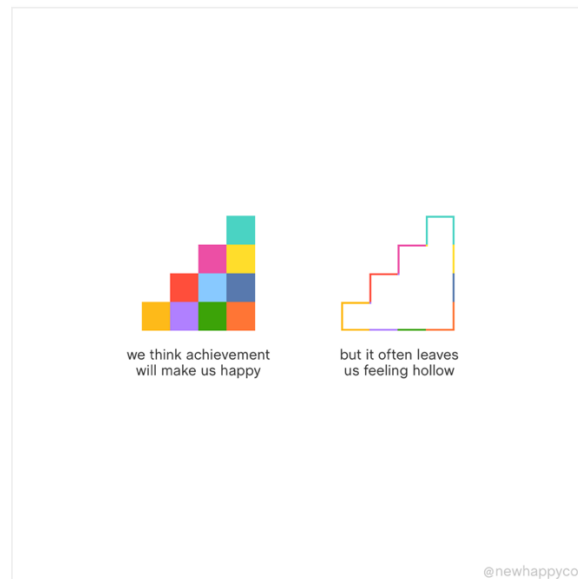
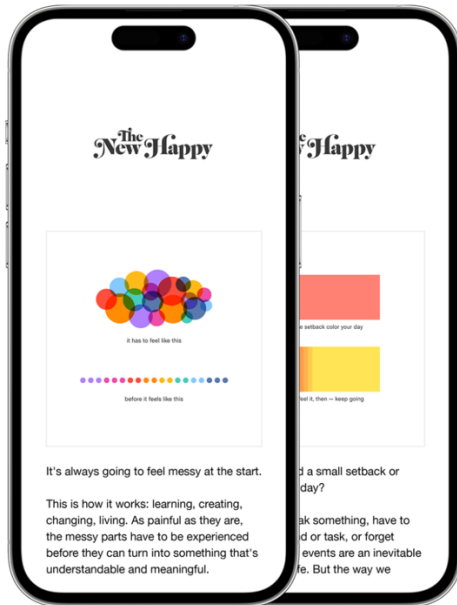


POSITIONS THROUGH TRIANGULATING

△ 2 Writing Response draft II

THESIS

△ 1 Reference

*Personal research***The New Happy® (2018)****Stephanie Harrison**

INTRO

The New Happy® is a digital content space founded in 2018 by Stephanie Harrison, a self-taught designer and expert in positive psychology, with the intention to be of service to others by sharing the science-backed philosophy of happiness.

TNH (acronym of The New Happy®) covers a range of concepts people deal with in everyday life from creativity, productivity, self-improvement, motivation, purpose, etc.

The content is shared daily in size bite posts on social media, in a newsletter format and podcast, which makes the content accessible to anyone would prefer to consume the content on their time and space by reading or listening to it via app or straight from their inbox.

Intention: communicate a new, science-backed philosophy of happiness

Aims: To offer bite-size self-help information to become happier (or more emotional intelligent). A tool for self-help and wellness improvement.



STRUCTURE

Each day's topic content shared follows a consistent structure which is visually represented with minimal graphics design in a rather aesthetically pleasant but above all, simple manner. Following the illustration, information and resources are shared, brief and simple, straight to the motivational point.

The visual representations are consistently designed simply with basic graphic design elements like circles, squares, colour blocks and gradients to illustrate the universal but complex concepts.

Language: American English – motivational tone – positive psychology

The language of the caption is clear, and it's tone approachable and comforting, like a compassionate psychologist.

Medium & Accessibility: Graphic representation and text shared on mainstream online platforms - newsletters, social media posts and podcast. Sharing the content both in visual and audio formats.

The exact same content in the same structure is shared on the newsletter and the podcast which is the audio version by the author and usually lasts one to five minutes, which is how long it takes to read the content.

The visual representation of the text mostly illustrates an idea from start to end or two contrasting ideas to represent the concept. Everyone can easily understand it as this project tackles universal ideas of human experience and the way is shared with the audience makes this project universal, useful, accessible and inclusive.

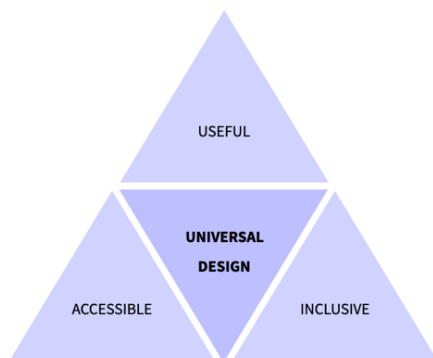
The reason of the simple graphics is because this project started on the social media platform Instagram during Covid-19 lockdown, as the founder a self-taught designer, set herself the challenge to create a daily graph that represented the concept or idea she would share each day.

