

Migrating methods in graphic heritage research

AMPS London Heritages, 24–27 June, University of Greenwich



Dr Robert Harland
Reader in Urban
Graphic Heritage
—UK



Dr Alison Barnes
International
Research Fellow
—Australia



Dr Yolandi Burger
International
Research Fellow
—South Africa



<https://namedafternelson.lboro.ac.uk/>

Loughborough University



Top 10 University in all UK league tables

Ranked 39th in the world for Art and Design
(2025 QS Higher Education league table)



**SCHOOL OF
DESIGN AND
CREATIVE
ARTS**



**Loughborough
University**

Research questions

What new perspectives can graphic design contribute to design for urban heritage?

How can participatory design approaches enhance urban graphic heritage for greater social cohesion?

In parallel with the recent interest in the relationship between design and heritage, **graphic heritage** has emerged as a new theoretical and practical domain in academic fields and professional contexts. It follows a global south-to-north path between Asia and a west-to-east direction between Europe. The design context underpinning it is a critical, creative, and poetic way of thinking about the functioning of cities through, for example, advertising spaces, commercial and industrial signs, facades, and lettering in a fusion of graphic memory, visual heritage, cultural heritage and urban culture. Graphic design in this sense is a framing device for a graphic image of the city and its urban heritage.

Any object through which people experience and are informed about cultural heritage in graphic form

(Harland and Xu 2021: 19)

This paper presents a classifying framework for graphic heritage for the benefit of the diverse uses of the concept until now and for future research. Through the utilisation of recent research in South Africa and Australia, the **means, meanings and measures** of graphic heritage are introduced. The research and impact activities in the Mandela Foundation in South Africa and the use of topophilia provide the basis for presenting a concept that reveal how the methods utilised by graphic heritage migrate between continents through the related domains of heritage interpretation, presentation and representation.



Content

Perspectives on graphic heritage

A decade of development

An evolving paradigm

Pathways to impact

The graphic heritage means, meanings and measures paradigm

Perspectives on graphic heritage

Discipline

Contemporary French and Francophile Studies (Chevant 2017)

Art History (Bilenkina 2019)

Architectural Heritage (Agustín-Hernández et al. 2020)

Graphic Design (Harland et al. 2019; Harland and Xu 2021)

Sociology of Sport (Barnes 2022)

Bilingualism (Elbardawil 2022)

Iberian Network in Defence of Graphic Heritage (Kassam 2021)

Theme

Graphic novel

Imitation

Buildings

Urban Design

Identity

Arab-English

Protest

Graphic Heritage

Graphic images are said to be central to the intellectual preoccupation of art historians and their concern for:

pictures,
statues,
architectural imagery,
designs,
abstract,
non-representational,
ornamental,
structural,
diagrams,
graphs.

—Mitchell (1986: 10–13)

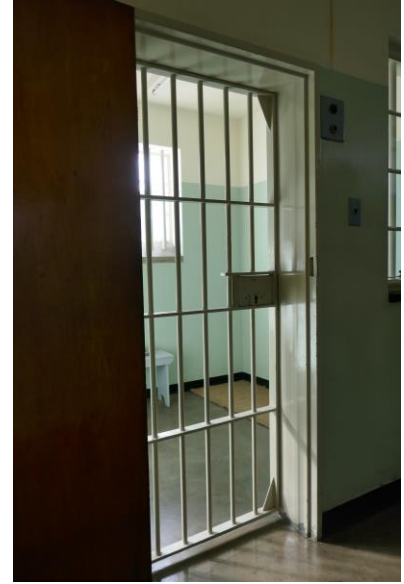
Heritage is a version of the past received through objects and display, representations and engagements, spectacular locations and events, memories and commemorations, and the preparation of places for cultural purposes and consumption.

—Waterton and Watson, 2015: 1

Contested/dark/uncomfortable/difficult/dissonant heritage



A representation of Mandela's prison cell on Robben Island is on display in one of the museum's courtyards. It gives visitors a **graphic sense** of how confined the space was in which Mandela lived from 1964 to 1982.



