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Design Archeology: Graphic Reconstructions of Kreuzberg, Berlin

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Citation:

SHEPPARD, Amy (2009). Design Archeology: Graphic Reconstructions of Kreuzberg, Berlin. In: Undisciplined! Design Research Society Conference 2008, Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield, UK, 16-19 July 2008. [Conference or Workshop Item]

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Design Archeology:
Graphic Reconstructions of Kreuzberg, Berlin

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Abstract

Design Archeology combines communication design with archeological methods for evaluating material culture to produce new forms of graphic identity. It is a research methodology for examining cultural practices and activities *of the moment* in order to create a "snapshot" of a community's identity from its material culture. *Graphic Reconstructions of Kreuzberg Berlin* is a graphic identity developed from ephemera (receipts, tickets, posters and flyers) collected from the streets of Kreuzberg, Berlin over a three-week period. The project examines the language of transactions and advertising and its impact on community identity. The final series of posters were installed back at the original site in Berlin.

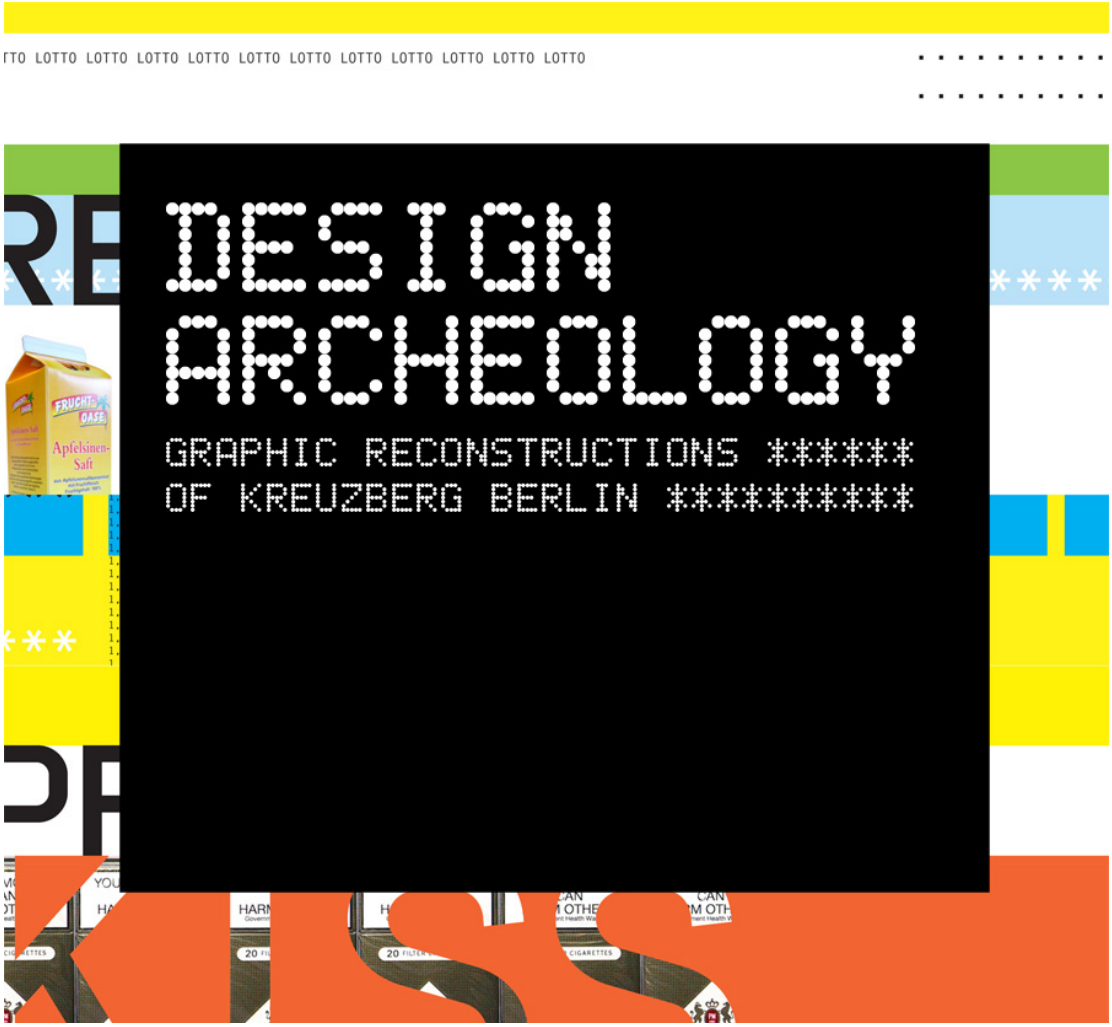
Surrounded by a plethora of advertisements, receipts, tickets, receipts, junk mail and more, this ephemera offers an immediate "snapshot" into a very specific moment in time. What if the information contained within could be captured, recorded, and interpreted? What would it tell us about that specific moment in time, identity, cultural patterns, and the relationship of language and media?

These Graphic reconstructions manifest itself in the form of posters and receipts. The content used in the posters came from transaction-based ephemera, and the content used in the receipts came from advertising-based ephemera. The inversion of media was used to "make strange" and change the context in which these items are normally seen, in an effort to reexamine cultural patterns and information that normally go unseen.

