Manifesto

Under the Surface: reflections on workers' narratives from below the minimum wage

2009

David Lewis Sinfield

This journal documents a journey of creative inquiry. The text is structured chronologically beginning in February 2007 and concluding in November 2009. It exposes through a personal narrative ideation, experiments and critical reflection on emerging practice.

Master of Art & Design

Manifesto

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Higher National Diploma in Graphical and Typographical Design (LCP)

November 2009

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This thesis is a
Manifesto.

Somigli (2003) in his
etymological analysis
of the word notes that
manifesto probably
derives from the Latin
manifestus, from
manus [hand], and a
conjectural adjective
festus, and thus may in
its primary sense mean
taken by hand or *made
palpable* (p. 29).

Metaphorically
manifesto may
therefore be a synonym
of *evident* as in the verb
phrase *made manifest*.

This thesis makes
manifest. It does this in
two ways. First it makes
manifest a number of
narratives of workers'
experiences. Second
it makes manifest the
process of the project's
realisation.

Introduction

The poet Ben Okri said,

"To poison a nation, poison its stories. A demoralised nation tells demoralised stories to itself. Beware of the storytellers who are not fully conscious of the importance of their gifts, and who are irresponsible in the application of their art: they could unwittingly help along the physic destruction of their people". (1997, p. 109)

Introduction
This exegesis tells a story. It uses dual narration to trace a research journey that began in February of 2007.

Narration
The document has two voices.
The primary voice is that of the critical designer. This is located in the main body of the publication and is a discourse between words, pictures and contexts.

The second voice is a personal narrative. 'voiced' in a comparatively vernacular tone, this is a 'story teller' who sometimes speaks parallel to the main text. His voice recalls histories or adds personal reflection in an almost conversational manner.

Structure
The exegesis is divided into four sections. The first is a forerunner. This is a positioning statement that narrates the background of the researcher and positions him in relation to the inquiry.

The second (initial experiments) is a consideration of early inquiries that led to refinements in the research question. The story of these experiments and 'problematic' outcomes serves to explain how and why the research took the eventual shape it did. This section also demonstrates the origins of concerns in the research relating to context, reflexivity, image and substrate.

The third section of the exegesis discusses the methodology used to explicate the work. Although a discussion of methodology traditionally appears towards the beginning of a thesis, in this case I have positioned it before a discussion of the final phase of the project. This is because the shift in the ethos of the project from the generic to the specific necessitated a change in methodology. The resulting narrative inquiry significantly shaped the thesis[1] and resulting work.

The final section of the exegesis offers a critical commentary on the exhibited work. Within this I discuss conceptual, aesthetic and technological concerns relating to the large serigraphic prints and interviews that comprise the outcomes of the research. This commentary relates to design of three visualised stories of New Zealand workers who have been employed in occupations that paid below the minimum wage.

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1. I use the word thesis here in reference to its Greek origins (*tithénai* to put, set down) + -sis), meaning a presented idea or argument. Thus the thesis is an idea that is explained and contextualised in this exegesis and made manifest in the exhibited prints and the 'storyteller's voice' designed for this document.

Dedication

Elizabeth Sinfield

(1919 – 1999)

To my beloved mother, who suffered and struggled to give me a better life.
I will never forget you.

Your buddy and loving son David

Table of Images

Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning, except where due acknowledgements is made in the acknowledgements.

David Lewis Sinfield _____ Date _____

Acknowledgements

Abstract

This research project is concerned with workers' narratives,[1] specifically those who have been employed in paid work below the national minimum wage in New Zealand.

As a graphic designer who has direct experience of exploitation through employment, I am interested in researching the subjective experience of underpaid workers in New Zealand. In doing this I have sought to creatively synthesize experiences into artworks that provide a deeper insight into the impact of underpaid work. Through this investigation I have attempted to contribute to a broader discussion of underpaid work than what is currently provided, through the analysis of statistical data.

In undertaking this project I have also been concerned with investigating new potentials in serigraphy (a graphic medium traditionally associated with working-class politics).[2] I have inquired into how it might be used to create a visual 'voice' for contemporary workers' narratives.

Accordingly, this project has employed audio recordings of three personal stories. The research has led to the production of a series of serigraphic prints that artistically interpret the journeys and experiences of the participants. These images sit in discourse with looped audio excerpts of their recorded interviews. In this approach, narratives of marginalisation that have often been muted through their presentation as written records, have been re-conceptualised as an artists' images, with which the recordings are in discussion.

1. This research employs narrative inquiry as a methodology. This is because the representation of the participants' experiences can be contextualised within the framework of the narrative 'story telling'.

2. The history of serigraphic printing serving the 'imaging' of 'labourers' may be traced back to the Workers' Rights movements and the British Unions in the 1900s. Serigraphic processes were also evident in prints generated for the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World, USA) in the 1920s. However, the distinctive aesthetic generated by this process of printing is probably most widely associated with depictions of the Soviet worker in political art generated in Russia between 1913 and 1940.

Ethics Approval

This research was subject to AUT ethics approval granted by the
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) on 12 May 2008,
number **08/80**.

Forerunners

Forerunners

Foreru

My mother

My mother's parents came from a small fishing village in Anglesey in Wales. In the early days of my grandparent's marriage they were forced to move to Liverpool in search of employment. My grandfather eventually secured work on the clipper ships that ferried goods back and forth between Liverpool and New York. At this time the journeys between these cities took several months. His regular returns to Liverpool inevitably resulted in another pregnancy for my grandmother. Because of the impoverished living conditions working class families endured at this time, many of these pregnancies ended in miscarriages. However six children survived and my mother was the youngest of them.

My mother barely knew my grandfather because work kept him so distant from his home. His place in her life ended with a story that filtered back to Liverpool one night in the late 1920s.

My grandfather had been drinking in a New York bar, boasting just before his scheduled return to England about the money he had earned and the fact that he would soon be seeing his family. He was very drunk. That night, when he staggered outside he was ambushed, dragged into a nearby ally and set upon by four men. He was robbed, and three days later he died penniless in a seaman's lodge. He was buried in Cypress Hill, Cemetery, in a land his family had never seen.

The incident left my grandmother destitute with six children. The depression created desperate times in Liverpool for working class families, so in 1933 she bundled her family up and moved to London.

She had no money, no contacts and nowhere to live. All she hoped for was a chance of work.

Like many of her kind, my grandmother secured employment cleaning and washing floors, labouring long into the night to make ends meet. She and her children lived on the bread line. She earned just enough to pay the rent and provide meagre sustenance for her family. At one stage, when she was unable to earn even enough for rent, she was forced to cut off her hair and sell it to the local wig makers.

My mother was an extraordinary woman. In London during her teenage years she was very active in the fight against the Mosley Blackshirt fascists. She saw the Cable Street riots of 1936 and was chased by the Blackshirts on numerous occasions. She was also very active during the St Pancras rent riots of the 1960s, which saw the mobilisation, and solidarity of the working classes.

1.1

Posters like these were the printed voice of working class opposition to Mosley's Fascist discourse at the period when my mother was politically active in London.

Image used with permission of the copyright owner.

My father

My father was born in Barnsley in Yorkshire. His father was a coal miner and he, like generations before him, continued a family tradition. However, in the 1940s, fate disrupted this order and he was enlisted and stationed in London.

In the tradition of many working class men of the time, at the close of the war he did not return to the mines. Instead, he remained in London where, in the struggle to rebuild the city, he found work as a large bore pipe fitter.

At one of the dances that punctuated the fragile morale of the city at this time, my mother and he met. It would not be fair to say she fell in love with him, but she did fall pregnant. Reluctantly she married, and regretted the decision for the rest of her life.

My older brother and sister left home as soon as they were able. They had experienced sufficient of my father's mood swings, shouting and beatings. I recall one Sunday at dinner time my father and brother arguing. Suddenly, there was a terrible crash, and the whole table was thrown against the wall. Then there began the habitual beating. However my father failed to notice his son was now stronger than he was. My brother hit back, but then fled.

I remember the next morning my father standing by the kitchen window in a pair of baggy Y-front underpants and a sagging T-shirt. I looked to see what had captured his attention. The door to our tiny yard shed was slightly open and in the mirror inside was the reflection of my brother's face. He was combing his hair. He had sheltered there for the night.

Because of this incident, my mother packed the few pieces of clothing we possessed, and she and I went to stay with my Aunty Ann. She was her sister and she lived with her brother in a council house in North London. They had rooms on the ground floor and their other sister occupied the floor above them. Because the house was quite small we all had to sleep in my aunt's bedroom. This meant that mum slept on a garden sun lounge bed, my brother on an inflatable *deluxe* bed, and me on a swimming pool lilo that barely managed to remain inflated for a few hours each night. We lived like this for eighteen months until my mother finally managed to secure a council flat of her own.

The day we moved in was one of the proudest of her life.

....

These might not seem like very big stories. They, and narratives like them never made it to the history books I read as a child. They never became part of a picture of what it was to belong to a nation. However, these and the multitude of small stories like them form the fabric of lives that for generations have eked out a living on the breadline. Often they are in fragments; their endings or details unresolved. They are neither epics nor redemption narratives. They rarely have happy endings. What they do have however, is a texture and resonance. They vibrate with imagery and the un-veneered depiction of human nature. Stories like these live, but remain culturally silent. In general they lose their place in the narratives of national identity because they live and die inside the families of the dispossessed.

They are the reason for this thesis.

Initial

This section of the
exegesis reflects
upon a series of early
experiments that
explored the T-shirt and
certain iconography as
vehicles for expressing
ideas relating to the
voice of a worker. The
investigations were
essentially exploratory
and based largely on
the interface of my
personal experiences
and attitudes, and the
language of graphic
design. The process of
their realisation may be
likened to the notion of
indwelling or the 'internal
pathway of the self'
(Douglass & Moustakas,
1985, p. 63). They formed
a starting point for the
research that placed
an emphasis on self-
conscious inquiry.

T-SHIRT

2.2

When I was eleven my mother was sent free vouchers for my school uniform. In these new clothes I suddenly became a replica of everybody else, I felt very uncomfortable. When I arrived at school it became evident that only first year students were required to wear such clothes. My reaction was to immediately *ditch* the uniform and replace it with a T-shirt and jeans.

My elected uniform was a plain white, 100% cotton T-shirt and a pair of Levi Red Tag 501s. They were the signifiers of 'working class cool' iconised by cinematic heroes like Marlon Brando and James Dean. Although these clothes were origined in my working class culture (my father wore T-shirts as underwear), these new garments had undergone a romanticising and resignification via the work of popular writers like Jack Kerouac and Neil Cassidy, and later, the narrative advertising campaigns of the Levi Strauss and Co.

Wearing the "T" was like being transformed. It levelled out and disguised one's lack of money while simultaneously elevating the working class status to a romanticised position of 'rebellious cool'.

Manifesto
原質量的材料 | by design

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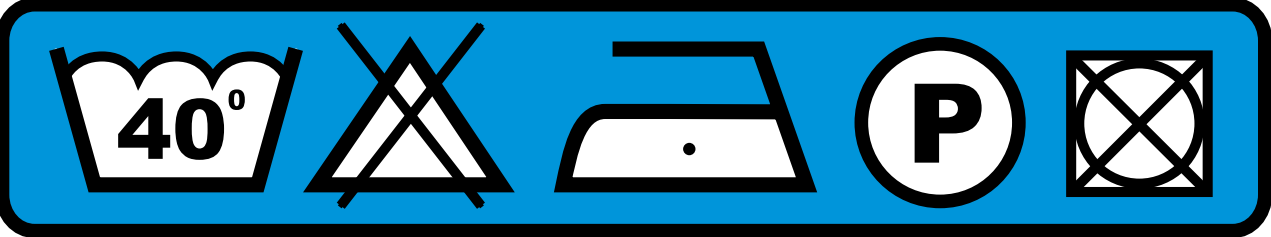
神奇的堅韌
Amazing toughness

原質量的材料
100% original quality garment

2.3

T-shirt · Investigation 1: Reflexivity as an indicator of the voice of the worker

This early body of experiments considered the potential of surface graphics and structure as a means of drawing attention to the 'worker' behind the sign of the T-shirt.[1] In these investigations I was interested in examining the potential of the T-shirt as a means of 'voicing' the nature of *workers* by exposing their contribution through the creative re-design of 'signs of making'.

Cullum-Swan & Manning (1994, p. 423) argue that, "undershirts, as they are commodified and exchanged in part for their image-creating value... display signifiers with ambiguous signifides." However, Weber (1958) and C. Wright Mills (1960), note, any meaning and its claim to status, if it is to be successful, must be legitimised and deferred to an audience.

Although I accept that a 'reader' of a text might create its meaning, I wanted to explore the potential of signifiers made explicit through their exposure as a form of reflexivity.

1. Historically the T-shirt has origins that can be traced back to the 'swabs' in the British Royal Navy who wore them under their uniforms in World War I. In 1915 the U.S. Navy adopted their crew-necked, short-sleeved, white cotton undershirts to replace their standard issue woollen underclothes. By the 1950s, the T-shirt was typically made of cotton or polyester fibres (or a mix of the two), and knitted together in a jersey stitch that gave the garment its distinctive soft texture.

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Reflexivity[2] is a term used to refer to foregrounding by a text of its own made-ness or constructed-ness. It describes the process by which an artefact draws attention to itself, reminding the spectator of its status as a construct. A T-shirt might be said to operate in a reflexive manner if it exposes normally concealed signs of its manufacture.

T-shirts in general, do not engage with their controversies as a product of exploited child labour.[3] They do not normally draw attention to the outworking of their manufacturing processes to Asia, and their often-posited notions of 'authenticity' and 'naturalness' avoid references to their mass production from generic patterns. Instead these issues are often replaced by signs of the 'designer'[4] or notions of a ubiquitous sign vehicle whose functions express identity, and the social and political fields in which it exists. Broadly the reflexivity experiments orchestrated separate but interconnecting investigations.

These involved:

• Redesigning the garment's washing instructions (as an indicator of labour) and exposing them on the outside of the T-shirt so they violated the position normally reserved for decoration. In doing this, I was considering the potential of modifying the garment's sign function.

• Exposing physical signs of manufacture (the stitching) on the outside of the garment. Over-locking stitches that would normally be hidden on the inside of the garment were now exposed and emphasised using contrasting coloured cottons.[5] By doing this I was interested in how the T-shirt's construction might be seen as integral to its 'voice' as an object produced through work.

• Experimenting with alternative fabrics that might more obviously indicate notions of work. In doing this, I sought to elevate substrate to the position of a sign vehicle.

• Creating print designs that while broadly signifying "work" and "social identity", spoke directly to their manufactured status. In achieving this I 'front staged' normally obscured signs of print, including registration marks, colour bars and trim marks.
....

Although these experiments were interesting as an early engagement with 'exposing work', I felt they tended to politicise rather than personalise the idea of exploited labour. I embarked on an experiment that drew inspiration from my personal experience of labour.

5. This process may be likened to Goffman (1959 p. 112) who distinguished between front stages where performances are given off, and "a back region or backstage" where signs of manufacture exist.

2. Reflexivity is derived from the Latin reflexio/reflectere meaning "to bend back on". Applied to an artifact, by extension of this etymological root, it is the process by which an object foregrounds its 'authorship' and production.

3. Bahree (2008) cites a recent U.N. International Labor Organization study that found that 420,000 children under the age of eighteen were employed by cotton plantations in India, with 54 percent of that number under the age of 14. These youth workers were paid on average twenty cents an hour.

4. 'Designer' is a dubious term for mass-produced clothing that is neither unique nor limited in number. The connotations of the term are wealth and exclusivity, but the denotations are derived from the work of dress designers who create clothing either as a 'one-off' or as a limited run for an elite clientele. In contemporary marketing the term simply means that an expensive, mass produced garment can be identified by a designer's name (brand). Cullum-Swan & Manning (1994, p. 432) suggest that the term 'designer' operates as a distinctive kind of sign function 'in which commodity, sign, and ideology are sufficiently integral to suppress or overcome the (assumed) resistance to being an unpaid advertisement'.

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Although I associate boots with my father and the men who trudged to factories and down the mines before him, footwear that sat unlaced at the doorsteps of workers' houses overnight took different forms with each generation.

In the 1970s in working class London, boots were the twelve hole Doc. Martins. They had leather cut aways from the toe to show the steel. As an eleven year old boy, starting senior school I use to watch menacing sixteen year old kids fighting each other and bullying the teachers.

One day at lunchtime I was wandering around the playground when a senior student shouted "Stop! Don't move". He was fifteen metres away. I did as I was told. I was petrified. He placed a milk bottle on the ground. He took five steps back then ran at it. With his steel toe boots he kicked the bottle, hard. The glass shattered into a thousand pieces. The shards of glass came at me in slow motion, like the pellets from a shotgun. By fate they missed my eyes, but I still have the scar from one piece on my forehead.

