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The Day is Just Another Surface

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**The Day is
Just Another
Surface**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Design, Visual Communication at Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA, May 2019.

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The Day is Just Another Surface

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Soft Eyes, Hard Lessons

In a season four episode of the HBO drama The Wire, veteran detective Bunk Moreland and his young partner, Kima Greggs, pull up to the scene of a homicide. As they exit their vehicle and trudge through the knee-high weeds of an overgrown Baltimore backyard, Kima comments on his appearance, then asks if he is hungover. Bunk wearily begins pulling on a pair of examination gloves. “You know what you need at a crime scene?” he says.

Kima is incredulous. “Rubber gloves?”

“Soft eyes.”

“Like I’m supposed to cry and shit?”

“You got soft eyes,” Bunk says, surveying the body, “you can see the whole thing. You got hard eyes, you’re staring at the same tree, missing the forest.”

“Ah, Zen shit.”

He turns to her. “Soft eyes, grasshopper.”

The concept of soft eyes is a belief held by a variety of practices and professions. In the equestrian community, for example, riders are taught to see widely, placing a premium on peripheral awareness. Many schools of yoga emphasize a similar type of gaze for its positive influence on breath and balance. Focusing too closely on a single point tends to cause the diaphragm to contract, inhibiting the ability to breathe deeply. As the muscles of the body tense, balance becomes ever more challenging. Strangely, the result of soft eyes is not only an increased field of vision, but also the opposite: an increased ability to recognize the sensations deep within one’s own body. But in our ambition to achieve a state of mastery, all too often we fall into hard eyes, locked onto some imagined end result: “when I get here, I will be good enough,” or, “when I accomplish this, I will have made it.” These ways of working are not sustainable. The only alternative, then, is to relax and learn to look at our work with a different view. Paradoxically, by not struggling so hard to focus, we

may find ourselves able to apply our focus more effectively than ever before.

However, talking about the thing and doing the thing are two different matters entirely, and I would be remiss if all I did here was hold forth about soft eyes and stable perspectives and started anywhere other than where I was—the exact opposite, all hard edges and tight corners, shallow breaths and white knuckles—not so very long ago. As much as I believed I had made the decision to undertake an MFA for the right reasons, it still took me the better part of two years to come to terms with the aspects of my approach that were holding me back (I am nothing if not stubborn). In my earnest desire to be the kind of designer I aspired to be, and to do the kind of work I admired, I frequently fell victim to internal expectations. These manifested themselves in work that felt overly dense, overly stylized, overly distant. Consciously or subconsciously, I approached every piece like it was the last piece I was ever going to design, and too often the result was akin to 50 pounds of content stuffed into a five pound bag.

The task of reaching this understanding is somewhat complicated by the nature of my output, rooted as it is in letterform and type design. This sort of craft has certain inherent realities—microscopic decisions, fine details, and an emphasis on precision and uniformity—that appeal to my worst inclinations toward perfectionism and rigidity. For some time, I was in a mindset of making form as the product itself, the end result. Then, in the wake of my first year of school, I had an important conversation about my work with my instructor and fellow type designer, Kelsey Elder. He encouraged me to view type as the tool to make the things I wanted to make, in order that the conversations about the work might center around the ideas behind it more so than the actual letterforms themselves. This, I've come to realize, has had a big effect on how I've come to

understand my ever-evolving, ever-expanding relationship to design. More and more I see design not so much as the end itself, but as the means.

This creative shift is also to a large degree the result of my own personal return to writing as a generative activity. In early studio visits with guest critics, I received a mixed bag of advice. While some encouraged me to lean into my writing, others advised me to avoid generating content and focus solely on the formal aspects of the work. Setting lofty expectations for the writing that I did do—believing that it must be heavily researched or bend toward the tone of the academy—made for work that was intellectually interesting, but also cumbersome. Things felt heavy.

In the beginning of my second year, my committee continually steered me back to one overarching question about my work: was I having fun? More often than not, the answer was no. My self-imposed expectations created pressure. That pressure brought anxiety. The work that I had most enjoyed making shared some common elements—it was done quickly and intuitively, challenged conventions and orthodoxy, and employed humor. It felt lighter.

At that time I happened to be reading Robert Smithson's 1967 essay, Language to Be Looked At and/or Things to Be Read, and found myself intrigued by his notion of language as sculpture, or words as objects. I hadn't really thought about that before in any significant way, but that text led to other references—Lawrence Weiner; Jenny Holzer; Alfredo Jaar; Roni Horn; Stefan Bruggemann. For a little while I had been thinking about the possibilities of situating the type that I was designing within larger spaces; with one conversation, these two ideas coalesced in my mind.

I happened to be commiserating with my recently-graduated colleague, Drew, about the student fees we were paying each semester, and he brought up the “arts major

differential fee” (a biannual fee charged to every VCUarts student, the destination of which remains frustratingly vague). Not long after, I got the idea to suspend the words “arts differential” across the Pollak Building courtyard, a phrase that acted as both a literal description of the physical open space at the building’s interior and a comment on the opacity of the VCUarts administration. That project was a turning point, and led to additional installations that explored how situating language in proximity to familiar objects could alter or augment the way viewers see and understand them.

Although it remains carefully crafted in terms of both form and language, I have continued to push myself to make work that is more sensitive to place, more contextual, more (hopefully) generous toward a public audience. This is not to say that the thinking behind it is any less rigorous, nor the results clumsily didactic. Rather, I have tried to present pieces that might serve as useful instruments of institutional critique; resources for comprehension; and moments in which to interrogate preconceived modes of seeing. I deploy original texts in public spaces in order that they might force viewers to decide how to personally resolve the content they encounter. Is it language or object? Is it literal or figurative? Is it graphic design or art? The further I develop this body of work, the less interested I am in providing answers to those questions. The questions themselves are enough.

This is the end. It’s also the beginning. If the past two years have taught me anything, it’s the value of perspective—of learning to see with a broader eye, a way of looking at my work with a relaxed gaze instead of a laser focus. Someone else might describe it as an argument between two approaches, process-based and results-based, but I prefer to consider it the beginning of my ability to understand

my work as a true practice rather than just a collection of individual things that I produce.

As I look ahead, I do so with an expanded sense of what design can encompass (as if drawing a boundary around it is even important at all), as well as an increased sensitivity to the modes of working and making that generate energy and joy within me. Those are elements of a sustainable practice, one that recognizes an open road of possibilities on the horizon. The journey is waiting to be shaped. The future is malleable. The day is just another surface.

**Brooks Heintzeman
April 2019**

The Thing

The thing you were expecting to see is not here.

The thing you were expecting to see exists, but in a different place, a different time, one to which access is tentative.

The thing is a singular expression of original vision.

The thing is a carbon copy; a cheap facsimile; a shameless rip-off.

The thing has a certain ring to it.

The thing is a little out of tune.

The thing speaks to our modern sensibilities, our oldest fears, our darkest secrets.

The thing has nothing to say.

The thing can bend backward until its ends practically touch.

The thing snaps like a dry twig under the slightest force.

The thing is acid on the tongue, hard on the stomach.

The thing goes down smooth.

The thing offers a tidy solution to the question.

The thing creates more problems than it solves.

The thing prefers to be lit from all sides equally, since it has no bad side.

The thing likes a dark room to hide its innumerable flaws.

The thing is the product of careful forethought and extensive planning.

The thing is a mistake.

The thing is perfectly level.

The thing is leaning to the right just a hair.

The thing is hermetically sealed to prevent inadvertent loss of pressure.

The thing is leaking a little from one corner.

The thing unfolds gradually in the mind, its philosophical underpinnings best understood through a rigorous program of repeated viewings.

The thing is a swift blow to the gut, grasped entirely in an instant.

The thing is mathematically symmetrical.

The thing is a bit lopsided, its left half noticeably wider than its right.

The thing privileges form.

The thing is largely an expression of its content.

The thing should be exhibited alone in order to avoid muddling its ultimate meaning.

The thing is dependent upon the other objects in its proximity to provide context.

The thing looks best after a few cocktails.

The thing deserves sober reflection.

The thing is slowly increasing in size, absorbing all matter within its direct orbit.

The thing is contracting fiercely.

The thing is an open road on the horizon, a blank check, a weathered sheet of notebook paper with a thousand possibilities scrawled on its blue-ruled surface.

The thing is an ontological cul-de-sac.

The thing appeals to the lowest common denominator in an effort to secure mass appeal.

The thing traffics in the obscure, the esoteric, the willfully arcane.

The thing waits politely for its turn to be seen.

The thing takes without asking.

The thing is aware of the canon and its position therein.

The thing resists all categorization, shuns the very notion of hierarchy.

The thing is the balance of its child components.

The thing is more than the sum of its parts.

The thing has a fine, lustrous exterior that reflects the room around it.

The thing has a few exposed wires where its seams have begun to fray.

The thing should remain unopened, lest its aftermarket value plummet.

The thing should be used, and often, with little regard for structural integrity or personal safety.

The thing is spotless.

The thing contains the elegant patina of years of wear, the memory of its handlers preserved in tiny concentric halos of oil across its mottled skin.

The thing is completely sterile.

The thing has a few blood stains somewhere.

The thing is rendered awesomely bright, in full, blinding color.

The thing is tonally superior in black and white.

The thing is every promise from the pages of a glossy magazine, every recognition of a strange emerging inner ache, every possibility of an emptiness that screamed to be filled, like a voice calling from the other side of a door with no handle, scratched and clawed but never opened.

The thing is not very important.

The thing is nice to talk about at parties.

The thing is a conversation stopper, a wet blanket, a record scratch in a room full of dancing bodies.

The thing makes everyone who stands next to it look a little taller.

The thing is best viewed at ground level, on hands and knees.

The thing cares about how it is perceived by those in the know.

The thing is indifferent to criticism or praise.

The thing is fragile, crystalline, merits handling with protective gloves.

The thing will bounce if thrown against a hard surface.

The thing cannot be described in a single way, its mercurial nature difficult to classify, tough to pin down.

The thing is self-evident.

The thing is just another fuck; a rag; a vessel; a number.

The thing is worth waiting for, the one, significant enough to suppress the urge toward other prospects, however attractive they might seem in the moment.

The thing never came.

The thing did come, but we had to wait a long time.

Progressive Revelation

Works
2017–
2019

Orion

MMXVII

WE STARTED WITHOUT YOU.

outcries against the bad example set by Bart, but at some point they decided that *The Simpsons* was off-limits. We spent a week that summer in Ocean City, Maryland, my family and I, going to the beach by day and walking the boardwalk at night. Amid the twinkling arcade lights and smell of salt-water taffy, we would duck into souvenir shops, their walls lined to the

ceiling with t-shirts. In the summer of 1990 one had their choice of any number of fine garments festooned with can't miss Bartisms, including “Ay, caramba!”, “Don't have a cow, man!”, “I'm Bart Simpson. Who the hell are you?”, “Under-achiever (And proud of it, man!)”, and of course, the immortal, “Eat my shorts.”

It's not that I aspired to be like Bart or even

LIFE IS NOT A MOVIE
(IT'S MOSTLY JUST CHAIRS)

Life is episodic. It feels linear in retrospect, but that's mostly a product of our internal editing process. Life is a lot more like a television sitcom than a movie—it's not just the singular, life-changing event, but a bunch of loosely-connected characters and plots. Epiphanies are rare; faces come and go. The days and weeks bleed into one another. For the most part, nothing eventful happens. The furniture stays pretty much the same.

Billy

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg
 Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn
 Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt
 Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz
 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
 , ; : ' " () _ - . ! ? / "

environmental
Obey the Laws of Man
Full or Void
THERMAL CURRENTS
1g Strontium
3,280 BCE
metallurgical alloy
Horror Vacui
Dilapidated Superstructures
Virginia Creeper
exoskeleton

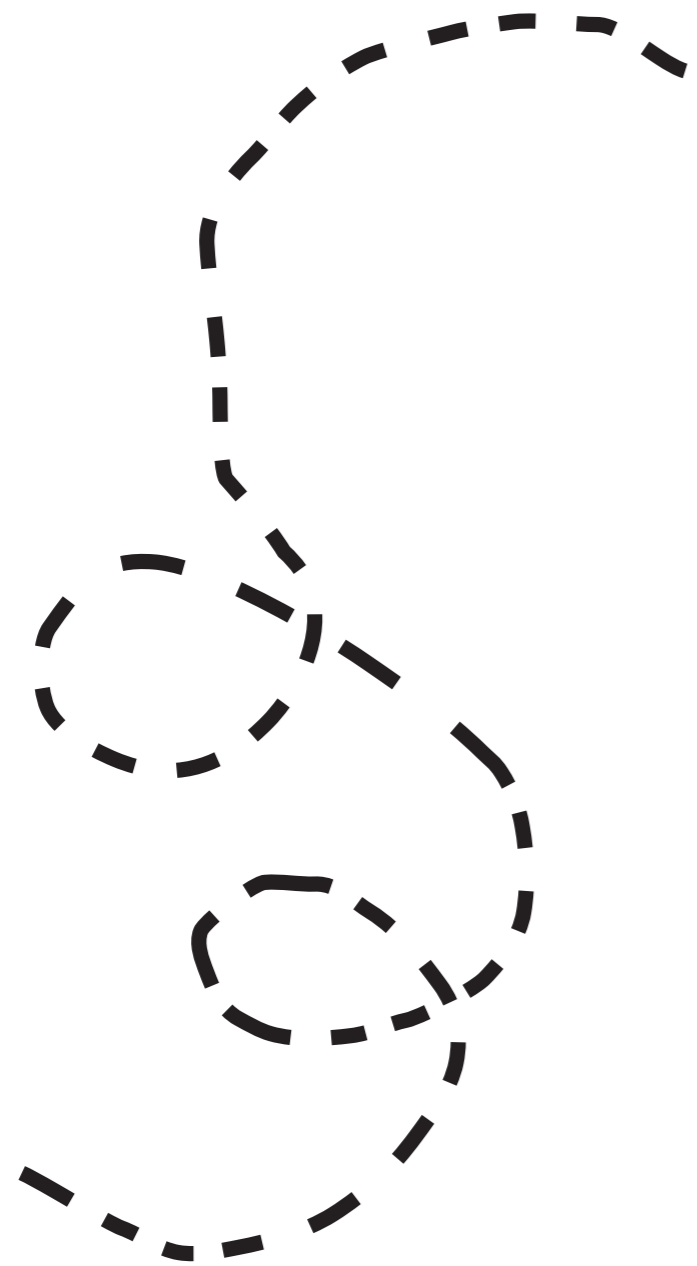
Myths of the Concrete

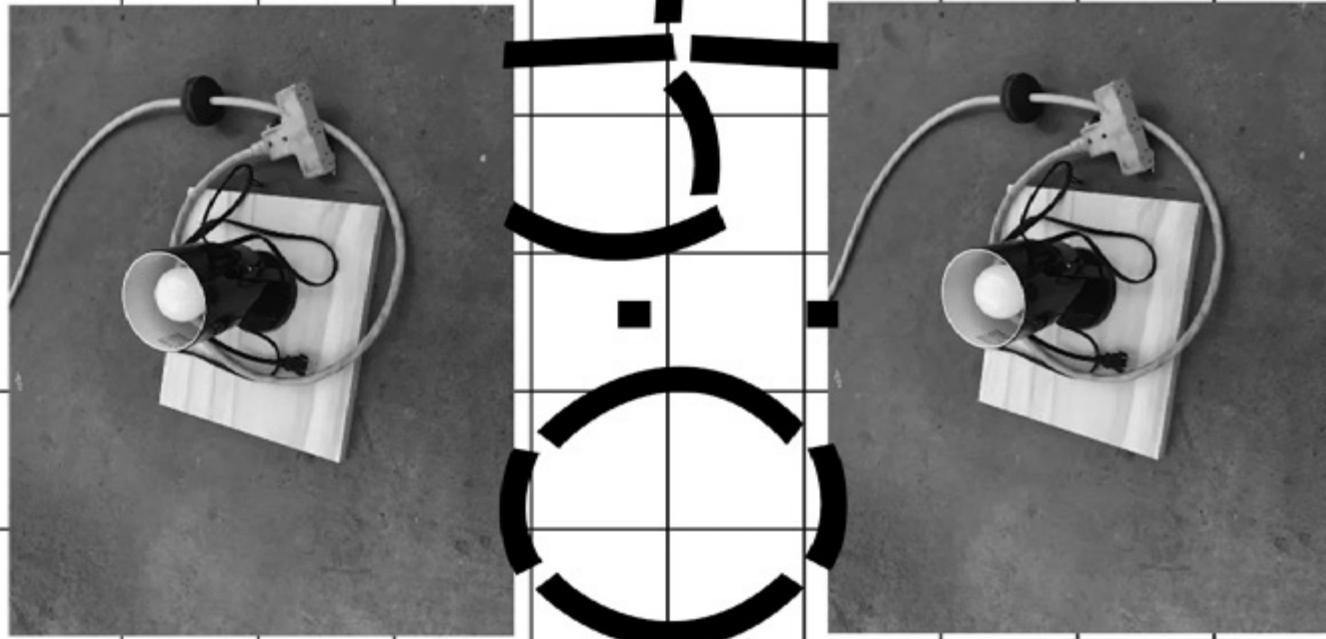
Modernism, in its unfaltering confidence in science, failed to account for the complexities of the human experience.

- 1 Ville Radieuse (Radiant City)
Le Corbusier
(Proposed)
1924
- 2 Hochhausstadt (High-Rise City)
Ludwig Hilberseimer
(Proposed)
1927
- 3 Pruitt-Igoe Apartments
Minoru Yamasaki
St. Louis, MO
1954
- 4 City of Brasilia
Lucio Costa
Brasilia, BRA
1960

PICTURE DAY

I like to think about relationships between letterforms as a kind of exercise in herding. One element influences the other; slowly, sometimes painfully, a collective begins to emerge from the mess. At this point it becomes a subtle wave of push-pull—a flexing of elbows, some shuffling to the left or right, like lining up rows of elementary school students for a class picture. Don't tug at your shirt, you chide one of them. Put your arms down, you two. Stand up straight. Lick your fingers, smooth out that cowlick.





['pigment'],
['place'],
['pocket'],
['poetry'],
['polymer'],
['pool']
['proposition'],
['purpose'],
['rapid'],
['razor'],
['rhythm'],
['ring'],
['river'],
['riverbank'],
['rock'],
['route'],
['routine'],
['scent'],
['shoulder'],
['shred'],
['skin'],
['soap'],
['son']
['sound'],
['south'],
['space'],
['spring'],
['step'],
['store'],
['street'],
['string'],
['stroke'],
['stub'],
['study'],
['sun'],
['surface'],
['suspension'],
['tail'],
['thing'],
['thought']
['time'],
['tool'],
['total'],
['train'],
['tree'],
['typography'],
['utility'],
['visitor'],
['wall'],
['wristwatch'],
['water'],
['weight'],
['welt'],
['width']
['wife'],
['wind'],
['wood']

IF YOU MEET YOUR THESIS ON THE ROAD, KILL IT

There's an old Zen Buddhist koan attributed to a monk named Linji that says, "If you meet the Buddha on the road, kill him." In our lives we cross paths with a lot of Buddhas—teachers; schools; U.S. News and World Report rankings; money; trends; expectations; job titles; profiles on It's Nice That; five-year plans; one-year plans; six-month plans; an MFA degree. But mostly, the Buddha is ourselves. Maybe we think we have reached some level of enlightenment. Maybe we've finally figured things out. But when every corner of the path is carefully mapped out before we begin, there's no longer any point in undertaking the journey.

At several points during my MFA I've let preconceptions of what design is supposed to be stifle me. I've wrapped my mind in anxious knots, worked some projects again and again, wrung the last drop of joy from the page in an effort to be successful. Instead I should have just killed my idea of what I thought it should be, taken a breath, and started over. More and more, I'm trying to do that—trying to kill the Buddha whenever and wherever I see him.

If You Meet Your Thesis on the Road, Kill It



Brooks Heintzelman
Fourth Semester Review
March 13, 2019
4:30 pm
Pollak 315



121

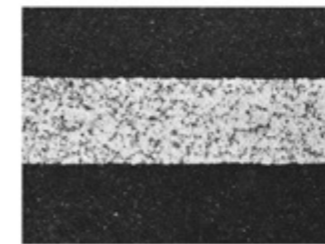
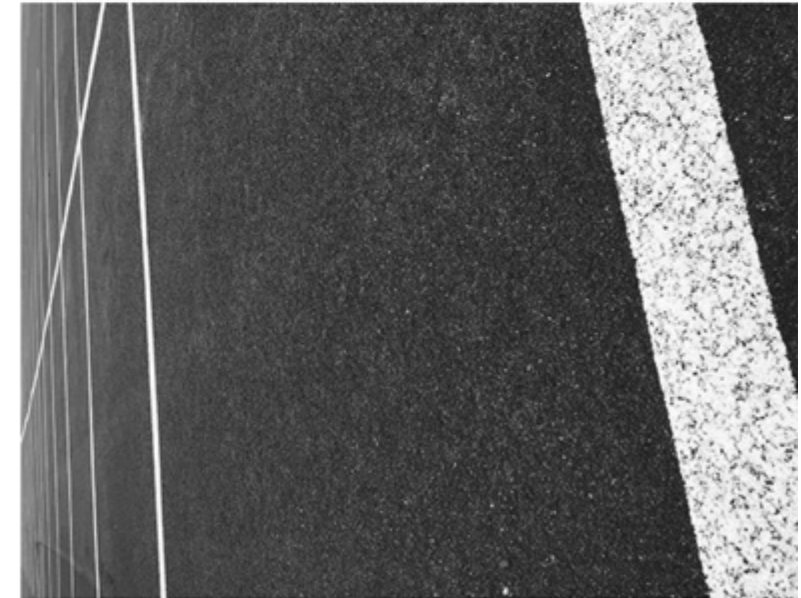




Fig. 1
Ray Kinsella first hears “the voice.”



Fig. 2
Cars line up to see Ray’s “Field of Dreams.”

I MONUMENTALITY AND THE OLYMPIC GHOST

“A diving pool with four inches of stagnant water, brand new stadia mothballed and derelict, an Olympic complex all but abandoned and strewn with litter and graffiti—this is the legacy from the Athens Olympics in 2004.”

—Robert Mendick¹

Sitting alone one spring evening as dusk settles like a blanket around his family’s Iowa farm, Ray Kinsella is beset by a voice:

“If you build it, he will come.”

As he hears these words (Fig. 1), his mind flashes to a vision of the finished product, a baseball field, illuminated by towering light standards and carved from the very cornfield that lay before him. The protagonist of W.P. Kinsella’s 1982 novel, Shoeless Joe (famously adapted into the 1989 film Field of Dreams), Ray does not question the voice; he acts on sheer faith and tenacity of purpose despite the anger, mockery, and outright disbelief of his in-laws, fellow farmers, and the Iowa City community, who see his actions as suicidal to his livelihood. In the end, his field having literally conjured up the spirits of baseball’s long-gone legends, he relies on the belief that “people will come” to see the spectacle. In yet another vision, this one of vast lines of cars lining up in his driveway, (Fig. 2) he knows he will be able to pay the mortgage and keep the farm after all.²

Fantastical as the story is, it remains unsettlingly close to the genesis of so many modern “fields of dreams,” those grand stadiums of the Olympic Games. Visions of groundbreaking architecture that will attract the world’s best athletes, wealthiest sponsors, and largest possible audience often obscures the economic and practical realities of hosting such an event. Dreams of urban transformation,

¹ Mendick, Robert. “The 2004 Olympic Legacy That London Must Avoid.” The Evening Standard, February 6, 2009.

² Kinsella, W.P. Shoeless Joe. Houghton Mifflin, 1982.



Fig. 3
Beijing National Stadium, affectionately known as “The Bird’s Nest,” was the centerpiece of the 2008 Summer Olympics complex.



Fig. 4
Athens’ Olimpiako Athlitiko Kentro Athinon (OAKA) was the centerpiece of the 2004 Summer Olympics complex.

shiny new infrastructure, and quick injections of consumer cash have turned out, in the past 30 years, to be the lies that the organizers tell themselves. For every Barcelona (the 1992 Summer Games revitalized the city, reimagined its urban plan, and made it one of the most-visited places in Europe), there are cautionary tales like Athens (Summer 2004), Sochi (Winter 2014), and Rio de Janeiro (Summer 2016), all of which involved massive building sprees, with billions of dollars spent on projects that now sit empty and abandoned.

While their ambition and optimism for the possibilities of design is undeniable, the legacy of Olympic stadiums is a troubled one. In large part, this is due to the sheer scale of the projects. At their best, Olympic stadiums can conjure awe and wonder; at their worst, they can become cumbersome relics that require a level of upkeep few cities are willing to provide. British historian William J. R. Curtis terms architecture on this scale, “instant monumentality.”³ Architecture at overwhelming scale serves to both increase its dramatic effect and cement itself in the memory of its audience. Recent stadium projects of the Summer Olympics (everything, from the number of events to the audiences to the stadiums themselves, are much larger than the comparatively-quiet Winter Games) have captured the imaginations of spectators and critics across the world. Herzog and de Mueron’s Beijing National Stadium (Fig. 3), affectionately known as “The Bird’s Nest” for its elaborate metal lattice-work, as well as Athens’ Olimpiako Athlitiko Kentro Athinon (OAKA) (Fig. 4), notable for Santiago Calatrava’s sweeping, wing-like roof design, each fit Curtis’ criteria.

The very act of designing for a specific period of time, on such a grand scale as to transform a utilitarian stadium into a monument, means that these structures become irrevocably connected to their temporality. Writing for the *Journal of*

³ Curtis, William J. R. *Modern Architecture Since 1900*. Phaidon, 1996, p. 355.



Fig. 5
The Weissenhofsiedlung, built for a 1927 international showcase of what eventually became known as the International Style of architecture.



Fig. 6
Olimpiako Athlitiko Kentro Athinon (OAKA) was the centerpiece of the 2004 Summer Olympics complex in Athens.

⁴ Wergeland, Even Smith. “When Icons Crumble: The Troubled History of Olympic Design.” *Journal of Design History*, vol. 25, no. 3, 2012, p. 309.

⁵ Bachman, Leonard R. *Integrated Buildings: The Systems Basis of Architecture*. John Wiley and Sons, 2002, p. 46.

⁶ Bachman, 46.

Design History. Even Smith Wergeland likens Olympic venues to the architectural exhibitions of the early 20th century, in which the early modernists displayed their ideas at full scale. One such rally, the 1927 Weissenhofsiedlung in Stuttgart, Germany (Fig. 5), showcased housing prototypes from the likes of Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius, and Mies van der Rohe.⁴ The difference is that the Weissenhofsiedlung was utilized and still partially survives as a permanent fixture (Fig. 6), while many stadiums like Athens’ OAKA lost all momentum after the initial event, and their initial purpose, was complete.

In Athens in particular, it became clear as soon as a year after the 2004 Games that there was no plan in place for most of the 22 venues that had been constructed. The majority of these were designed with white facades, as a nod to both Greece’s Hellenic past and its modern future. Without tenants to perform the required maintenance and cleaning on these structures, they quickly became prey to the effects of water, pollution, and decay. “As soon as the building is completed, nature begins to reclaim it by acts of weathering, erosion, chemical, and biological change,” writes Leonard R. Bachman, an associate professor of architecture at the University of Houston.⁵ He continues:

Civilization to date has been the history of this pioneering against entropy, moving instead toward organization, focus, and concentration. The pioneer mentality that generated the rise of industrial society was always aligned against the erosion of nature. Stain was a symptom of failure to hold back its forces.⁶

While the OAKA still stands, the nature of its existence is altogether different than before. The gleaming white surfaces that shone so well on the television cameras have taken on different tones—gray, green, brown. Weeds sprout from walkways



Fig. 7
In the former training pool for the 2004 Olympic swimmers, trash floats on four inches of stagnant water.

and bare parking lots. Pools lie empty but for a few inches of pond scum—homes more fit for frogs than for Michael Phelps (Fig. 7). The very whiteness that was so integral to these Olympics' idea of itself—a place of history, eternity, and human symbolism—has been lost in the fallout of a post-Olympic reality. Wergeland notes that the architecture of Athens “reminds us that the Olympics are not forever.”⁷ As these stadiums begin to lose the very materiality that first made them seem like timeless memorials, they begin to lose a sense of themselves.



Fig. 8
Beijing National Stadium, constructed for the 2008 Summer Olympics, today sits largely unused.



Fig. 9-10
The softball field, in use at the 2004 Summer Olympics, (above), is abandoned and choked with weeds (below).

II THE NATURE OF ENTROPY

“Abstraction rules in a void, pretending to be free of time.”

—Robert Smithson¹

As we have seen, the very nature of a stadium—a place of grand scale that houses a large audience for brief, highly-charged (both in terms of energy and meaning) periods of time—creates a situation in which identity becomes volatile. Does a piece of architecture cease to “exist” when the features that are integral to creating its meaning, like shape, color, form, and material, begin to fade or no longer remain at all?

In his 1995 book, *Non-Places: An Introduction to Supermodernity*, Marc Augé proposes an anthropology of both places and non-places that, together, make up our increasingly hypermodern world. In his view, a place is a physical space that creates meaning or social ties for the people who encounter it. Non-places, on the other hand, are spaces devoid of meaning, pervaded by a sense of anonymity and emptiness.²

Although he applies this term largely to spaces of fleeting interaction, where people do not dwell or interact but perform perfunctory, anonymous transactions (e.g., supermarkets, highways, airports), Augé's criteria seems also to apply to the deserted, discarded stadiums of Olympics past. These onetime settings for mass-gathering, where intense memories and meanings were generated by performers and audiences in a few short moments, have, in their abandonment, shifted from place to non-place. It is even possible that they represent a sort of in-between position: “The first is never completely erased, the second never totally completed; they are like palimpsests on which the scrambled game of identity and relations is ceaselessly rewritten,” Augé says about places and non-places, respectively.³ While stadiums often retain a physical

⁷ Wergeland, p. 314.

¹ Smithson, Robert. *The Collected Writings*. University of California Press, 1996, p. 302.

² Augé, Marc. *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*. Verso, 1995, p. 78.

³ Augé, p. 79.



Fig. 11
Robert Smithson piled 20 truckloads of earth onto an abandoned building for 1970's Partially Buried Woodshed.

presence long after their usefulness has faded, "Modernity does not obliterate them but pushes them into the background."⁴

While the capricious motivations of human society, be they economic or aesthetic, have a hand in this transformation, nature plays an equally important role in places becoming non-places. We have discussed decay as a result of human negligence—a symptom of inaction—but we can also view it in the opposite way, as a symptom of action, where nature takes the role of relentless aggressor. "Nothing about nature acts in a unified, homogeneous way, least of all its coalescence into 'figures' or 'unique beings' that can be taken forward as objects," argues Catherine Ingraham, a professor of architecture at Pratt Institute.⁵ The second law of thermodynamics tells us that the natural world tends toward maximal entropy, or disorder, over time. Moreover, that increase is irreversible. As time moves forward, nature continues its assault on any attempt from mankind to impose structures of order. Given enough time, the collapse of any artificial system is inevitable.

Despite these problematic implications, some artists have embraced entropy as a part of their process of making. Robert Smithson, famous for such living "earth work" sculptures as The Spiral Jetty (1970) and Partially Buried Woodshed (1970), became fascinated by this phenomenon and examined the possibilities contained within its contradictory forces: decay and renewal, chaos and order. "When a thing is seen through the consciousness of temporality, it is changed into something that is nothing," he writes.⁶ But unlike Even Wergeland, who laments this shift in Athens' OAKA stadium, Smithson embraces this "nothing" as the whole point of his work—a condition to be achieved rather than avoided. His land sculptures were intended to change and spontaneously surrender to the effects of time and nature.

For Partially Buried Woodshed (Fig. 11), Smithson poured 20 truckloads of soil



Fig. 12
Once the center beam cracked, Smithson surrendered Partially Buried Woodshed to the effects of nature. Today only its foundation remains.

onto an abandoned outbuilding at the edge of the campus of Kent State University. He continued piling on earth until the center beam cracked. With the events of its eventual collapse put into motion, he simply left it in that state, as he considered everything that happened next to be a continuation of the piece. Smithson summarizes his stance by referencing the Greek philosopher Heraclitus:

The actual disruption of the earth's crust is at times very compelling, and seems to confirm Heraclitus' Fragment 124: "The most beautiful world is like a heap of rubble tossed down in confusion."⁷

Compared to monumental architecture, which seeks a certain level of immortality, Smithson's works embraced the temporality of the physical world. In Entropy Made Visible, a 1973 interview given shortly before his untimely death, he forecasts the kind of problems Olympic host cities would encounter over the following decades: architectural and economic decisions made with self-contained, myopic outlooks, projects undertaken without regard to the effects of passage of time or what kinds of long-range impacts to cities and environments these decisions would create. "I don't think things go in cycles," he says. "I think things just change from one situation to the next, there's really no return."⁸ Smithson viewed assumptions about the future return of economies or structures to their former states of glory as impractical and impossible. Belief that one's actions can be kept self-contained ignores the basic realities of entropy in a natural world that is always moving forward.

In her historical examination of modernity, nature, and the city, City of Flows, Maria Kaika expresses similar regret over the lack of lessons learned by cities. She first aligns the taming of nature with the industrial revolution of the 19th century, a "Promethean" effort to emancipate

⁴ Auge, p. 77.
⁵ Ingraham, Catherine. "Faculty of Omnipotence." The Return of Nature: Sustaining Architecture in the Face of Sustainability, edited by Preston Scott Cohen and Erika Naginski. Routledge, 2014, pp. 32-33.
⁶ Smithson, p. 112.

⁷ Smithson, p. 102.
⁸ Smithson, p. 309.



Fig. 13
Discarded stadium seat backs lie on a heap in Rio, just six months after the Summer Olympics.

humanity by dominating the natural world. This created a vicious cycle: nature, first seen as an untamed evil that must be beaten back in the name of civilized progress, eventually becomes a moralizing force that is sought out as a refuge from, and means of escaping, the ills of the city.⁹ Sadly, despite the economic and structural problems of overdevelopment in the 21st century, not much has changed in her eyes. “The Western world is not through with producing wish-images, ideologies, and dreams of modernization, and with relentlessly pursuing their materialization,” she writes. “Modernization remains a project still under way, an ongoing process in which nature, cities, and people are woven together in an inseparable dialectic of creation and destruction, pursued through both ideological and material means.”¹⁰

But as strong a linear force as entropy is, it might still be possible to view notions of time and place in an alternative, cyclical way. Our understanding of the Mayan culture, for example, is closely tied to the notion of abandonment and the ruins they left behind after their civilization mysteriously collapsed. But the Maya viewed both the landscape and the abandoned dwellings of their ancestors in non-linear, less negative ways. In the context of the Mayan calendar, “the landscape holds lessons, in addition to material and ideological resources, for the future,” says geographer Denise Fay Brown. “Ruins on the landscape, far from being passively abandoned, become active agents in linking events in a cyclical time scheme that conflates the past, present, and future.”¹¹ It was not uncommon for Mayan communities to re-inhabit abandoned structures of their ancestors as a way to commemorate that history. As they re-engaged these spaces, they began to build on that shared past, eventually creating their own, unique meanings and memories. Brown writes of this cyclical worldview:

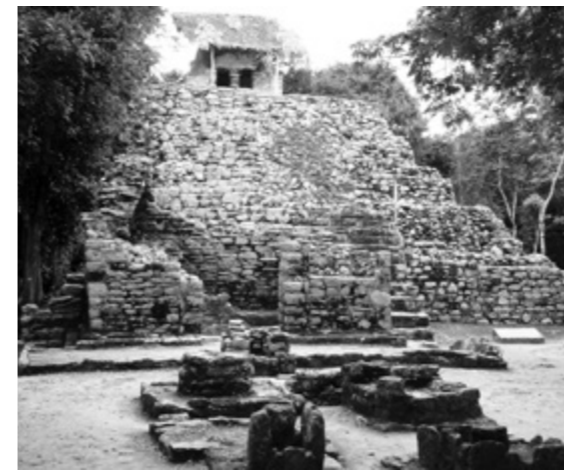


Fig. 14
The Mayan city of Coba, once powerful and influential, was abandoned by the time Spanish explorers arrived in Mexico around 1550.

