Critical Thinking and Making: The Visual Archive

Parsons School of Design
School of Art, Media, and Technology
PSAM 1130-A CRN 7036
Parsons 2 W 13th
Room: 1108

Wednesdays, 12:10pm - 2:50pm

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Office hours by appointment

Class website
glissmann.com/teaching/visualarchive

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This class explores the relationship between form and content: How is meaning constructed and communicated through visual language? Through observing, collecting, analyzing, writing, and form making, students apply design processes involving visual research, concept generation, and craft skills.

Driven by research interest, students will use digital and analog means to build visual archives. These collections are approached as a resource of critical inquiry and to respond to current socio-political issues.

Students will develop projects and build up skills across media ranging from physical collaging to digital artifacts and more complex visual essays for paper and for screen.

COURSE CONTENT

To initiate this class, we will be working with this definition of what an archive is: "a collection of items which form evidence of the activities of a person or institution." (1) In this sense, you will be creating a growing visual research collection over 15 weeks — while developing your own definition of what an archive is, how it could be part of your artistic practice, and which roles archives play in a larger socio-political context.

1   Discover: Building the Archive

During the first phase, we will explore principles and elements of design & communication design methodologies to populate your archive. A series of experimental exercises will guide you to create recordings (visuals) as a response to your individual research inquiry. This research inquiry is a set of questions based on your previous life experience, education, or any current socio-political interest. While we will formulate this research interest during the first two weeks of the semester, you will be able to realign your investigation at any point.

Your archive is your archive. Besides collecting the visual responses to class assignments, you are encouraged to document inspirational resources; pictures from magazines, books, flyers, or random artifacts you find in the streets.

Learning happens beyond the classroom. Make sure you expose yourself to the city, culture, and life—as much as our current living situation allows you to. Visiting an exhibition might trigger that missing thought for your current design project. This "habit of collecting ideas" will also help you to identify your visual language and inspire your future creative practice.

The idea of phase 1 is to explore, open up, learn, understand, and produce the records that will help you to define a focus in phase 2:

2   Define, Develop, Deliver: Archive as Method

During the second phase, you will determine a focus for your archive, which can be based on content, visual direction or both. What is the purpose of your archive? How could it have a positive impact on a specific community? Which media channel is most appropriate for your archive—where and how does it live?

This class looks at thinking and making as cross-pollinating activities: phases 1 & 2 might not be entirely distinct and merge into cycles of your creative practice. Your final archive can include everything you did in class or focus on a specific aspect/practice of what you experienced.

The only rule for your final archive is to be inquiry-centered, process-focused, and have at least 100 records. Each record needs to have a caption.

(1) "Introduction to Archives." What are archives? King's College Cambridge, October 20, 2017. http://www. kings.cam.ac.uk/archive-centre/introduction-archives/definition/index.html.

LINKS/ RESOURCES

This syllabus has a schedule that is tentative. You will find detailed information about synchronous and asynchronous activities & assignments on the class website: **glissmann.com/teaching/visualarchive**

Additional links including passwords to MURAL, VIMEO, and GOOGLE DRIVE can be found on the class CANVAS site. Homework and presentations have to be submitted through the shared google drive folder.
https://canvas.newschool.edu/courses/1722324

EVALUATION

Meaningful Participation	15%
1 Discover: Building the Archive	
Bilderatlas	5%
Urban Street Collage	5%
Material Culture	5%
Typology	15%

	Time	10%
2	Define, Develop, Deliver: Archive as Method	
	Final Archive, Process Documentation	45%

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, students will be able to

1   Use a basic vocabulary of communication design to articulate their design process and critique others;
2   Work through all the steps of the design research process, e.g. brainstorming, assembling, drafting, editing, critically analyzing, and prototyping their ideas through the means of visual language;
3   Evaluate how visual language and its variables are applied to reading/writing systems to facilitate orientation and create consistency;
4   Demonstrate an understanding of the iterative making process in interaction design, including an ability to incorporate feedback into their work,
5   Develop critical questions in relation to historical and contemporary sources, and to accurately evaluate the validity of the context of these sources.

TEXTBOOKS & READINGS

You are required to study a few readings which I will distribute in class as a soft copy. However it is equally important to find your own readings that are related to your topic. In order to realize a successful project in this class you have to become a specialist of your chosen area/topic.