CONTEXT PROJECT

Position with my research:

TNH is an adequate reference for this project due to its content (supporting well-being), structure (graphic and information), representation (simple colourful graphics) and most importantly, the values behind the project and the founder's intention (being of service to others).

As the universal design graph informs (graph found during research), for a design to be universal, needs to be equally accessible, inclusive and useful.



- *Accessible*, as TNH shares a range of science-backed philosophical, well-being and psychological concepts in bite-sized easy to consume and digest content.
- *Useful*, as it shares information to individuals with the intention of helping them look at issues with a new or different perspective.
- *Inclusive*, as it is shared in a variety to formats and platforms to suit the different needs of audiences.



CONTEXT AUDIENCE

“Good design enables, bad design disables” said once Paul Hogan founder of the Institute of Design and Disability.

I consider TNH to be good design as it enables to pause, reflect and start a conversation about the topics shared on its content.

The success of this project makes it clearly a universal project (with 900,000+ subscribers). This shows there’s a need in society for this type of content in these difficult times (it started at the beginning of covid-19 look down and continues through the current wars and cost of living crisis).

In May 2024 The New Happy® book will be published by Penguin Random House.

EVALUATION

Negative Critique:

Stephanie Harrison’s The New Happy® is somewhat a more superficial and simpler American version of the British Alain’s de Botton School of life. TNH oversimplifies concepts for things to be swallowed without chewing, like the problem of TED talks explained by Benjamin Bratton. It’s social media therapy, a mainstream perspective, a shallow and unhelpful approach as it doesn’t support one to go deep to find the root cause but rather offers a quick fix band aid solution, a panacea, to everyday issues.

Large companies book the founder of TNH for inspirational, motivational talks and consultations but remains unclear if it helps or solves systematic problems of our overdemanding fast culture.

Positive Critique:

While researching ethics of graphic design, In the book Good: an introduction to ethics in graphic design by L. Roberts, there’s an interesting conversation with the philosopher Anthony Greylink that says that (and I quote) “Designers have the ethical responsibility to try making the world a more beautiful place.”.

I find this sentence interesting; readers can question what is beautiful as it is so subjective, however to me TNH creates aesthetically pleasing graphics which I would describe as beautiful and at the same time, TNH is trying to make the world a better place by sharing positive psychology for people to reflect in their daily lives and successfully reaching millions of short attention span users.

POSITION

TENSION WITH MY PROJECT

Opposite to some experiments of my project where I tried to communicate both exact data and concept via different iterations by drawing inspiration from Dear Data and Visualising Complexity. TNH successfully represents concepts with minimal graphics and does not try to communicate exact scientific data.



ANTITHESIS

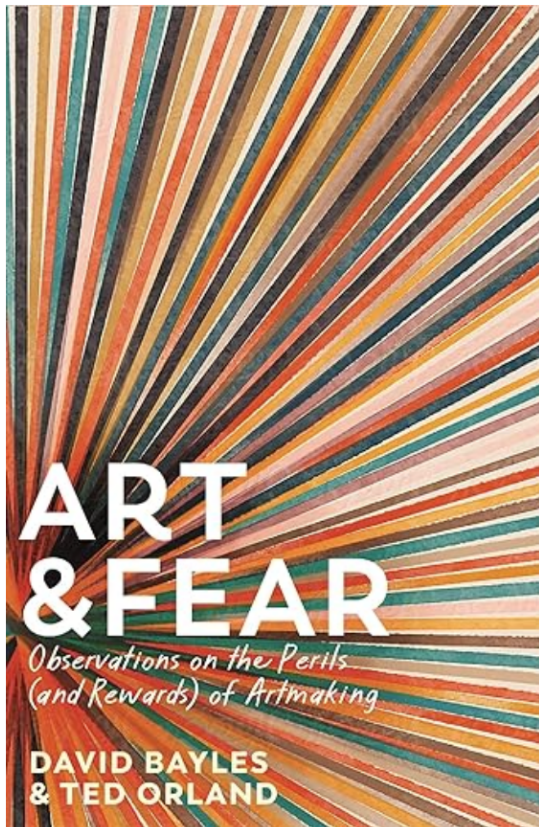
△2 Reference

Tutor Recommended

Art & Fear, 1994

David Bayles & Ted Orland

Observations on the Perils and Rewards of art making in a Freudian style like book that reflects on judgments and expectations from oneself and the outer world about making art.



