SHOW AND TELL
THE IMAGE IN RESEARCH

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University of Brighton
CREATIVE FUTURES
Thank You

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Inevitably some pictures have needed to be turned or cropped to fit these pages.
We think of research as an occupation which finds its expression in writing (classically in the research paper published in an academic journal) but it can take many other forms.

Think of an old map with its large patches marked *Terra Incognita* or – better – *Here be Dragons*. By marking what wasn’t known, that made a clear statement of where previous research had stopped – as well as an invitation to go in the future to find out what was there. A university like ours is filled with people using imagery in their research and using it in all sorts of different ways. A pie chart clumps numbers of instances of something in conveniently legible form. An organisation chart might well be the first expression at a time of corporate change: it shows a complex set of relationships in a single sheet, graphically rendering something invisible visible. A moving pointer shows sound levels – or any one of thousands of other variables.

We can simplify and say there are two kinds of images in research. There are those that show things which the researcher intends to address. We can think of those as input imagery. A collection of still photographs of broken turbine blades, for example, might be a very valuable beginning of an enquiry. Different in kind are the charts and graphs which show the results of research: this number did that; another number did something else. We might think of those as output imagery, helpful to transmitting the research process or results with clarity and speed.

But a simple taxonomy of this kind doesn’t begin to address the range and scope of possible visual expressions that come into research or come out of it. That’s why, in a modest exhibition, we have brought together a few examples just to begin to suggest the scope of a vast subject. Colleagues around the University of Brighton from every discipline use imagery in an astonishing variety of ways. This stimulating exhibition aims to show how images and imagination can play a central role in research processes.

Francis Hodgson
Phil Ashworth and Rob Strick

A demonstration of the new vision that can be achieved with computers. This is a composite view of multiple images of part of the South Saskatchewan River in Canada. To achieve it required enormous processing power of a kind that has not been usefully available until recently. The original images were collected from a series of low-altitude (~1500 m) aeroplane flights with specialist cameras. Each single image is tied into high-precision Global Positioning System coordinates to allow image manipulation and overlay. Combining the pictures takes more processing. The result is one of the first pictures to combine detailed topographic information from both above and below the surface of the water. That in turn provides insight into the formation of river bed shapes. It shows the hierarchy of different sand-bed forms – from superimposed sand dunes to lobate unit bars and exposed sand flats.

Simply repeating the sequence provides a time-lapse of how these bedform features move and evolve over time – allowing us to determine how much sediment is being moved through the entire river system for different flood magnitudes.

The flow of the river is up the page as you look.

The image was generated during a research project funded by the Natural Environment Research Council.

Composite view of multiple images of part of the South Saskatchewan River in Canada
Ashworth P and Strick R
3D digital elevation model using Structure-from-Motion techniques
Seán Padraic Birnie

Pictures from an ongoing process of experimentation in the psychodynamics of communications technology. Sigmund Freud’s The Mystic Writing Pad proposed an analogy between the apparatuses of writing and those of the psyche; Birnie’s ongoing research explores a similar connection between the workings of the psyche and those of a dynamic and chaotic media environment.

The particular subject is Eleanor, the psychokinetic protagonist of Shirley Jackson’s novel The Haunting of Hill House and its 1963 film adaption, starring Julie Harris. In Birnie’s Eleanor works, the progressive breakdown of the character is mirrored by progressive breakdowns of the integrity of the pictures, either in the darkroom, or through the overloading of computer systems. The continuing legibility of the pictures even under these stresses is an analogy for our continued understanding of character under psychic strains of the kinds that are exaggerated in film and fiction but very familiar all the same.

Finally I Am Going Somewhere I Am Expected and I Am Being Given Shelter.
Birnie S

Derived from a work entitled Eleanor, comprising analogue photographs, inkjet prints, and moving image works
One of the consistent advantages of photography throughout its history has been that it allows us to see that which could not otherwise be seen. Here we are seeing a side-on view of a droplet hitting and then passing through a narrow steel mesh. By varying such parameters as the size and speed of the droplet or the tightness of the mesh, and making repeated observations, the underlying physics can be derived.

