



Projection²

1 Abstract (220 words)

Elva is a creative practitioner and educator based in London. Through her practice, she often explores philosophical concepts around the subjects of Creativity and Creative Consciousness. Her practice is influenced by mindfulness and extra sensory perception. It is visually characterised by minimal line illustration and use of colour. Her core creative process strategies are systems, thinking through making, reflection, and meditation.

During Projection¹ Elva explored “What is the role of tools such as creative prompts or activity books in the development of creative consciousness?” The outcome of the research became a workbook with 21 guide drawing meditations paired with a grid for the audience to initiate their meditative journey through doodling.

During Projection² Elva explored from a personal position “What is creative consciousness and what it means for graphic communication design?”. The outcome, an artefact titled “Meditation: The Method of Creative Consciousness” and a “Creative Consciousness: *GLOSSARY*”.

“Meditation: The Method of Creative Consciousness” is a collection of visual representations, definitions, reflections, and exercises, where Elva materialises, reflects, and defines what Creative Consciousness is and what it means in regards of a critical graphic communication design context from a personal position.

The “*GLOSSARY*” gathers all the spontaneous visualisations and their meanings for individuals to decode their own visions after their meditation session and it becomes a toolkit for the regular meditator.

2 Context (1233 words)

Creativity and the creative process is a popular subject of study (think of double diamond design process, Bono’s thinking hats, etc.) but it is also very mysterious, as it has a mystical and intuitive aspect to it.

To answer what is creative consciousness and what it means for graphic communication design, I will explore creative consciousness and its link with meditation through definition and reflections from a personal position.

Creative Consciousness

Creative consciousness is the perception and awareness of every thought, decision, step, and influence, during the creative process.

Creative practitioners tap into it and embody creative consciousness during the creative process. It is a sparkling creative field of energy that all creatives access while working on a project, consciously aware or not.

In a graphic communication design both commercial and or educational environments, it includes every step from inception to outcome production. This means the brief and its boundaries, the inspirations, research analysis, feedback from clients, tutors, mentors, peers, responses to the critiques, comments, the audience, etc.

Creativity is more than just doodling or connecting ideas; it is a spiritual experience.

Meditation is the method through which one can be aware of accessing creative consciousness.

Meditation

Meditation is relevant to creativity and creative consciousness for it is the method which supports the development of awareness and perception. As it helps improve cognitive flexibility, clear the mind to leave space for creative thinking, helps unleash imagination and develop resilience during any creative process.



It is within the stillness of the mind that there is space for creative thinking and creativity. Meditation helps put the ego aside and clear the chaotic mind for creativity and innovation to flourish.

Meditation increases creative performance, irrespective of meditation style (Müller, Gerasimova, & Ritter, 2016). It is a tool that supports cognitive flexibility, and helps the creative individual sit back and be aware of one's own thoughts. Practicing nonattachment observations of one's thoughts can help let them go, understand the reasoning behind all creative decisions, process daily life events and emotional responses.

Personal position to meditation:

Like everyone else, I was introduced to mindfulness and meditation at some unmemorable time of my life, but it did not become part of my daily routine for a very long time. However, after surviving a near death experience and being diagnosed with severe post-traumatic stress disorder, it was suggested for me to practice meditation to better manage the life disrupting symptoms of PTSD. At that point, I purposefully tried it.

I believe that for many, meditation seems to be an unachievable practice, which just works for the enlightened few or wellbeing purposes only. With this body of work, I intend to share my experience, demystify the practice, and suggest meditation for creativity as a method that supports the creative process.

Projections^{1&2} creative process strategies:

- **Activities, exercises, instructions and/or prompts:**

Activities, exercises, and prompts can be beneficial at an introductory level to ease in and get started with a practice that is unfamiliar to the self. They can be restricting and stifling creativity due to its constraints but depending on the context and setting they can be useful. As an educator and reflective practitioner I find them helpful to navigate and break the ice.

- **Systems:**

I create my own systems and set my own instructions to follow when working on projects as they help me get started working on any project. For example, in Projection¹ I developed a system to generate prompts/activities which later lead to something else. In Projection² I created another system, a set of instructions for me to follow to generate content, more details below.

