



The Book Spotter's Guide to Avian Titled Literature

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Abstract

In order to remain relevant in the digital age, physical libraries have to strengthen their position as social and cultural spaces. They need to find ways to challenge existing users perceptions of the collections and how they are accessed and presented.

In an attempt to engage with these challenges, the University of Technology Sydney Library redesigned its visual identity and interior spaces, and commissioned us to create an installation in the central stairwell. From our initial research we formed the following question: how can we design a creative work (installation) that suggests the library is a space for play and discovery?

This paper reports a practice-based research project with two intrinsically linked outcomes:

1. An installation: 'Avian Titled Literature' – 30 altered books hung as a 'flock' in the central stairwell at the University of Technology, Sydney Library, with a set of ten accompanying A2 posters. The installation aims to visually communicate that the Library is a space for play and discovery.
2. A hybrid exegesis: 'Field Guide to Avian Titled Literature' is a document that tells the story of the installation, reporting the tacit knowledge embedded in the design process. It is 'hybrid' in that the document communicates through word, image and materiality.

The project is the first iteration of a larger, ongoing research project investigating ways visual communication design could encourage serendipitous discovery, browsing and more playful engagement within libraries.

Author Keywords

Practitioner-research; reflective practice; visual metaphor; installation; hybrid exegesis.

Research Imperatives

This project stems from a problem in the world – the relevance of a physical library in a digital age. Libraries need to strengthen their position as social and cultural spaces – finding ways to communicate this strategic aim is rich territory for design research. *Avian Titled Literature* is the first iteration of an ongoing research project in which we collaborate with libraries to help make their collections accessible, relevant and captivating to a broad audience.

The University of Technology Sydney Library positions itself as the social and cultural hub of an inner-city university campus. Recently, the Library overhauled its visual identity and redesigned interior spaces in response to changing user needs. This visual and spatial redesign aims to shift the perception of a university library from a staid and conservative institutional space, to a more active and engaging space for learning and socialising. As part of the redesign, the Library commissioned us to create an original work to enliven the three-story void in the central stairwell.

Research Process

From personal conversations with librarians, and the paper *From Search to Discovery in our Future Library*, (Booth, Tiffen and Vawdrey 2012) we formed the briefing question: how could we

design a creative work (installation) that suggests the library is a space for play and discovery?

An Installation

The result is an installation of 30 altered books suspended as a flock in the stairwell. Each book represents a novel from the Library collection that has a bird in the title – *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Flaubert's Parrot*, etc. A set of ten posters is mounted on the stairwell wall, prompting different interpretations of the bird-books (Fig. 1).

The installation acts as a metaphor that can be understood in several ways. First, as a visual simile: if you hang a book by the spine it looks like a bird. Second, as visual metaphor: the books refer to knowledge, flocking and rising in the university library. Third, by folding the books (something you are not supposed to do in libraries) and ordering them in an idiosyncratic way (birds in the title of novels, not by author or content) the installation disrupts the natural order of things, challenging the perception of the library as a conservative institution. We aimed to create a work with layers of possible readings in order to encourage "reading, curiosity, exploration, and wonder about the Library and its collection" (UTS Librarian Mal Booth, pers. Com.).

We searched the catalogue to find novels held in the UTS Library; it was important to connect the installation explicitly to the collection. This search produced more books than we could possibly suspend, so we edited the list to reveal a range of bird species in the title (twenty-one unique species).

A key consideration was for the book titles to be legible, so an understanding of the installation unfolds as patrons walk up the stairs. To draw attention the bird-titles (and not distract the viewer with cover images), we designed simple dust jackets for the books. Each cover features a silhouette of the titular bird on the spine, and the 'call number' to locate the book in the library (Fig. 2).

These silhouettes and call numbers are also listed on an A2 poster – 'Book Spotter's Guide to Avian Titled Literature' – (Fig. 3) that is displayed on the stairwell wall, inviting library patrons to spot the



Figure 1. 'Avian Titled Literature', 2012. Central stairwell, UTSLibrary, Sydney.

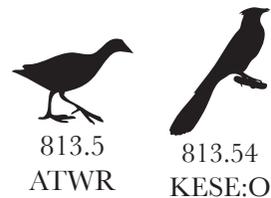


Figure 2. Bird silhouettes and call numbers for book spines. 'Oryx and Crake' (Margaret Atwood), left, and 'One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest' (Ken Kesey) right.

different books, and hopefully prompt them to find them on the shelves.



