Connective Movements

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Contents

Abstract

Connective Movements describes the winding, associative thoughts gathered from long conversations with colleagues and internal dialogue with writers, philosophers, and filmmakers. Using the visual essay, I follow points of interest through labyrinthine and idiosyncratic logics. Collage and montage results in an assemblage of visual ideas both analytic and personal. Although the outputs vary, my body of work has been informed by a sustained inquiry into moving image with a focus on small moments and subjectivity: cloudwatching can spin into thoughts on communication, or simple, everyday words burrow into experience and memory. With this aim, I use the constituent parts of image, sequence, and narrative to cultivate spaces for extended interiority.

I want to talk to you about the connection between thought and moving image.

Eadweard Muybridge,
The Horse in Motion (1878)

The Horse in Motion (1878), a work of chronophotography assembled from a set of concurrent still images, stands at the beginning of film. Even seeing the frames sitting together, there is the implication of movement.

It's easy to just focus on the images and ignore the gap between them.

Left: (Detail) Eadweard Muybridge,
The Horse in Motion (1878)

Right: (Detail) Aidan Koch,
Stone Blue Sky (2022)

This near-instantaneous jump across this gap is what enables the movement of images and the possibilities of expansion and juxtaposition. In film, the gaps are so tightly sutured as to be invisible, so this might be more intuitive in the panel breaks of comic books.

At one point I realized this gap also characterizes the movement between ideas.

The diagram in question.

If I have trouble explaining what I mean, I tend to draw it—doodling spindly schematics. And that's what I showed my external critic, Ayham Ghraowi: A diagram to explain my thinking in our first meeting.

He mercifully stopped me partway through my rambling explanation after I said the name "Heidegger" and drew my attention to the fact that none of these links were being demonstrated and, instead, were simply held in a fixed constellation of "just trust me." Drawing a line does not make a connection. Each line indicates a connective move being made. And it's in that movement that someone can be brought along with you.
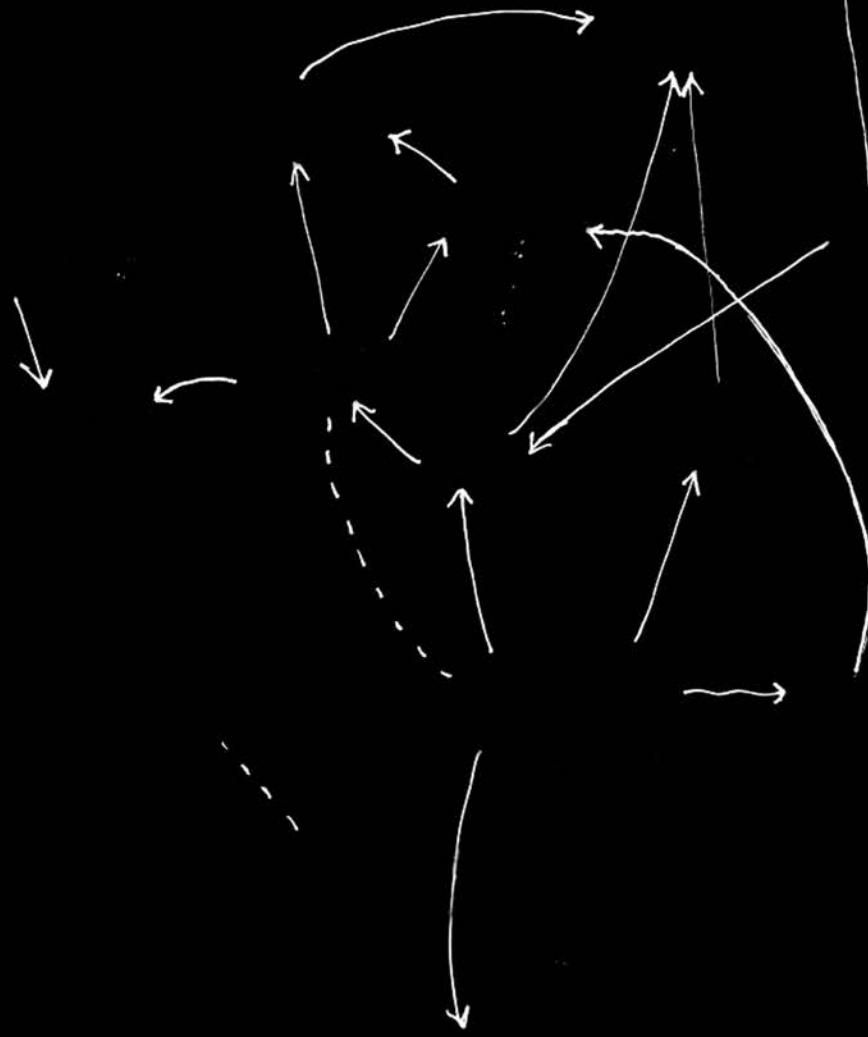
And what I began to see.

I would describe what happened in my mind as a figure-ground inversion. Where I was initially focused on the nodes—the points of reference—I began to look at the lines between them.

On their own, the arrows resemble vectors. In physics, the notation of a vector describes two things: direction and velocity. It is a symbol of movement.

INFORMATION
SOURCE   TRANSMITTER   RECEIVER   DESTINATION

MESSAGE   SIGNAL   RECEIVED   MESSAGE
                                   SIGNAL

NOISE
SOURCE
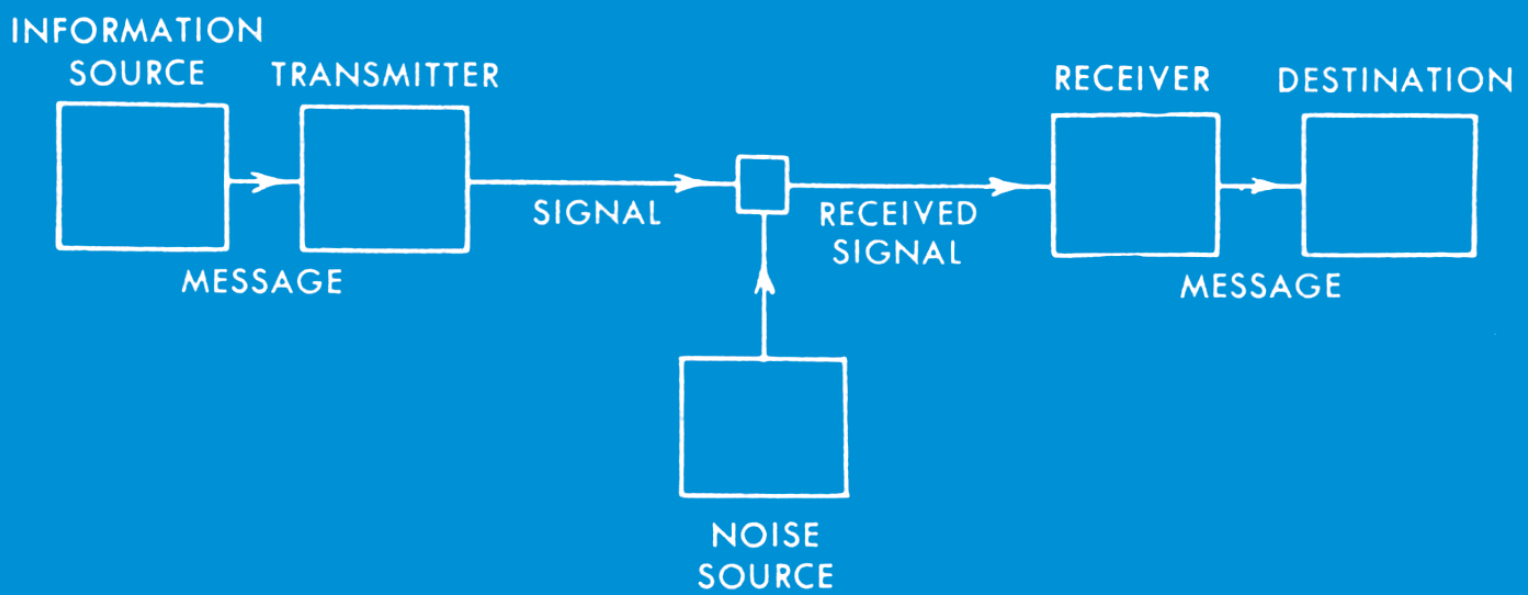
Claude Shannon's diagram of the flow of
information within a system.

The vector's single-minded directedness
brings to mind Claude Shannon's communi-
cation system diagram and its flow of infor-
mation from sender to receiver.

As a designer, I often feel like the vector
between the client's "information source"
and the final form of the "transmitter."
The message is linear and direct. But does
communication always need to be like that:
instrumental and efficient?

* I believe its personalized character comes from a combination of experience, emotion, ideas, and references each person has—any one of which might be shared by multiple others, but finds its uniqueness in the particular combination found in that person.

What I imagine conversations might look like.
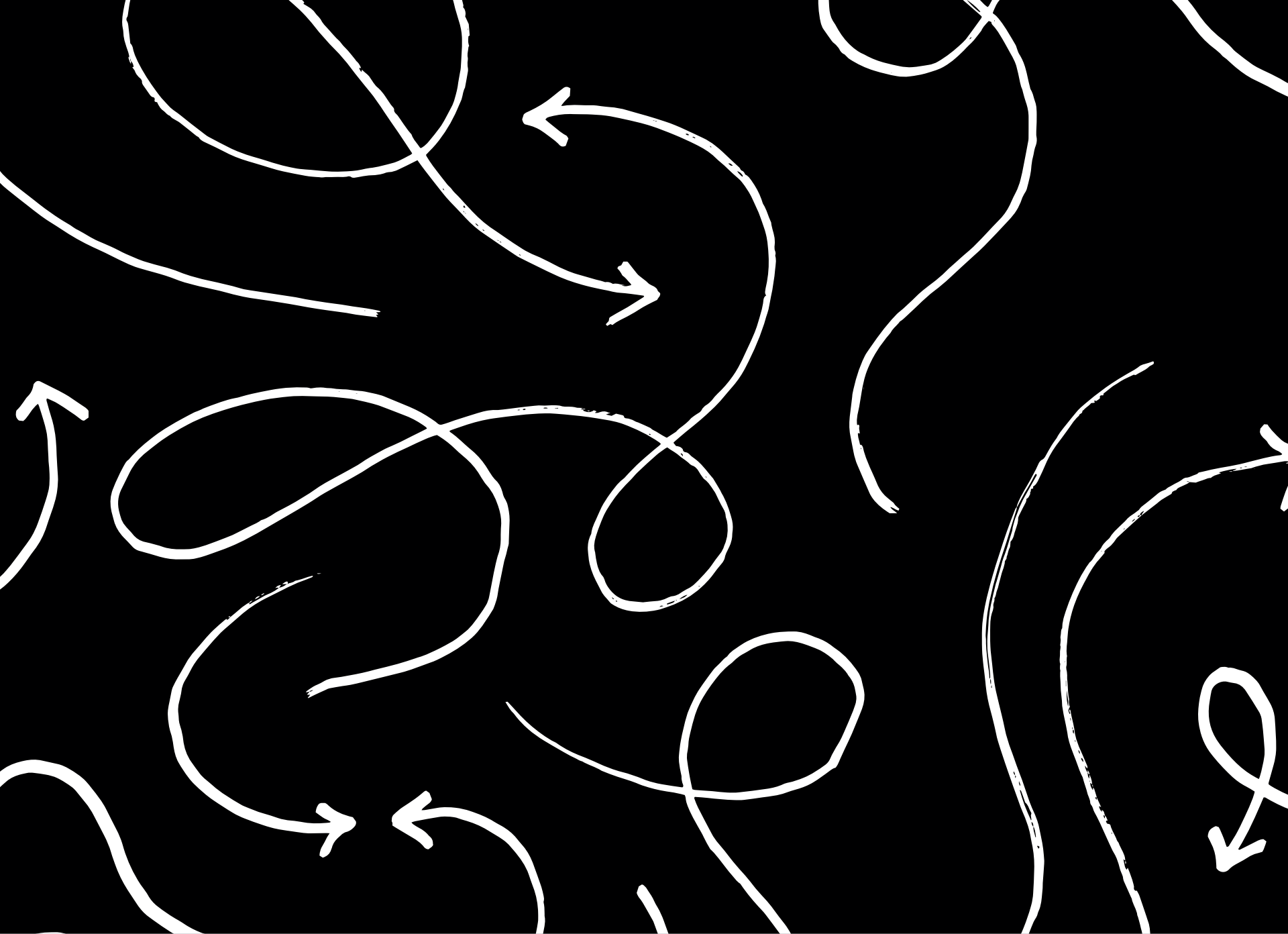
For me, rather, making connections is a process of wandering and noticing—a path of curiosity. I don't believe the things that make life worth living follow the directness of the vector.

If I were to instead diagram meaningful conversations or long thoughts, they might look like a collection of strange knots. Vectors on acid wandering around and looping back on themselves.

The particular character of this movement is a fingerprint-like representation of the person in thought or the people in conversation.*

1. Montaigne, "Of Idleness," p.21.

Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592) first published his *Essais* in 1580 and continued to add to them throughout his life in a process of accretion.

This wandering, questioning movement of thought is chronicled in Montaigne's essays. In "Of Practice," I'm fascinated by the way he moves from the inability to practice for death, to considering sleep as practice for death, to recounting a near-death experience after falling off his horse, to trying to understand how consciousness works during the experience of dying, to questioning his purpose of his self-imposed task of self-examination in the Essays.

Montaigne, himself, characterizes his mind as "giv[ing] birth to so many chimeras and fantastic monsters, one after another, without order or purpose, that in order to contemplate their ineptitude and strangeness at my pleasure, I have begun to put them in writing, hoping in time to make my mind ashamed of itself." [1] And I find myself identifying with a mind that can't control itself.
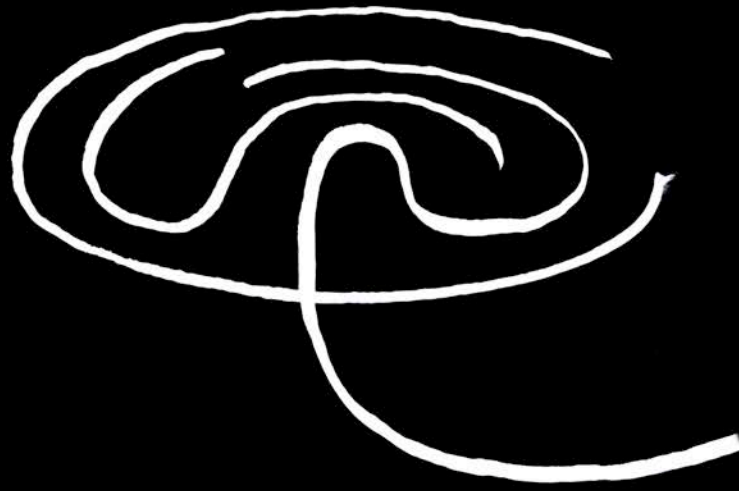
A labyrinth in becoming.

Visual Essay, Photo Essay, Essay Film—the "Essay" grafted onto different forms points toward something beyond a fixed literary artifact. "Essay" might be better described as an orientation or disposition toward a topic.

The title Montaigne gave to his collection, Essais, translates to something like "tries" or "attempts."

In that spirit, this thesis may be considered a collection of essays: a series of attempts at understanding and connection—with both ideas and people. They are attempts to move out of the streamlined production of messages and into the non-instrumental space of connection.

A labyrinth in becoming.

When putting this book together and mapping out my path of thought through the territories that have caught my attention, the path became a labyrinth.

Winding and doubling back on itself, it circles a set of preoccupations, among them: moving image, language, gaps, the interpersonal. And the points along this path—the individual inquiries and visual outcomes—even have qualities in themselves that could be called labyrinthine.

2. Odell, *How to Do Nothing*, p.7.   A labyrinth, formed.

Jenny Odell's description of the labyrinth as "attention holding architecture" helps to pull out some qualities of the labyrinthine:

"Labyrinths function similarly to how they appear, enabling a sort of dense infolding of attention: through two-dimensional design alone, they make it possible not to walk straight through a space, nor to stand still, but something very well in between."[2]

The labyrinth—as "attention-holding architecture"—sets the ground for a particular quality of thought to emerge that circles a point of interest. It allows a space for a "dense infolding of attention." I see the desire for my work—especially in moving image—functioning as attention-holding architecture; however, rather than the labyrinth's two-dimensional design laid on the ground, it is the plane of the screen that is face-to-face, addressing you.

The center of the labyrinth at the Grace Church Episcopal Church in Providence, RI.

It began with a conversation with Kelsey Elder on meditative walking where he mentioned offhandedly there was a labyrinth at the Episcopal church a few blocks away. I had no idea they appeared in that context or could be used to reach meditative states.

The maze was installed along the Providence River, on S Water, between Planet St and Power St, at the site of Providence's old docks.

Several months later, Sadia Quddus and I embedded a maze into a brick path in the attempt to evoke a meditative experience by disrupting the normal flow of pedestrian traffic into a more circuitous path.

We learned there is, in fact, a distinction to be made between a maze and a labyrinth. A labyrinth has one winding path, which enables its meditative qualities. A maze has many paths that quickly makes it into a game, which the project came to resemble rather than the meditative experience we were looking for.

(Detail) *Through the Labyrinth* of Berett Wilber walking the labyrinth.

This distinction would follow me over the next year as I stumbled across the form over and over again—in conversation, reading, browsing the internet. Each time I encountered it, the form accumulated a little more meaning, a little more weight, each time I saw it again from a slightly different angle.

I made Through the Labyrinth to exorcise the form that was pursuing me—to understand why I could not stop noticing labyrinths. I wanted to explore the form in a video essay, using a labyrinthine mode of thought. Reading the form through both personally associative and research-based registers, I orbited around film, myth, memory, screensavers, and any of the other inexhaustible lenses I could think of. I ended up seeing the labyrinth as a life-view: As a way of seeing and understanding the world.

Through the Labyrinth

Video, Sound   07:31
**Featuring: Berett Wilber** (GD MFA '24)

Through the Labyrinth is a video essay that discursively
explores the concept and form of the labyrinth using
a labyrinthine mode of thought. Rather than being purely
analytical, it winds through a series of different modes and
views—including the mythic, the pop-cultural, the historical,
and the literary—and pursues a desire to be transformed
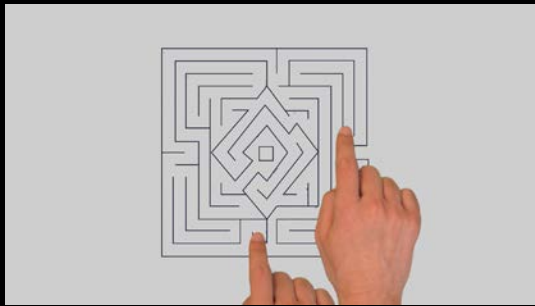by one's own questioning.
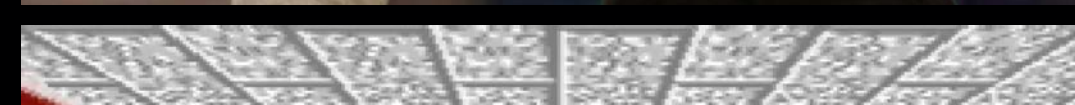
Ian Keliher

It was only recently that I learned there's a distinction between a labyrinth and a maze and it has to do with your path through it.
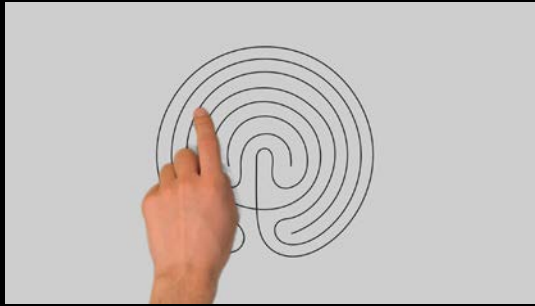
The labyrinth's path is a unicursal line that meanders toward a center.

The maze, on the other hand, offers possibility. There are many different paths that one might take here.


In the everyday use of the word "labyrinth," the distinction blurs. To call something a labyrinth is to imagine something tangled and confusing. But for most of its history, "labyrinth" referred to a unicursal form. It wasn't until the Middle Ages that one actually sees visual examples of mazes and the word itself doesn't come about until the 1300s.

Instead, there's a sequence of single-path labyrinths through history. Who was the first one to draw this? Early examples are found in Sardenia on graves. But how did it replicate and why?

One theory of the Cretan labyrinth is that it was a dance, so Deadalus—fabulous artificer and father of all designers—was apparently a choreographer too. I'm unsure of what to imagine for that . . .
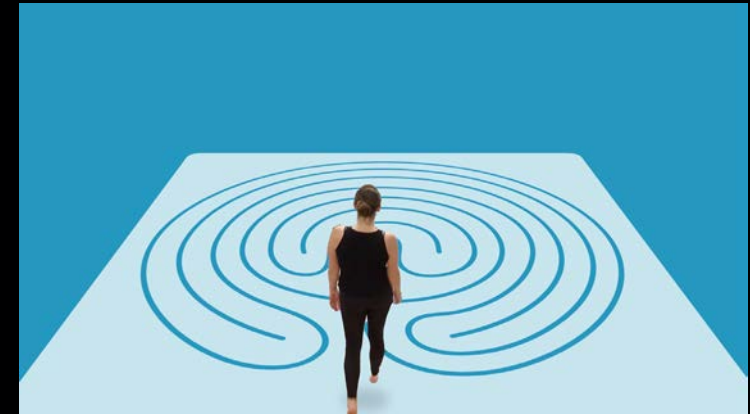
The single path through a labyrinth is known as Ariadne's thread, named for the myth.


But that raises the question of why Theseus would need Ariadne's thread at all if the labyrinth built by Dedalus to contain the Minotaur consisted of just one single, winding path. Even at this stage, labyrinth and maze seem to blur.

If you were to ask me about labyrinths before I knew about the distinction, I might've thought of the Windows 95 Maze Screensaver.
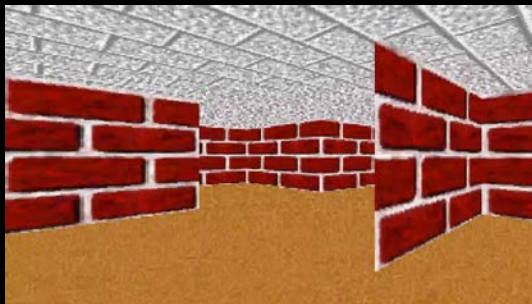
I remember just sitting in front of the screen and watching it run as a kid.
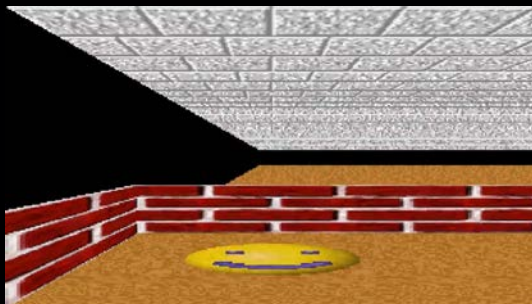
But looking at it now, the movement seems erratic and desperate.
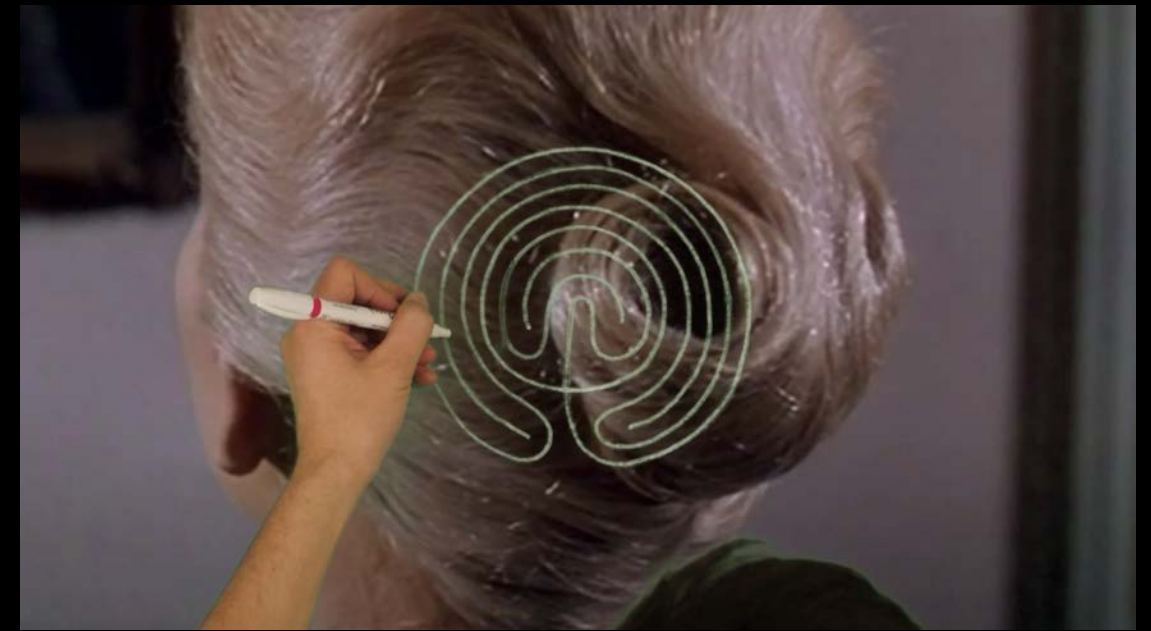
The path of the labyrinth is different: It loops back and forth in a meandering spiral circling tighter and tighter toward a center. Seeing the pattern,

I think of the first shot of Kim Novak in Vertigo. Hitchcock has pulled her bun into a glyph that pulls inward toward a center that darkens to black. The form repeats through time, matched in the painting.

But the vertigo of the labyrinth is not vertical, it spreads outward. It's the dizziness of being lost because we cannot see the structure that holds us.
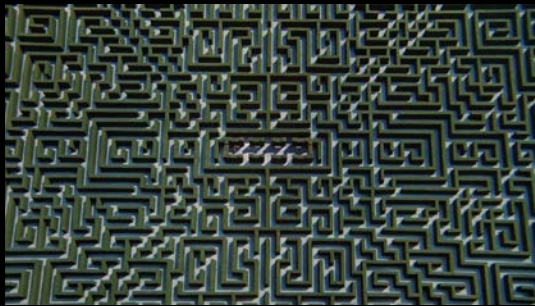

There's a peculiarity of understanding versus experience with the labyrinth.

To understand the labyrinth as a design is to see it in its totality—in plan view as architect-god.

To be within, however, is to surrender your understanding to the form itself.

But labyrinths typically don't have walls. They're usually embedded in the ground.

Two blocks away from my studio, there's a labyrinth at the Grace Episcopal church.

At a different Grace Episcopal church 200 miles away in New York City, there is also a labyrinth that is a recreation of the Medieval Chartres Cathedral labyrinth, which was spearheaded by a woman named Lauren Artress in the '90s.

In her book, *Walking a Sacred Path*, Artress is adamant about the transformative power of the labyrinth.
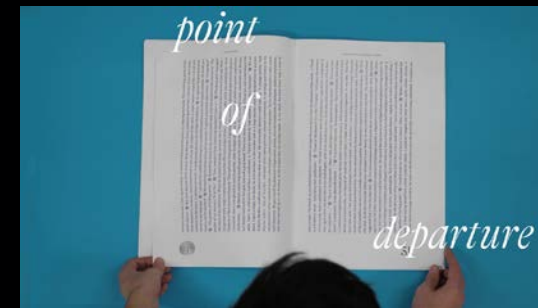

As I walk the labyrinth, I mostly feel self-conscious . . .

Am I doing this right? Am I feeling how I'm supposed to feel? I don't know if it's working. Is this a seven-circuit labyrinth? I'm not sure what the significance of that is . . . I think it might be five . . .

Stop.

After walking it, I think it works, I actually feel lighter. Unlike the maze, the labyrinth does not try to trick you. The only choice you make is to enter, and I start to understand the metaphor of the labyrinth and faith: staying on the path that's there if you look. The world becomes the labyrinth.

Other associations tumble out of Artress: unity, cosmology, the birth canal, sacred geometry. It's a mix of Christianity and Jungianism that I actually recognize from my grandmother who worked in the Episcopal Church. I can imagine *Walking a Sacred Path* sitting next to her copy of *Be Here Now*. But it's not a way of thinking that really feels available to me.

So. Maze or labyrinth. Contingency or fate. This is something Borges gets at. In "The Garden of Forking Paths," Borges introduces us to two characters: Yu Tsun—an academic on his way to kill a man—and Ts'ui Pên—Yu Tsun's ancestor and the author of the mysterious text, *The Garden of Forking Paths*.

I take Yu Tsun to represent the fate of the single path labyrinth. He says: "The author of an atrocious undertaking ought to imagine that he has already accomplished it, ought to impose upon himself a future as irrevocable as the past."

Ts'ui Pên, author of the textual labyrinth, insists on multiplicity: "All possible outcomes occur. Each is the point of departure for other forkings … in one of the possible pasts, you are my enemy; in the other, my friend."
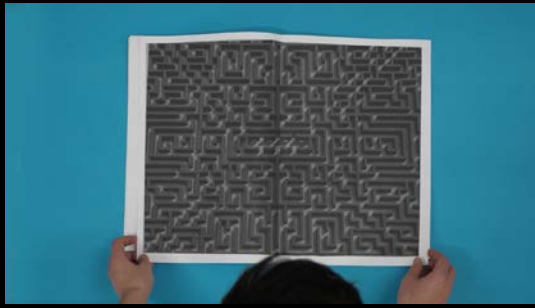
In the relationship between, we see understanding versus experience again. Ts'ui Pên as architect-god . . .

And Yu Tsun within the structure.

I do not want this either/or to resolve into clarity.

When I think about this, I think about Borges's eyesight.
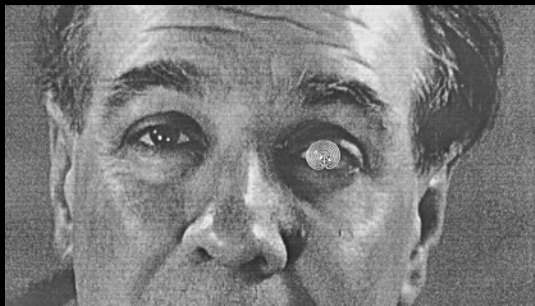
The way his cataracts slowly removed the distinctions of the world and if that might relate to his idealism—the primacy of mental concepts.

In this space, ideas can be suspended in paradox without need to resolve into one or the other.

I think about the way distinctions like maze or labyrinth, contingency or fate, might blur together in this sort of world.

I feel a hunger for a paradoxical labyrinth-maze. To allow multiplicity and agency but also feel the security of Ariadne's thread in my hand.
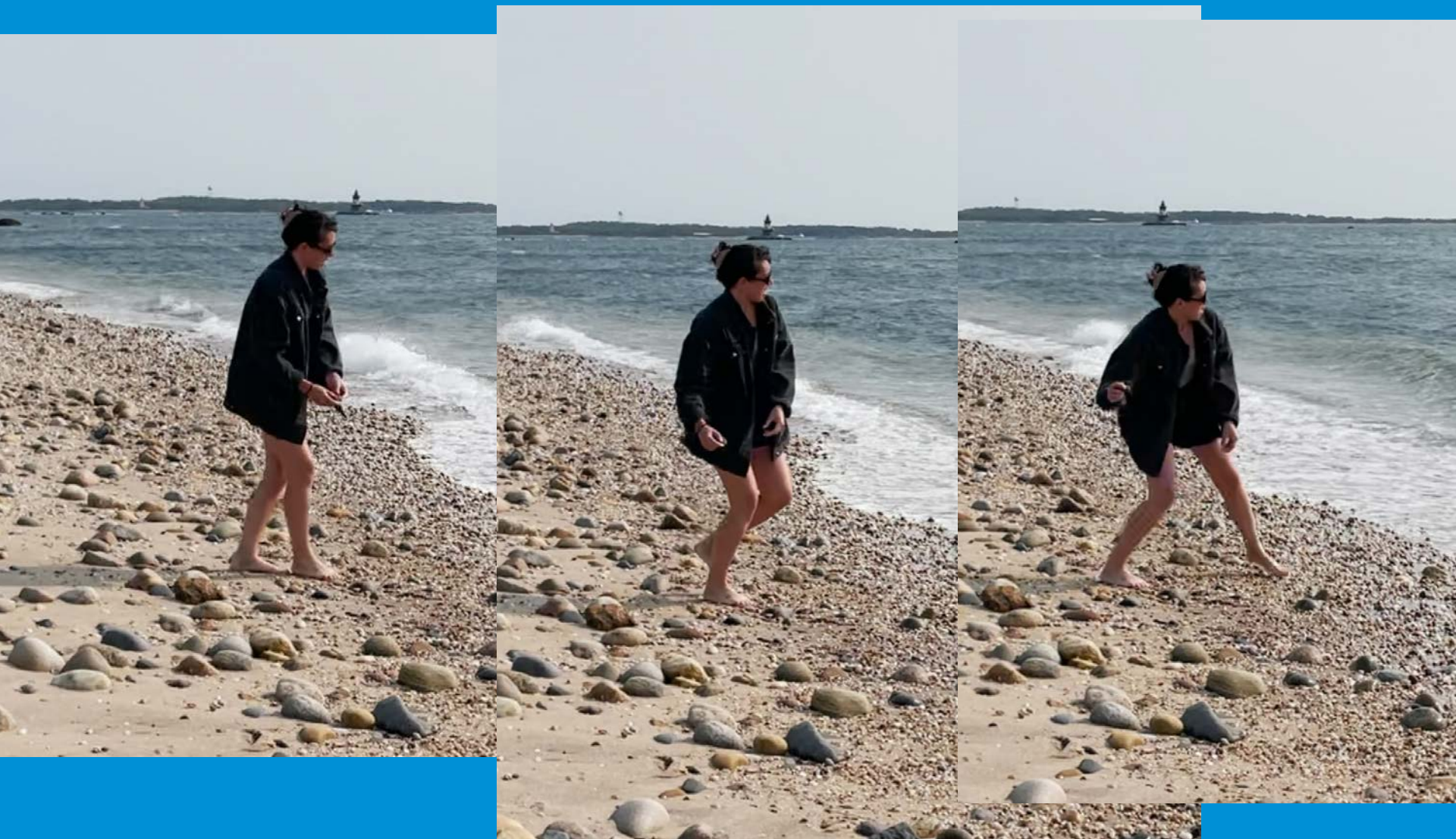
Lian throwing a rock in the water at the beach. Photo sequence recorded by her fiancé, Colin.

I think of another project that was set off by a similar experience of noticing and following. While working on something else, I see a sequence of images of my classmate Lian Fumerton-Liu throwing a rock at the beach.

There's something I find moving in the gesture that I can't explain. I ask her if she minds if I rotoscope the sequence and use it.

A onelegged sailor begs on the streets of Dublin

The Dedalus sisters discuss their lack of money

Blazes Boylan buys fruit and flowers for his tryst with Molly Bloom

Stephen Dedalus Crosses paths with his old vocal teacher

Boylan's secretary is at work in the office

Ned Lambert, Reverend Love, and J.J. O'Molly cross paths at an abbey

Tom Rochford explains his invention

Bloom shops for a book for Molly

Dilly waits for her drunken father

Tom Kernan has a drink at a bar after Paddy Dignan's funeral

Stephen crosses paths with his sister Dilly and sees his family's destitution

Simon Dedalus talks about his debt

Martin Cunningham is working on arrangements for Paddy Dignam's family

Buck Mulligan and Haines get lunch

(Detail) Lian's rotoscoped rock throw, first appearing in *Atlas* and then reappearing in the video *In Words*.

Looking at Lian's image brought up images of the Pacific Northwest, a childhood in rubber boots.

Feeling the limitation of instrumental communication, I wanted to draw out the experiences embedded in simple words. I wanted to know, do we feel echoes of past events everytime we say the word "rock" or "tree?"

In Words

Video, Sound   02:17
Featuring: Lian Fumerton-Liu (GD MFA '23)
**   Ásta Þrastardóttir** (GD MFA '22)
**   Moritz Lónyay** (GD MFA '23)
**   Sadia Quddus** (GD MFA '23)

In Words is a video exploring interiority and the personal, experiential dimension of language in contrast to taxonomic language systems such as dictionaries. I derived the content from conversations with four colleagues that were part open, winding conversation and part word association, which resulted in a set of personal definitions. From these interviews, I rotoscoped the footage and added my own associative layer to their thoughts.
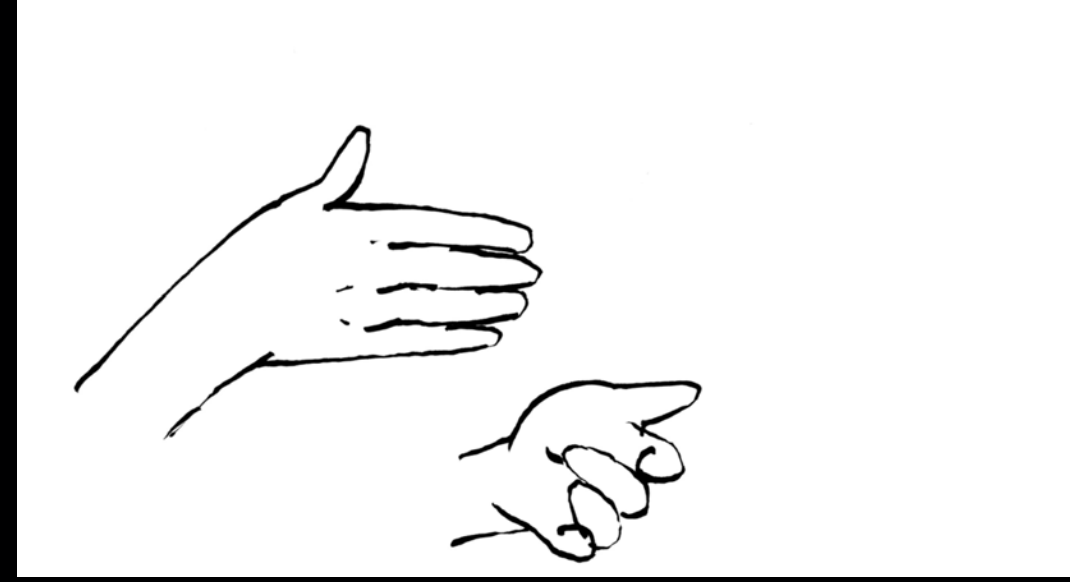
TREE / *tri* / *n.*

LF-L

**I think all my object
associations are memory-
based.**
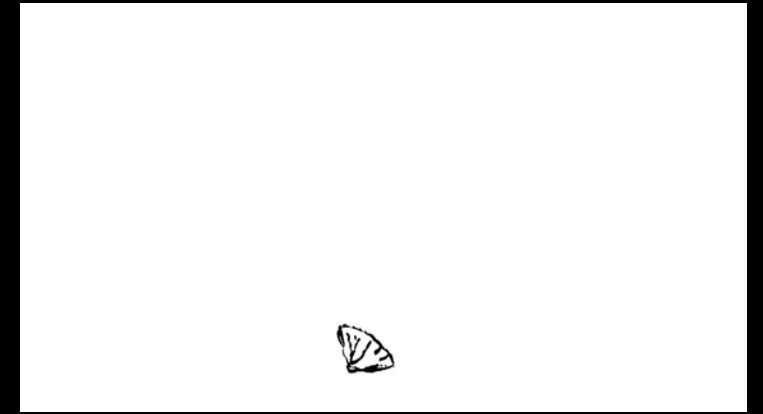
LF-L

**That's just the way
I like . . .**
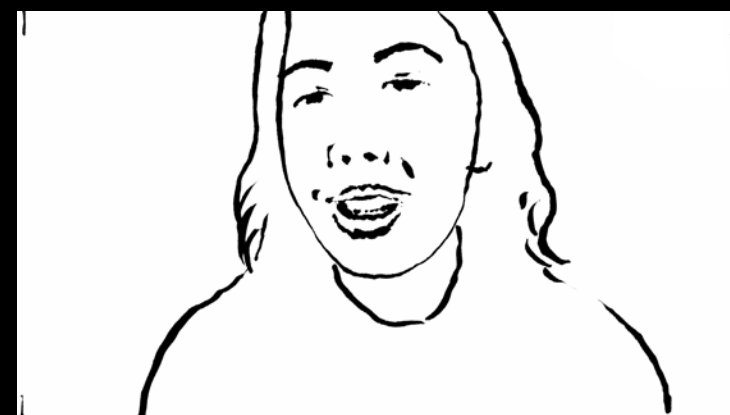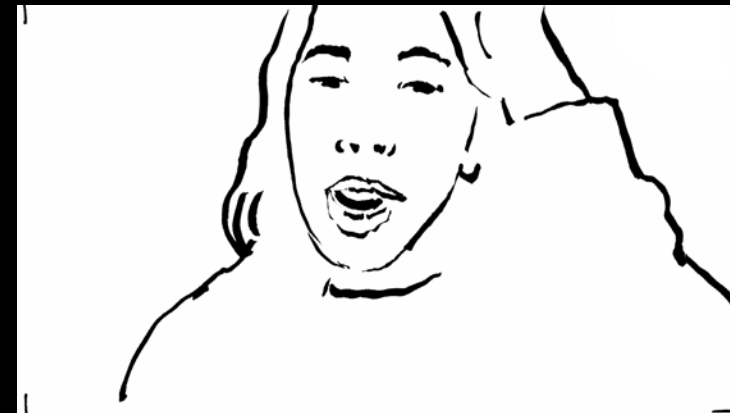
LF-L

**Not memory based but
not specific moments
in time.**
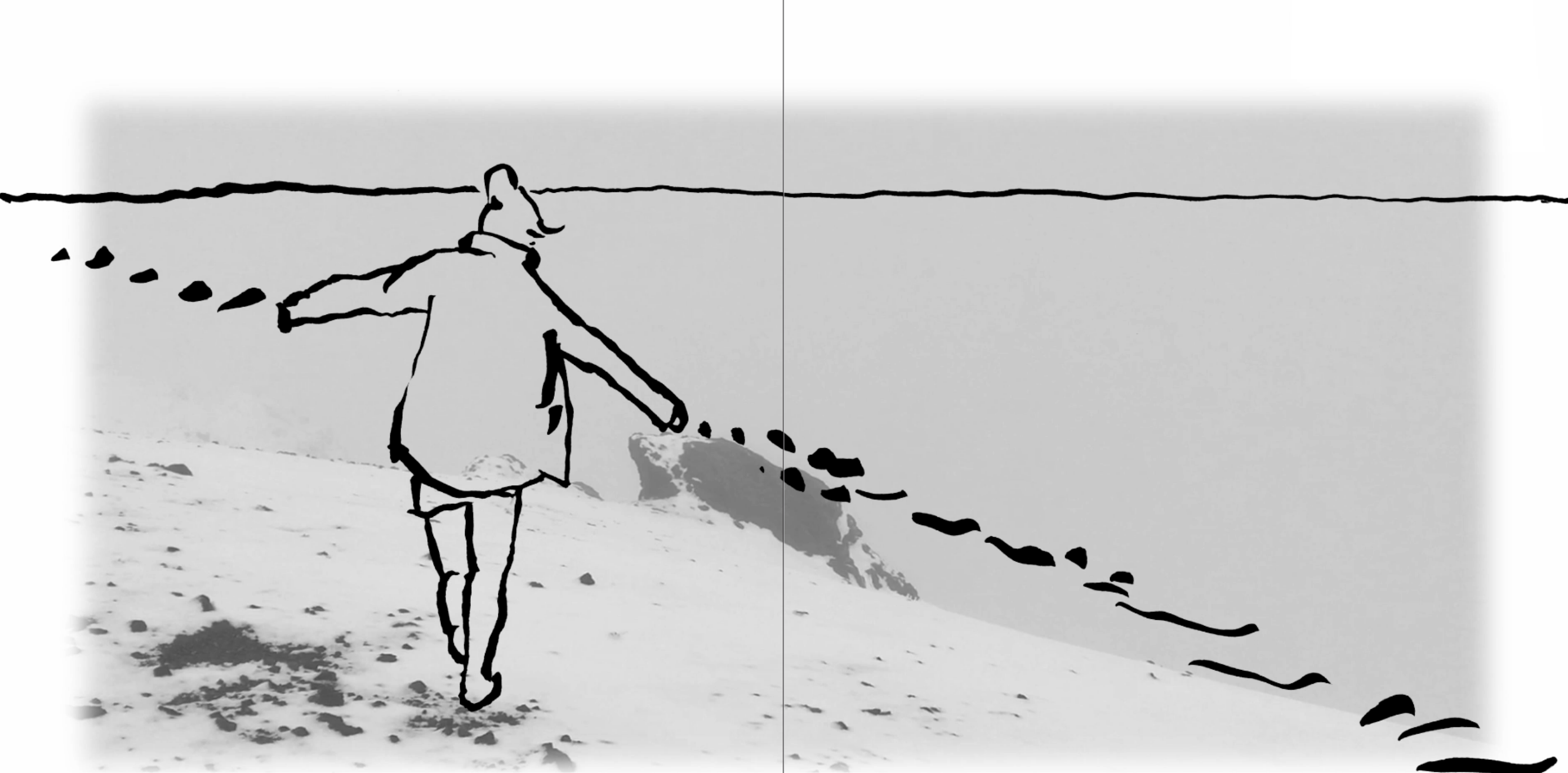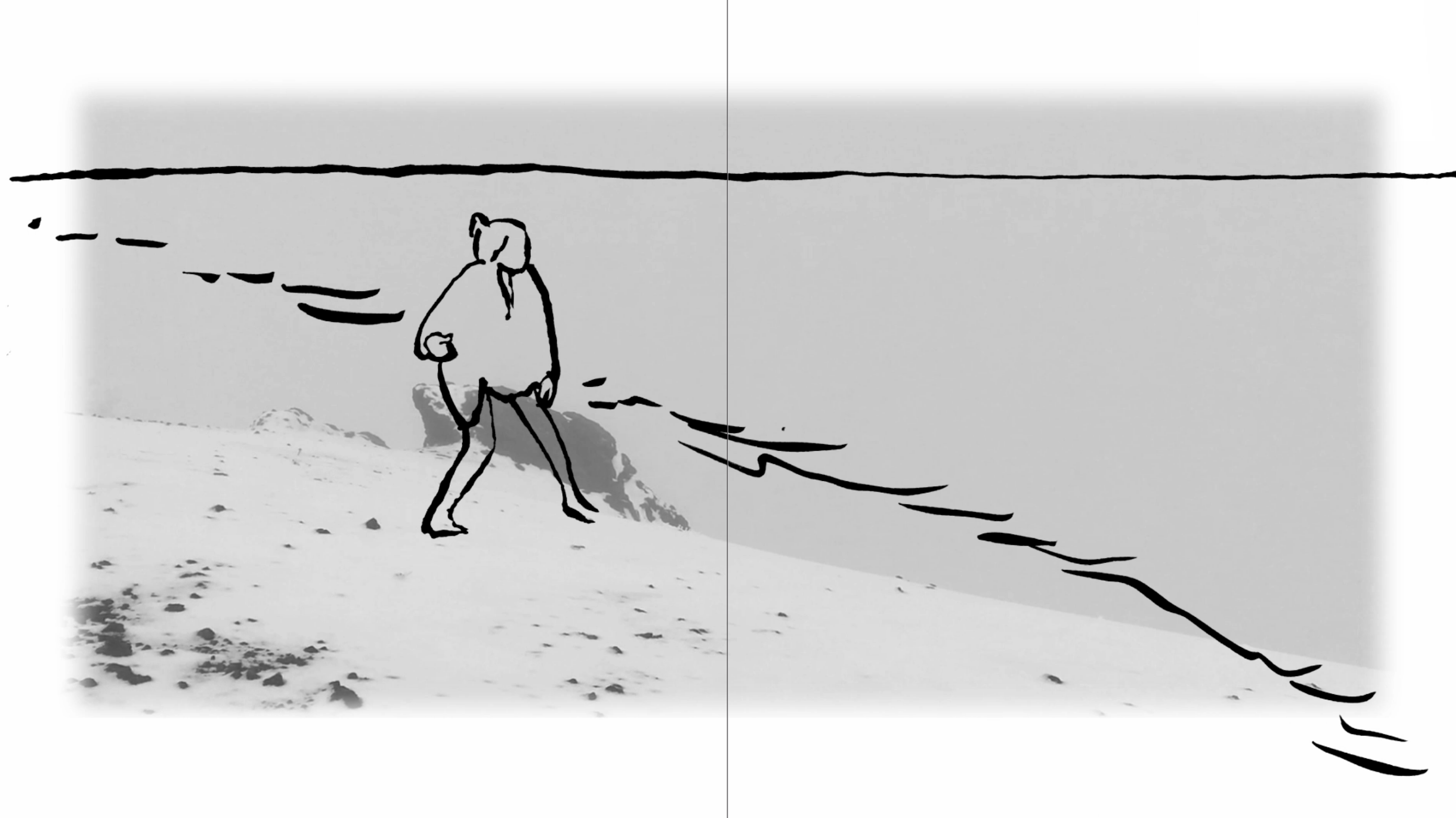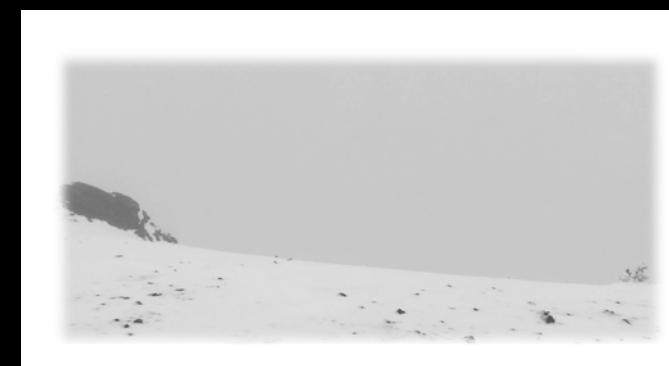
I feel nostalgic . . .

