

UNSTAKED TERRITORY: Frontiers of Beginning Design

Proceedings of the 19th National Conference on the Beginning
Design Student, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma
April 3-5, 2003



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Challenging The Boundaries I
Challenging The Boundaries II
Integrating The Boundaries
Obscuring The Boundaries
Various Terrains
Initial Terrain

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f: 405-744-5369

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The Abstract Machine” (Diagramming): A Design Mechanism for the Beginning Student

MAELEE THOMSON FOSTER, University of Florida

The thoughts of the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze, along with those of Felix Guattari, are now readily accessible to theorists and beginning design educators via their recently translated publications. A number of these innovative and clearly imaginable concepts can be used to define and describe both diagramming and mapping as “Abstract Machines,” mechanisms capable of identifying, recording, ordering and communicating design ideas for the beginning student. The difference between the two visually conceptual “machines” can be understood, mapping—a tool for interpretive analysis and the diagram—a tool for both analysis and synthesis, necessary for concept generation and the fulfillment of the design process. These mechanisms rely upon identifying, and building upon relationships and interrelationships to form a structure. In the past this structure was based upon a linear concept of hierarchical order, a “Tree-diagram,” whereby the only possible relationships in the system could be that of “above or below” carrying with it the connotation of being more or less important on a vertical scale. The introduction of a non-linear system of order by Deleuze and Guattari, the “Rhizome,” allows the beginning student to visually organize(diagram) design ideas—possibilities and constraints—according to multiple relationships that appear to grow out of each other. Combining the introduction to visual communication skills with design fundamentals through diagramming, the design process can be understood and implemented at the beginning of the students’ studio experience.

Visuals, student diagrams and conceptual images, will supplement the presentation.