A decade of development

2015 to 2019

AHRC Priorities: Design, Heritage, and Performance

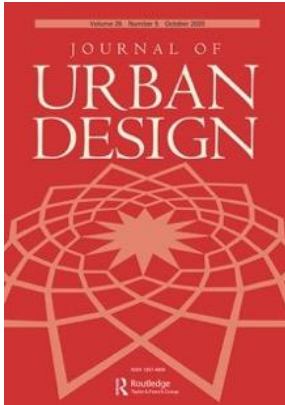
2015

| 2016

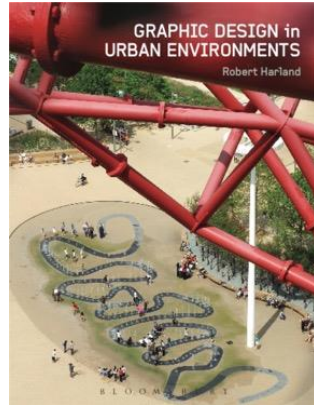
| 2017

| 2018

| 2019



Graphic Image of the City
—Journal article



Graphic Objects as
Urban Objects
—Monograph



Designing the Latina
Landscape
—Journal article



Repositioning
Graphic Heritage
—Grant
AH/S003398/1
£250k



Exploring Urban
Graphic Heritage
—Exhibition at
Tongji University

Graphic Design
Research Unit formed



2020 to 2024

15 Publications (8 Journal articles and 7 conference papers)

2020

| 2021

| 2022

| 2023

| 2024



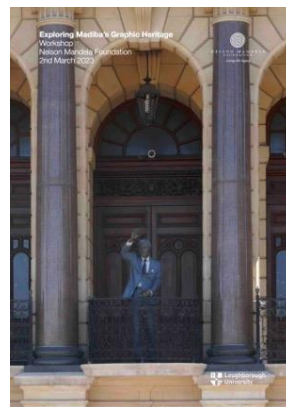
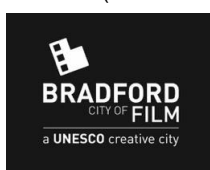
Design for Heritage in Practice
—Workshop



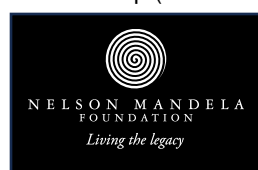
Repositioning Graphic Heritage
—Report



Bradford's Urban Graphic Heritage Workshop
—Grant (HEIF £50k)



Exploring Madiba's Graphic Heritage
—Workshop (GCRF £35k)

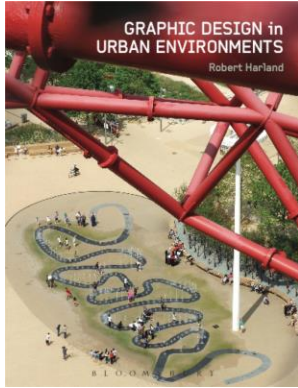


Named After Nelson: Learning from Places
Named after Nelson Mandela through Graphic Heritage
—Grant (HEIF £70k)