Figure 3: A2 poster 'The Book Spotter's Guide to Avian Titled Literature'.

In addition, a series of A2 posters present quotations from the books in which the birds 'appear'. Traditionally, users locate books

through the library catalogue searching by author, title or subject. These posters encourage discovery by giving a taste of the writing style: the posters transform the moment of wonder into a possibility of engagement with individual texts.

In order to find these quotes we used a 'focused data-mining' approach, 'mining' a written text for specific information¹ (Sadokierski and Sweetapple, 2012). We were looking for passages where the bird name appeared, to reinforce the idea of the project. By isolating these passages, we could choose a passage that worked as a kind of 'pull quote' for the book; a paragraph of text that gives a taste for the writing style – rather than a plot summary (Fig. 4 and Fig. 5).



Figure 4. A2 posters mounted on the stairwell wall.



Figure 5: Detail of A2 poster with a quote from one novel

A Hybrid Exegesis

Additionally, we produced a 'field guide' (hybrid exegesis) that reports tacit knowledge embedded in the design process, in a sharable way. Accompanying the Avian Titled Literature installation, we produced a 'hybrid exegesis' called 'Field Guide to Avian Titled Literature'. To clarify what 'hybrid exegesis' means, it is necessary to pick it apart.

Hybrid: The term 'hybrid book' describes novels in which graphic elements (photographs, drawings, diagrams) are integrated within the written text, as literary devices. (Sadokierski 2010) These graphic devices are more than illustrations of the written text, they are an integral part of the text. You cannot remove them without significantly altering the primary text. 'Hybrid' gives a sense that word and image are grafted together to form an argument, rather than the image illustrating the text.

Exegesis: In universities and art schools, an exegesis is a written text in which the creative practitioner critically examines their work in light of contemporary theory and practice. This written exegesis often includes images that function as illustrations of the written argument. Although some exegesis may include images that form part of the argument, it is not an expectation of the genre of exegesis writing that this is the case.

By combining the terms, we are emphasising that our research report is made through a combination of word and image. The images in the hybrid exegesis do more than offer illustrations of the written text; they form part of the argument.

In this paper, we describe the research and design process that led to the installation. In addition we argue for the significance of a hybrid exegesis as a way to disseminate findings from a practice-based research project.

¹ We used SCRIBD.COM to search the books for specific words or phrases.

Research outcomes

There is research embedded in the design and creation of the Avian Titled Literature installation, however this is primarily the kind of research that practitioners regularly undertake in commercial or artistic practice.

The scholarly research contribution comes through the articulation of our research methods and the insights drawn from our design process in a sharable way – ‘reflective practice’ (Schön, 1983). Importantly, for the discipline of design, we communicate this knowledge as a hybrid exegesis – a document that makes an argument through the interplay of word, image and materiality (Sadokierski 2010), (Figs. 6, 7 and 8).

It is difficult to position design practice as research without explaining the context in which it came to be. Just as a researcher begins a scholarly article by positioning it in a particular field and referencing theory or texts she has drawn from, practitioner researchers must frame their creative practice for it to be understood as a research outcome. Where the writer takes a new idea and frames it in a theoretical context, a practitioner-researcher creates a new work, and tells the story of that work: what led to its creation, the process of creation and where it points the maker to next. It is this deliberate process of articulating the context, process and findings of a design project that constitutes a contribution to a field. Traditional scholarly journals are not always an appropriate forum to report practitioner research for several reasons. First, due to restricted space on the page and budget considerations, many journals do not accommodate large quantities of images that are necessary to explain a design process. Scholarly journals tend to prioritise written arguments over visual or verbal-visual arguments.

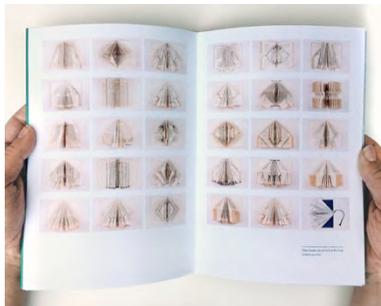


Figure 6, 7, 8. Spreads from our hybrid exegesis.

Second, practitioner-researchers often do not produce creative work that is based on or framed by traditional scholarly theoretical frameworks, therefore finding reviewers for these submissions is difficult. Therefore, practitioner-researchers need to find alternative ways to disseminate their research that accommodate verbal and visual arguments.