BOOTS ЩФЯЖING

2.12

T-shirt · Investigation 2: Image & Form

The undershirts of the military and working class are today, commodified and exchanged in part for their image-creating value. They have developed a reputation for political commentary and social identification. Understanding this, the following two experiments considered how I might explore the languages of graphic design to illustrate subjectively,

the idea of a worker being more than a 'cut out' one-dimensional 'labour unit'. [6]

In developing this work I considered how a narrative holds things together; how the stories of my family and those of countless other working class families are held in place through thin lines of recalled telling. In this regard I treated

the T-shirt, not as a one-dimensional surface (like an artist's canvas), but as a series of surfaces that clothe and protect the body. I employed typography as a device that tied the design together, in a similar way that a bootlace might hold a boot in place, or a story might connect a history. I experimented with the idea that not only might a T-shirt speak reflexively

2.13

6. The 'labour unit' was a construct of John Maynard Keynes that gathered popularity in the rhetoric of Thatcher's neo-liberal government of the 1980s. The reduction of a worker to a unit of energy that could be factored into a calculation of economic value, enabled to a certain extent, economists to avoid addressing the human consequences of reforms. Thatcher's policies were in general badly received by the British working class. Her government emphasised reduced state intervention, free markets, and more entrepreneurialism. However, in realising these ends, she made substantial budget cuts, reduced expenditures on social services such as health care, education, and housing, and placed substantial legal restrictions on trade unions.

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2.13 – 2.16 Photographs showing the printed wording in conjunction with the boots image utilising the front and back of the T-shirt.

2.17, 2.18 Artwork of the boots image treated to a coarse halftone screen.
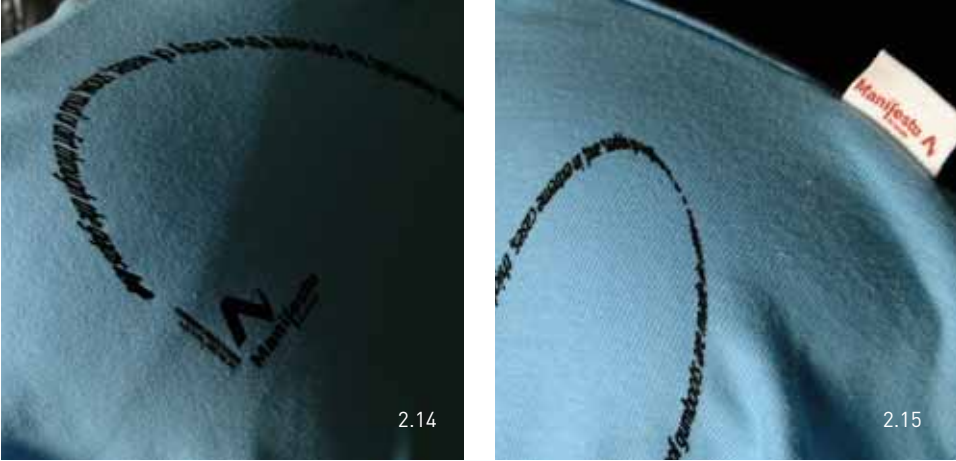
of its own making (exposed label on the shoulder, exposed cross stitch seams) but it might also orchestrate signifiers of work. Initially I positioned an image of my father's working boots on the front panel and screen-printed a line of narrative[7] so it wound like thread across and around the garment.

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7. Most work boots are made from leather and are usually lace up. Formerly they were ankle height, shod with hobnails and adopted by the army for their durability and the noise they made when marching. This is where the term 'square bashing' originates (British military slang). A popular form of work boot was introduced in 1960 by the company Dr. Martens (known as Doc Martens or DMs) who made the boot more comfortable by using rubber soles and softer leather. DMs where adopted by the skinhead movement of the time and went on to be worn by progressive fashion groups including the punks of the 1970s, and the new wave movement of the 1980s.

In a more developed series of experiments the T-shirt was printed as four separate panels (the front panel, back panel and sleeves), prior to the pattern being cut. This enabled me to orchestrate elements of the image on all panels, but have no predetermined vision of how the design might turn out. These works more effectively captured some of the grit and tension of my childhood memories of working class culture, both through their use of texture and discordance. The boot was no longer positioned on the chest as in most generic T-shirt design, but constructed in such a way that the design required a viewer to engage with the whole of the person wearing it. Thus the three-dimensionality of the design referenced the three-dimensionality of the worker.

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3.1
3.2 Typographical design of the Manifesto logo in script form.
Hessian and Calico constructed T-shirt.

When I left school, my first job was as a labourer working on a building site in Holloway North London. During the summer months the work was good, but when it came to winter and you still had to mix sand and cement in the sleet and rain, it became tough. As a manual worker, I wore a T-shirt like the other guys on the site. It was an unofficial uniform. Our T-shirts bore the graphics of a hundred different signifiers, gradually pulled out of shape, and faded with time and repeated washings. Like the other labourers, my T-shirts rode up my back when I bent over.

To deal with this problem, I resorted to wearing oversized garments. These oversized T-shirts were ubiquitous on building sites; they became the signifier of labour by the necessity of bad design. While the additional length kept you warm, their volumes of slackened cloth became bulky and presented a constant problem when trying to work safely with machinery. While they became a fashionable look on the street by the 1990s, they were in fact a workers solution to bad design.

Manifesto 3.1

Manifestazione nazionale

T-shirt · Investigation 3: Form & Substrate

In this next set of experiments I sought to explore the potential of substrate as a way of talking about 'work'. I experimented with the potential of fabrics that might be framed as sympathetic to the ethos of manual labour.[8] For this reason I conducted a series of experiments using a heavy hessian[9] fabric instead of the traditional cotton. The use of this material however, presented several problems.

First, it had no stretch, so a garment could not be shaped to the body. As a result, the design attained a more 'box-like' appearance. This shape was necessary so the garment could be placed over the shoulders. Because there was no stretch in the hessian, I had to devise an alternative way of getting the neck of the T-shirt over the head. To solve this I designed a buttoned shoulder slit. Once inside the

3.2

8. The T-shirt as a cotton or cotton polyester mix is a comparatively new phenomenon. Cullum-Swan & Manning (1994) note that 'in the industrial era the T-shirt was home made for a particular person from local material (perhaps even grown nearby and woven in the home) and worn under or with an outer garment and only worn openly in private or in the home or while hard at work. It had utility function while expressing labour and the work ethic' (p. 428).

9. Hessian or burlap is a coarse woven fabric usually made from jute. It has strong associations with workers through its use in sack making. It is breathable and therefore resists condensation and associated spoilage of transported contents. Because of its coarse texture, it is generally not used in modern apparel. However, it does have associations with workers in the German military (hence its name).

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3.5

garment, the buttons were locked in place. In keeping with the industrial ethos of the garment I elected to use metal buttons, sewn on with fine copper wire.

A second problem with this design occurred because hessian proved too rough to wear against the body. To address this I experimented with importing calico into the design, both because of its industrial relationship to hessian,[10] and its comparative softness. Although as a lining calico is inexpensive, its disproportionate level of shrinkage caused the T-shirt to buckle when the two fabrics were stitched together and washed.[11] A solution to this problem was found in pre-washing the hessian. Once dried and ironed, the fabric could be cut into shape ready for sewing.[12]

A final consideration in this artifact dealt with the issue of the T-shirt riding up the back of a manual worker. To address this I reconsidered the standard shape of the garment so the back of the shirt tapered to a greater length (see image p.23)

3.6

10. Like hessian, calico originates in India and is used traditionally in packaging dried goods like flour. Calico is an unbleached, and often not fully processed, cotton. As it is an inexpensive and readily available fabric, calico has often been used by working families to construct clothing for their children.

11. The hessian had a shrinkage value of approximately 20% after washing, where as the calico shrinkage value was negligible.

12. The propensity of hessian to fray when it's edge is cut, meant that I had to employ an over-lock stitch on the seams.

3.7

3.8

Front panel

Back panel showing
increased length

The following experiments move on from the T-shirt as a system of signification and concern themselves with the potentials of imagery and typography, and how these might be designed to speak for aspects of work. While the T-shirt had proved fruitful as an initial consideration, I was seeking through this new work, alternative approaches to 'voicing' workers' narratives. The two experiments presented here creatively reflect upon iconography of the deck chair, and the potential of certain Russian Constructivist structures.

Iconography

Icono

For a child, poverty is an insidious thing. It keeps you vulnerable and creates levels of guilt and responsibility other children don't have. I remember when I was ten my mother managed to save enough money to treat me to a small holiday on the Isle of Wight.

My sister, her husband and two of their friends were also there. One day I went with her to the beach. For the working classes, the tradition at the beach is to find a deck chair, relax and eventually an attendant will approach and ask for a few pennies.

But I was ten and penniless. I had relied on my mother to meet my meagre needs. When the attendant arrived my sister's husband paid for their chairs, leaving me to pay for my own. He asked where my money was. I didn't have any. I was ten. The humiliation scarred the event into my memory. I was terrified of the consequences of not paying for the deck chair. In the end, a friend of theirs offered to pay for my seat, and also he bought my lunch that day.

semiotics
of the working class ^{3.1}

3.2

Iconography · Investigation 1: The deck chair

There are many signs that might signify the working class, and in this phase of the research I was trying to locate an iconic image that might express my memory of being part of this social and economic group.

It was in this work that I encountered the fact that signifiers of the working class may differ from one culture to another.

For instance an image like the seaside deck chair might connote escapism and freedom in the context of working class Britain. That is to say in this context the deck chair may reference a life outside the daily drudge of the grey, industrial, smoke-polluted city scape in which the British working class often live. It might be seen as connoting a break from the 'normal' working class way

of life, in the form of a seaside holiday that only occurred for a couple of days each year.

As a British born designer I could visualise the relevance of this signifier, however the connotations proved to have little relevance outside of its British context. The signifier of the deck chair may be read in many ways,

3.3 Photograph of deck chairs on beach.
3.4 The final construction of the artwork for the deck chair.
3.5 Examples showing working ideas that where not used.

3.3

3.4

3.5
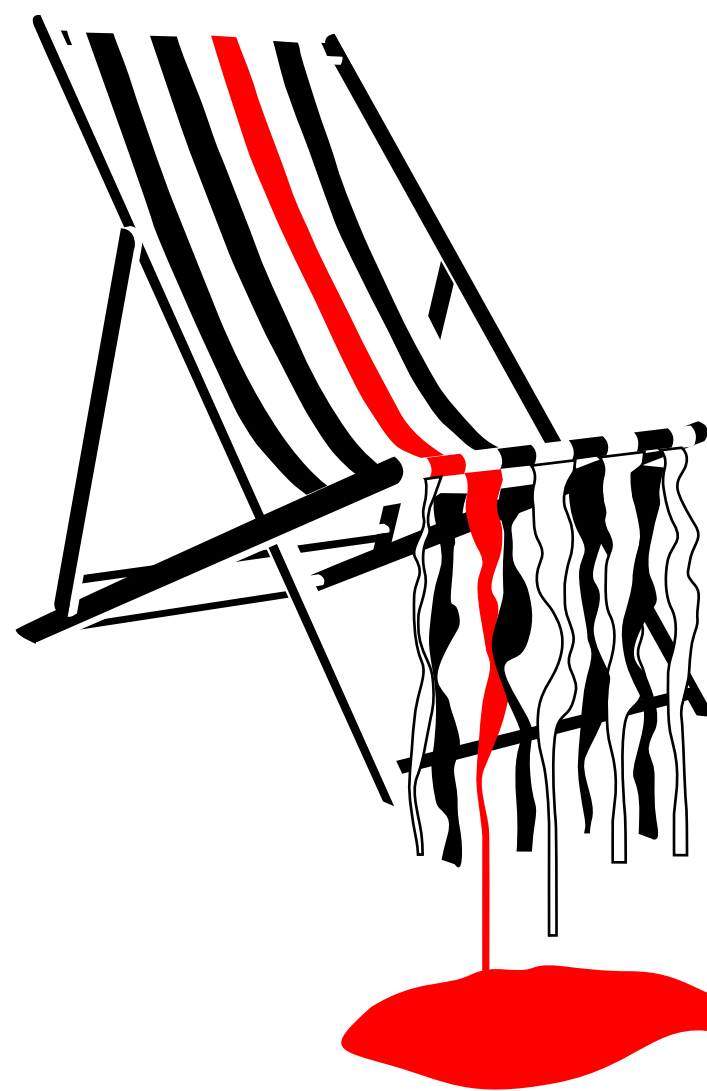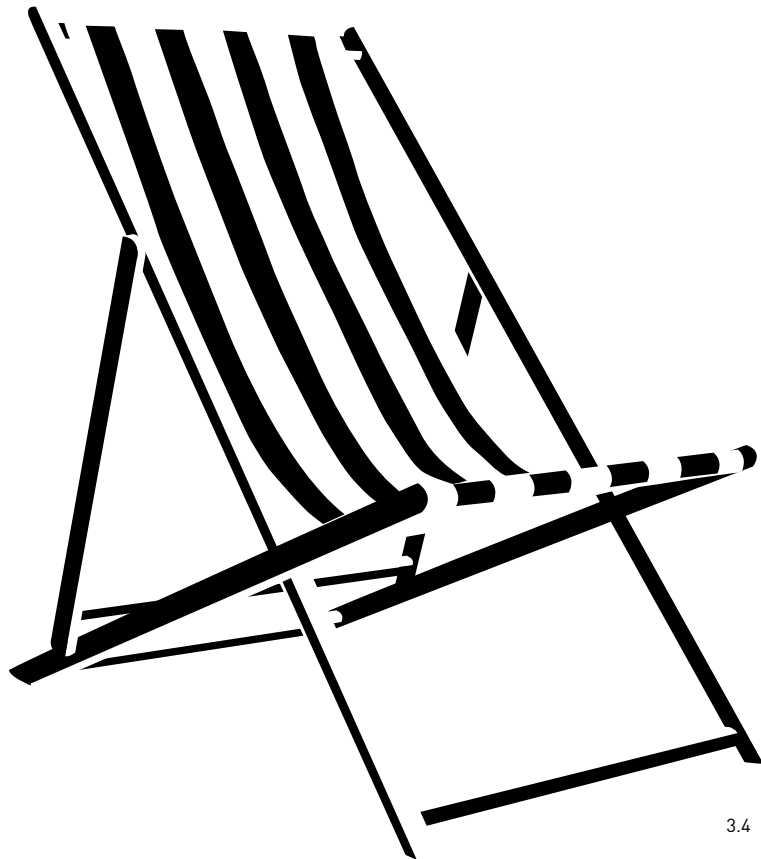
and certainly in a New Zealand context one might not automatically assume the same cultural reference points as those experienced by British working class families.

In Barthes (1977) essay 'Rhetoric of the Image' he argues how the signifying structure of illustration and the combination of text anchors or indeed changes the meaning when both are viewed together.[3] Thus, in the following experiments one sees evidence of this discourse between image and text (and specifically an emotive discourse between image and type). ....

Based on memories of seaside experiences I had as a child, I designed a poster measuring 1000mm x 700mm. By surrounding the graphic with a significant amount of space, both the graphic elements and space attained a degree of equilibrium. The physical size of the poster allowed the image to breathe within the design. The use of an embossed, paper subtly referenced the textured material of the deck chair itself, and the relationship between the deck chair's canvas and the image was enhanced by the unusual weight of the selected stock (420gsm).[4]

Graphically, the image was reduced to its simplest vector[5] shape. The treatment of the singular red stripe could denote the socially 'imprisoned' worker not being able to escape from his or her surroundings. One might now argue that this signifier had become ambiguous and could simultaneously connote ideas of freedom and suppression. Thus the freedom of the holiday might be understood as a pernicious outcome of a system of exploitation with its accompanying economic and social limitations of choice. The subtle manipulation of the stripes created a sense of movement that could suggest anything from a decayed bar code (the disintegration of the monetarist dream), to the bars of confinement surrounding a 'labour red' streak of resistance.

3. In this work Barthes offers an analysis of advertising images, and moves toward a clearer conception of how the image (and its linguistic attendants) produce signification. Barthes breaks systems of signification into three parts; that of the linguistic message, the coded iconic message, and the non-coded iconic message. In addition to this, he provides a useful discussion of an image's system of relay. He suggests that text and image stand in a complementary relationship, and the unity of the message is realised at [the] level of the story, the anecdote, and the diegesis.

