Bio Dr Robert Harland:

Robert’s research interests reside at an interface between Design Studies, Visual Culture and Urban Geography. He examines how urban graphic objects as a plurality of signs, symbols, sculpture, screens, etc. contribute to the identity, structure and meaning of the city in developed and developing global contexts.

This is explored from the perspective of graphic design as urban design, and underpinning the research are questions about the identification and relationship between graphic form and urban context. He seeks to challenge ideas about what graphic design is, why it is relevant, what it can be, and how it is understood as a visual form of knowledge production. Underpinning this is a continuum between type/typographic/graphic/urban design which provides an interscalar framework for empirical research in urban spaces. With a PhD in Architecture (Social Sciences) and a first degree in Information Graphics, he is attracted to interdisciplinary approaches to research and works regularly across subject boundaries.

Since 2008 he has collaborated with researchers at the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism at the University of São Paulo, working within the tradition of sustainable urbanism, but with specific focus on design, design education and transdisciplinarity. In 2012 this work attracted EPSRC funding for the project ‘Sustaining São Paulo’ in collaboration with academic colleagues at Loughborough’s Geography Department.

Before entering academia he spent fifteen years in professional design practice in London, establishing his own studio in 1991. During this time he undertook commissions for national and international public and private sector clients. Hence, he utilises a combination of professional practice, teaching, research and management skills.