

As a child I was captivated by grids, graphs, frets, and other geometric patterns. I took shop and mechanical drawing in Junior High, spending hours drawing nuts and bolts and everything possible in a 3 dimensional way. I used grid paper to create a set of specially shaped letters just for my name because the look of the name Dianne was equally important as the name itself.

I began my serious creative studies in textile arts where the intertwining of warp and weft at a 90 degree angle allowed for exploration of the geometric patterns that fascinated me. It was also at this time that I obtained my first serious camera. Surviving Photo I, the more I used the camera the more the images I liked best were not of framed and focused subjects. A turned up section of bark on a tree, broken glass, weathered wood and especially sections of wrought-iron fencing were more and more the images that appeared in the developing bath.

Looking back I am able to connect this collecting of images in a clip-art mentality to my childhood of cutting, saving and later using in collage pictures from my mother's catalogues and magazines. I remember spending hours drooling over these printed pieces just waiting to cut out my selected treasures. I kept envelopes and folders full of *favorites* and *just the right*: flowers, birds and trees. I was also collecting text in the form of individual words or letters that could be used as imagery. I was, and still am especially interested by the letter "a." Excitement came with finding the letter in a unique form different from what I already had in my collection. This was years before the terms typeface and font entered my vocabulary, I was simply looking at shape. The bigger the letter the more visual the possibilities; from a single shape I could create a story of a mountain, a road around a lake, or another letter such as "e."



When facing a wall in the creative process, I often find myself in front of my computer with a single letter or word simply changing the font for inspiration. Before I knew who Baskerville and Goudy were or knew that art movements existed and changed with visual flair, I understood that the size and shape of a letter was expressive and powerful. I can never have enough font choices – but I can wear the same pair of shoes until they fall apart. These are just a few of the lower case font choices I have on my pc whose names begin with A or B. Each letter started with a small a in the typeface Verdana at the point size of 8. I have only changed the font, yet the case, size and stroke have been altered as well. These are magical forms when used by an imaginative mind.



By the time I received my BFA in Textile Arts very little grid or structure was critical in the work. The tightly drawn linen supports built on mechanically operated looms were replaced with loose yarns on small portable structures known as Inkle and card looms. Kent State is close enough to Cleveland and Pittsburg for an afternoon drive to a museum. I began my ritual of visiting such institutions for ideas and inspiration. To this day I will pass through rooms of painting and sculpture with reverence for the creators, but will immerse myself in the rooms of history, collections and archaeology.

Textiles have been created for centuries around the world without the need of a large heavy unmovable structure. Following an exhibition on African textiles where I was introduced to the unlimited possibilities of strip weaving my work took on a more parts nature, similar to that of my photographs. I do not consider much of what I produced then to be of great significance, but it did lay a foundation for how I work today.

John Berger, the English painter and art critic begins his text *About Looking* (Berger, About Looking 3-28) with the essay: *Why Look At Animals?* He draws a parallel between the changes in our relationship with animals and the relationship we have with each other and possibly other cultures. He begins with providing a background for the earliest relationships between man and animal.

For me – Berger's text calls the reader to attention in observing the world around, to ask questions, and to look far and wide for answers. Having been educated in painting did not limit Berger into a world that he was only able to paint. His interests led him to painting, photography, drawing, etc. While teaching he moved into art criticism and

writing (John Berger). Both his work and his life exhibit an interdisciplinary approach that is fundamental in the collection and dissemination of ideas in a creative mode.

He follows his idea back in time to early animal paintings in caves as a communication tool and lost language to the present day marginalization of animals and lower class humans. I have used this text as well as another by Berger: *Ways of Seeing* in several classes as the basis for exercises introducing students to the ideas of observation, critical thinking, and research across a variety of topics and disciplines.

In a freshman **Introduction to Graphic Design** course that I have taught, I began the semester with requiring students to read a selected passage about looking by Berger, analyze advertisements and write about their findings. This assignment on observation became the foundation for all other projects during the semester. Building upon the investigation and observation skills learned in this first assignment, students were continually encouraged to develop their analytical skills in the selection and narrowing of topics and solutions for problems which lead to educated evaluation of their work and that of their peers in the critique process.

Information Technology is not usually thought of as a creative art. Yet students learning a variety of code languages for the development of web-based material are equally in need of understanding the relationship between observation and analysis.

Introduction to XML is more than memorizing a variety of tags, elements, and syntax in the creation of a web document. Building upon the fundamentals of a mark-up languages' system for annotating text so that it can be visually displayed on the Web, XML allows the developer to create the language necessary for flexibility across the internet. In a nutshell, the individual(s) developing the XML vocabulary for a given body of text are required to select meaningful tags to identify the information for better accessing of the material through a search process, such as provided by Google or Bing.

