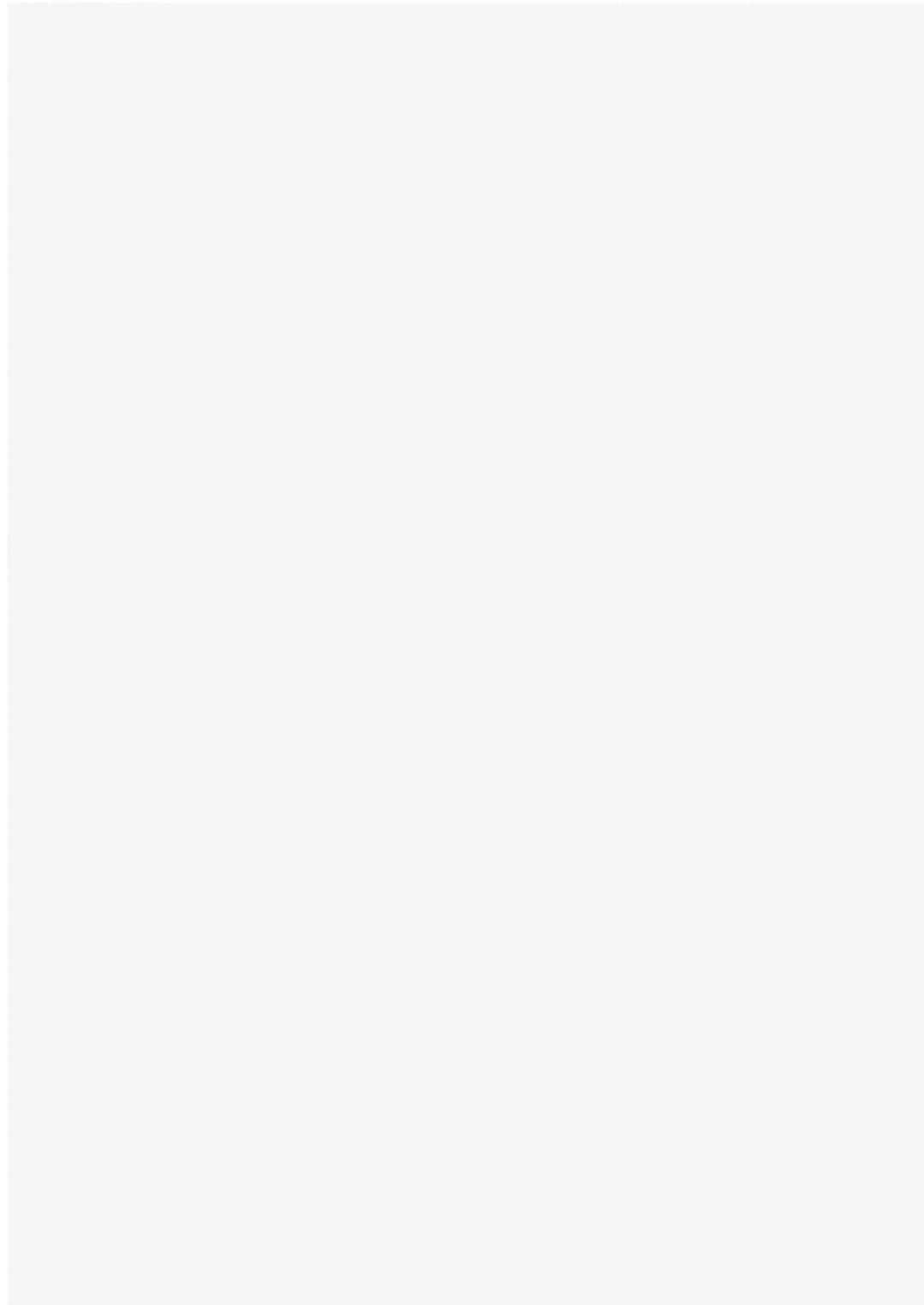


draw this paper

art colleges in 2025
ways of thinking

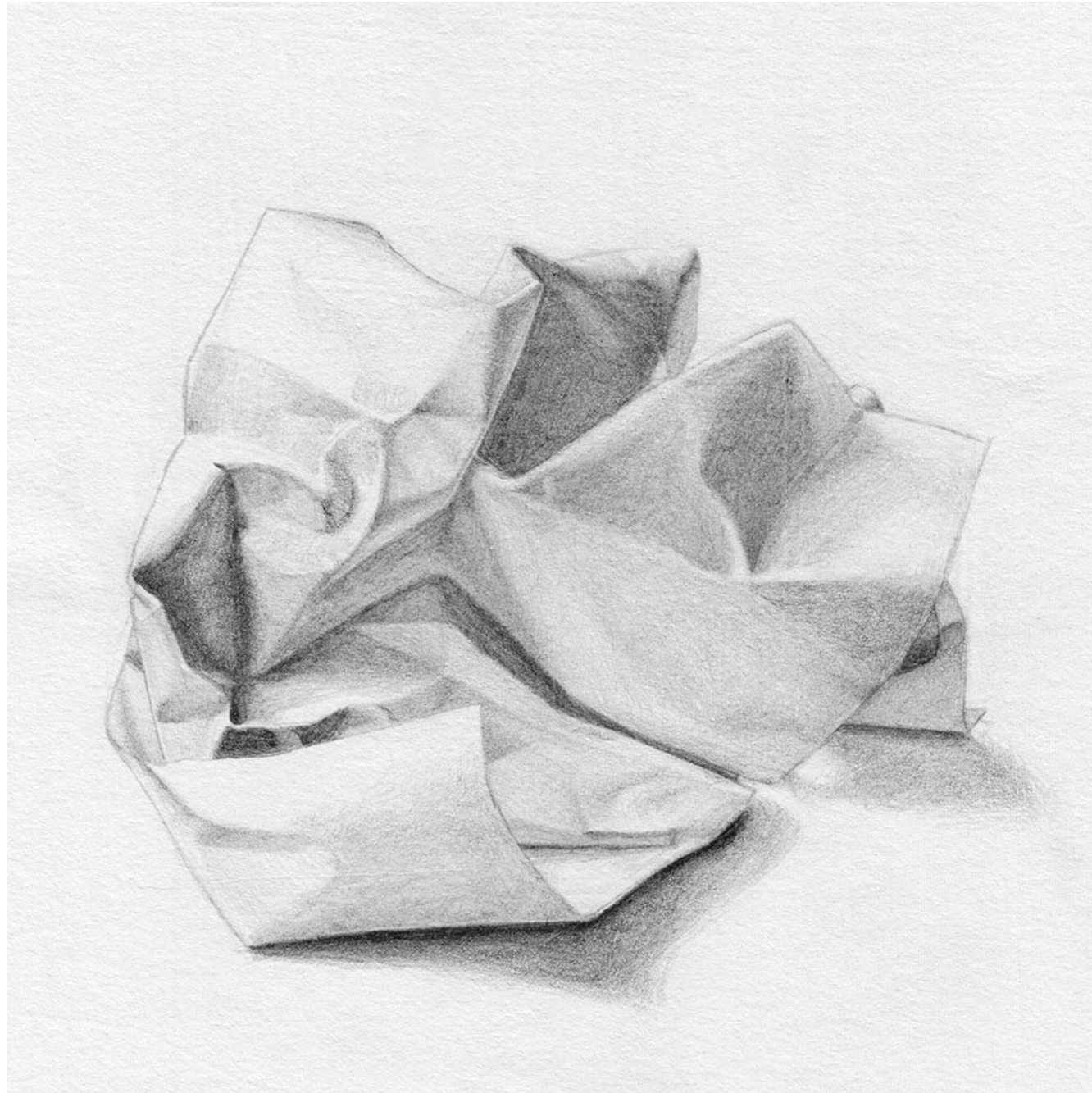


The Task



You have a stack of paper, and a pencil. [Draw the paper.](#)

Creative Problem Solving



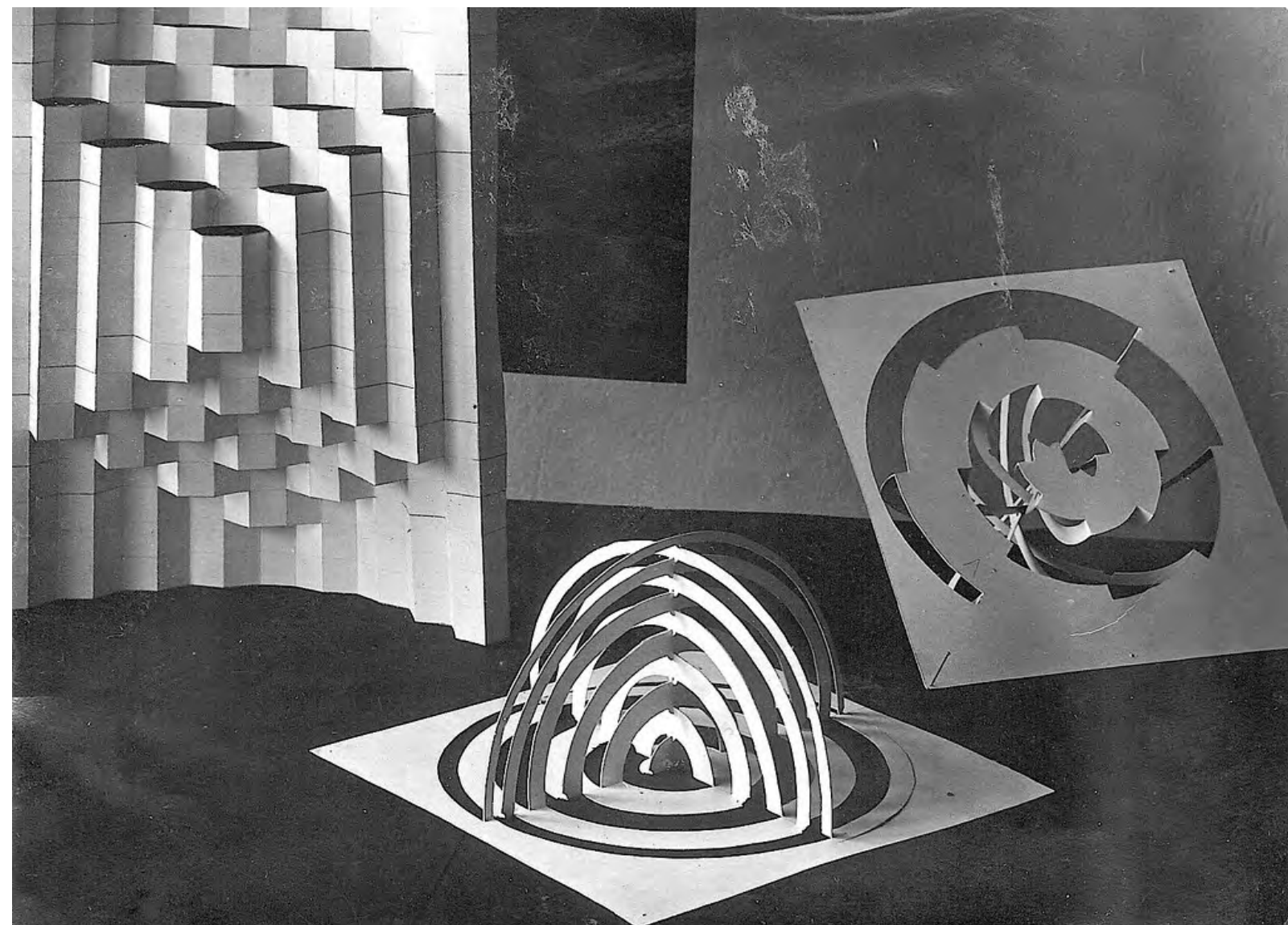
The initial reaction is most commonly:
it's for drawing **on**, right?

Creativity is about problem solving.
The exercise challenges you to move past thinking of the paper only as a drawing surface, to explore how changing its form can lead to an interesting subject for drawing. There is a **process** here.

You could:

- Crumple it up
- Fold it in to a paper plane
- Tear it to shreds
- Make a box
- Make a cone
- Stack them up...

The possibilities are endless. You are testing things out.
Art College is about fearless investigation.



What's an Art College?

school?

college?

~~university~~

The History Bit

- The institution we stand in today is a product of the biggest democratisation of the Arts in British history (1850-1900).
- Until this time, 'Art' in Britain was a pastime of the wealthy. There was a right way, and a wrong way to do things.
- Following the Great Exhibition of 1851 - it was clear that Britain was falling behind in manufacturing due to a lack of **enginuity**. Enter, the Art College.

Industry

To provide training in 'practical art' with a focus on industrial employment.

Science

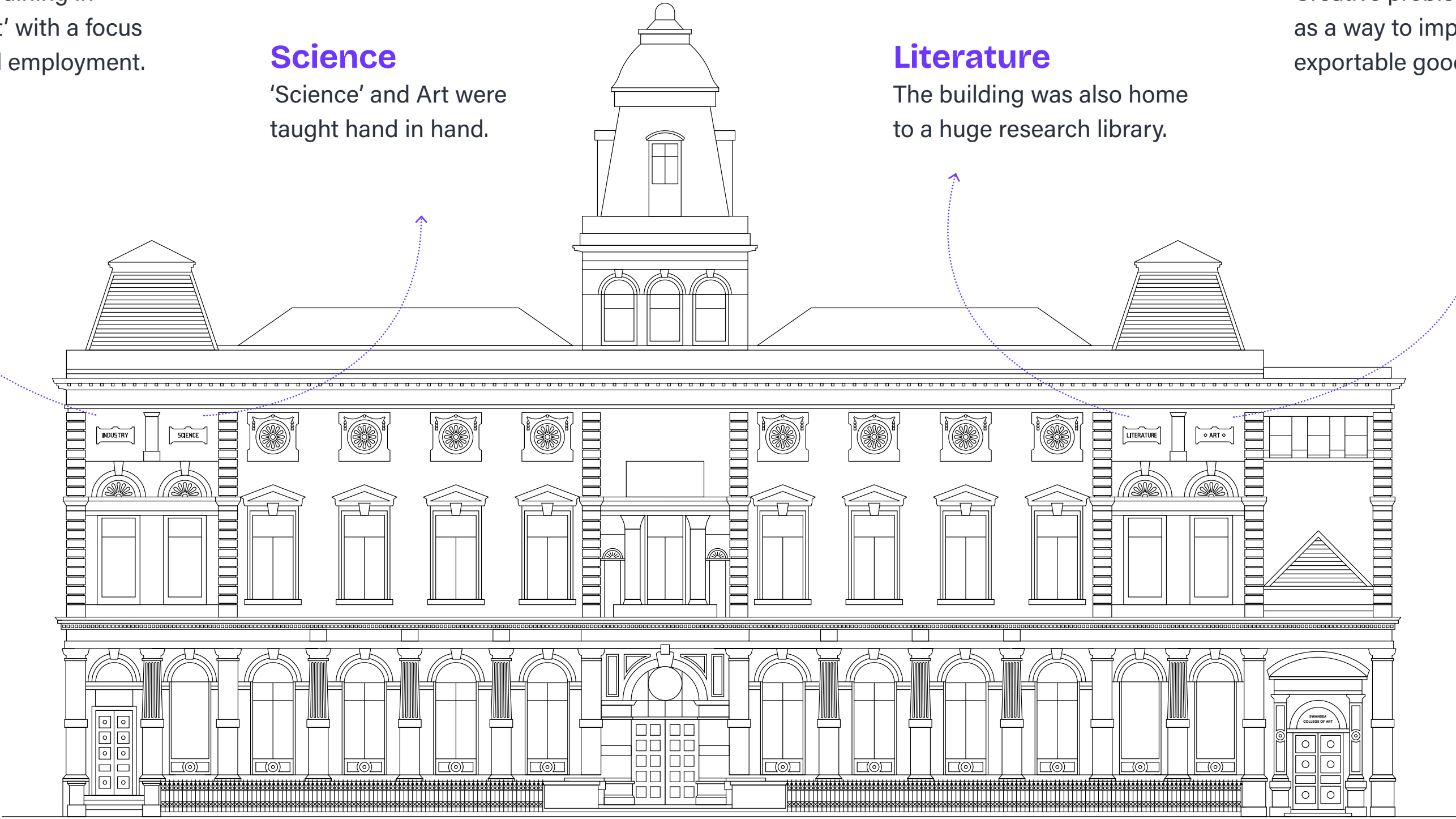
'Science' and Art were taught hand in hand.

