

**Hidden in plain sight - engaging in the visual construction of European identities and narratives through ancient European script**

LEVICK-PARKIN, Melanie <<http://orcid.org/0000-0003-3925-9792>>

Available from Sheffield Hallam University Research Archive (SHURA) at:

<https://shura.shu.ac.uk/13802/>

---

This document is the Presentation

**Citation:**

LEVICK-PARKIN, Melanie (2016). Hidden in plain sight - engaging in the visual construction of European identities and narratives through ancient European script. In: Europe in Discourse: Identity, Diversity, Borders, Athens, 23 - 25 September 2016. [Conference or Workshop Item]

---

**Copyright and re-use policy**

See <http://shura.shu.ac.uk/information.html>

Welcome

**Hidden in plain sight** - engaging in the visual construction of European identities and narratives through ancient European script.

Practice-led / Design thinking methodology

**Discovery - Design - Test - Implement**

repeat process

iterative process

Like visual design, ancient script deals with visual presentation of meaning and is directly relevant in relation to Frutiger's interest in archetypes and Neurath's Isotype collection.

# Signs and Symbols

Their Design and Meaning

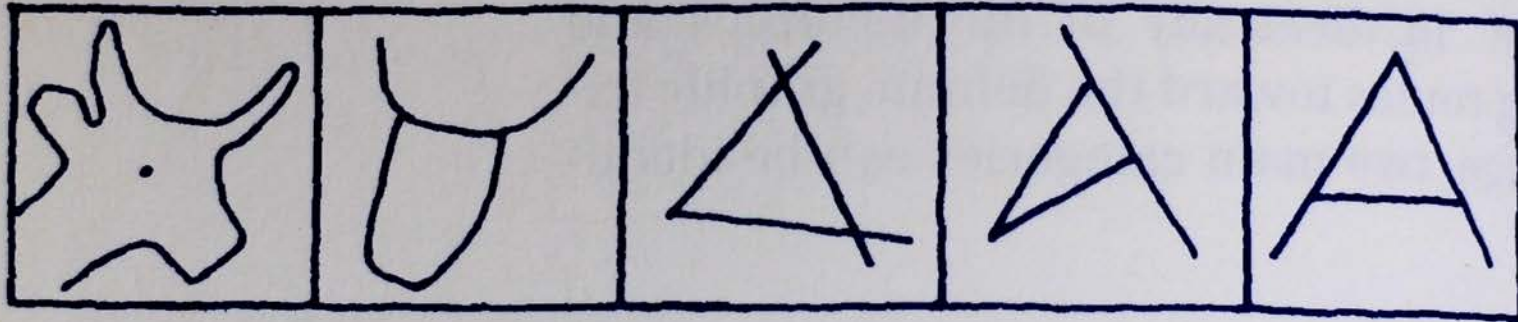


Adrian Frutiger

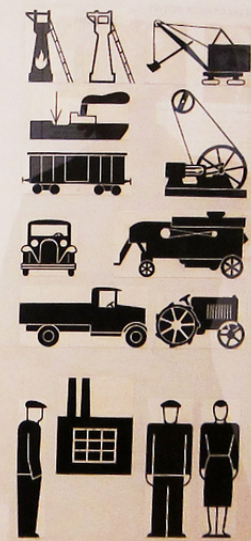
There is obvious affinity between contemporary visual communication design and ancient script because they are based on the same principle of the encoding of meaning to be de-coded by the receiver.

and an eye. As the sign develops, the pictorially significant parts of the image are left out bit by bit until the letter A crystallizes as a pure abstraction.

### Development of Latin characters

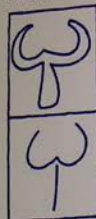


From the hieroglyph to the modern phonetic character A





Ox 2000 B.C.



"ru" 1500 B.C.

phological Table 1, square and cross), while open signs with visible stroke endings point to a more abstract, less pictorial use of the sign. Five hundred years of attrition changed the drawing of an ox into the syllabic sign for "ru."

In Cretan inscriptions, ideograms and syllabic signs could both be used in the same line, which explains why their definitive deciphering has not yet been achieved. Since our subject is not linguistics, we restrict our illustration to a few examples of striking signs. It is interesting to contrast the representations of man and woman, comparing them further with the signs for robe and armor. Legs hidden by clothing were, from the start, the pictorial expression for the womanly. In the warrior sign, the robelike shape of the armor is left out in order to express the masculine form clearly. There is also much fascination in the various kinds of representation of animal species (pig, calf, sheep) and in the diversity of statements on the chariot panel from Knossos.

Interpretation of signs from the chariot panel at Knossos (Evans)

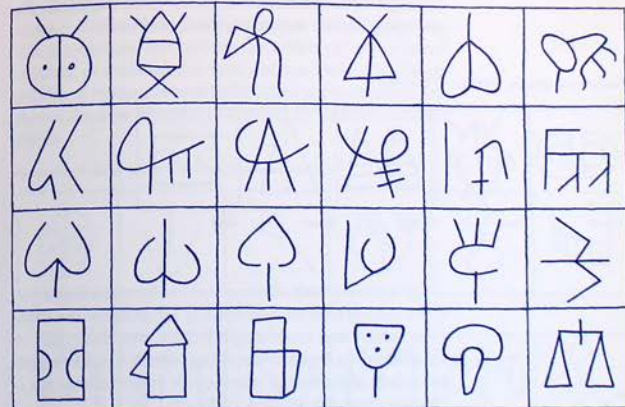


Cretan writing signs have their mysterious effect on the viewer because their form implies pictorial statements based on objects, while leaving the uninitiated in complete doubt about the explanatory key. It is probable that the refined pictorial signs assembled here were already largely used as syllabic characters.

Experts still disagree about the extent of influence of Cretan script culture on the Mediterranean region as a whole.

At all events, the graphic wealth of Cretan script signs radiates such mental power to the uninitiated as to leave no doubt about the island's cultural value in relation to the mainland.

Pictorial-syllabic script from Crete, 1500 B.C.



The mysterious area between concrete illustration and abstract sign

#### 4. Hethitic pictographic script from Syria

The Hethitic people lived in Syria, on the eastern seaboard of the Mediterranean, in the second millennium B.C. The examples of writing remaining to us from this realm consist of very beautiful, distinguished rows of characters, cut into stone and later scratched into a variety of materials in linear fashion.

It is supposed that the creation of the Hethitic pictographic script was stimulated and influenced both by Egyptian hieroglyphics and by the Mesopotamian cuneiform script of the neighbors on the opposite bank of the Euphrates. A relationship with the Cretan picto-



# Visual Translations of Ancient Heritage

Re-contextualising ancient European script through contemporary visual communication methods and media.