Here is a list of general recommendations:

1   Vis, Dirk. *Research for people who (think they) would rather create*. Onomatopee Projects. 2021.

2   Colomina, Beatriz, and Mark Wigley. *Are We Human? Notes on an Archeology of Design*. Lars Müller, 2016.

3   McCloud, Scott, *Understanding Comic*s: The Invisible Art. Harper, 1990

4   Willis, Anne-Marie. *The Design Philosophy Reader*. Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2019.

5   Berger, John. *Ways of seeing*. Penguin Classics, 2008.

6   Soulellis, Paul. *Urgent Archives*. https://soulellis.com/writing/aug2017/

7   Derrida, Jacques, and Eric Prenowitz. *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*.

University of Chicago Press, 1996. Print.
SCHEDULE

This schedule is tentative. Please check class website for detailed information, homework and expected preparations.

WEEK 1

1/24 **Introduction**

Introductions.
What is this class?
What is it not?
Syllabus. Methodologies. Participants.
Brainstorming Session.
Identifying Reading Questions.

Readings for next class (Research)
I.   Glissmann. Archive as Method.
II.   Berger, John. Ways of Seeing.
III.   Collins, Hillary. What makes a good research topic?

Prepare for next class
Assignment 1: Pecha Kucha—Five Objects.
Write response to introductory lecture.

WEEK 2

1/31 **Archive ⇄ Research**

Workshop: Pecha Kucha.
Each student shares research interest and receives feedback from the group.
Discussion: Ways of Seeing.

Readings for next class (Narrative)
IV.   Eames, Charles and Ray. Powers of Ten
V.   Tillmans, Wolfgang Interview.
VI.   Jafa, Arthur. APEX @MoMA
VII.   Vis, Dirk. Research for people who think they rather create.

Prepare for next class
- Assignment 2: Curate and print 12 images.
- Identify ways of creating order.

WEEK 3

2/7 **Archive ⇄ Narrative**

Workshop: Visual Narrative.
Order, sequence, and arrangement.

Readings for next class (Bilderatlas)
VIII.   Simpson, Lorna: Studio Visit @TATE.
IX.   Suter, Batia. Parallel Encyclopedia, Interview.
X.   Fleckhaus, Willy. Article.
XI.   Warburg, Aby. Bilderatlas Mnemosyne. Article.
XII.   Colomina & Wigley. Are We Human.
XIII.   Leonard, Koren. Arranging Things.

Prepare for next class
Experiment 1: Bilderatlas, print three panels.

WEEK 4

2/14 Archive ⇄ Atlas

Workshop: Bilderatlas.
What happens in the overlap?

Readings for next class (Space)
XIV.   McCloud, Scott. Understanding Comics.
XV.   Principles of Visual Language. Kennedy Art Center.
XVI.   Venezky, Martin. Beautiful (Then Gone).
XVII. Urban Type Collages. Demo.

Prepare for next class
Experiment 2: Seven Urban Street Collages, printed.

WEEK 5

2/21 Archive ⇄ Space

Workshop: Urban Field Studies.

Readings for next class (Material Culture)
XVIII. Woodward, Sophie. What is Material Culture?
XIX.   Likavčan & Heinicker. Planetary Diagrams.

Prepare for next class
Experiment 3: Satellite images & rubbings, printed.

WEEK 6

2/28 Archive ⇄ Material Culture

Workshop: Material Culture.
The satellite image meets my kitchen
floor: How does your research
inquiry manifest itself on the Earth's
surface? How does it manifest in your
everyday?

Readings for next class (Typology)
XX.   Becher, Bernd and Hilla. Video @SFMoMA.
XXI.   Breakell Sue. Negotiating the Archive
XXII. Soulellis, Paul. Bad Archives

Prepare for next class
Experiment 4: Typology drafts.
Field School: Curate galleries.

WEEK 7

3/6 Field School

What can we learn from other artists?
Field trip to Chelsea, itinerary will be
posted on the class website.

Readings for next class (Typology)
XXIII. Steedman, Carolyn. DUST, The space of memory: in
       an archive.
XXIV. Derrida, Jacques. Archive Fever

Prepare for next class
Experiment 4: Typology drafts continued.
Field School Documentation.

3/13 WEEK 8

WEEK 9

3/20 Archive ⇄ Typology I

Individual meetings via Zoom:
Use classifications to create order.

Readings for next class (Typology)
XXV. Identify your own readings relating to your research.

Prepare for next class
Experiment 4: Typology drafts.
Field School: Curate galleries.

WEEK 10

3/27 Archive ⇄ Typology II

Recordings. Time. Grid.
The Typology experiments will be
presented printed and animated (gif).

Readings for next class (Typology)
XXVI. Spieker Sven. The Big Archive, Introduction
XXVII.   Umbrico, Penelope. Interview.

Prepare for next class
Experiment 5: One hour, 12 recordings.