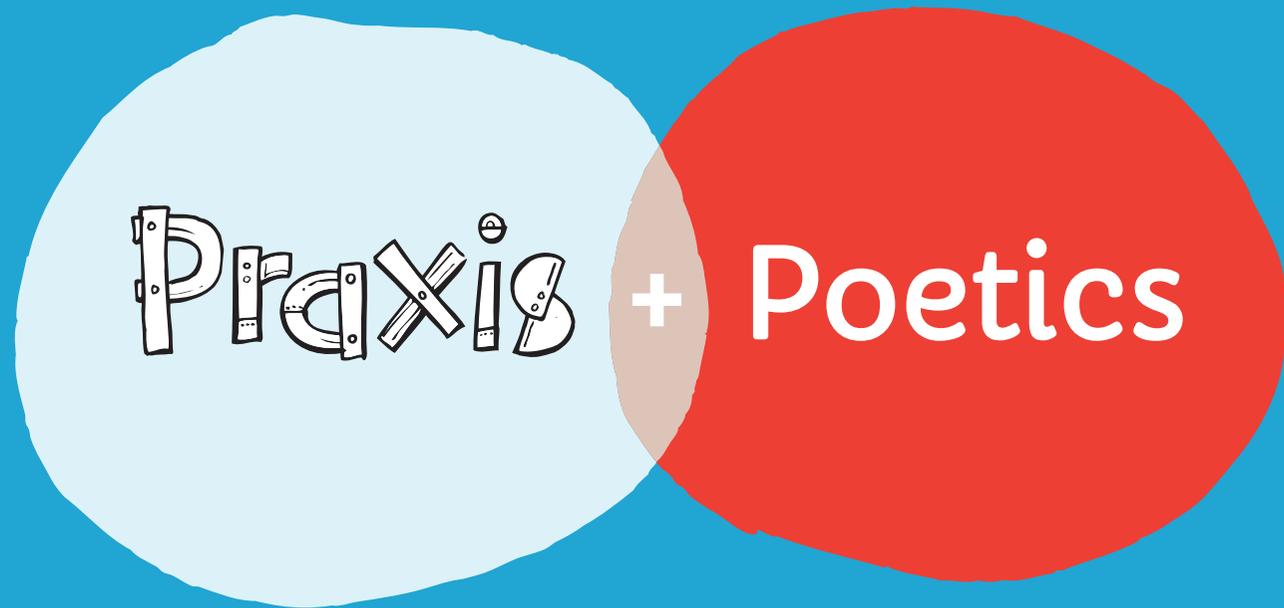
This model of disseminating design research is gaining momentum as an alternative to the traditional research paper. Aside from our own Page Screen research studio (Australia) are: The Hybrid Publishing Lab (Germany), and The Publishing Lab (UK/Spain).² The production of this book adds to the growing body of knowledge disseminated in this way.

By recording our research process and findings in this way, particularly of site specific or durational works, we can show an arc over time of where these projects lead to, and where future projects have stemmed from. We hope this project marks the beginning of a deeper engagement with cultural institutions. It is perhaps only then that the research outcomes from this project will be fully accounted for.

References

1. Booth, M., Tiffen, B., and Vawdrey, J (2012) *From Search to Discovery in our Future Library*, ALIA Biennial Conference 2012, Sydney. <http://conferences.alia.org.au/alia2012/papers.html>
2. Sadokierski, Z (2010), *Visual Writing; A critique of graphic devices in hybrid novels from a visual communication design perspective*, unpublished doctoral thesis.
3. Sadokierski, Z. and Sweetapple, K. (2012) *Drawing Out: How designers analyse written texts in visual ways*, Design Research Society 2012: Bangkok, p.1646 - 1659
4. Schön, D. (1983) *The Reflective Practitioner*. London: Temple Smith.

² hybridpublishing.org; the-publishing-lab.com; pagescreenstudio.com



Research Through Design
2013 Conference Proceedings

3rd – 5th September 2013

The Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art
Newcastle upon Tyne & Gateshead, UK

Praxis + Poetics

2013 Research Through Design Conference

Editorial Team

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An Introduction to Research Through Design



Dr Jayne Wallace

is a Reader and Research Fellow at Dundee University, Duncan & Jordanstone College of Art and Design, UK.



Dr Joyce Yee

is a Senior Lecturer in Interaction and Service Design at Northumbria University, UK.

