

## Domains, Precedents, and Contribution: Visualization Exercise

Duration: 90 minutes

Materials: Sticky notes, pens

**Description:** In-class exercise to identify the area of study (domain) in which to locate research & making, in context of work existing in the field (precedents).

**Goal:** In addition to demonstrating innovation and originality, an art and design thesis should make a contribution to the field or context in which it is situated. The goal of this exercise is to:

- identify an area of knowledge or study which is broad enough to allow for divergent thinking and innovation, but narrow enough that you can create an individual contribution
- identify and expand upon the relationship between your proposed work and the precedents you have begun to identify in your research.

In the early stages of design development, this exercise can reveal possible creative trajectories and organize prototyping and research activities. In later stages, a condensed version of this exercise can be used to clarify the articulation of design goals.

Individual exercise (60 min)

1. Domains: based on the general field of interest you would like to research, write out initial areas of study, knowledge or inquiry (domains) on individual sticky notes. Set these aside.
2. Concepts: for each domain, write out initial project based responses (concepts) that you might create on individual sticky notes. Keep in mind your unique Point of View and use different types of media / methods for each concept. Set these aside.
3. Precedents: For each concept, write out a range of precedents on individual sticky notes. At this point, you should have a minimum of 3 precedents for each concept, which demonstrate a range of media, perspectives and methods of creation.
4. Similarities and differences: for each precedent, on different pieces of paper, begin two lists: things you want to build on, and ways you would like to be different, using categories such as technical, conceptual, social, aesthetic.
5. Themes: look for emerging themes coming from all precedents, including your own project. Note down where there might be room for your work to make an individual contribution. Look for gaps, tensions, contradictions, and surprises.
6. Questions: based on your observations, what possible directions might your work take? For each idea / direction, write down an initial question you would like to answer / thing to test / possible initial paper / prototype

Peer feedback (30 - 60 min)

Break into small groups of three. Discuss each person's work for at least 5 - 10 minutes. Critique each other's work, paying special attention to surprises, design opportunities or contradictions. Take notes. Switch groups so that you hear everyone's concepts.

Revisions (15 min)

revise your diagram based on peer feedback Are there any changes you will make or add? Be sure to document before and after suggestions.

Photograph your work.

Outside of class, use questions raised in this exercise to design a range of 3 initial concept (paper) and aesthetic prototypes.

Synthesize and summarize ideas into written form, post to the class blog.