CAPTURING THE UNSEEN DATA OF THE EVERYDAY

Maybe you’ve wondered what pattern a tree branch makes when the wind blows on it or the movements of a parcel as it goes through in the post? What about the different shapes women carve their lipsticks into when they use them? These activities and more are captured in UTS Gallery’s latest exhibition, *Incidental Data*.

What: Incidental Data  
Where: UTS Gallery, Level 4, 702 Harris Street, Ultimo  
When: 2 Aug - 2 Sept. Open Mon-Fri 12-6pm  
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Through inventive and unexpected ways, six artists & designers provide insights into our incidental activities, capturing the unseen data of the everyday. Devoid of graphs, charts and diagrams, at first glance this exhibition seems to have little to do with information graphics but each work measures, records and reveals overlooked phenomena and human activity. The works also incidentally produce data – information visualisation is a by-product of a process, not the primary intention.

Unprecedented access to computer graphics and raw data has resulted in an explosion of information visualisation. Challenging the prevalence of digital, algorithm-driven imaging, curator Dr Kate Sweetapple has gathered together work that falls to the edges, or in many cases outside of, conventional data representations. Dr Sweetapple is a visual communication designer and Associate Head of School of Design at UTS. She says of the exhibition:

“The show is really playful and it’s about looking more deeply at the objects and processes that surround us. Discovering the richness of information that they hold. *Incidental Data* doesn’t have that kind of earnestness so often associated with data visualisation, which instead of making information accessible, can be so authoritarian and overly complex.”

Many of the works question our assumption of what data is. Tim Knowles’ Tree Drawings captures the effect of wind on trees in a very simple and whimsical way. By tying pens onto low hanging branches and arranging setting up with pencil this ephemeral ‘data’ is made visible.

Stacy Greene’s Lipsticks take the idea of incidental data one step further – capturing the different ways of applying lipstick and a fascinating and repelling ways in a series of photographs.

Young Sydney designer and UTS graduate Chris Gaul is also creating works that reimagine everyday items - bus tickets, library cards and ATM receipts in surprising ways.
London-based designer Daniel Eatock’s colourful works visualise pen and printer inks through use – where making the ink visible for its own ends, rather than as an incidental effect of printing words or images. He answers that unconscious nagging question – how long will this pen last?

Sweetapple comments on Sam Winston’s works The materiality of Sam’s work gives you a tangible feeling of time – so much data visualisation communicates time through graphs or in some kind of dry, linear way. Sam’s work embodies time & process rather than just talks about it – all these handwritten drafts, done over so many months cut up and laboriously compiled together showing the effort and iterations of the text.

American artist Christopher Baker has used visual records as data – he has animated the designs for every toy gun patented in the USA since the 1800s into a ghostly, evocative form.

Accompanying public program:

‘Data Poetry’ gallery seminar: Wednesday 10 August 6.30 - 8.15pm
This seminar brings together computing specialists, professional designers and researchers to discuss their diverse methods of rendering abstract material into visual form. Diverse visual practices will be explored as well as debate and discussion of new, computer-driven processes. With Kate Sweetapple, Mitchell Whitelaw from the University of Canberra, Elisa Lee Interaction Designer and Ben Hosken from Flink Labs in Melbourne. Followed by exhibition viewing & refreshments, all welcome, free

Gallery floortalk with Dr Kate Sweetapple: Thursday 10 August 1-2pm

Incidental Data is on at UTS Gallery from Tuesday 2 August to Friday 2 September as part of the Sydney Design Festival. Curated by Kate Sweetapple and featuring work by Christopher Baker (USA), Daniel Eatock (UK), Chris Gaul (AUS), Stacy Greene (USA), Tim Knowles (UK) and Sam Winston (UK).

UTS Gallery is located on Level 4, 702 Harris Street, Ultimo
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