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# What is research?

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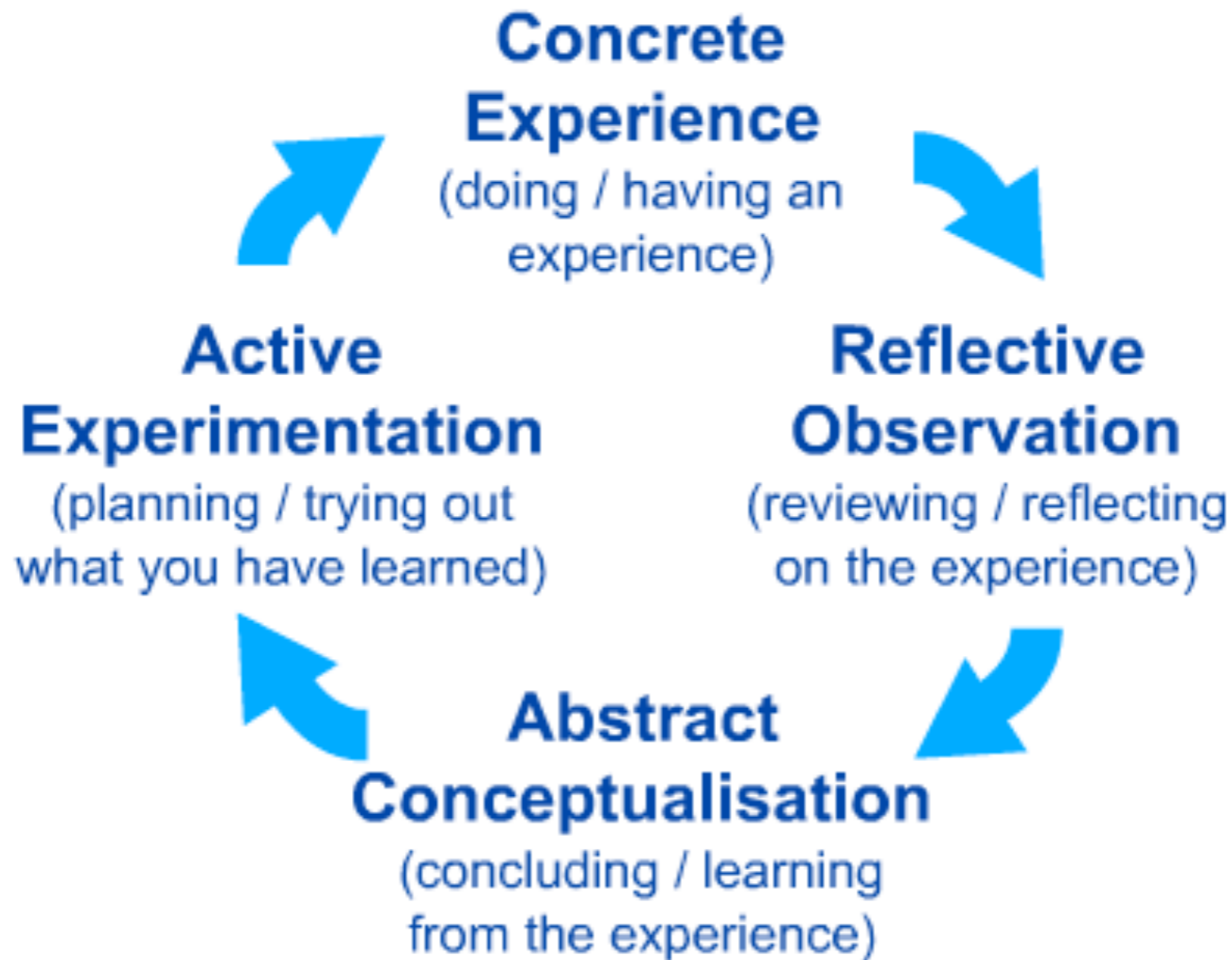


**“The value of research is seen to be the capacity to create new knowledge...”**

**AKA: Finding insights**

**...that is individually  
and culturally transformative”**

Practice as Research: Inquiry in Visual Arts By Graeme Sullivan



David Kolb's Learning Cycle

Source: <http://johnmill.wordpress.com>

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# What is visual research?