From as early as the 1930s, the pioneering photographer Harold Edgerton, a professor at MIT, used powerful stroboscopic lights in the creation of ultra-short duration flash photography to see events (such as the passing of a bullet through an apple) that were simply too fast to be studied. The present image shows that this kind of work continues.

It continues to have useful outcomes, too. Greater knowledge of the interaction between droplets and porous surfaces has important applications in many fields. Among them are painting, paper coating, design of textiles, filtration and therapeutic delivery. That the latter can now include also a number of processes of reconstructive surgery shows the way in which close observation - apparently old-fashioned as it is - assisted through accurate imagery, can still power advances right at the cutting edge of research.
Louisa Buck

Louisa Buck’s research looks at the use of Greek mythological adaptation in contemporary times. Most recently she has been researching the use of Greek mythology in the British political cartoon with a case study in the myth of Sisyphus. Primarily Sisyphus has come to represent ideas of futility and meaninglessness as he endlessly rolls a boulder up the mountainside only for it to roll back down again, without ever reaching the summit. However, his punishment and story have a multitude of meanings, including ideas of hope that have been employed by the British cartoonist.

The use of drawing as a process in research has proved effective in both the dissemination of collected data and in the exploration of potential thought. As the political cartoon seeks to depict the essence of the news story, so the single panel drawing can be used to sum up a core subject embedded in Greek mythology. The performative nature of the drawings also aided the fixing of memory as every moment of shifted meaning in Sisyphus’ classical reception history and propagated a multitude of drawn images.

Book of the Dead
Buck L
Pencil Drawing
Repeat and variation are central elements of all sorts of arts. Music and dance are obviously concerned with those things, architecture and rhetoric and verse, too. Pattern is the very core of order, and is one of the ways by which we make usable codifications of the chaotic world. The brain seeks pattern and uses it.

Sue Gollifer’s work has developed according to a rigorous programme of formal experiment, through which sets of relationships evolved between shapes, colours and tones, using various mathematical sequences including Fibonacci numbers, and modular symmetry.

In a paper some years ago, Gollifer wrote “I was very much inspired by the Cybernetic Serendipity show (ICA, London, 1968), but when I tried to get involved and have access to computers, there always seemed to be a series of obstacles. Few artists in the Sixties had access to such computer or output equipment… So I decided to turn myself into a computer, doing the calculations and measurements the hard way… In fact, the work I do now, entirely with computers, looks far less ‘computer-generated’ than the work I used to do entirely by hand: it has to do with being liberated from the tiresome tasks.”

Gollifer is among the very pioneers of computer art. Her prints are in the collection of the Victoria & Albert Museum in London.
Please make a drawing showing how do you know when there is a drought.

**REMEMBER, IT IS NOT ABOUT HOW WELL YOU DRAW, BUT ABOUT WHAT YOU DRAW.**

Ngiyela ungazela umdwebo wokuthi ubong kanjani ukuthi khesoniso. Ungazi swebela noma nina ngingakwenzela. Ungasebenisa u-isanal wong ukutha ufuno.
Communication takes all sorts of forms, and drawing and other ways of getting beyond words vastly increase its reach. A project about drought in Southern Africa used drawing both to elicit information from community-based co-researchers and participants who might not be fluent in the languages of the academic researchers, and as a way of binding the researchers and participants more closely together. The act of drawing, then seeking to gloss the drawings in a kind of shared oral analysis brought all concerned into a close collaboration beyond language.

The finished policy document was produced using some of the same visual collaboration, establishing that it wasn’t solely the academic researchers’ outcome, but a shared product of all those taking part.

P16 Q1
Hart A

Questionnaire from NERC funded Patterns of Resilience to Drought research project
It is the space between the visual and verbal that Sarah Haybittle investigates in her research. She explores storytelling in her work by developing fragments of narrative, such as the work on display, which is inspired by two surviving letters between sweethearts during the First World War. Haybittle utilises Roland Barthes’ S/Z and Gerard Genette’s Narrative Discourse: an Essay in Method as a visual methodology, where the letters, her materials and creative process are explored and developed through a post-structuralist literary lens, culminating in what she describes as ‘landscapes of narrative’.

