



Fehler + Fairchild Semiconductor | 100 Days [Iraq Conflict 20.05.06 - 27.08.06]

A collaboration between design collective Fehler and software artist Fairchild Semiconductor, '100 Days' is the first in a series of related works that explore the rendering of complex information both visually and aurally.

Inspired by the work of Edward R. Tufte - in particular his books 'Envisioning Information' and 'Beautiful Evidence' - Semiconductor and Fehler embarked on a series of works to explore the idea of creating visually arresting pieces which amplify abstract information's underlying message through the careful use of graphic form.

The resulting visualisations reveal an inherent beauty within often shocking information - from the daily civilian death toll in Iraq (above) to yearly 'road traffic and distribution of accidents on major roads

in the UK' (National Statistics). Information that we have become increasingly immune to through repeated exposure.

Fehler state: "For several years we have been working with ciphers and coding systems exploring different means of giving form to complex information.

"Collaborating with [Fairchild] Semiconductor on these works shifts the focus of our attention from the limited scope of graphic design towards works which operate within the broader scope of social commentary, a move in part inspired by Ken Garland's 1964 'First Things First' manifesto.

"These works are the first stage in a process which will ultimately result in a series of online installations that shape data live - a collaboration between Fehler,

Semiconductor and Fällt developer Nicholas Kove - an experiment in sculpting data in real time."

Semiconductor states: "Garland's original manifesto rallied against consumer culture and tried to highlight a humanist dimension to graphic design theory; a move we identified with. It seemed natural to highlight the current situation in Iraq as the first work in the series.

"Each bullet point (above) represents a day in the life of Iraq. Each millimetre in diameter represents ten civilian casualties. The larger the bullet the greater the number of casualties.

"The work reflects a sobering reality: 100 bullet points totalling 4,097 civilian deaths. A figure which undermines a recent Pentagon statement that 'this

conflict has been prosecuted in the most precise fashion of any conflict in the history of modern warfare.' The stark contrast of the work above paints a very different and sobering picture."

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:

TUFTE, E. R., 2006. *Beautiful Evidence*. Cheshire, CT: Graphics Press. [ISBN 0-961-39217-7]

Iraq Body Count: www.iraqbodycount.org