4. Stock refers to the material that the printed image has been applied to. Usually this is processed paper.

5. A vector drawing is a computer-based drawing method that plots one point to another. It is used when simple straight lines or curves are required. This is the simplest drawing method and smallest in computer memory size.

3.7

3.6
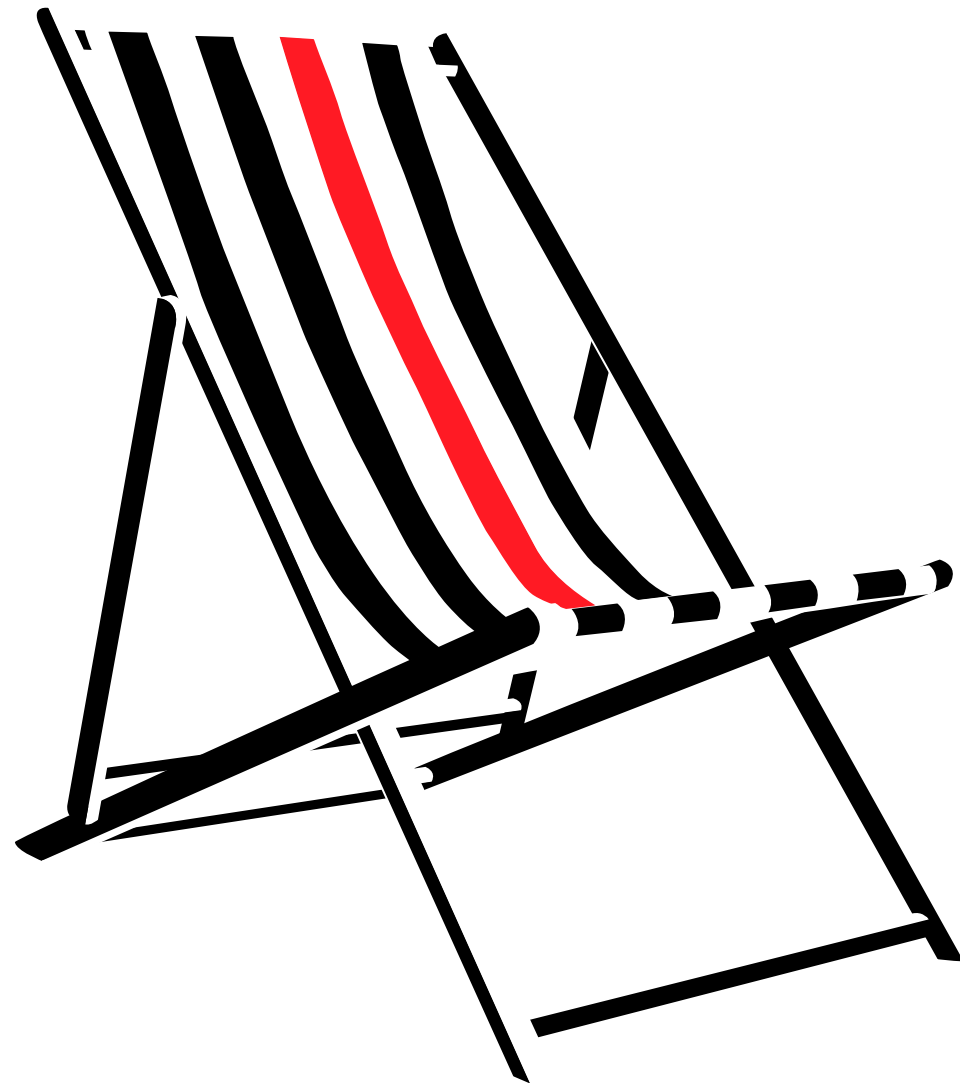
semIOTIcs
of the working class

In representing the chair I attempted to work inside a restrained aesthetic by not key outlining[6] details in the wooden frame. Instead I let the white space suggest this form. All of these approaches to the design of the image moved the graphic from a pictorial representation to an ambivalent signifier of meaning.

In the design of this work I was also interested in exploring Barthes concept of anchorage.[7] In the poster I used the word 'semiotics' to indicate that a simple deck chair might convey meaning. With regards to the typographic decisions for the words 'of the working class' I employed a typeface OCR-B LT (Adrian Frutiger,

1968), whose sans serif, almost industrial formality might suggest notions of the governed and conventionally organised. This text anchored both the dominant word which was rendered in Cocaine Sans (Chris Hansen, 2004), and the graphic of the chair. In considering the typographical voice for the word 'semiotics' I sought

a face that held a certain emotive and fragmented character. In other words, I was looking for something that spoke emotionally against the formal and relatively constrained nature of the chair, while perhaps adding something to the aggression of the solitary red stripe contained within it.

3.8

6. Key outlining involves bounding an object with a fine line.

7. Barthes, (1977) uses the term 'anchorage' to describe the functions of written text in relation to an image where both are combined in a design.

3.9

3.10
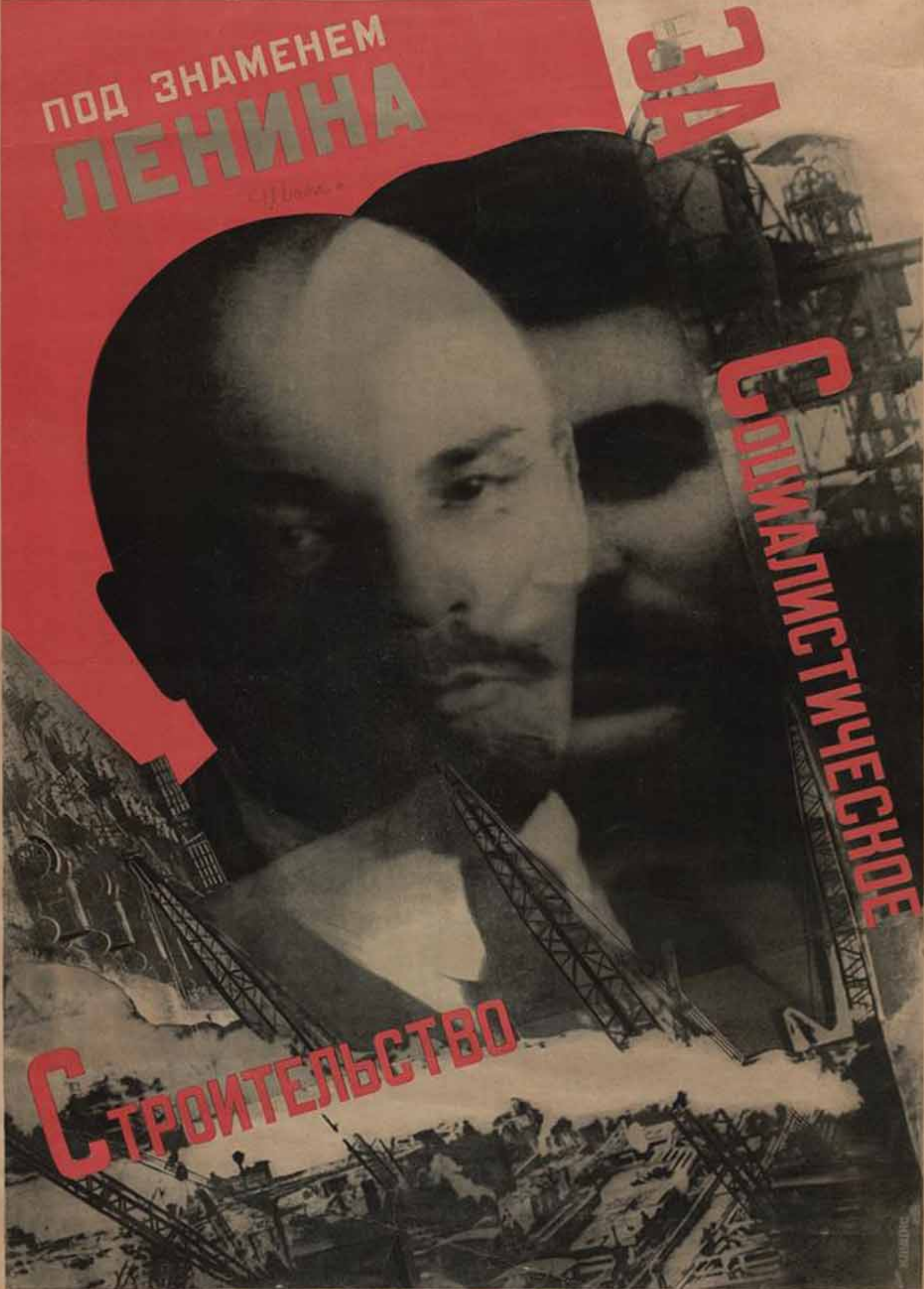
3.11

Iconography · Investigation 2: Russian Constructivists & Manifesto

This final, experiment was an investigation into an alternative approach to a generic worker's voice. It looked at the potentials of certain Russian Constructivist aesthetics designs that might reference notions of Socialism and strength. Although many posters produced during the Constructivist period were connected with the values of Stakhanovism and Taylorism (Arnason, 1969; Gorz, 1983), I was seeking potentials in past aesthetics to find a voice that might be integrated into contemporary work. However, in doing this I was cognisant of the problems of such intertextuality where values were antithetical to those of much non-Soviet discourse relating to workers' rights.[8]

Russian Constructivism may be seen less as the voice 'of' the worker and more as the voice 'about' the worker. The constructivist poster[9] as a purported voice of the worker was heavily critiqued in 1925 by the Marxist art critic Robert Pel'she. In his article, *Concerning Some LEF Errors* he claimed that the Constructivists elevated 'objects' above people. In doing so, rather than attack petty-bourgeois ideology, they, in fact, replicated its exploitative values (p. 17).

8. Indicative of this are the problems inherent in both Stakhanovism and Taylorism. Stakhanovism began in Russia in 1935 and was associated with increasing industrial production by the employment of Taylorist efficiency techniques. The movement was widely criticised by trade unions outside of the Soviet Union for its emphasis on productivity over the sustained care of workers. Stakhanov and subsequent 'model workers' were widely promoted by the Soviet media and served as an argument in favour of increasing work quotas.

9. Barkhatoua (1992) notes that the poster as a media form was considered an instrument of high impact and "Productivism and Constructivism were drawn to posters because they were touted as a revolutionary alternative to easel painting" (p. 4).

3.12 First rough sketches for the construction for the poster.

3.13 Gustav Klutsis. The Development of Transport is a Major Objective of the five Year Plan. 1929.

3.14 Detail of the completed poster.

That said, the posters produced by Constructivist designers in the 1920s and early 1930s offered much to the renegotiation of depictions of the worker. Their extensive use of typographical captions,[10] distinctive display faces, and unique approaches to space, emphasis and layout,[11] have all impacted on subsequent graphic design discourse. The association of the politicised voice with the worker (albeit problematic) meant that aspects of the Constructivist's innovations have been revisited by a number of graphic designers. Significantly in the 1980s by Neville Brody, and later in leftist publications like Graphic Agitation 2 (2004), and the work of Simon Robson, aka Knife Party (2004).[12] These comparatively recent works have selectively applied the aesthetics of Constructivist book designers like Rodchenko, El Lissitzky, Solomon Telingater and Anton Lavinsky to contemporary commentaries on U.S. foreign policy, terrorist propaganda, consumer culture, and civil rights.

The experiments I undertook at this stage in the research therefore, did not seek to apply the ideological frameworks of Russian Constructivism, instead, they paid homage to more recent applications of Constructivist aesthetics in contemporary protest work undertaken by graphic designers.

It was these experiments that were to influence the aesthetics adopted in the design of this exegesis. They also influenced certain considerations of 'voice' in worker's narratives that later formed the central concerns of the project.

In this experiment I replaced the preferred Constructivist media (photomontage) with serigraphy because this was a medium I had encountered in low budget workers' protest posters
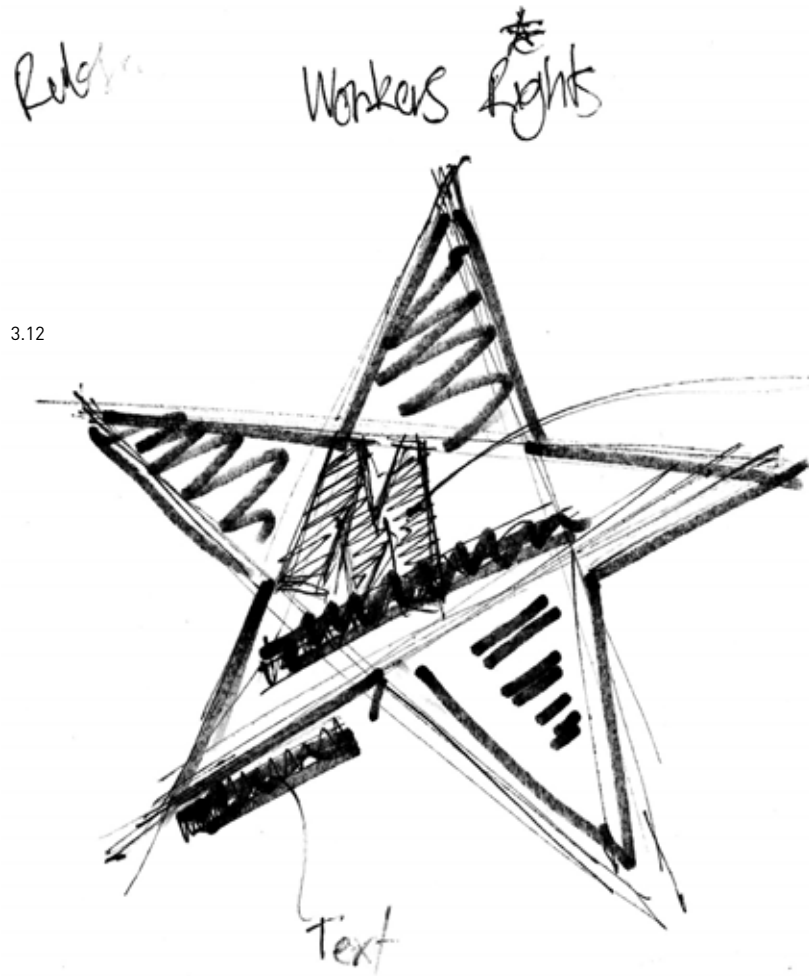
3.12

3.13

10. Significantly in the works of Prusakov and Borisov.

11. Useful in contextualising and understanding these works are the writings of Cooke (1995); Heller & Chwast, (2001); Lodder, (1985); and Rickey (1995). These theorists all provide frameworks for understanding both the context and design features of the movement.

12. See http://www.knife-party.net.

THAT WAS
MANIFES

THE SCHEME OF A CONSTRUCTION IS THE COMBINATION OF LINES
THE PLANES AND FORMS WHICH THEY DEFINE. IT IS A SYSTEM OF FOR
(INKHUK, 1921)

Manifesto by

THAT WAS, THEN | THIS IS NOW
MANIFESTAZIONE NAZIONALE

Manifesto
by design

3.14

3.15 The completed artwork of the Manifesto logo.
3.16 First rough sketch for the construction of the Manifesto logo.
3.17 Working visuals. Various examples of the construction of the Manifesto poster.

in England. Screen-printed images became popular in protest design in the 1960s because this print process did not require the cost of plate making [offset print] and could be produced in multiples at comparatively low prices.

Because of this, the print medium gathered popularity amongst both counterculture and workers' movements of the period. Although serigraphy was largely replaced by photocopying in the 1970s, it was arguably a more effective

medium because it afforded low budget, politicised graphic design, comparatively high production values, multiple colours, and physical print dimensions beyond the increasingly ubiquitous A4/A3 format.