DANCE / *dans* / n.

Ásta Þrastardóttir

**There's a certain sense of lightness
that I feel when I dance.**

ÁÞ
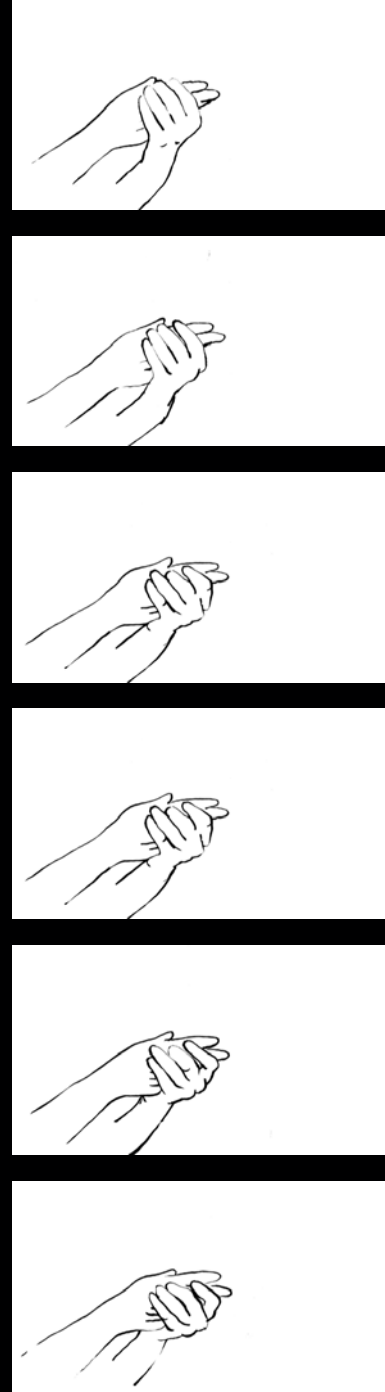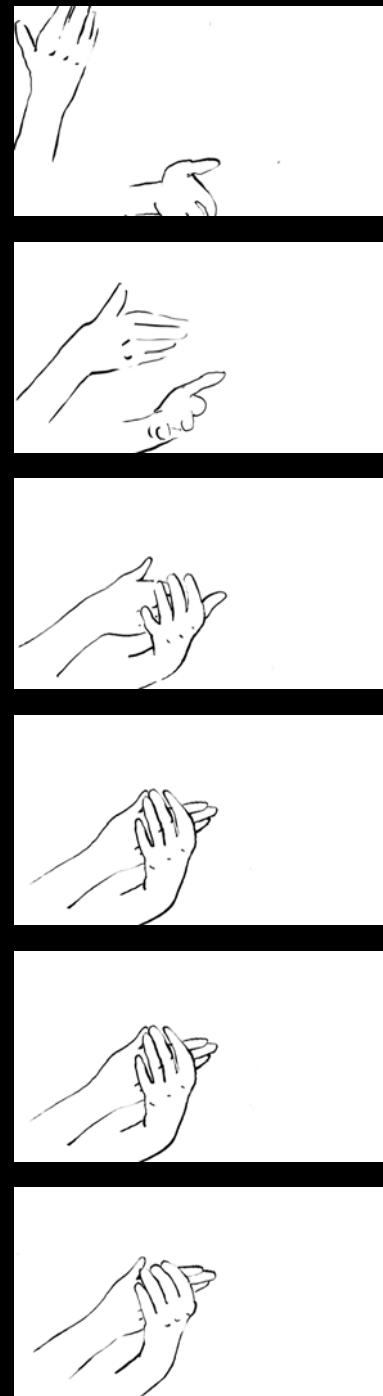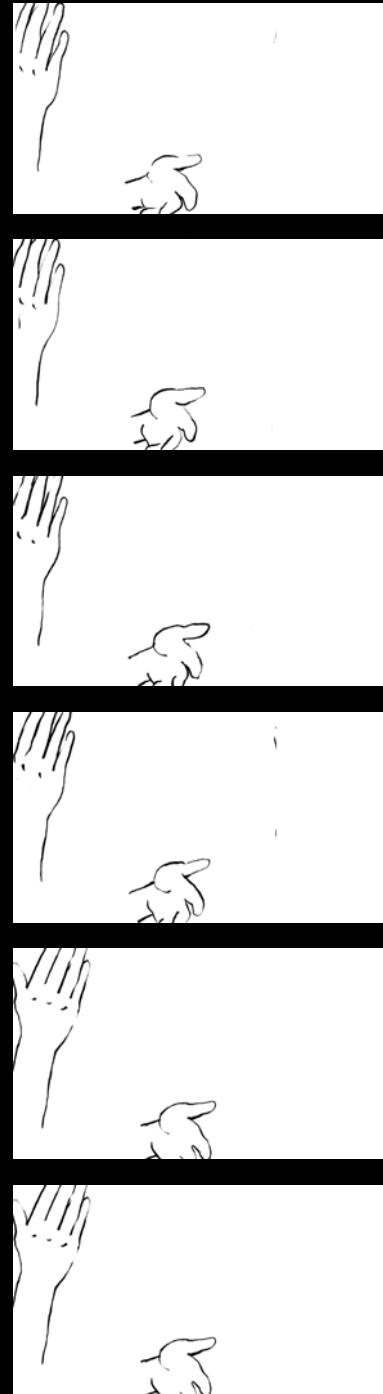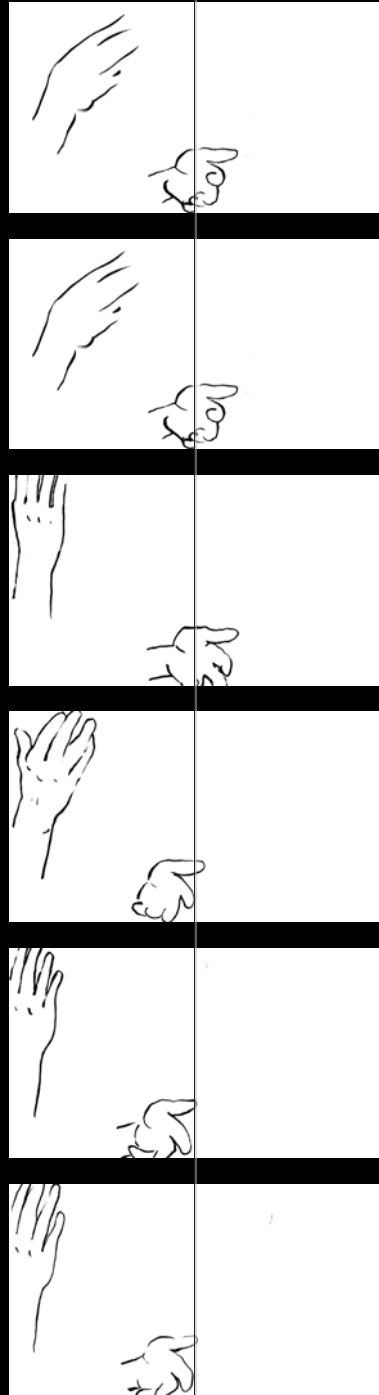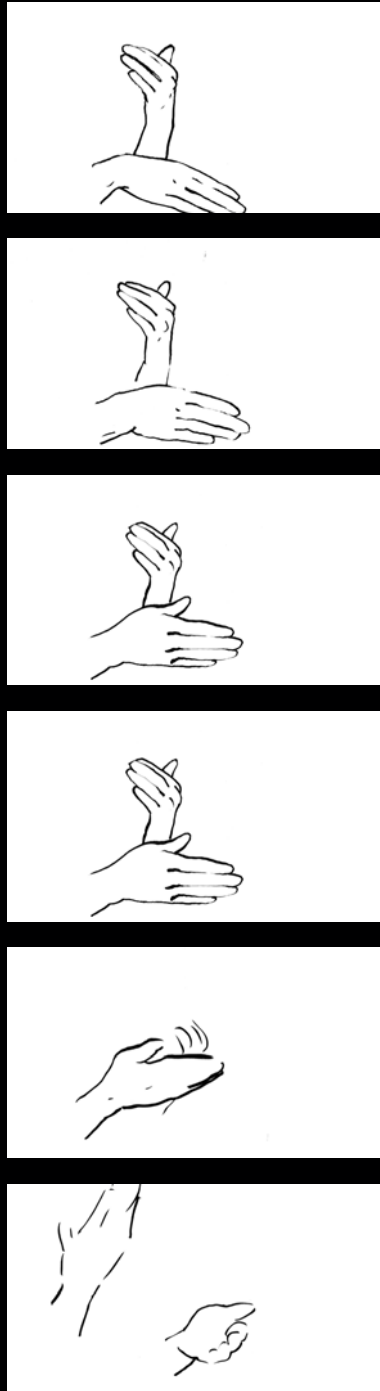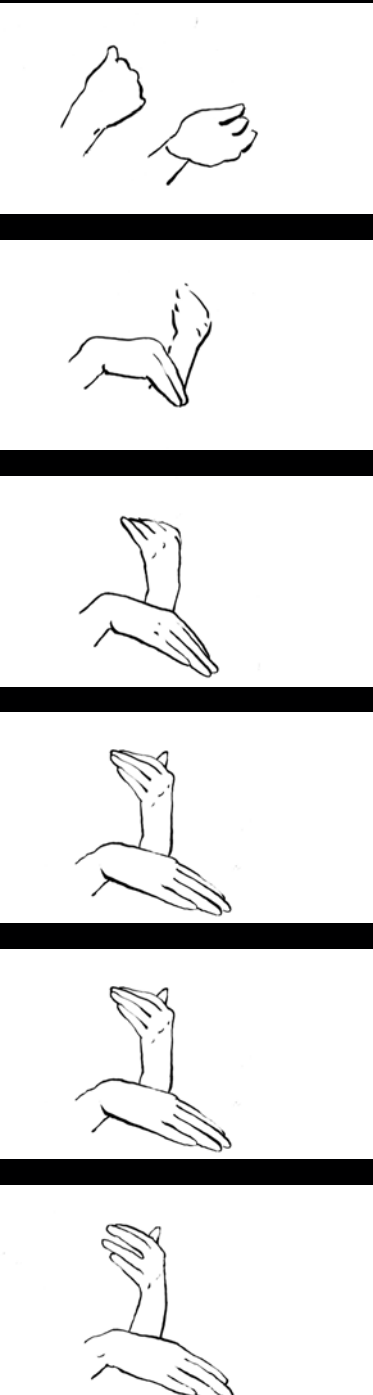
It's hard to explain …

ÁÞ

I'm a pretty serious person
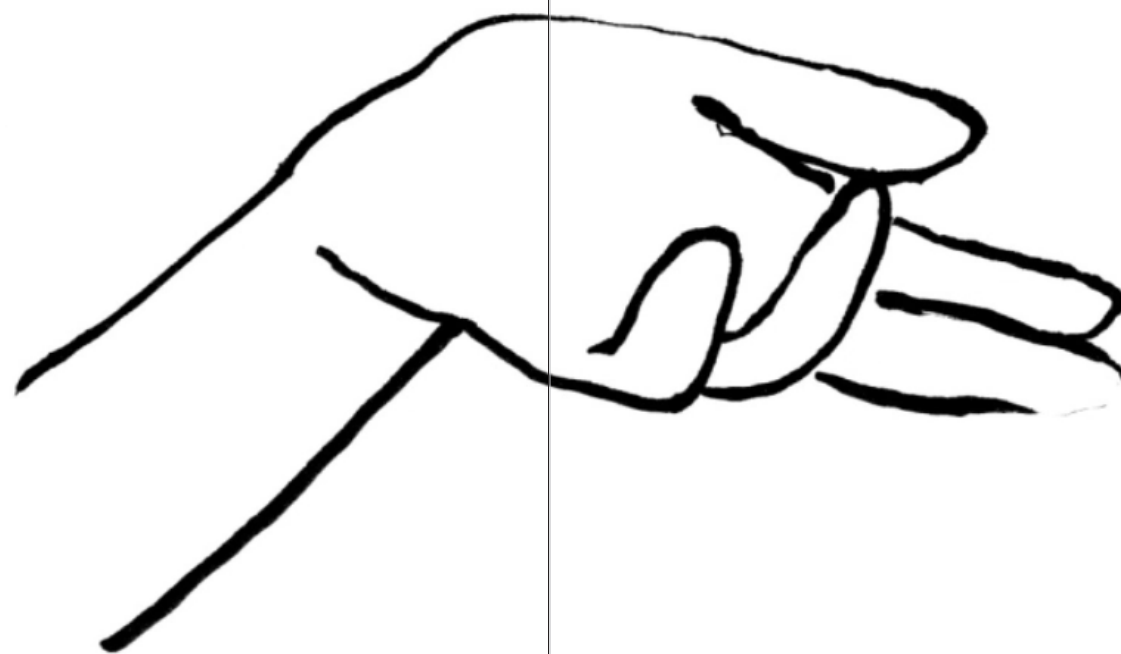
ÁÞ
**But this lightness and free moving
is really something that I love.**

BLUE / *blu* / n.

ML

**Cornflowers? Are they
called "cornflowers?"**

ML

**Those I really loved as
a kid growing up**

ML

They have a relatively loaded meaning—
symbolic meaning—in Austria and
Germany

ML

because during the time the National Socialist
Party was forbidden—before they were taking
over power

their symbol was to put a cornflower into
their breast pocket.
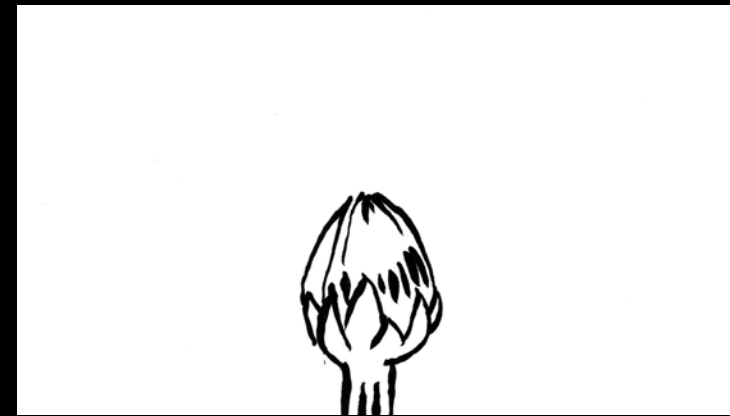
**So it has a certain
meaning**
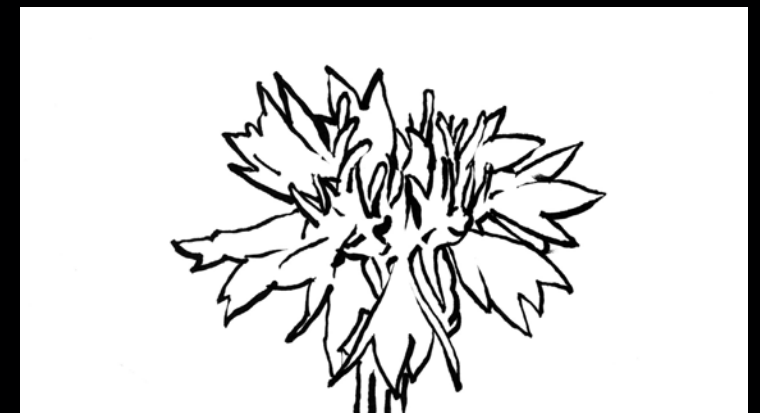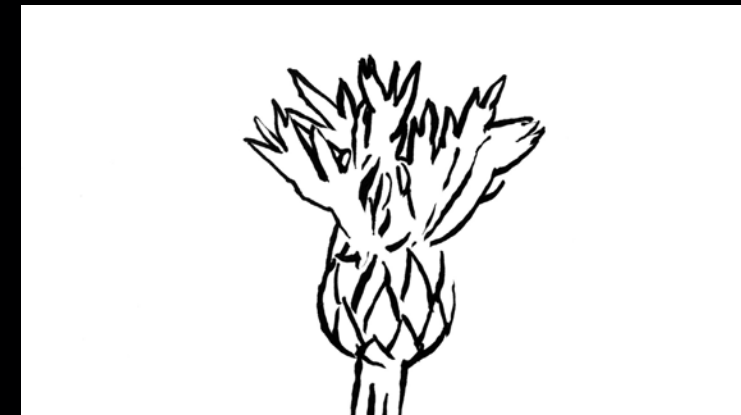
ML

some of the extreme right wing parties in
Austria and Germany are now using today

and they're saying, you know, "no, we're just
using the cornflower because we like flowers."

SUIT·CASE / 'sut,keɪs / n.

Sadia Quddus

I really like the big skies and the sprawling land that I am familiar with in Texas.

And I missed that.

So I had to just—even it was just like an hour away, right?—where I just drive to Newport . . .

SQ

But it's just the motion in itself
kind of restores my own sense of
self sometimes.
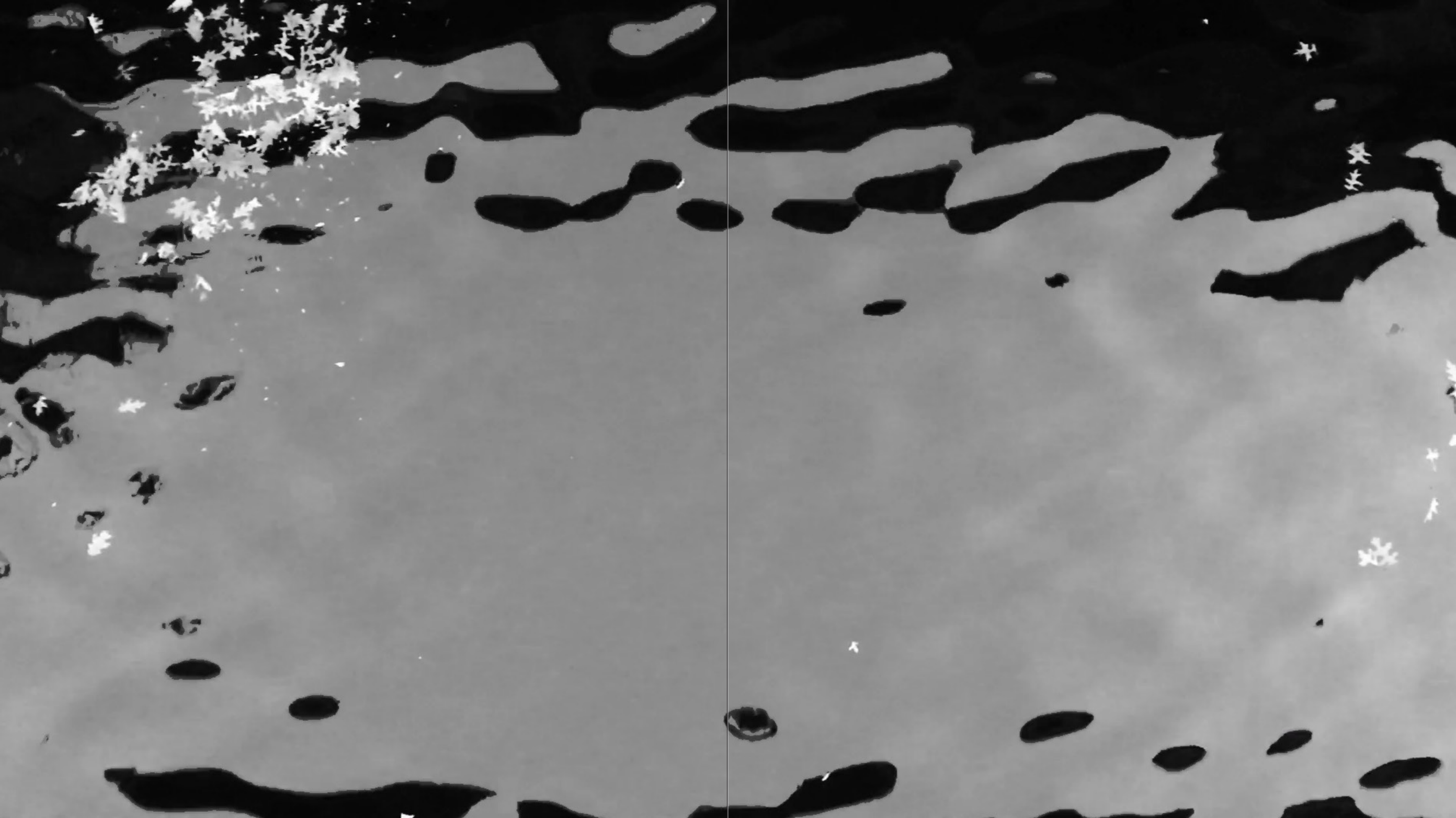
It doesn't always have to be like
a grand move.

(Detail) Lian talking about the way her memories work in *In Words*.

In investigating the experiental aspects of language in contrast to the objectified taxonomy of the dictionary, I found working with others brought me something I never could have found on my own.

The loose interview format allowed a space of intimacy and unfettered curiosity that would have been strange in other social contexts. My expectation of a word triggering a memory became something more open-ended, complex, and personal. Simple words called forth conversations that revealed interior landscapes: memories, experiences, embodied feelings, history, cultural heritage, or comments on the way their own mind worked. I was also taken with the way the moving image was able to visualize interiority in its mercurial, shifting presence.

(Detail) *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920) is a silent German film, which is a key work of Weimar-era German Expressionist cinema.

I think of the concept of mise-en-scène—the organization and articulation of elements within a frame, usually associated with film style and the authorship of the director—as being tied to this. Cinema is a medium built largely on photographic representation of surfaces, so internal states of characters here must be projected outward upon the world that they inhabit. There is something that feels true-to-life about this in the way subjectivity is shown to mediate the experience of the world through the lens of fantasy, memory, and both shared and idiosyncratic symbolic systems.

The first time I hear the term mise-en-scène is as a teenager in reference to *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920), which made use of wildly stylized sets and lighting to articulate the world in which the story takes place. Given the twist ending of the story (the story of the film is a delusion of a madman in an asylum), the film is explicitly concerned with the mediation of subjectivity.

(Detail) The press sheet of *Now and Then*.

I attempted to capture a similar sense of the way consciousness and memory colors the world but from my own experience by making a photo-essay derived from a trip to New York City.

It was the night before the New York Artbook fair and I was walking with my friend Olivia de Salve through Gowanus, Brooklyn. Waiting for the signal at the corner of 4th avenue, it struck me that I'd done this before, many times before: walked this street under the city's flourescent darkness. Returning to the city where I had lived for a decade after being gone for three years created an opening for memory that was usually spackled over by day-to-day life.

Using the form of the photo-essay, I wanted to capture this feeling of the present becoming a fluid veil, where the past rises up in unexpected ways. The camera becomes a way to capture a way of looking.

Now and Then

Silkscreen Publication   5" × 6.75"
Featuring: Olivia de Salve Villedieu (GD MFA '19)

Now and Then is a small, silkscreened publication and poster that documents a trip to the 2022 NY Art Book Fair and the spaces of memory that were opened up on my return to New York City. I made the publication using a press sheet to be able to fragment a collection of snapshots from my time living in the city throughout the publication.
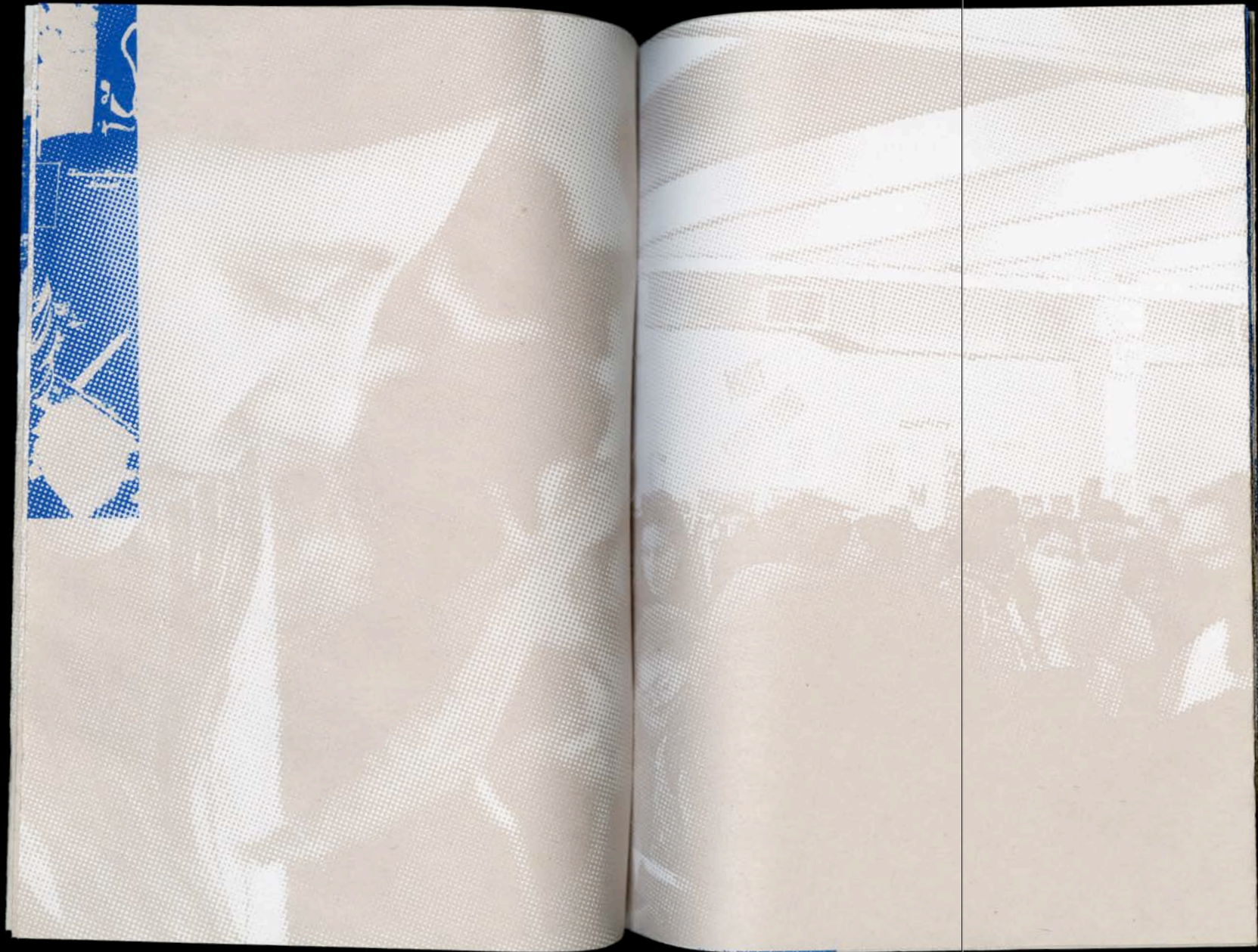
Photos in white are from my travels during the
NY Art Book Fair 2022, blue is from my camera
roll from the last ten years.

Next page: press sheet detail.
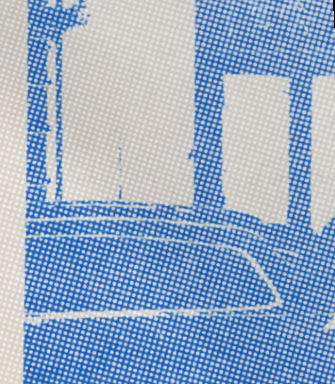
The publication also included some scans of printed matter purchased from the fair. Far left is a selection from Mike Mill's screenplay book for *20th Century Women*.

Eye to Eye, an iterative sketch for the video *Between*.

The link between the camera and the eye is a trope in filmmaking. The fascination may come from the sense that a camera IS an eye, directing attention toward something.

But I'm more interested in how the viewer's eye might turn inward in the act of looking. How guiding and influencing the way you look can define the "architecture of attention" and lead to a labyrinthine experience.

4

3

pan right and tilt up
55 seconds

cut to

2

cut to

1   13 seconds

5

slow zoom

6   23 seconds

A spatialized diagram of the opening
minute of Tarkovsky's *Solaris* (1972).

I can't help but think of the opening scene of *Solaris* (1972). Every time I see it, I'm returned to the first time that I saw it: sitting on a dirty carpet during a Bushwick summer after my first year in art school.

Watching twenty-three seconds of a single shot of swaying grass opens something up in me. The pause allows a gap to form that I can bring myself into.

Left: (Detail) Kris looking at the swaying grass in *Solaris* (1972).

Center: (Detail) Kaela Kennedy looking at water running over rocks in *Here and There.*

Right: (Detail) Sun Ho Lee watching clouds pass by in *Between.*

I find myself repeating this same softened, slowed texture of looking I found in Tarkovsky over and over again in my work.
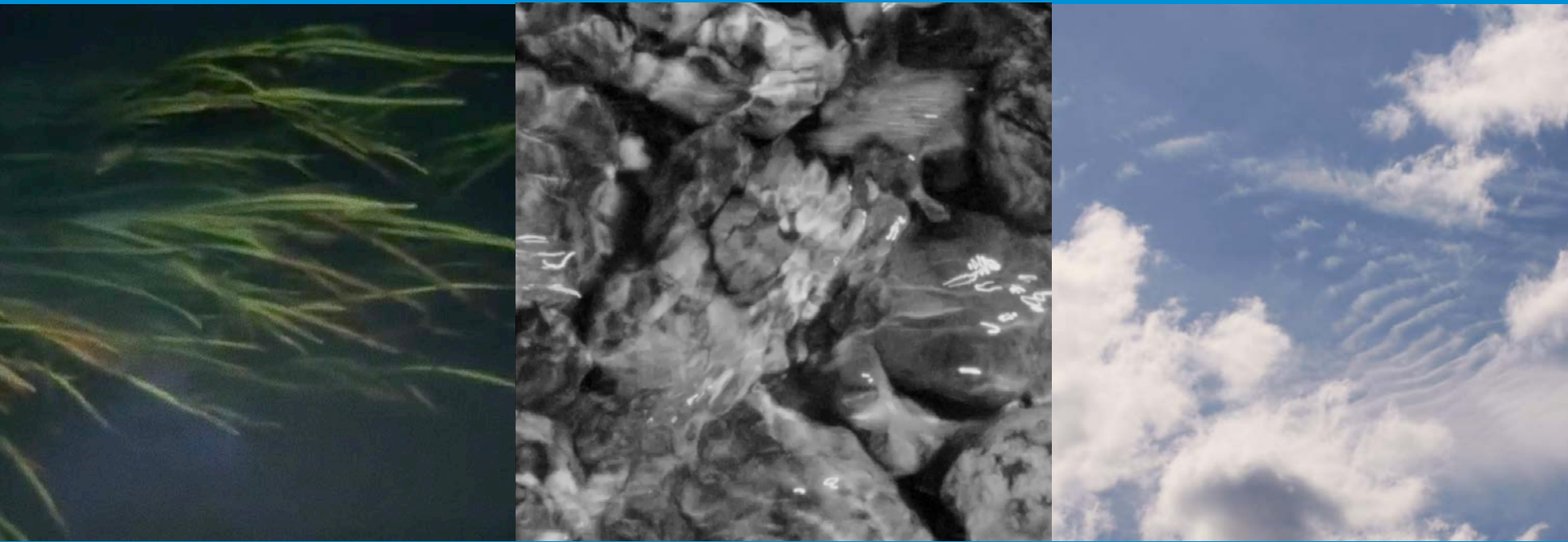
Left: (Detail) the swaying grass in *Solaris* (1972).

Center: (Detail) the water running over rocks in *Here and There*.

Right: (Detail) clouds passing by in *Between*.

I'm trying to widen a gap. To open a moment of pause to create a ground for thought, a space for interiority, in which a small, gentle moment fills the room and allows for a "dense infolding of attention."

Martin Buber (1878–1965) was an Austrian-Israeli philosopher who is primarily known for his book *I and Thou* (1923). His essay "What is Man?" was published in 1938, the same year he left Nazi Germany for Israel.

Soon after making *In Words*, I came into contact with the thinker Martin Buber for the first time in a seminar.

My amateur philosophical interest of the last few years has been geared toward Existentialism and Phenomenology, so I had been thinking of interiority in terms of the single individual, but Buber's essay "What Is Man?" makes a case for reconceiving the self as fundamentally relational.

If I and another come up against one another, happen to one another, the sum does not exactly divide. There is a remainder somewhere where the souls end and the world has not yet begun, and this remainder is what is essential. This fact can be found even in the tiniest and most transient events, which scarcely enter the consciousness. **Martin Buber, from "What is Man?"**

This quotation from "What is Man?" appears at the heart of *Between*.

Buber's insight goes beyond seeing people as simply existing alongside each other. Instead, there is the possibility of a deep, fundamental dyadic and dialogic I-Thou relationship in contrast to an instrumentalized I-It relationship.

I am especially taken with his concept of the "Between," which is a third space that emerges between two people, and a quotation regarding this ends up in a future video exploring his concepts.
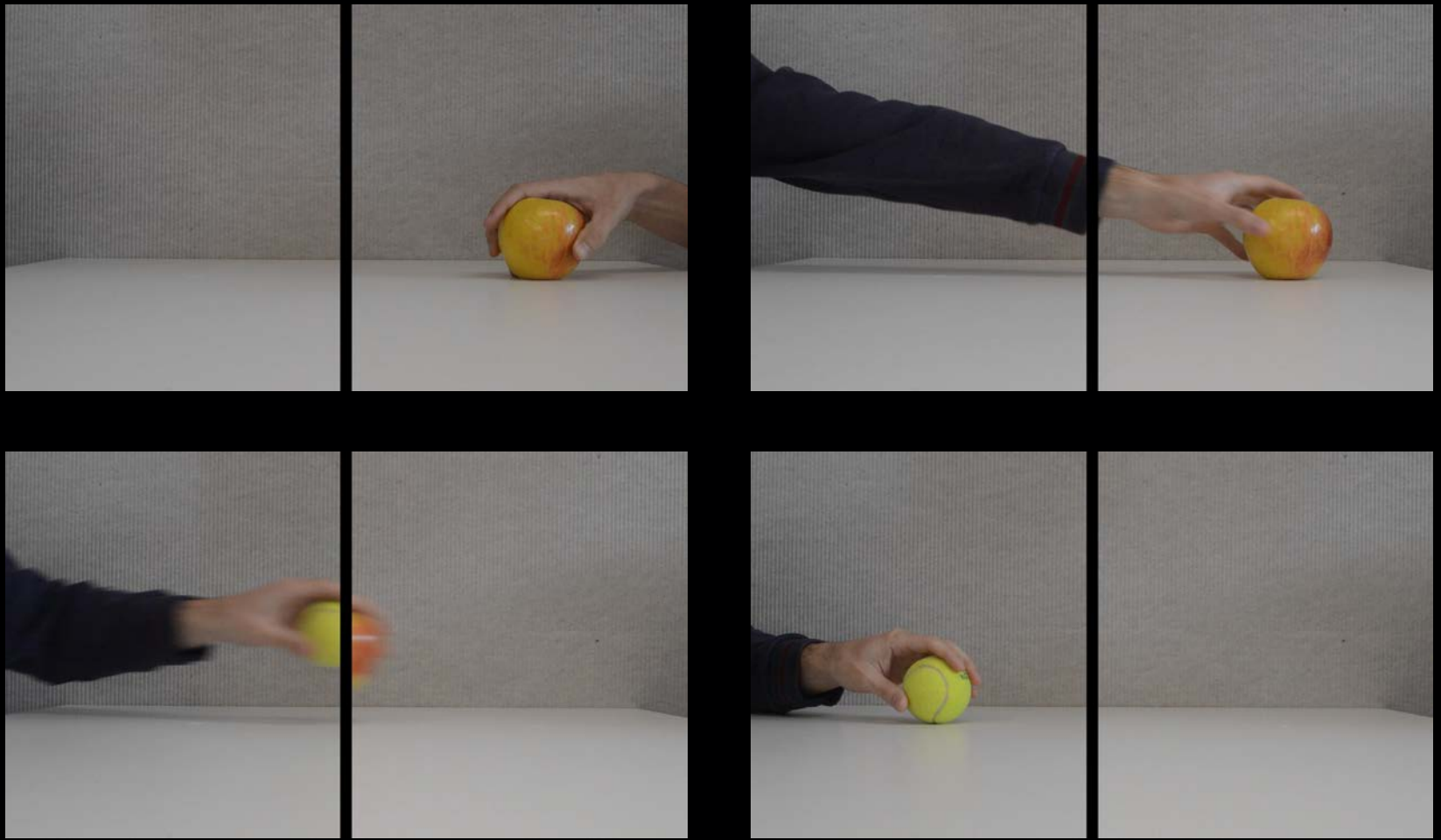
A video sketch for between exploring
the possibility of split-screen. Featuring
the hands of Jack Tufts (GD MFA '23).

But I can't help thinking about commu-
nicative gaps: places of mishearing and
misunderstanding.

(Detail) frame of *Eye to Eye*. A sketch for *Between*.

Or how images might talk to each other across this gap.

The best is when nobody

(Detail) frame of Ingrid (Didi) Schmaedecke
(GD MFA '23) and Gabriel Drozdov (GD
MFA '24) making a collaborative sentence.
Another sketch for *Between*.

How two people that have been separated
might make a complete sentence.

(Detail) frame of Ingrid (Didi) Schmaedecke (GD MFA '23) and Dougal Henken (GD MFA '23) going about their day separately and then meeting in the park.

How friendship exists in this space.

A frame from *Between.*

I believe that communication is taken for granted because language functions well enough for us on a day-to-day level. In the instrumental mode, there's no reason to ask: How is this happening? What is sharable and what is irreducibly private? In what ways are we always together and in what ways are we always alone?

But if you're reaching for a deeper, more vital connection within communication, these questions emerge.

So, if graphic design is sometimes referred to as "communication design," it bears asking what communication even is in the first place.

Between

Video, Sound   02:30
Featuring: Dougal Henken (GD MFA '23)
**   and Sun Ho Lee** (GD MFA '23)

Between is a split-screen video inspired by the writings
of Martin Buber (who is quoted in the middle of the video)
that asks the question "what is communication?" which
led to two exchanges with Dougal Henken and Sun Ho Lee.
Both Dougal and Sun-Ho had been making work that
derived from conversations with others, and these inter-
views with the two of them were then built into a narrative
framework about cloudwatching.

Dougal Henken

I see a sort of manatee shape in one.

Sun Ho Lee

That looks like a rose, right?

DH

Melting Tar?

SL

I see a snail!

There's the verbal portion

the non-verbal portion like gestures,
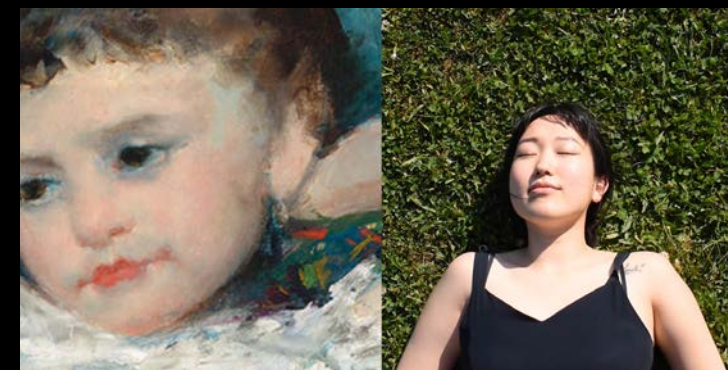
facial expressions, the tone . . .
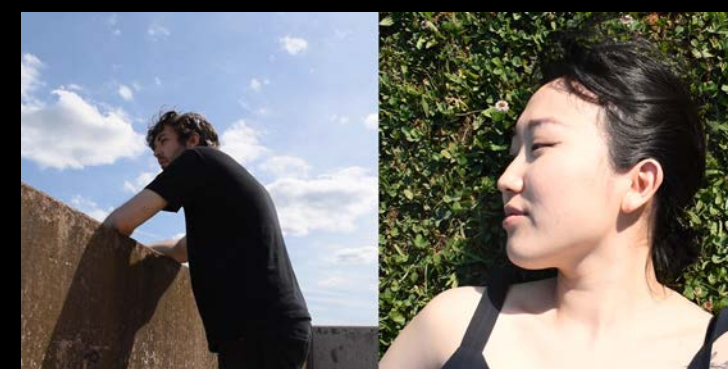
I think we spend our lifetime trying to get that portion right.

