BOOK REVIEW

Derek Yates and Jessie Price’s book *Communication Design: Insights from the Creative Industries* is about designers who make a difference in the world. Its aim is to bridge the gap between education and emerging practices in communication design so that graduates will be more employable. But it is more than just having the right skills and approach to get a job, this book also illustrates the diverse and dynamic field of marketing, advertising, graphic, interaction and digital design, and all the spaces in-between. The authors articulate the zeitgeist: design has an economic value, but also it can raise social and cultural awareness bringing change for a greater good.

The book is designed and written to be approachable and functional. It delivers a lot of content in a well-structured format that allows easy navigation from each section. There is a good balance of text and illustrations, the rich images draw your interest and the text sustains your attention.

I’m pleased to have read it. It's on the pulse and very current. It sets out an important curriculum for communication design that embraces process, politics, society, media and technology. While many books on graphic design education have come from USA, and especially the influential pen of Ellen Lupton, it is welcome to see world-leading UK and European practice being recognised. Conversations with leading designers provide authoritative accounts of changing and developing practice in the field. The ‘Collaborative’ section is a delight because it critically examines traditional production-line approaches, introducing hacking, play and shared interactive design. Branding, navigation and information overload, sustainability and design advocacy are finally all under one cover.

I would recommend all FE and HE lecturers in the subject area to read it and use it in lectures to support their teaching. It is both contextually and practice led, so it really underpins industrial and pedagogic approaches. But it would also assist A Level Art and Design teachers in understand what Graphic Design/Illustration/Communication Design undergraduate study is and should be.

I think the case studies are probably the most approachable aspects of the book, which could also attract and interest 14-16 year olds. They are succinct, well illustrated and capture a wide range of exciting real-life examples that will really broaden their perception of communication design. The inclusion of Kate Dawkins’ work for the London Olympics 2012 opening ceremony is one of many excellent contemporary examples.

As an overview it provides an important introduction. For further, deeper investigations an advanced reader/practitioner will need to look for more subject specific literature.

Dr Iain Macdonald

Senior Lecturer in Graphic Design and Programme Leader for MSc Creative Advertising

at Edinburgh Napier University