The development of an XML vocabulary is an act of creation. At the beginning level of any XML project observation and analysis is necessary. What is the material to be disseminated? Who will access it and how. Take a box of 48 crayons and follow this through. At the simplest level, my box of favorite crayons might require a language that includes: title, favorites, crayons, and crayon and look something like this:

```
<title>Dianne's Colors</title>
<favorites>Favorites</favorites>
<crayons>
  <crayon>red</crayon>
  <crayon>green</crayon>
  <crayon>blue</crayon>
  <crayon>purple</crayon>
  <crayon>yellow</crayon>
</crayons>
```

In both of the above mentioned courses, there is an elemental combination of Media, Art, and Text. Defined at the most basic level:

- **Media** is the mode or means by which something is communicated.
- **Art** is form and content.
- **Text** is words of something written.

Graphic Design is the profession that utilizes art and technology to communicate ideas and information. As the full-time Graphic Design Coordinator at Shepherd University from 1997 until 2003, I have taught a wide range of curriculum from Introductory and Intermediate courses in color, layout and design through individualized topics such as Typography, Poster Design, Electronic Publication, History of Graphic Design, and Portfolio Development. The integration of words and visuals is constantly at play in the process of design. These courses have included introducing students to traditional methods of production as well as utilizing numerous software programs. I have created a variety of projects that have provided a balance between the development of concepts and ideas and a use of tools and techniques for their execution.

Information Technology (IT), as defined by the Information Technology Association of America (ITAA), is "the study, design, development, implementation, support or management of computer-based information systems... (Information Technology)." Since 2006, I have been teaching a variety of IT courses from the Microsoft Office suite

(i.e. Word, Excel, and PowerPoint), Internet Foundations, and assorted web development topics such as Mark-up Languages (HTML, XHTML, and XML), GUI interfaced programs (Expressions Web and Dreamweaver) and graphic software such as Photoshop and Flash. In all these classes the technology studied is an additional layer applied to the material at hand allowing for the presentation in an electronic format.

I consider Graphic Design and Information Technology as partners in a coordinated effort to offer information. Focusing on the look and feel, Graphic Design's role is in the transformation of a concept or an idea into a visual medium, making the abstract concrete. Information Technology is the vehicle for presentation and transportation of the visual. Graphic Design and Information Technology each have their own independent language, syntax and tools/technologies that require the continual learning and relearning to use efficiently and effectively. Both feed the fire of creativity.

To be an educator I am also a scholar. In order to step inside a classroom as the individual in a leadership role providing knowledge and guidance as well as inspiration and encouragement to the students enrolled, I must assume a student role in my preparation. For me, quality teaching requires more than having read the textbook or a working knowledge of the provided projects. In every course I have taught, I have done research on both the actual topic as well as on a variety of subject matters to bring into the classroom as a project. Graphic Design is more than understanding how to do a layout – it requires the designer to step into any number of topics and subject matters with confidence. Researching the topic above and beyond what a client may provide is one way of obtaining that confidence. While at Shepherd, I worked with professionals outside the University collaborating on various topics that would become projects for my students. Antietam National Battlefield in Sharpsburg, Maryland, was one such resource. I have had students design newsletters, informational brochures and posters for a variety of events at this National Park. In addition to representatives from the Battlefield visiting a class and discussing the current need, I have taken students to the Battlefield and provided them with a connection to the Library of Congress for usage of royalty-free photos and text. Volunteers from affiliated associations, such as the National Museum of Civil War Medicine in Frederick, Maryland, have also been invited to classes to add to the student's knowledge and understanding of the historical aspects surrounding Antietam and the events there.

Typography, which is the study of letterform, is by far my favorite class. I love everything about the letter from its ancient history to contemporary font designs. Understanding pivotal moments in cultural history increases one's awareness of how these societal influences have changed the organization of elements on a page. Friedl, Ott and Stein in their text: *Typography: An Encyclopedic Survey of Type Design and Techniques Throughout History* have devoted their first 80+ pages to an historical overview of the development of type and layout from as early as 3000 BC Sumerians to present day (Friedl, Ott and Stein). A quick scan of the visuals that accompany the text shows the dramatic changes in the look of the page from periods such as the 8th century under Carolingian influence, Gothic, Art Nouveau, Dada, and Constructivism through Modern and Post-Modern. The shape and placement of the text as well as the look of the image if one is used at all reflect the trends of society.