This was done as a tool to evaluate transaction language, consumption and selling patterns and the locality of Kreuzberg. While the outcome does not offer a cohesive identity, it reveals ethnic backgrounds, trends in purchases, travel patterns based on transaction, nightlife locations, and a globalized and "businessfied" culture.

Keywords

Design; Design Archeology; Ephemera; Artifact; Research; Found Object; Berlin.



This paper explores three research questions through a method I will call design archeology. What does a community's identity look like when it is extracted from its material culture? What is the relationship of content to media forms? How does media influence the reading of information and use of language?

In the modern world, information pervades our daily life. In most cities, we are surrounded by a plethora of advertisements, receipts, tickets, receipts, junk mail and more. This ephemera, because of its short intended lifetime, offers an immediate "snapshot" into a very specific moment in time. It is material designed to quickly disappear from the attention-sphere only to be replaced by the next more current iteration. What if the information contained within could be captured, recorded, and interpreted? How can we study these artifacts and use them as a way of understanding the information that flows around us, that goes unnoticed, that is so programmed, and processed, uploaded and downloaded, machine made and human consumed? (Sterling, 2005). What if this information could be collected and evaluated? What would it tell us about that specific moment in time, identity, cultural patterns, and the relationship of language and media?

To approach these questions, this paper introduces a design research methodology titled Design Archeology. It is a design research methodology that examines cultural practices and activities of the moment in order to create a "snapshot" of a community's identity from its material culture, examines how media forms influence the reading of language and information, and creates a reflection back to the community to inform and inspire. It builds on three case studies that explore media, information, artefact and identity and served as my foundation for later design work. The *first* study focused on patterns of consumption, which began when I got curious about where my money went each week. The *second* study, focused on identity and transactions (building on the first study,) and captured an image of my identity at a specific moment in time. I could see that most of my money was spent on food, specifically take-out and coffee, and that my travel was limited to home, school, and surrounding areas for food and errands. The result was a book titled *Amy Sheppard: Non-Exchangeable*, which is a series of visual investigations based on my personal collection of receipts and tickets, in which all of the information, text, colors and visuals, were pulled directly from this ephemera. *Third*, after the completion of these case studies, I wanted to know if this method of investigation could scale? Would it be possible take this method of looking at material culture (specifically ephemera) to reveal an identity and create a "snapshot" of a community? This is what the third study examines. It was conducted in Kreuzberg, Berlin.

In this study, I narrowed the focus from material culture (which includes any and all physical remains) to ephemera only. Ephemera can be defined as *written and printed matter published with a short intended lifetime. Common types of ephemera include event-oriented posters, transportation and show tickets, receipts, letters, and postcards.* Two other primary terms that this research looks at are Communication Design and Identity. For this purpose I see communication design as a *sub-discipline of design, which is concerned with how media (print, web, motion, interactive) communicates with people.* My definition for identity is t*he individual characteristics by which a person, place or thing is recognized or known.*

Benjamin and Döblin on Ephemera

Ephemera is written and printed matter published with a short-intended lifetime. It is the class of published single-sheet or single page documents that are meant to be thrown away after one use. This classification then excludes simple letters and photographs with no printing on them, which are considered as manuscripts or typescripts. Common Types of Ephemera are postcards, event-oriented posters, transportation and show tickets, baggage stickers, stock certificates, motor vehicle licensing forms, business cards, printed wedding invitations, trade cards, and other similar printed materials.

Walter Benjamin (1999) uses ephemera as an organizing principle in his work, *The Arcades Project*, in which he creates a cultural history of 19th century Paris, building a biography of the city. He believes one can use individual moments to glean a larger view of the total event, and views history as a passing away, a transience. He proposes that a greater story can be told by what people forget or discard. In *The Arcades Project*, he states,

> *"A central problem of historical materialism that ought to be seen in the end: Must the Marxist understanding of history necessarily be acquired at the expense of the perceptibility of history? Or: in what way is it possible to conjoin a heightened graphicness <Anschaulichkeit> to the realization of the Marxist method? The first stage in this undertaking will be to carry over the principle of montage into history. That is, to assemble large-scale constructions out of the smallest and most precisely cut components. Indeed, to discover in the analysis of the small individual moment the crystal of the total event. And, therefore, to break with vulgar historical naturalism. To grasp the construction of history as such. In the structure of commentary. Refuse of History".*

The idea of using ephemera to investigate the cultural history of Berlin is not new. Alfred Döblin (1929), in his novel *Berlin Alexanderplatz* uses ephemera from the city as a method for telling the story. He incorporates brand-specific jingles and slogans from Berlin that capture the essence of its street life. These random phrases appear throughput the novel, and they are used as a way of conveying how much the city and its messages find their way into the minds of its inhabitants.

The novel is a free-association story of the Weimar Republic and is told through the voice of ex-convict Franz Biberkopf who is influenced often by the variety of media and messages that circulate around him. He insists that he is an autonomous individual who makes decisions for himself unaffected by society, but in the end he realizes that the city affect his actions and beliefs more than he would like to admit. Peter Jelavich (2007), professor of history at the Johns Hopkins University, states that,

> *"The novel is the perfect medium to describe the fact that consciousness is not something stable in the mind, that there's things going around us every day as we walk down the street or turn on the radio. The novel, with its stream-of-consciousness bleeding between thought, ideology, and media clutter, is the perfect medium in which to explore how little of our mental real estate is un-homesteaded by advertisers and politicians".*

Design Archeology: Research and Imagination

The following framework offers a method by which ephemera can be analyzed to reveal a community's behavior, culture, and patterns. This chapter provides a detailed description of the archeological methods and how it can be combined communication design to create a new form of graphic identity.

