TAKE AWAY STORIES

Patricia Burgetsmaier

This thesis is submitted to Auckland University of Technology in partial fulfilment of the degree of Master of Art & Design.

Acknowledgements

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 acknowledgement is made in the acknowledgements.

October 12th 2006

Abstract

This project questions and examines the impact of 'take away' culture on our society's lifestyle. The research considers the term 'take away' in relation to food and to broader behaviours such as models of social conduct or lifestyle related to consumerism.

The thesis embodies the creative exploration into the relationship between these areas and the outcome is an animated cyclic narrative that illustrates and reflects the concept of 'take away'.

The project is constituted as practice-based research. Seventy percent of the final assessment will be associated with the practical work and thirty percent with the contextualising exegesis.

Table of Contents

Table of Images

01 Introduction

This thesis reflects upon and questions consumerism and conditioned social behaviour through the notion of 'take away'. Considering the broad mass of society as the exemplary consumer, the aim of the research is to create a text that provokes recognition and consideration of uncritical consumption.

This project considers patterns of 'take away' behaviour and discusses these in relation to models of social conduct. It represents the findings of the research as a compilation of animated narrative sequences, which are connected by a soundtrack and arranged so they revolve through a never ending cycle of episodes.

The exegesis accompanying the animation is divided into three main parts. The first part discusses the methodology used to develop the body of work. The second section explains the critical context and offers a commentary on the visual outcome and the third part concludes and reflects upon the project to date.

02 Definition

For the purpose of this present research project, the concept of 'take away' may be defined as cultural practice.[1]

A 'take away' therefore may be defined as cultural device,[2] appropriated[3] by individuals within the use of everyday life.[4]

---

1 De Certeau (1998) defines cultural practice as *'the more or less coherent and fluid assemblage of elements … reactualized from day to day across behaviours translating fragments of these cultural devices into social visibility'* (p. 9)

2 De Certeau defines workaday elements, that are physical or ideological, as core devices in the performance of cultural practice (1998). These elements are what I define as 'take away'

3 *'The act of borrowing, stealing or taking over others' meanings to one's own ends'* (Sturken and Cartwright, 2001, p. 350).

4 According to Debord, everyday life is lived time and embraces everyday life as a measure *'of the fulfillment or rather the non-fulfillment of human relationships* [and] *of the use of lived time.'* (Debord, 1961, p. 2).

03 Methodology And Project Development

03.1 Positioning the research as subjective creative-production

Take Away Stories approaches the impact of 'take away' culture on forms of lifestyle in a creative way. It does this to complement quantitative analysis produced by scientific research.[5] The outcome is designed to provoke an audience to recognise issues of uncritical consumption, and to consider their impact on social behaviours.

The thesis develops a body of work, based on research that covers postmodern sociological and philosophical arenas. However, rather than providing a complex discourse that requires an existing, privileged and intellectual background, the purpose of my research is to design a visual communication that addresses a social issue in a way that it is accessible to a broad audience.

In reference to Scrivener's (2000) norms of creative-production research, the outcome of this present research project may be understood as an object of experience, and in this regard it may be seen as fitting within the criteria of a subjective, creative-production.[6]

In explaining the research design for this project, the exegesis considers two issues: the heuristic methodology, and the applied tools that were used to guide the research to completion. These tools include Schön's (1983) theories on Reflection on Practice and my systems of organising and creatively processing the data.

03.2 Heuristics

This subjectively driven project pursued the creative realisation of an idea about the connection between 'take away' food and 'take away' lifestyle. As a result I required a methodology that served to define the theoretical scope and simultaneously enabled me to work as effectively as possible in the development of an original text. In this regard I adopted as primary research strategy the qualitative methodology of Heuristics.

According to Moustakas (1990),

> … heuristic inquiry is a process that begins with a question or problem which the researcher seeks to illuminate or answer. The question is one that has been a personal challenge and puzzlement in the search to understand one's self and the world in which one lives (p. 15).

Heuristics describes a methodology that is applicable for a problem or situation for which no formula exists. It aims at discovery through processes of trial and error. Moustakas (1990) depicts the permanent self-dialogue with the phenomenon as *'to engage in a rhythmic flow with it … until one has uncovered its multiple meanings'* (p. 16). This requires fanning out the situation of the subject in question so it is considered from a maximum variety of aspects which may stimulate the emergence of unforeseen relationships within collected data.[7]

---

5 By scientific I refer to the physical and social sciences, economics and quantitative research arising from critical theory. This includes work by theorists like de Certeau (1988) who combines psychoanalysis, philosophy and the social sciences, Debord (1958), a writer, film maker, hypergraphist and founding member of the groups Lettrist International and Situationist International (SI), and Sturken (2001) whose analyses have focused on issues of consumer culture and the impact of media.

6 Scrivener (2000) defines the following as requirements to fulfil the norms of creative-production research projects: a) artefacts are produced, b) artefacts are original in a cultural context, c) artefacts are a response to issues, concerns and interests, d) the issues, concerns and interests reflect cultural preoccupations, e) artefacts contribute to human experience, f) artefacts are more important than any knowledge embodied in them.

7 According to Moustakas (1990) important phases of heuristic research develop, not necessarily in a linear process, from initial engagement, immersion, incubation, illumination, explication through to creative synthesis. This describes step by step the internalisation of all aspects of the question/area of research by the researcher and enables him/her to project the issue into different contexts. It also enables him/her to discover and value unexpected relationships with these contexts.