Haybittle describes elements of her practice in these terms: “I have attempted to work with the visibility of text and gesture of typography, creating a fragment of a tale through a jumble of linguistic and visual traces, utilising the drama of language. Text and language have been developed to over-reach their symbolic capacity as linguistic signifiers, such that the physical sensory and visual properties extend the potential and physicality of language, to act as triggers to memory and meaning, attempting to make the work felt, as much as seen or read.”

Help Me Endure and Survive this Bitterness
Haybittle S
Image representing outcome of practice-based research
Fergus Heron

Like an old-school surgeon laying bare the anatomy of a patient, Heron in this picture carves open many of the histories of London. Appropriately, it was made from the top floor of a pub named after a character from Dickens, that most indefatigable London collector. (The pub is the Betsey Trotwood – one of David Copperfield’s benefactors).

That great cut in the skin of the city in the foreground is the scene of an accident which might have been much worse. In 1862, during the construction of this railway, the Fleet sewer collapsed the deep cutting you see, occasioning a well-known engraving of the damage. To the right as you look, although invisible around the curve of the road, is the plaque marking the damage from bombs dropped upon Clerkenwell from a Zeppelin on the night of 8th September 1915, harbingers of the much more severe bombing of the Second War. To the left, Clerkenwell magistrates’ court, with the dome, closes off Clerkenwell Green, a hotbed of radical unrest since the Middle Ages. Straight ahead, seen at almost exactly the same angle as that shown by John Constable in his views from Hampstead Heath, the crouching sphinx profile of St. Paul’s, with its two paws extended in front of its great head. Constable looked down on London from further back and higher up the valley of the Fleet, so his line more or less becomes the one Heron uses here.

Heron’s London is veiled, screened. He can see things passers-by at usual heights cannot. He sees how thin some of the buildings are; and how newer histories overlay the old. This is a fluid city in motion, whose society and commerce and ambition are all laid bare for a moment.

A View of London 2014
Heron F
C Type Print
Olu Jenzen

This image is from Jenzen’s ‘Aesthetics of Protest’ project, funded by the Arts & Humanities Research Council. The researcher looked at data of 240,000 tweets linked to the Gezi Park protests in Turkey 2013. The image played a central role in their research processes as it provided a gateway into understanding how politics is performed through protestors’ engagements with visual aesthetics as well as with visualisations of social media imaginaries.

The image depicts the Twitter bird (a corporate logo) wearing a gas mask, accompanied by the hashtag #occupygezi, presented in the style of street graffiti. It is one of many Gezi Park images ‘interfering’ in creative ways with the logo. It illustrates the appropriation of Twitter (and other social media) by the activists. Wearing a gas mask as the protestors did under attack from the police, the Twitter bird becomes one of them, fighting their side, against the Turkish mainstream media’s heavily biased reporting on the protest. In other words, the protestors imagine social media as part of their collective identity. The #occupygezi hashtag indicates how members of the movement perceive themselves as part of a global anti-capitalist occupy movement. The street graffiti aesthetics – although this is in fact a digital montage that has never existed physically outside of the virtual world – serves to instil some of the atmosphere from the protest on the ground into the online communication. The image is anonymous and has no known originator but has been widely disseminated via Twitter and other social media.

Twittermask
Artist Unknown - Submitted by Jenzen O
Digital Image
Jenny Keane

As many of the images here, this image is not the work itself, but an indication of it. Jenny Keane has evolved a practice of altering drawings in a very particular way. The Lick Drawings are a series of performative drawings running since 2009 in which Keane finds scenes from horror films with a particular resonance, and then licks out the horror. Paradoxically, that leaves a residue of her own blood. As Keane puts it, “what is left is the abject quality of the scene, which is further reiterated by the action of licking, which absorbs saliva and blood into the image. The licking duplicates the image’s monstrous quality, or rather converts it from the metaphorical abject into the literal.”

There is disruption at many levels: the story of the film is disrupted by being excerpted as a single view; the control of the film is taken away from the makers - writers and directors and producers - by an artist who grants it to herself; the very effect of ‘horror’ witnessed is replaced by a participation in which the audience sees the effort required to make these marks and the physical cost of them.