The goals of design archeology are first to *document and explain* human culture through the collection of material culture (artifacts). But because archeologists get an incomplete view of the past, they must fill in the gaps with other kinds of information, educated reasoning and *imagination* (P. Crook, personal communication, November 7, 2006). Secondary goals are the categorization *of artifacts by their function, decoration, and material.* When applying the method of categorization, it is important to build clear constraints and guidelines for the categorization of artifacts, as this impacts its interpretation. In terms of analysis, there are a variety of methods by which to analyze material culture including chronologies and reconstructions, aiming to

use physical remains to create a picture of the past. (Archeology, 2003). As Penny Crook (personal communication, February 15, 2007) tells, analysis is an imaginative exercise:

> *"…archaeology can never build a complete view of a total cultural system for three main reasons: 1. Not all elements of the material world are utilized in the cultural domain with equal weight or with the same symbolic intent… 2. The value & significance of those items of material culture is embedded in the minds and actions of the people affected by and responsible for maintaining/changing that culture and these values shift considerably from time to time and place to place… and, 3. Archaeologists look at artifacts not objects — ergo we only get to see what happened to survive in the ground, not what may have been more important/significant in that cultural system.*
>
> *When it comes to imagining the bits we don't see, archaeologists are a little ambivalent on how this works… there has to be some plausible evidence to start with… and you have to be clear about how you came to tell that story in that way, and that it's just one possible interpretation… Similar arguments can be made for historians, although they deal with more comprehensible information, they can never use it with full accuracy because they're attempting to use the information in ways it was never intended to do…*
>
> *So in answer to your direct question, you build a representation of a culture through its ephemera with a full understanding that you can only represent a particular angle of it and even then it will just be your interpretation".*

In this research, the categorization, analysis and interpretation of ephemera is linked closely with the evaluation of media affordances, (i.e. what is the form, shape, size, color, language used on a receipt?) and its reading of the information (i.e. what kind of language is found where, what is the tone, focus, and intended audience and how does this impact the design?) (Laurel, 2003) A key aspect of this methodology is to move beyond the vernacular and towards a new interpretation of the information contained within the ephemera. Understanding the unique aspects of media, and its impact on the reading of symbolic aspects of design including semiotics, visual rhetoric and communication models are integral into the successful practice of the discipline. (Noble, I. & Bestley, R., 2005).

However, in this study, the imaginary aspect of design archaeology builds on artistic, not on scientific aims and sources. My artistic source of inspiration was Carey Young, an artist in the UK, who examines business language and its role in our culture (Lind 2002). This became a focus for me in my research. Another artistic influence was Ben Fry (2000), who received his doctoral degree from the Aesthetics + Computation Group at the MIT Media Laboratory. The inspiration I took from Fry's work was his pursuit of qualitative representations and his focus on looking for the small amount of information that is actually useful. I hoped to create poetic moments as a way to see a city and a community through its advertisements and transactions – its moments that come and go and its language both eclectic and banal.

Figure A: Carey Young's Exhibit titled: *Consideration* (2004-5). A series of mixed media works. Edition of 500 unique cards signed by the artist and to be signed by the viewer. Donorcard (front and back views).

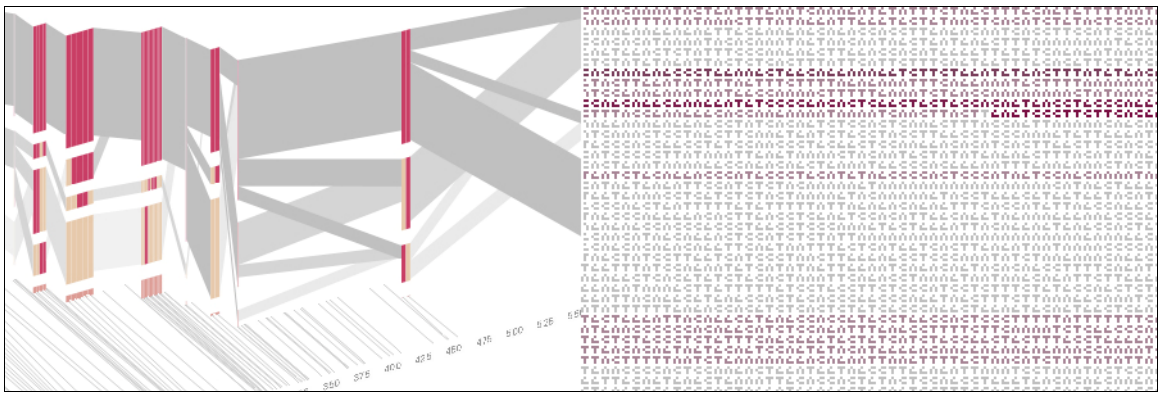


Figure B: Isometric Blocks, by Ben Fry. These groupings of patterns are sometimes referred to as "haplotype blocks". The data was discussed in a paper (Daly, et al, 2001) that looked at a section of the genome of ~500 people in search of Crohn's disease (Rioux, et al, 2001). The data from that paper is also used in the image above.