Polanyi (1983) claims that tacit knowledge is the very base of heuristic discovery. In his theories about Reflection on Practice, which will be discussed in more detail in the next section, Schön (1983) describes tacit knowledge as a *'feel for the stuff with which we are dealing'* (p. 49). He sees tacit knowledge as the internalised patterns and comprehension we use unconsciously but naturally in given contexts. Moustakas (1990) argues further that intuition complements the tacit in processing towards explicit knowledge. He explains that,

> *intuition guides the researcher in discovery of patterns and meanings that will lead to enhanced meanings, and deepened and extended knowledge* (p. 24).

However, even though Heuristics as a methodology designates tacit knowledge and intuition as vehicles to challenge established knowledge, I found it necessary to also apply systems that heighten the chances of discovery within the research process itself.

Kleining and Witt (2000) suggest four rules that may serve as guidelines to improve the chances of discovery when using Heuristics. The first two rules address the relationship between the researcher and topic. These theorists posit that in heuristic research, *'the research topic should be open to new concepts and change his/her preconception if the data are not in agreement with them'* (p.2) and, further, that *'the topic of research is preliminary and may change during the research process'* (ibid). The second pair of rules concerns the relationship of data collection to analysis: Kleining and Witt (2000) suggest that *'data should be collected under the paradigm of maximum structural variation of perspectives'* and that *'the analysis is directed toward discovery of similarities'* (ibid., pp. 2-3).

In this research project, these four rules have been applied in relation to Schön's (1983) theories of Reflection on Practice and have been implicit in the development of my systems of collecting and organising material, visualisation of data and pattern finding.

03.3 Reflection on Practice

Reflection on Practice may be considered as a method to complement heuristic models of research and its process had a high impact on the realisation of my work. Similar to Heuristics, Schön's (1983) Reflection on Practice describes a non-linear process of discovery through a permanent dialogue with collected material and produced work. Constant revising of material through the asking of questions, developing models of answers, and testing those answers, enables the designer to identify connections and correlations. Processes of reflection consider the body of work as a whole, or particular sections of it. They occur simultaneously with the progressing work or subsequently support exploratory and purposive analysis. Furthermore Reflection on Practice employs different categories of experiment[8] to drive the research towards a coherent outcome. These complement Heuristics in the sense that they add another level of systematics to the research.

Although Reflection on Practice has a strong impact on the completion of *Take Away Stories*, it needs to be considered as a methodological device within a Heuristic model. Taking into account that Reflection on Practice is essentially based on tacit knowledge, its application as a methodology on its own could easily produce an outcome that emerges out of the reconstitution of established methods and personally formulated approaches to both data and synthesis. To ensure the creation of 'new knowledge' this project positions Reflection on Practice as a process within Heuristics, as it is Heuristics that actively engages with new or unfamiliar approaches.

---

8 Schön (1983) defines three sets of experimentation: the exploratory experiment is dedicated to pure discovery; an action is undertaken without expectations or predictions. A move-testing experiment consciously aims to make changes. A hypothesis testing experiment confirms or dislodges developed hypotheses when they are compared to each other. Although some experiments may be simultaneously exploratory, move-testing and hypothesis-testing, the emphasis on experimentation in this research project generally shifted from exploratory experiments in the beginning to hypotheses experiments towards completion.

03.4 Collection of data

At an early stage in the research, the notion of 'take away' was closely tied to food and was considered to have a nebulous connection to social issues. Taking into account the third rule of Kleining and Witt (2000), which suggests that collection of data occur under a *'maximum variation of perspectives'* (p. 3), the compilation of data became more open to coincidence, curiosity and intuition. The research process began to challenge the notion of 'take away' by involving the connection to cultural practice, which embraced ideas of packaged forms of leisure activities or social events.

These approaches operated in concord with more established research techniques like the systematic searching of academic journals and related academic theses. To increase the number of perspectives the collection of visual data extended to photographs, observing people having 'take away', and discussing issues related to them. The analysis also began to include design elements in packaging and promotional media associated with 'take away' retail outlets.

More extensive and lateral consideration of critical texts included analysis of news broadcasts, commissioned reports, articles related to fast food, and philosophical essays, such as Mattenklott's (1982) notion of 'incorporation' in relation to food.

The research also considered contemporary documentaries dealing with fast food issues like Spurlocks *Supersize me* (2004), and George Ritzer's sociological analysis of the *McDonaldization of the Society* (1996). From there it expanded to consider the realms of design and visual art including Kurt Schwitters' collages and his theorisation of MERZ (1919).[9]

0.3.5 Organising data

The broadening of the research resulted in a need to effectively manage a growing quantity of material. Newbury (2001) states that *'the prime consideration* [of organising data] *is finding a format and style that fits with the needs of the research project'* (p. 4). He argues that the format must above all *'be workable and useful by the researcher'* (ibid.).

Thus a format used in the research process for this thesis was writing as a tool for analysing and understanding concepts and emerging relations between them. Initially, some ideas existed as mental pictures, feelings or in visual form. However, their translatability into words, the ability to name and describe them helped me to discuss them with others, independently from a visual form of communication. This opened another way of testing their relevance and strength. Writing also enabled me to arrange ideas in a logical order so that cohesion and internal coherence might be better considered. This was very important in the sense that it helped me to strategically locate single aspects of the research and their position within the whole body of work. In particular, this method was employed in thinking through the cyclic arrangement of animated narratives.