In this case, the work is the performance as a whole: what you see here merely an account of it.

Nightmare on Elm Street
Keane J
Film still documenting the ongoing series of work The Lick Drawings
Images from Klein’s PhD research on the photographic practices of young adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder. In Klein’s words:

“Placing participants and their photographic practices at the heart of my investigation meant it was crucial to the interpretation of the photographs to adopt a collaborative approach in the analytical phases of the study... For example, I asked them what had caught their interest to take the photograph(s); what part of the photographs they were drawn to; what photographic aspects were important to them; and what meaning they wanted to convey through their photographs. I also shared my own interpretation of their photographs with them. This participant validation exercise offered a way to explore the interpretation of the data and was part of the negotiation process between me and the participants, so the interpretation was not reduced to one or the other. The processes of meaning-making and interpretation are collaborative and dynamic activities, and not simply a matter of retrieving knowledge and information from participants.”

Klein’s conviction is that the different abilities of her participants in no way invalidate their own interpretations of imagery – and more generally, perhaps, that we have a mistaken tendency to assume that only the self-consciously erudite can be trusted to interpret imagery at all.

Fig. 3 by Alex S. “The flower looks really soft and comforting despite the fact there’s a car tyre next to it”

Klein U
Photograph
Love is an academic and fine artist, and is interested in questioning how the scientific image functions in relation to images mediated by our understanding as people, perhaps even in reclaiming some part of understanding for images which are by their nature coldly factual. Following others, Love examines how scientific imagery is often impenetrable to non-specialist viewers: we often cannot even tell what it is we’re looking at. By working at large magnifications with dust, re-drawing from computer-generated digital imagery, Love manages to re-insert sensations of material and scale and weight into pictures which tend to lose those things.

It’s an enquiry fully in tune with the new era of imagery, in which so many pictures will be made by machines to be read by machines, and the questions of how we can begin to understand those images and which codes - aesthetic? algorithmic? the entire question of truthfulness? - can be understood to apply to them.

A2_022
Love J
Electron microscope image
This research looks at the making of sketches, diagrams and drawings by health professionals, as part of routine clinical communication. The drawings are made during conversations between health professionals, colleagues and patients: to describe, explain, reassure, record and clarify. This drawing practice is important both in helping health professionals think through clear explanations and in enabling information to be personalised for patients’ benefit. The drawings are concerned with explanation rather than ‘beauty’; reassurance rather than scientific objectivity.

In research terms, this ‘live’ drawing practice is a challenging subject to study. It takes place spontaneously in contexts where individuals are ethically vulnerable. Direct access to patients for research is very difficult.

So researchers introduced the method of inviting health professionals to make exemplar drawings within research interviews. This greatly enriched the interviews and enabled analysis of the drawing process in conjunction with the transcripts.

The drawings shown here were made by a staff nurse, and a paediatrician, to replicate the type of drawings they routinely made for patients or carers. They can be seen as highly coded, selective sequences of marks in which very broad areas of deep and complex knowledge are compressed into a few lines. They express exactly that which needs to be expressed.
Visual taxonomy of factors: Health and environmental factors that have been measured using consumer-level wearable devices [derived from scoping literature review].

**Parent Factor**

- **Category (7)**
- **Category (6)**
- **Category (17)**
- **Category (4)**
- **Category (4)**
- **Category (14)**
- **Category (11)**
- **Category (11)**
- **Category (5)**
- **Category (22)**
- **Category (10)**
- **Category (N)**

**Nodes of the same colour signify different words for the same factor.**

**Category grouping (background):** spatial grouping of related factors

**Category parent term - not directly derived from review literature; unifying concept.**

**Nodes of a different hue signify a factor closely related meaning but not the same meaning to the parent.**

**Legend**

- **Nodes: sized according to count frequency.**
Examples of visualisations which make accessible information which would otherwise be too complex to envision. One is an example of what might be called a summing-up drawing, bringing within comparable view a wide range of distinct descriptive terminologies and technical factors. Not-quite-the-same-but-comparable is a difficult category in more formal contexts – graphs or equations or even budgets – but in the context of drawing, it makes readily graspable sense. Different types of fitness monitors (as different types of any other such tool) suddenly become graphically analysable. This is a taxonomy, based upon a literature review, of not-quite-matching terms.

