

Instruction Manual
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Introduction

This is the third edition of the Instruction Manual which originally proposed to aid the discussion, critique, and assessment of the Student's final works. This edition continues with similar aims and a close adherence to the format of the original manuals. It is a catalogue of the student's work thus far, with notes of relevant information and suggested topics for discussion. A section on Material Research considers the work leading up to the final outcomes. The guide also includes both the 303 formative assessment as well as a recommended assessment sheet for the final mark. The appendix consists of the original manuals.

There is one additional feature of this edition which was not present in the other two: as studio 3 students are required to present an artist's statement alongside the work, the Student's statement prefaces this edition. An artist's statement, as deemed by staff at Elam, should provide context, description, and conceptual ideas behind the work, it should be 200-500 words in length, and should be displayed on the wall next to the final presentation. However, the Student's statement, though acting here as a kind of forward to the work, is not perfectly situated in the decisive and communicative outline of the manual. As such, it may detract from the reader's precise understanding of the work, but the statement is included for purposes of interest. At best, the statement may also provide a different perspective on the work than presented in this manual.

On Writing an Artist's statement

Writing is always problematic. The Student should try to communicate clearly while also not providing instructions. Sentences progress in a timely manner, filling a page with ink. One might as well scribble.

There is no logic to the mess of this insignificant project. In fact, the artist's statement should read: "every minute now, a master-piece." This would be more precise, because all the brilliance of a great project would melt into the mundane appearance of a living room, or perhaps a museum display. A masterpiece has to be exhibited in isolation.

At art school, there should never be a masterpiece. The problem is a segmentation of space, a university specialty. Each student is accorded his own little square of wall and floor and perhaps a bit of window. The student's job is to present several resolved outcomes in the space. The student is also to show evidence of research and conceptual engagement while participating in studio groups. In other words, productive thinking is required, and displayed to its best advantage at the end of the semester. Art is never mentioned. It is assumed, indeed necessary, that anything produced at art school is art. This is true and also depressing, because there should never be a masterpiece.

In fact anything can be accomplished. The problem is a segmentation of time, an offshoot of capitalism in which work = nine to five and play is sandwiched somewhere else. The student's time is spent in sections, and days are planned accordingly. Art is a calculated experiment, a result of productive research reading in the library, or research painting, and even thinking becomes a job to do until the six o'clock moment when the student is permitted to switch off or eat a sandwich. Any minute now, there could be a masterpiece, but it probably won't happen here.

!

Arranged in this space is a haphazard frenzy of incoherent thoughts jumbled beyond recognition. This is a place in a space, a home in a foreign country. This is bad art, bracketed by bad writing.

Actually, in all cases, one does not want a masterpiece. How would the Student ever recover from such a disaster?

Masterpiece Paintings

Relevant Information

- The work is composed of two paintings, one on hand-made paper framed and the other on thick board the same scale as the Rangitoto painting (“Sometimes”). The latter is wrapped in bubble wrap, but the text is still visible. Both paintings read: “Any minute now, a masterpiece.”
- The words act in some ways as a title: they are the biggest letters in the display, and they also bring together some primary themes or intentions of the rest of the installation—especially those of time, progress, and value.

Suggested Critical Reading

- The text is one of the last works to be made over the semester, and as such, is perhaps overly cynical or sarcastic. However, the text might also express some level of narcissistic hope—otherwise, why would it be displayed with other work? Why, more importantly, would the Student continue to work? Perhaps the critique is less to do with the personal artistic merits of the Student’s work and more to do with how art is perceived as needing to stand out from the mundane craft of everyday.
- The above remark that it may be a ‘hopeful’ text is supported by the childish slant of the letters, and also by the light pink backgrounds. In some places, the dark colours beneath the pink are visible, which, like the Rangitoto paintings, makes visible the layers and suggests a visual attempt at depth. Is it necessary or gratuitous? Does it matter?
- Also, the addition of these paintings to the Rangitoto set takes away from their arbitrary and outcast position in the installation. In other words, the pairing of works provides a way for each to belong more resiliently than if they had to stand alone. In some sense, this actually detracts from the force of the Rangitoto set, which once stood out as uncertainly belonging to the work as a whole. In presenting a more coherent set of work, the Student risks suggesting a linearity or progression which she forcefully tried to challenge in every discussion leading up to the final presentation. The second masterpiece painting matches the ‘Pretend’ painting in scale and some aspects of the painterly treatment, but it is also quite different in other ways. For one, it is not visually representational.