# Linear A

# Linear B

- The oldest un-deciphered and deciphered scripts in Europe
- Linear A is Minoan and only found on Crete
- Linear B is thought to be the follow on script of Linear A and is Mycenaean script.
- Identified in Knossos Crete by Arthur Evans  
turn of the century.
- Deciphered by Michael Ventris



## Dr. Georgia Flouda

Heraklion Archaeological Museum  
Fellow, Centre for Hellenic Studies  
Harvard University

## Melanie Levick-Parkin

Senior Lecturer in  
Visual Communication

## Jonathan Wood

Senior Lecturer in  
Motion and Multimedia Design

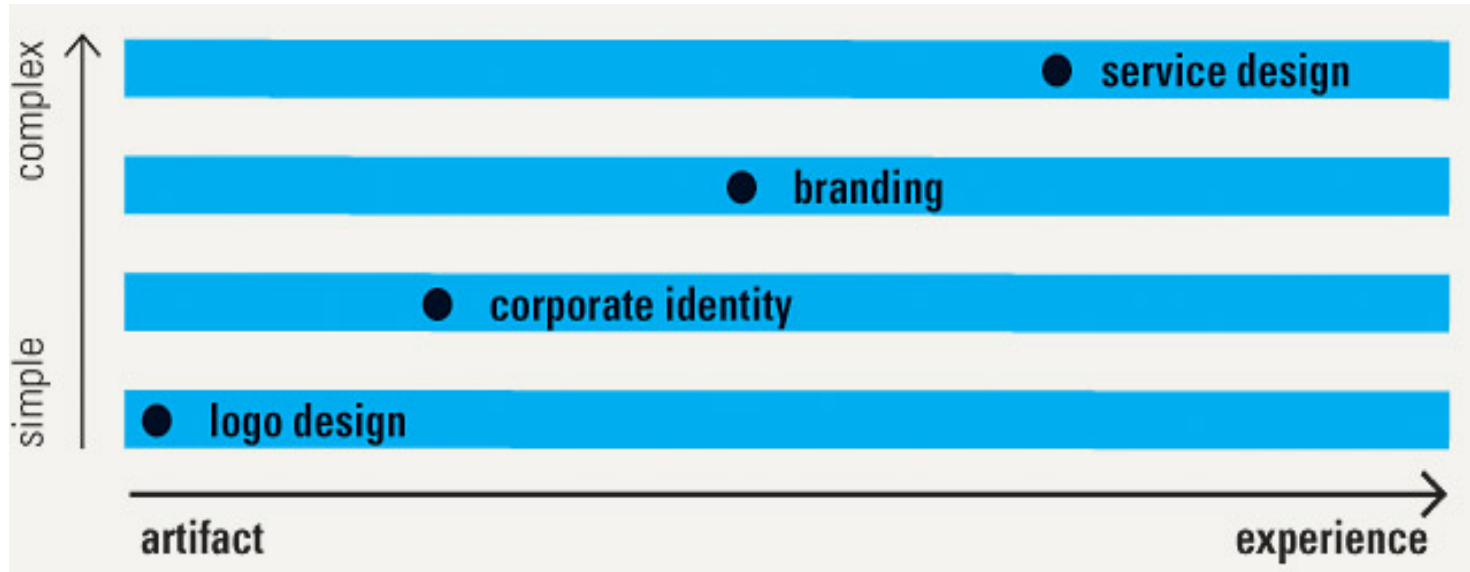
ARDC Art & Design Research Centre  
Sheffield Institute of Arts  
Sheffield Hallam University

# The Purpose

of this practice led research project was to apply a design anthropology approach to the visual re-contextualisation of ancient European script, using contemporary visual communication practices and media strategies in order to explore opportunities for creative engagement with archaeological knowledge.



# From Artifact to Experience



Meredith Davis (2012:208)







arrow



armour



amphora



βέλος



θώρακος



αμφόρεος



spear



dart



sword



δόρυ



ακόντιο



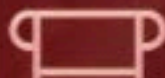
ξίφος



olive oil



goat



foot stool



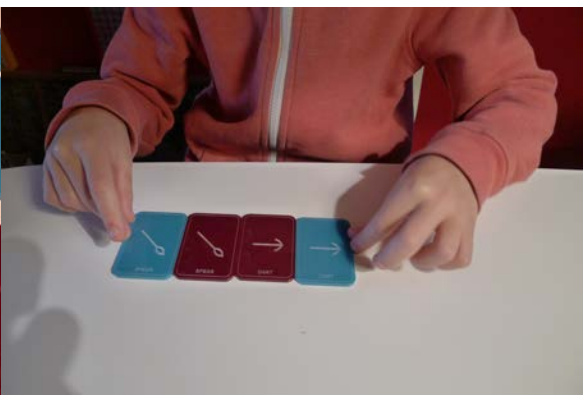
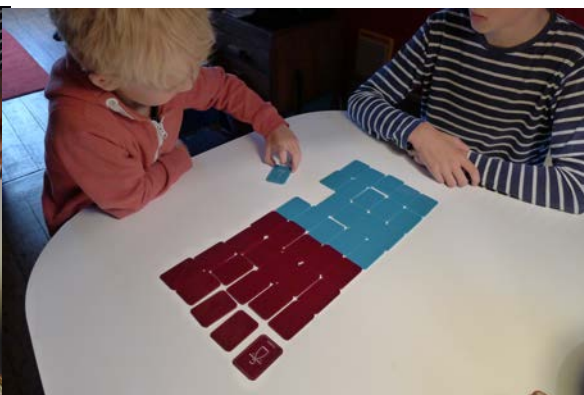
έλαιο