The other is different, a careful combination of two different kinds of charts – a service blueprint mapping a patient’s journey before, through and after surgery, matched with a mental model, which is designed to gain insight from interview transcripts. These are scholarly tools, yet legible by anyone who needs to follow the information or gain an insight from it.

These two images have some of the classic qualities of the infographic. Complex information covering ranges of time, vocabulary, angle of derivation, or even precision of thought (not by any means everything in these drawings is a fact as we would understand such a thing) are brought into useful arrangements for further thinking to take place. They derive from research; but they also allow research to move on from them.
I HOPE HE'LL PROPOSE TONIGHT!

THAT'S WHY I'M BATHING WITH FRAGRANT CASHMERE BOUQUET SOAP... IT'S THE LOVELIER WAY TO AVOID OFFENDING.

EVERY GIRL WHO'S IN LOVE OUGHT TO KNOW ABOUT CASHMERE BOUQUET... THE EXQUISITE PERFUMED SOAP THAT GUARDS DAININESS
SURELY AND IN SUCH A LOVELY WAY

LATER THAT EVENING...
AND I KNEW A LITTLE COTTAGE THAT WOULD BE PERFECT FOR A HONEYMOON!

OH BILL DARLING, HOW WONDERFUL!
(AND TO HERSELF)
I'LL ALWAYS CHARGE MY DAININESS WITH LONELY CASHMERE BOUQUET SOAP!

TO KEEP FRAGRANTLY DAINTY

BATHE WITH PERFUMED CASHMERE BOUQUET
Imagery, like many other kinds of messaging, can change radically when you change the context in which it is delivered. Take the original wording from an advertisement that was made in a different era with different values and put it in a context which accentuates the failure of its claims, and you make a strong statement. The words stitched on these objects are the very words that appeared in advertising; but changing expectations give them a very different flavour.

In Vanessa Marr’s words: “The application and subversion of these visual messages translates society’s expectations of women into tangible objects that point a mirror back at the industry responsible for these images, highlighting the ridiculous nature of their claims... Dressing-table cloths and lingerie from this era signify the beautification and objectification of the female body.

Images are reimagined through embroidery into new compositions that borrow from several sources. The feminine legacy of embroidery connects historical ideas of women’s work and status with image-led aspirations of an apparently perfect female life.”
Most workplaces look humdrum enough, and the spaces where research mathematics take place are no exception. The act – the very physical act – of writing on what used to be called a blackboard is a shared common experience among many kinds of thinkers. We have all seen expressive teachers or colleagues: the ‘doing’ of the writing may be as important in getting a message across as its content. This is a research project about exactly that. It looks at what gets missed when all this rough gestural expression is translated into neat text-books or academic papers. The content of these boards is extraordinarily varied. Sometimes they show exciting work in progress, with perhaps a moment of progression for the whole field there in a thicket of symbols. Or they show a more basic expression, delivered up for clarity. They are the stages for thought – and sometimes they are the vehicle without which the thought can’t take place.

The distinguished Spanish artist-photographer Alejandro Guijarro recently made a series called Momentum, looking at these same boards from mathematical institutes all over the world. His interest was slightly different. He found that the palimpsests of rubbed-out symbols partly legible gave a lovely metaphor for one thing in particular. The blackboards were always in two states at the same time, showing what was not yet past and what was not yet present. For Guijarro, they were quantum boards, maybe the most elegant explanation of quantum for non-specialists yet. Kate McCallum joins him in noticing the importance of the boards. She learnt in the course of the research that mathematicians campaign vigorously for the retention of the boards, whether green or black or white. Mathematicians recognise the element of performance in transmitting their thinking, even though they remove that from their (more austere) finished work.