Welcome to the Praxis and Poetics: Research Through Design 2013 conference. This is the start of something new and something that we hope will be the beginning of an exciting ongoing conference format for presenting and discussing design research.

As designers, practitioners and researchers the things that we make and the practice by which we do so is central to what we do and who we are. We wanted to hold a conference that both reflected this and that would offer multi-textural opportunities for presenting and discussing our work.

Through placing an exhibition at the heart of the conference we aim to bring the materiality of the physical artefacts and media that we produce to the fore in the conference forum.

The exhibition provides not only a central platform for the expression of research enquiries and outcomes, but also becomes a tangible part of each group of roundtable presentations and discussion sessions in our 'rooms of interest' throughout the

conference. And where better to hold an exhibition in Newcastle/Gateshead than at the BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art? We are thrilled to be hosting the conference at a venue with world-class provenance as a centre for creative exhibition and discussion. We are excited also to welcome keynotes who each stand as pioneers and masters of their areas of design and who are each fascinated by the potential of design research.

Our conference theme of Praxis and Poetics speaks not only of the act of designing and the heterogeneity of making, but also the beauty and grace within this, which we believe to be at the heart of design practice and research. We have been delighted by the strength of submissions to the conference and how praxis and poetics have been explored within them - so much so that we were moved to add a poster track to the conference to showcase a further strand of work. So welcome to what we anticipate to be a stimulating few days of presentation and discussion!

Jayne and Joyce



Praxis and Poetics: Research Through Design Conference 2013

3rd - 5th September 2013

Hosted by Northumbria University at the BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art

The first Research Through Design conference aims to explore multi-textural opportunities for presenting and discussing non discipline specific research through design and resists the temptation to adopt a traditional format for both paper submission and presentation in favour of an exhibition of design research accompanied by roundtable presentations and discussions in 'rooms of interest'. The exhibition will be used as a platform to present and express outcomes of research, demonstrate examples of research enquiries and generate debate about the role of making in design research. The conference theme of Praxis and Poetics represents the different modes and approaches to practice as well as a larger ethos around content related to poetics, beauty and grace.



Conference Chairs:

Dr Jayne Wallace & Dr Joyce Yee (Design, University of Northumbria)

This conference will be co-located with [DPPI – Designing Pleasurable Products and Interfaces](#) conference. Find out more about both conferences at www.praxisandpoetics.org

Registration

The registration fee is £300 before July 18th, rising to £350 after this date. By registering for Research Through Design 2013 you are also automatically registered for DPPI 2013, which is collocated with Research Through Design this year. Register via the button to the right.



Please note: the deadline for registrations is Friday 23rd August

Accommodation Information

Hotel

We have secured a special conference rate with Encore Newcastle Gateshead [located right by the BALTIC]

<http://www.encorennewcastlegateshead.co.uk/>

The conference special offer is for single occupancy in a double room with breakfast for £60 per night – authors and delegates please contact us ad.RTDconference@northumbria.ac.uk for the offer code following your registration at the conference and book directly with the hotel. This deal is subject to availability and can be booked by ringing +44 (0)191 481 3600 or emailing enquiries@encorennewcastlegateshead.co.uk once you have the code from us.

Student Halls

There is accommodation available in Northumbria University Student Halls during the summer months. Winn Studios or New Bridge Street halls are the newest and closest to the Baltic/Quayside. Winn Studios for example provides a self-catered room with ensuite and breakfast basics for £35 a night. To book please contact the Events Team regarding accommodation by emailing summerstays@northumbria.ac.uk or by calling +44 (0)191 227 4499. Please note the university has limited availability in Winn Studios and New Bridge Street so early booking is suggested.