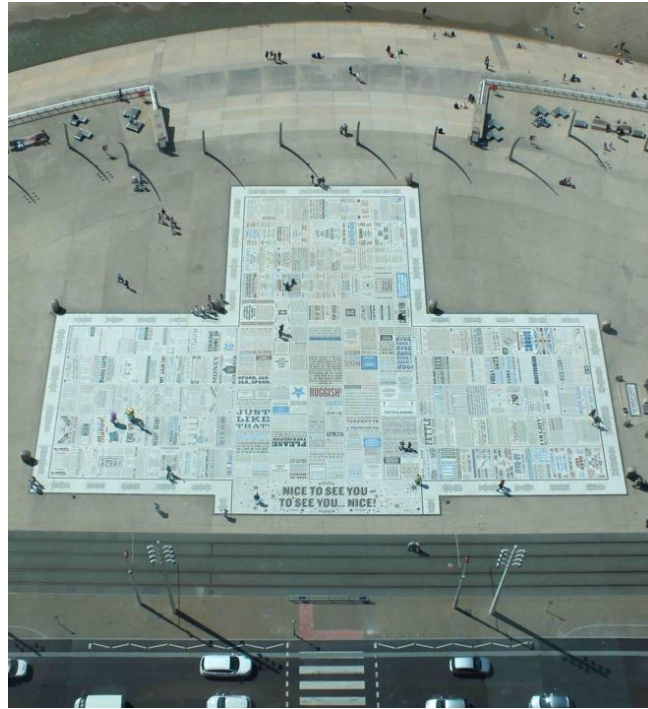


An evolving paradigm

Graphic design heritage



Harland, R. G. (2016).
Graphic Design in Urban
Environments, London:
Bloomsbury Academic.



An evolving paradigm

2015

Means — Comedy



2025

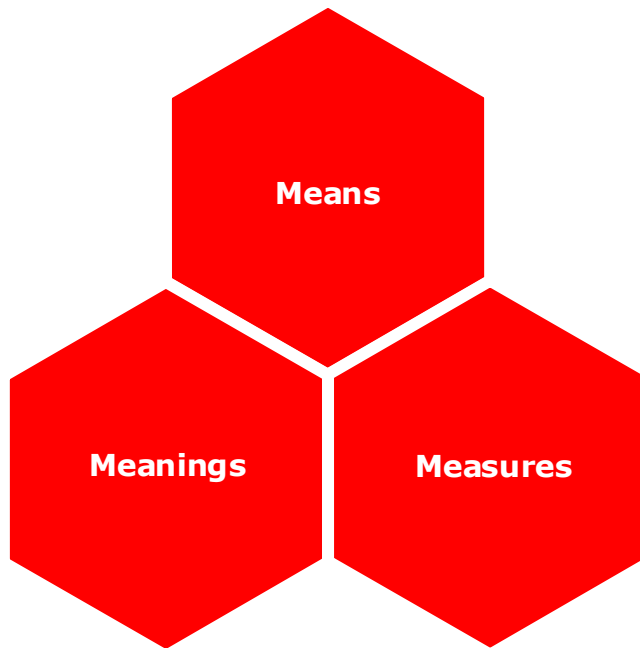
Meanings — Migration



Measures — Toponymy



The graphic heritage means, meanings and measures paradigm



An evolving paradigm

—Exploring Madiba's graphic heritage workshop

Means



Architectural imagery



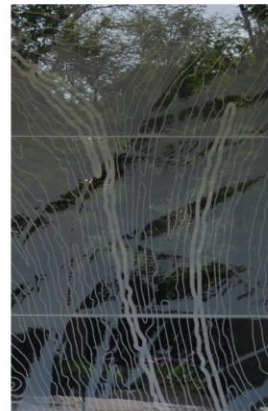
Statues



Designs



Abstract



Non-representational



[Infra]structural

An evolving paradigm

—Named after Nelson: learning from laces named after Nelson Mandela through graphic heritage

Means



Meanings

Item 1001 - Kenna coffee tin

During the final 18 months of his incarceration, at Victor Verster Prison, Nelson Mandela would drink Kenna coffee, a brand he favoured, as reported by Jack Swart, his former prison warder, and a qualified chef. Mandela had a fondness for home-baked bread, and when the tin in which the coffee was kept became empty, Jack Swart repurposed it as a container in which he baked bread for Mandela.