Scribble Drawings

Relevant Information

- This work includes two drawings hanging on the wall (one on top of the other), a photocopy hidden in the wall, and two photocopies on the floor.
- The original drawing took two weeks of regular scribbling, and a box of ten Bic ballpoint pens from the Whitcoulls on the corner of Queen and Victoria.
- The ball point pens might have lasted longer, but for some reason many of the pens dried up before the ink ran out.
- The Student managed to multitask by reading or talking to herself and others while scribbling.
- The other drawings were photocopied for approximately \$15 each from Neville Newcomb on the bottom of Parnell Rise. The friendly woman who did the copying informed the Student by telephone that they had accidentally ripped the original and taped it up to finish the copy job. The Student might have asked for a discount but is not a quick thinker, so she paid the full price. Oh well, she thought, a rip doesn't matter to an object which is not supposed to have value.
- Besides the copy, the drawing has been reproduced in other ways: there is an audio recording of scribbles, a set of used pens, and an audio recording of the Student remembering the first crit. discussion of the drawing. The drawing on display is also a record of the original scribble drawing: it was placed underneath the scribble drawing during scribbling, so the ink rubbed onto the paper like a print.

Suggested Critical Interpretation

- In terms of **conceptual engagement**, some of the most clearly considered concepts for this project are time and value. A drawing which has no skill, no originality in the idea (since so many other artists have done something similar), no high cost material, and no durability, might not be worth very much at all. It just depends on who is looking.
- Another applicable conceptual consideration is the critique of a teleological point of view associated with capitalist institutions. This project is the first project of the semester: to be presented as a final outcome suggests little growth or progression in the project. Where is the **research**? As an object without progression or evidence of research, it does not have authority.
- The **presentation** of this work also clearly relates to concepts of value: hiding the scribble copies and related records in the wall, while providing only one purely visual outcome through the seeming blank white record suggests a desire to conceal the amount of time and effort involved, while also making it more difficult for the viewer to interpret. Presentation also requires interactivity from the audience, and has a definite relationship to books and reading. It is a hopeful gesture.

Computer Scribble

- This work was completed in a few sittings at a computer while watching television. It took many hours, probably five, but involved far less time than the hand-drawn scribble.
- The scale of the original document was A4 on photoshop, and the printed versions are scaled down to look more dense.

Suggested Critical Reading

- The computer flattens out the ink, so that unlike the original scribble, which tortured the paper and left blotches of ink everywhere, the computer scribble is very neat.
- On the other hand, the density of scribbles are uneven, making the work appear more organic. The reading is dramatically changed with the label “Computer Scribble,” which is almost unbelievable. One almost wishes for proof of its authenticity. Perhaps scaled up rather than down would have achieved this.
- Notice there is more than one copy of the scribble drawing displayed, including a set of two clearly different outcomes on one page. This is the scribble in progress. Displaying more than one copy reduces the value of the single print but also increases it’s visibility within the work as a whole.

Rangitoto Works

The Student's material research reflects an increasing interest in Rangitoto as a site of tension between the honoured landscape and the tourist fascination with it. As a waiheke resident, the Student passes Rangitoto five days a week on the ferry and often considers it in an ignorant way. The Student's work around Rangitoto involves a kind of unknowing or uncertainty. Some of these research outcomes include the book "New Zealand Family History Research for Beginners," as well as a short video "Rangitoto" on the blog, some short writings and, the most visible work, two paintings of Rangitoto, one of which has been cut into small pieces, the other of which is displayed leaning against the wall.

New Zealand Beginner's Guide to Family History Research

Relevant Information

- The drawings are done from the ferry as it moves across the Hauraki Gulf. The landscape is silhouetted/drawn with simple lines that change slightly with each new angle.
- The work was restarted after ten drawings because the Student wanted to make even more simple drawings than she started in the first book.