Literature

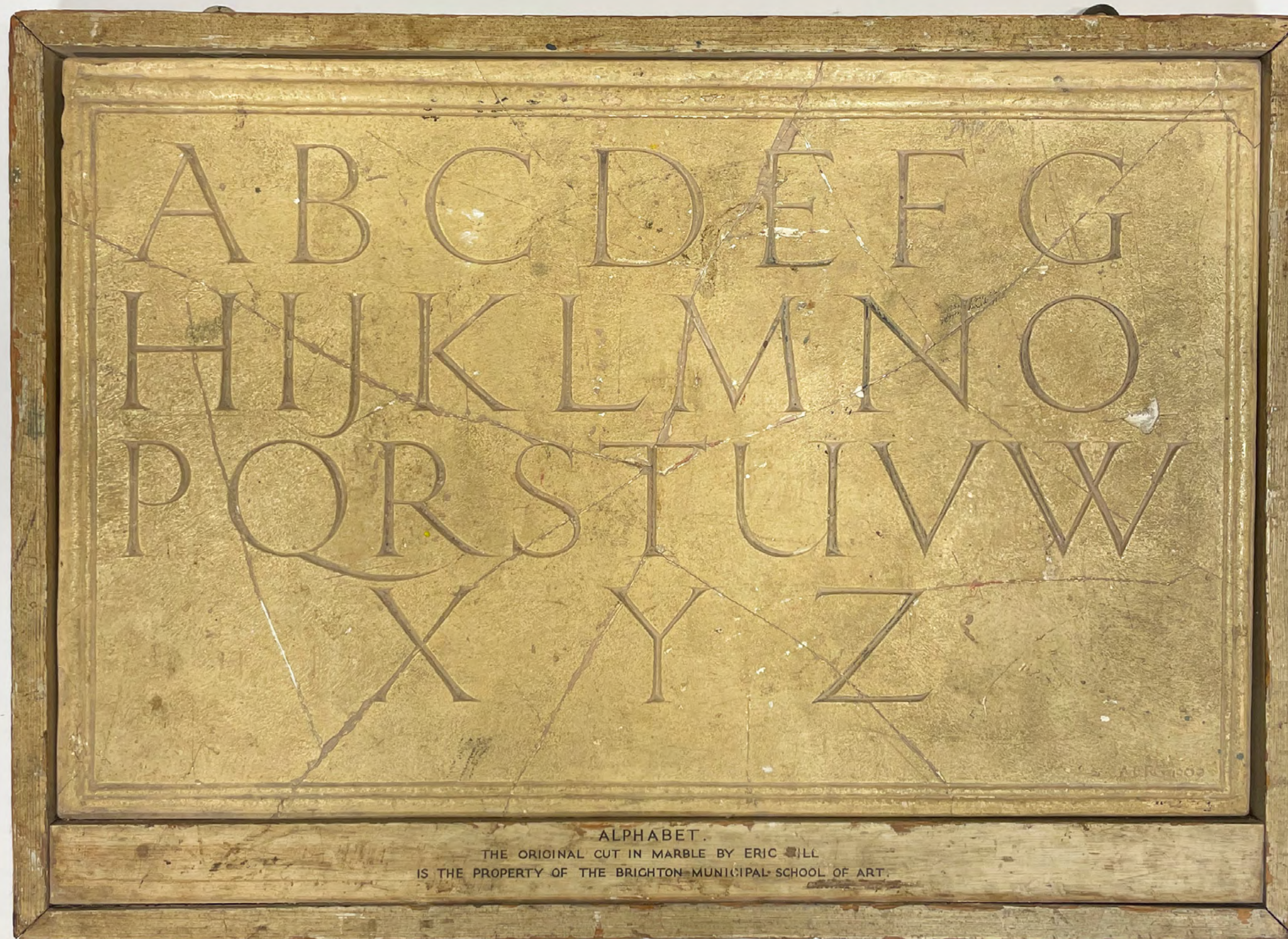
The building was also home to a huge research library.

Art

Creative problem solving as a way to improve exportable goods.



Swansea College of Art



References

Teaching staff and equipment were sent centrally from the RCA

175 years later - what have we retained? What might have moved on? What is worth preserving?

**Write a manifesto of 8
short statements regarding
your beliefs, principles, and
design practice.**

Pull everything out
of your teacher. Pull
everything out of
your fellow students.

IMMACULATE HEART COLLEGE ART DEPARTMENT RULES

- Rule 1 FIND A PLACE YOU TRUST AND THEN TRY TRUSTING IT FOR A WHILE.
- Rule 2 GENERAL DUTIES OF A STUDENT:
PULL EVERYTHING OUT OF YOUR TEACHER.
PULL EVERYTHING OUT OF YOUR FELLOW STUDENTS.
- Rule 3 GENERAL DUTIES OF A TEACHER:
PULL EVERYTHING OUT OF YOUR STUDENTS.
- Rule 4 CONSIDER EVERYTHING AN EXPERIMENT.
- Rule 5 BE SELF DISCIPLINED. THIS MEANS FINDING SOMEONE WISE OR SMART AND CHOOSING TO FOLLOW THEM.
TO BE DISCIPLINED IS TO FOLLOW IN A GOOD WAY.
TO BE SELF DISCIPLINED IS TO FOLLOW IN A BETTER WAY.
- Rule 6 NOTHING IS A MISTAKE. THERE'S NO WIN AND NO FAIL. THERE'S ONLY MAKE.
- Rule 7 The only rule is work.
IF YOU WORK IT WILL LEAD TO SOMETHING.
IT'S THE PEOPLE WHO DO ALL OF THE WORK ALL THE TIME WHO EVENTUALLY CATCH ON TO THINGS.
- Rule 8 DON'T TRY TO CREATE AND ANALYSE AT THE SAME TIME. THEY'RE DIFFERENT PROCESSES.
- Rule 9 BE HAPPY WHENEVER YOU CAN MANAGE IT. ENJOY YOURSELF. IT'S LIGHTER THAN YOU THINK.
- Rule 10 "WE'RE BREAKING ALL OF THE RULES. EVEN OUR OWN RULES. AND HOW DO WE DO THAT? BY LEAVING PLENTY OF ROOM FOR X QUANTITIES." JOHN CAGE
- HELPFUL HINTS: ALWAYS BE AROUND. COME OR GO TO EVERYTHING. ALWAYS GO TO CLASSES. READ ANYTHING YOU CAN GET YOUR HANDS ON. LOOK AT MOVIES CAREFULLY, OFTEN. SAVE EVERYTHING-IT MIGHT COME IN HANDY LATER.
THERE SHOULD BE NEW RULES NEXT WEEK.

