Designing Interactive Worlds With Words: Principles of Writing As Representational Composition

David S. Kaufer, Brian S. Butler

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No two writing situations are exactly the same and skilled writers, like skilled painters, must develop the know-how to represent the objects of their writing as part of a flexible art. This special art of writing lies hidden between grammar--the well-formedness of sentences--and genre--the capacity of texts to perform culturally holistic communicative functions (e.g., the memo, the strategic report, the letter to the editor). Concealed between grammar and genre, this less visible art of writing is what Kaufer and Butler call "representational composition." Texts within this hidden art are best viewed not primarily as grammatical units or as genre functions, but as bearers of design elements stimulating imagistic, narrative, and information-rich worlds, and as an invitation to readers to explore and interact with them.

This volume presents a systematic study of the principles that underlie writing as representational composition. Drawing from student models derived from a studio method, the authors use each chapter to present a different aspect of what unfolds--across the course of the book--into a cumulative, interactive, and unified body of representational principles underlying the design of texts. They reveal what makes the textual representations achieved by expert writers worthwhile, and, at the same time, difficult for novice writers to reproduce. Extending the framework of their 1996 volume, *Rhetoric and the Arts* of Design, into a realm of textual design, this volume will interest students and instructors of writing, rhetoric, and information design.

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