SL

I think people communicate in . . . I mean, there's so many different ways and modes we communicate.

DH

What really does matter between us is this conversation that we have leading up to this moment

DH

Like what's happening right now between us, this feeling that we're both sharing is the beauty of life: this moment of communication.

DH

This is whatever freak infinitesimal chances that wound themselves through the universe to create us …

DH

to lead up to this moment and this conversation that we're having is what makes life beautiful.

SHL

If I and another come up against one another

DH

Happen to one another

SHL

The sum does not exactly divide

DH

There is a remainder somewhere

SHL

Where the souls end and the world has not yet begun.

DH

And this remainder is what is essential

SHL

This fact can be found

DH

Even in the tiniest and most transient events

SHL

Which scarcely enter the consciousness.

There's probably a way in which [Kierkegaard and Montaigne] would've had richer subjectivities if they had been with their friends or lovers. But then it kind of seems as if the suffering is also what produced the beautiful writing that we ended up getting. So it's hard to know.

Heather C. Ohaneson

Conversation with Heather C. Ohaneson

Heather C. Ohaneson holds a Ph.D. in philosophy of religion from Columbia University. Her philosophical interests include walking, friendship, and play. Now a pastor of an Armenian Protestant church, she continues teaching with the Brooklyn Institute for Social Research.

IK   One of the reasons I wanted to talk to you is that, since getting here, Montaigne and Kierkegaard have been two thinkers that I've been thinking about for some reason. And I think that it has something to do with the kind of work that I'm producing. I've gotten into this idea of the video essay as a form and the idea of the essay going back to Montaigne. When I was talking to my external critic when I was trying to figure out what I was doing, he was like, "what do you know about the essay?" And I just thought, "oh shit—I just took a continuing ed course on Montaigne" and it synced up.

HCO   Yeah, it's interesting because I usually pair Kierkegaard with Pascal, but it's nice to bend that and think of Kierkegaard in relation to Montaigne and to see what comes from thinking of them together. But I feel so gratified that those are the thinkers who are coming to you now.

IK   Maybe—starting off—I think is this relationship to individuality with both of them. I think maybe that I've been trying to sort out because what does it mean to do so in a contemporary context? In prepping for you, I reread "Of Solitude" and "Of Practice" and also Montaigne's Friendship Essay, but the kind of individuality that he's talking

Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592) was the originator of the essay. I took a short continuing education course with Heather on Montaigne and Pascal in 2020.

Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855) was a Danish philosopher and one of the major figures of existentialist thought. He was a voluminous writer and wrote through pseudonyms about questions of how to live. I also took a couple of short courses with Heather on Kierkegaard.

about with "Of Solitude" seems to actually dovetail pretty nicely with what Kierkegaard is talking about in *The Present Age* in terms of setting oneself apart from the crowd and I'm curious what you think about this. I guess the way that I think about it is thinking about individuality as we understand it—in contemporary America with social media and a consumer capitalist sort of relationship to individuality—it seems they're after something else. Should a distinction be made there when we use the term individualism with Montaigne and Kierkegaard, do you think?

HCO   Not so much between the two of them but between them and the 21st century?

IK   Essentially—yeah.

HCO   Yeah. Probably, I just don't know what that distinction … It doesn't immediately jump out at me how to parse that difference. I think both Montaigne and Kierkegaard would be shocked at the shallowness of the inner subjective life of individuals. That even as people here seem to be so, I guess selfish in a way or just motivated by self-aggrandizement, but we fail to see all of the ways that we're really just determined by the crowd or how we've been flattened in our drives and desires and preferences and things. So that actually seems to line up very, very well. But for Montaigne, maybe also because he's earlier, there's just an earlier sense of subjectivity. I'm trying to think. It might be a little counter-intuitive, maybe there's a more robust sense of selfhood in Montaigne than there is today, just because of how much we've been flattened. I'm curious though because you're like fresher with the material than I am at this point. What popped out at you from the solitude piece? Give me a couple … Like feed me a couple of lines and I'll see what I …

IK   Oh yeah, no worries. Yeah, let me just go through really quick and see what I underlined. Let's see. "So wherefore it is not enough to have gotten away from the crowd, it is not enough

to move. We might, we must get away from the gregarious instincts that are inside us. We must sequester ourselves and repossess ourselves." And I think that language of self-possession pops up in Kierkegaard too. But yeah, I'm just trying to find another good … This one's a little bit more stoic: "we should have wife, children, goods and above all health if we can, but we must not bind ourselves to them so strongly that our happiness depends on them. We must reserve a back shop, all our own, entirely free, in which to establish our real liberty and our principle of retreat and solitude." And then another line, that's very kind of Kierkegaard-ian, "that the greatest thing in the world is to know how to belong to oneself."

HCO   I'm wondering though for Montaigne, like through friendship or discourse, how much of that self-possession occurs.

IK   Yeah, totally. So that was also one of the things that I was thinking about with them … And I think maybe part of that was some of the work that I was trying to do or think about was about how to access inwardness in other people, doing interviews with them … I think that there's maybe two senses in which Kierkegaard and Montaigne … Even though it's about the single individual or whatever can be said to be in relation to others in different ways. One thing that I was just thinking about is Montaigne—just through his act of quoting other thinkers—is putting himself in relation to others. But then I ended up taking this class at Brown where we read some Martin Buber and he gave this reading of Kierkegaard— and it was something I didn't realize— but like Kierkegaard has always been in relation to God. So when he is talking about the single individual, it's not like the single individual totally cut off from everything. So there's that kind of relational quality embedded in Kierkegaard. But then even at the same time, there's this kind of unmentioned other in Kierkegaard where you can think of him

An etching of Montaigne with his friend La Boétie, whom he met while working in the Parlements. La Boétie died in 1563 at age 33 and Montaigne immortalizes his friendship with La Boétie in his essay "Of Friendship," which Heather quotes from.

as writing to Regine. And then I think it was something that you mentioned with Montaigne—his friendship with, I'm gonna mess up the guy's name…

HCO   La Boétie, Yeah.

IK   So I think maybe you mentioned it in passing during our class: the idea of Montaigne writing these essays as a way to speak with him. And I think that's one thing I've been trying to think through is how to have this relationship to inwardness, subjectivity, the individual, but do it in a way that's not cut off from others.

HCO   That's so good. I like that. Yeah. I think, to tease some of this out, it's really good because for Kierkegaard in *Works of Love*, you have God is the third term basically mediating every relation so that, it gives you a way of, I think loving the neighbor as the

neighbor who is other from you. So there's a sort of universality to that neighbor where it could be anybody. I'm trying to think what would be the most relevant part of *Works of Love* to see how the single individual is cultivated in relation to the other. Yeah. It might be good to go back and to try to just look for signs of that.

But I think you're right in how you … I probably didn't put it that directly but it's a really beautiful way of expressing it that it's not a single individual just cut off in singularity, but it's a single individual in relation to God. And then I think that kind of hidden other, that's really good and it kind of parallels in like potentially very rich ways to Montaigne on the absent friend of la Boétie because like the most famous line from that friendship essay is "because he was he and because I was I." So there's something you can do with that that points to a kind of alchemy between the friends. But I don't know, in terms of … If people wanted to cultivate inwardness deliberately in friendships or in relationships, I think you would still wanna know well, doesn't it matter the person I pick or the people I pick to go in with? And there I'm trying to think what they would have to offer. Yeah. But you're right too, to point out Montaigne as belonging to this circle of friends of like Livy and Cicero. Also in the discourse essay, in the how to have a conversation essay, what does he say?

IK   Oh I didn't review that one.

HCO   Oh, okay. But that might be good to look at. There's a kind of conviviality or sociality to Montaigne that seems particularly French and very charming and I think is a lost art and it might … Yeah, it might give some hints for, yeah, basically how to suss meaning out of conversations that you have, not just with yourself, but with others.

IK   Yeah I think that's a good point 'cause I feel that's something I've been trying to figure out and maybe the reason I'm concerned with this is because I feel graphic design does contribute to this flattening of people. But then I'm wanting to see if I can get something else out of it. I don't know

what that is, though… And maybe that's why I'm kind of interested in this idea of inwardness. Whether you can get anything in-depth, actually have a bare conversation. And maybe that's why I'm also thinking about the unnamed other in Montaigne and Kierkegaard because okay, let's say you are talking to just one other person, but this is a piece of work that goes out and is read by many and what's that relationship overall.

HCO   Do you think that there needs to be sustained engagement with the image for it to produce some of those deeper responses or … I don't know because it's part of the issue just that people look and then look away or …

IK   I think that … actually I think that's maybe why I've been kind of interested in video because time [and attention] becomes a dimension that you're controlling and so that's kind of baked into it. I think that the issue with graphic design is probably mostly just that it's typically a commercial artifact. As a graphic designer, you're thinking about mediating the message of a client, where you're given content, you're making a poster for an event, and so you make it look nice, put it out there, perhaps it has some conceptual or formal relationship to what's going on. I guess maybe I've been thinking more about what this sort of communication could be or what it could open up.

HCO   Right. Right.

IK   And so I'm like, "Okay, can you point to one person. Does that change things?"

HCO   Right. Right. Because this is … I mean, this is the point you were just making about … I don't know that the audience is diffuse.

IK   Right. One thing I'm also thinking about like, thinking about these two people or perhaps referencing them— it's a big question—but I mean, like,

what do you feel like is their contemporary relevance, if any?

HCO   Yeah. I was trying to think about that a little bit at the beginning… That their setting seems so radically different as sort of models of individuals who pursued authentic selfhood. Like what kind of models are they? You can't go to some chalet in France and just have a library and ride a horse when you want or something. It's a different context. And I don't know if people, in terms of … For Montaigne like that amount of just high literacy, he was able to get to those thoughts because he engaged the ancient humanists so deeply. So, I don't know, is it like a prescription that you have to study Latin for 40 years before you can have a worthy thought about your own relation to death or something? So that doesn't seem to be that relevant. And for Kierkegaard, he came from such privilege, I mean, he was able to really just pursue his sort of quirkiness through those walks and he would just sit and write for hours. And he could both write, and I think especially walk himself into and out of ideas. So maybe part of the question … I think that their goals are very relevant for meaningful lives …

IK   Definitely.

HCO   Having a sense of a self you've chosen. Okay, that I think is important but how you get there and how you convince people to let go of the things that first of all, they blind you, it's like, can you do … I don't know what form allows you to do that, [laughter] whether it's an essay, a video essay or something else. I kind of liked what you were saying though about having interviews or conversations with people because those can have a really lasting effect.

IK   Yeah, I think that was something that I found almost by accident, making things from interviews. I've actually found it to be pretty fruitful because I was feeling a danger about this kind of very think-y sort of individualism, and being trapped in one's head too much. And so the way that just talking to other people and just being like,

"What do you think?" has been helpful in ways that I've found surprising.

HCO   Yeah, because the inwardness, it's not all roses and peaches or something.

IK   Yeah, before we got on the call, I was just thinking, "Man, how different would their outlooks be had la Boétie not died or if Kierkegaard had chosen to be with Regine? What would this kind of inwardness have looked like?"

HCO   Yeah, I mean there's probably a way in which they would've had richer subjectivities if they had been with their friends or lovers. But then it kind of seems as if the suffering is also what produced the beautiful writing that we ended up getting. So it's hard to know.

Regine Olsen (1822–1904) was Kierkegaard's ex-fiancée. Kierkegaard was the one to break off the engagement and echoes of his decision travel through his work.

La Jetée (1962) by Chris Marker is a short film made up primarily of still photographs sequenced in time.

My interest in communication and interiority in film leads to an interest in how the medium of moving image works in the first place, and motion seems to be key to this understanding.

Motion and change are intrinsic to the medium of film and its digital analogues. Where there appears to be stillness, there is instead perfect repetition of an image. The frozen images that make up *La Jetée* (1962) are really hovering there, hummingbird-like, beating their wings at 24 frames per second.

I'm curious if there's a sense in which that's true for all images—if fixity and stasis are an illusion. Whether motion can be thought of as a fundamental category, which opens up the opportunity for change, evolution, and becoming. Thinking through this, the simple fact of my body's shifting relation to things in the world occurs to me.
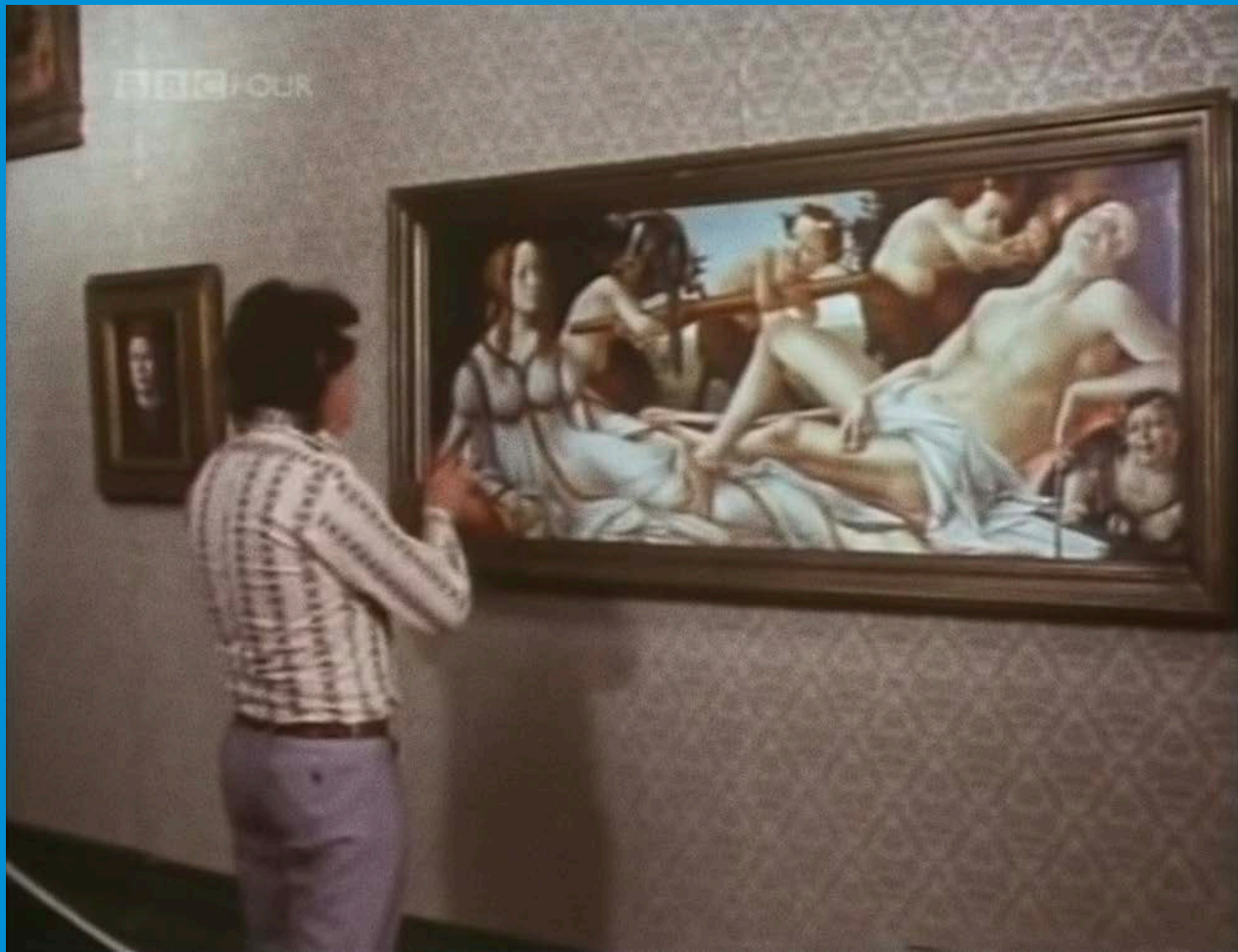
* Even this is a difficult statement to make as even material properties shift and change over time in relation to the environment they inhabit. Consider the sun bleaching of pigments, the damage caused by a roof leak.

John Berger stands in front of *Mars and Venus* by Botticelli (1483) in the first episode of his BBC series, *Ways of Seeing* (1972).

John Berger, in the first episode of *Ways of Seeing* (1972), makes the claim that paintings are "silent and still." From the point of view of the object, that seems true.* But from the point of view of the observer, one's mind and body are rarely silent or still.

It should be said the omission of first-person bodily relationship to an image is precisely Berger's point in his focus on the reproduced and mediated image.

Two frames of Berger's observation about the way the camera mediates the experience and understanding of images.

Berger's point is sound: The camera carves up the world and represents it as a mediated vision, which has ideological implications. The natural metaphor of the camera as an eye covers up this ideological aspect.

However, I also feel that it's a mistake to think of meaning and experience outside of that mediated relationship of the camera as being fixed and stable.

CLOSER ON a 1965 Ford Galaxy engulfed in flames.

DOROTHEA (55, short grey hair, Amelia Earhart andro-
gyny) and JAMIE (15, New-Wave/Punk) jog their shopping
cart toward the commotion, stunned to find their
car in flames. Dorothea looks at the car and then
her son Jamie, concerned. People run for help. Sir
in the background.

                    DOROTHEA (V.O.)
          That was my husband's Ford Galaxy. We
          drove Jamie home from the hospital in
          that car.

          JAMIE (V.O.)   VISUAL
as 40 when she had me. Every-   1. BABY IN ISOLETTE
her she was too old to be a

                                          VISUAL
     DOROTHEA (V.O.)   2. DOROTHEA'S HAND OFF
hand through the little window, WINDOW AND PUTTING HAN
squeeze my finger, and I'd tell 3. BABY'S FINGERS HOLD
was very big, and unknown.   IN SPACE.

                                          VISU
     JAMIE (V.O.)   5. MUYBRIDGE FOOTAGE
told me that there were animals 6. STILL OF THE SKY
and cities.   THEA'S ERA.

                                          VIS
     DOROTHEA (V.O.)   8. BACK TO DOROTHEA S
movies. He'd fall in love, have ISOLETTE WINDOW AND P
children, have passions, have   9. BABY'S FINGERS HOLD
have his mom and dad.

A spread of *Now and Then* (2022).

Through this lens of embodiment, putting
a still image or fixed object into motion starts
to feel less conceptual and more perceptual.
Like making focus shift back and forth
through layering.

Nocturne (2022), a collaborative installation made with Jenni Oughton (GD MFA '23) and Sadia Quddus (GD MFA '23).

Or designing an object that requires you to orient yourself to peer into it.

I tell my students … if you can take one class in art school, it should be a motion class because it teaches you everything you need to know about designing experiences.
Whether it's pacing a story, structuring something linearly in time, understanding how things move in physical space.
It's where you start to understand the sensitivity of communication, reading, processing, and messaging over time.
It all starts in motion. Lynn Kiang

Conversation with Lynn Kiang and Katie Lee of Dome Collective

Lynn Kiang is the co-founder and partner of Dome, an experience design studio in New York City. She is a multi-disciplinary designer and creative director in experience design, graphic design and built environments. She is also Director of the MPS Communication Design at Parsons School of Design.

Katie Lee is the co-founder and partner of Dome, an experience design studio in New York City. Previously she was a creative director at Local Projects, where from 2007 to 2014 she designed multi-media exhibits and interactive experiences for museums, cultural institutions, and public spaces.

IK   I'd like to dig into the idea of generalism a little bit, but I think before I do that, I'm curious while working at Local Projects, or during those first projects that you're doing as Dome Collective, did you find that any of these methodologies or ways of thinking from video, filmmaking, etc, had, like, found its way to these other applications that allowed you to be a better generalist? Whether it's thinking through narrative or sequence or anything like that?

LK   Well, I tell my students to take a motion class. Like, if you can take one class in art school, it should be a motion class because it teaches you everything you need to know

about designing experiences. Whether it's pacing a story, structuring something linearly in time, understanding how things move in physical space. It's where you start to understand the sensitivity of communication, reading, processing, and messaging over time. It all starts in motion.

IK   Yeah, I was curious about that. I was looking at your documentation for your Krishna project and one of the things I started thinking about was that it looks like video for you guys forms PART of what you do. Like there are videos there—it's a tool set—but it's within this larger generalist framework of thinking. Being able to think a little bigger, you know?

LK It's always in service of the story. We always say we're medium agnostic. It doesn't matter what medium. But what's the story? Who are the people and like, what would best serve the story? So if it's VR or AR: great, we'll learn how to do that and serve the story that way. If it's an immersive film, okay, let's do it. If it's a physical toolkit with pieces and parts, we'll do that. It's all about the experience of the story. That's the primary thing and all the mediums go back to that. They're all tools.

IK I'm curious if you guys can talk a little bit about that way of working because I was able to find a New INC interview with both of you and what you were talking about the way that taking on projects at Dome as shifted from like these smaller, clearly defined deliverables to more open-ended projects where you have the latitude to be medium agnostic.

LK I mean, when you start a studio, you'll take anything. We aren't funded by our trust funds or anything. We're like, "Okay, we're gonna start a studio, we're graphic designers, we're gonna design PowerPoint templates for nonprofits, logos, print brochures—sure." Medium-specific things that traditional graphic designers can sell, right? But as people start to meet us, trust us, expand their scopes, they begin to see us more as thought partners. And to come in earlier in the stream of the work. More what I call the upstream thinking of a project, where oftentimes the brief hasn't just been thinking about "what could we do next?"

And that's where now we've hit a sweet spot with certain clients that know us and trust us. Mind you, we are only two people, not this big agency, right? So trust is so important to us in building these complex, undefined things. So being able to build enough runway with folks to feel like they can bring us in at that early level has been everything in enabling us to find more experimental work.

Because no one writes in their brief "I don't know what to do." Everyone in their brief is like, "We want this kind of space with

this kind of technology for this amount of money," right? And that's not where we like to play. We're not here to just meet a scope. And so we prefer being in the blue sky phase of a project. We're just like, "What could be?" And that's where we get to just imagine with clients. And then you know, at the end, there is a budget, and we have to, like, figure out how to back up into that. But the core of the ideas are there, and we've been part of that.

IK So is it fair to say, because you have this more generalist approach where you're comfortable with working with emerging technologies and have this range, that then allows you to create many different ideas for whatever it might be, which allows you to go a little bit broader. Rather than, let's say, you both went down the route of being filmmakers where you're like, "Okay, I'm presented with this thing. I'm going to make it a film," you know?

LK Yeah, I mean, that's why we call ourselves Experience Designers. It's maybe starting to get more formal or whatever, but we just needed some term that wasn't graphic design, so people wouldn't just be sending us identities and books. Like, we just wanted something vague enough that we're like, "Okay, we design experiences. What does that mean?" It means that it's all of these things, any of these things, right?

It's also the fact that Katie, and I get bored doing the same thing. As designers, we don't want our practice to be pigeonholed into one thing for our own sake. So we like to keep trying new things, pushing our own abilities, our own practice to do things we've never done before. We'll take on a project because we've never done something like this before. That desire to be a beginner is still in us. To continue to learn something new to keep myself interested in this practice.

IK In calling yourselves Experience Designers and also talking about narrative, do you see experience design as narrative design? Or do you see those as two separate things?

Dome's exhibition design for *Revealing Krishna* (2022), an exhibition about the discovery and restoration of the Cleveland Museum of Art's Krishna sculpture. The exhibition includes motion graphics, film, interactive media, and mixed reality.

KL I think that we designers also use that word narrative very loosely. To maybe talk more about a "visitor journey" might be a better way of being more direct about what we mean by narrative in OUR work. So we sculpt the visitor journey, and we focus the experience in a way that that has a point of view about the narrative. So we're, we're very much designing that journey.

I mean, it just depends on how you're using the word the narrative. Because I think what Lynn is talking about is true, we're talking about the actual content, the actual story itself, which is its own story. And then on the other hand, when we're in our design bubble, we tend to think about the method itself, or like the act of designing as its own narrative. And so I think, well, what are we actually building? I think it's more appropriate to call it like a visitor journey.

LK For us, whether it's linear are not linear, it doesn't really matter so much as like, what are the kind of emotional moments that we can create in the work? You know, like, when you first arrive, like, what is the emotion that you

want people to derive from that arrival? So it's not about space as much as like the actual journey that they're on.

IK That's really interesting because that makes me wonder do you then think in terms of like, large emotional moments and small emotional moments?

LK There's like the big spectacular "wows," there are moments to learn. I mean, we call them "interaction models." So there's moments to orient, there's moments to teach, there are moments to just be in awe. Those types of interaction models is where we anchor the work. And different experiences will serve different interactions—different verbs—that you're trying to get across.

IK These frameworks that you both are using: are those frameworks that you picked up from Local Projects, or are these things that you've developed yourselves?

LK Just like any kind of novel, new experience, these anchor onto something that you know already. Like, we often talk about is this museum more of like an Exploratorium where everything hands on? Or is it like a guided tour where it's facilitated? It's like these things.

You can make novel things, but we need to still anchor ourselves in worlds that we understand in order to get to novel experiences. There's nothing formal. It's more like what we already know that we're anchoring these frameworks on, and we just conjure them. Like, maybe it's about theater. That's a framework to think about, right? So it's almost like adjacent experiences to latch onto and inspire us to think about this space or experience differently.

KL We should mention we do have a formal process that is part of discovery and strategy on these larger projects where it's not quite defined, where there are these sort of adjacent frameworks that we come up with. But we do put them in front of a client and say: "Is it more This? Is it more This?" Like, what feels right for this project, for this museum, or corporation, or whoever we're working with?

And I will say that this language and strategy work—and Lynn can talk more about this—totally comes from her consulting days, which we should mention was a really critical part of that kind of expertise. But Lynn do you want to talk about that actually? You're making the framework so casual, but, actually, it's quite rigorous.

LK I mean, yeah, I worked three years just doing strategy.

> **IK** Oh really?

LK Yeah, it was all upstream work. I worked at SY Partners.

> **IK** So was this before Local Projects, or after Local Projects?

LK After Local Projects, before Dome. That's where I learned how to frame up for clients to like, start imagining, you know, "what could be" because Local Projects had

no process back then. This was a process to essentially walk clients through an unknown thing they were going to create and could spend millions of dollars on it. How do you ensure that they feel like they're making a smart choice? Well, you do it with strategy. You do it with framing things up in a way that they can pick things and eliminate things. All of this was kind of the strategy techniques that I learned at SY Partners doing it for like, Fortune 500 companies and the kinds of things they wanted designed.

That's also part of the designers toolkit—like how well can you frame an unknown? To show the possibilities of What Could Be, then a client could actually go for it, right? That's also a huge part of the trust building that is helping them be a thought partner too.

> **IK** I didn't know that about your background. So, was that a big jump for you from going like actually designing and making things to where you were just doing conceptual work and trying to frame things for other people? And then was Dome a way for you to get back into actually making things?

LK Exactly, yeah. Local Projects was all downstream assets, SY Partners was all the upstream thinking, you put them together and now you have Dome.

> **IK** That's funny—that's like another entire layer—like a jawbreaker of generalism. In a good way. Like in terms of, you know, being medium agnostic but then also thinking in terms of the totality of a project from how its formed to how it's articulated.

KL Yep

LK We're just greedy. We don't want to be shut out of any part of it. It just helps us have more control of the final product. Like if you're out, if you're not in the room, then you just get doled out whatever you're told, right.

> **IK** So what is the dynamic between you two? I always wondered that about that with creative partnerships.

Dome's exhibition design for *Seat at the Table* (2021), which showed at Drexel University for the centennial anniversary of women getting the right to vote.

> Because you think about that partnership as one person giving something to it that the other person doesn't have and vice versa. Do you feel like it works like that?

LK I was really nervous when I proposed working as a company together. It really felt like a marriage proposal.

> **IK** Oh you were the one who proposed?

LK Yeah. And like Katie was like, my supervisor. So I'm like, "Is there gonna be this weird disparity between us?" Because she was

my superior, you know, it's so it was a lot of navigating, just learning about each other in a new capacity without titles anymore. And so the first, I mean, we've been together for about 14 years in some working capacity and now we know each other really well. She is my work wife. And like, there, there are things that from day one we appreciate about each other, and still holds true. Every January, we have a summit to check in on our relationship. And it still holds true why we appreciate each other and how we balance each other's personalities and working styles. Sometimes there are things to correct when you give each other feedback about that—and it's always the same things over

I don't think we could keep going and wanting to have the appetite for more different new things if we both didn't feel like our definition of what being a graphic designer is is expansive and not narrowing constantly. It's actually constantly opening up. Katie Lee

and over again. But, you know, I wouldn't want to work solo because I just need that foil to keep me sharp. Otherwise, you're just in your own world if you're just working the same way. I think it has made our studio more creative, functioning, and productive when you have someone to volley against. Just like in marriage and in life.

KL   I think that I now know, it's so Lynn, and it's so Katie, how things started. Where Lynn kind of was has a sort of secret plan, and she gets it done. And I'm with my, at the time, like, three month old kid, and I was like, "let's just experiment, you know, just see how it goes." And she's like, mmm-hmm mmm-hmm. And then, a couple months later, she's like, "So I have this other crappy offer from somebody else, but I would rather do our own studio thing." and I'm like, "Wellllll … Okay! Let's just do it!"

So it takes the chemistry of two humans with our different personalities. But obviously, you have to have that Venn Diagram of something that makes it work. And I do think it's a combination of where we definitely have the same point of view about what graphic design means for us, otherwise, we wouldn't be doing what we're doing. Our processes, our life outlook: very different. But actually, we do balance each other out.

IK   So there's two things that that makes me wonder about if you're saying that you both share the same vision of what graphic design is. I'm curious A) What that vision how you would articulate that; and then B) within this partnership, where where do you think that the other person has been able to make you grow as a designer and a person?

LK   The second question is easier to answer than the first—with Katie, it's the way she looks at life. She's so much more of a like responsive person to whatever comes. She's always more nimble and agile to anything that just shows up at the door, whether it's a bad feedback from a client or whatever. She just handles it so much better than me. Whereas, I'm like: I have my plan, and if anything derails me off that plan, it throws

me to this emotional thunderstorm. I've always said Katie's the even hand on the helm. That's what has helped me the most in our partnership. That's why we still have a business and I haven't flung it out the window every year.

IK   So you're the loose cannon cop of the two.

LK   Totally. I've learned to at least not email right away with my loose cannon and take 24 hours to cool down. Sometimes.

KL   It's the same [for me], but the converse of that. I would just be languishing, being caught in my own thoughts forever if it weren't for Lynn, being like, "We've got to get this done." And you know, even though Lynn actually packs in quite a lot in her life, she still is very adamant about life balance. And so she gets me much better about time management, and not spinning in my thoughts and just like getting it down on paper to look at it. Because at the end of the day, it's not a thought, we are making things.

And so it's it's just such a reflection of our like personalities—the way we work and then how it comes out, how it rears itself, and how it manifests is even stronger because it's in contrast to the other person. You can have your personality, but it really comes out more when you have to like deal with your opposite. And like how to convince your opposite to get on this joint path where we're both trying to get something done that we're both happy with. So like our personalities get more extreme in relief next to each other.

And for the shared vision, it's what we said earlier—just, it's our it's our take on graphic design at the core. Like, I don't think we could keep going and wanting to have the appetite for more different new things if we both didn't feel like our definition of what being a graphic designer is is expansive and not narrowing constantly. It's actually constantly opening up, and I think that's what video was.

I mean, I think do we genuinely love the medium of video too, but I think that was just like, constantly, like just wanting to test things and branch out, and not feel limited to being the best typographer.

incense
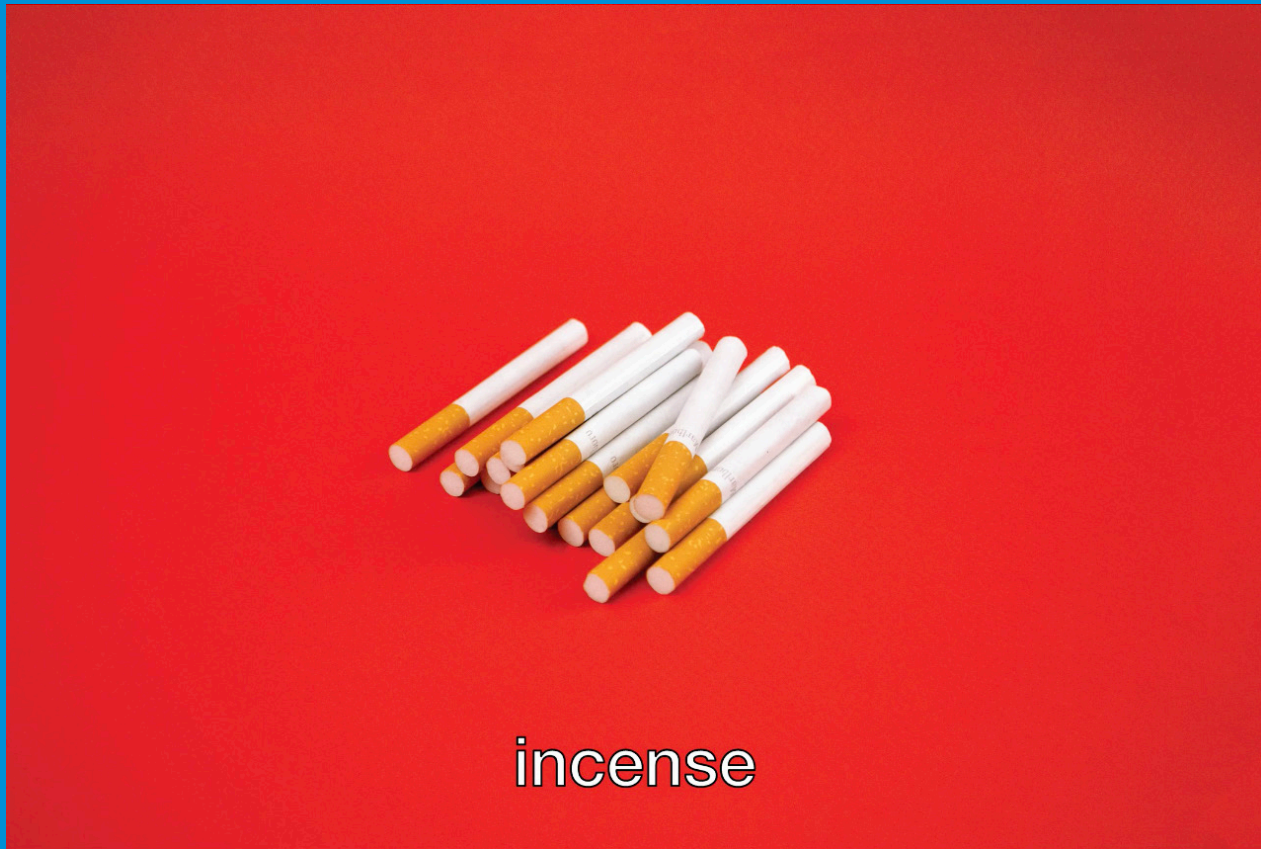
Apprendre le Français en 30 Secondes
(2018) by Olivia de Salve Villedieu.

I'm now wondering if the text-image relationship is enough to put something into motion by engaging the viewer—inviting them to fill the gap to cross it. But what is the texture of that engagement?

Olivia playfully opens up the gap between word and image, creating a resonance where the two bounce off each other. In this resonance, I have a feeling of being taken somewhere, of one thing becoming another and leading into a different space that becomes possible in the gap between word and image.

ONE
MUST
IMAGINE
SISYPHUS
HAPPY.

ALBERT CAMUS,
"THE MYTH OF SISYPHUS" (1942)
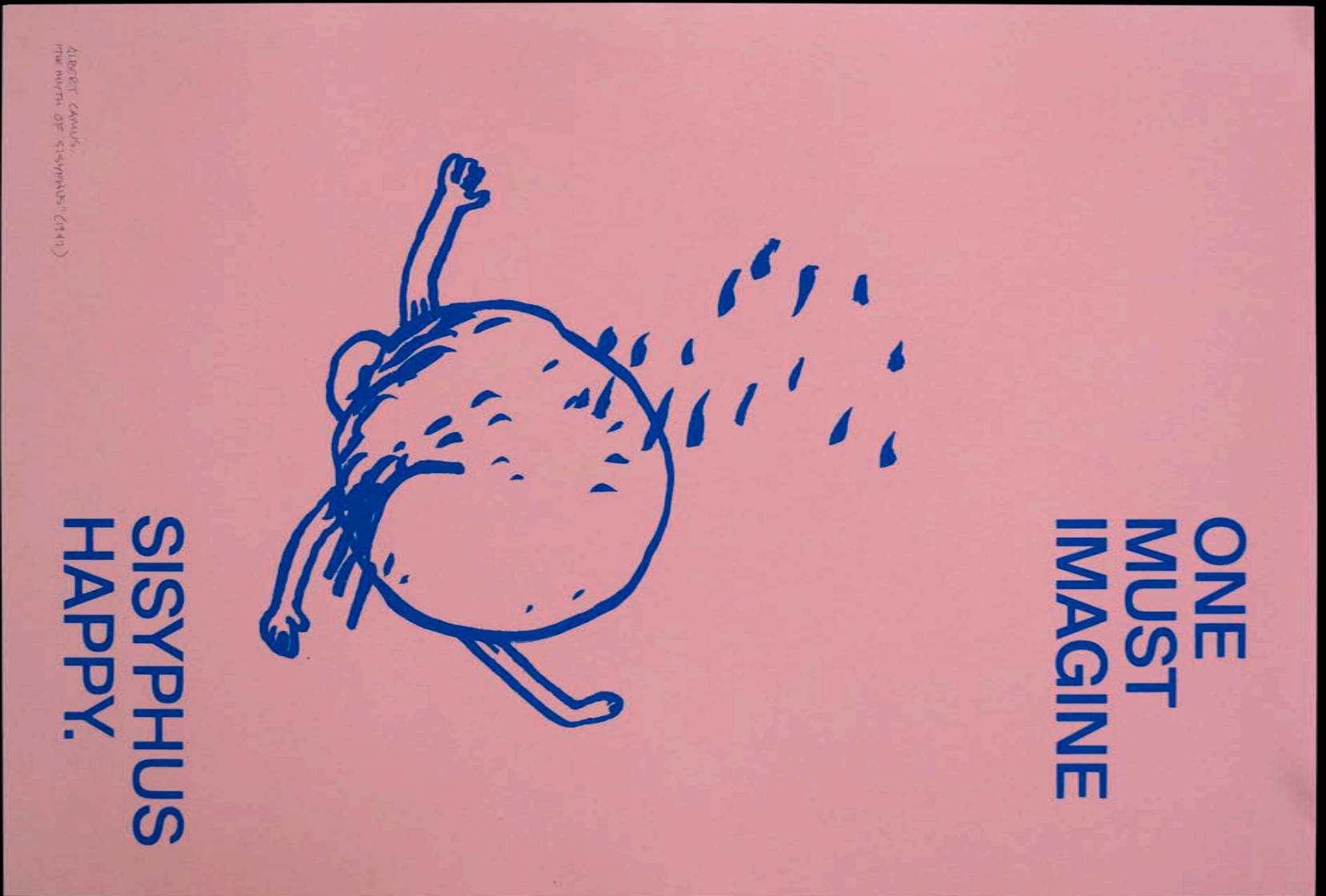
Sisyphus (2021), screenprint.

I take a break to make a joke.
    Now I look at it and wonder if it's in movement. Like a New Yorker cartoon, the text needs the image and the image needs the text, but they hang together in a static tension.

GOOD VIBES ONLY
I DO HAVE A ONLYFANS
I DO NOT
INTUITIVE HAIR GODDESS
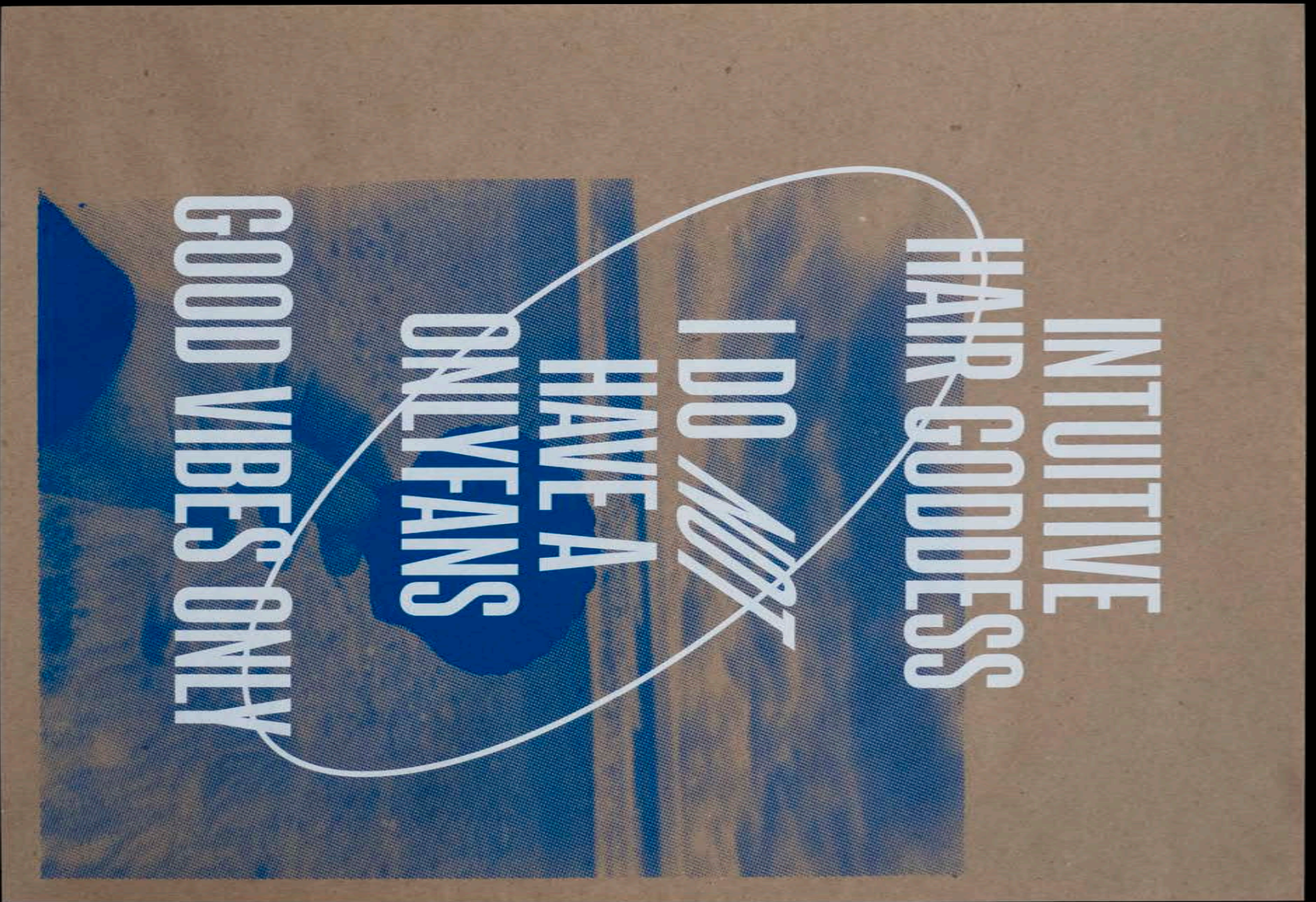
No OnlyFans (2022) is a collaborative screenprint made as the outcome of teaching Serena Ho (GD MFA '23) how to screenprint. I brought the text, she brought the image.

Does confusion cause a circling back that keeps the eye and mind in motion?

un photo-roman
de Chris Marker

Detail of the opening credits of *La Jetée*
(1962) by Chris Marker.