ZA COM NMG-1001

Archive at the Centre for Memory

Measures

Pathways to Impact

Means



Meanings

Measures

Exhibition visitor numbers,
April to September 2024:

3,498



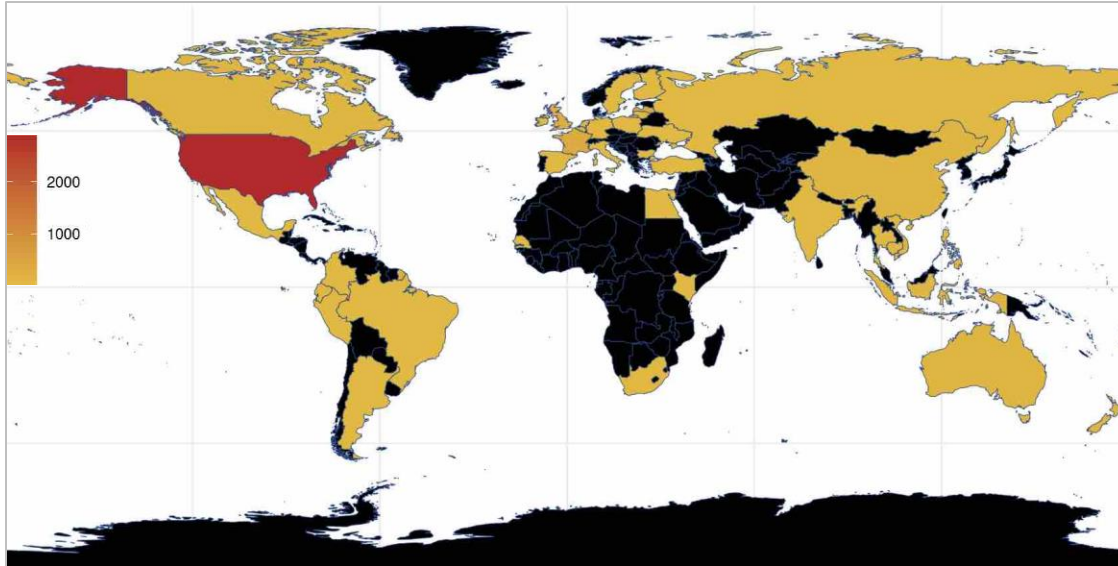
<https://namedafternelson.lboro.ac.uk/>

Pathways to Impact

Means

Meanings

Measures



Named After Nelson
Loughborough Repository Items
downloads to date:

4,763



<https://namedafternelson.lboro.ac.uk/>

Publications



Harland, R. G., Burger, Y., Barnes, A., & Burger, E. A. (2022). Memorialising Madiba in South Africa: The Role of Graphic Heritage and Toponymy in two Contrasting Urban Places, *The Journal of Public Space*, 7(1), 17–36. <https://doi.org/10.32891/jps.v7i1.1571>



Harland, R. G., Bridge, J., Nash, M., & Rabagliati, M. (2023). Utilising Graphic Heritage for Heritage Interpretation: A Case Report on Testing the Applicability of Graphic Heritage as a Development Tool for UNESCO Heritage Designations. *Heritage & Society*, 17(1), 117–143. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2159032X.2023.2248580>

Barnes, A., & Harland, R. G. (2023). Graphic Heritage and the Making of Place. *Heritage & Society*, 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2159032X.2023.2269364>



Harland, R. G., & Elbardawil, S. (2024). Graphic heritage calling: the temporal and spatial historic experience of the Wembley Stadium and Wembley Park milieu. *Soccer & Society*, 1–31. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14660970.2024.2363248>

Barnes, A., & Harland, R. G. (2024). Urban graphic heritage and the making of place: the 'arsenalisation' of the Emirates stadium. *Soccer & Society*, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14660970.2024.2384903>



Harland, R. G. (2024). Developing an explanatory hypothesis for urban graphic heritage through the observation of physical traces. *The Design Journal*, 27(3), 511–532. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14660970.2024.2339651>



Burger, Y., Harland, R.G., & McKenzie, C. (2024). 'Named after Nelson: Tracing the threads of **Graphic Heritage** in Gauteng, South Africa'. *Image & Text: A Journal for Design*, 38(1), 1–26. https://hdl.handle.net/10520/ej-c-imtext_v38_n1_a8

Content

Perspectives on graphic heritage

A decade of development

An evolving paradigm

Pathways to impact

The graphic heritage means, meanings and measures paradigm

Thank you

Robert Harland

r.g.harland@lboro.ac.uk