The reduction of Coba to a city in ruins (Fig. 14) was explained to me by an elderly Maya man in Chemax in such terms a decade ago. According to him, the people of the city of Coba had behaved in anti-social ways. As punishment, the city of Coba was swallowed up. He explained that Coba remains beneath the surface of the earth but will reemerge in the future as a city “more beautiful than Cancun.”¹²

It’s significant that the Mayans consider abandonment as something self-generated, rather than a result of external forces. In their eyes, they have simply returned their civilization to the earth, until that time when they will inhabit it once more. We see the possibility that faded material does not lose its identity after all; it is simply repurposed, revisited, restored. Perhaps the problem of meaning, then, is really up to us.

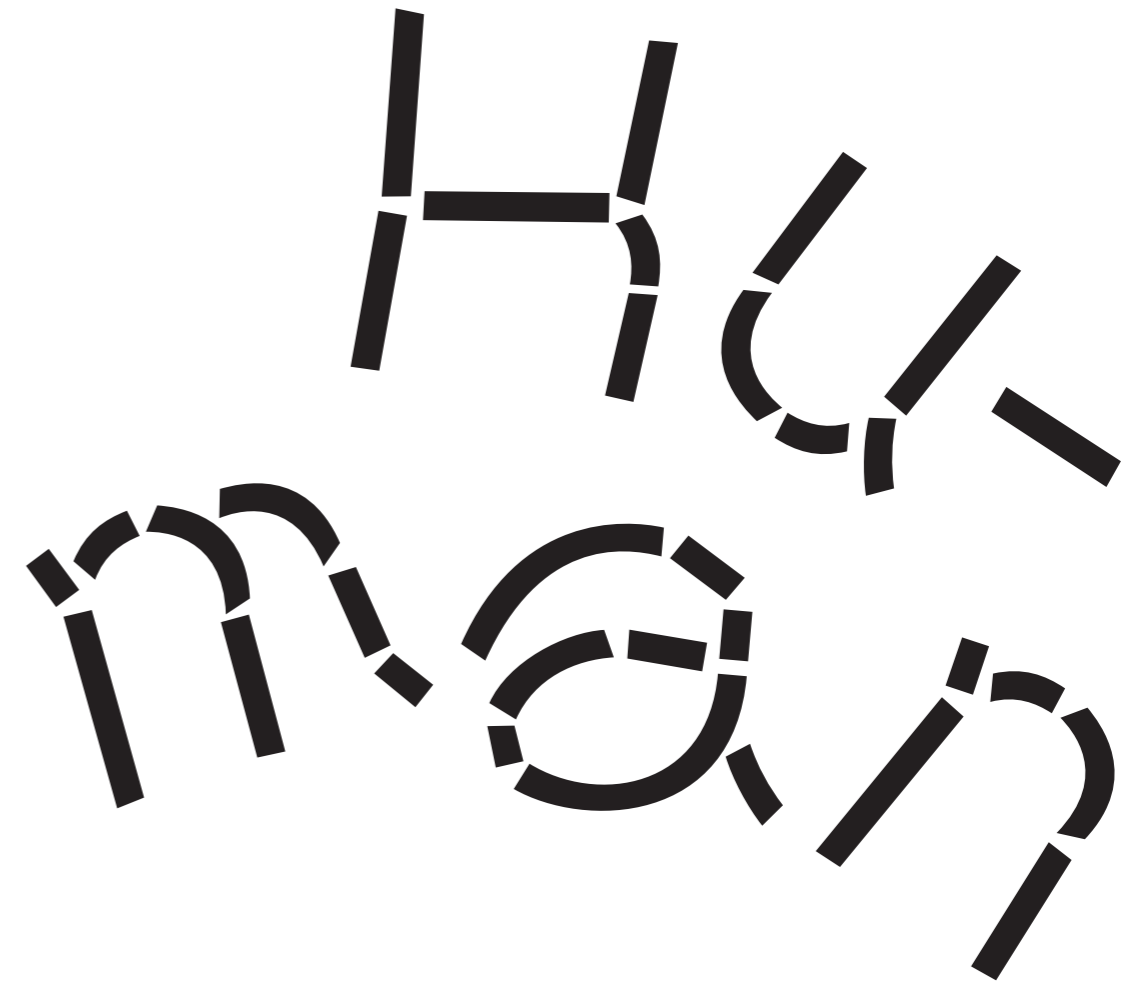
⁹ Kaika, Maria. *City of Flows: Modernity, Nature, and the City*. Routledge, 2005, p. 12.

¹⁰ Kaika, p. 174.

¹¹ Brown, Denise Fay. “Afterword.” *Ruins of the Past: The Use and Perception of Abandoned Structures in the Maya Lowlands*, edited by Travis W. Stanton and Aline Magnoni. University Press of Colorado, 2008, pp. 276-77.

¹² Brown, p. 277.

**Ideal
-ism**



**Con-
struc
-tion**

III AT THE CORE OF MEANING

“Nature is an infinite sphere whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere.”

—Blaise Pascal¹

So far we have examined both the temporality of human constructions and nature’s response through entropy. We have seen ways in which either our embrace or ignorance of entropic forces can influence the way we perceive meaning in the monuments we create. It may even be that meaning is cyclical, and comes and goes like the tale of the Mayan city swallowed up by the earth. But I would like to suggest still another possibility, that man does not have the power to prescribe true meaning to the world at all; instead, the places where our artificial constructions begin to fail—the cracks, the discoloration, the degradation—are the places where truth shows itself in the form of nature.

In his 1953 lecture, The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis, which became popularly referred to as the “Rome Discourse,” French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan described the human relation to death as unlike the “natural relation to biological death,” and that “death is not a ‘simple’ event, a moment ‘in’ chronological time, but rather the very opening of time, its condition of possibility.”² Here, writes Charles Shepherdson, Lacan sets forth the notion that death is instead a kind of hole, or void in the relationship between what is “the real” and our attempt to attach symbolism to it.³ “The real,” to Lacan, is a state of nature from which we, as human beings, have been severed due to our creation of language. In a sense, in trying to symbolize the world, we have inadvertently separated ourselves from it. Therefore, the real is impossible.

Shepherdson admits that part of the difficulty in understanding Lacan’s concept



Fig. 15
The field hockey stadium in use at the 2004 Summer Olympics.



Fig. 16
The Athens Olympic field hockey stadium today. Wild flora have begun to reclaim the deserted space.

of the real is that his use of the term somewhat changed over the course of his career. The first version is what we have just described—a kind of “pre-symbolic reality,” a realm of “immediate being” that exists independently and is never accessible in itself.⁴ In this version, human beings try and fail to organize or capture the real through image and language. The real is always lost to us, as long as we fundamentally misunderstand its nature through our limited human constructions. Smithson, in his 1971 essay, Art and Dialectics, derided modern artists who act similarly— isolating art, attempting to represent qualities of nature without creating any actual relationship with their surroundings:

Nature is not subject to our systems. The old notion of man conquering nature has in effect boomeranged. As it turns out, the object or thing or word “man” could be swept away like an isolated sea shell on a beach, then the ocean would make itself known.⁵

If this first case positions the real outside of the symbolic order, then the second case positions the real inside the symbolic order that we create in order to describe it. It exists as a void, a gap, a trauma at the center. Again, the real is not traumatic in and of itself; it is traumatic only when compared to the symbolic order that human beings have constructed around it. This positioning of the real at the center of the symbolic order is key. Shepherdson goes so far as to describe this second version as an “innermost core,” rather than an “autonomous external reality.”⁶

So if the real is something at the very core of our human constructions, then the way we view those empty stadiums and abandoned places of our greatest aspirations changes once again. Instead of non-places whose meaning is surrendered to fate and decay, or even places where meaning comes and goes in cycles, we can understand that the meaning is always there—it’s simply our idea of meaning that

¹ Pascal, Blaise. Pensees. 1670. Mercure de France, 1976.

² Shepherdson, Charles. Lacan and the Limits of Language. Fordham University Press, 2008, p. 3.

³ Shepherdson, p. 3.

⁴ Shepherdson, p. 27.

⁵ Smithson, p. 371.

⁶ Shepherdson, p. 34.

must change slightly. Instead of looking to mankind for meaning, what if we turned toward nature? Suddenly, the weeds springing forth from cracks in the foundation are not blights or eyesores, but glimpses of the real, emerging from fissures that we have opened by our failed symbolic order. When structures fail, they do not fall victim to a nature bent on overtaking them. Their failure simply reveals a kind of natural reality that is perpetually bubbling beneath the surfaces we pave with brick and marble, metal and concrete. The decay we witness is not an invasion from an outside force, but a “filling out” from within.

What does this mean for the future of built environments? Bachman writes of an alternative to the traditional approach of architecture-as-resistance outlined in Part I:

The counter-position asks about the notion of buildings as systems that will gradually be reclaimed by nature anyway. It proposes that a building is, in fact, an architecture for nature and so replaces the industrial mechanics with natural ones wherever feasible.⁷

Rather than fighting against nature, this kind of design requires us to revise our thinking. Nature’s reclamation provides a patina and context that can enrich the meaning of a place, if we are open to it. In his Ph.D. thesis at Harvard University’s Graduate School of Design, Miguel Lopez Melendez adopts Lacan’s idea of the real as a call to action, flipping the urban schemes of the modernist era on their heads. “The Modern Movement aspired to provide order to disorder, a perfectible architecture for a perfectible world,” he writes. “The real was understood as defeat, while the urban project was presented as a potential remedy to our ills. What if we just simply assume failure as fate?”⁸ If the inevitable failure of our human constructions can provide a



Fig. 17
The walkway to Athens’ OAKA, which previously displayed the flags of the participating Olympic nations, is now bare and covered with weeds.

unique means to access the real, then failure no longer sounds so bad. Once we rid ourselves of the notion of a perfect future we are finally free to embrace the imperfection of reality.

⁷ Bachman, p. 46.
⁸ Melendez, Miguel Lopez. “Perfect Horror: A Poetic Reflection on Ludwig Hilberseimer’s Hochhausstadt.” *Platform*, Vol. 9. Harvard University Graduate School of Design, 2016, pp. 342–43.



Event May 5
1-5pm
Pollak 313
(GES Grad Studio)
Sign up outside
Pollak 313 or email
siskca@vcu.edu by
Thursday, May 4
Sponsored by
GES Grad Workshop



PSC 750
FSC 750



i.

Bare, harsh, cheerless, immodest—these are the facts of the average school ground. The Pedagogical Construction Work-Book™ is one response, a field guide for creating new spaces for learning. The time is right for a distinct movement in this direction.



START ANYWHERE

My favorite kinds of books—the ones to which I find myself returning the most often, even after reading them—are the type you can dip in and out of, pick up anywhere and go. I like that sense of openness, of content not tethered to any particular order or linearity. I'm attracted to essay collections for this reason.

I recall that when I was a child, I would pick up a magazine for the first time and begin at some random point in the middle, paging through it backward, flipping left-to-right toward the front. I find that I still have a propensity for this when I first pick up nearly any kind of publication—to start in the middle and navigate from there. That tendency was definitely influential when I first began to conceive of the structure of this book.

EVERY
SURFACE

IS
IS
IS

A
A
A

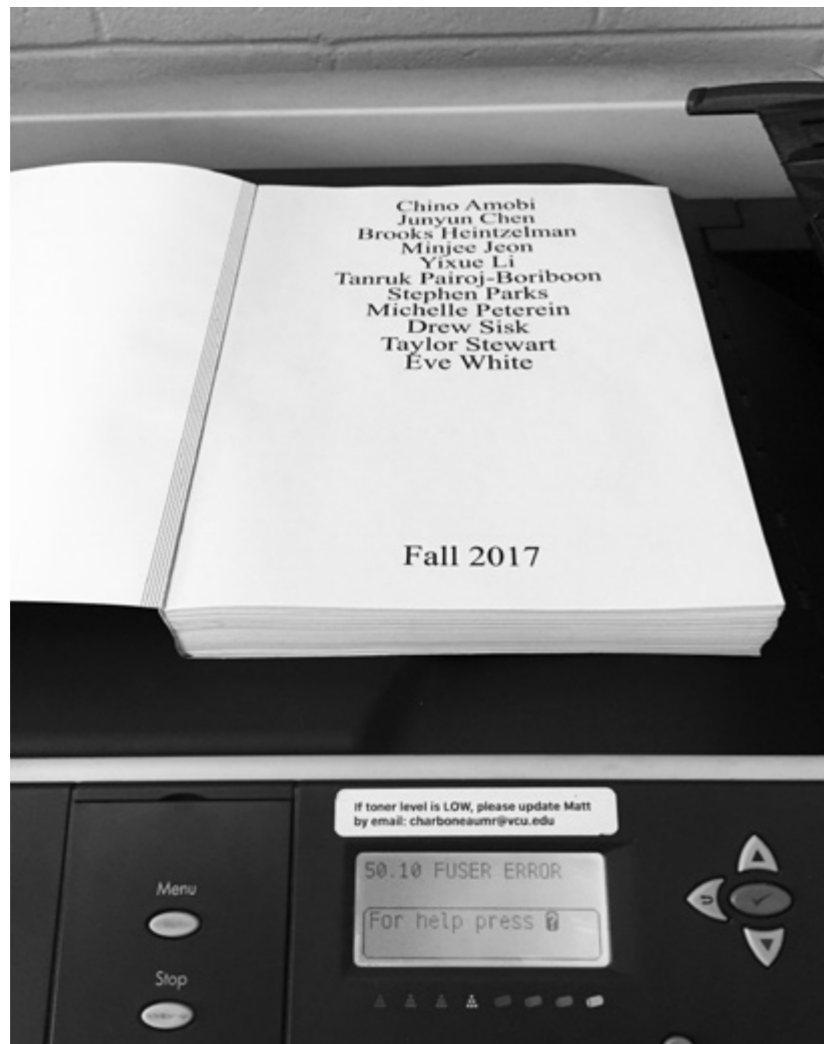
VOLUME

The Curved
Bricks
of
Education:
Only
Artists
Can Do It

Turnaround Arts California:
The Nation's Most Creative
Schools by 2022

Research conducted
and compiled
January–August
2018

A single silver can
of Natural Light lying
against the concrete
curb flanked by a pair
of limp green weeds.



THE SIMPSONS
DIDN'T FUCK ME UP
(BUT A TALKING
SANDWICH DID)

REFLECTIONS
ON THE FORBIDDEN
TELEVISION OF MY
CHILDHOOD

BROOKS
HEINTZELMAN

Contents

139

Even My Teacher Watches Hulk Hogan	5
Don't Whiz on the Electric Fence	15
Eat My Shorts	23
Something That Did Scar Me	33
J.R. and I Unscramble the Playboy Channel	43

http://w

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life

4 RF
1 RN

ACE

ART
ISTS

CRI
TICS

CRI
TICS

ART
ISTS

AN ACT OF GRAPHIC DESIGN

Level this building and plant a tree among the rubble.

vii.

Next comes the planting.
Let it be irregular and natural.



From *The Pedagogical Construction Work-Book™*, Committee for Pedagogical Practices,
325 N. Harrison Street, Suite 313, Richmond, Va. 23284. © 2017. All rights reserved.

viii.

Leave openings in your plan
wherever there are views to
be had.

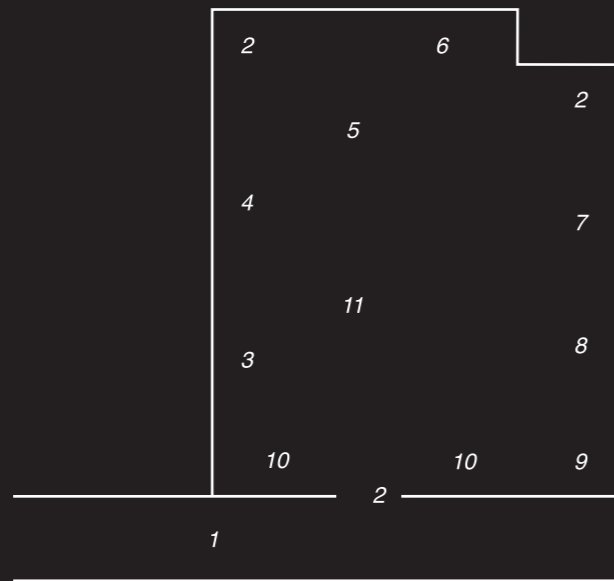


Effort should be exerted to do
the work well at the beginning.
If preparations are considered
and carried out with care, the
premises should become more
attractive year by year with a
minimum of labor.

Auckland
Melbourne
Quito
Sofia
Rotterdam
Buenos Aires
Rio de Janeiro
Indian Wells
Miami
Monte Carlo
Barcelona
Istanbul
Paris
Stuttgart
London
Newport
Toronto
Cincinnati
New York
Chenghai

STILL PROCESSING

PLAYING IN THE DARK
The Anderson
December 3–10, 2018



1
Bushra Alsughayer
Passage
Vinyl and water
Dimensions variable

2
Taylor Stewart
Nameless Power Poster: 001
Mixed media
Dimensions variable

3
Jason S. Wright
Bug Out Daily
Acrylic on canvas
18 x 24 in. each

4
Feixue Mei
The Hydra
Inkjet pigment prints,
wood, paper
Dimensions variable

5
Chino Amobi & Feixue Mei
Woyzeck Casting
Vinyl installation, performance
Dimensions variable

6
Yutong Liu
Her Voice
Video and book installation
18 x 81 in.

7
Brooks Heintzelman
*The Sound of a Space Being
Divided Against Its Will*
Cotton flag
60 x 36 in.

8
Yixue Li
In Exchange
Digital media, paper
Dimensions variable

9
Aidan Quinlan
At The Door
Paper, transparency film,
Raspberry Pi
Dimensions variable

10
Eve White
Eve White
Photographic prints, fabric,
wood, plexiglass
42 x 70 in. each

11
Michelle Peterein
An Emblem and a Myth
Mixed media
Dimensions variable

Poor old
Goudy was
turning in
his grave/
Just thinking
about the
choices we'd
made.

AN ACT OF NEGOTIATION CHALLENGE IS AN ACT OF NEGOTIATION



**A SYSTEM OF
PRODUCTION**

EVERYDAY FORMS OF TIME TRAVEL

1. Enter a theater in the afternoon, watch a movie, and exit to a darkened parking lot.
2. While re-reading an old book, happen upon a faded receipt, used as an impromptu bookmark, on which the date, time, and location of the book's purchase is printed.
3. Sleep in your childhood bedroom as an adult.
4. Listen to an audio CD in your car on the way to the airport. Upon arriving in the parking lot, turn off the ignition mid-song. Take a trip. Upon returning days or even weeks later, start up your car again and the CD player will resume the song exactly where you left off.
5. Watch the clock in the upper right corner of your computer the next time you awaken it from sleep mode. It will display the day and time you last used it before quickly updating to the current day and time.

The Act of Rereading
These Words is
an Act of Time Travel

**THIS ETERNAL
DANCE TOGETHER**



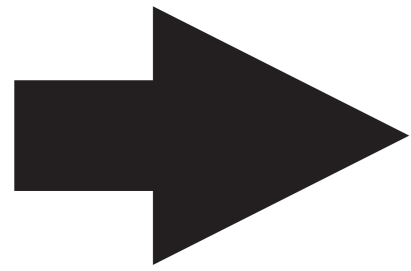


JMN2

ERW
3

Both the language and the typography of shipping labels strike me as everyday studies in utility. Absolute economy is of utmost importance, given the constraint of space and processing time. There is a purpose to every line and space; each letter and number, no matter if we laypersons understand or not. Each label is similar but wholly unique; each striped bar code is a fingerprint, never to be replicated again.

From its seemingly random assortment of typeface widths and weights to the oddly-stacked boxes condensing off one foreign bit of information from the next, there is a sort of raw poetry to the way the visual elements of the shipping label unfold. Margins shift; alignments are flexible at best. But uniformity is a dicey proposition. I don't want to lose the charm of the shipping label. Here is an instance where, perhaps, too much "good" design might just ruin an already good thing.



TOTAL P. 01/02



CAN I TELL YOU A QUESTION?

My son, Max, recently turned three years old, and one of his favorite phrases is, “Can I tell you a question?” It’s an endearing misnomer, and my wife and I gently steer him toward the correct expression. But it makes me wonder: how often in my work am I really asking questions, or am I just telling what I know? Am I carving out space; creating an opening; leaving something yet unsettled for the viewer to chew on after they’ve gone back to their day-to-day life? Or am I presenting something beautiful but impenetrable, a lovely sarcophagus of a big-ass book that checks all the design boxes but sits inert and resolved, politely browsed and quickly returned to its resting place, because nothing much exists to be gained?

VCUARTS SUMMER SESSION

GDES 391–002:
Typeface Design
(CRN 38617)

SESSION (B)

M–R 1:00–3:15 pm

BROOKS HEINTZELMAN

20¹⁹

MAY

THROUGH

20

JUNE

This course explores typeface design as both a practice and a foundational part of contemporary graphic design. We will begin by examining the historical evolution of Latin letterforms as well as their present-day significance and usage across a variety of media. Students will complete exercises to develop their calligraphic and digital skills, and will receive training on Glyphs, an industry-standard font editor for MacOS. Attention will be paid to the design of individual letterforms as well as the way in which typefaces function as cohesive systems. Working individually, and aided through a process of revision, group critique, and individual consultations with the instructor, students will develop and digitize an original typeface. The expectation of the course is not that students will master typeface design; rather, that it might help clarify the process of making usable fonts, enhance their personal work, and serve to deepen their appreciation of the practice and of typography itself. Questions? Contact heintzelmanbm@vcu.edu.





ped

vs

Rafa

vi.

Join these
points by the

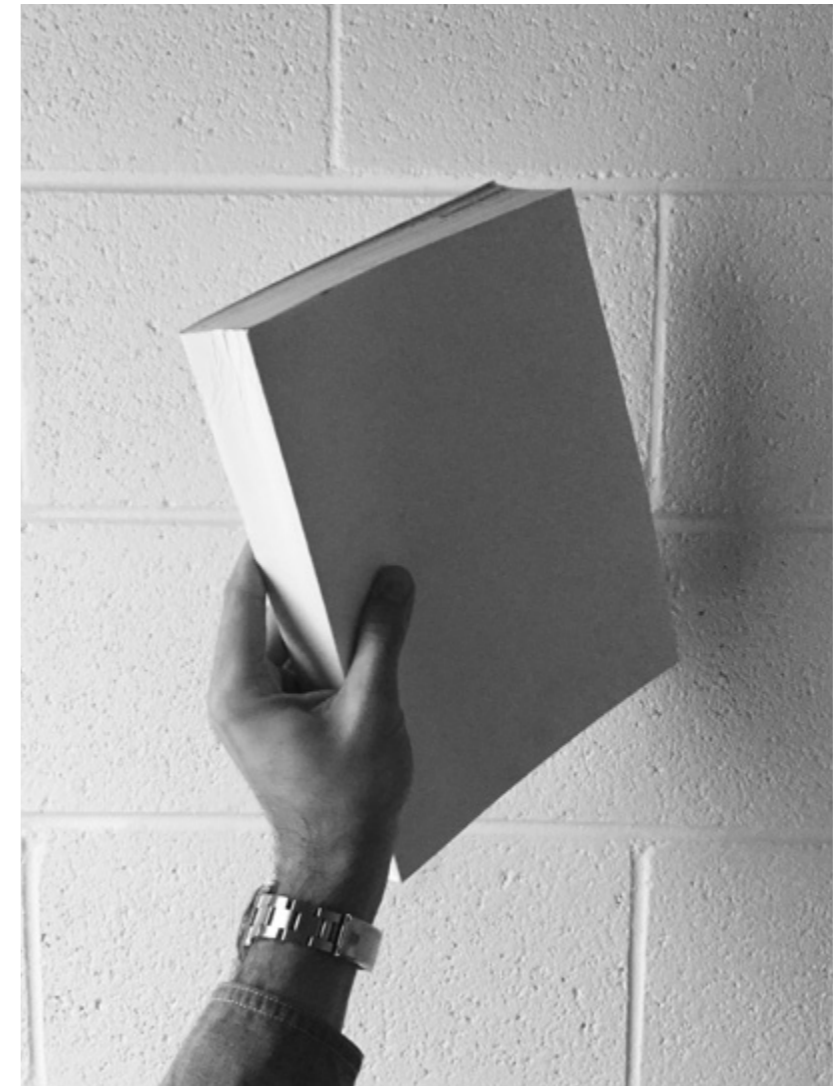


most direct and
simplest curves
possible.

(IT'S GETTING BETTER) ALL THE TIME

At this point, I am becoming slightly more comfortable with the sensation of not knowing where I am going at any particular time. I could attribute this to any of a number of key revelations and important lessons learned. This could also just be the Lexapro talking.

**JUST ACCEPT THIS
PITHY APHORISM
(FOR WHAT IT IS)**

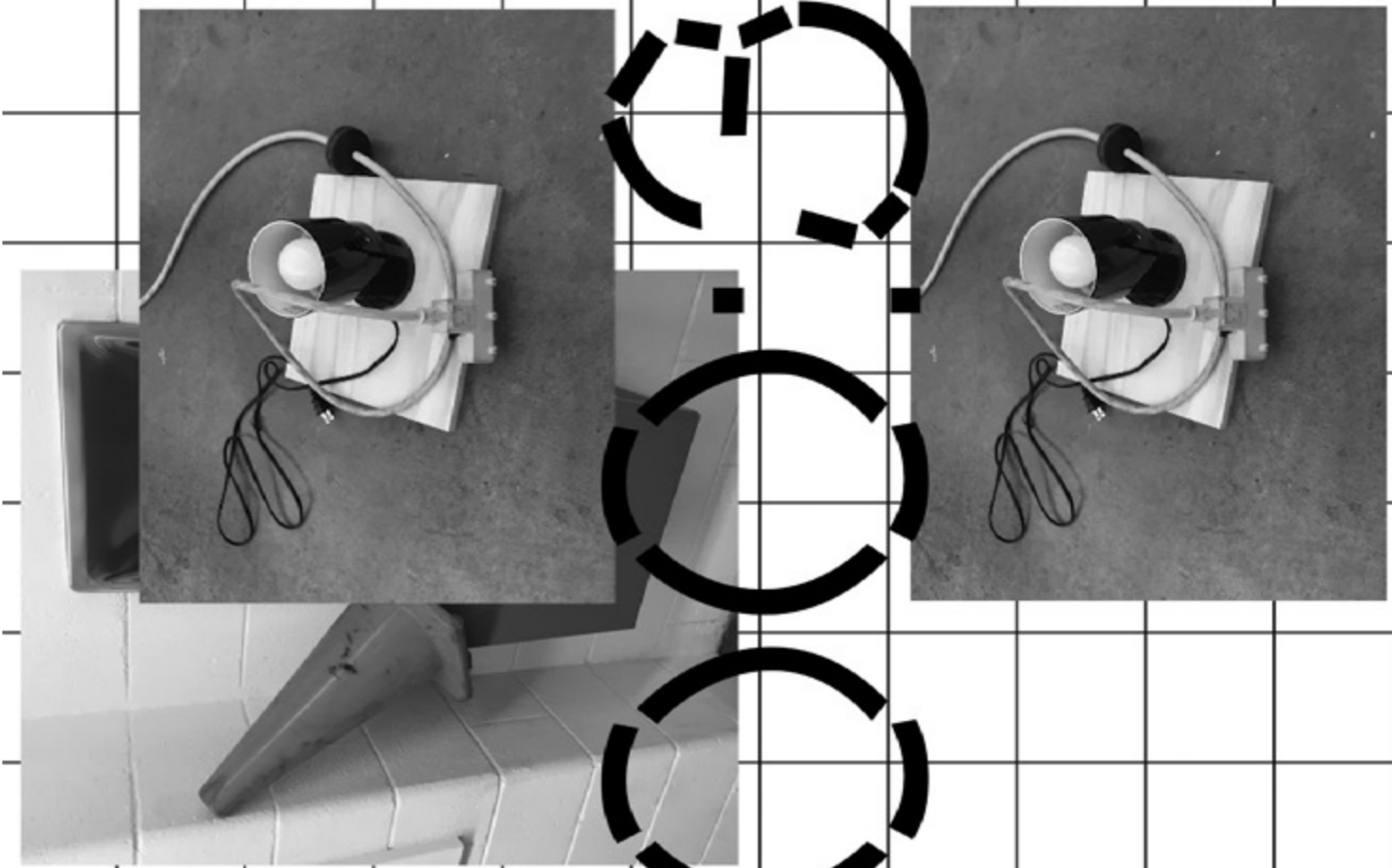
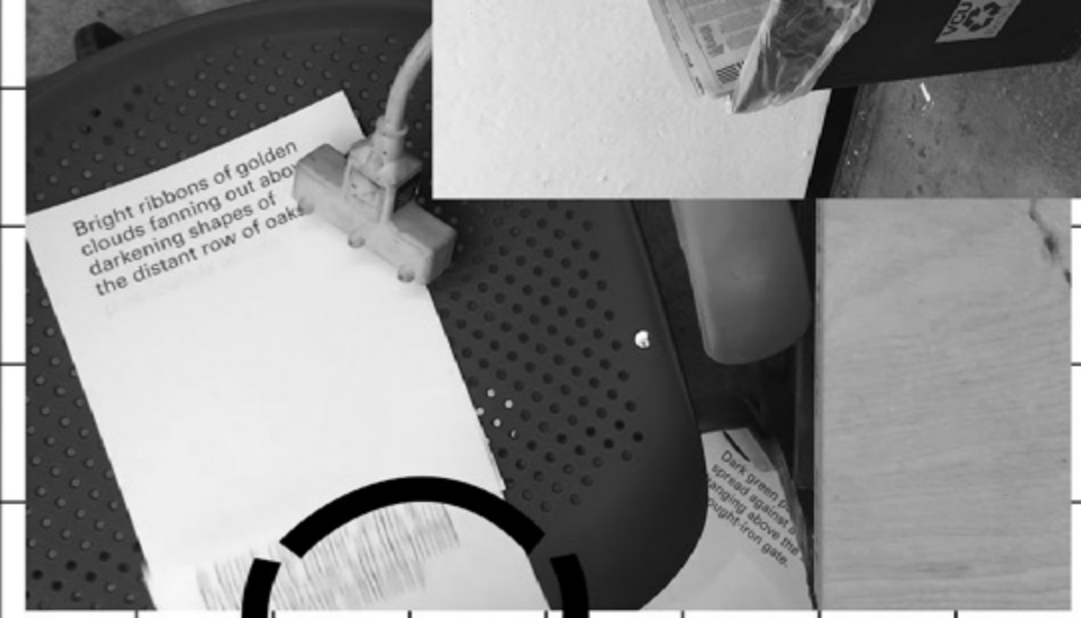


4TH QUARTER REVIEW

gdes

TARA	Tuesday	March	20	5:00PM	PAIROJ-BORIBOON	Pollak 317
MINJEE	Friday	March	23	2:00PM	JEON	Pollak 315
STEPHEN	Wednesday	March	28	5:00PM	PARKS	Pollak 321
DREW	Friday	March	30	9:00 AM	SISK	Pollak 315
JUNYUN	Friday	March	30	11:00 AM	CHEN	Pollak 317

WE'RE LISTENING... HONEST



Silex Oldstyle

AaBbCcDdEeFfGg
HhIiJjKkLlMm
NnOoPpQqRrSsTt
UuVvWwXxYyZz
0123456789
(,;... ---)“?!/”

Raconteur
leather jacket
Nile River Crocodile
viewfinder
Chukka Boots
Ibiza Nightclub
QUESTION
Skull & Bones
Did you just hear that?
Western Zephyr



Occultum Lapidem

TRACES OF BLOOD discovered on ancient arrowheads in Guatemala prove the Maya took part in bloody ceremonies to communicate with their gods. Bloodletting ceremonies involved piercing the earlobes, tongues and even genitals of willing participants and using spilled blood to feed their deities. The arrows were collected from five sites in Central America, including a temple at Zacpeten where it is thought bloodletting ceremonies took place around 500 years ago.

Stone reliefs created at the time have shown these ceremonies taking place. Rituals were carried out using carved bones, sting-ray spines or thorny ropes, as well as arrow heads.

Nathan Meissner, a researcher at the Centre for Archaeological Investigations at Southern Illinois University, says Mayas participated in bloodletting as a part of birth or coming-of-age ceremonies. This practice served to ensoul future generations and connect their life force to those of past ancestors.

It is thought that people, including rulers, gave blood voluntarily. The majority of these volunteers survived the gruesome ceremony, which sometimes involved ropes studded with thorns being drawn through the tongue, for example. Historical documents do not suggest that such activity brought individuals close to death, however.

Because of sacrifices, the Maya have a bloodthirsty reputation, but experts argue it is unfounded. It is important to approach Maya ritual behavior through the lens of their worldview that included complex cycles of renewal and time. Bloodletting was probably only one facet of much more elaborate ritual activity.

PROPAGATION

A thing begets more things. This is especially true in the case of designing type. Letterforms are small yet infinitely scalable. Making letters allows me to create words, and from these words, language and texts and an entire system for sharing my ideas with the world.

This is the nature of work as well. Work makes more work. This can be good or bad, depending.