It is therefore not coincidental that she had photographed these spaces of performance with nobody performing at all.
Two small documents carry a deliberate resolution to change, and a surprising outcome. The story is best told in the authors’ own words:

“Following our experiences with cancer, we felt lost. Trying hard to get back to the people we were before our illness and creatively stuck - Chris with her fine art and Jess with her writing - we chose to adopt an autoethnographic approach that we hoped would be transformative and also help us resist conventional research practices that seek to deny the personal. We engaged in a process of walking, writing and critique that we hoped would restore our creative processes. By trying something new, taking risks and being vulnerable in our work, we believed we would find a way back to the artist/writer and people we thought we needed to be. Instead, we identified a method of mapping a new way forward that helped us to accept the women we are post-cancer and shift and evolve our creative methods.

The results have moved and changed us, and we have now used this work to devise two co-authored chapters for an autoethnographic book that combine image and text - maps of our walks, poetry and autoethnographic prose.”

As elsewhere in this exhibition, we can’t really say the images are the research; the images are part of a process, part challenge and part ministration. The research was bigger than the images alone - yet the images are also somehow bigger than the research.

Walk One: 9.1 miles: Chanctonbury Ring to Winston’s Vineyard and back
Moriarty J and Reading C
Pen and ink on paper

Walk three: Firle Village to Charleston and back 4.8 miles
Moriarty J and Reading C
Ink on paper
Images from a PhD project on the journey into work and the experiences in work of people with learning impairments. Part of the aim was to provide a frame of reference to support people helping others with such impairments into work; and another part was to give a voice to people whose experiences are seldom heard or inadequately so.

The pictures are revealing; the repetition of individual frames tells of the repetition of the daily work routine. The sequence of the repetitions is sometimes the same, sometimes not - to express the surprise that can come when routine is disturbed. There is a lovely rightness in the exterior pictures being in colour rather than black and white: do they represent break times, intervals of freedom when the wages are still coming in but our leisure is protected by statute? It may not look inspiring - bins and lavatories and dirty dishes. But how many of us can honestly say that our work is not repeating tasks of exactly this kind, even if the elements of our own particular repeat ad nauseam are slightly different to those you see here?
Paul Sermon

An extraordinary image, devised years after some of the first elements it contains or describes.

This is simply an aid to self-reflection. The author makes works of a number of different kinds (some happen often to be interventions across several cities involving the participation and charting the interaction of groups who would otherwise not necessarily have met) which may or may not be separate events. He depends upon commissions or grants to make them; the commissions may not always come in the right order for his own internal logic. Like any good researcher, Sermon needs to spend time in self-reflection. His research is just that: it’s his. The author needs to look at what he’s done, what he’s planning, to find the connections that would move his work forward from being a mere chain of commissions to being a considered and progressive body of work.

Hence this image, half mind-map and half time-line. What connects, and when? It might be useful, for example, in helping potential funders to see deep patterns and connections in work which might at first sight look like a number of distinct short exercises. But it primarily helps the researcher makes those connections for himself.

Plotted time timeline of Creative Practice and Publications
Sermon P
Digital Image
Avril Wilson

Images from a much larger series called Threshold, upon which Wilson has been working many years.

In Threshold, records of places like maps or photographs are altered to suggest that the abstract, the undefined, or the changeable coexist with the things that we know.

Wilson cuts out geographical borders from maps – she comes from Northern Ireland, where the significance of borders has been critical and urgent for generations – letting them fall so that they are reminiscent of something else (a discharged party popper; maybe intestines). She blots out parts of a photograph with dense soot and she layers images so that they are simultaneously obscured and given depth.

She marks the work – rubbing with her hand, piercing with a pin, squeezing material through gaps and playing a flame across a surface. She treats this as her form of drawing.

Wilson’s work explores the point at which something changes or starts to change – the threshold of somewhere and somewhere else.

Wilson was the first female artist-blacksmith awarded a bronze medal by the Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths in recognition of her contribution to architectural metalwork.

Her appreciation of soot is not coincidental.

Offing 1
Wilson A
Translucent paper, graphite, silver, steel, cut geological map of the British Isles

Offing 2
Wilson A
Translucent paper, graphite, silver, steel, cut geological map of the British Isles
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