

The Reciprocal Studio: On Distraction

This third issue of Positioning Practice presents The Reciprocal Studio: On Distraction, a set of four collaborative workshops commissioned by the MA Graphic Media Design (MA GMD) course and hosted at London College of Communication from January to March 2019. Each workshop approached concerns of distraction from distinct starting points and through specific research methods, guided by guest tutors FRAUD (Audrey Samson and Francisco Gallardo), Confusion of Tongues (Marthe Prins and Benedikt Waishaupt), Demystification Committee (Oliver Smith and Francesco Tacchini) and Francisco Laranjo (Modes of Criticism, Shared Institute). Our guests and participants were invited to work with a learning and teaching model based on reciprocity — to use this collaborative working period as a moment to collectively investigate, to further their own and one another's knowledge, through the procedures of a research-oriented graphic design practice.

We chose to inquire into moments of distraction as a strategy to think into (and against) the perceived requirements of design: to clarify, to simplify, to render accessible, and so on. When we take the time to observe closely, we are made aware that design is increasingly operational in the authoring, production and dissemination of complex systems, encoded messages and conflicting politics. A distracted mode of address is less legible, less clear, less simple, and we need to be conscious of distraction in and through contemporary design practices. These workshops take us towards a closer read of such dynamics, exercising our capacities as critical thinkers and makers.

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