Nothing is a mistake.
There's no win and no fail. There's only make.

If you work it will lead to something.

Always be around.

Corita Kent

There should be new rules next week

Rule 2

Pull everything out of your teacher. Pull everything out of **your fellow students.**

The Studio

A Melting Pot

→ **Ownership** of a space is of huge importance to creatives. Not only are they spaces to work in, they are places to come together - 'work' and 'social' don't have to be seen as two separate processes.

Consider how your best ideas have come to you.

What happened to spark your last good idea?

Consider what you can learn from each other during your time here.

Conversations which spark ideas for projects, shared experiences which lead to collaboration, and support to discuss ideas as they form.



Pull everything out of your fellow students

Community



Internal

Everything we do is relational — not solitary.

The creative world thrives on networks, dialogue, and shared passion. The people you meet will shape you as a designer as much as your tutors or projects do.

Building relationships while at art college isn't just socially enriching — it's fundamental to your artistic growth, future career, and overall creative practice.



External

When a college is present in its community, it shows that it's not an isolated "creative bubble" but an active participant in public life.



Community

ING POST, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 20, 1938.

Swansea Arts' Ball Preparations



SWANSEA ART SCHOOL STUDENTS engaged on an Egyptian frieze to form part of the original decorations for their annual Christmas dance.

Fancy undress at the ball

YOUNG men in fancy dress and girls in fancy "undress" danced beneath huge colourful murals at Swansea last night.

The occasion?—the Swansea Arts Ball at the Embassy Ball-room.

The motif?—inventions. A cardboard flying saucer flew from the ceiling, and Genevieve lay against the wall. Bull fighters, bush whackers, Spanish dagoes, and 1930 "flappers" mingled on a crowded dance floor.





SWANSEA ART SCHOOL STUDENTS, in a mood of happy anticipation, making an artistic background for their annual ball.

Evening Post, Pic





→ What would we think to doing something like this as a graphic design course in 2025?

Diversity



Historically

Many art colleges adopted an open admissions policy
“open to any person without regard to age or sex”

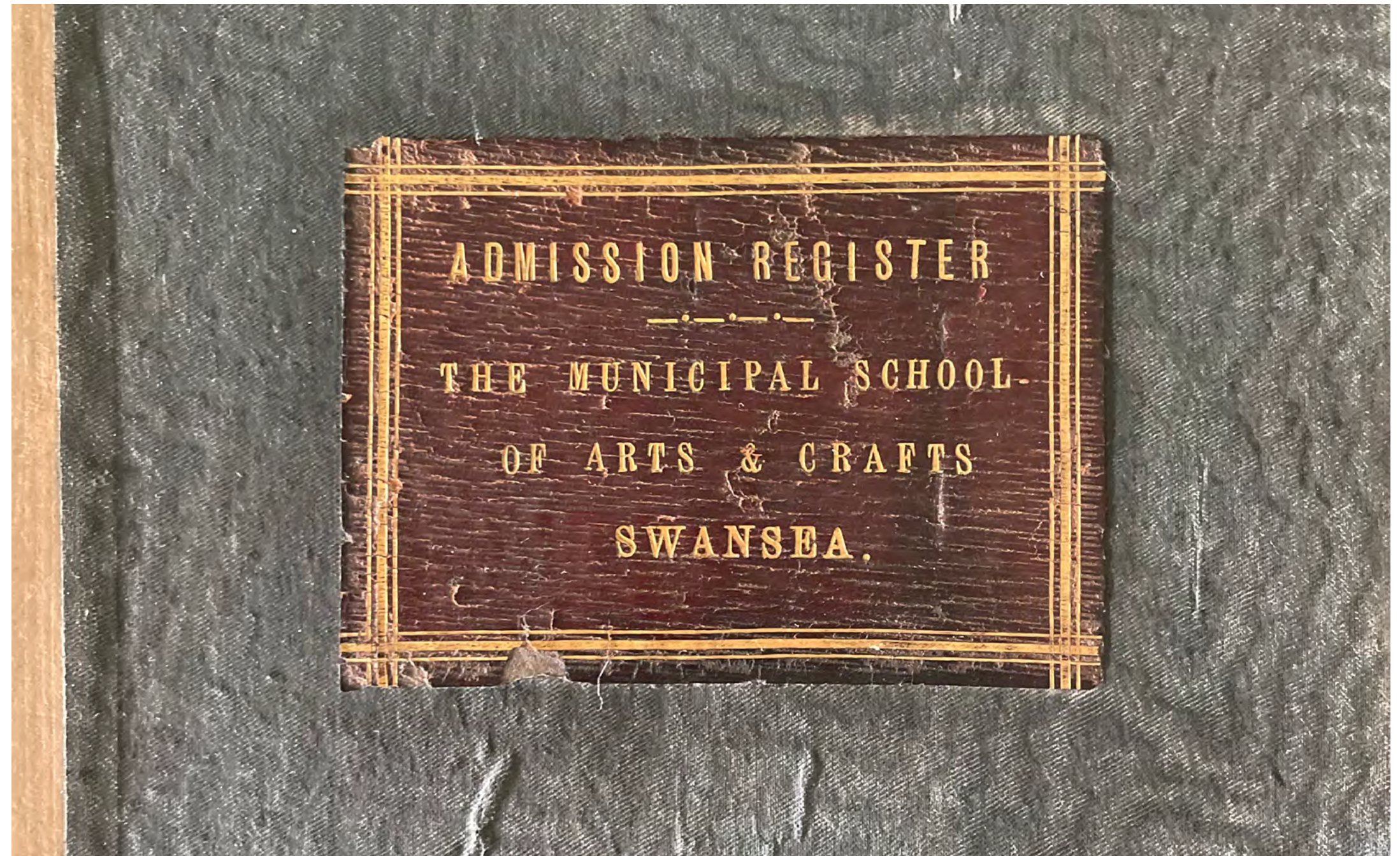
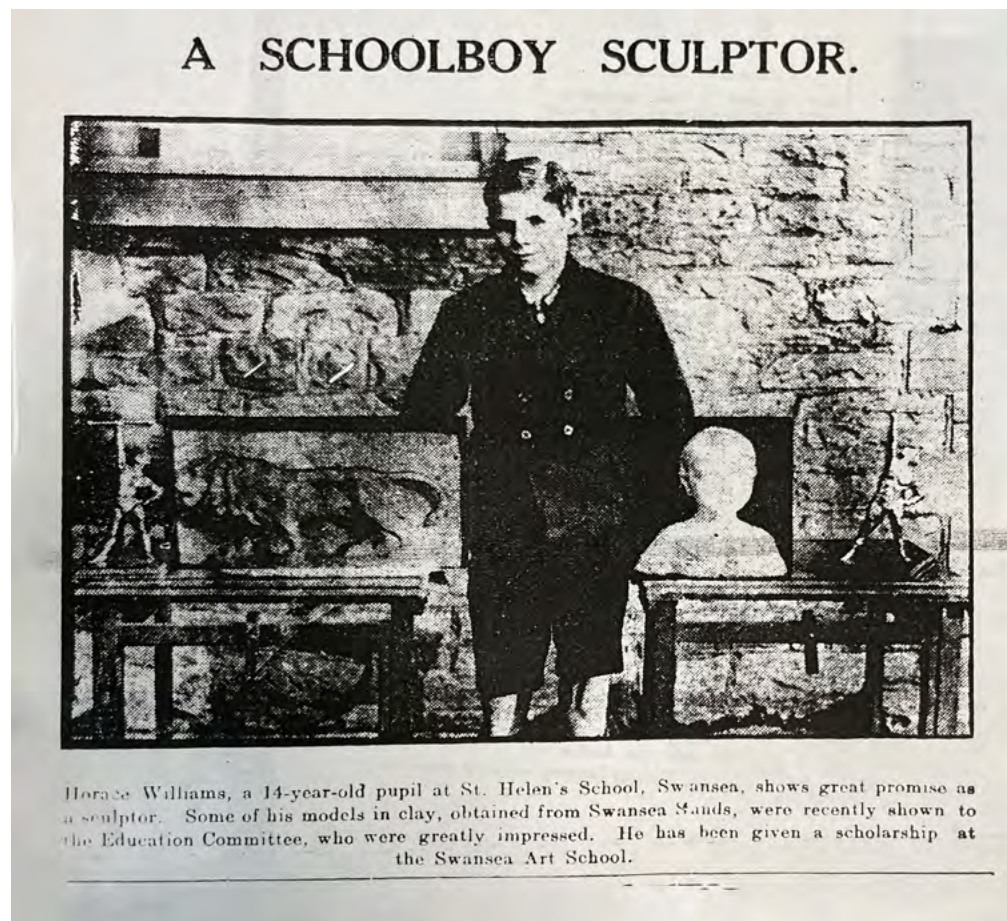
Importantly for a town like Swansea - scholarships
were made available to students from all backgrounds,
removing the barriers of expense.