Another form of taking notes was used in this project and involved the active documentation of work. A digital file kept chronological track of relevant developments, experiments and observations. The documentation of the progress of my research was used to analyse the body of work regarding conceptual strengths and weaknesses as it allowed for the re-analysing of data and their correlations. During this period I experienced Kleining and Witt's (2000) contention that the topic of the research may change if it is not in accordance with the collected material. The process of selection of collected data and analytic stepping back-and-forward helped me to reorganise

---

9 After the Dada period, Kurt Schwitters developed his own movement called MERZ. His key idea was to create connections through collecting workaday things and bringing them together by making collages. This process involved an artistic interplay of textures, shapes, colours and text. The idea of MERZ is related to De Certeau (1988) theory of reading as textual poaching. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 04

material in relation to its relevance to the overall concept[10] and to refine guidelines according to certain emerging priorities.

03.6 Visualising of data

Pinning loose pictures on a wall allowed me to see the results of the accumulating research as an overview. This move was necessary so I could develop flexible diagrams that might reveal emerging relationships between collected material. At the same time it also allowed me to create a dynamic and adaptable method of visualising changing relationships within the research.

Similar to the process of active documentation, the taking of photographs and notes helped me to keep track of every move of the development of the thesis. Analysing and reflecting on different components of the research finally led me to a precise framework in which to position the project.
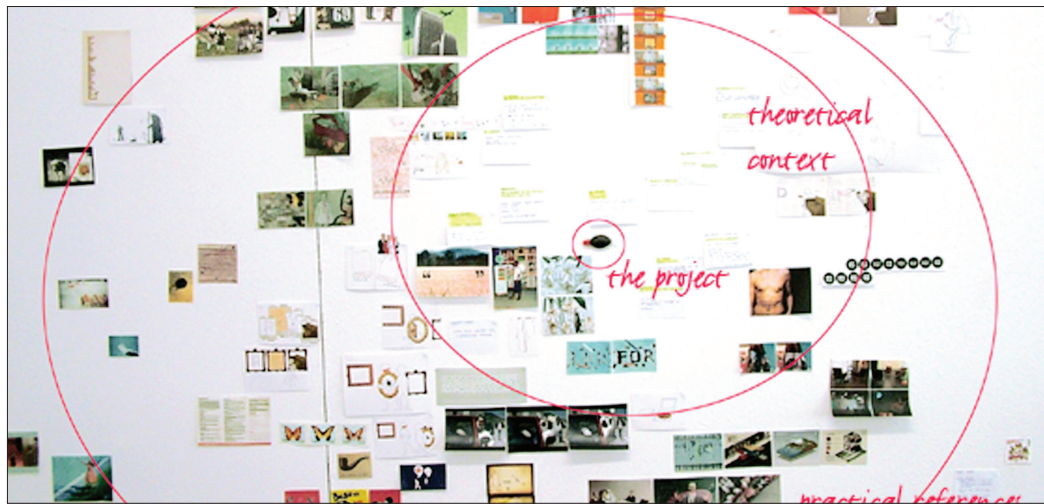

Fig. 1.1: Wall diagram 01 (2006)

This photograph of my studio wall illustrates an early approach to organise collected material relating to both the research and possible correlations. This diagram shows the project as the centre of spatially arranged accumulating references. The inner circle concerns theoretical ideas and the external circle practical work. This arrangement not only helped me to select and analyse references in relation to the topic, but also to create physically clustered groups of references according to relationships between ideas.

Figure 1.2 shows a later system of arrangement. Data was now allocated along two axes that allowed me to gather a sense of pertinence between images and groupings of theoretical ideas.

---

10 The overall concept moved as the research progressed. The initial focus on food broadened and theoretical frameworks such as *The Practice of Everyday Life* (De Certeau, 1998) and *Consumer Culture and the Manufacturing of Desire* (Sturken & Cartwright, 2001) became increasingly important in shaping ideas like the character of the film's protagonist and the recycled iconography in the graphic treatment of the animation.
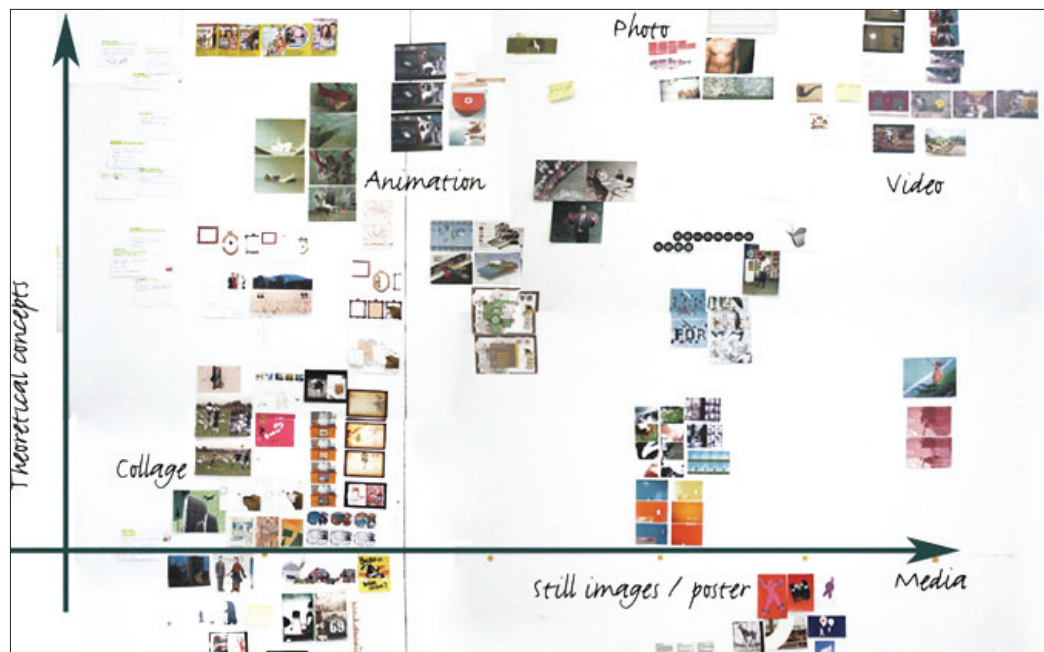
Fig. 1.2: Wall diagram 02 (2006)

Whereas earlier systems of data processing were used to link practical work and theoretical contexts together, another model [Figure 1.3] diagrammatically grouped correlations according to cause and effect. This cyclic framework finally enabled me to visualise practical and theoretical issues as an interrelating unity and this diagram formed the final framework for *Take Away Stories*.