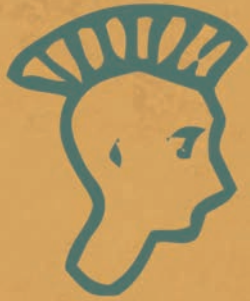


αγριοειδής



υποπόδιο





Move forwards 1 space

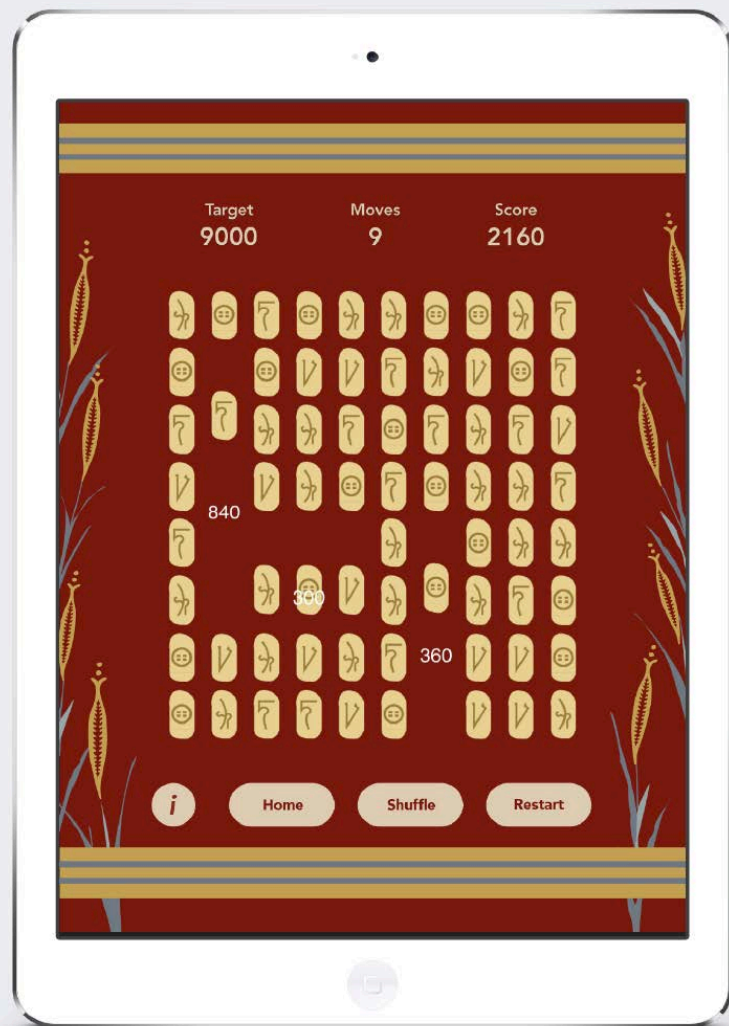
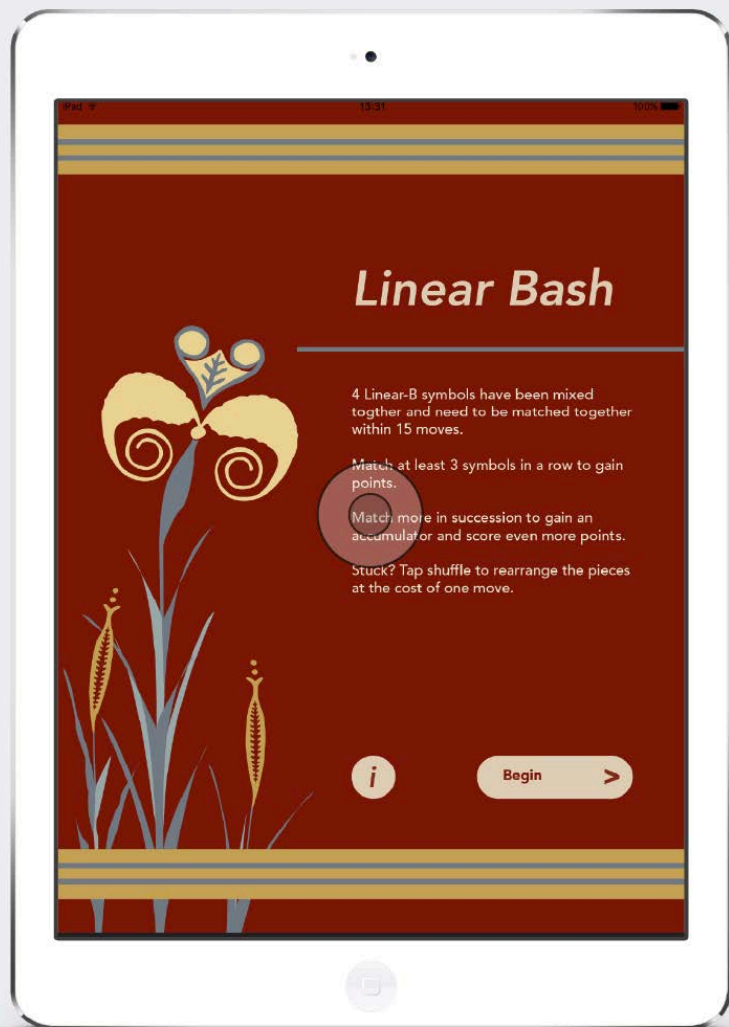
♦  
Did you Know:

The Phaistos Disk was  
discovered in 1908.