As a graphic designer, I naturally gravitate toward trying to make graphic design and film meet in the image-text relationship. Perhaps that's why I find myself so drawn to *La Jetée*, which operates within this very relationship. Marker himself refers to the film as a *photo-roman*, or "photo-novel" in the opening credits.

blue   36

dance (dæns) *v.*

ÁS·TA ÞRAST·AR·DÓT·TIR

37
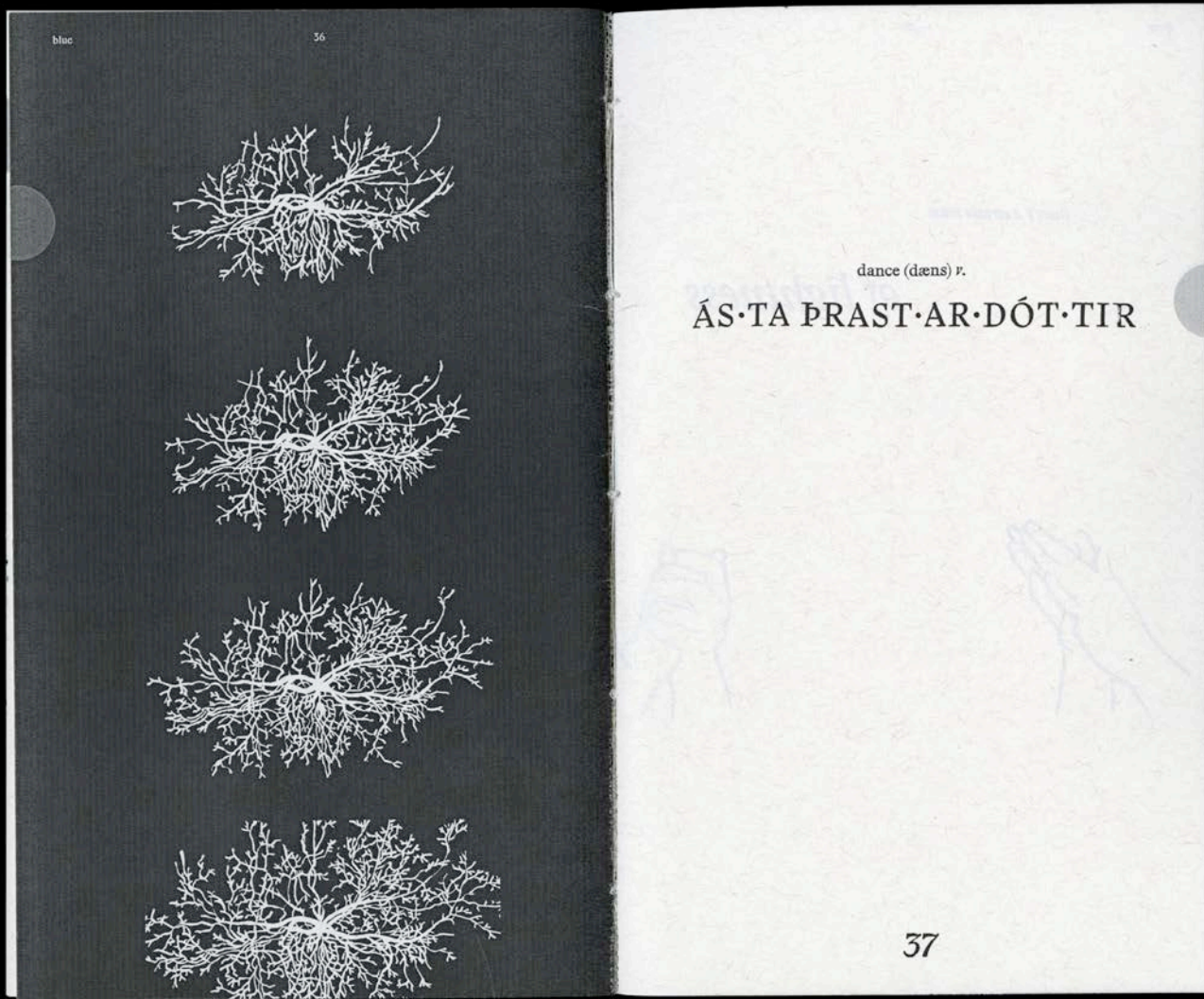
3. Carrión, "The New Art of Making Books," 1.

Ásta's opening spread in the book translation of *In Words*.

In that spirit of the photo-novel, or perhaps its inversion, I set out to translate my first two videos into book-films, engaging the book as what Ulises Carrion calls a "space-time sequence"[3] and to see if graphic design and film might meet here.

Book-Film Translations

Publication 6" × 10"
Publication 8" × 7.5"

37   51

dance (dans) *v.*   suitcase (suitkeis) *n.*
ÁSTA ÞRASTARDÓTTIR   SADIA QUDDUS

in·words

The translation for *Between* adopts the use of split-screen and subtitling to structure communication between two speakers and their reflections. In contrast to *Between*'s translation, the format conditions set for *In Words* were self-consciously hostile to the seamless translation of video to page. The more vertical format and mandatory 16-page signature per person required that the video and its drawings be pulled apart, broken, and reconstituted to fit the new format.

Be
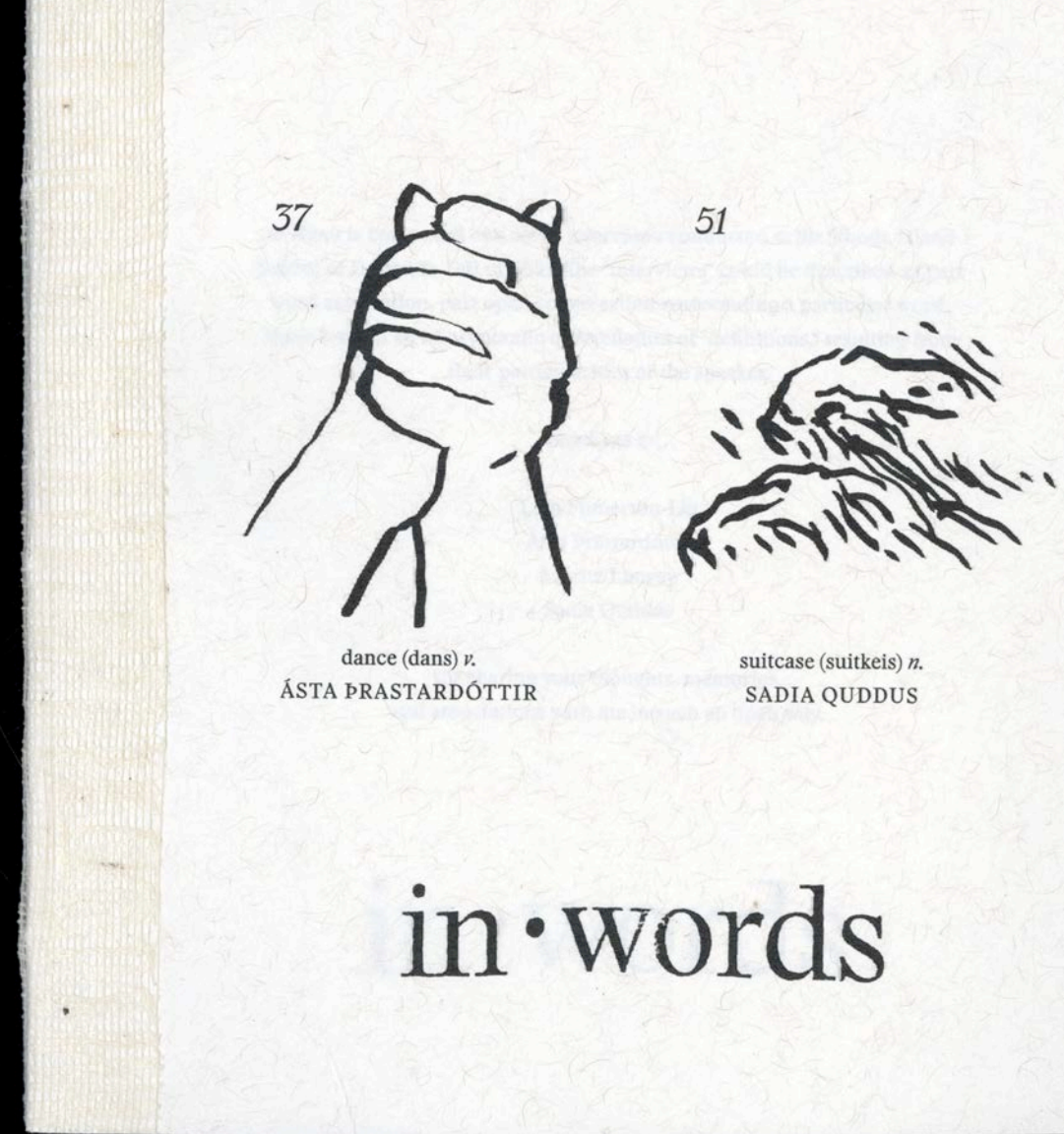
Dougal
Henken
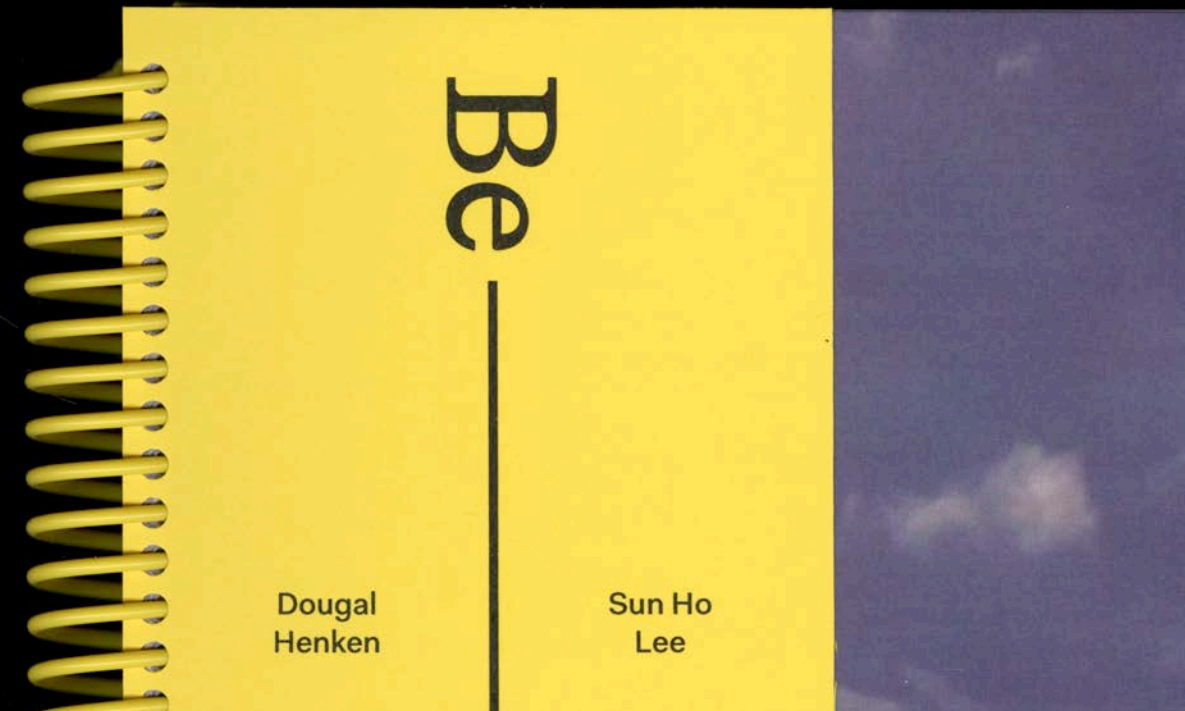
Sun Ho
Lee

The book's spiral binding allows Dougal and Sun Ho's respective halves of the book to exist separately from each other with the spiral weaving the two halves together and holding them in relation to each other.

5   21

tree (tré) n.   blue (blu) adj.
LIAN FUMERTON-LIU   MORITZ LÓNYAY

37   51

dance (dans) v.   suitcase (suitkeis) n.
ÁSTA ÞRASTARDÓTTIR   SADIA QUDDUS

in · words

This fact can be found

even in the tiniest
and most transient events

Image References

Thank you to Dougal Henken.

Interviewed in May 2022 on the question of
"How do you think communication works?"

Sun Ho Lee.

I think all my object associations

are memory-based

and I see certain trees,

sense of self sometimes

kind of restores my own

...facial expressions...

and
free-moving

I think what you can see [in graphic designers that move into film and video] is that there's a very structured visual. It's kind of like the flow of a book: You're thinking about something in terms of like, beginning, middle and end, you're designing the structure around it, you're creating consistencies in the same way that you would design where your page number is. You think about transitions and your [visual] language in the same way. **Lake Buckley**

Conversation with Lake Buckley

Lake Buckley is a Brooklyn based multi-disciplinary artist. She works as a director, designer and creative director. She is a California native and enjoys bringing a touch of ordinary magic to her work.

IK   I think if I remember right, you came into contact with filmmaking at RISD through an experimental film-making class. I was curious what it was that drew you to the medium and what was the moment of clicking for you?

LB   Yeah, I took that class two years in a row because I loved it so much. A few things really clicked with me. One was that I identify thinking more in three dimensions than I do in two dimensions. So that was just one compo-nent of it where I was like: Oh, I love thinking in three dimensions and then being able to flatten that and have a lot of fun with what happens in that translation process. And that just felt really, really exciting to me and more natural to my creative process.

And I also liked having permission to think through form. Like my favorite classes were always ones where the way of making was the idea. And if you were coming up with a new approach or new way of making, like, that was the substance rather than this more academic or conceptual layer that I'm putting on this thing that is a more traditional approach of making.

IK   When you're talking about the way in which you approach something as being the thing itself, I feel like I see that in your work. It's like suffused with a kind of vision. I feel like watching your stuff, it's like—it's not like a relationship to typography or something—but I feel like a graphic designer made it, you

know. Just because it has this kind of formal quality to it. And I'm wondering: do you think about the relationship between graphic designe and film? Or do you just do you just kind of, like, make stuff (laughs)—

LB   Yeah. Totally.

IK   'Cause I'm also wondering, like, how useful that distinction of trying to think of them as separate entities even is.

LB   I think sometimes I realize things after the fact. Like I am someone who generally follows curiosity, and then thinks about it afterwards.

And the distinction between graphic design and film is important if you want it to be important. I mean, they're so linked. So if it ends up being generative to you to think about the connection between the two and, like, ask yourself questions that a graphic designer would ask and then apply that to film: amazing. I think it's super personal. What do you find with your thinking about the two things in your work?

IK   Well, I think … I think I'm still trying to work through it. Because one of the things that I liked about working at mgmt. was that we were working on a lot of different things. You know, it would be like exhibition design, books, identities, whatever. And I think that I've found video is a pretty good container for a lot of different things.

Actually, doubling back to what you were talking about with the two dimensionality and three dimensionality. That was something that I wanted to ask you about becuase I saw that Keetra Dixton was one of your advisors. And so I was thinking about the use of experience design in creating spaces. And you have a little bit of a background in sculpture too, right?

LB   Yeah, yeah.

IK   So how does that come out in set design?

LB   Oh, it comes out so much. And with set design—with film in general—you're always thinking about how the space is constructed, how the feeling of a space is going to change when to put light in it.

And I think there's like a very, I mean, people who do product design and graphic design, and then move to film. There's like a pacing, and a structure to the work that I think feels different than someone who comes from film. And so I think what you can see sometimes is that there's a very struc-tured visual. It's kind of like the flow of a book: You're thinking about something in terms of like, beginning, middle and end, you're designing the structure around it, you're creating like consistencies in the same way that you would design, you know, where your page number is. You think about transitions and your [visual] language in the same way.

So I find myself thinking very structur-ally about film. And the growth area for me is to push myself in terms of bringing more movement into things and also allowing things to be less structured. Because I don't come from film, I'm never gonna make a super loose, poetic, rough skater film. No, I am thinking about things way more "what is the concept of the movements in this?"

And yeah, set design. I mean, I always wish that I could do more.

IK   I was kind of curious to ask you about the relationship with set design as you've progressed in your career through the past four or five years. I just rewatched the, the illusion, the TED video, and I think there's a shot in there of you actually being the person rolling the bottle that breaks.

LB   We shot that in my Brooklyn studio. When I first moved here, I had a studio where I was shooting everything. And the first films I did, there was like, almost no budget, and I wanted to prove that I could do this so that I'd get signed by someone. And so everything initially was just doing it myself and I do think that is another reason why I connected to that experimental film course because I just love being hands-on.

The bummer is when you're actually making something that's when you learn, and

An example of Lake's structure and symmetry in framing along with stylized set design in a frame from a Genvalia commercial.

that's for me the most productive space to like actually find new ideas and it's really hard for me personally to not have a space now to work and to have these jobs where I now design something on the computer and I have someone else make it. And so there is a lot of 2D life that I live now. I would love to be more hands on than I am. That's something that I think I need to figure out now.

IK   That brought up two questions for me. Number one was just wondering if it's fair to say that when you discov-ered video, you found a form that you could really bring the totality of your-self into in this way that maybe you couldn't in like, two-dimensional work.

LB   Yeah.

IK   But then one other thing that I'm thinking about is are you now making spaces for smaller scale projects where you're trying to give yourself that space to be more hands on?

LB   Totally. Last year, I didn't feel like I advanced my own voice and curiosity. So this year, I would like to do two personal projects. And both of them have a smaller scale just inherently because of budget restrictions. But yes: wanting to, like, bring the scale down and bring up the creative authorship.

IK   One of the things I wanted to talk to you about was this idea of Secular Magic [from your thesis]—or in a couple of press releases I've maybe seen it as Practical Magic—that's carried forward. Is that kind of where your head is still at as you're moving into new work where you're thinking about, you know, magic camera tricks, editing things like that? Or have you found yourself starting to move into other different directions over the last years?

LB   I think there's some feelings from Practical Magic that I still feel very attached to, but not so literally illusions. There's that feeling when you have an illusion—that feeling of like, surprise, or like originality. I'm
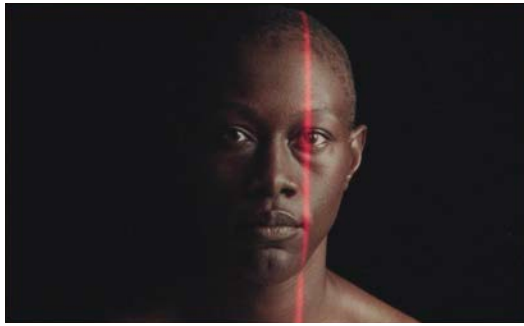
Left: Frames from a trailer for Jessica Helfand's book *Face*, which Lake Buckley co-directed in 2019.
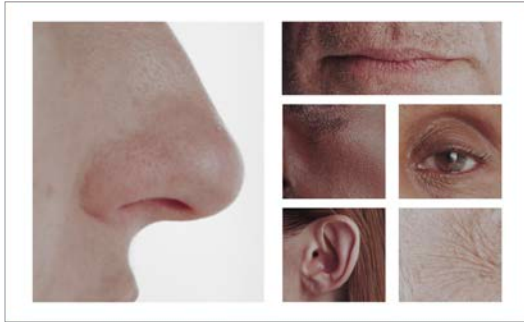
definitely looking for that wherever I can in my work. Like how can I do something in whatever project it is where it's trying to look at something in a new way, or trying to create a cut or a transition that feels fresh. That's the feeling I get from, like formal techniques that have a story embedded into them. And so that's something I definitely am always looking for.

IK   It was funny because rewatching your work in a solid block before talking to you, the word that came to mind was "delight." I feel like our sensibilities are different, but it's something that I really admire about your work: where it just feels like a very joyful person made this.

So we talked a little bit about transitions over the past several years, but it was just recently in the past year that you went from Creative Director to co-director to now just "director." How has that transition been?

LB   So the world of directing is hard to break into. I mean, especially coming from a graphic design background, I was like, Okay, how do I get a foot in the door? I don't fucking know anything about film. I don't know anything about the film industry, I don't have people I went to school with that I can, like get together to make cheap films. I don't know anything. So for me, it was doing work for friend's brands that trusted me and didn't have any money. And just like making the sets and putting that stuff together, to demonstrate that I COULD do that kind of work.

And then my mentor—someone that I interviewed in my thesis—has an agency here [in NYC], and knows that I want to direct. And so I started working as a Creative Director, and knew that if there was opportunities for directing work that I was also able to do that there. So doing Creative Direction was also helpful to just understand what the pitch process is.
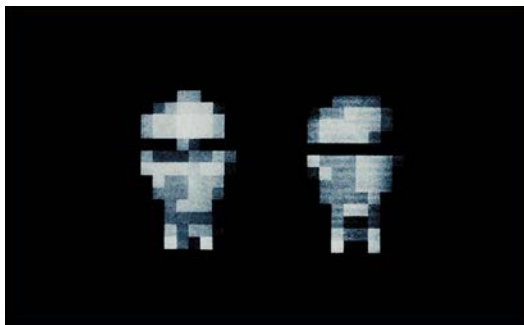
IK   Just to revisit the question of the mentor—I'm assuming this is Aaron Duffy that you're talking about? Did you know him before you interviewed him for your thesis book, or was that a relationship that built from there?

LB   Yeah, it just built from there. So, Andrew Sloat—who taught the experimental film course—was also signed as a director at [1stAveMachine where] Aaron was signed at.

IK   That actually does make me think of something that I wanted to ask you: You're now a director at 1stAveMachine, but you were also a freelance designer at Patagonia, and a creative director. Did you have this endpoint of like, "Oh, I know, I want to do that" and these things were the steps getting toward there? Or if it was just, like … Okay, you're shaking your head "no."

LB   No, I'm not someone who can be like a 10 year plan person. I just keep working towards more creative satisfaction. Like I went to grad school because I knew that I wasn't going to be able to like be happy on the career path that I was on and then after grad school, I was like, "I fucking love having the freedom to, like, follow my own curiosity. I love making work that I feel connected to, and I don't want to let go of that. I don't want to go back to making work for other people that I don't feel connected to." And that I think will always be the thing that I'm trying to figure out. So my path has led me here, and I'm still struggling with the same things.

IK   Given that you're not a 10 year plan person but now that you've found yourself in this world of directing, do you have aspirations to do certain types of projects? Whether, like, to do a feature film, or to do a short form documentary?

LB   The feature film feels like too out of my range at the moment, but I definitely want to push for, for example, this year, the music video, and then I want to create a hyper-stylized doc. And if I could get that into like, South by Southwest or something

then that would be great. But I want to do two things that I feel represent me this year. And knowing that those always lead to the next thing. So right now, that's my—and again, you can see by the way I'm talking about it like, I'm not a 10 year person. I'm just like: right now. I'm dissatisfied in these ways, so what I can do is do two projects this year, that answer that question for me, and then we'll see what's next. It's the same with my making too. Everything is pretty close in front of me.

IK   I think that seems like a better way of going about it, rather than to have like this 10 year plan of this really abstract thing that you're working at. Because at least if you're looking in front of yourself, you have concrete things that you're working on. And it's my guess is that you being able to get to where you are at 1stAveMachine is predicated on doing the work that was meaningful to you that was able to show who you were.

So are you thinking that if this work gets into SXSW, then the sorts of clients that are going to hit me up are going to be more in line with, you know, the vision that I have?

LB   Yes, and even more than that, the more I do things that are true to me, and push my own creative voice, the happier I will be.

4. Eisenstein, "A Dialectic Approach to Film Form," p.49.

* Is there a way to think of this in terms of Buber's emergent dialogue instead? Or do we already when we say two speak to each other when set in relation?

A diagram illustrating Eisenstein's notion of the temporal superimposition of sequenced images.

The way a book works with its stacked layers of latent images is not dissimilar from one of Sergei Eisenstein's insights. In Eisenstein's montage theory, he makes the point that film images are temporally superimposed upon each other, the current image in your sight held in mental relation to the one that was just there.

Montage occurs not in the short gap between frames that create motion but in the extended gap of image to image, idea to idea, in which the viewer must jump from one thing to another. Eisenstein sees this as a place of conflict, * what he calls the dramatic principle. [4]

The poster series *Repetition is a Form of Change* (2022).

Eisenstein's insights allow me to see my work again in a different light. My attempt to turn a poster series into a poster sequence through a recursive process of collaging and scanning lacks coherence. In the movement of collaged stripes, to scanned manipulations, then recombined into stripes, the posters become more of a record or residue of process rather than a sequence that moves an idea from one place to another.

The gap between is oddly shaped—in some ways too close, in others too far. I see them as a series of frames trying to put themselves into movement.

Repetition is a Form of Change

Poster Series   24" × 34"

Repetition is a Form of Change is a poster series that
I made to generate a sequence out of a recursive process.
Inspired by the simple prompts in Brian Eno and Peter
Schmidt's *Oblique Strategies*, the poster series takes a
set of constraints and creates a feedback loop that could
be repeated indefinitely: Stripes at different densities are
printed out and collaged, manipulated on the scanner, and
then recombined into stripes. Upon making the work, it
functioned more as a record of process than a sequence.

The process began by printing different densities
of stripes then collaging and scanning them.
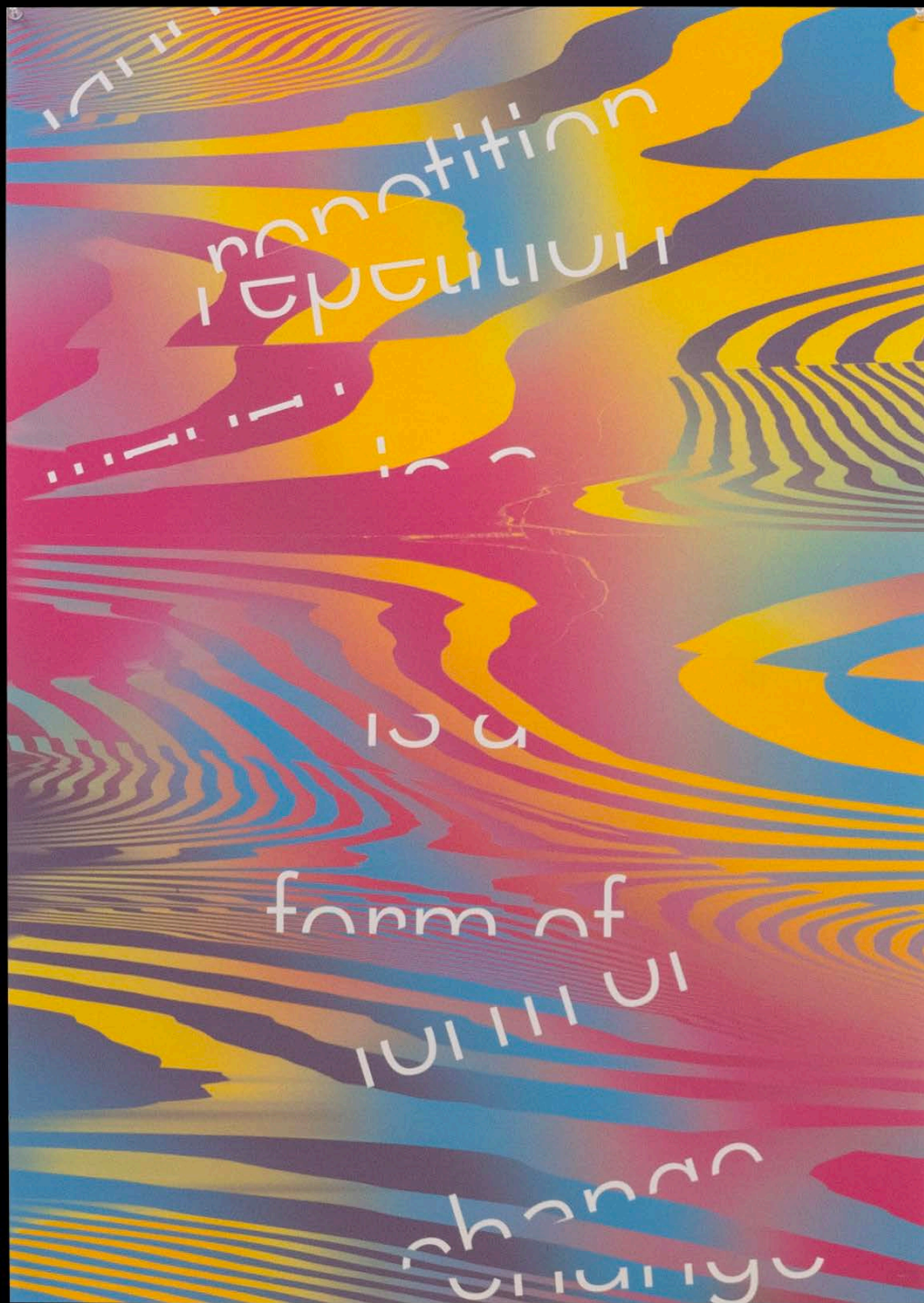
The stripe collages were manipulated
on the scanner.

The manipulated stripes were then recombined
into another set and scanned.

The following spreads show full-scale details
from each of the posters.

form of

change
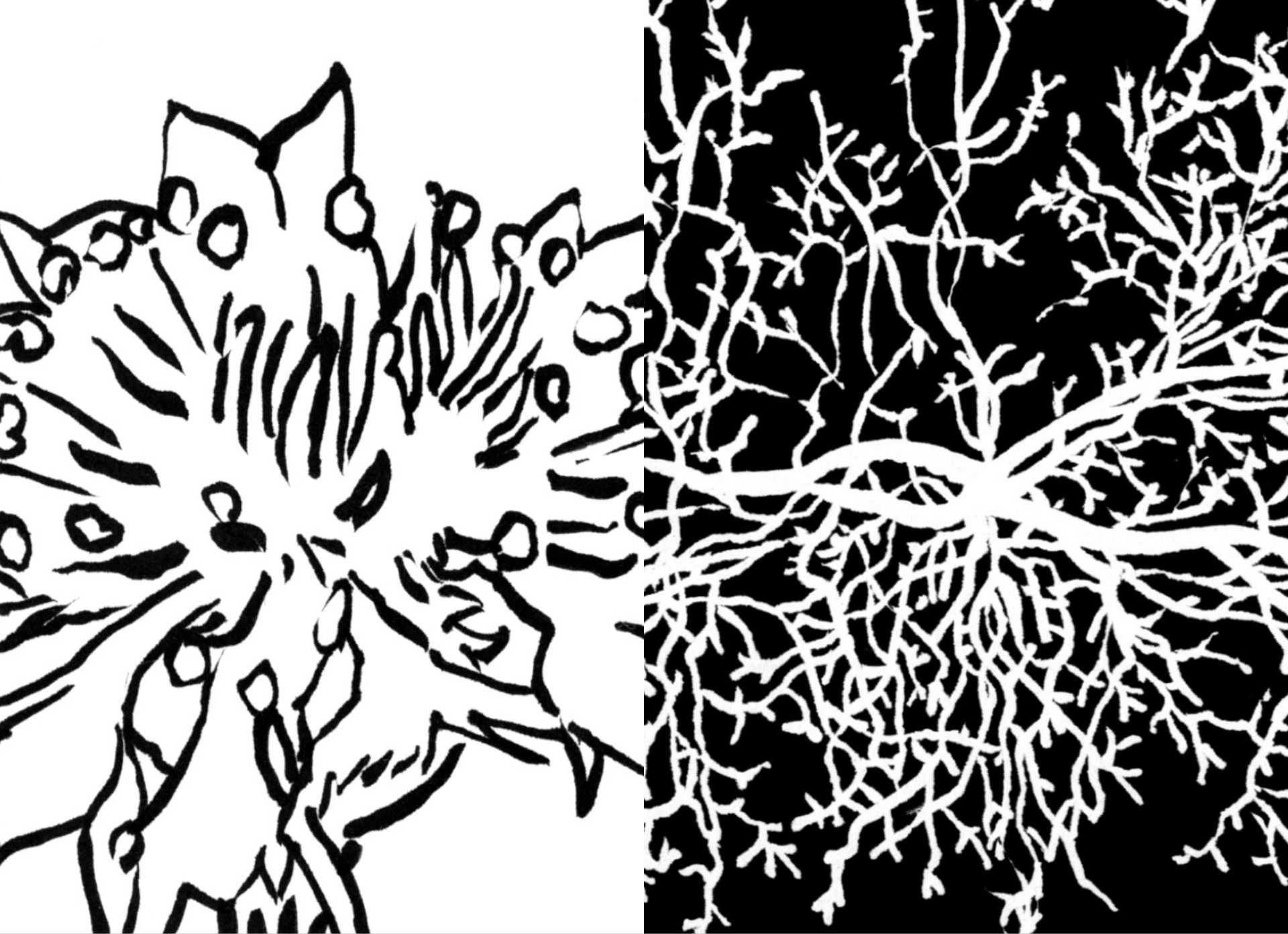
Details from Moritz Lónyay's segment of *In Words* (2021).

And Eisenstein's insights into montage also helps me recognize other moments that have greater sequential impact, such as the movement in *In Words* from the blooming cornflower to its inverted, sinister-looking root system while Moritz speaks about the Austrian far-right symbolism of the flower.

5. Sebald, *The Rings of Saturn*, p.17

Saturn's Rings (2023) by
Rebecca Wilkinson (GD MFA '24).
The spread above shows the page
the quote below is taken from.
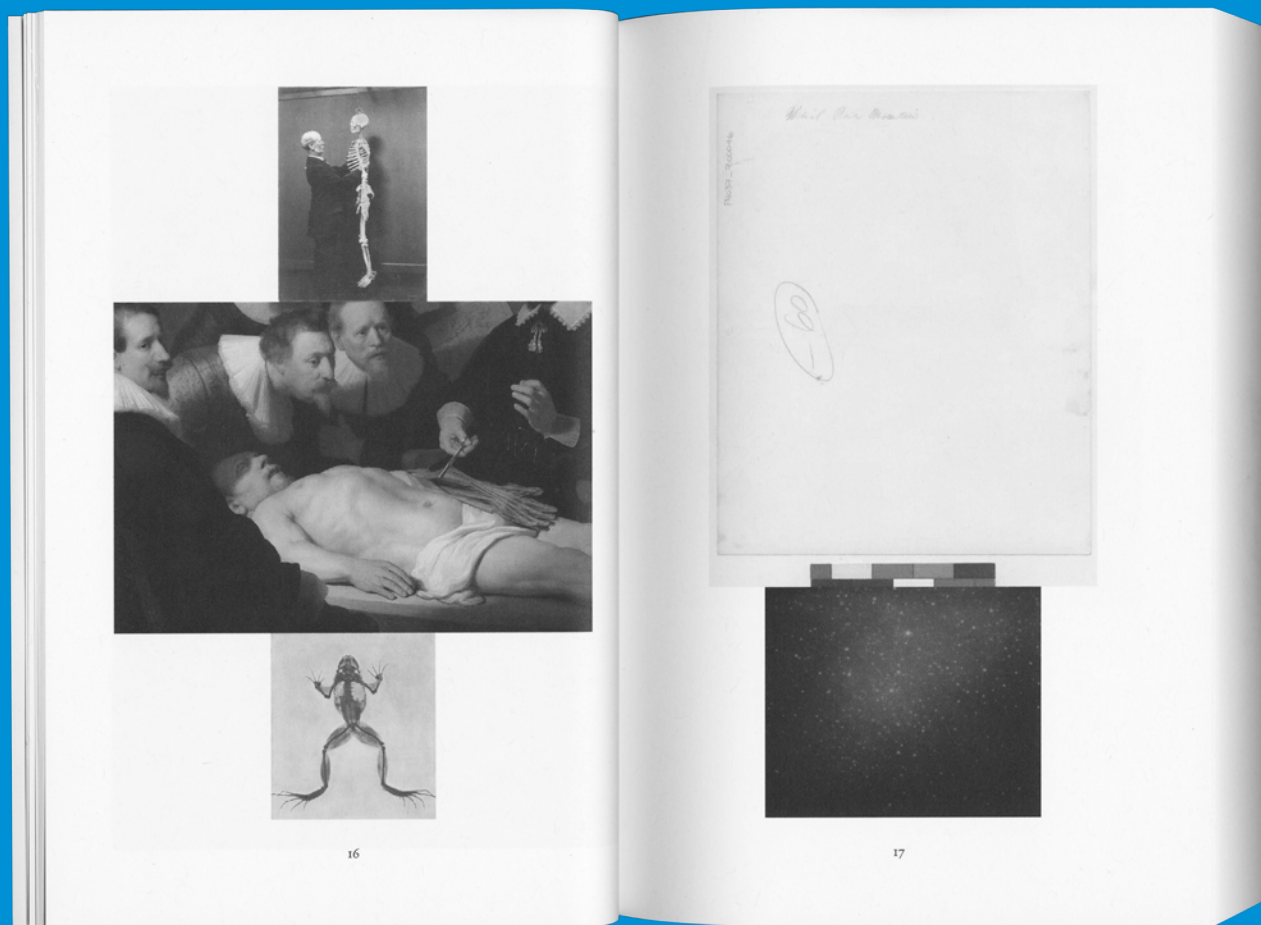
Rebecca, who sits several desks away from me, has been making a book which translates the entirety of *Rings of Saturn* into archival images. What results is a visual translation of the Sebald's movement thought to thought, reference to reference.

She tells me I need to read the book, that it was written for me. I restart it again after having put it down several months ago and can see what she means.

Looking at a transition in the first chapter of *Rings of Saturn*, I see a tonal montage in the image of mist that ties the associations together, allowing ideas to bounce off of each other, resonate, and accumulate:

"Perhaps, as Browne says in a later note about the great fog that shrouded large parts of England and Holland on the 27th of November 1674, it was the white mist that rises from within a body opened presently after death, and which during our lifetime, so he adds, clouds our brain when asleep and dreaming. I still recall how my own consciousness was veiled by the same sort of fog as I lay in my hospital room once more after surgery late in the evening." [5]

Still from *Liquidity, Inc.* (2014)
by Hito Steyerl.

I find myself experiencing the same sensation of concepts bouncing off each other while watching Hito Steyerl's *Liquidity, Inc.* (2014). The concept of liquidity spills over into the different discourses of finance, UFC, political instability, the internet, climate change, and others—all churning together.

Notably, these collide not only in sequential montage but also in the space of the same frame.

Detail from *Through the Labyrinth* (2023).

It's an impulse that's familiar to me because there's rarely only one image that I want to show you.

Frame from *Between* (2022) of
Dougal Henken next to a drawing by
the artist Vija Celmins.

Whether it's juxtaposed.

Detail from *In Words* of Lian's rock thrown on a Rhode Island beach layered over footage I shot in Bend, OR.

Or superimposed.
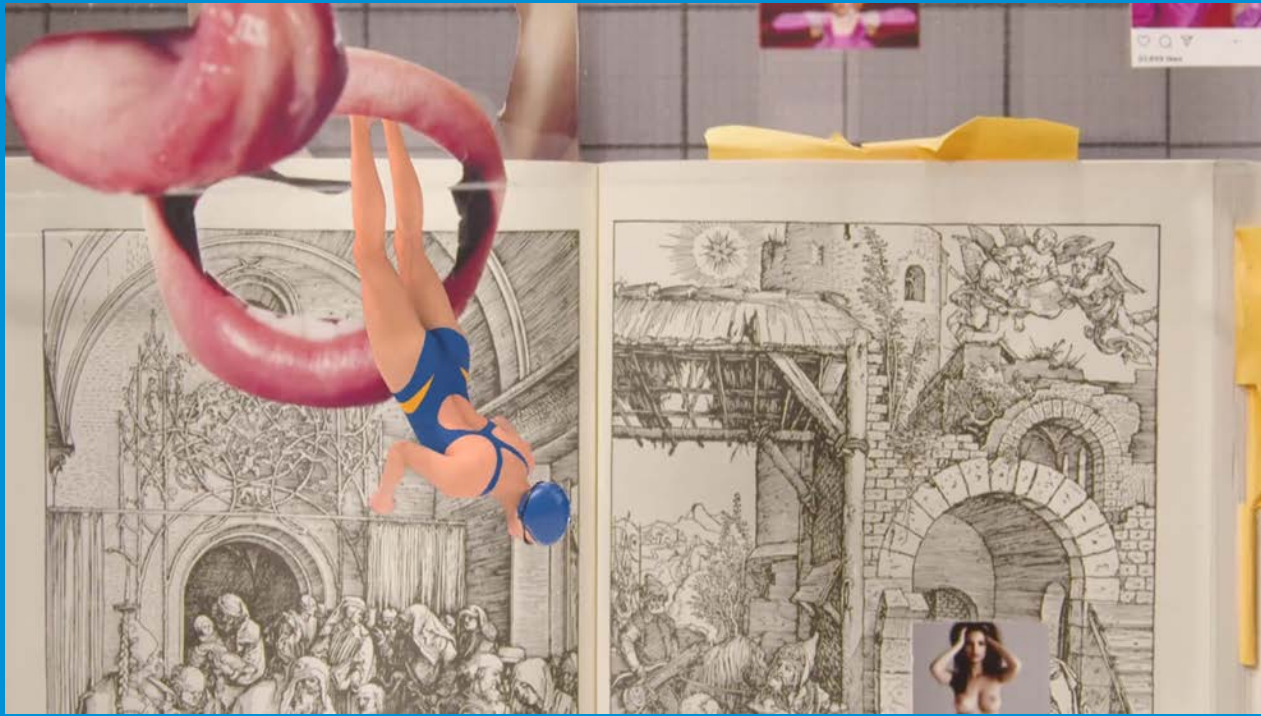
Still from *Glass Life* (2021)
by Sara Cwynar.

I recognize a similar tendency in the work of Sara Cwynar. Especially *Glass Life* (2021), which features an overwhelming flow of images and sound.

This combination of collage and montage is something that gets to what I feel driven to evoke in formal experiences.
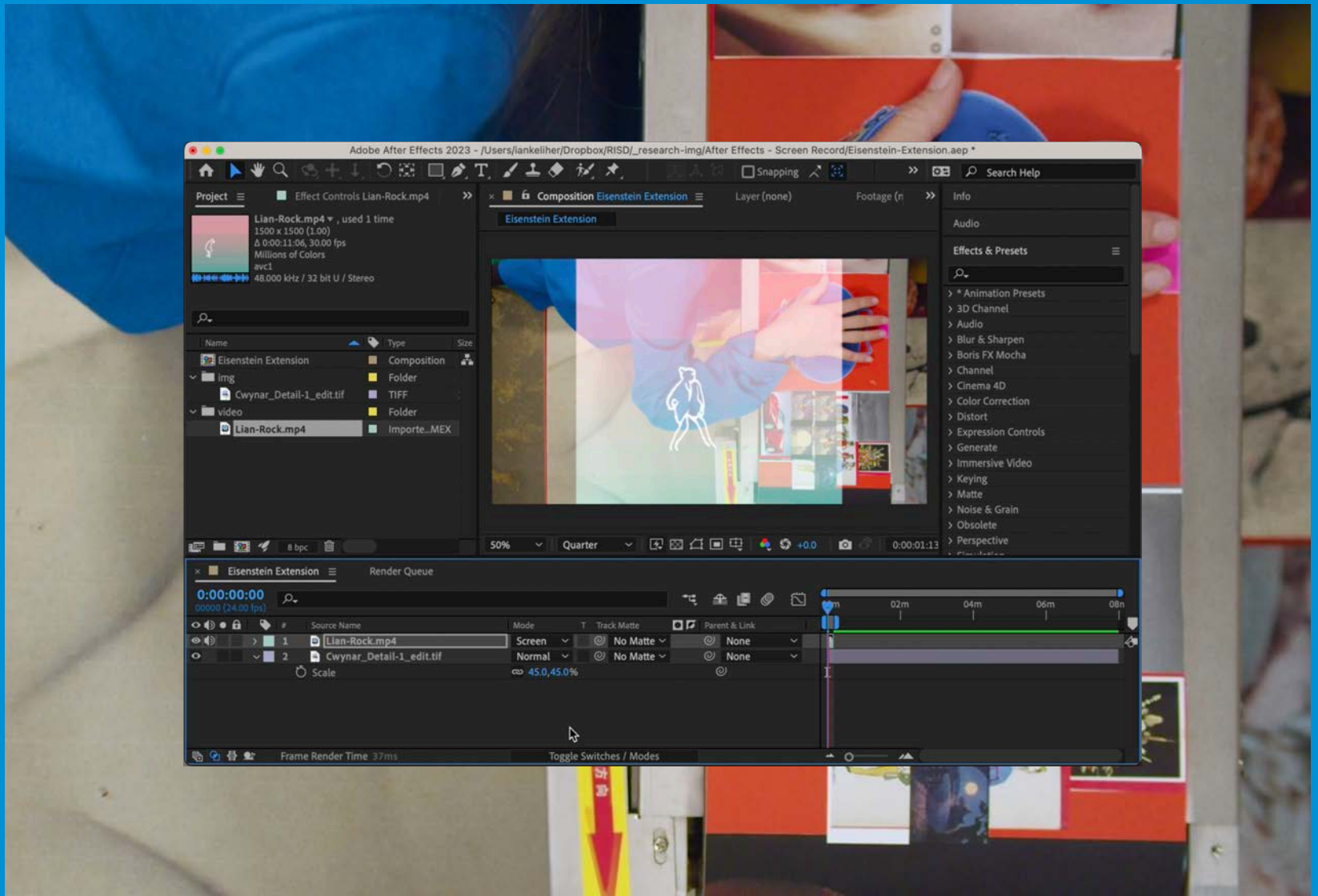
6. Manovich, "After Effects, or Velvet Revolution" 64–65.