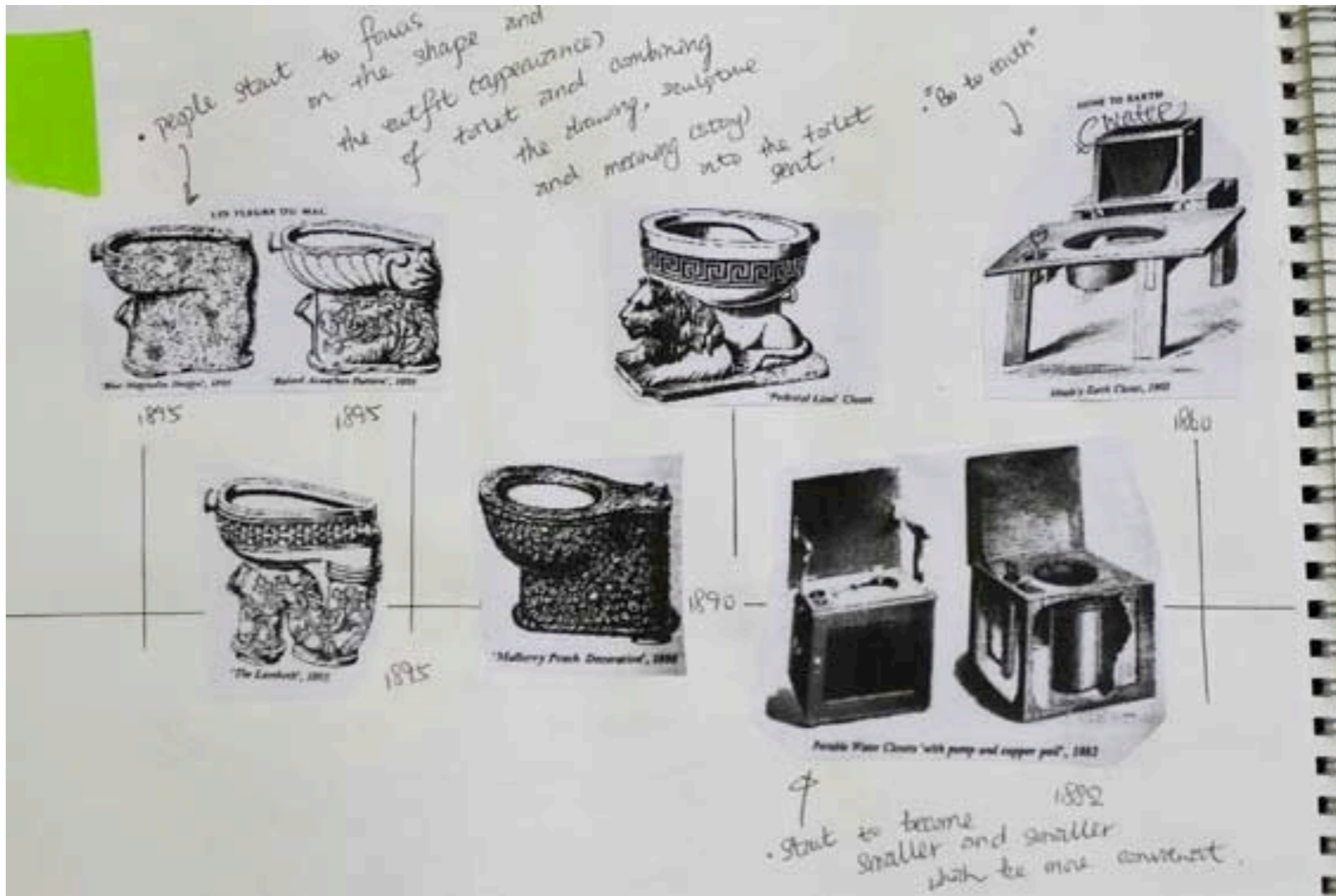
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**“Visual research for graphic artists is to prepare, collect and build up a catalogue of inspiration creating a foundation for design development. Visual research frequently takes the form of a sketchbook filled with visual information, but may also consist of more loosely collated material or three-dimensional objects.”**