Suggested Critical Interpretation

- The changing landscape is an interesting aspect, and seems to cooperate with the themes of memory and history provided by the original book. The serial nature of the work also adds to this.
- There is something uncertain or undeclared in this work, which has to do with the Student's relation to both the landscape and the subject of the book. As a foreigner, she cannot claim to know either, so the work may lack authenticity, but perhaps this is also the driving force behind it.

Rangitoto Painting 1

Relevant Information

- The painting is acrylic on board, originally approximately 1 meter square. The painting has been cut into 16 (?) smaller pieces.
- Rangitoto has been painted from memory, in a deliberately flat style and a dark hairy green colour.
- It is stacked on a miniature 'plinth,' while two pieces are hung—one on the wall above the second rangitoto painting, and the other nailed onto the second Rangitoto painting.

Suggested Critical Interpretation

- Cutting a painting is situated in a history of irreverence toward the medium, and would seem to suggest a similar symbolic reducing of value or importance.
- The idea is fairly obvious and redundant.

- Stacking the painting, while hanging one piece, suggests on one hand the equalization of value while also an isolation of one 'best' outcome or piece. The action of stacking a bunch while hanging one seems to contradict itself.
- The stack has a nice relationship to a bookshelf or a cabinet, which are all methods of organization and containment.

Rangitoto Painting: "Sometimes, I pretend"

- The painting is very similar to the first Rangitoto painting in treatment and style, though the colours are much darker—more greys and blacks than greens and blues.
- The painting was to be cut up in much the same way as the first, except that the Student could not or would not resolve the initial intention to paint with the act of cutting it up. The process was not apparent or useful and there seemed to be a conflict of interest. Instead, the Student added the text, "sometimes, I pretend," after considering other phrases such as "I wish I was a painter," or "Rangitoto is like a hairy woman." The final phrase was chosen for both its ambiguity and its relation to themes such as reality and authenticity.
- The words on the painting detracted from the landscape, so the Student covered them with a sliver of the original Rangitoto painting. This sliver can swivel on the nail and reveal the phrase beneath. An arrow is painted to show the possible manoeuvre.

Suggested Critical Interpretation

- This work seems unresolved for once not due to incompleteness or fragility but rather because the idea is so uncertain. Why is Rangitoto important, and why paint? This work apparently arises out of nothing. Most have mentioned that it is sort of out of the blue, arbitrary to the point of not belonging.
- Why make art at all?
- Considered more formally, the busy-ness of the paint and texture draw attention to the surface treatment and might provide an obvious answer to the pretend-what question which arises from the text: clearly, the Student is pretending to paint. The link to Rangitoto is still not clear, but enough could be made up on the spot because it is such a loaded subject.
- Besides the key points about reality and authenticity, there is not much further evidence of conceptual engagement. Perhaps something might be said about pretension.
- How does this work relate to the scribble drawing or themes of value? The link is not apparent just looking at the work. The audience would gain from knowing that the work did not take much time or effort, and that the materials were the cheapest, found, or free/second-hand. This information could provide a new way of looking at the painting—rather than the artist—as pretending to be important.
- The representation of Rangitoto is ambiguous and uncertain. Leaning on its side, the painting is even more ambiguous, and the shape of Rangitoto is even more uncertain.
- The swivelling piece links the work to the three doors which open and reveal aspects of the scribble drawing. Hiding and revealing are important concepts, as well as interactivity.

Blog: <elam303.tumblr.com>

Relevant Information

- The blog, along with the scribble drawing, is the longest running project of the semester.
- Posts are made up almost entirely of videos (with one exception), and videos are all animated text.
- The writing derives primarily from the Student's thinking around key themes of the project.
- Once the writing is completed, each video only takes about two hours to complete, with varying export and upload times. Most of the videos have been uploaded in too large file sizes, making the blog slow to load on slower internet speeds.
- The blog is accompanied by a small booklet with introduction and screen shots.
- The blog has not been exhibited to the peer group or tutors. As far as the Student knows, no one except her mom has seen it.

