**As you’re finishing your first set of iterations, try to articulate (in writing) the critical question that is emerging through your exploration.**

Week 1:

Trying my hand at a reduction linocut – printing a multicoloured image carved from a single ‘block’ of material – has revealed the reductive quality of the process to be mirrored by the additive nature of the outcome. Each new layer carved results in an additional fragment extracted from the original monochrome reference image, forcing me to rethink a singular ‘known’ image as a set of unplanned or ‘unknown’ individual parts, with the potential to alter the identity of the final image. So far, I’ve worked to recreate an original image, but I do wonder: how can this reductive method of layering be used as a means of (re)building or recontextualising an image? Can the reduction expand a single image into a set of narratives?

Week 2:

The printmaking is becoming increasingly ad hoc in both process and outcomes; a funny or amusing relationship between different parts as Jencks (1972) puts it. But typically, this is done to serve a certain purpose; is there one here? Admittedly, it has been less problem-solving and more aimed at exploring potential fictions through the juxtaposition of contrasting cultural depictions of beverages. Last week’s iterations have evolved as follows: I continued working with lino as a material but printing using limited tools and household objects. Shifting from the fully equipped workshop, I assembled myself on a little staircase inside my flat, using basic water-based inks and a wooden spoon to print the blocks. This ad hoc set-up has naturally translated onto paper through rougher, less refined images due to the lack of consistent pressure and poorer quality of the inks, but with arguably more character. Some of the sheets, printed at various stages of the linocut, read “Ramadan Special”, “Aperitivo Halal” and “Indus Exotica” in reference to the English naming conventions of South Asian restaurants or food items, which are inherently ad hoc in themselves by projecting such odd (yet fantastical) identities. It’s no ‘eureka flash’ but this process has allowed me to freeze layers and test certain versions Gary Perweiler’s overflowing beverage with these hybrid phrases. The old with the new, as adhocism calls for, but without the distinction of which is which.

Jencks, C. and Silver N. (1972) *Adhocism: The Case for Improvisation.* New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc.

Week 3:

KURRACHEE JEWEL INDUS DELIGHT NOUVEAU ORIENT BANQUET EXOTICA

The above open compound terms are the current focus of my enquiry, rooted in what I believe are two sides of the same cultural coin: the adhoc naming conventions of diasporic South Asian restaurants, and the Orientalist glossary of Anglo-India that preceded these, (and from which they arguably stem from.) But presented as linocut prints and paired with images, these two contexts can be either highlighted or totally lost – a failure of language, perhaps – which as Barthes (1972) describes is one of the conditions upon which myth is predicated.

In ‘Mythologies’, Barthes writes that one of the key principles of a myth-making is the “miraculous evaporation of history” (Barthes, p. 152, 1972), which has been one of the intentions of my iterations, albeit in an ironic sense. The ‘form’ of communication eradicates individual meanings or histories present within the myth and it’s true that the linocut form of these highly stylised, monochromatic prints is an intentional flattening of the connotations of the words and images they contain, instead presenting them as an invitation to viewers to imagine them in a new light. Yet, my very reasoning for selecting specific terms was due to the double-edged cultural context they hold, so are these outputs indeed myths?

One the one hand, Barthes argues that the nature of myths is illusionary; “what the public wants is the image of passion, not passion itself” (Barthes, p.16, 1972). He describes aspects of everyday life, such as steak or boxing, as being significant as gestures, rather than objects, and the reductive nature of linocut allows for a looser representative quality. The prints don’t explain what INDUS DELIGHT is exactly but are an attempt to evoke a certain sense of what it may represent within a new context. As another marker of a myth, I’d argue that they do turn words or symbols whose meaning may be already self-sufficient into empty ‘forms’. This arguably suggests a similar impact to the Orientalist gaze, but at which stage is that critique occurring?

I can see the prints functioning in both ways, by divorcing meaning from all communication and offering themselves at face value (this is both mythical and Orientalist in nature). Yet, they can also suggest something deeper if considering the history and usage of the words. But if both rely on suggestive but non-specific imagery to ultimately be evocative of ‘something’, rather than explicitly stating what that is, then are they both one and the same? Does the contradictory nature of the enquiry suggest that the whole framework of producing this is a myth?

Perhaps not a myth at all, but rather a sign, as Barthe writes:

“Here again, the sign is ambiguous: it remains on the surface, yet does not for all that give up the attempt to pass itself off as depth. It aims at making people understand (which is laudable) but at the same time suggests that it is spontaneous (which is cheating); it presents itself at once as intentional and irrepressible, artificial and natural, manufactured and discovered.” (Barthes, p. 26, 1972)

Barthes, R. (1972) *Mythologies*. New York: Noonday Press.