Statement of Enquiry

In this project, I am investigating the intersection of visual representation, movement, and the fluidity of meaning within the sphere of moving images. The central question guiding my enquiry is: How does translating static images or visual forms from a haiku into animated forms alter the viewer's perception and interpretation of the original poem? My focus is on how visual mediums (ranging from static images to dynamic animations) transform the meaning of the original work. Through animated iterations, I explore how movement, colour, texture, and the manipulation of time can evoke different emotional and intellectual responses to the visuals. This process challenges the notion of fixed meaning, suggesting that meaning evolves with the medium and method of communication. By combining traditional techniques, such as graphite, oil pastel, and gouache, with digital animation, I aim to uncover new interpretations and offer a more immersive engagement with visual forms. Ultimately, my work seeks to expand the potential of visual communication, exploring the power of animation as a medium for translating and transforming meaning.

Annotated Bibliography 1-6

Drucker, J., 2014. *Designing Graphic Interpretation.* In: *Graphesis: Visual Forms of Knowledge Production.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, pp.180-192.

"To imagine new intellectual forms of interpretation is also to design the spaces and supports that structure interpretative acts." (Drucker, 2014, p. 180)

Drucker's writing provides a conceptual framework that situates my project within the broader discourse of design as a mode of interpretation and knowledge production. Her argument that visual forms are not neutral vessels of meaning but active structures that shape how interpretation happens resonates strongly with my iterative approach to animating poetry. It reinforces the idea that by choosing specific formats, rhythms, and materials, I am not just visualising a haiku - I am designing a system through which meaning is experienced and constructed. This challenges traditional differences between content and form and aligns with my exploration of how different translations of the same poem can evoke distinct emotional and visual responses. Additionally, the text validates my use of animation and material experimentation as decisions that are not just aesthetic, but intellectual. Her work helped me see my practice as part of a wider conceptual field in which design is understood as a language of thought and a way of structuring knowledge, not just presenting it, thus, this broader lens has clarified my position within graphic communication design as one rooted in critical making and interpretive creation.

Mitchell, W.J.T., 2005. 'What Do Pictures Want?' In: *What Do Pictures Want: The Lives and Loves of Images*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 28-56.

"Pictures are things that have been marked with all the stigmata of personhood and animation: they exhibit both physical and virtual bodies; they speak to us, sometimes literally, sometimes figuratively." (Mitchell, 2005, p. 30)

Mitchell's reflection on the personhood and animation of images resonated deeply with my exploration of the animated haiku as he describes pictures as possessing both physical and virtual bodies, and this idea challenges static and dynamic visual forms. My project, which incorporates both tactile mediums (like charcoal and pastel) and digital animation, aligns with Mitchell's notion of the image as a hybrid of both material presence and intangible, animated energy. Each visual element I create is "marked" with a particular kind of energy through the gesture of a brushstroke or the fluidity of a frame transition, instilling the images with a "personhood" that speaks to the viewer in varied ways. Whether through the changing speed of the animation or the texture of the materials used, these images "speak" not just figuratively, but also physically, inviting viewers to engage with the poem in a deeply sensory manner. Mitchell's framing of images as active, animated agents speaks to my intention to treat each iteration of the poem as a dynamic, living thing, rather than a fixed, passive representation.

Dondis, D. A., 1973. *A Primer of Visual Literacy*. MIT Press.

"The visual elements are the basic substance of what we see, and they are few in number: the dot, line, shape, direction, tone, color, texture, dimension, and motion." (Dondis, 1973, p. 39)

Dondis' breakdown of the fundamental visual elements has been instrumental in shaping how I understand and construct visual interpretations of poetry in my work. Her framework reminded me that even the most abstract responses to text are ultimately conveyed through a finite set of visual tools. This clarified my thinking around how changes in tone, colour, or texture across different iterations of my animation aren't arbitrary but carry real symbolic weight. In the context of my project, which deals with visualising variations translations of a haiku, these elements became the building blocks for interpreting nuance. For instance, a softer texture or cooler palette implies calmness or distance, while jagged lines and warm tones suggest tension or immediacy. Dondis' articulation of visual language reinforced the idea that shifts in medium or animation style aren't just aesthetic - they actively participate in meaning-making. Her insights helped me focus on the intentional use of each visual element to construct mood, rhythm, and interpretation. This made me more aware of how visual literacy is central to my practice, not only in making but also in enabling viewers to read and emotionally engage with the layered meanings of a translated poem.

