

Unit 1

Methods of Translating Written Response

Representing “Fuck Content” through the Form of the Conditional Design Manifesto

INTRODUCTION

This written response represents Michael Rock’s “Fuck Content” and its key arguments through the structure and declarative tone of the Conditional Design Manifesto. Rock argues that form is the essential component of meaning-making in design, emphasising that a designer’s authorship is found in shaping rather than creating content. He frames design as a language that constructs experiences and mediates how people interact with the world.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Rock, M. (2009) *Fuck Content*. Available at: <https://2x4.org/ideas/2009/fuck-content/> (Accessed: 10 November 2025).

Blauvelt, A. (2014) ‘Conditional Design Manifesto’ in *Conditional Design Workbook*. Valiz.

Fuck Content Manifesto

A manifesto for designers insecure in their practice

We work in a profession that undervalues itself, measuring our worth against artists and authors revered for their power to command and create content. We chase authorship by creating content rather than by shaping it. We believe that form follows content, that good content defines good design, and that without content, form is meaningless.

We reject these beliefs. Shaping is authorship. We want to reclaim form as meaning-making, reaffirming its role in shaping what people see, feel, and believe.

We focus on communicate through typography, colour, scale, contrast, and weight. Treatment is our language. Every act of shaping changes how people encounter the world. This is our control. Design captures what it feels like to be alive now. This is our content.

“A movie is not what it is about, it’s how it is about it.

Likewise, for us, our What is a How. Our content is, perpetually, Design itself” (Rock, 2009).

Authorship

We are designers-as-authors, not designers-and-authors.

We author through the manipulation of form, not through the creation of content.

We express authorship through a consistent direction of style.

Ideas develop over a series of projects spanning years.

A single design object can never contain a complete idea.

Every work carries our signature.

The way we organise and develop projects expresses a philosophy, a style, an argument, and a critique.

Through visual, textual, and operational strategies, we make ideas tangible and compelling.

We revisit and rework key ideas to build a body of work that reflects what it feels like to live now.

Form

Form is our language and our content.

We shape meaning through form, using typography, colour, scale, contrast, and weight.

These are the devices of telling we must master.

Form is storytelling, not through narrative, but through treatment.

Graphic design evolves through form more than through concept.

It continually reshapes how the world is seen.

Reshaping

We reshape relationships.

Design mediates between people and their environment.

By shaping form, we create exchanges that transform connection and renegotiate experience.

Through design, we shape how people encounter the world, and that is our control.