Question
Authority
Exhumed
Bohemian
Threats
Linguistic
Symbolism
Limestone
Frieze

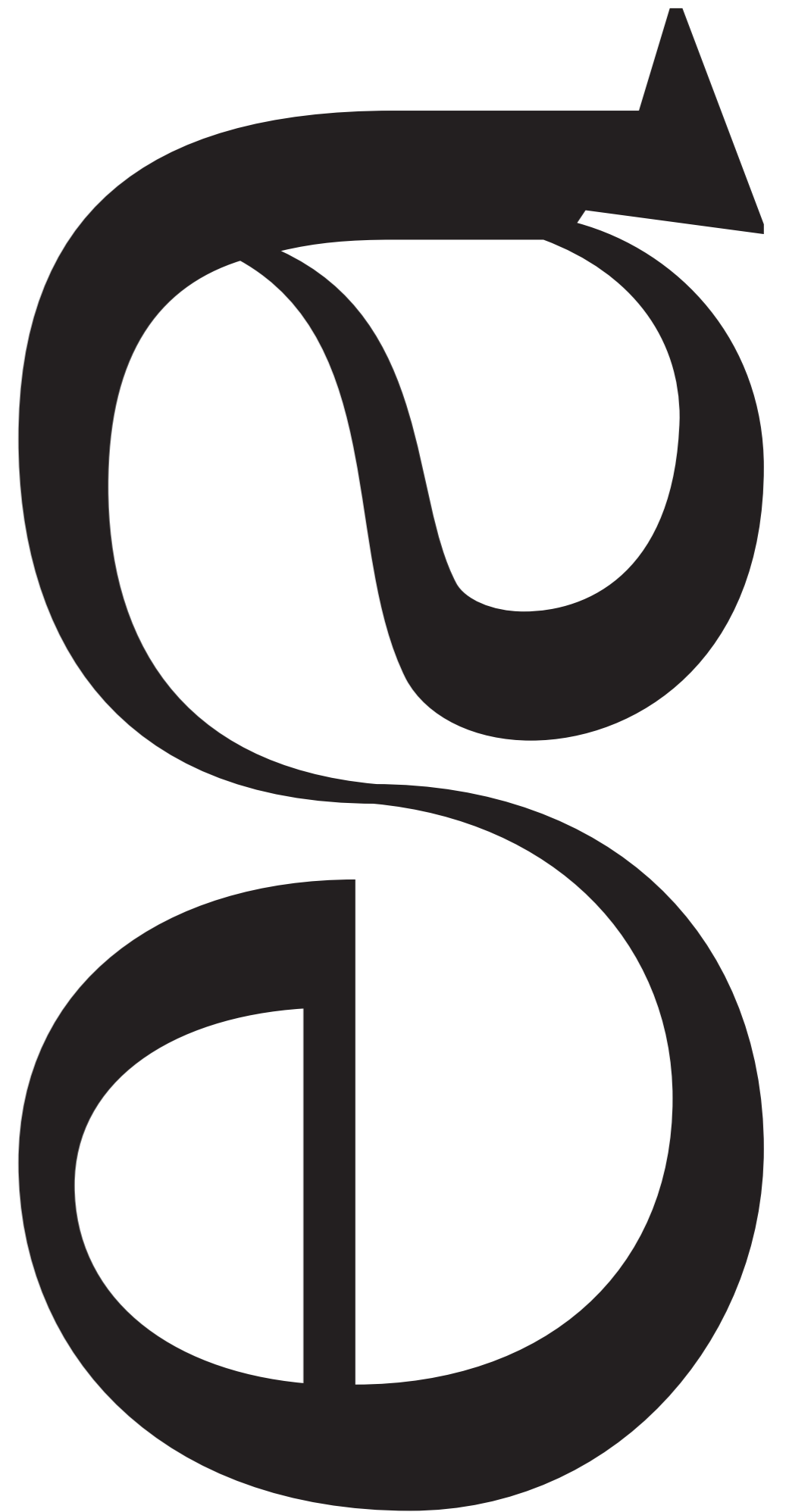
Initiation
Password
Nightfall
Handshake
Colleague
Universal
Ideology
Necessary
Mysteries

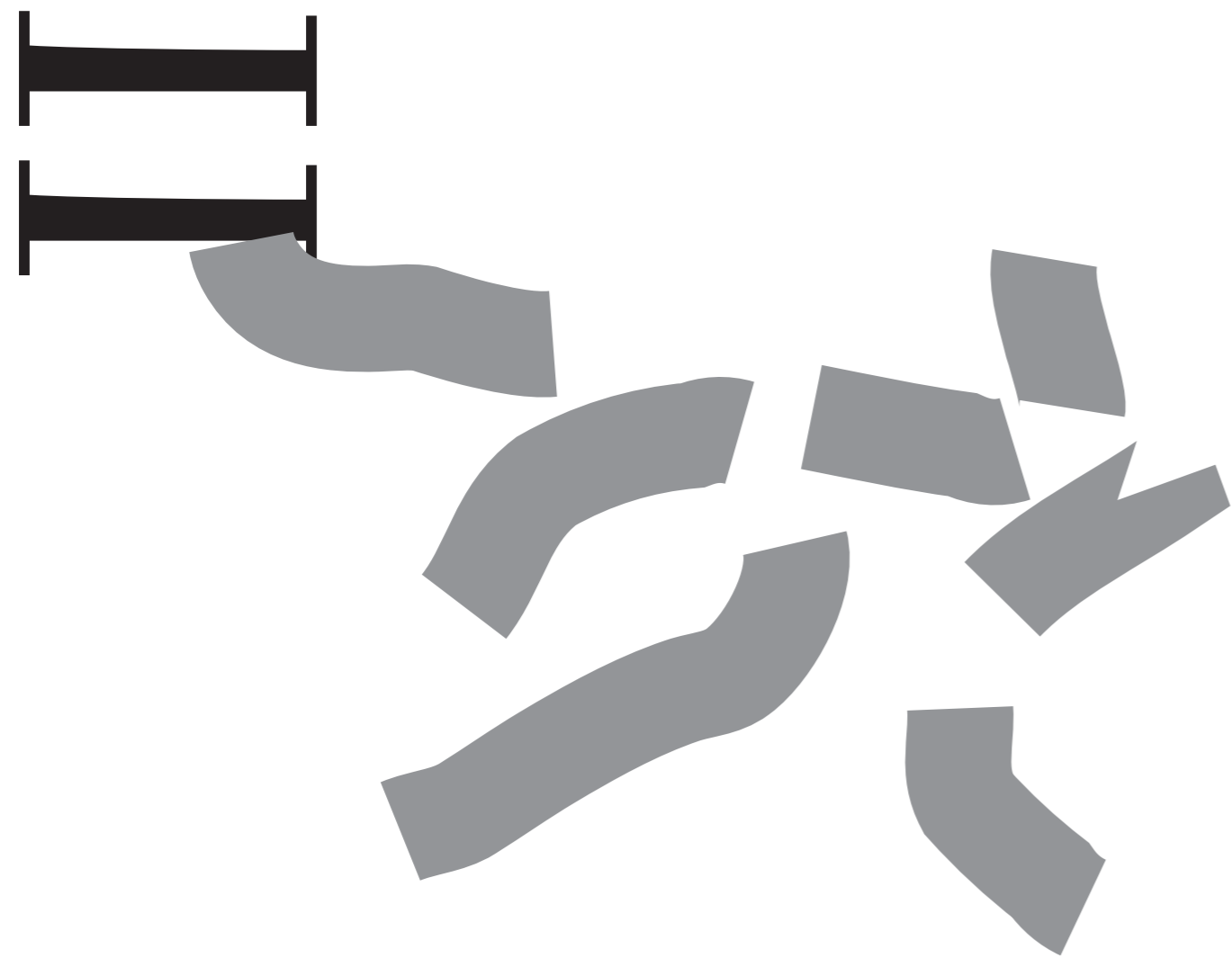
**I DON'T WANT TO
BE PRESCRIPTIVE,
BUT**

Lines of braided fence
wire stretching between
two leaning wooden
posts, surrounded by
scrub brush beside the
empty highway.

Pro- phets

To associate with other like-minded people in small, purposeful groups is for the great majority of men and women a source of profound psychological satisfaction. Exclusiveness will add to the pleasure of being several, but at one, and secrecy will intensify it almost to ecstasy. —Aldous Huxley





Stage

Objects - Methods
Lecture Series

THURSDAY!!!
THURSDAY!!!
THURSDAY!!!

gdes

Faculty Research Presentations

Graphics too hot to be street legal!

(GDES) **2010**

FEATURING THE BIGGEST NAMES IN DESIGN!

- Laura Chessin
- Nicole Killian
- Lap Le
- Jamie Mahoney
- Roy McKelvey
- David Shields
- Wesley Taylor
- Lauren Thorson
- Sandy Wheeler

Sept. 28 — 4:30 PM
Grace St. Theater

RESEARCH WILL BE presented Pecha Kucha style — 20 projected images, 20 seconds per image. Each faculty will have 6 minutes, 40 seconds to talk about their current work and ongoing research interests. Come see Laura Chessin, Nicole Killian, Lap Le, Jamie Mahoney, Roy McKelvey, David Shields, Wesley Taylor, Lauren Thorson, and Sandy Wheeler talk (swiftly) about what lights them up as designers.

SOME ASSORTED THOUGHTS ON COLOR

1. I have a strange aversion to the color red. My childhood bedroom had red carpeting, so maybe that's it?
2. Orange always looks good to me, but people hate orange.
3. While we're on the topic of people's likes and dislikes, a famous designer once told me that you can never change a client's opinions on color. Most everything else is negotiable, he said. But something about color is deep-rooted and reactionary.
4. There is no blue I've found that quite compares to the blue of a Southern California sky. Maybe the actual difference between the sky here and there is negligible? Either way, I still miss it.
5. Speaking of blues: International Klein Blue? Not a bad legacy.
6. Black and white always looks best.

vcuarts

VCUarts Posting Guidelines

Purpose

This regulation establishes requirements for the display and/or posting of all items posted or affixed to the walls of VCU School of the Arts buildings. This includes but is not limited to posters, brochures, circulars, community newspapers, fliers, handouts, notices or signs.

Display and Posting of Information

The hallways and classrooms of VCU School of the Arts buildings are instructional spaces. Their primary function is to further the educational mission of VCU and VCUarts, and any materials posted outside of designated areas is subject to removal. Only VCUarts may post signs, posters, flyers or other materials throughout VCUarts buildings. In general, VCUarts displays only materials related to its own programs, services or events.

VCUarts recognizes the importance of providing an appropriate forum, or designated space, for the community to post flyers, posters, or opportunities. To this end, the School has provided bulletin boards for community postings in the following designated locations. VCUarts will not monitor the content of these boards, and will clear them of all materials on the last business day of each month and at the end of each semester.

Materials must be posted to the boards using push pins or staples. Materials posted using any other material, including tape, are subject to immediate removal.

Any materials displayed or posted in VCUarts buildings outside of the designated locations will be subject to immediate removal.

Public areas are monitored daily by building managers and staff members, any of whom will be authorized to remove improperly posted materials promptly.

Designated Community Posting locations: VCUarts Buildings

- Pollak Building, 325 North Harrison Street. Yellow boards on each floor, to left of elevator.
- Depot, 814 West Broad Street. Movable board on wheels, 2nd floor
- Depot Annex, 801 West Marshall Street. Movable board on wheels, 2nd floor
- Singleton, 922 Park Avenue. To the left of the elevator on each floor
- Franklin Terrace, 812-814 West Franklin Street. Wall to the left and right of first-floor entrance
- Bowe Street Parking Deck, 609 Bowe Street. Landing across from the elevator
- Fine Arts Building, 1000 W Broad Street. Wall space near directory placard on 2nd and 3rd floors
- Dance Center, 1315 Floyd Avenue. First-floor lobby area

VCU Policies

All persons and materials are subject to the terms of the VCU Reservation and Use of Space Policy, which may be found at:

<https://policy.vcu.edu/sites/default/files/Reservation%20and%20Use%20of%20Space.pdf>

and the VCU Space Use Regulation, which may be found at:

<https://policy.vcu.edu/sites/default/files/Space%20Use%20Regulation.pdf>.

Questions?

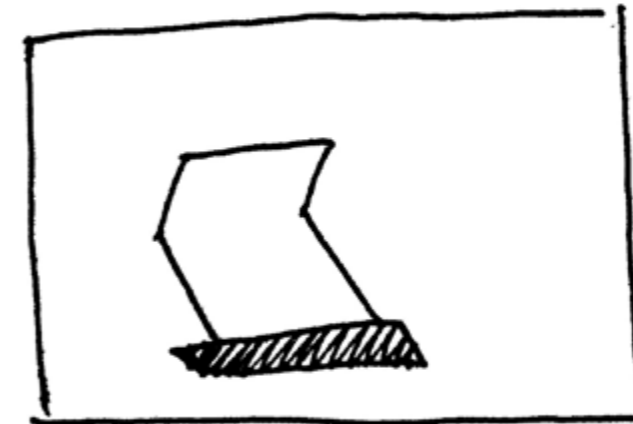
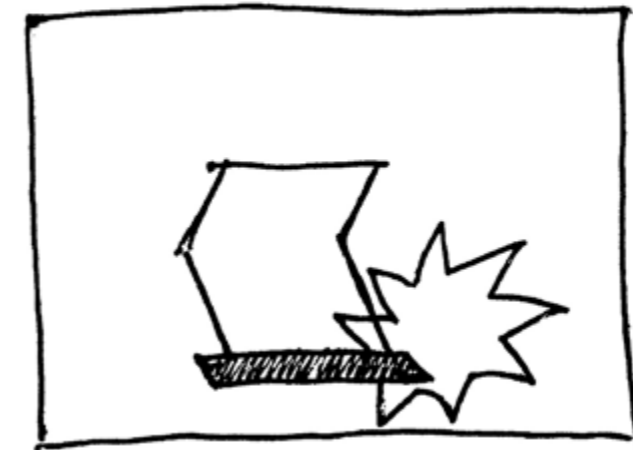
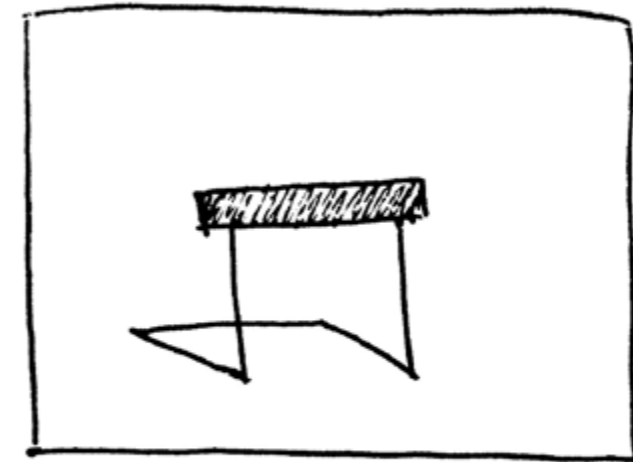
Contact VCUarts Director of Communications Suzanne A. Silitich, APR, at sasilitch@vcu.edu or (804) 828-2787.

Updated 1/4/2018



Valspar
3001-1B
"Dandelion Wish"

DESIGN IS A NIGHTMARE



SMACK!

Buley Allan E.
Bullock Randall Y.
Bulotti Richard C.
Bundschu James T.
Burdick Harold H.
Burkett William C.
Burnham Clark J.
Burnham DeWitt K.
Burns Brian P.
Burress Richard T.
Burrow Gerald N.
~~Burrows F. Robert~~
Bush George H.W.
~~Bush Michael J.~~
Busterud James P.
Byers Brook H.
¹⁹⁶Byrnes Bryant H.



a

z



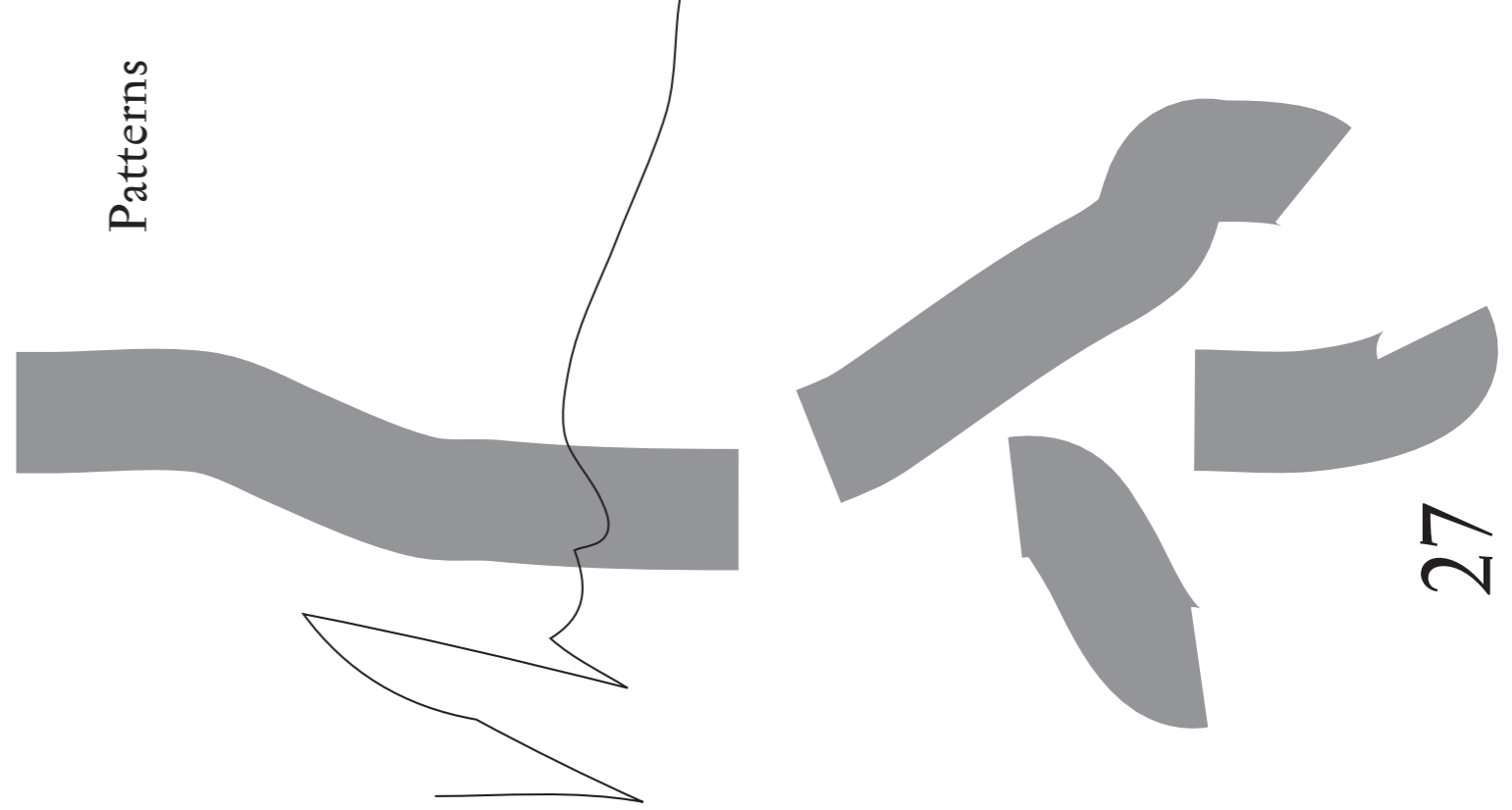
Q:

**AM I IN THE
DUMPSTER NOW?**

**Fair
Pay**

is

**Fair
Play**



J.A.G.D.

(nbd)

CAITLIN
CHERRY.
etherpaint
The Anderson
September 7–October 26
2018

READYMADE

There's an old hand-painted wooden sign someone posted above the doorway of the graphic design graduate studio years ago. I've walked beneath that faded black-and-white thing hundreds of times, and for a year or so I was thinking that I should create a typeface inspired by those forms. I was interested in the utilitarian approach and tradecraft of sign painting and how the evidence of the hand might be digitized and standardized to a certain extent, in order to function as a repeatable system. When I first shared Alliance Gothic, my colleague, Michelle, had a great way of looking at it—she described the process as one of taking something from the public, transforming it, and releasing it back into the public.

My installation, Readymade, was created in much the same way. For over a year I had been keeping a list in my notebook of humorous or poignant lines spoken in class that sounded like provocative titles for a thesis that no one would ever write. Eventually I had collected enough titles that I thought of shaping them into some sort of project. At the time I was reading about the Situationists and Dada, and I thought about Marcel Duchamp and his readymades—everyday objects that became art through his curation and repositioning. I envisioned a publishing imprint of readymade thesis books, 100 numbered but otherwise blank pages, each book with a predetermined title and official cover page to be filled out by the candidate with their name, institution, and date. It was another case of taking content from the public, pushing it through a specific lens, and releasing it back in a new form, one that might prove useful to those preparing their own thesis, if even to simply take the air out of a format that often feels daunting and over-serious.

PRINT FOR ME



A GROOVE IN THE SHAPE OF THE DAY

One of the best lines of descriptive writing I've ever read is from John Updike's Rabbit at Rest. It's in the final few pages of the novel, the last in a tetralogy of books, and an aging Rabbit Angstrom suddenly finds himself in a pick-up basketball game with a local teen hotshot. Before he suffers the heart attack that will be his end, he unearths a few dusty moves from his days as a high school hoops star. At one point his back is hurting and so instead of using his size advantage and driving to the basket, he lets fly a long set shot, the result of which Updike describes: "He knows as it leaves his hands it will drop; a groove in the shape of the day guides it down." A groove in the shape of the day. That description has stuck with me.

For a long time I've thought about using the title, The Day is Just Another Surface, for this thesis. I like that way of thinking about the day: as something malleable, usable, as a medium on which to work. When I conjured those words I wasn't thinking about Updike, but now I see that he was somewhere in there, subtly influencing me.



A Curve in the Shape of the Day, or Summer in Three Courses

SESSION A

GDES 301.001
Beginning Letterpress
CRN 37098
May 20–June 7
M–F 9:00am–12:00pm
Reid Reizes
Polak 309

An introductory/intermediate printmaking studio course designed for students interested in developing their visual vocabulary in letterpress and relief printing. Students will undertake critical analysis of the letterpress medium and utilize techniques to develop and produce finished editions of each assigned task.

GDES 391-001 Topics:
Techniques of Screen Printing
CRN 37945
May 20–June 7
M–F 9:00am–12:00pm
Jason S. Wright
419 W. Broad Street

Students will learn the basics of screen-printing through straightforward techniques and DIY applications that demonstrate how screen-printing can be an accessible addition to the designer's toolkit. The class will focus on hand techniques for screen preparation, file preparation for digital screens and then advancing to multi-layered editions. Students will be urged to explore applications that relate to their life and practice beyond the traditional paper editions. It is our goal at the end of the course to see screen-printing as an available and easily improvised medium that can be useful in many projects and scenarios.

SESSION B

GDES 391-002 Topics:
Typeface Design
CRN 38617
May 20–June 20
M–R 1:00pm–3:15pm
Brooks Heitzelman
Polak 311

This course explores typeface design as both a practice and a foundational part of contemporary graphic design. Students will complete exercises to develop their calligraphic and digital skills, and will receive training on Glyphs, an industry-standard font editor for MacOS. Attention will be paid to the design of individual letterforms as well as the way in which typefaces function as cohesive systems. Working individually, and aided through a process of revision, group critique, and individual consultations with the instructor, students will then develop and digitize an original typeface. The expectation of this course is not that students will master typeface design; rather, that it might help clarify the process of making usable fonts, enhance their personal work, and serve to deepen their appreciation of the practice and of type itself.

VCU Department of Graphic Design Summer '19

SK

& B

U I L

O N



L

E S

“Senior year I joined Skull & Bones, a secret society; so secret, I cannot say anything more.”
—George W. Bush

THE OBJECT PLAYS ITSELF

Speaking of comedy, Norm Macdonald has said that the perfect joke would be one whose punchline and setup are identical. The closest he ever came to this Platonic ideal, he figures, was during his stint hosting Saturday Night Live's "Weekend Update." In one 1995 episode, he declared: "Julia Roberts told reporters this week that her marriage to Lyle Lovett has been over for some time. The key moment, she said, came when she realized that she was Julia Roberts, and he was Lyle Lovett."

I've thought about this from time to time, about what the design equivalent would be. Back in October, I had a piece of text that I planned to fabricate in vinyl and apply to the wall at the base of one of the Pollak Building stairwells. Because it read, "The act of rereading these words is an act of time travel," it was important to me to situate it in a high-traffic area, a transitory spot that people would pass several times each day and therefore have multiple chances to enact the very phenomena that the words address. I was in the process of measuring things out on the wall when a guy opened the stairwell door and told me that whatever I put up on the wall wouldn't last the night. The facilities crew had been instructed to start cracking down on fire code infractions, including absolutely anything added to any part of the stairwell. No more posters. No more flyers. "Do it at your own risk," he advised me.

Eventually I figured it out: the fire code itself would become the thing that violated the fire code. So I printed and bound the 237-page Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code and hung it from a cable in the stairwell. The bright red cover displays the title of the piece, configured in black type: The Object Plays Itself.



כאלה ממש

ההגות
ממלכת
המערב
הזר
המערב
המערב
המערב
המערב

HUMAN BEINGS
TRANSCEND
UNKNOWNS
STYLISH
CALCULATE
HUMANITY
TODAY
FRAGMENTED
NONNEGLECT
DIVERSITY
SOLAR PLEXUS

URANIUM

ATOMIC
WEIGHT

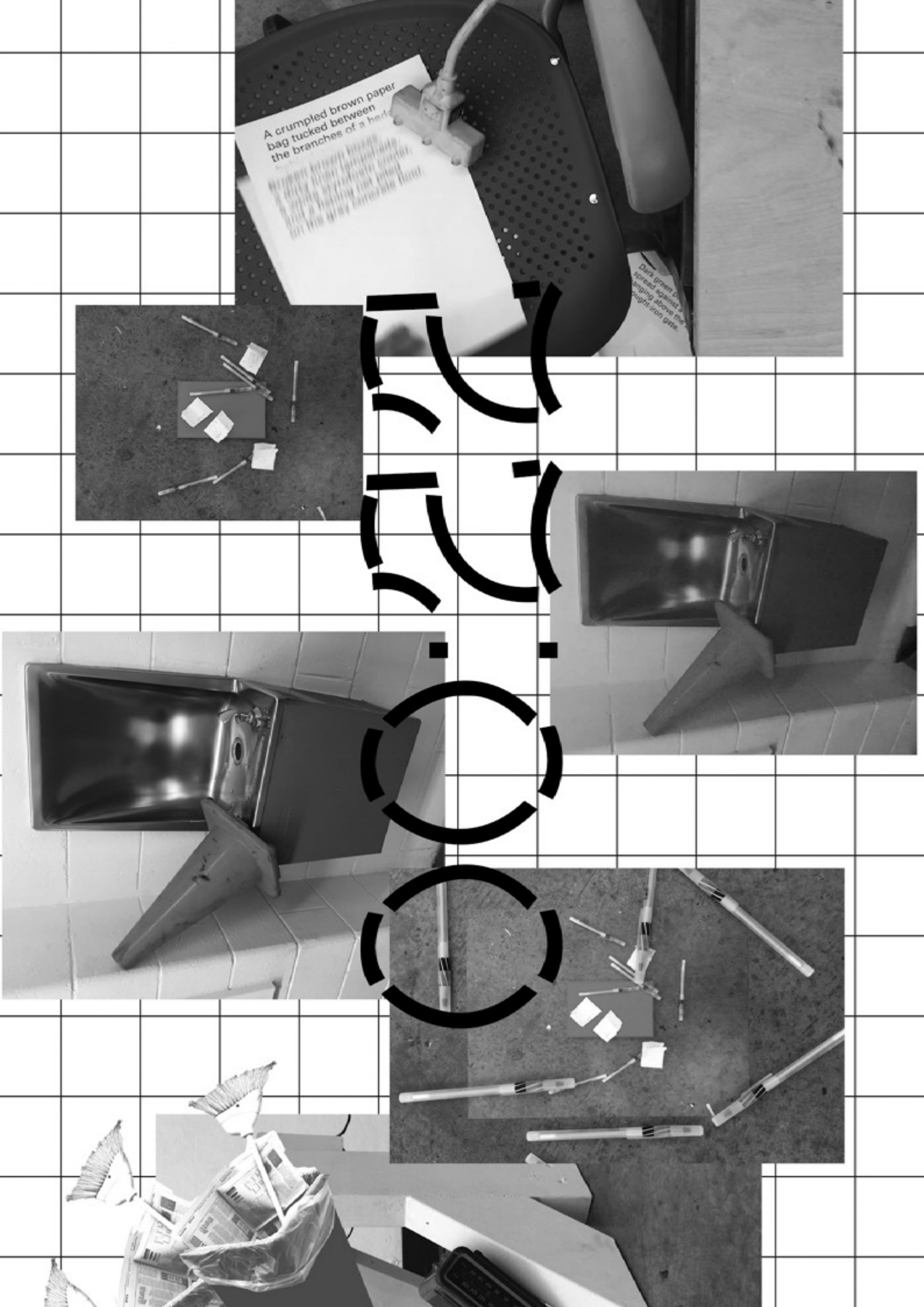
238.02891(3)

URANIUM IS A CHEMICAL ELEMENT WITH SYMBOL U AND ATOMIC NUMBER 92. IT IS A SILVERY-GREY METAL IN THE ACTINIDE SERIES OF THE PERIODIC TABLE. A URANIUM ATOM HAS 92 PROTONS AND 92 ELECTRONS, OF WHICH 6 ARE VALENCE ELECTRONS. URANIUM IS WEAKLY RADIOACTIVE BECAUSE ALL ISOTOPES OF URANIUM ARE UNSTABLE, WITH HALF-LIVES VARYING BETWEEN 158,200 YEARS AND 4.5 BILLION YEARS. THE MOST COMMON ISOTOPE IN NATURAL URANIUM IS URANIUM-238 (WHICH HAS 146 NEUTRONS

AND ACCOUNTS FOR OVER 99 PERCENT) AND URANIUM-235 (WHICH HAS 143 NEUTRONS). URANIUM HAS THE HIGHEST ATOMIC WEIGHT OF THE PRIMORDIALLY OCCURRING ELEMENTS. ITS DENSITY IS ABOUT 70 PERCENT HIGHER THAN THAT OF LEAD, AND SLIGHTLY LOWER THAN THAT OF GOLD OR TUNGSTEN. IT OCCURS NATURALLY IN LOW CONCENTRATIONS OF A FEW PARTS PER MILLION IN SOIL, ROCK AND WATER, AND IS COMMERCIALY EXTRACTED FROM URANIUM-BEARING MINERALS LIKE URANINITE.

WAIT FOR SIGNAL:

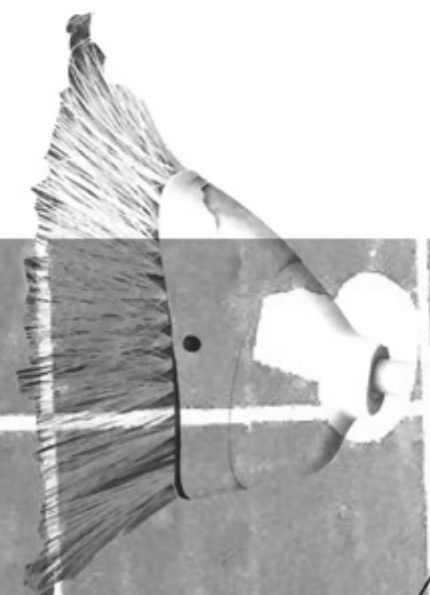
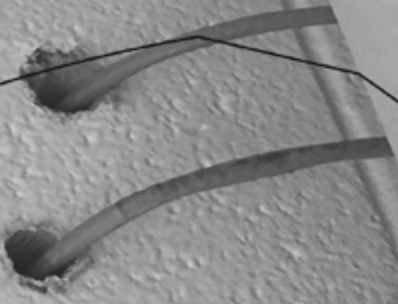
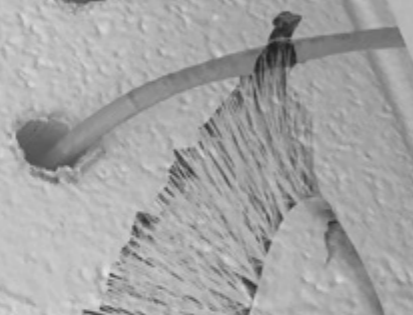
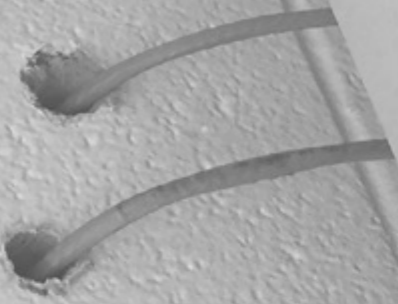
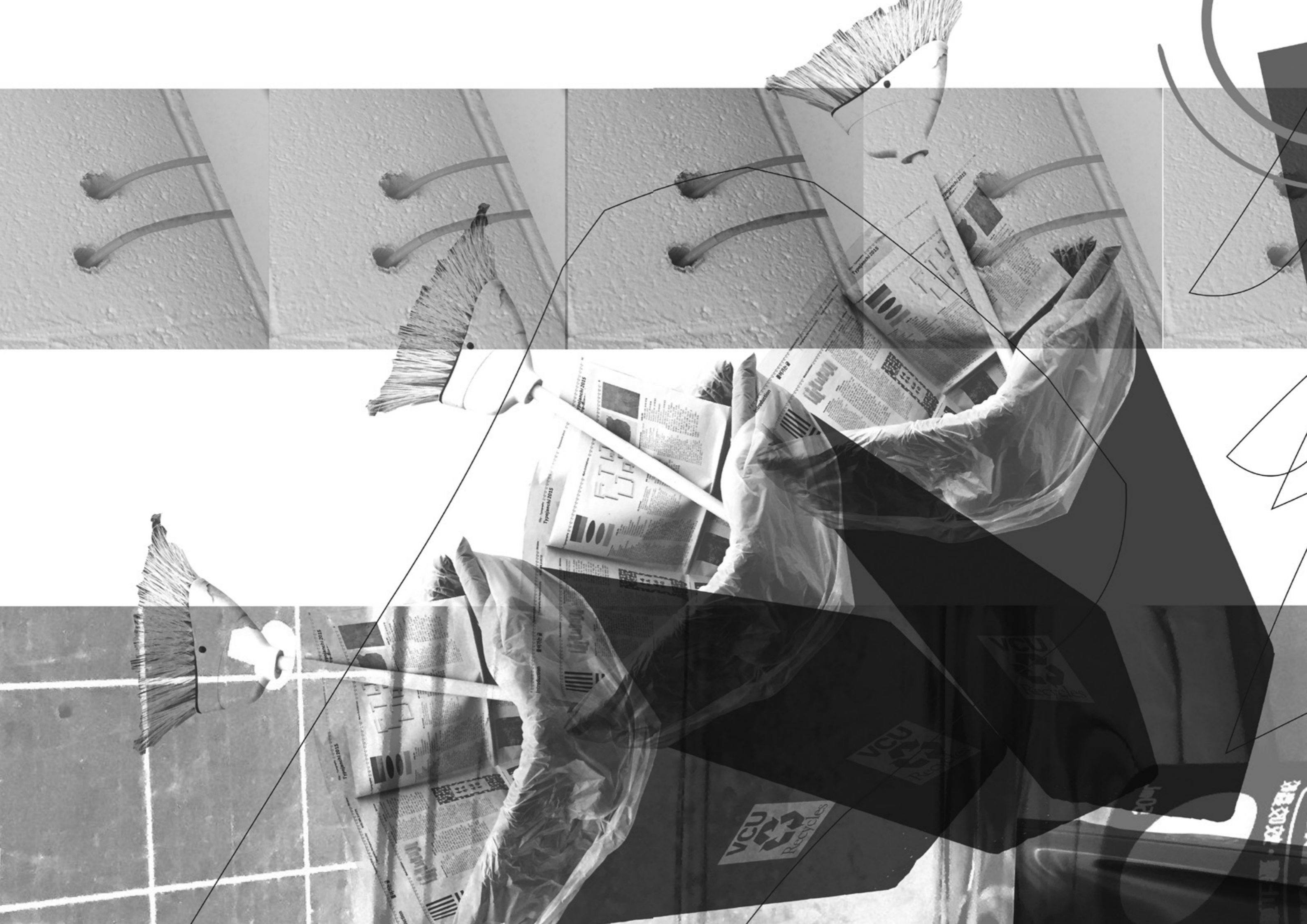
EXECUTE?



