

### Written response: Positions through iterating

1 A small, annotated bibliography of 6 references that help you to situate this project in wider contexts. These references can be texts, projects, or practices (bodies of work that explore a consistent theme). As you look for and select references, think about how they specifically challenge, stretch, or deepen your approach to your project. Maybe they give you a new critical angle on a topic you're exploring. Maybe they suggest a new process or method to test out.

For each reference on your annotated bibliography, you will include: (a) an academic citation, (b) a short quote, an image, or some other detail sampled from the reference, and (c) a short statement (100–200 words) explaining how that specific detail of the reference contributes to your understanding of your specific area of interest. (Tip: Don't summarize the reference; instead, put it in context of your emerging practice.)

Your set of references should include:

- 2 references drawn from the course reading list that situate your project in a broader discourse or conceptual domain

#### **Benedict Anderson (2006). 'Census, map, museum' Imagined communities. London: Verso pp.163-185**

- *A short quote, image or detail*

"While this kind of archaeology, maturing in the age of mechanical reproduction, was profoundly political, it was political at such a deep level that almost everyone, including the personnel of the colonial state was unconscious of the fact and it became a normal and every day. It was infinite quotidian reproducibility or its realia that revealed the real power of the state."

- *Short statement*

A stamp is an interesting medium because it holds a long history of design. Historically, it has been used as a form of nationalism. A medium portraying the strengths of a country in relation to other nations. In colonial times, the stamp was used to display colonial power. Anderson (2006) has helped me contextualise the meaning of a stamp as a form of nationalism and how it is strongly linked with the colonial history of a country. It would be valuable to explore the political and historical aspects of the stamp. To examine how such a small object can convey so much about a country's wealth, and how this representation may shift depending on the subject matter or symbolic meaning of the stamp.

#### **Ludovico, A. (2012). Post-digital print : the mutation of publishing since 1894.**

- *A short quote, image or detail*

"Traditional print publishing, on the other hand, is increasingly presenting its products as valuable objects and collector's items, by exploiting the physical and tactile qualities of paper.

It thus acts as a counterpart to the digital world, while looking for ways to cope with a gradually shrinking customer base, particularly in its traditional sectors such as newspaper production and distribution (where costs are becoming unsustainable) or paper encyclopaedias (which have already become vintage status symbols rather than practical information tools). A number of products will thus need to be re-invented to still make sense in print."

- *Short statement*

Ludovico (2012) raises an interesting question: how can print media survive in the age of digital media? The stamp serves as a particularly relevant example in this context. As a popular collector's item worldwide, it holds value not only in print history but also in cultural and political history, making it an object that carries meaning beyond its functional purpose. Central to this is its materiality, the physicality of print and the tactility of paper contribute to the narrative of the stamp in a way that digital media cannot easily replicate. These tangible qualities become design elements in themselves, building a world and story around the object. It is this tension between the physical and the digital that makes the stamp a compelling subject of investigation. Following Ludovico's (2012) argument, this raises the question: is there a way to combine print and digital elements to renew and reimagine the story of an object such as a stamp?

- 1 reference that is specifically related to your project in its topic (theme or subject matter)

**David (1995). *European Stamp Design*.**

- *A short quote, image or detail*

“Similarly, stuck onto the envelope or parcel and franked by distant mail office, the stamp offers the charm of mysterious and exotic message, a fragment of another time and place sent to join us in our banal world”

- *Short statement*

For me, a stamp is a way of connecting people and places, an aspect highlighted by David (1995). There is a mysterious quality to the stamp that genuinely intrigues me. The way it uses images and text as decorative elements on an envelope is a compelling use of the medium. The ability to build a narrative within such a small space, combined with the intimacy of receiving a handwritten message, makes the stamp a uniquely special object. Perhaps it could even be understood as a form of escapism, given the intimate connection it creates between people and places.

