

SOT 3 Mapping Project

"Where is the discipline heading and in what contexts are graphic designers working?"

The Schools of Thought mapping project can be best described in the following sequence:

PRE SOT 3

Emails, emails, emails.

Are we there yet?

Side Walk Chalk. Lots of it.

Who says you can't crit type and wrap manifestos at the same time?

Thursday, DAY BEFORE SOT 3

Blood, sweat, paint. 2 coats. Make it 3.

A big black rectangle, think minus sign, a runway, fresh blacktop.

(Insert UP NEXT 2007)

Friday, DAY 1

Semi-steady hands hoping for nothing better than X-act precision.

Reinforcements from the North(Carolina).

Pushing, pulling, placing, nudging, leveling.

Thumbs up.

A group sigh/hug/high-five/nap.

Anticipation, general apprehension.

And then the game begins. The first contribution is hesitant, it even contradicts it's initial confidence. But it's a valiant beginning.

The second chalk mark is empowering. Suddenly in large pink(or maybe green) letters:

PRO(EX)CESS

Inspiration strikes. Something resonates from last evenings "Up Next".

Those "unintended consequences". The map seems a perfect forum to leave a few of these traces.

And then (virtual) silence.

(Insert Peter Turchi keynote, dinner.)

DAY 2

Silas gives his introduction (amidst technology setbacks). The crowd goes wild.

Apparently there was a map discussion last evening. The initial layout may have been too graphic for these graphic designers.

I have to see this for myself.

The magnets,
the printouts,
the signifiers,
the categories,
the titles,
the kittens
have all been pushed to the outer edges of the design sphere, the map is a hollow vessel.

A part of me is disappointed, I favor the strategy to build a model and let interaction unfold, be it success or failure.
That being said...

*Had we considered this a failure, midway through?
If so was it the layout of our design that kept hands off?
Was the language of the text a barrier?
Was the top down approach suffocating the relational aesthetic?*

This strategic shift does not initially yield more favorable results.

It takes a semi-ambitious group of CalArts students to finally break the ice. In true CalArts spirit it quickly escalates from spark to flame to fireball. And the void becomes a mass.

Word lists. Slander. Questions of existence. A rainbow. Clusters within clusters. Circle meets square. (Graph)itti. Shout outs.

And the discipline is heading where?

My thoughts are that perhaps the map experience is the model. Nobody wants to commit one way or the other. Perhaps those who DID NOT contribute favor the promise left by the void. Perhaps those who DID contribute see the map as a place to ask questions rather than create definitions.

Considering the context...a conference about design & design education.

Were the majority of attendees looking for answers?

I would, all the big names were giving their best and brightest assessment of the current condition.

Success?

Depends on the angle...

To me everything is gained.

I am reminded of something taken from Andrew Blauvelt's presentation a few nights prior (Up Next). He was referring to a Koolhaas project and used the words "reprogramming the use of space."

Midway through Day 1 of the conference one of our mentors, Terry Stone mentioned to me that we need not repaint the wall when the conference concluded because another instructor was interested in using the magnetic chalk wall for a project.

This may be the greater success. By altering the facade of the cafeteria wall had we "reprogrammed the space", instigating an internal dialogue at Art Center?

Perhaps this is a model to learn from, an ability to create opportunities from unexpected circumstance, a flexible vantage point from which to approach the everyday, design into life.

And in this provide at least one temporary hub for a discipline in constant

transition.

- F. Zavala