

John Rooney

Supportive text of my research programme presented toward the University theme of Memory, Text and Place scoping document October 2010.

The project is designed to create new ways of looking at the story of a city in a way that the city becomes an art gallery itself. Mapping technologies have been used to present information as an aesthetic image; this project adds the voice of the person making the gesture, and the emotional context of the moment and location.

Memory

The story of a city is an ongoing timeline of interconnected exchanges, thoughts and ideas. It is in a constant state of flux; new messages are added to its databank via personal and digital correspondence. The stories and ideas used in this project can be taken from any point in the timeline and presented together as information aesthetics. An individual voice from the past can be transposed onto a new idea related to a specific location in the city, thus creating new connective dialogue across the timeline.

Text

Typography is information *plus* aesthetics. The project present work as image and text both together and independently. The written word presents language with an emotional content. Handwriting styles, the choice of font, the medium of delivery (stone cut letterforms, letterpress, text language) add emphasis to the message communicated to the viewer. The research looks at using audio technologies to create soundscapes made from the shape of letterforms. Each typeface has a different sound file. When the audio file is read back into a sonogram the sound wave created is in the shape of the letterform. Further research will look at creating typefaces based on the sound the letterform makes instead of any visual aesthetic. I am working on creating a typographic research network. The network has been set up in collaboration with Birmingham Institute of Art & Design. As of now we have contacts from eight universities, plus industry contacts to a total of 18 members, which will expand as time goes on.

Place

The first cities in focus in this research are Manchester and Salford. Both locations are significant centres for cultural activity and contain work that has had a profound cultural impact on my design practice and creative reference points. Interviews with key figures involved in the cultural impact of the places will be recorded, where possible by face-to-face interviews of the individual in question. Datum can also be recorded via existing audio and video archives if the contact is unavailable.