

“Whoever controls the media, the images, controls the culture.”

Allen Ginsberg

Narrative, relationship and the action of covering

In 1953, Robert Rauschenberg obtained a drawing from the artist Willem de Kooning. He erased the image, and then titled the blank paper “*Erased de Kooning Drawing*”. Peter Ed Muir described the action or erasure “When the pre-existing **perceptual** data is removed from its original surface of display, the connotative gesture of that erasure can be interpreted as shifting the focus of the beholder’s attention towards the devices of its **framing**, towards the wider aesthetic forms and their interaction within disciplinary fields, to the relationship with **narrative**, towards **institutional discourse** and the **spectator**.” (Peter Ed Muir, 2006, 267-268)¹

In the works featured in this bibliography, by covering the selected contents, I intend to shift the reader’s attention from the taken-for-granted images towards the captioned texts (the framing), the void above, the disappearance or the ruin within this particular context (institutional system), triggering readers’ curiosities towards the reason of the covering, exploring the (in)accessibility of information in our daily lives. The action of not erasure, but ‘covering’, created an interaction and a narrative between myself (as the author), the image, and the spectators (readers), in both physical reality (actual libraries) as well as the bibliography. Here, I, as a subject, covered the content, in order to prevent you, from seeing. And the difference between the project here and Rauschenberg’s *Erased de Kooning Drawing* is that, instead of ‘erasing’, I’ve chosen to ‘cover’ it, which implies that the contents are still there, and I know what it is, just that YOU cannot see. It’s hidden, from YOU, the spectator in the context here and now.

¹ Peter Ed Muir, 2006: ‘Act of Erasure: October and the Index’, in *Writing and Seeing. Essays on Word and Image*, 267-268.

Authority and institutional system

The fact that the books were borrowed from public libraries instead of purchased as my own property also plays an important role here. What is essential to the *Erased de Kooning Drawing* is that De Kooning, is a well-known artist. Had the drawing been made by a lesser known artist, the ‘awww factor’ would have been diminished. It was generated by the value of the original, now erased, drawing. In *You see what I see*, (2015), the awww factor is not caused by artistic or financial value, but the authority represented by the libraries as institutions. By altering the books, I intend to challenge the concept of authority, by becoming the authority myself.

The Arbitrary and illusional colours in the visible spectrum

The title of this work is derived from the BBC documentary “*Do you see what I see?*” (2011), which itself was inspired by the children’s game of the same name. The programme explored the concept of ‘colour as an illusion’ and how people view colours differently by a series of scientific experiments. Colours are light with different wavelengths. Human eyes send the signals into the brain, and the latter translates the signals into the concept of colours. So in a way, that colour doesn’t exist, at least literally. The apple is not red. It just reflects light with the wavelength telling our brains that it is red. The process is more arbitrary than we generally believe. For example, the Himba indigenous people in north Namibia have only five words to describe colours. These categorize colours by their shades instead of the colour systems we inhabit in the English-speaking world. So the Himba could easily spot different shades of greens, which might be difficult for us, but find it hard to spot blue among all greens, which could be considered easy for people here in Europe. It’s not because of any biological difference, it’s the languages and the cultural influence on how we interpret things. Colour is not a natural phenomenon, but a cultural concept that we apply.

In this work I have used coloured paper to replace / cover the original images. The illusional light is reflected, sending signals from your eyes to your brain, forming new narratives to hide the original content. We interpret colours through our experiences, in the same way as we construct images based on the captioned texts. And back to Peter Ed Muir's statement, "*When the pre-existing perceptual data...*" If the data is not perceived (like the original images here), does it still exist? What is the definition of existence? Is the information here the same as the concept of colours, that they don't really exist in a way? Do you *really* see what I see?

The project explores the arbitrary nature of categorizing and the censorship of information in the context of library and institutional systems, as well as the authoritative connotation embedded therein. As a replacement of the images, the texts here are designed to create imagination towards the constructed reality.

In *History*, 909.82, the original content could be a map, a painting, or a photograph. What could it depict? And why is First World War the division? If we take the recent Charlie Hebdo attack (2015) in Paris as the example, did we see equal media coverage of the Baga massacre (2015) in Nigeria which happened around the same time, with over 2000 deaths? What is your imagination of Africa before the First World War? In *Art*, 709.04, I intend to challenge people's perception of colour, exploring the relation between textual and visual description by swapping Black Square into a red square. As the texts explained, "...even though he had removed all reference to the known world, the viewer's brain would attempt to rationalize the painting: to attempt to find meaning." (Will Gompertz 2012, 171)² In *Religion*, 297 and *Philosophy*, REL 193, I try to offer the imagination of alternative images against the media constructed stereotypes. In *Science*, 530.11, the once believed theory, Ptolemy's Model, was 'censored' by a green block, which was designed to question the 'common sense' we take in unconditionally nowadays. *War & Defence*, 355.825, *Music*, 782.421 and *Gender, Gay & Lesbian Studies*, 306.766 aim to discuss the influence of politics on mass media and the changing regulation of censorships.

² Will Gompertz, 2012: What are you looking at? 150 years of Modern Art, England: Viking
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With the subject areas covered, taken from the contents of the bibliography, the project explores the political, cultural, historical and sociological control of information, the (in)visibility and the (in)accessibility, what is being seen and what is not, questioning the seemingly objective knowledge and information that we take for granted.

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