For the future

When students from different cultures, backgrounds,
and perspectives come together, they bring unique
ways of seeing and interpreting the world.

Diversity is key to the creation of work that resonates
beyond your own experiences.



Rule 6

Nothing is a mistake. There's no win and no fail. **There's only make.**

The Bauhaus Art College Model



- Art, and 'practical art' (which we know as design) were taught side by side. This **connectivity** was pioneered by German Art College, The Bauhaus.
- Students at the Bauhaus were timetabled to be in a life drawing room one minute, and in metalwork the next. This was also interspersed with meditation, debating and performance.
- This rounded idea of a 'creative education' had a huge impact on society between the wars, and a **lasting impact on design** as we know it today.



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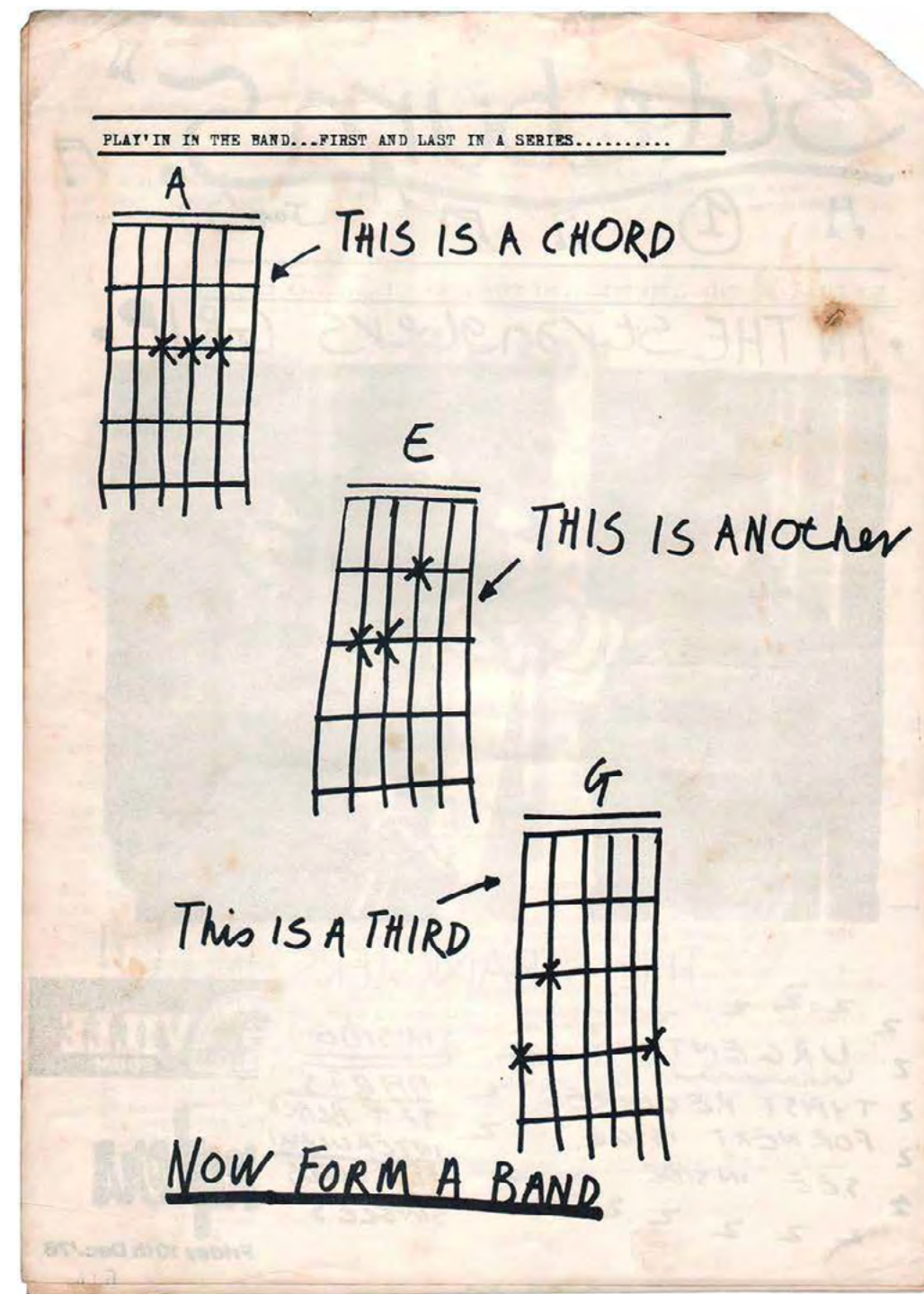
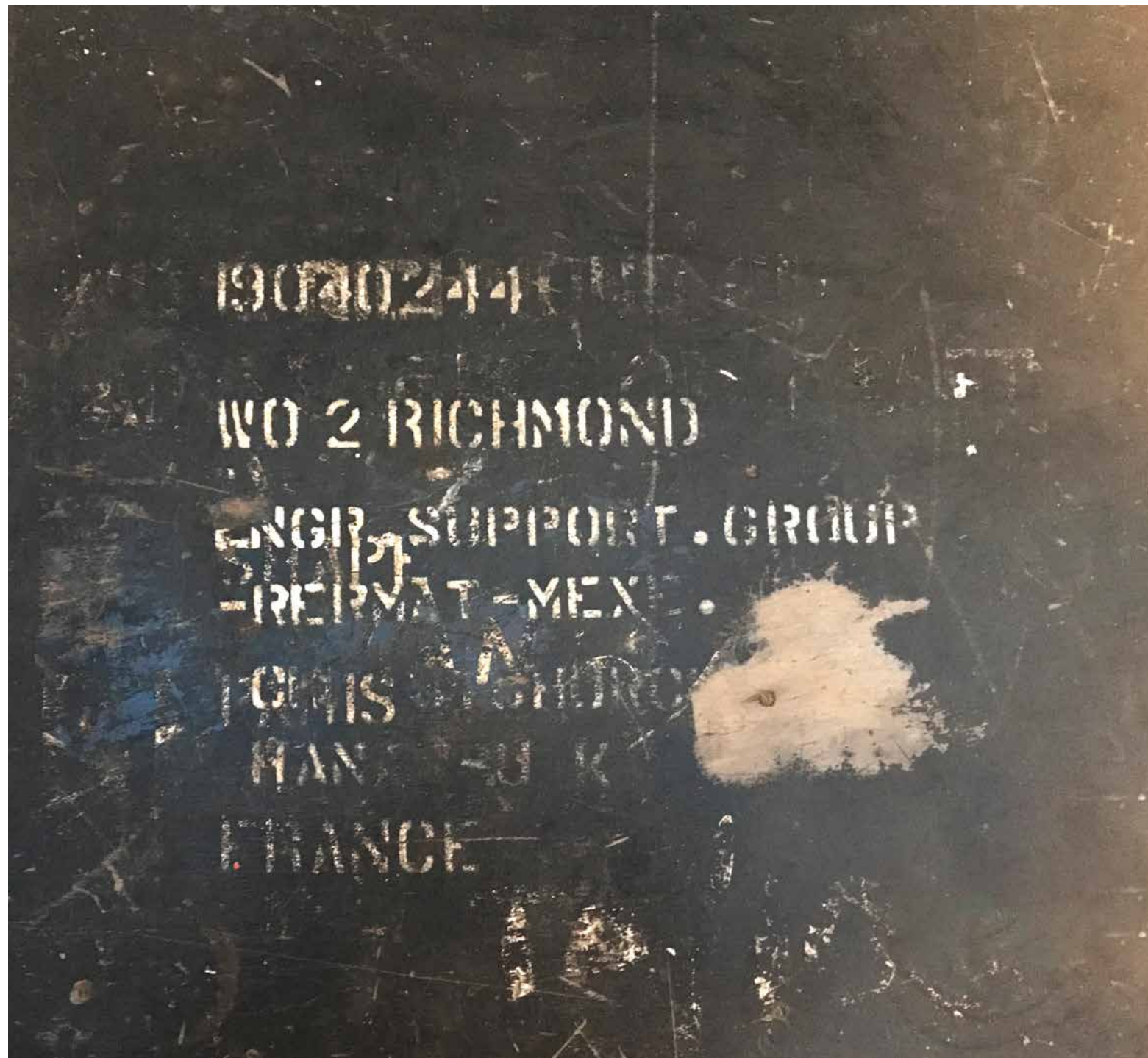