A crumpled brown paper bag tucked between the branches of a herd

Dark green... spread against... hanging above the... night-iron gate.

Graphics too hot to be street legal!



海能文知文

WORDS TO BE LOOKED AT

Although I thought I wanted to be a fiction writer at one point, it turns out I didn't have the stomach for novels, for working at something for years on end without knowing whether or not it would ever even see the light of day. For a long time it felt like some big character flaw, admitting that I liked the immediacy of graphic design, the ability to manifest the ideas in my head and, without too much delay, to make them public. Far more people have interacted with the words I've written while as a designer than anything I ever produced as a prose writer.

Colliding
Damage
The Inevitable
in the Mind
of Words

**LOST IN THE
PROCESS**

Magnavox
painted
the face of

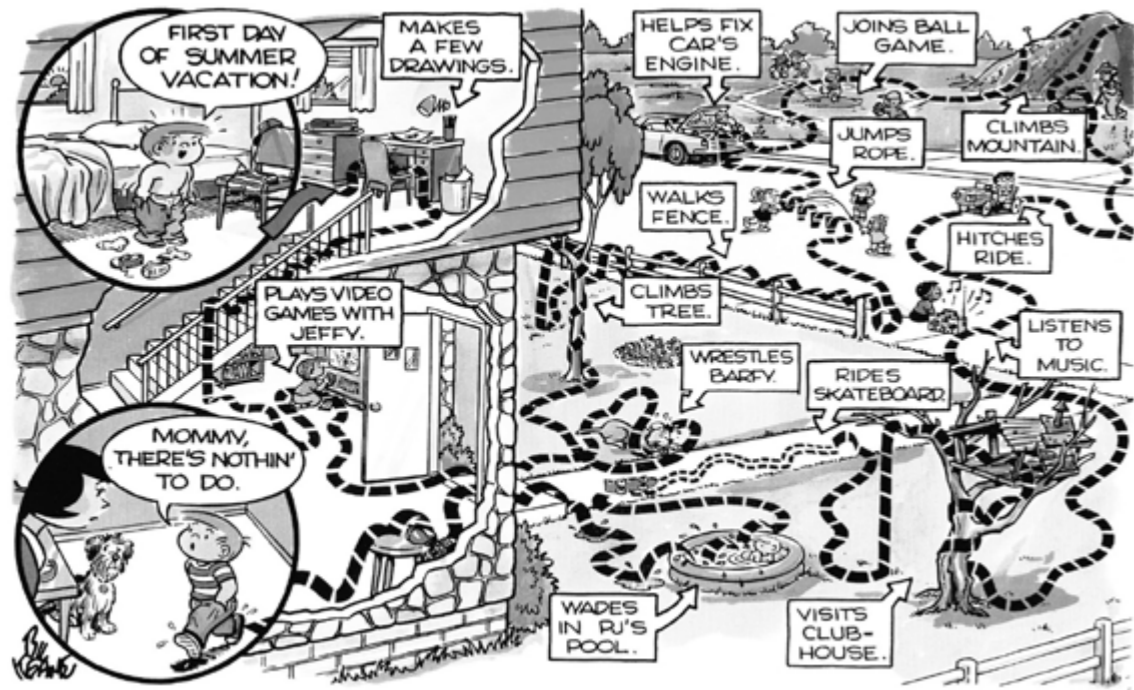
crying
sitting

painted

A broken
television
with
a

clown
beside

the red
curb



f e / l o d
UTOPIAS

This is unofficial business, not even close to business really, not in the way that the decidedly official shade of yellow paint on this sign would lead you to believe.



Laveta Grotesque

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg
Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm
Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt
Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
(, ; : . - _) " ? ! / ' ”

BREAK POINT #2

**Crosscourt forehand
Overhead Smash**

All-England Lawn Tennis Club

GRAND SLAM

30-15

continental grip

Mixed Doubles

% of points off unforced errors

Fifth Set Tiebreak

SERVE AND VOLLEY

GENTLEMEN'S DRAW

128 Players (16Q/4WC)

SEEDS

- #1 Roger Federer (SUI)
- #2 Rafael Nadal (ESP)
- #3 Novak Djokovic (SRB)
- #4 Nikolay Davydenko (RUS)
- #5 David Ferrer (ESP)
- #6 Andy Roddick (USA)
- #7 David Nalbandian (ARG)
- #8 Richard Gasquet (FRA)
- #9 James Blake (USA)
- #10 Marcos Baghdatis (CYP)
- #11 Tomas Berdych (CZE)
- #12 Andy Murray (GBR)
- #13 Stanislas Wawrinka (SUI)
- #14 Paul-Henri Mathieu (FRA)

- #15 Fernando Gonzalez (CHL)
- #16 Radek Stepanek (CZE)
- #17 Mikhail Youzhny (RUS)
- #18 Ivo Karlovic (HRV)
- #19 Nicolas Almagro (ESP)
- #20 Lleyton Hewitt (AUS)
- #21 Juan Carlos Ferrero (ESP)
- #22 Fernando Verdasco (ESP)
- #23 Tommy Robredo (ESP)
- #24 Jarkko Nieminen (FIN)
- #25 Dmitry Tursunov (RUS)
- #26 Ivan Ljubicic (HRV)
- #27 Nicolas Kiefer (GER)
- #28 Gilles Simon (FRA)
- #29 Andreas Seppi (ITA)
- #30 Gael Monfils (FRA)
- #31 Feliciano Lopez (ESP)
- #32 Michael Llodra (FRA)

SIXTY
SECOND
SESSION

IN
SITU
12.05.17

Sixty-Second
Sculpture
at VCUarts
Pollak Building
Room 313
325 N. Harrison St.

**NOT THAT I DON'T
LIKE FEEDBACK**

“Ohhh,
that
looked
awkward.”



T
T
B
E
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F

A
A

A DIDACTIC CONVERSATION,
MAY 9, 2018

(BH) Hey, someone broke a cinder block all over the men's room floor.

(SH) Well, we have to assume that it's an installation.

TRINITY ALLIANCE



THE OLD
GODS ARE
ABANDONED.

BUT THEIR



PLACE
IS
FILLED
BY

POWERFUL
MEN...

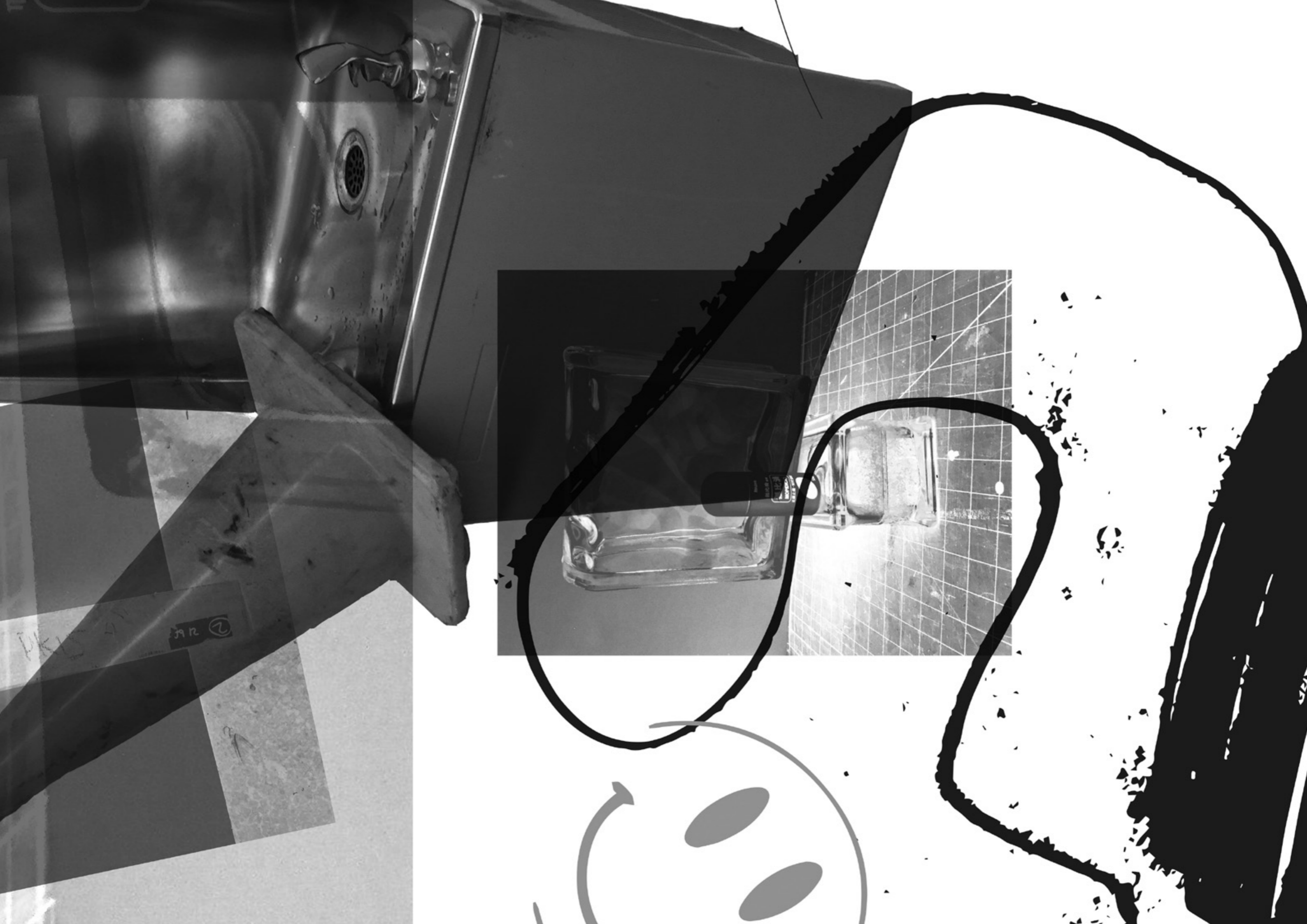
LAST ON, FIRST OFF

ist
Sympt.
tom

o
r
u
i
a
of

ON CREATIVITY

A little bit of deviance, however mild, can be a good thing. The best ideas always come to me when I'm supposed to be working on something else.



o a / a
r / a o

All England Lawn Tennis
and Croquet Club
Church Road
Wimbledon, London
SW19 5AE
U.K.

WIMBLEDON
CHAMPION



10k

THE NEW MUSEUM

THE MUSEUM FOR THE FUTURE

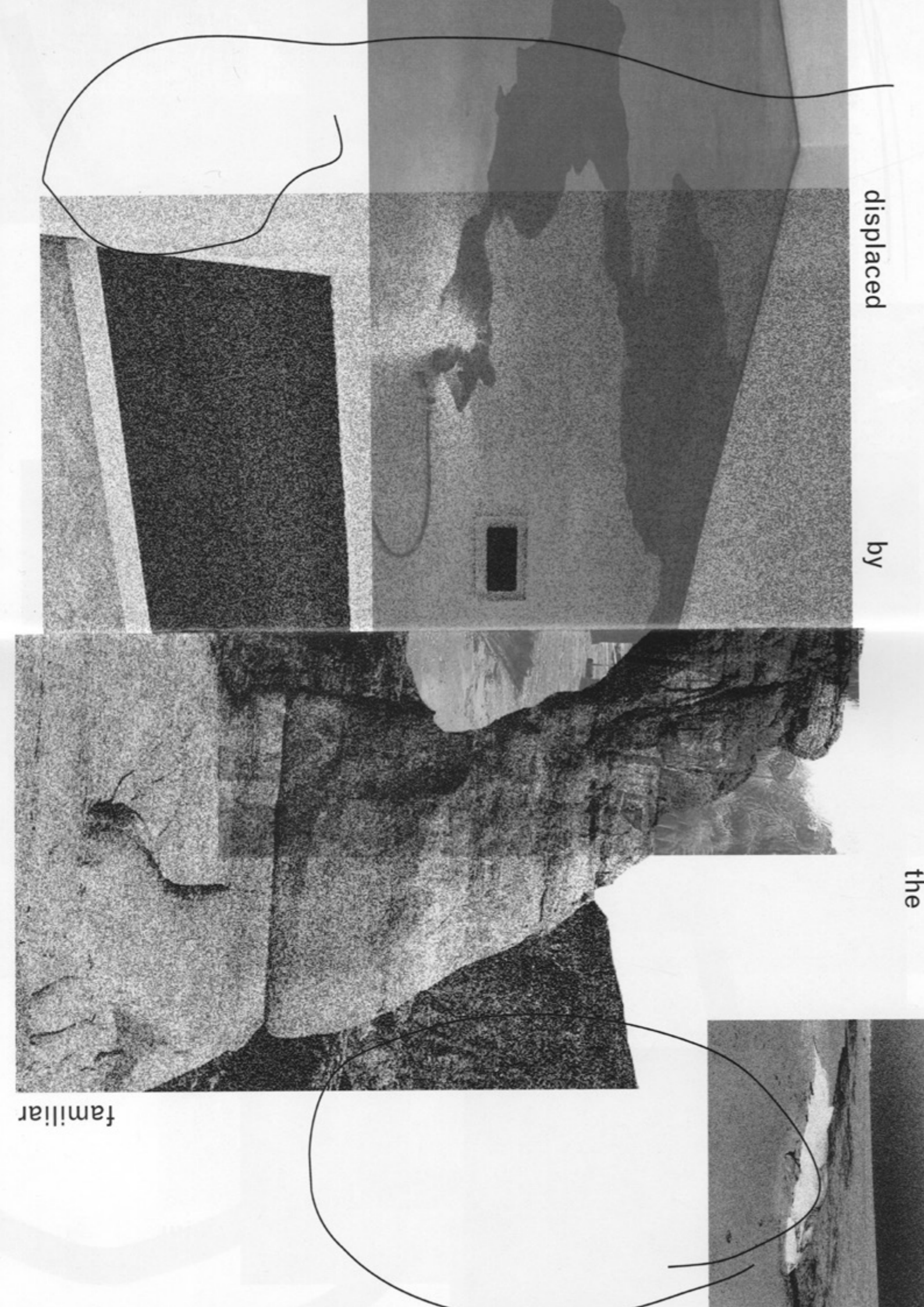
OBJECTS AND METHODS LECTURE SERIES

displaced

by

the

familiar



**THAT'S JUST
HOW I THINK**

December 2018

As designers, we operate with a seemingly infinite amount of space at our fingertips. We pull up Adobe Illustrator, launch a spotless new artboard, adjust the dimensions to our choosing. We duplicate it over and over again. But our ability to invoke endless amounts of digital surface at a whim clouds both our understanding of its nature and contributes to our misguided belief in our own control over the choices we make. How many of the decisions concerning the spaces in which we create have been made for us by software developers before we even begin? Where are the invisible limitations, the borders that we take for granted, the settings we accept as orthodoxy? Space is all around us. But space, ubiquitous as it may seem, is not just an empty container, not simply a product of individual will. Instead it is a product of the people who create it, a social construction that governs the ways that we use and experience it.

This argument—that space is, above all, socially produced—forms the cornerstone of French philosopher Henri Lefebvre’s 1974 book La Production de l’espace (The Production of Space). For Lefebvre, space is a highly subjective construction, whose features depend on the circumstances of the people in the time in which it is produced. Long ago, the first “absolute” spaces were selected for their natural features (such as a mountain top or cave), and ascribed religious or ceremonial meaning. During the Medieval and Renaissance periods this shifted to a “historical” space dictated by the rise of towns and cities, whose residents began to accumulate resources. As time went on and labor became less concretely tied to a community’s way of life, societies entered an increasingly “abstract” space that continues to our present day.¹

We still exist within this age of abstraction, and capitalism is its defining author. The dominant form of space, Lefebvre says, “that of centers of wealth and power, endeavors to mould the spaces it dominates, and it seeks, often

¹ Lefebvre, Henri, La Production de l’espace (The Production of Space). Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith. London: Basil Blackwell, 1991, pp. 48-49.

by violent means, to reduce the obstacles and resistance it encounters there.”² The abstract space around us is made up of glass and steel, grids and schedules, commodities and bureaucracies. However, Lefebvre is not without hope; he contends that the very nature of abstract space, distant as it is from actual lived human experience, carries certain contradictions that allow for ruptures across its fabric:

I shall call that new space “differential space,” because, inasmuch as abstract space tends toward homogeneity, towards the elimination of existing differences or peculiarities, a new space cannot be born (produced) unless it accentuates differences. It will also restore unity to what abstract space breaks up—to the functions, elements, and moments of social practice.³

Based on Lefebvre’s description we understand that this particular kind of space is not an addition, new creation, or even some sort of alternative setup apart from the dominant space. Instead, it is what Michael Leary-Owhin describes as “the product of dialectical contradictions within abstract space arising from what may be called the publicness of public space.”⁴

This publicness, I would argue, is an amalgam of ideas, of opportunities to reshape the conversation about what sort of public space its users desire. A public’s awareness of the contradictions in abstract space presents an opening: a chance to comment on, interrupt, or even subvert the status quo through the appropriation of historical tools of power: monumentality, language, and surface. I propose that the ability of artists and designers to utilize these tools to affect differential space is integral to evolving practices that bring individuals into community with one another in the face of a capitalist space that increasingly works to fracture those bonds.

RECLAIMING MONUMENTALITY

The history of public space goes back to the earliest times, when, as Lefebvre details, spaces were selected for their natural characteristics. These inherent features imbued the space with certain charismatic qualities that were subsequently co-opted by humans for religious or political influence. But this process (and its eventual evolution to the more abstracted space of capitalism) inevitably ended up stripping the land of the very qualities for which it was chosen.⁵ However, the emergence of differential space brings with it the possibility of a new kind of monumentality—one more sensitive to its environs, more appropriate for its site—that offers hope for a renewal.

One of the ways in which differential space can unfold is when an existing space is no longer used for its original, intended purpose. Upon the dissolution of this purpose, “which determines its forms, functions, and structures,” writes Lefebvre, “it may thus in a sense become vacant, and susceptible of being diverted, reappropriated and put to a purpose quite different from its initial use.”⁶ Again, this differential space is not an addition, but rather, a repurposing of existing space in order to change its use, and thus, its meaning.

As a result of economic or social factors such as rapid deindustrialization, any number of indeterminate urban spaces can present the possibility for temporary reappropriation. Writing in *Urban Studies*, Jacqueline Groth and Eric Corijn describe these new spaces as a kind of spontaneous alternative to the planned, governed spaces of the rest of the city. These informal spaces of abandonment and disuse have the ability to represent interests beyond those of the neoliberal capitalist societies around them—interests more rooted in community and less so in commodity:

...it is a space created and dominated by its users from the basis of its given

² Lefebvre, 49.

³ Lefebvre, 52.

⁴ Leary-Owhin, Michael. “From Public Space to Differential Space: Urban Citizens and Democracy.” *EURA Conference, City Lights: Cities and Citizen Within/Beyond/Notwithstanding the Crisis*. 16–18 June 2016. Polytechnic University of Turin, Italy, p. 6.

⁵ Lefebvre, 48.

⁶ Lefebvre, 167.

conditions. It remains largely unspecified as to its functional and economic rationality, thus allowing for a wide spectrum of use which is capable of integrating a high degree of diversity, and stays open for change...a kind of “urbanity” is produced in which the “lived” and the contradictions that constitute urban life are nurtured, their deliberate juxtaposition allowing for a more complex vision of development than is evident in their immediate urban surroundings or in the unidimensional planning proposals to which these areas are subject.⁷

It’s no surprise that artists are often the first to take advantage of these forgotten urban spaces. As opposed to commodified, highly-controlled offerings, these differential spaces allow a certain freedom for communities to organize and act as they see fit. A dilapidated industrial building becomes a canvas for street artists and muralists; an empty warehouse transforms into a setting for performance and installation; a former retail space becomes a meeting place for activists or the shared studio of an artist collective. In this way, through a repurposing of its public space the historical significance of a city might be recovered.

Running parallel to these urban transformations is a long tradition of site-specific artworks, particularly in the American west, that seek to restore the monumentality of natural spaces. Artists such as Robert Smithson, Michael Heizer, and Walter de Maria have used symbolic objects to create “representational spaces that overlay the physical space,” writes Mira Banay, “helping to obliterate the signs of the historical spatial practice that harmed the land.”⁸ Smithson, in the couple of years before his untimely death in 1973, proposed a series of reclamation projects that would transform industrial sites such as quarries and strip-mining pits. The largest of these was to take place at Utah’s Bingham



Robert Smithson, Bingham Copper Mining Pit—Utah/Reclamation Project, 1973
Photostat, plastic overlay, wax pencil
18 1/2 x 13 1/2 in.
Metropolitan Museum of Art

Copper Mining Pit—still the largest man-made excavation on the planet—and consisted of a giant, revolving mandala-like platform at the bottom of the canyon, from which viewers could take in the expanse. But perhaps the most defining characteristic of these “earthworks” in terms of creating differential space is their essential bond to place. While their physical remoteness is itself a strong rebuke of abstract urban space, their integral relationships with the sites on which they are built represent a more optimistic outlook—a championing of the kind of close ties to space that historically have enriched our human experiences.

AN ARCHITECTURE OF COMMUNICATION

Whereas certain artists have sought to reclaim or repurpose abstract spaces in order to restore some essence of what has been lost, others have chosen to use the very textual density of capitalism to their advantage, the equivalent of spatial judo. In their seminal 1972 critique of modernism, Learning From Las Vegas, Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour describe the architecture of Las Vegas as one of “styles and signs...antispatial; it is an architecture of communication over space; communication dominates space as an element in the architecture and in the landscape.”⁹ This abundance of language in the form of signs, so many that they literally overtake the space, is not just a feature of the Las Vegas strip; it is equally prevalent in places like airports, highways, supermarkets, and malls. Where transactions once relied exclusively on proximity—consumers saw, smelled, and felt merchandise before they made a purchase directly from the merchant who made it—texts become ever more necessary in these modern spaces through which people move quickly, performing increasingly abstract transactions with minimal person-to-person interaction.¹⁰ These spaces, defined

⁷ Groth, Jacqueline and Eric Corijn. “Reclaiming Urbanity: Indeterminate Spaces, Informal Actors and Urban Agenda Setting.” Urban Studies, Vol. 42, No. 3, March 2005, p. 521.

⁸ Banay, Mira. The Making of a New Differential Space: Permanent Site-Specific Art in America and the Dia Art Foundation (1974–2006). Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 2014, p. 238.

⁹ Venturi, Robert, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour. Learning From Las Vegas. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1972, p. 8.

¹⁰ Venturi, 9.

arts differential

more by texts than by bricks and mortar, are what anthropologist Marc Auge has termed “non-places.”¹¹

For several decades, artist Jenny Holzer has used electronic signs, billboards, televisions, news tickers, and theater marquees as a media to display her text-based work. These installations have continually adopted aspects of modern media and advertising—using LED lights to broadcast information that flashes or scrolls—within city streets, transportation terminals, and similar environments that fit Auge’s description of non-places. In 1982, as part of her ongoing series, Truisms, Holzer displayed a number of written statements on the new Spectacolor light board in New York’s Times Square. This sign—a monument of capitalism residing in its global epicenter—is a defining object in a space (Times Square) that in many ways defines the city as a whole. While this may be true, historian David Joselit believes that what truly distinguishes the sign is the “mobility of its information—always changing, constantly updated—and the banality of its content...the contemporary nature of the Spectacolor sign lies in its uneasy synthesis of place and non-place.”¹² By using the sign to broadcast messages that address matters of patriarchy, violence, and greed—stories too often operating below the surface of the mainstream media—she uses the medium of the controlling power in order to subvert it.

Holzer further experimented with notions of monumentality by embracing stone as a medium. Texts from Under a Rock (1986) and Laments (1988–89) are chiseled into benches and sarcophagi, respectively. “I thought I should put something on rock so that after Armageddon, someone could overturn the stone and read,” she tells Michael Auping in a 1992 interview. “Another reason was simply practical. I needed benches so people could sit and read my signs. Stone makes good inscribed benches.”¹³ Her decision to pair stone benches with LED



Jenny Holzer, Untitled (Abuse Of Power Comes As No Surprise), 1982
Spectacolor light board
480 x 240 in.
Photo: Lisa Kahane

tickers in Under a Rock resulted in spaces with the combined feelings of a “church, a space station, a Greyhound bus stop, and a high school auditorium.”¹⁴ The dual forces in the work—the pairing of electric and stone, prompts for sitting and walking—embody the sort of contradictions that distinguish differential space.

The text-based art of Stefan Bruggemann, like Holzer, situates language in spaces as a tool to highlight differences—in perception, location, and ultimately, meaning. Although many of his installations appear as standalone phrases crafted in cut black vinyl on white walls, the work does not exist in isolation; rather, it operates as a kind of layer atop the conversation of capitalism. The effect is akin to how Banay describes land artists overlaying representational space atop the damaged physical spaces of the industrial west.

Bruggemann’s work and its consistent referencing of abstract space creates a disconnect. Writing about the 2001 piece, (This is not supposed to be here), Nicolas de Oliveira says:

Bruggemann’s text is indeed referential, and therefore unstable, since it relies on constant relocation or insertion into other contexts. The place and time of its stable reading is indefinitely postponed. The provisional nature of both artwork and text lies at the heart of the artist’s activity.¹⁵

The text itself is a reference to a subversive act set inside the pristine white cube of the gallery. The self-awareness contained in the phrase, and acknowledgment of the tenuous nature of its own existence, creates a differential space for the viewer. Bruggemann conjures a similar effect with the neon piece, This must be the place (2003). The text grants significance to any space in which the work resides, creating a gap between the message and our original perception of the value of place.¹⁶

¹¹ Auge, Marc. Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity. London: Verso, 1995, p. 96.

¹² Joselit, David. “Voices, Bodies and Spaces: The Art of Jenny Holzer.” Jenny Holzer. London: Phaidon, 1998, p. 61.

¹³ Auping, Michael. Jenny Holzer. New York: Universe, 1992, p. 90.

¹⁴ Auping, 93.

¹⁵ De Oliveira, Nicolas. “I’m Saying Nothing and I’m Saying It.” Stefan Bruggemann, edited by Nicolas de Oliveira and Philippe Pirotte. Dijon: JRP Ringier, 2008, p. 10.

¹⁶ De Oliveira, 13.

THE PRODUCTION OF SURFACE

It seems shortsighted to attempt an examination of differential space without addressing the most defining space of our age, the world wide web. In the environment of the web, space becomes surface. Dutch designers Metahaven argue that “the multiplication of surface, formerly called information overload, is the new reality of design.”¹⁷ This density is not unlike the glitzy Las Vegas strip of Venturi, Brown, and Izenour, but with one important exception: whereas physical space is finite, the surface of the web can be reproduced and stretched endlessly.

The surfaces of the web are not only boundless, but offer a level of interaction that traditional surfaces (connected to materials and information) cannot match. These “active surfaces are inhabited by worlds in worlds,” Metahaven explains.¹⁸ But in order to be active, these worlds need users. “Active surface stimulates us to perform action, to accept the role—a user, administrator—which produces surface itself, which then, as in the cycle, becomes a self-perpetuating system,” adds fellow Dutch designer Tereza Ruller.¹⁹ These user-activated aspects of digital surfaces support Lefebvre’s assertion that space is socially produced.

The social space of the web is a delicate subject. This diverse collection of surfaces all networked together with each other enables a type of proximity and community-building that did not exist previously, one unconstrained by matters of geographic space. However, this network also inevitably creates new hegemonies (many people around the world are excluded by lack of access, for one thing) and holds the potential to isolate individuals from the kind of physical interactions with others that are important to our mental and social well-being. The contradictions it exposes in our understanding of space are myriad. In her 2002 book, *Cybering Democracy*, Diana Saco discusses ways in which the web challenges

these traditional notions:

...particular (seemingly nonphysical and, in a sense, antigeographic) spatial practices involved in computer networking have begun to complicate the notion of private property (especially intellectual property), to frustrate juridical assumptions relating one body to one identity or personality, and to violate the principle of exclusive location.²⁰

Not only does the web spawn new kinds of social practices, but it changes the relationship between our bodies and our lived experiences. On this, Lefebvre was strangely prescient. “Any revolutionary ‘project’ today,” he writes, “whether utopian or realistic, must, if it is to avoid hopeless banality, make the reappropriation of the body, in association with the reappropriation of space, into a non-negotiable part of its agenda.”²¹

A NEW KIND OF PRACTICE

We live in a time in which the tools for creating graphic design are more available than ever, the public’s awareness of design is higher than ever, and yet, our work seems increasingly commodified and devalued. Upon examining artistic precedents for using monumentality, language, and surface to generate differential spaces, an important question arises. What does a “differential” design practice look like in this current age of abstract capitalism? And are there greater possibilities for thinking about the space that we take as designers, both with our work and our practices at large? Lefebvre touches on this when he writes:

In connection with abstract space, a space which is also instrumental (i.e., manipulated by all kinds of “authorities” of which it is the locus and milieu), a question arises whose full import will become apparent only



Stefan Bruggemann, *(This is Not Supposed to Be Here)*, 2001
Black vinyl lettering
Photo: Dominique Uldry

¹⁷ Metahaven, *White Night Before a Manifesto*, Eindhoven: Onomatopoeie, 2008, p. 2.

¹⁸ Metahaven, 4.

¹⁹ Ruller, Tereza. “Action to Surface.” <https://www.therodina.com/actiontosurface>, 2015.

²⁰ Saco, Diana. *Cybering Democracy: Public Space and the Internet*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002, p. 7.

²¹ Lefebvre, 166-167.

later. It concerns the silence of the “users” of this space. Why do they allow themselves to be manipulated in ways so damaging to their spaces and their daily life without embarking on massive revolts?²²

I see a few potential strategies for addressing this. The first follows in the model laid out by Metahaven, who have developed new visual methodologies that embrace the increasingly fractured social and technological existence in which we find ourselves. This decentralized visual approach echoes the multitude of unique surfaces and users, incorporating the aesthetics of corporations and governments in order to create subversive and critical content. The second follows in the tradition of artists’ collectives and other practices that have historically sought to create a democratized space of community within the larger industry. While the internet no doubt offers the ability to build digital networks with shared interests and ethics independent of geographic limitations, I believe there is also a great potential to create differential space within a hyper-localized practice. This studio model places an emphasis on sharing resources, offers space for gathering, discussion, and shared appreciation, and establishes physical roots in a specific locality.

The third, and perhaps more overarching, strategy is for designers to remain sensitive to making work that shows care and generosity toward its audience. Maybe that goes without saying, but too often design in the capitalist sphere relies on tropes and irony, finds itself dumbed down to the lowest common denominator. The most basic tenant of a differential practice might be for the designer to effort to create tools and resources that manage to feel personal and authentic while also thoughtfully engaging a larger public. Through the establishment of a differential practice, the lived experience of design might go beyond the page or

screen, product or balance sheet, and manifest itself through relationships and communities. Whether that change presents itself aesthetically, organizationally, or both, the future demands that we re-examine our approach if we are to change the kind of spaces in which we will work and reside. If space is, as Lefebvre claims, socially produced, then we must actively participate in designing spaces that seek to unite, advocate for, and promote the humanity of, their users.

²² Lefebvre, 51.

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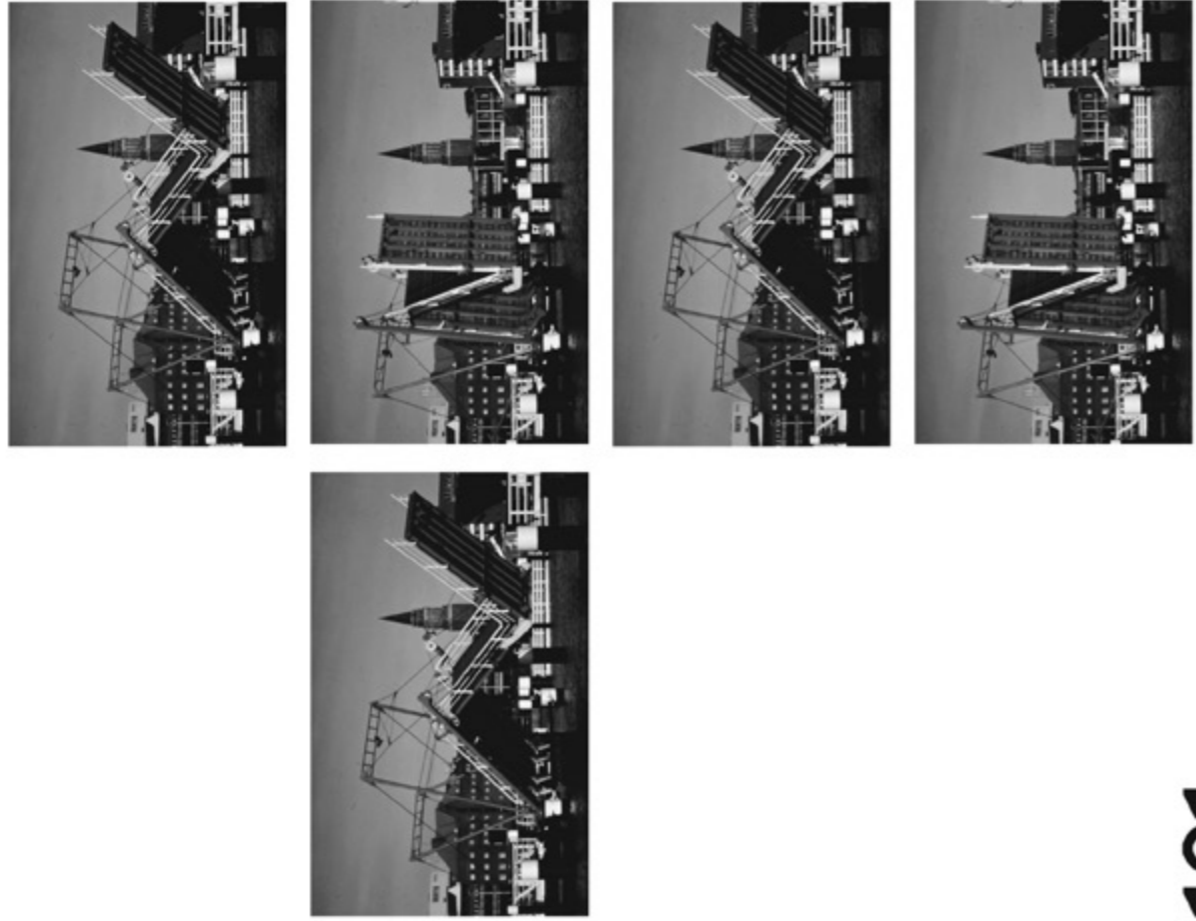
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101



100

At any given point in time an infinite number of stories stay hidden in the picture



Invasion Patterns

Entropic Studies in Richmond, Virginia



The

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wings of a

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the curved

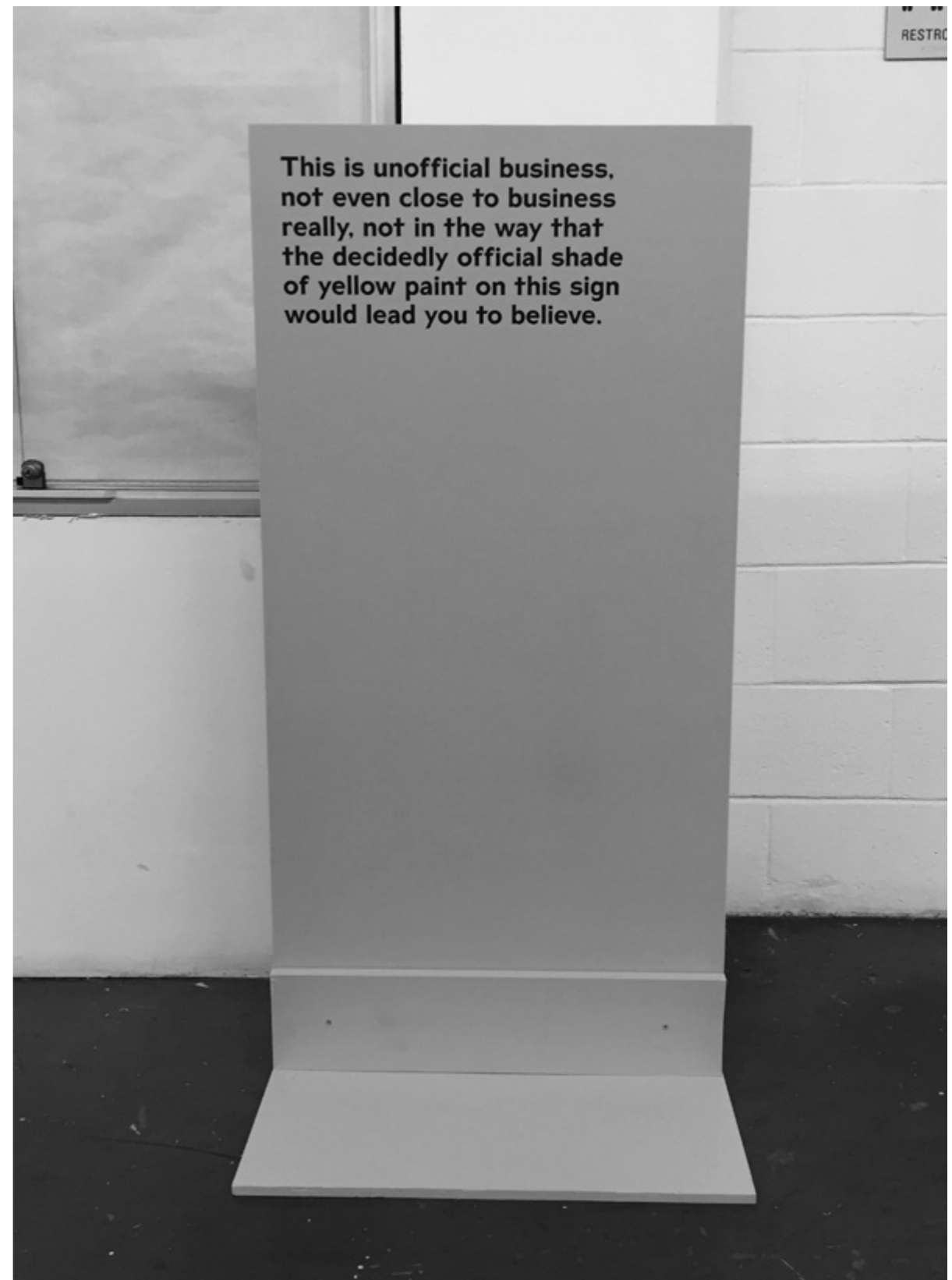
trunks of two

palms

THE ART OF THE JOKE

There are several parallels between the way I think about my practice and the way I hear stand-up comedians describe their craft. Both involve a lot of writing, a lot of circling around the initial spark of an idea. This is followed by a process of editing in which they're slowly refining the thing; challenging the thinking; seeing which elements they can push further, which they can cut, which combinations of words fall tin-eared and which ring like a bell. And just like every great piece of design, every great joke contains a point of view, an invitation to look at the world in a particular way. A little slice of the universal revealed through the personal.

