

THE OTHER WAY ROUND

The exhibition 'The Other Way Round' offers examples of how art and design, as thought processes, may present a simple transversal in rethinking the ordered universe of causes and effects. In the act of speculation we might dislocate mental effects from physical causes, incite the convulsive beauty that Andre Breton demanded of the pineal eye of the imaginary, or upset the given stability of certainty in any opinion.

By simple reversals we see how the move from the accepted way to get to understand something, could be enhanced by thinking it in the relation of its movement or the orbit of thought relative to it, the other way round. An idea, if unstable, moving chaotically in space and time, may change its direction. Or more acutely, to change position, as in a mirror, what cannot be captured is the thing [whether in the camera, the screen, the mirror, the machine] that sees you. The Thing that is not 'you' sees you in detachment, framed the other way round. What appears accustomed through habit reappears in the lens to alert to a distortion of consciousness, to take a different foreign view. Mind does not control matter in this case. We live in a glass house, contained safely inside to distance what we see outside before our eyes as real, yet with reasonable clarity we make up stories to disaffirm what is true or false despite or precisely because of the undeniable evidence. Are we to believe what we see with our own eyes, or not? Where does the truth lie? Is it not precisely the other way round, in the very lie of truth, the illusion that we project outwardly, whilst we gaze in the self-affirming mirror? Through this conceptual window, what do we see?

Jokes themselves surprise us on the basis of offering an unexpected reversal, yet recounted within the logic of a story told in reverse, making sense only when arriving at its destination the other way round in the punch-line. "No-one expects", as it was once announced by the camp inquisitors of Monty Python, "the Spanish Inquisition!" Yet they always turn up unexpectedly. Or upon that unexpected knock on the door, what do we imagine lies in wait, but anticipation itself in whatever unknowable new form? Whether angel or devil, as David Bowie sings in 'My Death', behind that door, there's nothing much he can do. In front of that door, there is still something we can do. Can we, in these uncertain times, afford to drop our guard, when the house is burning down, or simply if in fear of being caught being ourselves, (or not) still face the urgency of the question as to who or what we are becoming?

But whatever lies behind the door
There is nothing much to do
Angel or devil, I don't care
For in front of that door there is you

David Bowie, My Death
Credit (Songwriters: Brel, Jacques Romane, Eric / Shuman, Mort, published by
Lyrics © Warner/Chappell Music, Inc.)

I ask myself, if, in the title 'The Other Way Round' we might test all kinds of problems raised in the questions of art, science, politics and culture, entailing further design issues, such as (in no particular order), the arts of war, play, education and identity. Each testing of conditions opens up debates around the question, what if it was the other way round? For example, what if something appears 'new' it is the other way round? What if in accepting the 'modern' it is in fact, 'old', really just a disguise for a traditional and conservative idea? Cinema often betrays this gloss on the old dressed in 'new' clothes. It's a philosophical question that collapses the very act of questioning. Our question arrives at an impasse, what we can no longer automatically assume to be the right and wrong of questioning. What if, in fact, it's 'the other way round'? That the question might be a clever deceit? We need to reach a point of meeting, these radical dead-ends of reason head-on: