



School: School of Design

Researcher: Nigel Robinson

Project Title: Reimagining Post Punk: The Buzzcocks & The Fall

UOA: 32

Research Timeline

Date	Rationale of research activities and decisions undertaken
August 2017	<p>Started to get very interested in going back to an early favourite band of mine, The Fall.</p> <p>I first saw them play a long time ago at Eric's Club in Liverpool age 14 at a matinee performance.</p> <p>The `fall and my other first gig of The Buzzcocks had a profound influence on me both visually and musically and inspired me to make music myself with my own band.</p>
	<p>I questioned the role of the graphic designer as a service industry and how this could be changed in a very small way? And was not purely based only on commodity or financial gain. This is from the many commissions I have done commercially working with magazines and advertising. This led to me trying to consider the ultimate [cheap, affordable] format for an idea.</p>
September 2017	<p>Context/ thinking: I remembered queuing up for gigs outside and the punks walking down and stealing badges off people. It was at the time quite scary the secret was to avoid eye contact and take your badge off beforehand. All that for a badge...</p> <p>Badges can be political, they move around and can be seen and collected in some ways they have a longevity, they durable and reflect moments in time. They also can be anonymous, thought it would good to make a badge and use the original place that did all the punk badges, 'Better Badges'.</p> <p>I would then post them on my Instagram and send them to friends and anyone who asked me for one, sent some to New York but this proved problematic with the post being opened etc... I loved the idea of giving them away. I would go to gigs and give then to</p>

bands or punters.

The badge design is a homage to the artist Richard Hamilton's work 'Epiphany' from 1964 which was inspired by a 'Slip it to Me' badge he bought on road trip to America. Changing the name to Mark E Smith and the relationship to art and popular culture seemed the perfect mix. The badge designed itself almost.

October 2017

Through me posting these on Instagram and other's reposting them I was then asked to participate but the curators [DR.ME](#) [Manchester Design Agency] and Malcolm Garrett in a reworking of an infamous sleeve by Malcolm Garrett 'Orgasm Addict, a rework of the original sleeve alongside other practitioners for Design Manchester to mark its 40 Year anniversary. This was shown around various venues in Manchester, London [G.F Smith show space] and Birmingham. The highlight of this was having the work projected behind the Buzzcocks with all the other artists and designers.

February 2018

From taking part in Design Manchester in 2017 I was then asked to contribute work for an Exhibition at Bury Art Museum again via Instagram and connection to Malcolm Garrett. I was producing other badges too and posting them. This show was to celebrate the lyrics of The Fall and also a tribute to Mark E Smith who had recently passed away. You could choose any song so I chose 'Industrial Estate' which was off the very first Fall album I bought as a teenager, 'Live At The Witch Trials'.

I decided to go back historically and relate the concept to the idea of working in a factory on an industrial estate. I found an image of a punch card for clocking in and clocking out and then replicated as best as I could even down to the awkward typographic spacing and choice of font, trying to make it authentic and almost a ready made feel, like it had been found lying around. Since being in College I was always interested in the idea of design being made by itself in the sense that do we need to create anything so new if history has gone before us and left visual starting points? Are we at the stage in design when re-appropriation and reclamation is enough in itself to extend visual language into other contexts?

What is wrong with sampling existing work and giving a new meaning?

September
2018

This was then displayed as an A3 poster within the exhibition 'I Shout For The Fall' exhibition curated by John Rooney another Manchester based designer. The show was extended and we were asked if we wanted to send some more work in so I did a poster version of the badge and sent some of the badges be given

out on the private view.

September
2019 -

The re-worked Orgasm Addict sleeve was exhibited again in 2019 this was celebrating the life of Pete Shelley who had recently passed away suddenly. This was shown at The Turnpike in Leigh and was featured alongside Other Malcolm Garrett's Graphics, posters and artifacts.

During this time I had also made some other Mark E Smith work, a screen printed Tryptic based on a found image of Mark E Smith.

I couldn't find any credit for the photographer so decided to overlay the image screen printing over masking tape and making it appear ghostly in appearance. Similar to Warhol in approach leaving mistakes and not making it too accurate. The clothes he is wearing in the photograph reminded me of the last time I saw him live at a gig.

I saw The Fall on stage locally in Bath for the last time. Mark E Smith was wearing Marks & Spencer's black trousers, long sleeved white shirt with the arms folded up. With the clothing tags still on. This gave a timeless look, could be from any era. If you look at earlier photographs of Mark E Smith he wore some amazing clothes, he is not generally known for this almost a pioneer of the fashion trend Normcore.

The band sounded fantastic as he stumbled around the stage twiddling the amps trying to mess or in his eyes mix the sound on stage. It wouldn't have mattered really as the noise was ever present and the repetition was infectious, a kind of Can or Neu! repetition.

On stage he didn't stop, it was sometimes difficult to comprehend which song he was playing. However no-one cared, he was Mark E fucking Smith that was all that mattered.

The band were special to him and obviously were following instructions from the master himself.

The Fall has had so many different line-ups, there has even been a book written about it. There are however many consistencies still that have stayed the same:

No shit guitar solos
No fancy drum paradiddles
No fancy prog rock keyboard parts
No slap stick bass guitar

The most important part to all of this is the ability to not compromise, this is something I personally have never managed, so can't help feeling envious of his commitment to his own vision and determination.

From this memory I made another poster using the screenprinted Tryptic and my words I entered this to Glasgow Festival Poster Exhibition. This was not used in the end but it was good to experiment and resample to make new work. I also worked on

January
2020

some drawings too which I never used in the end.

I also used my research to form an introduction to how I think within a short lecture for Graphic Communication students at Bath Spa University.