**IF YOU PLAY
WITH IT TOO MUCH,
IT MIGHT RIP**



A POSTER IS ER A POST IS ER A POST IS ER A SUMM ER AT VCU

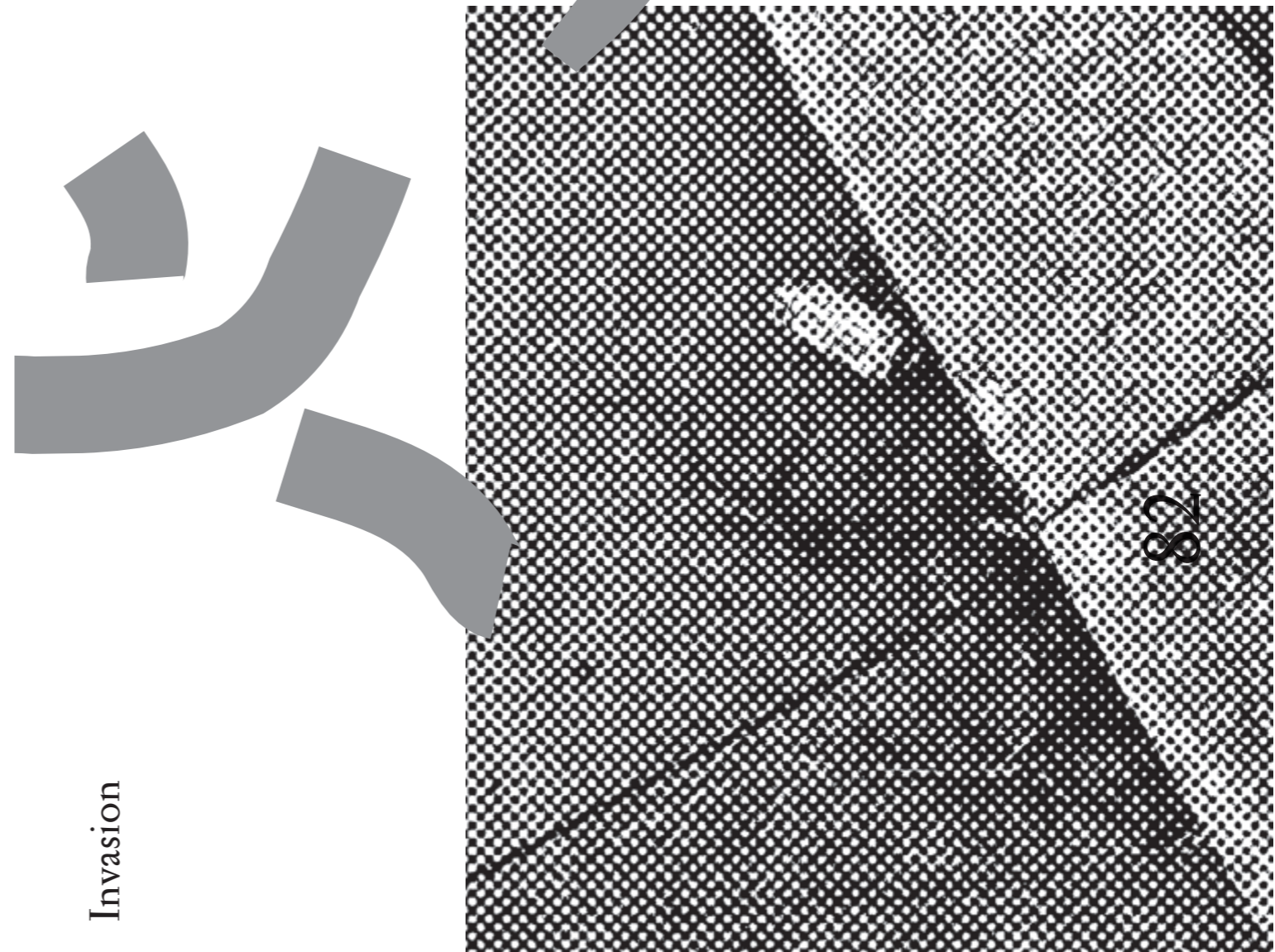
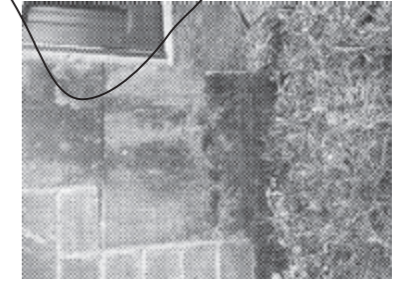
GDES 391-002
Poster Design
w/ Brooks
Heintzelman

3 Credits/3 Weeks
May 21 to June 8
M/T/W/R/F 9am-12pm
Course Code: 38287
Open to All Majors

This course explores the poster as a unique format for communication, problem solving, and self-expression. We will study the history of both the medium and its most prominent and innovative practitioners as a way to inform our understanding of the contemporary practice of poster design. Over the length of the course, students will work to develop a visual acuity and facility with typography and image. Through a process of making and

critique, we will apply original research to a series of individual and group assignments, both hands-on and digital. While experimenting with material, composition, image, and language, we will seek to answer questions about the present and future of the poster as a medium. How might we push it in new directions? How do we reach new audiences? How can we use a poster to question, challenge, engage, or better our environment?

Patterns



Invasion



ELEGY FOR A ROOM

I once described to a group of my peers how I tend to get nostalgic upon leaving a room for the last time. Even fleeting or anonymous domiciles, like the 300-square-foot nonsmoking double queen at a Hampton Inn I've only slept in for a single night, have the power to evoke this feeling in me. Not to mention dorm rooms, apartments, and homes. I watch a space I once inhabited disappear through the sliver of a closing door and think to myself, with a small twinge of loss, that I will never set foot in this particular place again. Apparently I was the only one who felt this way.



THE UN-EMPLOYABLES

128,

64,

32,

16,

TOURE JDD OPEN

2018 VCUarts
MFA Open House
Saturday, November 10

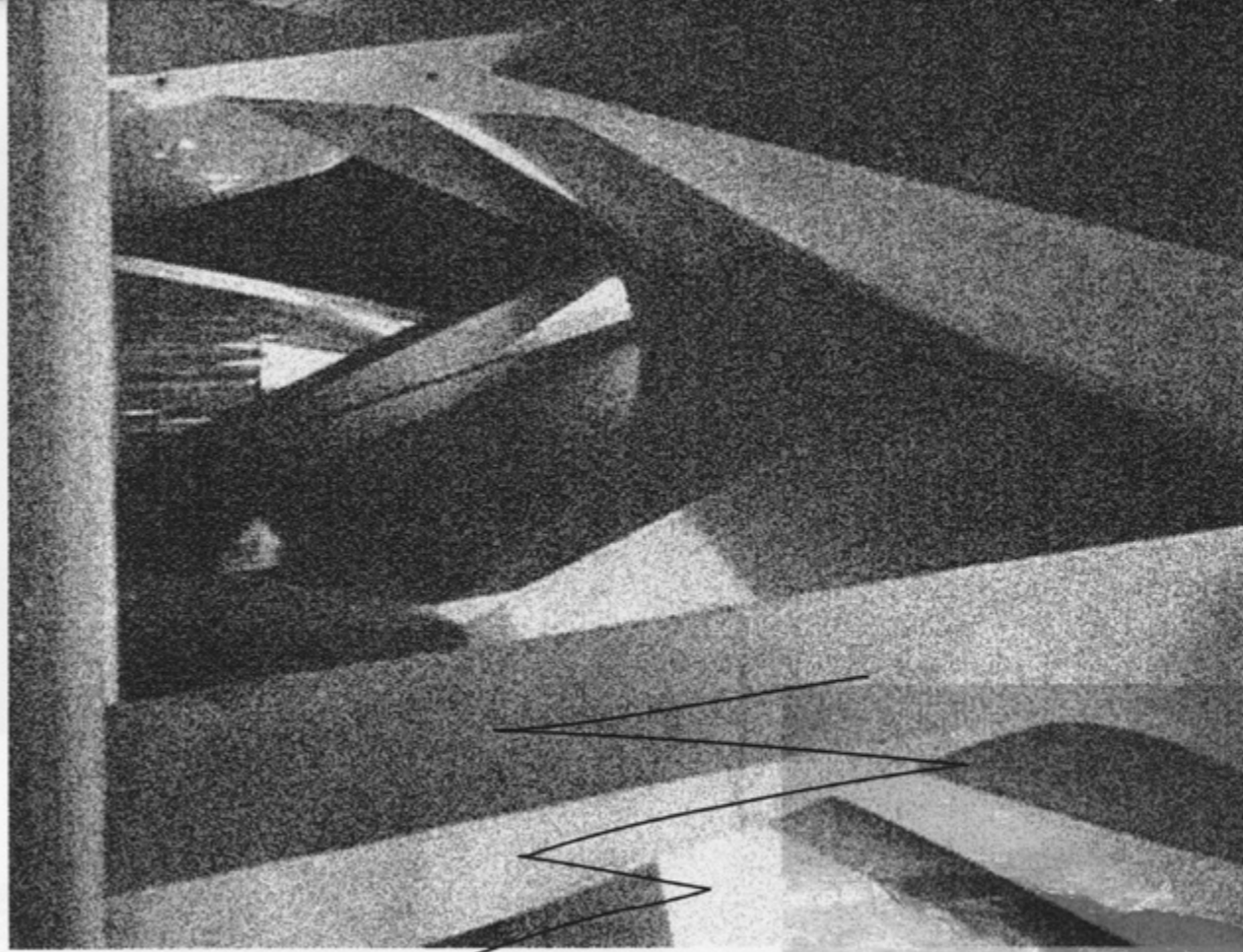
RSVP
804.828.1511
sculpture@vcu.edu

Application Deadline
January 15

11.10

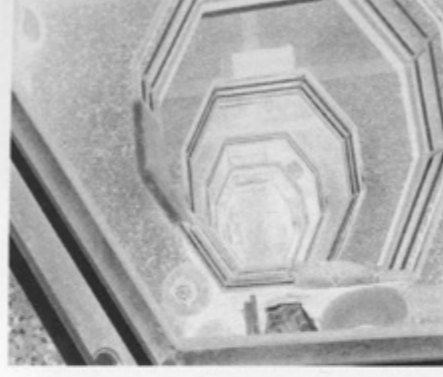
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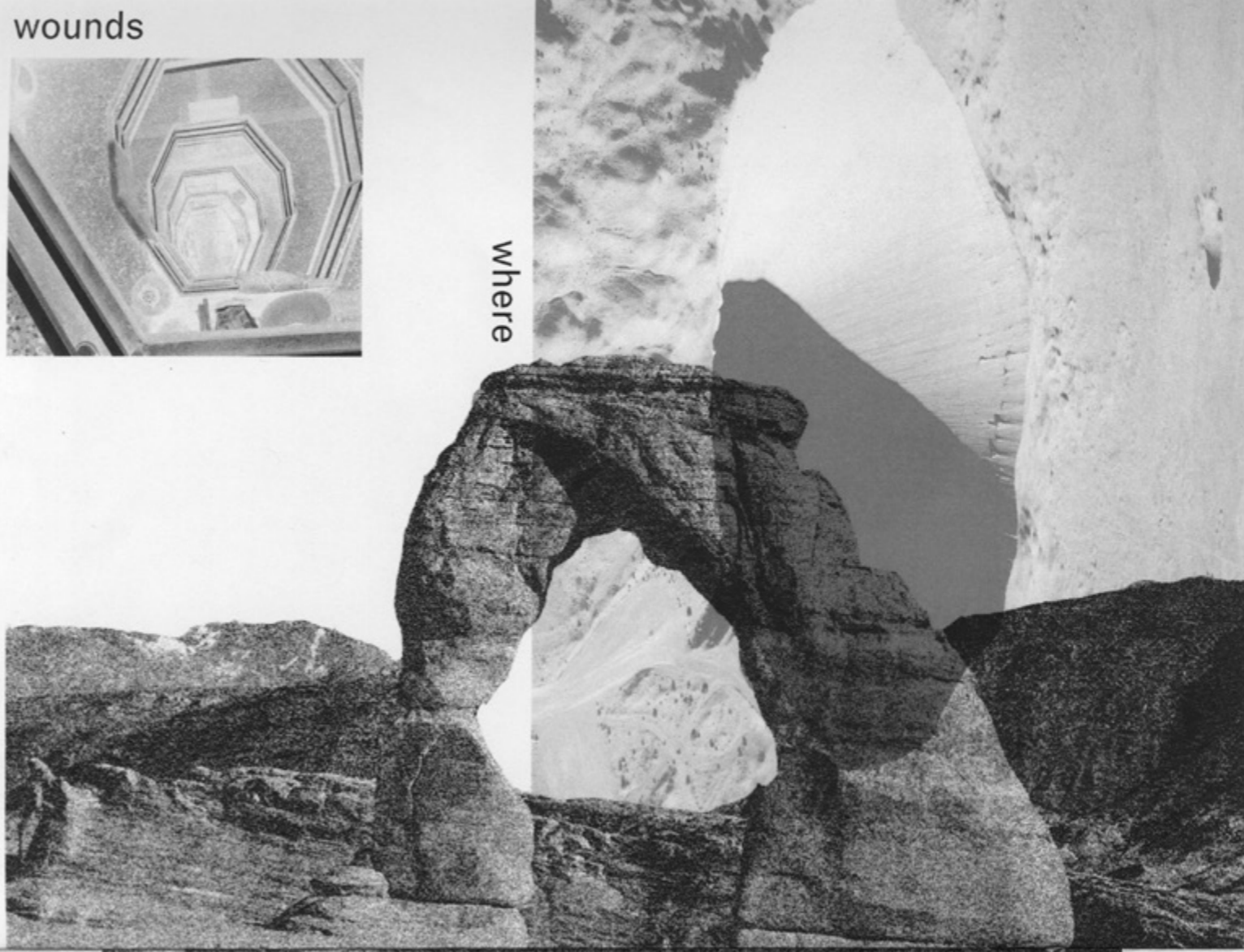


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ONE SECRET THING

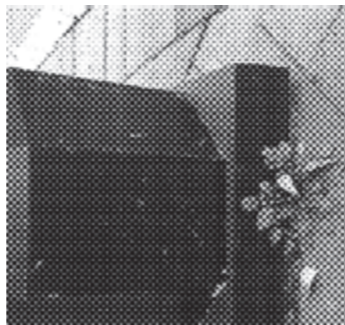
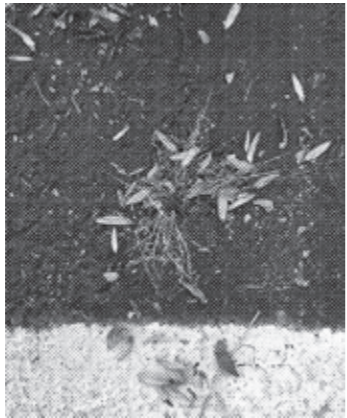
A true story: Michael Jordan wore the same pair of baby-blue practice shorts from his college days at the University of North Carolina under his uniform in every game he ever played during his NBA career. They were his good-luck charm. I like the idea of something only you know is there. I once read that Navajo weavers create small imperfections along the borders of the rugs they sew. They believe that only God is perfect, and that it is important to leave some evidence of imperfection in the work in order that it might be more human.

An offshoot of this idea came up during a studio visit with designer Mark Owens. At the time I was struggling with the problem of packing too much stuff into everything I was making, whether visually or conceptually. He brought up the notion of the “ragged edge”—that is, leaving some opening or unfinished quality in the work in order that the audience might be able to complete it for themselves. Let the imperfections be the charm that people describe in your work, the patina of personality, the welcoming embrace.

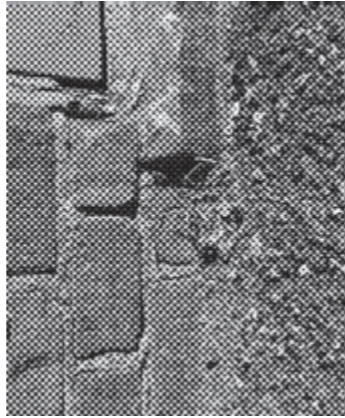
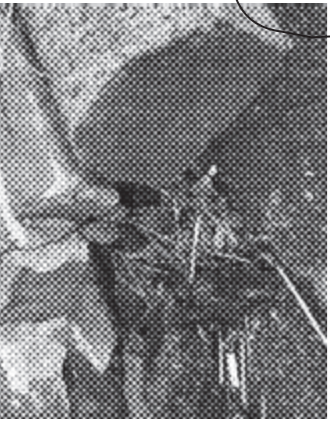


IT'S MILLER TIME

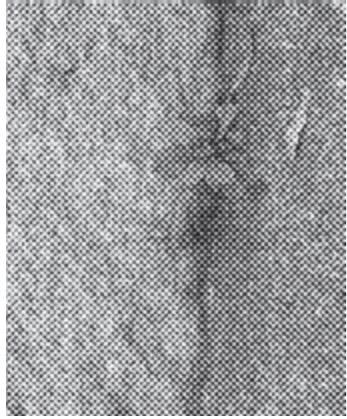
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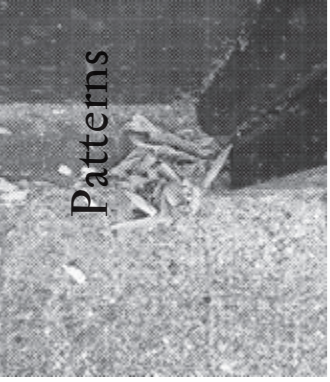
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Patterns

RACKET

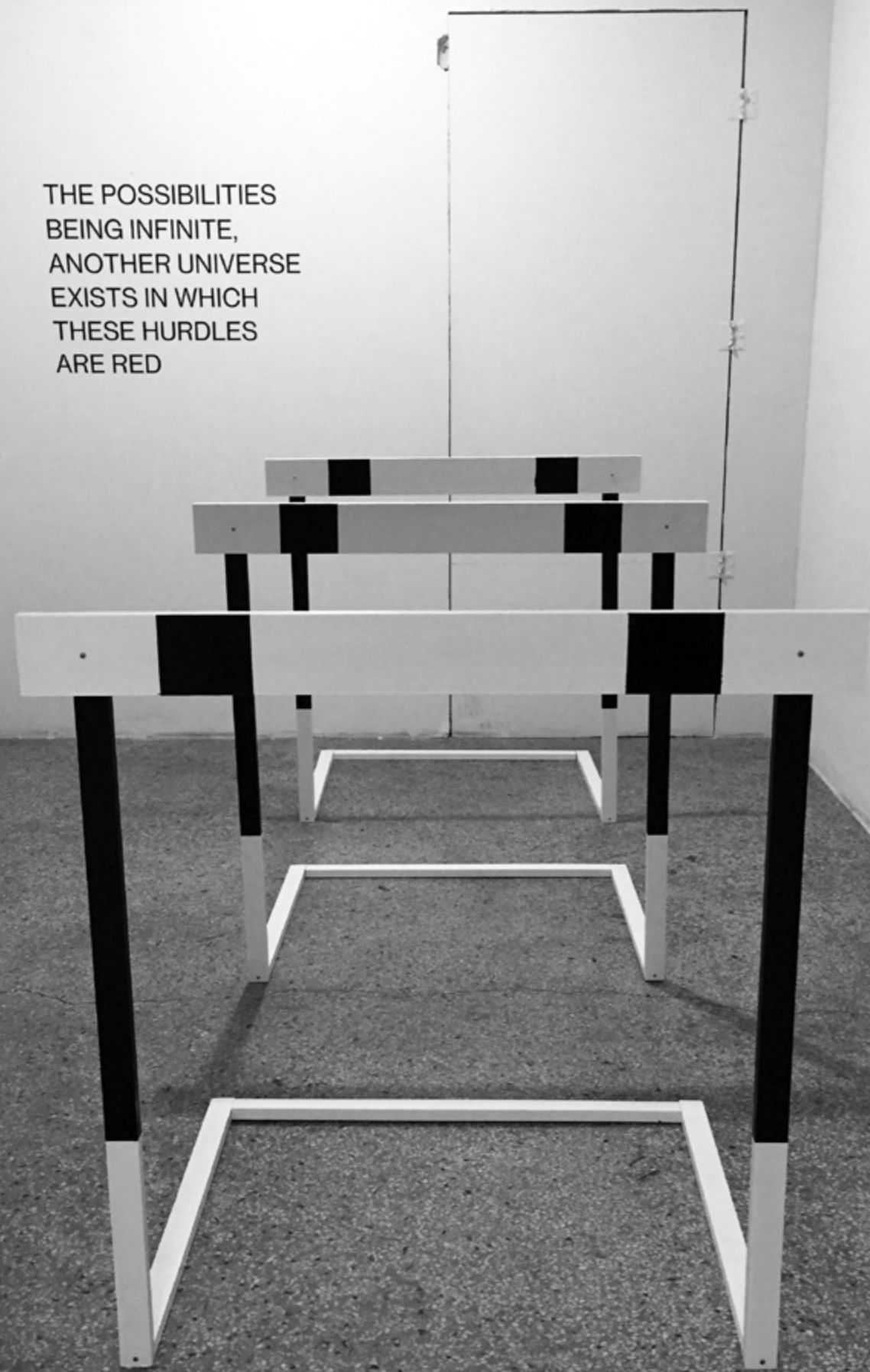
THE DAY IS JUST
ANOTHER SURFACE

A FEW THOUGHTS ABOUT TIME

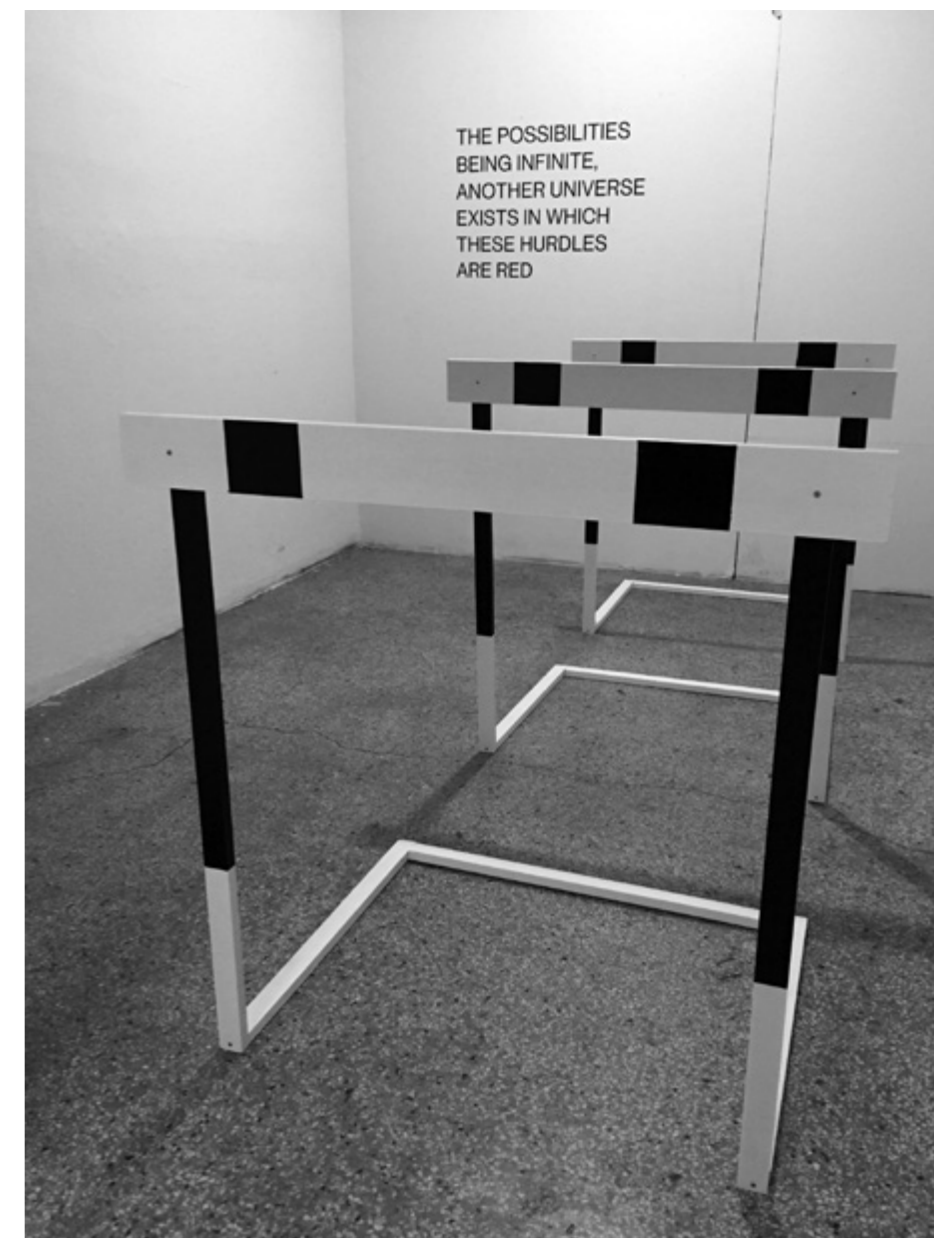
I spend a lot of waking life thinking about time. I think about my age. I think about my obligations as a parent and a husband, how the hours of my day must be prioritized and allocated. I think about the curious way in which time appears to move more quickly the older I get. I think about how it always seems like there's not enough of it. Yet, I spend an inordinate amount of the available time I do have looking forward and backward.

The more that I reflect on my body of work from the past two years, the more I return to the possibility that much of it is really just my own process of trying to come to terms with time. I've adjusted some of the methods by which I work in order to accommodate the time I do have, which has led to an increasing number of small projects and experiments that don't involve such an incredible length of time to produce. As designers, we're often granted an extremely small duration in which to connect with an audience. My recent work attempts to slow things down, make those viewers linger. To create small moments of reflection, of question, of pause. A double-take, even.

THE POSSIBILITIES
BEING INFINITE,
ANOTHER UNIVERSE
EXISTS IN WHICH
THESE HURDLES
ARE RED



THE POSSIBILITIES
BEING INFINITE,
ANOTHER UNIVERSE
EXISTS IN WHICH
THESE HURDLES
ARE RED



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Florida

staghorn fern

EUCALYPTUS

Oceanfront Property

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surfer

MANGROVES

conch fritter

Indian River Lagoon

SCUBA SUITS

Drop top barrel hop.
Hot lies, french fries,
and bolo ties. Party
on, Wayne! Party on,
Garth! Kazoos and
jambaroos. Go on—
make some ruckus.
The gang's all here;
no stopping us now.

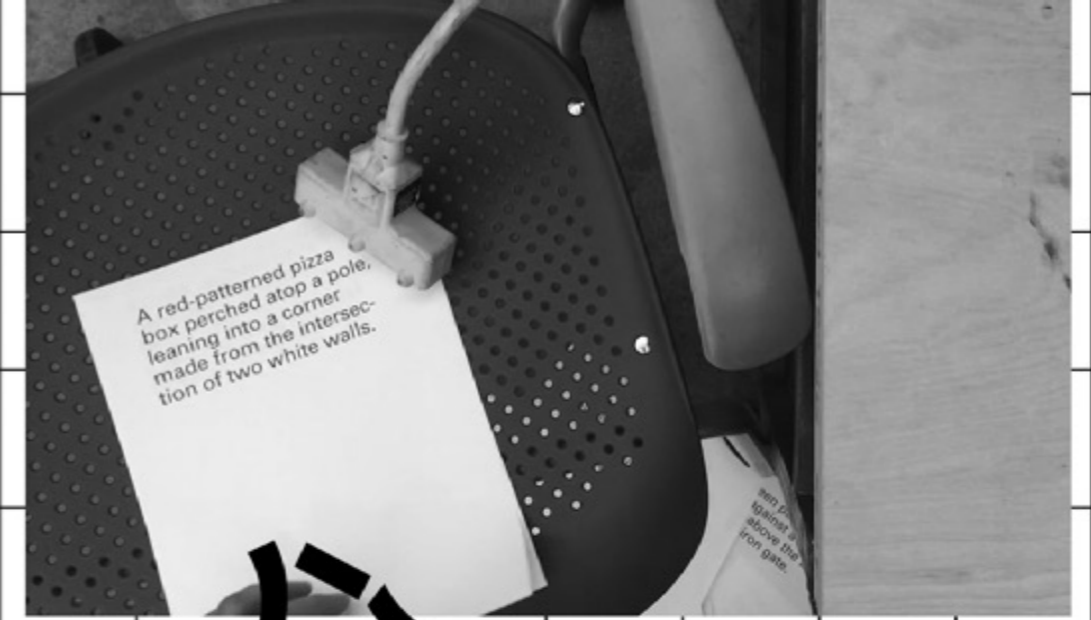
You're listening to
one-oh-three-seven
eff em, The Breeze.
Summer is for easy
listening. "Hey, hi...
first time, long time.
Can I ask just one
question? No, wait,
don't hang up. Let
me turn my radio
down."

B

At Last!


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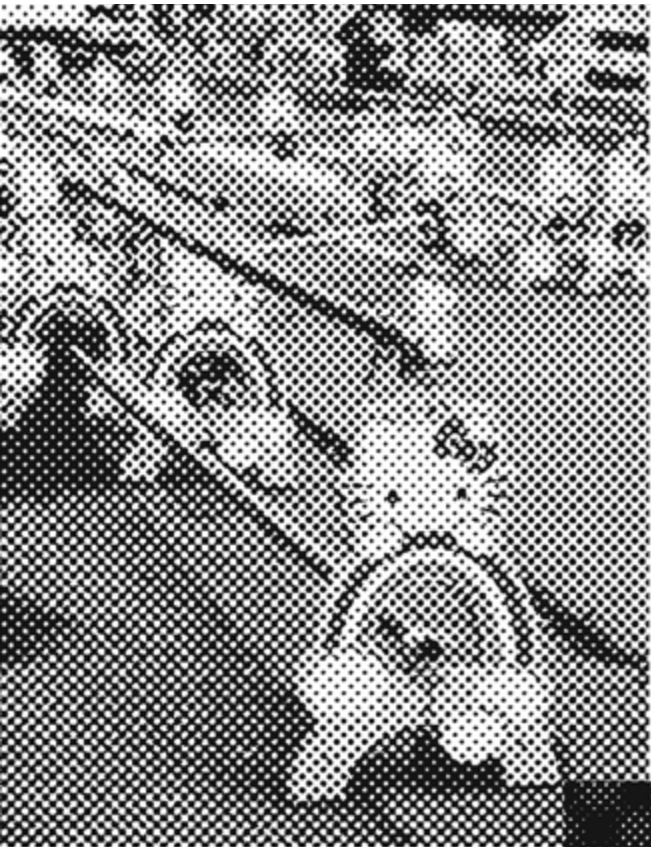
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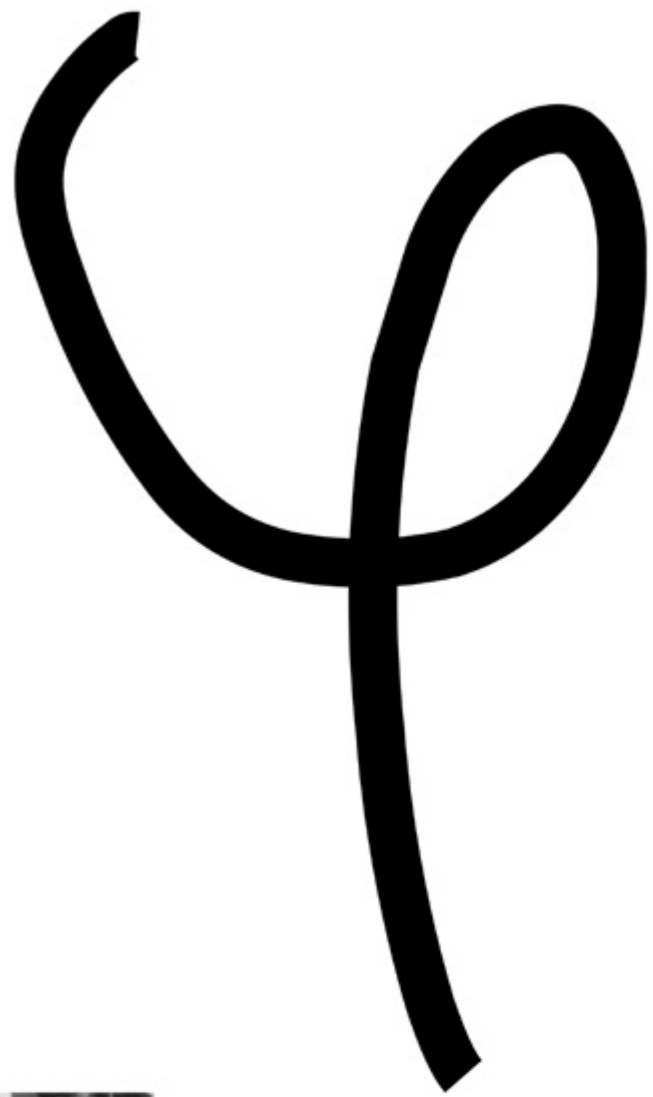
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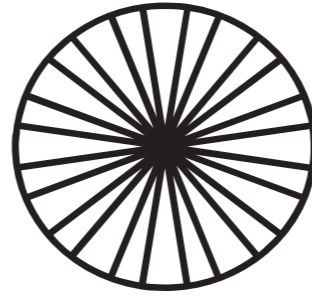


SUGGESTIONS FOR CREATING AN INTERVENTION

1. An inventory is recommended before commencing. Check your left hand for evidence of the following:
 - (1) Shard of bark, dark brown in color, 5 cm in length;
 - (1) Leaf, green to yellow in color, 2.5 cm in length;
 - (1) Tangle of string, various colors, 7 cm in length;
 - (1) Stone, dark gray in color, 1 cm in circumference;
 - (1) Leaf, green to yellow in color, 6 cm in length.
2. With your right hand, and from a height of exactly 30 cm, drop each object one by one in the order listed above onto the surface of a single sheet of white Elmers brand foam board, exactly 50 cm x 76 cm with a thickness of 0.5 cm.
3. If you have followed the above steps, the objects should now be resting in their preferred locations: the shard of bark situated 16 cm above and 2 cm to the right of the smaller leaf, which resides 4 cm above and 6 cm to the left of the tangle of string, which sits 2 cm above and 3 cm to the right of the larger leaf, which is located 0.5 cm above and 19 cm to the left of the stone.



I will always remember the ceramic dog atop my father's dresser, a glossy golden brown and smiling from head to tail. So much so that when I happened across one at a thrift store, years after leaving home, I purchased it without a thought. My own is smaller, as I am to my father, and when I deposit the change from my pocket or loop my watch around the porcelain tail each evening, I am reminded of him.



Readymade

I.....6
Monumentality and
the Olympic Ghost

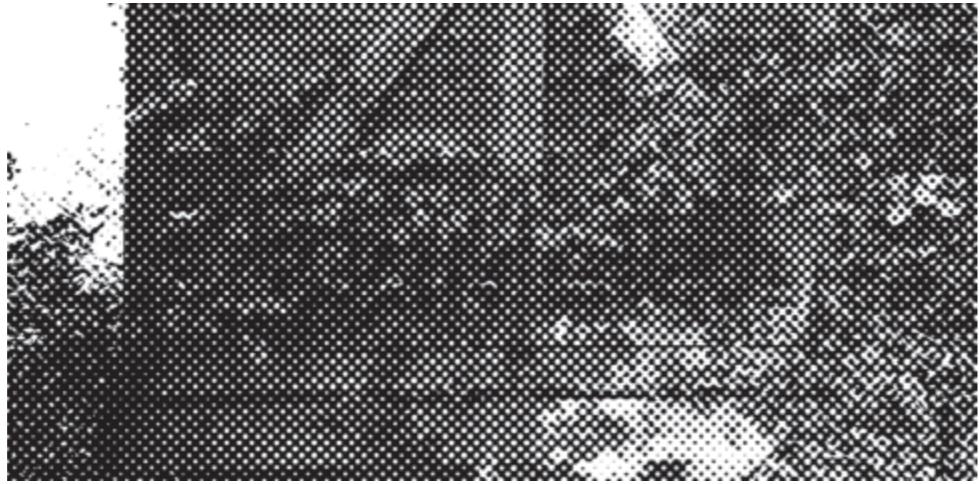
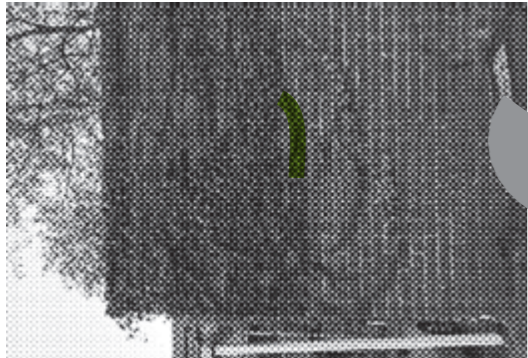
II.....22
The Nature of
Entropy

III.....44
At the Core of
Meaning

IV.....58
Index

Reclamation





Handwritten signature

152

153

THE "RAMINATOR"

The
page of
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19

19

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(,.;:… —)“?!”/’

City of Brotherly Love
STATUESQUE

Did you see the Liberty Bell?

Kennett Square
mushroom festival

Pennsylvania

Articles of Confederation

ROUTE 76

Borough of Langhorne

Shoo-fly Pie

1958

Gubernatorial Election
(PA)

PENNSYLVANIA'S branches of the two major parties entered the election in disparate states. Democrats were riding their largest wave of electoral success in nearly a century and quickly coalesced behind David L. Lawrence, the Mayor of Pittsburgh who had gained national fame as a reformer for his massive urban renewal projects earlier in the decade, but who retained a powerful traditional political machine. Although Lawrence worried that his age (he was 69 at the time of the campaign) and his pious Catholic faith may prove problematic, he was highly touted by party leaders. He easily defeated Lieutenant Governor Roy Furman in the primary after Governor Leader described Furman as unfit for higher office.

Republicans, conversely, were just exiting a time in which their organization had gone through both electoral and financial disarray. The party had brought in McGonigle, a Reading businessman who had transformed Bachman Bakeries into the world's largest pretzel maker, to clean up their monetary problem. Although McGonigle had no intention of running for public office, his bookkeeping successes led to many party bosses viewing him as a viable dark horse candidate.

Lawrence entered the race as the clear favorite and ran on a platform emphasizing how the successes he had achieved in Pittsburgh, such as with environmentalism, economic development, race relations, and bureaucratic reform, could be applied to state government. He ran a generally quiet and issues-based campaign and grew frustrated with what he perceived as growing reactionary behavior from the opposing party. McGonigle's campaign was more energized and continuously attacked Lawrence both for representing an archaic machine style of politics and for his position that the possibility of instituting a state income tax deserved study.

Despite political winds that greatly favored Democrats in the national arena, the party's successes in the state were marginal. Lawrence's campaign was never able to invigorate the base of urban voters and unionized workers in the manner that McGonigle did with key Republicans. A combination of Lawrence's generally liberal viewpoints, powerful Appalachian anti-Catholicism and contempt for his position as leader of a strong political machine undercut support in one of the greatest areas of Democratic support: the outlying industrial counties surrounding Pittsburgh's Allegheny County. Despite a generally disappointing vote total, Lawrence was able to hang on to his frontrunner position to win the election.

CHINO AMOBI
 JUNYUN CHEN
 BROOKS HEINTZELMAN
 MINJEE JEON
 IVY LI
 TARA PAIROJ-BORIBOON
 STEPHEN PARKS
 MICHELLE PETEREIN
 DREW SISK
 TAYLOR STEWART
 & EVE WHITE




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Construction

04.20.18

Branch Museum of Architecture & Design 201 Monument Ave. Richmond, VA

A GOOD RULE OF THUMB

Just assume it will take twice as long as you think it will.

THERE IS NO
PLACE THAT



DOES NOT
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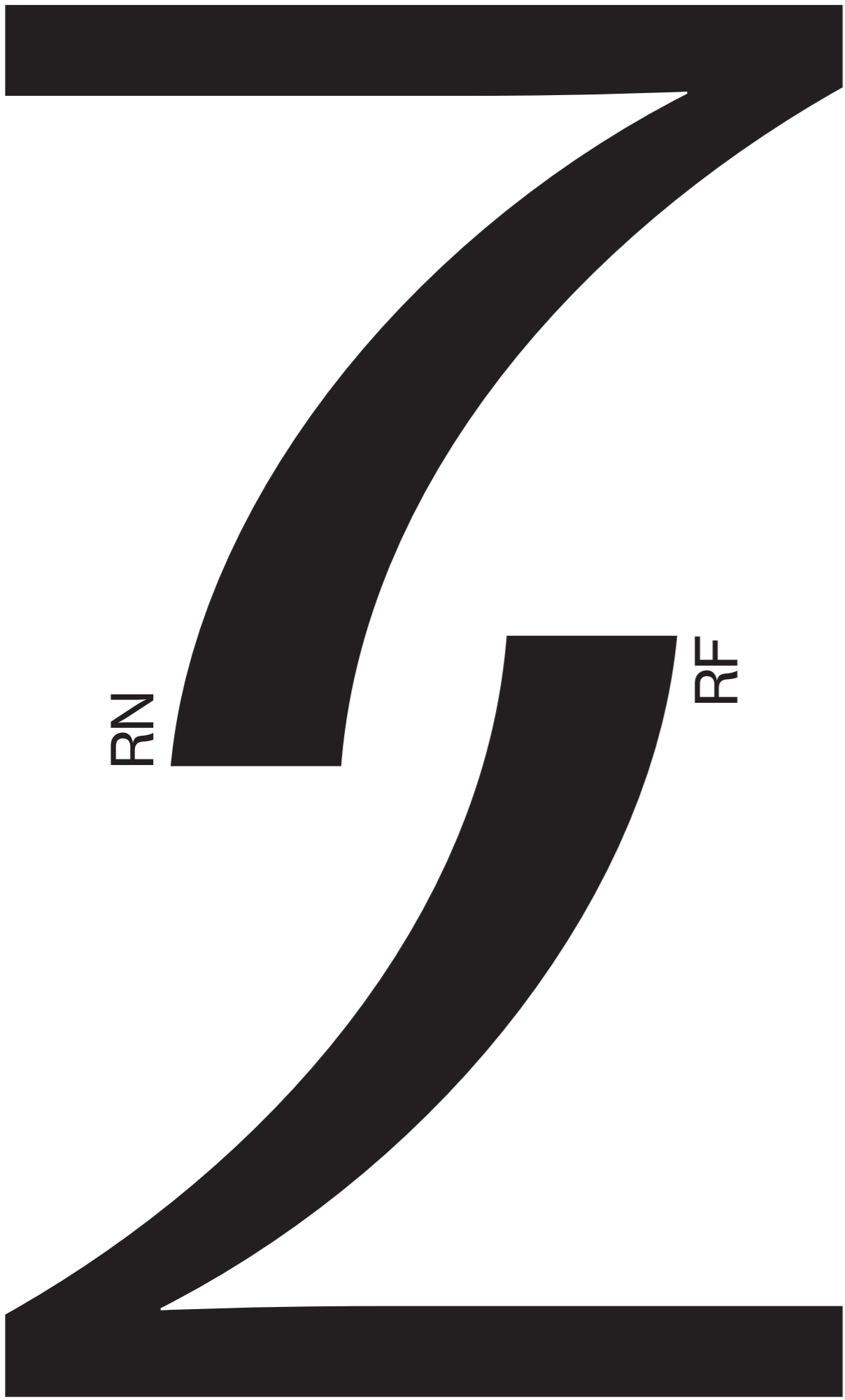
cherry ether
caitlin



The Anderson presents
Caitlin Cherry: Etherpaint

September 7–October 26
2018

Opening Reception September 7 6–9 P.M.
907 ^{1/2} West Franklin Street Richmond, VA



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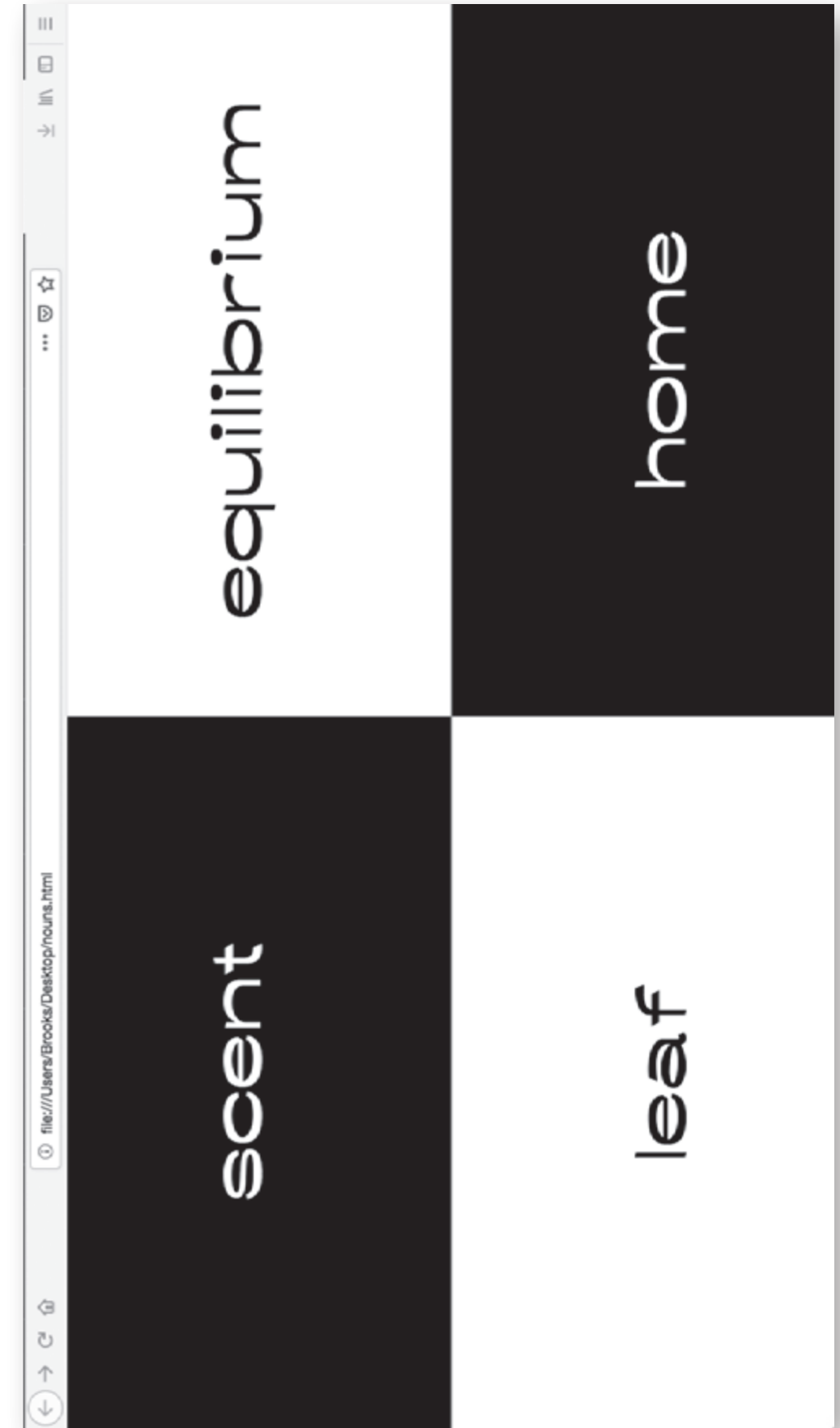


Studio

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  ['equilibrium'],
  ['era'],
  ['evening'],
  ['evidence'],
  ['father'],
  ['fingerprint'],

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A graphic design for an art show. The background is black with a white grid pattern. In the upper right, there is a sculpture of a toilet with a traffic cone on top. To the left of the toilet are several white geometric shapes: a circle, a square, and a triangle, some of which are fragmented or broken. A thick white diagonal line runs from the bottom left towards the top right. In the bottom left corner, there is a small inset photograph of a television set on a table with a spray can and other objects. At the bottom, the text "IN STUD" is written in large, bold, white letters, and "12.05.17" is written in a similar style to its right. In the top right corner, there is a small vertical caption: "(Fig. 2663/2680, Caution Fountain/Reflection Show)".

Sixty-Second
Sculpture
at VCUarts
Pollak Building
Room 313
325 N. Harrison St.

IN STUD
12.05.17

(Fig. 2663/2680, Caution Fountain/Reflection Show)



point of the work. Since relatively few exhibition spaces can accommodate such an expansive display, the zipped sheets frequently wrap around several gallery walls (pausing only at corners and doorways), enveloping the viewer in a sweep of quintessential Rauschenbergian imagery, rhythmically interrupted by silver-colored stripes of metallic teeth at regular intervals. The success, which is to say, the phenomenological impact (and dare one add, sheer beauty?) of *Hiccups* therefore hovers in the tension between these two modes of viewing: the pleasurable scopic consumption of a vista of colors and textures from across the gallery, alternated with immersion in a level of subtle detail discernible only through close examination of both the panels and the zippers that unite them, devices which—at least metaphorically—invite touch and manipulation.

Beyond its simultaneous visual and haptic appeal, *Hiccups* prompts a number of questions about its status as an archive and its role within a broader historical context of artistic strategies whose processes involve collecting large amounts of information (cultural details, images, found materials, etc.). In associating and arranging such materials in new ways, the work underscores a modern cultural sensibility that is structured by images, commercial or otherwise. To this end, Rauschenberg's radical blending of diverse source imagery finds morphological precedent in projects whose sprawling visual vocabularies and expansive structures both embody and radically subvert the modernist archive³—most notably Aby Warburg's (1866–1929) *Mnemosyne-Atlas* and Walter Benjamin's (1892–1940) *Passagen-Werk* (The Arcades Project). These two projects, both dating to the 1920s and central to our understanding of how the historical avant-garde appropriated and reused imagery, rightly have come to shape critical discussion of the ways in which archival

³See Matthew Rampley, "The Remembrance of Things Past: On Aby M. Warburg and Walter Benjamin (Wiesbaden: 2008), 58. Warburg also increased the size of various images (e.g., those of small coins and reliefs) to consider their detail in relation to far larger objects (e.g., sculptural reliefs on cathedrals).

⁴For more on the *Passagen-Werk* see Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991). For more on Warburg's understanding of the *Atlas* (and Benjamin's relationship to Warburg), see Matthew Rampley's excellent presentation "Benjamin's Influence of Walter Benjamin on Aby Warburg" (lecture presented at the Warburg, Benjamin and Kulturwissenschaft Conference, Warburg Institute, University of London School of Advanced Study, June 14–15, 2012), accessed May 20, 2013, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X719QWghq14>.

⁵For more on this construct see Hal Foster, "An Archival Impulse," October 3–22, Rauschenberg's strategies may also be understood through the critical examinations of archival practices outlined in two other texts, both of which variously address modernist, postmodernist, and contemporary artistic interventions into (and represen-

tations of) archive structures. See Rosalind Krauss, "Perpetual Inventory," in Robert Rauschenberg: *A Retrospective*, ed. Walter Hopps and Susan Davidson (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1997), 206–23; and Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, "Gerhard Richter's Atlas: The Anomic Archive," October 88 (Spring 1999): 117–45.

practices have informed artistic strategies throughout the twentieth century. It is important to understand how Rauschenberg's project resembles them, but ultimately moves beyond their logic.

Constructed by the German art historian in the 1920s but never completed, Warburg's *Mnemosyne-Atlas* consisted of numerous large wooden panels, each swathed in black fabric and layered with dozens of photographs. At the time of Warburg's death in 1929, the work had expanded to include eighty-two panels, each covered in encyclopedic visual studies ranging from juxtaposed illustrations of antiquity and Renaissance art forms to twentieth-century print advertisements; from explorations of natural and geometric patterns (e.g., cosmological charts and chessboards) to arrays of zeppelins shot at oblique angles, maps of Europe, and postage stamps. Warburg, while acknowledging the nineteenth-century precedent of atlas-like typological displays, positioned his project in opposition to such systematic and overdetermined studies. Key to reading the significance of this assembly—and its relationship to Rauschenberg's *Hiccups*—is knowing that while each single image was important in Warburg's consideration, it was the conductive medium of the black fabric that motivated his tireless reconfiguration of those pictures. The material substratum of the *Mnemosyne-Atlas*, a darkness connecting diverse visual content, provided fertile ground for the association of form, gesture, pattern, depth, and compositional balance across conventionally understood boundaries of period, style, or even scale—what Warburg termed an "iconology of the interval."⁴ Of course, the idea that disparate content could be productively reckoned by virtue of latent affinity was not unique to Warburg but is in fact the fundamental tenet of Benjamin's *Passagen-Werk*, a similarly labyrinthine archive of citations, textual fragments, and images that was conceived in 1927 and never completed.⁵ Although the expansive physical structures of the *Mnemosyne-Atlas* and Benjamin's materialist history of the nineteenth-century Parisian commercial arcades inevitably suggest a panoramic sensibility, it is important to our interpretation of *Hiccups*—not as a seamless vista of images but, through the work of the zippers, as a series of interruptions—to note that both Warburg and Benjamin strenuously avoided such an association. A device of fancy granting the illusion of "naturalized" historical progression, panoramas promoted a seamless continuity, supposed an unproblematic relationship between past and present, and effaced rather than



THE OBJECT STAYS UP

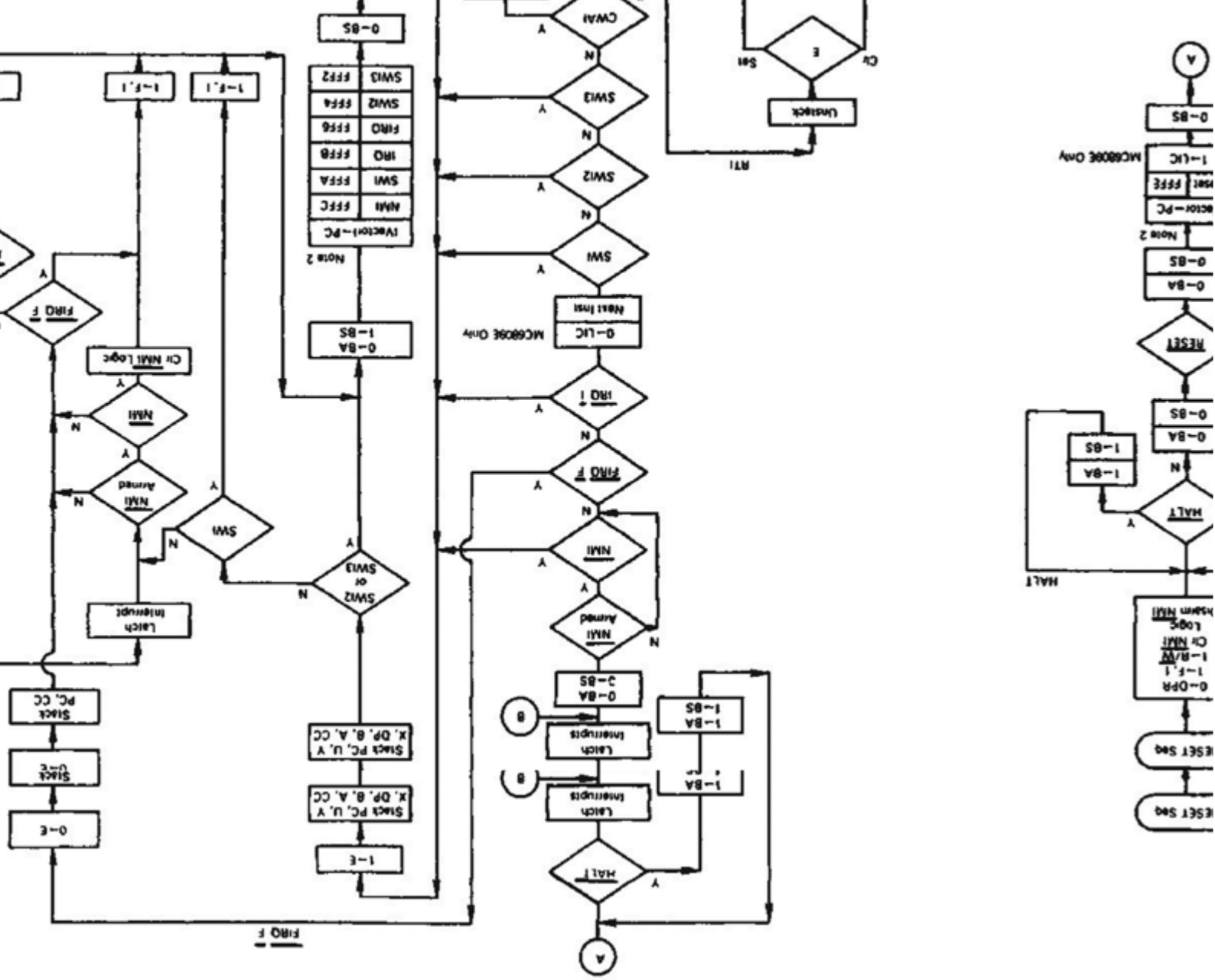
When I printed, bound, and hung the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code on a cable in the Pollak stairwell, a self-reflexive installation called, The Object Plays Itself, I did so as an instigation, a subtle act of protest. What I didn't imagine is what ended up happening—it inexplicably stayed up, and remains there at the time of this writing. Not only that, but I recently noticed others dipping a toe into the waters, hanging flyers and other ephemera that were previously labeled as a violation of the new policies. Posters are slowly coming back, like the first seedlings after Krakatoa.

All of this makes me feel good. Not to sound trite, but it has felt like an example of making a small, if noticeable, difference in my community. I look at the ecosystem of the stairwell as I come and go each day with a sense of pride, to see that my work has served a public purpose, even if it started as a joke. I don't think that design needs to be overtly activist in order to be relevant, but there's an undeniable element of public engagement that takes the inert object and breathes real life into it.

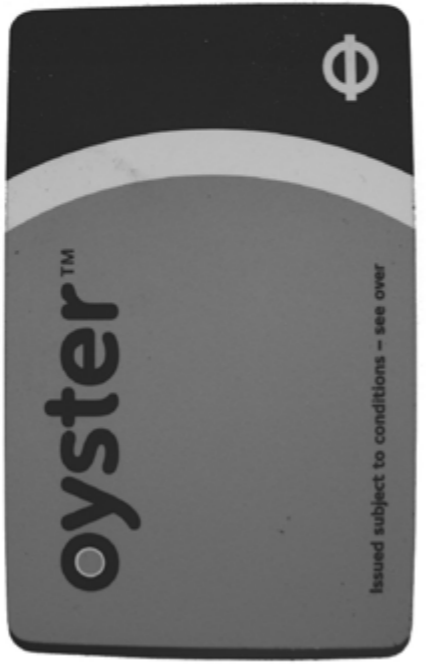


DON'T SAY WE DIDN'T WARN YOU

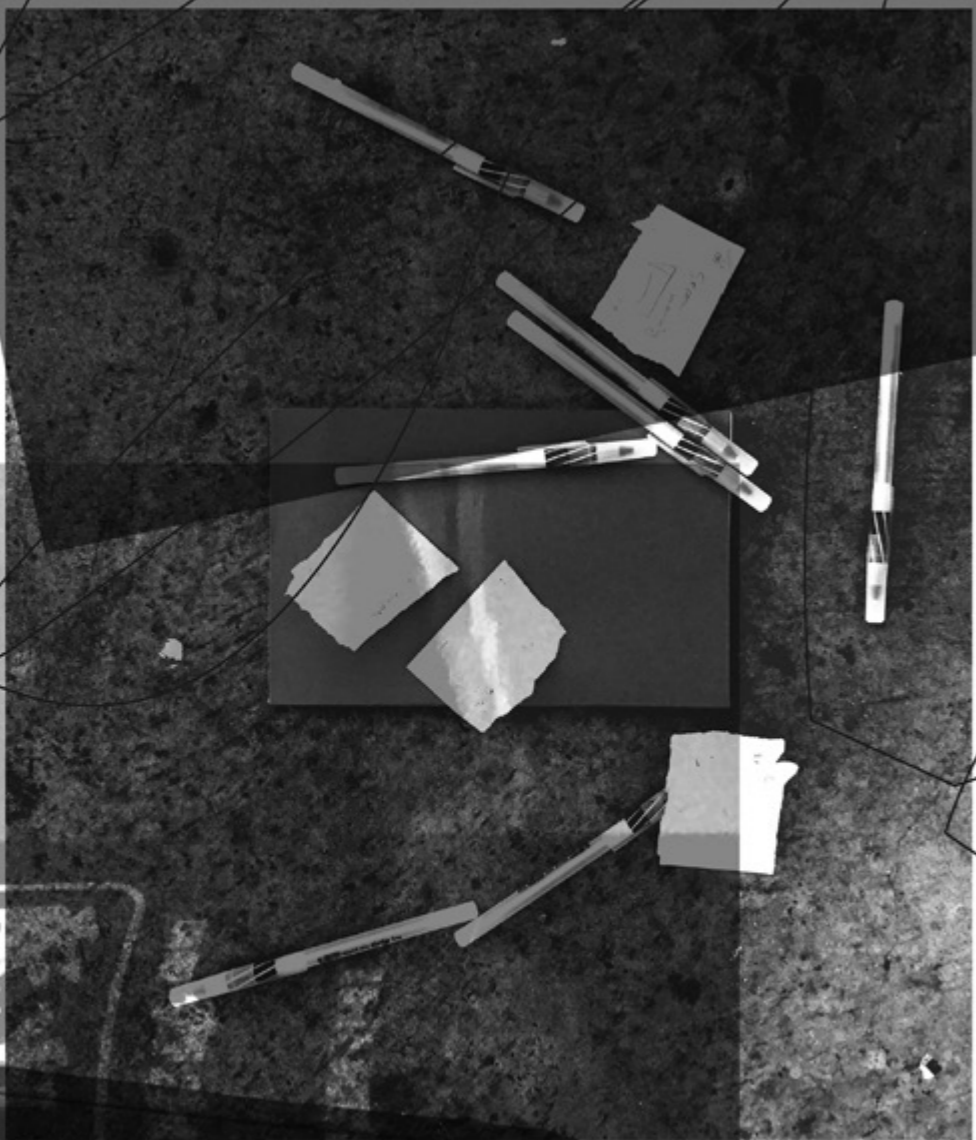
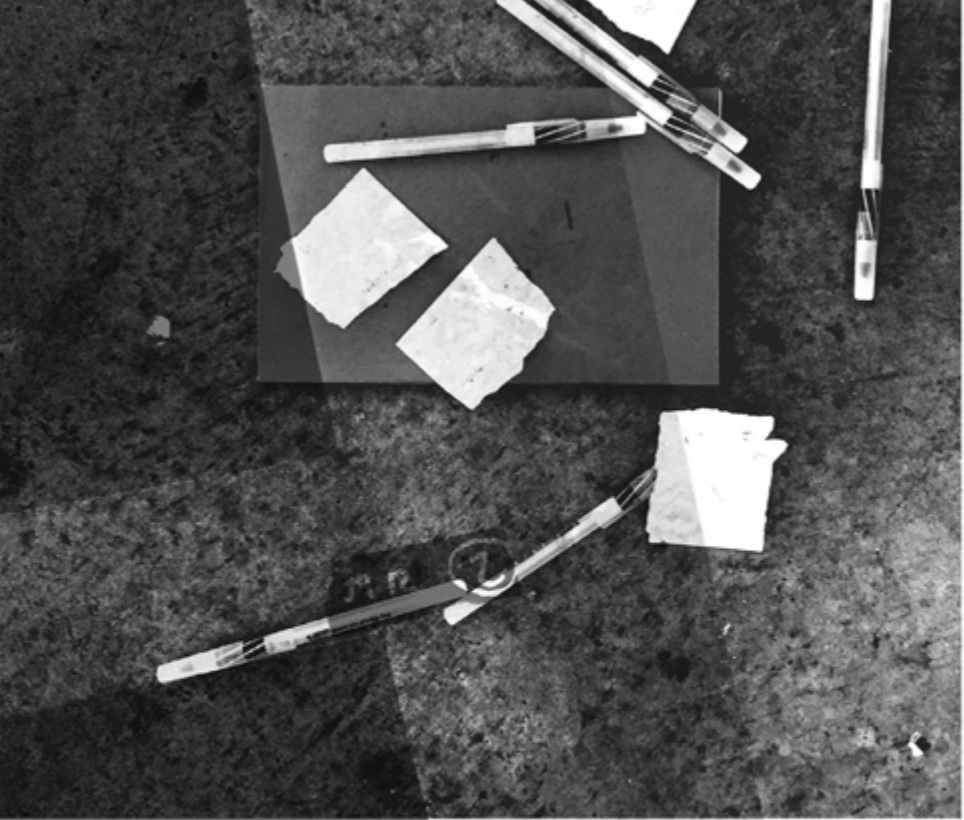
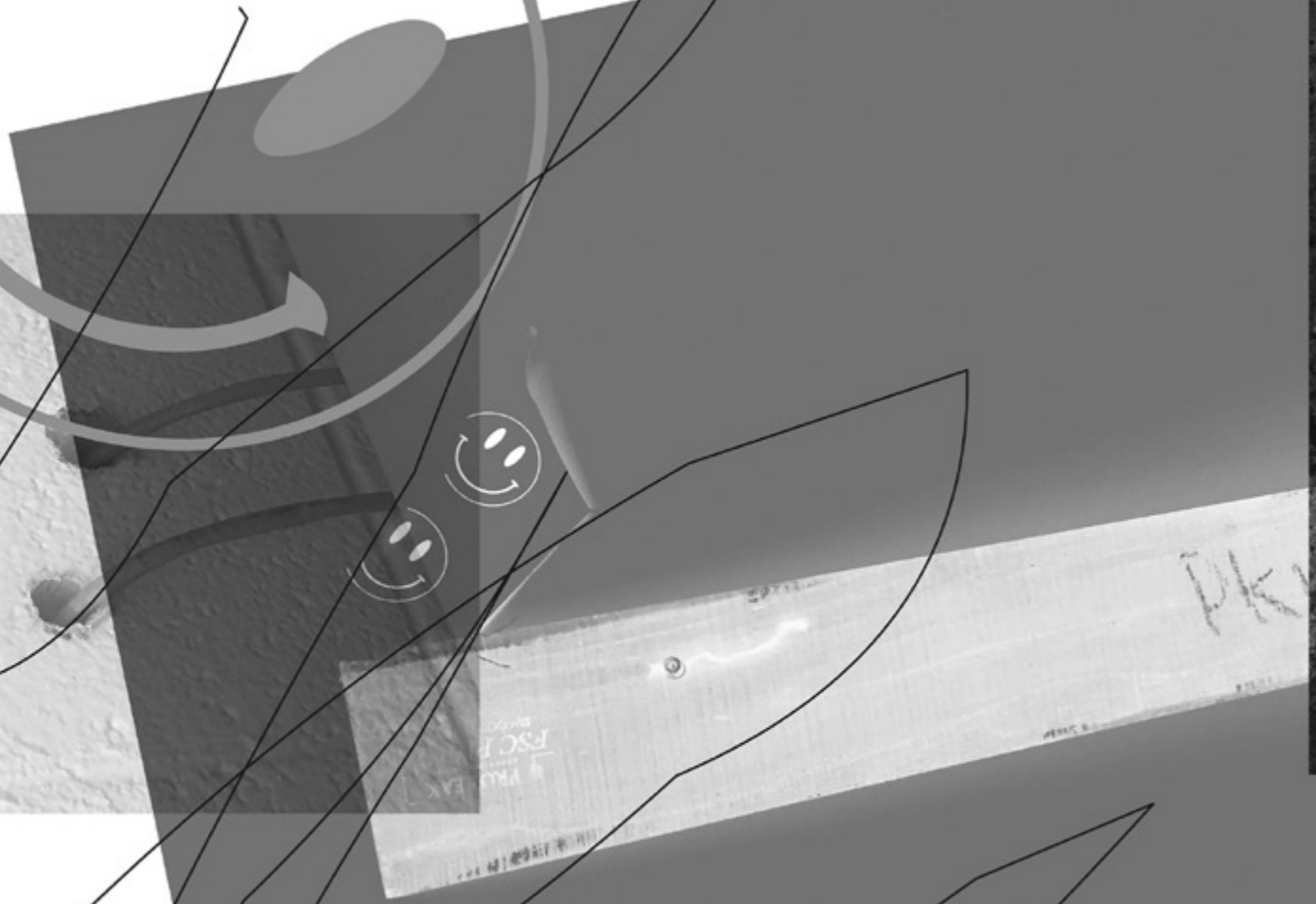




The stream will soon renew its smoothness, soon the visions will return



182



STAMP
DICKS
STAMP

Alliance Gothic Regular

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg
Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm
Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt
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0123456789
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Alliance Gothic Bold

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg
Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm
Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt
Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz
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“CONCEPTUAL ART”
3 Navel Oranges
John Lautner
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA
Mexican Fan Palm
WILSHIRE BL.
CA-405
Highland Park
Mountain Lion P-22
Peacocks in the front yard
Helicopter Buzz

Dwan Gallery press release, June 1967

**LANGUAGE TO BE LOOKED AT AND/OR THINGS
TO BE READ**

Robert Smithson

Language operates between literal and metaphorical signification. The power of a word lies in the very inadequacy of the context it is placed, in the unresolved or partially resolved tension of dispartes. A word fixed or a statement isolated without any decorative or “cubist” visual format, becomes a perception of similarity in dissimilars—in]short a paradox. Congruity could be disrupted by a metaphorical complexity within a literal system. Literal usage becomes incantory when all metaphors are suppressed. Here language is built, not written. Yet, discursive literalness is apt to be a container for a radical metaphor. Literal statements often conceal violent analogies. The mind resists the false identity of such circumambient suggestions, only to accept an equally false logical surface. Banal words function as a feeble phenomena that fall into their own mental bogs of meaning. An emotion is suggested and demolished in a glance by certain words. Other words

constantly shift or invert themselves without ending, these could be called “suspended words.” Simple statements are often based on language fears, and sometimes result in dogma or a non-sense. Words for mental processes are all derived from physical things. References are often reversed so that the “object” takes the place of the “word.” A is A is never A is A, but rather X is A. The misunderstood notion of a metaphor has it that A is X—that is wrong. The scale of a letter in a word changes one’s visual meaning of the word. Language thus becomes monumental because of the mutations of advertising. A word outside of the mind is a set of “dead letters.” The mania for literalness relates to the breakdown in the rational belief in reality. Books entomb words in a synthetic rigor mortis, perhaps that is why “print” is thought to have entered obsolescence. The mind of this death, however, is unrelentingly awake.