Case Study 03: Graphic Reconstructions Of Kreuzberg, Berlin

To put this methodology to work, I conducted a series of investigations in the form of posters and receipts to create *Graphic Reconstructions of Kreuzberg, Berlin* which is a graphic identity developed from ephemera (receipts, tickets, posters and flyers) collected from the streets of Kreuzberg, Berlin over a three-week period. This case study provides a vehicle for examining the language of transactions and advertising and what it reveals about a community's identity.

Community: Kreuzberg, Berlin

The collection of ephemera took place in Kreuzberg, Berlin. Berlin is a city that has been at the center of continuous change for most of the 1900s and is still a city of movement and flux. Kreuzberg is a West Berlin district that borders the former east districts of Mitte and Friedrichshain. The northeast part of Kreuzberg known as Wranglekiez (near U-bahn stop Schlesisches Tor) was considered the "end of the world" in the 70s and 80s because it bordered the wall on two sides and on a third side there was a canal. No area of West Berlin has changed as much since the wall came down.

This once isolated pocket found itself recast as desirable real estate, although much of the art scene shifted to Mitte and Prenzlauer Berg districts. Gentrification never really took hold of this district however, because Kreuzberg didn't experience a mass exodus of its original inhabitants (which

include a large Turkish population) after the wall came down, unlike the neighboring east districts of Mitte and Prenzlauer Berg which experienced an influx of students (now professionals) in the early 90s It is an earthy place full of cafes, bars and clubs. The large amount of foot traffic makes this a neighborhood full of posters and flyers that are often layered on top of one another.

Figure C: Northeast part of Kreuzberg (Schlesisches Tor), Berlin, Germany. Map of collection area.

Collection: Looking for Patterns

The collection of artifacts took place during September and October 2006 in the area known as Wranglekiez. I spent a total of six weeks in the area, three of which were dedicated to the collection of artifacts. I collected the ephemera from the streets of Kreuzberg by riding my bike in the neighborhood every day, and picking up only what was left on the streets. I didn't strive to pick up every single piece of ephemera lying on the street, but

instead sought to build a more representative collection. For example, if there were many calling card receipts, and only a few lottery tickets, I picked up the amount of each so they remained relative.

Figure D: (Left to right): Photo of ephemera being collected (by bike), studies of visual and written language used in advertising ephemera, translation of transaction-based content.

After I collected the artifacts, I scanned and organized them into several books based on general categories such as events and entertainment, business, and receipts. I then conducted a series of visual studies that looked at language use, type of ephemera, graphic devices, images of men vs. women etc. Overall these visual studies did not provide a great deal of insight into the community's identity, as I focused too much on the vernacular of the ephemera. There was however, a set of studies, in which I had that pulled out all the English phrases found in the German ephemera. These studies turned my focus towards language, and how media forms and graphic devices influence the way this information is perceived.

Categorization: Transactions and Advertisements

I began to notice several distinctions between transaction-based and advertising-based ephemera. I divided the ephemera into these two categories and defined them as such:

TRANSACTIONS – *Document an activity, a marker of time, an exchange between individuals and business. Examples of transaction-based ephemera include tickets and receipts.*

ADVERTISEMENTS – Document events to come, a potential exchange opportunity with their main intention to persuade. Examples of advertising-based ephemera include posters and flyers.

Figure E: Transaction-based ephemera (left) are usually small, little color, dense with information. Advertising-based ephemera (right) are usually larger in size, colorful, and sparse with information.

Each category demonstrated different qualities with respect to the type of information, amount of text, tone of voice, and visual treatment. For example, the transaction-based ephemera was mostly in German, contained legal text, business language such as "Thank you for your purchase.", location information, large amounts of data, used little color, and was usually small in scale. Whereas the advertising-based ephemera was mostly in English, contained persuasive and friendly language such as "good day" was large in size with minimal text, designed graphics and bright colors. Once the ephemera was organized into the two final categories, I typed up every single piece of text on the ephemera, had it translated and then entered into a database for further analysis.

Final Outcome: Graphic Reconstructions

The final outcome was a series of investigations in the form of posters and receipts titled Graphic Reconstructions of Kreuzberg, Berlin. The content used in the posters came from transaction-based ephemera, and the content used in the receipts came from advertising-based ephemera. This was done to inverse the media form typically used to view each kind of information, for example information typically hidden on the back of a receipt was easily viewed on a large poster, and vice versa. This was done as a tool to evaluate transaction language, consumption and selling patterns and the locality of Kreuzberg. The inversion of media was used to "make strange" and change the context in which these items are normally seen, in an effort to reexamine cultural patterns and information that normally go unseen. The posters were placed back in the original site of Berlin.

Figure F: Graphic Reconstructions. (Left to right). Photo of poster series (using transaction-content). Photo of receipt (using advertising-based content).

Poster Series

The content used in the posters came from the transaction-based ephemera (receipts, tickets). By placing the content of transactions in a different context it highlights the tone, voice and attitude of exchange between individuals and business.