After Effects UI over detail of *Glass Life* (2021) by Sara Cwynar.

In an article by Lev Manovich, he locates this tendency in the emergence of After Effects:

"After Effects' interface put forward a new concept of a moving image: as a composition organized both in time and 2D space … When I first began using After Effects, soon after it came out, I remember feeling shocked that the software did not automatically resize the graphics I dragged into the Composition Window to make them fit the overall frame. The fundamental assumption of cinema that accompanied it throughout its whole history—that film consists of many frames, all with the same size and aspect ratio—was gone." [6]
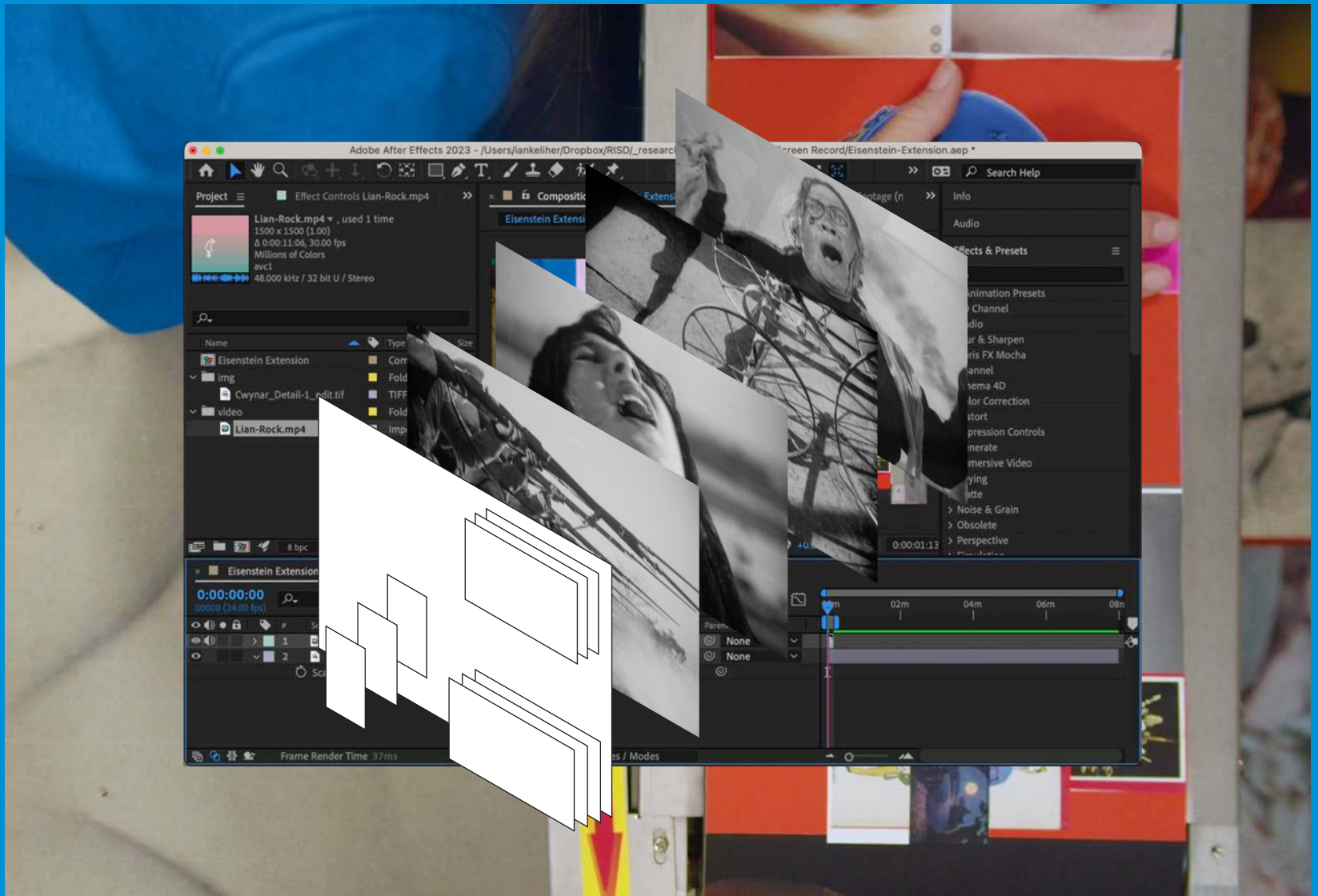
Layering a modification of my Eisenstein diagram over the top.

After Effects has extended Eisenstein's montage theory of sequences stacked in a temporal z-space into now having an additional z-space in every particular shot that could contain an infinite amount of layers. A potential montage of montages. A hybrid collage-montage.

In a certain sense, this isn't exactly new given the combinations of image and text put into temporal sequence in the history of title sequences, but I don't really see the work of Steyerl and Cwynar within that lineage and instead they point to other possibilities.

Detail of *Glass Life* (2021)
by Sara Cwynar.

What becomes visible in light of Manovich's insight is that After Effects initiates a new way of thinking about moving image, and what Cwynar's work shows is that the collage-montage way of thinking persists as a way of seeing.

In *Glass Life*, despite using post-production effects and transitions, Cwynar is working mostly within the limitations of celluloid film, so the scrolling images the compose the bulk of the film are, in fact, physical images affixed to moving plexiglass plates, resulting in an approach that might be called "practical after effects."

Clips from *Here and There* showing the intercutting between Beavertail in Kaela Kennedy's hometown of Jamestown, RI and her apartment in Providence, RI.

I find myself playing a similar game in 16mm film by trying to collage spaces together through intercutting.

Frame from *Heart of a Dog* (2015)
by Laurie Anderson showing her dog,
Lolabelle.

Though I feel a kinship with the formal strategies of Steryl and Cwynar, I don't feel like I'm pursuing them for the same reason. I find something closer in Laurie Anderson's *Heart of a Dog* (2015).

In her meditation on the loss of her beloved rat terrier, Lolabelle, Anderson employs a host of effects and formal decisions that are used to communicate and articulate different states and experiences as she weaves us through Tibetan Buddhism, Post-9/11 New York, and the ability of animals to play instruments.

It's the combination between her wandering path of thought and her interiority that speaks to me.

7. See page 240.

Seeing it in this way, my drive towards collage has to do with my feeling that every experience is really a manifold, composite experience. Aidan Koch put it very well in our conversation.

She says: "It's like most of us are all just out there having these experiences at all times where it's like something is bringing back a memory at the same time you're saying something to your friend and you're walking and there's a thing there. Somehow we are processing all these things simultaneously all the time." [7]

Part of the story is this kind of relational quality or even this overlap of perspectives. So part of the idea of fragmentation or abstraction is like layering different perspectives, which is not this concrete objective reality that characters are living in. So yeah, part of that is just playing with where are people's attention?

Aidan Koch

Conversation with Aidan Koch

Aidan Koch's work looks at complex inter-being between humans, their non-human cohabitators, and the landscapes they are situated in through constructing narratives with drawings and objects. She's published six graphic novels, exhibited internationally, and founded the Institute for Interspecies Art and Relations in 2017. Koch's graphic novels include Xeric Award winning, *The Blonde Woman*, and forthcoming *Spiral and Other Stories* published by New York Review of Comics. Her work has been exhibited at the Whitney Museum of American Art, South Bend Museum of Art, and Queens University Belfast, among others. She holds an MFA from Emily Carr University of Art and Design and is currently represented by Paul Soto gallery in Los Angeles, CA. Koch is based in Landers, CA in the Mojave Desert.

IK   I have one concrete, technical question to start off with: I'm really curious when you're making comics, whether you're doing things page by page or whether you're looking at it as a spread? Because as a graphic designer, I'm always thinking on the level of the spread. And I feel like your background is in illustration, right? So I'm curious if you go page by page or how that works?

AK   It depends. I mean, most of the time I use this very particular paper that I end up cutting them all in half, so it is page by page and that's a little bit practical—that size won't fit in my scanner. But one of the things I also learned is that as much as

I might have a page count laid out, I end up doing edits, I end up adding a forward. It's a 50/50 chance that those pages are actually back-to-back. So I think usually what I end up doing is I'll cut them into individual pages and I'll just have them all in a row. So there's continuities that end up bleeding through because I'm looking at more than the spread. Because I don't know which ones will be together, I try to create harmonies that will show up at different points. And I feel like those usually go more than two pages. But I'm always aware of it being a book. And always aware there's a bigger composition than the single page and that in order to create that fluidity of reading, there are carried-over bits or compositional mirrors. Lots of different kinds of tactics like a line
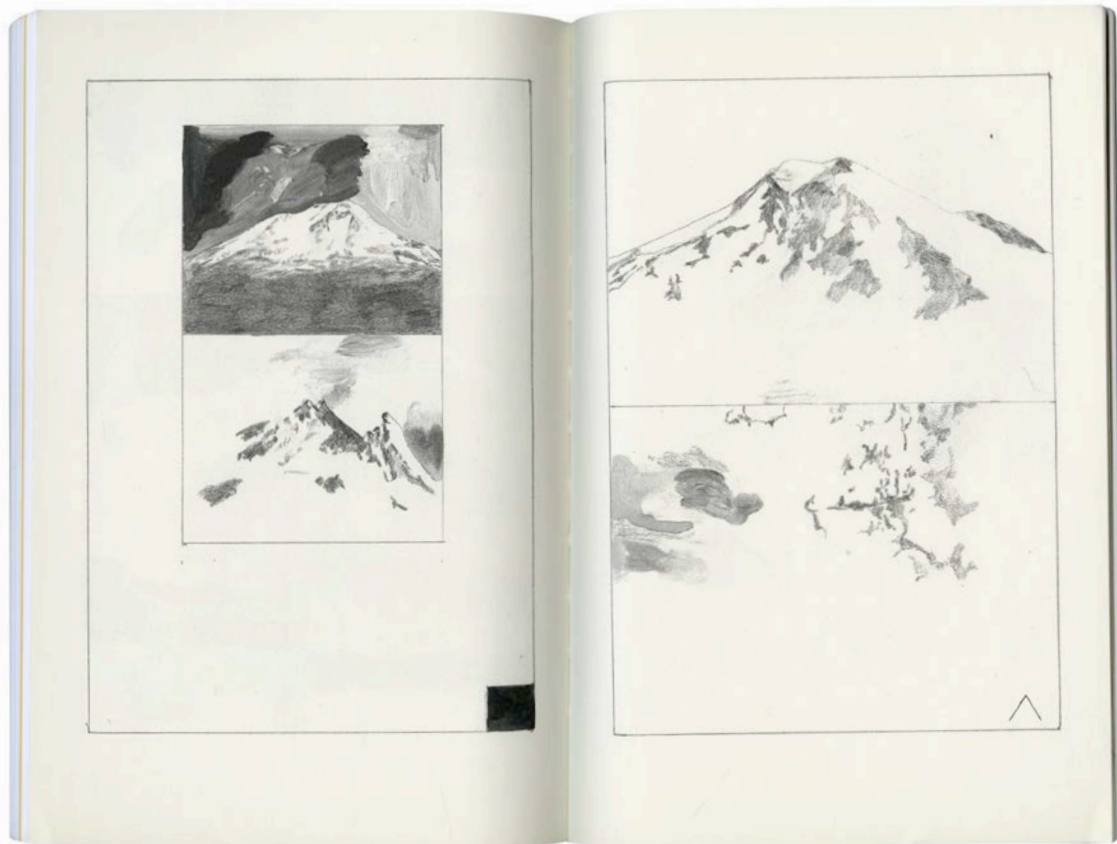
Pages from the story "After Nothing Comes" in the collection *After Nothing Comes* (2016).

that might carry through in different ways or have harmonious relationships.

IK Do you storyboard before or do you thumbnail sketches before going in?

AK No, that's one thing I never do or have done. And that's kind of like, I mean, partially for my own sanity. I can't know what it's really gonna look like. As much as I can sketch something out, it doesn't really help me that much. It also predetermines things versus leaving it open to chance and surprises and part of the pleasure that I find is just not knowing what it's gonna look like, and those things kind of unveil themselves as I move through. But I think the stuff that's maybe a little more intentional is the sense of harmonies and rhythms. And that comes back into it when I do some editing. I'll work on like 10 or 12 pages and then I'll go back and actually

read it and try and see how it moves—if it's moving too fast. A lot of times I'll find I need to add pages 'cause something is too fast of a transition. Or it's like, no, we need to kind of tone things down in this moment and then pull them back up to this next one. And yeah, so that's like, that's maybe the part where things become really intentional or finding too like if I start using a certain color palette, kind of pulling that back in at different points or if there's certain symbols that kind of arise, pulling those back in and developing kind of this language for a particular project that moves you through from beginning to end. So I think every book kind of has that, where there's like certain things that just come into it and then I try and kind of keep those and move those throughout that story.

IK It seems like because you're working page by page and you're not quite sure what's coming up, it seems

like it gives you a way to respond to what you just did. It's like this kind of linkage of call and response. Is that the way that it kind of works?

AK Yeah, and if you ever actually see the pages I'm working on, usually I'll, I'm scripting it also as I go. But there might be some things that I have kind of determined but not that much. And I'm usually always one page ahead in my scripting. So there'll be these little notes that are just like scribbled at the bottom that's the next page and they'll be a little bit, and then that's going to the next page.

I'm only really one step ahead and visually I'm maybe not there yet, but I at least am kind of like figuring out—based on what's happening here—what needs to be happening next or just what that conversation is and how it moves.

IK Reviewing your work, it was really beautiful to see these resonances start to develop between different projects. The word "motif" comes to mind after spending time with your work. And I'm curious when you talk about building those harmonious relationships or distributing those things, how do you approach something like that?

AK Yeah, I think those things kind of appear pretty naturally and then kind of like I was saying, when I go back and edit or I'm kind of like moving forward, I have to read through what I've done over and over and over again, and just like try and get into the mindset of the story. It becomes very immersive. So as I do that, there'll be things that I pull from the beginning and start putting in. And I haven't done this as much, but sometimes I'll pull from the end or put something back in the beginning just, again, to kind of build that relationship or those relationships throughout the story. And especially where it's like, "ooh, this actually has multiple meanings" or like, if I'm kind of seeing how there's symbols or color palettes, there are things that are kind of bridging the narrative in different ways, then those become more obvious to me too. And being like, "ooh, maybe I can play with that a little." Or like I can kind of mess with it

and bring in the intentionality even though as I'm working, it's like things are kind of just coming out. There's like that second step that is being a little more decisive and intentional. But I think, yeah, it's kind of that reading back through and seeing what's already happened and seeing what is enhancing the narrative.

IK In your work, you often have this gesture of a kind of reduction or fragmentation or removal of elements and I'm curious whether you think about that as leaving space for the reader to occupy or just how you think about it.

AK Yeah. This maybe isn't precisely what you mean but maybe you can tell me too, but something I was talking about recently was part of it usually for me is like, again, it's not necessarily about a sequence of events. Part of the story is this kind of relational quality or like even this overlap of perspectives. So part of the idea of fragmentation or abstraction is like layering different perspectives, which is not this concrete objective reality that characters are living in. So yeah, part of that is just playing with where are people's attention? Where are people's minds? Where are people's focuses? And some of that is, well, they're literally looking at this object and only this object, but they're looking at it very specifically. And it's just in those moments where it's like there's multiple things going on with our minds and our presences. So it's trying to capture that and then layer that among different characters. So that's kind of of this in and out of focus quality. It's like, if you're really stressed and you're sitting there staring at something, you're both looking at it with hyper attention but you're also not looking at it at all. Like everything else is gone. There's like these different plays with just being present in a space and having our minds racing or quiet.

IK It's so exciting for me to hear you say that because I feel when I read other people talking about your work, it's usually in relation to dreams, memories, these other kinds of states of mind. But I had this sense where it's maybe this phenomenological relationship of moving through the
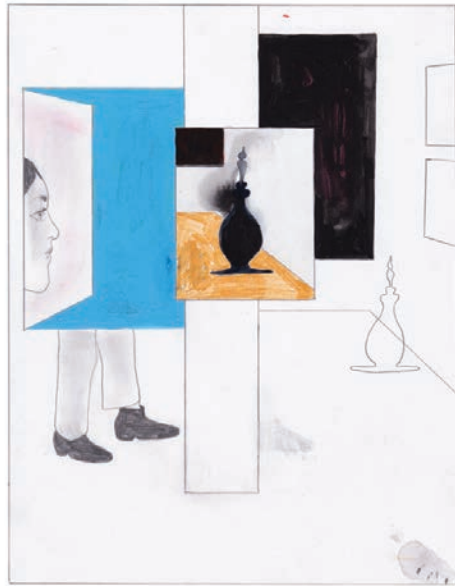
Page from *Viewer* (2016), which appeared in *Flash Art*.

AK Usually there's a pretty solid outline or it'll just be a page of notes in a journal that's mostly as far as things are from the beginning. And then sometimes with some longer ones I've had more extensive details written out or there might be a conversation and that's in my head or that's ready to go where I'm like, there's maybe a scene where this happens or this interaction is happening. That's where the narrative is at. And kind of guiding principles of like, even some words about maybe the tone or certain details where it's like, "ooh, I really want this in it or this type of thing in it." Or that's as far as that gets and it's really important and helpful. But sometimes when I'm starting, there's nothing and it's like, well, let's just draw something and see what the hell happens. And with comics, it's so fun 'cause it is relational so you really don't need much to start. You just start drawing, you're like, "Well, here's something and this—whatever I draw next—is in relation to this. So what will that be?"

IK Looking at some of your earlier work through the lens of what you're doing now—having just read *Stone Blue Sky* and hearing you talk about that—do you feel like this relationship to nature and the human was always there and it's just been heightened now? Or was that a really conscious decision to start to move in that direction?

world. And I think it's exactly what you said—it's attention. It's the way that the world looks depending on the type of attention that's being paid to it. And so it's less about these heightened states of dream or memory but just about the very act of looking. And maybe—you can correct me if I'm wrong—it's also partly about the way that dreams and memory glom onto the way that we look at things.

AK Yeah. I think it's all happening at all times. It's like trying to capture that but also in a way that it's not overwhelming. Most of us are all just out there having these experiences at all times where something is bringing back a memory at the same time you're saying something to your friend and you're walking and there's a thing over there and somehow we are processing all these things simultaneously all the time. And seeing some of the patterns of how those things move based on what the emotional experiences are, is kind of a guiding point.

IK So I'm curious when you talk about the story, how concrete is it for you when you're thinking about this?

AK It's definitely been there. My very first graphic novel I put out when I was like 20 was called *The Whale*. And that one does have those parallels in its narrative of, it's like someone grieving but then simultaneously, the story that they share is about a beached whale. There was actually a news story in the Pacific Northwest that year or the year before, it was a tropical whale that had somehow ended up in Puget Sound and being like, "oh, I was doing that then." And I think there is maybe more intention now and seeing what's possible with exploring that relationship more explicitly. And I think seeing more in myself too, the interest in anthropology and in cultural history and lenses, historic and contemporary and who knows, future a little bit too but I think there's
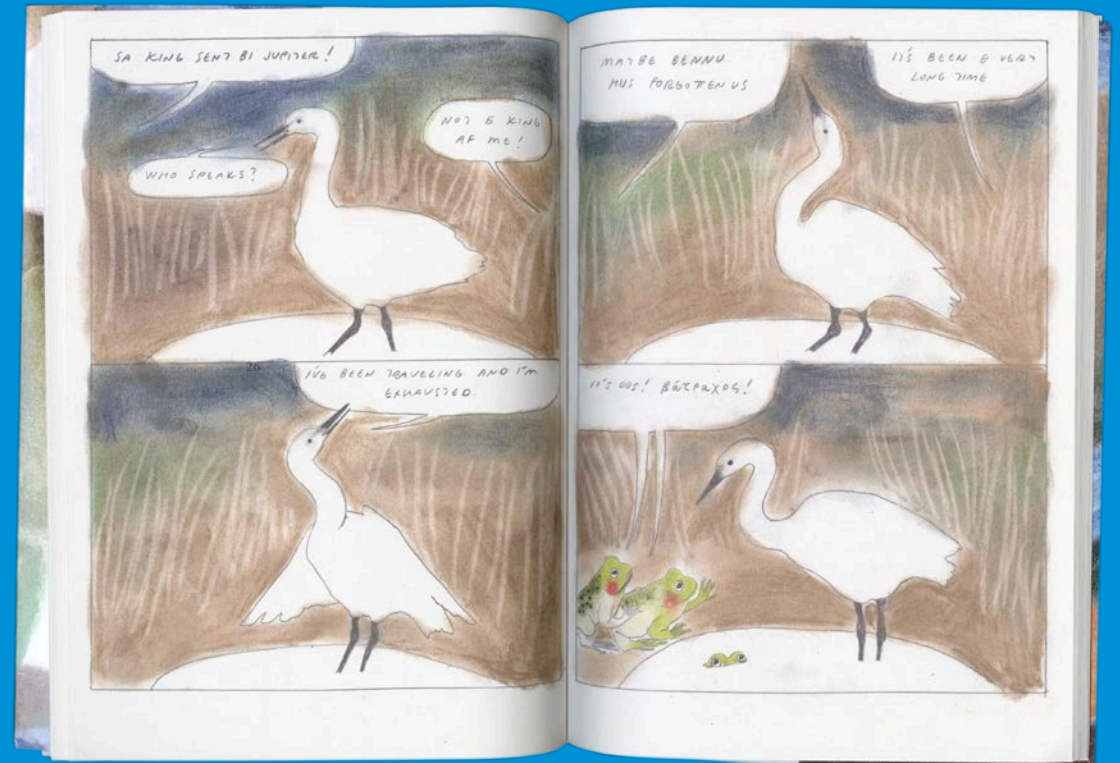
Stone Blue Sky (2021) and its parallel narratives.
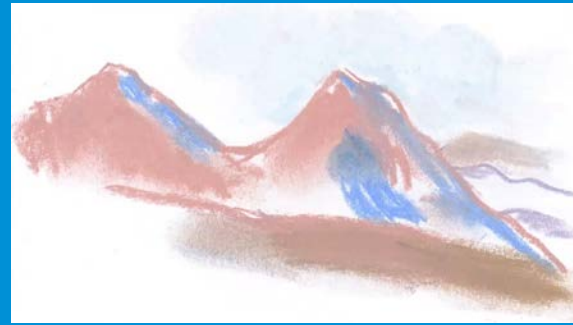
just so much there to play with and it's so fun as themes to work with.

IK   So, to me, what I really responded to when I first came into contact with your work was this relationship to inwardness or inner experience, and I'm curious how that's maybe changing as your subject matter is changing. Have you found that your approach to story-telling or creating visual narratives has changed? Because looking through Stone Blue Sky, what I found inter-esting was it felt almost more filmic.

AK   Yeah, this kinda came up recently talking to someone about After Nothing Comes and thinking about work now, and even re-reading something that I'd said before, which was like … I think there was this kind of … Maybe something people also identi-fied in my work more was this connection to poetry and forms and symbols, kind of operating this way that wasn't maybe more referential to poetry—and I've never been someone who's read a lot of poetry or it's never really enticed me hugely—but I can definitely see where that mindset was at play and how, the way things kind of danced with each other on pages was more that way. And I think now, I almost see things more as a stage play—cinematic almost—but more as a play.

IK   I was curious to talk to you about your relationship to research and trying to figure out how to put this into a narrative format.

AK   Yeah, I mean, it's really delicate and challenging thinking about how to make that successful and how to not just mimic it through something that's purely, again, non-fiction, but how to make there be space in it for playfulness and ambiguity, and keeping it kind of true to just being an artistic expression while also like, hopefully be … Having enough of that there to set off different thoughts for people. It's hard.

IK   I was wanting to talk to you a little bit about the animation work that you had been doing that I saw, and I think maybe I started going back and looking

at some of the earlier stories, in terms of this body landscape relationship or continuity, it was … I think Spring is the title of the animation. Could you talk a little bit about your interest in anima-tion, how you've been using it?

AK   Yeah, I'm really happy that it's back for me. I studied it for a while in undergrad and loved it, was totally obsessed in the anima-tion lab every day for a year, just messing around, but yeah, it's one of those things where it's like, unless you're going all in, it's so, so, so consuming in time and attention, and if you're not part of that community, it's also hard to see … I don't know, or find a way to get funding or step up projects in some capacity, so yeah, the stuff I've been sharing, the stuff I've been putting in shows is really, really small scale, but it's fun that way. Things that I know I can kind of do on my own and I have a pretty good non-professional system to make them. But I love it. I mean, it's so cool, and when I think about exhibits, it really does a lot to activate the space. It brings in time, which is so much part of graphic novels and comics, and sequence, but when you're walking into a space and it's static work, it's like, well, the time is just the time the person puts into it. So I think throwing animation in there does something kind of magical, where suddenly the world is moving and activated and expressive in this whole other plane of time.

And yeah, I've been playing around with different ones like Spring. That piece I really love, and it's all life drawing. So every frame was me drawing somewhere, and it has a really special connection for me because those are all places around the desert [I live near], and it's like, "oh yeah, I sat there for a freaking hour, just drawing that stupid rock over and over." So it has that life drawing, which I just love. And I love that it forces you to be in a place looking at something, and through that, you become connected to it.
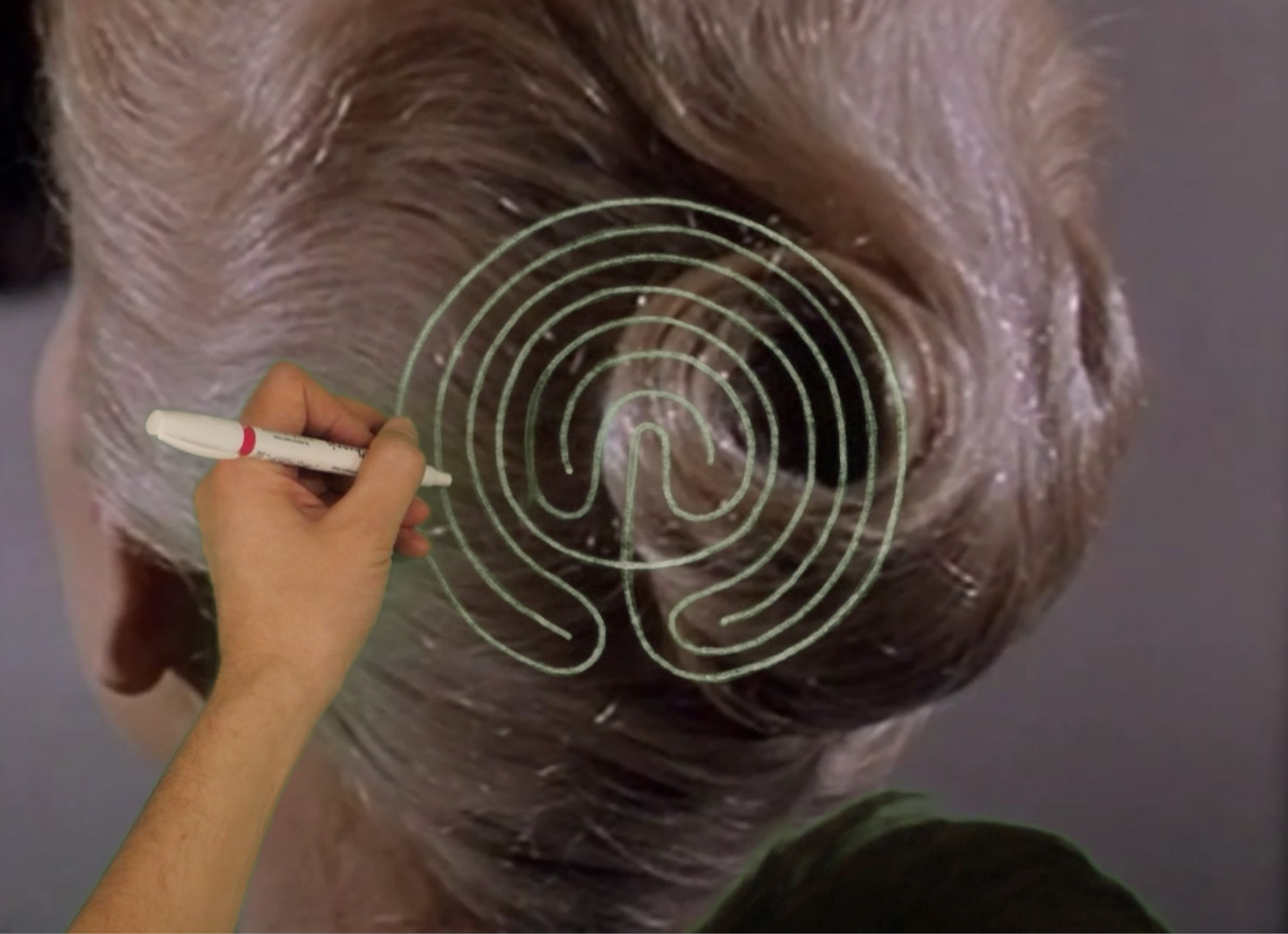
Detail from *Through the Labyrinth* (2023).

Part of this composite experience is recognizing my life as being mediated through the culture I have consumed. Referencing is a compulsive behavior for me. I read things through other things.
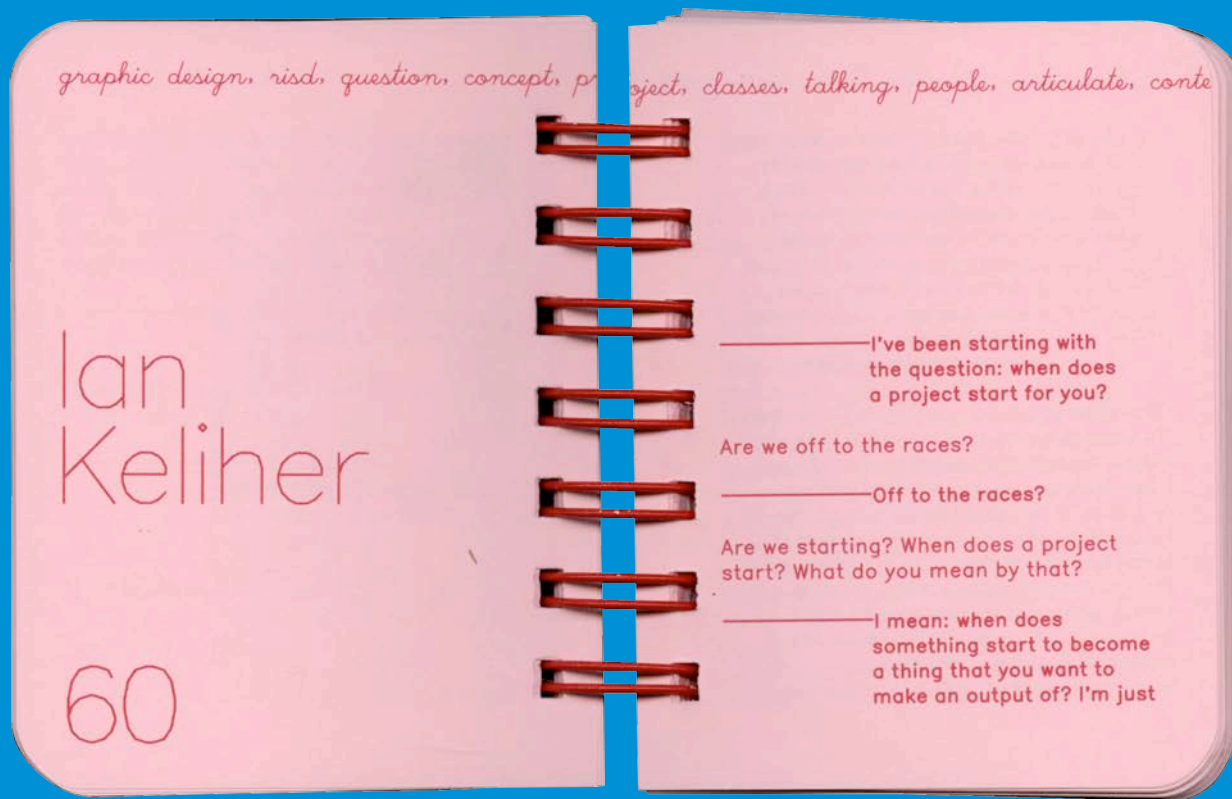
8. From an email sent 24 April, 2022.

When Does a Project Start? (2023) by Ingrid (Didi) Schmaedecke.

In a conversation with Didi Schmaedecke, I described my relationship to references as: "I think part of it is just a general curiosity and constantly taking things in and then coming across an idea that seems interesting or exciting. And [the idea is] like a little go kart. You're just like 'what can it do?'"

I believe that is still true, but I would not only put it in instrumental terms.

There's something that Shiraz Gallab wrote to me when I was having difficulty starting a project that I find myself thinking about often:

"Borrowing implies a reliance on another person or thing or structure to figure things out and make the next move. And that's not only fair but it's what we all need to do to survive, connect, find joy, and find answers." [8]

Calypso	The House	8AM	Kidney	Nymph	Economics	Narrative (Mature)
Lotus Eaters	The Bath	10AM	Genitals	Eucharist	Botany, Chemistry	Narcissism
Hades	The Graveyard	11AM	Heart	Caretaker	Religion	Incubism
Aeolus	The Newspaper	12PM	Lungs	Editor	Rhetoric	Enthymemic
Lestrygonians		1PM		...les		...tic
Scylla and C...		2PM		London		
Wandering Rocks		3PM		...ens	M...	...yrinth
Sirens	The Concert Room	4PM	Ear	Barmaids	Music	*Fuga per canonem*
Cyclops	The Tavern	5PM	Muscle	Fenian	Politics	Gigantism
Nausicaa	The Rocks	8PM	Eye, Nose	Virgin	Painting	Tumescence / Detumescence
Oxen of the Sun	The Hospital	10PM	Womb	Mothers	Medicine	Embryonic Development

Detail from the first page of *Atlas* (2021), showing Joyce's schema for *Ulysses* overwritten by my gesture, which alludes to the structural approach of the publication.

Usually the work follows the logic of the palimpsest—building on top of and overwriting. The particular texture of this relationship changes depending on the object or idea and the level of criticality.

8AM   12 September 2021
Providence, Rhode Island

Light haze in the sky

8AM   16 June 1904
Dublin, Ireland

Leo Bloom prepares kidney for breakfast

Detail of the content system for *Atlas* (2021), which looks at what is happening in Dublin at that particular moment and then attempts to put the content of the page in dialogue with it.

For *Atlas*, I put my first experiences in Providence in parallel with the events of James Joyce's *Ulysses* after noticing a parallel between the novel and the framing of the prompt (12 tasks referencing the labors of Hercules) for the publication.

I think of *Ulysses* as being a novel about mediation: the mediation of consciousness in the way interiority filters into the way the characters perceive the world, of the relation between form and content in Joyce's formal experiments, of its self-conscious filtering of itself through other literary works.
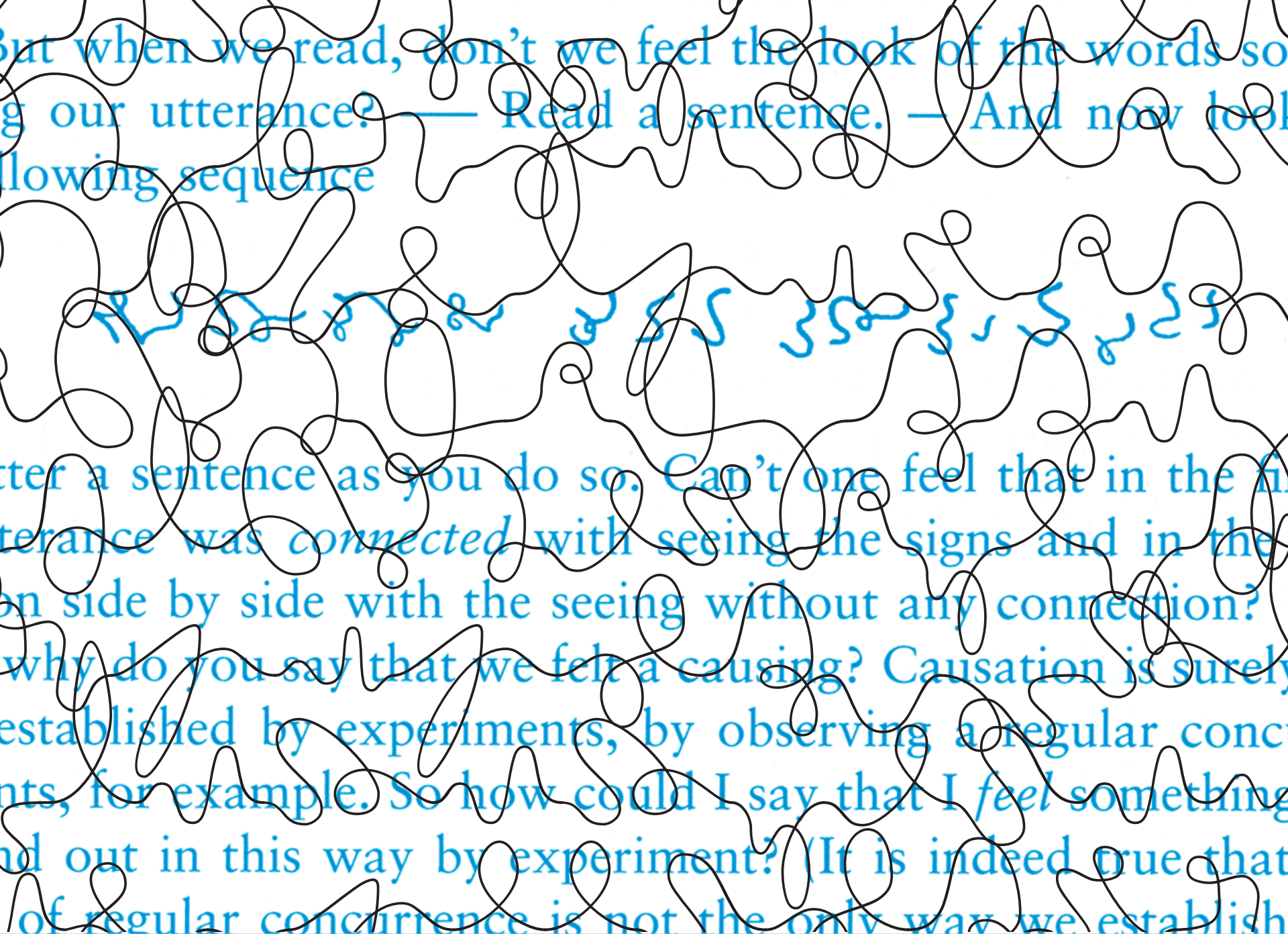
ut when we read, don't we feel the look of the words so
g our utterance? — Read a sentence. — And now look
llowing sequence

tter a sentence as you do so. Can't one feel that in the fi
terance was *connected* with seeing the signs and in the
n side by side with the seeing without any connection?
why do you say that we felt a causing? Causation is surely
established by experiments, by observing a regular conci
nts, for example. So how could I say that I *feel* somethin
d out in this way by experiment? (It is indeed true that
of regular concurrence is not the only way we establish

Detail of fragment No.169 from
Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*
(1953) overlaid with my pattern derived
from his asemic forms.

In the case of my Wittgenstein pattern
generator, it was based on having previ-
ously noticed a bit of asemic writing in the
Philosophical Investigations. In this section,
Wittgenstein is examining the form of
language—how letterforms give rise to
language in the act of reading.

I find myself wondering about the language
of form—what the particular looping, sinewy
characteristics of his doodles give rise to.
In response, I developed a pattern generator
based on his asemic forms using type design
software. Creating a pattern seemed to both
subvert Wittgenstein's observation and
extend it into another area.

100 meters

10^2 meters

A frame from my riso animation *As You Zoom Out, You Zoom In* overlaid on top of *The Powers of Ten*.

Sometimes the revisitation generates other readings for myself, as in my usage of *The Powers of Ten* (1977) by the Eames. I had both been shown this film as a student in a 2DD class and then went on to screen for a group of students when I taught my first 2DD class. I hadn't thought much about what the film meant, signified, or what its conditions were.

In working with it, I began to see within it Google Maps, surveillance images, Silicon Valley, the limits of Cold War scientific vision and imagination where the film hits its edges in the macro and micro. And I found myself wanting to bend it into a different shape, looping it and making the movement of the film paradoxical.
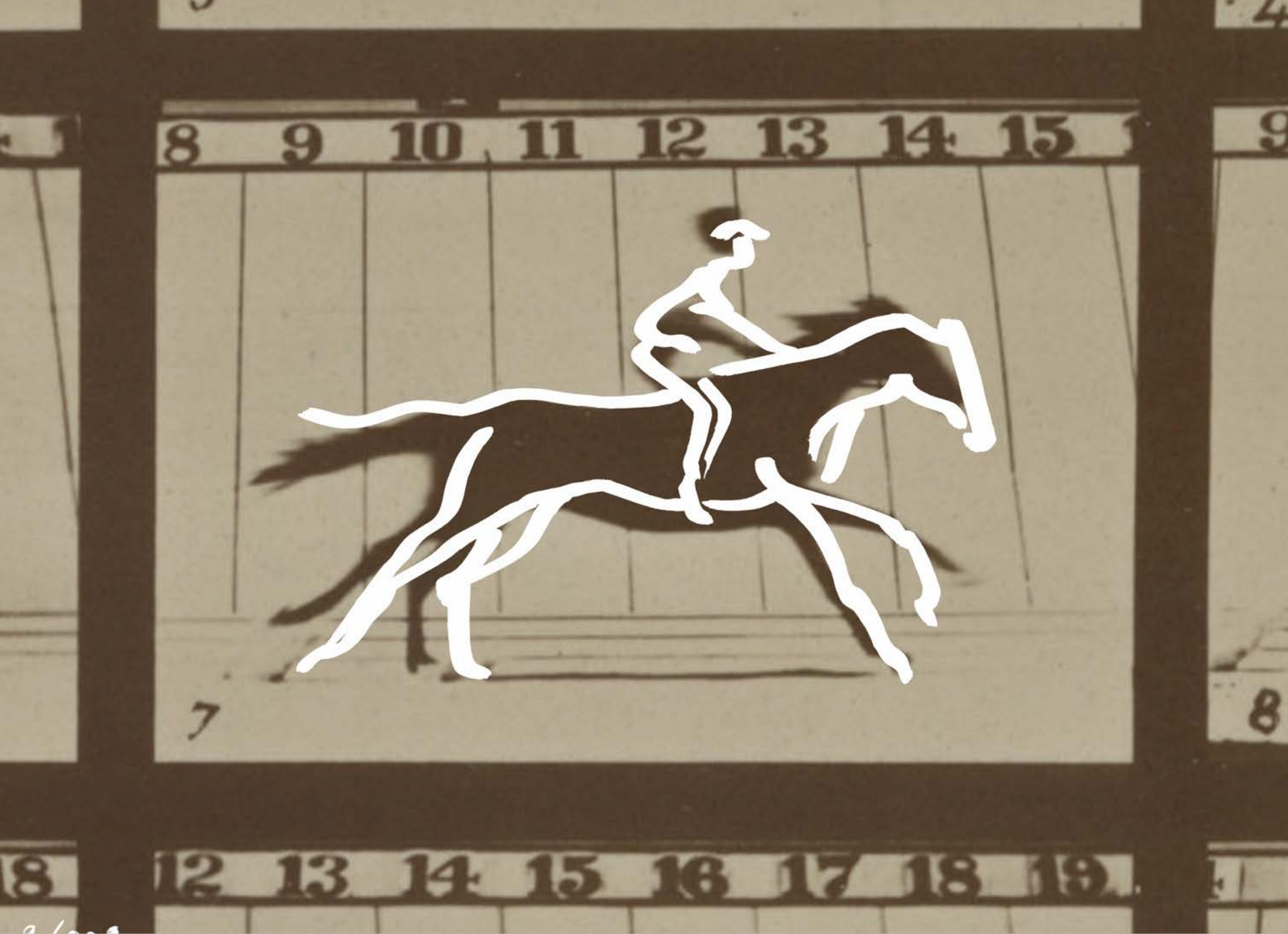
A horse drawn by Sadia Quddus, which overwrites Muybridge's horse.