3.16

3.15

THAT WAS THEN | THIS IS NOW
MANIFESTAZIONE NAZIONALE

Manifesto
by design

3.17
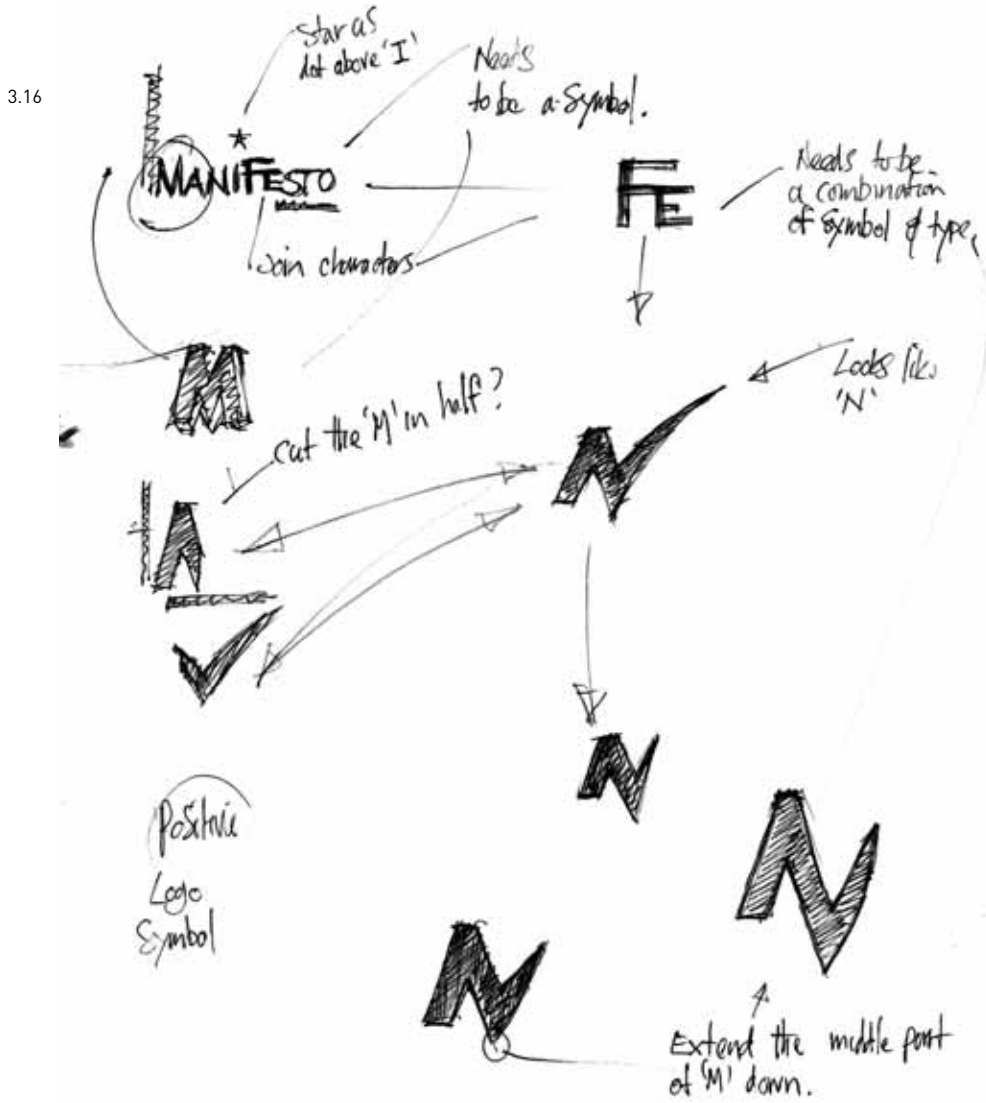
Turning point

At this point my project reached a position of crisis. While certain stylistic considerations were proving useful, I felt the research was drifting away from the 'lived' concerns that had initially motivated the project. While semiotic readings of a text were useful, I felt that I was incrementally edging towards an inquiry into generic meaning. My increasing preoccupation with iconography and rationalized synthesis meant that something of the human condition of exploited labour was being lost.

Accordingly I spoke with my supervisor and re-examined both the research question and my methodological approach. It was at this time that fortuitously two other things happened.

First, I chanced upon information relating to New Zealand's early adoption of legislation guaranteeing workers a minimum wage. Having left England in the aftermath of Thatcherism, this legislation and it application interested me.[13]

Essentially, in New Zealand a minimum wage protects workers from certain forms of exploitation. It is the lowest hourly, daily, or monthly wage that employers may legally pay to employees or workers. Equivalently, it is the lowest wage at which workers may sell their labour.

As I researched this piece of legislation I began to relate it back to real concerns in my own life. Many of my students at the university are forced to secure work so they are able to finance their studies, and many of these students are a source of exploitable labour. Over my time working as a lecturer I have encountered stories of this exploitation and they worry me deeply. In addition, due to a restructuring in the Faculty, my own position as an employee came under threat. In my career I have experienced redundancy before (as have generations of my family) and the reality of the precarious nature of employment was brought back to me with considerable force.

I did not want my thesis to become a cognitive contemplation on an issue. A *Manifesto* that is divorced from experience is very different to one whose tenets are driven from direct contact with a situation. I wanted my thesis to

be an intelligent and creative vehicle for raising awareness. I wanted it to have a heart.

After considering a range of possible alternatives I decided to seek out a number of New Zealand workers who were forced to work for less than the minimum wage.

Sadly, finding participants did not prove difficult.

The research now was able to draw into itself information from my early experiments but the project shifted markedly in its approach. I was forced to think deeply about the nature of stories and how one might work with them in an intelligent and creative fashion.

Accordingly, the next section of the thesis deals with the results. It briefly discusses the methodology (narrative inquiry) employed then, adopting a form of commentary, draws into discourse conceptual, technological and design considerations impacting on the thesis.

In doing so it seeks to present a highly integrative narration of the research.

3.18

13. Since 1896, following the passing of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, New Zealand employers have been required to pay at least the minimum wage, even if an employee is paid by commission or piece rate. Today this minimum wage applies to all workers aged sixteen years or older, including home workers, casuals, temporary, and part-time workers. The adult minimum wage in New Zealand is (as at 1st April 2009), $12.50 an hour. That is $100.00 for an eight-hour day, and $500.00 for a forty-hour week. There is no statutory minimum wage for employees under sixteen years of age.

MINIMUM W
1896
A MINIMUM WAGE IS THE LOWES
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WAGE LAWS ARE NOW IN FORCE IN MORE

Methodology

Methodology

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Methodology

Introduction

Jean Paul Sartre the French philosopher and existentialist in his book *Words* said,

"People are always tellers of tales. They live surrounded by their stories and the stories of others; they see everything that happens to them through those stories and they try to live their lives as if they were recounting them". (1964, p. 71)

In discussing the methodological approach to this project I am cognisant of the 'storied' nature of our lives.[1]

Narrative inquiry

Narrative inquiry is a process of collaboration involving mutual story telling as the research proceeds. As a methodology it can be seen as interpretations of people's worlds upon which they haven't necessarily reflected on past occasions. This is to say their complete narratives are stored within their subconscious and only establish a fuller picture when these narratives are expressed in a mutual collaboration between a participant and the researcher.

Grant and Ladson-Billings (1997, p. 195) suggest narrative inquiry is,

"A methodological approach of understanding people's representations of the world, and their actions in it, through the stories they tell [which are] frameworks through which they impose order and make sense of their own and other's experiences".

Connelly and Clandinin (1990) suggest that people by nature lead storied lives and tell stories of these lives, whereas narrative researchers describe such lives, collect and tell stories of them and write/create narratives of these experiences.

Therefore a narrative inquiry may be understood as two narratives, one being the participant's and the other being the researcher's. These two narratives are seen as one *conversation* on the same subject.

Narrative inquiry becomes the vessel for producing data for the final artworks in this project. Accordingly, the final exhibition focuses on three separate narratives of three different participants. Each story shares two narrators. The first is the participant whose audio narrative relates to their experiences working below the minimum wage. The second is the visual designer whose serigraphic image is a researcher's reflection on, and story of, the participant's narrative. Together this discourse constitutes a 'shared narrative'.

Trust relationships

For a narrative inquiry to work effectively a high level of trust needs to be established. In this research project this involved several meetings with the participants on an individual basis before the formal interviews occurred.

These meetings were generally unstructured discussions where the nature of the research and backgrounds of the researcher and the participant were shared. It was important that these meetings took place in an environment that was comfortable to the participants. In discussing this Clandinin and Connelly (1988. p 2), say,

"Collaborative research constitutes a relationship. In everyday life, the idea of friendship implies a sharing, an interpretation of two or more persons' spheres of experience. Mere contact is acquaintanceship, not friendship. The same may be said for collaborative research, which requires a close relationship akin to friendship. Relationships are joined, by the narrative unities of our lives".

The authors suggest that in this kind of research 'narrative' is both the phenomenon and method. In other words narrative names the structure of the experience (recollected story) and it names the patterns of inquiry for the study. In this regard narrative inquiry is more about a collaboration of stories, or a 'conversation' between the interviewer and the participant. There is a negotiation of stories contributing to a shared narrative unity.

Interview environment

A narrative inquiry is more than a recorded interview (Clandinin 1986, 1989, Hoffman 1988, Korma 1983). As a potentially multimodal method of gathering and processing information the researcher is constantly aware of all levels of information feeding into the inquiry. Thus, when one is interviewing a participant in their home, one is attentive to not only the content but also the *context* of the interview. A room, a home, or a workshop may speak articulately of the environment of a lived experience.

Because of issues of safety in the project I agreed not to take photographs of either the participants or their environments.

However, locations often served to generate questions or help me to gain a deeper appreciation of the context of a lived situation.

The inside researcher

For the stories to be open and flowing it sometimes helps if the interviewer is able to demonstrate a level of empathy with the participant. This is to say that for narratives to be expressed, a bond of trust between participant and interviewer is helpful especially if the interviewer has been in similar circumstances. The advantages of this are,

• The interviewer can ask questions framed in language the participant understands and recognises as familiar.

• The interviewer may have a heightened sense of the content or ethos of the interview and can often make pertinent connections that effectively lead to further fruitful questioning.

1. In terms of methodological approach the project's research design has been assisted by recourse to a number of texts. Although the thesis employs a distinctive application of narrative inquiry (that extends notions of writing into communication through image), writers whose discussion of the 'storied life' and how this might be utilised in research (Boje 2001, Connelly & Clandinin, 1990 Reason & Rowan 1981, and Conle 2000), have been useful in framing and applying the methodology.

Reflective interviewing

In project I employed a method of interviewing that replaced predetermined questions with a process of reflective questioning. A reflective interview is activated by a small number of open ended 'focusing questions'. Responses to these questions are 'reflected back'[2] to the participant by using 'reflection catalysts' that inquire into how the participant felt about the situation. This approach to drawing out narrative often elicits a more deeply resonant form of narration (Jameson 2006).

The reflective interview avoids simple responses to closed questions and also enables a participant's narrative to surface without unnecessary interruption.

Minimal intervention in interviews

When conducting these interviews I drew upon a technique often employed in radio interviews and oral history recordings where the researcher seeks to record information with minimal intervention. In this process one lets the participant speak freely, with minimal interruption. Questioning is pared back and open ended. Indicative of this form of interviewing is a question like,

"Can you tell me about how you got your job"?

Here one is not asking for a fixed answer but opening the question up to a narration.

Method of recording

In the project the participant's responses were audio-recorded using a digital recorder and *Sound Studio* software. Later, interviews were played back and resonances identified in the narratives, were used to generate visual responses.

Resulting from this data I began formulating a series of visual responses inside digital and analogue domains.

Safety

In a narrative inquiry of this type it is also important that participants are assured that their anonymity will be protected. In a project like *Manifesto,* this is imperative because certain aspects of participants' stories may deal with delicate matters regarding immigration or tax evasion. Accordingly I gained ethics approval (AUTEC: 0880) and conducted the inquiry inside the University's Ethic Committee guidelines.

Active listening to recorded stories

Once recordings had been made, the process of narrative inquiry moved into a form of *close reading* and analysis. By listening and re-listening to the recordings (up to 50 times) I was able to assess and piece together an understanding of the nature of the stories. It is from this listening and re-listening that I gathered the inspiration to formulate graphic responses. Here I listened to tone, pause, emphasis and connection as much as I listened to content. In doing this, the narrative 'talks to' the researcher and certain aspects give rise to visual responses. In developing these initial responses I also employed a designer's journal.

The designer's journal

The designer's journal is a document that records and reflects on data gathered and processed in the development of a solution to a problem.

The designer's journal is distinct from academic report writing in that it does not *"generally attempt to present the process of research in the linear fashion that is typical of research paper writing".* (Newbury, 2001, p. 1) Instead it generally employs subjective systems of data collecting and processing. It integrates elements of *"the real 'inner drama' of research, with its intuitive base, its halting time-line, and its extensive recycling of concepts and perspectives".* (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p. 15). The designer's journal experiences and develops ideas subjectively. Clifford & Marcus (1986), and Newbury, (2001) suggest that the voice of the researcher is intimately linked to the data.

Thus, I construct ideas in a journal while I am listening to the stories of participants. I dwell inside their stories, try to 'feel' them, their content, tone and emphases. My pencil draws out ideas as small-sketched responses to what I hear. They are my 'voice' in response to the voice I am experiencing.
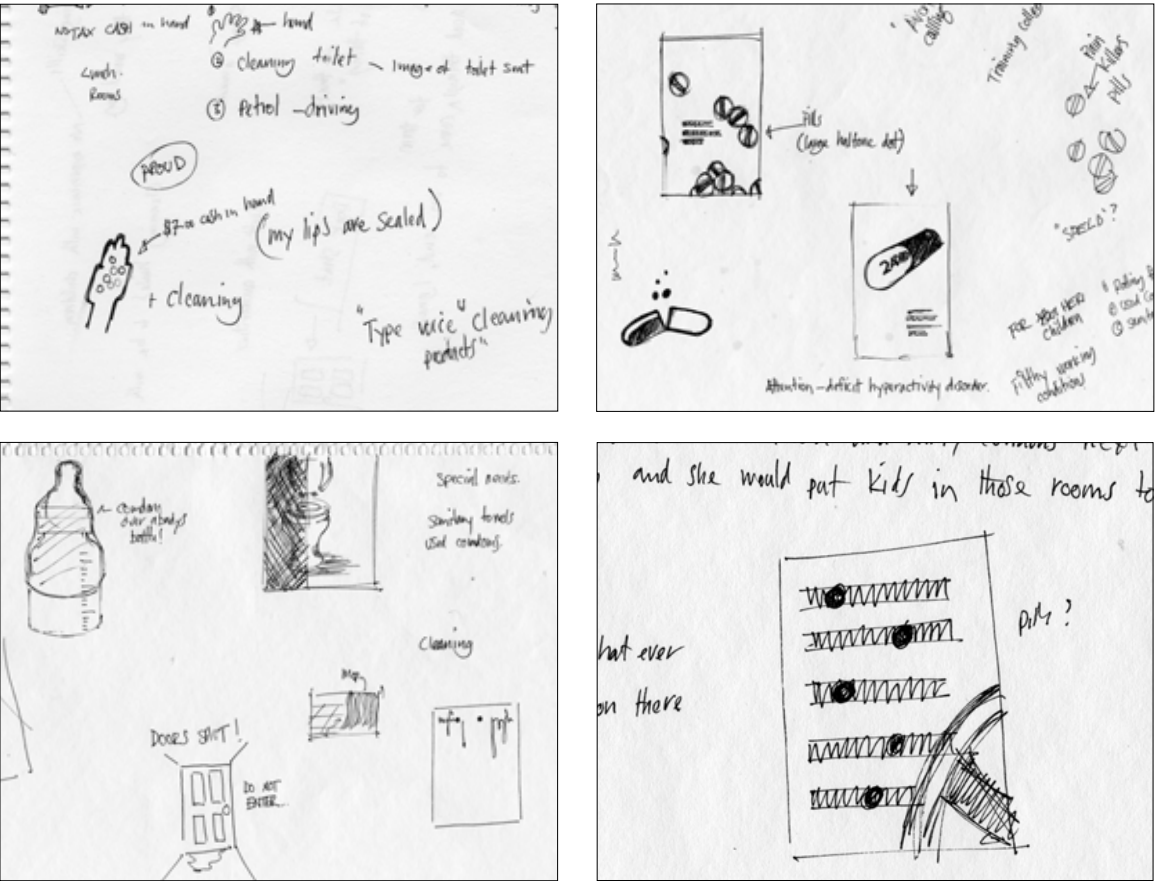
4.1

2. When I question I listen to what is being said and ask questions in response to what I am hearing. This form of reflective interview does not presuppose a fixed body of information to be gathered. It is an attentive and inquiring response to a participant's narrative.

The construction of digital thumbnails

From the pencil responses in my journal I select those with potential and trial developments on my computer. Here colour, texture and composition are new concerns that respond to both the sketches and the audio narrations. During this process I may construct numerous variations of a single idea as I seek to refine its 'voice'.

The serigraphic print as labour

At this stage in contemporary practice a design might be polished and printed out from a CMYK Tiff file. However, the nature of this research project sought something deeper. I wanted work that was 'laboured over'. This challenged the process of graphic designing that traditionally ends with the preparation of files.

Methodologically I was interested in seeing if the process of my narration might be developed by 'labouring' over an additional stage in poster design. This was the process of screen-printing.