Series 01: Transaction Language

This series of posters examines the language of transaction and its role in our culture. All content featured on the posters was pulled directly from the original artifacts (ephemera) found in Kreuzberg, Berlin. All the text was translated into English. This series aims to change the context in which this language is usually seen. It highlights the business language, disclaimers, and legal restrictions that surround us on an everyday basis, but mostly go unnoticed because they are on receipts, tickets and other items that are usually discarded or just too small to be noticed. In searching for the identity of Kreuzberg through its ephemera, one finds a globalized and "businessfied" culture that in many ways looks like many other parts of the western world.

Figure G: Selection of posters from Series 01: Transaction Language

Figure H: Detail of Series 01: Transaction Language. All text found at the bottom of receipts was used to create this poster, including punctuation. It highlights the business language, disclaimers, and legal restrictions that surround us on an everyday basis.

Series 02: Consumption Patterns

This series examines the consumption patterns of the inhabitants of Kreuzberg, Berlin. It asks the question: Can the identity of a community be seen by looking at what it consumes? The analysis reveals certain trends in activities and behaviors. A number of prepaid phone cards reveal a transitory nature of some of the neighborhood's inhabitants. German sausage purchases appear regularly on most supermarket receipts. And we see purchases of stimulants to power engines (benzine) and people (nicotine and caffeine) occurring at gas stations. As with any archeological collection, some records of activity are missing. For example, condom purchases are frequently made at gas stations when other stores are closed, but no record of these purchases were found on the discarded receipts. Other more ephemeral transactions like visits to bars, clubs or open markets don't offer receipts.

Figure I: Selection of posters from Series 02: Consumption Patterns.

Figure J: Detail of Series 02: Consumption Patterns. Masking: Cigarettes and Candy. Smoke a cigarette and then eat some candy to make your breath smell sweet again. Found on receipts in Kreuzberg–Berlin. U-Bahn Schlesisches Tor.

Series 03: Locality

This series of posters examines the patterns of information found on transaction ephemera (receipts, tickets) from Kreuzberg, Berlin. This includes times and locations of purchases, travel purchase patterns, the use of different languages in transactions, and lineage of names. Most of the transactions take place in Kreuzberg and its neighboring district of Neukölln, which both have a high Turkish population. Receipts from the countries of Italy, Spain and other cities in Germany indicate a traveling population in Kreuzberg. The neighborhood's hours of operation are revealed from the time stamps found on its receipts and tickets. Regular hours of business run from 8am to 8pm. Purchases that fall outside of these normal business hours take place at gas stations, which are open all hours. Shopping activity tends to happen at the beginning and end of the week, with not much activity in the middle. U-bahn travel peaks during business hours.

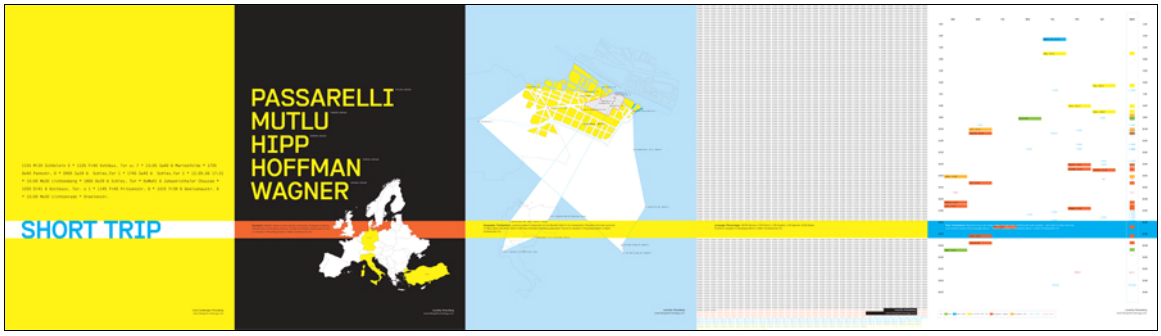


Figure K: Selection of posters from Series 03: Locality.

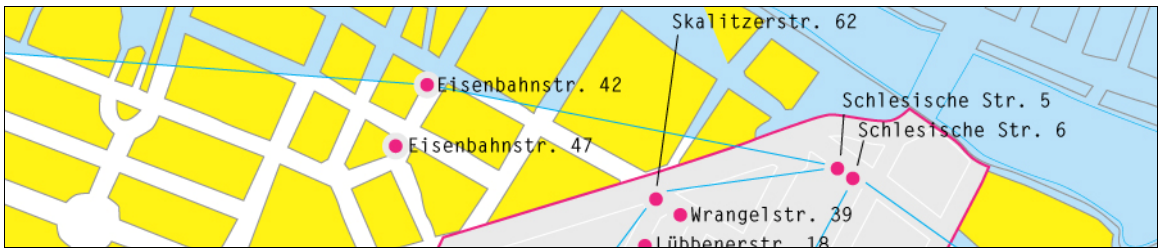


Figure L: Detail of Series 03: Locality. Geography of Transactions. Locations show a connection to the Neükolln district for transactions. Receipts from the countries of Italy, Spain and other cities in Germany indicate a traveling population. Found on receipts in Kreuzberg–Berlin. U-Bahn Schlesisches Tor.

Receipt Series

The content used in the receipts came from the advertising-based ephemera (posters, flyers). By placing the content of advertising in a different context it highlights the tone, voice and attitude used for selling.