Fig. 1.3: Theoretical framework - Schema (2006)

03.7 Finding patterns

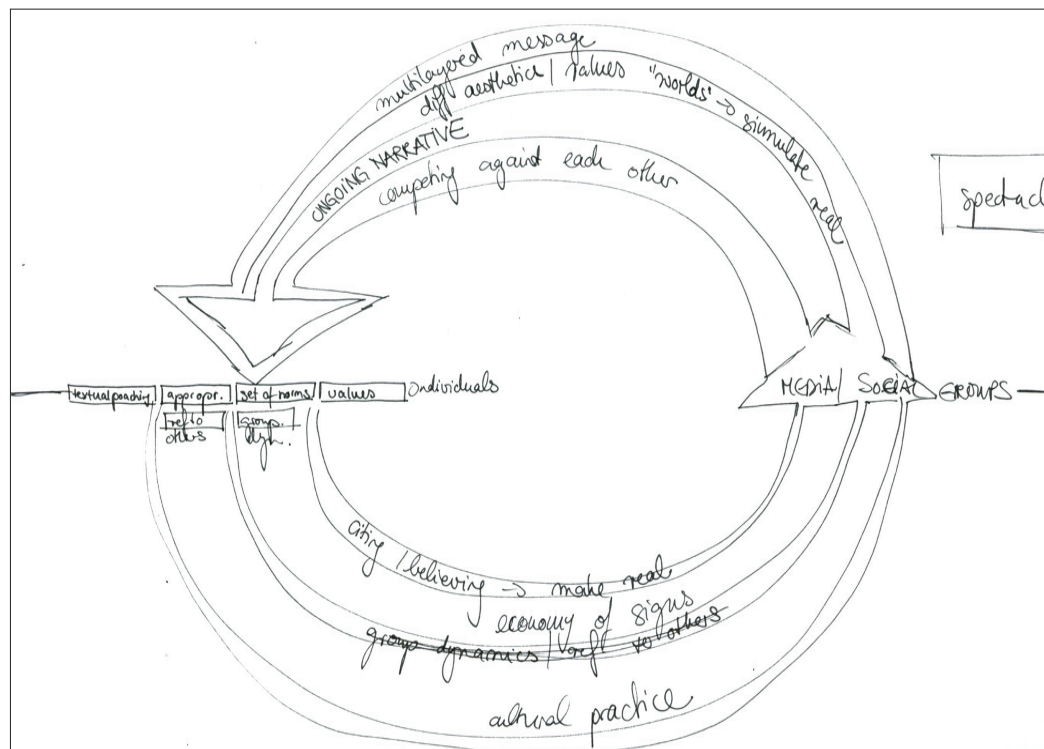All of these forms of data-processing worked together in the sense that they enabled the research to move fluidly between reflection and pattern analysis. Visualising and organising the data in these ways not only helped me to connect different elements of the research but more importantly stimulated the discovery of alliances and homologies across concepts that were sourced from different arenas. One of these parallels eventually became the basis of this research project: the possible link between 'take away' food and general patterns of social behaviour. Analysis of data unveiled the basic process of the act of consumption in relation to both food and social relations. Visualisation of data enabled me to establish links according to surfacing homologies. Through further cycles of reflection and reconsideration, this constellation of emerging concepts became the ground on which the core definition of the notion of the 'take away' was developed [Figure 2].
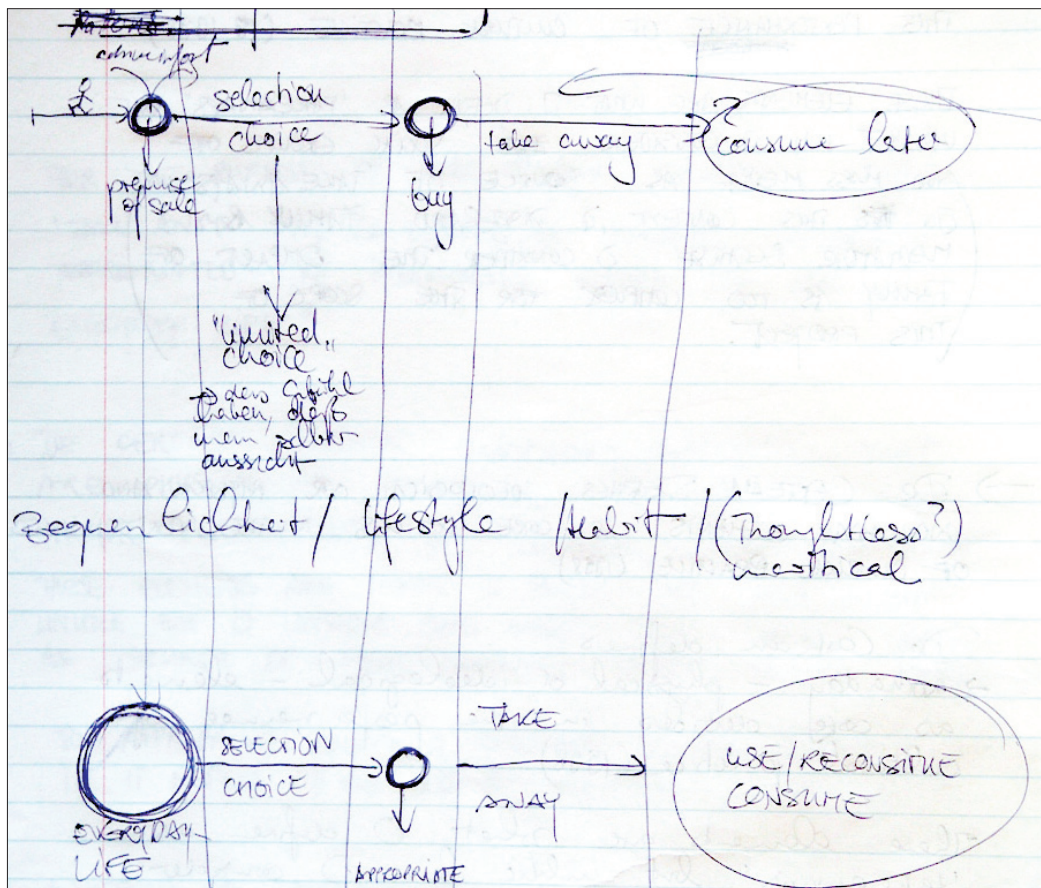

