

Visual translations of ancient heritage - re-contextualising ancient European script through contemporary visual communication methods and media [abstract only]

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The purpose of this practice led research will be to explore the application of service design methodology and design thinking for the engagement in encounters with heritage in Archaeology. The intention is to re-contextualise visual aspects of ancient European script, through the application of contemporary visual communication practice and media touchpoints. The ultimate goal of the project is to disseminate the research findings via traditional means of a conference presentation, a journal article and it is envisaged that a pop-up exhibition and digital exhibition will support the project documentation and outcome.

Archaeology can grant us access to our history by allowing us encounters with remnants of the past. 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. This makes any interaction with history also a potential interaction with the present and future. Any 'reading' of the past, is also a reflection of our presence (Gamble 2001; Gere 2009; Hayden 1993). Following the post-modernist suggestion that knowledge is socially constructed, we may concur that knowledge construction in the heritage experience should be inclusive and socially accessible. Admittedly, archaeology is an area of practice where the notion of socially constructed knowledge is examined within the discipline, but does not always translate into how archaeological knowledge and artefacts are presented to the public or cultural tourism's host communities. This limits opportunity for audience engagement and for stakeholder inclusion in the construction and communication of that knowledge and thus how the archaeological heritage is experienced.

Accordingly, our intention was to look at how visual communication and service design can help create archaeological heritage experiences that explore a multi-layered narrative through co-creation and democratised strategies of engagement. The aim is to investigate the overall relevance of visual communication and service-design to a heritage experience design in archaeology and to test its potential to engage new audiences in archaeological heritage through visual re-contextualisation of ancient content. Our research focus were the Minoan scripts of 2nd millennium B.C., and more specifically Linear A and Linear B. These writing systems are based on codes and, at the same time, deal with visual presentation of meaning; thus, they are relevant in relation to Frutiger's discussion of archetypes and Neurath's interest in isotypes. The Archaeologist adviser of the project (Georgia Flouda) provided the expert voice in order to ensure the appropriateness of visual materials worked with and the scientific integrity of the design outputs. Melanie Levick-Parkin as the design researcher managed and art-directed the integration of the archaeological knowledge with the art and design based practice based work and knowledge. Student design researchers produced visual communication designs in relation to illustration, typography and graphic design, that was image and process analysed and formed part of the projects visual output.