Important Submission Dates

Final Paper Submission - 7th July, 2013

Artefact Arrival Date - 5th August, 2013

For general conference enquiries please email ad.RTDconference@northumbria.ac.uk

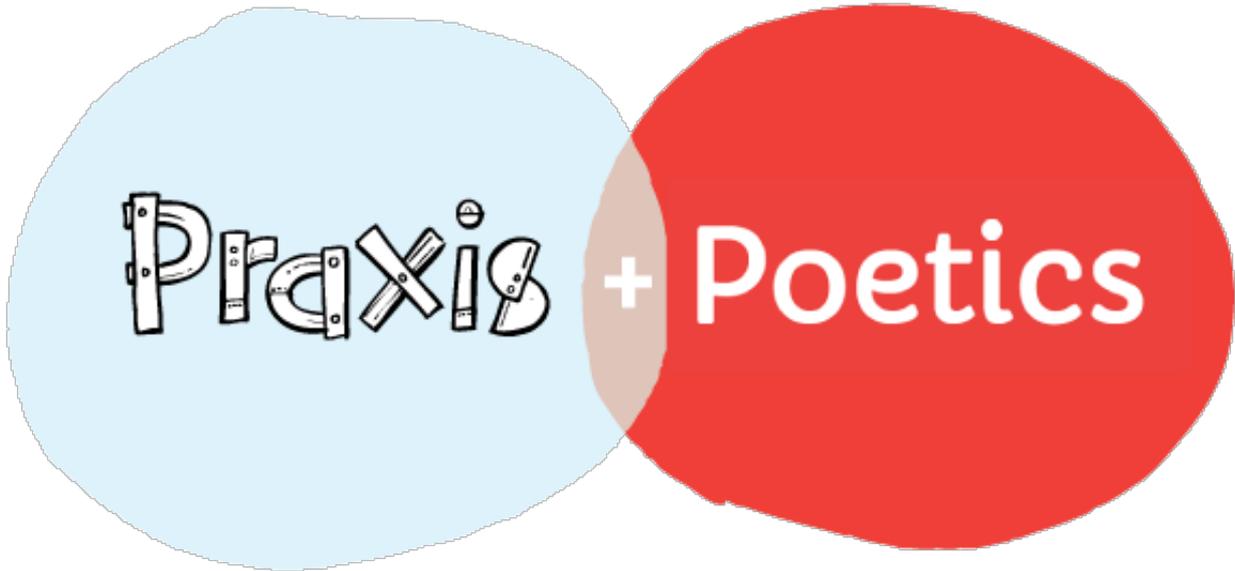
Additional information on can be found at www.praxisandpoetics.org/researchthroughdesign

Date posted: February 1, 2013

[Back](#)

Praxis and Poetics

Co-Hosting the 2013 Research Through Design and DPPI Conferences



Welcome to the Praxis and Poetics website.

This site involves two parallel conferences happening in Newcastle:

- The [DPPI conference](#) and the
- [Research Through Design](#) conference.

Research Through Design

2013 Conference

Welcome to Research Through Design

3rd – 5th September 2013



The first international biannual Praxis and Poetics: Research Through Design conference hosted by Northumbria University at the BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art UK.

Thank you to all of our conference organiser committee members, reviewers, session chairs, student volunteers, colleagues in the DPPI organisation committee, sponsors, supporters and delegates for making a fantastic few days possible!

Here are some [fantastic pictures](#) taken by the DPPI and RTD community.

And some really great blogs and write ups as well.

Vicky Teinaki's fantastic [summary](#) of the RTD conference

Carolina Figueroa's [summary](#) on some of the participants works

Richard Banks' notes on [Rachel Wingfield's keynote](#)

Richard Banks' notes on [Session 1, Day 1](#)

Jon Rogers' [storify piece](#)

Jayne, Joyce and Abi

The conference aims to explore multi-textural opportunities for presenting and discussing non discipline specific research through design. We are **resisting the temptation to adopt a traditional format for both paper submission and presentation in favour of an exhibition of design research accompanied by roundtable presentations and discussions in ‘rooms of interest’.**

The exhibition and artefacts will be central to the conference and used as a platform to present or express outcomes of research, demonstrate examples of research enquiries and generate debate about the role of making in design research. The conference theme of Praxis and Poetics represents the different modes and approaches to practice as well as a larger ethos around content related to poetics, beauty and grace.

Submissions are taking the form of an artefact (exhibited at the conference) accompanied by a commentary paper (max 4 pages). We have also created a Poster track due to the high quality and quantity of submissions. We have welcomed submissions of both final and developmental research. All submissions have been double peer reviewed and the exhibition will be curated. **All papers and images of the artefacts will be published in ISBN digital conference proceedings.**

For general conference enquiries please email: ad.RTDconference@northumbria.ac.uk.

We’re collocated with [Designing Pleasurable Products and Interfaces](#) conference meaning that by registering for one conference you are automatically eligible to attend the other. This offers delegates a unique opportunity to attend DPPI’s traditional talks of design focused research outcomes alongside Research Through Design’s exhibitions and round-table discussions on the practice of design.