“If making art gives substance to your sense of self, the corresponding fear is that you’re not up to the task —that you can’t do it, or can’t do it well, or can’t do it again; or that you’re not a real artist, or not a good artist, or have no talent, or have nothing to say.

The line between the artist and his/her work is a fine one at best, and for the artist it feels (quite naturally) like there is no such line. Making art can feel dangerous and revealing. Making art is dangerous and revealing.

Making art precipitates self-doubt, stirring deep waters that lay between what you know you should be, and what you fear you might be. For many people, that alone is enough to prevent their ever getting started at all—and for those who do, trouble isn’t long in coming. Doubts, in fact, soon rise in swarms:

*I’m not an artist — I’m a phony
I have nothing worth saying
I’m not sure what I’m doing
Other people are better than I am
I’m only a [student/physicist/mother/whatever]
I’ve never had a real exhibit
No one understands my work
No one likes my work
I’m no good”*

INTRO

Art & Fear: Observations on the Perils (and Rewards) of Artmaking was published in 1991 and it is one hundred and twenty-five pages exploring what entails, means and feels to make art and the fear that comes with it, from two authors that are creatives and artistic themselves and have experienced it themselves.

Intention: communicate observations and reflections about the positive and negative issues of art making to help artists identify and overcome both personal and external judgments and expectations.

Aims: The book **Art and Fear**, gives a space for one to reflect and confront one’s monsters/demons (and fear) about their creative practice and its place in society. It gives context and understanding. It’s a pep talk.



STRUCTURE

The structure of this book is divided in two parts, breaking the observations by the artist's inner self and outer world perspectives of issues around art. From fears about failure, the inner self world and outer world as well as academia.

Medium: 150 pages printed monochrome book

Accessibility: visual

Language: English - Theoretical – Freudian

The language of this book is approachable and comforting, like a wise empathic teacher or a self-help book about creative anxiety and the reality of making art, art education and how society and the system we live in does not fully and truly support for individuals to be artistic.

The book specifically states it's about every-day art, which in my opinion, that is what designers do every day to earn their living in the creative industries. I believe fashion, music, graphic design are contemporary creative arts. To me arts goes beyond the conventional description of it.

EVALUATION

Negative Critique:

It does not provide any solutions and can seem less approachable due to its format. However, It's easier to read than one might have expected.

Positive Critique:

It goes into the deep ends of issues explored without trying to oversimplify any of the concepts or ideas. In fact, I think it's a vulnerable honest take of what artists go through or find themselves believing.

POSITION

TENSION WITH MY PROJECT

This book is relevant and on point with the issues I am exploring through this project with the participants answers of the research questionnaire as well as my personal position in my creative practice and as a lecturer in a creative university. It gives clear insights and I found myself saying many "this is true" moments.



UNIT 2 ENQUIRY JOURNEY:
HOW TO VISUALLY REPRESENT COMPLEX EXISTENTIAL AND HUMAN EXPERIENCES.
FROM THE INEFFABLE AND CONSCIOUSNESS TO CREATIVE ANXIETY.

SYNTHESIS

△3 Studio Practice

Certain human experiences are universal but there might not be the need to universalise everything. By oversimplifying concepts for everyone to understand the result can become dehumanised and shallow. My studio practice failed to successfully communicate the concept of creative anxiety, as peers did not understand my graphics and they created more anxiety than ease.

REFLECTIONS

After the dialogues over the summer, the project has taken a new and more narrow approach to the question. Instead of continuing trying to visually represent the broad conceptual *ineffable*, I have narrowed it down to trying to represent *creative anxiety*.

To get to this point, I researched into what is universal design, accessibility, inclusive neurodivergent design and ethics.

Although briefly I contemplated the idea to design for anxiety, through my studio practice I quickly realised I was more interested in finding ways to visually represent the commonalities experienced by designers when experiencing creative anxiety while working on a creative project.

During the research phase of the project, I sent out a questionnaire to different kinds of creative practitioners from haute couture fashion designers, music and playlist designers, creative directors and graphic designers.

From the answers I found common issues which I tried to explore different ways to communicate the data following inspiration from *Visualising Complexity: Modular Information Design Handbook*. In contrast as I also tried to represent the data via digitally illustrated representations.

In my studio work I tried to visually represent common issues and answers from my research in a graph format as well as a digital illustration. The experiments were not successful, causing anxiety and misinterpretations amongst peers and tutor.

I came to the realisation that the choices I had taken (approach, medium and techniques) to universalise and oversimplify, removed the humane and complex elements of the content. To design accessibly and inclusively we need humans at the centre of the design, and I had unintentionally removed them.