Suggested Critical Reading

- Clearly, an obvious disability in interpretation arises out of not seeing the original. Should the viewer take matters into her own hands and look for the blog online, in her own time? (As if in looking at art, time belonged to someone else, like the artist or curator or the institution).
- This aspect of not seeing relates to the hidden facet of the scribble drawing, hoping for the viewer's interest and demanding his action.
- The document is possibly only the source for interpretation, yet screen shots render the video's durational aspects not important, so the document at once destroys the intention of the individual blog posts, which are in many ways about the fracturing of clear communication over time.
- Printed and bound, the document also suggests some durability not present in the ephemeral blog.
- Content of the blog is also difficult to ascertain from the document. We know from this document, and might suspect from the blog's document, that some of the writing reflects personal thinking, but there is no certainty of the tone or style of the writing.

Instruction Manual

Important things to note about the work and relevant information:

- The original manual was “first and foremost an effort to dissuade the ‘shy’ crits.” However, this studio 3 manual is primarily a continuation of that effort. As a third edition, it is still incomplete, because we can assume there will be a fourth.
- Relevant quotation from the original document:
 - The Instruction Manual is an attempt to enlighten viewers about important work and research, present an informed evaluation guide for exam assessors short of time and patience, while also reconsidering and re-evaluating the work for her own future reference.
 - This work is a work in progress. Potentially, it will grow to include all the work ever made in a lifetime.
- Note that “artist” in the original document has been replaced by “student” in all following editions. The Student claims that this change was unintentional. Perhaps it reveals an interesting shift in her thinking. Or, perhaps the idea that one should go from student to artist is largely based on a teleological misunderstanding of the universe, so that a shift from artist to student is not really backward but simply not forwardly progressive either—as if she were headed somewhere, and when she got there things would be all settled.

Your Opinion? Suggested Criticisms/pointers/questions to ask and answer:

- How do you feel about being told what your opinion might be? Does the work close down on the ambiguous and ‘open’ work which can appeal to a broader audience?
- Unlike any other project in this set of works, the Instruction Manual actually serves a functional purpose within the domain of art school. Even if it is not used as a discussion starter for crits, it still ultimately serves the artist as a record. In that case it can be considered selfish and its publication a kind of subversive misuse of public space.
- Commentary has come up in other work as a way to validate an artistic creation or something personal. This kind of commentary pretends to be authentic and objective, and therefore useful. It fits into a western ideal of science over art, of exposition over poetry.

Objects

The following objects are part of the final installation, and as such profit from a brief consideration.

Coffee jar

- The Student has gotten hooked on instant coffee during the semester.
- A small amount of mess was created when cutting the door holes in the wall. The Student wanted to value this gib dust, so she jarred it. The Student added a bit more ground gib to make the mess seem more substantial. The idea fits with the installation's desire to contain the mess of artmaking.

Miniature Plinth

- The plinth was made as an extra surface on which to put stuff.
- It was painted to look nicer. It was placed in the rain to see if the angle would let the paint drip off one edge.
- On another student's suggestion, it was repainted white to match the other plinths in the studio.

Candle/Rugs/Basket/Magazines/Newspaper

- The candle is a temporal device, much like a clock. Its use reveals time spent. As an artwork, the amount of time spent inscribes it with value, while incrementally subtracting from its usefulness.
- The rug is a decoration which is also another surface above the floor, providing a place for other objects. It also is a mass produced object, which is why two rugs are used in the installation. As a mass produced object, it is not valuable or unique. One of the rugs has been painted, reinscribed with originality and value.
- The basket is simply, like the jars, another place to put stuff. It is also mass produced but has an air of craft and usefulness. Filled with screws and nails, it is a homely soft basket filled with sharp scary things.
- All this stuff seems kind of arbitrary, and it continues to multiply even as this manual is printed and published. The objects don't appear to add much to the main set of work, and in many ways detract from the effectiveness of the scribble drawing, the masterpiece of the project.