Realising that everything is connected

→ A piece of Graphic Design is a response to a moment, just as a song is or a dress is.
Drawing inspiration from all kinds of different places will enrich the work you produce.

Ask yourself, what 'thing' did you pick up as a kid, or see as a teenager which led you here today?

What got your excited about Graphic Design?





Curiosity

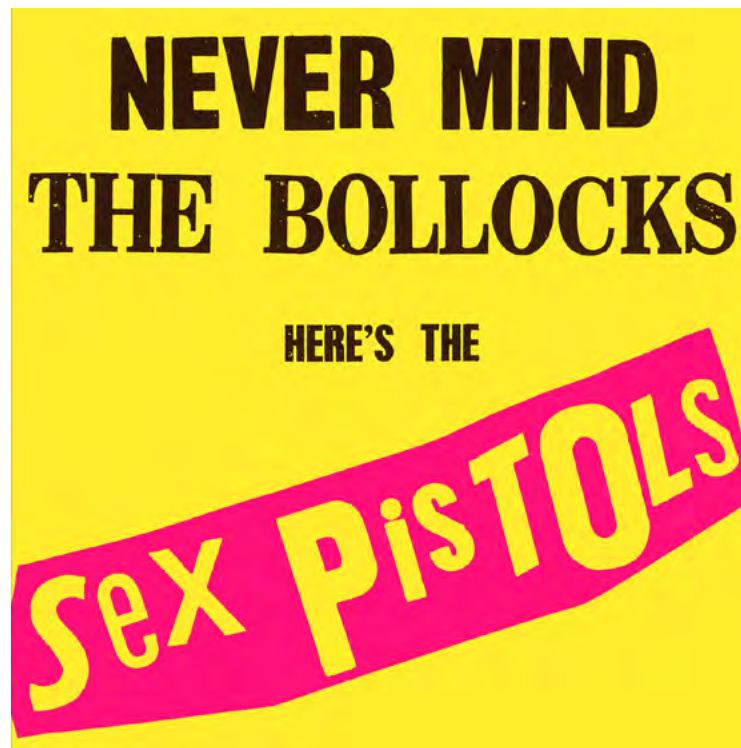
- “A student of an art college doesn't just learn their subject, they live it. ”
- Studying means participating in an interdisciplinary culture that shapes how you think and create.
- This is the antidote to the way we learn at other levels of our education. Curiosity is key.