My interests in Typography and layout have led me to researching specific periods. On a visit to the Walter's Museum in Baltimore, I was fortunate to be offered the opportunity to return and use their library for personal research on the Illuminated Manuscripts in their collection. My study of these documents was not about the words on the page, instead about the page itself. It is the visual that inspires the scholar in me. Although I had learned in grade school about Scribes and hand-made books, seeing and reviewing a variety of them first-hand introduced me to a world of document construction and imagery of which I knew very little about. These documents, created over a period of several hundred years, are completely done by hand. The page is animal skin, not Staples Bright White multiuse paper; the color – sparse and selectively placed – may be nothing more than an enlarged letter or a red line known as a rubric enhancing the black or brown ink on the page. Yet these documents were created by state-of-the-art techniques. Patterns were often used and placed on the page with pin pricks; letters were created using a pen or quill from a bird feather – a far cry from the Dvorak Simplified keyboard on my laptop on which I can change the typeface and look with a single click.

I have created projects for students based upon my research as well as the art work I produce. My interest in manuscript has further developed into a curiosity to learn calligraphy which in turn has introduced me to a current document project being created in Collegeville, Minnesota, known as the *Saint John's Bible*. Returning to all hand-done work – both in the lettering and the illustrations on the page – the tactile aspects of the pages in this Bible are inspiring to me.

Combining my interest in Civil War History of the area I live in, a direct growth from the Antietam projects I have developed for classes, with my skills in photography, layout and presentation, I recently proposed a research project for a local historical home. Boydville, the home of Elisha Boyd and daughter Mary whom later became a Faulkner, is

located in Martinsburg, West Virginia. While touring the estate, I was aware of a large quantity of Abraham Lincoln items. The name Boyd in Martinsburg is associated with Belle Boyd, a Confederate spy. My inquiry into the relationship between Lincoln and the Boyd estate has led me to documenting the Lincoln collection and researching the various Boyd families in the area at the time of the Civil War. Belle is not related to this family. Lincoln was instrumental in saving this home from a Union house burning due to Elisha's exemplarily service to the United States in the War of 1812.

At this time I, along with two assistants, have photographed and documented numerous photos, magazine prints and 3-D memorabilia. Numerous additional items including books and more 3-dimensional pieces are still to be catalogued. As I continue with the collection of these visuals I plan to collect information about both the house and the various individuals who have lived there. My goals for this project include a spreadsheet hyper-linked to enlarged photographic examples, a catalogue, and an interactive media piece.

Before arriving at MassArt in Boston for my MFA in Studio for Interrelated Media (SIM), I became a mother and actively pursued an advance degree in Child Development and Cognition at the University of Akron. How one learns and thinks is both mysterious and interesting to me. While an undergraduate at Kent, I periodically took a psychology course, enough to want to build upon them as I moved through parenting with my son. I have embraced every stage and change in my son's development and those courses gave me the foundation to weather them all. I was unable to finish my degree at Akron U. Without involvement in an active creative community, the threads on my loom once again appeared to be rigid.

At Akron University I took a quick course using a computer for word processing and data entry. One evening at a party the host wanted to show me his new toy – sure that I would understand how to use it better than he did. As he removed the white sheet off the hump on his desk an oddly shaped beige rectangular Macintosh appeared. The one program he had was MacDraw. All I really remember is that he said, "Quick, draw me something!"

It took me the remainder of the summer to figure out how to finance quitting my job and moving my son and me to Boston where I believed that I needed to go to jump into the digital world. Once in Boston, I got a job at MassArt before I became a student. Within eighteen months I would move from my initial position in Personnel to the Computer Arts Learning Center where I would stay employed through grad school and beyond. Other than my son I wanted to be around computers 24/7 - there was just so much to learn and do, the possibilities were endless.

My first choice for graduate studies was in Design, but the Design Department did not approve of my love affair with the computer and I was not going back to hands-on production. I retired my X-acto knife from the activities of shaving letters into the shapes I wanted; Adobe Illustrator with its vector abilities only required me to learn the pen tool. A lot less bloodshed in my workflow and a mistake could be undone. Priceless!

Unlike design or weaving, one never fully knows his/her tools in the computer world. I began with MacDraw – a simple black and white program with shapes, lines and fills quickly followed by MacPaint. Color came, video came, and numerous other computers appeared on the scene, each with new and improved software and abilities. When Adobe launched their first Photoshop program, I was already familiar with pixel-editing from the TrueVision suite of programs. Today I run Adobe's CS4 knowing that a revision is just around the next corner and possibly a new yet unthought-of image production program will soon appear on the digital horizon. An enormous amount of time is spent in the digital world just keeping up with the tools one uses. I spent more than half of the time in grad school learning and relearning programs and hardware.