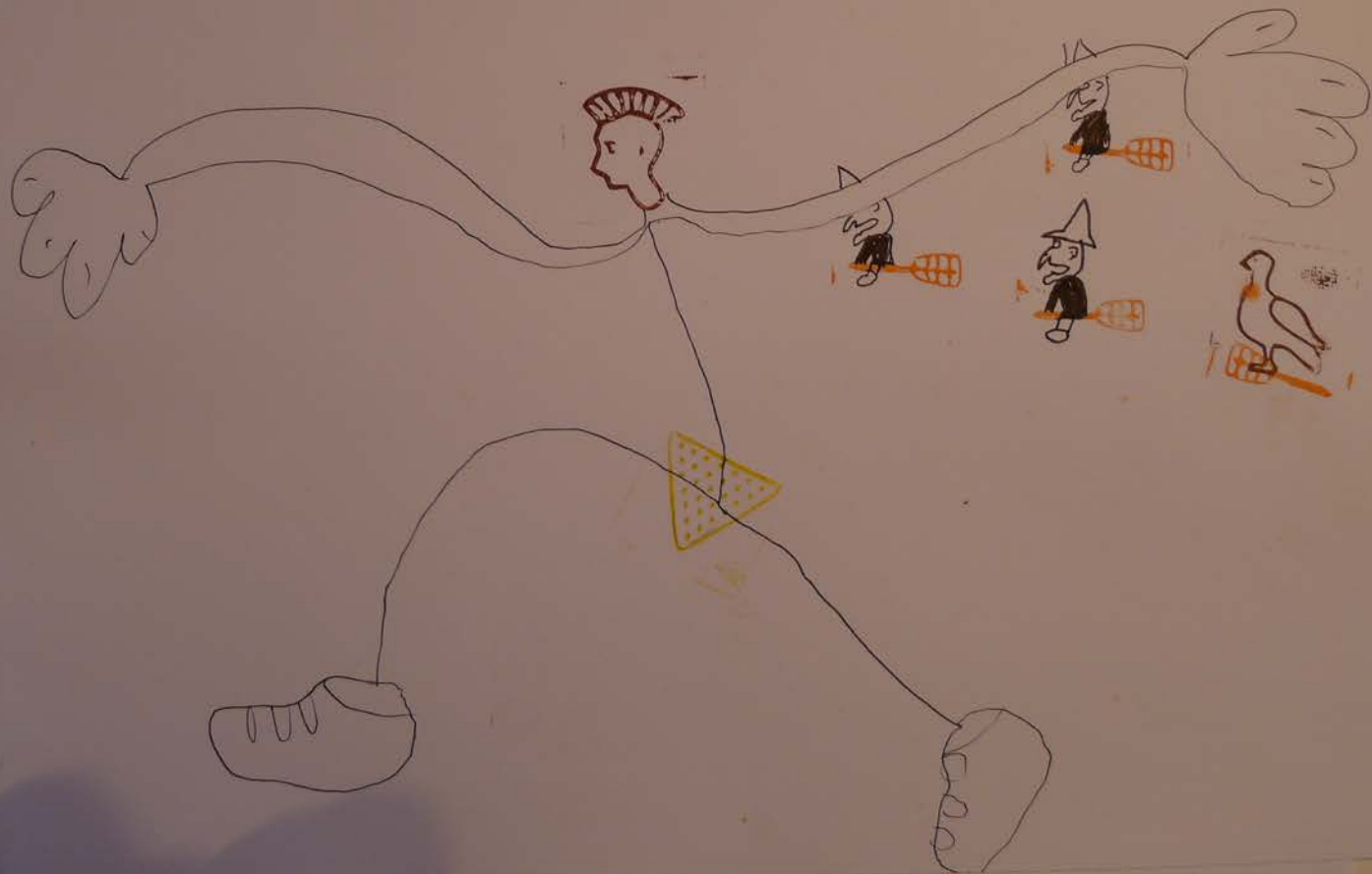












# Observation of Linear B Session

- MA Archaeology University of Sheffield
- Professor John Bennet
- Basement Lab

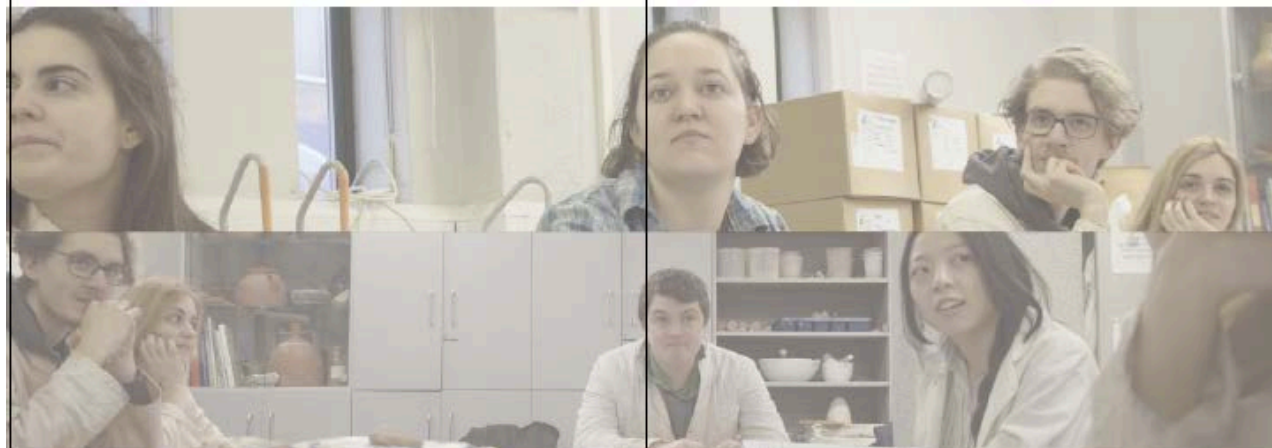
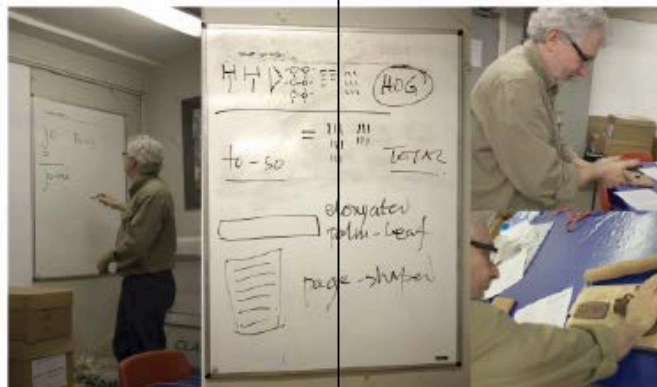


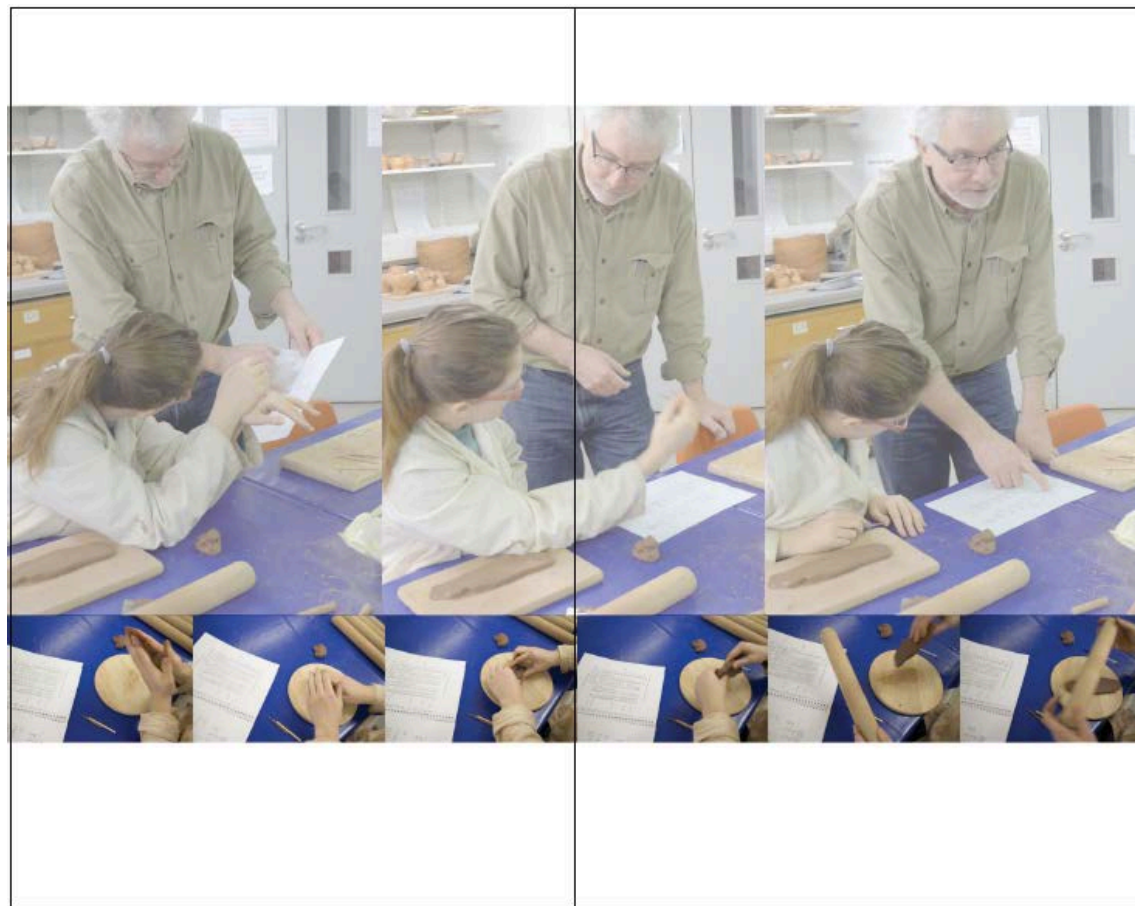
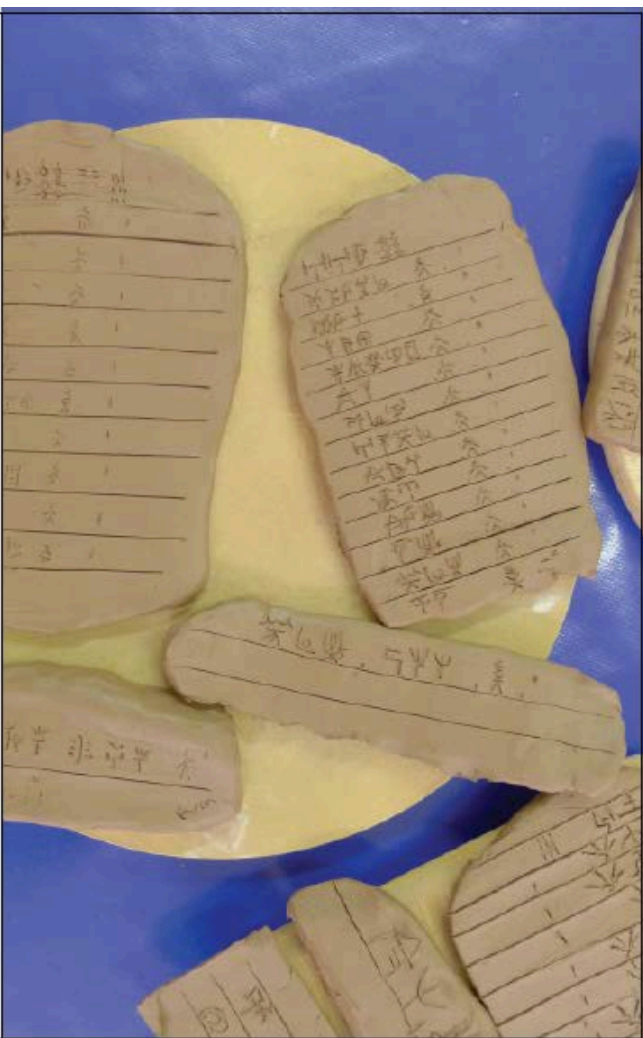
The MA Archaeology students are here to re-create linear B tablets. In the middle of the table is a big slab of clay and examples of replica tablets produced by John Bennet in previous years. These examples have a variety of shapes, some oblong, some more tablet shaped, and all are full of Linear B inscriptions. The tablets have all been fired and their colour ranges from the light brown of oven fired clay, to the irregular dark brown/black of clay fired in an open fire as an experiment, to emulate the accidental firing of the originals. Quite few of the tablets are broken.