- 1 reference that is specifically related to your project in its medium or method

**Tree, E. (2025). *Jacob Hutchinson merges structured layouts with the soft imperfections of old stamps and vinyl stickers*. [online] Itsnicethat.com. Available at: <https://www.itsnicethat.com/articles/jacob-hutchinson-graphic-design-discover-040925>.**

- *A short quote, image or detail*



- *Short statement*

This Sheffield-based designer works across both physical and digital media. It is interesting to observe how they use digital media to explore the feeling of physicality, suggesting that the tactility of print need not be lost in a digital context. This project raises the question of nostalgia. As a medium that belongs to an older form of communication. In an age dominated by digital communication, this nostalgia may be what gives the stamp its emotional weight and cultural significance today. this is quality that I wish to explore how the feeling of a printed object can be transformed or translated into a digital medium. This leads to a central question: how might we capture the feeling of the stamp without relying on the physical object itself?

- 1 reference that demonstrates a critical position in context of your specific topic, medium, or method

**Berger, J. (1972). *Ways of Seeing*. [online] Ways-of-seeing.com. Available at: <https://www.ways-of-seeing.com/ch1>.**

- *A short quote, image or detail*



*This is the last picture that Van Gogh painted before he killed himself.*

It is hard to define exactly how the words have changed the image but undoubtedly they have. The image now illustrates the sentence.

In this essay each image reproduced has become part of an argument which has little or nothing to do with the painting's original independent meaning. The words have quoted the paintings to confirm their own verbal authority. (The essays without words in this book may make that distinction clearer.)

#### - *Short statement*

How can text and image work together in the telling of a story, and what role does text play in shaping the interpretation of an image? These questions are central to my exploration. In my iterations, I experimented with text and how the meaning of an image could shift depending on the words accompanying it. The way text influences an image is an interesting area to explore in the context of storytelling and worldbuilding. This interplay can create a productive tension between the two elements, influencing how a viewer reads and understands them together. As Berger (1972) suggests, altering a single element within a painting or image can fundamentally change its initial meaning. This is particularly relevant when applied to stamps, where text and image have worked together to construct a specific national or political narrative. By reframing this relationship, it could become possible to shift the viewer's perception and open the object up to new interpretations.

- 1 wild card reference (identify another type of relationship, or re-use any of the above prompts)

**Brueghel, P (1559). *Nederlandse spreekwoorden*.**

*A short quote, image or detail*



#### *Short statement*

Brueghel (1559) relates to my enquiry into worldbuilding. It demonstrates how a single painting can construct an entire world on its own. Building an image in which every detail is part of a larger story, yet each detail, if extracted, could stand alone and give a new story. In my iterations, I used this painting to explore how details from a larger image could function independently, creating a different world when combined with details from other paintings. Bruegel (1559) was part of the Flemish Primitives, a group of artists who used symbolism to create deeper layers of meaning when portraying everyday scenes and portraits. This approach to storytelling is particularly relevant to my research, as I aim to create meaning within my stamps and explore how these meanings shift in relation to other stamps carrying different narratives.

2 A short statement (100–200 words) that articulates your line of enquiry. What questions are you exploring in this project, and how are you exploring them? Be as focused and specific as possible. (*Tip: Don't try to write this during the first week. Wait until your iterations have developed meaningfully.*)

The snippet I wanted to explore further from my previous projects was the combination of and methods of translating and methods of iterating. The themes I wanted to connect are worldbuilding, liminal spaces, and storytelling, approached using everyday objects placed in unexpected contexts. It was from this foundation

that I found inspiration in the stamp. I consider the stamp to be a liminal space. That travels between spaces, connecting people and places across the world. Despite its small size, it carries a lot of information and meaning. These leads me to wonder how the world of stamps and stamp collecting could be linked to worldbuilding, particularly through the idea of it constructing a world from the stamps through the act of collecting. This is something that resonates with me personally, as my family collected stamps for many years. I found the concept compelling. The idea of gathering objects across time and place and each one carrying its own story. This raises the central question of my enquiry: how can storytelling and worldbuilding be achieved through the medium of a stamp? Ultimately, I want to explore where the value of a stamp truly lies. Is it in its origin, its journey, and most importantly, the story it carries?