PROMPT

In your Unit 2 work you have been using studio and writing practice to situate your developing line of enquiry in relationship to existing discourses, practices, projects, and media. This brief challenges you to further contextualise your enquiry by engaging in direct dialogue with individuals, groups, or other actors who either share your interest or are affected by the contexts you're exploring.

Start creating a network of relationships connected to your practice by doing the following:

• Sign up for a 1:1 tutorial with one of a group of guest researchers and designers. This tutorial, which will be held either Wed, Jun 10 or Fri, Jun 12, is an opportunity for you to get an outside perspective on your enquiry and discuss other possible contexts and conditions that you haven't yet considered.

• Identify another individual, group, or actor that you could engage in dialogue with in order to advance your enquiry. This could be a designer exploring similar questions, an academic or expert in a related field, an individual representing a cultural institution, a community group, etc. Be intentional, thoughtful, and clear when you extend the invitation to engage in dialogue.

Depending on your enquiry, you could also engage in dialogue with a nonhuman actor affected by the specific contexts you're exploring, such as an organism, an ecosystem, or a relevant form of artificial intelligence. Make sure you have clear rationale and think creatively about how you can foster an exchange that allows others to respond to your work.

After you've engaged in both dialogues, create a piece of writing (500-word minimum) that reports on one or both of these dialogues. Your piece of writing doesn't need to summarize the entirety of your dialogue(s), but it should analyse, articulate, or demonstrate how the exchange advances your enquiry. Think also about how the form of your writing—visual, rhetorical, etc.—frames the dialogue.

Remember to cite your references, including interviews, according to academic standards.

You will present this piece of writing in a group tutorial at the start of the 2026–27 academic year.

My conversation with Paul Bailey began with the *Timetable Resolution Study*, in which I kept a 1928 railway timetable as a constant source while testing how different grid resolutions, scales and media altered legibility, comparison and information loss. I initially explained the project through its method: the source remained unchanged while the conditions of reading were repeatedly transformed. Paul redirected the discussion by asking, "What are you trying to share?". His question revealed that demonstrating formal difference was not yet the same as articulating a position.

Paul suggested that a timetable already contains ideas, principles and perspectives. Its organisation does not simply present routes and times; it proposes relationships between places, prioritises certain journeys and makes movement easier to perceive. A graphic system can therefore clarify information while also excluding, compressing or misdirecting. This shifted my enquiry away from proving that a grid is not neutral. Instead, I began to ask how designed systems organise the world and shape the reader's possible understanding of it.

Paul recommended Jan van Toorn's "Design and Reflexivity" as a way to develop this question. Van Toorn argues that communicative design often presents ideological choices as universal and evident. Reflexive practice should expose the interests and conditions embedded within mediation, producing commentary rather than simply reproducing an established order (Van Toorn, 1994). Applied to my project, each grid resolution becomes more than a formal variation. It establishes a different hierarchy of routes, times and intervals, making some comparisons immediate while compressing or eliminating others.

Paul also introduced Herbert Bayer's research into the "extended field of vision". Bayer's exhibitions used angled panels, changing scales and multidirectional displays to activate the viewer's body and gaze. Shpilko observes, however, that this apparently expanded visual field also choreographed movement and could become a mechanism of control (Shpilko, 2020). This contradiction helped me understand Paul's statement that "design is always composed of the eye and the mind of the reader" (Bailey, personal communication, 12 June 2026). Reading is produced through an encounter between information, apparatus and viewer.

This dialogue has helped me distinguish the roles of the media within my project. A website can expose adjustable parameters and defaults, allowing readers to compare how different settings alter the same information. A publication can use sequence, scale, folding and binding to regulate pace and reveal loss gradually. A spatial work can turn viewing distance, angle and bodily movement into conditions of legibility. These formats should not repeat one another; each should reveal an aspect of how information is constructed and encountered.

My developing position is that Information Design is not only a method for making information clear. It also determines what becomes visible, comparable or absent. Future experiments must begin with a more precise

purpose: what does each transformation reveal, what does it conceal, and what response does it make possible? Paul's dialogue moved my project from accumulating variations towards constructing situations in which readers can perceive both the information and the system shaping it.

References

Shpilko, O. (2020) 'Herbert Bayer: the extended field of vision', *Centre for Experimental Museology*, 27 April. Available at: https://redmuseum.church/en/bayer-extended-field-of-vision.

Van Toorn, J. (1994) 'Design and reflexivity', *Visible Language*, 28(4), pp. 318–326. Available at: https://journals.uc.edu/index.php/vl/article/view/5610.