Usually the contemporary graphic designer has little to no control over how a print will turn out. However, in printing my designs I have been able to experiment and make design decisions on the final product whilst being in control of the design when it meets the limitations and potentials of manual processes. These processes begin with the mixing of ink to the desired hues and tones.[3]

In the process of printing the posters for *Manifesto* one engages one's story telling with a new arena where variables result in disruption to preconceived visual ideas. For example, the application and variation of pressure while hand printing can result in significant changes to the texture and depth of colour in a print. This varies from print to print giving a unique personality on each manifestation of the design. This variation breathes unique life into each print version of the narration. Every print has its own voice despite the fact that it contains the same elements.[4]

The process of printing is laborious. These images, I physically sweat over. On average to set up multiple screens, register them, mix ink and print takes me forty hours per poster. I had no available technology for this size or scale.[5] Accordingly I had to design and make a specialised printing jig. This enabled

4.2

me to use varying sizes of screens and to be able to accurately position these in accordance with the requirements of the design.

What I was interested in was developing this method of image making as a way of signifying reflexivity. I wanted the traces of my labour in telling these stories to be inscribed on the prints.

Goldman & Papson (1994) suggest that reflexivity is a method of drawing attention to the 'made' nature of a given text, but I was interested in this going deeper. I was interested in not only revealing references to 'making' but also to the spirit and marks of fatigue and labour. On these prints we see over-printing where I could not physically ensure a mechanical registration. There are areas where the ink varies in the density of its application because it is physically impossible to pull a squeegee down a screen in one movement.[6] The prints are huge. They cannot be generated by any simple dexterity of the hand. They require the engagement of the designer's body to effect their realisation.

Thus, by extending the narration into physical work I hoped to not only 'exercise' the visual potential of labour, but to remind myself as a worker, of the marks of effort, inexactness and fatigue. These became elements of the designs and through this, profiles of my story telling. Through this process significant differences appeared between thumbnails generated on a computer and large, gritty prints generated through a process of physical exertion.

Conclusion

David Boje (2001) suggests that narrative inquiry challenges conventional attitudes to data gathering and questions the idea of 'objective data'.

This project has not been objective; its power lies in its subjectivity and its ability to translate this across modes of story telling, from the spoken recollection to the printed artwork.

The narrative inquiry in its explication has employed methods of audio recording to elicit stories that have been prompted, where necessary, by reflective questioning.

This data has then been processed through reflection involving listening, visual response, selection, editing, composing and formatting into design proposals.

Finally these 'thumbnail' stories have been 'laboured' through a process of printing and enlargement so that in bringing my physical labour to reflections on labour, I have been able to access certain resonances and marks beyond those normally generated by the graphic designer telling visual stories inside a digital environment.

Having now explained the methodology employed in this project I will conclude the exegesis with a commentary on each of the exhibited works.

4.3

3. This may sound superficial especially if one is an artist, who frequently practices this, but for a designer the nearest one gets to mixing colours is through a Pantone colour swatch or by mixing the colour slides via software on a computer screen.

4. This may be likened to the same story told using the same words but at different times and under different conditions. Each version of the same story will have unique pauses, emphases and variations.

5. Prints range in size from 1200mm x 3000mm (for the participant 1 prints), to 1700mm x 3500mm (for those of participant 2 prints) and 1370mm x 4000mm (for the participant 3 prints).

6. This is because the image is so large other techniques had to be employed, such as positioning the image in several parts and physically standing on ladders over the screen so that enough pressure could be applied.

Comm

Introduction

This commentary
briefly discusses
each of the prints
in this exhibition in
terms of its technical
and conceptual
considerations.

I have adopted this
structure as a means
of establishing
an authentic
commentary where
theory is directly
related to practical
decision making.

Accordingly, the
chapter is divided
into three sections.

Participant 1

Participant 2

Participant 3

Posters

CORROSÃO

5.1
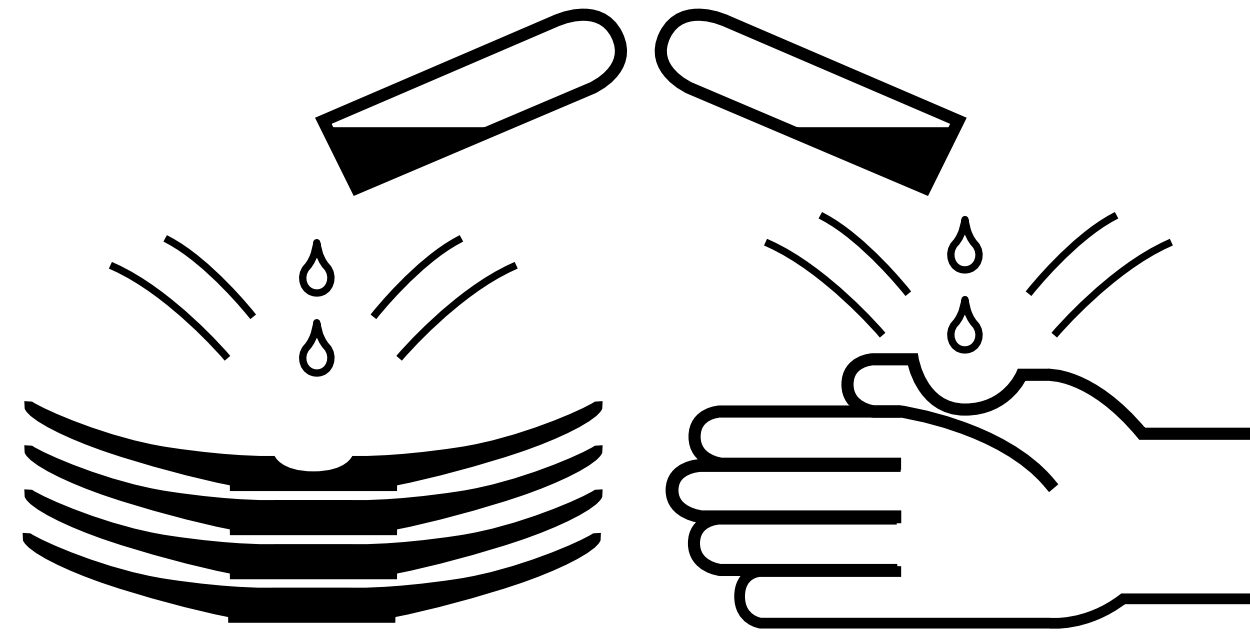
CORROSÃO

5.3

Poster 1 · Participant 1: Dish washing

This worker is in her late twenties. She came to New Zealand in 2005 from San Paulo, Brazil. In leaving her homeland she sought a better life and the chance to improve her English.

Moving to a country about which she knew little, with no money and only a vague promise of work, the realities of her sacrifice became quickly evident.

The participant had a Brazilian friend living in New Zealand with whom she

had remained in e-mail contact prior to her departure. The picture painted of New Zealand was one of freedom, beauty and opportunity. Therefore, using all of her savings to buy a one-way ticket the participant left for a new world.

Her friend assured her she could secure employment as she and her husband managed a local restaurant. Her husband was a chef and she, a waitress.

When she arrived the participant was offered a job washing dishes and a place to stay. The reality of her situation however, was shattering. She spent ten hours a day shut up in a kitchen, washing dishes. For this she was paid $7.20 an hour she had no contact with the outside world. Her employers argued that they

had to pay tax on her earnings, so to make things simpler they deducted a portion from her wages. They claimed that by doing this they could address the issue on her behalf. Her employer also deducted money from her wages for accommodation for a tiny room, barely big enough for a single bed. In an effort

to move beyond the limitations of her circumstances, the participant enrolled in a language school which she attended in-between washing dishes.

After she had paid for these lessons she was left with just twenty-five dollars a week on which to live.

Although the participant thought often of returning to Brazil, her situation meant she couldn't afford to.

She was trapped.

5.2

5.4

5.4 Close up of composite print of the background showing the texture of the ink on paper.
5.5 Close up of composite print of the corrosion symbol. Note the misalignment of the black referencing the workers fatigue.
5.6 Detail showing the texture of the black ink in the hand. Notice in this image the hand has not been doubled. This was an alternative printing experiment.

5.5

5.6

Interpretive and conceptual colour considerations

This poster sought to establish through the use of text and mis-registration the ethos of this workers' narrative. The colours, symbolic of her national identity are based on the palette of the Brazilian flag.

Corrosion and fatigue

The design features a central motif that references industrial warnings related to the corrosive effects of chemicals. However, the registration of the images are off-set to suggest double vision often experienced in a state of fatigue. By contrast, within this motif the word Corrosão (corrosive) is presented in a precise, clear and uncompromised voice.

The sense of fatigue in this poster is also referenced in the borders of the image. These are not constrained by sharp lines but eroded by the space the design inhabits. Just as the worker's aspirations were damaged by time and conditions, the label is worn and corroded by leakage and exposure to adverse conditions.

Typography

Another significant feature of the design is the sense of cultural dislocation evident in the recorded narrative.

Interpreting this sentiment I have dislocated (geographically) the foreigner so her voice is both part of, and separate from the design.

The word Advertencia (warning) on the left of the print is both absorbed into, and demarcated from the design. Thus, 'Advertencia' exists both inside and outside of the visual narration.

Like the participant, the word is accepted but not accommodated by the image. The letter forms bear the marks of dislocation experienced by the participant. The bold, large letter forms (H2D2-Alevita Rough) reference the power of type often used

in industrial warning signs. As a design element these signs often speak to us in single words.

• *Corrosão*

Finally, a significant visual anomaly in the print is the deliberate, sharp, and carefully registered white printing of the word 'Corrosão', in contrast to the fatigued state of the background and top half of the mis-registered central motif. The clarity of the word suggests the control and authority of the work environment. It is the dominant warning existing antithetically in the same work environment where one experiences fatigue and unsafe working hours.

Technical considerations

In producing this poster I applied the background colour in two parts. To do this, a large (1500mm x 1500mm) screen was set into a jig and positioned at the top of the print. The green (PMS 334) ink was printed inconsistently by applying levels of pressure through the screen.

Once this layer had dried the screen was positioned at the base of the work and the second part of the background was printed. The over lap between the two prints was emphasised rather than hidden. This is because I was not seeking to present a flawless continuity but through reflexivity I sought to draw attention to

evidence of its 'making'. In other words the physicality of its production.

In contrast to this aesthetic we see set against the background the precise alignment of the corrosion symbol. This element (shown in black) has been printed twice, with the top part of the motif mis-registered.[1] To achieve this, the image was printed in the conventional way using the screen in the correct position. The print was then left to dry. Two hours later the screen was repositioned at a slightly different angle and a second, slightly skewed section of the motif was printed.

Eroded boarder

The print also includes an eroded border. This technique is not transferable across multiple editions but is something engineered as a unique aspect of each print. I achieved this aesthetic by letting the ink strategically dry into the screen thus blocking the mesh and preventing pigment from reaching the printed surface. As the ink continued to dry in the screen, further areas of the mesh became blocked. To prevent the entire image becoming blocked, greater pressure was applied to the squeegee when "pulling" the ink.

5.7

5.8

5.7 Detail of the vertical typography 'Advertencia', translated meaning 'Warning'.
5.8 Close up of the corrosion symbol. Note the transparency of the blue ink showing the textural background underneath.
5.9 Image showing the completed printed poster.

5.9

1. By exploiting the nature of manual registration in serigraphic printing I sought to use disruption to emphasise notion of fatigue and exhaustion seen as double vision.

Você pode ganhar
You can win

5.10

5.12

Poster 2 · Participant 1: Dish washing

Interpretive and conceptual considerations

In this second response to the worker's narrative I wanted to emphasise the determined optimism evident in her recounting.

I used (PMS 186) red ink to reference the tradition of this colour in workers' protest marches. As an extension of this the letter "h" in the design was morphed into a waving flag. This motif is both symbolic of the participant's personal struggle for achievement and also a historical reference to workers' struggles and solidarity [2] (See 5.11).

Technical considerations

Again in this print the background colour was applied first. This was achieved in two parts much like the previous work but in this case I used a much longer screen (2500mm x 1200mm) to achieve a wider and deeper textured background.

The red ink was applied through the screen varying the pressure along its vertical path. Because of the length of this screen, pressure had to be applied while walking backwards. Normally in producing a serigraphic print one would be in a static position pulling the screen towards the body. This enables one to keep in control of the process. Using a method of walking backwards gave a varying texture along the edges of the print. In parts this produced copious

5.11

SOLIDARNOŚĆ

Graphic motifs used in the Polish Solidarność trade union posters.

2. Solidarnosc was the first non-Communist-controlled trade union in a Warsaw Pact country. In the 1980s it constituted a broad anti-bureaucratic social movement. The government attempted to destroy the union during the period of martial law in the early 1980s with several years of repression. However in the end it was forced to negotiate with the union. The Round Table Talks between the government and the Solidarity-led opposition led to semi-free elections in 1989. By the end of August a Solidarity-led coalition government was formed and in December 1990 Lech Walesa was elected President of the country.

5.13

amounts of ink and took up to four hours to dry, before the second section could be applied. These areas of colour produced rich, emotive textures and intense variations of colour.

• *Você pode ganhar*
The wording on this print has been pivoted through a 90° angle and positioned in the bottom left hand corner. It has been printed in two parts. The first part (Você pode) was printed at a slightly different angle to the second part (ganhar).

The aim of this was to draw attention to the text by shifting the eye's attention from the right hand side of the poster.

As with the first print in this series, the ink was partially left to dry, thereby blocking the mesh on the screen and producing a textured finish to the poster. The effect denotes the aesthetics of a low budget printing process indicative of those used in the graphics of underground protest banners and posters.

5.14

5.15

5.16 Vector drawing artwork for the poster. Note the tight letter spacing of the text referencing the cramped nature of underpaid worker.

5.17 Detail from the printed poster showing the textured finish from the printed inks.

$7.20

BLESSED TO HAVE A JOB

MONDAY SUNDAY 65 HOURS PER WEEK,$7.20 PER HOUR

5.16

5.17

Poster 3 · Participant 1: Dish washing

Interpretive and conceptual considerations

In this third response to the worker's narrative I reflected upon the relationship between pay, work, labour and culture.

The colours in this poster reference the decoration of Brazilian houses from the working class area where the participant grew up. To achieve this reference I used (PMS 109) yellow ink and printed it on the same white pattern-maker's paper (170gsm) that I used for the previous prints. This stock[3] was chosen for two reasons.

First I decided to print all of these responses to worker's narratives on paper used in the process of labour. Thus, I consciously avoided high quality coated offset speed art and high quality hammered finished papers that would normally be used in the printing industry. Instead I sought out rolls of 'industrial' stock as a way of reconsidering and re-valuing the marginalised.

In terms of the deign, the use of the large numbers ($7.20) emphasised the low pay the worker earned. The closely kerned[4] characters brought the letters together in such a way that these elements became virtually illegible. In doing this I was referencing the cramped nature of the worker's living conditions. Thus, in this narrative we see time and money

3. The white stock is used entirely for the pattern making industry and comes in a 100 metre roll specifically manufactured for the purposes to be used on a computerised plotting machine.

4. This is a typesetting technique that adjust and tightens space between each letter forms. In this process edges of individual letters are overlapped to provide unique negative spaces and suggest new composite forms.

5.18

cramped together in an effort to find some means of affording an opportunity for further study.

The texture of the black lettering throughout this poster is used (as in the previous posters) to reference fatigue and the physicality of labour.

Technical considerations

Again, with this print the background colour was applied first. This was produced in two parts much like the previous work but in this case I staggered the positioning of the background colour to produce a large 'step' in the textured colour.

The wording on this print has been tightly grouped together, pivoted at right

angles and positioned in the top left hand corner of the print. The sentence *'blessed to have a job'* (which is a direct quote from the interview) has been set as single words on separate lines. These words are stacked like dishes on top of each other. Adjacent to this text are many lines in white. These suggest a never-ending supply of dishes waiting to be washed.

Across the over-kerned $7.20 runs a line of pristine, white, clearly registered text recording the number of days and hours worked. This is the record of the employer. Ironically, his 'voice' links both the money paid and the worker's expression of gratitude for having a job. As in the first poster, this privileged text is not eroded by signs of decay, fatigue or distress.

The inks used for this poster are water based and comparatively cheap to buy.[5] The black ink was mixed with very little water to achieve a thick consistency. This is so it would dry quickly in the mesh of the screen. By doing this, an uneven amount of ink makes its way onto the paper, producing areas of broken type and a textured finish.

5.19

5.20

5. The inks used are *'Aqua print'*, and are water based inks. They are manufactured by *'Flint Inks Limited'* and they are $15 per litre compared to the more expensive solvent based inks that start at $80 per litre and can be as much as $240 per litre.