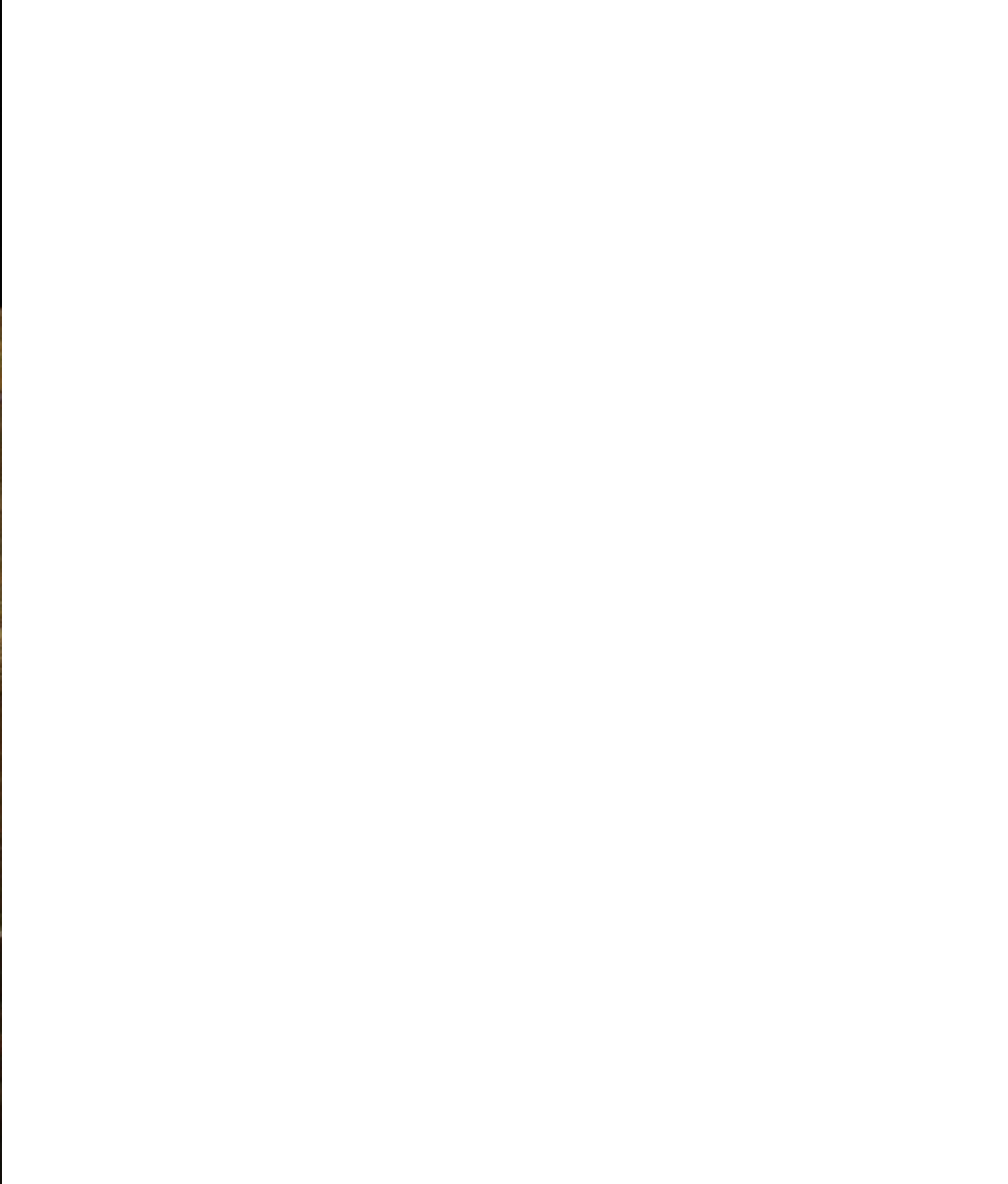
After the initial welcome and settling down, Angela cuts a piece of clay for every student, while John explain to the students the nature of the task about to be commenced. He asks them to start by creating a piece of table, in any shape they wish and to then transcribe their name in Linear B into the wet clay, using one of the writing instruments provided. He demonstrates the moulding of a sample tablet and writes some instructions for the Linear B script onto the whiteboard.