Knowing whats come before

There's only 12 f*ing notes**

Noel Gallagher

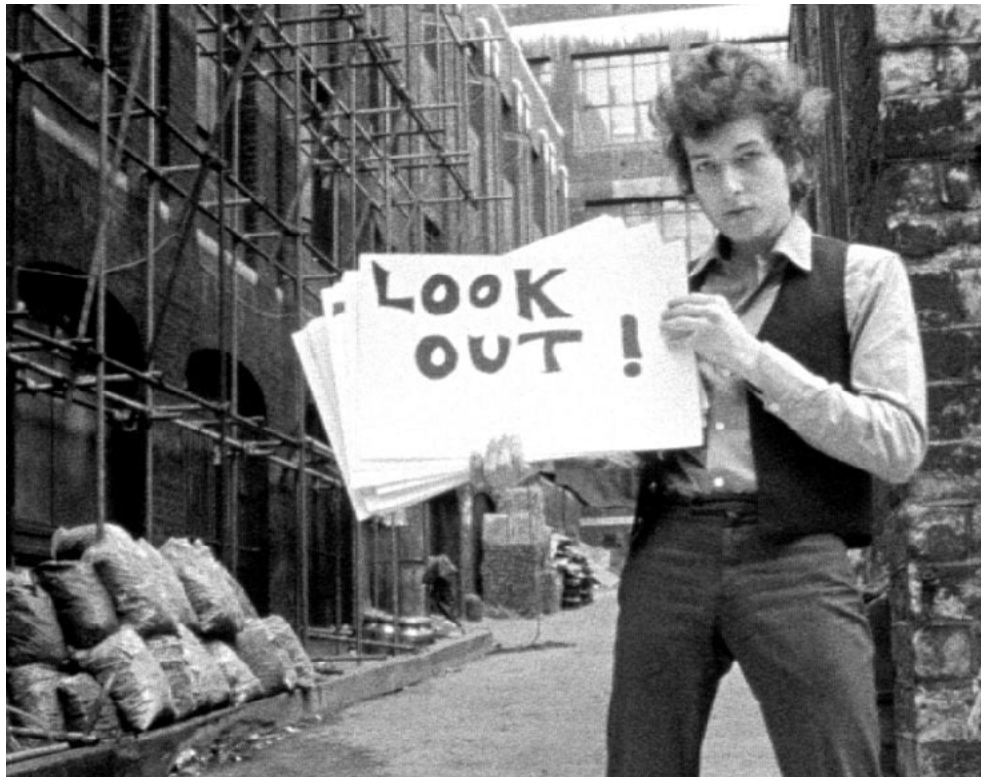
Knowing whats come before



Jamie Reid's 1977 Album Cover



Mcdonalds 2015 Campaign



Bob Dylan
Subterranean Homesick Blues
1965

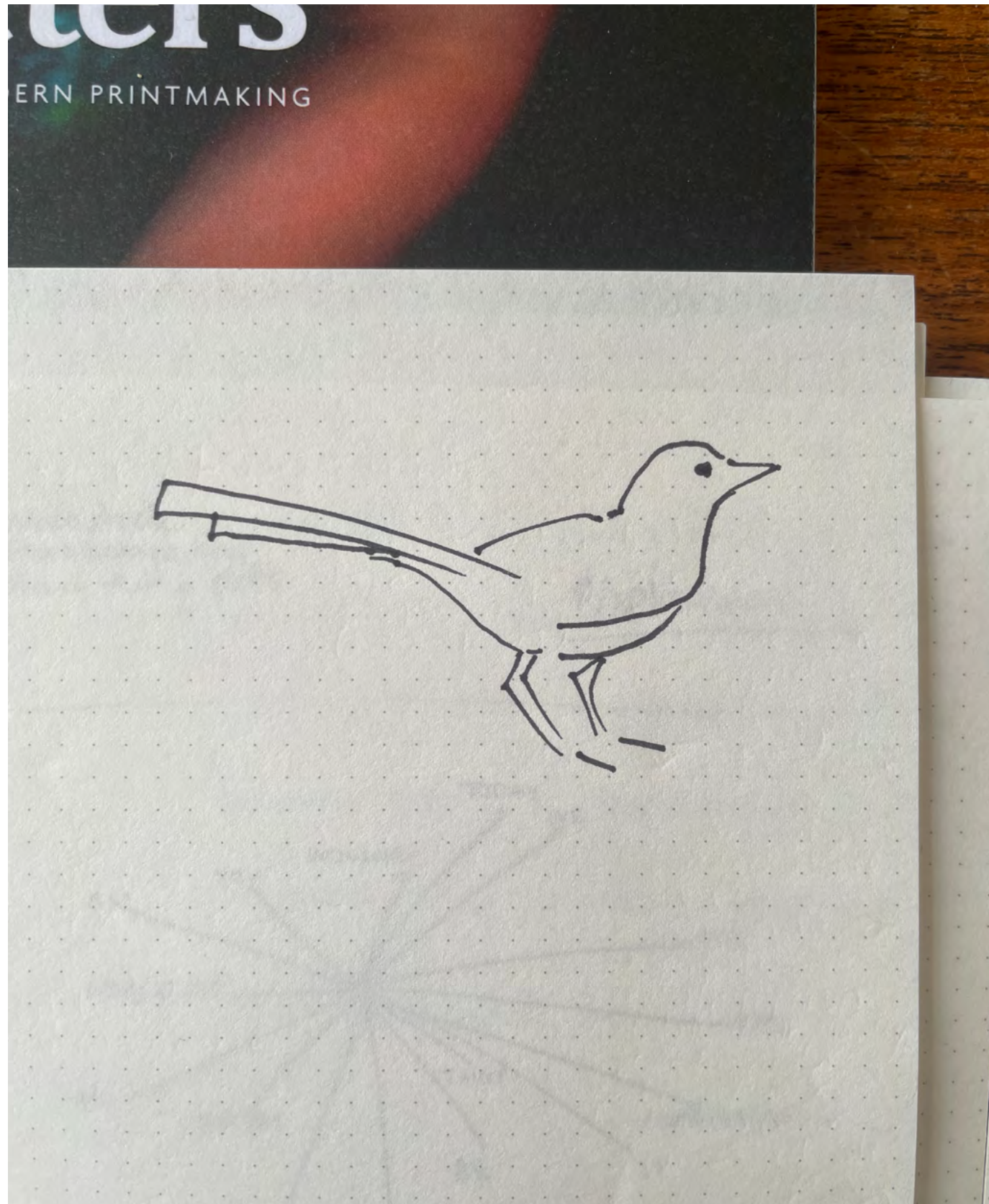


Love Actually
Tell them its carol singers
2003



Brexit Campaign
Conservative Party
2019

Cultural Magpie



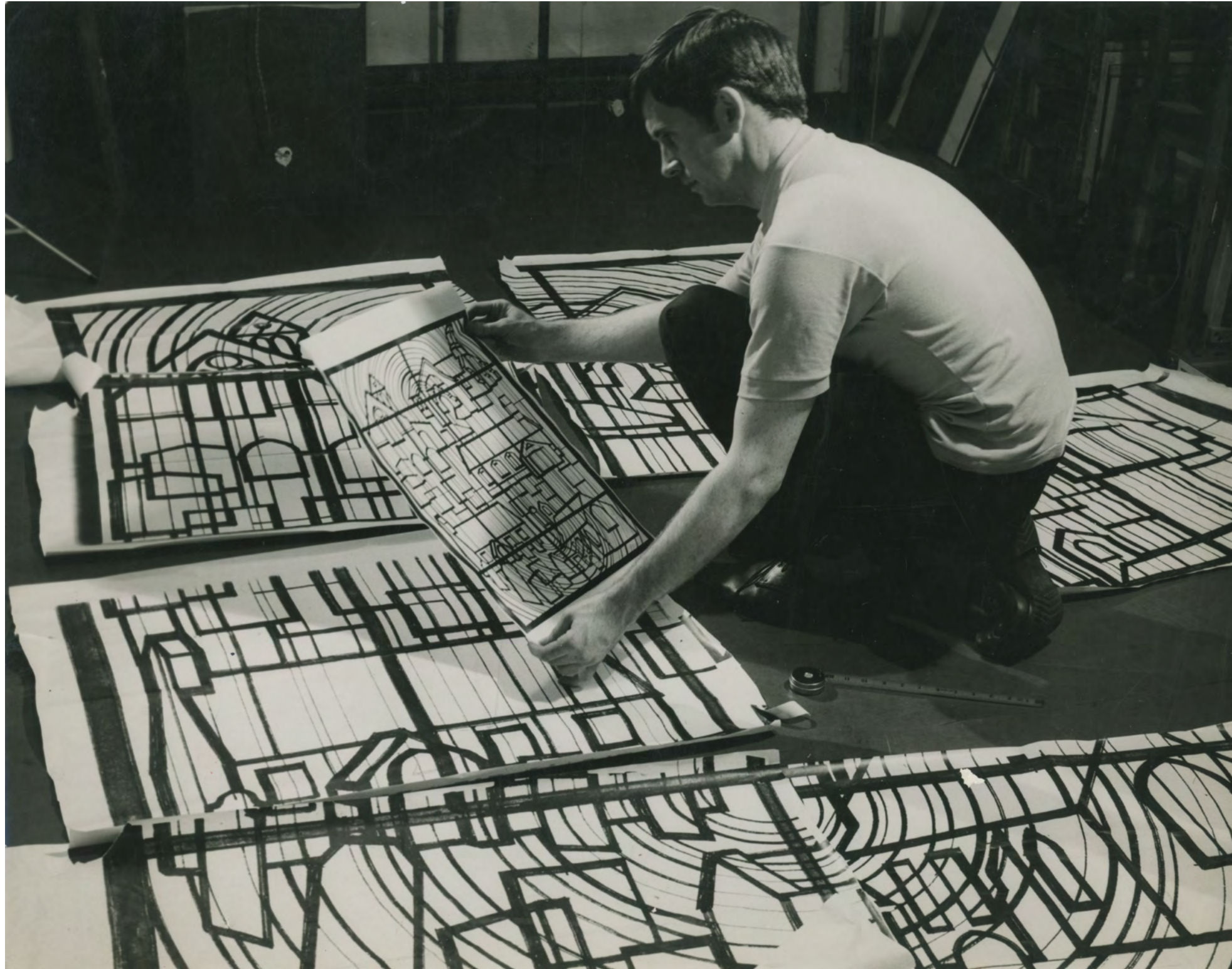
- Culture drives everything we do as designers. Everything we create adds to it.
- The more we take in, the more we observe, the better equipped we are to respond to it.
- You can't form opinions without first **exploring**