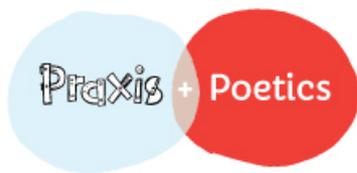
We look forward to seeing you in Newcastle upon Tyne and Gateshead in September 2013!

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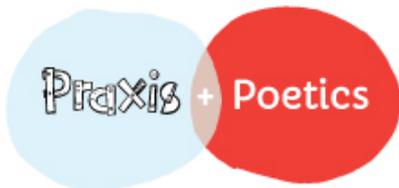
Full Paper Review

Number and Title of Paper	025 – The Book Spotter’s Guide to Avian Titled Literature	
Please highlight and add comments into the PDF itself where any passages feel unclear (for whatever reason – grammar, logic, quality of writing). If you have problems adding to the PDF please add as much detail as possible here instead.	I have added comments into the PDF.	
Has the authors retained the structure of Research Imperatives, Research Process and Research Outcomes?	Yes	
Please write your full review of the paper including the merits of the paper, suggested improvements – and whether you feel that it is of high enough quality to be included in the conference or not.	<p>This is a clearly written paper and describes the research imperatives and process in detail. The paper has merit in that it describes an interesting project that attempts to address how a creative work (installation) can suggest that the library is a space for play and discovery. It is of high enough quality to be included in the conference subject to changes suggested below.</p> <p>Areas of improvements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There should be more contextual examples of other installation art/design works that aimed to communicate play and discovery. 2. The research outcomes section needs to be expanded on. How was the installation received? What were the reaction from the library visitors? Did they perceive it as a place for play and discovery? Was there any attempt at collecting visitor’s viewpoint or reaction to the installation? 3. The authors have acknowledged that the research contribution comes ‘through the articulation of our research methods and the insights drawn from our design process in a sharable way’ in the hybrid exegesis document. However, they did not explain nor show this aforementioned document, which grounds this project as research rather than just a design project. Why is the format unique and relevant for the dissemination of this type of design research project? <p>Decision: Accept with minor revisions as stated above.</p>	
Is the available space used well in the paper? (aside from template issues – which we will rectify in the final amendments to papers phase)	Yes. The text is quite short, so there is room to expand on the text or add more images.	
Is the correct referencing convention used? In-text references should be indicated with author	Yes	



Full Paper Review

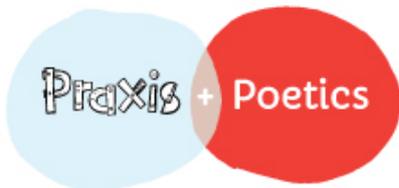
surname followed by year in brackets, (Edwards, 2011) with an alphabetical listing of all references added to the end of the document using the Harvard referencing format.	
Is the correct image convention used both within the body of the text and under each image in the paper? <i>Figure 1. Please ensure that images are clear and of print quality. Use the caption beneath any figure to describe the image and only</i>	Yes
Is the paper 4 pages (including references)? Are the pages numbered 1 – 4?	Yes



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 Research Through Design Conference: Praxis and Poetics 2013

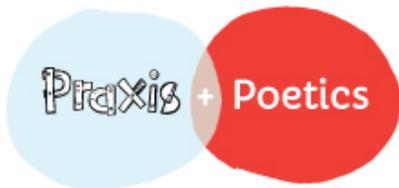
Number, Title of Paper and Lead Author Name	25, The Book Spotter's Guide to Avian Titled Literature , Sadokierski and Sweetapple
Please list/detail each of the changes you have made to the final paper including those made in relation to the reviewer suggestions.	<p>Changes have been made in response to the reviewer's annotation of our pdf and the separate full paper review document.</p> <p><u>Reviewer annotations</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewer suggestion > fuller abstract We have extended the abstract by adding the need for the research and what the research was, as follows: <i>"In order to remain relevant in the digital age, physical libraries have to strengthen their position as social and cultural spaces. They need to find ways to challenge existing users perceptions of the collections and how they are accessed and presented.</i> Reviewer suggestion > 'hybrid exegesis' not clearly described We have inserted the following text to clarify the term 'hybrid exegesis' and its significance: <i>"Accompanying the Avian Titled Literature installation, we produced a 'hybrid exegesis' called 'Field Guide to Avian Titled Literature. To clarify what 'hybrid exegesis' means, it is necessary to pick it apart.</i> <p><i>Hybrid: The term 'hybrid book' describes novels in which graphic elements (photographs, drawings, diagrams) are integrated within the written text, as literary devices. (Sadokierski 2010) These graphic devices are more than illustrations of the written text, they are an integral part of the text. You cannot remove them without significantly altering the primary text. 'Hybrid' gives a sense that word and image are grafted together to form an argument, rather than the image illustrating the text.</i></p> <p><i>Exegesis: In universities and art schools, an exegesis is a written text in which the creative practitioner critically examines their work in light of contemporary theory and practice. This written exegesis often includes images that function as illustrations of the written</i></p>

