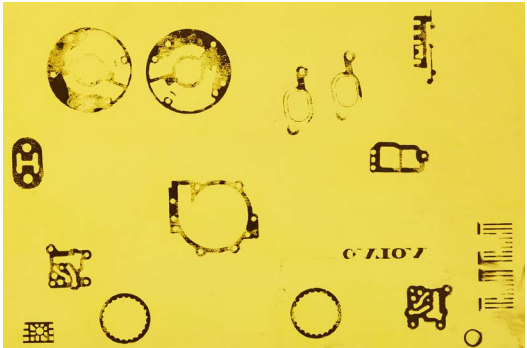


RE: You say Volvo,
I say Potato...

Michael Marriott



Editors' Introduction

Increasingly, design and architecture research (or the idea of using design practice to inquire about something) is commonly associated with either industry and the academy. During the forums, we wanted to understand how designers and makers were also using residency and fellowship programmes to conduct research outside of these two frames. We were keen to understand how the structures and conditions of residency programmes allow research to be conducted, and how this might differ from research conducted within the academy, through doctoral studies or academic research projects, and R&D in industry. We invited forum guests to provide case studies of projects conducted during residency programmes and attempted to understand and frame what might constitute research within these projects. Here, we tried to pay close attention to the minutiae of practice-based research and how concepts were formed in the small but important affordances of where an inquiry takes place.

As a practising designer (unlike the majority of artists), there are usually specific limits around projects. Sometimes this comes in the form of a client's brief, or requirements and needs. There are usually some fixed functions to accommodate, but perhaps more significant might be the immediate surrounds of what you are designing—type and scale of production means, available technology, budget and time restraints, material, processing, and logistical restrictions.

The very act of taking part in a residency programme will typically throw those concerns in the air; possibly some will return as a plan is formed. Having a certain amount of free space and time to allow the development and forming of a plan is key. It might essentially be a writing of one's own brief, but perhaps more exciting is to allow the research that follows to impact the direction of travel. This can facilitate outcomes not envisaged at the start line.

For this kind of investigative route to occur requires “elasticity” of the mind and approach, but perhaps much more

importantly, from the residency's host organisation. Host elasticity is essentially a kind of freedom to allow research to reach a natural conclusion. My own most recent experience of this was during the Stanley Picker Fellowship, which I received with a proposal to research alternative means of printing on plywood or wood (with potato printing referenced for its essential accessibility and ease). A project outside of the fellowship (with a North London school), which I was working on with curator Andree Cooke, brought to light the coming end of useful life of Andree's (beloved) canary yellow Volvo estate. On the day she told me this, I cycled home with it in mind as an issue that felt in need of some sort of attention. That night, I recognised that Andree's Volvo could provide a series of "potatoes" for evolving my printing experiments. It also would provide a narrative—a vehicle (literally & conceptually!)—that would drive the research and prompt wider-ranging experimental techniques. The results of this would create an accessible and engaging exhibition content, with references to a series of existing artist projects involving cars*, as well as providing ideal content with which to develop gallery workshops.

I was immediately aware that Andree would need to approve the plan (if not, another donor car could be found), but Andree's felt like the perfect vehicle, perfect timing, and dignified end-of-life plan. More essential though, the hosts would need to show elasticity, as bringing a car into the gallery was quite a stretch from what I had originally proposed. However, they proved tremendously elastic, and immediately approved (and encouraged?) the approach. The inclusion of the car itself and what it provided in terms of printing experiments and techniques was key to the development and success of the project and exhibition, prompting the research content to really occupy and give presence and accessibility to the project and the exhibition.

**Roman Signer (Bicycle with Paint),
Damian Ortega (Several VW Beetle
projects), Gabriel Orozco (La DS),
Richard Hamilton (Tyre Studies), Robert
Rauschenberg (Automobile Tire Print),
Simon Starling (Polski Fiat project)*



Installation view of *You Say Volvo, I Say Potato*, Stanley Picker Gallery, Kingston University, London, 2018. Photo: Corey Bartle-Sanderson



Installation view of *You Say Volvo, I Say Potato*, Stanley Picker Gallery, Kingston University, London, 2018. Photo: Corey Bartle-Sanderson



I Say Potato Printing Station at You Say
Volvo, I Say Potato, Stanley Picker Gallery,
Kingston University, London, 2018.
Photo: Corey Bartle-Sanderson



Car Tyre Print (Homage to Robert Rauschenberg) at You Say Volvo, I Say Potato, Stanley Picker Gallery, Kingston University, London, 2018. Photo: Corey Bartle-Sanderson



**Auto Squeegee Printing at You Say Volvo,
I Say Potato, Stanley Picker Gallery,
Kingston University, London, 2018.
Photo: Corey Bartle-Sanderson**



Installation view of You Say Volvo, I Say Potato, Stanley Picker Gallery, Kingston University, London, 2018. Photo: Corey Bartle-Sanderson



Lost Wax / Die Cast Volvo Estate for You
Say Volvo, I Say Potato, Stanley Picker
Gallery, Kingston University, London,
2018. Photo: Corey Bartle-Sanderson



I Say Potato Printing Station at You Say Volvo, I Say Potato, Stanley Picker Gallery, Kingston University, London, 2019. Photo: Corey Bartle-Sanderson



Installation view of *You Say Volvo, I Say Potato*, Stanley Picker Gallery, Kingston University, London, 2018. Photo: Corey Bartle-Sanderson



Installation view of *You Say Volvo, I Say Potato*, Stanley Picker Gallery, Kingston University, London, 2018. Photo: Corey Bartle-Sanderson

Biography

Born and based in London, Michael Marriott has been working as a designer since 1993. He was trained as a furniture designer, which still forms the core of his practice, but has broadened to incorporate exhibition, product, and interior design projects. In all his varied practice, there is a common concern, though, which is a search for the elemental nature of the thing in hand.

RE: Design Residencies publishes commissioned texts on design and architecture residency and fellowship programmes. Practitioners, curators, educators and residency organisers provide reflections, case studies and provocations on the role, value and impact of residency and fellowship programmes on contemporary practice and education today. RE: Design Residencies is a project collaboration between Stanley Picker Gallery at Kingston University and IASPIS, The Swedish Arts Grants Committee. The project has been developed out of two forums with many of the invited guests contributing further with texts based on their presentations.

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