Conversation

# This Same World

## Naïve impressions from an expanded view of our environs.

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**About**
Clyde Doyle is Co-Chair of the MA Design for Change in IADT, a programme run in collaboration with the Institute without Boundaries (IwB) at George Brown College in Toronto, and the Post Graduate Certificate in Critical Design Philosophies, and lectures on the BA in Design for Film. His professional career since 1995 has spanned a variety of creative industries; industrial design, model making/rapid prototyping, fine art fabrication and production design for film, TV and theatre.

Currently engaged in his PhD in Design at the National College of Art and Design (NCAD), he is developing non-anthropocentric design methodologies with the aim of facilitating ecological design practice. He is also a Principal Investigator at IADT's new Public Design Lab which is focused on design for social and public good.

Peter Ever's research and practice is post-phenomenological; drawing on a range of theoretical paradigms encompassing systems theory, performativity, situational ethics, biological determinism and non-human ontologies. He fuses his experience as a Lecturer in Visual Communication Design/Graphic Design at IADT with his practice as an art photographer; to consider how artistic practices can generate critical tools for investigative design methods and produce "fast tools for slow thinking." The insights gleaned from this combination of practice and research led to his founding role in the Public Design Lab whose mission is to address the most complex challenges facing our society with value-led design approaches.

The N-TUTORR and Elevate programmes at IADT funded the purchase of some specialist equipment with the objective of an expanded perspective on our environs. How might access to other ways of seeing effect our understanding of the world around us? What are the potentialities? Canon RP cameras were adapted to allow more of the non-visible spectrum to be accessed. The conversation below is a reaction to the first explorations with the cameras.

**Peter Evers:**

Just to set the scene, we used full spectrum cameras that we had adapted from regular cameras. We had a look at a mixture of nature and the built environment using a variety of infrared filters and some UV filters.

**Clyde Doyle:**

I was excited to hear about the cameras. When it comes down to it really, it's about this opportunity to see something that you can't usually see or that you don't have the perception that you understand it's there. I was actually surprised. I saw things I hadn't anticipated at all which was really exciting. It was quite affecting, to be honest. A lot of the work I do in research is around the limits of perception and the issues around our limited capacity to really perceive and understand things which are outside our perception bubble.

I have been making different tools, devices and processes which I suppose help us overcome those limitations in perception. I've made things before that would help people interact in a material way or to give them different viewpoints through embodiment; the kind of power of being in place and doing that research in place. Technology often aims to do this, but, more often than not, it becomes another barrier. So, what was exciting about this was that it was just very clean. There was a kind of a simplicity to it. It was like a blocking out of 'wavelengths'. A very simple kind of a process. I suppose it was the simplicity and directness of it, and the fact that the images didn't quite capture what I could see behind the lens. So, for instance, the thing that really stuck with me was the iridescent metallic quality of the Bramble leaves (Figure 1). While you can see it in a still image, it wasn't until you saw it moving through the lens with the sound and feel of the wind that you really got it. You could see that it was like it just looked like anodised aluminium. It was beautiful, you know. With the naked eye it's all very familiar but the shift in spectrum immediately brings forward the material aspect of it, the kind of material implications or suggestions.

**Peter Evers:**

Some of my initial things that I found exciting were like...There's an image where we see a sliver of a back garden and it's nestled amongst domestic houses and concrete walls. The foliage in the garden glows. The habitat of the garden looks like a heaven entombed in slabs of dead desert (Figure 2). In another presentation, a road appears black in the infrared spectrum. It reminded me that I would often see crows eating floundering insects affected by the heat radiating from the tarmac. The images prompted me into an acceptance that I was present and absent at the same

time. That the world was more wonderful than I could perceive and that I would never have the biology to understand these the novel ontologies I was seeing through these devices. So those are my naive impressions. They're not critical or scientific, more intuitive (Figures 3 and 4).

**Clyde Doyle:**

Yeah, but I think this is the kind of advantage of something like this that helps to access other points of view or more than human perspectives and perceptions of the world. Jakob von Uexküll, who developed the concept of Umvelt, and perceptual tools to help people bridge the gap in interpretation; to use biosemiotics.

**Peter Evers:**

What is biosemiotics?

**Clyde Doyle:**

It's the process of creating and interpreting signs, how living systems use signs to convey meaning. Like chemical messages; like pheromones in plants and animals. Organisms communicate with each other without language. How certain species think and perceive the world. Even though the images we are seeing are technological interpretations, they are providing a significant and direct access to a different perspective. It makes it instantly tangible that the world can be perceived in lots of different ways. These shared worlds are entirely different, as you said earlier, what is a road to us is something entirely different to what it is to other creatures. I kept on coming back to this idea of materials. The qualities of a thing, the properties of a thing. These devices give you a higher level of understanding of the thing.

