As the discipline of graphic design becomes more media agnostic we can no longer chart its territories solely by the products of its practice. We must define the ever-slippaging borders of graphic design by the ideas and methodologies of its practitioners. What is depicted is an expanded, but ruptured field in constant flux. One that is loosely joined together by a wider definition of "graphic design as a conceptual operation."

SOT 3 MAPPING PROJECT

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

MAPPING TEAM: N Silas Munro, Terry Stone, Christopher Vice, Florencia Zavala
We organize information on maps in order to see our knowledge in a new way. As a result, maps suggest explanations; and while explanations reassure us, they also inspire us to ask more questions, consider other possibilities.

—Peter Turchi, Maps of the Imagination

As the discipline of graphic design becomes more “media agnostic” we can no longer chart it’s territories solely by the products of its practice. We must define the ever-“slippaging” borders of graphic design by the ideas and methodologies of its practitioners. What is depicted is an expanded, but ruptured field in constant flux. One that is loosely joined together by a wider definition of [graphic] “design as a conceptual operation.”

—N Silas Munro

The Schools of Thought mapping project can be best described in the following sequence:
Emails, emails, emails.
Are we there yet?
Side Walk Chalk. Lots of it.
Who says you can't crit type and wrap manifests at the same time?
No time for knitting, Terry. Not when there's email to read! No time for sleeping Flo, not with chalk to wrap! Silas wake up and write the copy!
FOR THE DURATION OF SCHOOLS OF THOUGHTS III
we will be creating a map of graphic design today,
and invite you to join us—all of us—in this
collaborative endeavor. We ask you to locate graphic
design at this very moment. Not historically, not
even at Schools of Thoughts II. Consider what
constitutes or delineates the current field and
practice, and in what direction or to what topology
you think it may be heading (or not).

THIS PIECE OF CHALK SIGNIFIES YOUR ABILITY TO
make a contribution to our collective effort.
In the cafeteria we have established a magnetized
chalkboard where you can write, draw, deviate,
derive, dérive, pinpoint, and post to shape
the map. We have chalked in some edges and
meridians, but these markers serve only
as a beginning. It’s up to each of you to drive this
work-in-progress (to wherever it ends up). As
we progress, we will be recording the procession
of the map with periodic photographic documentation
in order to preserve this—your most spontaneous
form of scholarship.

REMEMBER YOU ARE AMONG PEERS, STUDENTS, ROLE MODELS, HEROES,
AND FRIENDS. LET’S SCRIBBLE, NOT SQUABBLE. PLEASE PLAY NICE IN THE
SANDBOX TOGETHER (NO BITING, HAIR PULLING, ROCK-PAPER-SCISSORS,
OR BACK-STABBING. BUT CRITICAL FRICION IS HIGHLY ENCOURAGED).
Finished and Wrapped Chalk
As the discipline of graphic design becomes more media agnostic we can no longer chart its territories solely by the products of its practice. We must define the ever-slippaging borders of graphic design by the ideas and methodologies of its practitioners. What is depicted is an expanded, but ruptured field in constant flux. One that is loosely joined together by a wider definition of "graphic design as a conceptual operation."
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)
THURSDAY, DAY BEFORE SOT 3  Blood, sweat, paint.
THURSDAY, DAY BEFORE SOT 3  Blood, sweat, paint.
THURSDAY, DAY BEFORE SOT 3  A big black rectangle, think minus sign, a runway, fresh blacktop.
FRIDAY, DAY 1

*Semi-steady hands hoping for nothing better than X-act precision.*
*Reinforcements from the North(Carolina).*
*Pushing, pulling, placing, nudging, leveling.*
FRIDAY, DAY 1  Reinforcements from the North(Carolina).
FRIDAY, DAY 1  *Semi-steady hands hoping for nothing better than X-act precision.*
FRIDAY, DAY 1  Pushing, pulling, placing, nudging, leveling.
FRIDAY, DAY 1  Pushing, pulling, placing, nudging, leveling.
FRIDAY, DAY 1

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.
FRIDAY, DAY 1  Thumbs up. A group sigh/hug/high-five/nap.
FRIDAY, DAY 1

Anticipation, general apprehension. And then the game begins.
The second chalk mark is empowering. Suddenly in large pink (or maybe green) letters:

PRO(EX)CESS

Inspiration strikes. Something resonates from last evening's "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.)
FRIDAY, DAY 1

Inspiration strikes. Something resonates from last evenings “Up Next”. Those “unintended consequences”.
SATURDAY, 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.
SATURDAY, DAY 2  Apparently there was a map discussion last evening. The initial layout may have been too graphic for these graphic designers.
SATURDAY, DAY 2

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.
SATURDAY, DAY 2  

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.
SATURDAY, DAY 2

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.


And the discipline is heading where?
SATURDAY, DAY 2

SATURDAY, DAY 2 And the discipline is heading where?
SATURDAY, DAY 2

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?
SATURDAY, DAY 2  Were the majority of attendees looking for answers?
SATURDAY, DAY 2

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."
SATURDAY, DAY 2

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.

—Florencio Zavala
SATURDAY, DAY 2  Success? Depends on the angle...
SATURDAY, DAY 2  To me everything is gained.