Fig. 2: Relationship between Take Away Food and Take Away Behaviour (2006)

The definition of 'take away', as it is used in this research and will be discussed in detail in the theoretical section of this exegesis, has been developed using writing as a tool to analyse, process and test connections between underlying concepts. However, implicit in this process is the discovery and connection of patterns that emerge out of comparison of those. According to Reins (2002), the bringing together of different, normalised and internalised subjects is the very basis for effective and qualitative advertising. This is because it enables things to be perceived in a conscious way and creates stories around them.

In my project, looking for patterns has been a visual search for metaphors and matching relationships. An early experiment [Figure 3.1.] was a first quick collage I used to capture an idea that concerned the consumption of 'take away' coffee in relation to time and basic needs. Figure 3.2 shows a still of a subsequent graphic experiment.

Fig. 3.1 Experiment Coffee 01 (2005)

Fig. 3.2 Experiment Coffee 02 (2005)
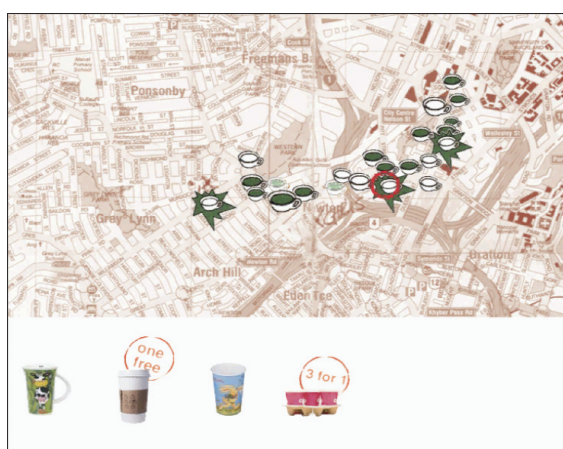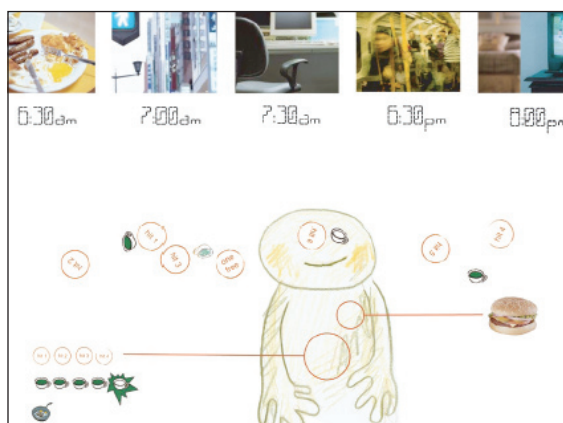
In grouping identified patterns of behaviour together, however, I experienced difficulties in creating a hierarchy between single elements: One component considered the iconic use of coffee cups to illustrate coffee consumption within a day [Figure 3.2]; the other developed a character in relation to coffee culture. When brought together, these elements confused the story as the character involved a plot on its own [Figure 3.3] and distracted the narrative of the coffee cups. The cup narrative however, used a graphic language that was in particular shaped for this experiment and became difficult to link to other issues surfacing the research.

Fig. 3.3 Experiment Coffee 03 (2005)

Although the research in general encountered some difficulties, this methodology over all helped to reshape the area of the research, to define the theoretical framework, and to develop a design that answers the question about the impact of 'take away' culture on our society's lifestyle within the scope of this project. The strength of Kleining and Witts (2000) approach to Heuristics is that it enriched the research by causing me to question the idea of 'take away' from tangential sources.

However, although this richness of material helped to avoid one-sidedness, it carried the danger of the research being easily distracted by related material and it was necessary to constantly keep redefining the question in relation to emerging priorities. Moustakas (1990) argues that a key requirement for quality heuristic research is the researcher's honesty with himself. Phases of unstable constellation and difficult relationships between data and outcome required constant critique, re-evaluation and rigour regarding the process of selection, framing and reframing. It was the methods of organising and visualising data that eventually enabled me to manage and exploit opportunities and connections emerging in the data.

While the heuristic methodology employed in this research enabled the realisation of the project, it is useful at this point to consider the critical framework underpinning the concerns that drove it towards resolution.