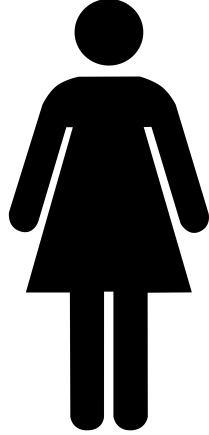


ΟΔΟΣ  
ΘΡΑΣΥΒΟΥΛΟΥ















|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |





Language takes its significance of a linguistic expression from embedding the world, - it transforms the world into something that can be thought of and talked about. (Suchman, 2007:77)

# Archaeology

can grant us access to our history by allowing us encounters with remnants of the past, but how these remnants are translated for us, read by us and what we believe that they tell us is intimately tied up with the context of our own contemporary culture.

# NATIONAL ART&DESIGN SATURDAY CLUB

scripts and discuss how their meaning relates to young peoples lives today and how they might be visually presented to make them suitable for todays media environment.



I hereby give permission for my child to participate in and contribute to the  
ADRC Visual Translations research project 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2015

Childs name:

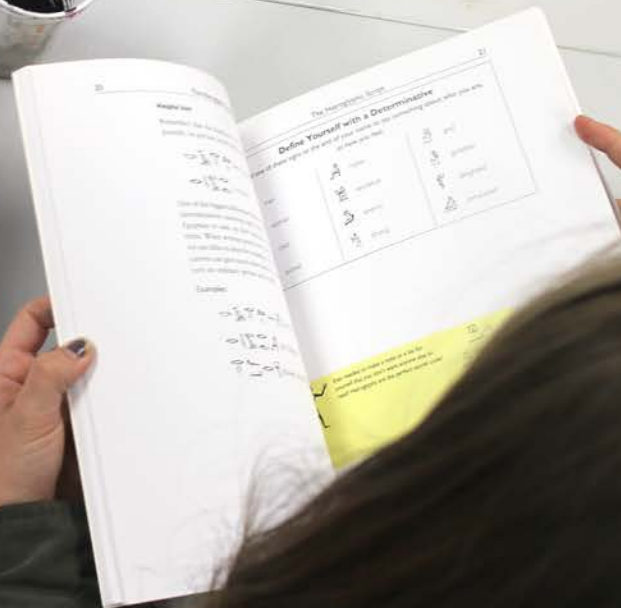
Parent/Carer:

Signature:

## 3 Part Brief

- Working with the script in ink
- Ideas generation for contemporary meaning
- Generating of new symbols in vinyl and perspex

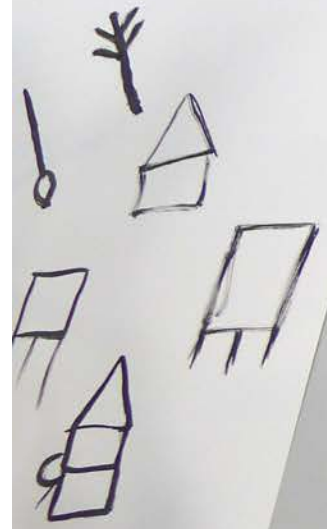




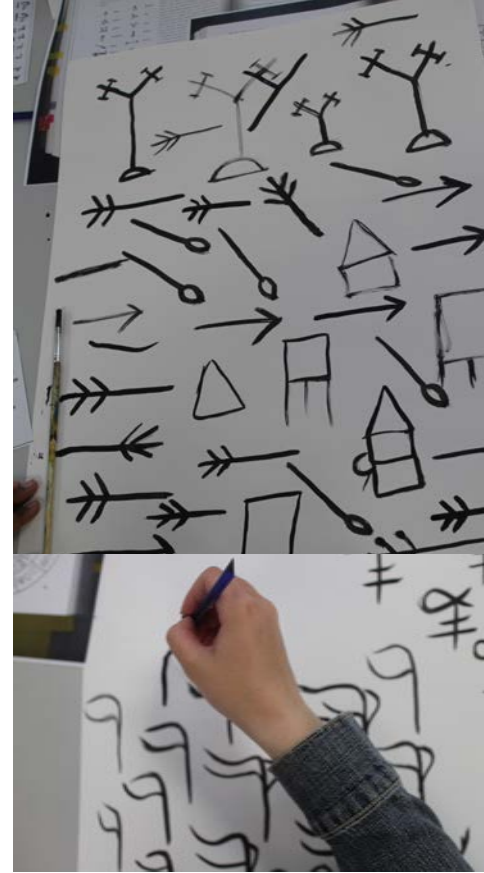


Handwriting reference chart with 48 symbols and their corresponding English words:

|         |         |         |         |           |         |              |         |         |         |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|-----------|---------|--------------|---------|---------|---------|
| even    | woman   | man     | house   | tree      | station | egg          | arm     | heavy   | body    |
| foot    | bird    | wheel   | barley  | olive oil | apple   | cup          | map     | gold    | oil     |
| corn    | bull    | gold    | moon    | horn      | table   | quintessence | without | month   | year    |
| part    | brother | gold    | moon    | horn      | table   | quintessence | without | month   | year    |
| brother | brother | brother | brother | brother   | brother | brother      | brother | brother | brother |