[My sense of language is that it is matter and not ideas—i.e., “printed matter.”
R.S. June 2, 1972]

**JUST ACCEPT THIS
PITHY APHORISM
(FOR WHAT IT IS)**

**A Thesis
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Degree of**

At

This Day,

D H I C

GDES OBJECTS & ID NETH DS

LECTURE SERIES

gdes

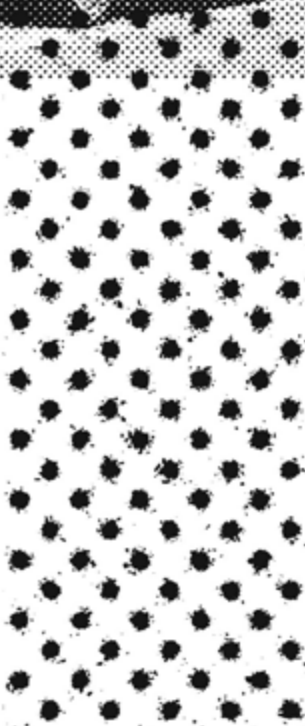
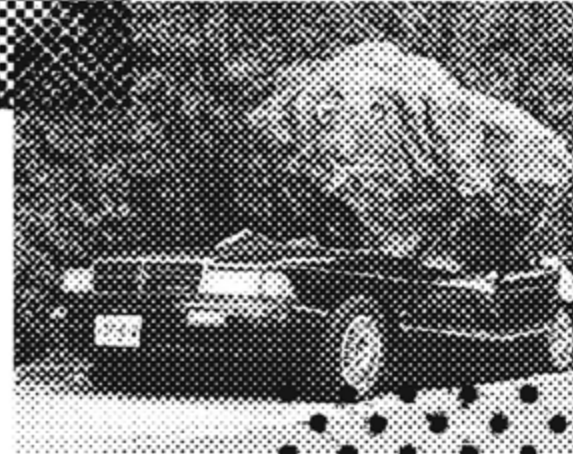
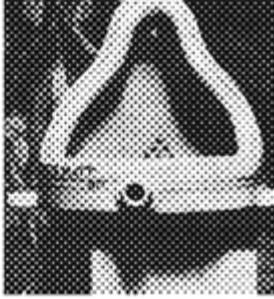
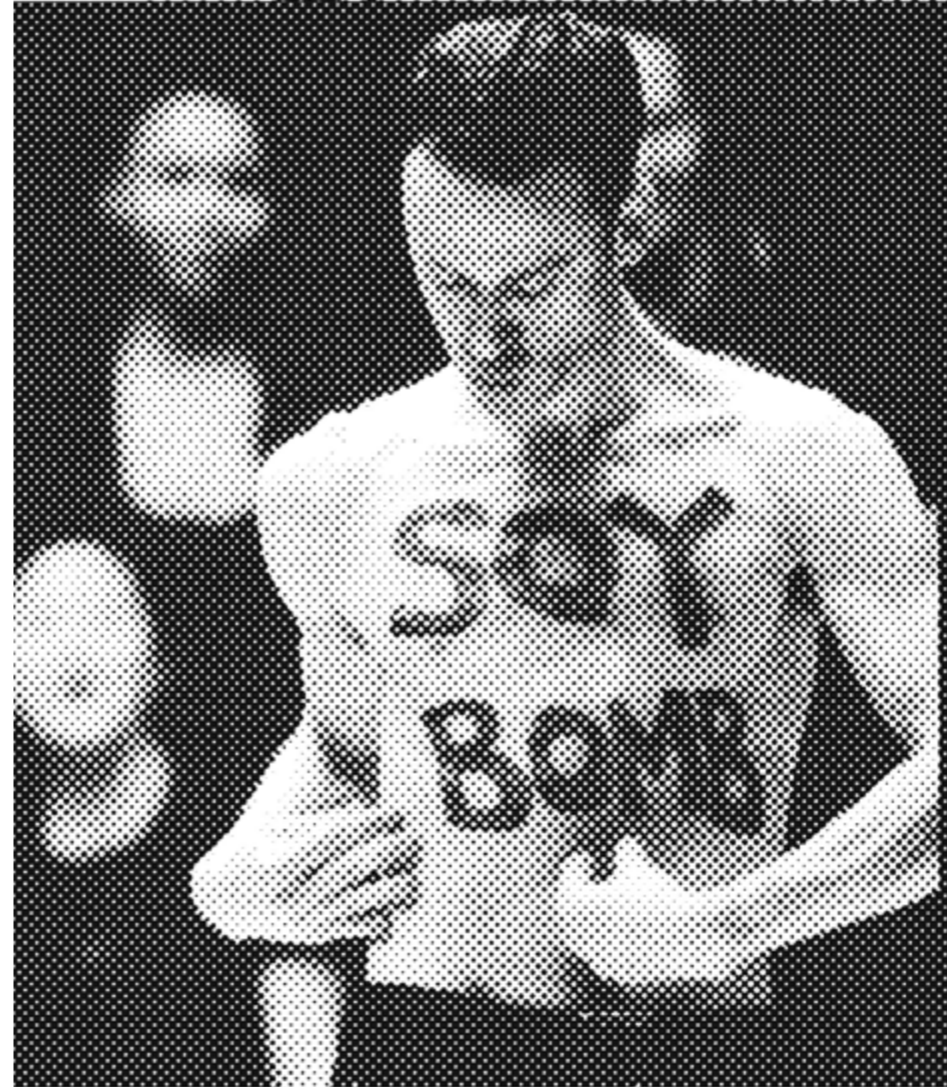
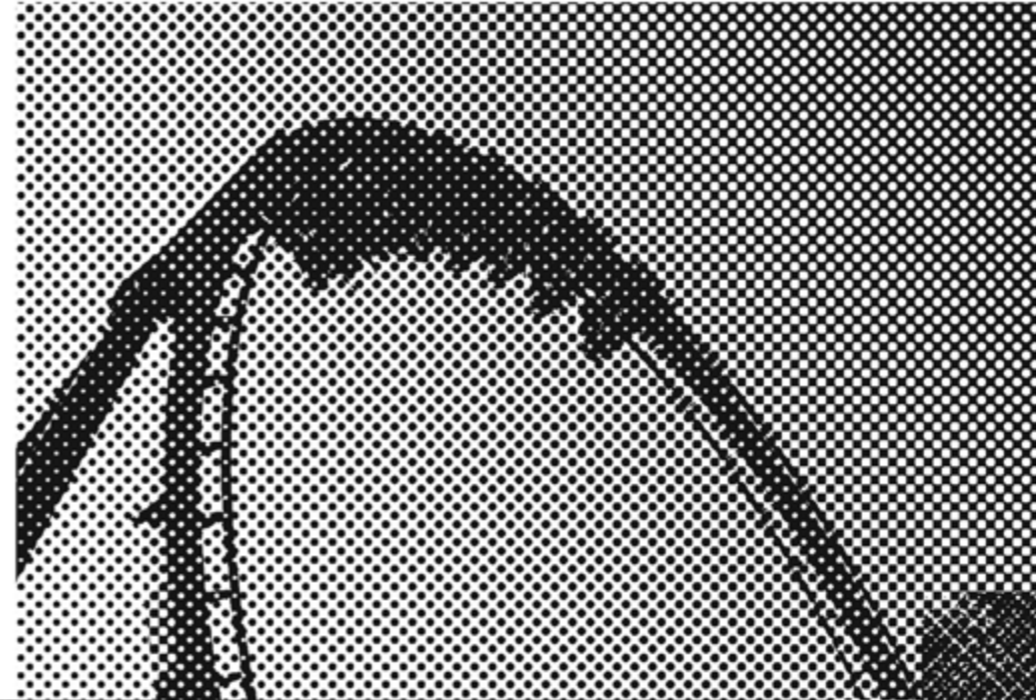
SGV—RVA

**The
Depot
March 1
4:30pm**

814 West Broad Street Richmond, Virginia

“Gee DEN,”

The stream will soon renew its smoothness, soon



May 2018

MAKING OTHER PLANS

As I sit here writing these words, my son is battling a fever. A sweaty night of thrashing has lessened his temperature, but not nearly enough, and so my Monday has pivoted to staying at home with him. I am more than happy to care for my only son; still, this was not the plan. There are several tasks I need to complete on this, the penultimate day of the semester—one of which just happens to be writing a foreword for a book about interruption, which at this moment, come to think of it, might as well be a book about irony.

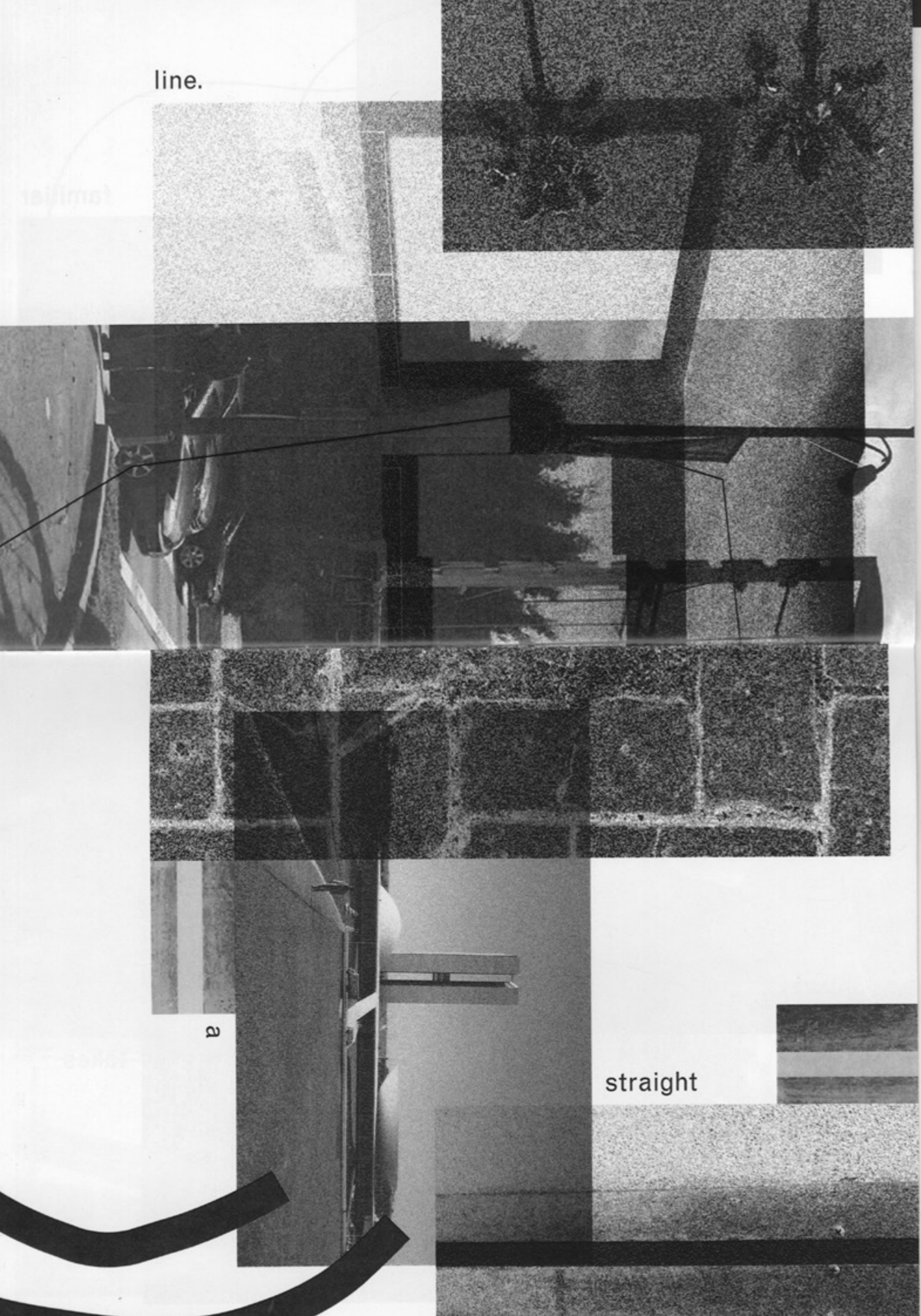
But naptime—naptime is my chance, my hole card. Naptime is somewhere between 90 and 180 minutes during which I might recoup my losses, make some headway on the work looming over me. Diaper change. Bottle. But he will not sleep on this afternoon. I hear him calling from the back bedroom. “Birds,” he cries, and I find him sitting up in his crib, tears in his eyes from the chirping going on outside his window. He has no idea of Hitchcock, but that does not matter—the dread is innate. I carry him to the couch, and we sit under the fan in the cool, dark stillness. He looks up at me, smiles. I wipe his cheeks and smile back.

In his 1980 song Beautiful Boy (Darling Boy), John Lennon says that, “Life is what happens to you while you’re busy making other plans.” Our plans—those foolish attempts at gaining some semblance of control over a world that mostly resists—routinely fall prey to the fever, the flat tire, the knock at the door. Samuel Taylor Coleridge famously told, in his preface to Kubla Khan, of waking from an opium dream and composing the poem until he was interrupted by a person from Porlock. The trance broken, he could no longer call forth the lines from his unconscious, and so he set the manuscript aside, unfinished for 19 years until 1816 when, after much prompting from Lord Byron, it was finally published. We will never know the identity of the person from Porlock, yet we all have our own personal visitors, the interruptions that, with their knocking, shatter our expectations.

The degree to which we cope with interruption often lies within the way that we frame it. Interruption can become intermission—a temporary state (forgive us, Coleridge) from which we might emerge better than before. A break. A pause. A respite. An opportunity for reflection. To stop before we go too far. It smiles at our need to produce, to keep busy, to stay a step ahead. More often than not, interruption might serve to save us from ourselves.

Interruption can also help to reframe our thinking, especially our creative output. Sculptor Jimmie Durham says, “I like interruptions, of any kind, especially from my own life, because we have such a tendency—something stronger than a tendency, actually—to do the same things all the time.” So an interruption is an opportunity to change direction, to take the unexpected path. The modern lives we’ve constructed lead us to believe that there is order in things. But this is just a facade. Robert Smithson, in a 1973 conversation titled, Entropy Made Visible, goes as far as to say that “planning and chance almost seem to be the same thing.”

I am writing these words now because I could not write them earlier. What might I have said, had life not gotten in the way? Maybe exactly this. That is possible, though unlikely. Maybe something better? I like to think not. Maybe this is simply the way I was always going to write them—in their own time, not mine, not anyone’s, only after certain other things have made their path through the day, through the cool dark air between my son’s smile and my own.



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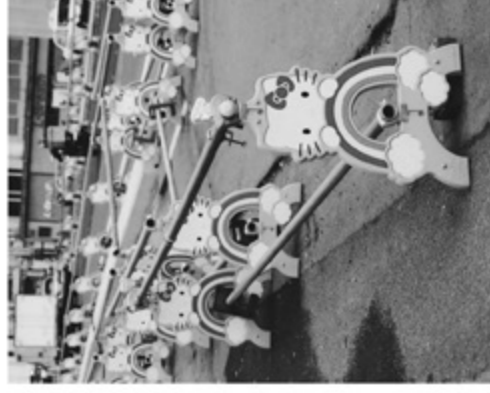
straight

925

HURDLES

Monumen- tality and the Olympic Ghost

**If You Build It, He Will Come / Instant
Monumentality / The Bird's Nest / OAKA
The Weissenhofsiedlung / Pioneering
Against Entropy / Stain as a Symptom of
Failure / The Olympics Are Not Forever**




96

97

397

QXOQ
is inevitable

CAITLIN
CHERRY



vcuarts 90

etherpaint

The Anderson presents
Caitlin Cherry: Etherpaint
September 7–October 26
2018
Opening Reception September 7 6–9 PM
907 1st West Franklin Street Richmond, VA



CAITLIN
CHERRY



vcuarts 90

etherpaint

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September 7–October 26
2018
Opening Reception September 7 6–9 PM
907 1st West Franklin Street Richmond, VA



My initial thought was,
“Was this something
that Bob had planned
and I just missed it?”
Bob’s singing, and try-
ing to ignore the guy,
and then he turned
around to me and said,
“Who the fuck is this
guy?” And that’s when
I realized ‘No, Bob
didn’t plan this...



obj-4.1.jpg



obj-4.2.jpg



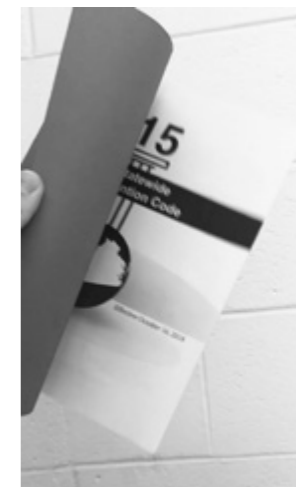
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obj-4.4.jpg



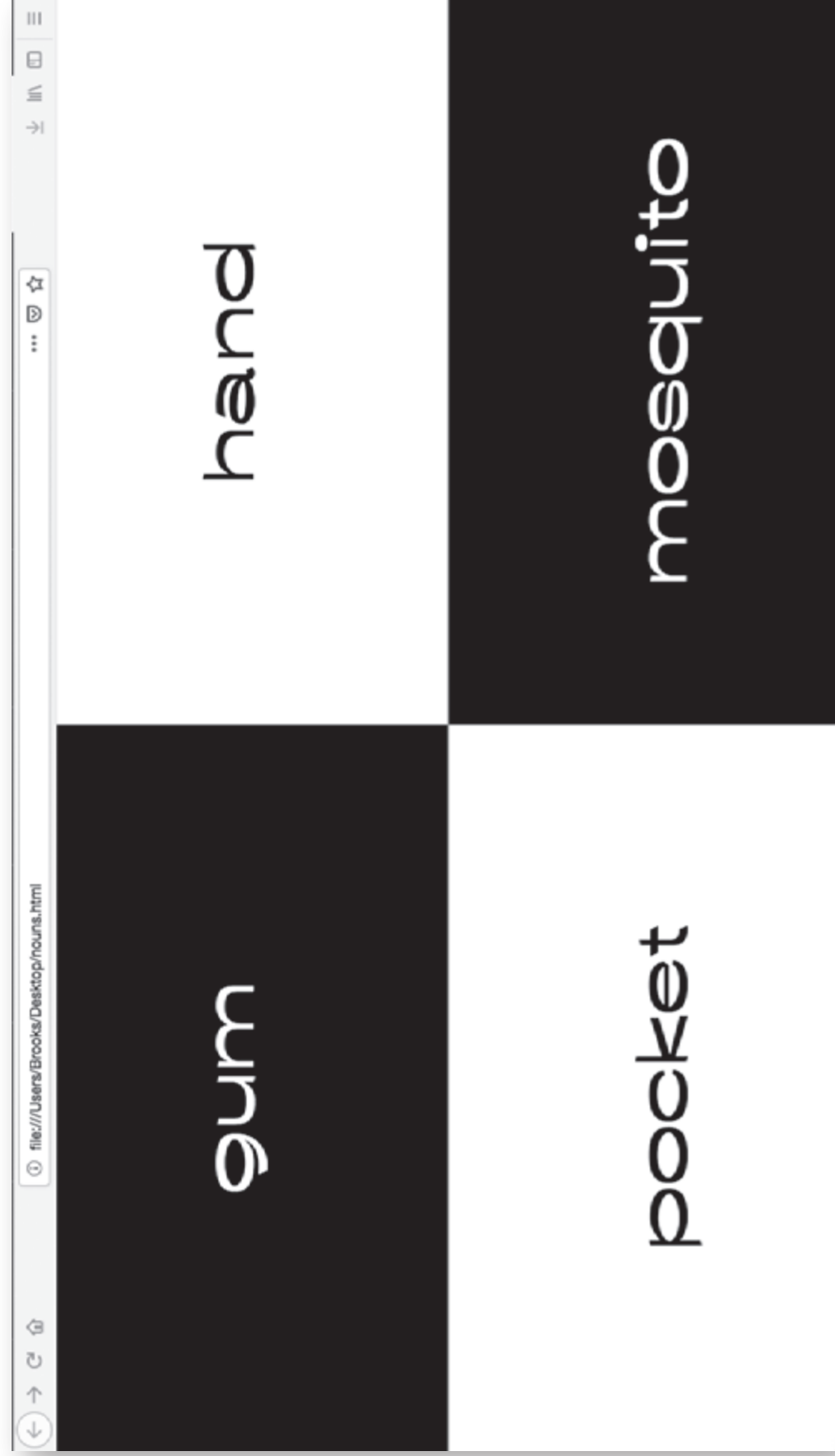
obj-4.5.jpg



obj-4.6.jpg



obj-4.7.jpg



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Soy Bomb, ODB, Aretha & the Craziest Grammys Ever: An Oral History of the 1998 Grammys

The 1998 Grammys were the most action-packed ceremony in the show's soon-to-be-60-year history. Aretha Franklin pinch-hit for Luciano Pavarotti at the last minute on a performance of aria "Nessun Dorma," often ranked among the greatest in award-show history. Shawn Colvin saw her song of the year win interrupted by a just-snubbed Ol' Dirty Bastard, memorably declaring in protest of his group's hip-hop loss: "Wu-Tang is for the children!" And two versions of the same country song, released simultaneously as singles by LeAnn Rimes and Trisha Yearwood, were nominated in the same Grammy category—and the version performed on the show wasn't the one that ended up winning.

Unterberger, Andrew.
"Soy Bomb, ODB,
Aretha & the Craziest
Grammys Ever: An
Oral History of the
1998 Grammys." *Billboard*. 20 Jan. 2018.

All of that, plus, well, SOY BOMB. That was the message inscribed in big black letters on the chest of experimental artist and comedian Michael Portnoy, as he interrupted Bob Dylan's "Love Sick" performance to gyrate sans shirt alongside the rock legend for a full half-minute. While the event was confounding to those in attendance, and remains largely unexplained 20 years later, it stands as a pre-Nipplagate, pre-Kanye moment of amusingly harmless award-show anarchy, one which might never be possible in the same way again.

The seemingly non-stop chaos of the '98 Grammys stands alone 20 years later as the gold standard for unforgettable unpredictability on music's biggest night. "We've had equally interesting things happening during a show [since]," recalls longtime producer Ken Ehrlich. "But probably not so many."

Here are the events of the 40th Annual Grammy Awards -- which took place at Radio City Music Hall in New York City on Feb. 25, 1998—as recalled by those who lived through its insanity.

ISAAC HANSON (HANSON GUITARIST, PERFORMER): The Grammys, especially in the late '90s—they were much snob-bier. It felt more like the Oscars. It was not done in a giant room, it wasn't done in an arena, it was done at Radio City Music Hall... it wasn't a flashy thing quite in the way it has become since then. I mean, Kelsey Grammer was hosting The Grammys.

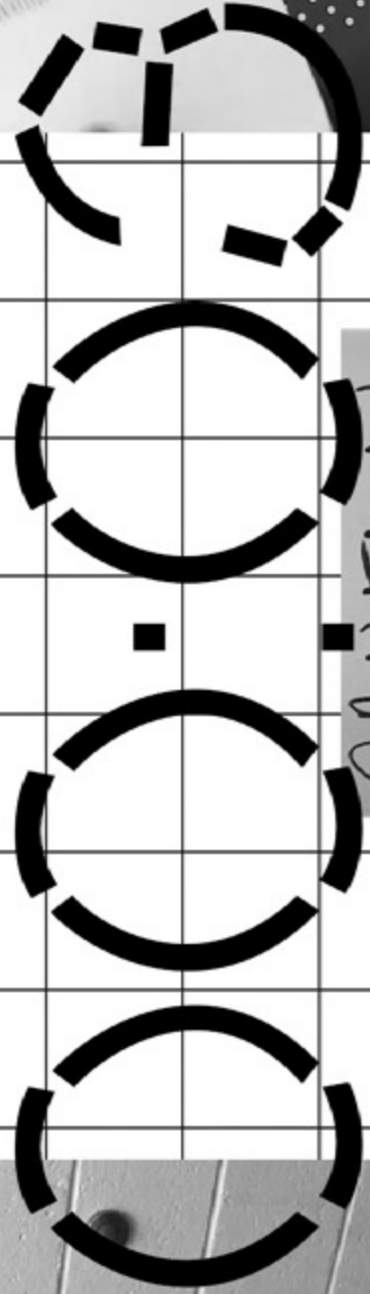
DJ JAZZY JEFF (WILL SMITH PRODUCER, WINNER): I think the Grammys had come a long way from the first time that [Will

Andrew Unterberger

VC U SCHOOL OF THE ARTS AND THE ANDERSON GALLERY PRESENTS BRÁULIO AMADO JULIO AMADO 17 JANUARY 4:30 PM GRACE STREET THEATER OBJECTS+METHODS LECTURE LINKING PARK 18 JANUARY THE ANDERSON GALLERY SOLO SHOW OPENING 6-9 PM

Bráulio Amado is a Portuguese graphic designer, illustrator and visual artist, currently living in New York. He worked at Pentagram, *Bloomberg Businessweek* and Wieden+Kennedy, and is now running BAD Studio. He has designed covers for Frank Ocean, Roisin Murphy, Beck and Washed Out. His illustrations have been published by *The New York Times*, *Wired* and *The New Yorker*. His work has been exhibited in the U.S., Japan, Australia, Portugal, Germany and France.

IT'S A SINKHOLE



Spinning And Falling In Equal Measure



THE SOUND OF A
SPACE BEING
DIVIDED AGAINST
ITS WILL

THE SOUND OF A
SPACE BEING
DIVIDED AGAINST
ITS WILL

Harrison

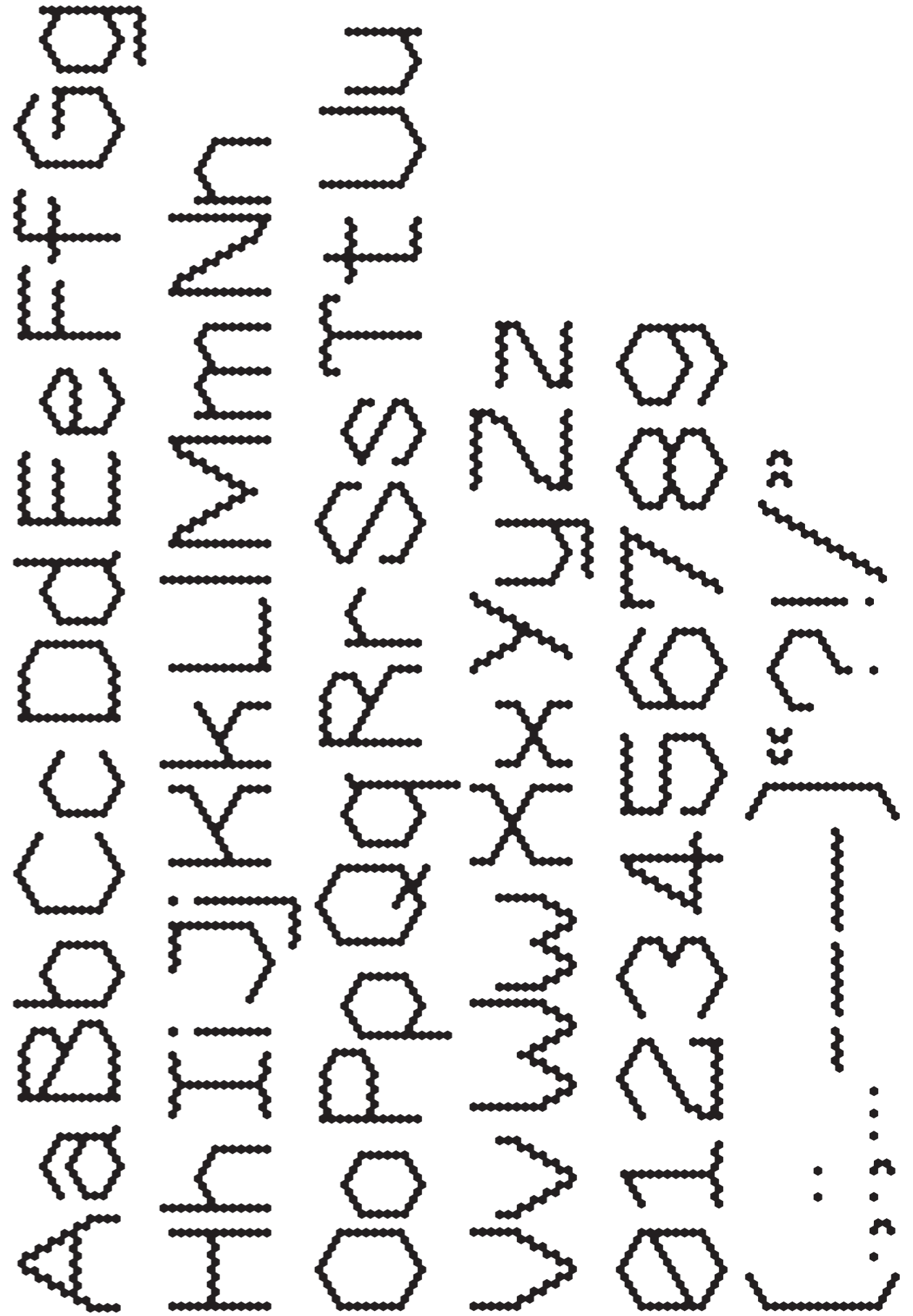
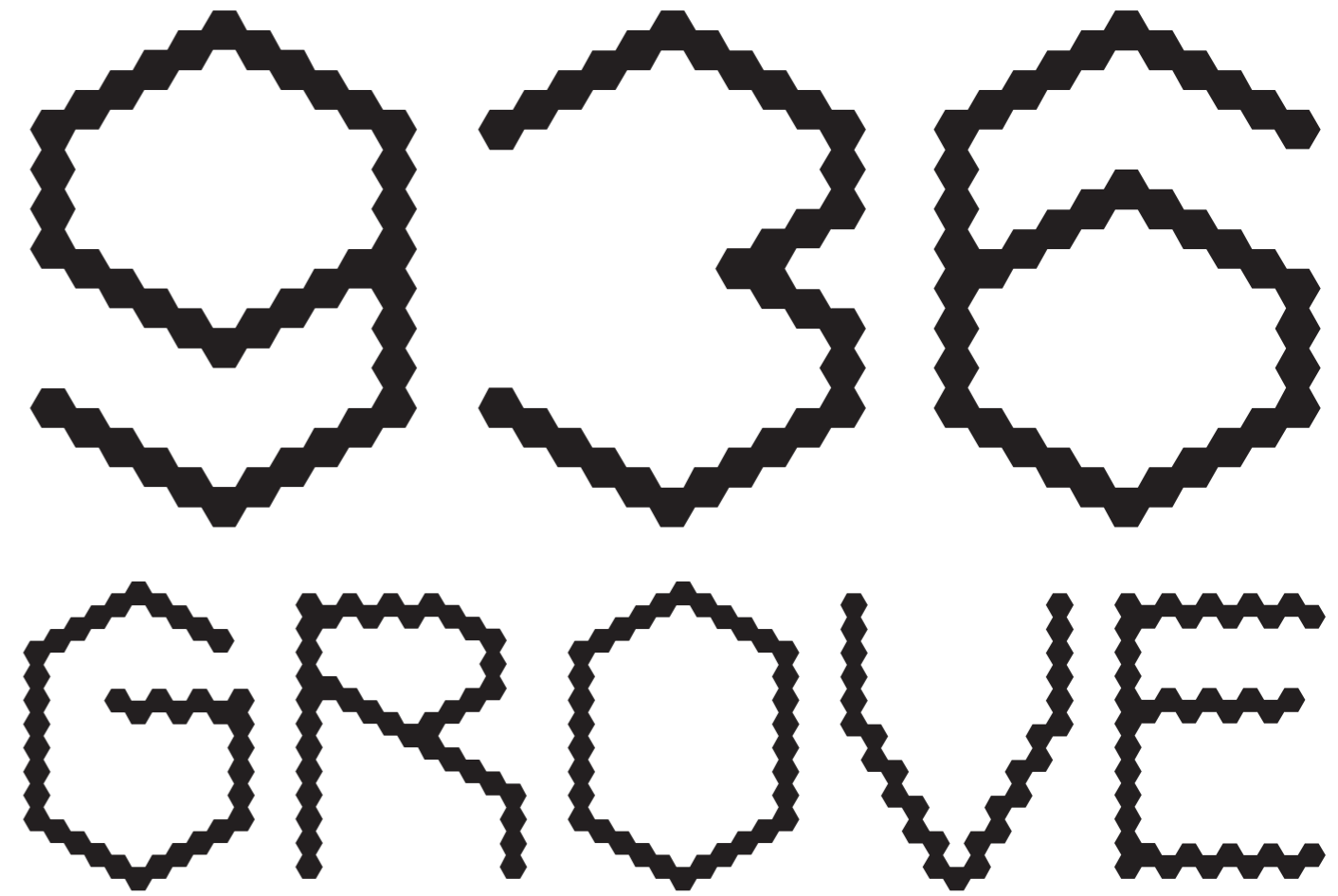


Fig and Olive
charcuterie plate
TABLE FOR TWO
fricandeau
apple-pear tartlet
FOUR TOP
10 DOZEN EGGS
Sauvignon Blanc
PARBOILED
Try the Clams Casino



The word “tapas” is derived from the Spanish verb *tapar*, “to cover”, a cognate of the English *top*.