Towards the end of my second year in grad school, the same year *About Looking* was published, I would put together a full room installation using what was then the state-of-the-art equipment and production method. I titled the work: *Falling*. The uniting element was a poem that I had written isolating a single emotional experience I had had.

The visual work produced utilized a combination of typography (poem text), photography, and computer manipulation on a single tree photograph. Eight unique images were produced. Each image was enlarged to the size of 4' x 8', printed across seventy 8.5" x 11" sheets of paper (standard letter size) and sewn together. Additional banners of white or black cloth, also 4' x 8' were created. A total of 24 visual pieces were produced. Hung to create an environment that required the participant to travel a labyrinth in a specified direction, a sound piece of repeated poem text ran continuously. Upon the completion of the path, a full-screen projection of all imagery repeatedly displayed the various trees the visitor had walked past. One poem, one tree photo used over and over in various media created the total environment.

I remember falling:

falling
falling
falling

I don't remember the fall
the trip
the stumble.

perhaps
I was pushed

I travelled for a long time
but i cannot remember where I was

it was always dark
scary

like falling through tree limbs at a 1000
m.p.h.
constantly getting cut torn ripped apart
yet everything always happened so fast -
too fast
I had no control

there was a time when I gladly gave up
control
mind expansion was a daily event
part of the ritual
the invited
the wanted

that was a different time
a different location
a different plateau

a desired, sought out place
so much was good

too good

I drove too fast - I liked the speed
I never thought to wear a helmet

but I remember falling

falling through trees -
through thorns
through thistles

100 feet long and oh so sharp!

they cut
cut very deep

I remember the blood
it poured so freely from the cuts

I remember the knife -
a simple steak knife
at my throat

the blade was pointed
it was sharp

I was scared
I was not afraid to die

I know every branch
every thorn

we have met

an intimate bond was formed

remember -
it was a long trip.



Falling Installation Thompson Gallery
Massachusetts College of Art 1991

Technologically, this piece pushed the boundaries at the time of what a small personal computer (Mac SE) and a personal laser printer could handle. Both the Berger text and the *Falling* installation were relevant for their time. The piece was successful in visually depicting the concept of transition. A story was told in both oral and visual formats with a variety of language. At that time film and video were media of movement; imagery such as falling was flat and static – even in such an environment.

Running concurrently with Berger and *Falling* were changes in the scientific world that would have significant repercussions in the way I thought and how I created. In 1989 at the European Laboratory for Particle Physics (CERN), Tim Berners-Lee “was working on the problem of needing to disseminate the complex graphics that were a significant part of the theoretical models being shared across e-mail. . .” (Schneider and Evans, *New Perspectives The Internet*, 7th Edition). His solution – the development of a code language – known as the markup language: HTML. This new language utilized the newly evolving communication tool: the Internet.

Unlike the text it is connected with, HTML and newer languages wrap a layer of instructions around existing text. It does not alter or modify the actual text - instead it creates a structure to transport and display it. This new language also enables traditional language – in written form – the ability to have life. Interactions between bodies of text, in the form of hyperlinks, allow the reader to move from one thought/idea/term immediately – without finishing a sentence to another thought/idea/term.

Berger looked at changes over the 200 years before him; the internet evolution above is only over 20 years. Berger thought photography rendered animal to the level of spectacle. What would he think of watching their private and intimate moments across the internet? Instantly, I can learn about love from the mating ritual of the lions at the San Diego Zoo or watch over and over and over the latest Panda birth. Concurrent with this animal voyeurism, technology has reduced the actual need for plant, animal, or human in real life situations. The latest hit movie, *Avatar* has more computer animation than live acting (Thulasimani).

Not all new technology is internet specific. When *Falling* was produced, the photograph taken was scanned into the computer after it was printed. My camera today plugs directly into my computer. A new layer of vocabulary and language has been added to the art of taking pictures. I no longer mull over film; I now need to consider resolution, formats, and histograms. Long before I release the shutter, I have decided upon a variety of formats necessary for my potential use of the information about to be captured.

As long as I can remember I have collected images I want to enjoy and use again. Instead of cutting the item out of a picture as in the past, Adobe’s Photoshop program is my tool of choice. Following a trip to southern Spain, I developed a body of work I titled: *Floral Enchantment*. The thirteen final pieces share architectural elements from the trip’s photos with floral imagery and work together to create the feeling and spirit of past Moorish cultural and potential stories reminiscent of those told by Scheherazade.