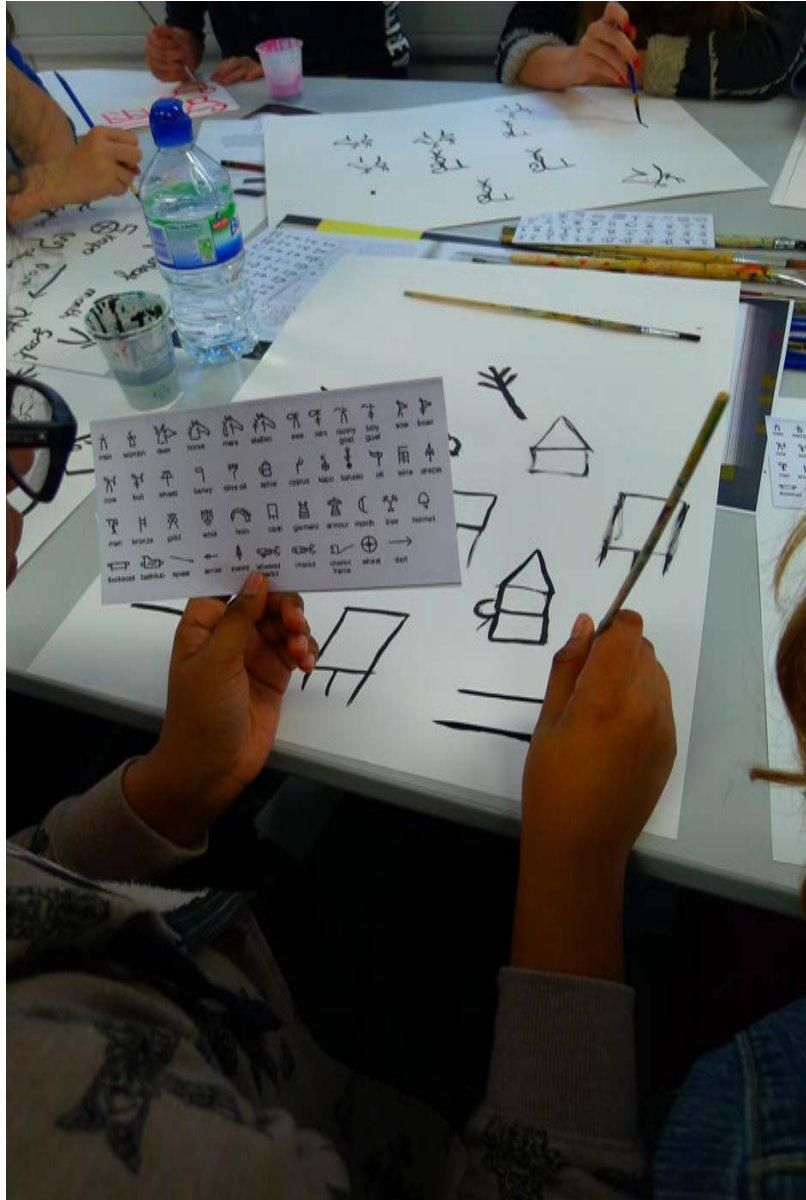










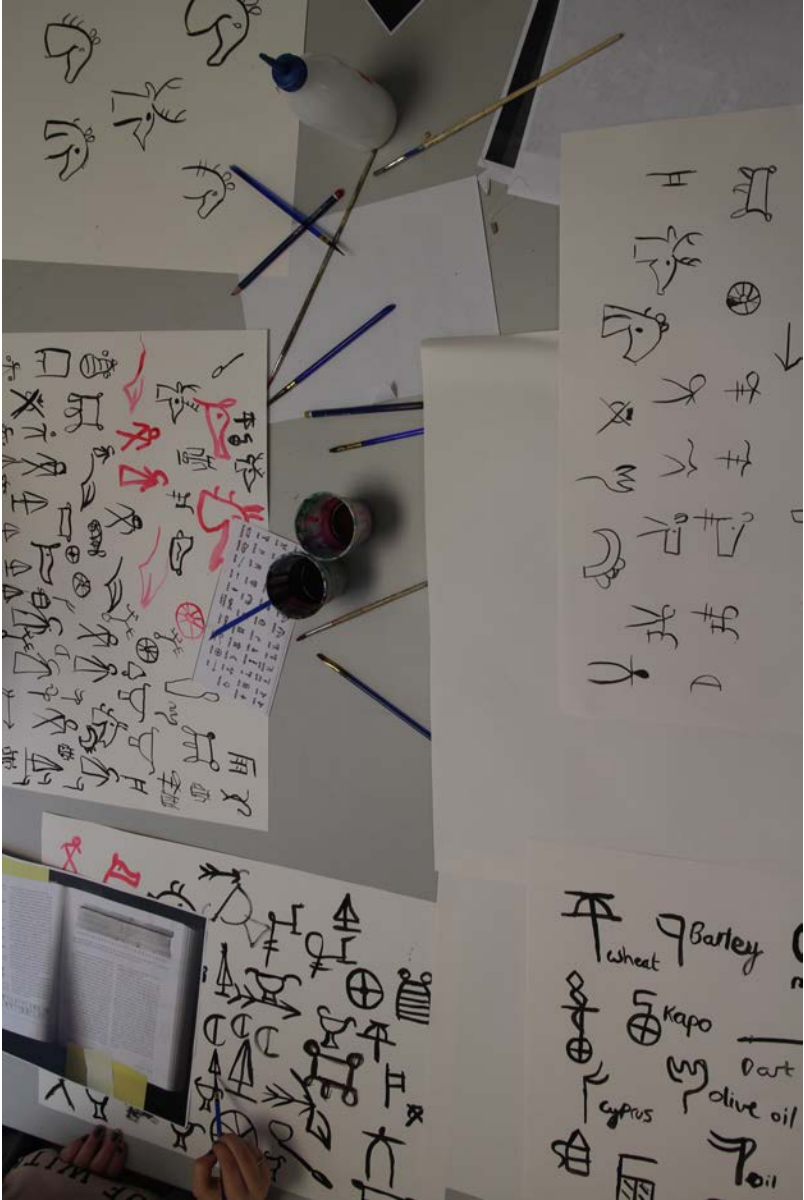




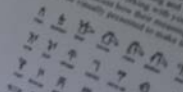




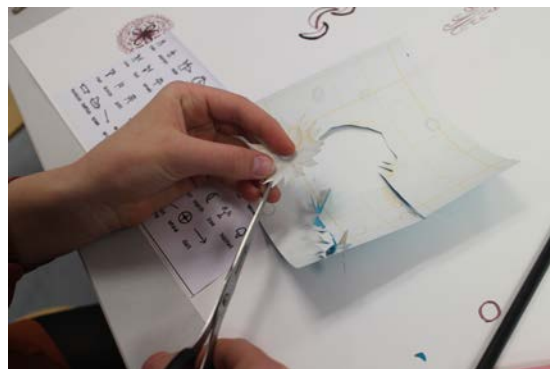
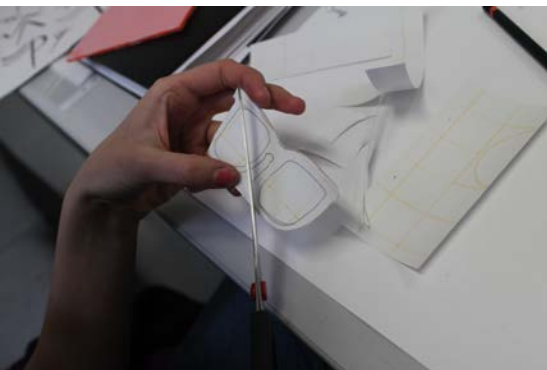


















ΑΓΓΛΙΚΗ ΑΡΧΑΙΟΛΟΓΙΚΗ  
ΣΧΟΛΗ

BRITISH SCHOOL  
OF  
ARCHAEOLOGY







MINISTRY OF CULTURE  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM

DAILY  
SUNDAYS - HOLIDAYS  
MONDAYS

9:00 - 20:00

Visual  
Translations  
of Ancient  
Script

International exhibition of the Ministry of Culture  
and the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs  
in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture  
of the Republic of Turkey

