

Writing Into the Unknown: Speculative, Arts-Based Writing as Creative Composition and Design Research Method

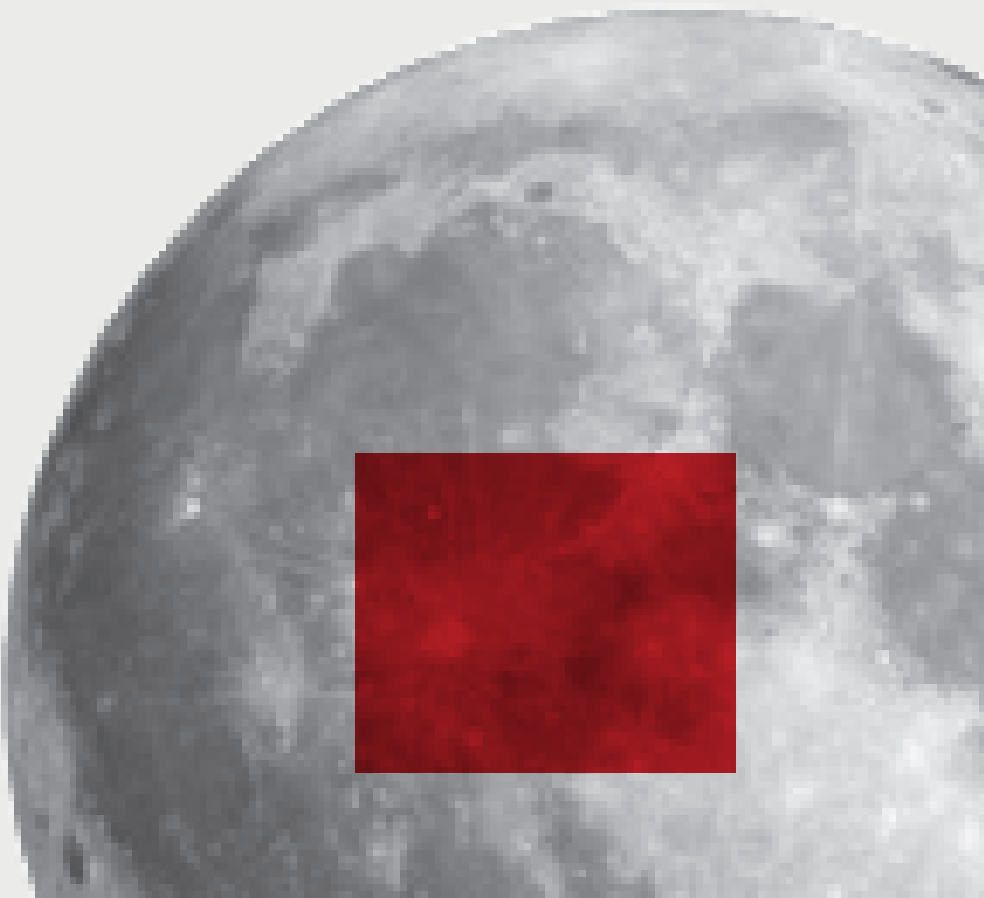
Cincinnati, OH

Sociologist Laurel Richardson’s research of writing as a form of inquiry establishes a methodological foundation for this study. Reflections from an industrial design master’s student, a graphic design master’s student, and their arts education professor in a School of Design at a Research I institution illustrate arts-based writing’s iterative process, dialogic engagement, and speculative approach to knowledge-construction. Providing critical, reflective structures for working through uncertainties, arts-based writing is uniquely responsive to the evolving epistemologies of the transdisciplinary university.

As discourses bump up against one another, unravel and even recombine to create new discourses, arts-based writing can be a mode of communication as well as a catalyst of transdisciplinary dialogues.

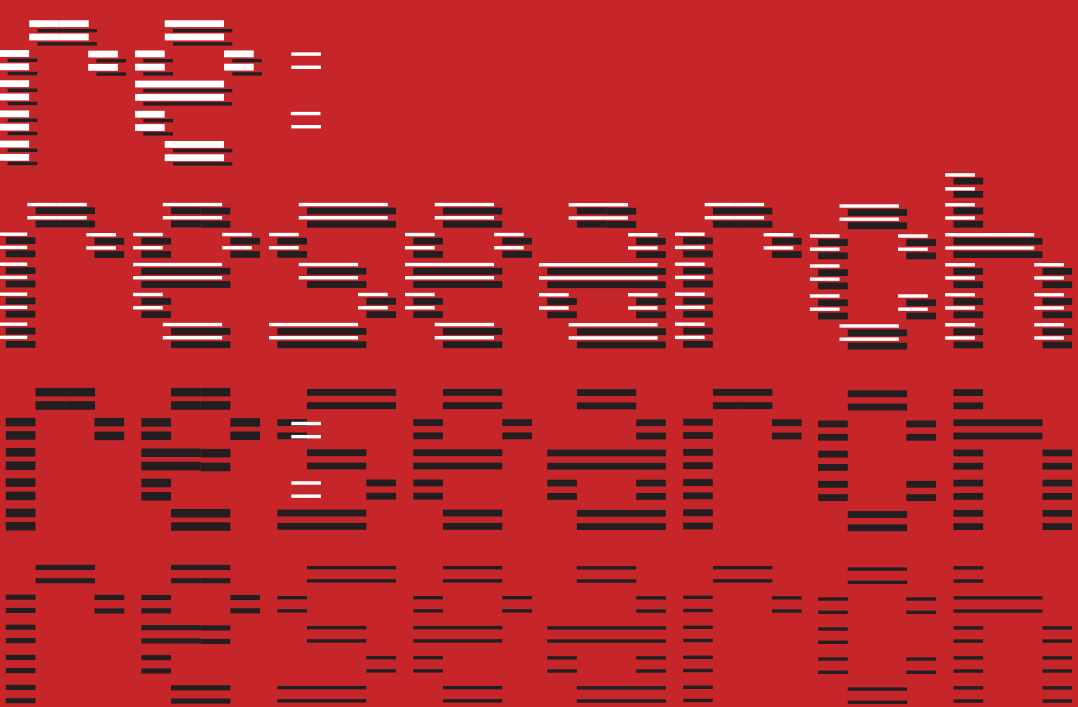
Three focal questions guide this reflection: What is arts-based writing? What role does arts-based writing play in students’ design research endeavors? How can arts-based writing practices support the growth of speculative and pragmatic design research?

“Arts-based writing is potent creative discovery. I believe my familiarity with the iterative process of discovery as a designer enabled me to ease in and out of arts-based inquiry seamlessly—discovering to write, writing to discover. No longer just a complement to my creative process, arts-based inquiry continues to push me towards deeper and more directed discovery.”
–Davida Casey



**“Art is not a world, but
a knowing of the world.
Art prepares us.”
- Muriel Rukeyser**

“The moon engraving poem represents the designer’s process of thinking and of generating ideas. The poem’s manifestation on the cratered fruit validates those twists and turns, the risks designers take off the beaten path that help create better ideas. Sometimes the side trips and excursions are the most productive part of the process—but the value of the journey is never realised until it has been actively reflected upon.” –Olivia Bruner



Authors

Vittoria Daiello
Davida Casey
Olivia Bruner

Organization

University of Cincinnati
University of Cincinnati
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