Kate Sweetapple 2/7/13 1:39 PM
 Deleted: Praxis and Poetics: Research Through Design Submission Template Including Style Names and Guidance – Apply Style: RTD-Paper Title .



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 Research Through Design Conference: Praxis and Poetics 2013

	<p><i>argument. Although some exegesis may include images that form part of the argument, it is not an expectation of the genre of exegesis writing that this is the case.</i></p> <p><i>By combining the terms, we are emphasizing that our research report is made through a combination of word and image. The images in the hybrid exegesis do more than offer illustrations of the written text, they form part of the argument."</i></p> <p>3. Reviewer suggestion > 'more detail about the book? Do you have example of the page?' We have added images of the hybrid exegesis.</p> <p><u>Full paper review comments</u></p> <p>1. There should be more contextual examples of other installation art/design works that aimed to communicate play and discovery.</p> <p><i>Due to the limited space we have decided to omit contextual examples.</i></p> <p>2. The research outcomes section needs to be expanded on. How was the installation received? What were the reaction from the library visitors? Did they perceive it as a place for play and discovery? Was there any attempt at collecting visitor's viewpoint or reaction to the installation?</p> <p><i>At this stage the reaction to the work has only been anecdotal. We haven't formally examined the response to the work. Understanding the visitors' is a different research project that demand different research skills.</i></p> <p>3. The authors have acknowledged that the research contribution comes 'through the articulation of our research methods and the insights drawn from our design process in a sharable way' in the hybrid exegesis document. However, they did not explain nor show this aforementioned document, which grounds this project as research rather than just a design project. Why is the format unique and relevant for the dissemination of this type of design research project?</p> <p><i>This point has now been covered by the inclusion of additional images and the following discussion of a hybrid exegesis (p4):</i></p>
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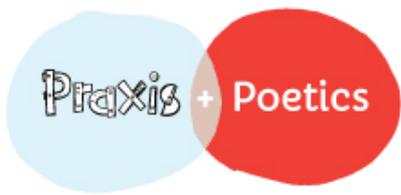
Author Amendments Made in Final Paper/Check List
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	<p><i>"It is difficult to position design practice as research without explaining the context in which it came to be. Just as a researcher begins a scholarly article by positioning it in a particular field and referencing theory or texts she has drawn from, practitioner researchers must frame their creative practice for it to be understood as a research outcome. Where the writer takes a new idea and frames it in a theoretical context, a practitioner-researcher creates a new work, and tells the story of that work: what led to its creation, the process of creation and where it points the maker to next. It is this deliberate process of articulating the context, process and findings of a design project that constitutes a contribution to a field. Traditional scholarly journals are not always an appropriate forum to report practitioner research for several reasons. First, due to restricted space on the page and budget considerations, many journals do not accommodate large quantities of images that are necessary to explain a design process. Scholarly journals tend to prioritize written arguments over visual or verbal-visual arguments. Second, practitioner-researchers often do not produce creative work that is based on or framed by traditional scholarly theoretical frameworks, therefore finding reviewers for these submissions is difficult. Therefore, practitioner-researchers need to find alternative ways to disseminate their research that accommodate verbal and visual arguments."</i></p>
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Checklist

<p>Is the correct referencing convention used? In-text references should be indicated with author surname followed by year in brackets, i.e. (Edwards, 2011) with an alphabetical listing of all references added to the end of the document using the Harvard referencing format. Direct Quotes need page numbers in addition to reference, i.e. "...blah blah" (Edwards, 2011, p. 17).</p>	Yes
<p>Is the correct image convention used both within the body of the text and under each image in the paper?</p>	Yes
<p>Is the paper 4 pages long (including references)?</p>	Yes
<p>Are the pages numbered 1 – 4?</p>	Yes
<p>Is the paper a word file (docx)?</p>	Yes
<p>Is the paper less than 2MB?</p>	Yes

Please use additional pages as necessary



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Please use additional pages as necessary