**“Visual research may be defined as whatever is selected to contribute to the development of ideas.”**

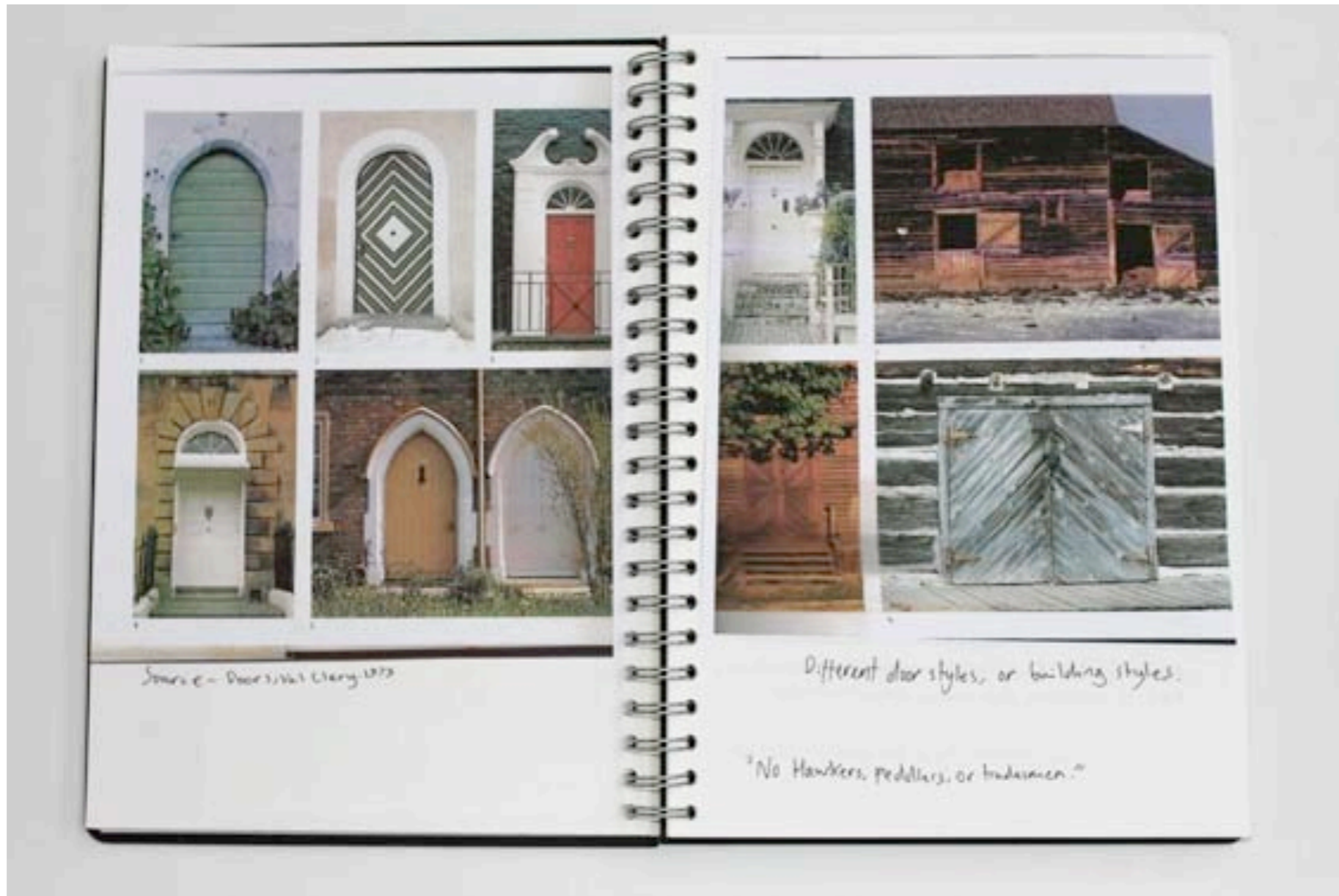
Torunn Kjølberg





Visual Research will often form a story or 'narrative' of images that are linked together by a central theme.

Image source: Ki Yeung



Visual Research is a body of images that provides you with inspiration and ideas to inform your design process.

Image source: William Allen



The aim of the creative process of design is to extract and interpret your Visual Research in order to innovate and inform new ideas.

Image source: Zahra Warsame

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# Producing visual research

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“Design is very much a process, its not as if you have a fully formed idea that simply needs to be realised, its an investigation that yields clues and direction”