5.21

While I was at her house interviewing, one of her sons (a young man in his twenties) he started to become quite difficult and interfered with the interview. The participant and her sons lived in a small house were the kitchen merged with the living area. I was interviewing her in the lounge area. Her son turned on the water tap and left the room or would throw cutlery into the stainless steel sink and turn on the dishwasher so it would make more noise. At one point he marched in-between his mother and me to cause further disruption. The participant later explained that her son suffers from ADHD and she had struggled as a single-parent to try to bring him up as best she could. The boy did not like attention focused away from his own needs.

If I knew it was like...She always had headaches **popping pain killers** and what even, if I had known that my kids would have never gone there.

5.22

Poster 1 · Interview 2: Childcare

The second worker interviewed for this thesis was in her mid to late forties. She was born and grew up in Auckland. She married young and had two children, both boys. Her husband left her when the babies were young which meant she had to bring her family up on her own. Her husband gave her no financial help. Having no family members she could call upon to help, she had to find work to pay the mortgage and bills. This meant juggling employment with the need to care for her children.

As her sons grew they developed learning difficulties that were later diagnosed as ADHD. This added further complications to her situation, as she needed to earn money for extra support beyond the meagre amount offered by the government to her local state school. Eventually, she was offered work by a wealthy woman who had converted part of her large home into a private childcare centre in an affluent part of Auckland. The job, entailed looking after the children, cooking food for them and also cleaning both the private house and the area where the children played. In desperation the worker took the job because it meant she could look after her children at the same time.

Her employer said that the childcare centre was not a profitable business so she could not pay her the going rate. Instead she offered her cash (without the tax authorities knowing). She suggested that by doing this the worker could still claim help from the government as a single parent. The worker worried that the authorities might become aware of what she was doing, but having little choice, she accepted the job.

Interpretive and conceptual considerations

This poster sought to establish through the use of exaggerated halftone[6] imagery and overlapping mis-registration, the ethos of her narrative.

The focal point of this poster is an image that references the type of the work undertaken by this worker. By significantly enlarging the image I sought to suggest that this narrative has been examined in fine detail. This is to say, we are delving deeper into the ethos of this narrative and uncovering what has been hidden.

6. This is a printing process that involves reducing an image to a series of fine dots to enable it to be printed by means of conventional printing. By varying the space between dots one can create lighter and darker areas in the image. Normally (depending on the printed matter) these dots are extremely fine and can only be seen through a magnifying lens.
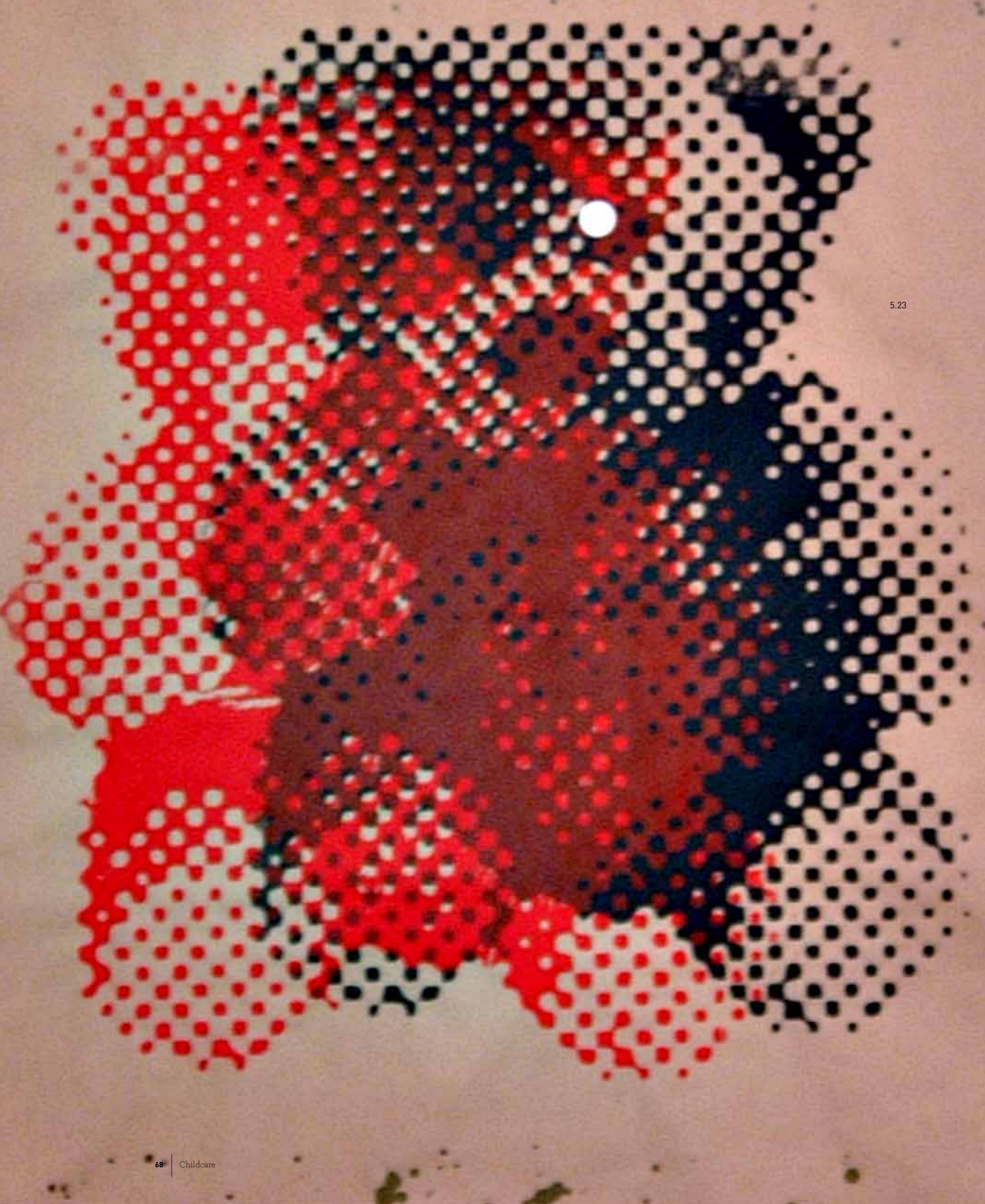
5.23
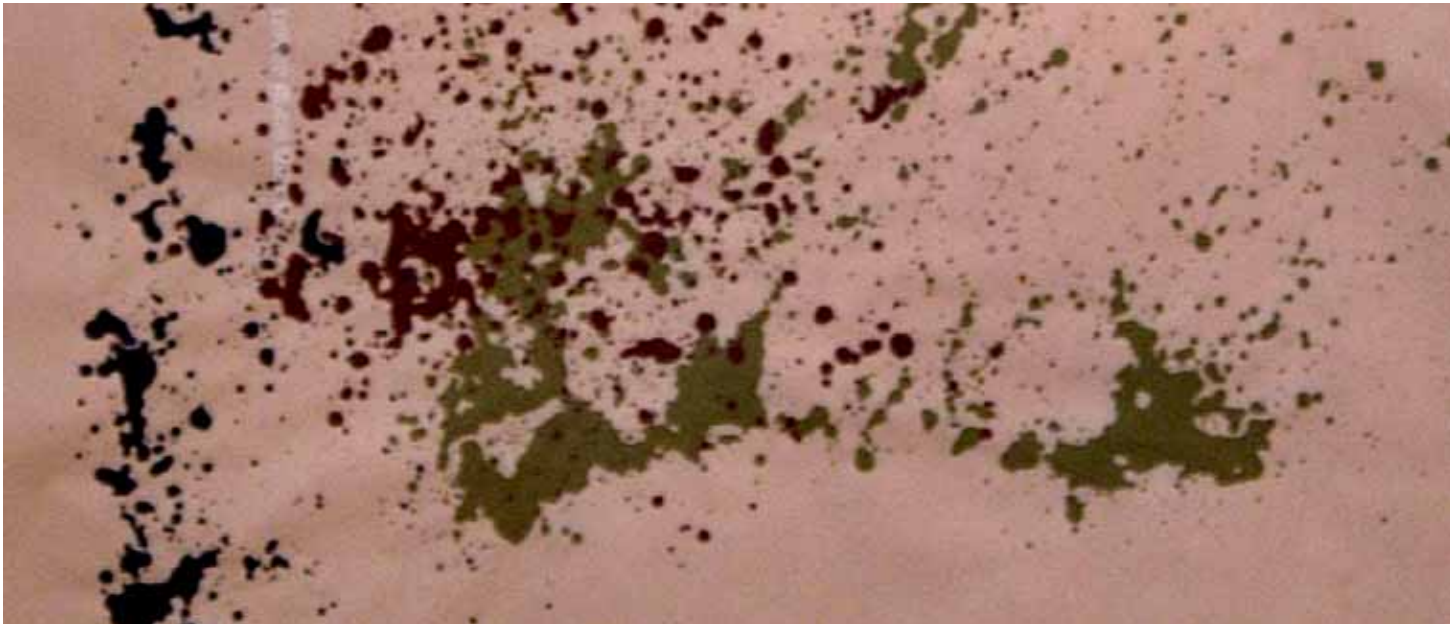
5.24

Again in this work, the registration of two versions of the same image have been offset and produced in different colours to suggest double vision often experienced in a state of fatigue, or confusion.

By contrast one of the toy's eyes has been over printed (precisely) in white ink and a perfect white circle. This references the accompanying text on the poster that talks about popping pain killers (pills). The sense of dirt, filth and blood in this poster is extended into the surface surrounding the central image. Its distressed surface connotes the filth of the environment she talks about in her interview.

Typography

The letterforms (American Typewriter) reference the personality of this worker.

This is to say that she is intelligent and practical (she has a tertiary education and works today in an administrative role). However, at the time of this employment she 'tapped out' a life with grinding regularity. Each decision was made in relation to her circumstances. Her life was machine-like and her observations had a precise clarity of the punctuating letters printed on a page by an industrial typewriter.

The use of the light font and continuous line length suggests a continuous commentary with emphasis on particular words. In this case the words 'popping pills' were emphasised during the interview. To emphasise this wording visually I have used the extra bold version of the typeface.

Stock, colour and technical considerations

To achieve a distinctive feel of grime and dirt within this narrative I chose to print the work on a coloured stock. To this end I used a lightweight craft paper (80gsm). This is the kind of paper we wrap purchased commodities in. It 'functions' to disguise the contents it wraps. The natural colour of the stock suggests 'low quality' and the idea of being disposed of after a single use. By using this stock I am suggesting that the worker is seen as unimportant and easily replaced. This paper came in a large roll, (1600mm wide). This meant I was able to produce very long (4000mm) posters.

5.25 Variations of the printed poster showing one version with the black over-printed and the other with the red overprinted.

5.26 Detail showing the splatter of the ink in one colour.

5.27 Image showing the completed printed poster.

5.25

5.27
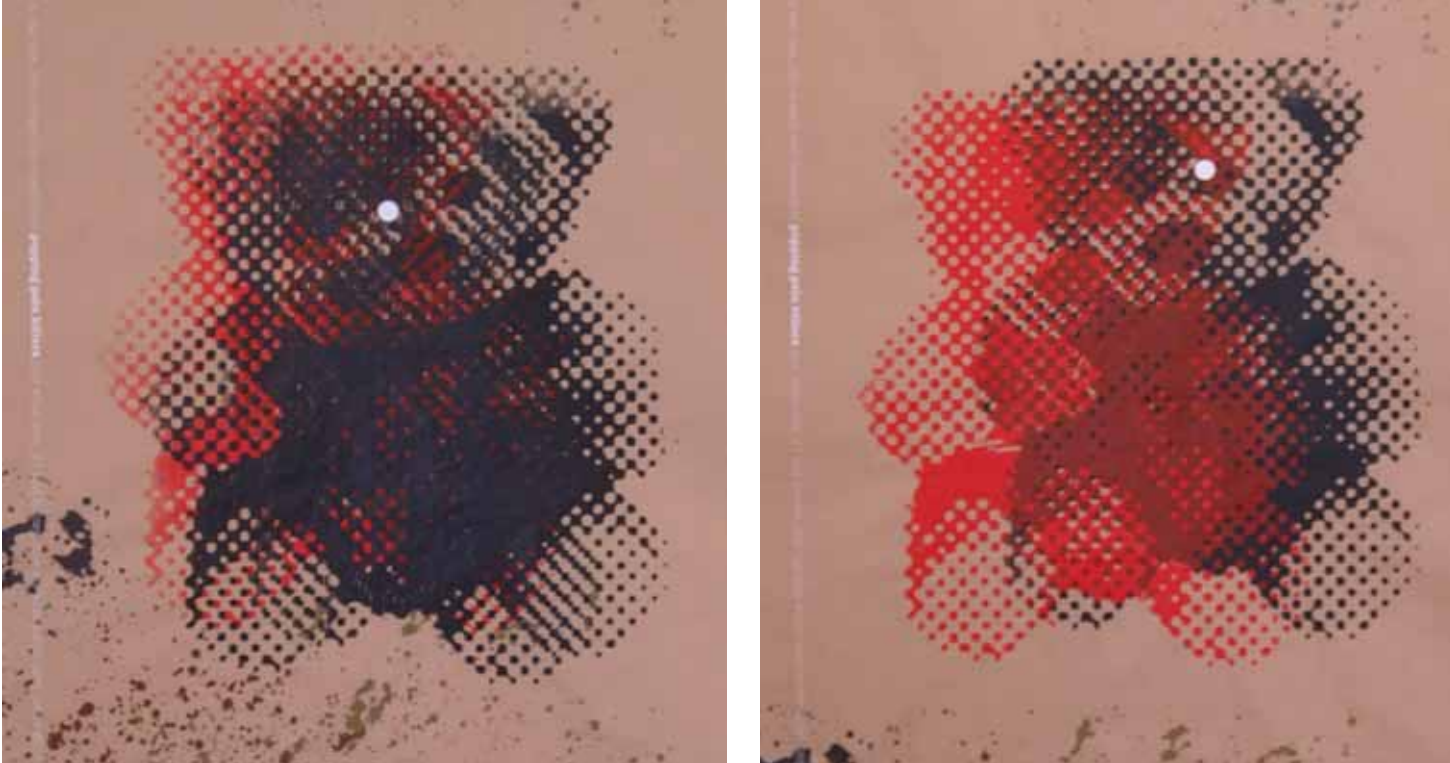
Process

The first part of the 'Teddy Bear' image was applied to a large screen (1500mm x 1500mm) and positioned in the centre of the poster using the printing jig. The black teddy bear was printed through this screen using process black[7] ink. Once this layer dried the screen was re-positioned on the poster and the second part of the image was printed. This second imprint used the same screen image but is printed in red (PMS 032) and offset below and to the left.

In conventional printing black is normally the last colour to be printed. This is because black is the strongest of the printing colours and will normally cover the colours underneath. I experimented with this juxtaposition because I wanted to see if the red of the bear might have more emphasis than the black.

Surrounding the central image of the bear is imagery connoting grime and dirt. To achieve this look I had to produce these solid areas in printable form. To this end I purchased large (2000mm x 2000mm) sheets of acetate film. This was used because of its transparent properties could expose the light-sensitive emulsion on the screen.

I mixed a thick consistency of black ink, and from a height of 2500mm I poured it onto the acetate film. This gave a spattering effect.

Because of the thickness of the ink, coupled with the non-porous properties of the acetate film, this layer took forty-eight hours to dry.

This technique was repeated six times for each print, each time using a different colour.

The white letters that relocate part of the interview onto the artwork had to be printed at three separate intervals due to the long length of the drying time.

5.26

7. Process black refers to the standardised mix of black colour that is used within the process printing colour range. The other colours in this range are Cyan, Yellow and Magenta. These are the standard four colours that are used to create the spectrum of colours in conventional printing and are commonly referred to as C,M,Y,K.

5.28

5.29

Poster 2 · Interview 2: Childcare

Conceptual and colour

The prints generated by this project seek to communicate meaning through a nonlinear orchestration of signs. I arrange signifiers in such a way as to suggest a message that might increase its meaning when brought into discourse with an audio interview. Thus, the prints of coloured hands in this poster form a coherent iconic whole whose meaning is increased through this association with another text.

Multiple prints of hands, red with labour (PMS 186), blackened and stained with dirt (PMS Process Black) and blue (PMS 300) may signify by their soiled offsetting something of the grime and unsanitary environmental conditions endured by the worker.

Considerations of stock

I chose to print this poster on the same coloured stock I utilised for the previous works. This was a lightweight craft paper (80gsm). By maintaining a uniformity of substrate across the three prints I was seeking an additional means of reinforcing relationships between iconic messages and the narratives of each participant.