Bookshelf

- The bookshelf was created to house books from last semester. It was an element of the last semester's final presentation, and still holds the books from last semester. The books and the shelf are thus outdated and less important than the 'new' stuff. Like the blog, they

provide an archive of no longer interesting work and a suggestion of the linearity of art-making and progress, concepts which the Student has explicitly tried to move beyond.

- Similarly, the keyboard is a leftover from last semester, as well as the shelf, and a few items on the shelf. Other items on the shelf are borrowed for the presentation, and will be returned to their original owner afterward. They don't really belong here.

Calendar

- The calendar is, like the candle, a record of time. This particular calendar shows historical pictures of new Zealand, and therefore also relates to the Beginner's guide to family history research and the Rangitoto paintings. The calendar is for 2011, so may potentially be useful for many more months.
- January has been filled with automatic writing from two ferry trips. The intention was to fill the whole calendar with automatic writing, but was never finished.

Deck of Cards Wrapped in String

- The cards are one of the earliest experiments in boredom and uselessness
- The string was used for other parts of the project—tying pens, wire, etc.

Material Research:

Most of the work produced for submission, including what would normally be deemed research, has been presented as a final display. Even the research here is presented in such a way that it could be confused with part of the main project.

Coupons

Relevant Information

- The coupons are from Southern Cross Health Insurance. Health insurance is less important in New Zealand than in the U.S. The main problem with health insurance, especially Southern Cross, is that it is difficult to get dental coverage, especially if one goes to the dentist more than once a year.
- The coupons are not useful to the Student, who is generally in good health, is young and issue free, and doesn't have any kids.
- The coupons are decorated with images of nude women, drawn in the Catherine Mitchell Wednesday Morning Life Drawing group.

Suggested Critical Reading

- Coupons explicitly involve concepts of value. Health coupons are interesting because they directly associate the body with money. One might consider Foucault's discussion of health discourses and self-control over the body. This provides one possible lead-in for understanding the reasoning behind drawing nudes.
- Nudes are a typical art-historical representation. When was the last time you saw a picture of a nude in a contemporary gallery? Is it only relevant to Devonport practices? There is a clear derision of such practices from the 'contemporary' group, and the suggestion is that nudes are an outdated subject, as if art were a linear field.

Nudes

Relevant Information

- There are nine images in total, but only 4 have been printed for research proof.
- The backgrounds are scanned images of the first Rangitoto painting. The paintbrush on Photoshop was used to draw the female silhouettes, which were filled with black using the paint bucket tool. Text from the Student's journal writings throughout the semester are partially hidden also behind black fill.
- The images were considered as nonlinear illustrations which might be framed in a warehouse frame for nine images.
- The images were also considered for a book, but the idea was discarded.

Audio- "Crit Memories"

Relevant Information

- This project is a response to Nicole's suggestion during the first crit that the Student's work was all about the discussion around it rather than the actual work. The idea was based on

something the Student said during the same crit, but the idea itself is not clearly a result of the project. In order to validate the idea that the crit was more important than the work, the Student created this audio project of remembering the crit: she spoke to the recorder while remembering, without the help of memory aids or without previously trying to remember. This recording took place exactly two weeks to the day after the crit.

- The project is literally self-explanatory. The Student explains the intention in the first memory recording. In the subsequent recordings, the Student remembered also previous recordings, so that the project began to be a self-perpetuating work, in which the content for the next recording was generated by the current one. Ultimately, there ended up being ten recordings, which was an arbitrary number.
- This project also includes one recording in which the Student remembers someone else's crit, in order to move beyond narcissistic naval gazing, which began to choke the project.

Proposal

Relevant Information

- This piece of writing was made in response to a studio 3 requirement to write proposals beginning the second semester.
- The work suggests many of the main concepts which are present in the final installation, such as teleology and reproduction, but most of the ideas suggested are not followed through.
- The proposal declares itself a resolved outcome which will be framed and hung in the final space, but this has not happened. As such, it is a false document.
- The proposal almost became the Artist's statement. It may perhaps have been a better artist's statement than the one actually written and displayed.

Rangitoto Book

Relevant Information

- The book was to be scanned and joined in a stop motion film.
- After scanning, the Student forgot to finish the film and so the project remains incomplete.