Lye, L., 1935. *A Colour Box [film].* London: GPO Film Unit.
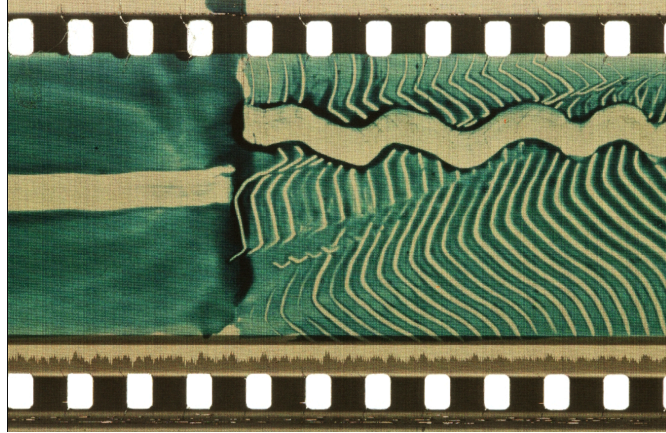
Len Lye's *A Colour Box* played a central role in shaping the second phase of my project, particularly in terms of medium and methodology. His use of direct animation - physically painting and scratching onto film - encouraged me to move away from digital tools and explore more tactile, hands-on processes. This shift allowed me to consider how materiality itself could influence the emotional tone and interpretation of the haiku I was working with. Lye's work demonstrated that motion and rhythm can be expressive in their own right, independent of conventional narrative structures. This resonated with my aim to capture the shifting meanings of a translated haiku through iterative animation. I was especially inspired by his dynamic use of colour and non-linear sequencing, which led me to experiment with different frame structures, including a 5-7-5 frame layering system mirroring haiku form and the cyclical structure of phenakistoscopes. These experiments helped me explore how visual rhythm and variation in speed can alter perception and mood. Lye's approach expanded my understanding of animation as a medium that not only communicates but transforms meaning through its process, reinforcing my interest in how poetic language can be reinterpreted through movement, texture, and visual energy.

Sontag, S., 1977. *On Photography.* New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, pp. 174-178.

"To photograph is to appropriate the thing photographed." (Sontag, 1977, p. 174)

Sontag's critique of photography as an act of appropriation raised important ethical and conceptual questions that relate to my use of translated poetry as source material. Although I am not working in photography, her argument about the power dynamics of visual representation made me more critically aware of the implications behind reinterpreting someone else's words into visual form. My project involves translating various English versions of a Japanese haiku into visual animations, and Sontag's work challenged me to consider what it means to "take possession" of those texts through my own lens. It made me think more deeply about how my choices (medium, colour, movement) impose a specific reading onto the poem, potentially narrowing its openness or diversity. Her position encouraged me to find ways to maintain ambiguity and multiplicity within the work, to avoid reducing the poem to a single, authored visual outcome. In response, I embraced iteration not only as a formal strategy but also as a conceptual stance: offering multiple interpretations instead of one definitive version. Sontag's

perspective grounded my understanding of visual authorship in critical awareness, prompting a more ethically engaged approach to interpreting and re-framing poetic material.

Berger, J., 1972. *Ways of Seeing*. London: BBC and Penguin.

"The way we see things is affected by what we know or what we believe." (Berger, 1972)

Berger's reflection on perception relates to my project's interest in interpretation and how meaning changes across translations and media. His assertion that seeing is never neutral, but always shaped by prior knowledge, experience, and belief, mirrors my exploration of how different translations of the same haiku evoke different visual interpretations. This perspective aligns with my intention to not present a single, fixed version of the poem, but rather to reveal how visual meaning is unstable and conditional as each of my animated iterations offers a distinct emotional reading, depending on the material, technique, and movement used. Berger's insight reinforced the idea that viewers bring their own frameworks of understanding to each version, making the act of interpretation collaborative. It also validated my use of multiple mediums (charcoal, pastel, digital) as a way to expand the possibilities for subjective engagement. Rather than seeing inconsistency as a limitation, I came to view it as essential to the viewer's interpretive experience. Berger helped me frame my work not just as a translation of poetry into image, but as an invitation to see differently through each iteration.

Links:
https://smg.media.mit.edu/library/Dondis.PrimerOfVisualLiteracy.pdf
https://contentstore.cla.co.uk/EReader/Index?guid=f6249745-4b0d-eb11-80cd-005056af4099&pcid=305
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