04 Theoretical Discussion

04.1 Lifestyle to go

'Take away' is promoted and used as convenient complement to our busy urban lifestyle. Analogue to trends in the food industry, technological developments in communication and entertainment make professional life and leisure activities instantly available together such as using a laptop while having a coffee somewhere. They do not only enable the simultaneous use of both, but compete with each other in promoting flexibility, time-saving and self-indulgence.

However, Debord (1961) suggests that *'this introduction of technology into everyday life … tends rather to reduce people's independence and creativity'* (p. 3). Observing my everyday environment raised questions regarding the way an individual's behaviour is accustomed by his/her lifestyle. An example of this is a previous flatmate of mine who performed autonomous 'commercial breaks' when watching a DVD by pressing the pause button to quickly flip through the TV music channels.

04.2 The economy of social practice

In understanding the depth of this issue one needs to go a step backwards to the very basic concepts of social interaction. De Certeau (1998) considers social practice as the *'art of coexistence'* (p. 8) within a social environment and he suggests this is determined by codes[11] of behaviours inscribed in this context. These codes are revealed through an individual's manner, attitude, gestures and language. De Certeau (1998) states that social regulation within a public space,[12] where proximity and repetitive contact are caused by the spatial situation, links individuals together and stimulates reciprocal interpretation. He argues that the performance of social codes asserts an individual's belonging and position within a certain group through their confirmation or disaffirmation of established rules. At the same time, the economy of codes embraces *'expected symbolic benefits gained through behavior'* (p. 8). The use of public space therefore makes it a *'place of a recognition … through which the dweller can constantly verify the intensity of his or her insertion in the social environment'* (ibid., p. 13).

---

11 Sturken and Cartwright (2001) suggest that *'Codes are implicit rules by which meanings get put into social practice and can therefore be read by their users. Codes involve a systematic organisation of signs. For example there are codes of social conduct, such as forms of greeting or styles of social interaction, that are understood within a given society. One situation in which codes become evident is when they are broken'* (p. 351).

12 De Certeau refers to the spatial context of the neighbourhood. This project considers the patterns of this context of the neighbourhood as applicable to other social contexts such as forms of greeting, body language…

In a similar argument Baudrillard (1981) discusses the economy of signs in relation to objects and goods rather than codes of behaviours. He posits that objects are directly linked with the social status they symbolise and he claims that individuals consume the signs rather than the objects themselves.

In applying their hypothesis we see that, 'take away' is not simply prepared food that has been made available for instant consumption, but is a metaphor that acts in a broader socio-cultural context.

04.3 The 'Take away' pattern

Comparing the core pattern of an ordinary act of having 'take away' with the patterns of social practice as an act of consumption, the following connections can be drawn: 'take away' food is available in the shop. In terms of location, social practice is settled in everyday life. Both, food and elements of behaviour, such as signs or codes are selected by the user, according to their individual background: food is purchased physically, whereas signs or codes are appropriated in a more ideological way. Both are taken away and consumed at a later moment, independent from time or space.

These similarities connect on De Certeau's (1998) and Baudrillard's (1981) notions of symbolic exchange and frame the idea of cultural elements as flexible, single elements that are used in an economical way. De Certeau (1998) suggests of cultural practice that,

> it is the more or less coherent and fluid assemblage of elements that are concrete and everyday (a gourmet menu) or ideological (religious, political), at once coming from a tradition (that of a family or social group) and reactualized from day to day across behaviours translating fragments of this cultural devices into social visibility… (p. 9).

This project uses De Certeau's (1998) definition of a cultural device as the definition of 'take away'. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, a 'take away' may be defined as cultural device, appropriated by individuals within the use of everyday life. De Certeau (1998) considers family and social groups as the mediators of these cultural elements. Although the strong impact of the family on an individual's set of norms and values is considered by behavioural psychology, the area of psychology is too multilayered for the purpose of this particular project and the role of the family as a mediator does not form part of this research.

However, another medium that actively affects values is the media. This is in part due to its omnipresence and the response gained to their constructions of identity from a broad audience. In this context, his thesis considers social groups and mass media as manufacturers of cultural values.

04.4 The notion of appropriation

Sturken and Cartwright (2001) define appropriation as an *'act of borrowing, stealing or taking over others' meanings to one's own ends'* (p. 350).[13] In discussing the notion of appropriation, De Certeau (1998) states that a common *'misunderstanding assumes…[that] assimilating necessarily means "becoming similar to" what one absorbs, and not "making something similar" to what one is...'* (p. 166). This is important to note as it refines the commonly assumed construct of consumerism. Consumption is therefore not a blind adaptation to a superior concept but concerns the positioning of one's

---

13 In relation to food, appropriation considers the notion of incorporation and possession: De Certeau (1998) argues that *'the table first and foremost celebrates the mouth as the centre of the ceremony'* (p.197). He refers to the act of *'supporting a profuse linguistic activity'* and *'absorbing food'* (p.186). Mattenklott (1982) discusses the notion of incorporation in relation to the interplay of eyes and mouth. According to him, practices of seeing are conditioned by the needs of everyday life. Seeing is performed for a specific purpose within the performance of everyday life. He claims that uncritical incorporation of food and images is a form of compensation of conditioned and selective seeing and he carries his hypothesis further: he claims uncritical consumption as compensation of adapting to forms of behaviour that are controlled by social norms and codes.

own concept in the centre of things and the selection of goods in accordance with this. This explains why many consumers feel individual while engaging physically and ideologically in processes of conformity.

