

**Timothy Donaldson**

### **The Hammer Shapes the Hand**

Why alphabets look like they do, what has happened to them since printing was invented, why they won't ever change, and how it might have been.

**Lynn Settrington,**

### **Sew – Near – Sew Far**

This paper examines a collaborative text-based initiative, *Sew Near – Sew Far*, that was developed during a partnership between the Bronte Parsonage Museum in Haworth and embroiderer Lynn Settrington. It explores how the pseudonymous signatures of the Bronte sisters were writ large in the landscape in a collaborative, site specific art work commemorating female creativity. Moreover, the presentation examines how this transitory female-focused installation, resonated with the linear artworks carved in the English chalk landscapes over the centuries, from the iconic White Horses, Cerne Abbas Giant to the Fovant Badges, and brought something new to this predominantly masculine domain.

This discussion paper also elucidates the significance of the crafts practitioner in this project, given her active role in each stage of the field work; intertwining her empathetic and immerse approach, with the views of some of those taking part in the shared making process. In addition, this study makes known how this interdisciplinary approach – combining stitch, calligraphy, ethnographic, fugitive, literary, empathetic and site specific methods, was able to uncover new and different ways of working. It also sheds light on how this project challenged stereotypes surrounding embroidery, by moving the practice away from an interior-based artefact, to a celebration of stitched-based endeavour situated on the Yorkshire moors. Releasing the Bronte sisters (signatures) from the confines of the museum, to be reunited with the landscape that inspired much of their creativity was at the heart of this initiative.



## **Catharine Slade-Brooking and Loucia Manopoulou**

### **Allusive Crafts: Drawing words, writing letters**

The objective of this paper is to explore literal and metaphorical forms of brushwork and to present a joint illustrated lecture, accompanied by audio - visual materials. The paper builds on Bernard Leach's quotation: "It is true that nothing betrays a man more than his handwriting, this is doubly true of brushwork. In the flow of the soft point his character is revealed" (Leach, 1945:124). The presentation is a combination of theoretical exploration, both of graphic design and crafts and includes examples of practice. Our interest lies on the movement and gesture and the visual communication elements of calligraphy brushwork on crafts, thus the paper will include performative work and focus on the gestural elements of the work. We use calligraphy and gesture as the key to unlocking narratives in works of craft. Leach believed that calligraphic use of a brush does not come easily for a European, considering that Westerns are accustomed from childhood to the heavier pressure of the pencil or the scratch of the pen. (Leach, 1975:132). The paper discusses text beyond calligraphy in both cultures while exploring the relevance of skill and

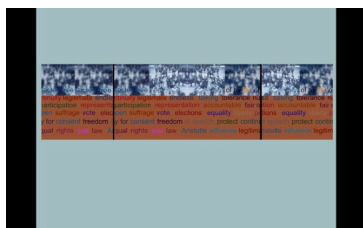
expression expanded in crafts. It explores distinctions and connections, rigidity and fluidity in creative expression among East and West, crafts and text.

We argue that brushwork calligraphy on crafts forms new connections to explore textual cultures. We question cultural relations and explore the manual gesture and the trace of the line and the word. For example, historically, in the West we 'write letters' using materials designed for 'writing' and apply them to materials usually for this purpose, while in the East words were 'drawn' with the same materials that were used for creating other types of art works.

A focus on an eclectic range of British and Japanese makers and creative disciplines, aims to investigate the tradition of brushwork calligraphy, alongside experimentation, expression and innovation. The paper will discuss work from the Crafts Study Centre's collection, such as Irene Wellington [considering the integration of text and image and how she demonstrates the manual gesture in word], Bernard Leach and Shoji Hamada [Hamada's brushwork, his patterns, although controlled and visually complicated, seem to have been born in a moment of creative energy], to contemporary makers work such as Ewen Clayton, Tomoko Kawao, Sakiko Yanagisawa and Grayson Perry.

## Pat Taylor

### Text and Tapestry, a Weaver's Perspective.



This paper provides the opportunity to reflect on three of my tapestries within the context of the conference themes: text as a social and political commentary; text as a fundamental and integrated aspect of the making process; the craft object inspiring poetry.

Text as a social and political commentary: *Democracy Tapestry*, Portcullis House, Westminster. In the *Democracy Tapestry*, text is integral to both the commissioning

and making process. Writing to a random selection of 300 British MPs, I requested their definition of democracy. A selection of the MPs' most often repeated words were then placed on the lower portion of the image, which reads like the running credits of a film. The upper half shows a composite image of people, which has been both mirrored and blurred, quietly demonstrating what often happens when we get together to talk. One of the many features of the commissioning process that I will explore in depth is the personalising of, and the anxiety over, the meaning of the text by the MPs.