WEEK 11

4/3 Archive ⇄ Time I

The archive and the every day. What
does it mean to record time. What are
alternative processes?

Readings for next class (Typology)
XXVIII.   Spieker Sven. The Big Archive, Chapter 6.

Prepare for next class
Experiment 5: One hour, 12 recordings.

WEEK 12

4/10 Archive ⇄ Time II

Workshop: One hour — one page.

Readings for next class (Typology)
XXIX. Identify your own readings relating to your research.

Prepare for next class
Slides to pitch your final archive.

WEEK 13

4/17 Archive ⇄ The Pitch

	What. How. Why. Introduce the methodology to create/ capture 100 recordings for your archive. How will you develop captions? Who is your audience?	**Readings for next class (Typology)** XXX. Identify your own readings relating to your research. **Prepare for next class** Prototype/ Iteration of final archive. Draft of archive introduction.

WEEK 14

4/24 Final Archive

	Group Studio: Archive & Context. Meta Data. Captions.	**Readings for next class (Typology)** XXXI. Identify your own readings relating to your research. **Prepare for next class** Prototype/ Iteration of final archive. Draft of archive introduction.

WEEK 15

5/1 Final Archive

	Independent Studio: Optional individual meetings.	**Prepare for next class** Use the guidelines provided on the class website to share your work in class next week.

WEEK 16

5/8 Final Archive

Dissemination/ Presentation.
What is next?

GRADING STANDARDS

A   Superior work. You have clearly demonstrated an enthusiasm for the projects, and an understanding of the concepts that guide your decisions. Your work demonstrates original and creative thinking and your projects are consistently and cleanly executed with a high level of attention devoted to craft and clarity of writing. You're able to explain your own work and offer insightful critique of your classmates' projects. You are present in class and participate in discussions.

B   Good work. You've completed all of the projects with a sufficient level of quality. Your projects are less conceptually clear, but you have displayed clear effort in attempting an understanding. Your projects are cleanly executed with a good level of attention devoted to craft and clarity of writing. You're able to explain your own work and offer insightful critique of your classmates' projects. You are present in class and participate in discussions.

C   Satisfactory work. You've shown that you can interact with the concepts presented in class, but you have not demonstrated a deep understanding or enthusiasm for your

work. You do not demonstrate a high level of attention to craft. You participate in some discussions but have not added insightful critique.

D   Your work adheres to each project's guidelines but you have not demonstrated original thought or depth of understanding of the concepts presented in class. You have not participated in class discussions, or have missed a significant amount of classes.

F   Failing grades are given for required work that is not submitted or for incomplete final projects. Make-up work or completion of missed assignments may be permitted only with the approval of the instructor and the program director.

W   The grade of W may be issued by the Office of the Registrar to a student who officially withdraws from a course within the applicable deadline. There is no academic penalty, but the grade will appear on the student transcript.

I   The grade of I, or temporary incomplete, may be granted to a student under unusual and extenuating circumstances, such as when the student's academic life is interrupted by a medical or personal emergency. This mark is not given automatically but only upon the student's request and at the discretion of the instructor. A Request for Incomplete form must be completed and signed by student and instructor. The time allowed for completion of the work and removal of the "I" mark will be set by the instructor with the following limitations:
     Work must be completed no later than the seventh week of the following fall semester for spring or summer term incompletes and no later than the seventh week of the following spring semester for fall term incompletes. Grades of "I" not revised in the prescribed time will be recorded as a final grade of "F" by the Registrar's Office.

RESOURCES

The university provides many resources to help students achieve academic and artistic excellence. These resources include:

- The University (and associated) Libraries
- The University Learning Center
- University Disabilities Services

In keeping with The New School's policy of providing equal access to individuals with disabilities, instructors are strongly encouraged to include a statement on their syllabus informing students that academic accommodations can be provided on the basis of disability if the student follows the protocol described. The following statement contains all of the elements that should be present. Instructors may want to make changes based on style preference or particular course content. Students Disability Services (SDS) assists students with permanent or temporary disabilities in need of academic and programmatic accommodations as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
In keeping with the university's policy of providing equal access for students with disabilities, any student with a disability who needs academic accommodations must

contact SDS. There are several ways for students to contact the office: via email at StudentDisability@newschool.edu, through the Starfish service catalog, or by calling the office at 212.229.5626. A self-ID form can also be completed on the SDS webpage at www.newschool.edu/student-disability-services. Once you contact the office, SDS staff will arrange an intake appointment to discuss your concerns and, if appropriate, provide you with accommodation notices to give to me. Please note that faculty will not work unilaterally with students to provide accommodations. If you inform me of a disability but do not provide any official notification, I must refer you to SDS.