The flower imagery used in *Floral Enchantment* is repackaged in a completely different presentation as a virtual walk-through of my herb garden displayed on the web. This project, intended to depict the garden in all twelve months has never been finished. Only the months of April, May and June were finished and displayed. In each of the three months, the viewer approaches the garden from an initial page displaying a poetic quote from a local author and a link into the garden. Upon entering the garden visitors are free to travel around the paths at their discretion. Each location shows the garden at that time with links to enlargements of various close-ups that include accurate botanical descriptions and folk-lore about the plant shown. A colophon page provides credits and reference information.

The Herb Garden, begun in 2001, is the result of taking courses on gardening and herbs. From its design and layout to its present day tending, I consider this to be as much of an art project as any other item I develop. It is used more as a photographic subject than a food source.

In 2005 I was asked to collaborate with a textile artist unknown to me for the development of a show in a gallery in the Catskills. I had entered a competition for gallery space for a one-person show. The jurying committee saw something in my portfolio that they thought would play nicely with the other artist’s work. I had submitted slides of *Floral Enchantment*; the weaver created wearable art forms. I liked the idea and so did she. Through a series of phone and email conversations our theme was selected and the work produced. Although we generously shared ideas and concepts, we never saw each other’s work until it was hung in the gallery. As a unifying thread, we had decided upon the poem *Patterns* by Amy Lowell.

While working on this piece I was also the primary caregiver for my aging mother. The text resonated with my daily life. The imagery was once again my garden.

This coming summer (2010) the above artist and I will begin production on a new project. We have decided to work with a creation story as our common thread. At present we are researching those of Native American and African origin.

Language is intertwined with the visual for me. Language can tell the same story orally, visually or in writing. The success of a hunting party or the honoring of a deity is no different whether it is expressed on a cave wall, spoken around a camp fire, or printed in a newspaper. It is in the art of past cultures, their textiles, pots and tools that stories are found. The letter "a" is thought to have evolved from the Egyptian character of Apis, later simplified by the Phoenicians, then by the Greeks and finally by the Romans (Ogg).

I see language as something that changes. Words are actually comprised of little independent shapes, those letters I love. The letter shapes can change, the words themselves or their meaning can change. New words can and often are made from old words. The hard-covered dictionary my parents sent me off to college with years ago has been replaced several times by new, revised and updated editions, now in paperback. In design classes I once learned to take the word fish and alter the letterforms so that the letters not only spelled out fish, but also looked like one. Today I can just use Microsoft Word's WordArt to do something similar.

I am fascinated by these changes in language; the application and usage both in the past and present. I am excited by the futuristic possibilities resulting from a computer environment. While creating a document to be shared across the internet, I wrap a layer of tags around selected pieces of the original text to tell a browser (IE: Internet Explorer, Firefox) what the rules are for display I have used (HTML, XML, PHP, etc.) and how to display the selected information. I might also add an additional layer of information, known as a cascading style sheet (CSS) providing for directions across several pages in order to be display together as a unified website. Not only am I adding layers to my original information but I also need to understand an entirely new language that is made up of symbols, syntax and acronyms. I can no longer discuss a photograph as simply a photograph; I need to know the format in which it is saved. If I want to have it printed, it must be a .tif; if I want to share it across the internet, it should be a .jpg or .png; and I need to understand the difference between each format. In every direction in the electronic world of imagery and text, a language of terms surrounds and engulfs the item or idea.

On an academic level I want to investigate a variety of directions that language may take in the future. Building upon my understanding of page layout, letter forms, image making, and electronic transmission, I want to explore both the past in greater detail as well as how trends and changes in electronic sharing of information may possibly alter it. I am looking for a balance between the importance of the actual information and how the information is transmitted and shared. As more and more layers of information are wrapped around information, what tools will the receiver need to possess to understand the message?

I cited Berger mentioning cave paintings of animals and lost languages. In Utah, the animal paintings are not to be found in a cave but adorning rock formations for 40 miles (Nine Mile Canyon). The stories depicted have long been forgotten but the universality of the images remains. Animal is still animal; human is still human. Today these images are considered "art" not language. Once they were language, a pictogram or picture-story, a language never-the-less. I am amazed at the longevity of this imagery while I have doubts as to the current trends having such endurance.

When I stumbled upon Agnes Varda's movie: *The Gleaners and I* (Varda), the clip-art collections of my own photography jumped before my own eyes. These images, elements and fragments from life are my form of gleaning. As a gleaner of the past, I have an interest in these visuals as a means for expression of yet to be created stories and myths. My interest in these types of images has developed over time and across the production of various art pieces, thus provoking me to pursue my doctoral program in the combined areas of media, art, and text.

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