I also examine origin points to see what might have been otherwise. In *The Horse in Becoming*, I used Muybridge's *The Horse in Motion* because the filmstrip logic of linear, sequential images embedded in Muybridge's photos from the 19th century carries down to any movie seen today.

The possibilities afforded by digital tools allows for other paths to be taken. In my case, it putting forward a labyrinthine logic by making the filmstrip logic wander by making the animation randomize iterations of a frame from a growing archive of rotoscoped drawings in which people were encouraged to draw the frame as *they* would draw it.

Atlas

Publication   8.5" × 11"

Atlas is a publication that organizes and sequences material derived from 12 tasks meant to evoke the 12 labors of Hercules. Being asked to reframe my daily life through a mythic lens, I thought of James Joyce's strategy in *Ulysses*, which takes a parallel approach of merging the everyday and the mythic. I organized all the content from my tasks using the hour-by-hour structure of Joyce's novel to find thematic and literal correspondances between my responses and Joyce's plot.

12 Labors

1   Visit Brown's John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Library, explore three different areas, and share what you find.

2   Perform an intervention or change in a specified location.

3   Document four things: one that won't exist in 1 week, 1 year, 10 years, 100 years.

4   Within 5 minutes, take as many photos as you can of a place that you would not be able to find on a standard map.

5   Choose a single public location and on a single day go there and describe your experience for ten minutes without stopping at 9am, 2pm, and 8pm.

6   Record, transcribe, and edit a fifteen minute conversation with a new classmate.

7   Superimpose one map onto another (local) map; travel there, and document your findings.

8   Have someone film you doing one physical activity and produce a sequence of stills.

9   Obtain three items for under $6 sum total from the Ocean State Job Lot.

10   With a classmate, visit one of Providence's twenty-five neighborhoods and spend fifteen minutes (or more) documenting it.

11   Document twelve hours of weather.

12   Find at least three dates in Providence's built environment. Investigate their significance.

TITLE	SCENE	HOUR	ORGAN	SYMBOL	ART	TECHNIC
Telemachus	The Tower	8AM		Heir	Theology	Narrative (Young)
Nestor	The School	10AM		Horse	History	Catechism (Personal)
Proteus	The Strand	11AM		Tide	Philology	Monologue (Male)
Calypso	The House	8AM	Kidney	Nymph	Economics	Narrative (Mature)
Lotus Eaters	The Bath	10AM	Genitals	Eucharist	Botany, Chemistry	Narcissism
Hades	The Graveyard	11AM	Heart	Caretaker	Religion	Incubism
Aeolus	The Newspaper	12PM	Lungs	Editor	Rhetoric	Enthymemic
Lestrygonians		1PM				
Scylla and C		2PM			London	
Wandering Rocks		3PM				inth
Sirens	The Concert Room	4PM	Ear	Barmaids	Music	Fuga per canonem
Cyclops	The Tavern	5PM	Muscle	Fenian	Politics	Gigantism
Nausicaa	The Rocks	8PM	Eye, Nose	Virgin	Painting	Tumescence / Detumescence
Oxen of the Sun	The Hospital	10PM	Womb	Mothers	Medicine	Embryonic Development
Circe	The Brothel	12AM	Locomotor Apparatus	Whore	Magic	Hallucination
Eumaeus	The Shelter	1AM	Nerves	Sailors	Navigation	Narrative (Old)
Ithaca	The House	2AM	Skeleton	Comets	Science	Catechism (Impersonal)
Penelope	The Bed		Flesh	Earth		Monologue (Female)

Each person's individual identity is, or depends on, an understanding he has of his life in narrative form, as a development from his part towards his future prospects, ending in his death.[1] ••• Metempsychosis, he said, frowning. It's Greek: from the Greek. That means the transmigration of souls.[2]

Leo Bloom
Odysseus
Hercules
Me

Gelid light and air were in the kitchen but out of doors gentle summer morning everywhere.[3] ••• No bright light this morning. Blanket of gray like home, like childhood. Light is muffled. Refracted. Is that the word? Not sure.[4] ••• ME: So, I was curious are you typically a very regimented person? Right now, you're the only other person here at like nine, and I hear that you get up at six in the morning to go swimming. ZOË PULLEY: Overall I like to generally think of myself as a morning person. I feel like my brain is most functional during the earlier hours, so I like to wake up early. So, as of right now, I'm trying to figure out what my new routine is going to be now that we're in person and I'm hoping to work in the studio more. Overall, I'm a person that definitely likes a routine otherwise my brain starts—pew-pew-pew—short circuiting.[5]
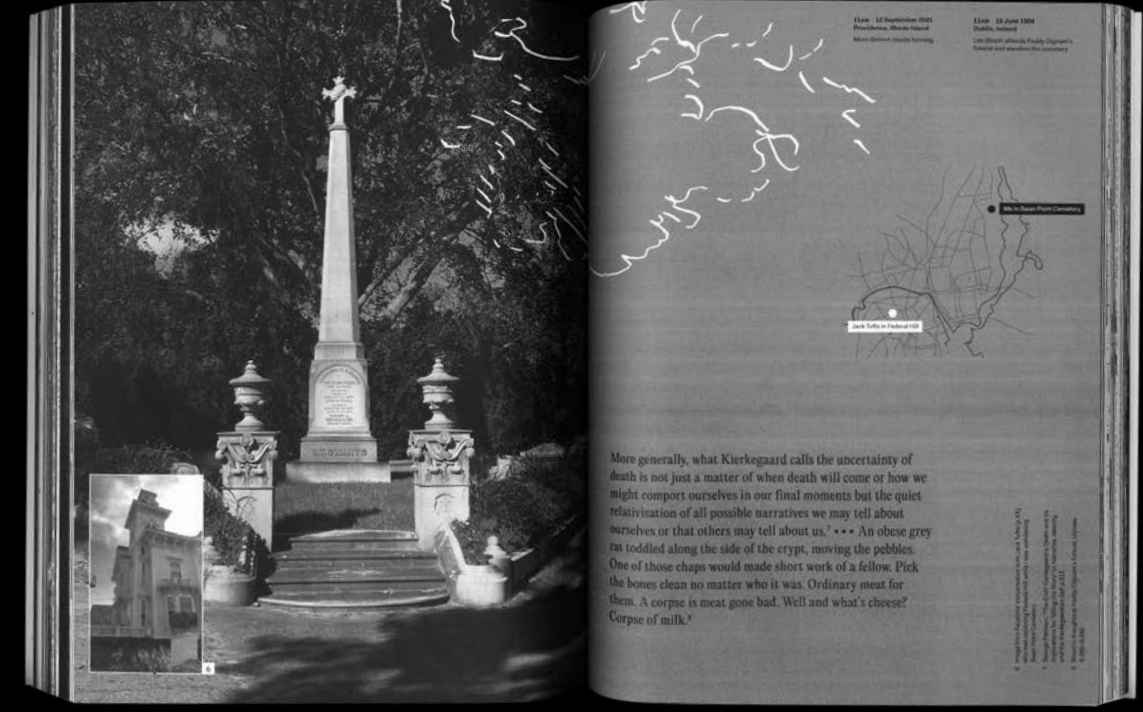
More generally, what Kierkegaard calls the uncertainty of death is not just a matter of when death will come or how we might comport ourselves in our final moments but the quiet relativization of all possible narratives we may tell about ourselves or that others may tell about us.[7] ••• An obese grey rat toddled along the side of the crypt, moving the pebbles. One of those chaps would made short work of a fellow. Pick the bones clean no matter who it was. Ordinary meat for them. A corpse is meat gone bad. Well and what's cheese? Corpse of milk.[8]

Above: the publication starts out with a diagram showing the framework guiding the publication.

Opposite, top: included is a map of my apartment in Providence keyed to Leo Bloom's residence in Dublin, and I then approximated his 8am walk as it was translated to Providence's map.

Opposite, bottom: Bloom's trip to a funeral is matched up with my own trip to Swan Point Cemetery.

Next spread: a series of classmates movements that have been rotoscoped.

3PM   16 June 1904
Dublin, Ireland

Father Conmee reads a letter about
Paddy Dignam's son

Corny Kelleher is visited by a constable

A onelegged sailor begs on the streets
of Dublin

The Dedalus sisters discuss their lack
of money

Blazes Boylan buys fuit and flowers for
his tryst with Molly Bloom

Stephen Dedalus Crosses paths with
his old vocal teacher

Boylan's secretary is at work in the office

Ned Lambert, Reverend Love, and
J.J. O'Molly cross paths at an abbey

Tom Rochford explains his invention

Bloom shops for a book for Molly

Dilly waits for her drunken father

Tom Kernan has a drink at a bar after
Paddy Dignam's funeral

Stephen crosses paths with his sister Dilly
and sees his family's destitution

Simon Dedalus talks about his debt

Martin Cunningham is working on
arrangements for Paddy Dignam's family

Buck Mulligan and Haines get lunch

Farrel walks the streets of Dublin and runs
into a blind man

Patrick Dignam dines out of the house after
the funeral

A Viceregal Cavalcade makes a
processsion across the city

10

11

12

ZOË PULLEY: Totally. It forces you to just be present and chill out.[9]
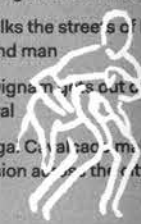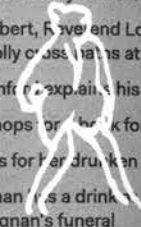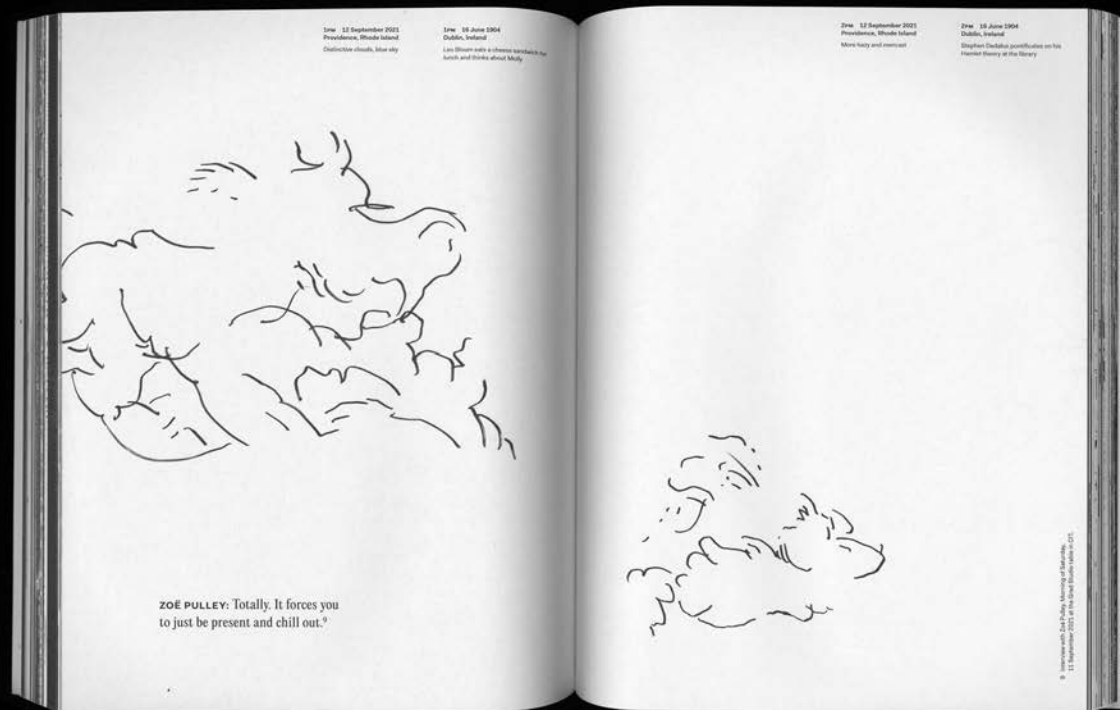
A series of clouds travel through the publication based on 12 hours of observing the weather.

To the memory of / Roger Williams / The Apostle of Soul Liberty / Founder of the / State of Rhode Island / and / Providence Plantations / This Monument is Dedicated / by the / Providence Association / of / Mechanics and Manufacturers / 1906[14] ••• 1871 / 1968 / 2018[15] ••• How does one found a state? Yell it from a mountaintop?[16] ••• Saint Patrick would want to land again at Ballykinlar and convert us, says the citizen, after allowing things like that to contaminate our shores.[17] ••• We have treated you rather unfairly. It seems history is to blame.[18]

Staking a flag representing my apartment at a site dedicated to one of Providence's original settlers

...and she leaned back and the garters were blue to match on account of the transparent and they all saw it and they all shouted to look, look, there it was and she leaned back ever so far to see the fireworks...[19]
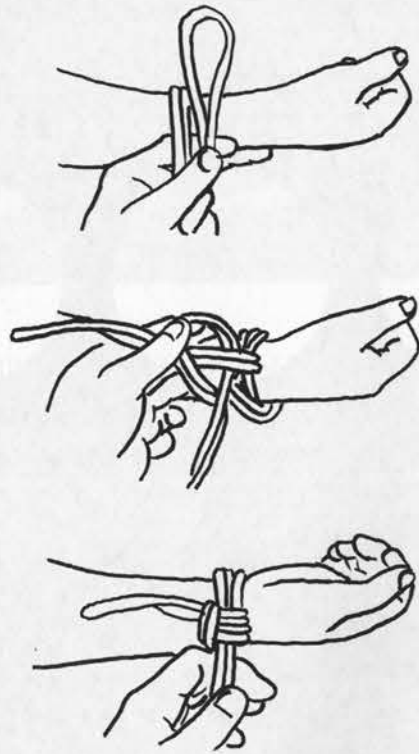
8PM 12 September 2021
Providence, Rhode Island

Nighttime

8PM 16 June 1904
Dublin, Ireland

Gerty MacDowell relaxes and daydreams at Sandymount strand while Leo Bloom watches her, fantasizes and masturbates behind a rock
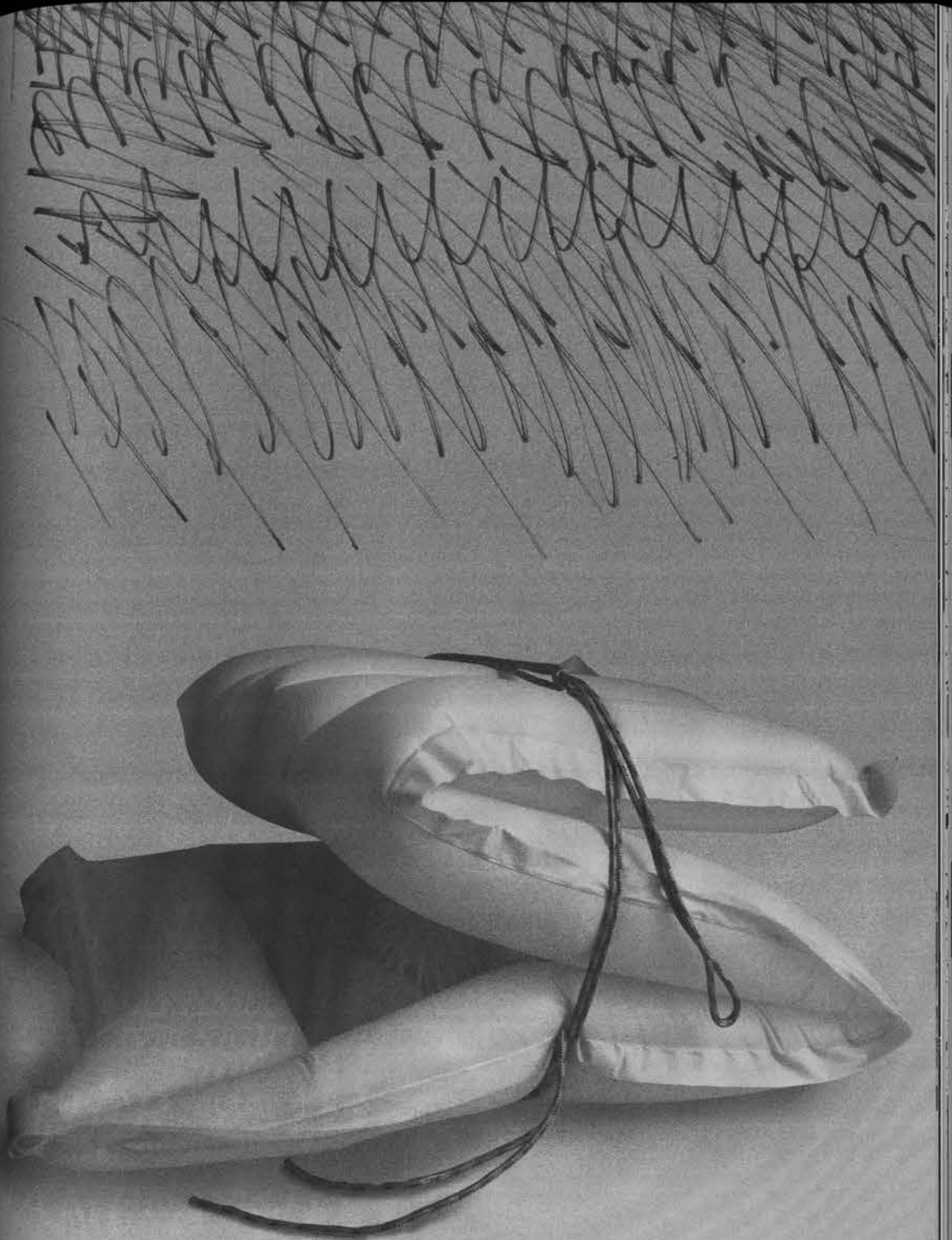
Wittgenstein Pattern Generator

Typeface
Drawbot Script
Posters   24" × 36"

Wittgenstein is a pattern-generating Drawbot script that uses a bit of asemic typography found in Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* as its point of departure. The project consists of a set of "letter-forms" derived from Wittgenstein's asemic squiggles, which are drawn as a typeface in Glyphs and then automated as an output using Drawbot to generate infinite variations of this "writing."
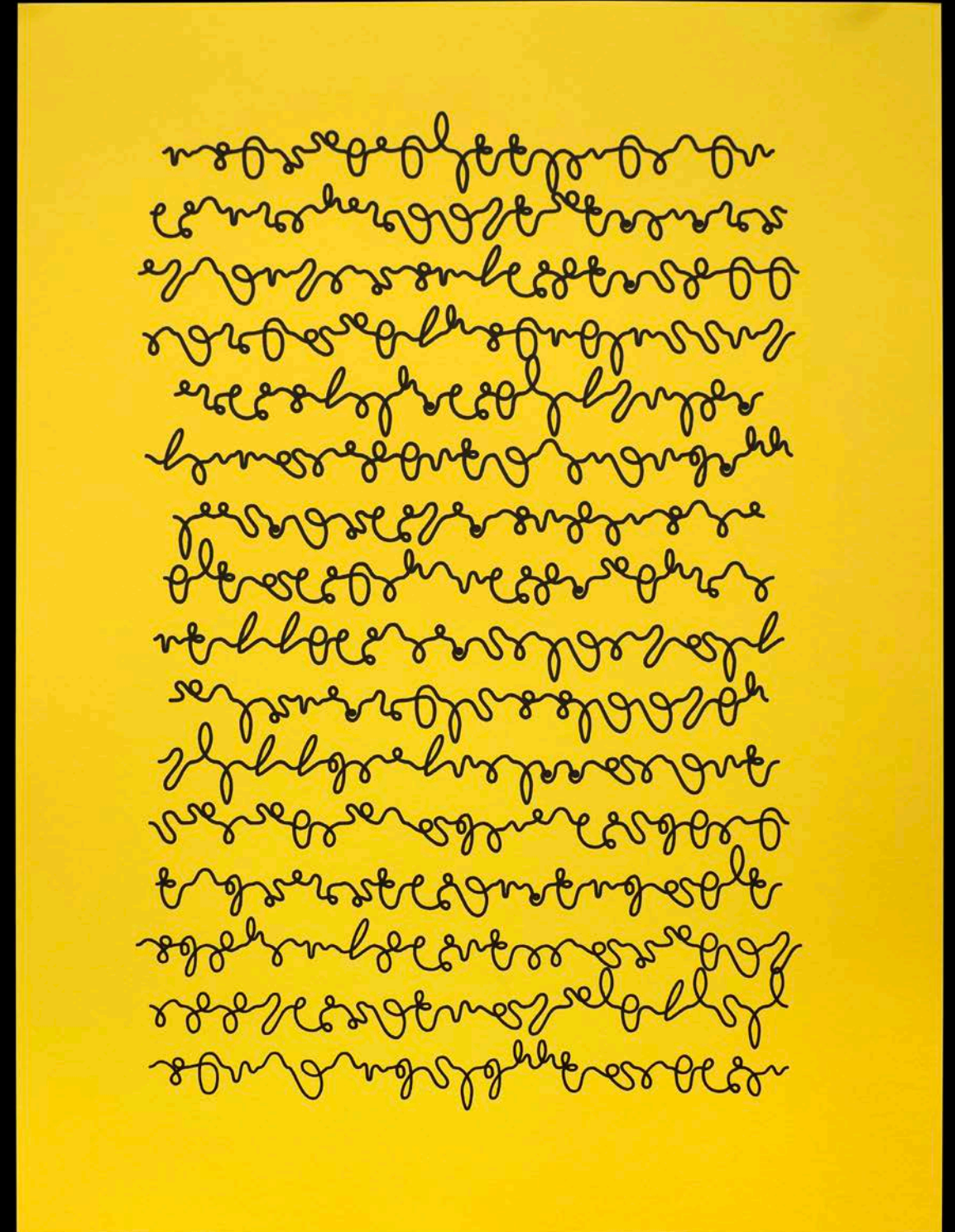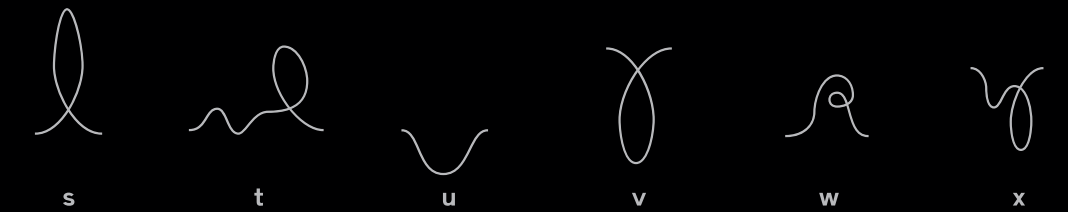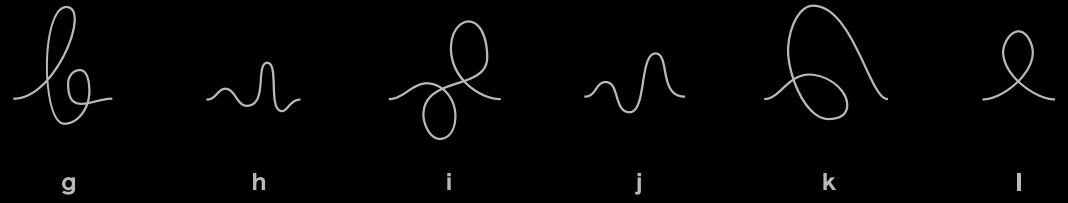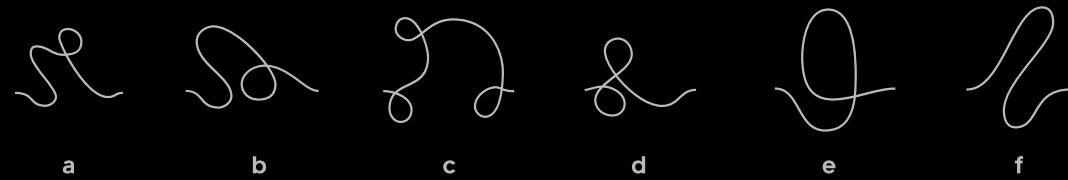
The character set for the typeface designed
in Glyphs.
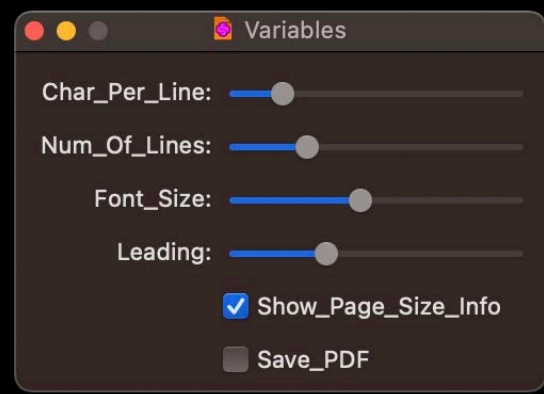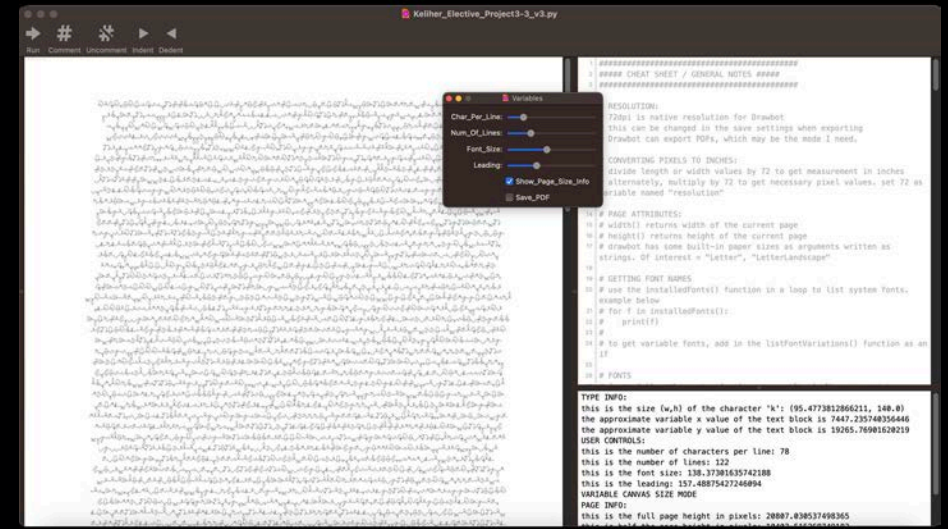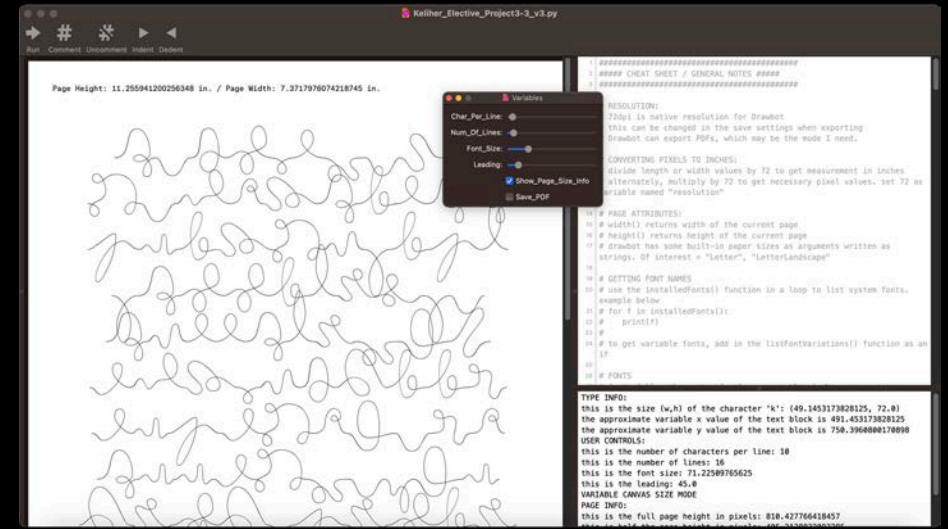
The drawbot script, which uses the typeface to
generate the pattern. The GUI allows the user to
set the parameters for the output. Every change
randomized the character set.
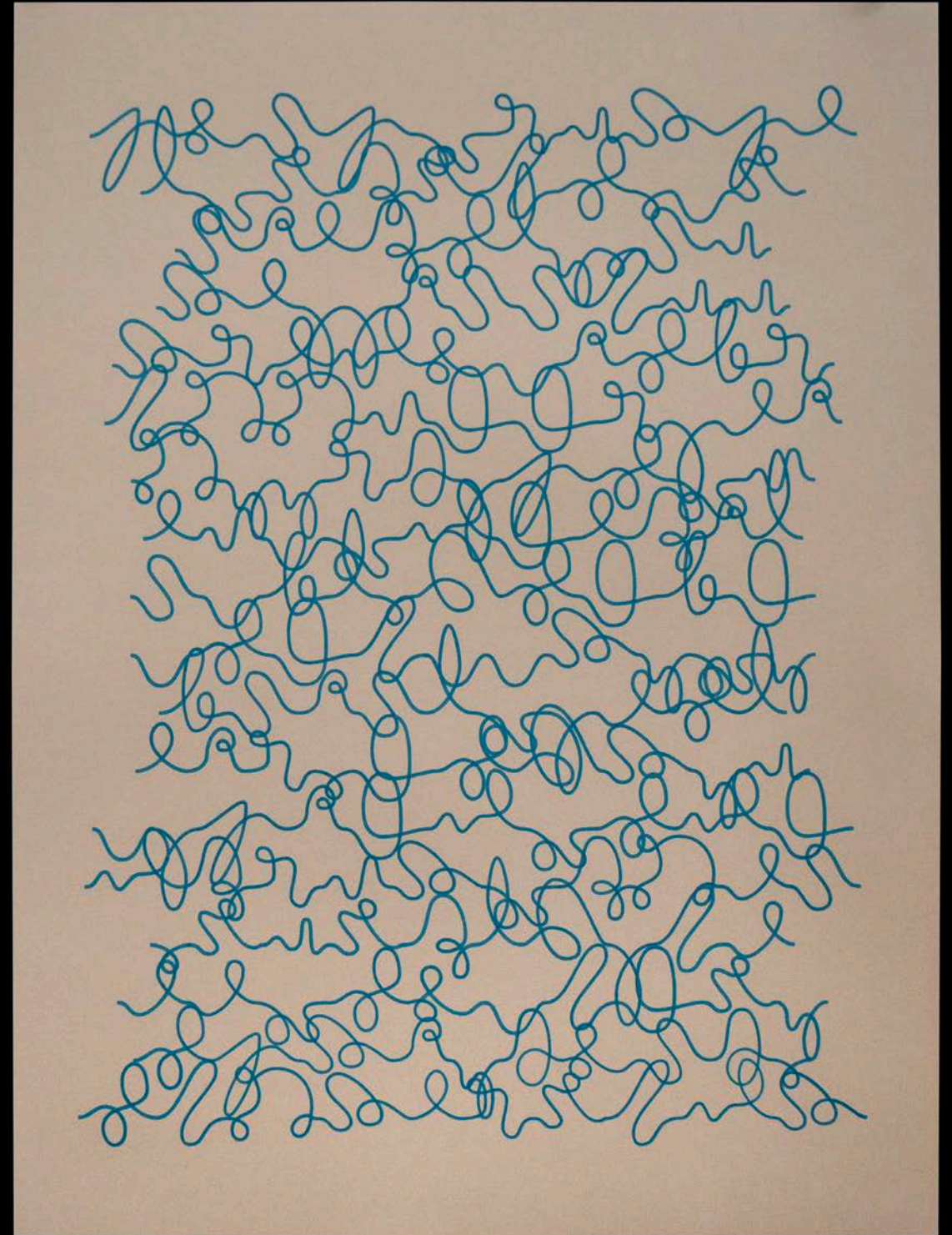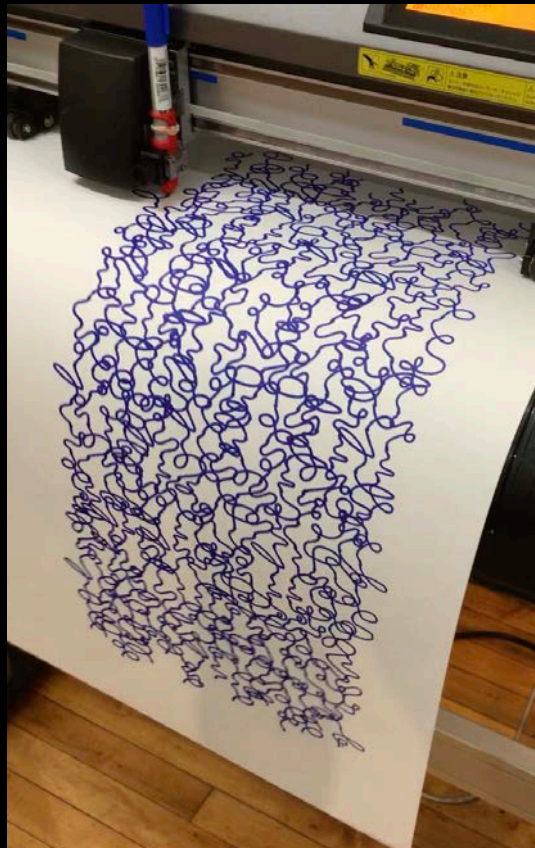
The files output from the Drawbot script were then run through a pen plotter to generate the posters.
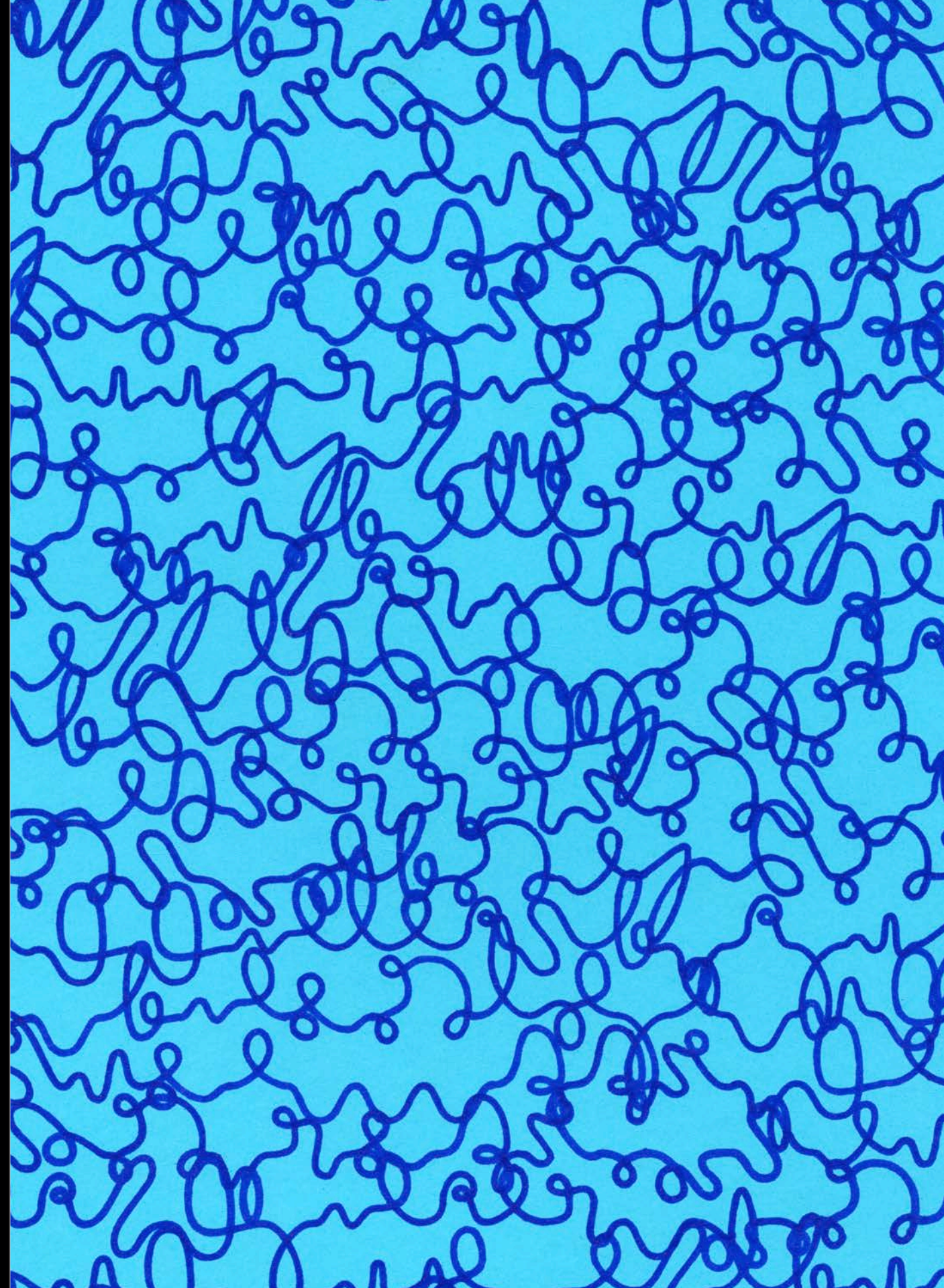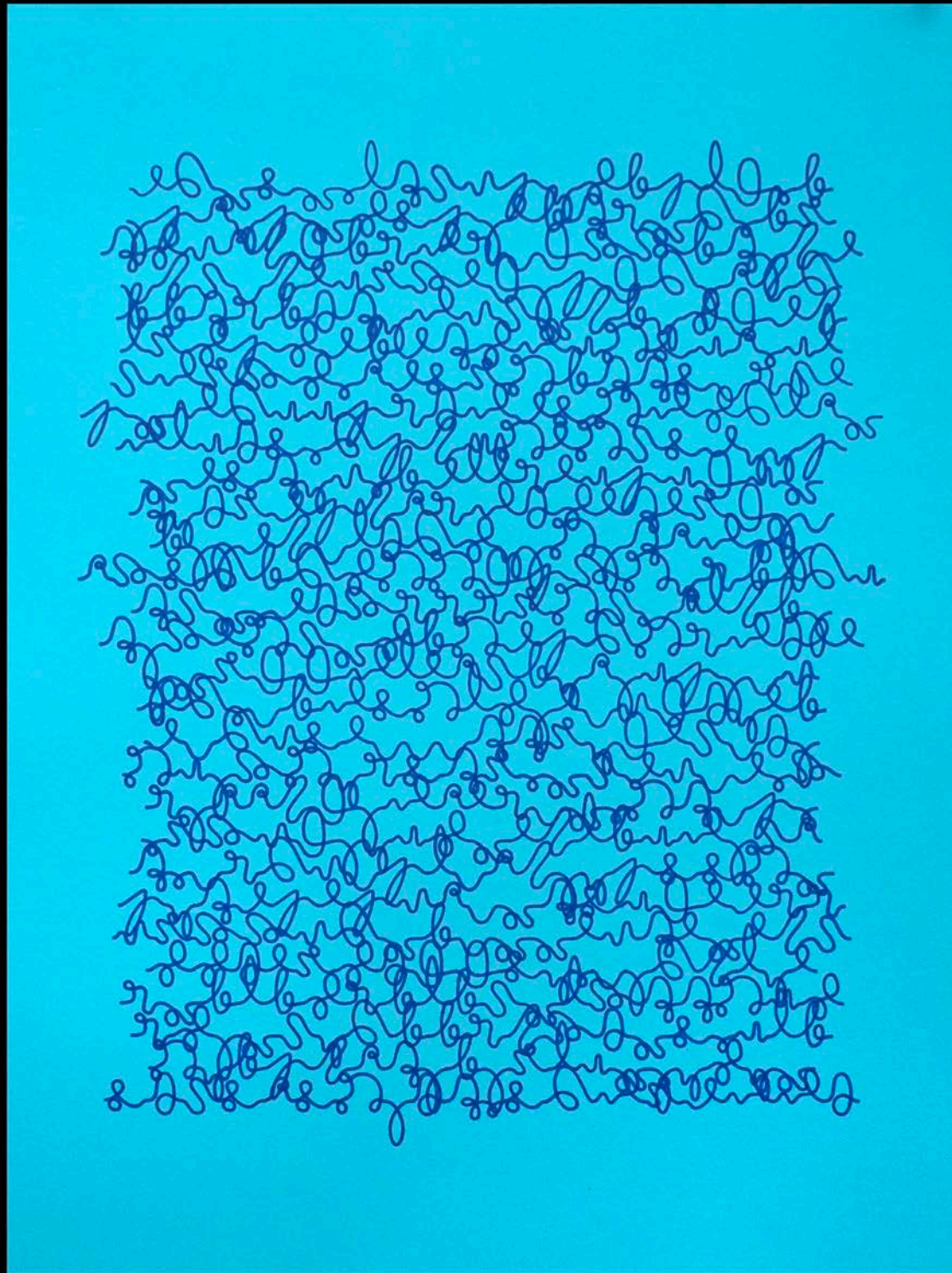
As You Zoom In, You Zoom Out

Animation, Risographed   00:30
Book, Risographed   2.25 x 2.25 x 4.25

As You Zoom Out, You Zoom In is a riso animation and book
that explores the Eames' seminal *The Powers of Ten* (1977).
The animation takes the Cold War-era scientific vision at
work in *Powers of Ten* and twists it into a paradoxical loop
where after zooming into the absolute micro level of things,
you find yourself back out in the macro. The frames from the
riso animation were also compiled into a book to examine the
material properties of the process and recover the material
aspects of animation that vanish in its final form.