04.5 The notion of everyday life

According to Debord (1961) everyday life is lived time and a measure *'of the fulfillment or rather the non-fulfillment of human relationships; of the use of lived time'* (p. 2). He criticises the poverty of everyday life in the sense that accustomed behaviour *'reduces life to the pure triviality of the repetitive combined with the obligatory absorption of an equally repetitive spectacle'* (p. 3).

De Certeau (1998) claims that the concept of propriety that is inscribed in an individual's environment is an impelling element in establishing accustomed behaviour. This theory is partially in accord with Debord (1961) who suggests that the entire structure of society is responsible for conditioned behaviour.

However both De Certeau (1998) and Debord (1961) agree that conditioning is stimulated through a correlation of the repetitive mediation of information and the repetitive performance of cultural practice. According to Debord (1961), *'everyday life is always elsewhere'* (p. 1), and things are *'considered as "normal" and not even noticed'* (ibid.). He argues that it is essential to alter these things to provoke conscious perception, but as this means a *'discomforting break with accustomed routine'* (ibid.) individuals tend to refuse to consider such a break with routine.

This project seeks to talk about these matters of everyday life, customary behaviour, and habits. The animated cyclic narrative draws attention to manifestations of the 'take away' and addresses social issues by disguising real characters.

Take Away Stories illustrates familiar situations and draws them through humour into exaggeration. The use of animated illustrations and photographs allows the representation of the real, without showing it. The work aims to make the audience not only laugh about others but also to think about themselves. The practical work for this thesis results in four animated episodes, considering different aspects of the notion of the 'take away'. These episodes are connected to each other and arranged in a cyclic structure. This makes the complete animation endlessly loopable and refers to the ongoing flow of consumption, and to repetitive activities and behaviours.

04.6 The impact of media

Considering the concept of 'take away', one might argue that the emerging relationship between the mediator and user is basically a relationship between sender and receiver. In Semiotics, De Saussure (1988) and Peirce (1931-58), both posit a system of communication that is based on the interpretation of signs.[14] Barthes (1967) developed the idea further and focused on the relationship of signifier and signified as implicit in the meaning applied to a sign.[15] Hall (1993) defined three ways of reading that involve a negotiation of meaning regarding an individual's cultural background.[16]

---

14 Semiotics is the theory of signs and is concerned with the way we interpret them to make meaning. According to Sturken and Cartwright (2001), it was De Saussure (1988) and Peirce (1931-58) who developed the theory that language and thought go through processes of interpretation. While Peirce (1931-58) believed in the correlation of interpretation and subsequent action of a sign, De Saussure's (1988) central idea was that meaning is depending on context and rules of language.

15 This *'defines the relationship between a vehicle of meaning such as a word, image, or object and its specific meaning in a particular context' bringing signifier and signified together makes meaning'* (Sturken & Cartwright, 2001, p. 366).

16 According to Hall (1993), readers practice different ways of reading that takes into account the personal, cultural background and their position within society. Dominant-hegemonic reading agrees and identifies with dominant concepts inscribed in the cultural environment. Negotiated reading ponders the text against other existing concepts before taking position in the sense of agreement or disagreement. Oppositional reading finally will read texts systematically in a manner opposed to the authors intention.

Similar to Hall (1993), the semiotic approaches take the viewers' memories, knowledge, experience and norms and values into account. From these, meaning is negotiated or decoded. Considering these different ways of reading, Sturken and Cartwright (2001) question the level of control over how an audience might read a text. De Certeau (1984) states that readers inhabit texts:'...to read is to wander through an imposed system (that of the text, analogous to the constructed order of a city or of a supermarket)'(p. 169). The reader, he suggests, fragments, appropriates, reuses and reshuffles words or images and makes meaning by bringing these pieces together in another context.[17] Thus stylistically Take Away Stories appropriates, reuses and reshuffles imagery. It uses the concept of collage as a main stylistic device. By composing visuals made up of collected images from commercial contexts, it illustrates the fragmented and shuffled nature of a consumer's set of norms.

According to Sturken and Cartwright (2001), mass media, in permanent competition with each other, adapt to those practices of reading. They suggest that today's media landscape provides an ongoing flow of information that orchestrates different levels of language, imagery and convention. Mass media, they argue, operate permanently. In responding to behaviours of unconcentrated watching or reading, texts are now structured to facilitate access at any time.

De Certeau (1984) claims that today there are too many things to believe and it is no longer enough to simply manipulate information. Media therefore fabricate simulacra[18] to make people believe in their artificial realities, to 'produce people practicing their faiths' (p. 186). To avoid silence, which might be enough time for distraction he argues that, 'the real now talks constantly' (p. 185).

His notion of constancy is an integral part of the design of my work. The music used in my animation [Mr Scruff's (1999) Blackpool Roll] generates a light-hearted, superficially elated atmosphere. Its rhythm is a seamless homogenising of all the episodes of the narrative into one continuous flow. While certain actions are edited to the beat, the animation talks in a constant repetitive, never pausing monologue. As the text has no beginning or end, we can access or leave the text at any point.

Take Away Stories also makes use of some of tools of communication provided by the media. By using mainly 2D stop-motion I sought to create a contrast to existing technically perfect animations. The animation's charm of imperfection demonstrates that it is not positing reality. It pretends to be honest by not trying to hide an underlying truth behind a facade of perfection.

This form of reflexivity where the 'manufactured' nature of the text is exposed, is part of what Goldman and Papson (1994) argued as a persuasive form of hyperrealism. The viewer knows this animation is not real and the film's 'made' nature is exposed as part of a contract of trust. Take Away Stories is positioned as something clearly separated from the smoothed-out, polished world of many commercials. It persuades by its position as a self revealing 'made' text.