Text as a fundamental and integrated aspect of the making process: *The Western Tapestry*, Western House, Great Ormond Street Hospital. This was a collaborative work by artists from the Slade School of Fine Art and West Dean College, to create a sympathetic image for this temporary home for the parents of long-stay children in the hospital. Based on observations of life around the Hospital collected by Taiseer Shelhi, the text gradually emerged. John Aiken, Taiseer Shelhi and I worked together on the design, arranging the hand written text in the form of a flat spiral, to create an optimistic and inclusive motif, where motif supersedes text. Unlike the "*Democracy Tapestry*", where individual words are potentially weighted with meaning, here the form carries passages of text, offering quiet glimpses into the world of parent and child.

The craft object inspiring poetry: *Portrait of a Man*, West Dean College, Sussex. Sometimes the extraordinary happens; words and images meet and mingle, form and reform in intimate and private settings. My third tapestry project arose from a sense of outrage after coming across an early 20<sup>th</sup> century Encyclopaedia. I felt a need to give a different reading to a very particular man imbedded in 'the book', to mark his existence, to honour him, to offer an alternative understanding of indigenous peoples. Then as if in full circle, the tapestry evoked a poem. After many reflective evenings sitting alone in low lighting on Reception, Rebecca Zanker wrote a poem and sent it to me....

*Images above, from left to right: Democracy Tapestry, The Western Tapestry, Portrait of a Man.*

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**Edward Wates**

### **A Calligrapher's Approach to the Text**

Having spent my working life rendering the words of others into printed or calligraphic form, I was struck by Tom Kemp's comments (*Forum* 35, March 2018) about his moral objection to using calligraphy for the transcription of texts: 'What the hell do I think I'm doing, taking somebody's great work of literature and trying to write it differently? What can I possibly add?' After all, he goes on to comment, 'the typeface is perfectly good'. Apart from those cases where calligraphy continues to play a functional role, such as illuminated addresses, names on certificates, etc., this is a question that all calligraphers should genuinely ask themselves. Too often, words taken out of context can appear trite and meaningless, or are simply used as an excuse for the display of technical virtuosity. It is no surprise, therefore, that calligraphy is sometimes described as 'the dreariest of all the crafts'.

**Mona Craven**

### **The artist printed-form: a craft in-between letterforms, exhibition, audience and meaning.**

In this presentation crafted text and craft text is viewed through the contextual lens of Walter Benjamin essays on the translators task, art and its reproduction in the mechanical age and an artist book by William Kentridge *No It Is!*

Attending to Benjamin's words on translation as 'wrapping around language, ...' and 'the task of the translator consists in finding that ... [Intention] ... producing in it the echo of the original' (1999:77). I am positioning the text artisan as translator of texts, interpreting liminal meaning between letter, space, word and line in pursuit of legibility and communication, this occupying an in-between space and placed in the exhibition space emphasises meaning between audience, artist and textual matter. I also draw attention to the artist working with reproducible text formations making new meaning reproducible.

Benjamin positions print-form reproduction of the art object as representing something new. In discussing print's impact on the social and political, he refers to lithography as advancement enabling the illustration of everyday life, this keeping

pace with printing. The lens view and photography surpassing print thus accelerating communication and film and speech transmitting as new communication. (1999:213-217)

In the contemporary crafted text on paper and screen encompass the crafting of minuscule pica, point and em-spaces in-between the essence of meaning. In reproduction now, the visual of and the meaning of the crafted art object is textually placed digitally in our hands.

In drawing the threads of textual craftsmanship between audience, exhibition and meaning the postcolonial, post Apartheid artist, Kentridge, sites much of his work in textual matter.

Underlying the collaged, over-drawn, erased, and redrawn is the textural surface conveying meaning. In No It Is! in making meaning the letters transform, text-like mark-making falls in-between the hybrid reproduction spaces of apps, book, film, drawing and performance to objectify a personal and political narrative. The text, image and performance combine '... a second hand reading, a re-inscribing of texts and books.' (2016:30) making new meaning reproducible. In-between, Translator, Text, Artist (William Kentridge)

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## **Alice Kettle**

### **In the margins, materialising stories**

Bound within text and textile is a layered depth and heritage of stories. They occur as archetypes, familiar and reproductive and resonate with new retellings and personal contingencies. Text and textile are linked through lineage narratives, where what is suspended in the margins and on the edges is the subject and rich language for material retelling of the personal and the present. Kathryn Sullivan Kruger in 'The Fabric of Myth', talks of 'the mysterious power of fabric' which reproduces symbols and beliefs while acting as a metaphor 'for the creation of something other than a cloth – a story, a plot, a world'.

This presentation discusses how textual referencing occurs within my textile work work, as an autobiographical material grounding and how more recently stitching has been a way of fixing and chronicling the lived testimony of the contemporary migrant's journey.