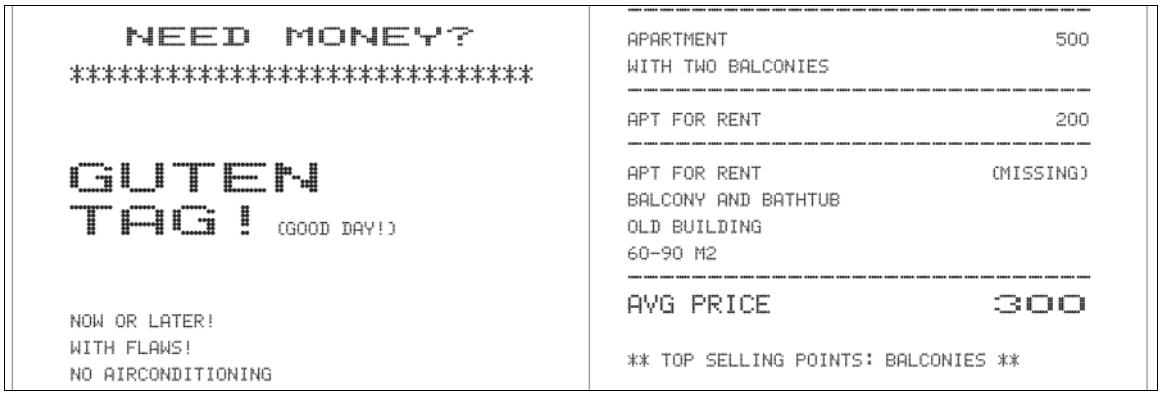


Figure M: Detail of receipt series. Advertising content is examined in the visual form of a receipt.

Series 01: Advertising Language

This series of receipts examines the advertising language found on discarded posters and flyers from Kreuzberg, Berlin. It takes the language of advertising and places it in the context of receipt to highlight the difference in tone, voice, and attitude used for selling. The primary language for posters and flyers for anything involving music including clubs, parties and shows is English, and the tone and voice is usually playful and incorporates descriptions of sounds such as "noise" and "loudly". The primary language for local and business flyers is German with smaller phrases in English.

Figure N: Selection of receipts from Series 01: Advertising Language.

Series 02: Selling Patterns

This series of receipts examines the selling patterns of advertisements found in Kreuzberg, Berlin. It asks the question: Can the identity of a community be seen by looking at what it sells? The analysis reveals very affordable apartments, a plethora of cheap printing and copy services (making it easy and affordable to print advertisements), calling plans instead of prepaid options, not so frequent yoga classes and many different DJs spinning any kind of music one might desire.