The paradox in the relationship between viewer and the media is that the spectator knows that these texts and images are the results of manipulations. Sturken and Cartwright (2001), however, argue that individuals are not always aware or consciously careful about the ideological way that images work. Furthermore, although consumers know about the technical possibilities of manipulating images, they often assume that images in certain contexts such as television news or medical environments are unaltered.

04.7 Distribution and display

Take Away Stories will be exhibited at St Paul Gallery in Auckland City, New Zealand, as part of the finishing exhibition of the Master of Arts programme in November 2006. The display will be a simple projection on a wall in Gallery 1 and will include the use of sound through a system of speakers.

---

17 This is what De Certeau (1984) defines as textual poaching.

18 Baudrillard (1981) defines simulacra as representations of a reality without a referent to the real. For example, someone simulating a disease does not only play ill but really produces the symptoms.

However, *Take Away Stories* is not constructed to be displayed in a gallery space. It is designed to be screened or projected in public transitional spaces such as public transport gates, airports or shop windows [Figure 4.1 and 4.2].

Fig. 4.1 Possible Implementation 01
(2006)

Fig. 4.2 Possible Implementation 02
(2006)

By doing this, the work aims to attract an individual's attention in a moment of transition between purposeful activities, such as waiting for a train, sitting in a bus or queuing in a shop. These transitional spaces allow a level of control over the length of exposure a viewer might have to the animation.

The site specific location of the work is designed in response to the paradoxical relationship between repetitive behaviours and the constant need for changing information. *Take Away Stories* aims to capture a short term attraction through it graphical language. The relentlessness of its audio track mimics the constant flow of information in public places in a technological society.

05 Conclusion

Take Away Stories may be considered as a summary of progress and developments that have been guided by the application of a chosen methodology and critical writing related to consumer culture. The research established a solid theoretical framework that reveals the construct of 'take away' culture in relation to an individual's adaption to social structures. The work fulfilled the aim to create a text that profiled stereotypical behaviours and manipulated stylistic approaches in a manner that captures and holds a degree of attention from an audience experiencing the work in a transitional environment.

At this stage knowledge gained in this research raises more questions and possibilities than it actually answers. It indicates the richness of the arena and its potential for creative consideration such as developing an artwork that actually creates a discomforting break with routine such as www.dontclick.it, a website dedicated to mouse clicking habits.

The outcome of this research might be considered as one artwork surfacing from a network of data, theories and questions. It is the result of highly individual and complex correlations which are demanding in their synthesis and creative rigour. However, the work is part of an ongoing research concern that considers visual forms of approaching a broad audience to break with their reading routine. It is the first of what will become a series of texts designed for public spaces that confront us with issues relating to our nature as non-critical consumers.

REFERENCES

Barthes, R. (1967). *Elements of semiology* (A. Lavers, & C. Smith. Trans.). New York: Hill and Wang.

Baudrillard, J. (1981). *For a critique of the political economy of the sign* (C. Levin, Trans.). New York: Telos Press Ltd.

Baudrillard, J. (1994). *Simulacra and simulation* (S. F. Glaser, Trans.). Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

Certeau, M. d. (1988). *The practice of everyday life* (S. Rendall, Trans.). London: University of California Press.

Certeau, M. d., Giard, L., & Mayol, P. (1998). *The practice of everyday life. Living & cooking* (T. J. Tomasik, Trans. Vol. 2). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Debord, G.-E. (1961). *Perspectives for conscious alterations in everyday life*. Retrieved January 18, 2006, from http://library.nothingness.org/articles/en/display/89

Frank, A. *Dontclick.it.* Retrieved September, 25th, 2005, from www.dontclick.it

Goldman, R. & Papson, S. (1994). *Advertising in the age of hypersignification. Theory, Culture and Society.* 2 (1): 23-53.

Heller, S., & Vienne, V. (2003). *Citizen designer: perspectives on design responsibility*. New York: Watson-Guptill Publications.

Hall, S. (1993). Encoding, decoding. In *The cultural reader* (S. During, Ed). New York and London: Routledge.

Kleining, G., & Witt, H. (2000 January). *The qualitative heuristic approach: a methodology for discovery in psychology and the social sciences. Rediscovering the method of introspection as an example* [19 paragraphs]. Retrieved May, 25th, 2005, from http://qualitative-research.net/fqs

Mattenklott, G. (1982). Das gefrässige auge. In *Der übersinnliche leib* (pp. 78-102). Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt.

Moustakas, C. E. (1990). *Heuristic research*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications, Inc.

Newbury, D. (2001). *Diaries and fieldnotes in the research process*. Birmingham: University of Central England.

Reins, A. (2002). *Die Mörderfackel* (2 ed.). Mainz: Hermann Schmidt.

Peirce, C.S. (1931-58). *The collected papers of charles sanders peirce*, eds. C. Hartshorne, P. Weiss (Vols. 1-6) and A. Burks(Vols. 7-8). Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Polanyi, M. (1966). *The tacit dimension*. New York: Doubleday

Ritzer, G. (1996). *The mc donaldization of society* (Revised Edition ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: Pine Forge Press.

Schön, D. A. (1983). *The reflective practitioner*. New York: Basic Books, Inc.

Scrievener, S. (2000). *Reflection in and on action and practice in creative-production doctoral projects in art & design. The foundations of practice based research*. Retrieved 25th May, 2005, from http://www.herts.ac.uk/artdesl/research/papers/wpades/vol1/scrievener2.html

Spurlock, M. (Director) (2004). *Supersize me*. USA.

Sturken, M., & Cartwright, L. (2001). *Practices of looking, an introduction to visual culture*. New York: Oxford University