Written Response : Method of Cataloguing
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Introduction —————————

Francisco Laranjo's article, *"Critical Graphic Design: Critical of What?"* is an insightful exploration of the meaning of *"Critical"* in the design field surrounding critical design in the field of graphic design.
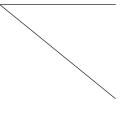
In this article, two distinct groups with different arguments about *"Critical"* in the design are described. This writing will initially be a constituent of the core arguments of each group and subsequently will describe their proposals and the evolution of those proposals as subcategories.

Category —————————

Core Argument / Proposals / Evolution

To begin with, Francisco Laranjo's article have two distinct groups in the design field with varying views on *"Critical"* Design. For clarity, this writing will call them *'Group 1'* and *'Group 2'*.

Core Argument

'Group 1' argues that:
Within contemporary graphic design production, criticality is regarded as a luxury. Also, graphic design work labeled as *"Critical"* is encountered disillusionment and even skepticism.

'Group 2' argues that:
Graphic designers still require ongoing *critical discussions* on the concept of *"Critical"* within graphic design.

Proposals

'Group 1' aims to three main proposals:
(1) Provoking the *"Critical graphic design"* community
(2) Expressing disappointment with *traditional forums for public debate and legitimation*, such as essays, lecture series, publications, and academia
(3) Challenging t*he shallow and predictable stylistic methods* employed by designers when addressing critical issues.

'Group 2' aims to three main proposals:
: (1) Fostering *self-awareness or reflexivity* about what designers do and why
(2) Challenging or rechanging *established traditions and paradigms*
(3) Addressing *pressing issues in society*, with the aim of not confining their efforts to the design practice, but focusing their impact to broader social and political phenomena
this three proposals of *"Criticality"* often overlap, intersect and influence each other.

While these two groups -*'Group 1'* and *'Group 2'* may not hold contradictory arguments, they represent different perspectives within a broader context. Now, let's explore how each group has contributed to achieving these goals/forms in this writing.

In this writing, the next category is referred to as 'Evolution.' Let's examine the 'Evolution' of each group, citing the sources, names, and providing additional descriptions. (if needed)

Evolution

'Group 1' have evolved their arguments like
- *The Critical Graphic Design Song (2023) by the designer Michael Oswell* : This song frequent repeats certain names in the critical design community. Notably, the names of designer Zak Kyes, co-curator of 'Forms of Inquiry*', and Radim Peško, whose typefaces are frequently employed in Kyes's work, are mentioned absurdly. Moreover, the popular blog Manystuff, known for disseminating works often classified as 'critical,' is also cited.
- *How To Be a Graphic Designer Without Losing Your Soul (2005) by Adrian Shaughnessy* : This book printed parody photos of Metahaven's three-dimensional representation of Sealand, Images that imitate the visual styles of some of the most celebrated critical designers and academic institutions. (Yale is often mentioned.)

* The travelling exhibition in 2007 by the Metahaven (dutch design studio) : the term "Critical design" was popularized through this exhibition.

'Group 2' have evolved their arguments like
- *The Werkplaats Typographie (WT) founded in 1998 by the Dutch designers Karel Martens and Wigger Bierma* : The educational model employed by the WT is based on the concept of a 'workshop' - the modernist form of reflexive practice pioneered by English typographer Anthony Froshaug and designer Norman Potter. Typically, the WT concentrates strong on typography as a starting point for assignments by the school, external clients, or the students.
- *The Sandberg Institute, dutch design school founded in 1990 by Simon den Hartog* : The design department presents as a 'Think Tank for Visual Strategies,' where students seek critical thinking and engagement. Their work explores design's role and potential in relation to public and political issues and public discourse.

In general, Group 1 mainly adopts a humorous visual-based approach, while Group 2 is largely embracing an educational and academic method.

Conclusion

As a designer, the term 'critical graphic design' can sometimes be ambiguous and subjective.

However, I believe that the discussion around critical design should be. I want to reference Francisco Laranjo's article itself; *it's time to publicly discuss the means, effects and especially the quality of the critical design projects, not just to celebrate and retweet them.*

Personally, I believe that if graphic design remains disconnected from society concerns and lacks critical thinking, it risks becoming meaningless. This is because this discipline's purpose is to contribute to public debate.

Francisco Laranjo (2014) 'Critical Graphic Design: Critical of What?' Modes of Criticism, Articles