5.30 5.31 5.32

5.33
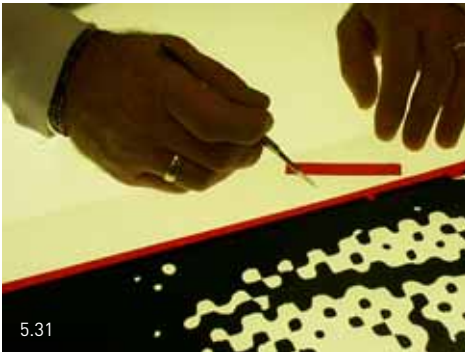
Process

Because of the large size of this poster it could not be produced on one piece of image-setter[8] film. Accordingly I had to divide the hand composite image into four separate parts on the computer so these would fit the maximum size of the film available (SRA2). After files were processed I arranged the four screens using printers' registration marks. These marks (as part of the computerised image) ensured that I had each element of the print in the exact position.

Next I used Rubylith[9] film to mask off areas that were duplicated. This ensured that the images of the hand fitted together on one piece of film. Next, I exposed this composite film image to the light sensitive area of the screen-printing mesh.

When the screen was ready for printing, it was placed in the jig and positioned at the bottom left hand corner of the poster. The first colour was applied in blue ink (PMS 300). Once this layer had dried the screen was repositioned and the second part of the image was printed. This part of the hand was printed from the same screen image but was applied using (PMS 032) red and offset below and to the left. The final part of the hand was printed in black, but this time was positioned to the right.

To achieve the distinctive look of the black hand in this work I weakened the ink to a watery consistency so the screen would flood with ink. By doing this I was able to create a strong suction between the ink from the screen mesh and the paper below. The resulting

saturation caused the paper to stick to the underneath the screen. This process left parts of the impression of the image on the underneath of the screen, so when one printed the next poster a 'ghost' impression of the previous print was transferred. In addition when a screen is flooded one gets interesting blurrings of detail, which suggested the smudged nature of a palm print 'soiling' the enlarged halftone textures of the red and blue hands.

As an extension of this 'soiling' surrounding the hand images are marks connoting grime and dirt. This effect was achieved by printing multiple layers of different colours. For this 'soiling' individual screens were made. These seemingly random marks were enlarged so they appeared to 'splatter' the surface

of the print. This method of printing multiple layers involved long drying times (between two-to-three hours for each application). When one realises that the completed artwork required fourteen separate prints, one begins to appreciate the complexity and dimension of the undertaking.

5.34

8. An image-setter is an ultra-high resolution large-format computer output device that exposes a monotone image via a laser light source onto light-sensitive film.

9. Traditionally, Rubylith was used widely in graphic design and pre-press artwork applications, to produce masks for various printing techniques. It was often used to mask off areas of a design prior to producing printing plates or stencils for screen-printing. This technique is rarely used today as the need for producing film prior to plate making has diminished due to computer-to-plate technology.

5.35

5.36

5.37
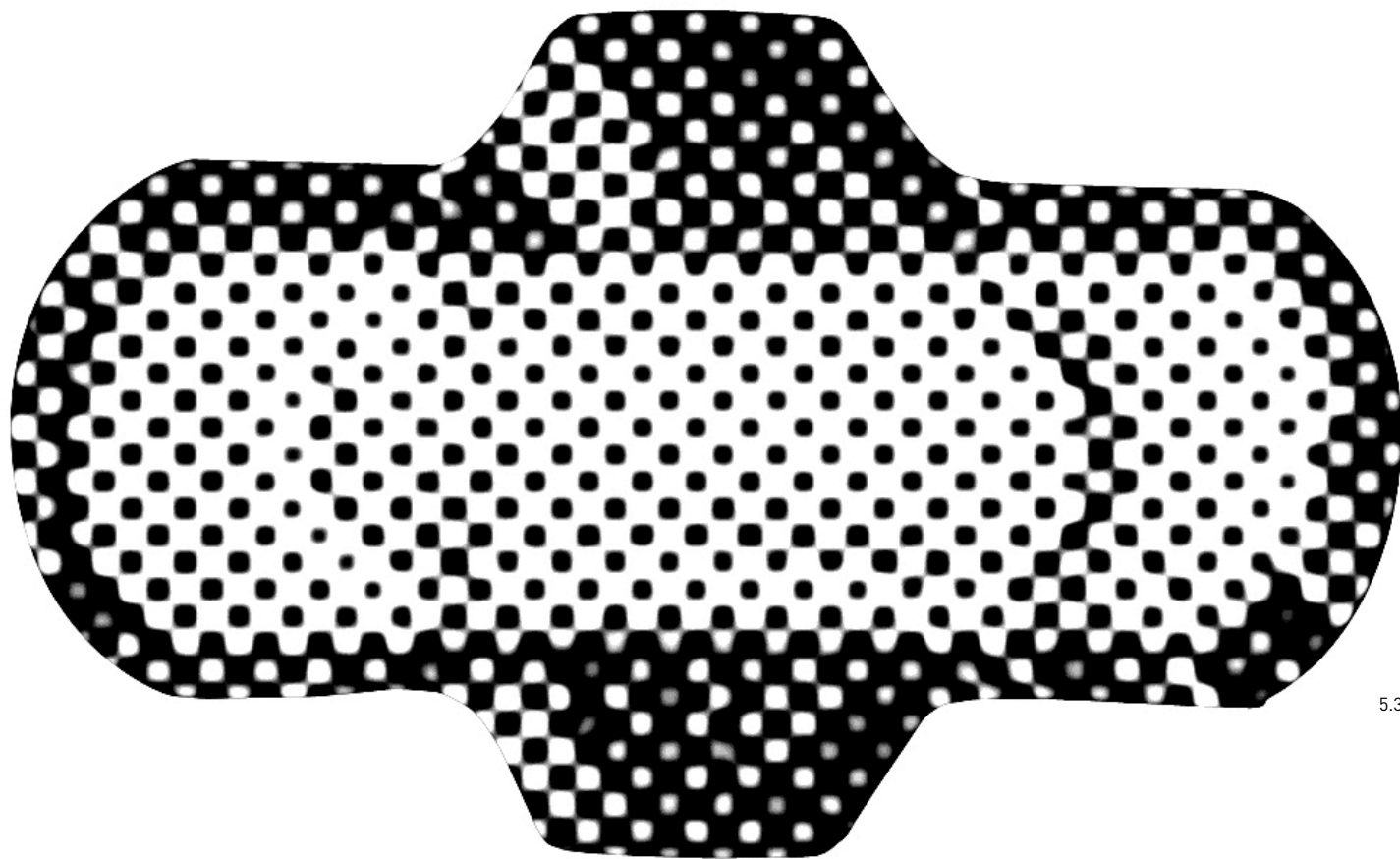
Poster 3 · Interview 2: Childcare

Dissolved demarcations between iconic and linguistic messages

All of the prints relating to interview 2 combine a coded iconic message and a linguistic message. The linguistic message may be conceived as separate from the iconic message yet it is also integrated with it. The choice of typeface and the fact that the printed word is a reflection of a 'heard' spoken text mean that Barthes (1978) differention between coded iconic messages, and linguistic messages becomes blurred.

In prints such as these the typographic 'voice' is more than a series of words. It's smudging and distressed use of letter forms mean that written transcripts become iconic. In addition these printed words 'bleed' between aural and visual dimensions of the installed work.

Subject and colour

In this third print I have 'retold' a particularly graphic section of the worker's interview where she tells us about finding a used sanitary pad. Here

5.38

5.39

the image is both a print of the object, and a typographic monologue. In this print I have again employed the halftone effect evidenced in the other works in the series. The first colour was a deep red (PMS 188), used to signify the colour of blood after it has been exposed to air. This colour may connote notions of the body and the discarded. The second colour is a grey (PMS 424). This may connote dirt, the slovenly, and the soiled nature of a lived environment.

Process
This poster was produced using the same stock as the previous prints and I employed similar techniques. However the marks of 'soiling' were magnified and enhanced with the introduction of bright red (PMS 186).

In this work there were only six colours used but because of the scale of the print its realisation involved fourteen passes. This was because the imagery of grime

and blood took three to four separate layers to complete each colour.

Scale
Because of the scale of this print (4000mm x 2500mm) and the fact that the stock I was using was very thin, moving the paper on ones own between each pass became difficult.

Early attempts at printing resulted in the paper creasing and ripping.

As a solution I designed a method of printing each part of the image separately, using different size screens. This meant that the entire poster did not need to be laid out in its full length. Instead the paper was rolled out in sections and held in place with paper clips.

For each section, just enough space was secured to allow each element of the work to be printed.

The process was precarious and necessitated each end of the paper roll being taped to a broom handle.

By doing this I was able to lift the entire print as a 'drape', off the printing area each time ink needed to be dried.

5.40

5.41 Vector drawing artwork from 'very cold and very dirty' poster. Shown here in black and white.

5.42 Vector drawing artwork from very cold and very dirty poster. Shown here in colour.

5.41

5.42

Very cold and very dirty

Poster 1 · Participant 3: Sustenance

The third worker in this project is in her early twenties. When she came to New Zealand from China her knowledge of English was limited. Despite this, her newly settled family relied on her to communicate on their behalf.

In this new country she was afraid and lonely and sought the friendship of fellow Chinese students at her new school.

Speaking Chinese at home and with her friends made her feel less homesick. In this environment her world remained essentially Chinese. Her parents worked for Chinese people, they watched Chinese television, and shopped only at Chinese stores.

As she began to acclimatise she began to question her family, her religion and

culture. She didn't want to dismiss her roots but wanted to experiment with this new world.

After she left school she enrolled at University. To help pay for her studies she secured a position working for a Chinese man who ran a fruit and vegetable business. The hours were long and gruelling. She had to sort and wash

vegetables and stack them in boxes. These were stored in a large walk-in refrigerator. As the worker was only small, she struggled to lift the produce onto the shelves.

She knew her income was very low. She thought she was being paid $4.50 per hour. However, when she later calculated her hours she realised it was only $3.40.

Her job did not last for long and after a few weeks her employer told her she was no longer required because her lack of strength made her a poor investment. Accordingly, she secured another position with her boyfriend's family in their butchery business. He was also Chinese. She worked there for two years, sometimes twelve hours a day, without pay.

After a few weeks she found carrying and preparing meat physically too demanding and asked for another position that was less strenuous. Her boyfriend secured her a job on the counter where she handled payments from people buying meat. Her boyfriend's father was not happy with this new arrangement and watched her closely. One day her boyfriend approached her

5.43

Gloss Vinyl Black
solvent-based ink

Mandaplas White
solvent-based ink

Polygloss varnish
solvent-based ink

Aqua print Process
Black water-based ink

Aqua print White
water-based ink

Manaplas Extender
solvent-based ink

5.44

while she was at the till and asked how much money she had in her purse. His father had claimed that she was stealing money from the cash register. Shocked that her boyfriend had believed this, she left the job, but was deeply distressed that her reputation in the Chinese community might be damaged by the accusation.

Interpretive and conceptual considerations

The Chinese text in this poster is a translated section from the interview where the worker discussed the physical conditions she endured. The first part of this text is printed in black (PMS Process black), then white (Opaque), and then blue (PMS 300). The black text has been exaggerated in its stroke-line[10] size so that it becomes the largest of the three components of the image. Because I have printed black ink on black paper, part of the image can only be seen under certain lights. This approach to the type has been taken as a reference to the worker's position being something that is subsumed by its cultural context, and therefore rendered relatively invisible.

The abstract image in the poster is a kiwi fruit. This has been used to establish a connection between the merging cultures of this worker. Both cultures eat this fruit (in China it is known as a 'monkey peach') and the icon also pays reference to the anachronistic New Zealand term 'Chinese gooseberry'. The fruit is also indicative of the produce stacked by the worker in the fruit store. Its blue (PMS 315) and brown (PMS 181) colouring reference the bruising of the produce.

Proportionally the print is positioned in a marginalised position at the bottom corner of the poster.

Stock, colour and technical considerations

As with the other prints in the exhibition I have used an industrial paper. To achieve a distinctive feel of isolation in this worker's story I used a heavyweight, black builder's paper (164gsm). This paper came in a large roll, (1370mm wide x 73 metres long). This enabled me to produce very long (4000mm) posters that could drop to the floor.
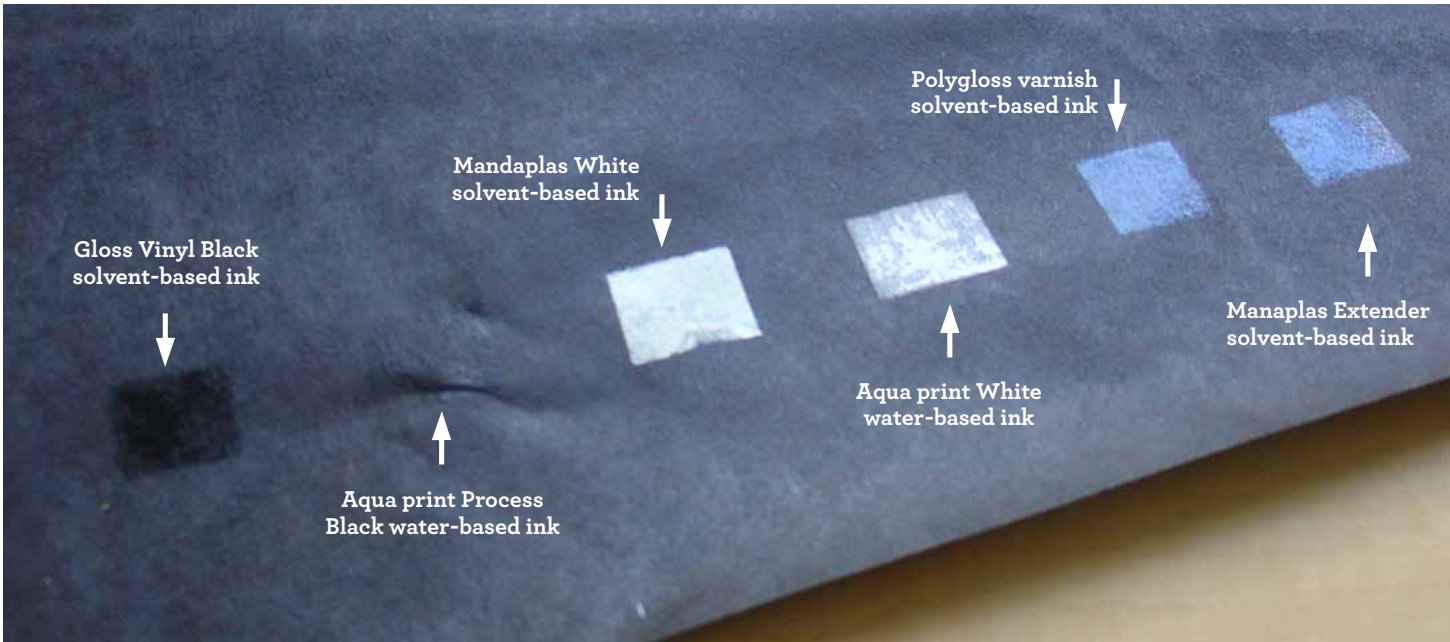
Experimentation of coloured inks

Initially I undertook a number of experiments to see how black ink might appear on this stock. To do this I printed 20mm x 20mm squares using a variety of inks.

Gloss Vinyl Black solvent-based ink produced a deep shiny finish. This ink was the most prominent of all the inks tested and its depth of colour remained the same when wet and dry.

Aqua print Process Black is a water-based ink. This was the most subtle of the inks tested. While wet it had the same colour depth as the Gloss Vinyl Black solvent-based ink, but when it dried it lost approximately half of its depth of colour. Its drying time however, was about four times faster than that of the solvent based inks.

Polygloss varnish solvent-based ink, applied to the black stock produced a black gloss despite there being no pigment in the ink. It produced a similar effect to the Gloss Vinyl Black solvent-based ink but without the depth.

Manaplas Extender solvent-based ink is also a non-pigment based ink similar to the Polygloss varnish ink but it produced a satin finish that worked only fleetingly in very direct light.

Because I was seeking a subtle 'black-on-black' finish I eventually used the Aqua print water-based ink. This provided me with a level of readability that could only be realised at certain angles.

10. Stroke-line is a line generated around an image. This line can be adjusted in thickness and colour to delineate it from the central part of the image.

5.45
5.46
5.45 Photograph showing a detail section of the poster. Notice the subtlety of the printed black ink against the black paper stock.
5.46 Shown here is the complete finished printed poster.

