

Leeam Curtis – Report Proposal

In this proposal I will write about what I want to talk about as well as what I want to research for my five thousand word report. I will talk about the ideas that have first formed, as well as the possibilities of things to write about now that I have more feedback from my presentation that I showed my tutors. I will also talk about the reasons why I chose this subject for my report and why I am so interested in it.

From the gathered feedback from tutors, I definitely have more of an idea of what I could narrow down to in terms of the main themes of my report which are independent comics, small press and self publishing. At first I focused mainly on zines as it was one topic of these themes, but after my presentation, I found out that I was much more interested in comics. Although this can be a part of zine culture but it seems that I was much more interested in this chosen area than others like news, fashion or politics. There may be a possibility that I could find forms of comics from different backgrounds that have the same self published nature of a zine, relating to or coming from a certain art movement or subculture.

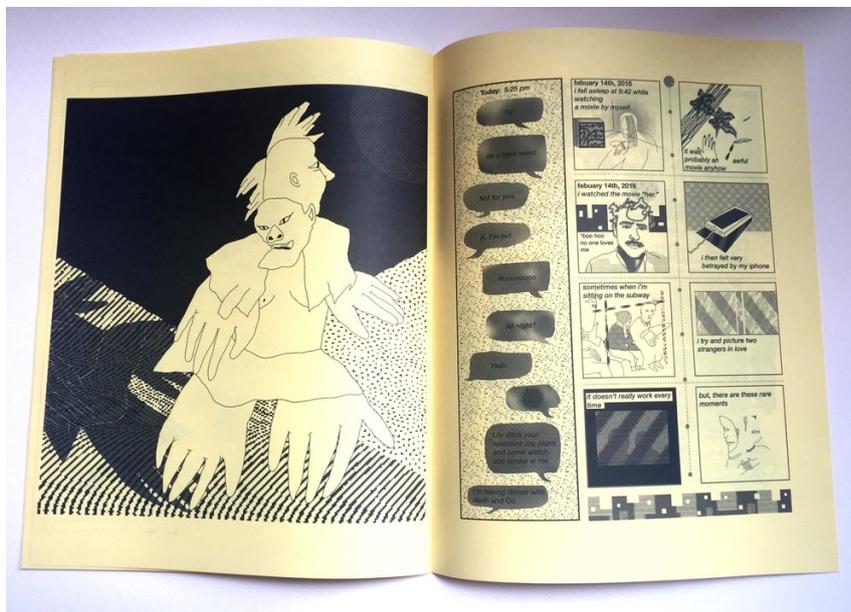
For my research, I could also certainly look at fanzines as a base example of self publishing. The reason I chose this broad theme in the first place is because I have always loved the idea that anyone can voice their opinion on anything going on in the world or share their own experiences or even create their own stories and artwork to gain exposure and publicity, while being (as similarly explained by Teal Triggs in her book 'Fanzines', page 7, chapter 1) less concerned about production value, copyright, grammar and spelling, and more about expression and being heard in a non-commercial and non-mainstream way.

The first type of text that I had decided to base my research around is 'Ways of Seeing' by John Berger because from what I have read so far, I found snippets of the book that could apply really well to what I am doing to raise questions and give a more in depth analysis of my chosen topics. After watching the televised version of Ways of Seeing, I remembered a few things he presented that I found interesting. One of them was how he presented images of paintings out of its original place and explained how they are seen in a different way and be given a different context. This is one of John Berger's many observations that I can think about when creating my own work as well as thinking about what I want to find out more about particular pictures or bits of information.

My second choice of text is a book called 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' by Walter Benjamin. I decided to focus on this book mainly because so far, from what I have read, it gives an insight on how art was reproduced in history like wood engraving, copper plate etching and lithography. It is a very complicated text which I will have to look at further if I want to fully understand it, but will definitely be worthwhile. I can also look at a few art movements that may have inspired different subcultures in zine culture, like for example – Dada, a movement of the European avant-garde in the early 20th century, which had mostly inspired punk fanzines from the late 70s to the 80s with collage and cut outs from other subject matter to be used maybe to point out flaws in a political background or become anti establishment. Another art movement that I can list is Fluxus, which is said to be a major influence on the graphics and writings of many different publications throughout history.

Now that I know that I want to focus more on comics, I now know that I might want to look further into how comics do their job as a publication, like how it captivates the reader, how the cover may attract the audience and what makes good narrative stand out in comparison to a bad one. A book that I should definitely look at for these types of questions is 'Understanding Comics' by Scott McCloud. Hopefully by doing this, I can apply it to my own work and get a better understanding of the attributes and characteristics of a comic form.

It will also be definitely worthwhile to look at artists who make use of zines, publications and narrative. One artist who automatically comes to mind is David Shrigley, whose work is so simply created but also very funny and often gets a joke or a short story across quickly with dry humour and comments from his own thoughts and day to day life. Kendra Yee is another artist that I can think of who makes zines, whose style of drawing I really like as well because it is so unique from anything I've seen before. These are only a couple of artists that I have seen so far, I think it will be good for me to look at what work I am interested in, which is good as there are so many individual artists out there doing their own thing.



'PURE HEAT' – a comic by Kendra Yee

In conclusion, I know what things I want to research and I know that the main reason for basing my report on this subject is because it is something that I want to do more of within my own practice. I think the chosen type of style of report will be industrial, as it informs my own practice and interests as well as my research. This may change over time depending on how comfortable I feel when developing my own practice, speaking to others about the specifics of the industry and what I actually want to do in the future. I think these things that I research will definitely be in my best interest.

References

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