In pre-19th century Spain tapas were served by *posadas*, *albergues*, or *bodegas*, offering meals and rooms for travellers. Since few innkeepers could write and few travellers read, inns offered their guests a sample of the dishes available, on a “tapa” (the word for pot cover in Spanish).

According to *The Joy of Cooking*, the original tapas were thin slices of bread or meat which sherry drinkers in Andalusian taverns used to cover their glasses between sips. This was a practical measure meant to prevent fruit flies from hovering over the sweet sherry. The meat used to cover the sherry was normally ham

or chorizo, which are both salty and activate thirst. Because of this, bartenders and restaurant owners created a variety of snacks to serve with sherry, thus increasing their alcohol sales. The tapas eventually became as important as the sherry.

Tapas have evolved through Spanish history by incorporating new ingredients and influences. The Iberian Peninsula was invaded by the Romans, who introduced more extensive cultivation of the olive following their invasion of Spain in 212 B.C. and irrigation methods. The discovery of the New World brought the introduction of tomatoes, sweet and chili peppers, maize (corn), and potatoes, which were readily accepted and easily grown in Spain’s microclimates.

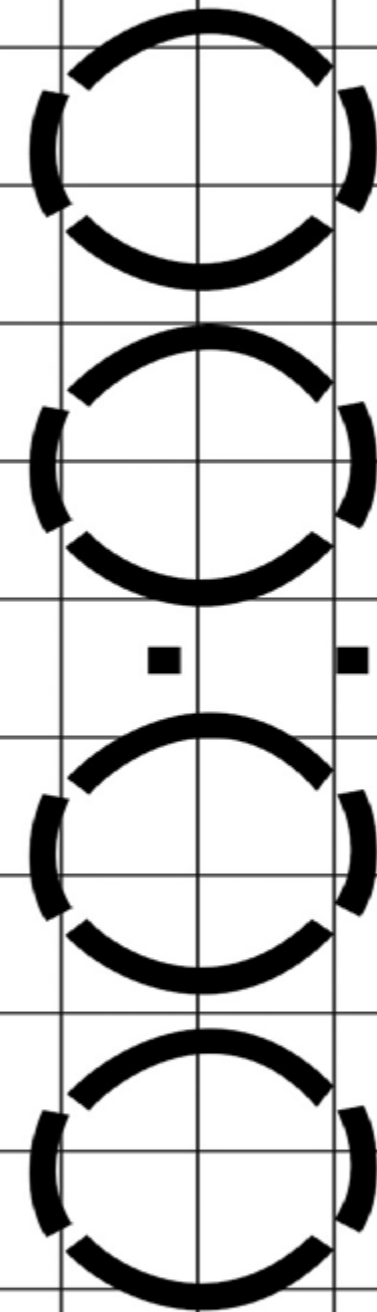
...assuming there's
a way out




AL AC AM AL AC AM AL AC AM AL AC AM AL AC AM
LYO TIO OUN LYO TIO OUN LYO TIO OUN LYO TIO OUN LYO TIO OUN
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**A RATIONAL
END POINT**

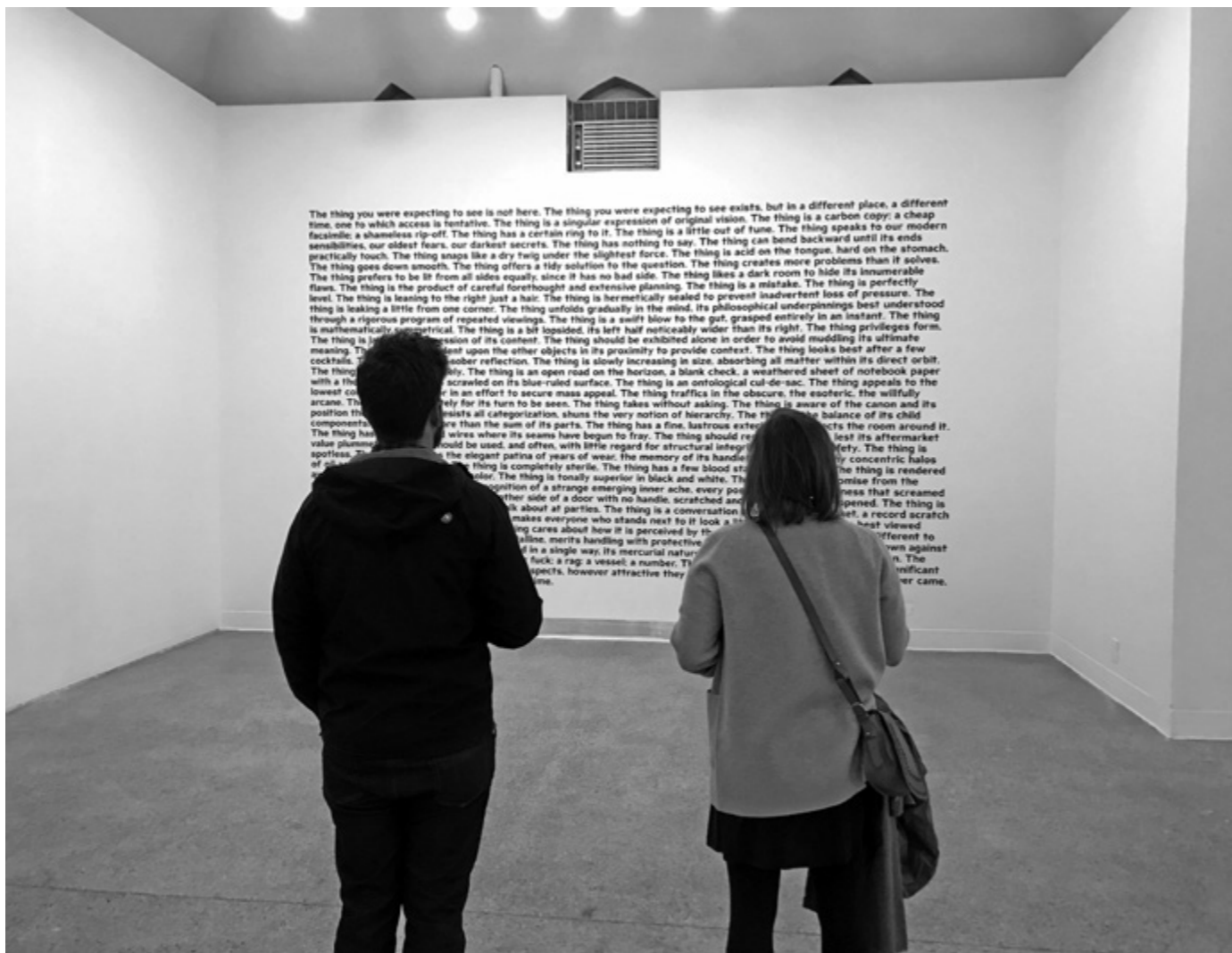





The thing you were expecting to see is not here. The thing you were expecting to see exists, but in a different place, a different time, one to which access is tentative. The thing is a singular expression of original vision. The thing is a carbon copy; a cheap facsimile; a shameless rip-off. The thing has a certain ring to it. The thing is a little out of tune. The thing speaks to our modern sensibilities, our oldest fears, our darkest secrets. The thing has nothing to say. The thing can bend backward until its ends practically touch. The thing snaps like a dry twig under the slightest force. The thing is acid on the tongue, hard on the stomach. The thing goes down smooth. The thing offers a tidy solution to the question. The thing creates more problems than it solves. The thing prefers to be lit from all sides equally, since it has no bad side. The thing likes a dark room to hide its innumerable flaws. The thing is the product of careful forethought and extensive planning. The thing is a mistake. The thing is perfectly level. The thing is leaning to the right just a hair. The thing is hermetically sealed to prevent inadvertent loss of pressure. The thing is leaking a little from one corner. The thing unfolds gradually in the mind, its philosophical underpinnings best understood through a rigorous program of repeated viewings. The thing is a swift blow to the gut, grasped entirely in an instant. The thing is mathematically symmetrical. The thing is a bit lopsided, its left half noticeably wider than its right. The thing privileges form. The thing is largely an expression of its content. The thing should be exhibited alone in order to avoid muddling its ultimate meaning. The thing is dependent upon the other objects in its proximity to provide context. The thing looks best after a few cocktails. The thing deserves sober reflection. The thing is slowly increasing in size, absorbing all matter within its direct orbit. The thing is contracting fiercely. The thing is an open road on the horizon, a blank check, a weathered sheet of notebook paper with a thousand possibilities scrawled on its blue-ruled surface. The thing is an ontological cul-de-sac. The thing appeals to the lowest common denominator in an effort to secure mass appeal. The thing traffics in the obscure, the esoteric, the willfully arcane. The thing waits politely for its turn to be seen. The thing takes without asking. The thing is aware of the canon and its position therein. The thing resists all categorization, shuns the very notion of hierarchy. The thing is the balance of its child components. The thing is more than the sum of its parts. The thing has a fine, lustrous exterior that reflects the room around it. The thing has a few exposed wires where its seams have begun to fray. The thing should remain unopened, lest its aftermarket value plummet. The thing should be used, and often, with little regard for structural integrity or personal safety. The thing is spotless. The thing contains the elegant patina of years of wear, the memory of its handlers preserved in tiny concentric halos of oil across its mottled skin. The thing is completely sterile. The thing has a few blood stains somewhere. The thing is rendered awesomely bright, in full, blinding color. The thing is tonally superior in black and white. The thing is every promise from the pages of a glossy magazine, every recognition of a strange emerging inner ache, every possibility of an emptiness that screamed to be filled, like a voice calling from the other side of a door with no handle, scratched and clawed but never opened. The thing is not very important. The thing is nice to talk about at parties. The thing is a conversation stopper, a wet blanket, a record scratch in a room full of dancing bodies. The thing makes everyone who stands next to it look a little taller. The thing is best viewed at ground level, on hands and knees. The thing cares about how it is perceived by those in the know. The thing is indifferent to criticism or praise. The thing is fragile, crystalline, merits handling with protective gloves. The thing will bounce if thrown against a hard surface. The thing cannot be described in a single way, its mercurial nature difficult to classify, tough to pin down. The thing is self-evident. The thing is just another fuck; a rag; a vessel; a number. The thing is worth waiting for, the one, significant enough to suppress the urge toward other prospects, however attractive they might seem in the moment. The thing never came. The thing did come, but we had to wait a long time.

The thing has no bad side. The thing is a bit lopsided, its left half noticeably heavier than the right. The thing is slowly increasing in size. The thing is an open road on the horizon, a blue-ruled surface. The thing is a port to secure mass appeal. The thing turns to be seen. The thing takes without categorization shuns the very notion of







The thing you were expecting to see is not here. The thing you were expecting to see exists, but in a different place, a different time, one to which access is tentative. The thing is a singular expression of original vision. The thing is a carbon copy; a cheap facsimile; a shameless rip-off. The thing has a certain ring to it. The thing is a little out of tune. The thing speaks to our modern sensibilities, our oldest fears, our darkest secrets. The thing has nothing to say. The thing can bend backward until its ends practically touch. The thing snaps like a dry twig under the slightest force. The thing is acid on the tongue, hard on the stomach. The thing goes down smooth. The thing offers a tidy solution to the question. The thing creates more problems than it solves. The thing prefers to be lit from all sides equally, since it has no bad side. The thing likes a dark room to hide its innumerable flaws. The thing is the product of careful forethought and extensive planning. The thing is a mistake. The thing is perfectly level. The thing is leaning to the right just a hair. The thing is hermetically sealed to prevent inadvertent loss of pressure. The thing is leaking a little from one corner. The thing unfolds gradually in the mind, its philosophical underpinnings best understood through a rigorous program of repeated viewings. The thing is a swift blow to the gut, grasped entirely in an instant. The thing is mathematically symmetrical. The thing is a bit lopsided, its left half noticeably wider than its right. The thing privileges form. The thing is largely an expression of its content. The thing should be exhibited alone in order to avoid muddling its ultimate meaning. The thing is dependent upon the other objects in its proximity to provide context. The thing looks best after a few cocktails. The thing deserves sober reflection. The thing is slowly increasing in size, absorbing all matter within its direct orbit. The thing is contracting fiercely. The thing is an open road on the horizon, a blank check, a weathered sheet of notebook paper with a thousand possibilities scrawled on its blue-ruled surface. The thing is an ontological cul-de-sac. The thing appeals to the lowest common denominator in an effort to secure mass appeal. The thing traffics in the obscure, the esoteric, the willfully arcane. The thing waits politely for its turn to be seen. The thing takes without asking. The thing is aware of the canon and its position therein. The thing resists all categorization, shuns the very notion of hierarchy. The thing is the balance of its child components. The thing is more than the sum of its parts. The thing has a fine, lustrous exterior that reflects the room around it. The thing has a few exposed wires where its seams have begun to fray. The thing should remain unopened, lest its aftermarket value plummet. The thing should be used, and often, with little regard for structural integrity or personal safety. The thing is spotless. The thing contains the elegant patina of years of wear, the memory of its handlers preserved in tiny concentric halos of oil across its mottled skin. The thing is completely sterile. The thing has a few blood stains somewhere. The thing is rendered awesomely bright, in full, blinding color. The thing is tonally superior in black and white. The thing is every promise from the pages of a glossy magazine, every recognition of a strange emerging inner ache, every possibility of an emptiness that screamed to be filled, like a voice calling from the other side of a door with no handle, scratched and clawed but never opened. The thing is in a room full of dancing bodies. The thing is nice to talk about at parties. The thing is a conversation stopper, a wet blanket, a record scratch at ground level, on hands and knees. The thing cares about how it is perceived by those in the know. The thing is best viewed criticism or praise. The thing is fragile, crystalline, merits handling with protective gloves. The thing is indifferent to a hard surface. The thing cannot be described in a single way, its mercurial nature difficult to classify, tough to pin down. The thing is self-evident. The thing is just another fuck; a rag; a vessel; a number. The thing is worth waiting for, the one, significant enough to suppress the urge toward other prospects, however attractive they might seem in the moment. The thing never came. The thing did come, but we had to wait a long time.



...AND THEN DEATH

Work Index

1 Billy
Typeface
Dimensions variable
2017

Billy is inspired by research on nature's interaction with abandoned structures. Its deconstructed forms mimic a variety of phenomena, from leaning buildings to climbing vines, and the breaks in the letterforms suggest cracks where plants break through man-made building materials.

I named it after the character Billy from Bil Keane's newspaper comic strip The Family Circus. One recurring bit was the "dotted-line" comic, in which a thick dotted line would show a character's winding path through the house or neighborhood.

2 Silex Oldstyle
Typeface
Dimensions variable
2017–2018

Silex is a typeface inspired by my reading on secret societies. I began to notice certain qualities about the symbols and typefaces used by these groups—from banners and books to coins and cathedrals. I set out to give the letters a sense of stable authority as well as curvaceous, slightly wicked mystery.

3 Nebular
Typeface
Dimensions variable
2018

Nebular is a typeface comprising a unicaser alphabet based around a small number of repeating shapes and angles. Its letterforms are at once organic while exhibiting a futuristic tone. The design arose from a series of sketches made in preparation for a poster announcing visiting designer Eric Hu. I kept returning to a slightly elongated, almost leaflike shape. From that initial combination of sharp and curved corners, I worked out the rest of the alphabet.

3 Laveta Grotesque
Typeface
Dimensions variable
2018

Laveta Grotesque arose from a desire to create a grotesque that would differentiate itself from others in the genre through the use of subtle quirks that lend it a kind of irreverent charm. It takes its name from Laveta Terrace, a street in my former Los Angeles neighborhood of Echo Park that I remember fondly.

4 Echo Extended
Typeface
Dimensions variable
2017–2018

Much like I explored with Nebular, I wanted to create an extended sans-serif that could look great in a display format and fit well together in type lockups. Echo started as just a few letters of custom type created for an architecture lecture poster back in late 2016 and has since expanded to an uppercase alphabet.

5 Racket
Typeface
Dimensions variable
2018

Racket is a typeface that was inspired by the phrase, "CURTAIN RODS," which was written on a moving box that I unpacked after arriving in Richmond. I was struck by the unique forms of the letters—the way certain lowercase forms masqueraded as upper case—and the playful, energetic look of the words. My wife figured out that our babysitter in Los Angeles, who helped us out a bit with packing up some boxes, must have written it. I haven't yet digitized it, instead drawing it freehand each time I've used it.

6 Gala
Typeface
Dimensions variable
2018–2019

Gala started as a month-long practice of creating a letter a day. I was interested in a slightly-squared round form, which quickly became a full-blown reverse contrast font. One of the first phrases I set in it was "gala flag," and that name just stuck.

7 Keystone BH
Typeface
Dimensions variable
2019

Keystone began as a straightforward revival of Frederic Goudy's Powell (1907), but soon took on elements of more well-known transitional serifs, like Plantin and Times New Roman.

8 Alliance Gothic
Typeface
Dimensions variable
2019

There's an old hand-painted wooden sign someone tacked above the doorway of the graduate studio years ago. I've walked beneath that faded black-and-white thing hundreds of times, and for a year or so I was thinking that I should create a typeface inspired by those forms. I was interested in the utilitarian approach and tradecraft of sign painting and how the evidence of the hand might be digitized and standardized, to a certain extent, to function as a repeatable system.

9 Harrison
Typeface
Dimensions variable
2019

Harrison was inspired by the penny tile floor at the entrance of a restaurant that recently opened on Harrison Street in Richmond, a few blocks from my studio. I like the way in which its letterforms can either take on a very blocky or very delicate look, depending on the scale.

- 10 Figure No. 1: Prism
w. Chino Amobi, Ivy Li, Michelle Peterein,
Taylor Stewart, Brett Suemnicht, and Eve White
Risograph booklet
5.5 x 8.5 in., 52 pp.
2017

Prism is a group publication created by the first-year cohort for the 2017 New York Art Book Fair. Each participant approached the topic of pedagogy from a different angle. I adapted found text from an 1895 Cornell University guide on building a rural school, and published it under the guise of a fictional entity, the "Committee on Pedagogical Practices."

- 11 Silex Specimen Book
Laser print booklet
5.5 x 8.5 in., 24 pp.
2017

The Silex specimen book was an opportunity to showcase the typeface in a variety of sizes and uses. Working with the theme of secret societies, type is combined with imagery and text from a number of real and fictional groups.

- 12 Reclamation
Laser print book
6 x 9 in., 72 pp.
2017

Reclamation is an essay based on a question of temporality: what happens to the meaning of the structures we build once they fall out of use and, abandoned, begin to cede to the forces of nature? The resulting book examines this question from three angles: first, through the lapsed monumentality of forgotten Olympic stadia; second, through the possibility of embracing entropy as a creative tool; and finally, by reinterpreting Jacques Lacan's idea of "the real" as something that emerges through the gaps that nature opens in our failed human structures.

- 13 Invasion Patterns
Laser print book
8 x 10.5 in., 222 pp.
2017

In light of my findings in Reclamation, I was motivated to explore Richmond in order to search out these phenomena in action; Invasion Patterns is a visual archive of my observations. Over 300 photos of plant and man-made material interaction are presented here in a growing order of size and scope, from the smallest leaves of clover sprouting from a sidewalk to vast mobs of ivy that engulf entire structures. Loose illustrations build in number and scale as the book (and intensity of plant growth) develops.

- 14 The Xerox Book
w. Chino Amobi, Junyun Chen, Minjee Jeon, Ivy Li,
Tara Pairoj-Boriboon, Michelle Peterein, Stephen
Parks, Drew Sisk, Taylor Stewart, and Eve White
Laser print book
8.5 x 11 in., 287 pp.
2017

Our combined studio class created a version of the famous Xerox Book, in which each artist contributed 25 photocopied pages on a concept of their choice. My con-

tribution was one-sentence descriptions of 25 photos I'd taken over the past few months that functioned like prose poems.

- 15 Fed vs. Rafa
Laser print book
8 x 8 in., 198 pp.
2018

While finishing up Laveta Grotesque, I completed a series of quick typographic experiments to showcase it. When thinking about language to use, my mind turned to tennis, and I thought about one of the sport's enduring rivalries: Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal. Fed vs. Rafa is my attempt at taking an event (in this case, the 2008 Wimbledon Final, arguably the greatest tennis match of all time) and telling the narrative purely through typography. The book was an exercise in working loosely and gesturally, with specific restrictions (black and white, one typeface, no outside images).

- 16 Hidden in The Picture
Laser print books (set of three)
11 x 17 in., 54 pp. each
2018

This project was an experiment in translating images into language, then creating a system in which that language can mix together to form unexpected results. I began by writing a concrete, seemingly prose poem-like descriptions of each image, which were justified in order to activate the spread of the book. Then the pages were cut in half. As the reader moves through the pages, they can mix and match different spreads. In this way, an exponential number of original images are created from the initial few.

- 17 The Stream Will Soon Renew Its Smoothness, Soon the Visions Will Return
Laser print book
7.75 x 10 in., 210 pp.
2018

This collection of 25 excerpted texts is presented alongside an image archive that seeks to investigate the phenomenon of interruption. It presents a range of subjects old and new, spanning artistic disciplines and both high and low culture, including writings from S.T. Coleridge, Stevie Smith, Robert Smithson, Hugo Ball, Daniel Libeskind, Steve Martin, John Cage, and Jimmie Durham. It also examines such disparate topics as sonic booms, instant replay, the footnotes of David Foster Wallace, the music of the Beach Boys, and the red carpet interactions of Jerry Seinfeld and Kesha. These texts, when paired with stepped typography, work to create a visual format for the reader to better understand the scope of interruption in our daily lives.

- 18 The Curved Bricks of Education: Only Artists Can Do It
Digitally-printed book
7 x 10 in., 64 pp.
2018

This publication was designed to support ongoing research by Turnaround Arts California, an organization bringing artists into California public schools.

- 19 Every Surface is a Volume
Laser print book
5.5 x 8.5 in., 24 pp.
2018

A range of images referencing voids are printed here in two colors and set along with a brief written narrative. Instead of imposing the pages for saddle-stitch printing, I instead printed the spreads in sequential order and bound them, unsure of what the final bound publication would look like. I consider this an experiment in examining the volume of a printed publication—by layering the spreads by literally stacking them atop one another, a certain kind of physical depth might be achieved in an otherwise flat medium.

- 20 The Simpsons Didn't Fuck Me Up (But a Talking Sandwich Did): Reflections on the Forbidden Television of My Childhood
Laser print book
6.5 x 8 in., 52 pp.
2018

This book of five essays details my experiences with television while growing up in the late 1980s and early 90s. The idea originated from an assignment to find a historical document on microfilm and respond to it. I chose a February 1989 issue of TV Guide; looking through the listings, I began to recall both shows that I watched and those that were forbidden to me as a child, like WWF wrestling and The Simpsons. Ultimately, it wasn't shows like these that scarred me—it was banal commercials for mustard and air fresheners that have stuck in my head for years.

- 21 Readymade
Digitally-printed books (set of 18) and wood shelves
6 x 9 in., 100 pp. each
2019

This project arose from a list of overheard phrases spoken during classes and in studio discussions over the past two years. Each has become the title of a "readymade" thesis, which consists of a publication with an official (and customizable) cover page and 99 subsequent blank pages. Titles are rendered in my typeface, Alliance Gothic, on sparse black covers. By creating multiple, aesthetically similar publications, they begin to function less like publications and more like objects. In a way, it was an exercise in unravelling the notion of the thesis as well the idea of the publication, taking the air out of both. It also serves as an interesting survey of the topics, concerns, and jokes that characterize the last two years of our graduate studio.

This Eternal Dance Together

Lost in the Process

Just Accept This Pithy Aphorism (For What It Is)

A System of Production

Still Processing

Design is a Nightmare

Last On, First Off

Am I in The Dumpster Now?

Print For Me

That's Just How I Think

I Don't Want to Be Prescriptive, But

It's Miller Time

It's a Sinkhole

If You Play With It Too Much, It Might Rip

Hurdles

Not That I Don't Like Feedback

A Rational End Point

...And Then Death

- 22 The Object Plays Itself
Laser print book, wire rope, fasteners
8.5 x 10.5 in., 237 pp.
2019

This installation is a reaction to the school of the arts' policy shift toward forbidding posters or flyers in building stairwells. Eventually I figured out that the fire code itself would become the thing that violated the fire code. I printed and bound the 237-page Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code hung it from a cable in the Pollak Building stairwell. The bright red cover displays the title of the piece, configured in black type, obscuring the material contained inside and hinting to its self-reflexive nature.

- 23 Faculty Research Presentations (Objects+Methods Lecture Series)
Poster
36 x 48 in.
2017

Faculty lecture series as monster-truck rally.

- 24 Sixty Seconds in Situ
Video installation, 1:08 run time
Banners (2), 27 x 71 in. each
Posters (2), 24 x 36 in. each
2017

Sixty Seconds in Situ originated from a brief assignment in creating one-minute sculptures with found materials from the graduate studio. I initially manipulated and collaged photographs of my "sculptures" into a set of banners then printed them at larger-than-life scale. After printing additional copies of the photos, I filmed myself manipulating them in different ways and assembled the resulting clips into a video collage. The still images and videos build, overlap, and recede on a black-and-white grid as a timer counts down one minute, echoing the temporal nature of the prompt.

Together, the pieces of this installation served as a record of experimentation and of the graduate studio itself. The title refers to the fact that the site of each of these sculpture experiments and the exhibition site were one in the same. Unforeseen to me, the combinations, juxtapositions, and happy accidents that transpired

through this process ended up creating a kind of documentation of the sights, sounds, and energies surrounding the first semester of grad school.

- 25 Fair Pay is Fair Play (VCU Adjuncts for Fair Pay)
Risograph Poster
11 x 17 in.
2017

Designed as part of a series in conjunction with the rest of the first year MFA cohort, this poster speaks to issues of fair pay for adjunct faculty at VCUarts. We affixed the posters to public surfaces in the Pollak Building, and provided them to demonstrators at a December campus rally.

- 26 Open Night 2018
Poster
24 x 36 in.
2017

I designed this poster on a whim one evening during the final week of the semester as publicity for my fellow MFA students. The gradients were inspired by the website scrolling experiments of my colleague, Drew Sisk.

- 27 Eric Hu (Objects+Methods Lecture Series)
Poster
36 x 48 in.
2018

The title of this lecture, Get In Where You Fit In, inspired imagery of plants growing obstinately.

- 28 Hyperconstruction: First Year MFA Candidacy Show
Poster
18 x 24 in.
2018

An visual exploration of the mix of digital and analog work made by my MFA cohort.

- 29 GDes MFA Fourth Semester Reviews
Poster
36 x 48 in.
2018

Searching for more loose, freer methods of working, I drew this lettering by hand with a mouse. The leaning shapes were inspired by a stack of clementines.

- 30 A Poster is A Poster is A Summer at VCUarts
Poster
11 x 17 in.
2018

My personal take on Gertrude Stein, used to promote a summer class that almost no one enrolled in.

- 31 Caitlin Cherry: Etherpaint
Posters (2), 35 x 44 in., 11 x 17 in.
Vinyl gallery signage, 30 x 20 in.
2018

I created promotional materials and signage for Caitlin Cherry's exhibit at The Anderson, which were influenced by the constantly shifting color in her work, selfie culture, and her portrayals of commodified black female bodies.

- 32 VCUarts Sculpture MFA Open House
Poster
22 x 28 in.
2018

I used my typeface, Echo, in stacking typographic forms that paired with the work of sculptor Raul de Lara.

- 33 Playing in The Dark
Poster, 24 x 33 in.
Exhibition Guide, 5.5 x 7.5 in.
2018

The promotional materials for this graphic design MFA group show used imagery of voids and shadows, two of the thematic elements of our fall 2018 grad workshop.

- 34 Braulio Amado (Objects+Methods Lecture Series)
Poster
36 x 48 in.
2019

This poster uses disjointed typography, messy doodling, and web iconography to echo the hand-painted billboards in Braulio's show, Linking Park, at The Anderson, in which website links stand in for the actual art.

- 35 A Curve in the Shape of the Day (GDes Summer Courses 2019)
w. Jason S. Wright
Poster
24 x 36 in.
2019

Jason provided me with a few digital sketches; I picked my favorite to pair with type. The title is a nod to my favorite line from John Updike's novel, Rabbit At Rest.

- 36 If You Meet Your Thesis on the Road, Kill It (B.H. Fourth Semester Review)
Poster
24 x 36 in.
2019

This poster for my fourth semester review visually references several of the things I've been thinking about in terms of design—working loosely, turning the paved "road" on its end, and playing with language and text. The decapitated Buddha statue, tilted askew, along with images of the guillotine, recall the origin phrase, about killing the Buddha if you meet him.

- 37 Typeface Design, Summer 2019
Poster
8.5 x 11 in.
2019

A quick typographic experiment to advertise my summer course in type design.

- 38 An Act of Language is an Act of Negotiation
w. Ivy Li
Poster
11 x 17 in.
2018

This was an exercise in responding to work produced by my colleague, Ivy Li. Her initial poster captured the

awkwardness and confusion of an employment contract written in two different languages (Mandarin and English). The contract was stamped so that an insignia covered the edges of several pages, a curious feature that she portrayed in her initial design. I took her printed poster and folded it several times to mimic this visual, then used it as a literal object to anchor my new poster. The accompanying title was my own observation about the very act of language, itself an act of negotiation.

- 39 Nouns
Website
Dimensions variable
2018

As an experiment, I assembled all of the nouns from my writing from the first half of the Fall 2018 semester. Then I put together a simple webpage using HTML, CSS, and Javascript that arranges four of these nouns on the screen at a time, one in each quadrant. One quadrant updates every three seconds. I was interested in seeing what kinds of random word combinations the browser would display.

- 40 Arts Differential
Inkjet print on vinyl banner
240 x 36 in.
2018

This piece is an exploration in activating public space through the use of language. A 20-foot-long banner, strung 50 feet above the Pollak Building courtyard, creates a new surface in this previously empty volume. The words call attention to two previously invisible things—the literal open space at the building's interior, and the "arts major differential," a frustratingly vague biannual fee charged to every VCUarts graduate student, the use of which remains largely a mystery.

- 41 The Inevitable Damage of Words Colliding in the Mind
Inkjet print on backlit film
28 x 17 in.
2018

This text piece, printed on backlit film and mounted on a lightbox, speaks to the somewhat inert nature of words when isolated as image-objects, and the subsequent impact they cause when the mind processes them as language. It also references the way in which the human mind corrupts, misinterprets, and reshapes language in ways that do damage to both meaning and intention.

- 42 The Act of Rereading These Words is an Act of Time Travel
Black vinyl text
50 x 13 in.
2018

This vinyl installation is meant to establish a moment of introspection or reflection for the viewer. Placing it in a busy intersection of the Pollak Building, where passersby encounter it multiple times a day, emphasizes to the themes in the language. The text refers to the idea that the act of re-reading a text has the power to take one back to the last time they read it, which I like to think of as an everyday form of time travel.

- 43 Everything That Could Happen (Already Has)
Wood, acrylic, black vinyl text
Dimensions variable
2018

This installation plays with the concept of the multi-verse, a theory of quantum physics that asserts that—time and space being infinite—all possible realities exist. If this is true, then everything that could possibly have happened in our reality, but did not, has happened in some alternate universe. It serves as a meditation on the problem of creative decision-making, and how that struggle might be seen as ultimately pointless in an infinite existence. It also explores the interplay between language and objects, and the way in which texts can reframe the familiar.

- 44 The Sound of a Space Being Divided Against Its Will
Applique text on cotton flag
60 x 36 in.
2018

This text piece takes the form of lettering applied onto a black flag. The lack of movement from the flag and the playful nature of the language—is there such a thing as a space making a sound as it is divided?—creates a kind of anti-sound piece. The statement, combined with the stillness of the object, encourages the viewer to consider both the properties of spaces and the possibility of a space having agency.

- 45 This is Unofficial Business
Wood, acrylic, black vinyl text
24 x 49 in.
2019

This is a response to VCUarts' recent installation of large "VCU yellow" bulletin boards beside the elevator on each floor of the Pollak Building. An accompanying memo states that all posters, announcements, and other "official business and forms of expression" should only be posted in these provided spots; ephemera posted elsewhere will be removed. I constructed a blunt sign, painted to match the shade of VCU's, with text that raises the question of what exactly makes an object "official."

- 46 The Thing
Black vinyl text
192 x 114 in.
2019

Following several previous experiments with using typographic installations to comment on institutional spaces, for my thesis exhibition at The Anderson, I chose to use the gallery setting as a prompt for the work. I wrote an 801-word text which plays with the kinds of expectations and preconceptions viewers bring to such a space. Back-and-forth, concrete descriptions of "the thing" continually negate each other, while the imposing scale and starkness of the piece challenges viewers to decide for themselves what exactly it is that they are seeing.

- 47 Compressed Alphabet
4,594 black vinyl letters
Dimensions variable
2019

A sculpture: 152 square feet of vinyl letters, crumpled.

Colophon

The Day is Just Another Surface
First edition, 2019.

Written and designed
by Brooks Heintzeman

Typeset in Alliance Gothic
by Brooks Heintzeman

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Park Myers

Please accept this complimentary substitute for the thing you were expecting to see, as proof of your commitment to such things.

