

Kingston School of Art

Departments of Graphic Design, Illustration Animation, Film & Photography and Cultural Industries

Jonathan Gander
Creative & Cultural Industries Dept.
Knights Park
Kingston, KT1 2QJ, UK
j.gander@kingston.ac.uk

Andrew Haslam
Graphic Design Dept.
Knights Park
Kingston, KT1 2QJ, UK
a.haslam@kingston.ac.uk

Julian Rodriguez
Film & Photography Dept.
Knights Park
Kingston, KT1 2QJ, UK
j.rodriguez@kingston.ac.uk

1. CRAFTING DIGITAL: FUSING ANALOGUE AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

As is common in art schools, courses at Kingston School of Art develop students' creativity and technical skills through the experience of making. We are additionally, sensitive to the technological capture that can occur when students use the tools they select to tackle their project briefs. Scholars of technology and socio-materialism have warned that the 'rules of use' embedded in particular technologies can enrol the user in a system and set of principles that can limit outcomes and determine the scope of the solution (Heidegger 1954; Latour 2005). The result, when this observation is applied to creative projects involving digital, can often be well-executed performances of digital technology rather than products or experiences that delight, surprise and meet the needs of the target user. In these cases, the tool has become the actor and not the student or user.

One way to counter this dynamic and develop the creativity of the student, is to encourage the fusing together of analogue and digital technologies. At Kingston School of Art, students use the workshops and support provided by Hackspace, a dedicated resource centre for reconfiguring and subverting the equipment and processes of making, to discover new ways of making that break the rules of their associated technologies. In this way students connect with the history of making, and experience the creative freedom that bricolage and appropriation can release.

2.1 Analogue and digital mashups

Examples of mixing the analogue with digital include a digital printer combined with a pen, a device that scanned the movement of a stylus on a metal plate, a weather data book, a lens used for mapping connected to a digital sensor, a VR

experience based on the concept of a stroboscopic disc and an analogue digital interface that converts hand drawn image into digital animation.



Figure 1: Examples from Kingston School of Art.

2.2 The learning experience

Through this process of 'thinking through making' students gained a valuable understanding of the constraints and opportunities embedded within analogue and digital technologies, experienced the instructive lesson of being in and out of control, and worked through an enhanced iterative process of trial, test and evaluation. Connecting students to the history of making and fusing the digital and the analogue results in a broader appreciation of the creative process that acknowledges that the tools of making are not neutral and that for creativity to thrive it often has to cross boundaries.

3. REFERENCES AND FURTHER INFORMATION

Hackspace <https://www.kingston.ac.uk/faculties/kingston-school-of-art/about/facilities/hackspace/>

Heidegger, M. (1954) The Question Concerning Technology. In C. Hanks (ed.), *Technology and Values: Essential Readings*. New Jersey, John Wiley & Sons.

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Latour, B. (2005) *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-network Theory*. Oxford, OUP.