- Making Center

The Making Center is a constellation of shops, labs, and open workspaces that are situated across the New School to help students express their ideas in a variety of materials and methods. We have resources to help support woodworking, metalworking, ceramics and pottery work, photography and film, textiles, printmaking, 3D printing, manual and CNC machining, and more. A staff of technicians and student workers provide expertise and maintain the different shops and labs. Safety is a primary concern, so each area has policies for access, training, and etiquette with which students and faculty should be familiar. Many areas require specific orientations or trainings before access is granted.

- Health and Wellness: additional services and support available to New School students.

COLLEGE, SCHOOL, PROGRAM AND CLASS POLICIES

A comprehensive overview of policy may be found under Policies: A to Z. Students are also encouraged to consult the Academic Catalog for Parsons.

CLASS WEBSITE

The class website is an important resource for this class. Students should check it for announcements and assignment before coming to class each week.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

The use of electronic devices (phones, tablets, laptops, cameras, etc.) is permitted when the device is being used in relation to the course's work. All other uses are prohibited in the classroom and devices should be turned off before class starts.

RESPONSIBILITY

Students are responsible for all assignments, even if they are absent. Late assignments, failure to complete the assignments for class discussion and/or critique, and lack of preparedness for in-class discussions, presentations and/or critiques will jeopardize your successful completion of this course.

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE

Class participation is an essential part of class and includes: keeping up with reading, assignments, projects, contributing meaningfully to class discussions, active participation in group work, and attending synchronous sessions regularly and on time.

Parsons' attendance guidelines were developed to encourage students' success in all aspects of their academic programs. Full participation is essential to the successful completion of coursework and enhances the quality of the educational experience for all, particularly in courses where group work is integral; thus, Parsons promotes high levels of attendance. Students are expected to attend classes regularly and promptly and in compliance with the standards stated in this course syllabus.

While attendance is just one aspect of active participation, absence from a significant portion of class time may prevent the successful attainment of course objectives. A significant portion of class time is generally defined as the equivalent of three weeks, or 20%, of class time. Lateness or early departure from class may be recorded as one full absence. Students may be asked to withdraw from a course if habitual absenteeism or tardiness has a negative impact on the class environment.

ACADEMIC HONESTY AND INTEGRITY

Compromising your academic integrity may lead to serious consequences, including (but not limited to) one or more of the following: failure of the assignment, failure of the course, academic warning, disciplinary probation, suspension from the university, or dismissal from the university.

Students are responsible for understanding the University's policy on academic honesty and integrity and must make use of proper citations of sources for writing papers, creating, presenting, and performing their work, taking examinations, and doing research. It is the responsibility of students to learn the procedures specific to their discipline for correctly and appropriately differentiating their own work from that of others. The full text of the policy, including adjudication procedures, is found on the university website under Policies: A to Z. Resources regarding what plagiarism is and how to avoid it can be found on the Learning Center's website.

The New School views "academic honesty and integrity" as the duty of every member of an academic community to claim authorship for his or her own work and only for that work, and to recognize the contributions of others accurately and completely. This obligation is fundamental to the integrity of intellectual debate, and creative and academic pursuits. Academic honesty and integrity includes accurate use of quotations, as well as appropriate and explicit citation of sources in instances of paraphrasing and describing ideas, or reporting on research findings or any aspect of the work of others (including that of faculty members and other students). Academic dishonesty results from infractions of this "accurate use". The standards of academic honesty and integrity, and citation of sources, apply to all forms of academic work, including submissions of drafts of final papers or projects. All members of the University community are expected to conduct themselves in accord with the standards of academic honesty and integrity. Please see the complete policy in the Parsons Catalog.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

The New School (the "university") seeks to encourage creativity and invention among its faculty members and students. In doing so, the University affirms its traditional

commitment to the personal ownership by its faculty members and students of Intellectual Property Rights in works they create. The complete policy governing Intellectual Property Rights may be seen on the university website, <u>on the Provost's page.</u>

Student Course Ratings (Course Evaluations)

During the last two weeks of the semester, students are asked to provide feedback for each of their courses through an online survey. They cannot view grades until providing feedback or officially declining to do so. Course evaluations are a vital space where students can speak about the learning experience. It is an important process which provides valuable data about the successful delivery and support of a course or topic to both the faculty and administrators. Instructors rely on course rating surveys for feedback on the course and teaching methods, so they can understand what aspects of the class are most successful in teaching students, and what aspects might be improved or changed in future. Without this information, it can be difficult for an instructor to reflect upon and improve teaching methods and course design. In addition, program/department chairs and other administrators review course surveys. Instructions are available online