**Peter Evers:**

It breaks with our traditional concept of the photograph. Our aesthetics, colours and semiotics are replaced by material; you're considering how organisms relate to the sun; how light is absorbed. Why is it absorbed by that material? Why is it reflecting it? Why does this look cold and dead? And why does this look vibrant and alive?
I think being able to directly compare the different spectrums is great (Figures 5,6,7,8).

**Clyde Doyle:**

I'm just enjoying thinking about it. Is it to do with the bouncing of light? Is it to do with the absorption of rain perhaps? Again, what I like about this is being embodied, being in the place, having the opportunity to explore in this place yourself as opposed to being presented with images.

**Peter Evers:**

Thanks Clyde, great reflections there.

**Clyde Doyle:**

Pleasure.

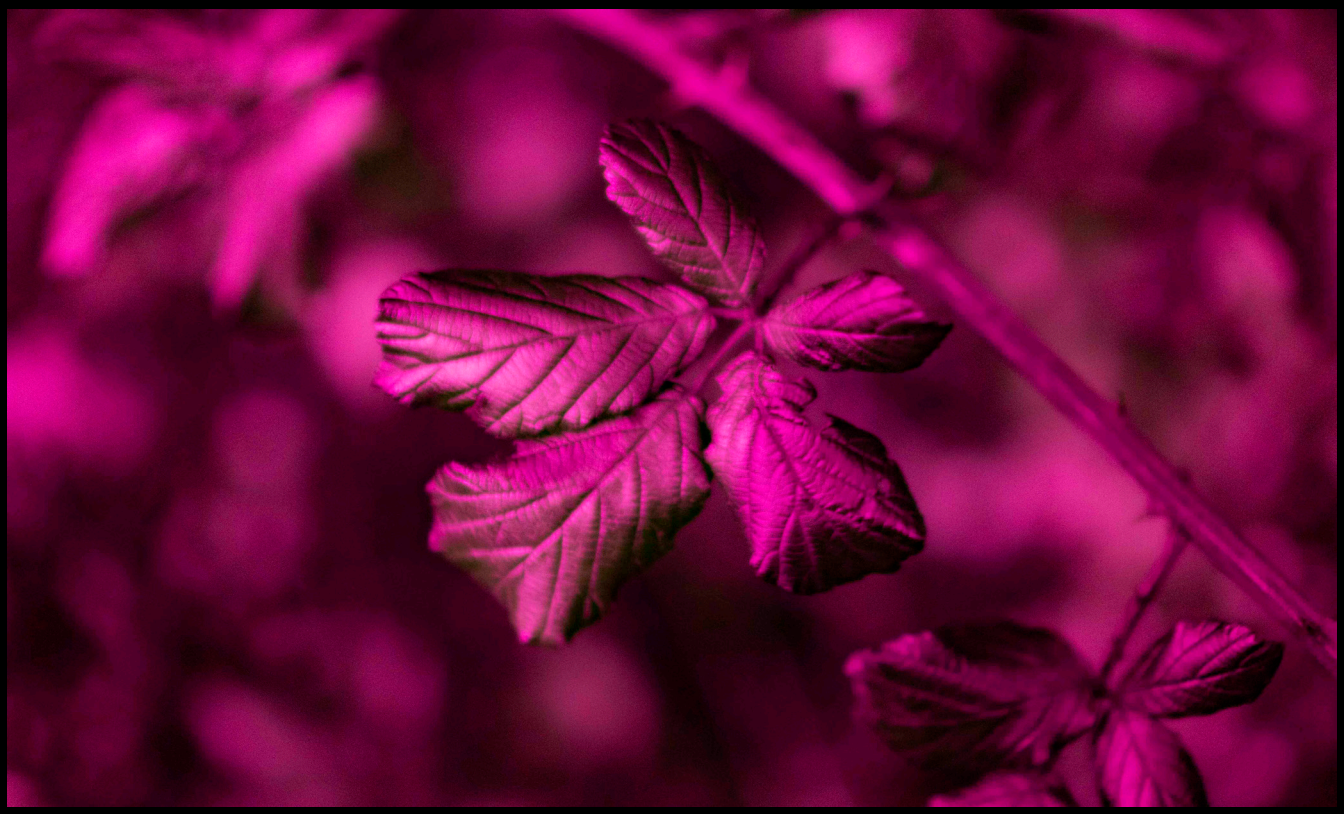

**Figure 1.**

**Figure 2.**

**Figure 3.**

**Figure 4.**

**Figure 5.**

**Figure 6.**

**Figure 7.**

**Figure 8.**