Objectives

The telos of my research proposal can be broken down into subsections. Firstly, I will explore the shareability of a public language, with reference to Hegel's social before individual theory (Theron, 2013, p.

2). The importance of our shared, learnt conventions will be considered. This will be problematised with the notion of the individual and of interpretation. I will then explore the notion of site specificity as an nomadic practice and the importance of mobility within site-specific art. This will 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 of an object, or text, which could lead to the text becoming something new.

This is certainly true for Kaye (2013, p. 1) who states that moving site-specific work allows it to become something new. In turn this also allows the 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 a site (Goldsmith, 2011). Methodology

The methodology used during this research proposal will be a mixed method approach. Practice led research as handability will allow for new knowledge to be gained (Bolt, 2005), will be key in answering my research question and will allow the research to draw on contemporary issues and sites.

The other main method used will be readings into key theories and contemporary artists, with use of visual materials (Rose, 2013, p19), to give my research a historical context. The two will inform each other. Literature Review The key pieces of literature reviewed include; Kwon (2002), Eco (1989), Burke and Cowley (2000) and Kaye (2013). Wittgenstein (2007a), Hegel (1976) and Vygotsky (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) goes on to state the impossibility of a private language systems. While Vygotsky states that language is one of man's greatest tools, for human understanding (Vygotsky, 1962, p. 108). The importance of shared systems become just as important within text-based art, as they are within linguistics. In following these systems, shareability should be ensured, allowing communication to take place. Flusser (2002, p.

184) explains the importance of systems in communications as a process in which the original system is changed by another system in such a way that the result is greater than at the start, showing the importance 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 mystery within texts and their multiple meanings, which may relate to individual interpretations. While the system of language remains unchanged, languages do evolve through time (Miller, 2001, p. 299). Meaning

that language continues to be a contemporary issue that we continue to try and understand.

The notion of a public language can be understood in similar 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 has a 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 to communicate successfully, we need to hold a collective understanding, of standardised conventions, this is similar to Wittgenstein's writings on public language and shows that the understanding of this phenomenon has stood the test of time (Kripke, 1984, p. vii). Showing the importance of systems within language and how this gives language meaning, by developing from social interaction (Vygotsky, 1962, p.

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

15) believes that these systems are still flexible as meaning depends on its relation to other words within the system and how linguistics are looked at from the view point of the present day (Saussure, 2013, p. xxi). This is due to the mutability of language and how our interpretation of it changes. Burke and Cowley (2000, p. 278) relate this to social forces related to language,

culture and 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 indexical words within linguistics and how they can only be understood when used within a context (Peirce, 1931-58). The use of shifters allows for direct communication to take place between the text and the reader. Eco (1979, p. 12, 208) sets these out 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 with the nature of the self, with the reader able to identify themselves within the text.

Saussure (Culler, 1985) also commented on relational identity, focusing on the second person pronouns and how they can be interpreted in multiple ways; as individuals or as many. Contemporary artist Jenny Holzer makes use of personal pronouns as a means of direct communication between herself and their audience, in works such as, I See You (2007) (fig. 1). The multiple interpretations of how 'you' may be read, could affect the author's intentions for the work. Interpretation problematises systems of language, the success of language is based upon its ability for us to make sense of the signs in which it is made up (Peirce, 1931-58), the use of interpretation means that we may not all be making the same sense of the signs. Eco (1989, p. 21) states that 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 of interpretations can be infinite. For Wittgenstein (2007a) interpretation becomes an issue with the use of text. He believes that the openness of the text leads to the author losing control over the meaning of the text. The issue of interpretation become further problematised here, with Eco's and Wittgenstein's definition of openness opposing each other. For Eco, the openness of the work refers to work which is not yet complete, work that is in movement 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 only having one clear meaning.

Other issues with interpretation stem from signifiers and signified, with each having the ability to hold multiple readings. The signified may change when the context changes. Site-specificity becomes important, as the signifier is located within it, but changed by it, as its meaning is not self-contained, but instead determined by the interpretation on it 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 inherently reflexive, with writing as a singular voice (Nancy, 1991, p. 64) and which is a silent expression of an individual's thoughts and becomes inseparable from inner speech (Vygotsky, 1988, p. 274-279). This also relates to Vygotsky's theory of cognitive development (1978, p.

32) and Hegel's view on there being no thought without language (Sokolov, 1972). In doing so the author is creating immortality for the text (Foucault,

1980, p. 117). However, the intention of the author maybe lost amongst the audience's interpretations. Barthes(1977, p.