AS YOU ZOOM IN, YOU ZOOM OUT
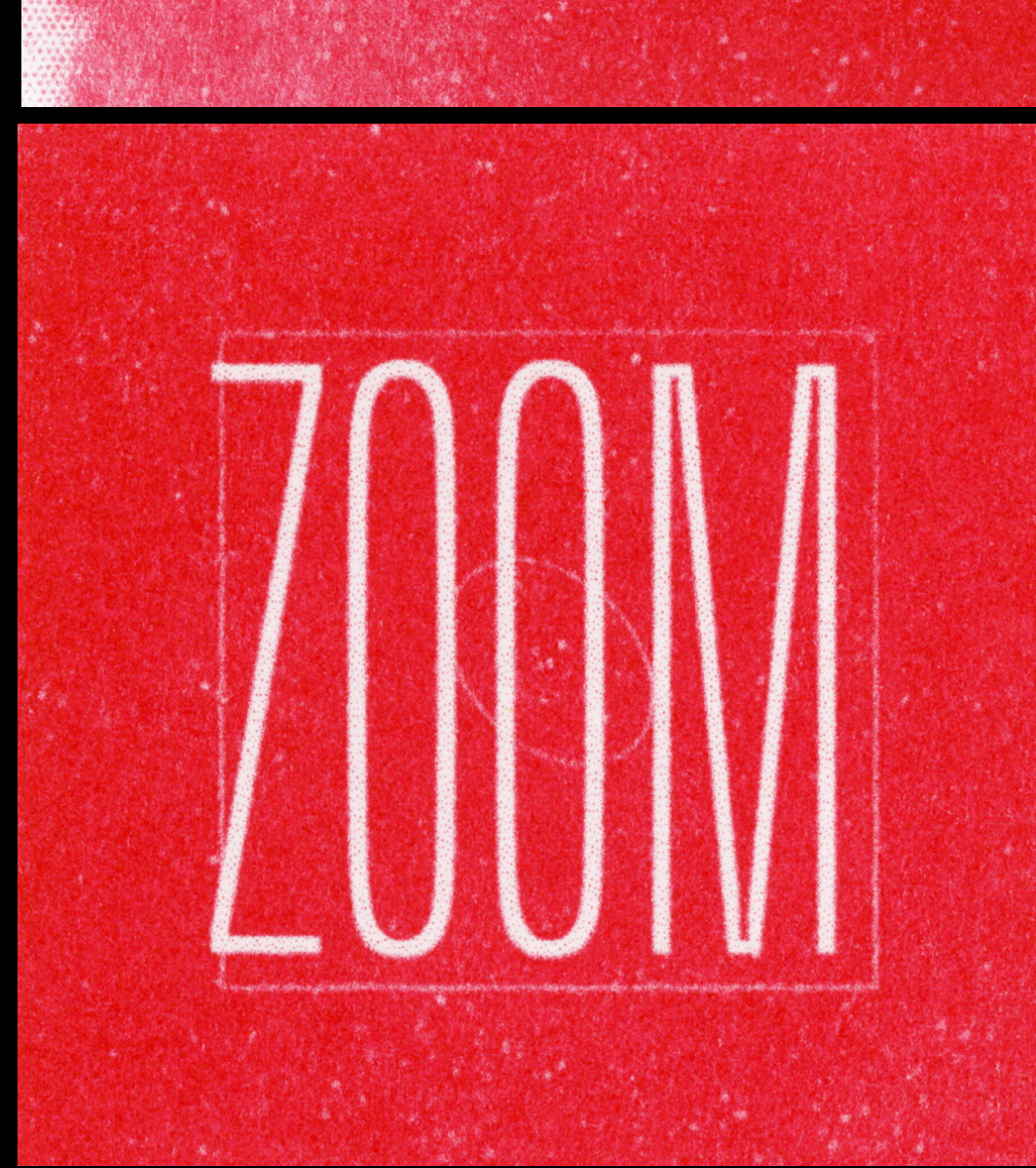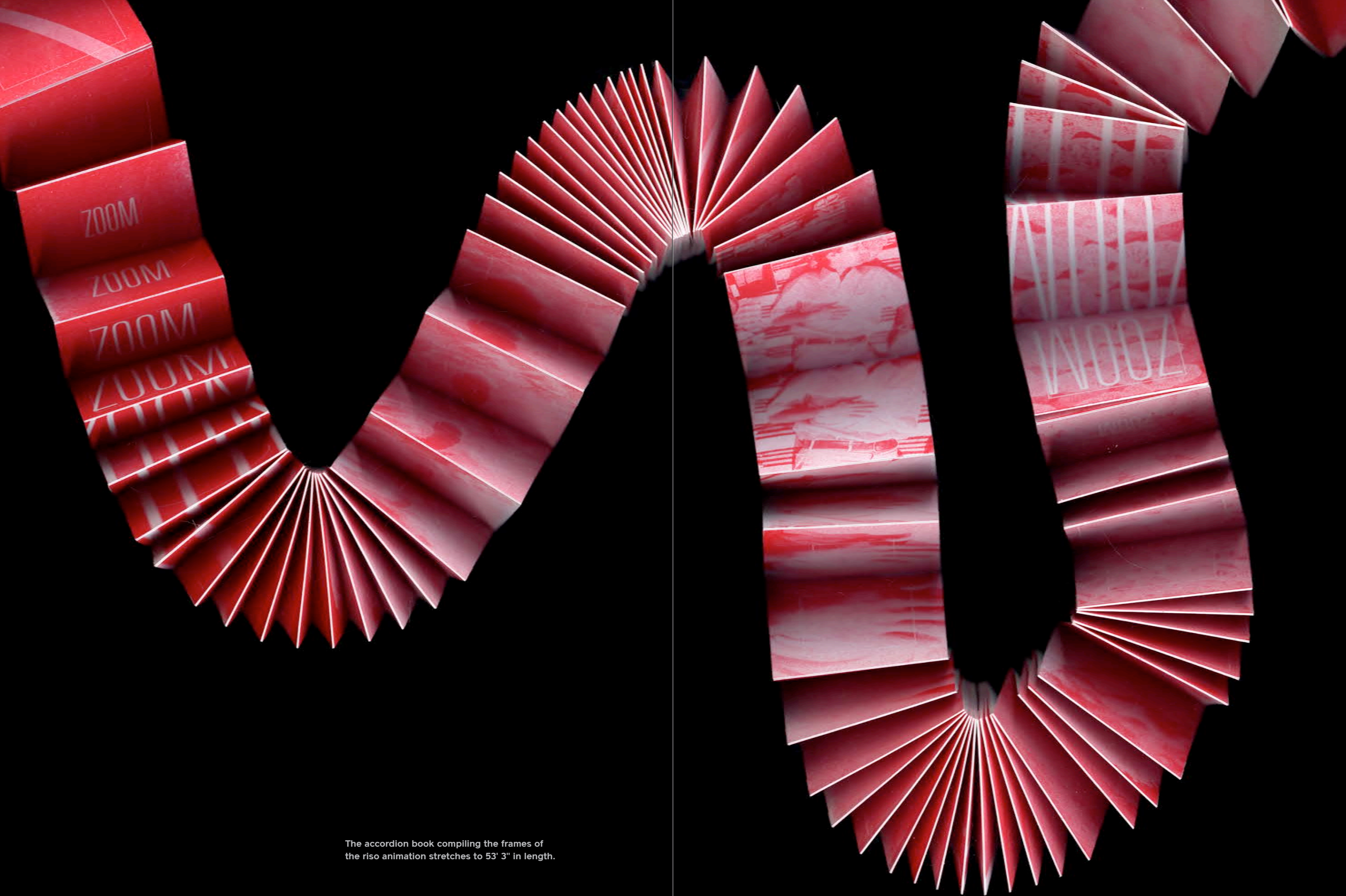
The accordion book compiling the frames of
the riso animation stretches to 53' 3" in length.

The Horse in Becoming

Website, Animation

A diagram of the filmstrip logic of the frame-by-frame sequence of Muybridge's horse
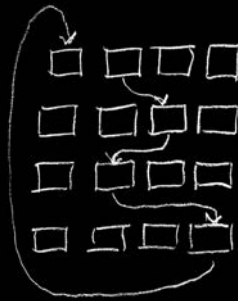
A diagram of the labyrinthine logic of my javascript loop that weaves through frame iterations

The Horse in Becoming is a website that injects a labyrinthine logic into Eadweard Muybridge's *The Horse in Motion* (1878), which operates frame-by-frame in a linear filmstrip. The drawings that make up the animation are a growing archive done by the people that surround me. Rather than running in a fixed loop, the horse will continue to mutate, grow, and change as more drawings are added to the archive and the script wanders through randomized iterations of the sequential frames.

1 FPS   12 FPS   24 FPS

1 FPS   12 FPS   24 FPS

About

About

frame number 12

frame number 12
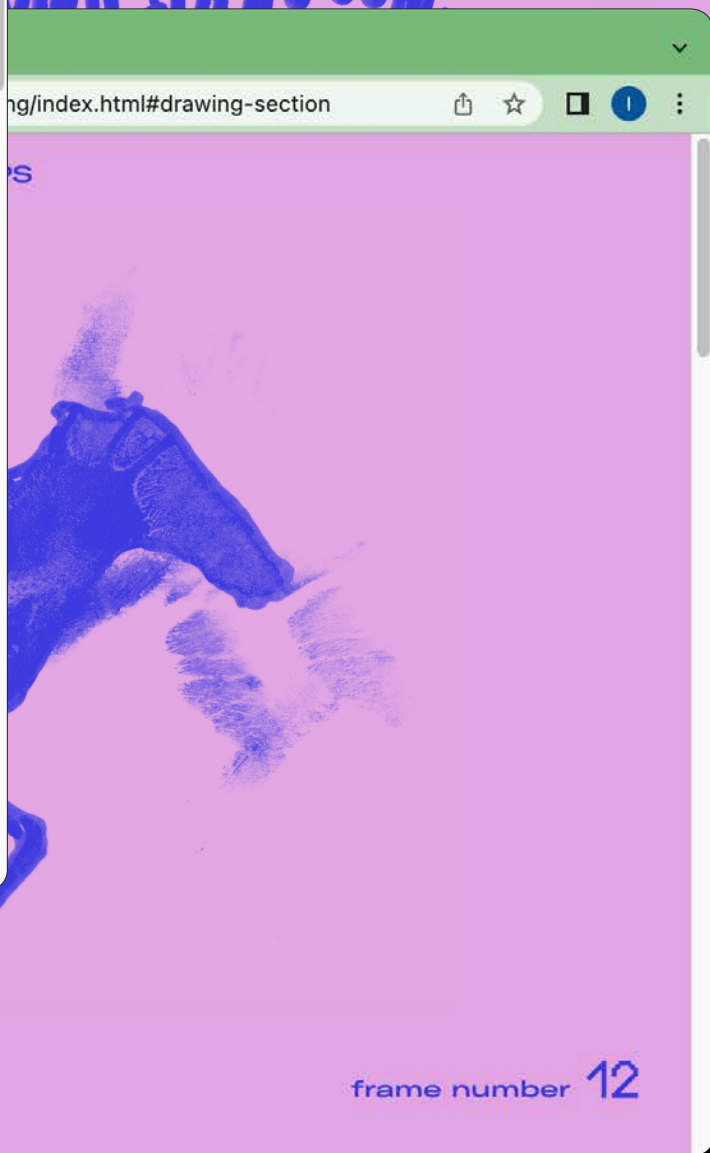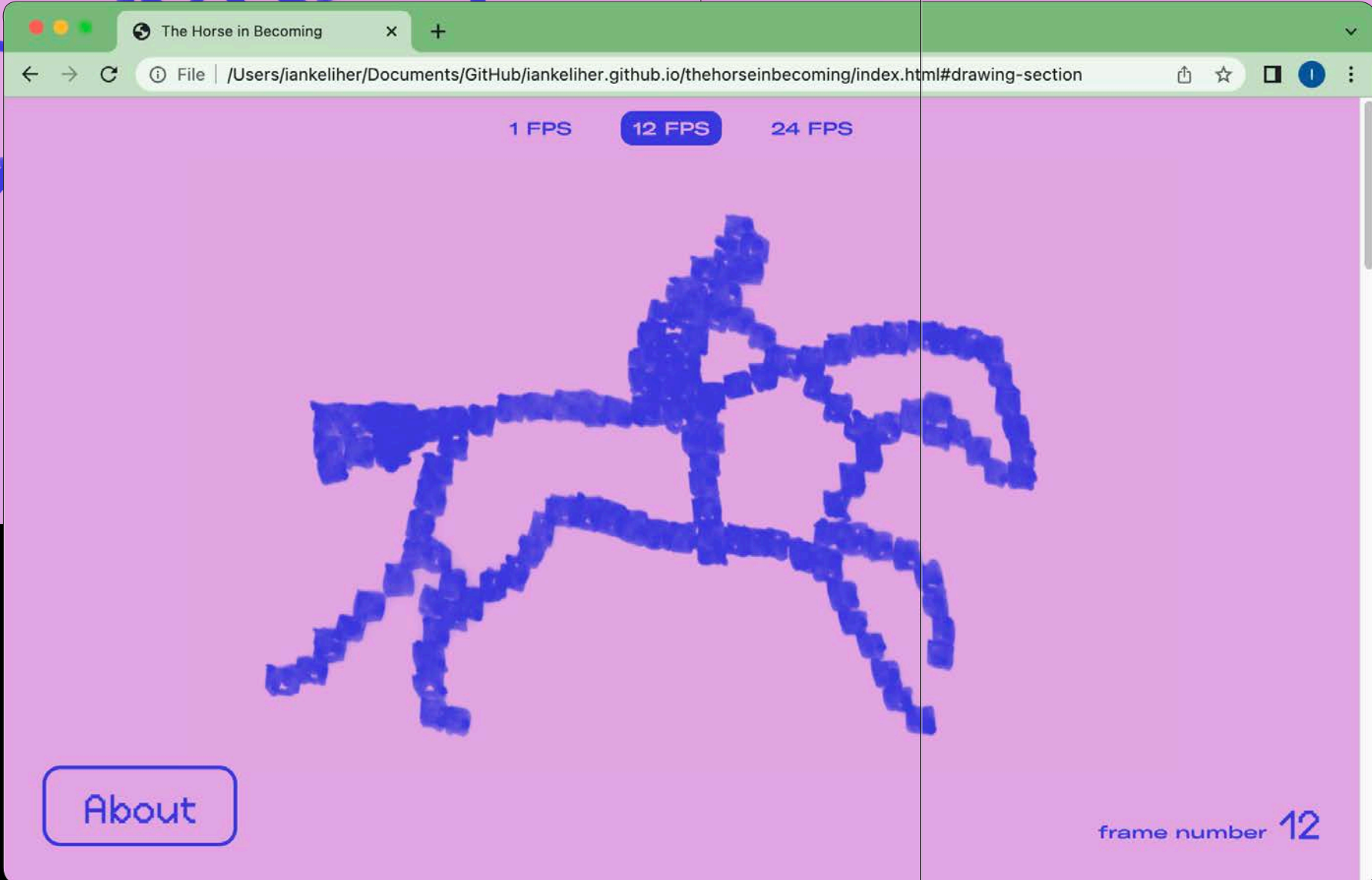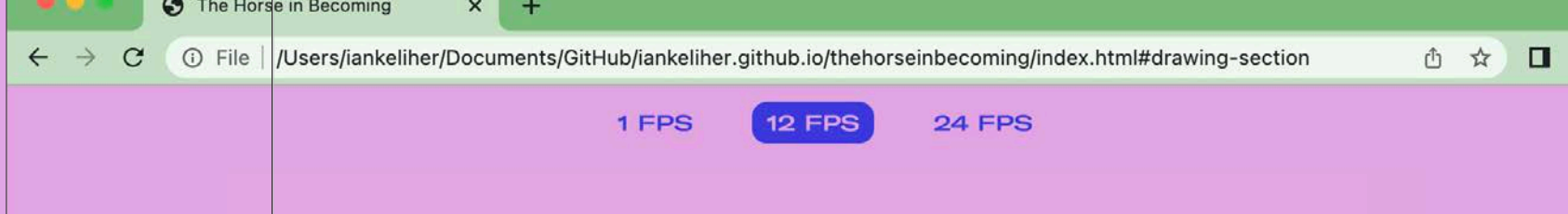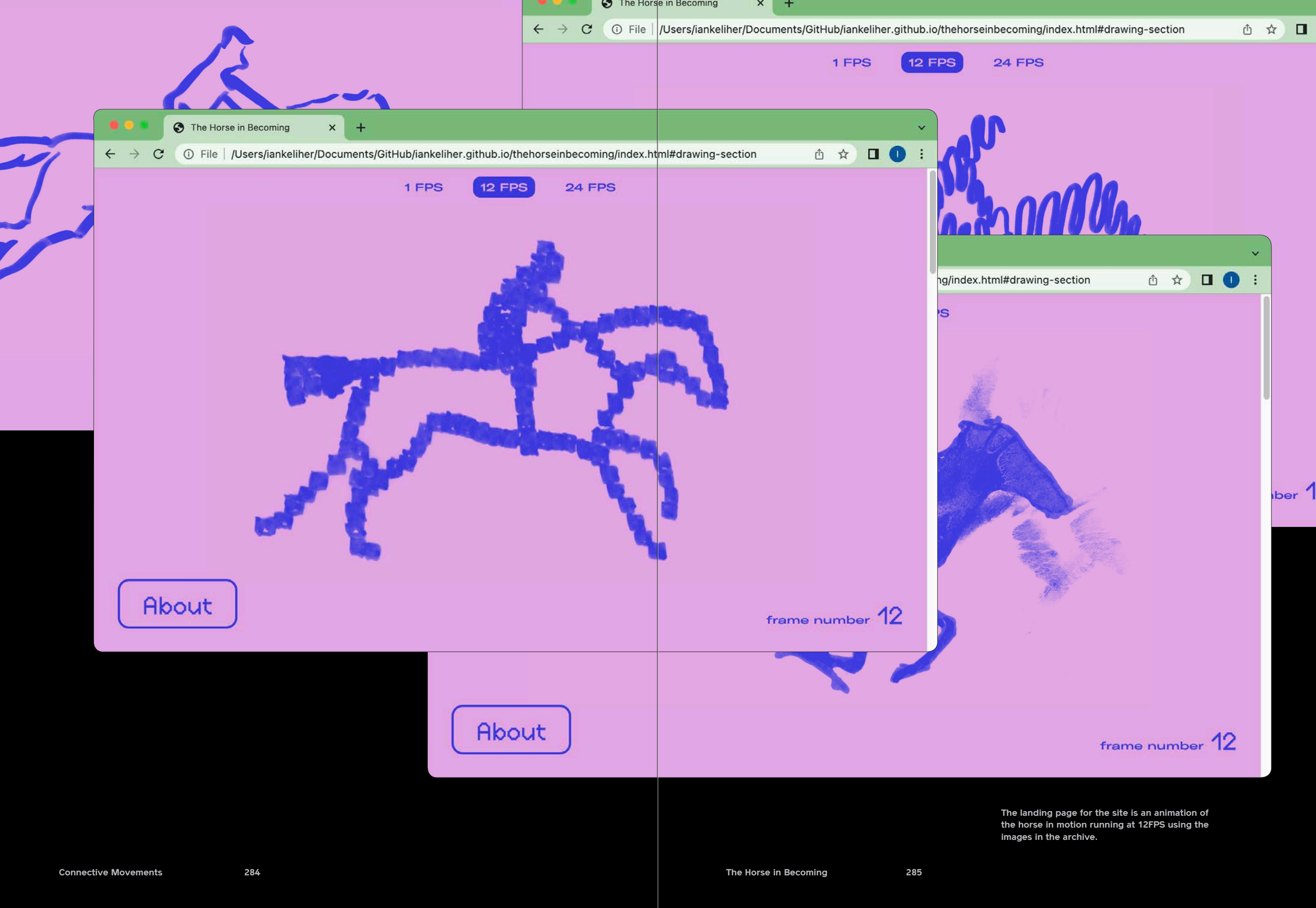
The landing page for the site is an animation of the horse in motion running at 12FPS using the images in the archive.
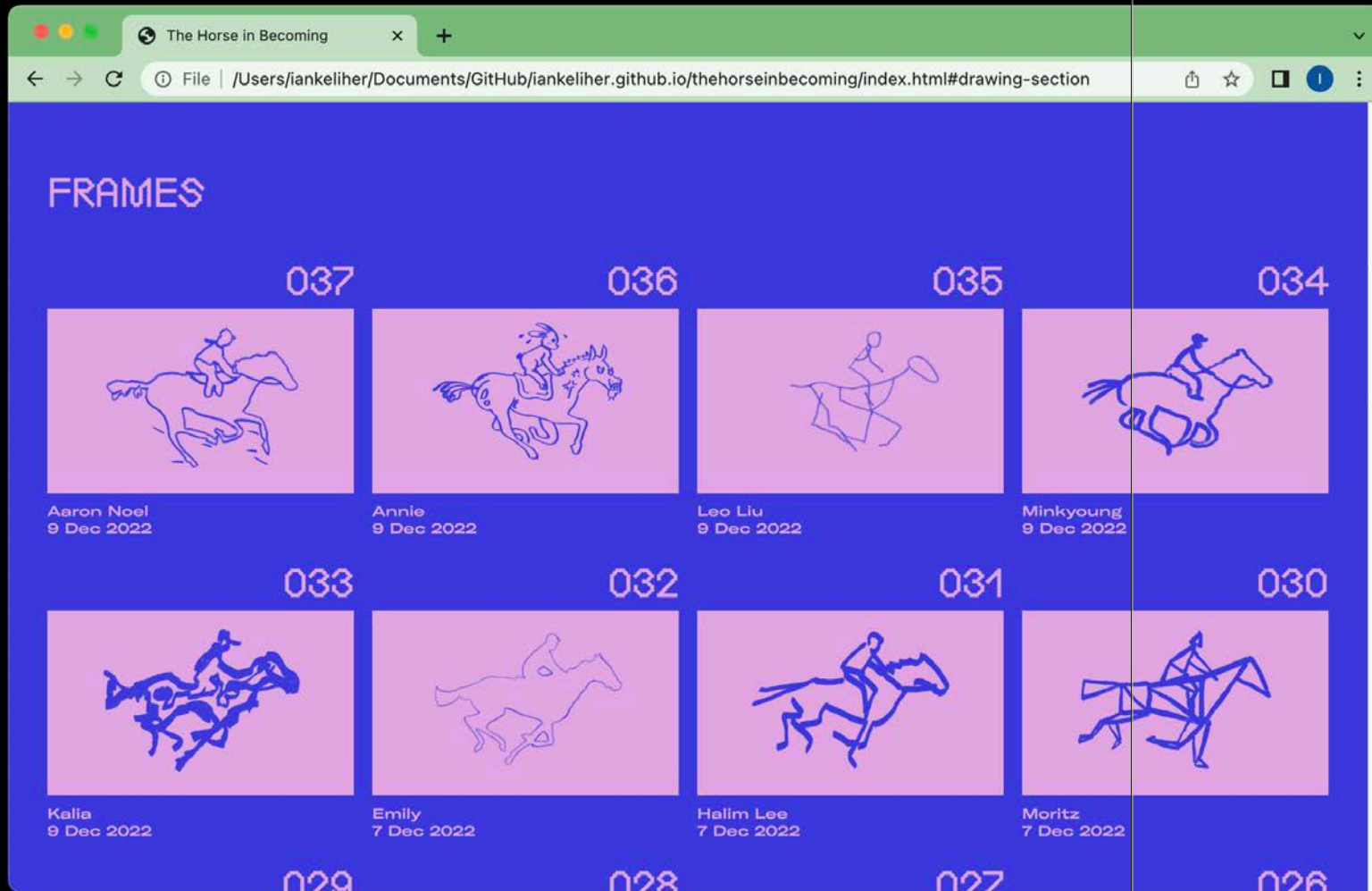
Above: The site also includes an archive of the frames.

Opposite: An example of the sheets that were distributed to collect drawings for the animation.
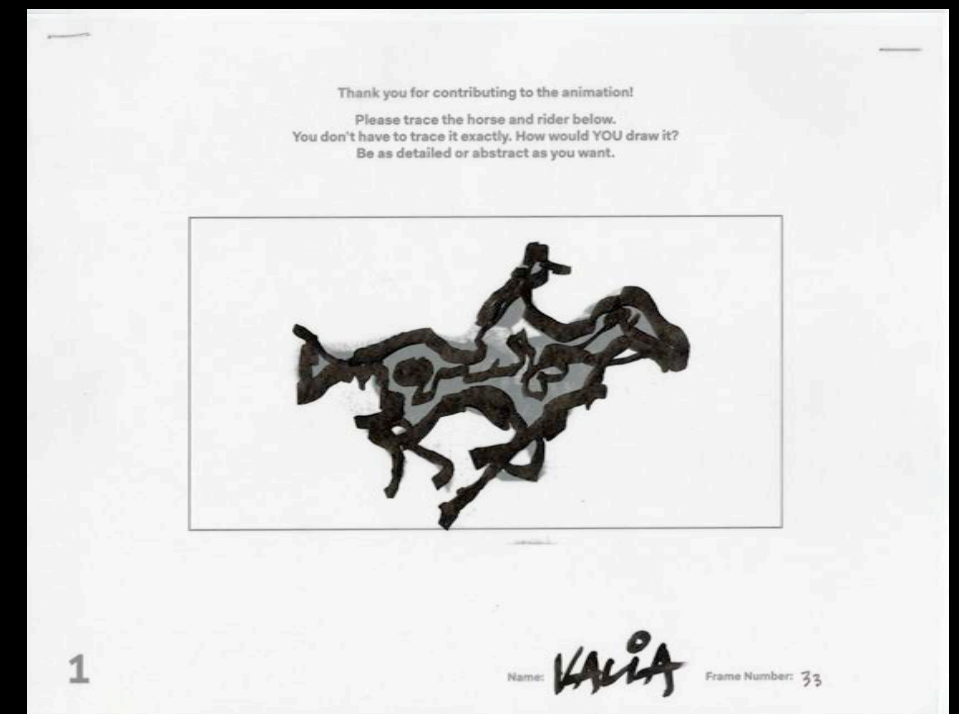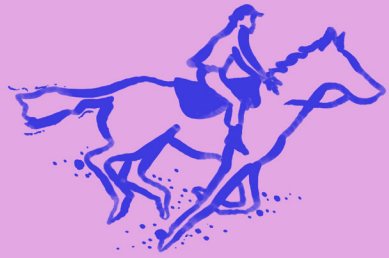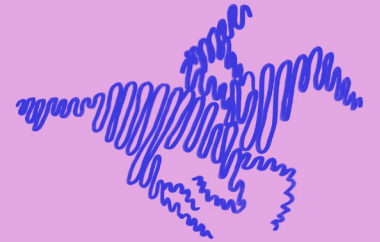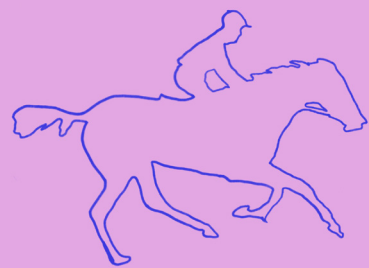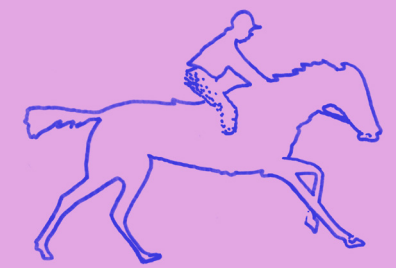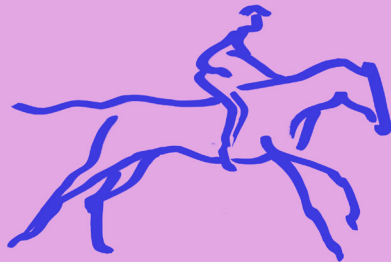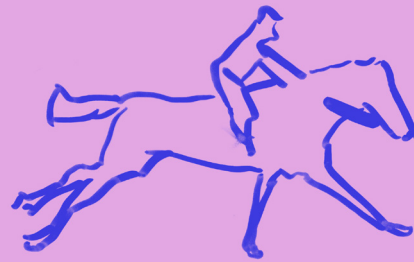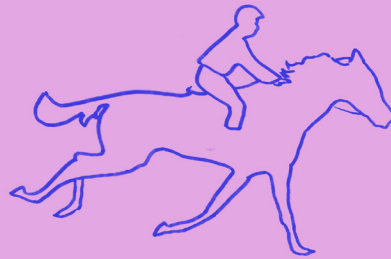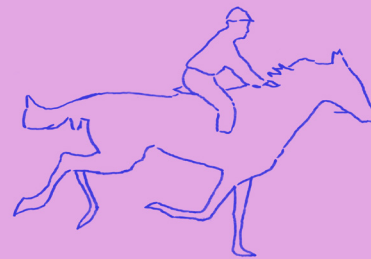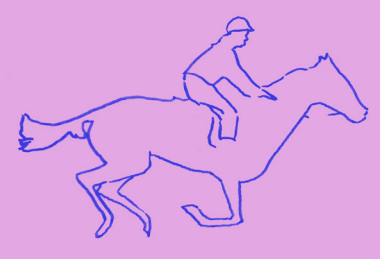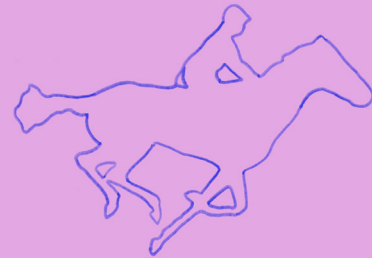
21
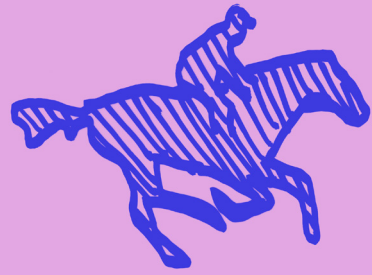
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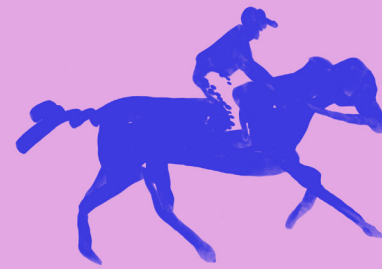
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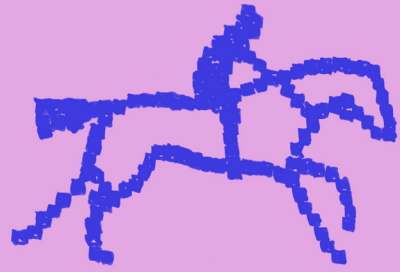
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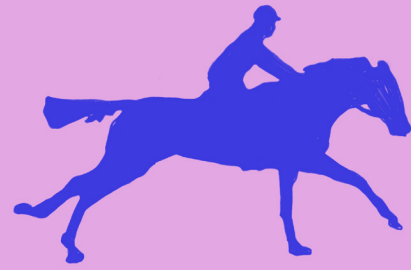
27
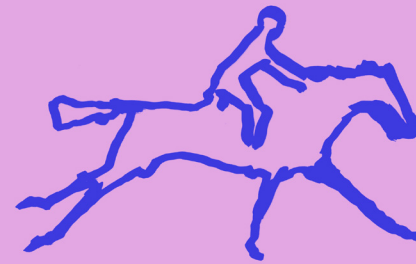
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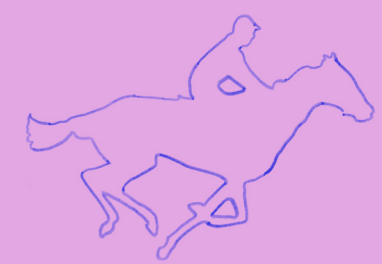
33

34

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37
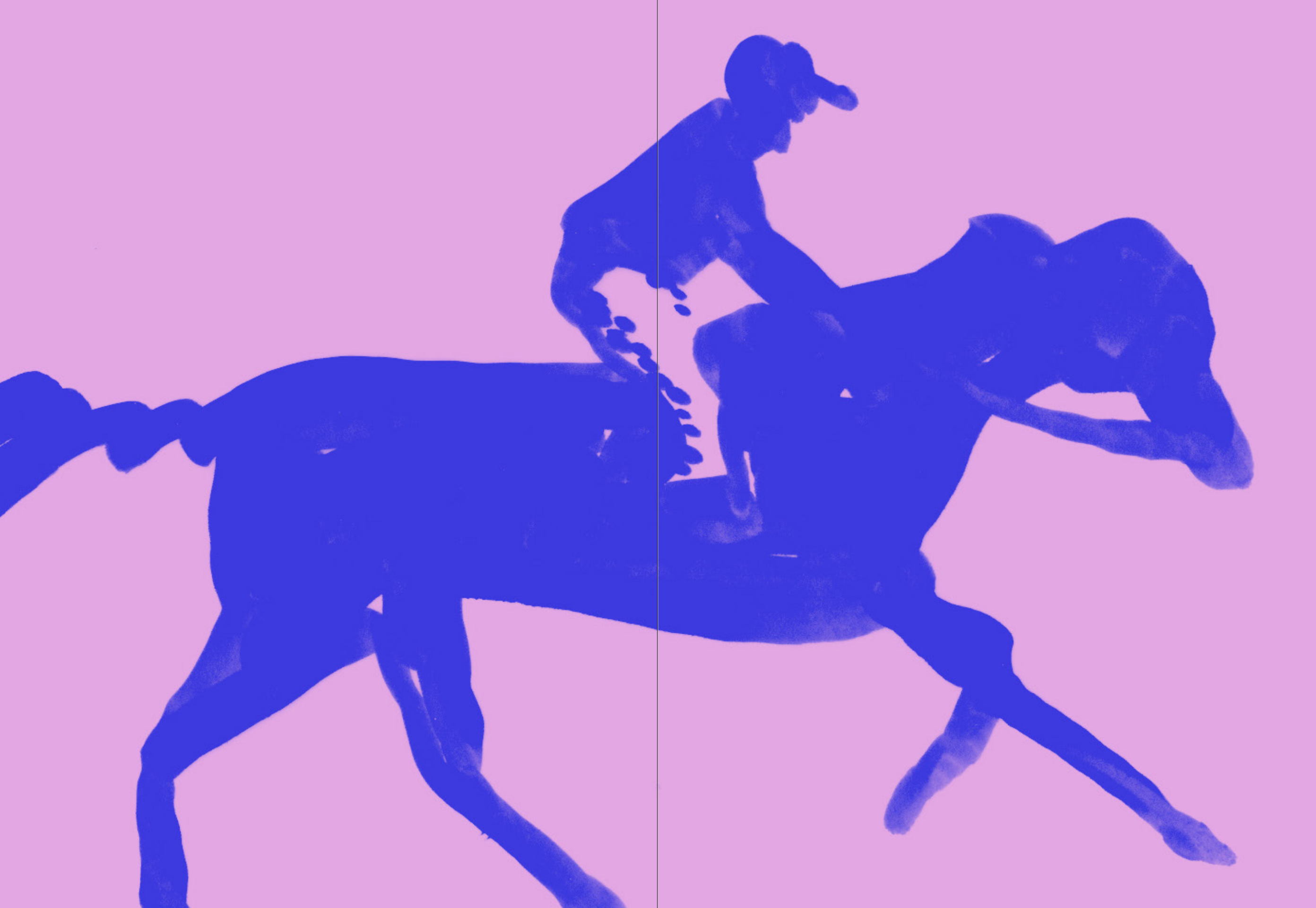
A screening of Sara Cwynar's *Soft Film* (2016) for the spring series of film screenings.

I often need to be in dialogue with someone or something to generate work. Whether it's an internal dialogue with the ideas and culture that I'm taking in or conversation with the people that surround me.

This desire for dialogue led to me opening up my research process into the relationship between graphic design and film. I wanted to invite others into it and take my research out of the world of private consumption. I think of Buber's observation of the theater as a space in which a "between" might emerge, and I wonder if doing this would bring people into contact with things that would influence their own practices in unexpected ways.

In a way, the work was an outgrowth of the extracurricular Friday Night Drinks I started organizing during my first year at RISD.

Recommended by
Anther Kiley

AN

Directed by
Dziga Vertov, 1929

Runtime 1hr 18min

Detail of Anther's credit on the poster
for Dziga Vertov's *Man with a Movie
Camera* (1929) for the first series of
screenings.

The initial visual output were posters
conceived as both publication material and
also as a substrate on which research could
reside. In retrospect, each one became a small
gesture to an interpersonal context that
defined each reference.
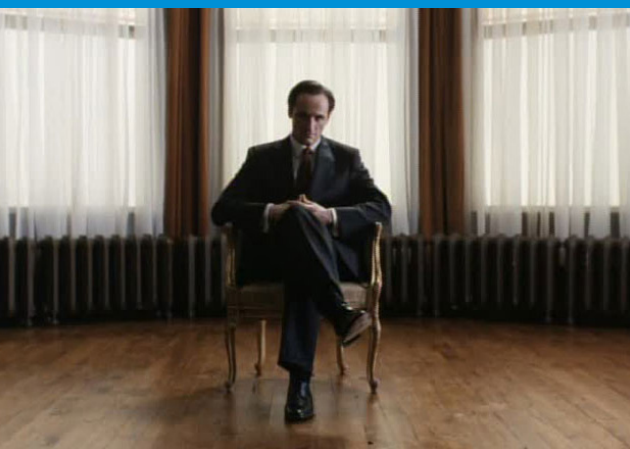
The three screenings for the Winter series based on the theme of bits and pieces were *32 Short Films About Glenn Gould* (1993) by François Girard (left), Music Videos by Spike Jonze, Michel Gondry, and The Daniels (center, "Turn Down for What" by The Daniels), as well as *The Five Obstructions* (2003) by Lars von Trier (right).

The screenings were sparsely attended and needed to be rethought. I scheduled multiple screenings in advance with some recommendations that were sourced from a form passed around to the critics in my December review.

I also made another round of posters, which started to feel strange—especially with me communicating reminders for screenings primarily on our Slack Channel. The screenings were better attended this time.
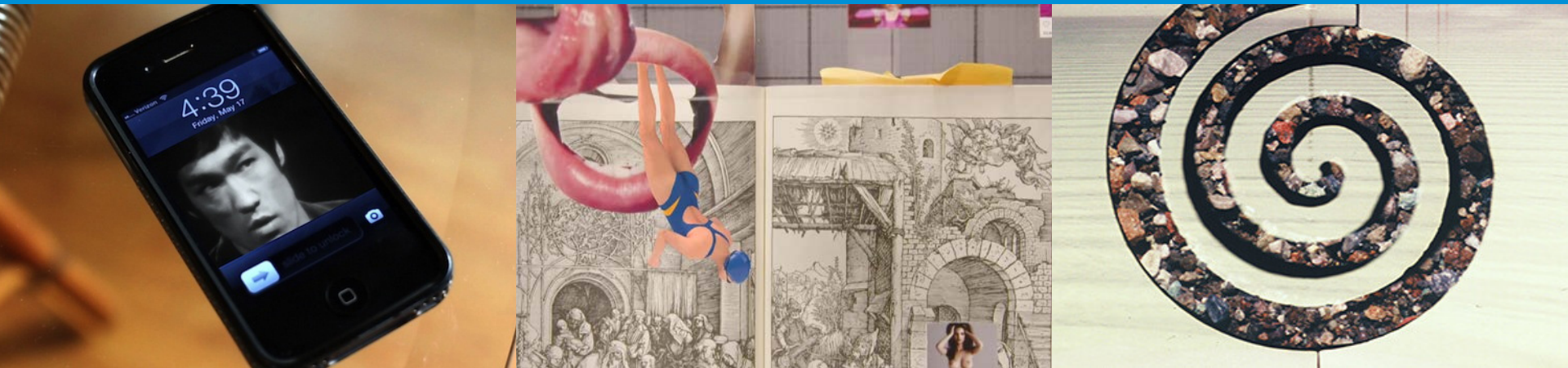
The three screenings for the Spring series, exploring the video essay in contemporary art, were two films by Hito Steyerl (detail of *Liquidity, Inc.* (2014), left), three films by Sara Cwynar (detail of *Glass Life* (2021), center), as well as a selection of films by Tacita Dean (detail of *JG* (2013), right).

I realized the project, for me, was simply about watching videos with other people and talking about it afterward. It didn't matter if the visual output was a poster or some other form.

In the next iteration I invited people directly to small screenings—partly because this set of video essays were being sourced from galleries that explicitly forbade large screenings. I reached out to people based on whether I thought the work might resonate with their interests.
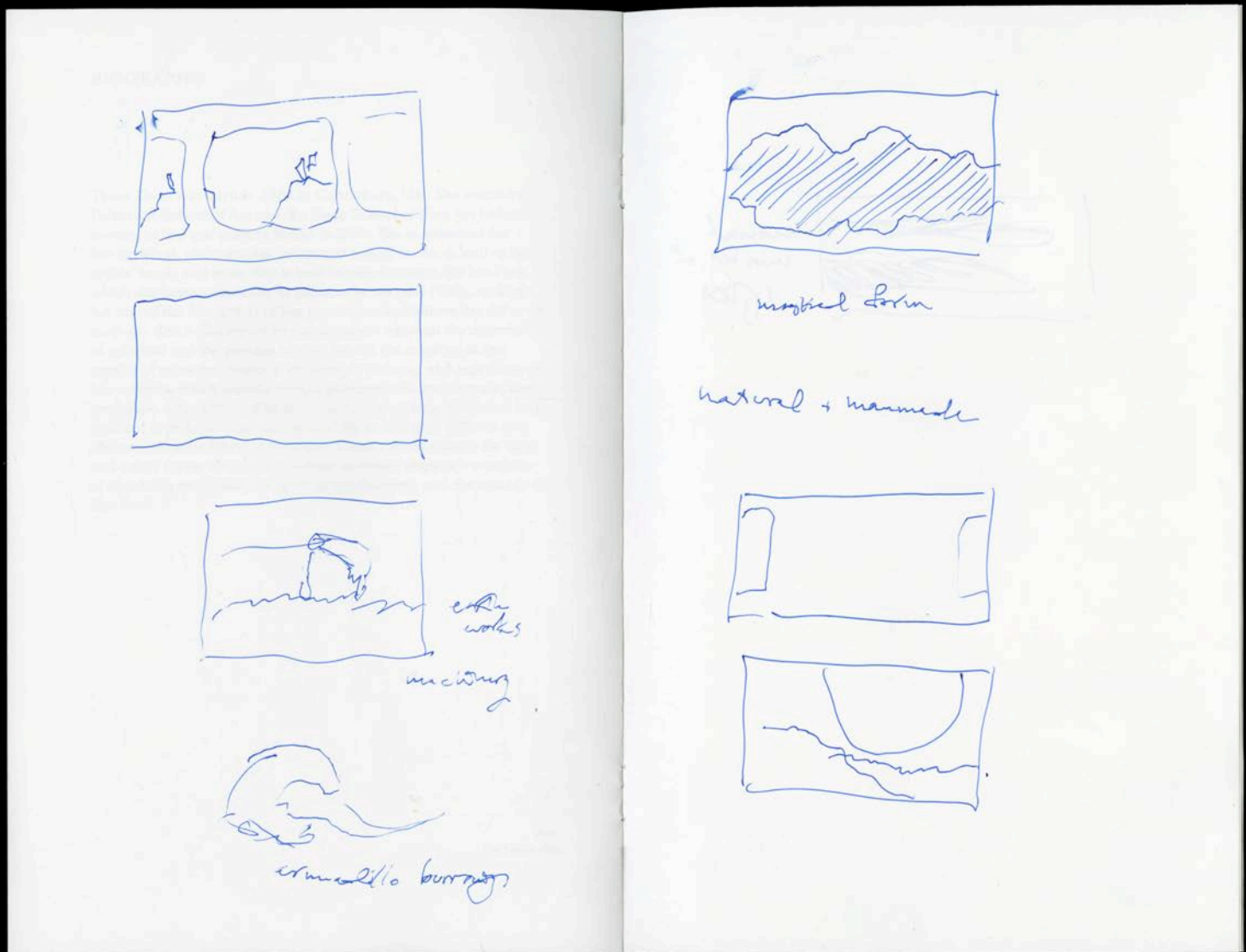
9. See page 369.

The visual outputs were small, blank notebooks for the attendees to write or doodle in—to bring themselves into. They also contained an interview or essay that contextualized the artist and their work.

My favorite bit was from a lightly admonishing letter from Tacita Dean's representation about the compromised viewing experience of her films, which contained the beautiful lines:

"It is the movement of the mechanical claw and the shutter that gives the illusion of movement. Between every frame is a subliminal moment of darkness that rests the brain." [9]

And I think of gaps again.

Film Screenings

Poster Series   18" × 24"
Silkscreen   12" × 18"
Booklet Series   5 1/2" × 8 1/2"

A   Fall 2022 Series:
     Recommendations

     Sat, Nov 5
     Ways of Seeing (1972)
          Series by John Berger and
          Mike Dibbs
          Recommended by
          Didi Schmaedecke

     Sat, Nov 12
     Man with a Movie Camera (1929)
          Dir. by Dziga Vertov
          Recommended by Anther Kiley

     Sat, Nov 26
     Beginners (1929)
          Dir. by Mike Mills

B   Winter 2023 Series:
     Bits and Pieces

     Fri, Jan 20
     *32 Short Films About
     Glenn Gould* (1993)
          Dir. by François Girard

     Thur, Jan 26
     Music Videos: The Daniels,
     Spike Jonze, Michel Gondry
     (1990s – 2010s)

     Fri, Feb 3
     The Five Obstructions (2003)
          Dir. by Lars von Trier

C   Spring 2023 Series:
     Artists and the Video Essay

     Fri, Mar 3
     Liquidity, Inc. (2014),
     Factory of the Sun (2016)
          By Hito Steyerl

     Fri, Mar 10
     Soft Film (2016), *Rose Gold* (2018),
     Glass Life (2021)
          by Sara Cwynar

     Thur, Mar 16
     JG (2013), *A Bag of Air* (1995),
     *The Martyrdom of St Agatha
     in Several Parts* (1994)
          by Tacita Dean
     Urth (2016)
          by Ben Rivers

Over the course of my second year, I organized a series of film screenings in fall, winter, and spring to open up my research into graphic design and film. Within this, there was the hope that conversations between myself and the attendees after the screenings would open up the films to help us see them differently and allow them to influence our own practices. The screenings took an iterative approach to film selection, scheduling, and visual output as I found out what worked best each time a series was shown.

The intervention on the *Ways of Seeing* poster
was based on the conversation I had with Didi
Schmadecke while watching the series together.

rt of feels like

MAN **WITH** A MOVIE **C**AM ERA

Recommended by
Anther Kiley

Directed by
Dziga Vertov, 1929
Runtime 1hr 18min

Sat, Nov 12
12 pm

CIT 169 Weybosset
5th Floor

Frame Manipulation

Time Manipulation

Self-Reflexivity

Editing / Camera Movement

Self-Reflexivity

Slow Motion

Exposure of Process

01:02:05 00:47:54 00:45:51 00:16:30 00:19:07

00:23:25 00:32:50

00:57:33 00:59:51

00:54:39 01:06:28

00:56:46

While watching *Man With a Movie Camera* (1929),
I took notes on all the different techniques that
I noticed being used in the film.

Middle poster:

Directed by
Mike Mills, 2010
Runtime 1hr 45min

A Thanksgiving weekend family special

BE
BEG
BEGI
BEGIN
BEGINN
BEGINNE
BEGINNER
BEGINNERS

Sat, Nov 26
1pm

CIT 169 Weybosset
5th Floor

Detailed poster:

00:03:45 – 00:04:54 Interpolation One
00:48:11 – 00:49:52 Interpolation Two
01:08:48 – 01:10:17 Interpolation Three
01:13:05 – 01:14:26

A Thanksgiving weekend family special

BE

Sex. Life. Healing. Sunlight. Nature. Magic. Serenity. Spirit. The first gay pride flag was made by a man named Gilbert Baker in '78. He gave a meaning to each color. This man was president. This was invented. This is what movies looked like. Pets. November 27th, 1978, Harvey Milk was shot and killed. One week after, my father opened his annual museum Christmas exhibit. He collected stuffed animals from people in the community and he put them on display. My father printed a quote in large type from the Velvetyne Rabbit on the wall. The stuffed rabbit asked What is Real? And the rabbit asked "Does it hurt?" And the horse said "Sometimes." "Does it happen all at once?" "It takes a long time. Generally by the time you are real, most of your hair has been loved off. Your eyes dropped out and you get loose in the joints. These things don't matter at all because you are real. You can't be ugly except to people that don't understand."