Architect: Michael Handel

**What are the qualities  
of a good investigator?**



Curiosity

Being open minded

Attention  
to detail

Thorough

Following leads

Methodical

Non-conformist

Determination

Referenced

Willingness to  
learn

Focussed

Creative

Hard working

Annotated

# Creative investigation

**BRIEF**

**VISUAL  
RESEARCH**

**IDEAS**

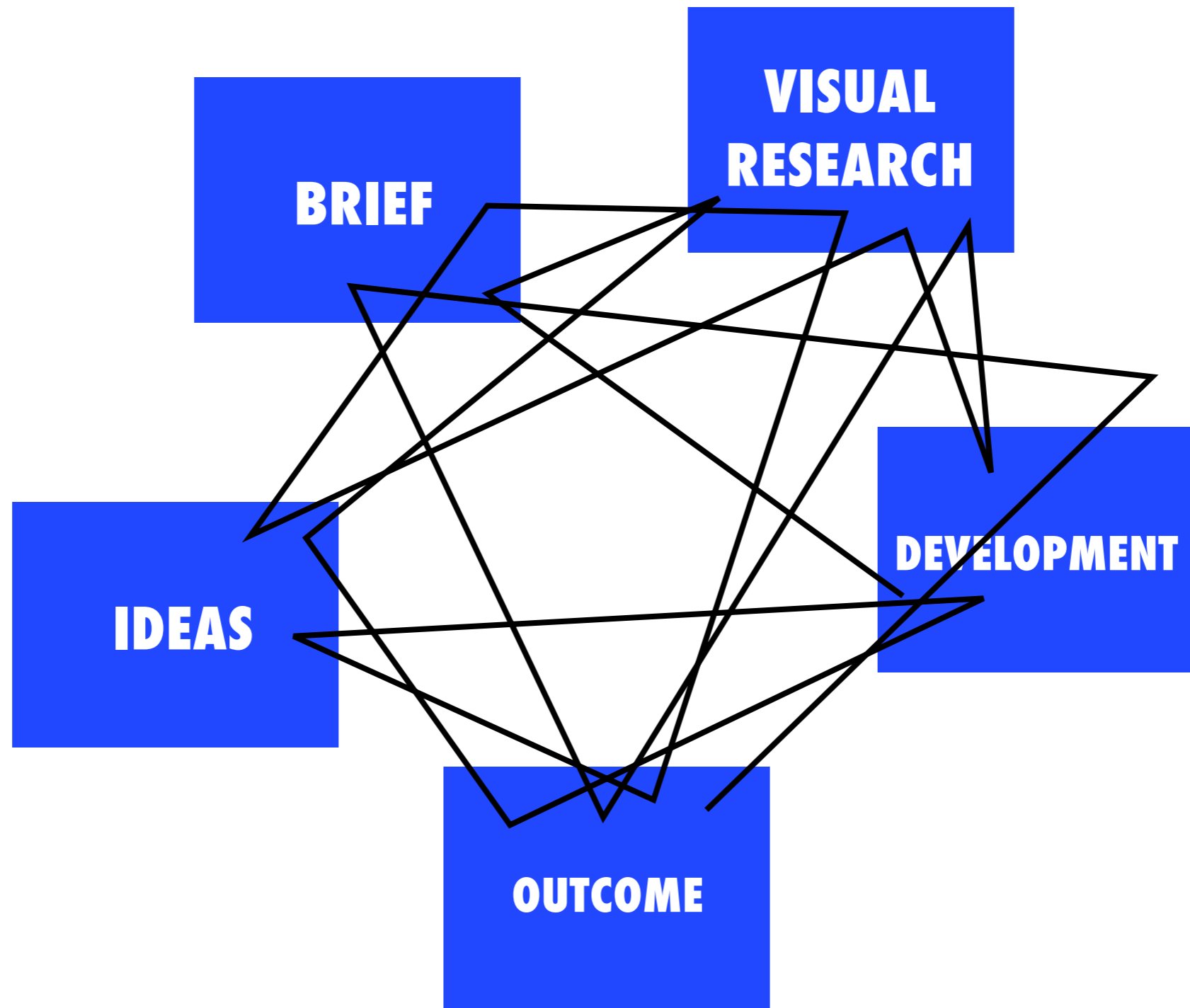
**DEVELOPMENT**

**OUTCOME**

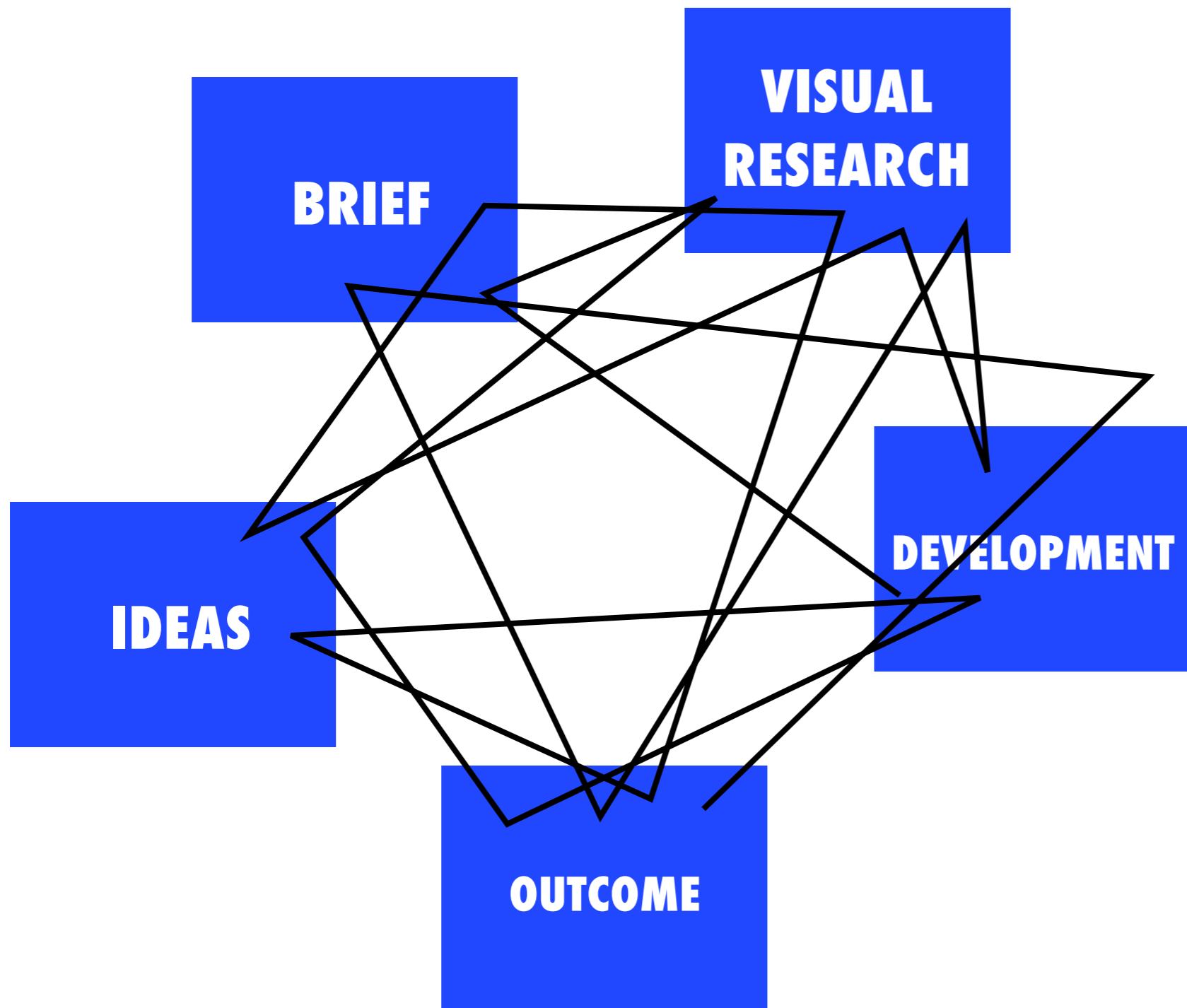
Source: Stephen Dell <http://www.arts.ac.uk>



# Creative investigation



# Creative investigation



“Creative development is dependent on quality and depth of visual research. Which can be emotive, detailed, directional, and informative”

Source: Stephen Dell <http://www.arts.ac.uk>

# Other types of research

## VISUAL RESEARCH

What are the images that provides you with inspiration and ideas to inform your design process?

## CONTEXTUAL

What are the historical, social and cultural contexts relevant to the work you produce?

## TECHNICAL

What are the technical methods, processes, techniques, and materials you will be using?

## MARKET/ AUDIENCE USER

Who is your audience? Where will the work exist? How will the work be interpreted?

**Q. How do I know if my research  
is any good?**

**A. Ask yourself what have learnt  
that I didn't know before?**

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# Tips

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Move beyond 'like' towards  
informed criticality



## Tips for a good Blog:

Care about it

Care about the visual presentation

Ensure your opinions are informed

Attribute your sources

Follow the task instructions carefully

Reflect on what you are doing

Make connections and write about them

Look and comment on each others posts

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# Blogs

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## Some blogs relevant to graphic arts to get started with

<http://designobserver.com>

<http://www.eyemagazine.com>

<http://www.swiss-miss.com>

<http://www.creativereview.co.uk/cr-blog>

[http://johnsonbanks.co.uk/  
thoughtfortheweek/](http://johnsonbanks.co.uk/thoughtfortheweek/)

<http://redtape.rca.ac.uk/blog.html>

<http://designatlas.wordpress.com/>

<http://jacobinmag.com/category/blogs/>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/datablog>