- **Meditation:**

Meditation is a studied practice and there are many scholars' investigative articles that study the practice and the consequences it has to an individual and its practices. It has been studied from neurological, psychological, educational, and spiritual perspectives.

To generate visual content from a personal position for Projection², I meditated 20min on each chakra, sketching and writing all spontaneous visualisations I experienced during the meditations.

Spontaneous visualisations experienced during meditation are visual expressions of consciousness and they come in like photographic slides, one after the other, in a dreamlike visual form.

- **Instructions:**

The set of instructions followed to generate visual content during Projection² is the below.

1. Sit down at a quiet and safe space that allows relaxation and concentration.
2. Set the intention to experience visualisations during the meditation.
3. Close the eyes and focus the attention to centre through the breath.
4. Once centred and focused, place the attention on the colour, body position and mantra of the specific chakra you wish to meditate on.



Example: Heart chakra meditation - hands on the chest, physical focus on top of the lung area under collar bone, focus on the colours green or pink and repeat the mantra YAM.

5. Breath until spontaneous visualisations appear, visions do not come rapidly and takes time and practice. Visions are like thoughts, they can show up one after the other, it is important not to hold on to them, they are expressions of consciousness.
6. Have paper and pen at the ready, when the first visualisations appear, sketch them quickly and blindly on to the paper.

All spontaneous visualisations have their own meaning, one can ask for their meaning on a separate meditation exercise. A visual glossary of meditative spontaneous visualisations is an ongoing project I have been working on, which expands daily with each meditation.

- **Visual representations:**

My illustrative practice is anchored in simplistic and minimal shapes. This is a personal choice made from comfort and restriction. When sketching fast with eyes closed can be difficult to draw detailed imagery that makes sense after. Details can get lost in translation and simple geometric shapes are most recurrent visual elements of spontaneous visualisations through meditation.

While occasionally I see more complex and iconic metaphoric images like animals of scenery, most of the time are geometric shapes. Furthermore, I find minimal illustrations a pleasing contrast to the complexity of abstract concepts, making it easier for myself and perhaps also the audience to engage with, as meditation and creative consciousness can seem too ethereal and, even perhaps overwhelming.

- **Reflection and thinking through making:**

Reflection and thinking through making are regular creative processes of my work but it was the core process through Projection¹.

Thinking through making was utilised through to develop the research question on to an outcome. While it might seem none-sensical at first, it's through making that I can make sense of a project and find a direction. Once I've tested something that gets my intuition's attention, I would follow the thread even if I do not know where it will take me.

A simple doodle can spark a thought or an idea that if we stop to reflect on it can be a major pivotal point on the creative journey of a project. Reflection is both an important action at the end of completing a drawing meditation and to improve the production of any project at every step.

- **Translation:**

Translation is the key method utilised to produce the visual glossary of meditative spontaneous visualisations. The visualisations are deconstructed into elements to decipher a message. By meditating on each element, I can understand their singular meaning and build the glossary. Once I have all the meanings of the elements, I can translate the visualisations and understand their complete meaning.

3 Projected contribution (220 words)

Often the job of a graphic designer is making the invisible, visible.

This project has the intention to articulate the invisible and to materialise spirituality. Creative consciousness is a part of human experience, experienced by anyone during their creative practice. Answering the questions of what creative consciousness is and what is the role of activity books in the development of creative consciousness is my personal input to the research field of creativity and the creative process, as a creative practitioner and educator.



“Meditation: The Method of Creative Consciousness” could be further researched and explored as workshops in creative education courses to support the creative process and reflective practice, and the “Creative Consciousness: *GLOSSARY*” is a project that I will continue expanding daily.

While philosophical, and an abstract concept, creative consciousness has been the main topic explored through my work at MAGCD. The conception, research, methods of exploration and execution are deeply rooted in graphic design processes – such systems, visual representation, translation, etc.

The work explored in this course is one that will continue outside this master’s degree. Specially since meditation, intuition and spirituality have taken an important role in my creative process. The visual glossary of spontaneous visualisations is a project that expands continuously after each meditation and which I wish to further build as an ongoing project beyond MAGCD.

Bibliography

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