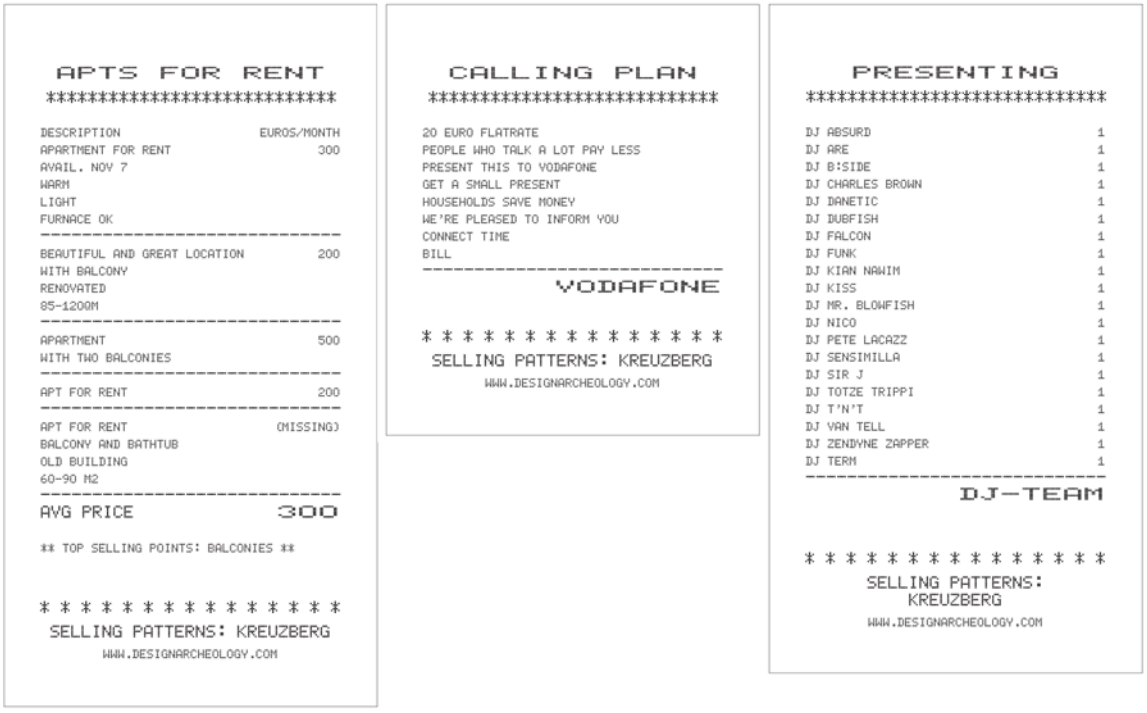
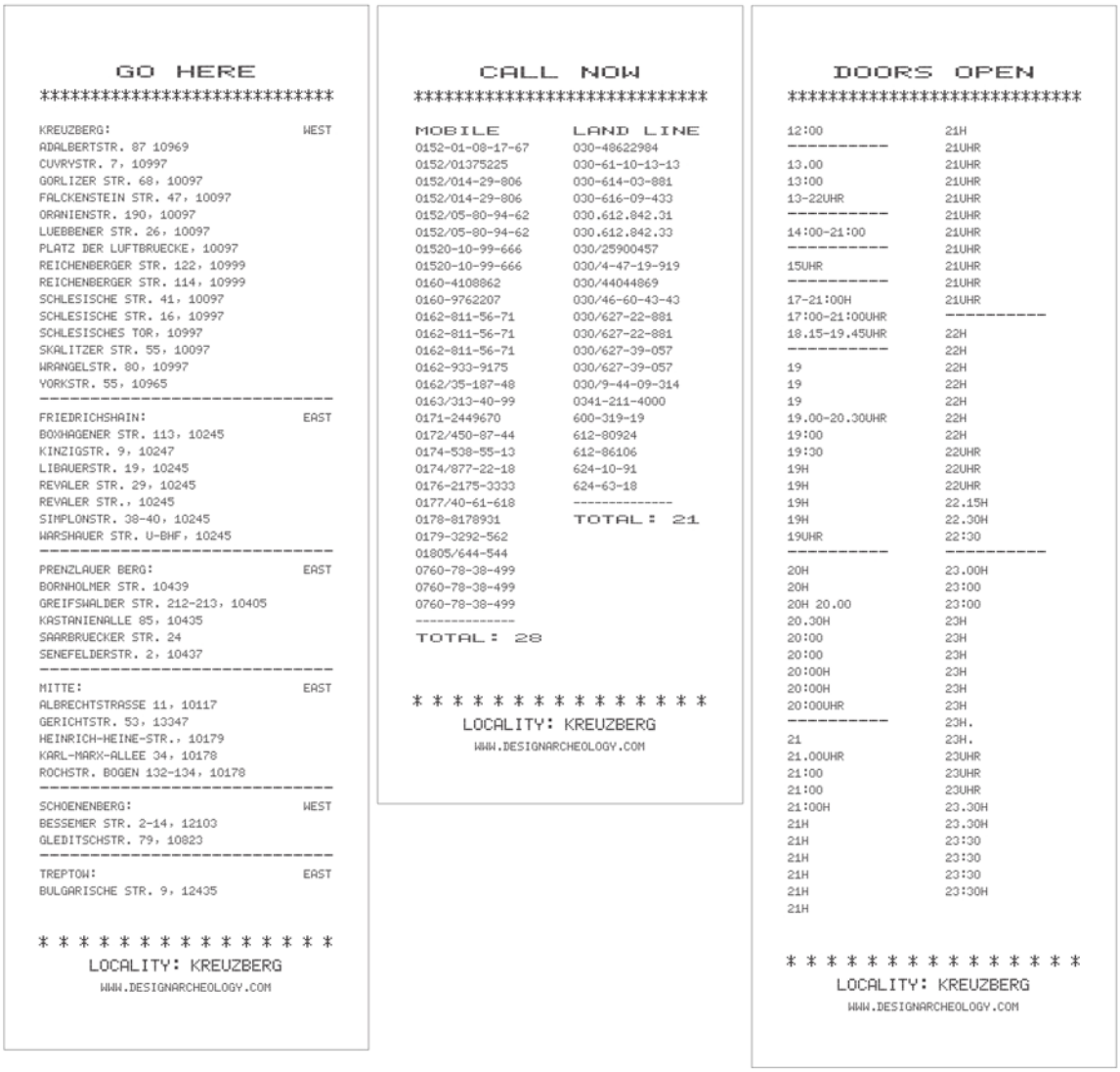


Figure O: Selection of receipts from Series 02: Selling Pattern

Series 03: Locality

This series of receipts examines the patterns of information found on advertising-based ephemera from Kreuzberg, Berlin. It takes these patterns of information and looks for specific insights about what the culture of Kreuzberg looks like when extracted from advertisements. This includes times and locations of events, mobile phone vs. landline usage, the role different languages play in advertising and the use of local website domains (.de) versus other types (.com). Most of the advertised events take place in Kreuzberg (west Berlin), and Mitte, Friedrichshain (east Berlin). This analysis reveals Kreuzberg as one of the main players that contributes to Berlin's nightlife. The starting times of events also add to the image of a neighborhood "open all night" with many events beginning at midnight.



GO HERE

KREUZBERG: WEST
ADALBERTSTR. 87 10969
CUVRYSTR. 7, 10997
GORLIZER STR. 68, 10097
FALCKENSTEIN STR. 47, 10097
ORANIENSTR. 190, 10097
LUEBBENER STR. 26, 10097
PLATZ DER LUFTBRUECKE, 10097
REICHENBERGER STR. 122, 10999
REICHENBERGER STR. 114, 10999
SCHLESISCHE STR. 41, 10097
SCHLESISCHE STR. 16, 10997
SCHLESISCHES TOR, 10997
SKALITZER STR. 55, 10097
WRANGELSTR. 80, 10997
YORKSTR. 55, 10965

FRIEDRICHSHAIN: EAST
BOXHAGENER STR. 113, 10245
KINZIGSTR. 9, 10247
LIBAUERSTR. 19, 10245
REVALER STR. 29, 10245
REVALER STR., 10245
SIMPLONSTR. 38-40, 10245
WARSHAUER STR. U-BHF, 10245