Sat, Nov 26
1pm 01:13:05 – 01:14:26 Interpolation Five

CIT 169 Weybosset
5th Floor

While watching *Beginners*, I noticed there were actually several small video essays embedded into the film, so I decided to catalogue and transcribe them all to see if I could figure out how they worked.

The series for Wintersession was based on the theme of "bits and pieces."

32 Sho...
Glenn Goul...

Music Videos:
The Daniels, Spike Jonze,
Michel Gondry[2]

THUR 8PM
JAN 26

The Perfect Man[3]

The Five Obstructions[4]

FRI 8PM
FEB 3

1
(1993) by François G...
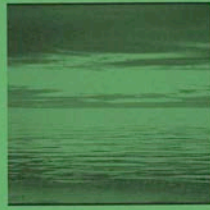runtime: 1hr 38...

2
(19...

THUR
JAN ...

FRI 8PM
FEB 3

1
(1993) by François G...
runtime: 1hr 38min

2
(1990s-2010s)
approx. runtime: 1hr...

3
(1967) by Jørgen Let...
Runtime: 13min

4
(2003) by Lars Von...
Runtime: 1hr 43min

prompt:
"a calming
ocean"

prompt:
"the sun"

Hito Steyerl
IN DEFENSE OF THE POOR IMAGE

(2009)
from e-flux

The poor image is a copy in motion. Its quality is bad, its resolution substandard. As it accelerates, it deteriorates. It is a ghost of an image, a preview, a thumbnail, an errant idea, an itinerant image distributed for free, squeezed through slow digital connections, compressed, reproduced, ripped, remixed, as well as copied and pasted into other channels of distribution.

The poor image is a rag or a rip; an AVI or a JPEG, a lumpen proletarian in the class society of appearances, ranked and valued according to its resolution. The poor image has been uploaded, downloaded, shared, reformatted, and reedited. It transforms quality into accessibility, exhibition value into cult value, films into clips, contemplation into distraction. The image is liberated from the vaults of cinemas and archives and thrust into digital uncertainty, at the expense of its own substance. The poor image tends towards abstraction: it is a visual idea in its very becoming.

The poor image is an illicit fifth-generation bastard of an original image. Its genealogy is dubious. Its filenames are deliberately misspelled. It often defies patrimony, national culture, or indeed copyright. It is passed on as a lure, a decoy, an index, or as a reminder of its former visual self. It mocks the promises of digital technology. Not only is it often degraded to the point of being just a hurried blur, one even doubts whether it could be called an image at all. Only digital technology could produce such a dilapidated image in the first place.

Poor images are the contemporary Wretched of the Screen, the debris of audiovisual production, the trash that washes up on the digital economies' shores. They testify to the violent dislocation, transferrals, and displacement of images—their acceleration and

circulation within the vicious cycles of audiovisual capitalism. Poor images are dragged around the globe as commodities or their effigies, as gifts or as bounty. They spread pleasure or death threats, conspiracy theories or bootlegs, resistance or stultification. Poor images show the rare, the obvious, and the unbelievable—that is, if we can still manage to decipher it.

1. LOW RESOLUTIONS
In one of Woody Allen's films the main character is out of focus. It's not a technical problem but some sort of disease that has befallen him: his image is consistently blurred. Since Allen's character is an actor, this becomes a major problem: he is unable to find work. His lack of definition turns into a material problem. Focus is identified as a class position, a position of ease and privilege, while being out of focus lowers one's value as an image.

The contemporary hierarchy of images, however, is not only based on sharpness, but also and primarily on resolution. Just look at any electronics store and this system, described by Harun Farocki in a notable 2007 interview, becomes immediately apparent. In the class society of images, cinema takes on the role of a flagship store. In flagship stores high-end products are marketed in an upscale environment. More affordable derivatives of the same images circulate as DVDs, on broadcast television or online, as poor images.

Obviously, a high-resolution image looks more brilliant and impressive, more mimetic and magic, more scary and seductive than a poor one. It is more rich, so to speak. Now, even consumer formats are increasingly adapting to the tastes of cineastes and esthetes, who insisted on 35 mm film as a guarantee of pristine visuality. The insistence upon analog film as the sole medium of visual importance resounded throughout discourses on cinema, almost regardless of their ideological inflection. It never mattered that these high-end economies of film production were (and still are) firmly anchored in systems of national culture, capitalist studio production, the cult of mostly male genius, and the original version, and thus are often conservative in their very structure. Resolution was fetishized as if its lack amounted to castration of the author. The cult of film gauge dominated even independent film production. The rich image established its own set of hierarchies, with new technologies offering more and more possibilities to creatively degrade it.

Hito Steyerl's booklet included her essay "In Defense of the Poor Image" along with an AI generated sun and ocean on the back cover.

LIQUIDITY
INC. (2015)
30 Minutes

HITO
STEYERL

FACTORY
OF THE SUN (2015)
23 Minutes

Sara Cwynar

Soft Film¹
Rose Gold²
Glass Life³

1
2016, 7 minutes

2
2018, 8 minutes

3
2021, 20 minutes

Sara Cwynar

in conversation with

Rose Bouthillier

excerpted from Glass Life

Your films weave pleasure and discomfort together. They're vibrant, saturated, playful, luxurious; and then at certain points, the excess overwhelms. Just at the moment when you've recognized or heard and understood something, it's gone and you're inundated with something new. This is in turns exhilarating and … I almost want to say "sickening." These feelings make me hyperaware of the speeds at which I can process different types of information, and how those can be played to and manipulated. How do you formulate the pace of your work?

I have a hypothetical viewer in mind, who needs more and more stimulation or I will lose their attention. So the pace is informed by my own apprehension about viewers' attention spans, as much as it is about trying to capture something of the frantic pace of this time. When I am making these films, I always feel like there is never enough time to say everything. I am always trying to strike

SC   RB

a balance between too much, stuffing in as much content as I possibly can, and then dialing it back just when I might have lost a viewer.

To take up your word, sickening—I think a lot about how, in a Western context, many of us have so many beautiful things that we can't actually appreciate them all. We're surrounded by this glut of riches and endless forms of variations that we don't actually want–hundreds of options for a toothbrush, bottled water from every corner of the world–and we're constantly getting new things instead of appreciating the old ones. We are all creating these increasingly massive archives of objects and images and screenshots that will never have time to go back and look at again. Red Film (2018) deals a lot with this idea that we are living in a world filled with choices, or purported choices, but we are actually just picking from a predetermined set of things–ways of being, lifestyles, even language–that have been pre-decided and dictated by capitalism. The idea that choice equals freedom is a central tenet of Western culture, but in practice, it often ends up feeling like the opposite of freedom, something closer to an imposition or a duty.

One of the lines from Soft Film (2016) that has really stuck with me is "what about the idea that objects outlive humans?" A growing population demands more and more objects, which makes for exponential accumulation. There's one scene in Rose Gold (2017), where your face is slowly obscured by a layer of objects, that seems to really capture this, almost like you are drowning.

Biography

Sara Cwynar (b. 1985, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada) is interested in the way that images accumulate, endure, and change in value over time. Her conceptual photographs and films involve constant archiving and re-presentation of collected visual materials, layering diverse imagery with references to art theory. The works intricately recall advertisements, retail catalogues, and old art history textbooks. Her visual assemblages meditate on how vernacular images shape collective world views, and how those ideals can change through time and contextual manipulation. Cwynar was one of the recipients of the 2020 Sobey Art Award, the 2020 Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Award, and the 2021 Shpilman Photography Prize. She earned her Bachelor of Design from York University in 2010 and her MFA from Yale University in 2016. In 2014, she was awarded the Printed Matter Emerging Artists Publication Series and published her first monograph, entitled Kitsch Encyclopedia, with Blonde Art Books. A monograph of Cwynar's work, entitled Glass Life, was published in 2021 by Aperture with the Remai Modern.

from
Cooper Cole Gallery

Notebook for viewing Sara Cwynar's Soft Film (2016), Rose Gold (2017), and Glass Life (2021)

Ian Keliher
March 2023

Sara Cwynar's booklet included an edited interview from her monograph, *Glass Life*.

ON

JG

AND THE

MEDIUM
OF TIME

*transcribed from a
Pete Center Arts video*

What is the relationship between your film *JG*
and J.G. Ballard's short story, "The Voices of Time"?

When I was cutting the film, in this case, I did end up—
ironically, because it's not normally the case at all. In fact,
it's the first way this has happened—I ended up in a way
finding that I actually had a structure that was very close
to the structure of "Voices of Time," by chance, which got
closer to the short story than I intended it to be. Which was
this punctuation of a clock, which we filmed, and I had no
idea if it was usable, and in the end, I used it. And so the
whole film is punctuated by a clock in smaller, decreasing
intervals, which is close to the diminishing waking time of
the character Robert Powers in the short story. And at a
certain point, I had four clocks that we filmed, and then I
realized I needed a shorter interval at the end of the last
moment. So I had another clock which actually ended up
making it in the structure of five decreasing parts, which
is actually structured "The Voices of Time." But that's
unusual for me.

Tacita Dean's booklet included an interview on
the film *JG* along with a stern letter from her
representation about the importance of film in
the experience of viewing Dean's work.

TACITA DEAN

JG (2013), 27 min

A Bag of Air (1995), 3 min

The Matyrdom of St. Agatha in
Several Parts (1994), 14 min

Girl Stowaway (1994), 8 min

Teignmouth Electron (1999),
5 min

BEN RIVERS

Urth (2016), 19 min

A snapshot sent to me by Berett Wilber of a sighting of one of my prints out in the wild.

Those notebooks existed as small gifts for the attendees and I see that interpersonal impulse embedded in the gesture pop up elsewhere. It's also in the small gesture of a series of screenprinted cards with Laurie Anderson's *Five Questions to Ask Yourself When Making Art,* which were left around the studio.

It was surprisingly delightful to see them spring up in people's working areas like spring flowers.

Laurie Anderson's Five Questions to Ask Yourself When Making Art

Screenprint   4" × 6"

Laurie Anderson's Five Questions … is a small silkscreen print that was left for free in the studio. I had come across Anderson's *Five Questions* after a conversation with Rebecca Wilkinson (GD MFA '24) about how much I had loved Anderson's film *Heart of a Dog* (2015). The gesture and project was small. But upon making them and leaving them out, I was surprised by how heartened I was to see these prints start to populate people's work areas.

Five Questions to Ask Yourself When Making Art

1 Is it *complicated* enough?

2 Is it *simple* enough?

3 Is it *crazy* Enough?

4 Is it *beautiful* enough?

5 Is it *stupid* enough?

from Laurie Anderson
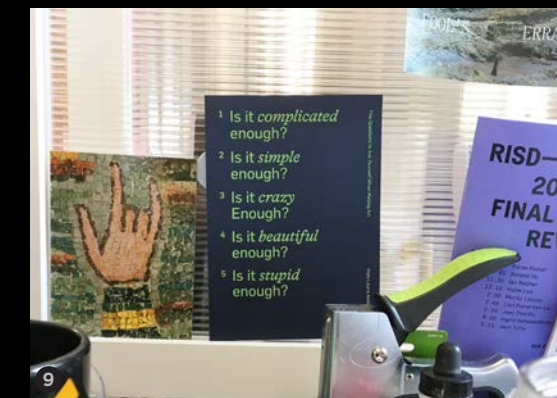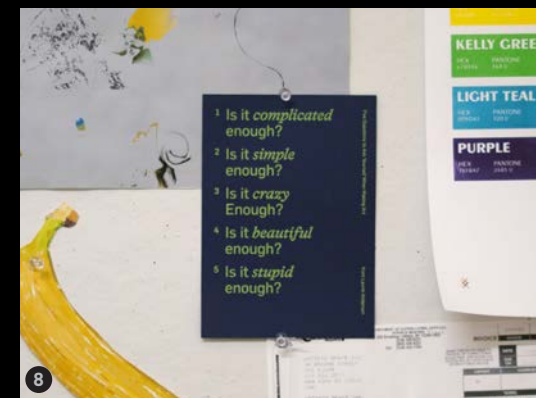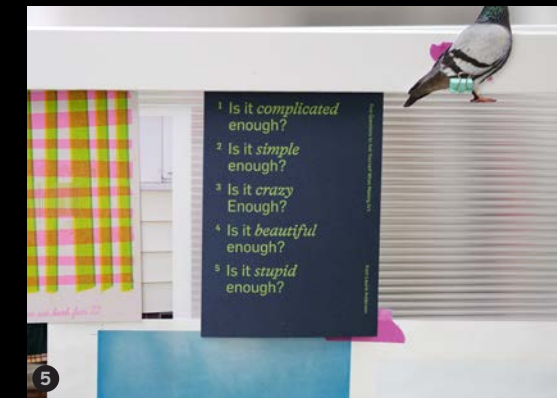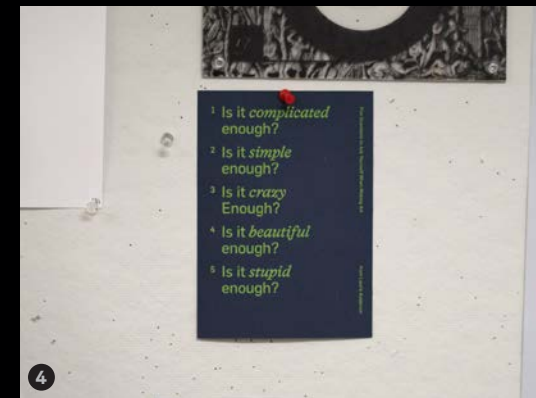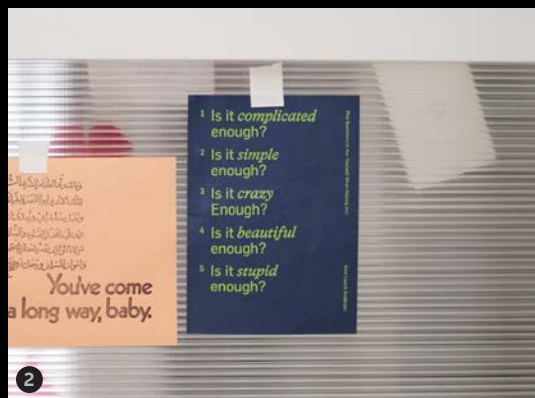
1	Michelle Belgrod	6	Joey Petrillo
2	Husna Abubakar	7	Rebecca Wilkinson
3	My own copy	8	Serena Ho
4	Jack Tufts	9	Kaela Kennedy
5	Jenni Oughton		

Sadia Quddus explaining her need
for movement in *In Words*.

Thinking about my early films again through
the lens of the interpersonal, I began to see
them as unwitting portraits.

Dougal Henken and Sun Ho Lee
in *Between*.

As much as they are explorations of ideas,
there's also an impulse to get to know the
people that surround me: what they're like,
how they think.

Left: (detail) Kaela working at her apartment in Fox Point.

Right: (detail) A cove at Beavertail State Park that Kaela brought me to when exploring Jamestown.

I decided to make a portrait in earnest of someone I hadn't yet gotten to know as well. An earlier conversation with Kaela Kennedy about her work served as a spark: Having grown up nearby in Rhode Island, I saw her filtering her lived experience of the environment she grew up in through websites and books. I wanted to intercut these natural areas with her daily life and work.

She was excited to take me out to show me these areas she knew intimately. I didn't want to impose a narrative on what we shot. She led me through these areas that mattered to her and the roving conversation we had in the car on the way to Beavertail that passed through her experiences growing up, the vibrance of natural materials, rock collecting, and the idea of practice in Catholicism served as a loose basis for the film.

Here and There

16mm film, silent   01:30
Featuring: Kaela Kennedy (GD MFA '24)

Here and There is a short film that explores Kaela Kennedy's relationship to her work, which is influenced by the landscapes of Rhode Island that she grew up embedded within. The film was shot in Beavertail, RI, and her apartment in Fox Point with the two places intercutting with each other for a new space of overlap to emerge.
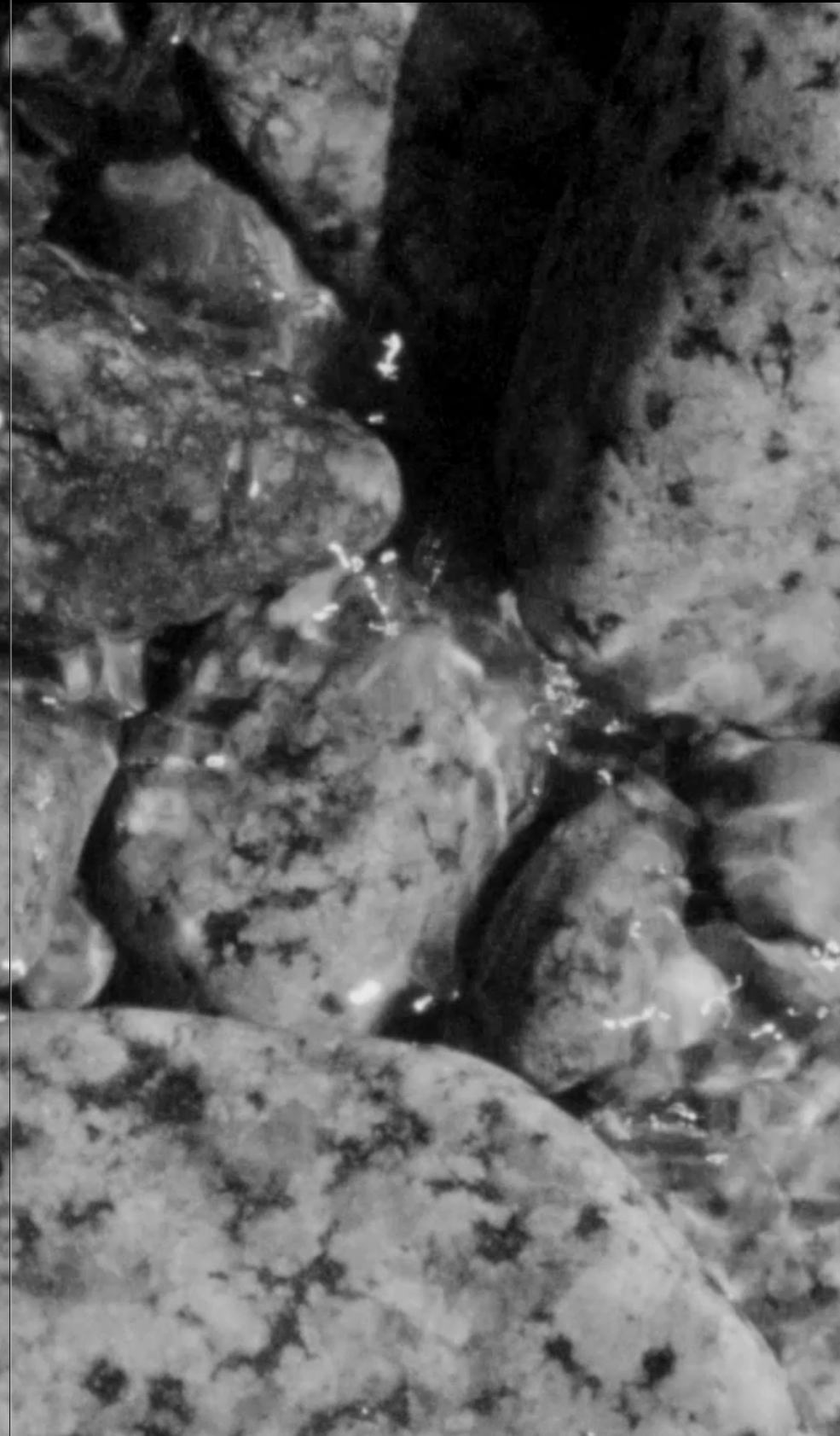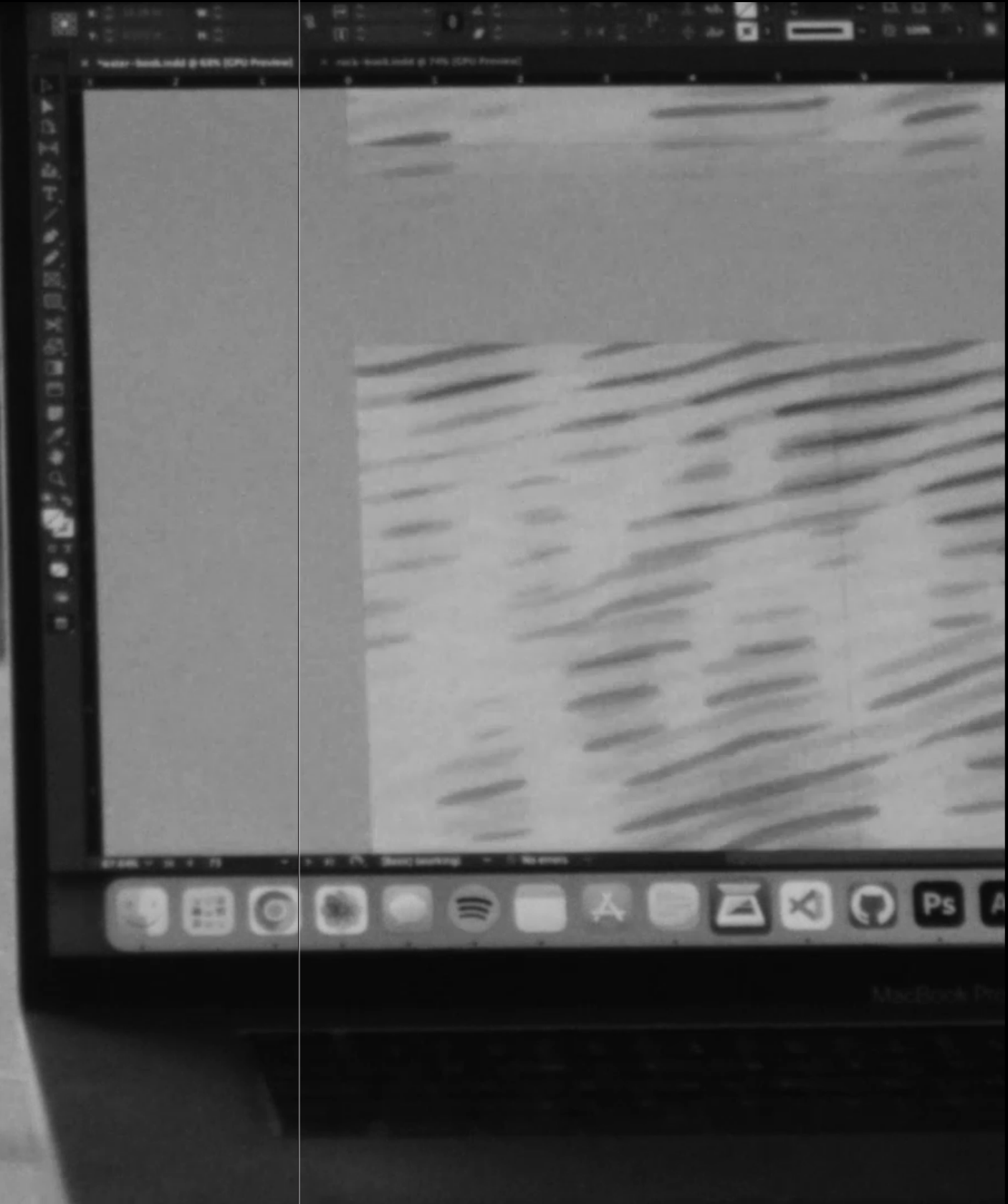
Kaela looking out at the water at Beavertail. I find myself thinking of a Caspar David Friedrich painting.

My advisor, Lucy Hitchcock, observes that despite the interpersonal aspect of my films, they're rather solitary. I agree and enjoy that tension—that connection is not easily straightforward. That the screen works as a point of contact but a mediated one.

Two moments of the explicitly dialogic occur to me, though.

The collaborative installation
What's That Sound?

One is a collaborative project with my roommate and cohortmate Jack Tufts in which we made a tent installation that responded to the sound by lighting up—reacting to the movements and speech of any viewers.

What's That Sound?

Istallation
Collaborator: Jack Tufts ^(GD MFA '23)

Do You Hear That? Is an installation collaboration with Jack Tufts meant to evoke late night conversations under the stars. The installation consists of a tent, projector, and custom website that drives the interaction. The tent illuminates in response to noise, flashing brighter the louder the sound is— whether that's the footsteps or speech of the visitor, or the soundtrack of a crackling fire.
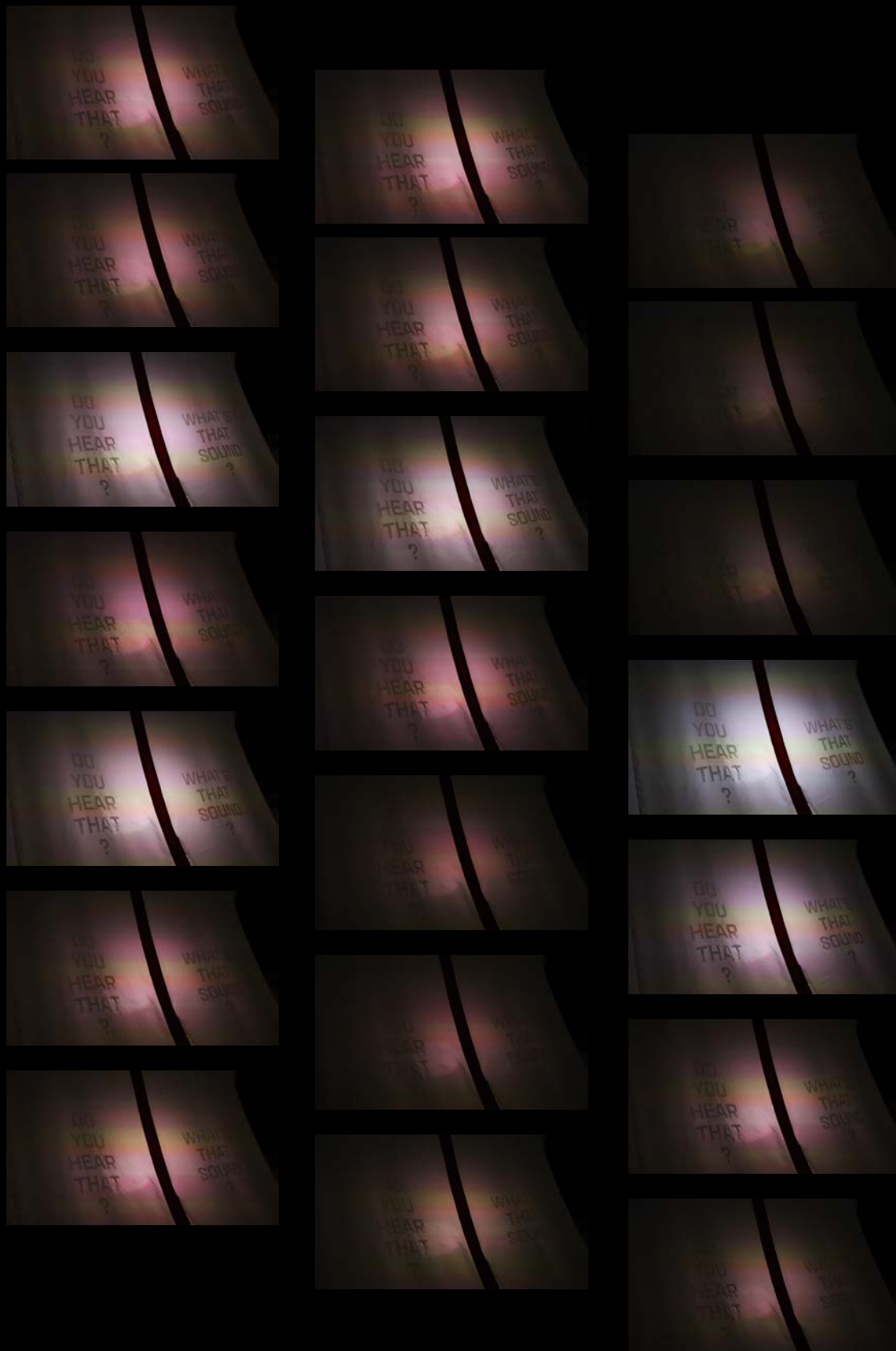
Opposite: the tent reacting to a soundtrack of a crackling fire.

Above: me laying down within the installation.

Ingrid (Didi) Schmaedecke
and Gabriel Drozdov building a
collaborative sentence word-by-
word from separate rooms.

The second is a project with Didi
Schmaedecke and Gabriel Drozdov where,
separated from each other, they build a
collaborative sentence with only the voice
from the other as guidance.

The best is when nobody can tell if this is real.

The best possible outcome of
a sentence to come out of this.

Something new emerges in that
space between.

FIN

A Note If You Are Studying Graphic Design and Moving Image

I've gone through and marked my annotated bibliographies with a • for things that I found especially helpful or useful when researching this topic. It's my feeling that if you were to spend a week or two reading and watching these things right now, you will be in a much better position than I was.

For the two thesis books marked (Lake Buckley and Lynn Kiang), find them and then review their bibliographies as well. Lynn's is especially good.

One thing I've noticed in other RISD thesis books is that Soviet Montage Theory (esp. Eisenstein and Kuleshov) is a pretty evergreen reference point. I found Eisenstein helpful and applicable, but I also became interested in areas that weren't as explored.

There are a few things I would recommend looking into, but don't get too caught up in them because I think your time is best spent making a lot of things: I believe mise-en-scène has potential as an area of exploration as well as other cine-matic theories (e.g. psychoanalytic film theory). Deleuze might represent a different pathway in *Cinema 1,* but I found trying to wrap my head around Deleuze took a substantial amount of time, so I set Deleuze aside (*Deleuze's Cinema Books* by David Deamer was the most helpful secondary text I found). I've recently started *Film Theory: An Introduction Through the Senses* by Thomas Elsaesser and Malte Hagener and it seems like another promising entry point.

Annotated Bibliography (Videos and Films)

• Anderson, Laurie, director. *Heart of a Dog*. Arte, 2015. 1 hr, 15 min. DVD.

Anderson, Laurie, performer. "Norton Lecture 4: The Road," 2022. 1 hr, 34 min. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-pbzcARJ1eM

• Andersen, Thom, director. *Get Out of the Car*, 2010. 35 min. Film, n.d.
   A film that broke me out of thinking of just image/language relationships in film and toward a more fundamental sound/image relationship.

Andersen, Thom, director. *Los Angeles Plays Itself*, 2003. 2 hr, 49 min. Film, n.d.

• Berger, John, performer. *Ways of Seeing*, 1972. 29 min. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0pDE4VX_9Kk
   The first episode of this series contains a sequence that does a great job of demonstrating both montage theory and the Kuleshov effect.

Bergman, Ingmar, director. *Persona*. Criterion, 1966. 1 hr, 23 min. Film, n.d.
   I watched the opening sequence to this over and over while making *In Words*, at one point breaking it down shot-by-shot with Dougal Henken one night.

• Cwynar, Sara, director. *Glass Life*, 2021. 19 min. https://mubi.com/films/glass-life
   Also screened *Soft Film* and *Rose Gold*. Cwynar is helpful for thinking about collage and montage.

Dean, Tacita, director. *JG*, 2013. 26 min. Digital link via gallery.

Gondry, Michel, director. "Fell in Love with a Girl," 2001, music video, 2 min. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fTH71AAxXmM
   Among a selection of his music videos shown.

Farocki, Harun, director. *Interface*, 1995. 25 min. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hTY7KeQ3JFI

• Godard, Jean-Luc, director. *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her*. Criterion, 1967. 1 hr, 27 min. DVD.

Jonze, Spike, director. "Weapon of Choice," 2001, music video, 4 min. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XQ7z57qrZU8
   Among a selection of his music videos shown.

Kwan, Daniel and Scheinert, Daniel, directors. *Everything Everywhere All At Once*, 2022. 2h, 19 min. Film, n.d.

Kwan, Daniel and Scheinert, Daniel, directors. "Turn Down for What," 2014, music video, 3 min. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HMUDVMiITOU
   Among a selection of their music videos shown.

• Leth, Jørgen, director. *The Perfect Human, 1968*. 13 min. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8a5TTsN2MGU

• Marker, Chris, director. *Sans Soleil*. Criterion, 1983. 1 hr, 40 min. DVD.

• Marker, Chris, director. *La Jetée*. Criterion, 1962. 28 min. DVD.

McElwee, Ross, director. *Sherman's March*, 1985. 2 hr, 37 min. DVD.

Mills, Mike, director. *Beginners*. Focus Features, 2011. 1 hr, 45 min. DVD.

Moosajee, Saad, and Gosset, Danae, directors. "A Pearl," 2019, music video, 3 min. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p8FDI_tMs4Y
   Influential in considering the possibilities of animation for *In Words*.

Rivers, Ben, director. *Urth*, 2016. 19 min. Digital link via gallery.

• Steyerl, Hito, director. *How Not To Be Seen: A Fucking Didactic .MOV*, 2013. 15 min. https://www.artforum.com/video/hito-steyerl-how-not-to-be-seen-a-fucking-didactic-educational-mov-file-2013-51651
   Screened *Factory of the Sun* and *Liquidity, Inc.* separately. Steyerl is also helpful for thinking through collage and montage.

Tarkovsky, Andrei, director. *Solaris*. Criterion, 1972. 2 hr, 47 min. DVD.

• Trier, Lars von, director. The Five Obstructions, 2003. 1 hr, 43 min. DVD

• Varda, Agnes, director. *The Gleaners and I*, 2000. 1 hr, 22 min. DVD.

• Vertov, Dziga, director. *Man with a Movie Camera*, 1922. 1 hr, 8 min. DVD.

Annotated Bibliography ^(Books, Essays, Articles)

Artress, Lauren. *Walking a Sacred Path: Rediscovering the Labyrinth as a Spiritual Tool*. New York, NY: Riverhead Books, 1995.
Used while making *Through the Labyrinth* to learn about the more spiritual and religious aspects of the labyrinth.

Buber, Martin. "What Is Man?" Essay. *In Between Man and Man*, 140–244. New York, NY: Routledge, 2002.
A direct influence on the video *Between* and thinking about what happens when one person truly encounters another and whether that can happen in graphic design.

• Buckley, Lake. *Double Takes : Secular Magic and Empathic Vision*. Providence, RI: Self-published, 2017.
I revisited her thesis book more than any other. Studied for my conversation with Lake Buckley.

Cixous, Hélène. "Without End No State of Drawingness No, Rather: The Executioner's Taking Off." Translated by A. F. MacGillivray. *New Literary History* 24, no. 1 (Winter 1993): 91–103.
I found this useful for thinking through how to activate references and capture the sensation of being in motion from thought to thought.

• Corrigan, Timothy. "'On Thoughts Occasioned by …' Montaigne to Marker." In *The Essay Film: From Montaigne, After Marker*, 13–49. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011.
An excellent primer on the essay film and its particular qualities.

Cwynar, Sara. *Glass Life*. New York, NY: Aperture, 2021.
Used as a resource when studying Sara Cwynar's film work.

Daston, Lorraine, and Peter Galison. *Objectivity*. New York, NY: Zone Books, 2010.
An influence on the thinking behind *As You Zoom In, You Zoom Out* in considering the ways in which scientific vision functions as a symbolic form.

Dingsun, Tiger. "Chimeric Worlding: What Can Graphic Design Learn from Poetics and Worldbuilding?" *Tiger Dingsun*. Accessed December 4, 2022. https://tdingsun.github.io/worlding/.
Useful in considering how other literary models and ways of knowing might be taken up as part of one's graphic design practice.

Eco, Umberto. "The Poetics of the Open Work." In *The Open Work*, translated by Anna Cancogni, 1–23. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989.

• Eisenstein, Sergei. "A Dialectic Approach to Film Form." In *Film Form and the Film Sense*, 45–63. New York, NY: Meridian Books, 1957.
Used while researching montage.

• Eisenstein, Sergei. "Methods of Montage." In *Film Form and the Film Sense*, 72–83. New York, NY: Meridian Books, 1957.
Used while researching montage.

Foster, Hal. "An Archival Impulse." *October*, no. 110 (2004): 3–22.
An article that introduced me to the work of Tacita Dean. It also made me consider my relationship to references.

• Gibbs, John. *Mise-En-Scène: Film Style and Interpretation*. of Short Cuts. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2002.
Essential for my understanding of mise-èn-scene.

Han, Byung-Chul. *Psychopolitics: Neoliberalism and New Technologies of Power*. Translated by Erik Butler. Verso, 2017.
Influential on the way I thought about efficiency of communication, contemporary culture, and interiority.

Hartle, Ann. "The Essay as Philosophical Form." In *Michel de Montaigne: Accidental Philosopher*, 62–87. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
Read as background to better understand Montaigne and the function of the essay.

Heidegger, Martin. "I.IV: Being-in-the-World as Being-With and Being-One's-Self. The 'They.'" In *Being and Time*, translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, 149–68. New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2008.
This was the section of Heidegger that I read in my seminar at Brown that primed me for seeking an alternative account of relationality in Buber.

Joyce, James. *Ulysses*. Edited by Hans Walter Gabler. New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1986.
Used extensively in *Atlas*. Originally encountered in a seminar in undergrad.

Kern, Hermann. *Through the Labyrinth : Designs and Meanings Over 5000 Years*. London, UK: Prestel, 2000.
The primary resource for my video essay on the Labyrinth that takes its title from this text.

Kiang, Lynn. *Cut + Run : video graphic design*. Providence, RI: Self-published, 2011.
Studied for my conversation with Lynn Kiang.

Koch, Aidan. *After Nothing Comes*. Toronto, Ontario: Koyama Press, 2016.
Influential on *In Words* and studied in my preparation for my conversation with Koch along with *Stone Blue Sky* and a collection of her early zines.

• Manovich, Lev. "After Effects, or Velvet Revolution." *Back Office* no. 4, April 2021.
Influential in thinking through collage and montage in the context of moving image.

Manovich, Lev. "Database as Symbolic Form." *Convergence: The Journal of Research into New Media Technologies* 5, no. 2 (June 1999): 80–99.
This article brought my attention to the relationship between research, the archive, and narrative, which all became questions when thinking about the visual essay.

• McPhee, John. "Structure." *The New Yorker*, January 6, 2013. https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2013/01/14/structure.
Influential in thinking about the structure of *Through the Labyrinth*.

Montaigne, Michel de. "Of Practice." In *The Complete Essays of Montaigne*, translated by Donald Frame, 267–78. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1966.
The essay of Montaigne's that I spent the most time tracing his line of thought. Reviewed for my conversation with Heather C. Ohaneson along with "Of Idleness," "Of Friendship," and "Of Solitude."

Naselli, Mara. "We Be Monsters: Montaigne And The Age Of Discovery." *3 Quarks Daily*, November 25, 2013. https://3quarksdaily.com/3quarksdaily/2013/11/we-be-monsters-montaigne-and-the-age-of-discovery.html.

Odell, Jenny. *How to Do Nothing: Resisting the Attention Economy*. New York, NY: Melville House, 2021.
Like Han's text, it was influential on my thinking regarding the efficiency and instrumentality of contemporary culture.

Ogden, Emily. "On Not Knowing." In *On Not Knowing: How to Love and Other Essays*. Chicago, Il: University of Chicago Press, 2022.

Poynor, Rick. "The Filmic Page: Chris Marker's Commentaires." *Design Observer*, March 22, 2014. https://designobserver.com/feature/the-filmic-page-chris-markers-commentaires/38371.
An influential article when thinking about the design of this book. It locates the inspiration of Richard Hollis's design for *Ways of Seeing* in Chris Marker's layouts for *Commentaire*.

Rock, Michael. "Fuck Content." In *Multiple Signatures*, 91–95. New York, NY: Rizzoli, 2013.
An essay that began me thinking about the relationship of mise-èn-scene's relationship to graphic design.

Sebald, W. G. *The Rings of Saturn*. Translated by Michael Hulse. New York, NY: New Directions, 1998.
I studied the opening sections of this to trace Sebald's movements of thought to see how he moved from one thought to another.

Stierli, Martino. "Mies Montage." *AA Files*, no. 61 (2010): 64–72.
An article that, in the study of Mies van der Rohe's use of montage, parses out the difference between collage and montage in a small section.

Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt. "Part 1: What's Left?" In *The Mushroom at the End of the World*, 17–34. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015.
Influential on the way I began to think of and approach collaboration.

Wittgenstein, Ludwig. "165–171." In *Philosophical Investigations*, translated by G. E. M. Anscombe, P. M. S. Hacker, and Joachim Schulte, Fourth ed., 72–76. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.
Used for my Wittgenstein pattern generator. Originally encountered in a short continuing education class.

A Note on Getting Hard-to-Find Films from Galleries

One thing I found very helpful that I only realized at the very end of my time at RISD was that you can reach out to galleries to request copies of hard-to-find video work that is often kept away from the public.

The average turnaround time of getting links to the videos was 2–4 weeks and required some emailing back and forth, but the people were amenable.

Here is the email that I sent to Tacita Dean's representation to request digital copies of her films so I could watch them. I used this same basic form letter to get a set of links for Hito Steyerl:

Subject: Access to Tacita Dean Films for Research Purposes?

Hello there,

My name is Ian Keliher and I'm a current graduate student at the Rhode Island School of Design in the Graphic Design department. I've recently come across the work of Tacita Dean from an article by Hal Foster and it would be helpful for the work that I'm currently pursuing if I were to actually be able to see some of the films, but it doesn't seem like any are available—at least online.

I'm curious if you have digital transfers of her films available for research purposes? I wouldn't be surprised if there were no digital transfers because of how invested Dean is in film as a medium and material, but I just thought that I would check.

Thanks for any help that you can provide,
Ian

WATCHING A FILM VIA VIMEO LINK

The Artist has agreed to let you watch her film via Vimeo link. This is a low resolution, digital documentation of the work and *not the work itself*. The Artist is allowing the work to be seen in this way for exceptional educational reasons.

The work itself is either a 16mm or 35mm photochemical film that is projected in an exhibition space with a 16mm or 35mm projector. The films are often looped on film loop systems. They vary in scale, can be either front projected or back-projected depending on the exhibition space or the film in question. The screens can be attached to a wall or embedded within the wall so they are flush with it. The films can also be back-projected onto an acrylic screen that is free-hanging in the space.

Some films have soundtracks while others don't. Silent films will always be accompanied by the sound of the projector in the room so they are never truly silent. Watching a Vimeo link will always provide a false or devalued experience of the exhibited work because without the sound of the projector, the work might appear too long and tiring.

Film is still images: 24 frames per second. It is the movement of the mechanical claw and the shutter than gives the illusion of movement. Between every frame of picture, is a subliminal moment of darkness that rests the brain. Therefore. the experience of watching a film projected is quantifiably and experientially different than watching a digital moving image. Every film frame is organically different from the next one. No two film frames are the same. They are composed of salt crystals and silver and made from a layering of several layers of emulsion on a polyester base. This gives film depth.

Film is made when a negative is exposed to light through a lens. The negative is processed and printed onto film stock. Copy negatives are made from contact printing from a positive made from the original negative and then further exhibition print copies are made from them. This is indexical to film: the light that first exposed the original negative is transferred through a continuous bond of chemistry and process to the film you are watching in an installation, sometimes decades later. This bond of light only gets broken when the film is no longer a film.

This work was filmed on photochemical film, edited on a cutting table using a blade and tape and is to be shown in a gallery or museum on an analogue projector. It will never be shown in a gallery context in any other way than as a photochemical film.

Photochemical film is different to Digital. Neither one is better than the other; they exist in parallel and both mediums have very different qualities. This choice of medium is vital for artists and for the film industry. The Artist has fought hard to keep film available for subsequent generations. It is a different medium full of beauty, poetry and light. Try and experience the work, or other works, shown properly as film installations when you can.

A special exception to show this work digitally has been granted in this educational setting. The quality will be different, it is a compromised viewing experience, and this type of showing is not as the artist intended presenting this artwork.

R. Boguska

A letter from Tacita Dean's representation that I found absolutely fascinating and (surprisingly) edifying.

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Connective Movements

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree Master of Fine Arts in Graphic Design at the Rhode island School of Design, Providence, Rhode Island.

By Ian Keliher, 2023

Approved by the Master's Examination Committee

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