21 - 23  
08.2018

19:00 - 20:00  
19:00 - 20:00

Αρχαιολογικό  
Μουσείο  
Ηρακλείου

Κυριακή 19.08.2018

Με την ευκαιρία της 19ης Διεθνούς  
Εβδομάδας της Γραμμάτιας, 19-25.08.2018

Η έκθεση αποτελεί μέρος της 19ης Διεθνούς  
Εβδομάδας της Γραμμάτιας, 19-25.08.2018  
και είναι αφιερωμένη στην Παγκόσμια  
Εβδομάδα της Γραμμάτιας, 19-25.08.2018  
Η έκθεση αποτελεί μέρος της 19ης Διεθνούς  
Εβδομάδας της Γραμμάτιας, 19-25.08.2018  
και είναι αφιερωμένη στην Παγκόσμια  
Εβδομάδα της Γραμμάτιας, 19-25.08.2018  
Η έκθεση αποτελεί μέρος της 19ης Διεθνούς  
Εβδομάδας της Γραμμάτιας, 19-25.08.2018  
και είναι αφιερωμένη στην Παγκόσμια  
Εβδομάδα της Γραμμάτιας, 19-25.08.2018

Επιμέλεια έκθεσης:















# Visual Translations





















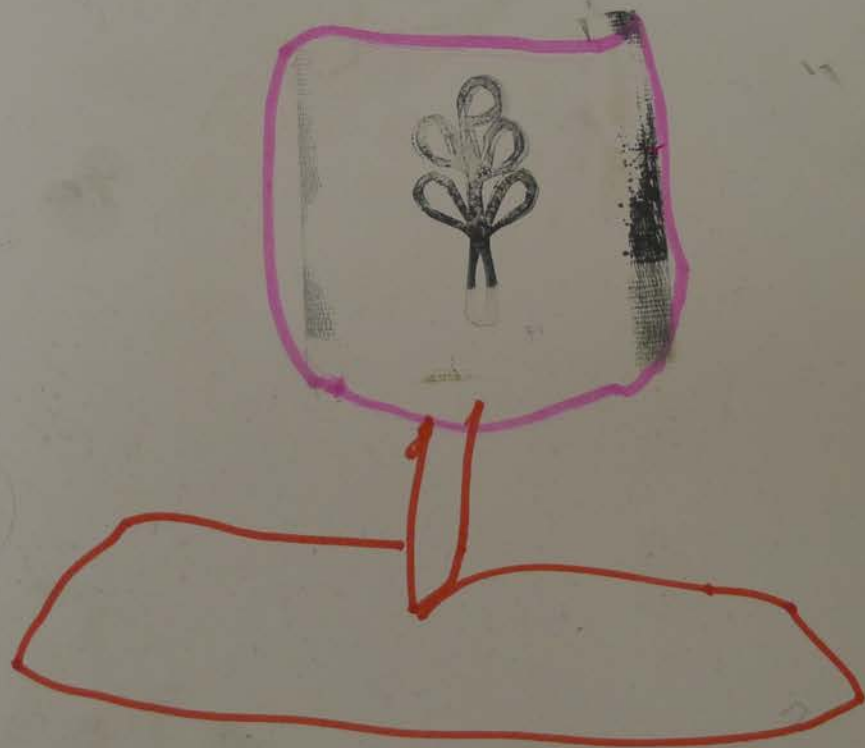














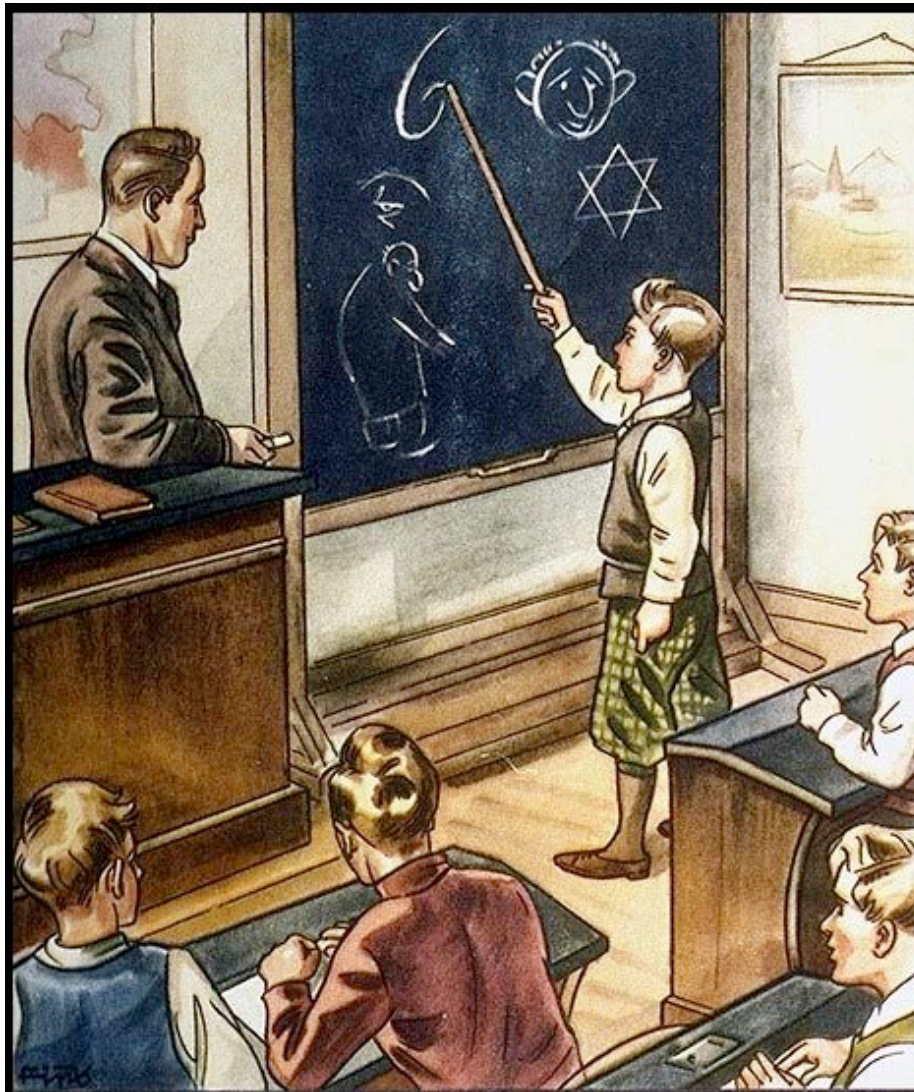




IT'S TOUGH







„Die Judennase ist an ihrer Spitze gebogen. Sie sieht aus wie ein Sechser...“

‘Interpretation involves intellectual confrontation with language and other cultural products. In the spirit of interpretation, meaning is not an innate quality of forms or an automatic reaction of the brain; it is discovered by relating signs to one’s own personal and cultural experience, and to other signs.

Images take meaning from stylistic and iconic conventions, from other images, and from words, as well as from natural objects. To interpret is to recognize that signs are not an absolute, neutral, and fixed, but are, rather, in historical flux. ‘

(Lupton:1986)

Thank you!



If you are interested in this type of ‘stuff’,  
please do get in touch:

[m.levick-parkin@shu.ac.uk](mailto:m.levick-parkin@shu.ac.uk)