PRENZLAUER BERG: EAST
BORNHOLMER STR. 10439
GREIFSWALDER STR. 212-213, 10405
KASTANIENALLE 85, 10435
SAARBRUECKER STR. 24
SENEFELDERSTR. 2, 10437

MITTE: EAST
ALBRECHTSTRASSE 11, 10117
GERICHTSTR. 53, 13347
HEINRICH-HEINE-STR., 10179
KARL-MARX-ALLEE 34, 10178
ROCHSTR. BOGEN 132-134, 10178

SCHOENENBERG: WEST
BESSEMER STR. 2-14, 12103
GLEDITSCHSTR. 79, 10823

TREPTOW: EAST
BULGARISCHE STR. 9, 12435

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0760-78-38-499	
TOTAL: 28	

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DOORS OPEN

12:00	21H
	21UHR
13.00	21UHR
13:00	21UHR
13-22UHR	21UHR
	21UHR
14:00-21:00	21UHR
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15UHR	21UHR
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18.15-19.45UHR	22H
	22H
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19.00-20.30UHR	22H
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21H	23:30H
21H	

LOCALITY: KREUZBERG
WWW.DESIGNARCHEOLOGY.COM

Figure P: Selection of receipts from Series 03: Locality.

Installation and Network

The final series of posters were installed back in the original site, to provide a reflection of identity back to the community of Kreuzberg, Berlin. The posters were installed on the walls and along the streets of the original collection site. The posters contained unusual phrases that didn't direct the viewer to a specific event, or provide a time, but instead sought to draw them in closer. On each poster there was the website address for www.designarcheology.com where viewers could learn more about the project.

Figure Q: Photos of posters installed in Berlin.

Figure R: Additional posters installed. Screenshot of www.DesignArcheology.com.

Analysis and Reflection

This research offers a system of evaluation, where the designer is the filter. It uses the combination of two distinct fields as a generative way to design to create both poetic and analytical reflections of a community. While the outcome does not offer a cohesive identity (is there any such thing?), it does offer a slice of life and a view into a community that perhaps isn't seen as easily on the surface. In the case of *Graphic Reconstructions of Kreuzberg, Berlin*, it reveals ethnic backgrounds, trends in purchases, travel patterns based on transaction, nightlife locations, and a globalized and "businessfied" culture.

Transcribing: Engaging Directly with the Information – Initially, finding a way into the information contained in the artifacts proved to be difficult. Because the artifacts were from Germany, a significant amount of the text was in German. Since I don't speak German, I wasn't able to engage in the meaning of the text, and therefore was only able to focus on the more visual aspects of the ephemera initially. The decision to type up all of the text, and have it translated, was the key to being able to truly engage with this material. The act of typing the phrases, quantities purchased, legal text, band names, times, and addresses began to focus my attention on the meaning of text and to separate it from its visual package.

Missing Aspects: Room for Imagination – Not all aspects of the community are revealed through its artefacts. The more ephemeral type of activities, like buying fruit at the flea markets, or going to a club don't result in receipts, just food, or a stamp on a hand that is washed away the next morning. But these missing components opened up room for imagination about what the existing information might mean.

Creative Role: Graphic Language – The graphic language was loosely inspired by the media, but I didn't strive to mimic the exact fonts etc that were on the found posters and receipts. The fonts used were sans-serif, a general standard in German designs inc. posters, and the colours and large type (with words only) reflected many of the posters I had collected. The receipts were modelled after the ones I collected. Many of the receipt machines, other than the hand written ones, were similar to the ones found in the US. Similar technology produces similar output. My creative role in the process was figuring out how to make sense of all the information, curate it and evaluate it in a framework that could then allow for further analysis, which could then be designed.

Future directions consist first of comparative studies. The methodology is flexible enough that the parameters for collection, categorization and analysis can be modified to fit different communities. For instance, what if we examined a community in Los Angeles? The collection process of material culture might take place by looking at what is left in people's cars? Publishing the research method online will make it possible for others to use it and collaborate. Engaging other people to contribute to and build on this research method, and offering workshops with other designers and students will create new results and outcomes. What will a community look like in a year from now and ten years from now? What will a community's identity look

like when the same material and time period is interpreted by different designers?

Another future direction is a new way of building identity and branding – This methodology offers an alternative to the existing methods of branding that exist currently. Marty Neumeier (2003, p. 136), from The Brand Gap: "Living brands are a collaborative performance. They are a pattern of behaviour that grows out of character." The Design Archeology methodology could be used to understand a company's customers or target audience. It could offer a new way of examining how they live, who they are, and a new way of visualizing that identity.

As a research methodology that deals with identity, community and its material culture, I think the result was successful. However, the aspects that I explored in the last case study are just an example of the bigger picture. I dealt with a specific set of constraints, and a focus on language so that I could move forward with applying the methodology and create a series of investigations for the final outcome. Using inversion as a tool was only one of the many ways the information could have been examined. For the future there are many other ways this research can be enhanced which include collaborative projects, comparative studies, workshops, or open source discussion on the ideas and methods discussed here.

"It's the ephemera of the forgotten…that tells the greatest tales." – Sufjan Stevens
(Hartman, 2006, p. 112)

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