Rule 10

Always be around. Go to everything.

A Creative Space

During your three years at art college, you are part learning your subject, part learning about yourself.



Living your subject

Ways of Seeing

John Berger



Seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognizes before it can speak.

But there is also another sense in which seeing comes before words. It is seeing which establishes our place in the surrounding world; we explain that world with words, but words can never undo the fact that we are surrounded by it. The relation between what we see and what we know is never settled.



The Surrealist painter Magritte commented on this always-present gap between words and seeing in a painting called *The Key of Dreams*.

The way we see things is affected by what we

Alice Rawsthorn

Design as an Attitude

Question:

Does knowing how to use the tools, make you a good Graphic Designer?

Tools for 2025

- Both art and design are deeply human. They both require empathy — the ability to feel and interpret human experience.
- This image is how AI responded to the design challenge. What limitations is it showing in its image-making? Why do we think this has happened?



Why would we use AI to do our university work for us?

- Laziness vs FEAR
- “Up to this point, education has focused on measuring understanding through the pursuit of high marks. This emphasis has fostered a fear of failure. Many students turn to AI when they feel uncertain about their ability to complete a task, using it as a safety net.” Newsnight Sept 2025
- We learn far more from our failures than from our successes. When our successes are produced by AI, we lose the opportunity to understand and learn from our mistakes. As a result, failure is postponed—only to be experienced for the first time in the working world.

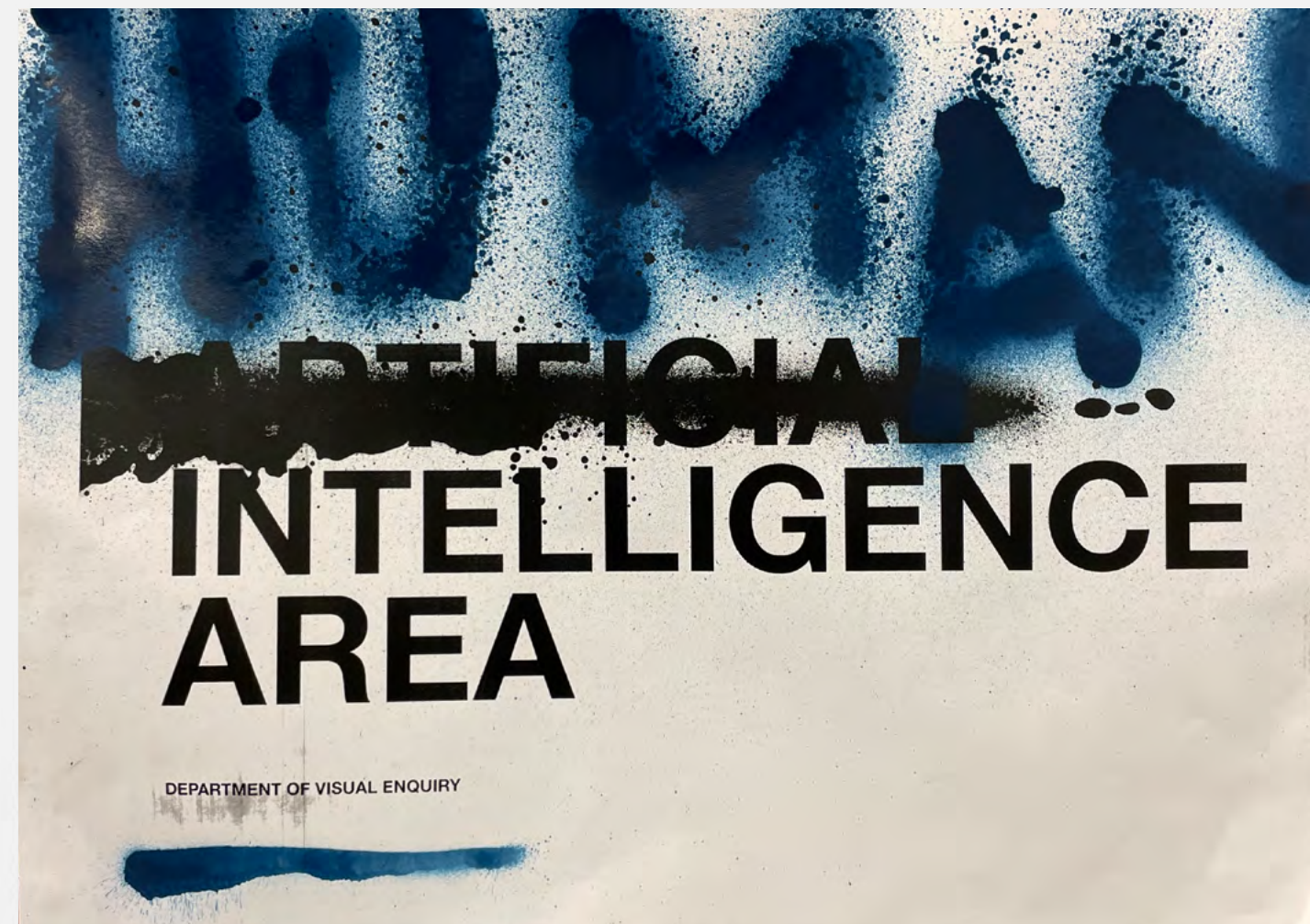
Human Intelligence

→ In a world increasingly dominated by automation and data, it is our human creativity that remains irreplaceable. Many of the world's most innovative companies employ art college graduates precisely because they bring new ways of thinking to problem-solving.

Art Colleges produce individuals who are not only creative but also emotionally attuned, capable of bridging divides and fostering understanding.

→ The UK's creative industries have grown at 1.5 times the rate of the wider economy for the past decade, generating more wealth than aerospace, the life sciences and automotive sectors combined.

It is estimated that up to 900,000 new jobs could be generated in the creative industries between 2013 and 2030. Guardian



Creative thinking is your **greatest asset.**

- ALL -
SCHOOLS
SHOULD BE
- ART -
SCHOOLS

All Schools Should Be Art Schools
Bob & Roberta Smith 2016

ALL SCHOOLS SHOULD BE ART SCHOOLS