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

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 become less important than the audiences' interpretations of it, Barthes (1977) would relate this to the birth of the reader. Eco (1979, p. 55) agreed with this, stating that the audience brings closure to the work. Contemporary artist Martin Creed embraces this within his work, believing that the audience make up fifty percent of his work (Fondazione Nicola Trussardi, 2006). Regardless of this Foucault (1980, p.

115) states that text points outwardly to the reader, meaning its use is fitting for use in works trying to communicate with the reader. Eco describes this as a work in movement and states it is essential for contemporary art work (1989, p. 86). My research will add to this body of research, by considering use of language and our understanding of it in the present.

Research will consider how systems may have changed, with the introduction of the internet 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 our world? Urban landscapes are complex sites which are full of excess information (Wodiczko, 2013, p. 33). However, Vygotsky (1978, p. 90) states that we can use language to organise the world into categories. Mertens (2000) believes that there is a link between interpretation and our built-in desire to try and make sense of things around us.

Contemporary artist Lawrence Weiner agrees with this and states that this is why audiences respond to art-works (McLean-Ferris, 2012). In trying to make meaning out of the situation, the audience will perceive both the signifier and the signified (Husserl, 2012), which allows them to build their own interpretations of the work. There is a possibility that the use of an economy of words could go some way to combat the issue of interpretation.

Contemporary artist Tracy Emin agrees with this, believing it would lead to easier access to the works (2007). Rex (Burke and Cowley, 2000, p. 483) states that the use of written language requires a much higher level of explicitly to be understood than spoken language. Burke and Cowley (2000, p. 483) disagree with this, stating that written language is the original language, as it is more authoritative than the spoken word and holds more truth, as it is able to be far more eloquent in its delivery, than spoken language.

Saussure (2013, p. 28) agrees that the spoken and written language are separate, but related. However, he views the written 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 of communicating

with written text, leads to the text being interpreted differently from the intentions of the author. This is particularly important to Eco, as he strives for a model reader, who will read the text exactly as the author intended.

This can be difficult with the intertextuality of all writing. Texts cannot be completely independent of other texts, they are always within a context which affects how they are read (Kristeva, 1977, p. 64-91). Hawkes (1992, p. 136) states that written forms of language emit messages 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 image and becomes part of visual culture. When language becomes a visual sign, it communicates with the site it is located in, as it is posing a physical existence within the site. Written texts are inherently dialogical and must be understood in terms of how they will be responded to by the reader (Wetherell et al, 2001, p. 70). The use of handwriting within text has also been examined.

Emin states 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 of handwriting adds to the quality and nature of it as a sign. Lyons (1977, p. 18, 107) takes this further and relates the use of handwriting to the author as an individual as the handwriting of one person, can never be the handwriting of another. Research into site-specificity is also key to this research proposal as the site in which the work sits is directly related to the issue of interpretation. Making the link between text and context, each site has its own localised context which can change the text.

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

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

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

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

Hapgood (1990), does highlight the importance of the circumstances being right, for the work to be moved from one site to another. This is an important 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 out of his being in the site. However, the text piece was later repositioned into a new context. That of a residential building in Christchurch (Christchurch Art Gallery, 2015).

The context of the two places was similar, which may have made the circumstances acceptable for the piece to become nomadic, as the location of the site is central to the interpretation of the work. Burke and Cowley (2000, p. 13) suggest, that language determines how we perceive the world around us, the use of language within site specific will not only effect how text is perceived but also how the 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 have merged physically into its location, for a limited duration (Owens, 1998, p. 56) The systems of the language used need to fit the location as 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 of site specificity. For Weiner, his work is not created for a specific site, but still the text resonates with the site, simply by being within the site (McLean-Farris, 2012). Referring to locational identity and social demographic (Nancy, 1991, p. 28-31), showing how both space

and language are interconnected. Figure 4 Weiner, L. (2012) Outside Project.

Dissemination The dissemination of my research will largely be by means of public outcomes. This may entail both placing the work within institutional sites, such as gallery spaces, as well as public sites. There is a particular importance to the work having multiple public outcomes, which are twofold and related to the need for an audience, in order to fully consider their interpretation of the work and the relationship between text and context. In the first instance, within the literature review it became clear that the audiences' interpretation of the work is very much part of the work. From this it can be deduced that the work needs to be situated in such a way which allows for an audience. Secondly, it will be the changing of the context which allows the meaning of the text to evolve.

Therefore, not only is the public space important, but the move-ability between spaces is also imperative. 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 well as my own practice based research, including work in progress and resolved pieces. This will document new knowledge development.