**Interview – Respondent 1
Held on 14 November 2024, 5.30pm online
Graduate from BA Graphic and Media Design Course in 2022/2023 academic year
Currently works in a design agency in a junior designer role**

RR:To make this brief as I know you had a busy day and I don’t want to take too much of your time. So thank you so much for agreeing to do this. I have a few questions to ask you about your experience of CTS over the course of the three years of your, of your degree and I'm doing this as part of a project for my PgCert which is kind of a qualification in teaching, basically, that we do. So my project has to do with how students think about or value CTS once they leave university.

So you were on the GMD course and did you do a DPS year? No? So you went straight through the three years.

And what is your current role? What are you doing at the moment?

R1: I work at the \_\_\_ agency, as a junior designer.

RR: OK right so you're still in London. Ok, how's that going?

R1: I’ve only been out of the college for 12 months, so can’t say much yet. And haven’t been in this role for that long. Before this, I did a few internships.

RR: Ok, so you haven’t been in the industry for that long but have a full time job now, which is good. So, to my questions, looking back what was the purpose of CTS within your degree?

R1: I’m by nature a very curious person, but writing is not our best quality as artists and sometimes is like wanting to go straight to the action. But it [CTS3] was very interesting once you get inside the project and have a deadline to pursue the project.

You start with something that is hard for us [designers], something out of our element so… But you have the possibility of learning so much, so many subjects, it was so interesting.

RR: And how did you find the other years? Obviously, you had a lot of freedom of choosing your own research in year 3, but how about the first two years?

R1: First year was a bit difficult, yeah, with covid. So I can’t say much as the sessions were online and it was difficult to interact online.

The third year was going in depth so much, when I came to the conclusion [of the dissertation], made my own conclusion it was the cherry on top of the cake… made me feel like I could do more or a challenge than what did before, it was more than I expected I could do.

RR: So what things were hard?

R1: Sometimes you had to get into different sources and research, so much research and so many sources that you get lost and overwhelmed, and there is so many ways you can research: video, archive, read...

During covid, the archives, I didn’t know how to use them or couldn’t go physically – so it was difficult for some of the projects…

Difficulty is about wanting to go into action and in the first year we didn’t design anything, second year a brief presentation on the dissertation, so we didn’t get to do much. And so in the final year, I didn’t do Route B [20 credit unit], I wanted to continue researching my topic… One of the best things about CTS was that someone gave us, was that you had to question everything and make your opinion out of it. Researching was very intriguing to me.

It was heard because if you don’ like writing and reading so much… but then you learn so much.

RR: Did it change your perspective on reading and writing?

R1: As designers if we don’t have a limit then it would be harder for us to start something. Reading wise I am reading a lot more; writing as a second language English it is a bit more complicated. But I write still. I was just analysing competitors for the brand and writing up the research.

Daily, I research, read articles, exhibitions, I am curious and want to go and see stuff. And also we are in London and have the privilege of seeing art and design so you need to have to do it. There are lots of platforms of design and architecture that are super interesting, brand new things that you can discover. Articles of people writing about different themes on design nowadays.

RR: And does any of that research inform what you do in the studio?

R1: There are many things that we use, like on moodboards that we can present to clients depending on what they want. It’s like increasing your knowledge about what is happening right now so you can directly think of visual references, artists, etc. and put it in your moodboard.

RR: Ok, so some of these skills you are kind of using them daily in your work, even if not quite in the same way as at university.

So I wanted to ask then, what are some of the things that were good about CTS? And what are some things that were less good, and that could be improved?

R1: First two years were online and I would much prefer to have sessions in class and prefer to meet my teacher and ask questions in class and debate in person. You are not inside of the class when you’re in your room, it’s not the same.

What I liked about CTS was that I remember there were classes, the ones in first year I don’t remember much, but I remember very specific cases of AI in design and architecture and I learned about gentrification [in year 2] which I never had heard about and now it’s everywhere and now I see it everywhere, even in Africa and places like, that, it was very interesting. Things that are very specific that you can then relate to your experience, a lot of knowledge and you absorb what you can. It was very good.

Some feedback in the first year was a bit so, so, but \_\_\_ feedback was amazing.

In the second year I remember putting together my question [for CTS3 proposal] and \_\_\_ really reorientated my question – helped me figure out what I really liked about it. This is very interesting so it made my, what I learned about the teachers, is they make it simpler, so that you can go deeper into the topic. With the examples he gave us, he gave me the right feedback, I felt. The activities that, they were, I remember they were super fun, it was really engaging for us to know each-other and what we liked, so it made us more comfortable to make us talk to each other about controversial topics. Not like that in first and second year because it was online.

I feel so lucky that I got to have \_\_\_ as my tutor

I remember I had, what happens is that you connect with teachers. He was good to work with as in the second year, [my tutor] was a bit more strict and more into his own thinking rather than being open-minded. The comments were, I want to go more into one pathway and you are neglecting what you want to do, so you are doing it for the mark.

RR: So did you experience any tension between studio and CTS – what did you think about that?

R1: For me it was good, in my course it was ideas and creating, I felt that it needed a lot of theoretical stuff like artists and things like that. Sometimes tutors were mentioning stuff but very randomly, CTS was good as you went into a bit of history and what was going on at the time. I was very into propaganda and brands that are very controversial, so I wasn’t looking at that at all in the practical side so I went into that and started realising what problems are there in the commercial branding, and what problems are out there in the real world and not as designer students in our bubble. But in the end it was good as you get out of the box ideas for your projects, so in the end kind of it is a good balance, so to have a bit of context on what you are doing. Because without theory you can’t do a lot of practical stuff. It was also very insightful also just to know about other areas in art and design. I remember someone doing art direction so I remember someone doing research on art direction in Brazil where she was from, so like this I learned about art direction which I didn’t know about. That came in the CTS class in the third year with \_\_\_. It was positive.