



**Fehler + Fairchild Semiconductor | Crash [Northern Rock PLC (NRK) 13.06.07 - 20.09.07]**

The second in an ongoing series of related works that explore the rendering of complex information both visually and aurally, 'Crash' is a collaboration between design collective Fehler and software artist Fairchild Semiconductor.

Inspired by Paul Klee's concept of 'taking a line for a walk', Semiconductor and Fehler purchased 100 Northern Rock (NRK) ordinary shares on 20 September, 2007 at a price of 194.5 pence (with commission and stamp duty a net payable total of £205.47). The shares, markers within space, are intended solely as a means of generating a 'drawing', not as an investment vehicle.

Fehler state: "We selected Northern Rock (NRK) shares in the same way a painter selects colours on a palette. Both are rich signifiers: NRK - turbulent

and vibrant; verdigris - archaic and vivid. The shares are simply a medium, a material abstraction whose movement creates the drawing.

"The market is an efficient generator of points on a line, however, the points have a resonance beyond the line they create. The dramatic downturn in Northern Rock's fortunes is startling and, as the first run on a bank in the United Kingdom in over 100 years, unprecedented in recent history."

Semiconductor states: "We saw the market as a perfect 'machine for drawing', a gestural entity whose sudden shifts and corrections guide the compositional process. The market, ruthlessly driven by an internal system of regulated checks and balances, begins and ends drawings as companies are born, age and die, a brutally efficient process.

"The market's rallies and runs are no different to the brush strokes of a painter, flamboyant gestures inscribed by market forces. A rally pushing the line higher, soaring; a run sending it downwards into a tailspin, a crash; a liquidation or a merger and acquisition ending the drawing."

Although the shares were purchased after their value had crashed by over 70% in the space of a tumultuous week their purpose isn't to generate profit at the cost of others', often life-changing, expense. Relinquishing control of the shares, Semiconductor and Fehler have transferred their ownership to Fällt to be held in escrow for the duration of the drawing. Profit or loss is irrelevant.

The composition only becomes complete on Northern Rock's liquidation or acquisition through

a merger and acquisition at which point a loss or gain is booked and any subsequent profits reinvested in a new financial vehicle - the beginning of a new drawing.

Design has the power to amplify meaning, to add an extra dimension, to provide clarity through carefully harnessed form. The works in this series explore this principle, creating visualisations that add a layer of beauty to evidence which at its most basic level can only be described as ugly.

As Tufte states in his introduction to 'Beautiful Evidence': "Science and art have in common intense seeing, the wide-eyed observing that generates empirical information. 'Beautiful Evidence' is about how seeing turns into showing, how empirical observations turn into explanations and evidence.

"Evidence presentation is a moral act as well as an intellectual activity ... [those who present evidence should] be held intellectually and ethically responsible for what they show and tell. Thus consuming a presentation is also an intellectual and moral activity."

Further Reading:

GRAHAM, B., 2003. The Intelligent Investor [Revised Edition]. New York: HarperBusiness Essentials. [ISBN 0-06-055566-1]

The Tipping Point: [www.gladwell.com/tippingpoint](http://www.gladwell.com/tippingpoint)