Very cold and very dirty

5.45

5.46
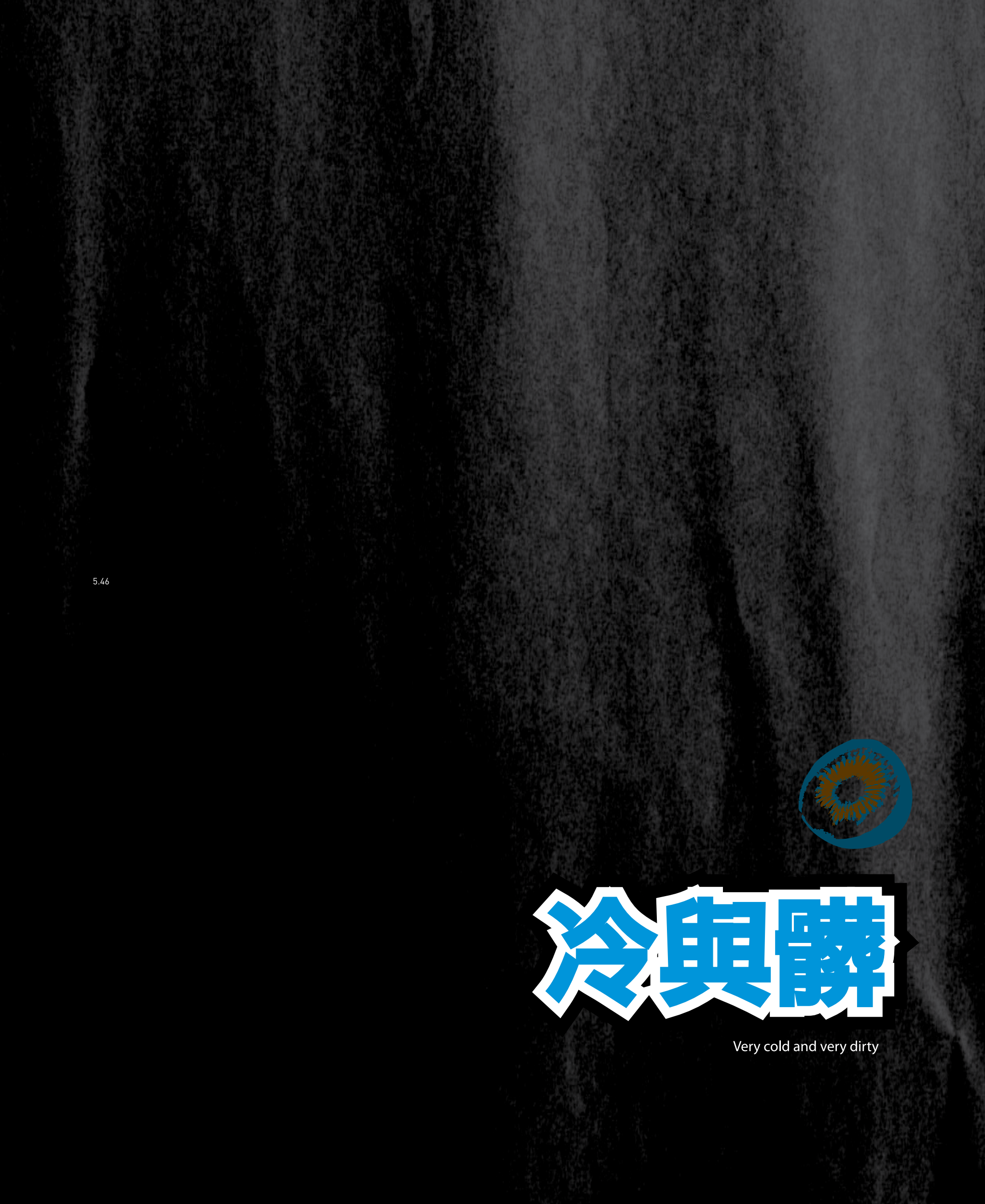
Process

The first part of the artwork I printed was the Chinese text. This was applied to a large screen (1500mm x 1500mm) and positioned at the bottom of the poster using the printing jig. The image was printed using 'process black' water based ink. Once this layer dried the screen was re-positioned and a second part of the image was printed using white water-based ink. This part of the text was proportionately smaller than the border of the first print that surrounds the white. Printing on black stock required special opaque inks, as there is no white substrate to bring out the richness of the colours. Because of the blackness of the builder's paper, the ink initially lost some of its richness. To prevent this, I mixed the inks to a thicker consistency. By not adding water to the ink, I was able to increase its opacity but this meant that the colour dried very slowly and care had to be taken so it did not block the screen.

冷與黐

Very cold and very dirty

$=0.00$

我沒偷錢

I did not steal any money

5.47

5.48

Poster 2 · Participant 3: Sustenance

Interpretive and conceptual considerations
The same technical considerations discussed in the previous poster were utilised in the production of this work.

However, in this poster an additional top colour green (PMS 3272) was added to the central motif to signify the LED read out of a cash register.

5.49

The typeface used in this poster design ($0.00) is OCR A Std. This is a standard face employed in the design of cash register read outs. Its bright green is illuminated against the black.

5.50

5.51

5.52

$0.00

我沒偷錢

I did not steal any money

我不能申請其他工作

Excuse to do...I can't apply another job

5.53

Poster 3 · Participant 3: Sustenance

Interpretive and conceptual considerations

In this final poster the ink applied was Process Black. This is because the translation of this excerpt from the interview is much longer and early experiments showed that printing the Chinese text in a contrasting tone detracted from the power of the abstract image.

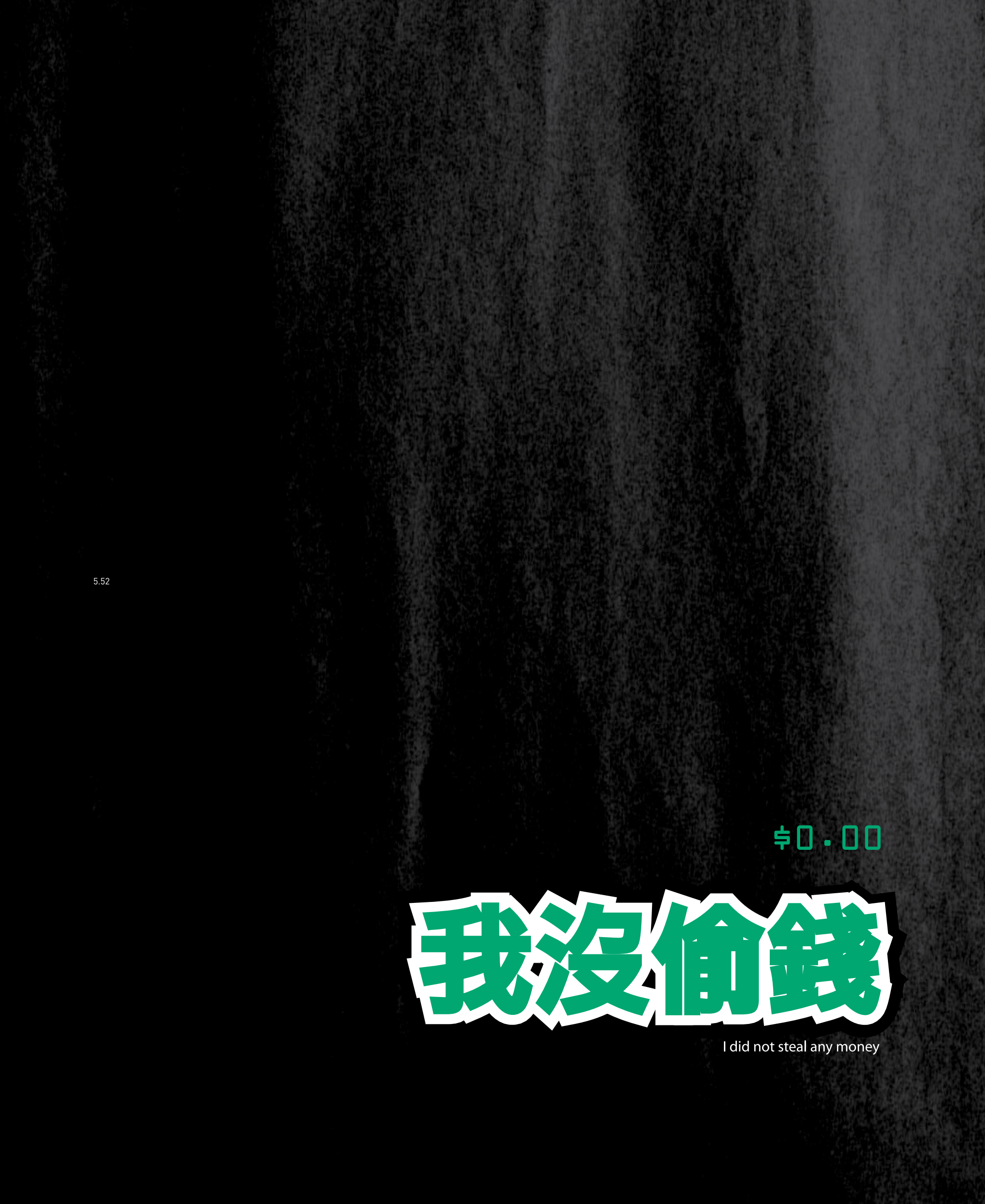The image in the poster shows lips that have been stitched together so that they can no longer talk. Because this motif is more stylised than the other images, we may take longer to decode it. The image may suggest lips, or early Chinese calligraphy or remain an enigma.

In all three of the posters in this set a central icon has been used (and marginalised) within space of the poster. The treatments of the kiwifruit, electronic till reading and sealed lips are less pictorial than elements in the poster series for the worker who cleaned the day care centre. In adopting this approach I sought to reference the difficulty in translating meaning across language barriers. The images (like attempts at English) are generally recognisable, but also compromised. We construct meaning but are uncertain of it. Their systems of signification remain relatively open.

The poster, as with the others in this set references the proportions of Chinese advertising banners used at the turn of the twentieth century. However its design is a contemporary imposition. The worker's voice is off-centre and dropped to the bottom of the design. It speaks from a lowered position, abstract and foreign, with sharply delineated elements that may not be fully understood.

The relationship of written, visual and spoken words

In concluding a discussion of the exhibited outcomes of this research project, it is useful to briefly consider the relationship between type and recorded interviews.

The posters (and the typography within them) may be seen, not as isolated objects but as participants in a 'discussion'. Their designed elements (type, iconography, space and substrate) comprise a discourse between the spoken (heard) narrative and the printed reflection of a graphic designer.

5.54

...I can't apply another job

5.55 Photograph showing a detail section of the poster. Notice the subtlety of the printed black ink against the black paper stock.

5.56 Shown here is the detail abstract image of the stitched lips.

5.57 Shown here is the complete finished printed poster.

In creating these posters I am not simply transcribing the content of a pre-recorded interview; I am attempting to give aspects of a narrative, visual form so they speak in concord. I am telling stories of a story.

When I listen I don't just listen to recorded words but I also listen what's in-between the words. Thus, design considerations like kerning, letterform, and legibility relate to paralinguistic concerns like tone, pitch, dialect and emphasis. I am seeking in designing the typographical 'voice' of the prints to locate something of the paralinguistic [11] nature of spoken narrative.

Salen (2001) in her discussion of cultural marginalisation through typography discusses how "value and meaning are assigned to a text based not only what is written but how it is written" (p. 132).

She notes that demands for linguistic standardisation that became prominent in the nineteenth century when cultural colonisation became a dominant social and political practice, lead to the prioritisation of 'standardised typefaces' against which the exoticised 'other' was positioned. As a result marginalised communities tended to be represented by exoticised display faces that failed to function beyond their signification of the 'other'. She notes, "this practice, dramatised by contemporary type designers' love affair with appropriation and reinscription of subcultural forms, has rendered the term vernacular both formally vacuous and semantically vacant. Formalised as slang-like riffs on a now

familiar alternaculture, [these] typefaces ... merely give the appearance of inclusion; they are culturally irrelevant" (ibid. p. 140).

Cultural irrelevance may be used to describe the position of workers whose narratives of exploitation often exist below the line of media concern. This marginalisation has been the driving political and artistic concern of *manifesto*. Although design theorists like Stuart Mealing (2003) have attempted to systematise the mapping of type onto paralinguistic features, this approach does not address the more subtle cultural issues Salen raises.

In attempting to address issues of the typographical voice, I have therefore not designed new fonts. Instead I have considered the potential of synergies where the (aural) context of a worker's voice is in spatial discourse with a written text. Thus, we experience the 'written voice' in relation to its spoken source. When we stand and view the artwork we are invited to don earphones so we hear the worker's narration (context). This approach reinforces the fact that the poster is the work of another party who is reflecting upon, rather than purporting to 'speak for' the worker.

In the exhibition of these works we are experiencing a conversation between two collaborators. There are two narratives taking place, one from the worker and the other from the interviewer/designer.

11. Paralinguistics is concerned with non-verbal elements of communication used to modify meaning and convey emotion. Paralanguage generally includes the pitch, volume, and intonation of speech. Although often restricted to vocally-produced sounds, paralinguistics can include a consideration of body language.

Exhibition of final works

Exhibition of final works: Photographs of exhibition

Date of exhibition: 22nd January 2010
Address of exhibition: Gallery 2, St Paul Gallery, 40 St Paul Street,
Auckland, New Zealand

6.1

6.1 Photograph taken from inside the exhibition hall. The entrance door measures 2.8m high. Note the exposed ceiling lighting and cable track. This gave a industrial feel to the exhibition.

6.2 Close up of the printed posters from participant 1. Note how the ends of the posters are fixed to the wall.

6.3 The windows on the right side of this photograph have been blacked out to give a dulled lighting effect which emphasises the atmosphere of the room.

MP3 player.
Audio recording of narrative.

6.4 This photograph shows the scale of the posters. Note the position of the mp3 platers on their stands. There was three, one for each set of posters.

6.5 The view showing the set of posters from participant 2. As one enters the gallery one is immediately presented with the size of these posters.

6.6 The ends of the poster are purposely draped on the floor. This gives the posters further scaling and immense size.

Conclusion

Okri (1997) said

"Stories are the secret reservoir of values: change the stories individuals or nations live by and tell themselves, and you change the individuals and nations"(p. 112).

This project has sought to tell a number of stories.

It tells the story of a research journey.

It tells the story of my past.

But most importantly it tells the story of three New Zealand workers.

In 1896 Australia and New Zealand were the first countries in the world to establish a national minimum wage to protect their workers. One hundred and thirteen years later we are still experiencing exploitation.

This project does not claim to present a complete picture of this exploitation but it offers a reflection on the experiences of three individuals who have lived on a salary that paid below the minimum wage.

I do not envisage that the project as a *Manifesto* will change the political and social landscape of New Zealand, but despite this, I have developed the research as a piece of social activism. To date I have presented papers based on the inquiry at three conferences.[12]

I have also arranged for the exhibition to feature at conferences in 2010.[13]

12. Australasian Association of Printing Teachers, Melbourne, 20th May 2009; PacPrint, Melbourne, 23rd May 2009; Tertiary Education Union, Wellington, 9th November 2009.
13. Australasian Association of Printing Teachers, Brisbane, 9th May 2010; World Skills, Brisbane, 10th May 2010.

Such a project is not resolved in three interviews and it is my intention to continue this work over the next few years so a more substantial body of narratives may contribute a fuller picture ....

The journey of this research has been a challenging one. Having come from a twenty-five year commercial background as a graphic designer, I have been trained in resolving given briefs.

When embarking on this project I had to adjust from this commercial mindset to thinking like a researcher. To begin with, I found this very difficult. Dealing with no perceived outcome, and parameters that shifted the more deeply one experimented was very destabilising. Although I was told this would happen, it was a concept I did not initially understand. The project meant that I had to re-evaluate the way I had been creatively thinking in the past.

This exegesis documents and contextualises the unstable nature of the project. I have not groomed it into a streamlined narrative of logical successes because creative inquiries, when they truly seek to trade beyond the experience of the designer, are rarely this straight forward.

Instead the exegesis is a story in itself.

It is the voice of a researcher speaking of the most challenging inquiry of his career.

It moves between ways of theorising in an effort to keep emerging work free from frameworks that might prescribe potential outcomes. Instead it speaks of design in relation to ideas that have influenced it.

It elevates technological knowledge and decision making to the same level as contextual theorising.

In doing so it positions practice at the forefront of the inquiry.

David Lewis Sinfield November 2009

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Typefaces used in this exegesis

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Paper Stock and printing processes used in this exegesis
The cover is printed on 3500 micron kappa board and screen printed using water based inks.

The text pages of this exegesis have been digital printed (Konica Minolta) on 118gsm Evergreen Almond stock from AJ Ball paper suppliers.

Paper Stock used for the posters
Poster 1.
White garment pattern paper (104gsm).

Poster 2.
Brown wrapping paper/garment pattern paper (80gsm).

Poster 3.
Black building paper (164gsm).